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“ Foreword ”

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## FOREWORD

In the new globalised context and the new information era nothing is as it was a quarter of a century ago. The old “certainties” and “convictions” have given way to a hazy start of millennium marked by today’s doubts and complexity. Territories and their peoples too are now more vulnerable to change and risk. Every day new, sometimes unknown, distant or uncontrollable challenges must be faced up to, challenges that transcend, surpass or outstrip our traditional realities that were defined by the context of the nation-states. And there is talk of the crisis of the Welfare State and the growing difficulties that states come up against to govern democratically the greater and greater presence of new global powers, both legitimate and illegitimate, that shake the foundations of the workings of market economy and traditional principles for locating activities.

The nation-states, which afforded such security, at least in a Europe capable of building solid generations of civil, political and social rights, are now immersed in a profound restructuring process. The emergence of new substate realities involving processes of yielding or returning political power is added to the consolidation of a suprastate geopolitical reality with its traditional stops and starts. The increase of regional importance and the growing link between people and *places* is one of the possible answers to a globalisation process that is certainly here to stay in which regard the only thing to be done is to incorporate new, more democratic means to direct the process differently. These scales have become new leading political actors for drawing up and implementing public policies in the territory.

The territory is also understood in a different, richer and more complex way. It is much more now than a mere physical support for activities. It is the space for the creation of social and economic relations that generate specific guidelines of balance, inequality or marginalisation, depending on the extent to which it is connected to more or less global networks. The territory is seen as a recourse, as heritage, as a cultural landscape, as a public asset, as a space for solidarity, as a legacy... *Territory culture* is even interpreted as a prime factor in competitiveness nowadays.

The way has been paved, then, for new values, and there are new actors in more and more homogenised territories. In consequence, the nature of conflicts changes and functions alter. But, above all, the ways of governing the territory are changing. Social change, growing segmentation, the emergence of new political actors, a greater distribution of the power to take decisions, make it necessary to rule in a more horizontal way, with greater participation, closer to citizens, more democratic, in a word. A new challenge for the public space, the principal and irreplaceable engine for fostering policies designed to enhance competitiveness, guarantee social cohesion, see that the territory is more wisely managed and watch over the general interest.

But many doubts and challenges lie in wait for the States. They are becoming more and more complex –not smaller– and they must confront new ways of governing territory in

a new context. The citizens also have reservations about their efficacy in solving new problems. There is even a risk of disaffection in large sectors of the population that consider the States not very well prepared to tackle the new challenges. The public space is now obliged to speak of subsidiarity, partnerships, (vertical and horizontal / formal and informal) cooperation, public policies that ensure more sustainable development, the need to overcome sectorial attitudes, territorial development, strategic approaches... And in the case of a united Europe this is no easy matter, because there are several traditions, territorial cultures, specific contexts and a very varied distribution of political power between the levels responsible for developing and evaluating public policies affecting territories.

The new scenario is also a challenge for the territory's sciences, which are bewildered to witness processes of historical acceleration that even alter traditional definitions of time and space and the relationship between them. The territory has recovered its role as a leader. Some social sciences think it never lost it, but now they are obliged to vary approaches and methodologies. Other territorial sciences, such as economy, political science or law, arrived later but entered into the debate with a flourish. They all confirm their incapacity to address and understand the processes individually. Now they are obliged to make interdisciplinary approximations, rely on all the actors involved, overcome the old inertia of the "expert", pay more attention to the local and regional scale, always consider the great importance of specific contexts...

This is the new context where the complex evolution of the task of spatial planning lies in the EU, fundamentally represented by the ESDP document, to which the member States have reacted in different ways. Aware of the difficulties our European colleagues have in understanding the Spanish situation clearly, we coordinators felt it was a good opportunity to bring out a special issue like this one in order to throw some light onto the Spanish reality in this complex process opened by the drawing up and subsequent approval of the ESDP document. It is our intention, to quote the words of a prestigious European expert, to open up the 'closed book' that is Spain. We are pleased to thank this expert, Professor Andreas Faludi, for offering us the chance to prepare this publication for foreign readers as a complement to the one we have brought out for Spanish readers.<sup>1</sup>

With this aim in mind, we invited eminent experts in different fields (urban planning architects, economists, geographers, engineers and legal experts) and from different professional areas (the university, the administration, foundations and private businesses) to collaborate in this editorial project, and they have kindly acceded. We sincerely thank them all and also Professor José María Jordan Galduf, who readily accepted our proposal to include this material in the journal *Quaderns de Política Econòmica*.

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<sup>1</sup> ROMERO, J. & FARINÓS, J. (Eds.) (2004): *Ordenación del Territorio y Desarrollo Territorial. El gobierno del territorio en Europa: tradiciones, contextos, culturas y nuevas visiones*, Gijón, TREA. (Forthcoming).

The special issue comprises eight papers in all, as well as this foreword. The first is by Margarita Ortega and Eduardo Pallardó, from the “Unidad de Desarrollo Territorial” (Territorial Development Department) of the Ministry of the Environment. From the privileged position of their long experience and participation in the process, the authors provide the possibility of getting a first-hand description of the role and attitude of the Spanish State in the preparation of the ESDP. They analyse the causes and make some suggestions for the future. Juan Romero’s text addresses the drawbacks of a “functionally federal” State from a Spanish polity point of view. The author emphasises the fact that the lack of formal spaces of institutional cooperation and a culture of efficacious coordination and collaboration is one of the major problems in Spain as regards the development of public policies with great territorial impact. This same lack of coordination between policies that would lead to a desired sustainable development is the argument wielded by Antonio Serrano in his article. On the basis of the importance of the concept of the declarations of the Rio and Johannesburg conferences in the EU, he goes into the difficulties involved in setting up a new model of territorial development. In many aspects it is the opposite model to the one followed and promoted in Spain in the last few years under a conservative government. The author calls for spatial planning as an agreement frame to enhance the sustainability of Spanish development in the future.

In a similar line, the unsustainability of the model, although in this case applied to the sphere of town planning, Inés Sánchez’s paper analyses recent changes in the legislation regarding land use in Spain. These changes have led to a greater liberalisation of uses, in reality to a lack of regulations, which has enormously increased the offer of land for urban development, with different models in each Autonomous Community. The author analyses the negative effects of this policy and the incapacity of the grounds on which it is based to yield good results: to stabilise the price of land so as to maintain the prices of dwellings within reasonable bounds according to the people’s purchasing power. The article by Joaquín Farinós addresses the different relationships between urban and spatial planning, the jurisdiction of local and regional governments respectively. Just as occurs with the conflict between Autonomous Communities and the Central Government, the solution requires greater collaboration, cooperation and coordination between the two levels. This can be gleaned from the doctrine repeatedly dictated by the Spanish Supreme and Constitutional Courts in different Rulings, in the line of bottom-up approaches and the new style of (multi-level and cross-sectorial) governance favoured by the European Community.

As spatial planning is the exclusive responsibility of the Autonomous Communities, it is they who have shown greater interest in incorporating the ESDP principles into their documents about territorial development. The monograph contains the two most innovative and advanced experiences in this sense, offered respectively by Juan Carlos Collado and Andreu Ulied, who were technically in charge of preparing it. On the one hand, the Territorial Strategy of Navarre, a document that constitutes the most complete

expression of the ESDP philosophy in spatial planning in Spain. On the other hand, the Catalan experience, still under discussion but with the special added value that it follows a multi-scalar participation criterion with a bottom-up approach, possibly the best developed in Spain. Finally the volume closes with a paper with a peculiar theme and origin. Regions, Autonomous Communities in the case of Spain, cannot only become involved in the European spatial planning project by means of the incorporation of the ESDP principles in their territory but also by participating in transfrontier projects of territorial cooperation. This is the issue addressed in Santiago González-Varas's text, containing some of the suggestions forwarded by the author, in his capacity as a Spanish expert in the context of a consulting project with the aim of establishing the German position regarding the possibility of having new European authority in matters of spatial planning.

We hope this special issue may contribute to providing our European colleagues with a closer and better idea of the complex situation of spatial planning in Spain and its relationship with the ESDP guidelines. The electronic format of the publication is no doubt an aspect that can help make it more easily accessible to everyone.

The coordinators.