


# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	<a href="#">1997/2253(INI)</a>	Procedure completed
Town and country planning and the European Spatial Development Perspective (EDSP)		
Subject 4.70.04 Urban policy, cities, town and country planning		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<span style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white; padding: 2px;">REGI</span> Regional Policy	<a href="#">ARE <u>NOVO BELENGUER</u></a> <a href="#">Alfonso</a>	22/09/1997

Key events			
24/10/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/05/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
26/05/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A4-0206/1998</a>	
01/07/1998	Debate in Parliament		
02/07/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0399/1998	Summary
02/07/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
20/07/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2253(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/4/09446

Documentation gateway				
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A4-0206/1998</a>	26/05/1998	EP

		<a href="#">OJ C 210 06.07.1998, p. 0007</a>			
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0399/1998 <a href="#">OJ C 226 20.07.1998, p. 0011-0042</a>	02/07/1998	EP	Summary

## Town and country planning and the European Spatial Development Perspective (EDSP)

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The committee unanimously adopted the proposal for a resolution on the first Commission town and country planning project. Although aware that its content might give rise to objections, the rapporteur, Mr Novo Belenguer (ARE, E), felt that the political value of the document, which was presented at the informal Noordwijk Council in June 1997, was such that it could rightly be considered a major step forward as the product of consensus and cooperation between the Member States in a new area of Community initiatives. The proposal for a resolution endorsed the three objectives of the draft European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), but asked the Commission to establish clearer guidelines and a methodology for coordination between the aims, mainly in order to achieve a balance between competitiveness and cooperation throughout the European territory. While approving the indicative and non-compulsory character of the document, the rapporteur trusted that the ESDP would not fail to achieve concrete results. Although it was to be deplored that the Treaty did not provide for specific powers as regards regional planning, there were provisions, such as articles 130a et b (cohesion), 129 b et seq. (trans-European networks) or even 130r and s (environment), which implied a direct link with the territorial approach. This meant that the ESDP needed to be taken into account when developing Community policies which had a regional impact and making decisions at national, regional or local level. In addition, the fact that the ESDP was not obligatory implied that its implementation needed to be based on cooperation, consultation and consensus; consequently, a reliable and permanent information and dialogue system was needed. Moreover, the principle of subsidiarity, which applied to the ESDP, meant that partnership was needed in the field of regional planning. Finally, as this was an open-ended document, it needed to be periodically revised and adjusted. As for the content of the draft perspective (which was still provisional), the proposal for a resolution raised certain priorities which deserved to be taken into account in the follow-up to the project, such as transport policy (especially shipping) and, more generally, the development of non-urban and non-continental European spatial entities. The text adopted also supported any initiative by the Commission under Interreg, or by the Council in connection with the creation of a European regional planning observatory. In the same institutional context, Parliament was asking for the formalisation of the Council of Regional Planning Ministers and for the Regional Development Committee to be established as a permanent body.?

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In adopting the report by Mr Alfonso NOVO BELENGUER (ARE, E) on regional planning and the European Spatial Development Perspective, the European Parliament welcomed this first official draft and, while considering that it would be necessary to establish clearer guidelines, endorsed the basic objectives stated in it. It regretted that the Treaty did not at present provide for specific Community powers as regards regional planning, and regretted the Perspective's indicative and non-compulsory character. It took the view that cooperation and consensus must form the basis of the practical application of the ESDP and considered it essential to find ways in which regional and local authorities could participate actively in the various development stages of the ESDP. Parliament considered it essential to include regional planning in the Community sphere, as the intergovernmental dynamic had exhausted its opportunities for action. Accordingly, it urged the formalisation of the Council of Regional Planning Ministers. The Regional Development Committee should be established as a permanent body, and members of the European Parliament should be involved in it. The ESDP should provide the framework for giving more consistency to Community policies which had a regional impact, in order to promote social, economic and regional cohesion and a sustainable development model throughout the European regions. Parliament repeated its call for the establishment of a Regional Planning Observatory. It was willing to consider the creation of a special budget heading for its funding. This Observatory (ORATE), which would be of a Community nature, would consist of a network of research institutes. It expressed its concern at the inadequate consideration of the many regional realities of Europe (islands and archipelagos, coastal regions, areas of low population density, areas of outstanding ecological importance, etc.) and at the basically urban and continental nature of the concept of European regional development. It considered that the ESDP should above all contribute to the implementation of a genuine comprehensive policy to correct regional imbalances, particularly by promoting equal access to communications infrastructure and the harmonious growth of employment and business in the EU's various regions. The key function of the transport policy was not sufficiently reflected in the present draft Perspective; a transport policy directed towards improving the accessibility of the peripheral regions and aimed at greater sustainability could help to counteract the growing congestion facing the territory of the European Union. Parliament drew attention to the need to pursue policies for developing and reviving Europe's ports, and to incorporate in the draft ESDP a chapter on the regional perspectives of enlargement; it welcomed the proposal to continue the Interreg programme. It would also be worthwhile to develop transnational cooperation and cooperation with the Council of Europe. The ongoing reform of the Structural Funds should make it possible to incorporate the political options stated in the ESDP into regional policy, particularly by strengthening the pilot projects financed by the ERDF. Parliament wished to be actively involved in the organisation of the forum on regional planning to be held in Brussels in 1999.?