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Macro-regions and the European Union: the Role of Cohesion Policy



RSA Workshop on the EU Cohesion Policy
Lisbon 5-6 November 2015

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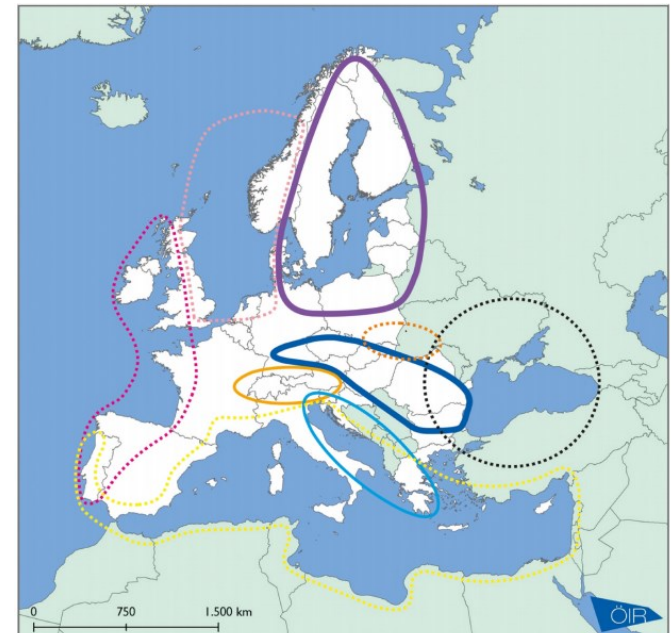
- Academic and policy debate
- The policy environment
- Cohesion policy programmes in Macro-regional strategies
 - Strategic and thematic focus
 - Financial resources
 - Coherence and coordination
 - Flexibility and inclusiveness
 - Governance
- Conclusions

- ‘Functional regions’ and ‘place-based policy making’ (Barca et al. 2012)
- Regional territorial capital
- ‘Spatial justice’ (Doucet 2008)
- ‘Territorial cohesion’ (CEC 2008).

- Macro-regional strategies a next step in European Territorial Cooperation
- 25 years of experience
- Congested policy arena



- Many regions and countries
- Broad thematic focus
- Three Nos – hinder or blessing?
 - No new institutions
 - No new legislation
 - No new funding
- Member State driven but strong role of EU institution



- Macro regional strategies are embedded in Cohesion policy programmes
 - Common Strategic Framework and Partnership Agreement
 - Regulations on ETC include reference to macro-regions
 - Inclusion provisions for enhancing capacity
 - Operational programmes
- Result orientation in 2014-20
 - Larger scale projects with greater impact
 - Provide links between funding streams
- Challenges
 - Timing issues
 - Partial relevance for programmes
 - Thematic concentration



- Cohesion policy provides a source of funding (particularly INTERREG B)
- Decline of 8.4 % overall budget
Cohesion policy (€324 billion)
- ETC/INTERREG budget relatively small



- Mutual benefits
 - Readily available funding instrument
 - Increase visibility and reach state actors
- Lack of alignment between structural funds and strategies in 2007-13
 - Lack of readiness to engage in strategic dialogue
 - Programmes operate in a bubble
- Focus on policy coherence in 2014-20
 - Contribution to Europe 2020
 - Contribution Cohesion policy programmes artificial



- Inclusive partnerships
 - Consensual approach (conferences and consultations)
 - High level commitment and bottom up
 - Partnership approach
- Flexible geographies
 - Macro-regions have flexible borders
 - Cohesion policy programmes more rigid



- Three levels of government
 - High level (Member States, Council, and Commission honest broker)
 - National Contact points (senior administrative level)
 - Expert steering groups (thematic and horizontal priorities)
- Governance challenges
 - Top-down vs bottom up
 - Bilateral vs regional cooperation
- Implications of the three Nos
 - Lack of ownership and professionalism
 - Lack of resources requires balance between coordination and administrative burden
- Increased role for transnational cooperation programmes?



- Cohesion programmes are more than a source of funding for macro-regional strategies
- But also clear challenges of integrating cohesion policy with macro-regional approaches
 - Budget constraints
 - Involvement of external partners
 - Lack of day-to-day management of strategies

Particularly transnational programmes can play an important role and address some of the challenges

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Thank you!

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