

**A Global Economic Integration Zone in Central Europe?
Vienna-Bratislava-Győr as a Laboratory
for EU Territorial Cohesion Policy**

Proefschrift

*ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Technische Universiteit Delft,
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. dr.ir. J.T. Fokkema,
voorzitter van het College voor Promoties,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
op maandag 16 juni 2008 om 10.00 uur*

door

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geboren te Amstetten, Oostenrijk

Dit proefschrift is goedgekeurd door de promotor Prof. dr. A.K.F. Faludi

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Dr. Friedrich Schindegger heeft als begeleider in belangrijke mate aan de totstandkoming van het proefschrift bijgedragen.

The author wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance of Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR).

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Design: Iris Neulinger (ÖIR)

Cover design: Mag. Alexander Collon (ÖIR)

Producer and Publisher: Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt

ISBN 978-3-902499-02-8

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Acknowledgements

As this work would not exist without the support of several people I would like to use this opportunity to thank them for generously giving me their time, resources and motivation. Many people helped to shape and develop this work.

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Andreas Faludi who managed to motivate me during all these years to proceed with my work, supported me during all the phases and was an excellent PhD supervisor by giving valuable and relaxed support. During all the years of my PhD he gave me constructive comments, encouragement and attention to detail.

Furthermore I would like to thank the Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR), especially the director Adolf Andel and ex-director Peter Schneidewind for giving me the opportunity to use the institute's facilities, the moral motivation and for providing me a certain degree of flexibility with regard to working times which allowed me to finalise this work. I would like to give special thanks to Friedrich Schindegger, retired now from ÖIR, my colleague and friend, who was a great companion and mentor during all these years. He gave me his interest, enthusiasm, motivation, interesting discussions and creative moments.

Furthermore I would like to thank my colleagues at ÖIR for interesting and helpful discussions. Special thanks also goes to my colleague Iris Neulinger and Alexander Collon who supported me in layouting this work and ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH for map basics, especially Christian Spanring, who helped me with the map design for the case study region.

I would like to thank my interviewees and all those project partners, colleagues and clients with whom I had to possibility to discuss my research. Here special thanks goes to Bas Waterhout for his companionship and support. I also would like to give Isabel Naylor (from ÖIR Management-dienste) and Pete Connolly props for language editing this work.

Last but not least, I want to thank my family and friends for their support and understanding, especially my husband Roland Höller for being a supportive, constructive and motivating partner during all that time.

Gabriele Tatzberger, Vienna – November 2007

1. Introduction

1.1 Contextual information

This research was conducted over the last five years while working full-time for the private research and consultancy institute, the Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR), and partly within my parental leave.

My interest in European spatial planning started with the discovery of a draft version of the European Spatial Development Perspective during a literature review at a traineeship in Lyon/France in 1998, which also incited me to deal with this topic in my master thesis. During my short work experience at Eco Plus, the Regional Development Agency of Lower Austria, I was mainly dealing with cross-border co-operation between Lower Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Since 2000, the work at the Austrian Institute of Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR) provided me with the possibility to gain further experience in cross-border, transnational and European spatial planning by doing research and consultancy. ÖIR is a private research and consultancy institute which is dominated by project based work. Here I got the opportunity to work in the EU Community Initiative programmes INTERREG IIIB CADSES¹ and ESPON² and also in the EU 6th framework programme for research and development and on studies for the European Commission, DG Regional Policy and the European Parliament. The work at ÖIR is organised in a project based way – which has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it often does not allow such in-depth research because of budget constraints, project management and its tough time schedules but, on the other hand, it forces its staff to be efficient in organising work, to orient the content of work along target groups, and to be policy oriented. It also allows the creation of a network of different actors on political and administrative levels in different countries and a fruitful discussion about European spatial development topics.

¹ Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European Space

² European Spatial Observation Network

I had the possibility to get in-depth knowledge about the border region of Austria, Slovakia and Hungary and had a co-ordination function in the INTERREG IIIB project PlaNet CenSE (Planners Network for Central and South East Europe). These and many other activities at the ÖIR inspired me to proceed with this research. In particular the challenge to “do” European and transnational planning, where I was more and more confronted with several visions and concepts coming mainly from the European level, caught my interest and motivated me to go more in depth by doing this research.

Besides project based reports, I also published some papers in order to deepen the knowledge in specific fields e.g. in European spatial development and European integration (Tatzberger, 1999 and Tatzberger, Schneidewind 2005), polycentric development (Schindegger, Tatzberger 2002, 2005, Tatzberger, 2004b), the Danube Space (Schneidewind, Tatzberger, 2002), territorial cohesion (Tatzberger 2003a), European transport networks (Tatzberger, 1998 and 2003b), spatial visions, concepts and metaphors (Tatzberger, 2002, 2004a and 2006) and the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle (Tatzberger, 2005 and 2007).

European and transnational spatial planning is a quite new field of work and I was interested in dealing with “spatial planning” at these levels. The work experience in the field of European and transnational planning motivated me to get more in-depth knowledge about the conceptualisation of space at these levels and how European integration works at transnational level where we are confronted with a very high complexity by having

- no direct political area to refer to, but being confronted with many different actors on regional, national and European level;
- different planning cultures and languages asking for the development of a common understanding concerning problem definition and measures to undertake;
- changing administrative and political structures and therefore contact persons;
- complex support systems especially in central and south east Europe (e.g. Phare and INTERREG);

The expectations for this research are to better understand the different tools for conceptualising space on European and transnational level and to get more in-depth knowledge about the challenges in border regions on a transnational scale by looking at a case study area.

In this field of work terms often provoke a lot of discussion and as I am German-speaking and therefore sensitive for linguistic distortions it seems important to clarify that European “spatial planning” is an Euroenglish term which developed in the course of shaping a European position in spatial development or planning. It is not directly linked to the actual planning

system of any EU Member State. Linguistically it is the outcome of a combination of the German term Raumplanung and the Dutch Ruimtelijk Planning (Williams, 1996). Within this thesis, European spatial planning is used synonymously with European spatial development policy. Discussing spatial planning on European level it must be born in mind that there is no formal competence for this policy field on Community level, but that it is a task of the EU Member states. Nevertheless many policies with spatial effects and relevance are in the competence of the European Union like regional, transport, environmental policy and so on. Furthermore it must be emphasised that spatial policy/planning embraces any spatial scale and that it is interrelated with regional policy. On the one hand, we have regional policy that focuses on the administrative regional level (whereby the term region describes different things in different countries and contexts). On the other hand, we have regional policy aiming at overall (national and European) economic and social cohesion, e. g. promoted by the European Regional Development Fund – this form of regional policy is closely related to European spatial development policy. Confusion also occurs with regard to the terms “spatial” and “territorial”. Strictly speaking, the term:

- “spatial” is used when referring to spatial entities, the common characteristics of which are considered rather independent from government and administration (e.g. ‘islands’, ‘patches’, ‘zones’, ‘belts’, ‘corridors’, ‘pentagon’, ‘triangle’)
- “territorial” is used when referring to spatial entities, that are considered rather related to the system of governance at different tiers (administrative and statistical units) (ESPON 3.1, 2004: 455)

However, these meanings are often used interchangeably thus flawing the conceptual difference between them and are frequently used synonymously and therefore also in this research.

This work aims to be of interest for all professionals dealing with spatial development at European and transnational level and students interested in the topic. As far as possible this research is up to date to December 2007 but readers should be aware that the content is a snapshot at a point in time. The present situation on European scale as well as in the case study area is a product of policy development over many years and is by no means static. Spatial development policy is developing all the time and factual and legal points can rapidly become out of date.

1.2 Structure and methodology of the research

The research design, the rationale of the research and the methodology used are key elements of every scientific work. A research design is the logical sequence which guarantees the connection of the empirical data to the study's initial research questions, which finally leads to its conclusions (Yin, 2003). That means that the research design should ensure that the collected data and information, and the way in which it is analysed, addresses the aim and questions of the research. Therefore this chapter explains the aims of the research, main research questions, the methods used and describes the three main parts of the work.

The interest in European spatial development policy and transnational activities has significantly increased due to European integration and international competition which made it difficult for individual countries to operate in isolation (Zonneveld, 2000; Nijkamp, 1993). Therefore new ways of conceptualising space developed and are used by planning experts. The **aim of this research** is to have an in-depth look at the different ways, challenges and problems to face these new scales (European and transnational) under the general idea of the European model of society. The European model of society is regarded as “a vision of society that combines sustainable economic growth with ever-improving living and working conditions”, where the dialogue culture is an important element. This European model of society is interrelated with the very popular concepts of polycentric development and territorial cohesion that are assumed to play a key role in European spatial development policy. In order to break down this knowledge a case study area was chosen to explore the spatial development potentials and European influence in a transnational border region.

The **main research questions** are:

- How is European spatial development policy related to the European model of society?
- How can the European and transnational scale be grasped? Which roles do spatial visions, concepts and metaphors play in the European/transnational spatial development process?
- How did the concepts of polycentric development and territorial cohesion emerge? How are they interpreted and how do they influence policy discourse in European spatial development policy and transnational co-operation processes?
- How do the above-mentioned topics, intensively discussed on European scale, influence or provoke discussions in transnational planning processes?

One main contribution to the scientific debate is the investigation of how the topics discussed at European level may be interpreted for the transnational level and whether the European discourse influences activities on transnational scale.

The research **methodology** concerns the way in which scientific knowledge comes into being, and how theories are formed and tested and what kind of logic is used. The research methods consist of the actual techniques or procedures for data gathering and data analysis. This work tries to deal with the research questions by applying qualitative methods and a case study approach. It is important to note that this research is dealing with a phenomenon that has not one underlying theory. That is why the work tries to exemplify specific aspects with the help of different parts of theories. The focus is on the case study research, but to be able to deal with it, different preliminary studies are necessary.

For doing so different **methods** were used for the **main fields of research**:

- First part (chapter two): Desk research and literature review was done in order to introduce the European spatial development policy, the European model of society and different ways to grasp the European and transnational scales, focusing on spatial visions, concepts and metaphors.
- Second part (chapters three and four): The investigation of the emergence and interpretations of the concepts of polycentric development and territorial cohesion on European scale was made by using specialist literature on the subject, project reports, journals, texts from the internet and official policy documents. Literature review and desk study research were regarded as crucial to analyse, evaluate and interpret relevant secondary sources. Through literature review, polycentric development and territorial cohesion on European scale, their emergence, underlying assumptions, meanings and theories are analysed in more detail with the aim of getting a clearer picture about these vague concepts and actors promoting them.
- Third part (chapter five): Literature reviews and semi-structured open interviews in a face-to-face setting were used to analyse the situation in the case study area, the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle. The aim was to reflect the role of spatial visions and metaphors and the two spatial concepts, polycentric development and territorial cohesion, in the area and how far the European model of society is reflected in the day-to-day practise of transnational planning. In order to bridge the gap between the European debate and the discussions on transnational scale, a case study research helps to investigate how far European discourse provokes and influences discussions on transnational scale. The case study approach was chosen because it offers several advantages when questions are being asked about a contemporary set of events. Yin (2003) defines several strengths and characteristics of the case study approach and defines it as “an

empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". She suggests undertaking a case study when the research should cover the contextual conditions because there is the belief that they might be highly pertinent for the study. The case study thus

- "copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical proposition to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2003: 13-14).

So the decision to undertake a case study is justified by the research questions and subject matter but also the strengths and characteristics of the case study approach.

But before the case study can be conducted, the researcher has to give some thought to the question of data gathering, where the researcher can find the information he or she needs and what methods can be used to actually gather the information needed. Denscombe (1998) and Yin (2003) mention that the researcher limits the range of possible methods for data collection by selecting a specific research strategy. It means that the choice for a case study approach restricts the range of possible data collection to four methods: conducting interviews, carrying out surveys, making observations and collecting documents. With regard to the aim of the current research the methods of conducting interviews and collecting documents seem the most appropriate way.

The desk study research was considered as crucial in order to analyse, evaluate and interpret relevant secondary sources. Here a choice is made for using specialist literature on the subject, in the form of project results, and texts from the internet, official policy documents, informal internal memos, and so on for data gathering.

Additionally, face-to-face interviews with key actors in spatial planning and decision makers in the case study area were expected to be the richest source of information. They helped to get appraisals about initiatives and developments going on. Within the method of conducting interviews subsequent decisions have to be made about the structure of the interviews, the setting, and the kind of actors who will be interviewed. Within this research the method of semi-structured open interviews in a one-to-one setting is chosen. It is believed that this way of conducting interviews, in a private setting and a rather loose structure, provides the right circumstances to gather the information needed. An interview guideline was elaborated (see

Annex 2) in order to have a defined framework for conducting the interviews. Actors interviewed are deliberately working in different contexts, as members of government, scientists, experts or as consultants in the case study area (see Annex 1).

As interviews were one important source of evidence in the case study research, the interviews were conducted in English as far as possible or in German (as many actors on the Slovak and Hungarian side speak reasonable German – if not a translator helped out). A combination of interviews and documentary evidence for the empirical investigation is used in the research, the connections between these are easier to make when using the same language, and misunderstandings through translations can be avoided.

In more detail the **first part** (chapter two) of this research is introducing the European spatial development policy and its interrelationship to the European model of society. As European and transnational planning is still a new and very challenging field of work, different ways of conceptualising these new scales are investigated. Thereby spatial planning on European and transnational scale is regarded as a social process where communication plays a key role.

Therefore this research comprises an investigation of three different ways of conceptualising space on European and transnational scales, namely spatial visions, concepts and metaphors. With regard to spatial visions the research focuses on four examples of so called “visioning processes” in order to show the different contexts in which such spatial visions were elaborated and what we can learn about it. The analysis is based on different products of vision projects and studies carried out, commissioned by different actors, and describes the significant differences between these visions. Vague spatial concepts gained importance and are intensively used at European and transnational level over the last years. Therefore their characteristics and role in planning processes are investigated in more detail. Finally the role, meaning and communicative power of spatial metaphors, often elements of visions or concepts, is analysed.

The **second part** (chapters three and four) of this work focuses on two spatial concepts which gained quite high popularity on European scale, namely polycentric development and territorial cohesion. This research aims to enhance our insight into the role of these concepts in European spatial planning processes and how they emerged, are used, and interpreted. It argues that if examined closely, discourse around spatial concepts is fragmented and contradictory. The need for “contextualism” in policy is also emphasised by Hajer (1995), whose approach to study public policy places emphasis on the fact that the sites where the discussions take place need to be contextualised, and that the discourse is “a particular pattern to be found in a discussion, and hence a term for something the analyst finds”

(Hajer, 1995: 64). Spatial concepts are widely used in European spatial policy making, often without having a clear idea of how they emerged and which role they play in the planning process. The benefits and importance of spatial concepts in terms of communication and consensus building are already widely acknowledged among planners (Faludi, 1996; Kunzmann, 2000, Duinen, 2004). For sure, spatial concepts are not merely neutral communication tools, they are also entwined with the interests and aims of actors who use them in their arguments. Actors use spatial concepts in order to provide mental guidelines and preferred visions of future spatial developments and may help to reach a common language and provoke new discussion.

Therefore this research focuses on an in-depth analysis of how polycentric development and territorial cohesion emerged on European scale, which interests and meanings underlie them and how they are interpreted and further developed by different actors. This focus is based on the social-constructivist perspective which is based on the assumption that the social reality is produced and reproduced by social actors. Blaikie (1993: 202-203) describes it as “a reinterpreted, inter-subjective world of cultural objects, meanings and social institutions. A consequence of this position is that there may be multiple realities”. Here we have to bear in mind that planning experts tend to work for organisations which do not only produce instrumental results. They also reproduce social and political relations through mechanisms such as information control, the use of networks, or the “framing” of problems (Forester, 1989). The analysis of policy discourse around the concepts of polycentric development and territorial cohesion should help to further understand the role of such concepts on a European and transnational scale. Hajer (1995: 44) defines policy discourse as “... an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorisations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities and which permeates regional, national and supranational policy making circuits”.

The **third part** (chapter five) of the research tries to translate the topics of part one and two for a concrete transnational case study area. Several arguments but also practical reasons led to the decision to focus on the INTERREG IIIB CADSES (encompassing 18 countries³) in general and on the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle covering parts of Austria, Hungary and Slovak Republic specifically:

- Two major territorial development trends are influencing the integration of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr region: to overcome Europe’s schism post-

³ Austria, Germany, Italy, Greece, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Former Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Moldova, Ukraine

1945 and the emergence of functional regions in Europe. The geographical position of this area makes it a testbed for Europe's post-cold war reunification process.

- The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr region is part of the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIB CADSES that aims to foster transnational co-operation in specific fields. CADSES is one of the most challenging transnational co-operation areas in the EU including also accession countries and non-member states. This part of Europe faced many changes and high dynamics over the last fifteen years (from the break-down of the "Iron Curtain" to EU integration, the transition of former communist countries, ...).
- The decision to focus on this case study area was also taken because of practical reasons as the researcher lives and works in Vienna and therefore has specific knowledge and access to networks and information. Also in her professional life the researcher was again and again dealing with the area, e.g. contributing to a background report about Vienna-Bratislava for the OECD or managing an INTERREG IIIB CADSES project called PlaNet CenSE (2004-2006) dealing with metropolitan networks in central and south east Europe. Besides these reasons also time and money, resources and language skills were arguments to focus on the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle.

The area is characterised by its history and division through the so-called Iron Curtain for decades. It divided different economic and political systems and showed a significant welfare edge after the political changes in 1989. It is interesting to see how this formerly impermeable area is facing the changes and new challenges and to what extent it is using the new potential of becoming a common area as the three cities are direct neighbours with the potential of easy commuting. This work tries to deal with the challenges transnational co-operation is facing like the political division, different languages, cultures and also ambivalences and existing prejudices. One aim is to look how far the European model of society, meaning equal opportunities, sustainability and the efficient and sustainable use of existing spatial potential to foster economic development, is in action. Another aim is to investigate if the area has the potential to become a core of a Global Economic Integration Zone in Central Europe. The case study shows that a transnational view is necessary to identify the specific spatial potentials existing within the area and that co-operation activities are going on and are badly needed in order to provide space for constructive dialogue. Here also the interpretations of polycentric development and territorial cohesion are investigated and to what extent tools like spatial visions and metaphors are used and analysed.

2. European spatial development policy and the role of spatial visions, concepts and metaphors in policy discourse

2.1 European spatial development policy

For many different reasons a growing emphasis on spatial development policy at the European but also the transnational level has emerged in recent years. First of all, an additional administrative and political level of spatial development – which is still a widely unknown area – was introduced with the European Union. Moreover, the EU is an administrative-political system in progress and this includes changes of actors involved, new general conditions and changes of territory (EU enlargement). With the EU enlargement, additional players and decision makers have emerged and a new administrative level added to the existing national political and administrative structures. This has brought significant changes into the structure of the political power in the member states. The internationalisation of planning issues did not occur by accident but was due to the realisation of the Single European Market that enforced the breakdown of nationalistic trade barriers and accelerated economic integration and regional interdependencies. This has been responsible for more and more cross-border and transnational decisions and activities. As regards economic activities and decisions the significance of borders between individual national states is decreasing. Trade barriers have practically disappeared between EU nation states and factor movements have become fully liberalised as from the early 1990s (Tondl, 2001). Globalisation is also a reason for the decreasing importance of borders; Taylor (2001) referred to the transformation of space semantics as a result of globalisation. But despite major efforts towards European integration (Single European Market, European Monetary Union, the Schengen agreement for the effective abolition of borders) national borders are still relevant for the administrative authorities and for politicians. Europe is still a system of nation states with separate languages and cultures, in a way that the US, Canada and Australia (and other continental-scale nations like China, Brazil and Argentina) are not (Hall, 2002).

European spatial development policy is a fairly recent phenomenon (from the 1960s) with the Council of Europe providing the first international forum for the promotion of European spatial development policy. The first European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) was organised in 1970 and its activities paved the way for a spatial development policy debate in the European Union (Tatzberger, 1999). The contributions of the Council of Europe deserve serious attention – it made the first attempts to develop a European spatial planning strategy and adopted a European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter in the 1980s. But it also played an important role in the stimulation of ideas about the form and content of a European-scale spatial policy – why it is necessary to think in these terms – and it helped in the creation of a European planning community by providing a meeting point for personal contacts (Williams, 1996). The ambition for the EU's European spatial planning policy was a response to opportunities created by the rising fortunes of the European Commission in the late 1980s and was seen as a strategy. One step was the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF – see further information in section 2.1.1) in 1975, another was the Single European Act of 1988 which prompted a doubling of Structural Funds based on the belief that the single market would mean more growth, mainly in the inner core of Europe (Faludi, Waterhout, 2002).

With the exception of these efforts to influence spatial development it must be clear that there is no defined or established planning system. On the contrary many different planning forms and terms have been used which have different meanings in different contexts. Examining the emergence of spatial development policy on a European scale we also have to bear in mind the different traditions and planning systems in the EU member states. E.g. in Germany “Raumordnung” is understood as a guiding principle to manage spatial problems, to safeguard functions and to develop the territory. In France – with the so-called *aménagement du territoire* – the emphasis is on making territories useable for economic activities. Because of these different understandings many difficulties and misunderstandings emerge in the debate on European spatial development. That is also one reason why the member states agreed to use a “tradition-neutral” term – spatial development policy or spatial planning (CEC, 1997; Böhme, 2002; Tatzberger, 1999). Besides the fact that European spatial development policy covers the idea of planning for Europe with strategies and policies for the development of the European territory, it is also an expression of the diversity of the national spatial planning systems (Böhme, 2002).

Also the term “spatial planning” – originally much more frequently used than spatial policy – is somehow not just an expression but also an outcome of this variety. According to Williams (1996), spatial planning and spatial policy is not the same and can be distinguished as follows. He defines spatial

planning as a method or procedure with which to influence future allocations of activities in spatial terms, or to set out and implement spatial policy at any geographical level. Spatial policy comprises for him all policies aimed at influencing locational and land-use decisions, or the distribution of activities. Spatial policy was then more concretely defined as spatial development policy by Faludi (1999) and Eser and Konstadakopulos (2000) who argued that spatial development policy is mainly applied at national and European level. In general the term development often seems to be more future-oriented and interpreted in a more positive way than planning which is often associated with restrictions and state control. In this research European spatial development policy is used as a catch-all expression covering all these different terms, and meaning the complex set of activities, measures and policies which lead to efforts to analyse trends and influence spatial development.

According to the EU treaties spatial development policy is not a competence at Community level but is a task of the EU member states. Nevertheless many networking activities and policies at EU level influence what is called European spatial development. The EU is unique among supranational bodies in that it is a jurisdiction and European law takes precedence over national law enacted by the national parliaments of member states. Furthermore, it has direct effect which means that it is applicable to the individual citizen or legal body (Williams, 1996). There are competencies of the EU with high spatial relevance: economic and social cohesion (regional or cohesion policy), transeuropean networks and environment. In addition to these three policy areas with an explicit spatial dimension other policies must be taken into consideration as well because they also influence spatial structure. These include the common agriculture policy, environmental policy, research and development, energy policy, competition policy, and so on. With the prospect of the Lisbon Treaty (European Union, 2007) that will reinstate territorial cohesion as an objective of the EU it gives the European Commission a key role in further developing relevant policies. But it is important to emphasise that a European spatial development policy emerged because of a perceived need for conceptualising policy aims and to coordinate different policy areas – and not because of a legal provision (Schindegger, 1999). So the competency issue in fact is not so relevant. What is important is that there are spatially relevant policies, which influence spatial development. The main reasons for activities in spatial development policy on a European scale are:

- the awareness, that spatial development policy has impacts on neighbouring countries and the rest of Europe
- the need for optimal use of economic potential
- the necessity to co-ordinate public investments and Structural Funds

-
- the promotion of cross-border and transnational co-operation for common problem solving
 - the recognition that spatial development policy can seriously contribute to a sustainable development (Malchus, et al, 1996).

The first steps taken to prepare an increased role for the EU in spatial development policy were the documents published by the European Commission – Europe 2000 and Europe 2000+ (CEC, 1991; CEC, 1994 and Williams, 1996). They must be regarded as the first European scale planning reaction to these developments. Europe 2000 described the situation and prospect of various types of areas and cross-border planning was mentioned as a priority issue. The follow-up document Europe 2000+ claimed to be more oriented to policy recommendations. As if to respond to these first steps on the part of the Commission the member states took the initiative to elaborate the European spatial development perspective (ESDP). During the ten-year process the ESDP (CEC, 1999), a legally non-binding document, was successfully elaborated and adopted by the European Commission together with the European Union member states in 1999 (Faludi, Waterhout, 2002) – to many observers therein lies the prime significance of the non-binding document. The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) is intended to provide a basis for planning and co-ordinating European policies and signifies the emergence of a new policy field of the EU (Benz, 2002). The ESDP is a commonly developed socio-spatial vision, which intends to set out a common understanding between the (at that time) 15 EU member states and the Commission. The ESDP is aiming to achieve a balanced and sustainable development in Europe, formulated as three policy guidelines:

- development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and new urban-rural relationship
- securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge and
- sustainable development, prudent management and the protection of the environment and cultural heritage (CEC, 1999: 10-11).

The ESDP did not deal with all questions of European spatial development but had a considerable indirect impact and provoked policy discourse. The European spatial development policy emerged from a group of national actors meeting on a regular basis to establish a European discourse on the issue (Böhme, 2002; Faludi, et al., 2000; ESPON 2.3.1, 2007).

In May 2007, the ministers responsible for spatial planning and development of the member states of the European Union adopted the “Territorial Agenda of the European Union: Towards a more competitive Europe of diverse regions” the so-called Territorial Agenda (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007a). The ESDP policy guidelines remain valid and serve as the basis for the Territorial Agenda.

However, the latter expands the guidelines through six priorities for spatial development measures:

- strengthen polycentric development and innovation through networking of city regions and cities
- new forms of partnership and territorial governance between rural and urban areas
- promotion of regional clusters of competition and innovation
- strengthening and extension of trans-European networks
- promotion of trans-European risk management including the impacts of climate change
- strengthening of ecological structures and cultural resources as added value for development

The Territorial Agenda also uses a different terminology from the ESDP, focusing on the new concept of territorial cohesion. There is a remarkable shift from “soft” concerns (in the ESDP) to the pursuit of competitiveness (in the Territorial Agenda).

2.1.1 Contribution of EU regional policy

European spatial development policy is also regarded as having close links and being interwoven with the well-established field of European regional policy. Williams (1996) points out that there is a difference between spatial planning/policy and regional policy, because spatial planning embraces every spatial level, whereas regional policy is mainly understood as policy applied at the level of a regional authority. Böhme (2002) shows that originally, regional policy was clearly related to the regional level, but especially with regard to the activities of the European Commission it became interwoven with European spatial development policy. With EU regional policy we have a policy that embraces single regions as well as one aimed at overall economic and social cohesion. This form of regional policy shows many similarities and is closely related to spatial development policy.

The Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG Regio) is responsible for European measures to assist the economic and social development of the less-favoured regions of the European Union and aims to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion by reducing disparities at the level of development among regions and Member States. Article 158 of the amended Treaty establishing the European Community reads: “In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Community shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic and social cohesion” (European Community, 1997). The aim is to support regional development and to promote a high level of competitiveness and

employment by helping the least prosperous regions and those facing structural difficulties to generate sustainable development by adapting to changes in the labour market and to worldwide competition. An important policy document reflecting EU regional policy is the report on economic and social cohesion, which the Commission has to submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions every three years, describing the progress made towards achieving economic and social cohesion (European Community, 1997: article 159).

The main instruments of EU regional policy (often also called cohesion policy) are the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. Structural Funds focus on regional development in all member states whereas the Cohesion Fund is only available in member states whose GNP⁴ per capita is below 90% of the EU average and serves to improve the environment and develop transport infrastructure. In the programming period 2000-2006 there were four Structural Funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Guidance (EAFG) and the Financial Instrument for Fishery Guidance (FIFG). Article 160 of the amended Treaty establishing the European Community specifies the aim of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which should “help to redress the main regional imbalances in the Community through participation in the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind and in the conversion of declining industrial regions” (European Community, 1997).

From a financial perspective the common agricultural policy (CAP) and the regional policy (Structural and Cohesion Funds) are the most important policy measures of the EU. For the 2000-2006 multi-annual financial framework 42% of the approximately € 700 bn of the EU’s total budget was allocated to agriculture and 30% to structural policies for the years 2000 to 2006. So EU spending for regional policy was € 213 bn (€ 195 bn for Structural Funds and € 18 bn for Cohesion Fund). The budget framework for the period 2007-2013 totals € 864 bn whereby 43% is under the heading preservation and management of natural resources (including the common agricultural and fisheries policies, rural development and environmental measures, in particular Natura 2000) of which € 293 bn are market-related expenditure and direct payments. The heading sustainable growth is divided into two separate, but interlinked components, the competitiveness for growth and employment with 8.6%, and cohesion for growth and employment with 35.6% (= € 308 bn). Out of these € 308 bn 82% (€ 252 bn) are for Cohesion Funds and therefore concentrate on the convergence aim and the poorest regions in the EU, 16% (€ 49 bn) are Structural Funds to

⁴ Gross National Product

promote innovation, sustainable development and regional competitiveness and employment and 2.5% (€ 8 bn) are earmarked for cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operation activities. The scope of EU regional policy has changed over the years, introducing a broader range of policy measures. A more important change was the substantial increase of financial resources from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.⁵

In the programming period 2000-2006, in addition to the Structural Funds, EU regional policies also comprised Community Initiatives such as Urban, Leader and Equal. A further initiative, INTERREG, is of specific relevance for this research because it encouraged transnational and cross-border co-operation. It was made up of three strands, of which strand INTERREG IIIA (cross-border co-operation) supported co-operation between adjacent regions and aimed to develop cross-border regions by means of common development strategies. Transnational co-operation involving national, regional and local authorities was supported under strand INTERREG IIIB – the strand which was most closely related to the ESDP agenda – which aimed to promote better integration within the Union through the formation of large European regions. In total hundreds of collaborative exercises were co-financed under INTERREG IIC (the code-name of the forerunner for transnational co-operation) and INTERREG IIIB with more than 10,000 people involved (Müller, et al, 2005). As intended by the founders of the ESDP diffuse effects can be expected in terms of Europeanisation of state and regional planning (Faludi, 2006).

The Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European Space (in short: CADSES) programme area includes the case study area Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle and is, among the 13 transnational co-operation areas in Europe, one of the largest and most complex area. It stretches from the coasts of the Baltic Sea, the mountains of Central Europe, the Hungarian plains, the Austrian and Slovenian Alpine landscapes and includes north-eastern Italy to Greece, taking in the Balkan regions and including Moldova and Ukraine in the east. It is one of the most challenging programme areas, not only because its size, but also because of the high numbers of accession and neighbouring countries included in the area. Additionally, this continued to change during the programming period 2000-2006 with the EU accession of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Poland in 2004. The CADSES area comprised regions belonging to 18 countries, eleven of them EU-member states (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia, including since 2007 the most recent new member states Bulgaria and Romania) and eight non-EU member states (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia,

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/prior_future/fin_framework_en.htm

Federation of Serbia, Montenegro⁶, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). Transnational co-operation programmes followed the recommendations of the ESPD (European Spatial Development Perspective) to encourage a sustainable and balanced development of the European territory. The third INTERREG strand (called INTERREG IIIC) supported interregional co-operation and aimed to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and instruments through large-scale networks, exchanging information and sharing experiences.

In addition to the three INTERREG strands two other programmes were financed, namely ESPON and INTERACT. Their task was to foster networks that promote the sharing of experiences and best practices. The European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) is a programme financed jointly by the European Union and the member states, as well as other neighbouring states. ESPON focuses on the observation and analysis of territorial and regional development trends in Europe and the financing of research studies in the field of spatial planning. The “ESPON 2006 Programme – Research on the Spatial Development of an Enlarging European Union” is a Community Initiative INTERREG III programme, which was adopted by the European Commission in 2002 and ran until 2006. It provided financial support for integrated territorial development projects and aimed to improve knowledge of European territory. In this context, transnational project groups were working on three levels: thematic studies on the territorial effects of major spatial developments against the background of typologies of regions, and on the situation of cities based on broad empirical data; policy impact studies on the spatial impact of Community sector policies and horizontal and co-ordinating cross-thematic studies beyond the territories of EU member states. In different fields, studies on spatial development are addressing an enlarged EU territory. From the 2002-2006 programme the Commission and the member states expected to obtain:

- a diagnosis of the principal territorial trends on an EU scale, difficulties and potentialities within the European territory;
- a cartographic picture of the major territorial disparities;
- a number of territorial indicators and typologies helping to set European priorities for a balanced and polycentric enlarged European territory;
- some integrated tools and appropriate instruments (databases, indicators, methodologies for territorial impact analysis and systematic spatial analyses) to improve the spatial co-ordination of sector policies.

⁶ The status of the union between Montenegro and Serbia was decided by the referendum on Montenegrin independence on May 21, 2006.

These are important programmes also with regard to the case study region as they promote cross-border and transnational co-operation and help to provide observation, analysis and interpretation of regional development trends.

The INTERACT programme (INTERreg – Animation, Co-ordination, Transfer) seeks to build on the experience and lessons of INTERREG I and INTERREG II, and to improve the effectiveness of implementation of INTERREG III during the 2000-2006 programming period.

In July 2006 the European Parliament adopted the new regulations for the new EU programming period of 2007-2013 (CEC, 2006). Here "European territorial co-operation" was introduced as Objective 3, so this will no longer be a Community Initiative, but an Objective in its own right, alongside the "convergence" and the "regional competitiveness and employment" objectives. The Objective will have three strands: cross border (ex-INTERREG IIIA), transnational (ex INTERREG IIIB) and interregional (ex INTERREG IIIC, etc).

2.1.2 Interrelationship to the European model of society

One aim of the research is to look how to better perceive the specific spatial conditions under the general idea of the European model of society. Therefore it is helpful to identify what the European model of society stands for and how it is interrelated to the European regional policy. European regional policy is very much an expression and outcome of the political belief that competitiveness and cohesion will not be achieved by market forces alone. Jacques Delors (President of the European Commission between 1985 and 1995) was responsible for articulating the European model of society, which in his eyes should combine competitiveness and cohesion (Faludi, 2007; Zonneveld, 2007). So one can argue that what underlies European regional policy is the idea of a European model of society (EMS), with economic and social cohesion being at its heart. The debate about the European model of society gained new momentum at a time when economic growth in Europe lagged behind that of the USA and national governments were increasingly arguing that the social state in Europe could no longer be financed unless it was not creating new jobs and that too many regulations hindered any economic initiative.

At the same time Jeremy Rifkin praised the European model of society and argued that the European labour and social policy was more humane than that of the USA and that the quality of life was higher in Europe. Rifkin (2004), speaking about the European and American dreams, analysed the differences between these two dreams, which were also related to the European model of society. Europeans were described as putting more

emphasis on collective responsibility and global awareness. Thus, the European model is far more secular in its orientation and oriented to the idea of collective responsibility for the welfare of the community. European society was much more willing to entertain government intervention to redress inequalities and was based on the belief that market forces were often unfair and, therefore, needed to be tamed. The American dream in contrast was described as based on an unswerving belief in the pre-eminence of the individual and personal responsibility and accountability, where freedom was associated with autonomy. Americans were said to prefer to keep taxes low and limit government involvement in the Community in order to optimise individual accumulation of wealth and ensure greater personal control. Furthermore, he argued that the health system, education system and infrastructure were better developed, welfare was more equally distributed and that Europe had less poverty and lower crime rates than the USA.

In the 1990s Ralf Dahrendorf (1996) distinguished three models of industrial societies in the world:

- first, the American model with economic growth and political liberty, but low social cohesion
- second, the model of the East-Asian industrial states which combine economic progress and social stability with conservative values where however liberty was subordinated
- third, the model of the European welfare state that is characterised through high economic equal opportunities and political liberty but is experiencing growing problems in a globalised world where flexibility and competitiveness is necessary, because economic growth rates are behind the first two models.

Still the notion of a European model of society is misleading. It is not “European” in the sense that it is standardised or uniform across Europe. On the contrary, different models exist with different features and performance in terms of efficiency and equity (Sapir, 2005; Reid, 2004). During the UK EU presidency in 2005 Prime Minister Tony Blair initiated studies where several European research institutes compared different European models of society. In his study Sapir (2005) distinguished four models: the Scandinavian model, the Continental model, the Anglo-Saxon model and the Mediterranean model.

The Scandinavian Model is the most comprehensive one, with emphasis on redistribution, financing social benefits through taxation. It relies on institutions working closely together with government and trade unions having an important role in the administration of unemployment insurance and training. An active labour market policy and high employment rates are the main characteristics of the model. The Continental Model emphasises

employment as the basis of social transfers, which are financed through the contributions of employers and employees. Social partners play an important role in industrial relations, and wage bargaining is centralised. On the other hand redistribution and the inclusion of outsiders are not high on the agenda. The Liberal or Anglo-Saxon Model applicable to countries with less market interferences, low transfers and underdeveloped public safety nets emphasises the responsibility of the individuals for themselves. The labour market is not regulated and competition policy is rather ambitious. Social transfers are smaller than in other models, labour relations are decentralised and bargaining takes place at the firm level. In countries with the Mediterranean Model social transfers are small and families still play a significant role in the provision of security and shelter. Trade unions and employer representatives are important to the rather centralised bargaining process for wages and work conditions.

The analysis initiated by Tony Blair mainly looked at how these different models perform with regard to competitiveness (so concentrating on economic indicators like growth of GDP, productivity, employment and unemployment rates, social expenditure, product market regulations, labour market regulations, future investments, and so on). The results of the four models according to these indicators were compared and additionally an Anglo-Saxon model Overseas and a Catching-up model looking at Czech Republic and Hungary were included in the comparison (Aiginger, Guger, 2005 and Sapir, 2005). The studies show that the Anglo-Saxon together with the Scandinavian model had the best results as regards global competitiveness. Both models show higher growth and lower unemployment rates but are fundamentally different in terms of social policy. The Scandinavian states provide high social standards financed by relatively high taxation. Those countries tried to reduce poverty and disparities and invested intensively in further education so they successfully combined welfare with higher efficiency. The Scandinavian model provides an alternative model to that of the United States in achieving economic efficiency while maintaining social welfare and environmental quality and thus combines security for citizens with efficiency and flexibility for firms. So the countries relying on the Scandinavian model successfully combine welfare with higher efficiency (Aiginger, Guger, 2005 and Sapir, 2005). The informal meeting of the European Council of Heads of State and Government at Hampton Court in October 2005 was initially themed around the sustainability of European social models but was later re-labelled to deal with the less controversial challenges of globalisation. Critics say that this shift of topic was due to fears of the British Presidency that the UK social model would not look as good as some others in the light of newer figures and that Britain might be forced to discuss the advantages of Scandinavian models (EurActiv, 2007).

The Assembly of European Regions emphasised that any definition of the European model of society must be based on knowledge and grounded in diversity and must take account of the various cultures, traditions, and needs throughout Europe today.

In a declaration, the Assembly of European Regions (2005) defined the European social model as a set of principles and values, common to all European regions, namely:

- solidarity
- social justice
- social cohesion
- equal access to employment, in particular for the young and the disabled
- gender equality
- equal access to health and social protection
- universal access to education
- universal access to health and social services
- equal opportunities for everybody in society
- universal access to, development of and implementation of knowledge in health and social services

Regarding this list of principles it becomes clear that European spatial development policy is very closely related to the issues relevant for the European model of society, in that it is also trying to provide equal opportunities (from a spatial point of view access to services is a precondition and thus a basic element of the EMS), sustainability and the efficient and sustainable use of the existing spatial potential (territorial capital) to foster economic development. The European Trade Union Confederation defined the European model of society as “a vision of society that combines sustainable economic growth with ever-improving living and working conditions”⁷. In this sense the term European model of society is used in this work, knowing that there is not one European standardised model. Delgado (2007) emphasises the importance of the dialogue culture in connections with the European model of society. He argues that it is necessary to create space for constructive dialogue in order to be able to create share and extend new knowledge to allow a positive adoption to the changes derived from globalisation. The role of the dialogue culture is to offer the opportunity to clarify terms and create common base of understanding and progress. As outlined in the following section and becoming also clear later in the case study area, this dialogue and the

⁷ <http://www.etuc.org/a/111>

communicative aspect is especially relevant when revealing the specific potentials of space on transnational level.

2.2 Revealing the specific potential of space – Conceptualisation of space

In order to better understand specific spatial conditions for development, co-operation at all geographic levels is necessary. Zonneveld and Waterhout (2007) also emphasise the need to develop the skills for spatial positioning meaning the capacity to conceptualise or think about a location within the spatial structure of Europe. The focus in this work is on co-operation at European and transnational level. Here the transnational scale in particular is both a relatively new dimension in spatial development and a highly complex one that has to merge many different actors and stakeholders, planning cultures and languages – as it will be shown by the case study region in chapter 5. On transnational level one has to face widely differing conditions with regard to competence, political power and resources. Due to the emerging new cross-border and transnational connections, functional regions and structures in Europe, we require new cross-border, transnational and European perspectives. Transnational co-operation helps to expound the problems and to address certain policy issues at this (new) transnational scale. Many examples of spatial positioning identify spatial structures and intrinsic spatial links with neighbouring territories, the development of which would benefit both parties (Zonneveld, Waterhout, 2007). With the significant changes in old places, spaces, scales and horizons, new emerging places must be imaged and framed and the still nationally biased European images and perspectives should be changed (Jessop, 2000). So European spatial development policy has been strongly influenced by the growing need for new forms of planning at the international level during the post-war process of European integration (Martin, Robert, 2002). That is why new ways must be found to deal with the challenges, at a time when “island plans” that do not illustrate the external connections are no longer relevant. Here new forms of dialogue, discourse and tools are necessary in order to develop a common understanding and work base.

European spatial development policy is becoming more and more a field of activity for experts of spatial development (civil servants, researchers, consultants and academics). Martin and Robert (2002) emphasised the important role of internal and external experts to influence concepts and ideas and bring them forward on a European and transnational scale. Experts considerably influenced European spatial development policy due to their interaction, mutual understanding and the complementary roles with specific challenges at transnational level – there is no direct policy level to refer to,

nor are there any established networks/institutions or common cultures or languages. This new field of spatial development – especially the European and transnational scale – has not come about by chance and it provides a new challenge for spatial planners because they face the need to develop the mental capacity to grasp this spatial scale and the inter-relationships that arise (Williams, 1996). The emergence of European spatial development policy has been gradual, unpredictable and unplanned, but nevertheless to an important degree determined by political decision making at strategic moments, because of its inherent link to the political process (Martin, Robert, 2002). This issue is also linked with the question of the “political contest of production of scale” as Smith referred to it. On this subject, Smith made a number of points: “First, that the construction of geographical scale is a primary means through which spatial differentiation “takes place”. Second, that an investigation of geographical scale might therefore provide us with a more plausible language of spatial difference. Third, that the construction of scale is a social process, i.e., scale is produced in and through societal activity which, in turn, produces and is produced by geographical structures of social interaction. Fourth, and finally, the production of geographical scale is the site of potentially intense political struggle” (Smith, 1993: 97).

Planners need different ways to identify, communicate and provoke discussions about the potential of space or territorial capital. The OECD (2001) states that each area has a specific capital – named “territorial capital” – that is distinct from other areas and is determined by many factors, like geographical location, size, factor of production endowment, climate, traditions, natural resources, quality of life or agglomeration economies provided by cities, etc. The local and regional traditions and customs, the quality of governance, including issues such as mutual trust and informal rules are mentioned as other important factors. Lastly there is an “intangible factor”, “something being in the air” which is the outcome of a combination of institutions, rules, researchers, policy-makers, etc. that provides the possibility for creativity and innovation.

The instruments planners use to identify the territorial capital are primarily communicative: Concepts, plans and vision documents are used to capture the imagination of the various relevant actors and therefore concepts and vision documents are often elaborated at European and transnational level (Hajer, Zonneveld, 2000). Planning – which especially on a European and transnational scale is a communicative process – is variously described as a process in which spatial visions, spatial concepts and/or metaphors play an essential role. This role is even more relevant since on these scales planners enter uncharted territory and encounter differences in planning cultures. Using amongst other things, diagrammatic language, visions, concepts and metaphors may help, to a certain extent, in overcoming such obstacles. This

is also why this research investigates, whether and to which extent such tools are used in the case study area.

European planning is a fairly recent phenomenon and – as Faludi and Waterhout (2002: 10) mentioned – “implies the conceptualisation of European space”. Cartographic visualisation, or the conceptualisation of the territory, is regarded as an integral part of spatial planning (Dühr, 2003: 929). Planning needs interpretations and ideas relating to space and spatial relations before intervention in its spatial development can be considered. What is important here is the conceptualisation of space, which involves representation of the territory, or parts of it, in the form of icons, diagrams or maps or in form of words, often in metaphorical style (Zonneveld, 2000). Albrechts (2001: 734) argued that “for the construction of a new region with multiple stakeholders, multiple goals and conflicting agendas a planning discourse is needed ... as a set of ideas, notions and concepts, a frame of reference, a system of meaning with which ideas and arguments are articulated and whose goal is to undertake initiatives that affect (spatial) development and everyday life”. Also Ache (2001) emphasised that the answer to the global challenges seems to be a whole set of concepts, which focus on new spatial organisation.

Numerous attempts to conceptualise European space have been undertaken and expressed by a multitude of concepts and imaginative metaphors (Zonneveld, 2000). Spatial visions represent tools that help in this context, as they provide the possibility of communicating different understandings about territories, and of dealing with new scales (transnational/European). Spatial visions often consist of or work with different concepts. Concepts are a form in which problem definitions and understandings can be wrapped up and they refer to the public understandings of policy problems and solutions as “policy images”. The determination of the main interpretation of policy images and concepts is therefore an integral part of the problem definition and agenda setting stages where a struggle between actors over interpretations can also take place (Duinen, 2004). Concepts often present themselves as metaphors that are underpinned by over-simplified assumptions where they “provide a strong, long-lasting and sometimes misleading effect on people’s perception of reality” (Davoudi, 2003: 989). On the other hand, simple spatial images, although they convey oversimplified information, appeal to a wider public and popular science media. The reason for the incredible success of such images across Europe may have been their potential for allowing people a wide range of interpretations and conclusions (Kunzmann, 2000).

We have to bear in mind that spatial visions, concepts and metaphors as elements of planning not only give shape to spatial development but also aim “of shaping the minds of actors involved in spatial development” (Faludi, 2001: 664) and should guide and structure planning thoughts and ideas.

Innes (1999: 1) described three primary points of such a communicative process. “First, information in communicative practice influences by becoming embedded in understandings, practices and institutions, rather than primarily because a decision-maker uses it as a scientist would as evidence for choosing a policy alternative. Second, the process by which the information is produced and agreed on is crucial. It will not become embedded in those understandings and institutions unless there is substantial debate among key players and a social process for developing shared meaning and legitimacy for the information. Third, many types of information count, and not solely ‘objective’ or formal information.” Habermas distinguished three aspects of communicative action which are of prime importance for a vision process: “Under the functional aspect of mutual understanding, communicative action serves to transmit and renew cultural knowledge; under the aspect of co-ordinating action, it serves social integration and the establishment of solidarity; finally, under the aspect of socialisation, communicative action serves the formation of personal identities” (Habermas, 1987: 137). Communicative processes play a key role especially in light of the growing importance of multi-level governance (which implies that hierarchical, clear-cut decision making no longer works in complex, constantly changing societies like ours).

Before dealing with the role and function of tools like visions, concepts and metaphors in the case study area, it seems worthwhile to review existing examples at European and transnational level in order to get a clearer picture about the role they can play and the tasks they can fulfil. That is why this chapter tries to explore the meaning, role and importance of three different tools of planners, spatial visions, spatial concepts and metaphors, by focusing on the European and transnational level. Spatial visions are often composed of spatial concepts and can also contain metaphors, whereby spatial concepts represent themselves often as metaphors. As persuasive metaphors are regarded as playing an essential role in communication processes and policy discourses, the final part of this chapter will deal in more detail with spatial metaphors.

2.2.1 Spatial visions

Spatial visions are planning tools that should help to construct a specific identity for the geopolitical regions that are being considered and to define a declaration of the shared aims and principles (Fellegara, 2004; Mascarucci, 2004). One principal value of the vision process on the transnational scale is to provide an alternative and valuable conceptualisation of territory and spatial development (Nadin, 2004). The conception of transnational spatial visions must be regarded as a potential to foster and establish the new functional regions and structures that are emerging due to the new cross-

border relations, e.g. in regions along the former Iron Curtain like the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr case study area. The brainteaser (Figure 1) shows very well the importance of cross-border/transnational views and planning in a symbolic way. The task of the brainteaser is to connect nine dots with four lines without taking the pen off the paper.

The solution may be simple, but it is not immediately obvious. The point is: One has to go beyond the border of the picture to come to a solution at all (Figure 2) – and this is also valid for many spatial development problems, e.g. the effects of transport, flood prevention, and so on.

Spatial visions at European and transnational level are one instrument to define the new spaces and to generate a cross-border or transnational look and way of dealing with opportunities and constraints. For the term “vision” though, there is no single valid definition – on the contrary, terms are used in very different ways. In Europe many “products” like visions, guidelines, perspectives, schemes can be designated as having transnational or European spatial visions. This shows the need to clarify the different terms so they can be used unequivocally.

The following definition (Schindegger, 2001) is one example of how to explain the term “spatial vision” and to increase the awareness of the use of different terms. Spatial vision:

- pictures future message
- provokes new views/perspectives
- is convincing
- creates identification
- is long-term orientated

Over the last ten years the concept of spatial visions at a transnational level has become a new issue in European spatial development. However, we have to bear in mind that transnational spatial vision is a new tool and is not yet well defined (Nadin, 2004). The “transnational” nature is a real challenge and makes it compulsory to refer to different cultural contexts, which can never refer to the planning traditions of a single nation. On the other hand, the community origin of transnational planning induces us to consider the dawn of European spatial development policy, as an analytical base, notoriously characterised by grave uncertainties and institutional contradictions (Janin Rivolin, 2004).

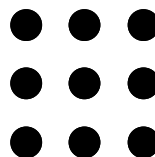


Figure 1: Brainteaser

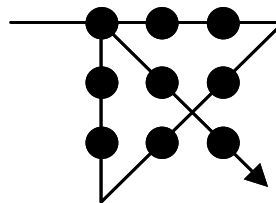


Figure 2: Solution of brainteaser

Transnational spatial visions were meant to bridge the gap between the ESDP and the national and regional plans through a more detailed examination of spatial development trends at the transnational scale. “Though the thinking behind the visions has not been made explicit, the implicit argument is that they add value to national and regional planning processes in three ways: measuring the territorial impacts of sectoral policies at this scale; identifying and managing conflicts among territorial demands; and revealing opportunities for synergy among the actions of member states and regions” (Nadin, 2002: 123).

Therefore it seems helpful that a spatial vision process includes

- joint identification of the area
- an increase in personal confidence between the key actors involved
- an exchange of experiences and awareness raising
- identification and definition of different interests, potentials, conflict areas and challenges
- identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints, as well as development options

Nadin (2000: 19) “suggested that the fundamental purposes of transnational spatial visions must be:

- “to understand the transnational and long-term implications of spatial development trends
- to provide a statement of shared goals for the spatial structure of the region
- to give direction and inspiration to transnational, national and regional planning processes
- to assist in the formulation and selection of transboundary spatial planning programmes and projects.”

Spatial visions are of a general and non-binding nature, and are developed in very different frameworks. Vague shadowy groups are often in the background and it is mostly a small inner circle that is responsible for setting it up. In addition the way in which these spatial visions proceed and their future is far from clear. But they do form a new meaningful governance instrument (Zonneveld, 2005). The results are often intermediate products of a development and consensus-seeking process. They often build a platform for the countries and regions involved to create greater integration and synergies of national and regional policies with spatial dimensions. The formulation of visions at transnational levels complements co-operations already existing at a European and regional level, whereby the results are often only the first steps in building strategic co-operation for transnational spatial development.

Especially at transnational level spatial visions play an important role as communication tools. For “outsiders” (or individuals not involved in the spatial planning and visioning process) who often only know partial products like pictures and reports, visions often seem very general and superficial. Products like maps, geo-designs, reports, documents, and the like are often perceived as the complete result. These products, however, are just a few elements of a wide-reaching development process – the visioning process. When evaluating a vision it is important to be aware of the process supporting the products. Through the communicative practice within the vision process planners influence each other and public action. The communication process not only takes place within the team elaborating the vision, but also concerns other people who might be affected or interested. Pictures and geo-designs (like metaphors – see section 2.2.3) play a very important role in such a communicative process because they procure the content of visions in an understandable and demonstrative way – not only for the specialists but also for the general public. Images and maps are used to underline policy statements and help to overcome cultural and linguistic obstacles. In the context of the still relatively new issue of transnational spatial development, visions serve as a tool to generate the trans-border view trying to overcome the traditional “puzzle of national pictures”.

On the basis of the work from Shipley and Newkirk (1999) Vincent Nadin (2002) has chosen the following types of visions as being relevant in spatial planning:

- vision as master plan (shows how it should be in x years)
- vision as the truth (it is a forecast or prophecy)
- utopian vision (supports new activities, is often provoking and fosters changes; application is not the aim)
- the vision as a mission statement (defines the fundamental principles that should govern the actions in the long term)

One particular framework which allowed transnational spatial vision to be elaborated was the Community Initiative INTERREG IIC of the EU co-financing transnational co-operation (in the programming period 1997 – 1999). This programme was meant to foster transnational and cross-border co-operation and views whereby the EC guidelines called for the preparation of a vision – an overarching transnational planning strategy or framework – for the seven defined transnational co-operation areas also aiming to build a bridge between the ESDP and the national and regional planning systems. This programme provided the opportunity to create new networks and linkages between governments, regions and interest groups and to elaborate transnational spatial visions. The ESDP with its jointly developed principles and policy options mostly served as basis for the development of spatial visions at a transnational level. At the beginning of this programme there

was little if any history of transnational co-operation on planning (Nadin, 2002 and Schindegger 2000) and it must be made clear that no continuity of institutions and structures in these co-operation areas existed. Examples of such spatial visions at transnational level include Vision Planet (2000), an INTERREG IIC CADSES project (including the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr case study area) which was a collective consensus-oriented process resulting in a final product, the “guidelines and policy proposals” which include guidelines for the CADSES area very similar to the ESDP. Another example is VASAB 2010 running under the INTERREG IIC Baltic Sea programme consisting of vision and strategies around the Baltic Sea, but also the spatial vision for North-West Europe, elaborated within the INTERREG IIC programme North-West-Europe (NWMA Spatial Vision Group, 2000).

But visions were also elaborated within other framework conditions. Studies for specific topics or regions, commissioned by different actors, were carried out by different consortia of experts. The Danube Space Study (ÖIR, et al., 2000) commissioned by the European Commission dealt with the Danube space and included a scenario “proDanube 2010” that also concerns the case study region as the river Danube flows through the area. At European level the French presidency commissioned a study dealing with polycentric development in a long term perspective, which was an attempt to represent the goals formulated in the ESDP at spatial level and to identify possible future Global Economic Integration Zones.

Below, the research findings of four examples of transnational visions (Vision Planet, VASAB 2010, the Danube Space Study and the study on Polycentrism commissioned by the French presidency) – elaborated in different frameworks – are discussed in three dimensions (authors and frame, space awareness and intention of vision). This should first of all show the different kinds of existing visions and secondly help to understand the meaning, power and possibilities of visions elaborated under completely different conditions. According to the different types of visions, Vision Planet and VASAB 2010 – both elaborated as INTERREG IIC projects – can be regarded as a “vision as a mission statement”, whereas the Danube Space Study is mostly a “vision as the truth” and the study on polycentrism is a “utopian vision”. All of these visions feature different conditions, functions and meanings which are explained below.

The first dimension concerns authors and frame of visions. Vision Planet and VASAB 2010 were elaborated under the INTERREG IIC framework, Vision Planet within the CADSES and VASAB 2010 in the Baltic Sea region. Official representatives were involved in both projects and the communicative element played a very important role. The main focus was on networking and in Vision Planet, for example, on the development of a common reference framework. The Vision Planet products and aims were worked out in a collective consensus-oriented process which had mediation

function and improved mutual understanding. In VASAB 2010 the communicative consensus-oriented element with a broad range of actors, especially authorities, played the same important role as in Vision Planet. The Danube Space Study and Polycentrism Study were developed by scientific experts – here the main focus was much more on expert knowledge than on communication between actors during the formulation of the vision. The Danube Space Study (commissioned by the European Commission) includes a “scenario proDanube 2010” and was developed by an international scientific consortium with the lead partner ÖIR (Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning). Finding consensus and networking between relevant actors was not in the foreground, but the conception of new ideas was. The same was true of the study “Elaboration of a long term polycentric vision of the European space” which was commissioned by the French presidency and developed by Ingérop – économie et aménagement. This study deals with polycentrism in a long term perspective at a transnational level and outlines an attempt to represent the goals formulated in the ESDP at a spatial level. The starting point was the existing Global Economic Integration Zone (the “pentagon” within the cities London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg) which should be supplemented by other Global Economic Integration Zones in Europe, especially with regard to EU enlargement.

While Vision Planet and VASAB 2010 had a similar frame one still can not view them in the same way. Vision Planet was the first trial to develop a strategy for integrated spatial development for the CADSES area. The final product (the “guidelines and policy proposals”) which includes guidelines for the CADSES area is very similar to the ESDP. Despite its title vision was not part of the final project results, as CADSES is a very heterogeneous area and “one single CADSES identification” simply does not exist. Here a new dimension can be identified – “space awareness” which strongly influenced the vision process. In contrast to Vision Planet’s CADSES, the Baltic Sea Area reverted to the functional region it once was and regained identification immediately after the breakdown of the communist system (historical reasons also played a role here). The stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Area immediately supported cross-border co-operation, developed new perceptions and improved east-west connections – they reacted as one space and created a common identification through the one space. With the Danube Space Study the aim was to emphasise this region as a common space, to clarify the possibilities of a common identification of the Danube Space through research-based evaluations and recommendations. The spatial vision is weak, but with the optimistic and realistic scenario for the Danube Space, key measures show the feasibility of a common space. In a way the study “Elaboration of a long term polycentric vision of the European space” may be considered a trial to promote “space awareness” for the still new

European spatial level, in this case around the concept of polycentric development.

Another important dimension of visions are the intentions of visions. In the Danube Space Study the intention was to show what the Danube Space could and should be like in 2010 and to raise awareness of the Danube and its functional region and potentials at European level. The Polycentrism Study was primarily intended to provoke new ideas and discussions at a European level about the concept of polycentric development by means of a first visualisation, so far only verbally referred to as a very vague term within the ESDP. Vision Planet tried to raise spatial awareness and foster a common framework and mutual understanding about CADSES and provided a platform where for the first time, countries of this region had the possibility to discuss spatial issues. On the basis of the co-operation activities that already existed, VASAB 2010 elaborated, further on common goals and challenges and from the start was more action oriented.

All four visions can be regarded as important first steps towards future co-operation, because they help to convert problematic situations into policy problems, agenda decisions and actions through the interaction between individuals, interest groups and social movements. The timetable for preparation of most of the vision statements was tight and given the limited resources available, they represent a considerable achievement. "Problem-solving is straightforward only where people share the same frame. Otherwise, there may not even be a basis for any form of resolution" (Faludi, 1996: 103-104). The above mentioned visions also helped to "... exchange positions and understandings and reach some agreement about what is rather than what will be" (Nadin, 2002: 128).

Some of the four vision examples have contributed to a better understanding of spatial development patterns and trends, but are far from being visionary in the generally accepted sense of the term (Nadin, 2002). Also Zonneveld (2005: 153) noted critically that what should be born in mind for future activities, was that "the goal should be the generation of visions and approaches, not the creation of consensus, but the bringing out for open discussion the multitude of opinions and attitudes concerning the layout of the European territory". Visions are often understood as binding top-down devices that must guide spatial development on other scales – but this is unrealistic. Rather the way forward is to allow, nay encourage all actors involved, also and in particular the Commission, to develop spatial visions and to let these rub off on each other (Faludi, 2004b).

2.2.2 Spatial concepts

In many European countries but also in European spatial development policy and transnational planning, concepts (like corridors, gateway cities, polycentric development, territorial cohesion, etc.) are used in planning processes because they help to frame thinking and are powerful communication tools (Duinen, 2004; Tatzberger, 2004b). Planners seem to need these concepts and use them to carry out their planning activities and to bring forward ideas about spatial organisation. Spatial concepts can “stir minds, arouse hope, and inspire action” (Neumann, 1998) and also help to mobilise stakeholders (Healey, 2004). Spatial concepts “also affect the structuring of political debate and struggle over the impacts of projects, the distributive justice of investments and regulatory principles, and over imagined futures” (Healey, 2004: 64). Interpretations and ideas relating to space and spatial relations are needed and so the conceptualisation of space, which also involves symbolic representations of a territory and concepts, is of considerable importance. Also Eising and Kohler-Koch (1999) underline that the EU relies heavily on “regime formatting concepts”. Such concepts refer to the content of the policy, the goals to be attained and instruments used, and are vague and broad concepts with normative relevance and prescriptive elements, often disputed and subject to divergent interpretations.

Spatial concepts have become an important issue in European spatial development policy and continue to be developed in the very new field of European spatial development policy. The development of new European concepts has, according to Martin and Robert (2002), several effects: They draw the attention and mobilise the energy of representatives of national planning authorities toward future-oriented issues and help to create a common language which is essential for international communication among experts. Spatial concepts allow a wide range of interpretations after their initial launch and then have to be seen as indispensable but ultimately disposable tools to grasp social reality in a scientific way (Kloosterman, Musterd, 2001). Spatial concepts created at European level have often quickly penetrated the media and political debates, because they are often produced as persuasive concepts, which should also gain the ear of policy makers. They are good in getting messages across, because they simplify complex reality by capturing the preferred spatial development in just one word or image (often as metaphor) and they also evoke associative appealing thoughts. “‘Visions’ and iconographic images are understood as significant in mobilising attention, an imaginative effort which builds from and contributes to shaping conceptions of identity” (Healey, 2004: 49). There are negative effects in that spatial concepts can evoke misleading associations, which favour the aims and interest of the actors who use the metaphor in their arguments and simplify reality, which means that certain aspects are not noticed and are excluded from people’s perceptions (Duinen, 2000).

The literature of European integration shows that concepts are often broad, vague and accommodate different objectives, also with the aim of avoiding deadlock. Nevertheless such concepts help to draw the attention and energy of political representatives to future oriented issues and help to create a common language. This shows that policy discourse around such concepts is of high relevance. As the reader knows discourse can be defined as “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer, 1995: 44). The dissemination of new discourses provoked amongst others through concepts like territorial cohesion or polycentric development is regarded as a key dimension of a mobilisation activity in order to construct strategies and create visions and new identities. But – as Zonneveld and Waterhout (2005) emphasise – for both concepts it is necessary to attend to the spatial structure and qualities of areas in order to set priorities. There are also operational concepts (like the central place concept) especially at local and regional level with very detailed measures and instructions for actions, often also of a legally binding nature. But spatial concepts especially at European and transnational level are often flexible and amorphous in order to bridge different principles and to deal as a basis for future co-operation (Eising, Kohler-Koch, 1999: 278). Eising and Kohler-Koch (1999) write that the belief in systems revolves around broad orientations toward solidarity and reciprocity and the search for consensus. Considering these diverse environments of the EU and its complex set-up with frequently changing conditions and territory, vague concepts might be unavoidable in European spatial development policy making (Waterhout, 2002). EU environments are marked by a multilateral and generalised reciprocity and need regimes around which actors’ expectations can converge. “Even within the European Commission or individual member state governments, actors are in need of bridging concepts” and often require a common denominator in order to break the deadlock (Eising, Kohler-Koch, 1999: 278). Eising and Kohler-Koch (1999: 275) also argue that the European Community “is open to and in need of guiding principles...” and “... puts a premium on the ability to provide convincing policy concepts and their interpretation”. So concepts help to reach a consensus in bargaining processes and settle a framework decision, in a scenario in which such vague terms allow actors with diverging views to interpret it according to their individual interests (Héritier, 1999 in: Waterhout, 2002).

The elaboration of such concepts presents the possibility of discussing current spatial trends and must be seen as a frame that allows intercultural and inter-sectoral dialogue to be structured. In this research the term “spatial concept” is used to mean concepts implying a spatial dimension or referring to a territory and therefore can also be named “spatial concepts”. This is a broader definition than the one Zonneveld (1991: 4) developed, saying

“spatial concept expresses in a concise form, in words and pictures, the manner in which the desired development of the spatial design is considered, together with the nature of the interventions deemed to be necessary”.

But the territorial dimension is expressed differently in spatial concepts like polycentric development and territorial cohesion (see chapter 3 and 4) – two concepts that gained popularity in European spatial development policy. For example, with regard to the concept of polycentric development the territorial dimension is already strongly present and it can refer to the planning concept level. Territorial cohesion, on the other hand, refers much more to the policy goal level, which is superior to the planning concept level. So territorial cohesion is more a policy concept where the spatial dimension is emphasised but not so clearly (Schindegger, Tatzberger, 2003). Zonneveld (1991, in: Duinen, 2004) suggests that spatial planning concepts can take many different forms ranging from blueprints to strategic synthesising visionary images and design concepts or concepts which are firmly grounded in academic reasoning to planning concepts that rely in part on geopolitical considerations. Spatial planning concepts convey clues and sometimes even guidelines for action and are presented as metaphors. In most cases spatial planning concepts are put forward by spatial planners, apparently they feel the need to interpret the spatial make-up of the territory that they are concerned with and want to convey their ideas to others (Zonneveld, 2000). The elaboration of such concepts presents the possibility of discussing current spatial trends and must be seen as a frame that allows the structuring of intercultural and inter-sectoral dialogue knowledge. According to Zonneveld these types of spatial planning concepts should be named strategic planning concepts because they present a long-term framework, described in somewhat abstract terms and rather vague when it comes to content. These kinds of concepts can be distinguished from other, more detailed types of planning concepts – the concrete planning concepts which refer to direct intervention in spatial structure and development (Zonneveld, 1991; in: Duinen, 2004).

The emergence of concepts is also caused by the increasing territorial disparities and interdependencies, but also by political debates on a European scale with higher spatial awareness and the need for guiding principles for future-oriented issues within the EU. These reasons make concepts dealing with the future development necessary for policy orientation. In the words of Throgmorton (1992), we can speak about “planning as persuasive storytelling about the future”.

2.2.3 Spatial metaphors

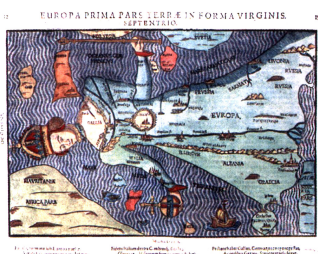
Spatial concepts often involve symbolic representations or images of a territory and sometimes are represented as metaphors. Not all concepts rest on such metaphors, but some do – and derive strength from it. Especially in European spatial development policy the “mental overturning of conventional geography” (Williams, 1996: 6) seems to be a crucial issue, because the scale of economic accumulation expands (and with it the scale of competition and co-operation) and alternative spatial forms are developing and these must be challenged. One helpful way to do this is to create spatial metaphors. A metaphor, according to Faludi and van der Valk (1994: 67) “can be a pervasive mode of understanding by which we use experiences in one domain to structure another ... it conveys meaning and intent.” Generally metaphors relate to the transfer of experiences from one realm of human experience to another and they have long been in existence. For instance, if one thinks of society as a machine, or as a human body, and one comes up with different conclusions. According to Williams spatial metaphors “are not predictions, and certainly not predestination, although people sometimes talk in these terms they should be regarded simply as ways of describing the spatial structure of Europe in a manner that can be easily grasped, which may help people who find it difficult to think in European spatial terms to gain a sense of positioning and may also help with place marketing” (Williams, 1996: 96).

Shetter (1993) argues in the context of spatial policy that metaphors play a critical role in human knowledge and action and are central to human imagination, because they provide a quasi-logical framework of associations. A widespread usage of generative metaphors in politics can be identified, also because metaphors provide a common ground between various discourses. “Actors are thus given the opportunity to create their own understanding of the problem, re-interpreting various elements of knowledge outside their specific realm of competence, or filling in the gaps and ambivalences that were left by the original text. This is the interpretive process of ‘discourse closure’ in the course of which complex research work is often reduced to a visual representation or a catchy one-liner” (Hajer, 1995: 62). Spatial images and metaphorical visions serve politically and socially to construct a territorial logic, to share ‘ownership’ of strategic development ideas, and to build legitimacy for the priorities of strategic plans. An important purpose is to promote internal coherence among the territorially-oriented stakeholders, as much as to position the territory externally.

One example for a metaphor is the “Old Madam Europe” (see Figure 3) from the year 1581 where Europe is related to a human body. It symbolises the early wish and tradition of coherence (“common European house”) in

Europe, despite the rise of nation states. Another more recent example is the well-known image produced by Keeble in the late nineteen-seventies (SPESP, 2000) which has visualised the “centre-periphery” development paradigm. The core of Europe has been variously defined as European Megalopolis, Golden Triangle and the well-known metaphor of the so-called Blue Banana (Brunet, 1989) – see Figure 4. The Blue Banana identifies a highly developed area stretching from South-East of England to the North of Italy. This metaphor has often been criticised for the rather simplistic representation of core and periphery in Europe (Jensen, Richardson, 2004). Nevertheless, this powerful image has become central to transnational and national planning discourses, and has provided the basis for innumerable variations of the theme (Dühr, 2003). This metaphor creates a memorable image, which simplifies and structures people’s thinking about the spatial structure of the European space (Williams, 1996). Such images and metaphors in planning have recently received a great deal of attention in strategic spatial planning (Kunzmann, 2000). Kunzmann and Wegener rejected the underlying view of Europe as “competitive” and developed an alternative metaphor the “European Bunch of Grapes” (Figure 5), in their eyes a more co-operative view, “more suited to represent the polycentric structure of the urban system in Europe and the fundamental similarity in diversity of the interests and concerns of its member cities” (Kunzmann, Wegener, 1991: 63). This is one of an increasing number of alternative spatial conceptualisations of the European territory. It represents, in contrast to the Blue Banana, which conceptualised economic realities, a desirable (or: normative) future for Europe by visualising a polycentric structure of competitive urban agglomerations instead of one economic core region (Kunzmann, Wegener, 1991; Nijkamp, 1993).

Figure 3: Old Madam Europe



Source: Strubelt, 2001: 692

Figure 4: Blue Banana



Source: Kunzmann, 1998: 116

Figure 5: “Bunch of Grapes”



Source: Kunzmann, 1998: 116

The ESDP bridged the gap between these two archetypes of European spatial conceptualisation: the Blue Banana and the European Bunch of Grapes. For a basic consensus of European spatial development, the concept of polycentric development retains a certain political appeal, as far as this

concept could capture both the objectives of cohesion and competitiveness (Waterhout, 2002). This metaphor can also be found as one of three policy guidelines – the development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural relationship – within the ESDP as the concept of polycentric development (CEC, 1999).

Metaphors as pictures and geo-designs are also used to provoke discussion. Kunzmann (1996: 144) argued that "in the end visualised concepts can contribute more to achieving certain political goals than legal and financial instruments". Successful pictures often depend on efficient metaphors – another well-known example of such metaphors is the Green Heart of the Netherlands, an organic metaphor, which influenced Dutch national planning for over 40 years (van der Valk, Faludi, 1997). The Dutch area called the Green Heart – an open area surrounded by towns and cities forming the Randstad – has an underlying metaphor, that of a country as a body, the well-being of which depends on the health of this heart. Here Faludi and van der Valk (1994: 18) speak about planning doctrine as a "body of thought concerning a) spatial arrangements within an area; b) the development of that area c) the way both are handled". So, a planning doctrine must incorporate a spatial organisation principle "which stands for a synthesis of current planning concepts and which is applied to the organisation of the plan area" (Faludi, 1996: 44). In order to communicate this spatial organisation principle, it must be formulated in such a way that it

- sticks in the planners' mind
- entices the planners to act out the underlying ideas, and
- assists planners in conveying to the public at large the point of planning and of plans.

Metaphors help in this regard, because they are easily understandable and suggestive and therefore have strong communicative power, often provoking discussions about specific issues. In addition spatial images are not neutral. They are representations that mirror the thoughts and observations of professionals, who reproduce these images in texts, maps, graphics and so on. Spatial representations are embedded in the practice of scientific discourse and the institutional complexity of society (Blotevogel, 2001). So spatial metaphors are famous for their colourful and associative capacities (Jensen, Richardson, 2004) but what has to be borne in mind is that they are selective and not impartial by nature – they are an instrument to communicate certain issues, but misunderstandings and misinterpretation can easily arise. Metaphors greatly enhance our understanding of material/physical space and territory and are used to support verbal statements of policy or they directly express policies, so an unreflective use of spatial metaphors is one central danger, because it implicitly repeats the asymmetries of power inherent in traditional social theory (Faludi, 1996; Smith, 1993).

Some examples of cartographic visualisations, notably the metaphor of the “Blue Banana” have been very successful in raising awareness and understanding about complex spatial development trends (Dühr, 2003; Jensen, Richardson, 2004). So we should not ignore the possible political effects of such metaphors. According to Foucault (in Smith, 1993) spatial, strategic metaphors decipher discourse and enable one to grasp precisely the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of relations of power. The production of space is not only an inherently political process, but the use of spatial metaphors – far from providing just an innocent if evocative imagery – actually taps directly into questions of social power.

2.3 Conclusions

Spatial development policy on the European and transnational scale did not develop by accident. The internationalisation of planning was due to the realisation of the Single European Market that enforced the breakdown of nationalistic trade barriers, encouraged economic integration, and promoted regional interdependencies. This was responsible for an increase in cross-border and transnational activity in the form of decisions and projects. What emerged within the EU was a kind of European spatial development policy which sought to analyse spatial development trends and established policies and instruments in order to influence the future development of regions, to foster integration on a cross-border and transnational scale, and to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and sustainable economic development. But as a policy, European spatial development policy is not clearly defined, nor is it a competence of the European Union. Rather, it emerged because it was deemed necessary to conceptualise policy aims and to co-ordinate policies. As the research highlighted, one important policy field with strong links with European spatial development policy is European regional policy. The latter provided very important incentives for actors at a regional, national, cross-border and transnational level to take initiatives, which promised more economic, social and territorial cohesion. European regional policy is very much an expression and outcome of the political belief that market forces alone will not contribute to competitiveness and cohesion. A conclusion of this work is that what underlies European regional policy is the idea of a European model of society, with economic and social cohesion being at its heart. The chapter discussed the different models of society identified in Europe so far and emphasised that the principles and values of the EMS, like equal opportunities (from a spatial point of view access to services is a precondition and thus a basic element of the EMS), sustainability and the efficient and sustainable use of the existing spatial potential (territorial

capital) to foster economic development, etc., are very much interwoven with European spatial development policy.

Due to the emerging new forms of cross-border and transnational connection, of functional regions and structures in Europe, we require new cross-border, transnational and European perspectives. In order to better understand spatial conditions for development, co-operation on all geographic scales is necessary. Here the transnational scale in particular is quite a new dimension in spatial development policy and a highly complex one, too. There is no direct policy level to refer to, nor are there any established networks/institutions, and so co-operation at transnational level has to unite many different actors and stakeholders, planning cultures and languages, and it faces widely differing conditions with regard to competence and political power and resources. Transnational co-operation involving national, regional and local authorities is supported under the strand B of the Community Initiative INTERREG III – the strand which relates most closely to the agenda of the European Spatial Development Perspective – and aims to promote better integration within the Union through the formation of large European regions. Working on the transnational scale first of all means creating spatial awareness and helping the perception of these new spaces as new frameworks for action. This is a new challenge for spatial planners because they face the need to develop the mental capacity to grasp this spatial scale and the inter-relationships arising from it. New forms of dialogue, new discourses and tools are necessary in order to develop a common understanding and work-base on the European and transnational scale. This part of the research discussed different ways of conceptualising space by focusing on the role of tools like spatial visions, concepts and metaphors in European and transnational spatial development policy. The three tools are different with respect to their character, and they are used in a multitude of ways but have a great deal to do with each other.

Spatial visions (the term refers to the process and its different “products”, such as visions, guidelines, perspectives, schemes and processes) help to conceptualise space. The construction of identity for a geographical region and the declaration of shared principles and aims are common goals in visioning processes, which interestingly are often of a verbal nature, eluding visionary maps, which depict the territory. The examples investigated in this work show that their results hardly deserve to be named visions, but – if organised in a networking process – nevertheless contribute substantially to developing a common understanding of specific spatial development issues in an area and to formulating suitable policy measures. Very different kinds of visions exist, and their meaning, effectiveness and potentials are highly dependent on the (often very different) conditions under which they have been elaborated.

Spatial concepts help to frame thinking and are often vague, flexible and amorphous, especially on the European and transnational scale. They allow for different interpretations, amongst others so as to avoid deadlock in policy discourse and to operate as a basis for future co-operation. Spatial concepts are continuously developed, foster discourse and promote policy-oriented perceptions of the spatial structure. Furthermore, they help to create a common language and attract the attention and mobilise the energy of representatives of national planning towards the future. Images and symbolic representations are often elements of spatial concepts. Some also rest on metaphors and derive strength from it.

Spatial metaphors, as pictures and images, relate to the transfer of experiences from one realm to another and have long been in existence. Metaphors provide memorable images that simplify and structure people's thinking. They help to illustrate policy aims and provoke discussions. Metaphors and images often meet with controversial reactions, for reasons, which include their communicative efficacy and power, but nevertheless are important for the initiation of discussion around certain issues. They provoke and guide political discourse and have been very successful in raising awareness and fostering understanding of complex spatial development trends.

The discussion has shown that the three tools are different in character but can each contribute to the shaping of the minds of actors in spatial development. They help to conceptualise space and foster discourse around the European and transnational dimension of spatial development. In contrast to metaphors, spatial concepts used on the European and transnational scale mostly convey a vague, flexible and amorphous message allowing for different interpretations. Both tools are often elements of spatial visions or vision processes. All three tools must be regarded as communicative and planning tools at one and the same time, but one has to be aware that such tools are to be used differently, depending on the context.

3. Polycentric development

The EU is often considered as an “unfinished union on the way to an unknown destination” (Weiler, 1999) moving ahead steadily: from six to 27 member states, to market integration, common monetary union, free movement of people, goods, services and capital. The growing interconnectedness of the global world, changing boundaries, eroding traditional modes of governance, etc. have profound implications. National decision-makers must refocus on international co-operation and new institutional arrangements are needed to take up the new challenges. But also existing organisations must adapt their working methods and policy co-ordination is badly needed. Europe today needs a new economic strategy, a new vision for the future (Gretschmann, 2003). As outlined in section 2.2.2 spatial concepts are regarded as a tool to foster discourse on policy-oriented perceptions of the spatial structure of Europe. Spatial concepts dealing with future spatial development are regarded as necessary for policy orientation and to reveal the territorial capital. The elaboration of such concepts provides the possibility to discuss current spatial trends and must be seen as a framework which helps to structure intercultural and inter-sectoral dialogue. In European spatial development policy two spatial concepts in particular gained popularity in the last ten years, namely polycentric development and territorial cohesion. These concepts are becoming more and more key concepts for European spatial development and related policies and that is why the focus is on them. Chapters 3 and 4 aim to deepen our insight into the role of polycentric development and territorial cohesion in European spatial development processes and how they emerged, are used, interpreted and further developed and which interests and meanings underlie them. The chapters argue that if examined closely, discourse around these spatial concepts is fragmented and contradictory and related to a European model of society. This focus reflects a social-constructivist perspective which is based on the assumption that social reality is produced and reproduced by social actors. This will be the basis to examine how far these two concepts are used and interpreted in the transnational case study region.

Polycentric development is a concept widely referred to since it emerged in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP, CEC, 1999) and may be considered the key concept for spatial development in Europe. The origin of the concept lies in the high concentration of economic activities in the European core (called pentagon; CEC, 1999). Although the EU is one of the largest and economically strongest macro-regions in the world, it still suffers

from major regional disparities. The so-called 20-40-50 pentagon of the EU with 15 member states (defined by the metropolises of London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg) covers 20% of the territory, where 40% of EU population lives and works and in which 50% of the GDP are gained and is described as the only zone of global integration in Europe. With the enlargement to an EU of 27 member states, the very high concentration of activities in the central part of Europe persists, with a GDP of 46.5% in 14% of the territory and 32% citizens living and working there. The ESDP says that current spatial development trends indicate a further selective concentration of high-quality and global functions in the core area of the EU and a few other metropolitan cities. In view of the expansion of the EU, any further concentration of spatial development in a single, globally outstanding integration zone would reinforce a polarised spatial structure in Europe and lead to increasing disparities between the core zone and an expanding periphery. With the concept of polycentric development and with its balanced spatial development model, European spatial development policy aims to counteract this trend. Polycentricity is meant to improve the spatial balance in Europe and is used as a normative notion, so it is a policy outcome that the authors of the ESDP would like to see happen. Whether it does is another matter (Atkinson, Dühr, 2002). So the ESDP regards the lack of other zones of global integration as disadvantageous for future economic competitiveness in Europe in order to promote a more spatially balanced European growth pattern. Therefore, especially with regard to enlargement, the pentagon should be complemented by other Global Economic Integration Zones (GEIZ) in Europe. This is the stated aim despite the increasing environmental and social problems that such zones are presently facing (Davoudi, 2003). GEIZs are mentioned as an important instrument to accelerate economic growth and job creation. It was emphasised that the European Union has only one such integration zone (the pentagon) whereas the USA has several out-standing economic integration zones on a global scale: West Coast (California), East Coast, Southwest (Texas), Mid-West (CEC, 1999). This is an interesting comparison but here we have to be aware that despite major efforts for European integration (Single European Market, European Monetary Union, the Schengen agreement for the effective abolition of borders), Europe is still a system of nation states with separate languages and cultures, in a way that the US, Canada and Australia (and other continental-scale nations like China, Brazil and Argentina) are not (Hall, 2002).

BOX 1: Pentagon – Global Economic Integration Zone (GEIZ)⁸

Under the heading of polycentric development the ESDP argues that at the moment only one Global Economic Integration Zone (the pentagon) exists on the European scale that should be complemented by additional such zones. The ESDP does not deal in more detail with what GEIZs are. Here it must be emphasised that the pentagon cannot be regarded as one homogeneous area/zone in Europe because it covers rural areas and many different cities and urban regions "... which participate in a very unequal manner in the integration of the world economy" (Krätke, 2001: 108). There is a huge difference, for instance, between Frankfurt-Main and Wuppertal, Paris and Bielefeld, Amsterdam and Duisburg, and so on. Even within the EU's core area, the urban system is very heterogeneous in economic/functional terms and comprises a highly selective distribution of "global" economic functions. The term GEIZ expresses the intention to identify spatial units that are more responsive to global challenges. In the study of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR, 2002c: 115), the Global Economic Integration Zone is defined as a "network of interlinked metropolitan regions that are actively involved in the world economy and capable of playing a role in redressing the balance of the European territory in relation to the pentagon". Networks are regarded as crucial institutional innovations which help to form new flexible governance systems that link existing structures with new ones in order to improve the approach to an increasingly complex environment (Ache, 2001). Krätke (2001: 108) argues that such GEIZs do "... not proceed by means of extended 'zones' within the EU, but via a series of geographical nodes. These nodes exist in the form of specific location centres within the European urban system, primarily the European metropolitan regions. Within this group of leading location centres there is again an uneven distribution of global economic functions". There are centres with considerable development potential, which will come up and cause regroupings of centres and peripheries. But those cities which have hitherto the function of major location centres in a national economic area, now find themselves in a difficult position. In future these cities will need to integrate into the European network of metropolitan regions if they want to avoid being relegated to the position of urban regions with a limited functional specialisation and a low economic innovation and self-regulation capacity. Krätke furthermore argues that, with regard to the existing imbalances in the European urban and regional system, the extension of a polycentric structure with several nodes would be a plausible way of proceeding. One way for achieving this is e.g. to strengthen the current "peripheral" metropolitan regions and large European cities. It can be regarded as a change of paradigm to provoke and motivate urban regions to think about future development, functional specialisation and co-operation possibilities in order to be able to play a role in a higher league. By co-operating they achieve a new critical mass that can sustain and help businesses, services and facilities to grow, and so on (Hague, Kirk, 2003). Two essential features of GEIZs are the function of agglomeration (economic and demographic

⁸ These boxes discuss more detailed information about some key notions used in the polycentric development discourse

mass) and the function of transcontinental gateway (integrating these areas into the world economy through *Gateway Cities* that are strongly connected to international trade). “The intrinsic feature of the Global Economic Integration Zone is that it reaches a level of development such that it can find its growth capacities within itself” (French Presidency, 2000). It also means to connect a number of places to form a network and by co-operating they can achieve a critical mass that can sustain and help business to grow.

Polycentric and balanced spatial development is a response to the persisting wide gaps in competitiveness between the central parts of the European Union and its peripheries and has brought to the fore the concept of balanced territorial competitiveness or equity. Balanced competitiveness was one of the most fundamental issues already in an early stage of the ESDP elaboration process and became one of the conceptual cornerstones of the ESDP. It can be interpreted as an effort to combine two different discourses on the future spatial economic development of the European Union (Zonneveld, 2000). The concept polycentric development aims to provide a response to the growing contradiction between economic efficiency, individual choice and unequal territorial opportunities. Achieving this objective requires an optimum level of territorial organisation that encourages co-operation, complementarity and the use of potential. Functional-spatial division of labour between metropolises, large cities and small/medium-sized cities is one major aim of the concept of polycentric development, but here we have to bear in mind that cities and regions themselves often have only a modest control capacity in this respect and are faced with a difficult labour market situation which frequently leaves them with very little room for manoeuvre when it comes to a selective location policy (Krätke, 2001). European polycentricity is designed to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European continent through supporting the co-operation of urban areas with the demographic weight and economic potential needed to create a balance with the decision-making centres located in the pentagon. As the reader will see in chapter 5, on a wider geographic scale the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle (the so-called CENTROPE region) has tried to gain demographic and economic weight on European and global scale through transnational co-operation focusing amongst others on location marketing.

A key challenge for the future will be how to support the establishment of such Global Economic Integration Zones on European level and to avoid at the same time that these activities lead to a centralisation or concentration on national or regional level. The concept of polycentric development emphasises the importance of cities and towns as crystallisation points for development. They are identified as motors for regional development, in

particular with regard to networks and co-operation activities between cities, which can lead to new opportunities and possibilities for a region.

However, this general description of the concept in the ESDP (CEC, 1999) apart, it remains very vague and broad and is often accommodating different objectives. But – as outlined in section two – vague concepts might be unavoidable in European spatial development policy, bearing in mind the diverse environment of the European Union, its complex set-up with changing conditions and territory. This chapter raises the question of how the concept of polycentric development emerged in the European policy arena, how it came into the ESDP. It investigates terms often used in connection with polycentric development and tries to find out which assumptions, meanings and theories underlie it. Finally, the section explores the political relevance by looking at how polycentric development is interpreted and further developed by different studies and actors and which role it plays in EU policy making, especially in regional policy.

3.1 Emergence of polycentric development in the ESDP

The concept of a balanced and polycentric city system was presented for the first time during the ESDP process and is also included in the final version of the ESDP (CEC, 1999). The ESDP represents an agreement on common objectives and concepts for the future development of the territory of the European Union. The aim of spatial development policy is to work towards balanced and sustainable development. Thus, the three fundamental goals of European policy should be achieved equally in all the regions of the European Union:

- Economic and social cohesion
- Conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage
- More balanced competitiveness of the European territory (CEC, 1999)

The balanced and sustainable spatial development described by the goals mentioned above should be pursued by the European institutions, the national, regional and local authorities by following the three policy guidelines:

- Development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural relationship
- Securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge, and
- Sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage.

Polycentric development can be regarded as the key concept of the ESDP (Waterhout, 2002) and therefore a more detailed look at its emergence within the ESDP elaboration process will follow. The concept “polycentric development” emerged during the preparation of the European Spatial Development Perspective in 1994. The phrase “balanced and polycentric system of city regions” appeared for the first time in the “Principles for a European Spatial Development Policy” during the German presidency (Informal council, 1994). In 1994, the ESDP working group of the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) and the Committee on Spatial Development (CSD⁹) formulated the aim to preserve and strengthen a decentralised or polycentric, hierarchically structured urban system whereby this principle should not be implemented rigidly but should be regarded only as a general objective aiming at an even spatial distribution of living standards and at the preservation of regional characteristics developed according to the historic background. Furthermore the group argued that concentration or de-concentration of urban activities depended on three factors, the geographical level, the function and regional characteristics (CEC and CSD, 1994).

Three years later, in the first official draft of the ESDP (Informal meeting, 1997), the balanced and polycentric system of cities was mentioned as one policy aim and option for the European territory. It was argued that planning policies would seek to improve the relations between towns and cities through co-operation, emphasising complementarity between urban centres. This can be interpreted as a change (at that time) of regional policy philosophy in the European Union. It was argued that cohesion couldn’t be achieved simply by taking into account the inter-regional dimension, but that the inter-urban dimension is equally important. A spatial concept considering only a single urbanised centre and “the remainder of the territory” was regarded as unacceptable. So new prospects offered to the periphery were required which could favour a more polycentric organisation of the territory.

Within the policy options the term polycentric system is no longer mentioned, but complementarity and co-operation between towns and cities are emphasised and formulated in following way:

- “Promotion of integrated spatial development strategies for clusters of towns and cities in cross-border areas;

⁹ The predecessor of the sub-committee of Spatial and Urban Development (SUD) established in 2001 was the Committee on Spatial Development (CSD). It was established in 1992 for the “purpose of exchanging information and assisting with the joint deliberation of member states and the Commission concerning the development of the Community territory” (Faludi, Waterhout, 2002: 56) and played a key role in the ESDP process.

- Co-operation within networks of towns and cities at the transnational and European levels, and of smaller towns in sparsely populated rural areas and in a number of regions lagging economically behind;
- Improvement of connections between national/international networks and additionally regional/local networks;
- Strengthening co-operation at the regional and local levels with cities and towns of Eastern and Central Europe and the Mediterranean countries” (Informal meeting, 1997: 61).

Furthermore the aim of a balanced and polycentric system of cities was combined with the new objective of Europe’s global competitiveness. The development of the strategic role of Global Cities and Gateway Cities with special regard to peripheral areas in the European territory was emphasised in order to foster dynamic, attractive and competitive towns and cities. Both documents (CEC and CSD, 1994 and Informal meeting, 1997) include the phrase “balanced and polycentric system of cities”. A shift of emphasis from aiming at an even spatial distribution of living standards to the aim of improving the relations and networks between cities can be identified.

BOX 2: Global Cities

Polycentric development at European level should also contribute to Europe’s global competitiveness. Here Global Cities (the European core – the pentagon – also includes several Global Cities) are regarded as strategic sites in the global economy because of their concentration of command functions and high-level producer-service firms oriented to world markets. More generally we can say that these cities have high levels of internationalisation in their economy and in their broader social structure and can therefore partly be called Global Cities (Sassen, 2000). Such large cities are more and more disconnected from their territories. The definition of Global City is quite restrictive – according to Sassen (2000: 4) they are centres for world trade and banking for centuries and are, beyond these long-standing functions, “(1) command points in the organisation of the world economy; (2) key locations and marketplaces for the leading industries of the current period – finance and specialised services for firms; and (3) major sites of production for these industries”. Regarding international top cities ranked by stock market value in 1997 London, Frankfurt, Paris, Zürich, Amsterdam and Milan (all part of the pentagon) are within the top 14 cities, whereby New York and Tokyo are the two most important ones. The “centre” in such cities is often regarded as synonym for creativity, innovation, interaction, think tanks, but the term can also evoke associations with the monolithism, monocentrism, centralisation, the arbitrariness of power, the dissymmetry of flows, injustice with regard to the noncentral/peripheral and thus dependent territories. The word polycentricity does not deny the advantages of the centrality but suggests, on the contrary, the balance in space, the division of the decision-making powers, the territorial harmony, the competition of the ideas, the emulation and the co-operation (Allain, 2002).

BOX 3: Gateway City

The ESDP argues that the regions of the EU can only be competitive and hence contribute to the reduction of unemployment if towns and cities, especially those outside the global integration zones and metropolitan regions, have enough economic potential. This argument includes, in particular, the so-called Gateway Cities, which provide access to the territory of the EU (large sea ports, inter-continental airports, trade fair and exhibition cities, cultural centres), and smaller towns and cities which are active regional centres revitalising stagnating rural regions. The Gateway Cities also include metropolitan regions located on the periphery, which can use specific advantages, such as low labour costs or specific links with economic centres outside Europe or neighbouring non-member states (CEC, 1999).

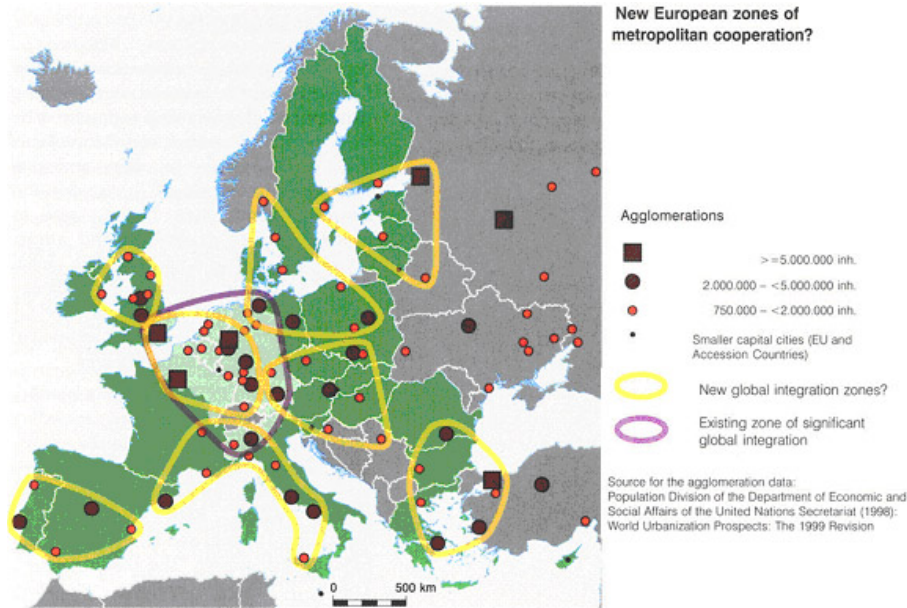
Gateway Cities are urban systems whose mass, competitiveness, dynamism and above all level of connectivity constitute aspects capable of influencing large surrounding areas (CPMR, 2002c). Furthermore Gateway Cities are locations, which are usually favourable, commanding sites, which act as a link between two areas and in many cases become primate cities. This was also expressed at the beginning of the post-socialist era when many cities – like Berlin, Vienna and Helsinki – lined themselves up as Gateway Cities to new markets (Newman, Thornley, 2003). Gateway Cities “are capable of offering a broad range of ‘connecting’ functions, as well as drawing upon strong links with other parts of the world” (Burns, Roca Cladera, Ferrao, 2002). So for a given space, Gateway Cities are poles in a system of relations of which the distinctive feature is that major flows pass through them. The attraction and re-dissemination of all kinds of flows – material or informational – from abroad must be regarded as one key attribute. This “gate”-like function is in favour of both the development of interface activities and the development of activities enhancing those flows (ESPON 1.1.1, 2003b). An emerging contrast can be recognised between the capitals of the European core and the “gateway” or regional capitals in the more peripheral European regions. The capitals of the European core are dense clusters of cities closely networked through air, high-speed-train and telecommunications links, e.g. London, Paris, Frankfurt, Luxembourg, Brussels, Amsterdam. The “gateway” or “regional capital” cities in the more peripheral European regions are dominating a large but less densely-populated territory – Dublin, Edinburgh, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Madrid, Lisbon plus the capitals of the new member states Ljubljana, Budapest, Prague, Warsaw and Tallinn. These cities are connected by air to the European core, even though they may be (and increasingly are) the cores of local high-speed-train systems. This leads to an interesting degree of competition between a higher-order city that appears to control such a wide sector of the European space, and next-order cities controlling parts of that space (as, for instance, Copenhagen versus Stockholm and Helsinki; Berlin versus Vienna; Madrid versus Lisbon). Additionally, their roles can be divided between a “political” and a “commercial” capital, like Rome and Milan or Madrid and Barcelona. Such intermediate-sized Gateway Cities have proved to be relatively dynamic in the 1970s and 1980s because they invariably act as regional airport hubs, with a range of long-distance

destinations (Madrid) and as the hubs of regional high-speed-train systems (Madrid, Rome). Furthermore, some of them have a wide variety of global service functions, especially where they dominate linguistic regions (as Madrid for Latin America). With the enlargement of the EU from 15 to 25 members, the eastern Gateway Cities (like Berlin and Vienna) promise to play new roles in their respective areas, returning to the roles they played before 1914 (Hall, 2002). This is the object of the investigations on the case study region, the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle.

In 1998, in the completely revised draft version of the ESDP, city networks are regarded as instruments to compensate for imbalances and dysfunctions of city systems on European and transnational scale. City networks are assumed to help to find solutions to the question of division of functions between medium-sized cities and larger metropolitan areas, furthermore they should help to avoid polarisation in one conurbation (Informal meeting, 1998). Finally, as already mentioned, the concept of polycentric development became one out of three spatial development guidelines of the ESDP final version (CEC, 1999) and is applied to three different spatial scales, the European, transnational/national and the regional scale.

On the **European scale**, the main argument is to strengthen several larger zones of global economic integration in the EU, equipped with high-quality, global functions and services, including the peripheral areas, through transnational spatial development strategies (see Figure 6) – which also shows the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle in the core of a possible future zone of global economic integration. The efforts undertaken to approach this will be highlighted in chapter 5.

Figure 6: New European zones of metropolitan co-operation?



Source: Mehlbye, 2000

Analysing the content of the ESDP concerning polycentric development on the European level we can identify two main aims:

- to improve the spatial balance in Europe through using the potential of all regions, respectively to avoid further excessive economic and demographic concentration in the core area of the EU (\Rightarrow spatial balance)
- to create and enlarge several dynamic Global Economic Integration Zones on the European level for accelerating economic growth and job creation in order to have a stronger integration of the European regions into the global economy (\Rightarrow global competitiveness)

So with the concept of polycentric development pursues the ESDP the twin policy aims of (economic) development or competitiveness and spatial balance.

The **transnational and national scale** policy options are described in the chapter “a polycentric and balanced spatial development in the EU” as follows:

- “Strengthening a polycentric and more balanced system of metropolitan regions, city clusters and city networks through closer co-operation between structural policy and the policy on the Trans-European Networks (TENs) and improvement of the links between international/national and regional/local transport networks.

-
- Promoting integrated spatial development strategies for city clusters in individual member states, within the framework of transnational and cross-border co-operation, including corresponding rural areas and their small cities and towns.
 - Strengthening co-operation on particular topics in the field of spatial development through cross-border and transnational networks.
 - Promoting co-operation at regional, cross-border and transnational level; with towns and cities in the countries of Northern, Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean region; strengthening North-South links in Central and Eastern Europe and West-East links in Northern Europe” (CEC, 1999: 21).

The chapter on “indigenous development, diverse and productive rural areas” gives a hint to polycentric development on **regional scale** by describing that “in a polycentric urban system the small and medium-sized towns and their inter-dependencies form important hubs and links, especially for rural regions. In rural ‘problem’ regions only these towns are capable of offering infrastructure and services for economic activities in the region and easing access to the larger labour markets. The towns in the countryside, therefore, require particular attention in the preparation of integrated rural development strategies” (CEC, 1999: 24).

So the ESDP discusses the concept on three levels and shows that it has different meanings on different spatial scales. Here we have to emphasise that there can also be a contradiction between different scales – polycentric development on European level might foster monocentric development on national level. Krätke describes a polycentric urban system as a “system in which a whole series of ‘high-ranking’ location centres exists side by side with a large number of small and medium-sized towns and cities”, whereby he emphasises that such a polycentric urban system is especially relevant in the pan-European perspective. The difficulty is that both polycentric and monocentric urban systems are to be found in the individual member states and in central eastern European countries and that the applicability of the notion to the whole of the EU needs further discussion. The ESDP was criticised because it talks in many places about the “competitiveness” of cities, regions and the EU as a whole, but turns a blind eye to the fact that strengthening the competitive position of specific centres in the European urban system does not automatically entail an improvement in the competitiveness of the pan-European urban system (Krätke, 2001). Furthermore, we have to bear in mind that if we have networks with network nodes there are also areas in between which often suffer from population loss, demotivation and economic decline (e.g. in parts of Eastern Germany) – so planning for shrinking cities/areas will be another major challenge for the future.

Interestingly, one of the frequently used arguments is that, whilst national governments are largely impotent to attract inward investments to improve their position through the development of new forms of social and cultural capital, efficient infrastructure and so on, it is assumed that cities (and city regions) can do so (Atkinson, Dühr, 2002). Furthermore, it is not certain that competitiveness on the world market and the economic and social cohesion of the European regional system can complement each other without conflicts ensuing. On the other hand, a policy geared towards strengthening world market competitiveness could cause an ongoing development of the leading regional economic centres in Europe and therefore foster a polarised spatial structure. This would contradict the aim of territorial, economic and social cohesion of the European urban and regional system. “Many decision-makers in the field of politics and economics refer to the practical constraints imposed by globalisation. They argue that world market competitiveness can be achieved or maintained at the pan-European level primarily by strengthening the core area of the EU, which they see as the ‘core zone of world economic integration’ with the greatest concentration of global economic functions and the highest potential for growth” (Krätke, 2001: 112). So in a globalising economy, territories and not just firms increasingly find themselves in competition with each other and therefore, weak and lagging territories risk exclusion and decline to a larger extent than in the past (Camagni, 2002).

In spatial planning, cyclical changes of terms can be observed (Schindegger, 1999) and therefore it is necessary to see whether and to what extent polycentric development is new in comparison with existing theories (location theories like central place theory). E.g. the **central place theory** developed by Christaller (1933) and Lösch (1940) was designed to explain the size, number and distribution of towns in the belief that some ordering principles govern distribution. The central place is specialised in selling various goods and services and is part of a hierarchy with other central places whereby the order is defined by the functions of central places. The theory explains the hierarchical decentralisation of cities by the fact that goods and services command service and market areas of different sizes.

Regarding the character of the concept of polycentric development, respectively, to distinguish it from earlier spatial concepts like central place theory, it may be distinguished by the following features: Polycentric development (Schindegger, Tatzberger 2002):

- is a dynamic concept, where the centres are not seen as provider but as development engine for the regions;
- recognises city systems as networks characterised by functional sharing of tasks and specialisation and not only as balanced non-monocentric settlement structures with a hierarchy of cities;
- motivates to use and activate the existing potentials;

-
- is dealing with different geographical levels (European, transnational, national, ...);

In general, the interest in polycentric development is strengthened by the hypothesis that polycentric urban systems are more efficient and equitable than both monocentric urban systems and dispersed small settlements (ESPON 1.1.1, 2003b). The logic behind polycentricity is to give scope for specialisation and complementarity. “A polycentric approach aims to optimise the benefits of scale and clustering, while minimising the disbenefits of rising costs and congestion associated with over-concentration of development” (CDCR SUD, 2003). So the concept is based on the assumption that co-operation of cities or metropolitan co-operation constitute a new policy option also for local actors which has the potential to overcome negative effects of urban competitiveness (Heeg, Klagge, Ossenbrügge, 2003).

The idea of polycentric development is not new, but the ESDP introduced not only a new European scale but has also marked a shift in its utility from being predominantly analytical to being normative (Davoudi, 2003). Another point of attention is the fact that the concept does not only concern the morphological structure of the distribution of cities and towns in space and by size but includes also as a main element the functional integration of several locations in terms of division of labour concerning specific central functions. Only in this way can the intended effect be achieved: the rise in rank to the next higher functional level of centres. Thus, polycentric development can be considered as the ideal situation where cities and towns are crystallisation points for regional development through networking and co-operation which creates new potentials for regional development (Schindegger, Tatzberger, 2003). So the idea of polycentric development is not to weaken the pentagon (besides, there is serious doubt whether policy would be able to do that) but that urban networks regard themselves as potential GEIZs and to look for possible measures and fields of co-operation. Polycentricity regards urban networks not only as a description of the changing settlement systems but also as a new spatial development policy concept emphasising co-operation and competitiveness (Müller, 2001). A key message to foster discourse around possible new Global Economic Integration Zones in Europe is to look for measures and to form networks. Cities and regions should regard themselves in a city network or respectively as part of a possible GEIZ and look for its potentials and spatial characteristics in order to form a counterweight to the one large growth zone in Europe and to support growth impulses in a sustainable way. In order to better understand the assumptions and meanings underlying the idea of polycentric development the next section deals with relevant regional development theories.

3.2 Meanings and theories underlying polycentric development

The division of labour – leading to specialisation – is one fundamental factor underlying economic theories, which does not have to, but can, be regarded also from a spatial point of view. Specialisation enables an area to achieve significant agglomeration economies, develop territorial capital, become more competitive and thereby attract enterprises. Spatial distribution is often ignored in economic theories but is a crucial element and topic of the polycentricity debate. Spatial planning claims for itself the role to direct and shape spatial development in order to guarantee the proper use of limited and non-renewable resources. There are theories, which claim that the market alone is perfectly able to supply the right answers to the right questions (OECD, 2001). One fundamental theory of regional development is the **neo-classic economic theory**, whereby “neo” stands for the return to the traditional welfare-economic objectives, which regard state interventions as unacceptable. The neo-classical theory explains that optimum use of resources and a fair distribution of income and economic growth depend on the market mechanism functioning – so the neo-classical theory assumes equilibrium and convergence tendencies. But the neo-classical theory of regional development was always criticised mainly on two points:

- the assumed inherent tendency towards equilibrium;
- the implication that economic policy should be restricted to guaranteeing the functions of market mechanism (Maier, Tödtling, 1996).

However, factors exist that prevent the market mechanism from functioning and which should be overcome from a neo-classical point of view. The factors which prevent market mechanisms from functioning are considered amongst others “distorting interventions of government” (e.g. market entry barriers) but also different types of transaction costs (e.g. insufficient transport connections, an inadequate educational system). Measures resulting from such an analysis include the integration of peripheral regions into the market through the provision of infrastructure, opening-up of new locations by roads, establishing a modern educational system, removal of administrative trade barriers on the regional level.

As already described in the ESDP (CEC, 1999), the fair distribution of income and economic growth is not a reality within the European territory where the economic activities to a large extent are located in the pentagon and a tendency towards equilibrium through market forces alone cannot be recognised. Myrdal – a classical representative of the **polarisation theory** – fundamentally questioned the validity of neo-classic economic theory for underdeveloped regions and proposed a centre-periphery-model as an alternative concept (Rauch, 1999). The basis for this was that – contrary to

the optimum equilibrium tendency assumption of neo-classical theory – prosperous and stagnating areas exist in an economy side by side and this often results in considerable differences in income and prices in different regions, countries and branches. The uneven economic linkages between centre and periphery were identified as factors which aggravate disparities. This results in a draining of resources from the periphery to the centre because the locational advantages (lower transaction costs) in the centre by far overrule the cost advantage of wages in the periphery.

So the polarisation theory explains unequal and diverging development and points out that increasing economies of scale lead to growing concentration in only a few cities. Therefore, development is inseparably connected with inequality. It says that the market mechanism does not foster balance but supports development differences. Therefore national (European) policy is needed to reduce the differences between regions (Maier, Tödtling, 1996). This cumulative development led the majority of regional scientists to abandon the optimistic neo-classical vision of a long-term trend towards equalisation of territorial conditions and to fully embrace the idea of the need for re-equilibration policy interventions. In the absence of basic “preconditions” like e.g. infrastructure, accessibility, general education and basic public services, growth could never start in a region, given the strong locational advantages of the other competitor sites (OECD, 2001). So in the 1970’s Myrdal’s model led to a “change of paradigm” in regional development thinking. The polarisation theory is also one basic theoretical assumption for the legitimization of the EU’s regional policy (Structural and Cohesion Funds). While the neo-classic theory concentrates on the efficiency goal and disregards questions of distribution, in the polarisation theory the task of balancing distribution-inequality is in the foreground (Maier, Tödtling, 1996).

Whereas classical representatives of the polarisation theory (here especially Myrdal) regard polarisation as negative, representatives of the **growth pole theory** also see positive sides to polarisation. They trust that dispersion effects dominate over deprivation effects that are regarded as the starting point of a development strategy (Maier, Tödtling, 1996). The growth pole theory was developed in France in the 1950s. Initially it did not focus on spatial poles but on industrial growth poles. This idea was then transferred to the regional dimension at the end of the 1950s and gained worldwide popularity. In the sixties and seventies much literature was published about the idea of growth poles, but the analysis of the regional and spatial connections was mainly done by Boudeville and Lasuén. It is assumed that a growth pole needs for its emergence the agglomeration advantages of a city and the variety of the functions cumulated there. In order to pass growth impulses on to the surrounding countryside, the city must be embedded in a functionally interlaced settlement system (Maier, Tödtling, 1996). Regional

planners appropriated the assessments of the growth pole theory under the slogan “**decentralised concentration**”. Peter Hall mentions that the ESDP adopts a central principle of polycentricity, allied to decentralised concentration. This principle was adopted in spatial planning long ago and aimed to disperse economic development from congested urban regions and to re-concentrate it in other urban centres. The aim of polycentric development on a European scale is not so much to redistribute but to encourage a significantly higher level of growth in less developed regions and cities (Hall, 2002).

The concept of polycentric development includes elements of both the polarisation theory and the growth pole theory. On the one hand, the polarisation theory can be regarded as the basic assumption underlying the argumentation of the ESDP – that without state interventions the concentration in the European territory will increase. On the other hand, it recognises the idea of growth pole theory based on the concept of polycentric development, which should help to foster a more balanced spatial development in Europe. Furthermore, the theories mentioned above also reflect a double trade-off: An increasing division of labour, which leads to specialisation, is acknowledged as one basic element of economic growth, but regional self-sustaining services should also be guaranteed. The main challenge lies in balancing these two aims.

Besides a first effort to analyse the different regional development theories and their relation to polycentric development, it also seems necessary to view polycentricity as a spatial concept which as such plays an important role in policy processes. Polycentric development may be described as a “Bridging Concept” (see chapter 2.2.2), since it merges two objectives discussed controversially for a long time. The ESDP encompasses both economic growth and balancing principles. Furthermore, the concept of polycentric development is based on a powerful metaphor. While the traditional core-periphery rationale represents a one-dimensional view of Europe, polycentricity represents a more diversified view of Europe, taking into account more indicators and showing the willingness to take a closer look at individual regions and their specific characteristics (Waterhout, 2002). The core-periphery model was criticised for its oversimplification of a complex and changing reality and for failing to acknowledge that there exist areas of deprivation within the core but also areas of growth within the periphery (Copus, 2001).

The storyline of polycentricity continues to hold something in stock for everyone (for EU decision-makers wishing to justify high-speed rail connections between national capitals as well as regional policy-makers arguing for improved road connections between secondary cities in the name of polycentric urban development). The overall context of the rhetoric of polycentric development are competitive European cities and regions which

each pursue individual growth strategies (Peters, 2003). Davoudi (2003) also describes the different uses of the concept: urban planners use the concept as a strategic spatial planning tool; economic and human geographers use it to explain a specific form of urban structure and growth; EU Commissioners and their counterparts in member states promote the concept as a socio-economic policy goal; and civic leaders use the term for place-marketing (as we will see in the case study region in chapter 5), presenting it as synonymous with dynamism, pluralism, multi-culturalism as well as a symbol of modern lifestyle. The diverse interpretations of the concept of polycentric development are also a reflection of its inherent complexity (Kloosterman, Musterd, 2001). As outlined in section 2.2 this vagueness and ambiguity can be considered as both a weakness, because different people can use it for different purposes (the lack of clarity undermines an effective application) and a strength, because it facilitates political acceptance and allows a wide-spread usage within the European spatial planning community. Furthermore the concept provokes a “positive” image, which can be shaped and re-shaped (Davoudi, 2003). Hajer (1995) underlines this with the essential assumption of a discourse-coalition¹⁰ approach, which says that the political power of a text is not derived from its consistency but comes from its multi-interpretability.

3.3 Polycentric development – its enhancements and interpretations

3.3.1 Interpretations so far

Different policy research studies have tried to deal with polycentric development (as it was also done for the case study region – see chapter 5), sometimes under quite tough conditions from a scientific point of view (Bengs, 2004). These studies are important and useful approaches to deal with the concept of polycentric development in the European territory. The variety and number of studies dealing with the concept also gives a hint of the political interest in the further development of the concept. Interestingly, no study has fundamentally questioned the concept. It is assumed that a polycentric urban system is more efficient, more sustainable and more equitable than both monocentric and dispersed small settlements. The concept of polycentric development has two complementary aspects, the morphology which gives information about the distribution of urban areas in a given territory and the relations between urban areas, which refer to the

¹⁰ Discourse coalition: a group of actors who share a social construct, thus actors which favour a particular ‘story line’.

networks of flows and co-operation (ESPON 1.1.1, 2005). The following table tries to give an overview of studies dealing with polycentric development mainly on European scale which are described in more detail below. It shows the different methodological approaches, the typologies involved and the area covered.

Table 1: Polycentric development in different studies – overview

Study	Area covered	Method	Result/Typology	Year
French Presidency	EU+	Questionnaire	Identification of possible Global Economic Integration Zones	2000
SPESP	EU15 + Central South-Eastern Europe	Statistical analysis	Cities and urban-rural partnership, 7 regional types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – polycentric metropolitan areas – monocentric metropolitan areas – polycentric regions with medium-sized cities – monocentric regions with medium-sized cities – polycentric regions dominated by smaller cities – monocentric regions dominated by smaller cities – regions without a city >50,000 inhabitants 	2000
CPMR	Peripheral maritime regions in Europe	Statistical analysis, national experts	5 types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – peripheral gateways – rising stars – promising systems – dilemma systems – most peripheral systems 	2002
University Rennes/DATAR	EU15 +	Scenario building	Spatial scenarios Monocentrism ⇔ polycentricity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – concentration – diffuse metropolisation – unequal regional integration – polycentricity 	2002
ESPON 1.1.1 Final Report revised version	EU25 + Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland and Norway	Statistical analysis	Typology of Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAS) – Transnational/national FUA – Regional/local FUA 	2005

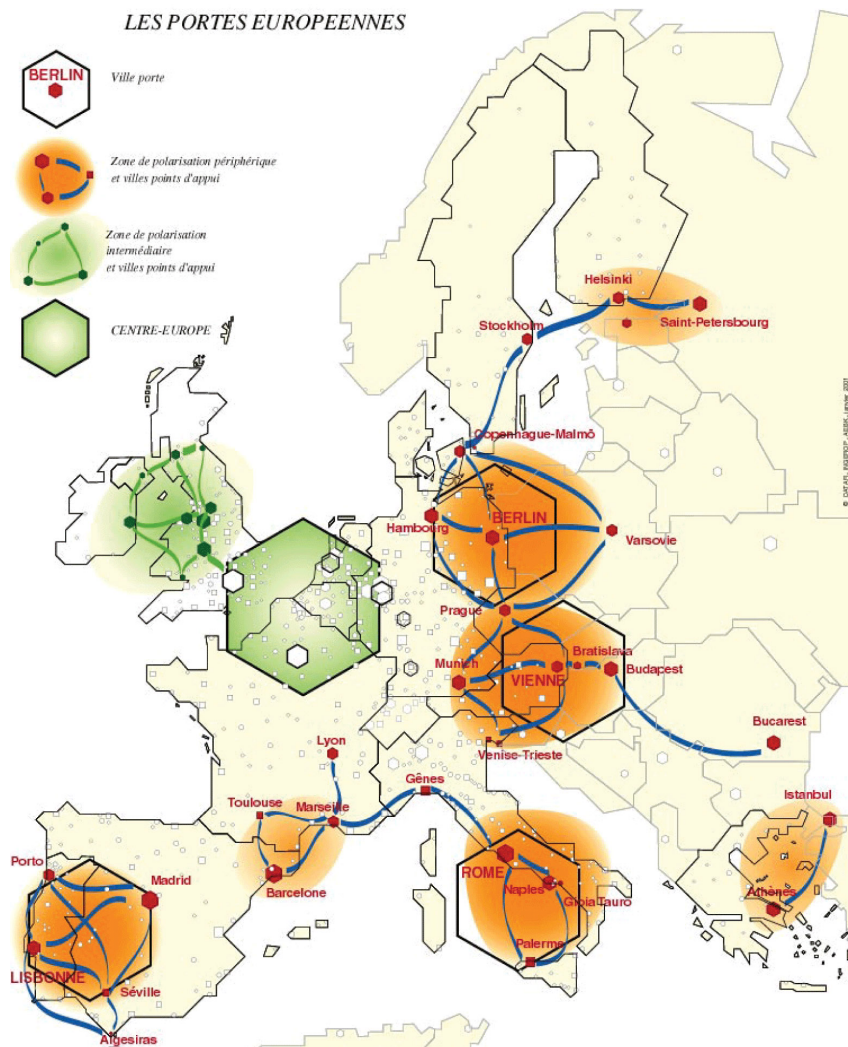
In 2000, the first attempt to visualise the goal of polycentric development on a European level is the study “Elaboration of a long term polycentric vision of the European space” commissioned by the **French presidency** and elaborated by Ingérop – économie et aménagement. The study deals with polycentricity in a long term perspective on the European level and tries to outline the aims of polycentric development as described in the ESDP and proposes additional Global Economic Integration Zones in Europe. The French regard the stimulation of new Global Economic Integration Zones on the European scale as a fundamental strategy to overcome hyper-concentration which results in diseconomies, including congestion, pollution, property inflation, and so on. On the basis of a questionnaire sent to the Committee on Spatial Development delegations, the study highlights in the first part two essential features of Global Economic Integration Zones:

- “The function of agglomeration, an economic and demographic mass that allows scale effects to operate and to express themselves through networking of the territory by the towns and infrastructures.
- The function of transcontinental gateway, integrating these areas into the world economy through Gateway Cities that are strongly connected in international trade.”

On the basis of these two concepts, the second part of the study proposes a method to identify potential Global Economic Integration Zones in the following way:

- First the identification of existing urban systems that gather metropolitan functions and can, through agglomeration, form world scale clusters.
- Second the major crossroads on terrestrial, maritime and even air traffic routes were identified with special attention to the new opportunities presented by areas in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.
- Finally a cross-analysis of these two maps (the agglomeration potential and the outward connexion opportunity) was combined and the strategic places identified. The assumption is that they have the potential for consolidating Global Economic Integration Zones” (French Presidency, 2000: 5).

Figure 7: The European gateways



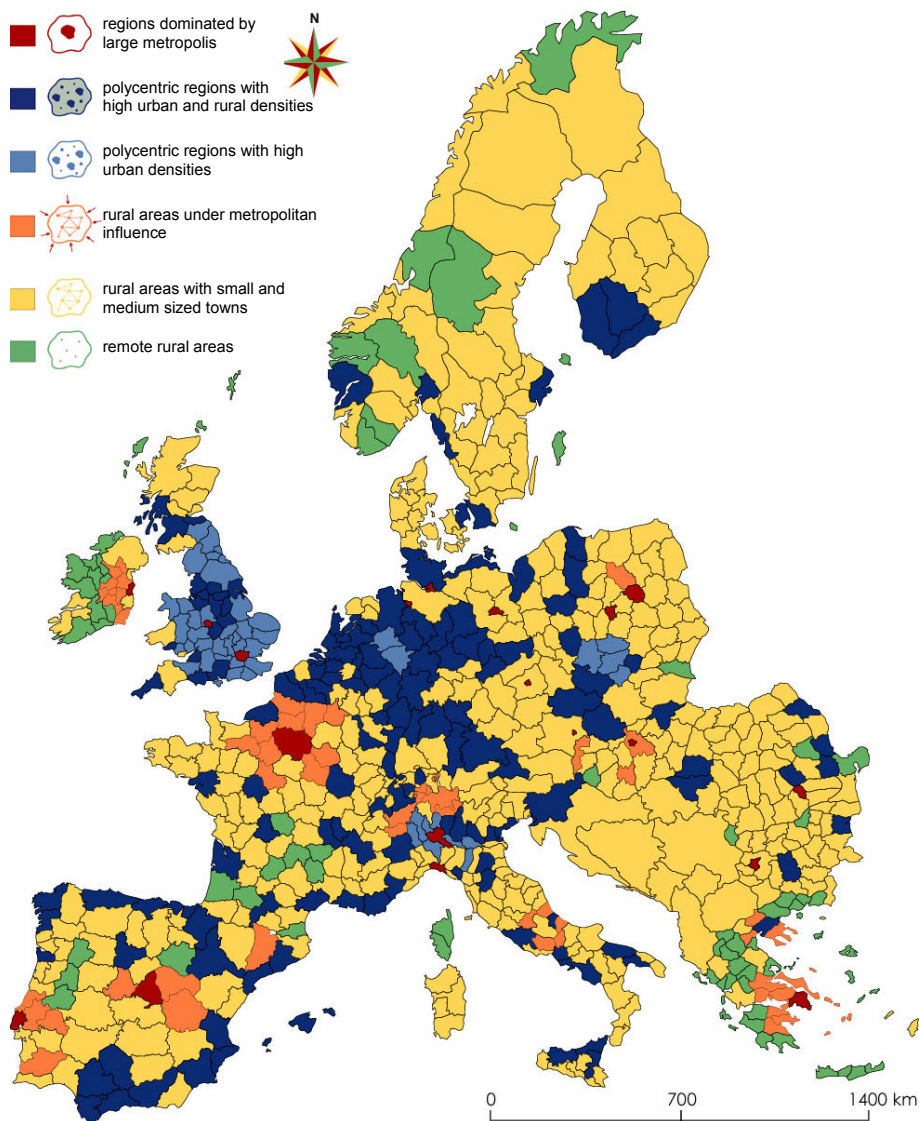
Source: French Presidency, 2000

The results of this approach show so-called European Gateways all over Europe whereby the case study region – the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle is at the heart of one (see Figure 7).

Another – more statistical approach – was applied in the **SPESP** (Study Programme on European Spatial Planning), which was set up under Article 10 ERDF pilot action from December 1998 to February 2000. During the developmental process of the ESDP, it became clear that the scientific basis for policy making needs to be improved. In particular, it was necessary to: 1) select indicators for spatial development, and 2) to suggest possible strategic directions which should be followed through and elaborated in policy terms. The objective of the study programme was to test whether a European network of research institutes on spatial planning can bring significant added value to the development of territorial policies and intend to provide insights on how a possible future European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) could be organised and what could be expected of it. Thirteen working teams were dealing with different fields like geographic position, economic strength, social integration, spatial integration, land-use pressure, natural and cultural assets, typology of cities, partnership on urban rural development, and so on. The – at that time – EU-15 and countries of central and south east Europe were covered by the studies. There was no working group specifically dealing with polycentric development but the one for urban-rural relations developed a “typology of cities and urban-rural relationships” They distinguished the following six types of territories for NUTS II or III regions (Figure 8):

- Regions dominated by a large metropolis;
- Polycentric regions with high urban and rural densities;
- Polycentric regions with high urban densities;
- Rural areas under metropolitan influence;
- Rural areas with networks of medium-sized and small towns; and
- Remote rural areas.

Figure 8: Regional types of urban-rural spatial patterns



Source: SPESP, 2000: 25

The six types are the result of a broad and comparable set of data at the European level whereby EU-wide available and comparable data was a main constraint. Some regions could be assigned to a different type by using other, more detailed data. For instance, now the rural areas look homogeneous, but smaller urban centres could appear as local networks in sparsely populated areas with more specified data (SPESP, 2000). Or, if we take the case study region, Western Slovakia is polycentric with high urban and rural densities and Western Hungary is categorised as rural areas with small and medium-sized towns – which is alright. But Eastern Austria is shown to have three different categories – due to the statistical units used – but should be described as a region dominated by a large metropolis, namely Vienna. But nevertheless this was a first result relying on a comprehensive method and the statistical data available.

Two years after finishing the SPESP studies the **CPMR** (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe) launched a study on the construction of a polycentric and balanced development model for the European territory. It tried to identify potentials for polycentric development for the peripheral European areas based on statistical analysis, interviews and expert knowledge. The participating countries wanted to elaborate a vision for polycentric development together with the regions and the European Commission, whereby the focus was on the peripheral maritime regions. The study was concluded along two dimensions:

- European polycentricity: with the main objective to enable conurbations and urban systems with enough demographic weight and economic potential on a European-wide scale to interact directly with the main European and global decision-making centres and spread their influence over large peripheral areas.
- Functional polycentricity: aims to encourage better complementarity between the European urban areas so that they may play a more structuring role in achieving a greater balance between the territories. Functional polycentricity is understood as a concept that can be applied on different levels, according to the kinds of functions that need to be better integrated. It also allows achieving a more convincing mass or critical threshold effects on an economic level (CPMR, 2002c).

Functional polycentricity can be regarded as the central concept as a main emphasis of polycentric development is not to make morphologically speaking mono-centric structures more polycentric but to use territorial capital through the creation of a win-win situation, in order to enable an urban area to play a role in the next higher league through co-operation. It should provoke and motivate urban regions to think about future development, functional specialisation and co-operation possibilities. Through co-operation urban areas can achieve a new critical mass that can sustain and help businesses, services and facilities to grow, and so on. As the

reader will learn in chapter 5 this is a main motivation for activities in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle.

The CRPM study can be regarded as a first attempt to analyse potentials on an urban scale and the possibilities and importance for polycentric development on a transnational/European scale. The indicators used as a basis for this typology were the competitiveness of urban systems, economic decision-making centres, human capital, connectivity and drivers of change. One conclusion of the study was that many European growth areas do not fulfil their role as a “regional growth territory” because of:

- specific competitive weaknesses with regard to the knowledge economy;
- low availability of skilled labour;
- an economic fabric under threat from international competition;
- a lack of internal connectivity hindering the creation of a flexible and efficient job market;
- lack of external connectivity that may make it less attractive for foreign investments or national or international economic decision-making functions; (CPMR, 2002c)

Another study is one using a scenario building method elaborated by the **University of Rennes 2**, commissioned by DATAR, to deal with polycentric development on a European scale. The two-year research project resulted in the publication “Le polycentrisme en Europe: une vision de l’aménagement du territoire européen” where the research group describes different scenarios for (Baudelle, 2002):

- Different extent of territory of the European Union (scenarios: small – less than 15 member states; medium – 15 member states, large – EU 27; extra-large – EU 27 to 36)
- Modes of governance (from intergovernmental Europe to the United States of Europe)
- Competence for European spatial development on a European scale (from *laissez-faire* to fragmentation, liberalisation with compensation, territories of projects, voluntarism and European centralism)
- European Territory (spatial scenario: monocentrism ⇔ polycentricity)

Focussing on the spatial scenarios for the European territory developed within the study, they stress the more or less existing geographical concentration ranging between two extremes: monocentrism and polycentricity. Four scenarios were elaborated for the European territory: concentration, diffuse metropolitanisation, unequal regional integration and polycentricity. The scenario for “**concentration**” refers to a European Union of two speeds where the Union endeavours vainly to compensate the intensification of regional inequalities. The scenario of **diffuse metropolitanisation** argues that new development poles (agglomerations of

smaller sizes) will take an important role. Large and medium-sized cities develop specialised locations, mainly within the high-tech sector (technopoles). It is assumed that such technopoles will normally develop in the proximity of the pentagon, whereby new axes and belts of urban agglomerations develop. The scenario of **unequal regional integration** is based on the self-organisation of some regions which are capable of improving their development through transnational and cross-border co-operation. These selective initiatives reinforce the most dynamic spaces and penalise the areas with fewer assets in terms of proximity, urban potential, political autonomy and finance. Finally the **polycentricity scenario** appears to be the adequate scenario to ensure a real spatial balance in a sustainable way. The scenario is elaborated as a normative scenario, an ideal vision that is suitable to guide future public strategies. It is argued that companies invest more and more in peripheral agglomerations because of an increased productivity without suffering diseconomies of hyper-concentration such as congestion, pollution, property inflation. In this scenario, the attraction of an agglomeration does not depend so much on its size but on the capacity to develop strategies in order to use synergy effects and to develop certain specialisations (Baudelle, 2002). Chapter 5 will show that this remains a key challenge also for the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle.

All the above mentioned studies, which are based on statistical analysis, only cover parts of the EU territory. Within the ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) programme for the first time several projects are dealing with polycentric development via statistical analysis covering an enlarged EU. The key project ESPON 1.1.1 “The role, specific situation and potentials of urban areas as nodes in a polycentric development” had the task of dealing specifically with polycentricity on regional, national and European level (project duration: Autumn 2002 to September 2004). The project team under the lead of Nordregio has chosen Functional Urban Areas (FUA) as the operational concept for the analysis in this project. 1595 FUAs have been identified in the EU 27 plus Norway and Switzerland on the basis of the following thresholds (NUTS III):

- FUA with a population of over 50,000 inhabitants and an urban core (agglomeration) with more than 15,000 inhabitants in countries with more than 10 million inhabitants
- In smaller countries FUA was defined as housing a population of more than 0.5% of national population and an urban core (agglomeration) with more than 15,000 inhabitants (i.e. in less populated countries smaller FUAs were taken into account) as well as having functions of national or regional importance.

In each FUA seven functions (population, transport, tourism, manufacturing, knowledge, decision-making in the private and public sectors) were rated from 1 to 5 (local to global significance) and the average

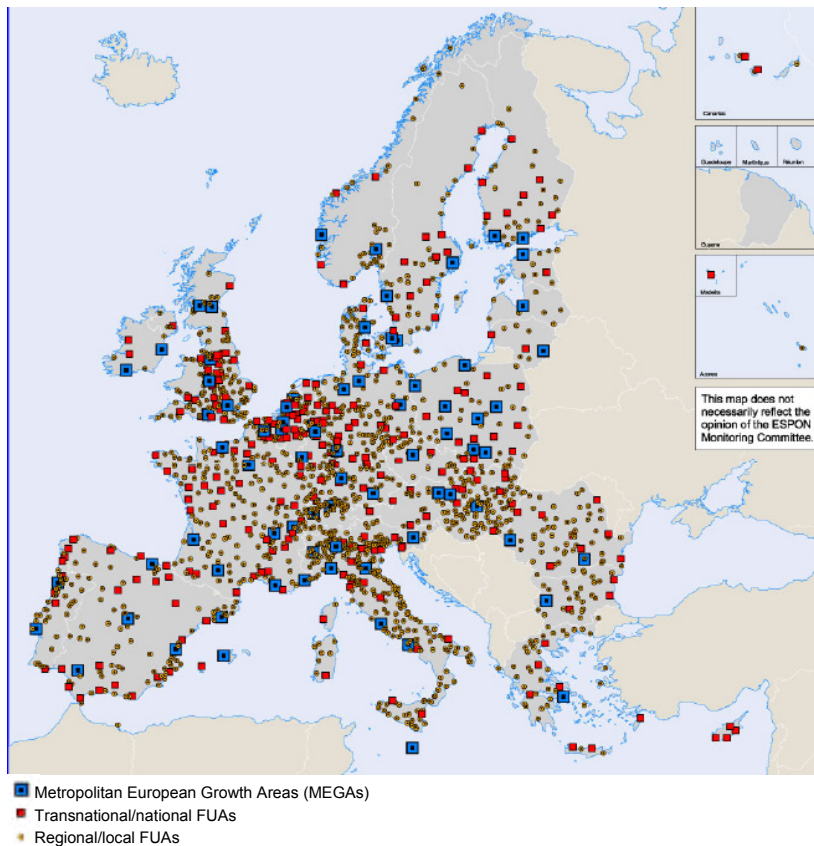
of the scores determined the category of FUA (2.5 or above = MEGAs; 1.5-2.49 = transnational/national FUAs; below 1.5 = regional/local FUAs).

The result is a typology of FUAs distinguishing (Figure 9)

- Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAs)
- Transnational/national FUAs
- Regional/local FUAs

76 of the 1,595 FUAs with the highest average score on the FUA indicators have been labelled MEGAs which are regarded as the primary urban regions able to act as a counterweight to the pentagon on European level (ESPON 1.1.1, 2005).

Figure 9: Typology of Functional Urban Areas



Source: ESPON 1.1.1, 2005: 10

The result is based on urban morphology, on the functions of FUAs and on proximity, but only partly taking into account flows, co-operation,... because the necessary data were not available.

In ESPON 1.1.1. Wegener and Spiekermann (2003) argue that the underlying hypothesis of polycentric development and the ESDP is that a polycentric urban system is more efficient, more sustainable and more equitable than both monocentric urban systems and dispersed small settlements. But until now there is “neither a method to identify or measure polycentricity at the different spatial scales nor a method to assess the impacts of polycentricity (or lack of it) with respect to policy goals such as efficiency (competitiveness), equity (cohesion) and sustainability. It is therefore not possible to determine an optimal degree of polycentricity between centralisation and decentralisation or, in other words, between the extremes of monocentricity and dispersal”. Therefore Wegener and Spiekermann tried to define a method to identify centres in the European urban system and to measure the degree of polycentricity of the urban systems within the ESPON 1.1.1 project. Three dimensions are the basis for their approach (ESPON 1.1.1, 2005):

- Size: distribution of larger and smaller cities – rank-size distribution
- Location: e.g. distribution of cities in a given territory through e.g. air line distances between cities of equal size or rank
- Connectivity: ideally this would include an analysis of functional relationships between cities, i.e. flows of goods or services, travel flows or immaterial kinds of interactions. Unfortunately such indicators are rarely available and therefore proxy variables like infrastructure supply, e.g. road connections, level of service of rail and air connections.

A comprehensive index of polycentricity was constructed based on indicators for each of these three dimensions. The results show that Slovenia, Ireland, Poland, Denmark and the Netherlands are the most polycentric countries, though they are so for rather different reasons. Slovenia and the Netherlands have a high score in all three dimensions, Poland has a balanced size distribution and Ireland and Denmark have a good distribution of FUAs over their territory. Other countries generally thought to be polycentric have lesser scores because they have shortfalls in one of the dimensions, e.g. Italy, Germany and the UK where cities are concentrated in one part of the country. Norway, Finland, Spain, Hungary, Portugal and Sweden are the most monocentric countries.

The ESPON project 1.1.3 (Enlargement of the European Union and the wider European perspective as regards to its polycentric spatial structure) and 3.1 (Integrated tools for European spatial development) were also dealing with the question of scale concerning polycentric development. ESPON 1.1.3 argues that the aim on European scale is the promotion of

growth of urban centres outside the pentagon in the remoter areas of the EU. Without further endeavour, growth may simply be concentrated in the leading urban centres of the countries, invariably the capital cities. This appears to be confirmed by abundant empirical evidence, including the experience of recent enlargements (since 1970) of the European Community/Union. According to the interpretations of 1.1.3, polycentric development on a national scale would seek to promote the growth of second order (“provincial capital”) cities as counter-magnets to the first-order capital cities. On the regional scale this would further seek to promote growth in third/fourth order centres in each region. The problem is that this may be achievable in favoured central regions around the first-order centres (i.e. along major transport corridors) like in South East England or Randstad Holland. But outside such favoured central regions policies to promote lower-order centres may work against strong economic trends which favour centripetal development, especially in conditions of rapid economic development such as may occur in the new EU member states. New member states try to find a balance between efficiency and equity yet prioritise in the short term efficiency and national competitiveness in the hope that these will generate “spill-over” effects for the rest of the country. But more importantly in the long-term political perspective equity or cohesion of the national territory is aimed at (ESPON, 1.1.3, 2003).

Within the ESPON 3.1 project, Schön (2003) defined a typology of the European Urban System along three levels: macro (NUTS 2 and higher), meso (aggregation of NUTS 5 to NUTS 3) and micro (NUTS 5). This 3-dimensional typology is regarded as a solid basis for the further statistical analysis of patterns and development trends. Different EU policies as well as specific types of problems are attached to these three levels, e.g.

- Macro level: new zones of global economic integration (core, periphery, accession countries); this view is supported through an economic indicator like GDP/inhabitant, but also by the accessibility indicator.
- Meso level: urban-rural co-operation and partnership (metropolitan areas, urbanised areas, rural/peripheral areas).
- Micro level: urban policies, EU Structural Funds for urban areas (metropolises, cities, towns, villages); medium-sized cities are very important for polycentric development in Europe, especially for remote, less populated and economically weaker regions.

Within the projects of the ESPON programme, due to data availability and constraints (comparability,...) for the EU 27 plus Switzerland and Norway, all statistical approaches are much more focused on the morphological dimension (distribution and mass of urban areas) than on the relational (networks, flows, co-operations). This is unavoidable due to data, time and budgetary pressure within the projects. However, with regard to the key element of polycentricity – networking, co-operation and division of labour

– there should be a stronger emphasis on this issue of gaining appropriate data enabling more comprehensive future studies. Here the first attempts covering flows and form of co-operation made within the ESPON 1.1.1 project can count as a good starting point. It is important to emphasise that polycentric development is acknowledged as a main objective of European spatial development policy but that does not imply that a consensus has been reached when it comes to the meaning of the concept (Gloersen, 2007; Cattán, 2007).

A breakdown of the ESPON results as regards transnational co-operation areas (e.g. INTERREG IIIB like CADSES, Alpine Space,...) and the national level seems to be necessary in order to treat in a more in-depth manner which kind of relationships, flows and networks exist/are possible. Furthermore, with the ESPON studies a new “hole” emerged in Europe – after having included Norway and Switzerland – the South-Eastern European countries like Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and Albania. Especially with regard to the polycentric development debate this should be overcome. Besides, it seems to be necessary to also have in mind large metropolises outside but adjacent to the EU enlargement area like St. Petersburg (appr. 5 Mio. inh.), Minsk (appr. 1.7 Mio. inh.), Istanbul (more than 10 Mio. inh.) which so far are not mentioned but can play a key role in polycentric development in Europe.

After looking at how the concept was investigated in different studies on expert level, the political relevance of the concept should be looked at. Therefore the author wants to treat in more detail European regional policy, the Lisbon process and the activities running within specific committees related to European spatial development.

3.3.2 European Regional Policy

One platform dealing with polycentric development and topics related to spatial development on European level within DG Regio is the Working Group for Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters of the Co-ordination Committee of the Funds – in short TCUM (formerly Sub-committee of Spatial and Urban Development – SUD¹¹). In September 2003, a document of the EU working group of SUD was published which presents some ideas and reflections on territorial issues. Here polycentric development is described as an instrument to link and improve co-ordination between

¹¹ The Working Group on Spatial and Urban Development (SUD) was a subcommittee of the management committee of the Structural Funds and as these structures need to be re-established for each programming period, SUD continues as the Working Group for Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters.

territorial and sectoral policies and to promote the objective of sustainable development.

Balanced development across the EU, in contrast to the tendency for economic activities to be concentrated in several regions, is regarded as the new focus. In this respect, it emphasises the link to the Lisbon strategy setting up economic, social and environmental goals for the European societies with regard to the global economy. The application of polycentric development is thus regarded on three different geographical scales (European, transnational/national and regional) but emphasises that the balanced development of metropolitan regions and gateways in Europe at large must be paralleled with a balanced development in the various countries. The expert group suggests that EU regional policy should help to achieve its goals through polycentric territorial strategies which:

- “Identify potential, qualities and opportunities in a region in order to enhance regional identity
- Provide foundations for future co-operation
- Involve networking and spatial planning
- Promote investments which foster integration and a more integrated perspective on urban and regional development; and
- Support infrastructure provision, in particular to enhance accessibility and urban quality” (CDCR SUD, 2003).

In the second report on economic and social cohesion (CEC, 2001c), a clear reference to the concept of polycentric development can be found in the chapter on “territorial cohesion: towards a more balanced development dealing with urban areas”. Here, growth centres are mentioned for achieving polycentric development. It argues, “connections between urban centres, and between these and rural areas, are a major force for economic development” (CEC, 2001c: 31). This reference to growth centres must be regarded as a change of European regional policy which was focused on peripheral, disadvantaged regions for the last decade and was based on the centre-periphery concept. A review of major policy documents shows that the core-periphery model has been a key theme in the thinking of the Commission since 1980s on regional policy (Copus, 2001). The application of a polycentric development model calls for a paradigm shift in current policies away from this centre-periphery thinking in European policies as well as national and local policies (Mehlbye, 2000). The traditional strategy of regional policy in the EU focused on structurally weak and disadvantaged regions whereas the new policy focuses more strongly on the development possibilities and potential of a region (Schindegger, 2003). The emphasis has shifted from subsidising footloose industry to move around towards encouraging regional specialisation that can help firms to compete in global markets (Zonneveld, 2000).

In the third report on economic and social cohesion “A new partnership for cohesion” (CEC, 2004a), the term polycentric development is not explicitly mentioned but anyhow numerous implicit statements can be found which are in line with the polycentric development concept. For example “urban systems [as] the engines of regional development” are mentioned and furthermore the report distinguishes between “growth metropolises of European importance” (CEC, 2004a: 28), which are mainly localised in North-West-Europe and form a core region (a clear reference to the pentagon).

The report argues that territorial disparities cannot be ignored and must be combated in order to achieve a “more spatially balanced pattern of economic development” which requires some co-ordination of development policies. So here the report focuses mainly on one dimension of polycentric development – the uneven distribution of towns and cities. But in general the report is mainly dealing with the competitiveness dimension of the concept because the report mentions that over 70 cities or conurbations (44 of which with more than 1 million people) provide major strategic functions and can therefore be regarded as growth “metropolises” of European importance (CEC, 2004a). Such growth “metropolises” are identified in an area stretching from London to Milan (passing cities along the Rhine – the so-called Blue Banana, see section 2.2.3). In the accession countries the significant growth can be noted in the capital cities with the exception of Poland (there are five large urban areas) and in peripheral parts of the EU:

- extension of the core to the east – such as Berlin, Munich and Vienna (which is exactly what the case study chapter deals with)
- capital cities in Scandinavia
- a number of urban areas in peripheral parts of the EU – such as Dublin, Athens, Lisbon.

Interestingly, there is no a clear reference to the study (but this seems to be mainly the results of ESPON 1.1.1 project) nor a list of the 70 cities mentioned and their ranking. Overall the report is written as a defence of the Structural Funds operations which are promoted as growth policies (Eskelinen, 2004). The overriding aim of a renewed cohesion policy should be to mobilise throughout the Union unused resources as represented today by unemployment and lagging regional development, thus contributing to the delivery of faster and more sustainable growth. The third report on economic and social cohesion accentuates mobilising unused resources (territorial capital) throughout the Union. Here we have to bear in mind that it actually makes a difference whether, in the end, the Global Economic Integration Zones should serve as “funding areas” or as “areas of specific co-operation needs” or as a “concept for a better regional location marketing”. The further growth of polycentric development is possible in co-operation activities under the new programming period of regional policy 2007-2013.

The ERDF regulation mentions polycentric development as priority in cross-border and transnational co-operation under article six, territorial co-operation. For cross-border co-operation it reads, “supporting links between urban and rural areas” and for transnational co-operation it says to want to foster sustainable urban development: by “strengthening polycentric development at transnational, national and regional level, with a clear transnational impact” (Official Journal of the European Union, 2006).

But the promotion of polycentric urban development as one “policy option” of the ESDP has found its way not only into policy documents but has already led to its incorporation in both the Structural Funds programmes of objective 1 and 2 areas and the Community Initiative INTERREG III of the programming period 2000-2006. The idea underlying polycentric development is not a new one, but the growing popularity of the term amongst planners and policy makers is remarkable. European spatial planning literature and policy and programme documents make many references to the concept of polycentric development. Polycentricity “appears to be cropping up everywhere as an ‘ideal type’ regional spatial structure, despite a lack of common definition and empirical evidence about its desirability, effectiveness, or the potential for its alleged success being replicated elsewhere by policy intervention” (Davoudi, 2003: 996). For example, in the guidelines of the Community Initiative INTERREG III, the promotion of a polycentric and sustainable development is also mentioned under the priority topics (CEC, 2000b) with regard to strand B (transnational co-operation). Various INTERREG Community Initiative programmes have therefore included the objective of polycentric development – e.g. priority 1 of the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space is the “promotion of the Alpine Space as a competitive and attractive living and economic area in the framework of polycentric spatial development in the EU”. In the programme complement of INTERREG IIIB of CADSES – the relevant programme area for the case study region – measure 1.2 “shaping urban development, promoting urban networks and co-operation“ refers to the development of multipolar or polycentric systems, which should focus on specialisation and division of labour between cities within countries but even between countries. Whether these priorities influence projects operating under the programme has to be assessed later on. The already addressed INTERREG programme “European Spatial Planning Observation Network” 2002-2006 can be regarded as an important programme to elaborate the concept of polycentric development. Waterhout (2007) argues that polycentric development lost some of its discursive power. This changed again with the important role it plays in the “Territorial Agenda of the European Union” (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007). The document defined six priorities in order to foster territorial cohesion. One out of these six priorities is to “strengthen polycentric development and innovation through networking of city regions and cities”.

3.3.3 Spatial dimension of competitiveness

As already mentioned, the third report on economic and social cohesion argues that European cohesion policy makes major contributions to the objectives set out in the Lisbon process, especially in regions where there is unused economic and employment potential (CEC, 2004a). The Lisbon process started with the Lisbon Summit in March 2000 where the European Union set itself the strategic goal to “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” by 2010 (European Council, 2000). The Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council focused on the two overarching themes of “preparing the transition to a competitive, dynamic and knowledge based economy” and “modernising the European social model by investing in people and building an active welfare state”.

So the political relevance of competitiveness increased, emphasised within the ESDP and polycentricity debate, in the cohesion report but especially with the start of the Lisbon process. This is also true for cities and regions as current economic developments have greatly intensified competition between them for investment and the expansion of new areas of growth (Krätke, 2001). In the economic literature there is considerable disagreement about what competitiveness could mean for spatial entities. E.g. Krugman rejects the idea of direct competition between nations and regions altogether, but many other economists recognise competition between cities and regions for mobile production factors, population, tourism or public budgets. Competition is influenced by the qualification of the regional human capital, the equipment with infrastructure, supporting institutions and other location factors (Mayerhofer, 2003). So an increasing number of inter-city co-operation networks are being set up at both the European and national level in order to function primarily as “strategic alliances” in the battle for investors and companies. Krätke (2001) concludes that the European urban system can, therefore, still be regarded as a system of competing location centres from the regional economic perspective. This will not change but, as Vogelij and Nauta (dealing with the spatial dimension of innovation referring to the Lisbon Process) argue, the specific spatial qualities of cities and regions should be identified in order to distinguish those spatial qualities from one city and region to another. Furthermore, cities should no longer focus on attracting companies but much more on generating a creative climate. At the moment many cities try to attract companies from similar sectors and are competing against each other, for economic innovation e.g. companies with ICT-activities or biotechnology are highly sought after. So an active identification of qualities of cities and regions is necessary in order to enhance the awareness of their comparative advantages where scenario studies may help to position the city or the region in the relevant networks

and define its roles on the basis of these characteristics. Strategic spatial development visions (see chapter 2.2.1) should be prepared with the following important objectives:

- “to build a common vision on the opportunities and future development of the region
- to build commitment of the stakeholders in an interactive policy process
- to identify the specific role of the region within the network of regions
- to identify specific roles of individual cities within the city networks
- to distinguish the differences in qualities of the cities and to increase the differences; and
- to identify economic innovations that could capitalise on distinct qualities resulting in specific competitive edges” (Vogelij, Nauta, 2004: 15).

The territorial dimension of competitiveness was emphasised within the ESDP and also the polycentricity debate, but so far not at all in the Lisbon process. In 2001, the Presidency Conclusions of the Gothenburg European Council (European Council, 2001) added the environment as the third strand to the Lisbon strategy for economic and social development, thus confirming the commitment to sustainability. It sets out objectives under four priority measures relating to sustainable development:

- combating climate change
- ensuring sustainable transport
- addressing threats to public health
- managing natural resources more responsibly.

In order to reach this aim of the Lisbon strategy in a sustainable way, Vogelij and Nauta (2004) are emphasising the need to take the territorial dimension of the development of the EU into account, which is also one main theme of the Territorial Agenda. To do so it is necessary to make use of regional potential, avoid polarisation and the diseconomies of congestion, ensure the distribution and availability of the necessary human capital and services of general interest, and provide for the efficient movement of goods, people and information. This argument is quite in line with the arguments raised in the polycentricity debate.

These examples show that the concept of polycentric development gained a quite high political relevance in the field of spatial development at European level and regional policy and confirms that the two main aims pursued are competitiveness and spatial balance. But we also have to bear in mind that regional policy is only one policy field and that there are other sector policy areas with considerable territorial impacts (competition, transeuropean networks, common agriculture policy, environment).

3.4 Conclusions

The discourse around the concept of polycentric development started with the elaboration of the ESDP and finally resulted in the inclusion of polycentric development as one out of three policy guidelines as a response to the wide gaps in competitiveness persisting between the central parts of the European Union and its peripheries. The aim is to develop alternatives to the 20-40-50 pentagon on European level (so-called Global Economic Integration Zones) by promoting a more polycentric development, on the European/transnational, national and regional level. This also is a challenge for the national level where polycentric development means to shift from the dominance of one (often capital) city to a more balanced network of cities by improving economic performance and services through clusters and networks. On the regional level, polycentric development would mean having several small and medium-size centres providing regional services through alliances between cities and regions in order to get a critical mass (CEC, 2004b). For several years the concept of polycentric development was the dominant one in the European spatial development scene but “lost some of its discursive power” (Waterhout, 2007: 39). This changed again with the “Territorial Agenda of the European Union” adopted at the informal ministerial meeting on urban development and territorial cohesion held in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007 (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007). The Territorial Agenda defines six priorities in order to foster a policy for territorial cohesion – one thereof is to “strengthen polycentric development and innovation through networking of city regions and cities”.

Analysing the ESDP, but also EU regional policy, it can be concluded that the concept of polycentric development pursues the twin policy aims of (economic) development or competitiveness and spatial balance. This also reflects a twin trade-off – on the one hand, a division of labour and therefore specialisation is an important pre-condition for economic growth, on the other hand, regional services of general economic interest should be guaranteed. Regarding the assumptions and meanings behind polycentric development different economic regional development theories, location theories as well as the importance of spatial concepts as tools for strategic planning are investigated. One conclusion out of this analysis is that the polarisation theory is the basic assumption underlying the argument of the ESDP and that polycentric development is trying to avoid over-concentration in the European territory while the concept also recognises the growth-pole theory which could help to foster balanced spatial development. The concept can also be distinguished from earlier concepts like central place theory because polycentric development is a dynamic concept (where the centres are not seen as providers but as development engines for the regions); it recognises city systems as network, motivates to use and activate existing potential and is dealing with different geographical levels. There is no

common definition of the concept and it cannot and should not be elaborated in a uniform way. Polycentric development is treated as an ideal vision for Europe that can guide strategies and which is, in a broad sense, a question of choice and conception of society.

Regarding the political relevance of the concept, we have to have in mind two different categories

- Ideas/ideology – polycentric development as a slogan in politics
- Application – how to apply it on different scales

EU regional policy is the policy field most closely related to the concept of polycentric development. In the beginning, it was mainly used as an idea/ideology but over the last years specific programmes supported projects to develop the concept further. Various studies were elaborated around the concept which are important and useful approaches to identify meanings and interpretations of the concept on different scales. Thus it is conspicuous that the main focus so far is on economic growth (economic development and competitiveness) and not so much on sustainable growth or equity. An intention to base the most important instruments for spatial development at European level (Structural and Cohesion Funds and transeuropean transport networks) on the aims formulated in the ESDP (CEC, 1999) can be identified whereby the aim of a “polycentric and balanced spatial development” could play a crucial role. The concept denotes a shift of paradigm in European regional policy from the traditional strategy that focused on structurally weak and disadvantaged regions to a new focus on the development of possibilities and the potential of a region. This is also confirmed by the third report on economic and social cohesion that accentuates mobilising unused resources (territorial capital) throughout the Union in order to deliver faster and more sustainable growth. Here we have to bear in mind that it actually makes a difference whether in the end Global Economic Integration Zones should serve as “funding areas” or as “areas of specific co-operation needs” or as a “concept for a better regional location marketing”. A further growth of polycentric development is possible in co-operation activities under the new programming period of regional policy 2007-2013. The ERDF regulation mentions polycentric development as priority in cross-border and transnational co-operation under article six, territorial co-operation. For cross-border co-operation it reads, “supporting links between urban and rural areas” and for transnational co-operation it says to foster sustainable urban development by “strengthening polycentric development at transnational, national and regional level, with a clear transnational impact” (Official Journal of the European Union, 2006). Polycentric development means enhancing competitiveness through co-operation but also fostering regional balance, having in mind urban-rural relationships. The traditional response to the problems of disadvantaged or peripheral regions was to connect them to the core, but polycentric

development also means to foster internal connections in order to create a network of internationally accessible urban areas and their linked hinterland (Hague and Kirk, 2003). A main emphasis of polycentric development is not to make morphologically speaking mono-centric structures more polycentric but to use territorial capital through the creation of win-win situations in order to enable an urban area to play a role in the next league up through co-operation.

4. Territorial cohesion

The discourse around the concept of territorial cohesion intensified with the debate about the Treaty of Amsterdam, where territorial cohesion was finally included in Article 16 dealing with services of general economic interest and furthermore with its inclusion as an objective of the EU alongside economic and social cohesion in the draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe¹² and then in the Lisbon Treaty (European Union, 2007). Thus, the awareness for the territorial dimension of EU policies is continuing to grow. This can be seen in different examples such as the Commission's white paper on European Governance – which refers explicitly to the need for more coherent territorial governance – or the second and third cohesion report.

In general, cohesion is one fundamental objective of the European Union that was introduced with the Single European Act of 1986. The Treaty of Amsterdam where cohesion is mentioned in article 2 says: “The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and an economic and monetary union and by implementing common policies or activities ... to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, ... the raising of ... ‘economic and social cohesion’ and solidarity among member states” (European Community, 1997).

Furthermore, a specific title called “economic and social cohesion”¹³ is integrated in the consolidated version of the Treaty of Amsterdam (article 158-162). There, the Community expresses its will to develop and pursue the actions which shall lead to the strengthening of its economic and social cohesion in order to promote overall harmonious development and reduce disparities between the levels of development of various regions.

But what does cohesion mean? The meaning of “to cohere” is according to the Cambridge international dictionary of English “to unite or to hold together as a unit”, according to the Oxford English-Reader's Dictionary it means “stick together, remain united”. So it is the aim of holding together the EU which is strongly linked to European integration. Tondl (1995) argues that the concept of cohesion is important for the integration process in

¹² <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/Treaty/cv00850.en03.pdf>

¹³ first mentioned in the Single European Act of 1986

the EU and that convergence has to be considered a prerequisite for cohesion. Cohesion as a “community interest” should be achieved between economic agents and citizens of the EU member states and can be regarded in relation to economic, social or political aspects. The necessity for cohesion arises in the context of the political intention to deepen integration and to realise higher levels of integration in the Union (in an economic sense, deeper integration could mean e.g. the creation of an internal market, trade arrangements or strengthening co-operation in key policy areas).

Cohesion is a keyword in European discourse and is often associated with equity or reduction of disparities, probably also because of article 158 of the Treaty of Amsterdam. There the reduction of disparities is presented as an aim because of its potential role in improving cohesion. The use of “in particular” in article 158 implies that the reduction of disparities is not considered as the only possible way (Hanquet, Boe De, 2003a). The emphasis on cohesion related to the reduction of disparities is not astonishing if one looks at the European territory which is characterised by a great diversity of areas (with its islands, rural, coastal, mountain, peripheral and highly urbanised areas), the great variety of institutional settings and different sizes of nations and regions, and also the disparities in levels of wealth. As the reader will soon learn, there is a significant wage and income differential in the case study region, which puts cohesion into question. Also Niebuhr and Stiller (2003) demonstrated in their empirical analyses that the EU’s economic geography is marked by an uneven distribution of population and economic activities across space. With the EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 this concentration strengthened and the centre-periphery structure prevailed. The European territory with 27 member states is split into three types: the countries with a GDP above the EU-27 average (12 of the old EU member states before enlargement in 2004), the countries with a GDP around 80% of EU-27 average (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia and the Czech Republic) and the countries which have a GDP per head of about 40% of the EU-27 average. Within the last group, exceptions are growth areas like the capital cities Prague, Budapest and Bratislava (CEC, 2001c; CEC, 2002a). These figures express the increasing spatial-economic disparities and urgently call for a vision for the European territory.

A European regional policy aiming to promote overall harmonious development, which should lead to economic and (later on) social cohesion has already existed since the 1970s, but – except for the definition of regions eligible to receive Objective-1 Funding – did not inherently imply a spatial dimension. The concept of “territorial cohesion” emerged in the mid-1990s and must be seen as complementary to economic and social cohesion. With the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed in October 1997, the new term “territorial cohesion” came into the Treaty under Article 16 (former article 7D) of the Treaty of Amsterdam: “Without prejudice to Articles 73, 86 and 87, and

given the place occupied by services of general economic interest in the shared values of the Union as well as their role in promoting social and territorial cohesion, the Community and the member states, each within their respective powers and within the scope of application of this Treaty, shall take care that such services operate on the basis of principles and conditions which enable them to fulfil their missions” (European Community, 1997).

So far EU policies have been focused on economic and social cohesion, but for the first time with the Treaty of Amsterdam territorial cohesion was introduced with regard to services of general economic interest (SGEI). As already mentioned, territorial cohesion gained in a next step high importance with the Lisbon Treaty which introduced it as an equal aim to economic and social cohesion. This makes it necessary to think about the difference between territorial and economic and social cohesion. What is the added value of introducing a territorial dimension in addition to economic and social cohesion? A first attempt to differentiate between territorial cohesion and economic and social cohesion should be made. Territorial cohesion refers to the different levels of basic services/supply of territories, respectively to the differences in endowments of regions with social and technical infrastructure and development differences between centre and periphery. A good provision of basic services is regarded as necessary for the optimal use of the potential of territorial units throughout Europe. Economic and social cohesion refers much more to development disparities in terms of GDP and unemployment rates. The Commission itself argues that territorial cohesion means the balanced distribution of human activities across the Union and regards it as complementary to economic and social cohesion. Territorial cohesion translates the goal of sustainable and balanced development into territorial terms and includes fair access for citizens and economic operators to services of general economic interest (to be discussed below) irrespective of the territory to which they belong (CEC, 2004b: 3). Niebuhr and Stiller (2003) did not find a precise definition of territorial cohesion and had difficulties in dealing with it in an analytical way. That is why they interpreted territorial cohesion first of all as the reduction of (economic) disparities between different spatial categories. Vogelij and Nauta (2004) take another point of view and argue that economic and social cohesion are aiming to reduce economic and social differences between regions and countries and that territorial cohesion should on the contrary focus on fostering differences of spatial characteristics. “With regard to the innovation of the economic activities in Europe it is important that territorial cohesion will not be oriented on levelling out differences.... For stimulating innovative actions, it is important to utilise existing qualities, to interpret existing characteristics as opportunities for specific activities, to identify and enhance differences” (Vogelij, Nauta, 2004: 10). The background document for the Territorial Agenda (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007b) provides a

useful explanation of the concept “territorial” (although the understanding of what territorial means differs widely across the EU):

- “place and geographical context matter
- policies should be differentiated according to the territorial context
- thematic integration of different sectoral policies with impact on certain places (whatever the level) would be desirable – but is obviously difficult to achieve
- and that the involvement of actors from sub-national levels (regions, municipalities) is crucial for the success of strategies and for translation into the ‘regional language of people’” (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007b: 4)

The introduction of territorial cohesion as an equal aim to economic and social cohesion in the Lisbon Treaty brings a much wider interpretation than the original core meaning of territorial cohesion which was about services of general economic interest (Zonneveld, 2007). The OECD (2001) states that territorial cohesion recognises territorial units as resources with a specific capital, the territorial capital. The services of general economic interest are regarded as preconditions to use the territorial capital (OECD, 2001). Also the Luxembourg Presidency scoping document (Luxembourg EU Presidency, 2005a) emphasised that territorial cohesion implies focusing regional and national territorial development policies on better exploiting regional potential and territorial capital. Here, for the first time, the concept of territorial capital is used implicitly to underline the fact that territory is a resource, potentially generating productivity increases (“higher return for specific kinds of investment”) and utility flows to local communities (Camagni, 2007).

Now after having territorial cohesion in the treaties it is interesting to see which efforts were needed and which underlying interests existed to realise the inclusion of the concept into the EU treaties. In order to better understand the motivation and activities of different actors, the following section will investigate this process.

4.1 How “territorial cohesion” came into the Treaties of the EU

European integration is based on four founding treaties, which have been amended on several occasions. There have also been more far-reaching reforms bringing major institutional changes and introducing new areas of responsibility for the European institutions. The Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on the 2nd of October 1997 and entering into force on the 1st of May 1999, mentioned for the first time territorial cohesion, but only with

reference to the services of general economic interest. Later on, territorial cohesion became an aim of the EU, introduced together with economic and social cohesion in the EU Lisbon Treaty. Regarding the inclusion of territorial cohesion into the Treaties, it seems important to mention that the French always played a very active role in European regional policy. They accepted a loss of autonomy resulting from accession to the EU and therefore European integration in exchange for greater influence in Europe. Jacques Delors (President of the European Commission between 1985 and 1995) was personally interested in spatial planning. He saw cohesion policy as part of his defence of what he called the “European model of society” against radical free-market protagonists. European funds were to be applied in an integrated way to attain Community objectives and also to foster partnerships between regional and local players¹⁴ (Faludi, Waterhout, 2002). The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF – one of the four Structural Funds) is a model which was exported from a French administrative model to the European Union. The model was elaborated by DATAR (Délégation à l’aménagement du territoire et à l’action régionale) and aimed to limit the regional inequalities in the European Union (Faludi, 2003a). Knowing this, the active and important role of the French in including the concept of territorial cohesion into the treaties will be no surprise.

One important initiative to include the concept of territorial cohesion into the Treaty of Amsterdam came from the Assembly of European Regions (AER), which was constituted in 1985 and has now 300 members with very diverse legal status.¹⁵ In 1994, Robert Savy¹⁶ installed a working group dealing with the effects of European policies on the territories of regions. The activities of this working group resulted in a document called “Régions et territoires en Europe” (AER, 1995) which summarised the results of a questionnaire covering this topic. Each region had to describe whether it feels part of the European networks of communication and which consequences, favourable or unfavourable, the various Community policies had on their territories. 135 regions from twenty countries (half of the AER members) answered the questionnaire which was complemented by statements of other international associations and organisations like the

¹⁴ The purpose of the EU regional policy is to reduce disparities in economic opportunity and welfare among regions in Europe and it aims to do so by involving – in the words of Jacques Delors – “les forces vives” throughout Europe, which means particularly regional and local authorities but also social partners.

¹⁵ Interestingly one of the first demands of the assembly was the creation of the Committee of the Regions of the EU (created 1991 by the Maastricht Treaty).

¹⁶ Robert Savy was leading the sub-commission under commission V of AER with a focus on infrastructure and spatial planning and was président of Limousin/France at that time.

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR¹⁷), Association des Régions Européennes Tradition Industrielle, Association Européenne des Cultures Traditionnelles, and so on. In total, 200 million Europeans were represented which gave the report an undeniable and strong democratic legitimacy. The document “Régions et territoires en Europe” formulated for the first time the demand for an inclusion of “territorial cohesion” into the new EU-Treaty which was also under discussion at that time (Husson, 2002).

In June 1995, at a meeting in Sweden of the AER commission V, a resolution was adopted unanimously recognising the concept of territorial cohesion. It was mentioned that the inquiry into the territorial effects of European policies showed the importance of territorial cohesion on the European continent (Husson, 1999). Four months later the general assembly of the AER met, which offered the opportunity to actively promote the idea (e.g. 5000 reports were distributed in French, English, German, Italian and Spanish,...) (Husson, 1999). AER members declared that for the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference of the EU in 1996 the concept of territorial cohesion should be pushed forward and result in its inclusion as one fundamental objective in the new Treaty: “... in consequence, to recognise the need for an appropriate and balanced distribution of activities over the whole Union territory, and to introduce in the Treaty provisions guaranteeing that the Community authorities take into account the consequences for the territories of the regions of measures taken in the exercise of the various competencies of the Union...” (AER, 1995).

In 1996, Robert Savy¹⁸ published a communication for the Inter-Governmental Conference with concrete proposals to include territorial cohesion into several articles of the new Treaty of Amsterdam, e.g. in the articles 158 and 159 (ex article 130a and b) dealing with economic and social cohesion where he proposed to mention always economic and social cohesion together with the territorial dimension:

- Article 130a: Afin de promouvoir un développement harmonieux de l'ensemble de la Communauté, celle-ci développe et poursuit son action tendant au renforcement de sa cohésion économique, sociale et territoriale.
- Article 130b: La Commission procède à un examen préalable des effets prévisibles de ses actions au regard de l'objectif de renforcement de la cohésion économique, sociale et territoriale (AER, 1996).

¹⁷ Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, founded in 1973 and now with 150 regions from 27 States as members (EU member states and non-members of the EU) all located in one of Europe's main sea basins.

¹⁸ at that time already vice-president of AER

For article 86 (ex article 90) – dealing with services of general economic interests – Savy also suggested including the objective of territorial cohesion.

In 1996, discussions about the European Community competence concerning European spatial planning were also going on. In this context, the Germans proposed to amend ex Article 130 where they wanted to include a reference to spatial cohesion. The Commission wanted the new treaty to spell out that the twin notion of economic and social cohesion implied a Community role in spatial planning, which was not realised. Later on, the Commission began to expunge spatial planning from its vocabulary and replaced it with “territorial management” and/or territorial cohesion (Faludi, 2003b). So territorial cohesion can also be regarded as giving the spatial development policy of the European Union a new commitment and as stressing the territorial dimension of EU policies. This is especially important because there is no formal competency of the EU in the field of spatial planning.

Manifold efforts by various parties notwithstanding, territorial cohesion was not included in the first preparatory official documents of article 16 dealing with services of general economic interest of the Treaty. With efforts of Michel Barnier¹⁹ – at that time French minister of European affairs – the concept started to be recognised. In 1996, Michel Barnier mentioned in an interview for Figaro that: “... the public services, or the services of general economic interest in the jargon of the European Community, constitute a main element of social and territorial cohesion in Europe. ... [They must be taken] into account in such various fields like transports, energy, water, telecommunication or the postal services” (Husson, 2002: 122²⁰).

The Commissioner for EU regional policy (at that time Ms. Wulf-Mathies) expressed her interest in territorial cohesion and its added value for the Community. Also the advisers of the French President were interested in elaborating a reference framework for spatial planning, as e.g. Jacques Chérèques²¹ describes his hope to find agreement for the concepts and emphasises that this subject remains a major challenge for the construction of Europe and the reduction of inequalities in socio-economic development (Husson, 2002).

¹⁹ In former times minister of European affairs in France; from 1999 – 2004 Commissioner of the general directorate for Regional Policy in the European Commission; since 2004 French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

²⁰ Translated by Gabriele Tatzberger

²¹ a friend of Delors, Minister for Aménagement du Territoires in France (Faludi, Waterhout, 2002 – p.31); he also organised the 1st informal meeting of ministers of the member states responsible for spatial planning and regional policy at Nantes 1989 to elaborate the ESDP (Faludi, Peyrony, 2001)

Finally the concept found its way into the Treaty of Amsterdam under Article 16, services of general economic interest, but not as an aim of the EU, together with economic and social cohesion. The next Treaty of Nice, signed on 26th of February 2001, entering into force on 1st of February 2003, did not change the part referring to territorial cohesion.

The situation changed with the initiative for a wider and deeper debate on the future of the Union. In December 2000 in Nice, the European Council reached an agreement on the revision of the Treaties with a view to adapting the institutions of the Union with regard to enlargement. For this purpose, the Laeken European Council in 2001 decided to organise a Convention bringing together the main stakeholders to examine the vital questions raised by the future development of the Union. With Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in the chair, the Convention formulated a Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (European Convention, 2003) between February 2002 and July 2003. This draft was the working basis for the negotiations at the Intergovernmental Conference composed of the Heads of State and Government of the member states and – at that time – accession countries. After some changes, the text of the Constitution was unanimously adopted at the Brussels European Council of 17th and 18th of June 2004. But the ratification process of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was stopped after the no from France and the Netherlands. Now the Lisbon Treaty (European Union, 2007) signed on 13th of December 2007 at a summit in Lisbon in Portugal provides for the objective of territorial cohesion to be included alongside the concepts of economic and social cohesion. It acknowledges that all EU citizens should have access to essential services, basic infrastructure and knowledge. If subsequently ratified by mid-2009, the Treaty will definitively endorse the territorial dimension of territorial cohesion policy and also reinforce the role of the local authorities in its implementation. With that the European Commission could have prime responsibility for devising policy on this subject as it has an exclusive right to make proposals.

During the preparation period for a European Convention/Lisbon Treaty several inter-regional organisations demonstrated their general agreement on the importance of territorial cohesion (AER, 2002):

The AER (Assembly of European Regions) stresses in its action plan 2002 as one objective for 2001-2004 to “encourage the exchange of experience and interregional initiatives aiming at maintaining economic, social and territorial cohesion”.

The CPMR pointed out that the disparities in Europe, not only between member states, but also within the individual states, will intensify regarding the future challenges which the Union will face (e.g. the enlargement) and therefore actions for territorial cohesion must be realised.

The CoR (Committee of the Regions) wishes that economic, social and territorial cohesion should explicitly be recognised as one of the priority tasks of the European Union.

The CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions): The regional and local authorities must participate efficiently in the governance process of the European Union, in particular in the fields of priority for the citizens like sustainable development, social and territorial cohesion (CEMR, 2005).

But different motivations or interests were underlying these activities. This becomes clear when we look at the different papers produced in order to promote the inclusion of the concept into the treaties. E.g. the CPMR has the goal to promote a more balanced development of the European Union highlighting the value of all of its geographical areas with a view to strengthening its economic, social and territorial cohesion. Before the Laeken Summit in December 2001 the CPMR argued that the "...objective of economic, social and territorial cohesion will not be achieved without difficulty unless all levels of government actually work together towards this" (CPMR, 2001).

So the importance of a more participative model of governance is explicitly mentioned by the CPMR (CPMR, 2001). The CPMR also contributed to the first stage of the work led by the European Convention on the Future of Europe and carried out a survey conducted among its member regions. The results show that the regions are in favour of completing economic integration of the EU while ensuring Europe-wide economic, social and territorial cohesion. The EU is called upon to promote development and solidarity whereby the single market should serve as an instrument. A largely shared vision is necessary to meet the future challenges which demand actions in favour of territorial cohesion. The regions see the revisions of the Treaties as an opportunity to entrust the EU with actions in order to achieve territorial cohesion and state the need for consistency and clarity in the forthcoming Treaty:

- "Although 'territorial cohesion' does not appear among the current objectives of the Treaty, it nevertheless serves as the basis for Article 16 of the Treaty of the European Community concerning services of general economic interest. It has to be accepted, in the light of the recent positions expressed by the European Council in Barcelona and the complete change of judicial attitude by the Court of Justice, that this will be an increasingly important reference in the process of opening up the markets and in the development of EU policies, in order to guarantee universal service which is a condition for cohesion, solidarity and equality between citizens and the territories in which they live.

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- Similarly, the economic and social cohesion policy (Title XVII of the TEC, Article 158) refers to the notion of the overall harmonious development of the Community, although it does not plainly state an actual objective of territorial cohesion. Article 2 of the TEC also calls for a balanced competitiveness with the European Area” (CPMR, 2002b).

The regions are convinced that territorial cohesion should be added to the objective of economic and social cohesion which CPMR argues would give greater coherence to the new Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (“Constitutional Treaty”). This would also correspond to the need to see all EU sectoral policies contributing to reducing territorial disparities and give the necessary impetus to improving the coherence and co-ordination between the policies accompanying the internal market (CPMR, 2002b). Therefore the CPMR demanded – as a reaction to the preliminary draft constitutional treaty – to supplement the aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion with the concept of territorial cohesion (CPMR, 2002a). CPMR emphasised another dimension of territorial cohesion²² too, namely the necessary co-ordination of sector policies and their consideration of the spatial dimension.

The Committee of Regions (CoR) which has a quite active role in fostering and investigating the concept of territorial cohesion has its origin in the Maastricht Treaty (that came into force in 1993) and is a representative assembly to give local and regional authorities a voice in Europe. In 1994, the first meeting was held and now it has 317 members and 6 commissions which have the task of drawing up draft versions of opinions and resolutions. One of them is the “Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy” (COTER), which is responsible for cohesion, transport and tourism policy.

In 1997, the Committee of the Regions declared in an opinion on spatial planning in Europe to foster the concept of territorial cohesion (CoR, 1997). The CoR also demanded consideration of the territorial dimension by the sector policies, e.g. in 1999, territorial cohesion was also mentioned during the discussion about the CAP (Common Agriculture Policy) and it was argued that “territorial cohesion of the Union depends both on the results of the CAP and the action taken under Community regional policy” (CoR 1999b).

Another example is the opinion of the CoR published four months later as a reaction to the Communication from the Commission about intermodality and intermodal freight transport in the European Union where it was emphasised that economic internationalisation and employment creation are demanding territorial solutions. The CoR explicitly demands that all sector policies must be examined in terms of “their impact on territorial

²² besides the economic dimension and equity dimension with services of general economic interest

development, in accordance with the principle of integrated development and territorial cohesion, and must foster interregional, cross-border and transnational co-operation between regional and local bodies. This is crucial to the development of transport and communications corridors” (CoR, 1999a).

Furthermore, it was stated that “the proper level at which to assess a policy’s impact on territorial cohesion is the regional level, and that the authorities at the same level are the natural partners of national government and the Commission in framing and pursuing spatial development policy” (CoR, 1999b).

In 2001, the CoR also reacted to the pending EU enlargement and the resulting changes in regional policy and mentioned that statistical changes²³ in the regions do not mean that structural problems have gone away. They welcome the fact that “future regional policy should be based on the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and in particular the polycentric and regional cohesion approaches, in order to create crystallisation points for economic development in thinly populated areas, which will grow into (strong) centres able to raise the prosperity level of the region concerned” (CoR, 2001).

This can be regarded as a clear argument for polycentric development in Europe to foster territorial cohesion. The CoR demands better co-ordination of different policies and that sector policies have to take into account the spatial dimension in their formulation and implementation. This demand was also formulated in the European Commission’s white paper “European Governance” where the coherence of overall policy is formulated through addressing the territorial impact of EU policies in areas such as transport, energy or environment. “These policies should form part of a coherent whole as stated in the EU’s second cohesion report; there is a need to avoid a logic which is too sector-specific. In the same way, decisions taken at regional and local levels should be coherent with a broader set of principles that would underpin more sustainable and balanced territorial development within the Union” (CEC, 2001a).

²³ The statistical effect is due to the modification of macroeconomic reference data following enlargement. Some regions which used to be eligible for aid in the 15-member EU will no longer be eligible now that there are 27 Member States

4.2 Role of Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI)

Interestingly territorial cohesion was included into the Treaty of Amsterdam under Article 16 dealing with services of general economic interest. Hence services of general economic interest are regarded as part of the shared values of the EU and to be suitable to promote territorial cohesion and to ensure that everyone has access to essential services (such as education, health, transport, energy,...) of high quality and at prices they can afford. The inclusion of territorial cohesion in this article reflects a discourse on spatial equity, which is linked to these services in remote and lagging-behind areas – where these services would be uneconomical. Territorial cohesion can be seen as a concept to resist complete market liberalisation, (Faludi, 2003a). On the other hand it is not further detailed within the Treaty what exactly is meant with SGEI. In 1996, the European Commission presented a Communication on services of general interest in Europe where the Commission stressed their importance in order to attain the fundamental objectives of the European Union such as solidarity and equal treatment within an open and dynamic market economy. In this communication the Commission defined the services as follows: The term services of general economic interest “refers to market services which the member states subject to specific public service obligations by virtue of a general interest criterion. This would tend to cover such things as transport networks, energy and communications” (CEC, 1996: 2).

Many Europeans have come to expect high-quality services at affordable prices and view them as social rights that make an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and therefore the services are at the heart of European model of society (see chapter 2.1.2) (CEC, 1996). In 2000, the European Commission states in a Communication that it is the responsibility of public authorities on the respective level to define the missions of these services. Hence no common valid definition of SGEIs on European level exists. On the other hand, the Commission declared its ambitions to provide rules to guarantee performance, in terms of quality and prices. There the Commission is referring to telecommunication, transport and energy when speaking about services. As part of the Eurobarometer series of polls of public opinion²⁴, a broader definition of services was used. A basket of services was fixed which included telephony, electricity, gas and water supply, postal services, urban transport and inter-city rail services (CEC, 2000a).

Special attention must be paid to the compatibility of the Treaty rules on competition and the internal market with high standards in the provision of

²⁴ Eurobarometer N° 53 of July 2000, ‘The Europeans and Services of General Interest’.

services of general interest, because these services mostly have been public so far but are now subject to privatisation and liberalisation. Often market forces alone do not guarantee the required services and therefore special or exclusive rights and funding mechanisms for their provisions are necessary.

The CEC Communication (CEC, 2000a: 6) had a twofold objective:

- “to provide further clarification on the respective roles of different levels of public authorities and of the competition and internal market provisions applied to services of general interest in order to respond to the request for greater legal certainty on the part of operators. Of special concern is the field of application of the rules on State aid.
- to further develop the European framework relating to the good functioning of services of general interest, in which local, regional and national authorities as well as the Community have their role to play, in line with Article 16 EC Treaty.”

For evaluating the “services of general economic interest” (SGEI) in Europe, the Commission has already adopted a method which should help to make tools available for improving SGEI provision through the Union – here reference is made to transport, energy, postal and telecommunications services (Infonet 195, 19 June 2002). Besides the European Commission, the OECD also tried to analyse the interpretation of the services of general economic interest in several countries (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom). The study “Territorial Policies and Economic Services in OECD Countries” (Pezzini, 2000) wanted to identify and discuss key re-orientations in territorial policies and the shift in the nature, content and administration of public goods and services on sub-national level. The individual definition and importance of SGEI also reflect the political structure of the different states (Guénaire, 2000):

Table 2: Interpretation of SGEI in several countries

France	In France organised monopolies like for energy, transport or communications are mentioned as SGEI. Furthermore non-profit making activities accompanying the social security system, activities complementing private initiatives in social housing, business creation, access to basic banking services, urban policy and sustainable development of the territory.
Italy	Business creation and access to financial services, care of children and the elderly, integration into work are described as SGEI in Italy.
Sweden	In Sweden, the term is not really known, but the central concept in Swedish society is cohesion and so income supports, enabling individuals to benefit from the opportunities offered by society and structural interventions in the labour market are realised.
United Kingdom	The United Kingdom is unaware of the idea and is moving towards a social economy.
Portugal	Portugal is speaking about services of general interest without the term economic and wants to foster social policies.

Table 2: Interpretation of SGEI in several countries (continued)

Netherlands	The notion of services of general economic interest is not well known in the Netherlands. Here urban policy, support for small and medium enterprises and social housing are subsumed under this term.
Germany	In Germany, the SGEI are at the heart of its welfare state – here social housing, urban policy and support for new businesses, transport, banking services are the main fields of activity.

In France, so-called “schémas des services collectifs” are elaborated with a time horizon of 20 years in order to guarantee these services in close proximity, to contribute to sustainable development and to reduce territorial inequalities. They cover eight different sector policies: research, culture, health, communication and information, transport of persons and goods, energy, natural and rural areas and sports (Datar, 2002). This example also shows that the individual member states often have a much broader and more diverse view of what is regarded as SGEI than the European Commission stated in its communications. The absence of a shared definition of services of general economic interest and the influence of national traditions militates against using a precise comparative table. The conclusion of the OECD study was that the equal availability of such services could be regarded as one important dimension of the concept of territorial cohesion – in particular in peripheral regions where the financing of such services would not be secured in the framework of free market conditions (Pezzini, 2000).

Furthermore, the Commission emphasises the Community's aims of supporting the competitiveness of the European economy in increasingly open world markets, contributing to a high level of consumer protection and confidence, giving consumers more choice, better quality and lower prices. General interest services are seen to have a key role to play in achieving the aims of economic, social and territorial cohesion. A disappearance of such services is regarded as a sign of desertification of rural areas or the degradation of towns (CEC, 2000a). So the Commission policy recognises that there is a need to intervene to ensure equilibrium between liberalisation and general interest objectives, such as economic and social cohesion and environment protection, and the Commission supports the key principle that general interest services constitute an essential element of socio-economic cohesion (CEC, 1998).

The Constitutional Treaty (Conference of the representatives of the governments of the member states, 2004) also refers to the declaration of human rights, which includes services in article 25. The latter argues that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in

the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control” (United Nations, 1948).

The Lisbon Treaty (European Union, 2007) includes a specific protocol on services of general interest, which emphasises the importance of these services for the EU. The shared values concerning the services include

- the essential role and wide discretion in providing these services as closely as possible to the needs of the users;
- the diversity between various services and differences in the needs and preferences of users that may result from different geographical, social or cultural situations
- a high level of quality, safety and affordability, equal treatment and the promotion of universal access

General interest services are regarded by many as a basic pre-condition to use territorial capital and as social rights that make an important contribution to economic, social and territorial cohesion and are hence at the heart of the European model of society.

4.3 Territorial cohesion: its meanings and interpretations

After discussing the genesis and inclusion of the concept into the EU Treaties and the specific role of Services of General Economic Interest it can be stated that there is a broad commitment to the concept of territorial cohesion within different institutions and organisations. Regarding this, it is interesting to see that none of the above mentioned institutions or organisations tried to elaborate a common definition of what the concept of territorial cohesion could mean besides some efforts of the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. The concept has experienced a rapid and considerable success in the discourse as it has become one of the key words in EU policy documents (CEC, 2001c; CEC, 2004a; CEC, 2004b; Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the member states, 2004; Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007; European Union, 2007) but also in the discourse of other international institutions and organisations. Many sources present territorial cohesion as a well-known concept without seeing the need to define it. So the very complex and not to say ambivalent concept (Faludi, 2007) is often presented as an aim or perspective rather than as a reality that can be observed or measured.

4.3.1 Attempts to define territorial cohesion

The CoR wanted to investigate what territorial cohesion could mean and asked the Study Group for European Policies to produce a study on “Territorial Cohesion in Europe” (CoR, 2002b). It resulted in a critical analysis of cohesion in Europe, a description of the major challenges to complete economic and social cohesion in the EU 15 and the consequences of enlargement. In the conclusions the existing lack of territorial cohesion in Europe and the factors for insufficient territorial cohesion are described. In general, income, GDP and unemployment are seen as the most important regional indicators to describe disparities. But, depending on the subject dealt with, other indicators also are considered. In the context of territorial cohesion, the following additional indicators have been briefly addressed to meet the territorial dimension (CoR, 2002b):

- activity rates (Eurostat: ratio between the active population and the total population of corresponding age = share of employable persons in a population of 14 years and over)
- educational attainment
- motorway index
- index of emissions of acidifying gases

The researchers also emphasise that, compared to overall state activities, EU regional policy (mainly aiming at reducing disparities) plays a marginal role but is in danger of focusing the activities where a competitive advantage can be expected with only little consideration of regional balance and social developments. Linking sector policies to spatial policies not only on European but also national and regional level is therefore necessary. The study group concluded that unequal territorial development is a result of a historic process and policies and economic and social development should be related to a territorial setting in order to avoid greater imbalances (CoR, 2002b).

One project of the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) tried to operationalise the concept of territorial cohesion. The ESPON 3.1 project “Integrated tools for European Spatial Development” was dealing with the concept of territorial cohesion (ESPON 3.1, 2003; Hanquet, Boe De, 2003a and b) and tried to operationalise the concept of territorial cohesion along four dimensions:

- Cohesion: three sets of conditions are described which integrate an aspect of the territorial dimension:
 - potential for sustainable development of the territory concerned,
 - position of areas where not only the individual situation but also their relative situation should be regarded and

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- integration in the form of material or immaterial flows, exchanges and co-operation activities
 - Territory, which includes “space” and “society”
 - The spatial scale at which territorial cohesion is envisaged has considerable importance in terms of policies
 - Time gives the dynamic prospect and is particularly important when working with scenarios

These four components were integrated in the so-called “hyper-cube” of territorial cohesion. It was suggested that indicators/typologies defined should be used to operationalise the concept of territorial cohesion, of course combined with other indicators/typologies in an appropriate way. ESPON 3.1 thus demonstrated that a great deal of information is needed to measure the potential for territorial cohesion. The real issue is how to combine all that information in such a way that puts it in the territorial cohesion perspective:

- “It cannot be asserted that territorial cohesion will grow in proportion of territorial potential, but it can be assumed that insufficient potential in some domains is an obstacle to cohesion; in those cases (which should be explored more in-depth and for which other ESPON partners may bring useful information) a threshold should be defined under which development problems are probable;
- Some components of territorial potential may be combined in a multitude of ways that may give an “equivalent” potential built on very different combinations of elements; this should be taken into account in the measurement;
- For some elements of potential (e.g. infrastructures, equipments, or even urban structure), it might be necessary to combine the potential with the position and include the potential of neighbouring areas, particularly if the measurement is made on basis of low-level NUTS. This is a question for which advanced spatial analysis techniques such as multi-scalar analysis may be useful” (ESPON 3.1, 2003).

The hypercube provides a systematic framework through which possible conflicts in goals and strategies as well as areas of complementarity can be identified (Schön, 2005; ESPON 3.1, 2003). Based on this work, the follow-up project ESPON 3.2 “Spatial scenarios and orientations in relation to the ESDP and EU Cohesion Policy” announced first attempts to develop a “European Territorial Cohesion Index” (ETCI). The idea was to evaluate scenarios according to their effects on territorial cohesion in Europe. Ideally the index integrates the three fundamental aims of the ESDP: economic competitiveness, social cohesion and sustainable development. The so-called European Territorial Cohesion Index was also intended to help the Commission to identify areas in need of aid, i.e. for allocating Structural and Cohesion Funds (Davoudi, 2007). But after a first extensive data analysis

with regard to the political expectations on territorial cohesion it turned out that such an index is hard to realise because data is mainly available for the economic dimension but not for the social dimension or in relation to environmental aspects. So “in the current statistical situation of the EU... it is impossible to build any relevant index of territorial cohesion at regional level which could combine the three dimensions of the ESDP” (ESPON 3.2, 2005: 525).

Camagni (2007) understands territorial cohesion as the territorial dimension of sustainability and identifies three main components of territorial cohesion:

- Territorial quality: the quality of the living and working environment; comparable living standards across territories; similar access to services of general interest and to knowledge;
- Territorial efficiency: resource-efficiency with respect to energy, land and natural resources; competitiveness of the economic fabric and attractiveness of the local territory; internal and external accessibility;
- Territorial identity: presence of “social capital”; capability of developing shared visions of the future; local know-how and specificities, productive “vocations” and competitive advantage of each territory.

The exploration of all three components at the same time can be regarded a key challenge for future activities especially on transnational level.

Within the Background Document for the Territorial Agenda (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007b) the meaning of territorial cohesion was described as following:

- focusing regional and national territorial development policies on better exploiting the territorial capital
- better positioning European regions by strengthening their profile and by transnational co-operation aiming to facilitate their connectivity and integration
- promoting the coherence of EU policies that have territorial impacts

These points show that EU Regional Policy can play a key role in initiating specific activities to foster territorial cohesion especially on cross-border and transnational scale.

4.3.2 Territorial cohesion and its role in EU Regional Policy

As the cohesion reports can be regarded as key documents at EU level this section will (as it was done for polycentric development in chapter 3) explore whether and to which extent the concept of territorial cohesion was taken into account. The second report on economic and social cohesion

includes a specific chapter with the title “Territorial cohesion: towards a more balanced development” (CEC, 2001c). With that, the Commission introduced territorial cohesion as a new, third dimension next to economic and social cohesion. The Commission saw clear relations between strengthening cohesion and the three main aims of the ESDP and declared that enlargement raised new challenges for territorial cohesion. In the ESDP, territorial cohesion is only mentioned once as a reference to the Treaty of Amsterdam. But the term spatial cohesion (in fact the same as territorial cohesion) is included several times as an aim in the ESDP in different contexts, such as the development of transport corridors, to overcome major natural barriers but also to use identity-giving entities like rivers, lakes and mountains (CEC, 1999).

The Commission stated in the second cohesion report that the spatial concentration of economic activities might increase the efficiency of production in the short term, but that the competitiveness of the EU might decline in the long-term. It hints at negative congestion effects, which might arise in agglomerated regions, whereas other areas suffer from economic decline and depopulation. But according to the cohesion report, there is no evidence that agglomeration diseconomies serve as an automatic correction mechanism for unbalanced growth. In contrast, as Niebuhr and Stiller (2003) point out, “... one can be of the opinion that agglomeration in the EU is still too low from the perspective of overall economic growth. New growth theory and new economic geography provide arguments suggesting that it could be more efficient to have an even higher concentration of economic activities in the EU. Therefore policy measures aiming at a more even distribution of economic activities across space do not necessarily enhance efficiency but may have adverse effects on overall growth rates” (Niebuhr, Stiller, 2003: 163). A potential conflict between equity and efficiency can be identified which the EU policy has to consider. Furthermore, they argue that territorial cohesion should be an issue of policy at the national or regional level and not a task of EU policy because detailed knowledge on the regional situation is a necessary precondition for designing adequate policy measures (Niebuhr, Stiller, 2003). A study of a high level expert group, the so-called Sapir report (Sapir, et al, 2004), fundamentally questioned the effectiveness of EU support for regional policy, especially the small amounts going to richer member states as a result of the intergovernmental bargaining process. “The current budget is more the expression of different deals and attempts by governments to claw back the receipts as much of their contribution as possible (just retour again) than a coherent set of measures aimed at pursuing EU objectives” (Sapir, et al, 2004: 197). The controversial expert report proposed the re-nationalisation of the CAP and regional funding, while introducing more flexibility into the EU's budgetary policy in order to foster growth as the first priority.

In February 2004, the third report on economic and social cohesion “A new partnership for cohesion” (CEC, 2004a) was published which includes a specific chapter called “territorial cohesion”. Territorial cohesion is described as an extension of economic and social cohesion and understood as an objective which helps to “achieve a more balanced development by reducing existing disparities, preventing territorial imbalances and by making both sectoral policies which have a spatial impact and regional policy more coherent” (CEC, 2004a: 27). It becomes clear that territorial cohesion is not only understood to aim at reducing disparities, but that it also covers questions of general accessibility, accessibility of SGEIs as well as problems caused by low population density or areas constrained by their geographical features (like islands, peripheral areas). Looking at the concept and what it encompasses at the different territorial levels a clear link to the concept of polycentric development becomes evident (see section 3.3.2).

After the publication of the third cohesion report, the European Commission (DG Regio) produced an interim territorial cohesion report (CEC, 2004b), which is a summary of different studies launched by the DG Regio or in the framework of the ESPON programme. Three topics are mentioned as important in order to achieve the territorial dimension of cohesion:

- overcoming territorial imbalances in the enlarged EU especially between the centre and periphery with regard to the metropolitan concentration in the pentagon and the regions with geographic handicaps (islands, mountainous areas, peripheral regions, regions with low population densities).
- improving the distribution of competitiveness factors in the EU esp. concerning research and innovation capacities, and
- improving the accessibility in transport, but also telecommunication and energy.

After a development process lasting 10 years in order to achieve the ESDP and a long break (which almost caused a complete dismantling of structures of communication) with these activities once again spatial development policy is beginning to be viewed more positively in Europe, captured in the concept of “territorial cohesion”. During the Dutch presidency in the second half of 2004, territorial cohesion was taken up as an explicit topic for an informal EU ministerial meeting (Schön, 2005). The presidency conclusions mention “the need for a coherent approach to the development of the EU territory” and “the ministers agreed that they will focus their agenda until 2007 on territorial cohesion with the aim of supporting the Lisbon ambitions by better exploiting Europe’s diverse potentials”. In the preparatory document for the ministerial meeting (Dutch EU presidency, 2004a) one of the key aims mentioned is “elaborating the objective of territorial cohesion, particularly in relation to the Union’s key ambitions for strengthening

sustainable economic growth”. Furthermore it outlines that territorial cohesion means the following:

- “Focusing regional and national territorial development policies on better exploiting regional potentials and territorial capital ...
- Better positioning of regions in Europe....
- Promoting the coherence of EU policies with a territorial impact, both horizontally (across sectors) and vertically (between levels of administration)....” (Dutch Presidency, 2004a: 11)

For the first time here the concept of territorial capital is used implicitly underlining the fact that territory is a resource which potentially generates productivity increases and utility of flows to local communities (Camagni, 2007).

The Luxembourg presidency, following the Dutch presidency, stressed again the challenge “to integrate the territorial dimension into EU policies with the aim of achieving a coherent approach to the development of the EU territory, on the basis of the concept of territorial cohesion” (Luxembourg EU Presidency, 2005b). There the ministers agreed to elaborate together with the European Commission and the European Parliament a document called “Territorial State and Perspective of the European Union”. The so-called “Territorial Agenda of the European Union” was adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion held in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007 during the German EU Council Presidency (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007). It emphasises the need for the territorial dimension to play a stronger role in future regional policy. The representatives “... believe that territorial cohesion of the EU is prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic growth and implementing economic and social cohesion – a European social model”.

With regard to the Structural Funds it is interesting to observe that the above-mentioned activities also influenced the debate on the programming period 2007-2013. “In the 2007-2013 programming period, the Commission has proposed a new and important form of leverage over the way in which member states spend EU cohesion policy allocations, which is of considerable significance for the territorial cohesion agenda. The proposal involves a new planning system with – at the apex, a set of Community Strategic Guidelines, agreed by the Council – and National Strategic Reference Frameworks governing the delivery of individual operational programmes. This is intended to ensure that overall EU policy objectives are reflected much more clearly in the allocation of resources” (Bachtler, Polverari, 2007).

In 2006, the European Commission adopted the Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion 2007-2013 (European Council, 2006) that contain the principles and priorities of regional policy and have a chapter in the

annex on “the territorial dimension of cohesion policy”. Before adopting this, the European Commission published a “non paper” in May 2005 and a Communication in July 2005 with the title “Cohesion policy in support of growth and Jobs: Community strategic guidelines” (CEC, 2005a and 2005b). Here chapter 5 on “Taking account of the territorial dimension of cohesion policy” (which in the non paper had the title “Territorial cohesion and co-operation”) includes the following definition, which is highly influenced by the Dutch and Luxembourg presidencies:

“The concept of territorial cohesion extends beyond the notion of economic and social cohesion, its objective being to help achieve a more balanced development, to build sustainable communities in urban and rural areas and to seek greater consistency with other sectoral policies which have a spatial impact. This also involves improving territorial integration and encouraging co-operation between and within regions. Improving territorial cohesion is a matter both of method – i.e. determining whether a multidisciplinary or integrated approach is needed – and of recognising the particular problems presented by different geographical circumstances. Success in the area of territorial cohesion therefore depends on a comprehensive strategy which sets the framework within which specific objectives and actions are pursued” (CEC, 2005b: 29).

Taking the territorial dimension into account is regarded as necessary because it is one of the determining features of cohesion policy which in contrast to the sectoral policies has the capacity to adapt to the particular needs and characteristics of specific geographical challenges and opportunities of regions.

4.3.3 Territorial cohesion – mediating different interests

Considering the ways in which territorial cohesion came into the Treaties of the EU and which organisations and institutions have fostered and interpreted the concept, it can be stated that the concept emerged quite rapidly and is the outcome of a political rather than a theoretical or scientific debate. Looking at the statements of different interest groups and organisations described above, a quite broad political consensus about the importance of the concept exists. With regard to the whole process through which the importance of territorial cohesion increased in the political debate, different interests and motivations underlying the activities fostering the concept can be identified. So the discourse around the concept is fragmented and contradictory. Territorial cohesion is used to mediate different political purposes and combines different interests such as (Tatzberger, 2003a):

- Limiting liberalisation activities caused by the EU in order to ensure equal access to services of general economic interest also in peripheral and

lagging-behind regions and to resist complete market liberalisation, with market failures serving as arguments for reining in the forces of competition (Faludi, 2003a).

- Strengthening the territorial dimension of EU policies in order to move towards a balanced and sustainable development by taking into consideration the territorial effects of sector policies on different levels. Several efforts are undertaken to identify the spatial effects from sectoral policies and to find ways to co-ordinate them. This leads to the topic of multi-level governance, which means to take into account the fact that hierarchical decision making no longer works in complex, constantly changing societies like ours.
- Framing European regional policy after 2006. Territorial cohesion has been intended as one motivation for a longer support programme for lagging behind and peripheral regions in combination with polycentric development, which raises arguments to support cities and towns as motors for regional development and to use their potential.
- Distributing economic activities more evenly over the territory of the EU where services of general economic interest are regarded as a basic precondition to use territorial capital. So it is a concept that aims to reach spatial equity in terms of opportunities and needs in order to foster the use of regional potential. So each territory should develop its potential by establishing links and partnerships with others.

A profound assessment of the meanings underlying territorial cohesion was done by Waterhout (2007) describing four different storylines of territorial cohesion. He identified the potential elements of a territorial cohesion policy by using four different indicators (geographic focus and key concepts, discourse coalition, operationalisation and scope and elements of European models of society). He concludes that “Europe in Balance” is the storyline which seems in the best position to remain the leading one, combining the thinking of planners who participated in the ESDP process with the lobbyists for services of general economic interest.

The Territorial Agenda adopted in 2007 (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007a) puts territorial cohesion in the centre – the future task mentioned within the Territorial Agenda is to strengthen territorial cohesion. But it also directly relates to the concept of polycentric development. Polycentric development, introduced with the ESDP, lost some of its discursive power (Waterhout, 2007) but is put back on the policy agenda as the first out of six priorities of the Territorial Agenda calling for “strengthening polycentric development and innovation through networking of city regions and cities”. Both concepts reflect the idea of the European model of society understood to foster competitiveness whilst keeping in mind concerns for social welfare, good governance and sustainability.

4.4 Conclusions

Territorial cohesion as a concept has a broad meaning and emerged quite rapidly and is the outcome of a political rather than a theoretical or scientific debate. First of all, territorial cohesion was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 in connection with services of general economic interest and made a kind of career move since it became an objective in its own right and on a separate footing to economic and social cohesion in the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (European Union, 2004). The proposed Constitution had failed ratification in referendums in France and the Netherlands in 2005 and therefore is an unimplemented international treaty. But with the signed Lisbon Treaty (European Union, 2007) territorial cohesion is introduced as an objective of the European Union, equal to economic and social cohesion. Further emphasis was given to the concept with the Territorial Agenda (Informal Ministerial Meeting, 2007) identifying as a future task the strengthening of territorial cohesion. The ministers responsible for spatial planning and development express the conviction that territorial cohesion is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic growth and implementing economic and social cohesion.

As territorial cohesion is used to mediate different political purposes, the chapter reflects on the different interests influencing the inclusion of the concept of territorial cohesion in the Treaties of the EU. Looking at the discourse around territorial cohesion, it transpires that different political purposes are underlying the concept. Some use the concept in order to lobby for mitigating respectively limiting liberalisation caused by the EU in order to ensure equal access to services of general economic interest and to resist complete market liberalisation, with market failures serving as arguments for reining in the forces of competition (Faludi, 2003a). Others would like to give more consideration to the territorial dimension and effects of sector policies on different levels (European, national and regional) and to improve co-ordination between levels and policies (horizontal and vertical co-ordination) (Robert, et al., 2001). The debate around the concept of territorial cohesion also aimed to frame European regional policy after 2006 with the Structural Funds as the second largest budget item of the European Union. Territorial cohesion is regarded as an argument for continued support for lagging behind and peripheral regions, but in combination with polycentric development arguments to support towns and cities as the motors for regional development. The traditional strategy of regional policy in the EU focused on structurally weak and disadvantaged regions whereas the new emphasis is more on the developmental potential of a region (Tatzberger, 2003a). A direct link to polycentric development is also emphasised in the second so-called report on economic and social cohesion with a specific chapter about “territorial cohesion: towards a more balanced development” where growth centres are mentioned for achieving polycentric development (CEC, 2001c). The third report on economic and social cohesion “A new

partnership for cohesion” (CEC, 2004a) argues under the heading of territorial cohesion that territorial disparities cannot be ignored and must be combated by mobilising unused resources throughout Europe. Another aspect very much related to this is the aim of distributing economic activities more evenly over the territory of the EU whereby services of general economic interest are regarded as a basic pre-condition to use territorial capital (OECD, 2001). To think in terms of the “potential” of regions is very much implied in the concept of territorial cohesion aiming to use the territorial capital in a sustainable way which also includes a more balanced distribution of economic activities in the territory. The 2004 Dutch presidency conclusion of the informal ministerial meeting on territorial cohesion stressed the importance of territorial cohesion, both in strengthening competitiveness and reducing disparities within the cohesion framework and the key role that cities play in this concern. It talks about a multi-sectoral and multi-level concept in order to exploit territorial potential (Dutch EU presidency, 2004b).

The urban areas are mentioned as engines for improving competitiveness and dynamic development and play therefore a central role. This allows the interpretation that the umbrella concept of territorial cohesion is rendered more operational by the idea of polycentric development (Böhme, 2004; Waterhout, 2007). So polycentric development is considered to be one operationalisation of territorial cohesion because it bridges the conflicting aims of economic growth and balanced development and supports a more cohesive and balanced European territory. Both concepts, territorial cohesion and polycentric development, reflect the idea of a European model of society (for details see chapter 2.1.2) so far not clearly defined and contested (Faludi, 2007) but understood to foster competitiveness whilst keeping in mind concerns for social welfare, good governance and sustainability. This is also regarded as one main aim and character of the European model of society. The EU always defended the traditional European model of society by seeking to balance regulation and liberalisation efforts. Its aim is to close the gap with the US economy but without following the US model (Martens, 2002). Solidarity and equal treatment within an open and dynamic market economy are therefore fundamental European Community objectives. The Territorial Agenda puts territorial cohesion in the centre but it also directly relates it to the concept of polycentric development. It calls for “strengthening polycentric development and innovation through networking of city regions and cities”. General interest services are regarded by many as social rights that make an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and are hence at the heart of the European model of society (CEC, 1996). Nowadays, with the internal market being a reality, the construction of Europe goes forward in a balanced way on two pillars: free competition and economic, social and territorial cohesion – expressions such as “European social model” correspond to the search for an equilibrium which is also a key theme in the case study area.

5. Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle – the European model of society in action

The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr border region that straddles Austria, Hungary, and Slovakia has experienced huge changes over the last 18 years, especially since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and in the course of the European integration that followed. In view of these changes, the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle can be regarded as an important springboard for revitalising East-West relations (ÖIR, 2003a). Furthermore, the three cities Vienna, Bratislava and Győr, formerly strictly divided by the so-called Iron Curtain, are located in high proximity and therefore have the potential to influence each other's development and to become a functional region. The EU is now the largest internal single market and trader of goods and services in the world (Rifkin, 2004) and one of the strongest regions economically. In the case study region, a transnational view is necessary to identify the specific spatial potential existing within the area. Indeed, for the first time in decades, a common transnational view and intensive co-operation are possible, and yet vast differences remain. For this reason, disparities among regions became a new focus of the European Union (EU) with its enlargement to 25 member states in 2004. This enlargement was a momentous achievement that signalled Europe's unification after 50 years of division while simultaneously creating a new political order that for the first time in contemporary history is based on common values and a shared desire to construct a space of security and peace. With the addition of the 10 new member states, the population of the EU rose to over 455 million, its territory to 3.9 million square kilometres, and its official languages to 20. By comparison, the United States has 293 million inhabitants, 9.4 million square kilometres, and one official language, English.

The EU enlargement of 2004 had several specific features. First, it was the biggest enlargement the EU has ever undergone. Second, in 2001 most of the regions within the new member states had a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita adjusted for purchasing power parity of less than 75 percent of the EU15 average (CEC, 2004a). And, third, the new member states in Eastern Europe are former socialist countries and therefore have undergone huge changes in becoming democracies and market economies. Even though entry to the EU might seem to imply the end of transition by these countries, which are now well-established market economies, it would be a mistake to imagine that history can be wiped out in such a short period and that no

structural traces of the former communist system remain (Mercier, 2005). In the EU with 27 member states the very high concentration of activities in the central part of the EU persists. These high disparities were the main drivers of the emergence of the concepts of territorial cohesion and polycentric development.

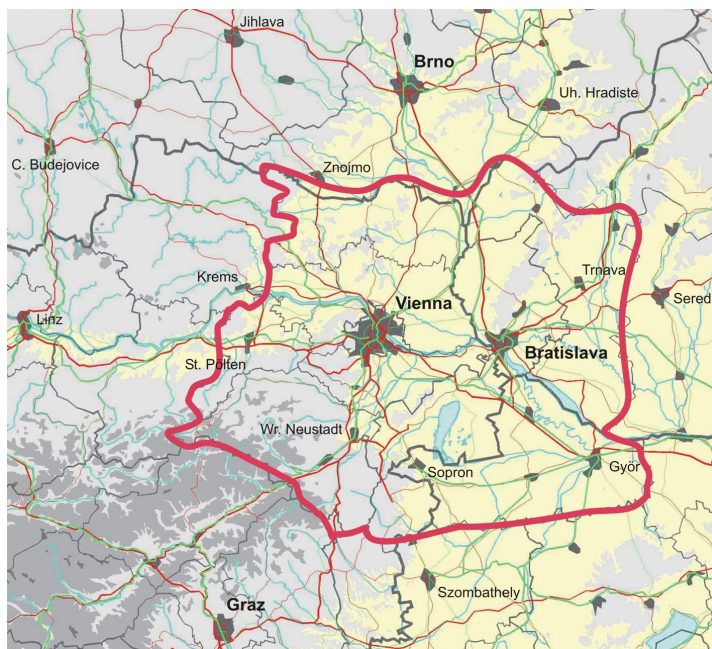
The first part of this chapter gives a general description of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle and deals with the historical events influencing relationships, economic performance, transport infrastructure and the high quality of the landscapes characterising the area. The following section tries to find out how the concepts of polycentric development (see chapter 3) and territorial cohesion (see chapter 4) can be connected or are interpreted for the case study area. This also includes the dimension of atmospherical feelings lingering in the population's mind and the role tools such as visions and metaphors (discussed in section 2.2) can play. The final part of this chapter tries to reflect on the European model of society (introduced in section 2.1) in relation to the situation and developments in the case study area.

5.1 Border region in Central Europe – the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle

No common definition exists of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, nor is any administrative institution responsible for it. On the contrary, the three cities are part of three different countries that once, however, belonged to the same empire. They were then separated and have converged again in the wake of the political changes in 1989 and EU enlargement in 2004. Although these political events caused huge changes within the area, vast differences remain. The three countries have turned inward, orienting themselves toward their national territories. Their capitals are the primate cities dominating the respective urban hierarchies. In other words, with the exception of Slovakia, which has a more balanced urban system, the situation in each of the countries is far from polycentric. As for territorial cohesion, each of the three countries is found wanting. The – on transnational scale – polycentric area has a great potential to use its territorial potential in order to play in a higher league on transnational and European scale. A particular characteristic of the area is that Vienna and Bratislava are one of the closest pair of capitals in the world (60 kilometres apart from centre to centre), resulting in potentially easy commuting and functional integration.

The area of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle is delineated differently, depending on the topic of co-operation or the themes of study. In Figure 12, the study area is defined by the following NUTS 3 regions²⁵: Mittelburgenland, Nordburgenland, Niederösterreich-Süd, St. Pölten, Weinviertel, Wiener Umland/Nord, Wiener Umland/Süd, Wien (Vienna), Győr-Moson-Sopron, Bratislava, and Trnava.

Figure 10: The area of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle



Source: ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH, own revision

This area is characterised by huge historical changes, especially in the last 18 years; three countries with three different administrative structures and languages; different socioeconomic development levels in close proximity to each other, but high dynamics; medium-size agglomerations alongside the economic core areas, two of them capital cities that are facing further suburbanisation; and a distinct urban-rural disparity.

Vienna and Bratislava are the national capital cities and thus the administrative, economic, and political centres of their respective countries, Austria and the Slovak Republic. Győr, which lies halfway between Budapest and Vienna, is the regional administrative and economic centre of

²⁵ NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units of Statistics) is a geocode standard developed by the EU for classifying territorial units for statistical purposes.

western Hungary. In terms of population, Vienna with 1.5 million inhabitants, Bratislava with 428,000, and Győr with 129,000 are the three largest cities in the Triangle, followed by Trnava (70,000), Sopron (56,000), and St. Pölten (50,000). As Vienna, Bratislava and Győr are within daily commuting distance, it can be assumed that they have the potential of becoming an integrated area. Furthermore there are three cities which have between 30 – 35,000 inhabitants (Wiener Neustadt, Mosonmagyaróvár, Piešťany) and two cities between 20 – 30,000 (Pezinok und Dunajská Streda). The northern and eastern border region of Austria can be regarded as the logical hinterland of the neighbouring areas in the Czech Republic and Hungary like Brno or Sopron, which originally were the economic centres of the surrounding rural areas (ÖIR, 2003b).

As for the administrative structure of the three countries, Slovakia has a more regionalised administrative structure than Hungary, whose capital, Budapest (which is larger than Vienna) and regional centre Győr are very much dependent on the national government. Austria has a federal structure in which the Länder (provinces) have many powers. Vienna, which is both a province and municipality, thus has far more room for manoeuvre in terms of its powers and budget than Bratislava and Győr.

5.1.1 Historical events influencing relationships

When Vienna, Bratislava and Győr were still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which stretched over some 680,000 square kilometres and was home to 52 million inhabitants (the two parts of the empire were linked only through the common monarch, foreign policy, military, and common finances²⁶), the two agglomerations of Vienna and Bratislava²⁷ interacted particularly intensively because of the absence of significant trade barriers. The transport infrastructure, which was adequate, mostly consisted of railroads and waterways. In 1914, a direct tram connection was launched with great success between the Vienna and Bratislava city centres (Kleindel, 1995: 304). But this close relationship changed radically after World War II, when the 40 years of separation began, and the cities coexisted – despite their close historical relations before 1945 – without any form of institutionalised co-operation. The Iron Curtain, which ran precisely along the border between Austria and Slovakia and Hungary, precipitated a fundamental change in the geographic position of the Triangle. Once at the core of Europe, the three cities found themselves at the periphery, each

²⁶ A common monetary and customs union was established to guarantee economic stability. The crown (German krone) was introduced by the Austria-Hungarian monarchy on 11 August 1892 as the first modern gold-based currency in the area (Kleindel 1995).

²⁷ Bratislava was part of Hungary at that time

oriented toward its respective country and cut off from its regional hinterland.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the subsequent political and economic changes in the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), Vienna, Bratislava, and Győr began to become reacquainted. The transformation process in the CEECs began, however, with a radical economic downturn. This restructuring process was characterised by high levels of uncertainty, a decline in production, unemployment, and significant social degradation. Most countries turned toward the West because they were seeking to replace trade with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)²⁸, which had collapsed. Today, five CEECs including Hungary and Slovakia have moved beyond the economic performance they had in 1989. Meanwhile, for Vienna, Bratislava and Győr the dismantling of the Iron Curtain once again changed their geographic position – they reassumed a core position that has influenced the area's economic and spatial development.

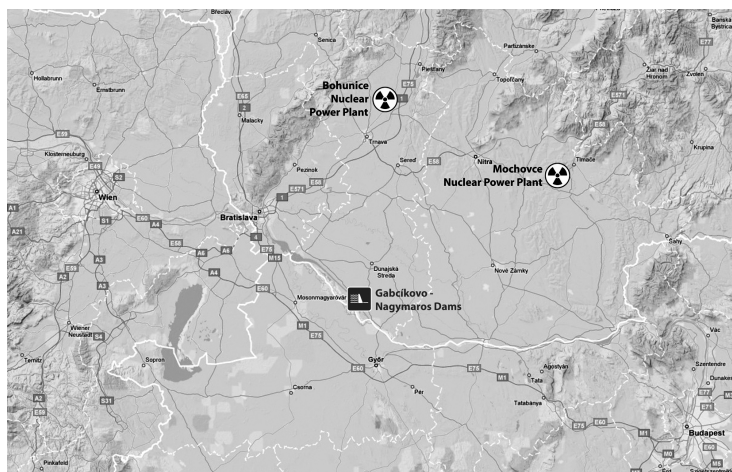
Relations between the three countries are influenced by their different characteristics but also by political events of the past. Slovakia is a very young state that came into existence in 1993 through the peaceful dissolution of the federation with the Czechs. Originally, Slovakia was not a candidate for the 2004 enlargement, because from 1992 to 1998 (with a break of a few months) Vladimír Mečiar's semi authoritarian party ruled Slovakia, seriously breaching democratic norms and the rule of law. This difficult start during the Mečiar era, as well as Mečiar's negative attitude toward accession to the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) led to Slovakia's political isolation. However, after 1999 Slovakia made huge political and economic progress, and today is one of the most promising new member states.

In general, the co-operation between Austria and Hungary began earlier and is more intensive than that with Slovakia. This difference stems from the above mentioned political isolation during the Mečiar era but also from Austria's long opposition to the construction of bridges over the Morava River between Austria and Slovakia (before World War II there were 12 crossings, but today there are only two). The bridges were very much wanted by the Slovak side immediately after 1989 but delayed by the Austrians. This hesitation can be explained by insufficient information, ecological reasons, the fear that cheap products would inundate the Austrian market, i.e. the fear of economic disadvantages. Point of origin was the local referendum about a bridge in Angern (see Figure 14), which was rejected on the Austrian side in

²⁸ The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON/CMEA), 1949-1991, was an economic organisation of communist states and a kind of Eastern European equivalent to the European Economic Community.

1994. This was apparently enough for politicians to subsequently avoid taking a political decision.²⁹ Now the Austrians are very keen to construct such bridges (in order to get access to the large automotive industries on the Slovak side) but this is no longer a political priority on the Slovak side. Another topic influencing the Austrian-Slovak relationship is Austria's resistance to the atomic power plants near the Slovakia-Austria border (especially Bohunice, but also Mochovce – see Figure 11). Hard criticism came from the Austrians (declared opponents of atomic energy) which led to requests to shut down Bohunice by 2008 as a pre-condition for EU accession. Additionally, in the conflict over the hydroelectric power plant in Gabčíkovo (see details in the paragraphs below), Austrian environmentalists were in the forefront of the fight against the plant. This is felt by Slovaks as an intervention in national energy policy and there is the feeling that Austrians want to make Slovakia dependent on the Austrian energy market.

Figure 11: Atomic power plants and Gabčíkovo Dam



Source: ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH

The relationship between Slovakia and Hungary is also not free from historical ill-feelings. The fact that Slovakia was once dominated by stronger political entities and the Slovaks suffered from ethnic domination, “Magyarisation”, during the Austro-Hungarian Empire is one example of the historical root of a modern tension. This history bred a psychology of ethnic superiority among Hungarians and still influences relationships between the two countries. Another reason for today’s lack of co-operation between Slovakia and Hungary is the Gabčíkovo Dam dispute. In 1977, Hungary and

²⁹ It is interesting to know that the bridge in Hohenau was opened in 1991 – a real piece of luck that was amongst other reasons influenced by the fact that German language was still known on Slovak side.

Czechoslovakia initiated the project with the goal of tapping the resources of the Danube between Bratislava and Budapest to produce hydroelectric power and to reduce air pollution in the area. In addition, the Soviet Union was hoping to improve the navigability of the river. In 1992, Hungary terminated the project using environmentalism as a political cover. In the same year, Slovakia began to divert the river, thereby extracting 90 percent of the water from the old riverbed which caused the water level to drop by 2 meters. The ensuing conflict took on an international dimension and was submitted to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, which led to the exploitation of the Danube project as an arena for a struggle over power and minority issues. Hungary protested that the Hungarian minority in Slovakia had been squeezed into a narrow strip of land between a canal and the Danube, and it claimed that the Hungarian population structure was undermined because Slovak construction workers were settling in the region. Since 2002, the Hungarian government has objected even to the construction of a lower dam. Meanwhile, Slovakia has signalled its willingness to compromise on condition that Hungary pays compensation. Thus, the fundamentally different interpretations of the problems by two conflicting parties remain and will probably continue to affect the prospects of future co-operation (Fürst, 2003).

A further provocation was created with the private visit of the Hungarian president Solyom in southern Slovakia at the beginning of October 2007. As a big group of Hungarian minorities live there this was understood as a visit to “Hungarian provinces” at a time when Hungarian politicians boycotted all meetings with Slovakian partners.³⁰ Surprisingly the issue between Hungary and Austria over Sopron’s secession from Burgenland has been settled. After World War I, Sopron was intended to become Burgenland’s capital city and the largest town of this new Austrian province. But Sopron’s status as part of Hungary was decided by a local plebiscite held on December 14th 1921 with 65% voting for Hungary – since then Sopron has been called “The Most Loyal Town” of Hungary.

This shows that alongside the many successful co-operation initiatives that exist there are still historical and current events – besides the political divide with the Iron Curtain – influencing the relationships and co-operation in the area.

³⁰ http://www.eurotopics.net/de/presseschau/archiv/aehnliche/archiv_article/ARTICLE21056

5.1.2 Economic performance

Even though Hungary, Slovakia and Austria have shown a largely positive economic development over the past few years, the economic structures and trends are characterised by enormous national and inner-regional disparities as regards prosperity, wages and income, but also in technical and environmental standards, price levels and the systems of social and unemployment benefits. These differences appear in the prosperity gaps between the bordering countries and the distinct gaps between the urban centres and the countryside. New member states try to find a balance between efficiency and equity, yet priority in the short term has been given to efficiency or national competitiveness also in the hope that “spill-over” effects will improve the situation in the rest of the country. But more importantly, the long-term political goal is that of equity or cohesion of the national territory (ESPON 1.1.3, 2006).

Vienna’s economic situation in relation to that of Austria’s other regions is revealed by the fact that about 30 percent of Austria’s GDP is produced in Vienna and about 26 percent of its labour force works there. In 2001, Vienna had an unemployment rate of 4.9 percent, above the Austrian average of 3.4 percent but far below the EU15 rate of 7.6 percent. Vienna and its immediate hinterland to the south enjoy the country’s highest economic status. Their respective GDPs per capita are 60 percent, 35 percent above the comparative EU value. Conversely, the regions north and east of Vienna (which adjoined to the former Iron Curtain and were therefore cut off from markets, political relations, infrastructure, etc.) are below average; in those regions agriculture plays a major role in the economy. Another feature of the economic structure of Vienna is its large share of small and medium enterprises. It is also home to the headquarters of many international organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Likewise, in the Slovak part of the study area, economic activities are concentrated in the urban region of Bratislava. At the turn of the millennium, Bratislava already had a GDP per capita that was about the same as the EU average (measured by purchasing power parity). But the disparities within Slovakia are huge: Bratislava has a value of 200 percent compared with the average national index (measured in GDP at purchasing power parity/inhabitant whereby the national index = 100).

The economic disparities in Hungary are also significant. Budapest is the wealthiest area, followed directly by the region of Győr with 120 percent of the Hungarian GDP per capita (ÖIR, 2003). Indeed, the western part of Hungary has a strong economy and is one of the most dynamic regions in the country (ÖIR, 1998; OECD, 2003). But the disparities between countries are large, presenting huge threats to territorial cohesion. Austria belongs to the

wealthiest countries in the EU with a GDP per capita of 113 (Index EU15 = 100) in 2001). The comparable figure for Hungary is 51 and for Slovakia 45. But over the past several years, the GDP growth rates of Slovakia and Hungary have been rising (+ 5.7 and + 4.3 percent, respectively) at rates far above the EU average (2.5 percent). The modernisation of the infrastructure, large-scale privatisation, foreign direct investments and a rise in consumption have triggered a dynamic growth process.

Figure 12: The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle: differences in GDP/inhabitant in 2001



Source: ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH, 2003; own revision

The economic structure of the study area is dominated by the secondary sector which is more important in Slovakia and Hungary than in Austria. This high level of industrialisation in Hungary and Slovakia is a legacy of the past because before 1989 economic policy was directed at expanding industrial production (ÖIR, 2003b). The existing human capital in this sector, combined with low wages and taxes, is a motor for a highly dynamic development. During the last few years, especially Győr and the area around Bratislava have become important centres for the automotive sector, benefiting from huge foreign direct investment (FDI). For example, since 1993, Audi has invested € 1.5 bn in constructing a factory for the production of engines and cars in Győr. In 1991, Volkswagen established a factory with 7000 employees near Bratislava that is now the second largest employer in Slovakia (Die Presse, 2003, 2004; Die Zeit, 2004). In 2003, Peugeot Citroen started to build a factory near Trnava employing 3,600 people and produces

300,000 cars per year. In 2004, also Hyundai decided to invest in the area near Bratislava and is planning to construct a factory with 4,000 employees producing 300,000 vehicles per year (Die Zeit, 2004; Die Presse, 2004). Already now Slovakia is the most important car producer in the world in relation to its population. The basis for this development was the high share of heavy industry as a legacy of the past – Slovakia was known as the armourer of the Eastern Bloc. Also, on the Austrian side, a competence in the automotive sector (with General Motors in Vienna) exists. The Automotive Cluster Vienna Region (ACVR) is an Austrian initiative of the Vienna Region (encompassing Vienna, Niederösterreich and Burgenland) to use the existing competence and initiate innovative projects with partnerships with classical sub-suppliers but also providers of electronics, telematics and services. The ACVR also initiated co-operation initiatives with partners in Hungary and Slovakia, e.g. development and implementation of inter-cultural language courses with the Hungarian Auto-cluster PANAC in order to reduce communicative and cultural barriers and increase the willingness to co-operate. Another example is the organisation of a cross-border production network together with the Slovak Business and Innovation Centre-Bratislava (BIC).

The figures above show that FDI plays an important role in restructuring and improving the competitiveness of industry and manufacturing by helping to raise productivity and to expand exports. It has been one of the driving forces behind industrial restructuring in Hungary and Slovakia. The majority of the Austrian direct investment concentrated in the first years of the transformation on Hungary. Hungary received approximately 70% of the total Austrian direct investment in the period 1989 – 1992. But also economic integration is proceeding. For example, Hungary has already 75.1% of its total export going to the EU 15 which reaches together with Estonia and Czech Republic a higher integration with the EU economy than the average of EU member states (62%) (Weiss, 2004; Schroeder, 2004). Slovakia lies with 60.5% slightly under the EU average but, for example, mutual exchanges increased between the Slovak Republic and Austria – the annually traded goods have multiplied by five from 1993 to 2002 with annual growth rates of 15-20% since 1993. This factor explains the head start that Austrian enterprises received in the Hungarian market. Apart from geographic proximity, Austria's interest in Hungary can be attributed in particular to its good economic and political contacts there, dating back long before 1989 (Preparity, 2000). In Slovakia, the largest volume of foreign capital was invested in the processing of food and beverages (12%) followed by metal working (9.3%), the car industry (7%), chemical production, and the manufacturing of metal-based products. Until 1998 most of the capital came from Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic but the situation changed in 1998 when the USA, the Netherlands and Great Britain took the lead on the list of investors as a result of large investments in the food and

metal working industries (Hošková, 2000). Nevertheless, in 2002, Austria still is, after Germany, the second largest source of FDI in the Slovak Republic with an accumulated total investment of € 1.1 bn (OECD, 2003). A large share of total FDI in the Slovak Republic is concentrated in the Bratislava area. Also in Hungary, the most important foreign direct investor is Germany followed by Austria, Spain and the Netherlands whereby the highest share goes to services, financial services and manufacturing, especially transport equipment (Missura, 2005).

Another fact is that foreign ownership in the banking sector has grown rapidly in the Central and Eastern European countries over the last ten years. Austrian banks have a significant market share in a number of markets in the region. They are among the largest players with market shares at or above 40% in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. In Central and Eastern Europe, the market share of Austrian banks is about 23% (excluding Russia and Turkey). But also the city of Vienna tries to position itself as bridgehead between East and West. It attracts international organizations but also EU institutions like the TINA (Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment) secretariat that carried out the project on transport infrastructure analysis for the ongoing extension of the Trans-European Network (TEN) into the new member states. In the former programming period 2000-2006, Vienna held the INTERREG IIIC East Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat, the Interact Programme Secretariat and also actively participated in numerous INTERREG projects. In the new programming period 2007-2013, Vienna will most probably be the managing authority for the transnational co-operation programme for Central Europe but also the INTERREG IVC East office and will also play a strategic role in project development. But the bridgehead role of Vienna is also perceptible in day to day life in Vienna as it is, for example, hardly possible to go shopping without being served by shop-assistants who speak a central-south-eastern European language or comes from such a country.

The trend in recent years towards economic integration within the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle has been supported by more favourable endogenous market conditions on the Slovak and Hungarian sides:

- a diversified economic base undergoing progressive structural change towards the tertiary sector, particularly production-oriented services, but also huge knowledge resources in the industrial sector.
- a large share of qualified, motivated human capital supplied by a network of educational facilities but working at low wage levels
- the development of a broader educational and scientific research basis
- a potentially advantageous location, with the urban region serving as an intersection of the transport corridors

-
- investment-friendly fiscal regulations (a flat tax in Slovakia and Hungary that is especially low in Slovakia).

For several years now, a comprehensive restructuring process has also been going on in Vienna, especially in manufacturing, which led to a concentration in technology-oriented industries (electronics, vehicles, mechanical engineering, chemicals) and in food production. A large share of the growth industries of the past few years is part of the service sector. As regards competitiveness, Vienna has been confirmed to have an excellent position for further development due to its modernised economic structure. Vienna has a very high share in industries that are expected to attain high employment gains from the accession of the Central Eastern European countries. By contrast, industries that are jeopardised through EU enlargement are represented at only average levels (ÖIR, 2003a). In Bratislava county, a decrease of employees in industry and construction can be recorded compared with 1993 and an increase in business services (like trade, tourism, banking, insurance). The Bratislava and Trnava region have a long tradition in the chemical, food and pharmaceutical industries and economic growth and export performance was especially good – as already mentioned – in the machinery sector (esp. car production). There are several strong enterprises with supra-regional importance and a high growth of the service sector was experienced in the urban areas (Aurex, 2002). Győr had been a relatively advanced industrial city before 1990 and after 1990 it benefited from the available industrial and infrastructural base, skilled local labour force, favourable location and a broad spectrum of foreign relations. Now, as a result of successful restructuring, the technology oriented industries (vehicles, electronics) are competitive, have a dynamic research and development base, and the service sector is growing (culture and education, information, tourism).

The original assumption underlying Austria's goal of locating more labour-intensive functions in the neighbouring states and concentrating more highly qualified functions in Austria is no longer valid. Over the last few years, the experiences of the Western European automobile industry in Hungary and Slovakia have revealed that production at the highest technological level can succeed there and the commensurate research and development capacities will follow immediately. Thus, over the next few years a pattern of integration will develop that will depend much more on existing know-how and functions within international research and production networks than on factors such as wage levels, rents and the price of land. An integrated regional economic structure will therefore emerge, covering both sides of the border, and the domination of one part will be a thing of the past.

Functional integration – partly perceived, partly unknown – is taking place more and more. Just to show some examples: shopping centres in Slovakia and Hungary are attractive for Austrian customers because of the very liberal

opening hours and often cheaper prices. On the other hand, Austrian shopping centres with brand products are very attractive for neighbouring customers because brands are cheaper here. Austrians also very frequently use services such as dentists, hairdressers and beauty salons in Hungary (e.g. in Sopron and Győr) because of cheaper prices and very good quality. Viennese people also like to visit the opera in Bratislava which conveniently offers a special bus connection from and to Vienna. Also in the labour market, partly functional integration is taking place. E.g. the bottleneck for the care of elderly people in Austria is partly compensated for with personnel from Slovakia and Hungary (which, as a consequence, face a huge lack of qualified people themselves) often illegally working in Austria. In the summer of 2006, the debate around this issue with all the problems involved culminated in the reproach that even the Austrian former Federal Chancellor Schüssel had an illegally employed caretaker from Slovakia for his mother in law. An interesting development which has been emerging over the last two years is an increasing demand for building land in the border area of Austria from the Slovak side (prices in this rural area in Austria are already cheaper than in the hinterland of Bratislava). These examples show that there is a high dynamic in the area which will change the area in the years to come.

The low level of wages in the post-socialist countries was one of the factors attracting investment from labour-intensive industries. In times of rising unemployment rates, the integration of the CEECs adds to friction in the labour market and the social system which intensifies when workers from the CEECs look for better-paying jobs in Western countries. This friction and the corresponding fears of the population have led some countries to adopt restrictive migration and labour market access policies. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) finds such policies short-sighted, however, because they do not take into account the relationship between employment, trade, and foreign direct investment (Altzinger, Maier, and Fidrmuc, 1998).

So far, labour migration in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle – regarded as an important force in enhancing the economic integration of a region – remains underdeveloped and fragmented, mostly because of Austrian restrictions. Under the terms of EU accession of the Slovak Republic and Hungary, these restrictions will gradually be phased out (OECD, 2003) but serious fears persist. Therefore, most of the old EU member states have transitional rules governing the free movement of workers from and to the new member states. A transitional period of up to 7 years after the accession of the 10 new member states to the EU in 2004 was agreed. During this period, certain conditions apply to restrict the free movement of workers. The implementation of freedom of movement for services and people could lead to economic and social problems on both sides of the borders by

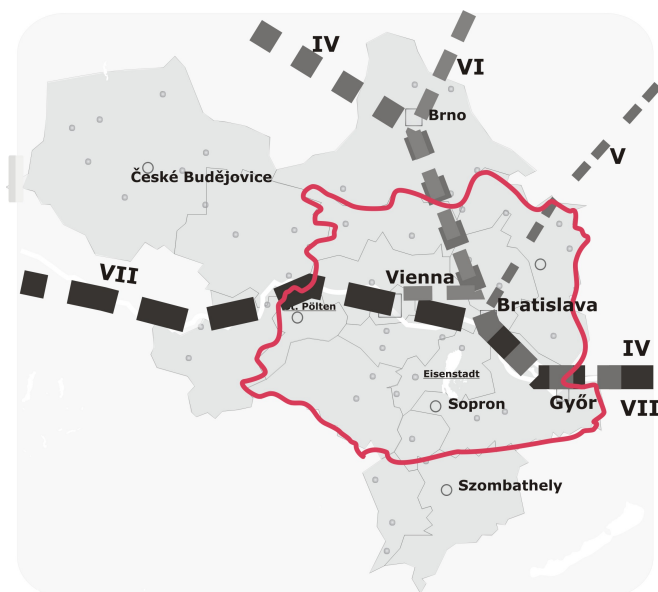
causing displacement of the labour market, especially for low-qualified persons. The tendency for segmentation could also increase with an increase in flexible, short-term work. Other threats are a brain drain from Hungary and the Slovak Republic to the West and from public to private enterprises and a traffic overload in the agglomeration areas because of an increase in commuting. However, new opportunities will emerge that should be perceived and used, for example, to benefit from the qualifications and the networks of immigrants and to develop co-operation networks.

5.1.3 Transport infrastructure

The development of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area has always been influenced significantly by its spatial position in the wider European context. It features several important geomorphological formations such as the Alps, the Carpathians, the Pannonian Basin and the Danube River which have defined the most important European transport networks going both north-south and east-west.

Transport infrastructure is regarded as a central element of efforts to foster integration. The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area lies at the crossroads of four Trans-European Network-Transport (TEN-T) corridors. The Danube is defined as Corridor VII connecting Eastern and Western Europe. Corridor VI extends from Gdańsk-Warsaw-Žilina to Vienna. One branch of Corridor V connects Lvov with Bratislava, and Corridor IV runs from the North Sea and Berlin to Istanbul. The trans-European transport network seeks to ensure the mobility of persons and goods and high-quality infrastructure. To that end, in 2003, the European Commission drew up a new list of 30 priority projects to be launched before 2010. Speeding up the completion of the border crossing sections has been designated as being in the Community's interest. In addition to Corridors IV, V, VI, and VII (see Figure 13), the rail axes Paris-Stuttgart-Vienna-Bratislava and Gdańsk-Warsaw-Brno-Bratislava-Vienna and the motorway axis Gdańsk-Brno-Bratislava-Vienna are directly relevant to the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle (CEC, 2004c). A quite specific connection existing since June 2006 in the case study area is the very successful Twin-City Liner, a high-speed catamaran connecting Vienna and Bratislava city centres in 75 minutes.

Figure 13: T-TEN corridors IV, V, VI and VII in the case study area



Source: ÖIR, own revision

The Commission's concerns reveal that – as a legacy of the political divide of Europe – the cross-border transport infrastructure is still disjointed and poorly connected to international networks. Furthermore, crossing a border requires a considerable amount of time and imposes costs on regional trade. So far, commuting problems caused by traffic jams occur only within centres and their surrounding areas but not between centres because there is little commuting between them. As integration progresses, however, more congestion is likely, with all the attendant problems. This will also be influenced by the Schengen Agreement that is an agreement among some European countries which allows for the abolition of systematic border controls between the participating countries. This so-called Schengen border – until the end of 2007 along the Austrian border – will move to the eastern borders of Slovakia and Hungary and will make free movement easier.

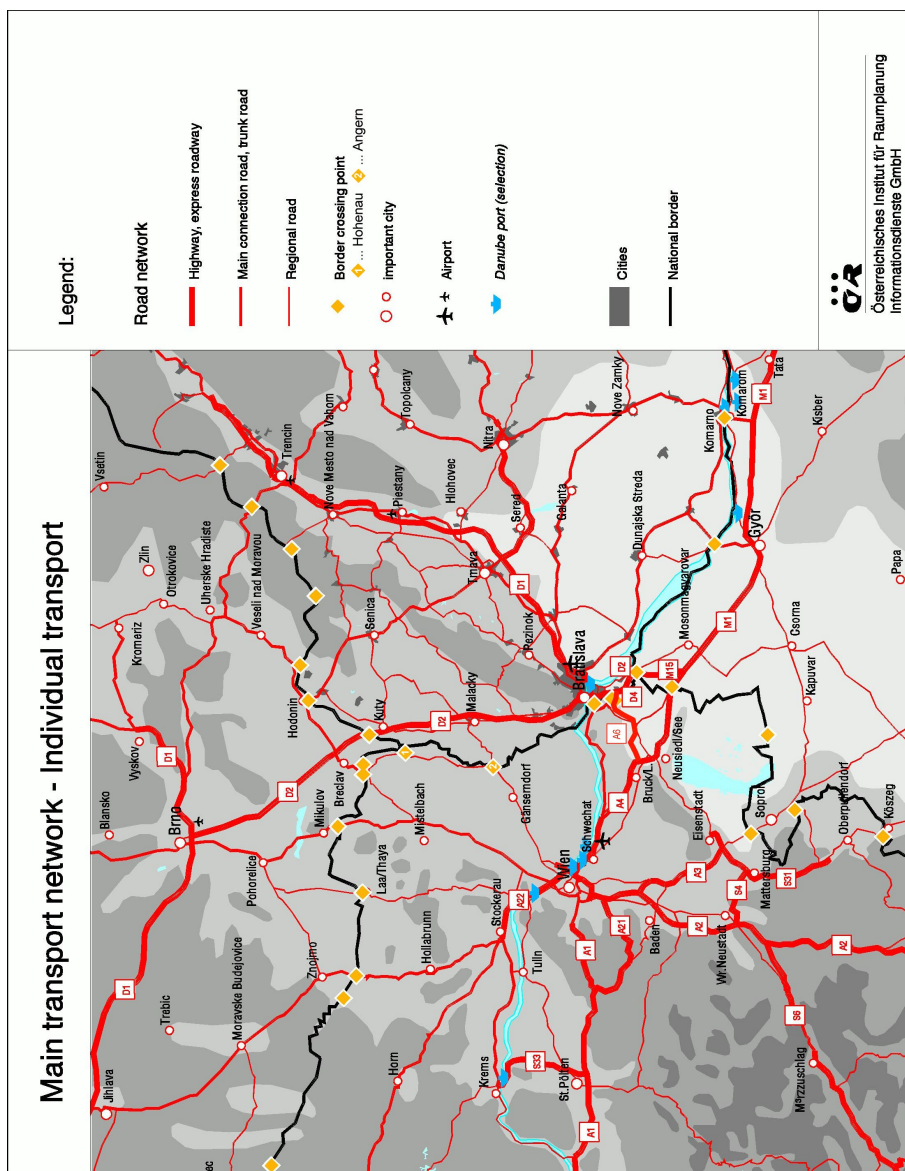
The evolution of traffic in the case study area can jeopardise environmental sustainability because international transport volumes are increasing (cross-border transport demand has doubled between 1995 and 2000 and is likely to increase annually by 10% until 2015), intra-regional cross-border traffic and suburbanisation are increasing with, at the same time, a shift from rail to road transport (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006). Although the traffic forecasts point to an increase in international and cross-border transport, the policies for all types of transport are unfortunately still weakly

coordinated (OECD, 2003). It is only during the past several years that the issue of cross-border transport routes has been addressed.

The trilateral border area of Austria/Hungary/Slovakia is linked internally by both road and railway, though with some qualitative shortcomings in infrastructure and transport organisation. These links are inadequately developed in some parts south of the Danube. The inadequacies in large parts north of the Danube stem mainly from the peripheral location of this area and the barrier formed by the Morava River but also from persistent delays on the Austrian side (ÖIR, 2003a; ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH, 2003). As a consequence, no road connects Vienna and Bratislava north of the Danube, and the road connection south of the Danube is a trunk road with a bottleneck in the city of Hainburg. In 2004, and thus years after the motorway on the Slovak side had been completed, the construction of the counterpart on the Austrian side began with the A6 North-East highway that was opened in November 2007 (see Figure 14).

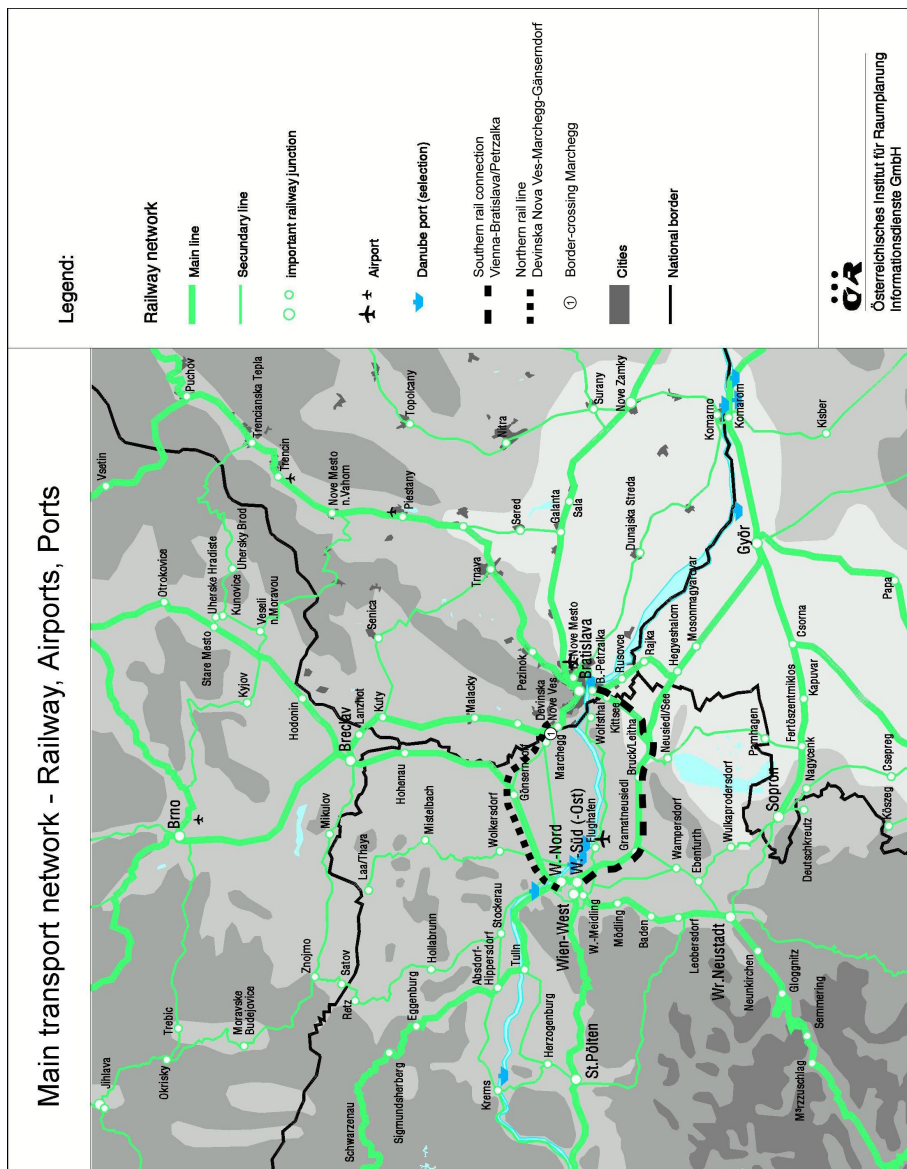
A direct, fast rail link between Vienna and Bratislava was opened in 1999, but it is poorly linked to both city centres. In 2004, another improvement of the rail connection between Bratislava and Vienna with 48 trains per day was completed by the Slovak and Austrian rail companies. A further improvement of the rail link between Austria and Slovakia is under discussion, focusing at the moment on the electrification of the line north of the Danube (Devínska Nová Ves-Marchegg-Gänserndorf) and a double-track connection south of the Danube on the line Kittsee-Petržalka (see Figure 15).

Figure 14: Main transport network – individual transport



Source: ÖIR, 2003a, revision of ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH

Figure 15: Main transport network – railway, airports, ports



Source: ÖIR, 2003a, revision of ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH

The international airports Vienna-Schwechat and Bratislava-Ivanka are 40 kilometres apart. The idea of co-operation between the two airports began with a General Agreement on Air Traffic signed between Austria and Slovakia in 1993, but so far these efforts have had relatively little impact on actual operations of the airports and on air traffic. The planned privatisation of Bratislava airport was taken as big chance for the area and a consortium around the airport Vienna-Schwechat made a bid, got the acceptance and signed the contract. But with the change of government in Slovakia, privatisation was stopped at the last minute in October 2006. Now, new co-operation possibilities are being looked for (Die Presse, 2007). This no doubt also influenced the decision of SkyEurope Airlines, a low-cost airline with its main base at the airport in Bratislava, to open a new base at Vienna airport with 16 new connections in March 2007 arguing that with that they achieve an essential and sustainable increase of efficiency. Improving the Danube waterway for tourist traffic and for goods transport is under discussion as well. Over the next 20 years, it is foreseen that some € 280 m will be devoted to improving the Danube route east of Vienna (ÖIR, 2003a).

In general, it can be concluded that in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle accessibility is high and transport infrastructure is well developed but insufficiently oriented towards the future challenges of the border area. This means – referring to chapter 4 which describes territorial cohesion as better exploiting the regional potential and territorial capital – that the case study region cannot be described as shaped by the aims of territorial cohesion.

5.1.4 High quality of landscape

Bearing these economic dynamics and infrastructure improvements in mind, a look at an aerial photograph of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area will demonstrate the presence of more spatial tensions. Between the metropolitan areas, there is high-quality landscape such as national parks and numerous nature conservation zones of national and international importance (see Figure 16) that could come under pressure to make way for additional business locations and provide land for housing and shopping malls and new transport infrastructure.

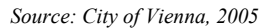
In 1983, the riparian wetlands of the rivers Danube, Morava and the area of the Lower Lobau were classified as wetlands of international importance. The alluvial forest of the river Danube, Morava and Thaya are, thanks to the intact bodies of water, the largest forest complex in Central Europe, and therefore unique. Among the national parks in this region are the national park Neusiedler Lake-Seewinkel-Fertő which has existed since 1993 and is a cross-border park with more than 320 km² in Austria and Hungary. Since 2001, it is a joint Hungarian-Austrian UNESCO world heritage site.

Furthermore, in 1996, the national park Danube meadows between Vienna and the Slovak-Austrian border was established with an area of 9300 ha whereby the river Danube forms part of the National Park over a distance of about 36 km. The flood plains of the river Morava (together with the river Thaya located at the Austrian-Czech border) are situated in the east of Austria on the border to the Slovak Republic. They constitute one of nine Austrian RAMSAR sites, wetlands of great importance for the waterfowl fauna. Landscape conservation areas also exist along the river Mosoni-Danube which is a large meandering branch of the river Danube. The national parks in the Triangle are recognised as the green axis or “Green Core” of the area, and proposals have been made for their management as a complementary soft factor for the location profile (ÖIR, 2003b; Zech, Schaffer, and Schremmer, 2004).

But also EU environmental and nature policies have considerable implications for the area with a view to preserving the “Green Core”. With Natura 2000, an ecological network in the territory of the European Union was established based on the Habitats³¹ and Birds Directive³². The selection of sites was in some parts of Europe heavily contested by landowners, farmers, developers and infrastructure planners as the consequences of being Natura 2000 site were not clear and ranged from hoping for funding to fearing that the sites would become “untouchable”. Co-ordination in this field seems to be necessary but was very weak during the designation phase – even within Austria where nature protection is in the competence of the Länder, there was virtually no co-ordination between the Länder. A co-operation with Slovakia and Hungary was difficult as they had their designation phase later in connection with their accession to the EU. Maybe in future co-operation and exchange of experience could take place concerning the management of the sites and further implementation.

³¹ Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

³² Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds



5.2 Polycentric development and territorial cohesion in transnational planning

Because no established policies or institutions for transnational planning are in place in central and south east Europe, any new visions or policies have to be related to national or European policies. Nevertheless, transnational or cross-border co-operation presents an added value that is necessary to actively identify and create new development potentials.

The former EU Community Initiative INTERREG³³ was one of the most important support programmes fostering transnational co-operation. For example, the first priority of the INTERREG IIIB CADSES (Central Adriatic Danubian South-Eastern European Space) programme is to promote spatial development approaches and actions for economic and social cohesion. It also includes a measure aimed at shaping urban development and promoting urban networks and co-operation. INTERREG offers good opportunities for establishing networks, exchanging information, developing common strategies, and increasing mutual know-how among the partners.

INTERREG projects, especially transnational ones, often require huge administrative efforts at the project level. Furthermore, because programme structures are not continuous (the programming period is only seven years), management structures and rules for project applicants can change radically. In addition, especially within central and south east Europe a balanced partnership was and still is difficult to achieve because of different regulations, programmes, and budgets. With the different status of a country different instruments are available, e.g. Phare, Tacis, etc. which are very hard to combine with INTERREG (e.g. before Slovakia and Hungary became EU member states they had the Phare programme which has a different programme structure and time frame than INTERREG and is therefore hard to combine). Thus despite commitments for co-operation in principle, the regulations did not seem to remove the constraints. However, this situation changed, especially with EU enlargement and the new programming period 2007-2013. In this context, discussions took place in Austria because the weak peripheral areas at the border are confronted with neighbouring regions that are benefiting from large Structural Funds allocations.

Transnational co-operation between cities and metropolitan regions confronts not only economic challenges but also political ones. These political challenges consist of coordinating a variety of political and economic actors embedded in mostly non-hierarchical relations. Networking

³³ INTERREG is integrated in the new Objective 3 “European Territorial Co-operation” of the Structural Funds for the programming period 2007-2013.

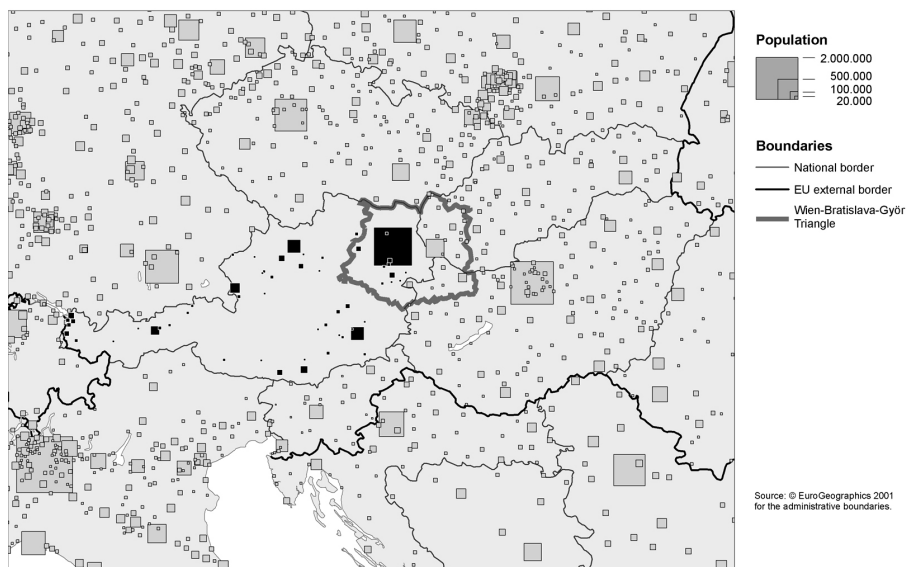
and co-operation between cities is always marked by the coexistence of co-operation and competition. Nevertheless, networks enjoy several advantages over hierarchical structures. For one thing, the integration of different actors improves the quantity and quality of information used as the basis for decision making. For another, the decision-making process supports the recognition, consideration, and – where appropriate – acceptance of different and even conflicting interests resulting in a greater probability that decisions will be accepted or that decisions are at least better legitimised. Typical impediments to co-operation are the fears of representatives or politicians that they will lose their influence but also the higher transaction costs arising from the longer time spans needed for decision making in the negotiation processes (Heeg, Klagge, and Ossenbrügge, 2003).

Polycentric development has – as outlined in section 3.3.1 – two integral dimensions: the morphological and the relational. The relational dimension comprises different forms of co-operation and networking activities (such as bilateral or multilateral, institutionalised, and informal) but also flows of goods, people, money, and information such as foreign direct investment, air transport, exports and imports of goods, and migration. In what follows, the emphasis is on co-operation and networking activities. The general information presented in this section on the morphological dimension and comments on co-operation activities and their relationship with competition, co-ordination, and governance issues will lead to a description of the experiences in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle.

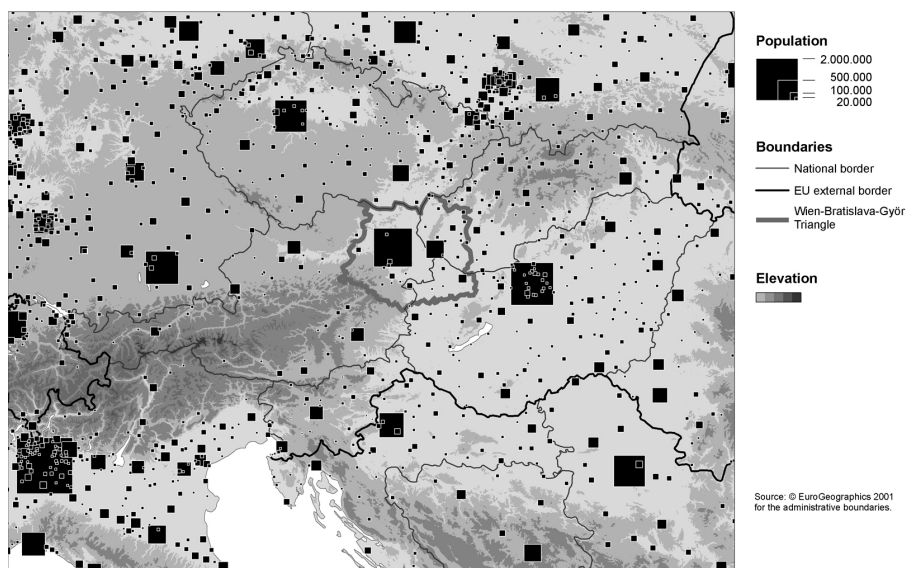
The morphological distribution patterns of urban areas in Austria, Slovakia and Hungary are still very much influenced by national points of view, and usually these national perspectives and maps are used for decision making at national and regional level (see Figure 17). It would be much more useful for any map of the urban and settlement structure to also cover areas of the neighbouring countries. In fact, a new interpretation is needed of this structure and its developmental tendencies in the European context, referring to the transnational/European level (with a focus on the Global Economic Integration Zones – see also chapter 3) and the intraregional level (decentralised urban structures in order to guarantee balanced intraregional development).

Figure 17: Settlement structures in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area

Austrian cities in Central Europe



Cities in Central Europe



Source: Schindegger, Tatzberger, 2002, revision of ÖIR-Informationsdienste GmbH

The crucial question about transnational co-operation is how the relatively stable structure of the last 50 years would develop under the influence of European integration within the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area. For example, would there be a repositioning of the city regions of Vienna, Bratislava, and Győr, but also of other cities such as St. Pölten, Wiener Neustadt, Trnava or Sopron, in the European space? Would the area gain synergetic advantages through developing co-operation, the common use of location potentials, and a division of labour between cities and urban areas within daily commuting distance? Would the centres in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area see further suburban development because of inadequate governance structures? The next section discusses a selection of relevant studies and co-operation initiatives to highlight activities going on in a transnational context.

5.2.1 Studies and co-operation initiatives in the case study area reflecting polycentric development and territorial cohesion

One study that deals with the concept of polycentric development and its morphological dimension in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle in order to foster a decentralised settlement structure assumes positive developmental effects, especially for the suburbs which will have to face high pressure from commercial development (ÖIR, 2003b). Because of infrastructure improvements, the outskirts of Vienna and Bratislava will gain locational advantages. Planners within the area are also aware that, unless development in the hinterland or the suburbs of larger towns is better managed, there will be negative consequences overall: greater demand for transport, negative impacts on the environment, deterioration of the landscape and in the quality of the environment. Thus, planners must pay attention to the promotion of fast regional public transport and to the integration of services. This often ignored challenge of urban sprawl was also analysed and described with a study from the European Environmental Agency (European Environmental Agency, 2006).

The goal of a balanced spatial distribution of opportunities can be pursued by means of high-quality transport and economic infrastructure in small and medium-sized towns, such as freight terminals in the cities of Sopron or Tulln, technology parks in the town of Eisenstadt, as well as several business and industrial parks in the Sopron-Eisenstadt-Wiener Neustadt region. The areas south of the Danube in Vienna and north of the Danube in Bratislava have a head start in the development of where workplaces are mainly located, and this head start will continue for years to come. In the long term, however, the counterparts will be strengthened. Along with the new transport infrastructure, large land reserves for building will appear and thus the focus should be on developing specific locations in combination with

public transport in order to reach magnitudes capable of supporting a self-contained dynamic and to avoid urban sprawl.

As outlined in section 3.3 several European studies confirm that the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle could be regarded as the core area of a possible new Global Economic Integration Zone (French Presidency, 2000; ESPON 2.2.2, 2003; ESPON 1.1.1, 2005). Indeed, these studies demonstrate the great morphological³⁴ and economic potential for the development of European and transnational polycentric structures. But how do the decision makers and key actors of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area react to these findings? The twin goal of achieving polycentric development and territorial cohesion as such is not mentioned as a driving force behind co-operation initiatives, but the central actors in the area are aware, nevertheless, of the challenges and opportunities of European integration. In recent years, several interesting transnational co-operation initiatives have been taken that are very much in line with the ideas underlying polycentric development and territorial cohesion.

First, the Danube River as such has metaphoric power for central and eastern Europe, especially for Vienna, Bratislava, and Győr. The Danube Space thus defined is an important issue in spatial development policy, and many co-operation initiatives are under way, especially related to environmental issues, political reintegration of the Western Balkans, and the use of the Danube as an inland waterway and for tourism (ÖIR, 2002). The scenario “ProDanube 2010” defines the Danube belt of transnational co-operation as involving eight European cities: Munich, Prague, Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade, Sofia, and Bucharest. In terms of economic and business development, this Danube Belt represents the strongest cohesive power (ÖIR, Ecotec, et al, 2000).

The INTERREG IIIB CADSES project PlaNet CenSE (Planners Network of Central and South East Europe) deals with information and knowledge exchanges on European spatial planning matters from a central and south east European point of view. Two pilot projects are directed at developing metropolitan networks and their potential for becoming a Global Economic Integration Zone supported by a “backbone” of improved transnational north-south rail corridors from the Baltic to the Adriatic. The main goal of the pilot study Metropolitan Networks is to further develop and use its network of experts to obtain data and information on existing spontaneous or institutionalised types of co-operation between cities and metropolitan areas as a launch pad for using these networks to promote the idea of polycentric development.³⁵ Therefore within the pilot action Metropolitan Networks the

³⁴ distribution of urban areas in a given territory

³⁵ For more information on this study, see <http://www.planet-cense.net>.

first step of collaboration was an appraisal of the ESPON 1.1.1 classification on “urban areas as nodes in a polycentric development” (see chapter 3.3.1) and adapting them to the future, taking up the distinction of functional domains surveyed there. National experts of the project partners performed the qualitative assessments of development potential of the urban areas that was finally translated into a list of candidates for upgrading. In a next step the focus was on city networking as a manifestation of polycentric development. In this context city co-operation was regarded in fields such as:

- co-ordinated spatial planning activities in the macro-regional context
- co-ordination of political activities to enforce common interests vis-à-vis the national and European level, e.g. co-ordinated lobbying and planning concerning transnational and national transportation network development
- co-operation towards functional division of labour concerning urban endowments, e.g. universities, cultural institutions and events
- exchange of know-how concerning urban service technology
- joint tourism marketing
- joint application for global events

These co-operation areas are regarded as the building blocks for polycentric development strategies. The idea behind them is to develop synergies, i.e. greater efficiency for each of the partners, or to achieve by joint endowments higher standards which could enable the partners to play in a higher league in the competition for places. The review is based on the responses of the project partners’ representatives to an inquiry by the Lead Partner. The results of this investigation also show the agreement-based co-operation going on in the Vienna-Bratislava-Trnava-Brno-Győr region in the fields of strategic planning, marketing and tourism.

Concerning the planning vision of a New Global Economic Integration Zone, promoted by the ESDP, another methodological approach was necessary. Thus, the project PlaNet Cense dealt with the topic in two ways. On the one hand, a survey gives an overview about what already has been elaborated within different ESPON projects concerning the issue of Global Economic Integration Zones, mostly in the form of qualitative analyses. On the other hand, the vague concept of Global Economic Integration Zones was tested analytically using the methodological approach of the ESPON project 2.4.2 “Spatial scenarios in relation to the ESDP and EU Cohesion Policy”. It should be of no surprise that the results of this empirical analysis do not show a coherent Central European growth region. Rather, Central Europe is characterised by considerable internal disparities and a strong clustering of similarities with outside regions. However, as a result, it may be concluded that it makes sense to keep the planning vision of a new Global Economic Integration Zone alive as a useful orientation for spatial policy

strategies for central and south east Europe. This assessment is justified by the leading position of the Metropolitan Growth Areas (MEGAs³⁶) of the Central European Triangle³⁷ within the ranking according to the indicators representing the Lisbon Performance. The MEGAs are supposed to build the corner stones of the Central European Triangle (Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest) and may be considered to serve as engines for the development towards such a vision (PlaNet CenSE, 2006).

The PlaNet CenSE project also tried to specify the concept of territorial cohesion for central and south east Europe. Having in mind the situation in this area, the PlaNet CenSE network agreed on three dimensions of cohesion:

- reducing regional disparities
- co-ordinating coherent sectoral policies and
- the whole that is more than the sum of its parts

The strategic document of PlaNet CenSE – that is neither a vision nor an action plan but a statement from 25 national spatial planning bodies and experts – was developed in a three step approach:

- measuring competitiveness, integration and cohesion
- formulating main challenges and chances for central and south east Europe
- presenting choices and recommendations for future action

It outlines the main characteristics and challenges of the area and tries to answer the question of what it actually means for central and south east Europe to be competitive, integrated and cohesive (PlaNet CenSE, 2006a and 2006b).

Another initiative – “CENTROPE, Building a European Region” – is on a lower geographical scale than PlaNet CenSE and covers parts of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary and includes the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle. It seeks to establish a Central European Region that supports dynamic development in important fields such as science, politics, administration, culture, and regional development. In September 2003, all regional governors in the area and the mayors of Brno, Bratislava, Trnava, Győr, Eisenstadt, St. Pölten, and Vienna signed a political declaration of intent to form a “European region” that would seek opportunities for more prosperity and sustainable growth. CENTROPE activities are directed at joint location marketing, in order to reach a critical mass of 4.4 million inhabitants and therefore to become visible on a global scale, and at the

³⁶ identified by the ESPON 1.1.1 project – see www.espon.eu

³⁷ Triangle because point of origin is the identified “Triangle of Central Europe” between Warsaw, Prague and Budapest by the ESPON 1.1.3 project “Enlargement and Polycentrism” which is extended due to PlaNet CenSE analysis by Bratislava, Berlin and Vienna.

establishment of adequate cross-border organisational structures (for more details see next section).³⁸

The JORDES+ (Joint Regional Development Strategies for the Vienna/Bratislava/Győr Region) project, which began in April 2002 and was completed in 2005, was co-financed by INTERREG IIIA. JORDES+, an instrument for the territorial administration of the cross-border region, helped planners to prepare and implement projects of common interest. JORDES succeeded in defining strategic development goals, establishing a basis for common planning and understanding, initiating the cooperative development of projects, and providing organisational structures for implementation. The common regional development strategy is a joint programme of activities and provides recommendations for political decisions and private investments.³⁹ The focus of the work was on the following topics: locational policy, economic development, education/research, transport, settlement structure, nature and environmental protection, tourism and cultural heritage. In a first phase a regional analysis was elaborated and after that development possibilities were defined and examined in regular workshops. Furthermore more detailed work was done among others on the following topics: the biosphere region and “Green Core” and the regional organisation model of settlement and transport development. In the second phase, guiding principles and elements of a development strategy were developed (for more details see below in section 5.2.2).

All of the projects described here are trying to bring experts and stakeholders together to exchange information and improve their knowledge about regional development and the potential for co-operation and to develop a new common identity. The co-operation area is delineated variously, from the whole of the CADSES area to just the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area. All these projects have Austrian lead partners not only because of the different programme structures⁴⁰ but also because the other partners were suffering from budgetary constraints. Here, too, the importance of benefiting from the Structural Funds (in order to plough EU money back into a country) is a highly political issue in Austria and will soon become one in Slovakia and Hungary as well. So far, political support for cross-border and transnational co-operation has not been that high in the new member states, resulting in great differences in participation in individual projects.

³⁸ For more information on this initiative, see <http://www.centrope.com>.

³⁹ For more information on this study, see http://www.pgo.wien.at/jordes_hp/

⁴⁰ e.g. before EU accession, Slovakia and Hungary did not have access to Interreg, but to the Phare programme which has a very different structure

Many other initiatives are underway but all of these efforts are still sporadic attempts that have emerged where the opportunity arises or where money is available. Another challenge for future development is that often transnational or cross-border co-operation is more intensive than co-operation between cities in the same country or cities and their surrounding region, such as Vienna and Niederösterreich (Lower Austria) and Bratislava and its surrounding cities. Interviews with key actors in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle revealed that transnational and cross-border co-operation is regarded as crucial and that Vienna is the recognised *primus inter pares* in the region. However, Vienna is keen to dispel any idea of presenting itself as the capital of the former Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. Rather, it presents itself as the capital of Austria, a country smaller than either Hungary or the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, partnership within the different co-operation initiatives was not always seen as equal. The reasons given during the interviews were different programme structures and the dominance of Vienna.

5.2.2 Role of visions and metaphors in the case study area

The three cities Vienna, Bratislava and Győr are located in close proximity and therefore have the potential to influence each other's development. Only a transnational view shows the specific spatial potential existing within the polycentric area. Dealing with the case study area and the development and role of visions and metaphors one has to be aware that the following factors affect Europe's urban hierarchy (Hall, 1993: 883):

- globalisation and the formation of continental trading blocs
- transformation of eastern Europe
- shift to the informational economy
- impact of transport technology
- impact of informational technology
- new role of urban promotion and boosterism
- impact of demographic and social change

Spatial visions, concepts and metaphors are regarded as having important roles and functions in transnational planning processes and may help to face these challenges. Spatial vision – as outlined in section 2.2.1 – helps to construct the specific identity of an area, to overcome obstacles, to find possibilities of communicating novel understandings about territories and thus deal with new scales. For the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle there is so far no commonly agreed spatial vision, but several initiatives on different geographical levels are going on – in parallel and partly interlinked – which try to help raise awareness for this transnational area and its interlinkages

with the aim of creating a sustainable functional region. The motivation underlying these activities is the assumption that a transnational point of view is necessary in order to

- foster integration
- deal with and co-ordinate cross-border effects and activities
- identify and use territorial potentials (territorial capital)
- promote spatial positioning on a larger scale, thus to become visible on a European or international scale.

The studies and co-operation initiatives described in the previous section cover the most important initiatives which are going on. In line with this, communication processes were initiated around several topics. From a central and south east European perspective, one aim is to become a polycentric region and to be the cornerstone of a possible new Global Economic Integration Zone (GEIZ) as outlined in the PlaNet CenSE project. The promotion of a North-South Rail Corridor would help to strengthen such a possible Central European Triangle to serve as an engine for development (Schindegger, Tatzberger, 2006). So the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area lies in the heart of this potential Central European Triangle. PlaNet CenSE was the first attempt to analyse and discuss metropolitan networking backed by a North-South Rail Corridors on a transnational scale with various actors. Furthermore, it served as a gateway for the mutual transfer of information and know-how between EU member states and non-member states and raised awareness about and within the area. The results show the great potential for metropolitan networks and improved north-south corridors. Now it is up to the “lower” scales to initiate activities in rail corridor investments and city networking in order to use the potential existing in the area (PlaNet CenSE, 2006).

According to Mehlbye (2000), a starting point for establishing such a Global Economic Integration Zone (GEIZ) is a political commitment to consider the common larger territory as a GEIZ because a critical mass of global services and accessibility is necessary for enterprises to compete in the world economy. Different components enhance the quality and attractiveness of metropolitan regions, such as in the fields of accessibility and transport, environment, nature resources and landscapes, cultural heritage, education and knowledge as well as social infrastructure.

Examples for strategic topics, themes and issues of a GEIZ are:

- improving the supply of global linkages (e.g. better internal linkage of existing airports by high-speed modes of transport)
- enforcing the global competitiveness of certain sectors and branches (e.g. biotech-network, medico-complex)
- joint efforts establishing any necessary supply of global services

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- jointly enhancing the area as a venue for global events
 - interlinking and developing education at university level
 - mutual development and protection of the natural and cultural heritage
 - world-wide marketing of the metropolitan cluster

PlaNet CenSE showed in the strategic document (PlaNet CenSE, 2006a, 2006b) the context in which the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr region acts. The CENTROPE initiative – on a lower geographical scale – was aiming to form a “European region” labelled CENTROPE and has prominent political support. It is in fact an initiative that pursues a kind of vision to become a Global Economic Integration Zone while, at the same time, guaranteeing an integrated and sustainable development. The task of the CENTROPE project was to deal with different topics regarded as key issues for the area, namely:

- economy and innovation
- labour market and qualification
- education, research and development
- transport, infrastructure, environment
- culture and tourism
- communication and co-operation

But here it must be emphasised that the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle is not a well-established entity and there is no real chance and wish to ever become something like an administrative unit. There are temporary consortia and projects dealing with specific topics that emerge out of a need and which can be regarded as characteristic for current developments within the EU. But nobody can say exactly what it is or means – the only thing that is clear is that structures and challenges are changing and therefore also administrative units have to adapt and also work together with private actors.

The focus of the CENTROPE activities was on location marketing, which also was regarded a key issue. A specific website⁴¹ was launched providing all relevant information about the business location CENTROPE, in particular the economic environment, business sectors, investor services and foreign direct investment. The project CENTROPE⁴² had a broader field of activities with several working groups dealing with labour market, regional development and management, tourism, economy and science.

The project website argues that the concrete development and implementation of CENTROPE requires considerable experience in co-operation with the European Union and within the region and detailed knowledge in numerous topics. Therefore, a consortium was installed to deal

⁴¹ www.centrope.com

⁴² <http://centrope.info/baerdtnau>

with the operational work. What is striking is that only Austrian institutions (Business Agency of Lower Austria, Vienna and Burgenland as well as the Centre for Urban Dialogue and European Policy and a consultancy enterprise) are part of the consortium and no institutions from the other countries. This and other parts of the project implementation were perceived as being dominated by Austrians and therefore severely criticised. The aims and content of the project were clear and received support but within the communication and working process no equal partnership has been achieved so far. Especially some partners from other countries had the feeling that Austrian partners did not want to hand over important activities. Here also the very complex institutional and administrative set-up must be taken into account. The co-operation area is not only confronted with an economic challenge, but also political challenges which consist in coordinating a variety of political and economic actors in more than one metropolitan region in non-hierarchical relations (Heeg, Klagge, Ossenbrügge, 2003). Therefore, the co-operation process still is at the very beginning in different fields. Nevertheless, the great potential of the CENTROPE initiatives undertaken is also shown by the keen observations from Budapest jealously watching the activities going on. Now – for the next phase and new projects – the added-value for the other partners has to be worked out and described and the actors in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary need to be mobilised again. A lot still needs to be done in order to meet the argument of Hajer, Zonneveld (2000) who pointed out that vision documents were to be used to capture the imagination of various relevant actors, both within the sector departments on the national level as well as at the other levels of government. Awareness raising activities of CENTROPE included articles about the region and relevant issues in the Austrian daily newspaper *Der Standard* in different languages. Furthermore the “Centropolitan” journal⁴³ was founded – a “four country” magazine for economy and society – dealing with news around different topics and which should be published every two months in all four countries.

The CENTROPE project also tried to sketch a possible future for the area and was trying to show the possible potential by describing the status quo (in the year 2006) and formulating a positive scenario for the year 2015 (Centrope, 2006) together with a development perspective and an agenda in different fields (economy and innovation; labour market and qualification; education, science and research; transport, infrastructure, environment and regional development; culture and tourism; communication and co-operation). The Viennese urban development plan (City of Vienna, 2005) makes reference to the CENTROPE initiative with a separate chapter “the spatial mission statement Vienna in CENTROPE”. The great potential of the

⁴³ www.centropolitan.eu

common area and the existence of co-opetition, the concurrency of competition and co-operation, are emphasised. A map (see Figure 16) is included (for the first time) showing the main spatial features of the cross-border area including Vienna and Bratislava. But also the new land use plan of Bratislava refers to this region as one of the future cores of the economically and socially attractive sub-region in Central Europe – Vienna-Bratislava-Győr. Now a CENTROPE white book (Centrope, 2007) is trying to set the agenda for future activities. It describes a new approach in region branding containing “Themeworld” as a metaphor for the intangible assets of a region. After a strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, it is proposed to concentrate future activities around three themes:

- understanding culture (bridge between East and West, melting pot of cultures, culture as inherent value and social key driver)
- working knowledge (highly qualified workforce, good educational infrastructure, focus on applied knowledge) and
- lifestyle garden (diverse nature enabling various lifestyles and a high quality of life)

It furthermore proposes a concrete development process and implementation structure and time plan of a possible new CENTROPE project.

Another visioning process was undertaken by the JORDES+ project – concentrating on the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area. A future picture of the area was developed labelled with “biosphere-growth region”. A settlement scenario for a polycentric structure was developed which assumes that future growth should mainly take place in centres outside the agglomerations. In order to avoid urban sprawl, restrictive measures are necessary to develop these growth poles. The consideration of a region under the aspect of “biosphere region and Green Core” is regarded as a milestone in regional development as it is a metropolitan region labelled as biosphere region. This is only possible because of the high quality natural and cultural landscape and an adequate economic dynamic. The high potential of the area is the very rare but at the same time interesting situation that a highly developed economic area (metropolitan region Vienna) borders on a (still) cheap economic area (Bratislava, Győr-Moson-Sopron).

The idea of the regional development strategy of the biosphere-growth region is to look how far it is possible to interlink natural and cultural landscapes with the regional economy. Growth should be realised based on following principles:

- on the basis of available regional resources and structures (= territorial capital)
- in new functional networks between urban and rural areas

- as learning growth region using and saving the biosphere resources
- through using the locational potential of the region
- through using the high educational level
- under implementation of the “Green Core” as spatial organisation principle

In concrete terms, it means developing specific fields of competence (renewable energy, agriculture – biological products, biospheres and sustainable mobility) in order to combine economic growth with the sustainable use of resources as a benefit for the region.

An again geographically more restricted initiative is the intensive promotion of the so-called “Twin City Vienna-Bratislava”⁴⁴ concept by the Federation of Austrian Industries, which is strongly linked to the CENTROPE initiative. The Twin City brochures and reports try to raise awareness for the economic potential within the area and are mainly used for locational marketing. The project concentrates on a smaller region than CENTROPE, focusing on the Vienna-Bratislava axis. There are some basically sceptical voices coming from the Slovak side but nevertheless promotion activities are intensively boosted. The Twin City website provides information about different topics relevant for the area, such as the real estate market, road and rail, navigation, air traffic, communication and education and science. Facts and figures about the area are also available. One success story is the Twin-City Liner, a high-speed catamaran connecting Vienna and Bratislava city centres in 75 minutes, which started in June 2006⁴⁵. Due to the success a second Twin-City Liner will navigate this route from 2008 onwards. Also a Twin-City TV⁴⁶ was announced but so far was not realised. But also the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) of Vienna together with the Slovak chamber of commerce and industry are fostering the co-operation idea between the two cities⁴⁷. For a certain period all passengers landing at Vienna airport got a booklet containing information on the “Twin City Vienna – Bratislava, Two Centres – One Economic Region” that argued that the area is a big player in the “New Europe”, a unique area for development, prosperity through networking (biotechnology and automotive industry) with a tradition in education and included some facts about it.

So far, no commonly agreed spatial vision has resulted from all these activities in the case study region but nevertheless the labels CENTROPE and Twin-City are actively promoted. These activities should help to establish a vision of one functionally integrated region in a sustainable way

⁴⁴ www.twin-city.net

⁴⁵ www.twincityliner.com/

⁴⁶ www.twin-city.tv

⁴⁷ <http://www.wien-bratislava.at/>

with a strong economic position. All the mentioned activities are very important steps following this direction whereby in future more endeavours are necessary to integrate Czech, Slovak and Hungarian partners as equal partners. Besides these efforts it seems likely that the “dominating” role of Austria in future INTERREG programmes and the like will last in the years to come (despite much more funding being available for new member states) also because of human capacity and knowledge due to greater past experience. In section 2.2.1 on spatial visions, it is argued that the spatial vision process includes: joint identification of the area, an increase in personal confidence between the key actors involved, exchange of experiences and awareness raising, identification and definition of different interests, potentials, conflict areas and challenges and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints as well as development options. This was pursued by the initiatives (some more intensively, some lesser) of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area. Not in one process, but in several partly interlinked and parallel processes. Nadin’s definition (see chapter 2.2.1) suggesting that transnational spatial visions must understand the transnational and long-term implications of spatial development trends, provide a statement of shared goals for the spatial structure, give direction and inspiration for planning processes on different scales and assist in the formulation and selection of transboundary spatial planning programmes and projects still needs to be further applied in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle. This is still a professional as well as institutional and political challenge.

Looking at these initiatives, also one or the other use of metaphors can be identified. As outlined in chapter 2.2.3, spatial metaphors are defined as being easily understandable and suggestive and therefore have strong communicative power and often provoke discussions. The “green core” developed by the JORDES+ project could be regarded as a powerful metaphor for the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle. The “green core” is a first attempt to define a label or slogan for the area but so far this picture is only known to a handful of experts. The “green core” of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle has an underlying metaphor, that of a region as a body, the well-being of which depends on the health of its heart (= core). Behind this label, a detailed analysis was undertaken about the added value of a biosphere region and a green core. The natural landscape should be regarded from an economic point of view as a locational soft factor that guarantees high quality of life in the working environment. This metaphor could help to raise awareness for the transnational region and increase identification by a broader public. Another element with huge metaphoric power in the area is the river Danube, not only for the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle but also for the whole central and south east European space. The Danube has been an important international waterway for centuries and links rather heterogeneous areas as regards economic development, cultural

identity and political dynamics (ÖIR, 2002). The Danube river can be regarded as a “lifeline for a greater Europe” but this metaphor has not explicitly been followed up so far.

All these activities must be regarded as important steps to form an integrated common European region. This may be understood as the main vision underlying all the co-operation efforts in order to use the transnational territorial potential in an economic and sustainable way and to work in equal partnership. As Zonneveld (2005) points out, European and transnational vision formation may help to increase the competitive position if countries and regions have a better insight into the structures and qualities of the area. Based on these insights it could be possible to arrive at a choice which should receive priority.

But how well this large territorial potential can be used depends also on how the interrelated tensions can be managed and whether spatial-functional integration can be promoted beyond city regions and national borders. This concerns especially all the requirements of infrastructure development and the adjustment and networking in the development of locations and economic clusters in the region. If actors think and work intensively and transnationally more growth potentials are realisable than if they work independently or against each other.

As for future co-operation between Vienna, Bratislava and Győr, the emphasis will clearly be on Bratislava and Győr’s co-operation with Vienna; there are almost no official co-operation initiatives between Győr and Bratislava. This lack of co-operation can be attributed to different reasons, but mainly historical tensions (see chapter 5.1.1). Although considerable efforts are being made to promote co-operation in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, there is, especially on the Austrian side, lingering awareness of the formerly impermeable border. Actors on both sides of the border have developed feelings of either superiority or inferiority and a social hierarchy that reproduces the differentiating effects of the national border. Differences in language, fundamentally different legal and administrative systems, as well as the populist statements and activities of individual politicians urging recourse to scare tactics support and strengthen differentiation.

The rejoicing and raised hopes aside, the border opening itself was also a disillusion. The Austrian view of the border opening was associated with the loss of familiar feelings of security and peace, which were replaced by feelings of insecurity because of phenomena such as illegal border crossings and the loss of the economic impulses. For Slovaks, the border opening brought two kinds of disappointments: exclusion from the Western consumer world and the refusal of Austrians to pursue contacts with Slovaks. In general, Austrian behaviour after the border opening can be characterised as defensive-preserving, and the attitude on the Slovak side can be

characterised as offensive-dynamic (Fridrich, 2003). But also the excellent relationship between Austria and Hungary is facing again and again new challenges. In autumn 2007, several issues led to tensions between the two countries – especially serious irritation on the Hungarian side. One example is the degradation of the water quality of the river Raab caused by Austrian enterprises for several years now leading to foam formation on the Hungarian side. So far, no serious steps have been undertaken to solve the problem by the Austrian government. Another issue is Austrian scepticism about the Schengen accession of the four Visegrad countries (Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland) recommending a further delay. The Visegrad countries are not accepting another delay and are not willing to make concessions to Austria's demand for further border controls on the Austrian side. Another politically hot issue is the attempt of the Austrian oil and gas corporation OMV Group⁴⁸ to take over the Hungarian energy company MOL that should be privatised. On the other hand, in Austria an atmosphere of fear exists concerning the relocation of production sites to the new member states (especially among low-qualified workers). Specific sectors such as the building industry are under high pressure because of cheap workers and enterprises being active in Austria and originally coming from central and south east Europe. These are some of the reasons for the protective attitude in Austria.

All actors are aware that co-operation and competition always exist in parallel, which is also regarded as positive. For example, under the CENTROPE initiative, the area can undertake location marketing on a global scale and thus become visible. But as soon as concrete location inquiries materialise, the regions within the area will be competing with each other. Besides good co-operation initiatives, there will always be political issues that will be pursued even against the interests of the neighbouring partners. Indeed, Vienna will find itself no longer alone in marketing in specific fields such as tourism, conference locations, or regional headquarters of multinational firms and recognises that co-operation is important in those fields. These findings demonstrate that co-operation is realised in a very specific and changing atmosphere and that often co-operation efforts are still at a very early stage. Thus further investments in cross-border and transnational initiatives are badly needed to improve the relationship.

⁴⁸ OMV is the largest stock exchange-noted industrial group of Austria. Largest owner with 35% is the Austrian state holding company of OEIAG.

5.3 Conclusions: European model of society – reflected in the day to day practise of transnational planning?

Important preconditions for polycentric development within the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, including small and medium-sized cities and the more rural and peripheral areas, are in place: unique location factors such as the high quality of the landscape, the strong economic dynamics together with the existence of great differences in the level of development, the expected radical conversion of the economic structure when Slovakia and Hungary catch up with their European neighbours, and the incentives and transfers from the EU budget under the Structural and Cohesion Funds to Slovakia and Hungary.

Currently, however, the co-operation structures are insufficient to face the future challenges of governance, networking, and co-operation. Furthermore, because of increasing liberalisation and privatisation, the opportunities for public initiatives are decreasing. One of the remaining key questions for the area is how a historically unique economic situation of competition in a very small area can be used in a sustainable way to benefit both sides of the borders. The use of synergy effects requires optimal co-ordination of sub areas based on the hypothesis that coordinated development results in a more positive outcome for all. The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area is a prototype for a situation in which, given strong competition, co-operation in different fields is of advantage to both sides of the borders.

From an economic point of view, the development perspective of the region is characterised by different developmental levels and dynamics and tensions which result from catching-up processes in the new member states. It is assumed that both new member states will have higher economic growth rates than Austria which would lead to slowly decreasing differences in income and the price of land, housing, and convenience goods in Slovakia and Hungary but not necessarily equally distributed within these countries. Whether and to what extent the existing potential will be used also depends on how the area copes with the tension related to developments such as commuting, displacements in the labour market, wage pressure on the Austrian side, and whether the cross-border spatial functional integration of the urban areas can be promoted.

In the case study area the priority is to increase competitiveness. This is also the main focus of the partly parallel and interlinked visioning processes identified in the area. Here location marketing (in a very broad sense) was a key issue with the long-term aim – not explicitly mentioned as such but implicitly aimed at – to become the core of a possible Global Economic Integration Zone in Central Europe (GEIZ) whilst having in action the principles of the European model of society. Metaphors like the “green core”

or the Danube river as a “lifeline for a greater Europe” may help to raise awareness for a more functionally integrated region.

Currently, the ideas underlying the European model of society do not seem to be a central political issue in the three countries. According to some interpretations, the combination of competitiveness, sustainability, and social concerns is what the European model is about. In this realm, Slovakia especially, with its flat tax on income, has provoked discussions beyond the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle. For example, when U.S. president George W. Bush visited Bratislava in February 2005 he praised Slovakia’s tax reform with its uniform 19 percent flat tax which puts pressure on Western Europe. Compared with companies in Austria, France, and Germany, Slovak companies paid almost half the taxes. Especially France and Germany voiced disapproval and argued that if new member states could “afford” a flat tax (which is assumed to lead to a decline in tax revenues) they would not need all that much financial help from the EU. After all, these transfers could be construed to finance tax competition (Tzortzis, 2005).

The European model can also be linked with the discussions about the liberalisation of the market for services. Some EU member states, especially the U.K., Ireland, and Eastern European countries, support this idea, because they believe it will create thousands of jobs. The opponents, mainly France and Germany, argue that such liberalisation would lead to lower wages and poorer working conditions and therefore lead to social dumping. The original draft directive on services (the “Bolkestein” directive) was one of the most controversial pieces of EU legislation and was watered down due to strong social opposition. In May 2006, a new Commission proposal was amended by the Parliament which reduced the scope of legislation, excluding some sectors which had originally been covered. Be that as it may, from the Austrian point of view, one important question remains about the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle: can integration-connected advantages, also undertaken in order to play at a higher league in the competition of places, moderate or even outweigh the expected disadvantages during the transition phase, especially the pressure on wages and output, the displacement in the labour market, and the increase to an extent so far unknown in traffic? To balance this is what the European model of society is about. Therefore a dialogue culture in connection with the European model of society is badly needed in order to create space for constructive dialogue to generate, share and extend new knowledge to allow a positive adaptation to the changes derived from globalisation.

How the area will cope with these challenges remains unknown. But it is true that, especially in competitive situations, the public institutions become very much focused on the economy. Actors in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle point out that it is essential that they do not wear themselves out in internal competition with the result that the area is no longer visible at the

European or global level. It is thus up to a point better to permit redundancies that have their positive sides in order to allow quality competition, but also to look for opportunities for co-operation. In future the number of attractive locations for investment equipped with specific advantages and disadvantages will increase. Therefore Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle needs to develop excellent management structures and attractive environments as location factors. Transnational planning can assist importantly in this effort by gathering knowledge about different areas and their cultures and is necessary implicitly aiming at becoming the core of a possible Central European Global Economic Integration Zone. Actors dealing with transnational planning are highly aware of existing opportunities and tensions and they try to find ways to guide development in order to guarantee access to services and to foster balanced and sustainable economic development combined with equity. This goal is exactly what the European model of society stands for by keeping in mind the territorial and political circumstances.

6. Conclusions⁴⁹

The purpose of this research has been to form a basis for the discussion of different ways of conceptualising space at European and transnational level and to look at how to gain a better perception of the specific spatial conditions for development under the general idea of the European model of society. Relating this to the case study area, the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, the research investigates to what extent current developments are influenced by EU territorial cohesion policy and whether a kind of Global Economic Integration Zone can be identified.

Chapter 2 argues that spatial planning on European and transnational level is becoming increasingly important with regard to European integration and the decreasing barrier effects of national borders. But planning on this scale is a highly complex matter and spatial planners, experts and policy makers are confronted with many challenges. New forms of dialogue, discourse and tools are necessary in order to develop a common understanding and work base. The research deals with the question of how to grasp the European and transnational scale in spatial planning. With the creation of the European Union, a kind of European spatial development policy emerged which tries to analyse spatial development trends, to establish policies/instruments which influence the future development of Europe's regions, to foster integration on a cross-border and transnational scale, and to enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and economic development in a sustainable way. This kind of policy is not a clear-cut, defined policy and competence of the European Union and many different and parallel activities on different levels are necessary and actually taking place. As mentioned in chapter 2.1, a network of people and institutions are concerned with and influencing spatial development as well as different so-called EU sector policies with spatial impacts (such as environmental, agriculture, transport policy, etc). One important policy field is EU regional policy which provides significant incentives for actors on regional, national, cross-border and transnational level to start initiatives which foster better economic development and cohesion. EU regional policy is based on the conviction that market forces alone will not be able to achieve competitiveness and economic, social and territorial cohesion in line with the European model of society.

⁴⁹ No source references are given in the concluding chapter.

Section 2.1.2 argues that the notion of a “European model of society” may be misleading because in reality different models exist in Europe with different features and performances in terms of efficiency and equity. However, the general idea behind the model is the combination of sustainable economic growth and good living and working conditions. Basic elements of this model are, for example, employment and high quality jobs, access to services of general economic interest, social justice, equity, and balanced, dynamic, sustainable economic development. The term European model of society is used in this work in the knowledge that it can mean different things.

This research regards the European model of society (section 2.1.2) as “a vision of society that combines sustainable economic growth with ever-improving living and working conditions” and in which the dialogue culture is an important element. Spatial planning contributes to the creation of such a constructive dialogue in as much as it is regarded on European and transnational scale as a social process where communication plays a key role. Different tools such as spatial visions, metaphors and concepts help to initiate and structure such dialogue and discourse to grasp the new dimensions. They not only give shape to spatial development but also aim to shape the minds of the actors involved and guide and structure thoughts and ideas in the field of planning.

In another part of this book (chapters 3 and 4), special attention is paid to the spatial concepts of polycentric development and territorial cohesion, which have gained considerable popularity in the European spatial development scene and are increasingly becoming key concepts for European spatial development and related policies. The research shows that these two concepts also contribute to the perception of the specific spatial conditions for development and reflect the idea of the European model of society.

The final part of the work deals with a transnational case study area in Central Europe, the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, which can be regarded as a testing ground for European integration and cross-border and transnational spatial development. Its geographical position makes it a test bed for Europe’s post-cold war reunification process.

6.1 Grasping the “new scales” – conceptualisation of space

The research deals with different ways of capturing the “new” scales (European and transnational) in spatial development policy by focusing on spatial visions, spatial concepts and spatial metaphors (section 2.2). Working on transnational scale means first of all creating a spatial awareness and fostering the recognition of this new space. But it is a challenging issue since the actors involved have different planning cultures and languages and are confronted with changing administrative and political structures, and complex support systems. In addition, there is no one policy level to refer to directly (either Community, intergovernmental and/or national, regional policy must be taken into account). That is why spatial development on European and transnational scale is regarded as a social process with communication as essential element. This research comprises the investigation of three tools (spatial visions, concepts and metaphors) that are different with respect to their character and used in a multitude of ways but meet the need to develop the mental capacity to grasp these spatial scales and their inter-relationships and to identify the specific territorial potential. They are also interconnected as concepts can serve as building blocks for visions and metaphors can underlie visions. Experts dealing with European and transnational spatial development policy have to understand these scales and the alternative spatial forms that are developing.

Spatial visions as processes and products help to shape identity and tackle the issues of cross-border and transnational spatial potential and problems and provoke and enhance discourse on specific issues. As outlined in chapter 2.2.1, the creation of a common understanding and the establishment of networks are important elements of vision processes especially in areas where co-operation was not easily possible in the past. The visions described in more detail in this research were mostly first attempts at co-operation on transnational scale. The discussion in this chapter has shown that spatial visions often include for the first time a description and analysis of spatial structures and development trends for such transnational areas. Visions are elaborated with different approaches and under very different circumstances and frameworks. In some cases, their results can hardly be named visions, but – if organised in a networking process – nevertheless contribute substantially to developing a common understanding of specific spatial development issues in an area and to formulating suitable policy measures. Such processes need political support and often depend very much on the commitment of individuals. The challenges of transnational co-operation and different funding schemes (e.g. in the case of a co-operation area including EU and non-EU member states) are also the reasons why such processes are hard to initiate with equal partnership and are sometimes “dominated” by certain actors. This is also the case in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle which had additional hard conditions by including EU member states and,

before 2004, non-member states in co-operation activities for over 10 years which had serious effects on how the co-operation went and on how political priority setting was done.

Spatial concepts used on European and transnational scale are usually not very clear in their message but vague, flexible and amorphous which allows for different interpretations. As discussed in section 2.2.2, there are also – mainly on local and regional scale – operational concepts (like the central place concept) with very detailed measures, but such concepts are rare on the European or transnational scale. Vague spatial concepts are often used on European or transnational scale because actors in the European Commission as well as in individual member states are in need of “bridging concepts” which are common denominators in order to break deadlock. Concepts are continuously developed, foster discourse on policy oriented perceptions of the spatial structure of Europe and help to create a common language. They draw attention and energy of representatives of national planning towards the future and help to build and structure knowledge.

Another quite prominent tool are **spatial metaphors** which are often also important elements of visions. Section 2.2.3 shows that they have already existed for a long time and provide memorable images that simplify and structure people’s thinking, provoke discussions and also help to illustrate policy aims. Metaphors are a helpful way for the mental overturning of conventional geography and can be a pervasive mode of understanding through which experiences are used in one domain to structure another. Metaphors and images often caused controversial reactions because of their communicative efficacy and power. Very strong metaphors became famous on European level (e.g. the “Blue Banana”, pentagon,...) but also on national level (e.g. the “Green Heart” in The Netherlands). They provoked and guided political discourse and have been very successful in raising awareness and fostering the understanding of complex spatial development trends.

Concerning the role of these different ways of conceptualising space, one conclusion is that spatial concepts, visions and metaphors are different in character, partly interlinked and can contribute significantly to conceptualise space and foster discourse around the European and transnational spatial development dimension. With European integration and globalisation, more and more cross-border and transnational structures and effects emerge and such tools help to shape and structure discourse on European and transnational level. They must be regarded as communication and planning tools at the same time, but one has to be aware that such tools require a differentiated handling depending on the context. All three tools have their weaknesses and could be improved but nevertheless they are regarded as an important means to understand spatial development and foster European integration.

6.2 Revealing the territorial capital

The concepts of polycentric development and territorial cohesion emerged on the political spatial development agenda at European level and seem to be key concepts in the discussion of a region's territorial capital. The debate on these concepts, later on supplemented by the European model of society, reflects the search within the EU for a more cohesive, integrative and equitable way of policy formulation.

Chapter 3 describes how polycentric development was introduced with the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) as a reaction to the high concentration of economic activities in the so-called pentagon (defined by the metropolises of London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg). The ESDP argues for additional so-called Global Economic Integration Zones (GEIZ) complementing the pentagon on European level in order to be competitive on a global scale. The concept became quite popular on a political as well as on an expert level dealing with European and transnational spatial development because it is based on a powerful metaphor. While the traditional core-periphery rationale represents a one-dimensional view of Europe, polycentricity represents a more diversified view of Europe, showing the willingness to take a closer look at individual regions and their specific characteristics. Additionally, polycentric development not only deals with the morphological structure (the distribution and size of cities and towns in space) but also has a second integral dimension, the relational one. This includes different forms of co-operation and networking activities (bilateral or multilateral, institutionalised, in/formal and so on) and also flows of goods, people, money and information such as foreign direct investment, air transport, export and import of goods, migration and so forth. An analysis of the ESDP and EU regional policy shows that the concept of polycentric development pursues the twin policy aim of (economic) development and spatial balance.

Looking at different economic regional development theories it becomes clear that the polarisation theory is the basic assumption underlying the argument of the ESDP concerning polycentric development. It explains unequal and diverging development, regards polarisation as negative and therefore argues that national (European) policy is needed to reduce differences between regions in order to avoid over-concentration in the territory. However, the concept of polycentric development also recognises growth-pole theory which sees the positive sides of polarisation and could help to foster balanced spatial development. In contrast to earlier concepts (e.g. the central place theory), polycentric development is a dynamic concept in which centres are not seen as providers but as development engines for regions and which recognises city systems as networks. The concept motivates the use and activation of existing potential and deals with different

geographic scales. The research shows that the concept of polycentric development means a shift of paradigm in European regional policy. The traditional strategy focused on structurally weak and disadvantaged regions whereas the new strategy focuses more strongly on the development of possibilities and the potential of a region to mobilise unused resources (territorial capital) throughout the Union. Polycentric development reflects the idea of a European model of society by trying to foster competitiveness whilst keeping in mind concerns such as equal opportunities, use of territorial capital, good governance and balanced dynamic sustainable development.

Another concept that emerged quite rapidly and is the outcome of a political rather than a theoretical or scientific debate is the concept of territorial cohesion. In 1997, it was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam in connection with services of general economic interest. As territorial cohesion still has a broad meaning, chapter 4 reflects on the different interests to be subject to the inclusion of the concept of territorial cohesion in the Treaty. Territorial cohesion combines different political purposes such as mitigating liberalisation by ensuring equal access to services of general economic interest and resisting complete market liberalisation. Some actors would like to give more consideration to the territorial dimension and effects of sector policies at the European, national, and regional levels and to improve the horizontal and vertical co-ordination between levels and policies. The debate around the concept of territorial cohesion also aimed to frame European regional policy after 2006 – the Structural Funds are the EU's second largest budget item. Territorial cohesion is regarded as an argument for continued support for those regions that are lagging behind or are on the periphery, but, in combination with polycentric development, and support to towns and cities as the motors of regional development. Another political purpose of the territorial cohesion debate was the more even distribution of economic activities over the territory of the EU, whereby services of general economic interest are regarded as a basic precondition to the use of territorial capital. Finally, the concept of territorial cohesion has gained prominence since it became an objective in its own right and gained an equal footing with economic and social cohesion in the Lisbon Treaty (also known as the Reform Treaty). This would give the Commission a key role in developing relevant policies.

Territorial cohesion is a spatial concept that refers much more to the policy goal level than polycentric development. It is more of a policy concept where the spatial dimension is emphasised but not so clearly. Polycentric development is considered to be one operationalisation of territorial cohesion because it bridges the conflicting aims of economic growth and balanced development and supports a more cohesive and balanced European territory. The Territorial Agenda adopted at the informal ministerial meeting on urban

development and territorial cohesion held in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007 puts territorial cohesion at the centre of the debate – the future task mentioned is to strengthen territorial cohesion. But it also directly relates to the concept of polycentric development as the first out of six priorities of the Territorial Agenda calling for “strengthening polycentric development and innovation through networking of city regions and cities”.

Both concepts, polycentric development and territorial cohesion, reflect the idea of a European model of society which, so far, has not been clearly defined and is contested, but is understood to foster competitiveness while heeding concerns about social welfare, good governance, and sustainability. Section 2.1.2 discusses the differences between the European and American way of dealing with these topics. Europeans place more emphasis on collective responsibility and global awareness. Thus, the European model is far more oriented to the idea of collective responsibility for the welfare of the community and based on the belief that market forces are often unfair and therefore must be tamed. European society is also more willing to accept government intervention to redress inequalities. One action taken in line with this is the introduction of EU regional policy and the Structural Funds in 1986 in the Single European Act. By contrast, the American way is described as based on an unswerving belief in the pre-eminence of the individual and personal responsibility and accountability. In order to optimise individual accumulation of wealth and ensure greater personal control Americans prefer to keep taxes low and limit government involvement in the community. The EU has always defended the traditional European model of society by seeking to balance regulation and liberalisation efforts. Its goal is to close the gap with the U.S. economy, but without following the U.S. model. Solidarity and equal treatment within an open and dynamic market economy are therefore fundamental EU objectives. General interest services are regarded by many people as social rights that make an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and are thus at the heart of the European model of society.

Polycentric development and territorial cohesion have great political relevance and are intensively discussed in Europe. But does this discourse influence planning in a transnational area like the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle? How would these concepts fare in this area? Both concepts have underlying ideas that could be highly relevant to the functional integration of the area. Territorial cohesion includes the notion of reducing socio-economic disparities while enhancing differences in spatial characteristics. As outlined in section 2.2, for both concepts it is necessary to attend to the spatial structure and qualities of areas in order to set priorities. For the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, the disappearance of national barriers and the possible emergence of new transnational polycentric functional areas are regarded as a great asset.

6.3 The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle – a laboratory for EU territorial cohesion policy

The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle (covering parts of Austria, Slovakia and Hungary) was chosen as case study because it is located on the border to the former socialist countries of Central Europe and obviously faces considerable challenges and complex interdependencies of restructuring and integration. The decision to focus on this area was also taken for practical reasons as the researcher is living and working there and has access to networks and information. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the area has experienced many challenges and integration is occurring in the context of two major territorial development trends, i.e. overcoming Europe's division between West and East and the emergence of functional regions in Europe. No common definition exists of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, nor is any administrative institution responsible for it but with the high proximity of the cities to each other, they have the potential to influence each other's development. The capital cities of the three countries (Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest) are the primate cities and dominate the respective urban hierarchies. The situation in each of the countries can be described as rather a long way from polycentric (only Slovakia has a slightly more balanced urban system – on the national level). However, a transnational view shows the specific territorial capital existing within the area – as a possible polycentric and (cross-border) functional region.

The transnational polycentric region is also where the debate around the European model of society will manifest itself in areas such as quality of jobs and social justice, access to services of general economic interest and balanced dynamic and sustainable development. Even though Hungary, Slovakia and Austria have shown a largely positive economic development over the past few years (esp. e.g. Bratislava and Győr in the automotive sector), the economic structures and trends in Slovakia and Hungary are characterised by enormous national and intra-regional disparities as regards prosperity, wages and income but also in technical and environmental standards, price levels and the systems of social and unemployment benefits. Cross-border transport infrastructure – as a legacy of the political divide of Europe – has improved but is still disjointed and poorly connected to international networks. On the other hand, the formerly impermeable border allowed the preservation of highly natural landscapes and the study area boasts national parks and numerous nature conservation zones of national and international importance. Actors on both sides of the border have developed feelings of either superiority or inferiority and a social hierarchy that reproduces the differentiating effects of the national border. Differences in language, fundamentally different legal and administrative systems, as well as the populist statements and scare tactics of politicians, support and

strengthen differentiation and hamper integration efforts. Although there are considerable efforts being undertaken to promote co-operation in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle, there still is a lingering awareness in people's minds of the formerly impermeable border.

The above-mentioned factors seriously influence transnational co-operation and give a glimpse of the huge challenges the latter is facing. But they also confirm that cross-border and transnational co-operation is necessary in order to foster integration and to make full use of the territorial capital available in the area. Several European studies (section 5.2.1) confirm that the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle could be regarded as the core area of a possible new Global Economic Integration Zone. Indeed, the studies demonstrate the great potential in terms of spatial structure and economy for the creation of a European and transnational polycentric region.

Important steps were undertaken on different scales with projects as PlaNet CenSE, CENTROPE and JORDES+, mainly financed through the EU Structural Funds. All the projects are trying to bring experts and stakeholders together to exchange information and improve their knowledge about regional development and the potential for co-operation and to develop a new common identity. The co-operation area of these projects is delineated variously, from the whole of the CADSES area to just the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area. All three projects have Austrian lead partners not only because of the different programme structures, but also because the other partners were suffering from budgetary constraints. Many other initiatives are underway, but all these efforts remain sporadic attempts that have emerged where the opportunity arose or where money was available. The concepts discussed on European level (like polycentric development and territorial cohesion) are only rarely explicitly taken and interpreted for the area. More often, the main elements underlying the concepts appear in day-to-day policy and planning. Here, a more strategic approach may help to face the challenges of the future and help to find positions/negotiation results which can be of advantage to the whole region. Tools such as visions or metaphors may help to identify and raise awareness about these future challenges also in a broader context (and not only in the planner scene). There are first attempts to define labels and slogans for the area but these are mostly used for marketing strategies and location marketing in an attempt to establish the core area of a possible Global Economic Integration Zone in Central Europe.

The discussion in section 5.2.2 reflecting on the role of spatial visions and metaphors in the case study area shows that no commonly agreed spatial vision exists so far. Several parallel and partly interlinked initiatives on different geographical levels are taking place. The actors involved are aware that a transnational view is necessary in order to foster integration, deal with and co-ordinate cross-border effects and activities, identify and use the

territorial capital and promote spatial positioning on a larger scale in order to become visible on a European or international scale. Labels and initiatives like CENTROPE or Twin-City are actively promoted and raise awareness for this transnational area and its interlinkages. These initiatives should help to establish a vision of creating an integrated functional region with a strong economic position in a sustainable way.

Looking at the initiatives and activities which are taking place, the use of metaphors can be identified. One idea is to define a “Grüne Mitte” – a kind of “green core” – between Vienna, Bratislava and Győr whereby it is already clear that it will come under pressure due to future developments. However, this is only known by a handful of experts and mentioned in development plans but not promoted as an idea to the general public. Such a metaphor as “Grüne Mitte” could help to raise awareness of the area as one common cross-border or transnational region that it is no longer defined by its borders and differences in culture and language. Another element with huge metaphoric power in the area is the river Danube. There have been several co-operation initiatives but a metaphor like “lifeline for a greater Europe” has not been explicitly followed up so far. In the case study area no such powerful metaphor has been developed to date. There are more investigations on visions and metaphors on European scale than in the case study area, but nevertheless they are regarded as important tools to face future challenges of the case study area from a transnational view because they give helpful ideas for new ways of thinking and positioning. The co-operation activities in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle must be regarded as important steps to form a functional European region with the long-term aim – not explicitly mentioned as such but implicitly aimed at – to become the core of a Global Economic Integration Zone in Central Europe according to the principles of the European model of society. This may be understood as the main vision underlying all the co-operation efforts in order to use the transnational territorial capital in an economic and sustainable way.

Besides these activities, functional integration – partly perceived, partly unknown – is increasingly taking place. Just to show some examples: shopping centres in Slovakia and Hungary are attractive for Austrian customers because of very liberal opening hours and often cheaper prices. On the other hand, Austrian shopping centres with brand products are also very attractive for neighbouring customers. Austrians frequently use services in Hungary (especially in Győr and Sopron) such as dentists, hairdressers and beauty salons because of cheaper prices and very good quality. But the labour bottleneck for care of elderly people in Austria is partly compensated for with carers from Slovakia and Hungary (which, as a result, face a huge lack of qualified people). An interesting development emerging over the past two years is increasing Slovak demand for building land in the Austrian border area to Slovakia (prices in this rural area in Austria are already

cheaper than in the hinterland of Bratislava). These examples reveal the existence of a strong dynamic which will change the area in the years to come.

Current activities are first attempts to overcome legacies of the past such as a lack of infrastructure, mistrust, etc. Furthermore, no clear policy level to refer to exists for this area – national governments, regions and cities are still equipped with very different competencies and budgets. Given the strong competition in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area, it can be regarded as a prototype for a situation where co-operation in several fields is of advantage for the individual actors and the whole region. One of the remaining key questions for the area is how to use its great territorial potential in a historically unique economic situation of competition in a sustainable way to benefit both sides of the borders in order to play in a higher league in the competition between areas in the EU. An optimal co-ordination of synergy effects between sub-areas is needed based on the hypothesis that coordinated development results in a more positive outcome for all.

6.4 The way forward

Whether and to what extent the existing territorial capital of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle will be used depends on how the area copes with developments such as commuting, displacements in the labour market, wage pressure on the Austrian side and brain drain and the explosion of living costs on the Slovak and Hungarian sides. These are also key questions with regard to the promotion of the transnational spatial functional integration of the urban areas in order to become the core of a Central European Global Economic Integration Zone. The development perspective of the region is characterised by different developmental levels and dynamics and tensions which result from catching-up processes in the new member states. New member states will have higher economic growth rates than Austria, which will lead to slowly decreasing differences in income and the price of land, housing, and convenience goods. But this does not necessarily mean that wealth is distributed equally in Slovakia and Hungary.

Currently, the ideas underlying the European model of society do not seem to be central political issues in the three countries. Their priority is to increase competitiveness in order to become more visible on a European and global scale and to improve their own performance. New member states try to find a balance between efficiency and equity, yet set the priority in the short term on efficiency and national competitiveness with the hope of “spill-over” effects to the rest of the country. But more importantly in the long-term political perspective, equity or cohesion of the national territory is a target. According to some interpretations, the combination of

competitiveness, sustainability, and social concerns is what the European model is about. In this realm, Slovakia especially, with its flat tax on income, has provoked discussions beyond the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle. The number of attractive locations for investment equipped with specific advantages and disadvantages will increase with the continued EU enlargement. A crucial challenge of the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle is to develop excellent management structures and to produce attractive environments as location factors. Transnational planning currently mainly fostered by EU regional policy assists importantly in this effort by gathering knowledge about different areas and their cultures. Actors dealing with transnational planning are highly aware of existing opportunities and tensions and try to find ways of guiding development in order to guarantee access to services and to foster balanced and sustainable economic development combined with equity. This goal is exactly what the European model of society stands for. Dialogue culture in connection with the European model of society is very much needed in order to create the space for constructive discussion and to generate, share and extend new knowledge to allow a positive adaptation to the changes derived from globalisation.

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Summary

This book aims to take an in-depth look at the different ways, challenges and problems facing the European and transnational scale in spatial planning and to look how to better perceive the specific spatial conditions for development under the general idea of the European model of society. This is very much linked to the – at least on European level – very popular concepts of polycentric development and territorial cohesion that are assumed to play a key role. In order to break down this knowledge a case study area was chosen to explore the spatial development potentials and European influence in a transnational border region, the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area. Different methods were used in order to deal with this topic like desk research and literature review using specialist literature on the subject, but also project reports, journals and official policy documents. Literature reviews and semi-structured open interviews in a face-to-face setting were used to analyse the situation in the case study area. The case study approach offers several advantages when questions are being asked about a contemporary set of events. The Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle was chosen because of its thrilling geographic position and specific spatial and political structure as a result of the location at the former Iron Curtain. Therefore it obviously faces great challenges and complex interdependencies of restructuring and integration. But practical reasons, too, influenced the choice as the researcher is living and working there and has access to networks and information.

With the European Union emerged a kind of European spatial development policy which tries to analyse spatial development trends, establishes policies/instruments in order to influence future developments of regions, fosters integration on cross-border and transnational scale and enhances economic, social and territorial cohesion. As outlined in chapter 2 it is not a clear-cut competence of the European Union and many different and parallel activities on different scales are necessary and going on. One important field is the so-called EU regional policy, which gives very important incentives for actors on regional, national and transnational scale. The EU regional policy is a reaction to the belief that market forces alone will not contribute to competitiveness and cohesion and therefore contributes to the European model of society aiming to foster economic, social and territorial cohesion.

As outlined in section 2.1.2 the term “European model of society” may be misleading because in reality different models are existing in Europe with

different features and performance in terms of efficiency and equity. But the general idea underlying is the combination of sustainable economic growth and improving living and working conditions. Basic elements of that model are for example employment and quality of jobs, access to services of general economic interest, social justice, equity, and balanced, dynamic, sustainable economic development. In this sense the term European model of society is used in this work knowing that the meanings can be very different. The European model of society can be regarded as a vision of society where the dialogue culture is an essential element. Therefore it is necessary to create space for constructive dialogue.

In the very young field of European spatial development policies different tools were elaborated to reveal the specific potentials of space. Especially working on transnational scale means first of all to create a spatial awareness and to help to see this new space. Furthermore actors are confronted with different planning cultures and languages, changing administrative and political structures, complex support systems and in addition there is no direct policy level to refer to. That is why spatial development on European and transnational scale is regarded as a social process where communication plays a key role. Therefore this research comprises an investigation of three tools (spatial visions, concepts and metaphors) that are different with respect to their character, interlinked and used in multitude ways but meet the need to develop the mental capacity to grasp these spatial scales and inter-relationships and to identify the specific potentials.

A review of several **spatial visions** on transnational scale in section 2.2.1 shows that the construction of identity for a geographical region and the declaration of shared principles and aims are common goals of visioning processes. Partly their results hardly can be named visions, but – if organised in a networking process – nevertheless contribute substantially to developing a common understanding of specific spatial development issues in an area and to formulate suitable policy measures. **Spatial concepts** are used by actors in order to provide mental guidelines for future spatial developments. Spatial concepts used on European and transnational scale are mostly vague, flexible and amorphous, allowing for different interpretations. They are often used on European or transnational scale because actors in the European Commission as well as in individual member states are in need of “bridging concepts” which are common denominators in order to break deadlocks. Concepts are continuously developed, foster discourse on policy oriented perceptions of the spatial structure of Europe, help to create a common language and focus attention and energy of representatives of national planning on the future. As outlined in section 2.2.3 **spatial metaphors** on the other hand provide memorable images that simplify and structure people’s thinking, are provoking discussions and also help to illustrate policy aims. Metaphors and images are often important elements of spatial visions

and cause controversial reactions also because of their communicative efficacy and power. One conclusion of the analysis is that spatial concepts, visions and metaphors can contribute to shape the minds of actors involved in spatial development, help to conceptualise space and foster discourse concerning the European and transnational spatial development dimension and are intensively used especially on European and transnational level.

Two spatial concepts can be regarded as key concepts of European spatial development policy, namely polycentric development and territorial cohesion. The emergence of the spatial concept of **polycentric development**, its meanings, theories underlying, interpretations and further developments are analysed in chapter 3. Polycentric development was introduced with the ESDP as a reaction to the high concentration of economic activities in Europe and proposed – in order to be competitive on global scale – additional so-called Global Economic Integration Zones (GEIZ). Analysing the ESDP and EU regional policy shows that the concept of polycentric development pursues the twin policy aim of (economic) development and spatial balance. The concept denotes a shift of paradigm in European regional policy from the traditional strategy that focused on structurally weak and disadvantaged regions, whereas the new aspect aims more strongly at the development of possibilities and potentials of a region in order to mobilise unused resources (territorial capital) throughout the Union. For several years the concept of polycentric development was the dominant one in the European spatial development scene, but lost some of its discursive power. This changed again with the Territorial Agenda of the European Union adopted by the informal ministerial meeting in May 2007 that defines the strengthening of polycentric development as one out of six priorities.

The review of **territorial cohesion** in chapter 4 was dealing with how territorial cohesion came into the EU Treaties, the role of services of general economic interests and the meanings, interpretations and different interests underlying. The analysis shows that territorial cohesion is used to mediate different political purposes and combines different interests. Some actors try to use territorial cohesion to mitigate liberalisation arising from the EU in order to ensure equal access to services of general economic interest and to resist complete market liberalisation. Other interest groups would like to give more consideration to the territorial dimension and effects of sector policies at the European, national, and regional level and to improve horizontal and vertical co-ordination between levels and policies. The debate around the concept of territorial cohesion also aimed to frame European regional policy after 2006 – the Structural Funds are the EU's second largest budget item. Territorial cohesion is regarded as an argument for continued support for those regions that are lagging behind or are on the periphery but, in combination with polycentric development, arguments have also been

made about supporting towns and cities as the motors for regional development. Another argument used is the goal of distributing economic activities more evenly over the territory of the EU, whereby services of general economic interest are regarded as a basic precondition to use territorial capital.

Interrelating both concepts, territorial cohesion is a spatial concept that refers much more to the policy goal level than polycentric development, so territorial cohesion is more a policy concept where the spatial dimension is emphasised but not so clearly. Polycentric development is considered to be one operationalisation of territorial cohesion because it bridges the conflicting aims of economic growth and balanced development and supports a more cohesive and balanced European territory. Both concepts, polycentric development and territorial cohesion, reflect the idea of a European model of society, which, so far, has not been clearly defined and contested, but is understood to foster competitiveness while heeding concerns about social welfare, good governance, and sustainability.

For both concepts, polycentric development and territorial cohesion, it is necessary to attend to the spatial structure and qualities of areas in order to set priorities. Therefore chapter 5 is dealing with a transnational case study area in Central Europe. The **Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle** that straddles Austria, Hungary and Slovakia has experienced huge changes over the last 18 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the European integration that followed. The integration is occurring in the context of two major development trends: to overcome Europe's division between West and East and the emergence of transnational functional integrated regions in Europe. The polycentric region is also where the contestation around the European model of society will manifest itself and can be regarded as testing ground for European integration and cross-border and transnational spatial development. The three cities are located in high proximity and therefore having the potential to influence each other's development – so only a transnational view shows specific spatial potentials existing within the area. Even though Hungary, Slovakia and Austria have posted a largely positive economic development over the past few years, the economic structures and trends in Slovakia and Hungary are characterised by enormous national and inner-regional disparities as regards prosperity, wages and income but also in technical and environmental standards, price levels and the systems of social and unemployment benefits. The capital cities of Austria, Hungary and Slovakia are the primate cities and dominating the respective urban hierarchies. In other words, with the exception of Slovakia, which has a more balanced urban system, the situation in each of the countries is far from polycentric. As for territorial cohesion, each of the three countries is found wanting. The – on transnational scale – polycentric area has a great potential to use its territorial potential in order to play at a higher league in the

competition of places on transnational and European scale as a possible core of a possible Global Economic Integration Zone in Central Europe.

Important steps were undertaken on different spatial scales with the projects like PlaNet CenSE, CENTROPE and JORDES+, mainly financed under the umbrella of the EU Structural Funds that are dealing with the transnational area and its development. All the projects analysed are trying to bring experts and stakeholders together to exchange information, improve their knowledge about regional development and the potential for co-operation and to develop a new common identity. But all these efforts are still sporadic attempts that have emerged where the opportunity arises or where money is available. People on both sides of the border have developed feelings of either superiority or inferiority and a social hierarchy that reproduces the differentiating effects of the national border.

The concepts discussed on European level – polycentric development and territorial cohesion – are only rarely explicitly taken and interpreted for the area. More often main elements underlying the concepts appear in day-to-day policy and planning. Section 5.2.2 reflected on the role of spatial visions and metaphors in the case study area. One conclusion is that there is so far no commonly agreed spatial vision, but several initiatives on different geographical levels are going on – in parallel and partly interlinked – which try to help raise awareness for this transnational area and its interlinkages with the aim to create a sustainable functional region that becomes visible at European and global scale. Looking at the initiatives and activities going on, also the use of metaphors can be identified. There is one idea to define a “Grüne Mitte” – a kind of “green core” – between Vienna and Bratislava where already now it is clear that it will come under pressure due to future developments. Another element with huge metaphoric power in the area is the river Danube that can be regarded as a “lifeline for a greater Europe” which is reflected in several co-operation initiatives going on, but is not explicitly followed up so far.

Besides the activities to foster transnational co-operation, functional integration – partly perceived, partly unknown – is more and more taking place in everyday life. One example is that different services are used cross-border because of cheaper prices and good quality, another example is that the border area of Austria faces an increasing demand for building land from the Slovak side because prices in Austria are already cheaper than in the hinterland of Bratislava. The high dynamic of the area in terms of economy and the resulting pressure on infrastructure development will change the area in the years to come. One of the remaining key questions for the area is how a historically unique economic situation of competition in a very small area can be used in a sustainable way to benefit both sides of the borders.

The area is a prototype for a situation in which, given strong competition, co-operation in different fields is of advantage to both sides of the borders. As the EU continues to enlarge, the number of attractive locations for investment equipped with specific advantages and disadvantages will increase. It will then be crucial that the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr Triangle develops excellent management structures and produce attractive environments as location factors. Transnational planning can assist importantly in this effort by gathering knowledge about different areas and their cultures. Actors dealing with transnational planning are highly aware of existing opportunities and tensions, and they try to find ways to guide development in order to guarantee access to services and to foster balanced and sustainable economic development within the region combined with equity and at the same time strengthen the location position of the area at European and global scale. This goal is exactly what the European model of society stands for by keeping in mind the territorial and political circumstances. Dialogue culture in connection with the European model of society is badly needed in order to create space for constructive dialogue to generate, share and extend new knowledge and to allow a positive adaptation to the changes derived from globalisation.

Samenvatting

Het doel van dit boek is een goed inzicht te krijgen in de verschillende werkwijzen, uitdagingen en problemen op het gebied van ruimtelijke sturing op Europese en transnationale schaal en nagaan hoe we de specifieke ruimtelijke voorwaarden voor ontwikkeling binnen het algemene idee van het Europese maatschappijmodel beter kunnen begrijpen. Dit houdt – in elk geval op Europees niveau – sterk verband met de zeer populaire concepten van polycentrische ontwikkeling en territoriale cohesie, waarvan wordt aangenomen dat ze een belangrijke rol spelen. Om deze kennis te kunnen analyseren is gekozen voor een gebied waarbinnen we een casestudy kunnen uitvoeren naar de mogelijkheden op het gebied van ruimtelijke ontwikkeling en de Europese invloed in een transnationale grensregio, het gebied Wenen-Bratislava-Győr. Er zijn verschillende methoden gebruikt om dit onderwerp te behandelen, zoals bureauonderzoek en literatuurstudie waarbij gebruik werd gemaakt van specialistische literatuur over het onderwerp, maar ook van projectverslagen, logboeken en officiële beleidsdocumenten. Om de situatie in het onderzoeksgebied te analyseren, werd gebruikgemaakt van literatuuronderzoeken en semigestructureerde open interviews in een persoonlijke setting. De aanpak in de vorm van een casestudy biedt diverse voordelen als er vragen worden gesteld over een set gelijktijdige gebeurtenissen. De driehoek Wenen-Bratislava-Győr werd gekozen vanwege zijn bijzondere geografische ligging en specifieke ruimtelijke en politieke structuur, die het gevolg is van de locatie: het voormalige IJzeren Gordijn. Daardoor heeft deze regio uiteraard te maken met grote uitdagingen en een complexe onderlinge afhankelijkheid van herstructurering en integratie. Maar er waren ook praktische redenen voor de keuze, want de onderzoeker woont en werkt er en heeft er toegang tot netwerken en informatie.

Met de Europese Unie ontstond er een soort Europees beleid voor ruimtelijke ontwikkeling dat probeert de trends op het gebied van ruimtelijke ontwikkeling te analyseren, dat beleidsmaatregelen en -instrumenten in het leven roept om invloed uit te oefenen op de toekomstige ontwikkeling van regio's, dat integratie op grensoverschrijdend en transnationaal niveau stimuleert en de economische, sociale en territoriale cohesie verbetert. Zoals wordt beschreven in hoofdstuk 2, is de bevoegdheid van de Europese Unie op dit gebied niet duidelijk gedefinieerd. Op verschillende schalen blijven er dan ook veel verschillende parallelle activiteiten bestaan, wat ook nodig is. Een belangrijk terrein is het zogeheten regionale beleid van de EU, dat zeer belangrijke stimulansen creëert voor actoren op regionaal, nationaal en

transnationaal niveau. Het regionale beleid van de EU is een reactie op de overtuiging dat marktwerking alleen geen bijdrage kan leveren aan het concurrentievermogen en de cohesie. Het beleid draagt daarom bij aan het Europese maatschappijmodel dat is gericht op het stimuleren van de economische, sociale en territoriale cohesie.

Zoals wordt uitgelegd in subparagraaf 2.1.2, kan de term ‘Europees maatschappijmodel’ misleidend zijn, want in werkelijkheid bestaan er binnen Europa verschillende modellen met verschillende kenmerken en resultaten als het gaat om efficiëntie en rechtvaardigheid. Maar het algemene achterliggende idee is de combinatie van duurzame economische groei en verbeterde leef- en werkomstandigheden. Basiselementen van dat model zijn bijvoorbeeld werkgelegenheid en de kwaliteit van de banen, toegang tot diensten van algemeen economisch belang, sociale gerechtigheid, rechtvaardigheid en een evenwichtige, dynamische, duurzame economische ontwikkeling. In deze context wordt de term Europees maatschappijmodel in dit boek gebruikt, waarbij wordt erkend dat de betekenis van deze elementen zeer verschillend kan zijn. Het Europees maatschappijmodel kan worden gezien als een maatschappijvisie waarin de overlegcultuur een essentieel onderdeel is. Het is daarom noodzakelijk om ruimte te creëren voor een constructieve dialoog.

In het kader van het Europese beleid voor ruimtelijke ontwikkeling, een zeer jong gebied, zijn verschillende hulpmiddelen uitgewerkt om de specifieke mogelijkheden van de ruimte aan het licht te brengen. Met name het feit dat er op transnationale schaal gewerkt wordt, betekent allereerst dat er een ruimtelijk bewustzijn gecreëerd moet worden om een overzicht te kunnen krijgen van deze nieuwe ruimte. Bovendien worden de actoren geconfronteerd met verschillende sturingsculturen en talen, veranderende bestuurlijke en politieke structuren, complexe ondersteuningssystemen. Daar komt bij dat er geen rechtstreeks beleidsniveau is om naar te kunnen verwijzen. Ruimtelijke ontwikkeling op Europees en transnationaal niveau wordt daarom gezien als een maatschappelijk proces waarin communicatie een belangrijke rol speelt. Om die reden worden er in deze studie drie hulpmiddelen onderzocht: ruimtelijke visies, concepten en metaforen. Deze hulpmiddelen hebben een verschillend karakter, zijn onderling gekoppeld en worden op diverse manieren gebruikt, maar ze voorzien alle drie in de behoefte tot het ontwikkelen van het mentale vermogen om deze ruimtelijke schalen en onderlinge relaties te begrijpen en de specifieke mogelijkheden te herkennen.

Een studie naar verschillende **ruimtelijke visies** op transnationaal niveau in subparagraaf 2.2.1 laat zien dat de constructie van identiteit voor een geografische regio en de vaststelling van gezamenlijke beginselen en doelstellingen gebruikelijke doelen van visualiseringsprocessen zijn. Deels kunnen hun resultaten nauwelijks visies worden genoemd, maar ze leveren –

als ze worden georganiseerd in een netwerkproces – niettemin een aanzienlijke bijdrage aan de vorming van een gemeenschappelijk inzicht in specifieke kwesties op het vlak van ruimtelijke ontwikkeling in een bepaald gebied en aan de formulering van geschikte beleidsmaatregelen. Actoren gebruiken **Ruimtelijke concepten** als mentale richtlijnen voor toekomstige ruimtelijke ontwikkelingen. De ruimtelijke concepten die op Europese en transnationale schaal worden gebruikt zijn meestal vaag, flexibel en amorf, waardoor verschillende interpretaties mogelijk zijn. Ze worden vaak op Europees of transnationaal niveau toegepast omdat zowel in de Europese Commissie als in de afzonderlijke lidstaten de actoren behoefte hebben aan ‘overbruggingsconcepten’ die een gemeenschappelijke deler vormen om patstellingen te kunnen doorbreken. Er worden voortdurend concepten ontwikkeld die de dialoog over beleidsgerichte percepties van de ruimtelijke structuur van Europa stimuleren, die helpen een gemeenschappelijke taal te creëren en die de aandacht en energie van de vertegenwoordigers van de nationale sturingsinstanties op de toekomst richten. Zoals besproken in subparagraaf 2.2.3, zorgen **ruimtelijke metaforen** daarentegen voor gemakkelijk te onthouden beelden die de menselijke gedachtewereld vereenvoudigen en structureren, discussies oproepen en ook helpen beleidsdoelen te illustreren. Metaforen en beelden zijn vaak belangrijke elementen van ruimtelijke visies. Ze wekken controversiële reacties op, mede door hun communicatieve effectiviteit en kracht. Een conclusie van de analyse is dat ruimtelijke concepten, visies en metaforen een bijdrage kunnen leveren aan de vorming van de ideeën van actoren die betrokken zijn bij ruimtelijke ontwikkeling, kunnen helpen de ruimte te conceptualiseren en de dialoog over de Europese en transnationale dimensie van ruimtelijke ontwikkeling te stimuleren. Ze worden met name intensief gebruikt op Europees en transnationaal niveau.

Twee ruimtelijke concepten kunnen worden beschouwd als essentiële concepten van het Europese beleid voor ruimtelijke ontwikkeling, namelijk polycentrische ontwikkeling en territoriale cohesie. De opkomst van het ruimtelijke concept **polycentrische ontwikkeling**, de betekenissen daarvan, de achterliggende theorieën, interpretaties en verdere ontwikkelingen worden geanalyseerd in hoofdstuk 3. Polycentrische ontwikkeling werd geïntroduceerd in het EROP als een reactie op de hoge concentratie economische activiteiten in Europa en stelde – om op wereldwijde schaal te kunnen blijven concurreren – aanvullende zogeheten grotere wereldwijde economische integratiezones van mondiaal niveau (Global Economic Integration Zones, GEIZ) voor. Analyses van het EROP en het regionale beleid van de EU tonen aan dat het concept van polycentrische ontwikkeling streeft naar een dubbel beleidsdoel: (economische) ontwikkeling en ruimtelijk evenwicht. Het concept duidt op een verschuiving van paradigma in het Europese regionale beleid, van de traditionele strategie die zich richtte op de structureel zwakke en achtergestelde regio’s, naar een nieuw aspect

dat zich sterker richt op de mogelijkheden en kansen van een regio om onbenutte middelen (territoriaal kapitaal) te benutten in de gehele Unie. Het concept polycentrische ontwikkeling was jarenlang dominant binnen de Europese wereld van de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling, maar is een deel van zijn zeggingskracht kwijtgeraakt. Dat veranderde weer met de Territoriale Agenda van de Europese Unie die werd aangenomen door de informele ministeriële bijeenkomst in mei 2007. De Territoriale Agenda bepaalt dat polycentrische ontwikkeling en het versterken daarvan een van de zes prioriteiten is.

De studie naar **territoriale cohesie** in hoofdstuk 4 hield zich bezig met de vraag hoe territoriale cohesie in EU-verdragen terecht is gekomen, met de rol van diensten van algemeen economisch belang en met de betekenissen, interpretaties en verschillende belangen die eraan ten grondslag liggen. Uit de analyse blijkt dat territoriale cohesie verschillende belangen combineert en bovendien wordt gebruikt om te bemiddelen tussen verschillende politieke doelstellingen. Sommige actoren proberen territoriale cohesie te gebruiken om de liberalisering die de EU met zich meebrengt te matigen en zo gelijke toegang tot diensten van algemeen economisch belang te waarborgen en volledige liberalisering van de markt te voorkomen. Andere belangengroepen willen graag meer aandacht schenken aan de territoriale aspecten en effecten van beleid voor bepaalde sectoren op Europees, nationaal en regionaal niveau, en aan de verbetering van de horizontale en verticale coördinatie tussen niveaus en beleidsmaatregelen. De discussie rondom territoriale cohesie was er ook op gericht het Europese regionale beleid na 2006 vorm te geven – de Structuurfondsen zijn de op een na grootste post op de begroting van de EU. Territoriale cohesie wordt gezien als een argument voor aanhoudende steun voor die regio's die achterblijven of zich in de periferie bevinden. In combinatie met polycentrische ontwikkeling zijn er echter ook argumenten naar voren gebracht voor de ondersteuning van steden als de motoren van regionale ontwikkeling. Een ander argument dat wordt gebruikt is het streven om de economische activiteiten gelijkmatiger te verdelen over het grondgebied van de EU, waarbij diensten van algemeen economisch belang worden gezien als een basisvoorwaarde om het territoriale kapitaal te kunnen benutten.

Territoriale cohesie, dat beide concepten met elkaar in verband brengt, is een ruimtelijk concept dat veel meer verwijst naar het niveau van beleidsdoelen dan naar polycentrische ontwikkeling. Territoriale cohesie is dus meer een beleidsconcept waarin het ruimtelijke aspect wordt benadrukt, maar niet heel duidelijk. Polycentrische ontwikkeling wordt gezien als een van de operationalisaties van territoriale cohesie, omdat het een brug slaat tussen de conflicterende doelstellingen van economische groei en evenwichtige ontwikkeling en een meer samenhangend en evenwichtig Europees grondgebied ondersteunt. Beide concepten, polycentrische

ontwikkeling en territoriale cohesie, weerspiegelen het idee van een Europees maatschappijmodel dat tot op heden nog niet duidelijk is gedefinieerd en getest, maar dat het concurrentievermogen zou moeten stimuleren terwijl het tegelijkertijd aandacht besteedt aan maatschappelijk welzijn, goed bestuur en duurzaamheid.

Voor beide concepten, polycentrische ontwikkeling en territoriale cohesie, is het noodzakelijk om oog te hebben voor de ruimtelijke structuur en eigenschappen van gebieden om prioriteiten te kunnen stellen. Daarom behandelt hoofdstuk 5 een transnationaal casestudygebied in Centraal-Europa. De driehoek **Wenen-Bratislava-Győr**, die zich uitstrekt in Oostenrijk, Hongarije en Slowakije, heeft de afgelopen achttien jaar ingrijpende veranderingen doorgemaakt, sinds de val van het IJzeren Gordijn in 1989 en de daaropvolgende Europese integratie. Deze integratie vindt plaats in de context van twee belangrijke ontwikkelingstrends: een einde maken aan de verdeling van Europa in oost en west, en de opkomst van transnationale functionele geïntegreerde regio's in Europa. De polycentrische regio is ook de plek waar het Europese maatschappijmodel zich zal moeten bewijzen en kan worden gezien als een proefterrein voor Europese integratie en grensoverschrijdende en transnationale ruimtelijke ontwikkeling. De drie steden liggen dicht bij elkaar en hebben dus de mogelijkheid elkaars ontwikkeling te beïnvloeden. Daarom toont alleen een transnationale visie de specifieke ruimtelijke mogelijkheden die binnen het gebied bestaan. Hoewel Hongarije, Slowakije en Oostenrijk de afgelopen paar jaar een overwegend positieve economische ontwikkeling hebben laten zien, worden de economische structuren en trends in Slowakije en Hongarije gekenmerkt door enorme nationale en intraregionale ongelijkheden met betrekking tot welvaart, lonen en inkomen, maar ook op het gebied van technische en milieunormen, prijsniveaus en de stelsels voor bijstands- en werkloosheidsuitkeringen. De hoofdsteden van Oostenrijk, Hongarije en Slowakije zijn de voornaamste steden en domineren de stedelijke hiërarchieën. Met andere woorden, met uitzondering van Slowakije waar het stedelijke systeem wat evenwichtiger is, is de situatie in deze landen verre van polycentrisch. Wat territoriale cohesie betreft, schiet elk van de drie landen tekort. Het – op transnationale schaal – polycentrische gebied heeft veel mogelijkheden om zijn territoriale potentieel te benutten om een betere positie te verwerven binnen de concurrentiestrijd van plaatsen op transnationale en Europese schaal als mogelijke kern van een eventuele grotere wereldwijde economische integratiezone van mondiaal belang in Centraal-Europa.

Er zijn belangrijke stappen genomen op verschillende ruimtelijke niveaus met projecten als PlaNet CenSE, CENTROPE en JORDES+, die hoofdzakelijk zijn gefinancierd door de overkoepelende Structuurfondsen van de EU, die zich bezighouden met het transnationale gebied en de

ontwikkeling daarvan. Alle geanalyseerde projecten proberen deskundigen en belanghebbenden samen te brengen om informatie uit te wisselen, hun kennis over regionale ontwikkeling en de mogelijkheden voor samenwerking te vergroten en een nieuwe gezamenlijke identiteit te ontwikkelen. Maar al deze inspanningen zijn nog steeds sporadische pogingen die zijn gedaan daar waar de gelegenheid zich voordeed of waar geld beschikbaar is. Mensen aan beide zijden van de grens hebben gevoelens van superioriteit of inferioriteit ontwikkeld en er is een maatschappelijke hiërarchie ontstaan die de differentiërende effecten van de landsgrens reproduceert.

De concepten waarover op Europees niveau wordt gesproken – polycentrische ontwikkeling en territoriale cohesie – worden slechts zelden expliciet beschreven en geïnterpreteerd. Wat vaker voorkomt, is dat de hoofdelementen die aan de concepten ten grondslag liggen, terugkomen in het dagelijks beleid en de sturing. In subparagraaf 5.2.2 wordt de rol van ruimtelijke visies en metaforen in het casestudygebied onderzocht. Een conclusie is dat er tot nu toe geen gezamenlijk overeengekomen ruimtelijke visie is, maar dat er meerdere initiatieven op verschillende geografische niveaus worden uitgevoerd – parallel aan elkaar en deels onderling gekoppeld. Met deze initiatieven wordt er geprobeerd om meer bewustzijn te creëren voor dit transnationale gebied en het daarmee samenhangende doel om een duurzame functionele regio te creëren die zichtbaar wordt op Europees en wereldwijd niveau. In de al bestaande initiatieven en activiteiten kan ook het gebruik van metaforen worden geïdentificeerd. Een voorbeeld hiervan is het plan om een ‘Grüne Mitte’ – een soort ‘groen hart’ – tussen Wenen en Bratislava te ontwikkelen, maar nu al is duidelijk dat dit plan onder druk zal komen te staan als gevolg van toekomstige ontwikkelingen. Een ander element met een grote metaforische kracht op dit gebied is de rivier de Donau, die kan worden gezien als een ‘levensader voor een groter Europa’, wat tot uitdrukking komt in diverse samenwerkingsinitiatieven die plaatsvinden, maar tot nu toe geen expliciet vervolg heeft gekregen.

Naast de activiteiten voor het stimuleren van transnationale samenwerking, gaat functionele integratie – deels bewust, deels onbewust – een steeds belangrijker rol spelen in het dagelijks leven. Een voorbeeld daarvan is dat verschillende diensten grensoverschrijdend worden gebruikt vanwege lagere prijzen en een goede kwaliteit; een ander voorbeeld is de toenemende vraag vanuit Slowakije naar bouwgrond in het grensgebied van Oostenrijk, omdat de prijzen in Oostenrijk nu al lager zijn dan in het achterland van Bratislava. De sterke dynamiek van het gebied als het gaat om de economie en de daaruit voortkomende druk op de ontwikkeling van infrastructuur zal het gebied in de komende jaren veranderen. Een van de resterende sleutelvragen voor het gebied is hoe een historisch unieke economische concurrentiesituatie in een zeer klein gebied op een duurzame manier kan

worden gebruikt zodat er aan beide zijden van de grens van wordt geprofiteerd.

Het gebied is prototypisch voor een situatie waarin, gezien de sterke concurrentie, samenwerking op verschillende terreinen in het voordeel van beide zijden van de grens is. Zolang de EU blijft uitbreiden, zal het aantal aantrekkelijke investeringslocaties met specifieke voor- en nadelen blijven toenemen. Het wordt dan cruciaal voor de driehoek Wenen-Bratislava-Győr dat het uitstekende beheerstructuren ontwikkelt en aantrekkelijke omgevingen creëert als locatiefactoren. Transnationale sturing kan een belangrijke bijdrage leveren aan deze inspanning door kennis te verzamelen over verschillende gebieden en hun culturen. Actoren die zich bezighouden met transnationale sturing zijn zich zeer bewust van de bestaande kansen en spanningen. Zij proberen manieren te vinden om de ontwikkeling zo te sturen dat toegang tot de verschillende diensten wordt gegarandeerd, dat een evenwichtige en duurzame economische ontwikkeling in combinatie met rechtvaardigheid binnen de regio wordt gestimuleerd, en dat tegelijkertijd de locatiepositie van het gebied op Europees en wereldwijd niveau wordt versterkt. Deze doelstelling is precies waar het Europese maatschappijmodel voor staat, want het houdt rekening met de territoriale en politieke omstandigheden. Een overlegcultuur met betrekking tot het Europese maatschappijmodel is hard nodig om ruimte te creëren voor een constructieve dialoog om nieuwe kennis te genereren, te delen en uit te breiden en om op een positieve manier te kunnen reageren op de veranderingen die het gevolg zijn van globalisering.

Annexes

A1 List of interviewees

Austria

DI *Rudolf Schicker* is Executive City Councillor of Vienna for Urban Development, Traffic and Transport since 2001

DI *Ilse Wollanksy* is head of Department for Spatial Planning and Regional Policy in Lower Austria

Mag. *François-Edouard Pailleron* is working at the Department for Spatial Planning and Regional Policy in Lower Austria and contact person for INTERREG IIIA Lower Austria with Slovakia and Hungary

Dr. *Heinrich Wedral* is head of Department for the Office of Europe and Statistics in Burgenland

DI *Christof Schremmer* is chairman of the board and researcher at the Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning

DI *Walther Stöckl* is vice-head of MA 27 Department for EU-Strategy and Economic Development, City of Vienna

Mag. *Andrea Schwecherl* is consultant at ÖIR-Managementdienste GmbH, responsible for the INTERREG IIIA secretariat

Hungary

Dr. *Hardi Tamás*, Hungarian Academy of Science, Centre of Regional Studies

Lóránt Istok, Municipality of Győr, Department for Urban Planning

Marianna Varga, Head of Department for European Integration and International Affairs of the Local Government of Győr-Moson-Sopron County

Slovakia

Dr. Ing. Arch. *Vojtech Hrdina*, Partner of AUREX Ltd.

Ing. Arch. *Miloslava Pašková*, Director of Physical Planning Department in the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic

Roman Lincényi, Business and Innovation Centre

Ing. *Ján Kizek*, Bratislava Regional Self Government

Ing. Arch. *Gabriel Čech*, Head of Department of Urban Planning, City of Bratislava

Furthermore I had very interesting and helpful discussions about the case study area with DI Christof Schremmer, researcher at ÖIR and DI Bernhard Schausberger, former ÖIR researcher.

A2 Interview guideline questions

Guideline questions – case study Vienna-Bratislava-Győr region (VBG):

- What is your task/function? What is your relation to cross-border/transnational territorial development issues? Since when?
- What are the main problems in terms of spatial structures the region is facing?
- How do you see the current situation and future development of the area (trend/vision)?
- Do you have cross-border/transnational co-operation/networking experiences in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr area of your own? What? Driving Forces?
- Which of the co-operation/networking activities do you know about (administrative/political/economic/scientific level) in VBG? Kind? Quality? Problems? Perspectives? Which ones do you consider as the most important ones?
- What do you see as the main political/institutional obstacles/chances for a good development of the VBG?
- Where do you see important fields of future co-operation (necessary, feasible, promising) between the three cities?
- Do you think that the functional division/partnership between the cities of the common region could be a realistic aim? If yes, where/in which fields?

New concepts:

- Do you know/have you heard about the concepts “territorial cohesion” + “polycentric development”?

If yes,

- In which context/How did these concepts emerge? How are the concepts used/interpreted/dealt with? ... for Vienna-Bratislava-Győr?
- From your own point of view, what is – in the course of the “cycle of concepts” – new about these concepts?
- Do you consider such spatial concepts as helpful/important/necessary in transnational planning/co-operation? What for? Why? Why not?

If not,

- Can you agree with the following assumptions/interpretations?

Is there additional information about VBG, which was not inquired, but seems to be relevant from your point of view?

A3 List of Abbreviations

AER	Assembly of European Regions
BBR	Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning
bn	billion
CADSES	Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European Space
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDCR	Committee on the Development and Conversion of Regions
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CEMAT	European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CoR	Committee of the regions
COTER	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy of CoR
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe
DATAR	Délégation à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale
DG Regio	Regional Policy Directorate-General
EMS	European Model of Society
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FUA	Functional Urban Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEIZ	Global Economic Integration Zone
m	million
MEGA	Metropolitan European Growth Areas
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
NWMA	North-western Metropolitan Area
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ÖIR	Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning
PPP	Purchasing power parities
PPS	Purchasing power standards
SGEI	Services of General Economic Interest
SGI	Services of General Interest
SPESP	Study Programme on European Spatial Planning
TEC	Treaty of European Community
TEN	Transeuropean Network
VASAB	Visions and Strategies around the Baltic

A4 Curriculum Vitae

Gabriele Tatzberger was born on 28th of March 1975 in Amstetten/Austria. In 1994 she received her high-school diploma from High School for Business Management and Tourism in Haag, and commenced her university education at the Vienna University of Technology where she obtained the master degree in urban and regional planning in January 2000. Afterwards she was working as project manager at the EcoPlus Regional Development Agency of Lower Austria and from September 2000 on she became researcher and project manager at the Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR). Since 2003 she was also member of the board. As a ÖIR-researcher she worked on a variety of international collaborative research such as INTERREG transnational co-operation programme, ESPON and in the 6th and 7th Research Framework Programme of the EU. As a consultancy she was involved in studies for the European Commission, DG Regional Policy and the European Parliament. Besides these research reports she published some 20 journal articles, book chapters and conference proceedings. Since February 2008 she is project manager at the Vienna Business Agency in the department for European affairs.