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Territorial Planning Policy for Sustainable Development

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Abstract. Urban planning in Albania, has been promoted in various forms of organization. Ultimately Territorial Planning Law represents another form of policies on the territory that is closely linked to the decentralization of control of the territory.

Up to now, four developments has been particularly important:

- European approach, which gave an increase in economic and social cohesion policy;
- Decentralization in the early 2000s, which has made local governments full participants in the process of territorial planning;
- The emergence of the notion of sustainable development;
- Initiation of international economic relations after the nineties.

Territorial planning policy for sustainable development requires meeting the challenges posed by changing economic, social and cultural development, to achieve a balance of population, industry, culture, etc., between the provinces of the country, such as:

- a) define the principles and directions for a balanced and sustainable development of territory with European standards;
- b) the establishment of the territorial conditions for regional development;
- c) the direction of the establishment and development of national public infrastructure;
- d) creation of conditions for the preservation of ecosystems, biodiversity, natural resources on and under the earth and the natural and cultural wealth, balancing the effects of housing systems and economic activities and the protection of green spaces development of other areas of cultivable; etc. The objectives of these policies are: Convergence; Regional Competitiveness and Employment; European territorial cooperation and contractual approach as an effective means of implementation of projects that include various levels of government, "an area, a strategy, a contract". They will focus on priorities: local competition and attractiveness; environmental dimension of sustainable development; social and territorial cohesion; sustainable development.

Keywords: Policy, Objective, Territorial planning, Social cohesion, Sustainable development, Regional development, Public infrastructure, Urban areas, Coastal areas, Rural areas, Central Government, Local Government

1. Introduction

Central Government through the National Territorial Planning Agency is closely involved in the planning. However, in view of the different situations that occurs, in this paper based on the specific treatment of the problems of territorial planning in developed countries and in improvements of planning in our country, I would like to pose some considerations on the improvement of urban planning. What does it mean territory planning? This question is not always easy to answer, because politics is constantly growing to meet the increasingly complex challenges, such as economic globalization, the shift from centralized administration decentralization, aspiring to accede to the European Union as consequently, the planning area is still not properly understood. For this reason, below we give an overview of short supply of territory planning policies and major players, and at the same time express the opinion on possible improvements in the context of the goals and ideas for the coming years.

The Albanian population in 2011 was about 3.5 million, making it one of the populous countries of the Balkans, while the average population density is 107 people per square kilometer. During these years there was a chaotic

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urban development. At the same time, massive migration from rural areas to the cities has led to a reduction in the density of the population in rural areas and its growth in urban areas.

These and many other phenomena identified require that territorial planning policies should aim to change this trend and dynamic, especially in Tirana-Durres region and in the hilly coastal area.

2. Current Policy

Albanian policy in urban planning from the central government since a few years ago to meet the challenges posed by changing economic, social and cultural development of the post-period changes in the system, and to achieve a better balance population, industry, culture, etc., between the provinces of the country and to cope with the dominance of Tirana.

As has already changed this policy? Some of the acts have been symbolically, as in facilitating urbanization procedures legalization in 2006 or changes in infrastructure and public sector in the years 2010; the rest is in the process.

Urban policies of the Central Government and Local Government can be divided into two categories:

(1). policies that address urban areas as a whole;

(2). policies that address the needs in neighborhoods within cities, which are called "city policy." *However, it is clear that the main objectives of territorial planning policy have remained essentially the same mainly;*

- Actions to promote the development of cities, rural areas, coastal and mountainous areas;
- The need to help all Albanian territories in the realization of infrastructures that are critical to their future development;
- Support to vulnerable areas defined.

During this period, the central government has not been very active in national territorial planning, economic planning and major infrastructure projects which appeared at the beginning of the period of democracy. Planning continued in the form of partial-master plans-some-year national plans and, occasionally, with additional plans for specific sectors, such as national roads project, national strategy of Water and Wastewater, etc.

National planning objectives set are:

a) definition of the principles and directions for a sustainable and balanced development of the territory;

b) establishment of the territorial conditions for regional development;

c) direction of the establishment and development of national public infrastructure;

d) creation of conditions for the preservation of ecosystems, biodiversity, natural resources on and under the earth and the natural and cultural wealth, balancing the effects of housing systems and economic activities and the protection of green spaces development of other areas of cultivable; e) orientation of transnational planning objectives of the government.

Cohesion Policy: 2000-2006-Objective 1 provides aid to regions where the development has been low, meaning regions where per capita gross domestic product was less than 75% of the European average. - **Objective 2** support economic and social returns of areas experiencing structural difficulties, meaning areas where industry and services subject to change declining rural areas, vulnerable areas and urban areas that rely on fishing.

Objective 3 support the adaptation and modernization of education, training and employment policies.

Policy generation for 2007 to 2013 is now almost in the final stage. It has been in line with the two main objectives of the European Union:

- Promotion of competitiveness and job creation;
- By making Europe the most competitive and dynamic in the world by 2013, while maintaining a sustainable model of development.

Four developments are particularly important:

- European approach, which gave an increase in economic and social cohesion policy;
- Decentralization in the early 2000s, which has made local governments full participants in the process of territorial planning;
- The emergence of the notion of sustainable development;
- Initiation of international economic relations after the nineties.

3. Main actors of territorial planning

To achieve the above objectives, during this period have been reorganized decision making structure and promote public actors in order to make right decision such as:

- National Territorial Council (TAC) is the decision-making body responsible for the adoption of national instruments of territorial planning, according to the stipulations of the law. It provides government views and suggestions, and participates in consultative processes dealing with all issues related to urban planning;
- National Territorial Planning Agency supports horizontal coordination between national authorities in planning, with a view to harmonizing the treatment of issues of national importance of the field of various sectors. It is charged with the development and implementation of national planning policy territory;
- Local governments and authorities. They are the city / municipality, district; bodies that are subject to city / municipality / district, where these have been delegated certain duties and responsibilities for planning. Each municipality, district municipality appoints bodies responsible for carrying out the activities of planning and development control their territory, according to the legislation;
- Civil Society. Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Regional Employment Services act as advisory bodies to the Regional Councils. Their duties include suggestions, offer opinions, suggestions and advice on a number of objectives relating to the duties of regional councils or in relation to economic, social and cultural development in the region.

4. The Vision 2013-2020

Despite improvements in the legal and institutional terms, performed during these 20 years, in terms of territory planning policies number of problems has been found that need to be improved so that the development of the territory in the coming years could be in harmony with the principles of planning policy of developed countries towards which we aim to go soon. From an analysis of current developments it results that in many cases at the planning cases and projects these principles and policies have been not followed.

For that reason I suggest as follows:

The government should require a more flexible national planning process more suited to the needs of the country. **Plans for public service should be related to Regional Planning and approved.** They should be provided until 2020 for policies on education, culture, health, information and communication, energy, environmental protection and rural nature, sports and recreational facilities, etc.

Apart from the above, each Territory Planning and Regional Development Project must include a document that defines the actions and programs to be implemented, maps, plans, for a sustainable regional development status, and opinions taken for this purpose:

- Countries of large facilities, infrastructure and services of general interest
- Development of economic projects;
- Development harmonious urban, suburban and rural areas;
- Protection and preservation of the environment, landscape and natural and cultural heritage; Rehabilitation of damaged areas;
- Inclusion of inter-regional or inter-local dimension of planning.

Territorial Planning local projects including local planning objectives should be in accordance with territorial cohesion projects. They should establish zoning regulations for the construction and use of land for a municipality or group of municipalities, define urban areas, areas of facilities, agricultural areas, etc. based on a Territory Planning and Proposal for Sustainable Development.

Territorial planning policy should be based on some solid principles, such as:

- Forecasting and monitoring;
- Equity, which means work, redistribution and infrastructure across the country to ensure balanced development;
- Planning and building from scratch, in the example of new cities and tourist developments;
- Equality, which means taking action in areas suffering from economic and social crisis;
- Protection of the environment;
- Compensation, which outlines actions taken in favor of non-privileged areas developed to compensate for their shortcomings.

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Although these principles are enduring, how are implemented and players involved, demonstrate that they are developing to adapt to sweeping changes Albanian society.

As part of the modern management of the central government, it is necessary that policies be based on two pillars:

- To make Albania more attractive and economically competitive, facilitating the participation of competing groups, anticipating economic change by supporting local partners dealing with such changes, in order to develop business activities and create as many jobs;
- Ensuring cohesion and equality throughout the country, while maintaining a genuine national solidarity in favor of disadvantaged areas through the completion of major projects, the creation of digital communications and transportation infrastructure, as well as the modernization of public services.

Some more improvements I suggest based on the experience of developed western European countries, regarding territory planning are as follows:

European Economic and Social Cohesion in Albania. European Union action is not yet understood. This is especially true as the economic and social cohesion policy is the second largest item of expenditure in the EU budget after the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

It aims to co-operation on behalf of people in need and European regions that face development problems. It includes:

- Cohesion policy, financed by the Cohesion Fund, which is only for countries facing the greatest difficulties;
- Regional policy financed by EU structural funds and applied for all countries in the European Union.

In order to ensure that the new cohesion policy is aligned with the strategy adopted in the European level each Member State is required to develop a national strategic reference framework.

Albania has not a strategy such broad-based consultations at regional and local partners, as well as the relevant ministries.

Development of cooperation with neighbors: In a joint initiative with the European Commission, led to the European Spatial Development Perspective, which is the reference document for European cooperation on spatial planning.

Therefore, the European spatial development perspective document recommends:

- development of a balanced urban and economic evenly spread throughout Europe, the concept that there are no areas that are left out, and the area supported by a complementary relationship between the city and rural area;
- equality of access to infrastructure and knowledge;
- wise management of natural and cultural heritage as part of sustainable development.

However, the above document is not binding on Member States, but its principles and methods can be considered in line with the Lisbon / Göteborg that inspired the new cohesion policy for the period 2007 to 2013 based on growth, employment and development stable.

In addition to the involvement of European Union policies in territorial solidarity, cooperation, are also suitable regions circles. For the implementation of the "European strategy", such as:

- Strategy for Employment, Social and economic cohesion reforms adopted by the European Council in 2000, Lisbon;
- Sustainable Development Strategy adopted by the European Council in Göteborg 2001;
- And access strategies in the regions, especially information and communication technologies or risk prevention.

Sustainable Development: Sustainable development seeks to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their demand," and as a corollary to this, is to prepare for the future by harmonizing economic development, social cohesion and environmental protection.

In Albania, the planning area has been closely linked to environmental concerns in the early 90's. With the creation of the Ministry of Environment, as well as regional environmental agencies that manage river basins or coastal area, working to preserve natural areas along the coast and lakes. National Council of Territory should adopt new guidelines for spatial planning with the objective of sustainable development. This strategy should put out that "local areas constitute human heritage", but some of them "represent a combination of environmental and social inequalities economics". As a result, "they should be managed in cooperation and consultation with local players, starting with the local government, if we are to meet the challenges of maintaining growth and rebalance local areas." This means that government policies for sustainable local development should lead to finding solutions to the problems associated with:

- Urban Distribution;
- negative effects of the movement, leading to pollution and overcrowding;
- The combination of social and ecological imbalances that contribute to poor image in many urban and rural areas.

They should also look to build on content and a new form of economic growth by exploiting all local assets and to minimize short-term or long-term damage that can lead to unsustainable development groups and policy competition that is part of this approach.

Co-urbanization: Cooperation between municipalities in the same urban area is relatively uncommon in Albania. Although social and economic relationships lead to multiple exchanges within the urban area, each municipality uses to pursue its own policies, which can burden the economy and social inequality and fail to meet the expectations of residents.

Based on these arguments, the central government should encourage cooperation policy to ensure a coherent and balanced development of urban areas.

Each join or Urban Community has received significant funding from the central government to promote cooperation and cross-sectoral developments. They may also require the institutionalization of a uniform business tax, meaning the same tax rate for all businesses united Community or Urban Community. This system is supposed to reduce inequalities between rich and poor municipalities and between municipalities with considerable economic activity and dormant municipalities.

Town Policies (French model): City Policy was launched in late 1970, but really took off in the early 1980s. These policies can be defined as a set of actions taken by the central government, in cooperation with local governments and non-profit organizations on behalf of disadvantaged urban neighborhoods that are home to 800 thousand people. Policies are based on the improvement of the housing (urban renewal), but they also cover the economic stimulus, employment and the improvement of public services (social cohesion).

They are mainly intended to play a corrective role. They aim to offset these drawbacks endure neighborhoods by providing additional human and financial resources for schools and tax incentives for businesses and private services located in neighborhoods. These measures apply only in detailed areas marked on a map.

Policies for rural areas. In the last decades the change of Albanian village was comprehensive after mass migration and social change occurring until mid-2000 highlighted a new type of rural Albania, giving Albanian village three faces

- "Village near the city" (suburban), where there are large residential areas. Agriculture can still have a major role in this type of village, but it faces stiff competition
- "New village", appearing as a tourist settlements and "natural". These rural areas will have higher flows of migrants and enjoy a higher growth of the labor market.
- "Endangered villages" made up of aging population density areas. These rural areas where agriculture or agro-industry has been decisive will have their production decline, decrease of population and low incomes. There are many challenges for action in the new rural landscape. In "village near the city", it is important to preserve the local areas and limiting the pressure on land. But it is also necessary to facilitate the growth of the "new village" and to create a dynamic development in a village more vulnerable, by applying the principles of solidarity, as appropriate to the most remote areas.

All rural areas in Albania should have guaranteed access to quality public services that can be tailored to the specific characteristics of each locality. Access to information and communication technology, including broadband internet and mobile phone networks, is also an integral part of this policy for rural areas. Therefore, it is necessary the adoption of new measures by the government to support rural communities.

Orientation economic measures:

- Preservation of agriculture, which plays a critical role in the economy, and landscape management (active policy to support "taking by young farmers" farm to create forms of work and extensive development of agriculture, etc.;
- Support for small craft and manufacturing enterprises (measures aimed at facilitating the commencement of work in appropriate environments and training, early training, the contracts for the distributive trades and craft industries, support for business transfers after retirement, etc.);
- Support for real estate;
- Extension of tax incentives for growing industries, such as tourism, or transfers, etc.

Many national policies for rural areas include preservation of natural areas:

- The policy for national parks and regional nature parks;
- Maintain and use legatine;

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- Storage and use of mountain pastures and conservation of mountain farming cultures generally;
- Preservation of natural and agricultural areas located near the cities through the modernization of land administration tools.

Specific policies for coastal areas and hilly-mountainous. Albania has 480 km of coastline. Banks are very attractive and their population per square kilometer is almost two times higher than the national average of 107. This allows for a strong urban growth and increasing pressure on land, which constitutes a threat to the environment. Coastal areas are also experiencing increasing development, especially in tourism, but such growth is vulnerable for different reasons. Albanian policy must go beyond the false debate to preserve natural areas against local development, to achieve balanced and sustainable development of coastal areas based on controlled urban growth and a diversified economy.

This is a move towards a new type of action; Integrated Management, an approach that has been encouraged by the European Union. It aims to address coastal zone as a whole, seeking better coordination of sectoral policies (environmental policy, urban planning, the development of the port, etc.), which are too far separated. Integrated management should also make it possible to use land-and-sea grounds to include banks and their surroundings.

Transportation: How twenty years ago today, the context has changed. Transport growth has got great development but will continue anyway. "Removal" of borders has led to business growth, the free movement of goods, passengers and tourists, along with the opening of European economies and the figures show that they are all the factors for increasing traffic. Albania needs a sustainable transport policy to meet these challenges. This means that its policies must face three equally important objectives:

- (i) national economic development; - (ii) local business attractiveness; and (iii) having in consideration of environmental concerns.

Review of environmental concerns draw attention to a new balance between different modes of transport and shifting some road traffic that cause less pollution.

Local Digital Development and Communications Access to information and communication technology is a critical element to the attractiveness of an area and business competitiveness. These technologies are also critical for social cohesion, for administration via the Internet promotes access to public services across the country.

Various ministries and organizations that should be involved in the implementation of this policy, local government units shall ensure that private and government initiatives are complementary in providing the growing number of investments in information and communication technology. **Utilities:** For this purpose, it requires a consensus among different stakeholders (central government, local government, users, private enterprises, etc.). This balance is particularly difficult to achieve in view of recent demographic changes in rural, urban and suburban areas. The structure of some systems, which date back to the nineteenth century, in some cases, it is now outdated. This comprehensive approach to seeking services in priority local needs analysis, in order to give proper attention.

Changes in Albanian society, as the arrival of new populations in rural areas, requires the growth of new needs for services that should not be overlooked. As part of the reform of employment services, central government should require the strengthening of the National Employment Service, in order to improve services for the unemployed and businesses. These centers need to coordinate the action of various government employment services in a certain area around the respective local government.

Education: The production and dissemination of knowledge have become critical factors for local attractiveness and growth. Therefore, the European Union has set itself the goal of becoming the world's leading "knowledge-led economy."

As part of this movement, it is necessary that Albania should provide an increased quality of these areas. At the same time, it must make its spatial distribution of the system to be balanced. This means that the supply of appropriate services and facilities should be established for each local area. With the keys to the future of higher education will be the one that will affect the use of the results and the transfer of technology for business, technology transfer and technology distribution networks, as well as close collaboration between public sector actors and the private sector.

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