

1. PRESENTATION: SEEKING THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE ‘EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY’

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SIESTA is an acronym for “Spatial Indicators for a ‘Europe 2020 Strategy’ Territorial Analysis”, a project that has been funded by ESPON (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion) and developed between June 2011 and April 2013. ESPON uses open competitive processes in the selection of partners for projects; under such a procedure, a competitive call for proposals on the potential contribution of European regions to the Europe 2020 Strategy (EU2020S) was launched in January 2011. This call attracted 6 proposals¹ and eventually the selected Transnational Project Group has been led by the University of Santiago de Compostela with the participation of seven additional partners: five public universities (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, University Mediterranea of Reggio Calabria, Hellenic Open University, University of Bucharest and University College Dublin), a public institution devoted to research (National Centre for Scientific Research of France) and a consulting company (MCRIT).

The EU2020S was issued in 2010 by the European Commission and basically constitutes a growth scheme for the decade 2010-2020 that aims to help the European Union (EU) to recover from the current ongoing crisis through the so-called smart, sustainable and inclusive dimensions of growth (see Chapter 2 of this book). In this context, the basic aim of the SIESTA Project has been to illustrate the territorial dimension of the EU2020S, that is, to show how the EU2020S acts territorially, particularly at the regional scale, but, when possible, also at the urban level. This is consistent with one of the expectations of the EU2020S itself, which includes a clear statement expressing that “the benefits of economic growth spread to all parts of the Union, including its outermost regions, thus strengthening territorial cohesion” (European Commission, 2010a: 16). However, it has to be pointed out that the territorial dimension of the EU2020S is not obvious. Indeed scholars such as

¹ See <http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Calls/Menu_Calls/Menu_PreviousCalls/Call24Jan2011/Call-24Jan11.html> (Accessed 30.4.2013).

Böhme *et al.* (2011: 25) have stated that the EU2020S is “territorially blind”. This has made this research project particularly challenging.

The principal objective of the SIESTA Project has been basically reached through the elaboration of an Atlas, which is its main scientific output.² The text contents of the Atlas have been developed by the Lead Partner, while cartography has been elaborated between the Lead Partner and MCRIT. The maps included in the Atlas are based on a set of territorial indicators at the appropriate geographical scale and reflect (when possible) both the present state and recent trends in the opportunities and challenges of the European regions and cities with regard to the objectives set in the EU2020S. The indicators have been logically derived from the EU2020S documentation. To do so, an initial task carried out in the second semester of 2011 was to understand how the EU2020S documentation can be territorially framed and expressed through an in-depth territorial reading of the EU2020S. This analysis led towards a first list of indicators playing the role of “point of departure” for the data cartographically represented in early 2012. In addition, this EU2020S analysis constituted the background that gave a qualitative and policy-making context for each one of the selected indicators (thus, their cartographic expression) when they were further analysed.

Once the maps for the Atlas were prepared in early 2012, the main task of the SIESTA Project was to determine how the studied regions are positioned in relation to the EU2020S framework. This not only consisted of a mere “ranking” of the achieved results by all the regions or cities in each one of the indicators as previously done in the Seventh Cohesion Progress Report (European Commission, 2011), but included a comprehensive analytical task. Among several procedures, the official ESPON typologies of regions (urban-rural, outermost, islands, coastal, sparsely populated, mountainous, in industrial transition, etc.)³ and the EU macro-regions⁴ were taken into account. In addition, the interpretation of the produced cartography provided a diagnosis of the territorial situation, while also allowed delivering policy

2 The Atlas has a Draft Final Report version (submitted on August 10, 2012, with 122 pp. and 76 commented maps) and a Final Report version (submitted on December 24, 2012, with 74 pp. and 50 commented maps). See <http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/siesta.html> (Accessed 30.4.2013).

3 See <http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_ToolsandMaps/ESPONTypologies/> (Accessed 30.4.2013).

4 ESPON only gives the indication of taking into consideration the Danube Space and the Baltic Sea macro-regions, in accordance with the recent decisions in this respect (European Commission, 2010b, 2009). The macro-regions for the remaining European space are problematic. Based on European Commission (1994) and the transnational macro-regional programmes of the EU territorial cooperation objective, several macro-regions have been roughly identified and used by SIESTA Project researchers.

messages and recommendations. According to the thematic organisation of the EU2020S, this analytical task based on the obtained maps was distributed among partners. Consequently, each partner elaborated a specific thematic report.⁵ They were basically developed between April and July 2012.

These thematic reports constitute worthwhile research given that they reflect on the European regions and cities situation in relation to the EU Strategy that has been framed to emerge from the current crisis. However, these valuable documents are not going to be published since they were only conceived for sustaining the synthetic and synoptic key policy messages that are included in the Atlas further developed, which will be published by itself.⁶ For this reason, this book is intended to be the place for putting together the main conclusions of each one of the thematic reports developed by the different partners and that remain unpublished. They are structured as follows:

- Chapter 4, authored by Lidia Mierzejewska, is devoted to competitiveness and other economic issues, given that the EU2020S deals firstly and foremost with promoting growth.
- Chapter 5, prepared by Francesco Bonsinetto and four other authors, considers green economy, climate change and energy issues. The EU2020S approach to overcome the crisis is based as far as possible on environmentally-friendly growth through the development of a low-carbon and resource-constrained economy preventing unnecessary use of resources.
- Chapter 6, developed by Niamh Moore-Cherry and two other authors, reflects on research and innovation (R&D), within the smart growth priority of the EU2020S. According to the EU2020S, smart growth deals with developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation, implying action in education, R&D promotion, innovation itself and digital society.
- The contents on education under the smart growth pillar of the EU2020S are particularly included in Chapter 7, again by Niamh Moore-Cherry and Delphine Ancien, and basically referred to tertiary education because of its obvious connections with growth, research,

⁵ See <http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/siesta.html> (Accessed 30.4.2013).

⁶ ESPON will publish this Atlas. It is expected in mid 2013.

innovation and competitiveness.

- Chapter 8, written by Lila Leontidou and three other authors, deals with the digital agenda of the EU2020S, which is basically orientated to making full use of information and communication technologies in general and, especially, the Internet through high-speed and high-quality connections (broadband).
- Chapter 9, authored by Ioan Ianoş and four other authors, refers to the basic EU2020S orientation towards employment creation, skills and labour market reform. The emphasis on these issues by the EU2020S is based on an economic rationale: Europe needs to make full use of its labour potential to face the challenges of an ageing population and rising global competition.
- Chapter 10, developed by Petros Petsimeris and two other authors, is specifically devoted to poverty. If the prediction is that the number of poor people will increase because of the crisis, and particularly because of unemployment, the EU2020S ambitiously commits itself with reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion at least by 20 million by 2020.

In addition to these chapters, this book includes as well four overall reflections on the EU2020S. The first one is a general analysis of this strategic document by Rubén C. Lois, SIESTA Project Coordinator, who provides a critical interpretation (Chapter 2). The second one is an explanation of the cartographic criteria set to produce the final maps used by the SIESTA Project, both in the Atlas and in this book, by Marta Calvet and two other authors (Chapter 3); this is an important content of this volume given that maps have been pivotal across the SIESTA Project development.

Last but not least, Chapters 11 and 12 constitute the conclusions of this book. On the one hand, Valerià Paül, SIESTA Project Manager, and Alejandra María Feal propose an overall EU2020S regional assessment through a composite index and clustering analysis. On the other hand, Xosé Carlos Macía, SIESTA Communication Manager, and María José Piñeira systematise the policy recommendations obtained by the Project, a pivotal content of a research that has mainly been devoted to territorially reflect on the Strategy set by the European Union to emerge from the crisis.

These book chapters were presented and discussed as communications or

keynote addresses at the SIESTA Final Conference held in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, on 4-5 April 2013.

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