



Integrated urban planning and the use of ITs

EUKN Policy Lab for the Czech Republic

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Background

The theme of the 2018 EUKN Policy Lab for the Czech Republic was integrated urban planning in Europe and the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) in particular. ITIs are an increasingly important instrument of the EU Cohesion policy to support sustainable urban development. The Policy Lab discussed various examples of strategic urban development in cities and metropolitan regions and of their use of ITIs.

A wide variety of experts took place in the seminar: Mr. Martin Ferry (European Policies Research Centre, School of Government and Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, UK), Mr. Martijn Kanters (Bureau Stedelijke Planning, Amsterdam/Gouda, Netherlands), Ms. Justyna Wieczorkiewicz-Molendo (Deputy Division Director – ITI Wrocław Functional Area, Poland), Mr. František Kubeš and Mr. David Koppitz (Ministry of Regional Development, Czech Republic), Mr. Petr Šašinka (ITI Brno, Czech Republic), Mr. Miroslav Janovský (ITI Hradec Králové and Pardubice; Czech Republic) and Mr. Jiří Hudec (ITI Ostrava, Czech Republic). The Moderator of the Policy Lab was the EUKN Director, Mr. Mart Grisel.

State of play

The first part of the Policy Lab concerned an introduction to ITI within Integrated Sustainable Urban Development (ISUD) presented by Martin Ferry and Martijn Kanters. **Martin Ferry** started by introducing ITI within the context of Cohesion policy and ISUD. He discussed recent research carried out by European Policies Research Centre based on a survey among authorities who were asked about their experiences with implementing ITIs and the innovative aspects of this instrument. Half of the respondents stated that they saw an impact in terms of governance. For instance, in tackling various failings at an urban level, combatting fragmentation, and identifying to what extent city authorities duplicated activities. Governance improved, with competencies and tasks delegated to a lower level in accordance with Article 7. New forms of cooperation have emerged, and communication has improved.

The survey also demonstrated problems and challenges. Respondents found that ITIs could and should be simplified. Furthermore, there were issues of technical capacity, access to funding, lack of experience, problems with the appointment of responsible authorities and organisations, issues of consistency of access, and doubling with other European programmes and policies. Respondents have, to some extent, appreciated the integration of financial resources, cooperation and communication, but on the other hand, the chosen approach is quite complex and brings about a heavy administrative burden.

After 2020, the amount of ITI funding will increase from 5 to 6 per cent of the ERDF. ITIs will continue to be used as a financial instrument for strategic urban development. Expectations are that the new ITIs will target urban areas and integrated urban development strategies even more. Policy research demonstrated that there is a need to focus more on specific objectives and to align the use of ITIs with other strategies, within an integrated, instead of a thematic approach. In terms of governance, there is a need for stronger coordination among local authorities and a clear repartition of



competencies between the managing authority and the urban level (regarding the selection of projects, audits, etc.).

Martijn Kanters subsequently highlighted the experience of a few major projects in the Netherlands, stressing the need for strategic planning and governance. He discussed the Dutch experience with metropolitan planning, which has existed in the Netherlands for about 10 years, and more specifically the case of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. The Dutch approach to ISUD is strongly rooted in cooperation, coordination and interaction between all levels of governance and all major stakeholders in the metropolitan area: municipalities, provinces, private sector and citizens.

Presentation of three urban and regional development projects

Martijn Kanters continued his presentation by highlighting the integrated project “Piushaven” (harbour of Pius) in the former industrial city of Tilburg, Netherlands. The project was launched to enhance liveability in smaller towns. Part of that project was the revitalisation of old technical monuments, similar to the project of the Automatic Mills in Pardubice (see below), using water as a significant element. From a governance perspective, the Piushaven urban revitalization project is a good example of a collaborative approach: funding came from the municipality, which also took care of the overall management, but there was a close cooperation with all private stakeholders (developers, property owners and housing corporations) and city inhabitants.

Petr Šašínska, started his presentation on the Brno Metropolitan Area (BMA) by addressing the lack of metropolitan thinking and the legislative vacuum in regard to metropolitan regions within the Czech Republic. Metropolitan planning is a voluntary activity for Czech municipalities; a legal framework is missing. Moreover, in addition to several regions, there are 6,250 municipalities in the Czech Republic, creating a real obstacle for metropolitan cooperation. The BMA has 621,108 inhabitants living in 166 municipalities, with Brno being the largest core city (around 380,000 inhabitants).

Next, Petr Šašínska explained the four phases of metropolitan planning in the BMA, starting with the delimitation of the BMA territory (Phase 1), followed by the development of an integrated strategy (Phase 2) and its implementation (Phase 3), and then future metropolitan cooperation (Phase 4). This strategic urban planning was part of an integrated approach that was carried out in cooperation with the Czech Ministry of Regional Development. The development of the BMA is part of one single operational programme for the urban or territorial dimension, using multiple funds (e.g. ESI, own resources).

According to Petr Šašínska, the future of metropolitan planning consists of the creation of a non-political expert metropolitan platform, the creation of a unified fund (composed of EU and municipal funding), and metropolitan law-making that would regulate, inter alia, the delegation of some competencies and the delimitation of self-governing functions. In conclusion, Petr Šašínska presented the results of a survey among the BMO municipalities on the willingness to cooperate, to finance some activities through a metropolitan fund, the willingness of municipalities to merge with others in order to more efficient governance and cooperation. The survey showed that:

- the closer the community is to the core city - the more communities are willing to cooperate;



- the willingness of municipalities to fund metropolitan cooperation is lower than the willingness to cooperate;
- most municipalities are unwilling to join or discuss funding, but a transfer of some competencies to a particular platform of expertise is possible.

Justyna Wieczorkiewicz-Molendo started her presentation by describing the use of ITIs in Poland, the only country that has introduced ITIs on such a large scale: 17 ITIs are obligatory for the regional cities and participation in 7 smaller ITIs is voluntary, as part of regional operational programs. She subsequently presented the implementation of ITI in the Wrocław metropolitan area, which is one of the most developed areas in Poland. She mentioned, among other things, the positive aspects of implementation (e.g. the possibility of cooperation, the development of the territorial approach, the building of trust among the partners involved, the exchange of know-how through conferences and seminars) as well as the negatives (the competitive environment between the partners involved, and the lack of an established system in the implementation of ITI).

Panel discussion

The Panel Discussion started with a speech from the Deputy Minister for Regional Development, **David Koppitz**, who reported about the Czech experience with ITIs. He identified several positive and some negative aspects related to ITIs as a tool to support strategic urban development.

Among the positive attributes, he mentioned in particular that ITIs:

- strengthened the role of cities (co-responsibility for project selection),
- helped cities take into account the needs of their “hinterland” and to solve problems beyond the administrative boundaries of municipalities,
- promoted co-operation by agglomerations,
- contributed to the exchange of experiences,
- extended the strategic planning horizon,
- was useful in fulfilling the FUA concept,
- created partnerships,
- was instrumental in implementing complex projects,
- helped to achieve complex, time-consuming and interrelated interventions (see below for examples of good practices).

Negative aspects include:

- the initial lack of experience (ITIs are a new instrument in the Czech Republic),
- the time it takes to set up an ITI,
- complex coordination of a number of actors (too many),
- the administrative complexity of processes associated with the implementation of ITIs.

The issue of adjusting the ITI tool for better use was discussed. David Koppitz expressed the need to reflect on the experience with the implementation of ITI in the 2014–2020 programming period. He also mentioned criticism of the ITI Intermediate Body as a redundant implementation article; the main cause is coming from the ambiguous division of responsibilities between the Managing Authorities and



ITI in the selection of projects, since the Managing Authority is fully responsible for the steps taken by the ITI Intermediate Body. This makes the financial management more complex.

The Czech Republic prefers to adapt ITIs to its own needs: ITIs are tailored to the needs of member countries, which can play an important role in regional development and strategic planning. The administrative aspects of ITIs need to be simplified to make them more user-friendly for the applicants and the governing bodies. ITIs should be a motor for urban development, not a problem. These kinds of policies should also not be seen as a shopping basket. Instead, ITIs should focus on 3-4 key priorities. EU funding is important for the Czech ITIs, but it should not be the only source.

David Koppitz also reflected on the Czech strategy for ITI after 2021, based on the following priorities:

- remove the ITI Intermediate Body,
- merge ITIs and Integrated Territorial Development Plans (ITDP),
- involve ITIs in the selection of projects,
- agree on one single ITI definition proposed by the Ministry of Regional Development,
- benefit from experiences from evaluations of the current programming period,
- include the widest range of projects
- achieve complex solutions.

The next part of the panel discussion was about the case of Polish ITIs, which will receive less funding from the EU in the future programming period. **Justyna Wieczorkiewicz-Molendo** said that the Wrocław region will have less regional funding in the future, and therefore it is necessary to make ~~also~~ use of its own resources. EU funds will be used in the next programming period, but there are two main areas – mobility and environmental protection – that need to be developed. Her advice is not to focus on smaller projects.

Interactive plenary discussion with input from Czech cities

The last part of the EUKN Policy Lab was a discussion based on three project presentations by Czech cities. The **Automatic Mills** project in **Pardubice**, the capital city of the Pardubice Region, about 100 kilometres east of Prague, was mainly inspired by the project in the Dolní Vítkovice area in Ostrava (see below). The project was set up to revitalise the brownfield area in the city centre. In the future, this area is designated to be the seat of the East Bohemian Gallery, the City Gallery of Pardubice, and the seat of the educational centre for primary and secondary schools. Ten interconnected smaller projects are part of a comprehensive integrated project.

The projects implemented in the territory of Pardubice aim at:

- revitalising the National Cultural Monuments (7 projects);
- building new facilities for storage institutions (2 projects);
- constructing an excellent educational centre (1 project).

Altogether, three applicants (city, county and private owner) participated in the projects. Without the possibility of including these projects in an ITI strategy, their implementation would not be possible: the possible implementation of one or two projects would only have an isolated effect. The vision of



the ITI agglomeration and of the city of Pardubice is that the complex will become the new natural city centre and that the city will become a popular destination for visitors from the Czech Republic and abroad, incentivising visitors to stay in Pardubice instead of going immediately to Prague or Brno (which are the cultural centres of the country).

The second presentation was about the integrated approach in **Dolní Vítkovice**, an internationally unique compound in the centre of Ostrava. Between 1828 and 1998, Dolní Vítkovice was a coal mining and pig iron production industry centre. The industrial complex has changed the site into a unique educational, social and cultural centre of national and international importance. Every day it attracts the citizens of Ostrava, young and old, and tourists from all around the world. Visitors can climb to the top of a blast furnace and admire the city from a bird's eye view. Expert conferences (international congresses) take place in the multifunctional Gong auditorium (a building formerly used to store gas). At the same time, children and their parents can play in the U6 Science and Technology Centre. The Science and Technology Centre highlights both science and technology in an entertaining way. Additionally, the Culture District attracts not only musicians and bands, but also sculptors, graphic designers, visual artists, lovers of musical concerts and other events. In 2002, the territory Dolní Vítkovice (including the Hlubina mine) was declared a national heritage monument. The aim is to protect industrial heritage for future generations and to give this space a new, modern and useful purpose. It now hosts a university, research and cultural organisation, and free-time zones. In 2017, Dolní Vítkovice was the most visited "united object" in the Czech Republic with 1.5 million visitors. The project was inspired by similar projects from Germany and Great Britain.

The last project introduced was the Central Innovation District project in The Hague, the third largest city in the Netherlands with roughly 500,000 inhabitants. **Martijn Kanters** explained that compared to the major Dutch cities, the city of The Hague lags behind in economic development. This is partly due to the presence of the national government and of government offices in the city, its main economic drivers. The Hague aims to boost local and regional economic development by attracting highly skilled knowledge workers in IT and the creative economy. The area between the three main railway stations has been selected as a future Central Innovation District (CID). The goal is to create a more diverse multifunctional area. Originally an idea developed by the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, a CID is a mix of residential and commercial real estate, including public spaces where people can meet. The development of the area will take decades, but it is an interesting example for everyone interested in strategic economic development.

Conclusions

The availability of (European) funding should not be the main driver for strategic urban development. Projects should start with a vision and a thorough strategic plan to be implemented in close cooperation with all key actors involved, including the private sector and civil society. Cohesion Policy can be an important driver of urban development, but it must be place-based and combine both territorial and thematic objectives. In the next programming period, ITIs can be the appropriate tool for this purpose.