

The Efficiency of New Governance Tools in Light of Western and Central and Eastern European Experiences

Abstract

The aim of the presentation is to discuss the specifics of Western European type urban governance with a special focus on France as a country on the road to decentralisation, the functioning of partnerships in areas such as energy efficiency, new economic policy measures, the construction of ecodistricts and other emblematic projects adding to the international visibility of pioneering and entrepreneurial cities and towns. The functioning of intermunicipal structures (EPCIs) will be explored in French regions that are organised around powerful core cities/regional capitals. In order to demonstrate the heterogeneous success of Eastern and Western member states in the adaptation of EU objectives, the Author will shed light on the inefficient functioning of inter-municipal cooperation and the absence of effective governance in a Central European monocephalic country, Hungary where decentralisation had no historical roots, leading to significant interregional socio-spatial disparities and an ever-growing gap between the capital city and the provincial towns. Finally, some consequences will be drawn about the diverging possibilities of Eastern and Western cities to respond to supra-communal challenges such as resource scarcity, climate change and environmental degradation. Due to the fragmented sectoral policy approaches, the absence of efficient governance on a supracommunal level and regional and social cohesion, the European space will be characterised by environmental inequality and widening socio-spatial disparities which will pose a threat to its competitiveness objectives.