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SECTORIAL POLICIES TO SPATIAL
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“SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: FROM SECTORIAL POLICIES TO SPATIAL INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT” (*)

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Abstract:

Text is arranged in six epigraphs as follows: 1) Introduction. 2) Improvement in sustainability of development as an objective of regional planning (RP) in the European Union (EU). 3) Strategies of sustainable development. Another failure of an alternative approach to the increasing unsustainability of the spanish development model. 4) Regional Planning as a framework for joint action and integrated policies for the improvement of the sustainability of development in 21st century Spain. 5) Co-ordination of sustainability at local level with global sustainability of development: Local Agendas 21 and environmental and urban evaluations. 6) RP and sustainability of development in the amplified European Union. Some final conclusions.

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(*) This paper refers to spanish situation until December 2003.

1. Introduction

All planning processes involve the assignation of limited resources to the achievement of certain objectives (A. Serrano, 1981). From this point of view, the definition of the Objectives is the fundamental starting point for setting in motion the process of analysis and regional or environmental planning. We can hardly propose projects if we do not know how far we want to go with them; and we can hardly evaluate the existing activity without the necessary comparative framework of “what it really is” with “what we would like it to be”.

With this in view, the first step in every planning process, by whatever name we wish to call it, is to define our Objective. And, within this definition, as has been remarked on other occasions, society and its political representatives, at least in their public speeches and in the objectives of the new Spanish planning laws, increasingly assume the aim of achieving greater sustainability of development; even though this sustainability is often wrongly used and with concepts far removed from those held by the scientific community, firstly, of environmental development and secondly, of sustainable development.

Therefore, it can be supposed that this Objective should establish a change in the economic aims of society, substituting the political standards that seek continual growth of the traditional macro-economic variables (profits, production...) for other values, focussed more on the integral conception of the welfare of the present population but that do not pose a threat to the welfare of future generations. However, public bodies frequently have an idea of “sustainable development” that gives priority to economic growth, and protect the environment only where this is possible without prejudice to profits; that is to say, as their contribution to sustainable development they agree to protect the environment as long as this has no great effect on their economies.

It is highly questionable that a society that allows a considerable number of its people to live in poverty could consider itself to be developed, yet a high proportion of the population of the planet are living below the subsistence level and have no access to conditions that could be considered “human”. Even in countries like Spain, the National Statistics Institute puts the percentage of people below the poverty line at 18%, although *Cáritas* raises this figure to 24%. According to the United Nations, in the last thirty years social differences have greatly increased, since in 1963 the poorest 20% of the world’s population lived on just 2.3% of global production, while now it is estimated that the same percentage exists on only half that figure. On the other hand, the wealthiest 20% of the planet’s population have increased their share from 70% in 1963 to around 90% at the present time. And the trends indicate that these differences will be even greater in the future.

If our we consider economic growth more important than achieving a minimum acceptable welfare threshold for everybody, it is doubtful if we can afford to talk about sustainable development or about effective protection policies for our patrimony and for

natural and social resources. Accordingly, the European Environment Agency in its most recent reports (see bibliography) declares that, even though advances have been made in reducing some pressures on the environment, these are not sufficient to improve the quality of the environment in general, and much less so as regards progress towards sustainable development, as there is still a world-wide tendency towards the increase of emissions and of rubbish produced and a worsening of the deterioration of the environment in general.

Also, the increasing influence attributed to the market in decision-making does not help to improve the situation. The market does not provide services equally to all regions or to all social groups, as its resources are distributed exclusively by the capacity to buy; thus, the market, as such, widens the differences between city and country, between prosperous regions and poor, city districts with considerable purchasing power and those with little, etc. These inequalities generate contradictions and social and territorial tensions which have repercussions on the environment that make the viability of its conservation doubtful.

In conclusion, if every process of sustainable development means assuring the minimum welfare threshold to the population, maintaining or augmenting patrimony and global natural and social resources, it is evident that the tendency of Spanish society, and that of planet Earth in general, at the beginning of this 21st century is not towards sustainable development.

The question is if it is possible for the situation to change, and if so, to establish what are the means necessary in order to advance towards the goal of improving sustainability at a global level; or at least at the level of those countries whose economies permit resources to be committed to improving sustainability after satisfying the population's basic needs.

With regard to this point, and as has been pointed out on other occasions (see bibliography), it can be affirmed that Regional Planning can play a fundamental role in co-ordinating the multiple factors involved in the social, economic and environmental interaction, eliminating negative elements and encouraging those compatible with the gradual improvement of sustainability. However, achieving these objectives at a global level implies the participation of all the elements involved in the process, from the UN to local administrations, the entire population and the various social organisations of each region. The UN is fundamental, both by its position as a world leader in the definition of global objectives and problems or denouncing injustice and poverty incompatible with development, and also by its decisive participation in promoting forums and world assemblies where countries commit themselves to long term global sustainability. The developed countries are important because they can afford to devote resources and give the lead in education for sustainability. Local administrations count because their field of action is where the transformations and environmental changes finally take place. Lastly, the population and social organisations are necessary, since

without changes in their day-to-day behaviour sustainable development will never be viable.

2. Improvement of the Sustainability of Development as an Objective of Regional Planning (RP) in the European Union (EU).

Taking into account the clarifications in the Introduction about how sustainable development is to be understood, it is, at present, an explicit Objective in the documents of the Commission and is of growing importance in the planning and environmental policies of the EU and of some of the member states. This follows the line marked out by the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, or Earth Summit, held in R o de Janeiro in 1992, which, in its R o Declaration, introduces the term sustainable development as a central political Objective. In its 27 Principles and Programme 21 or Action Programme, it lays down the development framework of global policy in the medium and long term, and although this is not binding it is undoubtedly of great political importance and consolidates the ever more urgent demands of scientists worried about environmental and socio-economic evolution in the world as a whole.

Nevertheless, as has been said on previous occasions (see bibliography), in the initial Treaties of the European Community planning and environmental worries were practically absent, and in any case were subordinate to growth and processes of economic consolidation of its member states. But, after the first significant references to the environment of the European Parliament in 1968, the subject began to merit more attention from this body, and the Commission itself, after creating in 1971, within the former General Directorate responsible for "industrial, technological and scientific matters (GD III)", the first environmental organism (answerable to the Director General of environmental affairs), drew up the first document in which the necessity of combining economic growth with care for the environment, preserving natural resources and managing the territory in such a way that the generation of profits should not be the only consideration but also improvements in the quality of people's lives should be given due importance.

In 1975 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was created and this was meant to be the authentic foundation of a regional policy designed to reduce regional inequalities and to avoid the disproportionate net contribution to the EEC budget of the new member states admitted in 1972, Ireland, The United Kingdom and Denmark. In the One Europe Act of 1986, approved at the same time as the admission of Spain and Portugal, territorial and environmental policies became explicitly included (especially art. 130). Belief in market forces now included the recognition that the market polarised and stratified the territory, causing undesirable external effects in the advance towards European unity. The principle types of these external effects were territorial, social and environmental inequalities, which the Community must take responsibility for

correcting. The Cohesion Funds, approved in Maastricht in 1991, were a move in the direction of solidarity among states.

In 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam was signed by the fifteen European member states and included sustainable development as one of its fundamental principles in Article 2. This made clear that the aims of the EU would be to promote social and economic progress, a high level of employment, and achieve balanced and sustainable development. These were to be obtained principally through the strengthening of economic and social cohesion. The European Constitution, which was to have been approved in 2003, reaffirms these objectives and criteria.

In this framework, the drawing up of an analysis of RP in the EU, with documents such as “Europe 2000” or “Europe 2000+”¹ would culminate in the approval, in 1999, of the European Territorial Strategy, whose subtitle (Towards a Balanced, Sustainable Development of the Territory of the EU) makes clear its objectives:

- Achieve greater economic and social cohesion among all the territories of the European Union.
- Achieve a sustainable development coherent with the preservation of natural resources and cultural patrimony.
- Promote a more balanced competitiveness of the territory.

The EU affects territory in constant expansion with a clear concentration of income and population in the central European pentagon whose poles are London and Paris but with an increasing influence for Berlin. In this area of activity, the objective of economic and social cohesion becomes increasingly important within the framework of sustainable development. Here there appears to be a basic need to find a balanced, polycentric model with a greater role for medium-sized cities to achieve a less extensive occupation of the territory by buildings and better integration of nature, country and city. The role that RP should play in this process is clear, since it is the most recommendable action framework for decision-making capable of considering all factors involved in the dynamics of development; economic, social, territorial and environmental.

However, as long as the majority of society remains unaware of the fact that the “model” we are following implies serious doubts about the future, since it is generating sizeable environmental problems (with global effects for the natural and cultural assets

¹ The informal meeting of Ministers of RP and Regional Development, held in Turin the 23 of November 1990, ordered the XVI Directorate General of the Commission of the European Community to draw up the Document “Europe 2000: a forecast of development of the territory of the Community”. The principle preoccupation that gave rise to this Document is made clear in the Conclusions of the meeting, where it is declared that “if there were no RP policy integrated within a regional policy, the creation of the common market and economic and monetary union could make worse in the future the present divergences and generate new ones (among the different regions)”. The deficiencies of the Document, pointed out by different member countries, led the Directorate General to produce the Document Europe 2000+, which will serve as the basis for the compilation of the “European Perspectives for Regional Planning”, and was the origin of the European territorial Strategy approved in 1999

of the planet), and until they become involved in the call for, and take an active part in, more sustainable planning and industrial processes, there is little hope that things will change.

3. Sustainable Development Strategies. Another Failure of an Alternative Approach to the Growing Unsustainability of the Spanish Development Model.

Within the framework of the Objectives established at the Río Conference in 1992, another Conference (Río+5) was held in 1997 to follow up the results achieved by the Objectives. Here, due to the obvious lack of progress of the Programme 21, the signatories of the Río Declaration committed themselves to formulate concrete sustainable development strategies for presentation at the Río+10 World Summit, to be held in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2002.

To give practical form to this Objective, the European Council of Gothenburg, in June 2001, adopted the Sustainable Development Strategy of the European Union, with the aim of promoting an integral and horizontal idea of all EU policies that impinged on sustainability, combating poverty and social deprivation; preventing social and economic effects of an aging society; reducing the effects of climatic change and promoting the use of clean energy; ensuring public health; encouraging responsible use of natural resources; and improving the efficiency of the system of transport and of land use.

The remainder of the countries of the EU adopted, in 1997, the commitment to approve various Sustainable Development Strategies for Johannesburg, though not all managed to achieve this, Spain being one of the outstanding failures in this respect, since the up-till-now inoperative Spanish Sustainable Development Strategy (SSDS), whose draft was presented to the Advisory Council of the Environment (ACE) at the beginning of 2003, which was not attended by the principal ecological associations because of their disagreement with the new constitution, seems to have a bleak future.

In fact, in Spain at the end of 2001, after more than six months' work, the Ministry for the Environment presented the Consultative Document of the Spanish Sustainable Development Strategy (SSDS) as a basis for discussion, with the aim of complying with the commitment of taking this Strategy to the Río+10 Conference in September 2002. However, not only was the commitment not achieved, but the process envisaged for the re-working and discussion of the consultative Document, in which public participation was to be correctly given transcendental importance, was frustrated.

Meanwhile, in Johannesburg it became clear that the objectives of the Río summit of 1992 were not being achieved, even though these objectives are still considered valid. The principal problems pointed out in Río not only have not diminished but have increased the poverty and underdevelopment levels of many countries, have widened social and economic inequalities, and have produced progressive global environmental deterioration directly attributable to the present model of growth. Within this framework, the objectives of satisfying the basic needs of the population, the supply of

clean water, health care, food safety, and the use of non-contaminating energy have been adopted. The roles given to education and technology as indispensable instruments for development have been given special importance.

In any case, not all countries in the world are in unanimous agreement on the need to promote sustainable development, as occurs in the present 15 countries of the European Union, in the Commission and in the European Parliament itself².

Meanwhile, the report “The European Environment; third evaluation”³, by the European Environmental Agency, drawn up for the Ministerial Conference held on 21 to 23 May 2003 in Kiev, declares that the environment in Europe is still worsening, although the rate of deterioration has been reduced in recent years – with significant differences between some countries and regions and others – as a consequence of the environmental measures adopted by certain countries, but especially as a consequence of the crisis and, conspicuously, of the industrial decline in the countries of the ex-USSR. Western and central Europe have transferred to these countries the environmentally damaging mining of raw materials⁴. This situation foresees that with economic recovery more negative figures will become the norm in the coming years and will put in doubt the Kyoto commitments and the viability of an improvement in sustainability, since, although the improvement in fuel efficiency has been considerable in the countries about to enter the EU in 2004, this is chiefly due to economic recession and the associated reduction in demand as well as to established restrictions.

In any case, it must be pointed out that environmental policies have achieved improvements in the environmental efficiency of resources and have reduced the pressure on the environment in certain countries and regions of Europe. Thus, there has been a reduction in the emission of greenhouse-effect gases (though not in all countries

² Thus, in May 2003 the Parliament passed the environmental Directive designed to make viable the application of the principle “he who contaminates must pay”, filling the legal vacuum that allowed those who contaminated to elude their responsibilities as to accidents and making good the damage caused by environmental catastrophes. Parliament, at the request of the European socialists, has widened the scope of the Directive “to all environmental damage caused or that could have been caused by any activity using dangerous substances”, going beyond the objective of the European Commission, which had proposed a field of action limited to transport of dangerous substances, nuclear or bio-technological activities, but after the opposition and unfavourable vote of the European conservatives, which goes to show the diversity and conflict of interests that exist in the Parliament. The question now is to judge the response of the European environmental ministers, who must approve this Directive before it can come into force, and later that of the 25 ministers of the expanded Europe.

³ This third evaluation was prepared for the Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, held in Kiev 21 to 23 May, with the sponsorship of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The first evaluation was prepared by AEMA in 1995 for the Sophia conference, and the second for the Aarhus (Denmark) conference in 1998.

⁴ 40% of the material needs of the EU are supplied by imports from these countries, which reduces the pressure on European resources is reduced. Greenhouse gas emissions, associated with the use and consumption of energy, were reduced in the 90s due to the crisis and the restructuring of Russia and the Ukraine, who cut their emissions by 36 and 50% respectively. In central and eastern Europe the reduction was 4% and in the west was only 1.8%. Consumption of coal and petroleum dropped, that of natural gas and nuclear energy rose, but this trend will be impossible to maintain due to the scheduled closure of atomic power stations. Also, the role of renewable energies in European power consumption only rose from 4.5% in 1992 to 5.6% in 1999.

and regions, Spain being one of the outstanding exceptions), and a considerable reduction in substances that affect the ozone layer, also in emissions of industrial acids. The protection of eco-systems has also improved on the whole.

On the negative side, however, we must place achievements in waste disposal, with the increase in the production of dangerous residues and the growing pressure on some natural resources: on fishing stocks (over-fishing); on land and agricultural land (urban developments and transport infrastructures that are covering large amounts of productive land and dividing the habitats of animals and plants in many parts of the territory); on the quality of water, still deteriorated by contamination both from outside and localised sources. Also, the growing volume of air and road transport means inefficient consumption of energy and augments the emission of gases that cause the greenhouse effect.

All these processes have consequences on people's health and increase the risks in this field; the quality of water, dangerous residues and atmospheric contamination, together with food safety, are the greatest threats to public health in European cities.

At present, the Spanish government considers the market the most important factor in public decision-making, forgetting the inability of a market economy alone to combine sustainable development and business profits, since many of the consequences of private actions for society, the environment and land cannot be taken into consideration by the market because there are no market mechanisms that can include these factors in prices. For precisely this reason RP as a public policy incorporates a range of devices designed to "prevent, regulate and absorb" the above-mentioned "external effects".

But the possibility of a RP that could encourage "more sustainable development" is not very great, since most of the administrations give priority to the strong pressures for free use of land and freedom to locate activities. Thus, the objective of the present state urban legislation⁵ is free occupation of all unprotected land, with the result that activities occupy more and more land, generate obligatory mobility, multiply the infrastructure requirements, reduce environmental and energy efficiency of investments and of public property.

Consistent with this philosophy, the Consultative Document of the SSDS showed a clearly "economist" and "development" posture, in the conventional sense of these terms, initially giving priority to key areas, in the following order: economic growth, employment and competitiveness; the management of natural resources and conservation of bio-diversity; training, research and technological innovation; social and territorial cohesion; measures to combat climate change and atmospheric contamination; sustainable tourism and the management and reduction of residues. The draft of the SSDS compiled from the Consultative Document avoids some of the contradictions of the latter, partially correcting the priority given to economic values,

⁵ The law 10/2003, of May 20, had to do with urgent measures of liberalisation in the real estate and transport sectors.

but it still gives little importance to the horizontal, territorial and global components of sustainable development, still lacks a strategic focus, includes “activities” without analysing their viability and justification, does not give an order of priorities (sometimes it fixes unjustified time scales) or sources of finance, and does not even include the necessary coordination and organization of many of the bodies involved in the direction and execution of the work.

If experts and institutions have really had no part in its composition, it is logical though incomprehensible, for what is supposed to be an SSDS, that the essential public, institutional participation in the creation, evaluation and control of the SSDS itself is also absent, the only participating public body being the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE), the immense majority of whose present members are representatives of the administration. Also, the very essence of what sustainable development means is called into question when the governmental Inter-ministerial Sustainable Development Commission (ISDC) is given the task of inter-ministerial coordination and control, if this is the very body that supposedly drew up the SSDS. With regard to relations with the Territorial Administrations, the Sectorial Conferences on the Environment have been expanded to include Sustainable Development, and the FEMP will attend when sustainable development is debated. Finally, the sustainable Observatory, which should have the job of evaluating, controlling and following impartially the real objective and dynamics of society and government and local administration policy, is politically dependent on the presidency of the ISDC and structurally and administratively on the Ministry for the Environment, which does not precisely constitute a guarantee its independence and objectivity.

4. Regional Planning as a Framework for Collaboration and Integrating Policy for the Improvement of Sustainable Development in 21st Century Spain.

Business companies in the age of sustainable development must of necessity adjust their production methods to a growth rate compatible with the improvement in sustainable development. This means that the growth should fit into an integrated, overall view of production, and should take into consideration both commercial, social, environmental and territorial implications. This process is characteristic of regional Planning, and makes it a powerful tool for increasing the role of public administration in achieving “more sustainable development”, in which the effect of actions is not limited to considerations based on the short term and the direct commercial results of each decision.

Regrettably, however, and in spite of the fact that RP should have been given a boost with the introduction of the Autonomous Communities, the fact is that the development of the present autonomous regulations and their effect on land use is far from ideal. Neither can much value be placed on some of the RP documents that have been drafted with generalities and formal aesthetics but which lack concrete commitment to territorial, social and commercially sustainable development, agreed to by state,

autonomous and local authorities as well as local social representatives, of which the RP document should be the coordinating framework. Neither can it be said that the performance of the present General Administration of the State is all that it should be, the Ministry of the Environment having made no use whatsoever of its legal powers over the problem of territorial development in Spain, and with its performance on matters that clearly impinge on sustainability, such as the until now inoperative Spanish Sustainable Development Strategy (SSDS) referred to above.

Also, the Ministry of Public Works has reverted to an absolutely sectorial line in its policies on infrastructures, maintaining a so-called Transport Infrastructure Plan 2000-2007, of doubtful viability in financial terms and totally excluded from RP processes and improvement in sustainable development, which should be absolutely indispensable to any infrastructure policy in the 21st century.

In a society like the Spanish, increasingly influenced by a philosophy that concentrates on short-term profits, and with authorities that make this viable, the role and the scope for action traditionally given to the public sector, including its role in RP and in urban, environmental and territorial planning, is being questioned more and more. Thus, from the second half of the 90s until now the nature of environmental plans and regulations has been discussed (control of natural resources, use and management of places of interest, etc.), also the still few plans or territorial planning regulations, and even greater importance has been given to planning of our cities because of its direct relationship with the real estate business. Evidently, the owners of the land and the operations of those interested in the speculative dynamics of the real estate market (principally, but not exclusively, property developers and estate agents) are responsible for the continuous deregulation of land to suit their short term business interests, interests normally incompatible with improvements in sustainable development.

In a more general way, the territorial development model of the consumer society of the beginning of the 21st century generates problems and uncertainties as to the future. Among these are risks that could even put in doubt the survival of the human race on the Earth. The great environmental problems (of world importance) demand a different approach to land use and transformation, and they require that society be aware of the real nature of the problems that confront us, participate in the decision making as to future objectives and take an active part in their achievement, and behave accordingly. The simultaneously global and local dimension of the problems means we must emphasise the urgent necessity of establishing integral territorial planning processes that take account of the triple urban, environmental and social perspectives, viewing problems and solutions in their totality, with sights set on the long term, and establishing objectives to problems on a world scale that overcome more immediate local interests. Of course, we must not forget that it is precisely in the local areas where public participation and commitment are more viable and effective and where, therefore, we must direct the fundamental supply of information, education, the consensus on objectives, intervention, management and participation in the processes.

Territorial planning schemes that try to improve sustainable development must of necessity have an influence on processes of decentralisation and rebalancing of the important towns and cities of each RFU. This decentralisation must be achieved through an appropriate territorial urban, environmental and housing policy; encouraging new centres, tertiary spaces and activities connected with new technologies, which should create the new centres in the right places as regards situation and capacity for promoting development. It seems evident that the decentralisation of the growth of Madrid and Barcelona, fundamentally, and also of Valencia, Seville, Bilbao, Malaga and Zaragoza, to a lesser degree, promoting the alternative/complementary middle-sized towns for the functioning of these spaces⁶, would be clearly necessary from the point of view of balance, homogeneous and sustainable polycentric development.

Additionally, the territorial planning must assure the coordination and consensus of all decisions with territorial consequences, principally those related to transport systems, territorial incentives, the location of particular operations and the total of public investments, with the aim of adapting them to the objectives and directives derived from the improvement of sustainability. In relation to this, it is fundamental to adapt the role of transport and mobility of persons and goods to sustainable development. Transport plays a fundamental role as a consumer of energy and emitter of pollutants⁷, so long-term policies aimed at promoting public investment in transport systems that encourage better and more efficient use of energy and policies aimed at minimising the needs of transport or at improving the efficacy and efficiency with a view to improving sustainability are fundamental. The second fundamental line of action must be concentrated on the conservation of our natural heritage and of biodiversity; the third on making territorial policies compatible with the sustainable integrated management of water resources; the fourth on redirecting productive processes towards sustainability; the fifth on encouraging the appreciation and conservation of our cultural heritage; and the sixth on ensuring the financial viability of the processes and operations carried out and the follow-up and evaluation of their results.

All steps taken to improve sustainability must have a corresponding budgetary provision in either private or public bodies. From this point of view, in budgetary policy it cannot

⁶ As has been shown in other documents, a coherent territorial policy should promote mid-sized towns, present or potential, in the environs of the Madrid and Barcelona RFU, such as Toledo, Talavera de la Riena, Avila, Segovia, Guadalajara, Tarancón and Aranjuez, in the case of Madrid; Taragona, Valls, Lérida, Manresa, Vic and Gerona in the case of Barcelona; Castellón, Segorbe, Liria, Requena, Xátiva and Gandía in the case of Valencia; Écija, Osuna, Morón de la Frontera, Lebrija, La Palma del Condado and Lora del Río in Seville; San Sebastián, Vitoria and Santander, in the case of Bilbao; Marbella, Vélez-Malaga and Antequera in the case of Malaga; and Tudela, Calatayud, Daroca, Caspe, Huesca and Ejea de los Caballeros for Zaragoza.

⁷ In regard to this, it is necessary and urgent that the Administration carries out a systemisation, fixing of objectives and following of the variables that make possible an evaluation of the evolution in the indicators of the compliance with the Kyoto protocol as regards the emission of pollutants and that it should adopt the opportune measures to reverse the serious growth of emissions implied, in practice, in not complying with the assumed objectives. In Spain, according to official statistics, the emission of greenhouse gases increased 33% in the period 1990 to 2000, in contradiction of the commitment signed at Kyoto, which committed us to not pass the 1990 level of emissions by more than 15% in 2010.

be forgotten that, in an unequal world of non-internalised external effects, the improvement of sustainability needs balanced discriminatory policies, such as state “environmental taxes” (central, autonomous and local). Neither must it be forgotten that a certain budgetary structure has an influence on sustainability. Decisions as to the amount to be assigned to different objectives (environment, infrastructure, defence, collaboration in development, education, etc.) imply a commitment to sustainability that should later be compared with the actual purpose to which the budgeted sum has been applied. So, it is fundamental that there be a precise relation between the resulting budgetary model and sustainability, ensuring that there is harmony between the proposed plans and operations and the budgeted sums, since otherwise the plans would not be viable and would be regarded as mere propaganda, something which unfortunately happens all too often.

Finally, as an indispensable part of any measure to improve sustainability, there have to be a series of indicators that allow the results of the policies to be monitored and to what extent (both ongoing and final evaluations). The regulations, plans, policies and financial and budgetary content of state, autonomous and local authorities’ initiatives must also be subjected to previous evaluation. Another fundamental is to establish an accounting system of the natural and cultural heritage complementary to the national financial accounting system. It is evident that the control, reporting and evaluation of these indicators and accounting system should be carried out by an organisation independent of the government (an observatory or agency that could be made to depend directly on the parliament or local authority), which would also carry out the corresponding previous, ongoing and final evaluations, and would be a guarantee that sustainability would be monitored objectively, and that the political process for sustainability would be STABILISED in the appropriate sector.

5. Coordination of Local Sustainability and Global Policy: Local Agendas 21 and Evaluations of Urban and Environmental Quality.

As has previously been pointed out (A. Serrano, 2001), the first and most important problem involved in improving sustainability in the present situation is people’s lack of information and awareness as to the processes which make this sustainability absolutely necessary for the future of our society. It is therefore vital that everybody be adequately informed about the unsustainability of processes such as the increase in the use of automobiles, of levels of consumption, the unsuitability of external models in the rate of land occupation and transformation, or about the need to recover solidarity (including inter-generational) as against individualism and competition as the norms of conduct that characterise present society.

But the viability of improving sustainability not only demands that society be increasingly aware both about the seriousness of the existing problems with the environment and our heritage and also about their interrelation with our economic and social situations, but it is also vital that there should be general agreement on the need

for coordinated action of all the organisations concerned, institutions and administrations, with an eye on the long term view, which means that in Spain there must inevitably be collaboration between, at least, the central administration, autonomous communities, and town councils in the setting and definition of these long term objectives. This collaboration should be centred, among other aspects, on encouraging institutional cooperation for urban sustainability and supporting the development of local Agendas 21, with common agreement on the contents, which should incorporate indicators to monitor the degree of success of the established objectives.

The Spanish (and European) society of the 21st century is chiefly urban-dwelling, which has less and less direct contact with the environment and natural resources; a contact which is received and slanted through the news-media, supplemented by occasional visits to the country. Therefore the urban habitat has become the everyday point of reference for the immense majority of the population, and its setting is the framework for their daily relations with nature. The city is the area in which the main social contradictions are evident, and among them is the contradiction of seeking sustainability in a medium, the urban, which is intrinsically unsustainable, since it depends on supplies of energy, food and resources of all kinds arriving from outside.

The growth of the city and a planning centred chiefly on the property business and speculation, not on the welfare of its citizens, has given rise, on many occasion, to a process of high concentration and speculation in the construction of housing, which has culminated in an increase in social diseconomies with the loss to society of land which has been built on, and increasing difficulty of being able to buy a house, or access to public places (parks, gardens, public health clinics, etc.).

At the same time, we find there is a growing tendency in many municipalities, some autonomous communities and even on the part of the central administration, to reward “deregulation” and encourage property operations in the private sector, under the false idea that more building will reduce the price of land and housing, subordinating planning and urban control, for which the quality of life of its citizens and the sustainability of development ought to be its principal objectives, to the real estate business sector. Thus, after 1996, the Government broke the urban planning tradition of previous laws with the legislation (Real Decreto Ley 5/96, de 7 de junio; Ley 7/97 de 14 de abril; Ley 6/98, de 13 de abril; RDL 4/2000, de 23 de junio y Ley 0/2003; urgent liberalising measures in the property and transport sectors) which focussed on the objectives of increasing the area of land available for building and development, with tacit recognition of the philosophy of associating the right to build with the ownership of the ground, and with values controlled by market prices. In this way, the unfettered use of all unprotected land, and the subjection of the long-term general interest to the short-term interests of the property market, with occupation models that need more and more space, generate a greater and obligatory demand for mobility, multiply the need

for more infrastructure and reduce the environmental and energy efficiency of public investment.

In this framework, the sustainability of development and the increase in people's welfare demand an integrated set of actions at local level, whose scheme can be seen in Figure 1. As can be appreciated, the processes to be carried out are centred on the integrated establishment of an Agenda 21, the definition of a Long-term Model City, an Environmental and Urban Quality Barometer, the detailing of Urban, Environmental, Strategic, Socio-economic and Transport Planning compatible and coordinated with the objectives established in the Local Agenda 21 and with the long-term definition of the city model, and, lastly, as can be seen in Figure 2, a procedure for monitoring and control that permits an evaluation of the success of the Local Agenda 21, the success of the measures to improve the Quality of the Environment and of life in the city and of improvements in sustainability through integrated indicators such as the generated Ecological Footprint⁸.

The Local Agenda 21 reflects a policy conceived by the UN for application in all parts of the world from a local perspective; it aims to define objectives, and a setting up of analyses and the corresponding evaluations, centred on the immediate space where a person lives, works and travels, which is the exact place where the corresponding corrective operations must be situated. And that is without forgetting the multidimensional, multidisciplinary and macro-spatial perspectives (in some cases on a global scale) presented by many of the present problems, which makes it necessary that many of the corrective approaches or operations have to be considered on a world scale.

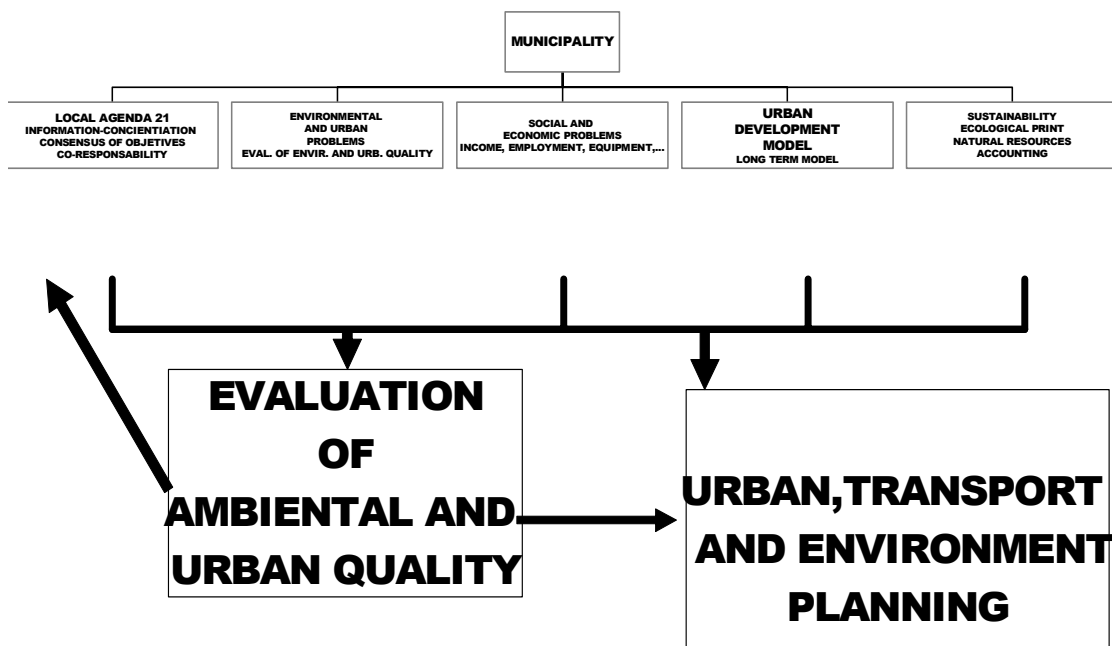
As is pointed out in the EU document that defines the Campaigns for sustainable cities, "a process of Local Agenda 21 can be described as a series of efforts within a municipality to reach a consensus among all sectors of the local community on the setting up and long term execution of a plan for sustainability". That is to say, in the proposed approach "social participation and interaction" are fundamental in the setting up of an Agenda 21.

The drawing up of documents such as Agenda 21 is basically a process of interactive learning between local authorities, the population and the various local social bodies, where the consideration and definition of municipal objectives for the improvement of

⁸ The basic content of these documents has to be directly associated to the aspects dealt with in documents such as the Green Book of Urban Environment; the Aarlborg Letter 1994, that elaborates the experiences and recommendations proposed in point 28 of the Agenda 21 of Río; the Fifth Action Programme on the subject of the Environment, of 1992, in Europe, and its subsequent development, especially in regard to the Right to Information on the Environment; the European Directive on the Right to Information on the Environment, which establishes that "everybody has the right to request environmental information from the administration", from the perspective that the beneficiary of this "emission of information" has to be the Environment itself; the ISO Series 9000 Norms (quality management) and 14000 (environmental quality management) and the European Regulation 1836/93 on Eco-Management and Eco-Auditing, in that they impinge on the organisation and the recommendations of systems of municipal operations, the Lisbon Action Plan, of 1998, , the Declaration of Hanover, of the

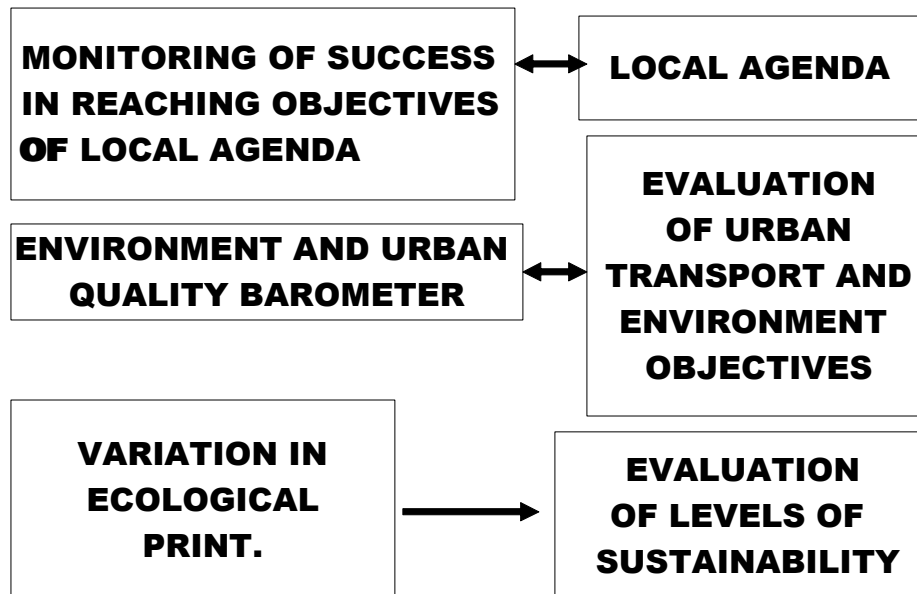
sustainability is also tied up with creative and imaginative processes and new ideas for the performance and application of “good practices” for achieving the proposed aims. It involves proposals for urban, environmental, socio-economic and transport planning that come from the aims agreed to by the local population through the drawing up of the Agenda 21, which should allow the definition, discussion and consensus of the population and social bodies of the long-term objectives for the community. This framework of social cooperation, which must include the three administrations and all relevant social organisations of the area, must constitute a guarantee to increase the stability of the structural processes of spatial transformation and be above whatever political and administrative changes that may occur.

FIGURE 1: INTEGRATION OF OBJECTIVES AND DIAGNOSTICS IN PLANNING



year 2000, or the present documents on Sustainable Development, or the ever-increasing number of recommendations and proposals made by the OECD, the EU, the Programme of Good Practices, etc.

FIGURE 2: FOLLOW-UP AND CONTROL



In this framework, the definition of the long-term Model city with the consensus of the entire population, previously informed and fully aware of the consequences for sustainability of the various possible alternatives, aims to decide the general structure of the territory, classifying the ground accordingly, and to define the property rights of the owners of urban ground, both building land and green zones, or the equivalent denominations of the autonomous legislation; rights which should not be modified by planning nor while the planned work is being carried out.

The next step is to establish a methodology for a set of specific indicators (municipal urban and environmental quality barometer) for each district of the municipality, to give information on the actual situation as to quality of life, environmental and urban quality (environmental and urban auditing), possible lines of action and citizens' cooperation for improvements, and the risks inherent in the current trend of these parameters if appropriate action is not taken in the appropriate place (street, block, urban area, province, metropolitan area, urban functional region, Autonomous Community, Spain, EU or Planet Earth). Evidently, this municipal Barometer should also permit the periodic follow-up of the degree of municipal success of the intended Aims. It should therefore be a specific municipal Barometer, that takes into consideration the problems and Objectives established by the community, and contains suitable indicators to evaluate the incidence of the municipality on the long-term global sustainability problems (such as the Ecological Footprint).

Within this context, current problems should be identified, also the indicators which would demonstrate and explain these problems, their cause, local and global diseases caused by them, and lastly, the trend and relative importance of the problems considered.

At the next stage, once this analysis has been done, it is now feasible to draw up the above-mentioned urban, environmental, social-economic and transport planning levels, where the evaluation and solution of the detected problem must be carried out in the context of political and social co-responsibility. This makes inevitable, as has been repeatedly pointed out from the beginning, that is to say, since the drawing up of the objectives of the Agenda 21, that the mechanisms of participation and co-responsibility are taken into account in the process. In any case, the proposed spatial, socio-economic, environmental and transport planning should focus on the previous processes of consensus of objectives (Agenda 21) and Model of city, as an interactive learning process between specialists, the population and the appropriate social organisations, where the consideration and definition of local objectives, in the short and medium term, are carried out jointly with knowledge of the problem and its long-term local and global implications.

The viability of this new process of planning for an improvement in long-term sustainability demands to be focussed as closely as possible on the individual citizens (street, district or town, as applicable), ensuring that they are adequately informed on the content and reasons for possible objectives (local and global; short, medium and long term) and should be the basis for achieving a culture and awareness of sustainability, which should be the first step in the co-responsibility and behaviour of the citizens and of the various social organisations in achieving the adopted objectives as the fundamental basis for the viability of sustainability itself.

This requires an effort in order to amplify the participation of citizens, in a historic situation in which public participation has not worked, or has worked badly, either because of inadequate means and lack of resources in unofficial organisations (NGOs, charitable organizations, etc.), or through lack of public willingness to participate (disillusionment) shown by a lack of interest in public affairs

In any case, it must be emphasised that municipal practices, with laudable exceptions, are not following this proposed process – included in the basis of the R o Programme 21 and in the recommendations of the EU – in Spain. The creation of Local Agendas 21 is given to business companies or consultants (sometimes from outside the town) that carry out from a distance studies and mixed evaluations of environmental and urban quality (the latter is not often considered), transferring indicators and objectives from other sectors or towns, forgetting public participation, or information campaigns and, of course, without any attempt to achieve consensus as to objectives, or paying only lip service to them. In the end, the process becomes a formality that has little effect on improving sustainability, but, (as is intended) does not question the continuation of the short term property business, which remains as the motor that powers the municipal planning in the great majority of Spanish townships, in spite of the fact that the processes that produce building land, construction and urban consolidation, generate long-term results that make it very difficult to physically or financially introduce subsequent changes or corrections.

6. Regional Planning and Sustainable Development in the Enlarged European Union. Some Final Conclusions.

Within the relatively narrow margins of really feasible operations in a global society with free competition, it must be pointed out that the EU is a world leader in environmental policies, both in the Commission and Parliament, and are trying to introduce elements of planning and cooperative management in order to improve the levels of sustainable development. Thus, the European environmental situation has improved in various aspects during the last decade, but a large proportion of this improvement is due to an economic recession which will not last for ever, and it is foreseeable that when it is over the present positive evolution in the environment will be radically changed, if significant measures are not taken to restructure the economy and the location of industries to improve territorial and environmental sustainability.

Therefore, there must be an integrated vision of processes, considering both the economic side as well as the social, environmental and spatial aspects of development, from a characteristically RP perspective. Urban planning should become more generally used, since both RP, and Urban Planning, as public practices, can incorporate a set of tools that can and must be used to “prevent”, “regulate” and “interiorise” the “external effects” associated with the various activities which may be carried out within the territory. In this way, both would be powerful instruments to boost the role of the public administration with a view to obtain a “more sustainable development”, in which the efficacy of the operations is not reduced to short-term decisions and the direct financial results of each operation.

The EU will influence an ever wider territory, with a clear concentration of income and population in the central European pentagon amplified to include Berlin, in which the objective of economic and social cohesion will take on greater importance in the framework of sustainable development. A RP that coordinates the measures necessary to achieve a polycentric, balanced model, with an increased role for medium sized towns, with a lesser occupation of land through building and better integration between nature, country and town is fundamental. But the feasibility of improving sustainability in an enlarged EU is strictly limited by:

1. The imbalance associated with the enlargement of the EU (up to 25 members by the middle of 2004 and 27 by 2007 involves an increase of the population by one third and a somewhat greater increase in area, with reduced population density and income per capita); the newly incorporated countries have governments that, as in the case of Spain, give priority to growth over development.
2. The predominance of sectorial logic in the choice of investments, favoured by the organisation of the Institutions and Organisations themselves, that are still preferred over integrated views that could consider the generated external effects and their consequences for the sustainability of development.

- 3 The foreseeable evolution towards a two-speed Europe, which will restrict the role of the Union as regards its competence in territorial and environmental matters, and the practical feasibility of any Objectives proposed
- 4 The final approval of a Constitution whose Article 1-3-3 specifies the Objective of sustainable development based on balanced economic growth, with a market economy aimed at full employment and social progress, which involves, among other aspects, the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among its member states.

The future capacity for EU intervention and control of the dynamics of each country's progress towards sustainable development is directly related to the future development of the established shared responsibility of Article III-125, which allows the Council, after consulting the European Parliament, the Regional Committee and the Economic and Social Committee, to unanimously adopt laws or European framework laws that establish, among other things, measures that affect regional planning, the management of water resources or that directly or indirectly affect water supply, land use or power supplies. As is pointed out in Article III, "the law or European framework law will establish general action programmes that fix in order of priority the planned objectives. It will be adopted after consultation with the Regional Committee, and the Economic and Social Committee, and its relationship – at least – with all of Section 3 of Chapter III, achieving a true horizontal integration of the of the most important factors of sustained development, or submitting them to economic growth based on the growth of the Gross Domestic Product."

Another fundamental factor in the improvement of SD and viability of the SD Strategies of the European Territorial Strategy is directly related to the possibility of knowing and evaluating the true dynamics of these elements in the totality of the Union. The establishing of the European Environment Agency and its periodic reports are both a good start and a guarantee in this direction, although the problems of obtaining homogeneous and trustworthy information are still serious. The important agreement reached in Luxemburg⁹ in 1997 for the setting up of a "Chain of Observatories of European Territorial Development", at present based on article 53 of the Community Initiative INTERREG III, dealing with the establishment of cooperating networks for the diffusion and exchange of experiences and good practices, and the community financing mechanisms, is a complementary base absolutely necessary for monitoring territorial transformations and their consistency with sustainability Objectives, whose functioning, unfortunately, is neither assured nor structured in the long term due to the position of certain countries that, as in the case of Spain, do not value the advantages of this instrument for the obtaining of Objectives whose desirability – in the case of the present Spanish government – it in theory maintains, but in practical terms pays it not the slightest attention.

⁹ Ministry of Regional Planning of Luxemburg, Echternach, 1997.

As long as the majority of society is not aware of the “model” that we are following, and becomes involved in the pressure to achieve alternative processes for better sustainability in land use, there will be grave doubts about the future, because we are generating big environmental problems (with global effects on the natural and cultural heritage of the planet), and there is little hope that measures will be adopted that will bring us nearer to a more sustainable development.

The growing influence of global processes, from the economic, financial and environmental perspective, on the many local problems that occur in the territory, and the global effect of locally produced economic or financial contaminating processes, bring us to the urgent necessity to support RP policies that take into account the global effects, promoting:

1. An integrated view of the problems and their solutions. In this respect, it must not be forgotten that RP is, first and foremost, a process of intervention to make our desired Objectives become reality. Therefore, these Objectives must be the fundamental references for the overall view of the problems (objectives not achieved) and their proposed solutions.
2. Our view always on the long term, since the Objective of improving SD demands continual improvements to be viable.
3. Local objectives that take into consideration the global effects of detected problems, overriding the more immediate local interests, but without forgetting that it is in the local ambit where public participation and co-responsibility is most viable and efficient, and where, therefore, we must concentrate the fundamental ambit of information, awareness, consensus on objectives, intervention, management and the sharing of social responsibility for the processes.
4. A RP framework that is the result of a Consensus of Objectives and Interventions, that permits the coordination of operations of the different sectors (local, regional, national and international) integrated in the achievement of the agreed common Objectives. A territorial policy aimed at improving SD in the long term, needs a coordinated, generally agreed synergetic territorial and city policy¹⁰, infrastructure, urban policies and housing among the three administrations, coordinated at the municipal level with the defined objectives in the framework of each Agenda 21, and that bears in mind that many infrastructures, especially in transport (ports, airports, railway stations or motorway service areas) facilitate the development of service areas, concentrations of businesses or logistic zones, which modify the competitiveness of the different areas, increase land values, and encourage speculation that signifies a huge rise in land prices, if this is not foreseen and measures taken to prevent it by means of appropriate planning and management of the entire process.

¹⁰ The experiences derived from the city Policy started by the Infrastructures Director Plan 1993-2007 (Bilbao 2000, the Green Belts of Oviedo, Prat de Llobregat, etc.) demonstrate the possible use of synergies of combined operations of the three administrations and public bodies.

As has been said on previous occasions, the motto “THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY”, sums up one of the basic tenets for an approach to RP understood as an integrating discipline of environmental, social, economic and infrastructural problems characteristic of our society, and directing it towards the established Objectives. RP that must be the reflection of a concrete process of “THINK GLOBALLY AND ANALYSE, INFORM, DIAGNOSE, MAKE AWARE, GET A CONSENSUS ON OBJECTIVES, PLAN, MAKE SOCIAL BODIES CO-RESPONSIBLE, ACT AND DIRECT LOCALLY”, where the towns or districts of big cities should be the last stage in this local scale.

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