

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND TERRITORIAL COHESION:
*HOW TO COORDINATE THE WORK AND IMPROVE ITS
EFFICIENCY ?***

EXPERT REPORT

**prepared at the request of the Polish EU Presidency
by Patrick Salez**

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INTRODUCTION

One of the key objectives of the Polish Presidency is to strengthen the territorial component of the EU 2020 Strategy, means the post-2013 cohesion policy. Such an objective, in the framework of the Territorial Agenda 2020 adopted under the Hungarian Presidency, raises the necessity to better coordinate urban development and territorial cohesion issues and to integrate them in the mainstream of cohesion policy.

Therefore the Polish Presidency took the ambitious initiative to organise two common meetings between UDG (Urban Development Group) and NTCCP (Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points) and to dedicate one item of their Agenda to the coordination of urban and territorial cohesion matters.

In this context, **the key aim of our analysis** is to answer to the three following questions:

- How to consolidate the work of the intergovernmental Groups in charge of urban development (UDG) and territorial cohesion (NTCCP) ?
- How to reinforce the role of TCUM (Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters) within COCOF (Committee for Coordination of Funds) as regards particularly the strategic debate on cohesion policy ?
- How to create coherence and cooperation between the intergovernmental and EU Working Groups dedicated to urban development and territorial cohesion ?

This analysis is « **organisation** » **targeted and complementary** to the wider reflection on the content and priorities of the intergovernmental work, which could emerge from the issue papers respectively on urban development and territorial cohesion currently under preparation.

A **summary of seven recommendations** is provided in the second part of the report. Any decision in these matters is complex, knowing the high diversity of institutional arrangements, urban policies, territorial cohesion meaning and spatial planning practices in the Member States. Therefore the ambition of these recommendations is to guide an in-depth debate of the delegates during the UDG-NTCCP meeting on 26-27 September. To facilitate this debate, **a few draft questions**, based on most of the recommendations, are presented in the Annexe.

1. TERRITORIAL AND URBAN MATTERS: HOW IS THE DIALOGUE ORGANISED?

1.1 UDG, NTCCP, TCUM : Analysis of each Working Group

The UDG

Origin : In Tampere, in October 1999, the Ministries responsible for spatial planning, urban affairs and regional policy decided to « *launch a process of operational cooperation* » in the area of urban development, as an implementation of a relevant point of the ESDP Action Programme (2.1.6). To this effect, a mandate was given to the Committee on Spatial Development (CSD) to set up an informal Working Group. This intergovernmental Group, called UDG, prepared a « *Proposal for a multi-annual programme of cooperation in urban policy within the EU* », which was endorsed by the Ministries responsible for urban affairs in Lille in November 2000 (launching the Urban Agenda).

Composition : Today the UDG is an informal Working Group, composed of the representatives of Ministries in charge of urban development in the Member States and of the EU institutions (EC, EP, CoR, EESC, EIB). In practice, the UDG is quite open with the participation of « external » countries (acceding, Norway, Switzerland), European Associations (CEMR, Eurocities, ECTP, EFAP) and of some technical networks (EUKN, URBACT).

Mandate and activities : The process of cooperation in urban development was linked-up from the origin to the process of European cooperation in the field of spatial development (ESDP). There is no other mandate than the one defined at that time (see above).

The UDG prepares the meetings of the Director Generals and Ministries in charge of urban development and elaborates background and policy documents to be endorsed at high level. Since the Lille event, its key challenge was to promote and provide guidance for an integrated approach in urban policy, be it national or at EU level, with reference to sustainable development. The FR Presidency (Marseilles, November 2008) refreshed the necessity to develop a common approach of integrated urban development by launching the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC). The following CZ Presidency focused the work on implementation of the Leipzig Charter.

Then a **thematic focus** was given to the UDG by the successive Presidencies : integrated urban regeneration (ESP), multi-level governance (BE), demographic and climatic challenges (HUN).

In order to better prepare the strategic decision process, a restricted and strategic Group was created under the BE Presidency, called « **Trio+1 group** », involving the past, current and two coming Presidencies and the European Commission (DG REGIO).

The NTCCP

Origin : The NTCCP was created under the Portuguese Presidency and endorsed in the conclusions of the Informal Meeting of Ministries in charge of territorial cohesion and regional policy in November 2007 in Ponta Delgada. A precise reference to this network appeared in the First Action Programme (AP1) for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda (TA), adopted during the same event.

Its **composition** was mentioned in the AP1: Member States, candidate and guest countries, EU Institutions and the other stakeholders. The term « *stakeholders* » being rather vague, the NTCCP, as the UDG, is today a quite open Group involving a certain number of European associations (CEMR, ERA, CPMR, etc.) and technical networks (ESPON).

Mandate and activities : The mandate was precised in the AP1: « *NTCCP is the back-bone structure for communication and coordination among all directly concerned by the TA and AP1 implementation* » (see again the vagueness of the term : who are the *directly concerned* stakeholders?).

Today, two kind of activities can be identified :

- first, preparing the meetings of the DG and Ministries (see UDG) which is an increasingly time consuming task ;

– second, discussing policy, conceptual and technical issues and exchanging knowledge, related to the concept of territorial cohesion : eg, urban-rural relationships, territorial impact of policies, macro-regional strategies).

Under the Swedish Presidency, it was decided to create a **Core Group** of the NTCCP in order to improve its leadership and coordination. As for UDG, the composition is a « Trio+1 » also associating DG REGIO . The tasks of the Core Group were precised under the Spanish Presidency : in particular, to prepare Agendas of the NTCCP meetings, draw up key policy documents, foster the relation with external stakeholders.

The TCUM

Origin: The TCUM (Sub-Committee on Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters) is a Sub-Committee of the Coordination Committee of the Funds (COCOF), created in 2007 on the basis of the Council Regulation laying down general provisions on Structural Funds (n°1083/2006). It succeeded to the SUD (Spatial and Urban Development), Sub-Committee of the CDCR (Committee for the Development and Conversion of Regions) established in 2000 (under the General Regulation on Structural Funds n°1260/1999).

Composition: The European Commission (DG REGIO) organises the work and leads the meetings (usually four per year). The TCUM is composed of one or two delegates (depending on the institutional arrangements in Member States) representing the territorial cohesion and urban matters. It should be recalled that the SUD organised separated meetings for spatial and urban development and that these sub-Groups were merged at the birth of TCUM.

Mandate and activities: Its role is to advise COCOF and the Commission on the implementation of Structural Funds, particularly on urban and territorial dimensions of cohesion policy.

The Group is formal but only consultative, without any policy negotiation and decision making power : positions of DG REGIO and Member States can not be considered as official policy positions.

In practice, the activities focus on policy, conceptual and knowledge exchange related to territorial cohesion and urban matters.

Within DG REGIO, the TCUM is considered as a forum for technical discussions on territorial cohesion and urban matters, allowing to :

- a) present the key Commission activities (including studies) in these areas ;
- b) facilitate sharing of experience and confront intergovernmental and Community approaches ;
- c) test some ideas to be possibly operationalised in the current implementation of Structural Funds
- d) feed the reflection for the elaboration of the future cohesion policy.

There is an asymmetry with the mandate of COCOF which is only management and implementation oriented.

The key items of the annual Agendas are presented to COCOF at the beginning of each year and endorsed by this Committee. During the last three years, a few common sessions between COCOF and TCUM have been organised on strategic subjects : Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, Non Paper on Financial perspectives, Fifth Cohesion Report..

The TCUM keeps COCOF members regularly informed about its activities by transmitting the minutes of its meetings and reporting activities in some of the COCOF meetings.

1.2 Cross-cutting analysis of the Working Groups

UDG and NTCCP

UDG and NTCCP share the same intergovernmental status. Their mandate is symmetric although only the NTCCP ones was stipulated in an official document. Their activities have some common parts which are to prepare the DG level and Ministerial meetings and to discuss policy documents (eg the 5th Cohesion Report or the TA 2020) . Both make use of a network-based knowledge (ESPON and URBACT) to feed their policy dialogue.

UDG and NTCCP have been efficient in organizing high level meetings and elaborating background documents, policy papers and common positions or recommendations.

They differ on a few aspects :

- NTCCP discussions are more conceptual (eg. meaning of territorial cohesion) and this Group lacks a strategic role and an influence on the content of cohesion policy ;
- UDG discussions are more operational and practice oriented, since urban dimension of cohesion policy has a longer history at EU level than territorial cohesion ;
- The impact on implementation of the policy recommendations in Member States has been less important for NTCCP, for reasons of internal governance and insufficient networking with EU Institutions (lack of contact persons within these Institutions). Some good examples of impact of UDG in the Member States are : a) implementation of the Leipzig Charter; b) exchanges on urban integrated development approach and implementation of the urban dimension of cohesion policy ; c) cooperation on implementation of URBACT, EUKN and RFSC.

UDG+NTCCP and TCUM

TCUM has another status since it belongs to the European Commission comitology. It has been efficient in exchanging information and conceptual views but suffered a **lack of concrete products**. The only significant product has been the 2003 expert report « *Managing the territorial dimension of EU policies after enlargement* », used for the Third Cohesion Report. More recently in 2010, an effort was made to initiate a debate on the implications of the Lisbon Treaty provisions concerning territorial cohesion. This provided the opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views but without producing any concrete output.

The interlinkages between UDG+NTCCP on one side and TCUM on the other side are quite limited and **no common strategy** is defined. These two Groups are runned in complete independency without any political willingness of complementarity : the dates and content of their respective Agendas are conceived separately. The only existing linkage consists in back to back reporting : one item of each intergovernmental meeting Agenda is dedicated to a presentation by DG REGIO and two items of TCUM meetings are dedicated to reporting the progress in the intergovernmental work.

Finally the two Groups **suffer a serious deficit in their influence on cohesion policy**. UDG and NTCCP are often considered as technical and/or lobbying Groups by the Member States and EU Institutions representatives in charge of cohesion policy ; they have not proved their efficiency in improving the urban and territorial dimension of cohesion policy (particularly NTCCP). Similarly, within DG REGIO, TCUM is not considered as a policy arena but rather as a technical forum. In parallel, there is no link between NTCCP and SAWP (the Structural Actions Working Party of the Council) : In the recent years, only the French Presidency organised a SAWP meeting on territorial cohesion.

1.3 Past efforts of the Presidencies to improve coordination

The idea to coordinate the urban and territorial intergovernmental Working Groups **is not new** and we recall below the most important milestones of this reflection under the successive Presidencies.

In the conclusions of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on territorial cohesion and urban development, held in Leipzig in May 2007, the Ministries took note of a **Portugal's Report** on « *European Urban and Territorial Networks to Exchange Experience, Learning and Skills and Generate New Knowledge* ». This Report stated the necessity to **strengthen cooperation between existing urban and territorial networks through focusing on selected areas of common or complementary interest**.

The AP1 defined Action 1.1 which dedicated to the **Slovenian Presidency** the following task : to develop a strategy for **fostering coordination between spatial and urban development in the light of the TA and the Leipzig Charter at EU and member States level**. This Action was completed under the leadership of the Slovenian Presidency which produced a final Report « *Coordination between Territorial and Urban Development* » in November 2008. **Some policy recommendations of this Report are directly related to our analysis** as particularly:

- a) the need to organise and manage platforms and partnerships to facilitate coordination ;
- b) the need for a fully participative approach recognising the different roles of different stakeholders ;
- c) the crucial role of political support at all levels for the success of coordination.

The Toledo declaration, adopted by the Ministers in charge of urban development under **Spanish Presidency** in June 2010, committed themselves to support and encourage the following actions :

- *Explore the possibility to **establish greater coherence and coordination** between territorial and urban issues and Agendas.*
- *Develop a common web tool to **foster and facilitate exchanges** (especially information) between UDG and NTCCP.*

The Spanish Presidency was the first one after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty which put forward territorial cohesion as an objective of the EU. Consequently **this Presidency went further in integrating urban and territorial issues** by stating that *urban development should be an integral part of the concept and wider context of territorial cohesion (relationships of cities with neighbouring communities, including metropolitan and rural-urban partnership)*.

Under the **Belgian Presidency**, three practical proposals were agreed during the UDG and NTCCP meetings and adopted by the DGs responsible for the TA in November 2010 :

- a) exchange issues, point of views and agendas between UDG and NTCCP ;
- b) create bridges between the UDG Trio+1 Group and the NTCCP Core Group;
- c) create a common website to share information between UDG and NTCCP.

The Presidency made a first step in putting closer the two Core Groups by inviting a representative of the urban Trio+1 Core Group to the NTCCP Core Group meeting. The **Hungarish Presidency** went further in this field and organised the first joint Core Group meeting last February 2011 (here the urban Core Group was in fact the UDG Contact Group, created more specifically in the context of the elaboration of the TA 2020).

Finally **the TA 2020 document**, adopted under Hungarish Presidency in May 2011, represents an important framework to improve coordination of urban and territorial dimensions of cohesion policy. It includes some references to coordination and external cooperation, as in the following items:

- (40): *enhancing territorial cohesion calls for effective coordination of policies, actors and planning mechanisms and the creation and sharing of territorial knowledge ;*
- (65): *continue the coordination of the NTCCP ; increase cooperation of NTCCP with the EU Institutions and other stakeholders including intergovernmental organisations.*

2. IMPROVING THE ORGANISATION: A FEW RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Five guiding principles emerging from the analysis

As recalled in the introduction, the « organisation targeted » analysis here is complementary to the work on the content and substance of the Working Groups. Some weaknesses appear from the analysis as regards the content of NTCCP and TCUM meetings which is not sufficiently linked to the mainstream of cohesion policy. Therefore **a more strategic and focused content for the meetings of these Groups should be thought in parallel** while implementing our recommendations.

Although the definition of a territory and of an urban area differs between the Member States, in academic arenas and in conceptual terms, these two notions are widely acknowledged as closely interlinked and complementary. In functional terms, a urban area is considered as a category of territory, while urban planning is viewed as a part of spatial planning, just focusing on a specific scale. Even in policy arenas, urban development is more and more considered as a dimension of territorial development and urban matters are viewed as a part of territorial cohesion (see Toledo event). Consequently, **a territorial integrated approach should be adopted**, as far as possible, within the Administrations of the Member States and the EU.

At the same time, urban issues can be viewed as keeping some specificities, for example when they focus on urban regeneration within cities. In addition, in most cases within the Member States, urban development and territorial cohesion or spatial planning refer to different policies. The difference exists also at EU level where the urban dimension has a longer history in the conception and implementation of cohesion policy than territorial cohesion. Consequently, **purely merging urban matters and territorial cohesion appears to be difficult in practical terms** : the added value and difficulties of such a merging has to be scrutinized.

The necessity to ensure more coordination between UDG and NTCCP and to improve their external dialogue with relevant bodies has been progressively recognised since the adoption of the Leipzig Charter. The Slovenian Presidency made an important set of proposals for the improvement of territorial-urban coordination and the Lisbon Treaty provided the opportunity to strengthen this process. However no real progress has been made in operational terms, particularly for institutional reasons in the Member States: in most cases, responsibilities for urban matters and territorial cohesion belong to different Ministries or Departments. However **it appears urgent to impulse improvement of the organisation and to implement coordination mechanisms while not making the process more complex**.

It seems also urgent to make TCUM more strategic and to create bridges with UDG+NTCCP. But making the intergovernmental and EU processes closer may be less essential than **integrating better the urban and territorial dimensions into the mainstream of cohesion policy**. Then trying to better articulate TCUM and COCOF on one side and NTCCP and SAWP on the other side should receive sufficient consideration.

These five key principles guide our recommendations for a better organisation and more coordination of the work.

2.2 Seven recommendations with their summaries

Seven recommendations are presented below, each of them being summarised in a box (R.1 to R.7).

First: Adopt a territorial integrated approach

We can not just better coordinate the structures and Working Groups dedicated to territorial and urban matters ; we should also systematise a new thinking, integrating territorial and urban matters, at all levels of the Administrations (Member States and EU Institutions). This idea also provides the opportunity to relaunch the implementation of the set of proposals made by the Slovenian presidency in the Report adopted in November 2008 (eg. role of the policy support at all levels).

R.1 Adopt a territorial integrated approach

Promote and adopt as far as possible a territorial integrated approach in the policy and decision making process within the Institutions of Member States as at EU level, meaning in particular to :

- elaborate a common understanding of urban development and territorial cohesion as parts of cohesion policy and mainstreaming these dimensions;
- consider urban development as part of an upper level development process : urban-rural, regional development, spatial planning.

Such a recommendation has to be viewed in the broader context of a governance reflection in the framework of the TA 2020, including two other dimensions of an integrated approach : vertical coordination (between territorial scales) and horizontal coordination (between policies).

As such, it has a mid-term perspective and should be examined within the Member States Administrations and the EU Institutions.

On Commission side, it would be necessary to convince DG EMPL about the importance of territorial cohesion for the mainstream of cohesion policy (yet this DG is convinced about the place of urban development). Up to now, the Interservices Group on Territorial Cohesion has failed to reach this objective. The support from the General Secretariat, as the DG having the most comprehensive policy view, should be requested for this purpose.

Second: Better coordinate urban and territorial matters

NTCCP and UDG, being of the same nature, should be strongly coordinated or integrated. Such a consolidation of the work has the **following pros** :

- This would be pertinent in academic, strategic and policy terms (the major target is a single cohesion policy) ;
- This would make the policy dialogue more coherent and efficient ;
- This could match the TCUM organisation, which integrated territorial and urban matters in 2007, and also the DG REGIO organisation, which merged the two matters into the same Unit in 2008 ;
- This would create synergies and cost efficiency in the current work, particularly in these Member States where urban and territorial issues belong to different Administrations.

There are **3 possible options** for improving the coordination of the Groups :

- option 1 : **coordination** of the two Groups while keeping their running autonomy

- option 2 : **integration** of the two Groups while creating two technical sub-Groups ;
- option 3 : **complete merging** of the two Groups into a single one.

The option 3, as compared to the other options presents the **following cons** :

- not very realistic: the institutional structures and arrangements (competent hierarchies) in Member States make this merging difficult to operate ;
- not pertinent in political terms vis-à-vis DG REGIO : this DG gives more importance to urban development and it could consider merging as a dilution of urban matters in a politically weak « territorial » Group ;
- not creating significant added value : there is a risk that the specificity of some matters (eg . purely urban and sub-urban topics as regeneration or social difficulties in neighbourhoods) would not be given sufficient consideration.

For these reasons, we would not recommend option 3.

However we propose not to exclude it from a wide debate within the UDG-NTCCP September meeting.

R.2 Better coordinate urban and territorial matters : A strong coordination of UDG and NTCCP

a) Elaborate a strong and not too complex mechanism of coordination of UDG and NTCCP, while giving consideration to some thematic specificities.

Three options should be discussed :

- **option 1 « UDG and NTCCP »: improved coordination** between the two Groups ; they will share a common Core Group (for strategic coordination), a common secretariat (for organisation), a common reporting and some common sessions (back to back meetings) ; two representatives of each MS at each common session.
- **option 2 « UDG+NTCCP »: integration** into a common Group with just keeping two thematic Sub-Groups which will meet separately on specific issues, when necessary; each Member State and EU Institution would choose a « leader delegate » for the common meetings.
- **option 3 : « UDGNTCCP » : complete merging** of the two Groups into a single one ; each Member State and EU Institution would choose a delegate for the meetings.

b) Not only organisation is important but also content which should be examined in parallel. Identify **a few strategic priorities for the joint meetings** through an analysis of relevant policy documents elaborated by the EU Institutions and under the successive Presidencies (as TA 2020); examples of priorities are : territorial and urban dimensions of the future Development and Investment Partnership Contracts and local development within cohesion policy.

Additional information on the options:

- **Core Group** : the strategic role of the Core Group should be reinforced, in order to strengthen the leadership process and guarantee its continuity ; it should focus its activity on identifying key issues of the Agenda aiming at influencing the policy process and preparing the debate.

For option 1, it can be a large Core Group (two delegates per country of the Trio+1 and two also for DG REGIO) or a small one (one delegate for each country of the Trio+1 as for DG REGIO) ; it should be stated here that large Core Groups seem to be extremely difficult to manage.

For options 2 and 3, it will be a small Group (one delegate) ;

- **Secretariat** : a leading by the Presidencies with a rotational character seems to be more efficient than having a permanent Secretariat structure : for logistical reasons since meetings are held in the country of the successive Presidencies but also because it guarantees a high level of policy and

- budgetary commitment ;
- **Chairing** the meetings or common sessions : choice made by the Presidencies ;
 - **Meetings** : for option 1, systematic back to back meeting (with common sessions at the middle of the meeting) ; for option 2, common meetings with specific thematic sessions (urban or territorial sub-Groups) when necessary ; for option 3, of course all meetings are common ;
 - **Reporting** : common and ensured by the Presidencies;
 - **Differences in pros and cons** for these three options: the merging and integration options would create more synergies and the coordination option would keep a little more autonomy for each matter (urban and territorial).

Third: Reinforce the mainstreaming of urban and territorial dimensions in cohesion policy :

The **strategic role** and content of TCUM meetings should be reinforced and **TCUM should be better integrated within COCOF**, while maintaining its consultative role. COCOF would keep its management role separated, except when debating Programme implementation issues concerning the territorial or urban dimension which should be open to TCUM members.

Joint sessions between COCOF and TCUM should be systematic on **issues of common interest** able to influence cohesion policy. Possible common issues could be : post-2013 cohesion policy debate, European Territorial Cooperation, macro-regional strategies, local development and territorial indicators ; coordination of policies and Territorial Impact Assessment are also suited topics which will provide the opportunity to involve other DGs of the Commission into the meetings.

In parallel, it appears also pertinent to match this new EU TCUM-COCOF organisation on the intergovernmental side by preparing the **same kind of integration** for UDG+NTCCP **within the SAWP**. The added value would be similar to the one issued from integration of TCUM in COCOF : it would allow UDG and NTCCP to influence the priorities and content of cohesion policy and to be more visible in the strategic debate. **Issues of common interest** could be territorial and urban matters in the post-2013 cohesion policy debate as for example legislative packages, strategic reports on Programme implementation, evaluation of Programmes. As compared to TCUM-COCOF integration, the only problematic subject here would be the coordination of territorially relevant policies : from the experience we had with the AP1 and the 2008 French Presidency, involving sectoral Ministries in discussions on territorial cohesion, is particularly difficult.

R.3 Reinforce the mainstreaming of urban and territorial dimensions of cohesion policy : better integrate TCUM in COCOF and UDG+NTCCP in SAWP

a) Instigate DG REGIO to reinforce TCUM as a strategic Working Group and to organise a structured policy debate within COCOF, through the following measures:

- all COCOF and TCUM meetings should be jointly organised and held back to back (COCOF first, COCOF and TCUM second, TCUM third) ;
- the common COCOF-TCUM sessions would focus on strategic issues as mainstreaming of territorial cohesion and urban development within cohesion policy ;
- a knowledge based debate : the participation of ESPON and URBACT to some common sessions should be improved and structured.
- some specific meetings, involving other DGs of the Commission, should be organised to discuss issues of coordination of territorially relevant policies .

b) Elaborate practical proposals, on a symmetric way, to integrate UDG+NTCCP into SAWP (for example as a sub-Group). Create a reflection Group to elaborate these proposals. The three first recommendations for the integration of TCUM into COCOF (joint organisation of meetings, some common sessions with strategic focus, knowledge-based debate) could be applied to SAWP and experimented.

Fourth: Create coherence between the intergovernmental and the EU work dedicated to territorial and urban matters

UDG and NTCCP on one side and TCUM on the other side refer to different processes : the first ones are intergovernmental and informal and the second is strongly based on the European Commission comitology. Nevertheless, both the place of territorial cohesion in the Lisbon Treaty and the TA 2020 represent excellent opportunities to put these two processes closer.

The aim is to create bridges and to organise a permanent dialogue between these Groups while preserving their autonomy. Keeping this autonomy would mean no systematic joint meetings. Nevertheless some issues of common interest should be identified and thematic seminars should be organised (as by DG REGIO in 2009 and 2010) mixing delegates from UDG+NTCCP and Commission officials (REGIO + interested DGs). Member States would organise their participation to both kinds of groups through internal coordination. **Issues of common interest** could concern in particular the urban and territorial dimension of cohesion policy Programming documents as the future Community Strategic Framework (CSF) and the Development and Investment Partnership Contract (DIPC).

Out of these joint meetings, in order to limit overlapping discussions, it could be appropriate to test the possibility of differentiating the fields of intervention of these two Groups.

R.4 Create coherence between the intergovernmental (UDG+NTCCP) and the EU (TCUM) work

a) Create coherence between UDG+NTCCP and TCUM through :

- common elaboration of Agendas : by a Strategic Group = DG REGIO representatives+ intergovernmental Core Group(s) ;
- organising some joint meetings and events on issues of common interest (eg future cohesion policy Programming documents);
- permanent exchange of information : eg. mutual access to the new UDG+NTCCP information tool and CIRCA (Commission site) ;
- reinforced linkages in activity reporting and external communication.

b) Discuss the idea of a certain degree of differentiation of the fields of intervention of the two Groups. For example :

- UDG+NTCCP would focus more on policy implementation, learning and share of good practices, progress towards a common spatial planning and urban development culture among Member States ;
- TCUM would focus more on elaborating common views on EU policy orientations and coordination.

Fifth: Organise a structured dialogue of UDG+NTCCP with stakeholders

The issue of dialogue and cooperation with stakeholders has in fact several dimensions and raises three questions :

First, the membership to the Working Groups. As showed in the analysis, the AP1 defining the NTCCP makes a vague reference to *other stakeholders* without delineating the word. The term is no more defined in the UDG documents. Then the number of participants to the Groups has progressively increased along the Presidencies without precise rules for membership. Having a so wide number of members and a so vague basis for membership certainly weakens the role of these Groups. Consequently some principles for membership should be identified with the view to compromise between two necessities : make the policy debate more efficient and keep the Group(s) open to stakeholders.

Second, the role of stakeholders in the meetings. Four types of stakeholders dealing with territorial and urban issues are present in the Working Group(s) : Member States and acceding and neighbouring countries representatives, EU Institutions, EU regional and urban organisations, technical networks (ESPON, URBACT, EUKN). Obviously, these four kinds of stakeholders should not have the same role in the process : while Member States and EU Institutions should have a prominent role, at the opposite it does not seem appropriate that the technical networks (the three mentioned above) participate to some strategic debates and to the approval of policy documents.

Third, the improvement of dialogue and cooperation of the Working Group(s) with stakeholders through the interface role of their members with their own institutions. Two good examples of this can be mentioned:

- On Commission side, the DG REGIO representative(s) should ensure interface between the Group(s) and other DGs through the Interservice Group on Territorial Cohesion and the Interservice Group on Urban Development ;

- On EP side, the REGI Committee representative in the Working Group(s) should ensure interface with the Urban Intergroup and the Intergroup 174 (geographic specificities).

In general terms, the stakeholders should :

- ensure a wide debate in their Institutions about the UDG+NTCCP work,
- provide regular feed-back to the Group(s) and inform its members on the work progress in their own Institutions;

- when necessary, organise inter-Institutional meetings .

R.5 Organise a structured dialogue of UDG+NTCCP with stakeholders and improve their participation to the process

A small reflection Group should be created to propose solutions for a structured dialogue with stakeholders working on territorial cohesion and urban development. Three tasks are proposed for reflection :

- establish principles (and criteria?) for membership of stakeholders to the Working Group(s)
 - examine the opportunity to create rules (or status?) for participation: eg. differentiate the list of attendants between technical and policy oriented meetings, creation of an « observer » status for policy decisions, etc..
 - establish rules for a more active interface role of stakeholders between the Working Group and their own Institutions (regular feed-back, inter-institutional meetings, etc.).

Sixth: Adopt a policy Agenda until the end of 2012

If our recommendations are approved in the UDG + NTCCP September meeting and endorsed in the following high level meetings under Polish Presidency, the current and two next Presidencies should commit themselves to implement them . In this perspective, we propose the following Agenda:

R.6 Adopt a policy Agenda until the end of 2012

A possible share of the Agenda between the Trio countries could be the following :

Poland :

- adopt the 7 recommendations including the final decisions on coordination of intergovernmental Working Groups and policy Agenda ;
- instigate DG REGIO to reinforce TCUM within COCOF (R.3)
- create a reflection Group on the integration of UDG+NTCCP into the SAWP (R.3) ;
- create a reflection Group on dialogue and cooperation with stakeholders within the UDG+NTCCP (R.5) .

Denmark :

- animate the reflection Group on integration of UDG+NTCCP into the SAWP (R.3)
- implement with DG REGIO the coherence scheme between UDG+NTCCP and TCUM (R.4)
- animate the Group on cooperation with stakeholders (R.5) and adopt a new scheme for this cooperation.

Cyprus :

- organise a common UDG-NTCCP meeting using the rules of the option adopted under R.2 ;
- adopt a scheme for integration of UDG+NTCCP into the SAWP (R3) ;
- organise the first common UDG+NTCCP+SAWP meeting (R.3).

Seventh: Elaborate a common web-tool for urban and territorial issues

Developing a common information web-tool will :

- reinforce exchanges and coordination between UDG and NTCCP
- ensure external communication of UDG and NTCCP.

The commitment of the Belgian Presidency, particularly the Walloon Region, confirmed during the Hungarian Presidency, is welcome and covers the whole area of work : financing, creating, managing and up-grading the web-tool.

The work has progressed significantly since a first version of the tool is planned to be ready before the end of the Polish Presidency.

Consequently we limit our recommendation to simply mentioning a few points that seem to be important in the current building process of the web-tool.

R.7 Elaborate a common web-tool for urban and territorial issues

Make use of the existing structures of COPTA and EUKN for creating the new web-tool ; see for example the policy oriented library of COPTA, the thematic library of EUKN (8 themes) and the categorisation of reference material of EUKN (4 user types).

Examine the following question : do we need a restricted area in the web-tool ? We should have in mind that the documents restricted to UDG+NTCCP members are usely draft technical and policy documents with can easily be circulated by mail and do not have any official survival. In addition, the successive Presidencies are used to open their own restricted areas.

Try to organise practical links between the web-tool and CIRCA (DG REGIO, eg. TCUM), EP sites (REGI, urban intergroup, 174 intergroup) and CoR site.

Explore the opportunity to organise a turn over in the leading for the web-tool, for example every « Trio » period (18 months) or every two years. The management and permanent upgrading of such a tool is time consuming and the Walloon Region should be given the possibility to be replaced in the future.

ANNEXE

Five Draft Questions for feed-back from the UDG+NTCCP members

Question 1 : Better coordinate urban and territorial matters within UDG and NTCCP (see R.2)

1a) Would you privilege option 1 (improved coordination), option 2 (integration) or option 3 (complete merging) ?

1b) Should we improve the content in parallel to the organisation and identify a few strategic priorities for the joint meetings?

Question 2 : Reinforce the mainstreaming of urban and territorial dimensions of cohesion policy (see R.3)

2a) Should we instigate DG REGIO to better integrate TCUM into COCOF through measures as the ones defined in R.3 ?

2b) Should we create a reflection Group to elaborate practical proposals for the integration of UDG+NTCCP into SAWP (a sub-Group ?) through measures as the ones defined in R.3? Would you participate to this reflection?

Question 3 : Create coherence between the intergovernmental and EU work (see R.4)

3a) Should we create coherence and linkages between UDG+NTCCP and TCUM through measures as the ones defined in R.4 ?

3b) Is there a need to differentiate the fields of intervention of these two kinds of Groups according to the ideas presented in R.4 or to others?

Question 4 : Organise a structured dialogue and cooperation of UDG+NTCCP with stakeholders (see R.5)

Should we improve the internal dialogue and external cooperation in UDG+NTCCP and create a small reflection Group aiming at proposing solutions to improve membership, participation and external linkages (according to the examples in R.5) ?

Question 5 : Adopt a Policy Agenda until the end of 2012 to improve urban-territorial coordination (see R.6)

Would you agree with the share of tasks between the Trio countries proposed in R.6 ?