An international group of experts was set up in 2006 to pursue the task of investigating and analysing the opportunities and limits of Swiss spatial planning. Prof. Dr. Bernd Scholl had received a commission from the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Planning (ARE) to obtain a view of Swiss planning from the outside and put together a group comprised of experts from Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The group conducted four inspections in various areas of Switzerland that included discussions with spatial planning experts, relevant actors and politicians. The significant future tasks of spatial planning and development in Switzerland had priority.

The report has three main areas:
- Suggestions for the development of spatial planning in Switzerland
- Personal observations and thoughts on Swiss spatial planning from the different national perspectives
- Reports on the state of spatial planning in the experts’ native countries

The proposals and suggestions on the themes of landscape, agglomerations, city networks and functional spaces, infrastructure, cross-border dimensions and planning in strategic surroundings receive a careful assessment that covers the current state, the potential challenges, and the suggestions of the expert group on the respective themes. One hopes these observations will add impetus to the discourse on spatial planning.

The publication is available in German, French, Italian and English.

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SPATIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN SWITZERLAND

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF EXPERTS

SWISS FEDERAL OFFICE FOR SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT (ARE)

ETH ZURICH
INSTITUTE FOR SPATIAL AND LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT
PROFESSOR FOR SPATIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
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The international group of experts on spatial planning and development in Switzerland are pleased with the lively interest their report has generated. The proposals, suggestions and insights of the international group of experts have been introduced and discussed at numerous regional and national events. Thus, an important goal of the report has already been achieved, namely, to enliven the discourse on questions relevant to planning.

The report has also met with great interest in neighbouring countries. Special attention has been given to the fact that the independent assessments and evaluations came into being on the initiative and orders of the federal authority responsible for spatial development. Taking a look at yourself from the outside, or a serious look in the mirror, has had an predominantly positive evaluation.

The positive reception has encouraged us to publish the experts’ report for a wider audience and provide an Italian and an English version, in addition to the German and French editions.

The work of translation has once again brought home to us the fact that no unified terminology exists for spatial planning. This not only clarifies the cultural and language boundedness of the discipline, it also explains the difficulties in understanding and communicating about spatial planning and development across national and language boundaries. We can hope that this report in its German, French, Italian and English editions will contribute to improving the cross-border exchange.
My sincere thanks go particularly to the translators of the original texts into the other languages: Beverly Zumbühl was responsible for the English translation and copy-editing, Catherine Bachellerie for the French and Julia Otto for the Italian translation. Anja Häfliger, Markus Nollert and Hany Elgendy, employees of the Chair for Spatial Planning, were responsible for the translations into German.

Rolf Signer also deserves my sincere appreciation coordinating the overall production process and the coordination and redaction of the translation work.

The publication of the report will have fulfilled its purpose when the actors occupied with the challenging tasks of spatial planning and development find it stimulating and supportive on their way to developing good creative solutions.

Bernd Scholl
Professor for Spatial Planning and Development
ETH Zurich/Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
In 2005, the Federal Office for Spatial Planning (Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung – ARE) published the “Raumentwicklungsbericht 2005” (Spatial Development Report 2005), in which it was very critical of the state of spatial development in Switzerland, describing it, among other things, as unsustainable. Based on the reaction to this statement, the ARE decided to let a group of foreign experts assess the state of Swiss spatial planning. Dr. Bernd Scholl, who had just taken on the post of Professor of Spatial Planning and Development at ETH Zurich and who possessed proven international experience, was assigned the task of putting together an international group of experts.

From the outset, the ARE made it clear that it would not intervene in the work of the expert group.

In the end, no evaluation in the usual sense was possible; in order to produce an evaluation, the goals must be clearly defined and measurable. In the field of spatial planning, that is practically never the case. The experts decided to express their opinions supported by their own experience, various analyses, discussions, conversations and on-site inspections.

The group found that although spatial planning in Switzerland is good, it is still in need of improvement, “good but not good enough” as the experts formulated it in the media conference held for the publication of the report. In general, Swiss spatial planning is well positioned in international comparisons. However, it does not meet the high requirements of sustainable development yet.
The report likewise presents the view that spatial planning in Switzerland must develop further, and, in the main, the report does not concern itself with the question of whether the federal government should have more authority. In these times, when new forms of governance are being sought and informal governance is increasingly more important, the question of formal authority is losing meaning and significance. A project-oriented approach, which allows the various actors to be drawn in, is more sensible and more meaningful. The federal level should therefore increasingly function in the role of an actor, instead of its hitherto regulative and controlling role.

The report also emphasises the possibilities of the Swiss city network (agglomerations) and points out that an approach must be developed in which the specific particularities of the various spaces can be taken into account. In the growing international competition, the diversity and quality of the spaces will be ever more critical location factors.

The report is complex, and therefore not easy reading, but it is worth a careful reading, between the lines as well. The route to take is clearly marked.

Pierre-Alain Rumley
Director, Federal Office for Spatial Planning, Bern
The idea of inviting foreign experts to study a nation’s spatial planning functions, opportunities and limitations and to provide observations, commentary and suggestions is a completely new approach. It would have been presumptuous to expect a systematic evaluation within such a short time, however, in this case, it was more about looking at aspects that are meaningful for the future, determining the current situation in terms of the future requirements on spatial planning and spatial development and then developing a future perspective from this information.

After discussing various approaches, the group interpreted their task to be to reflect on these aspects from their different backgrounds and then to work out suggestions for spatial planning in Switzerland in a common discourse.

Over the course of four inspections, each lasting several days, conducted between March and September 2006 in various parts of Switzerland, spatial planning experts, spatial planning-relevant actors and politicians engaged in intense discussions, which created the opportunity for an intensive exchange of ideas. Afterwards, the experts met again in a group retreat and hammered out this report. The report is based on some important fundamental assumptions.

For example, these assumptions would allow globalisation to be seen as an opportunity to connect a location’s attractiveness with its spatial development. Because of the accelerated economic change to a knowledge-based economy heavily founded on research and development, the
old industrial countries are dependent to a great extent on youth, intelligence and highly qualified workers.

Increasingly, these kinds of workers choose their location and their environment according to their standards for a good quality of life. In addition to education, culture and good health, quality of life now carries a special, and growing, emphasis on the quality of the spatial environment. The result is that, partially as an effect of globalisation, location factors that have traditionally belonged to ‘soft location factors’ have now become hard location factors from an economic point of view.

For the same reasons, spatial planning should change from a rather limited, administrative and controlling role in development to a policy-setting role with its own authority, which can offer rewarding fields of activity to active politicians who have creative ideas. We understand spatial planning primarily as a creative and conceptual activity that opens new spatial opportunities and creates positive proposals for development.

Based on the generally good quality of its spatial structures, in comparison with other countries, Switzerland already has very good prerequisites for achieving a new level of quality in sustainable spatial development. In order to actively promote this goal, however, the federal government should take a more active role in concept development and orientation for spatial planning than it has to date in order to bring the spatial potential of Switzerland in an internationally competitive situation.

We want to thank the Swiss Federal Office of Spatial Development for the opportunity and the privilege to be allowed to work so intensively on questions important to the future of spatial planning and development in Switzerland.

Special thanks go to our contacts and discussion partners. Their readiness to get involved, their openness and their commitment to spatially meaningful tasks impressed us very much. Their contributions and our exchanges with them are a central basis for the proposals in this report.

It would give us great pleasure to find that our observations, proposals and suggestions have stimulated the discourse on spatial planning in Switzerland.

The international group of experts:

Max van den Berg
Gaëlle Pinson
Thomas Sieverts
Christof Schremmer
Bernd Scholl
John Zetter

Zurich, November 2006
1.1. COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENERAL TASK

After half a century of growth, Switzerland, as well as all other European countries, is facing substantial changes in dealing with its further development. The population is barely growing, in many places, it is stagnating or declining – and aging intensively as well. The economy is changing and has long been moving from an industrial society to a knowledge and research-based society that will have to hold its ground amidst stronger European and global competition. Agriculture is also changing, without it being clear just what this means for the future. The climate change is producing some significant impacts, e.g., on winter tourism. Such developments can have critical relevance for future spatial planning. In this situation, the exchange of ideas about spatial planning and spatial development in Switzerland with experts from other European countries can be beneficial, especially because, as a small country, Switzerland is particularly vulnerable to international competition.

Switzerland is well known as, and in comparison to other European countries is, one of the most open societies. The sovereign handling of different national languages, the integration of different cultures and the traditional cooperation across its borders are a visible expression of this. A high quality of life and high environmental quality have been cultural values for a long time and can be experienced in everyday life. An awareness of and a striving for quality are widespread and deeply anchored in the society. This is carried out on all levels of society through initiatives, which are started and supported by informal citizen or in many cases non-professional organisations and initiated on a case-by-case basis. The willingness to take on an
active role, and responsibility along with it, is an especially valuable capital that can be utilised for the concerns of spatial development. However, this presumes that careful use of the non-renewable resource, land, is a central concern of spatial planning, not only to be anchored in the constitution but also to be experienced by the people in their daily life. In this area, there is a general lack of public awareness. Spatial planning is not a public issue.

This is the background and starting point for a collegial observation of Swiss spatial planning that was commissioned by the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development (Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung / ARE) and entrusted to a group of European experts. This group was asked to present, from an international point of view, independent opinions about spatial planning in Switzerland by exploring the core themes of the major task areas. Then, based on this exploration, they should introduce proposals and suggestions.

To date, such a procedure is unusual and it places a great challenge on the experts entrusted with this task. The experts understand their role as that of external observers who can, because of their detachment, help identify the strengths and the weaknesses of Swiss spatial planning. Another aspect of the task is to point out what significant future developments can be expected, from an international point of view, and delineate the major tasks that Swiss spatial planning will be facing. It was agreed among the experts that this exploration should be conducted against a background that featured the importance of sustainability, competitiveness and social cohesion.

The group has agreed that suggestions for improving cooperation, coordination and management should be defined according to important future tasks. In this context, it is important to consider that the time lag in spatial planning can be years or decades. Hence, uncertainties, instabilities, rapid changes in all directions and unpredictability of development are real circumstances for spatial planning actions and decisions.

It was also evident in the preparatory discussions that the results of this process cannot be considered a scientific investigation in the traditional sense. It is neither possible to thoroughly examine the processes and instruments, nor is it possible to obtain a comprehensive understanding of all the relevant issues in the short time available. From the point of view of the experts, it does not make any sense to undertake a retrospective assessment of Swiss spatial planning and to prepare proposals and suggestions based on that. However, it could be fruitful, based on their “outsider” perspective and their past experience, to undertake an identification of the central issues facing Swiss spatial planning today and, based on this, to present proposals and suggestions.

In order to approach these central issues from direct experience, the experts decided to interview Swiss spatial planning experts and visit different parts of Switzerland to get a personal insight into the current and future tasks and challenges of spatial planning. For better understanding and orientation, this paper is written as individual opinions rather than as a common statement. These observations
are complemented with an evaluation of spatial planning in the home countries of the experts.

The core of this report includes the proposals and suggestions that were deduced through a collective dialogue among the experts. These are understood as ideas that could, in the right circumstances, stimulate the discourse about spatial planning in Switzerland. Hence the group does not consider this contribution to be a conclusive opinion, but more of a stimulus for a further discourse. The group is willing to discuss these ideas with those who are interested in the subject of spatial planning.

The relationships between the federal level and the cantons, city-regions and municipalities are in the foreground. As the experiences around the relationships between the federal or central government and the regions and municipalities are very different in the various European countries, the debate about this subject could be very fruitful.
1.2. COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

As mentioned earlier, European cities and regions are facing an historical and radical change. Since breaking through the walls and trenches more than two hundred years ago, settlement development has been coupled with growth. Unsolved spatial tasks were solved, as a general rule, through the utilisation of more land. The ways of thinking, instruments and processes are all aligned for the most part with this approach. The spread of settled areas – especially in a small country with limited land resources – is reaching its limits. Only one third of the surface area of Switzerland is available for settlement. Sprawl, with all its consequences, is neither economical nor ecological and reduces the sphere of action for coming generations.

The uneven spatial distribution resulting from the slight increases, stagnation or decline of the population and the increasing percentage of elderly people has led to a shift in demand. The settlements are essentially already built. Growth is so insignificant that cities can hardly be changed structurally anymore. Demands on space are changing, e.g., for sports, leisure and health activities. Hence, most of the development must be realised through the transformation of existing areas. This will lead to challenging tasks if we want to further develop our cities and regions.

The countryside is also changing; the traditional rural lifestyle has almost completely disappeared. Facing both ecological demands and global competition, agriculture is undergoing a fundamental evolution. The general results of this change cannot yet be predicted, but will drastically change the traditional cultural landscape.
Globalisation is forcing many European agglomerations into a worldwide distribution of labour, in which, especially in the high-priced European agglomerations, a knowledge-based and service-oriented economy is more dominant than ever before. This leads to an expansion of the catchment area for specialised labour and increases the requirements on national, continental and intercontinental accessibility with the concurrent need for mobility. The developments of recent decades show that the share of the labour force that works near their residence has continuously decreased. In 1970, approximately 30% of the labour force commuted daily, while in 2000 this share reached about 58%. It is foreseeable that as a result of increased specialisation and further divisions of labour, the share of commuters, despite all the possibilities of electronic media, may further increase. Hence, it is not only important to preserve the quality of the infrastructure important for mobility, but to actually create reserves for additional mobility.

In the general European context, Switzerland enjoys comparatively good conditions that would allow handling this transition constructively, perhaps even to reach a level of spatial quality that may set new standards.

Through major efforts in the last few years, it was possible to improve environmental quality. Air and water quality are very good in international comparisons. The built environment and infrastructure are also to a large extent in good condition. There is no great need for bringing these up-to-date.

The current spatial planning regulations are modern and allow the development and implementation of improved planning processes that can meet the challenges of the coming years. The country has well-trained specialists in spatial planning-relevant disciplines and in advanced education and research, the spatial planning institutions have interesting perspectives available. For example, at ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in Zurich, sustainable spatial, landscape and environmental development are all important subject areas.

The “smallness” of Switzerland and its variety of landscapes and cultures contributes to its comprehensiveness and requires intensive personal relationships among the important actors. Switzerland’s form of direct democracy with an extreme federally structured fragmentation of power and distinctive municipal autonomy forms a unique situation in Europe. The supra-local spatial planning is the responsibility of the cantons, which vary in size, culture and landscape as well as in the demands that face each canton. Under these circumstances, the political structure has advantages and disadvantages. A centrally controlled spatial planning policy is not possible. However, through wise application, this political structure offers advantages and potentials that can put Switzerland in a position to create extraordinary stimuli. In particular, the extremely decentralised organisation with its high level of autonomy for spatial administrative bodies offers the chance to develop tailored concepts and to follow individualised approaches. The possibilities that are provided by the law are seriously underused. However, there are also threats that the required supra-local level, especially in the area of city-region cohesion, may be weakened. Hence, it is important to check if the relationships between the federal level and the cantons and the municipalities will still be viable under these changing conditions.

The fragmentation of power and its cultural diversity make Switzerland a small model for Europe. The continuous seeking and striving for cohesion and for reasonable solutions are prime motivations to adjust to change and to make important accommodations. The relatively positive economic conditions support large projects, e.g., the new railway transversals. The certainty that results from direct democracy and the economic potential over long time periods, is a quality that should not be underestimated for planning. The exceptional municipal autonomy and the diversity of the individual cantons can, as mentioned previously, also be considered a potential for practical experimental fields for diverse customised solutions.

The competition between the municipalities and the cantons is an enlivening element that promotes long-term robust solutions, and that means solutions that are resistant to undesirable developments and the uncertainties of the future. Direct democracy, which is carried for the most part by part-time politicians, leads to the wide diffusion of political debate, culture and knowledge in the society.
1.3. CENTRAL TASKS

The particular political structure and culture of Switzerland is not easily transferred; it is complex and takes a comparative amount of effort. Despite that, and perhaps, because of that, it allows for a new approach, one which could be stimulating for other countries in other circumstances as well. The central question is posed here as well whether there would not have to be a change in significance at the federal level in order to initiate the necessary supra-municipal negotiations. The issue would not be an increase in authority of the federal government, but rather an initiation and stimulation of planning processes of national significance by the federal representatives responsible for tasks relevant to planning, as well providing the presence and orientation wished for by the various partners in the dialogue. Additional means to stimulate the diversity of ideas and approaches, also those of an experimental nature, would be necessary.

The special and still advantageous situation in Switzerland with regard to the quality of the landscape and settlement areas is endangered and could quickly be lost if no adequate responses are forthcoming for local, European and global changes.

- Increasing urbanisation, excessive traffic in agglomerations and in sensitive transit areas, and extreme interventions in developed cultural landscapes could destroy qualities that are of vital, if not central significance for the attractiveness of the country, from an economic point of view as well. It cannot be foreseen at this time how the changing agriculture is going to
A second task concerns the further differentiation of function areas, their work sector combination and the possibility of benefiting from the highly specialized employment market without having to change location. This only works when function areas continue to be connected in reliable and dependable ways. With increasing mobility and the overlapping of the services in transit areas, we foresee the possibility that the quality of the required connections could not be maintained.

In order to prevent this, development, particularly of the transport system, to a higher, if not the highest level, is of central significance. This is less about developing new lines than about additions and renovations, to keep, if not improve, the quality of the enterprise. A particularly important point seems to be the integration of the access and exit areas of the new railway connections through the Alps.

Future operation should neither hinder the development of essential regional traffic nor should building be allowed to permanently damage the transit area. On the contrary, it ought to be possible to remedy the errors of the past with these investments, and to open up new perspectives for transit areas with special burdens through a better use of space (for example, tourism or attractive residences). A successful example of harmonising various infrastructure, flood protection, river renaturation, tourism and landscape development can be found in the Upper Valais (Oberwallis), while in other cantons, such as Basel-Landschaft, Schwyz and Uri, several difficult tasks have yet to be solved.

Ultimately, the purpose would be to better connect and interlink Switzerland, as a small country in the middle of the continent, with its border regions. Usually national planning concepts are developed starting from the peripheries, the border regions, and moving towards the inner areas. Again Switzerland has a pioneering position here with its former Regio Basiliensis as an example of international cooperation. In Geneva and in Aargau we have seen some interesting examples. Even so, many difficult tasks, as well as interesting opportunities, remain to be dealt with along the borders. Border regions are regions of opportunity.

Switzerland shares the aforementioned problems with other European countries, and therefore participation in an international exchange of experiences is of mutual interest. An isolated sector observation of essential tasks and a primarily internal national fixation, which are also to be found in other European countries, is no longer appropriate. This is also because Switzerland is a transit area in the middle of the continent, so it is particularly exposed to international influences. Both the character of the above-mentioned problems as well as the increasing spatio-economic interconnections across national borders, even to a global scale, raises questions about the importance of spatial planning on a national level and in collaboration with the cantons and the municipalities.

More than ever, it is essential to promote the still, by international comparison, unique qualities of the cultural landscape, in the densely settled regions too, through strategic action and the efficient utilisation of large investments.

Realistically, supra-local spatial planning in Switzerland is not particularly strong, as measured by the projects and the goals defined in the constitution, especially on the federal level. However, the constitution (Article 75 BV) provides the means for a more involved role of the Federation in spatial planning. Certainly, a centrally organised national spatial planning with power would be extremely contradictory to the nature of decentralised democracy in Switzerland. Therefore, national spatial planning in Switzerland should be structured differently than in neighbouring countries. In this area, we see three major tasks that should be expanded in the future:

- The preparation of overview information and the development of orientation, trans-sector concepts that cover the whole country, including the transfrontier regions, with levels of quality and specificity that allow projects of national significance to be identified. The federal concepts and sector plans (Konzepte und
Sachpläne, Art. 13 RPG) are a critical prerequisite for development.

- The formulation of projects of national significance that contribute, beyond their sector aspects, not only to national cohesion, but also to the identification of special transfrontier collaborations and the build-up of focused job sector areas, as well as the promotion of the conservation and enhancement of the cultural and landscape heritage.

- To develop forms of regulations, contracts and quality standards that will allow binding public subsidies to this type of project in order to achieve a tangible effect of the Federation on the initiatives and projects of the cantons, cities and municipalities.

Through this approach, the work of the cantons and municipalities should be supported in a way that will allow them to sufficiently carry out their task according to its specific demands and the required spatial (regional) context, which requires an immense coordination effort and, consequently, its related costs.

This stands in accordance with the formal planning instruments, for example, the cantonal structure plans (Richtplan). The regulations of the spatial planning law (Raumplanungsverordnung, RPV) specifically provide, for example, for the coordination of a particularly significant task, the implementation of inter-level (federation/canton/municipality), complementary and time-limited organisational forms. These legal opportunities should be used more extensively. Switzerland has a long tradition in the negotiation of tailored contracts and project-related procedures that could form the base for extensions in this connection.

The identification of focus areas, initiation and promotion of special cooperative planning processes, as a complementary element for existing formal processes, are important tasks from our point of view, especially during the cooperation of the authorities responsible for spatial development on the federal and cantonal levels. Therefore, the federal level should provide specific funds for this purpose. Furthermore, it is considered an important task for the Federal Office for Spatial Development to conceptually integrate the sector activities that have spatial relevance. To this category of activities belong, for example, federal transportation projects as well as the new regional policy of SECO. The federal sector plans (Sachpläne) are an important means, however, they offer insufficient means for communication and the reciprocal coordination of interests.

The concentration of resources should be devoted to areas and issues that lie in the collective national interests. At this time, the following areas are the main concerns:

- Areas with a dynamic economy
- Areas situated in the catchment area of national key infrastructure
- Catchment areas of important Swiss transit corridors to neighbouring countries
- Areas with strong depopulation pressure
- Areas expected to have extreme agricultural transformation

The following characteristics will be used instead of those from the definitions used until now, for example, the old differentiation between urban areas and countryside no longer has any meaning.
1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The contributions in this report cover the following topics:

- The joint proposals and suggestions made by the international group of experts to the Swiss Federal Office of Spatial Development (chapter 2).
- The personal observations of the representatives of contributing countries from their national perspective and the impressions and findings gained during discussions and inspections (chapter 3).
- A personal report on the state of spatial planning in the experts’ own countries (chapter 4).

In chapter 2, collective proposals are developed for seven areas that the experts think are especially significant spatially and in the overall interests of the country. These comprise:

- Landscape
- Agglomerations
- City networks and functional spaces
- Infrastructure as a contribution to national cohesion and competitiveness
- Cross-border factors
- Planning in strategic contexts
- Conclusion

Based on the present situation and the expected challenges of these areas, possible perspectives are presented. The concentration on these themes reflects, in our opinion, the possible threats and their far-reaching consequences for spatial planning and spatial development in Switzerland. However, wherever there is risk, there are also opportunities as well.
In chapter 3, the experts introduce their impressions and findings from the perspective of their native countries. These personal observations augment the collective proposals.

Chapter 4 concludes the report with the personal perspectives of the experts concerning the state of planning in their native countries. This should make it possible to make certain comparisons to spatial planning in Switzerland.
2.1. LANDSCAPE

CURRENT STATUS The international image of Switzerland is very strongly related to its landscape. Travelling through Switzerland by train and bus gives a good impression of the variety of the countryside and the state of nature, forests, agriculture and the landscape in general. Several kinds of landscapes could be distinguished, for example, the Grisons with its vineyards in the Rhine valley and the fertile Engadine with its extraordinary natural beauty. Alongside lakes like Lake Geneva and the Walensee, agriculture and commerce seem well in balance and farmers protect the landscape. Other lakes like Lake Lucerne attract the leisure trade and tourism. Both the Swiss and foreign visitors treasure the diversity of the landscape throughout the seasons.

The integrated development of the Upper Rhone valley in the Valais is very impressive. Thanks to careful spatial planning and coordination with the heads of the various projects, new infrastructure, waterworks and industry fit together beautifully in a renatured landscape that has been enhanced through sustainability and design. Infrastructure and open space in the alpine and transit Canton of Uri is less balanced. Chances for a promising development are limited and the landscape is threatened. In the Canton of Schwyz, the interplay of landscape/settlement and main traffic infrastructure will also be pursued with a view to success for spatial planning. The “Mittelland” region is urbanising rapidly but has traditionally been the main agricultural area. More than other areas, it is threatened by urban sprawl, scattered construction, inefficient uses, under- and over-developed settlements and random location of urban functions. Not all communities are willing to fight sprawl and the
cants are not able or willing to intervene. Land values are growing based on expectations, which will change agriculture and make preserving the attractiveness of the countryside more difficult.

Agriculture has a long tradition and is still of significant importance. Moreover, agriculture in the valleys is connected to agriculture in the mountains. If agriculture vanishes from the valleys, it will eventually lead to the destruction of the mountain areas, short-term or long-term, and contribute to erosion. Agriculture will change, but it won’t disappear. In Switzerland, good food is highly appreciated and the Swiss population wants to maintain a high degree of self-sufficiency and is ready to make the corresponding contribution to it. A restructuring of rural areas is underway, but future-oriented concepts are still missing. Enlargement of the parcel size is an on-going process. New products, additional business, para-agricultural activities and other mixed uses are part of the change process. Many of the changes are not just typical for Switzerland, similar transformation processes are taking place in many European countries. It is expected that part of the agricultural land will be put to other uses.

The Farmers’ Association reviews and promotes the best interests of the farmers in a very intelligent manner. Agriculture shapes the cultural space and contributes greatly to its maintenance. At the same time, the competition between agriculture and settlement extensions is a general problem. The natural landscape as part of the countryside is an important resource for leisure and tourism. The nature preservation areas of national importance are well protected by law (Bundesgesetz über den Natur- und Heimatschutz) and carefully guarded by foundations, private landowners and users. The landscapes of national importance are recognised and carefully documented (Bundesinventar der Landschaften von nationaler Bedeutung, BLN), but, in contrast to the nature preserves, these are not well protected by law. Forests on mountain slopes are the responsibility of the cantons and are very well protected and managed.

The cultural landscape is a result of occupation, cultivation and historic interventions of all kinds in the countryside and is shaped by nature (water), forests and agriculture. The various landscapes and their condition were recently inventoried by the Federal Office for the Environment (Bundesamt für Umwelt: BAFU: “Landschaft 2020” contains an appropriate set of criteria and indicators, making it possible to draw conclusions concerning landscape developments. There is a map of all types of landscapes available). The cantons are required to identify landscapes in structure plans, whereas municipalities, landowners and citizens are not bound to this by law. Instruments, funds and incentives for interventions and implementation are lacking. Farmers are still the most influential keepers of the landscape.
CHALLENGES
Land is a tight resource in Switzerland. Most of the land in the valleys is in private hands and landowners have a strong position because ownership is well protected by law. Many interest groups also want a share of the space. Pressure on open spaces in and around urbanised areas is extremely high. There the dynamics of change continue to increase. Measures are needed to counter uncontrolled development.

In the long-term, climate changes will also place a burden on the landscape. Climate changes are already noticeable and having an influence on the planning agenda (e.g., flood control, glacier retreat and tourism). Spatial planning should also make its contribution to the efforts to balance the many different interests. All levels of government are involved. Many sectors and institutions have ideas, financial means and instruments to contribute. The main challenges are fighting sprawl, agricultural reform and shaping (new) landscapes.

- Ongoing sprawl is dangerous and may endanger the recreation of agriculture and damage the quality of the landscape. In the long run, open space will be lost. Options should be kept open. Changes should not only be seen as a problem, but also as an opportunity to reconstruct the countryside and shape new landscapes.
- Agricultural reform is of major importance, but should be brought into harmony with new spatial claims for recreation, tourism, second homes, infrastructure, water management and development of new nature. It is a great challenge for all involved (policy-setting) fields. Spatial planning is able to contribute to that balance and to develop an action-oriented approach for integrated reform. Furthermore, spatial planning can help open new potentials, not only in agriculture but also in new uses for the countryside. Farmers want to have more possibilities to secure their existence with new, modern enterprises. Test planning should be conducted in selected areas, the possibilities it raises should be examined and conclusions drawn for further action.
- The cultural landscape is an urban construct and is vital for the sense of quality in urban regions. High-quality landscape is required for urban development. It is attractive for businesses and for citizens. Existing landscapes can be seen as a potential for the future. Until now, landscapes have been the result of complex, protracted processes that happened in the past. Now society is able to construct new landscapes. New cultural landscapes should be designed (and developed) where it is possible and desirable. New approaches to landscape developments should be encouraged. New infrastructure should lead to the reconstruction of existing or the development of new landscapes.

We suggest selecting some key landscape areas that are most threatened by urbanisation and by infrastructural interventions. The aim is to keep, improve or develop high-quality landscapes and to balance all the interests that want space, such as agricultural reform, diminishing sprawl, increasing biodiversity, improving water management and integrating new infrastructure. Economic as well as social, cultural and physical aspects are all involved.

At the same time, the aim is to experiment with processes of interactive planning that are directed at the implementation of measures. The federal level should encourage the organisation of the new approach with everything that that involves. The following considerations should be taken into account:

- Selection of regional landscape areas should be made with the help of the cantons, the federal agencies involved, the Farmers’ Associations and the VLP-ASPAN.
- The measures can be implemented from the bottom up or from the top down. Informal organisations should be set up with most affected institutions (public and private), and with (future) users and landowners who are willing and able to contribute. The basic attitude should be openness to experimentation.
- Selecting the most interested actors can be seen as an ongoing process.
- Analyses of the financial means and the instruments of participating institutions that will be needed for implementation is a crucial part of the planning process. The invention of new and unorthodox methods (land acquisition, incentives) is also part of the deliberations and negotiations.
- A leitbild and an integrated design are important means of achieving the goals and also help in negotiations and communication.
- The federal level should take an active part and could offer intellectual and financial support to enable the region to organise the planning processes.

Learning is part of the process and lessons should be communicated through VLP-ASPAN to the (planning) community.

The federal level should organise a national debate about the future of the landscape with all the institutions and interest groups involved.

The legal framework could be adjusted as soon as the planning processes deliver new effective instruments, methods and procedures.
2.2. AGGLOMERATIONS

CURRENT STATUS  The image of Switzerland has not been affected yet by the presence of its agglomerations. Though more than half of the population live in agglomerations, many of the residents still retain a rural attitude. But consciousness is changing to something more urban.

The following observations and suggestions are based on visits to the metropolitan areas of Zurich, Basel and Geneva and to the mid-sized agglomerations of Bern and Lucerne. Though these two types of agglomeration, as well as the five agglomerations themselves, have their own special character, they nevertheless have some problematic features in common.

- They comprise a large number of autonomous local authorities that have grown together physically to a degree that one cannot discern political boundaries anymore. Daily life and work in these agglomerations use the whole territory without taking notice of the boundaries. From outside, they are seen as an urban unity, but this unity does not exist in the political and administrative organisation.
- They have the advantage of a close connection to open landscapes. From nearly every point, even in the metropolitan areas, one can reach an open landscape on foot or by bicycle in a short time. Due to their being comprised of different local authorities, the open landscapes penetrate the agglomeration and form “fractal patterns” at the edges. This quality will be endangered if the agricultural portion diminishes.
- Based on high growth predictions, most of the local
For many years now, agglomerations have voluntarily been forming informal, regional organisations to harmonize local decisions and through this have developed a valuable culture of providing information and mutual cooperation, although with different levels of efficiency. These voluntary organisations are now reaching their limits: globalisation and strong international competition is forcing them to think with more urgency about closer, more formalised political and administrative cooperation. This especially concerns the larger agglomerations, which have meanwhile grown beyond several cantonal boundaries, in the case of Zurich, and are being confronted with cross-border problems – and in the case of Zurich with foreign policy problems created by the international airport. Cross-cantonal cooperation does not work yet and must be improved urgently, with guidance from the federal government. (The international challenges are treated in a separate chapter.)

Not only the large agglomerations, but also the smaller ones like Bern and Lucerne, feel the pressure to form larger entities in order to be seen and taken into account on the European, or even the world, map.

Both of these mid-sized agglomerations are trying to find their own path of development: The agglomeration of Bern, for example, is trying to find and develop its unique characteristics and take the lead in a league of mid-sized European agglomerations with a strong history. To reach this goal, it puts special emphasis on its physical image and beauty.

Lucerne, in contrast, is aiming directly at political fusion with its neighbouring local authorities, putting economic and financial matters in the foreground. Other urban agglomerations will develop different profiles to attain a unique selling proposition.

Our main suggestion is that each Swiss agglomeration should be encouraged to develop its own special strategic profile from the “bottom up”, with strong participation from civil society, taking the Swiss city network into consideration. This process should be supported at the federal level with concepts and information. This has already started with the Agglomeration Programme but should be developed further. In this era of the consolidation and transformation of town structures, and moving towards a knowledge-based economy, under the spread of international competition, both cultural and economic qualities and their differences grow more important, including the cultural landscape in which the agglomeration is embedded.

For a dynamic agglomeration policy, the federal level should develop visions and a national strategy for a national network of agglomerations with different characteristics. The federal level also should provide data and indices that the agglomerations can use for comparisons. Based on these images and strategies, the federal level should offer intellectual support and financial subsidies to enable each agglomeration to develop its own specific high-quality strategic concepts. On the basis of a national agglomeration policy, there could be contracts between each agglomeration and the federal government to help ensure that each agglomeration’s special profile fits into both national and cantonal policy.

We see four problems of special importance in this context:

- It will be necessary to harmonise the level of taxes among the local authorities – if the opportunity to fuse local authorities should present itself. But fusion is only one way to unify the agglomerations. There are other forms of administration and cooperation that might work, even with tax differences, and could be encouraged, for example, democratically legitimate regional associations that would only regulate specific tasks on the regional level.

- It will be important to develop a certain specialisation of functions according to the different local strengths within the agglomerations and reach higher standards of services by making use of the larger “market” of a regional unity.

- It will be essential to find a solution to both conservation and further development of the cultivated landscape in and around the agglomerations under changed agricultural conditions, perhaps using cooperation and contracts between urban regions and open landscape areas.

- With the historical change from population growth to a state of more or less stagnation and transformation, it should be made easier to correct former planning decisions, e.g., if growth expectations proved to be false, or if some disposition of use has proved to be wrong. If necessary, the federal government should help by supporting local authorities to purchase the land concerned. This would also help gradually build up a land reserve for future purposes, a land-use policy successfully used by the Mayor of Biel/Bienne. These problems can be solved within existing or emerging political and administrative structures with a few, but very important improvements, and by activating the resources of both the administration and civil society.
2.3. CITY NETWORKS AND FUNCTIONAL SPACES

CURRENT STATUS The economy in Switzerland is strong and flourishing. Worldwide, the Swiss economy is seen as a leader in its traditional sectors (e.g., banking, watch industry), as well as in new sectors (biotechnology). Several areas that are part of so-called functional spaces contain concentrations with clusters of specific economic activities. Some areas can be identified as “key areas”, “gateways”, “ports” and places for “exchanges and meetings”. Among the functional spaces, differentiation and specialisation can be recognised. They have the potential for further economic development. Together, functional spaces form an urban field from a network of cities and towns.

Functional spaces are spaces that emerge because people visit different spaces during their lives according to their needs: schools and universities for learning, hospitals for healing from diseases, airports as access to holiday travel or professional exchange. Sometimes these areas overlap. The sizes of functional spaces are defined through the size of facilities that have supra-local significance. For example, the functional space of an intercontinental airport differs from that of the functional space of a highly specialised hospital. Functional spaces usually cross cantonal borders and sometimes national borders as well.

It is also observed that the catchment areas of functional spaces develop dynamically and expand as a result of different conditions, for example, intensifying specialisation, formation of focus themes and of clusters. Functional spaces are usually larger than agglomerations and are connected by the Swiss city network. The underlying idea of a Swiss
The spatial strategy of a Swiss city network and its further development is to facilitate the differentiation of activities and functions between these spaces. In a small country like Switzerland, it is profitable that not every space has to have all specific city functions. Furthermore, a city network also has the advantage of allowing different and often redundant routes and connections. Consequently, city networks are robust and flexible enough to face change.

A precondition implies that the connectivity between the functional spaces, also taking future development and future reserves into consideration, is efficient and reliable and predictable. Connectivity is an absolute prerequisite for cohesion and exchange between functional areas.

The basis of the Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines ("Grundzüge der Raumordnung Schweiz", 1996) is that the railway network is the backbone of the city network. It allows connections to all the centres of important functional spaces in thirty-minute intervals with high punctuality and reliability. Consequently, it allows the working population to keep their places of residence for a long time while still being able to change their workplace and phase of life. The stability of the residential environment is very important in specific phases of life and in specific situations. Its contribution to the commitment of the voluntary citizen organisations that are so important in Switzerland should not be underestimated.

The advantage of the Swiss city network, which cannot be praised highly enough, is the fact that this city system permits keeping the landscapes between functional spaces free from sprawl, hence integrating the Swiss federal tradition with a decentralised settlement structure in the spatial development strategy. The interaction with activity differentiation allows the integration of both small and large cities. Compared to neighbouring countries, these aspects allow settlements of a manageable size and shorter distances within and between the functional spaces.

**CHALLENGES**

Differentiation and specialisation within and between functional spaces has to be strengthened and further developed throughout Switzerland. It is necessary that functional differentiation is accepted and encouraged. Open competition in all fields could restrict the added value of coexistence between the spaces within the urban field. The federal government has the overview needed to develop a city network policy for the whole country and to do so in close collaboration with the cantons.

The spatial strategy of a Swiss city network and its further development are dependent, as in no other country, on an attractive, reliable and predictable transportation system, which also means an intelligent combination of private and public transport – without violating the individual’s time budget. Keeping connectivity within and between functional spaces is the key question. Meanwhile, it is important to realise additional reserves for mobility in society, to improve Switzerland’s accessibility continually and inter-continentially and, furthermore, to recognise that as a transit country in the middle of the European Union, Switzerland is obligated to take over specific functions. In railway transport, it must be ensured that national and especially international freight and long-distance traffic do not displace regional and local traffic. This would thwart an increase in connectivity supply within and between the functional spaces.

An effective spatial development within the functional areas is difficult to achieve because of the high number of participants on the community and cantonal levels. Complex tasks await: the further development and the operation of a regional public transportation system; the development of workplace areas with good public transportation connections; a balanced settlement development between urban and rural areas; and good environmental quality must be ensured.

The organisational efforts among the countless public actors must be greatly improved in order to perform these complex tasks. A system of spatial governance should be introduced that would lead to continued cooperation in the planning and decision-making activities of the local and spatial/cantonal units affected.

It is exceptionally important for spatial development to overcome this problem. In particular, railway stations play an important role. It is well known that upgrading railway stations, their urban integration and the intensive utilisation of their surroundings are tasks with high priority. A good example of that is the planned extension of the Zurich railway station, which is essential for maintaining the reliability of the dense rail timetable throughout Switzerland and for the development of a new pass-through connection. In addition, the development of the much needed underground railway station, "Löwenstrasse", opens new possibilities for the urban development of the areas directly surrounding the station and beyond.

**SUGGESTIONS**

To preserve the advantages of functional spaces with differentiated activities, it is essential to observe the development very carefully and to support functional differentiation with appropriate measures and, above all, to ensure the quality of connectivity between the functional spaces. This especially means identifying possible bottlenecks of the systems and taking action to manage them.

It is not enough to convey these tasks to the cities and spaces. Appropriate measures must be taken from the national point of view, taking international developments and relations into consideration.

Therefore, the national level should promote the development of an effective regional governance system within the functional areas. Starting from the current agglomeration policy, the purpose of this task should be to contribute to the development, improvement and monitoring of effective forms of cooperation between the actors on the local and regional/cantonal levels.

Various forms of cooperation (regional associations and other regional political units, such as regional parliaments) should be pursued based on the specific regional needs, beginning within formal agreements on up to the advanced form of regional bodies (e.g., regional associations). The merger itself can be an appropriate instrument. It should thereby be emphasised that high transaction costs are only one of numerous problems. Conflicts of interest between
the participants are a sizeable challenge for such systems. Therefore, it is of central importance to find an effective organisational form and decision-making structure. Only then are economically functional areas actually functional in a spatial sense!

It is evident that observations on the differentiation of functional spaces, identification of national infrastructure and bottlenecks, and the containment of sprawl are federal tasks for the future, especially where coordination of federal activities is needed.

Accessibility to infrastructure of national relevance, e.g., railway stations and airports, and a reliable connection among these play here a central role.

The Federal Office for Spatial Development should, in this context (together with the important cities, functional spaces and related bodies and other actors whose activities influence spatial development), take the initiative to develop a national strategy with the purpose of identifying key areas for coordinated and integrated investment, stimulating private developers to participate and supporting functional spaces in their cooperation efforts.
2.4. INFRASTRUCTURE AS A CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL COHESION AND COMPETITIVENESS

In Switzerland, the railways are an integrated part of the national culture. Their elaborate and beautiful constructions with daring tunnels and elegant bridges have been part of the national image for a long time. "Schönheit und Bahnwesen" (beauty and railways) was the motto of our journeys. The railways were used as a means to stabilise the decentralised federal structure from the very beginning, so there is a strong emotional attachment to them.

CURRENT STATUS In terms of infrastructure, Switzerland has reached a level of technical service, reliability and territorial coverage that is among the best in the world. In this section, some of the main features regarding infrastructure development and spatial development in Switzerland are introduced.

- Public transportation infrastructure in Switzerland is characterised by an almost full coverage of the entire country at a very high level. It allows access to all major centres and provides links between these centres with high performance. The quality of service and reliability are among the best in Europe.
- One of the main principles that underlies the development of the transport infrastructure is the focus on the integration of the whole country and on providing access to attractive public transportation for most people rather than on high-speed transportation. This is a result of a long-standing policy to provide spatial cohesion on a national scale. As a consequence of this policy, some relatively slow international connections still remain (e.g., Zurich–Basel and beyond).
CHALLENGES Though well developed and of high quality, transport infrastructure in Switzerland will be facing major challenges in the next few years:

- The railway system, together with an almost complete road network, provides excellent location qualities for most cities and agglomerations in comparison with the rest of Europe. And, so far, it is a major contribution to Switzerland’s international competitiveness.
- The design, finance and approval process of the major infrastructure project NEAT has been one of the most prominent examples of infrastructure policies on a European scale. It will contribute to a massive increase in railway transportation capacity. While it will contribute to the reduction of the environmental impact of goods transportation, it will also have a number of substantial spatial development implications. Such a project should be used for improving the situation, or at least not endangering regional and local accessibility – particularly in areas along the access corridors to the tunnels where the high-speed trains will not stop.
- Air transport plays an important role in the economic competitiveness of Switzerland on an international level. While air transport is winning more importance in general, it is also growing rapidly – even with soaring energy prices and the threat of terrorism. However, substantial development barriers have already threatened the international function and importance of the major airport of Switzerland: Zurich–Kloten. This may have massive implications for the financial centre of Zurich. This is an example of the long-term effects of the lack of coordination and a far-sighted spatial development policy that also takes the cross-administrative and cross-border aspects into consideration.
- The high level of public transport service at a regional level has provided the basis for expanding functional spaces. Growing commuter distances and rising numbers of travellers have emphasised the general suburbanisation trend. This trend can only be channelled in spatial terms by focusing residential and business development in locations with good public transportation access (even good public transportation can, when accompanied by weak spatial planning, contribute to urban sprawl).
- The extremely locally oriented, bottom-up government system traditionally has difficulty in handling large projects that affect a great number of communities and cantons. This is particularly problematic in small cantons or regions with minimal administrative and professional capacity that cannot provide proper leadership for dealing with the impact and challenges brought about by such large projects.
- Governmental planning and decision-making with respect to infrastructure is characterised by a sectoral approach and only rarely is integrated in a comprehensive spatial development planning concept.
- In some cases, large infrastructure projects with spatial impact have played an important role in initiating regional development debates, fostering planning processes and stimulating political debates, particularly about specific future development options, as happened in the cantons of Uri and Schwyz. If well organised, such developments can provide good examples for integrated project development, which can then be used as models for future planning and implementation.

The Swiss approach to safeguarding a measure of national (spatial and economic) cohesion is potentially threatened by a reduction in the level of service in transportation in more remote and thinly populated regions and by the (economic) effort to provide a high-level transportation infrastructure (such as NEAT).

The (national) focus on NEAT creates the danger of underestimating both the importance of providing and safeguarding the development of the access corridors and of the removal of essential bottlenecks in the gateways (e.g., the Basel region as a gateway for the Gotthard axis, which crosses the cantons of Uri and Schwyz as part of the access to the tunnel). This situation could create major insecurity and cause blockades for users, citizens and businesses in the adjoining regions. Not solving these problems could cause conflicts between (inter-)national and regional traffic and therefore endanger regional accessibility.

The major spatial implications of large infrastructure have so far not been met with an adequate system of actively dealing with the necessity to integrate new infrastructure into an existing web of spatial functions. In a situation of growing awareness of spatial and environmental impacts and the parallel increase in intensity of using space as an economic and social resource, it is essential to find innovative ways of planning and integrating future demands on space. It is also critical to do this effectively and rather quickly. The current experience with planning and decision-making processes lasting more than a decade will not be sufficient in the future. This also has an increasing relevance for the growing spatial demands of economically important infrastructure, such as (expanding) airports.

Citizens and enterprises operate in spaces far larger than the existing administrative and political entities that constitute the political system, e.g., commuting, supply chains, business collaborations are taking place in expanding functional spaces. The discrepancy is growing in both spatial and thematic-functional terms (larger functional spaces, more issues), which creates the necessity for decision-making in growing regional contexts, particularly with the planning and financing of infrastructure. To establish and administer the necessary democratic procedures in the existing political and administrative system is difficult and time-consuming, possibly leading to delays or cancellations of essential projects.

In the context of the increasing global importance of secure and efficient energy systems, Switzerland will be facing a rising demand for the expansion of a safe and redundant energy production and distribution system. The experience so far has shown that planning and decision-making processes can take up to two decades, and that the spatial development implications have not been sufficiently integrated into subsequent implementations (e.g., growing settlements in close proximity to gas pipelines and tanks).

SUGGESTIONS The Swiss system uses a number of instruments in dealing with the tasks and challenges of the future. These instruments are embedded in a web of procedures to provide the necessary flow of information and balance of interests. Nevertheless, given the scope of the
challenges—and considering the potential gain from improvements, the following suggestions are offered:

- Key projects with substantial spatial impact, especially large infrastructure projects, should be pursued with an approach of active integrated infrastructure project planning, which includes the goal of integrating the new infrastructure optimally into the existing spatial systems of the affected regions and producing as many co-benefits to regional development as possible. Such an approach can greatly improve the project design quality and public support in democratic procedures while substantially increasing the economic efficiency of the investment from a financial perspective. Interesting examples can be seen in the plans made by the cantons of Uri and Schwyz for the access corridor to the Gotthard or in the complex coupling of road, highway, railway and flood management projects in the Upper Valais.

- Some key questions for this approach have to be considered: How can such integrated planning be designed and organised to fully cover the spatial and economic development issues tied to large infrastructure projects (e.g., including regions impacted by the Gotthard tunnel access tracks) by involving all relevant cantonal (and sub-cantonal) agents? How can it be ensured that participating in and contributing to this integrated planning process is more beneficial than not participating? How can it be ensured that future procedures can be faster and more effective than the current battling back and forth?

- The positive examples cited above have developed over a long period of time and out of the necessity of dealing with highly problematic situations. Through the systematic support of this approach, time and planning resources could be saved and processes could be greatly accelerated. Systematic support from the federal and cantonal levels should be used to establish and secure such integrated planning procedures, which often will have to go beyond the boundaries of existing cantonal borders, and also will be cutting across the borders of political and administrative units. In this context, the scope of existing planning instruments (e.g., sector plans for traffic, cantonal planning guides, agglomeration policy) should also be expanded and integrated horizontally. The idea of the Agglomeration Programme could be further developed, and experiences from the EU Interreg Programmes should also be included.

- A legal framework for the optimal operation of regional bodies in integrated infrastructure planning mechanisms may be necessary to provide the legal basis for formal support through various governmental levels/agents and for consistent operations horizontally across sectors.

- On a more general level of infrastructure policy, it should be safeguarded that the future focus planned for large projects should not lead to neglecting projects in the secondary level of network development (e.g., gateways, bottlenecks) and that the overall objective of national spatial cohesion is being maintained. This includes the maintenance of the level of service in more remote areas and in smaller nodes (such as Thusis), which are essential prerequisites for economic and social development in regions with lower population density, e.g., in mountainous parts of the country. All in all, a balance of efforts will have to be secured in the future.

New means for energy production and distribution are urgent in order to maintain the security of the existing system and to provide for these new challenges. The further development of the Swiss energy system will need a far-sighted and effective spatial planning component with faster procedures and better results in keeping settlement development a safe distance from energy infrastructure. This is a true challenge for a densely populated, mountainous country such as Switzerland.
2.5. THE TRANSFRONTIER DIMENSION

**STATUS** Being a landlocked country with long, indented borders with five other countries, three of them much larger in area and population and four of them members of the EU, transfrontier considerations necessarily play an important role in the formulation of a spatial development strategy for Switzerland, and, in particular, for its border regions. Cross-border spatial planning is already taking place in the context of Interreg in four cross-border Swiss regions. This cooperative planning tends to be project-based and therefore does not directly raise the issue of harmonising planning systems across boundaries.

The importance of cross-border issues is reinforced by the fact that the functional regions associated with several of the most important Swiss cities, notably Geneva, Basel, Schaffhausen and Lugano, cross national borders. In aggregate, and because cross-border considerations affect all four corners of Switzerland, they amount to an issue of national importance. The most extreme situation, which illustrates the imperative of putting a greater emphasis on cross-border spatial planning, is the Canton of Geneva, which has a 500 kilometre border with France and only a 4.5 kilometre border with another Swiss canton.

Because of its function as a country traversed by routes which link other countries together, the Swiss have always benefited from the cultural and economic exchange role their country plays. Cross-border spatial planning adds another potential dimension to this enrichment of national life. Switzerland’s role in Europe is also enhanced by close involvement in cross-border spatial planning because of the country’s importance as a link between EU countries.
Deriving from this geographical context, Switzerland has a well-established tradition of including transfrontier work in spatial planning, most notably in the Basel city-region. This tradition is reinforced because Swiss national boundaries with other countries are not, as is generally the case elsewhere, also linguistic boundaries. However, the dispute with Germany over flights to Zurich airport illustrates that significant work on cross-border spatial planning issues is still required.

**CHALLENGES** Several trends are likely to give greater emphasis to cross-border work on spatial planning in the future.

First, national borders are likely to become even more porous as the 21st century progresses. People and enterprises are both becoming more mobile and global competition means that countries have to be more open and adaptable than hitherto. The growing influence of EU policies will further reduce the barrier effects of national boundaries, even though Switzerland is not an EU member.

Secondly, at the city-region scale, the distances over which daily life takes place are also likely to increase, implying that what happens in the border regions adjoining Switzerland and in the border regions of Switzerland itself will become even more interdependent. If Switzerland is to try to control its own spatial development, it will increasingly have to play a part in influencing the spatial development of transfrontier regions. The quid pro quo will be that spatial development in Switzerland will more and more need to reflect what is happening on the other side of its borders. This may imply a certain loss of autonomy but it is better that this takes place in a considered, cooperative way than in a random and unplanned manner. The requirement to consider Swiss spatial development policies in a transfrontier context will have a considerable influence on other aspects of spatial development considered in this report, most notably agglomeration policy, infrastructure investment and economic development. None of these policies will function effectively without a well formulated transfrontier component.

**SUGGESTIONS** Particularly in the large countries which share a border with Switzerland, national governments play a greater role in spatial development policies than in Switzerland itself. For this reason, the Swiss federal government should play a larger role than hitherto in promoting and participating in cross-border planning exercises. Given the Swiss spatial planning context, this more active role needs to be undertaken in full conjunction with the cantonal governments.

Because certain Swiss border regions fulfil important gateway functions, it is important that this aspect of the spatial development of Switzerland is enhanced through cross-border cooperation. Further, cross-border regions are by their nature peripheral. Therefore, cross-border spatial development opportunities should play a larger role in Swiss spatial development policy, particularly to promote territorial cohesion within Switzerland to balance the centrifugal tendencies that working across borders could encourage.

In order to ensure that the opportunities available for transfrontier cooperation are fully used to the benefit of the Swiss people, the federal government needs to ensure that the spatial planning activities on a national level are soundly based and subscribed to by all levels of government and by other policy sectors. More generally, transfrontier considerations also need to play a larger role in infrastructure and agglomeration policies because of the large scale and economic importance of the Swiss border cities. Cross-border spatial planning issues need to be a regular item on the agendas of both ROK (Raumordnungskonferenz) and ROR (Raumordnungsrat).

The OECD territorial review of Switzerland in 2002 partially attributed increasing spatial differentials in Switzerland to the performance of the adjoining regions in other countries. This further emphasises the need for the Swiss government to give more priority to transfrontier spatial planning, particularly in southern Switzerland, where measures which enhanced the economic performance of adjoining French and Italian regions would have a beneficial effect on Switzerland.

Cross-border work will enhance the ability of cantonal and local governments to cooperate with each other. But from a territorial cohesion perspective, transfrontier cooperation on spatial planning could have a detrimental effect in Switzerland. For this reason, in border regions the federal and cantonal governments need to put an even greater effort into inter-cantonal cooperation on spatial planning.

Because of the importance of cross-border spatial planning to Switzerland, the federal government needs to encourage cooperation on the preparation of plans rather than just infrastructure projects. Also, the federal government could play an important role in synthesising and transferring experience of cross-border co-operation on spatial planning from one frontier region to another. The general experience could also be used to benchmark and, if necessary, enrich planning in Switzerland, as well as being possibly used as the basis for setting up a European centre of excellence in Switzerland for the wider exchange and dissemination of good practice.
2.6. PLANNING IN STRATEGIC CONTEXTS

**CURRENT STATUS** The present constitution of the Swiss Federal Republic states in Article 75, Paragraph 1, that the federal level decides the fundamental principles of spatial planning, while the cantons are responsible for the actual spatial planning. According to Paragraph 2, the federal government furthers the efforts of the cantons and works in cooperation with them. Furthermore, Paragraph 3 requires that the federal government and the cantons also consider the needs of spatial planning in the fulfilment of their duties.

The current federal spatial planning law (RPG: Raumplanungsgesetz) dates from 1979. In Article 2, the planning obligations of the federal, cantonal and community levels stipulate that they have to create and synchronise the plans required for spatially significant projects and to consider the spatial implications of other activities.

In addition, the structure plans (Richtplan) for the cantons are addressed in the documents entitled “Spatial Planning Measures” and “Special Measures by the Federal Government”, i.e., the concepts and specific sector plans. The land-use plans follow in the third part of the law.

In conceptualising their structure plans (as snapshots, reports, or periodic excerpts from the planning process), the cantons decide the essential features of how their territory should be developed, while keeping in mind the concepts and plans of the federal level, as well as the structure plans of the neighbouring cantons. They work together with the federal authorities and their neighbouring cantons “as far
as their duties coincide”. Border cantons should “seek co-
operation with the regional authorities of the neighbouring
countries, inasmuch as their measures extend across the
borders. (Naturally, foreign authorities are not bound by
this law, therefore, the use of “to seek” is to be under-
stood as an active offer of cooperation. Cantons that do
not border on other countries are still requested to seek
out this cooperation if their actions will have an effect out-
side the national border. A cooperation such as this can re-
result in, among other things, a state or international treaty,
which the cantons are authorised to sign.)

These structure plans, which are binding for the authorities,
show the minimum level of coordination for spatial plan-
ing activities in view of the desired development, as well
as the time sequence and the means of fulfilling the task.

The cantons organise the process for developing the struc-
ture plan. They regulate how the communities and other
stakeholders are involved in the development of the struc-
ture plan for spatially significant tasks. The federal level also
has an obligation to work out its basic foundation in the
form of concepts and sector plans and to make these consist-
tent with each other.

Of particular relevance in this legal context is the focus on
“activities” without further specification. A certain clarifica-
tion can be found in the RPV (Raumplanungsverordnung).
The manner in which these activities are to be identified
remains open, and can be adjusted to the targets to be
achieved. The terms “conflict” or “problem” do not ap-
pear in the language of the law, nor does the difference
between current and future conflicts. To define and organ-
ise these aspects is the responsibility of the cantons.

The requirement for cooperation is repeatedly empha-
sised, namely between federal offices, between the fed-
eral and cantonal governments, between the cantons, and
between the border cantons and the regional authorities
of the bordering nations. (In the concept and sector plans,
the explicit reference to cross-border cooperation is miss-
ing from the law. This follows in the RPV, Art. 18.)

The RPV then stipulates a type of methodological basis in
Art. 5, namely, the identification of the coordination status
of the individual activities:

1. The mildest form of this is, at first sight, the prelimin-
ary assessment (Vororientierung). This indicates that the
relevant spatial planning activity could have considerable
effect on “land use” (interestingly not: “use of space”), but
has not yet been defined in the terms needed for an ag-
reement. In other words: “recognition of…”. This is an ex-
ceedingly important part of planning policy and could be
called the opening move. Hypotheses are formulated at
this point, aspects that are not so important are removed,
and intellectual, creative potential and a wealth of ideas
are required. This is also the point where a decision is
taken on whether the situation has sufficient scope to require
special, non-routine effort. In this phase, it is particularly
desirable to be open to different approaches to a solution.

2. The intermediate step is when the status of the coor-
dination is indicated, i.e., where the spatial activities are
not yet aligned, but the steps toward a timely agreement
have been cleared (Zwischenergebnis). In other words:
“the next steps towards clarification are…” In this phase,
we find both openness and incompleteness, depending on
the “stage of maturity”.

3. The final step is a designation of a spatial agreement,
in other words: “the choice is…” (Festsetzung). Here, it is
taken for granted that further requirements will follow in
order to implement a plan.

This trilogy is plausible and practical in its simplicity. It’s
plausible because it reflects the usual stages of a clarifica-
tion process (recognising and accepting a problem, looking
for possible paths to a resolution, deciding on the solution).
And, it’s practical because it allows an assessment of the
situation at any time – even in incomplete and contradic-
tory decision processes. This is where it shows a methodolo-
gical strength: The requirement to obtain those pieces of
information necessary to advance the clarification process
will be defined, as well as limited, through actual decision-
making problems.

Summa summarum, this framework allows solutions to be
worked out step-by-step, connecting the necessary know-
ledge with the relevant decision-making problems and ap-
plying them economically. This is not part of a long-term
programme determined collectively by the federal govern-
ment, the cantons and the local communities. This offers
instead the possibility to take an assessment at any time,
one that is based on the current state of the structure plan
(a snapshot). The law accepts the fact that the network of
actors who take part in spatial planning cannot be treated
as a unit and that a customised focus on specific problems
is needed. Witness to this are the many diverse kinds of
planning approaches, as can be seen in the structure plans
of the cantons or the sector plans of the federal govern-
ment.

CHALLENGES
We see five areas in need of action:

The system of (cantonal) structure plan and (federal) sec-
tor plans has two critical points: one point concerns the
identification of problem areas of strategic significance in
the form of setting priorities. This can only take place by
creating an overview that is oriented to the situation – and
not along the lines of authority. A comprehensive national
Swiss overview does not exist and that means that the basis
for setting the focus does not exist either.

2. Integral treatment of strategically important areas
The second critical point concerns the integrated clarifica-
tion of problem areas where several actors are responsible.
Often, cantonal structure plans and federal sector plans
are concerned with the same space, but each from their
own point of view. A classic example is the Lower Reuss
Valley in Canton Uri. The spatial overview is often too limi-
ted and often dominated by thinking in terms of individual
projects.

3. Differentiated treatment of spatially relevant
themes by geographical sector
For themes of strategic importance, e.g., agriculture, the
question arises of how to create solutions that will correspond to the special diversity of Switzerland. Is there one way that fits all or are there different ways that can incorporate the special strengths of the individual regions?

4. Using the potential that a formal context offers
The opportunities that a legal framework offers from a strategic point of view (structure plans, sector plans) are not being used as much as could be desired, especially in the area of “creating emphasis” (focal points) and “initiating and promoting special procedures”.

5. Lebensraum and task-oriented spatial planning are not a public issue
A creative approach to the entire lebensraum, as well as creative and task-oriented spatial planning, remains in the shadow of more prominent topical themes such as traffic infrastructure. This is all the more regrettable, as the spatial qualities of a nation are increasingly changing from soft location factors into hard ones.

PROPOSALS
1. Initiative “Spatial Perspective on Switzerland”
The Swiss Federal Office of Spatial Development is considering initiating a task-orientated platform: “Perspective on Switzerland”. This platform will be implemented for a limited amount of time, i.e., 3–5 years.

In this context, space doesn’t just mean the physical characteristics, it also means the possibilities that this space offers for human activities and the boundaries it sets. As a result, the exploration of future behaviour is given a high, possibly even central, priority. When Switzerland is understood as a kind of network, then the operating forms of this network will be significant in influencing potential kinds of behaviour. Functioning networks are good insurance against surprises!

The goal of this initiative is to start a broad discussion among specialists and other interested parties about spatial development in Switzerland as a way to identify themes and areas of strategic importance and lead to their clarification and solution.

2. Overviews on spatial development in Switzerland
In order to create these overviews, all parties officially responsible for spatial planning are being invited to join. The appropriate authorities from neighbouring countries and other important actors who are not formally responsible for spatial planning questions, but who are concerned about a flourishing development for Switzerland are also invited to participate on a voluntary basis. The purpose of these overviews is to create a basis for regular assessments.

3. Assessments of spatial development in Switzerland
Regular assessments would be made as part of the platform. The purpose of these assessments is to identify strategic areas and themes that have central importance for Switzerland and to evaluate the usefulness of the presently available instruments. This is to be done in a problem-oriented manner and not along the x-y axes of the bureaucracy! This should, at last, enable a broad discussion (“Spatial Perspective on Switzerland”) that goes beyond the realm of the experts. The conversion into formal instruments and the revision of legal decrees will only happen when the relevant enquiries and tests show the usefulness and fruitfulness of the new approaches or solutions.

4. Strategic themes and strategic areas
The thematic and spatial focal points determined during the assessment would be handled in a special procedure over a specified period. The ARE will take the initiative and actively participate in finding solutions. It could be helpful to determine the method of directing these processes according to the relevant themes.

The usual practice of submitting scenarios to stimulate the discussion could be supplemented by an action-oriented method that includes both formal and informal elements: Here the motto: problems first, responsibilities later, could be appropriately applied.

5. Funding
The Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development should receive sufficient financial and personnel funding.
2.7. CONCLUSIONS

This section summarises the proposals of the international group of experts.

Where the interests of the federal government are particularly affected, the ARE should be more present with initiatives and an intensified course of action.

1. Development of test planning procedures for the cultural landscape
The cultural landscape of Switzerland will be subject to considerable change in future. In particular, the changes expected in agriculture could have an influence on the form and quality of the cultural landscape.

- One proposal is to select areas in different parts of Switzerland, based on a national overview, for a test planning process.
- Together with the involved parties, various developmental proposals would be drawn up, tested and visualised. In addition to the methods already available, new ways and means for action should be developed and tested in the field.
- The testing plan should be implemented by several teams and coordinated by a selected group of experts.
- On the basis of suggestions and developmental opportunities, further strategies should then be established.
2. Pinpointing the differences between agglomerations, promoting cooperation and organising support where this is needed and wanted

With the Agglomeration Programme, the ARE has initiated an important process in the further development of the agglomerations. This programme should be followed up. It will depend on being able to simulate the various agglomerations under a variety of conditions. For example, ideas about the future settlements of particular agglomerations should be visualised and made clearer through the use of different kinds of images.

The Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development should be able to further the necessary processes with and between the agglomerations with extra funding. As part of this process, the special contribution of individual agglomerations to national development should be detailed and a collective database should be created, which has reference numbers relevant for comparison. Relevant tasks are:

- Create an overview of the agglomerations.
- Select agglomerations whose profile should be developed from a national point of view.
- Define strategically important projects.
- Gather desirable tools and instruments for further development in cooperative planning processes.
- Create a mobile task force to support the agglomerations.
- Monitor progress regularly and draw conclusions for further development.

3. Further development of the city network in Switzerland and functional spaces

An effective, labour-based combination of functional spaces is essentially dependent on a functioning, reliable and predictable traffic system. In this connection, the following are important:

- Further development of the concept of the city network and the development of a programme with the support of temporary, overlapping institutional cooperation (especially with regard to functionally related areas).
- Identification of important existing and future bottlenecks.
- Compilation of measures planned for elimination or prophylactic actions.
- Selection of nationally important plans in this regard.
- Supporting the participants involved in the clarification and resolution of the tasks related to this.

Functioning city networks are also centrally dependent upon containing urban sprawl, using the guideline of developing settlement ‘inwards’ by concentrating housing within the current boundaries and improving the public transportation environment in the catchment areas. This task is important for Switzerland as a whole. A national programme for regional land-use management should be instigated. The details of the programme should be developed with the appropriate experts.

4. Integrated concepts for settlement, landscape and infrastructure

Proposals have been made for improving settlement, traffic and landscape development. The benefits of such a procedure can outweigh the cost of it several times over. Areas that will have to cope in future with considerable intrusions from the installation of infrastructure (for instance, traffic structures, flood protection), should especially take such procedures into consideration. One example is the effect on the nationally important corridor of Basel-Gotthard-Chiasso as a result of the extension of the entrance and outlet routes to the NEAT.

Furthermore, there is a proposal to investigate what spatially important effects and consequences are connected to the further development of Switzerland’s energy supply. The preparation of adequate capacity and operational distribution networks, together with the multiple demands of Switzerland as a transit area in the European electricity providers system, should bring up many relevant regional and nationally important issues.

5. Supporting cross-border spatial development

Switzerland has extensive borders with five neighbouring countries, some of which are considerably larger. In some cases, certain conflicts, which could also be connected to opportunities for spatial development, need to be resolved. Together with the relevant cantons, the possibilities for support should be discussed and conclusions drawn for further action.

In preparation for the conferences connected with this, a survey of cross-border activities and opportunities, as well as conflicts and reservations, should be compiled. The exchange and continuing work should lead to stronger cross-border cooperation and to the possible reconnaissance of new approaches that would incorporate the appropriate offices of the neighbouring countries.

6. Further development and utilisation of the structure plan philosophy for nationally significant plans/projects and spaces.

As described extensively in chapter 2.6, according to the spatial planning law (RPG), the structure plan contains interesting possibilities for spatial development in Switzerland. When the present and future initiatives and projects are actually underway, it will be important to create and maintain an overview. This is why we suggest that the ARE begin with an informal plan called “Spatial Development in Switzerland”, in which the projects started together with the various participants are merged and presented in a clear overview.

Regular assessments would show the progress achieved, reveal any open questions and indicate how to proceed. It’s conceivable that this informal plan could then form the basis for a special plan on “Spatial Development in Switzerland”.

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3.1 SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ON SWISS SPATIAL PLANNING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EXPERTS’ COUNTRIES

The following text is an attempt to highlight specific characteristics of the Swiss system as seen from my outside viewpoint. Major challenges are pointed out along with some ideas for potential ways to cope with those challenges:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SWISS SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEM

- Extreme bottom-up governmental system, with highest priority on the local level and strong at the cantonal level.
- The planning system reflects this division of governmental power; regional planning or a regional development approach have been established for a number of functions in additional levels (below or even above the cantonal level).
- Government decision-making is characterised by highest-order complexity: local citizenship, three-level tax system, local/cantonal building codes and planning regulations, direct democracy – all the elements relevant to political decision-making and planning processes.
- The main function of the highest government level is coordination and mediation rather than active, vision-oriented planning or even top-down decision-making.
- Decision-making and planning that focus on a functional regional level is extremely difficult, stretching the system’s capacity to the limit or beyond (particularly with a political system based on citizen organisations).
- Large (infrastructure) projects with spatial impact can and do have an important role in focusing regional...
development debates, planning processes and political decision-making (making debates about future development options more concrete and focused).

• Wide differences in the level of economic activity, tax revenue and income are immanent in the individualised, local-level-oriented planning system and regional development system.

• Four major systems have so far contributed to balancing economic disparities and providing national cohesion: (1) infrastructure (particularly public transport), (2) national defence (with a large number of decentralised bases), (3) subsidies to agriculture, particularly in mountain regions, and (4) support of endogenous regional development (Berghilfegesetz IHG).

CHALLENGES

• The real life of citizens and enterprises takes place in functional spaces that are far larger than the administrative and political entities that constitute the existing political system. The discrepancy is growing in both spatial and thematic-functional terms (larger functional spaces, more issues): economic, technological, and political stimuli do and will create a tendency toward regional decision-making in growing spatial dimensions.

• While this challenge is relevant for most countries, in an extremely decentralised and complex system like that in Switzerland, it is vital to find working solutions. In a system that has developed over hundreds of years, the question arises as to how this growing discrepancy can be dealt with in a way that builds on and uses the strengths of this system, particularly the high quality of direct democracy and decision-making.

• The Swiss approach to safeguarding a measure of national (spatial and economic) cohesion is being threatened by a reduction of military installations and personnel, relevant in the mountainous areas, a tendency to reduce subsidies to agriculture in a global context (WTO), and a new regional policy model that seems to be more efficiency-oriented and may even increase regional economic disparities at a sub-cantonal level. In contrast, the new system of financial sharing of tax revenues (Regionaler Finanzausgleich) is a big step toward providing a more balanced economic development at the cantonal level.

APPROACHES

Three potential sources of reconciliation can be considered:

1. Key projects with substantial spatial impact, especially large infrastructure projects.

   • Integrated infrastructure project planning.

KEY QUESTIONS:

• How can a planning organisation be designed that fully covers the spatial/economic development issues tied to large infrastructure projects (e.g., including all regions impacted by the Gotthard Tunnel and all the access routes) by involving all relevant cantonal (and sub-cantonal) agents?

• How can it be ensured that participating a contributing
This opening needs time, resources and adaptations to standard procedures because additional links will have to be managed.

- A legal framework for the operation of either regional bodies or integrated infrastructure planning mechanisms will be necessary, providing the legal basis for formal support through various government levels or agents, the transfer of resources, and the political link to the system of direct democracy. (Authorisation of such new planning processes or regional organisations through the electorate will be needed.)

Operational programmes for functional spaces.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- What is the driving theme, who are the key players and who gives identity and/or resources to a functional space’s operations?
- How can it be secured that existing (parallel) structures are fully supportive instead of hindering (e.g., communities, cantons, other regional platforms, especially where several cantons or even nations are involved, as in the cases of Basel and Geneva)?

A system of incentives and support from the federal level can be used to establish and make effective the planning and development efforts at the level of the functional spaces. The new regional development initiative for the mountainous regions (former IHG) has some potential to create initiatives, similar to the agglomeration policy approach – this should be enhanced to contribute to national (spatial, economic) cohesion.

**POLICY CONCLUSIONS: SYSTEMATIC SUPPORT**

- Both approaches need substantial backing and support from the higher government levels (federal or cantonal) and the good will (plus resources) to participate at the cantonal/regional levels.

- Substantial backing and support means setting incentives for cantonal/regional partners to participate and contribute to the success of a more complex, integrated planning/policy-making approach, for example:
  - The idea of the agglomeration programme could be further developed; experiences of the EU Interreg Programmes should be included.
  - A potential new element is the programme to support regional development in the mountainous areas, border regions and less-developed rural regions (former IHG). In addition, the money distributed through the new system of financial sharing to less developed cantons can partly be used to create incentives and support for a functional regional development approach outside the metropolitan region sphere.
  - A more systematic and developmental approach to the use of (former) military resources seems to be advisable.

- Participation at cantonal/regional levels means full support from existing planning and decision-making agents and the opening up/integration of existing planning procedures and tools to new planning/programming processes in a larger (spatial, thematic) context.
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT The basis of the mission is a diagnosis of the state of planning in Switzerland, as specified in the ARE 2005 report, according to which the country has failed to reach the goal of sustainable development that it had set for itself. The group of experts has further diagnosed a high quality of space and the handling of space in Switzerland, but also people’s feeling that space is threatened. The group also observed a high quality of democracy, which however has its limits in addressing certain spatial issues, such as the country’s goal for sustainable development and the lack of other strategic visions for its collective future that would contribute to the definition of the future of spatial planning policies.

These facts, added to the country’s small size and the speed of spatial change, which stand in contrast to the goals set for spatial planning, are in favour of developments that could induce rapid change, or at least in favour of a range of developments of various kinds that could be implemented simultaneously with short- or long-term schedules.

Coming after other diagnoses and recommendations that have been made to the ARE, our task was to formulate an original initiative. In addition, our recommendations should be ambitious. In fact, they contain demands formulated by the Swiss experts we met, as well as the critical response the group had to these demands. Largely linked to the freedom of thought we were given, these recommendations are general guidelines that should contribute to the debate on the future of spatial planning in Switzerland.
The possible recommendations concern:

- Collectively establishing facts, representations and shared goals about the state and the development of Switzerland through studies, surveys and debates (point 1).
- Defining possible guidelines for development through a new understanding of the role and content of public action in the field of spatial planning (point 2), legislative adjustments (point 3) and the informal development of tools, processes and organisational forms, based on a systematic comparison (point 4).

1. COLLECTIVELY ESTABLISHING FACTS, REPRESENTATIONS AND GOALS AS RELATED TO SWITZERLAND: "INSTRUMENTS CAN BE CONCEPTS".

COMMON KNOWLEDGE OF THE FACTS As is often the case, the citizens of Switzerland seem to have some contradictory ideas about the state of their country and what they expect from it. They place high value on the natural environment of their country, while at the same time supporting urban development. They express strong demands for public infrastructure but are competing for lower and lower taxes. They value local democracy for arranging planning tasks, yet do not see its limits from a global point of view.

Establishing realistic and shared representations of the state of development and the threats to Switzerland should be done on every level, through thorough surveys, evaluations, communication and public debate. Evaluating the activities and the limits of spatial planning in its present organisational state is necessary before trying to change it, said a mayor to our group of experts. In this respect and with regard to the strength of planning on a local level, it may be one of the crucial roles of the upper levels of intervention to show the collective impact of individual actions on the lower levels.

In addition to the current state of Swiss planning, a diagnosis of context-dependent developments that will affect it in future, whether they are man-made or not, was prepared by the group. Strong, far-sighted work must clarify the consequences of these developments on future policies in general and spatial policies in particular. Climate change is a major element, considering its consequences on important sectors of Switzerland like agriculture, water management, hydroelectric energy supplies, and both winter and summer tourism. Globalisation and growing international competition in Switzerland’s leading sectors like banking or pharmaceuticals must also be defined very precisely. Finally, the effects of an ageing population on the employment market, housing, etc., must be considered in connection with immigration policy.

ESTABLISHING COLLECTIVE GOALS There is also a need to collectively establish key issues and goals for Switzerland and introduce them into spatial planning policies: "We have to designate national interests as such; Galmiz was one," said one of the Swiss interviewed.

National interests of a social, economic and political dimension have to be named before spatial planning objectives can be defined, with the latter having to adapt to the former. Interestingly, many of the experts interviewed addressed the role of spatial planning more from the point of view of what had to be repaired, considering the damage done to the land and the environment, rather than what conditions would need to be created for future development.

What do the Swiss want for their country? The answer is not easy in a country traditionally more a confederation of shared interests than a federal state with a homogeneous national identity, where federal intervention is limited and the invisible hand of the market is growing. In the area of spatial planning: Are the Swiss ready to deal with national debates that go beyond the issues of local democracy? The debate about spatial planning might mirror some of the profound developments that Swiss federalism is undergoing, with a change in the balance of power at the federal level, the need to redefine political projects in a European and globalised environment, the related possible administrative reform at the federal level, in a context where public debates tackle the question of the country’s cultural cohesion, the weakening of the “esprit de concordance” and the resulting difficulties for the functioning of democracy on the federal level.

Simultaneously, some national issues related to spatial planning and spatial development can already be identified: environmental protection, risk management (especially floods), tourism, foreign investments in industrial and commercial areas, integration in the European transportation network. Collectively establishing facts and goals would also set the basis for a scenario-based decision process, where the question is not only “What do we want?” but “What can we do?” concerning Switzerland’s real spatial possibilities. Before accepting any reform that has to do with the historical prerogatives of the municipalities and the cantons, the Swiss have to have a clear picture of the state of the land and the range of its possible developments. Only under this condition will they accept that maintaining the general goal of sustainable development might mean, for example, possible restrictions on their local democracy.

Finally, the relevance of some operational objectives, as a means to reach the general objectives defined by law, could be examined technically and politically. For instance, new visions for regulating urban sprawl could be compatible with the main goal of sustainable development and a rational use of land. What’s more, some operational objectives in favour of sustainable development do not necessarily correspond to what people want: housing in the undeveloped zone with an extensive traffic network, for example. In a strongly democratic country, how are the “objectives” of the individual citizens to be made compatible with those of the common good? The existing goal of sustainable development of Swiss spatial planning needs to be given a more spatial dimension. Scenarios about how to interpret sustainable development spatially, considering contextual developments, as well as more thorough studies about their efficiency, could be useful. In this perspective, broad public debate would expand political and public awareness about the incompatibility of some developments the Swiss citizens want for their territory, a point made by experts in fields as different as agriculture and urban development.
Spatial planning is often about addressing the spatial consequences of contextual developments and sector policies. In fact, spatial consequences of sector policies usually have more impact on space than spatial policies per se and spatial planning is more efficient when space is taken into account at an early stage of the policy decision process.

What’s more, a spatial approach to sector policies may enhance the effectiveness of these policies. Space in itself is an active agent of public interventions, because of the specificity of its natural, cultural, economic resources, which can be an added value to a policy. This territorialisation on the federal, cantonal or community levels, spatial planning can be an added value to a policy. This territorialisation of public policy seems to already exist in Switzerland, for example, with the “Neue Regionalpolitik” (New Regional Policy), developed precisely because, given the country’s federal structure, measures taken by the federal level to support economic development had to be differentiated territorially. In this respect, federalism is a clear ally of a spatial planning use of federal policies and thus of a strengthening of spatial planning on the federal level. This evolution changes the understanding of spatial planning, from “spatial planning” to “spatial regulations” and then to “spatial development”, from a space-oriented regulative action to a project-oriented action of increased overall development. On the local level, active land buying and selling tactics as practised by some municipalities both as a tool for space management and economic development, show that spatial planning can be used as a means to an end other than land preservation.

On the federal, cantonal or community levels, spatial planning should be at least systematically and formally associated with all space-related sector policies such as environment, risk management, transportation, and housing policies. A step further would be to see spatial planning play a role in such policies as economic development. In fact, spatial planning and spatial development could be more explicitly designated as the instruments to achieve the general goal of sustainable development.

In this respect, communication is needed with the citizens, administration, and politicians, who often have a negative perception of spatial planning as a formal, restrictive practice. Work has also to be done to help the professional image of planners. They should become more project developers than plan designers, and become active actors in the organisation and mediation of public discussions, as is in fact already being done in many places, such as the Verein Region Bern initiative (Ein Bild der Region) or the test planning method in the Canton of Uri.

3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM: “WE NEED RENOVATION, NOT NEW CONSTRUCTION.”

Besides these “mental” measures for the representations of Switzerland and its future and what spatial planning is about, recommendations can be made concerning both adjustments to the legislative and administrative systems and the development of existing practices.

A BETTER USE OF THE GREAT POTENTIAL OF THE EXISTING LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM

The idea would be first to make better use of the potential of the legislative system, in agreement with the ideas of most interviewed people, that the legislative basis for spatial planning is good and that the problem is rather one of implementation. The conciliation procedure that can be applied by the federal level to influence cantonal planning could, for instance, be used more often. The jurisprudence associated with the interpretation of the obligations set down in the constitution to consider spatial planning, should also be taken into account and possibly defined more precisely in operational terms.

UPDATING THE LAW BY REDEFINING ITS OBJECTIVES

Another idea would be to introduce adaptations to the legal system in order to bring in the definition of the objectives of spatial planning. This would not mean a radical change of the philosophy of the law, rather the integration of developments that have taken place since 1979, for instance, the growing importance of urban Switzerland or that sustainable development as an objective is not being achieved in the current system.

A broad discussion on the objectives of spatial planning in Switzerland, taking the developments into account, could in fact find some strong expression in an adjustment of the objectives set for spatial planning in the law, as well as a possible change in the law would be a strong stimulus for a public debate on spatial planning.

These adjustments could therefore mean connecting spatial planning with other issues linked to urbanisation, sustainable development and environmental protection issues, making the first element a tool to achieve the latter. In respect, the changes could even affect the constitution, by reconsidering the separate articles about sustainable development, environmental protection, spatial planning, water, etc., in a more general and interrelated perspective with sustainable development mentioned as an explicit objective of spatial planning and spatial planning as a means to sustainable development.

Collectively establishing the objectives of spatial planning through legislative change could be enough to create in the population and the actors involved in spatial planning, the necessary consciousness and framework for changes and adjustments to occur at the level of administrative organisation and procedures. Interviews have shown that there is a strong consensus on the solidity of the legal system in organisational terms. The cantonal and municipal levels have competences that appear to be intangible from the point of view of Swiss history and identity, and the country’s capacity for negotiation and compromise in the management of complex collective processes is a unique alternative to a change through law. Organisational changes should therefore be introduced progressively through pilot projects more than through a change in the law. This proposition would be coherent with an observed evolution of the reality of federalism, from a clear formal delimitation of the competences of the different levels to a more process-oriented cooperation of the levels with one another.
4. SOFT DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS, PROCESSES AND ORGANISATION BASED ON BENCHMARKING: “THE STRUCTURE PLANS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AND NOT JUST APPROVED.”

SPATIAL LEVELS While mergers of communities should be further encouraged as a result of project-oriented collaborative processes, the regional level should remain a functional one, based on specific cooperative activities. Transforming it into an administrative role would only create a “Zwischenpapiertiger” (an intermediary paper tiger), as one expert said.

PLANS Work has to be done to strengthen some of the instruments. Connected with a method to have them elaborated more collectively, sector plans on the federal level could be more binding when addressing projects of national interest. The binding character would have to be strengthened with respect to two factors. One, that spatial planning as a way of managing uncertainty needs a framework that makes quick decisions possible and doesn’t fix things rigidly, and two, that some important projects of national interest nevertheless need a spatial commitment.

Another instrument, the structure plan (Richtplan), could also be strengthened. Switzerland has now different types and kinds of structure plans and could draw some recommendations out of this experience. The structure plan could become more than a coordination instrument and determine how the specific allocation of land for different uses should be handled in the land use plan. Strengthening the structure plan could also mean that it should be discussed and not only approved on the political level in the cantonal parliament. With regard to this, the relationship between the structure plan and the agglomerations projects must also be clarified.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION PROCESSES Re-inforcing and formalising some processes of information, coordination, cooperation, already at work, could also ensure better vertical and horizontal integration. In this respect, the federal level could be given means to pursue the information and coordination of issues that are common to different areas, as is the case with the agglomeration policy. In this way, it could also continue to influence inter-cantonal cooperation.

The federal level could also be given the means to develop a general vision for Switzerland and the possible functions of its different parts, as has been done with the Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines (Essential Features of Spatial Development in Switzerland) and is being done more precisely and with a broader base with the Spatial Concept for Switzerland (Raumkonzept Schweiz). Collectively identifying functions for the different parts of Switzerland might be the only way to a true strategy for spatial planning in some sectors like tourism, EU integration in the transport system or attraction of foreign investments.

In addition, acknowledging the fact that the "space" of spatial planning policy is just as much influenced by other political areas and should be more strongly connected with other sectors. Aided by a renewed vision, this could eventually also bring it closer to spatial development. This is especially important as many federal areas of responsibility with spatial consequences are currently being reformed. Inter-ministerial cooperation should be further supported and initiatives developed such as the Network Rural Space where representatives of ARE, the Federal Office for Agriculture, SECO (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs) and the Federal Office for the Environment, Forests and Landscape are working together. For instance, ARE could be formally, and not just informally, associated with the new regional development policy launched by SECO.

The power of spatial planning on the federal level might be strengthened by increasing its financial means in order to finance studies and projects that would support the goals of spatial planning. It could also be strengthened by stronger means, such as the administrative migration of spatial planning, which could become an inter-sector advisory body to the Federal Council, allowing it to participate in the preparation of the budget and the strategies of the departments, in order to check their spatial impact. This evolution could be seen as the next step in the changes of the significance that spatial planning has undergone in the last few years: being initially together with the controlling bodies of justice and police and at the present time with the “spatial” authorities for infrastructure and environment.

OPTIMISATION OF THE EXISTING CAPACITY FOR EXPERIMENTAL, INNOVATIVE, AND TAILOR-MADE PROJECTS IN SPATIAL PLANNING We have seen many examples of innovative practices on the regional level, with the actions of the Verein Region Bern, the Regional Planning Zurich and Surroundings and the Regio Basiliensis. The same occurs on the federal level with the agglomeration policy and the initiatives taken by ARE and on the cantonal and community levels in the form of innovative decisions and test planning in the Cantons of Uri and Schwyz.

Conclusions could be drawn from these initiatives, and a systematic comparison could be undertaken, coordinated by the federal level in association with actors from the other government levels, as well as actors involved in planning in civil society (Schweizerische Vereinigung für Landesplanung and informal groups of Swiss town planners, etc.).

Pilot projects for a more strategic vision, developed by the different levels of government under the coordination of the federal level, could be proposed for the use of the land released by the Federal Dept of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport and for the tourism sector.
3.3. SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN RELATION TO SWISS SPATIAL PLANNING FROM A GERMAN POINT OF VIEW

PROF. THOMAS SIEVERTS

For many years now, I have been working in Switzerland as a consultant from time to time and therefore have had some experience with the practice of spatial planning in Switzerland on several levels. In what follows, I will make some observations about the strengths and weaknesses of Swiss spatial planning from the background of my German experience.

The strongest difference is probably the form of democratic decision-making. Whereas in Germany, representative democracy is seldom complemented and confronted with direct national referendum, Switzerland uses direct, immediate democracy for all its major decisions. Against my own, and not just my own, but in Germany the widespread prejudice that immediate democracy is too labour intensive, too troublesome and too slow, in the meantime, I have revised my position. I now see the following advantages:

- In the competition between the propositions and ideas, direct democracy forces a clear discussion that even less sophisticated citizens can understand and participate in. And, because in spatial planning, the issue is almost always about clear-cut and well-defined factual decisions, demagogic arguments are rare. Even passionate experts have to submit to this tendency towards simple and clear argumentation if they want to gain interest for their position.

- The voting proposals, together with the factual proposals, always contain the finances too. When an issue is decided upon with a majority of votes, then the financing is an immediate part of that and is voted upon in...
the same instance. This gives weight and reliability to the decisions.

- When a voting proposal is rejected in direct democracy, it can be brought up again at any time. This opens the road to gradual improvement and sensible compromise.

The characteristics of direct democracy create a reliable base on which the decisions, once taken, can be realised. Without being able to prove it, I have gained the impression that this process of decision-making does not, in general, when compared with Germany, for example, create any additional delays and can be implemented in a realistic way.

A further important point, gaining advantage in our uncertain times, is that the regional bodies have more factual and technical freedom. They really can try out something novel and make a real contribution to Swiss innovation: all of Switzerland could become a “spatial laboratory”. True enough, most regional authorities make cautious and hesitant use of that freedom! The state and cantons ought to encourage cities and communities to use their scope more creatively.

One objection that should be taken seriously is that direct democracy may be suitable for clearly defined local decision-making, but not for the higher-level issues of regional, cantonal or federal levels. Actually, experience shows here, too, that the Swiss deal very responsibly with their power of direct democracy, and new developments that arise take problems into account on a higher level without making compromises to the direct voting system.

It could also be said that direct democracy, in dealing with the wide political and functional organisational latitude, sometimes leads to unhealthy competition among the regional authorities. This can hinder a regionally coordinated development in contiguous urban regions.

Particularly in this difficult area, interesting new developments can be observed in the last few years. Without intervention by federal government or canton, many cities and communities that now form urbanised regions are looking for ways to improve the coordination of collective development, while relinquishing some important responsibilities to the higher levels.

The reason for this is that cities and communities are beginning to sense that joining together, in whatever way, gives them a better chance of survival in a larger, global world. It is astonishing that based on direct democracy itself, initiatives for better cooperation, right up to the level of voluntary community fusion have started. In terms of systems theory, many small, simple community systems have achieved a higher complex regional system through inner emergence in quite varied forms.

Despite these positive observations “of the details”, certain problem areas are emerging that seem difficult to solve with direct, decentralised democracy without support from outside, for example, the large infrastructure required by airports and railway freight transport. In addition, the emergence of large functional metropolitan sites and occupation-oriented city networks will probably need a stronger involvement at the federal level.

According to the new systems theory, the state should not intervene directly in autonomous parts of systems, but rather pass on information, alternative concepts and experimental projects that would support the difficult mutual adjustments, while keeping the autonomy of the various systems involved.

In this field of action, I can see a real need for structural reform: spatial planning at the federal level ought to be more confidently present and offer information, project proposals and unconventional procedures, thereby stimulating new paths, mergers based on specialised occupation and new developments. Within that, subsidising procedures in connection with innovative projects ought to be tied to meeting definite goals and deadlines.
INTRODUCTION

Switzerland has a high level of economic performance; a high quality of both built and natural environments; and a high degree of social harmony, when judged from an internationally comparative perspective. It can be assumed that among the many factors making a positive contribution to these high standards, although this has never been comprehensively evaluated, is the planning system. Evidence for this is that planning does not attract a wide degree of political and public hostility, which it would if planning was seen to be making a negative contribution to economic prosperity, environmental quality and social stability.

However, even somewhat limited evidence of a good past performance is no guarantee for the future, in a situation in which the economic, environmental and social contexts are continuing to alter and the nature of planning is being transformed. Against this background, the Swiss planning system is beginning to look a little long in the tooth and in need of adaptation to changing circumstances.

PLANNING POLICY

The priority is for the aims of planning in Switzerland to be more widely debated and agreed. At the national level, sustainable development has been stated as the major goal of spatial planning policy. However, there is no evidence that how this is to be achieved at the cantonal and local levels has been well articulated. There is little environmental assessment of plans and planning decisions, let alone a...
more sophisticated sustainable development appraisal as has been pioneered in other countries. Sustainable development, as interpreted in spatial planning terms, calls for compact settlements which, among other things:

- reduce the need to travel and favour public transport;
- make the provision and maintenance of public services cheaper;
- support social integration; and
- preserve land and natural resources through higher densities and the recycling of already urbanised land. These factors are of course interrelated in that, for example, those taking decisions on investment in new hi-tech industries see attractive areas as good locations. As another example, recycling already urbanised land can make the provision of urban services less expensive.

Related to these considerations is the key spatial issue of urban sprawl and its economic, environmental and social consequences. The over-allocation of land for development and the rather lax attitude at the local level to urban sprawl has had one benefit in that housing costs in Switzerland have been kept comparatively low. However, house price inflation could be kept in check by other means, most notably by the adequate allocation of land, but within a compact settlement context and with an emphasis on brown-field development. At present, development trends in Switzerland do not support these objectives as much as they might. With an ageing population and increased inward migration, even more emphasis will need to be given in Switzerland to the types of development that are encouraged and those that are discouraged. While at first glance, variety can be seen to be a virtue, the logical conclusion in spatial terms is the establishment of ghettos.

Also, as planning becomes more about the spatial distribution of people and their activities than land use, the way in which its aims are articulated and the terms in which its achievements are assessed need to be changed. There are three dimensions to the spatial development of a country: first, the distribution between the various regions (e.g., cantons) and, secondly, the distribution within each region. Thirdly, in more detail, the pattern of development within each settlement and its surrounding area need to be planned.

This calls for three levels of spatial planning: first a joint national/cantonal plan for Switzerland as a whole and, secondly, a joint cantonal/local authority plan for each canton and, thirdly, a local authority level plan for each community. The framework for this already exists, but more emphasis is needed on integration between the three levels towards meeting shared goals.

However, there also needs to be a defining set of common principles at all three levels and a system whereby the higher level certifies that the smaller scale plans are in conformity with the larger scale one. The joint preparation of the two upper levels of plan is to ensure a combined bottom-up and top-down process, as well as integration between neighbouring jurisdictions. The alternative would be for Switzerland to leave it mainly to the market and the unforeseen interaction of other policies to decide the distribution of people and economic activity between cantons, urban and rural, and city centres and urban fringes.

At the national level, there are already signs that the differences between cantons are increasing. This is very likely to put strains on a federal form of government, particularly one without sufficient means to reallocate resources between different parts of the country. These spatial differences are being accentuated by the collapse of the traditional rural economy. At the cantonal level, competition for increasingly scarce resources is likely to become fiercer, further widening differentials as the stronger areas triumph over the weaker ones. In particular, “beggar thy neighbour” tax policies at the local level will become increasingly influential in spatial terms, particularly if Swiss society becomes more atomised and individualistic in its outlook, as is happening elsewhere.

One positive support for retaining at least the present pattern of population and economic and social activity in Switzerland is the large-scale investment in railways. However, a high degree of accessibility cannot fully overcome the point that some locations have other advantages over others. Also, particular nodes in the rail network are bound to achieve an above average degree of overall accessibility. For this reason, spatial policy needs a higher degree of influence over transport policy. Another factor is that urban sprawl, if allowed to continue, will mean that certain sections of the Swiss population will become more used to using private than public transport. Besides the transport use and congestion implications, this trend could also be socially divisive.

**PLANNING SYSTEM**

There is also a feeling that the planning system in Switzerland is rather stuck in a rut. It is being seen as an end in itself and as an end-state plan-producing machine. To meet the requirements of a changing society, the spatial planning system needs to be less static. Introducing a more dynamic and flexible approach, based on regular reviewing and monitoring to adapt to more rapid and less predictable change, could do this. The drawbacks of the present system are best illustrated by the continuing failure to tackle the question of the over-allocation of development land, much of it in sub-optimal areas.

Any planning system has to fit well with the general political and administrative arrangements in the country concerned. In Switzerland, the major feature to be taken into account is the high degree of local responsibility for and community involvement in political life and public decision-making. Strong local democracy is essential, but the downside is that it can be very parochial and easily highjacked by those solely motivated by self-interest. Further, in a more individualistic and pluralistic society, the general national interest is less likely to get sufficiently taken into account. This is of particular concern when global economic, environmental and social factors are of increasing importance and national borders are of decreasing influence.

For a landlocked country with several much larger, EU member neighbours, the international perspective will be of growing importance. This will be particularly challenging in a country with a very fragmented system of local and regional government. In planning terms, this calls for intensified integration between the levels of planning and...
for the national level to have the resources, as it does in other sectors (and countries), to give incentives to policies which reflect larger-scale interests. This can be done without taking away the power of the local level to decide to act in a way that means it will not be able to take advantage of these incentives.

Another specific feature of spatial planning is that it relies for its implementation on implementation of policies by other sectors. Therefore, what can be achieved by planning alone is strictly limited. No other country has managed even a reasonable degree of integration between policies in the different sectors. If Switzerland was to make “joined-up” government an aim of its spatial planning policy, the country’s size and record of good governance could give it an important competitive advantage. Implementation would call for the assessment of the spatial implications of all major new government and cantonal policies.

Altering a planning system is not without its risks. Therefore, any programme of change needs to be gradual with adequate transitional arrangements. It also needs to be well resourced in terms of information and training programmes for planners, politicians and the public. Further, because the annual increment of new development and investment is small compared to that already existing, spatial planning needs to be presented as being best used to anticipate and meet longer-term challenges than dealing with more immediate issues.

CONCLUSION

The way forward could usefully begin by stimulating a wide political and interdisciplinary national debate on the objectives of spatial planning. The declared outcome of this debate would be new legislation which embodies the agreed objectives. It would also introduce the assessment of the spatial implications of other policies and establish a national fund to encourage joint work between the different levels of government. Giving more unity of purpose to the different levels of planning would be another feature of this legislation.

A parallel technical assessment would be put in train of existing plan-making provisions, with a view to a second stage of new legislation introducing a less “end state” system of cantonal plans. They would be more flexible and easier to adapt as monitoring reveals changing trends. The emphasis would be on spatial development and not land use and there would be a requirement for such plans to be the subject of a sustainable development assessment before they are finalised. To support this, a programme of research and promulgation of what constitutes sustainable development from a spatial planning perspective would need to be established.
3.5. SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM THE NETHERLANDS
PROF. MAX VAN DEN BERG

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Although Switzerland is prosperous, the Swiss don’t like to show it. The Swiss like a good quality of life and quality of their environment. They cherish their democracy and make a proper and sound use of it. Disciplined democracy means that decisions are kept and often, but not always, lead to good results. In general, people have “healthy mistrust”. Politicians “don’t want to interfere”. The many (small) municipalities and many cantons act relatively independently resulting in different aims, opinions and culture. The power is extremely fragmented which limits inter-communal, inter-cantonal and cross-border problem solving. Some see municipal autonomy as a handicap for problem solving at a higher level.

Swiss people like the suburban way of life with easily accessible high-quality urban facilities. They are not bothered too much about commuting to work, because in general the accessibility is excellent. The Swiss physical (spatial) environment is in good condition, however, with considerable sprawl and inefficient use of land. Zoning plans keep order, but permission for building is regularly given outside the building zones and landowners with property in building zones keep their land bare. The instruments available to enforce it are not strong enough. Implementation is hindered by guaranteed property rights, and expropriation almost never occurs. Government preferential rights are unknown.

Some parts of the countryside suffer from insufficient economic growth: employment for (young) people is scarce and opportunities are few. So the younger generation moves to
cities and more urbanised regions and the population in the countryside declines.

Planning is very much focused on making plans. Citizens have a final say. Planning is government-driven with the help of experts and a scientific approach. Supply planning is more favoured than demand planning. Institutional organisations, citizens and the private sector do not play a significant role in setting planning programmes and agendas. They join processes relatively late. The role and position of government is strong by law. The government’s coordination is not always effective. The spatial planning law is felt to be sufficient and flexible enough. But what is the relationship to the sector laws in practice?

Among politicians and experts, planning awareness and planning expertise is good. Politicians are sometimes too pragmatic and experts a bit technocratic, using many expert reports, few designs and many deliberations; and all within a puzzling balance between public interest and private preferences.

Sector planning is strongly developed and has had excellent results. But, spatial planning could have a stronger say on the national level, because comprehensive planning is not favoured at this level. The need for better coordination is often felt. Representatives of sectors complain about the lack of cooperation with spatial planning. Some experts feel challenging ideas about the future are missing. Comprehensive planning on the cantonal level sometimes lacks design.

Municipalities have strong implementation instruments, but a substantial number of the municipalities are small and weak. Cantonal spatial planning has become important for regional planning but is weak in implementation. Sometimes cantonal policy is critical of its role and relationship with the federal government: “The central government of Switzerland should show more understanding and more flexibility.” National planning policy is criticised for its lack of assistance for regional and local problems. “The federal level is too weak to create win-win situations with the cantons.”

Cross-border planning is gaining importance. Planning methods for it are in an experimental stage. With cross-border planning, politicians and experts are confronted with different systems and goals.

**CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE** It is certain that demographic changes will occur and these (aging, shrinking, immigration) will bring changes in spatial demands and preferences for places to live. Pressure on open space will grow. Global competition will cause an increase in the choice of businesses and bring changes in workplaces, sites and networks. This is a chance for cities, agglomerations and city networks, but a threat to the countryside. The countryside will suffer under a loss of agriculture and landscapes are very important spatial resources for Switzerland. Landscape protection and the development of new landscapes are perhaps the greatest challenges to be faced.

The mountains and valleys with their nature, forestry, agriculture and landscapes are very important spatial resources for Switzerland. Landscape protection and the development of new landscapes are perhaps the greatest challenges to be faced.

The world is shrinking, but urban Switzerland is growing and is seen as a green and intense connected network of cities that can compete and cooperate with other metropolitan areas in Europe. It is an intriguing concept that is
also suitable for other places in Europe. However, urban networks also need political network structure and that condition is not yet fulfilled. The past was dominated by a separation of city and countryside, with compact cities and a concentration of urban activities. The concentric city is changing into a polycentric urban field. The distinction between urban and rural is becoming fluid. The network society and global economy are being driven by processes that are enlarging the scale. People and businesses have many roles and their expanding relations in worldwide chains and networks are becoming unattached and place-independent. It is therefore difficult to put them into territorial entities. Worldwide business networks result in more cohesion in cross-border urbanised areas.

This is difficult for government institutions to cope with because their organisations are territory-bound and sector-organised. Politicians must learn to function in chains and networks in order to intervene effectively in a network society. Hierarchy gets lost and co-production between private and public sectors becomes vital. Governments have to cooperate intensely with private parties and sometimes even leave their directing role to other institutions. Network government means targeting a common goal, or process, or distributed measures, with shared or sometimes delegated responsibilities. Opening up to the outside world is a choice and, in the eyes of the outside world voluntary and non-binding. A networking government is open, flexible, and interactive; the government institutions serve the network goals and concepts and take part in successes and failures. A networking government supports forming a multi-level governance, interdependency and massive involvement. Urban network regions are cross-border, and network organisations are fundamentally “unlimited”, scaleless and decentralised. Such organisations have to be flexible, dynamic and directed toward capacity building.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING SWISS PLANNING AND PLANNING RESULTS**

Within this system, much has been achieved. The level of expertise is excellent. But to improve the results and be able to face the future in a globalised world without borders, new efforts will have to be made, new goals formulated, new ways of planning and implementation explored and new patterns of behaviour tested.

**Strategic interventions contribute**

Certain regions are more important than others for the course of progress, prosperity and quality of life in Switzerland, for instance, Zurich, Basel, Geneva and Ticino. The entire country benefits from their dynamics. Even some areas in the countryside contribute more to the national well-being than others. In all these areas, locations and zones of strategic importance for future development can be distinguished. Clusters of (international) businesses that operate worldwide and cooperate and compete, concentrations of creative (cultural) activities that attract innovators and creative people (ETH), are such places.

Also, certain areas like ports and interface areas, multi-modal accessible zones, cross-border regions and certain (alpine) parts of the countryside have the potential to become such “leading” areas of national importance. It should be a responsibility of the federal government, together with other institutions, to determine those (ever-changing) areas, places, on-going projects and other developments of strategic importance.

Federal institutions have to intervene in those areas to support developments and sometimes to initiate action. Federal assistance should be based on a clear vision, otherwise, the measures would seem incidental and unclear and could lead to loss of control. A national strategy should be developed to clarify the position of federal institutions. Concepts and visions (Leitbilder) are helpful for determining the future of a strategic policy. These must be in balance with the opinions and goals that the actors involved can gather, the risks that participants are willing to take and the responsibilities that institutions are willing to share.

National debate, experiments, and selected actions might help to learn and get experience and to change attitudes. Involvement of creative persons and institutions is essential. Several on-going planning processes, like cross-border operations, are examples of strategic processes and could become more effective through strong participation of federal institutions.

Project-based developments are part of a strategic planning approach. Interventions can be supported by subsidies, capital investments, expertise, visions, regulations, land policy instruments, and management. Intervening also means making it easier to draw up plans and implement programmes.

**Conditions for taking action can be improved**

Uncertainties can be reduced through action. A very important condition for action is a change of attitude: to open up to people who show initiative and institutions from both the private and public sectors.

Cooperation in the sense of far-reaching shared responsibility is often more effective than coordination. Cooperation in opportunity-rich developments is of strategic importance. Cooperation can be promoted within government institutions and outside with the private or semi-private actors. A careful selection of actors who are able and willing to participate and who can contribute opinions, knowledge and ideas forms the first line of a strategic planning approach. Participating in the initiatives of others is often more profitable than trying to get support for own ideas. Sometimes support is necessary, sometimes incentives are useful, and sometimes initiatives are crucial. Interaction during all phases of planning (implementation) processes has proved to be profitable. Analysing potentials related to international competition and cooperation, creating visions, defining projects through negotiation and communication can contribute more than a planning-oriented process. New land policy instruments can help. If landowners don’t come to action, active acquisition, compulsory purchase and preferential rights with the help of development corporations and investment corporations will strengthen implementation activities.

**Strategies for commitment can be developed**

Shared responsibility, shared risks and profits, temporary organisations for special purposes and selected locations can be founded and developed. “Start small, achieve
commitment and expand involvement” has proven to be a successful formula.

The federal framework can be extended
A less plan-oriented policy and more emphasis on implementation, interaction and selected interventions might lead to additional changes in the legal framework. Reducing time-consuming procedures, strengthening the capability of all government levels, legalising public-private cooperation, strengthening informal cooperation will improve all sorts of interactive operations. If strategy has to do with reaching equilibrium between “aims” and “means”, then there should be more realism between means and aims.

FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Culture
More action/result orientation; more working “with” the people/private institutions than for the people; more working with the people at the beginning of planning processes; more open to the real world. Role and position of national spatial policy related to sectors, cantons and citizens should be rethought.

Implementation
Better analysis of existing means and mobilising instruments, such as land, investments, knowledge, support; better analysis of potential (private) partners.

Reports and surveys
Taking stock of the most used data and analyses of them in order to define spatial planning programmes. These could also be used for monitoring planning results and become an instrument for adapting spatial policy and defining projects.

Concepts
The concept of a Swiss urban network, or a polycentric Switzerland, or a Switzerland of the regions has to be worked out better so that all parties involved will understand it and be able to contribute.

SOME CAMPAIGNS

Policy can be intensified by “refreshing” measures, a kind of “campaigning” with modern advertising techniques.

1. “Clean out the house”: Emphasis lies on implementation at the local level. Strengthen local land policy instruments. Legal use plans are mostly accessible. Municipalities and local landowners play a significant role. Strict separation between settlement and countryside, but, also gives cantons the possibility to interfere in order to implement cantonal structure plans, if local authorities don’t act according to policy. Develop federal incentives to stimulate local implementation. Do not give too much energy to new plans or plan-making processes.

2. “Clear out the garden”: Emphasis on a regional approach to the countryside with agricultural reform and landscape development. Develop imaginative concepts for cultural landscapes with new uses of the countryside. Detect new ways of living with the help of the people and the market. Cooperation of municipalities in regional structures is essential. Formal regional plans form the backbone. Citizens’ organisations, farmers’ associations, landowners, entrepreneurs, local authorities and cantons play equal roles in flexible regional organisations. The federal level works continuously on a “Switzerland of the Regions” and coordinates the development of incentives. In this, the Federal Office of Agriculture plays an important role and provides flexible financial incentives.

3. “Enlarge the house”: Emphasis on the urban agglomeration policy and on the regional level (concentrated de-concentration). The cantons take the lead and cooperate intensely with municipalities under the support of federal planning and sector departments. Project programmes should be made according to agglomeration concepts and structure plans. The cantons monitor the programmes and the results. Close collaboration with (private) developers and municipalities. Developers and municipalities are responsible for the implementation of projects and bring them into the cantonal programmes.

4. “Open the house to the world”: Switzerland is seen as an urbanised network and part of Europe, it is open to neighbouring countries and competes with the world. Promising areas are selected. All levels of government take part. Federal government develops helpful concepts and programmes with the cantons, sector departments and federal institutions, like the Chamber of Commerce. The Federal Office of the Environment, Transportation, Energy and Communication plays an important role. All institutions contribute to common aims. Institutions are more fluid and adaptable. Government organisations must become network organisations.
4.1. SPATIAL PLANNING IN AUSTRIA

CHRISTOF SCHREMMER, Chairman
Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR)

ALLOCATION OF SPATIALLY RELATED DUTIES In Austria, the legal authorities for public duties related to space (as well as their conception and coordination) are divided among the federal government and the nine states (Bundesländer). Because of this division, there is no framework legislation at the federal level, in contrast to Switzerland and Germany.

The so-called “nominal spatial planning” is regulated by individual spatial planning laws as well as by laws concerned with topics that can impact spatial planning, i.e., environmental protection, agriculture, infrastructure, and soil conservation, and is under the authority of the states and municipalities. Because of the federal structure, the spatial planning laws of the individual states as well as the terms and definitions used may differ. This concerns the content and instruments as well.

Besides this, there are other spatially relevant topics that have expressly been put in the constitution under the competence of the federal government. Some of these are: trade laws, labour laws, traffic laws, mining laws, forest laws, and water and waterway laws. In order to ease the coordination of these various domains, a large part of the spatially relevant duties, which would formally lie within the competence of the federal government, are implemented administratively at the state level (indirect federal administration). In the end, it is the federal government that possesses both the economic means and the public services, and also invests in a public infrastructure through which spatial developments can be strongly influenced.
There is no specific unit responsible for “urban policies” in Austria at the federal level or the state level.

In order to compensate for this missing official coordination in the area of spatial planning policies, the ÖROK (Austrian Spatial Planning Conference) was created in 1971 as a collective cooperation platform of the federal, state and local levels, including the relevant representatives of the municipalities and those of the social organisations. Every ten years, the Austrian Spatial Planning and Development Concept (ÖREK) is revised at the political level to foster a collective understanding of problem areas and task priorities. This document could be seen as a set of guidelines, however, it is not legally binding.

**INDIRECT FORMS AND INSTRUMENTS OF SPATIAL PLANNING POLICIES** In addition to this cooperation platform, other regulations exist that involve the implicit intentions of a spatial planning policy. Among those are revenue sharing within Austria, the infrastructure policy and a range of (functional) supra-regional organisations (see below).

**A) REVENUE SHARING** Financing the regional authorities takes place in Austria according to a mixed system: the regional authorities receive their own income (from taxes and fees) as well as funds from joint federal taxes (Gemeinschaftliche Bundesabgaben; GBA), which are distributed through a two-level system of distribution keys: first between the various levels of the regional authorities and then within those levels.

The division of the GBA is governed by a multi-levelled procedure:

- First level: distributed between the federal, state and local levels according to fixed percentages regulated by the revenue sharing law.
- Second level: distributed according to set criteria (i.e., census, graduated population figures (see below), state revenue from specific taxes).
- Third level: distributed according to the graduated population key (see below).

As a result of this revenue sharing system, the federal government and the local municipalities receive a large part of their income from their own taxes, while the states’ income, in contrast, stems almost exclusively from the joint federal revenues and transfer payments (i.e., for the execution of indirect federal administration duties). On the basis of this system, the income of the states is mainly bound to the population and only to a limited degree connected to any economic achievement.

The distribution of the public levels of the public capital expenditure shows a strong dominance at the local level. Whereas the share of the total tax income for the joint federal tax is about 62 percent for the federal government, 20 percent for the states and 18 percent for the municipalities, the share of municipalities in the total public investments is around 52 percent. (This is calculated without Vienna; if Vienna is included, the share goes up to 70 percent because it is a state as well as a municipality).
A special instrument of implicit spatial planning policies within revenue sharing is the so-called graduated population key (ABV). The ABV is used in the allocation of joint federal taxes to the states and the municipalities, whereby it is of particular importance to the municipalities. The ABV shows an artificial increase in the population of the larger municipalities compared to the smaller ones. According to the ABV, the population figure is multiplied by a given number (a multiplier), which is then applied to the revenue sharing between the municipalities (if the population is 10,000 or under, the multiplier is 1 1/3, up to 20,000 it is 2 1/3, and over 50,000, it’s 2 1/3).

The efforts a community has to put into public institutions and services is taken into account, because these increase over-proportionally as the population grows; large cities in particular have to offer many services that extend well beyond the city boundaries (public transport, culture, health institutions, etc.) A general abolition of the ABV, as vehemently supported by the Association of Municipalities (as the representative body of the smaller municipalities, which exists alongside the Association of Cities) would redistribute about 500 million euro to municipalities with a population of up to 10,000 at the expense of the municipalities that have a population of over 20,000, whereas this would work out neutrally for those municipalities that have a population between 10,000 and 20,000. Vienna alone would lose about 200 million euro annually in income. One thing to keep in mind is that, at this time, the small municipalities receive 450 million euro from the states in so-called “special needs” funding. The number of main residences arrived at by the census, which takes place every ten years (the last one in 2001) is the criteria for the population figures used in the distribution of funds from revenue sharing for the following 10 years. The criteria used for “main household” is where the centre of life takes place (place of residence, domicile). Tying the shared revenues to the statement on the number of main residences in the population leads however to several distortions because of the delay effect. The fast-growing municipalities receive less income and the shrinking municipalities receive more income than their actual number of residents.

The relevant attraction of revenue sharing for municipality policies consists of two criteria, presented here in much simplified form:

- An increase in the population leads to an increase in income from joint federal taxes, especially when a threshold of the graduated population key is crossed.
- Because the municipality tax is a fixed percentage of the gross wages, there is an increase in the number of workplaces.

Incentives that used to be attractive, such as the trade profit tax and alcohol tax, are no longer relevant to future developments, as they were either abolished (trade profit tax) or frozen (alcohol taxes were strongly dependent on profits in tourist municipalities and were frozen at the 1994 level). Since this agreement on the alcohol tax, part of the income tax is distributed according to the alcohol tax rates of 1994. This means that the expansion of tourist services no longer creates an increase in alcohol tax profits.

However, despite this somewhat lessened appeal, especially in the areas around cities, this still creates the following behaviour: The competition of the surrounding municipalities for new residents and industries is as strong as before and sharpened by the rising cost in education, health and the care of the elderly. This competition also has a strongly political dimension in the sense of the “track record” of each elected representative, i.e., independent of the actual effect on the budgets of certain projects, the tendency seems to be for local politicians to want to get particular institutions into their community.

In comparison to this assumed impact, the actual impact of a revenue sharing system on behaviour is difficult to estimate. Only through complicated, individual simulation calculations for each community affected would it be possible to estimate how certain investment plans (e.g., a new industrial complex) would affect its economy, while, besides the tax return flow that can be calculated in advance, a range of side effects can also show up in revenue sharing. For example, increased local tax incomes of financially weak municipalities can be compensated through a reduced income from revenue sharing and lower special needs funding.

Recently, the revenue sharing law of 2006 made it easier to anchor the growth of development zones in the regional context through tax policies, i.e., for industrial zones, shopping malls or larger projects of the leisure infrastructure. From the point of view of spatial planning and transportation accessibility, it would be of great importance to have those projects in the most favourable locations and spatial concentration and not based on a quick purchase of the easiest property deal next to a major road. The creation of tax pools for those municipalities involved would make most sense where the return flow tax income, e.g., after the contributions of the participants to the development of the infrastructure, marketing and site management, could be distributed. Until now, this was only possible through the involvement of privately run companies, where, however, many legal complications in the area of financing could ensue. How these new opportunities will be used is still unclear.

**Special Purpose Organisations: Transportation, Education and Hospital Networks** In addition to the basic principles of revenue sharing described above, there is a range of other equalising instruments, especially national cost allocations for the support of financially very weak municipalities and special subsidies to finance the inter-municipal costs within certain associations, for instance, traffic associations or hospital associations (as well as schools, social institutions, wastewater plants). These associations are aware of tasks and problems that will also affect the agglomeration space, for example, the organisation of transportation associations, in particular, differ from state to state, particularly with regard to their service area. Therefore, financial support through various means on a national level is relevant here as well.
2. SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE AND REGIONAL COOPERATION IN AUSTRIA

The urban regions of Austria are fairly small when compared internationally. Even the large city of Vienna, with the largest population in Austria, and its conurbation (including the surrounding region as well as the connecting southern agglomeration areas) would only be classified as medium-sized, internationally speaking.

An international perspective could shed new light on the structures of urban centres in Austria, and the concentration on the region around Vienna could gain from a new approach in the direction of a more polycentric development. This is the goal of the Viennese initiative “European Region”, which includes the area around St. Pölten in the West, Brno in the North, and Bratislava and Győr in the east and southeast. This is where cooperation with regional actors would be established to further develop the collective strengths of social and economic life. To improve the ability to compete on an international level is of central importance to the European Region initiative (see the last paragraph of CENTROPE).

Other Austrian urban centres can be put into the medium-size category on the scale of international comparison. These conurbations can be roughly divided into two different types:

- Some show a dominating central city nucleus, like Graz, Salzburg and surroundings, Innsbrück, St.Pölten (-Krems).
- Others show more polycentric features, like Rheintal-Bodensee and in a slightly lesser way, Linz-Wels and Klagenfurt-Villach.

In the last few years, the significance of international development perspectives increased for a range of conurbations. Therefore, several attempts are being made to raise (urban) regional development work to an international level. This particularly concerns the urban areas of Vienna (across from Slovakia and Hungary), Salzburg (near Bavaria) and the Rhine Valley (bordering both Germany and Switzerland). The cooperation affects, among others, the development of the settlement structure, traffic infrastructure and the location of economic and knowledge bases.

3. ESTIMATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Although spatial planning policy in Austria is implicitly present and functioning as part of many (sector) political arenas, it is not, however, explicitly lived out as a political agenda. In the area of spatial planning, the constitution gives the states the legislation of the legal framework, and the municipalities, a concrete implementation plan. In reality, there are various ways to exercise the law in the states and one rather fragmented area of competence between the municipalities, the states and the federal government. Beside the close working relationship between the state and federal levels in the executive administration/management, there exists, in addition, many different voting schemes and negotiation tactics that can be tailored to the individual states and regions, e.g., concerning financial endowments and prioritising transportation infrastructure. The Austrian version of revenue sharing has a strong equalising effect at the state level, while at the municipal level, it strengthens cities and large municipalities and gives them incentives to compete for population and industry. This is why in the areas around cities, small municipalities are still being encouraged to grow and to increase their population as well as local industry and shopping centres.

As far as spatial development is concerned, there is no collective, national, convenient vision for the development of the country that could give clear guidelines for decision-making at the state and municipal levels. The Austrian Spatial Development Concept (ÖREK 2001) is an attempt to present the essential challenges, to set goals for achieving these, and to conceptualise the fundamental strategies. The themes of sustainability and the environment have a high priority in the programmes, but in practice are often insufficiently represented. The following points could be said to represent an implicit basic consensus on spatial development in Austria:

- The entire country, including every part of the mountain areas, should be developed as settlement areas with broad equality in social services and access conditions (social services, infrastructure, employment), and pull-outs from thinly populated areas ought to be prevented.
- Striving towards the best possible balance in economic structure and development between the states and within the states and between central and peripheral areas and supporting these through the use of the instruments of revenue sharing and direct as well as indirect economic support.
- The rural and forest areas and the cultural landscape they cultivate are considered essential national strengths and serve as a national identity as well as a location for tourism and other economic sectors. These should be particularly promoted and developed (alongside general rural development).
- The policies on technology, research and science have made a big advance in recent years as a factor in regional development. Here, too, the effort is being made to involve as many parts of the country as possible either directly or indirectly.

The challenges and problems of urban and regional development on the whole, however, are similar to those of other European countries. In particular:

- The increasing suburbanisation pressure with the equally increasing activity radius of commuters and a tendency to spread out, which, on the whole, is incompatible with the goal of offering attractive public transport.
- The competition between locations for business, particularly shopping centres and industrial areas, which will become even more heated when instruments for revenue sharing are lacking and which lead to less than optimal forms of localisation.
- The limited authority and effectiveness of supra-local planning in regard to a city-regional control of settlement development.
- The lack of coordination between the political decision-making levels in relation to the increasingly complex questions of regional spatial development.
The splitting off of political decision-making levels, from the point of view of the citizens, who end up living in ever larger spheres of activity (work, housing and free time) and, because of that, living in different roles and constellations of interest (environmental activist at home vs. wanting to vote for more roads when it concerns their journey to work or leisure pursuits).

How to deal with these very real and ever increasing problems of regional governance is correspondingly multi-faceted and usually starts when trying to attempt to coordinate and “manage” the various institutions and political units. Mostly these problems concern organisational and informal gaps in information as well as attempts to level out blatant weaknesses in private law agreements and organisations. The origin of these approaches is, on the whole, problem-related and has concrete causes.

A few observations follow to fill out the approaches to implicit spatial planning policies in Austria:

- At this point in time, the federal government does not follow an explicit spatial planning policy. Certainly some coordination tasks are taken into account (i.e., through the coordinating platform ÖROK), but no further concrete plans exist to promote the cooperation between regions or larger cities and their surroundings (in general, the states and municipalities do not particularly encourage this either).
- The opportunities for urban/regional coordination and development policies are more strongly perceived in the states. Efforts to encourage attempts at supporting collective development planning and/or development management exist in various concepts, for instance, through political cooperation on the level of the states (Planungsgemeinschaft Ost; PGO), through legal parameters and planning instructions, as in the agglomeration of Salzburg or through furthering the collective planning and regional management, as in the agglomerations of Linz and Graz.
- Even the as yet smaller municipalities partly see the need for and the opportunities of inter-municipal cooperation. Whereas purpose-driven organisations have existed for decades (health, waste removal, education, hospitals, local public transport), they are now, under pressure of stronger international competition for sites, seeking inter-municipal solutions for industrial sites, technology centres and start-up centres. The main problem, as before, is the fair division of the costs and the (tax) returns between the municipalities involved. The appropriate legal forms and organisational structures have been developed in recent years, however, the theme of horizontal revenue sharing is still a hot issue in many parts of the country (in the new version of the law, improved support is part of the plan).
- In urban and surrounding areas, the discussion is difficult as existing dependencies are often seen as a disadvantage. The problem of increasing separation in the various areas in life (working in the city, living in the suburbs) brings significant financial consequences. (see (A) Revenue sharing). The relationship between smaller surrounding municipalities and the larger core city is riddled with prejudice, often used as an excuse to avoid coordination and the pooling of interests.

The strategies of the Planning Municipality East (PGO) consisting of Vienna, Niederösterreich and Burgenland, have proven themselves in part. A general collective development, as it was planned in the Settlement Concept East, could not be achieved, however. But at least new steps have been taken in the last few years in the direction of involvement with the surrounding municipalities. A regional management for the region of Vienna and its surroundings was created, the cooperation between Vienna and the surrounding municipalities was encouraged (Simmering-Schwechat Programme), and the City-Suburb Management (SUM) was called into existence.

- A cooperation between three states on a political level exists in the area of transportation infrastructure expansion, where attempts are being made to create a collective expansion concept in order to have a stronger position in the negotiations with the federal government (and the other states competing for state subsidies). A relevant example does not yet exist in other political areas.

In the last few years, the changes in international conditions and the noticeable increase in competition for sites by neighbouring countries of the new EU-member states (especially Slovakia, Western Hungary, the Czech Republic) and the real challenge to bring about collective development for the area of Vienna-Bratislava-Győr could lead to a better inter-regional coordination and cooperation in the Austrian urban areas, which would also be a condition for international cooperation in the spaces of CENTROPE. It would be an excellent task for the federal government and the states of Austria to take a promotional role here and be a catalyst for better conditions for the cooperation of regional authorities (i.e., for organisational solutions, inter-municipal revenue sharing, etc.)
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4.2. SPATIAL PLANNING IN FRANCE

GAËLLE PINSON,
Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT)

BACKGROUND OF CURRENT SPATIAL PLANNING IN FRANCE

France is rich from a territorial point of view, possessing very different kinds of territories, five mountain ranges, two seas, and a relatively low population density of 111 inhabitants per square km. Nevertheless, for a long time, it has had to face both depopulation and congestion. From 1950 onwards, changes in agricultural policies, on both the national and European levels, together with industrial developments, have led to dramatic changes. The areas affected are mainly west of a diagonal line from Le Havre to Marseille. Rural population has fallen from 27% to 4% of the active population between 1954 and 2002 and some regions, such as Lorraine and Nord Pas de Calais, have been undergoing permanent industrial restructuring of textile, mine and metal industries for many decades. However, Paris has continued to grow, with most capacities in education, industry, finance, business and politics (e.g., 60% of engineers, 2/3 of researchers, 60% of car and space industries and all major universities) concentrating there since the beginning of the 1960s. By 2006, Paris was a city of 2 million inhabitants, 11.3 million with the agglomerations, comprising 19% of the population on 2% of the territory, and being seven times as large as the next largest towns, Lyon, Marseille, and Lille.

As in the 1950s, spatial planning has to tackle both the problem of rebalancing the relationship between Paris and the provinces, and, connected with post-war reconstruction, the development of basic infrastructure, especially roads and railways. The territorial disequilibrium that political and economic centralisation had generated from 1800
onwards was, somehow paradoxically, to be corrected by strong centralistic State intervention. DATAR (Délégation à l’aménagement du territoire et à l’action régionale) was created in 1963 with the objective of orienting the sector investments of ministries in a way that would develop the entire territory harmoniously. It had, and still has, a fund that is to be used either in addition to ministerial funds, if the investment planned is coherent with the target of global spatial planning, or to finance an investment linked to spatial planning.

Important policies were put forth to control the growth of Paris with the creation of new cities (villes nouvelles) around the capital city, and the development of the eight agglomerations that seemed to be able to form a network that is to be used either in addition to ministerial funds, if the investment planned is coherent with the target of global spatial planning, or to finance an investment linked to spatial planning.

From the 1970s onwards, the economic crisis, together with the growing influence of the liberal ideology, has made spatial planning more vulnerable to criticism and changed its objectives: Created as a tool to redistribute prosperity equally, it now also has to coordinate industrial conversion and support economic development.

DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL PLANNING TOOLS AND THE ORGANISATION OF ACTORS FROM 1950 TO THE PRESENT

Throughout its history, French spatial planning has been characterised by some permanent cultural and historical characteristics: an old stabilisation of the national frontiers; a consciousness of the potential of its many territories regarding economic development, culture, heritage, landscape, etc.; strong political and economic centralisation of power; and central State intervention both in the post-war reconstruction period and in the effort to rebalance the Paris-province relationship.

There are also some permanent aspects to the way spatial planning is conducted: through distribution and redistribution of prosperity, through ex-nihilo creation of the conditions for prosperity, through reparation, protection, compensation, and the adaptation of sector interventions to the specificities of territories.

Nevertheless, under the influence of some of the developments of the past decades, i.e., the formation of the EU and the implementation of European regional policy, decentralisation, globalisation of the economy and the issue of sustainable development, public interventions in spatial planning have undergone some changes.

Decentralisation was the biggest institutional change in post-war France and has considerably modified spatial planning. It reinforced the power of the municipalities (36,000) and the departments (100) and created a new spatial entity and elected authority, the region. The law of 2 March 1982 on the rights and liberties of municipalities, departments and regions has allowed the municipalities and the departments to be freed from the control of the State: the elected authorities need not have the authorisation of the State representative to implement decisions, no norms can be imposed, and financing occurs through a regular fund transfer which is totally free for them to use as they want.

Municipalities establish their own building codes and permissions and local urban plans. At first a functional spatial level for the State administration during the war and immediately afterwards, the region became an elected authority in 1986. It has played an important role in the parallel process of deconcentration of the State. In fact, it had become clear at the beginning of the 1980s that national planning could not be conceived and implemented in a centralised way, so the National Plan had to be adapted to territorial specificities: it had to be regionalised. The “Contrats Plan Etat-Région” that were signed between the State representative in the region and the regional elected authority were a way to adapt the National Plan to the regional level as well as a way to satisfy the new elected authorities by co-financing part of their projects.

The second phase of decentralisation came with the constitutional law of 28 March 2003, which established that the French Republic is one, indivisible and decentralised and introduced the possibility of experimentation as a way of testing the reorganisation of public interventions. It has also transferred more competences from the State to the regions and the departments. The field of competences of the municipalities is linked to proximity: construction of schools, urbanism in terms of construction permissions and local urban plans, social affairs, maintaining communal roads, urban transportation, spatial implementation of economic activity, etc.

The department is concerned with societal matters (60% of its budget and 80% of its employees), maintenance of the departmental roads and some of the national roads, construction of secondary schools, non-urban collective transportation, environment, and some economic development.

The regions have a more strategic role for the concerns of spatial planning by planning and coordinating these matters. They coordinate the elaboration of the Regional Planning and Development Document (Schéma régional d’aménagement et de développement du territoire; SRADT) and the Regional Economic Development Document (Schéma régional de développement économique; SRDE), prepare the “Contrats de Plan Etat-Région”, organise the regional railway system and have other competences in education, professional training, and economic development.

The regional bodies are financed in four different ways: first, through local taxes, which represent the largest part of their income, second, through State financing, third, through loans and, finally, through income from services they offer. They are not allowed to create new taxes but may under certain limits, modify the rates and basis of these taxes.
To overcome functional problems linked to the great number of municipalities, without eliminating this entity which means a lot to the French citizen, the law encourages cooperation between the municipalities. “Pays” in rural areas, and “projet d’agglomération” in urban areas were promoted by the laws on spatial planning of 1995 and 1999 and these project-oriented territories will continue to be supported in the next programming period, 2006–2013.

Actors are supported to develop a common project for their territory in the fields of local economic development, transportation, urbanism, environment, services, etc., i.e., fields that are legally but also functionally legitimate for this new territory. These territories are then considered a preferred investment site for sector interventions of ministries. In some cases, they give birth to a new structure, a Public Structure for Intercommunal Cooperation (Etablissement public de cooperation intercommunale, EPCI), whose existence has been reinforced by the law of 13 August 2004 on inter-municipal cooperation. These structures may be supported financially by the State if they implement a common professional tax on the area. They can vote and receive certain taxes as representatives of the municipalities they represent and can take over the competences of the departments and regions on housing policy.

At the beginning of January 2005, 85% of the French population was affected by inter-municipalities. There were fourteen urban municipalities (more than 500,000 inhabitants), 164 agglomeration municipalities (more than 50,000 inhabitants) and 2,389 remaining municipalities.

On the national level, the State still has a great deal of power in the field of spatial planning: it finances about 30% of public infrastructure and keeps a hand on essential ones such as universities, highways, high-speed railways, telecommunication, etc.; and, in particular, it handles the question of general spatial equity and development.

On the national level, DATAR, now called DIACT (Délégation inter-ministérielle à l’aménagement et à la compétitivité des territoires), thus showing in its name the goal of competitiveness that is to be achieved through a territorial approach to economic development, is still responsible for the coordination of sector policies related to the territory.

The former administration, which had been responsible for planning and prognoses since the 1950s, has been disbanded. DIACT prepares the committees on spatial planning that are held by the Prime Minister, prepares the “Contrats de Plan Etat-Région” and the European regional operational programmes, organises prognosis studies and territorial observations and supports the territorialisation of sector policies of other ministries. It has a budget of about 300 million euros a year, the FNADT (Fonds national d’aménagement et de développement du territoire), used in coordination with other sector funds. Another tool is the PAT (Prime d’aménagement du territoire) with about 40 million euros, in support of enterprise and job development in poorer parts of the territory.

On a regional level, the strategic actor of the State is the regional prefect, who handles inter-ministerial coordination on this level in the fields of spatial planning, economic development, rural development, environment and sustainable development, culture, employment, housing, urban renewal and European regional policy. He has different administrative (Secrétariat général à l’action régionale; SGAR; Comité de l’administration régionale; CAR) and planning tools (Projet d’action stratégique de l’Etat en région; PASE). He signs the “Contrat de plan Etat-région” together with the president of the regional elected authority. With the new law on finances (Loi organique sur les lois des finances; LOLF), more goal- than resource-oriented, the implementation of programmes and policies should be made easier. In some cases, the prefect can coordinate the action of other prefects when the programme is dealing with a matter that goes beyond administrative frontiers (mountains, rivers). Other actors, especially consulting councils with representatives of society and economy and agencies for economic development or urban development, also play an important role on a regional level.

Different spatial levels and authorities contribute collectively to spatial planning in France nowadays and the articulation of their finances and competences, linked to decentralisation, is often pointed out as being rather complex.

Public interventions in spatial planning can be characterised as being, first of all, strategic: spatial planning continues to be a national issue with a strong effect of the central State in questions of economic development, competitiveness, and industrial restructuring. It is of an integrative nature, in that it represents the result not only of specific space-oriented policies but especially the result of the coordination of the territorial impact of sector policies; it is deconcentrated and decentralised; for this reason, it is in a final analysis more of a partner relationship.

TOOLS OF SPATIAL PLANNING

Spatial planning is a combination of different tools. On the national level, an important tool is the CIACT (Comité interministériel d’aménagement et du développement du territoire), the inter-ministerial committee for spatial planning and competitiveness. This committee, created by DIACT, is led by the prime minister, along with other ministers, and launches specific territorial policies or harmonises the territorial impact of sector policies. The decisions taken by the CIACT are the government’s road map for spatial planning.

Another tool is the set of planning documents that exist on different territorial levels. The National Plan was abandoned at the beginning of the 1990s and replaced by the so-called “Schémas de services collectifs” (SSC) that project the actions of the State for the next twenty years in the fields of higher education and research, culture, health, information and communication technologies, energy, natural and rural space, and sport. Transportation has been organised by the decisions of the CIACT since 18 December 2003.

On the regional level, the State defines its orientation in the PASE (Projet d’action stratégique de l’Etat en région), especially regarding its dialogue with the elected authority for the preparation of the “Contrats de plan Etat-région”. Also on the regional level, the elected authority prepares the SRADT, which presents the orientation for regional development over the next ten years. It is elaborated collec-
tively, under the coordination of the region, and is based on a prognosis analysis and an agreement for sustainable development of the region. It deals with basic equipment, infrastructure, public services, urban, peri-urban and rural areas, protection of nature and historical sites, inter-regional cooperation, and transportation, especially the regional railway system. The SRDE deals with the economic aspects.

In matters of urban development, the spatial planning decisions (Directives territoriales d’aménagement; DTA), created by the law on spatial planning of 1995, are documents of local plans elaborated by the State, without a predefined area of application. Their role is to cover precisely the areas that are important regarding the coherence of public investment or that are under pressure with regard to the environment, demography or urbanism. They refer to other planning tools. One of the alpine-coastal areas (DTA) has already been approved and others are in preparation (Seine delta, metropolitan area of Lyon, etc.).

On an agglomeration level, the documents of territorial coherence (Schéma de cohérence territoriale; SCOT) are documents for strategic plans to harmonise sector policies in the fields of urbanism, housing, transportation and shops, and define the limits between building and non-building zones. They are elaborated by an EPCI (Etablissement public de coopération intercommunale), and at least every ten years are presented for public consultation and revised. At this time, 331 SCOTs are being elaborated, 207 of them for the “pays projects”.

On a local level, the local urban plans (Plan local d’urbanisme; PLU) are defined by the municipality or the inter-municipal structure. They have to be compatible with the SCOT. Another important tool in addition to plans is contracts and agreements: “Contrats d’agglomération”, “Contrats de plan Etat-région”, “Contrats de sites”, etc.

Finally, the use of “call for projects” is another important tool of spatial planning that the State and regions are using more and more. It signals a change in the way public support is being given as it implies that the territories that are given support have to actively organise themselves in order to get this support.

**SPATIAL AND SECTOR POLICIES** The main spatial policies in place in France since 2002 are:

For urban areas:
- A policy in favour of the international position of metropolitan areas
- A policy in favour of the coherent development of agglomerations
- A policy for quarters with difficulties

For rural areas:
- Economic measures in favour of diversification
- Measures for the living conditions of people in rural areas
- “Poles of rural excellence” that promote innovative projects for rural areas
- Zoning for settlement of enterprises in poor rural areas (Zones de revitalisation rurale; ZRR)

**THE MAIN SECTOR POLICIES ARE:**

For economic development:
- The competitiveness poles
- The cluster policy (Systèmes productifs locaux; SPL)
- The policy of the Agency for Foreign Investments (Agence française pour les investissements internationaux; AFII)
- The PAT (Prime d’aménagement du territoire)

For transportation:
- Development of the TGV with eight new projects, four of them of international dimensions
- Development of freight transport on five main axes
- Development of river transportation with the creation of the Seine Nord canal
- Port development with cabotage
- Six new road or railroad connections
- Nine highways
- Two airports and projects to improve existing airports

For public services:
- New ways of coordinating public services in the territories
- Experimenting with new ways of organising public service
- Technologies of information and communication

For higher education and research:
- Deconcentration of higher education from Paris
- Preparation of the new plan to succeed the U3M 2000–2006 (Université du troisième millénaire)

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1. CURRENT SITUATION

The federalist structure of the German Republic puts the responsibility for federal state planning (Landesplanung) in the hands of the individual states (for comparison purposes, if Switzerland were part of it, it would be considered one of the larger states, based on its population). The federal level of spatial planning (Bundesraumordnung) has a weak authority structure. The federal state’s immediate competence lies in sector planning, particularly for national roads and waterways, but it also has authority in the areas of federal funding that could impact spatial planning in relation to its revenue sharing policy, large scale infrastructure policy, economic advancement, labour market policy, research and development, city development and habitation and, last but not least, EU structural policy and agricultural policy. These funds should be bundled together in order to achieve regional planning goals.

Spatial planning in Germany is particularly concerned with the coordination of more spatially effective federal funding in cooperation with the resources of the states and municipalities: in the welfare and intervention state, regional planning was based on rules and norms that were held by the strong “golden reins” of state support. Those public funds are visibly missing nowadays.

The foundations for a policy of regional planning are the “Regional Planning Reports” (Raumordnungsberichte), which are created every five years, and the “Vision and Strategy Guides” that result from the reports, which, however, have no binding consequences either politically or administratively.
The State Regional Planning Report of 2005 conveys the transformation of spatial structures in an educational and differentiating manner, especially those on the scale of the population decrease in eastern Germany, connected to a strong increase in the percentage of senior citizens. Just as educational is the change from the “basic models of spatial structure”: the traditional urban spaces and agglomerations are increasingly connected by large semi-urban spaces and in western Germany are creating connecting bands from north to south. Finally, the ever-increasing economic significance of the metropolitan areas is becoming clear and the continued decrease in importance of the eastern regions, where the pivotal role of a range of traditional large- and medium-sized centres is endangered.

Where the old West German Republic, because of its central European location and its past history of being a small nation, had the most balanced spatial structure of all European countries with a comparatively low social-economic polarisation, this advantage has been strongly reduced with the reunification: Germany as a whole now shows a growing disparity between the strong west, especially along the Rhine, Main and Neckar rivers, as well as Bavaria, and a weak north (with the exception of the city of Hamburg) and east, while the trend shows a further change of focus with economic concentrations in west and southwest Germany.

2. NEW RESPONSIBILITIES This situation creates new responsibilities for federal state planning. Until 1990, it was relatively easy to create equal opportunities for all (as stated in the constitution) in the old republic. However, since then, regional planning has been having a critical conflict about whether to put social equality and equal opportunities for all first again, which would mean investing the majority of available means in the shrinking areas in the east, or strengthening economic capacity, which would concentrate the funds in the metropolitan areas. Of course, this is a stark exaggeration of the contrast. I would like to shed some light on three areas of conflict by applying the innovative spatial planning strategies currently under discussion to the examples of public services, cultural landscapes and metropolitan regions.

2.1 SOCIAL SERVICES (DASEINSVORSORGE) The contribution to social services by spatial planning in Germany was based on a “dogma” that was relatively easy to apply in the “central location theory” of the old republic with its comparatively balanced settlement structures based on a graduated hierarchy system. After the reunification, this ideology had to be fundamentally questioned, as the spatial structure had changed in two points: on the one hand, the agglomerations had fused together and had their own, highly specialised central maintenance areas, which no longer fit into the “central locations” theory. And, in these fully networked centres, all facilities can be reached from every position within the agglomeration and specialised centres can easily be added both functionally and physically.

The areas removed from the agglomerations, however, have become so diminished that a traditional “central location” approach is no longer functional: the distances are becoming too large, the number of customers is too small and the old “central locations” have lost their use and function. At this point, new spatial planning approaches are being discussed: in places where the distance allows it, the building of “city networks” ought to lead to functional additions in order for the cities to be able to specialise to a certain degree. Where this won’t work, the idea of high-performance operating centres connected to satellites and mobile services is being discussed.

In the midst of all this, traditional settlement structures to which the old concept of “central locations” can be applied still remain. The old notion of “countryside” has lost its function, as there is hardly any traditional farmland left. Everything: living, working and manufacturing, has been affected by the urban industrial trend.

2.2 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES The relationship between the various historically different places has to be redefined. At the moment, the overriding definition of a cultural landscape is being discussed intensively. The concept includes urban areas and semi-urban areas of the city regions as well as the cultural landscapes, the rural production areas of agricultural and energy production and the old and new wilderness of the various forms of uncultivated land. Alongside the, in the meantime, well-established concepts of ecological networking and ecological balance, as well as that of flood protection, new concepts are being discussed, for instance, a “responsible community” in which a metropolitan area and its open periphery are mutually responsible for spatial development.

This relationship could be secured by agreements in which the aggregation secures its needs for drinking water, fresh food, fresh air, green areas, and sports facilities through financial or other material exchanges such as public transport. In a concept such as this, the whole state would be divided up into “metropolitan areas” and “bridging areas” that would belong to them. The cultural landscapes defined in this way would, in their natural, historical, functional and especially cultural diversity, form the essential basis for the identity of the larger and smaller cities, in which the term “identity” would have to be understood as multi-levelled.

2.3 FROM AGGLOMERATION TO METROPOLIS The cities that historically were relatively balanced in their division are fusing together into large agglomerations. The larger criteria for a united Europe and global competition are leading to a situation in which these agglomerations of city regions are beginning to experience themselves as a large metropolis that can be regarded as one collective location from a global perspective. Spatial planning supports conurbation building, in that it uses a strongly urban-oriented regional planning and demands close cooperation of the regional towns and communities. In fact, only the regions around Hannover and Stuttgart have been able to legitimise their regional administrations through a vote and give them considerable authority. All other metropolitan regions are still weakly organised, both politically and administratively.

Spatial planning tries to use the concept of historically developed and natural regional strengths to create emphasis in the form of knowledge clusters and to encourage further qualification through the exploitation of an economy...
of scale and a greater regional market. With the installation of urban/regional learning processes and the exchange of knowledge, spatial planning tries to contribute to innovation and increase productivity. The ministry responsible has encouraged several accompanying research projects.

3. FROM SPATIAL PLANNING TO SPATIAL MANAGEMENT
Altogether, German spatial planning shows a cautious turning away from a practically and intellectually drained spatial planning (Raumordnung) in favour of careful steps towards a more active spatial management. Traditional regional planning created a certain appearance of unity of its spaces and opportunities through its terms, map symbols and displays, however, with the arrival of the new term “cultural landscape”, another element of quality has entered the discussion, into which aesthetics argumentation can be very carefully reintroduced. But also the new situation for Germany of emptying spaces tied to the functional loss of beautiful old cities rich with tradition pushes spatial planning towards an innovative management policy that extends far beyond the idea of spatial planning. Unfortunately, it has to be said too, that these innovative thought processes haven’t quite left the universities, state research institutes and some of the more forward-thinking ministerial departments: in reality, they are hard to come by. The current federal reform with its clear separation between state and federal policy could offer the individual states more political room to move concerning the development of spaces. I have great doubts, however, that the states are in a position to use this freedom in a productive and innovative manner.

4. THE “REGIONALE”
Finally, the reform will probably lead to a further weakening of federal spatial structures, as many subsidies that were previously the responsibility of both the state and federal governments, will now be solely administered and distributed by the states. The most important contribution at present from Germany, in my view, does not lie in federal spatial planning, but with the levels of the “regional management” of the states and communities. Nordrhein-Westfalen, in this case, with the Internationale Bauaustellung (IBA) in Emscher Park and the “Regionale”, a regional programme that builds on experience and the IBA, is particularly innovative.

The goal is to activate the innate potential that is present in a region, in close cooperation with the state, society and the economy. This procedure, estimated to last ten years, begins with a competition among the regions to produce concepts that would allow them to participate in the “Regionale” programme. This would stimulate each region to think about its own situation. After the definition of the locations, the region will be requested to propose project ideas. From these proposals, a jury will select the ideas that appear most promising for the region and will then try to organise project groups according to content and area. Almost all suggestions will need to pass additional qualifying rounds: the unalterable principle here is the competition of ideas (competitions, workshops, studios) combined with an independent jury. At the end of the qualification process, which is organised in stages, the investor and the operator will be obligated to realise the project with the defined “qualification agreement”.

Taking part in the “Regionale” is completely voluntary: the organisation of the strictly time-limited project has no formal authority to control, order or forbid anything. Despite that, it does have influence: namely, on the stance and the attitudes within the region, it makes a contribution to the improvement of procedures and it lends prestige. Another incentive could be the offer/use of financially valuable services: using its own resources to advise, organising the qualification process in a professional way and even financing, which has been the case until now. The “Regionale” also has a certain amount of political power in the sense that projects with its mark of approval get higher priority in the application for public funding.

Besides the contributions to a physical improvement of the region through building projects, activities like the “Regionale” add to the emergence of a “learning region”. In the case of the IBA Emscher Park, we were able to observe that around 1,000 people were, in one way or another, part of conceiving and creating this large project. Seen from this perspective, the “Regionale” projects (and in a limited way this also goes for the building and landscaping exhibitions too) are preparing themselves for a form of regional management that will be needed after the strong intervention state with its sturdy “golden reins” has become history!
4.4. SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

JOHN ZETTER

1. PLANNING ADMINISTRATION

Responsibility for spatial planning in England was transferred in 2006 from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to a new Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The previous three decades saw responsibility for planning frequently moved from one ministry to another, often integrated with environment and transport. As with other changes, the current arrangements represent a return to the pattern of an earlier period, when planning was part of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. This recognises that planning is one of the major functions of local government and that housing policy is inextricably linked to planning.

While there is no national spatial strategy for the UK, the recent preparation of such strategies by the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland (for brevity referred to later as the three Celtic nations) have stimulated thinking about the preparation of a spatial plan for England. However, the publication by ODPM in 2003 of “Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future”, is an English perspective in terms of measures to achieve sustainable development; growth in the London city-region; and to manage decline in areas of low demand and abandonment in the north of England.

Spatial planning policies to be applied at the local and regional levels in England are set out in a series of 25 Planning Policy Statements (PPS), prepared by the central government. Their number illustrates the extent prepared after
Regional planning in England has a rather chequered history. The 1944 Abercrombie plan for the London region, which led to the establishment of the Green Belt and the first generation of new towns, is world-renowned. However, following the introduction of comprehensive development plan coverage at the county level in the landmark Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, the practice of regional planning lapsed. Further, there has always been a split at central government level between regional policy and regional planning. This division, linked to ambiguities about the three Celtic nations (are they separate nations or just regions of the UK?) and the lack of strong regional identities in England, has also limited the extent of regional planning.

An added complication is the size of the London city-region, which with a population approaching 20 million is a third of the national total. This represents a substantial “state within a state”, particularly for a global city whose interests can diverge from those of the nation. Hence, the London city-region is divided by the national government into three regions (London, South East and East) for spatial planning purposes. This makes it difficult to frame a spatial strategy for the functional region as a whole. Further, London is the only one of the nine, regions in England to have an elected government.

Because, except since 2000 in London, there are no elected governments at the regional level in England, the regional planning process has traditionally involved “standing conferences” of local governments preparing regional “advice”. Regional planning has been strengthened and made more transparent since the election of a Labour government in 1997. There are currently three main bodies involved in spatial planning in the English regions:

- Regional Assemblies of delegated members of the local authorities;
- Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), appointed by national government, of representatives of business and local government; and
- Regional Offices of central government.

The local government structure in England varies. In most rural areas, there are two tiers, consisting of 34 Counties and 238 Shire Districts. Elsewhere, there is one level of local government consisting, variously, of London Boroughs, Metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities. These authorities, together with the Shire Districts, are the major actors in the planning system and have responsibility for its day-to-day administration and implementation.

Local government in the UK is much weaker than when the planning system, with its emphasis at the county level, was first introduced in 1947. In the first place, only one third of those eligible generally vote in local elections. Secondly, local governments only raise approximately 25% of their own revenues and do not benefit financially from increased development in their area.

2. PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

There are two main components of the planning system in the UK. The first is the control of individual developments through the grant of planning permission. Development is widely defined and includes the change of use of land and buildings, as well as new construction. A refusal of permission can be appealed against and the decision taken by an inspectorate which, as mentioned earlier, is bound by central government policy advice. Additionally the Minister can “call-in” any application for his own decision. This power is used rarely, but its existence has a constraining effect on the actions of local authorities.

The second element of the planning system consists of the preparation of plans. These are the main, but not the only consideration to be taken into account in deciding planning applications. Therefore, the UK planning system is plan-led and not a zoning system. In outline, there are currently two types of plan: Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Regional Spatial Strategies. (RSSs). Interestingly the word “plan” is no longer used.

Central governments have tended to set up special agencies when major new development is envisaged, for example, New Town Development Corporations and Urban Development Corporations. The latest delivery vehicle, of which there are currently 21, are non-statutory Urban Regeneration Companies led by the private sector. All these agencies operate outside local government, although elected local government politicians are included in their membership. This is a further factor which has weakened the planning role of local government.

3. PLANNING POLICY

Since the introduction of a comprehensive planning system in 1947, new development in the UK has taken place in a planned way, initially with an emphasis on new towns, then in the form of the expansion of existing towns. This has been successful in promoting compact settlements, restricting unplanned urban sprawl and extending the green belts around the larger cities.

The Planning and Compensation Act, 2004, departed from the usual practice of planning legislation only dealing with administrative matters, by establishing sustainable development as the main aim of planning. This gave statutory recognition to what had been accepted practice for over a decade. Sustainable development fits well with long-established spatial planning policies aimed to restrict urban sprawl and promote urban redevelopment. However, policy has recently strengthened, with a target of 60% set by central government for the percentage of new housing to be built on brown-field land. This is reinforced by a “sequential test” whereby it has to be shown that suitable brown-field land is not available before greenfield land is released for housing development. Also, a central government target has been set for a minimum housing density of 35 units per hectare. Both these targets have been exceeded in recent years.

However, these containment policies have had the unintended effect, over time, of raising the value of urban land...
in general and land for development in particular. A conse-
quence has been the rise in the price of housing, which has
had a downward pressure on quality and size in order to
keep prices low. The UK housing market tends to be over-
heated anyway, because of the comparatively high (70%+) and
increasing proportion of owner occupation and the lack of any capital gains tax on the rise in value of a prin-
cipal residence. Particularly in times of stock market uncer-
tainty, investment in property increases and this additional
demand leads to even further house price inflation.

In addition, the Conservative Governments (1979-97) gen-
erally stopped funding public housing and legislated for the
sale of much of the existing public stock. This has led to a shortage of social housing. A 50% decline in the na-
tional rate of house building, from approximately 300,000 per annum in the 1970s to approximately 150,000 now, is
almost entirely accounted for by the decline in the provi-
sion of social housing. The planning system is being used to
provide a small amount of social housing. Policies in some areas insist on a proportion (e.g., 40% in London) of social housing being built on large sites (e.g., more than 20 units) where planning permission is granted for private housing. This has the benefit of ensuring a mix of housing and pro-
moting social inclusion.

In order to increase the rate of house building and hope-
fully reduce the price, particularly in the high demand area of the London city-region, central government is promoting
more development there. The main area concerned is on both
shores of the Thames estuary from the east of London - “the Thames Gateway”. However, development in the London city-region is generally being resisted by the mainly Conser-
vative local authorities on the stated grounds of the lack of adequate infrastructure provision. There is also local op-
position to development, which is seen as being imposed
on an area by central government as a result of national
policy.

This links to a specific feature of spatial planning in the
UK, which is that infrastructure provision and mainten-
ance have largely been privatised. This lack of public sector involvement means that infrastructure, except roads, can-
not be used directly by the government to support spatial
policy. Private companies are naturally reluctant to invest
before development takes place, because income from their investment will take time to come on stream. Also, the mechanisms to ensure that development pays for the infrastructure needs it creates are weak. There is no spe-
cific tax on the rise in land values consequent either on infrastructure investment or on land being granted permis-
sion for development. There is a section (106) of the Plan-
ning Act whereby agreement can be reached between the
local planning authority and the developer to contribute to
infrastructure required by the development. This is usually used for road improvements (not yet privatised) and the
 provision of social housing on large sites, as mentioned
previously.

Turning from spatial planning at the local and regional lev-
els to spatial planning at the national level, there are two factors of importance. The first is the prosperity of the
London city-region compared to the rest of the country. The three regions involved (Greater London, South-East and
East) are the only ones above the EU average for GDP and
in which GDP rose in the last decade. Because the London city-region’s economy has been the economic motor for
the rest of the country, there is extreme reluctance to curb its growth. Recent plans are for considerable expan-
sion there. Despite high prices of labour, land and transport
(through congestion), the market has not turned. In any
event, the fear is that if development is deterred from the
London city-region, it might be diverted to other countries
and not other parts of the UK.

This spatial planning approach at the national level interacts
in an unfortunate way with spatial planning at the region-
al and local scales. The main reserves of brown-field land
and also spare capacity in the existing housing stock and
infrastructure are in the north of England and the three
Celtic nations. Further, house prices are considerably lower.
More assertive national level spatial planning would seek
to rebalance the country meeting two challenges at once
by taking pressure off the congested and costly London
city-region and taking up spare capacity in other regions.

There is also the possibility that the market may turn be-
cause the agglomeration advantages of locating in the
London city-region will be judged by companies and indi-
viduals not to outweigh the costs. There are signs that this
may be happening in the renaissance of the large cities in
other regions. The national government is also proposing a “Northern Way” which promotes development through
closer links between the larger cities in northern England.
However, the main thrust of policy is to manage decline in
the large cities through “Housing Market Renewal Areas”,
which involve housing demolition.

Planning in the UK is now seen as a continuous process. The classical survey/analysis/plan sequence has been re-
placed by a participatory, objectives achievement approach,
backed up by performance measures, regular monitoring
and review. This new style of planning was difficult to graft
on to the 1947-based planning approach. There was also
dissatisfaction with the slowness of the system. For example,
it took thirty years (1971–2001) to achieve complete
national coverage of structure plans (they were then abol-
ished). The new types of plan, LDFs and RSSs, are designed
to be more flexible in the light of a fast-changing world. How-
ever, a more environmentally aware society, linked to the
amount of personal wealth tied up in housing, is leading to
pressure for more public involvement in change at the local
level. This is unlikely to allow for much speedier planning.

4. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES The recent growth of inter-
est in spatial planning in the UK has come about for a
mixture of different but often related reasons. Some are
directly linked to UK circumstances, particularly the immem-
ture of its regional institutions when compared to other
European countries. But in an international comparative
context, there are some systemic factors at work, which
have a wider relevance beyond the UK.

The demographic background is one of a growing UK
population: from 60 m to 65 m in the next 20 years. This is
the result of both natural increase and immigration. How-
ever, housing demand will mainly (80%) be driven by long-
evity. As a result, the UK will have to house what amounts
to an additional generation. Linked more generally to smaller household size, this also provides an incentive to change the spatial distribution of housing, both between regions and between urban centres and their peripheries. Also, recent and future immigrants and their children may have different values by being more urban and having less attachment to conserving rural areas.

Another key factor influencing spatial developments climate change. This affects different countries differently. As an island, the UK is disproportionately affected by sea level rise. The costs of protection from flooding are likely to lead to the reclamtion of low-lying areas by the sea. This is promoting the need to rethink spatial strategy in the UK. There is a specific concern in Thames Gateway that sea level rise will make the estuary more liable to flooding than it already is. This would change the development potential of the area and/or the infrastructure costs involved.

Another important driver of change for spatial planning is the increasingly larger spatial scale over which daily life is conducted. This is related to increasing mobility provided by car ownership, itself a reflection of increasing affluence. The spread of development in metropolitan regions away from the central cities is the major trend in all the large city-regions of the UK. In the past two decades the six largest English cities outside London - Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Manchester and Sheffield - all lost population, while the regions in which they are located grew. This is an indication of the general trend to disperse from cities to suburban and rural areas. An increasing proportion of people work from home, at least for part of the time, and this also supports decentralisation tendencies. In order to counteract these trends, more attention will need to be given to improving the quality of urban life.

While there has been insufficient investment in new transport infrastructure, accessibility has nevertheless increased. Also, under-investment in public transport has stimulated car ownership and car use. These trends have also raised another issue, namely the need to plan urban and rural areas together as the distinction between the two becomes increasingly blurred in many places. With increasing wealth, education and ethnic diversity, it is also becoming more difficult to frame one-size-fits-all national policies. A renewed emphasis on the city-region, dealt with below, provides for a degree of flexibility in an increasingly pluralist society.

Governance questions are also important, particularly matching the scale of government to the emerging larger units of economic and social space. This has resulted in two major reforms of local government, in the 1970s and 1980s, which generally increased the size of units by a factor of three in terms of population and area. This is linked to a further issue which is how to fill the vacuum left as local government policy becomes increasingly driven by community concerns, while national government policy is more and more driven by international (and in the EU, particularly European) interests. These trends are tending to diverge and find their deepest expression in NIMBY (not in my backyard) responses at the local level clashing with national policies aimed at promoting economic competitiveness and social cohesion.

Against this background, the regional level, if properly constructed as neither an extension of local government nor of national government, can become a meeting ground for opposing views and provide a mediation mechanism. A further period of local government reform is now postulated in England. Despite the successful devolution of spatial planning responsibilities to new elected bodies for the three Celtic nations and London, the process of establishing regional governments in England was recently abandoned in the face of a negative result in an initial referendum. As mentioned later, attention is now being focussed on the city-region as the most appropriate unit for the intermediate scale of government between the local and the national.

In this respect, regions need to be of such a size that they can stand up to central government. From a political perspective they also need, as far as possible, to be in the same size range. This has led to the splitting of what is a functional city-region based on London, into three separate regions – London itself and the South-East and East. The dominance of the London region, which comprises over 20m people, a third of the national total, would, as has been mentioned, unbalance the regional structure of the UK. This has led to strong national involvement in the planning of the London city-region, because it functions as a unit and a single view of its development is needed.

There are also other concerns that are continuing to expand the scope of spatial planning. Sustainable development which has been fully accepted in British planning – for example, a sustainability appraisal is a mandatory part of the new Regional Spatial Strategies – is one such factor. The need to integrate social, economic and environmental concerns points to the regional level as an appropriate scale for planning. Lastly, as has been mentioned, regional disparities are a continuing concern. The old regional paradigm, which embraced “Robin Hood” type policies of robbing the rich regions to help the poor ones, has been replaced by the idea of each region developing its assets and finding its niche. This has put a premium on regional spatial planning as providing a framework for “home-grown” regional development.

Releasing more land for development will focus even more attention on raising money for infrastructure through taxing the increasing value of development land. Current proposals are for a “Planning Gain Supplement”, but this may deter development, particularly if all political parties do not support it. Infrastructure provision, as explained earlier, is an important issue that remains to be tackled. A more even distribution of population throughout the country will make better use of the existing infrastructure and make the provision of new infrastructure, for example, high-speed rail links, more viable.

Significantly reducing house price inflation by a more even national spread of new development could also be used as a means of improving housing quality. This is particularly important in terms of dwelling size, notwithstanding falling household size, and environmental quality in terms of energy efficiency. The main issue is the retrofitting of the existing housing stock. The provision of new social housing is more problematic. With the continuing political emphasis on the benefits of owner-occupation, future policy is
likely to be based on releasing more land for development, while helping individuals to buy housing at the lower end of the market.

Providing more housing is also crucial for macro-economic reasons as well. High house prices drive wage inflation, thus affecting the competitiveness of the UK. Also, to restrict house price inflation, interest rates have to be higher than they might otherwise be. This makes capital investment more expensive, which has a disproportionate effect on those regions in the UK in need of a development stimulus.

The planning of rural areas also needs to be rethought, as urban influences spread and the agricultural economy declines. This will lead to further diversification of the economy of “rural” areas and the increased use of the countryside as an adjunct to urban life, particularly for recreational purposes. This is leading to the emergence of the city-region as the most effective unit of sub-national government in the 21st century. A new round of local government reform has been postulated for England. This is likely to involve the establishment of new city-region authorities and the abolition of county councils, the current first tier of local government.
1. INTRODUCTION  Post-war policy in the Netherlands focused on economic growth, societal reform and social welfare. People believed in a promising future. National unity, societal consensus and solidarity were natural. Physical planning was an important vehicle for government policy. The aim was shaping space for existing needs with a fair distribution and reserving space for the future. Expansion of towns for new housing and industries, land reform for enlarging agricultural productivity and construction of infrastructure to improve mobility, had priority. Spatial plans determined public and private investments. On a local level, comprehensive extensions were realised by coalitions between municipalities and housing corporations. The national government was both controller and subsidiser. In the countryside, land reform was executed by coalitions of landowners, cooperative banks and research institutions.

Urban policy gradually shifted to social care of neighbourhoods, and later, in the 1980s, to economic revitalization of city regions. The political scope also broadened to the living and health conditions of our environment, as well as the preservation of nature areas and ecological diversity.

Public participation changed the planning process. Functional planning was replaced by process planning and strategic planning methods were introduced. Recently, the creative economy of cities has been emphasised. The heritage of the built-up area and valuation of man-made landscape have become part of the planning agenda. Under the influence of mobility and globalisation, attention has shifted from local and national issues to regional and European ones.
In the past decades much has been achieved, but society has also changed too. Individuality, self-expression and self-care are now shaping our society to be more competitive with less solidarity and less consensus. Uncertainties grow and confidence in the future declines. Satisfaction of needs has to be fulfilled in the present. Caring for the future becomes a personal affair and free market forces are favoured.

2. PRESENT POSITION OF SPATIAL PLANNING AND CHANGING ROLE OF GOVERNMENT Planning now is criticized for too many regulations, lengthy procedures, time-consuming control and slow, ineffective implementation. Administrative and plan density are high and the involvement of citizens and the private sector in planning processes is not satisfactory. Coordination between government sectors and levels is poor and cooperation with the private sector is not always effective. People are annoyed by expensive and time-consuming permit procedures. On all government levels, many plans and planning documents are produced but with too little implementation. Confidence in a planning and regulating government is diminishing.

Within the national government, the financial sector is gaining in importance. Steering by content is being replaced by financial steering. In the last decades, governments have privatized many areas. Ties between government and institutions like housing corporations and implementation and management agencies are growing slack. Politics doesn’t have a sufficient grip on the bureaucracy. Plans are replaced by projects. Developing companies ask for coupling financial incentives to projects.

Primary processes in our society take place mostly in the free market. The profit sector makes use of development projects with the help of marketing techniques. The public sector remains dependent on laws, regulations and plans. But the world we live in is more complex than a market-state distinction. Profit and non-profit sectors, individuals and institutions play specific roles in co-shaping our society and space. Between state and market, many organizations have grown up with a mixed (public-private) character. They try to balance private citizens’ preferences and public interests. They want to participate and contribute to governance processes. They introduce steering on demand instead of supply and make use of societal entrepreneurship. Citizens, civic institutions and entrepreneurs have often a good sense for quality, so awareness grows to give more room to innovative societal initiatives and to creative alliances.

The Dutch government (now, 2006, liberal) is willing to listen and learn from them and seems prepared to interact with those creative forces, as long as basic standards and vulnerable areas are respected. These basic requirements apply to nature, cultural heritage and water management. Until now, spatial planning as a policy field has been positioned as independent and equal in relation to the fields of social economics and culture or to sector departments. It is now felt to be better to connect spatial planning more closely to implementation agencies (like public works) in a more interlinked relationship.

These observations brought the national government and the (liberal) Minister for Housing, Environment and Spatial Planning, to change policy, especially about governance and the philosophy of steering. She rewrote the nearly finished 5th Spatial Planning Memorandum to a national spatial strategy. The content of the policy will not change much (the “what”), but the method of steering and governance will (the “how”). Steering on demand is replacing steering on supply. The national government is also willing to decentralize tasks to the provinces and municipalities and is ready to intensify cooperation with others in relation to the implementation of national spatial planning tasks. Consequently, the Minister proposed a rigorous change of the Spatial Planning Act and an expansion of implementation instruments for all government levels.

3. NEW ISSUES, TARGETS AND CONCEPTS The most important issues and goals in the recent national spatial strategy are a continuation of the contributive role of spatial planning for a strong economy, a safe and liveable society and an attractive country. New is that all spatial policy, including (spending) sector ministries, is put in one single policy document. Another innovation is an implementation agenda with programmes and projects.

The government focuses on strengthening the international competitive position of the Netherlands, on energising and promoting strong urban regions and keeping a vibrant attractive countryside, securing spatial values and ensuring public safety. On a regional level, the concentration of urbanisation will still be a goal. Densification and differentiation in cities will be encouraged as much as possible and social renewal will be intensified. Spatial concepts of compact cities, main ports, and ecological main structures are still valid. The Randstad is seen as a key region and as a cultural, administrative and economic core area.

New priorities are:

- More emphasis on economic development and the spatial conditions for it.
- Long-term space reservation for Schiphol Airport, the port of Rotterdam, and forming “brain ports” and “green ports” in more peripheral regions.
- Short-term improvements in the accessibility of main economically important regions and cities.
- Preventing social segregation by well-balanced (social) housing schemes in urban regions.
- Safeguarding (and developing) important nature areas, world heritage sites and landscapes for future generations.

The national spatial structure and the key national spatial planning decisions of basic importance are laid down in several maps with descriptions (economy, infrastructure, urbanisation, water, nature, landscape). (For more information, see the summary of the National Spatial Strategy: Nota Ruimte.)

In the near future, coastal developments, space for water (retention areas) and climate change in general will be studied. The spatial consequences of new forms of energy production and distribution might become important. The optimal size of functional regions could become an issue. Parliament has asked for long-term studies of this kind.
4. OLD AND NEW LEGAL FRAMEWORK
The existing Spatial Planning Act (Wet Ruimtelijke Ordening) stipulates the role and responsibilities of the levels of government in the Netherlands and focuses on planning, plan procedures and plan coordination between state, province and municipality. Plans on the national level are the National Spatial Planning Memorandum (Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening), with principles and guidelines for national spatial planning policy for medium and long term, the national spatial planning key decisions and national structure plans (Structuurschema’s) for specific sectors. They may be binding for other governments on certain issues and projects and form guidelines for spatial claims and investment programmes.

On the provincial level, the most important spatial product is the regional plan (Streekplan). It is indicative rather than binding. Provinces have also control and appeal tasks. Municipalities have far-reaching responsibilities and have authority over the structure plans and use plans (Structuren Bestemmingsplannen). Decision-making on each level is supported by a number of official (advisory) commissions, councils and inspections. Vertical and horizontal coordination during the planning process is obligatory and a higher level approves the product of the lower level. The law gives rules for public participation and procedures for objections and appeal. Local use plans are binding for every citizen and government and provide the legal base for building and construction permits (Bouwvergunningen), for compulsory purchase (Onteigening), preferential rights concerning land for development (Voorkeursrecht) and for claiming compensation (Schadevergoeding).

An entirely new spatial planning law has been submitted to the Parliament. The new bill on spatial planning is characterised by fewer rules, decentralisation and emphasis on implementation. Enlargement of independency of responsibilities and authority of the three levels of government is an essential aim. Every government level has to deal as effectively with their interest as possible. Spatial policy and its execution have been clearly separated. State, province and municipality have to present their spatial policy in only one new instrument, the structure vision (Structuurvisie).

This is a strategic document that explains the essence of spatial policy and outlines the execution of strategic spatial policy. Each administrative level will have less interference from other government levels. The municipal use plan is kept as the most important and most far-reaching planning instrument. It has to be made for the whole municipal territory and must be revised every ten years. Use plans don’t need the approval of the province anymore. The provinces and the state give their vision and interests in advance and during the planning process. If no developments are expected, municipalities can choose to make a management ordinance (Beheersovereenkomst). The provinces and the state have the authority to make use plans for areas with provincial and state interest. Those use plans have the same execution impact as municipalities (expropriation, preferential rights, etc.). In the future, central and provincial governments will be able to intervene more forcefully when important interests are at stake. Every government level may make use of a project decision (Projectbeslissing) to speed up implementation, later followed up by an adaptation of the use plan. The new act shortens procedures and reduces the number of permits. The new Act on Spatial Planning is expected to be in operation in 2007.

Furthermore, the Rural Planning Act will replace the existing Land Use Act (Landinrichtingswet). The national government and provinces will get a better position in acquiring land by expropriation in relation to the project. The Act on Preferential Rights is also being expanded to strengthen implementation policy.

5. CONDITIONS FOR ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION
The national government bears responsibility for the system. National guidance may be necessary when major government investments are at stake. Coordination with other (national) ministries and agencies will be taken care of and cooperation with provinces and municipalities, institutions and the private sector will be promoted to reach win-win situations. Other powers may propose priorities. National policy gives more scope for local and regional governments, social organisations, private actors and citizens, with fewer rules and regulations dictated by central government. For that reason, a new Act on Land Exploitation (Grondexploitatiewet) will give the opportunity to divide and balance costs and benefits between private and public partners.

The national government will also set up a development company (Gemeenschappelijk Ontwikkelingsbedrijf) for handling selected complex (regional) projects, a new, strong instrument for inter-department implementation measures. The company has the authority to acquire and develop land, also with the private sector.

Local authorities will be invited to put forward agendas, programmes and projects. Private actors, institutions and citizens will be encouraged to take initiative and join in. Political responsibilities will be made accountable, personal and transparent. The national government will act more as a partner. The regions will be central and the national government will only connect with a few selected regions.

6. STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR COOPERATION AND COALITION FORMING
How does this all work out in practice? Part of the National Planning Strategy is the Implementation Agenda. An interesting part of the Agenda are four regional programmes called “envelopes”, under the responsibility of four different ministers (Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment, Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and Vice Minister for Economic Affairs). Three programmes are part of the Randstad: North Wing, South Wing, Green Heart; and one is the so-called “brain port area”, located in South East Brabant. They are considered to be (potentially) the most important economic areas, with many national, provincial and municipal projects. In these areas, every government level has its “projects of interest”. Having different ministers in the lead means they are responsible for each other’s policy fields and are able to overcome conventional divisions and culture. Implementation of projects have to be performed by all involved government agencies with all their instruments and
(co)investments together with private firms and developers in tight relation with each other.

Harmonisation of these projects is crucial. Bundling investments of both government and private developers will improve chances for implementation. All the project fields are complex and, besides project management, a lot of study and structure vision work will have to be done. At this time, for instance, the growth of the airport, the future size of urbanisation around Amsterdam, future main infrastructure, etc., are of concern. Municipalities and provinces set the agenda anew each year. Development planning and negotiation planning gain in importance.

All these programmes have just started and it seems to work, but a true evaluation must be made in future.

Additional information
- More information at www.vrom.nl/international or +31 70 339 50 50.
- Interviews were held with:
  - Prof. Dr. Ton Kreukels, University of Utrecht.
  - Prof. Dr. Willem Salet, University of Amsterdam.
  - Dr. Zef Hemel, Spatial Planning Department, City of Amsterdam.
  - Dr. Bart Vink, DG Spatial Planning.
  - Dr. Jacques van der Jagt, DG Spatial Planning.
- Written materials:
- Several policy letters to the parliament about land policy.
MAX VAN DEN BERG, born 1938. Prof. Ir. Max van den Berg is an urban planner and designer. Between 1962 and 2002, he worked in the City Planning Agency of Amsterdam as town designer, planner and in management functions. He was also Managing Director of the Departments for Spatial Planning and Landscape Development of the Province of North-Holland. From 1986 until 2002, he was a part-time professor at the University of Utrecht, Faculty of Spatial Sciences. Since 2002, he has been working as a private consultant, is on the Advisory Board of Cronen Adviseurs and a member of the Council Staatsbosbeheer (National Forest). He is also Past President of ISoCaRP (International Society of City and Regional Planners), Honorary Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and Corresponding member of the Akademie für Städtebau und Landesplanung (D).

GAËLLE PINSON, born 1971, is a former student of the Ecole Normale Supérieure and currently an official with DIACT (délegation interministérielle à l’aménagement et à la compétitivité des territoires, ex-DATAR). She has organised various national spatial planning programmes: Monitoring long-term planning contracts between the central and regional governments (Contrats de plan Etat-région 2000–2006); Evaluation of the European Structural Funds Programme 2000–2006; and preparation of the innovation policy for the Structural Funds Programme 2007–2013. She has also worked in the European Cooperation Programmes on the Competitive Ability Clusters, in particular with Germany. At present, she is introducing a "good practices
CHRISTOF SCHREMMER, born 1955, studied spatial planning and spatial structure at the Technical University of Vienna; earned a Masters Degree in City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, USA). He was an Assistant of the Institute of Financial Sciences and Infrastructure Policy of the Technical University of Vienna from 1981 to 1987 and has been Project Manager at the Austrian Institute of Spatial Planning (ÖIR) since 1987. He has also been a member of the management of the ÖIR since 1999 and has been chairman of the ÖIR Institute (Obmann des Vereins ÖIR) since 2004. His main focus is on regional economic development strategies, EU-regional policy, long-term spatial and economic development, evaluation of spatial and regional economic programmes, city development planning and regional development planning.

THOMAS SIEVERTS, born 1934 in Hamburg, Prof. em. for City Planning (Städtebau), has taught at several European and American universities, including 30 years at the University of Darmstadt. He is a partner in SKAT Architects and City Planners in Bonn, and author of many publications (Zwischenstadt series 1997 – 2007). He continues to work as an international consultant in Europe.

JOHN ZETTER works as a free-lance planning consultant. He is also on the Governing Board of the International Federation for Housing and Planning, the Town and Country Planning Association and the Planning Aid Trust. He is a Fellow of the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Royal Geographical Society, and the Royal Society of Arts. He has held senior positions in the British government and at the OECD and has been a visiting professor at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and University College London. He writes and lectures widely on spatial planning.

Moderation: BERND SCHOLL, born 1953, has been Professor of Spatial Development at the Institute for Spatial and Landscape Development of ETH Zurich since 2006. His teaching and research priorities are: spatial management in local and supra-local spatial development, spatial and infrastructure development, and international/cross-border projects as well as development and design of innovative planning processes and methods in spatial planning and development. Bernd Scholl was in charge of numerous projects in city and spatial development and until his move to ETH Zurich, he was Chairman of the Institute of City Planning and Regional Planning of the University of Karlsruhe.

ETH SUPPORTING TEAM: Dr. Hany Elgendy, Anja Häfliger, Markus Nollert, and Dr. Rolf Signer
START: Bern, 22 December 2005

TOUR 1: 16–18 MARCH 2006

Zurich: Dr. Christian Gabathuler, Head of the Office of Spatial Planning and Surveying, Canton of Zurich, Cantonal Planner of Zurich: “Spatial planning in the Canton of Zurich”

Zurich: Paul Pfister, Head of the Department of Spatial Development, Canton of Aargau: “Spatial development in the Canton of Aargau”

Zurich: Dr. Donald Keller, Director of the Technical Bureau of RZU (Regional Association of Zurich and Surroundings): “Greater Zurich Regional Planning Association”

Brugg: Hansjörg Walter, Member of the Swiss National Council, President, Swiss Farmers’ Union (SBV): “Agriculture and spatial planning”


Zurich: Prof. em. Dr. Jakob Maurer, “Informal discussion during dinner”
TOUR 2: 16–19 MAY 2006

Leuk: Urs Schnydrig, member of the Office of Spatial Planning, Department of the National Economy and Spatial Planning, Canton of Valais: “Planning in the Upper Rhone Valley, Infrastructure, landscape and industry, including the Rhone Revitalisation Project”

Andermatt: Peter Schmid, Cantonal Planner, Canton of Uri: “Situation of an alpine and transit canton in the heart of Switzerland”

Andermatt: Benno Bühlmann, Head, Environmental Protection Office, Canton of Uri: “Andermatt Tourism Resort”

Flüelen: Heidi Z’graggen, Member of the State Council, Head of the Department of Justice, Canton of Uri: “Spatial planning in the Canton of Uri from the perspective of the cantonal government”

Brunnen: Lorenz Bösch, Member of the State Council, Head of the Department of Construction, Canton of Schwyz: “Situation of a small canton close to the Alps and to the Zurich agglomeration”


Lucerne: Rolf Sägesser, Chairman of the Executive Committee, SKS Ingenierure AG: “Energy management in a conflict environment”

Lucerne: Ruedi Frischknecht, Project Manager, Urban Development, City of Lucerne: “Perspectives of the development of Lucerne and its agglomeration”

TOUR 3: 2–5 JULY 2006
Bern: Lukas Bühlmann, Director of the Association of National Spatial Planning (VLP-ASPA): “Current topics in spatial planning in Switzerland”

Bern: Dr. Eric Scheidegger: SECO State Secretary of Economic Affairs, Director of the Office of Site Promotion: “New Regional Policy”

Biel/Bienne: Hans Stöckli, Mayor, Biel: “Requirements and future tasks in the context of local planning”

Bern: Friedrich Santschi, Project Manager, Department of Spatial Planning, VRB: (Verein Region Bern, Association of the Region of Bern): “Current and future aspects of planning in the region of Bern”

Zurich: Prof. Dr. Thomas Pfisterer, Member of the Swiss Council of States, former member of the Federal Supreme Court, former Member of the State Council of the Canton of Aargau: “The essential problems of spatial planning in Switzerland”

Zurich: Thomas Müller, Head of the Master Planning Department, Unique Airport, Zurich: “Spatial and infrastructure planning: Requirements, problems and perspectives in the development of a key infrastructure of national importance”

FINAL EVENT: 5–7 SEPTEMBER 2006

Chur-St. Moritz: Dr. Boris Spycher, Office of Spatial Development, Canton of Grisons: “Main problems and perspectives of the Canton of Grisons”

St. Moritz: Dr. Hanspeter Danuser, Director of the Resort and Traffic Association of St. Moritz, Peter Barth, Mayor of St. Moritz: Current problems in an alpine tourist region. “Informal discussion during lunch”

Castasegna, Villa Garbald: “Final discussion of the report”
In the year 1996, the President of the Confederation presented the report: “Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines” (Grundzüge der Raumordnung Schweiz) with the following words: “Our country is pleased to possess… a high level of prosperity in international comparison. The extent of the infrastructure is excellent, the standard of living is good on the whole, the choice of education, leisure and cultural pursuits is broad and of high quality. Prosperity and social and demographic developments, however, bring about changes to the living space that have to be dealt with… In terms of habitat and economic space, naturally, the countryside not only houses most of the agricultural industries, but also the small and medium-size businesses in the industrial/commercial sector that are so important for our country. Furthermore, the rural areas fulfil a recreational function for the interests of tourism and the urban population. All in all, the countryside is of central importance for ecological balance and resource protection.”

We considered this a good starting point for our report.

1 WHAT WE HAVE READ ABOUT THE SWISS PLANNING SYSTEM (AND SPATIAL PLANNING POLICIES) IN THE REPORTS PROVIDED
Swiss spatial planning is federally organised. The Swiss Confederation provides goals, key functions and instruments to ensure an economical use of space in the area of settlement development. The cantons and the municipalities apply these policies. The most important planning instruments are the cantonal structure plans, which are binding for the authorities, and the land use plans, which are binding...
for landowners. The cantonal structure plans are considered to be an outline for the processes of coordination and control of the next already-in-progress stage of spatial planning. The land use plan draws the lines between building and non-building zones.

In the past, most of the planning activities served the development of the cities. Today, they centre more and more on renovation, restoration and transformation of existing urban areas.

The federal government has an obligation to coordinate its goals with those of the cantons. The two current main themes are sustainable development and close cooperation between the municipalities and agglomerations, with the support of the federal government.

At the federal level, the sector plans are an important instrument for implementation. Spatial planning is heavily dependent on the sector departments and institutions.

Because of the diversity of the policies and culture among the strongly autonomous cantons and municipalities, spatial planning is fragmented. The various cantonal building and planning laws differ greatly. The spatial planning themes and the actual practice of the municipalities are often contradictory.

Swiss cohesion and the identity of individual cities and regions must be strengthened. The cities will have to be linked not only together but also with the countryside. The land has to be used in an economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable way, and the settlement pressure on rural areas must be reduced. Settlement development in all regions should be focused on urban centres. Settlements have to be extensively renewed and adapted to meet the changing needs of the population and the economy. At the same time, better use ought to be made of the existing settlement areas with an average population density.

The city network has to be developed through the creation of regionally spread out cities and growth centres in the vicinity of main railway junctions. Cities have to be renewed with a mix of functional and economic development and with easy-to-reach leisure and green areas (Zurich, Basel, Lucerne).

Activities of daily life – living, working and leisure – extend well beyond the administrative structures. This is the result of improved mobility and the growing catchment areas of the traditional centres. Unused and underused industrial land poses a problem – and at the same time, an opportunity. The consumption of land has to be limited. The concentration of buildings in well-connected settlement areas is preferred. Spatial planning policies move in the direction of “decentralised concentration”, a compact network of compact settlements of various sizes. Agglomeration policy and informal regional policies (Bern) are attempting to overcome this. The agglomeration programme was developed in order to improve cooperation and coordination between the conurbations. This task-oriented instrument is being regarded as “a means to prioritise themes from a
The alpine foothills are mainly an agricultural area and have potential for tourism and industry, as well as being a popular residential area. Their regional centres should be improved through development of the infrastructure and building schools and educational centres. In the Alps, the focus is on mass tourism in the winter sport centres, but few employment possibilities exist outside these centres. Here the policies focus on improvement and expansion of the existing hotel industry and limitation of second-home building.

The biggest challenge for the urbanised municipalities is fighting sprawl with high-quality internal development. Smaller cities are competing for employment and accessibility and villages are trying to attract (wealthy) households. The importance of the people and the environment are regarded as equal. The upkeep of the landscape and the protection of the crop rotation areas form a key focus. The cooperation of the agglomerations has to be improved. An integrated approach is needed to solve problems. A better coordination between the various political sectors is necessary.

All in all, spatial planning is not sustainable. An objective investigation (with the aid of monitoring and guidelines) is missing. Policies are inadequately implemented.
2 WHAT WE WERE TOLD ABOUT THE SWISS POLITICAL SYSTEM

- The system is mainly based on the separation of power and on the power of the people through direct democracy.
- Fear of the strong community autonomy leads everyone to try to avoid conflict.
- Property is central, public interest secondary.
- On the basis of the federal system, a national spatial planning policy is difficult.
- The overall and organising functions of spatial planning have lost their power.
- The federal sector policies are insufficiently integrated. Spatial planning is used more and more as an instrument for the policies of the various sectors. However, spatial planning ought to set the guidelines.
- A renewal of the organisation of spatial planning is necessary. Leadership at the national level is needed. The cantons do not accept intervention by the federal level.
- It is not spatial planning which is failing, but the political structure, which is not capable of guaranteeing an organised settlement of the country.
- The tax competition between the communities creates false spatial appeal.
- The present building and planning laws and the environmental laws encourage building on green land and hamper the conversion to urban settlements.
- A “spatially relevant transport policy” encourages sprawl.
- Federal policy functions on the “watering-can principle”: each canton, each region gets exactly the same... This does not lead to organised spatial development. The cantonal structure plans remain separate and are barely adjusted to those of the neighbouring cantons or national guidelines. Requirements: coordination and approval of the cantonal structure plans; programmes that support urban spaces; adjustment of the subsidies and financial support for the infrastructure for spatial development; adjustment of federal sector policies.
- The Swiss system was created in order to solve local spatial planning problems. Today, the question arises: Is this system good enough to deal with global and cross-border issues?
- When a system isn’t capable of reaching its aims, it could be that the system isn’t wrong, but rather that better reasons are needed for spatial planning: growing security.

ABOUT PLANNING CULTURE AND ATTITUDES

- (We haven’t heard much about planning culture, which is why it is difficult to analyse). The contribution of the actual planner has changed. In the past, there was an expert who designed the optimal future developments and drew them. Nowadays, he is more of a consultant, who points out future problems and possibilities and who steers processes towards actions.
- The experts serve politicians directly and the population indirectly.
- The experts are technocrats.
- The system leads to power plays at the government level. Government institutions compete instead of cooperating. They are power-driven and bent on survival.
ABOUT PLANNING GOALS
- An important goal is improvement in the coordination between settlement development and transportation in order to optimise the efficiency of public transport.
- Sprawl is to be limited in order to safeguard the environment for everyone’s benefit. It is difficult to limit sprawl. The autonomy of the municipalities plays an important part. Building outside of the building zone is decided per case at the level of the canton. The number of such buildings is estimated at ca. 700,000. (They form a development potential).
- Differentiation is a current trend.
- The cantons have difficulty in communicating and defining areas of concentration.
- Strengthening the cantons through creation of high-quality employment in relevant businesses in the regions. In the Canton of Aargau, there are pilot projects to encourage businesses in rural areas.
- Shopping centres situated next to motorway exits and focused on motorised customers lead to serious consequences for shops in the city centre.

ABOUT THE CREATION OF PLANS AND PLANNING PROCESSES
- The main problem is the failing political will for controlled settlement development. The communities can develop based on their own discretion. The municipal-ities have reserves for 15–20 years and are therefore still planning new building zones.
- Politicians do not create guidelines for planning: intensive research into spatial planning leads to identification of future planning strategies; negotiations with the interest groups start when definite plans are made.
- Preparations for and changes in structure plans and land use plans are processes of an uncertain and lengthy nature. In the end, the process leads to planning security. Two-thirds of the time, however, is spent on convincing others.
- Municipalities should work together to develop strategies for the agglomerations.
- Supra-regional cooperation between the communities should be encouraged.
- The main actors at the cantonal level are not private actors or institutional owners or government institutions either, but the population itself, which through direct democracy has the biggest influence.

ABOUT THE ACTORS
- Politicians are being criticised for not always being firm and only caring about local interests. (What else can they do?)
- The professionals are good and experienced in their fields.
- The population is only consulted when a response to planning processes is needed.
• Entrepreneurs do not play an important part. Even developers are often reactive.

ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION
• The distance between planning and realisation is too large.
• A driving force of spatial planning is missing (a land policy)?
• Planning and its realisation should be in one (political) hand. Land owned by a city can be an instrument for the implementation of planning goals. Planning and property should cooperate.
• The goal of planning should be the definition of conditions for implementation.
• Financial resources are close to the population. 40% of the direct taxes go to the cantons.
• Only through the use of standardised taxes can the places be classified according to an overall strategy. At present, the taxes are a big hindrance to sensible development.
• Being active in areas where change is taking place, being conscious of the life cycle of buildings and land use.
• In Zurich West, informal planning together with the landowner (the Zürcher Kantonalbank) functioned very well.

ABOUT PLANNING RESULTS
• There are important reserves of building zones: 60,000 ha., 27% of building zones are underdeveloped.
• Building zones of over-dimensional size, partially hoarded or sometimes in the wrong place; there are no instruments for dealing with those. Recently, a discussion started about the limitation of building zones.
• Tax competition leads to sprawl. Tax competition between the cantons is getting more and more aggressive.
• Suburban communities profit from proximity to central cities.
• Shopping centres, supermarkets and theme parks are booming, but are often built in the wrong place.
• A high percentage of second homes are in tourist areas. (Would that be positive or negative?)
• "A little bit of everything, everywhere"-politics and the demonisation of urbanisation.
• Solving present implementation problems instead of finding new guidelines and instruments. The spatial planning law is good. The guidelines should be extended and improved upon.

ABOUT THE STATE OF SWISS CITIES (FORMULATED BY LEADING EXPERTS IN URBAN PLANNING)
• Switzerland should know what it wants and act accordingly.
• Switzerland needs national guidelines that are binding for both federal and cantonal levels.
• For the cities, it is necessary to work out the collective interests as well as the complementing and competing differences.
• A city network is important and should be further developed.
• Foundations need to be created for the planning principles for the agglomeration programmes and these should be just as binding as the cantonal structure plans.
• Suggestions for optimising the planning process and the planning instruments must be formulated.
• Differentiation between the physical city and the city as a stage for the urban lifestyle.
• The national level should define what constitutes "minimal public services".
• Projects of national importance must be planned and coordinated (implemented?) at a national level.
• Projects of general interest must be planned and coordinated at all levels.
• Conflicts between pipelines and settlement areas are inherent.
• An outdated political mechanism poses a real problem. There is no regional interest in planning energy lines.

ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE ARE
• It is the intention of the ARE to stimulate cantonal activities through competition – and the condition for that is inter-cantonal cooperation.
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LEGAL FOUNDATIONS

Bundesverfassung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft vom 18. April 1999 (Stand am 8. August 2006) (Available in English)


An international group of experts was set up in 2006 to pursue the task of investigating and analysing the opportunities and limits of Swiss spatial planning. Prof. Dr. Bernd Scholl had received a commission from the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Planning (ARE) to obtain a view of Swiss planning from the outside and put together a group comprised of experts from Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The group conducted four inspections in various areas of Switzerland that included discussions with spatial planning experts, relevant actors and politicians. The significant future tasks of spatial planning and development in Switzerland had priority.

The report has three main areas:

• Suggestions for the development of spatial planning in Switzerland
• Personal observations and thoughts on Swiss spatial planning from the different national perspectives
• Reports on the state of spatial planning in the experts’ native countries

The proposals and suggestions on the themes of landscape, agglomerations, city networks and functional spaces, infrastructure, cross-border dimensions and planning in strategic surroundings receive a careful assessment that covers the current state, the potential challenges, and the suggestions of the expert group on the respective themes. One hopes these observations will add impetus to the discourse on spatial planning.

The publication is available in German, French, Italian and English.
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