

# **TOWARDS A EUROPEAN MODEL OF SPATIAL PLANNING: AN ATTEMPT TO GRASP THE INTELLECTUAL CONTENT OF EUROPEANISATION AS REFLECTED IN EUROPEAN SPATIAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

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## **Abstract**

The study contributes to the debate on the Europeanisation of spatial planning by attempting to identify the intellectual content of the EU-level orientation towards the transformation of spatial planning systems and practices of Member States. The paper analyses relevant European-level spatial-planning-related policy documents to reveal the directions of the Europeanisation of domestic planning systems. This paper argues that the EU-driven spatial planning changes can be captured in a limited number of dimensions. Based on content analysis of European-level documents on urban policy, territorial cohesion and spatial development, the author proposes the European Model of Spatial Planning (EMP) as a theoretical framework for EU-motivated changes. EMP includes the five dimensions in which the EU motivates (directly or indirectly) changes in national spatial planning systems: 1. Influence on the content of plans (European objectives and topics); 2. Influence on the geography of planning (new spaces); 3. Influence on policy logic (comprehensive planning); 4. Influence on process and roles (territorial/urban governance); and 5. Influence on planning instruments (soft and integrating forms). The case of the changes in Hungarian spatial planning practice is briefly overviewed to illustrate the potential use of EMP.

Keywords: spatial planning, Europeanisation, territorial governance, European Union, Central and Eastern Europe, European spatial planning, Hungary

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is often stressed that territorial and urban planning shifts over time in a chameleon-like fashion, adapting to changing circumstances (e.g., Freestone, 2001; Faludi 2011). The twenty-first century is witnessing a significant transformation in how spatial planning looks and functions. We can attribute this primarily to changes in the socio-political structures that are responsible for the planning function and the related forms of governance that are occurring in the context of the global changes of our time (e.g., the globalising economy, environmental sustainability challenges, technological change) or along the lines of current paradigms and

ideologies that reflect these. For EU Member States (MS), many of these impulses for change in spatial planning systems are due to the EU context. When trying to identify the European landscape, one can find rich literature about European spatial planning dynamics of the last decades. These dynamics have resulted in significant change even in the essential function and forms of planning. In a previous study, we made an effort to develop a framework for describing various practices of spatial planning in a comparable way based on an analysis of the respective European planning literature (Salamin, 2023). In that work, the European spatial planning trends were captured according to four processes that appear in the planning literature as distinct, trending topics: first, the prominence of more flexible and multi-actor *governance* in contrast to more hierarchical and regulatory government (see Getimis, 2012; Van Well & Schmitt, 2016; Schmitt & Wiechmann, 2018; Knickel et al., 2021; Berisha et al., 2021). Second, the appearance of *new spaces* of planning, which are often soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries that are also related to the increasingly multi-scalar character of planning systems (see Faludi, 2013; Gänzle & Kern, 2016; Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2020, etc.). Third, the impact of the EU, i.e. *Europeanisation*, which influences the understanding, instruments and spaces, and scales and methods of spatial planning – and has been widely discussed by authors in planning studies. All these processes may be associated with the fourth issue: *post-modern*, post-structuralist philosophy (multiple interpretations and narratives, relational space, etc.) (Allmendinger, 2000, 2016; Haughton et al., 2010).

The current paper deals with the influence of the EU on the changes in national spatial planning practices, referred to in this paper as the Europeanisation of spatial planning, adopting the approach of influential authors (on the introduction of the phenomenon, see Böhme & Waterhaut, 2008; Cotella & Janin, 2011; Faludi, 2014, 2019; on measuring its implementation see Stead, 2013; Evers & Tennekes, 2016; Purkarthofer, 2018; Salamin, 2018; Berisha & Cotella, 2024). It is noteworthy that this method of the Europeanisation of spatial planning can be detected even in European countries outside the EU, such as the Western Balkan countries (Berisha & Cotella, 2024) or Switzerland and Norway (Salamin, 2018). This study *aims* to contribute to a better understanding of the Europeanisation process of spatial planning by focusing on possible directions of change motivated by EU processes. The paper is primarily based on an analysis of the content of nine European-level documents, aiming to identify their intellectual messages with regard to the national spatial planning systems and practices of MS. The hypothesis of the research is that the directions of various EU influences explicitly affecting the spatial planning systems of the MS can be summarized in a handful of coherent messages, which are captured in the contents of EU-level spatial

development related strategic documents. The results of these analyses are synthesised into the European Model of Spatial Planning (EMP), which outlines the characteristics of a hypothetical ideal spatial planning to support further empirical analysis. The formulation of spatial planning ideals as a framework for empirical analysis has significant precedents in European planning research. The first comprehensive comparative study of national spatial planning systems, the European Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies published in 1997 (CEC 1997) introduced the ideal models of the four European planning traditions: land use management, regional economics, urbanism, and comprehensive integrated planning models. As Nadin and Stead noted (2013), these traditions were developed as ideal types and applied in the study as measures against which to compare the actual state of affairs in the MS. The advantage of such ideal types is that, as the categorisation is not exclusive – one national planning system can be affiliated with multiple ideal types, and its relation to them can be measured – this approach can tackle the multidimensional character of planning systems, which is the key challenge in the international, cross-country comparison of spatial planning (Salamin, 2023).

The current analysis deals with the period starting with the very first spatial planning document adopted at the European level in the 1980s. In the pre-Brexit era, this can be considered probably the most intensive period of European integration, with the expanding number of MS and EU competences giving rise to a sort of convergence of even policies under national competence. This convergence has also been identified in the case of national spatial planning policies and practices (Waterhaut et al., 2016; ESPON, 2018).

Since Brexit, the trend of the intensification of integration has changed, and new trajectories may also have appeared in spatial planning. The paper introduces the emergence of European spatial planning documents. The results of the document analysis are presented using detailed tables, followed by a description of the EMP model. The meanings of the EMP dimensions are also interpreted in relation to the shifting forms of spatial planning using the author's planning map tool (Salamin, 2023) and its application is illustrated with a short overview of some experiences of Hungary based on previous studies.

In the paper, we use a functional understanding of spatial planning (covering regional/territorial and urban planning and other fields) that is applied in the academic world instead of focusing on how the term is literally used in policy practice. We apply the Euro-English concept of spatial planning, which is defined as follows: “*Spatial planning refers to the methods used largely by the public sector to influence the future distribution of activities in space. [...] Spatial planning embraces measures to co-ordinate the spatial impacts of other sectoral policies, to*

*achieve a more even distribution of economic development between regions [...] and to regulate the conversion of land and property uses.” [...] “spatial planning systems” mean “the various institutional arrangements for expressing spatial planning objectives and the mechanisms employed for realising them.”* (CEC, 1997: 24) The term is used as a neutral umbrella concept, one that encompasses both the different planning concepts of different countries and, in addition to more traditional urban and regional planning, other public coordination mechanisms that influence spatial (including urban) development (from transport network planning to place-based economic and community development to the spatial coordination of sectoral policies). Spatial plans at different geographical scales, from the urban to the national and even transnational regions, are also part of this (Salamin & Péti, 2019). Although the term “spatial planning” has recently been used less and less in EU policies – mainly to avoid the sensitive overlap with national competences (Purkarthofer, 2018; Dürh et al., 2010) – the EU-level documents dealing with spatial development, territorial cohesion and even urban development are – according to the functional definition applied – the actual manifestations of an EU-level spatial planning process referred to as “planning for Europe” by Böhme and Waterhaut (2008).

Although these documents primarily focus on the European level, their implementation relies on the spatial development activities of MS, and by outlining an approach (to be followed) concerning how to manage spatial development, they provide cognitive orientation regarding national systems. However, these documents have relatively weak direct enforcement power in MS as they are neither legally binding nor involve direct financial sources that could motivate specific planning system patterns. Without regulatory power and direct fiscal consequences, they are rather discursive policy interventions (Berisha & Cotella, 2024; Purkarthofer, 2018). Their policy implementation is mainly voluntary, but as they articulate the EU’s preferences and sensitivity directly regarding methods of spatial development, they can be considered adequate materials for capturing the intellectual content underlying the general influence of Europeanisation. In addition, the ideas, approaches, and methods they define are often incorporated in “harder” EU policies, such as Cohesion Policy and implementation requirements and the comprehensive goal of territorial cohesion.

### **The Europeanisation of spatial planning and the creation of European-level policy documents**

Although spatial (incl. urban) planning policy in principle has remained the competence of the MS, the EU’s policies, cooperation and directives in the field of territorial (cohesion) and

urban policy are now indirectly and effectively influencing the planning practices of MS, extensively discussed in the European planning literature as the “Europeanisation” of spatial planning. In this paper, Radaelli's (2004: 3) definition is applied: *“Europeanisation consists of processes of institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies.”* This process of Europeanisation can be the result of a top-down (from the EU towards MS) or bottom-up (i.e., the 'uploading' of domestic ideas to the EU level) or a horizontal process (between EU MS) (Böhme & Waterhaut, 2008, based on Lenschow, 2006). EU policies have top-down influence (imposing constraints or providing motivation through Cohesion-Policy-related funding). Professional-scientific cooperation supported by the various EU programmes (such as European Territorial Cooperation programmes [incl. ESPON and URBACT]), in particular, has a significant horizontal Europeanisation effect, creating platforms for knowledge exchange in territorial and urban planning and development and effectively transposing European priorities and themes into national planning professional systems through an active EU professional discourse (Faludi, 2011; Böhme & Waterhaut, 2008) (Fig. 1). In the process of Europeanisation Purkarthofer (2018) identified 3 types of policy interventions: regulatory, remunerative and discursive.

The creation of European-level documents is connected to both horizontal Europeanisation (due to its collaborative nature) and the rather top-down realization of EU policy will.

As Faludi (2011) described in a book on the issue, after some antecedents in the 1960s, from the late 1980s, the boom era of European (level) spatial planning began, marked by a proliferation of policy documents dealing with spatial development from the late 1990s onwards. The first European spatial planning strategic document of this kind, the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter, was drawn up in 1983 under the auspices of the Council of Europe. In the 1990s, the EU also prepared policy reports dealing (also) with spatial development issues (Europe 2000, 1991; Europe2000+ 1994), then a separate strategy, European Spatial Development Perspectives (ESDP), was prepared in 1999 – the very first and remarkable step toward European spatial planning (Faludi, 2011). A more action-oriented document, the EU Territorial Agenda, was adopted in 2007 and replaced by the new Territorial Agenda in 2011 and then in 2020. In the absence of a formal EU competence, each of these documents was created and adopted by the MS; however, under the significant influence of the European Commission (EC).

In addition, based on both the voluntary cooperation of MS and the motivation of the EC to strengthen Cohesion Policy, an implicit EU urban policy has been developed since the early 2000s, which, in the absence of a direct mandate, has not been an objective in its own right, but rather an instrument serving the socio-economic objectives of the Union, often referred to as the urban dimension of EU policies related to cohesion, innovation and environmental objectives. Urban issues have been included in the programmes of various presidencies, typically setting out specific and desirable directions for development within the framework of presidency conclusions and joint declarations (Lille Action Programme, 2000; Rotterdam Urban Agenda, 2004, Bristol Accord, 2005, Budapest Communiqué, 2011, etc.). The German Presidency in 2007 produced the Leipzig Charter for Sustainable Urban Development (2007), renewed in 2020, the most important European urban policy document to date, which has played a decisive role in spreading the notion of an integrated urban development approach in Europe. In the Riga Declaration, the adopting ministers of MS in 2015 declared the need to establish an Urban Agenda to provide a platform for urban development cooperation in EU-preferred topics. All these guidelines involved inputs for MS's urban planning practices.

Falling outside the exclusive competence of the EU, European strategies and directives on spatial and urban development matters are primarily the result of voluntary cooperation between MS, which rely on discursive policy formulation and implementation. Several authors consider these works to be components of European (level) spatial planning (Böhme & Waterhaut, 2008; Luukkonen, 2011; Waterhaut, 2008; Purkarthofer, 2018). Since 2009, the new European objective of *territorial cohesion*, as set out in the Lisbon Treaty, has become the dominant concept of spatial policy at the European level. This has been welcomed as the new “currency” of European spatial planning (Evers & Tennekes, 2016) or as a sign that the latter had “come of age” (Faludi, 2011). Urban development planning and spatial planning in Europe are typical areas in which EU policies have a substantial impact, yet are also, in principle, areas where the latter have no direct competence, as critics underline (e.g. Luukkonen, 2015).

## **CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SPATIAL-PLANNING-RELATED EU POLICY DOCUMENTS – METHOD OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

For the purpose of the study, documents for analysis were selected according to the following criteria: strategic-future oriented documents that include normative considerations, e.g. goals or visions (agendas, charters, perspectives); those that, in their function and scope address

spatial planning (see definition in the first chapter); have a political nature: i.e., are adopted by political actors or published as a direct component of a policy-forming process. As the subject of the empirical analysis, the nine most relevant documents were selected from the period (Tab. 1). Two documents (Torremolinos Charter, 1983, Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development, 2000) adopted by a spatial development body of the Council of Europe were formally not documents issued by the EU, but their orientation on Europe and their essential role in shaping the international conceptual framework meant their inclusion in this analysis was unavoidable. With two documents, the first (2007) and the second (2011) Territorial Agenda of the EU, their expert-based background documents entitled “Territorial State and Perspectives of the EU” (TSP) were also included, which provided further details and justification for the priorities of the agendas.

The analysed documents generally do not directly prescribe any formal modifications to the MS’s planning systems. However, most of them are concerned with the preferred ways of shaping spatial/urban development, setting up spatial (territorial) development goals, encouraging specific territorial relations and defining spaces to be tackled, encouraging actors connected to territorial development and introducing coordination mechanisms. Therefore, these patterns can be identified and analysed to reveal potential messages associated with spatial planning (of countries). Two paths of influence can be recognised. On the one hand, these patterns can be viewed as models to follow (mechanisms). On the other, implementing the content of these EU documents to which the States have committed themselves by their signatures requires the contribution of the latter’s spatial planning practices. To capture these patterns, the following aspects of the documents were addressed in the qualitative text analysis:

- pattern(s) of the spatial organisation function (Tab. 1)
- priorities and goals (their existence in the text and their nature) (Tab. 1)
- identification of preferred, encouraged forms of spatial planning/development mechanisms referred to in the documents (integration, cooperation, strategy-building, comprehensive planning, vertical and horizontal coordination/cooperation, social and stakeholder participation (Tab. 2)
- new spaces of planning motivated by the document (emergence and types) (Tab. 2)

In their content, these papers often reflect the dominant European (spatial) discourses and ideas and the expectations of EU policies towards spatialities. On the one hand, they show the gradual introduction of an international understanding of spatial planning/development and territorial cohesion, formulated at first as a policy concept and then penetrating academic life.

The critical European territorial priorities (polycentric development, territorial integration, integrated development, etc.) gradually emerge in the documents. A significant overlap is found in the content of the subsequent documents, and a sort of gradual evolution of the understanding of European spatial planning can be identified. This can be detected in the evolving understanding of spatial development, European priorities (Tab 1), and the mechanisms for improving the territorial/urban development proposed/targeted in the documents (Tab 2).



**Table 1** Identification, functions and priorities of primary European spatial planning documents

Document					Goal system /topics		
Aspects of analysis Title <sup>4</sup>	1. Year	2. Type	3. Adopted by	4. Basic function as defined in the document	5. Vision, envisioned goal to which it contributes	6. Development priorities <sup>5</sup>	Dev
<b>European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter (Torremolinos Charter)</b>	1983	Policy strategy	Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT)	New common fundamental principles governing space organisation for the harmony of economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects. Setting European meaning of spatial planning	Common principles and cooperation in planning which contribute to the reduction of territorial differences, better organisation and use of space, spatial distribution of activities, the protection of the environment and improved life quality.	2	1. Balanced social and economic 2. Development of quality of life 3. Responsible management of na 4. Rational territory usage + specific aims for seven types of
<b>European Spatial Development Perspectives (ESDP)</b>	1999	Policy strategy	Ministers responsible for spatial planning of the MS and the EC	Common aims and concepts for the development of the territory of the EU Policy framework for EU and national sectoral policies with a spatial effect and for regional and local authorities.	Balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the EU.	2	Fundamental aims for every regio 1. Economic and social cohesion 2. Preservation and management 3. More balanced competitiveness Aims: 1.1 Polycentric and balanced spa 1.2. Dynamic, attractive and con 1.3. Endogenous development, di 1.4. (1) Urban-rural partnership; (3). Wise use of natural and cultu
<b>Guiding Principles for the Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent</b>	2000	Policy strategy	Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT) of the Council of Europe	Policy framework, coherent common strategy, common guidelines.	Contribution to social cohesion. Sustainable development of the European space and increased cohesion between the regions of Europe.	2	1. Reinforcement of territorial development and improved comp 2. Encouragement of developmen urban and rural areas 4. Development of access to info 5. Mitigation of environmental da 6-7. Promoting and protecting development factor; 8. Developm 9. Sustainable quality of tourism 10. Limitation of the impacts of r + Spatial development measures
<b>Territorial Agenda of the European Union (TA2007) <i>Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union (TSP)</i></b>	2007	Policy strategy	Ministers responsible for spatial planning and development	An action-oriented policy framework for future cooperation. (In 2011, it was renewed/replaced.)	A more competitive and sustainable Europe of diverse regions.	2	1. Polycentric development and cities 2. New forms of partnership and 3. Support for clusters of compet 4. Strengthening and expanding 5. Trans-European risk managem 6. Reinforcement of the role of ec

<sup>4</sup> Documents denoted in *italics* are not directly political ones but expert documents that support policy.<sup>5</sup> \*0: does not appear substantially / 1 present / 2 present strongly.

Document					Goal system /topics		
Aspects of analysis Title <sup>4</sup>	1. Year	2. Type	3. Adopted by	4. Basic function as defined in the document	5. Vision, envisioned goal to which it contributes	6. Development priorities <sup>5</sup>	7. Development priorities and aims
<b>Leipzig Charter on sustainable European cities</b>	2007	Policy strategy	Ministers responsible for urban development		Sustainable cities, integrated development, balanced (polycentric) development.	1	1. Enhanced application of integrated urban development policy - Establishment and encouragement of quality public spaces - Modernisation of infrastructure and reinforcement of energy efficiency - Proactive innovation and educational policies 2. Disadvantaged city parts (and partial aims) - Strategies for the renovation of the physical environment - Reinforcement of the local economy and labour market policy - Proactive educational and training policy for children and youth - Encouragement of efficient and affordable urban transport
<b>Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion</b>	2008	<i>Discourse - orientatin g report. Not a strategy!</i>	<i>Communication of the EC</i>	<i>Launch and focus on discourse about territorial cohesion.</i>	<i>Turning territorial diversity into strength</i>	0	
<b>Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA2020) of the European Union. Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union (TSP) Update</b>	2011	Policy strategy	Ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development	Action-oriented policy framework for the realisation of territorial cohesion and strategic orientation for the policies of the EU, MS and regions.	Inclusive, intelligent and sustainable Europe of diverse regions. Territorial cohesion for a more harmonious and balanced Europe.	2	1. Support for polycentric and balanced territorial development 2. Encouragement of the integrated development in cities, rural areas and 7 types of regions 3. Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions 4. Encouragement of global competitiveness based on local economies which are strong in the regions (including the development of the local economy, too) 5. Territorial connectedness for individuals, communities and enterprises 6. Ecological, landscape and cultural linking of regions and their management
<b>Urban Agenda of the European Union</b>	2016	<i>Cooperati on framework (platform) : Not a spatial planning strategy!</i>	<i>Ministers responsible for urban matters</i>	<i>To provide integrated and coordinating help for better realising EU aims, policies, and related national targets in an urban dimension.</i>	<i>(No vision; it seeks to be a tool for helping achieve EU targets and policies)</i>	0	<i>(There are no priorities and aims, just topics for discussion and elaboration for future cooperation)</i>
<b>Territorial Agenda 2030 – A future for all places</b>	2020	Policy strategy	Ministers responsible for spatial planning, territorial development and/or territorial cohesion	Action-oriented framework to promote territorial cohesion in Europe. Call for the importance of (and orientation for) strategic spatial planning and the territorial dimension of policies.	To contribute to sustainable development and to keeping Europe together. To respond to the increasing imbalances and inequalities, and the transition towards a carbon/climate-neutral economy.	2	1. Just Europe: •Balanced Europe •Functional regions •Integration beyond borders 2. A Green Europe that protects common livelihoods and shapes societal transition •Healthy environment: better ecological livelihoods, climate-neutral- resilient towns, cities, regions •Circular economy: strong and sustainable local economies in a globalised world •Sustainable connections: sustainable digital and physical connectivity of places

Source: author’s construction based on content analysis of the referenced documents

**Table 2** Preferred, encouraged or motivated mechanisms of spatial development in primary European spatial planning documents

Aspects of analysis  Title	Mechanism-related “messages” <sup>6</sup>									
	8. Key concept of planning	9. Integrated development*	10. Encouragement of strategies, cooperation and visions*	11. Comprehensive logic for spatial planning/ development*	12. Role and coordination of sectors*	13. Cooperation between levels (vertical)*	14. Cooperation and coordination between actors* (horizontal)	15. Social and stakeholder participation*	16. New spaces of planning*	17. Main new spaces encouraged
European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter (Torremolinos Charter)	Spatial planning	0	1	2	1	2		1	2	European space; cross-border interventions; areas of special characteristics; functional spaces
European Spatial Development Perspectives (ESDP)	Spatial development	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	EU and European space; cross-border and transnational cooperation, the introduction of territorial cooperation; city-rural area unit
Guiding Principles for the Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent	Spatial planning; spatial development	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	European space; cross-border and transnational cooperation and dialogue on the topic
Territorial Agenda of the European Union. <i>Renewed territorial status and perspectives of the European Union (TSP)</i>	Territorial cohesion	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	EU space; cross-border and transnational cooperation, introduction of territorial cooperation; city-rural area unit
Leipzig Charter on sustainable European cities	Integrated urban development	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	Urban region, the role of the national level, etc.
<i>Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion</i>	<i>Territorial cohesion</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>nr</i>	<i>nr</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>nr</i>	<i>nr</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>
Territorial Agenda 2020 of the European Union and the <i>Territorial status and perspectives of the EU</i>	Territorial cohesion	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	EU space, cross-border spaces, urban regions, ecological networks, areas of specific characteristics, territorial integration of functional spaces, etc.
<i>Urban Agenda of the European Union</i>	<i>(Urban dimension of the policies)</i>	2	1	nr	2	2	2	2	nr	
Territorial Agenda 2030 – A future for all places	strategic spatial planning	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	EU, local, regional, places (17 types of places), all geographical and governance levels, links and flows, functional regions, (incl. cross border)

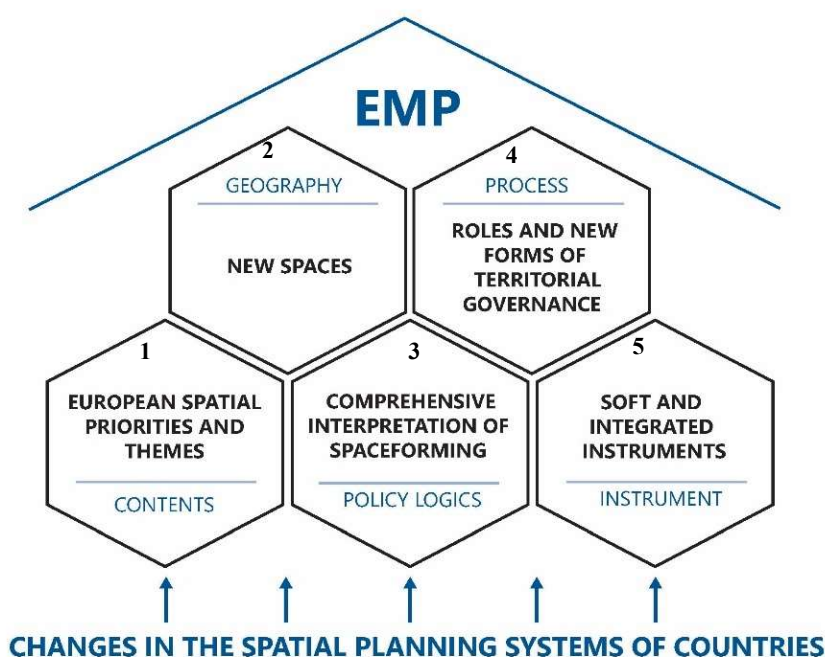
Source: author’s construction based on the content analysis of the referenced documents

<sup>6</sup> \*0: does not appear substantially / 1 present / 2 present strongly, nr: not relevant for the given document

### RESULTS: THE EUROPEAN MODEL OF SPATIAL PLANNING (EMP)

Due to the revealed logical interconnection between the analysed documents, it is possible to group their contents into a handful of cohesive aspects. The directions of change induced or encouraged by the European Union have been integrated into the European Model of Spatial Planning (EMP) theoretical framework (Fig. 2). The “European” attribute (taken over from Faludi [2014]) means that the European interpretation of the model is limited to impacts induced by the European Union. The EMP is an ideal type, which – as mentioned in the introduction – does not determine the status of an actual planning system and practice but rather specifies the change directions (vectors) according to the five dimensions of planning. EMP is an ideal model of transformation. The dimensions are Content (themes, priorities), Geography of planning, Policy logic, Process (governance) and Instruments. These change directions can also be interpreted for entirely different spatial planning practices.

**Figure 1** European Model of Spatial Planning (EMP): Five directions of change of national spatial planning encouraged by European-spatial-planning- (related) documents



Source: Author's construction<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In the paper's understanding, applying Farinós Dasí's (2006) approach, the terms 'hard' and 'soft' refer to how instruments and rules in spatial planning are more ('hard') or less ('soft') formal and clearly (closed) established from a legislative or juridical point of view.

Beyond the messages in the analysed European documents, identifying these dimensions was also based on the trends suggested by the literature cited in the introduction, consultations with planners from different countries, and the author's personal experience with planning. This model specifies directions of Europeanisation-related change according to the five dimensions. In line with Radaelli's definition (2004), these influences (in each dimension) can be manifested in the transfer of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms into national planning systems. It is important to note that this model is a theoretical construction due to its methodology and has nothing to say about actual changes in countries. However, it is an appropriate framework to be used in developing an empirical methodology, which – e.g. by creating indicators – could measure these changes in a comparative way. Tab. 3 shows how the document analysis supported the identification of the content of the five dimensions of EMP.

**Table 3** Relationship between aspects of the analysis of the documents and the synthesized dimensions of the European Model of Spatial Planning (EMP)

Dimensions of EMP	Aspects of analysis (See Tab. 1 and Tab. 2.)																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
EMP1. EU priorities and					■	■	■	■									
EMP2. New spaces							■									■	■
EMP3. Comprehensive		■		■	■					■	■	■					
EMP4. Roles and new				■								■	■	■	■		
EMP5. Soft and integrated		■		■	■					■	■						

significantly relevant ■

highly relevant ■

Source: Author's construction

### **EMP 1.: Influence on content: Appearance of European spatial priorities and themes in plans**

The first layer of “European” influence takes effect when objectives defined in the relevant strategies and policies of the European Union (e.g. polycentric development, territorial cohesion, urban-rural cooperation, and territorial integration) and topics of European discourses (e.g. territorial capital, cross border development, specific types of territories) appear in the priorities and issues actually addressed that are associated with the planning documents of a country or, in general, in thinking relating to spatial planning. Giannakourou (2012) calls it “thin learning” when MS incorporate concepts and ideas developed at the European level or adapt their discourses, processes, and institutions without, however, modifying their essential characteristics and the underlying collective understandings attached

to them. This dimension of Europeanisation is usually mainstreamed through discourses and cooperation as a kind of voluntary policy transfer. However, when planning is also directly related to a policy under EU competence (e.g. in the case of Cohesion-Policy-funded programmes), the application of European objectives and themes is rather obligatory within the framework of the planning hierarchy. In Central and East European (CEE) MS, since their EU accession, Cohesion Policy funding has been the primary source for implementing urban and regional development plans. Therefore, the plans addressing these developments must fit the expectations concerning the use of those funds more directly. In 2014-2020, the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy (as a strategic base for Cohesion Policy) and the corresponding 11 thematic objectives had to be mainstreamed in these countries' territorial and urban development plans (See Salamin, 2019). In research practice the adaptation of priorities, themes, and principles of EU level strategic documents (e.g. Territorial Agenda, Leipzig Charter, other EU strategies) and any kind of reference to them in national or subnational plans can be measured.

### **EMP 2.: Influence on geography: Towards new spaces of planning**

The analysed European documents formulate demands for new territorial entities designed to solve specific challenges or exploit potentials. The emergence of the European level in spatial thinking necessarily results in the transformation of spatial scales, but also spaces and levels of policies, interventions and partnerships (rescaling) with regard to multilevel governance. This claim is in line with the scientific literature on the emergence of new spaces of planning, which often cross the borders of administrative territories (Allmendinger et al., 2015; Faludi, 2013; Gänzle & Kern, 2016; Metzger & Schmitt, 2012; Walsh, 2014, etc.). As opposed to territories assigned with administrative and political competences, spatial planning targets new spaces that are organised according to functions or partnerships to be handled together, and in this context, several kinds of actors cooperate with the related responsibilities and often, boundaries are fuzzy. The new type of planning typically creates these “soft” spaces – e.g., by developing a common strategy for a particular space. The European approach reflected in the examined documents draws attention to the need for functional spaces, such as functional urban areas (urban-rural cooperation) or those related to other functions (e.g., protected areas, the spaces of infrastructural investment, tourism regions, etc.).

Cohesion policy encourages such flexible geography – particularly since the 2014-2020 period – with regard to specific tools and expects integrated strategies that mainly target functional spaces (Salamin, 2021). The spatial planning systems in CEE have undergone

significant transformation since they started becoming more integrated. This has included changes in the territorial levels of development. The application of the NUTS2 level as a planning level was often motivated by the EU regional policy approach (e.g. in Hungary between 2002 and 2012), but integrated territorial development and community-led local development instruments applied extensively in CEE countries since 2014 also resulted in the emergence of new, programme-based spaces (as the LEADER programme did in rural regions much earlier). The European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes created border-crossing programme-based planning spaces in each border section and at the transnational level, while European macroregional strategies emerged as a spatial development framework at an even wider scale (Medeiros, 2018). However other EU policies, e.g. digital and green transition also influence the new geographies of planning. In research practice all kinds of new planning geographic entities or spatial levels or other spatialities (e.g. networks, functional zones, border crossing strategies at different scales) can be recognized and analyzed to grasp the new planning places.

### **EMP 3.: Influence on policy logic: Towards more comprehensive space-forming planning**

The examined European spatial planning strategic documents did not formulate any explicit guidelines concerning how the national urban and regional planning policies should be reformed. Although these European documents were typically approved by ministers with defined fields of responsibility (ministers for spatial planning, territorial development, or urban development), their messages do not limit their reach to the typical scope of urban planning or regional planning. They encourage a comprehensive understanding of controlling spatial development, in which traditionally separate policy fields, such as regional, environmental and transport planning, land use or regional economic development, are increasingly connected within a framework of common strategies, a uniform policy target system, or even common (integrated) tools. In most documents, the envisioned spatial planning requires the coordination of different sectoral policies (Tab. 2). Thus, the implicit understanding of spatial planning indirectly reflected in these documents concerns policy coordination rather than being a distinct policy branch. This comprehensive approach addresses socioeconomic and environmental issues far beyond the spatial (physical) scope of traditional urban and regional planning. Such a comprehensive understanding of spatial planning policy is reflected in Faludi's (2011) description of European spatial planning, which is more about cooperation, coherence, and cohesion. This kind of spatial planning and

development (and one of its components, urban development) does not primarily involve independent policies with target systems but tools that ensure the implementation of other policies mainly due to their specific integrated intervention and coordination capacity.

In the aforementioned classification of the compendium of the EC (CEC, 1997), one of the four ideal types was the so-called comprehensive-integrated spatial planning found to be dominant in many northwestern European countries. This ideal is supported by the EU documents. The success (or the attraction) of this comprehensive, integrated approach in most of the MS is reflected in ESPON projects analysing planning systems (Farinós Dasi, 2006; COMPASS, 2018) In the results associated with this research (which used a method based on self-reporting by the surveyed institutions), even the CEE countries – new members at that time – demonstrated growing affiliation with this comprehensive, integrated model within their spatial planning systems. This may have been partly due to their willingness to align their policies to those preferred by the EU model (see Salamin, 2019). In research practice the scope of spatial plans, the jurisdiction of spatial/urban planning/development policy, and the relation of spatial planning to sectoral policies can be good materials to be analyzed to measure the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension.

#### **EMP 4.: Influence on process and roles: Towards new forms of territorial governance**

Closely linked to EMP3, the actors and the general characteristics of planning processes should be significantly different from those associated with traditional, more regulatory and bureaucratic plan-making, which is based more on the formally regulated responsibilities of public actors. This implies that changes can be directly connected to those described in the literature as the “governance turn” in spatial planning (Getimis, 2012; Stead & Pálné Kovács, 2016; Van Well & Schmitt, 2016). In this planning process, the range of actors involved in planning becomes much broader. Besides the growing number of public authorities, various stakeholders are encouraged to become involved. Governance appears to be flexible, ensuring the cooperation of government and entailing that various non-governmental actors and civil and economic sectors are involved in planning, too. This implies both the (horizontal) coordination of sectors and vertical coordination between levels (see multi-level governance) in the context of the development of the territory. This characteristic can be connected to Van Well’s and Schmitt’s definition, according to which territorial governance is the planning and implementation of public policies, programmes and projects for a place/area by coordinating actors, institutions and activities (1) by integrating policy sectors; (2) by mobilising stakeholder participation; (3) by adapting to changing contexts; and (4) by taking into account



place and territory-based characteristics and impacts (Van Well & Schmitt, 2016). This more flexible, cooperative governance is typically strategy-based, creating new channels of interaction in previously established policy processes, often organised around the implementation of programmes. The EU explicitly creates and promotes new forms of – mainly programme-based – flexible territorial governance in the area of territorial development (ITI, CLLD, ETC programmes, macroregional strategies, EGTCs, etc.), which is legitimised and boosted by the aforementioned EU territorial cohesion objective and the strengthening of the urban dimension, and explained by the need for spatially integrated planning and the implementation of development to make it effective. This requires shifting the focus from expert plan-making to coordination and cooperation; thus, the new governance paradigm may necessitate new methods, such as collaborative and communicative planning. This dimension can be analyzed through investigating actor participation patterns, formalized and non-formalized vertical and horizontal coordination, new territorial/urban governance entities and also the identification of planning professionals (incl. the role and backgrounds of planners and legislation on accreditation of planning profession).

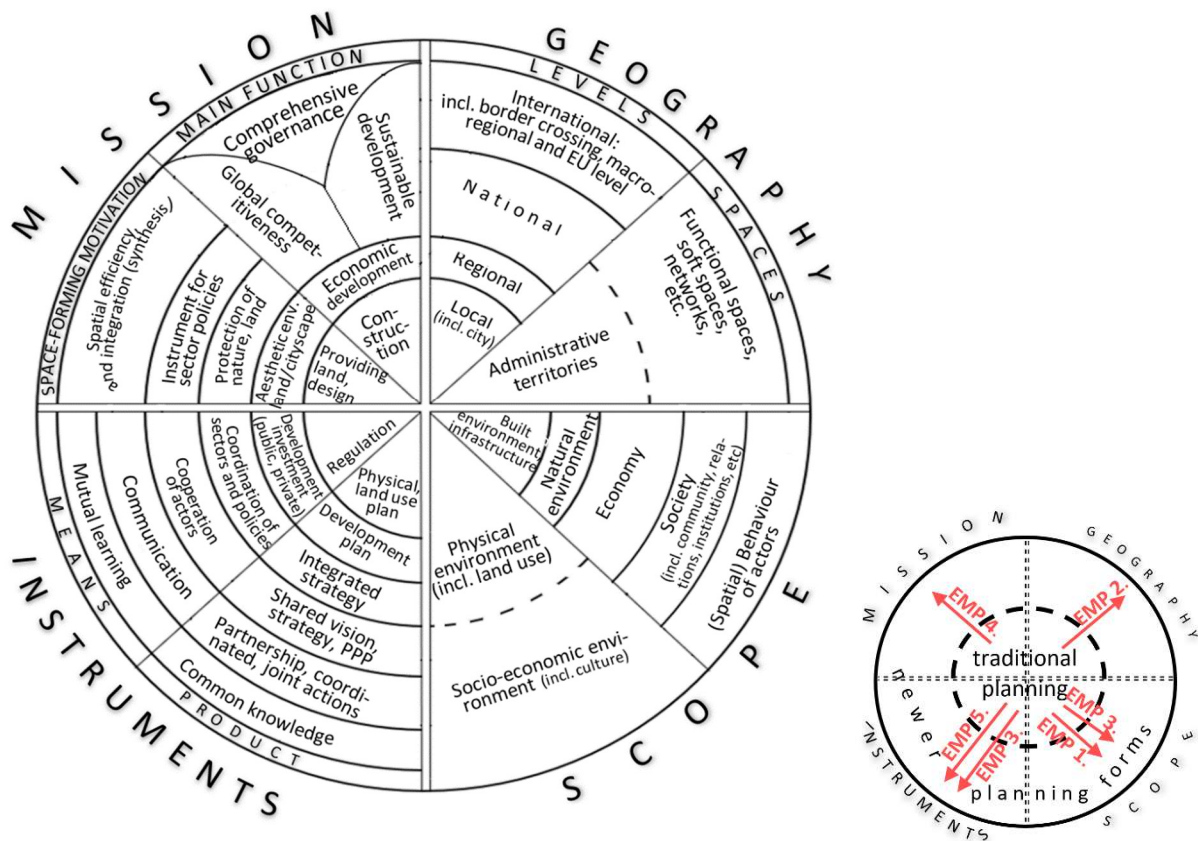
#### **EMP 5.: Influence on planning instruments: Towards soft and integrated forms**

In spatial planning, the instruments are crucial. Traditionally, these are blueprints or planning documents. Using our previous definition (Salamin, 2023), instruments are considered here as all those direct outputs of planning action that, according to their function, directly shape the development of a territory or place, i.e., give effect to planning intent. In comprehensive and governance-based European spatial planning, planning is no longer synonymous with plan-making but refers to a broader set of coordination processes that shape spatial development, even if no planning document is produced. The analysed EU documents mention a wide range of mechanisms that can be considered instruments. As the literature also describes, there has been a simultaneous shift in emphasis and a multiplication of tools. Furthermore, the new trends include soft instruments such as shared visions, fostering cooperation between actors, and even shared intentions and new knowledge. Integrated strategies, which can integrate more traditional physical spatial planning and sectoral policies, thereby supporting economic and social development, are becoming increasingly important, with the essential function of coordinating the activities of the various actors. Much greater emphasis is being placed on implementation and periodic feedback (evaluation and monitoring), but the continuous shaping of intentions and planning is intertwined with implementation in territorial governance.

### Impact on the forms of spatial planning: EMP and the Planning Map

In our aforementioned paper, a four-dimensional model called a spatial planning map was introduced as a comparative tool to capture different forms of spatial planning according to four dimensions (geography, motivation, scope, and spaces). This comparative framework included the possibility of distinguishing between new and more traditional forms of spatial planning based on the literature (Salamin, 2023). The relation between the transmission of the (intellectual) content of European documents to national spatial planning systems and shifts in spatial planning forms can be analysed by matching the EMP dimensions with the dimensions of the planning map. Fig. 2 shows that each of the directions of the EMP dimensions indicates the transformation of planning into a relatively soft form of territorial governance.

**Figure 2** Potential changes in the form of planning suggested by the European Model of Spatial Planning (EMP) as visualised in the Planning Map (Salamin, 2023)



Source: author's construction based on Salamin, 2023

### **The application of EMP – The case of Hungary**

The primary aim of the creation of the EMP is to provide a methodological framework for analysing the Europeanisation of spatial planning in countries. The transformation trends of countries can be analysed along the five dimensions of the model. The empirically identified changes in a certain period can be compared against the EMP pillars and, on this basis, the pace of convergence or even divergence from them can be identified. The EMP is similar to the spatial planning traditions (ideal) model of the EC Compendium (1997), which helped to typify the planning systems of individual countries based on their deviation from the parameters indicated in them (Nadin & Stead, 2013). While the EC compendium helps to identify the European types of spatial planning systems, the EMP, as a tool for examining the process of Europeanisation, helps to identify the changes. The paper does not aim to evaluate the implementation of the EMP model in any country, but a short overview of spatial planning trends in the case of a CEE country, Hungary, can serve as an illustration of the relevance of the EMP model.

As the CEE countries did not significantly influence the respective European discourses and European strategic documents (Faludi, 2004; Salamin, 2019), they appear as potential adopters of EU patterns. It is also connected to the weak participation of eastern scholars in European debates in planning-related disciplines (Maier, 2012). Central and South-Eastern Europe (incl. Hungary) is generally struggling with a relatively slow pace of catching up, a polarized urban structure and a fragile equilibrium (Rácz & Egyed, 2013), which makes it highly dependent on EU policies. As the primary net beneficiaries of EU Cohesion Policy, they are required to adapt to several EU requirements, which are often logically connected to EMP – as mentioned above. In the case of Hungary, the impact of the EU was powerful in the investigated period. Several trends indicated by EMP appeared in the planning system. In 1996, Hungary introduced a completely new planning regime (with the name területfejlesztés [territorial development]) at the regional and national levels. This law on regional development and spatial planning (XXI/1996) – the first of its kind in the CEE region – was explicitly motivated by the preparation for EU membership and the absorption of EU funds in development activities and the established new cooperative governance structures and programme-based planning. Beyond this regulation, powerful influences were the emerging planning exercises related to pre-accession funds (Phare, ISPA, SAPARD) and the cross-border cooperation programmes with Austria, facilitating the acquisition of knowledge of the EU requirements of strategic planning, programme cycle management and evaluations. The European orientation was the main driver of the creation of a new planning system (Salamin, 2019). For a long time, Hungary, with a motivated learning attitude, adopted the concepts, topics and goals in regional development (strategic) planning documents and later also in national spatial planning strategies. The objectives of the current Hungarian spatial development concept adopted in 2014 have a very close topical relationship with the Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020 (2011) (Salamin, 2019; Szabó et al., 2021). Therefore, the significance of EMP1 can be confirmed.

In relation to the Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011, Hungary coordinated the preparation of the revised Territorial Agenda (TA2020), which resulted in the inclusion of some CEE-specific issues, such as those of the local economy, population trends, and native minorities (Péti & Szalóky, 2023). Although this document played a role in the practical definition of territorial cohesion and the procedures and mechanisms ensuring its mainstreaming (new methodological framework), the conceptual framework originating in the north-western European discourses did not change (Salamin, 2019).

As regards the EMP3 dimension, different trends can be currently identified. On the one hand, planning as a profession and function in Hungary is terminologically vague. The public

functions and activities that could fall under the European term “spatial planning” are quite fragmented, belonging to several distinct policy fields (land use planning is separate from development/strategic planning, rural planning, and even local (urban) planning is separate from regional-level planning), resulting in constant disintegration (Salamin & Péti, 2019), in the absence of an integratory function (Péti, 2011). On the other hand, in the national spatial development concept of 2005 – some years before the territorial cohesion concept appeared in EU discourses – Hungary introduced the vision of territorial harmony, which required the coordination of sectoral policies and taking advantage of territorial diversity, thereby anticipating the notions of territorial cohesion. For 2007-2013, the government introduced territorial cohesion as a horizontal project selection criterion in programme implementation (Salamin, 2019).

In Hungary, multiplication and remarkably rapid changes in planning spaces have occurred in recent decades (Salamin & Péti, 2023). (EMP2) The EU had a strong influence on the creation of NUTS2 level planning regions in 2005 – which were abolished in 2012 – and on the short-term planning exercises on the microregional level, while several new programme spaces emerged in relation to EU funding (ETC programmes or EGTCs). After France, Hungary has created the largest number of cross-border cooperation regions formalised within EGTCs, but the real intensity of cross-border connections is often questionable (Pámer, 2021). However, several new planning spaces emerged from national governmental initiatives, too. While in Western Europe, these dynamics of emerging new spaces are primarily associated with the transformation of the role of the state and the private sector (Deas et al., 2015, Allmendinger et al., 2015), in Hungary, the changes result from EU policies and current governmental efforts. Planning spaces in Hungary are normally created for a narrower thematic or functional purpose and have a shorter life span, contributing to the relatively weak performance of spatial planning (Salamin & Péti, 2023). Somewhat contradictorily, in 2018 the former Central Hungary region was split in two to separate Budapest and its surrounding area (Pest county) in order to achieve better results in the absorption of EU funding in the period 2021-2027. However this modification worked against the treatment of the capital city as part of a single city region, i.e. against the functional territory approach (Szabó et al., 2021). In most CEE countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century an increased suburbanization and urban sprawl call for coordination on the level of functional urban areas (Kozakov et al., 2024; Hardi, 2022). Although under the pressure of increasing suburbanization (Vasárus & Szalai, 2023) the need for the coordination and planning of the entities of functional urban areas (FUA) has become evident in Hungary – it is included in the national spatial development strategy –, there is no formal planning-coordination at this level (Salamin & Péti, 2023) and the ability of local authorities to cooperate at this territorial level is limited (Kiss & Porhajas, 2024).

The emergence of the governance approach in planning (EMP4) is also quite contradictory in Hungary. At the beginning of the period, new governance forms appeared to be gaining ground, but later on, this governance approach, associated with broader opportunities for less formalised bodies, regressed. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, new institutions with delegated membership were created by law (e.g., regional development councils and microregional associations), which, as a sort of territorial governance structure, had a key role in regional development and planning. However, these councils acted more as a cooperative form of various government branches without involving significant economic or civic players. In contrast, the directly elected local and regional governments had limited roles. Such governance was also established for functional planning territories (e.g., the Budapest agglomeration and Balaton tourism regions). After 2012, most of these regional territorial governance bodies were abolished and some of their competences were decentralized to the county self-governments (at the NUTS3 level) while others have been centralized.

Additionally, participation has gradually emerged as a requirement of urban and regional planning regulation. Various governance approaches, especially those relying on participation and citizen involvement, have become relatively common beyond the official requirements of numerous municipalities, especially those with a stronger community and identity. However, their acceptance is far from unambiguous, and actual procedures often involve the use of measures different from those prescribed by higher-level regulations (Kocsis, 2019a, 2019b). As Bajmócy (2021) noted, development stakeholder and citizen participation in urban planning is undermined by a lack of consensus building and re-centralization.

The centralization of public functions has been the dominant trend in the last decade. At the same time, multi-level governance (including EU, national and regional-local levels) is necessary in Hungary, and the coordination of sectoral policies in the territorial dimension has remained poor. Territorial governance (in a more general sense) in this frequently changing setting is often evaluated as poor. Self-governments have a minimal role in territorial governance due to their weak fiscal, political, and social position and administrative capacities (Pálné Kovács, 2023). In a highly centralised system of governance, without strong local governments, the development prospects of the periphery have remained especially weak (Pálné Kovács, 2021).

Regarding planning instruments (EMP5), Hungary shows some duality. The country was a European pioneer in terms of the early introduction of integrated urban development strategies (IUDS) inspired by the Leipzig Charter. Since 2007, this was set forth as the precondition for EU-financed urban development support and later mainstreamed in planning legislation. However, this had a crucial role in shifting Hungarian planning culture away from a regulation-oriented, rather technocratic architecture-based urban design culture; pursuant to the 2021 reform, IUDS was abolished as a distinct planning instrument. While the formal spatial plans at the local and regional level remain relatively static and regulatory (the former have become even more technical), several less formalised planning types are emerging, such as programme plans related to different kinds of EU funding (e.g. cross-border strategies, integrated territorial programmes), governmental development initiatives and the specific challenges of climate change (SECAP) and mobility (SUMP) in cities. The plans are diverse in nature, but their effective ability to transform reality is generally limited due to poor coordination between different planning processes and the unclear competencies of the plan owners. Although most new planning instruments are not embedded in regulatory systems, they can still not be considered soft as they are driven mainly by the (public) funding opportunities, which are rather hard in nature.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The outcome of the analysis of European spatial planning documents is mostly in line with the abundant and rather theoretical European planning literature on the dynamics of planning. The results suggest that the postmodern approach of planning since the 1990s, the governance transition and the new spaces emerging since the 2000s, as well as the resulting claims about the transformation of planning, are part of an interconnected logical chain, a narrative, so to speak, which is reinforced and sometimes generated by messages from the European Union. There is such a broad consensus about these trends, both in professional (e.g., in relation to the ESPON programme) and academic discourse and in the EU's urban policy and territorial cohesion/planning strategy documents, that they could be considered a paradigm according to Kuhn's (1984) criteria. Spatial planning, embodied in new forms, is a postmodern approach to the new European paradigm that conveys the EU's spatial planning messages and reflects the challenges of globalisation. Accordingly, the role of planning as a driver of investments and a

strategic framework for resource allocation and investment is enhanced, and planning connects and integrates the public and private sectors. It increasingly creates a spatial dimension for national (sectoral) policies in the context of their spatial alignment and coordination. For the EU policies integrated territorial and urban development is increasingly represented as a means of achieving objectives (implementing policies) such as smart growth (innovation policy), green transition, climate protection objectives, inclusive growth and social cohesion. However, the implicit emergence of such a planning paradigm does not necessarily imply its effective implementation in actual planning systems. Especially in the context of CEE, several authors emphasize the gap between rhetoric (reflecting formal alignment) and reality in the adaptation of EU approaches to spatial planning (Maier, 2012; Dąbrowski & Piskorek, 2018). The Hungarian case with its controversial progress in the five EMP dimensions also shows this two-face nature of Europeanisation.

In order to assess the relevance of the theoretical model of the EMP it is worth looking at some of the more relevant conclusions of the ESPON COMPASS (2018) project, which produced the latest comprehensive study on the trends of spatial planning systems of the European countries between 2000 and 2016. In relation to the changing roles in planning (EMP4) this study states that there have been considerable shifts in the allocation of competences among levels of government but in varying directions, with coexisting decentralization and centralisation tendencies. There has been much reporting of a rescaling of planning competences in ‘functional planning regions’ to address the reality of flows across borders (EMP2). New territorial governance arrangements are being established for such regions (EMP4). It confirms the changes in planning instruments (EMP5). The ESPON project has identified 251 types of planning instruments in Europe. Visioning and strategy-making are increasing in importance, performance in keeping plans up-to-date is reported as good and improving (EMP3). More change is evident at the local level, where tools have been modified or new ones introduced. This mostly involves a simplification and/or streamlining of procedures, adapting to digital technology, and providing for more citizen engagement (EMP4) in the planning process. Spatial planning at the national and local levels is presented as well integrated with several policies, while integration is much less prevalent at the sub-national level. (EMP3) With a few exceptions, there is progressive innovation in practices of planning which give much more emphasis to sectoral policy integration, transparency and citizen engagement, and creating more responsive instruments that can adapt to changing circumstances. According to the ESPON report the EU impacted territorial governance and spatial planning most significantly through sectoral legislation. EU territorial cooperation has been less influential in domestic planning. Environment and energy legislation have been the most impactful. EU Cohesion Policy has had a considerable impact on domestic planning where significant funding was available. The ESPON report underlines that in the discursive impact of the EU the mainstream development strategies (such as the Europe 2020) have been more influential than specific spatial strategies. The Territorial Agenda has had limited impact compared with the ESDP and other general strategies such as Europe 2020. The relatively new MS – such as Hungary – were more receptive to EU concepts and ideas in the general discourse on spatial planning and territorial governance (ESPON, 2018: VII-X.).

In the context of the transformation of planning, it is important to note that according to studies dealing with different fields of transformation (such as the governance turn or the emergence of soft spaces), the emergence of new forms of planning does not mean that traditional forms have disappeared; the hard instruments of planning are still influential. The ESPON Compass study revealed some signs of the realisation of the model, but there is no evidence of the unification of planning systems in European countries (Stead, 2013; Purkarthofer, 2018) nor of a ‘deregulation’ of the formal structure of planning systems (COMPASS, 2018).

It must be underlined that our results have identified only the related intellectual content as orienting messages for domestic planning but have provided no evidence of the implementation of this EMP ideal in terms of the actual situation in the respective countries. While the former shows the orientation of a sort of policy ideology, measuring fundamental changes in the planning system is not within the scope of this paper.

In the case of CEE countries, the emergence of this type of Europeanisation necessitates further empirical analysis, for which the EMP can provide a methodological framework. The quick overview of Hungary's experience suggests that, after the accession, a strong desire to learn from Western European patterns existed in the investigated period, and the EU had a straightforward influence not only on content and concepts but also on regulation and institutional settings, at least for a certain time. However, these adaptations did not result in a strong, comprehensive spatial planning policy. Hungary, along with the other CEE countries, was most likely unable to take part in a horizontal process of Europeanisation; even in the implementation of European spatial planning, the latter rather tend to adopt or imitate methods in a top-down process. As Maier (2012) noted Europeanisation in CEE should move away from the formal alignment of planning to EU frameworks to its reinterpretation and the widening of its role to mediation that should seek win-win solutions for all parties in the long-term (Maier, 2012). According to Dąbrowski and Piskorek in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, in spite of their different Europeanisation trajectories, the legacies of the communist era and the transition period, including low administrative capacity, clientelism and the passivity of local leaders resulted in superficial and formalistic compliance with EU requirements regarding strategic and place-based use of EU funds, and the EU has largely been perceived by the governments at all scales in those countries as a 'milking cow', thus, regional and local strategic planning tends to remain a hollow 'window-dressing' exercise (Dąbrowski & Piskorek, 2018).

It is important to note that enforcing the planning system ideals of the model would not necessarily imply higher planning quality. We cannot identify this kind of Europeanisation with the development of the planning system, as its relation with the effectiveness of planning was not investigated. The study dealt with probably the most dynamic period of the European integration project, marked by a spectacular growth in the number of MS, and even policies under national competence – such as spatial-urban planning – underwent some sort of convergence. With Brexit and rising tensions between certain CEE countries and EU institutions – which also relate to Cohesion Policy – a new era may be predicted in the field of the Europeanisation of spatial planning.

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