

SPATIAL APPROACHES AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION AT EU-LEVEL

An Introduction

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Introduction

The EU has no legal competence in spatial planning; however, the EU is active in several policies dealing with a spatial approach. Especially the Cohesion Policy deals indirectly also with questions of climate change. And in the fields of environmental protection, climate change plays a major role in EU's policy for a "Greener Europe".

In so far it is self-evident that all legal provisions which the EU may introduce in the future in the relevant fields must be guided by the European guideline on adaptation to climate change. However, attention should also be given to those existing legal provisions which may have a bearing on effective adaptation to climate change. To this extent, it is appropriate to reappraise the existing corpus of EU legislation. This includes, for example:

The Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (85/337/EEC), which includes "climate" as an asset warranting protection; however, the focus is still placed to a great extent solely on the impacts of the project on the environment (e.g. CO₂ emissions). By contrast, climate change will lead to major changes in environmental conditions, which these projects will also have to be adapted to take account of. Whereas the emphasis has been placed hitherto on the effects of a project on the environment, in future the converse will also have to be considered, i.e. the impacts of climate-related environmental changes on the project.

The same comments can be applied to the Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (2001/42/EC). It would also appear expedient to elevate what has previously been "monitoring" into fully fledged "controlling" of a type capable of guaranteeing the necessary assessment of efficacy.

The Directive establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (2000/60/EC) currently makes no reference to climate change. In the absence of any consideration for climate change as early as at the stage of characterising river areas, there is every risk of the aims of the guideline not being achieved. In principle, the integration-oriented approach adopted in the guideline is well suited to capturing the various aspects of climate change as they impact on all relevant sectoral policies and land uses. This potential for integration should be enhanced.

Although the Directive on the assessment and management of floods (2007/60/EC) does address climate change in the preamble, and even though the Directive is quite correct to identify related types of risk and hazard, much stronger emphasis should be given to the responsibility to consider the totality of all land uses from a more integrated perspective and to forge co-operation among all of the relevant sectoral policy fields.

More generally, it is also important to re-examine the EU budget in terms of how it might be possible to reinforce adaptation policies within the framework of the EU's various competences.

RAINMAN Key Facts

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RAINMAN website &
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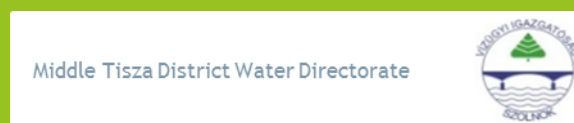
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