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European recent Policies Affecting Sustainability of Urban and Rural areas, European future Sustainability challenges and selected best practices

Pierre Laconte,

Foundation for the Urban Environment (www.ffue.org)
International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)

ABSTRACT

The paper – starting with an attempt to define territorial sustainability - has three parts.

The first part scrutinises some key European Union (EU) policies affecting urban and rural sustainability:

- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), traditionally oriented towards intensive agricultural production and export
- Regional policies – their encouragement of urban dispersal into hitherto rural areas, with some exceptions
- Transport policies – their encouragement of road-based mobility and high land consumption
- Energy policies – their limited effect on low-energy production and consumption

The second part suggests what could be key sustainability challenges for Europe:

- Slow demographic growth and surplus of built space linked with reduced availability of agriculture land
- Quest for sustainable spatial governance taking into account both urban and rural needs
- Adapting effectively to the forecasted energy shortage.

The third part presents selected best practices in urban containment and rural protection.