(o) Political challenges for the ESPON projects

The Second Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, published in January 2001, presented for the first time a third territorial dimension of the cohesion (beside the economic and social cohesion), which calls for a better co-ordination of territorially relevant decisions. Stressing the persistence of territorial disparities within the Union, the report stated the need for a cohesion policy not limited to the less developed areas as well as the need to promote a more balanced and more sustainable development of the European territory.

The Second Cohesion Report represents in that respect a follow up of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), adopted at ministerial level in May 1999, calling for a better balance and polycentric development of the European territory.

The projects launched under the ESPON programme shall follow an integrated approach and, seen together, cover a wide range of issues, such as:

- Identifying the decisive factors relevant for a more polycentric European territory; accessibility of a wide range of services in the context of enlargement; integration of wider transnational spaces; promotion of dynamic urban growth centres; linking peripheral and disadvantaged areas with those centres; etc.
- Developing territorial indicators and typologies capable of identifying and measuring development trends as well as monitoring the political aim of a better balanced and polycentric EU territory
- Developing tools supporting diagnoses of principal structural difficulties as well as potentialities, such as disparities within cities and regenerating deprived urban areas; structural adjustment and diversification of rural areas; strategic alliances between neighbouring cities at transnational, national and regional scale; new partnerships between rural and urban areas; potential support from infrastructure networks in the field of transport, telecommunication, energy; etc.
- Investigating territorial impacts of sectoral and structural policies in order to enhance synergy and well-co-ordinated decisions relevant for territorial development within policy fields such as Structural Funds, agriculture, transport, environment, research and development; developing methods for measuring the territorial impact of sectoral and structural policies; etc.
- Developing **integrated tools in support of a balanced and polycentric territorial development**; approaches to enhance the potential of cities as drivers of regional development, new tools for integrated urban-rural development and planning, etc.

With the results of all the ESPON projects, the Commission and the Member States expect in particular to have at their disposal: **a diagnosis of the principal territorial trends** at EU scale as well as the difficulties and potentialities within the European territory as a whole; **a cartographic picture of the major territorial disparities** and of their respective intensity; a number of **territorial indicators and typologies assisting a setting of European priorities** for a balanced and polycentric enlarged European territory; some **integrated tools and appropriate instruments** (databases, indicators, methodologies for territorial impact analysis and systematic spatial analyses) to improve the spatial co-ordination of sector policies.

In this respect, the ESPON projects will serve as a strong scientific basis for the propositions of the Commission in the Third Report on Cohesion, at the end of 2003, in view of the reform of post-2007 Structural Funds.

(i) **Relation to the ESPON 2006 Programme**

The priorities describing the work-programme of the ESPON 2006 Programme are structured in four strands:

1. **Thematic projects** on the major spatial developments on the background of typologies of regions, and the situation of cities.

2. **Policy impact projects** on the spatial impact of Community sector policies and Member States’ spatial development policy on types of regions with a focus on the institutional inter-linkages between the governmental levels and instrumental dimension of policies

3. **Co-ordinating and territorial cross-thematic projects** represent a key component of the programme. These projects evaluate the results of the other projects towards integrated results such as indicator systems and data, typologies of territories, spatial development scenarios. The cross section projects help to thematically co-ordinate the whole programme and add value to the results and to fill gaps, which are unavoidable when different themes are dealt with in different projects.

4. **Scientific briefing and networking** in order to explore the synergies between the national and EU source for research and research capacities.

This project belongs to the first strand and therefore holds a key position for the elaboration of the whole programme by the preparation of the common ground for the investigation of the basic spatial structure in Europe. Therefore a strong co-ordination with all other ongoing projects is needed, in particular with other projects within the same strand and with the coordinating and cross-thematic projects under priority three and the Co-ordination Unit.

(ii) **Thematic scope and context**
Cities are the starting point of reference for all measures. Nevertheless, this measure allows to dive deeper into the specific needs and potentials of cities in the context of territorial development. This link is most obvious for the role of cities as regional centres (in a polycentric tissue), but is equally relevant for the role of cities in fulfilling complementary functions at national, transnational and even EU scale. The ESDP highlighted the relation between territorial and polycentric development in that respect. As well, the ESDP highlighted the special role, which could be undertaken by Euro-corridors, global integration zones, gateway cities, urban clusters and individual urban poles in support of a better territorial balance within the Union. This project should be directed towards this field of activity.

The ESDP policy aims under the guideline “Polycentric Spatial Development and a New Urban-Rural Relationship” are, together with the relevant policy options, central to this research project. The project addresses all questions related to the ESDP except the specific aspects of relationships between urban and rural areas, which will be analysed under action 1.1.2. In addition, Ministers for Urban Affairs agreed at their meeting in November 2000 in Lille a multi-annual co-operation programme, which could act as a reference point for further specification and avoidance of double work. Moreover, the Study Programme on European Spatial Planning 1997-99 (SPESP) also provides valuable access points to questions related to polycentrism and the development of territories. Finally, the European Commission started in “The Second Report on Cohesion” the discussion on the notion “territorial cohesion”, which include a pursuit of a polycentric and better balanced European territory. This project is foreseen to deliver an operational input to the further European debate on territorial cohesion.

**iii) General objectives**

The general objectives of the project are the following:

a) to refer to the three fundamental objectives with in the ESDP with regard to balanced and sustainable spatial development: the economic and social cohesion, the conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage and more balanced competitiveness of the European territory;

b) to contribute to the identification of the existing spatial structure of the EU territory, in particular the degree and diversity of physical and functional polycentrism at different geographical scales, and to gain concrete and applicable information on the EU wide effects of spatially relevant development trends and their underlying determinates. Therefore, the project should be sustained by empirical, statistical and/or data analysis;

c) to define concepts and to find appropriate territorial indicators, typologies and instruments as well as new methodologies to consider territorial information linked to polycentrism, to detect territories (preferably below NUTS 2) most negatively and positively affected by the identified trends with special reference to regions in terms of accessibility, polycentric development, environment, urban areas, territorial impact assessment; particular attention will be paid to areas exposed to extreme geographical positions and natural handicaps such as mountain areas, islands , ultra-peripheral regions;
reflections should as well be included on relevant issues from the perspective of Europe and its territorial structure in a global or world-wide context;
d) to develop possible orientations for policy responses, taking the diversity of the European territory into account, and considering institutional, instrumental and procedural aspects;
e) to consider the provisions made and to provide input for the achievement of the horizontal projects under priority 3, such as tools for diagnosis and observation to be able to contribute to the forthcoming long term scenarios, as well as evaluation and assessment procedures.

In the efforts to meet these objectives the project shall make best use of existing research and relevant studies.

iv) Primary research issues envisaged:

- Identification, gathering of existing and proposition of new territorial indicators and data and map-making methods to measure and display the state, trends and impacts of the developments referred to above for polycentrism and urban areas. Compilation of national studies with European focus;
- A joint definition of urban-ness and urban typologies linked to polycentrism, and elaboration on the role played by urban areas in the territorial structure and development;
- The functioning of the European spatial system of urban nodes, in different (transnational) parts of the European territory, and in relation to other major spatial elements, such as the TENs, in order to better identify the European spatial structure;
- The (increasing) co-operation and networking between cities in trans-border networks and on transnational scale (as urban clusters and thematic networks) in support of polycentrism and better territorial balance;
- The reinforcement of cities and regions (as the ESDP states) as result of an integrated approach considering policies for the development of "gateway cities", multi-modal infrastructure for the European corridors, equal access to telecommunication facilities and intercontinental accessibility, natural and cultural assets, which could strengthen the role of regions and their cities, in particular at the external borders of the EU (connections with measure 1.2. need to be carefully considered).
- Geographical concentration of important economic activities as a concern, particular at European scale, hampering a better territorial balance; social cohesion and increasing disparities and segregation as a EU-wide concern about cities and their potential to increase economic dynamics; environmental concerns and the development of urban qualities as an asset in a sustainable development.
- A further operationalisation and territorial diversification of the policy aims and options adopted in the ESDP, including an adaptation to the territorial diversities within Europe.

(v) Expected results and timetable

The research undertaken during the interim reports is supposed mainly to work on the data available at the national statistical offices, Eurostat and other national and European
institutions, and normally be based on existing administrative units. From 2003 until August 2004, the research should complement the missing territorial/regional data and complement tools and territorial indicators if possible beyond the NUTS classification and the NUTS 3 level.

One of the main objectives of the ESPON 2006 Programme is to focus on research with policy relevance and to contribute to the development of relevant policies. Therefore, the deliverables of the research project should be highly operational and coordinated in time, as far as possible, to fit into the relevant political agenda. The following timetable and specification of output is reflecting this objective:

**September 2002 (first interim report):**

a) Consensus on indicators and data needed, after a precise analysis of the availability and comparability of data at Community level, to develop new database, including territorial indicators and the facilities needed for map-making. For the analysis, the results of the study programme and the results of other ESPON projects in course, in particular under priority 3.1, should be taken into account. This task should also define the appropriate geographical level and technology required for data collection, taking into account the availability of relevant data.

b) A first detailed and comprehensive list of main requests for statistical and geographical data to be collected from Eurostat, the EEA and National Statistical Institutes and National Mapping Agencies before mid 2002.

**February 2003 (second interim report):**

(c) Preliminary results on the basis of available territorial indicators, including European maps showing, as far as possible, the existing spatial structure of urban nodes, the degree of polycentrism as well as problems and dynamics in different parts of the European territory.

(d) A first overview on concepts and methodology and possible final results.

(e) Establishment of a new database, so far based on indicators available and with the ability to produce European maps related to polycentrism.

(f) A second revised and extended request for further indicators to be collected (mainly) at Eurostat and the EEA.

**August 2003 (third interim report):**

(g) Interim results on the basis of the extended number of available territorial indicators, including European maps showing, as far as possible, the existing spatial structure of urban nodes, the degree of polycentrism as well as problems and dynamics in different parts of the European territory, including a profile of the economic base, accessibility to transport and knowledge, potential complementarities with neighbouring metropolitan regions, capitals and regional cities, potential increase of attractiveness through urban qualities, natural and cultural assets.
(h) Detection of territorial typologies combining regions into revealing risks and potentials for the identified types, such as a hierarchy and a typology of “development poles” and other types of urban areas and regions;
(i) Development of appropriate tools for the processing of the new data base, indicators and map-making
(j) Applicable systems for the monitoring of new trends of territorial developments in the context of the European territory, including candidate countries and neighbouring countries;
(k) Provisional policy conclusions and results.

August 2004 (final report):

(l) An executive summary of the main results of the research undertaken and recommendations for policy development.
(m) Comprehensive presentation of territorial development trends of the enlarged European Union, including a description and SWOT analysis of the important urban nodes of the European urban polycentric system within the enlarged European Union (27 countries);
(n) Presentation of access points and concrete ideas for policy responses to the territorial trends facing urban areas at different scale and in different parts of the Union that could improve territorial cohesion;
(o) Presentation of the developed territorial indicators, concepts and typologies linked to polycentrism, including maps;
(p) Presentation of the database and the mapping facilities developed, covering as far as possible an enlarged EU and neighbouring countries
(q) Listing of further data requirements and ideas of territorial indicators, concept and typologies as well as on further developments linked to the database and mapping facilities.

vi) Rationale and Structure

The following text has the role of shaping the mind of thinking in developing a proposal for undertaking the ESPON action 1.1.1. The text is not meant to be exhaustive, but to serve the purpose of guiding the tenderer.

1. Approaches to the definition and methodology

1.1. The ESDP approach

The recent discussions on the primary concept of the ESDP, the polycentric spatial development, have shown sometimes a considerable confusion by non-distinguishing the relevance of the concept at the different spatial levels. However, the ESDP itself shows a quite clear approach setting apart

- a European wide application by promoting "several larger zones of global economic integration in the EU"
- a macro-regional application by promoting "a polycentric and more balanced system of metropolitan regions, city clusters and city networks" as well as an
intra-regional application by promoting "integrated spatial development strategies for city clusters in all Member States, within the framework of transnational and cross-border co-operation, including corresponding rural areas and their small cities and towns" (Policy Option 79)

A clear distinction of the different spatial levels seems to be necessary, all the more with regard to the basic functional idea behind the objective of polycentric development. Polycentrism is to be considered not only a vision for the adequate fabric of city distribution in the physical space, but also the geographic appearance of a functional network between and by cities and groups of them, in terms of division of labour/functions, co-ordination of developing amenities, joint investment in infrastructures and institutional structures of shared function/common interest, promotion of joint ventures, joint marketing at the respective higher functional level(s) on all of the levels mentioned above (i.e. of a certain polycentric metropolitan cluster at the European level, of a certain polycentric metropolitan region at the transnational level, of a certain urban region at the transnational and the European level)

Starting from assessing the current state of the issues mentioned above and eventually identifying typical models, an analysis should find out the potential for future developments in the cities and areas towards polycentric metropolitan regions, city clusters and city networks.

1.2. Important definitions in the European context

Among the terminology being used one finds global economic integration zones, urban development poles, "motor" regions, metropolitan regions, gateway cities, urban functional regions, hubs, euro-corridors, barrier-effects, agglomeration effects. Including a clarification of the concept of polycentrism, the project should provide a description of the present situation and future trends of polycentrism in the EU 15 and the candidate countries. It is essential to start from previous work and findings of studies on polycentrism (see existing access points). The study has to address the contribution of polycentrism to European spatial development (spatial planning objectives laid down in the ESDP) as well as Community and national policies (e.g. fiscal policy) influencing polycentrism. Especially the linkage between polycentrism and sustainable development should be made clear.

Still, polycentrism is an ambiguous concept; on the one hand a scientific on the other hand heavily burdened with political ideas. The impact of this conceptual ambiguousness is that we often speak about polycentrism as if it has become real and as if we are familiar with the reality of polycentrism. Urban systems in Europe vary strongly due to the variety of the preconditions of polycentrism, e.g. the specialisation, hierarchical ordering and functioning urban systems vary as well. Therefore, polycentrism should be examined on the background of studies of the variety of national urban systems aiming at the preparation of a European-wide typology of polycentrism.

1.3. Polycentrism at different territorial scales
The varying expressions of polycentrism at all the territorial scales represents another important focus ranging from the extended urban area to local, regional and European networks and in a second end to analyse the strategies that support a polycentric functioning of the European spatial system. Accordingly, it would be more operational to focus on a few preferential expressions that act in favour of the emergence of a polycentric integration. The three new following forms of networking are seen as the most relevant and efficient processes underpinning polycentric spatial development within Europe: a) specialised thematic urban networks, b) strategic co-operation between clusters of cities across administrative borders, and c) transnational urban networks. Some case studies could be carried out.

The work under the following points should be conducted at three territorial scales: global economic integration zones, urban development poles and urban functional areas. These three scales are to be identified and characterised (regarding type, function and geographical limits).

1.4. Polycentrism in an urban and rural context
Developing a typology for the description of urban and rural regions. The aim is to identify, on the one hand, functionally significant urban regions, and on the other rural areas in each country. Using statistical criteria, this would be accomplished by grading the significance of regions at the national level and by studying their functional specialisation. That which is not defined as urban would be categorised as rural. The method to be used has been tested in Finland in the context of the Urban Network Study 1998 and 2001. The project would seek to deliver information on the structure of the urban network in each country, and the roles of cities/regions in each national system. After the roles of urban and rural regions are defined in the national context, a comparative typology is attempted for the European level in respect to regions’ various roles at the national level. By using this method, the problems of scale in typology (especially the number of inhabitants in cities, etc) are easier to tackle.

1.6. Polycentrism in Europe - monocentrism in (some) regions?
Today we are witnessing a tendency of relative strengthen of metropolises in relation to lower ranks of the city hierarchy. This trend is an issue of concern and manifests itself in data for production, population and wealth. These trends lead to opportunities and threats of regions in particular in intermediate and peripheral areas of Europe. On the one hand large cities outside the Manchester-Milan dorsal of Europe grow fast and thus make a polycentric development in a European large scale more likely. The relative perspectives of middle-sized and small cities are diverse depending on the location, threads occur to long-established balances on a more local scale. Therefore the research on the divisions of labour between metropolises and smaller cities as well as between metropolises in Europe is emerging.

Further main tasks have to be considered:

1 see SPESP
- empirical foundations to position the European metropolises within the global urban system
- analysis to internally differentiate the European urban system
- identification of specific growth potentials of metropolises situated outside the European core area (especially in the EU Accession Countries with regard to their integration) to achieve a balanced, polycentric spatial development in Europe
- presentation of the perspectives of European metropolises and regions and of the chances to implement them on all levels of action

Experiences of this project proposal could already be made in the framework of the "Study Programme on European Spatial Planning" within the theme of "Urban Systems" of the strand "Regions and Urban rural Partnerships".

2. Indicators and data

The concrete measurement of the concepts addressed above requires the definition of appropriate indicators and the collect the relevant data in order to evaluate the role of urban areas in the construction of polycentric networks. This work will take into account the conclusions of the final report «Study Programme on European Spatial Planning», Bonn 2001, i.e. what concern the structures of urban areas based on functional criteria (European Functional Urban Areas-EFUAes).

The focus will lay on the quantitative analysis of concepts. Therefore the selection indicator and data, which are accessible and meaningful at the same time builds the reference for the further work.

Apart from data on the basic structure of population, land use and economic activity for indicators are emerging such as on:
- division of labour/functions
- co-ordination of amenities
- joint investment in infrastructures and institutional structures of shared function/common interest
- promotion of joint ventures
- joint marketing at the respective higher functional level(s)

The project should cover existing qualitative and quantitative indicators, propose new ones and collect the data within the 15 Member States as well as for the 12 candidate countries and neighbouring countries (at least Norway and Switzerland) refer to the above mentioned territorial scales.

The following criteria and their corresponding indicators must be taken into account:

- SPESP: 7 groups of criteria: geographical position, economic strength, social integration, spatial integration, land-use pressure, natural assets, cultural assets
- 4 indicators of competitiveness (see Second report on economic and social cohesion) : economic structure, accessibility, innovation capacity, qualification
- CPMR: demography, competitiveness, economic attractiveness, connectivity, territorial integration

The collection of data for the basic indicators should usually take place on the NUTS III level\(^2\) and has to be aggregated and disaggregated within the project to obtain data for the three territorial scales (global economic integration zones, urban development poles and urban functional areas).

### 3. Quantitative and qualitative analysis

On the basis of the indicators mentioned above, the project should set up a repertory (for the three territorial scales by area, country) and describe the existing and potential urban development poles. The following step comprises to create a hierarchy (competitiveness, SWOT-analysis, territorial diagnosis, see OECD work) and a typology of urban development poles.

The study should in particular take into account:

- the division of labour between the different areas (three territorial scales);
- the demographic trends (depopulation versus concentration of population) resulting from natural increase and/or migration.

Apart from the points addressed under the specific research questions the following points should be deepened.

#### 3.1. Migration

Metropolises are driving forces for the spatial development in Europe. Their significance for spatial development as well as the out-migration problem in some regions (depopulation areas) and polarisation in these areas show the need for research within the measure "Cities, polycentric development and urban rural relations". Apart from the joint elaboration of databases, perspectives and guidelines for action and with regard to the concept of zones of global economic integration, cooperation within the ESPON offers the chance to learn from countries which have managed to use the potential of metropolises via spatial planning measures and thus to reduce out-migration.

#### 3.2. Transport and communication

Several links with other main ESPON projects and Community objectives should be developed. Particular attention should be paid to concerns related to a setting up of a relevant supply of transport and communication infrastructures (priorities 1.2.1 and 1.2.2), of better governance (priority 1.1.2), and of more equity and social cohesion. The

\(^2\) Where harmonised (Eurostat) data sources don’t provide the data for the indicators at the appropriate geographical level, the consultant will have to examine national and possibly regional data sources to try to complete the data sets. The collection of these data should be done in co-ordination with data collection provided by the contractant/s of ESPON works under priority 4.
project should also deal with the priority mentioned under point 1.1.3., i.e. with the effects of the enlargement on the European polycentric spatial structure.

3.3. Polycentrism and “global integration zones”

Key question of the internal analysis is the existing obstacles and the investments needed to further develop global competitiveness, the engine of the European economy, through co-operation between neighbouring metropolitan regions and urban development poles and urban functional areas into a de facto “global integration zone”. This is particularly important outside the core area of Europe in order to support a future balanced territory. It should become clear where transnational cooperation and investments have an added value, and what (spatial-economic) obstacles should be removed. Within this framework particular attention should be paid to the specialisation of functions (e.g. referring to transport facilities such as the position of (networks of) sea harbours and airports) and to administrative issues of cooperation in global integration zones.

The ESDP designates the ‘pentagon’ London – Paris – Milan – Munich – Hamburg as the dominant and typical core-region of Europe and, at present, the only European zone of global importance. The ESDP sets the political target of developing several global integration zones within Europe in the long term.

The EU enlargement may be considered facilitating an extension of this core region towards Central Europe. National, TEN and TINA activities are favouring the improvement of East-West orientated transport connections between the peripheral centres and the current European core region. However, in order to move towards several globally important zones within Europe, strengthen the urban centres of Central Europe and to promote the development of core-region(s) for Central Europe, the development of links (and corresponding nodes capacities) North-South-oriented will be indispensable.

3.4. Polycentrism, peripherality, disintegration and structurally weak regions

As a counterpart of the previous topic it should be investigated what happens to the territory outside the present global integrations zone, the core region defined above. Which role does polycentrism play in those regions, what kind of special features are visible and which tendency for the future development are expected? Do minimum requirements exist for a polycentric development? which physical and functional preconditions are required to obtain a polycentric development?

Furthermore, the idea of polycentrism seems also to be closely connected with the idea of endogenous regional policy. Therefore, the examination of polycentrism should not be restricted to the urban system approach. Polycentrism should also include promising developments within a regional context profiting on the growing awareness and empirical evidence of regional functional and physical frame-conditions fostering endogenous development, e.g. regional entrepreneurship, institutional thickness and degree of regional “peripherality”.

3.5. Impact of communication and transport technologies on the urban hierarchy
The transport and communications technologies execute an impact on urban development, and the relations in the international urban hierarchy. An impact of cities on their surroundings urban and rural areas is probable. Proposal to study the hypothesis how higher order cities are extending their spheres of influence to embrace complex polycentric urban regions and to study how these impacts differ as between EU countries and regions.

3.6. Combating spatial fragmentation

There is a wide and challenging discussion whether there is a European way of urban development and how to define it. However, some essentials can be found in every definition of European urbanism: European cities are compact in size and relatively homogeneous in terms of social dimensions. Especially by comparing European and US-American cities it became clear and obvious that fragmentation is not the appropriate concept to describe the urban reality in Europe. Social cohesion and a relatively equal (balanced) “urban landscape” are special values, which are judged as positive by the public opinion and by the politicians. Social cohesion should be maintained in the future. In the context of polycentrism it is important to include a social dimension in order to support attractive urban development poles and urban functional areas. But to ensure this it is necessary to know more about the mechanism behind cohesion and segregation linked to urban areas.

The main contribution of the proposed project is the answering a simple question: How can we measure cohesion and segregation and what can policy do to avoid social, ethnical or demographic fragmentation in European cities? To answer this question the project should include the problem of social cohesion and residential segregation in a twofold way.

(i) Development of a concept and a model of measurement of social (ethnical and demographic) cohesion and segregation in different European cities; How can we measure cohesion and segregation and which data are available to cover an European dimension;
(ii) Analysing cohesion and segregation, the mechanism behind and the role of policy. What is responsible for cohesion and segregation and what can the policy do to avoid segregation – if this is a political goal – and to strengthen social cohesion.

The research should cover the variety of political strategies and empirical realities in Europe. The research should be imbedded into a network of urban sociologists, architects and social geographers. Competent partners would be necessary to reproduce the European dimension.

3.7. Strategic enhancement of the polycentric tissue

The analysis of strategies that support a polycentric functioning of the European spatial system is another important issue. Accordingly, it is necessary to focus on a few preferential expressions that act in favour of the emergence of a polycentric integration. The three new following forms of networking are seen as the most relevant and efficient
processes underpinning polycentric spatial development within Europe: i) specialised (thematic) urban networks, ii) cooperation between neighbouring cities across administrative borders, and iii) transnational urban networks.

In principle, an enhanced development of several global integration zones, a large number of urban development poles and many urban functional areas, well distributed on the enlarged European territory, would improve polycentrism and the balance on the European territory, and contribute positively to territorial cohesion. However, the project will through research have to answer the questions, if, then how and where?

4. Orientations for policy recommendations

Urban areas represent engines of territorial integration and development in Europe, which generate specific potential in the polycentric approach on the different scales. This is part of the fundamental approach and the political objectives of the ESDP. How far does the polycentric spatial structure provide the ground for a balanced and sustainable development?

In contributing to the development of policy strategies reference should be made to all policy options in the ESDP dealing with polycentrism. Recommendations have to address all relevant Community and national policies in order to promote the potential of the regions, especially in peripheral and low-density areas, and to tackle the problem of concentration in some urban areas. Reference should be made to financial aspects, comprising questions of financial resources partitioning, the fiscal system and subsidies. The role of territorial governance as well as the European Strategy for Sustainable Development has to be integrated into propositions.

Contributions on how the recommendations for polycentric development are to be applied to Structural Funds policy and other policies with territorial impact (e.g. competition, transport, telecommunication, research) should also be made, bearing in mind co-ordination and coherence among them.

Polycentrism refers to differentiated mechanisms and specific intervention strategies according to the territorial scale taken into account. A multi-dimensional approach provides a more comprehensive view of the nature of such a functioning.

This also includes formulating concrete recommendations for spatial planners on how a integrated polycentric urban model of European space could be elaborated and supported by EU policies. In addition, reference should be made to the question how far polycentrism represents a useful aim for Structural Funds policies.

In view of deriving policy recommendations the study should focus not only on policies with impacts on polycentrism, but also on the influence of territorial governance and institutional aspects, revealing the mechanism of power partitioning, decision making and
co-operation processes. In this context, networking seems to be of great importance, in particular between “neighbours” across borders.

**vii) Existing access points**

The access points listed below can serve the purpose of providing the tenderer usefull information for preparing a proposal. It is by no means meant to be exhaustive, but only as information that can be helpful in tracing additional useful background information.

- The SPESP already addressed the questions linked to spatial development and planning. Indicators on demography, economy, transport, housing and living conditions, social cohesion and political resources\(^3\), etc. are listed in relation to their availability through Eurostat and in each Member State, which provide a good base for further research and indicator work.
- The Urban Audit already compiled indicators and data on cities across the EU. The Commission’s/Eurostat’s Initiative on Environmental European Spatial Data Infrastructure (E-ESDI, now INSPIRE) can also contribute considerably.
- Interreg IIC and IIB projects are also dealing with this issue, which can provide some practical experience on the transnational scale.
- OECD: territorial indicators and analysis

In addition, an ESPON Data Navigator creating an overview, a handbook, giving information on principal data sources, contact points etc, is under elaboration. The Data Navigator is expected to cover, in principle, all countries in an enlarged European Union as well as neighbouring countries. The Data Navigator is scheduled to be finalised by August 2002

\(^3\) SPESP 2000 CD report of the working group on social integration p. 57ff.