



Urbanistica n. 129

January-April 2006

Distribution by www.planum.net

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Local Agenda's contribution to new provincial planning cycle in regional programming system

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The still topical debate about national planning law (*legge urbanistica*) and the progressive testing of new regional planning laws let foresee a chance for a new planning season to begin, which should deal with different aspects: a strategic approach, a territorial dimension and a most ambiguous landscape expression. In the meantime, Provinces have substantially closed their first planning cycle and they are considering how to set out. Most Communes are engaged in drafting urban plans conceived in a more middle-long term prospect, that requests them to look further administrative borders and to face themes, concerning environment and territory, in a more strategic and effective way. This process highlights two principal topics: on the one hand, central rule of Communes in a new phase for territory government, marked by the increasing care to tax regulations and to community participation. On the other hand, necessity for Provinces to strengthen their partnership with Regions in planning to a large scale, as well as to involve local networks. A cooperation to *note in agenda*: to stimulate the construction of inter-municipal networks, according to local experiences. This could be powerfully applied to integrated territorial systems, characterized by well-established relations (from the social, economic and institutional point of view), as well as to homogeneous areas looking for better visibility and more chances of success. Anyway, a basic condition is the search of common strategies developed by

local systems.

A common Agenda, reminding to decide together

Forming a Local System's Strategic Agenda appears as an innovative contribution in connection networks' building, to increase cohesion within communities. A contribution realized through the practise of a strategic action, able to 'look further on', toward middle term settings; engaged, at once, in searching meeting of interests on the decision-making process. Province's taking part to Agenda's construction can turn out a necessary reinforcement of local politics, as well as a useful moment to realize and verify provincial politics, starting from structure plan (*Piano territoriale di coordinamento provinciale*). Dialogue with Communes (all involved in reforming their own politics in different ways) and, especially, with Chief Towns requires an effective formalization of institutional comparison about problems and solutions. This formalization could allow both Towns and Local Networks to attest their participation in significant decisions for wide area. Agenda should be built through comparison and contractual agreement between local system's institutional subjects, stimulating voluntary actions. Subjects involved in Agenda's drafting (management) improve, in this way, their own programming and planning tools, which yet remain autonomous inside competences' system. Every action inscribed in Agenda should be related to the responsibility of an institutional or social actor. Moreover, Agenda is also an opportunity to reconsider local tax regulations' state, promoting procedures aimed at equalization and

compensation and supporting associated management.

Local System's Strategic Agenda could be the right place for sharing projects and, at the same time, could help in forming regional decisions about economic development and territorial trim. As a consequence, Province's role will be strengthened, obtaining visibility and influence. This is the reason why growth of partnership Region-Province seems to be decisive, joint to strategic projects' quality (both developed by Local System and Region).

A Strategic Agenda as a contribution towards regional politics

Strategic Agenda shall focus on relationship between Local Systems and regional programming, a widespread topical subject. This vertical connection seems to be decisive to give substance to *sussidiarietà*: investing local actors with responsibilities, as well as stressing leading role of Region, is going to increase decisions' quality and effect. A fertile regional direction, in fact, should allow to stimulate and reward autonomous project capabilities, shown by local actors, and their determination in being part of a network. Therefore, will to succeed in Strategic Local Agendas shall compare with regional and Community programming, recognizing to these instruments worth as bottom up experimentations. The project role ascribed to local actors is recognizable both in making strategic programme and in process for defining and developing feasibility's studies; that is a necessary step to pursue actions and targets defined by the programme. Shifting technical, social and political attention toward relation targets-feasibility seems to be indispensable in exercising new generation's territorial

planning (strategic and structural).

A Strategic Agenda helping Plans

Agenda's setting needs a preliminary reconnaissance, in order to make a first diagnosis of concerned area's problems, to become aware of involved subjects' behaviour and to define possible options for developing or transforming processes. This approach will form the basis for choosing shared strategies, in a first moment addressed to promote institutional cooperation and then to drawing up the strategic plan. Therefore, Agenda can be the right tool to build a plan's process starting from ability in gathering relevant themes, expressed by community, which cannot wait the formalization of a complete plan. A theme's entry in Agenda shall mark an important stage in realizing pursued strategies: for this reason it is essential that candidature's validating course gets full recognizability. To obtain a positive result, must be devised a technical dossier, together with adequate resources, basic elements for improving action's quality. Both Agenda and feasibility's studies should be appropriately financed, for instance by Regions, recognizing them as a constituent part of regional programming system. Agenda's building path should provide the subscription of an agreement's protocol between Province, Communes and other involved subjects, to sanction the sharing of a cooperative approach. By this way, it is possible to present an organic candidature to Region, aiming at converge local and regional resources (a new procedure for innovative 'cooperative-planning' form). A considerable result could be regenerating the method

of building Ptcp, steering it toward systemic approaches (mobility, logistics, telematics and welfare) and, at the same time, toward a local area's approach (local networks and their agendas). Welfare and human resources' themes need to pay attention to both material and immaterial aspects and to be dealt in territorial strategies.

The whole process shall be clearly characterized in a strategic and sustainable way, oriented to a smart growth; an approach to sustainability based on a landscape matrix.

Both Strategic and Structural Plans

A further significant contribution to new regional and Community programming seasons will be the development of innovative projects: well-articulated in technical terms, socially shared and with recognizable relationship's strategies. Moreover, it will stimulate the forming of Strategic Plans, worked by Communes and their networks; a Strategic Plan targeted to structure local system's identity and cohesion. This could be a support for town-planning procedures, too, especially if lacks evaluation of future trends or of choices' sustainability-feasibility and if decisional process is not socially shared.

The Strategic Plan must include structural aspects as well, referring to a 'new plan's form' proposed within the debate for new national planning law, already tested in regional experiences (even though with few contradictions).

Therefore a 'strategic and structural' plan, which aims at improving institutional negotiation and establishing agreements' network to deal with involved interests, being careful to places'. Such a conceived plan accomplishes properly to the innovative role assigned

to structural plans; it is also able to deal with environmental strategic evaluation of carried out processes and politics, with a communicative and pedagogic intention.

Sustainability shall be preferably considered from social and environmental point of view, as well as it has to be discussed sustainable organization and tax regulations.

This means that strategic-structural plan, to a municipal or intermunicipal scale, can represent, in real terms, the first stage for the composition of a new generation's planning tool and, at the same time, an instrument coordinated with current practices. In this prospect, building a Local System's Strategic Agenda points out as a decisive shift to form a new shared and authoritative Ptcp., based on partnership and co-planning.

Such a Strategic Agenda shall bind regional strategies to a constant comparison with local systems, proving its capability in producing vertical integration's processes and territorial innovation, which allow to regional system to be both efficient and effective. Finally, Strategic Agenda's experience could help in growing a new culture, characterized by social and institutional relationships, in regional context; this could give different answers to economic and civil growth's demands, expressed by a society that has to compete with globalization.