

Increasing influence of EU in spatial planning

Metrex Spring Conference

2 June 2025

CONTENT

1 EU competences on territorial and urban development

2 EU policies and fundings promoting territorial cooperation

3 Trends: increasing impact of EU legislation on planning

4 What is in the pipeline

5 Conclusion: What to do?



01

EU FORMAL COMPETENCES

SPATIAL PLANNING : NOT AN EU COMPETENCE

Examples of EU competencies and activities with significant influence on spatial planning			Intergovernmental cooperation spatial and urban policies	
Legislation	Incentives	Agenda and discourse setting*	Spatial planning policies	Urban policies
Environment – SEA Directive – EIA Directive – Birds Directive – Habitat Directive – Water Framework Directive – Floods Directive – Environmental Noise Directive – SEVESO III Directive – Waste Framework Directive – Landfill Directive Energy – Renewable Energy Directive – Energy Efficiency Directive – Regulation on Guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure Competition – Directive on public procurement and Directive on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors Maritime – Marine Spatial Planning Directive – Marine Strategy Framework Directive	Cohesion Policy – ESI Funds (EFRE, ESF) – CLLD – ITI Rural development policy – EAFRD – LEADER Transport policy – TEN networks	– Reports on Urban Europe, Urban Audit, State of cities report – Cohesion report – European Environment – state and outlook – Country Specific Recommendations (CSR)	– European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) – Territorial Agenda of the EU (TAEU) 2007 – Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020 (TA2020)	– Leipzig Charter – Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) – Pact of Amsterdam

Only legal basis related

Art 174. Treaty EU:
Strengthen EU economic, social and territorial cohesion

Cohesion Policy



02

EU POLICIES FOR TERRITORIAL & URBAN COOPERATION

TERRITORIAL COOPERATION



ESDP European Spatial Development Perspective

Towards Balanced and Sustainable
Development of the Territory
of the European Union

Agreed at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for
Spatial Planning in Potsdam, May 1999

Published by the European Commission

1999



Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020

Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse
Regions

agreed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial
Planning and Territorial Development
on 19th May 2011 Gödöllő, Hungary



2011



Territorial Agenda 2030

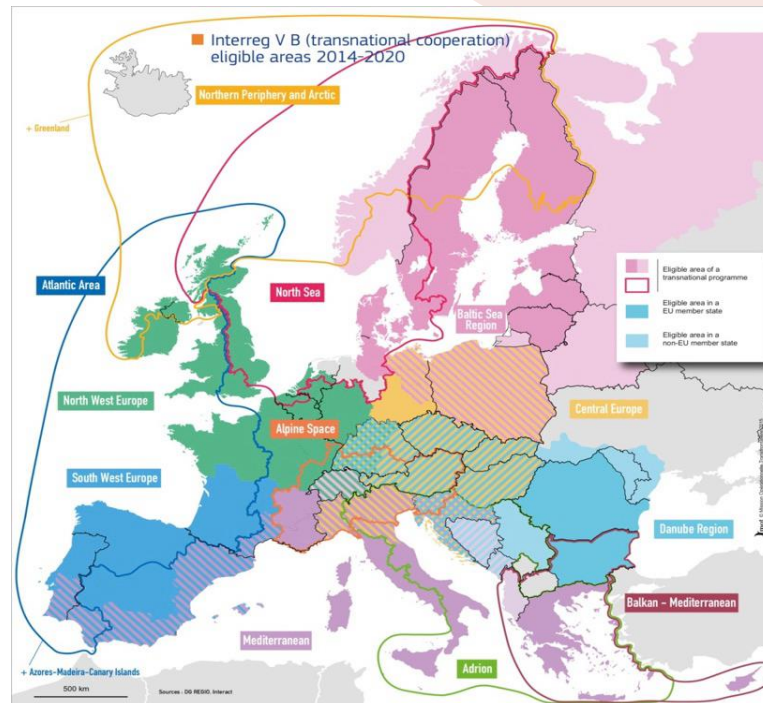
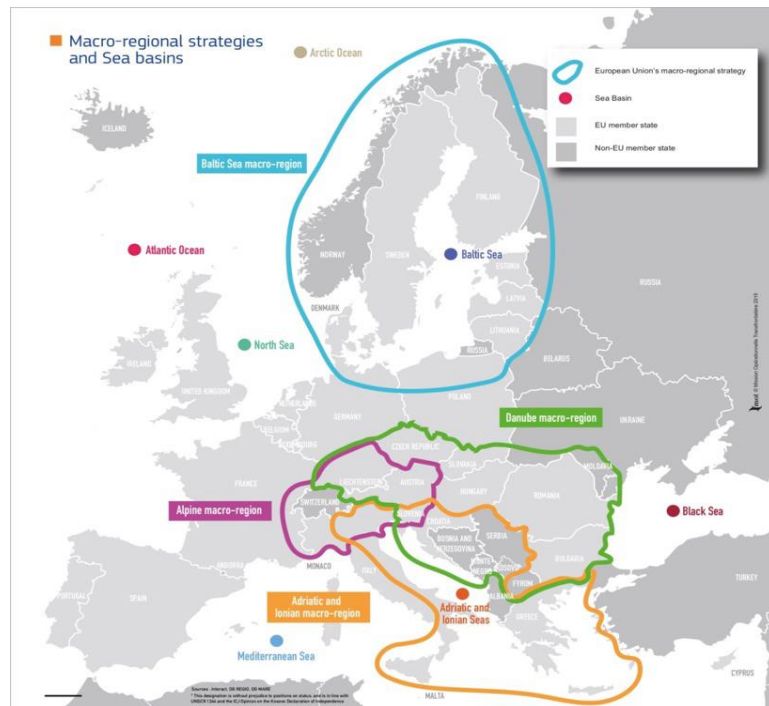
A future for all places

Informal meeting of Ministers responsible
for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development and/or Territorial Cohesion
1 December 2020, Germany



2020

TERRITORIAL COOPERATION



© Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière 2015

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

1985: Regional Policy

80s-90s: Urban Pilot Projects, Committee of the Regions...

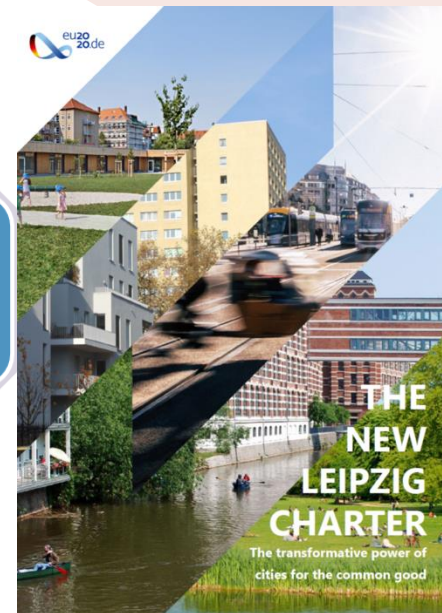
2000-2013: URBAN/URBACT

2007: Leipzig Charter

2012: DG Regio become DG for Regional and Urban Policy

2014-2020: URBACT III, UIA, SUD, ITI, CLLD

2016: Urban Agenda of the European Union





03

TREND: INCREASING IMPACT OF EU LEGISLATIONS

FIRST EU LEGISLATIONS

1982

1st SEVESO Directive

2006

Service Directive

1992



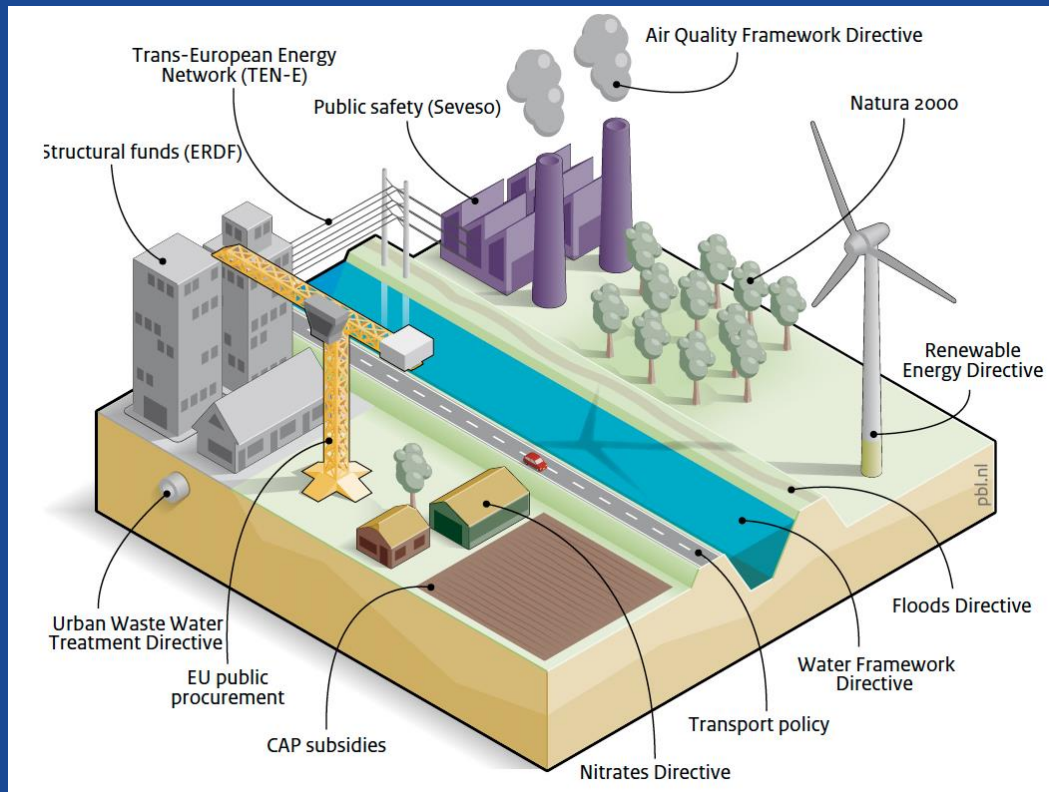
2019



The impact of EU regulations and policies on land use in cities

What lessons for the Urban Agenda for the EU
and intergovernmental cooperation?





Taken from Evers D. and Tennekes J. (2016), *The Europeanisation of spatial planning in the Netherlands*. PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, The Hague, p. 43.

ENVIRONMENT

- Nature Restoration Law
- Soil Monitoring & Resilience Directive

DG Environment (ENVI)

WATER

- Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

DG Environment (ENVI)

AIR QUALITY

- Ambient Air Quality Directive

DG Environment (ENVI)

'Cities in the European Green Deal' – legislative dossiers that are either recently adopted or pending with a direct impact on/role for local authorities (from: Eurocities & Energy Cities 2024)

ENERGY

- Energy Efficiency Directive
- Renewable Energy Directive
- Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

DG Energy (ENER)

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive
- Waste Framework Directive
- Construction Products Regulation

DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW)

MOBILITY

- Euro 7 Regulation
- Regulation on CO₂ Emission Performance Standards for Cars & Vans
- Regulation on CO₂ Emission Performance Standards for Heavy-Duty Vehicles
- Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation

DG Mobility and Transport (MOVE)

Own elaboration adapted from Eurocities and Energy Cities (2024), *The Cities in the European Green Deal. Opportunities and Responsibilities*, <https://energy-cities.eu/publication/cities-in-the-eu-green-deal/>

	TRANSPORT (INCL. WATERWAYS)	BUILT-UP AREA RESIDENTIAL	BUILT-UP AREA INDUSTRIAL & OFFICES	AGRICULTURE - GREENHOUSES	AGRICULTURE - OTHER	WOODLAND AND NATURE
European Green Deal	EXPANSIVE	INCONCLUSIVE	RESTRICTIVE	EXPANSIVE	EXPANSIVE	EXPANSIVE
EU Circular Economy Action Plan and Strategy	RESTRICTIVE	NO IMPACT	EXPANSIVE	NO IMPACT	NO IMPACT	EXPANSIVE
EU Biodiversity Strategy	NO IMPACT	RESTRICTIVE	RESTRICTIVE	EXPANSIVE	EXPANSIVE	EXPANSIVE
Connecting Europe Facility	EXPANSIVE	EXPANSIVE	INCONCLUSIVE	NO IMPACT	INCONCLUSIVE	NO IMPACT
Europe Fit for the Digital Age	NO IMPACT	EXPANSIVE	EXPANSIVE	NO IMPACT	RESTRICTIVE	RESTRICTIVE

Adapted from Ivanov et al., 2023, p. 126

EXAMPLE 1: NATURE RESTORATION REGULATION

Article 8 - Restoration of urban ecosystems

By 2030... no net loss (compared to 2024)

From 2031... increasing trend ... until « satisfactory level »

- in urban **green space** (at national level)
- in urban **tree canopy cover** (in each urban ecosystem area)



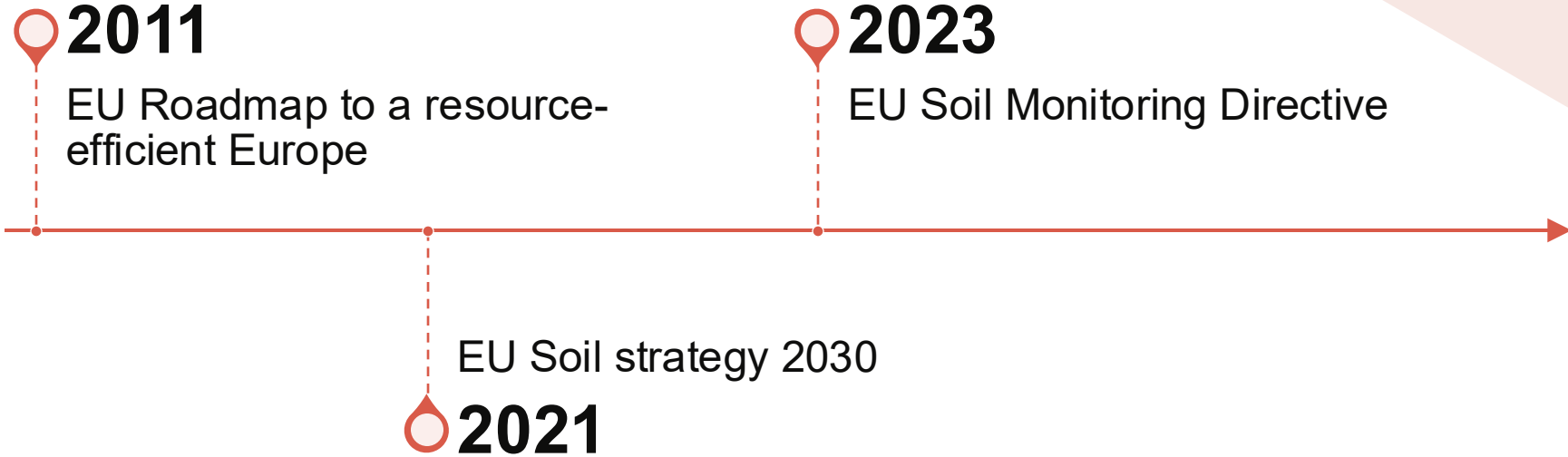
Definitions

Geographical areas covered

Exemptions



EXAMPLE 2: NO NET LAND TAKE & SOIL





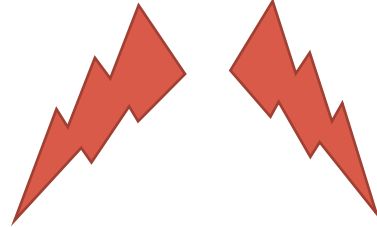
04

WHAT IS ON THE PIPELINE

NEW PRIORITY « COMPETITIVENESS »

Economic strategies: territorial blind

- Competitiveness Compass
 - Industrial green deal



Legislation impacting planning

- Critical raw material act
 - Net-zero industry act
- Industrial decarbonization Accelerator Act
 - Circular economy Act
- Omnibus (green taxonomy, sustainable reporting)
 -



NEW POLICIES WITH TERRITORIAL IMPACTS

EU
affordable
Housing
Plan

New
Cohesion
policy
programs

EU Agenda
for Cities

Foresight study
for
EU territorial
development
vision

EU
Preparedness
strategy

Climate
adaptation
Plan

EU
Port
strategy



05

CONCLUSION

WHAT TO DO?

NEED TO BRIDGE THE GAP

1

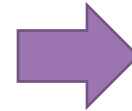
Better information for the planning field on EU policies and EU regulations impacting planning.

2

European institutions should engage more and better with planners when developing and implementing EU regulations and policies that have an impact on cities.

3

Urban planning agencies should broaden their scope by building wider networks and alliances with local, national, and European partners.



PlanningMatters

powered by **perspective.brussels**

NEED TO PROMOTE OUR WORK



Metropolitan Agenda

Foresight for Europe

Expert and Network Groups findings

Metropolitan
perspective

EU
affordable
Housing
Plan

EU Agenda
for Cities

EU
Preparedness
strategy

Climate
adaptation
Plan

Circular
economy
act



European
Union

New EU
budget

New EU
programs

Foresight study
for territorial
development
vision



NEED TO JOINING FORCES



Metropolitan (and macroregional) perspective



Metropolitan perspective (political)



City perspective



Spatial planning perspective at all scales

Many others.....

Thank you!

Contact

Alfredo Corbalan

Coordinator European and international affairs

E: acorbalan@perspective.brussels

www.perspective.brussels

More about PlanningMatters:



www.perspective.brussels/planningmatters



@perspective.brussels