

The Impact of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes on Territorial Cohesion and Spatial Planning

Abstract

This paper examines the role and impact of European Territorial Cooperation programs on enhancing territorial cohesion and spatial planning in Europe. By analyzing the historical development of these programs—with a particular focus on the evolution of Interreg—it is demonstrated how initiatives that transcend national boundaries contribute to the creation of integrated and sustainable territories. The study presents a comparative analysis of various cooperation models—cross-border, transnational, and interregional—and investigates the methodological approaches for measuring territorial cohesion, including both quantitative and qualitative indicators, as well as methods developed by specialized institutions such as ESPON.

The research indicates that territorial cooperation programs not only facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among different regions but also establish a framework for coordinating actions between state institutions, local authorities, and the private sector. The results underscore the importance of integrating spatial planning into the context of European integration policies, as this integration provides the conditions for developing sustainable regional strategies and enhancing socio-economic cohesion.

The conclusions of the paper highlight the need for a multidisciplinary approach in addressing the complex challenges of modern territories and suggest that only through the synergy of political, economic, and spatial planning interventions can long-term stability and sustainable regional development be achieved. This study contributes to both the theoretical and practical understanding of the role of European Territorial Cooperation programs, while also providing guidelines for future policies aimed at promoting regional integration.

Keywords: European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), Interreg, Territorial Cohesion and Spatial Planning