

THE PATH TO THE FIRST CEMAT CONFERENCE IN BONN OF 1970

Karl Peter Schön
Scientific Director (ret.)
Bonn

Abstract: This article explores the path to the first European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) which took place from September 9 to 11, 1970 in Bonn, Germany. It briefly sketches the development of regional policy and spatial planning as one element of reconstruction and reconciliation after World War II by investigating how far newly founded international organisations (like UN/UNECE, OEEC/OECD, CoE, ECSC/EEC) were concerned with and important for regional development in Europe. The article gives some examples for beginning European communication and cooperation of spatial planners at local and regional levels. In its main part the article tells the story how the Council of Europe (CoE) became the main platform for a European spatial planning debate in the 1960s, a process which eventually led to the first CEMAT conference in Bonn in 1970. The consensus reached in this conference, as recorded in the three resolutions adopted by the conference, will be summarised and the path from Bonn to Torremolinos and the “European regional/spatial planning charter (Torremolinos Charter”, 13 years later, briefly sketched.

Key words: Council of Europe, European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT), spatial planning, regional policy, European territory, European cooperation

1. Introduction

The first CEMAT Conference in Bonn which took place from September 9 to 11, 1970, started a long term cooperation between spatial planning ministers at a European scale. This conference was the first in a series of conferences which since then has been gathered regularly, about every three years and until recently¹. It was not before 20 years later that a comparable cooperation started in the framework of the European Union. This EU cooperation eventually led to the adoption of the “European Spatial Development Perspective” (ESDP) in Potsdam in 1999, to the three “Territorial Agendas” (Leipzig 2007, Gödöllő 2011 and Berlin 2020), as well as to EU supported cooperation programmes in the field of administrations (INTERREG) and research (ESPON). In parallel to these EU processes, the CEMAT process still continued in the larger framework of the European Council with its (today) 46 member states². And these two processes are still running up to today and influencing and supporting each other.

1. At present, the 17th session of the CEMAT which was held on 3 November 2017 in Bucharest (Romania), was the last CEMAT Conference.

2. Following the decision of the Committee of Ministers on 16 March 2022 the Russian Federation is no longer a member of the Council of Europe.

The first CEMAT Conference in Bonn 1970 was a first huge milestone in this process of European cooperation in the field of spatial planning. But, of course, international cooperation did not start from scratch, but rather had its own history of evolution. In the following pages, the building-up of new international organisations after World War II will be briefly sketched which, in some way or the other, had also regional development and coordination in their portfolio (cf. section 2); more in a bottom-up perspective, local, regional and national planning gradually (re-)emerged after WW II and planners began to communicate and coordinate with planners of neighbour countries, bi- and multi-lateral activities in the field of spatial planning emerged (cf. section 3); in particular, the Council of Europe (CoE) became a platform for exchange and discussion of planners beyond borders, and the history of the CoE and its activities in the field of spatial planning will be explored (cf. section 4); these activities eventually led to the first European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) which took place from September 9 to 11, 1970 in Bonn, Germany; the three resolutions adopted by the Bonn CEMAT conference will be depicted in some detail (cf. section 5). Finally, a short overview is given on conferences and activities of CEMAT between 1970 and 1983 (cf. section 6), where at its 6th Session of the CEMAT in Torremolinos, Spain, 19-20 May 1983 the European regional/spatial planning charter (known as the Torremolinos Charter) was adopted.

2. New international organisations after WW II and their significance for European regional development

The immediate post World War II period was a time of coping with the physical, moral, political and societal wounds of the war and its damages. It was a period of reconstruction and reconciliation, an astonishingly quick start into re-building national economies, societies and infrastructure, building the fundamentals of a new Europe.



Poster advertising the European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan).

Fuente: <https://www.transatlanticperspectives.org/entries/european-recovery-program/>

and reconciliation, an astonishingly quick start into re-building national economies, societies and infrastructure, building the fundamentals of a new Europe. The first years after World War II had their specific uncertainties and ambiguities; fundamental questions of the emerging European post war order were still open and waiting for conceptual answers (cf. Schön, 2022, 433-437). It was a time for building new international organisations and cooperations, but also the beginning of the cold war and the division of Europe.

There was a broad international consensus that a disastrous war like World War II must be avoided in future and that institutionalised forms of peaceful cooperation were needed, on a world-wide level and at European scale in particular.

Driven by the five great powers of that time – USA, USSR, China, Great Britain and France – the founding of a new international peace organisation, the United Nations (UN), were promoted and prepared.

Also driven by international forces, notably the United States and its European Recovery Programme (ERP), better known as the Marshall Plan, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) was founded, on 16 April 1948, with its main purpose to implement the Marshall Plan in Europe and its countries and regions.

In Europe, distinguished pro-Europeans like Winston Churchill, Alcide De Gasperi and Paul-Henri Spaak formed a broad “European Movement” which gathered 800 delegates from around Europe and also Canada and the United States in The Hague for the Congress of Europe that eventually led to the creation of the Council of Europe (CoE) on 5 May 1949.

One year later, on 9 May 1950, French foreign minister Robert Schuman, inspired by Jean Monnet, the first General Commissioner of the French General Planning Commission (Commissariat général du Plan), proposed the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), whose members would pool coal and steel production. ECSC was to become the first supranational organisation in Europe and is commonly seen as the predecessor of today’s European Union.

All of these four organisations – United Nations (UN), Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), Council of Europe (CoE), European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) – involved aspects of economic recovery policies, of regional economic development, although all of them were still far away from institutionalising regional, urban and spatial planning at international, European level. Such planning cooperation at a European level only started with the first CEMAT Conference in the framework of the CoE in 1970.

To explore this in some more detail, the history of these four organisations and their importance for regional development in Europe will be briefly sketched in the following.

United Nations (UN) / United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

In the last days of the Second World War, between 25 April and 26 June 1945, delegates of fifty nations met in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, widely known as the San Francisco Conference. On 25 June 1945 the Conference agreed upon the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the new International Court of Justice, seated in The Hague. The Charter came into force on 24 October 1945 after the Governments of China, France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States and a majority of the other signatory states had ratified it.

The UN Charter established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dealing with economic, social and environmental questions, as one of the six main organs of the United Nations. Under the roof of ECOSOC five regional commissions were established, among the first of them was the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) having been set up on 28 March 1947.

According to article 1(a) of its terms of reference, prime objective of the UNECE is to “initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic reconstruc-

tion of Europe, for raising the level of European economic activity, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the European countries, both among themselves and with other countries of the world” (UNECE 2024).

“The Iron Curtain which separated East and West shortly after ECE’s establishment forced it to deal only with questions that were of common interest to East and West, despite their different economic systems and their political and ideological confrontation. For more than 40 years, ECE was the only instrument of economic dialogue and cooperation between these two radically different systems” (UNECE 2024).

Already in 1947 the UNECE established a Committee on housing questions. Immediately after the Second World War, its activities largely concentrated on the reconstruction of Europe. It then broadened its area of work, covering other aspects of housing that contribute to the formulation of housing policies in many of its member States. After 1960, urban planning and land use were incorporated into its work. For the past 70 years, the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management is the only intergovernmental body addressing the housing and urban development challenges of the UNECE region focusing on a comprehensive review of housing-related trends and policies.

In 1976, from 31 May to 11 June 1976, the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements – HABITAT I – took place in Vancouver, Canada and focused on the impact of urbanisation and the need for sustainable urban development. 20 years after HABITAT II, held in Istanbul in 1996, HABITAT III gathered about 30.000 attendents from virtually all countries of the world in Quito, Ecuador and adopted the New Urban Agenda which represents a shared vision for a sustainable and well-planned future urbanisation.

Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) / (OECD)

In his famous speech at Harvard University on 5 June 1947 US foreign minister George Marshall proposed a post-war European Aid Program which later became the European Recovery Programme (ERP), better known as the Marshall Plan.

“The truth of the matter is that Europe’s requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products – principally from America – are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help” (Marshall 1947).

“The initiative, I think, must come from Europe. The role of this country (the USA – PS) should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be practical for us to do so. The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number, if not all European nations” (Marshall 1947).

The Marshall Plan was the initial cause for the foundation of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC). The OEEC was created on 16 April 1948 with its main purpose to help implementing the Marshall Plan in Europe and to support cooperation and free trade among the European countries.

The OEEC included 18 countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and Western Germany (originally represented by both the combined American and British occupation zones (The Bizone) and the French occupation zone).

After the end of the Marshall Plan the OEEC continued to exist and was later transformed into the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which was established at the organisation's headquarters, the Chateau de la Muette in Paris on 14 December 1960 and entered into force on 30 September 1961. In addition to the European OEEC countries, also the United States and Canada became members of the newly created OECD.

Council of Europe (CoE)

Winston Churchill formulated his conclusions drawn from the lessons of history in his famous 'Speech to the academic youth' held at the University of Zurich in 1946: "There is a remedy which ... would in a few years make all Europe ... free and ... happy. It is to re-create the European family, or as much of it as we can, and to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe."

The first major achievement of the European Movement was the creation of the Council of Europe in May 1949. The European Movement was also responsible for the creation of the "Collège d'Europe" in Bruges and the European Centre of Culture in Geneva.

The Council of Europe was founded at May 5th, 1949. The ten founding members of the Council of Europe were Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They were soon followed by Greece and Turkey (1949), Iceland and West Germany (1950), Austria (1956), Cyprus (1961), Switzerland (1963) and Malta (1965). Portugal (1976) and Spain (1977) joined the Council of Europe soon after their transition to democracy in the 1970s. We will come back to the Council of Europe and its activities in the field of spatial planning in section 4.

European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Economic Community (EEC)

On 9 May 1950, the French foreign minister Robert Schuman, inspired by Jean Monnet, the first General Commissioner of the French General Planning Commission (Commissariat général du Plan), proposed the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), whose members would pool coal and steel production. The Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was finally agreed in Paris on 18 April 1951 among the six founding members Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The Treaty was explicitly open for other European countries to join the Community. The legal construction of the ECSC was based on a transfer of national sovereignty to a supranational body; thus, the ECSC became the first supranational European community.

The ESCS did not refer to specific regions or to regional / spatial planning, but it had its focus on coal and steel production, and thus a special importance for coal and steel producing regions; and it already included rules for free movement of coal and steel workers, mutual acknowledgment of skills etc. among its member states.

Six years later, on 25 March 1957 the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and The Treaty Establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) added to the ECSC and widened the scope of the – now three – communities to more general objectives of economic integration and a broader view on energy production, but also included fields like agriculture, transport and social and work-related questions.

With the Treaty of Rome of 1957 the European Communities took a further step to gain relevance for regional development in Europe. But the Treaty was a treaty between member states, and regional development policies, not to mention spatial planning, remained in the competences of member states. Yet there was an expression of will that the six parties desire “to reduce the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions” (preamble) and define as a basic objective of the Community to “promote a harmonious development of economic activities and a continuous and balanced expansion” (EEC article 2). This is not just a lip service, but in order to implement these objectives the treaty foresees the establishment of a European Investment Bank (1958) with seat in Luxembourg, of a European Social Fund (1960) to support EU labour and social politics, and of a European Agrarian Fund (1962).

Since the 1960s the Commission of the EEC as well as the member states showed growing interest and concern about regional economic development and regional policy in Europe. In 1961 the Commission held a Conference on Regional Economies. On 11 May 1965 it submitted a first regional policy memorandum to the Council. And the First Medium-term Economic Policy Programme, issued in 1966, contained a chapter on regional policy.

Meanwhile, the integration of the three communities went on, and in 1965 the Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities (“Merger Treaty”) (effective 01 July 1967) merged executive institutions and strengthened the role of the – now unified – Commission of the European Communities. In 1968, the Directorate-General for Regional Policy of the European Commission (DG Regio) was created. A year later the Commission published the document “A Regional policy for the Community” which contained a “Memorandum on regional policy in the community”, a “Proposal for a council decision on the organization of community instruments for regional development” and an “Overview on regional policy in the member countries” as well as an “Analysis of regional development in the community”. It took another five years until (after Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom had joined the EC in 1973) the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was eventually established in 1975. But only after another round of enlargement (Greece 1981; Portugal and Spain 1986) which widened internal economic disparities to new dimensions, and at the same time deepened integration (Single European Act 1986), the time was ripe for a first meeting of European Spatial Planning Ministers (in Nantes 1989) and the decision to more actively work together and to develop a joint spatial vision for the EU territory, which eventually led to the presentation of the European

Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999, almost 30 years after the first CEMAT Conference in Bonn in 1970.

3. Multi-lateral cooperation in spatial planning after World War II

In the years after the end of World War II, in most European countries “planning” was concentrated on the urgent tasks of reconstruction of houses and infrastructure and on the immediate actors on local level. Spatial planning at national level only emerged around the year 1960 (see chapter I “Spatial planning in selected European countries” in Briesen and Strubelt, 2022).

“In the first 15 years after 1945, spatial planning played no significant role in West Germany. The remarkable achievements in West German reconstruction were largely made without planning that went beyond the framework of the municipal urban planning” (Briesen, 2022: 271).

However, cooperation between planners of municipalities and regions across national borders started early, and already soon after the end of World War II several organisations of bi- and multilateral cooperation established political and economic cooperation. Such organisations dealt with manifold themes of multilateral interest, most of them included exchange about local, regional and national development issues. Often these cooperations could be based on a longer history of friendly neighbourhood relations. Two early and well-known of such organisations are the Benelux association and the Nordic Council.

The intergouvernemental cooperation between Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg started already during World War II, led to trade agreements and a customs union (1948) and eventually to an economic union (Union Economique BeNeLux; 1958), a kind of forerunner and model for European integration at a larger scale.

In 1952 the eight Nordic parliaments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland formed an inter-parliamentary Council which established an organised forum of multilateral exchange and cooperation between the parliaments and also (since 1971, through the “Nordic Council of Ministers”) between the governments of all nordic countries.

The Nordic Council as well as the BeNeLux Economic Union, as part of their cooperation, dealt also with urban and territorial themes. But since the mid-1950s also a first explicit planners’ network developed in North-West Europe. Planners from planning agencies at national or subnational of the three BeNeLux countries together with their French, German and British counterparts formed a Conference for Spatial Planning in North-Western Europe (CRONWE), formally founded through the adoption of a common constitution in Liège (1959). Five of the six founding countries of the EEC (with the exception of Italy) were thus participating in this grouping that developed visions for the spatial development of this part of Europe. CRONWE was probably the first attempt that planners from five different countries and respective planning backgrounds tried to find a common language including visualisations and cartographies in order to develop a joint spatial vision for a multinational territory.

The 1950s also witnessed a rapid development of cross-border cooperation in Europe. Local authorities of European border areas formed regional associations on either side of the borders and oftenly those regional associations joined together to form a cross-border umbrella association. EUREGIO (DE/NL) was the first official cross-border association after WW II, established 1958 by 129 German and Dutch municipalities at the Dutch-German border, in the area of Enschede (NL) and Gronau (D). At national level, the German-Dutch spatial planning commission (Deutsch-Niederländische Raumordnungskommission) was founded in 1967 to promote cooperation in the border area and support coordination of spatial planning measures and mutual exchange of information. Since the foundation of EUREGIO 1958, many more of such cross-border associations have been established, and in 1971 the then active ten cross-border associations founded the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) as an umbrella organisation.

So we see that a lot of activities in the broader field of regional development and spatial planning existed in the 1960s (see in more detail: Schön, 2022). The CEMAT Conference in 1970 and its preparation was thus embedded in many activities of a manifold of actors in this field.

4. The CoE and its activities in the field of spatial planning in the 1960s

Before spatial planning became an EU policy in the 1990s, in particular the Council of Europe (CoE) turned towards this topic providing a platform for discussion and trying to foster and facilitate transborder and transnational cooperation in Europe.

The Council of Europe was founded by 10 European countries in 1949 based on the results of a “Congress of Europe” which took place in 1948 in The Hague, Netherlands. (cf. Dühr, Colomb and Nadin, 2010: 142). One of the central roles of the Council of Europe is the promotion and safeguarding of human rights, one of its first big achievements the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights on 4 November 1950 (which entered into force in 1953) and the establishment of the European Court of Human Rights set up in Strassbourg in 1959.

In this context the CoE very soon also focussed on political rights such as the freedom of expression, the right to (local) self-determination, the right to free movement, the need to solve housing problems etc. In other words: the view of local and regional associations and self-government was a topic for the CoE from the beginning, and since 1953 local authorities, later also regional authorities, had an institutionalised forum within the Council of Europe. It started as a “Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs” of the then Consultative Assembly, soon became the “Conference of Local Authorities of Europe” (first meeting in Strasbourg on 12 January 1957) bringing together 124 local elected representatives from 13 of the then 15 Council of Europe member states, changed its name to “Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe” (1975), became (in 1983) the “Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe” (CLRAE) and was finally, in 1994, established as the “Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe”.



Speech by W. Churchill during the constituent assembly of the Council of Europe. May 9, 1948

Fuente: <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/fotocollectie/a8b68af4-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>

and local authorities the Parliamentary Assembly stated that “the harmonious geographical development [...] is impossible in the absence of a regional development policy” and therefore “declares European regional planning to be one of the essential political tasks facing the European institutions at the present time”³. Balanced development of the whole, the general objective of European regional planning, pre-supposes an examination of the problems and working out of solutions at European and regional levels as well as at national level, a policy of urban and industrial decongestion, a policy of aid for less-developed regions, a policy of assistance for rural areas, and a policy of assistance for frontier regions. “These policies [can be] put into operation only if the natural representatives of the regional or local communities concerned, the local authorities, are closely associated in the task”.

The Parliamentary Assembly also addressed the European Coal and Steel Community to acknowledge the “importance of the local effects of the activities of the Communities of the Six for the authorities in certain regions and municipalities in their member countries” – also with reference to earlier Recommendations 76 (1955) and 141 (1957) on the local effects of the activities of the European Coal and Steel Community – and “recalls its earlier recommendations on the need for consultation by Local Authorities in all spheres where the policy of the European institutions directly affects local life and involves the responsibility and the functions of regional or communal authorities” (Recommendation 351 (1963)).

As neither ECSC nor EEC have an institutionalised representation of local and regional authorities in their decision process at that time, the Parliamentary Assembly, in its Opinion 43

3. Most resolutions, recommendations and other documents of the Parliamentary Assembly are available on the website of the archives of the Council of Europe: <https://search.coe.int/archives>

(1964) Activities and status of the European Conference of Local Authorities “recalls that, by virtue of the Conference, the Council of Europe is the only European organisation which enables local and regional authorities to share in the construction of Europe and offers member States opportunities for co-operation and harmonisation at regional and local level”.

In 1964 the Parliamentary Assembly repeats its view that “regional planning [...] is a central and determining factor in the organisation of both physical environment and human activities”; the Assembly is “deeply convinced of the need for a European policy in this field”. It resolves “to make a thorough study of the application of a European regional planning policy” and “to examine [...] opportunities for European co-operation in the field of regional planning” (Resolution 289 (1964)).

A Joint Working Party was set up to study methods of European cooperation and the criteria for a European regional planning-policy, and “a fact-finding tour” was started to interview persons responsible for regional development in several member countries and regions to explore the possibilities of Council of Europe action.

On 16 October 1964, in the Etats Généraux of the European Municipalities, Paul Lücke, Minister of the Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Regional Planning of the Federal Republic of Germany, proposed a European Conference of Ministers responsible for regional planning.

In September 1965 the Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution which focusses on three groups of problems representing the Assembly’s central activities at that time: regional planning, youth and science policy. It underlines that “the two main lines along which our action must proceed [...] are: the life-long education of man [...] and regional planning whose object should be to provide man with a graceful and healthful environment calculated to promote his physical and moral well-being, by means of the improvement of his surroundings both in the town and in the country, while at the same time safeguarding and making the best possible use of his cultural heritage and the resources of nature” (Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 302 (1965)).

In a report to the Cultural and Scientific Committee in June 1966 rapporteur Mrs. Agnès Maxsein stated that: “The most important [of a number of ideas] is a proposal made by Mr. Lücke, the Federal German Minister of the Interior, to set up a European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, which would meet under the auspices of the Council of Europe”. And “with a view to compiling a report, entitled “Regional Planning, a European Problem”, to be submitted to the Consultative Assembly, the Working Party also inquired into the work being done by other Council of Europe bodies [...] in the sphere of regional planning.” (CoE 1966).

In September 1966 a preliminary report (Document 2111 revised) was submitted to the Assembly which gave an account of the investigations carried out by the working party. In this Assembly Debate the Assembly adopted a proposal for “the creation of a European Conference of Ministers responsible for town and country planning, secretarial services for which could be provided by the Council of Europe” (Recommendation 472 (1966)).

After three years of research and investigation, prepared by the Joint Working Party on Regional Planning, in May 1968 the report “Regional planning – A European problem” (cf. CoE 1968) was eventually presented to the Parliamentary Assembly by its rapporteur Gerhard Flämig. On about 100 pages (plus appendices), in four parts, the report gives a broad overview on the subject and challenges, the state and future of regional planning at a European scale. As this report is the basis for the preparation of the first CEMAT Conference in Bonn in 1970, its content and argumentation shall be summarised here in some detail.

- Part I discusses the basic terms “region” and “regional planning” and presents a view on present and future challenges of regional development, coined by “zeitgeist” (spirit of the time) of the 1960s: As a common feature – “by whatever name it is described (English: Physical planning, town and country planning, regional planning, German: Raumplanung, Raumordnung, Landesplanung, Italian: Sistemazione dell territorio, French: Aménagement du territoire)” – “regional planning is closely linked to the search for the common good and its object is the co-ordination of all measures capable of affecting, directly or indirectly, the use and general arrangement of the country’s living space” (p. 9). It has to cope with the problems of cities and industrial regions caused by “population explosion” and “rapid urbanisation” (p. 11), the “crisis in rural areas” and the “search for a new relationship between town and country” (p. 14), the transformation of the industrial society into a “leisure society” and a “fulfilment society” (p. 15), the increase of speed in transportation and the reduction of distances, with “monorails” being “capable of travelling at 350 kms an hour” and the possibility “to cross the Atlantic in three hours by use of supersonic aircraft” (p. 16) — all of which regional planning has to take into account in order to shape the society of tomorrow.

- Part II contains a comparative study of the national planning systems and the organisation of planning at local, regional and national level of the Council’s member states. As a result countries are grouped into four categories (pp. 44-49) based on their diverse local-regional-national relations and other attributes like the significance of physical, economic and other dimensions in planning. A second chapter explores the principles, objectives and contents of national regional planning policies based on selected examples.

- Part III collects permanent, present and possible future arguments for a European policy for regional planning. These arise “from the dimensions of the small continental peninsula that constitutes Europe, its physical articulation in relation to its political division” (p. 57). And as a more present cause, “obviously the evolution of Europe towards a certain unity, or at least a certain solidarity, both economic and political, considerably strengthens the need for a common policy of regional planning” (p. 58). In future, in particular growing mobility and integration will further strengthen the need for European coordination. To coordinate all the different actors within their respective national planning systems is the first and basic aim of a European regional planning policy (cf. p. 61). This comprises a broad range of aspects of regional planning, among them: Urbanisation, Rural planning, Ecological policies, Leisure zones and natural parks, Power and traffic infrastructures, Conservation of historical sites, buildings and groups of buildings, Cooperation in frontier regions, and information, education and exchanges of documentation in respect of regional planning (cf. pp. 61-70).

- Part IV gives a thorough overview over already existing bilateral planning cooperation of governmental and non-governmental organisations in frontier regions and cooperation of international organisations in planning and regional development related matters (cf. also sections 2 and 3 of this article). The conclusion is “that the regular meetings held between specialists or political personalities of good will at non-governmental level are very valuable”, but: “One cannot help noting the lack of cohesion in all the activities we have just listed” (p. 88). The report thus notes a “dispersal of effort and duplication of work” and “enormous gaps [...] as regards terminology, the comparison of statistics, the standardisation of cartographic techniques etc.” (p. 88) which can only be overcome by concerted activities of the Council of Europe. On the other hand, the European Economic Community and its Commission are not in the position to tackle these subjects because “the powers conferred by the Treaty of Rome are limited to regional policy” and do not include “the establishment of a European regional planning policy”; and furthermore some countries, which do have a crucial role in a European planning approach, such as Switzerland, are not members of the EEC (p. 88). Therefore the report suggests that “the Assembly is submitting to the governments of the European states the proposals contained in the following two recommendations” (p. 88) (which after their adoption became known as Recommendations 525 and 526 of the Parliamentary Assembly).

In the Assembly debate on 10 May 1968 the Parliamentary Assembly discussed the Flämig report and adopted the two recommendations (Recommendations 525 and 526) to the Committee of Ministers. While “the second recommendation [rec. 526 – P.S.] was designed above all to make adequate provision in the Council of Europe’s intergovernmental work program for regional planning activities” (Déjeant-Pons 2003: 402), the first one (rec. 525) essentially proposed the “Convening of a European Conference of Ministers responsible for regional planning” (so the title of rec. 525).

In particular, recommendation 525 reiterates the view of the Parliamentary Assembly “that the problem of finding the rational location for all the various activities of economic, social and cultural life can be solved only in the context of a regional planning policy” and that “it is not possible to solve all regional planning problems in the national framework alone”; it furthermore acknowledges that “first steps towards European co-operation in this field have been taken at various levels: through bilateral contacts between several states, as may be seen from the constitution of a permanent Netherlands-German Committee for Regional Planning, a Benelux Regional Planning Committee and various committees under the Nordic Council; through contacts established in frontier regions between local and regional groupings [...]; by various technical committees of international organisations”. However, “although very useful, [they] have not yet enabled all common problems to be solved” because they are “too scattered [...], so that large gaps still have to be filled and there is risk of duplication”.

In recommendation 525, member states are invited to “(a) carry out studies and take suitable measures with a view to adapting or creating administrative machinery for the implementation of a coherent physical planning policy at the national, regional and local levels; (b) base their regional planning policy on [a number of] general principles”, among them: “to seek a just balance among the regions at national and European level”, “to ensure that

priority be given to the development of regions where the standard of living is appreciably lower”, “to improve the development of rural areas and maintain a reasonable population density”, and “to restore healthier living conditions to heavily urbanised areas, by reviving ancient town centres, by creating green areas and by promoting the establishment of a network of urban centres”, and finally to support regional planning on the European scale and cooperation in frontier regions.

But most importantly, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers convene, within the Council of Europe framework, a European conference of ministers responsible for regional planning and suggest some particular points that should be dealt with in this first European CEMAT conference.

“The recommendations were followed up swiftly and forcefully: the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe agreed to the idea of the conference of Ministers in 1968 and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany submitted a formal invitation to host the first conference in Bonn in 1970” (Déjeant-Pons 2003: 403).

5. The first CEMAT conference in Bonn 1970 and its outcomes

In 1970 the Council of Europe established its European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (Conférence du Conseil de l'Europe des ministres responsables de l'aménagement du territoire (CEMAT)). The CEMAT met for the first time from September 9 to 11, 1970 in Bonn, Germany. Since then CEMAT ministers met every three years and discussed topics of spatial planning in the greater Europe.

Being the first Conference of CEMAT, the Bonn Conference discussed basic topics of regional and spatial planning at national scale, and laid the foundations for future cooperation and exchange of national experiences.

As a result of the CEMAT 1970 the ministers and representatives of the governments of 19 states – 16 CoE member states⁴: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom plus, as observers, Finland, Spain and Yugoslavia – agreed on three resolutions:

- Resolution N° 1 on the foundations of a European regional planning policy
- Resolution N° 2 on the factors to be taken into account in promoting balanced regional development in Europe
- Resolution N° 3 on the foundations for European cooperation in the field of regional planning.

These three resolutions laid the fundament for a long term cooperation between spatial planning ministers at a European scale. Because of its importance for the future European

4. Greece and Iceland were CoE member states but did not participate in the Bonn CEMAT Conference.

cooperation in the field of spatial and regional planning, the three resolutions will be extensively cited in the following (cf. CEMAT 2010: 54-60).

Resolution Nº 1

The discussion between the participants brought out “the common aims as well as the differences” and “clearly indicated the need for a long-term conception of regional planning in Europe” (paragraph 2).

Two subjects, which are essentially “complementary aspects of the same fundamental problem”, were in the center of this exchange:

“urbanisation and the formation of zones of high concentration in the central part of Europe; and the development of the predominantly rural regions, in particular those situated in the outlying areas of Europe.” (paragraph 3)

The ministers saw “the need for a common European regional planning policy capable of ensuring a more balanced development of all parts of the continent.” (paragraph 4)

The conference stated that there is an ongoing “historical imbalance between the industrial and urban centre of gravity in north-west Europe and the structurally weak and economically backward outlying regions of the continent” (paragraph 6) and that “European integration, the liberalisation of trade and manpower movements and tendency towards concentration of industry may, if unaccompanied by a common conception of regional planning and development policies, aggravate geographical differences still further” (paragraph 7).

This trend towards concentration would eventually lead to costs and losses for areas with concentration of activity as well as for peripheral regions, and also for the whole of Europe, “because of the social cost of constant subsidies to peripheral regions, and even the outright loss of factors of production which may occur through emigration to countries outside Europe”. On the other hand, the benefits of a better balance between its more highly developed central regions and the other regions are numerous: “it would contribute to strengthening Europe’s economic and social structures, to widening its productive base and to expanding its trade; [and to] simplifying problems arising out of the high urban and industrial concentration of certain regions. “ (paragraph 7).

In this context, the conference endorses the activities of “international institutions” towards a more harmonious development of Europe, referring in particular to the Treaty of Rome: “The Preamble to the Treaty of Rome, for example, emphasises the member states’ intention to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and by mitigating the backwardness of the less favoured“ (paragraph 8).

Resolution Nº 2

Resolution Nº 2 considers the factors to be taken into account in promoting balanced regional development in Europe. These factors are grouped under seven headings:

The quality of the environment (paragraph 11-20)

The conference expresses its view that “economic development and preservation of the environment are two complementary aspects of a single aspiration” (paragraph 11) and that “regional planning can make an important contribution to the creation or preservation of a proper environment” (paragraph 13). Recreational areas and open spaces should be safeguarded and “uncontrolled urbanisation or a dispersal of individual facilities such as secondary dwellings” be prohibited (paragraph 15). “Special importance should be attached to improving the quality of the environment in urban and suburban areas. The provision of open spaces and green belts remains one of the essential means of action” (paragraph 16). “Pollution in all its forms is today attaining such distressing proportions that it is becoming a serious social danger and is hampering technical and economic development” (paragraph 20).

Urbanisation and the balance between town and country (paragraph 21-24)

The conference concedes that “there are grounds for thinking that the trend towards urbanisation will continue in Europe [...] unless governed by a rational plan” (paragraph 21). However, “disorderly concentrations [...] must be avoided”; the aim must be “reducing the prosperity differentials between regions, encouraging decentralisation of the population and protecting the quality of the environment” (paragraph 22). “Governments should promote a series of effective land-policy measures” (paragraph 24).

Problems of rural areas (paragraph 25-27)

“In rural regions [...] new employment opportunities and standards of living comparable to those of city dwellers” should be developed by “stimulating the growth of well-situated regional centres”; “establishing new concerns carefully selected and sited”; “improving the standard and quality of services provided for the population”; “and by developing tourism” (paragraph 26). Furthermore, “transport systems should be developed [...] to offer [...] easy access to the service facilities of the centres” and to “secure an adequate population basis for public and private service facilities” (paragraph 27).

Special problems of particular regions (paragraph 28-33)

The conference addresses five particular types of regions with special problems. In frontier regions planning policies and measures should be harmonised, local actors be involved, and regional plans set up. Specific topics are “pollution whose effects extend beyond the frontier, [...] air and road infrastructures, hospital and health facilities, and urban structures” (paragraph 28). “In mountain regions [...], the development of tourist centres should harness local initiative and make use of the manpower available on the spot” (paragraph 29). “In remote rural areas where at present no prospect of economic development can be foreseen, governments should be aware of the need for the conservation of nature” (paragraph 30). “In industrial redevelopment areas, new industries and services must be attracted [...] while at the same time avoiding further excessive concentration and restoring an acceptable environment” (paragraph 31). Finally, there is reference to the problems of the peripheral regions within national states which are discussed in the next section.

Problems of European peripheral regions (paragraph 34-38)

“The conference feels that special attention must be given to a number of outlying areas whose development suffers from their geographical remoteness” (paragraph 34). Particularly men-

tioned are “certain areas situated around the Mediterranean basin [...], on the Atlantic shore, in the Nordic countries, and in areas along the border of eastern Europe” (paragraph 35). A number of specific government’s action are listed in paragraph 36, from financial incentives for enterprises, modern infrastructures, education and vocational training to the establishment of scientific and research centres. Specific reference is made to the Brest Symposium of peripheral regions and municipalities of Europe (May 1970) stressing “that one of the best ways of accelerating economic development in these areas is the use of the latest technological discoveries; new techniques must be applied particularly in the field of transport and communications” (paragraph 37).

The transport and communications network (paragraph 39-41)

“A really fast and well-balanced transport and communications network is one of the essential conditions for the harmonious development of Europe, its human institutions and its trade” (paragraph 39). When planning “national communications networks, governments should take into account the future requirements of Europe” (paragraph 40). And “in urban areas special attention should be paid to the advantages of public transport so as to limit the use of private vehicles” (paragraph 41).

The participation of the public through local and regional authorities

With reference to the European Conference of Local Authorities effective regional structures are demanded and regions and their population should “play a part in the preparation and implementation of regional programmes” (paragraph 42).

Resolution N° 3

Resolution N° 3 is on the foundations for European cooperation in the field of regional planning. The ministers express their common wish “to build common foundations for a European regional planning policy” in order to ensure “a more balanced use of the European territory and a harmonious development of its various regions”; to achieve this goal they have “agreed here and now to co-operate in the following fields” (paragraph 43):

- a. institutionalise a standing exchange of information between the participating countries in the field of regional planning;
- b. establishing regular cooperation between public research institutes concerned with regional planning and cooperation in the field of long-range forecasting;
- c. coordination in time and space of plans and measures relating to regional planning in frontier areas;
- d. meetings and discussions between officials and research workers in the field of regional planning, in order to harmonise and improve their training and to familiarise them with the policies and techniques in use in other European countries;
- e. harmonisation of terminology, statistics and cartographical methods (paragraph 43).

“The ministers resolve to communicate the present resolution to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, [...] to the Consultative Assembly and the European Conference of Local Authorities” (paragraph 44).

“The ministers resolve to meet again within a reasonable period [and they accept] France’s invitation to hold this meeting on its territory” (paragraph 45).

As immediate next steps the Committee of Senior Officials is instructed “to prepare forthwith the implementation of this resolution, giving priority to points (c) and (e) above” (paragraph 46), in particular:

- “i. to draw up a list of regional planning problems to be dealt with at European level;
- ii. to specify which of these problems are directly of interest to a conference;
- iii. to study with the Council of Europe Committee on Cooperation in Municipal and Regional Matters the specific role of local authorities in regional planning policy;
- iv. to propose an agenda and a date for a future conference in order to allow the participating states time to choose and prepare their contribution” (paragraph 47).

The Parliamentary Assembly on the first CEMAT results

In its debate on 22 January 1971 (cf. Resolution 470 “European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (Bonn, 9-11 September 1970)”) the Parliamentary Assembly discussed the results of the first CEMAT conference and summarizes that it

- Takes note “with the keenest satisfaction” of the final resolution of the first European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (Bonn, 9-11 September 1970);
- Welcomes the practical decisions taken by the Ministers with a view to laying the foundations for a “common European regional planning policy capable of ensuring a more balanced development of all parts of the continent”;
- Is especially gratified by the Ministers’ decision to hold a second conference in two years time;
- Welcomes the intention to establish between the participating countries a standing exchange of information on their regional planning programmes and feels that the Ministers should make a particular effort in the direction of: coordination in time and space of regional planning in frontier areas; comparison of forecasts worked out in the various countries.

6. Conferences and activities of CEMAT between 1970 and 1983

Between the first CEMAT in Bonn and the sixth CEMAT in Torremolinos, Spain, 19-20 May 1983, there were four more sessions of CEMAT:

- 2nd Session of the CEMAT in La Grande Motte, France, 25-27 September 1973
- 3rd Session of the CEMAT in Bari, Italy, 21-23 October 1976
- 4th Session of the CEMAT in Vienna, Austria, 5-7 October 1978
- 5th Session of the CEMAT in London, United Kingdom, 21-22 October 1980

In these four conferences many elements of a more balanced regional development in Europe (as outlined in Resolution N° 2 of the Bonn CEMAT) as well as the common foundations of cooperation such as exchange of information and harmonisation of terminology, statistics and cartographical methods (as summarised in Resolution N° 3 of the Bonn CEMAT) were

discussed and the results finally compiled and adopted as the “Torremolinos charter” of 1983. Among these themes were⁵: relationship between transport and regional planning, regional planning in frontier regions, mountain regions, long-range forecasting, cartography, statistics, terminology, and communications policies (La Grande Motte 1973), control of urbanisation, urban renewal, public participation in the planning process, problems of mountain regions (esp. the Alpine regions) in respect of urbanisation (Bari 1976), problems of rural areas in Europe (Vienna 1978), and finally (in London 1980) discussing (on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of CEMAT) the report on “Achievements and prospects for regional planning in Europe”, welcoming and supporting the Council of Europe’s “Campaign for Urban Renaissance”, and discussing the draft “European Regional Planning Charter” which eventually became “The European regional/spatial planning charter (Torremolinos Charter)” three years later at the 6th Session of CEMAT in Torremolinos, Spain, 19-20 May 1983.

Literature

Briesen, D. (2022). Spatial planning in Western Germany from 1945 to 1975. In D. Briesen & W. Strubelt (eds.), *A New Beginning? Spatial Planning and Research in Europe between 1945 and 1975* (pp. 271-306). Campus

Briesen, D., & Strubelt, W. (eds.) (2022). *A New Beginning? Spatial Planning and Research in Europe between 1945 and 1975*. Campus.

CoE / Council of Europe (1966). *Activities of the Consultative Assembly having a bearing on the activities of the C.C.C. over the period May 1965 to May 1966*. Report presented by Mrs. Agnès Maxsein, Vice-Chairman at the 10th Session of the Council for Cultural Co-operation held at Strasbourg, 4th - 10th June 1966. Consultative Assembly. Cultural and Scientific Committee. AS/Cult (18) 13; Strasbourg, 15th June 1966.

CoE / Council of Europe (1968). *Regional Planning – A European Problem. Report of the Consultative Assembly*. Strasbourg, 1968

CEMAT / Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (2010). Basic texts 1970-2010. *Territory and landscape, N° 3*. Council of Europe Publishing. Council of Europe, May 2010

Déjeant-Pons, M. (2003). The European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT). In: *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung, Heft 7*. 401-410.

Dühr, St., Colomb, C., & Nadin, V. (2010). *European spatial planning and territorial cooperation*. Routledge.

Faludi, A. (2010). *Cohesion, coherence, cooperation: european spatial planning coming of age?*. Routledge.

5. For more details see the CoE website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conference-ministers-spatial-planning/ministerial-conferences>

- Farinós Dasí, J. (coord.): J. Farinós, & E. Peiró (eds.) (2018). *Territory and States: Essentials for coordination of Spatial Planning policies in XXIst Century* [Territorios y Estados: Elementos para la coordinación de las políticas de Ordenación del Territorio en el siglo XXI]. Tirant humanidades
- Kunzmann, K. (1982). The European Regional Planning Concept. *Ecistics*, 294, 217-222.
- Marshall, G. C. (1947, June 5). The “Marshall Plan” speech at Harvard University, 5 June 1947 <https://www.oecd.org/general/themarshallplanspeechatharvarduniversity5june1947.htm>
- Schön, K. P. (2018). Spatial and Urban Planning in Germany: A Multi-Level Approach within a Federal System. In: J. Farinós, & E. Peiró (eds.) (2018). *Territory and States: Essentials for coordination of Spatial Planning policies in XXIst Century* [Territorios y Estados: Elementos para la coordinación de las políticas de Ordenación del Territorio en el siglo XXI]. (pp. 471-504). Tirant humanidades
- Schön, K. P. (2022). A short history of European spatial policy since 1945. In: D. Briesen, & W. Strubelt (eds.), *A New Beginning? Spatial Planning and Research in Europe between 1945 and 1975*. (pp. 431-465)
- UNECE (2024). History. <https://unece.org/history-1> (30.04.2024)



Meeting of the Council of Europe. Palace of Europe. Strasbourg (France).
Source: <https://www.coe.int/es/web/about-us/headquarters-and-offices>