

ESPON COMPASS interactive dialogue

Methods and acknowledgements

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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

REPORT //

ESPON COMPASS interactive dialogue

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Report // October 2021

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Contributors

This document reports on the proceedings of the interactive dialogue that was part of the ESPON COMPASS Dialogue and Case Study project. The dialogue delivered input for the policy brief Cross-fertilisation of cohesion policy and spatial planning. These people contributed to the dialogue and preparation of the brief: Daniel Franke, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague; Jan Kabrhel, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague; Karel Maier, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague; Marcin Dabrowski, Department of Urbanism, TU Delft; Neli Georgieva, European Policies Research Centre (EPRC); Pablo Muñoz Unceta, independent researcher; Vincent Nadin, Department of Urbanism, TU Delft; Wil Zonneveld, Department of Urbanism, TU Delft; Wilbert den Hoed, European Policies Research Centre (EPRC).

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This document reports on the proceedings of the interactive dialogue that was part of the ESPON COMPASS Dialogue and Case Study project and has delivered input for the policy brief Cross-fertilisation of cohesion policy and spatial planning. The dialogue involved national experts in spatial planning and cohesion policy in 32 ESPON partner countries. We acknowledge the valuable contribution of all these experts. Experts who agreed for their contribution to the dialogue to be publicly acknowledged are listed in Chapter 2 of this report.

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Table of contents

1	COMPASS interactive dialogue: The process	6
1.1	Phase 1: Information mining	6
1.2	Phase 2: Questionnaire	6
1.2.1	Reflection on privacy and data collection	8
1.3	Phase 3: Interactive Dialogue event	8
1.4	Phase 4: Synthesis	9
2	Acknowledgement of contributors	10
	References	11

List of figures, and tables

List of figures

Figure 1 Number of responses to the questionnaire over time	7
Figure 2 Summary of experts' responses to the questionnaire.	8

List of tables

Table 1 Number of responses during stages of the questionnaire	7
Table 2 Attendees COMPASS Interactive Dialogue event.....	9
Table 3 Respondents of the COMPASS questionnaire.....	10

1 COMPASS interactive dialogue: The process

The Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe (COMPASS) ESPON project has analysed trends in spatial planning and territorial cohesion from a comparative perspective. When completed in 2018, it provided a rich source of knowledge on the characteristics of spatial planning and territorial governance in 32 ESPON countries, the relationship between spatial planning and European Union (EU) sectoral policies, and changes that had taken place in these arrangements from 2000 to 2016 (for the main report of the project, see ESPON, 2018). The ESPON EGTC contracted TU Delft to use this knowledge for practical and targeted recommendations on strengthening relations between spatial planning, regional development policy, and cohesion policy. As part of the commissioned COMPASS Dialogue and Case Study project, the research team prepared input for the ESPON policy brief Cross-fertilisation of cohesion policy and spatial planning (ESPON, 2021). Input was generated during an in-depth case study into sectoral policy integration in the Czech Republic (Maier et al., 2021), and an 'interactive dialogue' with spatial planning and cohesion policy experts from the ESPON countries which took place during 2021. This report describes methods used during the interactive dialogue and acknowledges the valuable contribution of participants.

1.1 Phase 1: Information mining

The main objectives of the COMPASS interactive dialogue were to (1) refine an understanding of the factors that affect cross-fertilisation between spatial planning and cohesion policy; (2) assess likely effects of reforms of the 2021–27 cohesion policy program on cross-fertilisation; and (3) test recommendations for improved cross-fertilisation. The dialogue was designed to involve national experts in 32 ESPON countries in a phased inquiry of these objectives.

The initial phase of the dialogue focused on the preparation of active interaction with experts. It aimed to better understand approaches to cross-fertilisation. Results were preliminary propositions on factors determining the effectiveness of cross-fertilisation, an overview over available procedures and tools for joining up sectoral policies, and a selection of best practices of cross-fertilisation in countries. Results were mainly derived from a review of material gathered for the 2018 COMPASS project. Review included an in-depth analysis of the main report, constituent volumes of this report, and raw data from questionnaires that were part of the earlier project. In order to anticipate on how novelties in cohesion policy 2021–27 will influence cross-fertilisation between spatial planning and cohesion policy in the future, the preparation phase also included a literature review of recent scholarly writing on these matters, and consultation with cohesion policy experts.

1.2 Phase 2: Questionnaire

In order to corroborate the propositions that were developed during the initial phase of the COMPASS interactive dialogue, the second phase of the dialogue made use of a questionnaire. Questions posed were developed by the COMPASS Dialogue and Case Study project team during iterative discussions and revisions. The questionnaire was designed as an online survey, making use of the QuestionPro software, and as a sequence of simple questions that can be answered in less than an hour. In its final version (Annex A of the full report) the questionnaire consisted of an introduction to its aims, a privacy and data collection notice, an explanation of key terms, and 12 multiple choice, drop-down, rating, or open questions. Questions were oriented at (1) establishing respondents' preferences regarding data collection, privacy and type of contribution; (2) profiling respondents background in terms of kind and country of expertise; and (3) collecting substantive data on improved approaches to cross-fertilisation.

As noted above, the questionnaire aimed at the involvement of experts in a dialogue on cross-fertilisation between spatial planning and cohesion policy. In order to gain qualified input, the questionnaire was sent to a group of preselected experts first. The initial selection was determined by the ambition to gain at least two responses from every ESPON country, and to collect responses that cover both, an expertise in spatial planning and cohesion policy per country. In order to approximate the realisation of this ambition, invitations to the questionnaire needed to be circulated several times.

The questionnaire was launched in February 2021. It was sent with a personalised email, an ESPON recommendation letter, and a link to the questionnaire to 144 experts, including the country experts who were involved in the 2018 COMPASS project, ESPON Monitoring Committee members (MC), ESPON Contact Points (ECP), and cohesion policy experts indicated by European Policies Research Centre (EPRC). Although cohesion policy does not apply to non-EU ESPON countries, experts on the policy in these countries were invited to participate in the questionnaire. The experts were selected based on their engagement with and knowledge about cross-border cooperation programmes. Due to an insufficient number of responses, the earlier addressed experts were reminded of filling in the questionnaire, and asked to recommend other experts who can do so in March 2021.

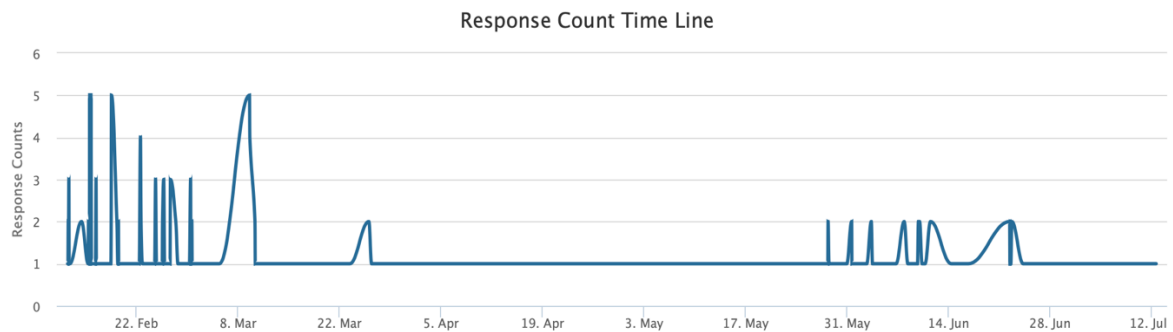
Before 9 April 2021 (the date of an interactive dialogue online event, see Chapter 1.3 below) 51 respondents from 23 countries had completed the questionnaire. In order to reach the ambitious amount of responses, additional experts were invited to fill in the questionnaire between May and June 2021. The selection of these extra experts followed recommendations by previously contacted experts and participants of the 9 April 2021 online event. During the last stage of inviting possible respondents, special emphasis was placed on addressing experts from countries that were not yet covered by earlier received responses (Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, and Portugal). The questionnaire was closed in July 2021. Table 1 and Figure 1 below summarize information on received responses over time.

Table 1 Number of responses during stages of the questionnaire

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Number of completed questionnaires (cumulative)
Invitation to initially selected experts						33
Reminders and invitation to additional recommended experts						51
Intermediate analysis of results and identification of gaps						
Invitation to additional experts, targeted at filling gaps						72

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Figure 1 Number of responses to the questionnaire over time



Source: QuestionPro.

Automatically produced reports by the QuestionPro software indicate that the questionnaire turned out to be demanding in terms of the time it consumed. The questionnaire reached nearly 500 experts from all ESPON countries. Over 200 of these experts started filling in the questionnaire, but only little more than 30% completed it. The average time experts spent on the questionnaire was 19 minutes. Experts who responded to all questions needed an average of 43 minutes (see Figure 2 below). In total 72 questionnaires were completed. These incorporate responses from 29 out of the 32 ESPON countries. Annex B of the full report depicts the responses to all questions given.

Figure 2 Summary of experts' responses to the questionnaire.



Source: QuestionPro.

1.2.1 Reflection on privacy and data collection

The QuestionPro software that was used for the COMPASS questionnaire is fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All respondents were enabled to share GDPR compliant data through the questionnaire. The process was supported by a sophisticated procedure to ensure data portability, data protection, consent and other compliance features. To enable the use of data in accordance with the purpose of the research, respondents had to agree for their answers (excluding personal details) being shared with other participants in the dialogue process, and made available through the ESPON website resource. The Chatham House Rule was applied to all collected data, meaning that all the information used in ensuing publications, would never reveal neither the identity nor the affiliation of the respondents. Sharing personal details (e-mail address, title, name and affiliation) was voluntary. If a respondent wished to receive a report with outcomes of the research or wished to be acknowledged as a contributor to this project in ensuing publications, those details were required. Respondents could also chose to remain completely anonymous.

1.3 Phase 3: Interactive Dialogue event

During a third phase of the COMPASS interactive dialogue, prior research results were discussed during an online interactive event named COMPASS Interactive Dialogue. The main objectives of this event were to (1) critically reflect on initial findings from information mining and the questionnaire, and (2) test and refine policy recommendations.

The COMPASS Interactive Dialogue was held on 9 April 2021, from 14.00–16.30, via the online platform Microsoft TEAMS. The event was combined with a Czech case study workshop, which happened in the morning of the same day and focused on policy recommendations for improved cross-fertilisation between spatial planning and cohesion policy in the Czech Republic. The afternoon event consisted of an introductory presentation of interim results of the questionnaire, two parallel dialogues that elaborated potential recommendations from the perspective of spatial planning and cohesion policy 2021–27, and a concluding panel discussion on how cross-fertilization can be enhanced on the EU level. Invitees to the event were selected according to two main criteria, notably (1) their expertise in national spatial planning systems and/or cohesion policy, and (2) a high diversity of represented countries. Contact lists that served as a basis for the selection of invitees included the lists of national experts and sub-contractors in the earlier COMPASS project, members of the European Regional Policy Research Consortium (EoRPA), stakeholders in the Czech case study, members of the ESPON Monitoring Committee (MC), and ESPON Contact Points (ECP). The event was attended by approximately 45 people from 11 countries. Table 2 lists attendees who were assigned distinct roles during parts of the event.

The event was documented through video recordings, Microsoft TEAMS reports, and written notes. Participants also had the possibility to document their comments on a digital MIRO board. Documentation was bundled as a distinct delivery of the COMPASS Dialogue and Case Study project. Annex C of the full report documents the program of the event in detail.

Table 2 Attendees COMPASS Interactive Dialogue event

Dialogue 1 How to bolster spatial planning and sectoral policy relationships? & Dialogue 2 How to enhance cross-fertilisation between cohesion policy 2021-2027 and sectoral policies?	
Prof. Wil Zonneveld, TU Delft , The Netherlands	Chair Dialogue 1
Mrs. Neli Georgieva, European Policies Research Centre (EPRC), United Kingdom / The Netherlands	Chair Dialogue 1
Prof. John Bachtler, European Policies Research Centre (EPRC), United Kingdom / The Netherlands	Chair Dialogue 2
Dr. Marcin Dabrowski, TU Delft, The Netherlands	Chair Dialogue 2
Prof. Anna Geppert, Sorbonne University, France	Discussant
Prof. Eduardo Madeiros, University of Lisbon, Portugal	Discussant
Prof. Georgia Giannakourou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece	Discussant
Dr. Giancarlo Cotella, Politecnico di Torino, Italy	Discussant
Prof. Harry Coccossis, University of Thessaly, Greece	Discussant
Mr. Jacques Borges Barthet, Architecture Project Ltd, Malta	Discussant
Mr. Jan Jelínek, Ministry of Regional Development (MMR), Czech Republic	Discussant
Prof. Karel Maier, Czech Technical University Prague, Czech Republic	Discussant
Dr. Lukas Smas, University of Stockholm, Sweden	Discussant
Dr. Nicola Dotti, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium	Discussant
Dr. Peter Schmitt, University of Stockholm, Sweden	Discussant
Prof. Tomasz Komornicki, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland	Discussant
Concluding discussion: Drafting a policy brief: Cross-fertilization from an EU perspective	
Prof. Vincent Nadin, TU Delft, The Netherlands	Moderator
Prof. Anna Geppert, Sorbonne University, France	Panel discussant
Prof. John Bachtler, European Policies Research Centre (EPRC), United Kingdom/The Netherlands	Panel discussant
Ing. arch. Josef Morkus, Ministry of Regional Development (MMR), Czech Republic	Panel discussant
Mr. Péter Takács, European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy	Panel discussant

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

1.4 Phase 4: Synthesis

During a final phase of the COMPASS interactive dialogue results acquired during earlier stages of the dialogue were analysed on their significance and relevance for the ESPON policy brief Cross-fertilisation of cohesion policy and spatial planning. For the purpose of this analysis quantitative results of the COMPASS interactive dialogue questionnaire were first visualized. To enhance a comparative perspective on results, data was visualized geographically and by the type of expertise of respondents. A description of methods used during visualisation and resulting infographics are taken up in Annex B of the full report. The questionnaire allowed respondents to comment on their answers to multiple choice, drop-down, and rating questions. These comments as well as notions expressed during the Interactive Dialogue event were reviewed on repetitive advisory for improved cross-fertilisation. In a final stage of analysis results of the interactive dialogue were compared to finding of the earlier COMPASS project and conclusions of the case study into sectoral policy integration in the Czech Republic that was part of the broader COMPASS Dialogue and Case Study project. In case results could be corroborated in this process of triangulation, they were considered relevant input for the policy brief.

2 Acknowledgement of contributors

As noted in Chapter 1.2.1, the questionnaire that was part of the COMPASS interactive dialogue allowed respondents to agree for their contribution to be publicly acknowledged in the policy brief. The below listed experts gave their permission for acknowledgement.

Table 3 Respondents of the COMPASS questionnaire

Prof. Sebastien Bourdin, EM Normandie Business School
Dr. Tristan Claus, Ghent University
Prof. Arch. Maria Prezioso, Università di Roma Tor Vergata
Elita Jermolajeva, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies
Erich Dallhammer, OIR Austrian Institute of Regional Studies
Neil Adams, London South Bank University
Dr. Serafin Pazos-Vidal, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
Dr. Angela D'Orazio, University of Rome 'Tor Vergata'
Emeritus Prof. Harry Coccossis, University of Thessaly
Prof. Anna Geppert, University Paris-Sorbonne (University Paris IV Sorbonne)
Prof. Karel Maier, Czech Technical University in Prague
Prof. Georgia Giannakourou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Dr. Irma Potocnik Slavic, Lecutrer in Geography
Prof. Cristina Cavaco, Lisbon School of Architecture - Universidade de Lisboa
Associate Prof. Giancarlo Cotella, Politecnico di Torino
Dr. Eva Marín Hlynisdottir, University of Iceland
Dr. Ir. Jan Vogelij, private consultant
Joao Mourato, Institute of Social Sciences - University of Lisbon (ICS ULisboa)
Associate Prof. Daniel Galland, Aalborg University Copenhagen
Research Fellow Johannes Lidmo, Nordregio
Dr. Piotr Idczak, Poznan University of Economics and Business
Dr. Carmen Beatrice Pauna, Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy

Source: QuestionPro.

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ESPON (2021), *Cross-fertilisation of cohesion policy and spatial planning – Policy brief*, Luxembourg: ESPON European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

ESPON (2018), *COMPASS – Comparative analysis of territorial governance and spatial planning systems in Europe: Applied research 2016–2018 – Final report*, Luxembourg: ESPON European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/1.%20COMPASS_Final_Report.pdf).

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