

Advances in Spatial Science

Erblin Berisha
Giancarlo Cotella
Alys Solly *Editors*

Governing Territorial Development in the Western Balkans

Challenges and Prospects of Regional
Cooperation

 Springer

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Foreword

The common denominator of the recent challenges that Europe is facing is their complexity. Global challenges like climate change, migration, demographic changes, Industry 4.0 transition or the coronavirus pandemic, as well as specific challenges like increasing regional disparities, the development of cross-border cooperation or ongoing European integration and the EU enlargement processes, require integrative cross-sectoral approaches. All interventions and measures that lead to managing the way these challenges are addressed need to be implemented through integrated (interconnecting different aspects comprehensively) and integrative (addressing relevant multi-stakeholders) governance policies. They have to frame efficient tools and measures crucial for a successful implementation of numerous policies, while facing the above-mentioned challenges independently from the subject or the area of policy implementation. This can be seen as an important motivation for addressing a multinational team of authors to contribute to this book on territorial development and territorial governance in the Western Balkan region.

The territorial dimension is one of the three key dimensions of integration together with temporal and thematic integration. This is because the territorial governance framed by the territorial cohesion as the target quality of territorial development not only should be perceived, but also treated as an inherent and core part of European development and cohesion policies and not as an additional issue to social and economic development. And, this is because the topic of territorial governance has to be one of essential issues in the debates on transition and integration in the Western Balkans.

The last two decades of the development in the Western Balkans, similarly to the Central European countries, have been significant in terms of multiple and complex economic and social transformation processes. The dynamics of these processes have differed across the countries, their regions and different scopes of social life. Significant for this development has been the high pressure on formal decentralisation of competences across different levels of the territorial government system, perceived as the central part of the transformation from a centralised totalitarian governing system towards a democratic governance structure. This brought a

somewhat high level of disintegration to the territorial system management, division of responsibilities and real decision-making competences available for particular territorial governance units, and a high level of sectoral division (OECD 2005).

As a reaction to the disintegration processes, sectoral division and formal decentralisation, contrasting with the complexity of territorial development problems and demand on complex responses to current challenges, territorial planning professionals and academics from the Western Balkans, supported by their European colleagues, started intensive discussions on territorial governance, later creating the Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance (<http://tg-web.eu/>), with the ambition to catalyse changes that develop and support innovations on better territorial governance for the Western Balkans in line with its EU initiatives. At the same time, the issue of territorial governance and spatial planning in the Balkan region became the object of academic discussion within the activities of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP—<http://www.aesop-planning.eu/>) and its Thematic Group on Transboundary Spaces, Policy Diffusion and Planning Cultures (http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en_GB/transnational-and-cross-border-planning).

This book, reflecting the outgoing discussion in the network and thematic group, clearly shows the need of more integrative approaches and proper formal and informal tools to overarch the gaps between the responsibilities for problem solutions and decision-making power over resources, between territorial government organisation and territorial correlation of problems, between political and professional views and between sector-specific and territorially comprehensive approaches. Although only addressed indirectly, particular chapters of this book create a mosaic framed by the multilevel polycentric governance as a concept framing new approaches for integrative and integrated development policies, especially those related to spatial/territorial development (Ostrom 2010). The concept of multilevel governance is trying to capture the complexity of horizontal relations across multiple levels of governance within the EU, and the polycentrism adds the dimension of cross-sectoral coordination and interlinks between a variety of factors influencing the success of territorial management (Finka and Kluvánková 2015).

The shift from the traditional hierarchic territorial government to a multilevel polycentric territorial governance system, significant for the Western Balkan development, is framed by the movement towards civil society development and by the fuzzification and softening of the borders between territorial functional and administrative units, including the national states. The cross-border, inter-communal, inter-regional and transnational cooperation in the Western Balkan macro-region addressed by the book has to be seen as an important tool reflecting this development.

The multilevel polycentric governance concept is addressed in several chapters of this book, underlining the need of vertical and horizontal coordination of forces in the decision-making and creating arrangements to include a large number of stakeholders as partners in the territorial development dialogues across different levels, with a special focus on the Western Balkan macro-regional specifics.

The overall transformation process in the Eastern and South-Eastern European countries is catalysed by the natural process of multiplication of the actors relevant to spatial development and increased spatial effects of their individual decisions, with the regionalisation of local and state policies (Finka et al. 2015). The intensive interplay across all hierarchical levels, different temporal dimensions and public and private actors becomes urgent in the development management. Simultaneously, the public sector representatives gradually diversify, going far behind the governmental and self-governmental bodies and becoming increasingly limited in their operational space by strong economic interests and concerns expressed by broad public. This is mirrored in the interplay between territorial/spatial planning systems, their tools and territorial development reality, as shown further in this book.

A proper multilevel polycentric territorial governance structure frames good political decisions that need to be followed by cautious and broadly accepted plans of high professional quality, adequate authority and broad public involvement (Finka et al. 2018). Within this context, the interplay between the civil society, governance authorities, academia and private sector creating the quadruple helix and representing different interests in territorial development has been addressed in several parts of this book.

There is only limited awareness about the role of good territorial governance in economic development and its implications at both sub-national and national levels, when looking beyond the spatial planning community in Europe. This applies even when speaking about issues closely linked to the investment localisation, development of territorial production clusters or efficient use of territorial capital. This contradicts the fact that the institutional settings are being steered from the government towards governance modes, changing the role of the state and eliminating its power monopoly (Špaček 2015). The power is being shifted vertically to international and sub-national levels with regional and local levels gaining more jurisdictions and horizontally focusing more on cooperation mechanisms and agreements among branches of public policy. This shift is supposed to make the governing mechanisms more effective through becoming more inclusionary and giving some power traditionally comprised on the national, regional and local levels (Jaššo 2008). The chapters of this book, addressing a place-based approach and transition of governance systems, are gaining a much broader context within these connotations.

An important dimension of the book is represented by an attempt to frame the development in the Western Balkans through the European dimension and processes of Europeanisation. The book shows great interest of this macro-region to become inherent part of the EU integration processes as well as points to a lack of communication on the territorial dimension of European development influenced by the dominance of sectoral policies and by the lack of practical implications of the European Territorial Agenda. The policy represented by the Territorial Agenda is crucial to the de-formalisation of dealings with the territorial dimension of the European development policies, including the EU enlargement, and filling the knowledge gaps about its critical role to safeguard sustainability and efficiency in using resources to achieve equal access to a certain life standard.

Providing a realistic and critical view of the complex transition processes in the Western Balkan countries from the perspective of territorial development and territorial governance, including the Europeanisation processes, the book goes beyond the ambition to simply contribute to narrowing the gap in knowledge about the macro-region and its particular countries. Bringing a big lesson learned and reflecting the interplay between policies and processes at different levels—global, European, national and sub-national levels in the EU-candidate states—the book is a valuable resource of knowledge not only for academics of the AESOP, but for practitioners and policy makers as well.

Bratislava, Slovakia

Maros Finka
AESOP President 2020–2022

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Preface

All the Western Balkan countries must now urgently redouble their efforts, address vital reforms and complete their political, economic and social transformation, bringing all stakeholders on board from across the political spectrum and from civil society. Joining the EU is far more than a technical process.

(CEC, 2018)

The idea of editing a collection of contributions focusing on territorial development and territorial governance in the Western Balkan region arose in our minds at the end of 2017, while reflecting on the results of the international seminar “Territorial governance and spatial planning in the Balkan Region” that we had organised and hosted at the Politecnico di Torino (Italy) within the framework of the activities of the AESOP Thematic Group on *Transboundary Spaces, Policy Diffusion, Planning Culture* (https://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en_GB/transnational-and-cross-border-planning). After several years, conducting in depth comparative research on territorial governance and spatial planning in Europe and beyond, with a particular focus on the European Union’s recent enlargements in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, we decided to set up an occasion for information and knowledge exchange, specifically dedicated to territorial development and governance in the Western Balkan region.

Being aware of the potential traps that accompanied the task, and in particular of those deriving from the geopolitical tensions that continued to project their shadow on the region, we decided to be as open as possible in our approach and launched a public call for contributions that was widely distributed both through public channels and to the many different colleagues in our networks that are active in the area. The seminar took place in Turin in December 2017, and the result was beyond expectation, with over 40 scholars from the region that answered our invitation and committed to sharing their knowledge and experience with us. For two full days, participants coming from all the Western Balkan countries and beyond discussed the main challenges and opportunities that characterise the present and future territorial developments in the region. As confirmed by several attendees, the event was characterised by a proactive, engaging atmosphere that, perhaps also as a

consequence of the “neutral ground” in which the event was taking place, allowed national perspectives to be put aside and attention to be focused on how the development of shared priorities and visions would be to the benefit of all. During the last session of the seminar, from various sides, the request arose, to continue sharing knowledge by consolidating the group of scholars that had just met into a permanent discussion forum that could engage additional participants from the academia and the policy-making world. The *Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance* (TG-WeB. <http://tg-web.eu/>) was born on that day, and, since then, it has continued to produce and share knowledge, visions and policy options on the territorial development of the region, with particular attention for its European dimension and the challenges that characterise the ongoing integration process.

With the establishment of the TG-WeB network, we had achieved one of the results that we aimed for. However, the overall high quality of the contributions presented during the seminar motivated us to take a further step and find a way to leave a trace of the discussion that took place. Indeed, one of the main outcomes of the seminar was the acknowledgment that “nobody knows what we are doing in the Western Balkans about territorial development and governance”! Aware of this knowledge gap, we contacted once again the various contributors and, together with them, we put together a selection of the most representative works that could well display the heterogeneity of Western Balkans territorial development and governance landscape and its multiple patterns of change.

The final version of the edited volume provides an extensive panorama of territorial development and governance in the Western Balkan region, concentrating on the main spatial and institutional challenges. Its objective is, on the one hand, to fill the existing scientific and empirical gap and, on the other hand, to focus on the transformations that are characterising the region, which is nowadays undertaking the EU integration path. To do so, it provides a collection of different experiences and perspectives, built around a common goal for which its shape and scope has evolved since the inception of the idea over two and a half years ago. During this time, we have elaborated, reframed and consolidated the volume, with new authors entering at various stages and some contributions that got lost along the way. Far from being discouraging, the process of incremental readjustment and the sharpening of our main focus has been extremely rewarding because it has allowed us to dig deeper and deeper into the different issues and to better grasp those aspects that once seemed blurred. In some ways, the process has generated as many questions as answers, but if the book provides an insight into the debates surrounding European territorial development, governance and spatial planning and generates additional engagement and critical reflections, then this will be the greatest reward for our work and we will consider our goal achieved.

Turin, Italy

Erblin Berisha
Giancarlo Cotella
Alys Solly

Reference

CEC—Commission of the European Communities (2018) A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, COM (2018) 65 final. Strasbourg, 6.2.2018

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Moreover, we owe deep gratitude to the institutions that supported us in the organisation of the seminar on “Territorial governance and spatial planning in the Western Balkan Region” that took place in December 2017 at the Politecnico di

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Erblin Berisha
Giancarlo Cotella
Alys Solly

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Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADRION	Interreg V-B Adriatic-Ionian programme
AIC	Adriatic and Ionian Council
AII	Adriatic and Ionian Initiative
ALUIZNI	Agency for Legalization, Urban Planning and Integration of Informal Area
BalkanMED	Balkan and Mediterranean Programme
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CBTD	Cross-Border Territorial Development
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CEMAT	Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning
CF	Cohesion Fund
CFC	Carpathian Framework Convention
CLLD	Community Lead Local Development
CoE	Council of Europe
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPR	Common Pool Resources
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CZM	Coastal Zone Management
DNPANI	Detailed National Plans for Areas of National Importance
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFPRZ	Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment

EMS	European Monetary System
ERDF	European Fund for Regional Development
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EURED	Regional Economic Development Programme
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region
EUSALP	EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
F MSP	Framework for Marine Spatial Planning
GB	Governing Board
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GES	Good Environmental Status
GGIM	Global Geospatial Information Management
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
GLTP	General Local Territorial Plan
GNP	General National Plan
GNTP	Generation National Territorial Plan
GVA	Gross Value Added
IAD	Institutional Analysis and Development
IAP	Ionian Adriatic Pipeline
IBL	Inter-Entity Boundary Line
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
INFCCL	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
INSPIRE	Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPARD	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development
ISPA	Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
LDP	Local Detailed Plan
LEADER	<i>Liaison Entre Actions de Développement Economique Rurale</i>
LGU	Local Self-Government Unit
LSI	Land–Sea Interactions
MED	Mediterranean Programme
MRDEUF	Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP	Maritime Spatial Planning
MUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NALAS	Network of Associations of Local Authorities

NAPCC	National Action Plan on Climate Change
NCCP	National Climate Change Programmes
NCCS	National Climate Change Strategy
NDA	Neighbourhood Development Agenda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSCCC	National Steering Committee on Climate Change
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
NSID	National Strategy for Integration and Development
NSP	National Sectoral Plan (Albania)
NTPA	National Territorial Planning Agency
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
OBNOVA	Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy, Cross-Border Cooperation
CBC	Economy, Cross-Border Cooperation
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
RD	Regional Development
RDA	Regional Development Act
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
RMM	Regional Management Mechanism
RSP	Regional Spatial Plan
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
SAPARD	Special Accession Program for Rural and Development Program
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development of Cooperation
SDI	Spatial Data Infrastructure
SDS	Sustainable Development Strategy
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEE	South East Europe
SEEP	South East European Programme
SEETO	South East Europe Transport Observatory
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SP	Stability Pact
SPLGU	Spatial Plan of the Local Government Unit
SPRS	Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia
SPSPA	Spatial Plan of Special Purpose Area
STAR	Support to Territorial and Administration Reform project

SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TA	Territorial Agenda
TAP	Trans Adriatic Pipeline
TCA	Trade Cooperation Agreements
TDA	Territorial Development Agency (Albania)
TEC	Treaty on European Union
TEN-E	Trans-European Networks for Energy
TEN-T	Trans-European Network Transport
TG	Territorial Governance
TG-WeB	Territorial Governance in the Western Balkans
TIA	Territorial Impact Assessment
TSGs	Thematic Steering Groups
UAZ	Urban Agglomeration Zagreb
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-Habitat	United Nation Habitat
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBR	Western Balkan region
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZUA	Zadar Urban Area

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Chapter 1

Introduction: The Western Balkans Between Continuity and Change



Erblin Berisha , Giancarlo Cotella , and Alys Solly 

Abstract Since the collapse of the communist regimes and the beginning of the transition period, territorial governance and spatial planning in the Western Balkans have often been marginalized within the academic and policy debates. Acknowledging this gap, this introductory chapter sets out the context for the book, presenting its aims and rationale and providing the basis upon which to unfold the discussion on territorial governance and spatial planning in the region. In doing so, it briefly delineates the transition from a centrally planned economic system to a market economy, paying particular attention to the institutional dimension. At the same time, it reflects upon the differential pace that has characterised the process of European integration in the different countries in question. Finally, it introduces the main challenges that have characterised the evolution of territorial governance in the region, as well as the potential role that territorial cooperation initiatives could play within it, before sketching out a roadmap that will guide the reader through the volume.

Keywords Western Balkan region · Territorial development · Governance · Spatial planning · EU integration

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1.1 Introduction

Since the fall of the Socialist Bloc in 1989, the Western Balkan region¹ has been undergoing multiple fundamental transformations that are complex in their nature and hard to explain with a single paradigm. Such complexity, where democratisation and transition took place in conjunction with nation building and European Union (EU) integration, came at the expense of a partial picture of the region. Most studies approached it *selectively*, in terms of conflict, democratisation or EU integration, exploring only specific aspects of the overall process of change that the Western Balkans were undergoing and, more importantly, often offering only partial geographical coverage at the expense of a more comprehensive macro-regional picture. Moreover, due to their fluid, challenging nature and to the differential pace that has characterised their integration into the EU, the Western Balkan countries have been left out of the majority of pan-European research initiatives focusing on territorial development and governance or on the impact of the EU on the latter.

As a matter of fact, since the collapse of the communist regimes and the beginning of the transition period, territorial governance and spatial planning have often been marginalised from the European as well as region's policy debates. This means that, for several years, hardly any discussion on the matter has been developed. Only recently, thanks to the launch of the new strategy for the integration of the Western Balkan region called "a credible enlargement perspective for an enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans" (European Commission 2018), have questions concerning territorial development and governance in the region returned to the centre of academic and political debate. Acknowledging the above scientific and empirical gaps, this volume provides an extensive portrait of territorial governance in the Western Balkan region, concentrating on the main spatial and institutional challenges that characterise the area. Thus, it focuses on the territorial development and governance challenges that characterise a region, which is still caught between multi-dimensional transitions and the path of European integration.

Overall, the editors of the volume have been engaged with the question of the evolution of territorial governance in Europe in various ways and through different institutional and academic contexts for at least a decade (Adams et al. 2011, 2014; Cotella and Stead 2011; Cotella et al. 2012; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2018, 2020; Cotella 2020; Solly et al. 2020, 2021). Their approach to territorial governance sees it as a highly path-dependent issue, strongly influenced by contextual logics. This is particularly true for those countries that have been interested by intense social and institutional transformations, as is the case of the countries of the Western Balkan region. Great importance, in this sense,

¹For the purpose of this book, with the wording Western Balkan region, we include Albania (AL), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA), Croatia (HR), Kosovo (XK), Montenegro (ME), North Macedonia (MK) and Serbia (RS).

will be given to the understanding of the socio-economic, cultural and historical conditions within which each territorial governance system has been evolving and consolidating. More in particular, the book sets out to provide input in relation to three main research questions:

- (i) what the present and future of territorial governance in the Western Balkans looks like?
- (ii) what territorial and institutional challenges remain to be faced?
- (iii) what role could territorial cooperation play in this picture?

In so doing, it offers a timely contribution on a subject that has seldom been dealt with in any comprehensive manner.² Its contents reflect the main territorial and institutional challenges that a number of countries located in the Western Balkans are facing, as a consequence of the mixed, concurring impacts of their transition and transformation, of the EU integration process and of various other, often path-dependent variables. In particular, the book is structured around three main areas of interest. The first concerns the emerging challenges and historical legacy (e.g. regionalisation, uncontrolled urban growth and lack of public participation). The second goes more into depth on the question of spatial planning systems and the role of territorial governance. The third section discusses the importance of territorial cooperation initiatives in relation to domestic territorial governance and in the light of the future EU enlargement. Touching upon different dimensions of territorial development, governance and cooperation, the book provides the reader with a rich overview on the main critical questions at stake, on the one hand, and of the ongoing diverse spatial and institutional transformation processes, on the other. In doing so, it also underlines the importance of these issues for the ongoing enlargement of the EU and reflects on the impact that the latter is having and will most likely have in the future.

In the context of the volume, this chapter serves as the introduction, setting out its main rationale, delineating the research field it is located within and presenting its overall aim and specific objectives. In particular, Sect. 1.2 introduces the area of research—the Western Balkan region—and explains the reasons why approaching the latter as a ‘space in institutional transition’ could be useful to provide additional insights on the evolution of the territorial development and governance. Section 1.3 looks at the evolving relationship of the region and its countries within the European space, especially focusing on the EU Integration process. Section 1.4 introduces more in depth the challenges that characterise territorial governance in the region. Finally, Sect. 1.5 presents a roadmap that will guide the reader through the various sections and contributions that make up the volume.

²The most recent contributions are by Tsenkova and Nedović-Budić (2006) and Getimis and Kafkalas (2007).

1.2 The Western Balkans: A Region in Transition

As mentioned above, the Western Balkan region has been treated until now as a *terra incognita* by the research community focusing on comparative territorial governance studies. In the 2000s, a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of the transition of post-socialist countries towards market economic models, various authors continued to refer to the region as if it was part of *Europe's wild west*, a space that has witnessed a “breakdown of law and order” (Olsen 2000, p. 70). At the same time, the region is also progressively seen as a *gateway to Europe*, a space located at the crossroads between the Western and the Eastern sides of Europe and between the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East and the European core (Cotella and Berisha 2019).

During the last decades, with the dismantling of the socialist and communist regimes that had characterised the regions since after World War II, there has been a shift from a strong centralised economic power towards a more decentralised development and administrative model, characterised by free market rules (Adams et al. 2011). This transition process has progressively transformed all of the Western Balkan region and also been enhanced by the European integration process. It is important to point out that the Balkan countries have adopted different approaches to set up a market economy (Osbuild and Bartlett 2019, p. 5). Moreover, Monastiriotis and Petrakos (2009) argue that the transition has also led to the appearance of a certain number of problematic issues, such as growing socio-economic dichotomies, underdevelopment, peripherality-rurality and economic dependence. In fact, as pointed out in the results of the ESTIA project report (2000, p. 11), the historical events that have occurred in the Western Balkans have led to a fast changing and significantly unstable context, where territorial governance and spatial planning are not seen as priorities. To complete the picture, the Western Balkans are also perceived as an internally “divided region” (Osbuild and Bartlett 2019, p. 1), characterised by a high level of territorial fragmentation and diversity, due to many political, economic and sociocultural reasons.

Transition, in the general meaning of the term, denotes “the interval between the dissolution of the old regime and the installation of a new regime” (Kopecky and Mudde 2000, p. 519). In the post-communist literature, it has been frequently conceptualised as the transformation towards a pluralist democracy and a market economy, hence implying first and foremost the creation of new institutions to guarantee the introduction of a market economy and the abandonment of state planning logics (Cotella 2007, 2014). Fundamental reforms and new legal and administrative practices had to be introduced, in order to break with the former institutional legacies. Although some degree of democracy and some economic reforms started right at the beginning of the 1990s, it can be argued that the Western Balkans experienced transition later, at least in comparison with the Central and Eastern European countries (Rupnik 2000). In particular, differences persisted in relation to the level of democracy as well as that of economic development. In the latter, the gap was particularly deep, with the economic performance of all the

transition economies in the Balkans that has been worse than that in the Central and Eastern portion of the continent (Freedom House 2006). As a matter of fact, whereas the Eastern European transition economies had been successfully developing throughout the 1990s, this was not the case for the Western Balkans, which in 1998 featured lower development levels than in 1989.³

Such evidence speaks for a *delayed* transition that the Western Balkan countries have been experiencing in comparison with the rest of European post-communist countries. The transition process, alongside recovery from conflict and disorder, brought new challenges for the region. In the political sphere, the main challenge was to establish a liberal democracy. A second important challenge was the creation of a positive identification with the State by the citizens. In the social field, the weak organisational capacity of social actors and a weak civil society constituted crucial challenges. Finally, all the stabilising economies in the regions were struggling to put in place sound conditions for self-sustainable economic growth (Gligorov et al. 1999). Along with the attempt to solve political, economic and social issues, other problems arose, with corruption and illegal activities being at the top of the list. These new challenges proved hard to face, mostly as a consequence of the structural weakness of the Western Balkan countries, which lacked sufficient governance capacities to carry out the necessary reforms. Overall, the building of institutions capable of overcoming the old and emerging challenges was one of the key issues that characterised the regions throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, with institution-building that was restricted due to the limits imposed by the previous tensions, as well as the lack of political will. In turn, this situation contributed to hamper socio-economic development, with progress along market lines that were hard to achieve in the presence of a state sector still ineffective in fulfilling its basic functions (Gligorov et al. 1999).

Due to these complexities, the Western Balkan region continues to be perceived by most observers as a space in *evolution*, where major political and institutional transformations have occurred in the last decades and are still ongoing. Throughout the path towards European integration, the concept of “quality of institutions has emerged as a key aspect of territorial governance” (Pere and Bartlett 2019, p. 75). Thus, the concept of territorial governance should be explored through different levels of meaning. As Bevir (2012) explains, the process of governance in a certain territory is undertaken “through laws, norms, power or language”, including at the same time “the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that leads to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions” (Hufty 2011, p. 405). Even though the Western Balkan region seems to currently lag behind in various aspects of *good governance* and *rule of law*, the situation could “improve or worsen depending on what decisions are taken” (Čeperković and Gaub 2018, p. 20). In particular, as pointed out in a number of the chapters in this volume, each national context has

³The Western Balkans’ countries GDP in 1998 ranged from the 35% of their 1989 level in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the 86% in Albania (Uvalic 2001).

evolved as a consequence of a mixture of internal and external stimuli, generating a highly complex, differential, fluid landscape. The emergence of decentralisation processes has been accompanied by the growing importance of regionalisation mechanisms. At the same time, this has also led to the need to improve both horizontal and vertical coordination, as well as to introduce of public participation mechanisms, promoting an active role of citizens in political and planning decisions. Within this process, as the following section will further explain, a crucial role is played by the EU, which has often considered the region as a *laboratory* where policies and programmes may be tested and experimented, in so doing triggering Europeanisation episodes in a context of incomplete democratisation (Bărbulescu and Troncotă 2013, p. 63).

1.3 Towards European Integration

In response to the turbulence of the previous decades and the challenges posed by the transition, the Western Balkan countries have implemented reforms that progressively turned the region towards EU integration. In 1999, the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) was established by the EU with the aim of introducing potential membership in the Western Balkans (Kostovicova and Bojicic-Dželilovic 2006). In 2000, at the Feira European Council, the prospect of membership was extended to the Western Balkans countries, where the Heads of EU States and Governments confirmed the prospect of the Balkan countries as potential candidates for EU membership. According to Elbasani (2013, p. 3), the EU policy shift towards the Balkan region has created high expectations that the enlargement strategy could “discipline democratic institution-building and foster post-communist reforms in the same way that it did in the previous candidates in Central and Eastern Europe”. The target of membership status has accelerated the progress and given new impetus, especially after the accession of the ten countries from Eastern Europe, with the Western Balkans that had become the next region waiting in line.

In order to be admitted for membership, the Western Balkan countries had however to comply with the rather strict EU political, economic and legal requirements.⁴ Such a relationship implies that, during the last 20 years, the EU has exerted an impact on the Western Balkans, triggering episodes of Europeanisation (Cotella and Stead 2011; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020), where the Western Balkan countries reviewed much of their legislation, adapted existing institutions or built new ones conforming to the EU’s legislation, policies and standards. As a result, all the countries have experienced major transformations, the

⁴In particular, the Copenhagen Criteria require the candidate countries to achieve stability of institutions, guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the union; the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

most direct ones concerning the structure of their public administration and the change in the substance and processes of democratic governance.

More in detail, in the last years, the EU has developed and implemented policies to support the gradual integration of all the countries, which were involved in a progressive partnership in order to stabilise the region and establish a free-trade area. However, the European integration process varies greatly according to each country of the Western Balkan region (Table 1.1). On 1 July 2013, Croatia became the 28th member state of the EU, as well as the first Balkan country to join. Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia possess the status of official candidates. Accession negotiations and chapters opened in 2012 with Montenegro (32 out of 35 chapters are still open, while 3 are provisionally closed) and in 2013 with Serbia (18 out of 35 chapters are open, while only 2 are provisionally closed). The European Council also agreed to open the screening step (i.e. analytical examination of the *acquis*) in 2018 with both Albania and North Macedonia, while in March 2020, the Commission has received the green light from the Council to start negotiation talks. Nowadays, the EU integration process is still at its early stages in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo*,⁵ with the two countries that are identified as potential candidates. Overall, whereas the stabilisation policies and agreements have entered into force in all countries, although at different stages, the European Commission 2019 annual report highlights that many of them did not seem to have “yet met the required standards as to economic, political, administrative, legal and human rights policies” (Osbold and Bartlett 2019, p. 3).

In parallel to the progress, concerns still persist on the Western Balkans readiness to join the EU, and the most sceptic observers consider the Western Balkan countries potentially *second-class members*. However, despite the scepticism and uncertainty surrounding the EU integration process, the latter appears nowadays irreversible for all countries at stake. “Europe [...] stands as the common denominator around which a new collective identity of the Balkans has begun to crystallize” (Bechev and Andreev 2005, p. 22), and this puts the accession into the EU at the centre of any long-range vision for the region. Whereas it is not yet certain that “elites and constituencies throughout the region increasingly share a European orientation” (Balkan Forum 2004, p. 5); they will have to stand to the task, as tangible measures need to be taken and complying with EU standards and consequently the launch of the opening process rests on them.

When it comes to the main focus of this book, throughout the years, European policies and programmes also seem to have also promoted a progressive openness of the territorial governance systems of the various countries towards European aims and priorities, as a consequence of the numerous initiatives put in place by the EU through its candidate and neighbourhood policies. By triggering various Europeanisation mechanisms, the pre-accession process has led to several rearrangements in the territorial governance systems that characterise the various

⁵(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Table 1.1 EU integration steps for WB's countries (*Source* Authors' own elaboration)

Steps	Agreements	AL	BA	HR	ME	MK	RS	XK
Pre-adherence agreement	Potential candidate	2000	2003	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
	SAA	2006–2009	2008–2015	2001–2005	2008	2001	2008	2014–2016
	Application for EU membership	2009	2016	2003	2009	2004	2009	N.A.
	Candidate status	2014	N.A.	2004	2010	2005	2012	N.A.
Screening	Analytical examination of the acquis	2018	N.A.	2006	2011	2018	2013	N.A.
Negotiation	Chapters' discussion period	N.A.	N.A.	2006–2011	2012–	N.A.	2015–	N.A.
Adhesion	Adhesion treaty	N.A.	N.A.	2012	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Status	Member state	N.A.	N.A.	2013	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

countries (Cotella and Berisha 2016). As clearly pointed out in the ESTIA report (2000, p. 10), the impact of the EU integration process on the Western Balkan region can be seen in “a number of issues concerning both the administrative context and the policy instruments of spatial planning, though in a different mix depending on the particular country and its stage of transition and restructuring”. According to ESTIA (2000, pp. 10–11) these changes are evident in the: (i) establishment of new territorial divisions and new regional institutions; (ii) introduction of the environmental dimension in the physical planning approach; (iii) effort to provide relevant information for spatial planning and development; (iv) effort to establish mechanisms for public participation and consultation in the spatial planning decisions. As some of contributions included in this volume will show, the new administrative levels have been set up in line with the European NUTS system and often given responsibility for the coordination of EU programming activities. As regards the environmental dimension, various EU sectoral directives and regulations (e.g. water and waste management, nature conservation) have been transposed on the domestic legislation of the different countries. Information and monitoring mechanisms have also been promoted in order to provide a better implementation of policies and projects, as well as to promote more effective spatial development. Moreover, the European model has enabled the Western Balkan countries to implement more strategic instruments and programmes, at the same time leading to higher cooperation between the various countries (Berisha 2018b).

1.4 What Role for Territorial Governance?

The debate on territorial governance in the EU has been at the centre of the academic and policy-making arena since the late eighties. In the last three decades, a series of contributions have compared the territorial governance and spatial planning systems of the European countries (Davies et al. 1989, Newman and Thornley 1996; CEC 1997; Cotella and Stead 2011; Reimer et al. 2014; Nadin et al. 2018; Cotella 2018; Berisha et al. 2020). Acknowledging that the majority of these contributions display a gap in relation to the Western Balkans, this volume presents a number of specific territorial governance and spatial planning issues, as they emerge in relation to the countries in the area. In so doing, it offers a fresh contribution on the main research and policy debates that interest the context under examination. In particular, the various contributors touch upon selected dimensions of the evolution of territorial governance and spatial planning, highlighting the main challenges at stake. They provide examples of spatial planning instruments at the various administrative levels, as well as shed light on the horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms, on the role of participation and coordination and on the influence of the spatial discourses of the international organisations on national and subnational spatial planning documents. Examples are put forward on the use of EU structural and pre-accession funds within domestic territorial governance and programming activities, and specific sectoral policies are touched upon, together with the attempts to spatially coordinate their impact through overarching strategic activities.

Overall, the territorial governance and spatial planning policies and practices in the Western Balkan region have drastically mutated during the last three decades. The domestic territorial governance systems have evolved from a socialist and communist planning tradition towards a free market perspective. This shift was affected by the initial distrust of the previous top-down regulative approach, which was perceived as a social limitation by the majority of the citizens (Berisha 2018a, p. 3). At the same time, it was also influenced by the European discourse and interventions and by what was happening in the neighbouring countries. As a consequence of the occurred changes, nowadays all the countries in the region seem to feature legislations that allow for a confirmative planning practice, with the “public authority [that] tends to allocate land use and development rights through general and rigid binding plans” (Berisha et al. 2020, p. 8). At the same time, spatial development processes are increasingly market-led, with private actors that, through their investments, drive the action of the public sector to a major extent. This occurs in the context of a high level of corruption and illegal development, deriving from the inability of public actors to resist the pressures of the market, mostly as a consequence of the precarious budgetary situation and of low levels of institutional capacity. Thus, territorial governance processes are permeated by private interests that, bypassing national legislative frameworks at the expense of public objectives, often lead to development episodes that run against the promotion of sustainable and inclusive urbanisation (Solly et al. 2020).

1.4.1 Persisting Challenges: Decentralisation, Sustainability, Participation

Some challenges appear particularly relevant for territorial governance practices. The shift towards a more decentralised local administration has led to an increased importance of the role of the regional level, with the adoption of regional plans and strategies. This shift has been intensified by the Europeanisation process, which has pushed the Western Balkan countries to adopt territorial institutions conforming to European requirements. However, in most cases, the newly instituted frameworks are decentralised only on paper, with the national level that keeps holding the reins of decision-making. Sanjay (2008) highlights the importance for the Western Balkan countries of improving growth prospects by deepening regionalisation and further enhancing the autonomy of regional and local administrative units. However, the “lack of substantial decentralisation efforts, low internal capacity in municipalities, overlapping jurisdictions between central and local levels, a culture of non-participation and an unfavourable economic environment jeopardise the success of local development efforts” (Milutinovic and Jolovic 2010, p. 293).

At the same time, the region is facing rising environmental challenges, also in relation to the need to address the consequences of climate change and to improve the overall environmental quality. Milutinovic and Jolovic (2010, p. 293) point out that, even though various municipalities have implemented strategic plans that aim to improve local sustainable development, many differences can be seen in the local governments, in terms of capacities, management skills and motivation. As anticipated, the introduction of the environmental dimension in the spatial planning approach is clearly a consequence of the influence of the EU. In particular, a number of strategies related to face climate change challenges have been implemented in the region, especially with reference to the Danube area. However, the long-term sustainable development of the Balkans continues to lack adequate national and transnational strategies and programmes that address common environmental challenges. At the same time, attention should be devoted to the management of the coastal area, since some countries in the region are characterised by extensive coastal development on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea. In this light, territorial governance and spatial planning should play an important role, since sustainable land use seems to depend on both the “socio-economic processes that trigger spatial development” and the “effectiveness of spatial governance instruments” (Solly et al. 2020, p. 1).

Finally, challenges have also arisen in the region in relation to social inclusion and the involvement of citizens in territorial governance activities. According to Ganić (2019, p. 61), the issue of growing social and economic inequalities has been a major concern that has accompanied the economic and political transformation of the Western Balkans since the 1990s. At the same time, public participation to territorial governance processes has been until now implemented mostly as a formal activity, without any real attempt to engage the civil society in decision and policy-making. Also, in this case, an increasing role of public participation could be

triggered by the guidelines and requirements that accompany EU inspired interventions and activities. Nevertheless, as the ESTIA report rightly pointed out, for the countries with a central planning past, the more general process of consolidation of democratic institutions and the broader decentralisation and liberalisation process of policy-making is likely to remain a critical factor (2000).

1.4.2 Towards Increasing Territorial Cooperation

As underlined during the EU–Western Balkans Summits of Zagreb (2000) and Thessaloniki (2003), regional cooperation is the focal point of the EU integration process of the Western Balkan countries. In particular, European territorial cooperation initiatives and especially cross-border programmes, but also transnational and macro-regional cooperation programmes and strategies, seem to constitute active catalysts of European integration, providing “border relations among neighbouring countries with a stronger territorial dimension” (Solly et al. 2018, p. 34). Bearing in mind that the full integration of the Western Balkans region is identified as a crucial step for the future of the EU (European Commission 2018), and that the development of territorial cooperation programmes and activities involving the region is intended to address issues of mutual relevance, producing benefits in terms of political understandings, economic and social prosperity and, more in general, increased integration, the development of cooperation activities within the region has always been seen as a key element for ensuring its political stability, security and economic prosperity (Bastian 2011).

As a consequence of the enlargement strategy adopted by the Commission, which sees cooperation and in particular cross-border cooperation as one of the pillars alongside the EU integration process, the last three decades have been characterised by the implementation of several territorial cooperation initiatives, as a consequence of the development and implementation of multiple EU cooperation programmes and strategies, in particular in the framework of INTERREG and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. The participation in these programmes has produced various direct and indirect effects in the political, economic and sociocultural spheres. New territorial governance models, instruments and mechanisms have been developed, in order to manage functional areas that go beyond administrative borders, and cross-border special economic zones and protected natural areas have been identified, contributing to soften the economic and institutional relations between countries and to favour investments in the sustainable development of local communities. At the same time, territorial cooperation initiatives have contributed to the building and consolidation of a common identity based on the EU principles of cooperation and collaboration, enhancing the attention devoted to the inclusion of minorities, youth and disadvantaged citizens in future agendas.

Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, as stressed by various authors in the literature as well as in this book, the participation in European territorial

cooperation programmes has enabled the exchange of knowledge and good practices in relation to territorial development governance, which in turn could contribute to further mutual understanding and virtuous learning processes among the involved actors (Cotella et al. 2015).

1.5 A Roadmap for the Reader

The final section of this introductory chapter provides an overview of the structure of the book and presents the individual contributions. The book contains 15 contributions from a combination of well-established authors, as well as emerging academics with expertise in the field of territorial development and governance in the Western Balkan region. All the contributors provide critical and reflective commentary on the evolution of, and future challenges and opportunities for territorial development inside the region. Their considerations are framed within the transition from centrally planned to market economic models and the progressive, differential integration of the various countries into the EU. After this chapter had set out the context for the discussion, the remainder of the book is divided into three interrelated sections, each structured in individual contributions, and followed by a concluding discussion (Chapter 17). In this way, each contribution provides the personal interpretation of the author(s) on the territorial governance transformations that had characterised the region and selected countries within it, making the volume informative and heterogeneous, thus capable of catching the polymorphism of the ongoing changes.

Part I of the book examines the main challenges and drivers of change that have characterised territorial governance in the Western Balkan region since the end of the early 1990s, from a number of standpoints. Erblin Berisha and Giancarlo Cotella (Chapter 2) provide a preliminary overview of the numerous territorial and institutional transformations that have characterised the area, paving the way for a diversity of territorial development and governance models. They identify and detail the main drivers of change that characterised the region and could affect its future development. In doing so, they adopt an historical perspective to the region's spatial development trajectories, focusing on the role of territorial governance and spatial planning in addressing them, identifying the main challenges that hamper this activity and dedicating particular attention to the role that international actors have played and are still playing in shaping it.

In Chapter 3, Marjan Marjanović, Mario Miličević and Dušan Ristić adopt the conceptual lenses of New European Regionalism to examine and compare the role of regional planning in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This governance level did not exist in the former Yugoslavia, although regional plans of a different character were developed. The authors show that in the countries formed by its dissolution, the regionalisation and development of regional governance and planning have been stimulated by the European integration processes. In this light, they discuss the importance of regional plans, the nature of the solutions and the

implementation mechanisms they entail, as well as their horizontal and vertical coordination and alignment.

Building on their first-hand experience of the context, Eliza Hoxha, Dea Buza and Ledio Allkja (Chapter 4) draw on the theoretical discourse regarding participation in territorial governance and spatial planning to set a number of criteria for analysing and comparing the legal basis and the requirements for public participation in Albania and Kosovo. Their work shows that territorial governance in these countries has evolved quickly over the last decade, as a consequence of the introduction of new legislation and different initiatives at the national and local levels. Although the legislation and instruments have changed relatively quickly, trying to mimic different North-Western European approaches, the practice is still fluidly evolving in the dichotomy between the new and the old customs, and the involvement of the civil society continues to be a challenge.

Part II of the book focuses in more depth on the issues of territorial governance and spatial planning, as well as on the main patterns of change that have characterised this activity. Zora Živanovic and Gataric Dragica (Chapter 5) explore the evolution and consolidation of the spatial planning system in Serbia. They focus on its basic characteristics, its development path and its importance as a social activity that has the final goal of raising the overall living standard of the population. To do this, the authors analyse the various spatial planning instruments that have been introduced, including their planning procedures and content, at each territorial level: national, regional and local. At the same time, the authors reflect on the key challenges that Serbian territorial governance and spatial planning must face, and provide guidance for systemic improvement within the ongoing EU integration process.

Moving from Serbia to North Macedonia (Chapter 6), Marko Ivanišević, Marjan Marjanović and Dejan Iliev explore the evolution of territorial governance and spatial planning of the country through the lens of EU integration. Adopting an historical perspective, the authors present the turbulent past of the territorial governance and spatial planning of the country, contextualising the patterns of change in relation to the main causes and drivers. This chapter offers the opportunity to understand how the country's territorial governance and spatial planning system have evolved and consolidated through time, and what role the EU integration process played in this process. In this regard, the authors argue that, whereas the increasing cooperation with EU institutions has helped the country to disengage from its historical legacy, the process is not yet concluded and there is still a long way to go.

Focusing on the main pitfalls that characterise Montenegrin territorial governance and spatial planning, Sonja Dragovic (Chapter 7) discusses how the country has shifted from a rather decentralised to a highly centralised system. In doing so, the author presents the main reasons and driving forces at the basis of the re-centralisation, which has taken place, in the framework of the overall economic and political contingencies that have progressively contributed to delegitimise the local authorities to the benefit of the central government. In conclusion, the contribution advances the question of whether what is happening in Montenegro

simply represents a short-lived experiment, or whether it will consolidate into a longer-term solution, thus further hampering the influence of local actors on territorial development.

Velislava Simeonova and Ivaylo Stamenkov (Chapter 8) focus on the transfer and impact of the EU spatial discourse on the Bulgarian and the Serbian spatial planning documents at the national level. They argue that this impact is a result of the process of the Europeanisation of the spatial planning in the two countries, which, at the time of the analysis, were positioned in a different phase as regards their relations with the territorial scope of the EU. The authors show that, in the case of Serbia, the current pre-accession period is much more important in organising and reforming the legal and instrumental framework of spatial planning than in the case of Bulgaria, where active reforms in the definition of its spatial planning policy were only initiated several years after its accession to the EU as a member state.

Following a similar line of argumentation, Ledio Allkja (Chapter 9) discusses both the limitations and the opportunities of the Europeanisation of spatial planning in Albania. He analyses the transition in the Albanian territorial governance and spatial planning system from a regulatory/urbanistic approach towards a more strategic/spatial one. The author looks at the extent to which the process of Europeanisation has affected the system and explored the potential of and the threats underlying the process. The aim of the chapter is not only to describe the different legal changes, but also to focus on the reasons behind them. By analysing the main changes of the planning system, the chapter also undertakes a content analysis of the General National Territorial Plan.

Maintaining the focus on Albania, in Chapter 10, Rudina Toto and Dritan Shutina discuss the changing role of territorial governance at the local level, examining a number of empirical cases. These case studies aim to provide practical evidence on various concepts, such as place-based decision-making, flexible governance and cooperation and coordination of interests, covering the whole policy cycle, as well as some specific steps. In particular, the authors emphasise the role played by the various territorial scales and sectors and provide input on the discourse relating to the bottom-up, context-based and inter-thematic evidence of territorial governance.

Željka Kordej-De Villa and Ivana Rašić (Chapter 11) present an overview of the relevant legislative framework for coastal zone management, focusing on the case of Croatia. They explain how the coastal area can be seen as an interface or transition zone where diverse economic activities interact and intensive environmental pressures manifest. In particular, they focus on the Integrating Coastal Zone Management, a dynamic and iterative process that aims to ensure the sustainable development of coastal areas in national development policies. Throughout the chapter, the authors devote special attention to spatial and regional policy, particularly to the physical plans of protected areas (e.g. national and natural parks) and island development policy. The authors also present an evaluation of the state and progress of the analysed policy through two different models.

Irena Đokić, Ivana Rašić and Marijana Sumpor (Chapter 12) focus on the new development planning framework that has emerged in Croatia over the last decade.

In particular, the authors explore the evolution of territorial development and governance issues in relation to the Zagreb Urban Agglomeration. The latter is commonly considered as an area that spreads over the administrative boundaries of the city, where functional relations are strong and migratory patterns rich. In particular, the contribution examines possible scenarios for future development in the Urban Agglomeration, based on contextual and key change factors whose interplay may significantly change its developmental image. In so doing, the authors argue that scenario planning can provide a structured approach for qualitative expert opinions on possible directions in the longer-term future.

Part III of the book focuses on the importance of territorial cooperation, in the light of the future EU enlargement process in the Western Balkan region. In Chapter 13, Siniša Trkulja and Tijana Dabović present a general overview of the most common supranational frameworks within which the countries of the Western Balkan region define and implement their spatial policies. By using a comparative approach, the authors identify specific aspects in which the reflection is high, as well as contemplate the need to create a specific supranational framework for the spatial planning and territorial governance of the Western Balkans. The authors argue that supranational frameworks, as instruments for better addressing territorial development, should be created and implemented through advanced forms of cooperation, taking into account all the levels of governance, especially the local level.

The European experience of urban adaptation has shown that all urban environments are vulnerable to climate change. Ana Vulevic, Rui Alexandre Castanho, José Manuel Naranjo Gómez, Sérgio Lousada, Luís Loures, José Cabezas and Luis Fernández-Pozo (Chapter 14) adopt an analytical approach to analyse cross-border cooperation and adaptation strategies to climate change, focusing on the Western Balkan Danube area. The authors' main objective is to update knowledge about the climate challenge for the benefit of policy-makers, regional and urban planners, nature protection authorities, regional and local development agencies in region. To do this, they cover not only the themes related to climate change, but also the bureaucratic procedures associated with border areas, which is seen as pivotal for territorial success.

Luca Pinnavaia and Erblin Berisha (Chapter 15) then stress the importance of cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans and in particular illustrate the case of Albania. The aim of the authors is to show if and how cross-border cooperation is contributing to a better spatial integration of Albania with the rest of the region and with the EU member states. In particular, the chapter discusses the importance of cross-border cooperation as a way of exploring the transnational dimension of territorial development, by shedding light on its constitutive dimensions (political, economic, sociocultural and territorial). The authors also illustrate how cross-border cooperation is becoming important in softening country borders and contributing towards a better EU spatial integration.

Alys Solly and Erblin Berisha (Chapter 16) draw attention to the importance of the EU macro-regional strategy, looking at the territorial dimension of EU Cohesion Policy. The authors' contribution sheds light on the potential influence of EU

macro-regions on territorial governance and, more in general, on the EU integration processes. Building on a careful analysis of the existing literature and empirical evidence, the study reflects on the capability of EU macro-regions, and especially of the EUSAIR, to influence the way in which countries are involved within the EU integration processes and must adapt towards new spatial governance configurations. In particular, this contribution shows both the potentialities and the limitations of this experimental initiative in addressing common territorial challenges.

Finally, as editors, we provide our reflections on the individual contributions when viewed through the interpretative lenses that set the stage for the volume in the concluding chapter (Chapter 17). Building on the considerations of the different authors, we try to shed light on the complexity that characterises the main topics explored in the book. As it has emerged from the majority of contributions, since the beginning of the 1990s, territorial development and governance in the Western Balkans have been subjected to drastic, tumultuous transformations. In this chapter, we illustrate the key open questions that still characterise the debate around territorial development and governance in the region, as well as those challenges that are to be faced in the years to come. We then round off the volume by identifying a number of avenues for future research that could enable a better understanding of the regional context under scrutiny, in particular as regards its relations with and the persisting gaps when compared with the rest of the European countries.

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Part I
Main Challenges and Patterns of Change

Chapter 2

Territorial Development and Governance in the Western Balkans



Erblin Berisha  and Giancarlo Cotella 

Abstract The last three decades have seen the Western Balkan Region facing several institutional, economic, social, and territorial transformation. Since the early 1990s, the region has undergone radical changes that have paved the way for a diversity of territorial development models. This chapter identifies and details the main territorial challenges and drivers of change that characterise the region and could affect its future development. To do so, it proposes an historical analysis of the region's spatial development trajectories, focussing on the role of territorial governance and spatial planning in addressing them and identifying the main challenges that hamper this activity. Finally, particular attention is dedicated to the role that international actors have played and are still playing in shaping territorial development and governance in the region.

Keywords Western Balkan Region · Territorial development · Governance · Spatial planning · EU integration · International actors

2.1 Introduction

The last three decades have seen the Western Balkan Region facing several institutional, economic, social, and territorial transformations, as a consequence of the transition period and the European Union (EU) integration process. For more than 45 years, the Balkans suffered from self-isolation that made the region one of the poorest areas of the European continent in terms of economic performance, territorial development, and human capacity. The downfall of the communist (Albania) and socialist (Yugoslavia) regimes has paved the way for the introduction of

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numerous reforms in the public and private domain. Reforms have been quite frequent and often supported by international actors that have been active since the first period of transition. Institutional actors have influenced how territorial development has been addressed, or at least tried to, by promoting a series of reforms in the domain of territorial governance and spatial planning. In this regard, this chapter aims at exploring the main development challenges and drivers of change by proposing a series of spatial, economic, and territorial considerations.

The chapter is composed of five main sections. After this brief introduction, the main spatial development trends that characterised the region since the beginning of the twentieth century until nowadays are presented, from the pre-war period to the transition period. It shows how the political systems and territorial development trajectories interlinked path dependently. The third section reflects on the role played by territorial governance and spatial planning in the region. By analysing its evolution from an historical and institutional perspective, the chapter shows how the question of territorial development, and territorial governance and spatial planning, has been addressed and which kind of conditions and contingencies (external and internal) there have been. Here the role of international actors is analysed, and the prominent role played by the EU is highlighted. On this basis, the fourth section presents the main challenges that the region is currently faced with. The nature of these challenges is multidimensional and ever-evolving, dealing with a number of issues like urbanisation processes, territorial disparities, preservation of natural resources as well as globalisation trends and impacts. Finally, the chapter is rounded off by a number of conclusive remarks that summarise its main messages, in so doing setting ground for the following chapters.

2.2 Socio-economic and Territorial Development in the Western Balkan Region

Territorial development in the Western Balkan Region has been characterised by its turbulent historical path and territorial disputes since the beginning of the twentieth century. This section aims at setting the context and establishing some historical trends useful for understanding the evolutionary patterns of territorial development and governance (see Table 2.1). To do that, the section is divided into three parts. The first reflects on the situation of the pre (until 1945) and communist regime (from 1945 to 1989), giving a brief overview on the particular geopolitical implications that dominated the region in that period (among others, wars, economic crises, migration fluxes, and ethnic contrapositions). Moreover, it recognises the importance of the Soviet Era and its effects on the region, focussing on how the socialist and communist ideology has been interpreted in Yugoslavia and Albania and how its different interpretation has influenced each domestic context. The second gives a preliminary understanding of the transition path that has been

Table 2.1 Main historical periods and territorial governance implications

Period	Main historical events	Territorial governance implications
Until 1945	Political instability	Embryonal and fragmented (urban) planning activities
From 1945 to 1989	Socialist (Yugoslavia) and communist (Albania) system	Centralised territorial governance and spatial planning mechanisms aimed at the implementation of economic planning
1989–2000	Transition to market economy	Territorial governance in standby; proliferation of illegal practices
2000–ongoing	EU integration	Introduction and consolidation of transnational territorial governance paradigms

Source Authors' own elaboration

highlighted through the examination of the main economic and political drivers of change and their spatial implications, while the third introduces the most recent development trends and their territorial repercussions.

2.2.1 From the Beginning of the Century Until 1989

The pre-communist period in the Western Balkan Region was characterised by uninterrupted political instability. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and the First World War (1914–1918) changed the configuration of the countries' borders, paving the way for the establishment of new regional power entities such as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Observing the demographic variation, the internal and external migration flux represented one of the main features of the new countries. Economically speaking, the consequences had been catastrophic for many countries: immense loss of labour force, low productive agriculture, and relatively small industry capacity have contributed to induce the region in a deep economic crisis (Innerhofer 2017). Despite some economic progresses, the Balkans remained among the poorest regions in Europe, with great internal disparities. To overcome those regional economic disadvantages, a series of reforms were launched, such as the agrarian reform and the monetary policy reform, but they did not produce any important effect. Despite the attempt to rehabilitate their economies, each country showed great economic and social limits that increased in the aftermath of the WWII.

After 1945, while Eastern and South-Eastern European adhered to a Soviet-style economic model based on central planning, rapid industrialisation, and collectivised agriculture, in the Western Balkan Region, the circumstances were different. On one side, Yugoslavia pursued the ambition to introduce a self-management doctrine, a combination economy based on elements derived from the planned economy and the market; on the other side, Albania introduced a communist system based on the Stalinist doctrine. In 1961, Albania abandoned the Warsaw Pact as a

consequence of the Sino-Soviet split and left the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in 1962, two steps towards a complete isolation from the other European countries. At the same time, Yugoslavia continued to relate with the Soviet bloc, while establishing trade treaties with the European Economic Community (EEC).

Despite being part of the Western Balkan Region as a geographic context, the socio-economic and political situations of Yugoslavia and Albania differed considerably. Yugoslavia was ruled by a socialist regime with specific characteristics in terms of (i) population—a wide ethnic heterogeneity featuring different languages and different religions; (ii) administrative structure—the adoption of a federal structure in the republics (Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Serbia) and autonomous areas (District of Kosovo—Metohija and Autonomous Province of Vojvodina); (iii) economy—it had retained a large private sector in its economy (agricultural area). Meanwhile, the Albanian regime followed the Stalinist approach characterised by a top-down state control over property of land, economic activities, and means of production. On the contrary, the Yugoslav system became highly devolved and polycentric, and decisions were taken by the central, the republican, and the communal branches of the government, and by individual enterprises. Indeed, Tito encouraged the private sector supported foreign economic relations with the Western markets (but also with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank). Nevertheless, marked regional disparities increased between the most-developed republics (Croatia and Slovenia) and the least developed (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo).

2.2.2 The Transition Period

In 1989, after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the socialist countries had to choose their ways towards democratisation and free market economy, a period that is generally referred to as “transition” (Cotella 2007). Aiming at having a better understanding of the transitional path followed by each country, it has been considered necessary to recognise how the phenomenon has been interpreted by the literature in the last twenty-five years and applied to the Western Balkan context. On this matter, Elster et al. (1998) identified mainly two modes of collapse that consisted in a peaceful civil pattern or a violent and military path, while Kitschelt et al. (1999) focussed their attention on the types of communist regimes, identifying two general attitudes: one centred on the cult of the personality and a more bureaucratic and authoritarian system. These studies have been focussing on the divergent patterns of change in the post-communist trajectory in Eastern Europe, including the former Yugoslavia and Albania. Based on their studies, Elster et al. (1998) affirmed that in the Western Balkans’ post-communist experience, the collapse of the regimes has been followed by the paths mentioned above, both peaceful and violent. Accordingly, the communist collapse in Yugoslavia was characterised by a violent mechanism of change that caused several tensions to follow one another for more than ten years, while Albania witnessed a relatively peaceful

transition period. These factors concurred to influence the undertaken institutional, administrative, and market reforms, as well as defining international relations during the post-communist reorganisation. In those circumstances, with important differences for each country, these factors influenced the orientation of the institutional choices promoted by the reforming elites. From an economic reform perspective, the state transformation regarding the economic transition allowed moving from a more centred-planned growth system to an open-based market. In this respect, the period from 1990 to 2000 has characterised by an increasing of macroeconomic reforms that have introduced changes in terms of property by supporting of the privatisation state own activities and the establishing of economic models by promoting the liberalisation of production assets and the breaking up of state economic assets. Moreover, the new reform circumstance asked for an institutional reforming process, which tried to introduce a series of decentralisation mechanisms that allocated a series of responsibilities to the locale level. Even not enough investigated, the process of decentralisation has drastically influenced administrative system influencing so territorial governance and spatial planning, as will see.

However, until now, the majority of studies about the Western Balkan Regions have generally referred to the economic aspect of the transformation although it represents only a partial aspect of the transition process. Indeed, Balkans countries were interested by a profound internal and external migration fluxes which have increased the development towards certain parts of its territory (i.e. capital cities, for instance) pressure while society's expectations changed according to the new opportunities offered by the free market economy model. While the modernisation of the entire state system was certainly necessary, this did not prevent from the coming up of negative externalities. Indeed, the "shock therapy" has drastically decreased the GDP performance of almost all countries (see Fig. 2.1). Even more important, the welfare system was dismantled as well as any social-oriented policy. Apart from that, there were growing socio-economic dichotomies like underdevelopment, peripherality-rurality, and economic dependence, increasing of corruption and the emerging of various forms of illegal activities (e.g. informal building, for instance).

Even not with the same magnitude in each country, all those socio-economic changes have influenced the way of territorial governance and spatial planning were conducted. From a territorial and institutional development and perspective, indeed, the most important change concerns the shift from government to governance, reflected in the new structure based on the interaction among a multitude of local and regional actors (Tsenkova and Nedovic-Budic 2006), which were mainly the result of the decentralisation process (Berisha 2018a). The new circumstances led not only to new institutions, but also to a new notion of territorial governance and planning that focusses on regaining its legitimacy and adapts to the new socio-economic and political mechanisms. The shift from government to governance was compatible with new demands on spatial planning and policy. This process of transformation was granted to introduce new principles associated with good governance: participation and consensus building; strategic direction and

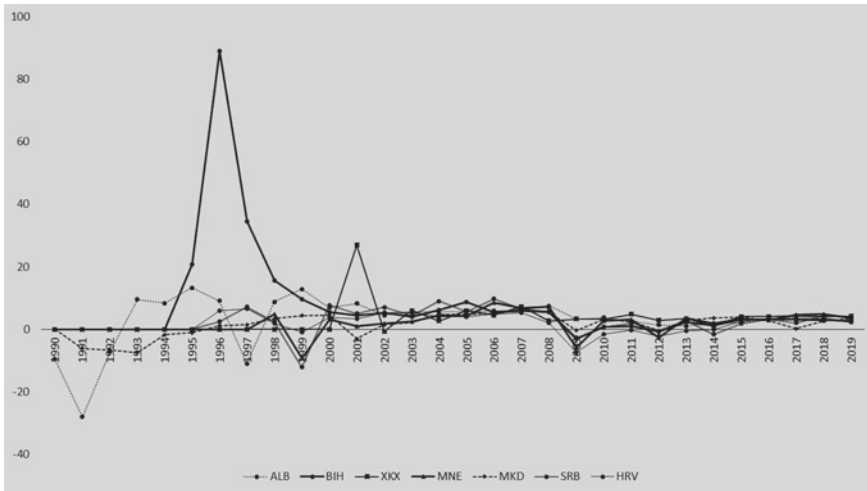


Fig. 2.1 Countries' GDP growth performance 1990–2018 (*Source* Authors' own elaboration based on DataBank—<https://databank.worldbank.org/home.aspx>)

vision; performance, accountability and transparency (Graham et al. 2003). In the context of the states' transformation, from one system to another, the role of spatial planning in the free market system drastically changed compared to the communist ideology approach. In fact, in state communism, action was based on planning and the party's monopoly on power and decision-making. In capitalist societies, instead, markets prevail, exercising innovativeness, attention to the social consensus, and economic activity independently from collectively reached decisions and approvals (Tsenkova and Nedovic-Budic 2006).

2.2.3 *The Turbulent Path Towards the EU*

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the Western Balkan countries started to be involved, at different pace, in the EU Integration process. The Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP¹) has been launched in 1999, as a first step along the way of the integration path. Since then, the countries' EU Integration performance varied. While Croatia joined the EU in 2013, the rest of the countries are still

¹The SAP framework is based on six key areas: (i) the development of existing economic and trade relations with and within the region; (ii) the development and partial redirection of existing economic and financial assistance; (iii) the increasing of role of civil society, education, and institution building; (iv) the cooperation in areas of justice and home affair; (v) the development of political dialogue; (vi) the launching of the Stabilisation Association Agreement (European Commission 1999).

dealing with structural reforms in order to align their systems to the EU requirements. However, since the beginning of the economic crisis of 2008 and the emerging of different orientations about the necessity to reconsider the EU enlargement process, the integration path seems to be more difficult than in the past. Countries are now trying to make structural reforms in order to better perform to convince on the one side the EU counterparts, but in the meantime are looking for potential economic and geopolitical alternatives. In this way, in the last decades, the role of non-European countries has been growing. In particular, Russia, Turkey, and China are investing a significant amount of resources in the region by obtaining important political endorsement. Despite that, the EU and European countries are still playing a central role in the region. For example, since the introduction of the first (2017–2013) and second (2014–2020) generation of IPA, the EU has invested more than 23 billion of euro in the region (Berisha and Cotella 2019; Pinnavaia and Berisha, in this volume) making it the most generous actor in the region. Spatial integration, connectivity, cross-border, and transnational cooperation are the key themes around which each domestic political agenda is built. Despite that, however, there are a number of challenges that require more interconnections in terms of political will that interest both countries as well as the EU.

From a territorial perspective, the recent development trends and trajectories are slowly changing also how territorial governance and spatial planning have been perceived until now. More than a purely technical instruments, territorial governance and spatial planning are becoming the way to sustainably address the territorial development by dealing with multidimensional issues like flexible processes, inclusive procedures, multi-level coordination, and strategic and future-oriented approaches (Toto and Shutina, in this volume). To deal with such complexity, Croatia, for instance, has developed a parallel system where spatial planning and regional development can easily be interconnected in each administrative level. This of course requires the introduction of new territorial governance models not anymore guided by normative and regulative logics, but instead identifying all-inclusive and integrated approaches that may facilitate the overall implementation of plans and strategies.

2.3 Territorial Governance Between Path Dependency and International Influences

Territorial governance and spatial planning models reflect the institutional, social, economic, and territorial contexts where they operate. It means that contextual conditions influence how territorial governance and spatial planning are conceptualised and implemented. In the context like the Western Balkan Region, territorial governance and spatial planning have undergone several, often drastic, transformations. These transformations concern (Janin Rivolin 2012): (i) how the discourses around those notions are framed, hence culturally linked to the context;

(ii) the system as a set of norms, rules, laws, and administrative arrangement; (iii) the instruments adopted, and (iv) the practices, hence the ways of territorial planning and spatial planning are addressed. In each country, territorial governance and spatial planning have changed from a more regulative and legally oriented to a more strategic and integrated approach. This paradigmatic shift has been driven by both contextual needs but also as a consequence of external stimuli (Fig. 2.2). In order to understand current tendencies and possible future trends, the following parts explore the main path-dependant logics and attitudes as well as the most relevant international influences.

2.3.1 *The Role of Local Path Dependency*

Territorial governance and spatial planning are the result of the unstable interaction of external and internal forces (Berisha 2018a). This interaction combines external influences with the emergence or persistence of internal priorities, logics, culture, and hegemonic power mechanisms. Together they constitute the main contextual conditions where territorial governance and spatial planning are framed and operate.

In the Balkans, during the first decade of the transition process, spatial planning was seen as a purely technical tool inherited from the previous regime (Cotella and Berisha, 2016a, b). Since the 2000s, however, it has changed into a more integrated and decentralised activity, characterised by a set of mechanisms aiming at properly addressing territorial development (Berisha and Pinnavaia 2018a, b; Berisha et al., in this volume).² Historically, the initial period of the post-socialist transition of the 1990s in most countries of the region was characterised by an unstable, unregulated, and often unequal institutional framework. According to Hirt and Stanilov (2009, p. 4), this *institutional vacuum* was dominated by private economic interests and market mechanisms strongly linked to the political establishment.³ In this respect, many regulations lacked sufficient legal power or clarity about the mechanisms of policy implementation. Overall, the transition was predominantly characterised by capital struggles that manifested through the accumulation of, and grab for, resources, with urban land being a major target in this process (Vujošević 2003). Within this complex framework, the privatisation of land, housing, and means of production in Albania and almost all public housing stock in the former Yugoslavia took place (Hirt and Stanilov 2009). At the same time, encroachment on public space and illegal construction rose substantially (Berisha et al. 2018, 2020).⁴ In the ex-Yugoslavian countries, this phenomenon worsened due to the social

²However, not all countries have followed the same path, and some exceptions persist: Montenegro, for instance, with its new law of 2019 has recentralized its system to a full extent.

³As studied by the authors elsewhere, this stands true for the majority of transition countries (Adams et al. 2011; Cotella 2014).

⁴For example, by the mid-2000s, there were 127 officially recognised informal settlements throughout Albania, which covered 3,200 km² (1,143 km² in urban areas) (Požani 2013).

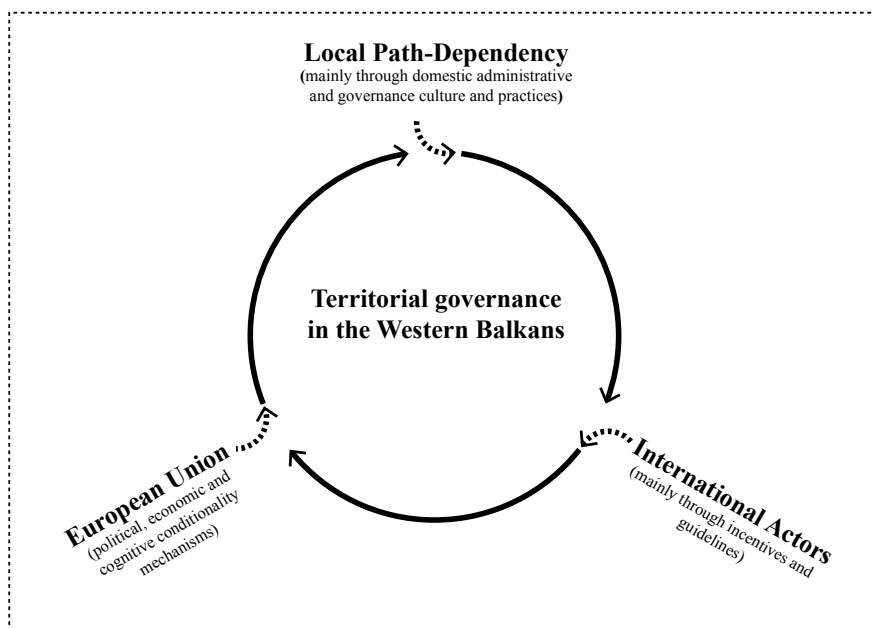


Fig. 2.2 Concurring influences on Western Balkans' territorial governance (*Source* Authors' own elaboration)

consequences of the war and, in particular, the increasing demand for housing by refugees and internally displaced persons (Žegarac 1999). At the same time, Albania remained stuck with socialist procedures in obtaining building permits and intensified rural–urban migration that overwhelmed the capital city of Tirana, with 25 per cent of informal housing being developed during the 1990s (Deda and Tsenkova 2006). In Serbia, over 1.5 million illegally built properties (including extensions) have been reported, while in Croatia the number of registered informal housing units stands at over 800,000 (UNECE 2012).

The turn of the millennium brought a renewed enthusiasm for the transition to democracy, economic liberalisation, marketisation, and political decentralisation. This was also a consequence of the normalisation of the geopolitical tensions that had characterised the previous decade. In this circumstances, most of the countries reformed and/or amended their legislative frameworks for territorial governance and spatial planning multiple times because of the growing influence of globalisation factors and the EU integration mechanisms. In addition, significant efforts were made in the attempt to accelerate the procedures of delivering construction permits, introducing some elements of flexibility to adapt to administrative and institutional reorganisation of the new contingencies. Moreover, various countries have introduced legislative procedures for the recognition of informal development practices.

2.3.2 *The Influence of the EU Integration Process*

While evolving path dependently, institutions are also subject to the influence of international actors and processes, among which the integration into the EU plays a particularly relevant role (Cotella and Stead 2011; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015). Since the end of the Cold War and the increasing importance of the EU in the region, a set of regulations, strategies, and visions have influenced the evolution of territorial governance and spatial planning in the various Western Balkan countries.

In Albania, for example, the Europeanisation of territorial governance and spatial planning interests several dimensions. While the transposition of EU legislation initially interested the upgrading of the existing rules and norms in several sectors, and in particular in the fields of energy, environment and transport. In turn, this led to the introduction of new instruments and procedures, like the environmental impact assessment and strategic environment assessment. When it comes to national strategies and guidelines, document produced at the EU level, such as the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), exerted an important impact on domestic spatial planning discourses. Concepts such as polycentric development, subsidiarity, rural development, integrated transport, and conservation of natural and cultural heritage progressively entered the Albanian policy-making arenas (Berisha 2018a, b; Allkja and Tavanxhiu 2016). However, as it has happened in other contexts (Cotella 2014; Cotella et al. 2012; Adams et al. 2014), these notions were often misinterpreted, poorly contextualised or just mentioned rhetorically (Berisha 2018a).

In Croatia, since the early 2000s, there has been a discussion on the impact of the EU logics in addressing territorial development policies. For instance, the Physical Planning Act approved in 2013 introduced a new generation of documents that aimed at a stronger sustainability approach inspired by EU mainstream development strategies. One should stress that in Croatia, due to its membership status, the EU impact is deeper than in candidate and potential candidate countries, with the country that has been exposed to the full influence of the EU legislation package. In particular, the environment legislation has been very influential for territorial governance and spatial planning since it has drastically altered processes and priorities. Similarly, the EU energy package and the Trans European Network framework have affected both spatial plans and the Croatian regional development policy. An important role in shaping the Croatian spatial planning landscape has also been played by the EU cohesion policy and the pre-accession and neighbourhood policy, with programmes like PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD, CARDS, IPA⁵ etc.

⁵In 2007, the EU launched the financial programme IPA—Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance—that replaced previous programmes like the Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy, Cross-Border Cooperation (PHARE), PHARE CBC, Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA), Special Accession Programme for Rural and Development Programme (SAPARD), and the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS).

Even though not with the same intensity, also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU contributed to influence the evolution of territorial governance and spatial planning. As recognised by the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and Environment of the Republika Srpska, the transposition of the so-called *acquis communautaire*, especially in the field of planning and construction, led to an improvement of domestic regulations, strengthened the institutional framework devoted to land use and promoted a more sustainable use of resources (MPPCE 2013). Moreover, the EU contributed to the establishment of cooperation initiatives between the Republic Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the field of spatial planning. Similar to the case of Croatia, also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the environmental legislation has been crucial, as well as the laws on natural protection that instituted for the first time the Natura 2000 network under which three national parks have been created. Moreover, the so-called European programming period approach influenced the temporal framing of domestic strategies and programmes and their increasingly strategic nature. Finally, there is a tendency to promote the integrated approach that has contributed to transform the sectoral perspective to a more adequate cross-sectoral one. However, as stated by Marjanovic (2017), despite partial efforts to understand and systematise the EU influences can be identified, the European spatial discourse has been introduced to domestic planning cultures only superficially and mostly to ensure formal compliance: most of the adopted concepts, in the practice, are often negatively stigmatised as “external imported” (Djurasic and Knieling 2015).

Other countries have been experiencing differential Europeanisation influences. In Serbia, the influence of the EU is particularly evident in the country’s attitude to cooperation with neighbourhoods in both cross-border and transnational programmes. Differently from the past, when cooperation was mainly focussed on the former Yugoslavia sphere, currently Serbia is trying to widen its cooperation action towards other countries and territories (Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, 2018). However, also here the impact of the EU is partly limited by contextual and path-dependent elements, among which the attitude of practitioners seems to be reluctant to external stimuli (Berisha et al. 2020). This is slowly changing thanks to the introduction of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, which takes inspiration from and defines its spatial priorities according to the goals developed in the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy, the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, and the Territorial Agenda of the European Union. Similar experiences have taken place also in North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo*,⁶ with the three countries that are slowly developing cross-border initiatives under the EU umbrella, in the field of environment, transport, and energy. Overall, one could argue that domestic contexts are slowly aligning their territorial governance models as a consequence of a number of concepts and way of doing things that are defined at the EU level, in so doing contributing to bridging at least partly the historical gap that has characterised the region.

⁶(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

2.3.3 *The Influence of Other International Actors*

Beside the role played by the EU, a number of other international players contributed to influence the evolution of territorial governance in the countries of the Western Balkan Region. Among them, it is possible to distinguish between (i) international organisations (United Nation Development Programme UNDP, UN-Habitat, World Bank, etc.) and (ii) development cooperation agencies like United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Swiss Development Agency (SDC), and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Western Balkan Region has become one of the hottest spots where the role of the international community has been crucial in terms of humanitarian aid, democratisation, and economic and institutional restructuring. While at the beginning, the main international efforts were devoted to the implementation of emergency initiatives, with the progressive normalisation, later their priority moved towards institutional and socio-economic restructuring.

Each country with its own pace has been interested by a number of initiatives, programmes, and projects concerning in one way or another the other territorial governance. For instance, the UNDP active in the region since the early 1990s supported the Albanian government through technical support aimed at the transposition and implementation of the EU environmental requirements, as well as at the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals launched by the United Nation (2000). At the same time, the programme has also supported Croatian local communities in the reform of several sectors such as local agriculture, environment, and energy.⁷ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNDP engaged with both the central and the local level (UNDP 2009). At the central level, it favoured public administration training and human resource management, ICT development and e-Governance, and war-related justice and advocacy towards reconciliation. At the municipal level, activities included the support for returnees and displaced people, local governance, and economic development. UN-Habitat has been particularly active in Kosovo, assisting the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning in drafting the Law on Spatial Planning (2003) (Westermann 2018). Among other initiatives, in 2002, it also initiated the Urban Planning and Management Programme co-financed by the Dutch international cooperation budget, which focussed on institutional capacity building and favoured the establishment of a Central Institute for Spatial Planning.

Together with UN agencies, also the World Bank contributed to the territorial development in the majority of countries. In particular, in Montenegro, it played a prominent role in the liberalisation and transformation of the system towards a

⁷A number of projects were launched, facilitating the compliance to EU requirements. For instance, the ARCH-Vukovar project (2011–2013) aimed at promoting the economic and human development and fostering interethnic reconciliation by restoring the most symbolic monument of the urban historical centres.

market economy through a number of financial initiatives. One of the last active programmes is the Institutional Development and Agriculture Strengthening, aiming at enhancing institutional capacity to manage public funds dedicated to agricultural support in the implementation of the Instrument for Pre-Accession and Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD). Similarly, in Macedonia, the World Bank has been historically engaged in the promotion of infrastructure initiatives thanks to the implementation of instruments like the Regional and Local Programme Support Projects (2008), the Energy Infrastructure Improvement Project (2011), the Road Upgrading and Development Project (2015), and the National and Regional Roads Rehabilitation project (2017). Finally, in Albania, it financed the Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP 2008–2011), assisting local administration in the development new spatial planning documents.⁸

A series of national development agencies have been operating in the region since 1990. The USAID in particular has been active since 1990 by assisting local authorities in several fields from humanitarian emergencies to economic restructuring, from state reforms to macroeconomic stabilisation. In Albania, the USAID has launched and partially implemented the Planning and Local Government Project (2012–2019), aiming at strengthening the capabilities of local governments to plan and manage urban and regional growth (USAID 2016). In Croatia, it supported the local community in several fields like agricultural production and the development of farmer organisations and NGOs networks and activities. At the same time, it helped the country with strategic planning in support of local economic development, citizen participation, management of information systems, transparency in budgeting and local governmental reform. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the USAID played an important role in the field of spatial planning, by financing two rounds of the so-called Governance Accountability Project (2004–2007 and 2007–2012), aimed at a more participatory, inclusive, and democratic society as well as at municipal action planning, financial management, and urban planning. Following these programmes, the methodological approach to land use zoning was reformed, including important changes in the release of building permits (GAP 2012).

Similar approaches have been adopted by other agencies. As mentioned in the Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development Strategy produced by Serbia in 2018, for instance, the GIZ has been responsible for strengthening of local management in the country, as well as for the introduction of a more integrated approach to local urban development. In addition, the GIZ has been responsible for launching the project integrated sustainable development of the southern coastal region of Albania (2015–2019), with special attention to rural tourism, the Climate Change Adaptation in Western Balkans (2012–2021) and the development of an analytical and methodological framework to fight illegal developments in Montenegro. Other

⁸The project allowed eight municipalities to draft local plans by dealing with: (i) security of tenure and registration of immovable property rights; (ii) urban land management; (iii) municipal infrastructure, and (iv) emergency response.

important agencies are the SDC, which launched in Albania a series of Decentralisation and Local Development Programmes, the ADA, that supported the development of stronger regions to advance their potentials, and the SIDA, that in Croatia has been engaged in supporting and encouraging local communities towards the EU membership route. The latter, in particular, focussed its efforts on (i) democracy, good governance and gender; (ii) natural resource and environmental protection; (iii) economic growth, and (iv) social development. In Kosovo its activities supported, among others, the preparation the Kosovo Environmental Strategy 2005–2010 and of the Kosovo Environmental Action Plan 2006–2010, that aligned the country to the EU's environmental requirements (SIDA 2007).

One should conclude mentioning that, overall, the involvement of international actors and, in turn, their influence on domestic contexts, varied in relation to their strategic agenda (some agencies are more economic development oriented, others more focussed on helping the countries to join the EU and others again in developing urban and regional plans and strategies) as well as to the period of action—at the beginning of transition, the majority of efforts were dedicated to humanitarian activities, to then shift towards social and environmental issues (Berisha 2018a).

2.4 Present and Future Territorial Development Challenges

Despite the mentioned reforms in the field of territorial development and governance, the present and future of the Western Balkans countries continue to be faced with a number of internal and external territorial challenges. Internally, demographic trends certainly will have impacts on spatial development, calling in the meantime for strategies and measures aimed at the preservation of biodiversity and natural resources. Externally, the main territorial challenges will relate to the impact of globalisation issues and trends as well as the schedule of the EU integration process.

More in detail, an urgent issue to deal with relates to the demographic changes and, in particular, to the increasing outmigration and its consequences: brain drain, a progressively ageing population and the further depopulation of inner areas. Though not immediately perceived as challenging issues, all the countries are suffering from internal and external migration fluxes, which are emptying some already depressed areas in favour of more developed regions. The population of the Western Balkan countries is expected to decrease by about 14% between 2018 and 2050 (Bankwatch Network 2016). This new demographic reconfiguration will bring with it increasing development pressure on cities and metropolitan areas, whereas nowadays the region features only two metropolitan areas with more than 1 million of inhabitant (Belgrade and Zagreb), a series of cities are nowadays suffering development stress (e.g. the Tirana-Durrës metropolitan area and the cities of Sarajevo, Skopje and Pristina). Due to the gateway role they play, the attractiveness of these urban areas is increasing exponentially, depriving the surrounding territories of human and economic resources. The challenge here concerns how to

address territorial development in a more polycentric direction without, however, having additional impacts on land use and the overexploitation of natural resources (Solly et al. 2020, 2021). Internal and external migration movements are reinforcing these trends, altering the traditional urbanisation model, which is per se rather balanced, polymorphic, and heterogeneous (Rácz 2014). More in particular, the Western Balkans population is becoming increasingly urban (World Bank 2019).⁹ The main negative sides of the growing urbanisation trends are the increasing development pressure that characterise the coastal areas of the Adriatic Sea, growing urban sprawl and multiplication of illegal development activities.

Additional challenges concern the increasing territorial disparities that characterise the region. This phenomenon is partly path-dependent, and due to regional contingencies like political isolation and ethnic conflicts, which have made cross-border cooperation difficult. The growth of capital cities or functional areas is limiting the potential development of peripheral inner areas, which are slowly emptying. As the World Bank (2019) argues, all the countries in the region feature entrenched lagging areas. These territorial disparities are reflected also in terms of job opportunities, GDP per capita, consumption capacity, and income per capita.¹⁰ The rural-to-urban ratio in mean income or consumption per capita is around 70–80% in most countries in the region, with North Macedonia and Serbia that presents the highest values among Europe and Central Asia countries (World Bank 2019). It is not surprising that the most lagging and deprived areas in the region are clustered around the Croatian–Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia–Kosovo, and Kosovo–Montenegro–Albania borders. To limit as much as possible the growing trend of such territorial disparities, countries are invited to invest more in accessibility and connectivity, through multi-modal transport system and networking, as well as in promoting soft and hard industries and high-specialised productive districts. For the former, it is important to develop a more inter- and trans-connected region which means improving internal and external connectivity, since the Western Balkans area is one of the most isolated regions in Europe, featuring very few international airports and underdeveloped highway and railway infrastructures.

Particular concerns are also related to the endangering of natural resources and biodiversity. The Western Balkan Region area is characterised by a variety of natural and ecological assets. It features high levels of biodiversity that is further amplified by the coexistence of three biogeographic regions—Continental, Alpine and Mediterranean—all presenting distinctive characteristics. This richness, however, is endangered by the progressive alteration of natural habitats by human activity, the impacts of climate change, and the scarce coordination of conservation and preservation initiatives taken until now. Similarly, the growing tourism industry

⁹Albania moved from the 36% of urban population in 1990 to more than 60% in 2018. In the same period, Montenegro went from the 48% to the 66.7%. Also Bosnia and Herzegovina, that remains one of the most rural countries of the European continent, saw its share of urban population raising from 39% in 1990 to 48% in 2018.

¹⁰The gap in mean income or consumption per capita between the poorest and richest regions in a country reaches 50% in Albania, 38% in North Macedonia, and 33% in Serbia.

is generating a number of negative externalities, mostly in relation to the overexploitation of natural resources and the endangerment of important ecological areas, and the overuse of services during the summer season. The risk of overexploitation of natural resources and the loss of biodiversity are real and require drastic and coordinated policy interventions: more sustainable territorial organisation and development models that would make cities and regions more efficient in the use of natural resources and increasing social responsibility in dealing with common goods, in turn making the region more resilient against climate change impacts.

Even if the process of EU Integration has been slowing down during the last years, to join the EU is a crucial step for the Western Balkan countries. In particular, despite the obvious economic and political advantages that the EU accession could bring, the latter should also provide an important impulse in terms of social identity and cooperation (Solly et al. 2018). Full EU membership would facilitate the addressing of the above-mentioned territorial challenges that could be faced more effectively through coordinated policies and cooperation initiatives. Cooperation is certainly one of the main messages of the EU. In particular, countries are required to progressively overcome the historical reticence by promoting common initiatives in various fields (Trkulja and Dabović, in this volume). To promote this, the EU has launched a series of multi-later cooperation programmes, under the flag of the European Territorial Cooperation objective¹¹ (Solly and Berisha, in this volume). For the Western Balkan countries, this represents an unprecedented opportunity for improving economic development, increasing administrative capacity and better interconnections of civil society, and fostering inter-institutional networking (Berisha 2018b).

Finally, particular attentions should be dedicated to the potential territorial impacts related to ever-increasing globalisation trends. Despite the economic transition and liberalisation processes that had characterised the Western Balkan Region since 1989, after almost three decades, the latter is not yet fully integrated economically with the rest of the continent. At the same time, the region is subjected to significant external pressures, and due to the crucial geopolitical position, it occupies between Asia and Western Europe and between the Mediterranean and the more economically developed Western and Central Europe. The recent Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has concentrated its economic efforts in developing important infrastructure projects in the region, like the acquisition and extension of a number of important harbours (e.g. the Piraeus and the Trieste ports), the acquisition of industries, and the realisation of transport roads (as the Belgrade-Budapest railway) (Mondozzi et al. 2019). The over-exposition to Chinese investments may become, for some countries, a distraction along the European pathway, in turn hampering the EU Integration process. This could be, on the one hand, a great opportunity to attract external (additional) investments but, on the other hand, the risk is that those investments and external interests might create

¹¹At present, the Balkans Countries are included in numerous Interreg, Interreg-IPA, and IPA CBC initiatives. They are also participating in a series transnational cooperation programmes and strategies like European macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

further political disputes and geographical divisions with still unknown territorial impacts (Cotella and Berisha 2019; Berisha and Cotella 2019).

2.5 Conclusions

The Western Balkan Region has recurrently undergone territorial, economic, and political changes. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the region has suffered from social, political, and economic instabilities, which worsened during the transition period, produced unavoidable impacts on territorial development dynamics. The shift from centralised regimes to democratic and free market systems has paved the way for the introduction of new territorial governance and spatial planning mechanisms that have reflected the main historical contingencies (Nadin et al. 2018). The chapter has shown which kind of drivers and mechanisms have been at the basis of the territorial governance and spatial planning shift from a more normative to a more strategic and integrated approach.

In particular, the changes were driven by both internal and external influences. The transition brought a series of institutional adaptations in order to address issues like privatisation, liberalisation, and decentralisation. This process of adaptation has not been linear at all, but it required a series of reforms in the field of spatial planning, administration, and self-government. At the same time, the process of EU integration paved the way for a further internationalisation of territorial governance and spatial planning (Berisha 2018a), occurred through the circulation of knowledge and ways of doing things from other part of Europe (Cotella et al. 2015), a process that has been also supported by the activity of numerous international actors implementing their programmes, strategies, and projects.

However, the newly introduced territorial governance practices did not seem able to steer territorial development towards a more sustainable direction; a number of territorial challenges worsened and persisted until the present days, as a consequence of increasing urban development pressure, regional disparities, and overexploitation of natural resources. To address these issues, decision and policy-makers should necessarily support joint initiatives and common strategies in order to reduce the impact or at least address the main global challenges that region is facing (above all: the impact of the investment of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative). This will require political convergence among the various countries, something that could be achieved with the support of the EU institutions and the multilateral cooperation initiatives put in place as a consequence of the integration process. In this respect, the countries of the Western Balkan Region should focus on improving: (i) spatial cooperation by facilitating the movement of people and goods and adopting common territorial development strategies; (ii) institutional cooperation in the sense that countries should facilitate the exchange of data and increasing policy coordination with regard to common regional challenges, and finally (iii) social coordination enabling the civil society activism to work together for a better regional development trajectory.

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Chapter 3

New European Regionalism: Regional Planning in the Ex-Yugoslavian Countries



Marjan Marjanović, Dušan Ristić, and Mario Miličević

Abstract The regional level of territorial governance and planning has a considerable importance for EU Member States. In some of them, it represents the main level of planning, while leading European territorial development policies are predominantly implemented by the regional governance. This governance level did not exist in former Yugoslavia, although regional plans of different character were developed. In the countries formed by its dissolution, the regionalisation and development of regional governance and planning have also been affected by the European integration processes. Based on the notion of new European regionalism, this chapter aims at discussing the development of regional governance and planning in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period of post-socialist transition and under the EU integration process.

Keywords Regional planning · Serbia · Croatia · Bosnia and Herzegovina · New European regionalism · Territorial governance · Former Yugoslavia

3.1 Introduction

The growing importance of local and regional communities and their role in territorial development is one of the main factors influencing policy development trends in the European Union (EU). Leading European territorial development

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policies are predominantly implemented at the regional level, while cross-border cooperation is also performed between regions (Trkulja and Dabović, in this volume; Pinnavaia and Berisha, in this volume; Solly and Berisha, in this volume; Vulevic et al., in this volume). In such situation, closer relations are developing between regions themselves, but also between regions and European authorities (CEC 1999). Although there is no unique and joint legislation for spatial planning and territorial development in the EU, there are a number of territorial development policies or policies with a spatial impact that are shaping the space of EU Member States and their neighbouring countries (Demetropoulou 2002; Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier 2005; Adams et al. 2011).

Yugoslavia did not establish a formal regional administrative level, but only counties and inter-municipal communities as statistical units. Although regional spatial plans were the first planning documents adopted in Yugoslavia, they were developed mostly for the areas with special functions. In the period after the dissolution, ex-Yugoslavian countries have carried out the regionalisation of their territories in different ways, while spatial planning and governance systems have been set up with certain similarities and differences. These countries have also been affected by the process of 'Europeanisation', which has, together with the lingering remnants of their common socialist past, conditioned the evolution of their governance and planning systems. This chapter aims to examine and compare the development of the regional planning and governance systems in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the period of post-socialist transition with an eye on the contemporary European influences and the legacy of the Yugoslavian planning system. It examines the development of regional planning and governance in terms of legislation changes, institutional development, territorial organisation, and adoption of regional spatial plans.

The chapter is organised into six main sections. Following the introduction, the second section discusses the new European regionalism and the Europeanisation of spatial planning and territorial governance. The spatial planning and territorial governance systems of former Yugoslavia are analysed in the third section, with the emphasis on the development of regional planning. The fourth section addresses the regional planning and territorial governance in the countries of analysis after the break-up of Yugoslavia. Discussion about the position and role of regional planning systems of ex-Yugoslavian countries between the EU aspirations and their socialist past is looked at in the fifth section. The last section provides conclusive remarks to this chapter.

3.2 New European Regionalism and the Europeanisation of Spatial Planning and Territorial Governance

The development of regional planning in ex-Yugoslavian countries is observed through the interrelation of two important factors. The first one considers the rise of 'new European regionalism', while the second one is known as the Europeanisation

of spatial planning. There is a widely accepted understanding that spatial planning and territorial governance in European countries are influenced by the policies and initiatives of the EU—a phenomena labelled as ‘Europeanisation’, which considers, according to Radaelli (2006), a multifaceted process of institutionalisation of both formal (rules, standards) and informal (norms, concepts) EU provisions into national planning cultures.

The same author defines the ‘downloading’ or ‘top-down’ Europeanisation, which is of most interest to this chapter. Namely ‘top-down’ Europeanisation understands the impact of various EU policies, initiatives, and discourses on domestic planning and governance systems.¹ Resulting adaptations can include modification of the legislative framework related to spatial planning (i.e. instruments, discourse, and practice) and changes in the modes of territorial governance (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020). Furthermore, under the umbrella of the European integration process and facilitated by the ongoing transformation of the nation state, regions have become an important actor, not only within the nation state, but also in the transnational relations at the European level.

The increased importance of the regions on the European scale has been labelled as the ‘rise of regional Europe’ (Harvey 1994). Keating (1998) describes this ‘new regionalism’ as the complexity and diversity of regional extension beyond the boundaries of the nation state. The author determines three main factors of the regional rise in Europe—functional restructuring in economy, institutions, and culture. The main characteristic of the new European regionalism is not only the presence of regions on the EU playing field, but the creation of new regional territories in Europe by the means of European integration, as EU policy instruments are used for the creation of new political spaces. Bialasiewicz et al. (2013, p. 60) explain that ‘European space making is explicitly about the political production of European spaces, rather than simply the deployment of European policies in already existing political space’. In that sense, European territorial policies actually formalise regions of different scale as genuine European political areas.

Deas and Lord (2006) identify three principal and interrelated drivers for the creation of new regional territories in Europe (pp. 1848–1849):

- Reconceptualisation of European economic and political space by diminishing the effect of national borders (Nadin and Shaw 1998).
- Promotion of competitiveness across the EU by creating new internationally significant territories of economic dynamism (CEC 1999).
- Promotion of territorial cohesion, reduction of interregional disparities, and improving competitiveness of peripheral areas (Faludi and Waterhout 2005).

New European regionalism encompasses a complex set of interrelationships in which politics at the scale of the EU have become more regionalised, while

¹Additionally, national territorial governance and spatial planning systems are subject to ‘horizontal’ Europeanization influences, through which one country influences another/others with the EU that provide the platform for interaction (see Cotella et al. 2015).

subnational territorial politics have become progressively more Europeanised (Keating 1996; Deas and Lord 2006; Cotella 2019). In terms of this study, it means that regions and regional governance can play a significant role in the territorial transformation of former Yugoslavian countries during the transition period.

3.3 Development of Regional Planning in Former Yugoslavia

In former Yugoslavia, urban planning had a longer tradition than regional planning which only started to develop after World War II. According to Perišić (1985), the development of spatial planning practice in former Yugoslavia is strongly related to the concept of regional planning. In this period, the spatial plan became the object of public interest, while spatial planning expanded beyond professional frameworks and started to be acknowledged as a social activity (Piha 1973).

The significance of regional level of planning was discussed for the first time in 1957 at the Sixth Council of the Association of Urbanists of Yugoslavia, where the necessity for developing regional spatial plans was emphasised (Novaković 1987). The council advocated the affirmation of regional planning in the formal planning system of the country in order to facilitate the realisation of socialist construction projects (Perišić 1985). The Congress adopted a resolution stating that regional spatial planning should be carried out by specialised professional bodies and that competent republic authorities should establish institutes for urbanism and regional planning.

When it comes to the territorial organisation of the country, the 1952 Act was first to define two major levels of sub-republic territorial units (not including two autonomous provinces in Serbia, which were governed by specific regulations)—municipalities and counties.² The municipalities were grouped in 42 counties in Serbia, 20 counties in Croatia, and eight counties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the 1970s, a new administrative division of Yugoslavia was carried out, with the establishment of inter-municipal regional communities, which were primarily administrative statistical units and held no formal competence in the matters of territorial development and planning (Mitrović 2006). There were nine inter-municipal regional communities in Serbia, ten (11 from 1985) in Croatia (Trkulja and Živanović 2009), and four in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Pejanović 2014).

The regional spatial plan was introduced as a planning document by the Urban and Regional Planning Act of 1961. Regional planning commenced as a need to solve complex and difficult issues that were relevant at a regional scale and to overcome the gap between the national and local level planning. However, although

²Apart from having different names—*srez* in Serbia, *kotar* in Croatia, *okrug*—in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they also had considerable differences in size in different republics.

defined as a formal obligation, these documents were not developed for any formal territorial unit but were adopted by relevant republic institutions for the areas of interest—usually for natural parks, tourist areas, and large-scale infrastructure projects.

The dynamics of development of regional plans and planning regulations in former Yugoslavia are given in Fig. 3.1. The first regional spatial plan in former Yugoslavia was the plan of the county of Krapina in Croatia adopted in 1958 (Đorđević and Tošić 2013). In the period from 1961 to 1963, a regional plan for the section of the Danube from Belgrade to the Bulgarian border was prepared as the construction of the hydroelectric system *Đerdap* was planned (Tošić 2012). During the 1964–1972 period, the development of plans for the spatial regulation of the Adriatic area³ was conducted in Croatia, Slovenia, and Montenegro in cooperation with United Nations (Radeljak 2012). In the same period, in Montenegro, two regional plans were prepared covering the entire area of the country as a replacement of the national spatial plan (Piha 1973).

A proliferation in the development of regional spatial plans happened after the adoption of the Law on Planning and Spatial Management in 1974. Spatial plans of municipalities and special purpose areas were defined in this legislative act as a narrower category of regional spatial plans (Trkulja and Živanović 2009). The regional planning in Croatia and Serbia was especially fruitful in this period, resulting in a number of adopted regional plans and including those of the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Metohia (1975) and Vojvodina (1978) (Vujošević and Spasić 2007). Instead, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first attempt to draft a regional plan was made by the regional spatial plan Upper Drina in the 1980. The plan was developed for the planned installation of a hydro-energy plants system but was never adopted.

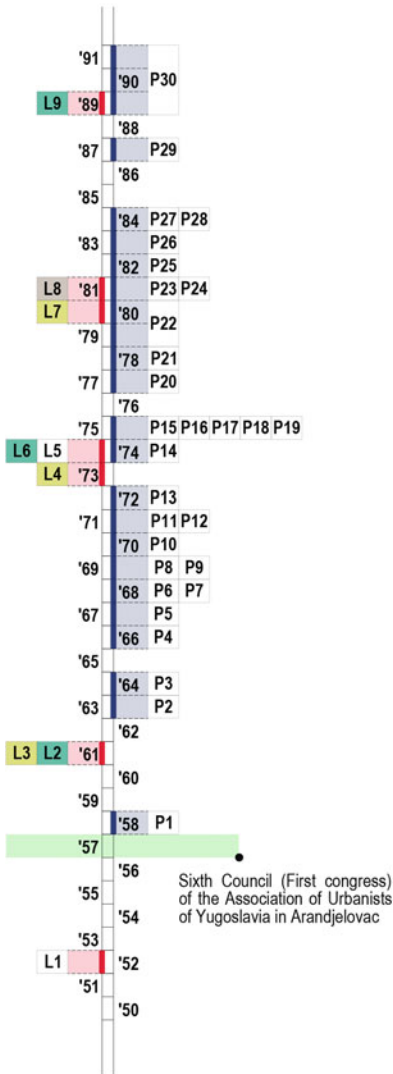
Overall, the regional spatial planning developed in former Yugoslavia represents a specific approach to address regional development in a top-down manner, where the central planning institution at the level of a republic would develop a plan for a de facto region. However, due to insufficient experience, these plans differed considerably between the republics that were part of former Yugoslavia (Perišić 1985). There was no unique legislative framework and differences between regional spatial plans appeared in terms of planning procedures, the scale and scope of the planning process, and the content of plans. In Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the law specified what a regional spatial plan should contain, while the law in Serbia left freedom to processors to adapt the content of a regional plan to specific situations present in the territory of a republic (Piha 1973).

³Programme of long-term development and plan of the spatial arrangement of the Adriatic area 1964–1967.

1950 - 1991

L - LAW, P - PLAN

Serbia Croatia Bosnia and Herzegovina



- L1 Administrative-Territorial Division: 1952 Act
- L2 Law on Urban and Regional Spatial Planning (Amendments 1966)
- L3 Law on Urban and Regional Spatial Planning (Amendments 1961, 1964, 1966, 1969)
- L4 Law on Physical Planning and Use of Construction Land
- L5 Administrative-Territorial Division: Constitutional Law 1974
- L6 Law on Planning, Spatial Management, and Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (Amendments 1985)
- L7 Law on Spatial Planning and Management of Space (Amendments 1986, 1989, 1991)
- L8 Law on Spatial Management (Amendments 1986)
- L9 Law on planning and arrangement of space and settlements
- P1 Regional Spatial Plan of Krapina county
- P2 Spatial plan for the region of the Danube river from Belgrade to Bulgarian border (planning the construction of hydroelectric power plant Đerdap)
- P3 Regional Spatial Plan of Split County
- P4 Regional Spatial Plan of Gorski County
- P5 Regional Spatial Plan of municipalities: Delnice, Čabar, Vrbovsko
- P6 Regional Spatial Plan of South Adriatic
- P7 Regional Spatial Plan of 10 Kopaonik municipalities
- P8 Regional Spatial Plan of Istria
- P9 Regional Spatial Plan of Split Region
- P10 General Plan of Boka Kotorska Bay
- P11 Spatial Plan of Zagreb Region
- P12 Regional Spatial Plan of Slavonia and Baranja
- P13 Regional Spatial Plan Upper Adriatic
- P14 Regional Spatial Plan of Novi Sad municipality
- P15 Regional Spatial Plan of municipalities Benkovac-Knin-Obrovac (intermunicipal plan)
- P16 Regional Spatial Plan of north-west Serbia
- P17 Regional Spatial Plan of Šumadija and Pomoravlje
- P18 Regional Spatial Plan of Timočka Krajina
- P19 Regional Spatial Plan SAP Kosovo
- P20 Regional Spatial Plan of Dalmatia
- P21 Regional Spatial Plan SAP Vojvodina
- P22 Regional Spatial Plan Upper Drina River
- P23 Regional Spatial Plan of Fruška Gora
- P24 Regional Spatial Plan of Deliblatska Peščara
- P25 Spatial plan of association of municipalities Split
- P26 Regional Spatial Plan of Miruša river natural park
- P27 Spatial plan of association of municipalities Rijeka
- P28 Regional Spatial Plan of intermunicipal regional community Podunavska
- P29 Changes and Amendments to the Regional Spatial Plan SAP Vojvodina
- P30 Regional Spatial Plan of MEIS (mining-energy-industry system) Kosovo and Metohija

Fig. 3.1 Dynamics of development of regional spatial plans and planning regulations in former Yugoslavia 1950–1990 (Source Authors’ own elaboration)

3.4 Regional Planning and Governance in the Transition Period Under the Umbrella of EU Integration

The fall of state socialism in East and Southeast Europe has brought considerable changes to post-socialist countries in political, economic, and social terms (Ivanišević et al., in this volume). These changes did not overlook the field of spatial planning which was suddenly facing a multitude of new conditions induced by political democratisation, reintroduction of market principles, commercialisation, privatisation, the state's fiscal crisis, discontinuation of welfare state programmes, and intensified international financial transactions and investments (Nedović-Budić et al. 2011; Berisha and Cotella, in this volume). As a result, spatial planning had to be basically reinvented in a context where the re-centralisation of political power and planning controls in the 1990s, the reform process influenced by the EU integration, and the emerging European spatial planning discourse in the 2000s played a major role (Nedović-Budić 2001).

In this section, we examine the development of regional spatial planning and territorial governance in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina after the break-up of Yugoslavia, while trying to account for the nature and effects of the changes induced by the EU integration process in relation to the inherited characteristics of the previous system.

3.4.1 Regional Governance and Planning in Serbia

Until 2000, regional planning has long been the least developed sphere of spatial planning in Serbia because the regionalisation process had never started (Milić and Stefanović 2009); regions were not defined (Trkulja and Živanović 2009), and ultimately, the institutions that would be responsible for conducting regional planning were never constituted. After a modest experience and a small number of regional spatial plans developed in the 1990s, the regional dimension of spatial planning started to be more and more affirmed after the turn of the century and the adoption of a series of legal acts in the sphere of territorial governance and planning. The need for a regional development policy has been seen as a prerogative of meeting the EU integration process. The influence of the EU and regionalism is primarily reflected in the adoption of a legislative framework (RAPPS 2009) and further development of regional plans in line with the EU standards

Internally, regionalisation was seen as the way of developing the process of decentralisation as confirmed by the law on the administrative division passed in 1992. The law identified the City of Belgrade and 29 administrative districts (counties) as forms of regional governance (Fig. 3.2). However, they did not constitute the territorial organisation of the country, but only a level of administrative organisation at which state acts and programmes are implemented. This model of territorial organisation does not completely correspond to the demands of

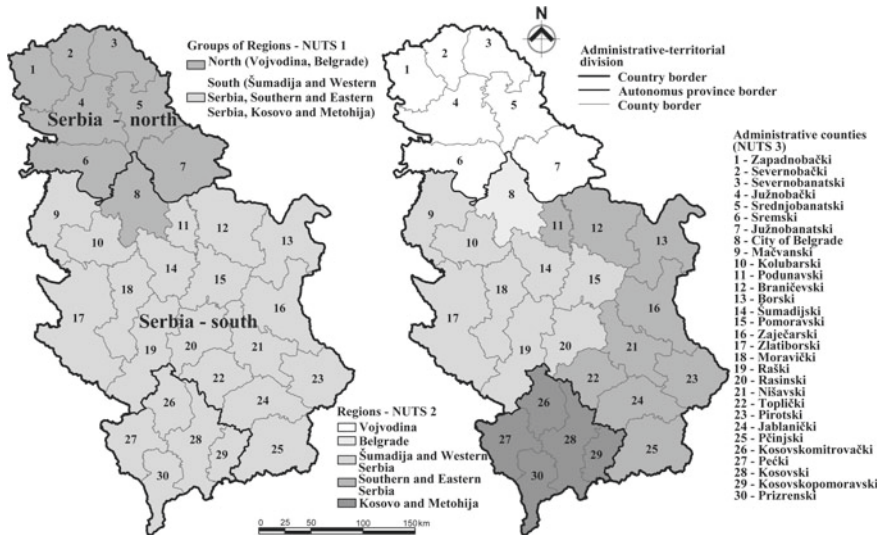


Fig. 3.2 Administrative territorial division of Serbia and current regionalisation according to the NUTS nomenclature (*Source* Authors' own elaboration)

purposeful regionalisation in terms of decentralisation and balanced regional development (Mitrović 2006; Trkulja and Živanović 2009). Currently, the organisation of the national territory corresponds to the Law on Territorial Organisation of 2007 and its amendments of 2016 and 2018. The country is divided into municipalities (145), cities (28), and the city of Belgrade as basic territorial units and two autonomous provinces.⁴ However, except the autonomous provinces and the administrative area of the city of Belgrade, which can be considered as regions with administrative and governing bodies, the law does not envisage other regional units. Despite that, the Regional Development Strategy of Serbia was adopted in 2007, and it highlighted some serious consequences which a centralised territorial organisation of the country could bring. The initiative for drafting the Law on Regional Development soon followed, and it was adopted in 2009.

The law aimed to stimulate the regional development processes, while also institutionalising the regionalisation of Serbia according to the EU nomenclature of statistical territorial units (NUTS). Among other purposes, the NUTS nomenclature also serves as the basis for shaping the EU regional policy and is the requirement for accessing the EU funds, which was the main reason for initiating the discussion on the topic of regionalisation in Serbia (Gajović 2009). The Law on Regional Development defined seven statistical regions (changed to five after further

⁴Since 2008, Kosovo* has declared autonomy, which is not recognised by the Serbian authorities. (*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

amendments) of the NUTS 2 level together with 13 statistical areas⁵ that correspond to the NUTS 3 level by grouping administrative units of the county level.⁶ Two NUTS 1 statistical areas were also defined (Fig. 3.2). Although the NUTS regions and county areas are supposedly territorial entities concerned with the implementation of EU regional development policy and responsible for development planning, and for the initiation of international and cross-border cooperation activities (Takács and Nagy 2013), they are not administrative entities. As such, they have no legal subjectivity and autonomy in the sphere of regional planning and governance (Gajović 2009).

In addition to the territories of the autonomous provinces and the administrative area of the city of Belgrade, the Law on Planning and Construction from 2003 envisaged the creation of regional plans for areas of the size of NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 regions (Radoičić and Trkulja 2012). Furthermore, although no regional administration was established, the possibility of drafting regional plans for larger spatial units was also envisaged with the aim of pursuing common goals or implementing regional development projects. All legal acts on planning and construction in Serbia, from the 2003 law until the current act (2018), have retained spatial units of statistical character (NUTS 1 and 2) as the main object of regional planning (Table 3.1).

Laws on regional development and planning and construction created normative and planning basis for defining regions and drafting regional plans (Milić and Stefanović 2009), but they have not stipulated the jurisdiction for their implementation. In other words, there is a regional planning level, but not a regional administrative level. Regardless, following the needs to accelerate the EU accession negotiations, the preparation of 11 regional spatial plans was initiated in a short period of time (2009–2010). This period can be considered to be the beginning of reaffirmation of regional planning in Serbia. By 2015, all regional plans were adopted, and for the first time, Serbia was fully covered by regional spatial plans⁷ (Fig. 3.3). However, there was a considerable discrepancy among the adopted regional plans in terms of methodology, content, and quality.

⁵Statistical areas (13) were initially adopted by the law as territorial NUTS 3 units, but later amendments to the law referred to NUTS 3 regions in line with the regulation on NUTS, which defined 30 counties as NUTS 3 regional units. This created confusion over whether and how NUTS 3 regions are defined in Serbia, while the consensus on this issue has not been reached yet.

⁶The purpose of grouping the counties into NUTS 3 areas instead of determining the counties themselves as the NUTS 3 level regions is rather debatable, since most counties (with the exception of Belgrade, North Banat, Bor, Zaječar, Pirot, and Toplica counties) are in the recommended population ranges (i.e. 150,000–800,000).

⁷The boundaries of the regional plans corresponded to the boundaries of the 13 areas in force until the amendments to the Law on Regional Development were made. Only the regional spatial plan of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina covered three NUTS3 levels (Srem, Banat, Backa).

Table 3.1 Spatial planning levels and relevant authorities in Serbia

Planning level	Type of spatial plan	Respective territory of the plan	Relevant authority adopting the plan
National level	Spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia	Republic of Serbia	National assembly on the proposal of the government
Regional level	Regional spatial plan	Larger spatial units of administrative character (City of Belgrade and autonomous provinces)	Assembly of the autonomous province or assembly of the City of Belgrade
		Larger spatial units of a functional, geographical or statistical character	Government on the proposal of the ministry competent for spatial planning
	Special purpose area spatial plan	Areas requiring a special regime of organisation, design, use, and protection of space of importance for the Republic of Serbia	Government or assembly of the autonomous province
Local level	Spatial plan of the local self-governments	Units of local self-government (cities and municipalities)	Assembly of the local self-government unit

Source Authors' own elaboration

3.4.2 Regional Governance and Planning in Croatia

During the 1990s, the establishment of the territorial governance and spatial planning system in Croatia took a different course than expected and overall development was much slower than was anticipated (Kranjčević 2005). The territorial organisation of Croatia that was established soon after gaining independence increased the number of local government units from 102 municipalities that existed in 1991 to 70 towns and 419 municipalities in 1992. Additionally, 20 counties⁸ and the City of Zagreb were formed as a regional level of government. This organisation into counties was actually inherited from the previous system with increasing competences in the governance and planning of their own territory.

Despite that, Koprić (2007) reports that, for a long time, Croatia was the role model for a post-socialist state organised and operating in a centralised manner. Only with the start of the EU accession negotiations (2001) was a new momentum given to the decentralisation process (Antić 2002), which allowed the introduction of new municipalities as their number changed from 419 to 556 in 2009. Thanks to this institutional restructuring, each county was also mandated the authority to define regional policies in education, health protection, spatial planning, economy, transportation, and infrastructure. According to Kranjčević (2005), this territorial

⁸In Croatian: *županije*.



Fig. 3.3 Adopted regional plans in Serbia (Source Authors' own elaboration)

organisation brings large difficulties for territorial governance and planning in Croatia, mainly because it requires complex vertical and horizontal coordination between different sectors and governance levels. However, the proliferation in the establishment of new local governance units, due to the EU integration processes, has left many of them without the capacity to independently plan and govern their territory (above all in the financial and human capacity).

In this period, the principles of EU spatial policies were also recognised in the Croatian legislation. The by-laws in the field of spatial planning and regulation based on the suggestions of various EU policies were introduced even before Croatia acceded to the EU. Furthermore, a territorial organisation of the state in accordance with the NUTS classification was also carried out. The country has been

divided into two NUTS II regions—Continental Croatia and Adriatic Croatia—while the counties have been adapted to correspond to the NUTS III level of territorial division (Fig. 3.4). This adaptation was also underpinned by some contingent and practical needs. It has allowed counties to quickly and easily build cross-border relations and participate in new EU policy areas. In a short amount of



Fig. 3.4 Territorial organisation of Croatia at NUTS 3 (county) level (Source Eurostat (2016))

time, all Croatian border regions started to participate in at least one Euroregion (Koprić 2007), which is seen as an important achievement in the context of new European regionalism.

However, during the development of the Law on Regional Development (2014), it was noticed that the coordination of development exhibited at the subnational level of spatial hierarchy was difficult and troublesome, primarily due to the lack of functional planning units between NUTS 2 regions and counties. For that reason, the initial draft of the law envisaged the establishment of so-called planning areas, an intermediate level of spatial organisation with a purpose of implementing special state policies aimed at strengthening territorial cohesion throughout the country (Kordej-De Villa and Pejnović 2015). According to the draft of the law, by grouping neighbouring counties on the principle of functionality, the establishment of five planning areas was envisaged (Table 3.2).

Although the Law on Regional Development was adopted in December 2014, the idea of establishing planning areas was completely rejected because these areas ignored the limited available resources at all governance levels. Furthermore, the law did not stipulate clearly the relationship between the planning area and NUTS 2 region, while the possible effects of introducing planning areas as the level of implementation of central government decisions were not completely explored (Kordej-De Villa and Pejnović 2015). However, the Law on Regional Development still attempted to facilitate the coordination between different governance levels. It further defined the roles and competences of subnational governance units in the development of national territory. It also established Regional Development Agencies for each county, tasked with the drafting and implementation of county development strategies and coordination of other regional development initiatives.

Table 3.2 Regional organisation of Croatia

NUTS 2 level	Planning areas ^a	NUTS 3 level (counties)
Continental Croatia	Central Croatia	City of Zagreb, County of Zagreb, County of Sisak-Moslavina, County of Karlovac, County of Bjelovar-Bilogora
	East Croatia	County of Osijek-Baranja, County of Virovitica-Podravina, County of Požega-Slavonia, County of Brod-Posavina, County of Vukovar-Srijem
	North-West Croatia	County of Varaždin, County of Međimurje, County of Koprivnica-Križevci, County of Krapina-Zagorje
Adriatic Croatia	North Adriatic and Lika	County of Primorje-Gorski Kotar, County of Istria, County of Lika-Senj
	South Croatia	County of Split-Dalmatia, County of Zadar, County of Šibenik-Knin, County of Dubrovnik-Neretva

Source Kordej-De Villa and Pejnović (2015)

^aThis level was envisaged by the draft version of the 2014 Law on Regional Development but was rejected in the end

After providing an overview on the administrative arrangement, it is also interesting to explore how spatial planning has evolved in the last decades. The Spatial Regulation Act from 1994 was the first legislative act in this domain introduced in Croatia after its declaration of independence. This act was based on the systematic and formal hierarchy of plans on three levels—national, regional, and local. The first generation of county spatial plans was drafted much more slowly than expected as first plans were passed only in 2000. However, the rest followed soon after, and all of them were adopted by 2003 (Urbanistica 2014). This also coincides with the start of Croatia's negotiations regarding the accession to the EU, and the country's increased involvement in different EU policy areas. Today, all counties are covered by spatial plans. However, the issues of vertical and horizontal coordination of territorial governance and planning initiatives at the county level are still predominant. Most notably, county spatial plans are not fully coordinated with other sectoral development plans at the regional level—agriculture, tourism, or transportation plans, above all—which has created considerable development impediments (Kranjčević 2005). Although the existing legislative framework envisages the participation of local and county institutions in cross-border and cross-county development programmes and projects, not only are international projects quite often interrupted or delayed due to the same failures, but even domestic ones are sometimes hard to implement. As a result, continuous and long-term spatial development projects at all government levels are rarely developed (Kranjčević 2005). This is further exacerbated by persisting differences in the nature and character of regional spatial plans. Some of them have a more directive and strategic nature, while others are more regulative (Urbanistica 2014).

3.4.3 Regional Governance and Planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The planning system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is twofold, with no exclusive (formal) competence for spatial planning at the national level and with two entities, Republika Srpska and The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of B&H), and one district (Brčko district) that hold full responsibility for spatial planning activity (Table 3.3). However, all of them share their roots in the system of former Yugoslavia and, according to Trkulja et al. (2012), have a close resemblance to the previous system. The level of these tiers of governance can be considered the highest level of competence in spatial planning and therefore, by definition, should not be seen as a regional planning level. That said, it is appropriate to explore the existence of regional governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the territory of its entities.⁹

⁹The territory of Brčko district is too small to have an effective level of sub-governance.

Table 3.3 Spatial planning levels and relevant authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Planning level	Republika Srpska	Federation of B&H	Brčko District
Entity level	Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology	Ministry of Spatial Planning	District council
Regional level	N/A	Canton assemblies	
Local level	Municipal councils	Municipal councils	

Source Marjanovic (2017)

A meso-level of territorial governance and planning in the Federation of B&H is established in the form of 10 cantons, which are further divided into municipalities; while territorially, Republika Srpska is divided into municipalities only and does not have a formal subnational level equivalent of cantons or other form of regions (Fig. 3.5). Therefore, we can observe some kind of regional governance in the Federation of B&H, but not in Republika Srpska, which says a lot about the complexity of governance and planning structure in the country, but also about some evident discrepancies.

When it comes to the Federation of B&H, cantons as regional tiers of governance enjoy a seemingly large autonomy in governance and planning (Berisha 2018). Although the planning activity in the Federation of B&H is governed by a legislative framework adopted at the entity level, each canton can develop its own set of laws which, however, has to be in coherence with the entity law (Marjanović 2017). Furthermore, cantons are in charge of developing their own territory by having a competence of adopting cantonal spatial plans and cantonal spatial plans for areas with special features—both of which have to be aligned with the respective entity plans. All cooperation competences lie in the formal domain of the entity level, and cantons have the opportunity to participate in cross-border cooperation activities only in exceptional circumstances.

On the other hand, in Republika Srpska, there were some attempts to formalise a regional level of governance within the entity's administrative structure, but with little effect so far. Besides formal regionalisation, a rather informal and indicative territorial organisation at the sub-entity level has also been developed and suggested by the entity spatial plans of 1996 and 2015. The proposed regionalisation models have been based on establishing spatial–functional areas around main urban centres, as drivers of regional development. However, these new territorial units would not have any form of formal jurisdiction in the governance and planning of their territories (no regional plans are to be adopted at this level) and cooperation activities, but would only consist of a level at which entity planning decisions would be implemented. In terms of spatial planning, the regional level of planning in Republika Srpska is de facto materialised through the development of spatial plans



Fig. 3.5 Administrative territorial division of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Source Write Opinions (2004))

for special purpose areas¹⁰ by a competent authority at the entity level. These plans bear a strong resemblance to the regional spatial plans of former Yugoslavia as they are neither devised nor implemented by a region, but only serve as planning tools for the areas of national interest (e.g. national parks or large infrastructure projects).

The existing territorial organisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a result of a political bargaining process in the negotiation of the Dayton peace treaty (1995) and not of genuine attempts to establish a coherent governance system that would enable a balanced development of the country's territory. At the time, the preference was given to political and ethnic issues, rather than spatial and functional factors. As such, it has had various adverse implications on the planning and development of national territory. In this regard, Bojičić-Dželić (2013) argues that the deeply contested structure of the state defined by the Dayton constitution

¹⁰Equivalent to spatial plans for areas with special features in the Federation of B&H.

has not provided a framework within which the potential for purposeful decentralisation and regionalisation can be achieved, or within which a needed vertical and horizontal coordination in the spatial planning activity can be established (Bijelić and Đorđević 2018). This could not be more evident than from the interrelation of adopted spatial plans of the highest rank in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The same authors demonstrated the enormous non-compliance rate of 78.79% that exists among the spatial plans of cantons and entities, which means that non-compliant planning solutions largely predominate in the regional level planning.

The need for vertical and horizontal coordination in such a contested planning system is probably one of the reasons why the development and adoption of planning documents for cantons and entities have been dragging on for so long and why the country has still not been fully covered by plans of this type. A discontinuity in the development of planning documents is evident at the level of cantons, with the majority of them starting to adopt plans only in the last 10 years (Table 3.4). This is further evidenced by the problems surrounding the adoption process,¹¹ as it is often hard to reach political consensus for their adoption and implementation. On the contrary, the development of entity spatial plans in Republika Srpska has been less turbulent. This can hint at the lack of regional units at the sub-entity level, which simplifies the demands for horizontal and vertical coordination.

The ongoing debate on the new regionalisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been additionally empowered by the process of European integration (Osmanković 2004). The EU involvement in the issue has been materialised most notably through the Regional Economic Development Programme (EURED), which included the formation of five new economic regions that do not follow entities' borders.¹² In each of the new regions, Regional Development Agencies were established and tasked with the preparation and implementation of integrated regional development strategies. These strategies, in an indicative and non-binding manner, predominantly address economic and not spatial aspects of the development. Due to the absence of any democratic legitimacy—there is no competent authority at the level of newly established regions to enforce the implementation process—these strategies end up having no real impact on the spatial development from a regional perspective. Additionally, Bojičić-Dželilović (2013) believes that such EU-sponsored initiatives have further usurped territorial and power patterns established by the Dayton Peace Treaty. It appears that the suggested model was not developed on the basis of evaluating spatial and economic factors, but that it was motivated by political reasons, with the obvious intention to reduce the role and economic independence of the entities within a new regional framework (Ekonomski Institut AD 2004).

¹¹For example, the spatial plan of Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Gorazde was initially developed for the period 2008–2028, but it was not adopted until 2016, i.e. midway through this period, while the spatial plan of Herzegovina-Neretva County 2012–2022 has been adopted only in 2018.

¹²The territory was divided in six economic regions: North–East Region, North–West Region, Central Region, Sarajevo Region, and Herzegovina Region.

Table 3.4 Development of cantonal and entity plans in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Level	Territorial unit	Planning document in force	Year of adoption (previous plans)
Entity	Republika Srpska	Amendments to the spatial plan of the Republic of Srpska until 2025	2015 (1996, 2008)
	Federation of B&H	Spatial plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period from 1981 to 2000	1982 ^a
District	Brcko District	The spatial plan of Brčko District Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007–2017	2007
Canton	Una-Sana Canton	Spatial plan of Una-Sana Canton (draft)	2018
	Posavina Canton	Amendments to the spatial plan of Brod-Posavina County	2012 (2001)
	Tuzla Canton	Spatial plan for the area of Tuzla Canton 2005–2025	2006
	Zenica-Doboj Canton	Spatial plan of Zenica-Doboj Canton 2009–2029	2009
	Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Gorazde	Spatial plan of Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Gorazde for the period of 20 years	2016
	Central Bosnia Canton	Spatial plan of Central Bosnia Canton 2005–2025	2006
	Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	Proposal of spatial plan of Herzegovina-Neretva County 2012–2022	2018
	West Herzegovina Canton	Spatial plan of West Herzegovina Canton for the period 2012–2032	2013
	Sarajevo Canton	Spatial plan of Sarajevo Canton for the period 2003–2023	2006
	Canton 10/ Herzeg-Bosnia County	N/A ^b	N/A

Source Authors' own elaboration

^aIn accordance with Article 115 of the Law on Spatial Planning and Land Use of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina until the spatial plan of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is adopted, the spatial plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period from 1981 to 2000 will be in force to the extent that it is not in contravention with the Constitution

^bPublic consultations on the draft version of spatial plan for the area of Herzeg-Bosnia County for the period 2008–2028 have been organised at the end of 2014, but according to the available information, the plan has not been adopted yet

3.5 Between EU Aspirations and Lingering Effects of the Socialist Past

Spatial planning and territorial governance in each of the analysed countries have been highly impacted by social, economic, political, and spatial processes that took place in the post-socialist transition period and along the European integration process (Berisha et al. 2018, 2020 and in this volume). While it seems that Croatia and Serbia fared better with these processes, Bosnia and Herzegovina took a considerably more problematic course in dealing with the newly found situation. The development of regional governance and planning in the country still continues to be constrained by the inertness of its complex formal territorial organisation and governance structure established back in 1995.

Contrary to the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European integration process has been the main external political reason for the regionalisation and development of regional planning in Serbia and Croatia. Today, the territories of both countries are fully covered by planning documentation at the regional level. While the methodology for the development of regional spatial plans and the legal framework are very similar, the dynamics of regionalisation and the development of plans vary. Namely Serbia lags ten years behind Croatia in the adoption of regional spatial plans—Croatia adopted all regional plans by 2003, whereas Serbia did so by 2015. However, it is interesting that Croatia firstly developed regional spatial plans for all counties and only then focused on the issues of the regionalisation of the country and the development of planning areas, while Serbia took things the other way around. This is possibly reflected in somewhat late regionalisation in Serbia and Croatia's advanced position in the EU integration process (already a Member State).

In both countries, the regional level of planning is in line with the NUTS standards, however with one important difference—whereas the newly established NUTS regions correspond to the regional level of formal governance in Croatia (i.e. counties), the statistical regions in Serbia correspond to counties that are neither formal levels of territorial organisation nor spatial-functional units. This identification of the territorial administrative system of Serbia with the NUTS nomenclature is problematic primarily due to the lack of functionality of counties as a territorial unit—which is considered to be necessary in accordance with the ongoing European integration processes (Gajović 2009).

However, although the regional models created in Serbia only have an economic and financial character, they could eventually become a real structure that leads to the establishment of regional administration and autonomy (Đorđević and Tošić 2013). By developing regional spatial plans for NUTS 3 areas, which are of paramount importance for regional and cross-border cooperation, a formal and practical basis for the participation of these areas in the common regional policy of the EU has been created. Establishing regional competencies and strengthening the capacities of these areas would undoubtedly improve the implementation of regional plans and contribute to a more dynamic participation of the country in the EU policy fields.

Furthermore, the location of regional planning in the planning systems of the analysed countries appears not to be clearly defined yet. This implies the lack of a clear methodology and goals of development. The role of regional planning has practically shifted from the essential—decentralisation, balanced polycentric development, and treatment of regional development problems—to the economic, to facilitate the access to the EU funds. The dynamics of the adoption of regional spatial plans in Croatia and Serbia indicate that there was neither previous evaluation of positive and negative development options, nor more significant public participation and developed cooperation of all the relevant institutions and organisations.

The main disadvantages of such a regional spatial planning system are the lack of a well-defined institutional structure for the management and implementation of regional policy (Serbia) and the lack of institutional mechanisms for cooperation and coordination (Croatia). In order to solve the persisting coordination failures between different territorial organisational levels, both countries deliberated on introducing an intermediate regional planning level as a way of bridging NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 regions. Those were planning areas in Croatia and statistical areas in Serbia, formed by grouping the counties. Moreover, while Croatia decided against this, the areas in Serbia have not only been established as a planning level (regional spatial plans were developed for these units), but they have also become new NUTS 3 regions, which has taken the initial problem they aimed to solve back to the beginning.

When it comes to Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to a complex governance structure, regional planning as a way of bridging national and local planning levels is present only in a certain part of the national territory (cantons in the Federation of B&H). Present administrative territorial organisation of the country is a result of a political bargaining process that obeyed demands for the ethnic coherence, which was underpinned by power relations that were at playback in 1995. As such, current governance structure is very rigid and leaves almost no room for adaptation to the contemporary development conditions and for an adequate application of planning and governance instruments at the regional level. The two entities are characterised by a strong ethnic identity—institutionalised in the country's administrative and governing structure, which acts as an obstacle to any possible formal, but also informal, regional organisation that goes beyond existing borders. Although the cantons boast a relatively high autonomy to plan and govern their territories, they are struggling to reach a political consensus on the development plans and policies, while their ability to implement certain planning decisions and act outside the national sphere is highly constrained. The question of regionalisation and regional governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina involves a multitude of different factors, including the strongly embedded formal governance structure, troubling ethnic mosaic, ongoing power struggle, European integration process, and also others.

3.6 Conclusive Remarks

The former Yugoslavian countries do not only suffer from the lingering effects of their socialist past, but continuous attempts to address the issues of regionalisation and decentralisation of governance and planning from the political and economic perspectives only (including those coming from the EU) have brought further problems and concerns. The main issue appears not to lie in the unfitness of their inherited systems and practices to the new development conditions, but in the continuous neglect as regards meeting the demands for purposeful regionalisation. This has been underpinned by the lack of scientific, professional, and empirical research on which the regional organisation of the national territory should be based, as if all the potentials that adequate regionalisation and regional development bring have not yet been sufficiently recognised (Osmanković 2004). That implies the need for the development of systematic research and thorough understanding of lessons from previous and existing experiences of regionalisation processes under the umbrella of the EU integration, in order to support the deliberation on an adequate decentralisation and planning model (Vujošević and Petovar 2010).

Taking into account the experience of some European countries (see: Cotella and Stead 2011; Cotella et al. 2012; Adams et al. 2014; Nadin et al. 2018), where the economic regions of a statistical nature have grown into political ones with defined competencies (e.g. Ireland, Slovakia), or where the political regions of EU regional policy are harmonised with the statistical NUTS system (e.g. Germany, Italy), which is the case in Croatia, one of the possible solutions to the regionalisation of some former Yugoslavian countries, in terms of decentralisation, is the harmonisation of statistical regions with the concept of functional urban regionalisation, and administrative regions in which the regional government is established and enjoys a certain autonomy. With the aim of proper decentralisation and establishment of a purposeful spatial planning system, statistical regions should grow to functional regions with their institutions and competencies.

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Chapter 4

The Challenge of Public Participation: Evidences from Albania and Kosovo



Eliza Hoxha, Dea Buza, and Ledio Allkja

Abstract Spatial planning in Albania and Kosovo has evolved quickly over the last decade. The introduction of new legislation combined with different planning initiatives has aimed at institutionalising the new comprehensive and integrated approach. Although legislation and planning instruments have changed relatively quickly, practice is still evolving in the dichotomy between the new and the old customs. An integral part of planning practice is also the involvement of the citizens during the planning process. The chapter looks first at the theoretical discourse regarding participation in planning resulting in a set of criteria for analysing both case studies. After that, the case studies will be compared as regards the legal basis and the requirements for public participation in spatial planning and then continue with the analysis based on the main aspects resulting from the theoretical discussion.

Keywords Spatial planning · Public participation · Local planning

4.1 Introduction

Spatial planning as a discipline has always been under the pressure for change (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015), due to different socio-economic, political and environmental challenges. Among the approaches that have contributed in shaping spatial planning processes in the last century, there are those linked to participatory and collaborative planning, which aim at increasing citizen involvement in

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decision-making (ECTP-CEU 2015). Thus, participatory democracy in spatial planning processes has become very important in order to legitimise the process, increase public support for policies, as well as the implementation of plans through co-creation of space and direct involvement of citizens. As such, practitioners and academics have been working for several years in devising new methods and ways of engaging the general public (Healey 1992a; Cooper et al. 2006). These processes span from public hearings (the more conventional approach) towards more technology-based approaches that include the use of different Internet-based instruments for a real public involvement (i.e. empowerment).

Albania and Kosovo*¹ are two post-socialist countries that over the last two decades have been undertaking different reforms in order to modernise their territorial governance and spatial planning systems. Both countries exhibit different characteristics in their stages of urbanisation because of their delayed economic and urban development and socialist political system. In fact, Kosovo is a special case: as besides the transition towards a market economy, it is also a new state that is trying to form its institutions and governance approach following its independence in 2008. In both countries, as part of the different sectoral reforms, planning has also been subject to different changes aiming at a *re-definition* of the system during the period 2004–2010 in Kosovo (Ec ma Ndryshe and ProPlanning 2016) and 2006–2014 in Albania (Allkja and Tavanxhiu 2016). Both countries are trying to establish a planning system that reflects characteristics of the comprehensive and integrated spatial planning systems, evident in most Western-European and more developed countries (Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2020; Berisha 2018).

These attempts do not include only the restructuring of planning institutions and instruments, but also go to the roots of planning processes and practices. As such, public participation is a key component of the process. On the other hand, research in planning in Albania and Kosovo is somewhat limited compared to other countries in Europe. The situation becomes even more so when it comes to the analysis of the evolution of planning processes and participatory planning. Thus, it becomes interesting to see how Albania and Kosovo are responding to the challenge of public participation and the different ways they are trying to promote public participation and engagement of citizens. The chapter is based on an analysis of planning legislation and local planning documents in both countries. The aim is to firstly create an evidence base of the different approaches, as well as to compare them.

The chapter has five parts. The first provides a brief theoretical overview of the main concepts in the field of the participatory planning theory. Following that, the evolution of the spatial planning system in Albania and the legal requirements for public participation are discussed, with the aid of two case studies. The same is

¹(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

done in relation to Kosovo in the following section, before the two experiences are discussed and compared. A final section rounds off the contribution, reflecting on the presented evidence and paving the way for future research on the matter.

4.2 Spatial Planning and Public Participation

Planning as a discipline has always been under pressure for change from its very beginning. Different socio-economic and political processes have shaped and continuously influenced the very nature of planning practice and processes. According to Healy (1997, p. 9), spatial planning in Europe was usually intended to provide a framework for major public investments in physical infrastructure or public sector building work, as its major function was the regulation of land-use change and development. Albrechts (2004, p. 744) argues that it is the “cultural, institutional and legal differences but also the specificity of the purposes for which formal spatial and planning systems were originally introduced, [which] has produced a wide variety of planning systems and traditions in Europe”. Planning policies influence to a great extent the living spaces and the quality of places people live in. Therefore, since these policies do have a direct impact on people, starting from every day practices to life choices, they must be transparent, responsive and effective, in terms of public participation and delivery of appropriate responses to cultural, social, environmental and economic challenges (ECTP-CEU 2015, p. 5). Thus, the necessity and the value of including the public and communities in planning and decision-making process has been recognised for a long time by practitioners (Cooper et al. 2006; Yang and Pandey 2011). Looking back to urban and social movements, urban theorists like Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford advocated citizen participation in planning before it was a generally accepted part of the process. According to Baeker (2002, p. 23), they promoted “civic exhibitions on urban and regional issues, surveys, and through input to the creation of planning alternatives or scenarios”. Mumford, on the other hand, saw plans as instruments of communal education. Later on, many bottom-up movements and advocate planers such as William H. Whyte, Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl, Patsy Healy and Leonie Sandercock have opened up a new discussion on creating, preserving and designing places with communities, while developing the sense of ownership upon them and a collective pride, thus recreating new linkages and social capital.

To do so, one should have knowledge of the city/place, its people, culture, economy and social status and be able to describe them. These considerations raise a series of questions. Firstly: how to engage in the distribution of access to the urban public realm under conditions of the neoliberal post-capitalist urban production? Secondly, who decides, who designs and who is allowed to participate in the urban fiction? Women and men of all ages and cultural backgrounds, people with special needs, children they all have what to say and what to contribute to the cities they want and dream about. Besides all urban theories and many practices during all these years, these rights are also guaranteed and addressed by the Charter

for human right to the city, new urban agendas, sustainable development goals and new planning paradigms. Communicative planning has played a determinant role in the discourse of planning over the past three decades. Its focus on the democratic and deliberative process has introduced a progressive work of planning, which theoretically includes the citizens in the decision-making process and makes no privileged priority for participants based on their merit or background (Healey 1992b).

Planners have tried to increase citizen involvement in the planning processes for over forty years, and there are several good reasons for this, such as the resolution of potential conflicts, strengthening policy support and the implementation of different initiatives (ibid.). Nevertheless, one of the biggest challenges for planners continues to be the improvement of the ways to include and engage citizens in the planning processes. The most common and used practice is via a public hearing; however, its success in generating dialogue and promoting new ideas which are based on the community is questionable (Brody et al. 2003). Public hearings are a good way of informing the public, but usually, it is a one-way communication with the technician (the planner) doing most of the talking. Thus, there are different attempts in diversifying citizen participation beyond the conventional hearing. The range of methods varies from small-scale co-designing experiences to games and recently, and with the advances in technology, e-participation is taking a strong emphasis. The latter goes from the use of the so-called *social media* in planning processes, towards more sophisticated measures of using GIS-based platforms for actively engaging the public (Conroy and Evans-Cowley 2006). Thus, these methods show that there are different dimensions and ways of engaging the public in the general local planning processes, starting from the more formal and legal requirements and continuing through to more elaborated Internet-based forms of engagement.

4.3 Spatial Planning and Public Participation in Albania

The last decade has marked a great change in terms of spatial planning in Albanian (Fig. 4.1). Starting from the rigid planning system, a relic of the post-dictatorial regime, and almost 15 years of lack of priority in terms of planning, the first attempts were initiated in 2006 to change the system from *urban planning* towards *territorial planning* (Aliaj et al. 2010, 2014; Ministry of Urban Development 2014; Allkja, in this volume; Toto and Shutina, in this volume; Berisha et al., in this volume; Berisha and Cotella, in this volume). Hence, the retreat of government, the absence of implementation of regulatory frameworks, led Albania from a highly centralised and planned state towards a *free for all* approach (Aliaj 2008). The liberty of the individual and weak institutions affected also the planning system that was unable to cope with the speed of socio-economic transformations (Çobo and Toto 2010). The planning instruments were unable to lead the local and nationwide development, thus very often becoming inhibitors. Many people opted for informal

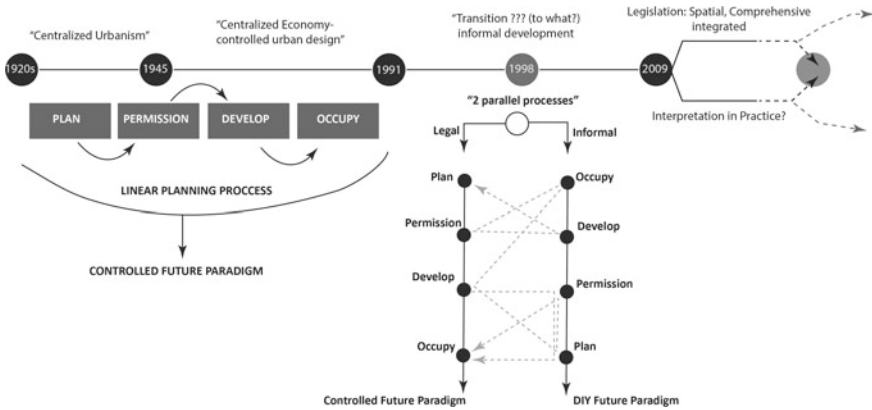


Fig. 4.1 Territorial planning chronology in Albania (Source Authors’ own elaboration)

development, resulting in a staggering 400,000 informal dwellings (Ministry of Urban Development 2014). Although, it is worth mentioning that different attempts were made to improve the planning system, especially in 1998, with a new legislation on urban planning the results in practice were very low, also due to the difficult socio-economic conditions and institutional capacities of the time. In 2009, a new legislation was drafted and approved. The aim was to introduce a whole new system of spatial planning (Toto 2012), with new instruments, new institutions and a new approach (including public participation approaches) which resembles/mimics the spatial planning systems of the comprehensive and integrated approach (Allkja and Marjankovic 2019).

In 2013, following the parliamentary elections, spatial planning received a greater priority, also because of the newly formed Ministry of Urban Development. Firstly, the territorial planning law and its bylaws were amended, through a large consultation process, resulting in the approval of the law 107/2014 “On Territorial Planning and Development” (as amended). Soon after the approval of the law, two of its important bylaws were also drafted and approved, accordingly to the DCM 671 “For the approval of the Territorial Planning Regulations” and DCM 408 “For the approval of the Territorial Development Regulations”. In parallel to the drafting legal framework, three plans of national importance were drafted and approved: The National General Territorial Plan of Albania (the first of its kind in Albania), the Integrated Cross Sectoral Plan for the Economic Zone Tirana-Durres, and the Integrated Cross Sectoral Plan for the Coast (NTPA 2019). In addition to the planning changes, it is very important to mention that in the 2013–2015 period, a territorial reform was also conducted in Albania, which resulted in the reduction of the local authorities from 371 to 61 (Ministry of Urban Development and NTPA 2016). The latter was also associated with the increase in power and functions of the local level. Hence, in this context, the spatial planning process became very important: new authorities had to manage greater territories in conditions, which

were difficult due to the absence of data and knowledge for the whole territory, as well as newly formed institutions and structures. Thus, the plan was seen as a tool for consolidating territorial knowledge, priority setting, and vision making for the new territory, better territorial governance and territorial development (ibid.). On the other hand, the challenge to plan such large territories with little coherent and updated data, within a very short timeframe, was to a certain extent underestimated by the authorities (Greca et al. 2019).

Meanwhile, at the local level, through the USAID support, five municipalities drafted their general local plans in the 2014–2016 period. In addition, in 2015, the Ministry of Urban Development opened a call for drafting 26 general local territorial plans (GLTPs) in support of the main local authorities. This was a remarkable achievement in the consolidation of the new Albanian planning system. Currently, there are 37 municipalities that have approved their GLTPs, six municipalities which are in the final process of approval, 17 municipalities in the process of drafting (supported again by the national government) and one municipality which is yet to initiate the process. As can be seen, over the last years, the planning activity in Albania has been quite intensive.

Returning to the legal bases for public participation in territorial planning in Albania, they are set out in the Article 24 of the Territorial Planning and Development law (Republic of Albania 2014). According to this article, the local authority has the duty to conduct at least one public hearing for every planning document that needs approval (see Fig. 4.2). Thus, considering that the planning documents that need approval are two, the strategy and the land-use plan, the minimum legal requirement in Albania is to conduct two public hearings. Additionally, every GLTP needs to be accompanied with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which needs its form of participatory planning process as well.

Nevertheless, in order to better inform the public, the local authority can repeat public hearings. In addition, the public hearing date is made public at least 30 days before through information provided in two newspapers (ibid.). Moreover, the

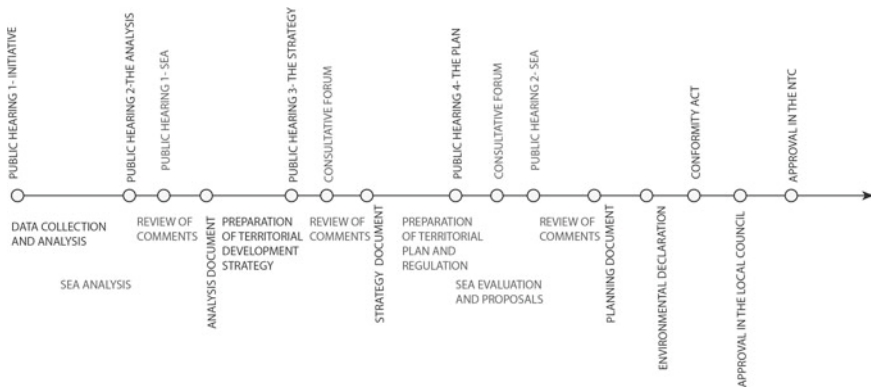


Fig. 4.2 Local planning process in Albania (Source Greca et al. (2019), translated by author)

documents that will be subject to the public hearing need to be available to the public at least 30 days before. Public participation is also regulated by article 8 of the DCM 671 (Republic of Albania 2015). This article also introduces a Forum for Local Counselling. This is a special entity, created on a voluntary basis that serves to engage local communities and other stakeholder groups in the planning process.

4.3.1 Public Participation in Practice

As explained above, planning activity has been quite intensive in Albania over the last three years. In order to investigate the practices that different municipalities/technical groups have used for public participation, a series of components will be used. Considering the time and territorial coverage challenge, it is interesting to see the different techniques that have been used. This section will analyse 12 cases of plans with different territorial coverage, different levels of institutional capacities and different levels of technical support. Based on the literature review (Healey 1992a, b; Brody et al. 2003; Conroy and Evans-Cowley 2006), the following analytical categories have been considered representative in order to analyse the experiences in the Albanian participatory experience. The components that will be used to analyse the different approaches are divided in four main categories: public meetings (including formal public hearings, field visits, focus groups), traditional media (TV, newspaper, radio), Internet and social media (Facebook, Web) and miscellaneous (issues that do not fall under any of these categories). Because the newly formed municipalities now include a large part of the territory that is rural, it becomes interesting to see how the inhabitants of these parts of the territory have been integrated in the plan-making process. In addition, it is interesting to see and compare the depth of public participation within the planning process, whether it has been purely informative or if there are also attempts to increase citizen direct participation in the planning process.

In order to better understand the way public participation has been conducted in Albania, the process was analysed for 11 municipalities (Lezhe, Kukes, Durrës, Kavaje, Gjirokaster, Vlore, Librazhd, Korçe, Tirane, Shkoder and Malesi e Madhe), based on their reports of public participation. The planning process was assessed in terms of the tools used for public participation, such as public hearings and whether they were conducted in urban and/or rural areas, the use of media (traditional and Internet-based), as well as the use of other more innovative tools. The plans show a variety of approaches towards participation, and also due to the fact that there is no strong legal guidance on the way, the process should be conducted. The only (legal) requirement is to conduct public hearings; thus, the rest is left in the hands of the municipalities and the experts involved in the process to define the method of including the public.

In terms of public hearings, the situation varies from a minimum of three public hearings in the cases of Vlore, Librazhd and Gjirokaster, up to 8 in other municipalities. It is worth mentioning that, for the case of the municipality of Tirana, it

was impossible to find a documented evidence regarding the number of hearings conducted. Most municipalities have held the major part of their public hearings in the urban areas, where attendance varies from 40 people, in small municipalities such as Librazhd and Kavaje (Bashkia Kavaje 2017), up to 150 people in the cases of larger municipalities such as Shkoder (Bashkia Shkoder 2017). Meanwhile, for those that have conducted public hearings also in the rural territories of the municipalities, it can be said that on average the turnout has been quite low, ranging from 12 to 30 people in the municipalities with the best cases. Hence, as can be seen, there is a bias of more participation in the urban areas. Considering the time constraints and the large territory, it can be seen that it has hindered the possibility of people to engage in the planning process and of the institutions to be able to engage as many people as possible. It is also important to note that in none of the above cases were the materials ready for the public within a timeframe of one month before the hearing. In the best case, it has been two weeks, while on the other hand, there have also been cases where the material has been made available only the day before the public presentation.

Given the above issue, many municipalities and their technical advisers have opted for different approaches to increase public participation. The cases of Tirana, Shkoder and Dropull (Bashkia Dropull 2017) have worked for example with different focus groups, composed of experts from different fields, in order to gain insight as well to as draft policies and priorities for the plan. While the *public hearings* can be said to be more sessions which aim at informing the public with a limited amount of time for questions and answers at the end of the hearing, the work of the focus groups aims at *co-planning* and gaining better insights; thus, it can be considered as a good practice which should be encouraged in the future. While Shkoder, Dropull and Tirana have had different focus groups, Lezhe has only used one group, which is the Forum for Planning Counselling. The latter is a new legislation initiative; however, with the exception of the municipality of Lezhe where it has played an active role, in the others, the Forum has only been called as part of the general hearings.

In terms of using traditional media, the most used ones are the TV and the newspapers. TV coverage was through local news, live coverage of hearings, as well as in the case of Shkoder through two TV debates regarding the plan (Bashkia Shkoder 2017). The latter is a good example for reaching a greater audience, especially in a territory which is quite large and difficult to access. Social media and the Internet have also been quite useful in terms of informing the public and reaching a wider audience. In this case, often municipalities have used these platforms as a means for informing the public regarding public hearings, as well as making available documents from the plan.

It is worth mentioning the case of the municipality of Lezhe (Bashkia Lezhe 2017), which can be seen as a good practice. They created, from the beginning of the process, an open source geographic information system (GIS) application, which was available to the public, so they could check the plan and comment on it in real time. Municipalities have also used questionnaires as a tool for data gathering and people involvement. However, this has proved not to be a very effective

tool. In most cases, this has resulted in a very low return from the public, ranging from 45 to 50, the lowest, to 790, the highest, in Tirana (Bashkia Tirane 2017). However, when considering that all of the above municipalities have a population ranging from more than 20,000, the smallest, to almost 700,000, the largest, Tirana, then the reach of the questionnaires is almost too small to be even considered representative. The municipality of Shkoder used online resources to create an Internet-based survey which attracted around 350 people.

4.4 Spatial Planning and Public Participation in Kosovo

Following the end of WWII, Kosovo became part of the Yugoslavian Federation. Being part of the communist regime, also in Kosovo, a centralist planning approach was applied. Most of the decisions were taken in Belgrade and then executed in the different localities. Between 1945 and 1965, planning focused mostly on the reconstruction after the war, and thus, a strong focus was placed on urban design projects. The urbanism approach was spread throughout the whole of Yugoslavia including Kosovo (Allkja and Marjankovic 2019). After 1965, there was a general attempt in Yugoslavia to introduce political decentralisation and to give greater autonomy to the different lower tiers of government in planning. Although not to the same extent as in other members of the federation, these tendencies were also reflected in Kosovo. In 1960, the Kosovo Urbanism and Construction Entity was established in Pristina (Hoxha 2006). It was a branch of the same institution in Belgrade, which became soon one of the main actors in terms of territorial governance of spatial planning in Kosovo. It took the leadership in drafting key documents for spatial planning, such as the National Spatial Plan of Kosovo (1973), regional and sub-regional plans, as well as support authorities to draft regulatory urban plans for cities (Asosacioni i Arkitekteve te Kosoves 2017). The municipalities became the main planning and implementation authorities at the local according to the law of 1971 “On Urban Planning”. This law also defined the criteria for planning and procedures. In 1972, the Unit for Urbanism and Planning in the Municipality of Prishtina was re-opened by some of the main planning figures at the time, such as Fehmiu, Luci and Pecani. Nevertheless, although there was an attempt for decentralisation, the lack of local planning capacities in Kosovo created another dependency level from central level institutions (Hoxha 2006). The preparation, discussion and implementation of planning decisions were complemented with various types of individual, group and general public participation. In this context, it is interesting to note that the principle of *cross-acceptance* was a common practice in the former Yugoslavia. Three main societal groups dominated the process for consultations: citizens in local communities, workers in the organisations of associated labour and members of the socio-political organisations (ibid.).

After 1989, the attention to planning in Kosovo was reduced because of the socio-political escalations within Yugoslavia (Gashi 2013). Within this framework,

also some plans at the local level were prepared. Prior to the 1990s, public participation was limited by party control and mostly focused on informing the citizens, while after the 1990s, due to the political and social reasons, it was completely reduced. With the collapse of the institutional agreement and re-centralisation of the government under the regime of Milosevic, the constitutional role of municipalities was weakened. The period also brought legal changes by transforming collective and social properties into state ownerships (Hoxha 2006). In 1996, a new master plan for Prishtina was drafted and approved. The plan was of a high professional level, with many analyses, table-diagrams, figures using Local Agenda 21 as a platform; however, the plan had little public acceptance. One of the main reasons is that most of the Albanian community during the 1990s lost their jobs (Hoxha 2006). This aspect led to the flourishing of the informal and illegal construction sector during the 1990s.

When the war between Kosovo and Serbia ended in 1999, attention returned to reforming all governance sectors including planning. It is worth mentioning, that, regarding planning, the laws in force were only those approved until 1989. Kosovo after the war was administrated by the UN—Mission, and the support was structured in four pillars: (i) Pillar I: Police and justice (UN-led); (ii) Pillar II: Civil Administration (UN-led); (iii) Pillar III: Democratisation and institution building (led by Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe); (iv) Pillar IV: Reconstruction and economic development (EU-led).

The fourth pillar is the one where the planning sector was affected the most. While the planning legislation was being prepared, in the early 2000s, some planning activities were conducted, and also, as a response to stop the informal activity, in Prishtina, a visioning process was initiated. This action was a comprehensive process which gathered together national and local institutions, international actors such as UN-Habitat, local actors including different experts. This three days workshop in the form of expert groups served as a basis for the preparation of a Vision for Prishtina.

In 2002, the first Provisional Institutions of Kosovo were established, and they consisted of three bodies: the Kosovo Assembly, Kosovo Government and the President. The administrative system was organised in two levels: the central and local government. After this, a new legal framework started to be drafted, and in 2003, the law “On Spatial Planning” was prepared and subsequently approved in 2004. This legislation brought a new approach to the planning system in Kosovo, as it embraced the comprehensive and integrated one. Public participation, by law, became an integral part of the planning process. Following the approval of the legislation, in 2004, the National Spatial Plan of Kosovo was drafted with the support of UN-Habitat and Institute of Housing Studies in Rotterdam. Besides addressing the plan drafting, the support consisted also of the building capacity of local planners. The Spatial Plan of Kosovo was approved after the independence of Kosovo in 2010, with extension of its validity until 2020. Additionally, at the local level, initiatives were taken in the preparation of plans. The law on spatial planning was amended before the independence of Kosovo because of the requirement of the *Ahtisari package* on spatial areas of orthodox heritage. After the independence of

Kosovo in 2008, the law on spatial planning was subsequently reviewed in 2010 and approved in 2013. Figure 4.3 summarises the evolution of the spatial planning system in Kosovo.

In terms of public participation, article 4 of Law 04/L-174 “On Spatial Planning” determines that one of the main principles that planning in Kosovo is based on is participatory planning (Parliament of Kosovo 2013). Meanwhile, article 20 deals with the participatory planning process and defines that not only should planning authorities encourage the participation of stakeholders, but they need to arrange dedicated meetings for each planning document that requires approval. Additionally, participation needs to be organised in a transparent manner, allowing appropriate time for stakeholders to become part of the process, and lastly that all the participation process should be documented in a report associated with the plan. In 2014, to further support the participatory planning process, an administrative order was prepared by the Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment, namely no. 05/2014, “Administrative Order on the Responsibilities of Spatial Planning Authorities, as well as the Principles and Procedures for Public Participation in Spatial Planning”, date 06/11/2014. The administrative order details the process that authorities at the national and local level have to follow regarding participation. According to this legislation, authorities need to hold at least one public meeting for each planning document that needs approval, namely the National Spatial Plan of Kosovo, the Zonal Map of Kosovo and the Plan for Areas of National Importance at the National level and the Municipal Development Plan, the Municipal Zoning Map and the Regulatory Detailed Plans at the local level. The notice for the public hearing needs to be published in three national newspapers, local TV and other media. The order introduces that landowners have the right to make petitions to local authorities regarding the preparation of the local plans. Lastly, it reiterates the fact that authorities need to prepare a report, which demonstrates in detail: (i) the participatory planning process; (ii) the response to comments and concerns of stakeholders as part of public meetings and (iii) the response to petitions from property owners.

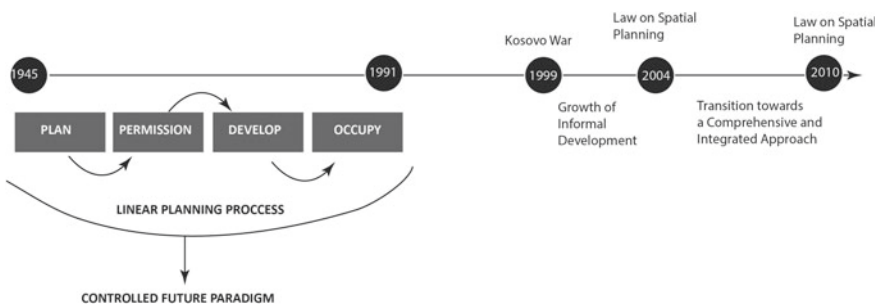


Fig. 4.3 Evolution of spatial planning in Kosovo (Source Authors’ own elaboration)

4.4.1 Public Participation in Practice

Planning activity in Kosovo has been continuous over the years. Once the legislation was approved in 2004, besides the Spatial Plan of Kosovo prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and the Institute of Spatial Planning, all municipalities started to draft their plans with the requirement of the new legislation within the timeframe of 18 months. The process of the preparation of the National Spatial Plan was an interesting experience in terms of participation. Figure 4.4 illustrates the process and the participation in the preparation of the plan.

The participation and the contributions from the stakeholders were structured along four main issues: (i) where we are—challenges of spatial development; (ii) where we want to go—vision and strategic goals; (iii) how to go there—strategy of spatial development and (iv) how to know that we are there—monitoring and evaluation.

From the beginning of the preparation of the spatial plan, the overall framework for the process of drafting and participation of stakeholders was discussed with the Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Kosovo Government, seeking the institutional support. Meanwhile, inter-ministerial working groups were established to cover all sectoral dimensions. In the third phase, the process was widened with other important stakeholders from interest groups like civil society groups, other ethnic and cultural groups, formal and informal educational institutions, private sector, international community and agencies operating in Kosovo (Nushi, personal communication, 24 November 2017).

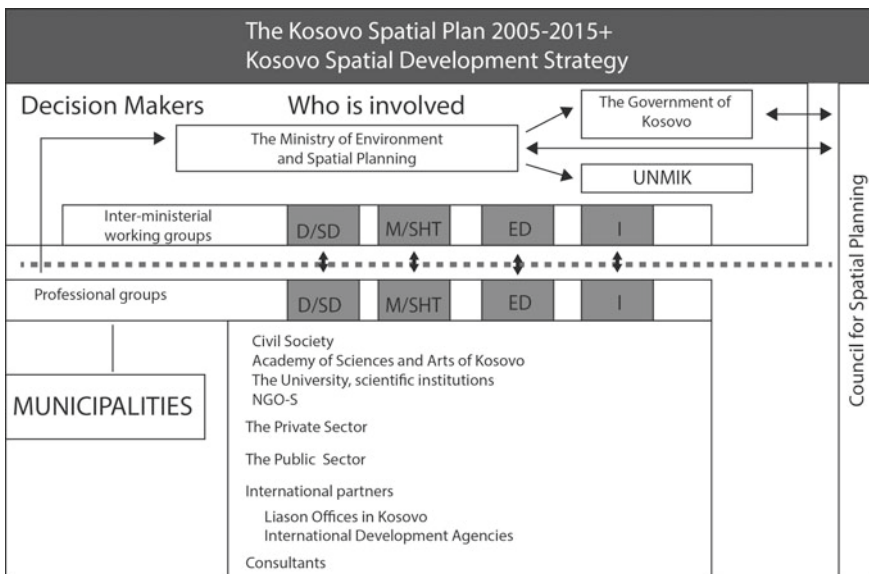


Fig. 4.4 Process for the preparation of the Kosovo spatial plan (Source Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (2006))

Similarly, in 2013, after the subsequent change in legislation, and the introduction of the zonal maps, local authorities took action and have prepared these zonal maps. Although planning activity has been continuous, its documentation, especially the documentation of the participatory planning process, is weak. Although a legal requirement, when checking the official reports of seven of the most populated municipalities such as Prishtina, Peje, Gjakove, Prizren, Gjilan, Mitrovice and Ferizaj, it transpired that none of them had the reports of public participation in planning processes available nor published. Thus, it becomes difficult to assess the process of participatory planning from the documented reports. The only way of understanding the process therefore is through interviews with planning professionals and third party reports.

Nushi (ibid.) argues that, although the reports of the process have not been made available, the public hearings have been respected rigorously by all the municipalities and their technical support in the preparation of the zonal maps of the municipalities, the most recent planning documents under preparation. He also reiterates and points out that, from the monitoring that the Institute of Spatial Planning has conducted, the situation varies from municipality to municipality, depending on their capacities in planning. Similarly, Gjinolli (personal communication, 15 July 2019) in his planning experience with the Municipality of Gjakova, as part of the preparation of the detailed regulatory plan for the neighbourhood of *Deshmoret e Lirise* in 2016 and the Municipal Development Plan for the Municipality of Klina in 2015, observes that they have respected the legal requirements and taken the appropriate measures for participation. One of the modes they tried to foster participation in the municipalities was through public hearings, which is the legal requirement, but they also used alternative methods, such as working together with the communities especially in the case of Gjakova, which is a smaller scale plan. However, Gjinolli (ibid) highlights that the process of participatory planning is difficult, and, besides the communal capacities, it is also not always understood by the citizens. Thus, their engagement becomes a challenge.

In terms of using the Internet and social media for the promotion and information of the general public regarding the planning processes, from an overview of the above-mentioned municipalities' official pages in Facebook—as well as the concerns of other social media—for the 2015–2018 period, it can be said that it is relatively low, and nothing is documented regarding planning processes. Additionally, interviews with Nushi (ibid.) and Gjinolli (ibid.) both confirm that there are no cases of the use of technology, such as GIS, for enhancing citizen participation in Kosovo municipalities.

Based on a report prepared by associations like *Ec Ma Ndryshe* and PRO-Planning (2016), citizens declare that their inclusion in planning processes is not sufficient, while only 23% of the interviewed people declare that it is good. This links also to comments on mentioned issues by the two planning experts who say that although efforts are made, participatory planning still has not achieved its full

extent. Some of the main reasons for the situation are related to a lack of interest by the public, as well as a lack of trust in participatory planning, combined with the lack of adequate information and an active attitude of the municipalities for the process.

These tendencies are also highlighted by the UN-HABITAT office in Kosovo, which is one of the main promoters of participatory planning in Kosovo. The lack of capacities at the local level very often requires the engagement of technical expertise from outside of the municipalities, creating a gap between the citizens and their local representatives. Participatory planning has not yet become a common practice in many municipalities of Kosovo. Most of them primarily conduct participatory planning processes to satisfy the legal requirement or the requirements of donors supporting the plans (UN-Habitat 2012). Thus, although the new law of spatial planning is based on participatory planning, its level of interpretation and implementation continues to be limited to the information from the planners to the community.

Nevertheless, there are also some good cases, which can be found in the Kosovo context, especially when these plans have been supported by the donor community. For example, through donor support, the municipalities of Peja, Shtime and Mitrovica were supported to prepare their visions through participatory methods (UN-Habitat 2012). The visions in these cases were prepared by using in-depth workshops with citizens and professional planners, as well as workshops with children who drew the desired vision of their cities. Once the vision statements were drafted, they were shared with a larger audience. Although these represent a good case study of vision making, they continue to remain limited.

Another good example of participatory planning in Kosovo at the local level comes from the municipality of Suhareka. The process was led by the Municipality of Suhareka, and the plan was drafted with the support of Vienna University of Technology, StudioUrba+, Mecca Environmental Consulting and im-plan-tat from Vienna. In this planning process, participation was one of the main aspects. Over 70 meetings with experts and special target groups, including entrepreneurs, young people, school children, farmers, heads of villages and the voluntary and community sector were conducted.

Additionally, at a smaller scale, there are also some good practices. For example, a pilot project on rethinking *Mother Theresa street*, with a focus on its turning it pedestrian, was a good opportunity to test the inclusive process of planning between many stakeholders such as Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Un-Habitat, Municipality of Prishtina, UNDP and University of Prishtina. The process was a field research with the community to identify their needs and challenges. Since it was an important project for the city, a wider group of actors were also included in the process.

4.5 Comparison Between Albania and Kosovo

Albania and Kosovo have made important reforms over the last years in the planning system. As all countries belong to the former socialist bloc, both countries have moved from the rigid and regulatory planning approach to a more comprehensive and integrated one (see: Adams et al. 2011; Cotella 2007, 2014). In both countries, an integral principle of planning is that of participation, which is sanctioned by law, and all planning authorities have the duty to include citizens in the planning process. Legally, all planning authorities have the duty to organise at least one public hearing for each planning document which is prepared. Meanwhile, unlike Albania, Kosovo has also prepared an administrative order in 2014 to further support the implementation of participatory planning processes, although, from a practical point of view, this legal act adds little to what the law on spatial planning already says through its articles. In Kosovo, the only legal obligation is to conduct public hearings, while in Albania, a novelty in terms of participation can be considered the requirement to create Citizen Advisory Forums. This is another step forward, as it requires municipalities to have community representatives in close cooperation with the planners while preparing the planning instruments.

In Kosovo and Albania, public hearings are the main method used for participatory planning. Both at the national and local level, planning authorities respect the legal obligation for conducting public hearings. Nevertheless, challenges continue to be associated with the public hearings. For instance, the engagement of the public in these types of meetings continues to remain a challenge. This is usually due to the low commitment of the municipalities, as well as the general low trust of the public in these types of processes. On the other hand, practice in Albania shows that attention is paid to the method of focus groups, usually with professionals of different fields, in order to overcome some of the challenges of participation with the wider public. Similarly, in Kosovo, the technique of focus groups for vision making has been used by local authorities; however, this has been mainly done through donor supported activities.

In terms of informing the public regarding planning processes through the use of other means such as social media and the Internet, it seems that Albanian municipalities are paying a greater attention compared to those in Kosovo. The opportunities offered by the Internet to speak to a larger audience through these means have been grasped by the Albanian municipalities. Additionally, the utilisation of technology such as GIS for increasing public participation can also be considered a novelty and a good practice by some of the Albanian municipalities (e.g. Lezhe). On the other hand, these efforts have not been seen in the Kosovo context yet.

In general, there is a lack of documentation of the processes and feedback, which has been taken in consideration by the community in decision-making. In Kosovo, the reports were not available in order to see whether issues raised by the community had been taken into consideration, whereas in Albania, although there was a general documentation of the comments from the public and meetings, the reports

lacked clarity on how they were reflected in planning documents. Thus, a lack of transparency in the planning processes continues to exist.

Participatory planning in both countries, especially at the local level, is subject to the willingness and leadership of the local authorities. In cases of authorities, which have higher levels of capacities and understand the importance of the process, the efforts to increase participation have been higher, whereas for the rest, it usually remains in the fulfilment of legal or donor requirements.

4.6 Conclusions

As can be seen from both case studies, Albania and Kosovo have gone through important and dynamic processes of change with regard to the planning systems in the last two decades. Both countries are trying to establish systems, which have a comprehensive and integrated planning approach. As part of these processes, an important component has been public participation. It is a great challenge for local as well as national processes.

As a conclusion regarding the public participation in Albania, it can be said that the process still remains a challenge. Although there are a variety of initiatives and new approaches, in most cases, the so-called *public participation* remains mostly at the information level, rather than a real involvement of local communities. There are some good practices, however, which can be used further for the future, such as the use of Web applications (case of Lezha), and focus groups with different experts (Tirana and Shkodra). The practice has shown the difficulty of involving citizens, especially in the rural parts of the municipalities. Even in the cases when municipalities have organised meetings outside of the centre, the turnout of people has been very low. In most cases, this is due to reasons such as the lack of awareness regarding the planning process, little trust in local authorities and tiredness of planning processes, which have not resulted in any implementation phase nor improved the quality of life of citizens.

Meanwhile, Kosovo, before and after independence, has undergone many political, spatial and socio-economic pressures. A change of the legal framework so often leads to the need to invest repeatedly in human resources, to ensure that the process will go further. Bearing in mind that is a young country, with a weak economy and still fragile political contexts, the culture of participation is developing slowly. The important thing is that all actors involved in the planning process should try to develop an inclusive process no matter the outcome. In this respect, the awareness of the public of the importance of participation in planning process is a necessity. Raising awareness about this aspect could be seen as something to be integrated also in the education curricula, as the right to the city touches also children, women, people with special needs and elderly people. Active citizenship should be promoted through different means of communication and should become a model. In this respect, municipalities could also engage in experimentation at community mobilisation over an issue and/or a plan. It is important to see and test

which are the best instruments to be used in public meetings, depending on the focus group, so that the best outcome is achieved. Community involvement takes time, money, efforts and capabilities, and these are the main reasons why some of the companies and other planning bodies do it formally and as a short cut, only as a public hearing at the end of the process. However, this does not have any real result and impact on the plan. Enhancing participation means creating a sense of belonging, and with that, a community seeks more responsibility and accountability.

This chapter has also reiterated the observation present in the literature that, although public hearings manage to inform a larger number of the public, they are less efficient in terms of participation. Thus, for both Albania and Kosovo, it is important to further experiment with different methods, in order not only to increase the reach of different people, but also to increase the participation of the public in planning processes. The Albanian case, as mentioned above, has shown that there are some embryonic experiences in terms of using Web-based approaches, which can be useful and further expanded. In addition, the Albanian case has also shown that social media can be very useful tools in terms of informing a larger range of the public.

Thus, based on the conclusions of this article, below are a few recommendations, which can be taken up by local and national authorities while conducting planning processes:

- Involving the public from the beginning should become a prerequisite for all authorities. It is important to identify different stakeholders. Also, community needs should be identified from the beginning. This can be done in different ways; however, the use of workshops and seminars could be a good method in terms of narrowing the gap between institutions and citizens, as well as increasing the trust in the process;
- Allow for the appropriate time in conducting public participation. The plan should be seen as a continuous dialogue with the citizens. Therefore, in the initiation phase, a detailed plan for community participation should be prepared and made available to the public;
- Public participation needs to go beyond mere information. Thus, it is important to diversify the tools used and overcome the *trap* of public hearings; hence, using scenario planning could be a good tool for integrating the public;
- The planning process should be transparent throughout the whole time of the process. In this case, the use of Web-GIS tools can be considered as a good option. However, considering that not all actors can understand and use these tools, it becomes important to expand the information giving platforms. Social media can play an important role in this respect;
- Additionally, authorities should increase public debate regarding territorial planning and development. This can be tackled in different ways, including TV debates, open exhibitions, polls regarding planning policies, idea competitions, etc.;

- It is important to identify also key stakeholders, coming from the community, who could serve as a consultative board regarding planning policies. Expert and non-expert focus groups on different policies can also be used in this case;
- Public involvement should be a continuous process; therefore, citizens should be involved in the planning implementation phase also. Authorities should make efforts in informing and afterwards integrating the public continuously. This can lead to better monitoring for policies and projects, as well as the subsequent reviews of plans;
- Both countries, besides the general local plans, have also another instrument of detailed planning. These should be seen as a key tool for public participation. Efforts for allowing self-organisation of community groups in these cases should be supported and enhanced.

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Part II
Spatial Planning and Territorial
Governance in Motion

Chapter 5

The Evolution and Consolidation of the Serbian Spatial Planning System



Zora Zivanovic  and Dragica Gataric

Abstract Spatial Planning in Serbia is a relatively new scientific discipline also in terms of the theoretical framework and social practices. It has gained importance in the second half of the twentieth century, with the intensification of problems related to the use and development of space. The aim of this paper is to show the Spatial Planning System in Serbia, its basic characteristics, its development path and its importance as a social activity that has the final goal of raising the overall living standard of the population. Spatial plans at each territorial level, national, regional and local, will be subject of specific analysis as well as the spatial planning procedures and the contents of spatial plans. Special attention will be paid to the key problems that Spatial Planning in Serbia meets: horizontal and vertical coordination, as well as the implementation of spatial plans. Based on the main spatial planning challenges in Serbia, along the EU integration process, some measures will be recommended to contribute to the improvement of the Spatial Planning System in Serbia.

Keywords Spatial planning system · Spatial plans · Serbia · Horizontal and vertical coordination · Implementation

5.1 Introduction

Territorial cohesion, regional competitiveness, social inclusion and sustainable development are priorities that are recognised globally. Ways to achieve these objectives, although different, often involve the use of spatial planning solutions.

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Spatial planning, as a social activity, aims to raise the overall life standard of the population, both in Europe and in Serbia.

It is not possible to understand a planning theory and practice separately from the context of ideological constructs of a society (Allmendinger 2002). In each country, spatial planning is adapted to its specificities: way of life, customs, political governance, degree of development and other contextual conditions (Berisha et al. 2020; Berisha et al., in this volume; Berisha and Cotella, in this volume). The basic characteristics of the system of spatial planning are essential for overall social development. The planning system is one of the most important and contradictory issues in the development of the territories. Indeed, according to Golubchikov (2004), planning systems vary across the world and change in time.

After illustrating some basic characteristics of Serbia and the historical development of spatial planning in the country, the chapter explores the main spatial instruments at each territorial level, together with the challenges that they face in terms of horizontal and vertical coordination, as well as implementation. The methodology of analysis implies a detailed overview of the current situation of the Spatial Planning System in Serbia, the systematic review of the existing legal solutions, assessing the efficiency of the planning system and defining the key challenges that the Spatial Planning in Serbia faces. The comprehensive analytical synthetic procedure, i.e. the assessment of the basic features of the planning system in Serbia, was supplemented by the proposal of measures that aim to overcome the main challenges recorded in the Spatial Planning System in Serbia and would thus contribute to the overall improvement of the system.

5.2 Historical Development of Spatial Planning in Serbia

Spatial Planning in Serbia is a relatively new scientific discipline in terms of the theoretical framework and social practices (Table 5.1). It gained importance in the second half of the twentieth century, with the intensification of problems related to the use and development of space. It has developed, in fact, as a response to the complex problem of directing the development and spatial organisation of larger territorial units (Perisic 1985a, b).

Historically, the first step was made at the Conference of urbanists in Arandjelovac held in 1957, when it was concluded that the space is *wasted* spontaneously, without a serious plan and that the shift must be made on to planning beyond the settlements, to the planning of wider areas, i.e. on spatial planning (Dobrovic 1957). The start of Spatial Planning in Serbia is linked to the 1960s, when the first Spatial Plan in Serbia was made (1961), which was related to the area of the Danube region from Belgrade to the Bulgarian border. Its design was initiated by the decision to build a hydroelectric power plant in Djerdap. The first Law on Spatial Planning came into force in 1961 and then revised in 1965. Until today, seven laws relating to spatial planning were issued in different periods: during the socialist period (1974, 1985, 1989) and after it in 1995, 2003 and 2009.

Table 5.1 Historical development of Spatial Planning in Serbia

Year	Main planning steps and laws	Main innovations
1957	The first step was made	The Conference of urbanists in Arandjelovac concluded that the shift must be made on spatial planning
1961	The first Law on Spatial Planning	Spatial planning as a <i>cross-section/sectoral</i> approach
1963	The first Spatial Plan in Serbia was adopted	Danube region from Belgrade to the Bulgarian border
1995	Law on Spatial Planning and Settlements arrangement	The main input was abolishing the spatial plan of the municipality
2003	The Law on Planning and Construction	Among others, the law: obligated creating the local spatial plan; established local planning commission and defined: rules of regulation and construction related to the part of the planned area for which no urban plans are envisaged
2009	The Law on Planning and Construction	Among others, seeks to: accelerate the process of obtaining construction permits and legalisation of illegally constructed buildings; prepare the Implementation Program for the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia and the Regional Spatial Plans, etc.
2014	Amendments to the existing Law were made in 2014	Among others, amendments establish: the abolition of the obligation of making the concept of the plan as the first phase and reducing the process of the spatial planning to a single phase, which is called draft plan and the introduction of early public insight

Source Authors' own elaboration

One of the main shortcomings of legislation in field of Spatial Planning in Serbia is a making cross-section, or the adoption of new laws with almost any change of government, with a radical change of legal solutions: i.e. the elimination of certain types of plans, changes in the organisation of the planning process, *transferring* license from an institutional to a private entity. This of course was very challenging for the historical context when it happened, which means also, making spatial planning activity complex and more articulated to implement it. Here, we will briefly discuss the last few laws that were adopted after the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The first law adopted after the downfall of the socialism experiences was adopted in 1995—Law on Spatial Planning and Settlements arrangement (“Off. Gazette of RS” No. 44/1995). It has brought radical change in the system of spatial plans such as the abolishing of the spatial plan of the municipality. This has significantly reduced the scope of spatial planning activities or the possibility of engaging spatial planners in Serbia. However, this law supported the creation of local public enterprises for spatial planning and urbanism in many municipalities in Serbia. In this period, due to the situation in the country, a small

number of spatial plans were made. Apart from that, the first Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia was completed and adopted in 1996.

The crisis which occurred from 1995 to 1999 has contributed to the disappearance of the activities related to spatial planning and territorial development. In fact, apart from the above-mentioned national plan, only one spatial plan was made, the Regional Plan of the area of Kolubara (1999). Despite that, the law of 1995 introduced an important novelty: the spatial plan of the infrastructure network which was designed as a special type of spatial plan. These kinds of plans are also interiorised by the current law under the label of *Spatial Plan of Special Purpose Areas*. The period of transition of the economy from centrally planned to market-oriented demanded a high degree of flexibility when it came to the legal framework of planning. This is why after less than ten years the Law on Planning and Construction from 2003 (“Off. Gazette of RS” No. 47/2003) was introduced. The law had the merit of integrating the areas of spatial and urban planning, construction land, legalisation, which were previously separated. According to this Law, the municipal spatial plan is referred back to the planning system. The obligation of creating the spatial plan within 18 months was stipulated for each municipality in Serbia. The deadline was unrealistically short, which confirmed its prolongation on several occasions, but many municipalities initiated spatial planning activities. The design of spatial development strategies in the planning area was anticipated as the first stage in the process of making the spatial plan of the observed area. The obligation to establish the planning commission was also stipulated to the local government, in order to perform professional tasks in the process of developing and implementing planning documents, expert verification of compliance of planning document with planning documents of higher order and Law, as well as providing expert opinion at the request of the competent administrative authorities. The same Act (2003) at the national level envisages the drafting of the document entitled Spatial Development Strategy. A new type of planning document—the Spatial Development Scheme—was introduced but never implemented.

The Law stipulates the establishment of the Serbian Chamber of Engineers based in Belgrade. Members of the Chamber are the architectural, civil, mechanical, electrical, traffic engineers and engineers of other technical professions, as well as graduate spatial planners with the appropriate license issued by the Chamber. The license of a chief planner is necessary for managing the development of a spatial plan (according to the previous Law, individuals did not receive a license but the *planning enterprises*). An important innovation for the Serbian Spatial Planning has been the establishment of the Republic Agency for Spatial Planning in order to ensure an effective implementation and improvement of the planning policy and spatial development of the Republic of Serbia. However, the Agency was abolished in 2014 and partially merged with the Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure of Republic of Serbia, which became entirely responsible for spatial planning.

The latest Law on Planning and Construction was adopted in 2009 (“Off. Gazette RS”, No. 72/2009). Although it is believed that the main goal of the law was related to a part of urban planning, in particular—to accelerate the process of

obtaining construction permits, as well as the process of legalisation of illegally constructed buildings—important changes also interest spatial planning. In particular, the law establishes that: (i) the preparation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia is prescribed; (ii) the Spatial Development Schemes have been abolished; (iii) the preparation of spatial plans at all territorial levels is envisaged in two phases: the concept and draft plan; (iv) the preparation of the Implementation Program for the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia and the Regional Spatial Plans was prescribed, and finally, (v) the spatial plan of the local self-government unit also contains the rules of regulation and construction related to the part of the planned area for which no urban plans are envisaged (as a result, location permits may be issued on the basis of the spatial plan of the local self-government¹).

In 2014, amendments to the existing Law were made which, again, to a greater extent were related to urban issues. What stands out as important, from the perspective of spatial planning, is the abolition of the obligation of making the concept of the plan as the first phase and reducing the process the spatial planning to a single phase, which is called the draft plan, as well as the introduction of early public insight. In 2018, amendments to the existing Law were made, and two new kinds of documents for spatial and urban planning were introduced: the Strategy for Sustainable Urban Development of the Republic of Serbia and the National architectural strategy. Also, the horizon of spatial plans is limited to a maximum of 25 years.

5.3 Main Documents of Spatial and Urban Planning

The law currently in force envisages a number of spatial planning documents, which are hierarchically dependent and diverse in nature (i.e. strategic or regulative), level (national, regional and local) and objectives (as illustrated in Table 5.2). Each of them is presented more in detail in the sections that follow.

The Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (SPRS) is a strategic document that provides general guidelines for state development and has legal force. It is elaborated by extensive lower order plans. As stated above, the first National Plan was adopted in Serbia in 1996, as a result of decades of research and work by the team that consisted of about 180 members from different professions. Years later, in accordance with the new institutional configuration promoted by the Law on Planning and Construction that was passed in 2003, the Strategy for the Development of Serbia (2010–2014–2021) was introduced at the end of the first decade of this century. The strategy was seen as equivalent to the concept of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, on the basis of which the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia was drafted (2010–2014–2020) and adopted in 2010. This spatial plan is under revision, and a new one is expected during the next year. Methodologically speaking, the plan will most probably be similar to the previous

¹The location permit is issued for the cadastral parcel eligible for the building plot.

Table 5.2 Documents for spatial and urban planning

Level	Planning documents		Documents for the implementation of spatial plans	Urban-technical documents
	Spatial plans	Urban plans		
National	Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia		Program for implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia	
Regional	Regional Spatial Plan Spatial Plan of Special Purpose Area		The program of implementation of the Regional Spatial Plan	
Local	Spatial Plan of the local self-government unit	General Urban Plan General Regulation Plan Detailed Regulation Plan		Urban project The project of pre-partitioning and partitioning

Source Authors' own elaboration

one although among the professional and scientific public there are advocates of the thesis that the logic of the strategy should be changed by giving priorities to defining a set of recommendations and guidelines. The strategic character of this document would remove the obligations of direct implementation and monitoring. After adopting the latest Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, through the development of the Implementation Program and the Report of realization of spatial development, has proven that in practice it was very difficult to monitor the implementation of the spatial plan.

The Regional Spatial Plan (RSP), instead, is a sort of operationalisation of the national plan and serves as the basis for plans at lower levels. The Regional Spatial Plan is supposed to be the planning document that takes into account specific needs deriving from the regional model, develops goals of spatial arrangement and determines the rational use of space, taking into account the interests of the areas adjacent to the region. Historically, the roots of regional planning in Serbia can be found in plans made during the eighties, for the inter-municipal regional communities. During the nineties, only one Regional Spatial Plan was made in 1999 for the Kolubara district, following the earthquake that hit this area. In the first decade of twenty-first century, only one Regional Spatial Plan was adopted for the Administrative area of Belgrade, 2004, to which amendments were made in 2011. According to the current Law, a Regional Spatial Plan is developed for larger spatial units of administrative, functional, geographic or statistical character, directed towards common objectives and projects of regional development. In Serbia, due to the impossibility of defining commonly acceptable criteria for

establishing the region as a single entity, administrative territorial division is often taken as a basis for considering complex problems of regional development planning (Zivanovic and Tosic 2016). Administratively speaking, on the basis of the adopted Law on Territorial Organisation of the Republic of Serbia (“Official Gazette of RS”, No. 129/2007), the territory of the country is divided into 29 districts and the City of Belgrade. The districts are further subdivided into units of local government. Since it has become clear that spatial planning is an inseparable attribute of the management process (Zigern-Korn 2009) and that planning is a prerequisite for successful directing development processes (Khodachek and Khodachek 2009), the development of several regional spatial plans has been initiated. The planning regions are formed by grouping several of the administrative districts. Thus, up to 2015, planning documents at the regional level covered the whole territory of the Republic of Serbia. Specifically, the nine regional spatial plans were adopted. The development of a new generation spatial plans is expected to be initiated at the regional level. However, one of the shortcomings of spatial planning that relates to the regional level in Serbia is the unification of the way of making regional spatial plans. Namely, all regional plans are made according to the same pattern, in the same way. This has been criticised because they do not reflect the specific nature of the area they are related to and therefore, conditionally, can be considered as a useless part of the Serbian planning system. This is precisely why the regional level in Serbia has no competencies and is very underdeveloped. The intention is that, in line with the EU recommendations, the regional level will be strengthened, obliging Serbia to improve the planning process at that territorial level.

The Spatial Plan of Special Purpose Area (SPSPA) has to be made for areas with natural, cultural-historical or environmental value, for the exploitation of mineral resources, utilisation of tourism potential and utilisation of hydropower and construction of facilities. The building permit is issued by the ministry in charge of construction or the competent authority of the autonomous province, which requires the special regime of organisation, development, use and protection of space and which is determined by the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia.

Serbia has so far adopted a total of sixty spatial plans of special purpose area. In particular, the recent years have been characterised by the adoption of several spatial plans for special purposes areas in the field of infrastructure for a total of twenty-two plans. The majority of the plans interest transport infrastructure, and in particular, ten have focused on road development and three on railway initiatives. In addition to the above-mentioned plans, initiatives have interested gas, petroleum and waterways. Other important sectors interested by this kind of plans are reservoirs (nine plans have been developed); mining areas (only two plans); natural goods (with a total of twenty-one); cultural heritage (four plans) and others (two).

During the recent years, more intensive making of this kind of planning documents is noticeable. One reason for this is the fact that it is the type of spatial plan that is adopted for areas of national importance. Their contracting authority is the State, through the competent ministry, so the procedure for their adoption is more efficient.

Moving from the central to the local level, the Spatial Plan of the Local Government Unit (SPLGU) is made for the territory of the local government and defines the guidelines for the development of activities and the use of the area, as well as the conditions for sustainable and balanced development in the territory of the local government. Local government units in Serbia are municipalities (147) and cities (27). The units of the local government that are the economic, administrative, geographical and cultural centres of the wider area and that have more than 100,000 inhabitants have gained the status of a city. In 2015, for the first time in the national planning process, all local government units have received spatial plans. Some have already started the production of a new generation of spatial plans, since the planning period of 10 years is usually at the end. In this respect, there are a series of planning documents at the local level, at least three.

The general urban plan is adopted as a strategic development document, with general elements of spatial development, for the settlement which, in accordance with the Law on Territorial Organisation of the Republic of Serbia, was established as a city. The plan has a strategic nature and does not contain rules of planning and construction, which means it cannot be directly implemented, as opposed to the plans of general and detailed regulation on the basis of which a location permit may be issued (and based on two types of spatial plans, as mentioned). The General Regulation Plan is mandatory for a populated settlement which is the seat of local government and can be adopted for other settlements in the municipality or city, or the city of Belgrade, when it is provided by the spatial plan of the local government unit. The Detailed Regulation Plan is adopted for parts of settlements, establishing informal settlements, zones of urban renewal, infrastructural corridors and facilities and areas for which the obligation of its production is established by its previously adopted planning document.

5.4 Spatial Planning Procedures and Plans Content

The process of preparation of spatial (and urban) planning instruments involves several steps. What changes are the planning responsibilities which depend on the planning level and the authorities involved, as Table 5.3 shows.

More in detail, the decision on the development of the planning document is issued by the authority responsible for its passing. In particular, the decision is taken by the Government on the proposal of the competent Ministry for plans like the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, the Regional Spatial Plan (except for Vojvodina and City of Belgrade) and the Spatial Plan of Special Purpose Area, while the Assembly of local government unit is responsible for adopting a decision concerning the spatial plan of local government unit. After taking the decision, the latest amendments to the Law on Planning and Construction introduced the so-called *early public insight*, in order to intensify acquainting the public with the planned activities and its participation in the planning process and to encourage participatory planning. After deciding on the development of the spatial or urban

Table 5.3 Spatial planning procedures

Steps	Responsibility (In charge of)	
Decision	Government on the proposal of the competent Ministry and the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, Regional Spatial Plan (except for Vojvodina and City of Belgrade) and Spatial Plan of Special Purpose Area and Assembly of local government unit for Spatial Plan of local government unit	
Early public insight	Ministry, i.e. competent authority of autonomous province or local self-government, in cooperation with the development plan holder	
Preparatory activities	The processor of the planning document is the development plan holder	
The draft plan and technical control	The draft plan is prepared by processor of the planning document (the development plan holder). Professional control of SPRS, SPSPA and RSP is conducted by the ministry in charge for spatial planning. SPLGU technical control is performed by the plans commission.	
Public insight	Ministry, i.e. competent authority of autonomous province or local self-government, in cooperation with the development plan holder	
Validation	Minister, i.e. competent authority of autonomous province	
Adoption	SPRS	National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, at the proposal of the Government
	SPSPA	The Government, on the proposal of the ministry
	RSP	The Government, at the proposal of ministry
	SPLGU	Assembly of the local government

Source Authors' own elaboration

plan, the development plan holder informs the public (legal entities and individuals) with the overall objectives and purpose of the development of the plan, possible solutions for the development of spatial entities and for urban renewal, as well as the effects of planning. After announcing the decision to draw up a planning document, the drafting of the plan starts. For the purposes of drafting the plan, one who starts the process collects data, particularly on existing planning documents, substrates, special conditions for the protection and development of space, other documents significant for the development plan, the condition and capacity of the infrastructure, as well as other data necessary for the development of the plan.

The draft plan is subjected to an expert control, prior to the public insight. According to the law, the technical control of planning document includes (1) the verification of compliance of the planning document and its solutions with the Law, the decision on the development of the planning document, adopted planning documents of the wider region; (2) the checking of the feasibility of the planning solutions from the standpoint of: the rational use and protection of natural and human resources; the alignment of spatial distribution of the population and activities; directing the development and the process of urbanisation; the rational organisation of the network of settlements; (3) the verification and assessment of the reality and feasibility of the solutions proposed by the planning document. All these activities are conducted at the central level. Expert control of SPRS, SPSPA and

RSP is conducted by the ministry in charge of spatial planning. The professional verification of SPSPA and RSP for areas that are entirely within the territory of the autonomous province is performed by the plans established by the competent authority of the autonomous region. A report on the performed expert control is then drawn up. An integral part of the report on the performed expert control of the planning document is the following conclusion: that, after acting upon the objections given in the report, expert control should be carried out again or a positive opinion on the draft plan should be given and that the draft plan can be referred to the public review procedure.

Once the plan has undergone the control process, a presentation of the planning document for public insight is made. The presentation is announced in the daily and local newspaper and lasts for 30 days after the advertising. The presentation of the planning document for public insight is overseen by the ministry responsible for regional planning or the local government authority in charge of spatial and urban planning. During the presentation of the draft spatial plan for public insight, a contracting authority (ministry, i.e. competent authority of the autonomous province or local self-government, in cooperation with the processor of the planning document), organises at least one public presentation of the draft planning document, not later than 10 days before the expiry of the public insight. Upon completion of the public insight of the draft document, the commission established by the competent authority, i.e. the commission for plans of the local government, holds a public meeting and prepares a report on the completed public insight for the draft planning document. The report on the conducted public insight must be submitted to the planning document processor, who is obliged to comply with it within 30 days of receipt of the report. After acting in accordance with the report on the conducted public insight, the competent authority puts a planning document into procedure for adoption.

The adoption procedure changes in relation to which kind of plan should be adopted. In particular, the competence for the adoption of planning documents is different in each spatial planning level. According to the Law, The Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia is adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, at the proposal of the Government. However, the Spatial Plan of Special Purpose Area is adopted by the Government, on the proposal of the ministry, and for areas that are entirely located in the territory of the autonomous province, the autonomous province assembly. Similarly, the Regional Spatial Plan, except for the Regional Spatial Plan of the autonomous region and the Regional Spatial Plan for the city of Belgrade, is passed by the Government, at the proposal of ministry responsible for spatial planning. The Regional Spatial Plan for the territory of the autonomous province is adopted by the Assembly of the Autonomous Province or the Assembly of Belgrade. At the local level, instead, spatial plans—both regulative and strategic—of the local government unit are adopted by the Assembly of the local government. Finally, all planning documents passed have to be recorded in the Central Registry of planning documents.

Each spatial plan contains textual and graphical parts. Although there are some differences in the content of the text part of spatial plans, depending on the type of plan, each spatial plan essentially consists of four main chapters (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Textual part of the spatial plan

Chapter	Content
Baseline	It contains: legal and planning basis; time horizon; spatial scope; analysis of existing state: nature, society, economy, infrastructure and environmental protection; assessment of the current situation
Objectives	In the same areas where the current situation is being analysed: nature, society, economy, infrastructure and environmental protection
Planning proposals	In the same areas where the current situation is being analysed: nature, society, economy, infrastructure and environmental protection
Implementation	It concerns the definition of institutional framework; the participants procedures, instruction, defining priority planning solutions, and finally, it defines measures and instruments

Source Authors' own elaboration

The first section elaborates and analyses aspects of the natural systems and resources by considering and evaluating the status of the goals and planning measures relating to agricultural land, forest and forest soil, water and geological resources. The same is required for the aspects related with the description of the social issues, which takes into consideration: the population, settlement network, structure and functions of urban centres and public services. Analyses should be conducted also in terms of (i) economic performance; (ii) infrastructure development, which implies the analysis and assessment of the situation, and the definition of the objectives and planning measures in the field of transportation, water supply, energy, communications and communal infrastructure; (iii) protection of environment that includes the protection and regulation of natural resources, the protection and regulation of cultural heritage, defence and civil protection, as well as natural disasters and the risk of technological accidents.

In addition to the described and analytical sections, the law also envisages a series of maps. The graphic part of spatial plans consists of sectoral maps whose number is not precisely defined and 3–4 referral maps (see Table 5.5). On referral maps are shown: use of the space; settlement network, functions, public services and infrastructure systems; natural resources, protection environment and natural and cultural resources, as well as the implementation of the plan (zones and settlements for which the development of urban plans or projects is envisaged, or zones for direct application of the plan—issuance permits).

5.5 Implementation and Monitoring

The implementation and monitoring of spatial plans in Serbia is one of the weakest planning stages. Methods of implementation of planning solutions are often unclear, and the effects of any application of planning measures are difficult to measure (Stefanovic 2011). Therefore, the current law stipulates the obligation of

Table 5.5 Referral maps in spatial plans, under applicable law

	Type spatial plan			
	SPRS	RSP	SPLGU	SPSPA
Number of maps	4	3	4	4
The names of maps	1. The purpose of spaces and functional areas 2. Network of centres 3. Transportation and infrastructure systems 4. Tourism and space protection	1. The main purpose of space 2. The settlement of network and infrastructure systems 3. Tourism and space protection	1. Purpose of space 2. The network of settlements and infrastructure systems 3. Tourism space protection 4. Map of implementation	1. A special purpose of space 2. The settlement network and infrastructure systems 3. Natural resources, protection of environment and natural and cultural resources 4. Map of implementation
Maps scale	1: 300,000	1: 50,000 to 1: 200,000	1: 25,000 to 1: 50,000	1: 25,000 to 1: 100,000

Source Law on planning construction 2009

making the document for implementing spatial plans. These are implementation programs, and they are performed for the SPRS and the RSP.

The implementation program of the spatial plan defines the deadlines, funding and competence for the realisation of planning solutions and determines the measures and activities for the implementation of the spatial plan, for a period of five years. In the course of this period of time, the drafting of the annual reports on the state of the area and the progress of the strategic priorities is provided, as well as changes in values of the spatial development indicators, which is a step towards continuous planning towards which Serbia is aiming. The implementation program passes to the Government or the authority competent for the adoption of the plan at the proposal of the ministry competent for regional planning, within one year of the date of entry into force of the spatial plan. So far, two implementation programs of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia have been adopted: the first for the period 2011–2015 and the second for the period 2016–2020. The implementation of the spatial plan is monitored, through four annual reports on the implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia.

In addition, the implementation programs for all regional spatial plans have been made (except for Regional Spatial Plan of City of Belgrade). The report on the achievement of the RSP for the Autonomous province of Vojvodina has been annually since 2012. Currently, the development of a new (second) implementation program for the RSP of the Autonomous province of Vojvodina is in progress. The report on the achievement of RSP in the area of all the RSP in Central Serbia except in the area of City of Belgrade is finished. In general, each implementation programme should contain the (i) elaboration of the strategic priorities; (ii) elaboration of the spatial development indicators; (iii) guidelines for the establishment of an information system on urban development.

The Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the first five-year period is defined by 292 strategic priorities in the context of 31 fields. In particular, the development of a strategic priority is undertaken according to the principle of filling analytical cards that define a priority action, responsibility for executing the project, the dynamics of embodiments, targets and indicators, basic problems and challenges. For the realisation of the strategic priorities, the use of available public funds from domestic sources is defined, which are in accordance with the Law on budget, and special public investment funds from the public investment funds which are in accordance with the Law on Investment Funds. Also, in addition to public funds, it is envisaged to use grants, loans, private funds, IPA and other international funds, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European investment bank, as well as programs of multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

Based on a detailed analysis, it was found that in the period from 2011 to 2014 out of a total of 125 planned strategic priorities 11 priorities were realised. In addition, progress in the embodiment at 72 strategic priorities was noted, while a stagnation in the embodiment of 24 has been recognised, and finally, in the 18 priorities, activities of embodiment have not been shown. These findings should be related to the current state of development in the region, which, together with the recent economic developments in the European Union, have contributed to the absence of specific investment initiative in Serbia, which ultimately has a direct impact on the implementation of the strategic priorities, or their suspension, as in the case of the project of the transnational Juzni tok gas pipeline.

Therefore, when preparing the new program for the implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia in the period 2016–2020, revision of the planned strategic priorities for the purpose of harmonisation with the current development needs has been conducted.

As part of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, a model has been proposed that makes 106 physical development indicators, which is based on a target-oriented approach for monitoring the implementation of the implementation program. The main requirements for selecting indicators were as follows: the indicators must have a valid basis for the implementation of the spatial analysis and can meet various requirements of decision-makers. The aim is to achieve compliance with European planning documents of spatial integration and development programs, since it is necessary for the list of indicators defined in the SPRS to be consistent with the list of ESPON indicators developed for monitoring the total European area (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020). The initial model of indicators was checked and tested by the SPRS 2016–2020 implementation program. The possibility to rethink, modify or replace indicators that are shown outdated or unavailable for follow-up in reports was used. Finally, even though the regularity of the spatial plan cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of the extent to which it was planned and implemented, since the reason for non-realisation of planning solutions may not be the inadequacy of the plan, but more often, the lack of financial resources and political orientation, i.e. implementation of the spatial plan (as well as monitoring of implementation), is an important link in the process

of planning and therefore a challenge to which spatial planning practice in Serbia has yet to find adequate answers.

5.6 Vertical and Horizontal Coordination and Spatial Planning Challenges

According to the current Law on Planning and Construction, documents on spatial and urban planning must be aligned so that the document of a narrower area must be in accordance with the document of the wider area. In this context, an integral part of the starting points of each spatial plan is an excerpt from the higher order planning documents. However, the quality of the effective use of these documents depends on the developer of the plan. Therefore, the approval from ministry competent for spatial planning is obtained, in terms of compliance with planning documents of the wider area before the adoption of the spatial plan. It can be concluded that vertical coordination in spatial planning exists in Serbia, with the possibility of further improvement.

In contrast, horizontal coordination is less present due to the fact that the sectoral plans in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, water, culture, education, health, social welfare, environmental protection are based on sectoral legislation. Often there are special types of related documents, such as the Water Management Basis of the Republic of Serbia and Forest Management of the Republic of Serbia, which regulate certain areas, not taking into account solutions in spatial plans. Currently, solutions promoted in sectoral documents certainly provide important inputs in the process of spatial planning; nevertheless, they usually contain maximalist demands in relation to other users of the space (Dordjevic and Dabovic 2009). In this regard, it is necessary to seriously work on the harmonisation of solutions set out in spatial planning documents and other sectoral documents.

Moreover, the new Law on planning from 2009 introduces points on territorial cooperation and the structure of planning analysis and planning proposals. Horizontal coordination and vertical coordination are assured not only in planning documents, but also in the process of participative elaboration planning with an integrated approach as well as implementation and monitoring which have to take into account other sectors and territories. When preparing the new SPRS implementation program using a participatory approach to activate the relevant actors (competent authorities), this has been actively done during the process of particular projects, i.e. strategic priorities in the development of the Republic of Serbia and its regional units, and then the harmonisation of the received proposals from the relevant institutions. The effort that was made represents a step towards improving this segment of Spatial Planning in Serbia.

5.7 Main Spatial Planning Challenges in Serbia

Besides what discussed, there are a number of serious shortcomings, which present a challenge for contemporary spatial planning practice: (i) an undeveloped regional level—which is creating frictions in terms of the legitimacy and implementation of regional plans; (ii) scarce public participation in the planning process that potentially can be an impediment for the implementation of plans; (iii) lack of interest of politicians in the opinion of spatial planners, which is contributing to increasing the distance between political will and technical opinions; (iv) the occurrence of cases of dominance of private over public interests; (v) illegal construction to the extent that it exceeds the capacity of the relevant institutions (the legalisation process attempted to bring informally constructed buildings within the legal framework, but caused a more intensive conversion of agricultural land into construction land with the aim of legalising illegally constructed buildings).

Also, the fact should not be overlooked that in the professional and scientific public of Serbia, as well as among the assessments of the planning system provided by experts from the outside, the so-called *overplanning* is mentioned. It refers to a large number of planning documents that are made both under the current Law on Planning and Construction and according to some sectoral laws. For example, the Strategy for Sustainable Urban Development of the Republic of Serbia envisages the development of Local Strategies for Sustainable and Integral Urban Development, which will significantly overlap with urban plans.

5.8 Conclusive Remarks and Future Perspectives

Notwithstanding the significant change of social and political relations, which may result in changes in the understanding of the concept and practice of spatial planning, the fact is that the development of modern society takes place in the gap between the growing needs of the population and the limited opportunities for them to be carried out satisfactorily. This is manifested by the increase in the number and the complexity of the conflict situations regarding space. The main task of spatial planning is to reduce conflict situations to a minimum (Maksin-Micic 2000). Thus, spatial planning is increasingly linked to the universal goals of improving the quality of human life on the one hand and on the other guaranteeing a balanced, inclusive and ecological use of space. In this context, spatial planning becomes one of the key management mechanisms, whose application must be balanced between the state and the market and must insist on an integrated approach (Berisha et al. 2020).

The constantly present tendency is towards achieving integrity in spatial planning, also the biggest planning concern in the theoretical, normative and sense of social practice (Perisic 1985a), which implies that equal treatment of social, economic and physical development component dominates over Spatial Planning in Serbia. The theory of an integrated approach has been present in Serbia since the

beginning of spatial planning (Perisic 1985a, b). Topics in spatial plans cover all aspects of sustainable development (see Solly et al. 2020). Some kinds of spatial plans (SPLGU and SPSPA) also give some basic guidelines for land use, especially for the areas out of settlements which are not treated in urban plans. Therefore, when comparing the Spatial Planning System in Serbia and other spatial planning systems in the countries of the European Union, the Spatial Planning System in Serbia is positioned between the comprehensive and integrated-land-use planning styles (Trkulja et al. 2011).

Finally, even if it cannot be denied that the Spatial Planning System in Serbia contains interdisciplinarity and integrality, it is clear that there are a number of serious shortcomings, which present a challenge for contemporary spatial planning practice. Certainly, to respond to some of the current and future challenges facing the Serbian planning practice, it is necessary to work on its development, especially in terms of (Nadin et al. 2018): (i) adapting the modern planning system in line with European standards and policies; (ii) strengthening the orientation to the market in accordance with the requirements of the specific post-socialist local context; (iii) improving cooperation between the public and private sectors (consideration of the institutional framework of the Serbian planning practice, pointing out the crucial role of local government and public institutions in the field of planning); (iv) intensifying the protection of public interest; (v) broadening the involvement of all relevant actors in the planning process.

In response to the basic challenges that characterise the functioning of the Spatial Planning System in Serbia, it is necessary to provide conditions in which the spatial plans would be more fully implemented and above all provide financial resources for the realisation of strategic priorities. Monitoring difficulties should be resolved by designing adequate indicators and by ensuring their availability. In line with EU recommendations, it is necessary to strengthen the regional level. Horizontal coordination and participatory approach are also areas in which serious efforts should be made to improve the overall Spatial Planning System in Serbia.

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Chapter 6

Spatial Planning and Territorial Governance in North Macedonia: From Socialist Yugoslavia to European Integration



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Abstract The present chapter discusses the evolution of the governance and planning system of North Macedonia. It does so by analysing the administrative and territorial subdivision of the country, the planning authorities in the multi-level governance system, and the main planning instruments produced at the different territorial levels. Particular attention is given to comparing the present situation with the system that existed in the former Yugoslavia, while also reflecting on the European influences in the period of post-socialist transition. The chapter concludes that, in North Macedonia, the remnants of the socialist past combined with the European integration requirements have given rise to a complex governance and planning system plagued by a lack of coordination and contested institutional competencies.

Keywords Spatial planning · Territorial governance · North Macedonia · Former Yugoslavia · Post-socialist transition · European integration · Western Balkan

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6.1 Introduction

Former Yugoslavia broke up in the early 1990s. The countries formed by its dissolution took a turbulent path of transition from planned to the market economy. In the course of the process, they had to adapt their crumbling institutions to newfound conditions. In some cases, it even meant building them from scratch. As in other post-socialist states (Bachtler et al. 2019; Cotella 2007, 2014), this has been done with an eye on the experiences of more developed economies, and especially their neighbours in Western Europe. Policies and initiatives of international actors, and considerably the European Union (EU), have played a prominent role in this process as well (Adams et al. 2011).

However, many societal institutions of ex-Yugoslav countries still bear the marks of their socialist past. Their development in the period of post-socialist transition has involved a mixture of preserving the lingering remnants of the previous system and experimenting with the influences coming from outside (Berisha et al., in this volume). In general, it has been a hard task to establish modern democratic institutions within the incompatible milieu of old habits and new political pressures for the democratisation of society. The establishment of territorial governance and planning systems was no exception to that.

The present chapter discusses the evolution of the governance and planning system in North Macedonia. In particular, we study its development in the context of European integration of the Western Balkans in the period of post-socialist transition. Policies and instruments of the EU, and especially those supporting non-members in the process of accession, have become consistent references for the adaptation of governance and planning structures to market conditions in all ex-Yugoslav countries (Berisha et al. 2018; Cotella and Berisha 2016, Berisha and Cotella in this volume). This appears to be considerably prominent in North Macedonia, however, where the question of acceding to the EU forms the strongest discourse and hence enjoys widespread support—so much so that some authors (Atanasova and Bache 2010) believe that it represents the key to understanding the pace of change concerning the establishment of the multi-level governance and planning system.

We start the discussion in the second section by giving an overview of the heterogeneous landscape for planning and governing territorial development in the Western Balkan that has emerged following the Yugoslav dissolution. The third section presents the evolution of the modern system of territorial governance and spatial planning in North Macedonia. It analyses the administrative and territorial subdivision of the country, the planning authorities in the multi-level governance system, and the main planning instruments produced and implemented at the different territorial levels. Particular attention is given to comparing the present situation with the system that existed in the former Yugoslavia. European influences on the development of territorial governance and planning in North Macedonia are reflected in section four. We do so in chronological order, by studying the main planning and governance policies that have been adopted in the country and linking

them with the relevant EU initiatives and instruments that have influenced them over time. Finally, we provide some concluding remarks to the study by highlighting the complexity of the Macedonian governance and planning system, while suggesting the need for further adaptations to the European requirements.

6.2 Spatial Planning and Territorial Governance in the Western Balkans: The Challenges of the Post-Socialist Transition

Planning and governance in North Macedonia have their roots in the system of former Yugoslavia. Although Newman and Thornley (1996) classify it in the East-European planning family, that system was quite different from other communist societies and planned economies of the time (Pajović 2006). Yugoslavia was a federal country and its political and economic system was considerably more flexible compared to the extremely centralised East-European countries (Trkulja et al. 2012). Planning in Yugoslavia departed from the Soviet centralised planning model soon after the end of World War II and moved on to develop a comprehensive-integrated approach to planning (Nedović-Budić et al. 2011) which is similar to that of countries like Germany or the Netherlands today. Besides, planning and governance in such a system were much decentralised. The constituent republics, including North Macedonia, could adopt their own planning legislation and govern their territories according to the rules and norms that they established. Moreover, they were in charge of developing and implementing spatial plans for territories under their jurisdiction.

The present-day Republic of North Macedonia¹ seceded from Yugoslavia following a referendum. The country proclaimed independence on 8 September 1991. Unlike other former Yugoslav republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia), the secession process was rather peaceful. However, North Macedonia still had to face many important challenges brought by the process of transition. They included ‘political democratisation, the reintroduction of market principles, commercialisation, privatisation, the state’s fiscal crisis, discontinuation of ‘welfare state’ programmes, and intensified international financial transactions and investments’ (Nedović-Budić et al. 2011, p. 429). Spatial planning and governance also had to adapt to the newfound political and economic conditions. As Nedović-Budić et al. (2011) write, a ‘new notion of planning’ had to be developed, one that needed to be more flexible while simultaneously striving to regain its tarnished legitimacy.

¹The constitutional name of the country between 1991 and 2019 was the Republic of Macedonia. On 8 April 1993, the Republic of Macedonia was admitted as a member of the United Nations, with a recommendation to be temporarily named with the reference ‘the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’ until the final settlement of the name dispute with Greece. Besides Greece, the temporary reference was used by other countries that did not recognise the constitutional name—Republic of Macedonia.

The notion of European integration has surfaced as an important reference point for most post-socialist economies to build and adapt their institutions to the conditions of the market economy. In particular, EU policies and initiatives have been a consistent ‘source of inspiration’ of Western Balkan countries when developing their systems of planning and governance. This is known as ‘Europeanisation’ and refers to the process of institutionalising EU norms, rules, and concepts within the national planning structures (Radaelli 2006). The outcomes of Europeanisation of spatial planning can include modifications to the national spatial policy framework and changes in the modes of territorial governance (Marjanović et al., in this volume; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020). However, many of the adaptations that have come from outside had to rely on the legacy of socialist institutions, thus creating a distinctive mix of old and new instruments and practices (Nedović-Budić and Cavrić 2006; Nedović-Budić et al. 2011).

On the other hand, although the violent conflicts surrounding the dissolution of Yugoslavia are long over, Western Balkan can still be regarded as ‘the powder keg of Europe’. Widespread ethnic tensions and contested territorial claims shape the politics in the region as strongly as ever, while domestic political spats take primacy over genuine efforts for reconstructing the institutions of the society and enabling development. In such a scenario, the question of building a reliable and efficient system of territorial governance and planning becomes of secondary importance. Instead, we witness the dominance of new-old ideological and political mantras (liberalisation, marketisation, stabilisation, etc.), which are paralleled by an approach to governance and planning which can be described as pursuing ‘growth without development’ (Vujošević 2010, p. 23).

6.3 The Evolution of the Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning System of North Macedonia

6.3.1 Administrative and Territorial Subdivision

During the socialist period in Yugoslavia, North Macedonia experienced several substantial changes in the administrative-territorial organisation of the country. After World War II, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was a federal unit within the Yugoslav Federation (Shukarova et al. 2008). This was the period of administrative-centralistic government. The first law that regulated the administrative organisation of the country was the Law on Territorial Division from 1945. That law prescribed the administrative-territorial structure at three levels: 4 districts, 32 sub-districts, and 894 people’s committees (Official Gazette, No. 17/1945). The first constitution from 1946 was substituted with a new one in 1953. The new constitution promoted a loosening of the administrative-centralistic system of governance (Shukarova et al. 2008) with the establishment of 18 districts, 18 cities (district centres), and 205 municipalities (Official Gazette, No. 13/1952).

From that point onwards, we can observe political efforts to re-centralise the country. Already in 1957, the Law on the Territory of the Districts and Municipalities introduced a new reorganisation of territorial units by reducing the number of districts to 7 and municipalities to 73. In 1962, the number of municipalities was further reduced to 61 (Official Gazette, No. 3/1962). Following the constitutional changes of 1963, the country continued with centralisation. In particular, the 1965 Law on the Territory of Municipalities abolished the level of districts while the number of municipalities was reduced to 32.

The new constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was adopted in 1974. The main changes brought by it reflected the undergoing decentralisation of the Yugoslav Federation and greater rights given to the republics (Hayden 1992). However, in terms of territorial organisation, there were not any substantial changes. The country's administrative structure remained very much the same well into the 1990s. From 1976 to 1996, Macedonia had 34 municipalities with the City of Skopje having the status of a special socio-political community with 5 municipalities.

Following the breakup of the Yugoslav Federation, the National assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted a new constitution on the 17 November 1991 (Akimovska-Maletić 2017). The Constitution, which is still in force today, guarantees the right of local government which is seen as a fundamental value of the constitutional order of the state. The single-tier system, with municipalities as basic units of local self-government, remained a preferred model of the territorial governance structure.

The first law that regulated administrative division in independent Macedonian state was the Law on the Territorial Division of the Republic of Macedonia from 1996. It was also the first attempt at decentralisation which was characterised by the excessive fragmentation of existing municipal territories. The country was broken into a staggering 123 municipalities and the city of Skopje as a separate unit of local self-government consisting of seven municipalities (Official Gazette, 49/1996), which is shown in Fig. 6.1. This created less capacity at the local level to deal with spatial issues and processes, although, at the same time, some competencies for planning and governance were transferred from the state to the municipalities (Ministry of Local Self-Government 2015). In 1999, the country adopted a strategy for reforming the local self-government system. However, it quickly lost on significance following the escalation of domestic ethnic conflicts (Spasov 2009). The conflicts ended with the signing of the Ohrid Agreement in August 2001. The agreement led to the restructuring of the administrative-territorial system of the country by accommodating interethnic relations. In this case, decentralisation served as a model for avoiding the federalisation of the country (unlike what was done in Bosnia and Herzegovina²).

The Law on Local Self-Government was approved in 2002 and foresaw the transfer of some administrative competencies from the state to the local level. It

²For more information, see Marjanović et al. in this volume.

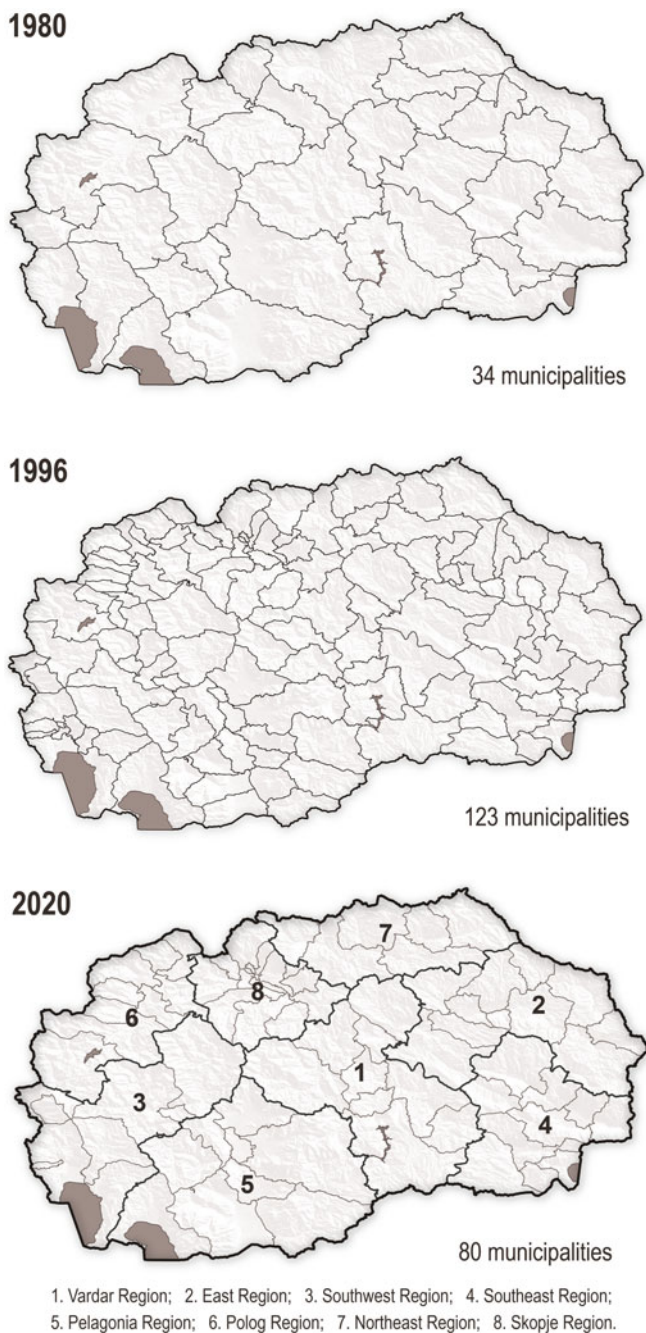


Fig. 6.1 Comparison of administrative-territorial division of North Macedonia in 1980, 1996, and 2020. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

meant that the municipalities started to enjoy autonomy in all local matters: communal activities, education, sport, healthcare, social welfare services, child protection, urban and rural planning, and local economic development (Official Gazette, No. 5/2002). The changes in municipal competencies were followed by the adoption of the Law on Territorial Division and Local Self-Government in 2004 which reduced the number of municipalities to 84 (Official Gazette, No. 55/2004). The fiscal decentralisation of the country started in 2005 with the adoption of the Law on Local Government Finance. The law transferred the responsibility for administering and collecting different taxes from the national to the local level. It also gave local governments the rate-setting powers over the taxes within the limits set by the national government, thus clearly making them the owners of local revenues (Levitas 2011).

With the adoption of the Law on Balanced Regional Development in 2007 (Official Gazette, No. 63/2007) a meso-level of governance and planning has been established in North Macedonia in the form of planning regions. Planning regions are governed by regional councils³ whose representatives also participate in the National Council for Regional Development (Atanasova and Bache 2010). To coordinate their development, the government also adopted the Strategy on Regional Development (Official Gazette, No. 119/2009) in 2009.

In 2008, the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics—NUTS (Official Gazette, No. 158/2007) was also implemented with further amendments to it coming in 2014 (Official Gazette, No. 10/2014) and 2019 (Official Gazette, No. 131/2019). Due to North Macedonia's relatively small size, the NUTS-1 and NUTS-2 levels have been established at the whole territory of the country, corresponding to the national level of administration. The NUTS-3 level consists of non-administrative statistical regions⁴ formed by the grouping of municipalities as administrative units of a lower level. Today, the country is divided into eight statistical units at the level of NUTS-3: Vardar Region, East Region, Southwest Region, Southeast Region, Pelagonia Region, Polog Region, Northeast Region, and Skopje Region; while there are also 80 local administrative units⁵ (municipalities⁶) defined at NUTS-4, as shown in Fig. 6.1. The NUTS-5 level consists of 1792 settlements (State Statistical Office 2019).

³Centres on Development of Planning Regions.

⁴Today, they correspond to the planning regions.

⁵17 of which make the Greater Skopje region which enjoys a distinct status.

⁶A reduction from 84 established in 2004, following the 2014 Law on the Territorial Organisation of Local Self-Government (Official Gazette, No. 149/2014).

6.3.2 *Planning Authorities in the Multi-level Governance System*

The institutionalisation of spatial planning in North Macedonia started in the early 1970s (Dimitrov and Koteski 2014). The development of major planning authorities since then is illustrated in Fig. 6.2. First, in 1970, the Republic Bureau for Urbanism, Housing, and Communal Affairs was established as an administrative authority in charge of urban planning. A few years later, it was transformed into a higher administrative body—the Republic Secretariat for Urbanism, Housing, and Communal Affairs. Soon after, the first professional institution for planning was formed—the Directorate for Spatial Planning, which was tasked with the development of spatial plans. By the end of the 1970s, the Directorate (which became the Institute for Spatial Planning in 1979) made one regional spatial plan, 6 municipal spatial plans, and numerous lower-level plans (Dimitrov and Koteski 2014). In this period, municipalities had some competencies for urban planning as well. However, they were not able to fully shape local planning policies because the whole system was centrally controlled. Still, the 1970s were the period of prosperity of planning profession characterised by strong central planning institutions and increased planning activity.

The next big change in planning institutions happened in the early 1990s as a part of reconstructing the state administration following the breakup of Yugoslavia. In November of 1990, a new Ministry of Urbanism, Civil Engineering, Transportation, and Ecology was established. Within the Ministry, the Republic Bureau for Physical Planning and Environmental Protection served as the principal national spatial planning authority (Official Gazette, No. 40/1990). Planning authorities were also formed at the local level as a part of municipal administrations. However, the process of privatisation that characterised the transition period led to the disorientation in planning practice, reflected in the reduced possibility of managing illegal construction and the implementation of spatial policies at the municipal level. Moreover, the production of spatial plans came to a halt with the suspension of the Institute for Spatial Planning in 1991. The way forward was seen in the adoption of the 1995 *Programme for preparation and adoption of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia*. One year later, a public enterprise tasked with the development of spatial plans⁷ was established in place of the Institute, while the new Law on Spatial and Urban Planning came into force. Furthermore, the Law on Local Self-Government from 1995 delegated more power and competencies to the local level. For the first time, municipalities could adopt their budgets and coordinate policies for urban planning (Stefanovska and Kozelj 2012). However, the real decentralisation of planning competencies began after the adoption of the Law on Territorial Division and Local Self-Government in 2004, when municipalities

⁷Public Enterprise for Spatial and Urban Plans.

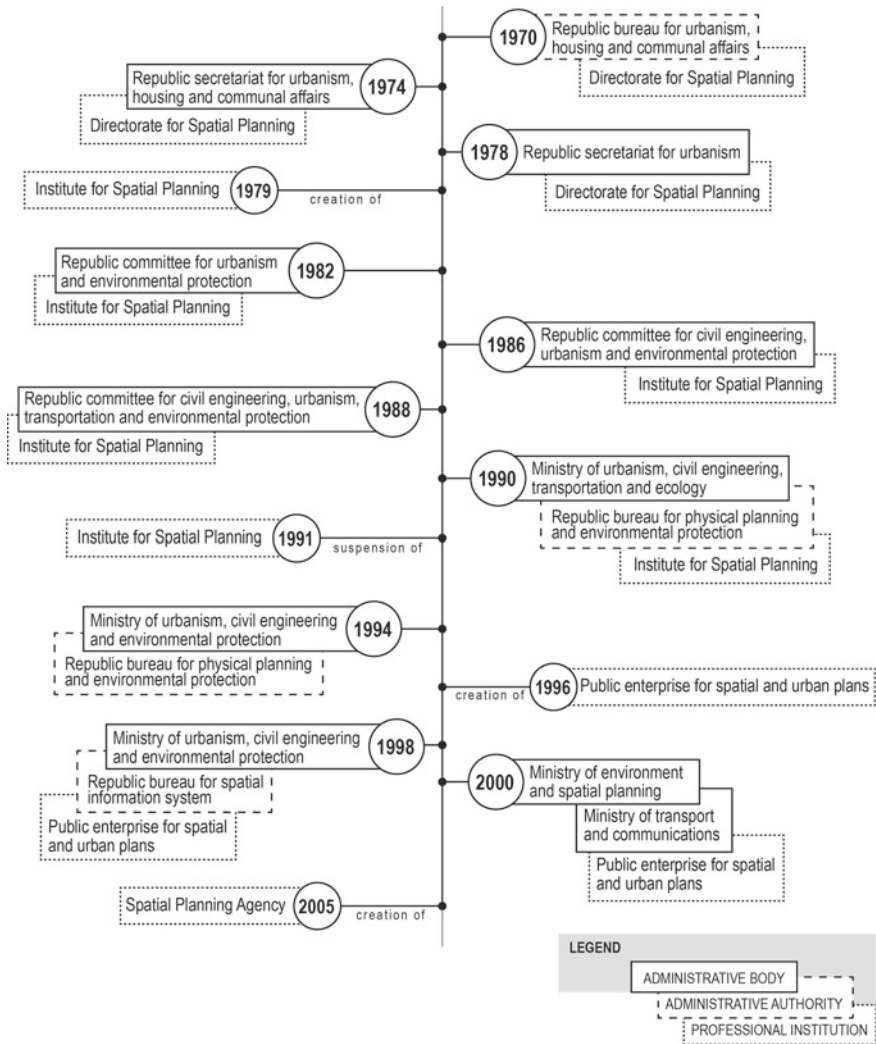


Fig. 6.2 Development of planning authorities in North Macedonia since 1970. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

were enlarged and consolidated, consequentially gaining greater capacity for conducting spatial policies (Stefanovska and Kozelj 2012).

Meanwhile, in the early 2000s, some notable changes in the reorganisation of planning authorities at the national level were made. Namely, the Law on Organisation and Work of State Administration (Official Gazette, No. 58/2000) prescribed that the activities related to spatial planning were under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, while the Ministry of Transport and Communications was to be in charge of the activities related to urban planning.

The tasks of the ministries as governmental executive authorities include the preparation of planning regulations, coordination, and oversight of plan implementation, and preparation of national planning guidelines. The Macedonian case of having two ministries with the division of competencies for spatial and urban planning is unique in the Western Balkans, if not in the whole of Europe. If anything, it only complicates the vertical and horizontal coordination among different levels of governance and the cooperation of stakeholders involved in the planning activity. The situation was additionally complicated in 2005 when the government decided to promote a successor to the Public Enterprise for Spatial and Urban Plans by forming the Agency for Spatial Planning. The main activity of the agency became the preparation and implementation of spatial plans and policies.

When it comes to the local level, planning is placed under the jurisdiction of local authorities or municipal assemblies (Nadin et al. 2018). Municipalities, through their departments for urban planning, manage the planning process.⁸ Different types of urban plans are produced by licenced⁹ public or private companies¹⁰ which are chosen via public procurement procedures.

6.3.3 Legislative Evolution and Instruments Produced at the Different Territorial Levels

The legal framework for spatial planning in North Macedonia has existed for a little more than half a century. Figure 6.3 presents the development of planning legislation together with the main types of plans stipulated by each legal act. The very first law that introduced spatial plans—the regional spatial plan to be exact, was the one from 1965 (Official Gazette, 7/1965). On the other hand, institutionalised urban planning has a slightly longer tradition. Urban planning was for the first time framed in the Law on Urban Planning from 1958 when the government decided to establish an organised urban planning system that would deal with the development of urban settlements.

⁸The planning process at the local level starts with the development of the planning programme for an urban plan by a municipal urban planning department. The programme is evaluated by a commission for urban planning. In the case of favourable evaluation, it is then sent to a municipal council for adoption. Following the adoption of the programme, a licenced company is tasked with the preparation of the urban plan. Once the draft of the urban plan is ready, it is reviewed by an expert committee established by a Mayor. In the case of positive opinion, the draft plan is sent to the municipal council for adoption, while the Ministry of Transportation and Communications also has to endorse it.

⁹Licences for urban planning are issued by the Chamber of certified architects and certified engineers of the Republic of North Macedonia.

¹⁰As of October 2020, 104 public or private companies in North Macedonia possess the licence for the preparation of urban plans (MTC 2019).

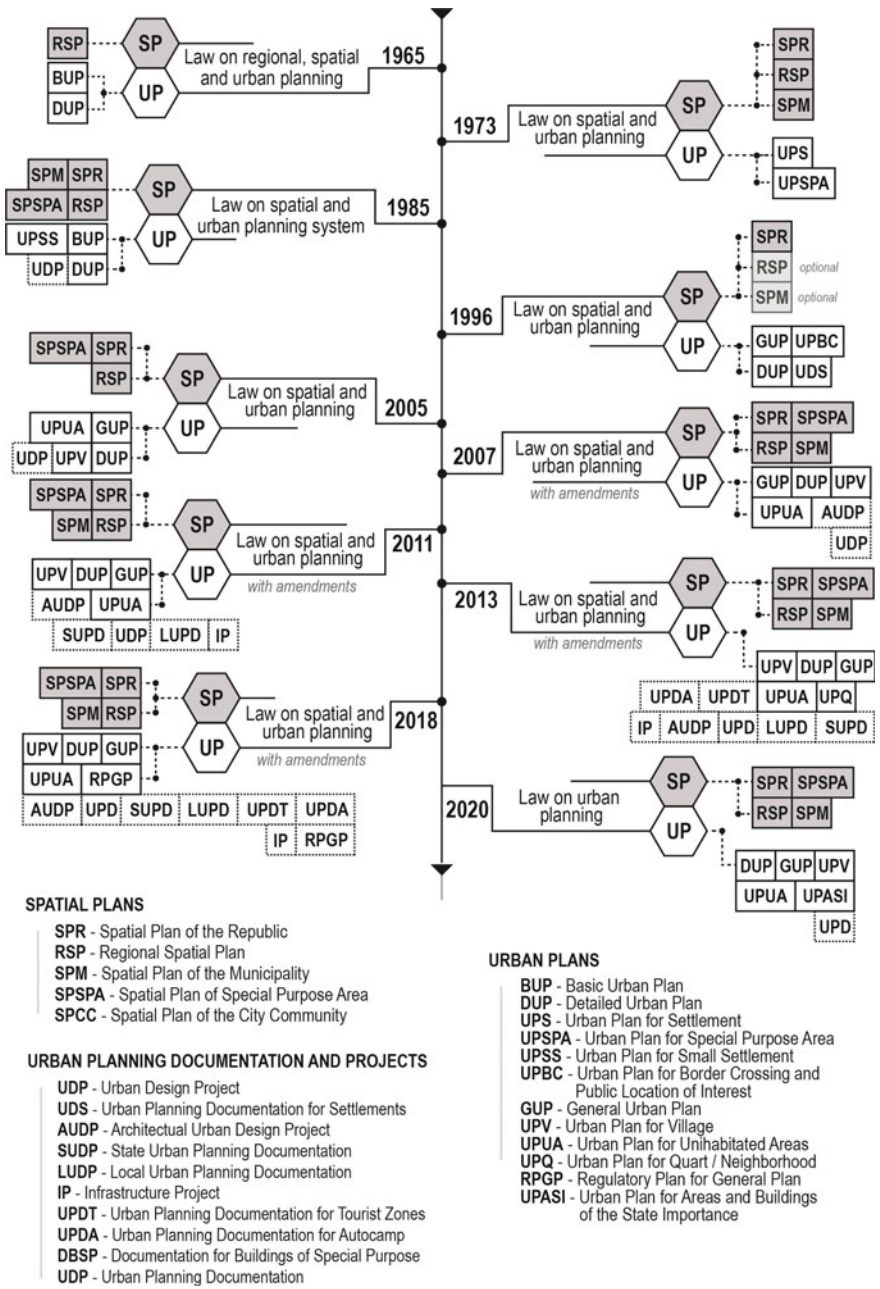


Fig. 6.3 Development of planning legislation and the main types of plans in North Macedonia since 1965. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

The Law on Spatial and Urban Planning from 1973, however, was the first to establish spatial planning at different territorial levels. The spatial plan of the Republic, the spatial plan of a region, and the spatial plan of a municipality became the principal spatial planning instruments in the country (Official Gazette, 15/1973). In addition to them, a new type of urban plan was also developed—the urban plan for a special purpose area. As noted before, the 1970s mark the period of considerable development of spatial planning practice in North Macedonia. Starting in 1975, the Spatial Plan of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was designed in a process that lasted for seven years (Zikov 1995) and it provided spatial planning guidelines for lower-level plans until the early 2000s.

In 1985, the Law on the Spatial and Urban Planning System (Official Gazette, 38/1985) introduced the spatial plan of an area with a special purpose as a new planning instrument. It was intended for specific spatio-functional areas of national interest, such as national parks and other protected areas, basins of artificial lakes, areas for exploitation of mineral resources, infrastructural corridors, etc. The 1985 Law had only three relatively minor amendments (in 1989, 1990, and 1993) and was in force until 1996, although the country had undergone a significant social, political, and economic transformation following its independence in 1991.

A new chapter in the contemporary Macedonian spatial planning started with the adoption of the 1996 Law on Spatial and Urban Planning (Official Gazette, 4/1996). It aimed to replace the legally binding nature of the plans from the socialist era with seemingly more flexible plans that would better meet the needs of the market, the interests of the private sector, and the requirements for environmental protection (Dimitrov and Koteski 2014). However, this law still prioritised the role of the central government in planning, even when it comes to the local-level plans. This is best exemplified with the issue of land ownership. Namely, although the municipalities bear all the responsibilities for the governance of municipal land, the state still holds the ownership rights over that land. That situation has remained until today and it is seen as the principal cause for the lack of implementation of municipal plans that is evident to exist in North Macedonia (Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2018).

We can say that the spatial planning in the country started its revival with the adoption of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia in 2004, as it was soon followed by the development of several lower-level spatial plans and numerous urban plans of a different type. The new Law on Spatial and Urban Planning was enacted a year later (Official Gazette, 51/2005). It defined the Spatial Plan of the Republic as the basic planning framework at the national level which should be worked out by the regional spatial plans, spatial plans for the areas with a special purpose, and spatial plans for municipalities. At the local level, principal planning instruments were defined to be general urban plans, detailed urban plans, urban plans for villages, and urban plans for uninhabited places. Besides spatial plans, other important documents for spatial development in North Macedonia include spatial strategies, such as the Strategy for Regional Development from 2009 and the Strategy of Sustainable Development from 2010.

Overall, the continuous adjustments of the legal framework for spatial planning to the socio-economic and political changes in Macedonian society in the transition period have resulted in an ambiguous planning system characterised by blurred and contested competencies among different planning instruments (Vitorovič 2009). Moreover, the Law on Spatial and Urban Planning has undergone numerous amendments in a short time following its adoption in 2005, which resulted in the considerable modification of planning methodology and the introduction of several new types of urban plans. Namely, the number of types of urban plans has risen from five that existed in 2005 to 13 that were established in 2018 with the latest amendment to the law. However, rather than improving the situation in the spatial planning and development, these changes have created chaos in the monitoring and implementation of plans (Angelovska and Trpevski 2019). Instead of decentralisation, the planning system has moved towards centralisation, parallelism, and mixing of the state and local-level competencies (Angelovska and Trpevski 2019). The Macedonian government attempted to regulate the situation by introducing a new Law on Urban Planning (Official Gazette, 32/2020) which would simplify the planning system. It was adopted in the first quartal of 2020 and reduced the number of types of urban plans to six while attempting to modernise the whole system through digitalisation.

6.4 The Evolution of Spatial Planning and Territorial Governance in North Macedonia in the Context of European Integration

North Macedonia was the first ex-Yugoslav country to sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU which took place in 2001 (Gerovska Mitev 2013). However, although it got its candidacy to join the Union approved by the European Council already in 2005, with the European Commission recommending the start of the accession negotiations in 2009 (Milevska 2009), it was more than ten years later that the accession talks have begun. This lag in the European integration progress mainly happened due to the bilateral dispute with neighbouring Greece over the use of Macedonia's constitutional name (Garding 2020) and had adverse impacts on country's relations with the EU. Gerovska Mitev (2013) writes that even negligible and soft effects arising from the *acquis communautaire* were hampered by this political stalemate, while Mihaila et al. (2012) note the lack of commitment on the side of the EU to facilitate the country's progression to official candidate status or to genuinely support its democratic reform. The loss of a clear and legitimate EU perspective is believed to have strongly contributed to the country's democratic backsliding starting in the late 2000s and culminating with a prolonged crisis that lasted until 2017 (Garding 2020). The deadlock was finally broken with the signing of the historical Prespa Agreement in June 2018, when the name of the country was agreed to be officially

changed to Republic of North Macedonia. The agreement paved the way for North Macedonia to open the membership talks with the EU in 2020, but also to join NATO the very same year.

However, since the country has been undergoing thorough political and economic reform following the breakup of Yugoslavia and the fall of its socialist institutions (Rocheska et al. 2014), the lingering process of acceding the EU has created what Nedović-Budić et al. (2011) refer to as ‘the moment of discontinuity’, which offers ‘an extended period to study the processes and issues that underlie the formation of planning systems and their legislative base’ (p. 430) in post-communist European countries.

6.4.1 The Period of Destabilisation and First European Initiatives

Stefanovska and Kozelj (2012) recognise three distinct phases in the development of the Macedonian planning system that ensued after the fall of communism and dissolution of Yugoslavia. The first is the stagnation period which can be placed between 1991 and 1993. This period was characterised by a complete lack of building regulation which hampered any legal construction activity. It was followed by the period of destabilisation (Stefanovska and Kozelj 2012) which started with the efforts to enable privatisation of state property and land, famously promoted by the 1993 Law on the Transformation of Enterprises with Social Capital (Official Gazette, No. 38/1993).

In this period, North Macedonia took part in some of the first European programmes and initiatives targeting non-EU countries. In 1996, the country joined Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania in receiving funding from PHARE¹¹ and OBNOVA¹² programmes, while it was also part of ECHO¹³ and the Emergency Response Programme (Kostoska et al. 2017). Financial allocations from these programmes supported a wide range of planning-related sectors and activities, including the development of SMEs, agriculture and land reform, environment protection, construction and modernisation of infrastructure, and cross-border cooperation (CEC 2000). The PHARE programme was most relevant for financing projects of spatial development. In North Macedonia, and it had a strong focus on the development of infrastructure and provided funds for upgrading cross-border transport infrastructure, alongside grant support for local economic infrastructure projects (CEC 2000).

¹¹Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy.

¹²The word ‘obnova’ means a ‘restoration’ or ‘reconstruction’ in the language of former Yugoslavia.

¹³European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

Following the need to support Western Balkan countries in the accession process,¹⁴ the EU specifically designed the CARDS¹⁵ programme in 2000 (Trkulja and Dabović, in this volume). The programme became the principal financial instrument in the stabilisation and association process and aimed to support reconstruction and development projects in the region, while promoting stability and facilitating closer association with the EU (EC 2016). However, it was not until 2002 that the programme became fully operational in North Macedonia, providing funding for projects in four priority areas: democracy and the rule of law, justice and home affairs, economic and social development, and environment and natural resources (Atanasova and Bache 2010). Similar to the previous forms of EU assistance, the CARDS focused strongly on investments in the development of infrastructure, specifically targeting the implementation of local infrastructure projects, while the adopted governance and planning initiatives mainly dealt with the management of natural resources (ReliefWeb 2003).

6.4.2 The Service-Driven Period and the Expansion of European Support

Following Stefanovska and Kozelj (2012), the destabilisation period in North Macedonia ended in 2004, when the country underwent a territorial reorganisation marked by the reduction in the number of municipalities. This led to the beginning of the third, service-driven period. Besides the increasing of municipal responsibilities for planning and development of a local territory, this period also characterises the upsurge in the private-led construction activities throughout the whole country (Stefanovska and Kozelj 2012). The lagging adoption of planning legislation and weak municipal capacities for planning regulation, however, could not follow the accelerated construction in the private sector. This created a mismatch in the development process, generating a form of a development-led planning system in which planning outcomes adapt to fit with the actual development or with the intentions of private developers (Nadin and Stead 2008; Valtonen et al. 2017). Such an approach to planning is seen as a dominant characteristic of post-socialist systems (Taşan-Kok 2004; Tsenkova and Nedović-Budić 2006; Berisha et al. 2020), and particularly those of Western Balkan countries (Vujošević et al. 2012; Zeković et al. 2015; Marjanović 2017). It is described as lacking any form of strategic governance and planning, but ‘encompassing a strange combination of elements of the so-called crisis management, planning-supporting-privatisation-and-marketisation (which is

¹⁴The EU support to non-members was expanded in 1999 with two sector-specific programmes: Sapard—the programme for rural and agricultural development and ISPA—the instrument for structural policies providing investment for large-scale infrastructure projects in the area of environment and transport, but Western Balkan countries could not be the beneficiaries of these initiatives.

¹⁵Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation.

especially visible in urban and environmental planning at the local-regulation level), and project-led planning' (Vujošević 2010, p. 24).

In this period, North Macedonia became an EU candidate country, thus gaining access to additional support on its road to potential membership. In January 2007, a single instrument known as IPA¹⁶ was devised to provide pre-accession assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries, effectively replacing all previous instruments. During the 2007–2013 EU programming period, IPA incorporated five components: (1) transition assistance and institution building; (2) cross-border cooperation; (3) regional development; (4) human resources development; and (5) rural development (Kostoska et al. 2017). As a candidate country, North Macedonia was eligible to receive funding for all five components¹⁷ (Atanasova and Bache 2010) and it was the only Western Balkan country besides Croatia to fully benefit from the first iteration of IPA programme.¹⁸ With the introduction of IPA, the scope of EU support in North Macedonia considerably expanded, especially if we consider the adoption of regional and rural development measures, which offered the basis for future implementation of EU Cohesion policy (Atanasova and Bache 2010). In terms of planning and governance, the IPA assistance was consistent with previous EU instruments, however, largely concentrating on the transport and environment sectors.¹⁹

The process of European integration brought rapid developments in the spheres of territorial governance and planning in North Macedonia. They were exceptionally prominent in the second part of the 2000s when the country got its candidacy for the EU membership approved. A notable impact of the integration process represents the development of the country's regional policy. The Law on Balanced Regional Development was enacted in 2007 following direct EU requirements for decentralisation,²⁰ while the country's territorial organisation was further amended a year later with the introduction of regional statistical units according to NUTS nomenclature (Atanasova and Bache 2010). To stimulate interregional links and facilitate spillover effects (Rochevksa et al., Rocheska et al. 2014), the law stipulated a financial allocation equivalent to 1% of country's GDP to the Ministry of Local Self-Government and the Council for Regional Development which was to be transferred to individual planning regions based on their development needs (Penev and Trenovski 2017). It is interesting to note that this funding model closely mimics the EU Cohesion policy since less developed regions (compared to EU average)

¹⁶Instrument for Pre-Accession.

¹⁷Potential candidate countries have access only to components I and II.

¹⁸Serbia and Albania got their candidacy approved too late to be fully eligible for IPA in 2007–2013, while Slovenia was already a member.

¹⁹For example, the focus of the first IPA Regional Development Operational Programme in North Macedonia was on the continuation of the development of the Southeast Europe Core Regional Transport Network (corridors VIII and X), as well as on the investments in wastewater treatment and solid waste management projects (EC, n.d.).

²⁰This law was instrumental in the development of the country's regional policy.

were foreseen to receive more funding, while local administration units were expected to contribute to the implementation of projects with the co-finance rate of 50%.

At the turn of the last decade and following the requirements of EU integration, North Macedonia continued with adapting its domestic legislative structure to *acquis communautaire*. Of considerable importance for the field of planning is the 2011 Law on Illegal Buildings (Official Gazette, No. 23/2011) which enabled the legalisation of 342 794 informal objects in the country (Stefanovska and Kozelj 2012). This act appears as a direct consequence of the development-led planning approach and the inability of planning practice to adequately respond to the demands of accelerated construction activities (UNECE 2015), but can also be seen as a result of the pressure for greater compliance with European regulations. Despite the efforts of legalisation, the problem of informal buildings, however, is still highly pronounced in North Macedonia. According to the latest studies (Požani 2019), informal settlements house more than 11% of the population in the 14 largest Macedonian cities. Informal construction remains an important planning issue today, not only in North Macedonia, but in the Western Balkan region as a whole, and can be expected to be at the fore of any future planning-related initiatives coming from the EU.

In North Macedonia, the support from IPA continued also in the 2014–2020 EU programming period. In the second cycle, financial assistance from the instrument almost tripled as compared to the previous cycle. The IPA II in North Macedonia targeted investments predominantly in the sphere of economic competitiveness and growth while it promoted further decentralisation of the country and establishment of local capacity for governance.²¹

6.4.3 The Nominal Impacts and Discontinuous Effects of European Integration

The development of the territorial governance and planning system in North Macedonia seems to have been strongly influenced by the processes surrounding the country's path towards EU integration. However, the actual effects of these developments appear to be quite different on the ground than what can be initially perceived. Although the country aimed to actively meet the requirements of the accession process, it largely struggled in the attempt to do so. While significant funding was received from different EU support programmes and initiatives over the time, the implementing institutions have lacked the necessary administrative capacity to efficiently absorb the available funds and ensure their effective

²¹The key support areas included environment and climate action, transport, agriculture and rural development, innovation and competitiveness, and social policies. Particular attention was also given to the projects contributing to regional development and territorial cooperation.

management (Kostoska et al. 2017). This is especially evident in the country's attempts at decentralisation, which were hampered by institutional sclerosis and the lack of vertical coordination among different governance levels. For example, the establishment of planning regions and the implementation of regional development projects faced important hurdles in the inability of regional councils to raise municipal co-financing (Penev and Trenovski 2017). For that reason, the wide-reaching efforts to establish and implement a regional development policy in North Macedonia, reminiscent of the EU Cohesion policy, have failed to produce the desired effects as the country remains to be largely polarised between the centre and the periphery (Rocheska et al. 2014). On the other hand, the failure to effect veritable and genuine changes in implementing the EU accession requirements can be found in the understanding that the intensive pressure for effectiveness and efficiency results only in the nominal rule transfer, which is well recognised to take place in North Macedonia²² (Risteska 2013).

Furthermore, in the transition period, North Macedonia has been exceptionally troubled by the difficult relations it has had with its closest neighbours, as well as by the internal political struggles and rising ethnic tensions (Mihaila et al. 2012). We have already mentioned that this has caused a discontinuity in the relations with the EU after a much promising start. It has also contributed to North Macedonia being omitted from participating in some important European initiatives, most notably the EU macro-regions.²³ Whatever the reason, it is especially striking that, until recently, it was the only country in the region that was absent from major EU macro-regional strategies.²⁴

Today, the governance and planning in North Macedonia still bear a strong resemblance with the previous, Yugoslav system and less with the model promoted by the EU (Tošić and Živanović 2019). Although the willingness to join the EU has been 'the only game in town' for a long time (Atanasova and Bache 2010), the country has so far failed short to meet the expectations in adapting its planning and governance system to the EU requirements. The findings of the ESPON COMPASS project (Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2020) on the governance and planning in North Macedonia criticise its complexity and highlight the lack of coherence with European standards. They also call for its further adaptation in line with policies and requirements of the EU, especially concerning principles and instruments of integrated urban development.

²²This is also something that we can observe in other EU candidate countries as well (see Marjanović 2017).

²³Although it can be due to its unfavourable geographic location.

²⁴It was only in April 2020 that North Macedonia joined the EUSAIR—The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR 2020), although the Strategy has been in force since 2014.

6.5 Conclusive Remarks

The planning and governance system of North Macedonia today bears both the marks of the previous socialist system and the modern influences of European initiatives, however, combined in an unruly manner. We can describe it as a grotesque amalgamation or a patchwork of contested and ambiguous competencies, blurred organisational responsibilities, and lingering institutional sclerosis.

The development of that system has been nothing short of turbulent. In terms of administrative-territorial organisation, the country has gone from decentralisation in the first years after WWII to progressive centralisation that started in the late 1950s and culminated in the 1970s; and again, to another, this time excessive, but largely unsuccessful decentralisation following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The country's territorial structure only started to stabilise and consolidate in the mid-2000s.

The development of the planning system can be traced back to the beginning of 1970s when the first planning institutions were established. The planning activity in North Macedonia reached its peak in that decade, after which it began its slow decline following a period of inactivity which spanned throughout the 1980s. The 1990s mark the dark age of planning in the country, which only started to revive with the turn of the century. However, the planning system that ultimately emerged is characterised by extreme complexity, institutional ambiguity, and the lack of coordinative capacity.

At the same time, the country has considerably suffered from its undefined position in relation to the EU. From a promising start as the first Western Balkan country to sign the SAA, it entered a 20-year limbo in which the lack of a clear European perspective brought only nominal impacts of EU programmes and initiatives, despite the abundant financial support. Moreover, all this time North Macedonia has been plagued with domestic issues and tensions with its closest neighbours which created a troubling landscape for governance and planning.

The seemingly impossible untying of the Gordian knot achieved by reaching the Prespa Agreement undoubtedly offers a way forward for North Macedonia to stabilise its institutions and establish a functional system of governance and planning. However, we should be aware that the real work on the matter only now truly begins. In particular, the future efforts should involve further legislative adaptations of the planning regulation and instruments to the European standards and requirements.

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Chapter 7

The Volatile Policy Framework of Spatial Planning in Montenegro: Will the Centre Hold?



Sonja Dragović 

Abstract Over the last decade, spatial planning policy in Montenegro has become increasingly centralized. This chapter discusses the recent legislation in spatial planning and construction, through which the system of territorial governance is regulated. The chapter offers an in-depth focus on the evolution of centralizing tendencies within the planning process, which have prioritized the elimination of business barriers over the strengthening of local-level planning tools and capacities. The findings, based on the analysis of implementation challenges and wider policy effects of this approach, point towards the lack of efficient mechanisms for local-level participation in and control over the spatial planning system. Recommendations include shifting the focus away from centralizing the processes of territorial governance and investigating the potential of developing the regional dimension in spatial management. By distributing the responsibilities and the opportunities more evenly across the local, regional, and central levels of government, it might become easier to reach better, more inclusive, and more democratic decisions regarding spatial development.

Keywords Spatial planning · Territorial governance · Centralization · Montenegro

7.1 Introduction

The policy of spatial planning and development in Montenegro has been in a constant state of change, throughout its short history as a newly independent county in the Western Balkans. The challenges of large discrepancies in regional development, predominant reliance on service industry (especially tourism) and the financial imperative to attract direct foreign investments are unavoidably spatial and, as such, require an efficient and robust system of spatial governance. In an

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effort to construct such a system, Montenegro has, over the last decade, gradually shifted away from decentralized decision making in all matters related to spatial planning and development. The adoption of the most recent Law on Spatial Planning and Construction (Parliament of Montenegro 2017) marks a decisive shift towards centralization by taking the important instruments of spatial self-governance away from the local authorities. In this chapter, the centralizing process, its results, and consequences are closely and chronologically examined. The detailed analysis provided here aims to contribute to the recent body of work on territorial governance and spatial planning systems in the Balkans (Cotella and Berisha 2016; Berisha 2018; Berisha et al. 2018, 2020; Tošić and Živanović 2019; Berisha and Cotella, in this volume; Berisha et al., in this volume).

The first part of this chapter briefly introduces the history of Montenegrin spatial planning. The second part discusses the recent laws on spatial planning and construction, with an in-depth focus on the evolution of centralizing tendencies within the increasingly unstable planning system. The final part presents the implementation challenges, contradictions, and the wider policy effects of this development and offers some predictions for its future course.

7.2 The History of Spatial Planning in Montenegro

The territory which Montenegro occupies today has been under some form of spatial planning regime since the mediaeval period (Nedović-Budić and Cavrić 2006). The first proper urban plans were developed for the coastal towns: according to Doderović and Ivanović (2012), the first plan of Budva originated in 1708 (author A. Bekoni), while the first plan of Kotor was created in 1775 by Venetian captain F. Gironui. Regulatory planning was first introduced in Nikšić in 1883 by J. Slade, whose plan was held in high regard and used until 1941. However, the comprehensive spatial planning processes and documents were not developed until the middle of the twentieth century. This was due to the fact that, for the most part of its history, Montenegro was predominantly rural: urbanization coefficient was as low as 6.5% in 1921, growing to 7.1% by 1931 (Ivanović 1979, p. 85). Rapid post-war industrialization during the early years of Yugoslavia encouraged urbanization which was difficult to contain and control due to its scale, but also due to the lack of planning instruments and local resources. According to Ivanović (1979), proper urban plans were finally introduced after 1955; however, they were not of a very good quality and they lacked a regional development perspective, because the way in which they were produced did not provide the conditions for coordination and cooperation among regional communities. The first truly comprehensive spatial plans of Montenegro were created more than a decade later: the Regional Spatial Plan of South Adriatic in 1969, for the area comprising nine southern and central municipalities, and the Regional Spatial Plan of Northern Montenegro in 1972, for the area of eleven northern municipalities. With this, the spatial plans encompassing the entire territory of Montenegro were, for the first time, completed.

More detailed documents—specifically, general urban plans and detailed urban plans—were to be adopted at the municipal level. Even then, some municipalities, especially in the traditionally underdeveloped north of the country, found it difficult to develop local planning expertise and continued struggling in this area ever since. The spatial plan of the Federal Republic of Montenegro was created in 1986 (see Parliament of Montenegro 2008), laying out the spatial development vision for the period until the year 2000; it was amended twice, in 1991 and 1997. In the process of producing these documents, significant research has been done, and special purpose spatial plans for the areas of national parks and for the coastal region have been produced (Doderović and Ivanović 2013). Most of the municipal spatial plans and general urban plans were completed during this period as well.

In 2008, a new spatial plan of Montenegro was adopted, for the period until 2020. This was the first national spatial planning document since the country declared independence in 2006. According to Doderović and Ivanović (2013), some of the problems encountered in the process of creating this plan were lack of reliable data, lack of communication and coordination among the actors of the planning process, lack of institutional organizing in the area of spatial planning, inadequately regulated relations between public and private interests, as well as imprecise definitions for the concept of public good. The authors emphasize the importance of registering these shortcomings, and working towards achieving sustainable spatial development, greater public involvement, and democratization of decision-making process. They also underline the worrisome lack of coordination between institutions in charge of spatial management at the local and national level, noting that the regional level of planning has been almost completely neglected, even though the regional level is the most suitable for alignment of interests between local communities and the state, as evidenced by European practice in recent years (*ibid.*, p. 520). Evidently, the spatial plan of 2008 uncovered some structural defects of the entire planning process, rooted in the lack of planning tradition and regional coordination. The question of how spatial planning can be done in a more structured, more open, and more democratic way—and the proposed development of regional plans as the possible answer—stays relevant in the light of recent legal changes which, once again, missed the opportunity to enhance regional cooperation in the field of planning.

7.3 Centralizing Tendencies in Spatial and Urban Planning

The Law on Spatial Planning, a legal framework for developing and adopting spatial planning documents, has been changed frequently since the beginning of the 1990s. The Law on Spatial Planning and Development (Parliament of Montenegro 1995) was succeeded by the new Law on Spatial Planning and Development (Parliament of Montenegro 2005), which was replaced by the Law on Spatial

Planning and Construction (Parliament of Montenegro 2008). Although each of these three laws, adopted in a span of a little more than a decade, introduced some changes to the regulation of spatial governance, the planning process was decisively and entirely reformed with the adoption of the new Law on Spatial Planning and Construction (Parliament of Montenegro 2017). The Law of 2017 centralized the decision making related to spatial planning, thereby concluding the process, which had been slowly developing since 2010 and which, through a series of amendments to the 2008 Law on Spatial Planning and Construction, increased the power of the state government at the expense of the local authorities. The new planning legislation has substantially changed the procedures, the actors, and the relations between the actors of the planning process. To understand and analyse this change, it is necessary to start with a detailed overview of the Law of 2008 and the Law of 2017—the spatial planning legislation adopted in Montenegro in the period after the 2006 declaration of independence.

7.3.1 The 2008 Law on Spatial Planning and Construction

The first Law on Spatial Planning and Construction of a newly independent state of Montenegro was adopted in August 2008 (Parliament of Montenegro 2008). According to this document, the objective of spatial planning is to provide conditions for the spatial development of Montenegro. The Law outlines a list of principles that spatial planning is based upon, which includes harmonized, balanced, and sustainable development, protection of natural resources, prioritizing of public interest, polycentricity and decentralization (*ibid.*, Article 5).

The Law on Spatial Planning and Construction of 2008 (hereinafter: the Law of 2008) preserved the traditional hierarchical structure between the municipal and the state-level planning documents (i.e. spatial plans) and defined the separate local and central-level procedures for adopting these documents (Fig. 7.1). There are four categories of central planning documents: the spatial plan of Montenegro (strategic document, determining the basis of spatial organization and planning and the instruments of spatial development), the special purpose spatial plan (regulating the areas of special interest and regime of use, such as national parks, coastal zone, etc.), the detailed spatial plan (for the areas in which the construction of objects of state interest, or of regional significance, is necessary), and a state site study (for the areas which are in the scope of a special purpose spatial plan, but require more detailed elaboration). The categories of planning documents defined for the local level mirror this structure and include: the local spatial urban plan (determines the goals of spatial and urban development at the local level, and the measures of achieving them), the detailed urban plan (determines the conditions for construction in the territory covered by the local spatial urban plan), the urban project (for complex construction in smaller areas, or for the areas with distinguishing features), and the local site study (for the areas within the scope of a local spatial urban plan, where detailed urban plans or urban projects are not required).

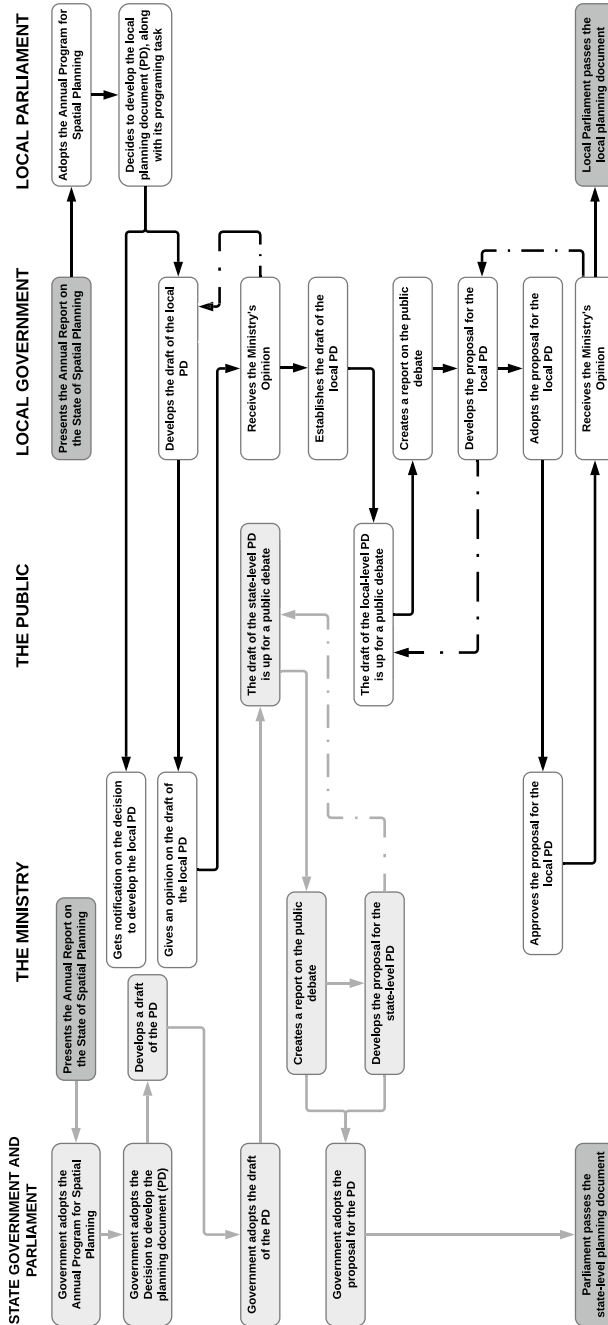


Fig. 7.1 Procedures for the adoption of planning documents, according to the former Law on Spatial Planning and Construction (Parliament of Montenegro 2008). *Note* Public debate is repeated if the proposal for the planning document is significantly different from the draft of the planning document that was originally put up for public debate. Also, if it is not in accordance with the opinion from the Ministry and with this Law, the proposal for the planning document will be returned to be improved. *Source* Author’s own elaboration, based on Dragović (2018)

At the municipal level, local government leads the process of creating municipal planning documents. The right side of Fig. 7.1 shows the series of steps taken by the local government, i.e. the executive branch, as defined by the Law of 2008. Local government develops an annual report on the state of spatial planning and presents it to the local parliament, where the decision to develop a local planning document is made and its programming task defined. The local government follows by creating a draft of a local planning document, of which it informs the state ministry in charge of spatial development; in 2008, this was the Ministry of Economic Development, later succeeded by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism. Once the Ministry approves the draft, the local government presents it for a 15–30 days long public debate, which is the instrument of public participation, giving the local community an opportunity to actively support or contest the plan's propositions. The results of this process are to be integrated in the next iteration of a local planning document: the proposal. If the proposal differs significantly from the draft, due to the changes resulting from the public debate, the local government repeats the public debate procedure. Once the final proposal is established, the local government seeks the Ministry's approval; when the Ministry approves it, the proposal is presented to the local parliament and, finally, adopted into a local planning document. Therefore, according to the Law of 2008, the Ministry is involved in the local planning process as a supervising body, in charge of ensuring that the local planning documents are made in accordance with the Law. The process is led and managed by the local government.

At the central level, the procedure is similar (as shown on the left side of Fig. 7.1). The Ministry produces the Annual Report on the State of Spatial Development at the national level, which informs the spatial planning-related decisions of the state government. The Ministry also organizes the development of a new state-level planning document. Municipal governments do not have a special role in the process of creating a central-level planning document; their involvement is contained within the frame of public debate, which lasts for 15–30 days and presents an opportunity for all interested public and private actors to take part in the development of a planning document. In both the local and the central processes of adopting a planning document, public debate provides a space for comments, critiques, and proposals, which are then sorted and analysed by the responsible (local or central) planning authority and, if considered relevant, built into the proposal. Like in the case of the local-level planning document proposal, the central-level planning document proposal may be put through more than one round of public debate before it reaches the form in which it is adopted by the government and then passed by the parliament.

As these procedures show, the Law of 2008 outlines two parallel, but clearly separated procedures for the adoption of local and national spatial plans, with well-defined roles for both the municipal and the central government. The Law of 2008 also regulates the way in which the planning documents coming out of these procedures—the local and the national spatial plans—should be coordinated and integrated. The local planning documents need to be in accordance with the central-level planning documents, which are of higher order. The Ministry oversees

this coordination: in the process of creating local-level spatial plan, the Ministry's role is to ensure that the Law has been followed and the regulations of different levels have been harmonized.

According to the Law of 2008, the details of the local spatial planning decisions have mostly been left to the municipal authorities. However, this Law left local governments wanting both more autonomy and more support. The Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (2009), the national association of local authorities, found the procedure of adopting the new and changing the existing spatial plans too cumbersome and suggested it should be simplified. This is one of the issues to which the Union of Municipalities refers in their 2009 review of problems in the application of the 2008 Law, which also includes the disparities between the plans at local and central level, the inconsistency in the plans of neighbouring municipalities, lack of local capacities for the production of spatial plans, lack of local expertise for the proper online presentation of planning documents (as prescribed by the Law), and, overall, insufficient time for the municipalities to adapt to the demands of the 2008 spatial planning legislation. To counter these problems, the Union of Municipalities proposed establishing a clear hierarchy of the planning documents along with the procedure for their harmonization, as well as the possibility of introducing regional-level plans, which would provide a framework for the development of regional cooperation in spatial planning. Other proposals referred to the need for increased state support in strengthening the local technical capacities, and for more time to implement the necessary changes. The Union of Municipalities also asked for improvements in the process of involving the public in the spatial planning procedures, suggesting that the Law should require the planning authorities to respond in writing to all the comments and suggestions received in the process and that, regarding the ways of including the proposals of the interested public into the planning document, more detailed clarifications should be adopted. An additional issue with the results of the participatory process is that the Law of 2008 prescribed how, once the draft of the planning document is updated with the results of public deliberation, it might be put through another round of public comments, provided that the new version of the draft is "significantly" different from the previous one. Since there is no definition of the "significant" difference, there is a possibility for arbitrary, case-by-case interpretations, which the Union of Municipalities noted as an issue with the potential to impair the planning process, to damage its participatory component.

Throughout the period of implementing the Law of 2008, some of the concerns expressed by the municipal governments were addressed. However, strengthening the local capacities was not the prime objective of the central government's actions, oriented more towards the improving of the business environment, i.e. making the process of obtaining building permits simpler and more affordable. An important part of this effort was the Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP), started in 2009 and supported by the World Bank, with the goal to improve the efficiency of permitting and property registration (The World Bank 2008). The project, which concluded in 2016, supported the creation of spatial planning documentation in less developed municipalities of the northern and central regions of

Montenegro: nine spatial urban plans were financed or co-financed through this scheme (in Cetinje, Danilovgrad, Bijelo Polje, Plav, Kolašin, Šavnik, Nikšić, Andrijevića and Pljevlja), along with 22 detailed urban plans in 10 municipalities. The project emphasized how, in the process of creating these plans, the participatory approach of the World Bank was employed, therefore securing high standards of transparency and civic participation (Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism 2016a). While this might have addressed some of the concerns regarding participatory procedures expressed by the Union of Municipalities, the legislative framework regulating public participation in spatial planning was not changed throughout the period of the Law of 2008 implementation.

Even with the support of the LAMP, the adoption of most local plans took much more time than the one year the Law of 2008 originally allowed. Subsequent amendments gradually extended this deadline until the end of 2015; however, not even by then had all the local governments produced and adopted their respective spatial plans. The state government reserved the right to adopt a local spatial plan if it was not adopted by the municipality, or if the lack of such document could cause damage to the environment or stagnation of local development. The fact that there is a legal instrument which allows for the state government to take over the responsibilities of the local government might solve the problem of adopting a missing spatial plan. However, as noted in the policy paper by the Centre for Civic Education (2014, p. 22), this does not counter the problem of lacking capacities at the local level, nor does it enforce the principles of decentralization.

The 2008 Law was amended seven times before it was revoked and replaced by the 2017 Law on Spatial Planning and Construction. Five of these changes were substantial, while the remaining two referred to minor technical corrections. Adopted during in the 2010–2014 period, these amendments often reinforced the centralization of certain aspects of spatial development—a process which culminated with the adoption of the new Law of 2017. The first set of amendments came with the adoption of the Law on Improving the Business Environment (Parliament of Montenegro 2010) and introduced several minor changes regarding the process of compensating municipalities for utilities provision on construction land. The second set of amendments was introduced the following year (Parliament of Montenegro 2011a), focusing on streamlining the procedure of issuing building permits and broadening the state government's authority in this area. The third set of amendments came before the end of the year, through the Law on Amendments to the Law prescribing fines for misdemeanours (Parliament of Montenegro 2011b); this change resulted in lowering the minimal amounts of fines for violations against the Law on Spatial Planning and Construction. The fourth set of amendments (Parliament of Montenegro 2013) provided more space for private investors to initiate and finance the creation of new spatial plans and propose changes to the existing ones. New discounts in municipal fees for utilities provision on construction land were also introduced. With the final amendments to the Law of 2008 (Parliament of Montenegro 2014), the central register of planning documents was established and put under the purview of the state government, i.e. the Ministry. The cumulative result of these frequent changes was a more centralized process of

spatial planning-related decision making, primarily oriented towards eliminating regulations perceived as business barriers.

The issue of building permits is a good example of how these sets of amendments gradually changed an important aspect of spatial planning, moving the decision-making powers from the local to the state level. According to the Law of 2008, the local government was in charge of issuing building permits for the projects constructed in accordance with the local-level planning document, while the central government issues permit for the projects in accordance with the central-level planning documents. The exceptions where the state government takes the authority of issuing the building permits away from the municipal level were few, according to the Law of 2008, and included complex constructions such as industrial and infrastructural projects, stadiums with capacity for more than 3000 people, and hotels with a surface area of more than 3000 m². However, this list of exceptions was expanded significantly with the 2011 amendments, which gave the central government the authority to issue building permits for all “state projects of public interest”, which are defined by the Law of 2008 as, for example, production systems that employ more than 300 workers, five-star hotels with at least 120 rooms, and education, science, health, culture and social service buildings (Article 7). In addition to this, the amendments of 2011 gave the central government broader authority over the construction of smaller hotels, bringing all of those with a surface area of more than 1000 m² under the Ministry’s purview. This trend continued with the amendments of 2013 (Article 1), which expanded the definition of “state projects of public interest” to include facilities for the production of electricity from renewable sources, production systems that employ at least 50 workers, and almost all types of hotels and tourist resorts, including small and boutique hotels. Finally, the amendments of 2014 (Article 8) gave the central government the authority to issue building permits for objects which are part of the “spatial and functional whole” with “state projects of public interest”.

The issuing of building permits is based on the local and state planning documents, which prescribe the planning and technical conditions for construction and which are adopted at the local or central level, according to the above described procedures. However, the granting of a building permit is never guaranteed, as it depends on the interpretation of the plans and conditions. Therefore, it is important if the local or the central authority is in charge of this process: whoever decides which building permits are approved and under what conditions, makes their own interpretation of the planning document official and permanent. If the decisions on building permits for structures which might have great significance for the future and direction of local development (e.g. mini hydropower plant, new hotel, etc.) are removed from the local level, the instruments of self-governance at the municipal level might be jeopardized.

The gradual changes in the Law of 2008 limited local governments’ power by transferring some of their authority to the central level, but also by introducing business incentives with a potential to hurt local budgets. The 2013 amendment declared that the investors who finance the “state projects of public interest” are exempt from paying the municipal fees for utilities provision on construction land.

The possible extent of this measure is clear when put in the context of the fact that these fees accounted for 31–43% of total municipal budgets in the 2008–2012 period (The Union of Municipalities 2013). While the fact that the local budgets have been so reliant on the new construction projects is worrisome and indicative of the overreaching economic challenges of Montenegro, it is evident that with this decision, the expanding definition of “state projects of public interest” became, potentially, even more damaging for the local governments: the more of them are approved, the emptier the local budget is. At the same time, local governments were given the power to decide on lowering the fees for utilities provision on construction land or waiving them entirely, on a case-by-case basis, which however left even the wealthy coastal municipalities vulnerable to the pressures from the important outside investors (Luković 2018). This instrument was recognized as a potential corruptive mechanism and challenged before the Constitutional Court of Montenegro by the Network for Affirmation of the NGO Sector in 2016 (Dan 2018).

Finally, some of the ways in which the Law of 2008 was gradually changed reflect the attempt to counter the lack of funds and expertise at the local level by creating more space for businesses to act. While the Law of 2008 only allowed the development of an urban project (which is a local-level plan) to be financed by a private investor, the amendments of 2013 (Article 15) made it possible for private investors to finance the development of a detailed spatial plan and a state site study (central-level planning documents), as well as a detailed urban plan, an urban project, and a local site study (local-level planning documents). In their review of the implementation of the Law of 2008, The Union of Municipalities (2009, p. 7) requested that it should become possible for private investors to finance a local site study; here, this request was accepted and significantly expanded. Having in mind the fact that local governments have struggled to create and adopt planning documentation throughout the entire period of the Law of 2008 implementation, it may be assumed that the invitation for private funding to enter the process of spatial planning was envisioned as a way to help local governments finance spatial plans. It could also be understood as an effort to increase local efficiency, while also expanding the business opportunities for commercial planning bureaus, allowed to undertake the work of producing spatial plans by the Article 35 of the Law of 2008. The Union of Municipalities (2009, p. 6) warned about the difficulties caused in the local planning process by the lack of public planning agencies, but to no avail. Overall, the result of implementing the Law of 2008 and its subsequent amendments was the increased influence of private capital on spatial planning processes, the centralization of decision making, and the insufficient development of local planning capacities—which remains a constant problem of the Montenegrin spatial planning system.

7.3.2 The 2017 Law on Spatial Planning and Construction

Even though the series of amendments to the Law of 2008 have gradually made the spatial planning decision-making process more centralized, the centralization became official with the 2017 adoption of the new Law on Spatial Planning and Construction. The preparation of this legislation began in 2015, when the new law reached a form of draft, which was put through the public debate (Kapor 2017). The process continued away from the public eye for more than a year, resulting in a surprising legislative proposal for a new, centralized spatial planning system. The public pressure to continue debating this issue prevailed, and another round of a highly engaging public deliberation followed. The proposal was sharply criticized by the municipal governments, political parties, civil society organizations, professional chambers, and concerned citizens, who all together contributed to the debate with more than 750 written comments and questions. The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, in charge of this process, accepted only a dozen of the technical suggestions, while those that challenged the new legislation were, for the most part, dismissed (Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism 2017). The proposal was passed into the Law on Spatial Planning and Construction (hereinafter: the Law of 2017) by the state Parliament on 30 September 2017.

Some of the most pronounced stated objectives of the Law of 2017 are to provide regionally balanced spatial development and efficient use and protection of spatial resources, and to encourage investment activity in a way which benefits both spatial and economic development (Article 2). The Law is rooted in a set of ten principles, among which are an integrated approach to the planning process, sustainable spatial development and quality of planning and construction, and horizontal and vertical integration in spatial planning (Article 3). However, the Law of 2017 pulled away from the notion of decentralization. The new legislation abandoned the traditional classification and hierarchy of local- and central-level spatial plans and introduced the spatial plan of Montenegro and the general regulatory plan as the only two planning documents, through which the entire Montenegrin territory should be planned and regulated. According to this Law, the spatial plan of Montenegro is a strategic document, adopted for a period of 20 years, which provides the basis for spatial planning and prescribes the guidelines for the development of the general regulatory plan (Article 16). The general regulatory plan, adopted for a period of 10 years, is a detailed planning document which contains the goals and measures of spatial and urban development of Montenegro and covers the entire territory of the state, including protected areas (Article 17). Both documents are created by the central government and adopted by the state parliament, in a process described in Fig. 7.2. Besides the local and state governments, parliaments, and the public (whose roles have significantly changed, as is evident when compared with those defined by the Law of 2008), the Law of 2017 introduced two new actors into the procedure of spatial planning: the Authority for Technical Requirements (Article 5), which can be an institution (local or national)

or a company (public or private) in charge of a certain infrastructural element (e.g. road construction and maintenance, water supply, Internet provision), and the Revision Council (Article 30), which is appointed by the state government, in charge of revising the drafts of planning documents, and composed of experts in spatial planning with at least 15 years of experience. To secure the involvement of the local municipalities, the Council is required to have a representative of a local government whose territory is being planned in a document under revision. Apart from this representative, local governments are also represented in a team of experts formed by the Ministry and tasked with developing the planning document.

As Fig. 7.2 shows, the Law of 2017 has substantially limited the ways in which local governments can influence the planning process. Instead of leading the procedures of adopting the local-level plans, local governments are now effectively only observing the process with the right to comment, but with no right to consent to the planning document in question. New legislation has not provided the municipal authorities with a clear procedure which could be used to block a decision on spatial planning made by the state government. Additionally, the local government's approval is not necessary for the proposed planning document to be adopted by the state parliament, while the approval of the Authority for Technical Requirements is. Therefore, the Law of 2017 clearly puts the technical aspects of the spatial planning before the political ones.

It is not surprising that the local governments fought vigorously against adopting such legislation. The Report on Public Debate on the Draft Law on Spatial Planning and Construction (Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism 2017, p. 6) shows that the Union of Municipalities criticized the "trend of centralization" the Law was promoting and referred to the stipulations of the Constitution of Montenegro (Parliament of Montenegro 2007) and the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Council of Europe 1985), which promote broad rights for municipal governments and decentralization of power. For the coastal municipality of Tivat, the proposed legislation was "absolutely unacceptable"; in their comment, the local authorities criticized the results of the centralized spatial planning that they had already experienced, after parts of the municipal territory became subject to the central coastal area regulation in 2009. They note how the Ministry began issuing the building permits in areas where construction was never allowed before, and that now the space is devastated to the point where the beaches are disappearing, that new buildings have completely blocked the access to the sea, that tourists are leaving, and that the residents who used to make a living by renting accommodation during the summer season are now trying to sell their property. In their comment, the Tivat municipality insists that these are issues of great importance, which cause huge losses that need to be addressed (Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism 2017, p. 25).

The capital city of Podgorica also criticized the proposed legislation, noting how regulations leave a possibility for all the new plans and by-laws to be of a good quality, but definitely do not guarantee such an outcome (Ibid, p. 40), therefore anticipating that the space for excluding the local authorities from the planning process, which has been opened up by the proposed Law, might indeed be used by

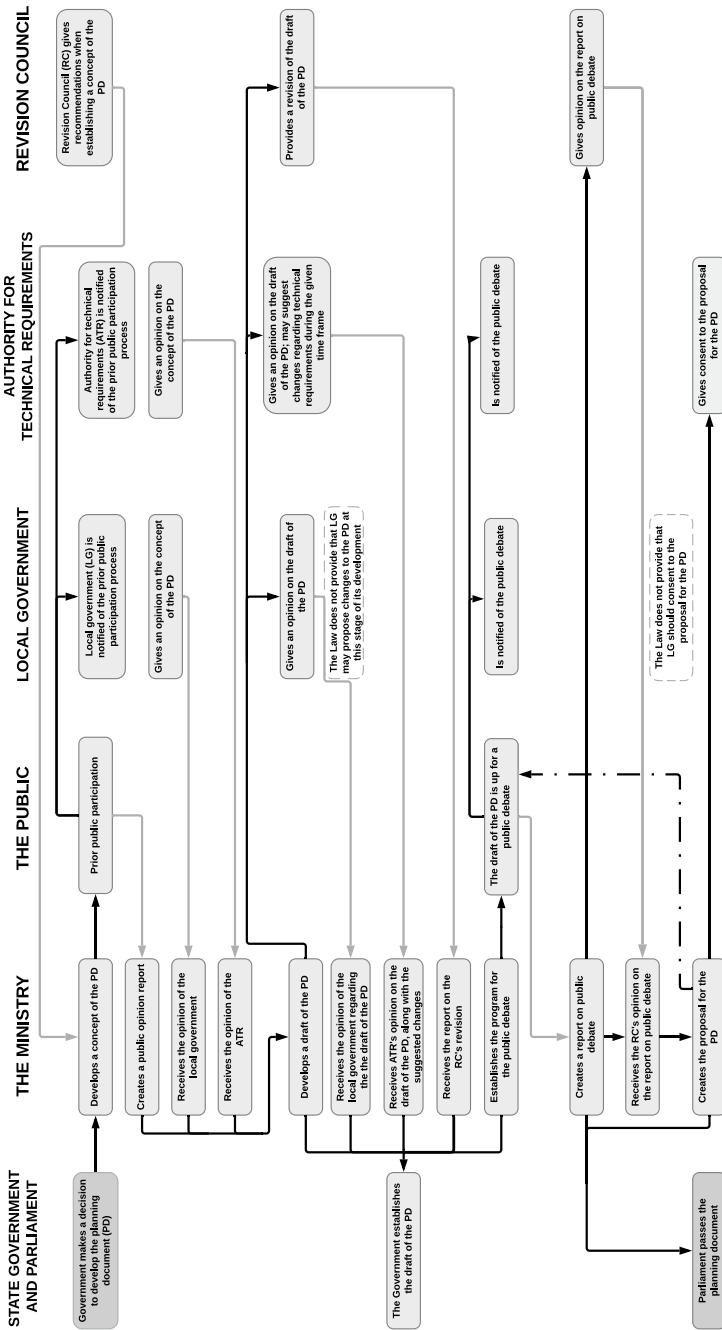


Fig. 7.2 Procedures for the adoption of planning documents, according to the new Law on Spatial Planning and Construction (Parliament of Montenegro 2017). *Note* Public debate is repeated if the proposal for the planning document is significantly different from the planning document that was originally put up for public debate.

Source Author's own elaboration, based on Dragović (2018)

the central government to circumvent local actors and to impose ready-made solutions from above. The Ministry responded to these concerns by claiming that the constitutional rights of the municipalities to self-govern are always confined within the legal framework of the state, and that, by adopting the Law of 2017, the state has only been changing this legal framework, and not imposing limitations to the municipal self-governance (Dragović 2018, p. 72). The Ministry also referred to a newly introduced process of “Prior public participation” (Article 27) envisioned as an instrument for encouraging public participation in the early stages of the planning process. However, although the Law of 2017 did provide this innovation, it did not in any way ensure or guarantee its effectiveness in shaping the spatial plans from the bottom up.

In addition to changing the spatial planning process, the Law of 2017 altered several other aspects of spatial development, the following being the most important among them: the building permits were abandoned as an instrument of controlling construction process and replaced by a notification of the start of construction presented to the Ministry (Article 91), urban and construction inspection was centralized under the Ministry (Article 197), the roles of Chief State Architect and Chief City Architect were introduced (Articles 87 and 88), and the process of legalizing illegally constructed buildings was brought into the sphere of spatial planning and included, for the first time, into the legislation regulating spatial development (Article 1). These changes caused a great degree of turmoil in all areas of spatial regulation and development, the results of which are still difficult to fully comprehend. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Law of 2017 kept some provisions of the Law of 2008 in effect until the adoption of the general regulatory plan, which was scheduled to be adopted no later than 36 months after the Law of 2017 goes into effect.

Since its adoption, the Law of 2017 has been amended four times: once with a technical correction, three times with substantial changes to regulations. Two sets of amendments adopted in 2018 referred mostly to the extension of a deadline for the adoption of planning documents in accordance with the Law of 2008. Originally, the Law of 2017 allowed a period of nine months (i.e. until July 2018) for all the local- and state-level spatial plans, which had been in the process of development under the previous law, to be adopted and to come into force (Article 217). If adopted within the given timeframe, these plans would be valid until the adoption of the general regulatory plan; if not, the adoption procedure would be terminated and the new plan would have to be developed according to the Law of 2017 provisions—that is, within the general regulatory plan framework. State government used this short timeframe to encourage the adoption of spatial plans, some of which had already been in the process for years, while local municipalities were very interested in using this opportunity to adopt some of the local planning documents in accordance with the old procedures, which granted them more autonomy. When the nine-month period provided by the Law of 2017 proved to be insufficient, the Law was amended and the deadline was extended twice, within two different sets of amendments—the first until the beginning of October 2018 (Parliament of Montenegro 2018a), and then, until the end of December 2018 (Parliament of

Montenegro 2018b). These frequent changes and the constant shifting of, apparently, arbitrary deadlines contributed towards the perception of the new legislation as unstable and unreliable, thereby undermining the extensive reform the Law of 2017 was trying to establish even further.

The most recent set of amendments to the Law of 2017 was adopted in July of 2020, bringing an array of changes organized in as many as 100 articles (Parliament of Montenegro 2020). The main motive for amending the law was the ruling of the Constitutional Court (2019), which deemed one of its provisions unconstitutional; specifically, the 2013 amendment to the Law of 2008, which was kept in effect by the new law, and which gave local municipalities discretionary rights to exempt an investor from paying some of the municipal fees for utilities provision. The amendments of 2020 brought this regulation in line with the ruling and introduced, among other measures, business zone exemption from paying for utility provision on construction land (Article 97). With this, the trend of legislating spatial development to ease the regulations related to business development was continued.

Another crucial change adopted in this set of amendments refers to the 24-month extension of the timeframe within which the general regulatory plan should be adopted, to a total of 60 months from when the Law of 2017 was first adopted (Article 85, Amendments 2020). This means that, instead of coming into force in 2020, the updated detailed planning documentation for the entire territory of Montenegro will not be adopted until (at least) late 2022, with the possibility of the deadline being pushed even further, as was the case many times in the past. The delay in adopting the general regulatory plan creates an impediment for the entire process of spatial development, which is now subject to a series of transitional provisions based on the expanding authority of the state government. For instance, the newly adopted Article 218a gives the state government the authority to allow construction in locations which are presently not covered by the valid detailed planning documentation. This provision, which is set to last until the adoption of the general regulatory plan—which might be prolonged even further than 2022—effectively divorces the construction process from the process of spatial planning. By making it possible for these important decisions to be made ad hoc, on a case-by-case basis, and outside of the framework of a carefully crafted detailed spatial plan, it could cause lasting damage to the overall spatial development of Montenegro.

7.4 Main Implementation Challenges

The numerous and frequent changes in the laws regulating spatial development have produced difficulties in implementing this legislation. The Law of 2008 did not uphold its proclaimed principles of encouraging polycentricity and decentralization: the gradual strengthening of the government's authority at the expense of local municipalities, promoted through the series of 2010–2014 amendments, did not create conditions for the long-term improvement of the planning system. The lack of local planning documentation, poor implementation of the existing plans,

and insufficient planning capacities at the municipal level continued to burden local development efforts in the period following the adoption of the Law of 2008, as noted by Doderović and Ivanović (2012). The state government responded by taking over some of the municipal responsibilities and by enabling private businesses to play a more active role in the planning process, while contributing less to the municipal budgets. These actions contributed to the weakened position of local governments in all matters related to the spatial development decision making.

The Law of 2017 set out to solve the problem of the inadequate municipal capacities by formally centralizing the planning process, but failed to take into account how complicated the implementation of such transition may be. By eliminating the deeply rooted classification and hierarchy of local- and state-level spatial plans, the Law of 2017 discontinued the established framework of developing spatial planning documents—a framework that relied on the process with long tradition and well-versed experts. The old planning process was abandoned, while the new one was to come into force with a delayed start: planning documents outlined by the Law of 2017 were to be adopted only several years after this legislation was introduced. In the meantime, for the duration of the period of transition between the two systems, the old plans would still be in use, and they could even be altered and renewed in accordance with the new law. This complex combination of the old plans and new regulations left the public disoriented and confused, and contributed to the atmosphere of uncertainty and instability in spatial planning, evident in the reactions of local governments, professional associations, independent experts, journalists, and political parties (Centre for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro 2018). In the period following the adoption of the Law of 2017, the situation has not become much clearer: local development is often based on dated local-level plans, inadequate for the contemporary challenges of urban development, while the new procedures have yet to fully come into force. This results in construction projects of dubious legality and quality, and inspires critical civic action (Vijesti 2020). When the amendments of 2020 prolonged the transitional period until the late 2022, it became conceivable that the present state might turn into a slow long-term adjustment, with no guarantees for its overall impact on the spatial, social, and economic development of Montenegro.

7.5 Centralization of Spatial and Urban Planning: A Short-Lived Experiment or a Long-Term Solution?

The last decade of spatial planning in Montenegro has shown how challenging it is to develop a stable and functional system of spatial governance, even when the territory in question is small in size and has a well-established tradition of spatial planning. The often-contradictory spatial demands of a largely tourism-based economy (i.e. the demand for ever-expanding development of short-term accommodation versus the protection of the environment) have increased the pressure to

speed up the planning process, at the expense of a careful and thorough construction of a resilient, integrated and inclusive planning system. However, there are no guarantees that the system which is currently being developed will last—or that, indeed, it should last.

Three years after the Law of 2017 and the reform it introduced came into force, the spatial development processes are slow, inefficient, and often confusing. While the creation of important planning documentation is delayed, there is also not much progress in other areas regulated by the Law of 2017—areas such as building construction, urban and construction inspection, and legalization of illegally built structures. The elimination of building permits led to weakened systemic control mechanisms, while the centralization of urban and construction inspection left this service understaffed (Standard 2018). The legalization of the existing structures built without a permit and inconsistent with the valid spatial plans, a process long-overdue (see: Potsiou 2012) and reinvigorated by the introduction of the new legislation, has also uncovered systemic shortcomings: of an estimated 100,000 illegally built objects in Montenegro, around 51,000 applications for legalization were submitted by the summer of 2020; around 65% of the received applications were processed, but only 734 of those structures (1.4% of all the applications) were legalized (Dan 2020). The amendments were introduced in 2020 to improve the process, but the very low success rate from the first phase of the implementation remains worrisome and indicative of the government's unpreparedness for the extensive spatial planning reform it introduced in 2017.

The National Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 lists the strengthening of local governments' capacities to prepare, develop, and implement spatial planning documents as one of the measures for achieving sustainable spatial development in Montenegro (Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism 2016b, p. 308). The 2017 reform of spatial planning legislation has, however, rendered this measure unavailable. For the last three years, local capacities for envisioning and administering spatial development have continued to stagnate, while the state government's capacities have become overburdened and less efficient. It might be fair to say that, until now, the chief achievement of the Law of 2017 was to highlight the flaws of the system currently in place, impairing the autonomy of the decentralized system as well as the efficiency of the centralized one. To overcome the current problems and support the development of a more robust system of territorial governance and spatial development, the current legislation needs to evolve into a framework which truly supports local self-governance and encourages regional-level cooperation in spatial planning, which might hold great potential, but was given little to no attention during the last decade.

7.6 Conclusion

The centralizing trend in the Montenegrin policy of spatial development has so far not produced the desired results, especially in terms of increased quality of planning and balanced regional development. According to the Report on the Implementation of the Regional Development Strategy Action Plan (Ministry of Economy 2020), in 2019, 353 million euros was invested in the northern region; however, during the same period, only 780 people have been newly employed in this part of Montenegro (compared to the total of 9586 newly employed in the entire country over the same period of time). This is not to imply the causal relation between the centralized policy of territorial governance and the poor economic performance of the Montenegrin north. However, the fact that the northern region accounted for only 8% of all job creation in 2019 is illustrative of the persistent discrepancy in regional development, which will only be exasperated by the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It invites further exploration of the effects that the current policy of spatial governance has on the overall economic and social development.

The current policy framework of the spatial development in Montenegro lacks the efficient mechanisms of local-level participation and control, while the regional dimension of spatial management and planning remains an entirely undeveloped potential. By shifting the focus away from centralizing the processes of territorial governance and towards supporting, building, and integrating the local and regional systems, a vast space for the improvement of the current framework emerges. If the responsibilities and the opportunities for spatial development are more evenly distributed across the local, regional, and central levels of government, it might become easier to achieve high-quality, inclusive, and democratic decision making regarding spatial development. If, however, the policy of spatial development continues its current course, the centre might not be able to hold and cope with the burden of the rapidly accumulating negative effects.

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Chapter 8

The Impact of the European Discourse on National Spatial Planning in Bulgaria and Serbia



Velislava Simeonova  and Ivaylo Stamenkov 

Abstract Studying the adoption of the European spatial discourse, the transfer and the (re)production of ideas, principles and visions concerning the European space, as well as the impact of European spatial development documents, support the idea of Europe as a spatial entity. The focus of this chapter is the transfer of EU spatial discourse (using the example of the European Spatial Development Perspective) to both Bulgarian and Serbian spatial planning documents at the national level and on the impact of this process of Europeanisation of spatial planning in the countries at stake. Some initial results show that, in the case of Serbia, the current pre-accession period is much more important in organising and reforming the legal and instrumental framework of spatial planning than was observed in the case of Bulgaria. The latter country only initiated active reforms in the definition of its spatial planning policy several years after its accession to the EU as a member state.

Keywords Europeanisation · Spatial planning instruments · Balkan countries · Serbia · Bulgaria

8.1 Introduction

European spatial planning consists of a mixture of different planning traditions and cultures, which often leads to confusion in its overall interpretation, and to contrasts between different geographical contexts with reference to a number of other historical, cultural, political and governmental factors. In various studies, the idea of European spatial planning has been referenced to multidimensional processes such as Europeanisation (Luukkonen 2011). This idea and the debate surrounding this

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specific academic field benefit from a particularly wide range of scientific literature, which can be viewed as a discourse on European spatial planning.

Adopting this point of view, this chapter focuses on the transfer of EU spatial discourse, taking the example of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), to Bulgarian and Serbian spatial planning documents at the national level and the impact of this process of Europeanisation on spatial planning. The two countries chosen represent the Eastern and Western Balkans, which at the moment are in different phases of EU integration. Indeed, Bulgaria became an official EU member state in 2007, while Serbia was granted candidate status in 2012 (Berisha et al., in this volume). In particular, the aim is to analyse the influence of the Europeanisation of the planning systems in two neighbouring countries with similar areas, populations and historical development, but different spatial planning systems. At glance, the comparative analysis demonstrates the influence of the EU on spatial development, including in candidate countries from the Balkan region, which is a topic that is not yet sufficiently present in the academic literature (Berisha et al. 2018). Comparative studies between the spatial systems of the EU member states and non-EU countries (including the Balkans) are a new focus in Europeanisation studies (See: Cotella et al. 2012; Adams et al. 2014). Such research includes substantial contributions from Berisha et al. (2019) on Switzerland and Albania which poses at the centre of the discussion the capacity of the EU to influence non-member states, despite their diversity in terms of geographical position, historical background and political contingencies—Albania is a candidate country while Switzerland has no ambition to join the EU but co-participates in some EU initiatives (ESPON, for instance). The contribution of Allkja and Marjanokvic (2019) on Serbia and Albania explores the impact of EU internally to the Western Balkans by showing the importance of Integration programmes as channel of influence in countries where spatial planning tradition is very diverse. Conversely, the contribution of Marjanović (2017) on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (with special focus on the Republic of Srpska) instead shows how the Europeanisation process may work in similar contexts but have very different outcomes when it comes to spatial planning activities. In this comparative perspective, it is also interesting to mention the contribution of Coheci and D’Orazio (2019) which explores the role of Europeanisation in member state like Italy and Romania, showing how Europeanisation can have diverse impacts also in countries within the EU itself.

This chapter focusses primarily on the impact of ESDP in the national planning discourse of the two countries at stake. It begins with a brief review of the importance of the process of Europeanisation of spatial planning and the role of the ESDP in planning discourse and territorial policy-making in the last twenty years. The second section then concentrates on the EU’s influence on the legal and instrumental organisation of the planning systems in Bulgaria and Serbia. The connection between the processes of European integration and the transfer of European spatial discourse to the planning systems of both countries is also demonstrated. A separate methodological section is devoted to the understanding of Europeanisation through discourse analysis. In this regard, the aims of the ESDP

are taken as a basis for content analysis of the two main national planning documents, while the results of the implementation of the ESDP aims are analysed in a separate section. Finally, the discussion section is dedicated to the implementation of European planning principles in the planning systems of both countries, before a number of closing remarks and future perspectives are presented to the reader.

8.2 The Europeanisation of Spatial Planning Through Discursive Integration Dynamics

Considering national spatial planning systems, Giannakourou (2012) states that the process of Europeanisation has many variations according to the prism used in the analysis and the analytical framework chosen. Reimer et al. (2015) add that domestic institutions assimilate the objectives that the process of Europeanisation entails, where the degree of convergence or divergence of planning depends on the specifics of the country, on the relevant political sector and on the time frame. However, European planning systems cannot be understood as static models of formal regulations for planning activities, but rather they must be seen as dynamic and adaptive structures. The process of the Europeanisation of spatial planning has become more and more consistent in Eastern Europe, despite a certain degree of criticism which affects how it is interpreted and enacted. With the enlargement of the EU to the east and southeast, specific Eastern patterns of adaptation emerged (Maier 2012). It is believed that the degree of change in the new member states will be even more profound than in Western European countries (Dühr et al. 2007; Cotella 2007, 2014; Adams et al. 2011; Nadin et al. 2018). Therefore, as Zolkina (2013) points out, the impact of Europeanisation on domestic transformation in Central and Eastern European countries has become one of the most significant aspects of current research concerning Europeanisation in general. Zolkina's interests centre on the classification of Europeanisation into three types: membership Europeanisation; enlargement Europeanisation; and neighbourhood Europeanisation. While enlargement Europeanisation implies a clear prospect of EU membership, neighbourhood Europeanisation relates to the countries bordering on the EU which have not been offered any such membership as an inalienable part of their relations with the EU (Zolkina 2013). Several countries in the Balkan region could be clear examples of these three types of Europeanisation.

The application of key concepts in spatial planning, at different levels from the supranational to the domestic, is part of the idea of the so-called discursive influence of European spatial planning. This notion of discursive influence is an expression and manifestation of the Europeanisation processes, whereby concepts and ideas which have emerged at the EU level, through debates among participants from all over Europe, have proved capable of influencing domestic spatial or territorial discourse. Internal change therefore occurs as a result of processes based on sharing *planning ideas and image*, established at the EU level and then acting as

catalysts of change when (re)interpreted within the different member states (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2011, 2015; Cotella and Stead 2011).

Despite the lack of formal EU competences, the European discourse on spatial planning grew particularly rapidly in the 1990s, reaching its climax in 1999 with the publication of the ESDP, which was approved by the Informal Council of Ministers for Spatial Planning of the European Commission in Potsdam. The ESDP is an informal document that promotes spatial development goals and principles at regional and national levels (CEC 1999). In particular, the European perspective strengthens the ideas of polycentric and balanced spatial development as key concepts in European spatial planning, based on the experience of countries such as the Netherlands and Germany. Thanks to the ESDP, the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) programme is currently functioning, and this in turn has contributed to the justification of various INTERREG programmes: part of the European Commission's range of instruments for promoting interregional communication and exchange (Kunzmann 2006). So, at the turn of the century, the discourse on European spatial planning which *promotes* the idea of a European spatial planning model is taking shape. To a large extent, it is maintained but also supported by the EC through European funding opportunities for local and regional initiatives (Ibid.).

The ESDP is the first non-binding European intergovernmental document on spatial planning that attempted to overcome differences in cultures, perspectives and terminology that exist between different planning systems. The goals and priorities initially set out in the ESDP are developed and upgraded in later European documents such as Territorial Agenda (2007) and Territorial Agenda 2020 (2011). The implementation of the ESDP in territorial policy-making and its integration into the planning discourse, as noted, plays a particularly important role in bridging the differences. The European spatial planning guidelines clearly attest to the union's mission to stimulate more activities to be undertaken by the member states and can indeed be understood as a performative stage that justifies the European dimension of the territory, pending consolidation of this process (Elorrieta Sanz 2013). Many years after its publication, the ESDP can be considered as part of the broader process of Europeanisation (Börzel 2001; Faludi 2004; Giannakourou 2012, Cotella 2020). In a number of studies, application of the ESDP is presented as an important feature in the understanding of Europeanisation or as representing the supranational influence of the EU and the different member states and vice versa. However, analysis shows that very often, in the survey models, no other European level documents are taken into consideration, in line with the ideas of Böhme and Waterhout (2008) for "Planning for Europe" or, for example, in attempts to trace outlines for the construction of a single European spatial planning model. The direct impact of the ESDP is limited in many countries, as noted in some complex studies such as the "Application and Effects of the ESDP in the Member States" (ESPON 2007); while in others, it remains incompletely studied, as in Bulgaria and Serbia, because their national spatial planning documents were produced relatively late.

8.3 The Integration of Bulgaria and Serbia into the European Union

Simeonova's thesis (2017) on the spatial planning system in Bulgaria (in the context of the European planning debate) indicates that this Eastern European country has completed its post-socialist socio-economic transformation. The country is in the process of adapting to the Western European model, which is evidence of the Europeanisation effect (Tsachevsky 2011).

In contrast, obtaining the status of candidate for membership of the EU means that Serbia has a commitment to adapt to union practices and thus to implement necessary regulations, policies and strategies for sectoral and other development, as well as to correct and transform its procedures towards the EU's common vision, objectives and standards. Although the spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia with its policies, principles and practices is not directly regulated by the EU in any particular way, the corresponding public sector is heavily influenced by other related national sectors (such as transport, water management, environmental management and agriculture) which are widely influenced by relative EU directives. This means that if the national spatial planning is linked to the coordination of different sectoral policies and strategic priorities, the national spatial plan is a model for their optimal balancing and should affect the national regulations of each member state or candidate country and appropriately reflect the overall framework for EU development (Živković 2014) and sectoral policies.

In Bulgaria, almost three decades after the fall of the *barrier* of political dependence and centralised state control, the process of Europeanisation (whether defined as real or seen as just fictitious) succeeded, though with difficulties, in introducing new approaches and visions to spatial planning (Simeonova 2017). The process is not yet complete; on the contrary, it is an evolving dynamics heading towards future transformations and results. However, many of the traditional aspects of Bulgarian spatial planning have been forgotten or unreformed for a long period of time. For example, after the adoption of the Spatial Planning Act in 2001 and the regulation of the National Complex Spatial Scheme that is contained within it, no such instrument is being developed. There is a similar problem with the Regional Spatial Schemes. In the years when the country was a candidate for EU membership, the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) adopted it and their related national legislation led to poor practices. In the years since full membership was granted to the country, the aspects of spatial planning that have been forgotten have gradually been taken over by new planning tools (regional planning), created in the process of vertical Europeanisation and the, primarily *harder*, mechanisms it determines (EU spending policy and EU legislation) (Simeonova 2017). At the end of 2012, following the reforms of the legislation on spatial and regional planning, the long-awaited National Concept for Spatial Development for the period 2013–2025 was adopted and replaced the National Complex Spatial Scheme, which never actually came into being. After its adoption, a series of 67 integrated plans for urban regeneration and

development for the 2014–2020 period were programmed at a local level, but they gave rise to new criticism of the National Concept and its validity as a planning tool.

In Serbia, considering the more formal impact the EU has had on planning tools, the EIA and SEA laws and their respective directives have been adopted. Although both have been used in practice since their introduction, they were not formally included in the planning process until 2009 when the new Law on Planning and Construction was adopted. Despite criticism, these are seen as a *new* type of planning and policy instrument that are relevant for the EU provisions, as they transfer EU policies into the national institutional context. Likewise, the new instruments for transnational and territorial policy are important for Serbia in its process of European integration and Europeanisation. These include the macro-regional strategies, in two of which the country participates: the EU strategy for the Danube Region (see Vulevic et al., in this volume) and the EU strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (see Solly and Berisha, in this volume). Spatial planning methodology has been developed in Serbia in accordance with the European methodology in the field of spatial development, especially between 2008 and 2012, with particular emphasis on public participation and cooperation with stakeholders in the planning process. Also, the content of the planning documents is gradually changing as part of the Europeanisation process. Similarly to Bulgaria, the documents at the national level successively reflect the European objectives; but at lower levels, these effects are less strong. In the 2008–2012 period, the country's planning activity intensified, along with the new Law on Planning and Construction and the Spatial Plan of Serbia 2010–2020, 35 spatial plans at the national level and over 100 at the local level were adopted (Marjanović 2017).

In the field of regional planning, Bulgarian planning tools are an example of *blind* transfer of the European discourse into a system of plans and strategies. In addition, the use of European spatial discourse, or the use of the discourse of *Europe* as a whole in organising the planning process or practices at different individual levels, is considered an attempt to increase the legitimacy of political reforms (Dühr et al. 2010). In this sense, it is logical to say that Europeanisation is not only a coercive but also a voluntary process in which local planners use the EU as a discursive framework to promote their own goals and ideas—often conceptually distant and incoherent from the former. However, assessment of the application of these ideas shows that it has a controversial character in the case of Bulgaria (Simeonova 2017).

Similarly to the case of Bulgaria, unbalanced regional development is also one of the main features of Serbia, where the discrepancies in development are mainly due to differences in the metropolitanisation and the polarisation of the country conversely to what is continuously promoted by the EU concerning polycentric development and balanced regional development. The lack of adequate development policies creates conditions, primarily for Belgrade with its constant dense concentration of population, and the subsequent clustering of activities and capital, which are ideal for fostering unbalanced regional development and national urban system (Živanović and Gatarić 2017; in this volume).

8.4 Understanding Europeanisation Through Discourse Analysis

The use of European spatial discourse as a platform of knowledge, a resource or an argument for achieving specific goals in the adaptation process is a complex mechanism that is undoubtedly tied to the development of the cognitive and discursive dimensions of the planning system. The actors in each European system try, in their own way, to (re)produce and transfer ideas and visions concerning European space or to learn from European documents on spatial thinking, thus maintaining the idea of *Europe* as a spatial formation (Luukkonen 2015). The set of planning tools (strategies, plans and programmes, etc.) could represent more of a need to analyse and assess the impact of *new* European principles and ideas regarding spatial planning, such as material assets or material expressions of organised goals and interventions on space, although they are not always easily accessible. Plans, for example, allow us to focus on the content and discourse of territorial policies and the verification of their accordance with Europe's goals, principles and strategies, at least on paper (in theory) (Elorrieta Sanz 2013). The system of activities related to the implementation and monitoring of the planning documents represents an actual expression of the results of the territorial plans. Bulgaria recognises the necessity to implement the European spatial planning documents in its own system of instruments, and the usefulness of this implementation, only when their principles can be *transferred* from paper to practice (Simeonova 2017). Although separate efforts can be identified to analyse the impact of the EU on planning, European spatial discourse has been introduced into local planning cultures superficially, i.e. largely following the process of European integration and the growing need to ensure formal compliance (Marjanović 2017).

Although with different intensity, in Serbia and in Bulgaria, there are *traces* left in the national planning documents by various European spatial policy documents and some EU concepts, such as horizontal and vertical coordination, and sustainable or polycentric development, while the transfer of European objectives is considered to have been only limited. For this reason, European spatial planning and development principles (as laid out in the ESDP) were taken into account in order to follow, via content analysis, two spatial planning tools at the national level. The results were compared and explained. Some of the principles shown in Table 6.1 have been fragmented into keywords and expressions as a way to find them in national instruments, and most importantly, to estimate how well they are developed in the territorial context of each country.

The keywords that helped us to implement the content analysis of the documents (in their English version) are presented in italics in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Policy aims of the ESDP and key words for content analysis of the national spatial planning instruments in Bulgaria and Serbia

Policy Aims (ESDP)
3.2 <i>Polycentric Spatial Development and a New Urban-Rural Relationship</i>
3.2.1 <i>Polycentric and balanced spatial development</i>
3.2.2 <i>Dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urbanised regions</i>
3.2.3 <i>Indigenous development, diverse and productive rural areas</i>
3.2.4 <i>Urban-rural partnership</i>
3.3 <i>Parity of Access to Infrastructure and Knowledge</i>
3.3.1 <i>An integrated approach to infrastructure and knowledge</i>
3.3.2 <i>Polycentric development model: a basis for better accessibility</i>
3.3.3 <i>Efficient and sustainable use of the infrastructure</i>
3.3.4 <i>Diffusion of innovation and knowledge</i>
3.4 <i>Wise Management of Natural and Cultural Heritage</i>
3.4.1 <i>Natural and cultural development as a developmental asset</i>
3.4.2 <i>Preservation and development of the natural heritage</i>
3.4.3 <i>Water resource management: a special challenge for spatial Development</i>
3.4.4 <i>Creative management of cultural landscapes</i>
3.4.5 <i>Creative Management and Cultural Heritage</i>

Source Authors' own elaboration elaboration, after ESPON (2007) and Simeonova (2017)

8.5 Implementing the ESDP Objectives in Bulgaria and Serbia

In this section, we focus on the political and administrative systems and their relation to spatial planning in the two countries at stake. Particular attention is paid to the decision-makers who are responsible for spatial planning at different vertical levels. After a brief presentation of the basic planning documents and the relevant current laws in the two countries, the section concludes with an analysis of the implementation of the stated aims of ESDP in the two main planning documents: the National Concept for Spatial Development of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Spatial Plan for the Republic of Serbia.

The key policy aims of the ESDP, as set out in Table 8.1, and the content analysis of the two main planning documents at the national level for Bulgaria and Serbia, respectively, the National Concept for Spatial Development 2012–2025 and the Spatial Plan for the Republic of Serbia 2010–2020, reveal a common trend—from partial towards more thorough transfer of the European principles for spatial planning and development to the individual countries. The comparative results of the content analysis of the integration of the thirteen European spatial aim into these two documents, however, and show some differences between the two countries (currently with different EU status), but also the same impact of the general idea of a single European spatial model.

As per Art. 1 of the country's current Constitution (1991), Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic and sovereignty belongs to the people while according to Art. 2, Bulgaria is a unitary country with local self-governance but no autonomous

structures allowed within any part of the territory. It has a clearly defined three-level vertical structure: republic, provinces and municipalities (Table 6.2). As is usual for a typical unitary republic, spatial planning in Bulgaria is dependent on the national level. An exception to this is the self-governing competency of the municipalities, while the provinces (corresponding to the NUTS 3 regions in the EU) are only an intermediate level for implementation of state policy. The guiding principles of the spatial planning policy are determined by the Council of Ministers. The minister of Regional Development and Public Works is responsible for policy implementation: coordinating the activities at all levels and exercising control over the overall spatial planning practice through the National Construction Control Directorate. The minister appoints a National Expert Board on Spatial Planning and Regional Policy, which approves planning documents of national importance. District governors implement the national spatial planning policy within the territory of the administrative regions they are in charge of. Depending on the spatial planning objectives and tasks of regional and inter-municipality importance, the district governor may appoint a regional expert board on spatial planning. Acting within the competences vested in them, the municipal council and the municipality mayor implement spatial planning activities within the territory of the relevant municipality. At this level, the majority of spatial planning competences are transferred (Tosic 2010). The Bulgarian National Concept for Spatial Development 2013–2025, currently the key instrument for integrated and sustainable spatial, economic and social development, was adopted in December 2012. It represents the first attempt to consolidate the main objectives and priorities of both physical and socio-economic spatial planning. It seems most likely that this National Concept will also completely substitute some of the national planning instruments mentioned below. In Bulgaria, the spatial planning instruments are defined by the two that are most relevant for the spatial planning laws: the Spatial Planning Act and the Regional Development Act. That means every administrative level has two different spatial instruments according to both laws (Stamenkov 2014).

Serbia is also a parliamentary republic with a vertical administrative structure: republic, autonomous province (Vojvodina), municipalities and cities. In addition, there is a division of districts and statistical regions (Vojvodina, Belgrade, Šumadija and Western Serbia, Southern and Eastern Serbia). According to the Law on Planning and Construction (2009), the planning system is divided into three levels: national, regional and local (Table 8.2). The most important authorities are the Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure and the Republic Agency for Spatial Planning, which is an independent public institution, while the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina has its own institutions and competencies in the domain of planning. Competencies at sub-national regional territorial levels are yet to be defined. The two main types of planning documents are spatial plans and urban plans. The four main categories of spatial plans are the spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia, the regional spatial plan, the spatial plan of a specific area and the local (municipal) spatial plan. They are more focussed on the strategic orientations of development. The main categories of urban plans are general urban plans, general regulation plans, and detailed regulation plans. These plans are more land

Table 8.2 Basic information and planning levels in Bulgaria and Serbia

State	Area	Population	EU status	Planning level	Institution
Bulgaria	111,000 km ²	7.1 million (2016)	Candidate status since 1999; Full member since 2007	National Regional Local	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, National Expert Board for Spatial Planning and Regional Policy District governor, regional expert board for spatial planning Municipal council and municipality mayor
Serbia	77,000 km ²	7.1 million (2016)	Candidate status since 2012	National Regional Local	Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure/MCTI MCTI, Provincial Secretariat for Urbanism and Environmental Protection Local authority, local public and private planning enterprises

Source Authors' own elaboration

use-oriented, although they also adopt an integrated approach (Trkulja et al. 2012; Trkulja, and Dabović, in this volume).

8.5.1 Results of the Analysis of the National Concept for Spatial Development of the Republic of Bulgaria

Analysing the National Concept for Bulgaria, the first two policy aims of the ESDP (i) polycentric and balanced spatial development and dynamic and (ii) attractive and competitive cities and urbanised regions are sufficiently integrated and can be indicated as successfully transferred and applicable (Table 8.3). The first was developed in the territorial context as Strategic Objective two, which calls for a more of polycentric territorial development; while the second was in the context—somewhat similar to the first—of balanced polycentric and sustainable urban development. The case of the third aim “indigenous development, diverse and

Table 8.3 Assessment of the presence of the ESDP policy aims in the main planning documents of Bulgaria and Serbia

Policy aims (ESDP)	National Concept for spatial development of the republic of Bulgaria 2013–2025	Spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010–2020
3.2.1. <i>Polycentric and balanced spatial development</i>	Developed in the territorial context	Developed in the territorial context
3.2.2. <i>Dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urbanised regions</i>	The principle is developed in the context of balanced and polycentric and sustainable urban development	The principle is not developed in line with the ESDP
3.2.3. <i>Indigenous development, diverse and productive rural areas</i>	Particular attention to targeting priority actions. It has been developed on its own	The principle is not developed in line with the ESDP
3.2.4. <i>Urban-rural partnership</i>	Developed as a separate principle and guideline	Not developed as a separate principle
3.3.1. <i>An integrated approach to infrastructure and knowledge</i>	Available in Strategic Objective 3: “Spatial cohesion and access to services” but is not fully integrated	Not among the five basic goals. It is mentioned in different areas, but not as in the ESDP
3.3.2. <i>Polycentric development model: a basis for better accessibility</i>	Not developed independently; accessibility is almost entirely related to transport.	Polycentric urban development is analysed, but is not in the sense of ESDP with an emphasis on accessibility
3.3.3. <i>Efficient and sustainable use of the infrastructure</i>	Not developed independently and fully, but is adapted in the territorial context	Partially developed and incomplete
3.3.4. <i>Diffusion of innovation and knowledge</i>	Available as a strategic goal. Less attention paid to the term <i>knowledge</i> than <i>innovation</i>	<i>Knowledge</i> is used only in terms of accessibility and a factor for the development. Innovation is almost lacking
3.4.1. <i>Natural and cultural heritage as development asset</i>	Available as a strategic goal and basic principle	Sufficiently developed as a vision and a goal
3.4.2. <i>Preservation and development of the natural heritage</i>	Available as a strategic goal and basic principle	It is sufficiently developed as a vision and basic goal
3.4.3. <i>Water resource management - a special challenge for spatial Development</i>	Mentioned as a basic principle, but is insufficiently developed	Enough developed, it somewhat meets the ESDP recommendations

(continued)

Table 8.3 (continued)

Policy aims (ESDP)	National Concept for spatial development of the republic of bulgaria 2013–2025	Spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010–2020
3.4.4. Creative management of cultural landscapes	<i>Cultural landscapes</i> are mentioned just once. The principle is insufficiently developed	A sufficiently developed principle and basic goal
3.4.5. Creative Management and Cultural Heritage	It is available as a strategic goal and as an important basic principle. Sufficient attention is paid	Sufficient attention and emphasis on the importance. It is both a principle and a basic goal

Source Authors' own elaboration

productive rural areas” is different, as it is not developed on its own but a positive sign in this regard is the “urban–rural partnership”, which has the status of a specific principle of spatial planning and contains specific guidelines for action.

The second group of four ESDP policy aims collected under the theme “Parity of Access to Infrastructure and Knowledge” does not provide a sufficiently eloquent and straightforward answer to the feasibility of European principles in Bulgarian planning practices. A positive sign could be found in the aims of “an integrated approach to infrastructure and knowledge” and “diffusion of innovation and knowledge”. The former is sufficiently covered by the Strategic Objective three, which recognises the importance of “spatial cohesion and access to services”, although it is not presented in a fully integrated model, as is supposed to be the case, while the two terms “infrastructure” and “knowledge” are considered separately. The latter is broadly implied in Strategic Objective six, which focuses more on “competitiveness through growth and innovation areas” and demonstrates the important role and priority that the National Concept gives to thematic areas such as science, technologies and innovation. It is worth mentioning that much greater attention is paid to the term *innovation* at the expense of *knowledge*. This is not the case, however, when we consider the objectives “polycentric development model: a basis for better accessibility” and “efficient and sustainable use of infrastructure”. Although polycentric development is stated as a separate strategic goal, it is not related to accessibility. Accessibility in the National Concept is almost entirely integrated into the development of transport and transport infrastructure, hence more related with spatial accessibility instead of the broader sense given by the ESDP. The second of these objectives does not exist independently either. Most commonly, the terms *efficient* and *sustainable* relate to energy, water and natural resources, but not to transport and transport infrastructure, as is outlined in the perspectives.

The application of the last group of five policy aims of the ESDP within the thematic area “wise management of natural and cultural heritage” is provoking discussion within Bulgarian planning practice. In general, three of these five aims can be said to have been successfully transferred and developed in the text of the

National Concept. First of all, this is “natural and cultural development as development asset”, which has been given considerable attention and is integrated into specific Strategic Objective four, which focuses on “well-preserved natural and cultural heritage”, while also considered a priority as an important basic principle and approach. Two increasingly current aims are also well-integrated: “preservation and development of natural heritage” and “creative management and cultural heritage”, although the latter is not a priority from the management point of view. With insignificant presence (and therefore examples of spheres where changes are needed) are the aims “water resource management: a special challenge for spatial development” and “creative management of cultural landscapes”. Proof of this is the fact that the term *cultural landscape* is only mentioned twice in the whole concept. It would seem that the National Concept for Bulgaria has somehow integrated part of ESDP principles and spatial approaches. However, this discursive integration should be further developed and, in particular, contextualised and adapted to local needs, priorities and contingences.

8.5.2 Results of the Analysis of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010–2020

The situation with the Serbian national plan is somewhat different. From the first group of four ESDP policy aims, only the first “polycentric and balanced spatial development” is sufficiently developed in the territorial context and is characterised by its status as a basic principle for balanced spatial development (Table 8.3). The other three aims “dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urbanised regions”, “indigenous development, diverse and productive rural areas” and “urban–rural partnership”, although in some cases identified as a principle or priority, have not been developed in the way set out in the ESDP.

At this stage, Serbia is further from transferring the European policy goals to its main national planning document in terms of the second group of aims with the theme “parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge”. The first of these aims, “an integrated approach to infrastructure and knowledge”, is not among the five basic objectives, but is mentioned in themes such as social coherence, reduction of inequalities, priority for high mountain areas, climate change and protection and development of landscapes. Despite the attention paid to *infrastructure* and *knowledge* issues, it is not possible to argue that they are integrated as in the ESDP. The problem with the second aim “polycentric development model: a basis for better accessibility” is similar. Polycentric urban development has been sufficiently analysed, but not in the sense of the perspectives with an emphasis on accessibility. Accessibility is considered a priority for transport and in some specific cases such as access to social infrastructure. Still less integrated are the last two aims in the group: “efficient and sustainable use of infrastructure” and “diffusion of innovation and knowledge”. Concerning the former, the terms *effective* and

sustainable that are used are linked to areas such as natural and cultural heritage, natural resources, forests, bio-resources, but not to infrastructure, as in the recommendations. As regards the latter *knowledge* is mentioned only in terms of accessibility and as a factor for economic development; while *innovation* is almost entirely absent, leading to the conclusions that this specific principle is generally poorly integrated.

The most important of the European recommendations in the National Plan of Serbia can be observed in the third group “wise management of the natural and cultural heritage”, where all five European policy aims are substantially transferred, with few exceptions. The first two aims, “natural and cultural development as a development asset” and “preservation and development of the natural heritage”, are directly integrated as basic objectives (respectively, “protected and sustainably used natural and cultural heritage and landscape” and “spatial–functional integration with the surroundings”). The third aim, “water resource management: a special challenge for spatial development”, also meets the European principles, although water management is not analysed only in terms of spatial development. Separate parts of the national plan devoted to the subject are entitled “nature, ecological development and protection” and “water management and infrastructure”. The last two aims in the group, “creative management of cultural landscapes” and “creative management and cultural heritage”, are also paid substantial attention. Their importance is emphasised as they are defined both as planning approaches and as basic objectives, entitled “protected and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and landscape”. As a single recommendation, it is possible to affirm that the terms *cultural landscapes* and *cultural heritage* are analysed simultaneously with *natural landscapes* and *natural heritage* and not separately as indicated in the objectives.

A brief analysis of the results shows us that the countries have different degrees of incorporation of the ESDP aims into their main planning documents. Generally, these aims are integrated as a strategic or basic goal, principle or vision, but there are some that have not been developed independently and fully as in the European perspectives (Table 8.3).

8.6 Concluding Remarks and Future Perspective

Our results show interesting dynamics in the transfer and implementation of the European spatial principles according to national territorial contexts, which can indicate the general idea of an interest in *adapting* to the European spatial discourse. Although some of the principles are not self-defined and developed in both national instruments, this does not mean that their *presence* has not been taken into account, even though indirectly, in the preparation and development of the documents. Therefore, we can give a positive evaluation to the implementation of the ESDP in the new national planning documents for Bulgaria and Serbia.

In the case of Bulgaria, we should bear in mind that the National Concept is a document developed under the Regional Development Act (2008) and not under the Spatial Planning Act (2001), as in the case of Serbia. The latter country started its legislative reforms in the field of spatial planning years before gaining its status as an EU candidate. Comparing the two cases, there are transformations and political transfer of principles with and without legislative reforms. In this sense, evidence of the transfer of EU ideas to the Serbian planning system begins before the process of formal membership; unlike in Bulgaria, where this process follows different dynamics in the period after 1999.

The Europeanisation of spatial planning in EU candidate countries, according to Marjanović (2017), can hardly be appreciated (made visible). The situation in Bulgaria is not very different from this, although it is a member of the EU. In both cases, we have evidence of the harmonisation of many of the national laws and policies with the *acquis communautaire*, although in the case of Bulgaria, the Spatial Planning Act was not conceived, updated or implemented within the context of the EU planning discourse, which significantly slows down the adoption and elaboration of a national spatial planning document. By comparing the two countries, clear evidence has undoubtedly emerged of the regionalisation of the countries in accordance with NUTS and the fostering of the process considering the design of a series of developmental strategies (regional planning), which impose the promotion of the transfer of ideas for territorial cohesion as part of the European spatial discourse. This has, in turn, influenced the establishment of a new system of regional planning tools. Both countries adopted the environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment during their periods of candidate status, and these became part of the transnational planning documents (Marjanović 2017; Simeonova 2017).

Concerning the transfer of discourse from EU documents, the results of our content analysis indicate a transfer of planning principles and, in particular, of the policy aims developed in the ESDP. However, the debate on compliance with the transferred discourse in these national spatial documents and planning practices continues. Marjanović (2017) and Simeonova (2017) report finding traces of various European documents in the national spatial planning documents of Serbia and Bulgaria, which is confirmed by the results of our analysis presented here on the specific implementation of the ESDP. However, limitations in the knowledge local planners have concerning the relevance of European spatial initiatives in individual national contexts can still be recognised. As Marjanović (2017) summarises, in the case of Serbia, the European spatial discourse is superficially introduced, which questions the overall dynamics of changes and implementation in planning practices. Similarly, in the case of Bulgaria, evidence of a *voluntary* transfer of the European discourse can be found in the National Concept. However poor *piece by piece* practices, as well as weakly coordinated systems of planning and shoddy development tools, continue to cast doubt on the actual realisation of the new planning practices and the new structure of instruments that the impact of EU spatial principles implies (Berisha et al. 2020; Solly et al. 2020).

In order to clarify the process and its future development, it is necessary to study the Europeanisation of spatial planning of each EU member state, as well as that of candidate countries. In both Bulgaria and Serbia, there have been attempts to implement EU policy aims, in particular those of the ESDP, in their main national planning documents. According to this study's assessment, the transfer of ESDP principles can be considered positive. However, the key challenges in the future will relate to how this transfer can be turned from just political *on paper* good will to applicable well-planned practice, and how it can also have a strong impact at levels of organisation and administration lower than the national level. The comparison is also useful in view of the fact that in Serbia, legislative reform and the transformation of the system of spatial planning tools began before the acquisition of EU candidate status. In Bulgaria, the delayed legislative reforms, especially with regard to the Spatial Planning Act, the constant criticism from the academic community and the practicing planners, together with the ineffectiveness of the Act, are the reasons why the main planning document at the national level, National Concept for Spatial Development, is closer to the Regional Development Act, which has been updated three times over the last two decades. This is a somewhat greater criticism of the Bulgarian National Concept than of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia. Meanwhile, this chapter confirms how the long arm of EU (Berisha et al. 2019) is capable of influencing not only member states but also non-members, as in the case of Serbia.

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Chapter 9

The Europeanisation of Spatial Planning in Albania: Opportunity or Threat?



Ledio Allkja

Abstract The fall of the totalitarian regime in Albania started a large wave of governance reforms, including the territorial planning sector. This chapter aims at analysing the major transition in the planning system from a regulatory/urbanistic approach towards a more spatial approach through the looking glass of Europeanisation as one of the main drivers behind the changes. Therefore, it becomes interesting to open a debate regarding the extent to which the process of Europeanisation has affected the planning system as well as to understand the limitations and the possibilities behind the process. Following a theoretical discussion regarding the Europeanisation of spatial planning systems, the chapter delves into the analysis of the Albanian case. By analysing the main changes of the planning system, the chapter will afterwards focus on a content analysis of the General National Territorial Plan (GNTP). The case of the GNTP is quite interesting considering that this instrument is at the top of the hierarchy in planning in Albania; thus, it is expected that the impacts of the European integration processes, and the larger debate on Europeanisation, are manifested in this document.

Keywords Europeanisation · Spatial planning · European integration

9.1 Introduction

European integration is one of the top priorities for the Western Balkans, including Albania, following the political changes of the 1990s. Over the last two decades, the process has been quite slow, partly due to internal issues within the European Union (EU) such as the economic crises, followed by the refugee crises, as well as the increased nationalistic rhetoric against the EU (i.e. Brexit to mention one case), and mostly due to the internal development issues of the Western Balkan countries.

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The process of European accession is defined in the Treaty of the European Union, signed on the 7th of February 1992 in Maastricht, with article 49 of the Treaty, which establishes that: any *European state may apply to become a new member with the condition of respecting the values of the union established in article 2 of the treaty* (European Union 2016). These values, also known as the Copenhagen Criteria, include issues related to freedom, democracy, rule of law and advocate for a social model where pluralism, justice, tolerance and gender equality are at the core. Thus, on one hand, the integration process is focused on the transposition of EU legislation, directives and policies on the domestic arena, while on the other it advocates also for a large socio-cultural change.

Several reforms are required within each country, as well as a long sequence of negotiations in an intergovernmental setting for the full transposition of the *acquis* into the national legislation. Therefore, the EU has a strong influence in areas such as market regulations and sectoral policies through rules and norms that need to be adopted within a limited amount of time and flexibility. In the literature, Europeanisation has been widely used as a concept to explain European integration as well as domestic changes as a result of the EU region. As an area of the public policy domain, spatial planning, although it is not a direct competence of the EU, is influenced by it (Faludi 2008; Dühr et al. 2010; Adams et al. 2011). The Europeanisation of spatial planning systems, in particular, has been a hot research topic within the member states (Giannakourou 2005; Dühr et al. 2007; Cotella and Stead 2011; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020) and partially in the eastern bloc countries which joined the EU in the early 2000s (Peterlin and Kreitmayer McKenzie 2007; Kovacs 2009). The Western Balkans has been somewhat outside of this research, and only in recent years has there been a growing attention (Berisha et al. 2018). Thus, the fact that countries like Albania have a different context provides an opportunity to test hypotheses about Europeanisation outside the cultural, political and economic particularity of advanced West European democracies with developed economies. Albania is a country which has gone through a drastic change in its planning system, and one of the main motivating factors can also be linked to European integration. From the outset of the reform, the government of Albania has established an ambitious objective of transforming its system based on European models of planning. Thus, Europeanisation is seen as a key priority in the transformation of the system. Nevertheless, even though changing a legislation can occur very quickly, changing a planning system can require a lot of time and investments. The institutionalisation of the new planning system continues to be a challenge for Albania.

Ten years after the outset of the reform, it has become interesting to look back and understand what is happening. In this sense, the debate regarding Europeanisation as a limitation or as an opportunity will be a key element in the chapter. The planning activity has been quite high over the last decade, starting with the legal changes in the 2009–2014 period and then with the preparation of planning instruments during the 2014–2019 period. For the first time in the history of

the Albanian planning system, a Generation National Territorial Plan (GNTP)¹ has been drafted and approved in 2016. Besides that, two other plans of national importance—the Integrated Cross Sectorial Plan (ICSP) for the Coast and the Integrated Cross Sectorial Plan for the Tirana–Durrës area—were drafted and approved in parallel to the GNTP. Additionally, at the local level, 37 out of 61 municipalities have drafted and approved their General Local Territorial Plans (GLTPs), 8 municipalities are in the approval process, 16 are in the drafting process and only one municipality has not yet started the preparation (National Territorial Planning Agency 2019).

The GNTP is at the top of the planning hierarchy in Albania and has been selected as the case study to provide evidence of empirical Europeanisation impacts. Following a theoretical/conceptual discussion regarding the Europeanisation of planning systems, the chapter will focus on the analysis of the Albanian case. Initially, the planning system in Albania will be explained, followed by the process for the preparation of the GNTP. The analysis will continue with an identification of European legislation and directives part of the GNTP, by exploring the vision and objectives of the Albanian GNTP vis-à-vis European documents such as the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the Europe 2050 vision prepared by ESPON. The content analysis will continue with the penetration of the European policy jargon in the GNTP, and the way they have been contextualised. Once all the facts are laid out, the discussion explores the main opportunities and limitations of Europeanisation on the plan. In this respect, considering Albania’s history with planning, the Europeanisation of the planning system is seen as an opportunity for trying to establish a functioning and just system, bringing new practices, rules, and debates into the domestic context. However, the way these influences are contextualised in the domestic arena can well become a limitation and somewhat of a hindrance to the whole process of the institutionalisation of the new approach in the planning system. It is an acknowledged fact that the Europeanisation of Albania (in other sectors) is mainly oriented towards paying lip-service to the EU and somewhat a depthless process, which brings about only limited changes.

9.2 Europeanisation of Spatial Planning

Europeanisation has been at the centre of research in European Studies by academics in and outside Europe over the last three decades (Dühr et al. 2010). However, to get a more comprehensive view of the meaning of the term itself, first some definitions need to be compared. One narrow view of the concept comes from Risse et al. (2001, p. 3), who define Europeanisation “as the emergence and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance”. In this

¹In other words, the GNTP, can be compared with a national spatial plan.

case, the term is defined as a concept in search of an explanation for the modes of governance development at the European level. The narrowness of the definition not only comes from the direction of the process, at the EU level, but is also due to the fact that it is only concerned with governance structures. Meanwhile, Borzel (1999, p. 574) shares a similar view, but her definition does not restrict the process of Europeanisation only to the governance structures, seeing it as a: “process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy-making”. This definition also looks at vertical integration, thus at the mechanisms that allow a larger degree and variety of policies to become part of the European domain. Thus, it can be observed that although Europeanisation is seen from a single-direction perspective, it entails two main processes, the creation of new governance structures as well as the creation of new policy areas.

However, the other view sees Europeanisation from a different direction, thus the impact that the EU has on domestic change. In this sense, it is interesting to see two different definitions given by Ladrech (1994, p. 17) “Europeanisation is an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy-making” and “Europeanisation is... understood as the change within a member state whose motivating logic is tied to a EU policy or decision-making process. The prime concern of any Europeanisation research agenda is therefore establishing the causal link, thereby validating the impact of the EU on domestic change” (Ladrech 2010, p. 2).

In both definitions, Ladrech uses the concept of Europeanisation in explaining domestic changes due to EU policies and decision-making processes. Although the concept is dealt again from a one-directional perspective, thus the impact EU exerts on states, Ladrech goes further than the previous definitions. Europeanisation is not purely a formal issue of legal and policy compliance, but domestic change is seen also from a wider perspective. In this sense, domestic change is also seen as a more comprehensive term hinting at the cultural, ideological and discourse change through Europeanisation. This view is supported also by Radaelli (2004, p. 3) who provides a more comprehensive definition of the concept “Europeanisation consists of processes of (a) construction, (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, *ways of doing things* and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies”.

With this definition, Radaelli goes further in highlighting the fact that domestic change does not occur only on legal and policy issues, but also in impacting the institutional culture, which particularly fits with the logic of this chapter.

Meanwhile, in understanding the reasons for domestic change, it is argued that one of the main preconditions to spur change is the *misfit* between EU policies, processes and norms when compared to the domestic ones (Borzel and Risse 2000). The second condition for domestic change is the existence of certain actors, institutions or other facilitating actors that respond to pressures for change. In trying to build a logic of domestic change, it can be said that there are two main views: the

first where formal institutions seize the opportunities provided by change in the redistribution of power; whereas the second is a more *bottom up* approach which involves civil society and informal institutions/actors that act as agents of change and through persuasion bring change (ibid). Nevertheless, although both aspects hold from a theoretical point of view, the two processes are not mutually exclusive. Thus, it is a combination of both that can lead to domestic change.

The second issue of the discussion concerns spatial planning and, in particular, spatial planning systems. Spatial planning systems have been subject to continuous change in order to better achieve their technical scope to steer spatial dynamics and processes of land organisation and transformation (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2020). Although the EU does not have direct competences on spatial planning, the different EU sectoral policies have spatial impacts consequently leading to direct implications in planning processes (Dühr et al. 2010) and also as demonstrated recently by the ESPON COMPASS project (ESPO EGTC 2018). A growing number of academics have taken an interest in the ways that Europeanisation influences spatial planning (Zonneveld 2005; Nadin 2007; Faludi 2008; Nadin and Stead 2008; Stead and Cotella 2011; Janin Rivolin 2012; Cotella et al. 2012; Adams et al. 2014; Cotella 2014). Their studies range from influences on the national planning system, policies, processes, instruments and so on due to the dissemination of ESDP or even ESPON projects, or through the more conceptual shift from land-use planning towards a spatial planning approach. Nevertheless, it can be said that Europeanisation can be seen through the increased influence of the EU policies and concepts within the national spatial planning systems. The latter is a result of direct policy implications, as well as of exchange via transnational cooperation on spatial development which very often has generated some kind of learning (Dühr et al. 2010). Some of the main EU sectoral policies such as environment, regional development, transport and agriculture have an important territorial impact, and thus, it can be argued that they also impact on planning systems (Böhme and Waterhout 2008). Besides direct impacts by policies, Servillo (2010) argues that changes have also been induced due to the increased discourse regarding planning in Europe, as well as the diffusion of different keywords and concepts.

The impacts of the EU on (domestic) spatial planning can be divided into three main strands of academic research: (i) the analysis of the direct impacts of EU legislation; (ii) directives and policies on space and the debate surrounding the evolution of *European Spatial Planning*; and (iii) the most recent events of informal and formal learning supported by territorial cooperation practices. Looking at policies that have a direct impact on space and planning, Evers and Tennekes (2016), in their study about the impact of EU policies in the Netherlands have come up with two types of policies: the more visible ones which have a direct impact on space and the other ones which are less visible but have a direct impact on policies. In addition to the above, they also found that there were three other types of policies that impacted planning: (i) procedural rules, using the example of the requirement of the environmental impact assessment, (ii) projects to achieve EU targets and

(iii) and new governance relationships which are developed through territorial cooperation initiatives such as *cross-border* planning (Evers and Tennekes 2016).

Meanwhile, Janin Rivolin (2012) uses the concept of institutional technology in defining planning systems “such as the broad idea of *usage and knowledge of tools, techniques, crafts, systems or methods of organisation* affecting the *species ability to control and adapt to their natural environment*, within a structure or mechanism of social order and cooperation governing the behaviour of a set of individuals” (Janin Rivolin 2012, p. 69). In doing so, a conceptual model for analysing spatial planning systems is developed on four main strands: *S* (structure), *T* (tools), *D* (discourse), *P* (practice). The framework by Janin Rivolin (2012) also provides an opportunity to integrate the different impacts of the Europeanisation of spatial planning system in a more structured way. However, special care needs to be taken when considering non-member states as they do not need to comply to the same rules, regulations and are not involved to the same extent as member states in shaping discourses on spatial planning. Based on the above discussion, and the aim declared in the introduction, the frameworks by Janin Rivolin (2012) and Evers and Tennekes (2016) will be used as guidance in analysing the Europeanisation of the Albanian planning instrument.

9.3 The Albanian Spatial Planning System

During the 1945–1990 period, Albania was under the communist dictatorship regime, and thus, spatial planning system reflected features of a centrally planned country, characterised primarily as a technical discipline based on strong codes and standards with a strong influence from the Eastern Bloc (Aliaj et al. 2010, 2014; Berisha 2018; Berisha et al. 2018; Berisha et al., in this volume; Berisha and Cotella in this volume). The regulatory plans were the main planning instrument and they were only drafted for urban areas, while at the national level, although no national spatial plan was drafted, the country operated with 5-year economic plans which also had strong spatial implications (Aliaj et al. 2014). At the local level, due to a total absence of private property and market economy the objective of the plan remained primarily technical (Aliaj et al. 2005), in most cases drafted by a central institution called the Institute of Urbanism.

The fall of the dictatorial regime required reforms also on urban planning which started in 1993, with law 7693 “On Urban Planning”. The law primarily regulated development in urban areas and the main instrument remained the *regulatory plan*. The legal change was only an improvement of the legislation during communism in terms of integrating some issues regarding private property. Nevertheless, the legislation could not be fully implemented as it did not manage to incorporate all the dynamics of change that the country was going through at the time (Ministry of Urban Development 2014; Allkja and Tavanxhiu 2016). The system could not respond to market demands, and thus, it very soon became obsolete and non-functional. In 1998, with law 8405 “On urban planning”, after gaining some

experience, the Albanian authorities tried to correct the system failure. Although several improvements were made in the planning law, it still was not successful in managing territorial development (Aliaj 2008; Çobo and Toto 2010). The system to a certain extent became *corrupted* and people lost faith in planning. The failure to properly address informal development and the change in property rights from state owned towards private property combined with weak institutional structures were the main pitfall of the system (Çobo and Toto 2010).

In 2006, the Albanian Government decided to initiate a process for reforming the planning system (Aliaj et al. 2014). However, this time the aim was to completely transform the system by changing from a rigid, physical, technical and aesthetical process towards an integrated, comprehensive and strategic approach (Leka et al. 2012). Thus, a change from *urban planning* is towards *spatial/territorial* planning. This was concluded in 2009 with law 109111 “On Territorial Planning”, set to enter into force in 2011 in order to allow the authorities to adapt and prepare for the changes (Ministry of Urban Development 2014).

The legislation brought several changes in terms of institutional arrangements, new planning instruments and processes (Toto and Shutina, in this volume). In terms of institutional arrangements, the National Territorial Planning Agency was established as a coordinative and supportive institution in terms of planning. Its duty, besides coordinating the processes of planning at the national level, consisted also of supporting local authorities in the preparation of their planning instruments. In terms of instruments, a clear hierarchy was established with the introduction of the General National Territorial Plan at the top of the hierarchical pyramid. Planning, from a typically regulatory perspective, is now also received a strong strategic dimension. The environmental dimension was also integrated as part of the planning process, and strategic environmental assessments became a prerequisite for the territorial planning instrument. A focus was also placed on participatory planning issues and increasing transparency and accountability. However, although there were various initiatives at the time to draft General Local Territorial Plans, the loss of interest at the central level as a political priority, the continuous changes of the law and its bylaws, combined with the low capacities at the local and central government did not allow for full implementation of the legislation. The procedure for the preparation of the GNTP was initiated but never finalised while at the local level, out of 373 local authorities only 45 managed to draft a GLTP. In 2013, planning was put back into the political agenda, the law was reviewed and its bylaws were redrafted led by a newly created Ministry of Urban Development (Ministry of Urban Development 2014).

Law 107/2014, on Territorial Planning and Development became the main legal framework for territorial planning in Albania. The law defines the planning instruments as well as the competences of the different governance levels in planning (Albania. Government of Albania 2014). The law does not bring any new concepts compared to that of 2009; however, it clarifies most of the issues. Figure 9.1 shows the planning instruments in Albania and the respective responsible institutions.

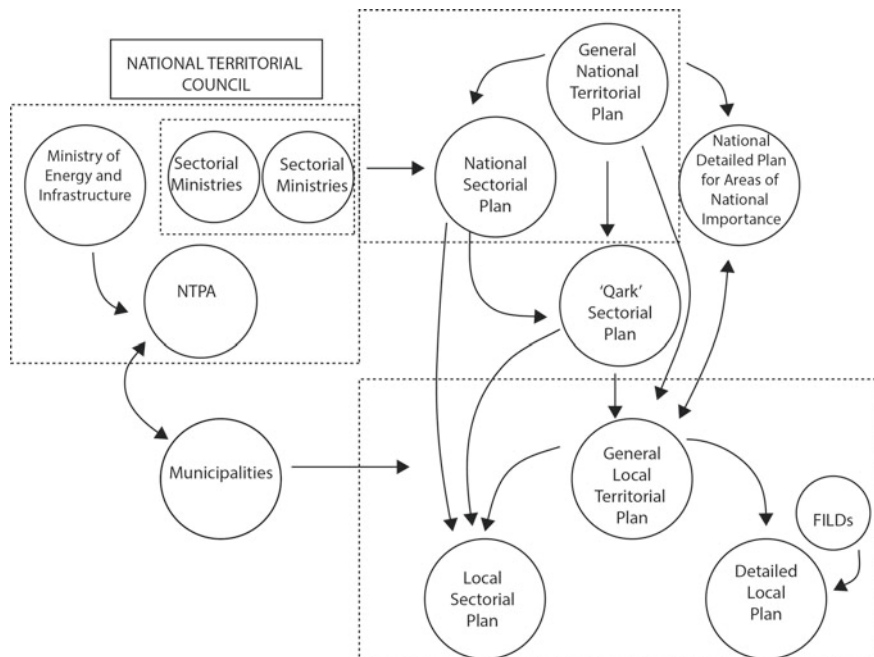


Fig. 9.1 Planning instruments in Albania. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

In terms of planning instruments, at the national level, the GNTP is the highest order of plan. The plan itself is composed of three documents, namely the strategy, the plan and the regulations while it should also be associated with a strategic environmental assessment (SEA). The GNTP as part of its proposals defines sectoral plans and the Detailed National Plans for Areas of National Importance (DNPANI) which need to be drafted. While the sectoral plans are drafted by the respective ministries, the situation changes when it comes to DNPANI. These plans, which can be initiated either by a local governance unit or by a ministry, are drafted in a joint group between the national and local level in close cooperation with the NTPA. In essence, it is quite an interesting tool in terms of vertical coordination; however, that is also one of the biggest challenges.

Based on this law, and its bylaws, each municipality in Albania has the competence and obligation to prepare a General Local Territorial Plan (GLTP) for the territory under its jurisdiction. Municipalities cannot issue building permits unless they have an approved GLTP. The latter is composed of three main documents. The Strategy of Territorial Development defines the vision of the municipality, its objectives and the main policies for guiding development. The land-use plan is the second document. In brief, it gives territorial meaning to the strategy by defining the distribution of use of land for the whole territory. As part of the preparation of the land-use plan, the territory is divided into smaller units (called structural units in the Albanian legislation), and for each unit, the permitted uses are defined.

The Territorial Development Regulation is the third document prepared under the framework of the GLTP. It is composed of general regulations, which are applied for the entire municipality as well as sectoral regulations, such as, for example, in terms of environment or transport. Additionally, it has also specific regulations for each of the structural units.

As part of the process of preparing the GLTP, the municipality has the right to define certain areas of priority, which need to be further planned and that should be developed by a Local Detailed Plan (LDP). The LDPs can be prepared by the public authority and/or with a private initiative. In this case, it is usually a private developer, a property owner, or a group of owners, who take the initiative for preparing the LDP, while the municipality oversees the process and assesses the plan. The Law 107/2014 defines also financial instruments of land development which can be used by municipalities as part of the process of preparing LDPs. The law defines three main instruments: transfer of development rights, bonus FAR and compulsory development of land. Additionally, a Decision of the Council of Ministers on public spaces completes the legal framework of these instruments, by adding also business improvement districts, betterment fees and forms of co-financing between the public–private and the community. The aims of these instruments are to generate additional finances for public investments, good distribution of development and balancing of cost and profits between the parties involved in the process, as well as protection of natural, historic or agricultural land (Toto and Allkja 2018).

9.4 Evidences of Europeanisation: The General National Plan

The General National Plan was drafted during the 2014–2016 period and approved by the DCM 881 “On the Approval of the General National Plan of the Territory”, on 14th December 2016 (Albania. Government of Albania 2016). This plan represents the highest level of planning in Albania, and it is a reference for spatial planning instruments at lower levels (Albania. Government of Albania 2014). In terms of European Integration, the GTNP serves as the first filter for the transposition of the EU directives, policies and concepts into the Albanian planning practice.

As can be seen from Fig. 9.2, EU directives, policies and concepts can penetrate the Albanian context in different forms and through different instruments both at national and local levels. EU Directives, Policies and Strategies are integrated as part of the Albania Strategy for EU Integration and subsequently as part of the National Strategy for Integration and Development (NSID). These two documents, especially the NSID, have a direct impact on the GNTP. The relationship between the two is quite strong, as the GNTP, gives a spatial expression also to the priorities of the NSID. On the other hand, territorial cooperation also plays an important role,

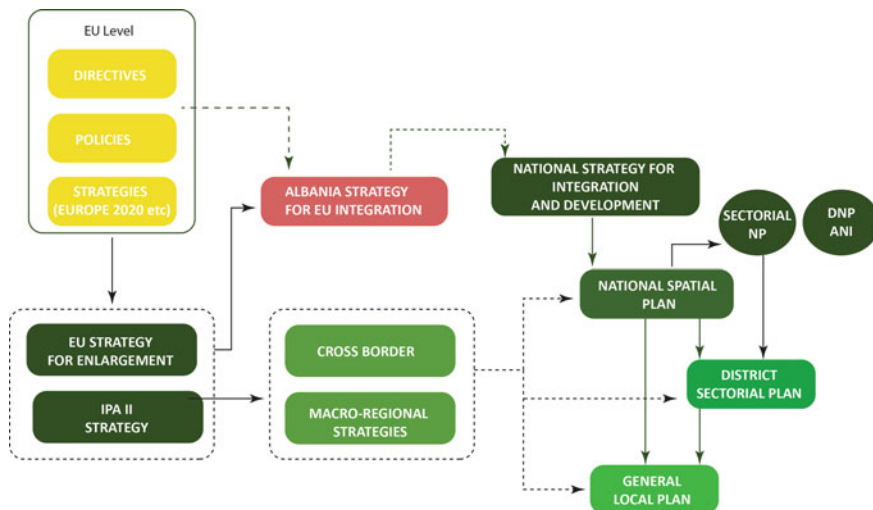


Fig. 9.2 Relationship of Planning Instruments in Albania and EU Directives. *Source* Authors’ own elaboration

not only at the national level, but also at the local level. Albania is part of different cross-border cooperation programs and INTERREG. Thus, the objectives of the programming documents of these programs are internalised also in the Albanian planning instruments. Compared to the NSID, which has a greater impact at the National level, the territorial cooperation programs do extend their influence at the local level as well. Additionally, the implications at the national level also cascade at the local one. GNTP compliance is required by law for all municipalities, which can thus create the conditions for the reflections of these issues also at the local level.

9.4.1 The Planning Process

The process for the preparation of the GNTP was initiated after the approval of the request of the Ministry of Urban Development by the National Territorial Council, Decision 1, date 18/10/2013. The preparation of the plan would be led by the Ministry of Urban Development (MUD) and the NTPA in an inter-ministerial panel composed of representatives of the different line ministries. Each ministry had to appoint a representative and create a dedicated structure which would contribute in the preparation of the GNTP. This can be considered as a high level policy coordination structure which should guarantee sectoral integration as part of the preparation to the plan. The process started strongly; however, the lack of experience in developing such processes by both the NTPA and MUD as well as the

sectorial ministries, soon brought the role of the commission to a stalemate. Meanwhile, the role of the inter-ministerial group was somehow reduced. Based on the evidence provided by the NTPA, the sectorial ministries were primarily consulted and informed regarding the plan, as well as provided with the required information; however, they were not included first-hand in the process. Although the NTPA and the MUD took over the process, it can be said that a series of attempts were made to make the process open and participatory.

As part of the process for the preparation of the GNTP, four different workshops were organised on an expert basis through the project for *The Metabolism of Albania*. This method of focus groups allowed the gathering of information as well as the consultation of different ideas with high level experts from different fields. The results of the project and afterwards the publication were used as part of the analysis for the policy-making of the GNTP.

Besides the work with the project on the Metabolism of Albania, consultative meetings were conducted with different stakeholders such as universities and research organisations, municipalities, business representatives, tourism and other associations. However, the process failed to grasp this opportunity in terms of increasing territorial cooperation with bordering countries.

In terms of engaging with the general public, four large consultative meetings were held in Korçë, Shkoder, Vlore and Tirana. These meetings also included livestreaming on the national television, as well as several spots which were aired on different national televisions which aimed at conveying the vision and the objectives of the GNTP to a larger audience. Once the document was prepared and revised, it was approved by the National Territorial Council. On the other hand, one of the main priorities of the EU is the improvement of the cross-border cooperation. While drafting the plan, the Albanian authorities made an attempt to consult also with neighbouring countries, although this was only limited to Kosovo^{*2} and Montenegro.

9.4.2 The Influence of EU Directives

From the very beginning of the GNTP, reading the introduction from the minister, one can understand the desire to join the European Union and also to seek the modernisation of the country. The latter is evident through “this instrument will serve to the acceleration of the journey towards European Albania” (Ministry of Urban Development 2016, p. 4). Later on, the plan is seen as an instrument for achieving better integration and better relationships with other neighbouring countries. This becomes quite evident also during the further elaboration of the plan, as there are specific recommendations for transport corridors, as well as

^{2*}This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

specific recommendations for improving cross-border cooperation. Nevertheless, with regard to cross-border cooperation and territorial cooperation, the plan only illustrates the different programs (Ministria e Zhvillimit Urban 2016) and highlights some possibilities for recommendation; however, it does not provide any solutions for improving cooperation and increasing performance levels in EU projects.

The aspiration to join the EU and Europeanisation plays an important role in the Albanian GNTP. Based on the content analysis of the plan, more than 30% of the references used in the plan came from European documents (meaning, not only official EU documents); however, a third of the latter were (spatial) planning oriented ones (i.e. ESDP, EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian etc.), while the rest were directives (i.e. Water Framework Directive). Just by looking at the numbers we can see that the EU has a strong impact also on spatial planning documents (see Table 9.1).

As can be seen from the above table, there is a first attempt of the Albanian authorities to highlight some of the main directives that influence space. Nevertheless, there is a disproportion in terms of the directives cited by the plan and some of the main directives that effectively impact on the territory. For example, directives related to waste, air quality, energy and SEVESO are not even mentioned, which is clearly a handicap of the plan. There is no clear explanation regarding the reasons for certain directives being referenced while others are not even mentioned. As one of the aims is also to support the integration of Albania in the EU; the absence of a clear analysis of possible impacts of EU directives can be

Table 9.1 EU directives with spatial impacts by sector vs. EU directives referenced in GNTP

Directives/referenced in the GNTP	EU Directives with spatial impacts by sector
Environment – Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) – Directive on Urban Waste Water Treatment (91/271/EC) – 7th Action Plan on Environment (1386/2013/EU) – Potable Water Directive (98/83/EC) – Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (2009/147/EC) – On the Conservation of natural Habitats and of wild Fauna and Flora (91/43/EEC)	Environment – SEA Directive – EIA Directive – Birds Directive – Habitat Directive – Water Framework Directive – Floods Directive – Environmental Noise Directive – SEVESO III Directive – Waste Framework Directive – Landfill Directive
Transport – The Interoperability Directive (2016/797/EC) – Single European Railway Area (2012/34/EU)	Energy – Renewable Energy Directive – Energy Efficiency Directive – Regulation on Guidelines for trans-European Energy infrastructure
	Maritime – Maritime Spatial Planning Directive – Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Source Authors' own elaboration

considered a missed opportunity. Some of the directives which do have spatial implications have already been transposed in the Albanian legislation (i.e., renewable energies); however, the plan does not give any indications regarding their implementation and implications in the territory. In addition, also the directives cited in the plan are only acknowledged, but there is no Territorial Impact Assessment of these directives in order to understand their possible impacts on the Albanian territory as well as to suggest/recommend adequate policies for the GNTP.

In addition, it is said that the plan will provide a territorial governance model for attracting EU funds (Ministry of Urban Development 2016, p. 22). The plan identifies the different funding available mainly through territorial cooperation; however, it does not go into any analysis with regard to EU fund absorption, nor for the reasons of the low level of absorption. Meanwhile, in terms of regionalisation, the plan seems to give different alternatives of regions, mostly from a functional perspective, but nothing from a territorial governance perspective. Although one of the main objectives concerning EU integration of the GNTP is to increase the absorption of funds also at the regional level, with regard to the latter the plan does not go into detail for a possible scheme in terms of regional development and governance.

Meanwhile, considering Albania's prospect for joining the EU, and other possible funding schemes which may come through the Cohesion Policy (ESI Funds; CLLD; ITI) or the Rural Development Policy (EAFRD; LEADER), there is little analysis and the plan does not take them into consideration. Thus, while on the one hand the ambition is to provide a territorial governance framework for attracting EU funds, content wise, the GNTP fails to acknowledge, analyse and give possible policy options for their attraction.

When considering candidate countries such as Albania, or other Balkan countries, most of the change also comes due to the interaction of local experts with international ones, as well as through the different international agencies (Allkja and Marjankovic 2019). Thus, the exchange in this case does not only happen through territorial cooperation within the framework of the EU, but also on a more *individual* basis where different member states try to extend their influence on other countries. In addition, in this case, conditionality is not only due to EU rules and regulations, or through EU mechanisms of financial conditionality, but also and more directly connected with the argument above.

9.4.3 *The Reference to EU Visions and Guidelines*

Looking at the strategic or spatial planning documents at the European level, the GNTP makes reference to the ESDP, the Territorial Agenda and the ESPON Territorial vision for Europe 2050. In addition to these documents, the GNTP makes strong reference also to the Urban Agenda objectives, but on the other hand neglects the Urban Agenda of the EU, which is becoming quite important at the European and urban level. Table 9.2 shows an overview of objectives of the

Table 9.2 GNTP objectives vs. ESDP, TA and Europe 2050 objectives

GNTP	ESDP	Territorial Agenda	Europe 2050
Multi-dimensional integration in the European context	development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban–rural relationship	Promote polycentric and balanced territorial development	Openness: opening up European markets while promoting global sustainability; enhancing the efficiency and coverage of the European network industries; facilitating cross-border regions; promoting co-development with neighbouring regions; mitigating and adapting territories to climate change
Creating and strengthening a strong and competitive economic position of Albania within the Balkans and the Mediterranean	Securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge	Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions	
Providing physical and territorial integrity of the historic, cultural, natural and urban landscape throughout the Albanian territory	Sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage	Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions	
Increasing and improving the quality of life of people by promoting economic growth, eliminating territorial disparities , removing barriers of access to economy, infrastructure and knowledge		Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies	Polycentricity: promoting secondary city/regions as engines of growth; renewal of cities enhancing social inclusiveness ; reducing land-take and improving overall resource efficiency; valorising of cultural landscapes ; unleashing regional diversity and endogenous development
-promoting the right to the city		Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises	
Establishing the basis for regional development		Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions	

Source Authors' own elaboration

Albanian GNTP vis-à-vis the ESDP, Territorial Agenda and ESPON Vision for Europe 2050.

There is a general convergence of objectives between the GNTP and the European documents that can be seen in terms of regional development and competitiveness, parity of access and reduction of disparities as well as with regard to the protection of environmental and cultural heritage.

In order to better understand the penetration and interpretation of these terms in the Albanian context, polycentrism and cohesion will be analysed in greater detail as two of the main policy objectives and discourse also at the European level.

Polycentric Development in the GNTP is defined as—...*the process that promotes cooperation of cities and regions with each-other and the surrounding areas in order to identify the common strengths and complementary potentials, which bring an added value to economic development that cannot be achieved by isolated cities or regions* (Ministry of Urban Development 2016, p. 230), which is entirely based on ESPON definitions. As can be seen, the GNTP uses quite a broad definition of the concept of polycentric development. The latter is used both at the urban/city level and the regional level. Especially at the urban level, also due to the use of the *central place theory*, the concept of polycentrism is used very frequently. Meanwhile, in terms of polycentricism, the plan also gives some alternatives for a polycentric network of regions. The central place theory plays an important role in the Albanian GNTP, and this can also be linked with the support received from the German International Development Agency (GIZ). Nevertheless, while in Germany there is a whole mechanism for supporting cities and regions in achieving their rank, the Albanian GNTP does not give any indication as to how it will occur; instead, it remains mostly at defining the concept at the theoretical and normative level.

Meanwhile, referring to cohesion, the plan sees it both from the perspective of social cohesion and economic cohesion. Again it is a broad concept, very often also used as a substitute for sustainable development. Especially in terms of reducing regional disparities, the term cohesion is used as a main objective. Both terms have been interpreted and contextualised in the Albanian context. They are used in their broad definitions in order to express different issues and objectives.

9.5 Europeanisation: Opportunity or Constraint?

The chapter has provided an overview of some of the main legal changes of the spatial planning system in Albania and has looked at the way Europeanisation penetrates the Albanian planning system and instruments. The main aim was, however, to open a debate regarding limitation and opportunity because of Europeanisation (Table 9.3).

The prospect of Europeanisation has opened up the opportunity for the modernisation of the Albanian planning system and also its instruments of spatial planning. Undoubtedly Albania has made steps forward in terms of modernising and

Table 9.3 Opportunities and limitations of the Europeanisation process

Aspects	Opportunities	Limitations
Legislation	The transposition of SEA and EIA legislation in Albania offers a good opportunity for improving also spatial planning policy-making. As a country with a weak tradition in environmental policy these two instruments support an improved process and better policy integration, especially in integrating environmental and climate change issues as part of spatial policy	Although SEA and EIA have been integrated in legislation, they remain weak. These instruments at the current state are seen mostly as bureaucratic procedures rather than creating better opportunities for adequate policy measures
Instruments	The changes in territorial planning have created a more hierarchic system of instruments (from national to local). The GNTP serves as a great opportunity to align spatial policies with National Development and Integration objectives. Planning has a comprehensive approach and thus tries to integrate different sectors in the process. Planning has a comprehensive approach and thus tries to integrate different sectors in the process	The absence of a planning culture of based on coordination and policy integration, limits the implementation of the GNTP. Although the GNTP tries to align with NDIS objectives their implementation is weak. Especially, sectorial conflicts arise in the implementation phase
Process	The Europeanisation of the Albanian planning system has created opportunities for a more open process in policy-making. Additionally, the process is also attempting to open up to the general public. This is also a great opportunity for increasing territorial cooperation as a result of planning processes	Formally, the GNTP has attempted to increase awareness on territorial planning at the national level. Nevertheless, the process is limited to information sharing rather than participation (Hoxha et al., in this volume). Additionally, territorial cooperation and cross-border cooperation have been weak
Directives	The Europeanisation of planning is a great opportunity for speeding up the transposition of EU directives from a spatial perspective. This includes also the fact that some of the directives can be better analysed from a territorial perspective in terms of their expected impacts, thus offering greater possibilities for their contextualisation	There is a general lack of contextualisation of EU directives in the GNTP. There are no prior studies on the impacts that EU policies have on the territory, and thus, the response from a territorial planning policy perspective is weak
Policies	Looking into European spatial policies offers a great opportunity for learning as well as the introduction of new concepts in the Albanian planning milieu. Concepts such as	There is a general lack of contextualisation. New concepts have been introduced; however, they remain at a very normative level at

(continued)

Table 9.3 (continued)

Aspects	Opportunities	Limitations
	polycentrism, cohesion and competitiveness have also found their way into the Albanian planning terminology	best. There is no link with mechanisms of implementation
Financial	Aligning Albanian spatial policies with European Strategies and programs offered a prospect for a strategic orientation in trying to make better use of EU financial support. Considering that the country has a low rate of absorption of EU funding, this should be considered as an opportunity to identify possible areas and policies for intervention through a better alignment with EU mechanisms	Although the GNTP identifies the main territorial cooperation programs Albania is part of, it fails to offer policy solutions in increasing absorption of funding. The main issue with regard to EU funding is the absence of capacities in authorities, and thus, there is little the GNTP can do in this sense other than <i>say</i> it supports these initiatives

Source Authors' own elaboration

Europeanising the system. Nevertheless, this should not become an objective on its own, but should be seen as a more comprehensive approach to co-develop the system in all its integral parts. The Europeanisation of a planning system should not only be seen as the fulfilment of certain criteria and an objective per se, but it should be considered as a greater and larger socio-cultural change. This process offers great opportunities in aligning the objective of EU integration with that of a sustainable territorial development.

9.6 Conclusive Remarks

Although the EU does not have competences on spatial planning, it has considerable impacts on planning instruments and systems, even in the case of non-member states, such as the integration of EU directives, the shaping of visions and objectives and policy debates. Hence, Europeanisation as a process can also be appropriate for non-member states; however, it needs to be contextualised. In the case of Albania, it becomes important to understand that the Europeanisation of the spatial planning system, does not come as a consequence of misfit or financial/regulatory conditionality; however, it is a more bottom up process driven by local desires and the objective of joining the EU. In any case, it is worth mentioning, that the plan itself highlights the importance and the challenge of the financial conditionality of the EU. Although in terms of increasing fund absorption and the links with planning, especially with the GNTP, it can be said that the link between the two are rather weak. There is no guarantee that having a GNTP means that the ability to absorb more funds is granted. The GNTP is a good basis; however, greater work needs to

be done in this sense in order to increase the capacities for funding absorption which go beyond the expectations and attributes of a spatial plan. Hence, from this perspective, it can be said that one of the dimensions of the *Europeanisation* of the spatial planning system can be considered in terms of increasing performance in fund absorption from the EU.

The other dimension of Europeanisation which is visible in the GNTP is the search for the modernisation of the system. Very often, *European models* are cited, although there is no clear understanding of what these models are or mean. In this sense, this represents a great possibility for the Albanian system, as through using the *excuse* of European Integration greater things can be achieved in trying to modernise the Albanian planning system.

There is a general understanding of and reference to different parts of the EU body of law, specifically some directives which do have impacts on spatial planning. However, these should be used with *care*. Thus, the Albanian authorities should be careful in terms of citing these directives without having done a deeper analysis of their impacts on the territory and afterwards providing the necessary policies to mitigate or profit from their externalities. As a result, *regulatory* conditionality can be seen as one of the dimensions of Europeanisation influencing the Albanian case.

The use of common European spatial planning terminology is widespread also in the Albanian spatial planning instruments. There is a general convergence between the spatial planning objectives of the Albanian GNTP and the rather general EU documents. In addition, there is evidence that terminology has penetrated and is now being contextualised in the Albanian context. However, in this case the reasons could also be related to the influence of the different donor agencies and international consultants that work with the Albanian authorities as pointed out by Berisha (2018). Thus, compared to member states, the Albanian GNTP shows that it is not as much territorial cooperation under the EU framework that shapes processes of learning and exchange of discourses on spatial planning, as much as direct influence from different European countries, for example Germany in the case of the GNTP.

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Chapter 10

Untangling Territorial Governance in Albania: Towards a Place-Based Approach?



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Abstract Territorial governance has emerged in European policy discourse pertaining to social cohesion, spatial planning, multilevel governance and socio-economic development. However, despite the extensive literature, territorial governance still contains definitional ambiguities and faces criticism, especially in terms of practical implementation. This chapter examines five cases of territorial governance in Albania, making use of five territorial governance dimensions defined by the ESPON TANGO project in 2013. These cases are meant to provide practical evidence on concepts such as place-based decision-making, flexible governance, and cooperation and coordination of interests in the Albanian context, covering the whole policy cycle as well as specific steps. Besides contributing Albanian cases to the growing international repository on territorial governance, this chapter places an emphasis on various territorial scales and sectors and provides input on the discourse around bottom-up, context-based and inter-thematic evidence of territorial governance.

Keywords Territorial governance · Albania · Place-based · Policy sectors

10.1 Introduction

In preparation of the Territorial Agenda 2030, ESPON (2019, p. 5) lays out three *overarching structural challenges* in the discussion paper on the Territorial Reference Framework for Europe. These challenges consist of territorial fragmentation and disintegration, growing interdependencies, and a mismatch between decision-making jurisdictions and territorial functionalities and impacts (Böhme

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et al. 2019). Dealing with these challenges requires policy responses and governance solutions, which, in addition to employing flexibility and quality, recognize and reflect territorial diversity in Europe (Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2020). Territorial governance (TG) is one such solution.

TG is an evolving concept in European policy and scientific discourse. Territory is an inherent dimension and includes domains such as spatial planning and cohesion, resilience, governance, regional development, information technology that affects development, urban–rural dynamics and cross-territorial cooperation (Van Well and Schmitt 2016; Van Well et al. 2018; Oliveira 2016; Stead 2013; Faludi 2012; Peterlin 2010; Santinha and de Castro 2010; Schout and Jordan 2007; Lidström 2007; Cotella and Stead 2011; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015, Cotella 2020). However, the TG concept is still a recent one (Van Well and Schmitt 2016). It is underexplored and underutilized in the practical implementation of policy-related objectives, carrying definitional ambiguities and few specifications (Oliveira 2016). Still, TG’s strength lies in two key features: flexible auto-collaboration of actors and adaptability towards different territorial constructs evolving in a continuous territorial and governance rescaling process (Toto 2019; Stead 2013; Keating 2013; Davoudi et al. 2008).

The purpose of this chapter is to capture and analyse place-based aspects of TG (Oliveira 2016), deepening knowledge on how TG works by using current studies on its various dimensions. This closer look contributes to the “holistic approach towards understanding territorial governance” (Van Well and Schmitt 2016, p. 12). This objective is built on the assumption that TG happens within policy sectors and across them, and that cross-sectorial synergies can only be achieved and bear sustainable territorial development results if governance modes evolve towards being territorial. The chapter also aims to add to arguments as to why TG matters. After discussing theoretical views, the chapter analyses TG in Albania, making reference to five local cases, namely: (1) a place-based approach dealing with informal territorial development; (2) the spatial planning reform; (3) regional development; (4) place-based local tourism development; and (5) commons forest governance. Each case is analysed through the lens of the five TG dimensions elaborated by Schmitt et al. (2013) in the ESPON TANGO project. Each case is an example of territorial governance within a particular policy sector, and at a particular territorial scale. Place specificities and the dynamics of various actors emphasize the place-based character of TG in each case. The chapter concludes with findings and indications of future prospects on a case level, country level and at the broader theoretical level of discourse on territorial governance.

10.2 Why Territorial Governance Matters?

The notion of territorial governance has entered policy and scientific discourse as a natural step after the rise of multilevel governance. Studies on the concept proliferated beginning in the 2000s with a peak in 2013, when the TANGO project of

ESPON accumulated systematic evidence on several European cases of territorial governance, establishing a common understanding of the concept and its dimensions. Since then, TG studies have persisted, albeit feebly. Governance of the European Territorial Agenda and concerns about its future create opportunities for further examination of the TG concept beyond spatial planning and socio-institutional definitions.

Governance, established to replace the older government concept (Stead 2014), involves processes, actors, resources, power and regulation. Advancements in using adjectives such as *good (urban)*, *multilevel*, *polycentric* and *territorial* reveal key dimensions of governance as it is understood today. In the polycentric governance discussion (Ostrom et al. 1961; Ostrom 1972; Aligica and Tarko 2012; Nagendra and Ostrom 2012), emphasis is placed on how several coexisting, sometimes overlapping, autonomous centres of decision-making can complement each other (Ostrom 2005, 2009) in a multitier interaction; are more efficient than mega-governments; and build a system that is visionary, flexible, self-reflexive, dynamic and accountable to versus stakeholders (Armitage 2007). Similarly, territorial governance involves territorial and stakeholders' interactions defined by different but non-conflicting interests (Davoudi et al. 2008), where places and spaces are not seen hierarchically, but as "relational nodes" (Faludi 2016, p. 43) with stakeholders injecting and sharing their place-informed knowledge in policy- and decision-making.

UN-Habitat (2002) has defined seven main features of good governance, where sustainability and subsidiarity in particular connect to the territorial dimension. Later on, other features were added, such as the proportionality principle (CoR 2009; Schmitt et al. 2013, p. 70), variety and learning capacity (Gupta et al. 2010), and coordination across scales and timeframes (Birkmann et al. 2010; Schmitt et al. 2013). All of these features are supposed to be included in the meaning of multilevel, territorial governance. OECD (2001) provided the first definition on territorial governance, encompassing the roles and responsibilities of institutions at various layers and dialoguing processes. The Council of Europe revised the concept in 2006 (Stead 2014) to add the dimension of "shared forms of planning and managing of socio-spatial dynamics" (CEMAT 2010, p. 269). The EU Territorial Agenda (TA) of 2007 linked territorial governance to territorial cohesion. The European Commission (2009), based on consultations, endorsed critical concepts, such as coordination and multilevel governance, place and evidence-based governance (Barca 2009), territorial impacts, cooperation and flexible territories for different types of functions and problems. TA2020 emphasizes the territorial coordination of policies and multilevel governance to address different functional territories (Böhme et al. 2015).

Despite conceptualization challenges and literature gaps (Faludi 2012; Hooghe and Marks 2003), territorial (multilevel) governance became integral to European policies in 1999, with the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). The ESDP evoked the necessity for achieving horizontal and vertical coordination, as a means to avoid the negative effects of a sectorial approach on territory (Faludi 2007, 2009; Stead and Waterhout 2008; CSD 1999; Adams et al. 2014). However, at a strategic, European level, the territorial dimension of governance may lose strength, with funding shifting from regional to national programmes (Böhme et al.

2015) and with the reduction of the Cohesion Policy funds for the next programming period 2021–2027 (EC 2018; Tosics 2018). Furthermore, current processes of drafting the TA 2030 show that, due to political processes, such as European elections, and insufficient administrative capacity support (Schout and Jordan 2007), the territorial dimension of governance may remain a critical challenge for the future programming period too.

Territory matters in governance, as it reflects socio-ecological, economic and political interactions, interests, values and decisions that happen on the territory and affect its resources (Toto 2019; Schmitt et al. 2013; Keating 2013). Emphasis on the territory should increase social awareness on diversity and on pertinent decision-making, instead of producing stronger recognition of rigid jurisdictional boundaries. Rigid boundaries set boxes on policy thinking that do not respect functionalities. Hence, the increased use of the term *territorial* “marks a change of focus in policy circles”, bringing approaches for managing territorial dynamics related to the implementation of various policies into multilevel governance (Stead 2014, p. 1372).

Faludi (2012) argues that “multilevel governance as such is already inexorably territorial” (p. 198) and therefore the adjective *territorial* is “probably redundant”. Its use is mostly a legacy of spatial planners, who are caught in “the territorial trap”, unable to “investigate and create new soft spaces” (ibid. p. 208; Faludi 2018). However, he also raises concerns about the vagueness of territory as a notion—between a fixed geographical space and a soft space of fuzzy boundaries (Faludi 2012, 2016, 2018; Schmitt et al. 2013; Raymond 2008; Blatter 2004). Being constructs for various purposes and in constant transformation (Keating 2013), territories are the subject of contestations or convergences that happen within various sectors and among them, when actors compete for resources in a “network of socio-political and economic relation” (Argiolas et al. 2009, p. 184).

10.2.1 *Territorial Governance Dimensions*

Operationalization and understanding of territorial governance are far from complete, despite theoretical reflection and the course of TG in the European policy discourse (Toto 2019). Explaining territorial governance through practical cases helps stakeholders realize how TG is connected to the implementation of different policies, while accounting for a diversity of values, interests and resources. To characterize TG, a number of authors, such as Stead (2013), Böhme et al. (2015) and Schmitt et al., (2013) identify and analyse its dimensions (Fig. 10.1). Schmitt et al. (2013, p. 75) in particular have made a significant contribution through the ESPON TANGO project, which has identified five TG dimensions measured by twelve indicators.¹

¹These twelve indicators are: governing capacity, leadership, subsidiarity, public policy packaging, cross-sector synergy, democratic legitimacy, public accountability, transparency, reflexivity, adaptability, territorial relationality and territorial knowledgeability.

Schmitt <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Stead (2013)	Böhme <i>et al.</i> (2015)
1. Coordination of actions of actors & institutions	1. Coordination of policies/actors – vertical & horizontal	1. Flexible and sensitive to sectorial policies/objectives
2. Integration of policy sectors	2. Actors participation & consensus building	2. Active participation & collaboration of actors
3. Mobilization of stakeholder participation	3. Powers/resources devolution to lower decision-making levels	3. Place-based and adaptive
4. Adaptation to changing contexts	4. Delivery of territorial cohesion	4. Shared management & partnership principle
5. Realization of place-based territorial specificities & impacts	5. Assessment of territorial impacts & development of territorial visions	5. Strategy & long-term thinking to achieve societal objectives

Fig. 10.1 Dimensions of territorial governance. *Source* Author, based on Toto (2019), Schmitt *et al.* (2013, p. 12), Stead (2013, p. 142), and Böhme *et al.* (2015)

Most of the literature on territorial governance relates (explicitly or implicitly) to spatial planning, with some focus on climate change, transport and regional development as well. The territorial scale of cases analysed in the different sources varies from the very local to the city/local government, regional, national, cross-regional and cross-border levels.

The dimensions of TG according to different authors share several commonalities. The coordination of actors and institutions (Schmitt *et al.* 2013) is mirrored by vertical and horizontal actors’ coordination and devolution of powers to the appropriate decision-making levels in Stead (2013); and shared management and partnership principle in Böhme *et al.* (2015). All authors assume the coexistence of both types of multilevel governance, as defined by Hooghe and Marks (2003), hence “power sharing” (p. 236) between hierarchical levels on the one hand, and “task-specific” (p. 237) and “flexible” (p. 238) on the other, which considers the territory as a complex construct with fuzzy boundaries. According to Raymond (2008), devolution of powers and horizontal coordination between actors represent the networked interaction of “unbundled” institutions of coordinated governance beyond jurisdictional boundaries (Blatter 2004, p. 531), or what Manuel Castells (1996, p. xvii) envisions as “the network society”.

Stead (2013) brings actors and policies together under the coordination dimension, due to strong linkages between institutions (formal and informal) and their interests (represented in sectorial policies and resources’ exploitation). The other authors place a singular emphasis on the coordination of sectorial policies, emphasizing perhaps their connection to territorial sensitivities and specificities. All authors define a specific dimension of actors’ participation and mobilization, which represents horizontal cooperation in multilevel governance. This dimension bridges territory as a flexible social construct and territory as a fixed space for representative

democracy and guarantor of the connection between constituencies and legitimate governments. Faludi (2018) analyses the latter within territorialism, a jurisdictionally bound perspective that does not account for territorial functionalities and where representative democracy prevails over participatory democracy. Besides contributing to solving the mismatch between fixed administrative boundaries and functional territories, stakeholders' engagement in governance is crucial for sharing knowledge and responsibility of actions on the shared territory. As the complexity of socio-ecological and economic issues increases, so does the societal awareness that "local issues cannot be governed by a single authority" (Raymond 2008, p. 125) and that stakeholders should proactively seek solutions. Because knowledge and stakeholders are "unequally distributed" (Raymond 2008, p. 126) over the territory, participation and cooperation become even more essential in governance.

Furthermore, all three authors define a specific dimension of TG such as the strategic thinking for territorial visions, which includes the impacts of development and governance scenarios before and after implementation. Schmitt et al. (2013) and Böhme et al. (2015) also emphasize the place-based approach to governance and development as both realistic and farsighted. Stead (2013) highlights the ability of TG to promote territorial cohesion, while the other authors emphasize its ability to adapt and build resilience from institutional and ecological perspectives. The link is not explicit, but in all three dimensions, sustainable territorial development is revealed as a final objective.

The findings of the ESPON TANGO project revealed that the fifth dimension (territorial and place-based specificities) is considered by stakeholders to be more important than the other dimensions, while the fourth dimension (adaptive to changing contexts) received less importance (Schmitt et al. 2013). In fact, a place-based approach to governance naturally adapts to the changing context, therefore being resilient and reflecting territorial specificities. So, these two dimensions of TG are in fact intertwined, but perhaps this connection is not well understood. Schmitt and Van Well (2016) argue that there are interplays between all five dimensions of TG, but: while interlinks between dimensions 1, 2 and 3 (typical for good multilevel governance) are easily traceable through empirical research, their relationship with dimensions 4 and 5 is weak (Schmitt and Van Well 2016). Yet, the territorial character of governance is emphasized in dimensions 4 and 5 (*ibid.*).

The need for more and continued research that untangles territorial governance (Van Well et al. 2016) inspires the work of this chapter, which brings forth experiences from Albania. The chapter identifies five different TG practices, with their failures and successes, within various policy processes/sector reforms, and at different territorial scales. Methodologically, the five TG dimensions formulated in the work of Schmitt, et al. (2013) under the ESPON TANGO—Territorial Approaches for New Governance—project, constitute the analytical framework for each case. The chapter concludes with an overview of the status of TG in Albania comparing the five cases and provides perspectives for the evolving TG concept.

10.3 Territorial Governance in Albania—Five Cases

Territorial governance is not a typical term used by governance stakeholders in Albania. One can mostly observe efforts of introducing multilevel governance as a concept in development projects that support decentralization. The term *territorial* though is used extensively due to the legislation and practice of spatial planning, which in Albania is recognized and known as *territorial planning*. The reason for using this term is linguistic² as territory is understood as a socio-physical and ecological setting of complex interactions within defined administrative boundaries. In this broader context, territorial governance is neither defined legally, nor used scientifically and/or technically by public stakeholders. Therefore, the following five cases are selected out of their inherent connection to the theoretical definition of territorial governance. The first case refers to a model of dealing with territorial development in an informally established urban area with an absence of legally and institutionally adopted spatial planning. The second case explores territorial governance within the current system of spatial planning. The third case focuses on regional development and its linkages to the EU cohesion policy. The fourth case deals with place-based tourism as a means for governing territorial resources in a sustainable and resilient manner. The fifth and final case is about common forest resources, as a typical example of place-based governance.

10.3.1 A Place-Based Approach to Dealing with Informal Territorial Development

Often, development initiatives do not start at one of the policy cycle stages—identification, formulation, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation. In fact, they often start as an immediate response to a perceived problem, with the results instigating broader national policies. This has been the case for informal territorial development policy in Albania.

In the early 1990s Albania faced dramatic socio-economic transformations following the shift from a centralized regime to a market-oriented economy (Shutina and Toto 2010; Berisha et al., in this volume; Berisha and Cotella, in this volume). In socio-territorial terms, this gave impulse to a massive demographic movement and exodus. Thousands of families migrated internally in a cascade fashion from the more rural and remote areas, towards the urban centres and the Tirana-Durrës region. This flow of people posed an unprecedented demand for affordable housing, juxtaposed with the government's reform on privatization of land and properties. Due to these reforms around 700,000 ha of agricultural land was subdivided among around 360,000 households/farmers, resulting in fragmented landholdings of 1–2

²If literally translated, the term *spatial planning* in Albanian means planning of outer space.

hectares each. In addition, 237,700 urban households were granted ownership of their dwellings (USAID 2008). The latter reform satisfied the housing needs of urban residents but did not provide any instrument for accommodating new residents migrating to urban areas.

Initially, informal land occupation and construction was a reflection of the basic need for housing. The government was institutionally unprepared to deal with the newly arising challenges of housing and public infrastructure, therefore *officially* allowing a *laissez faire* approach to urban development (Shutina and Toto 2010). The newcomers created their own solution—occupy vacant land and build informal housing (with no infrastructure provided). This phenomenon started with around 45,000 informal houses in the first five years after 1990, and grew to around 250,000 in 2005, and around 323,000 in 2019 (USAID 2008; WB 2006; ALUIZNI 2019), with the boundary between informality as a need and as an economic opportunity becoming blurrier with time. By not intervening for more than 10 years, the government contributed to creating a social and economic problem that became apparent on a societal level around 2004–2005. From 2006 to date, only 50% of the informally self-built buildings have received a building permit (ALUIZNI 2019).

In 1995, in a context of policy-silence around informal developments, a local organization, Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development, became aware of the massive gap existing between the population's energy and capital on one hand, and the actions of state institutions on the other (Co-PLAN 2016). Besides acknowledging a rapidly growing problem on a societal level, Co-PLAN also recognized challenges and opportunities arising from attempts to incorporate the nation's *frozen capital* and *hidden wealth* into the formal channels of economy (ibid.). In the absence of any official instrument, Co-PLAN became engaged at the grassroots level, supporting the residents of Breglumasi (the first informal neighbourhood in Tirana) to upgrade their living conditions through participatory planning.

Considering that Albania was just coming out of a period of a centralized, rigid urbanism approach, introducing participatory planning for neighbourhood upgrading was very sensitive and more than a merely professional exercise. The experts had to work with residents on a daily basis for two years to show them the benefits of the approach, empower them, increase mutual trust, and involve them in designing infrastructure projects for their neighbourhood. They also guided residents in a process of identifying and securing funds for implementing the projects.

The success of this first case was disseminated and Co-PLAN, the World Bank, and the Government of Albania replicated the approach in the informal settlements of the Municipality of Kamza between 1998 and 2003, which, in 2011, had 100,000 inhabitants living on 22 km² according to INSTAT (2011), and in Këneta in Durrës between 2004 and 2007. During these latter stages, Co-PLAN also introduced the concept of the Neighbourhood Development Agenda (NDA) as a way for citizens to provide input to the city's strategic planning and neighbourhood development. The Municipality of Kamza was the first to prepare an urban development strategy, moving away from the rigid urbanistic regulations and instead referring to NDAs.

The success of these cases was based on a number of factors. One such factor was certainly the presence of a knowledgeable, local institution that was visionary enough to create and implement the model. Secondly, the implementation of a place-based approach involved communities and local governments during not only problem identification, but also solution finding and implementation. A third important factor was the mediation between local communities and local governments that turned *enemies into partners* in urban governance (Co-PLAN 2016). This made possible the empowerment of community leadership, mainly through the provision of know-how on the role of the citizens in urban upgrading and growth; the inclusion of interested stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation process; and the establishment of a community-based organization to represent the community in policy processes to follow. Finally, great importance has been given in these cases to the implementation of concrete infrastructure and social improvement actions showing accountability towards citizen engagement.

As a result of these enormous efforts, the government recognized the *informal development* phenomenon in the country. It adopted a law in 2004 and a report on the extra-legal economy followed in 2005. In 2006, the Government adopted a second law on informal settlements, which has been revised several times since. The latter law initiated the process of legalizing informal buildings. However, rather than continuing to replicate the successful place-based approach, the government politicized the phenomenon. This provided an incentive for people to continue building informally, which turned a necessity into a business opportunity in land development and speculation, resulting in the adoption of a *laissez faire* mentality among both citizens and institutions. Hence, once the government moved away from coordinating with stakeholders and implementing a place-based approach, the success of dealing with informal territorial development became heavily compromised.

10.3.2 Territorial Planning and Development

Albania initiated a spatial planning reform in 2009, aimed at shifting from a rigid urbanism to a flexible, comprehensive, and strategic territorial approach. In the process, Albania aligned its system with views and perspectives of planning legislation from other European countries. Since 2009, with an in-depth review of the legislation in 2014, national and local governments are striving to implement the new spatial planning system. Most challenges relate to users' antagonistic perceptions and resistance to a number of changes such as: shifting from the urban to the cross-sectorial perspective and planning for mixed territories; accepting that land development is inherently linked to spatial planning and leads to economic growth; shifting from plot-based to area-based development; and accepting that enhanced professional capacities are required to think of the Albanian territory from a European and sustainable development perspective.

Albania has a shared planning system between local and national government, “decentralised upon the sectorial legislation” (GoA 2015a) as defined by the law on local self-governance. The government follows the subsidiarity principle for planning but not for land development, withholding power for priority areas. Fiscal decentralization is incomplete for planning. For the last four years, the national government and international donors have subsidized the drafting of spatial plans at the local level. The National Territory Planning Agency (NTPA) coordinated the process in a multilevel framework (Allkja, in this volume). The adoption of a national territory plan, two regional plans, and the establishment of various coordination and participatory local and national forums were the basis for stakeholders’ coordination and engagement in the preparation and adoption of 60 local plans (out of 61). Still, some local actors were not prepared to exert their power for impacting decision-making. Those who are financially more powerful have better means of affecting territorial development decisions (Toto and Allkja 2018).

Land development, on the other hand, evolves at a slower pace due to a lack of knowledge. There is a tendency to promote public private partnerships (PPP) as one of the innovative means deployed in territorial governance, bringing added value through synergies (Argiolas et al. 2009). Still, land development PPPs, if misused, create complexities that increase socio-economic and power inequalities. Stakeholders’ participation is partially achieved and often avoided by municipalities, considered as a risk that can delay the result or even cause it to fail (Toto and Allkja 2018).

Cross-sectorial integration is rather weak, especially at the national level, often due to power dynamics. The urban development ministry was effective only during one government mandate (2013–2017). The two agencies concerned with planning and development, though currently under the prime minister, cannot override other sectors and ministries with the mere intention of achieving sectoral integration. The national spatial plan should, by law, reflect the objectives of the Government’s National Strategy for Development and Integration on the territory. However, the two documents exhibit mismatches across their respective sectorial policies. As practice shows, among the conflicting priorities, those that have a direct link to possible funding or are lobbied for will be implemented. By contrast, due to an established multilevel system of checks and balances and clear leadership and visions for the territory, the local spatial plans reflect national priorities, simultaneously creating synergies with local priorities and community needs (GoA 2015b).

An important step of the planning process is generating knowledge on the territory by establishing a broad database and carrying out all-encompassing analyses. The planning legislation provides for numerous types of analyses, but their application happens in compliance with the socio-economic and ecological features of the territory that is object of planning. Consequently, development proposals reflect local strengths and territorial sensitivities. Besides reinforcing legitimacy through participative democracy, the polycentric network of stakeholders’ interaction for the local plans (Fig. 10.2) helps to establish territorial relationality and increases the ability of the plan to adapt to continuously changing circumstances.

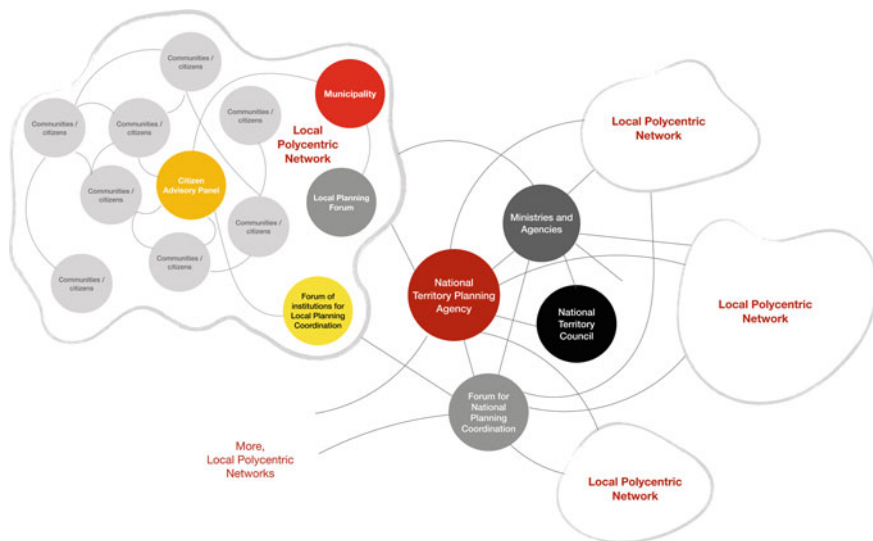


Fig. 10.2 Polycentric interactions in spatial planning in Albania. *Source* Shutina (2019)

Finally, after the approval of the first 10 local territorial plans, the NTPA revised the planning bylaw to better reflect lessons learned from practice. Learning events are also organized and toolkits are published to reflect on accumulated knowledge and disseminate it among various public and private actors.

10.3.3 Regional Development and Governance Processes

In 1998, Albania signed and ratified the charter of the Council of Europe on Local Self-Governance (Toto et al. 2014). A multistakeholder process of decentralization followed, resulting in a strategy and laws on the organization and functioning of the local government and administrative territorial reform. Out of this process, 373 local governments (urban municipalities and rural communes) and 12 *qarks* (the second level of local government) were established. The *qarks* have no territory under their administration and therefore can only carry out functions that local governments would be willing to delegate, in addition to coordinating regional development strategies. Strengthening *qarks* and evolving them into regions was considered premature in the early 2000s.

In 2007–2008, Albania drafted its first regional development strategy and a subsequent draft law from a domestic perspective. Neither of the two documents went through approval and the government interest in regional development declined, only to rise again in 2010 within the window of opportunity for Albania to gain EU candidacy status. By this time, the government, with EU and UNDP

support and technical assistance, drafted a new Regional Development (RD) policy and strategy that included a regional development funding mechanism, as well as development strategies for four development regions (Toto et al. 2014). The government did not follow up with approval due to changing priorities around 2012, when the EU position towards candidacy status changed.

In both abovementioned cases, processes were implemented through a top-down approach. The respective teams organized participatory processes, which in the second case extended also to the *qark* level, trying to employ a place-based methodology for drafting strategic visions. Still, a lack of leadership from the government contributed to weak institutional and sectorial coordination and integration of policymaking, causing the process to fail altogether.

In 2012–2014, Austrian and Swiss development agencies supported a bottom-up domestic RD process in two *qarks* in northern Albania. The place-based methodology was applied regionally/locally and proved successful in engaging local stakeholders and producing feasible programming documents. Territorial relationality was developed by planning for subregions—territorial constructs identified by the stakeholders in the process—and using stakeholders' knowledge to build individual project pipelines. However, at the central level there was confusion about whether to channel priorities towards regional development or towards the regionalization of governance. This, together with a lack of leadership and poor institutional and sectorial policy coordination led to another impasse in achieving the policy objective of enabling regional development and reducing territorial disparities.

Since 2015, the government has embarked on a reform aimed at boosting RD, from both EU and domestic perspectives. The government developed a Regional Management Mechanism (RMM) to promote concerted growth and reduced inequalities, and established four regional development agencies, one for each development region (Imami et al. 2018). The Swiss Development Agency is currently supporting the government in implementing the RMM, focusing on the preparation of the regional policy, financial instruments, and, most importantly, on creating the necessary institutional capacity for the multilevel governance of regional policy. At the same time, the government revised its decentralization strategy and undertook a second territorial and administrative reform, which consolidated the 373 local governments into 61 municipalities. Various stakeholders opened up a discussion on the regionalization of governance, but the government postponed a decision on this regard assuming that it was premature to achieve both regional development and regionalization of governance in a context of insufficient capacity.

In terms of scope, the regional policy (still in draft form) fulfils domestic objectives for regional development and coordinates sectors across the territory in a horizontal and place-based manner. The objectives of the RD policy fit with the overarching plan defined by the National Strategy for Development and Integration, including: sustainable growth, development of human capital, employment and welfare, and institutional/governance capacities. The intention of the draft policy is also to match domestic and EU funds, while increasing efficiency and complementarity (Shutina 2015).

The course of RD policy in Albania is quite controversial, with cyclical engagement and disengagement. What is most striking about all phases of this policy development is the lack of leadership, followed by the low governing capacity at the national level, and a lack of a cross-sectorial perspective. The local and regional levels have implemented a place-based approach, adaptable to the context. Yet, the government shows resistance to employing principles of subsidiarity and partnership, and to devolving powers to local levels.

10.3.4 Place-Based Local Tourism Development

Albania has valuable territorial potential for tourism development. However, its natural resources and attractions are greatly threatened by overexploitation and mismanagement as a result of uncoordinated sectorial developments. These include developments in the energy sector, urban developments, agricultural fragmentation, and the lack of a sustainable, place-based approach to tourism development at the national level (Ciro and Toska 2018).

In 2015, the municipality of Gramsh, with the support of a civic society organization (CSO), initiated a bottom-up process of empowering local tourism initiatives as a means for promoting local economic development. The municipality prepared a number of planning instruments, including a tourism development strategy.

Both the municipality and the supporting civic society organization decided to build their own local model, learning from social network theory and creating a quadruple helix mechanism that was reflective of the local context. After identifying stakeholders, they invited POLIS University, the donor community, and local businesses as partners in designing and implementing their approach. Through intensive dialogue and cooperation during a three months period, the stakeholders embraced a commonly shared vision about how to promote Gramsh, its natural resources, and tourism opportunities. They also agreed on a platform of activities to be implemented over a six month period, culminating in a three-day *natura fest* branded as *#EjaNëGramsh* (*#come to Gramsh*). The activities included support to the municipality and local businesses for: (i) increasing mutual, transparent communication and cooperation; (ii) undertaking public investments to improve urban amenities in Gramsh; (iii) training and coaching businesses to improve the quality of facilities (i.e. hotels and restaurants) and especially services; (iv) packaging local products and services and introducing new complementary products; (v) designating hiking and trekking paths towards the beautiful, natural attractions; and (vi) introducing supporting business services, such as accounting, nursing, transportation, etc., as means to improve the quality of services and increase the credibility of their products (Ciro et al. 2019).

Rather than following a theoretical path or defining all of these activities in a detailed plan, the stakeholder group agreed to follow an incremental approach based on the shared vision and implementation platform. This choice was made

intentionally so as to *coerce* the local businesses to engage in creative thinking and produce activities that would best reflect territorial “relationality”, “knowledgeability” and “adaptability” (Schmitt et al. 2013, p. 75).

The process was fully transparent and the coordination with local strategies and plans was done carefully along with any decision-making. The municipality led the process with the CSO’s support to build governance capacity for place-based local tourism development. Next to local stakeholders, six service providers from Tirana joined the initiative after the simple but very effective promotion campaign that the municipality and the CSO implemented. This campaign made use of social media, university connections, local businesses themselves, local television stations, and a large network of friends and local tourism development supporters. Consequently, more than 600 (verified) visitors participated in the activities of #EjaNëGramsh. Six tour operators organized a number of nature hiking tours and six new itineraries were developed (Ciro et al. 2019).

Prior to the natura fest, Gramsh was overlooked as a tourist destination. By developing its own model of tourism, it suddenly became a favourite destination. The natura fest took place in late May 2017 and again in 2018, and the lessons learned are serving the local stakeholders in their current efforts to stimulate sustainable economic activities and lessen local territorial disparities.

10.3.5 Ecosystem-Based Governance of Forests as Commons

Albania has committed to lower CO₂ emissions by 11.5% in 2030 compared to 2016, and is among the first to have ratified the Paris Declaration on Climate Change (GoA 2016). With a total loss of 7.57 million m³ of forests in ten years (2000–2009) or a deforestation rate of 1% per year (Toto 2017), this commitment sounds highly optimistic and challenging.

Albania has a hybrid forest governance system, with the conventional governance model dominating over the commons arrangement. The municipalities run the formal system while the national government owns 15% of the forests and private owners only 3% (AKZM 2016; INSTAT 2016; Muharremaj 2003). The commons regime is a networking, informal, and intuitive mode of governance implemented by people in almost 30% of the local forests, and supported informally by municipal officials in the absence of specific legislation (Ministria e Mjedisit 2005). Local governments recognize that local knowledge is essential to managing forests, particularly in a context of insufficient human resources at municipalities. Forest common pool resources (CPR) are essential to sustaining life for local people, who use them for provisioning ecosystem services and pastoralism. Locals also receive cultural and cognitive development services, and pride in the forests seems to be a key factor stimulating villagers’ willingness to engage in protection and maintenance (Toto 2017). People’s proximity to forests, strong historical

connections, and inherited traditional knowledge are other vital factors to ensuring the resilience of the commons, even though national legislation does not support the management of CPRs.

The Government of Albania intends to achieve its climate change targets by improving forest exploitation technology, doubling wood combustion efficiency, and adopting a forestation rate of 500–1000 ha/year in compliance with EU guidelines (GoA 2016). These challenging targets are not yet supported by a cross-sectorial policy or coordination among line ministries. Spatial planning considers forest protection, but has no solutions in terms of governance. The best way to accomplish these targets is through coordination and convergence between conventional governance and the place-based forest commons regime. This would require institutional recognition of the forest commons to increase incentives to protect forests beyond the local scale.

The government has recently devolved forest governance to municipalities based on the principle of subsidiarity without transferring financial means. A complete transfer would also imply the official establishment of a commons regime, or common forest property. Forest commons governance happens through transparent, cooperative processes among commoners. Representation in nested levels of governance is present through an innovative social network of 251 users' associations organized around river-basins (established with the support of donor projects a decade ago). The associations and the community's capacity to protect forests is based mainly on cognitive development values (rather than provisioning ones), traditional territorial knowledge, and the choice of municipal officials to support a regime that operates *outside* of the legal frame. These are the current ingredients of the place-based approach that contributes to the survival of forests in Albania.

10.4 Conclusive Remarks and Future Perspectives

Territorial governance happens in Albania but is not a specific policy objective. It has happened either intuitively (i.e. forest commons or tourism development), or because its sectorial relation is more apparent (i.e. spatial planning and regional development). In the case of informal settlements integration, TG acted as the mechanism to solve the problem, intuitively formulated as a place-based approach for upgrading neighbourhoods and ensuring participative democracy for a particular community in a network society. Table 10.1 provides a comparative summary of all cases while Table 10.2 provides a summarized visual representation of the presence and success of each dimension of territorial governance in the Albanian cases.






As Table 10.2 shows, successes and failures in achieving TG were present in all cases. As TG was not a deliberate approach, the self-reflexive learning process was not very prominent but rather fragmented and depended on individuals or non-governmental actors. In the case of regional development, the learning process is hampered by the continued absence of leadership and governing capacity, while

Table 10.1 Comparison between TG cases in Albania

Territorial governance presence and dimensions	Informal developments	Territorial planning	Regional development	Tourism development	Forest commons
<p>1. Coordinate actions of actors and institutions</p>	<p>TG as genuine mechanism for problem solving</p> <p>CSO transferred knowledge, governing capacity, and vision to community, and empowered local leaders; upgrading decisions by the neighbourhood and municipality; urbanization and integration through ministry</p>	<p>TG linked inherently to the sector</p> <p>Significant efforts centrally and locally to establish governing capacity; there is local leadership, but centrally mostly technical leadership; shared system based on subsidiarity for planning, not for development</p>	<p>TG linked inherently to the sector</p> <p>Leadership unclear and fluctuating over time; support received to build governing capacity, but not fully absorbed; actions based on subsidiarity, but no full power devolved subnationally</p>	<p>Intuitive TG, induced by need for economic development</p> <p>The process was implemented locally; leadership was strong and governing capacity was built through a transfer mechanism as part of the process</p>	<p>Intuitive TG, based on tradition</p> <p>Good governing capacity among commoners, inherited traditionally; leadership not so clear due to lack of legal support; municipalities adopt subsidiarity principle “informally”</p>
<p>2. Integrate policy sectors</p>	<p>Integration and urbanization assessed in line with decisions on social welfare and agricultural policy; partnership between community—civil society—municipality</p>	<p>Sectorial coordination and synergies strongly present locally and between levels; within national level, there is methodology of coordination, but practice is weak</p>	<p>Policy integration still weak; action at local and regional level established synergies among sectors/policies, but was not supported nationally</p>	<p>Very good coordination and synergies with other policies; draft and approval of local strategy and plan, and implementation of the network governance approach</p>	<p>No intended policy packaging and cross-sector synergies between local and national levels; at local level, the spatial local plan is an instrument for sectoral synergies</p>
<p>3. Mobilize stakeholder participation</p>	<p>Community engagement in design and implementation—participative</p>	<p>A polycentric system of actors’ engagement; participative democracy locally; municipalities</p>	<p>Various degrees of participation—some top-down and others with horizontal</p>	<p>The network governance approach made use of the quadruple helix model,</p>	<p>The system is transparent between commoners—all participate in</p>






(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Territorial governance presence and dimensions	 Informal developments TG as genuine mechanism for problem solving	 Territorial planning TG linked inherently to the sector	 Regional development TG linked inherently to the sector	 Tourism development Intuitive TG, induced by need for economic development	 Forest commons Intuitive TG, based on tradition
4. Be adaptive to changing contexts	democracy; transparent processes; legislation and policy adopted by government on the basis of local models	accountable to planning decisions; the planning process is transparent and accessible; land development is not transparent and processes are <i>closed-box</i>	cooperation; local/regional participation present; efforts towards partnership bear government's resistance for multilevel actors' engagement in decision-making	led by the municipality, supported by the CSO, and with the engagement and decision-making of local businesses and the community	decision-making and management: local officials are cooperative and responsive to commoners
5. Realize place-based/territorial specificities and impacts	The learning experience transferred and adapted to three other informal areas; approach revised based on changing legislation and context	One system, methodologically contextualized in each municipality; methodologies and legal framework revised gradually to reflect practice	The various RD cycles fed knowledge to a reflexive process of policy review, though finalization was not successful due to power dynamics	The approach reflected the context; other tourism destination areas in Albania are using the approach, contextualizing it to their specific territorial strengths and communities	Rules and activities adapted to different rural contexts; forest associations and the national federation ensure learning and representation at higher policy levels
5. Realize place-based/territorial specificities and impacts	Community engagement in designing solutions specific to their context; incremental approach—knowledge on impacts used to craft next	A significant portion of time and effort given to the analysis, based on local data and specific territorial contexts and need; participatory	The RD policy packaging, projects, and methodologies have collected local/regional knowledge and adapted to the local/	Model based on Gramsh's territorial strengths and opportunities, local knowledge, and on the willingness of local people/businesses to	The system is sustainable because families pass down knowledge and information to generations, and act on the basis of territorial

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

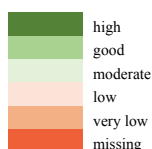
Territorial governance presence and dimensions	 Informal developments TG as genuine mechanism for problem solving actions for introducing health and education infrastructure in the area	 Territorial planning TG linked inherently to the sector processes reflected territorial constructs.	 Regional development TG linked inherently to the sector regional context in the case of implementation	 Tourism development Intuitive TG, induced by need for economic development create a functional tourism development model	 Forest commons Intuitive TG, based on tradition knowledge and tradition

Source Authors' own elaboration based on TG dimensions as defined by Schmitt et al. (2013)

Table 10.2 Visual comparison* between the five TG cases

Dimensions and Indicators		Informal development	Territorial planning	Regional development	Local tourism	Forest commons
Dimension 1: Coordinating actions of actors and institutions	1.1: Governing Capacity	high	high	low	high	high
	1.2: Leadership	high	high	very low	high	good
	1.3: Subsidiarity	good	good	moderate	high	moderate
Dimension 2: Integrating policy sectors	2.1: Public Policy Packaging	good	good	good	good	low
	2.2: Cross-Sector Synergy	good	good	good	good	good
Dimension 3: Mobilising stakeholder participation	3.1: Democratic Legitimacy	high	good	low	high	high
	3.2: Public Accountability	moderate	high	very low	high	moderate
	3.3: Transparency	high	good	moderate	high	high
Dimension 4: Being adaptive to changing contexts	4.1: Reflexivity	high	high	good	high	high
	4.2: Adaptability	high	high	moderate	high	high
Dimension 5: Realising place – based / territorial specificities and impacts	5.1: Territorial Relationality	high	good	moderate	high	high
	5.2: Territorial Knowledgeability	high	high	moderate	high	high

*The colours indicate the presence/success of the dimension as follows:



Source Authors own elaboration, based on TG dimensions as defined by Schmitt et al. (2013)

in forest commons governance, reflexive processes happen intuitively, with families transferring knowledge to younger generations.

In the case of spatial planning, the shift in the learning process and governance culture happens intentionally and knowledge and awareness develop in parallel. So far, success depends on the role of local governments and involvement of the NTPA, with low institutional and sectorial integration at the national level. This reduces the impact of the learning and self-reflexive processes may lead towards a more rigid system of rules instead of a self-governing system. In the Albanian

planning system, the territory is “a neatly ordered space within definite boundaries” where “each scale has its own instruments” (Stead 2014, pp. 1369–1370), i.e. development strategies, spatial plans, sectorial plans, and capital investments plans. Territorial relationality and knowledgeability have been achieved, while achievement of adaptability is interpretable, due to administrative boundaries prevailing over functional territories.

Territorial cohesion through “turning territorial diversities into strengths” (Janin Rivolin 2010, p. 313), reducing disparities, and promoting sustainable development, is present either as an objective (regional development and spatial planning), or as an outcome (commons, tourism, informal developments). For instance, the forest commons regime leads to less poverty; better, healthier, and more resilient natural resources; and therefore, fewer disparities at the local level.

All dimensions are needed for successful TG at a specific territorial level. For instance, in the cases of territorial planning and informal development, all of the dimensions were present, but not within a single territorial level, therefore leading to weaknesses in specific policy sectors.

Furthermore, the most successful cases were those in which an incremental approach was implemented, such as in local tourism and informal developments. This approach helped stakeholders gradually discover their territory and the impacts of their interventions, hence increasing their knowledge and creating space for corrective action and self-reflexivity. This is also true for the case of the forest commons, where governance interactions are established and consolidated overtime.

In addition, the theoretical discussion suggests that TG is considered as having a loosely defined set of regulations. The cases show that regulations are not particularly vague, though changes happen frequently due to reflection or negotiations and dialogue in the cooperation process. In this context, regulations should have a broader spectrum while also being able to address a particular set of actions. This is legally and procedurally challenging. One suggestion coming out of the above practices is to produce guidelines, manuals, and toolkits, and to undertake knowledge cross-fertilization activities to facilitate the interpretation of the regulatory framework.

Finally, the empirical evidence confirms that TG happens within and across policy domains, achieving territorial cohesion, convergence between territories, and equal and just treatment of all citizens regardless of the territory in which they happen to live (Faludi 2007). Territorial governance materializes the full scope of governance, showing that there are no ready-made recipes or one-size-fits-all solutions (Schmitt et al. 2013; Cotella et al. 2015). Each TG case presented here is different, since it is place-specific. All cases bring added value to the knowledge and common understanding of the concept itself.

To conclude, governance varies “from country to country” and “within countries” not only because “governments are constituted differently,” but also due to the variance of non-state actors and cultural factors that define governance (Stead 2014, p. 1368). Although there are no formulas to achieve a successful TG model; there are key ingredients that can facilitate the emergence of successful TG models such as visionary leadership and knowledgeable actors that are motivated to

collaborate and accept culture-shifting in governance, own the process, and improve it iteratively. This examination of TG cases helps identify “transferable lessons” that contribute to the advancement of territorial governance with territorial development as its end purpose (Schmitt et al. 2013, p. 8). In this view, the Albanian experience illustrates that the emergence of successful TG models, being very spatial and contextual, reflects the capacity of the society to become a proactive agent of change in governance. Yet, bottom-up initiatives, while much needed, should not take place in isolation. They should equally be upscaled within a context of institutional and formal recognition for adopting territorial governance at all institutional levels.

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Chapter 11

Integrating Coastal Zone Management into National Development Policies: The Case of Croatia



Željka Kordej-De Villa and Ivana Rašić

Abstract Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) is a dynamic and iterative process with the aim of ensuring the “sustainable development” of coastal areas. Like many other maritime countries, Croatia has recognised its coastal zone as a valuable and specific region requiring special attention. The coastal area is an interface or transition zone where diverse economic activities interact and intensive environmental pressures exist. To deal with these economic and environmental conflicts, numerous instruments, including tools and methods, are available. Given that the multi-sector dimension of ICZM is the most important feature, this particular approach requires a suitable institutional and legal framework, as well as appropriate governance skills. A key goal of this chapter is to analyse policies for the integration of ICZM into Croatian development planning. Special attention is given in particular to spatial and regional policies, physical plans for protected areas such as national and natural parks, and island development policy. An evaluation of the state and progress of ICZM is also given using two different models.

Keywords Croatia • Integrated coastal zone management • Island development policy • Physical planning

11.1 Introduction

In Croatia, densely populated coastal areas are particularly under threat due to intensive urbanisation, uncontrolled construction, lack of adequate spatial plans and poor implementation of such plans, mass tourism and the presence of industries incompatible for coastal areas. The consequences are varied and severe: environmental pollution, a decrease in biological diversity, depletion of natural resources

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and diminished value of coastal landscapes. In the not too distant future, consequences may become even more threatening due to climate change and rising sea levels. As a result, coastal countries have pointed out that sustainable development and protection of coastal areas is a priority national interest. Given that coastal degradation is a cross-border and transnational issue, it is clear that coordinated global action is necessary. The concept of coastal zone management (CZM) is closely related to that of maritime spatial planning where land–sea interactions (LSI) exist (Ramieri et al. (2018) and Schultz-Zehden et al. (2008). Strong coordination is necessary due to the complexity of such interactions, involving various stakeholders and associated interests. Therefore, the lack of “effective governance models” is recognised as a critical factor for the successful implementation of CZM. As has become evident worldwide, CZM is isolated from mainstream national development processes and planning thus denoting a lack of coordination in developing common visions and implementation mechanisms.

The main goal of this chapter is to analyse policies for the integration of CZM into Croatian development planning, both at a regional and a spatial level. The aim is to discuss the importance of establishing links between CZM and development policies by emphasising benefits and potential challenges. The research has been based on reviewing key national development planning documents and comparing them to theory lessons from the relevant literature and different policy guidelines, where CZM is positioned “between science and policy, between statutory and voluntary, between short-term projects and long-term processes” (Shipman and Stojanovic 2007: 390).

This chapter is organised into five sections. The following section presents the main definitions behind the concept of CZM and legal tools for its implementation. Section 11.3, instead, examines interactions between both regional and spatial policies and CZM including various elements for the effective integration of CZM into national development planning. In this respect, Vallejo (1993) offers interesting insights on the effective integration of CZM into national planning that can be performed by goals, concepts, methods, organisations and networks. Section 11.4, different schemes for assessing the progress of CZM are identified. Finally, the chapter ends with certain conclusions and future prospects.

11.2 Integrated Coastal Zone Management—Concepts and Tools

This section briefly elaborates on the concept of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and the closely related framework of maritime spatial planning (MSP), with an emphasis on the institutional and European legislative frameworks. There are many useful definitions of ICZM. The most frequently cited definition states that “ICZM is a process by which rational decisions are made concerning the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and ocean resources and space”

(Cicin-Sain and Knecht 1997: 1). The other commonly used definition describes ICZM as “a dynamic process that requires the active and sustained involvement of the interested public and many stakeholders with interests in how coastal resources are allocated and conflicts are mediated” (Christie 2005: 209). Similarly, according to Sorensen (1993: 39) ICZM is “a dynamic process in which a coordinated strategy is developed and implemented for the allocation of environmental, socio-cultural, and institutional resources to achieve the conservation and sustainable multiple use of the coastal zone”. ICZM is today addressing resolving conflicts within the coastal zone and resource degradation (Kensington and Crawford 1993; Sorensen 1997; Wescott 2009; Harvey and Caton 2010). These definitions illustrate some important features of the ICZM process: harmonisation of development, protection and conflict mediation, as well as participation. In addition, they reflect EU principles on ICZM, defined in European documents, such as a holistic approach, a long-term perspective, local specificity, working with natural processes, adaptive management, a combination of instruments, the support and involvement of all stakeholders and a participatory approach (Mc Kenna et al. 2008).¹The history of developing institutional and legal infrastructures for ICZM at a global level is long and rich. The key document for CZM, the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, was adopted in 1976, and amended in 1995 (Barcelona Convention). The Barcelona Convention was followed by seven protocols that cover all the relevant aspects of the protection of marine and coastal environments. The Protocol on ICZM differs from other protocols. Besides stipulating protection, it also covers environmental management, referring to both sea and coast. In addition to the Protocol formulated by the United Nations, there are also several obligations imposed by the European Union. In October 2007, the EU launched the Blue Paper, a document that introduced the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) with the main task of integrating sectoral and ecosystem management. Sustainable development is in the focus of the IMP with special emphasis on the sustainable use of the seas and oceans as well as the building of knowledge and innovation for the IMP (Meiner 2010).

In June 2008, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) based on directive 2008/56/EC was adopted. The directive established a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (European Parliament 2008). It stipulates that each member state should develop a marine strategy designed to achieve or maintain a Good Environmental Status (GES) in marine environments. According to Article 3 of the MSFD “good environmental status means the environmental status of marine waters where these provide ecologically

¹These definitions have also been used by: the Council recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May, concerning the implementation of the ICZM in Europe (European Commission 2002); the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on IICZM: a strategy for Europe (2000) and the Communication from the Commission and Report to the European Parliament and the Council: an evaluation of ICZM in Europe.

diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive within their intrinsic conditions, and the use of the marine environment is at a level that is sustainable, thus safeguarding the potential for uses and activities by current and future generations” (European Parliament 2008: 7). MSFD is a new generation directive that is focused on multi-level and multi-actor governance, subsidiarity and decentralisation (Long 2011; Hassler et al. 2019). Some authors stress the existence of potential conflicts between the IMP and MSFD by suggesting that two different approaches for maritime spatial planning exist. Whereas the MSFD argues that for an ecosystem-based approach, the IMP is based on a more relaxed, soft sustainability approach.

According to Domínguez-Tejo et al. (2016: 2), the ecosystem-based approach can be defined as “an interdisciplinary management approach that acknowledges the complex nature of ecological systems and integrates social, ecological, and governance principles to achieve a sustainable use of natural resources in an equitable way”. An ecosystem-based approach is usually defined as the complexity of ecosystems and the interaction between humans and ecological systems with management decisions (Ehler and Douvère 2009; Long et al. 2015; Buhl-Mortensen et al. 2017). Soft sustainability is based on the view “that depletions in natural capital, through crashes in natural stocks, declines in biodiversity, etc., can be compensated for through economic growth, related improvements in technology, etc.” (Qiu and Jones 2013: 183). In other words, it implies that of the three (economic, environmental and social) components of sustainable development, the economic component is the most important one. In 2014, the MSFD was followed by the Framework for Marine Spatial Planning (FMSP)² which defines maritime spatial planning as an instrument to facilitate the ecosystem approach. The FMSP applies to the marine waters of member states and not to coastal waters or associated parts encompassed by spatial planning for land (Article 2). The directive does not provide a definition of marine waters, it refers to the MSFD and establishes a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy. In fact, this means that the FMSP encompasses areas inside the borders of marine waters, but not areas covered by local planning schemes (Kovačić et al. 2016). Furthermore, the FMSP prescribes minimal requirements for spatial planning of maritime areas. It emphasises that LSI, environmental, economic and social aspects (Peel and Lloyd 2004), as well as safety aspects must be taken into account. The form and the content of maritime spatial plans are left to be determined by member states themselves. The following section describes how this new and complex European policy scenario impacts on CZM in Croatia.

²Directive 2014/89/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishes a framework for maritime spatial planning L 257/135 (European Parliament 2014).

11.3 Coastal Zone Planning in the National Policy Arena

The Protocol on ICZM was signed in 2008 and ratified by the Croatian Parliament in October 2012. It provides grounds for defining the maritime and terrestrial parts of the coastal zone. According to the protocol, the Croatian Ministry of Environment and Energy, as the national body responsible for ICZM, has defined eligible coastal units (Fig. 11.1).



Fig. 11.1 Continental and Adriatic regions of Croatia. *Source* Eurostat (2019). *Note* The delimitation of boundaries in territorial waters between Slovenia and Croatia is subject to the pending arbitration. The delimitation of boundaries at sea with Bosnia–Herzegovina are also pending in relation to the borderline at the peninsula of Klek

Administratively speaking, Croatia is divided into 21 counties, which in turn are grouped into two NUTS-2 regions—Adriatic and Continental Croatia—that are quite different in terms of natural features and economic structure. The focus of our research is Adriatic Croatia with its 1.4 million inhabitants (57 inhabitants/km²). It encompasses 24,705 km² of land and 31,479 km² of sea. Continental Croatia covers an area of 31,889 km² and there are 2.9 million inhabitants (90 inhabitants/km²).³

According to the provisions of the Protocol on ICZM, the Croatian coastal zone encompasses the entire Croatian territorial sea (18,981 km²), including 139 towns and municipalities in the seven Adriatic counties (the counties of Istria, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Lika-Senj, Zadar, Šibenik-Knin, Split-Dalmatia, Dubrovnik-Neretva). Eligible coastal units are those situated on the coast, which completely or partially lie within a 3-kilometre-wide coastal belt. By definition, all island towns and municipalities are considered to be parts of the coastal zone. On account of its 1246 islands (out of which 50 are inhabited with population of 132,000), the Croatian coastline is relatively long. It consists of the mainland (1880 km) and island Sect. (4.398 km), amounting to a total of 6278 km. It is the second most indented coast in the Mediterranean (Duplančić Leder et al. 2004). Due to the rather narrow shape of the Adriatic Sea and the outer Croatian islands, both coastal and marine waters are rather large expanses, hence their management and governance requires considerable effort.

Croatia is a very maritime country, where the Adriatic Sea, islands and coastal zone are considered a very valuable and environmentally sensitive area. Therefore, proper management in line with sustainable development principles is essential. It is necessary to stress here the importance of regional cooperation as the Adriatic Sea is bordered by six coastal states. The cooperation between Croatia, Slovenia and Italy is based on EU instruments (mainly cross-border and transnational cooperation), while cooperation with EU candidate countries (Montenegro and Albania) and potential EU candidate countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina) is predominantly based on international projects (e.g. the SHAPE project with Italy, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania and the ADRION Portodimare project with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia). Over the years, the treatment of the sea and coastal area in spatial legislation has slowly been changing.

The legal framework for maritime spatial planning in Croatia was established by the Regulation on MSFD (Government of the Republic of Croatia 2011) and passed by the Croatian government in October 2011. In addition, the existing Physical Planning Act was passed at the end of 2013, and its amendments in 2017 (Croatian Parliament 2013), meaning that it has been completely harmonised with the FMSP. It introduces the state's obligation towards the spatial planning of the sea, with the existing obligations for the regional and local levels. It also includes planning of the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone (EFPZ, which

³Population data is based on Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2011).

encompasses 23,870 km²) and the continental shelf. Based on the MSFD, the FMSP and the Protocol on ICZM, the Ministry of Environment and Energy will prepare a marine and coastal strategy, thus fulfilling its commitments as defined in all of the mentioned documents.⁴ In October 2014, the Regulation on the Creation and Implementation of Strategy on Maritime Environment and Coastal Zone Management was adopted (Government of the Republic of Croatia 2014), which defines the institutions and general responsibilities for preparing the Marine and Coastal Strategy.

As Kovačić et al. (2016) elaborated, the need for a consolidated document stems from the overlapping of spatial coverage, the mutual dependence of the coastal development and the current state of the maritime environment. The drafting of the Strategy is currently in progress, and the preparation of the programme containing measures for the protection and management of the marine environment and coastal area of the Republic Croatia began in September 2017. The final deadline for the drafting of maritime spatial plans is 31 December 2021. There already exist 133 plans and they will be revised. The complexity of coastal zone planning is due to its reliance on numerous development policies and sectoral policies. Analysis of all these policies extends beyond the scope of this chapter. We will identify spatial and regional policies as those policies with important links to coastal zone management.

In these terms, spatial planning is viewed as the main integrative link between spatial and regional policies. The Regional Development Act (Official Gazette 147/2014) determines that the spatial plan is a “starting point for drafting the planning documents relating to regional development policies” (Article 11). This is the reason why spatial plans will receive particular attention in this section. There is a hierarchical system of spatial plans which have already been drafted at the state, regional and local level. According to the current planning legislation, at the central level the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning is the responsible authority for spatial planning, including maritime spatial planning implementation in Croatia. However, as the regulatory system that governs the sea area is still characterised by a sectoral approach, a number of relevant ministries and institutions will be involved in the maritime spatial planning process—the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure as the main body in charge of the maritime

⁴The MSFD refers to the marine waters encompassing part of the Adriatic beyond the territorial limits in which Croatia “has and/or exercises jurisdictional rights”. This revives the question of the EFPZ provided by the Maritime Act (Croatian Parliament 1994) and based on the Decision of the Croatian Parliament on extending Croatia’s jurisdiction in the Adriatic Sea (Croatian Parliament 2003) in which Croatia has, but apparently does not exercise, all its jurisdictional rights. The respective zone extends from the outer borders of the Croatian territorial sea to the limits of the epicontinental sea (continental shelf), as agreed upon by Italy and Croatia, and has all the characteristics of an exclusive economic zone provided by UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. In 2008, the Croatian Parliament decided that its jurisdiction will not be exercised upon member states of the EU, which means that fishing in the respective zone is to remain outside of the full control of Croatian authorities. Therefore, the implementation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy in the EFPZ may differ across the entire Croatian marine waters as actual jurisdiction rights in the EFPZ differ from those in the territorial and costal sea as opposed to the inland waters.

domain, the Ministry of Tourism, the Croatian Tourist Board, the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, the Chamber of Commerce, etc.

In Croatia, there are several spatial plans at the state level, among others: (i) the Spatial Development Strategy; (ii) the State Spatial Development Plan; (iii) the spatial plans for national and nature parks; (iv) the EFPZ Spatial Plan; (v) the Epicontinental Zone Spatial Plan (continental shelf) and other spatial plans defined in the State Spatial Development Plan (The Spatial Development Strategy, Official Gazette 106/2017; Dobrinić et al. 2017). More in particular, the Spatial Development Strategy has been adopted in 2017 and specifies the manner of utilising coastal and marine areas. It places an emphasis on maritime spatial planning and ICZM as important tools for the protection of coastal and maritime areas. Currently, the intention is to draft the State Spatial Development Plan by the end of 2019, followed by the Spatial Plan for the EFPZ, which is to be drafted by March 2021. The expectation is that current capacities are to be strengthened in terms of quantity and for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Moving from the central to the regional level, comparing the legislation and institutional setting of spatial and regional planning, it becomes evident that the local level is entirely covered by spatial plans—the counties' spatial planning institutes are responsible for spatial planning, including maritime spatial planning, too—but of a coherent and coordinated regional development management system seems to be lacking. Indeed, linking spatial planning and regional development management is a difficult and demanding task due to the regional development management system not being compliant across the different administrative levels. In addition, there is no harmonised methodology for drafting development programmes at the level of local self-government units which otherwise rely on their own spatial plans.

Reviewing the county development strategies and county spatial plans reveals several important conclusions. First, it is evident that an integral development policy incorporating environmental care along with spatial and regional development still does not exist. Second, coastal county spatial plans contain some elements of maritime spatial planning, particularly of LSI⁵ where economic issues dominate compared to environmental issues. There are two insightful cases related to the issue of county maritime spatial planning—the Zadar and Šibenik-Knin counties.

The only example of a legally binding plan with a link to maritime spatial planning is the Zadar county integrated sea use and management plan. It was adopted in 2001, and amended several times, with the last revision in 2015 (The Zadar County 2015). The plan focuses on marine aquaculture, which is the most important maritime activity in the county. Comparing to the Zadar plan, the Coastal plan for the Šibenik-Knin County is a non-binding document, adopted in 2016. It is

⁵The most important issues in LSI in coastal counties are coastal tourism, shipbuilding and ship repair, fishing, short sea shipping, marine aquaculture, passenger ferry services and cruise tourism. These are the sectors which will have to be regulated with a marine spatial plan in the future.

indicative and not sector specific but it is interesting as it identifies coastal zones which are vulnerable due to climate change. It proposes a set of policies and measures to improve the coastal and marine environment.

LSI is an established and important topic in Adriatic Croatia, due to the specific geography of the Croatian islands. Managing island development is a very important issue because the Croatian archipelago is the second largest in the Mediterranean (Starc 2001). The island development policy has been reviewed a number of times since 1995. The Island Development Programme was established in 1997. It was the first document in Croatia that dealt with a particular region. In addition, it favours sustainable development principles and emphasises the importance of regional policy (Starc et al. 1997). It was accompanied by the first Island Act adopted in April 1999, while the most recent Island Act was introduced in November 2018 (Croatian Parliament 2018). According to Kordej-De Villa et al. (2005, 2013), the island development policy should be treated as an integral part of the regional development policy and general development policy. Current Croatian island policy is defined as a combination of bottom-up/top-down approaches to formulating and implementing development measures (Starc 2017). However, it soon becomes evident that in practice, the top-down policy component prevails, hence islands are treated as mainland extensions.

11.3.1 Digression: Management of Protected Areas

To illustrate the implementation of the island development policy and the formulation of spatial policies at a state level, which has significant implications for the local development, we will briefly present a management model for protected areas, i.e., national and nature parks. Protected areas also deserve special attention in the course of maritime spatial planning (Fig. 11.2). They may serve as a pilot area for the implementation of development and environmental measures. We will consider them as the most obvious example of conflicts between decision-making and impact, arising from fragmented development policies (spatial and regional).

In Croatia, 8.2% of the territory (12.1% of land and 1.9% of the territorial sea) is under protection; in other words, there are 408 areas under various degrees of protection. In 2017, up to 47% of the land territory and 39% of the territorial sea was included in the EU ecological network Natura 2000 (European Union 2013).⁶ All 8 national parks are located in Adriatic Croatia (Brijuni islands, Krka River,

⁶It is important to point out that 266 Natura 2000 marine sites are established in Croatia for a total sea area of 5279 km².



Fig. 11.2 Protected areas in the Republic of Croatia. *Source* GIS shapefiles (ESRI 2019)

Kornati islands, Mljet island, Paklenica, Plitvice Lakes, Risnjak, North Velebit).⁷ Three of the seven national parks are located on islands: Brijuni, Kornati and the western part of the island of Mljet, in the southern Adriatic.

According to the Nature Protection Act (Official Gazette 80/2013, 15/2018 and 14/2019), all protected areas are managed by specially established public

⁷It is interesting to note that certain areas of outstanding value for the biological and landscape diversity of the Republic of Croatia are under international legal protection. Thereby, the Plitvice Lakes National Park has been inserted in the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List since 1979, while the Velebit Mountain was included in 1978 in the world network of biosphere reserves within the UNESCO programme of Man and the Biosphere (MAB).

institutions. Public institutions that manage national parks and nature parks are established by the Government Act, and directly controlled by the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Other public institutions for managing areas of special reserve and highly protected natural reserve are established at the county level. Physical and management plans for national and nature parks are prepared by the Ministry of Physical Planning and Construction and the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and subsequently adopted by the Croatian Parliament. However, this process does not entail any participation by municipalities and counties in which the parks are situated.

Spatial plans have been adopted for seven national parks (while preparation for the Krka National Park is still in progress) and eight nature parks (with the exception of Papuk). Furthermore, all national and nature parks have valid management plans. Our analysis of the spatial plans for marine national parks shows that there are serious issues in the overall park management. Some of the issues include: (i) no identified maritime domain; (ii) public institutions that manage the park have no jurisdiction over the maritime domain; hence, they neither have the instruments at their disposal nor the funds to prevent various interventions (construction of new piers, unauthorised anchoring and mooring, etc.); (iii) unsolved ownership issues for land in protected areas, given that most of the protected areas have been proclaimed as parks with no considerations as regards land ownership. In most cases, land is privately owned, and the number of owners is rather large, thus it is very difficult to achieve consensus on common actions in parks, based on the Physical Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette 106/2017). Finally, marine parks face serious issues regarding nautical tourism, and public institutions in the parks are not consulted for the drafting of tourism strategies at any level. It is important to emphasise that although management problems in protected areas may not be a typical situation for policy implementation across the entire coastal zone; nonetheless, they are good examples of undesirable effects caused by fragmented development policies.

11.4 Assessing Progress in Coastal Zone Management— Lessons from the Literature

Coastal zone management covers about 90 coastal states involved in the implementation of at least 180 programmes, feasibility studies and projects. Despite the increasing use of the ICZM over the last few decades, there is still not much evidence of the effectiveness of that global practice (Sorensen 1997). Therefore, there is an increasing amount of literature on the issue involving assessment of the CZM progress (Burbridge 1997; Van Buuren et al. 2002; Pickaver et al. 2004). There are indicators for assessing governance, as well as evaluating progress for the environmental status of marine and coastal areas. According to the OECD (2003), basic criteria for selecting indicators are policy relevance and utility for users,

Table 11.1 Four orders of outcomes

First order
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constituencies that actively support the ICZM initiative 2. A formal governmental mandate for the programme with the authority necessary to implement a course of action 3. Resources, including sustained annual funding, adequate for implementation of the plan of action 4. A plan of action constructed around unambiguous goals 5. The institutional capacity necessary to implement the plan of action
Second order
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes in the behaviour of institutions and interest groups 2. Changes in behaviours directly affecting resources of concern 3. Investments in infrastructure which is supportive for ICM Policies and Plans
Third order
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improvements in some coastal ecosystem qualities 2. Improvements in some societal qualities, for example, progress of the Human Development Index
Fourth order
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equilibria among both social and environmental qualities is defined

Source Adapted from Olsen (2003)

analytical soundness, and measurability. Although these indicators are directly related,⁸ we will focus on governance and implementation issues.

Intensive research work on measuring progress as regards implementing CZM in the EU⁹ began in 2002 with the issuing of the Recommendation of the European Parliament concerning the implementation of ICZM. In 2003, an EU ICZM expert group set up a working group in order to evaluate indicators and data to assist countries in assessing coastal management progress in a more integrated and sustainable way. The European framework of the ICZM progress indicator is based on the work of Olsen et al. (1999) and Olsen (2002, 2003). Olsen's framework of "four orders of outcomes" groups together elements of institutional, behavioural and social/environmental changes that provide sound coastal management. An adapted and summarised framework is presented in the Table 11.1.

Olsen's "four orders of outcomes" encompass predominantly enabling factors for achieving ICZM and emphasise the need for some behavioural changes. The most critical factors in Croatian planning practice are related to governance issues

⁸The expectation is that greater incorporation of ICZM at all governmental levels and sectoral activities will lead to positive improvements for the coastal environment. And vice versa, that a positive environmental improvement of coastal areas will be a strong incentive for new ICZM measures and tools.

⁹There have been very different approaches taken in the EU and the US for measuring the progress of ICZM. While in the US the assessments of individual ICZM projects prevails, the focus in the EU is on formulating a framework for the assessment of the overall progress.

and the capacity of the institutions involved in an ICZM. Therefore, Olsen's scheme could be very useful in the Croatian context. By reviewing the Croatian planning system, spatial and regional development plans and strategies based on Olsen's "four orders of outcomes", certain conclusions can be drawn.

First-order outcomes are engaged in establishing the enabling conditions that provide conditions for the implementation of an ICZM. In Croatia, the first-order outcome is completed, at least at a national level (government institutions have the mandate to support CZM initiatives, legislation and institutions are established and set in place; financial funds for implementation of measures for the protection and management of the marine environment and coastal area are reserved in the state budget).

Second-order outcomes are changes in the human behaviour that are necessary for achieving desired social and environmental improvements. In Croatia, the second order is partially fulfilled, and there are attempts at collaborative planning and decision making through task forces, commissions, civic associations, etc. Second-order outcomes are predominantly evident at the local level of government.

Third-order outcomes are the result of positive changes in institutional behaviour and positive behavioural changes of all stakeholders in the resource management process. It is too early to evaluate third-order outcomes in Croatia, but an initial assessment of the state of marine and coastal environment was prepared in 2015 as a background paper for drafting the Marine and Coastal Strategy. It is important to note that during the preparation of Croatia's Regional Strategy in 2017, several meetings and workshops for partner councils (from the counties) were organised and all the coastal counties noted that an integrated coastal management does not exist, nor the implementation of the ICZM Protocol (Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds 2016). These meetings also revealed that the ICZM management process has insufficient focus on spatial and environmental issues within regional policies. Challenges from vertical and horizontal coordination were identified in terms of both governmental and sectoral aspects.

Fourth-order outcomes call for defined equilibria among environmental and social qualities. This is a very ambitious and distant goal, both for Croatia and other countries as well.

According to Olsen (2003), there is a causal relationship between the four orders, but they are not usually accomplished in successive progression. Some elements of the first-, second- and third-order outcomes should be accumulated simultaneously within a certain time period. A pragmatic tool in the form of an assessment matrix for the ICZM progress was developed by Pickaver et al. (2004) and Ballinger et al. (2010). The assessment matrix for ICZM progress and four orders of outcome can be used as complementary tools. The assessment matrix argues that an efficient ICZM process has to be organised around a typical policy cycle, comprising issue identification and assessment, programme preparation, formal adoption and funding, as well as implementation and evaluation. The matrix contains 31 actions that are in line with the EU principles of ICZM. This approach

uses semi-quantitative criteria and allows comparison between countries. Monitoring at a national, regional and local self-government level is required (Ballinger et al. 2010).

The monitoring and evaluation phase of the CZM process enables decision-makers to learn from the successes and failures in their governance activities (Douvere and Ehler 2011). The results of the evaluating of ICM practices indicates “that the primary factor limiting progress in coastal management is not the availability of funding or knowledge of the social and ecosystem process at work, but the capacity of the institutions most directly involved to instigate and sustain integrated and adaptive forms of management” (Olsen 2003: 358). More specifically, Shipman and Stojanovic (2007) identified four major causes of gaps in implementation: complexity of responsibilities for coastal areas may prevent institutions from establishing joint action; a policy vacuum constrains implementation from the national to local level; information gaps may prevent coordination between different stakeholders and between different sectors; and a democratic deficit.

As seen from the previous sections, Croatia exhibits all of these gaps. In order to fully exercises all the potential benefits of CZM and MSP, Croatia has to elaborate additional normative preconditions for further development of MSP. These will include capacity building through the implementation of pilot projects in the field of ICZM and MSP (The Programme of Measures for the Protection and Management of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone of the Republic of Croatia). It also has to strengthen the role of spatial planning documents, as well as to integrate instruments in the coordination of all sectors and levels of spatial and development planning.

11.5 Concluding Remarks and Future Perspectives

CZM and related concepts, such as maritime spatial planning, are important tools for the sustainable management of coastal and maritime areas. CZM is still isolated from mainstream national development processes and planning. Implemented policies remain fragmented and are sometimes even contradictory. Some recommendations do exist for integrating CZM into development planning in terms of policies, institutional and planning elements. First, coastal policy must be consistent with other development policies, and vice versa. Then, an institutional CZM structure has to be integrated within the existing institutional structure. Third, priority in formulating long-term development planning is essential, while relationships between coastal and other regions are crucial in defining a general development strategy. Formal maritime spatial efforts have not started formally at the regional level yet. The County (regional) plans have provisions for marine areas, though not consistently and over their entire marine area.

Croatia's experience, as well as that of other European countries, shows that besides the many opportunities that CZM offers, it also has profound weaknesses (Gibson 2003; Shipman and Stojanovic 2007; McFadden et al. 2007; Jones et al. 2016). But opportunities do exist to overcome them. Besides national strategies, legislation and funding schemes for local CZM activities, there are also external drivers in the form of regional marine strategies, regional cooperation (e.g. The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region) (see Solly and Berisha, in this volume), and international projects (e.g. the Supreme Project Supporting Maritime Spatial Planning in the Eastern Mediterranean [Supreme Project 2017]) in the area of CZM and MSP.

Croatia, as an EU member, requires external drivers for developing coastal zone management. Croatia is in the process of developing several important planning documents, including the State Spatial Development Plan and the Spatial Plan for the Protected Ecological and Fishing Zone. Cross-border perspectives and connectivity in the Adriatic region are particularly important for the respective ecological and fishing zone. Due to many different interests between planning levels and diverse stakeholders, coordination is a very demanding task. The complexity and abundance of data requires new knowledge and sophisticated tools for processing the data and implementing them in development policies. The monitoring and evaluation of the progress of CZM and related concepts are a challenging and a promising area for future research.

In conclusion, efforts for CZM planning and its integration within the development of national policy in Croatia are still rather fragmented and unconnected, although the legislative framework, as well as strategic documents have been set in place. Nonetheless, there is an evident lack of interconnectedness and harmonisation among different policies and a lack of vertical coordination in implementing them. Perhaps this also reflects the political importance of CZM in comparison to other issues in policy creation.

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Chapter 12

Urban Agglomeration

Zagreb—Scenarios for the Future



Irena Đokić , Ivana Rašić, and Marijana Sumpor

Abstract The regional development planning framework in Croatia has emerged over the last decade. European Union (EU) requirements and the intention to bridge the theoretical and empirical gap related to the implementation of EU territorial agenda in the Croatian context are the primary drivers of these shifts. This chapter focuses on development issues of the Urban Agglomeration Zagreb (UAZ). The agglomeration is commonly considered as an area that spreads over the administrative boundaries of the city, where functional relations are strong and migratory patterns rich. Here, the authors examine scenarios of the UAZ's future development based on contextual and key change factors whose interplay may significantly change the UAZ's developmental image.

Keywords Urban agglomeration Zagreb · Integrated territorial investment · Scenario planning · Governance

12.1 Introduction

Regional development-related policies to modern planning principles and practices in Croatia have been mainly driven by EU requirements striving to implement the EU territorial agenda in the Croatian context (Berisha 2018). As a result, urban agglomerations and urban areas, bigger and smaller, have been structured through Croatian regional policy regulatory and institutional frameworks for developing

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territorial units, namely counties. This has enabled the establishment of four urban agglomerations; the biggest one is the Urban Agglomeration Zagreb (UAZ).¹

The objective of this chapter is to test the validity of the current UAZ developmental framework and to provide alternative development scenarios. The main research question refers to which development path of the UAZ can be expected to take in its short and medium perspective. The literature review covers recent research on regional development, metropolitan areas, and governance, as well as urban agglomeration planning practices. We search for a conceptual framework that reflects aspects of agglomeration development and its possible application to the metropolitan city-region of the City of Zagreb. Particular attention in this research has been given to the new governance context and requirements. In the analytical portion of this study, we examine the UAZ and its role in regional development, presenting some results of the comparative socio-economic analysis of Zagreb as a regional centre. In addition, through a focus group discussion and scenario planning exercise, the possible future development of the UAZ has been elaborated. From the analysis, an urban agglomeration development planning model has been tested. Overall, the results of our research provide four possible scenarios for the future Zagreb metropolitan region, and these can serve as the basis for future development plans and actions.

12.2 A Framework for Strategic Development Planning

12.2.1 Strategic Development Planning Theoretical Framework

A development policy contains various instruments, measures, and activities intended to efficiently manage complex systems like states, regions, counties, and local self-governments units (LGUs). It creates a framework for the future development of a territorial-administrative entity, and it is impossible to implement it before having an implementation plan. If integrated, it usually encompasses various development aspects, such as economy, social issues, spatial planning, and environmental protection and institutions. Although activities that are implemented sporadically or unrestrained can lead to the results of the set objectives, they often also have unforeseen impacts. Therefore, a smart decision-maker will strive to search for some possibilities that enable them to keep control over the instruments at their disposal, while working towards the achievement of expected results.

Development planning as a term seems to be regaining popularity, at least in Croatia. The word planning was common in the second half of the twentieth century until the 1990s, specifically in Central, East, and South-East European countries, where terms like centrally planned economy, planned economy, centrally planned

¹Zagreb as an agglomeration was mentioned in the Zagreb Plan back in 1971.

economic model, and similar variations were often used (Đokić et al. 2010; Adams et al. 2011). It took a decade to return the term planning (and its related variations) to its previous positive connotations. Planning is conventional in the private sector and various business activities. As such, it has been present in the economies of the western, capitalist world. Planning—in its spatial meaning—actually originates from the culture of spatial planning, and Healey (1997) distinguishes three primary planning traditions:

- economic planning,
- spatial planning, and
- planning and analysis of development policies.

Later, Sumpor (2005) summarises these three traditions into the following strands:

- economic development planning directed towards the management of state and regional production forces, linked to social policies, creating a framework for the welfare state;
- spatial planning, in a narrower sense, is directed towards the management of the physical development of towns, promoting health, economy, comfort, and beauty of urban habitats; and
- planning (and analysis) of development policies directed towards management aiming at efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the explicit objectives set by public administration bodies.

The three traditions represented above form the basis for modern development planning, at the national, regional, and local level. However, in the past two decades, words such as strategy or programme have been frequently, and purposefully, used in place of the word *plan*, especially in state-level documents. At the national level, strategic planning is a recognised necessity of good governance. Đokić (2015) highlights the importance of strategic planning and the need for vision on a national, regional, and local level in the context of globalisation, fast, frequent and unpredictable changes in the economy, social inequality and climate change impacts. The established sustainable development triangle comprised of economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental equity can rightly be expanded even further by other equally important aspects, such as cultural, institutional, and spatial, or territorial development aspects (Dräger et al. 2004; Đokić and Sumpor 2011; Moolaert et al. 2012). These new understandings of development have evolved over the past fifty or so years and have become an integral part of the European Union's Cohesion policy with the introduction of the term “territorial cohesion”. The new European policy framework recognises that development has an evident spatial or geographic context (Pike et al. 2006: 35).

The relevance of strategic planning is recognised at all administrative levels—it enables the identification of the resources needed for achieving planned objectives and thus reaching an envisaged future. Today, formal governments represent only one of the numerous stakeholders in the development process, while more efficient

transformations occur in a more informal environment (Kordej-De Villa et al. 2009: 113). Bryson (2003: 38) believes that strategic planning is a disciplinary decision-making effort. For him, it is also a way of thinking and behaving as well as a constructive approach to problem-solving, which enables managing development processes, its formalisation and control, coordination of development activities, and stakeholder participation.

One of the primary planning objectives is to organise the future. Thus, it usually has the following key features (Đokić 2015):

- *Structure*—the process of planning and its final output (the development document) contain elements (phases of the process, contents of the document itself) that have to be identified, determined, and framed in an appropriate timescale.
- *System*—development processes and planning need to be built on an internal logic based on the logical sequence between the analytical part that strategically sets the objectives and measures (projects, activities), and the implementation phase that will ensure the accomplishment of these objectives. As the development document (especially at lower administrative levels) is part of a more extensive system, it should be compatible with it and, if possible, complementary to its fullest maximum extent.
- *Goal oriented*—planning is focused on setting the goals/targets that should be achieved within a specific time horizon. Thus, it is commonly recommended to orient them towards SMART characteristics: Sustainable, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time defined. Goals with SMART characteristics enable easier monitoring of their implementation and progress evaluation over time.
- *Negotiations and coordination based*—development planning typically brings together different stakeholders, disciplines, sectors, and fields. Reaching consensus over many different, and at times, conflicting ideas and visions of the future requires constant negotiations and coordination efforts. Standard individual disciplinary background is not sufficient to bridge the gap between diametrically different perspectives and views on problems and solutions. Those responsible for steering and coordinating this process most often need to have additional skills, like moderation, facilitation, coaching, and tutoring, which are essential for the success of the development process.

New ideas and improvements in cooperation are only a few of the reasons why planning is generally considered as functional. The planning process requires consensus building on development priorities and strengthening synergies between a myriad of activities implemented by different stakeholders. Planning is not a linear process. It could catalyse solving antagonisms and also impede consensus building. A specific benefit of planning is that it enables a more pro-active influence on the future and better “positioning” in competitive environments. In this sense, more extended planning methods might be useful, especially when discussing visions of possible futures.

12.3 Envisioning the Future of Territories and Scenario Planning

Strategic planning is an inadequate long-term planning tool. Almost thirty years ago, two famous authors in strategic management, Igor Ansoff and Henry Mintzberg, took opposing positions in discussing the pros and cons of strategic planning. Mintzberg (1990) argued that in unpredictable environments, it is impossible to formulate an explicit strategy before the trial and experience process has run its course; and that it is not necessary to make the strategy explicit in predictable environments. Ansoff (1991) presented his critique of Mintzberg's work on the design school in strategic management. An important message from their work is that strategic planning is relevant but not sufficient when trying to plan for the unforeseeable future.

According to Schoemaker (1995) through scenario planning, possible future states are identified. He emphasises that the process does not provide strategies on how to deal with identified futures. Thus, it is recommended to involve different stakeholders in the process. In short, the technique applies to virtually any situation in which a decision-maker would like to imagine how the future might unfold (Schoemaker: 27). The fundamental method of developing scenarios for strategic planning can be applied, with uncertainty, to other situations of decision-making. A scenario is a story, a manuscript for the future. Therefore, it is important to create a title that will interpret the scenario. According to Schoemaker (1995), the final scenarios should be tested to confirm whether they are sufficient, and he proposes four criteria:

- scenario relevance—strength of scenarios' impact on individual mental maps,
- internal consistency to achieve effectiveness,
- need to build significantly different scenarios, not only variations of the same; and,
- description of a possible state to be sustained over some period of time.

Zech and Andreotta (2015) applied a “visioneering” planning tool in the context of transport infrastructure planning and used it to design comprehensive and inspiring pictures of regions in order to stimulate the political, public, and professional debate. Enhancing standard strategic planning perspectives with inadequate methods envisaging development in the far future forms the foundation of their approach. They define visioneering as a term that combines “envisioning”, i.e. how to develop a vision for the future, and “engineering”, i.e. how to design and engineer future reality. Though scenario planning is mentioned in their work within the context of quantitative tools, we apply the scenario planning method in a similar qualitative setting, as the visioneering tool, and use it as a guide for focus group discussions on possible futures of the UAZ. In such a context, scenario planning can also function as a visioneering exercise.

Our approach follows similar lines to Zech and Andreotta (2015), and our arguments related to long-term planning also consider that a historical perspective in the analytical strategic planning phase is inadequate. Various qualitative and

quantitative analyses on current states and trends provide a basis to build achievable objectives within the envisaged implementation timeframe of the document. This approach limits to a certain extent the visionary dimension(s) of the future, as it largely relies on what is known and foreseeable and is based on trends. Although historical data and past experience are valuable inputs in the planning process, this approach could be upgraded or complemented using scenario planning. These scenarios call for changing the conventional thinking and understanding of the past and present, therefore being different from commonly used planning methods and tools. As stressed by Schoemaker (1995: 27), “Scenario planning attempts to capture the richness and range of possibilities, stimulating decision-makers to consider changes they would otherwise ignore”. He emphasises the practical aspect of the planning tool as it organises those possibilities into narratives that are easier to grasp and use great volumes of data. He also recognises the importance of our beliefs and knowledge, as well as the uncertainty or unknowns of the future.

In the context of territorial planning, urban agglomerations and metropolisation processes seem to return to the development planning focus, a trend that has been highlighted by the European Commission (EC) in the latest programming period 2014–2020 and the new Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) mechanism (EC 2014). Urban agglomerations have to be defined, followed by an elaboration of a strategic document including actions that can be funded within a proposed set of priorities. The European Commission proposes a general structure for the implementation of the mechanism, while member states define the details of the concrete implementation in each country.

In the literature, the notion of agglomeration has been relevant within spatial economics and the local and regional development theory. In the spatial planning context, Zagreb has already been identified as an agglomeration in the Zagreb Plan of 1971. The importance of agglomeration economies is mentioned in the literature on regional development (Camagni 2002; Herschel and Tallberg 2011), metropolitan areas and governance (Miller 2002; Taylor and Walker 2001), as well as urban agglomeration planning practices (OECD 2004).

12.4 Urban Agglomeration Zagreb—A New Territorial Entity

12.4.1 Urban Development in Croatian Context

According to the last Census (Croatia. Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2013), 4,284,889 inhabitants live in Croatia, with an average density of 75.8 st km² (EU28: 116.7 st./km²). The population is primarily concentrated in the four biggest regional centres (Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, and Osijek), and larger and smaller urban areas. In order to improve the quality of life in certain parts of Croatia, a regulatory

framework including acts² and bylaws was recently established. The purpose of the adopted new legislative configuration is to serve the implementation of the regional development policy adopted at the national level, meaning that strategic documents at the lower administrative levels become an important steering tool for governance and development planning at a county and local level, and the basis for the identification of project candidates for EU funding. The Regional Development Act³ (RDA) introduced the terms urban agglomeration, and bigger and smaller urban areas. Based on this act, urban agglomeration development strategies have to be elaborated, as well as development strategies for bigger and smaller urban areas. In compliance with the new regulation, the above-mentioned biggest regional centres become urban agglomerations with headquarters in Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, and Osijek. According to the RDA, bigger urban areas are towns that according to the last Census (2011) have more than 35,000 inhabitants and are not included in previously mentioned urban agglomerations (in total ten areas). Other towns with less than 35,000 inhabitants, with a central settlement of more than 10,000 inhabitants, and/or, representing a county administrative centre, are treated as smaller urban areas (in total 19 areas). The rest of the Croatian territory hosts a number of LGUs that, according to the RDA, are not obliged to elaborate and adopt strategic development documents. Nevertheless, they do so as they recognise the benefits of these documents in the majority of cases.

The RDA defines regional development as “[...] a long-term process of improvement of sustainable economic and social development of some area which is achieved through recognition, stimulation and management of development potential of that area.” (Croatia. Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds 2014b; art. 3). The Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds (MRDEUF) is responsible for the implementation of the national regional development policy and Cohesion policy in Croatia. The regional policy refers to a set of objectives, priorities, measures, and activities directed towards the stimulation of long-term economic growth and improvement of the quality of life. It complies with sustainable development principles and focuses on the decrease of regional difference in the long-run. The objectives of the Croatian regional policy are implemented through the Strategy of Regional Development of the Republic of Croatia until 2020 (RDS).⁴ In this document, the national regional development objectives and priorities are determined, as well as the implementing mechanisms, and areas with developmental specificities (Croatia. Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds 2017).

²Croatia. Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds (2014b). The Regional Development Act, Official Gazette, 147/2014.

³See Footnote 2.

⁴Adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 14th July 2017.

Urban areas are recognised as carriers of development to achieve the strategic objectives defined in RDS for the period until 2020.⁵ The implementation of the urban agglomeration development strategies for bigger and smaller urban areas plays a crucial role in reaching the strategic objectives of the RDS. The four Croatian urban agglomerations started the elaboration process of their strategy during 2015, followed by the three bigger urban areas Pula, Slavonski Brod, and Zadar. Each of these seven urban areas counts 50,000 inhabitants in their central settlement, thus qualifying for financial sources channelled through the ITI mechanism. The population of urban agglomerations and areas represents around a third of the Croatian population.

Consequently, the implementation of ITI strategies is vital for the overall development of Croatia. The mechanism is relatively new throughout the EU and consists of a set of activities identified by urban agglomerations that can be financed from the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), and the European Social Fund (ESF). The ITI mechanism is implemented aiming at strengthening the role of cities, i.e. urban areas as drivers of economic development. The biggest urban centres in Croatia have € 345.35 million euro at their disposal through ITI for the implementation of activities related to sustainable urban development.

Candidate cities are required to prepare development strategies evaluated by independent experts for their quality, methodological coherence, and corresponding relevance to specific ITI objectives to receive funding. The development strategies of these cities were adopted in 2016. All seven previously mentioned urban areas fulfilled the evaluation criteria, which enabled them to use the ITI mechanism. It is worth mentioning that the administrative centres of urban agglomerations, as the most active regional centres, generally have a more dominant role in the process of determination, steering, and managing of urban agglomeration area than administrative centres of bigger urban areas (Pula, Slavonski Brod, Zadar) as future ITI beneficiaries. The Analytical Study on Sustainable Urban Development in Croatia (Croatia. Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds 2014a) shows that the integrated approach will bring benefits to all cities exceeding 50,000 inhabitants including their neighbouring areas, which will generate new jobs and strengthen competitiveness.

Around a fifth of Croatia's population live in bigger and smaller urban areas (except ITI areas). According to the RDA, other bigger and smaller urban areas are also obliged to elaborate development strategies. Development strategies of all urban areas cover around half of Croatia's population and their implementation can have significant impacts on socio-economic condition of the country (Đokić and Sumpor 2017).

⁵In the Programme of Spatial Development of the Republic of Croatia (Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Housing—Institute for Spatial Planning 1999) Croatian space is divided into three categories whereby urban areas cover 12% of inhabited Croatian territory and 63% of total population.

12.4.2 *Scenario Planning Experiences in the Croatian Urban Planning Context*

The application of the scenario method spread after the Second World War in various forms of planning. Its evolution was related to military planning, public administration planning, business planning, technological development forecasting, environmental studies and sustainable development, urban and regional planning and studies of futures in general (Radeljak Kaufman 2016).

The city of Zadar, as an administrative unit of the bigger urban area, adopted the development strategy of Zadar Urban Area for the period 2014–2020 (Strategy ZUA).⁶ During the elaboration of this document, the scenario planning method was used. The analysis of the current state, together with the SWOT analysis and the results of the scenario method, presents the basis for the elaboration of the strategy for urban area development, which addresses identified needs and potentials of the urban area.

As indicated in this strategy, the purpose of the scenarios was the identification of the conditions where the direct influence on the future development of a receptive area is possible. The rationale for using the scenario method, in this case, was to identify the most probable directions of development of the Zadar Urban Area until 2023 (the final year of EU funds use according to the n+3 rule), with the further aim of identifying development needs and potentials that would enable achievement of the most suitable scenario. For scenario planning purposes, the existing analytical data and SWOT analyses results were used, while development needs and potentials were identified through the development of the SWOT analysis. Qualitative data about key change factors for the Zadar Urban Area were gathered until 2023 through a survey and focus group discussions among representatives of public, private, and civil sector institutions as well as organisations. Two development factors were selected: diversity of the economy and sustainable use of space and four scenarios were elaborated. In the next step, scenarios were qualitatively analysed in order to test their probability. In the first round, three probable scenarios were selected and described:

- *Blue scenario*: polyfunctional economic development through the sustainable use of spatial resources and technological development,
- *Green scenario*: monoculture of tourism through the sustainable use of spatial resources,
- *Grey scenario*: monoculture of tourism and unsustainable use of spatial resources.

These prognostic scenarios serve to forecast the possible development directions of the Zadar Urban Area until 2023. Differentiation of identified development factors using survey respondents' perspectives forms the basis of this process. As

⁶Zadar Urban Area Strategy is available at: <http://www.grad-zadar.hr/repos/doc/Strategija%20razvoja%20urbanog%20podrucja%20Zadra%202014.%20-%202020..pdf>.

the authors indicated, this strategy scenario planning approach cannot address all factors of development, and it represents to a certain extent an assumed future. In the end, the “Blue scenario” was chosen as the most desirable and used as a guideline in defining the strategic vision, objectives, priorities, and measures. The approach was used in this particular case for medium-term strategic planning.

12.4.3 Urban Agglomeration Zagreb (UAZ)

Today, around 70% of the EU population—approximately 350 million people—live in urban agglomerations of more than 5 million inhabitants, and the share of the urban population continues to grow (EUROSTAT 2017).⁷ Around 7% of the EU population live in cities of over 5 million inhabitants. In Europe, the urban structure is more polycentric and less concentrated. There are 23 cities of more than 1 million inhabitants and 345 cities of more than 100 thousand inhabitants in the EU, representing around 143 million people. Within the UAZ, there are a large number of interactions and exchanges of products and services (work-living-leisure relationship). Two neighbouring counties of the City of Zagreb receive the necessary natural resources, food, labour via daily commutes to the city to work, education, and so on. On the other hand, Zagreb’s residents use the surrounding area for its natural environment as well as other forms of leisure and recreational activities. However, the competition for space between productive and residential sectors leads to high land rents and housing prices in central areas, which only business and services or affluent citizens can easily afford. Thus, people move to the surrounding areas of the City of Zagreb, while commuting into the city for work. With advancements and increases in transportation technologies, a counter-urbanisation is taking place. It is therefore justified to consider the area of UAZ as an integrated spatial entity and as an integrated development and spatial planning instrument.

The UAZ was formed in 2016 in accordance with the RDA and the City of Zagreb because of its centre and a population of over 700,000. The UAZ consists of 30 local self-government units from three counties: the City of Zagreb, and parts of Zagreb, and Krapina-Zagorje County, i.e. 11 cities and 19 municipalities. The City of Zagreb, the capital of the Republic of Croatia, is also a unit of local and regional administration (county level). Table 12.1 shows data on population, surface, population density, and number of settlements in the LGUs of the UAZ.

The UAZ is located in central Croatia; it borders Karlovac and Sisak-Moslavina County in the south, Varaždin in the north, and the Republic of Slovenia in the west. It provides opportunities for a more balanced development of particular sectors, thereby reducing pressures on the space of the city, e.g. providing incentives for economic activities due to the existence of a significant Zagreb market and

⁷http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_European_cities.

Table 12.1 Number of inhabitants, number of settlements per LGU, surface of LGU, population density

Town (T)/ Municipality (M)	Name	County	No. of settlements	No. of inhabitants	Surface (km ²)	Population density (pop/km ²)
M	Bistra	Zagreb	6	6,632	53.0	125.20
M	Brckovljani	Zagreb	13	6,837	69.6	98.20
M	Brdovec	Zagreb	13	11,134	37.3	298.66
T	Donja Stubica	Krapina-Zagorje	10	5,680	43.2	131.42
M	Dubravica	Zagreb	10	1,437	20.5	70.20
T	Dugo Selo	Zagreb	11	17,466	53.9	323.80
M	Gornja Stubica	Krapina-Zagorje	20	5,284	48.5	108.95
T	Grad Zagreb	Zagreb	70	790,017	641.3	1.23184
M	Jakovlje	Zagreb	3	3,930	35.7	110.02
T	Jastrebarsko	Zagreb	59	15,866	226.6	70.02
M	Klinča Sela	Zagreb	14	5,231	77.3	67.66
M	Kravarско	Zagreb	10	1,987	58.1	34.22
M	Luka	Zagreb	5	1,351	17.2	78.64
M	Marija Bistrica	Krapina-Zagorje	11	5,976	68.0	87.86
M	Marija Gorica	Zagreb	10	2,233	17.1	130.58
M	Orle	Zagreb	10	1,975	57.6	34.26
T	Oroslavje	Krapina-Zagorje	5	6,138	32.1	191.10
M	Pisarovina	Zagreb	14	3,689	145.1	25.43
M	Pokupsko	Zagreb	14	2,224	105.8	21.02
M	Pušća	Zagreb	8	2,700	17.1	158.17
M	Rugvica	Zagreb	23	7,871	93.6	84.11
T	Samobor	Zagreb	78	37,633	250.8	150.05
M	Stubičke Toplice	Krapina-Zagorje	4	2,805	27.1	103.51
M	Stupnik	Zagreb	3	3,735	24.9	150.12
T	Sveta Nedelja (Samobor)	Zagreb	14	18,059	64.1	281.60
T	Sveti Ivan Zelina	Zagreb	62	15,959	185.3	86.11
T	Velika Gorica	Zagreb	58	63,517	327.7	193.81
M	Veliko Trgovišće	Krapina-Zagorje	15	4,945	46.1	107.24

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

Town (T)/ Municipality (M)	Name	County	No. of settlements	No. of inhabitants	Surface (km ²)	Population density (pop/km ²)
T	Zabok	Krapina-Zagorje	17	8,994	35.3	254.57
T	Zaprešić	Zagreb	9	25,223	53.6	470.23
TOTAL			589	1,086,528	2933.6	370.37

Source Author’s calculation based on Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2011)

the recent expansion and/or, relocation of economic activities from Zagreb to the surrounding area (see Fig. 12.1). Additionally, the proximity to the City of Zagreb offers higher social and economic standards (e.g. employment and educational opportunities). The UAZ also provides opportunities for the reduction of intensity of demographic processes such as immigration trends and daily centre-periphery migration.

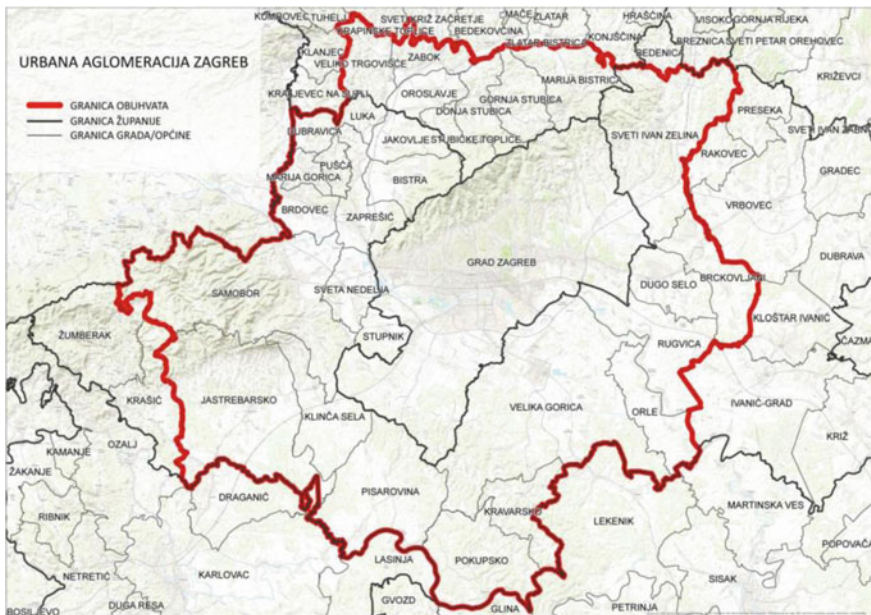


Fig. 12.1 Urban agglomeration Zagreb. Source Zagreb. City Office for the Strategic Planning and Development of the City (2017)

The strategy-related facts relevant to the development of UAZ can be summarised as follows;

- The UAZ covers three counties that also have their county development strategies to consider as prescribed by the RDA. Therefore, when drafting the UAZ development strategy, it was necessary to examine how this strategy harmonises with county development documents;
- The UAZ comprises a large number of towns and municipalities of different population sizes, of different development levels and position (physical/spatial, economic, traffic). All these factors should be considered when developing and drafting the urban agglomeration development strategy.

According to the 2011 census, the total population of UAZ was 1,086,528, which was slightly above one-quarter of the total population in Croatia (25.35%). It is also important to note that some cities and municipalities are not part of the UAZ but gravitate towards it. The average population density of UAZ is 370 inhabitants per km², which is 50% higher than that of the total area of Krapina-Zagorje and Zagreb counties and of the total area of the City of Zagreb, which points to the complexity of a high concentration of people and goods.

For these and many other reasons, creating the UAZ development strategy was a complex and demanding process. An additional effort was required to formulate common development goals, activities, projects, and programmes and to organise and conduct the process of stakeholder consultations. It was a process where decisions had to be made about desired future results, how to accomplish these results, and how success is to be measured, evaluated, and communicated to its stakeholders.

12.5 Planning Scenarios for the Urban Agglomeration Zagreb Future

12.5.1 UAZ in Figures and Facts

This section provides the underlying statistical figures and facts about the UAZ environment, economy, social, and cultural development.⁸ They show the current state of development and represent a starting point for the identification of possible future scenarios. According to the available indicators and standards,⁹ the quality of spring waters is generally acceptable. The most principal watercourse in the UAZ territory, the Sava River, also collects wastewaters from the most significant polluter—the City of Zagreb. The waters of the Zagreb aquifer are strategic water

⁸Information and data are provided by the Zagreb Urban Agglomeration Development Strategy until 2020 (Zagreb. City Office for the Strategic Planning and Development of the City 2017).

⁹Ibid.

reserves, and it is held that they are inherently vulnerable to the largest polluters in the catchment area, from the Slovenian border to Sisak. Lakes are in a good condition with respect to oxygen and nutrient content, although soils are increasingly exposed to contamination from urban centres, traffic, and industrial activity. Agricultural soils are considerably threatened by potentially toxic metals and other contaminants. However, the majority of the land area has no limitations for agricultural activities according to legislative propositions that refer to conventional cultivation, and a large part of the land is also suitable for ecological cultivation. Air quality in UAZ is relatively good; however, the City of Zagreb is the main source of air contamination and, according to the Croatian State of Environment, in the third category of air quality (excessive contamination).

Organised waste collection is provided to almost all the population of the UAZ. However, the data¹⁰ shows that the problem of smaller and larger illegal landfills is present in the majority of the territory. However, for most of the existing illegal landfill locations, remediation activities have started or are planned to move forward through licensed communal firms. Noise and light protection does not considerably deviate from the national average. Although, throughout the UAZ territory all major traffic corridors pass through settlements without bypasses or ring roads, thus contributing to growing noise pollution. The strongest light contamination comes from the City of Zagreb, which could be mitigated by the development and implementation of environmentally and economically acceptable improvements in measures for public lighting.

Economically speaking, there are significant differences among the three counties (the City of Zagreb and 29 units of self-government from the Zagreb and Krapina-Zagorje counties) covered by the UAZ. Indeed, the data show that the City of Zagreb on average records the highest amount of yearly GDP/capita (trends are presented in Fig. 12.2).

On average, in the observed period, GDP/capita for the City of Zagreb is 18.742 EUR/capita (78% above the national average), while in the Zagreb County it is 8.038 EUR/capita (76.3% of the national average), and in the Krapina-Zagorje County, 6.724 EUR/capita (63.8% of the national average). The City of Zagreb is the only Croatian territorial unit that in 2016 recorded 6.6% above EU28 average GDP/capita (Zagreb. City Office for the Strategic Planning and Development of the City 2017).

Recently (based on data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics), the structure of gross value added (GVA) creation for the City of Zagreb shows that business activities related to wholesale and retail, transport and warehousing, accommodation, preparation and provision of food account for the largest share in total GVA (Zagreb. City Office for the Strategic Planning and Development of the City 2017). They are followed by the public sector and defence, education, health protection and social care, and a decreasing processing industry. However, regarding the GVA of the economic sector at the national level, the City of Zagreb has a significantly

¹⁰Ibid.

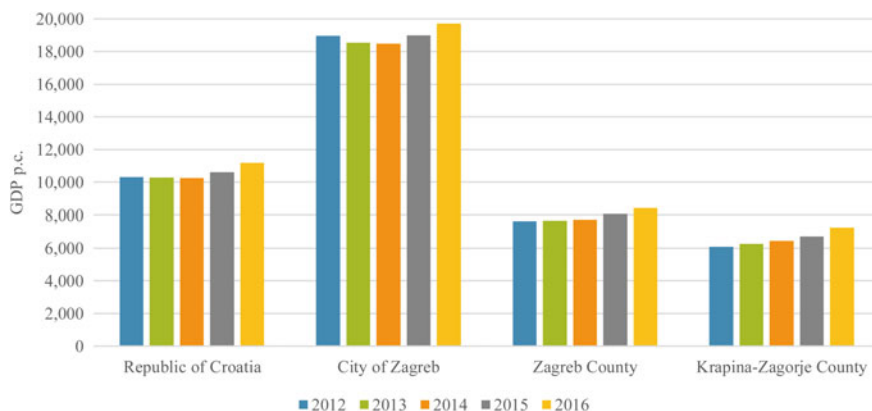


Fig. 12.2 GDP/capita (in EUR), 2012–2016. *Source* Croatia. Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2012–2016

higher share: information and telecommunication (around 2/3 of total GVA is generated in the City of Zagreb), financial sector, professional, scientific, technical, administrative, and other service sectors. Today, the technological capacity of industry in Zagreb has significantly weakened, creating an unfavourable technological exports structure. The processing industry has the highest share of the city's industrial production, followed by electric energy provision, gas, steam and air-conditioning, and, to a small extent, mining and extraction. There is a decreasing trend in the number of craft firms, especially in the traditional and artistic fields, due to a prevailing trend of enterprise disinterest from the younger cohorts of the population. As such, additional investments are needed for crafts and craft occupations promotion and harmonisation of vocational programmes requiring future craftsmen.¹¹ There is one free zone in the UAZ,¹² and 28 units of local self-government (out of 30 in UAZ) have planned or established entrepreneurial/business zone(s). Approximately, 300 entrepreneurs operate within these zones, employing almost 9000 persons. Entrepreneurial activities outside the City of Zagreb have particular relevance for a balanced spatial and regional development of the UAZ territory and wider region.

Tourism is propulsive and one of the most important economic sectors in Croatia. The current trends reflect steady annual growth in the number of visits and overnight stays in both Adriatic and Continental Croatia, highlighting the importance of the sector to the Croatian economy. However, further tourism development at the UAZ requires an effort to be made for improvements in communication and

¹¹Data and information on business, investments, entrepreneurs, and other economy-related issues are obtained from the Zagreb—City Office for the Strategic Planning and Development of the City (2017).

¹²Free zone Zagreb.

networking of tourism stakeholders, better exploitation of cultural heritage, capitalising on health tourism potentials and the geo-transport position of UAZ, as well as attracting internationally recognised hotel and tourist brands. Cultural infrastructure (facilities and equipment) in the UAZ is inadequate and insufficient, lacking modern technological performance and enhanced inclusion into the European cultural space. Pre-school education is hampered by deficient infrastructure and equipment (for regular classes, physical classes, and daily stay facilities) and unequal distribution. Education programmes need to adapt to the announced curricula reform. Secondary school education is mainly concentrated in Zagreb and in the majority of the territory of the LGUs, covering a wide array of programmes. Higher education institutions and scientific-research activities are also concentrated in Zagreb, as the university centre of agglomeration. Future development of tertiary education depends on increasing investments that are presently insufficient and on better allocation of spatial and human resources at higher education institutions to meet the demand for studying in Zagreb, especially from territory and LGUs. There are a large number of sport, cultural, and socially active NGOs, implementing a vast variety of projects, manifestations, and competitions.

12.5.2 From Statistical Figures and Facts to UAZ Future Scenarios

The UAZ development strategy was elaborated in a conventional and participatory manner. Starting from the analytical part, SWOT analyses have been conducted followed by setting of the objectives, priorities, and measures. The final document provides the list of strategic projects and strategic themes/network projects; there is also a list of strategic themes/network projects. A scenario planning exercise of a focus group consisting of urban planning, regional policy, architecture, infrastructure planning, and economic development experts yielded a more imaginative approach. Through a series of facilitated discussions, change factors were identified and grouped with the help of the PEST/EC tool (P—Political, E—Economic, S—Social, T—Technological, E—Ecological/Environmental, C—Citizens). In the next step, a prioritisation matrix was prepared based on two criteria by using numbers from 1 to 5 indicating the importance of the change factor and its uncertainty concerning the future of UAZ in the year 2030. Out of 23 change factors, two were selected as contextual factors and five to serve as an orientation for further elaboration of future scenarios. The two contextual factors—waste management and international migration—were supposed to be mostly independent of each other, or least correlated. They represent the context within which the interrelated impacts of the remaining key change factors, namely digitalisation, food production and supply, tourism, university, and security, were discussed. The framework for the scenario planning discussion is presented in Fig. 12.3. For the two contextual

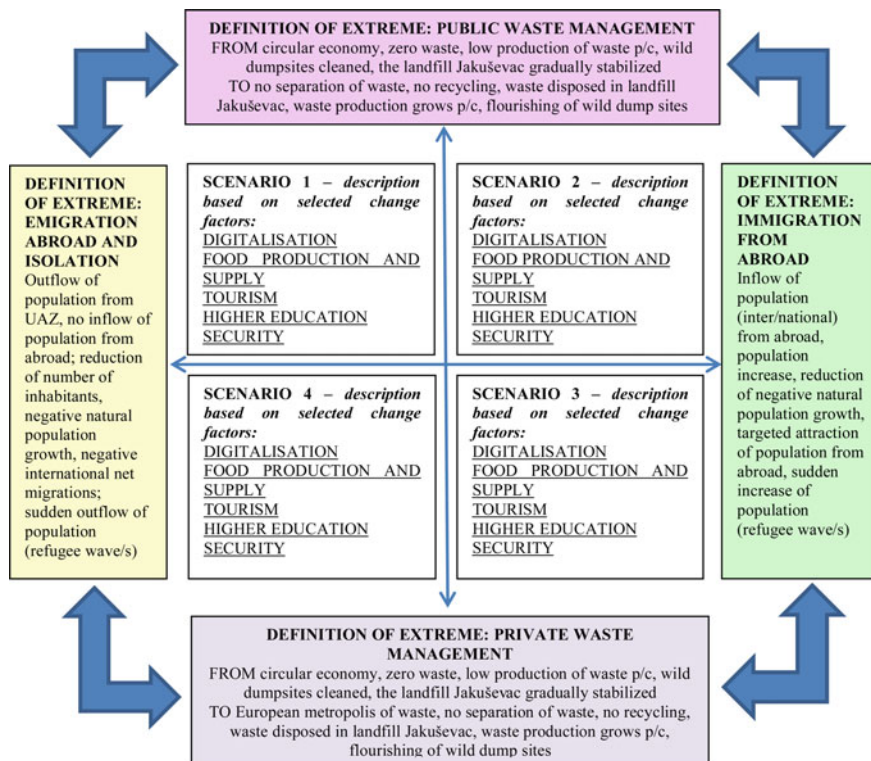


Fig. 12.3 Scenarios for the Urban Agglomeration of Zagreb. Source Author’s elaboration (2017)

change factors, extreme situations had to be defined to enable the discussion on possible contexts and scenarios for the other five change factors.

Before continuing to the elaboration of the four scenarios, a comparison with the strategic objective of the UAZ ITI strategic document has been prepared. The change factors identified as important and unpredictable were analysed in relation to the strategic document prepared for the UAZ that serves as a funding framework used for strategic projects. The ERDF and ESF are allocated for these projects by the ITI mechanism and its objectives.

The selected change factors were discussed and matched with corresponding strategic projects, strategic themes/network projects, as well as with the specific ITI objectives. The results are presented in Table 12.2.

As presented in Table 12.2, the scenario contextual factors are linked with one UAZ strategic project (University campus, for example), as there is expected to be an inflow of students/scholars/teaching staff due to immigration in some scenarios. As waste management is one of the top priorities in any big or bigger city, this topic might become even more exciting and converted into an educational programme. Waste management is also recognised as one of the strategic themes/network

Table 12.2 Relation of factors of change and strategic development framework of UAZ

UAZ—strategic projects	UAZ—strategic themes/network projects	Specific objectives of ITI
Scenario contextual factors: waste management and migrations		
University Campus Borongaj	Waste management	
	Local production and supply of agricultural products	
	Arrangement of public space and facilities	
Factors of change: tourism, university, security, digitalisation, food production, and supply		
<i>Tourism</i>		
Railway connection Zagreb– International airport Zagreb– Velika Gorica	Cultural heritage and tourism, selective forms of tourism	Improvement of cultural heritage (6c1)
Cable-car Sljeme		
Programme Sava		
Greenway–state cycle route no. 2	Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure	
Regional centre of competence for tourism and catering, Zabok	Revitalisation of brownfield locations	Revitalisation of brownfield locations (6e2)
Craft-entrepreneurship vocational centre, Zagreb	Urban renewal and energy efficiency	
<i>University</i>		
Regional centre of competence for tourism and catering, Zabok	Development of high education institutions	Improvement of education system for adults (10iii3)
Craft-entrepreneurship vocational centre, Zagreb		Modernisation of offer of vocational education and increase of its quality (10iv1)
<i>Security</i>		
NEWLIGHT—public lightening system, energy efficiency and traffic safety	Urban security	
	Development of health infrastructure and services	
	Reconstruction and construction of bridges	
<i>Digitalisation</i>		
Integrated transport system in UAZ	Broadband Internet network	
<i>Food production and supply</i>		
	Local production and supply of agricultural products	

Source Authors' own elaboration (2017)

projects in the development strategy of UAZ; therefore, the selected scenario factor is a perfect match. Other matching strategic themes/network projects with scenario factors are related to the supply of locally produced agricultural products and management of public space and facilities, as migrations and waste management (regardless of the direction of change) might call for adjustments of their current operational models. As for the other changing factors, based on the information in Table 12.2, tourism seems to be the most embedded in the strategic framework of the UAZ development, as there are many strategic projects and themes/networks which are focused on tourism aspects, which makes it also relevant for financing through the ITI mechanism.

Afterwards, four different scenarios were discussed, and short manuscripts were written, taking into consideration possible impacts of the interrelations of change factors. For this exercise, imaginative hypotheses based on expert knowledge, experience, and “out of the box” thinking, were applied. The scenarios are presented in Figs. 12.4, 12.5, 12.6 and 12.7.

The four scenarios presented above provide a direction for future decision-makers, but no exact solutions to the possible futures. However, the possibility to work towards a more rewarding future becomes more attainable, as contingency plans can be easier to prepare, and risks can be better assessed, especially when preparing large infrastructure projects with long-term environmental and societal impacts. Targets can be set in accordance with more viable futures based on these scenarios.

12.6 Conclusive Remarks and Future Perspectives

A development policy creates a framework for the future development of some territorial-administrative entities, and implementation is impossible without a plan or programme. Usually, it encompasses various fields of development—economy, social issues, spatial planning and environmental protection, and institutional models. Planning that originates from the culture of spatial planning as discussed by Healey (1997) builds on three primary planning traditions: economic planning, spatial planning, planning and analysis of development policies. These traditions form the basis for modern development planning, at the national, regional, and local level.

Strategic planning is an evident and unquestionable need at the national level; nevertheless, all levels of administration recognise the importance of strategic planning—it enables the identification of the necessary resources for achieving planned objectives and consequently reaching an envisaged future. Planning is generally considered useful as it brings new ideas and usually improves cooperation. The planning process requires the building of consensus on development priorities and strengthening synergy between a myriad of activities implemented by different stakeholders.

<p>DIGITALISATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slower application of digital technologies in the public sector waste management system slows the modernisation of the system and the movement towards a circular economy; • in conditions of non-appliance of digital technologies, failure in waste separation and recycling can be expected, consequently there is more waste and more wild dump sites that negatively affects quality of life; <p>FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a consequence of lower demand for food because of population decline, excess supply of food can be expected; • less need for food imports from outside the agglomeration; • population can produce compost; <p>TOURISM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAZ is an unattractive tourist destination; • existing hospitality business capacities decay; • waste is reduced and utility income is lower; <p>HIGHER EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decreasing number of students leads toward closure of study programmes; • the university can offer programmes to encourage better care for the environment and waste management, contribute to raising awareness on environment issues; <p>SECURITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to negligent waste management, drinking water is not anymore in compliance with health standards, which endangers health safety of the population; • emigration is possible due to endangered physical and material security.
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Fig. 12.4 Scenario 1—European metropolis of waste. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

<p>DIGITALISATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to higher public income, investments in modern technology was possible, public waste management digital technologies are significantly used, we approach a full application of the circular economy concept; • UAZ is a desirable space for living/residing, especially of younger generations since the digital technologies are easily accessible and in wide use; <p>FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased interest in production and food supply due to increased demand, local production chains developed and the local market revived; • strengthening of the economic basis of UAZ (increased revenues, increased tax collection, increased spending); • public waste management needs to respond to changes through constant upgrade of its services; <p>TOURISM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAZ becomes a very attractive tourist destination; • increase of waste - need for more waste collection capacities (personnel, equipment, spatial requirements); • a part of an increased income from tourism business activities should be channelled to constant improvements of the public waste management system; <p>HIGHER EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more students can be expected to enrol in some higher education programme; • students involved in waste management research and commercial projects; • public waste management institution open to transfer knowledge and experience to students; • internship schemes available for students interested in public waste management; <p>SECURITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased risk of security due to increase in number of population, tourists and immigrants; • health security under control since the public waste management system works efficiently.

Fig. 12.5 Scenario 2—affordable Zerowaste digital paradise. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

A historical perspective in the analytical, strategic planning phase is inadequate and, to a certain extent, limits the visionary dimension(s) of thinking about the future, as it largely relies on what is known and foreseeable. Although historical data and past experience are valuable inputs in the planning process, the approach could be upgraded or complemented using scenario planning. Scenarios call for changing the conventional thinking and understanding of the past and present, therefore being different from commonly used planning methods and tools. As a

<p><u>DIGITALISATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> digital technology used in private sector waste management system contributes to cleaner environment and natural resources; waste is effectively recycled and reused in line with zero waste principles; well managed but expensive due to profitability targets; due to UAZ attractiveness for the high-tech digital industry, inter/national inflows of IT industry workers is high; <p><u>FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> larger local demand for food enables the development of local and healthier food production; food related biological waste is minimal, due to higher environmental awareness and incentives to avoid higher waste management costs of biological waste; <p><u>TOURISM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> due to higher environmental and zero waste standard, UAZ is attractive for tourists; even though inflows of people into UAZ is larger, the waste management system remains efficient; fines are large and public information on recycling policy and available in various languages; <p><u>HIGHER EDUCATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zagreb agglomeration is an example for a healthy environment due to exemplary waste management; the waste management company has risk management and crisis response plans/ contingency plans; UAZ waste management system is promoted as a best practice case; international environmental study programmes are offered and very popular among local and international students; <p><u>SECURITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in regular times, high quality waste management ensures high environmental standards - good quality ground waters and health safety, but expensive and might cause poverty; risks - sudden increase of population due to political/economic crises or natural catastrophes inter/nationally, causing inflows of migrators into UAZ, might put the local waste management under pressure negatively affecting prices and environment.
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Fig. 12.6 Scenario 3—Nice Life, But Not for All. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

<p><u>DIGITALISATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> private sector waste management system was on its way to become fully digitalized, efficient and with the objective to be profitable. However, CBA was based on the assumption of growing population, at the same time the system was too expensive and many private waste management companies declared bankruptcy, waste is back to old landfills and wild dump sites are mushrooming, without recycling and reuse of waste; <p><u>FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> food demand and production is expected to decrease due to population decline, some of the local food producers will stop producing food for the local market; food related biological waste is growing; increased export of surpluses to other food-deficit areas; <p><u>TOURISM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UAZ is an unattractive tourist destination; the number of tourist arrivals and tourism industry is falling; <p><u>HIGHER EDUCATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality of staff at faculties declines; university professors leave UAZ for better employment opportunities, quality of higher education programmes will worsen, consequently the quality of entrants will worsen, as well as students' quality of life; <p><u>SECURITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> utility costs are high, poverty is growing; healthcare and social security systems will be under severe pressure due to growing health risks caused by pollution, and as the number of people of working age in society is declining; public expenditures for security of citizens will be decreasing resulting in decrease of citizen security.

Fig. 12.7 Scenario 4—Waste is Back! *Source* Authors' own elaboration

useful tool in the elaboration of future development scenarios, it has also been applied in the Croatian strategic planning practice.

In the context of territorial planning, urban agglomerations and metropolisation processes seem to come back into the development planning focus. The European

Commission has purposefully highlighted this in the latest programming period 2014–2020 and the new ITI mechanism. In compliance with the Croatian regulations, urban areas (agglomerations, bigger and smaller urban areas) have to elaborate and adopt their development strategies document to qualify as the candidates for funds channelled through ITI.

The scenario planning method in the elaboration of development strategies of urban areas in Croatia has been firstly applied in the elaboration of the development strategy of the Zadar Urban Area until 2023. The document is produced in a participatory way. The application of the method resulted in the construction of three scenarios and the selection of the most desirable. The advantage of qualitative scenarios (as in this case) is the possibility of simultaneous representations of the perspectives of a large number of stakeholders and experts, as well as the transfer of information on the future in a comprehensive way (Radeljak Kaufman 2016). The selected “Blue scenario” is further used as a guideline to define the vision of the development and identification of development objectives, priorities, and measures.

The UAZ was firstly institutionalised in 2016 with the City of Zagreb as its centre. The development strategy of UAZ has been elaborated in a participatory manner, and it was adopted by the Zagreb Assembly at the end of 2017. However, a longer-term perspective is missing. In this chapter, the authors have tested the complementary scenario planning method in addition to the already elaborated strategic document. Based on a series of focus group discussions, four different future scenarios of UAZ development were elaborated, with a time horizon set at 2030. The aim was to provide a more visionary, “out of the box” way of thinking about the future than that presented in the current UAZ development strategy. The resulting scenarios range from quite bright to somewhat darker and depressing prospects for the Zagreb urban agglomeration development, which is reflected in the titles of scenarios: (1) European Metropolis of Waste, (2) Affordable Zerowaste Digital Paradise, (3) Nice Life, But Not For All!, and (4) Waste Is Back!. What this approach offers is that the presented scenarios enable an easier preparation of contingency plans and a better assessment of risks, in particular when preparing large infrastructure projects with long-term impacts on society and the environment. Although these scenarios do not provide exact solutions to the possible futures, their significant value is that they give an orientation to future decision-makers, thus becoming a useful development planning tool for the longer term.

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Part III
Episodes of Territorial Cooperation

Chapter 13

Supranational Frameworks for Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning in the Western Balkans



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Abstract The chapter offers a general overview of the most common supranational recommendations and initiatives as frameworks within which countries of the Western Balkans define and implement their spatial policies. By using a comparative approach, the aim of the chapter is to identify specific aspects in which reflection is the highest, as well as to contemplate on the necessity of creating a specific supranational framework for spatial planning and territorial governance for the WB countries. The latter could contain a set of recommendations and initiatives tailored to the experiences, opportunities and challenges of the region. Supranational frameworks, as instruments for better addressing the territorial development, should be created and implemented through the advanced forms of cooperation, taking into account all levels of governance, but especially finding the way to reach the local level. These are, however, particularly challenging in the Western Balkan region due to the small size of countries and the current political and economic context.

Keywords Spatial planning · Territorial governance · Comparative research · Supranational frameworks · Western Balkans

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13.1 Introduction

The region of the Western Balkans (WB) could be characterised as an inner neighbourhood of the European Union (EU), surrounded by EU countries. Although Croatia is geopolitically an EU member state, it is still considered a part of the WB due to multiple similarities and historical legacies with the other countries of the region. The population in the WB is dynamic and lots of unofficial exchanges or exchanges at a smaller scale are taking place. Despite numerous conflicts, especially in the recent period, the WB represents a specific cultural space that is attractive for tourists, but also for investors. There is considerable emigration, but in most cases the connection with the diaspora is preserved which facilitates international exchanges in all domains. Certain specificities of the WB countries can be observed, for example, in natural and cultural heritage and landmarks, in complex links between tradition and innovation, and in complex political structures, especially in Kosovo*¹ and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cooperation, coordination and harmonisation are essential for the overall territorial development of the region. Cooperation implies a process of working together to achieve the same end, and coordination is a cooperative effort resulting in an effective relationship, while harmonisation is the action or process of making something consistent or compatible (Lexico Online 2019). Therefore, it could be said that coordination as the higher level of cooperation implies the process of searching for joint practices or ways of optimal coexistence of different practices, while harmonisation can be the result of cooperation and coordination, but needs some common standards or recommendations. In the terms of spatial processes, territorial development and in particular as regards spatial planning and territorial governance, territorial cooperation is supposed to have positive effects on the quality of life and future development. In this sense, great importance is given to ‘supranational frameworks’, as a set of strategies, agendas, guidelines and charters aiming at facilitating the introduction of harmonised and cooperative approaches to territorial development (Pinnavaia and Berisha, in this volume). These are mostly being transferred as non-obligatory guidelines through the national level and then tested and adapted at subnational levels and sometimes, vice versa. They also imply and anticipate the harmonisation of spatial planning systems and instruments interrupting the logic of path dependency by introducing new approaches and principles. On the other hand, a massive dose of supranational influences carries the risk of uniformity and loss of identity. More precisely, this internationalisation risk is in terms of neglecting specific spatial development challenges and adequate capacities to implement the supranational guidelines.

This chapter offers a general overview of the most common supranational recommendations and initiatives as frameworks within which countries of the Western Balkans define and implement their spatial policies. Its aim is to identify specific

¹(*)This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

aspects, as well as to advocate for the necessity of creating a specific supranational framework tailored to the WB countries. The framework could be used to harmonise planning and governance practices in the WB reflecting its territorial and institutional specificities. In these terms, apart from recognising the WB context and specificities, a comparative approach to existing spatial planning and territorial governance systems should identify: the existing similarities and differences among planning practices and their components (Sanyal 2010); the forms of existing cooperation among different planning systems (Sanyal 2005); the existing harmonised practices which can be the result of policy transfer (Stead et al. 2010; Cotella et al. 2015). Some basic determinants of the supranational framework will then be contemplated.

The chapter is structured in seven main sections. After this brief introduction, Sect. 2 sets the contextual background of the study. Section 3 deals with the preliminary comparative overview of the existing institutional framework of spatial planning in terms of laws, institutions and planning documents. Today, there are very few comparative researches dealing with the territorial development and governance issues in the WB (Berisha et al. 2018). A small contribution in this direction will be given in this section. Section 4 provides an overview of the cooperation activities that have a territorial impact. These are related to the various programmes and projects, which represent a good base for further cooperation. Section 5 illustrates the different forms of supranational frameworks and guideline documents that somehow harmonise and in part address territorial development in the WB. Section 6 advocates for further coordination and harmonisation activities as advanced levels of cooperation towards defining the WB framework for spatial planning and territorial governance. Finally, the conclusion indicates a number of possible directions for future activities, using comparative planning methods and innovative technologies, in order to achieve improvements in the domain of spatial planning and territorial governance with positive effects on the WB citizens' quality of life.

13.2 Contextual Background

WB is the western part of South-East Europe (SEE). The region has, after a relatively stable post-WWII period marked by the one-party socialist regimes in Albania and Yugoslavia, been through a very turbulent period after the fall of the Berlin Wall. At the beginning of this period, Albania started a slow transition towards democratic capitalism, while the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia marked by civil wars began. The starting positions of Albania and the former Yugoslavia were different, but the new countries created within the borders of republics of the former Yugoslavia faced significant transformations and conflicts creating even greater diversity and making cooperation in the region even more

complex (Janku et al. 2017). The cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are particularly specific and complex. In addition, the attempt at economic and political transition began in most of the new WB countries almost a decade later than in other Central and Eastern European countries, which had important repercussion in terms of political stability, economic and social development. It was carried out without a clear perspective and continuous effort to follow international guidelines for spreading both democracy and economic restructuring.

Even if the term ‘Western Balkans’ is widely used by experts and institutional actors, one should keep in mind that the Western Balkans exists as a ‘territorial framework’ only since the start of the so called EU regional strategy of the Balkans. Indeed, Western Balkans was for the first time officially used in 2000 in Zagreb for the EU-Western Balkans summit, to indicate the territory, which remained at the margin of the European Union integration process. This has also been reconfirmed in 2003 during the EU-Western Balkans summit in Thessaloniki. The process of institutionalisation of the EU regional approach continued with the regular EU-Western Balkans annual summits held—in Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Trieste, London, Poznan and Sofia until 2020. Although their path towards EU integration started in the early 2000s, only Croatia has actually joined the EU. Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have currently the status of EU membership candidate countries. Serbia and Montenegro have started the negotiations for joining the EU. Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have the status of candidate country but it is considered as a ‘potential candidate’. Kosovo has not been recognised by all EU countries and WB countries, which makes its situation even more complex. It is anticipated that, by entering the EU integration process, the WB societies are simultaneously reflecting on their interplay between the pursued economic growth model, social values and responses to environmental challenges. However, because of the significant problems such as social polarisation, deindustrialisation, rural exodus due to its underdevelopment and environmental degradation, the question about the adequate capacity development becomes increasingly topical (Dželebdžić and Bazik 2011). In terms of spatial planning and territorial governance, there are certain specificities of the region as well. Although Yugoslavia was a decentralised country since every republic had its own law on spatial planning, the exchanges within the single country resulted in numerous common elements. Meetings of spatial planners were regular and people cooperated in multiple ways; it was the same country and the bonds were quite strong; experts were hired in different parts of the country. Spatial planning was in its initial phase of strong development since the historic meeting of town planners held in city of Arandelovac in 1957 when an integrated approach could already be recognised in discourse (Trkulja et al. 2012). Albania had diverse practices of economic and social planning, moving towards urban planning with laws in 1992 and 1998 and finally to more comprehensive spatial planning with the law of 2009 and in particular since the reform of 2014 (Janku et al. 2017; Berisha 2018).

13.3 Spatial Planning and Territorial Governance in the Western Balkans. A Comparative Overview

Putting the WB countries in comparative perspective is quite a challenge. The initial situation in the WB at the beginning of the transition seemed much simpler with a coexistence of only two national spatial planning systems—Yugoslavian and Albanian. However, the actual situation was more complex. More specifically, within the former Yugoslavia's federal borders, divergence of planning systems created at the level of the socialist republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia) and autonomous provinces of Serbia (Vojvodina and Kosovo) began almost two decades before its dissolution officially started in 1991. Indeed, that the significant divergence of the republics' spatial and urban planning acts became apparent after the mid-1970s and has intensified since the 1980s. The mid-1970s' federal reforms caused additional inconsistencies. The development of sectors resulted in a contradicting and constantly growing legislation, uncoordinated institutions, and a failure to consider interrelated territorial issues and effects (Krstić and Pajović 1987; Dabović et al. 2019). Apart from these (past and for this study incomplete) comparative studies, those presented in the project European Space and Territorial Integration Alternatives (ESTIA) within EU Interreg initiative from 2000, as well as in the Feasibility Study for the 2016–2018 ESPON project Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe (COMPASS) give a better input about more recent trends in the development and convergence or divergence between the WB countries' spatial planning systems and territorial governance. However, their results also do not fit the focus of this study in terms of period, countries and comparison criteria; hence, we will present in Table 13.1, the legal frameworks, planning institutions and types of spatial and urban planning documents as comparison criteria for the WB countries in the post-2000s period. The legal frameworks in the WB countries are all post year 2000, which makes them relatively up to date and adapted to current circumstances. They are not outdated, but it is certain that they still need improvements and continuous updates. The dates in Table 13.1 refer to the original new laws on spatial and urban planning without the amendments, which are even more recent, and most of laws have been amended at least once in three previous years—from 2015 to 2018. One example of need for improvements in the legal frameworks is the still high rate of illegal construction and number of informal settlements in WB countries. It is the topic, which strives for cooperation among WB countries. One important step was the Vienna Declaration on Informal Settlements from 2004 signed by Ministers in charge of urban planning (Mojočić 2011). The institutional framework is specific for every country, or even inside the countries there are some differences, like for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where two entities have different institutional settings (Berisha 2018). The national level is represented by ministries in all countries or entities, but national spatial planning agencies are not present in all countries. Also, the regional level is sometimes absent when regional institutions do

not exist. Differently from the other countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina maintains a very complex and path-dependent administrative structure. For example, in the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the regional (cantonal) level exists and it shares spatial planning responsibility with the entity level.

As Table 13.1 illustrates, spatial and urban planning documents exist at all levels in all countries despite differences and specifics in terms of nature of the plans. Spatial plans refer more to national, regional or metropolitan level plans; but in some cases, they refer to urban areas as well. Spatial and regional plans are more strategically oriented, while urban plans refer often to land-use and zoning, without being restricted to that only. Tools for implementation and monitoring have been developed in Croatia, North Macedonia and Serbia (Živanović and Gatarić, in this volume). Plans for special areas exist in all countries, and they may represent specificity for this region in line with the existing tradition, at least in ex-Yugoslavia.

Apart from the presented comparison criteria, spatial planning in the region is generally characterised by a relatively integrated approach to planning and development, especially at the level of spatial plans, which had since the beginning the inter-sectoral horizontal links incorporated in their structure and content. Vertical links among plans at different levels are assured by the mechanisms of control and existence of different planning levels, which have to be in mutual concordance. The issue of decentralisation and increased role of local communities is important as elsewhere and needs additional efforts in order to improve the quality of spatial development (Brahimi et al. 2013; Mucollari et al. 2013). Participative planning approach encourages the cooperation of citizens and their involvement and inclusion in different activities where they are concerned. Although upwards cooperation is more and more spread due to the promotion of subsidiarity and decentralisation principles, it needs additional efforts and is supposed to be combined with a downwards approach in order to have balanced development. Strengthening of local level has to be accompanied by proper implementation and support from national to local governance structures through building capacities, raising awareness and advocacy (Djordjevic et al. 2013; Cotella and Berisha 2016).

In this regard, the role of civil society organisations in the field is slowly growing and should be strengthened. Historical or newly established organisations are increasingly important in all countries, like Co-Plan in Albania, Palgo Smart in Serbia and Expeditio in Montenegro, but may exist in other Balkan countries. The participation of civil society has been also facilitated and promoted by a series of supranational frameworks which also have impacts on the spatial planning processes and outcomes. It is also worth mentioning that the strategies at macro-regional level in the WB are for the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regions. National strategies of spatial or urban development are rare, although that denomination was in use more widely some twenty years ago, there are numerous sectoral strategies used for the elaboration of plans. As described above, the elaboration of national urban policies is a new recommendation coming from the international level. Among agendas, there are Territorial agendas, the Urban agenda of the EU, the New Urban Agenda. There are guidelines for urban and territorial

Table 13.1 Comparative table of spatial planning systems in the Western Balkans

	Bosnia and Herzegovina		Croatia	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	Kosovo*
	Federation of BH	Republika Srpska					
Legal framework	Law on planning and territorial development from 2014	Law on spatial planning and land-use from 2002	Law on spatial planning and construction from 2013	Law on spatial planning and construction from 2017	Law on spatial and urban planning from 2005	Law on planning and construction from 2009	Law on spatial planning from 2013
Planning institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of infrastructure and energy - National territorial council - National territorial planning agency - Regional council (<i>parlari</i>) - Local council (<i>bashkiari</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federal ministry for spatial planning - Cantonal ministries for spatial planning - Cantonal institutes - Local urban planning departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of environment and spatial planning - Institute (<i>zavod</i>) for spatial development - Regional institutes for spatial planning - Local urban planning departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of sustainable development and tourism - Secretariat for spatial planning and environment - Institute for urban planning - Local urban planning departments - Local development agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of environment and spatial planning - National spatial planning agency - Local urban planning departments - Private planning companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of transport and infrastructure - Local urban planning departments - Urban planning institutes - Private planning companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of environment and spatial planning - Institute for urban planning - Local urban planning departments - Private planning companies
Planning documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National general spatial plan (Albania 2013) - National sectoral spatial plans - National detailed plans for special areas - Regional sectoral spatial plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entity spatial strategy - Special area Urban plans: - Cantonal Urban plans: - Municipal Urban plans: - Regulation plan - Zoning plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National spatial development strategy - National Spatial plans: - Counties (<i>županija</i>) - Special areas - Municipal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National General regulation plan: - Regional - Special areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National - Regional - Special area - City of Skopje - Municipal Urban plans: - General plan - Detailed regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National - Regional - Special area - Local Urban plans: - General plan - Detailed regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial plan for Kosovo - Spatial plan for special area - Zoning map of Kosovo - Municipal zoning plan - Detailed regulation plan

(continued)

Table 13.1 (continued)

	Bosnia and Herzegovina		Croatia	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	Kosovo*
	Federation of BH	Republika Srpska Brčko					
Albania							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – General local plans – Detailed local plans 			Urban plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – General plan – Regulation plan Monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National report – Regional report – Local report 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – For villages – Outside of populated space Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National program – Regional program Monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National report – Regional report 		

Source: Authors' own elaboration

planning, decentralisation and guiding principles for sustainable development (Trkulja and Zivanovic 2016). Apart from these, some other may be added, for example spatial data information systems or participative territorial governance practices.

In addition, the planning activities in the Balkans are influenced by a series of common contextual issues. One example of need for improvement in the legal frameworks is the still high rate of illegal construction and number of informal settlements in WB countries (Berisha et al., in this volume, Berisha and Cotella, in this volume). Despite the attempt to adopt a common strategy concerning the informal development—the Vienna Declaration on Informal Settlements signed in 2004 is an example (Mojović 2011)—illegal construction still represents one of the main challenges for the entire region.

Generally, one can affirm that spatial planning and territorial governance in the WB countries is a highly heterogeneous activity, characterised by a variety of administrative levels and bodies, which hold responsibilities in relation to spatial planning practice, as well as by a number of planning instruments (Berisha et al. 2018, 2020).

13.4 Cooperation Activities with Territorial Impact Within the Western Balkans

Different forms of cooperation among SEE countries were initiated in the past with more or less success. Following the disintegration of the two big empires Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman after the First World War, five kingdoms and one republic appeared in SEE: the Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian and Yugoslav kingdoms and the Republic of Turkey. Cooperation attempts were initiated between the First and the Second World War (Scurtu and Cojocaru 2012). After the Second World War, the cooperation was very weak since big political differences appeared—the dictatorship in Greece, the isolation and policy of self-sufficiency of Albania, Bulgaria and Romania were part of the Soviet Union's influence zone, Yugoslavia was a non-aligned socialist country, and Turkey was a member of NATO. However, following the end of dictatorship in Greece, that country initiated the Inter-Balkan multilateral cooperation in 1976, which took place for the next 15 years until the beginning of the questionable transition in Eastern Europe. Following the years of wars in ex-Yugoslavia, the first SEE political cooperation conference of eight countries took place in 1997 at Crete with the initiative coming from the macro-region itself (Lopandić 2001). Further cooperation initiatives following the 1999 NATO intervention in the FR Yugoslavia were initiated by the EU, giving birth to the Stability Pact for South-East Europe, which was transformed into the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in 2008. The RCC has a wide range of sectoral activities indirectly related to spatial planning.

In particular, territorial cooperation can increase the effects and improve outputs of spatial planning policies and territorial governance, but also help in identifying the WB's similarities and differences. A few forms of territorial cooperation were institutionalised through the EU initiative IINTERREG which was launched for the first time in 1990 and which led to what is currently officially called 'territorial cooperation' in the EU. Three main forms of territorial cooperation are cross-border cooperation, transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation. Cross-border territorial cooperation is clearly the cooperation in border regions from both sides of the border. Transnational cooperation is the cooperation of entire countries or parts of countries in the framework of transnational cooperation areas or macro-regions. Interregional cooperation is cooperation among areas which are not neighbouring in space, but which have common spatial development issues and therefore have common cooperation programs or projects. Very similar to the interregional cooperation is the cooperation of cities, which are always, except in case of conurbation, territorially separated. The inter-city cooperation can have different forms within a country or in different countries. Transnational and cross-border cooperation are present in WB while interregional is not. Those are the forms of cooperation initiated externally, but local initiative for networking and territorial cooperation is rather weak (Table 13.2).

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) in the Western Balkans has started in the form of Euroregions in the 1980s. Euroregions were the form of CBC supported by the Council of Europe. Numerous cooperation projects were set up through Euroregions, very often with a territorial dimension (Petračkos 1997; Todorović et al. 2004). Another form of CBC cooperation took place under the auspices of the EU and its Interreg initiative, first in the framework of the CARDS program from 2004 to 2006 and afterwards through the IPA programs in the subsequent EU budget periods. CBC cooperation areas were forms of cooperation among NUTS3 regions adjacent to international borders. Different topics of cooperation were present, sometimes with explicit territorial dimension like the project in the Serbia-Hungary CBC 'CODEX—Coordinated Development and Knowledge Exchange on Spatial Planning Methodology' or with indirect territorial impact. Transnational projects were realised in the framework of transnational cooperation areas: CADSES, SEE and currently the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy (Table 13.2). In parallel to these forms of cooperation, the twinning of cities is a good way of cooperation, often underestimated. Even though there are examples of twinning between WB cities (Belgrade with Banjaluka, Zagreb with Skopje, Pristina and Sarajevo, Tirana with Skopje, Skopje with Podgorica, Banjaluka with Novi Sad, Novi Sad with Budva and Rijeka, Split with Mostar and Štip, Rijeka with Bitola and Cetinje, Durrës with Ulcinj and Prizren, Kragujevac with Ohrid and Karlovac), it is more usual that these agreements are realised with cities external to the WB.

The New Urban Agenda contains paragraph 96 (United Nations 2016: 17): 'We will encourage the implementation of sustainable urban and territorial planning, including city-region and metropolitan plans, to encourage synergies and interactions among urban areas of all sizes and their peri-urban and rural surroundings,

Table 13.2 Forms of cross-border and transnational cooperation in Western Balkans

Cooperation	Cross-border region or project name	Participating countries
Euroregions	Belasica	FYROM, Bulgaria
	Danube XXI	Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania
	Danube-Koros-Mures-Tisa	Serbia, Hungary, Romania
	Drina-Sava-Majevisa	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia
	Dunav-Drava-Sava	Croatia, Serbia, Hungary
	Eurobalkans	FYROM, Serbia, Bulgaria
	Morava-Pčinja-Struma	FYROM, Serbia
	Nišava	Serbia, Bulgaria
	Prespa-Ohrid	Albania, FYROM
	Stara Planina	Serbia, Bulgaria
Transnational	Vision planet and Planet cense	All WB countries
	Attract SEE and Attractive Danube	All WB countries
	ESTIA and ESTIA SPOSE	All WB countries except Croatia and BiH
	Intemigra—network on the topic of socio-economic change due to migration	Albania
	Arge Donau—transport infrastructure in the Danube region	Croatia, Serbia
	Donauregionen and Donauregionen+	Croatia, Serbia
	Netwet—cooperation concerning wetlands	Albania
	Natural Resources—sustainable development policy in agriculture, forestry, water management	Croatia
	Dataurway—tourism in the Danubian area	Serbia, Croatia
	TICAD—River Tisa catchment area development	Serbia

Source Authors' own elaboration

including those that are cross-border, and we will support the development of regional infrastructure projects that stimulate sustainable economic productivity, promoting equitable growth of regions across the urban–rural continuum. In this regard, we will promote urban–rural partnerships and inter-municipal cooperation mechanisms based on functional territories and urban areas as effective instruments for performing municipal and metropolitan administrative tasks, delivering public services and promoting both local and regional development’.

In the WB, a specific form of cooperation, having urban and territorial planning as a distinct topic, is the cooperation of local administrative units. They have their

association at the level of South-East Europe, which is called the Network of Associations of Local Authorities in SEE—NALAS.² The NALAS is a reference point for the coordination of local administrative initiatives in different sectors including spatial planning and territorial development. Associations of local authorities may have an important role in the transfer of recommendations from supranational frameworks to the local level. The previously mentioned forms of cooperation are mostly seen as comprehensive cooperation activities at different administrative or territorial levels.

The integrated approach to spatial planning implies offering integrated guidance and territorial expression to other sectoral activities (Healey 2006; UNECE 2008). Therefore, in the following paragraphs, some selected activities in the WB are presented for sectors of transport, network of settlements and cultural and natural heritage (Fig. 13.1, Table 13.3). As regards the infrastructure cooperation initiatives, the WB is crossed by four Pan-European corridors defined in 1997 in Helsinki, namely corridors V, VII, VIII and X. European Transport Policy was more intensively expressed from 2001 on the basis of Pan-European corridors. Two studies followed in order to define additional routes: Transport Infrastructure Regional Study (TIRS) and the Regional Balkans Infrastructure Study (REBIS), the South-East Europe Core Transport Network. The South-East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) was established in 2004 in Belgrade. The SEETO Comprehensive Network composed of Pan-European corridors and additionally defined routes is supposed to become part of the Trans-European Networks (TEN-T) upon the accession of the WB countries into the EU.

Cultural and natural heritage are essential for the identity of a certain territory. At international level, under UNESCO, there are World Heritage sites, both natural and cultural, as well as the biosphere reserves of the Man and Biosphere program (Fig. 13.1). The European Union has the Natura 2000 network of natural heritage protected sites, which are already defined for Croatia as an EU member country (Table 13.3). Every country has its own national legislation for the protection of natural and cultural heritage. In this respect, there are 39 national parks (14 in Albania, 4 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 8 in Croatia, 3 in North Macedonia, 5 in Montenegro and 5 in Serbia), 6 biosphere reserves (2 in Croatia, 1 in North Macedonia and Albania, 1 in Montenegro and 2 in Serbia) and 22 World Heritage sites (3 in Albania, 3 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10 in Croatia, 1 in North Macedonia, 4 in Montenegro and 5 in Serbia; two sites are shared by two or more WB countries).

²Associations of local level units in the WB are the following: the Association of Albanian Municipalities, the Association of Cities of Republic of Croatia, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities, the Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of BiH, the Association of Municipalities in Republic of Croatia, the Association of Units of Local Self-government of Republic of Macedonia, the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Republic of Srpska, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia and the Union of Municipalities of Montenegro.

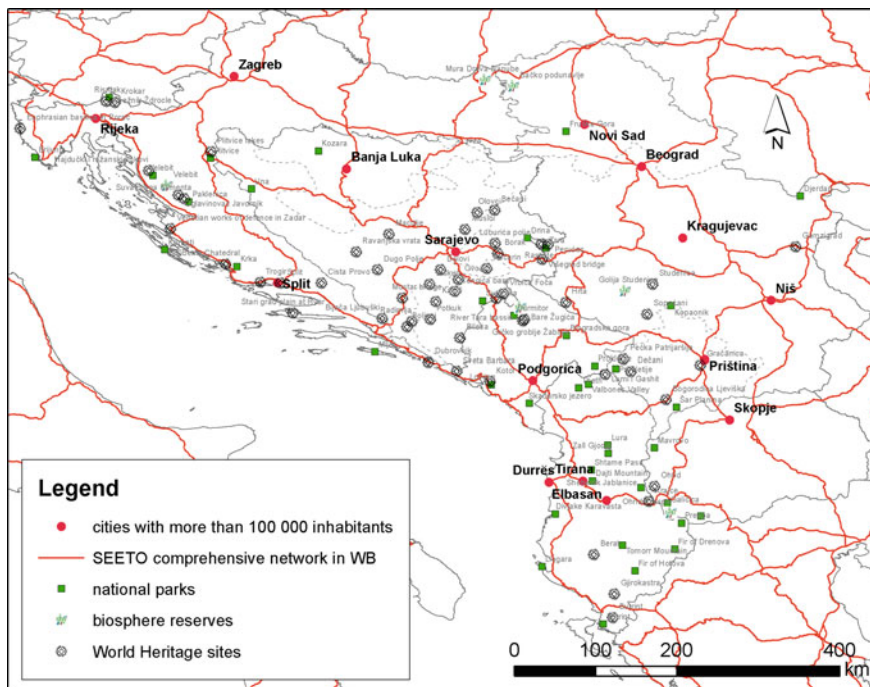


Fig. 13.1 Network of main cities, principle road transport corridors and routes, natural and cultural protected sites in the Western Balkans. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

Large urban settlements represent the nodes for cooperation in the field of urban development which has the strengthened international dimensions since starting with the Leipzig Charter (2007), followed by the Marseille Statement (2008), Toledo Declaration (2010), Riga Declaration (2015) and finally the Pact of Amsterdam (2016) in the EU, but also SDG11 and New Urban Agenda at the global level. Therefore, urban settlements bear the big potential for cooperation in any macro-region. The network of settlements in the WB is characterised by settlements of smaller size with a large proportion of rural population in terms of Europe. Only Belgrade and Zagreb have more than million inhabitants. Polycentric development is very important in the framework of the WB in order to have a solid network of settlements ('Balkanopolis') which is going to be the backbone for regional development. With Belgrade and Zagreb, there are 15 cities having a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants; the others are Tirana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Pristina, Podgorica, Banjaluka, Novi Sad, Niš, Split, Rijeka, Durrës, Kragujevac and Elbasan. Urban settlements are the generators of economic activity and cultural development and exchange if managed in a sustainable way.

Apart from these territorial cooperation activities, there are specific cross-border projects for conflict resolution or post-conflict areas, such as *peace* between Serbia and Croatia, more precisely the cities of Osijek and Sombor, inspired by the

Table 13.3 Institutionalised protection of natural and cultural areas in the Western Balkans

Country	National parks	Biosphere reserves	World Heritage sites
Albania	Shebenik-Jabllanicë, Butrint, Llogara, Tomorr, Lure, Prespa, Divjaka-Karavasta, Dajti, Theth, Valbone Valley, Shtame Pass, Fir of Hotova, Zall Gjocaj, Fir of Drenova	Ohrid-Prespa	Butrint, Historic centers of Berat and Gjirokaštër, Ancient and primeval beech forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sutjeska, Kozara, Una, Drina		Bridge of Mostar, Bridge of Višegrad, Stećci
Croatia	Brijuni, Kornati, Krka, Mljet, Northern Velebit, Paklenica, Plitvice Lakes, Risnjak	Mura-Drava-Danube, Velebit	Dubrovnik, Split, Trogir, Cathedral in Šibenik, Stari grad plain, Euphrasian basilica in Poreč, Plitvice Lakes, Ancient and primeval beech forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe, Venetian Works of Defence in Zadar, Stećci
North Macedonia	Mavrovo, Pelister, Galičica	Ohrid-Prespa	Natural and cultural heritage of the Ohrid region
Montenegro	Prokletije, Durmitor, Lovćen, Biogradska Gora, Lake Skadar	River Tara Bassin	Old town of Kotor, Stećci
Serbia	Fruška Gora, Kopaonik, Šar Planina, Đerdap, Tara	Golija-Studenica, Bačko Podunavlje	Studenica, Stari Ras i Sopoćani, Gamzigrad, Stećci, Medieval monasteries of Kosovo ^a
Kosovo*	Bjeshkët e Nâmuna (Prokletije) ^b		

Source Authors' own elaboration

^aAccording to the UNESCO world heritage list

^bNational park of Bjeshkët e Nâmuna (in Albanian)/Prokletije (in Serbian) has been proclaimed protected site by institutions of Kosovo

Northern Ireland PEACE programme. These projects have special significance for the region and should be additionally considered and implemented (European Union, European Parliament 2013).

13.5 Harmonisation Practices and Policy Transfer via Supranational Guideline Documents

One of the first supranational guideline document, concerning spatial planning was promoted by the Council of Europe in 1983 in Torremolinos. On the occasion of the 6th meeting, the Ministers responsible for regional planning gave an overall definition of spatial planning according to which (CEMAT 1983) ‘Spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards balanced regional development and the physical organisation of space according to an overall strategy’. This definition has shaped the spatial planning discourse in the last three decades, being also an important reference for spatial planning in the WB.

Similarly, the United Nations (UN) in 2015, within the framework the of International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IGUTP)—the first global document which deals with the topic of spatial planning—defined urban and territorial planning as follows: ‘Urban and territorial planning can be defined as a decision-making process aimed at realising economic, social, cultural and environmental goals through the development of spatial visions, strategies and plans and the application of a set of policy principles, tools, institutional and participatory mechanisms and regulatory procedures’ (UN-Habitat 2015: 2). Beside this, IGUTP contains 12 principles to give recommendations and supranational framework globally for urban and territorial planning. The tenth in particular makes the link between urban and territorial planning and spatial planning by affirming that ‘Urban and territorial planning includes spatial planning, which aims to facilitate and articulate political decisions based on different scenarios’ (UN-Habitat 2015: 23).

These two definitions have been mentioned as examples of how international organisations—CEMAT on one side and UN on the other side—can be influential in shaping the supranational discourse of planning. Indeed, they both represent international recommendations that may be used by single countries in addressing general or very specific and path-dependent challenges in the field of territorial development management. What both documents seek is a substantial convergence of spatial planning practice that can be harmonised as the result of the cooperation and coordination of activities, attitudes, knowledge and experience. Apart from those, there is a series of documents that have been drafted and internationally shared by institutions and organisations. In this respect, among a number of spatial planning documents with recommendations published since the first CEMAT Conference in 1970, the document *Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of European Continent*, adopted at the 12th session of Ministers responsible for regional planning in 2000 in Hanover, treats and recommends direct horizontal and vertical cooperation in spatial planning. In particular, this document fosters territorial cooperation at different levels and represents an important reference for spatial planning in the WB countries (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015;

Cotella 2020). In parallel, the EU has developed a series of other documents that seek to provide instruments for a sustainable territorial development in the Continent. The first is the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) adopted in 1999, which has been followed by the Territorial Agenda of 2007, revised in 2011 and its most recent version from 2020. For a better understanding of the EU territorial dynamics, the EU has established the European Spatial Planning Observatories Network (ESPON) which, since 2002 is playing a leader role concerning the territorial monitoring EU by activating a series of pan-European research activities. The scope of ESPON is to explore the territorial and social development of the ESPON space³ and to create synergies within the diverse research communities in the EU. ESPON as an interregional cooperation programme does not allow institutions of the Balkan countries to be directly involved in the process, but this does not prevent them from sometimes covering the WB countries in their analyses (Berisha 2018). One of the first projects that targets also the Balkans was launched in 2006: the ESPON project on *Data and Indicators of Western Balkans*, which had to do with setting of basic territorial monitoring indicators for WB countries. This has been followed, for the period 2007–2013, by the ESPON ITAN—*Integrated Territorial Analysis of the Neighbourhoods*. Even only partially, the recently concluded ESPON COMPASS—*Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe* (2016–2018), produced a preliminary analysis on the spatial planning and territorial governance context in the region (Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2020). The same has also been done by ESPON SUPER—*Sustainable Urbanisation and land-use Practices in European Regions* (2019–2020). However, despite these positive examples, the majority of ESPON projects do not consider the Balkans in their scientific elaboration, which is of course one of the reasons why the regional territorial development is largely unknown.

An important driver of international concepts in the field of spatial planning is the cooperation with UN-Habitat and in particular the current process of implementation of global Agenda 2030. Among the 17 sustainable development goals (SDG), SDG goal 11 aims to achieve sustainable, safe, inclusive and resilient cities until 2030. The operationalisation of this goal is taking place through the implementation of the New Urban Agenda adopted on the Habitat III in 2016, which gives guidelines for urban development in the two decades following its adoption. Two documents from the New Urban Agenda adopted by UN-Habitat have an important role in harmonisation of spatial planning practices—those are the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning adopted in 2015 and the International Guidelines on Decentralisation and Basic Services for All adopted in 2007 and extended in 2009 for the part on basic services.

The coordination of the activities is the task in the framework of implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and both international guidelines which are

³The ESPON space includes the actual 27 EU member state plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

mentioned in paragraphs 85 and 93 (United Nations General Assembly 2016). An analysis, in a harmonised way, was made for the purpose of the NUA through national reports for the Habitat III conference. The Habitat III conference was the third global conference organised by the United Nations on the topic of urban development and housing. National reports were already made for the Habitat II conference which was held in 1996. Among the WB countries Albania, Croatia, FR Yugoslavia and North Macedonia made reports for that conference, and in 2016 for Habitat III, it was done only by Croatia and Serbia. Following the conference in 2016 the focus is on the implementation of the NUA through numerous activities at all levels from global, macro-regional, national, subnational to local. The WB has not yet initiated any common activities in the framework of this cooperation process up to now.

Finally, the cooperation platform in the WB for spatial data infrastructure (SDI)—Regional Cooperation on Cadastre and Spatial Data Infrastructure (RCS) has been established in 2008. Also, following the INSPIRATION project for the WB from 2012 to 2013 other projects with the topics of cooperation in the field of SDI appeared—IMPULS, SPATIAL and MATRA. Those activities at the level of the WB are vertically coordinated with EU activities in line with the INSPIRE directive from 2007 which proposes the general framework for Spatial Information in Europe (Kroiss 2013), but also with the global activities of UN-GGIM (Global Geospatial Information Management) (Agius 2020).⁴ The analysis of the national spatial data infrastructures in the WB countries was done through INSPIRATION project. The outputs of the final report of that project consist of two parts. The first part refers to the harmonisation with the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE) directive through the analysis of the SDI legislative frameworks, state of play and comparison in terms of knowledge and implementation of SDI. The second part refers to coordination on the basis of the analysis to give recommendations for upgrading SDIs in line with the EU requirements. The difference between pure harmonisation and coordination can be observed here. If the harmonisation, with for example the INSPIRE directive, is done without analysis of local context, it might encounter many more obstacles than when it is done following the analysis of the national context and through coordination of the existing and intended state of play. This will be elaborated in the following section.

⁴Some efforts towards the harmonisation of cadastre and spatial data infrastructure could be identified in the early attempt to establish a GIS-based observatory for six Balkan countries which was undertaken in parallel with the ESTIA project named OSPE—Observatory for Spatial Planning and Environment in South East Europe (Stojkov et al. 2000).

13.6 Towards Coordination and Harmonisation as Basis for the Western Balkans Supranational Framework

Until nowadays, the cooperation in the WB has often been seen as *externally imposed* by international organisations and circumstances. This is confirmed by the fact that the main cooperation initiatives have been developed under the umbrella of the EU firstly and the UN secondly, while self-initiated cooperation activities within a regional framework do not exist or are limited to some isolated events disabling the higher level of cooperation, i.e. coordination and harmonisation.

The issue can be raised—who is defining the platforms for coordination and creating standards or recommendations for harmonisation frameworks? In the case of the WB countries, it is often the case that those countries are applying standards, which were created externally without their participation. Bearing in mind that all the countries are officially determined to join the EU, they are harmonising with standards created externally, except for Croatia, which is now an EU member state. Proposed standards can be adapted to the national or local context, but sometimes it is not the best solution. Besides the European Union, the countries of the region are members of the Council of Europe and the United Nations, where they have possibility to participate fully in decision-making and policy creation and there is at least an opportunity to propose elements for harmonisation, which can later be applied in the WB countries. While harmonisation can be the alignment with externally created practices, coordination bears the added value of participation and the internal creation of harmonisation frameworks.

Consequently, the majority of local and national plans in the WB are adopted without taking into consideration macro-regional/transnational or cross-border issues. Even when there are attempts to enhance territorial cooperation and coordination during the elaboration of spatial strategies and development policies, there are no harmonised standards and instruments, which can enable and institutionalise such practices. For example, the last Entity Plan of Republika Srpska called for cooperation and coordination with respective plans in Serbia, but that attempt did not work because there were no modalities available due to the lack of harmonised procedures.

Why is this the case? Part of the answer is that the Balkans and the WB in particular is a very diverse region—culturally, ethnically, religiously, even naturally; hence, it is not always easy to find common guidelines. The other part of the answer relates to difficulties to assure democratic leadership, fragile political situation, persistent economic lagging and some conflicts which are not sorted out completely yet. Also, harmonisation of planning within individual countries is a prerequisite for comparing the planning systems within the WB region. Now, this harmonisation has not yet been achieved. Besides the three comparison criteria for comparative analysis presented in the preliminary overview of spatial planning and territorial governance in the WB (legal frameworks, institutions and planning documents), two others are worth presenting here as potential priority criteria for harmonisation—use of geo-information technologies and participative territorial

governance practices which are already promoted by existing supranational frameworks (UN 2016: 26–27; UN-Habitat 2015: 24).

With regard to the use of geo-information technologies and SDI in the region, it would be beneficial to continue coordinating activities and harmonising the standards, with special attention to the WB context and possibilities. In addition, participative territorial governance practices can be identified at any level of spatial planning, but they are crucial for the local level, which is the closest level of governance to all. The question may be how all stakeholders responsible for spatial development in WB should prepare themselves for the implementation of innovative topics and practices that are recommended in the international documents in order to adapt them in the best way to their local contexts. The only effective way is the coordination of activities, both upwards starting from local level, but also downwards using commonly agreed recommendations. Public hearings as traditional on the one hand and early participation and the use of information and communication technologies as innovative participatory practices can help to reach as many actors as possible.

Cooperation activities coming from subnational entities, non-government or private actors has a specific meaning for triggering any coordination resulting in the harmonisation of practices in order to get better spatial and urban development proposals, solutions and results. Also, the twinning of the WB cities might be extended in cooperation with more than two cities, creating in that way networks of cities, either neighbouring ones or cities which are territorially separated but have common topics or areas of interest.

In order to provide a more elaborate basis for tailoring the WB's supranational framework for spatial planning and territorial governance, there is a need to develop a series of studies, which finally reveal the territorial trajectory of the WB as, for example, a compendium of the WB spatial planning practices—an accurate overview of existing practices and planning legacy. In parallel, it is necessary to develop a regional *urban agenda* for the WB according to the UN agenda but adapted to local circumstances. Both will allow the drafting of specific and more focused programmes of cross-border cooperation using urban and spatial proposals. Also, more efforts should be developed in creating joint spatial planning education programmes, so academics and practitioners could contribute more to creating joint perspectives of solving spatial problems and creating opportunities. This is important as a starting point for any future cooperation initiatives aiming at harmonising procedures and spatial visions.

13.7 Conclusions

Territorial cooperation and some harmonisation within spatial planning and territorial governance in the WB were and are currently present. However, these activities have almost entirely been initiated by some supranational frameworks offered by external institutions and entities to the region itself, such as the Council

of Europe, the European Union and the United Nations. Principles such as poly-centric development, cultural diversity and identity, development of transportation networks, climate action, transparency through participatory planning, digitalisation are presented in numerous laws, plans and documents in the countries. Also, these activities enable cooperation and coordination, even conflict resolutions. However, the harmonisation of laws, of practices, and the application of recommendations in planning documents which could frame the potential supranational framework for the WB is sporadic, not organised or formalised. A certain path-dependency, based on inherited practices which have somehow slowed down the process of convergence to other spatial planning models (Berisha 2018), also makes a good case for tailoring a supranational framework for the region. A step forward in that direction is an informal platform for sharing, like the Territorial Governance in the Western Balkans (TG-WeB), which involves civil societies and experts coming from all WB countries and beyond. The exchange of good experiences among the WB countries should be particularly strengthened. Spatial policies adopted in the WB can be inspired by the global and EU driven concepts, but they should be adapted to local needs and priorities, otherwise the level of effectiveness of plans is relatively low. In this sense, in parallel to global questions, specific problems of the WB countries like illegal construction, big emigration, particularly the brain drain, poor communal infrastructure, low environmental care or inefficient bureaucracy have to be taken into account. In this perspective, international actors and the civil society of the WB should invest more on networks creation and facilitating the participation of civil society and citizens. Networking based on mutual interests is supposed to lead to new initiatives coming not only from the supranational level, but also from the Western Balkan countries and their subnational entities.

Accordingly, besides the cooperation among countries it is very important to intensify first communication and then effective cooperation among local communities. Experience in the form of good practices or traditional knowledge that they can transfer upwards (through subnational regional level, directly or transversally in cooperation with civic or other sectors) to national and macro-regional levels is precious and should be used. Although capacities are often not sufficient, it should not be forgotten and ignored when capacities do exist, but they are underused for various reasons. The role of the NALAS as an association of local communities and of their network is very important in this sense. International Guidelines on Decentralisation and Basic Services for All are one of the supranational frameworks which can contribute to the better involvement of the local level, as well. The support of the local level can be achieved through new legal, financial and institutional proposals and solutions.

Thirty years ago, most of the current WB countries (those that were part of Yugoslavia, so with the exception of Albania) had similar legislation, institutions, planning documents and planning procedures what can still be seen nowadays. Besides the similarities in the sense of harmonisation with the international documents of the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN and similar planning systems, especially in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia, the WB countries have common traditions, history and multiple cultural similarities. Harmonisation in relation to the

external pressures is in any case occurring, particularly in the framework of the European integration process, as well as globalisation. However, the use of supranational frameworks in any region of the world cannot succeed if it is not coordinated with local needs, assets and realities. Supranational frameworks can help us identify more easily common interests and better harmonise the efforts to have an effectively better quality of life. Subnational, national or macro-regional entities actively involved in the creation of macro-regional, European or global supranational frameworks are in favour of their better implementation. The macro-regional level which corresponds to the WB framework has its particular role keeping in mind the size of the countries concerned and the needs that come from the comparative contextual analysis.

A heterogeneous macro-region such as the WB should find the right balance between common principles and prevention of uniformity due to external pressures under the umbrella of the global village (McLuhan and Fiore 1969). Careful and selective harmonisation towards creating tailored supranational framework for spatial planning and territorial governance in the WB might be the best way to go.

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Chapter 14

Cross-Border Cooperation and Adaptation to Climate Change in Western Balkans Danube Area



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14.1 Introduction

Nowadays, most European countries recognize the reality and the challenges caused by climate change and its effects. The EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change (2013c) provides a framework for enhancing the preparedness and capacity

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to respond to the impacts of climate change at all levels (local, regional, national and EU) through three priorities: (1) promoting action by Member States, (2) better informed decision making and (3) climate-proofing EU Action (ECRAN 2015). The key to climate change adaptation is the integration of this issue in sectoral strategies, planning and program documents, as well as in spatial and urban planning. “Mayors Adapt” (2014) is a new EU initiative, supporting European cities in developing and implementing adaptation strategies mostly focused on urban adaptation strategies. Cities signing up to the initiative commit: (1) to contribute to a more climate-resilient Europe, (2) to develop local adaptation strategies within the first two years of signing and (3) to review the outcomes on a biannual basis. This initiative is also open to local authorities from EU candidate countries, and it’s open to Western Balkans countries already affected by climate change (ECRAN 2015).

Climate change affects urban areas in the Danube area of the Western Balkan region¹ and neighbouring countries and has started to impact severely on the lives of people in urban areas and on their economic, health and social situation. As a result, floods, water supply, waste water, or wildfires may destroy urban infrastructure and private property and call for intensive disaster risk management. Additionally, during the floods in 2001, 2002, 2010 and 2013 regional authorities had to organize the evacuation and the reconstruction of entire villages to protect the population and goods against the greatest floods of all time on the River Danube. Climate change also affects the quality and length of the seasons. Since 2007, almost every year an unusual heat wave has placed new demands on the authorities to alert the community. In the last winters, heavy snowfall and prolonged frost caused serious problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Agricultural areas in Croatia were endangered by extreme temperature fluctuations. The sudden snowfall occurring in March 2013 affected thousands of people in Austria, Hungary and Serbia, who were temporarily left without any kind of primary infrastructure. Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria suffer permanently from sudden thunderstorms (IPA II 2014–2020; ECRAN 2015).

Nowadays, there are various disparities between the Western Balkan territories and the rest of the EU, as well as the most developed countries. In this regard, the present study aims to define the state of the art of Context of Adaptation to Climate Changes Westerns Balkans from a spatial planning perspective through the study of the disparities in the Danube area of the Western Balkan region and their

¹The institutions of the European Union have generally using the term “Western Balkans” to mean the Balkan countries that are not members of the European Union, while others refer to the geographical aspects. Each of these countries: North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (*this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence) aims to be part of the future enlargement of the European Union. Croatia, considered part of the Western Balkans, joined the EU in July 2013. The countries analysed in this chapter are Serbia as a non-EU country and Western Balkan countries; Croatia as a new member of EU country and ex WB country; Romania and Hungary as EU members and neighbours of Western Balkan countries. All of them are included in 19 countries, which share the world’s most international river basin—the Danube River Basin (De Munter 2016).

neighbouring countries. In addition, several questions are raised: Have the strategies to adapt to climate change been carried out by governments? Has the realization of joint management in the field of climate and hazards benefited the EU countries? Which are the main critical factors in climate change adaptations? What are the gaps and needs from the public point of view?

The main objective of this chapter is to provide up-to-date knowledge about climate challenge and climate change management. To realize the proposed objectives, the research also covers the territorial governance actions associated with border areas to look for territorial success on vertical (multi-level) and horizontal (among territories, actors, policies) levels. As the analysis shows, the majority of the facilities are not prepared only for the future climate conditions but also for the current climate variability. From a territorial governance point of view, there is much to do at the national and municipal level including the provision of more detailed information on impacts and vulnerability, since potential measures to reduce the harmful effects of climate change and assistance are needed to elaborate proper adaptation strategy at these levels. This chapter also describes the most widespread communication problems. In the beginning, some critical factors can be present, such as: absence of cross-border studies; common objectives; cross-border strategies; deficiency of legislation and management techniques on either side of the border; multilevel governance and lack of citizens' involvement.

Also, most direct and indirect impacts of climate change are of a cross-border nature. Transboundary issues create interdependencies between Western Balkans countries (e.g. the hydrological, social and economic interdependencies in the water sector). For that reason, each country should seek to establish contact with the neighbouring countries to identify approaches for coordination over different political and institutional settings and to provide information about the adaptation process and critical areas with regard to the cross-border impacts of climate change. Current governments and the efforts of other actors might further need to be based on the identification of common threats and mutual risk assessments, according to each country's adaptation objectives and investment in cross-border cooperation. That is the way to minimize the costs of adaptation action and to maximize its benefits by developing common adaptation measures and defining consequences for the neighbourhood.

The present work briefly describes the state of the art related to regions, cities and CBC climate changes in the Danube area of the Western Balkan region and neighbouring countries, as well as analysing, in a simplified way, some adaptation projects and strategies that are already taking place. In the literature and practice of spatial planning, there are not many theoretical references in a comprehensive manner concerning, for example, how cross-border integration and its regulation impact on that area in context climate change adaptation issue. That is hindering the production of cross-border territorial strategies that can efficiently regulate border territories and create synergies between them. Also the limits and advantages of the implementation of cross-border strategies in a way which includes institutional aspects, functional realities and elements linked to differences in spatial planning territorial contexts was analysed through an analytical framework applied to four

very diverse countries: Croatia, Hungary Romania, that are the EU Member States and Serbia, that is a candidate country. This approach was adopted, not only to respond to the issues raised, but also to enable the definition of some principles of governance and spatial planning procedures that can lead the territories of the Western Balkans closer to EU standards. In conclusion, the study argues that the key to adapting to climate change is to integrate this issue at all levels into a sectoral strategy, with documentation of planning and programs, as well as spatial and urban planning, and it points out the need for additional research on the matter.

14.2 Adaptation Process and European Strategies

The EU Strategy on Adaptation to climate change adopted by the Commission in 2013 aims to achieve a more climate-resilient Europe at the local, regional, national and EU levels. Adaptation may occur automatically or can be produced through policy, and may be defined as the current state of climate change (EU Commission 2013a, b, c). Climate change strategies require methodologies that, firstly, identify potential climate change hazards, secondly, identify vulnerabilities in relation to these hazards and, thirdly, develop responses that address vulnerabilities and result in more resilient urban areas (Wilson 2006; Andersson-Sköld et al. 2015; Mehmood 2016).

Climate change strategies need to ensure that the right mixture of mitigation and adaptation measures is achieved and that these are tailored to the specific context (Sheppard et al. 2011). A key input in the development of urban climate change strategies is a strong understanding of the relationship between communities and their environment and the interdependencies within between such systems (Wilkinson 2012; Andersson-Sköld et al. 2015). The development of a local adaptation strategy should have three pillars as a related to vulnerability and risk assessment: “(1) describe the characteristics of climate change unique to the city under study; (2) identify the most vulnerable indicators in the city (i.e. people, places and regions); and (3) assess the city’s adaptation capacity in response to climate change” (Rosenzweig et al. 2011). Also, according to ECRAN (2015 p. 26): “The instrument of environmental and urban politics is a 4 C’s challenge: Combination, Coordination, Cooperation and Communication. Three instruments are dependent upon these challenges, regulative, economic and discursive” (Fig. 14.1).

14.3 Cross-Border Cooperation on Spatial Governance and Climate Change

Cross-border cooperation in this field has a real added value because climate change is a problem that transcends borders. Practical relevance for adaptation includes five levels of cooperation: local, regional, (federal state), national and European.

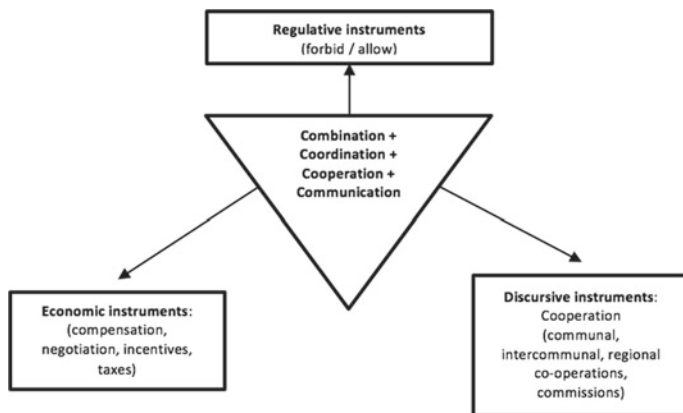


Fig. 14.1 Combination, coordination, cooperation and communication in environmental and urban politics. Adapted from ECRAN (2015)

In theory, cross-border spatial planning is a means to regulate spatial dynamics and the effects induced by the cross-border integration process that impact on territories and the socio-spatial practices of border residents. However, spatial planning at the cross-border level, even though it is promoted by the European Union, “remains a field of action that faces many obstacles and whose definition varies greatly depending on the context” (Durand and Decoville 2018, p. 229).

Territorial governance actions implemented at different geographical levels guarantee vertical (multi-level) and horizontal (among territories, actors, policies) coordination and cooperation as well as participation in order to promote spatial sustainable development and territorial cohesion (Cotella et al. 2015, ReSSI 2017). In the context of European integration, transnational cooperation has emerged to address the *in-between issues* that neither national and regional perspectives (traditionally focused on issues within the boundaries of national territories) nor EU-wide perspectives (since the late 1980s focused strongly on European integration as a whole) gave sufficient attention to. Complex governance arrangements, however, present considerable challenges, as does the limited involvement of sub-national and non-EU actors (Notre Europe 2011, p. 43, ULYSSES 2013c; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020).

In many countries, spatial planning strategies are implemented through regional governance bodies; however, to cope with climate change, existing spatial planning should be abandoned (Cotella and Stead 2011; Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2020). New spatial planning boundaries should be created according to environmental characteristics or similar changes brought about by climate change (Pinnavaia and Berisha, in this volume, Trkulja and Dabović, in this volume). It is essential to construct a cross-border approach to face cross-border issues, insofar as the situation in one country can affect the situation in neighbouring countries. Cross-border territories have benefited from the realization of joint responsibility

and joint management as well the pooling of resources in the field of climate and hazards, an absence of frameworks of reference, concertation mechanisms and collective management tools. Different types of border territories are concerned with climate change adaptation topics and adaptation to climate change, as well as with the prevention and management of technological risks, whether they are rural or natural areas, or urban conurbations. As far as natural hazards are concerned, they represent a bigger challenge in mountainous areas, along rivers, in protected natural areas, coastal and maritime areas.

Beyond sectoral cooperation projects, adaptation to climate change and prevention and management of risks require a global approach at an appropriate scale for the territories (managing mobility with coordinated urban planning policy and transport policy, reconciling economic development and the preservation of nature, etc.). It would be appropriate to establish synergies between initiatives in favour of adaptation to climate change and risk management with those developed for the protection of the environment, innovation, energy, economic development and transport—other objectives for 2014–2020. However, even if border territories would benefit from the realization of joint responsibility and joint management as well as the pooling of resources in the field of climate and hazards, at least in the beginning, complicating factors can emerge (Solly et al. 2020). Firstly, there may be a deficiency of, or heterogeneity of, statistical data accompanied by the absence of cross-border studies. Secondly, there may be a deficiency of knowledge of the actors concerned, of legislation and management techniques on either side of the border, which can negatively influence the lack of citizen involvement.

Since local actors are often limited in terms of their legal, human or financial capabilities, it is therefore important that the actors at the level above should be able to assist them, financially, or with legal or technical expertise. The same should be supported by territorial cooperation programs like INTERREG that finance projects in the environmental field, on the regional level, and the States and European institutions, concerning the regulatory and legislative aspects (ICPDR 2015; ECRAN 2015).

Among European Territorial Cooperation initiatives, CBC focused on adaptation to climate change which requires the full participation of citizens, directly and through the joint action of their elected representatives. Practical relevance for climate change adaptation includes five levels of cooperation: local, regional, (federal state), national and European. Relevance for setting the framework policy has a bottom-up approach; while on the other hand, relevance for implementing specific measures has a top-down approach, having most implementation relevance at the local level (ECRAN 2015). By integrating and connecting adaptation with another spatially relevant issue, it could be much better communicated to the public. This communication at the local level is about particular adaptation measures, whose suitability is based on the local circumstances and cannot be generalized (Priemus and Davoudi 2016).

For this and many other reasons, urban planning activity should move towards a progressive adaptation of its instruments and process to the new circumstances that climate change is bringing. Developing adaptation strategies in an urban area can be

an extremely complex and challenging process, but, as Wilson (2006) notes this is economically convenient. Indeed, while there may be financial costs associated with building climate change considerations into planning processes and systems, the cost of taking early action should be much less than responding to climate change impacts as they happen or retrospectively.

Increasingly, climate change is a matter of strategic urbanism—global cities and those with specific vulnerabilities. Indicative in this regard is that climate change will affect how we plan cities and adaptation may require extreme planning action (Campbell 2006; ESPON Climate 2013a, b, c). An initial failure in understanding the spatial and climate contingences, without taking into consideration the climate factors, creates an incomplete platform for identifying and consequently promoting solution-based development. In anticipation of change, short-term planning can be an effective polygon for the development of climate-change measures at the immediate level (Maruna et al. 2011). But the short-term planning process itself does not take into account climate change projections, nor can they be found in higher-order plans (primarily General Urban Plans). This is particularly pronounced in the initial planning phase where, when collecting data on the state of the environment, changes in climate factors are not considered at all (Campbell 2006; Maruna et al. 2011). On the basis of the collected data, the limitations of the area and the development potentials are analysed. A good information basis in planning is an essential step on the basis of which further development goals are defined and a solution is developed.

14.4 Territorial, Regional and Intergovernmental Cooperation in the Field of Climate Change

All of the above-mentioned large-scale activities involving several countries receive funding from the EU. In addition, European policies already help address some of the transboundary issues associated with climate change. The climate change policy and environmental policy in the region is also influenced by the policies and directives of the European Union, not only in member countries but in neighbouring countries as well (Cotella et al. 2016). Various agreements and cooperation efforts related to environmental policy exist between the countries located in the Danube area of the Western Balkan region. The European Union regards climate change as a serious hazard to its citizens. Therefore, the EU adopted its first policy document on adapting to the impacts of climate change called Green Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change (2007) and developed a White Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change, which is an official set of policy proposals, adopted by the EU Commission (2009).

The main EU policy document on adaptation is the Strategy on adaptation to climate change (EU Commission 2013b). The Strategy has three main objectives (European Commission 2013a, b): (i) comprehensive adaptation by the Member

States, through National Adaptation Strategies; (ii) inform decision making through EU-funded research programmes, like Horizon and the EU platform Climate-ADAPT; (iii) integration adaptation to climate change measures in the key sectors of EU policy.

The white Paper “Operationalizing knowledge on and for societal transformations in the face of climate change” (EEA 2019) also has been developed by the JPI Climate Action Group “Enabling Societal Transformations in the Face of Climate Change” to provide an overview of the research priorities for future societal transformations to face climate change.

As for the international context of the countries in the Western Balkan Danube area, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the main treaty concerning climate change action on the international level. It considers what can be done to reduce global warming and to cope with unavoidable temperature increases. Parties that have also signed the Kyoto Protocol, which is a legally binding international agreement linked to the UNFCCC that commits industrialized countries to stabilize their greenhouse gas emissions, have to submit national communications on the status of implementation (ESPON Climate 2013a, b, c; ICPDR 2015). Although the vital importance of adaptation is acknowledged by the UNFCCC, it mainly focuses on least developed countries of the world in terms of provision of support in their adaptation efforts.

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (CFC 2003) represents the only intergovernmental cooperation instrument focusing exclusively on the Carpathian region itself. The objective of the CFC is to achieve sustainable development in the Carpathians. It has seven signatory countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine). The CFC could serve as a framework for cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination and would be as an ideal instrument to develop a united, comprehensive regional effort on adaptation to climate change in the Carpathians.

No intergovernmental cooperation agreements exist that focus specifically on the impacts of or adaptation to climate change in the Danube-Carpathian region. At the same time, there are two main areas of intergovernmental cooperation related to environmental issues that can be connected to climate change adaptation. These are cooperation agreements related to water management and the sustainable development of mountain areas. Both issues are connected to climate change, as both rivers in the region and mountain areas will be impacted by climate change, and therefore, management and sustainable development of these areas must take climate change into consideration. There are cooperation agreements between countries on water management issues and environmental protection in the Danube-Carpathian region. These include the Danube River Protection Convention (1994) implemented by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR 2015), the Tisza River Basin Memorandum, the Tisza Water Forum, the Tisza Environmental Program and Tisza River Basin Sustainable Development Program. At the same time, the effectiveness of these agreements has been criticized as a result of few improvements in the environmental situation.

Several projects conduct research on the application of risk assessment methodologies in the Danube basin and other areas of southeast Europe that are seriously threatened by meteorological and hydrological hazards. One of them is SEERISK—Joint Disaster Management risk assessment and preparedness in the Danube macro-region, which has been funded by the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme. In sum, it is a collaborative project that has conducted research into the application of risk assessment methodologies in the Danube basin and other areas of southeast Europe that are seriously threatened by meteorological and hydrological hazards. It represents a good example of European cooperation in applied science and is a model of how collaboration between institutions and countries can reduce a seemingly intractable problem to something that offers solutions and methodologies for making Europe safer.

14.5 Materials and Methods

The present research required the use of several methods throughout the research, including indirect and direct research methodologies and tools. Therefore, the authors dedicated a significant amount of time and attention to the design of the methodological framework. The methodology was divided into four main phases (Fig. 14.2), ending with the identification of the critical factors and their influence on the creation of a transnational climate disaster management system (Fig. 14.2). The phases are as follows: data collection, methodological framework, and case study selection, case study analyses and, lastly, identification of critical factors and their influence on the creation of a transnational climate disaster management system. Contextually, the data for the study was collected through previous analysis of the selected sites, by analyzing the process of planning of each case study, to identify the most relevant issues that should be answered throughout the present study. During the literature review, it was possible to cover a range of issues,

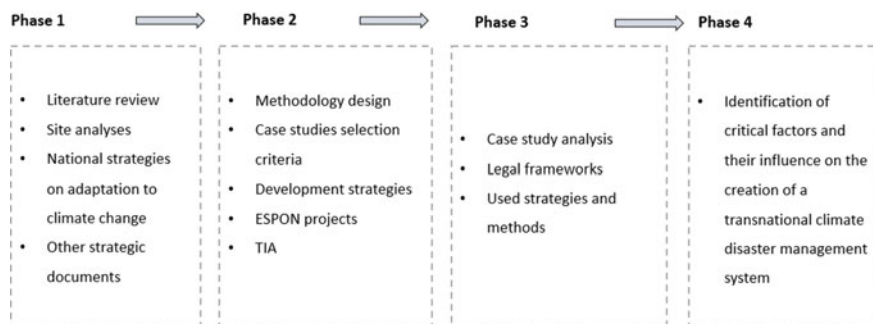


Fig. 14.2 Methodology scheme

considering not only the state of the art regarding the EU integrative CBC process, the multi-level governance but also the climate change issue and the inherent strategies to face it.

A Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) was performed—based on the information/data available and on the existing literature. The TIA enabled the policies and strategies that were implemented in the study areas to be evaluated. This typology of analysis enables the territorial governance and spatial governance to be assessed with some rigor (Medeiros 2015; Castanho et al. 2017a, b; Loures et al. 2018; Vulevic et al. 2020). Furthermore, the results were confronted with the previously identified 14 critical factors to achieve territorial success (Castanho et al. 2019). Thus, the authors were able to identify which factors should be considered to develop new spatial planning principles and approaches towards sustainable development, territorial success and intergovernmental cooperation which may allow better integration and coordination of climate adaptation strategies and action plans for the Danube area of the Western Balkan region and their neighbour countries.

14.6 National Strategies on Adaptation to Climate Change

In order to avoid and reduce damage related to the negative impacts of climate change, countries in the Danube Western Balkan region should develop adaptation strategies and action plans. Statistically, Romania is the country most affected by this phenomenon, with the highest number of regions with more than 9 major flood events taken place in between 1998 and 2009. Hungary, Croatia and Serbia may also be considered as countries with important exposure to a high number of major floods. Precautionary policies and measures are important, as they contribute to adapting to climate change in an effective and cost-efficient way. Some adaptation measures even prove beneficial in the absence of climate change. According to the European Commission's Green Paper on adaptation to climate change, anticipating potential damages and minimizing threats by taking early adaptation action will result in clear economic benefits and even contribute to gaining competitive advantage (European Commission 2009).

At the same time, it has been recognized that the majority of adaptation actions will have to be undertaken at the local, regional and national level, as the impacts of climate change will arise at the local and regional levels. Anyway, according to the principle of integration, adaptation policy should be integrated with development and cohesion policies at the level of the EU.

A national strategy for combating climate change needs to be developed and implemented in line with the expected EU 2030 climate and energy framework. Furthermore, integration of relevant climate change issues into the national development strategies is also needed. In the area of mitigation of climate change, there is a need to strengthen the institutional capacity to design, implement and monitor mitigation policies and measures, with particular attention to greenhouse

Table 14.1 Status of national climate change strategies and action plans

	WBs countries		Neighbouring countries	
	Croatia*	Serbia	Romania*	Hungary*
National climate change strategy	No, but in progress	No, but intention to develop it	Yes	Yes (2008–2025)
Adaptation section included	Yes	Yes (only agriculture and forestry)	ND	Yes
Action plan for implementation	In progress	ND	ND	Currently being develop
Separate strategic document on adaptation	In progress	ND	Yes, currently undergoing public consultation	Yes

*EU countries, *ND* no data

gas (GHG) emission reduction activities. More particularly, a system for economy-wide and systemic data collection on greenhouse gas emissions needs to be developed and implemented to comply with the EU requirements for monitoring, reporting and verification.

The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) is the main instrument for the implementation of the National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCC) and establishes how the implementation progress is to be reported. The NAPCC assigns tasks and responsibilities for every stakeholder institution and identifies the main actors for each specific action and relevant task. The NAPCC provides clear deadlines for the actions that need to be implemented and identified.

Some countries in the Western Balkans area have also already developed or are currently in the process of developing national climate change strategies and action plans (see: Table 14.1). Romania and Hungary, for instance, have the most developed climate change policies, while there has already been an indication that Serbia as a non-EU member state is ready to develop climate change strategies (CEU 2008), ECRAN Report (2015).

14.6.1 Croatia

The strategy on adaptation to climate change in the Republic of Croatia for the period until 2040 with a view to 2070, is in progress and will focus on several sectors such as hydrology and water resources, agriculture, forestry, biodiversity and natural ecosystems, coastal zone management, tourism as well as human health. The strategy should have integrated adaptation measures into sectoral development plans and strategic documents and a further elaboration of adaptation measures in the Action Plan.

In this view, it is expected that spatial planning and infrastructure planning (national, regional and local levels) should include the anticipated impacts of climate change. Also the revision of national strategies and planning documents should ensure revised part climate-proof. Besides that, a series of local policy documents for Zadar and Zagreb regarding adaptation to climate change exist and could be good practice examples for other cities in Croatia, which can also be inspired by a lot of regional and local adaptation strategies and plans already adopted by other EU Member States. Among legislation initiatives in the field of climate change, the Air Protection Act (OG 130/11 and amendment of 47/14) is certainly one of the most important (EEA 2016a).

The importance of climate change is also recognized by the sustainable development strategy (SDS) of the Republic of Croatia (OG 30/2009) which recognizes adaptation to climate change as one of main preconditions for achieving sustainability, as well as the overall objectives of SDS.

Also the Water Act and relative amendments (OG 153/09, 130/11, 56/13 and 14/14) prescribe the obligation to consider climate change within the process of development of flood risk management plans and the river basin management plan.

14.6.2 Hungary

Since the beginning of the 2000s, Hungary has adopted two National Climate Change Strategies, in 2008 and 2013, respectively. The first Hungarian National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS) for the years 2008–2025 has been developed by the Hungarian Ministry of Environment and Water and was adopted in 2008. The NCCS contains an extensive chapter on both mitigation and adaptation and identifies key objectives and actions to be implemented for 2008–2025 in order to deal with the spatial and social consequences of climate change.

The Climate Change Act 2007 (Act LV) based on the implementation framework of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, created a framework for building Hungary's ability to adapt to climate change. The law also required that the Hungarian Government adopted the National Climate Change Programmes (NCCP) every two years, which set out the main objectives and measure to take against climate change. In this regard, the first NCCP was approved for 2009 and 2010 and reviewed a year later, in 2011 (EEA 2016b).

The new National Adaptation Strategy of Hungary was adopted by the Hungarian Parliament in 2016 as part of the second National Climate Change Strategy (2013–2025, with an outlook to 2050), which also contains the review of the first National Adaptation Strategy. The New Strategy also contains a National Decarbonisation Roadmap, a National Adaptation Strategy and a Climate Awareness Plan.

14.6.3 Romania

The first National Climate Change Strategy, drawn up in 2005 and approved by the Governmental Decision (no 645/2005), was related to the 2005–2007 period. Climate change adaptation issues were highlighted separately in the chapter “Impact, Vulnerability and Climate Change Adaptation”, which briefly detailed the effects of climate change adaptation on the following sectors: agriculture, forestry, water management and human settlements.

In July 2013, the Romanian Government adopted the second Romanian National Climate Change Strategy (2013–2020) through the Governmental Decision no. 529/2013, regarding the post Kyoto objectives, targets and actions for mitigation and adaptation. The Adaptation component from the National Climate Change Strategy 2013–2020 aims to provide an action framework and guidelines to enable each sector to develop an individual action plan in line with the national strategic principles. The adaptation component addresses 13 sectors: industry; agriculture and fisheries; tourism; public health; construction and infrastructure; transport; water resources and flood protection; forestry; energy; biodiversity; insurance; recreational activities; education and enable each sector to develop an individual action plan (EEA 2016c).

In parallel to these two documents, Romania has adopted a series of other strategies or action plans which are: (i) the National Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the medium and long term (GD no. 846/2010); (ii) the River Basin Management Plans (for the 11 River Basins of Romania) elaborated by the National Administration “Romanian Waters” (2009); (iii) the Master Plan for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Romanian Black Sea Coast (2011); (iv) the National strategic guidelines for the sustainable development of disadvantaged mountain area (2014–2020).

In October 2016, the Romanian Government has adopted the new National Climate Change Strategy which was the result of the cooperation with the World Bank. This new strategy was approved by the G.D. no. 739/2016 for the National Climate Change Strategy and growth economy based on low carbon and the Climate Change National Action Plan on 2016–2020, government decision which repealed the G.D. 529/2013.

14.6.4 Serbia

The Republic of Serbia is a party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol since 2007.² This was an important step towards the recognition of the role of climate change within the country’s territorial

²The law ratifying the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—Official Gazette of RS, 88/07 with the status of a “No Annex I Party”.

development approach. Apart from that, only several years later, Serbia started to think about adopting a Climate Change Strategy. This was possible thanks to a project funded by the European Union through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II 2014–2020). In 2015, the drafting started of the first Climate Strategy and Action Plan, which was coordinated by the Ministry of Environmental Protection. The strategy establishes a national cross-sectoral strategic and policy framework for climate action in Serbia in compliance with international obligations and pledges on greenhouse gas mitigation, in particular with the Paris Agreement (2015) and the EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework.

Analyses conducted for the purposes of the Strategy include further definition of the precise activities, methods and implementation deadlines (ECRAN 2015). Even before the start of the first strategy on climate change, in Serbia the draft of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS 2007) identified a series of strategic documents which include measures and consideration concerning climate change. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the Strategy for the Implementation of Clean Development Mechanisms and the National Strategy, as well as the harmonization of the legislation with regard to Climate Protection change (related to greenhouse gas emissions). The latter in particular should deal with mitigation and adaptation measures related to climate change.

In Serbia, the relevant development-oriented local planning documents (concepts, strategies, programs) consist of the following sequence of steps: situation/status analysis, SWOT, overall objectives, development targets, interventions and projects. Impact analysis, in particular the kind focusing on environmental impact is still not that widespread. The lack of environmental consideration of development initiatives shows how local consequences of climate change are not a prominent topic in these planning documents. The impacts of climate change appear in the local regulatory planning documents only indirectly and with considerable delays. The process of amending land use plans requires a lot of time.

A significant change in relation to the problem of climate change is made by the National Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 (Dulic and Stojkov 2010; Maruna et al. 2011). As the plan of a higher spatial level, based on which the plans of a lower spatial level are further elaborated, it establishes the basis for changing the planning system in Serbia. However, the suggested system changes, as well as assuming obligations from this plan at lower planning levels, are a long-term process. The theme of adaptation to climate change is still viewed as a *finesse*, especially in circumstances of unadjusted planning practice with new market demands and the dominance of elementary problems in the planning and construction system. In full knowledge of these facts, the City of Belgrade developed the Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan and Vulnerability Assessment (2015) within the regional project “Climate Change Adaptation in the Western Balkans”, implemented by the German International Cooperation Agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit—GIZ).

14.7 Discussion

Challenges and needs for cooperation, as well as identified critical factors for cooperation and communication for climate change adaptation, are similar in the Danube area of the Western Balkan region and neighbouring countries (Table 14.2). They include the lack of transnational strategies and action plans and other targeted problems (low capacities, budgeting barriers, lack of legislative issues, need to raise awareness, lack of educated professionals and common cross-border strategies), which have a negative influence on the creation of transnational disaster management systems in order to limit the damages of the occurring risks.

Concerning any decision-making process, uncertainty and knowledge gaps are particularly emphasised as a challenge when working on climate change adaptation. The quality of the information on which the assessments are based as well as existing knowledge gaps needs to be made explicit. Researching the exchange of good practice and social learning can help reduce the lack of knowledge regarding the climate change adaptation process in the Danube area of the Western Balkan region and neighbouring countries. Climate change considerations must also be integrated into sectorial policies, plans and projects. Providing sufficient funding for the implementation of climate change strategies and action plans is an important aspect to be taken into account (CEU 2008; Castanho et al. 2017a; ESPON Climate 2013a, b, c; ESPON ReSSI 2017).

Table 14.2 Identified critical factors in cooperation and communication for climate change adaptation in the Danube area of the Western Balkan region and neighbouring countries

Countries	Critical factors												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Croatia	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	0	X	X	0	X
Serbia	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	X
Romania	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	0	X	0	0	X
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	0	X

1 Public Awareness; 2 Informing the public; 3 Deficiency of knowledge about climate change; 4 Deficiency of finances; 5 Deficiency of organized education; 6 Legislative issues; 7 Deficiency of experts; 8 Multilevel governance; 9 Young and talented people magnet; 10 Common objectives and cross border strategies; 11 Publishing regulation for urban planners; 12 Citizen involvement; 13 Provide political support

Sources Adapted from ECRAN Report 2015. (X)—Major influence; (0)—Minor influence (authors)

14.8 Conclusions and Future Perspectives

Transnational and cross-border initiatives can generate coordinated policies for international reaction to the occurrence of different types of risks. The case of cooperation in the Danube area of Western Balkan region draws attention to the importance of having common policies when dealing with climate change. Cooperation also means that the climate change adaptation abilities already developed in some parts of the Western Balkan Danube region can serve as examples of best practice for the rest of the area. This transferring of knowledge in the fields related to climate change adaptation can be considerably enhanced by governance actions making territories more resilient to unpredictable natural events. From a spatial planning perspective, it is possible to conclude that the development-oriented documents at local level need to take into account and incorporate the concept of climate change and conscientiously formulate investment projects with regard to function, location, capacity, energy consumption with a thorough general and local knowledge of climate change.

Climate change considerations must also be integrated into sectoral policies, plans and projects. Providing sufficient funding for the implementation of climate change strategies and action plans is another important aspect to be taken into account (Valkenburg and Cotella 2016). Lack of systematic planning in response to climate change impact will lead to increased costs for adaptation measures. Anticipatory strategies and plans including climate change projections must be continuously developed to ensure the adaptation of urban structures to mitigate the impact of a changing climate on the urban living environment. This has been recognized by the Serbian Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (2015) as follows:

Rising temperatures and weather extremes like floods and storms could be detrimental to the quality of life in Serbian towns—these are all challenges we have to face. Our towns must be prepared to cope with the effects of climate change as structures and the urban living environment are especially vulnerable. At the same time, well-functioning towns and cities are among the most important prerequisites for sustainable economic development (Report: Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2015, p. 6).

In Serbia, current documents focus specifically on flooding and groundwater and some of them are about natural hazards in general. Some local plans have a wider approach and include manmade hazards as well. Plans mention the concept of climate change, but they deal with the issue in the general introduction and mention climate change, which require a new strategy as the cause of changes (Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan and Vulnerability Assessment 2016).

To conclude, climate change is challenging for territories because its unpredictability, borderless and multidimensional impacts (environmental, economic and social). Apart from some positive aspects, the Danube area of the Western Balkan region seems to be widely unprepared to deal with climate changes since it requires different forms of coordination (i.e. technical, political and social), which affects the

way in which each country deals with the phenomena and measures taken. Conversely, the study suggests it is important to start thinking about climate change adaptation measures as the way to overcome borders and to operate in a transnational dimension which may allow a better integration and coordination of strategies and action plans.

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Chapter 15

The Role of Cross-Border Territorial Development. Evidences from Albania



Luca Pinnavaia  and Erblin Berisha 

Abstract Since the beginning of the European integration process, cross-border cooperation has become pivotal to any European Union (EU) programme. In the last thirty years, the Western Balkan countries have been targeted by several EU cross-border and transnational initiatives aiming at a better regional and spatial integration. The scope of this chapter is to show if and how cross-border cooperation (CBC) is contributing to a better spatial integration of Albania with the rest of the region and the EU member states. The chapter discusses the importance of CBC as a new way of exploring the transnational dimension of territorial development by shedding more light on its constitutive dimensions (political, economic, socio-cultural and territorial). After a brief discussion on the role of European Territorial Cooperation, the chapter deals with identifying the forms and tools of cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkan Region that have been adopted. In its core part, the contribution focuses on cross-border cooperation and territorial development experiences in Albania by illustrating how cross-border cooperation is becoming important in softening country borders and contributing for a better EU spatial integration.

Keywords Border regions • Cross-border territorial development • Western Balkan region • Albania

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15.1 Introduction

The interpretations of cross-border territorial development (CBTD) fluctuate between being included within the many cooperation activities influenced by the European Union (EU) political project in general, and the specific effects of programmes and experiences that involve regions and areas of EU and non-EU members. Many scholars have been committed to trying to explain the sense, functions and relevance behind the different interplays among cross-bordering cooperation in the field of territorial development (among others see Durand and Decoville 2018). The main reason can be found in the emerging importance of functional areas across borders, as a consequence of the gradual opening of national borders and the push to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, as well as solidarity between the member states (Durand and Decoville 2018). Bearing in mind that the full integration of the Western Balkans Region (WBR¹) is identified as a crucial steps for the future of the EU (European Commission 2017); the development of cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes and activities involving the regions is intended to address issues of mutual relevance, producing benefits in terms of political understandings, economic and social prosperity and, more in general, increased integration (European Commission 2017).

By exploring CBC, we intend to stress the necessity to examine more in depth the territorial dimensions of the collaboration among the Western Balkans' bordering areas, throughout the lens of cooperation instruments and programmes. In order to give an adequate evaluation to the extent and character of the cross-border territorial development within the WB's territories, it is important to have in mind three main correlated and equally important issues:

- The Western Balkan's socio-economic transition process. The transition has been characterised by decades of decline in the standard of societal life and of economic growth; that period has been followed by different levels of democratisation in the countries (Petričušić 2005) and heterogeneous development attitudes. The various transformation that responsible for changing the economic and social life of Western Balkans' countries are still active and not following a univocal route (Berisha and Cotella, in this volume).
- The ongoing process of Europeanisation and EU integration. From a political point of view, the process of European integration of the WBR is a fact, strongly re-affirmed with the strategy adopted by the EU Commission in 2017 that highlights the integration process as a geostrategic investment for the future of the EU (European Commission 2017).
- Territorial effectiveness of the spatial actions and arguments within the various CBC programmes. As Perkmann (2003) argues the CBC programmes tend to create the nurturing context for regional and local authorities to cooperate,

¹For the purpose of this article, the Western Balkan Region includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

within areas that are characterised by functional interdependencies and homogenous features, with a certain degree of strategic capacity.

Aiming at shedding light on these issues, after this brief introduction, the second section of the chapter explores the meaning of border regions by advancing four analytical categories, which represent the main dimensions used to apprehend the relevance of CBC in the WBR. Then, section three frames the European territorial cooperation context and provides an insight of the theoretical premises, while section four is devoted to present and describe the evolution of forms and tools of CBC in the WBR. That said, the paper zooms on the Albanian context, focusing on the importance of CBC, therein, with particular reference for the last generation of CBC programmes (2014–2020). Finally, a concluding section rounds off the contribution, reflecting on the future of CBC in Albania and in the WBR and the importance of collaborative and cooperative approaches along the EU integration process.

15.2 Border Regions and the Four Dimensions of Cross-Border Cooperation

According to many authors, border regions are a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon (Lechevalier and Wielgohs 2013; Ruidisch 2013; Sendhardt 2013; Beck 2018). Their nature can be understood through multiple lenses, such as political, economic, spatial, cultural and linguistic, which identify and thus characterise those territories. Historically, cross-border territories have been left at the margin of the political and scientific debate because of their *distance* from the centre—capital cities or central power control. For many decades, large parts of the border territories suffered from unbalanced development, territorial disparities, social and economic crises and political marginalisation. These ‘lands of transit’ or as Beck (2018) calls them “territorial sub-systems”, started to be reconsidered since the late 80s when a series of EU cross-border initiatives were introduced. In parallel to the enlargement and integration processes, the EU decided to invest more on cross-border territories and regions (European Commission 2015b). The idea was to soften these historical borders in order to facilitate social, economic and political relations among EU member states and between EU and neighbouring countries. Thanks to this new approach, there has been a shift from *land of transit* to and *land of linking* because of the implementation of numerous CBC programmes, initiatives and projects. Therefore, in Europe, after 1989, border regions, that historically were seen as impediments, changed into zones of contact in which new opportunities for cross-border mobility and cooperation emerged (Wielgohs and Lechevalier 2013). Currently, even more than in the past, the EU is investing considerable amounts of funds in CBC programmes—strengthening INTERREG and IPA instruments (Adams et al. 2011). For all these reasons, bordering regions have been invested with the role of innovative places—where the experimental actions that have taken

place in the decades of various programmes lead to a re-formulation of the concept of border areas, which have moved from the sole economic opportunity given from areas with physical contact to a broader definition where the territorial development notion has a central role. From a methodological point of view, this contribution understands the complexity and multi-dimensionality of CBC by focusing on four main constitutive dimensions: politico-institutional, socio-cultural, economic and territorial.

Taking into account the *political and institutional dimension* of CBC, one cannot avoid considering the complex system of governance models, mechanisms and procedures through which different border regions are administered, their institutional configuration and how decisions are taken. In this respect, the political and institutional environment is framed by both administrative structure and political decision processes within each country and by the relational mechanism established among border regions. Moreover, specific political predisposition towards cooperation is another important aspect, which may depend on the historical and cultural attitude. The political will to activate cross-border initiatives, indeed, can rely on sporadic cooperation events or conversely can be inclined to establishing long and future-oriented initiatives. Although these differences are based on governance models, the cooperation among countries and specifically between bordering areas has been proposed and implemented as a political instrument to enhance and sustain mutual commitment aimed to the rapprochement and the integration of the WB's countries. The political capacity to overcome differences and work together on common issues is constitutive of a general objective that is functional to give stabilisation and long-term sustainable response to regional challenges (European Commission 2005). This objective is in line with the EU political approach related to the whole bordering areas in the European territory and seems stronger in the WB's context, where many programmes deal with the political configuration that sometimes runs on the edge of tension and conflict. Finally, it is important to highlight that the establishment of a mixed scale of regional and local actions follows the will to give a multilevel ownership to the policy processes and to open new possibilities for the beneficiary to produce reforms and replay cooperation models with the collaboration of EU member states (Bastian 2011).

As regards the *socio-cultural dimension*, identities and common cultural background are often at the basis of any CBC initiatives. Social and cultural issues are often used as elements of commonality among countries and regions and that is particularly true for the WB's countries. Similar to other dimensions, the social and cultural arguments have different characterisations and transmit diverse qualities that change with the territorial level of the authorities and actors involved. The socio-cultural relations that influence the capacity to conform to the way in which countries or regions cooperate are not easy to detect, mainly because the programmes' frames are often functional to upper-level general objectives that aim, at the same time, to overcome diversities and to promote the work among homogeneous communities and stakeholders. This context of interlaced relations is well described by Durand and Decoville (2018, 8) affirming that "cross-border observation can also have a qualitative dimension through the analysis of national or

regional political and administrative systems, social and cultural worlds that juxtapose, connect and interpenetrate each other on both sides of the border, or of modes of cross-border cooperation between public actors in the diversity of their forms (more or less institutionalised) and their objectives (specific or broad-spectrum skills)”.

The importance of different languages, behaviours, societal structure and the qualities of the bonding and bridging capacity that different socio-cultural groups perform lead to a great number of variables, which are at the same time obstacles and opportunities. This explains why the socio-cultural aspect is so predominant in the discourses related to the improvement of social capital within bordering areas and how it can enable and ease the cooperation in other dimensions (Portolés 2015).

The *economic dimension* of CBC can be firstly traced back to the EU meaning of not-only-functional values of cooperation among bordering regions. The necessity to overcome the EU regional disparities has been one of the main pillars of the cooperative actions inducted by programmes and agreements, and that is true also for the WBR. Cooperation among WB's countries is identified as fundamental to achieve faster and stable progress in the economic development, due to structural fragmentation of the economic space and the limited size of each country (European Commission 2005). In this respect, it is possible to highlight how the formulation of economic development strategies tends to push the promotion of investments in energy and transport infrastructures, jobs creation and models of economic growth bounded with social cohesion objectives. Despite the creation of a variety of programmes that aim to tackle issues which impact on economic and financial development, the economic criteria as well as the theoretical concept of *natural economic spaces* finds a complicated contextualisation in the WB's bordering regions, with the risk to be more artificial than natural and to produce outcomes with low added-value (Durand and Decoville 2018). Indeed, it is important to give economic relevance to bordering areas in order to re-balance the divergent development trajectories of the main urban or other economic poles by facilitating common strategies among adjoining areas (Perkmann 2003) and promoting poly-centric models of territorial development and governance.

Finally yet important, border regions have a strong *territorial dimension*. In this respect, border regions may potentially share common natural boundaries (rivers, forests, natural resources) but also similar aspects of territorial organisation such as population density, quality and typology of urban development, spatial distribution of human activities (concentration of similar production assets) as well as degree of socio-spatial integration. The models of spatial organisation and connectivity are central for the promotion of CBDT programmes and agreements among countries, and it is unusual for the specific spatial conformation to be the starting point for agendas, guidelines and development actions. The territorial dimension of CBC is often hard to grasp since it is the result of a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional decision-making process. It is, indeed, inter-related with the given politico-administrative boundaries (Beck 2018), although it may have trans-administrative consequences. Durand and Decoville (2018, 9) have pointed that “at the local level, cross-border cooperation is rooted in a certain spatial proximity and is often driven

by the need to provide very concrete responses to issues that affect the daily lives of people living in the area". At a broader scale, the territorial dimension discourse tends to be more general and committed to the identification, by planning actors, of strategic issues and their orientation. Its importance is also recognised by the awareness that the EU's bordering areas are inhabited by approximately one-third of the total EU population giving great importance to the spatial dynamics of territorial development as a dimension of collaboration among countries, in order to sustain economic growth, enhance the valorisation and protection of landscapes and heritage and for the implementation of sustainable development models of natural and social resources (AEBR 2012).

15.3 European Territorial Cooperation

As a transnational "subsystem" (Beck 2018), border regions constitute an important asset of the EU integration process. Indeed, almost 40% of the EU territory is covered by border regions and approximately 30 per cent of total population lives here (ibid, 57). Since the mid-80s and in particular with the start of the EU programming periods, cross-border territorial cooperation became central in both the academic and political debate. The debate has reflected the intention of the EU to promote several cooperation initiatives in the field of economic, social and territorial development in specific border territories. Since the beginning, the intention has been to reduce the distance among bordering communities along internal (i.e. member states) and external (i.e. not member states) EU borders. The aim was to allow those countries to improve their mutual relations, by reducing historical border divergences and thus reducing the territorial imbalance of borders (Solly et al. 2018).

On this focus, in 1990, the EU launched the first European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) initiative better known as INTERREG I that was followed and updated by a series of similar initiatives.² Originally focused on existing gaps in transport infrastructure, the main investments of ETC currently deal with the environment, climate change, tourism and cultural heritage (Solly et al. 2018; Solly and Berisha, in this volume). Even if the ETC initially focused on strengthening cooperation within the EU's internal borders, over time, three strands of ETC have been institutionalised. The first was the CBC (INTERREG A) that encourages integrated regional development between neighbouring land and maritime border regions. The second typology has been the transnational cooperation (INTERREG B) the strengthens cooperation over larger transnational territories according to priorities established by EU cohesion policy, while the third, inter-regional

²Though time has been activated the INTERREG II (1994–1999), the INTERREG III (2000–2006), the INTERREG IV (2007–2013) and the INTERREG V (2014–2020) all together dealing with cooperation (A, B and C). This paralleled the introduction of other Community Initiatives, focusing on different aspects (e.g. urban areas, rural territories) (Cotella 2019).

cooperation (INTERREG C), promotes exchanges of experience focusing on the design and implementation of operational programmes, encouraging good practice in the area of sustainable (urban) development (EPRS 2016; Dühr et al. 2007; Solly et al. 2020, 2021).

While the first examples of cooperation were concentrated in the EU countries, in 1992, the ETC acquired a new external dimension thanks to the introduction of the PHARE programme which is the acronym of Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring their Economies. Over time, the EU continued to launch similar initiatives like the Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA), the Special Accession Programme for Rural and Development Programme (SAPARD) and the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) from 2000–2006 as well as an instrument for pre-accession assistance for rural development (IPARD), which is still in place (Cotella 2007, 2014; Berisha 2018a, b, Cotella and Berisha 2016).

However, only with the establishment of the instrument for pre-accession (IPA) in 2006, for the 2007–2013 programming period, has the EU provided itself with a foreign policy tool (European Commission 2015b). The first generation of the IPA allowed the EU to properly deal with non-members countries in terms of CBC. This instrument included five different components but one of them is important for border regions³: CBC took place between EU member states and other countries eligible for IPA, which since the beginning tried to play an important role in the mitigation of the differences among territorial borders. Despite positive responses registered in several sectors from justice to public administration, from transport and energy to environment protection as well as climate change, the very focus of IPA was on cross-border cooperation. According to the European Commission (2015a, 64) “the cross-border programmes worked to boost the living conditions and development of people living in remote border regions by supporting municipalities, regional agencies, civil society organisations and grassroots initiatives and establishing links with neighbouring countries’ border regions”.

Acknowledging the importance of CBC, the second IPA generation, called IPA II and valid for the 2014–2020 period, was launched. Despite some changes in terms of regulation and procedures, the IPA II confirms the importance of bi and multi-lateral cooperation programmes. The novelty of this second generation is its strategic focus. It introduces indeed the *country strategic papers* which establishes the main scope of the cooperation, implementation procedures based on the Action Plans and several monitoring mechanisms aiming at measuring the distance between objectives and what really takes place.

For the future programming period 2021–2027, aiming at removing CBC obstacles, the Commission is evaluating the introduction of some novelties. In particular, the harmonisation of the regulation and legal framework has been

³The other components were: (i) assistance for transition and institution building; (ii) regional development (transport, environment, regional and economic development); (iii) human resources (strengthening human capital and combating exclusion) and (iv) rural development.

proposed by introducing the European Cross-Border Mechanism and by increasing the available funds by about 13%, passing from 11.7 billion of IPA II to 14.5 billion of IPA III. This new generation is expected to focus more on creating synergies with a wide range of EU internal policy programmes, to maximise impacts on key priority sectors, such as security, migration, research and innovation, environment and climate action, transport and energy connectivity. That said, it seems, also for the future programming period Europe post-2020, that CBC will be the key objective of any border regions development priorities, providing a challenging opportunity for policy and decision makers, experts as well as civil society organisations.

15.4 Forms and Tools of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Western Balkan Region

Geographically speaking, because of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Balkans region became the most fragmented economic, social and political space in Europe (Mitko et al. 2003). This spatial fragmentation goes around historical and ethnic boundaries that are not facilitating the EU integration process at all but, on the contrary, are one of the main inhibitory factors. Since 1989, the relation between the EU and Balkans region has been growing on ambiguities and relative scepticism. According to Rogelj (2015), the recent Balkans' Integration history—from “terra incognita” (Smith 2000) to fully integration approach—can be divided in four different periods. During the first period, from 1989 to 1995, the relations between the EU and the Balkans countries were minimal and predominantly focused on the management of crises and humanitarian aid (Jano 2010). The second period coincides with the introduction of the regional approach, implemented by the EU between 1996 and 1999. After the Dayton Agreement (1995) which established the Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a cornerstone in the stabilisation of the country, the EU recognised the importance to shift from a national-centred approach in favour of a regional one. According to Jano (2010), indeed, the EU started to see the Balkans more as a part of the EU rather than a region far from its doors. At that time, the introduction of the regional approach was justified by the necessity to promote a long-term political stability through an intense cooperation initiative with and within the region (Berisha 2018a). The third period, from 1999–2005, coincided with the introduction of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) and the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). In 1999, the Kosovo*⁴ war gave to the EU the opportunity to introduce a more comprehensive regional approach that included the question of EU enlargement as well. Motivated by the fact that something had to be done, the EU introduced the Stability Pact for South

⁴(*)This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

East Europe (SP). Its main objectives remained the stabilisation and the development of the region through the consolidation of democracy, the promotion of the rule of law, the economic reform and development, the reform of administrative structures and the promotion of regional cooperation (Rogelj 2015). Politically speaking, the Stability Pact's most important purpose was achieving EU and NATO memberships that were seen as the most effective way to stabilise the entire region. Nonetheless, the integration process still depended on the Copenhagen Criteria that were built, among others, on political, economic, administrative issues. As concluded by Jano (2010), the core of this strategy was the project of the Europeanisation of the region. The fourth period started in 2005 and is continuing nowadays. If, until 2006 nobody doubted the ability of the EU to absorb new members, today this topic is central to the European political debate. The long arm of the economic and democratic crises is influencing the EU enlargement strategy that has to choose between following its original political ambitions or the emerging spirit of local independency and right-left extremisms. Regarding this matter, what has been declared by the President of the Commission at the European Parliament in September 2017 is emblematic. In his communication, Junker affirmed that "it is quite clear that there will be no further enlargement during the mandate of this Commission or Parliament; no candidate is ready yet". On the same occasion, however, he affirmed that the European Union will be greater than twenty-seven members. By saying that, the President has re-affirmed the logic of *carrot and stick* that has been the main cause of the *asymmetric power relation* that has characterised the political and economic relations between the EU and the Balkans. Only recently, in February 2018, thanks to the launching of the EU strategy for the Enlargement of the Western Balkan Region called "a credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans", has the President of EU Commission admitted that the Western Balkans are part of Europe, geographically surrounded by EU member states. In this strategy, the 2025 is seen as the date for another enlargement period to include the Western Balkans Countries (Berisha et al., in this volume).

As has emerged, the last three decades of EU and Balkans relation was characterised by several stops and starts (Berisha et al. 2018). However, what remains constant through time is the conviction that the development of the region represents a priority for the EU and its member states. As has been affirmed several times, the development of regional cooperation in the WBR is the key of having political stability, security and economic prosperity (European Commission 2005; Bastian 2011). This can be facilitated by, as reconfirmed during the EU–Western Balkans Summits of Zagreb (2000) and Thessaloniki (2003), the regional cooperation becoming the focal point of the EU integration process of the Balkan countries. This has been also acknowledged by the recent enlargement strategy adopted by the Commission which sees cooperation, and in particular, CBC as one of the pillars alongside the EU integration process. That said, the last three decades have been characterised by the implementation of several cooperation initiatives (see Trikulja and Dabovic in this publication). The authors identify, for the Balkans, the Euroregions as one of the first forms of territorial cooperation born under the

auspices of the EU like some cooperation initiatives which started with the implementation of CARDS. However, the majority of the examples of cooperation derive from the enactment of several EU cooperation programmes and strategies and in particular from the CBC promoted by INTERREG and IPA instruments. Since the previous programming period (2007–2013), the Balkans countries have been interested in CBC thanks to the introduction of IPA, which allowed them to benefit from EU funds (Table 15.1).

As the data shows, the EU funds have been principally used to enhance the quality of justice and domestic affairs as well as to reform the public administration. Another important focus of EU funds has been the environmental and climate change sector (especially for Albania, Macedonia, and Serbia), the social development as in the case of Serbia and Macedonia, and finally, great attention has been paid to the rural development in countries like Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, although distinct data is not available for Kosovo. Apart from that, additional funds have been allocated by multi-beneficiary programmes. By creating favourable conditions for political and economic reforms, multi-beneficiary assistance promoted regional cooperation and supported reconciliation and political dialogue in order to achieve political stability, security and economic prosperity in the enlargement region (European Commission 2015a)

The general assessment of the first IPA programming period has been positive since there are several examples of progress achieved by the Balkans countries. According to the European Commission (2015a, 8) “The last seven years have seen some improvements in this regard, with the legal framework for fundamental rights now largely in place in all enlargement countries. Candidate countries and potential candidates have made efforts to promote freedoms and have made progress in the areas of women’s rights and anti-discrimination measures. The EU is helping candidates and potential candidates foster civil society, particularly through the Civil Society Facility and by encouraging the participation of civil society in discussions on policy development”.

This has been also confirmed by the evaluation of IPA Programmes 2007–2013, which recognises the importance of IPA CBC in improving neighbourly relations in the region, enhancing stability, security and prosperity of partner countries and promoting a harmonised, balanced and sustainable development.

Thanks to the experience made during the implementation of IPA I and the several lessons learned, the EU launched the second generation of IPA, dedicating considerable attention to CBC programmes (see Table 15.2). Currently, 23 programmes with cross-border character have been activated. In particular, Croatia is involved in three INTERREG programmes with EU member countries like Italy, Slovenia and Hungary. Ten programmes instead have been launched under the umbrella of INTERREG IPA which involve several EU and extra-EU countries like Italy, Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania and almost all the WB’s countries except Kosovo. Additional 10 IPA programmes have been launched between Balkans countries.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the Balkans countries are also taking part in important INTERREG B initiatives, like the transnational programmes. In this

Table 15.1 Allocation of EU funds in the Western Balkans Regions during the period 2007–2013

	Tot.	Justice (%)	PA reform (%)	Transp. (%)	Energy and climate (%)	Social develop.	Rural develop.	Other
AL	512	18	13	16	18	10%	22%	3%
BA	554	18	13	8	16	14%	5%	26%
HR	802	9	9	12	15	34%	21%	0%
ME	191	17	23	13	8	8%	18%	13%
MK	508	12	13	20	18%	12%	17%	8%
RS	1.213	16	22	10	19%	22%	6%	5%
XK	679	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source Authors' own elaboration based on EU data (European Commission 2015a)

context, it is interesting to mention the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), the EU Strategy of Danube Region (EUSDR), the South East Europe programme (SEEP), the Mediterranean programme (MED), the Balkan-Mediterranean (BalkanMED) and the Interreg V-B Adriatic-Ionian programme (ADRION).

15.5 Evidence from Cross-Border Cooperation in Albania

Since the end of the Second World War until the downfall of the communist regime, Albania has been totally isolated from the rest of the world in terms of political, economic, social and cultural relations. More than four decades of isolation made Albania the poorest country in Europe with structural delay in several fields. In those circumstances, borders areas have been marginalised becoming the less developed regions of the country while relations with neighbours' countries were totally absent as well as any cooperation activity.

Despite the process of EU integration started in 1999 thanks to the Stabilisation and Association Process Agreement, Albania is still far to join the EU. Looking at the last three decades, indeed, Albania has had a controversial relationship with the EU, even though their first diplomatic initiative dates back to 1991, which made Albania therefore ahead of the other countries. Until that time, no economic and political relations existed. The year later, 1992 marks the moment when in Brussels an agreement between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Albania was signed: the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, about trade exchanges, commercial and economic cooperation (Goxha 2016). The Trade Agreement allowed Albania to participate and to benefit from the PHARE programme funds (that amounted € 0,7 billion) for the period 1992–2000, confirming the EU as one of the most important actors in the country. In fact, in 1993, the European Commission delegation constituted a permanent diplomatic mission to represent the European Commission in external affairs in Tirana (Goxha 2016). The new course

Table 15.2 Cross-border cooperation programmes 2014–2020 in the Balkans

CBC	AL	BA	HR	XK	ME	MK	RS
INTERREG	n.a.	n.a.	IT-HR SL-HR HU-HR	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
INTERREG IPA	IT-AL-ME EL-AL	HR-BA-ME	HR-BA-ME HR-RS	n.a.	HR-BA-ME IT-AL-ME	EL-MK BU-MK	HR-RS BU-RS HU-RS RO-RS
IPA	AL-ME AL-XK AL-MK	RS-BA ME-BA	n.a.	AL-XK XK-MK ME-XK	AL-ME ME-XK ME-BA RS-ME	AL-MK XK-MK	RS-BA RS-ME
Potential funds	178,983,292	89,641,552	460,877,444	25,200,000	197,048,110	84,793,865	252,766,629

Source: Authors' own elaboration

of events, inspired by the Albanian ambition to be part of the EU, was later interrupted in concomitance with the economic and political crises that caused the civil war of 1997. The war caused many consequences; one of the main ones was a new negative attitude from the EU towards the Albanian system, which was considered less trustworthy than before. Thanks to the external intervention of the multinational peace force, operation ALBA, the social crisis was stabilised. Afterwards, the Stabilisation and Association Process, an initiative undertaken by the EU in favour of the entire Western Balkans, has been the chance for Albania and the EU to become closer again. Through the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreements and their full implementation, the EU meant to establish a stronger relationship with all the relevant countries, almost foreshadowing that all of them would be soon potential candidates. This has been confirmed also in 2000 at the EU summit in Zagreb. Being a potential candidate country meant that Albania was eligible to benefit from economic and financial support. At the time, the main economic assistance was the CARDS programme, which replaced the PHARE and OBNOVA financial programmes. From 2001 to 2004, CARDS benefited Albania with approximately € 180 million, plus € 20 million deriving from the Regional CARDS Programme.

Returning to the topic of integration, the summit that took place in Thessaloniki in 2003 confirmed for the Western Balkans countries the prospect of accession to the EU, and defined the procedure for all the countries involved. After six years of being a candidate, precisely in June 2006, Albania signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU, which was ratified in 2009 and became effective a few months later. It was June 2014 when Albania was granted candidate status as a recognition for its reform efforts and the progress made in meeting the required conditions. Despite reaching these outcomes, the country still needs to increase and consolidate the reform momentum and focus its efforts on tackling the EU integration challenges, in a sustainable and inclusive way. Referring to the Progress Report of 2015, progress has been made in all the aspects; however, there are still some that have a long way to go. For this reason, Albania should continue to participate actively in high-level dialogue meetings, as well as in the joint working groups on the five key priorities such as democracy, public administration reform and the rule of law, human rights and the protection of minorities and regional issues and international obligations. These criteria need to be continuously fulfilled if Albania wants to approach the accession negotiations shortly. To conclude, according to Goxha (2016), if in the last decade the regional counterparts have made significant progress in the European integration process, in Albania's case the results have been definitely minor. In spite of this turbulent but constant approaching to the EU, Albania has experienced important CBC initiatives. After having signed the SAP and the SAA, one of the topics of Albanian and EU relations became the CBC and through time, and it became even more important with the launch of IPA I and II. The idea of the EU and beneficiary partners was to soften borders in favour of more cooperative and collaborative relation mechanisms between citizens and borders' institutions. During the first IPA, Albania has effectively (co)implemented numerous projects concerning several thematic

priorities of cooperation, namely: economic development, environment and people to people (see Table 15.3).

Thanks to the implementation of IPA I, Albania and the neighbouring countries decided to invest the majority of funds available for the thematic priority of economic development and in particular to projects related with the transport and connectivity and tourism sectors while the other two thematic priorities have been scarcely developed (except in the case of Albania and Macedonia CBC). These programmes have been the occasion for funding several specific and or transversal-targeted projects (see Table 15.4). Table 15.4 reports few selected examples to show the diversity of the cross-border projects implemented. The projects reported explore the spatial/territorial dimension of border regions like the Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve of Lake Skadar/Shkodra, which focuses on the preservation of natural areas (i.e. the Lake of Skadar/Shkoder), or draw attention to the socio-cultural dimension, like preservation of the unique heritage and cultural exchange between Bilisht and Brvenica, as well as the social integration through non-formal education promoted between Albania and Kosovo to facilitate youth involvement in elementary school courses.

Overall, these projects reflect the complexity of border areas and the need to adapt as much as possible to approaches used in identifying strategic priorities and mechanisms of implementation, which have become crucial concerning the IPA II programme (Fig. 15.1). Despite not yet being fully implemented, Table 15.5 illustrates the objectives and actions of each cross-border programme and their respective thematic issues. More in detail, the table explores each IPA II programme where Albania is participating, by showing respectively: the territories' eligibility and the total of funds available for each programme, the main thematic priorities, the principal objectives established and the actions were foreseen. As reported in Table 15.5, despite social, economic and historical diversities, CBC programmes have similar objectives. At a first glance, indeed, the main sectors targeted to investments are (i) the environment, energy and transport initiatives followed by supporting, (ii) the tourism and rural development and local economic development (SMEs, start-ups, guarantee youth employment, etc.).

Table 15.3 Sectors and policy areas interested by Albanian CBCs 2007–2013

CBC	Funds	Projects	Economic development (i.e. transport, SME, tourism, rural development)	Environment (i.e. disaster, water, solid management)	People to people (i.e. cultural exchange, inclusion, youth and healthcare)
AL-ME	7.9 m	31	65% (5.2 m)	23% (1.8 m)	11% (0.9 m)
AL-MK	7.3 m	51	44% (3.3 m)	34% (2.4 m)	22% (1.6 m)
AL-XK	2.2 m	11	84% (1.9 m)	6% (0,1 m)	10% (0.2 m)

Source Authors' own elaboration based on data Evaluation of IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes 2007–2013 of 2017

Table 15.4 Selected projects of Albanian IPA CBC 2007–2013

CBC	Projects' name	Objective	Results	Outputs
AL-ME	Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve of Lake Skadar/Shkodra	Efficient environmental and nature conservation	Application form to the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve	Zoning maps
AL-MK	Preservation of the unique heritage and cultural exchange between Bilisht and Brvenica	Promote and preserve the cultural heritage	Prepared joint action plan for further cultural CBC	Detailed research/survey on cultural heritage
AL-XK	Social integration through non-formal education	Involve of socially marginalised students	Non-formal education courses	Policy paper

Source Authors' own elaboration

Table 15.6, instead, shows how those issues have been operationalised through the series of projects that have been financed by each programme, based on every thematic priority. Methodologically, the list of projects taken into account by the study are representative of each programme with no ambition of being exhaustive at all, but with the idea to select those projects that show explicit implications on the diverse cross-border territorial development dimensions (i.e. politico-institutional, economic, socio-cultural and territorial). Despite the early stage of the implementation process, it is worth noting that the majority of the feedbacks on the selected projects are not limited to one of the dimensions identified, but on the contrary, all of them are involved.

By analysing each dimension separately, it is interesting to note, concerning the politico-institutional dimensions all projects demand for collaborative governance models, which mean relying on inter-institutional dialogue, the inclusion of civil society organisations and investing in informal networks constituted by temporary organisations groups. All the projects promote a very all-inclusive and collaborative participation of stakeholders as one of the main objectives. Once those projects will be fully implemented, it is expected that the border territories involved can benefit from these positive experiences and messages that are the vehicle of a diverse and more proactive governance models, which is one of the declared objectives of the EU (Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al. 2020).

A positive impact can be also expected concerning the economic dimension of the CBC, which will affect all the territories involved. Differently from the leading country-economic policies, which pursue a generic economic development, these projects are very selective in promoting innovative job creation in diverse economic sectors, like tourism and rural development as well as food and digital start-ups. The majority of these projects support, among others, the involvement of youth and special social categories in developing a new and more open ecosystem for

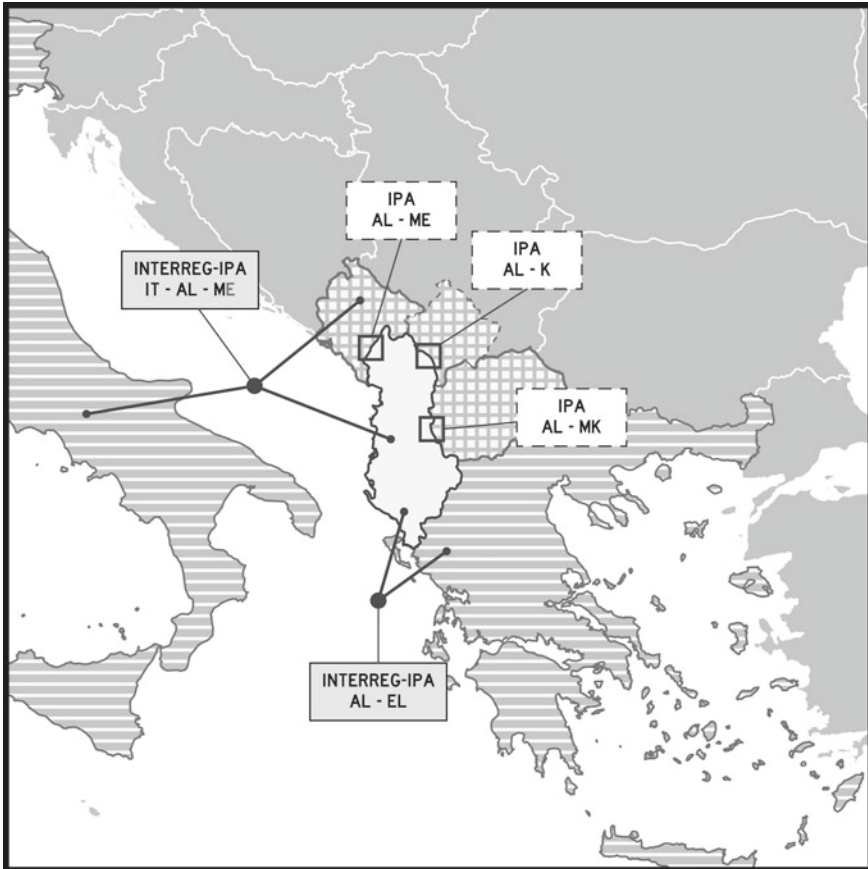


Fig. 15.1 Current Albanian's IPA programmes activated for the period 2014–2020. *Source* Authors' own elaboration

innovation. This is certainly positive in the creation of an entrepreneurship culture, which may be replicable in other contexts and become a distinctive character of border regions. Creating a cross-border identity based on a collaborative approach emerged also with regards to the socio-cultural dimension. Shared cultural identity, removing the barriers, exchanging best practices, softening cultural contradiction are the core of the majority of presented projects. Building a strong and credible identity will allow border regions to overcome past barriers and to build joint territorial development visions (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020).

Finally, different from the past, some projects are experimenting new forms of cross-border territorial cooperation by advancing the idea of preparing and adopting common transnational strategies in the fields of tourism, transport, rural development and the protection of species and habitats and ecosystems.

Table 15.5 Cross-border cooperation programmes in Albania

2014–2020	Eligible areas and funds	Thematic priorities (TP)	Objectives	Actions
INTERREG IPA IT—AL—ME	Albania is participating as a whole <i>93 million available</i>	TP 1—Competitiveness of SME	Encouraging tourism, conservation of cultural and natural heritage; protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures	Developing common models and plans for sustainable tourism management; promoting actions for protection of the environment; developing a Web-GIS Observatory Network; cross-border exchange of good practices; development of local sustainable energy action plans
		TP 2—Tourism and culture		
		TP 3—Environment and energy		
		TP 4—Sustainable transport		
INTERREG IPA EL—AL	Vlorë, Gjirokastër, Korçë and Berat. <i>54 million available</i>	TP 1—Promotion of environment, sustainable transport and public infrastructure	Increase the capacity of cross-border infrastructures; the effectiveness of environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources; effectiveness of risk prevention and disaster management	Planning, construction and rehabilitation of border crossings of road network; joint initiatives for environmental protection; introduction of maritime plans improving the planning, cooperation and response capacity for disaster management
		TP 2—Boosting the local economy		
IPA ME—AL	Region of Shkodra, Region of Lezhe and District of Tropoje. <i>11.9 million available</i>	TP 1—Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	The protection of the environmental, climate change adaption and mitigation, risk prevention and management; encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	Establishing cross-border synergies for the management of the protected areas located, support to reduction of pollution and management of sensitive ecosystems, integrated environmental monitoring systems
		TP 2—Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation		
		TP 3—Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border		

(continued)

Table 15.5 (continued)

2014–2020	Eligible areas and funds	Thematic priorities (TP)	Objectives	Actions
IPA MK—AL	Korce, Elbasan and Diber. <i>11.9 million available</i>	TP 1—Encouraging tourism culture and natural heritage	Encouraging tourism, culture and natural heritage; protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management	Development and promotion of joint tourism products and services; restoration and preservation of cultural and historical sites and associated built environment; promoting and supporting sustainable use of natural resources and environment
		TP 2—Enhancing competitiveness business trade and investments		
		TP 3—Protecting environment		
IPA AL—K	Lezha and Kukës Region. <i>8.4 million available</i>	TP 1—Protecting the environment	Promoting sustainable use of natural resources, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; joint actions to encourage tourism and promote cultural and natural heritage	Preparation of strategies and action plans for; prevention and mitigation of manmade hazards and natural disasters, introducing cross-border mapping and integrated environmental monitoring systems
		TP 2—Encouraging tourism		
		TP 3—Investing in youth education and skills		

Source Authors' own elaboration

15.6 Conclusive and Recommendations Remarks

Almost 40 per cent of the EU territory is covered by border regions, and approximately 30% of the total population live here (Beck 2018). Despite this, border regions have been historically marginalised and left behind by state development policies. After the Cold War and the increasing of the EU enlargement policy have border regions and started to be reconsidered no longer as *lands of transit* but as *lands of linking*. In the last three decades, CBC has been targeted by several EU initiatives and programmes becoming pivotal to the EU territorial agenda and the European Territorial Cooperation. Since the beginning of its political history, the EU recognised the necessity to soften its internal borders and mitigate spatial discontinuity with non-EU members seeing that as the only way to guarantee a coherent, inclusive and sustainable territorial development. The evolution of European Territorial Cooperation has evolved from the first initiative launched in

Table 15.6 Significance of cross-border cooperation programmes 2014–2020 in Albania

CBC	TPs	Projects	Objectives	Main implication on the cross-border cooperation dimensions			Territorial
				Political	Economic	Socio-cultural	
IT—AL —ME	TP 1	INERRAnT	Innovative ecosystem	Collaborative governance	Improve competitiveness	Knowledge sharing	Foster territorial dialogue
	TP 2	HAMLET	Enhance touristic potentialities	Partnership public-private	Boost local economy	Improving of social well-being	Common strategy for tourism management
	TP 3	LASPEH	Preserve the natural heritage	Network of organisations	Environmental economic-based systems	Socio-cultural awareness	Transnational strategy for species and habitats
	TP 4	ON CLOUD NINE	Border connectivities	Inter-institutional dialogue	New facilities and services for travellers	Down barriers of people circulations	Territorial Strategy for air transport system
EL—AL	TP 1	COMOBILION	Improve the connectivity	Inter-institutional dialogue	Facilitation of movement of goods and peoples	Overcome social barriers (i.e. accessibility)	Completion of TEN-T axes/Pan-European corridors
	TP 2	TACTICAL TOURISM	Assisting tourism experiences	Proactive governance models	Touristic-based economy approach	Unifying approach on touristic policies	Brings together all the UNESCO protected cities
ME—AL	TP 1	Preserving cultural landscape	Sustainable exploitation of the cultural heritage	Collaborative policy measures	Touristic-based economy approach	Local awareness of cultural heritage	Territorial accessibility and cultural heritage
	TP 2	Disasters do not know borders	Protection of people from natural hazards	Capacity building	na	Social awareness on natural disasters	Supervision of natural disaster
	TP 3	Raspberry Crops	Economic and rural development	Informal networks	Creation of new jobs	Involvement of unemployed and youth	Sustainable exploitation of natural resources

(continued)

Table 15.6 (continued)

CBC	TPs	Projects	Objectives	Main implication on the cross-border cooperation dimensions			
				Political	Economic	Socio-cultural	Territorial
MK—AL	TP 1	STEP	Promote vibrant touristic sector	Empower private and public entities	Strengthened capacities of tourism SMEs	Creation of eco-tourism identity	Created inter-regional tourism online platform
	TP 2	Agricultural Standards etc.	Certify producers and processors	Partnership public-private	Business opportunities for food companies	Promotion of local agriculture tradition	Rural and agriculture development solutions
	TP 3	Innovative practices in environmental protection	Stimulate sustainable use of natural resources	Collaborative and participatory approach	New agro-producers organisations	Promotion of local identity	na
AL—XK	TP 1	na	na	na	na	na	na
	TP 2	Improving tourism offer in highlands	Valorisation of natural/cultural heritage	Informal networks relation	New job opportunities	Developing local identity	Preservation of territorial integrity
	TP 3	Y.D.E.A	Youth networking and capacity building	na	Promotion of establishing digital star-ups	Social exchange	na

Source: Authors' own elaboration

1990, and by opening its action to non-EU countries, becoming more and more capable of tackling disparities and promoting cohesion among bordering regions. The role of CBC in supporting the development of bordering regions have been here analysed through four constitutive dimensions. The necessity to divide and characterise these dimension is fundamental to highlight both the opportunities and the problems offered by this collaborative approach. The described dimension provides analytical tools in the political, economic, socio-cultural and territorial domains to better understand the WB's regional context of cooperation. In Albania in particular, cross-border territorial cooperation has never been seen as a *credible option* since its historical isolation during almost the entire twentieth century. Only after the fall of the communist regime and with the start of the integration process, the country experiment its first experiences in the field of CBC. Thanks to the implementation of EU initiatives like the IPA, first, second and the coming third generation (2021–2027), Albania is taking part in several EU programmes, which is facilitating local communities, border administrations and stakeholders to be active in various fields.

As demonstrated by the study, participation in CBC programmes produces direct or side effects in terms of politico-institutional, economic, socio-cultural and territorial dimensions. Despite that, however, Albania as well as the majority of the WB' countries will face with a series of the challenges, being fundamental to learn, apply and implement CBC approaches. In particular, the coming years will see the next generation of IPA (2021–2027) dealing with a number of challenges in terms of:

- *Politico-institutional dimension*—in this perspective, it will be fundamental to identify appropriate inclusive governance models, instruments and mechanisms capable at managing *functional areas that go beyond administrative borders* by facilitating and supporting cross-institutional actions and contamination initiatives;
- *Economic dimension*: identify cross-border special economic zones in order to facilitate softening the economic relations by investing more in local community development, with a sustainable approach in social, economic and environmental terms. Spillover effects should be carefully considered under the light of economic cooperation (i.e. promoting place-based sharing and circular economy) instead of mere economic competition (i.e. investing in more economically promising regions at the expense of lagging territories);
- *Socio-cultural dimension*: CBC programmes should be seen as instruments for building a common identity based on the EU principles of cooperation and collaboration by guaranteeing that the inclusion of minorities, youth and disadvantages citizens will be pivotal in the future agendas. This is particularly important to what concerns the lessening of brain drain, edging and depopulation of lagging regions;

- *Territorial dimension*: CBC initiatives should be creating the conditions for drafting, implementing and monitoring cross-border (spatial) plans, strategies and programmes as some CBC projects call for. This is particularly important for dealing with issues like climate change and global warming as well as managing transnational and cross-border territorial issues (i.e. ecological networks for example).

Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, as stressed by various authors in the literature (Cotella et al. 2015), the participation in European territorial cooperation programmes, and in particular, CBC has allowed and will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and good practices in relation to territorial development governance, in turn contributing to further mutual understanding and virtuous learning processes among the involved actors, in so doing strengthening European integration.

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Chapter 16

Towards the Territorialisation of EU Cohesion Policy? The Case of EUSAIR



Alys Solly and Erblin Berisha

Abstract This contribution sheds light on the potential influence of EU macro-regions on territorial governance and, more in general, on the EU integration processes. From a theoretical perspective, EU macro-regions are seen as a natural consequence of subregionalisation processes, which emerged in the EU after 1989. Building on a careful analysis of the existing literature and empirical evidence, the study reflects on the capability of EU macro-regions, and especially of the EUSAIR, to influence the way in which countries are involved within EU integration processes and must adapt towards new spatial governance configurations. This contribution shows both the potentialities and the limitations of this experimental initiative in addressing common territorial challenges.

Keywords Macro-regions · EUSAIR · European territorial cooperation · Governance · EU integration

16.1 Introduction

EU macro-regions are gaining momentum in the field of European studies and scholars and academics are increasingly engaged in understanding the importance of these new institutional configurations within the panorama of EU territorial governance (Gänzle and Kern 2016). The discussion on macro-regional approaches has a long history in the literature of various fields (e.g. international relations, geography, economics). However, the concept of macro-regions applied to the European context is relatively new. One of the first definitions given by the EU Commission refers to macro-regions as areas “including territory from a number of

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different countries or regions associated with one or more common features or challenges” (European Commission 2009). Since then the interest of academics and policymakers has been growing and a relatively high number of contributions are exploring the question of macro-regions from various perspectives (see among others Stead 2014; Gänzle and Kern 2016; Vesković and Haller 2017; Gänzle et al. 2018).

This contribution seeks to understand the domestic political and spatial effects of the EU macro-regions. In particular, it explores the potential influence of the EU macro-regions, and specifically of the EU strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region (hereafter EUSAIR) upon the territorial governance of the Adriatic–Ionian countries, as well as upon the integration of the involved countries into the EU. It shows the latent potentialities of the macro-regional approach in addressing territorial development from a multi-level governance and transnational perspective. Moreover, it demonstrates that the EUSAIR does not have a univocal impact but, instead, is characterised by a differentiation of influences, depending on how each country is dealing with the Strategy as well as on its level of integration. In particular, it first looks at the impact of the Strategy on territorial governance and cohesion, paying attention to the changes in the spatial structure of the existing territorial governance environment. It then explores the sectoral and integrated policy approaches, which derive from the implementation of the four macro-regional pillars. The third aspect investigates the transnational and cross-border cooperation characteristics of the Strategy, looking at how cooperation is transforming the entire region and establishing stakeholder networks. Finally, the fourth aspect explores the link between macro-regions and Europeanisation processes to understand if macro-regional strategies are favouring the enlargement of non-EU countries.

The chapter is structured in five main sections. After this introduction on the scope and content of the contribution, Section 2 presents the EU macro-regional approach and looks at its relations with EU territorial governance by briefly presenting the more recent theoretical discussion on this topic and illustrating the major EU macro-region strategies already active. Section 3 focuses on the EUSAIR and on its process of institutionalisation, governance structure, objectives and priorities. Section 4 identifies some key analytical factors and investigates the potential influence of the EUSAIR on territorial governance, spatial cohesion and integration processes, presenting some empirical findings and exemplifications. Finally, Sect. 5 presents the conclusions and some recommendations for future research initiatives.

16.2 EU Macro-Regions: Concepts and Strategies

This section introduces the concept of EU macro-regions, highlighting their main features and challenges and focusing the debate on their role as a new form of European territorial governance. The first subsection explores the concepts of EU macro-regions, territorial governance and regional cooperation, taking into

consideration the existing debate on the topic and the related literature. The second presents and discusses the existing macro-regional strategies, such as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

16.2.1 EU Macro-Regions, Regional Cooperation and the (Re)Scaling of Territorial Governance

Just under ten years ago, macro-regional strategies were endorsed by the European Council to enhance trans-governmental cooperation between EU member and non-member states, strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion also in the neighbouring areas. Accordingly, EU macro-regions are integrated frameworks that address common challenges in areas that share geographical/territorial, policy/functional and natural/ecological issues. In general, these EU strategies aim to strengthen cooperation and connectivity in the entire region, harmonising territorial governance and trans-governmental cooperation. However, no agreed definition of the term “macro-region” exists (Mirwaldt et al. 2011).

For Soukos (2017), EU macro-regions are “hybrid forms of organisation”, which include both a territorial and a functional dimension that need to be carefully managed and balanced. In fact, EU macro-regions are affected by pre-existing institutional arrangements and include countries that have different historical, political, cultural and normative backgrounds. As Gänzle et al. (2018, p. 1) point out, “both the macro-regional strategies and the macro-regions themselves have been met with increasing interest across several disciplines, including geography, regional planning, political science and public administration, triggering questions and debates on issues such as their impacts on existing practices of territorial cooperation and their relation to previously established forms of regional cooperation”. Thus, Gänzle et al. (2018, p. 10) further suggest that scholars should reflect more extensively on “the impacts and outputs of macro-regional strategies”, focusing on their political relevance and effectiveness.

According to the scope of this study, to explore the importance and nature of EU macro-regions three dimensions should be investigated: (i) macro-regions as a regionalisation process; (ii) macro-regions as an EU cooperation instrument; and (iii) macro-regions as an EU territorial governance entity. In this regard, macro-regions can be seen as a way to explore alternative solutions within the framework of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). Macro-regions can also be conceptualised as an instrument for managing transnational territories that deal with common challenges and spatial perspectives, as well as the outcome of the rescaling process of functional regions beyond administrative subdivisions. Indeed, the European Parliament (2015) defines macro-regions as “a major emerging instrument of governance in the EU that involves a plurality of state and non-state actors around a

series of functional problems in a given territory”. It must be kept in mind that, as the macro-regional motto states, *no new funds, no new legislation, no new institutions* are provided. In fact, unlike other EU transnational programmes, EU macro-regions economically depend on other instruments. For example, EU macro-regions may be supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which make them less independent compared to other cooperation initiatives. Overall, macro-regions should be considered through the lenses of European territorial governance and seen as a first attempt to *territorialise* EU Cohesion Policy (European Parliament 2015), as well as “soft policy spaces” (Stead 2014) where formal and informal relational mechanisms may happen. Macro-regions should also be considered as multi-level governance entities for the way they are managed and how they interact with each domestic governance system.

This study aims to make a contribution in this direction, shedding light on the possibility that macro-regions might influence and promote cross-fertilisation across Europe. Thus, this process could also lead to a transformation of the existing patterns of spatial development and territorial cohesion, as well as the role of international actors at the different levels, leading to new forms of government and of territorial governance, of multilevel governance and to the creation of soft spaces. Indeed, as Stead (2014) observes, macro-regions are currently fostering the establishment of new stakeholder networks, resulting in a rescaling of actor involvement. Furthermore, macro-regions are also facilitating the integration of new member states and, at the same time, enlarging their influence to candidate and potential candidate countries (European Parliament 2015).

16.2.2 EU Macro-Regional Strategies

Currently, four EU macro-regions are formalised while more others are under consideration¹ (European Parliament 2015). The first EU macro-regional strategy, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), was launched in 2009 and involves various EU member states: Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. As can be seen in Table 16.1, the main objectives and policy areas of the EUSBSR aim to protect the sea, increase the prosperity and to enhance the connectivity of the region. Each objective relates to a wider range of policies and has an impact on the other objectives. The Strategy aims to strengthen cooperation between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea in order to meet the common challenges and to benefit from common opportunities facing the region. The EUSBSR implementation is coordinated in close contact with the European

¹Six other strategies are under the process of institutionalization: the Carpathian Region, the North Sea, the Black Sea, the Atlantic Arc, and the Western and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean Sea (European Parliament 2015).

Table 16.1 EU macro-regions

Macro-regions	Year	Geographical coverage	Main objectives and policy areas
Baltic sea region (EUSBSR)	2009	7 Member States (Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland)	Save the sea, increase prosperity, connect the region
Danube strategy (EUSDR)	2011	14 countries, of which 9 EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), 3 accession countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia) and 2 neighbouring countries (Moldova, Ukraine)	Connect the region, protecting the environment, strengthening the region, building prosperity
Adriatic–Ionian strategy (EUSAIR)	2014	8 countries, of which 4 Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and 4 non-EU Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia)	Blue growth, connecting the region, environmental quality, sustainable tourism
Alpine strategy (EUSALP)	2015	7 Countries, of which 5 EU Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia) and 2 non-EU States (Liechtenstein, Switzerland)	Growth and innovation, mobility and connectivity, environment and energy, governance

Source Authors' own elaboration

Commission and all relevant stakeholders, such as other member states, regional and local authorities, inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies. Moreover, the Strategy is also strengthening cooperation with EU neighbouring countries (Russia, Iceland, Norway and Belarus).

A few years later, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) was endorsed by the European Council in 2011. The Strategy has been jointly developed by the Commission, together with the Danube Region countries and stakeholders, in order to address common challenges. The Strategy seeks to create synergies and coordination between existing policies and initiatives taking place across the Danube Region. Moreover, the Strategy addresses a wide range of issues, which are divided into four main pillars and twelve priority areas. This macro-regional strategy involves a high number of stakeholders geographically located in fourteen different countries, of which nine are EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), three accession countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia) and two neighbouring countries (Moldova, Ukraine).

Later on, in 2014, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region (EUSAIR) was endorsed by the European Council. The Strategy aims at creating synergies and fostering coordination among all territories in the Adriatic–Ionian Region. The Strategy involves eight countries: four Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and four non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia).²

Finally, the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) was launched in 2015. The Strategy aims to improve cross-border cooperation in the Alpine countries as well as to identify common goals and implement them more effectively through transnational collaboration. This Strategy concerns seven countries, of which five are EU Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) and two non-EU countries (Liechtenstein and Switzerland). Moreover, the Strategy builds upon three main three general policy areas and one cross-cutting policy area which tries to improve cooperation and coordination within the governance macro-region.

It is interesting to note that, as can be seen in Fig. 16.1, some of the areas involved in certain macro-regions overlap with two or more EU macro-regions. For example, some areas of Slovenia and Italy are both parts of the EUSALP as well as the EUSAIR, while Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, involved in the EUSAIR, are also part of the EUSDR. The case of Slovenia is rather emblematic in this sense since it is part of three EU macro-regions (i.e. EUSALP, EUSDR and EUSAIR).

16.3 The EU Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region

After having explained what macro-regions are and how they are currently implemented, this part focuses on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region. The first section describes the main steps of the institutionalisation process of the macro-region, starting from the 2000 Ancona Declaration to its current structure. The second looks at the macro-regional's governance structure. The third discusses the macro-regional's objectives and strategic priorities, while the fourth analyses the integration of EUSAIR with the existing EU transnational strategies and programmes in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, especially looking at the aspects of discursive interaction and cross-fertilisation.

²North Macedonia has only recently been officially included in the EUSAIR, becoming the ninth country in the strategy. See: <https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/2020/04/03/north-macedonia-has-officially-been-included-into-eusair/>.

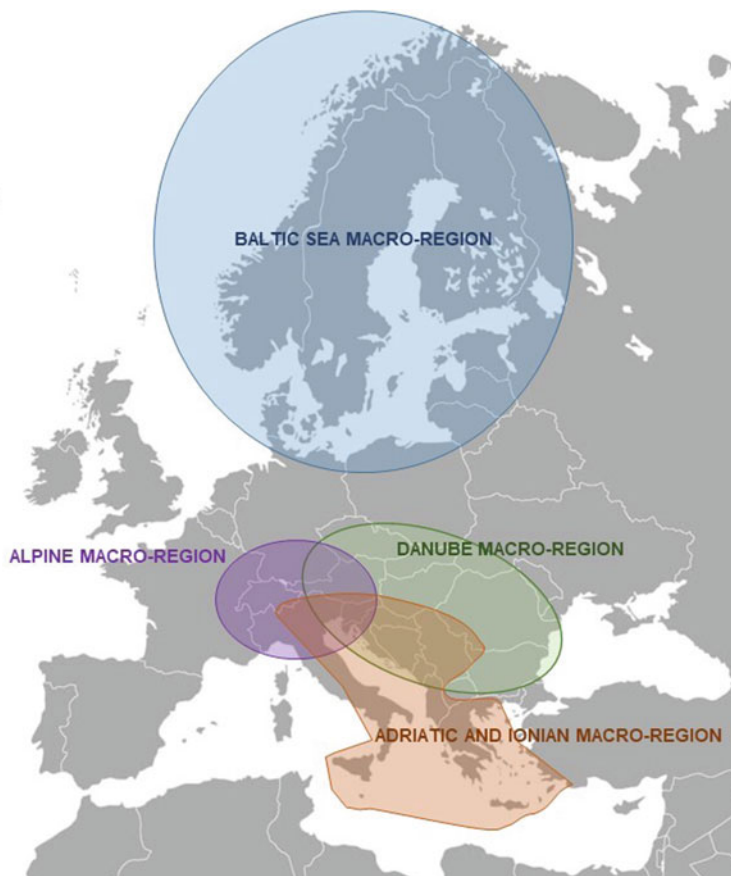


Fig. 16.1 EU macro-regions *Source* Authors' own elaboration, based on European Commission (2017)

16.3.1 Steps Towards Institutionalisation

The approval of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region dates back to 2014, after the introduction of the 2009 Strategy for the Baltic Sea and the 2011 Strategy for the Danube Region. However, it has required almost fifteen years of cooperation to officially launch the EUSAIR (Table 16.2). In fact, the institutionalisation of the EUSAIR comes after years of discussion between the EU Commission and the authorities of the main participating countries, led by the Italian central government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Ministry for the Economic Development) and by other subnational actors, such as the Marche Region (Cagusi and Stocchiero 2016).

Table 16.2 Main steps towards the process of institutionalisation of EUSAIR

Main steps	Decision	Year
First Ancona declaration	Summit on development and security on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas	2000
Permanent secretariat of the Adriatic–Ionian	Inauguration of the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic–Ionian at the premises of Marche Region	2008
EU declaration	Support for the EU strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Basin	2010
Second Ancona declaration	Reconfirm the importance to establish of an EU strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region	2010
Launch of the EUSAIR strategy	European Council gives the European Commission the mandate to present the EUSAIR before the end of 2014	2012
Establishment of the committee of the regions	Setting up of the Adriatic–Ionian intergroup of the committee of the regions	2013
Approval by the European council	Communication from the European Commission to the other EU institutions and introduction of the action plan	2014

Source Authors' own elaboration

At the beginning of 2000, Italy hosted the first Summit on Development and Security on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, which was attended by almost all the EUSAIR countries, except Montenegro and Serbia, which were included later on. The main objective of this Summit, known as the Ancona Declaration, was to guarantee the political and economic stabilisation of the Adriatic and Ionian Region after years of instability. Another aim was to enhance regional cooperation since “it is an effective incentive that is instrumental to fostering political and economic stability, thereby making it the most solid basis for progress in the European integration process” (Ancona Declaration 2000, p. 1).

In that period, the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII) was launched as an “initiative for dialogue and cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian Region and to this end to establish the Adriatic and Ionian Council (AIC)” (Ancona Declaration 2000, p. 3). Over time, a progressive consolidation of cooperation activities between countries and institutions has taken place. Every year, the AIC organises an annual meeting where progress in the level of cooperation is usually assessed and new initiatives are presented. To further formalise these cooperation activities, in 2008, the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic–Ionian was established in Ancona. The main objective of the Permanent Secretariat is to make the AII more project-oriented by coordinating several transnational cooperation activities. However, the turning point for the consolidation of the EU macro-region strategy was the 2010 Declaration of the Adriatic–Ionian Council on the support to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region where the AIC affirmed its readiness to foster an attractive, secure and prosperous region, as well as to place the region within a European regional policy perspective. Moreover, the importance of collaborating with the EU Commission for the preparation and implementation of the Strategy, involving national, regional and local administrations, was finally

recognised. With the 2012 launch of the EUSAIR Strategy, the European Council provided the mandate to present the Strategy before the end of 2014. In 2013, the Adriatic–Ionian Intergroup of the Committee of the Regions was established with the aim of fostering a broader engagement and the proactive role of local and regional communities. In 2014, the European Council approved the official version of EUSAIR and its Action Plan, concluding the institutionalisation process, which started in 2000 with the first Ancona Declaration.

With the introduction of the EUSAIR, the need to adopt a multilevel governance perspective by anchoring its activity within an intergovernmental approach was confirmed. However, after the institutionalisation of the EUSAIR the role of AII was discussed because of an overlap of authorities and competencies, as well as to make both strategies more effective. This discussion led to the 2015 Meeting of the Adriatic and Ionian Council, which stressed the need to align the AII and EUSAIR priorities, to put in practice the principle of subsidiarity and to have a common political management.

16.3.2 Governance Structure

Differently from other EU transnational initiatives, macro-regions have no possibilities to benefit from new funds (which can, however, be obtained by using existing EU financial channels); from new legislation (since laws should be based on the existing EU legislation framework); nor to introduce new institutions. As Gänzle and Mirtl (2019, p. 249) point out, the four strategies “exhibit more structural commonalities than differences with regards to their governance architecture”. To implement the Strategy, however, an effective and operative governance structure is needed. In its 2014 Communication, the European Commission (2014a) affirmed that governance must have both a political and an operational dimension, stressing the importance of coordination and implementation. Coordination should be intended as between the participating countries, the different ministries and the decision-making levels of each country; implementation should focus on the participation of EU member and non-member countries, effective involvement of the EU Commission and key target stakeholders. In this sense, “better governance is not about new funds nor bureaucracy, but how and by whom the Strategy is implemented and joint actions initiated and financed” (European Commission 2014a).

The EUSAIR’s governance structure consists of a number of actors and institutions (Table 16.3). At the political level, the Ministerial Board represents the reference body concerning any political decision. The competent ministries for each country participate in it, in particular those that are responsible for EU funds management and foreign affairs. Concerning the coordination level, the main body is the Governing Board (co-chaired by the European Commission) that encompasses a series of participants from each country (national coordinators, at least two for each country) and European institutions (e.g. representatives from Commission

Table 16.3 EUSAIR governance structure and main responsibilities

	Governing Bodies	Main responsibilities
Political level	Ministerial board	Takes strategic decisions at the EUSAIR annual forums' ministerial meetings
Coordination level	EUSAIR Governing Board (GB)	Coordinates work of the four TSGs, provides strategic guidance for management and implementation of the strategy, advancing revision of the Strategy and Action Plan, ensuring coordination with existing regional cooperation organisations, developing a monitoring and evaluation framework
	National coordinators	
	Pillar coordinators of policy areas	
Implementation level	Thematic steering groups (TSGs)	Implement the strategy according to pillars' priorities, evaluating which projects/actions best contribute to achieving the strategy's objectives
	EUSAIR Facility Point	Give assistance to the Governing Board and Thematic Steering Groups; facilitating strategic project development and financial dialogue; building capacities for monitoring and evaluation of EUSAIR; developing and managing the EUSAIR Stakeholder platform

Source Authors' own elaboration

services, the European Parliament). The main duty of the Governing Board (GB) is to coordinate the Thematic Steering Groups (TSGs), advancing potential revisions for the Strategy and Action plan, ensuring coordination with existing regional cooperation organisations and developing a monitoring and evaluation framework. The Governing Board is seen as the hinge between the political/ministerial level and the operational/managerial level represented by the TSGs. The TSGs consist of four thematic groups according to each pillar identified by the Strategy. Each thematic group is chaired by a tandem of countries (for at least three years) on a rotating basis. As the operative body, each TSG is responsible for identifying actions and projects to be included in the Action Plan, guaranteeing their conformity to the pillars' objectives, identifying relevant funding sources and facilitating the implementation of actions and projects, and including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In addition, each TSG has to be in line with the other TSGs, liaising with the Managing Authorities, and the relevant EU programmes managed directly by the Commission, the International Financial Institutions and the regional cooperation organisations. In addition to the main strategic bodies (the GB and TSGs), the EUSAIR Facility Point Strategic Project was set up to facilitate the implementation of the Strategy on the condition of offering operational support to the governance structures of the Strategy. The current Facility Point is delegated to the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy, which coordinates the ministries, and one regional and one local authority for each of the participant countries.

16.3.3 *Objective and Priorities*

As affirmed by the EU Commission (2013), the general objective of the EUSAIR is to promote the sustainable economic and social prosperity of the Adriatic and Ionian Region and to preserve, at the same time, the environmental and costal ecosystem. The EUSAIR Strategy is set out in two main documents. The Communication of the EU Commission, which provides a framework for a coherent macro-regional strategy, and the Action Plan, which identifies the priorities and actions for the macro-region (European Commission 2014b).

The Strategy has four main pillars: blue growth, connecting the region, environmental quality and sustainable tourism. For each pillar, the Action Plan identifies a series of specific topics, actions and projects.

Blue growth (Greece–Montenegro) reflects the main objectives of the Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. The aim is to strengthen the ecosystem axis represented by Adriatic and Ionian Seas by promoting common initiatives concerning several topics like blue technologies, fisheries and aquaculture and maritime and marine governance and services (European Commission 2017). Particular attention is given to research by establishing, for example, networks and platforms for collaboration among the scientific community, public authorities and private companies. Great importance is also given to the transposition of and implementation of EU *acquis* on fisheries, principally among non-member states.

Connecting the region (Italy–Serbia) aims to optimise, improve and enhance connectivity infrastructure in the area, by reducing, minimising and addressing territorial disparities and environmental impacts. The Adriatic and Ionian Seas constitute an important transport route for goods, passengers and energy (EU Commission 2013). Great importance is also given to the implementation of the Adriatic Motorway of the Sea in according with the trans-European multimodal transport system and the Trans European Network-Transport (TEN-T). The macro-region is influenced by the EU energy infrastructure with the implementation of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Ionian Adriatic Pipeline (IAP) (Cotella et al. 2016).

Environmental quality (Slovenia–Bosnia and Herzegovina) seeks to preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment by implementing cross-sector dialogue and initiatives aimed at improving the environmental quality of the regional ecosystems and preserving their biodiversity (EU Commission 2013). It tries to be in line with the EU and international declarations and to provide strong coherence with the main directives (e.g. the Water Framework Directive), EU strategies (EU strategy on adaptation to climate change) and other instruments like Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). *Sustainable tourism* (Croatia–Albania) seeks to increase regional attractiveness by promoting diverse and more sustainable tourism practices that can involve coastal regions as well as inner areas according to the communication on blue growth, which clearly identified coastal and maritime tourism as one of the key areas for future jobs and growth from the blue economy (EU Commission 2013).

16.3.4 The Role of EUSAIR Within EU Transnational Strategies and Programmes

The EUSAIR is part of wider EU transnational strategies and programmes that are, entirely or partially, involving the Adriatic and Ionian countries. Since the Strategy is economically and strategically influenced by these programmes, it is important to locate the EUSAIR within the architecture of the EU's strategic programmes. Moreover, the macro-regional's strategic vision combines several EU economic, social and spatial needs. The identification and conceptualisation of the four pillars shows how close the EUSAIR is to the EU mainstream documents and norms (e.g. EU sectoral legislation, policy and discourse).

For example, the first pillar contributes to reinforcing the EU 2020 Strategy and the South East European 2020 Strategy, by promoting a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In line with the existing cooperation initiatives, the pillar enhances cooperation and the sharing of best practices between countries inside and outside of the region. Concerning the second pillar, alongside the general provisions of the EU 2020 Strategy, the SEE 2020, and the South East European 2020 Strategy, the Strategy has been influenced by the Trans-European Networks for transport (TEN-T) and the Trans-European Networks for Energy (TEN-E). The South-East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) is an important reference point for the Strategy concerning the transport infrastructure system in the Balkans. As regards the third pillar, the Strategy has been influenced by the series of EU Environmental *acquis* (Marine Strategy Framework, Maritime Spatial Planning, Water Framework and Habitats Directives in particular), as well as by the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the South East Europe 2020 Strategy of the Regional Cooperation Council. The fourth pillar also combines a series of EU provisions deriving from existing documents and strategies. In this respect, the Strategy reflects some aspects from "A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism and EU Tourism Policy (European Commission 2014c)", with an emphasis on promoting notions like sustainable tourism and competitiveness, and the integrated rehabilitation of cultural heritage.

These examples briefly show how the Strategy's content is strongly integrated with EU documents and programmes, denoting continuity in addressing common challenges in spite of a variety of instruments co-implemented by the EU.

16.4 The Influence of EUSAIR on Spatial Governance Configurations and on the EU Integration Processes

As seen in the previous sections, EU macro-regions seem to influence the way in which countries must adapt towards new spatial governance configurations. In particular, EUSAIR seems to have some potential impacts concerning territorial

governance and EU integration developments in the Adriatic–Ionian Region. Even if it is too early to provide detailed empirical evidence, since the impacts require time to produce appreciable effects, some preliminary observations show initial but significant impacts. In this section, the research will also provide some exemplification from both EU and non-EU countries. The collected data and information will be analysed through different lenses, such as territorial governance and spatial cohesion, sectoral and integrated policy approaches, regional and cross-border cooperation and Europeanisation processes.

16.4.1 Towards Better Territorial Governance and Spatial Cohesion

The dimensions of territorial governance and spatial cohesion help understand the way in which both EU members and non-EU members are participating in and contributing to the EUSAIR programme. It is also important to understand if the implementation of the Strategy is making some kind of impact in terms of changing formal and informal rules, norms and actors. In fact, these factors are important since they can enhance good territorial governance and be relevant for “specific categories of stakeholders active in territorial governance, namely (i) practitioners (ii) policy-makers and (iii) decision-makers” (Cotella et al. 2015, p. 248).

Looking at the participation of the countries in the Strategy, it can be observed that all have been contributing to the EUSAIR since its first establishment in 2014. In particular, Italy has been at the forefront in developing the idea and asking the EU to establish a macro-region for the Adriatic–Ionian area (Grandi and Sacco 2019). However, each country responds in a different way during the implementation of the macro-regional Strategy.

For example, as regards *territorial eligibility* (which areas of the country are interested by the Strategy), it can be observed that some countries are participating only with certain areas. For example, while Italy is participating in the EUSAIR only with some regions (those that have a direct relation with the Adriatic and Ionian seas), all the other countries are participating with their entire territory. Thus, territorial eligibility influences the way in which the Strategy is addressed and implemented, and the governance set-up of certain areas will be more influenced by the EUSAIR than others.

Looking at the *level of responsibility* (the administrative level where decisions are taken), and the main involved *actors* (which stakeholders are involved), other differences emerge. For example, Italy’s participation involves a series of central and regional authorities. The national steering committee sees at the top the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, with the Department of European Policy and the Department for Cohesion Policy, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, which also participates on the EUSAIR’s Governing Board. At the regional level, instead, the Italian Regions’

EUSAIR Group that represents all the regions involved has been created, while the Marche Region represents Italy at the Facility Point Project. In Albania, as in the majority of the non-member states, participation is restricted only at the national level by attributing all responsibility to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of European Integration. However, it has to be remembered that the macro-regional's Facility Point cannot replace national administrations, which should be better organised in order to implement more effectively the Strategy.

Another discriminating factor is the definition of *budget and funds* (the financial resources available). For example, while Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia take part as EU Member States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, instead, participate as non-Member States. This makes an important difference concerning the use of funding channels and the formulation of budgets. In fact, as IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) countries, the non-members participate through co-financing 15% of the budget with national funds as an additional fund to what is already foreseen by the IPA II instrument (Solly et al. 2018). Thus, EUSAIR, as all transnational EU initiatives, requires a national budget contribution besides the funds which derive from ESIF and ERDF (member countries) and IPA II (non-EU members).

The European Commission has recently pointed out the existence of a persistent gap between the political commitment and the actual follow-up at the administrative level, which should make reconsider the macro-regional governance set-up (European Commission 2019, p. 33). Nevertheless, EU macro-regions seem to favour the creation of new spatial governance configurations and organisations (e.g. new stakeholders, programmes, etc.). Moreover, this seems to push non-EU countries of the Adriatic–Ionian Region towards a more “European” governance set-up, supporting EU integration processes. This can especially be seen in the implementation mechanisms of budgets and funding. However, national and regional administrations need more effective resources (e.g. financial and human) to facilitate and improve the implementation of the Strategy (Berisha and Cotella; Trkulja and Dabović, in this volume).

According to the analysis carried out by the Study on Macro-regional Strategies and their links with Cohesion policy (European Commission 2017, pp. 118–122), “the quality of governance (i.e. regulatory quality and government effectiveness) and the institutional capacity of the EUSAIR countries vary”. The study shows a low quality of governance in all the countries of the macro-region. In particular, the best scores can be found in the four Member States: in Slovenia and Italy, followed by Croatia and Greece. However, the scores for these countries show a decrease in 2015 compared to 2008, as well as a worsening of their regulatory quality and levels of government effectiveness. The lowest governance scores are found in the four non-EU countries: Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even though the values are generally low for all the countries, they are still higher in the EU Member States than in the non-EU member countries. However, since 2008 all the countries of the second group (apart from Bosnia and Herzegovina) seem to have made considerable improvements, especially in regulatory quality (Nadin et al. 2018; Cotella et al. 2020; Berisha et al. 2020). In fact, the candidate

countries are approaching the EU governance standards while only Bosnia-Herzegovina is still far below the standard.

16.4.2 Balancing Sectoral and Integrated Policy Approaches

Macro-regional strategies are implemented through specific sectoral pillars and policies, which might influence the territorial governance and spatial planning system of a country. Sectoral policies can be defined as strategic policies dealing with specific sectors (e.g. environment, tourism, energy, transport), which are subject to EUSAIR's external influence. As regards territorial governance, a variety of strategies and objectives are implemented through sectoral policies, plans and programmes.

For example, as regards the *actors* (which actors are responsible for each pillar) involved, Italy participates in EUSAIR at the national and regional level simultaneously. Each pillar involves both national authorities (e.g. line ministries) and regional actors. The responsibility for the first pillar (blue growth) is under the charge, at the national level, of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, the former Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies now substituted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Tourism Policies, while, at the regional level, of the Veneto and Molise regions. A similar distribution of responsibility has taken place also for the other pillars, where both national and regional levels are involved. When it comes to Albania, however, due to the reorganisation of ministries it is hard to find information on how the country is managing the EUSAIR at the national level.

As regards the adopted *strategies* (which strategies have been adopted in relation to EUSAIR), in some sectors (e.g. tourism) important progress is being made. For example, Italy has produced the Strategic Plan for Development of Tourism that recalls some elements from the EUSAIR by implementing them at the national level. Similar things are happening in Albania, which is promoting some national and international forums on sustainable tourism that are facilitating networking among NGOs (European Commission 2017). However, this is not common for all the sectors. Indeed, similar strategies adopted by Albania in the field of transport do not mention the EUSAIR Strategy at all.

As regards the *level of policy dialogue* (thus, how and if the EUSAIR is facilitating the institutional dialogue), the macro-region Strategy process facilitates synergies between policies and helps to better understand the big picture at the policy level (European Commission 2017).

In general, it seems that the macro-region is enhancing the creation and implementation of various sectoral policies, especially those that are in line with the strategies of the different pillars. This process also seems to enhance relations between EU members as well as helping non-EU members in their integrations paths.

16.4.3 *Favouring Transnational and Cross-Border Cooperation*

Since the 2000s, cooperation has improved in the entire region, establishing stakeholder networks (e.g. between cities, universities), also thanks to the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII) and the ADRIION programme which covered the same eight countries and geographical areas.

As seen before, there is strong EU political and financial support for cooperation in the region, as well as to strengthen relations with EU neighbouring countries (Berisha 2018b). The EU is also supporting the Western Balkans initiative to establish a Regional Economic Area to create new opportunities within the region. Indeed, the EUSAIR is transforming existing territorial and spatial development patterns, as well as the role of international actors at the various levels, leading to new forms of government and of multilevel governance. Thus, both in EU members and non-EU countries, macro-regions are currently fostering the establishment of new stakeholders (see also Solly et al. 2018).

As regards *capacity building* (sharing of methods, skills and tools), there is a need to improve the sharing of expertise and to reinforce cooperation between the various scientific communities. In fact, Vesković and Haller (2017, p. 97) explain that in the macro-regions that also include EU non-member states (e.g. the Danube and the Adriatic–Ionian), the scientific communities have a relatively low participation in the EU research Framework Programme and less cooperation activities with the EU Joint Research Centre. For example, enhancing the creation of scientific clusters and collaboration between experts at the EU level and the Member States should increase the capacity building of the whole macro-region. These scientific clusters should also provide a more efficient management of the action plan of the Strategy and lead to the development of cohesion policies (Vesković and Haller 2017, p. 99), strengthening horizontal linkages within macro-regions.

As regards *inclusion and transparency* (i.e. transparent and inclusive governance processes), the Facility Point is developing the Stakeholder Platform in order to ensure more direct information and communication with the various actors, increasing social inclusiveness. This should also improve participation in public meetings and *knowledge exchange*, increasing the possibility to share experiences, best practices and build new partnerships (European Commission 2019, p. 33). Communication activities (e.g. through public events, social media) are being carried out by the Facility Point, helping to raise awareness and visibility among citizens.

As stated in the 2019 Report on the Implementation of EU macro-regional Strategies, the launch of EUSAIR raised high expectations among stakeholders, expecting “immediate tangible results in terms of strengthened cooperation and macro-regional actions and projects”; however, “the very nature of macro-regional strategies requires a change of mind-set among key implementers and stakeholders” (European Commission 2019, p. 26). However, in the current 2014–2020 period, various programmes are still implemented according to national interests and good

outcomes in terms of macro-regional projects mainly regard the various Interreg programmes (e.g. CBC Italy–Croatia; IPA-CBC Italy–Croatia–Montenegro). In order to strengthen cooperation and networking, it is necessary for stakeholders to increase their overall interest in the entire region, enhancing common policy objectives.

16.4.4 Triggering Europeanisation Episodes

Territorial governance and spatial cohesion, sectoral and integrated policy approaches, and regional and cross-border cooperation, are all instruments that favour and enhance the Europeanisation processes (Adams et al. 2011; Cotella and Stead 2011; Cotella 2020). For example, “spatial planning practice in Italy has changed over the last two decades under the influence of the EU territorial governance agenda” (Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2011, 2015). In this regard, macro-regions can be seen as channels of Europeanisation between the EU and its member states, as well as channels of integration and enlargement for non-EU countries. Indeed, among other aspects, Europeanisation should be considered as a stage in the development of EU integration (see Coman et al. 2014).

As regards the Mediterranean area, the countries involved in the EUSAIR macro-region seem to have been influenced by the Europeanisation processes. In fact, the EU has been, directly and indirectly, influencing the national *discourse* of the various countries through EU instruments, transnational and cross-border programmes and sectoral policies. As explained previously, the content of each EUSAIR pillar takes inspiration from existing EU legislation, policy and main-stream discourse (see Table 16.4) that in turn influence domestic sectoral strategies and programmes. For example, the Blue Growth pillar builds on existing EU *sectoral legislation* (e.g. Water Framework, Maritime Spatial Planning Directive), EU *policy* (e.g. EU 2020 Strategy, Barcelona Convention) and promotes one of Europe’s main policy discourses: sustainability. The importance of the EU policy discourse on sustainability can be seen in the many interventions that have been put in place by European regions in order to achieve a more sustainable urbanisation and land use (Solly et al. 2020, p. 2; Solly et al. 2021).

Overall, the Strategy adapts and scales various EU objectives, taking examples from existing EU documents and strategies, and considering the contextual needs and spatial priorities of the region. This makes the Strategy more understandable by both sides: the EU, which sees its ideas and principles applied at a lower level, and the various countries involved, which see the help of a supra-national body as a way of facing current challenges.

Table 16.4 EUSAIR pillars and EU mainstream documents and legislation

Pillars	EU sectoral legislation	EU policy	EU discourse
Blue Growth	Water Framework and Maritime Spatial Planning Directive	EU 2020 Strategy, Maritime Strategy Adriatic and Ionian Seas, Barcelona Convention, South East European 2020 Strategy	Sustainability, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, cooperation
Connecting the region	Transport and energy sectoral legislation	EU 2020 Strategy, SEE 2020, South East European 2020 Strategy, TEN-T and TEN-E, SEETO	Sustainable transport, integration infrastructure system, energy efficiency
Environmental quality	EU Environmental <i>acquis</i> , water framework directive, maritime spatial planning directive	EU Strategy for on Adaptation to climate change Green Infrastructure Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and SEE 2020	Climate change, adaptation, risk prevention and mitigation, environmental protection
Sustainable tourism	n.a.	A European strategy for more growth and jobs in coastal and maritime tourism EU tourism policy	Sustainability and competitiveness, integrated rehabilitation of cultural heritage

Source Authors' own elaboration

16.5 Conclusive Remarks: What Future for EU Macro-Regional Strategies?

The need to adopt trans-governmental strategies referring to specific geographical and functional regions has been discussed and recognised only in the last decade. This is justified since, for some reasons, “the EU has not undertaken an optimum level of intervention, being in some cases *too large* or in others *too small* to deal with territorial challenges”, as affirmed by Majone (2014). Thus, the implementation of macro-strategies is one of the biggest challenges for both the EU and its member states. As shown in this study, the impacts of these kinds of macro-regional strategies are largely unknown and often underestimated.

The macro-strategy approach is a European governance experiment that has a different distinctiveness compared to existing EU initiatives. The well-known motto of the macro-regions strategy “no funds, no institution and no legislation” is contributing to optimise the existing economic and institutional resources and to avoid the overlapping of strategies and institutions. Moreover, the two main documents that constitute the guiding line of an EU macro-region—the Strategy and the Action Plan—are the outcomes of a compromise between an EU perspective and the

various macro-regional needs and priorities. This is clear when it comes to analysing the content and principles of those documents where a combination of existing EU policies, norms and strategies has been incorporated. Moving to the level of implementation and looking in particular at the case of EUSAIR, it seems that, the Strategy has at least two different territorial governance effects. The first refers to the potential differentiation of the impacts. For example, in Italy the regions included in the Strategy are more affected by its impacts than those excluded which present a lower influence. The second refers to the implementation of the Strategy and its relative impacts. For example, while the Italian regions (those interested by the Strategy) can be active in addressing common issues deriving from the Strategy and bringing economic and political advantages, in Albania and Serbia, for example, the participation of the local level (i.e. districts and municipalities) is very marginal and often perceived as top-down. The same influence mechanism can be seen in sectoral policies, where the implementation and influence of the Strategy is very different from one sector to another. Even though EUSAIR promotes an integrated approach, the implementation then depends on how the domestic contexts are managing the Strategy and which kinds of institutional relations may exist (e.g. coordination, collaboration, level of transparency). In any case, it is too early to have common regional approaches on specific sectors, denoting a lack of coordination among countries and within each country. This is also a direct consequence of how the Strategy has been conceptualised (four pillars) and implemented (two countries for each pillar). In fact, even if there are some cross-cutting development areas such as blue growth and tourism, the main affected sectors seem to be the transport, energy and environment sectors.

Overall, since the launch of the EUSAIR, transnational and cross-border cooperation has increased, while EU integration processes have also been strengthened. However, it is still necessary to improve certain aspects, such as multi-level governance, horizontal and vertical cooperation, cross-sectoral coordination and transnational exchange of good practices. If improved, these dimensions should better support the EUSAIR as well as enhance the processes of EU integration. As explained in the 2019 Report on the Implementation of EU macro-regional Strategies, the “participation of enlargement countries in the EUSAIR governance on an equal footing with EU Member States is to be considered a capacity building process accustoming them to the EU working methods and preparing for their future EU membership” (European Commission 2019, p. 26). Indeed, it seems that the Strategy brings significant added value in the region, increasing cooperation between the various countries. Thus, the Strategy should be seen as part of the wider process of Europeanisation, which each country is undergoing. In fact, the EUSAIR seems to be a channel of influence that transposes the logic and principles of other EU strategies and policies, as well as regulations and norms.

Moreover, in the coming years, the EUSAIR will have to deal with important challenges like the need for a dedicated funding programme, a new governance configuration and enlargement for new entries. Indeed, in order to strengthen integration processes in the light of the next programming periods (2021–2027), macro-regional strategies should be included and implemented in the IPA

programming documents and funds (European Commission 2019, pp. 29–30). In this perspective, also the Catania Declaration recalls the “need for establishment during the new Programming period 2021–2027 of a dedicated Territorial Cooperation Programme with substantial and balanced financial resources (ERDF-IPA) to have the same geographical coverage as EUSAIR and aligned to it” (2018, p. 3). Thus, it is important to carefully balance the available EU funds in both EU and non-EU countries. Moreover, the establishment of national EUSAIR committees could enhance the implementation of the EUSAIR in each domestic context. In 2018, the AIC pointed out the growing importance of the macro-region through the intention of North Macedonia to become the ninth participating country. Today, the European Commission (2019, p. 2) confirms that in the coming months a new challenge might result from the accession of North Macedonia to the EUSAIR, which could lead to changes in the overall coordination of the Strategy. Another upcoming challenge is to facilitate the implementation of the recent Western Balkans strategy and to address emerging geopolitical challenges (Berisha 2018a; Berisha et al., in this volume), such as migration movements and refugees, and the growing international investments promoted by China thanks to the launching of the Belt and Road Initiative (Cotella and Berisha 2016, 2019; Mondozi et al. 2019).

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that this study is a first attempt to explore the potential impacts and thus to open up the debate on future theoretical and methodological integrations. Its scope is not therefore to provide an exhaustive explanation of EUSAIR’s impact (it is still too early), but rather to establish a common starting point for future research activities and to contribute to the scientific and academic debate in this field. The application of specific case studies on certain projects or programmes might help the future analysis. In fact, it might be easier to understand in more depth if there are changes happening in spatial governance processes and procedures, as well as to be able to distinguish the possible impacts.

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Chapter 17

Governing Territorial Development in the Western Balkans: Conclusive Remarks and Future Research Perspectives



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Abstract As the various contributions included in the volume show, since the beginning of the 1990s, territorial development and governance in the Western Balkans have been subjected to drastic and tumultuous transformations. Drawing on the arguments developed by the different authors, this concluding chapter summarizes the main messages of the book and illustrates the key open questions that characterize the debate around territorial development and governance in the region, as well as the challenges that are to be faced in the years to come. The chapter concludes by identifying a number of future research perspectives, that could allow a better understanding of the regional context under scrutiny.

Keywords Western Balkan Region · Territorial governance · Spatial planning · EU integration · Territorial cooperation

17.1 Introduction

Territorial development and the governance models and mechanisms put in place to steer and regulate it are ever-evolving and context-dependent (Adams et al. 2011). From a theoretical perspective, territorial governance and spatial planning systems owe their shape to a multitude of economic, social and institutional variables (Berisha 2018), acting as institutional technologies that “allow the public authority to guide and control the transformation of the physical space in respect of property

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rights, through the concurrence of constitutional and legal devices, administrative provisions and tools, and technical knowledge, as established and possibly modified over time within each institutional context” (Berisha et al. 2020, p. 1). As such, they are socially constructed and deeply rooted in domestic planning cultures (Knieling and Othengrafen 2009; Adams et al. 2011, 2014; Cotella and Stead 2011; Servillo and Van den Broeck 2012). In this light, due to its particular transitional nature, the Western Balkan Region constitutes a fruitful field for empirical studies on the topic. The evolution of territorial governance and spatial planning in the Western Balkan Region has taken place in parallel with the multidimensional transformations that have interested the region in the post-1989 period. The last three decades have been characterized by an unceasing process of change, profoundly dependent on contextual and external circumstances. The readjustment of the state’s mechanisms has been influenced by the strong will to embrace the market economy as well as by the progress of the EU integration process, in turn requiring the introduction of a number of structural reforms that have interested various fields such as the economy, public administration, property rights and local government.

Thanks to the heterogeneity of its contributions, this book has provided the opportunity to discuss a number of key issues that cut across these transformations. In particular, each chapter has been a privileged observatory on how territorial development and governance have been evolving; taken together they allow the volume to provide important insights on the three overarching questions that have shaped its structure: (i) what do the present and future of territorial governance in the Western Balkans look like? (ii) what territorial and institutional challenges remain to be faced? (iii) what role can territorial cooperation play in this picture?

This concluding chapter draws on the various arguments put forward by the authors in the different contributions, to provide the reader with evidence-based answers to these questions. Far from being exhaustive, these answers further problematize the issues at stake. In so doing they contribute to reduce the existing knowledge gap on the region, at the same time raising further interrogatives and paving new ways for future research. In particular, the following sections highlight the mutual implications linking territorial governance and spatial planning with the evolving socioeconomic trends that had characterized the Western Balkans since the 1990s. After that, the authors reflect upon the present and future of territorial governance in the region on the basis of the information provided in the various chapters. The main challenges that still characterize territorial governance in the Western Balkans are then brought forward, such as the lack of participation and the need for further inclusiveness and integration. Finally, the potential added value of territorial cooperation initiatives in solving these challenges and, more in general, in providing further substance to the European integration process, is pointed out. A concluding section rounds off the chapter and the book, sketching out a number of directions for future research.

17.2 Socioeconomic Dynamics and Territorial Governance: Mutual Implications

17.2.1 Socioeconomic Dynamics and Trends

The Western Balkan Region is characterized by rather contradictory socioeconomic trends. When compared to the rest of Europe, the countries composing the region suffer from a competitive gap in terms of infrastructure development, macroeconomic performance, higher education and training, technological readiness, market size and innovation. At the same time, the region seems to perform well in terms of renewable energy provision and tourism, and has benefited from a growing number of foreign investments in the last decades (Gaifami et al. 2020). A recent report of the World Economic Forum clearly shows that the socioeconomic trends in the region are relatively low compared to more advanced countries, as well as very heterogeneous within the region itself (World Economic Forum 2019) (see Table 17.1). In this respect, the data included in the territorial analysis of the European territorial cooperation programme ADRION show how the 2008 global economic crisis contribute to the increase of inequalities in almost all countries, when exploring economic development at the NUTS 2 and NUTS3 levels (Gaifami et al. 2020, Berisha and Cotella, in this volume). More in particular, when analysing a number of socioeconomic indicators for the period 2009–2019, some countries show an increase in competitiveness values. This is the case of Albania (that moved from the 108th position to the 81st position over the 141 countries analysed in the report) and of Bosnia and Herzegovina (improving its position from the 107th to the 92nd place) and Serbia (from the 85th to the 72nd place). On the contrary, other countries have worsened their performance, as it is the case for North Macedonia (from the 69th to the 82nd place), Montenegro (from the 65th to the 73rd place) and Croatia (from the 61st to the 63rd place).

Uneven trends are also identifiable in relation to most recent performance, with countries like Croatia and North Macedonia that have improved their conditions between 2018 and 2019, while the other countries that appear worse off in this comparison (e.g. Albania and Serbia have, respectively, lost 5 and 7 positions in the ranking). This heterogeneous picture is also visible when one considers selected indicators that are directly or indirectly linked with territorial development, as the overall unemployment rate (Fig. 17.1), the GINI index¹ (Fig. 17.2) and the share of renewable energy consumption (Fig. 17.3).

In particular, when looking at the unemployment rate it is possible to notice a rather large gap between Slovenia and Croatia, countries that are already member of the EU and, respectively, feature 5.5 and 8.9% values, and the rest of the Western Balkan countries, featuring higher values that peaks at above 20% in North

¹The GINI coefficient measures the deviation of the distribution of income among individuals or households within a country from a perfectly equal distribution. A value of 0 represents absolute equality, a value of 100 absolute inequality.

Table 17.1 Western Balkan countries socioeconomic performance

Country ^a	Country's ranking and trends										Indicators' performance 2019																							
	2009		2018		2019		Trend 09-19		Trend 18-19		Insti- tutions		Infra- structure		ICT		Macro economic stability		Health		Skills		Product market		Labour market		Financial system		Market size		Business dynamism		Inno- vation capacity	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Trend	Value	Rank	Trend	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank		
Albania	108th	76th	81st	81st	↑		52	58	53	70	86	69	54	65	53	40	62	30																
Bosnia and Herzegovina	107th	91st	92nd	92nd	↑	↓	44	63	52	75	80	60	50	53	58	42	51	28																
Croatia	61st	68th	63rd	63rd	↓	↑	52	78	61	90	86	63	53	56	62	50	55	38																
Montenegro	65th	71st	73rd	73rd	↓	↓	57	64	63	70	81	69	59	68	68	29	64	38																
North Macedonia	69th	84th	82nd	82nd	↓	↑	51	67	58	75	81	60	49	58	44th	134th	50th	69th																
Serbia	85th	65th	72nd	72nd	↑	↓	52	74	53	75	79	68	55	62	57	52	63	40																
							75th	51st	77th	64th	76th	55th	73rd	54th	82nd	74th	54th	59th																

Source: Author's own elaboration based on World Economic Forum (2019)

^aData for Kosovo are unavailable



Fig. 17.1 Unemployment rate 2019. *Source* Authors' own elaboration based on World Economic Forum (2019)

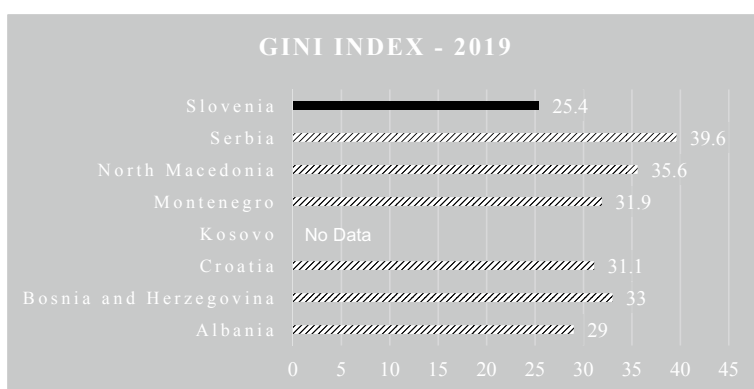


Fig. 17.2 GINI index, 2019. *Source* Authors' own elaboration based on World Economic Forum (2019)

Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unemployment is indeed one of the main socioeconomic challenges that the region has been facing through time and is also one of the reasons why inhabitants (and mainly the young ones) are abandoning the declining territories, this in turn having a negative impact on the overall territorial capital and development potentials (Gaifami et al. 2020). From a territorial perspective, these emigration dynamics are causing the increase of regional disparities in the Western Balkans, as well as within each of the countries therein.²

²This negative demographic trend is also sharpened by the increasing of average age of the population. This is particularly significant in Albania where the average age has increased of around 35% in the last two decades (Gaifami et al. 2020).

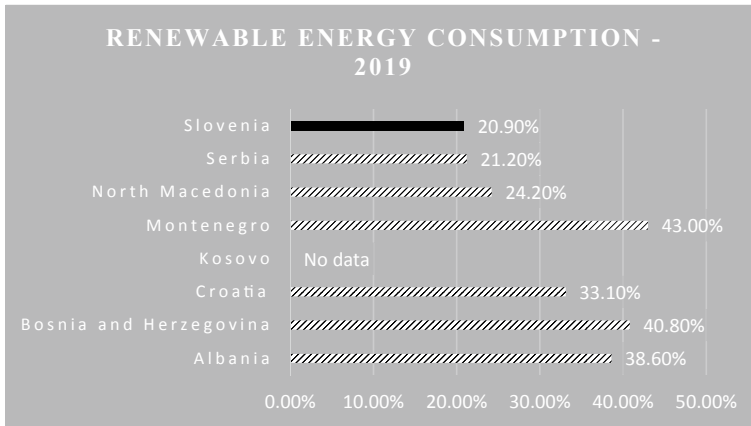


Fig. 17.3 Renewable energy consumption, 2019. *Source* Authors' own elaboration based on World Economic Forum (2019)

When it comes to the regional performance in relation to societal inequalities, the GINI index shows rather mixed figures, with countries like Albania (29), Croatia (31.1) and Montenegro (31.9) that are characterized by relatively low values, while Serbia stands out as one of the most unequal countries in Europe (39.6). Overall, since the 2000s onwards, most countries of the Western Balkan Region have shown a common tendency towards increasing inequalities, this mirroring the situation that have characterized the countries from Central and Eastern Europe after they abandoned their Soviet-inspired economic models (Cotella 2007). In turn, this has important consequences in terms of territorial development such as for instance the multiplication of informal settlements and socially segregated communities. In these terms, it is important to highlight that all countries in the region are characterized by the presence of a more or less relevant share of illegal settlements, that mainly concentrate in the main cities (Požani 2018; Berisha 2018; Berisha and Pinnavaia 2018a, b). In turn, this illegal (sub)urbanization, accelerated by the increase of spatial and social inequalities, has progressively eroded the capacity of the public to influence territorial development.

Partly in opposition with the mentioned negative trends the Western Balkan countries show rather positive results in relation to the share of energy consumption derived from renewable sources. In particular, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania produce a rather high share of renewable energy—respectively, accounting for the 43%, the 40.8% and the 38.6% of the national consumption—and this shows that the investments that have been targeting this field in the last decade are starting to pay off. This indicator, despite not having a direct spatial dimension, offers the opportunity to reflect on how the geographical and morphological characteristics of the region can constitute an added value in the promotion of sustainable development, this constituting a potential asset in the light of the integration into the EU and in particular for the implementation of the EU

energy agenda (Cotella et al. 2016; Valkenburg and Cotella 2016). Moreover, the last decade has been characterized by an increasing attention to the tourism industry, with the regions that has consolidated as a renowned destination in the overall European framework (Gaifami et al. 2020). Accordingly, the tourism sector and the related activities represent one of the most relevant economic sectors in Montenegro (30% of the GNP), North Macedonia (23%) and Croatia (23%). From a territorial perspective, this indicator should contribute to influence the definition of future development strategies and the allocation of investments. At the same time, it also rises a warning in relation to the increasing development pressures that have characterized the main tourism destination located on the Western Balkan coast and that, in turn, is putting the environmental and cultural heritage of the region in danger (Gaifami et al. 2020).

17.2.2 Institutional Implications and Influence on Territorial Governance

The socioeconomic and institutional dynamics that have characterized the Western Balkan countries since the beginning of the transition have certainly influenced the way in which the systems of territorial governance and spatial planning have evolved and consolidated (Nadin et al. 2018; Berisha et al., in this volume). At the same time, the incremental reforms in terms of territorial governance and spatial planning have contributed to shape the evolution of the region's socioeconomic trends. Until the 1990s, the spatial planning activity was merely seen as a "transmission belt", where decisions were taken at the central level and then implemented hierarchically through the State apparatuses. Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was immediately evident that this model was unable to respond to the new socioeconomic challenges such as privatization, liberalization and decentralization (Berisha and Cotella, in this volume). In particular, the incremental privatization of land, building stock and economic activities was not contemplated by the old mechanisms, that all of a sudden became obsolete.

Public economic actions, that were predominant before the 1990s, were quickly overshadowed by the action of private operators, with territorial governance and spatial planning activities that were often perceived as impediments for private developments. Not only spatial planning, but almost all forms of public initiative aiming at addressing the evolving socioeconomic dynamics were progressively withdrawn, with the aim to leave room for market mechanisms and logics to take roots. The combination of this institutional vacuum and of the negative attitude towards any form of constriction contributed to marginalize planning-related debates, with spatial planning that was mostly used by politicians to gain electoral consensus through patronage and clientelistic actions (Berisha 2018). As a consequence, private actors were free to act, in the absence of regulatory paradigms and most often stimulated by marketing approaches put in place by the public sector.

The lack of any form of spatial steering of the localization of investments quickly contributed to increase the development gap between places characterized by different attractiveness, as took place in almost all post-communist countries. Territorial disparities rose dramatically, with the capital cities and the main centres that started to develop relatively quickly, while those territories that, due to structural conditions, were less appealing to private entrepreneurship saw a steep decline of their economic performance. In particular, the monofunctional industrial and agricultural regions that had represented the main economic engines of Albania and Yugoslavia under the previous regime, started to decline and to feature unemployment trends comparatively higher than the rest of the countries. This situation was further worsened by the incremental withdrawal of the welfare system that characterized the previous historical period (as already highlighted in Chap. 2).

It was only after the second half of the 1990s that the various governments started to feel the need for specific mechanisms aiming at counteracting the growing disequilibria. This triggered a number of reforms that, at a different pace in the different countries, paved the way towards the reintroduction of territorial governance and spatial planning activities. However, the process proved to be particularly complex, as the decentralization of powers and competences happened in a rather opaque way and did not produce any relevant result at least until the end of the 1990s. More in detail, whereas each country implemented multiple reforms in the field of administration and local government, the devolution of power and responsibilities to the lower levels proved unsuccessful, due to a set of mechanisms that hampered its implementation (e.g. the lack of administrative capacity, the inertia of the central government that wanted to retain fiscal and financial power, the overlapping of responsibilities among authorities, etc.). The situation started to change around the mid-2000s, with the growing influx of resources delivered through EU pre-accession instruments. The latter contributed to provide an alternative source of development that did not follow the localization preferences of private investors, but was anchored in the logics of economic, social and territorial cohesion. As a consequence, a number of initiatives started to flourish in areas that would have otherwise remained at the margin of territorial development trajectories, as for instance inland areas and border regions. In turn, the new development dynamics progressively slowed down interregional and intraregional disparities, as it was recently highlighted in the territorial analysis that will underpin the coming ADRION transnational cooperation programme (Gaifami et al. 2020). At the same time, the actions sponsored by the EU are helping to progressively empower the local civil society, in so doing opening the door for the introduction and consolidation of new forms of territorial governance and spatial planning, which will hopefully contribute to more cohesive and place-based territorial development dynamics (see Toto and Shutina, in this volume).

17.3 The Present and Future of Territorial Governance in the Western Balkans

The various contributions included in this volume clearly show that the territorial governance and spatial planning systems of all the Western Balkans countries have been subject to profound transformation during the last 30 years, in terms of rules and regulations, instruments, agendas and practices. Even though not in the same way, the transition from a more normative to a more strategic approach to territorial governance has interested all the countries under scrutiny. This tumultuous process of change appears far from a conclusion, and it is still characterized by a number of open questions. Institutions remain rather fluid, although not as much as in the 1990s and early 2000s, and reforms and changes continue to occur at a relatively rapid pace. Within this scenario, a first concern regards the dichotomy that progressively has emerged between uncompleted decentralization trends and emerging recentralization trajectories, leading to unstable territorial governance configurations characterized by central-versus-local tensions. These tensions concern not only the territorial governance sphere, but all the functions of the state, and depend very much on the structure and layers that characterize each national context. The second issue emerging from a number of contributions concerns the incremental shift from a purely regulative to a more strategic approach to territorial governance and spatial planning. More in particular, there appears to be a tendency towards the inclusion of strategic and visionary activities, overall aimed at orienting territorial development towards more sustainable directions (Solly et al. 2020, 2021). Finally, a third issue concerns the discursive dimension of territorial governance and its progressive internationalization, despite the path-dependent forces that are in place resisting this change.

17.3.1 Between Decentralization and Recentralization

In the Western Balkan Region, similarly to the other countries of the Soviet bloc, spatial planning was considered a more or less state-centred business at least until 1989. The process of decentralization started after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and required a series of institutional and administrative reforms, in particular related to the introduction of subnational self-government units. Whereas local self-governments were set up almost immediately in all the countries, as a consequence of the will for autonomy that had been growing during 45 years of central control, the institution of a regional tier of government has been much more controversial.

As Marjanović et al. (in this volume) point out, in Serbia, the process of decentralization and administrative subdivision started in 1992 and was then followed by multiple reforms in 2007, 2016 and 2018. For its part, Croatia opted for a strong meso-level constituted by 21 counties. This regionalization process started in 1992, and paved the way for the introduction, in 2009, of the Law on regional development, which includes several prescriptions and indications directly

dedicated to the management and implementation of the EU cohesion policy (Kranjčević 2005). The Croatian administrative decentralization process has been, however, harshly criticized. In particular, Koprić (2007) reports that, for a long time, the Croatian administration remained attached to the legacy of socialist organization and continued to operate in a centralized manner. In particular, the process of decentralization was accompanied by parallel reforms aimed at maintaining the central control over the activities of the counties, with the national ministries that put in place hierarchical vertical structures aimed at influencing the action of the subnational level of government. Overall, as appears evident in the contribution by Dokic et al. (in this volume), the multiplication of local governance units, also as a consequence of the EU integration processes, did not coincide with the development of the necessary institutional capacity to independently plan and govern their territory. A very divergent path has been followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has undergone an unprecedented state administrative arrangement. Based on the Dayton Peace Agreement approved in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been divided into two different entities—the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika of Srpska—a structure that was then complemented with the addition of the Brčko District in 1999.³ This polymorphic administrative subdivision has paved the way for further decentralization within the entities. However, whereas the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina instituted a regional administrative level constituted by cantons enjoying a high level of autonomy, the Republika of Srpska does not envisage this kind of administrative layer. Despite these efforts, however, in both cases the devolution of responsibilities to the subnational level has not yet been concluded, nor has the decentralization of financial resources to any meaningful extent. Similar to the other Yugoslavian republics, also in Macedonia the process of decentralization took time, and was consolidated only after multiple reforms. According to Ivanišević et al. (in this volume), the country has gone through a largely unsuccessful decentralization following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. In this regard, the country's territorial structure only started to stabilize and consolidate in the mid-2000s thanks to the influence of the EU integration.

When it comes to Albania, as pointed out by a number of contributors (Chaps. 9 and 10, in this volume), the country has not yet managed to bring the regionalization process triggered more than a decade ago to a successful conclusion. More in particular, two new administrative reforms were introduced in the 2000s: the first one focusing on the organization and functioning of local government and the second on the administrative subdivision of local government units (Brahimi et al. 2013).⁴ Although some problems characterizing the administrative subdivision of

³Established by the Arbitration Tribunal for the Dispute over the Inter-Entity Boundary Line in the Brčko Area formed Brčko District.

⁴The reform provided the country with two levels of local government, 12 regions (in Albanian *qarku*) and 373 local units, of which 65 *bashkia* and 308 *komuna*. While the representatives of the lower level, the mayors and the members of the municipal councils, are directly elected, the board of each *qarku* is composed by representatives by the *bashkia* and the *komuna*.

the early 1990s were solved, the identification of the role and responsibilities of the regional level in the absence of the self-government political legitimacy remains a problem (Toto 2010a, b; Toto et al. 2014). This is also confirmed by the last law approved on the matter (Law 115/2014), that has reduced the number of first level local units to 61 municipalities, but did not change to any reasonable extent the number and the role of the Qarku. Another questionable issue of the decentralization approach adopted by the country concerns the distribution of financial resources. According to Toska and Bejko (2018) the Municipality of Tirana features a budget about 14 times higher than the national average, or about 307 times higher than the smallest municipality. The municipalities of Elbasan, Durrës, Fier and Shkodra belong to a second cluster, with a budget size about two times higher than the national average and about 48 times higher than that of the municipality with the lowest budget. These differences contribute to fuel the existing territorial imbalances and regional disparities in the country. While Albania is experiencing some form of decentralization, Montenegro has been recently experiencing the opposite. According to Dragović (in this volume), since the introduction of the new law on spatial planning (2017), the space for local municipalities to address territorial development has been reduced to a minimum. According to the author, “if the policy of spatial development continues its current course, the centre might not be able to hold and cope with the burden of the rapidly accumulating negative effects” that a centralized system will bring up.

In sum, whereas the promotion of an efficient and effective decentralization process is clearly supported by the European Union (EU), in relation to the development and implementation of programming tools related to the EU pre-accession policy and, in perspective, of the EU cohesion policy, a highly path-dependent inertia seems to persist, to maintain the locus of power and the control of financial resources at the central level.

17.3.2 Between Normative and Strategic Spatial Planning

As argued by a number of contributions in this volume, the first decade of transition has been characterized by the coexistence of strong normative and regulative spatial planning mechanisms and the emergence of more strategic territorial governance approaches (see also: Cotella 2014). While the former were recognized as a heritage of the socialist and communist regimes, the latter envisages more inclusive and future-oriented mechanisms that have been introduced through time also as a consequence of the external influence of international organizations. More in detail, for a long time territorial governance and spatial planning procedures were framed within the legacy of the central control planning doctrine that had characterized the previous historical period. A new wave of innovation within this field progressively emerged at the edge of the 2000s, as a consequence of the decentralization processes mentioned above and due to the progressive involvement of international actors within domestic democratization and policy-making. Within this process, an

increasingly important role has been played by the process of European integration, with the EU that had conditioned its pre-accession economic support to the development of territorial development strategies and programmes, in so doing influencing the way of doing things of domestic actors.

As a consequence, at the cusp of the new millennium territorial governance and spatial planning started to overcome the crisis of legitimacy they had been through since the early 1990s, to slowly become an activity focusing on effectively addressing future territorial development (Nedovic-Budic 2001). The number of strategic, forward looking plans started to grow, often prepared by international organization cooperating with local authorities. This process led to the consolidation of territorial governance and spatial planning systems that, at least formally, feature a coexistence of both regulative spatial planning tools and more strategic-oriented activities. After years of adaptation and reforms, the common opinion had consolidated the notion that an efficient territorial governance system should feature both strategic plans—hence future-oriented, long-term vision—and more operative plans—hence based on norms and regulation able to make planning effective in regulating land-use. This double perspective clearly emerges from the work of Zivanovic and Gataric (in this volume) in relation to the case of Serbia, arguing that the present legislation envisages a number of spatial planning documents, which are hierarchically related and diverse in nature (i.e. strategic or regulative), level (national, regional and local), objectives and mechanism of implementation.

More in general, as Trkulja and Dabović (in this volume) show, all the countries in the Western Balkan Region feature a mix of strategic and regulative spatial planning documents, that vary from context to context in relation to their objectives and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms. In some cases, as for instance the General Local Plan produced in Albania, the strategic and regulative dimensions of territorial governance are included in the same planning tool, and their operationalization is then delegated to specific Local Detailed Plans that are hierarchically dependent on the former (Berisha 2018; Toto and Shutina, in this volume). In Croatia, alongside the traditional regulatory planning activity, a number of development strategies have emerged through time, that aim at steering future development trajectories. In the recent period, as recognized by Dokic et al. (in this volume), the importance of strategic planning has been acknowledged at all administrative levels, as allowing the identification of the resources needed for achieving the planned objectives and thus reaching the envisaged future configurations. Significantly, a number of contributions clearly show that the public authority constitutes nowadays only one of the numerous stakeholders influencing the development of territorial development strategies, with the inclusion of the private sector and, to a lesser extent, of the civil society, that ensure more efficient transformations (Kordej-De Villa et al. 2009: 113).

17.3.3 Endo-Exogenesis of the Planning Discourse

The boundaries and contents of spatial planning discourses are constantly subject to change, as a consequence of a mixture of internal and external stimuli (Adams et al. 2011). Theoretically, discourse should here be intended as “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer 1995: 44). Like other policy spheres, territorial governance discourses and storylines are inscribed and structured by a set of complex notions elaborated by exogenous and endogenous communities of actors, and framed by specific values and orientations of the actors involved and their various interests (Berisha 2018). Based on this, territorial governance systems are framed by the discourses developed within multiple, overlapping communities of actors, concurring to the selection and combination of values, logics, aims and goals (see among others: Getimis 2012; Adams et al. 2011), in response to their perception of and reaction to the evolution of domestic socioeconomic conditions and challenges. In this light, from the contributions included in this volume it clearly emerges how the main territorial governance discourses and storylines that characterize the Western Balkan countries have evolved through time as a direct reaction to the evolving socioeconomic dynamics and the way they have been perceived by the actors that were called upon for dealing with them. In particular, this meant that different perceptions of these challenges had to come to terms and find a synthesis, all within knowledge arenas that were permeated by an uneven set of power relations, in which international actors could sometimes overcome the path-dependent logics of domestic actors by means of economic and political conditionality.

Within this process, Europeanization influences have been particularly relevant (Janin Rivolin 2012; Cotella and Janin Rivolin 2015; Cotella 2020), progressively influencing the way in which territorial governance was perceived and conceptualized. The contributions developed by Ivanišević et al., Simeonova and Stamenkov, Allkja, Dokic et al. and Trkulja and Dabović (respectively: Chaps. 6, 8, 9, 12 and 13, in this volume) provide meaningful evidence of this process, highlighting how Europeanization impacts on domestic contexts in a highly differential and fragmented way (see: Cotella and Stead 2011). More in general, all the contributions, in one way or another, show a progressive alignment of the Western Balkans territorial governance discourses to the mainstream development concepts detailed in a number of territorial development strategies produced by the European Union, and most importantly the European Spatial Development Perspective (CEC 1999); The Territorial Agendas of the European Union (DE Presidency 2007a; HU Presidency 2011), the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Cities (DE Presidency 2007b). Additionally, as will be further detailed below, the contributions included in Part III clearly point out that a relevant impact on domestic territorial governance discourses and practices has been exerted by the many territorial cooperation programmes put in place by the EU (Ivanišević et al., Trkulja and Dabovic, Vulevic et al., Pinnavaia and Berisha, Solly and Berisha, respectively, Chaps. 6, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in this volume).

At the same time, the collected evidence also raises a number of warning in relation to this influence. The impact produced by the European discourse is often limited to paying lip service to EU documents, a rhetorical plea that hardly affects local practices. As argued by Simeonova and Stamenkov, “the key challenges in the future will relate to how this transfer can be turned from just political ‘on paper’ good will to applicable well-planned practice, and how it can also have a strong impact at levels of organization and administration lower than the national level”. As pointed out by Allkja in relation to the Albanian case, it is only when domestic actors truly buy into the EU logics more in depth, that Europeanization produces a real added value. As a matter of fact, notions like polycentric development, smart growth, inclusive participation, cross-border cooperation, etc., while potentially constituting an added value for the development of domestic territorial governance strategies that aim at a further integration of the Western Balkan Region into the European space, should however be filtered and interpreted in relation to the specific local contexts, if they are to produce positive impacts (Cotella et al. 2015; Berisha 2018).

17.4 What Challenges Remain to Be Faced

Despite the numerous changes that the territorial governance and spatial planning systems of the countries under scrutiny have been through during the last thirty years, they still feature a number of unsolved challenges. In particular, these challenges are related with both substantive and procedural aspects of territorial governance and spatial planning. Even if the last three decades have been characterized by incremental reform processes, the collected contribution provides evidence of a number of recurring problematic nodes, among which the most relevant appear to be (i) the struggle to institute effective participatory procedures that allow for the inclusion of civil society in decision- and policy-making processes; (ii) the need to enhance the inclusiveness and transparency of the governance models; (iii) the difficulties encountered in the promotion of coordination and integration between different planning sectors and levels. Although these three challenges are obviously interrelated, the following subsections address them separately, in so doing allowing the reader to reflect upon and analytically distinguish the reasons behind them.

17.4.1 Lack of Inclusive Participatory Procedures

The lack of participatory mechanisms is one of the main challenges that characterize territorial governance and planning activities in the Western Balkan Region. This can be considered a challenge inherited from the previous historical period, when the public authorities did not deem it necessary to consult citizens in the decision-making process, as spatial localization decisions mostly obeyed economic

logics that were centrally defined. As a consequence, the majority of the contributors lament, either explicitly or implicitly, the scarce attention to citizens' involvement in the decision- and policy-making processes related to territorial governance and spatial planning.

The collapse of central economic planning and the consequent transition did not mean an increasing attention to the inclusion of citizens. Similarly to what occurred in the other transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the dismantling of socialist institutions paved the way for economic liberalization and a radical shift towards the free market (Cotella 2007). As Aliaj (2008) points out in relation to the case of Albania, the progressive hollowing out of the state transformed the country from a highly centralized state towards a "free for all", unregulated context, which paved the way for the explosion of informal development. Even when territorial governance and spatial planning gained increasing attention from policymakers, from the media and from the community of experts, a participatory planning approach was never fully implemented. As Hoxha et al. (in this volume) argue in their contribution, in both in Albania and Kosovo, the practice of participation has indeed been progressively recognized by law, and this is true for the majority of the countries examined here. However, the institutional interpretation of participatory planning is rather superficial almost everywhere, and often is seen as a series of public hearing events accompanied by communications initiatives in the local and national media. Even when the law is more aware of the role of citizens' involvement, as occurs in the Albanian case, the introduction of innovative instruments (like the Forum for Local Counselling mentioned above) it is voluntary and reliant on the political will of the public authority, which may jeopardize its implementation in practice.

Overall, the scarce attention to public participation remains an issue for the whole Western Balkan Region. According to Colic (2017), notions such as public interest, community participation and public spaces have been used by experts and practitioners to justify market-oriented initiatives. In other cases, the participation of citizens has been reduced to a minimum by centralizing planning activity, as is happening in Montenegro with the new spatial planning reform. However, some hope arises from the evidence collected in this book. Despite far from being systematic, the episodes of inclusion and participations that accompany the place-based local tourism development in Gramsh and the local plan of Suhareka in Kosovo (respectively: Toto and Shutina and Hoxha et al. in this volume) may represent seeds that could contribute to a more inclusive territorial governance approach in the years to come.

17.4.2 Need for Inclusive and More Transparent Governance Models

As far as the governance models are concerned, the majority of contributors and, in particular that authored by Toto and Shutina (in this volume), highlight the urgency of introducing more open, inclusive, transparent and multi-level models of

governance. As has been argued by Berisha and Cotella (in this volume), the institutional transformations that followed the fall of the Iron Curtain demanded a change of political mentality and behaviour, until then mainly based on public, central control. The need for a progressive consideration of market interests and the inclusion of private actors (i.e. market operators, associations, chambers of professionals, representatives of private interests, as well as NGOs and local community organizations) opened up the opportunity for shift towards a more inclusive governance approach. As emerges throughout the book, however, this institutional shift has never been fully implemented, while the majority of public decisions continue to be taken in a very rigid, hierarchical and often opaque perspective. When improvements in terms of administrative accessibility and transparency have been made, they have been sporadic and uncoordinated. This is because, for a long time, the relational power that drives the public institutions in their actions continued to be influenced by the historical legacy of the former communist and socialist power mechanisms. Indeed, for many years the lack of institutional coordination and stakeholder inclusion and cooperation, as well as the absence of transparent, place-based and inclusive approaches, have hampered the fluidity of the democratic practices that have been progressively introduced since the 1990s (TG-WeB 2019).

From a territorial governance and spatial planning perspective, the emerging of new spatial planning needs, concepts, practices and implementation mechanisms have not always been followed by the introduction of appropriate governance models. Multi-level governance logics, although widely acknowledged in official documents, are not implemented to a significant extent. The same goes for inclusive governance models that favour the involvement of underrepresented interests in policy-making process. Within these scarcely transparent configurations, where the public decision-making process does not envisage explicit mechanisms to take into account the interests of the different stakeholders, only the stronger actors have the chance to make their voice heard. This mostly occurs through opaque, often barely legal procedures, with private actors that carve out their own ways to bend public decisions to maximize their own benefits, at the detriment of the overall public interest. In order to face this challenge, it is important for decision- and policy-makers to proactively experiment alternative, more transparent mechanisms to manage power dynamics. Only the introduction of territorial governance models that are more transparent, adaptive and place-based could increase the credibility and the trustworthiness of government institutions, as well as the sustainability and acceptability of the promoted interventions to the benefit of all.

17.4.3 The Quest for Integration and Coordination

Finally, a recurrent challenge that emerges when exploring the evolution of territorial governance in the Western Balkan Region concerns the persistent lack of integration. Despite the efforts made by each country, well summarized by the

plethora of territorial governance reforms developed and approved during the last thirty years (as discussed by Trkulja and Dabović, in this volume), territorial governance activities still suffer from the lack of vertical—among territorial levels—and horizontal—among actors and sectors—coordination (Berisha 2018).

Whereas territorial governance integration requires the institution and operationalization of a number of coordinated inter-institutional mechanisms, the countries of the Western Balkans seem to have failed until now to develop them and, at the same time, they seem to lack the institutional capacity necessary for this task. As reported by Marjanović et al. (in this volume) for instance, in Serbia, while local planning activities appear clearly framed, regional spatial planning is still underdeveloped and dysfunctional, and this generates a number of internal frictions that overall hamper coordination. In this light, the scarce autonomy of regional units, often lacking administrative status and resource and acting *de facto* as outposts of central government, constitutes a drawback in various national contexts. In particular, where this configuration is effective in ensuring coordination between national and regional activities, with the regional authorities that implement at the regional level decisions that are taken centrally, it hampers at the same time any coordination with the activity of the municipalities.

This institutional discrepancy is evident also in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the national level has no competence for territorial governance, and this activity is delegated to the lower administrative level (Berisha 2018; Berisha et al. 2018). This administrative configuration is at the basis of the present territorial governance inefficiency, and the scarce coordination it has generated among local municipalities is one of the main causes of the territorial fragmentation that characterize the country (Uruci 2017; Marjanović et al. in this volume). The same kind of institutional incongruity also characterizes the administrative context of Albania, with the Qarku that, despite constituting the main regional administrative reference, are mostly responsible for sectoral initiatives and programmes that do not benefit from any overarching attempt at spatial integration. Also in the case of Croatia, when referring to coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning activities, Kordej-De Villa and Bakarić (this volume) point out the lack of any attempt towards implementing spatial coordination and integration. In particular, the authors argue that coastal zone management is still conceived in isolation from the main national development processes, which leads to fragmented and sometimes even contradictory results in its implementation process. Also, in this case, as the case of the Integrated Territorial Investments developed in the context of the city of Zagreb points out (Dokic et al. in this volume), precious inputs towards the establishment of vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms could derive from the programming instruments and incentives put in place by the European Union.

17.5 The Potential Added Value of Territorial Cooperation

As shown by the contributions included in the third part of this volume (Chaps. 11, 12, 13 and 14), territorial cooperation activities have been increasing in the Western Balkan Region starting from the end of the mid-2000s, mostly as a consequence of the financial support provided by the European Union and its pre-accession instruments. Over time, cooperation activities have become more and more welcome: countries and territories are recognizing the importance of cooperation and collaboration for addressing common challenges, as well as the role that EU incentives play for the development of local economies. Despite the extremely important role that territorial cooperation could play for the region, both in enhancing its internal coherence, as well as in accelerating the process of integration in the EU, it however remains a challenging issue for all the countries under scrutiny (with the partial exception of Croatia, mostly due to the achieved membership status), as well as for the region as a whole.

This process has been certainly facilitated by the implementation of the European Territorial Cooperation approach through a high number of cooperation programmes that have been activated in the last years. According to Trikuja and Dabovic (in this volume), one of the first typologies of EU cooperation launched in the region are the Euroregions that date back to the 1980s.⁵ However, from then until the end of the 1990s, political contingences and ethnic conflicts hampered the real potential of cooperation activities. Cross-border cooperation had gained momentum only since the mid-2000s, thanks to the introduction of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) that allowed the proliferation of EU programmes dedicated to this issue. Since then all the countries of the Western Balkans are participating and hence benefiting from a number of EU funded cooperation programmes. Overall, the support provided by the EU through IPA in the two last programming periods (2007–2013 and 2014–2020) amounts to more than 23 Billion EUR (Cotella and Berisha 2019), and a good share of this budget has been dedicated to the cross-border and transnational cooperation activities. The cooperation projects funded within this framework have focused on a number of different fields, among them the environment, energy and transport, tourism and rural and local economic development (SMEs, start-ups and youth employment), as well as initiatives concerning the blue economy. As highlighted by a number of contributors in this volume, the participation in these territorial cooperation programmes is bringing the Western Balkan countries closer to the EU. In particular, Vulevic et al. point out that the motivation for participating in this kind of cross-border and transnational programmes is not only to benefit economically, but also to share and take advantage of the knowledge exchange platform put in place

⁵According to the authors, the list of Euroregions includes Belasica, Danube XXI, Danube-Koros-Mures-Tisa, Drina-Sava-Majejica, Dunav-Drava-Sava, Eurobalkans, Morava-Pčinja-Struma, Nišava, Prespa-Ohrid and Stara Planina.

by the European Union. In this light, the authors argue that the participation in the EU macroregional strategy for the Danube Area has led to a better cooperation in the field of climate change and adaptation initiatives, at the same time favouring the sharing of best practice in the context of the cooperation area. This transfer of knowledge in relation to climate change adaptation could, in turn, contribute to enhance the development of domestic territorial governance actions aiming at making territories more resilient to unpredictable natural events.

Finally, as argued by Pinnavaia and Berisha (in this volume), the participation in territorial cooperation programmes, and in particular in those focusing on cross-border cooperation, has been producing a number of direct and indirect positive impacts in relation to various dimensions. Even if not immediately visible, in the medium and long run cooperation initiatives will contribute to soften the existing borders by reducing the distance between communities, as well as increasing transnational integration (Solly et al. 2018). In this respect, one of the main challenges identified by the authors is to overcome the container view that characterizes traditional territorial governance activities, through the creation of functional regions that go beyond administrative borders.

17.6 Towards a Research Agenda

One of the major difficulties in understanding territorial governance in the Western Balkan Region resides in the high fluidity that has characterized the area since the Collapse of the Iron Curtain. Aiming to make a contribution in this direction, this book paves the way for a better understating of the region by looking at it from different perspectives, ranging from regionalization to territorial cooperation, from public participation to new governance models, from strategic planning to national territorial governance and spatial planning reforms.

The various contributions included in the volume have shown that, despite the differential, path-dependent nature of the transition process, the Western Balkan countries, with their regions and cities, face common territorial governance challenges, such as insufficient institutional capacities; limited cooperation between policy sectors, stakeholders and places; and rather weak territorial governance and spatial planning configurations. At the same time, they have also shown that all the countries in the region share a common aspiration for a future within the EU, despite their diversity and idiosyncrasies. As a region of more than 20 million inhabitants, they share similarities with respect to their development and integration agendas, and face common imperfections in territorial governance and planning systems and practices. Although the EU has, through time, dedicated a growing number of efforts and funds to achieving better territorial governance and integration of policies, the results are still far from optimal and a long and troubled road still lies ahead for both the European Union and the region, if a full integration of the latter is to be achieved.

Far from being comprehensive, the evidence provided in this volume at least scratches the surface of an extremely complex and multifaceted reality, characterized by a number of concurring drivers of changes, all together contributing to continuously reshape domestic territorial governance: from domestic territorial challenges to the path-dependent inertial attitude of domestic actors, to the pressures exerted by the EU through the negotiation process and its funding programmes. All this opens up a number of opportunities for further research, in so doing calling for further, more focused analyses.

First of all, the lack of comprehensive analyses concerning territorial governance and spatial planning systems in the region and how they have evolved in the last three decades remains an important gap. Improvements in this direction would be particularly important not only for scholars in the field, but especially for policy and decisionmakers. In particular, a comparative overview of the evolution of the territorial governance and spatial planning systems would provide a meaningful contribution to the activities of those actors that, in their daily practice, are engaged in the promotion of territorial development activities within the various countries in question. At the same time, decision- and policymakers responsible for the development of territorial cooperation initiatives at the EU and the national levels would benefit from it, as they could take their decisions on the basis of actual comparable evidence on the functioning of the institutional and administrative contexts, in which their policies will have to work and produce an impact. This could be an opportunity also for international organizations to take better decisions regarding the definition and programming of their policy agendas dealing with the provision of financial support in the region. Finally, it would also constitute an added value for those civil society organizations advocating for a higher level of engagement in territorial governance activities.

Secondly, more focused attention should be dedicated to the process of European Integration, that could potentially change the regional geopolitical positioning in the coming years. The accession into the EU as full members is indeed crucial for all the countries concerned, at the same time constituting an important strategic objective for Europe as a whole, whereas the territorial implications of the full integration of the Western Balkan Region into the EU are multiple, until now only a handful of comprehensive research studies have been developed on the issue. In particular, the overall territorial implications for the Western Balkan Region as a whole are often overlooked, and so the ways in which the fulfilment of the integration process and its implications in terms of territorial support could drastically change the way in which territorial development has been conducted until now. To develop the necessary capacity to absorb the EU structural funds and benefit from the plethora of programmes attached to them will be a key factor in maximizing their impact. However, to this end, additional comparative knowledge is required. This issue can be appropriately addressed only if each country is fully aware of its institutional limits and potentials, as well as of the benefit they could gain. Moreover, national perspectives are not enough, and the various countries should be provided with the necessary knowledge base to speak with one voice, and to develop joint macroregional development strategies. In this light, future research

could focus on the capacity of the region on how to exploit the opportunity offered by present pre-accession instruments to prepare for accession into the EU cohesion policy framework.

Finally, an additional direction of research is highlighted, that lies outside the scope of the present work. Researchers should dedicate further attention to explore the implications of the evolving global influences and trends that are interesting the region. In this regard, of particular importance are the growing migration movements that interest the so-called Balkan route, which is one of the busiest migration routes leading to the core of the EU. From a territorial perspective, this challenge presents important territorial repercussions in a region that knows very well the meaning of building borders and isolating minorities. At the same time, and also as a consequence of the crucial position that the region occupies as one of the gateways of Europe, it is important to explore the territorial implications of the multitude of international investments that are growingly interesting the region. Alongside those of old Balkans friends like Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, etc., the role of China is becoming increasingly relevant, as the Chinese government has explicitly indicated the region as one of the cornerstones of its Belt and Road Initiative, a crucial corridor through which to deliver its products to the attractive Western and Central Europe markets. Overall, this new geopolitical scenario brings with it a series of open questions that deserve further inquiry, in particular to understand what real benefit it will actually bring to the region and what will be its impact on the overall EU integration process.

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