

## SRL PRIORITY POSITIONS ON THE POST-2020 EU FUNDING PERIOD

### Premeditation

SRL considers municipalities, cities and regions to be the engine of economic, social, ecological and cultural development. In these turbulent times in Europe, oscillating between the poles of globalisation and regional willfulness, they are the places where Europeans come together. We understand the European city to be a democratic system of values.

For all (spatial) fields of action the following set principles apply

- Secure sustainability!
- Focus on the common good!
- Participation and transparency!
- Prevention instead of rectification!
- Respect for the principle of subsidiarity!

### Spaces

SRL emphasises the goal of equal living conditions for all sub-areas in Germany and Europe. We consider urban and rural spaces to be in an urban-rural continuum, which means that the challenges in the fields of action of spatial planning can be diverse and may require differentiated answers.

The ESIF for **urban areas** must be redirected to strengthening integrated neighbourhood and urban (regional) development in its organisation and process design (cross-sectional and systemic, bottom-up and top-down) and by way of both established and new fields of action (Urban Agenda). The objectives and promotion of European cooperation between municipalities, cities and regions must be accelerated. Involvement of citizens along with their qualifications - language skills, facilitation skills and management skills - must be promoted more strongly to allow them to shape processes themselves.

Policies for territorial cohesion designed to strengthen rural areas are welcomed by SRL, however, they must gain further importance in the future. Future funding must reflect that one rural area is not identical to another rural area. Different types of rural areas need to be identified whose specific needs are addressed in the funding programmes. Particularly EAFRD and sustainable land management must receive more support.

## Selected key aspects

Europe - and thus also spatial planners - faces diverse familiar and emerging challenges. SRL has taken four key aspects as examples.

**1 Standardisation:** As a rule, standardisation is necessary for technical developments and applications. However, we vehemently oppose the standardisation of social processes, spaces and places and strictly reject its application as a prerequisite for eligibility for funding within development programmes. The EU must use its policies and programmes to ensure that local data sovereignty and decision-making power remains permanently with the local municipalities. For communities, cities and regions, the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC) offers an excellent approach for analysis, location, goal definition, implementation and improvement. There is no need to classify cities and their neighbourhoods according to DIN or ISO standards.

**2 Digital transformation:** Smart city, smart village, smart spaces must be considered together while being differentiated at the same time. A concentration of smart solutions in (large) cities must - as in equivalent living conditions - be avoided by the drafting of European guidelines, policies and funding programmes. Technical solutions by manufacturers, which are equal to or greater than a SME according to the EU-definition for SME, must be compulsorily scalable and have a uniformly standardised interface for data transfer between systems.

**3 Governance:** Through the development and implementation of the EU Urban Agenda and the Amsterdam Pact it has become apparent that the direct presence of the local municipalities and their interests is a major asset in the cooperation at various levels in the European Union (multi-level governance). Cooperation at eye level strengthens the effectiveness of urban and spatial integrated approaches and the use of funds as well as the visibility and persuasiveness of European integration. It must also be ensured in the future that the integrated development approaches within the meaning of the Leipzig Charter will be strengthened further and the interactions with other space-relevant and sectoral fields of action taken into greater consideration. Likewise, the highest possible transparency in the development of criteria and the implementation of the operational programmes at the various levels as well as their flexible application must be ensured in order to make the European idea tangible at the municipal level.

**4 Occupation:** Freelance work has proved to be an economically and socially viable system in Germany. SRL advocates that this is not hindered by European legislation which should provide regulations that secure adequate fees in order to maintain the high quality in planning and project execution. Building culture is to be secured and promoted, which also entails a sufficient number of professionals in administrative positions and in the liberal professions. The EU must ensure the common recognition of qualifications and standardise their levels of quality.

## Outside the box

The Territorial Agenda should be reviewed and complemented by the Commission in line with the Leipzig Charter and Urban Agenda. The 'development of urban and rural areas' task is assigned across all departments and steered with instruments which are inter-directorate generales.

New challenges, tasks and issues must always be considered with their effects on space, city and region in mind. This applies to all of the European Union's tasks and funding programmes.

The future drafting of funding programmes must address the promotion of cooperative spatial design. Funding should be based on the neediness identified at the NUTS3 level rather than on abstract spatial categories. The allocation of spatial funding must be exclusively inter-departmental and integrated; it is not a 'funding competition' between various programmes. Prerequisites for any funding must be well-founded, integrated overall concepts resulting from participation processes.

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