



The “Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions” Initiative

// Position paper on “Spatial Observation
in Germany and Bordering Regions” – Abstract

The members of the “Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions” Initiative IMeG have been campaigning for more intensive cross-border cooperation in spatial planning and development for decades. A central prerequisite for this is a better information base for the border regions. There is still a great need for action with respect to the data availability and use rights, the harmonization of the data collection and/or information bases, as well as the institutional coordination and/or nationally informed understanding of spatial planning and specific policies, which affects concepts and indicator systems. Lacking or qualitatively inadequate information bases prevent national sub-regions from being compared, cross-border interdependencies from being adequately registered, and planning projects from being precisely tailored to the needs of the border region.

Section 25 (1) of the Federal Regional Planning Act (ROG) formulates the statutory requirement to have information available about the spatial development in the federal territory and adjoining regions. The spatial observation system of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) is therefore to be expanded by continuous cross-border reporting. Against this background, the German government realized the Demonstration Project of Spatial Planning (MORO) “Spatial Observation in Germany and Bordering Regions” (2016–2017) with nine model regions (Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure BMVI 2017), including the IMeG-regions.

The Demonstration Project of Spatial Planning highlighted the status quo of spatial observation in the model regions and its great importance. In close cooperation with the model regions, the thematic reach and corresponding spatial specifications for cross-border spatial observation could be defined and ultimately incorporated in a data and indicator model (BMVI 2017: 8). With their efforts, the model regions created a basis for the planned mid-term establishment of continuous spatial observation by the BBSR. But the Demonstration Project of Spatial Planning also left a number of questions unanswered, leaving the hope that the German government will define concrete core indicators for cross-border spatial observation. A nationwide set of core indicators defined in a cross-border context could help to ensure that particularly important themes and interdependencies are regularly buttressed by the latest data and that developments in the border regions can be highlighted faster, better and

IMeG dedicates itself to the concerns of metropolitan border regions. The members of IMeG include the Saarland and Rhineland Palatinate as parts of the Greater Region, and the regional associations of Middle Upper Rhine, Southern Upper Rhine, High Rhine Lake Constance and Lake Constance Upper Swabia from the Trinational Metropolitan Region Upper Rhine and the Lake Constance region. The special purpose association of the Aachen region represents the German part of the Maas-Rhine Euregio. The IMeG is engaged in a very close exchange with the Aachen CityRegion and district government of Cologne. The Aachen CityRegion is in turn part of the Charlemagne Border Region – a model region in the Demonstration Project of Spatial Planning (MORO) “Spatial Observation”.

most of all in a more comparable manner. Amongst others, these key themes under focussed consideration in the IMeG-regions also include demographics, housing/settlement development, the labour market, mobility, nature protection and tourism.

In this position paper, the IMeG initiative formulates concrete suggestions for improving the cross-border spatial observation: Improvement potentials are most of all provided in the areas of data collection and harmonization, in a simplification of the data availability and licencing, and in the user-oriented presentation. A further adjustment screw is the closer cooperation within the IMeG-regions, e.g. by developing a regional platform for the exchange between spatial observation actors. These requirements can only be adequately met, however, if the political will is provided for this along with sufficient financial means.

In 2018 the BBSR started a follow-up Demonstration Project of Spatial Planning (MORO). Under the title “Establishing a spatial observation system for border regions” (08/2018-12/2020) the previous work will be continued (website BBSR). The IMeG partners support the deepening of the approaches and results of the first MORO phase. Through this, it is hoped that any outstanding questions can be answered and obstacles can be resolved.

Literature and further information

BMVI – Bundesministerium für Verkehr und digitale Infrastruktur (Hrsg., 2017): Raubeobachtung Deutschland und angrenzende Regionen. Räumliche Strukturen und Verflechtungen. MORO Praxis 11/2017. Bonn/Berlin

Federal Regional Planning Act (ROG) – Raumordnungsgesetz vom 22. Dezember 2008 (BGBl. I S. 2986), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 Absatz 15 des Gesetzes vom 20. Juli 2017 (BGBl. I S. 2808) geändert worden ist. www.gesetze-im-internet.de/rog_2008/ROG.pdf [25.05.2018]

website BBSR – Bundesinstitut für Bau, Stadt- und Raumforschung: Modellvorhaben der Raumordnung (MORO) Etablierung eines Raubeobachtungssystems für angrenzende Regionen (10.05.06-18.5). www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Aktuell/Forschungsprojekte/Ausschreibungen_Projekte/10.05.06-18.5.html [13.08.2018]

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