



Chapter 1

Spatial Planning and Urban Development in the New EU Member States – Between Adjustment and Reinvention

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Introduction

The accession of ten new member states to the EU represents a historical milestone for governance and spatial development in Central Eastern Europe. In May 2004, the three Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and the two Mediterranean islands of Malta and Cyprus joined the European Union, thereby profoundly altering the overall institutional map of Europe. As a group, the ten new members are highly heterogeneous, both spatially and socio-economically. Even the former COMECON countries, with their common experience of a rapid transition from centrally-planned to democratic, market-oriented states, have very different regional economic and land use structures, also owing to the diverse political and socio-economic history of the various newly created and reconstituted states. In addition, the transformation processes had different effects on the different societies. In some countries, one can observe a shrinking of the population (Hungary, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Estonia) while others are growing (Poland, Malta and Cyprus).

Settlement patterns in the new member states also vary widely; some countries are highly urbanized, others predominantly rural. There is no large metropolis matching the size of London or Paris, and only three cities have more than a million inhabitants: Budapest, Warsaw and Prague. In some of the countries, there is only one major metropolis which serves all central functions (Tallinn, Budapest, Riga, Prague), in other countries there are several larger cities (Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia). In Slovenia, even the capital Ljubljana only has about 260,000 inhabitants, and Valetta, the capital of Malta, has less than 8,000 inhabitants.

Over the course of the last decade, the larger cities typically lost population, for various reasons: low birth rates, suburbanisation, dramatic rises in rents and property values in the inner cities, economic restructuring and job loss. A particularity in the Baltic States is the emigration of the Russian population. The transition to a



market economy and a capitalist society remains the dominant theme in the cities: during socialist times, the cities were the centres of industrialisation. Today they are experiencing massive de-industrialization – a rapid structural change which they have to master. Consumption and production patterns have been fundamentally rearranged. Western European and North American multinationals fight over future market shares in the region, strategically developing hypermarkets and other big box retail stores on greenfield sites along major access roads, thus increasingly fostering a culture of automobile dependent consumerism. The privatisation of the housing stock is a central planning problem in the cities, as are the transportation and environmental consequences of urban sprawl (see KPMG 2004a).

In some of the transition countries, the social and economic transformations also brought about radical readjustments in the national urban hierarchy and new challenges for regional development. Opposite the new challenges (like, for example, the need for developing future-oriented, comprehensive land use plans restricting the currently more or less uncontrolled urban sprawl at the edges of the major cities) one often finds an idealized conceptualisation of purely market-based instruments. At the same time, the political and planning systems have to account for far-reaching EU regulations and directives. In the new member states, urban issues are hardly addressed in a comprehensive manner at the national level (with Slovenia being a notable exception). Local governments often set their own agendas, but in a setting of chronically under-financed municipal budgets and fragmented administrative structures, the private sector has a significant influence over municipal decision-making. There are thus increasing calls for developing national urban policies in order to coordinate medium to long-term development (see KPMG 2004a). The larger cities in Central and Eastern Europe are also showing a significant interest in an urban policy framework provided by the EU.

The aim of this volume is to present a preliminary review of developments and planned interventions in the ten new member states since the beginning of the transition, seen in light of their recent accession to the EU. In order to present such a picture, one can take one of two possible perspectives. On one hand, one might focus on the social and economic transition as a starting point. This places socio-economic transformations and their effects on urban regions centre stage, and one would then have to look at how public administrations and local planning stakeholders deal with these processes and try to organize them spatially. Another possible point of entry is the planning system. Such a perspective would focus more on the question of how the set of involved actors and the new governance apparatus have changed in relation to previous governance arrangements. However, since those two perspectives are in fact complementary, it is precisely the point of intersection between these two approaches which lies at the heart of our volume. Further, it is necessary to contextualise this dual perspective on urban-regional transformation processes within the historical moment of EU accession in May 2004. Ever since the prospect of accession became real, particularly since the beginning of the accession negotiations in 1997, the process of Europeanisation – the adoption of the ‘rules’ of the European Union – has overshadowed the transition. Accession into the union of European states was always

linked not only to the establishment of a functioning market economy, but also to political conditionalities – constitutionality, democracy, protection of minorities – and the adoption of the European Union's vast *acquis communautaire*. This 'conditionality of Europeanisation' had ambivalent effects: the price of a successful rapid adoption of the rules was a slowdown or even rollback of decentralization processes in some advanced states, where executive forces were (re)invigorated. At the same time, some observers note a tendency towards a 'transposition without implementation,' i.e. a discrepancy between the formal adoption of EU rules and their actual realization (see e.g. Schimmelfennig 2004: 266).

In our discussions with the authors, we have particularly tried to address the question of concrete changes as a direct result of the accession. While it is still too early to provide a comprehensive answer to this question just one year after the fact, thus far, it seems apparent that the most crucial changes already took place in the preliminary stages. Day-to-day political and administrative operations in the respective states have been dominated by the prospect of accession and the adjustment to existing EU law due to the impending necessary future adoption of the entire *acquis communautaire*. The actual date of accession itself was therefore not a significant factor for ongoing spatial developments and the related planning interventions. It is only now that the accession is official that the EU's regional and environmental policy framework can provide the respective cities and regions with a welcome 'structure of possibility' in order to better manage the massive transformation, even though the pre-accession funds and instruments already played a key role in this regard (comp. European Commission 2004: 170ff).

Given the highly heterogeneous situation, it makes little sense to speak of 'one Eastern European (planning-)family' (Malta and Cyprus are exempt here anyway). Depending on the national context and the particular path of reform chosen, planning has a very different meaning in the various countries. Additionally, there are vast differences in the degree of fiscal and administrative decentralisation as well as in geographical size, meaning that the administrative and decision-making structures of the individual countries are often very hard to compare, especially since they are at the same time still undergoing constant modification within those countries. This is why we consider it more appropriate to emphasize the different paths of transformations rather than offer a premature typology. Pre-soviet legacies (such as resurrected traditions and historical (transport-)connections) are being considered as one factor among others here.

The complex interrelationship of enabling and disabling factors for the development of new planning systems – as well as the different size, position, economic base, and political tradition of the formerly socialist Central European countries – points to a significant differentiation of their political and planning future, even when the spatial challenges regarding the transition to a market economy did include a variety of similar features, such as the problem of restitution, the development of self-reliant local governments, the divestiture of the socialist production units (which also effectively ended the dominant influence of socialist industrial policy on settlement systems), the increasing spatial and social differentiation, the privatisation of the housing market etc.

Table 1.1 The population of the EU member states in comparative perspective (in 1,000)

	1995	1999	2003
EU-25	446,808.1	450,677.5	454,552.3
EU-15	371,605.4	375,719.5	380,351.4
Euro zone	299,073.1	302,160.5	306,698.2
Austria	7,943.5	7,982.5	8,067.3
Belgium	10,130.6	10,213.8	10,355.8
Cyprus	645.4	682.9	715.1
Czech Republic	10,333.2	10,289.6	10,203.3
Denmark	5,215.7	5,313.6	5,383.5
Estonia	1,448.1	1,379.2	1,356
Finland	5,098.8	5,159.6	5,206.3
France	57,752.5	58,496.6	59,630.1
Germany	81,538.6	82,037	82,536.7
Greece	10,595.1	10,861.4	11,018.4
Hungary	10,336.7	10,253.4	10,142.4
Ireland	3,597.6	3,734.9	3,963.6
Italy	57,268.6	57,612.6	57,321.0
Latvia	2,500.6	2,399.2	2,331.5
Lithuania	3643	3,536.4	3,462.6
Luxemburg	405.7	427.4	448.3
Malta	369.5	378.5	397.3
Netherlands	15,424.1	15,760.2	16,192.6
Poland	38,580.6	38,667	38,218.5
Portugal	10,012.8	10,150.1	10,407.5
Slovakia	5,356.2	5,393.4	5,379.2
Slovenia	1,989.5	1,978.3	1,995
Spain	39,305.4	39,724.4	41,550.6
Sweden	8,816.4	8,854.3	8,940.8
United Kingdom	58,500.2	59,391.1	59,328.9
Iceland	267	275.7	288.5
Liechtenstein	30.6	32	33.9
Norway	4,348.4	4,445.3	4,552.3
Canada	29,437	N/A	N/A
Japan	125,570	126,056.8	127,273.8 (2004)
USA	261,687	271,626	291,685.1 (2004)

Source: Eurostat 2005

So far, analyses of the planning systems in the formerly socialist countries primarily concentrated on Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic (comp. Newman and Thornley 1996: 35–38, 69–71, but also the numerous special issues in academic journals on Central Eastern European countries.) These publications tended to generalize the reform experiences and paths in Central Eastern Europe. But, as the contributions in this volume show, the reality is much more complex, even if the basic insights regarding the difficulties of the political transition in the 1990s are generally confirmed by these accounts. And it was already obvious by the early 1990s that in the larger countries, and in Poland in particular, one would have to regionally differentiate between the ‘transformation winners’ in the Western part and the ‘transformation losers’ in the Eastern part.

Without targeted structural assistance programs, there is a danger that those countries with very dominant capitals located close to the old EU will experience an increasing division into a booming West and a poor East. This polarisation is being exacerbated by the additional contrast between urbanised and rural-agrarian lifestyles. Compared to the old EU, the new member states are still much more characterised by non-urban structures. The example of the Baltic states, however, shows that a geographically peripheral location within the European settlement area as a whole need not necessarily play a decisive role for the prospects for a successful transformation of the country as a whole.

Outline of the Book

In order to adequately deal with regionally- and country-specific dynamics, the following contributions were not devised as a comprehensive list of comparative country studies. Instead, we worked together with the authors in order to identify typical planning and development problems for each country and to then provide an in-depth coverage of the selected focus. So although every accession country is featured in at least one article (the exceptions being Poland and the Czech Republic which have two contributions each), some of the articles concentrate on individual cities while others instead describe the conversion to and the search for appropriate new planning systems at the regional, national and supra-national level. Overall, the book is arranged into three main thematic blocks: Following this introduction, part one opens with three overview pieces that look at *spatial planning and urban development from an EU-wide perspective*. In part two, contributions on Slovenia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Cyprus place issues of *spatial development and sustainable development* at the centre of attention. In part three, case studies from Estonia (Tallinn), Latvia (Riga), Malta (Valetta), Poland (Warsaw), and the Czech Republic then take a closer look at various *special issues in urban planning* such as housing, historic preservation, urban regeneration, commercial/retail development and brownfield reuse.

In his contribution on the future East-West agenda of Europe, Klaus Kunzmann outlines six issues of particular relevance to the situation in the new member states which will have to be addressed by politicians and policy makers: growing social and spatial polarisation, structural change and industrial development, agricultural divergence, insufficient transport infrastructure, natural heritage conservation and the brain drain of the qualified labour force. He also makes particular reference to the recent crisis of the EU brought about by the negative referenda in France and the Netherlands. In the remainder of his contribution, he then discusses the future role and a possible revised outline for the European Spatial Development Perspective.

Simin Davoudi identifies three key challenges for spatial planning in the EU accession states. She notes great regional disparities both within the states as well as between them due to their different starting points and developments since the end of the Soviet Regime 15 years ago. Her second point concerns the relationship between economic growth and environment protection as a major field of strategic spatial planning. Finally, she points to the nature and the quality of the institutional context in the emerging regional governance patterns as an important issue.

Susanne Frank sketches a 'short history of European urban politics'. She shows how, over the last two decades, the EU changed the nature of its political interventions, starting with a focus on the environment in the 1980s, followed by a focus on cohesion policies in the 1990s and, most recently, a promotion of 'competitive' cities or regions. The EU's vision of a 'European city' changed from the centre of European civilisation and democracy to the place where 'social market economy' is shaped. Whether, and in which form, urban issues will continue to play a significant role at the level of the EU in a context where cohesion and competition dominate political thinking remains an open question.

Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development

The main aim of the chapter by Kaliopa Dimitrovska Andrews is to give an overview of Slovenian planning and building practice, emphasising the impacts of globalisation and Europeanisation processes. The article summarises the individual aspects of the connections between global trends and local urban problems, and attempts to define the role of the vision of sustainable spatial development in Slovenia in orienting local transformations, especially of urban areas. In the introduction, some general facts on Slovenia are presented, followed by a discussion on the influence of Europeanisation on the spatial planning and urban policies in member states and consequently Slovenia. In the second part, a brief introduction of the planning system in Slovenia is given and national urban policies are presented. The third part includes an overview of development trends and urban problems at the local level and possible approaches for solving them. Slovenian sustainable development perspectives are discussed in the concluding part of the article.

Principles of regional development consolidated in the first Lithuanian territorial planning scheme described by Zigmās J. Daunora and Prančiskus Juškevičius had a marked influence on the sustainable evolution of the urban system in the intensive urbanization period. With a transition to market conditions, the polarisation in the quality of life in regions has been expanding fast. In the context of the strengthening economy, there is a need for a more precise determination of state regional policy and an escape from speculative ideas in addressing urban development towards concentration. This chapter addresses the need for the establishment of a legal basis for the regulation of city and regional planning and development.

Piotr Lorens discusses various factors influencing the current urbanization tendencies in Poland. Starting from remarks concerning the history of urban development, he brings together different factors shaping the Polish model of urbanization, like land ownership pattern, planning situation, administrative structure, and level of government involvement in the process. The article also describes the effects of introducing the free market without the proper preparation of the urbanization process by the municipalities. It also includes a few remarks on the emerging trends in urbanization – like urban regeneration and gentrification – as well as the development of new types of urban program.

The chapter by Luděk Sýkora presents an overview of the growth and decline of cities and changes in their internal urban spatial structure in the Czech Republic after 1989. Special attention is given to the most pressing urban problems, namely the formation of inner city brownfields, the decline of housing estates and the negative consequences of sprawl-like suburbanisation. The second part is devoted to the urban policies and planning at the city level and to a discussion of national government policies and programmes that influence urban change. In the Czech Republic, the responsibility for urban development rests primarily with city governments, which are in some instances supported from national government programs, such as housing and regional policies or support to FDI.

In his article on Slovakia, Jakob Hurre focuses on various development strategies for rural Roma settlements in the eastern part of the country. As a marginalised minority, the Roma were historically subjected to varying policies of assimilation and segregation. Towards the final phase of socialism, attempts at assimilation were increasingly being replaced by a policy of state assistance resulting in reduced capacities and incentives for self-reliance among the Roma communities. Current initiatives on the part of the Slovak government, the EU and international organisations combine an activating social policy with physical upgrading of the settlements. The article concludes that these interventions have been mostly unable to do away with the ghetto-like character of the targeted settlements.

Zoltán Dövényi and Zoltán Kovács try to characterise the patterns of town and city development in Hungary. Above all, the chapter investigates new tendencies that have come up as a consequence of the transition process Hungary has gone through. The authors ask whether Hungarian towns and cities follow trends that have been present in Western European cities and if a tendency towards convergence can be observed. It seems interesting to note that they identify an expansion, transformation

and differentiation of the system of towns and cities that has its origin in strong political action at the level of the central state.

Richard Sharpley looks at the role of tourism in the economic development of Cyprus. While the island has witnessed an enormous economic boom due to its attractiveness for tourists (mainly from the UK), the negative consequences cannot be overlooked. The national economy depends so heavily on tourism that some sections of the coastline suffer from excessive development. Although the government has been trying to plan for more sustainable development and to integrate the hinterland, its policies are almost without effect. The author concludes by arguing that the future of the relatively expensive tourist destination is uncertain since the diversity of the island's tourist attractions is limited in comparison to other places.

Special Issues in Urban Planning

Sampo Ruoppila analyses the housing situation and housing policies in Tallinn and the changing picture after the city became the capital of the newly independent Estonia. He describes the Estonian politics of privatisation and of restitution of formerly private apartment buildings. The accelerated residential mobility resulting from this development and from limited state intervention into the housing market have reestablished a diverse pattern of neighbourhoods for different incomes originating in pre-Soviet times and scattered throughout the city. These were complemented by newly-built luxury neighbourhoods in the periphery. The observed pattern may be typical for post-socialist cities, but the future must determine whether the renaissance of redistributive policies by the states and the cities will help limit residential segregation as they do in Tallinn after the turn of the century.

The situation in Riga city region is the focus of the chapter by Inara Marana. The new challenges for the capital of Latvia are a result of demographic, economic and social changes and the ongoing urban development since Latvian independence in 1991. The author describes the Latvian planning system and illustrates the situation with current examples of planning in Metro Riga and the historic core.

Conrad Thake presents examples of regeneration efforts in old Valletta, the capital of Malta. For centuries, the island that was conquered by various powers had to put a certain amount of resources into its defensive structures. Nowadays, the remaining fortifications are one important factor for an urban strategy that tries to revitalise abandoned historic buildings and use them for public and sometimes private purposes in a central heritage location that is only very slowly being repopulated. The results are nevertheless striking especially considering that Valletta is a place where strategic public interventions into the land-use pattern do not have a strong tradition.

Mareile Walter comes back to the case of Poland and focuses more closely on the relationship between city and suburban development in Warsaw. The capital of the largest accession country has become an important hub for international companies trying to penetrate the Eastern European markets, and has therefore witnessed an outright boom of investment. The reinvention of a city centre happened in a very particular environment

characterised by the attempt of preserving the rebuilt old town but overcoming the legacy of Soviet influence embodied in the Stalinist high-rise cultural palace, whereas the suburban periphery is, as the one of other big Eastern European cities, being besieged by an armada of shopping centres built by Western European companies.

Finally, Yaakov Garb and Jiřina Jackson take another look at the Czech Republic and describe how urban planning issues surrounding the particular problem of brownfields play out in the Central European context. They reflect on the role of a non-profit advocacy organization in generating change. While the issue of brownfields is generally well recognized in Western Europe, the particular circumstances of Central Europe produced a unique nature and scale of brownfield problem. The interaction of the brownfield problem with EU accession is also discussed, including some suggestions for making EU funding and planning categories more capable of facilitating brownfield reuse.

Conclusions: Towards Adaptation?

With the chapters of this volume, we hope to provide deeper insights into the multiple challenges and trends that can be observed during an increasing Europeanisation of spatial planning and city development. Many of the contributions in this volume show how policy-makers in the accession states still waver between an outright refusal to revitalise the idea of spatial planning as a tool for better land use management and integrated development on the one hand, and an enforced adaptation to EU coordinating, planning and funding mechanisms on the other hand. The mostly negative experiences with centrally-planned economies – which can even be considered one impetus for the peaceful revolutions in the early 1990s – explain the rather liberal approach towards the transition launched after the end of socialism. The stiff wind of globalisation forcing the former socialist states to quickly adapt to a completely new picture further contributed to it: liberalism seemed to be the appropriate answer to the decline of state-controlled manufacturing giants. Cities and towns, having rid themselves from the often strangling party rule were eager to establish local self-governments and to improve their competitiveness. Unfortunately, lacking planning skills and too great a scepticism towards planning on the part of the newly-elected public officials then often led to uncoordinated private investment. At the same time, the decline of the manufacturing base left behind a huge stock of derelict sites. It is true that inward investment and the establishment of modern office complexes have created modern CBDs in some major cities and attractive historic cores have been revitalised by retailers and hotels. But particularly in the retail sector, it is difficult to compete with the rapidly developing suburban developments, especially since land acquisition and site preparation is still much easier and cheaper in greenfield locations. In this context, tools and incentives for the revitalisation of centrally-located brownfield sites are lacking in many places. The rapid transformation of the economic base has very clear and serious consequences for the future spatial structure of Central European cities and towns.

In light of these socio-economic challenges, an integrative understanding of sustainability promoted by the EU calls for ecologically friendly development and social justice. Only a few states seem to go for plans that promote an integrated understanding of ecological sustainability, whereas issues of social justice and cohesion are gradually gaining importance as segregation and polarisation grows in Eastern European cities.

Facing these multiple challenges, the undue scepticism towards spatial planning and urban development strategies in the accession states in the early and mid-1990s obviously hindered a fresh and timely approach towards comprehensive land use management. Cities in the accession states were therefore quickly confronted with negative trends like suburban sprawl and the decay of inner-city brownfields. It was not before the end of the 1990s that the Central East European accession states gradually started to amend their planning laws so as to lay the foundation for new funding schemes and to prepare for EU structural policies. Although the states have made good progress, the funding of urban regeneration or regional planning in metro areas is still underdeveloped. Partnerships for the redevelopment of brownfield sites are still relatively difficult to build.

On the other hand, the EU accession process has initiated substantial adaptation mechanisms. In countries like Poland, the regions were adapted to better suit the EU terminology. In Slovenia, national planning seems to be able to integrate a wide array of policies into the overall goal of sustainable development. Policies against social polarisation are slowly being developed in cities like Tallinn.

Overall, the efforts to prepare for EU integration and to establish a new understanding of planning and development seem to have produced ambivalent results. Sustainability continues to be one of the central challenges for spatial and urban development, and it is one that needs to be addressed both at the national and the supra-national level. In an era of uncertain transition where even economic growth is at stake, it will remain of particular interest for planners and scholars to observe whether the increasingly liberal course of EU politics – which still talks about ‘cohesion’ and ‘social justice’ (but in fact increasingly focuses on strengthening already competitive areas rather than provide wide-spread structural assistance to weak ones) – will produce substantial progress in key urban issues like economic and spatial segregation, inner city revitalisation, limitation of sprawl, social cohesion and ecological modernisation.

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