

## ESPON 2013 Programme

10 June 2008

### Press Release

#### ESPON shares experience on dynamics within a wider European territory

**How will ageing, globalization, climate change and rising energy prices affect Europe, its territory, regions and cities?**

**The ESPON 2013 Programme welcomed delegates from EU Member States and neighbouring countries as well as Japan to the Open Seminar “Territorial Challenges and Cooperation in a Wider Europe” in Portorož during the Slovenian EU Presidency.**

In the presence of Mitja Bricelj, State Secretary at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia, and Marko Starman, State Secretary at the Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy of the Republic of Slovenia, more than 130 participants attended the ESPON seminar, amongst them policy makers, practitioners at EU, national, regional and local level as well as scientists.

The purpose of the seminar was to exchange knowledge and create awareness on territorial development dynamics as well as a sustainable and balanced territorial development in the European Union and its neighbouring countries. It provided information on the ESPON 2013 Programme, on current results and activities within EU Member States and neighbouring countries and stimulated a better mutual understanding of trends, challenges and perspectives facing the wider European territory, its regions and cities.

Commenting ahead of the seminar, Peter Mehlbye, Director of the ESPON Coordination Unit, said: “*“This is the first time an ESPON Seminar has been open to neighbouring countries that are not partners in the Programme.”* Europe is facing major territorial challenges due to ageing population, accelerating globalisation, climate change and rising energy prices, which will all affect balance and cohesion between different parts of Europe and the living conditions citizens, will have in the individual regions and cities. *“These challenges will also influence the neighbouring countries of the EU. By sharing experiences on territorial dynamics, scenarios and policy impacts, we can help creating a mutual understanding to the benefit of development, integration and cooperation within a wider Europe and at the same time support the use of evidence at European scale in shaping practical policies”*, he added.

The event offered participants the opportunity to share their experience on how to develop and use the ESPON Programme in order to provide the necessary knowledge on the development of the European territory. The Seminar served as a platform for creating new contacts and synergies enlarging the involvement and networking around the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The presentations of the seminar addressing territorial challenges and cooperation in a wider Europe are available at ESPON web site: [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

**More information:**

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON shall support Cohesion Policy development with European wide, comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions, cities and larger territories.

In doing so, it shall be facilitating the mobilization of territorial capital and development opportunities, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to the widening and deepening of European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.

The Managing Authority responsible for the ESPON 2013 Programme is the Ministry of the Interior and for Spatial Development of Luxembourg.