

# Summary

## 14th Spatial Planning Report 2012 to 2014

The Austrian Spatial Planning Report (Österreichischer Raumordnungsbericht, ROB) is part of the Austrian Regional Monitoring System. The Reports are published in regular intervals and include comprehensive analyses on specific topics relating to spatial development and spatial planning. The Spatial Planning Report gives insights into the activities of the ÖROK bodies as well as into the activities of relevance for spatial planning and spatial development of the ÖROK members (federal government, Länder, cities and municipalities, economic and social partners). It contains analyses of the framework conditions and trends in spatial development in Austria and addresses the themes of European spatial development and cohesion policy and their implementation in Austria as well as an overview of the implementation of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept 2011 (ÖREK 2011).

### **Current Spatial Trends – Spatial Development in Times of Crisis**

The past years have been ridden by constant crises. The introductory chapter examines to which extent the economic and financial crises and the various political events are also perceptible in spatial development. As in the last 13th Report, the analysis follows the lines of the structure of the ÖREK 2011 based on selected spatial monitoring indicators. The issue of how resilient Austrian regions have proven to be and how capable they were in overcoming crises is analysed in greater depth. The phases of stability and the breaks in development are investigated based on demographic developments and future challenges such as those of housing and basic services. Under the title of "Climate Change, Adaptation and Resource Efficiency", the Report goes into more detail on the theme of "land use" for which a broad base of data and indicators was available for the first time. In his contribution, Helmut Hiess arrives at the conclusion that the economic, financial, banking and budget crises certainly had had an impact on spatial development and resulting in "winner and loser regions". While in agglomerations and central places, the topical issue is

the creation of affordable housing and the economic use of land, in the other regions, the focus is on the preservation and improvement of the regional economies.

### **ÖREK 2011 – The First Three Years**

ÖREK 2011 was adopted in 2011 in a political decision reached after completing a wide participative preparation process. This decision implied a mandate to specify and implement the proposals for actions of the ÖREK 2011, which was done in the form of so-called ÖREK partnerships. In 2011, nine partnerships were initiated and seven have already completed their work. An initial assessment on the work of these partnerships, the experiences and the first achievements are presented in the contribution by Sabine Volgger. She focuses her discussion on the implementation process and closes with a quotation from ÖREK 2011 that states: "To advance the areas of action and establish cooperation and networks, a lot of time, cooperation work and professional project management and therefore personnel resources will be needed."

### **European Spatial Development and Implementation in Austria**

The third expert contribution was supplied by Markus Gruber and Simon Pohn-Weidinger and deals with the key strands of European spatial planning and regional development. The issues relating to spatial development play an important role in the context of EU cohesion policy. The team of experts present a description of the reformed EU cohesion policy in the strategy of "Europe 2020". The planning and programming process in Austria is described in great detail as well as the new programming period, and special attention is devoted to the circumstance that in the new period the principal programmes are fully managed at the national level for the first time. The Länder are increasingly being involved in the coordination of policy measures at the regional level and play a critical role in programme implementation. The authors view this new approach of national programmes as an

interesting variant for securing territoriality and support the resolute further development of this model to shift attention more towards functional and non-administrative areas. The reporting period of the 14th ROB also covers the closing phase of the programming period 2007-2013. A detailed presentation of the status of implementation grouped by programme completes the article.

## Activities of ÖROK Members

The breadth and width of the portfolio of tasks and the range of activities in the area of spatial and regional development are revealed in the contributions of the ÖROK members, which, considering their large number are discussed here only in exemplary form.

### ■ Land, land use and settlement development

The UN General Assembly has declared the year 2015 the «International Year of Soils» in a response to the global challenge of securing a sustainable basis of life. This was taken as an opportunity to address the theme of claims to land and land use in the 14th ROB, which is reflected both in the contributions of ÖROK members as well as in the introductory analysis by the experts.

The prudent use of space and its ecological, social and economically-sustainable management are also urgently needed in Austria. Steering the course of settlement development with the goal of containing the trend of despoliation and suburbanization are two of the most important tasks.

The objectives of compact settlement development and saving space are defined both for the activities of the Länder as well as at the Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The Ministry takes initiatives to support a common mode of action by the federal government and the Länder in order to reduce the progressing loss of agricultural land and its use for transportation, housing, commerce, industry and recreation. The approaches and plans of the Länder cover activities such as the reorientation of zoning policy and zoning procedures, the development of settlement policy schemes, the creation of a legal framework and activities to strengthen town centres/town cores as well as initiatives to improve the basic information and research tools used to obtain more precise analyses of territorial impact issues and problem areas.

The theme of soil and land use is not the only common thread in the report. Other issues often addressed

are spatial planning for energy and alternative energy sources as well as risk and natural hazards management.

### ■ Energy and spatial planning

“Spatial planning for energy is an integral component of spatial planning that looks at the spatial dimensions of energy consumption and energy supply in general. “This is the definition agreed by the members of the ÖREK Partnership “Spatial Planning for Energy”. The interconnectedness of spatial planning and energy has become topical in Austria only recently; this Report addressed the theme in various sections. The Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management acting as Lead Partner was involved in the aforementioned ÖREK Partnership throughout the process and gives a brief review of the outcomes in its report. The report is supplemented by concrete examples from the national and regional level.

The reports of many Länder also include a focus on energy production from alternative sources such as wind power, wind farms and photovoltaic. The report shows how framework schemes and guidelines can and should be used to promote systematic development.

### ■ Risks and natural hazards management

Many regions in Austria were once again affected by massive natural disasters during the reporting period. This Report contains contributions by the Länder describing which protection measures they have taken or plan to implement. These measures range from the creation of hazardous zone plans to concrete flood protection projects. The ÖREK Partnership Risk Management for Gravitational Natural Hazards in Spatial Planning focused on this theme during the period 2013-2015 and prepared the corresponding recommendations.

### ■ The urban dimension

The Austrian Union of Towns (Österreichischer Städtebund) reports on the role of towns and urban areas in its report. It contains information on the ÖREK Partnership set up in 2012 “Cooperation Platform Urban Regions” that deals with urban region themes. The contribution addresses three specific themes thereby revealing the breadth of the issue. The enormous population growth in urban areas has shifted themes like inner densification and affordable housing also into the limelight and likewise space saving, resource conservation and energy efficiency. The Smart City Initiatives are only one response to these trends.

During the reporting period, the revival of city centres was one of the main activities of small and medium-sized towns. The development of retail complexes covering large areas of space and the related spatial planning measures required for transportation and mobility patterns enormously influence the development of city centres. A report on how and which measures were used in attempts to steer development is presented in the contributions of the Länder such as Town and Urban Development (Lower Austria), (Sectoral) spatial planning and/specific programmes (Upper Austria, Styria, Tyrol). The issue of city and catchment area is also addressed and dealt with by the Länder, for example, in the form of regional spatial planning schemes and master plans (see, e.g.; Linz-Umland, Master Plan Kernregion Salzburg, Vision Rheintal).

#### ■ **Cooperative and efficient structures for action**

ÖREK 2011 aims to achieve the development and the strengthening of a new and efficient culture of cooperation. The many regional cooperation projects, but thematically also cross-border and transnational cooperation projects reveal the changes in the approaches taken, the structures selected and the areas of focus defined that resulted from the new challenges. The summaries prepared by Vienna and Vorarlberg have been selected as examples for the different approaches taken. The summaries present the different regional and thematic cooperation platforms. The variety of forms of collaboration is shown in the description of the city-catchment management project of Vienna/Lower Austria (SUM), in the platform of the local authorities in city regions, in the Planning Association for Eastern Austria (Planungsgemeinschaft Ost, PGO) as an example for institutional and political collaboration between Länder and CEN-TROPE as a cross-border European region. Furthermore, the report for Vienna also covers collaboration within the European Networks (Eurocities, METREX) and the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Area. In Vorarlberg, examples are mentioned like "Regio im Walgau" and "Vision Rheintal" as regional cooperation initiatives, the Spatial Planning Commission Lake Constance with 14 members in the catchment area of Lake Constance, and the projects implemented under the scheme "Perspektiven für eine grenzüberschreitende Raumentwicklung im Rheintal" (Perspectives for Cross-Border Spatial Development in the Rhine Valley). At this point we also want to point out the report on the probably most comprehensive project at present in connection with cooperative and efficient structures for action, namely, the structural reform of the municipalities in Styria which was deci-

ded in December 2013 and implemented after a phase of intense preparation and negotiations during the reporting period.

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