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Spatial Planning Instruments in Bulgaria: Toward the Europeanization of the Spatial Model

Velislava Simeonova Simeonova



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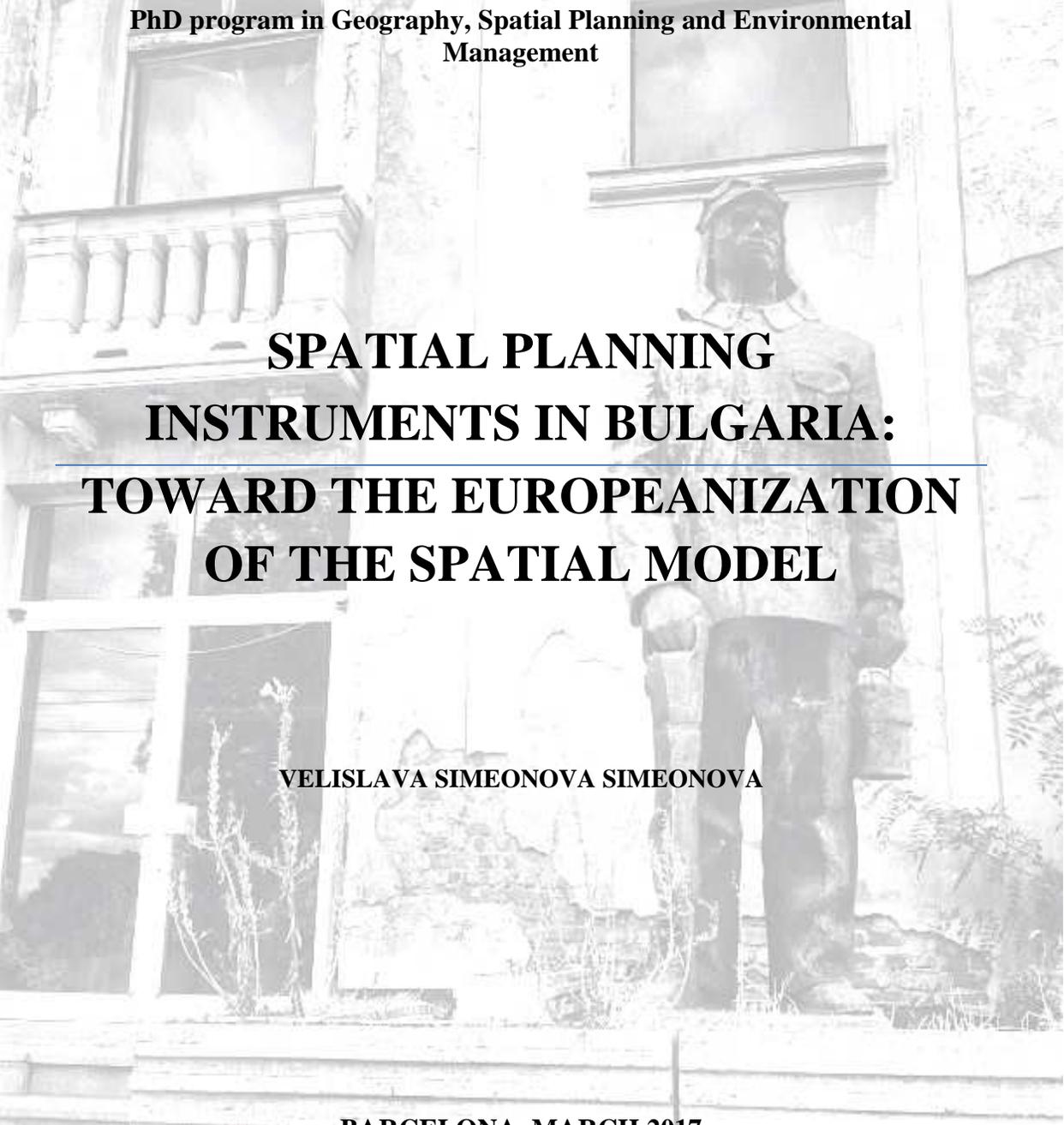
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UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA

Faculty of Geography and History

**PhD program in Geography, Spatial Planning and Environmental
Management**

A grayscale photograph of a building facade. On the right, there is a large, dark statue of a man in a hat and coat. To the left, there are windows and a balcony with a decorative railing. The text is overlaid on this image.

**SPATIAL PLANNING
INSTRUMENTS IN BULGARIA:
TOWARD THE EUROPEANIZATION
OF THE SPATIAL MODEL**

VELISLAVA SIMEONOVA SIMEONOVA

BARCELONA, MARCH 2017



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PhD Project

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THE SPATIAL MODEL**

by

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**Scientific Supervision by
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to advance the knowledge of the system of spatial planning instruments and of the Europeanization process, having as an object of study a country from Eastern Europe: Bulgaria. The actuality of the topic is justified by the fact that Bulgaria is one of the new EU member states and also by the need to understand how the national system of spatial planning is transformed and Europeanized as a result of this membership. Understanding and interpreting the changes in the planning system after the fall of the communist regime in 1989 and the country's preparation for EU-membership, followed by an analysis of the system of spatial planning instruments and its implementation in the process of Europeanization, shape out the two main successive lines of research, which define the main objectives of the study. The time scope of the study covers the period between 1989 and 2013, thus coinciding with the end of the first programming period for Bulgaria as an official member of the Union. The study follows the dynamics of the various dimensions of the system of spatial planning, with special focus on those periods when the Europeanization process has had the greatest impact in the transformation of the system of planning instruments, respectively – the strongest impact on the spatial instruments - and its implementation through new ones, in the context of the European spatial discourse or model. The analysis of the studied literature and documents, as well as the conducted interviews, show and argue that Bulgaria has made significant efforts in introducing new planning instruments, mostly related to regional development planning, but without any reformation and integration of the system of spatial planning. The implementation of the Integrated Plans at the local level and the National Spatial Development Concept as new spatial instruments - an expression of the coordination of the physical planning and the development of the territory, although within the legal framework of regional development - display the first attempts for integration of the planning system, discursive integration and transfer of the ideas of the European spatial model.

RESUMEN

Este estudio pretende contribuir al conocimiento del sistema de instrumentos de ordenación del territorio (spatial planning) y del proceso de europeización, teniendo como objeto de estudio a un país de Europa del Este: Bulgaria. La actualidad del tema se justifica por el hecho de que Bulgaria es uno de los nuevos Estados Miembros de la UE, y también por la necesidad de comprender cómo se transforma y europeiza el sistema nacional de ordenación del territorio como resultado de esta adhesión. Las dos principales líneas que definen los objetivos del estudio son, en primer lugar, comprender e interpretar los cambios en el sistema de ordenación del territorio tras la caída del régimen comunista en 1989 y la preparación del país para la adhesión a la UE. Y en segundo lugar, realizar un análisis del sistema de los instrumentos de ordenación y su aplicación en el proceso de europeización. El ámbito temporal del estudio abarca el período comprendido entre 1989 y 2013, coincidiendo así con el final del primer período de programación para Bulgaria como miembro oficial de la UE. La investigación sigue la dinámica de las diversas dimensiones del sistema de ordenación del territorio, con especial atención en aquellos períodos en los que el proceso de europeización ha tenido mayor impacto en la transformación del sistema de instrumentos de planificación y, posteriormente, su implementación en el contexto del discurso espacial europeo o modelo de ordenación de territorio. El análisis de la literatura y los documentos estudiados, así como las entrevistas realizadas evidencian que Bulgaria ha realizado esfuerzos significativos en la introducción de nuevos instrumentos de planificación, en su mayoría relacionados con la planificación del desarrollo regional, sin reforma e integración del sistema de ordenación del territorio. La implementación de los Planes Integrados a nivel local y del Concepto Nacional de Desarrollo Espacial constituye nuevas herramientas en el sistema de instrumentos de ordenación y son una expresión de la voluntad de coordinación de la planificación física y del desarrollo del territorio, dentro del marco jurídico del desarrollo regional. La implementación de estos planes y la difusión del Concepto Nacional de Desarrollo Espacial representan los primeros intentos de integración del sistema de planificación, de integración discursiva y transferencia de las ideas del Modelo Europeo de Ordenación territorial (*European Spatial Model*).

RESUM

Aquest estudi pretén d'ampliar el coneixement del sistema d'instruments d'ordenació del territori (*spatial planning*) i del procés d'uropeïtzació, tenint com a objecte d'estudi un país d'Europa de l'Est: Bulgària. L'actualitat del tema es justifica pel fet que Bulgària és un dels nous Estats Membres de la UE, i també per la necessitat de comprendre com es transforma i europeïtza el sistema nacional d'ordenació del territori com a resultat d'aquesta adhesió. Comprendre i interpretar els canvis en el sistema d'ordenació del territori després de la caiguda del règim comunista l'any 1989 i la preparació del país per a l'adhesió a la UE, seguit per una anàlisi del sistema d'instruments d'ordenació i de la seva aplicació en el procés d'uropeïtzació conformen dos principals línies successives que defineixen els principals objectius de l'estudi. L'àmbit temporal de l'estudi abraça el període comprés entre 1989 i 2013, coincidint així amb el final del primer període de programació per a Bulgària com a membre oficial de la UE. La investigació segueix la dinàmica de les diverses dimensions del sistema d'ordenació del territori, amb especial atenció a aquells períodes en què el procés d'uropeïtzació ha suposat el major impacte en la transformació del sistema d'instruments de planificació i, posteriorment, la seva implantació en el context del discurs espacial europeu o model d'ordenació del territori. L'anàlisi de la literatura i dels documents estudiats, així com les entrevistes realitzades demostren i expliquen que Bulgària ha realitzat esforços significatius en la introducció de nous instruments de planificació, en la seva majoria relacionats amb la planificació del desenvolupament regional, sense reforma i integració del sistema d'ordenació del territori. La implementació dels Plans Integrats a nivell local i del Concepte Nacional de Desenvolupament Espacial, com a nous instruments en el sistema d'instruments d'ordenació, expressió de la voluntat de coordinació de la planificació física i del desenvolupament del territori, dintre del marc del desenvolupament regional, mostre els primers intents d'integració del sistema de planificació, d'integració discursiva i transferència de les idees del Model Europeu d'Ordenació territorial (*European Spatial Model*).

РЕЗЮМЕ

Това изследване има за цел да разшири познанията върху системата от инструменти за пространствено планиране и процеса на европеизация, имайки като обект на изследване една страна от Източна Европа: България. Актуалността на темата се оправдава от факта, че България е една от новите страни-членки на ЕС, но и от необходимостта да се разбере как националната система за пространствено планиране се трансформира и европеизира, като резултат от това. Разбирането и интерпретирането на промените на и в системата за планиране след падането на режима през 1989 и подготовката на страната за ЕС-членство, последвано от анализ на системата от инструменти за пространствено планиране и нейното имплементиране в процеса на европеизация, формират две основни последователни линии, дефиниращи основните цели на това изследване. Времевият обхват на проучването обхваща периода 1989-2013 година, съвпадащ с края на първия програмен период на България като официален член на Съюза. Изследването следва динамиките на различни измерения на системата за пространствено планиране със специален фокус върху онези периоди, в които европеизационният процес оказва най-силно влияние в трансформирането на системата от планови инструменти, респективно влияние върху устройствени инструменти и тяхното имплементиране с нови такива в контекста на Европейският пространствен дискурс/ модел. Анализът на проучената литература и документи, както и проведените интервюта, показват и аргументират, че България е направила значителни усилия във въвеждането на нови планови инструменти, свързани най-вече с планирането на регионалното развитие, но без реформация и интеграция на системата от инструменти за устройствено/пространствено планиране. Имплементирането на интегрирани планове на местно ниво и Национална Концепция за Пространствено Развитие като нови пространствени инструменти - израз на координация на физическото планирането и развитие на територията, макар и в законовата рамка на регионалното развитие, показва първите опити за интегриране на плановата система, дискурсивната интеграцията и трансфер на идеите от Европейския пространствен модел.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BAS	Bulgarian Academy of Science
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CEMAT	Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial Planning
EC	European Commission
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
ESTIA	European Space and Territorial Integration Alternatives
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Communities
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GOSPLAN	The State Planning Committee
GORPLAN	The Urban Planning Commission
GSP	General Spatial Plan
IME	Institute for Market Economy
IPURD	Integrated Plan for Urban Regeneration and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
MRDPW	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
NCRD	Center for Regional Development
NSDC	National Spatial Development Concept
NUTS	Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OP	Operational Program
PLUREL	Peri-urban Land Use Relationships – Strategies and Sustainability Assessment Tools for Urban-Rural Linkage
PT	Policy Transfer
RDA	Regional Development Act
SPA	Spatial Development Act
SU	Sofia University
TA	Territorial Agenda
UACEG	University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy

UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
USDP	Unified Spatial Development Plan

Do not fear that too eastward we go. Everything is very cleverly thought out. Can you guess what the most Western part of the state called Blacksealandia will be? Bulgaria, of course, Bulgaria. For the first time – the West. The dream of every East. Finally a dream comes true!

(From "The Invisible Crises", Georgi Gospodinov, 2013: 85)

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Problem context and problem statement

Research questions and hypotheses

Aims and objectives

Research context and key definitions

Thesis structure

Problem context and problem statement

The general structure of any study should be such that it starts by identifying the set of problems it addresses (Haesbaert, 2011). The current doctoral thesis can be defined as a multidisciplinary study. The part devoted to spatial planning studies refers to the Eastern European context and the dimension of spatial transformations and reorganization of national spaces together with spatial policies.

With the process of the disintegration of communist regimes in Europe which started in the late 1980s, followed by changing geopolitical patterns of the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of life, the countries in Eastern and Central Europe faced the idea of democracy. They became subject to dynamic transformation driven by Western ideals of prosperity and the new globalization. The Soviet Union collapsed, and with it the end of political and military tension between East and West marked the beginning of a turbulent period of transition and profound change. The characteristics of this transformation included economic crisis, negative demographic trends, a radical change of values, and a swing from extreme communism to ultra-liberalism (Yanchev, 2012).

The transition from command economy to various combinations of liberal democracy and a free market, led to the recognition of the importance of spatial aspects of development and to an increasing interest of researchers and policy makers in the role of geography and spatial planning. The considerable developmental changes in the countries of the former communist bloc were marked by violent processes of privatization, which became a leitmotif of the post-communist transition, and called into question the capacity of Eastern European societies to manage and plan their future, including their national spaces. These processes reformed the basic context within which planning had to function, provoking conflicts and confusion that planners and other professionals were simply not prepared for (Hirt and Stanilov, 2010). Moreover, the supposed superiority of private enterprise and the free market imposed the idea of a "legitimation crisis" in planning, and the denial and rejection of prior policy as a bad memory from another era that would never return.

The slow but peaceful process of unification of "the East" with the European Union has become an expression of European integration (Kafkalas, 2007). The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe, where national policy makers try to adapt to EU

standards, has quite often, however, led to significant differences in terms of mechanisms and results (Maier, 2012).

Compared to other countries in the region, and especially the others in the Balkans, the transition in Bulgaria has probably been one of the smoothest in Southeast Europe. The adoption of a new constitution in early 1991 enhanced a relatively rapid stabilization of the political transition. Nevertheless, the economic, social and political transformation created a new situation and novel realities for spatial planning in the country, where the division between the planning of socioeconomic development and physical (perceived as urban) planning had been typical since the communist period before 1989. As a result, two different and uncoordinated systems produced planning documents. It was in that new post-socialist reality that the crisis in planning emerged, together with an attitude towards it in which terms such as "planning" and "spatial planning" were rejected and even forgotten.

The year of Bulgaria's EU accession - 2007, representing the fifth and the last but one expansion of the Union to the east and southeast, and the period thereafter, brought structural changes to the organization of the planning process as a whole. EU accession acted as a true catalyst of domestic change (in terms of planning discourse, institutional change, planning practices and planning documents) and was an expression of the future expectations of the country. The influence of the EU formed and led to the implementation of regional (cohesion) policy, even in the pre-accession period. In Bulgaria, as in other new EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe, legislative models and frameworks for the strategic planning of regional development were adopted. However, these were not based on the historical experience which those countries had been through. To a greater or lesser degree, the reproduction of planning policies and practices which were recommended by the European Commission began. Those policies and practices were contained in the Union's legislation in the field of regional policy, and they were accompanied by the implementation of structural instruments for the development of European regions (Burov, 2015).

In parallel, efforts towards the development of regional policy together with pressure from the EU to adapt in this area of shared competence, opened up a number of opportunities. However, in Bulgaria, this has left the development of the system of spatial planning (physical planning) somewhat in a state of hibernation and isolation; in

a state in which, twenty years after 1989, serious problems were observed. These included:

- The existence of development plans and procedures that were drawn up in another political, economic and social context, and which do not reflect the real situation with regard to the development of the territory;
- A complete lack of plans and schemes (instruments) for spatial planning;
- A Spatial Planning Act (2001) which failed to introduce an integrated approach to the planning of the national territory and whose regulations in the field of spatial (physical) instruments remained unfulfilled. As a result, the legislative pressure to draw up general spatial plans at the local level and general spatial schemes at the regional level remained wholly unsatisfactory;
- A lack of mechanisms and methodology for studying spatial planning;
- Spatial practices that could only be described as "fragmentary": a lack of prevention of negative processes concerning spatial development (such as illegal construction);
- A failure to strengthen the public sector in the planning process. Instead, an unprincipled distribution of funds to private consulting and design firms in the implementation of procurement planning services was observed, in tangible deficit to standards and quality and control;
- Institutional weakness;
- A lack of spatial data and of a community that is expert in spatial planning. The profession of the planner was still not recognized sufficiently. Traditionally, spatial planning involves architects and to a much less extent, urbanists;
- The lack of a comprehensive vision for spatial planning and organization, including the belief that regional planning should be regarded as part of the spatial planning concept;
- A lack of transparency and public participation in territorial governance.

As part of the European Community and under the influence of the EU, Bulgaria conducted a series of planning reforms in the period between 1989 and 2013. However, they mainly concerned the system of regional planning instruments. Spatial planning remained trapped in those spheres which are only partially reformed under the influence of the EU; while after 2007, the function of spatial plans and schemes was gradually taken over by regional plans and strategies. Sectorial funding was adopted, but along with that the changes in the domestic discourse on planning, planning education and the behaviour of policy makers in the process of territorial governance, clearly appeared to remain insufficient with regard to the implementation of the ideas of the debate on the emergence of the so-called European spatial planning model of the creation of a coordinated and integrated system of planning documents.

The current work aims to form part of the studies of spatial planning in Bulgaria. Its purpose is to clarify important aspects of the transformation of spatial planning, namely: the system of spatial instruments. This transformation has been identified in the framework of the process of Europeanization (of spatial planning) and the pan-European debate on European spatial development or the European spatial model.

Europeanization is a broad term that is used in the explanation of all political transformations in the EU member states (but not limited to them) once their domestic institutions begin to interact with the European institutional instruments and also with the EU debate. Europeanization reflects the complexity of the process of mutual influence between the European Union and its member states, and is an expression of a transfer which explains the relations between the supranational actors and the new member states after the major “Eastern enlargement” (Dimitrova, 2015).

The Europeanization of planning in the Eastern European context, as far as the area studied here is concerned, is a continual process which began in the mid-1990s. Thanks to the common association of the region with communist regimes, the beginning of the so-called transitional period was associated with the primary task which those countries had, which was to provide liberation from the rule of planning experts. It is due to this that planning and spatial policies in many countries in the region remain outside the sphere of the national political interest. Such is the case of Bulgaria. However, planning is widely recognized as one of the prerequisites for accessing the EU funding for Central and Eastern Europe (Adams, 2008). The literature describes the process of

Europeanization in the region as the "Eastern model of adaptation" (Maier, 2012) and is still represented by an insufficient number of studies, some of which will be discussed herein.

Research questions and hypotheses

This doctoral thesis is guided by the search for answers to the following two central research questions:

A. How did the Bulgarian spatial planning system change after the fall of the communist regime (1989) and up until 2013?

B. How has the system of spatial planning instruments changed and been implemented within the framework of the Europeanization of planning processes?

This second central question is complemented by three sub-questions which facilitate the task of carrying out the research in a structured and purposeful way, so as to be able to interpret the reality more profoundly and to provide the opportunity for more in-depth analysis. These sub-questions are:

B.1. When and how did the implementation of spatial instruments begin?

B.2. Do these instruments transfer European concepts, ideas and approaches to spatial planning?

B.3. If so, by what mechanism is European spatial discourse transferred to this field?

These two central questions fully justify and explain the title of this doctoral thesis: *“Spatial planning instruments in Bulgaria: towards the Europeanization of the spatial model”*. The first part of the title reflects the need to identify, analyse and understand Bulgaria’s spatial planning system. The work that offers substantial content in response to this first part of the title focuses on the differentiation of spatial instruments and their relations to other elements of the structure of the system. For this reason, the first main (central) question relates to the development of the system from 1989 to 2013. That period was characterized by the post-socialist reality of violent transformations and the EU integration process. It is also comprised of a pre-accession period of reforms, and the initial period of Bulgaria’s EU membership, between 2007

and 2013, which coincides with the second cohesion policy programming period in the country.

The second part of the title focuses on the processes of the Europeanization of planning and reflects the idea of the introduction of the European spatial model. The work which responds to this part of the title chiefly consists of analysis of the impact of the Europeanization process on planning instruments. In particular, my work focuses on the ways in which those instruments have been changed or the approaches adopted in tackling these transformations, and also on how new instruments have been introduced. This part of the doctoral thesis is strictly analytical-interpretive and has the character of a discussion. It is in this context that I pose the second central question.

The need for a more comprehensive understanding of the situation defines the three additional questions that open up the analysis of these spatial planning instruments within a wider realm of research. Here I discuss in detail exactly what was implemented in the system of instruments, together with when and how that implementation occurred in the context of Europeanization. Answering the third specific sub-question provides an opportunity for additional analysis of the characteristics of the transfer of ideas from the European spatial model and the associated debate, defined in a series of pan-European documents for spatial development. The ESDP is the most important of those documents, in cases where such transfer supposedly occurred.

The hypotheses in turn are related to the two central research questions. They are an expression of the preliminary explanation or a temporary solution to the issue posed (Elorrieta Sanz, 2013).

The first hypothesis is that spatial planning in Bulgaria was neglected and unreformed at the beginning of the post-socialist period, and that this state of affairs continued through the 1990s; the period characterized by the development of the cohesion policy. The lack of active reforms of the system of spatial planning in the period between 1989 and 2013 led to the formation of two systems of planning instruments: one for spatial planning and the other for regional development. The changes in the technical dimension of the spatial planning system show no intention to integrate the spatial instruments with those for regional planning. Therefore, spatial functions were taken over by regional development planning (through a series of plans and strategies) that

was introduced in the process of European integration and the Europeanization of planning in the country.

The second hypothesis is that the Europeanization of the system of planning instruments did not begin until after 2001. The system of spatial plans remained "static" and did not undergo reformation even after the introduction of the SPA (2001). It was only in 2010 that the system of spatial planning documents was partially implemented. That implementation involved the introduction of planning instruments at the national level, the National Spatial Development Concept, and at local level, the Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development. Those instruments formed part of the Europeanization of spatial planning through the transfer of the European spatial discourse, or the European spatial model, from the EU to the domestic level. They represented the first attempt at voluntary transfer via common European spatial development documents designed as recommendations.

Aims and objectives

The identification and achievement of the overall aims is part of the contribution this research is expected to make to the general knowledge in this field. Meanwhile, the individual objectives are what guide the activities undertaken in order to provide that contribution. The principal aims are therefore reflected in the two main research questions expressed in the preceding section and can be stated as follows:

A. To understand the transformations of the spatial planning system in Bulgaria after the fall of socialism, through EU accession, and up to 2013.

B. To analyse the changes in the system of spatial instruments and the novel instruments implemented within the Europeanization process.

As the specific objectives within the second aim, the following have been defined:

B.1. To explain how implementation of novel instruments occurred in the system of spatial instruments in terms of timing and method.

B.2. To identify ideas, the transfer of ideas, concepts and approaches related to the supranational idea of the EU spatial model and the instruments implemented.

B.3. To verify the mechanism and the characteristics of the transfer of European spatial documents to new instruments for spatial planning in Bulgaria.

Research context and key definitions

In theoretical and conceptual terms, the current research was partially inspired by the geographic conceptualization of space. The study of this is part of the science of spatial planning referred to in geography as "spatial science" (from the original German term: *Raumwissenschaft*). Stoyanov (1992, 2009) relates the origin of spatial science to the first spatial (localization) theories and objectives. My research has been developed within the framework of Europeanization: space as a social construction and planning in the context of European space making.

A change of patterns in planning systems and practices has been observed over the past two decades, while studies devoted to Europeanization contribute to new explanations of supra-national policies within domestic institutions (Reimer et al., 2015). The Europeanization of spatial planning is part of the political project for the construction of the "EU"-ropean space, i.e., the process through which Europe is (re-)defined and (re-)constructed as a unified spatial entity (Luukkonen, 2011a). In parallel to this, however, I take into account the fact that the development of ideas of a common European space and the creation of a common EU planning model, in practice follow the complex and diffuse connection of competences between the EU and the member states (Elorrieta Sanz, 2013). It is also borne in mind that the EU does not have any explicit power in the field of spatial planning, i.e. there is no specific regulation of spatial planning as a policy in the Community. Nevertheless, the EU has developed various ways to have a consolidated practical impact on European spatial planning. On the one hand, these are the series of documents that purport to be the reference for planning and sustainable development of the territory. On the other hand, however, in practice there is a clear tendency to appropriate certain competences (in an indirect way) through other policies where the EU has exclusive competence or shares it with the member states. The Union possesses competences in the development of sectoral policies; and those policies,

together with the financial framework of the Community, have an impact on national spatial planning policies. Of course, this is more clearly visible when studying the process of Europeanization of national planning and its mechanisms, as discussed in detail in the second chapter.

Meanwhile, Chapter 3 develops the concept of policy transfer within a logical structure. Although it is rarely used in the social sciences, the idea of policy transfer complements some of the mechanisms and directions of Europeanization. These mechanisms - and the variables which characterize them - are considered in depth in the search for a logical methodological model that will allow the study of spatial planning transformation in Bulgaria within the conceptual boundaries of Europeanization.

In this way, the current research is based on concepts which have formed the so-called European debate on spatial development for more than two decades. Specifically, this doctoral thesis covers three main lines of conceptual enquiry: spatial planning, Europeanization (of spatial planning) and policy transfer. Despite the variation in the literature, the following definitions of these terms have been selected as the most representative.

Key concept 1: *“Spatial planning appeared in the process of shaping a European position in the field of planning and spatial development, intended as a neutral term and not directly linked to any particular country”. (Böhme, 2002: 11) At the same time, according to Servillo and Van den Broeck, it represents a socially constructed system whose core technical dimension is embedded in a broader "institutional frame" composed also of a cognitive, socio-political and discursive dimension. More generally put, spatial planning is a four-dimensional structure (Yanchev, 2012)*

Key concept 2: *“Europeanization consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion, and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated into the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies” (Radaelli, 2003: 30).*

Key concept 3: *Policy transfer is "the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or*

present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system" (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000: 5).

It should also be taken into account that the term *instrument (spatial instrument)* has been preferred to *tool* when it refers to spatial plans / schemes or other domestic spatial documents regulating intervention in the territory. The term *planning instruments* in the current doctoral thesis refers to those formally adopted by the planning legislation of the country (at the national, regional or local level), and used for territorial governance, land use management and development of territorial units. At the local level, spatial instruments are most often called *plans*, while at the regional and national levels their characteristics may be different. For example, in Bulgaria, the term *spatial instruments* refers to general spatial plans (of municipalities or urban settlements), as well as to schemes (regions) and concepts (municipalities, regions or the national territory).

Thesis structure

The work presented in the current doctoral thesis is divided into four main parts: the conceptual framework of the research (Chapters 1, 2 and 3); the methodology, illustrating how the research has been conducted (Chapters 4 and 5); the domestic context and results of the empirical study (Chapters 6 and 7); and an analytical part reflecting how Europeanization had an impact on spatial instruments (Chapter 8), as well as additional interpretation, critical analysis, analysis of instrument transfer during Europeanization, and discussion of the newly introduced planning instruments (Chapter 9). The final (fifth) part comprises the conclusions and the arguments concerning the two central hypotheses.

The construction of the **Conceptual framework (Part II)** mainly includes an overview of the existing academic literature, but also of the literature of an institutional nature. In order to understand and study the influence and the mechanisms of action of these conceptual starting points - which are not found in an integrated form in the academic literature or in the Eastern European context (or they are poorly studied) (Ladi, 2007), and more specifically in the literature concerning spatial planning in Bulgaria - it is necessary to understand the essence of the concepts separately. In this way the empirical research is theoretically supported. The chapter on spatial planning (Chapter 1) considers the wide variety of literature available and for the central academic

references, sources in English have been chosen. This chapter focuses on the idea of precisely *what* the research is into.

Europeanization (Chapter 2) is a broad concept, which is used to explain the political transformations in the different EU member states, following the "contact" between domestic institutions and European institutional tools. The transformations and dynamics involved are shown as part of the idea for the emergence or the need for a European model of spatial planning, which supports the debate on the convergence or divergence of planning systems and practices within the Community. This chapter, together with **Chapter 3 (Policy Transfer)**, is an important starting point for explaining why Europe's national planning systems are changing and how this is possible in the multi-directional and complex relationship between the EU and the member states. An important point in focusing on these three conceptual and theoretical starting points is the consideration of each one of them in the Eastern European context, keeping in mind that the countries in that region began to change their planning systems more recently and the adaptation pressure and conditionality of the EU follow different dynamics from those in Western Europe.

The **Methodology (Part III)** of the study aims to demonstrate the overall strategy and approach to conducting the current research. The main objective of this part of the doctoral thesis is to develop a design that allows the central research questions which the study addresses to be answered, while clarifying in the analysis the validity of the answers and possibly threats to it. The methodological framework and research design adopted define this study as qualitative. It is inspired by the need to generate knowledge and interpret processes and phenomena that are identified within the framework of Europeanization. Through policy transfer in that context, ideas, discourse and regulations, related to spatial planning in certain geographical areas of the EU, can mutate as it adapts and becomes united under the common European model of spatial planning. Furthermore, this study can be defined as explanatory research in accordance with the classification in Saunders et al. (2007)¹.

¹ Saunders et al. (2007) define three types of studies: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The classification of studies is usually based on the research methods; while, depending on the research question, a study can be both descriptive and explanatory.

Thus **Part III** of this work integrates two central chapters. **Chapter 4** organizes the information sources and the methods of gathering qualitative information and data, including semi-structured interviews of experts in Bulgaria. The chapter justifies the territorial and temporal scope of the empirical study. **Chapter 5**, within this methodology section, is of particular importance and focuses on key approaches to studying the system of spatial planning, as well as approaches to analysing the impact of Europeanization. Within the latter process, an additional model is presented: a model for in-depth analysis of the European spatial discourse transferred to the spatial planning instruments already analysed in the previous parts of the doctoral thesis. This analysis of the process of transfer provides additional results for the general discussion on the implementation of spatial instruments in Bulgaria as a result of Europeanization.

Part IV - The results of the empirical research focus on the evolution of the spatial development system in Bulgaria during the period known as the New History Period of the country (since 1878). This part comprises **Chapter 6** and **Chapter 7**, and is deliberately separated from the rest of the results of the analysis, as it focuses primarily on the transformations and changes in spatial planning in Bulgaria. **Chapter 6** examines in detail and provides a descriptive analysis of the evolution of planning since 1878, paying special attention to the 1989-2013 period (the period the current work studies). The results of this chapter represent a basis for a future upgrade of the analytical study. The recapitulation of the development of the spatial planning system in **Chapter 7** is supplemented by an overview of the ESPON findings concerning Bulgarian spatial planning (since 1989). Understanding and systematizing this information enables the rest of the study to be completed.

The empirical data (in **Part IV**) reveal a number of problems in the system of spatial planning that were caused by the specifics of the reforms, as well as the emergence of different planning instruments: regional and spatial. Transformations which occurred as a result of the influence (direct or indirect) of the EU, i.e., Europeanization, as well as the different dynamics of these changes in the technical dimension of the system (**Chapter 8**) fall within the scope of the analytical study (**Part V**) of this thesis. In parallel, a central place in **Chapters 9** is devoted to the role and transfer of the European spatial discourse (discursive integration) through the implementation of concepts and planning principles from key documents designed as recommendations within the system of spatial instruments (as a result of the changes in the domestic

discourse on spatial planning and the opportunities for changing the planning practices by implementing these new planning documents).

A comprehensive framework for critical review and the analysis of transfer are proposed, as well as an interpretive analysis and a discussion of examples of spatial planning instruments which have been implemented since 2007.

Finally, **Part VI** is dedicated to the **Conclusions** organized at several levels. A table of the interviews conducted (recorded in audio format) and their characteristics has been annexed, as well as the consent form filled in by the experts interviewed in the field. Figure 1 is a summary of the conceptual outline of the general structure of this research.

Figure 1: Conceptual outline of the general structure of this doctoral thesis



Source: Author

PART II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

CHAPTER 1: SPATIAL PLANNING AND SPATIAL PLANNING MODELS

CHAPTER 2: EUROPEANIZATION PROCESS

CHAPTER 3: POLICY TRANSFER THEORY AND POLICY TRANSFER IN THE EU

CHAPTER 1: SPATIAL PLANNING AND SPATIAL PLANNING MODELS

1.1. Conceptual-terminological and linguistic problems related to the interpretation of the term “spatial planning”

1.1.1. Space and territory in spatial planning. Geographical context and linguistic features

Space has always been a fundamental concept in geography. For scientists in the field of physical geography, space is a geometrically organized system (absolute space), while for too many representatives of human geography, the understanding of space stems from rather relative and relational perspectives (Luukkonen, 2011a).

The understanding and the semantic distinction of the two terms - territory and space - have formed - in their own manner - certain expressions, which nowadays reflect the national (regional) concepts and names used in the domestic planning systems and spatial planning policy. In this respect, the diversity of European languages as well as the variety of geographical, economic, etc. planning schools, require clarification, especially when studying space and planning policies in Slavic countries from the perspective of Latin or Anglo-Saxon languages. The linguistic features and the abilities to explain the differences in the denomination of the various terms and practices are undoubtedly related to this issue, therefore – this has been paid attention to in this study as well.

At the same time, there is no clear definition of *territory* nor of its relation to space and time, or as Elden (2010) stated - the concept of territory together with the concepts of space in geography, remains little explored. Elden (2010) rounds out Raffestin’s (1980) ideas of the territory and territoriality as some of the most neglected issues in geography and adds in conclusion that the history of this concept is yet to be made.

The conceptualized ideas - through the prism of determinism, naturalism, idealism, materialism, etc. – create an illusion in geography that territory is more complex than we are able to explain, or as Haesbaert (2011) noted - it brings against its background the term “hybridity”, so that the territory can be seen through the idea of multiple connections of power (as Claude Raffestin clarifies, 1980) - from the material power of

economic and political relations to the symbolic power of the relations in cultural aspect. In this study it is added that such an approach reflects the idea that territory (space) is not just a "land cover". Territory is complex, evolving in time, integrated, multi-layered, resulting from the correlation of its physical geographic features, geopolitics / politics (power), economic evolution and culture (an expression of the territorial-social identity and social relationships). In other words, studying the process of spatial organization or spatial planning is impossible without knowing the process of territory formation and the elements that define it.

The territory is the geographic space attached to a being, a community, an entity of any nature, physical or immaterial geographical area (Zoido, 1998). Territory and space are not equivalent, while their indiscriminate use leads to confusion. Territory is generated from space by actors who territorialize it (Raffestin, 1980). Territory is a spatial category and is sometimes parallel to the concepts of region, place or locality, and as Luukkonen (2011a: 5) noted - in policy making these terms are often used randomly. Territory can be regarded as a specific political way of representing space.

In German-speaking countries, spatial planning theories, which are based on two sciences - regional and spatial - space is associated with the concept of region. It could be said that every region is a space, but not every space is a region, for it is the level of organization which distinguishes them (Stoyanov, 2009: 76).

Stamenkov (2014: 37) binds the idea of spatial planning with the German Theory of geographical dimensions. The Theory is related to landscape studies. Initially it was used in technical literature and later on in many scientific fields, not only geographic ones, which deal with the term *space* (Sandner, 2013). In human geography the meaning of the geographical dimensions are more complex and complicated, since spatial research can be conducted in various ways depending on what meaning and concept of space will serve as a basis. Like in physical geography, space is a real object (natural, urban, industrial landscape, etc.) but it is also a social, cultural, abstract space, such of action, planning, or generally put - based on ideas, perceptions, individual or collective experience (Stamenkov, 2014: 38). Hence, the Theory of geographical dimension is a theory of geographical spaces, although the latter are the research subject of numerous sciences.

The space is divided into material space and abstract space. The first is regarded as one filled with objects - part of the Earth's surface - or as structural space with an important role in physical and human geography. Abstract space is typical for human geography and is organized by the following subcategories: space as a functional system (political, cultural, social aspects); space as a perception and identity (the material world combined with language, culture, traditions, social relations, etc.); space as a political and planning field of action (object and/or subject of planning policy); space as a social category and part of the social structuring. The latter overlaps the new socialist theories (Stamenkov, 2014). Theory acts as a motor for studying the structural parts of scientific planning and deals with the idea of programming of spatial problems solving. The theory of planning derives from, and depends on social scientific theorizing, while spatial planning is harmonized through its theoretical penetration of ethical values. Space in spatial planning is a multifaceted concept / notion – with economic to a virtual significance, which turns spatial planning into a step towards solving the numerous problems of various categories. Thus planning is not limited to institutions building, but to seeking strategies for negotiations between the various partners / actors, while time - being a technical tool and a resource which is mentally perceived subjectively - will be increasingly taken into account by spatial planning.

In practice and in spatial planning policy, space is often understood in absolute terms (Luukkonen, 2011a). Schön (2005) even divides territorial and spatial policies: territorial policies focus on the development of a particular area, whereas spatial policies include various spatial levels from European to local ones, in a process aimed at better coordination and cooperation of space connections. Nonetheless, spatial planning is inevitably territorial, while the conceptualization of the notions of space and territory is important in the political debate on the territorial cohesion policy (Luukkonen and Moilanen, 2012).

1.1.2. Linguistic challenges to the interpretation of the term “spatial planning”

Interpretation, translation and explanation of the terminology related to spatial planning in Europe is becoming an important challenge considering the wide variety of languages in the 28 EU member states. Like the use of concepts such as "territory" or "space", the cultural rootedness of many of the words used in practice and in the explanation of spatial planning, are bound by aspects of society, including planning practices and tools,

which only make sense "domestically, in the national context and language" (Dühr, et al., 2010: 22).

In his book "European Union Spatial Policy and Planning", Williams (1996) emphasizes the importance of language and the linguistic interpretation and understanding of the concepts of the EU spatial policy in the context of the official languages of the Union. Williams himself attaches importance to the different language variations of the English language regarding the term "spatial planning", and to the fact that recognition of the linguistic significance in understanding the terminology only started in the 1990s. The same author defines "Spatial planning" as a Euro-English term used as a neutral expression of different planning styles in Europe on various geographical levels. However, interpreting the concept of spatial planning leads to confusion caused by the fact that its different use depends on the context and the purpose (Nadin, 2007). Dühr et al. (2010: 26) define two main ways in which "*spatial planning*" is used:

- As a concept of governance system for managing spatial development or land use in a particular place (the national or the regional planning system);
- As a specific term used to describe the special / particular idea or definition of spatial planning as a coordination mechanism originated in the debate at the European level (the spatial planning approach);

In an academic aspect, spatial planning is sometimes substituted with (or parallel to) terms such as "spatial development", "strategic planning" and "strategic spatial planning." The differences between the terms are more or less subtle and partially overlap, despite the numerous concepts explaining the comprehensive aspect of these terms (Luukkonen, 2011b).

In many cases, the term "spatial planning" is almost literally translated from English, while in other cases the term is completely different. In that line of discussion, it should be noted, however, that in many cases these terms describe different concepts.

Figure 2: Official languages in the EU: translation of the term "spatial planning"

Bulgarian	пространствено планиран
Spanish	ordenación del territorio
Czech	územní plánování
Danish	egnsplanlægning
German	Raumplanung
Estonian	asulaplaneerimine
Greek	χωροταξία
France	aménagement du territoire
Hungarian	prostorno planiranje
Italy	assetto territoriale
Latvian	pilsētu un lauku plānojums
Lithuanian	teritorinis planavimas
Hungarian	területszervezés
Dutch	ruimtelijke ordening
Polish	planowanie przestrzenne
Portuguese	ordenamento do território
English	town and country planning
Romanian	planificare urbană și regională
Slovak	plánovanie rozvoja mesta a vidieka
Slovenian	prostorsko načrtovanje
Finnish	Kaavoitus
Swedish	fysisk planering

Source: Dühr et al. (2010)

Note: Bulgarian – *пространствено планиран* to be considered as *пространствено планиране*

In Slavic-speaking countries, such as Russia for example, along with the term "organization of space" (in Russian: *организация пространства*) the term "organization of territory" (*организация территории*) is also used, but above all - "arrangement of territory" (*устройство территории*) - in terms of engineering and technical development, as well as "territorial / spatial planning"; in Croatia - "Prostorno planiranje", in Poland - "planowanie przestrzenne", in the Czech Republic - "Územní plánování", in Serbia - "prostorno planiranje", etc.

In Romance-speaking countries, the term "territory" is traditionally used in the definition of spatial planning. For example in Spain and in Spanish-speaking countries, the term for spatial planning is "ordenación del territorio", respectively "ordenación territorial"; in France, although with a different concept and content, "aménagement du territoire" is used.

In many cases the direct translation of "spatial planning" is understood as both spatial planning and territorial planning, which in their essence are both part of a certain systematic hierarchy; therefore, in various academic schools various terms have been introduced which unite the above concept. For example, in *Diccionario y glosario en ordenación del territorio (Vocabulario de uso frecuente en ordenación del territorio)*, the term "planeamiento territorial" is defined as synonymous to spatial planning². Here it is necessary to add that the term "planning" by itself is an instrument of the spatial development policy, where policy means authorizing a society in a collective action. Policy should be understood as a form of problem solving, whereas planning is associated with rationalization of the policy. The development planning is related to the need to build a better system of influencing the processes. For many decades the idea of planning as technology has been developing as politically neutral, that planning is a philosophy. Until the mid-twentieth century, planning is preparing the policy management, policy itself is making decisions about alternatives, while planning is a consequence and an administration activity (Stoyanov, 2009).

In German-speaking countries, such as Germany and Austria - "spatial planning" is expressed through concepts such as "Raumordnung" (spatial organization) and "Raumplanung" (spatial planning). There Raumordnung definition is quite different in official and scientific documents respectively. The interpretation of those terms differs in official papers on the one hand and in scientific papers on the other, which often leads to misinterpretation not only in everyday life but also in literature. As Stamenkov (2014) stated, in the case of Austria "Raumordnung describes the present condition of a certain space, as well as the desired condition of the same space, and the set of activities to be implemented in order to achieve this desired condition". On the other hand, spatial planning deals with regulation and transformation of space, pursues the management of the physical and the material form of space, but also seeks to steer certain social relations (Luukkonen, 2011b). Transformation in spatial planning relates to the design and the implementation of locational and land use solutions, or to the distribution of activities on a certain geographical level (Faludi and Waterhout, 2002), together with building up a framework of policy principles with a spatial impact (Healey et al., 1997).

² "Expresión prácticamente sinónima de ordenación del territorio y que está referida, por tanto, a ámbitos supramunicipales ", while "ordenación del territorio" is defined as a policy: "Política que se ocupa de la presencia, distribución y disposición en el territorio de aquellos hechos a los que se confiere la capacidad de condicionar o influir en el desarrollo y bienestar de sus habitantes".

Therefore, when we talk about spatial planning we refer to something more than territorial planning. Thus in this doctoral thesis, the term “spatial planning” is has the same meaning, linguistically and semantically parallel to the Spanish "ordenación del territorio" or the German “Raumordnung”, despite the traditional and cultural differences in the academic and the practical use of the terms "territory" and "space" which were explained above.

In Bulgaria, for decades there was no term equivalent in its meaning to the German or Spanish term for spatial planning, as a result of the dividing of "physical planning" (*устройство на територията* in Bulgarian, literary – arrangement / structuring of the territory) and "planning of the socioeconomic development" (regional development planning) (Stoyanov, 2009), despite the fact that linguistically the term “arrangement of the territory" translates into Spanish as "ordenación del territorio" and into German - as “Raumordnung”. The Bulgarian "arrangement of the territory" (Kovachev, 2009; Stoyanov, 2009) conceptually stands closer to the French "aménagement du territoire", but not in its practical meaning, since the latter is highly economically oriented to reducing the socioeconomic imbalances. The Bulgarian "arrangement planning" is more related to technical-arrangement planning (similar to the Russian meaning). Thus the Bulgarian term for “spatial planning” is actually closer in meaning to the German "planning of the land use” (Flächenwidmungsplanung), to the Spanish "uso del suelo", to the Austrian “planning of the land use" (Flächennutzungsplanung) or to the English "land use planning", which are only part of the spatial planning concept.

The term "spatial planning" as a literary translation from English, replacing the term “territory” with “space”, legislatively appears for the first time in planning documents for the adoption of the National Spatial Development Concept in December 2012, although in the relevant act and a number of other planning documentation, the term “territorial arrangement” is in use. In the National Concept an indirect reference is made to the need for changes in the existing terminology, imposing the "new" term "spatial planning"; in the same document it is stated that: "according to the definition of spatial planning adopted by the Council of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning in Europe in 2006, which definition was published a year later by the Council of Europe in the dictionary of spatial planning terms, in the "Territory and landscape" section spatial development is defined as "the evolution of territories in all dimensions (economic,

social, environmental, physical)" (NSDC, 2012: 16)³. The Concept officially establishes the term "spatial planning", used in parallel or as a substitute for "spatial development" as Luukkonen (2011b) highlighted, in many practical cases mentioned above.

1.1.3. The term “region” in the spatial planning concept

The term “region” appeared in Western literature during the 1930s. The concept of region has evolved and has reached various spatial dimensions - sub-national, supranational, cross-border, etc. regions (Stoyanov, 2009). As early as 1968 the Council of Europe recommended in a report the convening of a conference of the ministers responsible for spatial planning, so as to clarify the concept of region and its subcategories. The subcategories which were defined as main were: nature region; homogenous region; cultural-geographical region, functional region; polarized regions. Most of the recommendations, however, remain open even today (Stamenkov, 2014).

Jones and Paasi (2013) noted that the concepts of region, as well as those of regionalism, regional boundaries and identity, have become important keywords in social sciences since the 1990s, both in the academic discourse and in management, planning and policy. The region is a social structure (Paasi, 2010) and represents an important element of comprehending the rapid transformation of the countries, the debates, the practices and the multilevel governance of "Europe of Regions" (Jones and Paasi, 2013).

In German geography, for example, studying the concept of region came later than studying the concept of space, and as opposed to other geographic schools, preference is given to the latter term. Region is regarded as a politically demarcated territorial unit where the activities focused on meeting human needs are constructed on a common cultural base. Due to increasing competition, regions are forced to constantly create new ideas, concepts and innovative forms of cooperation, since the idea that the quality of a state is determined by the sum of the qualities of its regions, is becoming increasingly popular (Stamenkov, 2014).

³ “Spatial development refers to the evolution of territories in all their dimensions (economic, social, environmental, physical)... “Spatial development policy” is a rather recent concept originating from the 1990s (when the ESDP and the Guiding Principles were adopted) which means a policy promoting the development of space in accordance with general principles. Various public policies (sectoral and non-sectoral) should converge for the achievement of these general principles described in the Guiding Principles and in the ESDP” (CEMAT, 2006; CEMAT GLOSSARY OF KEY EXPRESSIONS USED IN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN EUROPE)

In Russian geography, as noted by Shuvalov (2013), according to the Dictionary of Concepts and Terms in Socioeconomic Geography, the term “region” is more often used as a synonym of the term *rayon* (from French - “rayon” - ray; “район” in Russian) and is endowed with its immanent properties. In Russian the term was introduced in the late 1800s as a foreign word, which literally means "region". The terms *region* and *rayon* are conceptually different, says the above-mentioned dictionary, therefore *rayon* analysis and *regional* analysis differ by definition.

In Bulgaria, the free interpretation of both concepts - region and *rayon* is a clear expression of the problem with the use of the conceptual-terminological apparatus. As elucidated by Slaveikov (2000), the term *rayon* is only used in the former USSR and Bulgaria; according to the Dictionary of the Foreign Words in the Bulgarian language – 1978, cited by the same author, *rayon* means: 1. an area with certain economic and geographical features; 2. a part of a village or neighborhood; 3. Administrative-territorial unit in the USSR; 4. the place where a certain activity is carried out; field of activity (ibid: 431).

The term “rayon” was introduced in 1879 by the Soviet geographer A. S. Yermolov for the outlining of agricultural areas. Later the term was imposed by the implementation of the administrative-territorial reform in the USSR and with the emergence of the so-called “*rayon* Soviet school” in the 1920s. That is the period when conditions for the emergence of the regional economy (Kovalenko, 2005) were created. The creation of the Soviet *rayon* school as an academic field was due to geographers such as N. Baranskiy, who was the author of some of the first *rayon* divisions of the Soviet Union.

Some studies based on the Russian human geographer E. Alaev (1983) and on his Socioeconomic Geography in particular, adhere to the idea that the term *rayon* (meaning “ray” in French) is a Russification of that word and has no territorial content, as a result of which was only imposed in Russian geography and planning science, whence to countries such as Bulgaria, the development of which was heavily dependent on the scientific evolution in the USSR. According to Alaev (1983) the term “region” has multiple meanings, which fact explains the refusal of many Russian geographers to use the term *rayon*. Alaev (1983) analyses the taxa “*rayon*” and “region”; he defines the *rayon* as a territory characterized by a set of elements that distinguishes it from other territories and determine its unity, interconnection and integrity. Therefore - the same

author stated – the use of both terms makes them synonymous. No error occurs in the substantive and meaningful aspect of their use, with the exception of some deeply-rooted phrases such as administrative *rayons*, urban *rayons*, main economic *rayons*, etc. According to Alaev, the term “region” is more common and recognized.

An essential element of the definition of “region” is the notion of “territory”, which according to Alaev (1983) is defined as a part of the Earth's surface, possessing both natural and anthropogenic properties and resources, characterized by length (area), a specific kind of "spatial" resources, geographical location, etc.

Kovalenko (2005) explains that the term “region” in Russian language can be seen as *rayon* and he also advocates the need for their synonymous use. The same author, however, adds that history has imposed the term “economic *rayon*” as a key element of the territorial structure as a consequence of the specialization of the territorial division of labour. The content of the term *rayon* according to Slaveikov has derived from that of “region”, which is of German-English origin, and therefore, the use of the term “region” is what is proper.

Maslova (2009) notes that the term “region” does not have an explicit interpretation today. According to that author, the term *rayon* is a starting concept not only in geography but also in economic sciences and research, as well as studies related to both space and territory. The same author arranges in a hierarchical order the terms “territory”, followed by “region” and then by *rayon*. The *rayon* is a part of the territory, characterized by unity, interdependent components, integrity – an objective condition and a logical result of the development of the territory. At the same time, the "range" in which the *rayon* extends varies from *rayons* as parts of a city to *rayons* as parts of a country.

In Bulgaria, being a post-communist state, the term *rayon* is used to denote administrative-territorial units but also refers to socioeconomic, economic, tourism, etc. *rayons* - along the lines of the Soviet practice of economic regionalization.

The economic *rayon* is a major category in the Bulgarian economic geography. Respectively, economic regionalization, as noted in Geography of Bulgaria – 1979, is the fundament of designing an optimal spatial organization of the production and of the increasing its economic, social and environmental efficiency. Concepts for the

regionalization of the country were developed as early as the 1930s. Different configurations of *rayon* divisions in the following decades included various in number, configuration, territorial scope and economic content *rayons*. Those configurations, however, implied the idea of the *rayon* as a basis of both territorial-economic and territorial-arrangement planning of the county (Geography of Bulgaria, 1979).

Along with that, in resemblance to the Soviet model, a division of the Bulgarian capital Sofia into *rayons* was introduced after WW II. Such divisions were also applied in the cities of Plovdiv and Varna during the 1980s. The Administrative-Territorial Structure of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, adopted in 1995, provides mandatory *rayon* division of the capital and the cities of Plovdiv and Varna, regulated by a separate act, which enables the municipal councils of cities with a population of over 100 000 to proclaim *rayons*, with a population of minimum 25 000 residents each.

Another significant differentiation of regions relates to their purpose: on the one hand, regions serve as a basis for analysing the complexity of spatial relations (regions for analysis), while in other cases, specific normative public action comes in the foreground (planning regions, regions for management, program regions according to the EU terminology, etc.). Regions can be used for spatial analysis and spatial development policies – the regions of the NUTS system of the EU being a typical example, as explained by Passi (2010). The first of the three approaches in the study of regions regards its interpretation as a statistical, administrative unit, which provides a spatial framework for phenomena or processes that need monitoring or comparison. According to the oldest approach regions are regarded as a construction, a final product of the research process. The third approach regards regions as a social discourse, i.e. regions are a regional condition and are determined by politics, culture, economics, and management and power relations.

Table 1: Interpretation of the terms “rayon”, “region”, “rayon planning” and “regional planning” in Russian geography

<i>Rayon</i>	Region
<p>A territory outlined on the basis of a certain sign (a phenomenon, a process) or a set of elements that distinguish it from neighbouring areas. The <i>rayon</i> is a major taxonomic unit in territorial division. The <i>rayon</i> is a major category in geographical disciplines which study the territorial organization of society as a whole and its individual components. Various types of <i>rayons</i> exist: sectorial (industrial, agricultural, etc.) and integrated (socioeconomic and / or social – as a result of the general division of the territory). The economic, the social and sometimes the political and the cultural <i>rayons</i> occupy an intermediate / middle position in the system of sectorial and integrated division of the territory (Kovalenko, 2005).</p>	<p>A polysemantic concept of <i>rayon</i>. Recently used among many geographers as a synonym of the term <i>rayon</i> and endowed with its immanent properties.</p> <p>Every <i>rayon</i> is a region but not every region is a <i>rayon</i>.</p>
<i>Rayon analysis</i>	Regional analysis
<p><i>Rayon</i> analysis suggests implementation of <i>rayon</i>-creation and creation of a network of <i>rayons</i> that will be used for geographical research. For the classical economic-geographical analysis of several <i>rayons</i>, it is important to show whether they possess the property of integrity, and therefore - their inner self-organization depends on the choice of approaches and methods of analysis.</p>	<p>Regional analysis can be used for random territorial cells. It regards their internal structure as secondary and those can be represented as information points.</p>

<i>Rayon</i> planning	Regional planning
<p>A type of scientific-design activities aimed at rational administrative and economic territorial arrangement, incl. optimal deployment of industry, distribution of settlements; industrial, transport and recreational infrastructure, based on a full assessment of the capacity of the territory, taking into account the architectural planning, the geographical, the economic, the engineering, the technical and the environmental conditions.</p> <p>In its essence the term “<i>rayon</i> planning” is close to the term “physical planning”. In Russia, following the changes in the legal framework of planning and design, and with the adoption of the Urban Development Code, the term “<i>rayon</i> planning” was replaced by the term “spatial planning”. This has led to gradual weakening of the term “<i>rayon</i> planning” associated with the Soviet era.</p>	<p>The process of developing plans for socioeconomic development (in its broader sense) of the regions. At the base of regional planning, regional forecasting lies.</p> <p>In the regional plans / strategies, strengths and weaknesses of the regional economy are calculated, as well as its competitive advantages, etc. Regional planning forms the future development vision of the region and the necessary actions which need to be applied by the authorities, the citizens and the economy, in order to achieve the designated goals and directions for development.</p>

Source: Author, based on Kovalenko (2005); Gorkin, A. et al. (2013).

1.2. Definitions and conceptual approach

Spatial planning appeared in the process of shaping a European position in the field of planning and spatial development, intended as a neutral term and not directly linked to any particular country (Böhme, 2002:11). However, it is a well-known fact that spatial planning is understood and defined in various ways. Even as of today, contradictions concerning the definitions of spatial planning as a public policy, science, technique or empirical praxis, exist (Merlin, 2002). Depending on the context, definitions vary between different authors, with various possible focuses, while the concepts of spatial planning as a system, learning process and social structure, hold a special place in scientific literature.

Spatial planning is an activity that can take different forms in different contexts, depending on the institutional and legal framework or the variations in planning cultures and traditions (Adams et al., 2006). Spatial planning includes all experiments, tools and actors who form a certain part of the development of a given territory. It is strongly associated with the cultural features and the political framework of the nation-states; it is a sign of sovereignty and identity (Yanchev, 2012). Sometimes spatial planning is being replaced or is in parallel use with terms such as spatial development, strategic planning, strategic spatial planning, etc. (Luukkonen, 2011a). More generally put, spatial planning is a special form of public order; it is involved in the regulation and transformation of space (territory) and evaluated through the prism of its "toolkit"; it is an evidence-based policy, as noted by Davoudi (2006). This approach is based on the idea that the complex of political and socioeconomic processes can be technicized, led and controlled by the scientific process. In the EU, that approach is promoted by the ESPON (Luukkonen, 2011b).

Spatial planning is a key instrument for establishing long-term, sustainable frameworks for social, territorial and economic development, both within and between countries. Its primary role is to enhance the integration between sectors such as housing, transport, energy and industry, and to improve national and local systems of urban and rural development, also taking into account environmental considerations (UNECE, 2008).

Spatial planning can even be studied as a framework clarifying "policies of land use and the governance of change; discussion about places, their future and territorial change; and

finally, an activity that has to be understood in the context of political economy, relational geography and institutional restructuring”, where planning itself is not a solution; it is better thought of as a means, a lens, through which we understand and manage spatial processes and changes (Tewdwer-Jones, 2012: ix).

Spatial planning stands out as a scientific discipline, administrative technique and interdisciplinary research, policy or a set of policies, a way, a method or a search; an integrated process, a development strategy, a set / a range of political and administrative actions. This comes to show that there is no consensus on its conceptualization. For example, in the European Spatial Planning Charter spatial planning is both a scientific, administrative and technical discipline and policy (Massiris, 2002). It is a policy and not purely instrumental, as it expresses a world view in which the reduction of differences in the economic development represents only one facet (Urteaga, 2011).

Spatial planning is a public will and activity to improve the location and the arrangement of the facts in a given geographical region, especially in those regions where we attach more importance to the needs and the living conditions of the people who inhabit them. Spatial planning needs to rely on legal instruments and administrative practices, as well as consolidated principles of various scientific knowledge and multidisciplinary inputs (Zoido, 1998).

Terán (1978) too defines spatial planning as a response to the problems of the occupation of space and its use considering the utilization and allocation of resources, and adds that the activity of spatial planning is much more political rather than technical and scientific. Spatial planning embraces measures of coordinating the spatial impact of other sectorial policies, so as to achieve a more even distribution of economic development between regions which would otherwise be created by market forces, and to regulate the conversion of land and property use (CEC, 1997). In this regard, a similar concept is that of Hildenbrand (1996), who defines spatial planning as physical planning at the regional and sub-regional level, the main purpose of which is to coordinate the territorial aspects of sectorial policies, including supra-communal coordination of urban planning.

The need to unravel the complicated tangle of actors in the planning, as well as the dynamics of their activities and interactions, leads to the conceptualization of spatial planning as a system (the system approach is widely used in political science and in management). In this regard, Nadin and Stead (2008) define spatial planning as a set of mechanisms for territorial governance aimed at influencing the patterns of spatial development of a given area. This set of mechanisms is often conceptualized as a "system", which in turn is associated with attempts for classifying the systems for spatial planning in Europe over the last two decades (Munteanu and Servillo, 2014). Spatial planning is a system that reflects the model of society, the collection of common social and cultural values. The relation between social models and models of spatial planning is a first step towards clarifying and understanding the evolution of the national forms and planning policies, as well as the convergence process in the context of **the process of mutual learning**.

Spatial planning is also described as a learning process, while at the same time planning is not always learning. Sometimes planning is indeed what many planners have seen in the past: a technical exercise in the production of material things, thereby drawing on available expertise. *Planning as learning* particularly relates to situations requiring the coordination of various actors, each with a perspective on the issues at hand of his or her own, perspectives that need to be adjusted to each other before action can be taken (Faludi, 2000: 302).

Servillo and Van der Broeck (2008) consider the system of spatial planning as a **multi-dimensional and a multi-actor social system**, whose idea is to steer the spatial dynamics and the processes of "land organization and transformations".

According to Knieling and Othengrafen (2015) spatial planning is **an operative instrument of territorial policy** in a more comprehensive way. It is bound to situation-specific contexts and has deep and diverse roots, including the particularities of history, attitudes, beliefs and values, political and legal traditions, different socioeconomic patterns and concepts of justice, interpretations of planning tasks and responsibilities, as well as different structures of governance.

Some approaches highlight how planning systems are shaped by their societal context (Nadin and Stead, 2008) and their capacity to be transplanted to other contexts. Others elaborate and advocate specific types of planning and the effectiveness in bringing about changes in society (Servillo, Van den Broeck, 2012).

In the interpretation of the social structure of spatial planning, Yanchev (2012) offers two starting points in its studying. On the one hand, the author raises the issue of the culture of planning, the definitions of which vary in the scientific literature (1). On the other hand, Yanchev (2012) considers the strategic-relational institutionalist approach to spatial planning, and elaborates the suggestion of Servillo and Van den Broeck (2012) for a model of a spatial planning system considered in relation to the broader socio-cultural environment; Yanchev (2012) further on argues that planning systems are socially constructed, but also that they are articulated technical systems with a specific instrumental mandate of steering the spatial transformation dynamics; the spatial planning system is embedded in a context-based institutional frame, supported and reproduced by a variegated coalition of actors, the interaction of which specifies in an original way its socio-political characteristics and the technicality of its configuration.

(1) Spatial planning systems across Europe are very diverse and reflect local policy making styles and cultures, as well as specific territorial conditions and priorities (Stead and Cotella, 2011:13). The culture of planning is bound by the collective spirit and the prevailing attitudes of the actors involved in the planning process, the role of the state, the market forces and the civil society, i.e. bound by the political culture, the beliefs, the emotions and the values of society (Stead, 2013). This focus on spatial planning exploits the planning systems and their "traditions", as well as their impact on the sets of policy outcome and instruments (Stead et al. 2015). Differences in cultures of planning are reflected in the variety of tools, planning practices and professional ethics (Simeonova, 2015).

(2) Spatial planning is a socially constructed system in the core of which its technical dimension stands, which is embedded in a broader "institutional frame", composed also of a cognitive, a socio-political and a discursive dimension. More generally

put, spatial planning is a four-dimensional structure (Servillo and Van den Broeck, 2012) (Fig. 3): Socio-political, cognitive, discursive and technical dimension. The latter is the focus of this study. The technical dimension of spatial planning consists of all planning institutions, formal public and private actors, rules and regulations. This is the part of the planning systems which have always been the core of the policy debate and were also central to the typological studies.

Figure 3: Spatial planning structure

<p><i>Technical dimension</i> Planning instruments, tools, rules, binding plans, formal procedures, formal governmental competences and interactions, etc.</p> <p><i>Cognitive dimension</i> Implicit and explicit knowledge, perception of the spatial issues, monitoring structures, planning schools with their planning approaches, etc.</p> <p><i>Socio-political dimension</i> Model of society, welfare structure, perception of the role of the State and the public domain, political configuration, financial resources distribution, political balance of powers, governance structures, etc.</p> <p><i>Discursive dimension</i> Values, aims and principles, key words, rhetorics, issues, etc.</p>

Source: Servillo and Van den Broeck (2012)

The role of evidence is central to the process of spatial planning. According to Davoudi (2006), spatial planning is defined as an **evidence-based policy**. The role of evidence in public policy and spatial planning can be described as a necessary underpinning to ‘getting a grip on the problem’ to create a result-oriented approach, although there is always a tendency when dealing with challenges, issues or problems, to consider the inputs rather than the outcomes. The evidence-based policy making has been used in three main ways to identify: “What needs to be done? What has worked here or elsewhere? Did this approach work to solve the problem or improve the outcome?” (Morphet, 2011:76).

The acknowledgement of the need for improving the evidence base of the EU spatial policy goes back to the late 1980s (Gestel and Faludi 2005; Davoudi 2005) when the EC embarked on a series of studies which resulted in a number of reports, notably - Europe 2000 (CEC 1991) and Europe 2000+ (CEC 1994). Whilst those represented an important

step towards providing a pan-EU spatial analysis, their scope was confined to data collection, at a limited level, and a description of spatial development trends (Davoudi, 2007). Hence, for example, during the elaboration stages of the ESDP it became clear that there was a need for improving the evidence base of the ESDP's policy framework and in particular its concern with territorial differentiation (Davoudi 2005).

1.3. Typologies of the spatial planning systems

The first attempts for comparing the European spatial planning systems date back from the late 1980s (Davies et al., 1989), although at that point we could hardly speak of an existing "European spatial planning model" (Stoyanov, 2009). The majority of the earlier typologies designed to compare the European social models, government cultures and planning systems, however, ignore the countries in Central, East and Southeast Europe because of the fact that they were often defined and treated as countries in transformation (Maier, 2012). Moreover, the inner division of the Balkans (East and West Balkans), as well as the diverse dimensions and roles of the European integration and the Europeanization at the different levels (national, regional, local), complicate additionally the studies and the comparisons between these many-sided countries (Simeonova et al., 2015). The common ignoring of those countries in terms of planning typologies and planning models is due to the fact that their planning agendas at the different domestic levels are likely to continue to be influenced by elements matured within the North-West European dominated knowledge arenas, therefore, territorial knowledge communities in many of those countries do not yet appear to be consolidated sufficiently to play a pivotal role at the supranational level, due to their "weak and fragmented" nature (Maier, 2012; Cotella, 2012).

Four specific studies of planning systems are being discussed in the scientific literature on that topic.

Figure 4: Classification of spatial planning systems in Europe

Davies et al. 1989*		Common law England		Napoleonic codes DK, DE, FR, NL	
Newman, Thornley 1996	Nordic DK, FI, SE	British IE, UK	Germanic AT, DE	Napoleonic BE, FR, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES	East European
CEC 1997**	Comprehensive integrated AT, DK, FI, DE, NL, SE	Land use regulation IE, UK (and BE)		Regional economic FR, PT (and DE)	Urbanism GR, IT, ES (and PT)
Farinós Dasi 2007***	Comprehensive integrated AT, DK, FI, NL, SE, DE (and BE, FR, IE LU, UK) BG, EE, HU, LV, LT PL, RO, SL, SV	Land use regulation BE, IE, LU, UK (and PT, ES) CY, CZ, MT		Regional economic FR, DE, PT, (and IE, SE, UK) HU, LV, LT, SK	Urbanism GR, IT, ES CY, MT
* Davies et al. (1989) do not give a specific name to the two groups but contrast England and other systems based on their legal frameworks.					
** The EU Compendium identifies 'ideal types' of planning traditions. Each country may exhibit combinations of ideal types in different degrees. The ideal types are dominant in the countries indicated here.					
*** The ESPON project took the EU Compendium traditions as a starting point and examined how countries, including the transition states of central and eastern Europe, were moving between them.					

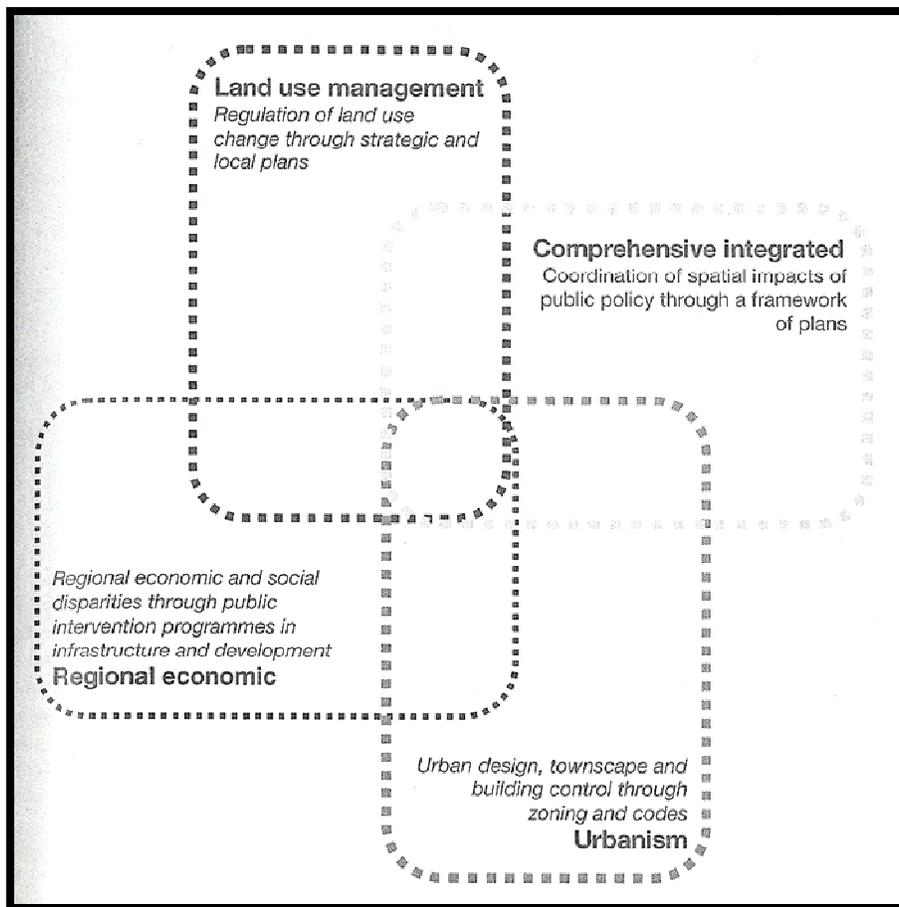
Source: Nadin and Stead (2008)

A study and a classification of the planning systems in Europe were developed in the 1990s by Newman and Thornley (1996). They distinguish five different planning families: Scandinavian, German, Napoleonic, British and East-European. This classification is entirely based on legal and administrative structures according to the existing five European legal families.

In 1997 the European Commission published the Compendium of Spatial Planning Policies and Systems in The European Union, in which four groups of planning traditions were identified: land use regulation, comprehensive-integrated, regional-economic and urbanism. Several years later this classification was actualized by the ESPON (2006 - ESPON project

2.3.2) (Trkulja et al., 2012). The Compendium uses the term "tradition" in order to bring the attention to the forms of planning that are deeply embedded in the historical complex conditions in the different countries. Some national spatial planning systems, according to this typology, represent a combination of traditions and models. For example, some countries may exhibit a strong tendency towards a certain tradition and be weaker in other traditions, or may show a tendency of combining traditions (Dühr et al., 2010: 180).

Figure 5: Planning traditions in Europe



Source: Dühr et al. 2010

In 2006 the term "traditions" was replaced by "styles of planning." The new classification includes more countries and reviews the "status" of those already typologized. The situation

is not so clear since a number of countries are classified into two, three or four styles of planning.

The ESPON 2.3.2. Study on Governance of Territorial and Urban Policies from EU to Local Level (2007) further attempted to extend the Compendium, so as to assess also the new member states in relation to the four EU 15-related traditions. These categorizations of planning systems are quite useful as they set some ideal types against which reality can be compared. However, what is clearly noted in all studies is that there is a whole array and variations of planning systems in the different countries, depending on the criteria which are used for their categorization. In addition, it is difficult to “clear-cut” categorize these planning systems due to the fact that aspects of different traditions are intertwined in each of them. On the other hand, some studies (Dühr et al., 2007 and 2010, Nadin and Stead, 2008, the ESPON 2.3.2 project, etc.) show that there is a convergence of planning systems mostly due to the Europeanization processes (Allkja, 2012).

1.4. The European spatial planning model

1.4.1. Prerequisites for the formation of planning models and existing planning models in Europe

The word “model” has a wide scientific and practical trajectory and is used in many examples of spatial planning. In this context, ideas about the territorial model and the spatial planning model reappear, according to Zoido (2006), in the regulatory and technical language of the late twentieth century in connection with the new impetus of the regional spatial planning. Dühr et al. (2010: 178) use the term "model" in the sense of providing a simplified but systematic representation of the main properties of the (in reality) very complex mix of phenomena and ideas.

According to Wegener (2000), spatial planning models include the regional models of economic development, land-use and housing market, models of spatial diffusion, migration models, urban and land-use models, the transport model, etc. In social sciences these models rest on complex and space-time dynamic systems based on economic modelling. Worth mentioning are the spatial economic models of Thünen, Weber, the

locational models of Lösch, etc. or the so-called spatial economic theories. Those have a history of more than 150 years and form an important part in understanding the spatial and regional development. Along with those theories, the study of regional models of production / industrial complexes whose meaning will be explained in the context of the socialist spatial planning, is important in the attempt to explain the emergence of regional disproportions and differences, the reduction of which will become a major goal of the regional and spatial planning policies (Stoyanov, 2009).

A solid part of the spatial economic theories and the ideas of the territorial organization of the production is represented by the Anglo-Saxon, the American or the French scientific community, where economic development of spatial models have formed the theoretical and practical basis of modern spatial planning. In Central and Eastern Europe the political and social changes of the early XX century, the formation of the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence, World War II and the Cold War, as well as the implementation of the Molotov Plan (as an alternative to the Marshall Plan in Western Europe) and the establishment of the European Community did not allow the expansion of the scientific concepts of spatial planning. This part of Europe was strongly influenced by the Russian economic-geographical concepts which acquired paramount significance for spatial and regional planning after the victory of the Russian revolution, the development of Russian GOSPLAN and GORPLAN, as well as the political, economic and scientific-technical influence of the USSR in those European countries which following World War II turned into its "satellite countries". The territorial organization and location of the production forces set up the theoretical-methodological basis of formation of the socialist spatial planning model (inherited by Central and Eastern Europe - a generic model until the end of the 1980s), where the identification and analysis of the industrial / manufacturing complexes have direct relevance to the study of spatial patterns (Pratap, 1985). As Pallot and Shaw (1981) noted, the socialist economy in the Soviet Union and in the countries which adopted the same model, tends to be spatially inefficient, including more dispersion than Western capitalist economies.

1.4.2. The European spatial planning debate on the European spatial model

European spatial planning is a mix of different planning traditions and cultures, which fact often leads to confusion in its overall interpretation in different ways and in different geographical contexts, as a result of various geographical, historical, cultural, political, governance, etc. factors. In various academic studies, the European idea of spatial planning is referred to as a multidimensional process such as the Europeanization of spatial planning (Luukkonen, 2011a). The idea and the debate on the European spatial planning has earned a particularly wide range of formulations in the scientific literature, which have been organized into a discourse on the European spatial planning and model. This discourse shapes out and frames "the minds of actors" by promoting and creating specific European spatial thinking (ibid).

It is believed that the EU does not have a legitimate direct competence in terms of spatial planning. The specific actions in this field are left to the member states. Nevertheless, the EU is involved in this process and retains its right to provide guidelines for spatial planning, offering an open forum for discussions on those topics (e.g. during informal meetings of the ministers), supporting the analysis and the scientific debate, especially within the ESPON programs (Vanolo, 2010). In fact, ESPON, along with programs such as INTERREG and AESOP (Association of European Schools of Planning) have the role of "key catalyst" in promoting the European spatial planning.

Despite the lack of formal prerogatives, the European discourse on spatial planning was growing especially rapidly in the 1990s, reaching its climax in 1999 with the publication of the ESDP, approved by the Informal Council of Ministers of Spatial Planning of the European Commission in Potsdam in 1999. The ESDP is an informal document that launched goals and principles for spatial development at regional and the national level. In particular, the European Perspective promotes the idea of a polycentric and balanced spatial development as key concepts of the European spatial planning, based on the experience of countries such as the Netherlands and Germany. In fact, it is the ESDP which initiated the operating of ESPON, and in parallel to that, the ESDP contributed to the justification of a number of INTERREG programs – part of the European Commission's tools of promoting interregional communication and exchange (Kunzmann, 2006).

The shaping of the discourse on the European spatial planning, which "promotes" the idea of a European model of spatial planning, has been increasing. To a large extent, it is maintained and supported by the European Commission through the European funding opportunities for local and regional initiatives, for example (ibid.).

The idea of the European model of planning has been increasingly acquiring relevance in conditions of territorial cohesion, shared competences and planning typologies among the EU member states, together with the possibilities for the European Commission to make legislative proposals on various territorial issues. Within this scenario the idea of a European model of planning continues to grow, although the format and the direction of this evolution remain unclear.

The influence that decision-makers have on different domestic contexts as Cotella (2012) explains, undoubtedly affects the evolution of the European spatial planning. This influence is marked by the active participation of relevant stakeholders and it concerns the European spatial planning discourse - a product of an epistemic community⁴ admittedly rooted in North-West Europe. This discourse is unclear on whether such a perspective will be altered any time soon.

At the European level (scale) numerous recommendations have been made on the European model of planning through the concept of territorial cohesion - now dominating the European discourse on spatial planning. In other words, as Davoudi (2007) notes, the European model of planning is described as "spatialization" of the European social model. At the same time, it is also noted that there is no single social model in Europe, but a number of different models for policies that share a set of common functions, or a set of shared objectives (Stead and Nadin, 2008; Dühr et al., 2010). The European model for

⁴ A network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge, within that domain or issue-area. As policy-makers often do not have time and capacity to engage in the EU discourse in order to 'search for lessons', professional contacts across institutions and geographical boundaries may constitute an important source of change and possible innovation, as 'the likelihood of integration between domestic and EU discourse increases the more that public policy makers have institutionalised relationships with epistemic communities that promote EU rules and the more that domestic structure are conducive to the influence of new ideas' (Cotella and Janin Rivolin, 2010: 18)

spatial planning is more of an unfinished project, which barely extends to the political arena. Nevertheless, the debate about shaping the European position in the field of planning is marked by several important events (Kunzmann, 2006): the primacy of Torremolinos Charter for Spatial Planning (1983); The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems (1997); the European Spatial Development Perspective published by CEMAT (1999); Adoption of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union (2007). Here, the emergence of the EU "Urban Agenda" can also be integrated (documents, initiatives, projects). Documents such as the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, adopted in 2007, are today a reference example for common principles and strategies for urban development policies throughout the EU. The Charter is built upon the recommendations set out in the Territorial Agenda of EU and promotes the concept of integrated urban sustainable development (Dühr et al., 2010).

The publication of these documents-guidelines (strategies, schemes, charters, principles, etc.) on behalf of the EU, their implementation and adoption, as well as following and sharing good practices embedded in those documents referring to different territorial levels, constitute one of the most representative samples and dimensions of the impact which the idea of a common European spatial planning has. These documents are also an expression of the processes of spatial planning in Europe (Elorrieta Sanz, 2013). Each of those documents mark the way to the common EU planning principles.

The presence of those documents (though only recommendatory) in domestic planning documents, supports the idea of mutual adaptation of different systems and a general convergence. The idea of convergence of certain aspects of the planning systems has been noted in the scientific literature on the topic, since cities and regions are subjected to more competition within the European space. In addition to that, there is a process of learning during working with the European Commission and the Council of Europe. However, it is still difficult to talk about a single European model of spatial planning. The trend rather suggests strengthening of the overall planning elements, especially in the efforts to coordinate the different sectorial policies in the EU.

Some shared concepts of spatial planning at the European level in documents of the European Commission such as: "polycentrism", "town-country relationship", "integrated

urban development", "integrated urban restoration" and many others, form the conceptual basis of the idea of spatial development, while implementing those concepts in a national discourse (discursive integration) has become a reference for the dimensions of the EU's influence on national spatial planning systems. This way, for example, the application of the ESDP and using it in the planning discourse and territorial policy making, as noted earlier, has played a particularly important role in that task. The European recommendatory documents for spatial planning clearly show the Union's appeal for more action by the member states, and can indeed be understood as a stage which justifies strictly the European dimension of the territory, anticipating the consolidation of the spatial planning process (Elorrieta Sanz, 2013). Long after the publication of the ESDP, making and applying the ESDP has been considered as part of the wider process of Europeanization (Börzel, 2002; Faludi, 2004; Giannakourou, 2012). In several studies, the ESDP application is presented as an important feature of understanding the Europeanization or that supranational idea for interrelation between the EU and the member states. However, the analyses show that very often the research models disregard other documents at the European level - a problem reflected in the ideas of Bohme and Waterhout (2008) in their "Planning for Europe" - in the attempts for outlining the construction of a common European model of spatial planning. The direct impact of the ESDP in many countries is but limited - as noted in some complex studies such as the ESPON's "Application and Effects of the ESDP in the Member States" (2007b).

The application of key concepts in spatial planning from supranational to domestic level is part of the idea of discursive influence of the European spatial planning, or the impact of the idea of a European spatial model on the national discourses, or as part of the "dimensions" (called structure, instruments / tools, discourses and practices) which characterize the interactions between the EU and the member states in the overall framework of spatial planning activities in Europe (Cotella and Janin Rovolin, 2010; 2012). This discursive influence is an expression and manifestation of the Europeanization processes where concepts and ideas which have emerged at the EU level, through debates among participants from all over Europe, have been proven able to influence the domestic spatial / territorial discourse. Internal change, therefore, occurs as a result of processes based on sharing "planning ideas and image", established at the EU level and then acting as

'catalysts of change' when (re-) interpreted within the different member states (Cotella and Janin Rovolin, 2010: 18). This pattern of influence is taken into account in the analytical study of the transfer of European principles and ideas into new tools for spatial planning in Bulgaria.

CHAPTER 2: THE EUROPEANIZATION PROCESS

This chapter refers to the conception and construction of the theoretical basis for studying the process of Europeanization and the variations of definitions describing this term. The formation of the EU-Europe, in order to be distinguished from the geographical unit of Europe, is the promoter and leader of a broader process which has historical and geographical roots, called Europeanization (Faludi, 2012). Considering the impact of the processes taking place in the European Community and the EU, the history of the concept of Europeanization has shown tendencies to be replaced by *EU-ization*, although the semantic distinction between the processes associated with the EU and those with Europe as a continent, rules out this option for terminology use in the scientific vocabulary.

The literature devoted to the Europeanization today has become a stable component of the EU studies. The theoretical dimension is arguably much less contested than the conceptual one. The dynamics and mechanics of change have been explored and core questions have emerged for debate, Bulmer (2007) notes.

Lackowska-Madurowicz (2011) marks individual ideas and criticism of the Europeanization, its conceptual and content's expression. For example, from an anthropological perspective the process is primarily an expression of the culture, the norms and the values of non-European societies, generated by the European influence. From this perspective, Europeanization may likewise be viewed and compared to *Orientalization* or *Americanization*.

On the other hand, Europeanization can inform on the nature of the EU and its member states as a political system, with its own processes of boundary building, representation, and political structures. Arguably, this is the direction in which Europeanization can penetrate the nature of the EU politics much better than the major theories of European integration (Radaelli, 2004: 16). That is why Europeanization is often studied through the prism of political geography because it adds crucial significance to the re-conceptualization of the European integration and also to Europeanization in times of crisis (Moisio et al., 2013).

The conceptualization of the Europeanization is a basic tool in the creation of a methodological model for the study of this process and the different mechanisms /ways that transform the policies of the different countries. Clarification and understanding of Europeanization is undoubtedly the leading task in the study of changes in the Bulgarian spatial planning and policy, following the fall of the totalitarian regime in 1989.

2.1. The concept of Europeanization

2.1.1. Definitions and differentiations of the term “Europeanization” in literature

Europeanization is not a new term, but perhaps one of the most modern "topics" in literature on spatial planning and in the field of social and political sciences in the last two decades in general (Stead 2013, Faludi 2012; 2014 Luukkonen 2011a; 2012, Lackowska-Madurovicz 2011, etc.). The term has increasingly insinuated itself into the literature on European Union policy making, with numerous conceptual formulations, mechanisms of functioning and descriptions of a variety of processes that occur at different levels of territorial governance in the EU (Giannakourou, 2012), aimed at domestic adaptation to the EU-Europe (Lenshaw, 2006). In fact, the conceptualization and the definition of Europeanization is a complex task, since there is no single theory of the Europeanization process (Olsen, 2002) and, therefore, it is determined in the literature as a "fashionable concept" (Olsen, 2002; Ionela, 2013) or, as the same author puts it, "research on Europeanization is an academic growth industry" (Olsen, 2002: 921).

Europeanization has been developed as a modern term, relative to four main categories, namely: a historical process, a cultural diffusion, an institutional adaptation and adaptation of policy, and a policy process (Stoev, 2011). As a historical process and a cultural diffusion, Europeanization has been described in literature as a transfer of cultural norms and models / patterns, social and cultural beliefs and perceptions; Europeanization explains the internationalization of the different national perceptual and ideological models / patterns, changing the political culture, redefining citizenship, etc.

Europeanization is a term that is used in the description of *something* (a phenomenon, a process, a policy development, etc.) acquiring European appearance or features. In a

historical aspect it has been associated with the colonial and post-colonial policy, whose aim was the establishment of European values, principles, models and standards. Europeanization is the growing trend towards globalization in the development and the relationship between countries in modern Europe (Tsachevski, 2011).

The EU influence is often described with the term Europeanization (Ladi, 2007). Europeanization serves to label or describe the process of transformation, but also the internal dynamics as a consequence of the European integration or the European institutions – a discourse in which there is still no consensus, given the variety of definitions and interpretations (Table 2).

Mourato (2011) summarizes that Europeanization is not a new theory but a combination of programs: it is "something to be explained" and not "something that explains" (Radaelli, 2004). It is a process, a problem, but not a solution. All things considered, Europeanization is a "framework for analysing difference and variation in the processes of mutual adaptation and change (and of resistance to change) affected by new patterns of transnational-national relations: it (...) puts the explanatory burdens on the factors, mechanisms and dynamics of mutual adaptation and change (as well as of resistance to adaptation and change)" (Gualini, 2004: 24).

Table 2: Some leading definitions of the term “Europeanization”

Ladrech (1994:70)	an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EU political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national logic, of national politics and policy making
(Lawton, 1999: 92)	<i>de jure</i> transfer of sovereignty to the EU level
(Börzel, 1999: 574)	a process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy making
(Radaelli, 2003; 30)	processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of

	domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies
Lendschow, 2006	Domestic adaptation to the EU-Europe

Source: Author

Europeanization is reorienting the direction and shape of politics (Ladrech, 1994), a process of transfer of sovereignty (Lawton, 1999), which generates power for making policy in the member states (Börzel, 1999; Saurugger and Radaelli, 2008). Particularly often, the definition of Radaelli (2003) is integrating all dimensions of Europeanization for three reasons: he sees Europeanization as a process of institutional and political changes on both EU and national levels, i.e. as a two-way process. The importance of policy transfer is defined and that leads us to a broader definition of the political change, as Stela Ladi (2007) adds.

The study of Europeanization, as interpreted by Stead and Nadin (2011), is not just an attempt to understand the time in which a nation is Europeanized or not, but rather seeks to explore the complex dynamics - vertical, horizontal, or circular, which intertwine and contribute to the modification of various national and supranational spheres.

Europeanization consists in the processes of formation, diffusion and institutionalization of rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things”, shared beliefs and norms which are initially defined and consolidated in the EU (Radaelli 2000, Bulmer and Radaelli 2004).

A basic interpretation of Europeanization is also the identification of the process with the EU enlargement. In this respect, many researchers support the view that Europeanization in the EU stimulates and has a strong impact on the changes in the political system of Eastern European countries in particular. The accession of these countries into the European family means that they have completed their transformation or their process of political, social, cultural and economic transition, and have adapted, have integrated into the Western European model, or what is known as "Europeanization effect" on Eastern Europe (Tsachevski, 2011).

Europeanization as a spatial phenomenon deals with various political discourses, norms, formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, modes of action and opportunities for competition, for maintaining a certain territorial objective in Europe (Luukkonen, 2012). In this context, the Europeanization of the Balkans, for example, has acquired a particularly special significance due to the fact that in a region where relationships between territory, identity (culture) and strength (power, geopolitical past and present), are of paramount importance in the dynamics of the development. Some studies even clarify the role of Europeanization as "concern for acculturation" (Simeonova, 2015).

Bache (2003) tries to group different types of definitions of Europeanization, their analytical tricks and characteristics. He separates three types of processes. The first type of definitions refers to the synonymous use of Europeanization and the concept of European integration. The focus is put on the authority and the competence of the actors and the institutions at the EU level. The second type relates the impact that those authorities and competences have on the national policies. The third type of definitions of Europeanization is based on the interconnections and the mechanisms of transfer between then member states, with or without the EU intervention. In this case "Europeanization has concerns that are often separated from the EU". On the other hand, in type two, Europeanization incorporates pressures from the EU, as well as the possible varying responses to that pressure. This perspective gives the idea of the two-way nature of the process. For that reason Bache (2003: 7) defines Europeanization as "a redirection of policies and / or practices and / or preferences in the domestic arena towards those advanced by dominant EU level actors / institutions".

2.1.2. Relations between Europeanization and European Integration

The evolution of the terms *Europeanization* and *European Integration* encounters different interpretations with different functions which, in a generalized manner, can be called a centrally organized concept of what is happening in Europe, or whether Europeanization is simply a regional type of globalization or just a way to talk about integration (Pirro and Zeff, 2005). Europeanization is an influential and fashionable term in the social scientific terminology, as well as the common discourse of Europe, in its multiple dimensions

(Anastasakis, 2005). Europeanization may reflect a new step in the theoretical ideas of European integration, although - as stated by Graziano and Vink (2013) - quite many conventional studies were not clearly related sufficiently to this issue. As far as Radaelli (2004) is concerned, the issue of the balance of power is important in distinguishing the theories of European Integration and Europeanization. Börzel's conclusion (2005) is that integration theories are not well suited to understand Europeanization, as their main puzzle is the explanation of the dynamics and the outcomes of European integration, rather than domestic effects (Radaelli, 2004:3).

Lenschow (2006) makes a clear differentiation between Europeanization and integration, given that the first refers not only to the top-down political influence but also to a mutual learning process and any other kind of cooperation. In this sense, integration appears to be the connotation of the member states' loss of identity. He argues that the mutual learning, the vertical and horizontal political co-operation between the nation states, can be seen as an entire process of EU governance, rather than transfer of policies between EU levels (Yanchev, 2012). According to Ladrech, (2001) Europeanization is the actors' response - institutional and otherwise - to the impact of European integration. Of course, in many conceptualizations of integration and Europeanization, the question of their analogical interpretation is also considered, by using European integration as a linear concept of an average rank for theorization of the Europeanization. Some researchers limit Europeanization to the impact of EU integration (institutions and national policies), while others interpret the impact of integration in a wider range, or as Stead (2013) indicates, Europeanization is one of the three means, instruments of convergence, of the territorial policies of the EU. However, Europeanization should not be confused with "convergence" or "harmonization", still less with European Integration. As Graziano and Vink (2013) point out, the process of convergence may be a consequence of the integration, but should not be cited as synonymous to Europeanization. Radaelli (2003) also notes that the difference between those two terms should be sought in the differentiation between the process itself and its consequences.

2.1.3. The Europeanization as a policy transfer

Often, Europeanization is also conceptualized through the focus of policy transfer as a process where knowledge, norms and political ideas, circulate and interact between the different administrative and territorial levels.

Naturally, there are a number of case-studies which examine the political changes in the EU member states, including cases where candidate countries of the EU are also considered. However, only a few attempts where the possibility for bringing the Europeanization and the policy transfer frameworks together, exist (see Bomberg and Peterson, 2000; Radaelli, 2000, 2003; Bulmer and Padgett, 2004; Ladi, 2007).

Bomberg and Peterson (2000) link the transfer of policies and Europeanization, and raise questions about the "Europeanization by stealth". According to these authors, these two fields share common concepts in the EU policy making literature, but the links between them remain unexplored. The same authors concluded that more evidence of Europeanization can be found in cases where policy transfer has occurred. The authors accepted that the EU has a political process embedded in procedures and treaties, and investigated the extent that the established process at the EU level still provides the main impetus behind policy making in Europe (Howell, 2002).

Radaelli (2000) too questions the relationship between Europeanization and policy transfer in the context of the EU. He sees the Community as a "massive transfer platform" that offers increased policy transfer opportunities. More evidence of Europeanization can be found in cases where policy transfer has occurred (Radaelli, 2000; Bomberg and Peterson, 2000). The definition for Europeanization which Radaelli (2003) provides, complements that idea - he focuses on policy transfer and diffusion⁵, defines the political changes, and attaches importance to the national paradigm for successful transfer from European to the national level. For this reason, in this doctoral study, I understand and construct a theoretical-methodological model of the statement that:

² Scientific literature distinguishes the concepts of transfer and diffusion and their mechanisms. Regardless of the importance that defines those in the process of political change, policy diffusion and policy transfer are regarded as complementary in literature (Marsh and Sharman, 2009: 269). See Chapter 3.

“Europeanization consists of processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated into the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies” (Radaelli, 2003:30).

The research of Stella Lady (2007) also complements this idea. According to her, the Europeanization framework is more useful for the analysis of cases where the EU plays a central role in the process of transfer.

Börzel (2001) insists on separating the process of Europeanization from that of policy transfer, since the first is a two-way process of "downloading" and "uploading" preferences from Brussels. However, Europeanization can be considered as a tool that focuses not only on formatting and exporting policies, but also as a national spaces' reaction to policies in (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003).

Bache and Jordan (2006) see Europeanization as a horizontal transfer of concepts and policies between the EU member states. Radaelli (2004) maintains that these transfers are the result of the exchange of ideas, power and policies between the member states, which complements the idea of a horizontal approach in the mechanism of Europeanization (Hang, 2011).

The analysis of this relation, including the results of the two processes in terms of a domestic adaptation, clarifies the concepts and the functions of the policy transfer theories.

2.2. Europeanization of the national spatial planning

2.2.1. The Europeanization of planning in the EU

Numerous studies confirm that, considering the effect that the European Spatial Development Perspective has on national policies, the discourse devoted to spatial planning has become more or less "Europeanized". Although Europeanization has become a "fashionable" topic in literature (Olsen, 2002), still we continue to understand only to some

extent the reasons and conditions for the Europeanization of the different planning systems (Giannakourou, 2012). Europeanization of spatial planning is a process which Dühr, et al. (2010) describe as the increasing influence of the EU policy on the member states, the support given to transnational cooperation in spatial development, and the learning effects that are expected to come with such a cooperation. This process is directly related to the debate on the European model of spatial planning, or the network of the member states and their planning systems, whose cooperation and exchange of knowledge covers a different spatial scale (the EU motto "united in diversity" describes very accurately that process). Faludi (2012) explains that the Europeanization of planning is a result of the ideas and practices crossing borders and from the elites involved attempting to let planning share in the building of Europe. Success has eluded them so far, but there has been much mutual learning, including the creation of a common evidence base for territorial development and cohesion - the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON).

Considering the national spatial planning systems, Giannakourou (2012) states that the process of Europeanization has many variations according to the prism of the analysis and the chosen analytical framework. Simeonova et al. (2015) agree with the statement that the Europeanization of planning is perceived as: a process of governing; an institutional transformation; a policy transfer and a lesson-drawing process; a discourse process generating new mechanisms, practices and "power-legitimacy" connections, where the planning actors are involved under the conditions set by the EU-based policies. Therefore, Europeanization may produce different effects on domestic planning systems and policies, ranging from changes in the planning discourse, structure and instruments, to shifts in the domestic planning styles and patterns of territorial governance (Giannakourou, 2012: 131). Reimer et al. (2015) add that domestic institutions assimilate the objectives driven by the process of Europeanization, where the convergence or divergence of planning depends on the country's specifics, on the relevant political sector and on the timeframe. However, European planning systems cannot be understood as static models of formal regulations for planning activities, but rather as dynamic and adaptive structures. The trends of comparative studies in Europe, according to the above-mentioned authors, identify opportunities for convergence. Nevertheless, the answers to the questions about the mechanisms of adaptation to such spatial objectives remain unsatisfactory in literature.

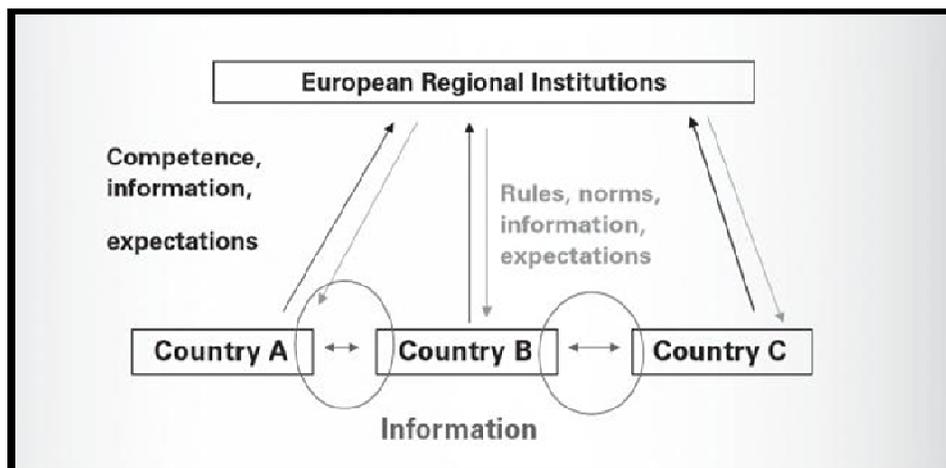
2.2.2. Action mechanisms of the Europeanization of planning

2.2.2.1. Directions of impact: towards an integrated and complex approach

Almost all researchers believe that Europeanization is a two-way process or a top-down (and vice versa) interaction. This vertical relationship is explained by the directions “member state – EU” (bottom-up) and “EU – member state” (top-down). Lenschow (2006) adds a horizontal direction (“member state – member state”) and its variance “member state – EU – member state”, which according to the model of Böhme and Waterhout (2008) can be defined as cyclic.

Graziano and Vink (2013) also emphasize the fact Europeanization is more than a top-down and a bottom-up process, although much of the known studies in literature regard the impact of Europeanization on domestic planning systems only as a vertical process. Europeanization needs to be presented as a process with a horizontal direction. Such horizontal Europeanization results from the fact that in an integrated Europe, actors - civil servants, lobbyists, entrepreneurs, etc. - increasingly have cross-border contacts and exchange information and expertise. In such a conception, Europeanization is not about a Brussels-induced top-down domestic adaptation, but is rather about a change induced by policy learning and diffusion (Graziano and Vink, 2013: 47) (Fig. 6). This direction is particularly important in studying the Europeanization of the national planning systems in Europe, the establishment of international networks for the exchange of information and experience, and the interpretation of spatial planning as a learning process, as Faludi (2005) notes.

Figure 6: Directions in the Europeanization process



Source: Graziano and Vink (2013)

- The top-down (EU→ national state) approach

The beginning of the debate on Europeanization starts with the top-down understanding and interpretation of the process, focusing on the unidirectional impact of the European integration on the member states of the Union (Hang, 2011). The earliest definitions of Europeanization are based precisely on this perspective. As noted already, according to Radaelli (2003, 2004), Europeanization is a process of construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things”, defined and consolidated originally in the political discourse of the EU, and subsequently incorporated into the logic of national and sub-national discourses, political structures and public policies. This makes the idea of transformation of national policies dependent on the European policy making.

The top-down direction generally can be summarized as the impact which the EU sectorial policies and the European integration have on national goals, choices and tools in spatial planning. The top-down perspective in the study of Europeanization is especially typical for the so-called first generation of Europeanization research, which started in the early 1970s. A decade later, the second generation of research emerged, focused primarily on the bidirectional nature of Europeanization and the voluntary adaptation of national policies (of

planning) by policy transfer and training, which are to be clarified in the next chapter (Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of some common characteristics of “Two generations of Europeanization research”

First Generation of Europeanization Research	Second Generation of Europeanization Research
Top-down perspective, seeking to explain domestic reactions to pressures from above	Emphasizes both Top-down and Bottom-up, vertical and horizontal dimensions
Assumed “mismatch” between European and Domestic levels: particularly legal, institutional and procedural	Greater emphasis on interests, values and ideas: the “political” dynamics of fit
Emphasized reactive and involuntary nature of adaptation	Greater emphasis on voluntary adaptation through policy transfer and learning
Focused on policy and polity dimensions	Greater emphasis on politics, e.g. identities, electoral behavior, parties and party systems
Expected increasing cross-national convergence	Emphasis on differential impact of Europe
Defined Europeanization in substantive terms – focus on the “end state” effects.	Emphasizes impact of Europeanization on domestic political, institutional and policy dynamic.

Source: Bache (2003)

The top-down pressure on national policies leads to observations and development of possible typologies relative to the type and extent of the changes in national planning. For example, Lackowska-Madurowicz (2011: 45) synthesized the ideas of Radaelli (2003) and those of Börzel and Risse (2003) about distinguishing the domestic changes. Börzel and Risse (2003: 69-70) found that the domestic change caused by the EU membership is divided into three main categories. They call these categories *Transformation, Accommodation and Absorption* characterized accordingly by *High, Modest / Poor and Weak* degree of change. These categories of change will be analysed in the context of the changes that accompany the Bulgarian system of spatial planning during the 1989-2014

period, in the empirical and the analytical part of the study. The difference between these categories can be explained based on whether the national spatial policies will change fundamentally, will adapt, or new policies will be incorporated in the already existing ones. The study shows that a high degree of change is only possible in *an overall change of government policies and practices and / or replacing them with others*.

The possible responses to the EU adaptation pressure are synthesized and grouped in the following table by Laskowska-Majerowicz (2011: 45):

Table 4: Types and categories of possible domestic changes

Type	Characteristics of the Process of possible reactions according to Radaelli (2003)	Category of change according to Börzel and Risse (2003)	Degree of change
Inertia	Lack of change	Lack of change	-
Absorption	Shallow adaptation change.	Accommodation/Absorption	Modest/Low
Transformation	Deep adaptation change	Transformation	High
Retrenchment	Active contradiction against imposed requirements		-

Source: Author's adaptation based on Lackowska-Madurowicz (2011:45)

The type and categories of the proposed changes are highly dependent on different variables in the national context, combined in factors-mediators / facilitators. These may include: multiple veto points, training, political conflicts, political and organizational culture, facilitating formal institutions, empowering of actors, etc.⁶

⁶ In regional aspect, much of the factors-mediators can be grouped by region. While in Eastern Europe, a number of these factors are associated with institutional and economic transition, territorial ownership and land use, etc., the Balkans (in their variation Eastern and Western Balkans) form another region characterized by some common variables (Allkja, 2012).

Bache and Jordan (2006) emphasize that without the adaptation pressure from the EU, Europeanization cannot reasonably happen and even though the top-down approach in the study of the process is significant in the explanation of domestic changes, this approach has been criticized in literature for ignoring the bilateral interaction between the European and the national level (Hang, 2011). For this reason, in studies dating mostly from the last 10 years, the bottom-up approach has an essential place in the understanding of Europeanization and in the explanation of the complex relationship “*EU - member state*”.

- The bottom-up approach

The bottom-up approach, called "second generation of Europeanization" helps us understand how the "upload" of domestic policies shapes the policies, politics⁷ and institutions of the European Union. Ladrech (1994), in the very beginning of his research on the issue of Europeanization, sees the need for a bottom-up analysis of this phenomenon and the impact that the EU member states may have on the structures of the EU.

Marshall (2005) structured the Europeanization as a download (top-down) change of the local systems of governance resulting from the negotiation and implementation of EU programs, but also as a process of an upload and a transfer of innovative practices at the supranational level.

Another characteristic of the bottom-up Europeanization studies is that they cover not only the vertical dimension - from the EU to the domestic level - but also the horizontal dimension. In Radaelli's words (2004: 5) "the EU may provide the context, the cognitive and normative frame, the terms of reference, or the opportunities for socialisation of domestic actors who then produce exchanges" (of ideas, power, policies, and so on), one with another. Finally, this new generation of studies draws a careful line between the

⁷ Domain of Europeanization according to Bomberg and Peterson (2000):

- **Policies:** e.g. agriculture, monetary, competition, etc.;
- **Politics:** the Europeanization of parties, interest groups and “national political discourse”;
- **Polity:** or national institutions, i.e. the effect of European integration on political and administrative structures and processes arising in particular from how states organize themselves to handle EU affairs.

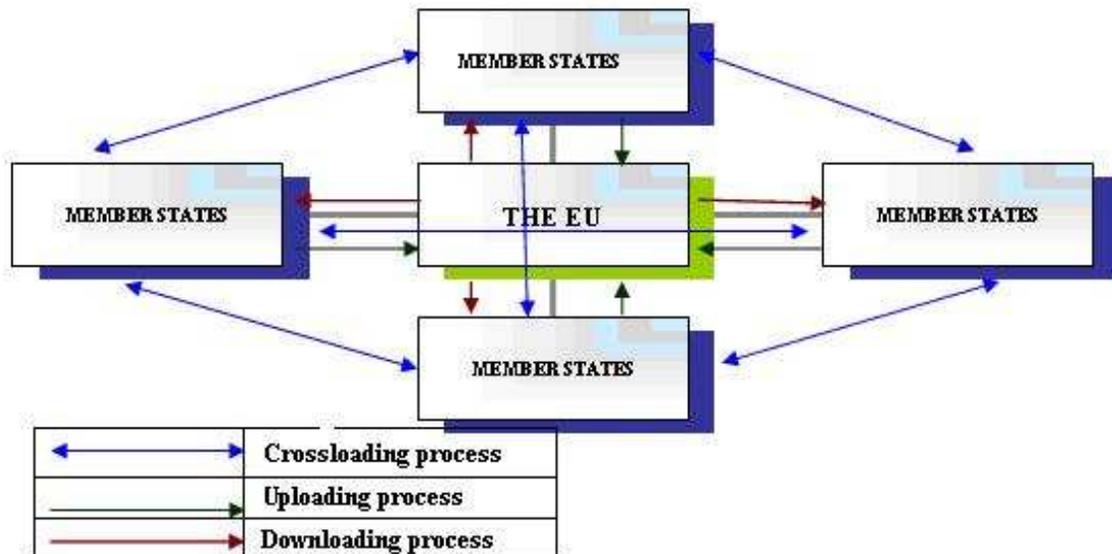
definition of Europeanization and its potential outcomes in terms of convergence or divergence (Mourato, 2011: 49).

Laskowska-Majerowicz (2011) offers two sub-approaches in the study of the bottom-up Europeanization. The first one has to do with the state activity aimed at activating the international position of the countries, which is able to influence the EU. On the other hand, the second approach is related to the concept of framing and tries to understand who, at which stage and how, sets the EU political agenda.

- The multidirectional / complex approach

Europeanization refers to a process, a change and a management, and as explained so far, it has both a vertical (top-down and bottom-up) and a complementary horizontal (state-state) dimension (Fig. 7). The latter, as Yanchev (2012:16) adds, refers to the processes of cooperation and mutual learning, especially through transnational, cross-border and inter-regional territorial cooperation, but also to the process of "spatial positioning" (Williams 1996), which relates to the growing awareness of the domestic actors that they are part of something larger than the member state. The same author also adds the so-called cyclic or roundabout (national state → EU → national state) dimension in the directions of Europeanization. This dimension refers to the process by which national discourses and positions / ideas are "loaded" at the European level, which subsequently, as a cyclic effect, leads back to the domestic systems of planning (Böhme and Waterhout, 2008).

Figure 7: Europeanization – the incorporated approach



Source: Adaptation based on Hang (2011:146)

The combination of perspectives and directions gives a new understanding of the process of Europeanization and the opportunities for influence between the EU and the member states on the one hand, and between member states themselves, on the other (Bache, 2008). Moreover, the horizontal approach sees Europeanization as a horizontal transfer of concepts and policies between the EU member states, where this transfer is a result of sharing ideas, power and policies between national actors in the EU context. The literature argues that Europeanization is a crossloading process through which the member states exchange ideas and practices. This exchange may be independent from the EU, but the EU can be a facilitator in this horizontal process (Hang, 2011).

Böhme and Waterhout (2008) (Fig. 8) summarize that Europeanization of planning is a three-dimensional process which involves:

1. Planning for Europe (the concept of spatial planning at the EU level).

This includes policies for supranational and cross-border territorial development

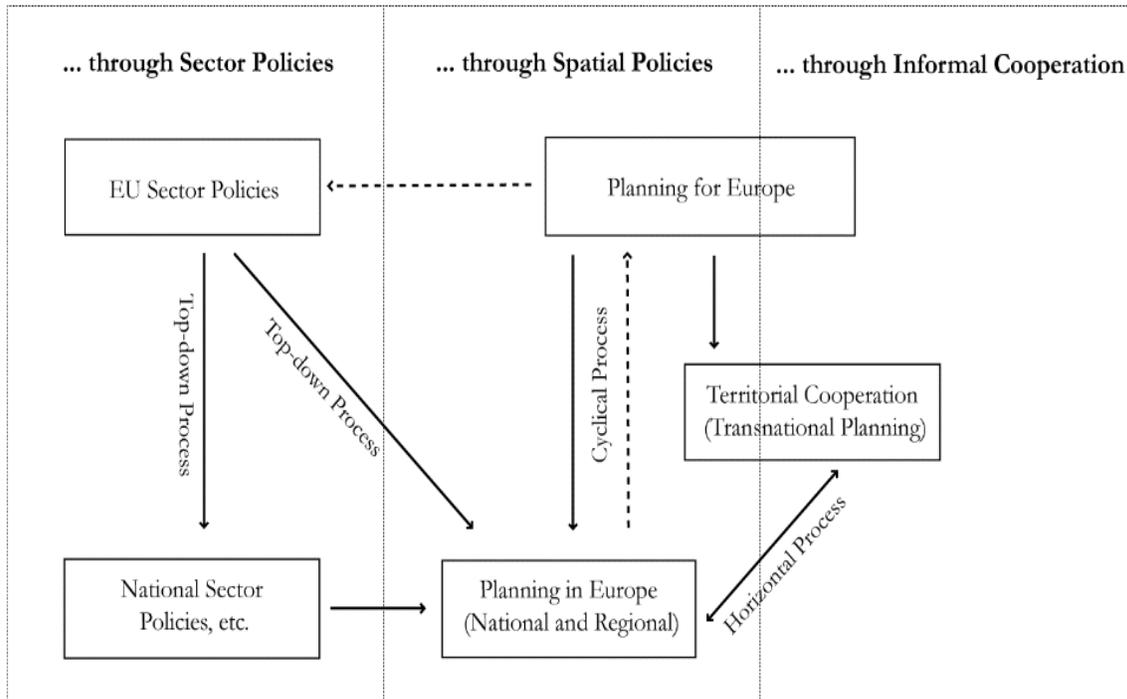
(the ESDP, ESPON, Territorial Cooperation, the Territorial Agenda of the EU, the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion)

2. The influence of planning-for-Europe policies on the planning in Europe (systems, practices and policies for spatial planning at the national level in the member states)

3. The impact of the EU sectorial policies and the European integration on planning in Europe.

Practice shows that the establishment of formal EU practices aimed at facilitating the horizontal transfer and the learning process, can be a good example of this multidirectional and complex approach to Europeanization. For example, one of the management tools of the EU that combines the bottom-up and the top-down prospects is the *Open Method of Coordination* (OMC). This is a mechanism, a device for transfer of models of good practices, especially in areas where the EU is not able to provide a top-down pressure. The OMC has been promoted after the signing of the Lisbon Strategy and is based on cooperation (exchange of experience) and mobilization (Lackowska-Madurowicz, 2011). The OMC is part of a broader set of instruments for "soft" or "cognitive" Europeanization and the ESDP show features of OMC. The same author describes the process as an encouraging adaptive approach, an unlimited horizontal and vertical mutual learning (Dühr et al., 2010).

Figure 8: Europeanization of planning



Source: Böhme and Waterhout (2008)

Zonneveld and Waterhout (2009) add that the Europeanization of spatial planning refers to the influence of the EU on domestic practices, which is not exactly the same as assessing the territorial impact, and provide a useful overview of the types of impacts that can be expected. The impact of the EU policies should not be regarded as a linear top-down process, as they are the result of two processes - top-down and bottom-up, in which the member states reinterpret the Union's policy from their own perspectives (Radaelli, 2003; Lenschow, 2006 and others).

2.2.2.2. Catalysts of the Europeanization of planning

Some authors emphasize the role of strategic-oriented documents such as the European Perspective of Spatial Development or the Territorial Agenda of the EU, as some of the main catalysts for the Europeanization of planning, and their impact on the member states (Mourato, 2011; Mourato and Tewdwr-Jones, 2012). The very idea of shaping the European policy for spatial development at the supranational level is referred to by the same

authors as a complex "catalyst environment", without which national planning systems cannot identify themselves. The three fundamental focuses of the European spatial policy, whose influence can be identified in this "catalyst environment", are: strategically oriented, informal focus; formal acts; monetary incentive system (Reimer et al., 2015).

Figure 8 reflects a matrix of links between the means and the effects of the Europeanization of planning, and shows the different catalysts of change and the effects that the EU policy has on national planning systems, proposed by Böhme and Waterhout (2008). These authors distinguish three different types of policies, with the respective directions of impact, and approximately four different effects (grouped into effects with a short-term and a long-term impact). These are: (1) the EU regulations, (2) the EU spending policies and (3) the EU discourse on spatial planning. The first group comprises all "hard" rules – directives and regulations of the European Commission, which have been accepted by the member states and directly or indirectly regulate the processes of spatial planning in those countries. More interesting, however, is the issue of the so-called spending policies of the Union, which is related to financing and how it is distributed between priorities and projects. The discourse of the EU is related to the idea of the so-called European spatial planning model, described in the previous chapter. As added by some authors (Waterhout, 2007), Europeanization of planning will always be the result of the combination of these three groups of catalysts (Yanchev, 2012).

The first two groups of effects include the change in the use of terminology, the temporary use or application of new terms and concepts, and the implementation of single concrete actions. The long-term effects are dictated primarily by the significance and the application of documents such as the ESDP, the EU regulations and structural funds, the cooperation and mutual training through the INTERREG programs of the EU, etc. The typology shows that the Europeanization of planning affects the territory, the national policies and the management systems (Zonneveld and Waterhout, 2009). Böhme and Waterhout (2008) summarize the four potential channels of Europeanization of planning: 1) the top-down effect of the EU spatially-defined sectorial policies; 2) the EU non-spatially-defined sectorial policies; 3) the EU legislation with a direct impact on national legislation; 4)

specific initiatives, programs and tools for the planning of the EU territory, called "Planning for Europe" (Giannakourou, 2012).

Figure 9: Typology of the Europeanization of planning

Effects(?) Means (?)	Long-Term Influence		Short-Term Influence	
	<i>Change of self perception and position in Europe</i>	<i>Change of laws, "daily" practice, procedures, cooperation patterns (organizational learning)</i>	<i>Change in the use of terminology, temporary application of new terms and concepts</i>	<i>Implementation of single concrete action that would not happen or would happen differently without EU influence</i>
<i>Implementation of directives and regulations</i>	Possibly environmental directives in the long run	EU regulations in various sector fields, Structural Funds regulations	Formal terminology put down in regulations	Application of EU directives in general
<i>Use of EU funding as incentive</i>	ESDP application in INTERREG	Structural Funds, organizational learning through INTERREG, LEADER	INTERREG, Structural Funds	Where EU provides cofunding, infrastructure projects, INTERREG
<i>Following of a (hegemonic) discourse at the European level</i>	ESDP application, ESPON use	ESDP application at national level in rare cases	ESDP application, ESPON	

Source: Böhme and Waterhout (2008)

The catalysts of Europeanization of planning can be synthesized into three groups according to Böhme and Waterhout (2008). Some authors regard the European Perspective for Spatial Development as a leading part of the widening process of Europeanization (Börzel, 2002). To date, the only attempt to develop a transnational comparative analysis of the impact of the application of the Perspective was developed by the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON)⁸. Seven years after the final version of the ESDP, the ESPON project 2.3.1 *Application and effects of the ESDP in the member states*, undertook to assess the implementation and the impact which the ESDP has on national planning. The assessment focuses on identifying concrete evidence of the impact of the ESDP at the national, regional and local level, in all EU member states, as well as neighbouring countries which also participate in the ESPON program.

⁸ Currently it is "The European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion."

2.2.2.3. Hard / Soft types of mechanisms of the Europeanization of planning

The literature on Europeanization proposes a number of mechanisms that range from “hard” to “soft”, depending on the level of coercion that can be observed (Ladi, 2005). “Hard” and “soft” approaches towards studying the Europeanization are related to “hard” and “soft” EU policies, related in turn to the degree of adaptation pressure, which is an important factor by itself in determining the results of Europeanization. Hard policies require the member states to apply the relevant EU legislation, whereas soft policies are those that create structural opportunities for changes at the national level. Whether domestic actors will accept those opportunities or not, depends on the national institutional and political context (Gemenis and Lefkofridi, 2013).

Giannakourou (2012) distinguishes two basic mechanisms of Europeanization of national planning, in search of a methodological framework for analysis of the problem (Table 5).

Table 5: Hard / Soft types of Europeanization according to Giannakourou (2012)

<u>Soft Coordination and Learning</u>	<u>Hard Regulation and Compliance</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Related to the idea of the European spatial pattern and suggests (works as a platform for political coordination and accumulation of knowledge and good practices) networking, policy transfer and learning among member states - Doesn't suggest a top-down pressure - Voluntary change - Can be linked to the idea of the <i>Open Method of Coordination</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refers to institutional changes and transformation of the domestic regulatory frameworks in compliance with the EU - Relies on channels of impact which differ from those of the soft Europeanization, such as sectorial policies (e.g. environmental policy), in a direct way - by changes in the national planning legislation and procedures; or through an indirect influence - by changing the spatial organization and development models, (e.g. the cohesion policy); or by altering the procedural and substantive rules in specific policy fields producing this spill over (e.g. the EU competition policy) - Mainly coercive change

Source: Author's adaptation

On the basis of various theoretical approaches, Giannakourou (2012) considers this process as a series of several major mechanisms. On one side, the Europeanization of spatial planning through soft coordination and learning, while on the other side we have Europeanization through hard regulation and compliance. Giannakourou defines also the so-called group of other types of Europeanization, in which he adds the growing role of the judicial policy making. However, whether these mechanisms may be activated in the real world of domestic planning depends on the national settings and the mediating actors in each domestic context (ibid: 131).

2.3. Eastern European context

The process of Europeanization of spatial planning becomes more and more consistent in Eastern Europe, despite the certain degree of criticism, which it is being interpreted with. With the EU enlargement to the East and Southeast, specific Eastern patterns of adaptation emerged (Maier, 2012; Yanchev, 2012). It is believed that the degree of change in the new member states may be even more profound than in Western European countries (Dühr et al., 2007). Therefore, as Zolkina (2013) points out, the impact of Europeanization on the domestic transformations of the CEE countries has become one of the most significant current aspects of research concerning Europeanization in general. In this context, the same author offers a typology of the process of Europeanization, distinguishing:

- Membership Europeanization;
- Enlargement Europeanization;
- Neighbourhood Europeanization

Zolkina's interest is focused on the clarification of the last two types, the first of which implies a clear perspective for EU membership, while the second type relates to the neighbouring countries of the EU which have not been given the prospect of membership as an inalienable part of their relations with the European Union (Zolkina, 2013: 7). An

example of such type of Europeanization (of planning) can be considered Serbia (Simeonova et al. 2015).

2.3.1. The Eastern European planning systems in the new European context

East-Central and Eastern European planning inherited from the communist period its strong legal position with a top-down hierarchy of planning and building offices, equipped by respective state directives to control the quality of development, and binding plans (Maier, 2012). Coming out of communism, the countries in that part of Europe passed through (in varying degrees) a set of similar spatial dynamics. Privatization and property disputes, de-industrialization, environmental problems, informality in housing construction and in business, emigration and marginalization of vulnerable groups (e.g. the Roma ethnic group) and deepening of spatial disparities, have put the beginning of a common (planning) trend that goes in line with widespread corruption and weak law enforcement (Munteanu and Servillo, 2014). This new order of planning and in particular - of urban planning - as Stanilov and Hirt (2009: 3) elucidate, is perhaps best referred to as "laissez-faire planning," tended to support the short-term interests of private capital. Yet, critics claim, in some cases the new approach amounted to no planning at all.

Raagma and Stead (2014) note that spatial planning in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) differs from that of Western Europe due to the rapidly changing economic, organizational and political landscapes, lower levels of trust in the role of government, the position of planning in society (Maier, 1998) and the fact that spatial planning has had a longer history in Western Europe (Adams, 2008). Regardless of that, quite often the planning ideas of the Western schools and countries have been offered to the CEE as better social and cultural models, based on the assumption that these models of planning are more appropriate, as new democracies in the region move to a market economy (Raagma and Stead, 2014), which regards "the market as a driver for development" (Maier, 2012: 149). Spatial planning in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the transitional period was assigned to a separate group, different from the Western European models. This is the case in the works of Newman and Thornley (1996), according to whom new planning systems in the region did not yet exist. As noted by Maier (2012), earlier typologies of the European social

models and planning systems ignore Central and Eastern Europe and / or characterize the countries in that region simply as countries in transformation.

Some countries, such as the example of some Baltic states, attempted - in their efforts to secure funds and forms of financing by the EU - an adaptation of various elements of Western models of planning, in which, as confirmed by some authors, there are clear examples of policy transfer in the field of planning (Stead et al., 2008).

Despite some similarities between the new EU member states (from the CEE region), generalizations concerning their development is avoided in literature. Some authors even emphasize the extremely diverse / heterogeneous situation given the significant differences in the degree of fiscal and administrative decentralization (Altrock et al., 2006). On the one hand, this is due to different geographical features, while on the other - because of the specifics of their past, which defines different models of transition. Despite the general trend of research on transformation in Eastern Europe, this macro-region can be divided into three other regions, based on geographical factors. These are: 1) the Baltic region; 2) several countries in the CEE region, situated along the borders of some older member states from Central Europe, part of the 2005 enlargement; 3) the region of Southeast Europe, where Bulgaria and Romania are situated, part of the 2007 enlargement and representing a special focus of transformational change.

2.3.2. Limited Europeanization of spatial planning

The process of Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe during the post-communist period is one of the most topical issues in the field of Europeanization studies (Zolkina, 2013). In the early 1990s, new independent states in the CEE region developed under relatively similar democratization and European integration starting conditions, predetermined mainly by common post-communist problems in the political, the economic and the social realms. As of today, many specific methodological and empirical studies of the Eastern European post-socialist planning, in the context of the European spatial model, have already enriched the scientific literature. However, the majority of those studies are not thorough, as they only concentrate on specific aspects of the process, consider a limited time frame, or are simply case studies of the dynamics in a given country. Nevertheless, in

the last few years some studies of the spatial planning systems require special attention, such as the studies concerning the Baltic region (see Raagmaa and Stead, 2014; 2015), Estonia (see Raagmaa, Kalvet and Kasesalu, 2013), Slovenia (see Peterlin and Mackenzie, 2007), Albania (see Allkja, 2012), Romania (see Ionela, 2013; Munteanu and Servillo, 2014), Bulgaria (see Yanchev, 2012, Dimitrova, 2015), as well as some general studies of the Europeanization of spatial planning in the region (see Maier, 2012), etc. Special attention to Eastern Europe is paid in the ESPON project 2.3.1 (2007b: 8), whose main task is to monitor the effects of the application of the ESDP across the member states. The document explains that the new Eastern European context illustrates how a number of countries have been faced with the discussion about the ESDP and its contents, which has been taken into account in the creation of new planning systems and institutions. At the same time, the ESDP should be seen, however, as providing more of a “helping hand” within the context of the process of EU accession, rather than a clear guidance document. And despite the transfer of the ESDP to the Eastern European context, certain criticism of the ESDP from the Eastern European point of view exists because **"it did not fully reflect the spatial development problems of Central and Eastern European countries**, the numerous implications of the accession process for these countries and the issues relating to the enlargement of the EU territory".

Maier (2012) concludes that the structural funds have a much larger role, while formal requirements associated with them, have led to the establishment of many new tools for spatial planning, created only for the purpose of EU funding. Raagmaa and Stead (2014) summarize that the absorption of EU grants, following the accession period, in many Eastern European countries is associated with the so-called double standards in national policies, which trend has been expanding. If in the pre-accession period the administrations and the political elites of the region dealt with European programs / agendas with care and were willing to learn from their Western counterparts, today a combination of that behaviour is observed – a combination between the new EU rules and the local programs / agendas, which generally reflect the interests of the business elites. This new situation puts the brakes on different plans for institutional reforms and limits the Europeanization of planning, generally said. As a result of that, some old bureaucratic structures haven't

changed significantly after the EU accession. Such examples can be seen in some Baltic States, Romania, Bulgaria, etc.

2.3.3. The Europeanization of planning in Eastern Europe: Southeast-European context

According to Castelan (2002) the revolutions which were projected across the Balkan territory after the collapse of the Soviet Union, marked the beginning of a period, which due to lack of homogeneous characteristics and clear prospects, is described by the vague concept of "post-communism". The democracy which all seek, whirled the political, social and economic transformations in the countries of the Balkans⁹ into a vicious circle. The spatial and geographic structure of Southeast Europe encompasses the national territories of many countries which - based on specific criteria - form also the territory of the Balkans. The collision of diverging historical and geopolitical impacts on this relatively small in size region, has deprived it to a large extent of the possibility to catch-up with the rest of the territories of the European continent in terms of political, social and economic development. The significant states' and nations' fragmentation, along with some other political and geographical characteristics of the region, directly result in the general political weakness of the Balkan Peninsula (Karastoyanov, 2002), and thus - in the evolution and the transformation of the spatial planning systems as well.

The modern ideas of the EU enlargement show trends towards Southeast Europe - part of the territorial ambitions of the Union. In 2013 the Republic of Croatia, whose planning system - like other countries of the region - was marked by the planning ideas of former Yugoslavia, accessed the Union. In Croatia, however, as in the whole of Eastern Europe, there are ongoing processes of searching solutions to concrete problems and misconceptions about the economic and cultural features of the countries, as well as the still undefined borders, separating physically, administratively and psychologically the nations in that region. This is yet another feature that destabilizes the processes of integration and Europeanization. In this context, an important factor is the culture of the region, regarded in

⁹ Today the geographical term "Balkans" is being increasingly replaced by the regionally determined term "Southeast Europe", whose use is becoming more widespread with the expansion of European integration and the opportunities for multilateral cooperation it offers (Tsachevski, 2011).

a more general sense. Culture has horizontal (geographical) and vertical (historical) dimensions. It has the ability to spread unlimitedly in space and time, irrespective of political and administrative constraints, and the Balkans are a good example of this (Stojkov, 2002).

Establishing common denominators and codes in the countries of Southeast Europe, which should indicate the path of economic integration and cooperation, is mentioned in the European Spatial Development Perspective, which reflects this fact. Documents such as the Spatial Planning Priorities for Southeast Europe, for example, also stress the importance of culture as one of the main priorities and factors for spatial development and territorial integration of the Balkan countries, which perhaps would accelerate the process of Europeanization of the national policies (Table 6).

The political and the military events following the fall of the "Iron Curtain" and the crack of the socialist system (in its variations), together with the subsequent wars for national differentiation, have led to the provisional division of the region into Eastern and Western Balkans. This allows us to see the "transition" through both – the prism of socioeconomic failure and the crisis of the 1990s, and through the eyes of the new political borders in the context of European integration and the common desire for "Europeanization" of the countries across the peninsula.

Table 6: An overview of some of the basic factors and preconditions, and their spatial dimensions characterizing the limitations and the problems of Eurointegration and Europeanization of the countries in Southeast Europe

Groups of factors	Spatial dimension
Political-geographical	Border space Strategic transport Certain geopolitical conflicts of influence Discussion about the political boundaries of the region
Socio-cultural	Historical-cultural region Ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity Identity and image problems Weak organizational capacity of social actors and weak civil society

	Ethno-religious fragmentation Nationalism Deepening social crisis
Political-economic	Slow development and integration problems Socio-political fragmentation (Balkanization) Incomplete or “superficial” democratization and re-institutionalization Inexperience of political division and pluralism Nationalist and regionalist movements Socialist past Market economy (transition) Privatization-caused problems Monocentric development models EU enlargement

Source: Author, based on Jelavich (1993); Karastoyanov (2002); Demetropoulou (2002).

Today the countries of Southeast Europe form a part of the so-called Planners Network for Central and Southeast Europe (PlaNet CenSE, 15 countries included), which serves as a gateway for the mutual transfer of information and know-how between non-EU states and EU member states, and facilitates the integration of spatial development institutions and actors into the European Spatial Development Networks (Tatzberger and Schindegger, 2008).

CHAPTER 3: POLICY TRANSFER THEORIES AND POLICY TRANSFER IN THE EU

3.1 What is policy transfer?

Policy transfer (PT) emerged as an important concept within the public policy analysis, guiding both theoretical and empirical research, spanning many venues and issues areas. PT represents a niche topic for some researchers, although successfully advocated into wider debates on topics such as Globalization, Europeanization / Policy innovation. PT is a relatively uncomplex or even a simple concept, with growing interest in it among both academic and management circles since the beginning of the 1990s. This is due to both communities, which are becoming aware of the potential influence which foreign ideas and models have had and still have on the changing world of modern governance. As the awareness of policy transfer spreads and concerns issues related to the globalization of decision-making, the interest has been growing in how policy transfer relates to the activities and decisions of international governing bodies such as the European Union (EU).

PT has become a fact of everyday life in various countries, given the impossibility of isolation (Stead, 2008), while the increase of the number of studies in this area over the last decade is an indication of the growing importance of PT in the circulation of policies and also a sign of the growing interest in policy transfer among scholars outside the political science (McCann and Ward, 2013).

3.1.1. Policy transfer in the process of geographical research

Understanding the policy transfer in planning and geography in general is a complex phenomenon, undoubtedly linked to both the process of policy mobility (or transfer as a mobility) and that of policy making. Policy making, as Ward notes (2006:70), is a deeply geographical process, in and through which different places are constructed, while the ideas for policy *mobility* can be defined as by no means less "hot" a research line, studied in recent decades, mainly by Anglo-American, German or Scandinavian human geography (urban geography and urban planning), political science, anthropology, etc. Undoubtedly,

while attempting to understand the terms of *mobility and transfer* in the field of policy making, it should be noted that they do not share a parallel / synonymous use, although their analytical interpretation is a kind of circulation¹⁰.

Since the 1990s there has been a growing interest in the research on PT and in the theoretical and conceptual ideas for circulation of policies in general, by scientists outside political science - including geographers - who have also played an important role in these debates (McCann and Ward, 2012). The focus of geographers on *place, space* and *scale*, along with the sociological and anthropological focus on policy making - both within and beyond institutions of governance - offers a great deal to the analysis of how policy making operates, how policies, policy models and policy knowledge circulate and how these mobilities shape places. The imposing interdisciplinary nature of the topic turns the debate on PT into a research framework within the reach not only of political science, but of a number of other scientific fields such as history, sociology, planning, etc. (McCann and Ward, 2013). Nevertheless, the links between PT, practices (good and bad), knowledge and topics such as spatial planning - which in the context of the EU are becoming more interesting and are often part of multidimensional processes such as Europeanization - are still insufficiently explored by scientists in the field of geography. The latter process (Europeanization) is an expression of the importance of the EU as an important agent of change in the contemporary governance and policy making in Europe, where EU decisions pervade the policy making activities of individual European countries and the lives of European citizens (Wallace et al. 2015).

3.1.2. Understanding policy transfer

Banson and Jordan (2011) examined PT as an analogous concept of lesson-drawing (LD) or a common currency within policy studies and public policy analysis. Policy transfer is

¹⁰ Policy mobility combines three types of literature - the long-time research on policy transfer in political science; ideas and approaches to testing mobility in sociology and those in the geographical interpretation of scale (Temonos and McCann, 2013: 345). This comes to show that the study of policy mobility is much more complex and more extensive and legitimate in scientific literature. In this regard, for the purposes of the current PhD, policy transfer is regarded as one of the numerous important actors relevant to the definition of policy mobility.

commonly employed in the analysis of broader phenomena such as Europeanization, Globalization and Policy innovation. For example, in the literature on Europeanization, PT is used as a way of explaining the policy convergence, although the archetypal theory of PT described in 1996 by Dolowitz and Marsh, was drafted as an accumulation of policy diffusion, policy convergence, policy-learning and lesson-drawing processes. All those are united as dimensions of the PT concept (Evans, 2013).

Academically, the process by which knowledge of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of similar features in another, or in other words - the process by which the policies and / or practices in one political system are fed into, and utilized in the policy making arena of another political system, is known as policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; Dolowitz, 2000; 2003).

"The process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system" (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000: 5).

The development of the PT ideas by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996; 2000) and others, are the result of research on questions that PT has to answer - what is transferred, where from and where to, the degrees of and the constraints on the transfer, its success once transferred, etc.

Over the past two decades PT has been imposed as a widely used concept of classifying and explaining the numerous processes occurring within and between different political contexts. It also operates as a form of evidence-based policy making¹¹ (Legrand, 2012); PT covers voluntary and coercive forms of practice, although the latter may appear as "one

¹¹ Evidence-based policy has been defined as an approach which "helps people make well informed decisions about policies, programs and projects by putting the best available evidence at the heart of policy development and implementation". The pursuit of evidence-based policy is based on the premise that policy decisions should be better informed by available evidence and should include rational analysis. This is because policy which is based on systematic evidence is seen to produce better outcomes.

government or supranational institution is pushing, or even forcing another" to adopt a set of policy innovations (Banson and Jordan, 2011).

Policy transfer represents a mechanism of globalization, leading to convergence / divergence of institutions, policies and paradigms, which provide further opportunities for policy transfer to occur. Policy transfer is a catalyst for the processes of globalization leading to policy convergence and / or divergence. The latter two occur (or are supposed to occur) between countries with close cultural proximity (policy convergence) or in cases of cultural diversity (policy divergence) (Ladi, 1999). As for the territorial reforms, the policy convergence discusses the results of transfer processes (incl. policy diffusion), but not always the latter may or must provoke policy convergence.

Diane Stone (1999: 51) also determines PT as a dynamic whereby knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements or institutions, used across time or space in the development of policies, administrative arrangements or institutions elsewhere. Lesson-drawing, emulation and harmonization are all terms that convey a sense of transfer being a voluntaristic activity. Policy convergence and policy diffusion give an impression that transfer arises as a consequence of structural forces. Policy learning or social learning is another matter relating to the PT, but this concept is analytically different. According to Stone (1999) the subject of transfer may include:

- Policies
- Institutions
- Ideologies or justifications
- Actions and ideas
- Negative lessons

This makes the studying of PT useful from a different perspective:

1. **At the practical level** - in the EU-territorial context and the significance of the EU in general - it is increasing the importance of studying the EU affairs, where the logic of the single market emphasises the harmonization and standardization. PT occurs at the sub-national level. For example, the transfer of practices developed

within a local institution to another local one; opportunities to strengthen the rationality of the policy making, etc.

2. At the scholarly level – it contributes to comparative studies - of public policies for example and to studying policies as a whole. The PT concept problematizes the division between domestic and international.

The PT approach was pioneered by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000). A central spot in their concept is taken up by the question of *What is transferred*. The idea which is brought to the fore is that policy goals content, policy instruments, policy programs, institutions, ideologies, ideas and attitudes, and negative lessons can all be transferred (Dolowitz and March, 2000:12). The framework the two authors developed drew explicitly upon Rose and Hall's notions of lesson-drawing and policy. According to the author, policy-learning is self-evidencing, significant and relates to the transmission of policy knowledge between policy actors. PT is about knowledge, evidences and learning. It is apparent that policy officials seek lessons from policies with both negative and positive outcomes, and such lessons are grounded in evidence.

Although theoretically connected, a differentiation between PT and LD is required, given that both terms refer to transpositioning / transportation of policies and / or practices already in operation in one jurisdiction to another. Page (2000) groups in a synthesized manner the various accents that policy transfer literature and lesson-drawing literature have, and how their differentiation is related to a change in the analytical discourse.

The emphasis of the policy transfer literature according to Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) has tended to be on understanding the process by which policies and practices move from exporter to importer jurisdictions, above all the agents of policy transfer or, in the case of the diffusion of innovation literature, the patterns by which practices spread. The prime object of the analysis is to throw light on decision-making processes. This is not to say that the purpose is purely intellectual, an understanding of the process may also have direct practical implications — that some ways of transferring policies and practices are better or worse than others.

The emphasis of the lesson-drawing literature (see Rose 1993) is on understanding the conditions under which policies or practices operate in exporter jurisdictions and whether and how the conditions which might make them work in a similar way can be created in importer jurisdictions. Here one of the prime objects is to engage in policy transfer — to use cross-national experience as a source of policy advice. However, the practical purposes are also supplemented by the academic-theoretical objective of understanding the distinctive political, administrative, social, economic or cultural conditions that sustain cross-national policy differences. In the lesson-drawing literature, the focus of the analysis is on how policies operate in the exporter jurisdiction, how they may be applied in the importer jurisdiction and what modifications are needed to transpose between them. The studying of LD is related to the comparison of the conditions of the exporting and the importing jurisdiction and the ways those differences can be bypassed and compensated¹².

3.1.3. Types of policy transfer and variables characterizing the policy transfer

The studying of policies of the exporting jurisdictions and their application in the importing jurisdictions includes the identification of a number of variables related to basic questions such as **who, what, where, when and why such a transfer is done, while a starting point is the single individual or collective transfer agents** (Page, 2000).

The paper of Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) can be regarded as a landmark both in the development of the concept, cited above, and of those variables which characterize the process, which can be synthesized into six basic groups of questions: *Why do actors engage in policy transfer? Who are the key actors involved in the policy transfer process? What is transferred? Where are lessons drawn from? What are the different degrees of transfer? What restricts or facilitates the policy transfer process?* Subsequently the question of how the process of PT connects to the policy "success" or policy "failure" is also added (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). The latter can be analytically related to and

¹² Rose (1993) suggests 4 stages of the LD process: "searching", "making a model", "creating a lesson" and "prospective evaluation".

debated together with ideas about "transfer of good / best practices" developed by Stead (2008; 2012), which will be discussed further on in this chapter.

A. WHO transfers the policy? (Actors involved in the policy transfer)

Six types of actors associated with the activities of transfer have been identified: Elected officials; Political parties; Bureaucratic / civil servants; Pressure groups; Policy entrepreneurs / experts; Supranational institutions. The first 4 types have become the center of discussion, so the two authors focus on the role of policy entrepreneurs / experts and that of international bodies such as the EU. These two categories of experts, as well as the EU, have been of growing importance and so has been the attention paid to them. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) also study two other groups of actors which they call *policy consultants* and *non-governmental institutions*. Other researchers identify non-governmental experts associated with the promoting of norms transfer across national borders, as a transnational advocacy network, think-tanks, epistemic communities (Banson and Jordan, 2011).

Page (2000) classifies the actors involved in PT into: 1) Individual agents - ones acting on their own initiative or institutional (on instructions) and 2) Organizations (group agents) – such as the World Bank, the UN, NATO, the EU – which take models for best practices and use them as models for adoption. Policy networks can also be regarded as collective or group agents - usually informal grouping of individuals belonging to different organizations that share a common interest in specific issues, problems and policies (which can take the form of transnational expert community or of an epistemic community with similar professional beliefs and standards for assessment, which share common policy concerns). The relationship between individual entrepreneurs and collective organizations is often not made very clear because of the difficulties of understanding precisely how an idea came on to the agenda of an organization (Page, 2000).

B. WHAT is transferred?

In the study of PT this question is perhaps more problematic and complex than in the study and analysis of LD where, according to Page (2000), we go back to one of the main research issues of PT - establishing causality. In response to what is transferred, Dolowitz

and Marsh (1996: 349-50) include a number of things that could theoretically "transferred", namely: policy goals, structure and contents, policy instruments or administrative techniques; institutions; ideologies; ideas, attitudes and concepts; negative lessons. Banson and Jordan (2011: 370) observe that initially the studies of what is transferred were focused on "*hard*" transfer instruments, institutions and programs between governments, but on the other hand the importance of "*softer*" transfer of ideas, concepts or ideologies is also referred to: policy elements that move freely among non-state subjects in conditions of increasing globalization. The *hard* and *soft* forms of transfer coexist and may very well complement one another. Bulmer et al. (2007) include also different subtypes as semi-coercive, conditionality and obligated transfer.

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000: 12) emphasize the distinction between policies (divided into policy purposes, policy content and policy tools) and programs. In their original, initial typology - as in most concepts of PT - programs and policies are both included or incorporated into a single category. This according to Dolowitz and Marsh is not right since policies are seen as *a broader declaration of intentions and which generally denote the direction policy makers wish to take*. Programs on the other hand, are the specific means of the course of action used to implement policies. Each policy can have several programs, whereas the program is a complete course of action in and of itself.

C. WHEN?

The concept of PT gives but little information about the time period or at what point in time the actors get involved in this process. PT may take an extended period of time and depends on other variables such as actors (who is involved in the transfer?), similarity between the policies of the exporting and the importing jurisdiction, etc. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) do not clarify when PT is done and when the actors get involved in it, although in the context of the study, this variable can be analysed by deduction, minding the other variables and the extent of the transfer. According to Page (2000), PT is not necessarily based on a single instrument, and may be carried out over an extended period of time.

D. WHY? (Motivations)

The reason why policy officials choose to adapt or adopt policy from elsewhere are potentially as varied as any form of social or policy decision-making. In the original PT framework, Dolowitz and Marsh make a distinction between voluntary and coercive PT. A distinction predicated on power. Voluntary mechanisms of transfer are subject to agents' perception and knowledge of their environment. Coercion clearly describes a two-way relationship where agency / institution / country A has the ability and resource to force country / institution / agency B to adopt a certain policy in one form or another (Legrand, 2012).

Page (2000) examines the “Why” variable in 4 categories, one of which can be separated as another variable of the transfer, and explains that the question "why a country borrows from another?" is probably the most asked question and the most complete - in terms of information - variable. In their matrix, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) explain the “Why” with the understanding of the continuum between forced (have to be transferred) and voluntary transfer (want to be transferred). For example, some developing countries are often forced to adopt practices in order to obtain a loan or grant.

Another dimension to the question “Why” is associated with the circumstances / conditions where a given country has to borrow policies from another country. There is a great variety of reasons as to why the importing country looks for programs or inspirations / ideas in another jurisdiction – those reasons could be: the characteristics of the importing jurisdiction (for example – it has to quickly develop certain policies); the characteristics of the policies to be transferred; the characteristics of the exporting jurisdiction, etc.

A third dimension of the issue is related to the objectives pursued in the transfer - the benefits of policies or programs, or their ability to have an effect on / or support another policy.

A fourth dimension of this variable, as Page (2000) points out, is related to the choice of the country which to borrow from. According to the same author, this can be given as another variable: "Where from". The ideological proximity between governments is the most common explanation in this case.

E. WHERE from?

As for the question “Where from”, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) group sources of policy export depending on the levels of governance, although in the original study Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) talk about endogenous and exogenous sources of learning. They argue that policy makers can look to three levels of governance: the international, the national and the local. Politicians in one country can learn from other political systems or units. Sub-national government units can teach each other. The national government can borrow and learn (draw lessons) from lower levels of governance and vice versa. Lessons can be learned at the international level as well.

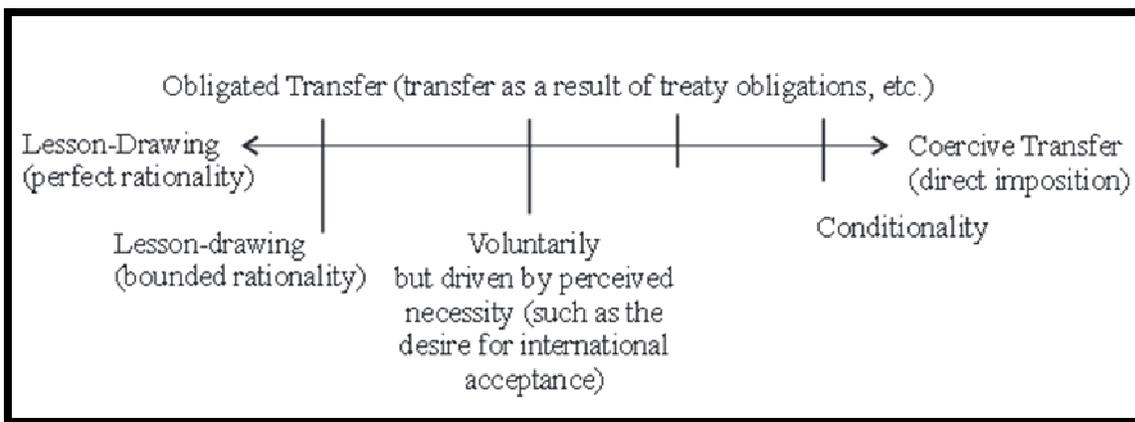
The literature devoted to PT is still exploring the different dimensions of the question “Where from” and the implementation of transfer between individual national governments. In this regard, studies on processes such as Europeanization, globalization, multi-level governance and policy network perspective, have suggested that lessons are also drawn from and transfer readily between many different venues, spanning multiple spatial and temporal scales. Internationally, national governments actively demonstrate "upload" and "download" of policies, ideas, norms and so on, through NGOs, think-tanks, intergovernmental organizations, etc. A typical example is the participation of member states in downloading and uploading policies from and at the EU level (Banson and Jordan, 2011: 371).

F. HOW?

Not only is it important to examine what motivates the policy transfer process, it is just as important to consider how and in what way a search for lessons can be conducted (Dolowitz, 2004: 6). Very often the answer to the question of “How” PT occurs is related to the question of “Why”. If a country was forced to adopt a set of practices, then to a large extent the answers to how and why are likely to be the same (Page, 2000: 6). The definition of how the transfer is implemented depends on whether it is voluntary or a forced adoption of a set of practices.

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) regard the connection between the two "types of adoption" as a continuum that runs from lesson-drawing to the direct imposition of a program, policy or institutional arrangement on one political system by another (Fig. 10). Each of the identified categories in this continuum may itself serve as a conceptual framework for empirical research - something that will be taken into account when drafting the methodological model for the study of Europeanization in Bulgaria.

Figure 10: From Lesson-Drawing to Coercive Transfer



Source: Dolowitz and Marsh (2000:13)

According to Stead (2008), PT can be both Voluntary-endogenously driven - and Coerced - exogenously driven. Holm-Hansen (2005) suggests that the most real examples of PT lie in a continuum somewhere between these two extremes. The continuum undoubtedly reflects opportunities for transfer involving both voluntary and compulsory elements that help its more profound study.

In the direction of the "coercive" end of the line, patterns where national governments are forced to adopt programs and policies can be observed, even more so when it comes to a membership in an international organization (such as the EU). The scientific literature does not provide a clear analysis of realization mechanisms of the different types of transfers, especially when it comes to transfers which Dolowitz and Marsh (2000: 13) indicate in the continuum between voluntary and forced transfer. Regardless of how policy transfer takes place, the two authors associate it with the

limitations, the delivery methods and the opportunities for "positive" or "negative" result of it (see Fig. 11: Policy Transfer Framework / Variables).

Although many studies of PT are focused on success, not all PTs have been successfully completed. While theoretically and practically it is difficult to ascertain what is *success* and *failure*, an important place in the study of the mechanisms of transfer takes the result of the transfer and the factors determining it. Even if we assume that the "success" of a policy in one country is obvious, it does not always mean that the transfer and development in another country would be successful and justified. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) summarize the possible "failures" as a result of three main factors: incomplete information about the policies that are transferred (uninformed transfer); crucial elements of what made the policy or institutional structure a success in the originating country may not be transferred, leading to failure (incomplete transfer); differences between social, economic, ideological contexts, leading to failure of the transfer (inappropriate transfer).

G. DEGREE of policy transfer

There are basically four main degrees or gradations of transfer that Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) developed based on Rose's (1993) category of the lesson-drawing level, which four degrees are generated depending on the form of governance, causing different outcomes of the transfer (Bulmer and Padgett, 2005). Those are:

- **Copying:** which involves direct and complete transfer;
- **Emulation:** which involves transfer of the ideas behind the policy or program;
- **Combinations:** which involve mixtures of several different policies;
- **Inspiration:** where policy in another jurisdiction may inspire a policy change, but where the final outcome does not actually draw upon the original (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000: 13).

According to Banson and Jordan, (2011: 371) *Combinations* are the result of the combining of hybridization and synthesis, in order to denote instances where policy elements are drawn together from different contexts. Stead (2008) also supports the idea that there are different degrees of transfer, ranging from pure *Copying* of policies, legislation or

techniques, as well as various forms of emulation, synthesis and hybridization or - in its most simple form - inspiration and ideas.

Examining the EU as a platform for policy transfer, Bulmer and Padgett, (2005) present a complementary structural classification of the types of transfer (adapted from Rose (1993) and from Dolowitz and Marsh (2000)):

- **Emulation / Copying** - the strongest form of transfer. Leads to "borrowing" a policy model from a given jurisdiction;
- **Synthesis** - combining policies of two or more jurisdictions;
- **Influence** – suggests a weak form of transfer. The outer example taken into account serves as a means of inspiring a new policy;
- **Abortive variant** - the transfer is blocked by a veto of the actors involved in the borrowing institution.

Which of these types of transfer has the strongest expression and evidence depends on the form of governance and the research context, as it is outlined bellow.

Figure 11: Policy Transfer Framework / Variables

Why Transfer? Continuum Want To..... Have To			Who Is Involved in Transfer?	What Is Transferred?	From Where			Degrees of Transfer	Constraints on Transfer	How To Demonstrate Policy Transfer	How Transfer leads to Policy Failure
Voluntary	Mixtures	Coercive			Past	Within-a Nation	Cross- National				
Lesson Drawing (Perfect Rationality)	Lesson Drawing (Bounded Rationality)	Direct Imposition	Elected Officials	Policies (Goals) (content) (instruments)	Internal	State Governments	International Organizations	Copying	Policy Complexity (Newspaper) (Magazine) (TV) (Radio)	Media	Uniformed Transfer
	International Pressures		Bureaucrats Civil Servants	Programs	Global	City Governments	Regional State Local Governments	Emulation	Past Policies	Reports	Incomplete Transfer
	(Image) (Consensus) (Perceptions) Externalities	Pressure Groups	Institutions			Local Authorities		Mixtures	Structural Institutional	Conferences (Commissioned) (uncommissioned)	Inappropriate Transfer
	Conditionality	Political Parties	Ideologies					Inspiration	Feasibility	Meetings/ Visits	
	(Loans) (Conditions Attached to Business Activity)								(Ideology) (cultural proximity) (technology) (economic) (bureaucratic)		
	Obligations	Policy Entrepreneurs/ Experts	Attitudes/ Cultural Values	Negative Lessons			Past Relations		Language	Statements (written) (verbal)	
			Consultants Think Tanks Transnational Corporations Supranational Institutions								

Source: Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000:9

3.2. Policy transfer in the EU

The study of PT in the EU is a topic that has acquired increasing importance and interest ever since the year 2000 regarding the enlargement of the Union. Recent research suggests a focus on the potential of the EU and its role as a "transfer platform", according to Radaelli (2000: 26) or a "supranational idea hopper ", according to Bomberg and Peterson (2000: 7), though existing literature does not focus on the potential which the EU has so as to facilitate the transfer to, and between member states.

Bulmer et al. (2007: 6) highlight the unsatisfactory nature of the theoretical foundations of PT, although the existing ones do impose the consensus that the EU's transfer potential lies in its multi-level character. Interaction within a multi-level system of governance, it is argued, is highly productive of emulation. Thus one of the key theoretical questions is "what happens when policy lessons are pulled or pushed up or down between levels of European governance?" (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000: 6). Both the motivation and the organizational elements of the national institutions, as well as the coercion imposed by supranational institutions, are considered as important elements of the effective policy transfer. In this sense, the EU has become the appropriate laboratory for testing and analysis of this phenomenon - on the one hand, because of decades of integration and convergence attempts in different policy areas, and because of the changes and the conditional policy, which the EU imposes in the process of enlargement towards the East-Southeast, on the other (Conde Martínez, 2005).

In the EU, the Europeanization of national (and sub-national) policy making has both encouraged research on convergence and questioned the analytical value of policy transfer as a causal process (Bulmer et al., 2007), although as identified above, more research is required into exogenously driven EU transfer activities (Banson and Jordan, 2011: 375).

3.2.1. Policy transfer opportunities in the EU

Still, the influence of international organizations has proved to be most popular among the actors of the transfer and in particular - among researchers of Europeanization. Radaelli (2000) argues that the EU has evolved as a "massive transfer platform"

spreading various aspects of policy among the member states. Subsequent studies reveal just how far the EU influence has spread: from environmental policies, to foreign and energy policy and from policy objectives to policy instruments. PT occurs in a horizontal and in a vertical network of actors where sub-national institutions such as regional and local governments have been identified as important transfer agents (Banson and Jordan, 2011).

According to Bulmer et al. (2007), PT has contributed to the study of the EU policy process in three key areas:

- "Mainstreaming" provides an escape from "the great debate" about national versus supranational actors in the EU. In particular, by focusing on the exchange of ideas and policies. The PT approach avoids attributing to the policy process, but at the same time it draws parallels with what happens in other con-federal or federal systems, particularly that of the USA.
- An attempt for applying the notion of policy transfer in a "joined-up" manner which links policy making in the EU. Here the authors include the "upstream" perspective typical of the policy making and integration literatures on the EU with the "downstream" focus that is typical of the Europeanization literature. PT is used to track the flow of ideas, policy content and institutional models from the creation of a EU-level policy through to operationalization, including in domestic regimes giving effect to EU rules. Bulmer et al. (2007) emphasize that the study of the PT should not lead to binding all national policy changes in the process of Europeanization.
- The identification of three modes of governance - negotiation, hierarchy and facilitation. These models show how the different institutional configurations affect the preferences and interests of actors, the way they interact with each other, and the resultant patterns of policy transfer.

Bulmer and Padgett (2005) identify three distinctive forms of governance in the EU. Different types of structures, which coexist in the EU, can generate different types of transfer. This makes the EU a laboratory for the development of the concept of PT. The following types of governance in the EU have been defined (Fig. 12):

- **Hierarchical governance** - distinctive for places with a single market, where EU institutions exercise supranational authority leading to *coercive form* of transfer.
- **Negotiation** - policy transfer by negotiation. The EU seeks to agree *common rules or norms* by common consent.
- **Facilitated Unilateralism** - unilateral / *voluntary exchange* facilitated by the EU. The parties retain sovereignty, but coordinate policies.

Studies on PT in the EU have also concentrated on the so-called *Open Method of Coordination* and especially on the voluntary form of governance based on persuasion or diffusion, where PT takes the form of a horizontal exchange between national actors.

These three forms of governance generate qualitatively different types of transfer and outcomes of the transfer. In the evaluation of these outcomes, Bulmer and Padgett used the basic typology adapted from Rose, 1993, and Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996.

According to Bulmer and Padgett *the hierarchical management generates the strongest form of policy transfer*, with results falling within the scope of emulation to synthesis. Negotiations can produce emulation (the European Monetary Union, for example, is essentially based on the German monetary model). Usually, competition between member states in shaping the EU policy according to domestic norms will result in synthesis or mere influence. The facilitated unilateralism as a form of governance leads to a diffuse form of mutual influence or in the worst case - to a failed or abortive transfer (Bulmer and Padgett, 2005: 106).

Figure 12: Mode of Governance, Institutional Variables and Transfer Outcomes

Mode of governance	Institutional variables	Range of likely transfer outcomes
Hierarchy	Authority/normative mandate accruing to EU institutions Density of rules Availability of sanctions/incentives	Emulation–Synthesis
Negotiation	Decision rules/Mode of negotiation: QMV + problem solving Unanimity + bargaining	Emulation–Synthesis Synthesis – Abortive
Facilitation	Institutionalization: Treaty incorporation of objectives Specificity of guidelines Quantifiable benchmarks Density of exchange networks	Influence – Abortive

Source: Bulmer and Padgett (2005: 107)

PT also can be instigated by EU institutions acting on their treaty powers. Treaty obligations are another potential source of policy transfer. The treaty rules served as an external tie (*vincolo esterno*), binding domestic authorities to budgetary discipline.

The limited literature that deals explicitly with policy transfer in the context of the EU focuses mostly on the innovative, horizontal governance mechanism of the Open Method of Coordination (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000). The evidence of the existing EU literature suggests that it is a mistake to equate EU policy transfer with the OMC or to confine investigations to new methods of EU governance. More compelling evidence of the phenomenon can be found in the traditional "hierarchical" modes of governance where supranational actors are endowed with greater institutional resources to promote policy transfer (Bulmer et al., 2007: 9).

3.2.2. Eastern European context

Stead (2012) defines the PT to the Eastern European region as a variety of PT and studies the West-East policy transfer to post-socialist countries, given that the latter have been particularly prone to emulating the West since the beginning of 1990s. PT can also be demand-led - an initiative and acknowledged need of the recipient administration, or

supply-led – an initiative of the donor and the donor's perception of the needs of the recipient. Supply-led PT was more predominant in the early 1990s at the start of the transition in many CEEC (Central and Eastern European countries), where by the late 1990s institutions became more proactive in PT and LD (Randman-Liiv, 2005).

The fact that Eastern and Central European countries are seeking to draw lessons – positive or negative - from the West or the EU, comes as no surprise, as this can help decision-makers prevent problems and avoid newly emerged costs. Nevertheless, as observed by some authors, there is much to be desired in the field of PT and LD. The fact that a given policy works in a given situation with some, does not necessarily mean that it will work in another situation or territorial and national context. PT requires the right combination of people-actors, ideas, incentives, interests and time (Stead et al. 2008). It should be born in mind that many factors "contribute" to bad practices defined by the new post-socialist policy making and more than 20-year-long transition period of deteriorated economic and social conditions, etc. These factors indicate why and what usually went wrong in the transfer between the West / the EU and the East. Among the bad examples are: the blindly and uncritically transferring of policies, where sometimes the donor benefits more than the recipient; the lack of equipment, enough funds and time; problems related to decentralization and administrative capacity; corruptive practices, etc. Pojani and Stead (2015) also indicate that many countries in the region which have long been EU members, or even ones which have been EU members for not so long, observe an increasingly reduced pressure for harmonization of the EU-policies, while the pace of reform has slowed down.

In the policy transfer and the transfer of rules from the EU to the Central and Eastern European countries, Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier (2004) explain that the transfer is best expressed and explained by the so-called *External incentives* model of governance. The external incentives model in the enlargement of the Union to the East and to the countries in this part of Europe, is a rationalist bargaining model, in which the external governance.

The EU external governance mainly follows a strategy of conditionality in which the EU sets its rules as conditions that the CEEC have to fulfil in order to receive EU rewards (ibid. p. 662). This type of transfer refers mostly to non-member states.

According to Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier (2004), the EU policy aimed at CEE countries is a policy of conditionality. The use of "conditionality" in the EU, however, does not always say much about the base management model and / or the conditions under which the transfer (of rules) to the CEE countries is made. The EU conditionality can be comprehensive but not always effective in achieving transfer of rules concerning certain issues or to certain countries. The most important statement in this model is that a country adopts EU rules if the benefits of the EU rewards exceed the domestic adoption cost (ibid: p. 664).

It can be concluded that the transfer is feasible and potentially effective (the outcomes - negative or positive) when it is set as a condition among the EU member states, especially in matters where the EU has full or shared competencies. The conditionality of the transfer of rules / practices is above all characterized by a "top-down" coercive transfer (especially in countries with a credible membership perspective, where this type of transfer is particularly successful).

3.2.3. Policy transfer in spatial planning

Planning ideas from elsewhere often provide inspiration for policy makers but these do not often lead to changes of the formulations of policy or practice. The last few decades have witnessed an upsurge in knowledge and policy transfer related to planning. Various factors have been put forward to explain this phenomenon. These factors range from global to micro in scale (Pojani and Stead, 2014: 21).

The growing interest in the heterogeneous landscape of spatial planning and the multidimensionality of space in this context creates the notion that the organizing of policy making is increasingly becoming a major variable. This undoubtedly has led to increased attention to spatial policies in the EU, which nevertheless, can be considered as an expression of the universal desire of the Union to consolidate a kind of territorial governance model. In this model, as observed by some authors, European spatial

planning works as a form of meta-governance relating to the management of systems in a way which aims to ensure that policy actions are complementary and mutually reinforcing one another (Haughton et al. 2010). On the other hand, that model allows the consideration, as well as the conceptualization and the study of the European spatial planning, not just as multi-scale governance, but as a multi-scale meta-governance, aimed at promoting the transfer of ideas, policies, programs and approaches. This focus, however, is usually seen in the framework of a broader phenomenon known as Europeanization of spatial planning (Nunes et al., 2009).

The literature that examines the process of Europeanization of spatial planning currently does not offer enough information on the methodology or on the creation of an analytical framework of what the mechanisms of this transfer are. In some theoretical research aimed at adaptation and transformation of the planning system in the new EU member states from Eastern, Central and Southeast Europe, the “PT – planning” relation has been brought out, however, lacking particular clarity on the question of how the PT in the EU spatial planning is carried out (Dühr et al., 2010; Radaelli 2004; Rabdman-Liiv, 2005; Nadin and Stead, 2008; Adams et al. 2011; 2012; Nunes et al., 2009; Bache 2008, etc.). Other studies and authors such as Stead (2008, 2012, 2013), Stead et al. (2008), Ferry (2014), Pojani and Stead (2014, 2015) and others, offer possible ways of tracking the PT in the CEE countries in the field of planning, followed by the appropriate means of evaluation of the PT as good or bad. Within the academic literature on the subject, topics related to strategic transport planning, cohesion / regional policy, strategic urban planning, housing, etc., have been studied in greater depth and that, to some extent, complements the idea of how the transfer of ideas, policies, programs, etc., occurs in this field.

In the early post-communist period, spatial planning was denied, while regional policy in Central and Eastern Europe was uncoordinated and strategically weak. There was also significant conditionality: in order to access the EU funds, the CEE countries had to develop a strategic framework and administrative approaches to keeping with the EU practices. According to Börzel (2010), accession conditionality gave the EU a powerful tool to pressure the CEE countries toward downloading the comprehensive *acquis*

communautaire and introducing institutional reforms. However, in the CEE context, “EU pressure has been only one of several drivers of change” (Ferry, 2013: 12).

The difference between the context and traditions of national institutions in the EU on the one hand, and the countries of Eastern and Central Europe on the other, are significant. Nevertheless, when it comes to (regional) planning, PT can act as an important catalyst for some kind of institutional change (Ferry, 2014).

One of these options includes the comprehension and the study of good (better, best) practices, since best practices¹³ in spatial planning are transferable, especially when it comes to transfer between Western and Eastern Europe. The concept of best practice or good practice is rife in European policies and programs. In the area of spatial planning, best practices have been developed under a range of European programs and projects.

Examples of best practices in the context of spatial planning include numerous, widespread European research programs and initiatives, many of those financed by the ERDF - INTERREG, pre-accession funds, research programs, rural development programs, etc. However, it is considered that the applicability of these best practices in another territorial context - the new EU member states - is insufficiently studied or limited (Stead, 2012: 102). A large number of studies, however, pay a lot more attention to the detection and installation of best practices examples and not to the question of how best practices can be helpful in influencing policies in other situations.

¹³ The term can be found in various EU policies relevant to spatial planning: The European Spatial Planning Perspectives, *CEC 1999* (define that the exchange of best practices, in sustainable urban policy, for example, offers an interesting approach for applying ESDP policy opposition (CSD, 1999:22); The EU white paper, *CEC 2001* (emphasizes the role of the Open Method of Coordination as a key factor for improvement of the EU governance, which suggests activities such as cooperation, good practices exchange in the agreement on common targets and directions); the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, *CEC 2005*; Green Paper on Urban Mobility 2007; The Territorial Agenda (DE Presidency, 2007) (best practice of territorial cooperation); Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Urban cities, DE Presidency 2007 (calls for a “European platform to pool and develop best practice, statistics, benchmarking studies, evaluations, peer reviews and other research to support actors involved in urban development), etc.

In Bulgaria, in the context of spatial planning, the idea of best / good practices in planning is addressed in the Methodological guidelines for the development of the National Spatial Development Concept (2010: 11):

"... Adaptation of best foreign practices should follow the NSDC's logic of continuity and scientifically-based consensus approach; It is appropriate to use the results of research on spatial development conducted by leading European universities within the ESPON program"

Some authors (Shishmanova, 2011) also appreciate the importance of good practices for the improvement of the exchange of experience in urban planning, for example. The ideas of good / best practices of the European legislation - studying the German system of spatial planning in particular - are reflected in some projects for a legislative change in the field of spatial planning, regional development, urban planning, investment planning and construction.

PART III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGICAL POSITIONING AND RESEARCH DESIGN

**CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO STUDYING THE
SYSTEM OF SPATIAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS IN BULGARIA IN
THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEANIZATION**

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGICAL POSITIONING AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The main methodological problem of any research in social sciences generally relates to what the design of the study should be and how to shape out the collection of data and the strategies for analysis, so as to achieve maximum reliability and validity at a certain research topic and a theoretical framework. Therefore, the methodological task of studying Europeanization is conventionally divided into three interrelated foci. On the one hand - as a methodological contextualization - an overview of the need to create a unified methodological framework for studying the Europeanization of national spatial planning has been made, incl. in the post-socialist context. For this purpose, some of the key methodological templates and proposals (incl. methodologically unjustified ones or ones with no clear empirical research model) for studying the process, have been reviewed. A second important point emerges by binding two of the main theoretical concepts - that of Europeanization and that of policy transfer.

The “content” of Europeanization incorporates policy transfer, as identified by Bomberg and Peterson (2000), as well as shared beliefs, identified by Radaelli (2001), Olsen (2002) and Howell (2002). The links between these two processes and / or phenomena are realized within the second part of the theoretical development of this study, where linking these two frameworks is regarded as a methodological challenge. On the other hand, identifying the changes in the Bulgarian system of spatial planning is associated with the impact of the European territorial policy, perceived as Europeanization (as a multidirectional, voluntary and / or compulsory process). Last but not least, based on the understanding of policy transfer, the presence of such a process - in cases where the system of spatial planning instruments has been implemented - has been identified and analysed.

The creation of a methodological design was inspired also by a number of studies devoted to the topic of Europeanization of spatial planning (see Yanchev 2012, Luukkonen 2011a) and by some original theoretical and methodological approaches to empirical research, suggested in studies by authors such as Giannakourou (2012), Stead (2012), Haverland (2008), Bulmer (2008), etc.

4.1. Empirical material and data collection

The selection of empirical material can be linguistically unified by the term *texts*. As texts, as Luukkonen (2011a) notes, in its broad hermeneutic sense, should be regarded all actual cases of use of language, whether they are written texts, both in political and planning documents and / or spatial strategies (raw material), or transcriptions of direct or indirect interviews (complementary material, including email interviewing as a research method according to Burns, 2010). In this study, spatial-planning policy documents such as strategies, concepts, acts, plans, directives, schemes, etc. (also referred to as spatial development strategies - as a particular sphere of regional political texts according to Luukkonen (2011a) and Fairclough (2003) - whose interpretation and analysis (incl. the discourse they generate in the public and the political space) are usually classified as qualitative analysis of secondary sources and are positioned at the base of the study, are regarded as important points of articulation in the process of policy- and space-making. Those documents are public products in which the results (often contested) of political negotiations over the spatial development principles and objectives are announced. As such, they represent the official statement about the course of spatial policies, through which the policy practices are justified and to which the stakeholders refer, once the policy guidelines are (re-) negotiated, if, for instance, it turns out that the chosen course appears to be inappropriate (Luukkonen 2011a:14). Those documents reflect different spatial planning, cultural and political discourses, and are an "indicator" and / or a "tangible" expression (the document as an artifact) of the spatial identity and a model of a given geographical (national) space.

An important moment in the design of the empirical research is the accumulation of information on the history and the changes of Bulgarian planning for the period following 1989 and prior to that moment. This process can be defined as *limitation* - for lack of available literature in that field in Bulgarian language. However, semi-structured expert interviews have largely managed to provide the necessary missing information on those points in time, for which there is no sufficient data or lack of data in literature. For the empirical research, several types of sources have been used:

- **Academic literature** on spatial planning, Europeanization of national spatial planning; case studies of the mechanisms of Europeanization of national planning; Policy transfer. These are adopted as key concepts in the development of the theoretical part of this doctoral thesis and their dimension in the Eastern European context has been discussed.

Figure 13: Key concepts for developing a methodological basis



Source: Author

- **Official documents** (EU, national, regional and local level): Directives, Regulations at the EU level, International reports (ESPON; PLUREL¹⁴); National Legal Acts (the Spatial Planning Act, the Regional Development Act, the Administrative-Territorial Structure of Bulgaria Act; the Local Government Act, etc.); Strategies and National Concepts (Regional Development Strategy 2005-2015; Decentralization Strategy, National Regional Development Strategy; National Spatial Development Concept 2013-2025), agendas, policies and national programs, documents, plans, projects of plans, the Methodological guidelines for the preparation of spatial planning instruments (the NSDC and the IPURDs);

- **Opinions of experts and key figures** expressed in semi-structured direct or indirect interviews (Table 7), opinions expressed in journals - used to collect, to verify and to evaluate the data on practices, experience, planning operation, and planning and governance culture. The interviews were conducted between March 2015 and July-August 2016, and have been transcribed in Bulgarian. Their implementation is consistent

¹⁴PLUREL (Peri-urban Land Use Relationships – Strategies and Sustainability Assessment Tools for Urban-Rural Linkages) is an Integrated Project funded within the 6th Research Framework Programme of the European Union (EC FP6 036921). During its lifetime, 36 partners from 14 European countries and China have participated in the project. The project began in 2007 and terminated in March 2011. For further details, see www.plurel.net

with a predefined indicative questionnaire (14 groups of questions (Table 9), consistent with the assumptions and the objectives of this research, addressing the following problems, supplement information and critical / descriptive analysis:

- Designation of planning episodes in the 1989-2013 period (all questions);
- Features and characteristics of the planning process before and after the adoption of the SPA and before and after Bulgaria's accession to the EU;
- A system of planning instruments – according to the SPA and from 2007 on - essence, features, functionality (with expert analysis and application) and coordination between the planning instruments and / or other instruments for sectorial or regional planning;
- Good and bad planning practices (policy transfer) and new principles of spatial planning in Bulgaria from 1989 on;
- Legislative and institutional framework of spatial planning - opportunities, weaknesses, advantages and changes;
- Competence, education and academic environment of spatial planning - specialists and experts (associated with the cognitive dimension of the system of spatial planning);
- Evaluation of the Europeanization and the general understanding of this process in Bulgaria (positive or negative, opportunities, changes and lacks). New spatial planning instruments as an expression of Europeanization – evaluation;
- Culture of planning – definition options and criticism. Proximity and differences between the planning process / culture of Balkan and Eastern European countries.

Table 7: Conducted expert interviews with key figures to the planning process in Bulgaria

Name	Occupation / Position related to the planning process and expertise	Date and duration of interview
Dr Petar Stoyanov stoyanov@gea.uni-sofia.bg	University professor in Geography and Regional Development (Sofia University); Former consultant at the NRDC; Spatial planning in Germany; Planning and development in the EU	22 nd March 2015; Online / Via Email
Dr Neno Dimov n_dimov@mail.bg	University professor in Geography and Regional Development (Sofia University); Director of the NCRD (2002-2005); Planning development and planning	20/22 nd March 2015; Online / Via Email 0:39 h
Dr Vesselina Troeva vtroeva_far@uacg.bg	Architect / Professor at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy/Director of the National Center for Regional Development; Team coordinator for the NSDC and the IPURD of Sofia; Spatial planning; Planning diagnostics; Spatial plans	20th March 2015 1:39 h
Dr Irina Mutafchiiska irina.mutafchiiska@gmail.com	Urbanist / Professor at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy; Projects of IPURDs and General Spatial Plans	2 nd July 2016 1:22 h
Nurhan Redjeb nurhan.r@gmail.com	Urbanist / Planning consultant; elaboration of General Spatial Plans; local planning, General and Detailed Spatial Plans	4 th July 2016 1:12 h

<p>Stoycho Motev, architect office@ncrdhp.bg</p>	<p>Architect / Chief expert in “Regional analyses, urban planning, spatial planning and development, housing policy and tourism” at the NCRD since 1988 (investment planning, development strategies, IPURDs, General and Detailed Spatial Plans; NSDC team</p>	<p>5th July 2016 1:14h</p>
<p>Dr Petko Evrev office@ncrdhp.bg</p>	<p>Architect; Doctor of spatial and landscape planning and urban planning / Chief expert in “Regional analyses, urban planning, spatial planning and development, housing policy and tourism” at the National Center for Regional Development since 1968; NSDC team; Spatial plans, development plans, national and regional development strategies, etc.</p>	<p>5th July 2016 1:09h</p>
<p>Stoyko Doshekov, economist office@ncrdhp.bg</p>	<p>Economist / Chief expert in “Regional economic analyses and social services” at the NCRD since 1979 NSDC team; Spatial research at the municipal level, spatial plans</p>	<p>5th July 2016 0:30h</p>
<p>Dr Angel Burov ange.gang@gmail.com</p>	<p>Urbanist / Professor at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy; Projects of IPURDs and General Spatial Plans</p>	<p>20th July 2016 Online / Via Email</p>
<p>Pavel Yanchev, architect pavel_yan@yahoo.co.uk</p>	<p>Master in Architecture; Author of “Changes in spatial planning in Bulgaria and the process of Europeanization till 2011 (2012)</p>	<p>I: 5th February 2016 Online / Via Email II: 2nd August 2016 01:01h.</p>

Source: Author

Table 8: Formal consultations and meetings related to specific questions concerning the elaboration of this PhD thesis

Name	Occupation / Position	Meeting / Correspondence
Dr Ginka Chavdarova namrb@namrb.org	Executive Director of the National Association of the Municipalities in Bulgaria, spatial development expert, local self-governance and municipal finances; Municipal spatial plans;	27 th June 2013 Via Mail
Dr Boris Kolev retired /bkolev@bas.bg	National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Senior research fellow in Economic and Social Geography, Regional Development and Tourism; Coordinator of ESTIA (INTERREG) for Bulgaria.	20 th March 2015 0:40 h.

Source: Author

Table 9: Indicative questionnaire for conducting semi-structured expert interviews

<p style="text-align: center;">Indicative questionnaire / groups of questions which the interviews were based on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you best describe briefly the process of urban / spatial planning in Bulgaria since the beginning of the 1990s? 2. What has changed, and how, in the process of European integration after Bulgaria's accession to the EU (2007)? What are the fundamental principles that characterized, and still do, the system for spatial planning in Bulgaria at the moment? 3. What is your expert opinion on the system of spatial planning instruments?
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4. What do you think is the role of the political conflicts in the country in recent years for the Bulgarian spatial planning - legal framework, local authorities, funding, etc.?
 - a. How would you comment / assess the difficulties which local authorities / municipalities have in preparing and elaborating General Plans and Municipal Development Concepts?
 - b. What are the main difficulties which the municipalities face in the elaboration of General Spatial Plans and Urban Spatial Plans?
5. Why the national and the regional development schemes – provisioned by the SPA (after its adoption in 2001) - were never adopted (except for one)?
6. A unified terminology system coordinating the SPA and the RDA, and the planning process of one and the same territorial unit, modelled on the example of the terms “region- rayon”? Was the adoption of the National Spatial Development Concept without a new legislative framework a "positive" step towards reformation of the Bulgarian spatial planning? Why a National Concept and not a National Plan / Strategy?
7. Does a new legislative framework in the field of spatial planning in Bulgaria needs to be elaborated and how, in your opinion?
8. How do you think the planning process at the national, regional, district and local level needs to be organized? What instruments have been adopted and need to be implemented so as to optimize spatial planning in the country? What have we learned from the “European guidelines” (documents), incl. policies with a direct and indirect impact on spatial planning (reg. planning) and what role / influence have they had so far?
9. Is the Bulgarian system of spatial planning "Europeanized"? If yes - how do you assess this process? If not - why and what is missing?
10. What practices and "best practices" (from Western Europe and / or defined as such by the EU) the Bulgarian system of spatial planning instruments implements?
11. Can you define such thing as a Bulgarian “socialist” culture of planning, in your opinion, and if yes - what does it have in common with the practices and the spatial planning instruments of the post-socialist and the EU integration period?

12. Does our country exhibit touchpoints in spatial planning with other Balkan / Eastern European countries and what are they? If yes - can we sum up a "model / culture" of planning? What are its perspectives in the context of EU integration and Europeanization of the region?

13. How is "spatial planning" *treated* in Bulgarian higher education? What concepts and training programs need to be implemented in the educational process? So far, planning has been an exclusive competence of architects? Do you think that the profession of a planner should be open to other scientific fields and / or specialties that deal with the development of the territory (for example Geography), as it is in many Western European countries?

Source: Author

4.2. Spatial and temporal scope

4.2.1. Studied space

The spatial scope of the study covers several key geographic levels - as implied by the very title of the thesis: on the one hand – the European territorial scope (the one within the EU's borders), where the idea of **the** Europeanization process, respectively – the Europeanization of spatial planning policies - was conceived. In a broader scientific context, the impact of this process, however, may not only be limited to the EU alone, since it affects Europe as a whole (particularly the territories of Eastern Europe and / or the Balkans), as well as other global macroregions – objects of other studies.

An important geographical reference for clarification of the theoretical and conceptual chapters is the differentiation of Eastern Europe - because of "the model of adaptation" of countries representing that region to the requirements (for membership) of the EU, and the specifics of the processes of Europeanization and policy transfer, the historical and the current planning practices and policies.

A central focus of the spatial extent of the study area holds the national space of the Republic of Bulgaria. Studying the national space, as Grozeva and Kolev (2015) point

out, following the country's membership in the EU, imposes new rethinking of the meaning and the role of Bulgaria as a part of the overall geographical space of the Union. Without identifying, in the empirical research, any specific regional cases of the national territory, the national space is viewed as a geographic system represented by three main levels: national, regional (district) and local.

4.2.2. Periodization and episoding

The temporal scope that accompanies the study of the space, generally defines this study both as retrospective and prospective. On the one hand, this has to do with the historical nature of the sources and with the temporal logic of analysing the acquired data: in the direction of the closest proximity to the current reality. The time focus of the study is the period from 1989 to 2013, although it is also necessary to provide some clarification of the planning reality in the period prior to 1989, framed by important events, starting with the Independence of Bulgaria, till the beginning of the communist regime and the fall of the latter.

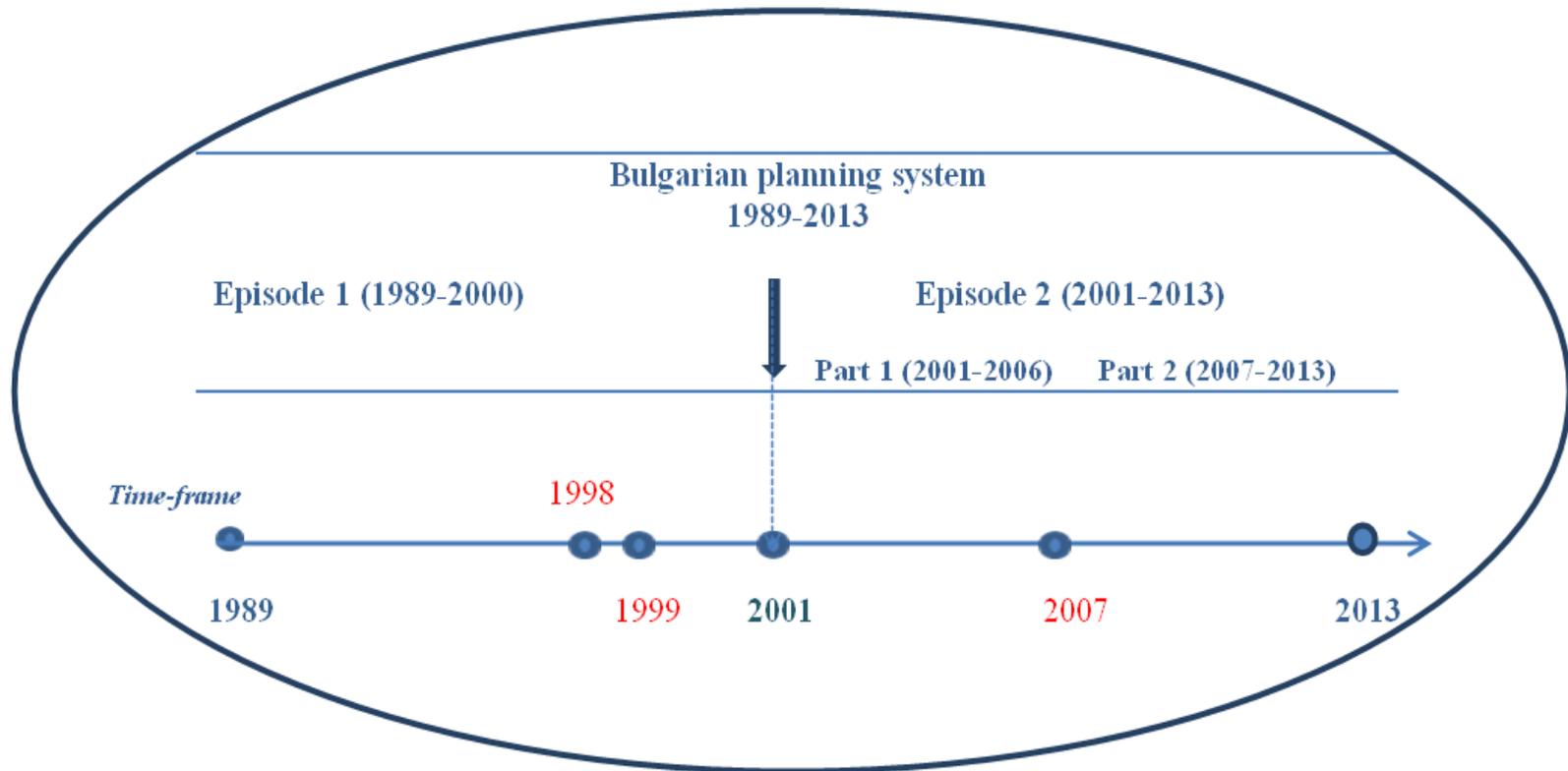
Determining the timing and the episodes of the Europeanization of spatial planning in Bulgaria has been possible after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the totalitarian regime in 1989. This moment of political, social, economic and spatial changes is referred to - in short - as the "post socialist" period and / or "the transition" (the transitional period). This research focuses precisely on this period, by dividing it into spatial planning episodes, whose analysis will provide the basis for identifying the Europeanization process, as well as the policy transfer process.

In his works on the Europeanization of spatial planning of Bulgaria during the 1989-2011 period, Yanchev (2012) distinguishes four socio-political episodes which initially serve as a basis for this doctoral thesis and are supplemented in the context of this extended study of the Europeanization of spatial planning. The suggested episodes are as follows: 1) 1989-1998 (in search of political identity), 2) 1999-2001 (the reformist period), 3) 2002-2007 (the rise of real estate mortgage loans) and 4) from 2008 on (Bulgaria being a EU member state). These episodes have been selected based on the general political

trends - political continuity, the reformist political will and the stages of European integration in the field of spatial planning and development.

However, it is considered that the so shaped "episoding" takes the attention off the main accents in the development of spatial planning, since it focuses more on the implementation of reforms concerning the process of introducing regional development planning, reflecting mostly the historical stages of the development policy, identified by Marinov (2006). The review of the Bulgarian literature on the topic, as well as the existence of important legal and strategic documents, and the series of expert interviews with key figures in the field (the purpose of which is complementary in terms of information), show that the most logical division of the 1989-2013 period into episodes should be defined by the adoption of the SPA, which marks the beginning of a new planning period after the denial of planning of the 1990s and the transformations related to the process of Europeanization. The 2001-2013 episode is divided into two phases, the main divisive event of which is the formal EU membership of Bulgaria as of January 1st, 2007. P. Yanchev himself reports that the most important benchmarks in determining episodes within the 1989-2013 period are the years 2001 and 2007, rather than 1998, when the banking reform which formatted the investment pressure was carried out (personal communication, August, 2016). The adoption of the SPA (2001) is mostly associated with the regulation of spatial planning and not so much with the prerequisites for investing capital and the capitalist environment in general. Therefore, the formatting of the Europeanization into episodes in the 1989-2013 period is logically better substantiated if it is done depending on the processes of regulation, expressed through the adoption of the SPA.

Figure 14: Spatial framework and episodes of the research



Source: Author

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO STUDYING THE SYSTEM OF SPATIAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS IN BULGARIA IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEANIZATION

The development of the methodological model of the study is a consistent process composed of different, but logically bound, approaches, whose sequence follows the order of the research questions and hypotheses. In this study the constructivism position on the ontology of the research has been adopted, which in turn means that the reality is socially constructed, or spatial planning is regarded as a social and multi-actor system, while the process of Europeanization is a result of “the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors and therefore it is a phenomenon under constant change” (Dimitrova, 2015: 25).

In terms of its epistemology (the nature and scope of knowledge) this study is steered by the interpretivist position, as it seeks to understand the issues being examined, while interpretivism sees the researcher as related to the problem¹⁵. Saunders et al. (2009) distinguish different research approaches used in social sciences. This study generally falls in the case study approach (the case of Bulgaria) in the context of Central and Eastern Europe. In this context, Bulgaria is likely to be considered a case with similar characteristics to other case studies of the same type (Dimitrova, 2015).

Among the methodological tools for building this section of the research methodology and the research design of the study, as well as the development of models for analysis, operationalization of the theoretical part has also been used. The operationalization of concepts is a process in which empirical connections / correlations are found, which allow evaluation of the concepts’ effect and behaviour in a given context. In order to use a selected concept at the empirical level, it is necessary to find those specific dimensions, elements, indicators or operations which allow its (of the concept) measurement (Reguant and Martínez-Olmo, 2014).

The methodological approaches are discussed in three consecutive sections which reflect the logic of organizing the theoretical sections and the chronological work on the whole dissertation, as well as the sequence of asking the research questions and the

¹⁵ The researcher in this case comes from Bulgaria, therefore is not indifferent to the problems of spatial planning and development of the country. The professional and academic background of the author of this doctoral thesis is closely related to spatial and regional planning and development.

"building" of their answers. For this reason, albeit in different points of this chapter's structure, their sequence should be understood in a logical way and in a related sequence.

5.1. Study of the national system of spatial planning

As explained in the theoretical part of the study, spatial planning is defined differently and the definitions can be summarized as an activity, whose development and evolution is strongly dependent on the spatial and political context and variations of the planning traditions, established over time. Spatial planning can be considered as a set of territorial governance arrangements aiming to influence the patterns of spatial development in a given place (Nadin and Stead, 2008). This set is often conceptualized as a (spatial planning) "system" (Munteanu and Servillo, 2014). It is a hierarchical, multidimensional and multi-actor process in which the knowledge related to the spatial development transfers systematically between the different levels of administration in the conditions of a decentralization process in which the different actors interact between each other. This not only confirms spatial planning as a complicated system in which the different territorial levels influence each other, but it also enriches and coordinates them (Simeonova and Romero-Torres, 2016).

The theoretical model of the system of spatial planning proposed by Servillo and Van den Broeck (2012) has been chosen for organizing and structuring the results of the descriptive analysis of the dynamics in the development of the planning system in Bulgaria. This way, the planning system can be seen as a technical device embedded in an institutional frame and produced by groups of actors. The two above-mentioned authors distinguish a technical, cognitive, socio-political, and a discursive dimension within the institutional frame of a planning system (ibid, p. 48). The operationalized review shows that the system of spatial development is a multi-actor system of four dimensions - **social, political, technical, cognitive and discursive**. Tracking the changes and the evolution of each dimension of the system over a given time interval allows the revealing of the dynamics in those changes, directly or indirectly modified by the influence of external factors and / or elements, i.e. processes such as Europeanization. A similar, but reduced in content, is the methodological model applied in studying the system of spatial planning by Yanchev (2012), whose study can be classified as the first review of the Bulgarian system since the full EU membership of

the country. For each dimension, the proposed by Servillo and Van den Broeck (2012) variables have been taken into account, with a particular emphasis on the technical dimension, defined as the center, or the "heart" of the system to which all planning institutions and formal actors (public and private), rules and regulations, are related. It is the technical dimension where the research focus is oriented to, as it (the tech. dimension) binds together the system of planning instruments¹⁶. For the defining of the dynamics of the system of instruments, as well as for the factors which determine the changes and the elements related to it, an additional sub-frame for monitoring the dynamics of the technical dimension has been organized, based on the European Compendium of Spatial planning (1997). The structure of the technical dimension, clarified in the Compendium, is presented in the following sequence: analysis of the scope (scope of the policy topic over which the planning system has some competence or influence; integration between spatial planning and planning as a general activity); the focus of the government or locus of power (related to the decentralization of governance and the distribution of competencies in the system of various territorial levels); planning documents (planning programs, strategies, plans, systems of instruments and their implementation); actual planning practices (usually related to administrative, legislative and other traditions), actors and territorial levels in the system of multi-level governance (public and private participation, reasons which determine them, etc.).

The two methodological frameworks for tracking the evolution of the system of spatial planning in Bulgaria for the 1989-2013 period, which complement each other, have been implemented based on the performed episodizing (Episode I) and periodization of the episodes (Period 1 and Period 2 of Episode II).

The results of the two episodes are synthesized and complemented by the features of the spatial planning system, provided by the international ESPON reports. Reports 2.3.2 and 2.3.1 from 2007 have been taken into account, where using a content analysis, the data for the Bulgarian planning system - obtained from the analysis of the results of the changes since 1989 - have been interpreted.

¹⁶ The term *planning instruments* implies plans, strategies, programs, etc. in the EU Compendium. In this context, due to different definitions found in literature, here the terms *tools* and *instruments* as planning documents are referred to, are considered synonymous. Unlike Spanish or English language where *tools* and *instruments* are two different words, in Bulgarian language only word stands for the two terms in discussion.

Table 10: Operationalization model of the spatial planning system, applied in the study of the system in Bulgaria

Spatial Planning System (Domestic context)	Dimension	Variables	Source of information
	<p style="text-align: center;">Socio-Political Dimension</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">Spatial pattern</div>	<p>Model of society, perception of the role of the State and the public domain, political configuration, political balance of powers, structures of governance;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Spatial expression of the development models</p>	<p>Academic literature, interviews, official documents (institutional, legislative, planning, etc.)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Technical Dimension</p>	<p>Planning instruments, tools, rules, binding plans, formal procedures, formal governmental competences and interactions.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Scope</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Locus of power</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Planning documents</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Planning practices</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Territorial governance</p> </div>	<p>Academic literature, the press, interviews; other official documents (institutional, legislative, planning, etc.)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Cognitive Dimension</p>	<p>Knowledge, planning theories, educational models, etc.; structuring the reproduction of a planning system by planning schools, law schools, professional organizations.</p>	<p>Academic literature, the press, interviews; official universities' webpages</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Discursive Dimension</p>	<p>Values, aims and principles, keywords, rhetorics, issues</p>	<p>Academic literature, official documents; interviews</p>

Source: Author (based on Servillo and Van den Broeck, 2012)

5.2. Analytical study of the Europeanization process

The European studies focus on the impact of the EU membership on the member states, while Europeanization is a theoretical advance in the research of European integration (Graziano and Vink, 2013).

As shown in the preceding chapters, Europeanization is presented by a large number of different definitions in literature. Definitions of this concept, such as the one of Ladrech (1994) and Radaelli (2003), and even that of Bache (2003), show segregation of the process's components and emphasize the top-down prospect of the process, despite the criticism that Europeanization is much more than that - it is a cyclic process "which is not merely about 'downloading' or 'uploading' between hierarchical levels of government, but the complex circulation of spatial visions, ideas and knowledge, between individual policymakers that often takes place beyond the formal structures of policymaking" (Luukkonen, 2015: 177).

It is a spatial phenomenon (Luukkonen, 2011a; 2012; 2017) which occurs as both technical (legislative change and / or change of domestic policies in compliance with the EU directives) and a discursive process (a less visible dimension of the styles of thought, which are accepted and legitimized within the European policy) (Luukkonen, 2011a).

In organizing the analytical part of this study, the conceptual framework of the Europeanization process of Böhme and Waterhout (2008) has been adopted for studying the spatial planning system. The two authors combine the idea of Europeanization of planning by the top-down influence of the EU on the spatially defined sectorial policies; the EU legislation which has a direct impact on the national legislation; specific initiatives, programs and instruments for planning the EU territory, called "Planning for Europe." The three main catalysts of the Europeanization of planning are: the EU regulations; the EU spending policies and INTERREG; the European spatial planning discourse. The first two can be generally defined as *hard* mechanisms of change (indirect, rather than direct, since there is no direct impact on the national system of spatial instruments), while the third one can be regarded as a *soft* mechanism with elements of a possible convention (hard elements), having in mind that the territorial cohesion concept (which is the basis of regional policy) too is a part of the EU discourse.

Table 11: Operationalization of the Europeanization of planning

Europeanization of spatial planning	EU spending policies
	EU regulations
	European spatial planning discourse

Source: Author, based on Böhme и Waterhout (2008)

Based on the synthesized periods which have been studied, as Böhme and Waterhout (2008) suggest, the effects of the three drivers of Europeanization have been indicated, by giving particular importance to the effect those catalysts have on the new spatial planning instruments in Bulgaria. The assessment of the Europeanization effect is supplemented with comments and professional assessments of the interviewed experts, some of whom participated in the drafting of those documents, or have had the role of direct observers and researchers in the process of spatial planning in the country.

The discursive integration at the domestic level as a catalyst for Europeanization of planning, has multiple options, the most important of which are: the EU sectorial policies (regulations and spending policies) and the European spatial planning discourse, which has developed through the Territorial Agenda; the implementation of the ESDP; the ESPON programs such as INTERREG; the adoption of other pan-European documents (The European Spatial Guidelines), etc. It is in the analytical part of the study, where the necessity of using the "Europe" discourse (not only Europe's funding channels and sectorial policies - hard regulation and compliance - which have a direct or indirect impact on the national spatial planning), acquires some priority, in order to answer the second central research questions. This type of discursive integration - based on knowledge, European spatial mindset (linked to the idea of a European spatial model) and according to Giannakourou (2012) - a voluntary change, has been focused on in the second part of the analytical study. The implementation of the ESDP ("the mother document" of European spatial planning as referred to by Luukkonen, 2012: 403), being an expression of the European planning discourse in the

different member states, is particularly referential in the context of discursive integration. Therefore, the implementations of the ESDP ideas will be taken into account in the analysis of the new spatial planning instruments in Bulgaria (such as the National Spatial Development Concept). Moreover, given the lack of direct EU competence in the field of spatial planning, the reflection of the conceptual framework of the EU spatial model in the spatial instruments is directly related to sustaining or rejection of Hypothesis 2, regarding the presence of conceptual ideas of spatial planning from the European Spatial Guidelines or from any recommendatory EU documents, and the way the ideas in those documents have been transferred to the national level.

5.3. Bringing in the Europeanization and policy transfer frameworks for studying the transfer of the European spatial discourse to the spatial planning documents of Bulgaria

5.3.1. The Europeanization as an expression of evidence of policy transfer between the EU and the member states

Few studies in the academic literature have used the idea of policy transfer in studying the Europeanization process or its framework (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000, Radaelli, 2000, Bulmer and Padgett, 2004, Ladi, 2007). The Europeanization framework is more useful for the analysis of cases where the EU plays a central role in the process of transfer (Ladi, 2007), while the in-depth analysis of the transfer can show the resistance of the national systems against changes coming "from outside", i.e. from the EU.

Policy transfer to Eastern European countries is among the varieties of transfers in Europe that follow the West-to-East direction, as post-socialist countries have been particularly prone to emulating the West since the early 1990s (Stead, 2012). In a more general scale, the EU-to-Eastern European countries transfer follows the same deductive logic, given that the EU is regarded as a symbolic expression of Western values. Therefore, the post-socialist countries' adaptation to these "Western (EU) values and political ideas" is possible through their vertical relationship with the EU, where it plays a role of imposing ideas and policies. The EU policy towards the CEECs is generally described as predominantly a policy of conditionality, therefore, basically a forced / coercive, conditional transfer of rules and policies (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004).

The institutional evolution of the EU shows a shift from coercive forms of transfer to voluntary ones (Bomberg, 2000). The vertical policy transfer occurs through the EU or the European integration processes. Horizontal policy transfer includes learning from, and adopting another member state's policies, without the participation of the EU (Howell, 2002). Horizontal, state-to-state (or region-to-region) transfer may take place independently from the EU, but can also be facilitated by the EU providing the arena for interstate or interregional cooperation or competition (Böhme and Waterhout, 2008: 229). Therefore, the horizontal transfer has not been taken into consideration in the analytical part of this study. It is only the dimension in which vertical transfer between the EU and Bulgaria is realized in the elaboration and implementation of spatial planning instruments.

The review of the academic literature on policy transfer has shown that in the framework of Europeanization both the EU and the member states share similar directions of influence, where policy transfer is not limited to just transfer of policies, but also of ideas, principles, concepts, forms of governments, best practices, negative lessons, etc.

Table 12: Directions of Europeanization and Policy transfer

Europeanization direction	Policy Transfer dimensions	General type of Policy Transfer
Vertical: Bottom-up (Uploading process) / Soft	Uploading	Voluntary (by consent) Soft Transfer
Vertical: Top-down (Downloading process) / Hard	Downloading	Coercive Hard Transfer
Horizontal (Cross-loading process) / Soft	Horizontal	Unilateral (intergovernmental learning and sharing) Soft Transfer

Source: Author

I have adopted the conceptual framework for policy transfer offered by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), which states: policy transfer is "the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system" (ibid:5). In this conceptual framework, the idea of Bomberg and Peterson (2000) has been adopted, according to which the EU works with a set / mix of "forced" and "voluntary" methods for the Europeanization of policies or a mix of "push" and "pull". According to these two authors, the policy transfer is rarely forced (vertical), but is more often voluntary (vertical and horizontal). Bomberg and Peterson (2000), as well as Radaelli (2000), see the European Union as a platform that offers increased policy transfer opportunities.

5.3.2. Transfer analysis of the implementation of the European spatial discourse into the new spatial instruments implemented through Europeanization (studying of cases)

Although the idea of the European spatial model, or the European spatial discourse, still does not close the debate on the difficulties in organizing the latter, the EU manages to impose a number of principles through various agreements and directives of the sectorial policies, as well as financial resources, which can serve as a clear example of a vertical, top-down transfer of conditions, ideas, norms, rules, etc. (Ladi, 2007). In other words, the presence of EU pressure or a strategy of conditionality which defines a top-down vertical Europeanization, is a feature of the coercive form of policy transfer, especially in cases where the EU plays a central role in dictating the rules and has full or shared competence (Giannakourou, 2012). I believe that this type of transfer and direction are easily detectable and more visible in policy making (ibid.), with more evidence in the dynamics of the EU influence on national planning and on the system of planning instruments (such as the ones for regional development). Moreover, the lack of direct competence for spatial planning at the European level stimulates the use of a number of documents in the distribution of the discourse in the making of territorial policies. The discourse, in general, should be understood as an ideological part of a hegemonic project (European spatial planning), which in turn is linked to the institutional dimension. It includes the consideration of new symbols, concepts or vocabulary, creation of specific practices, construction of ideology around a specific

hegemonic principle (Böhme, 2002). Discourses become actualized in spatial strategies as they articulate the guidelines for spatial planning and development (Luukkonen, 2012).

According to Giannakourou (2005, 2012), it has been proven - theoretically and empirically - that the vertical transfer can be an expression of a voluntary acceptance ("downloading") or transfer of EU-generated discourses, concepts and principles of spatial planning to the national (or to the local) level. Therefore, consideration of the vertical, top-down transfer, initiated by the domestic planning actors through "downloading" from top-down (the initiative comes "from below") the conceptual framework for spatial planning from EU documents of recommendatory nature (such as the ESDP), allows a discussion about the evolution of the domestic spatial thinking and the options for other forms - examples of discursive integration. In this sense, the identification of variables / indicative questions for policy transfer analysis in the theoretical section devoted to it, are referenced to the transfer analysis in addition to the analysis of the discursive integration through new spatial documents. In the current case, two types of new planning instruments (a concept and plans) in Bulgaria have been selected - the National Spatial Development Concept and the Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development.

Table 13: Operationalization model of the policy transfer, applied in the study of the system in Bulgaria

	Dimension	Variables	Source of information
Policy Transfer (Domestic context)	<p><u>Vertical</u> <u>(Voluntary)</u></p> <p>MS->EU</p> <p>MS<-EU</p>	<p>Who executes the transfer?</p> <p>What ideas are transferred?</p> <p>When are they transferred?</p> <p>Where are they transferred from?</p> <p>Why are they transferred?</p> <p>How?</p> <p>Possible outcome or degree of</p>	<p>Planning documents + Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the planning document ; academic literature, interviews; other official documents</p>

		transfer?	
	<u>Vertical</u> <u>(Coercive)</u> EU->MS	x	-
	<u>Unilateral</u> <u>(Voluntary)</u> MS<->MS	x	-

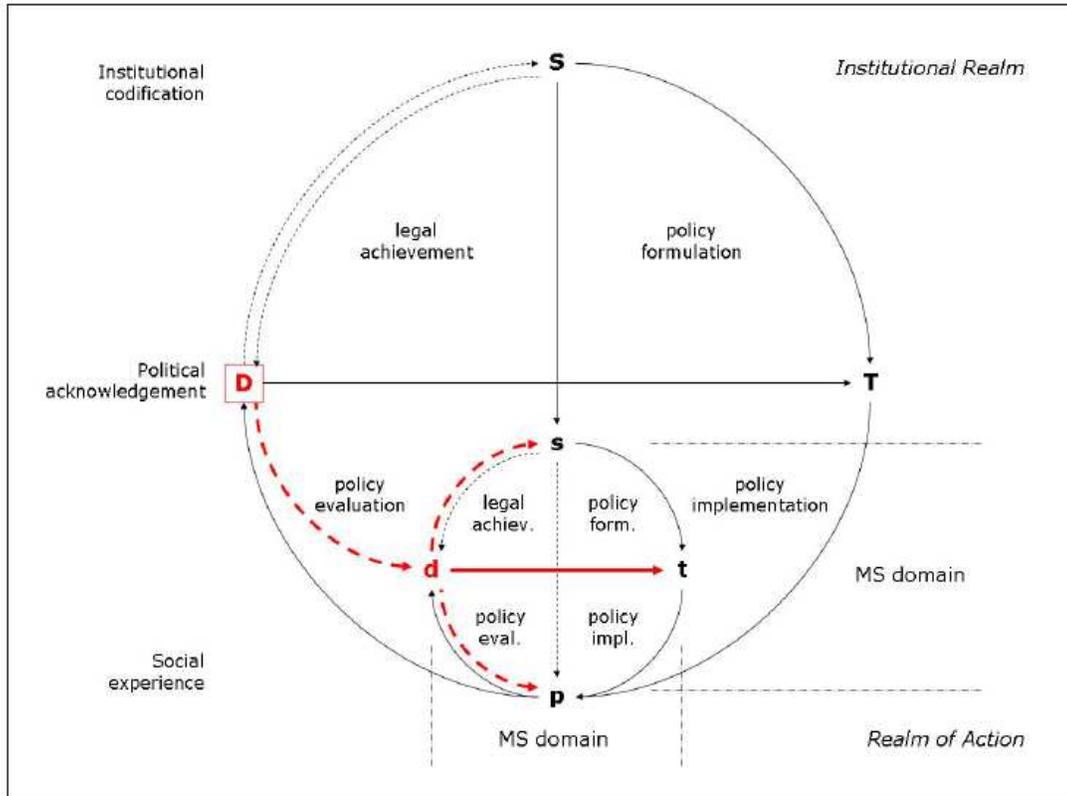
Source: Author

In addition to the transfer analysis - in response to the specific research questions and the second central hypothesis - a content analysis of the Bulgarian NSDC and the Methodological guidelines for its elaboration has been performed, as well as a content analysis of the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration and implementation of the Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development. The latter had not yet been completed (a total of 67) at the time of writing this doctoral thesis, therefore, in order to avoid subjectivity of the results, only the Methodological guidelines for the IPURDs have been taken into consideration, whereas regarding the NSDC, both have been considered – the NSDC itself and the Methodological guidelines for it. In tabular form, the main characteristics of these two planning documents have been organized and presented. As a planning instrument at the national level, the analysis and the discourse on the NSDC have been reinforced by an additional content analysis of the 13 policy objectives of the ESDP based on keywords and their territorial adaptation (diagnosis) to the domestic context.

The tracking of the "downloading of ideas" from the top down without EU pressure, but with possible hidden or seemingly vague conditionality from above (the EU) or below (inter-governmental), indicates that the "downloading" of ideas (principles, keywords approaches, etc.) is a typical example of a vertical transfer, but with the possibility of combining different directions, which can be discussed with the answer to the questions (the variables *Who, What, Where from*, etc.) proposed by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000). The transfer type continuum of Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), reflects the potential for transfer involving both voluntary and coercive elements, which helps deepen the discourse on the domestic context of spatial planning instruments implementation. Furthermore, in the direction of the "coercive" end of the continuum, certain patterns are observed, where national governments are forced to adopt EU programs and policies in areas where the EU has full or shared competencies. However, with regard to spatial planning, it is assumed that the transfer type will / may tend to incline towards that part of the continuum, where there is possible taking into account the rational-based solutions or transfer (governments borrow policies, programs and institutions with the expectation that the transfer will lead to success; here, policy makers' transfer processes start when they voluntarily engage in an active search for new ideas, when they perceive a condition becoming problematic (Unalan, 2009).

The answer to the questions follows the discursive context of Cotella and Janin Rivolin (2010) for possible influence of the EU discourse on the domestic discourse and hence - directly on the change of the instruments and on the possible changes in the domestic planning practices and the system's structure, i.e. in cases where the new spatial instruments are the result of changes in the domestic spatial discourse. The planning instruments are determined by the structural dimension of the institutional context, and also by ideas, concepts and approaches, validated through the policy discourse, and have a direct impact on practices in the phase of policy implementation (Cotella and Janin Rivolin, 2010) (Fig.15). This pattern of influence provides opportunities for its application in future studies of discursive spatial integration of Bulgaria.

**Figure 15: From the EU discourse to the member states discourse
(Europeanization of territorial governance)**



Source: Cotella and Janin Rivolin (2010:17)

Notes: D (EU discourse) – d (MS discourse); T (EU tools) – t (MS tools); S (EU structure) – s (MS structure) ; P (EU practice) – p (MS practice) ;

PART IV: RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

**CHAPTER 6: RESULTS: THE SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEM OF
BULGARIA**

**CHAPTER 7: RECAPITULATION: DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM
OF SPATIAL PLANNING IN BULGARIA DURING THE PERIOD
BETWEEN 1989 AND 2013**

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS: THE SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEM OF BULGARIA

The history of Bulgarian planning can be conditionally divided into three periods (Alexandrov, 2006):

- The period between the Liberation from Ottoman rule (1878¹⁷) and the end of World War II. This is a period of efforts to overcome the consequences of the age-old isolation from the rest of Europe, wars and dramatic changes of borders, followed by long delayed modernization, aggressive and expansionist foreign policy; parliamentary democracy and social changes, followed by quasi-authoritarian regime (Giatzidis, 2002). During this period the first legal acts for the organization of the urban network were formulated and the development of spatial planning (although partially) started;

- 1945-1989 – a change of territorial values by turning the country into a satellite, strictly following the ideology and politics of the USSR; total state control; separation of the physical and the economic planning; adoption of the Soviet model of development;

- The period following 1989, or the so-called transitional period: post-socialist transition; "Right turn" of the development towards a market economy, privatization and denial of planning; severe economic crisis and recession in the 1990s. The years between Bulgaria's application for EU membership (1998) and its accession to the Union, when the first structural changes in the development approaches were implemented, can be considered as a sub-period, or even a separate period.

As it was made clear at the outset, the empirical focus of this study is the spatial planning of Bulgaria during the period following 1989. However, clarification and taking into consideration of some of the features of planning after the fall of the communist regime in the country (and in the entire Southeastern / Central and Eastern European region) would not be possible without presenting the system of spatial development and its transformations during the so-called New Bulgarian History and Modern Bulgarian History periods - the years between 1878 and 1989, divided

¹⁷ In 1878 the San Stefano Treaty was signed. Bulgaria, however, was only declared an independent state in 1908.

conditionally into two periods, namely: before and after the presence of the communist regime in Bulgaria.

For this reason, the synthesized presentation in the first sub-chapter aims to show some key moments in the history of spatial planning in the country, so that the transformations and the processes of Europeanization in the rest of the empirical research are better understood.

The changes following the fall of communism in Bulgaria marked a period that can be best described as a "crisis of transition." The first ten years of that period were marked by a complete denial of spatial planning. The country went through one of its worst economic crises, devaluation of the national currency, high unemployment rates and inflation. In 1995, the new government whose main task was to overcome Bulgaria's severe financial crisis, submitted an application for EU membership. This decision was crucial for the future development, while the spatial reform began with the introduction of two new legal acts related to spatial planning and regional development, aiming to prepare the country for a greater consistency with the European legal and financial framework.

The period following 1989, the fragmentation and the focus of which were justified in the methodology chapter of the study, can be generally synthesized or considered as a period or a sequence of episodes of transition (transitions) to democracy or as a cultural shift towards Euro-Atlantic values. With the exception of the first period discussed in this chapter, the subsequent ones are diagnosed in higher detail in the proposed multidimensional structure of the study of the spatial planning system. Considering the research issues of this doctoral thesis, special attention in its structure was paid to the technical dimension of planning and the planning instruments, which determine it as an important step towards understanding the Europeanization of planning in Bulgaria and the process of policy transfer.

The first main episode and the two subsequent periods of the second episode, which can be identified in the system of planning during the 1989-2013 period, provide information on the socio-political and economic dimensions of the country, with basic qualitative data on the characterization of the spatial development model; that data are followed by a diagnosis of the technical dimension of the planning system, as well as its cognitive and discursive dimensions. In this context, in the diagnosis of the technical

dimension, we have adopted the model elements of the technical structure, relying on the European Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies (1997), according to which the technical dimension is in the center of the spatial planning and it consists of all planning institutions and formal public and private actors, rules and regulations. This is the part of the planning systems that has always been the core of the policy debate and was also central to the typological studies. This allows us, as Yanchev (2012) explains, the possibility of organizing an additional sub-frame for monitoring the dynamics of the technical dimension, expressed by the analysis of:

- the scope, the stated goals of the spatial planning system (scope and objectives of the system - this is where the legal acts come out);
- the scales at which planning has competences in relation to the locus of power (decentralization and levels of management, as well as distribution of competences);
- the related plans and programs (planning documents);
- the actual planning practice (usually related to administrative, legislative and other traditions);
- the territorial multi-level-, multi-sector-, and multi-actor-governance arrangements (public and private participation, reasons which determine them, etc.).

6.1 Spatial planning in Bulgaria before 1989

6.1.1. Spatial planning during the period between 1878 and 1944

The transformation of the spatial planning of the country in the late 19th century is a dynamic process that follows the political turmoil and the disruptions of the political programs of Bulgaria. The Liberation from the Ottoman rule and the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878), followed by the Treaty of Berlin (July 1878), marked two of the first major spatial transformations of the physical boundaries of Bulgaria. The lack of social elite turned Bulgaria (unlike other Balkan states) into one of the Eastern European countries with egalitarian society and ill-defined nationalism. A number of territorial changes occurred under the stress of the ensuing Balkan wars and the First World War. New territorial changes occurred after the signing of the Treaty of Neuilly (1919) and the Treaty of Craiova (1940).

The new socio-political system adopted capitalism and the first steps of industrialization and urban growth began as an attempt to attract investment and cultural influence from Western Europe, and to stimulate the private initiative.

Yanchev (2012) states that the institutionalization of spatial planning in Bulgaria during that period began with the formation of the modern structures of the Bulgarian government following 1878, and the adoption of the first Public Works Act of the Kingdom of Bulgaria in 1882, updated and amended several times over of the next thirty years (1889, 1901, 1905, 1907, 1911). The act regulated the development of areas within settlements, which however, boiled down spatial planning to regarding it as a mere urban planning and urban practices that fell within the competence of only a narrow circle of experts, namely: architects and landscape architects. Some larger urban settlements, including the capital of Bulgaria, began to rapidly change their appearance in the mid-1880s. According to Parusheva (2014) those were some of the first signs of Europeanization in spatial aspect. In 1908 the Cadaster of Land Act was adopted, which was imposed by the need to elaborate the first cadastral plans in the country after the Liberation (Kovachev, 2009).

Educational and planning practices were strongly influenced by the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the German traditions. The new generation of Bulgarian architects acquired their education outside Bulgaria. Under their leadership, some of the first plan-schemes of some of the larger Bulgarian cities were developed, which however, did not consider anything but their street patterns. During the first decades of the 20th century, special regulations for urban planning and for the construction works taking place in the capital, came into force; in the 1930s, spatial plans which were more detailed, were adopted.

The plan of Sofia (the history of its spatial planning dates back to the Liberation), as well as those of other major Bulgarian cities, was elaborated immediately after the fall of the Ottoman rule. Some urban settlements – such as Plovdiv - were designed in accordance with the existing natural environment. Other plans – such as the first plan of Sofia (the Amadier Plan of 1880) - completely changed the “urban fabric” of the settlement (Yanchev, 2012).

After the First World War some urban plans began to follow the ideas of the "garden city" and later – the European modernist movements in urban planning. Thus the urban plan of Sofia by Adolf Muesmann appeared in 1934 - a symbol of the "garden city

“model. Although it remained unrealized, the plan marked an important moment in the evolution and the development of modern urban (spatial) planning in Bulgaria at that time, but with the start of World War II it was rejected, together with its supporting projects. (Angelo Emmanuel, 2011). The plan provided modern transport networks and the use of functional areas; it was influenced by the ideas of monumental restructuring of the city (a large civic center was proposed), following the example of cities such as Paris (Stanilov and Hirt, 2009).

A legislative change in planning was made in 1941 when a New Public Works Act was adopted (affecting solely the land within the boundaries of the settlements and therefore cadastral plans were elaborated) which function was to split the urban area into sectors by the use of planning tools. Some plans regulated the street structure, others – the land plots, etc. This act led to the adoption of construction standards as a requirement. The act only remained in force until 1949 (Kovachev, 2009).

6.1.2. The period between 1945 and 1989: Planning in the People's Republic of Bulgaria

During the period between the end of World War II and the mid-1980s Bulgaria was exposed to Soviet influence – including in the field of planning, urban planning and architecture. The period began with a new transition where the ideology of planned, single-centralized management of the economy, radical socioeconomic transformation and central planning of the settlement network dominated. That period coincided with the imposition of the zonal urbanism (expression of the Athens Charter / doctrine) and the doctrine of functional planning, the devastation of war and the need to quickly solve the housing problem (the appearance of large residential complexes), the rapid growth of cities and search for "satellite vents" (Alexandrov, 2006).

Figure 16: Geographic location of Bulgaria within the region of Central and Eastern Europe during the communist period



Source: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2014/03/daily-chart-15>

(Accessed on 11 March 2015)

The consolidation of Bulgaria as a satellite of the Soviet Union in the late 1940s implied huge changes in the spatial values and the concentration of the planning process in the hands of the state. This meant that the state took full control over the territory. Like other communist countries in the region, the planning process was centralized, technocratic and subordinate to the national economic goals. An institutional and ideological framework of the one-party system was maintained, together with limited local autonomy, which explained the fact that local authorities simply channeled down state decisions to the local level (Hirt, 2005).

In late 1947, a process of nationalization of the industry, the banks and the foreign trade began, and in 1949 the new Planned Construction of the Settlements Act was adopted,

which covered the planning of not only urban spaces, but beyond. The act was repeatedly amended and supplemented, but for the first time it concerned problems related to the construction works in plots of land outside the regulation limits of the settlements. The act remained in force until the first half of the 1970s. In the late 1940s, implementation of the so-called five-year plans of economic development began, in parallel with the process of intensive industrialization.

Elaboration of new plans and conduction of planning contests was launched with the active support and influence of Soviet experts and city planners. Some authors define this almost a fifteen-year long period as a period of doctrine change, during which three main factors or components of the reprogramming were observed. First, those were Bulgarian experts educated in Western countries, second - a growing number of experts bearing a Soviet influence, and third - already constructed urban centers that exhibited already established spatial structure (Alexandrov, 2006). The Soviet model of development planning and economic planning was adopted. The industry was now fully nationalized, and in parallel, a huge number of production centers emerged without being complied with either demographic or natural resources. Spatial planning was divided into physical planning and centralized development planning.

In the years 1950-1951 regional planning was launched - defined at the time as territorial and “rayon” planning (in compliance with the “rayon” planning of the USSR). An Agency for regionalization and allocation of the productive forces was established, operating within the State Planning Committee (State Planning Commission) - a national institution responsible for coordinating the command economy. The Agency aimed at developing the economic fundamentals of the regional planning and later - at the elaboration of the General Scheme of Allocation of the Productive Forces in the country. In June 1960, The Institute for Regional Planning at The Committee for Architecture and Public Works was established. Regional territorial plans, which concentrated large investments for construction works, were designed. The major industrial, agricultural, resort “rayons” (not regions) and complexes were defined (Dimitrov, 2000).

In July 1965, a new part was added to this activity and The Institute for Regional (“Rayon”) Spatial Planning was established. The creation of the General Scheme of Allocation of the Productive Forces and The Unified Spatial Development Plan of the

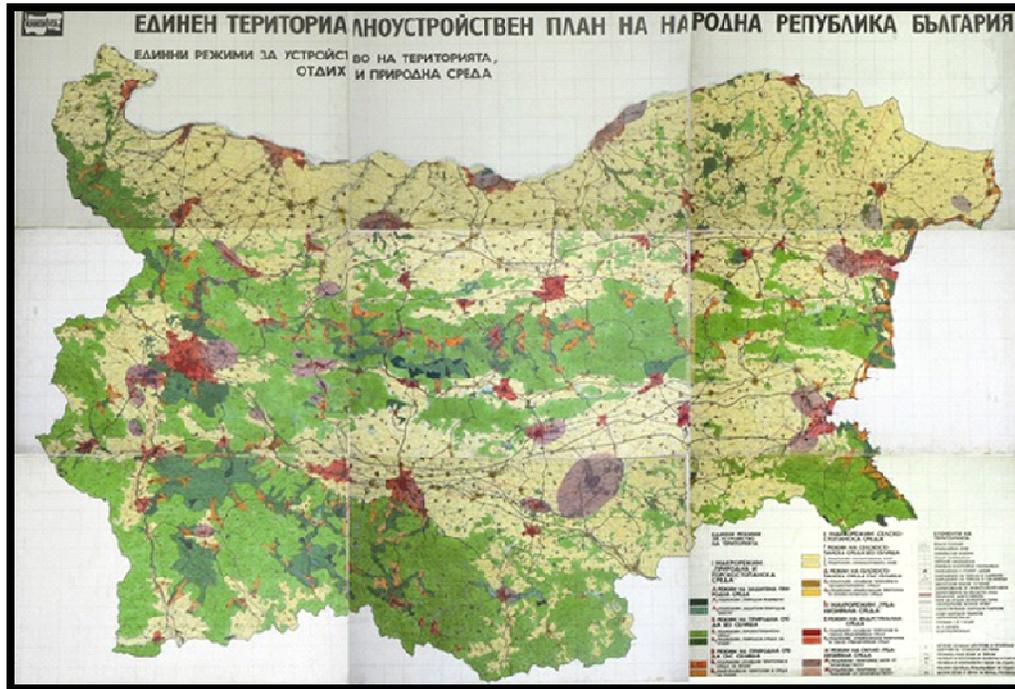
country had the potential to turn these into two very powerful accomplishment tools for the spatial planning of Bulgaria. The General Scheme was committed to the allocation of medium and large enterprises across the country, but also to their maintenance - by providing direct and indirect subsidies for the respective economic activities. As a result of this document, the industrial and agricultural enterprises became much stronger factors of regional development than local communities with all their resources. The distribution of these enterprises served to solve the various spatial issues - ensuring employment, conducting industrial policy or direct industrialization, stimulating the development of certain "priority" sectors of the economy, etc.; the planning of enterprises was based on a political decision taken at the state (central) level and not according to the local needs, resources and existing opportunities. As a consequence of this model of spatial and regional development, hidden problems emerged after some decades, or with the beginning of the post-socialist transitional period (Yanchev, 2012).

In 1973 a new Spatial and Urban Planning Act was adopted that would only be canceled at the end of the 1990s. The act distinguished two main planning zones so as to manage the growth of the cities, namely: urban and countryside zones. This act practically gave start to the first research and development of key instruments such as the Unified Spatial Development Plan of Bulgaria (USDP). According to some authors (Dimitrov, 2000), in its elaboration, the experience of the "developed countries" working on the development of the so-called "Integral plans" (USA, UK, etc.) was taken into consideration. The development of the USDP, its functional and integrative systems, had a huge methodological and applied significance for the practice of spatial planning in the country in the 1970s and 1980s, although this planning document did not eliminate the dominance of the sectorial approach to planning (Devedzhiev, 2011). The improvement of the USDP was later commissioned to a specialized institute, established within the Ministry of Construction and Architecture in 1976 – the Complex Research and Design Institute in Regional and Urban Planning (Dimitrov, 2000).

The USDP is among the most important and interesting spatial measures in Bulgaria the second half of the 20th century. It was completed in 1979 and adopted by the Council of Spatial and Urban Planning at the Council of Ministers in December that same year. In its essence, the USDP was defined as a system of comprehensive projections, programs and plans that includes and links individual elements characterizing the spatial and urban planning - settlements, non-residential areas, the natural environment and the

population. Three spatial levels were defined - national, regional and local - specifying the content of the tasks and elaborations.

Figure 17: The USDP of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Formation of the spatial structure at the national level through the Unified regimes of spatial planning



Source: Evrev (2015)

In parallel with the USDP, the Complex Research and Design Institute in Regional and Urban Planning designed spatial development plans at the regional and local level, and the period of the 1980s can be summarized by the campaign of large-scale elaboration of spatial development plans at the local level – that of the then existing settlement systems (municipalities). Each of those plans indicated the same mode of spatial planning, since the regimes existed as a "unified regime of planning". The applicability of the plans during that period was good, according to Evrev (2015). Agglomeration plans and urban development plans were also elaborated. The main disadvantages of the construction and the planning of the Bulgarian cities, however, were due to the inefficiency of the socialist economy. The directives on land use did not arise in response to the needs of the settlements, but rather as a symbol of power and

enforcement of irrational ideas. Socialism imposed on urban space the so-called “layer of reflection”, legitimized through artifacts and symbols (monuments, squares, quarters, etc.) (Zlatkova, 2010), and the *greatness* of the public projects (such as the “bedroom-suburbs” for example) showed the huge state power over the territory (Hirt, 2008). All this featured the development of socialist cities till the end of the 1980s - in stable economic conditions, with quantitative characteristics such as: growth, intensification and efficiency, technological progress, rapid urbanization and growth of the cities as industrial centers, planned by the government executing a strong intervention (Smolyanov, 2011).

Table 14: Key characteristics of the planning process in Bulgaria during the period between 1878 and 1989

Main features	1878 – 1944 Planning in The Kingdom of Bulgaria	1945 – 1989 Planning in socialist Bulgaria
Political-economic conditions of development and planning process	Initial stages of capitalism	Totalitarianism / Communist ideas of centralized national development and planning in compliance with the ideas and principles of the USSR
Legislative framework of spatial planning	Public Works Act of the Kingdom of Bulgaria (1882); Construction of the Capital Act (1934); Public Works Act of the Kingdom of Bulgaria (1941) – sectorial division of the planning instruments; Cadaster and Land Consolidation Act (annulled following 1944)	Planned Urban Construction Act (1949); Spatial And Urban Planning Act (1973)

<p style="text-align: center;">Some basic instruments for spatial planning at the national, regional and local level</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Spatial urban plans of large urban settlements such as: Urban plan of Sofia (1880), Urban plan of Plovdiv (1891), etc. The Adolf Muesmann plan of 1938 (Rejected with the start of WWII) Since 1941 – Spatial plans of urban settlements and their adjacent areas; detailed urban plans</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">USDP</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Spatial development plans of regions and settlement systems (municipalities) (partially elaborated) Urban Development Plans and Detailed Spatial Plans (partially) (In Sofia: 1945-1961 – The Urban Master Plan of Totev; 1961-1972 – the Compact Development Plan of Neykov 1979-1989 – General Urban Development Plan (not adopted)</p>
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Source: Author

The planning of regions and cities was seen as a technocratic process. This is a period in the development of spatial planning when architects and planners were given enormous power to "shape out" territories and cities according to their own understandings and values. The lack of private initiative and totalitarian form of government ensured that no civic groups or other participants took part in the planning process (Yanchev, 2012).

6.2. Episode 1: Spatial planning in the period between 1989 and 2000

The period following 1989 can generally be characterized with the transition theory, which in turn is rooted in the theory of democracy, which regards the transition as a political process. In terms of spatial processes and phenomena, the transition could also be considered as economic or political, but might not differ from transition as a whole. The transition is characterized by continuity / succession and regards the state socialism as part of the European modernity (Tsenkova et al., 2006). There are currently no strong opinions about whether the transition period has ended or not, although the country's

accession to the EU (2007) is considered by some as its end. This is a matter of studying the transition's history and its present.

The transition began with a legacy of broken, poorly coordinated systems of (socio-) economic planning and physical planning (referring especially to the planning of settlement systems and urban areas), as a result - as explained above - of the centralized command economy and almost total implementation of the directive planning with dominating hierarchical (top-down) approach (Marinov, 1999; Yanchev, 2012).

6.2.1. Socio-political dimension

The period of political changes in Bulgaria started the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th, 1989. Yanchev (2012) states two main reasons identified behind the unrest against the communist regime. On the one hand, this is the violation of human rights in the period between 1970 and 1989 (the process of forcible change of the names among the Muslim population, or the so-called "Revival Process"). On the other hand, another reason is related to the environment and the wave of emerging environmentalists in care of nature, being destroyed by the state industrial enterprises.

Although the change of power is described as a relatively "calm" process without making sacrifices, the end of 1989 was marked by street protests supporting both the new democratic changes and the former communist power. The organization of the National Round Table following the resignation of Todor Zhivkov – the Chief Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party - aimed at convening a Grand National Assembly and drafting and adoption of a new Constitution of Bulgaria.

The first attempts to introduce reforms towards a market economy system came from the National Chamber of Commerce of the USA (the "Rahn-Utt" plan), which remained unimplemented until 1997. The main reason for that was the so-called "political chaos" expressed in the conflict between the new political formations and the confrontation between political ideas and visions for development.

In the course of the serious economic crisis in 1996 and 1997, a further major reduction of state payments was accompanied by high inflation rates. The new government stabilized the country and undertook one of the first banking, financial and planning reforms. In order to stabilize the economy, a currency board was introduced under the

aegis of the IMF and the BGN was coupled with the Deutsche Mark (later the Euro) (Ermann and Waack, 2000: 42).

During the period between 1990 and 2000, the first informal and formal relations between the country and the EU began, or in other words - that was the beginning of the process of European integration (Table 15).

Table 15: Timeline of the negotiations of Bulgaria for EU accession and integration between 1990 and 2000

1990, 22nd December	Resolution for full membership in the EU, adopted by the National Assembly of Bulgaria;
1993	The EU introduces criteria for the extension of the Community, applying for the Eastern European countries as well, after the fall of the communist regime (the Copenhagen Criteria) affirmed as mandatory in 1997 (Treaty of Amsterdam);
1995, 15th December	Bulgaria applies for full membership in the EU;
1997, 16th July	The European Commission gives opinion on Bulgaria's application. Bulgaria is rated as a candidate, insufficiently prepared to start accession negotiations;
1998, 28th March	The Council of Ministers of Bulgaria adopts a National Strategy for EU accession;
1998, April	Multilateral analytical screening of the legislation of Bulgaria;
1999, 10th March	A Council of European Integration is established, together with action groups coordinating the process of Bulgaria's EU accession;
1999, December	In Helsinki, The European Commission decides to start negotiations with Bulgaria;
2000, February	Formal / Official opening of the negotiations for EU membership

Source: Author

6.2.2. Spatial development model

The new political "right" turns required significant spatial and territorial transformations, expressed in the deep land reforms. In Bulgaria, as well as in all other countries of the Soviet Union communist regime, a process of privatization began (the Privatization of State and Municipal Property Act, from 1992 to 2002 - Privatization and Post-Privatization Control Act), concessions (The Concessions Act, 1996) restitution of property (the Restitution Act, the Ownership and Use of Agricultural Land Act) - a consequence of the nationalization of land and property following 1944. As a result of the change and the restitution, many citizens and former owners regained ownership. According to Yanchev (2012), approximately 700 000 residential units in social housing blocks built by the state during the period between 1958 and 1989 were privatized in favor of their current owners.

An important point in the development of spatial transformations of Bulgaria were the processes of decentralization stipulated in the Constitution of Bulgaria from 1991 and in the Local Government and Local Administration Act (1991), by the power of which the municipalities and their settlements were entitled to manage and develop their hinterlands. According to the Constitution of Bulgaria (1991): *the territory of Bulgaria is divided into municipalities and districts, where the municipality is the main administrative-territorial unit, which carries out local governance, while the district is an administrative-territorial unit for the implementation of state governance at the local level.*

The decentralization process occurred at a varying pace and was often accompanied by contradictory assessments and results, as well as temporary interruptions (Decentralization Strategy 1996-2015; Decentralization Strategy 2016-2025). The decentralization process in the country went through three main stages: 1990-1995; 1996-2000 and from 2001 on. The first two steps were essential because of the clarification of the principles and forms of decentralization, the preparation and the enactment of some of the first administrative-territorial reforms (the Administrative-Territorial Division of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, 1995). Serious attention was paid to the implementation of the administrative decentralization and the defining of the local authorities' competences (264 municipalities, grouped into 9 districts – a territorial unit with controlling functions mostly). The second stage was related to the development of

the property-financial basis of the local government (financial decentralization). The Municipal Property Act was adopted in 1996, and a year later – the financial independence of the municipalities was launched - one of the most current and effective criticisms of the decentralization process following 2001 and 2007. In 1995 Bulgaria ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in its mandatory part, and in 1996 the first Decentralization Strategy for the 1996-2015 period was adopted.

With the reformation of the administrative-territorial division in 1998, the number of districts was increased from 9 to 28. In addition to that - six planning regions corresponding to the NUTS II (System EUROSTAT NUTS) level were established in 2000, which are not administrative-territorial units but are only used for the purposes of regional statistics, regional policy and planning (Marinov, 2006). Meanwhile, the system of spatial planning remained without reforms and to the last years of the 1989-2000 period, planning was often regarded as a "dirty word", denied based on the idea that market economy does not need planning (Evrev, 2015; Marinov, 1999; Yanchev, 2012). However, efforts in the integration process and the EU recommendations for planning, as well as the adoption of European funds, led to the start of a number of new processes, including that of regionalization, which was accompanied by the adoption of the first Regional Development Act (1999) in Bulgaria.

In parallel, the patterns of the post-socialist urban development – indiscriminate, often illegal, building, an individualist approach to property, weak or almost no public contribution in the infrastructure and the public space – had strengthen those patterns' presence in the urban fabric. Certain protected areas have been invaded by *ad hoc* investment projects (Yanchev, 2012:38).

6.2.3. Technical dimension

The closure of all institutes for spatial planning which used to elaborate all types of land use plans during the communist regime, was among the first transformations associated with the technical dimension of the planning system in Bulgaria. Almost all of the land use plans' development was redirected from the public (state) sector to the private sector. The emerging private architectural (and spatial planning) companies (subsequently - design companies) founded by people from liquidated companies working on government projects prior to 1989, were one of the signs of transition during

the 1990s. The exception was Sofia where the municipal planning was focused in "Sofproekt" Company - part of the Municipal Urban Planning and Development Department. The National Center for Regional Development became part of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, but remained without subsidies and completely dependent on the dynamics of the market and on the competition - as far as public procurements and tenders were concerned. The main act which regulated the process of spatial planning, as mentioned earlier, was the Spatial and Urban Planning Act (1973), which was cosmetically reformed and amended repeatedly so as to regulate mainly the process of issuing building permits in the market environment, while planning instruments (spatial plans) in their essence remained the same - as regulated by the communist regime. The inherited methodology for pre-planning and research (diagnosis) did not reflect at all the current complex situation, which the planning system was in. Planning instruments can generally be grouped into two main categories - spatial schemes (originally regulated by the Spatial and Urban Planning Act as "plans") and spatial plans, organized in a hierarchical order. The schemes were designated for areas of larger scale - national, regional (district), whereas plans were elaborated for municipalities, settlements and neighborhoods. Plans were also divided into General Spatial Plans and Detailed Spatial Plans. Similarly to the principles of communist planning, all spatial documents were subject to the planned (but never accomplished) National Spatial Development Scheme, which in turn was subject to the National Plan for Economic Development (Yanchev, 2012).

Following the totalitarian principles, spatial land use plans were not able to communicate a planning concept and thus became the arena for debate and concord. That is why these are perceived by the public and businesses primarily as restrictive technocratic documents which hinder the freedom of land development. Spatial planning is seen as a bureaucratic step, merely as a tool for issuing building permits (ibid.).

The withdrawal of the state from the possession of land and from land management, the restoration of private property and the privatization process during the 1990s, created a sort of vacuum in which various entities, acting in different ways, operated in this new reality with or without training. The most unprepared and least active happened to be the local authorities (municipalities), albeit the acquired competencies regulated by the adoption of a new Constitution and new legal documents and strategies at the national

level.

While planning at the national level was denied, "evaded" due to "trauma" of another period, the local authorities were definitely not prepared for independent decision-making, i.e. "they work on inertia, the way they are accustomed to" (I. Mutafchiiska, personal communication, July, 2016).

Several key moments affected, more or less significantly, the technical structure of the system of spatial planning in the 1990-2000 period: The Bulgarian Black Sea coast plans campaign (1); The legislative changes and innovations in the field of environmental management (2); The beginning of regional development planning (3).

(1) The spatial development plans for the Bulgarian Black Sea municipalities project

The project for the preparation of the coastal municipalities' spatial development plans began as an initiative of the World Bank in 1995, aiming at an integrated management of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. This "large-scale, chrestomatically elaborated program", carried out jointly with the Ministry of Regional Development and funded by the Global Environment Fund in 1996, was among the first revealing opportunities for the experts in the field of planning. It was with this program that the field of spatial planning was first connected to a new tool called Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (Troeva, 2015). The project aimed at planning of the most important seaside resort municipalities with regards to the exhaustion of their capacity. It was "tailored by the book" and demonstrated exactly how this (planning) activity should be organized. The planning of the territory had to be done in a completely different way - something which few people had the knowledge of¹⁸. An important element of this task was the preparation of a methodological guidance and a preliminary spatial scheme of the entire coast, on the basis of which the provisioned plans for the announced 14 Black Sea municipalities had to be elaborated. However, this process was still difficult at the time for a number of reasons. Among them were the unfinished processes of restitution (including those concerning the towns' centers), the beginning of the so-called

¹⁸ "In a poor country where people were deprived of the ability to manage their own property for 50 years, just like the effect of the pendulum – a turn to the opposite direction was observed - everyone started wanting to get maximum profit from their acquired property, not always entirely legally" (V. Troeva, personal communication, March, 2015).

“construction boom” in all resorts, the participation of municipal authorities and mayors, etc., which eventually lead the overall process of spatial planning to a non-compliance with the provisioned plans and their constant violation (ibid.).

(2) Introduction of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Environmental Protection Act

After the completion of most of the plans along the Black Sea coast, Bulgaria undertook the introduction of yet another document, along with the rest of the EU countries (the EU Directive 85/337/EEC). This was the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which document can be regarded as a maximum expression of the EU's influence for the period from 1989 to 1997, when speaking about spatial planning policies in the environmental sector in general.

Environment and its conservation became a major concern after a long period of centralized planning, resulting in the creation of large industrial structures, complexes and systems across the country. Until the early 1990s this field in Bulgaria was regulated by the Nature Protection Act, adopted in 1967, which, however, did not oblige the recognition of problems, nor the dealing with problems related to pollution and threats to biodiversity. After the fall of the communist regime, the changes that followed defined the solving of these environmental problems, as well as the environmental management and protection - reflected in the Environmental Protection Act, adopted in October 1991.

The introduction of EIA as an important tool of direct influence on the process of spatial planning, led to the requirement for a multidisciplinary evaluation of each plan. This in turn led to attracting new specialists / experts from different fields, who, however, lacked experience, sufficient information and knowledge (Yanchev, 2012).

(3) The adoption of the Regional Development Act and the beginning of regionalization

The reforms in Bulgaria in the process of European integration were followed by a reform of the regional administrative structure and its role in spatial planning. Parallel to this, the policy of economic and social cohesion holds a key position and apart from providing significant resources from the Community, the cohesion policy also sets

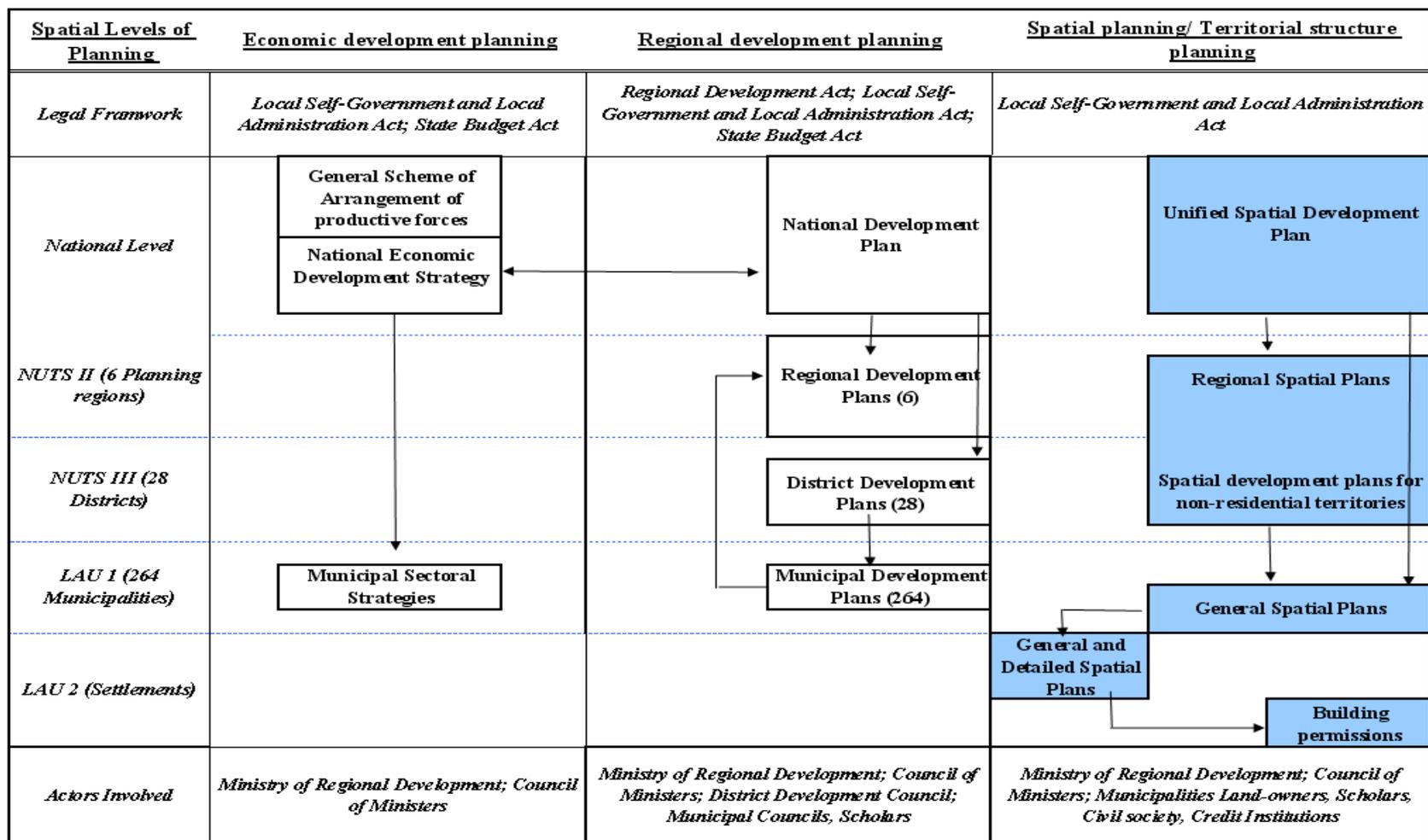
specific requirements for the member states and especially for the membership applicants¹⁹ (Marinov, 2001). This is why the discussion about the need for regional policy in Bulgaria started as early as the beginning of the 1990s (at the time concerning mostly mountainous regions, the development of which was lagging behind considerably). However, the overall development of a planning system didn't find its manifestations until the 1998-1999 period with the establishment of a number of events such as: the preparation of the first medium-term public investment program (1998) and especially with the adoption of the Regional Development Act (March 1999); the foundation - in parallel to the same legal act - of the Regional Development Council at the ministerial level, with the participation of key ministries responsible for the policy development; the preparation of the National Plan for Regional Development and the District Development Plans (October 1999). A special preparatory program for the structural funds, as well as a regional Operational Program, was also launched. As in most post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the expected EU accession and the access to EU funds gave impetus and had a significant influence on introducing and designing regional development approaches, legislation and planning. With the adoption of the Regional Development Act the elaboration of a whole new set of strategic documents for development began. Strategic planning is considered a better way of achieving public investment in spatial development than the existing inflexible land use plans.

In the first years after the adoption of the RDA, none of the required strategies was elaborated - the actual design and implementation of those planning documents only began years later (from 2004 on). The reason for that was that after the introduction of such a completely new set of planning documents, their purpose was not explicitly formulated by the commissioning authority, namely: the Ministry of Regional Development. Furthermore, those documents were not clearly linked to financial resources. The lack of experience, the limited participation of local and regional actors, the deadlines for completion of many of the documents, as well as other prerequisites, were among the main factors.

¹⁹ Regional policy is a direct object of the accession negotiations, of the regular progress reports and of the National program for adoption of the *acquis* (Chapter 21: "Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments")

In parallel to all that, a process of regionalization was launched. That process should not be regarded as a process of regional decentralization, but rather as a process of deconcentration. Bulgaria adopted the NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) system of Eurostat and depending on their characteristics and those of the RDA, the country's territory was divided into the following three levels: NUTS I (2 regions), NUTS II (6 regions), NUTS III (28 districts) and LAU 1 (264 municipalities). In order to gain access to the EU funds, Bulgaria had to develop strategic planning documents for all those territorial units, so that regional and local development priorities were formulated. The environmental impact of all those priorities also had to be evaluated by the EIA tool. Of all three newly adopted levels of planning, only the local level units (the municipalities) have an actual government, democratically elected by its residents. The governors of the 28 districts are appointed by the Council of Ministers. All other higher territorial units have Development Councils, consisting of the regional governors and the municipality mayors.

Figure 18: Spatial Planning Instruments in Bulgaria, 1989-2000



Source: Author

6.2.4. Cognitive dimension

During this period too – as during the communist regime - spatial planning is almost entirely in the hands of professional architects, many of whom specialized in the field of urban planning - given that the main educational center in this area is the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG) in Sofia (known as the Civil Engineering Institute until 1963, the Higher Civil Engineering Institute until 1977 and the Higher Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering until 1992). The architecture institutes, as well as the UACEG, have been collectors of knowledge for spatial planning, and a place where expert-architects in the field of plans elaboration have been trained not only till the end of the communist regime, but later as well (Yanchev, 2012).

A major element in the preparation of Bulgaria for the EU accession following 1989 (as well as any other country in its pre-accession years) was the training of personnel involved in the process of successful participation in the EU structural funds. The development of plans for recruitment and training of specialists in the field of structural funds became an important commitment that the candidate-countries made during the accession negotiations. This was related to the need for strengthening the capacity of local administration in the process of absorption of the pre-accession EU financial instruments (PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD). The successful participation of candidate-countries in the integration process required learning processes, knowledge and exchange of knowledge and information, as well as active participation in the cooperation with partners of different territorial levels, participation in European projects, influencing the process of decision-making, etc. Bulgaria ratified its participation in the co-financing of ISPA (in 2000), SAPARD (in 2000) and PHARE (in 1999 / incl. PHARE cross-border cooperation). In 1994 the spatial cooperation between border regions of Bulgaria and Greece through the INTERREG program (INTERREG II 1994-1999 and subsequently INTERREG III 2000-2006) was introduced. Cooperation with Romania was also launched (1999), and some years later - with other Balkan countries such as Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro (at the time) and Turkey. This was possible thanks to the

CADSES²⁰ (INTERREG II C) initiative. Key acting participants were the UACEG, the Technical University of Sofia, Sofia Municipality, the National Association of the Municipalities in Bulgaria, as well as municipalities and cities with a considerable expert-administrative capacity. Although INTERREG is rated as one of the most successful pre-accession programs, it has not won great popularity in Bulgaria. The projects have started, but as Yanchev (2012) specified, the effect on the process of knowledge exchange is not as fast as it is in other Eastern European countries (P.Yanchev, personal communication, July, 2016).

A major result of INTERREG - CADSES was the inclusion of Bulgaria in the ESTIA (European Space and Territorial Integration Alternatives: Spatial Development Strategies and Policy Integration in SEE) project. The project aimed at developing a common framework for coordination / integration of spatial planning priorities in Southeast Europe (ESTIA, 2000). The Bulgarian partner in this entirely Greek initiative was the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in the face of the Institute of Geography and Prof. Boris Kolev, who led the project. However, no attempts have been made for interdisciplinary research in the field of spatial planning, while in the report on the state of the Bulgarian system of spatial planning, the information provided was reflected in the then Spatial Planning Act without commenting on the planning documents' status or the rejection of any planning practices. Bulgaria's participation in ESTIA remained almost unnoticed, so was its participation in the next edition of the project (2000) – the ESTIA-SPOSE project, which theoretically was to be based on the knowledge and experience gained from its predecessor – the ESTIA project. Among the objectives of the second edition was the elaboration of Actions for a Spatial Planning Observatory in Southeast Europe, based on an integrated system of territorial indicators fully compatible with the approach of the ESDP and the ESPON.

The geographic community in Bulgaria has been focusing its research on space using a different methodological approach – one much closer to that of Russia's socioeconomic geography imposed during the communism period. Geographers are more competent in

²⁰ CADSES - Central, Adriatic, Danubian and Southeast European Space) programme zone of the European INTERREG Initiative

matters related to the regional and the economic development of the territory, which require complex geographic analysis, whereas planning is a technical discipline that requires the work of architects and designers.

6.2.5. Discursive dimension

The main debate in spatial planning slowly acquired a new role in the free market which over the first 10 years had been creating "the rules" of the necessity of such a debate, even more so because such planning was typical for another period which no one wanted to even talk about. Despite the overall attitude of *no need to develop plans*, some cities, including Sofia, began to express directly or indirectly the need for such planning, considering the turbulent transformations of the urban environment which created problems with the privatization of public spaces, indiscriminate construction models, transportation and infrastructure problems, including traffic jams, the still existing buildings and colossal ideological monuments with a glimpse of the totalitarian past. Naturally, civil calls for planning were heard by the successors of the communist party who announced themselves pro-planning. Thus planning as such, hardly found any supporters outside the planning community.

An important input of the new spatial planning discourses came from the presence of Bulgaria at the CEMAT meetings. Those influences, however, affected only few professionals as the language problem was still a barrier for absorbing knowledge and concepts from abroad (Yanchev, 2012). The Spatial Planning Charter signed in Torremolinos (1983) was among the main discourses on regional development and planning from the late 1990s, which confirmed the idea of the region as the best planning scale. Along with the process of regionalization, this opened the discourse on introducing a second (regional) level of local governance (and its spatial scope – the district or the region), which process continued even after the start of the Bulgarian EU membership. In parallel, the idea of imposing environmental awareness and the formation of ecological discourse emerged - thanks to a number of international events. For the first time documents such as the Water Act, the Protected Areas Act, the Energy Efficiency Act and the Clean Air Act, were introduced as a result of the adoption of a number of

international documents on sustainable development, including the Global Plan of Action (Agenda 21) from 1992 (Rio de Janeiro) and projects for sustainable human development (ibid.).

6.3. Episode 2: Planning and EU membership, 2001-2013

6.3.1. Spatial planning in the 2001-2006 period

6.3.1.1. Socio-political dimension

The period following the year 2000 was marked by a new governance of the country (the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha government), which however did not provide satisfactory solving of the internal political and economic problems such as poverty²¹, rising crime levels, etc. Dimov (2007) summarizes the period following the 1990s (from 1997 on in particular) as a period of socioeconomic development of Bulgaria mainly through the application of external models and programs, without implementing the results of research and targeted analyses of the research teams. However, reforms in the financial system and some financial stabilization of the country, led to the creation of a favourable investment environment for private (local and foreign) investment, especially in real estate. During its first year, the new government was passive in conducting reforms in the field of spatial planning and development. The main priority was the European integration. That period coincided with the successful completion of the negotiations for membership in the Community (December 2004) and with the European Parliament's voting for admission of the country in April 2005 (534 votes for and 88 against). In this context, the outcome of the vote was particularly positive considering the reserved public opinion among the "old" member states of the EU from the very beginning of the negotiations for admission of countries such as Bulgaria and Romania (Ermann and Waack, 2007). In September 2006 the European Commission recommended the country's membership to be formally regulated by January 1st, 2007.

²¹ According to data of the Institute for Market Economics, the GDP per capita as of 2002 and 2003 was approximately ¼ of the EU average.

In parallel with the integration process, several departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were created, commissioned with tasks related to the acceleration of the country's membership (along with a corresponding European Affairs Minister).

6.3.1.2. Spatial model

The first efforts for planning (of the regional development) were not particularly successful at both the regional and the local level, as a result of lack of coordination and balance between the planning documents (development documents and spatial planning documents required by the EU), limited public participation, lack of appropriate analysis of the growing spatial / regional disparities²², etc. (Dimov, 2007). The latter were mainly related to the distribution of the urban network or to the regional differences between the urban settlements. The intra-regional disparities were to be regarded as differences between the cities and their peripheries.

The system of spatial planning was partially reformed with the repeal of the Spatial and Urban Planning Act (from 1973) and the adoption of the new Spatial Planning Act (2001). The period coincided with an economic growth and an increase of the share of direct foreign investments. The latter had a significant impact, especially on the real estate sector, and following 2002 led to the so-called "boom" of the development of the real estate market. The process was intense and accompanied by a rise of mortgage lending and indiscriminate issuance of building permits (for lack of a spatial and urban planning concept) in major Bulgarian cities, regional centers and tourist (coastal and mountainous) areas.

Despite the practice of EIA issuing, sustainable development was not the focus of public influence. All those led to speculations with the overall system of planning documents (where those were available at all), which failed to regulate the process of the private investment management as well. V. Troeva explains that this trend was complemented by a full incompliance with the prescriptions for resort areas governance with regard to the

²² As of 2002 the GDP per capita of the most developed Bulgarian planning region (NUTS 2) was 41.7% of the EU-25 average. In other regions, this figure varies between 23.2% (South-Central) to 25.5% (North), while the national average was 28.3% of the EU-25 average (Marinov, 2006).

environmental protection and optimal development of various tourist and sports activities (V. Troeva, personal communication, March, 2015).

6.3.1.3. Technical dimension

The extreme development of the real estate market gave rise to a planning practice known in Bulgaria as "fragmented planning". Many tourist resorts and cities were trying to attract more investments, which was accompanied by an increase of the construction of houses / apartment buildings, hotels, holiday and golf resorts, etc., whose building permits were often issued based on a new Detailed Spatial Plan uncoordinated with the already existing one, or in the complete absence of a spatial plan. It is known, however, that the General Spatial Plan largely limits the ability of local administrations (municipalities) to operate freely and to decide in a "fragmented" mode on newly emerged needs (of private character). The General Plan is able, if not to thwart, at least to slow down the investment plans whenever it is necessary for those to be amended, since the amending itself is a long and complicated procedure. Therefore, as Evrev (2008) states, the General Plans were "unpopular", since they hindered the realization of such intentions. When there is no plan to limit the municipal administrations, it is easier to come to partial solutions²³. This overall process of "fragmented planning" led to indiscriminate construction and urbanization of many areas of the country, which are of significant importance for the natural balance and the ecology.

Three important events defined the development of spatial planning in the 2001-2006 period, and those should be considered separately. These are the adoption of the Spatial Planning Act of Bulgaria (1); the adoption of the new Regional Development Act (2); the Domestic legislation alignment (under pressure by the EU requirements) (3).

²³ According to the SPA, the provisions of the General Spatial Plans, which determine the overall structure and the predominant purpose of the territories, the type and purpose of the technical infrastructure, environmental protection and protection of cultural heritage objects are required in the elaboration of the Detailed Spatial Plans. In other words, the Detailed Plan can be only elaborated if a General Plan exists, with whose provisions it has to comply.

(1) The Spatial Planning Act

The most important change since 1989, which marks the development of spatial planning in Bulgaria is the adoption of the Spatial Planning Act (SPA) in March 2001, repealing the Spatial and Urban Planning Act (SUPA) of 1973. The new act was not affected by EU regulations but offered a new framework for negotiations between landowners and for spatial planning (Yanchev, 2012; P. Yanchev, personal communication, August, 2016; S. Doshekov, personal communication, July, 2016). A fundamental change in the understanding of the country's territory was introduced. The previous act of 1973 focused mainly on the difference between the two types of territory - urban and rural (non-residential), while the new SPA sought to eliminate the division between urban and rural areas, and to create a regime that depends on the characteristics of the territory with regard to its purpose, according to the adopted plans. The main spatial categories were the urbanized areas, followed by the agricultural areas (arable land and some uncultivated land), uncultivated areas (forests) and protected areas. Some concepts were replaced - for example, "plot" was now called "land property". Each land property could be regulated by a General or a Detailed Spatial Plan so as to designate the status and the functions of that piece of land. Thus all the power of land use was effectively transferred to the plan itself, which now had the status of a legislative act. Land properties could be grouped in spatial and development zones, which were determined in accordance with the General and the Detailed Spatial Plans, while construction was considered legal only if it had been approved by an enacted Detailed Spatial Plan.

The adoption of the SPA regulates the elaboration and the existence of a series of hierarchical documents at the different levels, which practically do not differ from the earlier known plans (at the municipal and at the city level) and schemes (at the regional²⁴ and at the national level). The plans maintain the conditions of the planning schemes and yet offer much more detailed and specific information thanks to their spatial delimitation. In the hierarchical system the plans are divided into General Spatial Plans, Urban

²⁴ The act uses the term "rayon", respectively - "Rayon development schemes", without precisely defining their extent. I.e. the rayon can comprise a group of municipalities or districts.

Development Plans (of cities or regional centers of national importance) and Detailed Spatial Plans.

Plans (where they existed at all) remained unchanged in its explicitness and technocracy in regard to private or public interventions. The principles of their contents, structure and the way they were elaborated, were still unchanged, perpetual and non-transferable. Later, as it proved, at the time of the rise of mortgage loans, the SPA became one of the most amended acts in the country (over 50 amendments by 2013). The structure and the type of the planning documents and their hierarchy, however, (with some minor exceptions) remained unchanged. The SPA is the first legal act that introduces the concept of "scheme", respectively, in documents such as the national and the regional schemes. A kind of "novelty" was the National Spatial Development Scheme, which completely replaced the Unified Spatial Development Plan. Since there are no strictly appointed deadlines for the elaboration and updating of the spatial schemes and plans, there has been a long delay of the National Spatial Development Scheme and a lot of other plans even to date. More than 50 % of the municipalities²⁵ follow the example of the Ministry and have not developed General Spatial Plans due to low expertise capacity and weak political will. Many local governments justify this fact with the lack of development schemes / documents at a higher level in the hierarchy (national, regional, district), so they do not have guidelines for spatial priorities at the municipal level. Another problem is the financial instability of local authorities and the lack of funds for the preparation of planning documents - primarily in small and medium-sized municipalities. However, the preparation of regional strategic documents was very important for the integration of Bulgaria as a future member of the EU. It created a boost of the political awareness for strategic planning, together with the emergence of a culture of strategic spatial planning and practice, especially at the municipal level. The reports of the United Nations Development Program for that period (2004-2006) showed that municipalities had gained experience, knowledge and awareness of the possibility to set strategic priorities and to implement those through projects (Yanchev, 2012).

²⁵ As of June 2013, a total of 117 municipalities had a General Spatial Plan, out of which 7 had been adopted over the past seven years. 33 municipalities are at different stages of preparation, coordination or adoption of General Plans, 114 municipalities are planning on possible projects till 2013, but only after being provided with financial resources (G.Chavdarova, personal communication, June, 2013)

(2) The new Regional Development Act

Nevertheless, a number of problems in the field of strategic planning became more visible. The RDA (of 1999), which was the first attempt to settle and regulate the public relations in the field of regional development and planning, was not in compliance with the European legislation and the provisions of Regulation 1260/1999 of the EU, governing the terms and the general conditions for the obtaining of financial support from the structural funds, which in their turn represented the basic requirements for successful negotiations for the country's EU membership on Chapter 21: "Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments" (Galabinova, 2006; IME, 2006).

Criticism of the completion and the implementation of the RDA (Marinov et al., 2002), together with the "quiet" period between 2001 and 2004 - when some of the planned activities, implementations and monitoring activities practically stopped (except those at the municipal level), eventually led to the adoption of the new RDA in February 2004. The new RDA did not overcome the main shortcomings of its predecessor. The two systems of planning documents (related to structural funds programming and to regional development planning), as well as the two planning approaches ("top-down" and "bottom-up") were "integrated" rather mechanically. The new planning process was much more complex in terms of procedures, documents and participants as compared to 1999-2000, and at the same time much more real in terms of the desired outcomes. Marinov (2006) argues that the quality and content of the planning documents could have been improved. At that moment, three parallel planning instruments were used to plan the territory of Bulgaria. All three lines of planning were under the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works: the economic development strategies; the regional plans and programs; the land use schemes and projects.

Scientists have been paying attention to the artificial partitioning of the planning process and have been recommending over the years that the processes of planning, regional development and land use be connected and harmonized in some way. (Marinov, 2006; Dimitrov, 2010). Marinov (2006) also explains that regional planning has developed good practices in the preparation of projects at various administrative levels, but there is a risk of "planning for the sake of planning". He adds that plans have been mostly

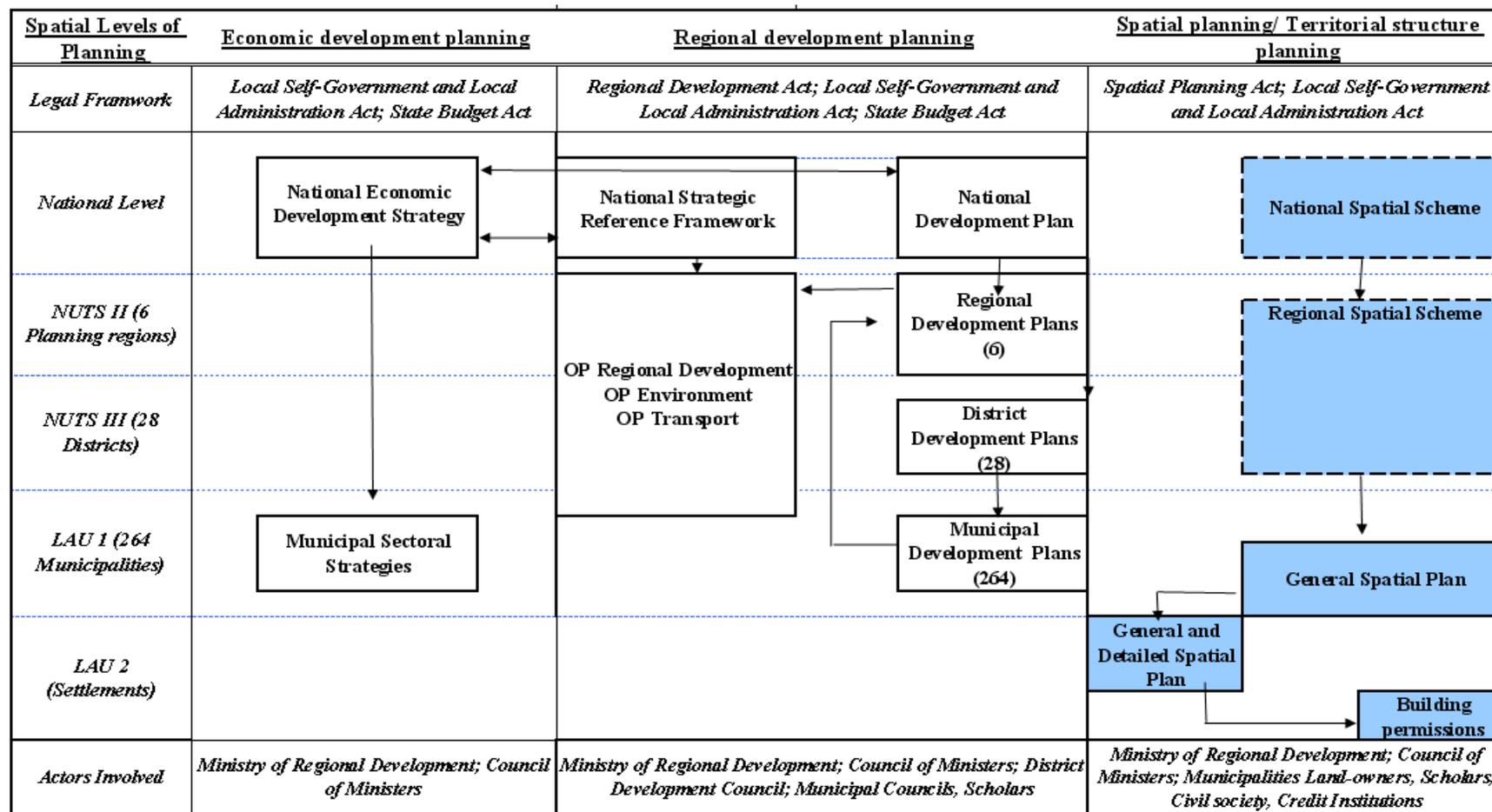
developed only to meet the EU requirements – that is – simply to demonstrate that such plans exist.

NGOs also did not appear to be sufficiently prepared to enter the planning process. New players emerged in the process of creating new strategic and development documents. The consultants who develop documents for regional planning are mostly private contractors, some of which without even the sufficient knowledge in that field. The low financial and expertise capacity of the municipalities has led to the gradual withdrawal of specialists from the public administrations so that those can later start operating as private consultants. The practice of certifying individuals in the preparation of development plans has been often criticized. Assessing the effectiveness and the quality of those plans, therefore, is not clear enough (Yanchev, 2012).

(3) Domestic legislation alignment

So far, some new legislative documents of a spatial dimension have been introduced. Such are the Energy Efficiency Act (1999/2005), the Biodiversity Act (in 2002, after the NATURA 2000 network of protected areas), the Waste Management Act (2003), the Chambers of Architects and Engineers Act (2003), the Public Procurement Act (2004). All these legal documents have set, to a certain extent, some new rules and restrictions in the process of spatial governance. The Public Procurement Act is particularly important since it applies the European practice through Directive 2004/18 / EU. The act has no spatial aspects but is related to spatial planning by regulating spatial planning and architectural contests. The latter could potentially become more transparent and easily accessible to a greater number of professionals and hence - the results to become more open to the general public and the media. The act may provide opportunities for debate and inclusion of various representatives in the process of spatial planning (Yanchev, 2012).

Figure 19: Spatial Planning Instruments in Bulgaria, 2001-2006



Source: Author

6.3.1.4. Cognitive dimension

Till 2002 spatial planning in Bulgaria was dominated by architects, mainly because of the domain of urban planning (P. Stoyanov, personal communication, March, 2015; Yanchev, 2012). In 2002 the UACEG launched an autonomous Bachelor's degree in urban planning under the guidance of prof. V. Troeva and in 2006 - a Master's program in the same specialty. The degrees were established after soliciting students input and reviewing the curricula of several leading planning schools in Europe. However, faculty from the university have identified some impediments to the development of degrees in integrated planning, including the mere fact that under Bulgarian law, the UACEG cannot hire, in permanent positions, faculty with degrees other than the ones identified as primary (other than architecture). In other words, faculty with training in, say, economics or law, can only be employed as temporary. This hardly helps the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum (Stanilov and Hirt, 2009: 116).

It is believed that the professionals who will be trained in these educational programs should equally know the European trends in spatial planning and traditions, as much as they do the local / domestic planning. The "Urbanism" specialty (urban / city planning) was introduced to the National Classification of Occupations in Bulgaria. However, as V. Troeva noted, the specialty is not quite positively accepted among architects (the Union of Architects in Bulgaria) and even by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (V. Troeva, personal communication, March, 2015). The introduction of that specialty led to further controversy about whether it fully covers spatial planning, given that the word "planners" in Bulgaria is hardly ever used and therefore - not well understood, as opposed to titles such as "architect" or "engineer". This is one of the reasons why that specialty (Bachelor's and subsequently – Master's degree) was changed to "Urbanism" and the experts - "urbanists" (ibid.). And despite the fact that urban planning has particularly strong roots in the countries in transition, and training is carried out in Architecture universities or within that major (Architecture), in a neighboring country such as Serbia, the major "Spatial planning" has been taught in the Faculty of Geography at the University of Belgrade since 1976 (Stanilov and Hirt, 2009).

Another key point in teaching planning is the launching of a Bachelor's program in Regional Development and Policy at the Faculty of Geology and Geography - Sofia University (SU), in 2005. The curriculum has been modeled based on similar majors in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. The program was introduced as a response to the political turn to the EU discourse on regionalization of spatial planning. Emphasis is placed on the political, geographical and social dimensions of the planning and the territory. According to the qualification characteristics of the specialty, the students acquire skills in regional development and policy, and in particular - in the field of programming, implementation and monitoring of plans, strategies, regional development programs and other areas.

The curriculums at SU and the UACEG try to provide knowledge of European magnitude. GIS training was introduced in both, though GIS at SU was introduced much earlier (in the "Geography" major), and has reached certain success in the training of experts.

6.3.1.5. Discursive dimension

The whole discourse on spatial planning in the pre-accession period (till 2006 including), acquired a European dimension in trying to show that we can adapt to the requirements of the EU and the forthcoming membership of Bulgaria. Concepts such as regional sustainable development, spatial cohesion, competitiveness and strategic planning, are used in high level documents and in the overall academic discourse which tries to demonstrate progress in the field of regional planning and development.

The prioritization of certain projects, however, shows that spatial planning in Bulgaria still revolves around two main central locations – the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and the territory of Sofia (Yanchev, 2012). This is followed by discourses on privatization of public spaces in the large Bulgarian cities – a trend that follows the overall development of post-socialist cities in Eastern and Central Europe.

6.3.2. Spatial planning in conditions of EU membership, 2007-2013

6.3.2.1. Socio-political dimension

The EU membership as of January 1st, 2007 was almost immediately accompanied by the start of the European financial and economic crisis. The socialist government at the same time did not recognize at all the signs of an upcoming crisis, even long after the first strong reminders such as the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in September 2008. Indeed, some political figures spread the belief that the Bulgarian economy was immuned to the turmoil in the global financial markets. The crisis was felt in Eastern Europe long after 2009 (Yanchev, 2012:53). The crisis and the governance mandate of the new center-right conservative party (the Borisov Cabinet) set a strategy of maximum benefiting from the EU funds and the EU funding. Nevertheless, Bulgaria became the poorest country in the Community.

6.3.2.2. Spatial model

A new Regional Development Act and its implementation regulations was adopted, which aim was to introduce changes to the macroeconomic social and political environment, as well as achieving the objectives of structural adjustment and development of the various territorial units in the context of the EU cohesion policy. As far as economic development indicators are concerned, Bulgaria is among the poorest countries in the Union. The infrastructure and transport projects, energy projects (those for renewable energy) - projects subsidized and ensuring sustainability – did not reduce appreciably the regional disparities. The unemployment rate rose significantly following 2008 (Yanchev, 2012).

The lack of approaches and of linkage between the analysis of the current situation and the project solutions, combined with the lack of current information, professional and administrative capacity, together with outdated norms, eventually leads to making inappropriate decisions in the field of spatial planning. An example of such a solution is the practice of increasing the cities' area without a real and logical need in times of demographic crisis and shrinking cities trend (Redjeb and Chakarova, 2016).

6.3.2.3. *Technical dimension*

With the EU membership, the urban and spatial development was again in the focus under pressure from - and in line with - the EU policies and priorities. This agenda led to the campaign mode of commissioning the elaboration of a number of structural and strategic plans, including a new category of instruments called Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development (Redjeb and Chakarova, 2016). However, at the beginning of that period, no changes in the inertial trend of underestimating the process of spatial planning as a whole, were observed, which led to some difficulties with the EU funds absorbing. The multiple changes of the Spatial Planning Act and the RDA were treated separately, and the variety of plans (development plans, forest management plans, protected areas plans, conservation and management of cultural heritage, development and sectorial plans, etc.) for spatial governance, which overlap to a certain extent – in terms of information - suggests the need for profound reforms. The SPA is an extremely "heavy" document since it integrates spatial planning, construction and the investment process. At the local level the situation is even more complex. The municipalities are those actors which experience the most problems with the absorption of funds and it is in their case where the acknowledgment of the need for plans is the greatest, while in the same time the public is generally unaware of what has been promised in these documents (Dimitrov, 2011).

The period from 2007 to 2013 coincided with the respective programming period of the EU and therefore exhibited certain implementations in regional development. In Bulgaria this was accompanied by adoption of the third new RDA and (re)organization of the structure of the Operational Programs for the new planning period (1). An important moment in the development of the system of spatial planning instruments was the introduction of changes related to the implementations of the system of instruments, which system had been characterized by its static condition for over ten years approximately – since the adoption of the SPA. This implementation is related to the development and the adoption of a key instrument at the national level – the National Spatial Development Concept (2012) (2) and the introduction of integrated urban

planning, through the development of Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development (3).

(1) The Operational Programs and the new RDA

The reforms in the system of regional planning are mostly related to the utilization of financial resources from the EU structural funds. According to the proposed (by the European Commission, in the early 2004) financial framework for Bulgaria, funds that are intended to be allocated and utilized by Bulgaria for the 2007-2013 period totaled approximately € 11 billion from 7 Operational Programs (OPs) : OP “Transport”, OP “Regional Development”, OP “Environment”, OP “Administrative Capacity”, OP “Human Resource Development”, OP “Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”, OP “Technical Assistance”, and the Operational Program for Rural Development through the European Agricultural Fund for the development of rural regions (Galabinova, 2012). Operational Programs "Transport" and "Environment", as well as a certain set of priority projects within OP "Regional Development", received higher total budget compared to other Operational Programs.

In parallel, a new legislative reform in regional development was carried out in 2008 with the adoption of the new (third) RDA, currently in force. The new RDA is based on the need to change the national legislative framework in the field of regional policy and regional development, making it consistent with the terms of Bulgaria's full membership in the EU. Some important directions of the regional development policy at the European level have been taken into account, which are related to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, the EU sustainable development policy and the European territorial cooperation. According to this new version of the RDA, the system of instruments for strategic planning and programming covers: the National Development Plan, the National Strategic Reference Framework, the Operational Programs co-financed by the EU funds, the National Strategy for Regional Development, Regional Development Plans, Regional Development Strategies and Municipal Development Plans.

Among the major infrastructure priorities are the construction of four highways, the subway system in the capital city, major railway corridors to Turkey and Romania, a

second bridge over the Danube River. In the first years, abuse of power and fraud with concerning the absorption of EU funds were observed. The problems were mainly due to the unclear management of the "European money", which resulted in freezing of part of the funds by the EU and led to administrative reforms of the EU funds management, together with audit and control of all expenditures and practices associated with these funds. This has helped strengthen the partnership and the cooperation between the national institutions at the different levels on the one hand, and the EU authorities, on the other. The main emphasis of the priority projects was on transport. Transport infrastructure is still seen as the factor that will eventually drag Bulgaria out of the economic and financial crisis and will foster growth in the different regions. This decision was a continuation of a line of thought and a vision from back in the 1970s-1980s, according to which Bulgaria was seen as a crossroad on the Balkans and a bridge between the continents. The country was lagging behind with the development of the road infrastructure - projects for motorways, roads and railways, had stayed unfinished in appalling condition (Yanchev, 2012: 54).

During the first three years of the period of full EU membership, the system of spatial planning instruments remained without reforms and according to a statement of the chairman of the Regional Commission at the National Assembly, as of 2013 over 220 municipalities had no current active General Spatial Plan (Yordanova, 2013).

(2) The National Spatial Development Concept (2012)

In March 2012 the National Assembly of Bulgaria submitted another draft amendment and supplement to the SPA²⁶. According to the proposal made by the Council of Ministers, the National Complex Spatial Scheme under the SPA was to be replaced with the National Spatial Development Concept, while its appearance, contents, method of procurement and design are to be defined under the new RDA. The aim is to complement the National Regional Development Strategy with a development scheme, so that there is concord between strategic documents not only at the national level but at the district and

²⁶ Transcript; № 202-01-10, submitted by the Council of Ministers on February, 2012. Available [here](#) {consulted on 20/11/2016}

at the municipal level as well, while in parallel, second level schemes are provided – for the six planning regions, as well as spatial development concepts at the district level and such at the municipal level (regulated additionally in 2012 following the amendments to the RDA). In parallel to that, the mandatory commissioning (by the municipalities) of elaboration of General Spatial Plans by 2016, had turned into a major requirement regulated by a new amendment to the SPA (despite the financial deficit of the municipalities and of the MRDPW for commissioning of spatial plans). This activity began with a temporary interference of a new ministry – the Ministry of Investment Planning, which however was dismantled after a year, together with the resignation of the then cabinet (the Oresharski Cabinet, 2013-2014), while the General Spatial Plans "campaign" was preceded by that of General Development Plans elaboration for the 2014-2020 period.

The amendments to the SPA were launched as a result of discussion and analysis that had taken place a year earlier, when a tender for elaboration of a National Spatial Development Concept within six months was announced, the financing of which was to be carried out under Priority Axis 5: "Technical assistance" of OP "Regional development". The document was commissioned by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, while the contractor was the National Center for Regional Development (NCRD) with a team lead by Prof. Dr. Vesselina Troeva. In its basic characteristics, the NSDC is a medium-term strategic document for the 2013-2025 period, which provides guidelines for the development, the governance and the conservation of the national territory and the territorial waters, aiming to create conditions for spatial orientation and coordination of the sectorial policies. In their nature, the Concept and the National Regional Development Strategy for the 2012-2022 period are essential documents and instruments for integrated planning and sustainable spatial, economic and social development.

The document was adopted by the Council of Ministers at the end of 2012 and came into force by January 2013, although, as V. Troeva stated, the issue of the institutionalization and the continuous maintenance of this document would impede its further development and its amending, given the impossibility for the document to be completed within the

provided deadline (personal communication, March, 2015). The lack of theoretical clarity among the team of specialists and the time period for completion of the order had a significant impact on the quality of the National Concept as a spatial instrument. However, a number of urban planners recognize that the development of the Concept within 6 months can be assessed positively, "very professionally, considering the time and resources that we had", even if the Concept is only regarded as a "product", a "conditional means" of activating the financial flows (OP "Regions in Growth", 2014-2020) and channeling the EU funds for sustainable urban development (the Plans For Urban Regeneration and Development).

The elaboration and the adoption of the NSDC are seen as an important reform, but not substantial enough, considering the gaps and inconsistencies in the legislation.

(3) Integrated urban planning

In the 2010-2011 period the MRDPW undertook the introduction of a new planning instrument, which aimed at incorporating various sectors into the the urban development of 36 agglomerations of settlements in Bulgaria. In practice, this idea was implemented in creating the so-called Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development (IPURDs). The integrated spatial planning was to be done at the municipal level and to continue not only during the remaining two years of the 2007-2013 period, but in the next period of EU budgeting (2014-2020) as well. Integrated Plans follow the discourse of European documents such as the Leipzig Charter (2007) and the Declaration of Toledo (2010), where it is indicated that an integrated approach to urban development is going to be a mandatory requirement for obtaining support from the EU financial instruments.

The policy of integrated territorial investment formulated by the IPURDs is the main policy embedded in the Bulgarian planning system. Its "landing", however, as a "good European practice" is not the softest and painless one (A. Burov, personal communication, July, 2016).

The IPURD project is aimed at sustainable and a lasting overcoming of the high concentration of economic and social problems, as well as environmental problems, in 36

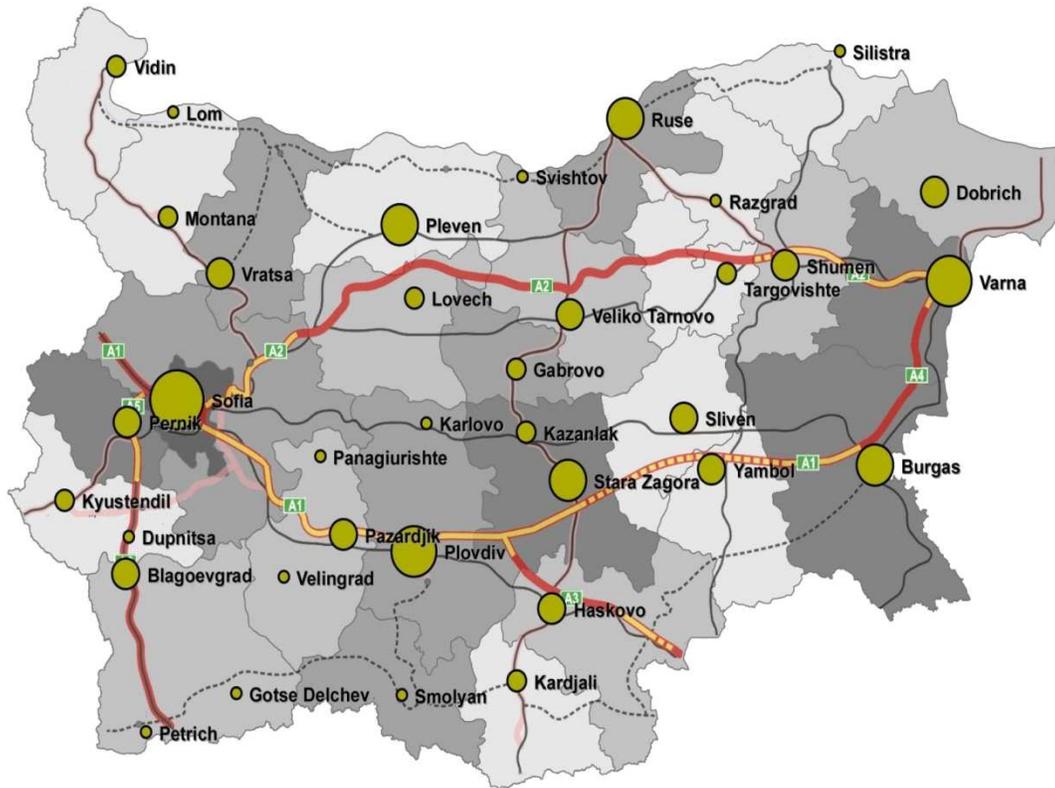
cities, centers of agglomeration areas, which were financed within OP “Regional Development” 2007-2013. According to the RDA (2008) “the Integrated Plan for Urban Development is a plan for economic and social development or reconstruction of a settlement – a town or a part of it, elaborated for the implementation of OP “Regional Development ”, as well as other operational and project financing programs. The 36 urban settlements fall within the first three hierarchical levels of the classification of urban settlements, developed within the NSDC (Fig. 20).

Table 16: Classification of the urban centers into five hierarchical levels

Level 1	The capital city of Sofia - a center of European significance for the national territory
Level 2	Large cities - centers of national significance for the territory of the regions
Level 3	Medium-sized towns of regional significance for the territory of the districts
Level 4	Small towns of micro-regional significance for the territory of a group of municipalities
Level 5	Very small towns and villages acting as centers of municipalities

Source: NSDC 2013-2025

Figure 20: Large and medium-sized urban settlements included in the project for elaboration of 36 Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development



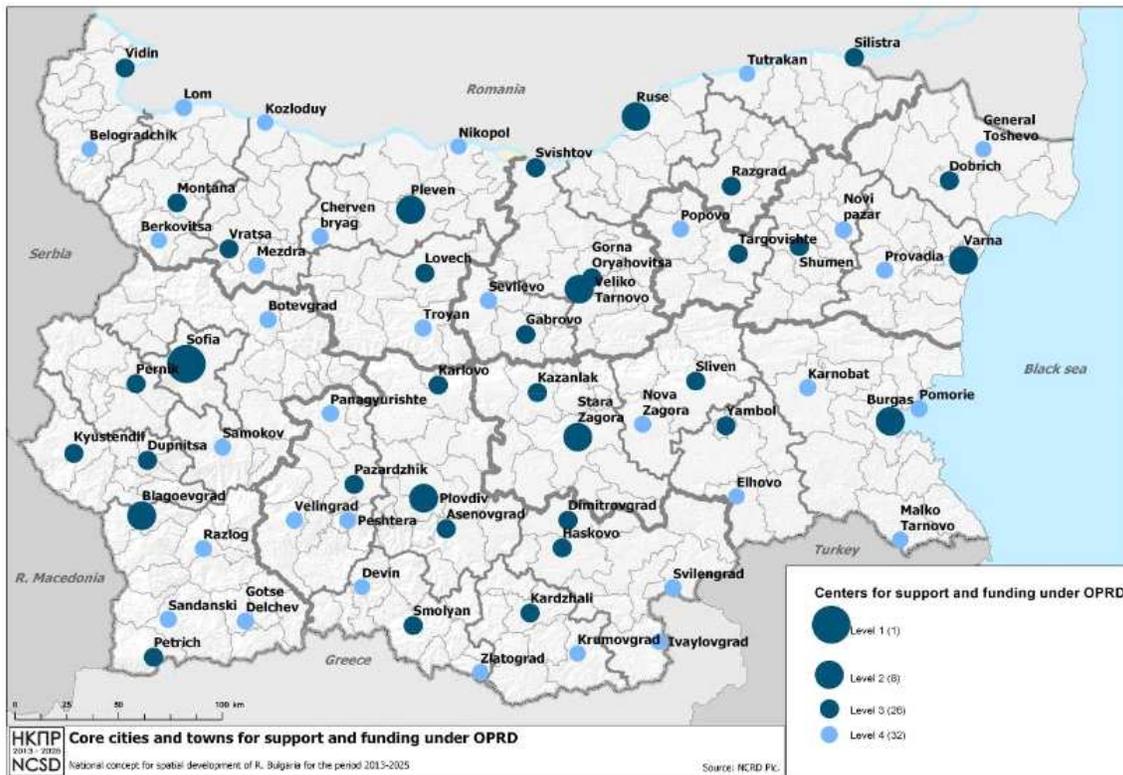
Source: Tasheva-Petrova, M. (2012)

According to some scientists, the methodological guidelines designed for the preparation of the Integrated Plans are not sufficiently clear. Some critics fear that the lack of clarity on how the Integrated Plans should be elaborated also poses a risk of developing the same standard plans, some of which will have the appearance of a written strategy, and others – of an analysis of the current situation. Another significant problem has also been pointed out - the question about the lack of requirements for certification under which those plans are to be elaborated by companies with a certain professional profile (Dimitrov, 2010; Yanchev, 2012).

With the finalization of the NSDC, the initial project for the development of the IPURDs was completed. This includes the addition of those small towns across the country (Level

4) which are regarded as a key to the development of peripheral, rural and border areas, and therefore, should be funded in the new programming period of OP “Regions in Growth” (2014- 2020). Thus the total number of urban settlements to be provided with IPURDs increased to 67.

Figure 21: Urban settlements eligible for support under OP "Regions in Growth" 2014-2020 (a total of 67)



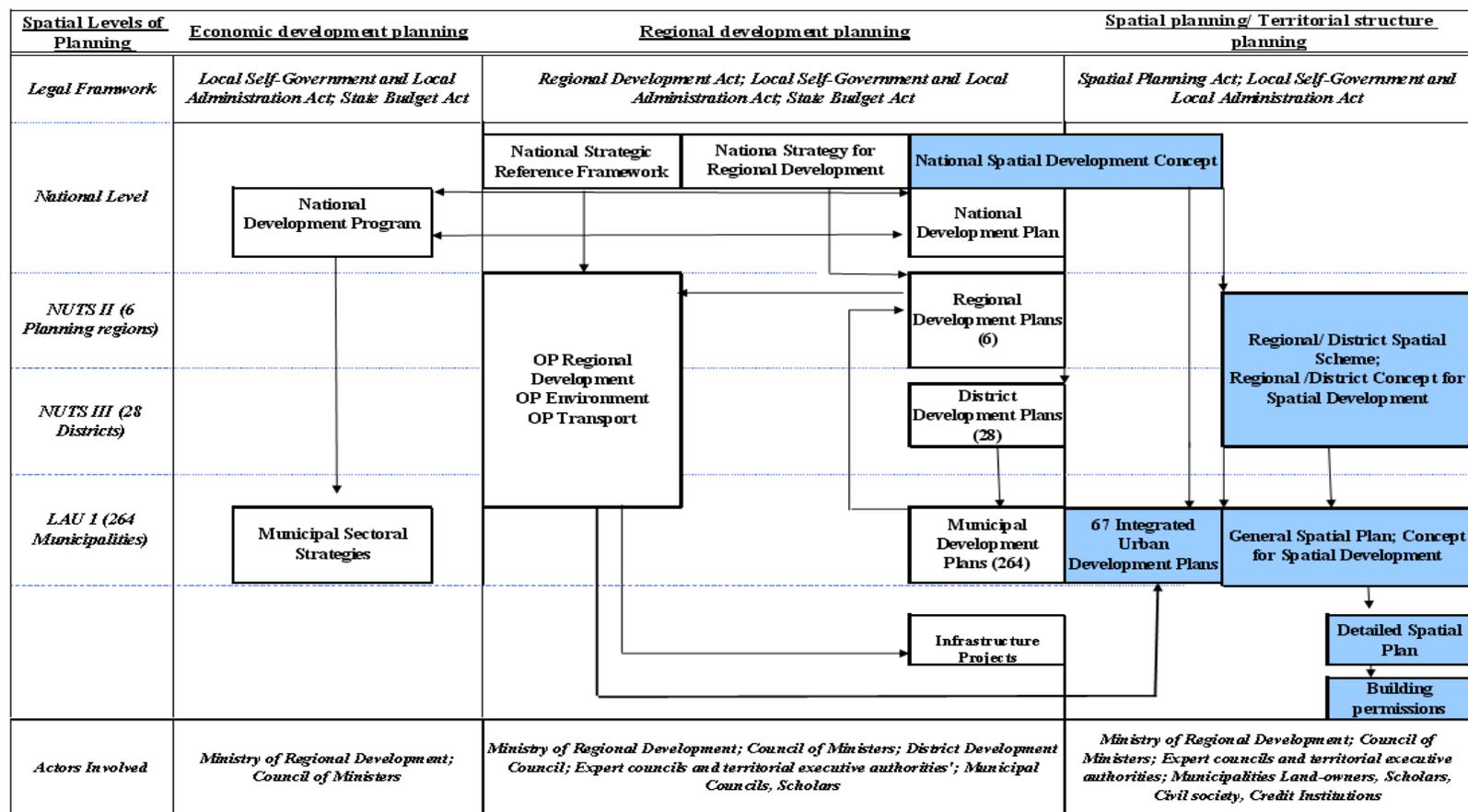
Source: NSDC 2013-2025

An important condition for elaborating the IPURDs is the existence of a spatial plan, which the IPURD could be based on. Complementing the number of urban settlements with those of Level 4, however, makes the implementation of their Integrated Plans virtually impossible, since almost none of those towns have a spatial development plan or a current one, which is why the linkage between individual planning documents is impossible or dysfunctional (Burov, 2015). Nonetheless, the MRDPW published new Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of IPURDs for towns of Level 4, that

enable the elaboration of an IPURD based on any available strategic document (not just spatial plans), or based on the national, regional and municipal sectorial strategies and programs.

In mid-2013 the first IPURD – that of Sofia - was completed, under the leadership of Prof. Dr Vesselina Troeva.

Figure 22: Spatial Planning Instruments in Bulgaria, 2007-2013



Source: Author

6.3.2.4. *Cognitive dimension*

No significant changes in the educational system in the field of spatial planning have been observed. Tendentious initiating of various graduate programs in Regional Development and Project Management has begun in the older and elite public universities of Bulgaria (UACEG, the University of National and World Economy, Sofia University, Veliko Tarnovo University, the Svishtov Economic Academy, etc.), the main goal of which is the training of specialists with knowledge mainly in the field of regional planning and development. Some of the programs (such as the one at Sofia University – “Regional Development and Management”) communicate quite well with organizations and centers such as the NCRD and the National Association of the Municipalities in Bulgaria.

On the other hand, urban planners and all those professionals with Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in "Urbanism" from the UACEG, have not accumulated enough knowledge so as to create their own professional body and thus strengthen their position in the process of spatial planning, while the profession remains insufficiently institutionalized and incorporated into the legal framework of the country (Yanchev, 2012; V. Troeva, personal communication, March, 2015).

An important contribution to the learning process for the 2007-2013 period are the European Territorial Cooperation programs, in particular INTERREG (INTERREG IV) – a EU initiative aimed at stimulating the economic and social cohesion in any part of the EU, by promoting balanced development through cross-border (INTERREG IVA), transnational (INTERREG IVB) and interregional (INTERREG IVC) cooperation. INTERREG is part of the so-called "soft" approaches / planning measures at the European level that encourages collaboration and networking at the expense of “hard” regulatory policies. The main objective of the projects in this framework is "learning by doing”, through working with people from different cultural contexts and professional backgrounds. However, the effect upon the Europeanization of the planning systems can hardly be measured objectively beyond the statistics of number of projects approved and budgets absorbed (Yanchev, 2012; P. Yanchev, personal communication, August 2016).

In Bulgaria, a total of five programs were funded within INTERREG IVA for that period: two internal (within the EU) - Bulgaria-Romania and Bulgaria-Greece, and three

external - Bulgaria-Macedonia, Bulgaria–Serbia and Bulgaria-Turkey. INTERREG IVB funded 13 transnational programs for cooperation. Bulgaria is also part of the SEE Program. Another project for cooperation is the Danube Strategy, which covers five countries. INTERREG IVC finances the interrelation of different countries from different EU regions, as well as three network programs - URBACT II, INTERACT II and ESPON.

6.3.2.5. Discursive dimension

The accumulation of experience at the end of the period, as well as the implementation of the European spatial cooperation programs in regional planning, has updated the discourse on the application of new approaches to planning in Bulgaria. Yanchev (2012) and N. Redjeb (personal communication, July, 2016) argue that a slight change in professional generations and a change of the focus of this process can be detected, thanks to the greater involvement of people who have acquired their education abroad and who later return to Bulgaria with their new knowledge and approaches to working in that field. Regional planning is gaining a stronger spatial dimension, so is the multidisciplinary nature of the study and the governance of the territory. According to the ESPON reports, as well as some of the first studies on spatial planning in Bulgaria carried out abroad, the informal organizing of networks of young professionals in various areas begins to regenerate the discourse on the application of best practices and external expertise in the national context in the field of spatial planning.

CHAPTER 7: RECAPITULATION: DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM OF SPATIAL PLANNING IN BULGARIA DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1989 AND 2013

Chapter 7 is the result of the idea to outline (in the form of a recapitulation) some important findings concerning the development of the spatial planning system in Bulgaria during the three periods which were already discussed within the timeframe of this study. Furthermore, this recapitulation of the changes aims to define and accurately summarize - within the outlined sub-frame of the study - the technical dimension of that system, so that it can be analysed in depth - taking into account the central spot which the technical dimension has in the system for spatial planning - something which has already been emphasized in this PhD thesis. In parallel to these synthesized results, a review of the Bulgarian planning system done in two main ESPON reports (2007a, 2007b) has also been added. One of the main reasons to choose to do so has to do with the perceiving and understanding the Bulgarian system of spatial planning from 1989 on, at the EU level (a vision against the background of the European spatial practices and systems), but also in order to reveal and discuss the exposed information, the existing gaps or the possible discrepancies with the ascertained findings about the development of the spatial planning system so far (based on the example of the implementation of the European Spatial Development Perspective).

7.1. Socio-political dimension and spatial model

During the pre-accession period many attempts to stabilize the economy, to harmonize the Bulgarian legislation (or part of it) with that of the EU, and to introduce European standards in various economic sectors and activities have been made in the country. The overall review of the political instability, conflicts and events up to 2013, the dynamic socioeconomic transformations - regardless of the integration process and Bulgaria's membership in the EU - show that the debate about the "transition" and the post-socialist confusion is still relevant and yet diametrical in the interpretation of their effect on the country. A part of the old approach to "how things are done" has been reserved, but with the integration of new priorities and development models financed through the European structural funds and later "disciplined" by the European programs.

Adaptation to EU values is a slow and gradual process, but still questioned in a country of a political instability, a clear population decline trend (for both natural and emigrational reasons), an uneven development of the settlement network provoked by the general population trend of the 1990s of migrating to large urban centers and above all – to the capital city, in search of economic opportunities and an increased dominance of the private sector initiative.

The crisis of 2008 exacerbated the negative demographic and socioeconomic trends in the country, the inequality between Sofia and the rest of the municipalities, and affirmed some of the NUTS 2 regions (the North-West and the North Central region) as the poorest regions in the EU by a number of socioeconomic and population indicators. In parallel to all that, the mass concentration of population in some of the regional centers and the subsequent outflow of population from the peripheral areas of the country, has predetermined the development of the industry, the transport and a number of non-agricultural sectors since 1989 - traditionally characterized by spotted distribution across the country - which makes the question of the repeated reorganization of the statistical units-regions a permanent issue (Atanasova and Naydenov, 2016).

Spatial planning remained a prohibited activity long after 1989. The liberal environment of free markets, together with the private initiative and the development of the banking system, prevailed in the new model of territorial governance. Spatial planning, which initially had accumulated hatred among the members of the society because of "its sentimental connection" to the centralized model of planning, became a "panacea for the strategic structuring of public priorities and funding", following 2000 (Yanchev, 2012: 61). The emergence of regional planning in the process of European integration did not bring together experts on the issue that regional planning should be treated in the context of spatial development, but on the contrary. The lack of knowledge, priorities and clarity on spatial planning from 2007 on, has directed the majority of the EU fundings towards infrastructure projects, which were thought (with the beginning of the crisis) to be able to revitalize the stagnant economy of the country.

After the fall of socialism urban planning was accompanied by the end of the state control over the land, which gave rise to a series of transformations, covering both the architectural and the spatial aspect of the city. The Bulgarian urban settlement - like many post-socialist cities – was becoming a major channel linking the national

economy to the global system of cities. The city is the scene of transformations resulting from the action of the triad “transition to democracy; free trade; a new decentralized governance system. In this line of analysis, cities like Sofia began to suffer increasingly from bad practices in urban management and became a standard example of post-socialist urban development with a legitimacy crisis, an aggressive application of restitution laws without concern for public spaces, an intense process of commercialization of the architectural structure (Hirt, 2008), formation of marginalized urban neighborhoods and slums (inhabited predominantly by minorities) and other negative processes and phenomena. However, the capital remained chosen as representative of Southeast European cities that have remained outside mainstream scholarly work on post-socialist urban spatial change (Hirt and Kovachev, 2009).

7.2. Technical dimension

The balance of changes in the technical dimension of the system of spatial planning from 1989 on, follow the proposed structure, namely: scope, scale and locus of power, planning practices, planning instruments and governance. A special emphasis has been put on the balance of planning documents.

7.2.1. Scope

The Bulgarian system of spatial development is part of the so-called systems in transition, part of the group of Eastern European countries, which are highlighted for the important role of an "effective" and "transparently conducted" planning process (Burov, 2015).

By the end of the 1990s the scope of spatial planning remained without reforms. The "space-planning crisis" which occurred with the denial of the centralized economic planning practiced in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, led to a huge deficit of planning documents at all territorial levels. The adoption of the Environmental Protection Act (1991) and the regulation of the EIA in compliance with the EU directives, introduced the bases of environmental planning and management. Following the practical development of the EIA process in Bulgaria and according to the experience and expertise in its implementation in the member states, the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) has been amended several times in its EIA part, thus improving

the rules and requirements of the EIA. The most significant in volume and nature was the 1997 amendment, when specific criteria for carrying out a mandatory EIA and a clear regulation of the competent authorities were set.

The transformations imposed "from outside", as an effect of the process of Europeanization, arose with the adoption of the first RDA (1999) and the introduced environmental planning, which, however, did not bring an impulse nor did it have any direct influence on the system of spatial planning, even more so when it comes to the relationship between local authorities and landowners. This relationship underlies the establishment of almost all bad development practices in conditions of land reforms and "unleashed" private initiative. The slow response, or in other words - the inability to respond - to the existing planning instruments (plans at the local level) defines the entire 1990s period as a non-planning period.

A major milestone in the development of spatial planning was the introduction of the Spatial Planning Act (2001) - an extremely complex document, tenfold amended over the years, which regulates the planning instruments and land use from national to individual land lots. Two parallel planning systems have been created, which fail to coordinate with each other and operate independently without explicitly mentioning each other or sharing spatial planning responsibilities. The strong differentiation was born after introducing the region as an important territorial unit. The political decision for that implementation, as it seems, took for granted the EU regionalization policies while trying to foster development and investment (Yanchev, 2012). The EU membership from January 1, 2007 failed to "discipline" and improve that process. However, the EU managed to conditionalize the implementation of the spatial planning system, but without solving the old problems and without the conditionality which the EU imposes on national systems for regional development planning. Many soft measures of the European spatial planning, such as the European programs for cooperation and exchange, represent an opportunity to bring new networks of planning professionals and to raise unaddressed issues. The influence of European documents such as the European Spatial Development Perspective did not have a significant effect until 2010.

7.2.2. The locus of power

The changes in the distribution of power and in the territorial levels of decision-making and competence, is probably the first most significant transformation of the overall system of planning and policy making in Bulgaria after the fall of communism in 1989. The emergence of a decentralization process and the establishment of local authorities became a key step in the democratic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s.

Today Bulgaria is defined as a centralized unitary country with a strong, but an unintegrated local level, showing poor control potential resulting from the national government and planning system (PLUREL, 2010). The 264 municipalities represent the basis of the administrative-territorial division, where local governance is executed. During the years of democratic development, many functions and powers have been decentralized from the government to the municipalities, albeit the obvious imbalance between rights and responsibilities. The main problem that has been gradually increasing is the limited financial resource and the imposed responsibilities, which two are quite disparate. The delay of fiscal decentralization and a large part of the tasks set out in its concept, have only remained "on paper", which seriously affects the ability to provide spatial planning at the local level in many Bulgarian municipalities. Parallel to this, the idea that the model of development continues to depend on decisions made at the national level creates a notion that some traditions from the communist era still have not changed.

With the subsequent artificial and unfounded dividing of the municipalities into rural and urban at the beginning of the EU programming periods, approximately 30 % of the settlements in Bulgaria remained as "white spots" without any chance of developing their infrastructure within any development program. More than half of the municipalities (152) are small and without a manifested center, which is the basis of their inability to plan effectively their territory, or - the least to say - limits their ability to elaborate spatial planning documents. Most of these municipalities are regarded as "areas for targeted stimulation" which a priori speaks for an internal inequality (G. Chavdarova, personal communication, June, 2013).

For the purposes of the regional analysis and planning Bulgaria has six NUTS 2 regions ("rayons"), without any administrative competencies, regional councils or functions in

regional planning, which regions are especially unstable in terms of changes in their social and economic indicators necessary for their delineation. For many years, the NUTS 2 regions have been a part of the discourse on drawing a second level of local governance along with the administrative-territorial units called districts (“oblast”), introduced in 1999. The latter are responsible for implementing the government's policy at the regional level, without an elected district government, but with competences to supervise the legal decisions of local authorities and to participate in the preparation of regional development documents.

7.2.3. Planning instruments (plans and programs)

The apparent distinction between the two systems – the one for spatial planning and the one for regional planning, together with the lack of clear opportunities for their integration throughout the whole period up till 2013 - despite the academic and the planners’ appeal - is the main problem which the planning instruments reflect - a result of lack of synchronization between the legislation in the field of regional development and that related to planning. This legislative misunderstanding is one of the main reasons for the strategic and planning documents to be prepared without a clear spatial concept and specification, which often makes them look more like a list of wishes, rather than working instruments for planning and governing the territory. On the other hand, the lack of certain functional and structural links between regional and urban planning has turned the spatial plans into isolated documents, which, according to Dimitrov (2010), can additionally fragment the national space. The plans in most cases are initiated and driven by specific investment (private) interests, often mismatched with the defined national or local interests. A major drawback of the system of plans and strategies is the problem of cyclicity which some of the documents have, as well as their hierarchical subordination. The long provided by the SDA National Complex Spatial Scheme (until the adoption of the NSDC in 2012) and the Regional Spatial Schemes (with the exception of one scheme of a group of 5 municipalities), which strategic documents are supposed to state the national interest in establishing relevant models of spatial planning and land use, have not been prepared, despite the adoption of their territorial equivalents in regional development. The reasons for this are, one hand - the lack of a set cyclicity in the SDA documents (incl. the plans) and the lack of well-defined functional and structural connection with the plans, the strategies and the

programs developed in accordance with the SDA (Dimitrov, 2010) on the other - something which could be overcome in the future by functional and legal binding. The adoption of the NSDC, which came into force in 2013, was the first step towards this direction, in view of the NSDC's binding to documents at the national level such as the National Regional Development Strategy. However, the criticism which the Concept takes as a national planning document, prepared with limited resources and for a very short period of time (six months), is related to the fact that its appearance is the result of the an intention to define cities which are to direct the financial "flows" (defined by the new OP "Regions in Growth" 2014-2020), without considering the principles for spatial development. As N. Redjeb summarizes it: "The National Concept in the form which it was adopted, is morally and physically obsolete before even being adopted {...} its elaboration is based on the ideas of the Unified Spatial Development Plan (USDP) of the 1970s {...} and the way of its elaboration is based on the methodology and the calculations used for the elaboration of the USDP..." (N. Redjeb, personal communication, July, 2016).

In 2010 the idea of introducing the Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development was launched as a result of the grant scheme for the development of such plans declared by the OP "Regional Development", initially for 36 municipalities-beneficiaries, which - as Dimitrov (2011) puts it - were defined in an extremely controversial manner as "centers of urban agglomerations", and later - another 67 urban settlements were added for the 2014-2020 programming period. The Integrated Plans became one of the most criticized instruments to have been introduced to the system of planning instruments at the local level (see Dimitrov, 2011) - their necessity and ability for a realistic adaptation as an integrating element between development and spatial planning on the one hand, and the existing system of legally defined documents, on the other. For such integration to occur, evaluation of the expectations and the needs of the stakeholders would be necessary, as well as creation of an information platform for collecting, integrating and analysing information and data for the elaboration of plans.

The balance of the subsequent regulation of the elaboration of spatial concepts for municipal development, and later - of regional ones (at the district level) - but **only after** the amendments to the third version of the adopted RDA, together with the General Spatial Plans regulated by the SPA, only shows the misunderstanding of the essence of spatial planning and the place of regional development in it. According to

Evrev (2015), the essence of the General Spatial Plans is that they are to be regarded as a concept of spatial development. The delay in the elaboration of spatial plans at the expense of the elaboration of development plans shows a tendency for the first ones to become a consequence of the second ones.

The system of spatial planning instruments as of the end of 2013 remains with a disheartening technical and informational provision (due to fragmented information and without interoperability standards), which are insufficiently compatible at the methodological and at the procedural level. At a higher planning level, the spatial planning instruments are represented by schemes and not plans. That means that although the control on spatial planning and land use regulations at lower levels is strict and strong, it is not based on higher level plans (PLUREL, 2010). The regional spatial development schemes continue to be regulated without any basis and these do not exist for the time being, despite the ongoing development of methodological guidelines, which began three years after the changes in the legislation (the SPA and the RDA) in 2012. The prospects for all municipal plans to be combined into a single document – for development and for spatial planning - are still too far to be seen (see Evrev 2015).

Table 17: Coordinated planning of the development and the construction at the local level - two synchronized plans with options for a single General Municipal Spatial and Development Plan (Evrev in 2015)

<u>Spatial Levels of Planning</u>	<u>Regional development planning</u>	<u>Spatial planning/ Territorial structure planning</u>
<i>LAU I (264 Municipalities)</i>	Municipal Development Plans	General Spatial Plans
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Municipal Plan for Spatial Planning and Development </div>	

Source: Author

Achieving continuity between the preliminary strategic and planning documents, and their application, is also a major problem. This determines one of the main problems and dysfunctions that characterize the Bulgarian system of plans, namely: the elaborated documents (plans and programs) only justify a formal necessity, while their messages and proposals do not result in a real activity. This indicates a lack of consistency between planning and development in practice. This disparity undermines the

preliminary documents and is a prerequisite for the actual measures taken and implemented projects to be challenged or even lose their legitimacy.

"Little by little a structure of planning documents is being created – in a completely schematic and “mechanical” mode. Attributes of their creation, methodologies, are also emerging. And as a result – an immense writing of documents is initiated, which feeds the consultancy market – full of incompetent people ... And thus a generation of plans is produced that are just no good "(S. Motev, personal communication, July, 2016).

The practice of elaborating strategic planning instruments, it can be summed up, also shows uncertainty in addressing crucial challenges, which creates and affirms an array of problems. Examples of this, in the regional development, are the incomplete municipal plans or the incomplete content of the municipal development plans from the first programming period (2007-2013). This incompleteness determines their difficult execution as a series of concrete steps. Furthermore, there is a lack of compliance between the previously outlined vision and the defined goals and priorities on the one hand, and the actual development in the past seven years, on the other. This perspective reveals the inability to track the deviations from the plans' projections and their timely overcoming.

Another problem identified during the 1989-2013 period has to do with the elaboration of General Plans. There is a certain presence, which stands out, of numerous partial Detailed Plans for specific areas (usually agricultural lands) that the future General Plans must comply with. This violates the consistency of the “from the general to the particular” principle, which in resort areas, areas of tourist potential and tourist settlements in particular, leads to a general lack of foresight for development and to "planning" in the interest of private priorities. The 24-year long absence of a national spatial planning document and the lack of regional ones, has led to the deterioration of the existing spatial plans and to the implementation of "bad practices" in updating or adopting new ones, with no regard to the system of regional planning instruments, without an integrated approach to the development of the territories, with no consideration of the national, respectively - the local resources and landscapes, etc.

It has been observed that the teams who elaborate strategies / plans consist of different people and therefore the results of working on planning documents are different. This is easily seen when comparing two concepts / plans for spatial development at the municipal level. The same is observed in strategies / plans for regional development.

Development and planning have become more project-driven than the plans themselves, considering that the development plans remain mandatory. This results from the conditionality that determines the co-financing coming from the European funds through the priorities set out in the Operational Programs. Planning of regional development in Bulgaria can be assessed to be in an initial phase, without a fully developed methodology, approved activities and models in the elaboration of planning documents.

The two generations of instruments for regional planning which have been elaborated and adopted - strategies, plans and programs - cover all territorial levels and have managed to justify a certain amount of public projects. Many projects have been successful in the largest or in some of the large Bulgarian municipalities, incl. at the national level, where the quality of planning documents and the potential of the expert groups are relatively higher (Yanchev, 2012). However, the general opinion is that the plans embedded in such projects have been converted into formal tools for absorption of EU funds, not conceptually subordinate to the municipalities' own features and resources, despite the repeated appeal of Brussels for "planning based on effective, sustainable use of own resources" (S. Motev, personal communication, July, 2016).

7.2.4. Current practices

The balance of the planning process following 1989 and after the stage where planning was considered a "dirty" word, shows that the existing plans of the communist regime remained "in action" and were not updated, despite the enacted SPA of 2001. As for the attempts for elaborating spatial planning documents - unlike the process of regional planning - in the period till 2013, the practice shows a concentration of that process at the local level - municipalities and settlements, with some exceptions such as the regional spatial scheme of the city of Plovdiv and its adjacent municipalities, as well as the belated National Concept of the late 2012. As of June 2013, a total of 117 municipalities had a General Spatial Plan, although in municipalities where such a plan

is missing or has not been updated, the local authorities continue to perform fragmented planning and to elaborate Detailed Plans which change the regime of the territory in order to issue building permits. In some small or medium-sized municipalities where a General Spatial Plan was elaborated during that period, the practice shows significant gaps in the implementation process or inability of the municipality (incl. the municipal administration) to administer the decisions provisioned by the plan.

Yanchev (2012) concludes that regional development planning and development plans have already gained "momentum" and are able to ensure the implementation of public projects, thus making the spatial plans out-dated and almost worthless documents (where available at all) which haven't brought any conceptual changes for more than three decades now. The practices of regional planning are the ones which are able to give priority to more projects, although the first budget period (2007-2013) was not completely utilized due to the insufficient number of such projects. Key issues have been shaped out (initially), such as the lack of traditions in regional planning, the lack of administrative capacity, complexity and bureaucracy in the approval process and in the funding of regional development projects, etc. The practices also show that with the "market supply" of consulting companies that emerged with the preparation of the first generation of development plans, regional development has been superficial and with almost no outcome, which complements the P. Stoyanov's criticism of the failure of the plans' comparability, especially at the municipal level (personal communication, March, 2015).

Urban design as a means of creating quality urban spaces has been disappearing. The general practices in the process of regional cooperation and collaboration have given positive results, but without much opportunity to assess their effectiveness, especially in cross-border Bulgarian territories (municipalities) which are most severely affected by the negative demographic and socioeconomic trends in the country.

7.2.5. Territorial governance

Investments

Private investments in spatial planning in Bulgaria are regulated by the Spatial Planning Act and its provisions. Public investments (municipal and state) are supported by the EU funds, processed largely by the state through the development programs. Despite the

increased share of public investment, public regional and spatial planning does not exist. The few exceptions are the “Sofproekt” municipal company at Sofia Municipality and the National Center for Regional Development at the MRDPW. The first company mentioned above is directly related to working on the General Spatial Plan of Sofia, while the second one works on numerous draft projects and strategies for planning and development at the national, regional and local level, despite its participation in public procurement as a company with an independent budget. In fact, spatial planning has suddenly become entirely private and the two mentioned public planning enterprises are the only ones saved from dismantling. All other planning is done by smaller companies often with no sufficient expert potential (Yanchev, 2012: 65).

Private investments - represented by building permits – are until now regulated by the municipal authorities. Private investment is to a great extent related to fragmented planning practices and to dealing with Detailed Plans outside urban areas, especially in cases where no General Spatial Plan exists (the elaboration and approval procedure of which is long and institutionally dependent), where the change in the designation of farmland or forest areas is easier. In places where spatial plans do not exist, property owners also have the right to update the plans with their own proposals. The amendments to the Spatial Planning Act of 2012 only seemingly hamper private investors with constraints to elaborate Detailed Plans, while the actual idea is to put an end of the indiscriminate construction works by 2016 (when each municipality must have a plan). Construction works in protected areas are prohibited. However, a number of bad practices and management of interests are associated with the issuance of building permits to investors in non-compliance with the resolutions of the EIA, while in some cases no EIA has been carried out at all. In regional and local projects for regional development, private investments are not sought, or rather - not allowed. In those cases investments are distributed among the municipal and the state budget on the one hand, and the structural, cohesion or regional development funds, on the other.

Public-private partnership is still not quite clearly regulated an issue in Bulgaria and is generally rare. The Public-Private Partnership Act is one of the legislative documents which have been long discussed, given the fact that most activities are governed by other legal acts such as the Concessions Act and the Public Procurement Act. This type of partnerships has always raised doubts about corruption, despite their potential in

large infrastructural projects. The Public-Private Partnership Act was passed in 2012 and repealed a year later.

Actors

The guiding principles of spatial planning policy are determined by the Council of Ministers, while the MRDPW is an important actor in the process of organizing the priorities of spatial and regional planning in Bulgaria. The MRDPW is a key ministry in the collaboration with the National Expert Council on Spatial Planning. The MRDPW helps in the orientation and structuring of the objectives and their implementation, in parallel with its ability to communicate at different territorial levels, with the Operational Programs and the EU. At second place, the municipalities and the municipal councils come, which set the priorities and make decisions about the spatial planning of their territory. Their participation is particularly important, despite the fact that the municipalities often work with subcontractors which can be private planners or consultants and / or NGOs.

The public environment is a crucial factor in the policy formation and understanding, while the attitude towards the public environment again has become an important factor. The importance of civil society in discussions and in the exercising control over transparency and openness of local authorities' work on the plans, programs and strategies for municipal planning and development, is still negligible, while the public opinion is not sufficiently appreciated.

Other participants in the planning process are presented by credit institutions (participation in public policy for regional and urban development), the regional and district development councils - regulated by the RDA, although their resources and functions are limited in spatial planning and only serve as advisory bodies with no real decision-making power.

7.3. Cognitive dimension

The changes in understanding spatial planning and the educating of "new" experts in that field began in the early 2000s with the introduction of university majors such as "Urbanism" (2002). These new university (Bachelor's and Master's degree) programs - initially in Sofia and later in other regional centers - aim to fill the gap of specialists and

competent personnel in the new scenario, where the planning process and strategic planning are of growing importance in the country. Confrontation between architects and urban planners within the scope of competence and experience in the field of spatial planning is yet to be overcome.

In parallel, certain priority spatial studies which reveal the spatial dynamics and the changes in the demographic, economic, cultural and ecological landscape, remain insufficient and unfunded. The loss of resources cumulatively rises, while its consequences occur with different intensity and will be prolonged in time (Dimov, 2009). Planning and governance of the territory are a complex and spatially deterministic process requiring quality and detailed information with a clear geographical orientation demanding an interdisciplinary research dialogue. However, planning practices remain tendentiously divided between the different groups of professionals - architects and urban planners on the one hand, and geographers, economists, environmentalists, etc., on the other.

The profession and the activities of a "planner" are very poorly recognized by the authorities and the society compared to Western European countries. At the end of the discussed period, a tendentious hiring of Bulgarian specialists with education and experience acquired abroad was observed. The cognitive influence in the system of spatial planning also comes from some European territorial cooperation programs (INTERREG) and international projects contributing to the process of training and exchange of best practices and knowledge. The established networks of scientists and experts are still in an initial stage of that process, but show the possibilities for lengthy relations and cooperation.

7. 4. Discursive dimension

The main discourse that marks the period following 1989 is the transition from non-planning (where, as already mentioned, planning was equal to communism) to spatial planning and the search for new approaches and instruments for its realization. However, the experience has shown too often that planning is done without a thorough analysis, while the results of the analysis "are adjusted" so as to achieve certain spatial goals (almost all General Spatial Plans predict a population growth, which aims to "justify" the proposals for expansion of new urbanized areas, while the actual

demographic trends almost throughout the entire country show a drastic population decline (Dimitrov, 2014). Changes in the ownership status and the market liberalization are yet another challenge in the period of transition from non-planning to planning.

The discourse of sustainability of planning and development emerged in Bulgaria as early as the 1990s, and subsequently – the discourse of strategic planning, regional development, cohesion, etc. All these discourses emerged and gained ground thanks to the Eurointegration process, the conditionality of the European financing, and later – due to some reference documents such as the European Spatial Development Perspective, CEMAT, platforms such as ESPON, cross-border projects and cooperation, etc. The fundamental principles of the system are related to comprehensiveness and an integrated approach, which find concrete expression through institutionalization and actions towards reinforcement of the capacity.

An important challenge for spatial planning is the inefficiency of public participation, reduced largely to passive public hearings in which no mechanism for reflecting the public opinion, desires and recommendations to the final documents exists. The debate about the lack of "publicity" of the planning documents and the low level of involvement of stakeholders in the elaboration of such documents are both a cause and a result of the lack of experience and traditions in the country for implementing the principles of transparency and partnership, as well as the lack of good practices of all spatial information being available to anyone, and in the same time – comprehensible for non-specialists as well (Dimitrov, 2014; Redjeb and Chakarova, 2016). The question of how much the planners and specialists in this field, including administrations, have knowledge of the process of spatial planning at various levels and in multi-level management conditions, remains disputable. Parallel to this, there is still a technocratic regarding of plan designers by the general public and it is necessary to improve the communication between the various stakeholders involved in this process.

7. 5. The Bulgarian spatial planning system according to the ESPON

The launch of the ESPON is among the most important outcomes of the adoption of the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999), which can be considered as the largest ongoing spatial planning exercise at the EU level. In the 1990s the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were not sufficiently integrated into the research on European spatial planning, unlike during the 2000s when the ESPON and the Territorial Agenda provided a significant "policy window" for spatial planning in an enlarged EU territory. In the new member states the ESPON takes into account the dimensions of the territorial impact of the EU enlargement process (Pallagst, 2011).

The Bulgarian planning system appeared in studies and projects of the ESPON even before the country's accession to the EU. Later the Bulgarian spatial planning was presented in two of the largest ESPON reports, namely: 1) the Final Report of the ESPON project 2.3.2 (2007a): Governance of Territorial and Urban Policies from EU to Local Level and 2) the Final Report of the ESPON project 2.3.1 (2007b): Application and Effects of the ESDP in the Member States. Some conclusions about the planning system were also taken into account by the final report of the Transnational Networking Activities conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Program, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

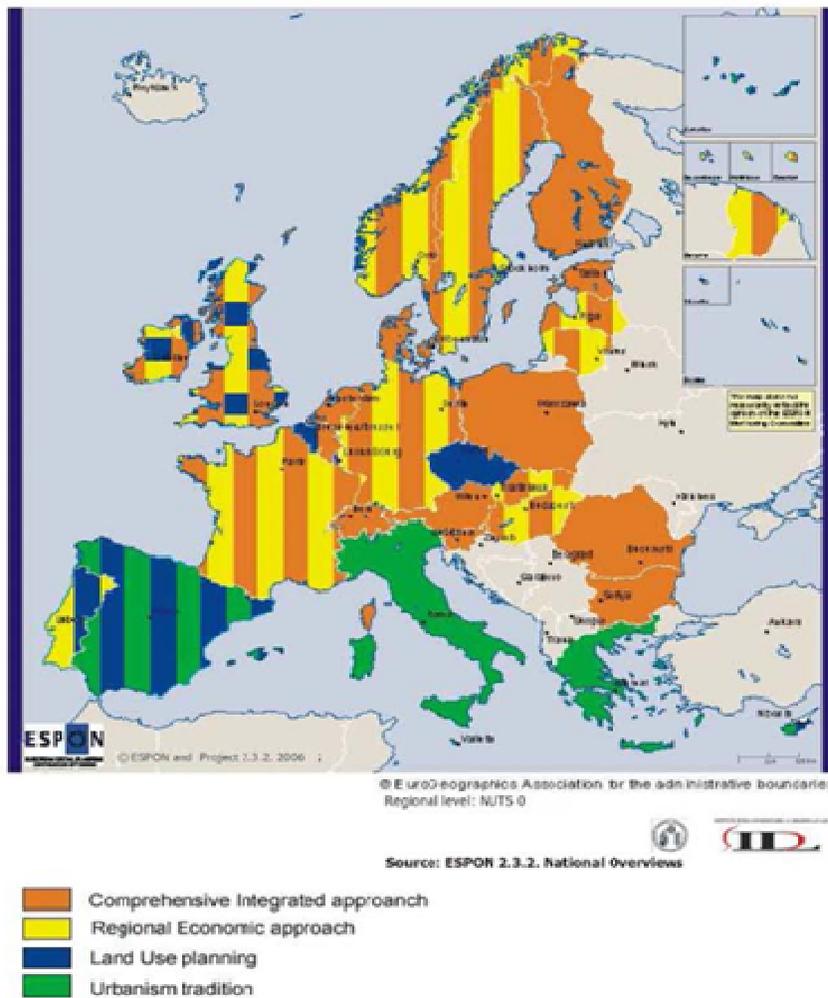
Particularly important in the review of the ESPON project 2.3.1 (2007b) is the assessment of the impact of the ESDP, its implementation and impact in the context of Europeanization of spatial planning, which will be taken into account in the subsequent analysis of the spatial planning instruments in Bulgaria.

7.5.1. The ESPON project 2.3.2 (2007a)

The Bulgarian system of spatial planning is presented in the framework of the European groups of spatial planning systems in the ESPON 2.3.2 report, which gives an updated and a comprehensive overview of the four types of spatial planning systems developed and published in 1997 in the Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies in Europe. Bulgaria is included in the study and its planning system is compared within the European framework. The spatial planning of Bulgaria is classified within the ideal model of the "comprehensive integrated approach" type of planning (Fig.23), where:

"Spatial planning is conducted through a very systematic and formal hierarchy of plans from national to local level, which coordinate public sector activity across different sectors but focus more specifically on spatial coordination than economic development [...] this tradition is necessarily associated with mature systems. It requires responsive and sophisticated planning institutions and mechanisms and considerable political commitment. [...] Public sector investments in bringing about the realization of the planning framework is also the norm "(EC 1997, pp. 36-37)

Figure 23: Movement within the EU 15 between the Styles of spatial planning and characterization of new member states + 2 + 2



Source: Final Report of the ESPON 2.3.2 project (2007)
 Note: in the legend – *approach* to be considered as *approach*

The ESPON underlines the importance of this type of planning systems, characterizing their basic elements, namely: the hierarchical system of institutions and plans, where special attention to the vertical (multi-level) and horizontal (cross-sectorial) coordination is paid. Dühr, et al. (2010) also highlight the wide range of this type of planning, in which the main task is to provide horizontal (across sectors), vertical (between levels) and geographical (across borders) integration of the spatial impacts of the sectorial policies. This is only possible with multi-level arrangement of plans that are intended to coordinate spatial development.

At the sub-national level the analysis of the overall style of planning and the competencies by levels, shows a high positive assessment of Bulgaria as one of the countries with strong competencies at the local and average competencies at the regional and at the national level. However, in this particular case, the high score within the comprehensive integrated approach is fictitious, due to the rather unique situation in which everything exists in theory, but that in reality all plans are already very outdated.

Bulgaria's theory and practice could not be further apart (ESPON, 2007a: 129).

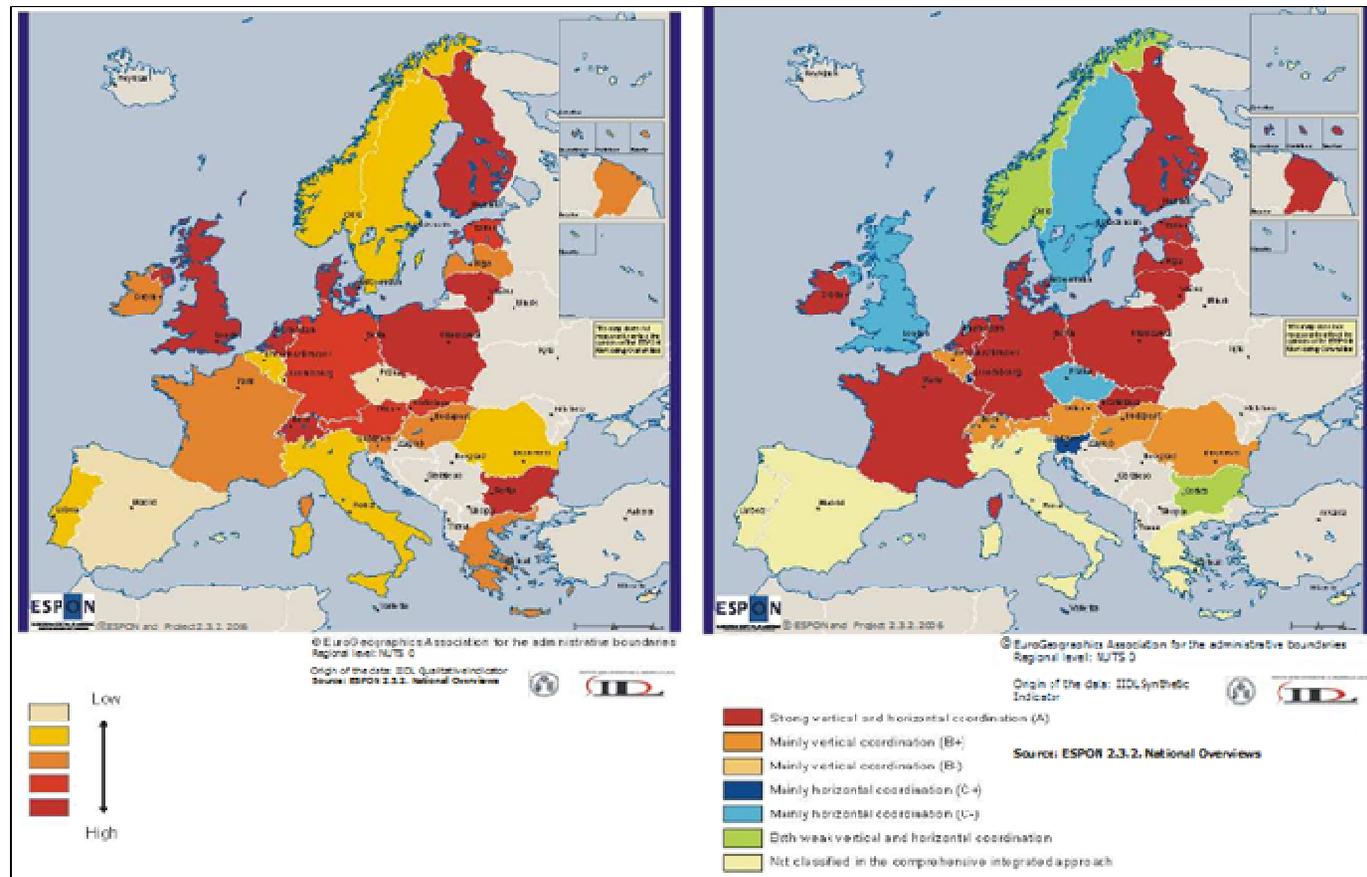
In many cases in which a country is classified under the comprehensive integrated approach it is still lacking vertical or horizontal coordination, as in the case of Bulgaria. The country is classified in D category, where there is both *weak vertical and horizontal coordination*, at which one can doubt if the country should be qualified under a comprehensive system in the first place (ESPON, 2007a: 133) (Fig 24B).

The report confirms that the greatest difficulties in the Bulgarian system of spatial planning are related to the fulfillment of the requirements for EU accession. This in turn necessitates strengthening and development of a framework for the conducted policy, as well as programming and management of the public administration capacity and the judicial system, so that Bulgaria may be able to introduce and apply the European legislation (ESPON, 2007a). The ESPON emphasizes the role of the EU membership, the integration and the European funding, as factors which favor the development of the participation process and the functioning of partnerships. The relatively recent introduction of two basic acts in the field of planning – the RDA (1999; 2004) and the SPA (2001) is also reflected in the report, as well as their potential which has not been adequately studied / tested yet. The relatively optimistic projection of the development

of the spatial planning approach is based on the political will in the first years of implementation of regional planning.

The lack of indicators on the use of the Open Method of Coordination is also taken into account in the report, the main reasons for which is the lack of awareness of that method.

Figure 24: A. The presence of the comprehensive integrated approach based on the scores on each level of the comprehensive integrated approach; B. Level of development of the comprehensive integrated approach in spatial planning



In full accordance with reality, the report explains the key spatial problems in the country, including regional disparities (the “center-periphery” example), regional isolation, problems of remote and inaccessible areas, etc. – a result of the economic and political crisis which Bulgaria passes through after the fall of the communist regime. The territorial structure and the spatial planning competences are characterized in detail (within the analysis) and completely adequately, as well as the need for "availability of coordination, both vertical and horizontal, in the design of the planning tools" (ESPON 2007a: 36).

Table 18: Multi-level structure in Bulgaria according to the ESPON 2.3.2 report (2007)

Category	Performance
Model of State	Centralised Unitary
Typology of regionalisation	Administrative regionalisation
Constitutional reconnaissance of Regional and/or local levels	Regional and local
Allocation of Spatial Planning powers	Weak local
	Weak sub-regional / supra-local
	Weak regional
	Strong national
New Spatial Planning powers	No
National territorial chambers	No
Regular multi-level governmental meetings	No
Dependence of local governments on central government	Dependent
Constitutional regions	No
Devolution to 1 st tier local authorities	Expecting or in process to devolution

Source: Final Report of the ESPON 2.3.2 project (2007)

Table 19: Multi-level relationship

Category	Performance
Forms of cooperation between agencies, departments and authorities	Cooperation only for making a plan or some plans
Approaches for vertical cooperation and coordination	Positive attitudes
	Progress towards vertical co-operation and partnerships
Integrated Spatial Planning	Both weak vertical and horizontal coordination

Source: Final report of the ESPON 2.3.2 project (2007)

The report discusses (as a specific case) the development and the implementation of the General Spatial Plan (GSP) of the city of Sofia, developed from 1999 onwards. The plan is given as an example of representative planning practice in Bulgaria, based upon "the involvement of a number of partners in the elaboration of plans". In fact, in line with the opinion of Yanchev (2012), the plan was completed in 2009 after numerous procedural difficulties, which gives an idea of how long it may take to develop a plan for land use based on outdated practices. There are doubts about how much the GSP of Sofia²⁷ is actually followed and to what extent it gives in fact the direction of the city's development.

7.5.2. The ESPON project 2.3.1 (2007b)

Bulgaria is a passive participant in the "drafting process" of elaborating the European Spatial Development Perspective. However, clear tracks of the ESDP influence are to be found in countries where the national policies for spatial planning were reformed shortly after the ESDP was published. It is believed that this is a strong - although indirect - influence of the ESDP which is linked to reforms in the institutional structure of the spatial planning system or the introduction of a new legislative framework (ESPON, 2007b). According to the report, Bulgaria is among the examples that

²⁷ The preparation of its elaboration started in 1998. Initially the plan was approved in 2003, but due to the conflicts that followed its implementation - environmental impact assessment – its revision was necessitated in 2007. This was complemented by the fact that socio-economic processes in Sofia in the 2003-2007 period led to an investment growth and an increase of the capital's population, motorization, the process of restoration of ownership, organization of green spaces, new housing complexes, etc. The final approval of the plan was carried out in 2009.

illustrate this with the introduction of the SPA in 2001, although the act is in no way analytically consistent with the European principles of spatial planning. A further example of this are the already mentioned multiple amendments over the following 12 years, including the inability to organize the system of spatial planning instruments within the framework of that act. In addition to that, a process of a "construction boom" emerged with the introduction of the SPA which also regulates the construction processes.

The ESPON report affirms that the most important effect of the ESDP application is reflected in the change of spatial planning practices at the local level. Bulgaria is the only country, according to the report, where the local level is the most important level of application, since planning documents only exist at NUTS 4 and NUTS 5 levels. The National Report (2005) which was prepared for the 2.3.1. Project does not take into account how many of those regional (local) units are provided with such planning documents, in how many of them these planning documents are simply inherited by the old regime, whether they are still active (without an update), etc. Nonetheless, the lack of knowledge on the ESDP by local administrations is strongly underlined in the report, as well as the lack of evidence of direct application of the document. The specifics of the distribution of competences, as well as the territorial levels of planning are correctly reflected, although in a generalized manner.

Further on an assessment of the degree of compliance or non-compliance regarding the 13 policy aims of the ESDP is made, whose results are ensured thanks to the "national experts" by the attached national reports elaborated for the 2005 ESPON project (Table 20), without considering the cause-effect relationships.

The analysis of the spider diagram for Bulgaria, where the line between "application" and "no application" of the respective policy aims is depicted, shows the application of a given policy aim in the country for assessment indicators varying from 4 (no change as policy was already in conformance with the ESDP) to 6 (change and conformance due to the application of the ESDP), taking into account the prevailing changes and conformance resulting from the application of the ESDP, or under the influence of other factors, influencing the ESDP application (implicit application).

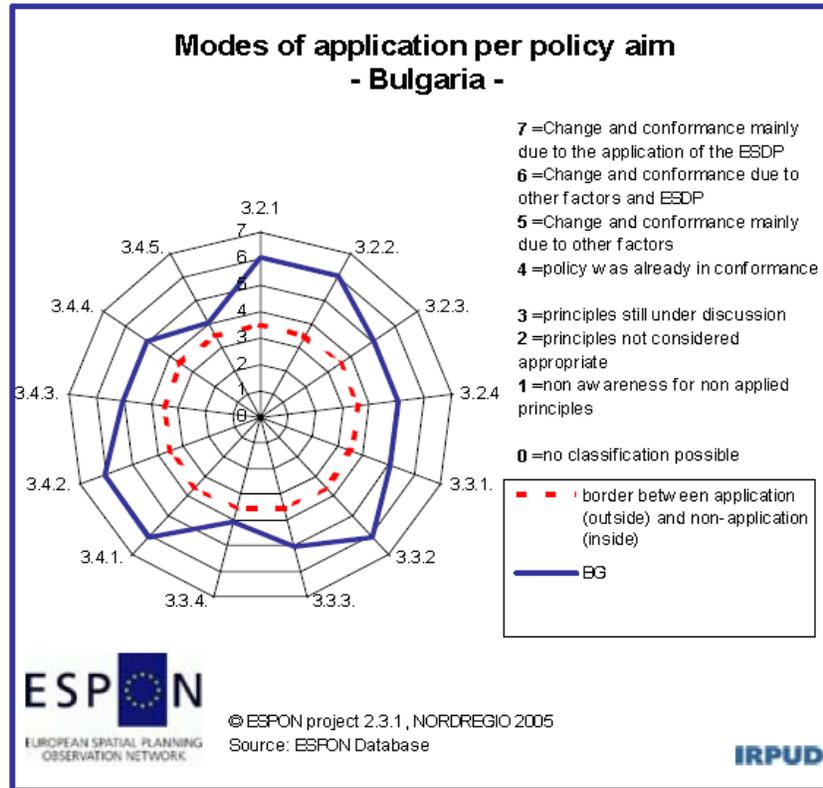
Table 20: Policy aims of the ESDP and its conformance assessment in Bulgaria according to the ESPON (2007b)

Policy Aims	Assessment of the conformance for Bulgaria
3.2 Polycentric Spatial Development and a New Urban-Rural Relationship	
3.2.1 Polycentric and balanced spatial development	6 Change and conformance due to the application of the ESDP
3.2.2 Dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urbanized regions	6 Change and conformance due to the application of the ESDP
3.2.3 Indigenous development of diverse and productive rural areas	5 Change and conformance due to other factors
3.2.4 Urban-rural partnership	5 Change and conformance due to other factors
3.3 Parity of Access to Infrastructure and Knowledge	
3.3.1 An integrated approach to infrastructure and knowledge	5 Change and conformance due to other factors
3.3.2 Polycentric development model: a basis for better accessibility	6 Change and conformance due to the ESDP and other factors
3.3.3 Efficient and sustainable use of the infrastructure	5 Change and conformance due to other factors
3.3.4 Diffusion of innovation and knowledge	4 No change as policy was already in conformity with the ESDP
3.4 Wise Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage	
3.4.1 Natural and cultural development as development asset	6 Change and conformance due to the ESDP and other factors
3.4.2 Preservation and development of the natural heritage	6 Change and conformance due to the ESDP and other factors
3.4.3 Water resource management - a special challenge for spatial development	5 Change and conformance due to other factors

3.4.4 Creative management of cultural landscapes	5 Change and conformance due to other factors
3.4.5 Creative management and cultural heritage	4 No change as policy was already in conformity with the ESDP

Source: Author, based on the Final Report of the ESPON project 2.3.1 (2007b)

Figure 25: Spider diagram of Modes of application per policy aims. Bulgaria.



Source: Final Report of the ESPON project 2.3.1 (2007)

Note: in the legend – *non awareness* to be considered as *non-awareness*

The levels of assessment are highly dependent on the National Reports - studies which should identify the effect of the ESDP on the national systems. However, the main criticism to the conformance assessments for Bulgaria concerns the fact that the problem of institutionalization of the Bulgarian spatial planning system has led to the absence of competent authorities which should be in charge of such national surveys. This is one of the reasons why the Bulgarian "National Report" tracking the effect of the ESDP was a product of the Spatial Development and Research Unit (SDRU) at Aristotle

University of Thessaloniki, Greece²⁸. It has also been noted that the implementation mechanisms and other requirements contained in the focus of the National Reports, had not been reported (due to the format of the ESPON report). In the presented case studies of the ESDP application (which are likely to be found at the regional or local levels) Bulgaria is missing.

Five out of thirteen policy aims have been assessed positively, in which cases a change resulting from the implementation of the ESDP was observed, despite the absence of key spatial planning documents - spatial schemes and plans. For example, the objective: "Polycentric and balanced spatial development", assessed according to "change and conformance due to the application of the ESDP" in the period up to 2005, is mentioned in strategic documents such as the National Regional Development Strategy of Bulgaria for the 2005-2015 period. The document slightly reports possible territorial-urban inequalities across the country, but raises the issue of a lack of balance in the "network of settlements and its polycentric hierarchy", as well as the need for national and regional spatial schemes through which this issue is to be clarified and addressed. The first national spatial document which takes into account the application of the ESDP and develops models for the implementation of a polycentric spatial development is the National Spatial Development Concept.

The ESPON reports (2007a, 2007b) are an important step not only towards understanding the Bulgarian system of spatial planning of the 1990s, its transformations and main characteristics, but also towards the directions of adaptation to the European model of planning, the process of Europeanization of the planning systems of the Eastern bloc and the abilities for convergence of the planning systems in Europe in general. The studies show various ways of reforming, based on various criteria, some of which are not even a product of national surveys and expertise. This is one of the main reasons why "the ESPON reports contain many errors about Bulgaria because much information on the country is not up to date ..." (ESPON, 2013: 56). Without any doubt, however, many of the conclusions drawn from studying the Bulgarian planning system concern the discrepancy between theory and practice, the lack of integrity in the systems

²⁸ A key educational and research institution for different projects within the INTERREG II and III programs for Southeast Europe, in which programs Bulgaria also participates.

of planning, the lack of awareness of key documents such as the ESDP, despite the debate on their implementation, the lack of spatial plans and schemes and other issues, which only recently began to be realized. Those issues remain key challenges of the system towards providing a more open and pluralist approach to spatial planning.

"We learnt about the integrated approach through seeing different countries' systems for spatial planning and regional development. Bulgaria has two different laws for the two. They have some linkages but are not as integrated as some....The outcomes are taking us in the right direction - making connections between and harmonising the two systems". (Bulgarian experts; ESPON, 2013: 67)

In this context, it should be taken into account that the Europeanization of the planning system is a slow and gradual process with different directions and impacts of the outer processes. Many of the ESPON reports show that the Bulgarian system of spatial planning is not yet an integrated unit that functions effectively in all its dimensions. A process of European influence can be detected – Europeanization in the governance of the territory, but without any effective reformation of the old planning system. The review of the studied reports (2007a, 2007b), in the case of Bulgaria shows that the "European" still has not managed to change the paradigms, the values and the understanding of spatial planning.

**PART V: ANALYTICAL STUDY: FINDINGS AND
DISCUSSION**

**CHAPTER 8: THE EUROPEANIZATION OF THE SYSTEM OF
SPATIAL PLANNING: TECHNICAL DIMENSION**

**CHAPTER 9: POLICY TRANSFER: THE EUROPEAN SPATIAL
DISCOURSE ON SPATIAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS: THE NSDC
AND THE IPURDs**

CHAPTER 8: EUROPEANIZATION OF THE SYSTEM OF SPATIAL PLANNING: TECHNICAL DIMENSION

The EU, being an external factor for the imposition of internal changes in the policies of the member states, has effects with various significance, while the impact on the overall changes in the Bulgarian system of spatial planning can even be misunderstood. The use or the application of the EU rules and policies as an opportunity to transform and adapt the systems of spatial planning to the European model of planning, again takes us back to the cyclic nature of the EU influence or the three-dimensional nature of the mechanisms (“top-down”, “bottom-up” and horizontal) and channels of influence which the Europeanization of planning has.

The “top-down” direction of the EU influence - through sectorial policies and the European integration - on national goals, as well as the introduction of instruments for territorial governance, can be summarized in the process of changing of the Bulgarian planning system, and of the system of planning instruments respectively.

The principle of conditionality - one of the key components of the EU strategy in the post-communist countries - is widely recognized as a driving force behind the processes of EU enlargement and Europeanization, and Bulgaria makes no exception. This principle is mainly related to the inner transformation of the process of membership negotiations and has been followed by the EU pressure from 2007 on, where the level of domestic change generally ranges from mild to modest.

The conditions and the requirements of the European integration are the basis for the emergence of regional development and subsequently, in parallel to those, opportunities for territorial cooperation were introduced (horizontal Europeanization). This territorial cooperation still has no direct impact on the national discourses and ideas for planning, nor do they have a selected experts’ evaluation which to be "uploaded" at the European level, despite the advent of soft and voluntary instruments.

8.1. Dynamics related to the EU impact

Tracing the effect of the triad of the main types of EU policies, namely: the spending (sectorial) policies; the EU regulations and directives; the EU discourse on spatial planning (*Planning for Europe*) - can serve as a basic approach to understanding the impact of the EU's role in the Bulgarian system of spatial planning. The Europeanization of spatial planning is - as already mentioned - the result of these three groups of catalysts or channels of influence (Böhme and Waterhout, 2008; Waterhout, 2008).

8.1.1. Spending (sectorial) policies (resources)

The sectorial policies, and the regional policy in particular (the INTERREG initiative, though not so much in this case study), are the policies which most strongly detect the influence of the Europeanization process on transformations and reforms in the Bulgarian planning system. The regional policy is the cause of building a completely new set of institutions, policies and levels of planning the regional development²⁹. The introduction of a legislative framework for regional development, as well as the replacement of the sectorial planning approach with the indicative approach, has provided a legal basis for the implementation of the structural funds in Bulgaria, together with the introduction of the NUTS territorial system. Achieving the priorities, the measures and the activities, as well as specific development projects, has become possible thanks to the pre-accession financial instruments (operating until 2006) and the structural funds, together with the Cohesion Fund (2007), in some cases – with a supplement or co-financing from the financial resources of the state or the municipal budgets, international financial sources, etc.

The evolution of the system of planning instruments has revealed that the opportunities for organizing priority programs and projects financed from the EU funds have been acknowledged. "The financial injection" is the main reason for the introduction of an entirely new set of strategic documents which only seemingly formulate regional and local priorities for the development of the territory, but in practice those documents are

²⁹ Spatial planning itself is not institutionalized.

an expression of a "documentary adaptation" – a product of uncertified design groups / organizations (in the majority of cases).

The Bulgarian experts at the NCRD, as well as the academic circles, remain firm in their view that the European funds have turned not only into an important commitment and momentum for changes and adaptations through which Bulgaria conducts and develops its system for regional planning, but are also a factor for subsequent implementation of new spatial planning instruments (following the example of the Integrated Plans) within the RDA, in absence of a real reform in the field of planning and without any direct competences (directives) for spatial planning coming from the EU.

The problems with the absorption of the flow of financial resources during the first years, together with the reported abuses and corrupt practices even in the years of Bulgaria's full EU membership, has resulted in various restrictions, including freezing or suspension of the EU funds. However, the priority role which the EU funds have in making regional policy, maintaining the cooperation and the transparency of the relationship between the EU and Bulgaria, has led to the creation of specialized government departments whose function is limited to the funds control and management, and to aiding the future mutual trust between Bulgaria and the EU. An acting Minister of the European Affairs was introduced in 2002 (albeit without a respective ministry). Since 2009 the coordination regarding the EU funding has remained within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in the period following 2010 those functions were delegated to the Minister / Vice Prime Minister of the EU funds management. Their main task remains the control of the absorption of EU funds and their distribution among the Operational Programs.

Funding of territorial cooperation programs such as INTERREG is also an example of (although less significant) influence, despite the fact that the impact of the established "connections" for knowledge exchange - as a *soft* approach to Europeanization of planning - is still not quite substantial after the first two episodes of planning, despite the country's participation in a number of projects. Here it should be noted that the effect of the process of knowledge exchange is not so quick and therefore this effect is more likely to be observed after a prolonged period of influence.

8.1.2. EU Regulations and Directives

The "adaptational pressure" of the EU has led to a number of legislative changes in the country (see *Scope of the planning system*) (Table 22). This "harmonization" with the European legislation – typical for each candidate-state of the Union - is the reason for transferring the idea of planning and introducing the planning of the regional development. Bulgaria was supported in developing the first set of strategic documents by countries such as Spain, although additional information about the influence of other member states in the development of institutional and legislative structure for regional policy in Bulgaria have not been found (Dimitrova, 2015). European legislation is perhaps the most powerful and difficult “top-down” compliance condition for the planning system of Bulgaria.

However, updates in the legal framework for planning were detected as early as the 1990s – on the example of environmental protection - and subsequently – water and waste management, energy, biodiversity, etc. All these "hard" measures created more regulations for the spatial planning process and yet - they were considered by the society and by the professionals as a progress. The regulation that probably affected the private investment process the most, creating many collisions, was the introduction of the NATURA 2000 network of protected areas (Yanchev, 2012: 72).

The idea of radical change in the planning system is possibly the most typical example of the Europeanization of planning, though it is only valid in those areas where the EU has a direct competence. Despite the existence of a horizontal dimension of the Europeanization process, the prevailing opinion is that the institutional arrangements supporting the regional policy are the result of a downloading process. This type of Europeanization, Giannakourou (2012) clearly defines as “hard” (Europeanization through hard regulation and compliance).

8.1.3. The EU Discourse

The EU discourse referring to the idea of a European spatial planning model through the increasing formation of the European Agenda for spatial planning since 1990, and through focusing on "territorial governance", "territorial cohesion", "polycentrism", "sustainable development", etc. (ESDP, ESPON), affects the national planning systems in different ways. The lack of direct powers at the EU level promotes the use of a

number of documents in the distribution of the discourse on making territorial policies. That discourse, in general, should be regarded as an ideological part of a hegemonic project, which in turn is linked to the institutional dimension. The discourse includes consideration of new symbols, concepts or vocabulary, creation of specific practices, construction of ideology around a specific hegemonic principle (Böhme, 2002).

The European documents, compensating for the lack of European directives in the field of spatial planning, are essential promoters of the discourse on the European spatial model. As already discussed in previous chapters, the European discourse and knowledge in that field, are not fully utilized by the Bulgarian spatial planning. The belated awareness of the concept and the importance of the European spatial planning is visible in practice through the inability to merge two entirely separated systems of planning instruments, despite the implementation of new ones - as it is in the case of the Integrated Plans, the spatial concepts and the NSDC of Bulgaria. The application of the European Spatial Development Perspective, discussed in Chapter 7, is still insignificant and not quite bound to the overall improvement of spatial planning practices at the different levels, and to the creation of an ideology. New symbols, concepts and vocabulary have been introduced through the implementation of the European legislation in the field of sectorial policies - particularly in the field of regional development. However, the transformation of the cognitive dimension of the spatial planning system, as well as the application of soft approaches in general, is insufficient, which explains the prevalence of "hard" Europeanization through tough institutional aspects of the planning system. In this sense, the Bulgarian culture of planning has yet to undergo profound processes of transformation.

The influence of the three channels of impact proposed by Böhme and Waterhout, (2008) in the detection of the Europeanization of the national planning, is a major benchmark in the understanding and the organizing of the spatial planning system of Bulgaria during the studied period. The influence of these three channels of impact have helped for the general grouping of the planning instruments depending on the prevailing EU influence, but also for distinguishing the two key documents (the NSGC and the IPURDs) defined by the legal framework as spatial instruments, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, from all other planning documents.

Table 21: Introduction of the new planning instruments according to the influence of the three types of EU policies

European legislation	European financial resources	European spatial planning discourse
Regional programs, plans and strategies	Regional programs, plans and strategies; Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development;	Regional programs, plans and strategies Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development; National Spatial Development Concept

Source: Author

Table 22: Main changes introduced to the process of Europeanization in the technical dimension of the planning system in Bulgaria (1989-2013)

Technical dimension of spatial planning	1989-2000	2001-2006	2007-2013
Scope	<p><i>No spatial planning episode</i></p> <p>Planning Acts: First Regional Development Act Territorial and Administrative management Act</p> <p>Environmental Acts: Protected Areas Act + regulations NATURA 2000 Environment and Waters Act (amendment) Property Acts</p>	<p>Planning Acts: Spatial Planning Act</p> <p>Second Regional Development Act</p> <p>Environmental Acts: Environmental Protection Act EIA Regulations SEA / EA Regulations</p>	<p>Planning Acts: Third Regional Development Act</p> <p>Environmental Acts: Protected Area Act + regulations Property Acts</p>
Locus of Power (Level)	<p>Local governance: municipal level of regional and spatial planning</p>		
	<p>Regional level of planning is introduced NUTS</p>	<p>NUTS 2 reforms</p>	<p>National level of spatial planning (NSDC)</p>
	<p>No national and regional level of spatial planning</p>		

<p>Planning Instruments</p>	<p><i>No reformation of spatial plans</i></p>	<p><i>No spatial plans and schemes</i></p>	<p>Integrated Urban Plans; New instruments (concepts) for spatial development</p>
<p>Practices</p>	<p>Regional development plans, strategies and programs</p>		
<p>Governance</p>	<p>EIA / SEA</p>		
<p>Practices</p>	<p>Separation between regional and spatial planning</p>		
<p>Practices</p>	<p>INTERREG</p>		
<p>Practices</p>	<p>Dismantling of the planning institutions of the socialist era</p>	<p>Private consulting companies for regional and strategic planning. Lack of certification</p>	
<p>Governance</p>	<p>Individual approaches to spatial planning with strong influence of private investments</p>		
<p>Governance</p>	<p>Bad management practices of “fragmented planning” backed by private investors and incompilance with the EIA resolutions</p>		
<p>Governance</p>	<p>Territorial cooperation</p>		

Source: Author

Notes: In red: dynamics related to the Europeanization process

8.2. The Bulgarian expert assessment of the Europeanization of planning

The technical dimension of the planning system in Bulgaria goes through various dynamics associated primarily with the introduction of European funding and implementation of European legislation in the field of regional planning in the three discussed episodes of changes. The most distinct are the dynamics in the scope and in the levels of planning (locus of power), despite the partial, selective nature of the changes and the adaptations.

As a result of the development of the system of planning instruments during the three episodes, two parallel systems of planning documents have been established – one for regional development and another one for spatial planning (physical planning), whose integration remains questionable. The unanimous opinion of the interviewed experts assessing the reforms introduced by the process of Europeanization in the face of the NSDC or the Integrated Urban Plans, is mainly sceptical, rather than optimistic: the reforms do not cover the lowest territorial levels or specific development tools regulated by the SPA. This, coupled with lack of awareness of the need for spatial policy in the country, explains the lack of real opportunities for coordination and integration of the existing systems of regional planning and physical (land use) planning documents.

However, the opinions regarding the need for reforms in the legal framework of spatial planning or in the system of plans, concepts and schemes, remains diametrically opposite among Bulgarian scientists and experts in that field. Various options have been suggested over the years, including recommendations for the unification between the SPA and the RDA or fragmentation of the SPA, since it unites land use, investment activities and construction (and regulates the issues of ownership as well). Among the recommendations for reforms there have been such related to the compaction of the secondary (by-law) regulations of the legislative acts, and setting new solutions through key tools at the appropriate levels. The adjustment of the scope of the planning system will undoubtedly result in new realities and opportunities for finding solutions for the synchronization of the system of instruments. Creating a new legislative framework or the integration of the already existing one in the face of the SPA and the RDA, would certainly result in a delay in the planning process. Solutions for integrating the systems of regional (for development) and the spatial planning instruments have been sought from experts also because of the

impossibility for completion and compliance with the existing acts and regulations. The failure to comply with the SPA and its incorrect application, finds expression through “distraining” its functions by other regulations and legal acts, such as the exemplified RDA.

Improving the existing legislation, however, should logically follow the need for awareness of the European values, but above all – an integrated approach to understanding space and spatial planning, respectively. Last but not least, a possible spatial integration of the planning documents should be preceded by a logical terminology unification, which currently the RDA and the SPA do not share - as exemplified by the terms “region”/ “rayon”, to which special attention was paid. The analysis of the conducted interviews shows that it is only the non-architects and non-urbanists who share the idea of the dimensions and the difference between these two concepts (region and rayon), which share a seemingly "synonymous perception / use" (Slaveikov, 2000), but in practice find expression in areas with different geographical range and boundaries. The introduction of NUTS further "complicates" the situation by imposing a belief among experts that the region is nothing but a changeable statistical unit with no historical-geographical boundaries. In this context, the issue of unification of terms (for example the use of “region” in the RDA) would facilitate the understanding of the spatial range of instruments such as the spatial schemes - originally designed as a spatial planning instrument and subsequently replaced with their equivalents – the spatial concepts.

Reforms in the system of spatial plans practically do not occur following 1989, therefore, no dynamics of the Europeanization process in this part of the technical dimension of the planning system are reported (apart from the implementation of Integrated Urban Plans). It comes as no surprise that this "static" (unchanging) element of spatial planning is often accompanied by the view that spatial plans or land use plans in Bulgaria should not be changed because of their relevance to the similar ones in Europe. The opinion about the Detailed Plans is not much different, although certain differences are observed in terms of private interests' influence, especially in the process of changing the status of the territories (most often - being declared as urbanized), as pointed out earlier – in cases of resort settlements and areas with a well-developed tourism industry. In this regard, the statement that there is no urgent need for Europeanization of physical planning, is common. The

Europeanization should be oriented in the search for links which pool the systems of regional and physical planning (S. Motev, personal communication, July, 2016). This idea suggests that the search for “mechanical” integration solutions, without a conceptual justification for this unity - within the European discourse on space planning - is part of the reality in which Bulgarian planning system has been developing.

The Europeanization of spatial planning is unanimously evaluated by the interviewed experts as a fictitious, documentary, misunderstood process, only measured by the amount of absorbed EU funds. The Europeanization of the system of instruments is a formal process of transformation, but informally it remains marginalized and "hollow" inside – a system of files in the municipal administrations and not an expression of the competition of ideas in society (A. Burov, personal communication, July, 2016). The conducted consultations and interviews categorically add that Europeanization in Bulgaria is a clearly distinguishable “top-down” process, whose impact on the reform of the planning instruments relates primarily to the impact of the spending policies and the resources of the EU³⁰. The Europeanization is "ineffective" because of the lack of European consciousness and values for forming a process of a unified territorial policy in the country as of 2013.

The Europeanization of spatial planning is a process which has had a "confusing" reflection in the technical dimension of the system, whose complete transformation towards integration is impossible without parallel reforms in the cognitive and the discursive dimension.

8.3. Domestic changes as a result of the EU adaptation pressure: The spatial instruments

The internal changes in response to the Europeanization pressure may vary and are rated from “weak” to “strong” with intermediate levels (see Chapter “Europeanization”). However, it is no surprise that a long period of time of EU influence on the national

³⁰ None of the interviewed experts mentioned the role of territorial cooperation as a kind of Europeanization or evaluated the latter.

policies of the member states is required in order to determine the extent of domestic changes.

The overview of the development of the system for spatial planning in Bulgaria excludes theoretically possible reactions to Europeanization such as *Lack of Change* or *Retrenchment* (in case of an active contradiction against the imposed requirements). Therefore, the rate of change varies from Absorption (Absorption and Accommodation according to Börzel and Risse (2003) to Transformation defined by a high and deep adaptive change (Radaelli, 2003).

The Transformation in turn requires a change in countries which are already EU member states, measured by a complete replacement of the existing policies, processes and institutions by new ones, which in the Bulgarian case can be excluded undoubtedly. On the other hand, the Absorption process is a bit more wide-ranging with regard to the rate of change and the type of reaction to the EU pressure. For this reason, it is considered that the bilateral consideration of the process by Börzel and Risse (2003) is more appropriate. The two authors characterize the Absorption and the Accommodation, which differ because of the fact that Accommodation involves not only incorporation and adaptation of European policies and ideas (without changing some essential characteristics and the collective understanding of spatial policies, processes and institutions) but also "patching" (gluing) new ideas and policies to the old ones. The degree of change in this case is defined as "modest".

The spatial planning system in Bulgaria for the 1989-2013 period exhibits a fragmentation into two systems – of physical planning and of regional planning, one of which is adapted to the direct EU requirements. The concept of spatial planning has not evolved to the extent that integrates these two systems and their respective sets of planning instruments, and has only partially reformed the planning system by adapting it "forcibly" ("top-down"), as it was pointed out, through the conditionality of the European mechanisms of financing and through enforcement of the EU legislation. In parallel, the practice and the management of the technical dimension of the system (the *heart* of the system) shows a long period of "non-planning", an individual approach to the "spatial planning process" and / or failure to meet the requirements of the SPA - an outdated act, gradually "patched up" by

amendments. The balance sheet of the evolution of planning instruments has shown only a seeming change in the field of regional development, without much improvement of the overall understanding of the territory, a collective perception of spatial planning as a single process or a complete replacement of the existing (old) practices.

The “evolution” of the spatial plans and the lack and / or the delay in their implementation is a clear indicator of the Accommodation nature of the change imposed by the Europeanization. Undoubtedly, it is assumed that this type of domestic change tends to be altered to Transformation, regarding the requirements and the characteristics of the possible reforms in the future.

The unchanged nature of the system of plans and schemes as of 2010-2011, shows the development of a static system of instruments "glued" to that of regional plans, programs and strategies, which "follow" the nature of the EU programming periods. This lack of change is progressively followed by "distraining" of spatial "competences" for the development of spatial planning instruments by the legal framework of regional development, following the example of the implementations of the Integrated Plans, the spatial concepts (from 2012 on) and the NSDC (2013). These new documents, "glued" to the existing system of instruments, are “born” disguised with the idea to integrate the already existing ones.

The implementation of the European spatial discourse in planning documents appears for the first time in the NSDC (2013-2025), whose degree of applicability cannot yet be measured. Similar cases are the elaborated Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development, such as the one of Sofia, whose temporal scope is 2014-2020. The transfer of the EU discourse in these two types of documents will be tracked by analysing the methodological guidelines for developing the Integrated Plans and the NSDC of Bulgaria in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 9: POLICY TRANSFER: THE EUROPEAN SPATIAL DISCOURSE ON SPATIAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS: THE NSDC AND THE IPURDs

Observation of evidence of a Europeanization process is always a sign that the latter has been assisted, incited or strengthened by policy transfer processes (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000). The exchange and circulation of ideas created by policy transfer are the most acceptable face of Europeanization, where its influence has been observed, but also an important tool for clarifying and assessing the transformations imposed (coercively) by it, or voluntarily adopted within its framework. Europeanization has the potential to have markedly different effects in different countries, including different domain or dimension of domestic structures (ibid). The studying of the results which were achieved within that process in the planning systems, shows different interpretation, perception and response to the Europeanization, despite the influence of the same external principles and the impact of similar "European instruments" for transformation and/or adaptation of the domestic spatial planning systems to the idea of a single European spatial project. The reforms and the initiatives in the process of Europeanization of spatial planning remain significantly dependent on the national political will (the behaviour of state actors - elected or non-elected officials, political parties and advisory experts) and the awareness of the need for real opportunities to integrate common principles reflected through a system of instruments for spatial development - a result of the discursive integration into the European space.

The empirical study of the dynamics of the spatial planning system of an Eastern European country such as Bulgaria (in the context of the European scheduled debate³¹), which has adopted the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership and has joined the EU countries, is a sign that Bulgaria has completed its post-socialist socioeconomic transformation, and is currently in a process of adaptation to the Western state model, which is considered as first evidence of a Europeanization effect (Tsachevki, 2011). Twenty four years since the fall of the "wall" of political dependence and centralized state control, the process of Europeanization (defined either as positive or as merely fictitious), although difficult, has been able to introduce new approaches and visions for

³¹ The fall of the "Iron Curtain" in 1989 can be interpreted as a major impetus for the development of the European debate on spatial planning in which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have indeed raised some interest (Cotella, 2012).

spatial planning. This process has not been completed yet. It is an evolving dynamics of future transformations and results. However, many of the traditional aspects of the Bulgarian spatial planning have been forgotten, unreformed for a long time, or have been simply an expression of limited genuine political interest in the EU discourse when compared to “talking the talk” in order to maintain or increase funding from the EU (see Cotella, 2012). These forgotten aspects of spatial planning are gradually taken over by the new planning instruments, created in the process of vertical Europeanization and its primarily "hard" mechanisms (the EU spending policy and the EU legislation). The establishment of regional development policy and / or environmental policy, and its impact on the system of spatial instruments, are an example of this. The impact of the EU spending policies are evidence of the creation of formal (within the legal framework) and informal (certification, adoption, preparation, implementation and monitoring of plans) procedures, practices, rules and / or "way of doing things." Evidence of legal and institutional changes made at the national level due to pressure from the EU, has been observed in the Bulgarian planning system, primarily through regional development policy and planning, as discussed in the previous chapter. Thus a Europeanization pressure through the EU legislative framework has also been observed.

Using the European discourse on spatial development for better positioning and justification of the reforms in the national, regional or local planning, is no precedent in the analysis of the Europeanization of spatial planning. The reference to the ESDP and to the broader European discourse, offered the domestic actors additional arguments for a strategic turn, but also a rationale of the decision, allowing and defining the duration of European resources for the planning policies. However, a voluntary transfer of ideas and principles is probably the most difficult task caused by the impact of Europeanization. Using the spatial discourse on "Europe" as a platform for knowledge, resources or argument to achieve specific objectives in the process of adaptation, is a complex mechanism which is, without any doubt, linked to the development of the cognitive and the discursive aspects of the planning system.

The cognitive research on Bulgaria shows a recovery of the importance of the European spatial discourse, primarily in the period from 2007 on. The need of "using Europe" and its principles, not only through its funding channels, has been acquiring certain priority significance in Bulgaria, in a new temporal and financial context of organizing the national spatial priorities, which brings back to the agenda the concerns about the

development and planning of the cities. These concerns (which until 2008 were just an expression of "construction of buildings") began to acquire a "shape" through the planning of urban settlements (Redjeb and Chakarova, 2016). The "Europe" discourse on spatial planning was born in the shadow of regional planning and culminated in two key documents – the NSDC and the IPURD.

9.1. "Download" and transfer of the European spatial discourse to planning instruments for spatial development

Territorial policies are a combination of actors, instruments and activities (practices), whose relationship and interaction are far more complex when doing a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the processes and practices for planning in a given country (Elorrieta Sanz, 2013). The actors in each Europeanizing system try - in their own way - to (re) produce and transfer ideas and visions, as well as / or learning spatial thinking from European documents, which support the idea of "Europe" as a spatial entity (Luukkonen, 2017). Planning instruments (plans, concepts, etc.) could be of an even greater need in the analysis and the evaluation of the impact of the “new” European principles and ideas for planning at the domestic level, as material assets or as a tangible expression of the organization objectives and interventions concerning space, although not always easily accessible. Plans, for example, allow a focus on the content and discourse on territorial policies, as well as a verification of the compliance with the objectives, principles and strategies marked by Europe - at least in theory (on paper) (Elorrieta Sanz, 2013). The system of activities related to the implementation and the monitoring of the planning documents, are the actual expression of the answer to the question of what the results of spatial plans are. In Bulgaria, P. Evrev recognizes the necessity and the usefulness of implementing the European spatial planning documents³² in the Bulgarian system of spatial instruments, only when their principles are transferred from paper into practice:

"It is important to consider the principles, the general principles. (...) We learn through these documents. (...) ... we borrow those from the Europeans and

³² Expressed through programs for implementation of the necessary actions and indicators for monitoring, evaluation and update have been developed under Art. 17 of the RDA (2009) in the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the NRDS of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2022), Regional Development Plans at Level 2 (2014-2020), District Development Strategies (2014-2020) and Municipal Development Plans (2014 -2020) (MRDPW, 2011).

*transfer them. We use and we approve these documents, we like them. All of these common European documents and charters – The Leipzig Charter, the Torremolinos Charter, the Toledo Declaration - are good in their essence; we comply with them and in the elaboration of the National Concept we seriously leaned upon them. And it's all good. **The question is to what extent we apply those and to what extent there is real application of those documents and their underlying principles?**" (P. Evrev, personal communication, July, 2016).*

The implementation of an integrated approach to spatial planning at all territorial levels is among the new elements in the Bulgarian system of spatial planning instruments, much more recent than the adoption of the SPA. The integrated approach is referred to as a mandatory program in important EU documents which set the general guidelines for spatial development, such as the ESDP and the EU Territorial Agenda. At the urban settlement level, the integrated approach to planning has been developing in parallel with the principles embedded in a series of documents such as the Charter of European Sustainable Cities and Towns, the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (2007), the Toledo Declaration (2010) (Troeva, 2013). However, the main element that is missing - "not on paper but in practice" - is that same integrated approach that we talk and write about (V. Troeva, personal communication, March, 2015).

The influence of the European discourse is revealed most clearly in the system of instruments for regional planning – regulated by the RDA - which instruments generally follow the recommendations of all of the more recent European planning documents, through which Bulgaria is trying to solve the intricate puzzle of regional policies (Troeva, 2013). Clear evidence of implementation of the policy objectives of documents such as the ESDP, has not been observed in the logic of the SPA and the system of spatial plans and schemes. The impact of the ESDP on regional planning is controversial and limited as a whole, should we consider the balance of the chronological review of planning practices and activities on the implementation of regional planning instruments. The impact of the EU structural funds and the cross-border programs such as INTERREG (whose influence and effect is not included in this analysis) can be considered an exception rather than a rule.

Troeva (2013) insists that the ideas of the ESDP and other (further developing the latter) European documents (the Lisbon Strategy, 2000; the Göteborg Strategy, 2001; the

Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020, etc.) have been “downloaded” and have had their reflection on the elaboration of the National Regional Development Strategy (2012-2022) and the National Spatial Development Concept (2013-2025) - adopted along with the latest amendments to the SPA and the RDA³³ (from 2012). Beside the principles of sustainable territorial development, the NRDS and the NSDC also abide the principles of interdependence and equality, so as to reduce social, economic and spatial disparities between the different cities and regions. The NSDC has further developed the principle of polycentric urban development in the new National Regional Development Strategy (2012-2022), unlike the one elaborated for the 2005-2015 period. The NSDC is the result of the search for compromise and protection of the model of "moderate polycentrism", but parallel to that, it is also a pragmatic instrument for identifying priority urban settlements for channelling the EU funds for sustainable urban development.

However, it should be noted that in the field of regional development, the transfer of ideas from the ESDP to legislative texts, strategies and programs, is mainly conceptual, partial or even unsatisfactory, given the three attempts to draw up a legal framework for regional planning, speculations and lack of real standard criteria in the elaboration of regional development plans, the application of which provides unified legislative, European objectives of territorial development. P. Evrev insists that the Bulgarian regional planning is an example of blind transfer of the European discourse to the system of plans and strategies (personal communication, July, 2016). It could also be noted that using the European spatial discourse or the discourse on "Europe" in organizing the planning process or practices at certain levels, is regarded as an attempt for achieving greater legitimacy of political reforms (Dühr et al., 2010). In this sense, it is logical to argue that Europeanization is not only a forced / coercive process, but also a voluntary one, where local planning actors use the "EU" as a discursive tool for

³³ The RDA is supplemented with texts that mention spatial planning and development. It is stated that "the planning of spatial development of the territory covers a system of legally regulated documents that aim: 1. Integration into the EU; 2. Development of a balanced polycentric network and integrated urban regeneration and development; 3. Territorial connectivity and access to public and private services; 4. Sustainable development and conservation of natural and cultural heritage; 5. Improvement of specific areas with unfavourable socio-economic, geographic and demographic characteristics; 6. Promoting of investment, competitiveness and innovation; 7. Territorial integration of border areas including at transnational level; 8. Reduction of the natural hazard risk in vulnerable areas." (Art. 3, § 1).

promoting their own goals and ideas. The evaluation of the expression and the implementation of those ideas, however, is most likely disputable at the national level.

Further development of the ideas for integrated urban development and planning was also observed in the last period of the 2001-2013 episode of the planning system dynamics. The principles were "downloaded" and transferred through documents of national character such as the National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013), OP "Regional Development", the NRDS (2012-2022) and subsequently - the NSDC (2013-2025). Integrated and sustainable urban development is being infiltrated through the ideas of the Leipzig Charter, the Toledo Declaration and the Territorial Agenda of the EU. The conditions for funding urban projects from the EU and the recommendatory nature of these documents, "impose voluntarily", the "downloading" or the borrowing of their principles for the elaboration of the IPURDs, thus turning them into a practically new planning instrument – an integrator of the systems of planning documents at the local level. The conditions for "downloading" and implementation of these principles are expressed in the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration and implementation of the 67 Integrated Plans.

9.2. Transfer of the European discourse on spatial planning to the NSDC and the Integrated Plans. From theoretical implementation to changes of the planning practices

The national planning systems reflect the European spatial planning in different ways (Luukkonen, 2017). The European discourse on spatial planning like the one promoted in the ESDP, has a difficult to achieve and a controversial impact on spatial planning practices in the EU countries (Dühr et al., 2010). The so-called "discursive integration" is quite common when there are strong policy communities, active at the European and national levels, with strong direct links between them. The ESDP is a great example of of the "discursive integration" measurement among member states in the nascent phase of the European spatial planning (Cotella and Janin Rivolin, 2011), but not a particularly valid example in the study of spatial planning in Eastern Europe, where the difficult change of the planning culture and planning practices are strongly dependent on the success or failure of the European cohesion policy (Maier, 2012). Bulgaria is no exception to that case.

Distinguishing the role of the discourse from that of the planning practices in the study of changes in spatial planning is imposed by the idea that these two belong to separate dimensions of the planning system structure, and yet are in close and constant interaction within the frameworks of territorial governance. The direct impact of the EU spatial discourse on the changes in the domestic discourse shows, however, that this change has indirect influences on the other domestic planning dimensions - the structure, the instruments and the practices. On the other hand, changes in the domestic discourse are directly dependent on the impact of the EU instruments for territorial governance on the domestic planning practices (Cotella et al., 2011).

Proof of borrowing ("downloading") European spatial planning principles from key pan-European documents can be found in the methodological framework for the elaboration of the two new instruments in the system of planning documents, aimed at integrating the system of instruments for development and spatial planning (the NSDC and the IPURDs). This fact was noted not only by the content analysis of the Methodological guidelines for their elaboration and the review of the existing scarce literature on the topic in the last few years, but also by the interviewed experts' analyses, some of whom took part in the elaboration of the NSDC and some of the first Integrated Plans (such as the one of Sofia, completed in 2013).

For the analysis of the transfer of these principles, the Methodological guidelines have been taken as a source, as well as the possibilities for future application of these instruments and the possible changes in the practices and activities that follow the implementation of the latter, discussed with the above-mentioned experts.

The selection of documents for analysis, such as the Methodological guidelines, arises from the fact that these documents underlie the requirements of the RDA (not of the SPA) and are within the functions and responsibilities of the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works and the respective specialized administration. These are also documents addressing the development and the updating of the planning instruments in the system of the currently existing ones. These documents not only seek to clarify and support the process of drawing up the planning documents (sequence, structure and content, phases and applications that follow them), but also to show the way these documents are inscribed in the EU context, including the way they reflect the European spatial model and governance. The Methodological guidelines take into

account both the European experience and the requirements of the domestic law for compliance and coordination between regional development and planning. The Guidelines contain formulations of conceptual nature, which highlight the possible approaches to applying the fundamental principles of the European spatial development policies in Bulgaria (MRDPW, 2010a). In this context, the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the NSDC and the Integrated Plans act as a "springboard" where the European idea of spatial planning is organized with opportunities for practical intervention into the territory at various levels. The Methodological guidelines themselves are not just a document that reflects the ideas of the "European space", but a framework in which these ideas can be applied and transferred to the sub-national level. The relation "EU discourse - domestic discourse – practices", shown in the model of Cotella et al. (2011) for Channels conveying domestic change, reinforces the idea that more evidence of voluntary transfer of European principles and opportunities for practical application can be discussed and analysed at this stage of development, only through documents such as the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the NSDC (MRDPW, 2010) and the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the IPURDs (MRDPW, 2010/2015). Choosing the Methodological guidelines is justified also by the fact that the process of elaboration of the above-mentioned instruments covers the final phase of the timeframe of this study (till 2013), which limits the ability to monitor and analyse their application and the process of "walking the walk".

Nevertheless, the analytical review of some preliminary studies (Parashkevova, 2016; Dimitrova, 2015) shows that the existing Methodological guidelines for the NSDC and for the IPURDs, do not bring the needed clarity on the mechanisms for concordance, coordination and integration with other planning documents. The Guidelines only give partial orientation so as to ensure cohesion with sectorial policies, but without clarifying the mechanisms of implementation (or any clear methodological approaches) of the European principles for planning in urban areas, for example. The Guidelines also lack a monitoring evaluation of the implementation of the Integrated Plans.

According to Parashkevova (2016), the analysis of these documents ought to consider the dynamics of the legislative changes, especially in regional development, which significantly hinder and delay the implementation of adequate Bulgarian spatial development policy. Thus, for example, the spatial development concept of Romania was developed as early as 2008, that of the Czech Republic - in 2006, Slovenia - in

2004, Greece - in 2002. The elaboration of the National Concept of Bulgaria is lagging significantly and only started in 2011.

9.2.1. Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development

9.2.1.1 General formulations and goals in a European context

With the country's accession to the EU, a process of close tracing of the idea of sustainable urban development and integrated regeneration has begun (Troeva, 2013). In the middle of the 2007-2013 programming period, the legal and strategic framework of regional development began to implement that idea, which culminated in 2010 with the publication of the first Methodological guidelines for the elaboration and implementation of the IPURDs, the funding of which was provided by the European Fund for Regional Development under OP "Regional Development" in Bulgaria.

OP "Regional Development" aims at practical implementation of Priority Axis 4 of the NRDS: "Balanced territorial development". The overall logic of interventions takes into account the importance of urban centers, determining the need for their development and the development of their adjacent and peripheral areas (NRDS 2007-2013, p.100)

With the start of the procedure for direct grant assistance under OP "Regional Development" 2007-2013, a total of 36 municipalities were invited - centers of urban agglomerations - as specific beneficiaries for submission of project proposals under Priority Axis 1: "Sustainable and integrated urban development ", Operation 1.4.: "Improvement of the physical environment and risk prevention", grant scheme BG161PO001 / 1.4-07 / 2010 "Support for Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development". In the same priority axis, during the next programming period, the EU will only fund those urban settlements which are able to provide approved Integrated Plans. This is why the proposed strategic goals and priorities of Methodological guidelines reflect and ensure the priorities of the European integrated urban development, namely: smart growth, sustainable growth, inclusive growth and integrated renovation. Thus a new stage of urban development has begun, which is for the first time based on the approach to integrated planning. It is for the first time that accents on fighting social exclusion and / or restructuring of unused and abandoned

urban sites and areas are put, thus contributing to the successful implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. The Methodological guidelines for the IPURDs clearly require a synergistic effect of all activities and proposals for projects implementation. The integrated approach is embedded in the pooling of all information resources from various sources, exploring the relationships between the factors of influence and the environmental components, pooling the knowledge of experts with those of local people, as well as business representatives and municipal administrations. The goal is a successful application of this approach in urban areas and reduction of the risk of superficial comprehensiveness (Troeva, 2013). This is one of the focuses through which principles such as publicity, citizens' participation and coordination are interpreted. The Methodological guidelines mark the implementation of the integrated approach to planning and sustainable urban planning, in the development of the strategic part of the Integrated Plans, by studying the interactions at different planning levels (transnational, national, regional and municipal), exploring all economic, social, environmental, physical and other factors and aspects of planning at all scales (from urban design to strategic spatial planning).

An essential part of the analytical development of these plans is devoted to the designation, evaluation, discussion and approval of zones of impacts by specific sets of criteria, annexed in the Methodological guidelines, which has been assessed as the biggest challenge in the elaboration of these documents. A zone of impact is:

"A distinct urban area with a specified basic function, with similar characteristics and conditions of the physical environment, social and ethnic structure of the population, as well as characteristics and structure of the main funds" (MRDPW, 2010b: 10).

The designation of zones of predominantly social nature, with potential for economic development or ones with public function, corresponds to a system of evaluation criteria applied in the Methodological guidelines. Applying these criteria is essential, together with the concrete observation and studying of those areas, sociological surveys, public discussions and consultations with local communities, NGOs, business representatives and professional circles (Troeva, 2013). An example of groups of criteria, an evaluation scale (at the neighbourhood level), backed with sources of information on areas of social nature, are shown in the table below:

Table 23: Sample evaluation criteria for areas of predominantly social nature in the IPURD of Sofia

Criteria for evaluation	Scale of evaluation	Source of information
Quality of hard infrastructure (sewage, electrification, connectivity, road infrastructure, public transport, etc.)	Neighbourhood of a problematic nature	Sofia Municipality Master Plan; Sofia Municipality Development Plan; Sofia Municipality Strategy for Engineering Infrastructure; Fieldwork observations
Environment and urban ecosystems (air quality, water pollution, flood risk, seismic activity, landslides, green areas)	Unfavourable; average to unfavourable	Regional Environment and Water Inspectorate – Sofia; Fieldwork observations
Socioeconomic characteristics (poverty, isolation, education, ethnical structure)	Favourable, average to unfavourable	National Statistical Institute; Ministry of Education and Culture; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Social Affairs; Regional government office
Financial characteristics of the housing estate (condominiums, prices of the housing estates, etc.),	Good, average and in bad condition	Sofia Municipality Master Plan; Housing estate, property and land listings

Source: Simeonova and Hasanov (2013)

The parallel development of the Methodological guidelines for the NSDC and its adoption by December 2012, imposed new changes to the Methodological guidelines for the IPURDs. This was due to the selection of new urban settlements of Level 4 (by the classification of the NSDC) to be added to the list of cities to receive a gratuitous grant for the development and implementation of IPURDs, for the 2014-2020 period. New Methodological guidelines which define the additional urban settlements' identity as beneficiaries were published by the MRDPW in 2012. No content, strategic or any

organizational differences between the two documents - from 2010 and 2012 - have been observed.

Unlike the methodical preparation of the GSPs, regulated in Ordinance 8 of the SPA (volume and content of the spatial plans), the IPURDs are provided with a longer period of research on the urban settlements, together with reduced options for the gathered information to be outdated. The IPURDs contain a program budget for the implementation of project activities (each zone of impact is a combination of projects and activities respectively).

Table 24: Main characteristics of the IPURDs

Integrated plans for urban regeneration and development (IPURD)	
Spatial range	37 agglomeration areas in Bulgaria + 28 urban settlements of Level 4 (Covers the territory within the regulation boundary).
Promoter	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
Technical execution	Own capacity of the municipality and / or with the help of external experts or consulting firms (Public Procurement Act).
Financing	Priority Axis 1 of Operational Program “Regional Development” –“Sustainable and smart development” / Priority Axis 4of the NRDS – “Balanced Spatial Development”. Other possible funding sources: Municipal budget National budget National programs Private investtori Other sources - funance engineering tools: JESSICA, JASPERS, JEREMIE, etc.
Period for completion	Midterm development documents / it could coincide with the period of the MDP
Status of the instrument	Drafted methodological guidelines for elaboration and implementation of the IPURDs; Ongoing process of IPURD elaboration;
Objectives	Main objective : Permanent improvement of the economic, social and environmental status of the given urban area, through integration of all activities in the plan in such a way that the interrelation between the individual elements exhibits synergy and the overall impact of the plan exceeds the sum of the effects of its individual components, should those are implemented separately. The main objective of each plan: Support of the realization of the development vision for the urban settlement, through the implementation of projects in urban areas with unsatisfactory condition, negative development trends and / or unrealized potential, as well as

attracting, and coordinated management of diverse investments

Terms of elaboration:

1. The plans are elaborated for designated parts of the urban settlement called "**zones of impact**" (the elaboration of more than one IPURD for the settlement's territory is possible)
2. Relation to the Municipal Development Plan and the General Spatial Plan

Structure and contents

1. Introduction – Presents the purpose of the IPURD in the overall political and legal context (European and national documents clarifying the principles and priorities of regional policy) .Description of the elaboration process, participants and principles which the IPURD is based on.

Part I: Objectives and problem analysis of the situation.

Main objective: Designation of parts of the urban area, whose problems require application of instruments for integrated development and most important - instruments for integrated planning. (Criteria for designation of areas for application)

Thematic contents of the analysis:

- General characteristics of the urban settlement and the municipality
- Demographic parameters
- Economic development
- Social sphere
- Cultural-historical heritage
- Environment
- Settlement network, structure and degree of accomplishment of the urban environment
- Residential sector
- Technical infrastructure (transport-communication system)
- Major infrastructural projects and their significance / impact
- Inventory of current projects ideas and accomplished projects
- Provision of the territory with existing plans / schemes
- Role and influence of the urban settlement in the development of a Level 2 area

	<p>- SWOT analysis - Summary and analysis of the situation Vision for the urban settlement till 2020 Designation of zone of impact, based on selected criteria</p> <hr/> <p>Part 2: Strategy and objectives of the plan Strategy and rationale, general and specific objectives Financial resources Description of the unit / structure / organization involved in the implementation / application Procedures on public hearing and participation (transparency) Synergetic effect Results - environmental assessment and compatibility Implementation program (application). Part 3: Management of the implementation / application Inclusion of indicators for evaluation and monitoring; public participation in the monitoring and implementation of the plan and evaluation of results</p> <p>Applications:</p> <p>Zones of impact (criteria). Relation: Zone of impact – set of projects - activities Matrix-Budget (by zones and projects) Implementation program Glossary</p>
<p>Approaches, principles and references for spatial planning</p>	<p>Basic guidelines and applied principles for urban planning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated approach to urban planning 2. Integrated Urban Regeneration 3. Publicity, transparency, public participation 4. Balanced and Sustainable Urban Development

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Duration, continuity, coordination and further development towards realization of other strategic and planning documents 6. Synergistic effect and concentration of resources 7. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination 8. Environmental protection 9. Partnership / public-private partnership 10. Infrastructural and socio-economic development 11. Improvement of the physical environment (zones of impact) 12. Local economic development (zones of impact) 13. Social development (zones of impact) 14. Creation and designation of areas of high public significance and quality public spaces.
References to European context	<p>Consideration of European documents, principles and practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 ▪ Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities ▪ Toledo Declaration
Relations and place in the system of spatial planning instruments	<p>National and regional reference framework of integrated planning: RDA (art.2, 2008) NSDC 2013-2025 OP “Regional development” 2007-2013 / OP “Regions in growth” 2014-2020 Available strategic documents at regional level + sectoral programs and strategies MDP-IPURD-GSP (zones of impact - DSP)</p>

Source: Author’s adaptation based on the Methodological guidelines for elaboration and implementation of the IPURDs (MRDPW, 2010/2015)

9.2.1.2. Discussion

The integrated planning approach is undoubtedly a new step in the evolution of urban planning in a country where integrated planning did not exist because of the lack of experience and the enormous power of the state had over the territory (Hirt, 2012). Tsenkova et al. (2006) argue that urban space is the result of a collective production; it is a social construction. Therefore, decisions must first cover the needs of the community that inhabits a given territory, but in the same time they need to be realistically justified by the system parameters and indicators that reflect the real state of the situation. In this context, the identification of the so-called "missing spaces" in the final contour of the overall Integrated Plan, is among the most discussed and criticised issues in designating the zones of impact, as well as the validity of the criteria that determine those zones. Such an observation is made by Simeonova and Hasanov (2013) in one of the final phases of the elaboration of the IPURD of Sofia, which exhibits an exclusion of marginalized in social and infrastructural terms areas, which in the preliminary reports on the plan have been defined by the criteria and evaluated as *worst situation areas*, but were actually excluded from the final assignment.

"The campaign mode of elaboration" of these plans in the context of EU membership and funding, under pressure and in line with the EU policies and priorities, creates a new category of planning. It is sporadic, as noted by Redjeb and Chakarova (2016), due to too short a period of time in which commissioning of too many plans is sought, while the Bulgarian municipalities lack the capacity and the tools for management and elaboration of such plans. A major moment in understanding these plans, as stated in their Methodological guidelines, is that they are based on the General Spatial Plan, which only a few municipalities have, or even so - those are simply not up-to-date. There are many cases of IPURDs, developed before there was an updated GSP of the given urban settlement, as well as IPURDs, which are based on the provisions of an adopted GSP. Many IPURDs, especially from the first wave, were developed even before the Municipal Development Plan.

A major practical drawback, which takes criticism, has to do with the mechanism of reflection of the public opinion and the inefficient public participation in the planning

process. In the IPURDs, where a different number of public hearings are provided at different stages of the elaboration of the plan, only the already completed product is presented for discussion - the case of Sofia (N. Redjeb, personal communication, July, 2016) - instead of an active inclusion of citizens and business representatives in the very elaboration of the plans. Few contests have been organized - with unsatisfactory quality of the procedures and the results (Redjeb and Chakarova, 2016).

The analysis of the Methodological guidelines highlights other issues - subject to wide debate - such as the model of co-financing of plans which stimulate private initiative - a fact linked to a number of bad practices in the development process of spatial planning to date. There are no clear guidelines for achieving the set objectives, in line with the European principles, or simply the opportunity to develop the potential of these plans by combining them with plans for urban mobility, for example.

Observations of urban planners and architects, including of those who participated in the elaboration of IPURDs, criticize this new approach to planning and the potential for turning the IPURD into some kind of "financial planning" rather than a real planning assignment. The campaign mode of these plans, especially with the introduction of the urban settlements of Level 4, is one of the central debates in the process and the conditions for the elaboration of another important document – the NSDC, the adoption of which "fills a gap" and also "ratifies the need for" the existence of integrated urban planning (A. Burov, personal communication, July, 2016).

9.2.1.3. Transfer analysis of the IPURDs

The integrated upgrade and the recognition of the topic of sustainable urban development occupy an important place after the EU accession of Bulgaria - in the National Strategic Reference Framework for 2007-2013 (Priority Axis 4: "Balanced territorial development") and the related OP "Regional Development" (Priority Axis 1: "Sustainable and smart development"). A condition of the next planning period - 2014-2020 - is that only urban settlements with approved plans for integrated urban development will be funded.

Integrated Plans emerge in an "appropriate moment" of the development of the system of spatial planning documents, reflecting the effects of post-socialist *non-planning*, no real conceptual idea of what spatial development is, the ways of planning and the opportunities for all that "to be repaired" through the process of "borrowing", learning and transfer of opportunities, ideas and principles from Europe (the European discourse on spatial planning). However, it remains unclear how this "download" of the "European" should be assessed in "filling the gaps" functionally and fully, in a system which has inherited many of the principles of bygone eras (such as the traditional separation of planning).

How the mobility of ideas is to be evaluated - from the top down or from the bottom up - is a serious challenge in the countries of the "Eastern bloc", especially when in the basis of the demand (of knowledge), financial opportunities are found. This fact is not surprising, knowing the "nature" of the EU, which "supports" state actors (involved in the transfer) through incentives by which the member states have a real chance to become "successful projectors of methods and ideas" rather than just "passive recipients of lessons from practice" (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000). This brings into question how much the voluntary transfer from the bottom to the top is based on its own initiative, motivated by the need for knowledge and guidance in domestic policy making; to what extent this "download" of pan-European ideas and principles can be regarded as a soft mechanism of Europeanization of spatial planning, as Reimer et al. (2015) highlight. Perhaps this can be discussed and examined in an extended range of empirical studies of the process of spatial discourse transfer and Europeanization of the countries in that region.

Bulgaria is no exception to the framework in which the demand of opportunities justifies the means of change, the effectiveness of which has financial terms. Integrated Plans themselves satisfy these ideas, these searches of opportunities, while the analysis of the transfer of the "European" to those plans would not be possible without a real understanding of the overall context in which they appear. Without the current context, the Integrated Plans would probably be regarded as an "evolutionary" new step towards completion, supplementation, coordination and integration into what already exists, but also as a typical expression of the voluntary transfer from the bottom up - a result of the awareness of the need to plan our cities in a sustainable, integrated and sensible manner.

That necessity is imposed by the Transferability analysis which is part of the evaluation of the feasibility of transferring opportunities for making successful or unsuccessful decisions in the future spatial planning at the local level in Bulgaria. Not only does this analysis detect the transfer of guiding principles merely "on paper" (*taking the talk*), but it also serves as a "platform for discussion" about how these ideas will be put into "practice" (*walking the walk*) in a future extended discussion and analysis of this study. As it was already mentioned earlier – the fact that the transfer outcomes cannot be reported - at least at this stage of development of the system of spatial instruments - has also been taken into account.

The results of the responses to the predefined variables / questions on the analysis of the transfer, have been organized in Table 25 and commented afterwards.

1) The question **Who** carries out the transfer of ideas and principles for integrated approach to spatial development at the urban level, refers to the actors involved in this process. In general, those actors can be grouped into two main categories: 1) ones dealing with the transfer of ideas from the EU to the national planning framework for organizing the Methodological guidelines and 2) those that will transfer the opportunities for the implementation of these ideas into practice. In both cases it comes to group agents presented by national agents: the Council of Ministers and the MRDPW (political figures and government experts on territorial governance) related to the promotion and setting of the conditionality of the transfer; experts and planners (some of whom were interviewed) who participated in the process of setting up the regulatory methodological framework of how this transfer needs to be reflected through specific tasks (plans). As for the second group of actors, the MRDPW does not specify the composition of the team (in the released Methodological guidelines), unlike the composition of the team responsible for the elaboration of the NSDC (at the NCRD). On the other hand, the group of sub-national and sub-governmental actors involved in the transfer process, consists of local authorities and administrations, citizens, private investors, civic groups, design firms, etc., the relationship between which cannot yet be reflected at this stage.

2) **What** is transferred? - Information on that can be found in the CM's resolution from 2010 and in other planning and organizational documents, namely: the National Strategic Reference Framework, OP "Regional Development" and the Methodological guidelines for the IPURDs. The latter are documents where the idea of using the European principles for urban development planning, embedded in the transfer at the local level, are most clearly outlined. The Methodological guidelines are a theoretical expression of the concepts and principles of the sustainable integrated development of the Bulgarian cities, part of the European discourse on spatial development. The answer to this question precedes the question why these principles are transferred in Bulgaria.

3) The grounds for transfer or **Why** transfer is "downloaded", is among the main criteria for assessing the type of policy transfer (forced, voluntary or mixture type), distinguishing the terms as *want to be* or *have to be* transferred (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). The combination of different motifs, in this context - a financial incentive for "voluntary" and "own initiative" acceptance of ideas and knowledge from documents manifested as recommendations to the EU member states - would classify such a transfer primarily as a mixed one (mixture type), rather than just voluntary, considering the overall evolution of the system of spatial planning instruments.

4) As stated in the theoretical part of this study, the concept of PT does not provide enough information about the details of the time period. From what has been analysed so far, it can be argued that the timing of the transfer is limited to the third period of development of the spatial planning system (2007-2013). Certain years have been specified through the release of resolutions and documents, which years can be regarded as **When** the indicative start of the transfer should be. In reality, the sub-national transfer is commensurate with the period of implementation of the plan proposals. The period for applying the "transferred ideas" is limited to the 2014-2020 time frame.

5) As for the question **Where** the policies are transferred from, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) distinguish two complementary levels of monitoring: *cross-national* and *within a nation*. In the first case the answer is related to the EU and the EU-generated discourse, which serve as platforms from which, potentially, the transfer flows, with opportunities for a voluntarily download of ideas from European documents, integrated into the idea of a

European spatial model. In the second case, the transfer correlates with the possibility of reaching a practical application in approved and published documents at the urban governance level. The role of the Methodological guidelines in this case is important, since they reflect the "supranational" discourse (the platform of transfer) and frame the principles and the steps toward its "entry into practice."

6) The question *How* the transfer is carried out complements the answer to the question *Why*, or in other words – the two questions overlap in cases of forced adoption of practices (Page, 2000). Given the mixed nature of the transfer resulting from "want to be" and "have to be" transferred, the answer to the question *How* supplements this information through the chronological documentary organization of the transfer in the following sequence: Operational Program - Funding scheme of the beneficiary urban settlement - Methodological guidelines - Elaboration of plans - Implementation of plans - Results. This sequence explains the interaction between the elements of conditionality (the exogenous elements) and the voluntary elements (the endogenous elements) of a "bottom-up" transfer, which proves that such a transfer is positioned in the middle of the continuum between the Coercive Transfer (Direct Imposition) and the Lesson-Drawing process, according to Dolowitz and Marsh (2000).

7) The *Degree* of transfer is probably the biggest challenge in analysing the situation. The outcome of the transfer is strongly dependent on the form and the terms of its management. Here it is taken into consideration that the theoretical studies allow the classification of the transfer results in conditions where the borrowing has occurred from another jurisdiction, following the example of "country-to-country". A full analysis probably would have been possible under optimal studying of the Integrated Plans in Bulgaria, as well as their impact on the local discourse and practices. This phase of my study shows that as of now the outcomes vary from Emulation (transfer of ideas behind the policy or program) to Combination (which involves mixtures of several different policy or in this case - practices), with options for Inspiration - given the fact that the results may be fairly different from the set of strategic objectives of these plans.

Table 25: Transfer analysis of the IPURDs

	<p style="text-align: center;">Result/Outcome IPURD</p>
<p>Who carries out the transfer?</p>	<p>Groups of actors: Council of Ministers; MRDPW - institution which initiated the transfer; Executors of the principles embedded in the transfer: Local actors and organizers in the process of elaborating the IPURD (mayor and municipal administration; citizens; consulting firms, NGOs, private investors, etc.)</p>
<p>What ideas are transferred?</p>	<p>Principles and ideas for integrated sustainable development of urban areas, regulated in key documents at the EU level: the Leipzig Charter, the Toledo Declaration, the Territorial Agenda of the EU - all principles and ideas are organized and transferred to preparation for practical implementation (elaboration and implementation of plans) by the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration and implementation of the IPURD document (MRDPW, 2010b, 2012)</p>
<p>When are they transferred?</p>	<p>Third planning period (2007-2013) - Scheme for providing gratuitous grants BG161PO001 / 1.4-07 / from 2010, regulated under OP “Regional Development” and publishing of the Methodological guidelines.</p>

<p>Where are they transferred from?</p>	<p>The EU discourse on spatial development. The EU documents on European cities - Leipzig Charter (2007) / Toledo Declaration (2010) / Territorial Agenda 2020 (2011);</p>
<p>Why are the ideas for integrated urban development transferred (motivation)?</p>	<p>Resolution of MRDPW (2010) on financing urban projects that are part of an Integrated Plan for urban development, generate revenue and are able to return the resource inputs, and which meet the eligible activities under Priority Axis 1 of the Operational Program “Regional Development” (incl. from instruments such as JESSICA) (Resolution of the Council of Ministers from 21-07 / 2010)</p>
<p>How is the transfer carried out?</p>	<p>ERDF funding through OP “Regional Development” 2007-2013 and OP “Regions in Growth” for the 2014-2020 period. Funding urban projects which reflect the European planning principles: Vertical conditional (resource-backed) transfer and voluntary “bottom-up” transfers (mixture type of transfer).</p>
<p>Possible outcome or degree of transfer?</p>	<p>In perspective (requiring a longer period of time). Conditions for achieving outcomes - analysis and evaluation of the local discourse and practices after completion of the application period of the first series of plans (6 years). Inability to track the implementation process (e.g. the first order under the</p>

funding – the IPURD of Sofia 2014-2020; completion of technical assignment: October 2013). Current weaknesses in designating the zones of impact, the diagnosis process, publicity and information organizing.

Source: Author; Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the IPURDs

9.2.2. The National Spatial Development Concept

9.2.2.1. General formulations and goals in a European context

The development of the NSDC is also part of the Europeanization reforms/ implementations of the system of planning documents in Bulgaria from 2007 on. The emergence of this document aims at replacing the previously provided by the SPA National Complex Spatial Scheme, which, according to Article 100 was to determine "how to achieve the goals and objectives of spatial planning at the national level, coupled with the overall sustainable socioeconomic development." After more than 10 years of debating and attempts for clarifying the scope and the content of the NCSS, as well as the options for its elaboration, the work on this new document began in vague legislative conditions. The new scope and content of the new document called NSDC is framed in the additional provisions of the 2012 amendments to the SPA and to the RDA, in search of a better connectivity between the two acts (NSDC, 2012). The creation of the NSDC as a document originally regulated by the SPA, and later by the RDA, is part of the so-called attempts for optimization of the planning process. That optimization had started ambitiously with the motive that the Directorates at the MRDPW dealing with regional development, had better capacity (in terms of administration, resources, etc.), and thus they attract most of the EU funds. The Directorate which deals with spatial planning has a smaller capacity and limited functions, therefore the spatial planning instruments related to spatial and detailed urban planning at a lower level, have been regulated by the RDA since 2007 (V. Troeva, personal communication, March, 2015).

Failing to elaborate national and regional development schemes as required by the SPA, together with the limited activity of the Directorate of Urban Planning, has led to conclusions about the reassessment of the role and location, the volume and the content of these schemes, defined more than ten years after the adoption of the act itself. The release of the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the National Concept (December, 2010) was part of an ambitious initiative to coordinate planning and development (MRDPW, 2010a), which marked a new stage of opportunities for conceptualization of the spatial planning in Bulgaria. The NSDC has been developed as part of the "Programming of Regional Development for 2014-2020", funded by

Operation 5.1: Programming, management, monitoring, evaluation and control, Axis 5: "Technical Assistance" of Operational Program "Regional Development" 2007-2013.

"The NCSS and the Regional Spatial Schemes for Level 2 regions, have not been developed and adopted to date. These circumstances create a risk for the preparation of strategic and planning documents for regional development for the 2014 - 2020 period, which do not meet the requirement of art.5, § 2 of the Enforcement Regulations of the Regional Development Act, which would deteriorate the quality and the territorial focus of the Operational Programs co-financed by the EU funds for the 2014 - 2020 period. In the sense, the NSDC should be a specific strategic document for the sustainable spatial development of the country, which is to fill the absence of a spatial vision and a spatial coordination of both regional and sectorial plans" (MRDPW, 2010: 3).

A new domestic debate related to the need for new spatial documents and coordinating those with the ones for regional development, culminated with the release of this significant new national document whose scope is defined within the national space of Bulgaria, as open to the world and integrated into the European space and networks of centers and axes of development, culture, science and innovations. In other words, this is a document which develops the spatial polycentric model and the integration within the European space and networks. Its main purpose is:

"Spatial coordination of the processes taking place in the national territory, through creation of spatial planning base and regulations for implementing not only the regional, but also the different socioeconomic sectorial planning at the national level, in the context of the European spatial development, for achieving a complex integrated planning" (NSDC, 2013:4).

Together with the National Regional Development Strategy 2012 – 2022, the Concept is a key document in the latest legislation and a long-awaited instrument for integrated planning and sustainable spatial, economic and social development. Its design as a

document-concept, rather than a planning instrument, is justified by the fact that it does not plan resources but outlines the need for measures that will be implemented through the resources of the sectorial programs which the NSDC is to affect by directing them and coordinating them at a territorial level. The practical application, however, of the principles and approaches to spatial planning at the national level should consider not only the need for studying the practices of some European countries (e.g. the Austrian Concept according to S. Motev, personal communication, July, 2016), but also pan-European documents dictating the principles, formulations and prospects for spatial planning. Those documents are reflected in the Methodological guidelines and the very NSDC which states that they "urge the member states to take into account the European dimension of spatial development in the coordination of policies, plans and national reports on spatial development". In this sense, through the adoption and the implementation of the NSDC, a step forward is expected, towards "Europeanizing the national, regional and urban planning" in Bulgaria (MRDPW, 2010).

The analysis of the NSDC shows that it takes into account the advantages and the challenges of the national territory's spatial development, presenting also a summary of the conclusions which determine the guidelines and the priorities set out in it. It indicates that the ESDP have the greatest influence in Europe. The ESDP brings back to the table the theme of polycentrism and the linking of the settlements into networks (policy objective 3.2 of the ESDP). The National Concept transfers and further develops (in a text expression) this model by the National Regional Development Strategy (2012-2022), through the centers and axes of development.

The performed keywords-based content analysis of the ESDP, based on the underlying policy objectives and their dimensions, shows that the basic ideas and principles of the three political objectives are terminologically reflected in the NSDC, developed and adapted to the national territorial context.

Table 26: Policy aims of the ESDP and their presence in the NSDC³⁴

Policy aims of the ESDP	Development of the principles in the NSDC of Bulgaria 2013-2025
3.2 Polycentric Spatial Development and a New Urban-Rural Relationship	
3.2.1 Polycentric and balanced spatial development	Yes
3.2.2 Dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urbanized regions	Yes
3.2.3 Indigenous (local community) ³⁵ development, diverse and productive ³⁶ rural areas	Yes
3.2.4 Urban-rural partnership	Yes
3.3 Parity of Access to Infrastructure and Knowledge	
3.3.1 An integrated approach to infrastructure ³⁷ and knowledge	Yes
3.3.2 Polycentric development model : a basis for better accessibility	Yes
3.3.3 Efficient and sustainable use ³⁸ of the infrastructure	Yes
3.3.4 Diffusion of innovation and knowledge	Yes
3.4 Wise Management of the Natural And Cultural Heritage	
3.4.1 Natural and cultural heritage as development asset	Yes
3.4.2 Preservation and development of the natural heritage	Yes

³⁴ In green colour: the key words

³⁵ In the original text of the ESDP the term used is “indigenous”.

³⁶ The key word traced for the purposes of the content analysis of the NSDC is “**productive**” - in the context of areas of rural type (incl. peripheral (rural) areas).

³⁷ Incl. “**Transport infrastructure**”, “**Transport Links**“, “**Access to information and knowledge**“

³⁸ “Efficient and sustainable use” have also been traced for the purposes of the content analysis

3.4.3 Water resource management - a special challenge for spatial development	Yes
3.4.4 Creative management of cultural landscapes	Yes
3.4.5 Creative management of cultural heritage	Yes

Source: Author, based on the NSDC of the Republic of Bulgaria 2013-2025

The key priorities of the “Europe 2020” Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are also mandatory - as specified in the NSDC - through ideas for a balanced allocation of priorities between urban centers and areas of good social and economic development on the one hand, and lagging behind, peripheral and / or vulnerable to demographic and economic risks areas, on the other. This is reinforced through targeted support of important, smaller urban settlements (of Level 4), further designated as beneficiaries of the Integrated Plans’ funding. Approaches to rural and border areas have been developed by the EU Territorial Agenda (TA 2020), which adds to the polycentric spatial and integrated urban development a concern for the smaller settlements (small towns and large villages).

Among the highlights of the NSDC is the support for integrated urban regeneration and development (in the framework of the cited pan-European documents for sustainable and integrated urban development). Thus the criteria system for selecting urban settlements whose Integrated Plans are to be supported, was further developed, which regulates the second Methodical guidelines for the elaboration and implementation of IPURDs (of 2012).The NSDC takes into account the opportunities for integration of the sectorial policies, creating prerequisites for this integration and pointing the possible pathways to achieving it.

Table 27: Main features of the NSDC of the Republic of Bulgaria

National Spatial Development Concept 2013-2025	
Spatial range	The national space of the Republic of Bulgaria
Promoter	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
Technical execution	National Center for Regional Development
Financing	OP "Regional Development" 2007-2013, funded by the European Regional Development Fund; Operation 5.1: Programming, management, monitoring, evaluation and control, Priority axis 5: "Technical assistance"
Period for completion	May-June 2012 (6 months)
Status of the instrument	Finalized and adopted (December 2012)
Objectives	<p>Mission; In a methodological aspect the mission of the NSDC is spatial coordination of the processes occurring in national territory, through creation of a spatial planning basis and regulator for implementation not only of the regional, but for planning of the individual socio-economic sectors at national level as well, in the context of the pan-European spatial development, so as to achieve a comprehensive, integrated planning. On the other hand, the mission of the NSDC is the creation of a national framework for implementing spatial (urban) planning at lower territorial levels (regional, district, municipal), by generally formulating the main guidelines and principles for conducting the state spatial planning policy.</p> <p>Main objective: The National Spatial Policy „...guarantees the protection of the territory of the country as a national treasure...“ (art. 1 Spatial Planning Act, 2001) „Spatial coordination of the processes, taking place at the national territory through creation of spatial planning base and regulator for implementation not only the regional, but also the single socio-economic sectorial planning at national level in the context of the European spatial development for achieving a complex integrated planning“.</p> <p>Specific objectives: Integration of spatial planning with regional and sectoral planning, spatial coordination of sectoral policies, strategies, plans and programs; • Formulation of guidelines and principles for implementation of the spatial planning policy; • Defining of tools for coordination between hierarchical levels of spatial planning; • Defining of areas with specific features through the appropriate methodology and indicator system; Stimulation of the polycentric development of the settlements network, improvement of the relations between the central and peripheral regions, between urban and rural areas; • Defining of functional zones (protected, production, transport, tourism), of important national and regional significance, requiring specific development policy;</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination at national level of the ORPD 2014-2020 interventions as well as the rest of the operational programs; • Creation of GIS data base for the purposes of the elaboration, the implementation and the maintenance of the NSDC
<p>Structure and contents</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MAJOR CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL SPACE <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Political and legislative framework 1.2. The place of the NSCD in the system of strategic documents 1.3. Objectives, tasks and principles of the NSCD 1.4. Factors influencing the national space 1.5. Summary conclusions – the challenges of the spatial development 2. MODELS AND SCENARIOS FOR SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Spatial models 2.2. Elements of the spatial structure 2.3. From monocentric to polycentric spatial development – selection of urban model and scenario for spatial development 2.4. Vision, strategic objectives and priorities 3. STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL SPACE <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Polycentric urban network – the basis for balanced development 3.2. Social infrastructure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3. Engineering infrastructure – links and accessibility <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3.1. Transport infrastructure 3.3.2. Engineering infrastructure 3.4. Spatial dimensions of the resources-based economic development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.4.1. Agriculture and forestry – current state, objectives, development prospects 3.4.2. National concentrations of production and business activities – mining, energy generation, processing and logistics industries 3.4.3. Tourism – seaside, mountain, SPA, cultural and ecological/alternative tourism 3.4.4. R&D centers 3.5. Natural and cultural values – a guarantee for the national identity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5.1. Natural values 3.5. Territories of cultural values 3.6. Territories with specific characteristics 4. THE NEW PHILOSOPHY OF SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT 5. ANNEXES <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. List of abbreviations

	<p>5.2.Glossary 5.3.List of geographic terms 6.REFERENCES 6.1.Acts and ordinances 6.2.EU and international organizations documents 6.3.Publications 6.4.Strategies, programs, plans and projects 6.5.Publications on the Internet</p>
<p>Approaches, principles and references for spatial planning</p>	<p>Basic methodological guidelines and applied principles for spatial planning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated approach to planning 2. Publicity, transparency and citizens' participation 3. Priority protected public interests 4. Scientific approach 5. Continuity of the planning process <p>Some key tasks in the drafting of the document:</p> <p>For the document's diagnosis: selecting sources of supranational (Balkan region) and European level regarding: Physical environment and environmental quality; population; System of settlements, structures and urban typologies; Infrastructure; Social institutions, education and healthcare; Administrative organization; Historical and cultural heritage.</p> <p>Identification and description of factors influencing the differentiation, the defining different scenarios for Spatial development models.</p> <p>Introduction of urban settlements typology (to serve as a defining criterion as well as for project opportunities for integrated urban development and elaboration of the relevant plans.</p> <p>Creating a set of indicators to monitor the level of objectives achieved. Indicators of urban hierarchy.</p>
<p>Reference to the European context</p>	<p>Consideration of European documents, principles and practice :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESDP • SPSSDEC (Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development of the European Continent) • ESPON

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUROPE 2020 • 4th and 5th Cohesion report of the EU • Documents and agreements fixing the development of major infrastructure projects and networks across the European space, such as the European transport corridors, pipelines, "the green belt", "cultural corridors", etc. • The Gothenburg Strategy for Sustainable Development • Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013 • The Territorial Agenda of the EU • The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities • The Toledo Declaration for integrated urban regeneration and development • The European Landscape Convention. <p>Practice of the different European countries in spatial planning at national level that is applicable in the Bulgarian conditions.</p>
<p>Relations and place in the system of spatial planning instruments</p>	<p>The NSDC should be the main coordinating document: Horizontal coordinating effect and Vertical coordinating effect (hierarchical subordination at national territorial level (within the territory of the EU, of Eastern Europe); OP "Regional development";</p> <p>Relation to the National Regional Development Strategy;</p> <p>Relations to other strategic documents for regional planning, plans and strategies of different territorial levels; National framework for implementing spatial (urban) planning and lower territorial levels (regional, district, municipal) by generally formulating the main guidelines and principles for conducting the state spatial planning policy;</p> <p>Other OPs, sectoral strategies, projections, programs and plans.</p>

Source: Author, based on the Methodological guidelines for elaboration of the NSDC and the NSDC 2013-2020

9.2.2.2. Discussion

The NSDC is a document elaborated in extremely limited (in terms of time and resources) conditions, which is the reason for a debate on the opportunities which this national instrument for spatial planning suggests, including its complementation, monitoring and the overall quality of the territorial diagnostics reflected in it. However, the most important role of the NSDC is the opportunity which it provides for discussing various issues, concerned in the document (discussed at open meetings of the then government), and for realizing that "we all go in one direction" and that all activities should be coordinated, so that we "act" together in coordination.

The NSDC is the first document that reflects, in its content, the relation between the process of Europeanization and the spatial planning process, clearly justifying that this is possible by the application of a "European dimension" (principles, models, approaches, ideas, etc.) of spatial development, enshrined in important documents such as the ESDP, whose formulations were transferred to the content of the Bulgarian Concept. This suggests that a community of professionals, who are an expression of the domestic cognitive and discursive changes, has occurred in the country following 2001, without whose comments, criticism and advice, this doctoral thesis would not be complete. Nevertheless, it is that same community of experts which is among the main critics of spatial planning in Bulgaria, arguing that the effect of "enthusiasm" and the opportunities for political coordination of regional policies has been lost after the promulgation of the Concept. To many, the adoption of this document has played its most important and essential role, namely: to justify the need for integrated urban regeneration and planning, and the elaboration of Integrated Plans not just for 36 (originally selected), but for 67 Bulgarian urban settlements, which - according to some - "is a wrong approach" (V. Troeva, personal communication, March, 2015; N. Redjeb, personal communication, July, 2016). Among the critical notes concerning the elaboration of the NSDC are about the uncertainty "to the last moment" what should be done, how the document should look and "the fundamental understanding and bringing an idea from a conceptual to a concrete project level", generated around the priorities which provide funding from the EU.

Nevertheless, as it has been noted, the conditions and means for the elaboration of the Concept do not suggest more and that is enough for this type of document (ibid.).

The discrepancy in legislation and the taking over of some spatial planning functions by regional planning, are yet another issue discussed by some of the urbanists who were interviewed. However, the adoption of the NSDC within the RDA, and not within the SPA, marks new opportunities and prospects for future reforms, including the idea of merging the two legislative acts.

An important point in the Concept and the drafting of the Methodological guidelines for it, is the creation of a terminological glossary which clarifies essential formulations such as spatial planning and development. The development of the terminology is also based on the ESPON studies, concerning many of the definitions transferred to the domestic context, some of which, however, do not meet the Bulgarian territorial formulations, such as what a rural area or a mountain area is, etc. (S. Motev, personal communication, July 2016). The glossary of the Methodological guidelines define terms such as *spatial development*, but not very accurately, considering it a synonym or nearly synonymous to the interpretation of *physical planning*, traditionally associated in Bulgaria with *urban planning and land use*. The glossary clarifies that the term “policy for spatial development” is a “European term,” “downloaded” from documents such as the ESDP. However, the adaptation of the term “spatial” is conditional (the translation from English to Bulgarian), therefore, this concept is regarded as synonymous to “policy for territorial development”. The terminology formulations in the Methodological guidelines for the NSDC require rethinking of these concepts in all other documents related to the spatial organization and planning, including, in the first place, the SPA, which traditionally uses the term “arrangement of the territory”, as clarified in the first chapter.

The NSDC is the first spatial document that makes a difference between the use of concepts such as “region” and “rayon”, for the debate on those is still not clear in Bulgarian geography. The Concept defines the term “region” (a statistical unit) based on the EUROSTAT norms for this type of units. The word “rayon” - originally associated with the imposition of Soviet principles of regional planning in Bulgaria - has complex

applications and is linked to the socio-cultural identity of the territorial units, their natural conditions, history, identity, etc.

9.2.2.3. Transfer analysis of the NSDC

The transfer analysis of the NSDC, unlike that of the Integrated Plans, is performed on the basis of two documents – 1) the NSDC and 2) the Methodological guidelines for the NSDC. The view of the interviewed experts, who participated in the elaboration of these two documents, has also been taken into account. However, the limited period of time since its coming to force (2013) and the temporal horizon of this study, do not allow interpretation of any results since its implementation. The fact that the NSDC is a medium-term document with time limits up to 2025 is also taken into consideration. So is the fact that its adoption is part of the delayed process of "Europeanization of the domestic debate" and thus - its overall impact on that process is still hard to observe. Nevertheless, the Concept is a result of the affirmation of the changes in the development of the discursive and the cognitive dimension of spatial planning since 2001, which influences the conceptual definition of some formulations in the Concept, the needs, the changes in the planning practices and structure of the system of planning documents. This influence is still partial and hard to impose on specialists, experts and technicians, working on "new" planning documents, who in parallel, have inherited visions of the territory and practices of the socialist era planning process. The analysis of the transfer of the European spatial planning discourse through key documents is reflected and commented in Table 28 below.

1) The question **Who** carries out the transfer of ideas and principles for an integrated approach to spatial development at the national level, is attributed primarily to group actors. They can be conditionally divided into two sub-groups: policy and government experts (MRDPW) and group experts – participants in the elaboration of the NSDC (at the NCRD). The latter are also responsible for the Methodological guidelines document, as opposed to the lack of information concerning the team responsible for the IPURDs Methodological guidelines' elaboration. Representatives of this group (from the NCRD) took part in a series of interviews for the purposes of this doctoral thesis.

2) The principles and approaches to spatial planning set out in key European documents are considered as a response to the question *What* is transferred. Documents such as the ESDP are of particular importance, whose policy aims are revealed and territorially justified in the content analysis of the Concept.

3) *Why?* – The NSDC is a reform in the strategic spatial planning at the national and at the regional level. On its basis, regional spatial development schemes at all administrative levels are to be developed. It replaces the longstanding lack of a NCSS regulated by the SPA (2001), and aims at establishing a new stage in spatial planning at the national level, while in the same time integrating the national space into the European model of spatial development policies. In this regard, the NSDC is the main framework for the development of a series of strategic documents for regional development and is the basis for the preparation of national documents for managing the EU funds for the 2014 – 2020 period. Its adoption fulfills the requirement of the reformed European cohesion policy for strengthening the territorial context of documents for strategic planning of regional development for the next programming period (Pavlova, 2013). Although the transfer is defined as voluntary - a result of rational search for solutions - the distinction between *want to be* and *have to be* transferred takes certain criticism, and the boundary between those two conditions is difficult to define and interpret. This is also determined by the role of the financial framework of OP “Regional Development” and OP “Regions in Growth”. The strategic focus of OP "Regions in Growth" 2014 - 2020 is aimed at urban development. One of the main tasks of the team that developed the NSDC was to propose a set of eligible for aiding urban settlements where targeted state policy is to be applied. The discussions about this fact impose some criticism related to the "need" or the "conditionality" of elaborating such a national document. In a more detailed study of the process of organizing the documents and the motivation of spatial development policies, a correct answer could be given as to whether the case concerns a voluntary or a mixed transfer, with opportunities for its precise positioning in the transfer continuum of Dolowitz and Marsh (2000).

4) There are no specific details about **When** exactly the idea of creating the NSDC and the way the decision to reflect European ideals, principles and approaches in it was made. The evolution of this planning instrument shows that the idea for its development emerged after the elaboration of the IPURDs. The Methodological guidelines for these two types of planning instruments were published in the same year. It is also emphasized that the NSDC is the document that expands the list of cities which are beneficiaries for elaboration of Integrated Plans, which fact imposes the thinking that the ideas for transfer follow the chronological sequence of the current analysis (1 –the IPURDs and 2 –the NSDC).

5) The question **Where from** refers to the *cross-national* level, where the EU-generated discourse on spatial planning / development acts as a platform for the transfer of ideas and principles. An essential role here plays the ESDP. At the domestic level, the possibility for achieving practical application of the transfer depends on the actual implementation of the NSDC as a chief coordinating planning instrument and also on the elaboration / the updating, the implementation and the horizontal and vertical coordination of the planning documents in the hierarchy order of the Concept.

6) The question **How** the transfer is executed, as explained earlier, is closely related to the definition of the reasons for its implementation. A part of the transfer terms is the organizing of the methodological framework of the NSDC, where initially approaches and references for potential transfer are marked, including where the transfer will be carried out from. In the context of the ESDP, the transfer "on paper" is executed through the direct transfer of policy objectives (shown in the table bellow) and their further development and adaptation to the national territorial context.

7) **The Degree** of transfer. A full presence of the ideas and formulations embedded in the ESDP is observed. How these formulations will be brought down to practical level is heavily dependent on the system of instruments (at the regional and at the local level) which have the attributes for the fulfillment of the development priorities. The analysis, as in the case of the IPURDs, would be more complete by a future tracing of the dynamics of the national discourse on spatial development. The NSDC is the first real attempt to organize a spatial document that reflects the specifics, the problems, the

advantages and the priorities of the Bulgarian territory. Its initiation is based on the real possibilities of "Europeanization" of the system of spatial instruments at lower levels as well, but it is also a factor for larger dynamics of the changes in the cognitive and in the discursive dimension of the spatial planning system.

The implementation of the transfer from the top down to lower than the national territorial levels, is one of the challenges of the current analysis. At the present stage of the study, it appears that the transfer outcomes most likely vary closer to Combination (which involves a mixture of several different policies or in this case - practices) rather than Emulation (a transfer of ideas behind a policy or program), considering that documents of this kind (at the national level) did not exist during the socialist regime in the country. The evolution of planning practices (incl. bad practices resulting from the long period of planning denial) can also be used as criteria to determine options for a future Combination. Any results of the transfer of principles of spatial planning at the regional and at the local level would only have some validity after the expiry of the planning period - 2014-2020.

Table 28: Transfer analysis of the NSDC

	Result/Outcome National Spatial Development Concept
Who carries out the transfer?	Groups of actors: Council of Ministers; MRDPW – institution-initiated transfer (political actors); NCRD (group of experts) - transfer of principles and ideas for spatial planning in the elaboration of the NSDC.
What ideas are transferred?	Polycentric and balanced territorial development, integrated economic, social and environmental regeneration and urban development, rural areas and regions with specific characteristics, territorial integration and coordination of policies, preservation of natural and cultural values and adapting to global climate changes, regulated in key documents at EU level of paramount importance: the EU Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA 2020) "Towards an inclusive, smart and sustainable Europe", which documents further develop the ideas of the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999), the Lisbon Strategy (2000) and the Göteborg Strategy (2001).
When are they transferred?	Third planning period (2007-2013) – debate meetings at political level (ministries) in 2010. Organization of the text coverage; 2012 - the year of the document's elaboration.
Where are they transferred from?	The EU - EU spatial planning documents, which "urge the member-states to take into account the European dimension of spatial development in the coordination of policies, plans and national reports on spatial development". Main reference for the transfer of planning principles and objectives: the ESDP (1999).
Why ideas are transferred (motivation)?	Unadopted National Complex Spatial Scheme for Bulgaria regulated by the SPA (2001); Need for coordination of sectoral policies and the distribution of EU funds depending on the spatial priorities, organized in a completely new class of documents – the NSDC; Consistency of the regional and the spatial planning through providing their methodical coherence for the 2014 - 2020 planning period.

<p>How is the transfer executed?</p>	<p>Voluntary transfer of the ESDP policy objectives and their dimensions in the formulation of the Concept in terms of a full EU membership.</p> <p>The Methodological guidelines recognize that the obligations of Bulgaria as a member of the EU impose new practices in terms of applying the fundamental principles of the European spatial development policy, as well as the requirements of the "ESPON" research program in the field of spatial planning, environmental protection in compliance with "NATURA 2000", the "Europe 2020" Strategy, etc., which all motivate the Methodological guidelines for the NSDC as part of the common European planning.</p> <p>Seemingly voluntary transfer with elements of political rationality and "conditionality" (imposed by national political actors in response to the need for properly organizing and directing "financial injections" from the OPs funded by the EU Structural Funds).</p>
<p>Possible outcomes and degree of transfer?</p>	<p>The policy objectives of the ESDP are transferred and adapted for the specific regional conditions of development "in text".</p> <p>The Methodological guidelines impose the idea of a well-established in recent decades European practice and the need of the same in Bulgaria. Assessment of the transfer outcomes - analysis and evaluation of the changes of the local discourse and practices - assessable at the end of the 2014-2020 planning period (for which the NSDC directs the funding flows) and / or possibly after 2025. In any case, the impact assessment of the transfer, as well as the NSDC impact on the discourse, practices and future organization of the planning instruments (coordinating character) is not entirely possible as of 2013 (the time limit of the current study).</p>

Source: Author, based on the NSDC and the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration of the NSDC

9.3 Final notes and discussion

The reflection and the impact of the European spatial planning documents not only lies in the planning instruments' adoption of the terminology, the objectives and the orientations, but also in the extent of changes in governance styles, coordination and knowledge transfer between the different territorial levels, creating new organisms (or institutions) to develop spatial planning in its entirety (Elorrieta Sanz, 2013). Evidence of transfer of the European conceptual framework to the two new spatial instruments in Bulgaria has been found. The European references which these two documents bear are also observed and explained, so is the contextual framework in which those references appear, are developed, and are to be applied. The two new documents in discussion are bearers of future planning proposals and reorganization of the otherwise being static for decades set of spatial instruments (at least of the existing ones), which was a reflection of the inability for a symbiosis with the new European formulations and standards for spatial organization and planning, known as the European spatial model.

Regardless of the performed analysis, it does not mean that these new planning ideas or even "styles" of planning are brought down to, and implemented in practice. Therefore, this study of the Bulgarian planning instruments remains open in terms of future enrichment of results, perspectives and experiences (good or bad). The gathering of information does not allow (in terms of time and resources) reporting of any policy and institutional aspects, public participation, territorial and administrative cooperation. This additional information would complement the results and the discussion about the future of the new instruments regulated in the process of Europeanization of the Bulgarian spatial planning and the opportunities for their effective implementation, communication and coordination with other instruments for territorial policies in the country.

In the analytical part of the study it has been discussed that the process of Europeanization of planning is a complicated, complex process, which involves different mechanisms, actors and "moving forces", in which the transfer takes the role of an "indicator" of clarifying a number of aspects of the process of change initiating. Using policy transfer in the motivation for changes and the possible outcomes of those changes, is useful in cases where the vertical transfer of the European conceptual framework for spatial planning and its implementation in national (sub-national) planning documents

from the top down, is not forced from above, and in most cases is regarded as voluntary. Not surprisingly, however, the situation in depth is more complex than it seems.

The results of the analysis of both cases (of the NSDC and the IPURDs) share a common logic of "voluntariness" but also of "conditionality" related to the development priorities of the regional policy in Bulgaria, as well as the overall character of the impact which the EU cohesion policy has on the member states. This "conditionality" is not directly related to the EU, since the European reference documents are recommendatory in nature. The conditionality is an expression of rational-based policy decisions which the actors have chosen to transfer as a rational response to a perceived need. This type of lesson-searching makes an assumption of rationality, or in other words - a rationality-based policy transfer is the one in which national governments borrow ideas (programs, policies, etc.), with the expectation that the transfer will lead to success, and where the latter is measured by the extent to which a transferred policy achieves the aims set by the borrowers (e.g. the governments). The process of transfer begins with a voluntary engagement and active search for new ideas, while the transfer itself depends on subjective judgments and perceptions of the actors involved in it, which affects the outputs of policy transfer (Unalan, 2009). All this generates the idea that the transfer of spatial ideas, principles and approaches in organizing new planning documents is not simply defined as a voluntary or a mixed transfer, but it rather places it between the voluntary and the rational (Lesson downloading) variety of the Dolowitz and Marsh continuum (2000). However, it is not entirely impossible for an additional study of the political actors' motivation, to lead to new conclusions about the level of demand for knowledge and new ideas amid the financial incentives that "predefine" or "conditionally impose" the same. This new contextualization is most likely situated between the voluntary transfer type (in the center of the continuum) and the obligated type in the continuum.

The top-down transfer of ideas, following the example of implementing new spatial planning instruments in Bulgaria, is a complex process which involves not just borrowing, copying or inspiration, but adaptation and implementation as well. This in turn involves additional group / individual actors, measures and organizational practices, which the future outcomes of the transfer will depend on. The cases of the NSDC and the IPURDs are not the typical cases of a completed cycle of transfer analysis, since their period of elaboration and adoption overlaps the temporal limitation of this doctoral thesis.

However, those two documents are a sign that a new stage in the organization of the system of spatial instruments has begun. Regardless of the criticism, the focus of this new approach in the history of spatial planning should be viewed on with optimism, in a system where planning was forgotten and denied; in years when the process of adoption, change, or update of spatial plans was an uncontrolled legally and uncoordinated process of "trade of interests."

The evolution and the success or failure of the European cohesion policy in Eastern Europe, which Maier (2012) talks about, is part of this important process of transition and Europeanization, a process of not just building a system of new, structurally different spatial documents. Here Bulgaria is a typical example. The success of the cohesion policy provides the means to a complete rethinking of the future of the legal formulations and their coordination, as well as a more direct impact on the system of spatial documents, in this already initiated transition of spatial culture and practices. The most distinguishing feature of the planning culture is its diversity of instruments and practices, including the professional ethics that follow them. In this case too, the Bulgarian planning culture is just beginning its transitional period, in the European context, of convergence of policies for spatial organization and planning.

PART VI: CONCLUSIONS

Results and discourse on the posed research questions

Final discourse and validation of the research hypotheses

Contribution and future research challenges

Results and discourse on the posed research questions

This study is trying to reveal what the spatial planning transformations in Bulgaria have been since the fall of communism, as well as the changes imposed by the country's membership in the EU. The study also analyses how the system of spatial instruments is "adapted" and implemented in the context of the European discourse on spatial planning. These two main research lines have been organized around two central research questions, empirically and analytically presented in the two main parts / sections of the study, structured in four research chapters, the results of which are presented in this final part.

This study shows that Bulgaria is no less interesting a case for observation and study of the Europeanization processes in spatial planning, which theoretically frames this doctoral thesis within the studies of the so-called "Eastern enlargement" of the EU. In parallel to organizing the results, the advantages which have been deemed to form part of the contributions of this study, have been presented in a separate section, as well as the limitations, which have been organized as suggestions and challenges for a future research agenda.

The study of the Europeanization of spatial planning in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe has gained an academic interest given the dynamics of the changes determined by the EU intervention, as well as the common denominator under which these dynamics can be identified. As a country in this part of Europe, this study of Bulgaria falls within the group of case studies investigating and reporting transformational EU-effects on the national policies of the countries of the above-mentioned macro-region.

The presentation of the results follows the structure and the sequence of the research questions. In this sense, the results of answering the first question brings together findings from Chapter 6 and 7, and respectively - those from answering the second question combine findings from Chapter 8 and 9.

A. To understand the transformations of the spatial planning system in Bulgaria after the fall of socialism, through EU accession, and up to 2013.

A. Results: Bulgaria is a post-socialist country which - before 1989 - traditionally divided the planning process into two separate and non-integrated planning systems, which

remained unintegrated in the years of transition - generally equated with the period before the EU membership.

The long period of denial and rejection of spatial planning in the 1990s, together with the conditions of European integration, formed a new kind of planning - regional planning - which reorganized the entire system of planning documents in conditions of a "new" separation of power in the country, territorial and administrative reorganization of the national space, new market conditions, new ownership and a prevalence of personal interests concerning the territorial governance. The decentralization processes during the transitional period left a number of uncertainties, which reorganized and "reconstructed" the planning system of the country. The weak (and unprepared for decision making) local authorities, the problems of fiscal decentralization, the "burden" of the central government and the lack of an integrated approach to the management of planning, led to the formation of significant differences in the planning system, motivated by the common need for fulfilling the "recommendations of Europe" for the future EU membership of Bulgaria.

The introduction of regional planning under the regulatory and financial (the pre-integration funds) control of the EU brought with it the formation of two systems of planning instruments: 1) for regional planning and 2) for spatial planning, which exhibit different dynamics in their development and implementation. On the one hand, within the framework of the earlier introduced RDA (1999), the first - albeit ineffective - attempts to transfer Europe's discourse on territorial governance began. On the other hand, in the framework of the Spatial Planning Act (2001) - adopted two years later than the RDA - the importance of spatial planning was "resumed". The rather "static system" of planning documents - plans (at the local level) and schemes (at the regional/ district and at the national level) - subordinate to the SPA, has shown, thereafter, that these instruments not only do not reflect the priorities of the new conditions for development, but instead create conditions for the development of scenarios in which plans are not an obstacle in the implementation of any investment (private) interests whatsoever. The results presented in Chapters 6 and 7 show that spatial plans and schemes are not integrated vertically and exist in insubordination with other planning documents. Furthermore, documents such as the National Spatial Development Scheme were not created after all. Nor were the regional development schemes provided by the SPA – an act considered to be introducing a fundamental change in the understanding of the territory, which governs the relations

between the new owners, the types of territory and foremost – an act that regulates the organization of a new system of spatial documents. The system of General Spatial Plans also remained fragmented among the Bulgarian municipalities. Many of them never adopted such plans and governed their territory on the basis of the Detailed Spatial Plans. Meanwhile, however, the elaboration and adoption of regional development plans had been gaining priority in the territorial policies of a country in preparation for a future EU membership.

The empirical results of the descriptive analysis of the planning system of Bulgaria allow summarizing of the various reasons that explain the dynamics in the development of spatial planning and regional development, respectively - in the elaboration of planning instruments at the local, regional or national level. First of all, the development of planning is a result of the need for adjustments and harmonization with the EU requirements, as set in the *acquis communautaire* (Dimitrova, 2015). Secondly, the priority development of regional policy and the "isolation" of spatial (physical) planning from the latter, reveals the still unfinished cycle of changes at the discursive and at the cognitive level, defined by the still unclear domestic discourse on planning and by the change in the overall vision of the territory / space, its governance and planning. Last but not least, the lack of "new" planning practices and integrated approach to territorial governance leans towards an incomplete interpretation of the ideas of the European spatial planning. Spatial planning does not exist as a term in the planning documents and the transition from the old to the new (spatial) planning practices is a matter of a long period of time.

The results of the ESPON analyses in two reference projects, such as the 2.3.1 and the 2.3.2, confirm many of the hidden "weaknesses" of the Bulgarian planning system. Moreover, the results of the above mentioned projects' review show that they also report a lack of coordination in the system of planning instruments. The effect of the ESDP seems unclear, despite some positive assessments of the implementation of the policy objectives of the ESDP in times when the discourse on spatial planning does not clarify the relations between regional and physical planning, and is partially implemented through the ideas of the European cohesion policy. The regional plans and strategies have greater importance in territorial governance than the spatial plans and schemes.

The EU membership (from 2007 on) has affirmed the need for more efforts and professional investment in terms of financing the national Operational Programs by the EU structural funds. During the 2007-2013 programming period the Operational Programs were crucial for changing the approaches to planning. The lack of an integrated approach to planning and the inability to subordinate and coordinate the planning instruments for regional development on the one hand, and the ones for spatial planning on the other, set new conditions for the reorganization of the legal framework within which planning is to be executed. Within the scope of regional development (and the last version of the RDA from 2008), given the inefficiency resulting from the inconsistency and the breach of the SPA regulations, a series of new spatial documents was created – the National Spatial Development Concept and the Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development. At this point, concepts such as spatial planning are entering the documentary framework of regional development, but exist in isolation from the current SPA.

B. To analyse the changes in the system of spatial instruments and the novel instruments implemented within the Europeanization process.

B. Results: The review of the planning system in Bulgaria has shown that it is only after the adoption of the first RDA (1999) and the SPA (2001) - the two main legislative documents, concerning spatial planning - that the real transformations of the overall system of planning instruments began. The first regional documents for the 2001-2006 period were elaborated and adopted. With the appearance of those documents, the creation of an updated system of spatial plans and schemes that had remained “static” for years, was brought into discussion.

The preparations for the financing of the future Operational Programs and the transfer of EU directives in the field of regional planning at the domestic level, introduced the first transformational effects of Europeanization during the 2001-2006 programming period of the EU. A number of instruments assisting regional planning were elaborated during that period. Driven by the need for harmonization and adaptation to the European requirements, a new RDA was published in 2004, and yet another one in 2008. This gives us grounds to conclude that the Europeanization of the planning process started gradually and consistently in the years following 2001. Parallel to this, the analysis of the three "channels" on the EU impact, shows that the Europeanization has a dominant influence

on the system of *regional instruments*, whose value in territorial governance has been growing at the expense of the *spatial plans* and *schemes*. The regional plans, strategies and programs are the result of the vertical process of Europeanization, and until 2010 remained as a clear expression of the conditionality and coercive mechanisms of influence of the EU on the national planning system. These planning instruments, together with the fragmentary mode of elaboration and adoption of spatial plans (mainly at the local level), are the clearest reflection of the development of two planning systems, "incompatible" in the domestic planning practices. Thus the discursive integration which reflects the degree of impact of the idea of a European spatial model, is still an incomplete process in Bulgaria. Parallel to that, no evidence of the influence of the European spatial debate in the system of existing spatial planning instruments is found until the implementation of such, following 2010.

B.1. To explain how implementation of novel instruments occurred in the system of spatial instruments in terms of timing and method.

B.1. Results: The 2010-2011 period was marked by some key changes of the planning process, which led to their official proclamation in the SPA and in the RDA in 2012. A decision was made to introduce two new spatial instruments into the legal framework of regional development. Those were the IPURD and the NSDC, which by their nature are referred to as instruments for spatial planning and development. Within the Europeanization process of national planning, these two new instruments are considered the first real step towards the reformation of the system of planning instruments, whose development had remained for more than two decades static and "isolated" from what is regarded as spatial planning in Europe. The new instruments aim at "regulating land use and development through designation of areas of development and protection, and application of performance criteria". Unlike the standard land use (physical planning) instruments, the new spatial documents embody a broader, integrated, strategic perception of what planning is. Their main objective is to achieve a polycentric and balanced territorial development by coordinating the spatial impact of sectorial policies and decisions (Mourato, 2011). These new documents are the spatial expression of the coordination of both the physical planning and the development of the territory.

B.2. To identify ideas, the transfer of ideas, concepts and approaches related to the supranational idea of the EU spatial model and the instruments implemented.

B.2. Results: These two new spatial instruments state that their reference base is the leaning on pan-European spatial planning principles, enshrined in documents which reflect the European discourse on spatial development. The content analyses of the Methodological guidelines for the elaboration and implementation of the Integrated Plans (2010) and of the NSDC (2012), including their Methodological guidelines (2010), show that the definitions, approaches and diagnostics developed in these documents, have been adapted to the domestic territorial context and "transferred on paper" from the European spatial discourse. The content analysis of the NSDC shows that the Concept exhibits transfer and adaptation of the policy ideas of the ESDP (1999). In the case of the 67 Integrated Plans that are to be elaborated in the 2014-2020 period, the analysis was carried out on the basis of presence of key concepts for integrated urban and sustainable development, based on texts from the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Cities (2007) and the Declaration of Toledo (2010).

B.3. To verify the mechanism and the characteristics of the transfer of European spatial documents to new instruments for spatial planning in Bulgaria.

B.3. Results: The application of the model for analysing the policy transfer – referred to as transfer analysis - together with the provided detailed characteristics and the content analysis, show that depending on the direction that characterizes the mechanism of transfer of the European discourse to these two new planning instruments, a vertical, voluntary, top-down transfer is executed, initiated "from below" without coercive imposition from above. The results presented in Chapter 9, based on the accumulated information and data collection, indicate the presence of a voluntary transfer, but also elements of rationality and internal "conditionality" coming from the fact that the IPURDs and the NSDC arise in the legal framework of regional development. The implementation of these two new instruments and of the planning practices that determine them will be of importance for future evaluation of the outcome of the European planning discourse transfer after the end of the 2014-2020 programming period, or a longer period, given that the NSDC's action period continues up to 2025.

The analysis of the documents and the expert interviews, discusses the "germ" of ambitions for integration of the two systems of planning instruments - for spatial planning and for regional development, as well as the evolution of the domestic planning discourse on the integration of the Bulgarian planning system into the EU spatial planning "standards".

Final discourse and validation of the research hypotheses

In response to the two central research questions, two hypotheses have been offered - proposals for explanation of the changes of the spatial planning system in Bulgaria, starting from the fall of the communist regime in 1989 to 2013, as well as the integration of spatial instruments into the so-called European spatial model through the process of Europeanization of the domestic planning.

The results of this study show coherence with the conclusions of other authors who have worked on topics related to the transformations of the planning system in Bulgaria during the transitional period and the post-EU accession period, imposed by the process of Europeanization (Yanchev, 2012; Dimitrova, 2015). Meanwhile, the results add - by in-depth analysis - certain aspects and features of the Europeanization process, following 2007, as well as the evolution of the domestic discourse on spatial understanding and the possible changes that could follow in the planning practice. The lack of changes in the system of spatial plans and schemes, and yet the existence of active ones in the system of regional plans, programs and strategies, indicates the presence of a system which is operating institutionally, at least "on paper" (Dimitrova, 2015). However, "in practice", the transition to "new" planning practices in the context of the "new" implementation of spatial documents, reveals the still unclear development of the process of spatial planning. The interviewed experts and planners (from both the academic and practical circles of the planning process), without whom the results and the discourse of this study would not be complete, share the same ideas.

As a consequence, the exposition of the final results gives grounds for consideration that the two central hypotheses were confirmed, or justified, in the conducted research.

Hypothesis 1: *The aspects of spatial planning in Bulgaria were neglected and unreformed at the beginning of the post-socialist period, but also in the years following the 1990s, featured by the development of the cohesion policy. The lack of active reforms in the system of spatial planning in the period between 1989 and 2013 has led to the formation of two systems of planning instruments – one for spatial planning and another one for regional development. The changes in the technical dimension of the spatial planning system exhibit no intention of integration of the spatial instruments with those for regional planning. Therefore, spatial functions were taken over by regional development planning (through a series of plans and strategies), introduced in the process of European integration and Europeanization of planning in the country.*

Status: Confirmed

Hypothesis 2: *The Europeanization of the system of planning instruments began after 2001. The system of spatial plans remained "static" and did not exhibit reformation even after the introduction of the SPA (2001), until 2010, when the system of spatial documents was partially implemented. This implementation is expressed by introducing planning instruments at the national level – the National Spatial Development Concept, and at the local level – the Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development, which are an expression of the Europeanization of spatial planning through transfer of the European spatial discourse, or the European spatial model, from the EU to the domestic level. These two instruments represent the first attempt for a voluntary transfer through common European spatial development documents of recommendatory nature.*

Status: Confirmed

The confirmation of the second hypothesis adds also that the specifics of the way the European spatial discourse is transferred to the national level (the domestic discourse) gives us grounds to define that transfer as a voluntary one. There is no evidence of pressure and conditionality by the EU. However, the results derived from possible future

research on the implementation of these planning documents into practice, as well as the policy making conditions, may complement the specifics of this type of voluntary transfer, as well as the outcomes of it.

The confirmation of the hypotheses affirms that the process of EU enlargement has to do with the export of rules, concepts, mechanisms, "ways of doing things", etc. from the EU to the new Eastern European (incl. Southeast European) member states (Yanakiev, 2009). The huge role of the European structural funds and the formal EU requirements has also been confirmed - as being two of the three mechanisms of Europeanization according to Böhme and Waterhout (2008) - which mechanisms have led to the creation / enrichment of the systems of plans (planning instruments) and the models of Europeanization of the Eastern European countries (Maier, 2012; Raagma and Stead, 2013). However, the EU mechanisms of funding Bulgaria, serve as a proof of adaptation to Western (EU) model of planning (mostly in the field of cohesion policy), which clearly presents an example of policy transfer in the field of planning in general. Despite the difficulties in the study of the evolution of the domestic planning discourse, it has been concluded that the latter may be an interesting example of research and analysis of the voluntary transfer in a vertical direction.

The indicated "resistance" to transformation of the spatial instruments in the context of discursive integration into the European spatial model, shows that this resistance has to do with the culture and planning traditions of the post-communist countries (Meier, 2012) – matters which were not in the immediate focus of this study.

The effect of the transfer of principles, models and ideas from the European spatial planning documents to the domestic practices is still early to be evaluated through the new spatial plans and the National Concepts. This proves that the Europeanization of planning is not only a spatial and temporal process (Luukkonen, 2011a; 2011b; 2015; 2017), but a process where the *integration transition* to "European space" is a result of active interaction and a continuous transmission, accumulation and application of knowledge by the planning actors in Bulgaria. With this, the concept of spatial planning in the country can be affirmed in the context of legal and instrumental implementations not only "in theory", or "on paper", but in practice just as well.

Contribution and future research challenges

Bulgaria is an interesting case study of the Europeanization of the planning process, as part of the general pattern of "Eastern European adaptation", and part of the so called "Eastern enlargement", which has opened a number of research lines since the 1990s. This doctoral thesis is part of limited or partial studies of planning in post-communist and EU-accession conditions for development of their planning systems.

As part of the study of Europeanization and the changes in the domestic spatial instruments, this doctoral thesis reveals the presence of interpretive narratives of the Europeanization and the development of spatial planning in Bulgaria. The case of Bulgaria is very poorly represented in European studies of planning. By focusing the attention on the research debate on studying this process in Eastern European context, this thesis has a structural contribution. It adds volume to the yet undersized number of specific studies of the spatial planning systems and the mechanisms of their transformations as a result of the EU integration of the countries of the macro-region of Central and Eastern Europe.

The review of some studies has shown numerous options for the methodological organization of this study. The idea of linking three conceptual frameworks in order to achieve results for the Bulgarian spatial instruments and their possible adaptation to European spatial principles and ideas, has been regarded as one of the challenges in organizing the study, so was the limited scientific literature and the academic reference concerning the integration of these three process - Spatial planning, Europeanization and Policy transfer - in a common methodological framework. The latter was accurately represented by three key steps for empirical and analytical studying of Bulgaria. The future work on the methodological framework's complementing and refinement, are among the ambitions for presenting it as a valid model for studying other countries in the region, incl. opportunities for comparative studies.

Future research on the spatial planning system can integrate opportunities for horizontal Europeanization and transfer of knowledge and practices through European cross-border cooperation, which were not extensively focused on in this doctoral thesis because of the inter-mediation role of the EU. This focusing on horizontal Europeanization could provide more information on how the process of knowledge accumulation is reflected in

the implementation of the Integrated Plans into practice. This will also enable the complete answering to the questions / variables of the transfer analysis.

The complex research on the vertical transfer of the European discourse through the system of regional instruments and the ones for spatial planning, can enrich the discussion about the possibilities for the integration of these two systems and give a clearer idea of the conditions / mechanisms of the transfer of the European discourse to the domestic planning system, following the example of other documents apart from the ESDP. In parallel, more extensive studies, covering also civic consulting and public opinion, comments and justifications of the policy makers, representatives of the different stages of the pre-accession and the full EU membership periods, should be considered in the gathering of information.

The enrichment of the methodological framework and the extension of the range of methods would allow the realization of future comparative studies of the Europeanization of planning systems in Eastern Europe, including the Balkans, where it is even possible to identify a regional planning culture, organized and defined by specific socio-political, economic, geopolitical, military and historical factors. For a long period of time, the political elites of the EU-15 have seen the Balkan states as subjects defining the "bad" kind of Europeans (Slavev, 2009; Simeonova, 2015).

PART VII: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - TABLE OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	Code	Institution	Date
Dr Petar Stoyanov	P. Stoyanov	Sofia University	22 nd March 2015
Dr Neno Dimov	N. Dimov	Sofia University	20/22 nd March 2015
Dr Vesselina Troeva	V. Troeva	NSDC	20 th March 2015
Dr Irina Mutafchiiska	I. Mutafchiiska	UACEG	2 nd July 2016
Nurhan Redjeb	N. Redjeb	Private consultancy company	4 th July 2016
Stoycho Motev	S. Motev	NSDC	5 th July 2016
Dr Petko Evrev	P. Evrev	NSDC	5 th July 2016
Dr Stoyko Doshekov	S. Dochekov	NSDC	5 th July 2016

Dr Angel Burov	A.Burov	UACEG	20 th July 2016
Pavel Yanchev	P. Yanchev	Private consultancy company	I: 5 th February 2016 II: 2 nd August 2016

ANNEX 2 – CONSENT FORM



Consent Form

Research project/ study focuses: **Spatial planning instruments in Bulgaria**

Name and Position of researcher: **Velislava Simeonova, PhD candidate**

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions**
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason**
- 3. I agree to take part in the study**
- 4. I agree to the interview**
- 5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications**

Name of Participant:

Date:

Signature:

Velislava Simeonova (researcher)

Date:

Signature:

