SLOVENIAN SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEM
– KEY CHANGES OF PAST DECADE

Valentina Lavrenčič, Janja Kreitmayer

Spatial planning has a long tradition in Slovenia. It was always a part of the integrated planning process, first institutionalized in 1968. The planning system was quite unique, combining economic, social, and spatial aspects in one, a so-called long-term and medium-term social plan. At the national level its spatial part consisted of the national spatial plan, the defining concept for settlement management and growth, public service delivery, use of space and landscape transformation, protection of the environment, and guidelines for conflict management. Today, this form of planning is substituted by the national strategies and programs of each sector.

The new legal system set in Slovenia upon gaining independence in 1991 also required a different attitude toward space, as well as the design of a responsible and effective spatial planning system. The new spatial planning system had to adapt the administrative solutions and approaches to a parliamentary democracy, market economy, private property, the establishment of the local government, and incorporation in the European integration process. Reforming the standards and organizational aspects of spatial planning is establishing new rules, especially in relation to the system of spatial planning documents and their contents, the recognition and introduction of market instruments in the area of spatial planning, new roles in spatial planning for local communities, and respecting private property as one of the basic constitutional categories. The new normative arrangement is set to enable greater flexibility of spatial documents and greater public participation in adopting decisions about the use of space, establishing the foundations of a spatial planning information system, and newly regulating the activities of spatial planning.

The new spatial planning system in Slovenia is still in the process of being developed. Slovenia is redesigning the whole system of planning, which includes economic development, budgetary and spatial planning, and adjusting it to the accession procedure to the European Union.

Significant efforts to improve spatial planning legislation with an emphasis on land policy and preparation of the new spatial development concept of Slovenia are being made. These efforts are setting up an overall strategy for spatial development and implementing the principles of European guidelines for sustainable spatial development. The Spatial Planning Act has just been drafted and is currently in process to be adopted by the parliament. It is determining the responsibilities and procedures in spatial planning, and among others, also defining the types and contents of spatial documents. The new act introduces novelties with an emphasis on the flexibility of planning, the strengthening of public participation, and simplifying procedures. The decisions about spatial development and guidelines for spatial planning, however, will be determined according to the latest proposal of the Act, in three spatial documents: Spatial Management Policy, Spatial Development Concept, and the Report on Spatial Development.


The Assessment of Spatial Development in Slovenia (Assessment of Spatial Development) is a temporary document for the period before the adoption of the new Spatial Planning Act, and will later be substituted by the Report on Spatial Development. It was needed to serve as a basis for all other spatial development or spatial management documents and the starting points:

- the formulation of the basic spatial development objectives and guidelines,
- the enforcement of an effective spatial management system, and,
- the preparation of uniform methodology with criteria and indicators for the continuous monitoring of spatial development, which will be the basis for preparing periodic Spatial Development and Management Reports.


ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION: ROLE-DIVISION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STATE LEVEL

<table>
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| COMMISSION FOR SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT | - laws and provisions  
- resolutions, strategies  
- national program  
- spatial development concept  
- protection of areas |
| NATIONAL ASSEMBLY | - assessment of the constitutionality and legality of the spatial planning documents |
| MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING | - control of the legality of local spatial development plans  
- implementation provisions, guidelines  
- detailed plans for structures of national importance  
- permits for interventions in areas of national importance  
- supervision of the local spatial plans  
- dealing with amendments regarding structures of national importance and provisions from territorial offices |
| LOCAL BRANCHES | - building permits |

LOCAL LEVEL

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| LOCAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL | - building permits  
- cooperation  
- other legal documents from local jurisdiction local infrastructure, etc. |
| MAYOR | - implementation |
| ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES | - implementation |

Source: Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning
The Assessment of Spatial Development in Slovenia highlights the principal characteristics of Slovenian space and its most urgent problems pertaining to spatial development and the current spatial planning system. It briefly presents and deals with all of the main activities affecting spatial management.

On the basis of the Assessment of Spatial Development we designed the Spatial Management Policy of the Republic of Slovenia (Policy). The Policy is the first spatial document that represents the attainment of the long expected consensus on the fundamental spatial management objectives, as well as, on the methods and instruments for their achievement at the national, regional, and local levels. At the same time it also offers a framework for a co-ordinated and interconnected implementation of all activities and actors in the spatial planning process at all levels of decision-making. Together with the Slovenian Economic Development Strategy and the Slovenian Regional Development Strategy, it is the basic policy document for guiding national development. It has been formulated for a number of years with the co-operation of many experts in this field and on the basis of professional discussions and inter-ministerial co-ordination among all the bodies that influence spatial management.

The Spatial Management Policy is a framework for:
- co-ordination of sectoral spatial development policies,
- reform of spatial management system, and
- at the same time it is also the basis for preparing the Spatial Development Concept of Slovenia.

The Policy points out the trends in Slovenian spatial development, which have a fundamental influence on spatial planning and development, and need to be tackled as soon as possible. It further states the basic principles and objectives to be taken into consideration in the management of Slovenian space and draws up guidelines how to attain them.

Spatial management objectives, as stated in the Policy:
- to enforce our comparative advantages in European integration processes, and
to protect our national identity,
- to promote a balanced development of all regions,
- to reintroduce and define polycentric urban network development, and promote it by effective transport and other infrastructure, enabling good transport links and access to knowledge,
- to promote the modernisation of agriculture and the preservation of cultural landscapes when restructuring rural areas,
- to promote the economically viable use of space,
- to ensure conservation and the active management of the environment, as well as natural and cultural values, and
- to improve the institutional system for spatial management.

An issue of particular emphasis in the Spatial Management Policy is the request for integrated treatment of settlement, infrastructure, and landscape. Emphasis is placed on those guidelines which refer to the polycentric development of cities and other settlements.

The Policy is setting also the system of implementation measures and policy proposals to be taken into consideration in further spatial development documents and other policies. These are in the areas of:
- Legislative and institutional systems (High-quality legislation and its consistent enforcement)
- Financial and economic measures (Providing adequate financial resources and other economic measures)
- Development of the profession and information system (Education of technical personnel and an improved information system)
- Spatial management promotion (Providing access to information)
- Public participation (Public involvement throughout the planning process)

In order to ensure active controlling and targeting of spatial development, it is necessary to develop an effective system of measures, interconnected at inter-ministerial and all other levels to ensure the spatial policy's adoption and implementation. Particular attention is therefore devoted to financial and economic measures aimed at promoting the positive, and the hindering of negative processes in the space, education, and information system, the promotion of spatial management activities, as well as the participation of all those that are affected by or interested in spatial management. However, a prerequisite for controlling ever new challenges and tasks in spatial development is the reform of the spatial management system, which will be enabled by new spatial planning legislation.
Spatial documents at the national level with regard to other strategic documents
SPATIAL PLANNING ACT - proposal 04.04.2002

Source: National Office for Spatial Planning, ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning
NEW APPROACH TO SPATIAL PLANNING IN SLOVENIA

Slovenia is implementing new approaches to spatial planning also at the national level through the preparation of Spatial Development Concept of Slovenia. Along with the National Environmental Protection Program and the Economic Development Strategy this is one of the main strategic documents oriented toward sustainable development. The emphases are primarily on subsidiarity, flexibility and integration in the wider European space as the general parameters for guiding spatial development. Planning is seen as a continuous process where it is crucial to have a good set of criteria to guide the spatial development, rather than pre-set solutions that might be unable to manage the continuously changing interests.

Through the preparation of the spatial development concept Slovenia has also undertaken the implementation of the recommendations from European spatial development documents, which are enforced in the preparation of all laws and national programs in the area of sustainable development.

Within the context of the spatial development strategy, we stress the priorities of: achieving a balanced urban structure and urban network; the effective management of urban growth; the balancing of the housing market; and improving the land and real estate policy.

The Spatial Development Concept sets three basic values which are taken in regard through every decision: These are social welfare, social stability, and freedom. It also sets three general goals: - quality of living and working environment, - rational use of land, and - preservation of the identity of spatial structures.

The concept is based on long term vision which sets the priorities for spatial development. Each priority has strategic goals, strategies, and guidelines how to achieve these goals and instruments for the implementation.

In order to improve the identified conditions in Slovenian spatial development, we find it necessary to always ensure interdependent economic, social, and spatial planning, as well as provide for effective monitoring, and ensure the enforcement of legislation. A system of criteria and indicators has to be established to enable the implementation of defined objectives to be monitored, supervised and controlled, and provide the possibility of prompt and effective action in the case of deviations from the desired directions of development, or enable adaptation to constantly changing conditions.

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1 European Spatial Development Perspectives, Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent (CEMAT), and others. Slovenia is implementing the recommendations from those documents also through the participation in INTERREG III programs and CEMAT activities.