



Integrated urban interventions reinvented: EU urban policy and planning cultures in Greek cities

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Résumé / Summary

Since their initiation in the early 1990s integrated urban interventions have constituted a significant EU regional policy instrument with ups and downs depending on the policy priorities that prevail in each programming period. In the period 2014-2020 in particular, there has been a renewed interest in this type of interventions, which goes in tandem with the upgrading of the urban dimension of cohesion policy. The adoption of the EU Urban Agenda as well as the establishment of the new initiative for Urban Innovative Actions are representative in this respect.

It can be argued that a re-inventing of URBAN type interventions has emerged, which of course needs to adapt to current realities. Questions arise as to how cities are capable of implementing and exploiting these interventions. This in turn refers us to the debate on the Europeanization of spatial planning and its relationship to planning institutions and cultures at the country level.

The case of Greek cities is representative in this respect. After years of implementation of EU co-funded urban interventions, the impact of the integrated approach to urban planning and development on the institutional framework has been evident for instance in the institutionalization of 'Plans for Integrated Urban Interventions' in deprived urban areas (SOAP in Greek) in 1999, which began to be implemented in the early 2010s. At the same time the role of informal institutions and planning cultures appears to be at least of equal importance for promoting integrated urban interventions. This paper examines these issues drawing evidence from the city of Thessaloniki which has long experience in such interventions starting with an urban pilot project in the early 1990s. As new integrated urban interventions are at a preparatory stage, the paper endeavors to explore arising prospects, taking into account not only formal but also informal frameworks.

Key words: Integrated urban interventions, Europeanization of spatial planning, Greek urban policies

Bibliographie / Bibliography

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