Implementation of territorial development (CPR, Title III, Chapter II) and its application in the European Territorial agenda 2030

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The European Parliament adopted by 549 votes to 26, with 37 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of territorial development (CPR, Title III, Chapter II) and its application in the European Territorial Agenda 2030.

Title III, Chapter II of the current Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) provides the basis for the drawing of cohesion policy funds through territorial development strategies.

The resolution stressed that, in the 2014-2020 period, only 28 % of strategies for sustainable urban development were implemented through integrated territorial investments (ITIs). It called on the Commission to take action to encourage the use of such tools to develop the TA2030, in particular through stepped-up communication activities. It also stressed the valuable contribution to territorial development delivered by actions implemented through **community-led local development** (CLLD) such as those under the LEADER programme.

Members welcomed the Handbook of territorial and local development strategies and the Handbook of sustainable urban development strategies as guides for all administrative levels for the design, implementation and monitoring of territorial and local, including urban, development strategies. They believed the dissemination of **good practices** should be fostered with a view to ensuring that projects are effective and sustainable and encouraged the Commission to produce timely guidelines to simplify the process for developing the programmes.

Strategic spatial planning

Parliament called on the Member States to promote strategic spatial planning that takes into account territories as a whole beyond metropolitan, urban and functional urban areas. It called, furthermore, on the Member States to strengthen rural-urban links as a way of achieving better balanced territorial development across the EU and to consider cross-border planning and implementation through bottom-up approaches such as CLLD/ITI.

The Commission and the Council to earmark funding for rural areas and regions that suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps in the same way that 8 % of cohesion policy funds are earmarked for the development of programmes under the Urban Agenda.

Participation of local and regional authorities

Taking into account the capacities demonstrated by local and regional authorities in the implementation and management of territorial tools, Parliament called for an effective implementation of the **partnership** principle and in-depth **consultation** with local and regional authorities and other stakeholders prior to the definition of ITI and CLLD actions. It highlighted the importance of the bottom-up approach to territorial development, while empowering citizens to take ownership of the development of their territories.

Use of territorial instruments

Members noted that territorial instruments, such as CLLDs and ITIs, are proven measures to bring the EU closer to citizens. Underlining the clear distinction between Member States that are committed to developing ITIs or CLLDs and those that are not, they called on the Commission to clarify this differentiation to avoid geographical disparities and to provide for tailored technical support for the Member States that have not made use of these territorial tools. They encouraged all Member States to make greater use of the integrated territorial development tools and to ensure respect for partnership as defined in Article 8 CPR. Integrated territorial development tools should be **mandatory** for Member States.

Territorial Agenda 2030 (TA2030)

Members considered the TA2030 to be a real and proper instrument that aims to reduce the spatial dimension of inequalities and to ensure the EU's cohesion through the management of each of its regions with their particularities. They believe, therefore, that **societies and territories should be more involved**. The Commission is called on to modify the role of the TA2030 beyond that of a territorial management guide.

The resolution stressed that the TA2030 actions should play a **central role in partnership agreements and programmes**. These actions should be more decisive in the allocation of funds and the need to promote the integration of the TA2030 into EU policies, with a focus on levels of governance closer to the ground. The TA2030 should be provided with **adequate funding** and an allocation methodology in the future multiannual financial framework.

It is also essential to include TA2030 priorities and objectives in the legislative instruments and programmes of the cohesion policy funds, which should be tailored to each territory.

Members pointed out the huge potential of the TA2030 and its current and future pilot projects in **addressing the highly diverse needs of non-urban areas**, including rural areas, mountainous areas, islands and coastal areas, remote and sparsely populated areas and many other types of territories where a mix of urban and rural features coexist.

Member States are called on to:

- develop their territorial agendas in line with the TA2030 as a basis for programming their territorial strategies, taking into account the specificities and highly diverse needs of each of their regions, and serving as an incentive, as well as in order to stimulate the decision-making process and the design of territorial and urban policies;

- **enable different territorial strategies for all EU regions** including rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, regions that suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, such as the northernmost regions and regions with very low population densities, islands, cross-border regions and mountain regions;

- promote the implementation of the TA2030 beyond pilot actions, making this instrument a reference framework for action that provides concrete and adapted guidelines for EU territories to improve their performance.

The Commission is called on to:

- ensure the proper implementation of funds and the implementation of territorial instruments, favouring efficient management without disproportionate bureaucracy;

- increase its involvement in territorial policy through cohesion policy and to strengthen the governance of regions in order to promote cohesion and micro-cohesion by covering the particularities of each region, improving decision-making at local and regional level and applying existing tools in order to improve the management of legislative instruments.