

GERMANY

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GENERAL COUNTRY INFORMATION

Germany is a federal republic consisting of 16 States (Land, plural Länder), three of which are City States: Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg. Although Germany has a long tradition as a state, the current territory and its form of government were formed after World War II in 1949. This form has not changed after the German Reunification in 1990.



Map 1: Topographical and political map of Germany

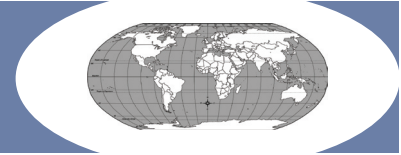
Geographically, Germany is located in central Europe. It is characterised by a large topographical variety. While the northern part borders on northern Europe and the Baltic Sea, the southern edge has alpine character. In between, the major features are the great plains in the North, the uplands in the Centre and South-west and the valleys of the big rivers, Rhine, Danube, Elbe, Main and Neckar.

Germany lies within the moderately cool west wind zone between the Atlantic Ocean and the continental climate to the east. Persistent cold or warm periods are rare. However, frequent weather and climate changes from day to day and from year to year are frequent. Rain is possible in all seasons. The climate differs from one region to another. While, North-western and coastal regions have a maritime climate, characterised by warm summers and mild cloudy winters, further inland, the Upper Rhine Valley the warmest part of the country, is a sunny region in summer with winters that are quite cold because of its proximity to the Alps and distance from the ocean.



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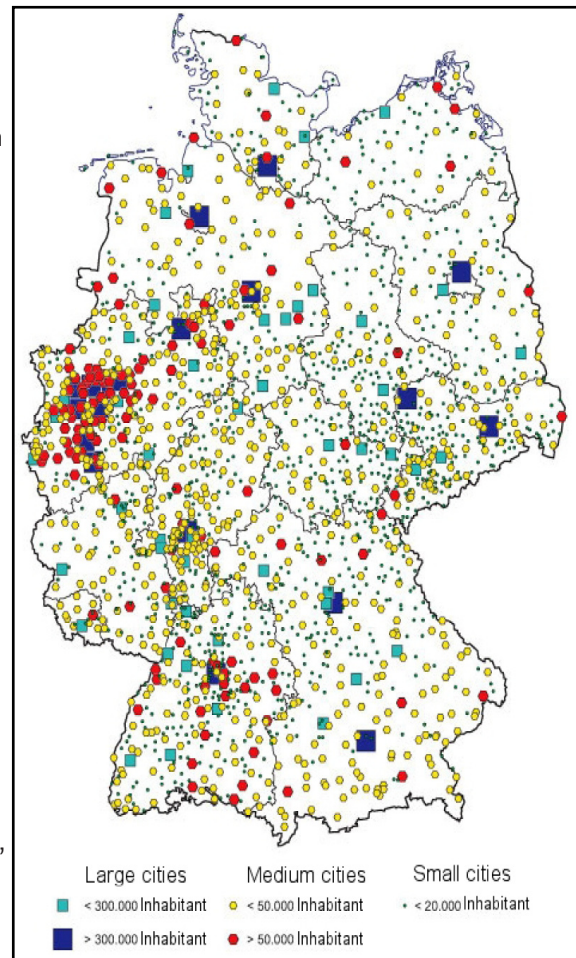
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Germany is a high-urbanised country, only 16% of the population lives in rural areas. The rest lives either in cities (54%) or in urbanised areas (30%). However, this high percentage of inhabitants living in urban areas is not concentrated in a few large cities. Only 35 % of the population is living in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Consequently, Germany's spatial landscape is characterised by a large number of medium and small towns as an inheritance from the time, when Germany was consisting of many small and medium-sized autonomous states.

CITY SIZE	NO. OF CITIES
> 1.000.000 inh.	3
500.000 - 1.000.000 inh.	9
100.000 - 500.000 inh.	70
50.000 - 100.000 inh.	109

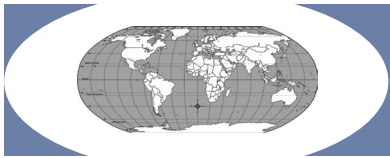
“Decentralised concentration” is the spatial strategy that guides spatial planning in Germany. It is based on the concepts of central places and development axes. It implies that population, workplaces and infrastructure facilities are concentrated in agglomerations of different sizes that spread quite evenly over the whole country. It involves several intermediate centres, surrounded by smaller centres, situated along axes of transport facilities: roads and railways to create a network of cities with different functions, instead of a major city with an accumulation of inhabitants, activities and services.



Map 2: Settlement structure; 'decentralised concentration'

Basic information about Germany (2004)*	
Area	357 031 km ²
Population	82.5 Mio. inhabitants
Population density (average)	231 inh/km ²
max: Berlin	3800 inh/km ²
min: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	75 inh/km ²
Capital	Berlin
Form of government	Democratic parliamentary federal state. Consisting of 16 states
Gross domestic product (GDP)	2 178,20 Billion Euro (2004)
per inhabitant	26.400 Euro (2004)

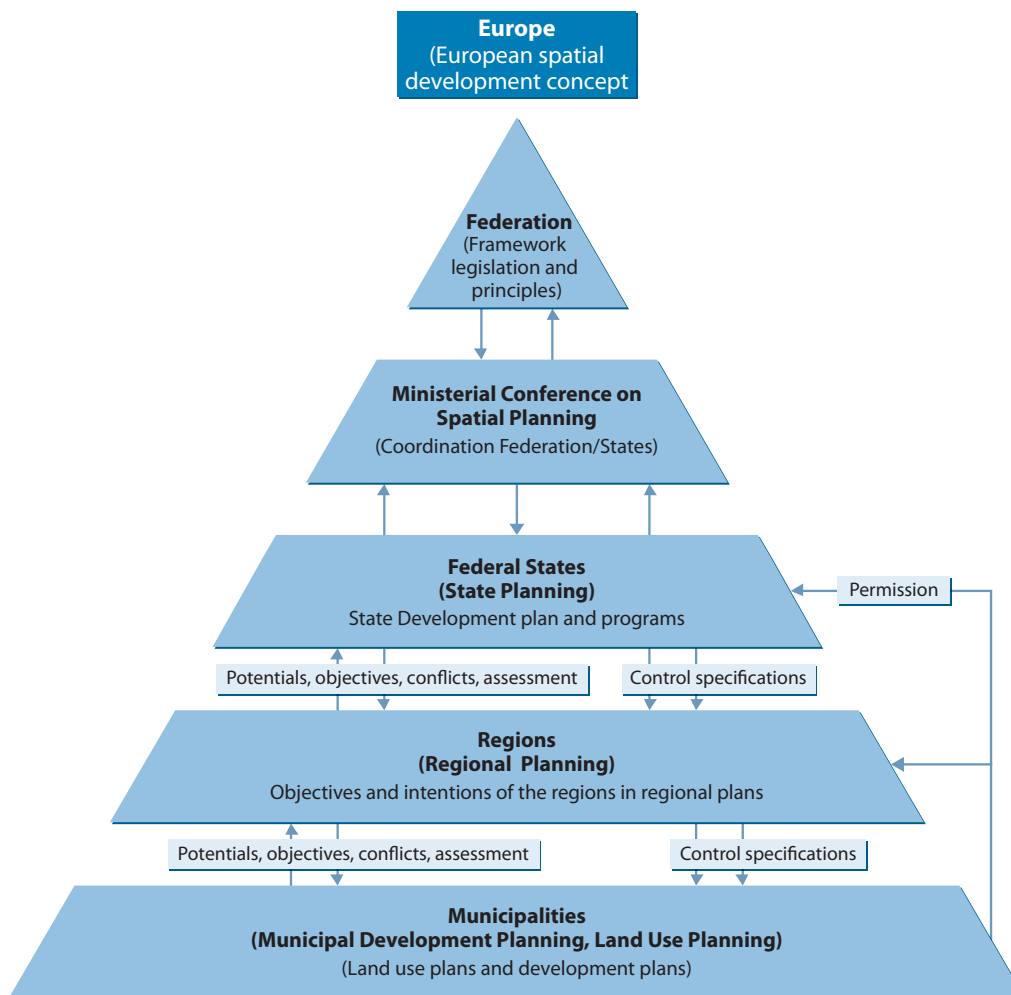
* Based on information from www.deutschland.de



PART I: PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- **Administrative structure**

The German constitution (Grundgesetz, literally, “Basic Law”) defines the country’s system as a democratic, constitutional, social and federal country. One of the main consequences of these principles is the separation of powers both in functional/administrative partitions and at territorial levels. The functional (horizontal) separation means, that the political power is divided into legislative, judiciary and executive. These powers are completely independent from each other. This organisation was chosen to secure the country from an abuse of power as it happened during the period of National Socialism. The territorial (vertical) partitioning of power is reflected in the Federal character of Germany. Each of the 16 States has a constitution, an elected parliament and a State government. Each State is further divided into cities and counties.



Scheme 1: Planning system in Germany

Original graphic in German is prepared in Institute of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Karlsruhe. Translated by the authors

The States (Laender) have the political and administrative power to decide nearly all questions related to affairs within their territory and liability, while the Federal government mainly administrates and decides questions of national importance, such as foreign affairs, defence and national finance. In addition, the Federation has some powers regarding parts of infrastructure and environmental matters. It also owns the



highest courts to guarantee a harmonised interpretation of law.

One of the most important principles of the federal system in Germany is the subsidiary concept, which means that every decision should be made at the lowest possible political level. A higher political level should intervene only, if the subject cannot be handled or organised by the lower one.

- **Administrative competences for planning**

Similar to the political and administrative federal system in Germany which is based on a division of competence and power at different levels, spatial planning is organised hierarchically. Although, the Federation represents the top of this spatial planning hierarchy, it has only framework responsibilities and no direct planning competence. On the contrary, the municipalities represent the basic planning level where the main spatial planning authority is located. In addition, the States have planning authorities on their territory and the regions are responsible for sub areas of each State. Beyond these national levels, the European spatial development concept represents a guideline for national plans of the member countries. The most important aspect in this hierarchy is again the above-mentioned subsidiarity rule.

This hierarchic system of spatial planning in Germany is governed by two basic principles, namely: “municipal planning autonomy” and “mutual influence”. The first principle means that the municipalities are autonomous and responsible for spatial planning in their territory according to the principles and guidelines defined by higher levels. This municipal autonomy is guaranteed by the federal constitution that emphasises the municipal self-government. Consequently, the Federation and the States cannot withdraw this right from the municipalities. Based on this right, municipalities have an information, participation and hearing right during super-ordinate planning, e.g. infrastructure planning.

The Federation and the States are obligated to take interests and plans of the municipalities into consideration. Meanwhile, each lower level is obliged to consider the guidelines and principles of the higher level. These two aspects comprise the principle of “mutual influence”. Consequently, in the above-mentioned hierarchy, spatial planning authority and competence starts from the top with framework and coordinating tasks and powers, while direct and detailed competence are vested in the lower levels. Hence, each planning level has different tasks, deals with a different coverage, and delivers different degrees of details in respect to both plan preparation and planning legalisation.

- **Other characteristics**

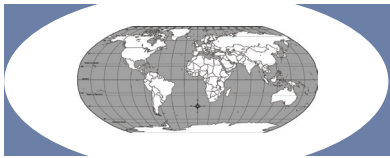
- **Sustainable development**

The supreme declared goal of spatial planning in Germany is creating the preconditions for sustainable development in the whole territory of the Federal Republic by bringing ecological considerations into line with the social and economic demands on space. Meanwhile, it aims at allowing comparable living conditions in the different regions of the country and at strengthening the centres of development. Although these two paradigms should guide any form of spatial development in Germany, the first one has dominated spatial planning and allocation of resources for a long time. Now the trend is moving to the concentration of resources.

- **Planning legislation**

- **Main planning legislation**

Regarding spatial planning legalisation, the Federation enacts a framework law called the Federal Act on Spatial Planning (Bundesraumordnungsgesetz - ROG). This act has a framework character. In this framework, each State can regulate its State planning and regional planning in more detail in a State spatial planning law. In addition, the Federal Act enacts the regulations for planning at the municipal level. Each planning level, except the Federal level, can prepare spatial plans – the Federation can only give guidance and support for State and regional planning levels. These plans have a final character, which means they show a final wished status of the situation and how it should be at the end of their validity.



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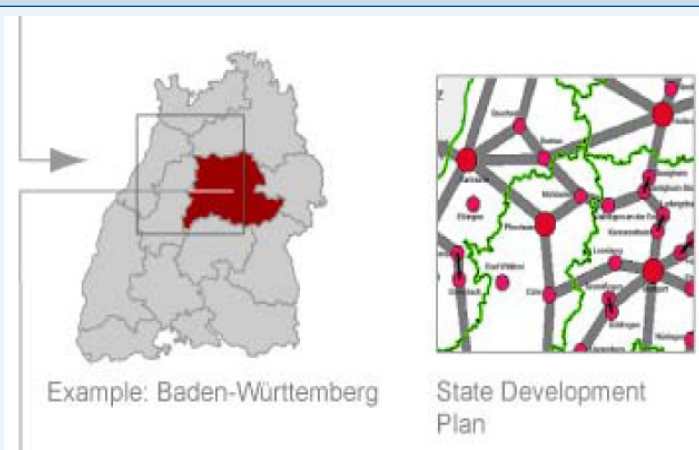
Though the municipalities are considered autonomous in their planning for spatial development, both the Federation and the States introduce financial programmes to guide and support specific development trends and activities. In addition, the federal level and the State level attempt to initiate and support discussions about spatial strategies through innovative programmes and pilot projects.

PART II: PLANNING PROCESS

- Planning system
- Plan making

In reviewing the planning system in Germany, “change” is understood as the attempt to realise, influence or preserve a specific spatial order. Change also implies any activity that has spatial impacts. The following table shows the different types of change at different levels in Germany:

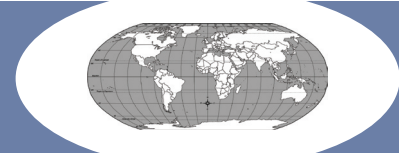
Planning levels, competences and contents of plans

a. Federal Level	
	<p>The highest and most abstract type of change in Germany is concerned with preparing the spatial guidelines for the whole Federation. This task is assigned to the Federation by the Federal Act on Spatial Planning and is defined as preparing a comprehensive interdisciplinary and interregional framework for the spatial development in the whole country, taking into consideration the goals of the European spatial development policy. Consequently, spatial planning authorities at the Federal level are limited to defining principles for spatial planning.</p>
b. State Level	
 <p>Example: Baden-Württemberg</p> <p>State Development Plan</p>	<p>The main task of spatial planning at the State level is to prepare strategies for the spatial development of the State territory. Each State should prepare a State Development Plan that represents the strategy for the spatial development of the State. This plan is concerned mainly with the coordination of activities that have State wide spatial significance and have to consider the special situation in different regions of the State. A ministerial conference on spatial planning is held to coordinate the development plans of the different States.</p>



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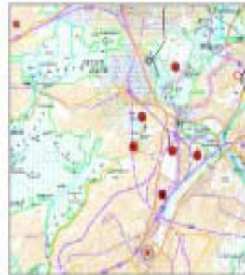
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c. Regional Level



Example: Stuttgart



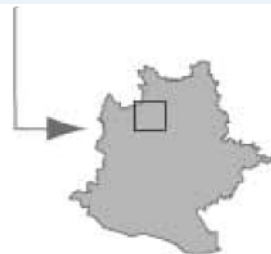
Regional Plan

The main function of regional planning is the interdisciplinary and inter-municipal coordination of urban development, taking account of the binding goals and principles of the State plan. In addition, regional planning is responsible for defining and allocating functions and infrastructures of regional significance.

In Germany, the State laws regulate regional planning. Hence, they vary from one State to the other. The three city-States (Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg) and the State of Saarland have waived this planning level completely. In some small States, the State prepares the regional plans for its regions.

In most States, the municipalities form regional planning associations. Hence, they are participating directly in formulating the regional plans.

d. Municipal Level



Example: Stuttgart



Land-Use Plan

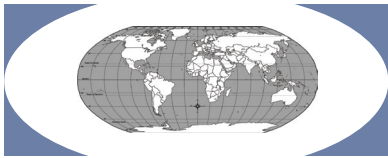


Legally-binding
Land-Use Plan
(zones or parcels)

Aiming at safeguarding a sustainable urban development and a socially equitable utilisation of land for the general welfare of the community, the main task for municipalities regarding urban land-use planning, as defined by law, is to prepare and control the use of land within the municipality, for development or for other purposes. Each municipality is responsible for preparing land-use plans - as soon as needed and to the extent that is required for urban development - in accordance with the regional development policy.

Urban land-use planning on the municipal level is based on a two-tier system:

- The first implies the preparatory land use plan. Based on the intended urban development, this plan defines the type of land use for the whole area of the municipality.
- The second level implies the development plan, which represents the legally-binding land-use plan. It defines the detailed type and use of individual land parcels or parts of the municipality.



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Administrative structure and planning implementation*			
LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	NAME	DESCRIPTION
Federation (Bund)	Ministry responsible for development and / or environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Act on Spatial Planning • Federal Town Planning Act • Land use Ordinances • Map sign Ordinances • Special Provisions for development and urban renewal Laws • Ordinances and Statutes Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles of the country's spatial organisation taking account of European Union spatial policy and setting a framework for the States.
	Parliament		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal regulations affecting municipal planning: types of plans, range of potential contents, procedures, public participation.
State (Land)	Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Planning Act • Design Guide Ordinance • State Building Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws for State and regional planning General guidelines for regional and local planning
	State Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Development Program • Approval of regional plans • Approval of preparatory land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State development programmes • State developments plans
Regions (Regionen)	Regional associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional plans. • Regional Landscape plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals and principles for regional development.
Municipality (Gemeinde)	Municipality, Council	Preparatory land use plans (1: 10,000)	Made for the entire area of the community, fixing the main directions of future urban development. Obligations only for public authorities which were involved in its preparation.
	Development control office	Legally-binding land-use plan (1: 5,000 1: 1,000)	Local statute to which all building and development must conform. Regulations: density and type of land use, public and private spaces, building masses, etc.

* Modified after G. Albers and E. Dittmann, 1992 in Volume IV of this manual

AUTHORITY	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Supreme State planning authority	This authority is assigned to one of the State ministries. In each State, however, a different ministry takes on this authority. Even in the same State, this ministry differs from time to time according to the policy of the State government.	Approving regional plans.
Higher planning authority:	Each State is divided into several administrative districts that represent a middle tier between State ministries and the municipal authorities. This authority is normally called the district government. It overtakes specific tasks from the State government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approving preparatory land-use plans of the municipalities Approving legally binding land-use plans that are not based on a preparatory land-use plan. This authority can refuse a land-use plan only if it is not prepared according to the formal rules or if it contradicts the planning regulations and laws.
Lower planning authority:	Municipal council.	The municipalities are responsible for adopting their legally-binding land use plans as far as they are based on a preparatory land-use plan. The municipalities are also responsible for giving building permissions.

- Development control

In Germany there is no central planning authority at the Federal level. Consent authority is distributed between three different levels: supreme State planning authority, the higher planning authority and lower planning authority. Which ministry or public agency overtakes each of these roles changes according to the State spatial planning law.



- Participation and appeal

Three groups are defined in the German spatial planning legislation that should be informed and should get the opportunity to participate and object in the process of land use planning: public agencies and public bodies, the legislative bodies and the public.

- *Public agencies and public bodies*

Municipalities have to invite public agencies and public bodies – those bodies that have been assigned a function of public interest either by a law or a by-law - as early as possible to give their comments about the intended plan as far as their area of responsibility may be affected by the plan. These agencies and bodies have to submit their comments – limited to their discipline - in a period of one month to the concerned municipality. They have also to give information about matters and activities (planned or in realisation) that might influence the plan. Furthermore, these public agencies and bodies can inform the municipality about negative impacts of implementing the plan according to their information, even after the plan comes into effect.

Generally, municipalities can participate and object in the process of land-use planning in a neighbouring municipality. In addition, regional associations are responsible for coordinating the land-use plans of neighbouring municipalities.

- *Legislative bodies*

The early draft of the land-use plan should be discussed in the political committees of the municipality. Normally the committee of planning and technical affairs is responsible for spatial planning matters. Other committees could be consulted according to the subject of planning. In large municipalities, city districts or local administrations are also consulted about planning. As a result of this consultation process, the draft of the plan should be approved by the corresponding municipality and the public should be informed about the plan.

- *The public*

By law, each municipality has to inform the public as early as possible about:

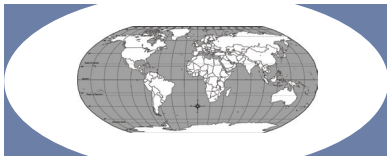
- general aims and purposes of planning
- different alternative solutions that have been considered for the development
- possible impacts of the measures that are included in the plan.

The public should get a suitable opportunity to comment and discuss the plan. The Federal Act on spatial planning defines this formal public participation exactly. The drafts of the plans should be available for public inspection for one month. The place and time of the plan presentation should be made public at least one week in advance. Generally, every person can take part in the public participation without considering if he has a direct political or economical interest in the planning process.

Another type of public participation – the so-called early public participation - includes informing the public at an early stage of planning to allow the public to contribute to the planning of their community. The law does not describe this type of participation in detail.

- *Appeal by signatures*

Furthermore, since 1956 in Baden-Württemberg and since 1998 in all German States, except Berlin, there is a possibility for the public to apply for a public decision (vote) on a specific issue or to object on a decision of the municipal administration by collecting a specific number of signatures according to the size of the municipality. There is also a bottom up model whereby the municipal administration can call the people to vote about a public decision on a specific subject of municipal interest.



PART III: EVALUATION

- **Application of the planning system in practice**

Since World War II, spatial planning in Germany was mainly devoted to urban growth under convenient political, economic and demographic conditions. Hence, the planning system, education and practice were mainly organised to serve this trend. However, during the last two decades drastic political, economic and demographic changes have affected spatial planning. Facing new circumstances, spatial planning has to deal with new challenges and tasks. A short review of some of these circumstances and their impacts on spatial planning in Germany is introduced hereafter. Consequences for spatial planning are also introduced, supported with some examples.

- **Changing circumstances**

- ***Demographic and social changes***

Germany has witnessed since World War II a continuous demographic growth as a result of increasing life expectancy, immigration of foreign labour - needed for industry - and the return of displaced Germans. Since the beginning of the 21st century, Germany is facing a general population decline in the near future because of the decline of the birth rate to 1.3 children per woman (2005). Currently, negative demographic development is apparent in the eastern States and old industrial regions such as North-Rhine Westphalia because of intensive out-migration. Conversely, other regions, where job opportunities are still attracting more migrants, are facing less negative development.

Furthermore, Germany is facing severe social changes, such as the decreasing average household size and the increasing number of single-households. Every fourth inhabitant of a large city lives alone; in the countryside and in small towns the figure stands at every seventh person. Around 2.4 million people, mainly women, live alone with their children (2005).

The combination of fewer births, longer life expectancy and the ever-decreasing household size will lead to a new demographic and social structure that will seriously interfere with every single aspect of a society which was mainly based on population growth, profits and economic efficiency. At this stage, social care systems like pensions and health insurance are nearing breakdown, also because of the economic crisis burdening Germany for years.

- ***Economic changes***

Although Germany's economy is the world's third-biggest and one of its most advanced, it has been facing several challenges during the last few years: globalisation of the labour market, the costs of the German Reunification, increasing rate of enterprise insolvency and hence declining tax revenue, are just a few examples. As since 2005, unemployment is at record levels, over 10% of the work force, the country's worst unemployment rate since before World War II. Unemployment is especially high in the eastern States, where it reached up to 25%. From these only 40 percent find work within six months. These developments have affected different States in different ways.

Falling revenues and rising expenditures, for financing the growing number of unemployed and business development programmes, have been putting a strain on Germany's budget. The Federation has to reduce its expenditure radically and to rethink the so-called "watering pot" principal (Gießkannenprinzip - principle of indiscriminate all-round distribution) that is still practiced but cannot be adhered to any longer. Because of this situation, several development and infrastructure projects and programmes have been delayed. This led to rethinking and discussing the "indiscriminate all-round distribution of resources" in 2004, when a commission of the federal government voted for a concentration of structural development and the flow of subsidies.

Accompanied by the negative demographic development in many regions, the economic crisis has forced competition for residents at the municipal level. The erroneous belief that zoning of new development areas on the outskirts of towns and cities might attract new investments, more inhabitants, and therefore, more



taxes for the municipal budget, is still widespread. However, different studies show clearly the often-negative financial consequences of such action.

- **Political changes**

In the last two decades, Germany has also witnessed major political changes. By the end of the cold war, both parts of Germany have been reunified in 1990, which affected nearly every aspect of public life, as well as spatial planning in both parts of the country. To avoid a mass-migration to the western states, the Federation has made great efforts, spending about 1.5 trillion euros between 1990 and 2004 to improve the living conditions in the new States to near the western standards. One of the most urgent tasks was the reconstruction and development of the almost completely capped infrastructure between the two parts of Germany. In 17 infrastructure projects for rail, road and water networks - that was included in a programme called Infrastructure projects 'German Reunification' – an estimated 57 billion euros were invested.

After the Reunification, the scope of regional differences has increased considerably, e.g. extensive rural areas with structural weaknesses and severe development problems still existed in the new States, as is the case in large parts of inland Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and northern Brandenburg. Conversely, many cities were more densely populated and had not yet experienced suburbanisation in their surrounding areas.

However, the lack of an adequate planning system in the former centrally organised States has represented an obstacle for the organisation and delivery of spatial development after Reunification. It was decided to adopt the western legal structure for the state and regional levels and to enhance it with additional postulates for the development of the new States, for example by applying more flexible forms of procedures to speed up public and private investments. Attempts were also made to establish regional co-operation, interdisciplinary development programmes and detailed analysis of spatial structure.

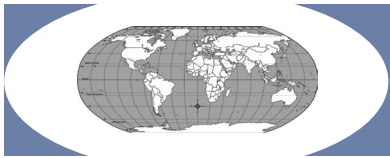
15 Years after the German Reunification, the impacts and consequences of the decisions that were made after the Reunification are becoming more evident: The new States still suffer from economic and structural imbalance. However, the most serious problem is the migration from the new States - nearly one in 17 inhabitants has moved to the West. Together with the negative natural population growth, this development has created a mixture of decreasing financial power and a concentration of old or unemployed inhabitants: unemployment in the former East - as of 2005 - stands at 20% about twice the national average. The consequences of the German Reunification can also be seen in the Western States of the Federal Republic, where the financial transfer and the extension of the social system to the eastern states has blocked several needed investments, both in growth areas and in regions with structural weakness.

The strong migration to the west accompanied with an excessive suburbanisation process in the East, have resulted in shrinking cities. Many investments in new shopping centres and other functions on "green field sites" have accelerated competition with retailers in city centres, leading to many deserted city centres. In addition to these developments, the rapid increase of car ownership and the intensive investment in roads and highways have encouraged further urban sprawl and decentralisation apart from existing urban agglomerations and public transport infrastructures.

- **Consequences for spatial planning: new challenges and new tasks**

Facing the above-mentioned changing circumstances, German spatial planning has to deal with completely new questions, e.g.:

- How to plan for development in a country with a shrinking population and decreasing financial power?
- How to manage regional development when economic and spatial growth for every municipality cannot be guaranteed?
- Where to plan for creating focus points for generating structural impulses and where to plan strategic withdrawal?
- How to deal with the demand for large-scale infrastructure extensions while the Federation cannot afford the running costs of the existing networks?
- Facing the limited public funds, how many more urban development projects as well as technical and social infrastructures could be financed by private investors, entirely or in the form of public-private-partnership?



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To deal with these and other questions, spatial planning is facing a challenge to search for new methods and processes, to become more problem-solving orientated instead of its current orientation towards plan formulation. Formal spatial planning in Germany is mainly aimed at achieving goals or realising specific developments in the medium- or the long-term by setting frameworks that have, to a large extent, a passive character. This type of planning is helpful for the State or the regional planning, authority e.g. for the delimitation of settlement areas and for preservation of green spaces. It also offers the municipalities and other planning authorities the necessary medium-term certainty for development arrangements. However, formal planning processes are often proving to be politically sensitive and have only a limited capability of being implemented. They have mostly a restrictive character rather than a constructive one. The resulting plans have, usually, a finite character. Based on a description of the initial situation, they usually attempt to represent a desired development, up to a specific planning horizon. In addition, they have a coordination function among activities that have spatial impacts from public and private actors. The time span of such activities lays beyond the preparation time of such plans. Their discussion, exploration, development of solutions, assessment and decision making may take several years or sometimes decades. Meanwhile, such formal plans are static by nature. They can only represent specific planning conditions at a specific time, often in the past. Hence, they cannot, or only with immense effort, keep pace with the changes and evolutions in the planning area and cannot fulfil any coordination function.

To fill the gap between formal planning and the needs of spatial development both at the local and super-local levels, informal planning processes are developed and implemented. Informal planning processes attempt to reach consent and cooperation among the concerned actors in a planning matter in different ways, for example through ad-hoc “round tables”, pilot planning or mediation. These procedures are characterised by a high level of flexibility regarding their application areas and organisational structure. Although their binding effect is formally considered limited, their success is remarkable if the involved actors reach common solutions and agree on implementing these solutions in formal plans, according to the scope and responsibility of each individual participant.

From a different point of view, while formal plans are usually confined to administrative borders, spatial problems are not limited to these borders and their impacts extend usually beyond them. A problem-solving approach for such areas requires the cooperation of different actors beyond their administrative or organisational borders.

Two examples are given to illustrate some of these new tasks and the need for new methods which are suitable for these types of problems and hence contribute to solving such problems: namely development within cities and the integration of large-scale infrastructure development with spatial development.

- *Development within cities and regions*

Most West German cities and towns have witnessed a rapid urban growth during several decades in the second half of the twentieth century. It is estimated that land consumption during that period is equivalent to that of all prior generations. This urban growth was initiated by the intensive growth of the industry sector during the 1950s and the 1960s, and later of service sector growth, which consequently led to further urban growth to satisfy subsequent demand of housing, infrastructure and roads. In addition, the demand pattern for housing has shifted to the single-family house on green fields, encouraged by public incentives for building owner-occupied houses. This growth, in the form of urban sprawl, and suburbanisation on green-fields on the outskirts of cities has led to more demand for private passenger vehicles and hence more pressure on the road network. To keep pace with these developments, immense investments were dedicated to road networks. This trend extended to the East after the Reunification in 1990, in a more intensive way. Although the population growth is stagnating or negative in many regions, the demand for more residential area has not decreased, because of increasing living standards and the increase of small and single households that led to a continuous increase of average residential area per person.

From a different point of view, almost each municipality has attempted to designate land for development purpose on green-fields, aiming at attracting new investors and, in turn, taxpayers. This situation has led to an uncoordinated suburbanisation process due to the weakness of the legal regulations for inter-



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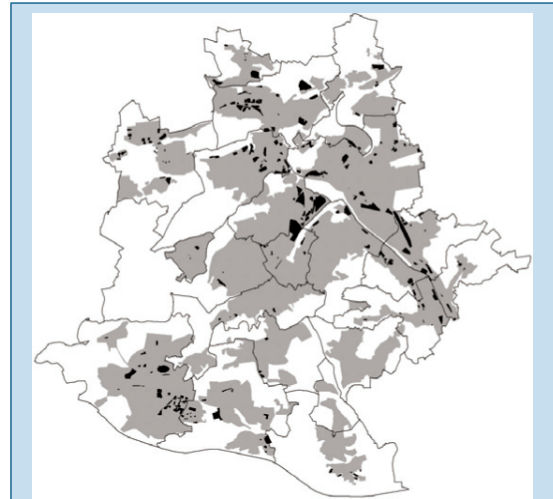
municipal coordination and planning. These developments are straining the budgets and liabilities of many municipalities and states.

While urban sprawl is continuing at uneven scales in different regions of Germany, various factors have initiated a rethinking of the spatial planning strategy that was mainly based on urban growth for a long time. Firstly, many municipalities are not able any more to finance their growing infrastructure under current and estimated future negative demographic development as fewer taxpayers are available to finance the extensive infrastructure needed to serve the areas in the outskirts of the cities. Secondly, urban growth in some municipalities has reached already their administrative borders. These municipalities have to think about new ways of spatial development without further spatial growth. Thirdly, the renewal and modernisation of technical infrastructure networks and facilities, such as railway facilities, harbours, treatment plants, etc., that occupy relatively large areas in cities, have opened a chance for new urban development in cities and towns. Fourthly, economic, technical and operational changes in industrial and service sectors have left large abandoned or underused sites. In addition, at the end of the cold war, large parts of foreign forces have withdrawn completely from Germany and many of the national army bases have moved out from the urban areas.

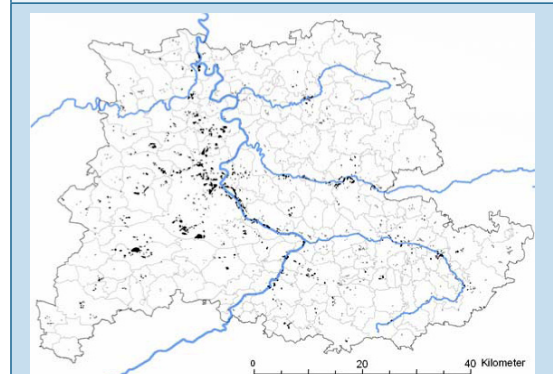
Development of these sites might play an important role and influence the urban structure by concentrating existing settlements mainly around public transport nodes. This does not only imply a reduction of land-consumption but also an improvement of the quality of life in the surrounding areas as well. If the change of developing inner cities is not exploited, urban sprawl will continue to increase the financial burdens of municipalities on the one hand, and constitute unsustainable development on the other hand. In addition, the quality of life in these cities will be affected by the existence of these abandoned sites.

Hence, to avoid this uncontrolled development and to achieve a sustainable development of inner cities, integrated strategies and innovative planning methods and processes are needed. An integrated strategy is needed to avoid competition between development projects for inner cities with urban growth projects that might have more convenient circumstances, either in the same municipality, in neighbouring municipalities or regions. Such an integrated strategy can also minimise developments that might interrupt the opportunity of promoting inner development or might hinder further developments because of resulting restrictions. The need for innovative planning methods and processes is a consequence of the lack of formal ones that can keep pace with the dynamics of inner city development, where coordination beyond organisational and administrative borders is essential, and where interests of different actors have to be considered. This needs a problem-solving orientation rather than a plan formulating one.

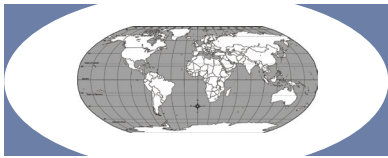
The basic requirement to facilitate the development of inner city potential is to get an adequate overview of existing opportunities. Empirical experiences show, that city administrations may not know how much and where such potentials of inner city development are. Therefore, they often do not take them into consideration. Information about these potentials is mostly fragmented and changes rapidly. Hence, the harder task after getting the overview is to keep it up to date. A possible instrument to realise and communicate such an overview is web-based information platforms, where inner city site potentials can be registered and managed by



Inner development potentials in the city of Stuttgart



Inner development potentials in the Stuttgart Region



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the city administration.

Parts of this information could then be made available to investors.

For this type of development potential, it is usually better to explore the scope of development possibilities through informal planning processes, such as pilot planning to understand how better situations could be achieved, conflicts could be discussed and investors' interests could be considered. If formal planning processes - which lead to legally binding plans - are directly implemented, at an early phase, the results might lead to blocking the development, as such plans could only be changed with great effort. The above-mentioned information platform and the pilot planning process were implemented in the City of Stuttgart in the framework of the project "sustainable settlement land management" 2000- 2002.

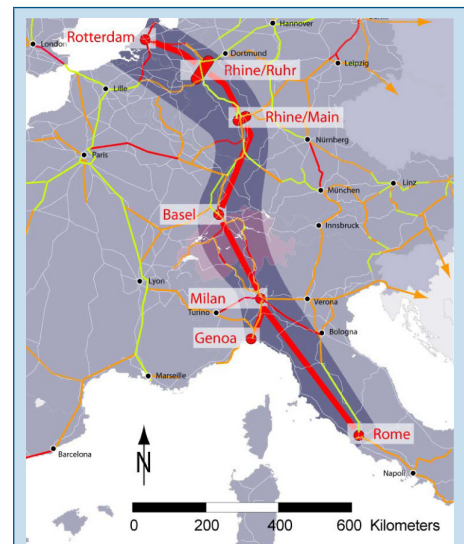
Such a strategy at the municipal level requires inter-municipal coordination and support from regional planning to coordinate municipal efforts in promoting development of inner cities and reducing urban growth on green-fields. This role of regional planning is essential, especially in regions where central sub-regions have reached the maximum of urban growth, to make a more integrated view possible for present and future tasks beyond the municipal borders. Hence, regional planning as an intermediate tier between states and municipalities can play an important role in substantiating the general goals of state planning suitable for the conditions of the sub-region and to avoid the usual practice of quantitative equal distribution. The attempt to examine inner city development at the regional level was conducted in the Stuttgart region in the project "sustainable regional land management" 2003-2005.

In addition, a wide spectrum of voluntary forms of cooperation at a super-local level, which use formal and informal instruments of spatial planning, can be found at different scales and forms of administration. The following are some examples:

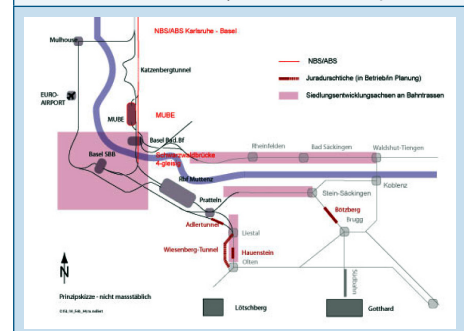
- loose cooperation among several municipalities when dealing with zoning questions
- regional authorities overlapping state borders and constituted by treaties, such as the "Spatial Development Association Rhine-Neckar" that is constituted by three regions from Baden-Württemberg, Hesse and Rheinland-Pfalz
- the Stuttgart Regional Association has special competences to organise public transport at the regional level
- in the Frankfurt/Main Region, the "Planning Association Agglomeration Frankfurt (am Main)" prepares a land use plan at the regional level that substitutes the municipal ones.

- **Integration between infrastructure and spatial development** The development of technical infrastructure plays an important role in spatial development. On the one hand, it promotes spatial development by increasing the quality of life in human settlements. On the other hand, infrastructure shapes the spatial structure of these settlements for decades, if not centuries. Nonetheless, the interdisciplinary integration of infrastructure development and spatial planning is still weak. The lack of an integrated view results from the fact that interactions and conflicts of infrastructure projects arise among different levels of planning and therefore complicate issues among different actors.

The ongoing integration of the European Union, is adding another planning level: trying to accelerate the establishment of the internal market, linking peripheral regions to Europe and opening itself to neighbouring countries, the European Union promotes the construction of trans-national infrastructures and appears therefore more and more as an additional actor in the planning process.



The north-south railway corridor in Europe



Overview Region Basel



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Along these trans-European infrastructure corridors, European, national, regional and local interests and requirements have to be coordinated, which leads often to complex planning tasks with a large number of actors concerned beyond organisational borders, national borders, and planning systems. Often the national and international needs for high-capacity long-distance transportation conflict with the spatial aims of the local level. To gain the central overviews and to work out integrated concepts, informal and problem-solving oriented planning methods are a valuable opportunity to bridge the borders.

An example is the planned freight train bypass in the tri-national region of Basel, a region located on the south-western edge of Germany at the borders with France and Switzerland. The Bypass is part of extending the capacity of one of the most important European transport corridors from Rotterdam to Northern Italy. Due to existing bottlenecks, the proposed start-up of the two new trans-Alp tunnels in Switzerland until 2015 and the extension of the Upper-Rhine railway line, some sort of capacity extension will be needed within the next decade.

A concept of the three national railway companies is designed to bundle freight trains from France and Germany on the Upper-Rhine valley to bypass the critical traffic node of Basel via the German Upper-Rhine valley. For the adjacent regions, whose economy is based mainly on tourism, the primary impacts of this bypass would be a barrier-effect and heavily increasing noise emissions. Thus, they could not see any positive effects. This situation has caused critical reaction to the project and put even the current plan approval procedures for the main line at risk. As a reaction to this conflict, the regional planning authorities concerned of Germany, France and Switzerland launched a pilot planning process to evaluate the range of possible solutions and thus to play an active role in the upcoming planning process.

The example shows a possibility of how regional planning authorities can influence a planning process in order to represent regional and local objectives to actors involved in large-scale infrastructure provision. Instead of reacting to the proposed projects (the role regional planning authorities have to play in the formal planning procedures), they can enter the planning process from the outset by showing constructive suggestions that consider local and super-local requirements of the planned infrastructure. Using informal planning processes may help to find robust and sustainable solutions, which are based on consensus building among most of the actors while the required formal processes can be shortened.

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