

# THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN THE ATLANTIC EUROPE: SPAIN IN THE SDEA PROJECT

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The SDEA project arises out of the cooperation experiences that took place in the frame of the INTERREG II C programme and during the preparation of the INTERREG IIIB «Atlantic Area». The Atlantic Arc Commission decided to start a more precise reflection on the role of the Atlantic Area concerning the European regional planning. This is how the idea of elaborating a Development Schema of the Atlantic Area (SDEA, after the French, Schéma de Développement de l'Espace Atlantique) was born, and should involve most of the regions of the Atlantic Arc Commission, coordinated by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) and its Prospective Cell of the Peripheral Maritime Areas (CPPM) which was responsible of the project. It was developed between 2003 and 2005 with the active participation of twenty Atlantic regions, as project partners.

The research was carried out by a team of British, French, Portuguese and Spanish experts from several universities and research centers who discussed with the regions the results and orientations obtained. The work gives a detailed diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Atlantic territories, and is a tool to help the regions with its strategies of territorial development. SDEA points out how important is to reinforce and develop associations between local collectivities (regions, departments, towns) in a logic of integration, further than the national borders, and confirms the need to concentrate the future cooperation on maritime matters in the Atlantic Area. Safety and transport, or management of the coast are subjects which can only be tackled from the transnational point of view. The Atlantic Arc Commission took these aspects into account with the aim of preparing cooperation projects for the period of 2007-2013.

The elaboration of a Development Schema of the Atlantic Area (SDEA) refers to the continuity of the orientations established by SDEC (European Spatial Development Concept) concerning the creation of a model of polycentric and balanced development of the European space. It also represents a new impulse of the Atlantic regions in favor of the polycentric

structure of its territories, and unites the aims and priorities of the INTERREG III B Atlantic programme: polycentric structuring of the space and development of the competence poles.

The objective of the study is to give a territorialized view of the Atlantic polycentrism, defining the implementation conditions and suggesting strategic orientations and some measures shared by all the territorial entities. All this aims at evaluating the possible outlines of the Atlantic polycentric model, its appropriateness, its possible territorial declensions and the definition of the political conditions of application to the different responsibility scales. These objectives respond to the political options of SDEC and are inscribed in priority A of the Atlantic Area programme; and mainly in the following aspects: the creation of an economic integration area of global significance; the structuring of the urban reinforcement in nets, articulating great, middle and small towns that organize the rural territories; the reinforcement of the competitiveness and the innovation in the Atlantic territory; the mobilization of the protagonists and the reinforcement of the professional and cooperation networks in the Atlantic area.

The works were carried out in parallel to the study made for the European research programme ESPON (the European Observation Network on Territorial Development and Cohesion) about the polycentric development of the EU. They are placed in the continuity of the prospection study Europe 2000, of European Commission, to delimit the great transnational cooperation areas and also in the continuity of the study recently made by CPMR on the construction of the polycentrism in Europe.

We start from ascertaining that the globalization of the economy spontaneously helps the more advanced regions that offer the best comparative advantages, the ones of the area delimited by the cities of London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg, risking that the «center-periphery» model might spread in Europe. If this hypothesis became real, different spatial disorganization levels could be imagined: some territories and urban systems outside the above mentioned area, such as North of Italy, center of the United Kingdom, Southeast of France or the metropolitan areas of the national capital cities would benefit from the lever effects of the central regions, while the more peripheral ones, such as the Atlantic regions, would tend to an increasing risk of marginalization.

The study was developed in three big phases: a methodology definition, a strategic evaluation of the Atlantic Area from a diagnose of the Atlantic territorial systems and of its evolution trends and a last phase of proposal of a polycentric development schema of the Atlantic Area. These works were done with an active participation of the regions and the social and economic protagonists, both in the control committee of the project and in the national workshops. The results obtained in the cooperation processes were taken into account through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of INTERREG III B projects.

The Atlantic Area is recognized in several studies and analysis as a heterogeneous space in economic, social and cultural terms. Its territorial organization answers to territorial logics from different sub-groups. They have as a common characteristic the absence of first range European metropolis. Nevertheless, the Atlantic Area presents a network of middle cities, diversity, natural and cultural resources and technical knowledge that give this space a certain attraction power and potential to develop. SDEA's drawn up was organized about four basic working subjects:

- The regions and urban systems and its interrelations and dynamics over the last ten years, covering a wide group of fields: competitiveness, internationalization, the human resources, connectivity and interregional cooperation.
- The productive systems of the different Atlantic areas and the maritime economy.
- The transportation, as basic dimension for constructing the polycentrism and for the sustainable development.
- The governance systems inherent to each one of the territories to be studied.

The report is organized in two volumes. The first one presents the strategic evaluation of the Atlantic territorial and urban systems and the second one puts forward a proposal of organization of the polycentrism in the Atlantic Area as conclusion of the analysis carried out in the diagnose. This last one includes recommendations to the various territorial members, with the aim of reinforcing the regions and improving its network connection, formulating sector and territorial politics and suggesting cooperation possibilities. The appendixes include the national reports prepared by the experts and are also part of the minutes of the national workshops. The study gives the calculation of a synthetic index of development that allows the evidence of territorial breaks in the Atlantic Area and a synthetic and comparative analysis of the metropolitan and middle urban systems. This comparison is made in an inner way among the Atlantic systems and in an outer way with the closest great cities: Madrid, Paris and London.

SDEA approaches the territorial organization of the Atlantic Spain classifying the territorial and urban systems in four levels of analysis: Metropolitan Areas, Middle Urban Systems, Middle cities and Low Density Areas.

From this structure it undertakes a strategic evaluation applying criteria of competitiveness, potentiality, and polycentrism, which confirm the internal and external breaks and differences in the European Atlantic Area. The strategic evaluation is developed in a SWOT matrix, applied to the referred territorial systems. Besides the public policies carried out by the regional and national administrations are analyzed and a series of proposals are written for the European Atlantic smaller spaces where the Spanish territorial and urban systems are included. These proposals take the shape of recommendations and refer to territorial aspects (reinforcement of the different levels of the urban network and of the rural and low density areas), sector aspects (internal and external accessibility, innovation, research and development, environment and risk prevention) and articulation with other related Atlantic development spaces (North of Spain-Southwest of France, Atlantic Area of Galicia-Portugal and Lower Guadalquivir-Algarve).

