International cooperation in the implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2020 in the Benelux

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Erik Ooms
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Contact information:
Erik Ooms
Muzenplaats 107
6525 JB Nijmegen (The Netherlands)
E-mail: erikooms@live.com
Abstract

In May 2011 the Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA2020) was signed by the ministers responsible for spatial planning from all EU member states. While spatial planning is not an official EU competence, the TA2020 is non-binding, has no instruments, and member states are not obliged to implement the agenda. To increase the strength of the document the writers try to relate it to the EU 2020 strategy and cohesion policy, which are official EU competences, and have financial instruments. Implementation of the TA2020 is therefore focusing on influencing the sectoral, economic oriented, policy, and not the domestic planning policy as the predecessors of the TA2020, the ESDP and the TA, did. Although links between the TA2020 and the other documents are possible on a linguistic base, these policies result from entirely different views on development of the EU, which makes linking them in practice much harder.

According to the TA2020, its implementation can be done through several ways. One of these ways is through international cooperation platforms. The main European instrument in this respect is INTERREG, which became strongly related to Cohesion Policy in the mid 2000’s. For this research a focus is not put on INTERREG, but on international cooperation in the Benelux, and more specifically between Flanders and The Netherlands, and the way the TA2020 is implemented or used here. Already having a long history on cooperation on spatial planning, there are significant differences between the countries. Cooperation has been proven to be a complex and difficult task in practice. The current cooperation is institutionalized in the several commissions, such as the VLANED and BCRO, which form the research objects of this thesis.

The implementation of the TA2020 in general and in these commissions is analyzed by the theory of Europeanization, which consist of four parts, namely uploading (to the EU level), downloading (from the EU level), circular (uploading and downloading at the same time) and horizontal (between EU member states). An emphasis is put on the last, being most relevant for international cooperation. While analyzing uploading, the shift of status of the documents (the power relations) and the domestic views of planning and interests in European affairs were the dominant forces, while downloading was mostly influenced by the domestic institutional setting in Flanders (weak planning department) and the fact that the ideas were already incorporated in the discourses in the Netherlands. Circular Europeanization could not be analyzed more specifically. The horizontal Europeanization in the VLANED has been minimal, which is a result of a general functioning of the commission, the limited competences of the Benelux to put things on the agenda and the communication between the national governments and the regions. To conclude for this particular situation (Flanders/Netherlands/VLANED) the TA2020 has contributed just slightly or almost not to European integration/Europeanization.
Preface

In a discussion with a few staff members of the Benelux Secretariat General about the possibilities for an internship in January 2012, it came to the attention that a lot of things were happening at the European level. The economic oriented Agenda 2020 of the EU was just published a few months ago as well as the upcoming proposal for Cohesion Policy, which was at its end stage. While speaking about all these documents, little attention was given to the Territorial Agenda 2020, a framework agreed on by the ministers of spatial development of the EU in 2011, not more than a year ago.

While the Benelux Secretariat General was mainly interested in how to translate the ideas of the EU 2020 strategy into the member states, and what this would mean for the possibilities for international cooperation on spatial planning, I became interested in the TA 2020. Why was an update produced by the ministers, since the previous one was lacking almost everything? Why was there just little attention at the Benelux Secretariat General the TA2020? So, what is the use of making an agenda, if it’s just words which have no effects?

During the process of writing my thesis I learned a lot about the TA2020 and related issues. Not everything needs to be hard and implemented though European directions. Intergovernmental cooperation lets people meet each other, form a network, a club, exchanging experiences and most important learn from each other. The world of European Spatial Planning is therefore not about measuring, quantifying data, and looking at implementation, in contrary, this world is something that contributes to the long term evolution of European integration. Integration that happens at all levels, from transnational cooperation to two municipalities on both sides of the border. Although economists might contradict the added value of such a process, for me, European integration is something that might not always add something to the economic development, but certainly to the social development of our society and generation.

For providing me the opportunity to do this research, I would like to thank Peter Janssens, Karin Jacobs and Mariëlla Smids from the Benelux Secretariat General in Brussels. Besides this I would like to thank the people I interviewed and met during this internship as well as my supervisor Jan-Evert Nilsson, fellow students I met in Karlskrona and my housemates in Brussels.
# Index

1. Introduction 8
   1.1 The Territorial Agenda 2020 8
   1.2 International Cooperation 8
   1.3 Two different approaches 9
   1.4 Problem definition and research purpose 10
   1.5 Research questions 11
   1.6 Conceptual model 11
   1.7 Social and scientific relevance 12
   1.8 Structure of the thesis 13

2. The Territorial Agenda 2020 14
   2.1 Introduction 14
   2.2 Historical background 14
      2.2.1 EU competence 14
      2.2.2 The ESDP 15
      2.2.3 Territorial Cohesion 16
      2.2.4 The first Territorial Agenda 17
   2.3 Territorial Agenda 2020 18
      2.3.1 Evaluation of the TA 18
      2.3.2 Process 21
      2.3.3 Content 22
      2.3.4 Relation with the Agenda 2020 24
   2.4 Implementation of the TA2020 26
      2.4.1 Strategic documents 26
      2.4.2 Implementation of EU policy 27
      2.4.3 Implementation process of strategic planning documents in theory 27
      2.4.4 Implementing the TA2020 31
   2.5 Conclusion and discussion 34
1. Introduction

1.1 The Territorial Agenda 2020

The Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (TA2020) was agreed at an informal ministerial meeting of European Union ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development at Gödöllő, Hungary in May 2011. The Agenda is a revision of previous documents concerning spatial development of the European Union, such as the ESDP in 1999 and the Territorial Agenda 2007. The TA2020 is not a result of official EU legislation, but is a result of intergovernmental cooperation between the individual member states. Therefore the document is non-binding, has no instruments, and member states are not obliged to implement the agenda (Schmitt, 2011).

“The TA2020 provides a succinct digest of some of the key territorial development challenges facing European regions, makes a case for the consideration of territorial issues in the pursuit of EU, national, regional and local policies, and suggests some clear ‘territorial priorities’ that should be pursued through such policies (Sykes, 2011: 7)”. By this the document is trying to be a guide for the future development of the European Union. The TA2020 is compared to previous documents such as the Territorial Agenda and the ESDP more or less the same, using early statements and discussions that were already there. Sykes (2011) mentions that the document therefore by some is considered as hardly contributing to a wider debate about the territorial development of the Union.

Although the content has not changed much, compared to the TA 2007, the document has another purpose. The Lisbon Treaty (European Commission, 2007) has given Territorial Cohesion an official place in the Cohesion Policy alongside other objectives, such as social and economic cohesion. Since the TA2020 has no official instruments, the document now has the possibility to get closer links to Cohesion Policy and its instruments. Besides this, alongside the work on the TA2020, a broader document was produced by the European Commission, called Agenda 2020. This document is focusing on the social and economic development of the Union. The makers of the TA2020 state that the this provides an opportunity to further connect it to the Agenda 2020 and make territory matter in sectoral policies. The TA2020 can be seen as a document trying to integrate territorial issues into EU policy, such as the Agenda 2020 and Cohesion Policy.
1.2 International cooperation

Implementation of the TA2020, mainly though other EU policy documents will partly be done by the member states individually. However, territorial issues and problems, as well as economic and social issues and problems, do not stop at national borders. International cooperation provides an opportunity to solve problems together. There are many reasons why organizations become involved in international cooperation such as cross border cooperation and transnational cooperation. The reasons can be very pragmatic, for example water pollution in a river that crosses multiple national borders. But the reasons can also be less pragmatic, such as an exchange of practices and experiences on issues that do not have a direct transnational impact (Dühr, Colomb & Nadin, 2010: 347). Territorial cooperation when implementing policy documents, such as the TA2020, can be of an added value in solving problems and promoting sustainable development of a larger area. The writers of the TA2020 are well aware of this and territorial cooperation is mentioned numerousl y in the document, as well as a priority as an implementation mechanism.

International territorial cooperation is not new in the European Union. In the 1990’s the European Union set up a programme called INTERREG, to stimulate territorial cooperation. This programme has evolved during the years and became institutionalized in Cohesion Policy in the late 2000’s. Besides INTERREG other forms or international cooperation have been organized around Europe, stimulated by the European institutions.

In this thesis international cooperation between Flanders, the northern part of Belgium, and the Netherlands is the main research object. Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg (Benelux) have a long history of working together on several issues. An official organization has been set up in the 1950’s, called the Benelux Union, to facilitate cooperation between the countries. In the 1980’s the countries together worked on visions for territorial development of the entire territory of the Benelux (De Vries, 2003). Nowadays, the focus for territorial cooperation has shifted towards more practical issues and cross-border cooperation, such as the cooperation between Flanders and southern parts of The Netherlands. Because of the long tradition on cooperation in planning and the differences between the domestic structures of the two regions this case is an interested study subject.

1.3 Two different approaches

Integrating a territorial approach into Cohesion Policy and the Agenda 2020 has become a key issue in the implementation of the TA2020. Although this argument seems valid, it is important to note a separation in two main approaches for the development of the EU (Faludi, 2007). Firstly, there is a territorial approach. This approach is dominant in continental Europe, and more specifically in the Netherlands and France. The TA2020 and previous intergovernmental
planning documents represent this territorial approach, which emphasize that territorial development policies are an instrument for managing and strengthening the territorial capital in a region, and thereby contribute to an economic and social harmonious development of the territory. On the other side, there is the institutional approach, which is dominant in the Anglo-Saxon countries. It forms the basis for Cohesion policy and is focusing on the economic growth of the regions, without taking specific territorial aspects into consideration (Bachtler and Raines, 2002). The approach is mainly problem solving and economic incentives and subsidies are used as instruments.

Hence, the TA2020, a territorial approach, based on visions and territorial development, tries to be of influence on Cohesion policy and the Agenda 2020, dominated by the institutional approach, based on problem solving arrangements. It can therefore be argued, that integration of the TA2020 into economic and sectoral driven policy is not done easily. As part of the thesis, a discussion is raised, based on the two approaches, to see the implementation of the TA2020 in the broader view of European models of society.

1.4 Problem definition and research purpose

Intergovernmental spatial policy documents have the problem of lacking an official status and instruments. Implementation of these documents is done different than official EU legislation. The ESDP in 1999 was of an added value, mainly though its process by learning from each other. Also the ESDP influenced spatial policies in member states which were lacking such a framework. After the ESDP a crisis in the European spatial planning community occurred and finally in 2007 the Territorial Agenda was set up. The effects of this document were negligible and questions were raised how to continue. In 2011 the TA was revised and transformed into the TA2020. A strong focus was put on integration of territorial aspects in other policies (Cohesion and Agenda 2020) on three levels, the European, the national and the international cooperation level. This last one refers to for example the VLANED, the study subject of this research. Although the previous is described in theory, practical issues arise concerning the integration. A dominance of the Anglo-Saxon, institutional perspective in Cohesion Policy and the Agenda 2020 means that it remains unclear what the effects will be and how implementation will work out in reality.

Territorial cooperation is one way implementing the TA2020. This is suggested by the TA2020 itself and the attention given to this specific subject by the EU and other actors. Flanders and The Netherlands are aware of the fact that the TA2020 is there and that it might contribute to a more sustainable environment. The goal of this thesis is to analyze the implementation of the TA2020 at all levels and more specifically the implementation in the territorial cooperation
processes. The main purpose of the thesis is to "get insights in what way the implementation of the TA2020 is done through territorial cooperation".

### 1.5 Research questions
Following the purpose, different questions are defined to further specify the research subject. The main question of the thesis is: "How is the TA2020 implemented in structures of territorial cooperation in the Benelux?"

The following sub questions are a result of this main question:

1. What is the Territorial Agenda 2020, how was it created, what is the link with other EU policies and documents, such as Cohesion Policy and the Agenda 2020, and how is the implementation process set up?
2. How is international cooperation in spatial planning between the member states organized in general, and how is it organized in the Benelux?
3. What is the relation between the intergovernmental planning processes/policies (e.g. TA2020) and the member states?
4. How is the TA2020 used in the international cooperation processes in the Netherlands and Flanders?

The first two questions relate to the TA2020 and international cooperation and provide a general overview of the content. The third and forth question are subject to empirical research.

### 1.6 Conceptual model
The conceptual model (figure 1) provides a visualization of the questions and their relationship by using variables. The model starts with a box called EU Policy consisting of three variables, namely the TA2020, the Agenda 2020 and Cohesion Policy. Although the specific focus is on the implementation of the TA2020, the other two policies are closely related to the TA2020 and thereby influence its implementation. Besides Cohesion Policy and the Agenda 2020 other policies areas might be of influence, but are not mentioned in the box. The three variables are implemented, together or separately in the member states (Flanders and The Netherlands). This implementation is done on a national, but also a regional scale. The way implementation is done is highly depending on the intuitional structure, but also the background of the countries. Besides implementation on a national level, it is also done on an international level. The red arrow in the figure shows this cooperation. The research will focus on this arrow. Besides being influenced by national and regional policy and implementation, the territorial cooperation is
also influenced by EU policy directly, such as the implementation mechanism mentioned in the TA2020 or the INTERREG initiative, coming for Cohesion Policy.

1.7 Social and scientific relevance

When conducting research, the social and scientific relevance needs to be clear, so that the research in itself contains an added value to the scientific community and society in general. Two main elements contribute to the scientific relevance. First of all, the more scientific view is provided on the relation between the TA2020 and economic oriented policy, such as Cohesion Policy or the EU 2020. This view is questioning the dominant view planners have on integration of these documents and provides new insights on the subject. Secondly, the scientific framework of Europeanization has been used in combination with the TA 2020 and more specifically the theoretical framework of Colomb (2007) concerning horizontal Europeanization has been put in practice for the first time.

For the social relevance, firstly, the research is focusing on the problems international cooperation platforms are dealing with. These problems result in projects not being developed or implemented the correct way. Besides the fact that this may result in a less sustainable environment, it is also a costly, time demanding thing for governments to invest in. Secondly, closely related to this, is the societal relevance of the implementation of the TA2020. While not having any official bidding power, the implementation of the TA2020 could lead to more sustainable society. Researching its implementation and providing recommendations might contribute to improvements in the future.
1.8 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is mainly based on the research questions defined. The first chapter elaborates the TA2020. Specific focus is given on the history of intergovernmental spatial planning documents and the competences of the EU. Furthermore the TA will be analyzed on its content and in relation to other policy documents. Here, discussions are raised relating to the institutional versus the territorial approach to policy making. The second chapter focuses on international cooperation in general, but also more specifically on the Benelux. In this chapter the current institutional structure of the Benelux for international cooperation on spatial planning is elaborated, which provides links to the empirical part of the research.

The third chapter is the theoretical and analytical framework of the research. In the theoretical part several theories concerning European institutions and international cooperation are reviewed. This eventually leads to the choice of using Europeanization as a theory. The analytical part further defines the theory into variables and operational concepts. Besides this a link is put with the methodology. On the base of the analytical framework provided and the elaborated content the fourth chapter uses the empirical findings and puts them into the framework. Important findings will be discussed in the conclusion and some recommendation are defined that relate to implementation of European Spatial Planning documents, the VLANED commission and also to future research which can be taken in this respect.
2. The Territorial Agenda 2020

2.1 Introduction
The Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 – Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of the Diverse Regions (TA2020) was agreed at an Informal Ministerial Meeting of European Union Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development in May 2011. The Agenda is a revision of previous documents concerning spatial development of the European Union, such as the European Spatial Planning Perspective (ESDP) in 1999 and the Territorial Agenda (2007), also known as the Leipzig Agenda.

In this chapter an overview is provided concerning the European Spatial Planning documents and the TA2020 in general. To set the background, this chapter starts with a brief description of previous documents on spatial planning. Following this a more detailed description of the first Territorial Agenda (2007), the working agenda and the implementation of the TA is analyzed. When the historical picture has become more clearly the focus is shifted towards the TA2020. First the making of the TA2020 and the official status of the document are explained briefly, following by an analysis of the content of the TA2020, the relation with the Agenda 2020 of the EU and the implementation of the TA2020.

2.2 Historical background

2.2.1 EU Competence
Although attention to the territorial development of the EU is addressed already since the 1990's, the institutions of the European Union have no official competence in spatial planning. Molle (2007) states that the reason for this is that "The sectors at Brussels apart, an EU-wide planning framework is up against yet another logic—that of national sovereignty. Responsibility for their territory, also described as territoriality—the institutional barriers with which a sovereign exerts exclusive power over the subjects in a territory".

The previous would mean that the EU has no influence on the spatial development of its territory. However, two main elements contradict this point. Firstly, there are other policies, where the EU has a competence, which have implications for the spatial development and spatial planning in the member states. Examples of this are economic policies, agriculture or transport. Secondly, although there are no official competences at the EU level, the individual ministers responsible for spatial development of the member states come together and have started to work 'intergovernmentally' (Dühr et al, 2010:15). In this process they are encouraged by the
European Institutions, on the bases of knowledge and financial input. This intergovernmental work also has an influence on the spatial development of the territory of the EU.

The focus of the research is on this intergovernmental work. This means that the documents analyzed are not officially agreed by the European institutions, but are agreed on by the ministers of the member states themselves. This method has its consequences. For example, the documents agreed on have no official binding status. This means that the member states have a right to implement or use the document their own way. The European institutions have no influence on the way these documents are used, no instruments are there to stimulate the application. But there is also a positive side of intergovernmental agreements. In some cases intergovernmental cooperation allows a small number of member states to move forward faster by agreeing on certain issues (Dühr et al, 2010: 157).

2.2.2 The ESDP
Simulated by France and the Netherlands, a process developed which eventually lead to the first intergovernmental territorial agreement, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999. Faludi and Waterhout (2000) describe the process of making the ESDP in detail. Between the first conference in Nantes in 1989 until the last conferences in Potsdam and Tampere in 1999 intergovernmental work has been successful in reducing differences in planning cultures and beliefs and the result was a final document, concluded by the authors as not begin a masterplan, but a useful template for spatial development in the EU. Without specifically looking at the content an important aspect of the process of creating the ESDP was the emergence of a learning community. By interacting and discussing issues with planners from other parts of Europe, politicians and policy makers, got a better understanding of ideas and issues in other countries. The making of the ESDP and other strategic spatial documents that follow, resulted in an elite group of people. Böhme, Doucet, Komornicki, Zaucha and Świątek (2011) in this respect are speaking about a ‘club’ of spatial planners.

Because of no competence of the EU on spatial planning, the ESDP was a result of intergovernmental cooperation signed by the ministers involved in spatial development. The ESDP has therefore a non-binding status (Williams, 2000). The emphasis of the document is therefore more on dialogue and debate (Dühr et al, 2010:215). Its influence will depend on other issues, such as the political support it receives, but also on “the strengths of arguments in favor of a spatial planning approach to policy coherence and cross-sectoral development” (Williams, 2000:795). Williams further defines that “in order to be effective and worthwhile, it will have to be applied to the policy–making process, not only at the EU level, but also by national, regional and local authorities”. The ESDP is therefore a guide for policy thinking, but also tries to stimulate coherence in spatial policies in the countries and regions.
2.2.3 Territorial Cohesion

The ESDP process has stimulated thinking about spatial planning in Europe. In the end of the 1990's a new concept arose concerning spatial development of the EU: Territorial Cohesion. The notion of Territorial Cohesion is often referred to as coming from Jacques Delors, the former president of the European Commission and Michelle Barnier the former EU regional Commissioner (Davoudi, 2005). The concept was shortly after introduction motioned in several EU reports, for example in the Second Report on Social and Economic Cohesion. The concept of Territorial Cohesion has its roots to the French concept of Amenagement de Territoire, which can be seen as a regional economic approach to spatial planning (Faludi, 2004).

Territorial Cohesion is mainly used to describe an uneven development of the EU territory and particularly the concentration of people and economic activity in the core of Europe (Davoudi, 2005). An official more detailed description, not a definition, of Territorial Cohesion can be found in the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, created by the commission in 2007. This report states that Territorial Cohesion should focus on ‘concentration and density’, ‘connecting territories’, ‘cooperation’ and on ‘policy differentiation’. However, the concept still is lacking any specific definition (Böhme et al, 2011) and is used and interpreted in different ways. Zillmer and Böhme (2010) have analyzed Territorial Cohesion Policy and the concept in regional development in reality and conclude the concept has obtained its form and empirical evidence is there, but this has not yet been translated into action programmes.

When using the concept of Territorial Cohesion, the European institutions have shown the importance of equal spatial development of the EU. Territorial Cohesion is therefore officially embedded in EU legislation. The Lisbon Agenda has given Territorial Cohesion an official place in Cohesion Policy. Also ESPON, financed by the EU, has the goal to “support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory” (Böhme et al, 2011). But the most direct notion of Territorial Cohesion by the Commission in the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion in 2008. Dühr at all (2010:219) explain that the Green Paper is notable for two reasons: First, after a domination of intergovernmental cooperation during the ESDP process the Commission is taking a more active role. Second the paper marks a shift from spatial development, mentioned in the ESDP, to territorial development, more in line with the object of Territorial Cohesion. So, although the EU has no official competence on spatial planning, it tries to use the concept of Territorial Cohesion to spatially direct other sectoral policies and thereby to further stimulate spatial development of its territory.

Not everyone agrees on the previous conclusions. Therefore, Territorial Cohesion can be seen as a controversial subject. Besides discussions on defining the concept and the competence of the European institutions, a debate is going on about the objectives of Cohesion policy and the
role Territorial Cohesion should play in this (Polverari, Mendez, Gross and Bachtler, 2007). The question here rises whether Cohesion policy should be growth oriented or aiming at correcting disparities. Regional policy, originated from UK roots and a dominant factor in Cohesion policy, stresses the importance of a growth policy by increasing competitiveness. This approach is mainly market supporting and tries to stimulate growth. On the other side the territorial approach of Territorial Cohesion is a distribution policy, aiming at harmonious development. The question is whether these two goals can be reconciled in one Cohesion policy.

2.2.4 The first Territorial Agenda
Following the ESDP, in 2007, the first Territorial Agenda of the EU was signed by all the ministers relevant for spatial development in Leipzig. The TA has the same official status as the ESDP, not being an official document of the European Institutions and therefore non-binding. However, the ESDP and the TA differ from each other in several aspects, mainly because of the development in the issue of Territorial Cohesion. Dühr et al (2010) mention that the reason to develop the TA was a shift in EU policy priorities expressed through the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies and the debates on EU financial and institutional reforms. Rather than just an update of the ESDP the TA is also seen as an operationalization of the ESDP. In this paragraph the process of making the TA is described, as well as the differences in relation to the ESDP.

As a result of the ESDP, ESPON was created by the European Commission to provide evidence for new territorial policy and the objective of territorial cohesion. This evidence was lacking while making the ESDP and ESPON has the task to ‘put some flesh on the generic skeleton of ideas that is the ESDP (Bengs, 2002:13). The establishment of ESPON is in line with the general tendency towards evidence based planning (Davoudi, 2006). This kind of planning, which required empirical evidence from the field to support policy interventions, has grown much attention. Support by the European Union, some researchers have doubts about the added value of the data provided, with the argument that “evidence can never be forming a self-evident, objective basis for action” (Waterhout and Faludi, 2006:9).

The process of making the TA was done by the same ‘club’ as the ESDP, and is documented by Faludi (2009). The process started in 2003 when a first expert document appeared on spatial and urban development. This lead to several conferees and the decision to create the Territorial Agenda in 2005. Two years later, in 2007, the Territorial Agenda was officially signed by all the ministers.

Considering the content of the TA, Faludi (2009:25) states that: “A constant throughout was the intention for the Territorial Agenda to become a strategic document, with concrete proposals for contributing to the EU agenda of promoting jobs and growth. The document insisted that, in so doing, there should be attention to the particular needs and characteristics of
specific geographical challenges and opportunities. In short, the message was that “geography mattered” in EU policy. Following the Territorial Agenda, Portugal, which had the presidency of the EU at that time, suggested to adopt the First Action Programme for the Implementation of the Territorial Agenda (EU Ministers, 2007b). Certain priorities and actions were defined and different member states had to coordinate these actions. The guiding principles for implementation were solidarity between territories; multi-level governance; integration of policies; cooperation on territorial matters; and subsidiarity.

2.3 The Territorial Agenda 2020

2.3.1 Evaluation of the TA

The previous paragraphs have provided an overview of the historical background of European spatial planning documents and on the concept of Territorial Cohesion of the European Union. These actions and documents have eventually led to the making of the Territorial Agenda 2020. The TA2020 is the object of research and will therefore be explained more detailed in the following paragraphs. Here not only the process matters, but also the content of the document will be analyzed more thoroughly.

It is notable to start with the reasons for providing making the TA2020. Firstly, it needs to be mentioned that in the TA point 45 requests the common Hungarian presidency to evaluate and review the TA in the beginning of 2011. Secondly, an evaluation report was published by the Swedish Presidency: The EU Territorial Agenda & its Action Programme: How to reinforce the performance (Böhme, 2009). This report mentions the core issues and problems concerning the TA and the Action Programme.

The main conclusions of the Swedish report are (Böhme, 2009)

1) Now that the commission has obtained a competence, close cooperation between the intergovernmental cooperation and the EU commission needs to be established.

2) Dialogue, needs to be strengthen, because actual dialogue has not yet really taken off. This dialogue needs to be held with sectors that are closely related, such as cohesion policy and its territorial dimension.

3) Greater emphasis should be place on delivery mechanisms and governance aspects. This implies looking at the relationship with macro regional strategies and the exchange of experiences on the concrete implementation of the TA.

4) Communication of the aims, results and achievements of this process needs to be improved at both European and the Member States levels.
5) There needs to be a better focusing of activities and a more clearly targeted approach. Besides the shifting EU presidencies, other support mechanisms which strengthen the management, should be created.

6) The TA should strengthen its responsiveness to developments in related policy fields and to new themes emerging, such as climate change and the financial crisis.

Following this evaluation a more official ‘Evaluation Report of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union’ (Hungarian Ministry of National Development and Spatial Planning) was presented and discussed during the making of the TA2020. The report consists of two main chapters dealing with the evaluation of the challenges and priorities and experiences with the implementation of the TA.

The chapter of evaluation of challenges consists of three parts: ‘recent development trends’, ‘changing policy context’ and ‘a TA assessment survey under experts’.

In the light of recent territorial development trends the report the following:

1) The financial and economic crisis with its complex challenges might induce important changes in territorial structures though market forces

2) The increased impacts of globalization focus on the role of the EU in the global economy

3) Substantial changes have occurred in the interrelations of regions in the new Member states

4) Further topics, not emphasized in the TA, such as the complementary nature of urban centers and the hinterland; the recognition of endowments; needs and potentials for different types of rural territories; the increasing territorial disparities and the slowdown of the catch up processes.

The changing policy context emphasizes the following issues:

1) Green paper on Territorial Cohesion contributed to a better understanding of the subject and a more complex view on territorial priorities in Europe.

2) The treaty of Lisbon included Territorial Cohesion as one of the objectives.

3) In the implementation there is a shared competence between the member states and the EU.

4) The Europe 2020 Strategy was adopted and territorial cohesion plays an important role in reaching its objectives. The Europe 2020 strategy and the TA2020 should reinforce each other.

5) There is a renewed EU Sustainability Development Strategy (2006) which is an important policy framework and includes some territorial issues.
6) Discussions about the reform of Cohesion Policy. The Barca report emphasizes the need for a place-based approach, which highlights the importance of territorial units in the EU.

7) The Leipzig charter on Sustainable European Cities raises questions on integrated urban development and needs to be taken into account in the revision of the TA.

8) The Toledo declaration (2010) highlights the importance of the integrated approach in urban regeneration and development. The urban dimension in Cohesion Policy needs to be strengthened.

The conclusion from the survey among experts state that “more emphasis should be put on mechanisms and conditions to achieve territorial cohesion. The importance of regional/sub-national level, territorial governance, territorial aspects of globalization and macro-regions were underlined in the context of territorial cohesion”. More specific on territorial challenges climate change, demographical change, the effects of the economic and financial crisis, vulnerable local pillars of economy and community, public and private partnership and increase of innovative capacity are mentioned. The experts share the opinions that the revised TA should focus on a limited number of selected priorities and its needs to look at new opportunities to influence other EU policies.

In the chapter of experiences in implementing the TA, the report makes use of the report by Böhme (2009) mentioned earlier here. Besides this, a questionnaire was set out and resulted in the conclusion that the territorial thinking in the EU is diverse and progressive and is gaining importance. Thereby the issues in the TA remain highly significant, and other new issues can be detected. Common territorial thinking is thereby crucial for the Community.

More specifically, the following conclusions resulted from the survey:

1) True engagement and process is experienced in the practice of the TA, but most of these practices are ‘soft’ kind, begin only an initial or experimental phase. Member states mention some possible good practices and mechanisms which could support the TA.

2) The territorial context is considered as a significant political issue and the European social, economical and environmental challenges need to be translated into this context.

3) Old and new challenges are important and some new policy issues have a territorial relevance. The sector policies are considered to have a great potential to improve territorial structures.

4) Methods and territorial knowledge have a significant role to play in further implementation. Methods are for example integrated territorial planning, territorial coordination of sectoral policies and horizontal realization of territorial priorities.

5) The role of EU institutions and EU Cohesion Policy is considered to be important.
To summarize, the main conclusions of the evaluations suggest that the context has changed and the TA needs to focus on integration with other sectoral policies, and a stronger dialogue and cooperation with the EU institutions and other actors. Therefore the process needs to be changed. The challenges in the TA are considered as important, but new challenges arise, and old challenges need to be further specified. More focus is needed on implementation mechanisms, governance and communication.

2.3.2 Process

The Evaluation Report of the TA (Hungarian Ministry, 2011a) provides an overview of the general process of making the TA2020. In May 2009 the work group for reviewing the TA started and ended when the TA2020 was signed in May 2011. In between this time the work group held conferences with researchers, academics, experts, planners and local and regional stakeholders, throughout Europe to get the partnership discussion started. Figure 2 provides an overview of the steps and milestones in the TA revision.

![Figure 2: The process of making the TA2020 (Hungarian ministry, 2011a)](image)

An important milestone in the work of the TA2020 was a conference of director generals of ministerial departments responsible for territorial development policy in the European Union in May 2010 in Sevilla. In this conference the Director Generals confirmed that “Territory matters to make Europe 2020 a success” (EU Ministers, 2010). The document produced, states that the Agenda 2020 is replacing the Lisbon Agenda and that issues of the Agenda 2020 have territorial consequences. Better coordination is needed with other sectors, but also with the work of the Commission. The ministers see a significant overlap between territorial priorities and issues relevant for territorial development addressed in the Agenda 2020. To stimulate consistency
between these two an intense mobilization of key players of EU territorial development is necessary in order to favor horizontal and vertical integration of policies. The document ends with the fact that “The TA provides a very useful reference framework to coordinate European territorial development and should serve as an inspiration to make the implementation of EU2020 as efficient as possible” (EU Ministers, 2010).

Since evidence is playing a more important role in the EU (evidence based planning), the TA2020 was submitted together with a background document called "The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union" (Hungarian Ministry, 2011b) It is an update from the first document published in 2007 together with the first TA. The document provides “a comprehensive analysis on Europe's territorial structure and development” (Hungarian ministry, 2011b) All major elements in the TA2020 are explained more detailed and accompanied by ‘evidence’ collected by ESPON.

2.3.3 Content
The evaluation and the process analyzed resulted in the TA2020 signed in May 2011. According to Sykes (2011:7) “The TA2020 provides a succinct digest of some of the key territorial development challenges facing European regions, makes a case for the consideration of territorial issues in the pursuit of EU, national, regional and local policies, and suggests some clear ‘territorial priorities’ that should be pursued through such policies (Sykes, 2011: 7)“. By this the document is trying to be a guide for the future development of the European Union. The TA2020 is compared to previous documents such as the Territorial Agenda and the ESDP more or less the same, using early statements and discussions that were already there. Sykes (2011) further mentions that the document therefore is by some considered as hardly contributing to a wider debate about the territorial development of the Union. In this paragraph the content of the TA2020 is analyzed. The entire document can be found in the attachment.

The TA2020 is divided into four main chapters. Following this the document ends with a set of guidelines for future action.

The first chapter is called ‘Territorial Cohesion is a common goal’. The first part of this chapter refers to the integration of the TA2020 into other sectors and the Agenda 2020. Points 3, 4 and 5 states that “the TA2020 is our action oriented policy framework to support territorial cohesion in Europe as a new goal of the European Union (EU) introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon (Art 3.). It outlines objectives in accordance with the time horizon of major policy documents until 2020. (...) The objective of the TA2020 is to provide strategic orientations for territorial development, fostering integration of territorial dimension within different policies at all governance levels and to ensure implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy according to territorial cohesion
principles. (...) We believe that the objectives of the EU defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth can only be achieved if the territorial dimension of the strategy is taken into account, as the development opportunities of the different regions vary". (EU Ministers, 2011a). Besides the Agenda 2020 the TA2020 takes into account that Territorial Cohesion should be further integrated into Cohesion Policy (Point 6) and that those responsible for design and implementation of sectoral policies should take the principles and objectives of the Territorial Agenda into consideration (point 7).

Following this the TA2020 further elaborates on the concept of Territorial Cohesion. Point 7 states that the authors "believe that territorial cohesion is a set of principles for harmonious, balanced, efficient, sustainable territorial development. (...) Territorial cohesion complements solidarity mechanisms with a qualitative approach and clarifies that development opportunities are best tailored to the specificities of an area (point 8). (...) States, regions, cities (incl. small and medium sized towns), other territories and sectoral policies at all relevant levels to contribute to common European territorial priorities (point 9)". Besides this the TA2020 refers to the place-based approach to policy making, and the principles of horizontal coordination, evidence-informed policy making and integrated functional area development. This should be implemented though a multi-level governance approach.

Analyzing the first chapter it can be concluded that the focus of integration with other sectors, as mentioned in the other reports, has been included into the priorities. Furthermore Territorial Cohesion, and the influence of Cohesion Policy and the European Institutions has been defined. Cooperation and discussion between the intergovernmental work (TA2020) and the work of the institutions (Territorial Cohesion, Cohesion Policy, Agenda 2020) is seen as essential. Although this is mentioned in the TA2020, Böhme et al (2011:12) states that the "links to the Cohesion Policy and, indeed, to other policies remain very general. This situation cannot be tolerated any longer with the introduction of shared EU and member states competences in the field of territorial cohesion".

The second chapter is called ‘Challenges and potentials for territorial development’ and takes a closer look to six different driving forces and their territorial aspects.

1) Increased exposure to globalization: structural changes after the global economic crisis
2) Challenges of EU integration and the growing interdependences of regions
3) Territorially diverse demographic and social challenges, segregation of vulnerable groups
4) Climate change and environmental risks: geographically diverse impacts
5) Energy challenges come to the fore and threaten regional competitiveness
6) Loss of biodiversity, vulnerable natural, landscape and cultural heritage
The six priorities are (Böhme et al., 2011: 12):

1) “Promoting polycentric and balanced territorial development as an important recondition of territorial cohesion and a strong factor in territorial competitiveness.

2) Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions to foster synergies and better exploit local territorial assets.

3) Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions as a key factor in global competition facilitating better utilization of development potentials and the protection of the natural environment.

4) Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies as a key factor in global competition preventing the drain of human capital and reducing vulnerability to external development shocks.

5) Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises as an important precondition of territorial cohesion (e.g. services of general interest); a strong factor for territorial competitiveness and an essential condition for sustainable development.

6) Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions, including joint risk management as an essential condition for long term sustainable development.

Analyzing the TA2020 and comparing it to the TA is can be stated that content has only changed slightly. Besides incorporation of the financial and economic crises, not much has changed. However, when looking at the way the TA2020 is mentioned in relation to other documents it is clear that more than before the focus is in incorporation territorial aspects into other EU policies and the Agenda 2020.

2.3.4 Relation with Agenda 2020

The evaluation reports, the Sevilla document, but also the content of the TA2020 itself refers to the strong interdependency between the Agenda 2020 of the EU and the TA2020. All these documents have shown general insights on how integration of these policies should be done. To provide a more detailed and practical guide of the possibilities of a stronger integration, Böhme et al. (2011) wrote the report: “How to strengthen the territorial dimension of ‘Europe 2020’ and the EU Cohesion Policy”. In this paragraph the main findings of this report are elaborated and discussed.

Böhme et al. (2011) call for integration of the TA2020 into the Agenda 2020 and Cohesion policy. At the moment policy actions are missing. The reasons therefore are that territorial concepts are not clearly communicated outside the ‘club’ of spatial planners, actions.
are mostly related to spatial questions, but should become more comprehensive and territorial actions should be development oriented, reflecting to concrete results.

So, integration is needed between spatial policy and other policies. Three types of integration are relevant (Böhme et al., 2011: 17). Firstly, horizontal integration, so integration between the sectors and spatial policy, which is advocated in several documents, such as the TA, but has resulted in little results in reality until now. Secondly, vertical integration, so integration between the different layers of government (national, regional and local), should further strengthen the territorial dimension of policies. Thirdly, territorial integration needs to be developed. Territorial integration is “the process of reshaping functional areas to make them evolve into a consistent geographical entity; this entails overcoming the various negative effects stemming from the presence of one or more administrative borders, which hamper harmonious territorial development (Böhme et al., 2011:20). Authorities at different levels of government, in different countries should work together on cross border and transnational issues. More about this issue can be found in the chapter on territorial cooperation.

To be more precise about integration of the content of the policies, Böhme et al. (2011) elaborate on the issues discussed in the Europe 2020 strategy and the TA2020 and find a high correspondence. Furthermore, Böhme et al. (2011) suggest to develop so called ‘territorial keys’ which “translate the TA2020 into a set of task and policy issues which are crucial for the successful implementation of ‘Europe 2020’, and are directly related to the ‘Europe 2020’ headline targets.

The report of Böhme et al. (2011) is written by people who use a territorial approach to see the development of the EU territory. They state that territory matters in EU policy. The idea of territorial keys, which is a result of a linguistic analyses of the concepts used in the Agenda 2020 and the TA2020, forms a part of this, and is an attempt of the territorial scientists and policy makers to show the similarities between the two policies. However, this way of analyzing is limited, seeing only the content based elements, but not the broader picture of integration. Cohesion policy and the Agenda 2020 have a different view on how to organize development through an institutional approach. Therefore it is not only a question of linguistic commonalities, but more how to change cohesion policy from a growth policy to a more distribution policy. In this respect the relation between the Agenda 2020 and the TA2020 is political, and efforts like defining territorial keys will not be sufficient to establish a more efficient integration.
2.4 Implementation of the TA2020

2.4.1 Strategic documents

In the previous paragraphs the notion of ‘implementation’ was already mentioned several times. However, a specific definition and analysis of the concept in this respect is still lacking in this research. This chapter is focusing on the implementation and more specifically on the implementation of the TA2020. After discussing the general concept of implementation, a small overview is provided on the implementation of EU policies. Following this, the implementation process of the TA2020 is analyzed in theory and practice. 'In theory' refers to the way the policy makers of the documents (ESDP, TA2007 and TA2020) state the policy should work though. 'In practices' discusses the way the TA2020 has its possibility of integrating into cohesion policy. The focus in these last paragraphs is on a normative way, people enhancing the territorial approach to development, see implementation. It therefore does not refer to implementation in reality.

Policy implementation can be considered as the process of carrying out government decisions (Berman, 1987). In this process, which is iterative, the ideas, expressed as policy, are transformed into behavior, expressed as social action (Ottoson and Green, 1987: 362). A distinction can be made between the process of implementation and the outcomes of the implementation. Policy implementation can differ from each other, based on the kind of policy that is needed to be implemented. In the case of more concrete policy issues, implementation is already directed towards the actual outcome in reality. If the policy is less concrete, so more strategic, implementation is not strongly related to the outcomes.

The TA2020, as well as the TA and the ESDP, are strategic policy documents. Faludi (2000) refers in this respect not to the implementation of the ESDP, but to the ‘application’ of the policy. Three points about the application need to be taken into account (Faludi, 2000). Firstly, when discussing strategic planning document as the TA2020, it is better to describe the follow-up as the application of the ideas, rather than the implementation of a plan or proposal. Secondly, to facilitate their application, strategic planning documents often need to undergo further elaboration, for example the making of new institutional arrangements. Thirdly, application when evaluation the application of strategic documents, the focus is on the ‘performance’, in shaping the ongoing action, and not on the ‘conformance’, of the actual outcomes.

The makers of the ESDP did not want to stimulate direct implementation, but wanted to create a ‘frame of reference’ or framework for those involved in spatial development (Faludi, 2010). Framing is described as “injecting ideas into the proceedings, ordering thoughts and thereby, albeit indirectly, giving direction to action” (Faludi, 2003). Although no direct effects
are there, the power of the framework must not be underestimated. Frameworks work on the minds of those who take its messages into consideration. The application of a framework is done by stimulating future action to a particular course, but without already pre-deciding what action needs to be taken.

Faludi (2003), but also Mastop (1997) speak about conformance and the application of strategic documents. In this research no distinction is made between the words ‘implementation’ and ‘application’. If in this thesis the word ‘implementation’ is used, it does not mean implementation in the close sense, but more the concept of application, so implementation in the broad sense of the word.

### 2.4.2 Implementation of EU policies

Implementation of European policy documents, binding or non-binding, to lower levels of governance, such as the national level, has been a research subject for a long time. In the 1980’s hardly any research about implementation was done, because of the strategy of the European Commission to expand its political power, without endangering the autonomy of the member states (Milio, 2010). In the 1990’s, after the completion of the common market and a rise of power of the European institutions, more focus became on the implementation of the policy.

The results of studies done about the implementation of EU documents mention a so called implementation gap between the original document and the national strategies or laws (Bursens, 2002). This gap implies that the goals and targets mentioned in the European document are not successfully integrated in the member states. Milio (2010) has researched the implementation of social cohesion policy and thereby focused on the institutional structure (administrative and political preconditions) of the individual member states. She thereby argues for a development of multi-level governance to implement policies more successfully. Knill (2006) has written about different kinds of implementation of EU policies, but his focus is on laws or directives. These elements are binding for member states and therefore are not comparable with the more voluntarily committed goals of the TA2020. However, his research has provided insight in general problems of implementation. To summarize the previous research, Milio (2010), Knill (2006) and Bursens (2002) emphasize the importance of the institutional structure when implementing EU policies or directives.

### 2.4.3 Implementation process of strategic planning documents in theory

Closer to the research subject, research has been conducted on the application of the ESDP in several countries. Faludi (2001) has for example researched the application of the ESDP in North-West Europe and Shaw and Sykes (2003) looked more specifically to the application in the United Kingdom. An official study more quantitative was done by ESPON (2007) and
concluded that the application is still going on, but the context has changed significantly. The results of the studies show high regional differences in the application of the ESDP.

As already mentioned in the previous chapters, the relation of strategic intergovernmental planning documents, like the ESDP, the TA and the TA2020 with other EU policies and instruments changed during time. This was mainly caused by the inclusion of territorial cohesion as an official EU competence. This has its effect on the implementation of these documents. In this paragraph the ways of implementation of the three strategic planning documents are elaborated more specifically. The way they are implemented does not provide insights in the way this implementation has been successful. Furthermore it has to be said that the elaborations are a simplified version of reality. Although they are there in reality, not all connections are made visible in the figures. The figures therefore represent the main implementation process of the documents.

For the ESDP the implementation can be visualized as is figure 3:

![Diagram of ESDP implementation process](image)

The ESDP was strongly connected to the spatial planning policy in the individual member states. In the ESDP general spatial concepts were outlined and needed to be work thought in domestic spatial policies. In some countries, which have played important roles in making the ESDP the implementation of the concepts had not far reaching effects, in other countries, like the UK and Italy the ESDP concepts have changed planning policies and practices (Dühr et al., 2010: 216). In general, spatial planning policy has the possibility to influence sectoral policies, such as environmental or transport policies. However the influence of the ESDP concepts were only partially implemented in these sectoral policies, as is concluded by Bruhmann, Flowkowski & Ickes (2005). Besides general domestic policy ideas the sectoral policies were also influence by cohesion policy and its structural funds.
The ESDP concepts became linked to the INTERREG II Programme. Initiatives for international territorial cooperation were approved if they would further strengthen the objectives of the ESDP. Kunzmann (1998:54) mentions that linking the ESDP to community funding, such as the INTERREG II programme prevailed it from begin a ‘paper tiger’.

Discussion already rose to have a stronger links between the ESDP and sectoral policies. The Report on Community Policies and Spatial Planning (1998) provided insights of the relationship between the concepts of the ESDP and the Sectoral Community Policies. However, the focus of the ESDP was primarily on spatial planning and less on sectoral policies.

The implementation process of the TA can be visualized as in figure 4.

![Figure 4: Implementation process of the Territorial Agenda (own elaboration, 2012)](image.png)

The Lisbon treaty made Territorial Cohesion an official objective of cohesion policy, which changed the way the implementation process of the TA in 2007 was directed. Cohesion policy obtained more influence, since it was something that could direct policies and could influence member states in a binding matter. The makers of the TA were aware of this and therefore the TA promotes the objective of territorial cohesion. However, discussion needed to be started on the definition of Territorial Cohesion. Cohesion policy had two main instruments, namely the Structural funds (the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund) and INTERREG III, which ceased to be a separate Community initiative and was integrated into the concept of territorial cohesion.

From one side, the TA can be seen as a further operationalization of the ESDP, still focusing on spatial issues, but further specifying those (Dühr et al., 2010: 217). The TA tries to influence spatial policies of the member states. From the other side the TA, more than the ESDP, acknowledges the importance of coordination the sectoral policies (Dühr et al, 2010: 217).
Cohesion policy further had little influence on domestic spatial policies, but the concept of territorial cohesion was focusing more specifically on the sectoral polities. Cohesion policy, including territorial cohesion got an influence in the EU sectoral policies, which further influences the domestic sectoral policies. Besides this, Territorial Cohesion strongly promotes territorial cooperation between member states in implementing sectoral policies.

The implementation process of the TA2020 can be visualized as in figure 5.

Since the creation of the TA in 2007 the European Institutions have further strengthen their competence in the field of territorial cohesion (Green paper on TC). Although territorial cohesion became officially institutionalized by the EU, a narrow definition is still lacking (Schmitt, 2011). In the TA2020 itself a chapter is dedicated towards the implementation of the territorial priorities. Three levels of implementation are distinguished (European ministers, 2011). Firstly, the TA2020 needs to strengthen Territorial Cohesion at the EU level. Other sectors are asked, when they design policies to take into account territorial priorities. Special attention is given to instruments like structural and cohesion funds and the Agenda 2020. Besides this the suggestion is made to develop and make use of integrated territorial impact assessments for all significant EU policies and programmes. ESPON is asked to take the priorities into account when further defining the research areas. Secondly, implementation has to be done at the cross-border, transnational and interregional level between countries. Instruments as INTERREG and macro-regions create the possibility for strengthen territorial cohesion at this level. Thirdly, member states are asked to implement the TA into national sectoral and integrated development policies and spatial planning mechanisms. The consideration of territorial impacts and territorial coordination of policies is seen as particularly important.
These aspects should be integrated into the reports and evaluations related to Cohesion Policy and Agenda 2020.

So, in the implementation process of the TA2020, Cohesion policy, including the structural funds and INTERREG, plays a leading role in territorial development of the union. Especially in respect to the coming update of the Cohesion Policy framework 2014-2020, the TA2020 tries to include its priorities in this framework. The TA2020, does not focus only on the spatial priorities or how to implement them in domestic spatial policy. This focus shifted to the integration of territorial aspects into other sectoral policies. The TA2020 tries to get strong links with the Agenda 2020 and tries to use to framework of this Agenda to integrate territorial priorities. This is also shown in the subtitle of the TA2020 which has a close connection with the subtitle of the Agenda 2020 (Schmitt, 2011). Besides the Agenda 2020, also more direct implementation of the TA2020 in domestic sectoral policies is addressed (Schmitt, 2011)

Böhme et al. (2011) mention that the TA2020, as being a result of an intergovernmental process, will not have enough effect on the Agenda 2020 and other policy documents to be of real importance. The authors therefore argument that “an EU reference policy document should be elaborated to steer a process aimed at exploiting synergies between EU sector policies in different types of territories while contributing to the successful implementation of the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy. (...) The TA2020 must continue to serve as a valuable informal interface between territorial development policies carried out at the national and regional levels and EU policies with a territorial dimension, but as far as the latter are concerned, a specific formal EU guidance reference is required”.

To conclude it can be stated that a shift occurred from a spatial perspective, using planning instruments, to a territorial perspective, using sectoral policies. The intergovernmental cooperation of the TA2020 has mainly lost terrain compared with Cohesion Policy, which is more dominant in the current structure, due to having financial instruments. Intergovernmental strategic planning documents are becoming more and more frameworks and survival of these documents is done by promoting further integration with Cohesion Policy, the Agenda 2020 and other community policies.

2.4.4 Implementing the TA2020
The previous paragraphs have elaborated on a strong interdependence of the TA2020 with Cohesion Policy and the Agenda 2020, which makes that a more direct implementation of the agenda to domestic spatial planning as done in the implementation of the ESDP is not possible. The focus of this paragraph will therefore be on the way the Agenda 2020 is implemented, Cohesion Policy is implemented and the way the TA2020 could influence domestic sectoral policies, according to the territorial perspective.
Considering Agenda 2020 it is not a sector of the EU, and therefore has no financial power. It is a policy document how to further develop Europe on a long-term. The Agenda 2020 (European Commission, 2010) exists of 5 targets, employment, R&D/Innovation, climate change/energy, education and poverty/social exclusion, which have quantified targets. To get results the Agenda 2020 proposes so called ‘flagship initiatives’. For ‘smart growth’ these are: digital agenda for Europe’, ‘Innovation Union’ and ‘Youth on the move’, for sustainable growth ‘Resource efficient Europe’ and ‘An industrial policy for the globalization era’, for inclusive growth they are ‘An agenda for new skills and jobs’ and ‘European platform against poverty’. The flagship initiatives are the framework for further action.

Member states are obligated to do their upmost to meet the targets as proposed. The European Institutions are doing an annual growth survey to see the progress made in the implementation of the agenda for the EU as a whole and member states. Advice is provided and discussions are organized. The member states themselves are obliged to report on their national reform programmes and the progress they are making in achieving the goals. Regions and local authorities are responsible for further implementation of the national programs in which they are assisted by the Committee of the regions. They can develop action programmes for further implementation. So, implementation of the TA2020 into the Agenda 2020 can be done by integrating the priorities of the TA2020 in the flagship initiatives, the programmes of the member states and the more concrete action programmes at the lower levels.

As already mentioned, there is no financial framework connected with the Agenda. First of all, money has to come from the member states themselves. Besides this the Agenda 2020 tries to link itself with EU policy, like transport, agricultural or cohesion policy. The last one can be defined as the most influential. The tools of Cohesion policy can direct the investments so that the Agenda 2020 gets incorporated in the actions taken.

So the Agenda 2020 and Cohesion Policy are interdependent, although Cohesion Policy obtains the financial instruments. The main financial instruments are the structural funds, consisting of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund. Böhme et al (2011) elaborate in detail about the implementation instruments of Cohesion Policy and the way the TA2020 can be integrated.

A framework for Cohesion Policy is produced for 7 years. The last period was 2007-2013, the next period is 2014 until 2020. In February 2012 the commission presented proposal for Cohesion Policy for the next programme period (European Commission, 2012). This proposal consist of a general framework called the “Common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund” and European
Regional Development Fund’ and a special framework for the individual entities, namely the European Groupings on Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

The general framework consists of two parts “The first part lays down a series of common provisions for the five Funds with structural aims covered by the Commission’s Common Strategic Framework (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund, EAFRD, and EMFF). The second part sets out specific provisions for the ERDF, ESF, and Cohesion Fund. These relate to the mission and goals of cohesion policy, the financial framework, specific programming and reporting arrangements, major projects and joint action plans” (ec.europa.eu/regional_policy). The general framework was created with the help and input of other actors. One of the conclusions of the consultation process was that the EU support should focus on a number of priorities and the different policies should be aligned with the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The proposal allocates different instruments to the different levels of government. For the EU level "a Common Strategic Framework will translate the objectives and targets of the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth into key actions for the ERDF, the CF, the ESF, the EAFRD and the EMFF which will ensure an integrated use of the CSF Funds to deliver common objectives". Following this Partnership Contracts are close between the Commission and each Member State. These contract set out the commitments of partners at national and regional level and the Commission. “They will be linked to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the National Reform Programmes. They will set out an integrated approach for territorial development supported by all the CSF Funds and include objectives based on agreed indicators, strategic investments and a number of conditionalities. They will contain commitments to give yearly account of progress in the annual reports on cohesion policy, on rural development policy and in other public reporting’. The regional and local authorities have to define Operational Programmes, which set out so called priority axes corresponding to thematic objectives. Besides this these actors need to ‘elaborate consistent intervention logic to tackle the development needs identified, and set out the framework for performance assessment. They should also contain other elements necessary to underpin the effective and efficient implementation of these Funds’. Furthermore the commission proposes to introduce so called Joint Action Plans. These plan consist of several ‘operations comprising a group of projects as part of an operational programme, with specific objectives, result indicators and outputs agreed between the Member State and the Commission’.

The Agenda 2020 is mentioned continuously within the Cohesion Policy proposal, suggestion that the concepts of the Agenda should be used in the implementation of Cohesion Policy. However, the TA2020 is not mentioned once. However, territorial issues are also taken into account in the proposal. A simple content analyses, which can be found in the Annex of thesis, shows how this territorial aspect can be found in the proposal for Cohesion Policy. As can
be stated from this content analysis the focus of the general framework concerning territorial cohesion is the use of an integrated approach for territorial development, where common challenges are addressed. The issues are for example the role of cities, functional geographies and sub-regional areas facing specific geographical or demographic problems. Attention is given to the mechanisms that ensure coordination between the different Funds and instruments. Article 99, with the title territorial development arguments for 'integrated territorial investments (ITI). This is the case when more priority axes in one area are use for investments.

Besides the general framework on Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 the Commission also launches proposals for the individual funds, such as the ERDF and the ESF. The ERFD proposal mentions that this fund "shall contribute to the financing of support which aims to reinforce economic, social and territorial cohesion by redressing the main regional imbalances through support for the development and structural adjustment of regional economies, including the conversion of declining industrial regions and regions lagging behind". Specific provisions on the treatment of particular territorial features are mentioned in chapter II of the ERDF, such as Sustainable urban development (article 7), Urban development platform (article 8) Innovative Actions in the field of Sustainable Urban Development (article 9), Areas with natural or demographic handicaps (article 10) and Outermost regions (article 11). In the proposal for the ESF the notion of territorial pacts is mentioned as well as special attention is given to sustainable urban development strategies. For the objective of territorial cooperation a special proposal has been created to determine the aspects of the INTERREG projects.

Besides indirect of direct implementation of the TA2020 in Cohesion Policy, the TA2020 also needs to work though in other sectors. But the way how to address this in the other policies is still undefined. Therefore, a road map towards promoting and enhancing an integrated, territorial approach based on the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (Polish presidency, 2011) has been written, which proposes concrete actions for integration. The roadmap allocates action to different member states and for different periods.

2.5 Conclusion and discussion
In this chapter an overview is provided concerning the TA2020 and its implementation, which was elaborated in a theoretical and in a practical way. Following the analysis, it can be concluded that that the makers of the TA2020 focus on implementation though the Agenda 2020 and Cohesion Policy, but that the TA2020 has difficulties integrating with these documents and policies in reality. Dominated by the Anglo-Saxon approach, little attention is given to a territorial approach to development in Cohesion policy. Scientist and policy makers enhancing the territorial perspective describe the enlargement of competences of the EU on spatial planning, for example though the objective of territorial cohesion and other initiatives, but it is
unclear if a shift occurs in reality. For the implementation of the TA2020 this means that the focus of integration with Cohesion Policy and the Agenda 2020 may not work out the way they have stated normatively.

Figure 6 visualizes the two perspectives and position of the policy documents in this respect. Cohesion Policy and the Agenda 2020 are dominated by the institutional perspective. Territorial Cohesion, since being a part of Cohesion policy, has created a shift, but it is unknown to what extent this is true. On the other side the TA2020 is dominated by the territorial perspective. Also, a shift can be distinguished to a bigger focus on integration with Cohesion policy and the Agenda 2020. This shift is also discussible, being the fact if the TA2020 has not changed much compared to the previous intergovernmental policy document when looking at the content. Only linguistic similarities have been elaborated until now.

![Policy documents in the institutional and territorial perspectives](image)

**Figure 6:** Policy documents in the institutional and territorial perspectives (own elaboration, 2012)
3. Territorial Cooperation

3.1 International Territorial Cooperation

3.1.1 Introduction

Territorial cooperation across countries can take many forms. In general a distinction can be made between cross-border cooperation, transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation. Cross-border cooperation concerns cooperation between regions on both sides of a national border, transnational cooperation is cooperation on a bigger scale, concerning for example the Baltic Sea or the Alpine region. Interregional cooperation is cooperation between regions, which are not situated next to each other, but have a common understand, problem or development. Dühr et al. (2010: 346) shelter these three forms of cooperation under the name transboundary cooperation. They define this concept as "forms of cooperation across national borders and other agencies or organizations at various geographical scales to pursue policy objectives and projects (Dühr et al., 2010:346). These objectives and projects do not specifically have a spatial component in them, and therefore also relate to social or economic cooperation.

There are two main reasons for actors to start international territorial cooperation. Firstly, the reason can be very pragmatic. There are issues that have an international content, such as water pollution, air pollution, but also connections between regions on both sides of a border, such as rail, water and road connections. International cooperation can coordinate these issues, resolving or reducing the problems that have risen or coordinate new developments together to stimulate economic and social development. Secondly, the reason can be less concrete, and is more focused on exchanging of experiences that do not have a transnational impact (Dühr et al, 2010:347). These issues are for example transport or urban regeneration. Sharing of knowledge, good practices and the joint realization of projects form the base of transfers of policy or learning from other actors.

Territorial cooperation between countries in Europe dates back from a long time. Even before the European Union obtained its current shape, incidental projects required international cooperation. A more institutionalized form of pre-EU international cooperation is international cooperation in the Benelux, between The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The Benelux is used as a case study in this thesis, therefore details about this cooperation can be found in the next chapter. The focus in the first paragraphs however is on institutionalized international territorial cooperation, with a main focus on the INTERREG programme, being the most relevant.
3.1.2 INTERREG

The INTERREG programme is an initiative started by the EU in 1990 to foster transnational cooperation between regions and nation states. The initiative is currently financed thought the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), one of the main tools of the EU to financially support development of regions. Before 1990 cross border cooperation was arranged by the member states themselves (bottom-up) and had no support of the EU. In 1990 the first INTERREG initiative was created. The reasons for this were an ongoing economic integration in the EU between the member states, which was a result of the accession of new member states, but also the adoption of the Single Market in the 1980’s (Dühr et al, 2010:234). The main goal of the INTERREG was to use existing cross border structures and support their development. Brenner (2004:286) states that the first INTERREG program was a success and resulted in an expanding number of cross border activities.

In 1994, INTERREG II was created. This programme existed of three parts namely cross-border cooperation, energy networks and between 1997 and 1999 transnational cooperation. Difference with the first programme was the focus on softer cooperation, and not only on infrastructure, the incorporation of cooperation at the external borders of the EU and cooperation across maritime borders (Dühr et al, 2010:235). The INTERREG II programme was more closely connected with the ESDP; the INTERREG IIC programme on transnational cooperation was presented as one of the key operational mechanism for the application of the ESDP. A relation between strategic spatial documents and the INTERREG programme financed by the ERDF, which focuses on economic and social development, became reality.

The third programme period resulted in the division of the three current forms of cooperation. INTERREG IIIB on cross border cooperation needed to support integrated regional development between authorities (local, regional, national) and other partners. INTERREG IIIB supported harmonious territorial integration and was presented as main instrument of the ESDP. Thirteen transnational areas were defined in this respect. INTERREG IIIC was set up to improve the effectiveness of policies and instruments for regional development and cohesion, particularly for regions that were lagging behind and were undergoing transformation. IIIC is not focused on cooperation between neighboring regions but on regions with similar problems across Europe.

The fourth programme, which is running until 2013, is using the same structure as the third programme, however the emphasis on cross-border cooperation has been strengthened. The programme is closely related with the Lisbon Agenda, focusing on economic, social and territorial cohesion. Funding of projects is therefore related to the goals of the Lisbon Agenda. Besides these changes, the scope and definition of cooperation areas has changed. Using the concept of ‘one border, one programme’ led to combining programmes along the same border
(Dühr et al, 2010: 243). For the Dutch-Flemish region, used the empirical part of this research, the cross border INTERREG IVA is directed by the Secretariat INTERREG Nederland-Vlaanderen, located in Antwerp. For the INTERREG IVB part, concerning transnational cooperation, Flanders and The Netherlands are part of the framework of North-West Europe and the west coast of Flanders and The Netherlands is also part of the framework for the North Sea region.

It can be concluded that in the first and second programme periods INTERREG was focusing on practical problems, mainly on cross border cooperation, that in the third programme period the focus was shifted to a more comprehensive view on the EU’s territory, using the ESDP and its concepts as a source of information and that in the fourth period INTERREG and Cohesion Policy became interconnected. In the next paragraph a closer look is provided on Cohesion Policy and the inclusion of the INTERREG instrument in Cohesion Policy.

### 3.1.3 Objective 3

The Lisbon Agenda has led to several substantive and procedural changes in the framework for territorial cooperation from 2007. Since then the thematic priorities for all cooperation programmes had to focus on innovation, environment, accessibility and sustainable urban development. Spatial concepts, as defined in the ESDP and other intergovernmental documents were no longer the base for international territorial cooperation. At the start of 2007, The INTERREG programme became an official instrument of Cohesion Policy, under the new mainstream objective of ‘European Territorial Cooperation’ (Dühr, Stead & Zonneveld, 2007:294). The instrument became officially institutionalized by the EU. The objectives of the Cohesion Policy period 2007-2013 became linked to the INTERREG programme, and the budget almost doubled.

The EU’s attempt to further strengthen territorial cooperation is defined more specifically in Objective 3: a challenge for territorial cooperation – the future agenda for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, adopted by the European Parliament on the 11th of April 2011. In this proposal a call is made to strengthen the territorial cooperation objective by allocating more funds to cooperation projects, ESPON and other cooperation networks. Besides this the proposal calls for mainstreaming the ‘territorial cooperation’ objective (so the INTERREG programme) with the ‘convergence’ and ‘competitiveness’ and employment’ objectives. A better coordination between these objectives and the programmes is necessary. The report further notes that it is important to adopt a territorial approach in implementing other EU policies. Here the Baltic Sea strategy is mentioned, and the report states that macro-strategies should take full account of other regional cooperation programmes in order to generate synergies. Three other aspects are mentioned in the report. Firstly, there should be a bigger focus on facilitating the establishment of European Groupings of Territorial
Cooperation (EGTCs). EGTC is a new community legal instrument that is directly applicable to all the EU member states. Secondly, implementation of territorial cooperation programmes needs to be simplified. At the moment too many different administrative authorities are involved and rules are too complicated. Thirdly, the profile of territorial cooperation needs to be raised. A more effective communication, more transparency and closer to the civilians, but also more attention in the media and an awareness-raising campaign are mentioned here.

3.2 Territorial Cooperation in the Benelux

3.2.1 Introduction

Besides institutionalized forms of cooperation, such as INTERREG, Member states and regions individually can also cooperate on spatial issues on the base of a bilateral or a multilateral agreement between one or more countries. The Benelux is an example of an organization based on a multilateral agreement between Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg.

The cooperation between The Netherlands and Flanders, a part of Belgium, is used as research object. The methodological choice for this threefold. Firstly, the Netherlands and Flanders have a long tradition on working together on planning issues and established forums together, called the VLANED and the BCRO, which will be elaborated later in this research. The VLANED and the BCRO deal with international issues, such as European policy, and these platforms provide an opportunity to see how the TA2020 is discussed. Secondly, from the literature it is known that the Netherlands had been active in intergovernmental planning processes (Faludi, 2003). This makes it interesting to see how they deal with the TA2020 domestically and in international cooperation. Thirdly, although the two regions speak the same language, differences in (planning) culture exist. This could make the discussion of the concepts of the TA2020 more interesting.

In the following paragraphs territorial cooperation in the Benelux will be elaborated. To start this chapter, a closer look here is provided into the domestic spatial planning systems of The Netherlands and Flanders and the current changes in these systems. This is followed by an overview of the history of international cooperation on spatial planning in the Benelux. Hence, the current institutional form of the Benelux is explained. This chapter ends with an elaboration on the research subject, the international cooperation on spatial planning between Flanders and The Netherlands.

3.2.2 Spatial planning in Flanders

Belgium is a federal state, consisting of three regions, namely Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia. As part of the second large institutional reforms in the 1980, the regions obtained the competence for spatial planning in their own territory. Before this, spatial planning in Belgium
was never really evolved or institutionalized in the country. This had its influence on the spatial structure of the country. Leinfelder and Allaert (2008) describe the densely urbanized area of Flanders, where more than 70% of the residents live in a so called ‘urban complex’; an area characterized by suburbanization and commuting to and from other agglomerations. Only a small percentage is living in the cities and the land occupied per citizen is one of the highest in Europe. Individual freedom and private ownership played a big role in Flanders and spatial planning could threaten this role.

The institutional reforms in 1980 have changed the competences and therefore new attention was directed towards spatial planning and policy development. Although this was the case, real reforms only started in the early 1990’s. Two major reforms are important (Van den Broek, 2007). Firstly, a spatial planning decree was approved in 1996, and later adjusted in 1999. This decree provided the legal framework for spatial planners and the instrument for spatial development. The decree introduces the strategic plans in Flanders, the so called Structuurplan. These plans need to be made on the three levels of government, the Gewest, the provinces and the municipalities. With the introduction of the structuurplannen, Flanders breaks with his tradition of only having land-use plans. Secondly, following the decree the first ‘Spatial Structure Plan for Flanders’ was developed in 1997. Until today the plan is still in function.

While a new law and a new strategic document was introduced and the planning community was in a state of euphoria, the context and the role of spatial planning in this context changed rapidly (Van den Broek, 2007). The neo-liberal approach to planning demanded another way of handling spatial developments. The focus of the plans was still on the approval of developments in a certain area, so called ‘toelatingsplanologie/permission spatial planning’. But the demand for a more flexible approach which would focused on development instead of permissions, was growing. Besides this the planning system became increasingly bureaucratic, which was threatening the strategic character of the plans (Van den Broek, 2007). Most strategic plans became standardized and not implemented. With the shifting context, the sectoral policies, such as transport, environment etc, tried to increase their power and influence over spatial development, resulting in more complexity of rules and regulations. Laga, Idea consult & Studiegroep Omgeving (2005) describe this as an explosion of sectoral laws, planning and instruments, conflicting with each other. Also the European Union became one of the actors introducing sectoral laws and directives influencing the domestic spatial planning in Flanders.

Although the context changed a lot, spatial planning in Flanders still rests on the instruments and principles founded in the late 1990’s. Spatial Planning does not get much attention in the country which results in lacking behind compared to other EU member states. Since 2009, work has begun on the new structure plan of Flanders. The legal system has had
some minor changes, mainly due to influences of other sectoral laws, such as environmental laws, but an overall review of the legal system has not been done. The future concept is to use the same instruments, but in a different way. Boelens (2010) analyses and compares the developments of spatial planning in The Netherlands and Flanders describes the way the structure plan in created. The plan tries to strengthen the position of spatial planning and the fate in the government. This is done by public participation in the process of making the plan. The first drafts of the plan show an encouragement of development, leaded by the government. The government has drawn some actions and tries to stimulate other actors in development. So, although little attention has been given to spatial planning before, nowadays more initiative is shown by the government. But still, the concepts of spatial planning are lacking behind on the changing context.

Nowadays, spatial planning is part of the ministry of Space, Living and Historical real-estate (RWO). Since recently the department (policy preparation) and the agency (governing the policy) has been brought together to increase efficiency. The department is also dealing with international affairs, such European spatial issues and cross-border and transnational spatial planning. The department has little means and employees, and focuses mainly on ad-hoc decisions.

3.2.3 Spatial planning in The Netherlands
Spatial planning in the Netherlands differs highly from spatial planning in Flanders (De Vries, 2003). Since the introduction of the Woningwet in 1901 the municipalities in the Netherlands have the right to make land use plans. In the 1930’s the provinces got the right to develop so called ‘streekplannen’, strategic plans for the area of the province. The first Law on Spatial Planning, adopted in 1965 created the official legal framework for all three government layers, the national government, the provinces and the municipalities, to make ‘structure-sketches’. These sketches provided the possibility for the governments to arrange a more efficient integration of sectoral policy into space. Besides this all the national government creates a separate national planning framework every few years. All together, it can be stated that spatial planning is rooted in the history of the Netherlands.

The Dutch planning system has become a big complex system which is unique in its kind (De Vries, 2003). Dutch planners have a high belief in the possibilities of spatial planning. The inhabitants of the Netherlands have accepted spatial planning to be a part of their daily life. This can partly be explained historically by the actions of the government to protect the inhabitants against threats of the water. Spatial planning is not organized hierarchically, like in Flanders, but very decentralized, following the principles of the Dutch political system (De Vries, 2003).
Despite the fact that the Dutch planning system can be seen as a success for a long time, recently it was criticized. During the 1980’s the government became aware that the planning system had become outdated. This is closely related to the rise of the neo-classical economic model that came to rise in Europe. Research from the United States and the United Kingdom had shown new ways of planning, with greater responsibility for the citizens themselves. This so-called interactive planning demanded a bottom up approach from the lower government. The decentralization of the government responsibilities started. From then planners needed to focus on strategic questions at the regional level in interaction with stakeholders and the time of modernist, centralized planning was officially over (Healey, 2007). This decentralization is still going on today.

Although the way planning was done changed, the beliefs in the possibilities of spatial planning still remained. In the 1990’s the Dutch government and Dutch planners became active on the European level. In 1991 the Dutch government proposed to arrange a committee of senior officials responsible for spatial planning in Europe to meet regularly as the Committee on Spatial Development (CSD) (Williams, 1999). This proposal was agreed on by the European ministers on Spatial Development and it became the official start of the ESDP process. Faludi and Waterhout (2002) describe this process and state that The Netherlands was one of the dominating actors for creating a spatial framework for Europe.

Meanwhile in the 2000’s the Dutch developed a new approach to spatial planning, called ‘development planning’ (Grijzen, 2010). In this approach public-private partnerships between local governments and development companies are set up for creating integral development projects. The approach needed to result in a more democratic and more effective use of spatial planning instruments and public spending. Although successes were booked, the approach also resulted into financial problems for local governments who invested in projects, which until today are not developed, also because of the financial crises in the late 2000’s (Van der Krabben, 2010). Another problem of the new approach to spatial planning in the Netherlands was the fact that the system had became even more complex, also due to new European legislation, resulting in financial miscalculation and long overhaul times for projects to be developed.

The Dutch government became aware of the complexity of the system and new legislation was proposed to deal with the current problems. In 2008 the new law on spatial planning (Wro) was introduced, replacing the old WRO from 1965. “The new legislation distinguishes between local, provincial and national (spatial) interests and says in essence that every tier of administration should primarily look after its own level of interest” (Van der Burg, 2011:5). Besides this all environmental and building legislation became packed into one new law, called the Wabo. Also, a temporary law (Crisis and recovery law, CHW) became active,
financially supporting spatial projects to stimulate the Dutch economy, which was suffering from the crisis.

Although legislation to reduce the complexity of the system was put into practice, the new government of the Netherlands further wanted to reduce the influence of national spatial planning in order to stimulate growth. The ministry of Spatial Planning, which had a long history in the Netherlands dating back from the 1960’s, was demolished and integrated into the new ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (I&M). In 2011 a new national policy strategy (SVIR) was put into place, as well as severe budget cuts for spatial planning related issues (Van der Burg, 2011). Currently, a new spatial law is proposed, involving all spatial related issues to come together (Omgevingswet). It can be concluded that spatial planning in the Netherlands is no longer considered as a separate entity, but has to further cooperate and integrate with other sectors in order to retain its place is the Dutch society. The focus is on a greater efficiency and measurable projects and results.

3.2.4 The Benelux Secretariat General

The Benelux Secretariat General is an intergovernmental organization dealing with international cooperation between the European member states The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg. Cooperation between the different countries already began during the second World War. In 1958 the three countries signed a treaty, called the treaty on the Benelux Economic Union, which needed to strengthen economic cooperation between the member states. A new treaty was signed 50 years later, in 2008, and changed the name of the organization from Benelux Economic Union to Benelux Union.

The Benelux can be seen as a pilot project of European cooperation and integration. The main goal of the union is to further strengthen the cooperation between the member states, so that the union can function as a leader and is able to reinforce cross border cooperation at all levels. The Benelux Union consists of several institutions. There is a parliament, with an advisory role and a court of justice for legal conflicts. More prominent are the Committee of ministers, consisting of the three ministers of foreign affairs from the member states and the advisory council with high civil servants from the three countries. This last has to direct the core institution of the Benelux Union, the Secretariat General. This last institution is responsible for the daily activities of the union.

Since the treaty of 2008 a few things have changed. Firstly, the Benelux Secretariat General is now working on three main themes, namely Internal Market and Economic Union, Sustainable Development and Justice and Home Affairs. A work programme for each year, and a programme for a period (2007-2013) further define the individual goals and actions of the groups handling these themes. Spatial Planning is part of the team Sustainable Development.
Secondly, the ministers have voted in favor of a stronger cooperation with the German region North Rhine-Westphalia. Thirdly, the Secretariat General has obtained an official right for initiative. Since the Benelux Secretariat General is an intergovernmental organization, the programmes defined and the initiatives taken need to be done by the member states themselves. The Secretariat General is there to facilitate cooperation, but can also take initiatives itself. At the moment the Secretariat General is working on a new programme for the period 2014 until 2020. This is done by an interactive process between the Secretariat General and the stakeholders.

3.2.5 History of international cooperation on spatial planning in the Benelux

The core arguments for this paragraph can result from a research done by De Vries (2003), about the international cooperation on spatial planning in the Benelux. This history of international cooperation on spatial planning started already in 1959, outside the Benelux institutional framework, in the so called Hasselt study group (De Vries, 2003). In this group, spatial planners and experts published reports on spatial issues in the so called Beneluxmiddengebied, the Dutch-Flemish border area. In 1969 the Special Committee on Spatial Planning (BCRO) was set up as an official institution for international cooperation, under the supervision of the Benelux Secretariat General. This committee consisted of representatives of national spatial planning ministries, and in the 1990's also the regional representatives joined. The BCRO has the task of coordination policy issues in relation to spatial planning. In practice the cooperation was on the international influence of plans from one side of the border to the other and on adjustments and cooperation on strategic plans.

In 1975, BCRO has decided to work out a procedure for a more comprehensive coordination of spatial plans in the Benelux, including a strategic spatial plan for the entire Benelux area. Nadin and Shaw (1998:281) state that “the root of the explanation for increasing transnational collaboration on spatial planning is the increasing economic interdependence of nations”. Because the Benelux counties became more dependent on each other’s economy, cooperation in planning was a logical consequence.

Although the intention was there to create a strategic plan, practical difficulties arose creating it. Nobody was really aware what it took to make a transnational plan. The first ‘Benelux structuurschets’ therefore resulted in a plan without a vision. The idea of the document was that it should work top-down to the national plans. The Dutch and Luxembourgian governments were determined to create a plan that would not contradict their current national plans. (De Vries, 2003).

Despite the fact that the first structural sketch of the Benelux was no great success, it also created some positive effects. First of all, the plan arranged a platform for planners from
different countries to come together. The advantage of this was the uniform terminology was created (Verberk, 1987). Secondly, the plan influenced the planning ideas in Flanders. The Flemish government was working on their first strategic plan and the structure plan provided new insights (De Vries, 2003).

Since the first sketch did provide the results as initiated, in 1989 the BCRO decided to revise the sketch. However, the makers were not convinced that a simple revision would do the trick. Therefore it was decided to make a new plan, the second Benelux Structure Sketch. De Vries (2003) mentions that there was also a possibility of going a total different direction. However, this was not a part of the discussion of the ministers; going the same direction was the only option. In the meeting of the ministers two points are mentioned for reviewing the document. Firstly, there was the aspect of European integration and removal of national borders which demanded a further integration. Secondly, in a short time, all member states of the Benelux would have a strategic spatial framework of their own, which could make use of Benelux sketch. Unfortunately this last became untrue during the process of making the sketch.

The result of making the second sketch was disappointing. The agenda needed to stimulate cooperation by sharing ambitions, mainly through implementation of the plan in domestic planning documents (De Vries, 2003). However, there was little consensus between the planning agencies about the subjects, which eventually lead to a scale of themes. All the participating partners were defensive and did not bring any new elements into the process. The final result was not a normal sketch, but two documents which together go under the name 'second Benelux structure sketch. The first is the concept sketch, made by a special arranged planning agency, and which included several provision to create the future spatial structure of the Benelux. The second is a decision nota, which contains several 'policy intentions' approved by the ministers. Both documents contain no essential decisions, mainly because the document has no official status and implementation would be hard. Another reason for the lack of real decisions is the fact that the ministers of the countries would enter the competence of another domestic ministry, which would be unacceptable. De Vries (2003) concludes that the described desired spatial structure in the sketch had almost no effect to the domestic planning discourses. Elements of the European spatial documents, such as the ESDP, had become stronger points of reference for spatial planning agencies. The relationship between the two documents forming the sketch, so the vision in the concept sketch and the programmes in the decision nota, was also insufficient.

In the end of 1990's another initiative for international cooperation is developed: The Schelde-Rijn delta cooperation, called after the delta of the two rivers. A group of actors, consisting of the ministers of spatial planning and the representatives of regional governments, agree, after a long process with contrasting interest and ideas, on several points of common
interest. The decision was to form a steering group which had the responsibility of making a spatial development perspective for the area. However, shortly after the presentation of the perspective a few years later, tension arose in the group. The central governments were not convinced of the added value of the perspective and the cooperation, and showed little commitment. At the same time projects were created, but these projects got little support. De Vries (2003) mentions the lack of rationale for working together. The Schelde-Rijn spatial perspective eventually obtained the status of a simple discussion nota. Based on this the actors committed themselves to more concrete actions. In 2006 the second Delta agreement was signed between the partners, which built on the results of the first agreement. This agreement ended in 2011 and no action was taken to start the process again.

So, the first structure sketch, the second structure sketch and the two Delta agreements all resulted in lessons from history how to deal with international territorial cooperation. Three kinds of tensions have always been noticeable in the processes. Firstly, there is a tension between creating a vision and programming in the form of projects. Creating a vision can be concluded to be almost impossible, while programming result in certain projects which all seem to miss a basis and lack of development. Secondly, there is a tension between commitment on one side and safeguarding your own interest on the other side. Both parties want to have something in there for themselves and commitment seemed to be hard to provide. Thirdly, there is a tension between the possibilities of using instruments for implementation and the status of the documents. Implementation to domestic policy could lead to the use of instruments, but the more informal status of the document makes it hard to be of any force.

Besides the transnational visions attention was also given to specific cross-border projects. In the Benelux ‘middengebied’, the cross-border area between The Netherlands and Flanders, infrastructural projects have a long and controversial history, costing more money and more time than expected. De Vries (2008) mentions three of these issues, the construction of a high-speed rail between Antwerp and Rotterdam, the deepening and widening of the Scheldt river, and the reopening of the Iron Rhine freight railway between Antwerp and the German Ruhrgebiet, which crosses Dutch territory. There are several reasons for the slow and costly development of cross border infrastructure (De Vries, 2008). Firstly, the dominance of a state perspective the idea of sovereign states with clear national interests is still very much alive. Secondly, there is a necessity to make use of issue linkage and compensation in order to stimulate the development, which has not been the case. Thirdly, there is a lack of awareness about the frames of references of the other parties on the other side of the border. Fourthly, every party is obtaining its own knowledge, while obtaining knowledge together, such as joint fact finding, is a more promising approach.
3.2.6 Current cooperation on spatial planning in the Benelux
Since the new millennium no new large spatial development documents have been produced. Instead the institutional structure of working together in de Benelux Secretariat General has been adjusted. In the structure (figure 7) there is a separation between the executive side of civil servants from the countries and a political side with deputies from ministries and provinces. Besides this there is also a separation between the levels two levels of cooperation, transnational and cross-border. The following paragraphs provide an elaboration on the working of the structure and the projects and plans coming from international cooperation.

Figure 7: Structure of cooperation in the Benelux Secretariat General (own elaboration, 2012)
The starting element in the structure is the long term work programme of the Benelux and the year plan. As mentioned before these plans define the priorities of the Benelux and have an influence on the attention given to certain subjects. The making of the plans starts with the Committee of Ministers of foreign affairs, who discuss on what issues they want to work together. The Advisory Council prepares the files and gives advice on these issues. This eventually leads to a long term plan, and several year plans at the Benelux Secretariat General, with priorities on what the civil servants need to focus on.

The priorities defined in the process are taken into account by the Special Committee on Spatial Planning (BCRO). In the action programme defined in 2006 it was agreed that the committee would focus on exchange of information in cross border development plans and current spatially related issues, like European spatial developments. Like this, the partners could learn from each other’s experiences and become aware of each other’s initiatives on the other side of the border. An example of this in practice was a meeting of civil servants from the different governments to discuss macro-regional strategies. Also, initiatives are taken by the Benelux Secretariat General themselves. Already in 2003 the Secretariat General provided an overview of the spatial planning systems in all countries to stimulate information exchange.

While the BCRO deals with translation issues, the VLANED en OOST commissions deal primarily with cross-border issues. Although the VLANED and OOST have a close link with the BCRO, they act individually. Because the focus of this thesis is on cooperation between Flanders and The Netherlands the OOST commission will not be elaborated further. The VLANED commission consists of 18 people (excluding employees of the Benelux Secretariat General) and comes together every few months. In the meetings evaluation takes place of the proposal done and new initiatives are brought forward by the members. These initiatives can also be brought forward by the work programme and year plan of the Benelux Secretariat General. The members of the commission have the responsibility to synchronize activities with the region they represent. Every few years they have to arrange the steering group meeting to get political commitment on new initiatives which they have discussed with each other.

The Steering group comes together every few years. The deputies discuss the issues proposed by the VLANED and define the issues of cooperation. By this political commitment is given to certain issues and the VLANED commission can work these issues out. The last Open Minds were held in 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2007. The 30th of May 2012 the next steering group meeting will be held in Tongeren, Belgium.

So, as can be concluded by the previous, the core of international cooperation for Flanders and The Netherlands is laying at the VLANED commission and at the BCRO. The VLANED commission is however far more active than the BCRO. An example of this activity is the proposal for plan consultation, which started in 2005. By this instrument the different actors
in the Netherlands and Flanders are able to inform others about the projects and plans and the possibilities of consultation. The regions on the other side of the border can respond to the projects and proposals. The Benelux has provided a manual for plan consultation, which will be distributed in 2012. Another instrument is the creating of the ‘action map’, a map of the area showing all developments and initiatives taken in the region. It is not a policy document, but simply combines all the policy documents of the regional governments together in one map. Besides these two successful initiatives, also less successful projects are undertaken and have provided little or no real results. The 30th of May 2012 the VLANED is providing an overview of its work and the Steering group has to focus what direction is going to be taken in the future.

3.3 Conclusion
Considering international cooperation the INTERREG initiative is the main instruments of the EU. Since becoming part of Cohesion Policy, the focus of the programmes shifted towards economic and social development, with a minor attention to spatial planning. The EU tries to further stimulate international cooperation by Objective 3, which allocates more funds towards international initiatives.

In the Benelux, international cooperation is historically rooted. The core of the current structure of international cooperation in the Benelux on spatial planning is on the VLANED, OOST and BCRO commissions. The TA2020 and other intergovernmental documents, such as the TA and ESDP are discussed in the meetings of these commissions. Therefore, the empirical part of the research focuses on these commissions, with an emphasis on the VLANED commission, being the more active of the two.
4. Theory and methods

4.1. Introduction
The previous chapters have provided an overview of the Territorial Agenda 2020 and issues related to this agenda, as well as the concept of territorial cooperation. The case study (Flanders-The Netherlands) has been described more detailed, including the way territorial cooperation has been functioning in the region and functions at the moment. In this chapter the theoretical and methodological framework is elaborated, which makes it possible to link the elements described to the empirical part of the research.

Using the two main different approaches, the institutional approach dominant in Cohesion policy and the territorial approach, dominant in planning, this chapter starts with an overview of the economic approach to cooperation. Since the emphasis of the empirical part is on the planning perspective, being applicable in the case study, an overview of theories concerning strategic spatial planning, multi-level governance and learnings followed after this. The theory combining the previous elements of the planning approach is called Europeanization and will figure as the final theoretical base for this study. An emphasis is put on a specific part of Europeanization, called horizontal Europeanization, which deals with international cooperation between different layers of government.

The theoretical framework, and more specifically, the theory of Europeanization, provides a view of how to establish a more analytical framework for looking into territorial cooperation at the implementation of the TA2020. The second part of this chapter focuses on this issue. Besides this the second part also elaborates the methodology, the methods which are used in collecting empirical data.

4.2 Theoretical framework

4.2.1 Cooperation from an economic perspective
Biologists, sociologists, psychologists and economics have researched cooperation between animals, people and companies since a long time (Gillinson, 2004). The theories resulting this research are for example focused on obtaining efficiency, persuading others and pure survival. From an institutional point of view, dominant in Cohesion policy, the economic perspective of cooperation is most important. Viewing cooperation from this perspective three motives can be distinguished (Wortelboer-Van Donselaar & Kolkman, 2008:18). Firstly, cooperation is there to increase efficiency and reduces costs. Examples are preventing overcapacity, spreading the risk for research & development and projects, economies of scale and scope (buy and sell stuff
together), improve the processes and a reducing transaction costs. Secondly, cooperation makes it possible to make use of each other knowledge, for example though an exchange of practices. Thirdly, cooperation can increase the position of an organization or entity. They can work together to obtain a better position on the international marked, reduce international competition by strengthening the own position, for example though begin a countervailing power, and they can work together in influencing political power.

Cooperation can take place on an operational, tactical and strategic level (Klein Woolthuis, 1999). On an operational level organization can work together with daily business, for example sharing personnel. On a tactical level, they can work together by supporting the policy of an organization, such as doing research together. On a strategic level, cooperation is seen from a long term perspective, for example creating a network together. Besides the levels of cooperation, it can take place on a vertical and a horizontal way. The vertical way refers to cooperation with other actors in another place in the process. For business this can be the sellers of the product, in general this can also mean for example municipalities or the EU. The horizontal way refers to cooperation with the competition. For organization in general this can also refer to cooperation with actors on the other side of the border.

4.2.1. Strategic and soft spatial planning

The economic view on cooperation is much enhanced in Cohesion Policy. However, in this thesis, the territorial approach with a planners perspective, is used for explaining cooperation. This perspective has evolved during the decades. Not much is left of modernist, rational, goal oriented planning in current planning practices (Te Brommelstoet, Hoetjes and Straatemeier, 2007). The complexity of modern life made planners in the 1970's and 1980's aware that their ideas of planning were outdated. This lead to post-modern ideas of planning, implying that the experts do not have all the answers, and that planning should become a democratic participative process where the focus is on how to plan, instead of what to plan. By the end of the millennium these concepts evolved and lead to more strategic approaches to planning, such as frameworks, perspectives and city regions (Albrechts, 2004). Previously in this research, the TA2020 has been called a strategic document or had been linked to the concept of strategic spatial planning. The question can be asked to what extend this is true.

Strategic planning can be defined as “linking long term-visions and knowledge to short term action (Te Brommelstoet et al, 2007). Currently the process of strategic planning involves an increasing number of parties, disagreement on the goals, what to plan and how to reach the goals. This is caused by the fact that in strategic planning the problems are poorly defined, that there is a lack of information about alternatives, baseline, background, but also about the range and content of the values, and the preferences and interests of the parties involved.
time, skills and resources make it harder to steer the process (Forester, 1989, 50). Strategic spatial planning can be classified into the ‘garbage can model’, a planning model where there is no agreement on objectives or on the methods (Te Brommelstoet et al., 2007).

The TA2020 is not exactly a strategic planning document, since it does not fit to the description mentioned. Although an increasing number of parties were represent during the creation and the discussion of the TA2020 concepts, agreement on certain issues was established quite easily. There was no real lack of information, since the data, made available by ESPON, has become of an added value to the process. But the TA2020 is on a high abstraction level, not comparable with ‘normal’ strategic plans, such as regional plans. Besides this the TA2020 can be discussed as having hardly any influence on the reality of spatial planning practices. Since this is the case, the TA2020 does not fit into the general concept of strategic spatial planning.

Instead of the term strategic planning, the term ‘soft’ spatial planning can be used to describe the planning category of the TA2020. Faludi (2010b) presents territorial cohesion policy as a form of soft planning on the European level. Soft planning focuses on the ‘soft’ category which is to be negotiated what challenges cut across boundaries. Vanautgaerden and Zaman (2010) suggest that spatial planners should not focus on the development of a supranational hard framework for spatial planning, since this would probably turn into a costly mistake and will not be accepted by the member states. Soft principles in European spatial planning can for example be horizontal policy coordination, multi-level governance, evidence-informed policy making and cooperation based upon functional areas (Vanautgaerden and Zaman, 2010). In it planning without plans, but planning by creating a framework for plans, by advocating principles to improve the planning processes on the lower levels. The focus is therefore not on the content but on the process of planning.

The idea of soft spatial planning is that the meaning are not cast in stone, but depend on who is using them, when and why (Faludi, 2010c). The concept is related to the idea of ‘soft spaces’: “configurations relevant to the real and shifting ongoing processes that become spatial visions or strategies” (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010). The concept is not about absolute space, but about relative space, which is an ad-hoc construct arising out of the interaction between actors. Relations between people are what create space. A full overview of the current theory of soft space can be found in Oleson (2011). What needs to be mentioned is that this form of planning does not replace the current forms, such as strategic planning, but is complementary by providing spatial visions for ‘soft’ spaces.
4.2.2 Multi level governance

Soft planning can for example be the promotion of multi-level governance. The concept can form a prerequisite for discussion planning policy on several levels of government and can therefore be enhanced in policies. Multi level governance, already mentioned several times in this research has been developed in the early 1990’s by Hoogheboom and Marks (2001). Multi-level governance makes a difference between the different levels of government, the European layer, the national layer, the regional layer and the local layer (Dühr et al., 2010: 97). The different layers interact with each other (vertical dimension) as well with relevant non-governmental actors within the same level, such as interest groups and NGO’s (horizontal dimension). Decision making in the concept of multi-level governance, is not done hierarchically, but all levels are actively engaged in the policy activities. This means that the system of implementation from national to local level, as described in the hierarchical model, does not function.

An important aspect multi-level governance is the incorporation of the word governance. Governance implies that there are complex interaction between governmental actors and non-state actors. As Nugent (2006:56) describes it: “Government now involves a wide variety of actors and processes beyond the state, the relationships between state and non-state actors have become less hierarchical and more interactive, and the essential ‘business’ of government has become the regulation of public policy activities rather than the redistribution of resources.”

Although advocated throughout European policies and politics, there is also critique on multi-level governance. Faludi (2011) critique is threefold. Firstly, he argues that there is no claim for speaking about multi-level territorial governance, since multi-level governance is always territorial, relevant to different governmental layers at different scales. Secondly, the concept can be describes as ambiguous. Multi-level governance refers mostly to vertical relation, so relation between different bodies of government, and not to a comprehensive process called governance. Multi level governance does not take into account the interaction between the government, private bodies and civil society. Thirdly, multilevel governance depicts territory as ‘hard spaces’ and not about soft spaces, as already explained in the previous paragraph.

4.2.3 Learning

In the case of international cooperation on spatial planning political scientists have dominated the field and have put an emphasis on policy transfer. Policy transfer is a concept whereby "knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past of present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). Colomb (2007) states that policy transfer cannot directly be related to the INTERREG programme, which
stimulates transboundary cooperation, because they involve voluntary, multilateral processes over a long time between various actors.

Instead of ‘policy transfer’, which can be discussed to be very hard, political scientists have called the process resulting from INTERREG cooperation 'lesson-drawing' or 'learning'. The emphasis has been put on the last concept of learning and it is now assumed that the European territorial cooperation can result in changes of practices, policies and strategies, resulting from the process of organizational, social and policy learning from the actors involved (Dühr et al., 2010). This learning can be individual, so between the project partners, be intra-organizational, so learning within the wider organization, or inter-organizational at a regional, national or transnational scale, where experiences and knowledge are used outside the cooperation projects and become of influence on national or regional practices (Böhme, 2003). In this last case cooperation may generate new understanding of certain concepts and ideas.

4.2.4 Europeanization

While the previous theories and approaches have provided an overview of international cooperation and can be applied to the empirical part of the research, they do not cover the entire perspective of implementation of European documents on the one side and international cooperation on the other side. An approach that combines these two elements is Europeanization, and more specifically horizontal Europeanization. The approach of Europeanization shares a focus on the role of actors in multi-level governance processes of policy-making in the EU and an intuitionalist perspective on explaining the sharing of ideas and ongoing integration in Europe (Dühr et al., 2010, 103).

There are many definitions and applications of the concept of Europeanization (Radealli, 2004). Olsen (2002) therefore argued that Europeanization is a fashionable term for which there are many definitions. Besides the usual problem of finding a commonly acknowledged definition in social science this diversity derives as well from the fact that different disciplines are dealing with the subject of Europeanization (Sittermann, 2006). So the definitions are related to the time they were created and the context in which they are defined. Some definitions were focused on historical Europe, some on cultural Europe and some on political Europe (Sittermann, 2006). While a more specific definition is lacking there are other ways of developing the approach of Europeanization. Howell (2004) for example attempts to further develop conceptualizations of Europeanization by synthesizing the methodological approaches.

In this thesis we take Europeanization in the broad sense of the word. Europeanization "describes the impacts of the EU on national polities, policies and politics, on the one hand, and on the influence of national discourses on the development of governance at the European level though the process of 'uploading', on the other (Dühr et al., 2010:103). Besides this Lenschow
(2006) adds that there is also a kind of horizontal Europeanization, which is created by interaction between EU member states and circular Europeanization, which is the process of uploading elements to the EU level to get them back in the national level in the form of new EU directives and initiatives for example. Dühr et al. (2010:104) states that these last two last elements are closely related to the ideas about policy transfer of Dolowitz and Marsh (2000). They suggest a framework which determines the policy transfer in a scale from copying, emulation, combinations and inspiration. The concept of Europeanization therefore can be seen as a combination of different phenomena and process of change in response to EU influences. The concept is linked to policy transfer, learning and lesson drawing (Dühr, Stead and Zonneveld, 2007), and instrumentation such as benchmarking, mainstreaming and the OMC can form a part of it (Bruno, Jacquot and Mandin, 2006).

Europeanization as an approach has been used in research on spatial planning since a few years. Böhme and Waterhout (2008) conceptualize the ‘Europeanization of spatial planning’ as a threefold process, which can be seen in figure 8. Firstly, there is the emergence of ‘planning for Europe’, which is the TA2020 for example, planning at a European scale. Secondly there is the influence of ‘planning for Europe’ on ‘planning in Europe’, such as the influence of the TA2020 or Territorial Cohesion on spatial planning systems, policies and practices. Thirdly, there is an influence of EU sectoral policies and European integration on ‘planning in Europe’ (Dühr et al., 2010: 360). The process of Europeanization is not self-evident, and takes a lot of time and can lead to different results in domestic planning systems, policies and practices.

Specific attention in this thesis is given to the concept of horizontal Europeanization, the cooperation between different member states in the process of Europeanization. In their article ‘The Europeanization of Spatial Planning though Territorial Cooperation’ Dühr, Stead and Zonneveld (2007) discusses the way INTERREG and intergovernmental works such as the ESDP
might influence the Europeanization of planning cultures. More specifically, Colomb (2007) describes the process of ‘policy transfer’ to the cognitive mechanisms of ‘Horizontal Europeanization’ and refers to the current evaluation practices and the qualitative impacts of European Transnational Cooperation, for example used in the INTERREG programmes. By combining evaluation practices and the concept of horizontal Europeanization Colomb (2007) has created a bottom-up framework for the evaluation and conceptualization of learning in transnational concepts. This framework is used in the empirical part of the research, to describe the process of horizontal Europeanization in the Benelux.

4.2. Analytical framework

4.2.1 Creating a framework

The literature mentioned provides an opportunity to create an analytical framework for the Europeanization process of spatial planning in the Benelux. Figure 9 visualizes the process of Europeanization, by making a distinction between the Flemish side on the left and the Dutch side on the right. At the core in the top there is the TA2020. The TA2020 is visualized as a separate entity, although the previous chapters have already elaborated on the fact that the TA2020 is part of a play with other instruments and official EU legislation. From the TA2020 a process of downloading occurs, which can be seen as the top-down process of the influencing domestic spatial planning and sectoral planning in the member states and eventually in the regions. On the other side the bottom-up process creates an opportunity to let initiatives from the regions and member states get a place in the European, and in this case, the intergovernmental framework. A circular process takes place with ideas translated in the TA2020 by the Dutch and Flemish planning bodies in order to get them in the intergovernmental framework, to download them afterwards. The horizontal process between the member states is there to discuss the TA2020, to use it and learn from it. The horizontal process is not specifically between the member states, or between the regions, but compasses a combination of cross-border and transnational work. The arrow is therefore drawn between the level of the national and regional bodies. In the following paragraphs the four elements of Europeanization will be discussed in more detail.

Although the four elements of Europeanization seem to work independently from each other, this is not the case. The visualization already shows overlap between the elements, however, all the processes of Europeanization are related with each other. What is downloaded influences the uploading process, what has been brought in circular is further discussed at the horizontal level etc. All elements contribute to Europeanization and can never be seen completely distinguished from each other.
4.2.2 Downloading

The focus of Europeanization in the early years was on downloading European or intergovernmental work and legislation to lower levels, such as the member states and the regions. This top down conceptualization can be described as “the processes, construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and the incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and sub national) discourse, political structures and public policies (Radealli, 2004).

In the literature three adaptation mechanisms are distinguished in the downloading process. Firstly, EU policy “may trigger domestic change by prescribing specific institutional requirements with which member states must comply, with community policies often explicitly directed at replacing existing domestic regulation arrangements” (Dühr, et al. 2010). In this case, the member states are transformation their structures to the EU policy or legal framework (Saurugger, 2006). Secondly, there is a process of accommodation, where European policy or legalization may affect domestic arrangements by altering structures and thereby the distribution of power and resources between different actors. Thirdly, the weakest adaptation mechanism concerns the absorption of EU policy. The focus is on altering the beliefs and expectorations of domestic actors.
4.2.3 Uploading
Uploading concerns the way concepts and ideas are transformed from the level of the regional and national actors to the EU framework. Thereby, it is a bottom up approach towards the development of EU institutions. Olsens (2002) definition of Europeanization clearly takes the bottom-up approach in mind. He defines Europeanization as “the development of governance at the EU level. This signifies centre building with a collective action capacity, providing some degree of political coordination and coherence. Formal legal institutions and a normative order based on some overarching constitutive principles, structures and practices both facilitate and constrain the ability to make and enforce binding decisions and to sanction non-compliance”.

Important in respect to the bottom up approach is the need to investigate power relations (Wilshlade, Yuill and Mendez, 2003). The relevant actors needed to be indentified and the motivations and forces that determine their choices need to be clarified. This is done by policy transfer, which is action oriented intentional learning, which takes place consciously and results in policy action. Uploading policy and ideas from member states to the EU level is never on a one to one base. Not one state can consistently have its preferred model transferred to the EU level, because the EU regulatory framework, which can best be described as a patchwork of countries (Wilshlade, Yuill and Mendez, 2003).

4.2.4 Circular
As can be seen in figure 9 seeing Europeanization in the light of a circular process, means that actors at regional, but more at national governements , seek to upload their domestic policy ideas and models to the EU level, while on the other side download the same ideas from the EU level with the idea that it can change the domestic political interests (Dühr et al, 2007). The idea of circular Europeanization has as a main goal to get the ideas integrated in domestic policy, while not intervening in the domestic policy itself.

It is hard to investigate the phenoma of circular Europeanization because ideas and sturctures that are uploaded to the EU level and downloaded at the same time can take different forms. Research has for example been done by Waterhout and Stead (2007), who investigated the circular process of Europeanization in relation to INTERREG B and agrue that the ESDP influence is not always tranceable. Dühr et al. (2007) therefore stats that the processes which effect the cognitive logic of actors can become more visiable over the coming years. However, this is never sure, while institutional and political resistance can lead to a misfit between the EU and national policies and rules. This will eventually have effect on the implementation.
4.2.5 Horizontal

While the attention was first only focused on the uploading and downloading part of Europeanization, nowadays the concept also encompasses changing policy paradigms, new shared norms and rules (Colomb, 2007: 351). Horizontal Europeanization refers to the transfer process between member states individually. This can take place independently of EU influence, although EU institutions are able to facilitate learning processes. Horizontal mechanisms of Europeanization are processes without any pressure to conform to EU policies, but rather they are processes triggered by “the diffusion of ideas and discourses about the notion of good policy and best practice” (Radaelli, 2003, p. 41).

The focus of research on horizontal Europeanization has been on intergovernmental work and INTERREG. In this thesis the framework created by Colomb (2007) is used to indicate horizontal Europeanization in the Benelux. Colomb (2007) focuses on the learning process and distinguishes five steps with scales of analyses.

4.3 Operationalization

4.3.1 General operationalization

Operationalizing, in order to provide the possibility to empirically research the phenomena of Europeanization, is rather difficult. This is mainly due to the fact that the Europeanization is a complex whole, and the different elements do not function independently from each other. However, in this paragraph an attempt is made to define indicators on Europeanization and especially horizontal Europeanization. Since these indicators are questionable, they are only used as a tool for analyses, and do not provide an exact understanding. The indicators provide insight what to look at, not what needs to be measured exactly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Europeanization</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Downloading     | - Goodness of fit  
|                 | - Domestic institutional structures  
|                 | - Actors preferences or strategies  
|                 | - Absorption, accommodation or transformation  |
| Uploading       | - Power relations  
|                 | - Distinguish between policy goals, content and instruments  
|                 | - Copying, emulation, combination or inspiration  |
| Circular        | - Policy shaping  
|                 | - Political resistance  |
| Horizontal      | - Rationale for transnational cooperation (types, intensity and scope)  
|                 | - Recording learning, evaluation of learning and evaluation for learning  
|                 | - Individual to organization learning, regional to transnational learning  
|                 | - Organization learning to changes in policies and practices  
|                 | - Local impacts to European added value  |

Figure 10: Operationalization of indicators

When analyzing the downloading of the TA2020 to the domestic level three elements are looked at specifically (Whislade, Yuill and Mendes, 2003). Firstly, the question rises concerning the goodness of fit. It answers the question whether the TA2020 fits into the ideas and structures of
the member states. If the policy fits in well with EU policy, there is no impact, if it is completely different than EU policy, it will be impossible to adapt (Bulmer and Radialli, 2004). Secondly, the domestic institutional structures need to be taken into account. These structures determine to what level downloading and implementing of the TA2020 is possible. Thirdly, a closer look has to be given to the actors' preferences and strategies. These determine how the document will be downloaded and used. The downloading paragraph will be closed by concluding an emphasis on absorption, accommodation or transformation.

The uploading process will be empirically researched by looking at the power relations and the way policy goals, instruments or content are uploaded to the EU level. In this way specific attention is given to the writing process of the TA2020, but also to previous documents, such as the ESDP and the TA. What can be concluded is that there is some kind of copying, emulation, combination or inspiration going on at the EU level.

Since the circular process is hard to analyze, due to its complexity of being a combination of the downloading and uploading processes, indicators are hard to account for. The circular process is mainly connected to policy shaping, how a domestic policy changes due to the uploading process, and to political resistance, referring to the way concepts get uploaded and the way these concepts find domestic resistance. The conclusion of this circular process is related to the way the circular process is used, without defining its results.

4.3.2 Operationalization of Horizontal Europeanization

The operationalization of horizontal Europeanization is done by using the framework created by Colomb (2007). Figure 11 provides an overview of this framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Scale of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Establishing the rationale for transnational cooperation between project partners</td>
<td>Project partnership as a whole; individual institutional project partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Recording learning in transnational networks: evaluation of learning, evaluation for learning</td>
<td>Project partnership as a whole; subprojects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Conceptualizing the observed processes: from individual to organizational learning, from regional to transnational learning?</td>
<td>Individual project participants; institutional partners; project partnership as a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Linking processes to outcomes: from organizational learning to changes in policies and practices</td>
<td>Institutional project partners; other external stakeholders at the regional and transnational territorial scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) From local impacts to 'European added value': drawing lessons on the role of INTERREG in the ‘Europeanization of spatial planning’</td>
<td>Transnational area; INTERREG programming areas; the EU territory as a whole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11: A bottom-up framework for the evaluation and conceptualization of learning in transnational cooperation projects (Colomb, 2007)
In the first step of the framework the rationale between the project partners for transnational cooperation is being defined. The question rises on what issues the project partners think the VLANED needs to be dealt with and what the geography of the scope needs to be. Considering the first it is important to make a separation between common issues and transnational issues. The boundary between these issues is not clearly cut. If the focus is on transnational issues, the exchange of experiences and good practices has an higher priority than finding common solutions, which is the case in common issues. Considering the geography of the cooperation, the scale needs to be defined. Spatial closeness, comparable structures, spatial patterns and development challenges form ingredients in the development of a cooperation.

The second step concerns the actual progress of cooperation and learning, whereby the learning process of transnational cooperation is recorded. Colomb (2007) distinguishes two types of learning, the evaluation of learning and the evaluation for learning. The evaluation of learning is an ongoing process, embedded into the cooperation, while evaluation for learning is done at the end of a cooperation and project. There are multiple ways to record learning. In this case the study of De Jong and Edelenbos (2007) will be used as a source of inspiration. Firstly, social interaction patterns and how they evolve need to be recorded. Following this, the processes of conceptual replication need to be examined, such as a shift in the use of concepts, wording, symbols and style. Since this study is less detailed than De Jong and Edelenbos (2007) conducted, these elements are researched in a broad way, also using the TA2020 a motor for inspiration.

The third step is the process of conceptual learning. In this step a specific look is given to the process of individual learning to organizational learning and from regional to transnational learning. Individual learning is learning by a person, while organization learning is defined as "when individuals acting on behalf of an organization and interaction with each other in the organization, learn in such way that the beliefs, attitudes or values of relevant organizational members change and ... organization behavior changes' (Wolman & Page, 2020:478). So the question rises whether the organizational behavior in total changes with all the discussions which are held. Is there learning within the organization? Besides this the third step concerns the process from regional learning to transnational learning. Hereby, learning between organizations is the core issue. Are projects that have been done, or are conducted at the moment, affect the learning of the organization? How do other organizations affect the learning process in this matter?

The fourth step is linking processes to outcomes. The question here is to what extent the increased level of knowledge and awareness is utilized and implemented. In this respect it is relevant to what degree this changes the working routines in partner organizations. Is the knowledge transferred to other levels, such as the level of the region, but also to other
organizations? Does it influence strategic planning policies and practices of the transnational territorial scale? Colomb (2007) distinguishes several types of policy learning and their effect on partner organizations: a new understanding of certain concepts, translated into operational decisions concerning spatial structure, changes in practices and methods of ‘doing things’, changes in ways of conceptualizing policies (different scales, new concepts) and changes in the way partnerships are set up with other actors.

Finally, the last step links the analysis of changes to the wider theoretical debate on the Europeanization of planning. More specifically, the link is elaborated between the different concepts of uploading, downloading and circular Europeanization, and the steps analyzed in the horizontal Europeanization. The main question here is whether the transnational cooperation has lead to a further Europeanization of spatial planning, and to what extent the TA2020 has contributed to this.

4.4 Methodology

The analytical and operational framework created is used for the empirical research. In this paragraph the methodology, the methods of obtaining and using data, is elaborated. Several means are used to collect data. These are reports, interviews and literature, which are used in different stages of the research.

In the first part of the research the focus is on downloading, uploading and circular Europeanization to the domestic, mainly national, level. To get global insights on these issues scientific and popular literature is used. By this, statements on the way the Dutch and Flemish government try to steer the intergovernmental processes can be sketched out. The scientific literature mainly points out the Dutch involvement in intergovernmental spatial policy documents, while the popular literature discussed both the Dutch and Flemish relation to these kind of documents. The advantage of using literature is that it shows already in-depth views of the subjects. The disadvantage is that it is not enough to answer the main questions and besides this the literature looks from a specific angle, making it hard to be critical about the subject (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007: 227).

Additional to the scientific literature in both parts of the empirical research, reports of the VLANED and BCRO are analyzed. The internship at the Benelux makes it possible to access these files. Since there are only a small number of reports, because of the small number of meetings, it is easy to screen them on European related issues. This is done by looking at the index and searching for key words. Special techniques for analyzing are not necessary in this case. Using the reports has the advantage to easily screen on what European issues are dealt with. But it is also a disadvantage, since the reports can be considered as a small summary what is discussed during the meetings. Although the report are finalized interactive, sent back to the
representatives in the meetings and officially approved in meetings followed, it provides just a slight overview of the real discussion held at that moment.

After analyzing the relevant literature and documents, interviews are conducted with several civil servants. In making questionnaires for these interviews two main differences can be created: on the level of pre-structuring of the interrogation and on the level of openness of the questions (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007: 230). The first refers to the way it is predetermined what is going to be asked, how and what the exact order of the questions is. The second refers to the level of freedom the respondent has to answer the individual questions, a result of how they are formulated. Two groups of interviews are conducted. For the first part interviews are conducted with two civil servants from the national planning bodies, for the second part interviews are conducted with civil servants from the regions.

The two national civil servants are representatives of the planning ministries in Flanders and The Netherlands, responsible for European and international affairs. Besides this, they are both involved in the VLANED and the BCRO commission. The interviews provide the opportunity to get a more detailed picture of the process of downloading and uploading in relation to the TA2020. Since the process of Europeanization is not analyzed in detail, the interviews have a very open character, with the intent of trying to figure out what downloading, uploading and circular processes are related to the TA2020 in a broad sense. While the questions are all open, so without predetermined answers, a structure of the main subjects and issues is listed. This is done to stay on the subject, to be sure to not forget about certain elements, but also to make a comparison possible between the Flemish and the Dutch respondent. After the interviews, a report is written and send to the respondents. In this report the respondents are able to change what they considered to be false or wrongly interpreted and by this the most reliable answers are adopted. A disadvantage of this is that the representatives can change a lot about the report and get the critical notes out of it. The advantage is the openness of the conversation, making a broad discussion possible.

For the second part interviews are taken with several regional actors. The interviews conducted here are structured along the line of the analytical framework presented. A questionnaire, which can be found in the attachment, is the red line story, and the interviews follow the questions as formulated in this questionnaire. Compared to the interviews with the national representatives the structure is more predetermined, making it easier to compare the answers with each other. The level of openness of the questions remains however the same, having the advantage to let the respondent defend his arguments and bring up certain issues. To get an even spread between the Flemish and the Dutch regions, two Dutch and two Flemish regional actors are interviewed. For the first interviews the two adjacent provinces of Limburg (NL and BE) are chosen, while their culture might be more comparable and interesting to
analyze more detailed. Both provinces border a lot of different regions (Germany, Wallonia, The Netherlands or Flanders), and the regions might therefore be more internationally oriented. The third interview was done with one of the most active actors of the VLANED, the province of North-Brabant and the fourth with a less active actor, the province of West-Flanders. By differentiating in the level of activity it is to see the differences of opinion between the less and more active regions when discussing the TA2020.

4.5 Conclusion and discussion theoretical framework

The theory and the analytical framework are a combination of choices. The analytical framework for horizontal Europeanization is mainly inspired by the work of Colomb (2007). Nevertheless, discussions need to be raised on what base she created this framework and to what extent this framework provides a valid tool for ‘measuring’. The empirical analyses thereby can provide new insights on the use of this tool. As a critical comment it needs to be mentioned that the framework provided by Colomb (2007) has been focusing on INTERREG programmes and new cooperation initiatives. However, the research object, the VLANED and BCRO, are not new established initiatives, but are both institutionalized, already active for a decade or more. This might influence the amount of learning between the actors involved, and the question is to what extent Colomb’s framework is still of scientifically valuable.

Considering the methodology, the interviews are the main method while they provided more in-depth insights. Alternative methods, such as a questionnaire handed out to all the actors would not provide the same in-depth analyses of the subject. However it would make a comparison between the different actors easier. It can therefore be concluded that the chosen methodology is of influence and the advantage and disadvantages of it should be kept in mind during the empirical part of the research.
5. Results

5.1 Introduction
Following the analytical framework elaborated in the previous chapter, the empirical results are organized in the same matter. This chapter starts with the concept of uploading, analyzing the way domestic spatial ideas are uploaded to the intergovernmental frameworks. The download part describes the way The Netherlands and Flanders have used and are using concepts of intergovernmental spatial policy documents, and the circular part shows how elements that are uploaded, are downloaded at the same moment. The focus of the research is however on horizontal Europeanization, the way the TA2020 is used in structures of international cooperation. In the conclusion the four parts of Europeanization are combined and put into the framework. The discussion in the last paragraph deals with the fact if Europeanization takes place, on what way, and if the TA2020 plays a role in this process.

5.2 Uploading

5.2.1 The Netherlands
The Netherlands have historically played a big role in making intergovernmental spatial policy documents. Faludi (2002) describes the Dutch role in the making of the ESDP more detailed. France and The Netherlands have been active in organizing spatial planning conferences in the 1990’s. In 1991, shortly before the Maastricht summit, the Dutch organized an informal council in The Hague. This council agreed to the Dutch proposal to establish a committee of senior national officials for spatial planning to meet regularly as the Committee on Spatial Development (CSD) (Williams, 2002). In the ongoing process of the ESDP the Dutch organized more conferences and meetings between ministers of spatial development. The reasons for the Dutch to be active in this field can be originated from the domestic view on planning. As the Dutch see planning as an important tool to organize the country, they consider it of importance in the development of the EU.

Besides organizing conferences, the Dutch have also been active in uploading goals, instruments and policy into the ESDP. In the early days of making the ESDP, the Dutch National Spatial Planning Agency introduced the new domestic discourse on the European Level (Waterhout, Meijer en Zonneveld, 2003). This discourse was developed during the 1980’s and can be referred as the creation of a spatial-economic structure. In this structure, certain areas and urban regions, referred to as urban nodes, are playing the most important role in the competition between countries. Hereby the discourse functions as a combination of the old
distributional policy in combination with the neo-liberal ideas of competitiveness. It can be stated that these domestic policy ideas announced the European concept of polycentricity (Waterhout, Meijer en Zonneveld, 2003). This concept eventually became the main idea in the ESDP. Besides this, the Dutch also succeeded in including global competitiveness as one of the objectives in the draft ESDP, which was reformulated in the final version as balances competitiveness (PLB, 2009: 64). Next to policy ideas, the Dutch also were active in putting instruments to the European level. In the preparations of the ESDP the Dutch proposed certain cartographic representations of the EU’s territory (Faludi, 1999) However, the core of this was removed from the final version of the document.

After the ESDP the attention from the Dutch for European Spatial policy documents was reduced. In the process of making the TA the Dutch government was still relatively active, organizing a meeting in Rotterdam in 2004 that resulted in a political agenda until 2007 (Waterhout, 2008). The Dutch point of view on in the process of making the TA was that there is no need for new rules and structures, such as a council of spatial development. However, there is a need for a Territorial Impact Assessment, incorporated in the impact assessment which already exists. Besides this the Dutch were in favor of creating a definition for territorial cohesion and thereby send a political message. “The text is written that the European Commission can put it without problems aside. There is no mentioning what the Commission needs to be doing” (Benelux, 2007). Another issue which is not supported by the Dutch is the diversion between Urban and Territorial, which looks artificial in their opinion. The balance between Urban and Territorial is lost, with more and more attention for urban elements like architecture, which have no added value.

In the process following the TA, the enthusiasm and the efforts done by Dutch politicians and civil servants diminished (Van der Burg & Van Maarseveen, 2012). The main idea here was that the Dutch government wanted to reduce costs, and saw a reduction on the cost on international cooperation on spatial planning as an appropriate measure. The provinces, actively involved in cross-border spatial planning, were able to make sure that a small amount was kept available for certain purposes, but the focus on intergovernmental spatial policy was reduced. The ministry of Infrastructure and Environment mentions that the Dutch goal at the moment is to reduce their contribution to the EU and reducing pumping around flows of money. Because European Spatial Policy documents are too much vague talk and no concrete action results from it, the government is less interested in it (Van der Burg & Van Maarseveen, 2012).

The attitude of the Dutch government influences the uploading process to the TA2020. In making the TA2020 several groups were set up. Firstly, a joint working group was created with partners from several countries. Secondly, this group delegated experts to the TA Drafting team. In none of these teams Dutch representatives were active, showing the low commitment the
Dutch government gives to the TA2020. That this commitment is low, can partly be explained by the current situation in the Netherlands. The TA2020 addresses issues that are not very relevant to Western-Europe and the Netherlands. "It is not that everything is perfect, but there is already a lot of comprehensive professional cooperation, compared to the new member states. The story of the TA2020 therefore gets another charisma" (Alsters, 2012).

To conclude it can be stated that in the early years of the European spatial planning the process was characterized by copying and emulation, while in the current situation the uploading process can be best described with the word inspiration.

5.2.2 Flanders

In contradiction to The Netherlands, Flanders had not been active in the ESDP process. In the end of the 1990's Flanders adopted its first Spatial Structure plan and a non biding action programme. A central concept in this plan was the Flemish core area, called the Flemish Diamond. Incidental attempts were made to put this concept on the ESDP agenda, but no direct links were established with the ESDP process (Faludi, 2004). Since the Flemish structure plan was the first of its kind, the priority of Flanders was given to internal orientation, such as the rebuilding of the planning system, building a planning tradition and developing institutional arrangements (Litwick and Gradus, 2000).

The reason for the lack of activity can be partially explained by the planning tradition, but besides this the European argument in Flanders had not really been developed yet (Litwick and Gradus, 2000). Because of this, the Flemish administration in the early 2000’s found it hard to make personnel available for international work (Faludi, 2004). This can also be seen in the INTERREG programmes, were Flanders does not figure among the lead partners, but the Flemish partners mainly participate in five projects. In the process of making the TA the Flemish government states that the TA draft at that moment was still not very concrete and hardly an improvement compared to the ESDP (Benelux, 2007).

Although the number of personnel has not been increased, the attention for European, intergovernmental spatial planning has done so. For the TA2020, Flanders invested a lot in the document (De Bruijn, 2012). This was mainly a result of the presidency of Belgium in the second part of 2010. Belgium for example contributed to the process of writing the TA2020 by participating in the writers team. Considering the policy goals, content and instruments, Flanders was active at uploading content, such as the concept of ‘comprehensive regional development’ (gebiedsgericht beleid) and together with Wallonia, the other part of Belgium, they mainly focused on uploading a stronger link between the decision processes and the concept of Territorial Cohesion (De Bruijn, 2012). Because of the contribution of Flanders and other countries, The TA2020 does not only emphasize the content, but also the monitoring,
evaluation, partnerships and territorial governance. Therefore it can be seen as a document with modern ideas about planning (De Bruijn, 2012).

The struggle for power is less important in the uploading process of the TA2020, as it might have been before. De Bruijn (2012), responsible for international affairs for spatial planning in Flanders, mentions that the document on itself has a weak status. Therefore, not only the uploading process, but also establishing an agenda and the gathering of ministers responsible for spatial development in the EU, is of importance. To conclude it can be stated that in the earlier processes of the ESDP and the TA, Flanders hardly contributed or inspired, while in the process of making the TA2020, Flanders was a source of inspiration.

5.2.3 Conclusion uploading

A clear difference can be distinguished between The Netherlands and Flanders when it comes to uploading to the intergovernmental policy documents. In the 1990’s the Netherlands, together with France, was the dominant force in the creation of the ESDP. Concepts and ideas were uploaded to the European scale and found their way into the ESDP. For Flanders the ESDP process had no real meaning and the focus was on the internal organization of the domestic planning. The Dutch, advertisers of spatial planning, tried to establish power for spatial planning in Europe. After the ESDP and the TA processes, the documents might not have done was it was intended for by the Dutch, and also the domestic attitude changed towards planning and international affairs. The Dutch stopped investing a lot in these kinds of intergovernmental documents, and called them vague and non interesting. New players therefore had the opportunity to show their opinion. In the process of making the TA2020 this shift can clearly be seen between The Netherlands and Flanders. While Flanders tried to contribute to the writing team and uploading concepts to the European level, the Dutch pulled more or less away from the field of intergovernmental spatial planning. So, to provide a conclusion, the shift of status of the documents (the power relations) and the domestic views of planning and interests in European affairs were the dominant forces in this shift of uploading.

To the idea of the author, this shift has mainly to do with the basic ideas of culture and therefore is linked to the European models of society. The Netherlands, from a culture of consultation (polder model) and a social-democratic state, has shifted in the 1990’s towards more neo-liberal thoughts, where direct results, money, efficiency, ranking etc do matter more than before. The ESDP and the TA had cost a lot of efforts by the Dutch in establishing it and although commitment was given by other countries, the document did not have its intended effects. At least not the effects the Dutch expected it to have. These small effects were also caused by the way spatial planning in institutionalized in other countries, for example if there are ministers responsible for planning or not, and what relation these ministers have with other
sectoral departments. While anti-European thoughts got more attention in The Netherlands, with the idea of contributing less, the Dutch more or less gave up on these intergovernmental processes.

By being active in the intergovernmental processes, the Dutch made a contribution in establishing a community. Other players, such as Eastern European countries, and also Flanders, have obtained a planning platform, where planning issues can be discussed with each other. While neo-liberal thoughts might be less prominent or central planning departments might be stronger in these countries, the process of making the TA2020 can have a stronger value.

5.3 Downloading

5.3.1 The Netherlands

Since the downloading and uploading part are interdependent, it is important, when analyzing downloading, to keep the uploading process in mind. Besides this, it needs to be mentioned that the concept of downloading does not only refer to the implementation or application of the TA2020, or intergovernmental policy documents in total. As is already explained in this research, the implementation process of certain documents is done though multiple levels (EU, national, regional) and though sectoral policies. Therefore analyzing documents, and especially planning documents, on the implementation level is highly subjective. In this part downloading refers to the way the concepts are used in domestic planning ideas, thoughts, and discussions. So these paragraphs show how the TA2020 is used in the processes, not how it is applied and what the effects of this are.

The Netherlands had been highly active in uploading concepts to the ESDP. This had its influence on the way these concepts, ideas and goals were used in domestic spatial policy and discussions. Since the uploaded concepts were already mentioned in the national discourses and discussions, the real influence of the ESDP was rather low (Faludi, 2006:113). An ESPON report (2005) mentions that the Dutch have partial compliance between national policies and ESDP policy aims, but without any significant impact from the ESDP on national policies. When considering the goodness of fit it can be considered very high, because the concepts and ideas were very closely related to the domestic ideas. With an active planning ministry at that time, which was still of influence, the domestic institutional structures were optimal for the implementation. Although these two elements can be considered as close to optimal, Zonneveld (2005) mentions that the ESDP, or in general the European level, did not get a foot on the ground in the early 2000's. As explained before, a shift occurred in thinking about Europe and intergovernmental spatial policy documents. Although the fourth National Planning Report in 1988 also took a broad 'European layer' into the discussion, the fifth planning in 2004 is one step
backwards to the entire focus on the national level. The reason for this was that the makers of the report faced criticism and lack of interest by their own colleges at the ministry and found that their negotiating partners in other ministries were indifferent or even hostile. Therefore it can be stated that the influence of the actors preferences and the strategies undertaken have been of influence on the downloading of the ESDP. Downloading was simply absorption of information.

The situation did not change at the process of downloading the TA in 2007. The use of this document by the ministry of spatial planning was limited. Van Maarseveen and Van der Burg (2012) mention that the TA did not focus on things that were really interesting, and therefore no real commitment was there to undertake action. As mentioned in the uploading part, this had to do with the general interest and ideas of European spatial planning, since the ESDP. On the Dutch side the implementation of the document was not continued. Although the exact reasons are unknown, two different elements contributed to this lack of implementation. Firstly, no direct funds were connected to the TA and that did not improve the implementation process. The TA is in that sense a product with a lot of subjects, but little instruments and concrete points. Secondly, it was unclear who was supposed to do what. Member states had to take initiatives, but no one knew was going to do what. A few member states tried to pull this process by showing initiatives or making programmes, but this had not affected The Netherlands. Whereas the downloading seemed limited, the Dutch used the definition of Territorial Cohesion in their implementation agenda of their national spatial plan, and tried by project subsidies and co financing to influence the INTERREG projects (Benelux, 2007).

In the process of downloading the TA2020 not much has changed. Two elements of the TA2020 are considered of interest to the Dutch ministry responsible for spatial planning (Van Maarseveen and Van der Burg, 2012). Firstly, there is attention for Territorial Impact Assessments. The Netherlands would like to see the concept of TIA elaborated more specifically with a structured systemic. Secondly, the attention to cities has been emphasized. According to the roadmap, The Netherlands will also be active in further working out these two points (Polish presidency, 2011). It can be concluded that in this sense the TA2020 can be considered a small source of inspiration, but nothing concrete. Because of this lack of interest on the national level, the TA2020 is not passed on to the regional level. For example Alsters (2012), responsible for international affairs for the province of Dutch Limburg, mentions a lack of feeding of information by the ministry. The ministry does hardly show any initiative to provide the province with European documents, like the TA2020.

To conclude it can be stated that the downloading had been very low, especially because of the actor’s preferences and strategies. The concepts of the TA and the TA2020 were seen as not or just slightly contributing to the national discussions and discourses. What Van
Maarseveen and Van der Burg (2012) consider as more important in the future, is what the European Commission wants and is planning to do. The role of the Commission, with the concept of Territorial Cohesion as a competence, is very complicated. However, it can change the way funds are allocated and spatial issues will be dealt with.

5.3.2 Flanders

Spatial planning was, and still is, not strongly institutionalized in Flanders. The department has a lack of capacity for spatial positioning and can hardly deal with European issues, like intergovernmental spatial policy documents (Faludi, 2006:133). The way the department responsible for spatial planning (RWO) deals with EU issues, is mainly focused on ‘preventing disasters’ which flow out of sectoral legislation which influences spatial planning (De Bruin, 2012). An example for this is the way Flanders deals with Environmental Assessments. Besides this Flanders also has attention for the policy of territorial cohesion, and for cross-border spatial planning.

In the process of downloading the ESDP Flanders has hardly been influenced by it. The ESPON report (2005) on the application of the ESDP mentions that the use of ESDP ideas has been more influential in Wallonia than in Flanders. This can partly be explained by the higher dependency level of Wallonia in the European context, such as support from Structural funds. Although modest, the ESDP influenced the planning discourse of Flanders first, and thereafter the planning policies followed. It can be stated that the goodness of fit of the ESDP is not the main problem for the lack of downloading, since the concepts can be integrated into the context of Flanders, but the reasons are laying in the institutional structure, being the weak position of spatial planning in general and the department responsible for spatial planning.

The previous situation has not changed much. Flanders has just slightly been involved in the TA process in 2007, and was not involved in the action programme. Flanders considers the TA as a broad framework, which tries to influence national and European sectors, and not spatial planning. The Agenda does not focus on specific regions, and is therefore to abstract for implementation. However, in influencing EU policy, it can be of an added value (De Bruin, 2012). What a problem is in Flanders, and some other countries, is that the ministers responsible for spatial planning sign the TA and show commitment. However, the ministers of the related sectors might not support the ideas of this minister and a lot of efforts need to be taken to convince them.

Although Flanders was more active in the uploading process of the TA2020, downloading it is also done minimalistic, due to the reasons mentioned before. The department of spatial planning (RWO) focuses on domestic issues and tries to integrate and cooperate with other national departments. An example for this is the plan ‘Flanders in Action’ which is a regional
translation to the Europe 2020 strategy. One of the concepts in this plan is the spatial concept 'Flanders as a green city region' (De Bruin, 2012). By this the department of spatial planning tries to be of influence on the Agenda 2020 and sectoral policies.

As can be concluded, the institutional structure of Flanders, with a weak planning department, is the main reason for the lack of downloading of the TA2020. The concepts of the TA2020 have little influence, although the Flemish department is aware of hooking up with the Agenda 2020. This idea is advocated continuously though the TA2020. For the future, the Flemish Spatial Planning is focusing on translating the principles of territorial cohesion to programmes of Flemish cohesion policy and European cohesion policy, and thereby tries to be of influence on these programmes.

5.3.3 Conclusion downloading

As well as in The Netherlands as in Flanders the ESDP has just slightly been downloaded. However, the underlying reasons are different. For The Netherlands, who contributed a lot in uploading to the ESDP, the lack of downloading is a result of the concepts already been mentioned in the discourses, and the negative attitude towards European affairs, which started in mid 2000’s. The preferences of the actors and strategies undertaken are dominant in this respect. For Flanders, this was not the case. In Flanders, the domestic institutional setting, with a weak position of spatial planning in relation to other sectors, can be seen as the main reason. Although the position of spatial planning in The Netherlands and Flanders has changed slightly, the downloading process has not shown any difference. Also the fact that Flanders contributed to the uploading of the TA2020, has not changed the way concepts are used, although the Flemish planning department is hooking up with the EU 2020, by advocating the concept of the green city region.

The fact that the downloading from the TA and the TA2020 has been less, is in line with the earlier conclusions in this research. As mentioned the TA2020 tries not to be of influence on domestic spatial policy, but focuses mainly on (European) sectoral policies. Since this is the case both the Dutch and Flemish departments see the future of intergovernmental spatial planning as hardly contributing. Both are more interested in the way the concept of Territorial Cohesion is picked up by the commission and which role this concept is going to play in the Cohesion Policy and the upcoming programmes.
5.4 Circular

5.4.1 The Netherlands
Analyzing circular Europeanization is focusing on the concepts which are uploaded and downloaded for further policy shaping and for reducing political resistance at the domestic level. For The Netherlands, circular Europeanization in the ESDP process is less evident. The main ideas brought up to the European level were already applied in domestic policy. However, these ideas might have gained extra power in putting them at the European level. Since uploading was hardly done in the TA, circular Europeanization is not relevant in this process.

For the TA2020 the Netherlands hardly uploaded to the European level. However, the Dutch Ministry of Internal Affairs (BZK) is trying to get the importance of cities incorporated in European Cohesion Policy (Van Maarsenveen and Van der Burg, 2012). By this they try to get the city related policies higher on the agenda. Although not referring to the TA2020 directly, this is a kind of circular Europeanization, affecting spatial development of The Netherlands.

5.4.2 Flanders
While the planning department in Flanders is less institutionalized, the downloading of concepts and ideas is harder. This clearly affects the way the circular process is run. In case of uploading concepts, to download them again, the downloaded elements also have to be of real influence. Flanders has been active in putting the idea of ‘intergraal gebiedsbeleid’ on the TA2020, which might be for circular reasons, for example to download it to the new Structure Plan Flanders, or to become more influential in other sectors, such as ‘Flanders in action’ programme. However, there is no evidence that suggests that this is the case. Therefore no statements can be done on the circular Europeanization in this respect.

5.4.3 Conclusion circular
While circular Europeanization is hard to distinguish from uploading and downloading, it is unclear in what manner it can be observed. Also in line with the conclusions from the first part of this thesis, the TA2020 can be downloaded indirectly, though sectoral policy, like Cohesion Policy. Therefore no conclusions can be taken in this respect.
5.5 Horizontal

Introduction

While in the previous chapter the national level in combination with intergovernmental processes (the TA2020) is analyzed, in the following part the focus is on the VLANED commission, as described in subchapter 3.2.6. It describes another level of interaction and takes other issues into account than the previous chapter. The main evidence in this chapter comes from interviews from the representatives of the provinces. To get the contradictions between the provinces, but also between the countries clear, the text contains direct references to the interviewees. LB BE stands for the Belgian province of Limburg, LB NL for the Dutch province of Limburg, NB for the Dutch province of North-Brabant and OV for the Belgian province of Oost-Vlaanderen.

5.5.1 Rationale for cooperation

Focus of cooperation

The rationale for cooperation describes the issues what needs to be dealt with. About the core focus of the VLANED, all partners agree that this is put on the exchange of information. This can be done in the form of common projects, instruments or policy proposals. There are a lot of instruments developed for interaction, such as an action map, a planning consultation manual and more (LB NL). Three partners clearly suggest that the VLANED needs do more than what it is doing at the moment. Projects related to policy are an option to provide an overview that is more than just a sectoral view which is dominant now (LB BE) or the VLANED could give advice about cross border possibilities, such as projects and networks, to work together (NB). The VLANED needs to look for added values, and that is where it is failing at the moment (OV). As long as this is not developed the interest of partners will stay low. However, the ambition that more can be organized is depending on the context. Like a wave, in some years, the possibilities for international cooperation are bigger than in other years. Besides the time, also the kind of people, elections and if people are open for it are determining the cooperation (LB BE).

One of the partners (LB NL) clearly disagrees with the rest by saying that there is just little they have together, very little. The focus is put on your own business and the things you want to inform the partners about. Others agree on that the focus is put on the own region (OV), but that you have to see if there is an added value for you in the process. This can be done by making a vision or sketch, but only with the idea of analyzing the territory and giving advice (NB). From a completely other point of one of the partners (LB BE) considers that the group should always try to focus on creating common policy, visions, are ideas, not just things they
agree on, but things that are really common. Taking the scale of cooperation developed by Colomb (2007), the VLANED can be seen between the scale of sharing and pooling tools and jointly realizing a transnational action/investments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchanging experience</th>
<th>Testing or transferring different approaches to tackle a common problem</th>
<th>Sharing or pooling tools and resources to tackle a common problem</th>
<th>Jointly realizing a transnational action/investment</th>
<th>Jointly producing and implementing a transnational spatial strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing information about experiences, practices &amp; policies between different partners</td>
<td>Flow of information from some partners to others with a view to apply new knowledge to solve a particular issue in one partner location with the help of the expertise of other partners</td>
<td>Multilateral flows of information and joint creation of a tool, resource, method (a ‘hybrid’ or a new tool) to tackle an issue occurring in one or several project partners’ areas</td>
<td>Pooling of expertise, knowledge and resources with a direct application (investment or joint action of interest for the whole transnational partnership)</td>
<td>Pooling of expertise, knowledge and resources leading to a joint transnational strategy addressing transnational issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not necessarily conducive to learning, or local/regional learning only</td>
<td>Testing an approach in another location means a slightly deeper form of learning involving a reflection about the local context ‘why did things work there and how could they work here’</td>
<td>Partners are learning from one another towards the production of something jointly shared</td>
<td>Actors learn how to work at new scales and in new types of networks in order to better address certain issues of transnational importance</td>
<td>Actors learn how to work at new scales and in new types of networks in order to better address certain issues of transnational importance through a medium- to long-term strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Level of cooperation (Colomb, 2007)

**Scale of cooperation**

The scale to be looked at by the VLANED is more or less agreed on by the partners. The focus is really on cross-border, however in an international context (NB). The VLANED needs to look at all scales (OV). The EU2020 strategy is developed in Europe, but has implications for the competences in practice. Although the EU2020 is only implemented on a small scale, this dimension is important. The BCRO is mainly focusing the issues that are covering the entire Benelux, such as climate change, energy, demography, globalization/competition) (LB NL). Some partners are critical to the way the scale the cooperation is organized. The VLANED territory in fact is made up of two different territories (LB BE) an eastern and a western. Also the BCRO is criticized for its scale. It might be an illusion to see the Benelux as one entity (LB NL). There are a lot of big separate regions. The focus should be on functional regions, not on administrative regions.

**Proximity**

The proximity of the countries is an important reason to work together between the partners. Flanders and The Netherlands obtain, because of their proximity and comparability, a certain dimension (OV). There is a strong influence of the regions on each other (NB). For example the
flow of goods, if The Netherlands is working on this, Flanders has to do this to. Although all partners consider cooperation with regions which are not situated close by of an added value, it is more relevant to learn from regions that directly border your region. Those regions have a bigger impact.

**Institutional structure**

The institutional structure of the countries is also of influence on the cooperation. Although the regions are rather similar to each other, both from the napoleonic era, both having provinces and a decentralized administrative structure (OV), differences are also there. The differences in competences of the provinces is the most influential in this case. Spatial planning is an exclusive competence for Flanders (OV) and the Flemish provinces have obtained a rather weak position. The Dutch representatives mention that if they want to take action, this is primarily done with the Flemish administration and not with the provinces (NB). Although this is the case, it does not mean that the provinces in Flanders have little to add. Firstly, in theory they have a lack of competences, but in practice they play a role in for example coordination (OV). Secondly, although the competences are not the same, it is important to involve other parties, who own the competences, to the process. It is not that provinces cannot do anything internationally, but in a certain stage they have to involve Flanders as a partner, being the owner of the competence.

**Spatial patterns, problems and challenges**

The partners see differences in the spatial patterns of each other, but those differences are relatively small. This is mainly a result of development in history, such as the focus of The Netherlands on concentration of urban agglomerations. However, The Netherlands is becoming more Flemish (LB NL), thinking the planning system was to strictly regulated, and the Flemish are getting more Dutch, trying to develop a more restrictive system. Altogether the similarities seem to be bigger than the differences.

Just as that the differences in the spatial patterns are rather small, the same is the case for the problems and challenges the regions are dealing with. The focus on the harbors, the problems with traffic and mobility, the problems with ageing of the population and the consequences of climate change on the regions (OV). These challenges are the same on a baseline, with some small differences, also within the countries. While these challenges are more or less the same, the wheel is reinvented several times (NB). The regions are almost not looking at each other, which this can be done more. In the discussions of the VLANED these similarities, differences, problems and challenges are almost never the issue (OV). This results in the fact that there is a lack of interest for several parties to join the meetings.
**The rationale of cooperation and the TA2020**

The TA2020 is discussed shortly during the meetings of the VLANED. The question rises to what extent the VLANED is a good place for the discussion of this document. Although the TA2020 is discussed, on a broad scale, but the idea of having an added value out of it is not always there (OV). It can be doubted whether the VLANED is the right place to discuss the TA2020, since the BCRO might be a better place (NB). Also in 2007 the TA was discussed in these meetings. But since the provinces are not an official member of the BCRO, and they should be aware of the document, the VLANED might be a good place, so that the partners see for themselves which opportunities result from it (NB). However, these Europe wide frameworks are rather vague to a lot of people (LB BE). Everyone knows something about it, but no one knows exact how it is. Nevertheless, the TA2020 could functions as a valuable document, if a common vision would be prepared in the futures (LB BE). Also other actors mention they have just little knowledge about the TA2020. Other European policy ideas are also influential on spatial planning, such as the TEN's, Europe Connected, the Structure funds etcetera.

So, in the VLANED meetings, the TA2020 is discussed not at all (NB) or too little (LB BE). It is therefore suggested to really discuss the document once (NB). That is the main problem of the VLANED, the lack of discussion. The focus is for example on financial programmes, but this is on a broader scale. This scale should be the focus of the VLANED. By this the VLANED is able to look cross-border, on a long term, functional and relating to policy (LB BE). The strength of spatial planning is that it can provide a vision, the weakness is that it always needs the sectors to implement this vision. The TA2020 can be seen as a framework to start looking across the border, although the document in itself contains nothing new. For these European frameworks, if spatially relevant, the Benelux needs to safeguard that the national ministries provide information to the provinces. This can still be improved (LB NL).

**5.5.2 Evaluation of and for learning**

**Social interaction patterns**

None of the partners is really satisfied with the functioning of the VLANED, and how interaction takes place. The VLANED is more like a talking club, a lot is discussed, but there are almost no results. (NB). Now and then projects are arranged and exchanged, but the main conversations relate to procedures and the arrangements made. The discussion is therefore not about the content, about the ambitions and goals and the consequences for the region in total. The meetings are not really inspiring, although there are some changes. The reason for partners to join the meetings is that he can get something out of it, learn something, and this is just happening occasionally (OV).
Two main reasons are mentioned for the functioning of the VLANED like this, and the lack of learning it thereby causes. The first reason is the capacity of personnel the project partners have individually. In trying to be more efficient, cuts are performed on the personal of provinces. It is therefore hard for the partners to really come up with ideas during the meetings which need to be discussed (LB NL). The second reason is by some partners put on the lack of input that the Benelux Secretariat General is showing. The Benelux is hardly providing the VLANED with new information (LB NL). They have to become more inspiring (LB BE) and challenge the project partners. This can be done by inviting speakers to discuss issues about the content. This lack of creativity has grown last years (LB BE), which can be seen in the agenda which is static and little inspiring (OV). The regional representatives, all having little influence, want the Benelux Secretariat General to take action and become more dominant by providing input. However, the national ministries, all having more power, state the opposite. They see the SG as an institution fed by the member states, but without a right to really define issues for themselves. The SG is in a position that it cannot come up to the expectations of all the partners (Smids, 2012). A lot of work in therefore done behind the scenes to find common grounds for the parties involved.

So the question is, if the VLANED really has lead to a broader network of learning and exchanging. The partners disagree on this, which can be related to the attendance of the individual partners. The partner who attends the VLANED only occasionally (OV), clearly states no, while the other partners mention the VLANED has contributed, be it only to a small extent, to the establishing of a network. Without the VLANED the cross border cooperation would be much smaller (LB BE). If necessary contacts can be arranged with other persons in the network. By meeting once every while it is possible to maintain and develop the network (LB NL). That there is hardly a broader network has mainly to do with the content of the discussions, which is mainly on procedures and the lack of time the individual partners are able to spent on the VLANED.

Replication of ideas, concepts, wording, symbols and styles
The replication of ideas, concepts, wording, symbols and style is a way learning takes place. The project partners have a different opinion to what extent they replicate, but all together they are on the same line. They are already aware of the specific concepts used in your own country, but the VLANED provides an opportunity to easier relate to the professional jargon used in the other country (LB NL). Often the partners are doing rather the same things in their regions, but use other words for it (NB). This influences the discussions, while for example sometimes the partners all agreed that the discussion was over and after a while the same discussion starts again, mainly because the partners did not understand each other in the right way. The Flemish
partners think the concepts can be inspiring. Although it is impossible to replicate the ideas, and especially the solutions to your own region, due to legal and financial complexities, you start thinking of other issues. For example in the case of a discussion about the environmental permits, things came up which were rather tangible (OV).

**The evaluation of and for learning and the TA2020**

In strong relation to the other questions about the TA2020 the partners were asked whether the TA2020 contributed to the learning process by replication and to what extent the TA2020 is discussed by the partners outside the VLANED in the broader network. Concerning the first question the two Dutch partners state that is has not influences much, mainly because it is not discussed appropriately until now (NB) and it shows hardly any new elements. It is too early to state if the TA2020 is influential, also because the TA2020 is mainly something that is leaded by the national governments (LB NL). The Flemish partners both state that the TA2020 is inspiring in a certain way, but also other issues on the European scale are the same. They create a certain framework and influence thinking patterns (OV). None of the partners have really discussed the TA2020 outside the VLANED. One of the partners (NB) has brought it up intern once. But they mention having just little contact to other international colleges (OV) or that the Benelux has to be the catalyst of certain EU frameworks, which is not always the case. (LB BE).

### 5.5.3 Conceptual learning

**Individual learning**

Individual learning takes place because of the interaction between the partners. All partners recognize that they have learned something. This can be more knowledge about the other area (LB NL), but also the broader context, what really is happening in the other regions (NB). More specifically, one of the partners (NB) states that he learned from the Flemish partners how to really get to know each other. In Flanders, building up a network before starting a project is recognized as something that is essential. In the Netherland, people are aware of this, but at the same time deny this. A Dutch representative (NB) more often uses the Flemish way of building up a network, before really starting, and thereby investing on the front side of the projects, instead of the back side, referring to the final stages of projects. From another point of view, another partner mentions that he learned elements of the Dutch legal planning system.

**Organizational learning**

A determinant for organizational learning is the fact that the partners really feel a part of the VLANED. Three of the four partner reply with a definitive yes, and state that they feel respected.
and really want to do something out of the name of the organization (NB). One partner states no, but mentions that this is the case because of his lack of presence at the meetings (OV). Now that he is present more often he feels more involved. Therefore it can be stated that the organization is institutionalized. Although this is the fact the partners clearly mention that they feel more related to the region than to the VLANED. You keep looking and thinking from your own region, that is the base (LB BE). But if developments which are happening somewhere else affect the region, it is important to see it in a broader context.

But the partners have critique on the way the organizational learning takes place in the VLANED. The problem is that the organization is hardly developing itself. It is hoped that after the big meeting on the 30th of May a new impetus will be there and a real agenda is concretized (NB). This means going to concrete project plans, with a schedule and responsibilities. In the past the same has been tried, but the plans were bad, not focusing on policy. At the moment, when things are put on the agenda and ready for discussion, the discussion is only short (LB BE). But not all partners are that critically. The discussions are going a certain direction and give a positive feeling to the future (OV). At least the VLANED functions a bit better than a few years ago, because everybody has the feeling the situation cannot be continued like this (NB). This push in the right direction can also be seen in the establishing and improvement of the tools developed (Smids, 2012). Organizational learning takes place, while discussing these tools and their shortcomings and new common issues and problems arise as a result of this.

Since the organizational learning is also strongly related to the projects developed, the partners were asked how the communication was done between the organization and the projects and if the results, the successes and the problems, are clear. These initiated projects are a bit overrated, being only related to certain sectoral parties, for example shipping (LB BE). By this they were largely depending on other actors outside the VLANED, which became a problem (NB). Another thing is that if parties commit themselves to something, they also have to stick with this. But that is the main problem, because that was not the case. The pressure of a meeting made partners agree, but in the end, nothing happens. At a certain moment nobody feels responsible anymore to make something out of it (NB), and everybody opts out. The projects organized were too passive, without obligations or absent for everyone (OV). It all depends on the utility of the projects, if it really has an added value for all partners. That should be the main line of the projects. The lessons to be learned out of these projects a different kind of projects needs to be established and commitment needs to be there. The projects might need to be developed more from a spatial planners perspective, not depending too much on the sectors, while that makes a realization of the projects only harder (LB BE).
**Inter-organizational learning**

Most of the partners feel responsible to share the outcomes of the discussion with other actors, but only if it is interesting. Sharing is almost never done with other organizations, but with the own colleges in their own organization. One of the partners (LB NL) mentions that he tries to communicate before and after the meetings with the national planning departments. By this the meeting is prepared inter-governmental, comprehensive, focusing on spatial planning with the relevant people. The outcomes of the meetings are very little passed on to other parties, for example incidentally with the Euregion. This is because the other organizations are doing things that are not always spatially relevant. The communication with other sectors is really hard, because they look from a certain perspective and do not put their project in the entire picture (LB BE). However, there is inter-organizational learning going on, by the use of the instruments developed, such as the manual for plan consultation (Smids, 2012). Municipalities and other organizations close to the border occasionally contact the SG for information on the manual and how to use the instruments and by this the SG is contributing to inter-organizational learning.

**Conceptual learning and the TA2020**

Because of the results of earlier question on the TA2020, the rationale for cooperation and learning, which were that the TA2020 is almost not discussed or learned from, the questions relating conceptual learning and the TA2020, have largely been removed. One partner (NB) mentions that the TA2020 is not discussed in other organizations, but that the attention for financial with the use of European money in the internal organization has been increased. This is just the case since a relatively short period.

**5.5.4 Linking processes to outcomes**

**Internal communication**

Resulting from earlier conclusions relating to the development of the VLANED and lack of discussions, the communication with the own region is influenced by this. In general the partners recognize that feedback hardly takes place. Sometimes this is done informally, but in general the messages are not passed on (NB). It mainly depends on the subject. If it comes to general business there is almost no response (LB BE). If taking place, communication can happen in the form of forwarding mails and relevant documents to other employees, but in practice this hardly is the case (OV).

Because of the important steering group meeting the 30th of May 2012, communication with the regions is stronger than in normal cases. A special policy dossier is created and discussed within the organization (NB) or a report is made up with a communication list (LB NL)
or the dossier is completely analyzed, a nota is prepared and sent to the deputation. In practice all partners will communicate rather the same way with the regions concerning the coming meeting.

**Changes in practice**

The partners do not share the same opinion if it comes to the idea VLANED has changed how the provinces are dealing with actions and if a more international oriented concept has been established in discussions and plans. For some partners, the VLANED is more a confirmation of what is happening, and the international perspective is already included in the discussion and visions (NB). This is primarily the case in the Dutch provinces. The visions have not become more internationally because of the VLANED (LB NL). For the Flemish provinces they do have a relatively limited international orientation and not much has changed (OV) or the VLANED has in fact contributed a bit of an increased international orientation (LB BE). It can be stated that the fact if things have changed is depending on the historical point of views. Where the Dutch already were rather internationally oriented, for the Flemish provinces this had been less the case.

Besides the incorporation in visions and policy, the question is whether the VLANED contributed to a change of the practices, such as the networks which are made up or the way policy works out in practice. The answers were different among the partners. For the Dutch provinces it was stated that it is already in the culture (NB) or it the VLANED contributes to a more professional way of practice and to the enlargement and strengthening of the networks. For the Flemish provinces this idea differs, while they recognize that has influenced practice, for example by projects which set up, like the Albertknoop, a project on the border of Dutch and Belgian Limburg (LB BE).

**Linking process to outcomes and the TA2020**

While the TA2020 has never been discussed properly in the VLANED, the relation between the outcomes and the TA2020 is hard to define. To further look into this relation, the question was asked to the partners to what extent the TA2020 could contribute to a more comprehensive, integral mindset. After all, in the TA2020 an emphasis has been put on the relation with the EU 2020 and Cohesion Policy. All partners state that they already work integral, not from a sectoral, planners perspective. For example, the previous Structure sketch of the province of Dutch Limburg already was integral, and this has been like this for a long time already (LB BE), just as the visions of the Belgium province of Oost-Vlaanderen. In the Dutch case, integral working is not new, but however, it has improved during the last years. The separation between the departments of Economic Affairs and Spatial Planning in the province has been reduced. There
might be a difference between the integral thinking between the Flemish and the Dutch provinces, the Flemish being more focused on the sectors (NB). This has to do with the way spatial planning is defined in the two countries. In practice this for example resulted in a different way of handling Environmental Assessments. A Flemish partner states that there is danger that the focus is too much on the economic part. A spatial framework needs to prove itself that is still has a value and that sectoral solution are not it. Thereby it is not the idea to make a vision from an island perspective, but to define a framework, which creates an interplay between sectoral policies and spatial planning.

The way this more integral point of view can be implemented in practice in the VLANED is a search, which will be one of the points to focus on in the future (OV). Already in the past attempts have been made, by for example let other parties explain what they were doing. But his was rather vague and too general. The ideal picture is that you adjust each other's perspectives completely. By this a global vision can steer projects and make them a bigger success (LB BE). What also is mentioned (NB) is that if you start working internationally, you will have to start with yourself. For the VLANED it is important to make the club not bigger than necessary, by occasional invitations are a possibility. It is the responsibility of all the partners to include their relevant colleges from other sectors if necessary.

5.5.5 Europeanization?

Planning practices
This last paragraph deals with the question whether horizontal Europeanization is taking place as a result of the VLANED and as a result of the TA2020. First of all, the partners disagree over the question if the VLANED has really changed the way spatial planning is done in the member states. From a practical side, the VLANED has contributed by developing instruments together and making things more understandable for the partners on the other side of the border (LB NL). Flanders has come closer to The Netherlands, but the story is still dominated by the sectors. Maybe the VLANED has contributed slightly, but this is only the result of problems that occurred during the years in Flanders and their search for solutions. A study done in 2003 by De Jong and De Vries about the planning practices in The Netherlands and Flanders contains the same conclusion, namely that a kind of convergence is taking place, but that this is mainly a result of Flanders looking for inspiration and alternatives from The Netherlands. The VLANED is not a structural counsel and therefore focuses on communication and almost not on implementation (OV).
**The TA2020**

The TA2020, hardly discussed in the VLANED, has until now brought little contribution to the process of horizontal Europeanization in this structure of international cooperation. The document confirms integral working and being aware of potentials in an area (LB NL). The document thereby functions as a signal. Also if it is only there to keep you awake and sharp. A problem distinguished by several partners is the communication of the document. Without the Benelux, the document would never be part of the discussion. The Dutch and Flemish governments have never promoted or forwarded this document to the regions (LB BE, NB). In general, the communication between the Flemish government and the regions is insufficient. Therefore hardly anything is done with it. In the future, certain intergovernmental documents might be of any influence if it is taken more seriously by politicians on a higher level (NB). This could eventually lead to further concretize the documents and create an appealing story.

5.5.6 Conclusion and discussion horizontal Europeanization

**Conclusions VLANED – Horizontal Europeanization**

Since the VLANED already exists for several years, the rationale for cooperation among the project partners has been established. Common instruments have been developed and a few projects have been set up, which did not work out in practice as intended. The focus of cooperation is shifting between the sharing of pooling of tools and jointly realization of a transnational action. Three of the four partners interviewed, state that they want to further invest in a transnational vision or framework. The scale is more or less agreed on by the partners, although critique is there. The proximity of the other regions is an important factor to work together. While the institutional structure is more or less the same, the competences on spatial planning for the provinces are different. This has already resulted in some small issues. All partners agree that the spatial patterns, challenges and problems do not significantly differ from each other.

None of the partners is really satisfied with the functioning of the VLANED, mainly because not much content is discussed. The two reasons mentioned for this are the lack of personnel in the provinces for cross border and transnational issues, as well the lack of input from the Benelux. This last is discussible when analyzing the official status and competences of the Secretariat General. Although this is the case, forms of replication takes place, but mainly in the form of ideas or inspiration.

Individual learning has taken place in the form of procedures or knowledge about each other's systems. However, organizational learning, the development of the VLANED as a whole, has happened little during the years. This has also to do with the projects which did not get off
the ground. Reasons for this were a lack of real commitment, a schedule and responsibility. Considering the inter-organizational learning, the communication with other internationally oriented sectors and parties, it has not been developed strongly too.

Because of the lack of discussions, feedback with the domestic parties hardly takes place. Now that a political meeting is coming up, more attention is paid to this. The partners are mixed to what extent the VLANED has contributed to a more internationally oriented domestic vision or network. The Dutch partners state this has not been of any influence, while the Flemish partners see a contribution of the VLANED in this respect.

While considering the entire picture of horizontal Europeanization, the VLANED has only brought little contribution to a convergence of domestic planning systems. This mainly has to do with the content of the discussions. While organizational and inter-organizational learning are lacking, the VLANED has mainly contributed to the individual learning of the partners. In this sense Europeanization has taken place on a low scale.

Conclusions TA2020

While the previous paragraph focused on the VLANED, the main question of this research is directed to the TA2020 and its contribution to horizontal Europeanization. Being just discussed shortly, the TA2020 can be considered of hardly any value for this structure of international cooperation. In the rationale for cooperation it becomes clear that the partners have little knowledge about the document and questions are raised whether it is the right place to discuss the document. The TA2020 in itself is by some partners seen as inspiring, but not more than that. It has therefore also not contributed to a more integral way of looking at spatial planning. There are multiple reasons for this lack of influence of the TA2020. Firstly, the discussions in the VLANED are at the moment not about the content, so the TA2020 is hard to implement in this situation. Secondly, the Benelux does not always put these elements on the agenda, also because their competences are limited. The partners have to main right to put things on the agenda. Thirdly, the communication between the national governments, who signed the TA2020 and are aware of its content, and the provinces, is insufficient. The national governments show little interest in using the document themselves, as can be concluded from previous results, and therefore do not forward any of these documents to other levels of government.

Discussion

The evaluation of horizontal Europeanization in combination with the TA2020 has brought up evidence relating to the functioning of the VLANED commission. In general, the questionnaire as created, has not been functioning the way it should function. This also has to do with the VLANED, being in the process of not dealing with the content, but mainly focusing on
procedures. Questions relating to the TA2020 were quickly answered and no one really knew something about the document and its content. This will have its consequences in the following conclusions.

To the feeling of the author the interviews were a very useful experience, but also resulted in misconceptions. The main idea was to see the organizational learning of the VLANED, how interaction takes place, how they learn and communicate. But in reality the partners more or less only undertake action from an individual perspective. This can for example be seen in questions relation to sectoral integration of planning. Where in the interview the interviewer tried to research integration on a cross-border/transnational scale, so integration between the VLANED and other structures of cooperation, such as INTERREG, Flemish-Dutch Delta, Euregions etc, the partners kept referring to integral work of their own departments with other departments. To my opinion, this refers to a strong individual character, representing your region, but not really looking from the perspective of the VLANED as an organization.

5.6 Conclusion

In this conclusion the main findings of the different kinds of Europeanization are discussed. The research stated with looking at the uploading process and it became clear that this has changed a lot during the last decade. The Netherlands, being highly active in the process of the ESDP, did not upload anything to the European level for the TA2020. Flanders had the opposite situation, not being active in the ESDP, now slightly contributing to the TA2020. Reasons for this shift can be explained by the domestic interest in planning and the institutional structure that follows this interest (the position of the planning departments), the experiences in the past with intergovernmental policy documents and the interest in European affairs in general. For the Dutch these three elements all moved to a negative side in the first decade of the 21st century, while for Flanders they moved to a more positive side. The reasons for downloading are closely related to the reasons for uploading and almost the same factors determine if downloading takes place. In this respect a difference between the Netherlands, which was mainly not interested in European affairs, and Flanders, which institutional structure prevents it from downloading, can be distinguished. Little can be stated about circular Europeanization, and to the opinion of the author circular Europeanization only has effects in more influential policy, such as Cohesion Policy.

The small amount of downloading and uploading to the European level influences the horizontal process in the VLANED. Although discussions about the content are relatively small anyway, the TA2020 has obtained just little attention. The national governments are not interested in forwarding the documents to lower levels and uploading is not directed from the regions. By this the TA2020 considers of hardly contributing to horizontal Europeanization. As
can be concluded for The Netherlands and Flanders, the TA2020 has not contributed to a further Europeanization of their planning systems or planning practices. Also the horizontal Europeanization though the VLANED has not been affected by the TA2020.
6. Conclusion and discussion

6.1 Main findings

In the following paragraphs the main findings are presented. Following the structure of the thesis, first the findings on the TA2020 are discussed, followed by findings on territorial cooperation and the findings on the empirical research.

**TA2020**

There is a strong tension between intergovernmental spatial policy documents, such as the TA2020, and the official EU objective of Territorial Cohesion. By including Territorial Cohesion in the Lisbon Agenda, there is the idea that the EU is enhancing a more spatial approach to the development of its territory. However, the EU is still not very active on the concept and unclear is how it will work out in practice. At the same time the position of the TA2020 is under pressure. This is a result of its predecessors, the ESDP and the TA, which did not function as intended. To get more influence the TA2020 is trying to get closer to the current economic developments. Its content is therefore full with references to the EU2020 strategy, which is economic oriented, and Territorial Cohesion, an EU competence. Reality is however that cohesion policy and the EU2020 strategy are dominated by another approach to the development of the EU, namely the institutional approach. The question is therefore not which linguistic elements can be combined, but the question is highly political. Is the EU willing to shift the base of its Cohesion Policy from growth-oriented policy to a more distribution-oriented policy?

That the TA2020 tries to link with other policy can be concluded by analyzing its implementation mechanisms. While its predecessors also focused on national spatial policy in the member states, the TA2020 focuses on (European) sectoral policies. In spite of this, the sectoral policies do not link with the TA2020 back. While the new frameworks for Cohesion Policy are determined at the moment (beginning 2012), the TA2020 tries to be of influence in the division of the INTERREG and Structural funds.

**Territorial Cooperation**

Territorial cooperation in the EU is primarily stimulated by the INTERREG programme. In the early years this was a separate EU programme. When the ESDP was created, INTERREG and the ESDP became linked with each other. In the years following INTERREG became part of Cohesion policy, which resulted in the fact that the programme became more growth oriented. INTERREG, and other forms of cooperation, are, at the moment, stimulated heavily by the EU. This is done in
a financial way, by increasing the budget, but also by creating new institutional arrangements, such as the European Groupings on Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

For this research the focus is on the Benelux, an institutionalized organization between The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, which arranges cooperation between these three member states. This cooperation takes place on several terrains, including spatial planning. The cooperation on spatial planning has a long history, which is very much influenced by the national spatial planning traditions. The Netherlands, in this respect, has a longstanding planning tradition, but is increasingly searching for less complex, neo-liberal, alternatives. On the other side, spatial planning in Flanders has hardly been developed. The long tradition of cooperation on spatial planning in the Benelux can be seen in the spatial sketches the countries tried to created together in the 1980’s and 1990’s. These sketches, all being made official, did not work out in practice what they were supposed to do. Clear tensions were found between visions and programmes, commitment and safeguarding your own interests, and instruments and the status of the documents. In the current situation the international cooperation between Flanders and The Netherlands is done in the VLANCED and OOST commission by civil servants. Both commissions are directly or less directly steered by politicians from the region.

**Empirical research**

Using Europeanization as a theory, four levels of interaction between the TA2020 and the national and regional governments have been distinguished: Uploading, downloading, circular and horizontal. Considering the uploading of elements to the European level, The Netherlands has been active for many years, while Flanders, which only had a small administration, was hardly active. However this situation changed, due to the shift of status of the documents (the power relations) and the domestic views of planning and interests in European affairs. The Netherlands became less active in uploading to the TA2020, while in Flanders the opposite happened. The downloading is closely related to the uploading. As well as in The Netherlands as in Flanders the ESDP and the TA have just slightly been downloaded. However, the underlying reasons are different. For The Netherlands, this had partly to do with the fact that the Dutch discourse was already in line with the documents in combination with a growing negative attitude towards European affairs. In Flanders, the institutional setting in the form of a weak planning department was the main reason for this. For the TA2020 these reasons are still valid, but furthermore it is doubtful to what extent the downloading to domestic planning is initiated, be it that the TA2020 mainly focuses on (European) sectoral policy. About the circular process it can be stated that it is hard to define and research it, due to its complexity.

The emphasis is put on horizontal Europeanization, be it relevant for international cooperation. While analyzing the way the TA2020 is discussed in the VLANCED, the overall
picture of horizontal Europeanization became clearer. The results show that the VLANED, although institutionalized, has hardly grown as an organization. The focus is on the own region, focusing on procedures and not the content. While organizational and inter-organizational learning are lacking, the VLANED has mainly contributed to the individual learning of the partners. In this sense Europeanization has taken place on a low scale. More specifically analyzing the TA2020 in the VLANED, the document has hardly been discussed for three main reasons. Firstly, the working of the VLANED as explained, secondly, the lack of input resulting from the competences of the Benelux Secretariat General, and thirdly, the lack of input from the national governments. This last reason is related to national interest in downloading the TA2020 as already described. These three main reasons also form the answer to the main question in this research "How is the TA2020 implemented in structures of territorial cooperation in the Benelux?". Overall it can be stated that the TA2020 in this particular situation has just contributed slightly or almost not to the process of Europeanization or European integration in general.

6.2 Discussion
This research has provided new insights on the implementation of the TA2020 and the working of the VLANED commission. For the TA2020 it became clear that is hardly contribution at the moment to the spatial development, and European integration in general, when looking at this specific case. However, it is impossible to generalize this to a broader scale and state that the TA2020 has almost no effect on European integration. In other structures of territorial cooperation the TA2020 could have other effects, which might result in other actions. Afterwards, the problems of choosing the VLANED as the research object are twofold. First of all, the VLANED, although institutionalized, does not really discuss these documents properly. Secondly, the VLANED is group of planners. While the focus of the TA2020 has shifted towards (European) sectoral policy, it might be more interesting to look for sectoral groups or INTERREG programmes.

Also if the implementation of the TA2020 in general comes out as insufficient by other researchers, than still this does not mean that it has not contributed to the process of European integration. As already described in the process of writing the ESDP by Faludi and Waterhout (2003), the writing process of certain documents let people come together, meet other planning cultures and learn from each other. For the Dutch representatives this added value might be low at the moment, but for representatives of the new member states, and maybe Flanders, having a weaker planning department, this might be the opposite.

More specifically discussions need to be raised about the implementation of the TA2020 and its efforts to relate the document to the EU2020 strategy. At the moment little efforts are
taken to really influence this strategy. Cohesion policy and the EU2020 strategy, both seeing the development of the EU in a growth-oriented way, do not take a territorial perspective in mind. If no more efforts are taken, the implementation process will stop and the credibility of the TA2020’s successors will be even lower.

6.3 Policy recommendations

Using the main findings and the discussion, the most prominent policy recommendation in relation to the TA2020 and in relation to the VLANED are elaborated. For the TA2020 it is clear that the implementation is lacking on several issues. Firstly, it is necessary to further promote the agenda in a more active way. This is not only a task of the member states, since some of them are not actively downloading the agenda themselves, it is also a task for the makers of the TA2020. The roadmap which is defined already is a good start, but more needs to be done. Secondly, it can be recommended to get some extra force by involving the European institutions in the implementation process. If a definition of Territorial Cohesion would be created, the instruments in Cohesion Policy, the structural funds and INTERREG, could be used to implement the agenda. This would also main a shift from a more growth oriented policy to a policy that also takes territorial assets into account. At the moment, this lack of instruments, combined with the lack of commitment, might be considered as the main problem. Especially the national planning departments see the way the European institutions defined Territorial Cohesion as the future for spatial planning on a European scale. Thirdly, about the content of the TA2020, it is lacking innovation. This results in the fact that the old member states, such as The Netherlands, withdraw from the intergovernmental processes and only focus on issues they think are of importance for their own. Innovative content could be realized by further involving other sectors into the process, as well as involving public participation and private companies.

In relation to the VLANED commission several recommendation are made. Instead of discussing their own regional plans and procedures, the VLANED also needs to discuss the content of spatial planning for the area as a whole. The Benelux and the provinces need to provide more input, on multiple levels, from local issues to European issues. Communication between the national governments and the provinces need to be improved. This can for example be done though ICT channels, which are now absent. Individual learning, but also organizational learning, by doing something commonly, and inter-organization learning, by linking the VLANED to other groups needs to be strengthened. If real things are discussed the partners need to forward the results of these discussions to the domestic institutions and safeguard that they are taken into account by others. The projects organized need to have commitment, a clear schedule and a good base, and in constant cooperation and discussion with the other sectors. By this the projects could lead to an added value. Clear evaluations need to be made during the projects, not
focusing on quantitative, but on qualitative aspects, seeing the long term development of the VLANED region.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

For future research on the implementation of the TA2020, the focus should not be on spatial planning, or spatial planning forums as the VLANED, but on sectoral programmes with an emphasis on Cohesion Policy and its partnerships contracts. Now that the programmes are further defined it would be interesting to see if the TA2020 has been of any influence. In this respect it is not only relevant to look at the content of the programmes, but also to the process of making the programmes and the influence of spatial planners in this process.

Research can also be done a more theoretical base. Europeanization has proven to be a valuable framework, but in fact the real evidence is still lacking. More specifically research could focus on the framework of Colomb (2007) which needs to be elaborated further. Also circular Europeanization could be an interesting theoretical element to look at, especially from a more intergovernmental point of view.

The VLANED commission has proven to be an interesting case study subject. Further research could be focusing on for example commitment, also from a political point of view. Besides this it could be interesting to further see how communication develops, for example between the national ministries and the lower layers of government, or the communication between the VLANED and the other sectors.
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ANNEX I

Questionnaire horizontal Europeanization

STEP 1:

1. What do you think VLANED's core focus needs to be? What do you think BCRO’s core focus needs to be?
2. Do you think VLANED/BCRO should be there to solve transnational issues/ cross border issues? Do you think that VLANED should focus on an exchange of experiences and good practices, so focus more on problems in the own region?
3. Do you think that the TA2020 needs to be discussed in the VLANED or BCRO? Do you think this is of an added value?
4. How do you think the TA2020 should be discussed in the VLANED/BCRO? Is it done appropriately?
5. Do you think the spatial closeness is important to work with VL cq NL? Is the territory determining the cooperation?
6. Do you think the structures are comparable between NL and VL? Do you think this causes problems/ may cause problems?
7. Do you think the spatial pattern in VL and NL differ from each other? Does this affect the working of the VLANED or BCRO?
8. Do you think the spatial and other challenges differ from each other? Does this affect the working of the VLANED or BCRO?
9. Do you think the TA2020 and other EU spatial documents are of influence determining common spatial challenges?

STEP 2

1. Do you think the VLANED/BCRO works well? How did it work before? Do you see changes or improvements?
2. Does the VLANED/BCRO leads to more relation between different actors in the area? Do you more often contact other actors because of a more active VLANED/BCRO, outside the meetings themselves. Do you discuss problems with each other outside the meetings?
3. Do you use other concepts and wording because of the VLANED? Do you use them in other cases?
4. Do you think the TA2020 or other documents influence the terminology, concepts and words used? What concepts of the TA2020 are used in these discussions? How do they influence the thinking and ideas in the VLANED/BCRO?

5. Do you discuss the TA2020 outside of the VLANED/BCRO with international colleagues?

**STEP 3**

1. Have you obtained more knowledge from interaction with the other actors?
2. Do you feel a real part of the VLANED/BCRO?
3. Do you feel that the VLANED is a coherent organization which form a group of specialist on territorial issues, or do you feel only/more connected to your own region?
4. Do you feel responsible to share the messages/discussions of VLANED/BCRO with other people/actors?
5. Do you see the development of the VLANED/BCRO as a organization and how its learns from the discussions and interaction?
6. Do you think the VLANED/BCRO is functioning better as an organization than a few years ago? What are the reasons for this?
7. Do you think that the TA2020 or similar document contribute to such an organization?
8. How is the communication between the project level and the VLANED/BCRO organized? Does this work as it should be, is it successful?
9. When specific projects are defined or organized, is there feedback towards the VLANED/BCRO?
10. How is the organization between VLANED/BCRO and other organizations such as the VND organized and communicated? Is the inter organizational communication sufficient?
11. How are the lessons learned in the different projects communicated in the VLANED? Is there clarity what the successes are and what the problems are?
12. Are the TA2020 or similar documents discussed with other organizations or into projects? How does the outcome of the discussions on the TA2020 within the VLANED or BCRO influence the projects or other organizations?

**STEP 4**

1. How do you communicate the results of the with the regional organization?
2. How do you provide the outcomes of the discussions concerning the TA2020 to the regional authorities?
3. How do they use the information you obtained from the VLANED/BCRO? Do they take it seriously and to what extent is this communicated and implemented?

4. Are other concepts used in the regional authorities because of the VLANED/BCRO, for example in the regional plans?

5. Has the VLANED/BCRO lead to changes in the way things are done in the region, like the policies are defined and partnerships are set up?

6. How do you or other actors communicate with the results to other organizations or projects?

7. Do you think the emphasis on implementation of the TA2020 on integration with other sectors is discussed in the VLANED appropriately? Do you think further integration with other sectors, and programmes (INTERREG, Cohesion Policy or others) is of importance?

8. How do you think this integration can take its form in practice? What needs to be changed? What cooperation structures are possible in this sense?

**STEP 5**

1. Do you think that planning practices have come closer to each other thanks to the VLANED/BCRO?

2. Do you think the TA2020 or other documents are of relevance for getting the planning practices closer to each other?
Annex II

Simple content analysis using the word ‘territorial’ in the EU Cohesion Policy documents

**General document**

Partnership Contracts between the Commission and each Member State will set out the commitments of partners at national and regional level and the Commission. They will be linked to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the National Reform Programmes. They will set out an **integrated approach for territorial development** supported by all the CSF Funds and include objectives based on agreed indicators, strategic investments and a number of conditionalities. They will contain commitments to give yearly account of progress in the annual reports on cohesion policy, on rural development policy and in other public reporting.

The Common Strategic Framework should therefore establish the key areas of support, **territorial challenges to be addressed, policy objectives, priority areas for cooperation activities**, coordination mechanisms and mechanisms for coherence and consistency with the economic policies of Member States and the Union.

Territorial cohesion has been added to the goals of economic and social cohesion by the Treaty, and it is necessary to address the role of cities, functional geographies and sub-regional areas facing specific geographical or demographic problems. To this end, to better mobilise potential at a local level, it is necessary to strengthen and facilitate community-led local development by laying down common rules and close coordination for all CSF Funds. Responsibility for the implementation of local development strategies should be given to local action groups representing the interests of the community, as an essential principle.

Where an urban or territorial development strategy requires an integrated approach because it involves investments under more than one priority axis of one or several operational programmes, action supported by the Funds should be carried out as an **integrated territorial investment within an operational programme**.

The Common Strategic Framework shall establish (…) (b) the **key territorial challenges** for urban, rural, coastal and fisheries areas, as well as for areas with particular territorial features referred to in Articles 174 and 349 of the Treaty, to be addressed by the CSF Funds; (c) …)

An integrated approach to territorial development supported by the CSF Funds setting out:

(i) the mechanisms at national and regional level that ensure coordination between the CSF Funds and other Union and national funding instruments and with the EIB;
(ii) the arrangements to ensure an integrated approach to the use of the CSF Funds for the territorial development of urban, rural, coastal and fisheries areas and areas with particular territorial features
(iii) …

(…) the contribution to the **integrated approach for territorial development** set out in the Partnership Contract, including:

(i) the mechanisms that ensure coordination between the Funds, the EAFRD, the EMFF and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the EIB;
(ii) where appropriate, a planned integrated approach to the territorial development of urban, rural, coastal and fisheries areas and areas with particular territorial features, in particular the implementation arrangements for Articles 28 and 29;
(iii) the list of cities where integrated actions for sustainable urban development will be implemented, the indicative annual allocation of the ERDF support for these actions, including the resources delegated to cities for management under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) No [ERDF] and the indicative annual allocation of ESF support for integrated actions;
(iv) the identification of the areas in which community-led local development will be implemented;
(v) the arrangements for interregional and transnational actions with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State;

**CHAPTER IV Territorial development**

**Article 99 Integrated territorial investment**

1. Where an urban development strategy or other territorial strategy or pact as defined in Article 12(1) of Regulation…[ESF] requires an **integrated approach involving investments under more than one priority axis** of one or more operational programmes, the action shall be carried out as an integrated territorial investment (an ‘ITI’).
2. The relevant operational programmes shall identify the ITIs planned and shall set out the indicative financial allocation from each priority axis to each ITI. 3. The Member State or the managing authority may designate one or more intermediate bodies, including local authorities, regional development bodies or non-governmental organisations, to carry out the management and implementation of an ITI.
4. The Member State or the relevant managing authorities shall ensure that the monitoring system for the operational programme provides for the identification of operations and outputs of a priority axis contributing to an ITI.