



**ESPON 2013
ESPON-INTERSTRAT Workshop –**

„Refresh your practice!

***The ESPON contribution to the formulation of territorial development
strategies in Romania”***

Iasi, 9 June 2011

Draft Report

Aim

The workshop aimed to bring to the attention of national stakeholders and practitioners the results of ESPON researches and to identify the possibility to apply the methodology and results of ESPON projects at national level, supporting the formulation of integrated territorial development policy and strategies.

Objectives

- Raise the interest of the Romanian public authorities and practitioners relevant for the territorial development, towards the ESPON base of knowledge;
- Support and facilitate the use of ESPON results in the formulation and monitoring of integrated territorial development strategies;
- Identify the necessities of national stakeholders and practitioners in relation with the results of ESPON researches;
- Explore the utility of ESPON results in the formulation of integrated territorial development strategies;
- Facilitate the transnational exchange of experience, concepts and data about the development, implementation and monitoring of integrated territorial strategies in the context of the 2013 ESPON Programme;
- Bring together stakeholders, practitioners and researchers relevant for the territorial development.

Target groups

Representatives of national, regional and local authorities, consultants in the domain of territorial planning, academic and research institutions.

Workshop Session I

The first part of the workshop focused on a general presentation of the concept of strategic integrated planning in Romania and on the role of ESPON and ESPON-INTERSTRAT in this framework.



EUROPEAN UNION

Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE



Introduction

Oana Stoleriu (ESPON-INTERSTRAT Romania) welcomed the attendees and presented the agenda of the day, highlighting the role of the event within the national engagement strategy of ESPON-INTERSTRAT, as well as the interactive approach of the meeting.

The brief introduction made by **Ovidiu Iancu** (dean of the Faculty of Geography and Geology, “Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi - institution representing the Romanian ECP) emphasized the role of geographers in the elaboration and implementation of territorial policies, as well as the importance of the “Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi in the development of transnational projects on this topic: ESPON-DATABASE, ESPON – INTERSTRAT, ESPON-CADEC.

Presentations

Teofil Gherca (General Department for Territorial Development, Service for Strategy and Territorial Cohesion, Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism) made an overall presentation of the Romanian planning system. The main Romanian planning documentations and the hierarchical relations between the national, regional and local scales are highlighted. The need for a further integration and correlation of the planning system at different levels was underlined, as well as the need for integrated approaches. The integrated territorial strategies represent a new concept and a real challenge for the Romanian practitioners and policy makers, considering the sectorial approach used until now in the main national planning documents. As for the European perspective in the Romanian planning, Europe 2020 and the European strategy for the Danube region are some of the main European strategies (currently/about to be) implemented in Romania.

The Territorial Development Strategy for Romania (TDSR) is expected to be finalised in 2012. The audience welcomed the news. The main discussion points raised were about the delay in the TDSR implementation calendar and, in consequence a potential lower efficiency at regional and local level. T. Gherca explained the causes of the delay (such as changes in the funding system) and mentioned the ongoing efforts to correlate the National Spatial Planning Plan with TDSR.

After that, T. Gherca made a brief presentation of the ESPON Programme: financment opportunities, types of projects (priorities), previous and ongoing researches financed by ESPON, the next calls for 2011 and further information sources.

Radu Dimitriu (coordinator of the Romanian ESPON Contact Point) presented the role of the Romanian ESPON Contact Point in the implementation of ESPON



EUROPEAN UNION
Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE



Programme, in supporting the participation of Romanian institutions in transnational partnerships and the use of ESPON results at national level.

O. Stoleriu had a brief presentation (with inputs from **Julius Ursu** - project LP) of the ESPON-INTERSTRAT project: general data (budget, partnership, duration, team members); the general aim of the project and specific national objectives; target groups; the main activities developed at national and transnational level; the contribution of ESPON-INTERSTRAT to the Romanian planning.

Workshop Session II. The integrated territorial development plans in Romania. Local and regional perspectives. The main challenges at local, regional and national level, in the domain of integrated territorial planning.

The second part of the workshop was a interactive one, focused on talking to the main categories of ESPON-INTERSTRAT Romanian beneficiaries and finding their needs and issues regarding the elaboration and implementation of territorial development strategies.

The audience formed three main groups, representing the main categories of Romanian institutions interested in the territorial development (and the main categories of ESPON-INTERSTRAT beneficiaries):

- representatives of national, regional and local authorities (7 persons) - A,
- practitioners, consultants in the domain of territorial planning (4 persons) - P,
- researchers, also involved in European (ESPON) projects (6 persons) - R.

In order to identify the specific perspectives and needs of these categories of beneficiaries, a SWOT analysis was conducted on the concept of *integrated territorial planning in Romania*: short and long term strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Results of the SWOT analysis:

1. Strengths – *increasing interest towards Europe (policy, concepts, methodology etc):*

- the existence of a legislative framework for the national planning, correlated with the European directives (P)
- the awareness and positive attitude towards integrated approaches in territorial planning - R
- the increasing interest for European territorial policies – R



EUROPEAN UNION
Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE



- the present import of modernity: new concepts and new territorial indicators, more efficient for the planning process – R
- existence of a strong professional capacity at the administrative and research level – A.

2. Weaknesses – *low integration, up-dating and efficiency level of the present national planning system:*

- the lack of hierarchical integration (national – regional - local scale) and permanent up-date of the Romanian planning system generates confusions and low quality products at local and regional level – P
- the lack of a spatial statistic data base, centralized and up-dated, integrated and accessible - P
- a rigid territorial administrative hierarchy (long term), combined with a spatial inertia – R
- the absence of LAU1 and NUTS 2 in the national territorial administrative organization – R
- low administrative capacity – A
- low adaptation of the planning legislation framework - A
- lack of integration between the strategic documents (with different time calendars and specific objectives) - A
- lack of coherence in the institutional system – A
- lack of continuity and monitoring in the implementation of territorial development projects – A
- insufficient valorisation of the available professional capacity – A.

3. Opportunities – *the European policy and funding supporting the development of functional territories:*

- a better awareness and dissemination of the planning system's importance, at different levels and among different stakeholders – P
- the increasing use of new methods (more precise), in the planning practice, such as GIS – P
- absorption of European funds for territorial development and integrated planning – P, R
- the construction of functional territories – R





- the positive long term effects generated and supported by the territorial cooperation networks (including ESPON) – R
- ongoing specialization of national professional clusters, including policy makers and researchers - R
- the territorial dimension will be necessary in the next period – A.

4. Threats – *formal importing of European patterns, with negative territorial effects:*

- the lack of specialized (interdisciplinary) professional teams validating the methodology currently used for the elaboration of planning documents – P
- the present legal and methodological framework allows ambiguity and interpretations, and, consequently, low quality products with negative long term effects – P
- emergence of non-functional territories - R
- adopting European formal/theoretical patterns, without a local/national foundation, excessive focus on technical aspects (and increasing number of planning documentations) - R
- increasing socio-spatial polarization (increasing economic differences among the population) – R
- decrease of the absorption level of European funds – A.

The main results of the SWOT analysis have been summarized at the end of this session. The results are compared to the results of similar approaches observed in the Interstrat workshops organized in Ireland (Dundalk, 7 April 2011) and Scotland (Edinburgh, 1 April 2011).

Observations: beyond the topics closely related to the professional background (like the indicators and the administrative units allowing scientific analysis, mentioned by the researchers), a few important and common issues were highlighted by the three categories of participants. The researchers gave fast the higher amount of inputs to the SWOT analysis, while the administration representatives gave fewer but very precise opinions, after long debates.





Workshop Session III. What does ESPON bring to the Romanian planning and to the integrated territorial strategies? What are the expectations of Romanian stakeholders and practitioners from the ESPON researches?

The last part of the workshop was focused on **explaining and demonstrating the possibilities to use ESPON results at different spatial levels, in the elaboration and implementation of territorial development strategies.**

Teofil Gherca briefly underlined the awareness and real interest of the central administration towards the use of ESPON results in the main national planning documents. But this capitalization of ESPON researches needs an integrated centralized national data base, including the ESPON results (which currently lacks). He also underlined the need for simplification, clarification and better correlation of the main planning documentations and strategies, in order to better absorb and capitalize the ESPON results.

ESPON results useful in the elaboration of integrated territorial development plans.

Daniel Tudora and **Oana Stoleriu** („Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași) presented a selection of concepts and indicators provided by different ESPON projects that could be used in the Romanian planning practice. The indicators are addressing specific target groups (practitioners, policy makers) and specific territorial challenges (metropolitan areas, identification of FUA, peripheral territories, rural areas etc).

Their indicators are correlated with the main sections of the Urban Integrated Plans, as requested by the Regional Operational Programme. Their use is explained with ESPON maps and further information sources (ESPON references) are mentioned.

The main topics presented are: inner peripheries, functional urban areas, territorial sensitivity, territorial capital, agglomeration economies, territorial diversity and competitive advantages. A few indicators were discussed, used for the assessment of: the demographic potential, the economic growth, the accessibility, the Knowledge economies, territorial performance, potential of rural areas, territorial sensitivity etc.

The audience showed interest for the indicators presented, asking for further information sources and for the ECP's potential future support in finding ESPON indicators adapted to specific topics and documentations (request from the North-East Regional Development Agency).

Georgeta Smadu (North-East Regional Development Agency) suggested a stronger involvement of the ECP in the elaboration process of local integrated development plans, at least during the public consulting. This could be an important opportunity to further disseminate the ESPON concepts and indicators among the actors



EUROPEAN UNION

Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE



involved in territorial development, which are less sensitive to other communication ways currently used by the ECP.

Alexandru Rusu: ESPON data base - applications at local and regional level. Alexandru Rusu (researcher, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, member of ESPON-DATABASE team) presented the database delivered by the ESPON DATABASE project, explaining the main challenges of centralising different types of national indicators, across the European space. The need for new, better indicators (as regards the scale and the content), extremely important for territorial planning and the decision making process was underlined. The national statistics are lacking the local scale indicators, as well as relevant data for the analysis of migration flows, functional urban areas, economic growth etc.

The audience confirmed the importance of centralizing relevant indicators at local scale and the obvious need of up-dating the current statistic system.

Conclusions.

The main conclusions of the workshop were drawn by Oana Stoleriu, with contributions from different participants: Teofil Gherca, Georgeta Smadu, Alexandru Rusu, George Turcanasu etc.

The discussions during the event were very valuable for the improvement of the implementation of ESPON results at national level, in the process of elaboration and monitoring of integrated territorial development strategies. The workshop also revealed interesting facts for the future implementation of ESPON-INTERSTRAT in Romania and for the development of communication and cooperation between the main actors interested in the territorial development.

The main conclusions of the workshop are:

- there is an increasing interest at national level towards territorial planning and integrated territorial strategies. The European perspective becomes more and more important in the national practice.

- without a precise scientific and methodological basis, the efforts regarding the integration of European directives and territorial researches within the national planning risks to generate low quality products, with negative long term effects (such as focus on immediate economic benefits, in the detriment of sustainable development and regional/urban resilience);

- the improvement of the Romanian planning system needs a better integration and capitalization of the present professional capacity at national, regional and local



EUROPEAN UNION
Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE



level, through the development of communication and partnership between the institutions interested in territorial development.

- there is a strong request for the simplification, clarification and better integration of the Romanian planning system and strategic documentation, in order to ensure a higher capacity of absorption and valorization of ESPON results at national level.

- it is necessary the creation of a centralized data base, integrating the results of ESPON researches and new relevant indicators for the regional and local planning (indicators currently lacking from the national statistics);

- a further involvement of the local communities and other stakeholders in the elaboration and validation of territorial strategies is needed; this could be achieved also by creating more accessible planning products/documentation (as regards to content, language, volume of information).

- it is necessary to find new (incentive) mechanisms to stimulate the interest towards territorial partnership and European projects at local level, through a better adaptation of the legislation and methodological framework to different categories of territories (especially for those underrepresented in the development projects and funded territorial partnership - like rural spaces);

- the lack of continuity in the implementation of territorial development projects has obvious negative long and medium term effects;

- there is an important territorial dimension in the Romanian strategic planning, simultaneously with a lower interest for very popular topics in the planning context of other European countries (such as climate changes, energy security, food security etc)

- a further involvement of the Romanian ECP in the elaboration and monitoring of local strategies is needed, in order to increase their quality and to ensure a better integration of ESPON results in the consolidation of these strategies;

- the territorial cooperation networks currently activating in Romania (including the ESPON Programme network) have a important role for the development of the national professional capacity, sustaining the partnerships and the connections to the present trends orienting the European territorial policies.





Evaluation.

Objective	Activity
Use of interactive methods	<p>All the attendees actively participated in the second part of the workshop.</p> <p>About ¼ of them contributed to the workshop conclusions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise the interest of the Romanian public authorities and practitioners relevant for the territorial development, towards the ESPON base of knowledge; - Support and facilitate the use of ESPON results in the formulation and monitoring of integrated territorial development strategies; - Explore the utility of ESPON results in the formulation of integrated territorial development strategies; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A brief presentation of ESPON programme (during the seminar - Session 1, supported by the information included in the agenda) - a selection of ESPON indicators, concepts and database has been presented during Session 3 - correlation of the ESPON results with the sections of the Integrated Urban Development Plans (Session 3) - positive feedback from the participants (interest for the indicators and concepts presented)
Identify the necessities of national stakeholders and practitioners in relation with the results of ESPON researches;	- the discussions and results of the SWOT analysis (Session 2)
Facilitate the transnational exchange of experience, concepts and data about the development, implementation and monitoring of integrated territorial strategies in the context of the 2013 ESPON Programme;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use of interactive methods similar to those used in the UK workshop (Edinburgh, 1 April 2011) - a brief presentation of the main challenges associated to the integrated territorial planning and the capitalization of ESPON researches, as indicated by the Irish and Scottish practitioners. - key persons have been invited to the workshop, able to ensure a further dissemination of the workshop main topics and conclusions, in different professional environments (administration, consultancy





	firms).
Bring together stakeholders, practitioners and researchers relevant for the territorial development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionals from the 3 main areas gathered together for this workshop: local, regional and national administration, consultants, researchers involved in European (ESPON) projects; - Key persons were invited to attend the event. They are able to ensure a further larger dissemination of the workshop's main topics and conclusions.

List of attendees.

No.	NAME	Institution
1.	ELENA BURLACIUC	Proactiv Consulting Iași
2.	GEORGE CARAPANU	Order of Romanian Architects, (President of Iasi Branch)
3.	COVĂȘNIANU ADRIAN	Proactiv Consulting Iași
4.	ANTONIU FLANDORFER	Suceava Prefecture, Department of European Affairs and Economic Development
5.	ADINA GIJAN	Iasi Prefecture
6.	TEOFIL GHERCĂ	Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, General Department for Territorial Development, Service for Strategy and Territorial Cohesion
7.	GRIGORAȘ IOAN-RADUCU	Proactiv Consulting Iași
8.	OVIDIU IANCU	Dean of the Faculty of Geography and Geology , “ Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi
9.	ISTRATE DAN IONUȚ	Iasi Cityhall
10.	ADRIAN MEDELEANU	North-East Regional Development Agency, Coordinator of Iasi Growth Pole
11.	ALEXANTRU RUSU	Faculty of Geography and Geology , “ Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi, team ESPON-DATABASE
12.	GEORGETA SMĂDU	North-East Regional Development Agency, Department of Planning and Programmes
13.	STOLERIU OANA	Faculty of Geography and Geology , “ Al. I. Cuza” Univeristy of Iasi, team ESPON-INTERSTRAT





14.	ROXANA TALASMAN	Association of Iasi Metropolitan Area, Departemnt of Projects Mnagement
15.	DANIEL TUDORA	Faculty of Geography and Geology , “ Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi, team ESPON-INTERSTRAT
16.	ȚUNDREA CONSTANTIN	Iasi County Council (County Architect)
17.	GEORGE ȚURCĂNAȘU	Faculty of Geography and Geology , “ Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi, team ESPON-DATABASE

Realised by:

Oana Stoleriu (ESPON-INTERSTRAT Romania)

22 June 2011



EUROPEAN UNION
Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE