



## ESPON 2013 Programme

### Conference

# Territorial Development in Europe: Potentials and Challenges for Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – and for the European Union

11 March 2014  
16h00 – 18h00

### Venue

Mission of Switzerland to the EU  
Place du Luxembourg 1  
B - 1050 Brussels

## Draft Programme

In cooperation with:



## Scope

In the development of the European Union the neighbouring EFTA countries play a particularly important role as partners in driving Europe forward in the world, as markets for exchange of goods, innovation and people, etc. Conversely the European Union plays a similar role for Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Territory matters more and more in development policy. Globalisation creates new markets further afield, increases the dependencies of economies and the need for connections that were not known 10-20 years ago. Furthermore developments in European countries and the EU influence developments in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, and vice versa.

Inside Europe, the diversity of development potentials and challenges are nowadays recognised and integrated in EU policy. The fact that diversity prevails make tailor made regional and national policy mixes necessary. This, in turn, requires a solid and reliable territorial evidence base to support an efficient use of scarce resources and the necessary growth in the “right” places.

Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland belong to the Centre-North powerhouse of Europe. They are scoring quite well on a number of economic, social and territorial indicators, and they are strong in many aspects of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Switzerland is the biggest of the four countries in terms of population, while Norway ranks highest in terms of size of territory.

All four countries have specific and different types of territories (mountainous, islands, sparsely populated), and there are many regions within the EU, which are comparable to their regions as regards economic, social and territorial settings.

Indeed, the territorial development of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland as well as the European Union is facing new development opportunities and challenges. Viewing territorial development in an integrated way between these territories helps to better exploit development potentials and deal with challenges.

Some of the issues to be addressed at the high-level conference are the following:

- Territorial development and cooperation: Additional options for Partner States and EU Member States jointly contributing to European smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- International, national and regional gateways: Options for jointly stimulating growth and providing services of general economic and social interest.
- Transport corridors and flows of goods, people and information: Promoting important infrastructures and sustainable connections between EU and Partner States, and to the wider world markets, such as through Arctic waters.
- Territories with specific potentials and challenges: Harvesting upon the territorial diversity of specific types of territories and supporting areas in need.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will, as basis for the conference, publish a Territorial Observation no. 10. Based on the current European territorial evidence base, this publication will present new information on development potentials and challenges to be addressed and discussed at the conference.

## Programme

16.00-16.20 **Welcome and Opening**

- Roberto Balzaretto, Ambassador of Switzerland
- Peter Mehlbye, Director of the ESPON CU

16.20-16.45 **Development potentials, challenges and scenarios in Europe: Benchmarking Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland**

- Presentation of ESPON conference report:  
*“ESPON Partner States in the European Context”*  
Kai Böhme, Spatial Foresight GmbH

16.45-18.00 **Initiatives for Growth and Territorial Cohesion: What could or should be done jointly by the EU and the four countries?**

*Facilitator:* Mathilde Konstantopoulou, EU Greek Presidency, Ministry for Development and Competitiveness, Greece

Roundtable discussion (statements of 10 minutes each):

- Rudolf Niessler, Director of Policy Coordination, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission
- Adalsteinn Thorsteinsson, Director of the Icelandic Regional Development Institute, Iceland
- NN, high level representative of Liechtenstein
- Hallgeir Aalbu, Director General, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Norway
- Hauke Fehlberg, Vice-Director, Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE, Switzerland
- Maria José Festas, Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy, Portugal

18.00 **Reception**

## **ESPON Conference “Potentials and Challenges for Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – and the European Union”**

11 March 2014

Brussels, Belgium

### **More information**

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON shall support Cohesion Policy development with European wide, comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions, cities and larger territories. In doing so, it shall facilitate the mobilisation of territorial capital and development opportunities, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to the widening and deepening of European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.

The Managing Authority responsible for the ESPON 2013 Programme is the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Department for Spatial Planning and Development of Luxembourg.

More information: [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

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