EU Macro regions and macro regional strategies: from concept to policy action

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Structure

1. Emergence of macro regional processes
2. Macro regions as functional areas
3. Macro-regional strategies (MRS)
4. Defining a capacity of implementation/ action
Emergence of macro-regional processes

- Rise of large scale regional integration in Europe since 50s up to 90s
- Increased importance of global flows
- New regionalisms based on ‘trans-national’ governance
- Growing territorial concentration forces around larger urban agglomerations
- Global challenges, e.g. climate change impact with highest vulnerability in Southern Europe
Concept of Macro region

Functional area – rather than administrative unit
Geographic boundaries not exclusive or fixed
Not only nation states - complex and heterogeneous networks
Common challenges – best addressed on a transnational scale
Construction of a common regional identity
From macro regions to macro regional strategies (MRS)

**Scale** of macro-regional cooperation defined by overlapping territorial and functional characteristics

Internal/external re-scaling - Balancing and synergies between European territories as well as neighbours

The three no's rules – no new legislation, no new funding, no new institutions

A three tier governance system – policy, coordination and operational measures
Macro-regionalization – What can we learn from each other?

About 270 million people in 20 MS

ALPINE REGION

BALTIC SEA REGION

DANUBE REGION

ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION
Added Value (s) of MRS

Tackling regional inequality and promoting territorial cohesion
Greater integration and coordination
Improved policy development
Results in terms of projects, actions, decisions, networks
Value for money
Promoting multi-level governance
Improved cooperation with neighbours
Defining the action capacity

- in view of 3 No’s, MRS need to fit into existing dynamics and initiatives within the macro-region as well as EU policies
- main added value lies not much in strategic focus but prioritization of concrete actions with highest impact
WHAT? Embedding Strategies in EU policies

Topics/sectors for priority action

Innovation, Transport, Energy: areas with highest potential of integration

Other areas may have a high degree of fragmentation (business development, environment, safety/migrations...)

Need for synergies and complementarities (e.g. smart specialization)
Capacity of existing instruments to support prioritized projects

1) Identify priority actions and projects ("labelling")

2) Seek funding – Aligning funding instruments toward shared objectives/ concrete actions
HOW? Funding the Strategies

‘Mainstream’ ESIF

Macro-regional strategies


Other programmes/funds (EFSI, COSME, Horizon, CEF, WBIF, ...)

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WHO? Implementing macro-regional projects

Capacity of actors involved to steer/implement projects = EC, National governments, regional/local authorities, NGOs, private sector, etc.

Combination of top down/bottom up processes

Not just legitimacy but also efficiency
Towards a (successful) macro-regional policy framework

Addressing obstacles to territorial cohesion implies capacity of actors to cooperate across sectors, instruments and various levels of governance

Capacity to identify and realise tailor made solutions is critical

Funding – specific budget line for MRS?