

Denmark – A green room in the European house

Please note, as mentioned in the introduction, this chapter discusses Danish planning up to the change of government, 20th November 2001. The new government changed in many ways the political attitude. This is also true for the field of spatial planning as illustrated in a newspaper article by Michael Rothenborg (2002), titled “Murder in the Ministry”. In this article he suspects the new government to abolish the achievements in the fields of environmental protection and planning which the former Minister of the Environment had fought for. So, the near future will tell to what degree Danish planning and planning policy will change.

Denmark – small state and strong society

Denmark is one of the oldest nation states, as it has been around for more than thousand years. Not exactly in its present form, perhaps, but an entity carrying the name Denmark can be identified as far back as the formative years of Europe in the early Middle Ages.

Østergaard (2000) identified a number of aspects of Danish history which he claims are crucial for the Danish national identity and therewith their actions on the European scene as well as their approach to policy making. Among these aspects are Denmark’s past as European power, which eventually shrank to a small but sovereign state, as well as its geographical location in the Northern periphery of Europe, where it is also connected to a long tradition of Nordic co-operation and not at least the Nordic welfare state model.

Around 1800 Denmark was a middle-ranking European power, roughly equal to Prussia in military and economic potential, with a fleet second only to the one of Great Britain. In contrast to other old nation states such as France, Spain and England (which later goes up in the United Kingdom), Denmark was defeated in wars with Sweden and Prussia and, consequently, lost most of its territories. So, the country comprising of Denmark proper, Norway and Schleswig-Holstein gradually shrank to a size smaller even than its present borders (1864). It was, however, not swallowed up by stronger neighbours, as the great powers of the day were interested in preserving a small sovereign state at the entrance to the Baltic Sea. Therefore, Denmark belongs to a restricted group of small states, including e.g. Luxembourg and the Netherlands, who by historical accident exercised national independence in the crucial years in the middle of the twentieth century when European co-operation was launched on the basis of sovereign nation-states. Even today, Danish self-perception oscillates between regarding itself as a small state with a moral right to exercise influence because of its strong and coherent

society and a small state with practically no influence in the world. (Østergaard 2000)

In addition to this national identity, and as a result of Nordic integration, the 20th century has witnessed the rise of a trans-national, common Nordic identity constructed on independent national identifications. This supranational identity is of a particular kind as strong national identifications have been the precondition for successful Nordic co-operation at a practical level since the early twentieth century. This presents a contrast to the competing identification which often seems to characterise European-level co-operation. In this context two aspects are of interest (Østergaard 2000):

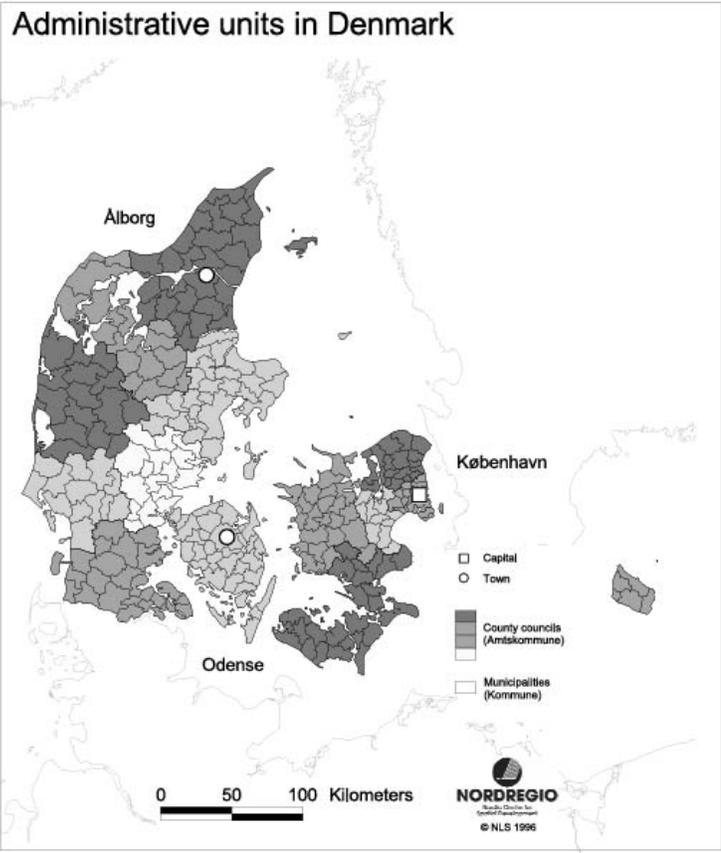
The belief in the Nordic welfare state model has led many Scandinavians to assume there is a major difference between their small, coherent and peaceful societies and the larger, conflict-ridden and aggressive European (and American) states. In the case of Denmark the small size of the Danish nation state, combined with its rapidly expanding, export-oriented economy, were decisive factors in the development of the Danish liberal social-democratic welfare-state.

The problem for Denmark as a player in international politics is that many Danes mistake formal sovereignty for real power in determining European politics, and so Danish foreign and European policy is often interpreted as a consequence of an age-old tradition of determinism and neutralism. In this light also Denmark's reluctant attitude towards the independence of its overseas territories (the Faeroe Islands and Greenland) can be understood as an attempt to preserve Denmark's international importance (Skaale 2001:9).

However, since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Denmark has embarked on a policy of building a sphere of influence in the Baltic area and thus no longer acts as a small state. On the other hand, the reluctant Danish EU policy has severely undercut its possibilities for effectively using international forums because of the difficulties in building strong alliances with other members of the EU and the EU itself. (Østergaard 2000)

Danish characteristics

Denmark is an island kingdom comprising the peninsula of Jutland and approx. 500 islands, 88 of which are inhabited, the two largest being Zealand (where the capital Copenhagen is located) and Funen (where Denmark's third-largest city, Odense, is located.). Furthermore, the Kingdom of Denmark also includes the partly independent overseas territories of Greenland (the world's largest island) and the Faeroe Islands, and it has jurisdiction over a portion of the continental shelf in



Map 4: Administrative Units in Denmark

the North Sea. Despite all this Denmark itself – and in the discussion the understanding of Denmark does not comprise its overseas territories – is a rather small state, with a land area of approximately 43,000 km² inhabited by approx. 5.3 million people.

Apart from the geographical situation in Denmark, Danish spatial planning is highly influenced by a consensus-oriented political culture and the strong position of local authorities. Denmark has traditionally had a strong welfare orientation, and because of its extensive social welfare system, the country has a relatively large public sector. As far as the planning system is concerned, the consensus and welfare orientation results in a neo-corporatist planning culture combined with a global planning approach which is implemented by the so-called principle of framework control (*rammestyringsprincip*), which will be discussed later on. The basic element of the planning system is the division of the country into three zones, namely, urban, recreational and rural. About 10% of Denmark's territory is designated as an urban or recreational zone. Here development is allowed in accordance with current planning regulations. The other 90% of the country is zoned as rural. Here developments or any other changes of land-use for other purposes than agriculture and forestry are prohibited, each of which are subject to special permission under planning and zoning regulations. (EC 1999b:17) This underlines the importance of agriculture both for industry, society and spatial development in Denmark.

Despite the large areas allocated to rural activities, today Denmark is a highly urbanised country: In 1998, 85% of the Danish population lived in urban settlements and 77% in towns and cities with more than 1,000 inhabitants. In the early 1980s Danish spatial planning defined a hierarchy of urban centres comprised of national centres, regional centres, municipal centres and local centres. The urban structure is monocentric, with Copenhagen, the Danish capital, as the dominant city. Greater Copenhagen is home to more than 26% of the Danish population or ca 1.4 million inhabitants. The four largest provincial cities are Århus (286,000 inhabitants), Odense (183,000 inhabitants), Ålborg (162,000 inhabitants) and Esbjerg (83,000 Inhabitants), all of them designated as national centres.

Because of the geographical shape of Denmark, surrounded by water on three sides and with its major settlements on a number of large islands, spatial integration in Denmark seems often to be closely connected to building bridges. One of the major planning and integration projects in Denmark was the Great Belt (Store Bælt) Bridge which connects the island of Zealand where Copenhagen, and thus more than

26% of the Danish population, is linked via the island of Fynen with the continental part of the country. The existence of this bridge shrank Denmark, as travel-time from East to West was reduced significantly: trips which formerly required an overnight stay became day-trips. Possibly the most famous example of a bridge as a symbol for spatial integration is the Øresund bridge, linking Copenhagen (Denmark) and Malmö (Sweden), formerly divided by the Øresund. The physical connection between these two cities and city regions is a vital element for the so called Øresund region as a potential global integration zone. (EC 1999a) Another bridge project aiming at further spatial integration of Denmark is a fixed link across the Baltic Sea between Lolland and Fehmarn. This bridge would improve Denmark's transportation-links with Germany and make the so called *Vogelfluglinie* (a popular travelling route from Germany via Denmark to Sweden) travelable without using ferries. However, this link and its economic feasibility are still under discussion. Its potential meaning for Denmark's further integration in Europe can only be speculated on as also highway connections on both sides need further development.

At the moment, Denmark is a rather hesitant EU Member, as pointed out for example by Dosenrode (1998). Denmark grew slowly into the increasingly supranational EU and managed to postpone the fundamental decisions on supranationality for almost two decades while preferring intergovernmental co-operation to supranationality. (Dosenrode 1998, Pedersen 1996)

While many would emphasise the continuity in Danish EU policy evident by the continuing reservation as regards certain features of the EU, it could be argued that the recent departure from traditional Danish policy with its emphasis upon confederalism and welfare-oriented motives is more important than specific opt-outs. It can thus be argued that in fact Denmark did not become fully committed to membership of a supranational community until the late 1990s. Danish EU policy underwent a change in 1989-90 which, though not as dramatic as the Swedish and Finnish, was equally fundamental. (Pedersen 1996:81)

In 1973, Denmark became member of the EC after a referendum, in 1972, in which 63.4% voted in favour of membership. The debate preceding this referendum was very much focused on the EC as intergovernmental co-operation in which Denmark needs to participate in order to find a way out of its economic dependence on the EC and UK,³⁵ as well as a

³⁵ Dosenrode (1998:64) points out that Denmark was economically dependent on the EC and UK, where export licenses, especially for agricultural goods, had to be negotiated on an annual basis.

necessity for sustaining the Danish welfare state. In 1985 as well, during the referendum on the Single European Act (SEA) the debate focused on purely economic matters. So, in the referendum in 1985, 56.2% voted in favour of the SEA. However, Greenland, which had joined the EC together with its motherland, Denmark, left the EC in 1985.

In the 1990s a turning point in the Danish attitude towards the EU was reached, at least as far as the political elite is concerned. This change can be explained by the political changes in Europe, with a number of EFTA and Central and Eastern European countries moving closer to the EU. (Pedersen 1996:91) However, the issue of membership remains a very sensitive one, as e.g. illustrated by the 1992 referendum, where 50.7% voted against the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union (TEU). In consequence, Denmark negotiated a number of opt-outs³⁶ from the TEU at the Edinburgh summit. In the period from the Danish “no” and up to the Edinburgh summit, the UK and Denmark emphasised the need for more subsidiary in European integration. (Andersen 1997a:281) In the end, the “no” on the Maastricht referendum caused only minor backtrackings in Danish EU policies as compared to the programme changes introduced with the TEU. (Pedersen 1996:93)

One of the crucial issues Denmark had to balance during its first 25 years of EU membership was economic integration into the emerging Single European Market, while maintaining the economic and cultural ties in the Nordic co-operation. Here, the situation became easier when Finland and Sweden joined the EU in 1995, and Denmark tried to extend the traditional co-operation among the Nordic countries into the EU Council of Ministers. Still, Denmark’s membership remains a sensitive issue when it comes to supranational aspects of European co-operation. The 1998 referendum on the Amsterdam treaty turned out positive with 55.1% of the votes for the treaty. The referendum on participation in the European Monetary Union (EMU), in year 2000, resulted in a majority (53,1 %) voting for keeping the Danish crown and not joining the EMU.

A more illustrative example of how the Danish attitude towards the EU changed in the 1990s can be found in the field of environmental policy:

[...] Denmark kept a relatively low profile in EU environmental policy-making in the years from 1987 to 1992, when member states such as Germany and the Netherlands were somewhat more actively involved. Denmark generally supported the use of Article 130 as the legal basis of EU environmental policy because this

³⁶ The opt-outs regard the areas of monetary integration, defence, citizenship and co-operation on juridicial and internal affairs. (Pedersen 1996:93)

article provided for minimum standards that allowed individual member states to maintain or introduce stricter domestic standards. (Andersen 1997a:281)

In 1993, when Svend Auken was appointed as new Minister of Environment, the turning point for the Danish opt-out position in environmental policy was reached. (Andersen 1997a:282) He gave international and EU environmental policies a higher priority and flagged Denmark's green policies at international level. During his period of office, the ministry elaborated and published two national planning reports with a clearly European focus, one of which was called *Denmark and the European Planning Policy* (Miljø- og Energiministeriet 1997). In this report the policy image of Denmark as a green room in the European house was developed.³⁷ This policy image and its position in the discourse will be discussed later on.

The placement of the European Environmental Agency (EEA) in Copenhagen and the subsequent appointment of Ritt Bjerregård as Environmental Commissioner (1994 – 1999) are seen as further evidence of the new and more active Danish position in the beginning of the 1990s. (Andersen 1997a:282)

Planning philosophy

Denmark is in a Nordic context a rather “political” country, as it lacks the dominance or hegemony of one political party and so after each shift of government efforts are made to establish a new line. The importance of politics is also reflected in the planning system by a close linkage of various plans or planning reports to election dates.

A feature of the Danish planning system is the close link with the political electoral processes which helps to give it both legitimacy and flexibility. (Newman-Thornley 1996:65)

In practice this means that both national planning reports and regional and municipal plans have, according to the planning act, set time periods assigned for presenting proposals, tied to the election dates of the national parliament or the regional or municipal parliament respectively.

This illustrates not only the political relevance of planning. The close interrelation of politics and planning at all three tiers of public planning, indicates also that each planning tier has a certain degree of freedom regarding its vertical connections to other planning tiers. The principle of framework control aims at combining this freedom with

³⁷ Whether the ambiguity implicit in the metaphor of the "green room", which can be understood either as environmental oasis or as room in a theatre, provided for the accommodation of actors and actresses when not required on the stage, was originally intended or not remains an open question.

consistency in planning over the three planning tiers, as well as in sector plans.

Comprehensive planning and framework control

Various sectoral policies at the three levels of spatial planning are brought together in a so-called “global planning approach” (EC 1999b) .

In general, one may describe the system of public administration in Denmark as a mix of:

- vertical connections, implementing each sectoral policy by a top-down approach, and
- horizontal connections, linking the different sectoral policies on the same level through comprehensive spatial planning.

(EC 1999b:85)

This global planning approach is mainly achieved through an important, underlying principle of Danish planning: the principle of framework control. In principle planning is intended to co-ordinate and sum up various forms of sectoral planning as e.g. in the field of environmental planning and protection, which developed together with local and regional planning. Through its summarizing function, planning is to achieve comprehensiveness and entirety in public planning, as well as securing a balanced and appropriate development in all parts of Denmark. In this system of planning, as described by Sehested and Damsgård (2000), the central state has a guiding role which is exerted by the so-called principle of framework control. In fields of national interests, the central state lays down a framework, within which the counties and municipalities can act freely while filling out the given framework with their regional and local land-use planning. More concretely, this principle is defined as follows:

The planning system is based on the principle of framework control, signifying that the plans at lower level must not contradict planning decisions at higher level. But the contents of planning are different at the three administrative levels. (EC 1999b:17)

The main means the central state has to exert this kind of framework control are the instruments of national planning, the national planning report and the national planning directives, which are described in the section on planning instruments, as well as the guidelines for regional planning. Even though the central state seems to have considerable power through the principle of framework control, the power of the local and regional level should not be underestimated.

Administrative structure: An early approach to subsidiarity

Public administration in Denmark is a vast field, providing work for 1/3 of the labour force, and it is rather amorphous and difficult to delimit vis-à-vis the rest of society.

The Danish model emphasise public control and responsibility at local level. (Andersen 1997b:160)

Denmark has 275 municipalities and a long tradition of delegating responsibility and decision-making power to the local and regional councils. In fact, local government contribute more than 30% of the gross national product, as compared with about 10% in countries such as Germany and France. Local authorities administer more than half of the public expenditure and more than half of local government expenditure is financed by local income taxes³⁸ (EC 1999b:81). Here it should be borne in mind that municipalities to a large extent administer the Danish system of universalised welfare and, as providers of public services according to objective criteria stipulated by the parliament, they are reimbursed by the state. (Jensen and Jørgensen 2000:31-33)

The roots of decentralisation are to be found in the constitutional conflict in the late 19th century between Copenhagen's ruling bourgeoisie and farmers, who were struggling for independence and local self-governance. Andersen (1997b) sees two different roots to this conflict: Firstly, the fact that Copenhagen's bourgeoisie put the Danish parliament out of action in the 1890s, until the farmers gained power in both houses of parliament in 1901. Secondly, the development in Denmark's neighbouring country, Germany, where the preference for local self-governance was institutionalised by the social democrats in the 1930s. (Andersen 1997b:160)

The emphasis on local self-governance involves also the question of division of labour between three administrative levels, namely municipal, county and nation state. Here, the principle of subsidiarity has been applied in Denmark before the EU debate shaped this term.

The concept of decentralisation comprises a precise and finely tuned relationship between a strong national authority and strong county and municipal councils, based on a series of laws that establish which decisions are to be delegated. The purpose is to solve the tasks at the lowest possible level so as to combine responsibility for decision-making with accountability for financial consequences. (EC 1999b:81)

³⁸ Municipal income taxes range from 14 to 22% of income. (EC 1999DK:81)

In spatial planning all this means that the principle for framework control is not meant to be an instrument for steering the regional and local level more than absolutely necessary.

Policy-making

Denmark is described as a neo-corporist country, where public policy-making on social and economic programmes brings all the interest groups together under official auspices to try to forge a common consensual policy. (Wiarda 1997, Nielsen 2000) Nielsen (2000) sees the roots for Danish neo-corporatism mainly in the agricultural orientation of the Danish modernization process. The special form of Danish modernization further accentuates long historical continuity of peaceful, compromise-oriented processes combined with a political culture characterized by national harmony and democratic community. Instead of enormous demographic and socio-cultural changes caused by a rapid urbanization in connection with industrialisation in the 19th century, Denmark went through an agriculturally based and more drawn out process of modernization. Furthermore, Nielsen draws the conclusion that Danish political culture is marked by a classical, almost pre-modern, understanding of *Gemeinschaft* in which specific constellations of interest of experiences of societal conflicts became characteristic for Danish modernity and extended their validity to the national level. This community-oriented political culture has led to a rather pragmatic, compromise- and consensus-oriented conflict regulation in which all relevant interests and opinions are taken into consideration. (Nielsen 2000:87)

With regard to spatial planning, Jensen (1999:215) points out that the development of the Danish urban pattern is rather a result of corporatist planning and policy processes than of broad public debate. Gaardmand (1991) sees also corporatism and neo-corporatism as major features in Danish planning. However, he describes corporatism as a rather new phenomenon in Danish planning. He sees the basic principles of the Danish planning system in a hierarchic-rationalistic planning concept where however, the rationalistic ideal is becoming less and less influential. (Gaardmand 1991:21) Rationalism, to his mind, was the dominant school until the 1980s, when planning started to become more democratic. (Gaardmand 1991:24) In his book on the mahogany-table method and corporative planning³⁹, he claims that planning became during the 1990s increasingly a task carried out and decided upon by

³⁹ The full title of the book is *Magt og medløb: Om mahognibords-metoden og den korporative planlægning* (Power and Fellow Travelling: About the mahogany-table-method and corporative planning). (Gaardmand 1996)

circles of experts and elites, (closed) committees and their networks. The main aim was to give commercial and sectoral interest groups more influence on the development of the society. (Gaardmand 1996:8) In this book he analyses a number of large planning processes of national interest and criticizes them as being undemocratic because decisions are made in a number of committees staffed by representatives from a rather small “inner-circle” of bureaucrats, politicians, interest organizations and industry, typical for neo-corporatism. To his mind Svend Auken (Minister for the Environment 1993-2001)⁴⁰ was one of the first to practice the new corporative style in connection with larger plans. (Gaardmand 1996:56) Main examples for corporatist planning in Denmark are according to Gaardmand (1993 and 1996) the national planning perspective 2018, the Øresund bridge and the municipal plans for Ørestaden and Copenhagen.

In his analysis of rationality and power in Danish planning, Flyvbjerg (1991) underlines that the most consequential activities tend to be located before the formulation of goals, plans and policies, in what is called the genesis of planning and politics, and after hearings, public debates and political referendums, in the implementation phase. Accordingly, the courses are set in small inner circles.

One can argue as to whether corporatism is really such a new phenomenon in Danish planning. Firstly, Denmark has a corporatist tradition in policy making (Andersen 1997a, Kuhn 1981, Laursen 1997, Nielsen 2000) which is closely connected to the development of the welfare state, as is Danish physical and spatial planning. Secondly, the very way Danish national planning policy emerged, as described by Jensen (1999) and Gaardmand (1993), justifies the conclusion drawn by Jensen (1999:215) that spatial development in Denmark is a result of neo-corporatist planning and policy making.

A key element in Danish policy-making is the corporatist system of decision-making. Major interest organisations are closely involved in negotiations for the drafting of legislation as well as subsequent implementation. (Andersen 1997a:262)

However, the traditional emphasis in the Danish policy style on consensus-seeking and striving to reach an understanding among those regulated, lost some ground during the 1980s, changing towards a more loosely linked system where interest organisations are lobbying rather than negotiating. (Andersen 1997a:254) At the same time, collaborative

⁴⁰ Svend Auken was previously Minister of Labour (1977-82)

planning (Healey 1997) emerged which may explain Gaardmand's (1993 and 1996) view.

Historical development of the planning system

Before we go on discussing the state of Danish spatial planning, we will have a look into its history and emergence.

The planning system has been developed for a number of years, changing with changing conditions, but it is rooted in the tradition of understanding the necessity for functional cities and the regulation of land use. (EC 1999b:18)

The first town-planning act was passed in 1925. However, it was not used very much, mainly because of its controversial regulations for economic compensation. (Jensen 1999 and EC 1999b)

In 1938 a new planning act was passed, imposing the duty on the municipal councils to adopt a "town planning by-law" for any built-up areas with more than 1,000 inhabitants. However, in this act planning was limited to urban areas, and as it could not be used for fighting urban sprawl, a new act was passed in 1949 (*byreguleringsloven*). This act was the first national intervention regarding planning across municipal borders. It was followed up with an act on rural areas (*landsbygdloven*) in 1960 and an act on land regulation (*jordloven*) in 1963.

In 1970 the local government reform was carried out, the most comprehensive interference in local self-governance hitherto. (Jørgensen 1985:526) The number of local authorities was reduced by replacing 88 boroughs and 979 rural municipalities with 277 municipalities. At county level the number of county authorities was reduced from 22 to 14. The number of inhabitants in most new municipalities varies between 5,000 and 10,000 and in the county areas between 200,000 and 250,000. Exceptions are Copenhagen, Frederiksberg in the capital region and the island of Bornholm. (Albæk 1996:23-22)

A wave of planning reforms were undertaken between 1970 and 1977. They include the urban and rural zones act (1970), the national and regional planning act (1973), which was the first Danish act on comprehensive national planning, as well as the municipal planning act (1974). These acts, plus a number of other issues, were collected in a single planning act adopted in 1992, which introduced a number of innovations without changing the basic principles of Danish planning. Some issues of the acts from the 1970s are, however, still of interest and relevance, e.g. in the national and regional planning act (1973) it is stated that the regional plans shall, in combination, give expression to a national plan. In addition, national planning interests shall be taken care of

through the approval of regional plans by the Ministry of Environment. The national planning policy shall be presented in annual national planning reports. The planning system builds on the idea of framework control. The main innovations of the 1992 planning act are the introduction of further decentralisation, as well as providing the Ministry of Environment with a possibility to support pilot projects and extending the period between the national planning reports. Planning reports are no longer to be delivered every year, but only after each national election. (Miljø og Energiministeriet 1996) Despite those changes the principal aims of planning remain:

The objectives of *Lov om Planlægning* (the Planning Act 1992) are to ensure that planning synthesizes the interests of society regarding future spatial structure and land use and contributes to the protection of the country's nature and environment, so that sustainable development of society with respect to people's living conditions is secured. (EC 1999b:17)

In practice, the birth of comprehensive and especially of national planning was a long process. Planning above municipal level started with regional plans for the larger Copenhagen area and developed from this to national planning.

First steps towards comprehensive planning: Regional planning and the Copenhagen Region

The first time an overall planning perspective was formulated in Denmark was in the so-called traffic-report which was published as preparatory work for a regional plan for Copenhagen in 1926. (Christoffersen and Topsøe-Jensen 1979:244) Two years later, in 1928, the Danish Town Planning Institute (*dansk byplanlaboratorium*) initiated the first regional planning committee, although it lacked any formal authority, and in 1936 this committee proposed a plan for future green areas in the Copenhagen region. (Gaardmand 1993:35) It was recommended that the new park system in the central municipality should be extended to embrace a regional park and path system. This plan provided a basis for an important move towards active nature conservation policies in the region in the years to come, and many of the paths for walking and cycling were laid out during the Second World War as part of a policy to remedy unemployment.

Finally, the development culminated in the first Danish regional planning project, which became famous as the "Finger Plan" (*fingerplanen*) for Copenhagen, presented in 1947. This plan was not the result of political discussion or inspiration. In a more technocratic approach specialists, both architects and civil engineers, mainly from the

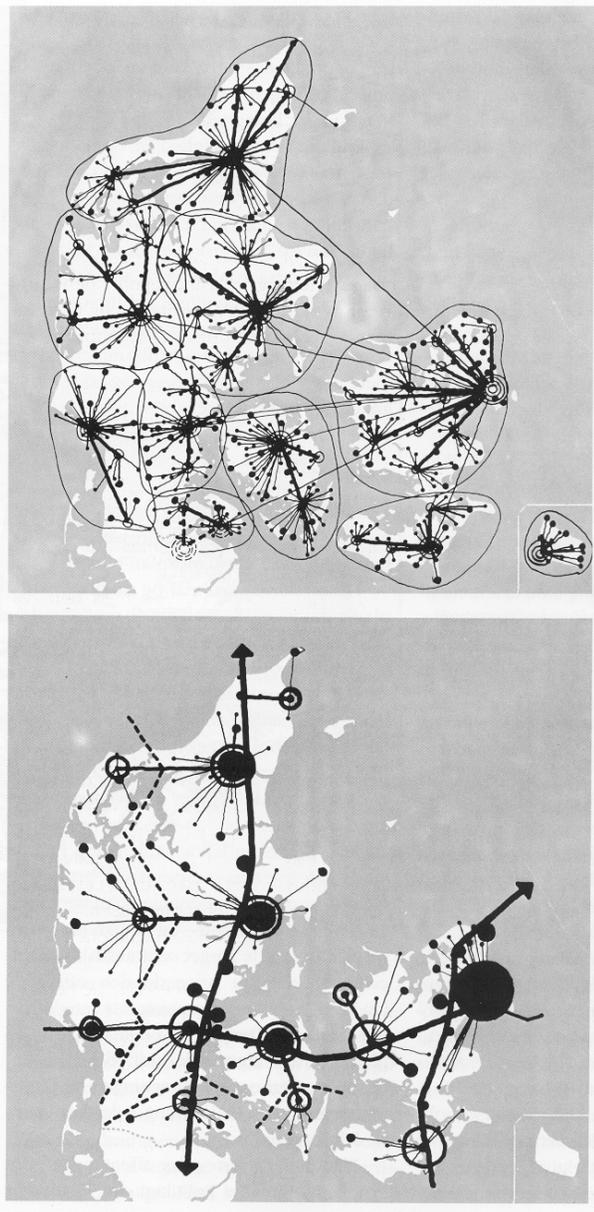
Copenhagen city administration, took the initiative for this plan and carried the planning process out. It was the first attempt to combine traffic planning and distribution of industry and living areas.

Because the “Finger Plan” took, for the first time, a broader approach than classical urban planning, it became a historically important document which set standards for both voluntary regional planning, carried out by large municipalities, and for the law on regional and national planning. (Christoffersen and Topsøe-Jensen 1979:246) The “Finger-Plan” for Copenhagen was far ahead of its time with regard to a number of issues, e.g. it introduced thoughts about the capital’s development as part of nation-wide planning, an idea which, however, was rejected. (Jensen 1999:135)

Birth of Danish national planning and national planning policy

The term for national planning *landsplanlægning* was introduced into the Danish language after World War II. However, it only became political reality in the 1950s. (Schmidt 1998a:8) It had already from its inception clearly been an appeal for politicising and vision-shaping actors; and it has been viewed with less enthusiasm by political realists and economic actors. (Jensen 1999:210)

Out-migration from rural areas, declining level of public service and unemployment were in the 1950 consequences of changes in the industrial structure (*erhvervsstruktur*) and led to declining living conditions for a large part of the Danish population. Consciousness of this problem reached political processes as protest against this development and the concept of an “unbalanced Denmark” (*et skævt Danmark*) came-up. (Christoffersen and Topsøe-Jensen 1979:251) Development proceeded rapidly in those years, and to the demands for “endogenous” development and regional planning (*egnsudvekling*) from the late 1950s, a new one, national planning, was soon added. The debate on “unbalanced Denmark” entailed insight into problems caused by enormous economic growth in a number of regions and stagnation in other regions. During this debate Erik Kaufmann published in 1959 an article on a growth plan for Denmark in the form of a national planning hypothesis. He recommended that a national plan should opt for a number of “star towns” (*stjernebyer*), equally distributed over the country. The idea of “urban star systems” became rather influential, and was included in the first national planning report prepared by the Ministry of Environment in 1975; in addition, it became a major pillar of the first regional plans. (Illeris 1998:15) The “urban star system” and the subsequent “large H” (cf. figure) became basic metaphors for ideas about the Danish urban pattern. (Jensen 1999:143)



Map 5: The “Urban Star System” and “Large H” of Danish Planning
(Source: Gaardmand 1993:79)

Around the same time as Kaufmann presented his vision of a growth-plan for Denmark, 1959/1960, discussion began about national planning. This discussion took place mainly in and around the Ministry for Housing, probably very much influenced by similar discussions within the Danish Town Planning Laboratory. In 1960, the idea of establishing a national planning committee emerged, and was supported by Prime Minister Viggo Kampmann⁴¹. In December 1960, a representative of the Ministry for Traffic, the Ministry for Housing, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Trade and Industry etc. and a number of independent experts, town planners and economists interested in national planning, presented a concrete proposal for a committee on national planning. The government established the Committee on National Planning (*Landsplanudvalget*) on 8 June 1961, to focus on guidelines for localisation of investments of importance for the future urban pattern. A secretariat, the so-called LPLUS, was established with about 30 employees from various disciplines and Erik Kaufmann as its head (1960-64). Already in 1962, a first proposal was presented, the “zoning plan for Denmark” (*Zoneplan for Danmark*), which was later followed up by a more detailed elaboration of the “urban star system” and the “large H”. (Schmidt 1998a, Illeris 1998, Jensen 1999, Gaardmand 1993)

At the same time, a committee of the Danish Town Planning Institute and the Jutland Town Planning Council was also working on the question of national planning. In a document issued in 1961, the committee stated that the term national planning was in the mid-1950s still a utopian term, but that exercises in national planning had started already with the establishment of the Ministry of Housing’s Committee on town planning issues in 1948. (Jensen 1999:137)

In the 1970s, the idea of national planning became more established. National planning and urban patterns subject to physical planning became both articulated and institutionalised by law and through professional and political debates. (Jensen 1999:159) Finally, the first national planning report was presented in 1975.

As explained above, the 1970s were marked by a number of changes in Danish planning, including developments in national planning and LPLUS. In 1973 LPLUS and the committee on town planning issues (*byplansager*), which originally were under the Ministry of Housing,

⁴¹ V. Kampmann was Prime Minister 1960-1962, after having been Minister of Finance in 1950 and between 1953-1960. So his engagement with planning goes back partly to his time as Minister of Finance and partly to his time as Prime Minister. Another Danish PM who later supported the idea of national planning was J.O. Krag. He was PM between 1962 and 1968 and once again 1971-1972.

came under the auspices of the new Ministry of Environment⁴². In 1975 they merged with the newly established National Agency for Physical Planning (*Planstyrelse*), also under the Ministry of Environment. (Jensen 1999:145) In connection with the new planning act of 1992, the National Agency for Physical Planning was set up and the Spatial Planning Department (*landsplanafdeling*) under the Ministry of Environment was established in 1993.⁴³ This step meant not only a break with tradition, but also that physical planning was placed under stronger political control, in a ministerial department which functions as the Minister's secretariat for planning issues. (Gaardmand 1993:289)

The legal and institutional developments described above are certainly interrelated with different epochs or specific ideas of national planning; each national planning report is a product of its time. As Jensen (1999:210-216 and 2000:92) illustrates, the character of national planning has changed tremendously during the last 40 years. He identifies four "seasons":

- Control of economic growth (1959-71)
- Management of the crises (1972-81)
- Decentralisation / modernisation (1982-88)
- Internationalisation / creating of a distinct image (1989-?)

However, the seasons are not only characterised by contemporary issues and political attitudes, Jensen (1999) has illustrated a number of shifts with respect to language and presentation. Here three main phases are visible. Between 1975 and 1984 the national planning documents are marked by a factual/objective and plain/sober tone. Between 1984 and 1990, they tend to experiment more with illustrations, visions and appeals. Finally, since 1992, national planning works extensively with illustrations, info-graphics, associations, metaphors and ambiguous advertising formulations and marketing visions. Jensen concludes that national planning has changed from co-ordinating and comprehensive planning (ambitions) to more diffuse vision creation. It is said that there is a change from expert-oriented and rational planning towards colourful and dramatic rhetoric marked by ideological and vision-oriented national plans. (Jensen 2000:92) Although it is debatable whether national planning reports became more ideological in the 1990s or just shifted ideology, Jensen's findings that there is a trend shift in planning from

⁴² The ministry changed in 1973 its name from Ministry of Pollution Control to Ministry of Environment and in 1994 to Ministry of Environment and Energy.

⁴³ According to Gaardmand (1993:289) there were a number of voices that interpreted the elimination/resignation of the Agency for Physical Planning as single of breaking off comprehensive and coherent physical planning.

social and welfare orientation towards a more strategic and economic profile (Jensen 2000:92) are irrefutable.

From physical welfare planning to spatial planning for competitiveness

Globalisation and further progress towards European integration led to changes in Danish spatial planning in the 1980s and 1990s:

[...] Denmark witnessed a remarkable turn-around from the situation in the 1960s and the 1970s when spatial planning was institutionalised, so to speak, as the spatial expression of the welfare state. [...] Planning strategies now addressed the new socio-spatial context of increased urban competition, and looked towards the European Union and its emerging spatial visions. (Jensen and Jørgensen 2000:34)

As illustrated above, traditionally, Danish planning is both focused on physical planning and strongly influenced by the welfare-state ideology.

In the 1980s national spatial planning discourse was influenced by the neo-liberal climate that swept across most of the West. The Keynesian welfare policy was challenged under the slogans of decentralization and modernization. (Jensen and Jørgensen 2000:34)

The new planning act of 1992 marks, according to Jensen and Jørgensen, a change towards the approach of a “competition oriented global capitalism” (Jensen 1999:181).⁴⁴ The shift in legislation is, however, in line with more general recent developments. Global, European, national and regional competitiveness begin to appear more and more often in various planning documents, e.g. there is the rising number and importance of rankings and studies on competitive advantages of cities and city regions, which are used and prepared in the sphere of strategic spatial planning. (Jensen-Butler and Weesep 1997 and Newman and Thornley 1996) In Denmark the development did not actually begin with the 1992 planning act; even the national planning report of 1989 articulated neo-liberal critiques of planning and the goal of a balanced spatial development was associated with the welfare state. (Jensen and Jørgensen 2000:34)

At the same time as we witness a stronger economic orientation of planning, which in the case of Denmark even influenced planning legislation, environmental issues increasingly become an acknowledged

⁴⁴ The main argument for the ideological shift in Danish planning legislation is seen in the changed formulation of the aims for spatial development mentioned in the first article the focus is “appropriate” (hensigtsmæssig) instead of equal or balanced (ligelig) spatial development (Jensen 1999:180 and Jensen-Jørgensen 2000:35).

aspect of planning. Even when the comprehensive system of national, regional and local planning was introduced in the planning act in the 1970s, one of its main purposes was to enable better cross-sectoral policy co-ordination. Environmental protection was among the issues incorporated in the planning system. (Andersen 1997a:262) Regarding the integration of environmental issues, Jensen (1999) points out that environmental tasks became during the 1990s an issue of growing importance in planning. This development illustrated the basic differences of the ideological goals of equality and competition, namely the relation between economic growth and environmental management. He concludes that the ideals of the Brundtland report (WCED 1987) were incorporated in the discourse accordingly, although based on the idea of qualitative growth. (Jensen 1999:207)

Taken together, the integration of economic and environmental issues into planning documents marks a shift from classical physical planning towards spatial planning. At the same time, globalisation of capital and the new international division of labour created in the 1980s and 1990s a context in which national planning was affected to an increasing extent by trans- and supranational phenomena. (Jensen and Jørgensen 2000:34)

A recent trend is the strengthening of the international dimension of national planning. Since the beginning of the 1990s, more attention has been directed towards analysing international development trends with the spatial impact on the territorial development of Denmark. (EC 1999b:28)

Denmark is prepared for more polycentric and market-oriented spatial planning within a larger European context. (Jensen 1996:14) So, accompanied by the ideological shift away from classical welfare ideas, two different major trends can be identified: firstly, a stronger cross-sectoral approach to planning and, secondly, a wider geographical scope in national planning policies. These will be discussed more in detail in the following two sections.

The European perspective in Danish planning

There has been a European or international perspective to Danish planning, more or less from the very beginning. Already under Kaufmann Denmark's location in Europe was an issue. Maps about the European urban pattern and Denmark as a loop between South and North Europe were elaborated at the beginning of the 1960s. (Andersen and Kaufmann 1988:16-19)

However, with the national planning reports of the 1990s, the concepts of urban patterns and national planning were clearly transformed from a mainly national to a combined national and European perspective. (Jensen 1999:207) As early as the 1989 national planning report the international orientation can be seen. It emphasises that development opportunities in Denmark's regions need to be used optimally for strengthening Denmark's international role. (Miljøministeriet 1989:5) This approach to international spatial positioning is further developed in the national planning reports 1992, 1997 and 2000. According to Jensen and Jørgensen (2000:35), the change towards the trans-national and international level can be explained partly by the growing impact of the Single European Market in the European Community and partly by the further intensification of global socio-spatial changes, as well as by the ideological change in Danish planning at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s.

During the 1990s Denmark's international planning involvement took place mainly in three different arenas, namely, in Baltic Sea Co-operation, through the ESDP process and the North Sea Co-operation. Certainly, not all three were considered equally important. The North Sea Co-operation entered the arena rather late, as it was initiated by Interreg IIC.⁴⁵ VASAB was first out and is widely seen as the inspiration not only for later trans-national spatial visions under Interreg IIC, but also for the ESDP.

VASAB and ESDP setting up a hegemonic project

Generally speaking, there are numerous similarities between VASAB and ESDP. In the ESDP document the VASAB 2010 report, Strategies and Visions around the Baltic Sea, is referred to as good practice for trans-national spatial visions in Europe (1999a:79). The VASAB co-operation started in 1992. (Mehlbye 1995:6) In the same year the elaboration of a European spatial vision was proposed to the Committee on Spatial Development (CSD), and one year later, in 1993, the Committee decided at its meeting in Liège to elaborate a spatial vision for the territory of the European Union. Both processes employed a Committee on Spatial Development, in both cases called CSD, on an intergovernmental base and with high-level political backing. Both visions have been given the

⁴⁵ Being elaborated between 1998 and 2000, NorVision took on board many of the aspects put forward in the discourse initiated through the VASAB and ESDP work. It implemented ca 54 of the ESDP policy options and in contrast to VASAB the regional level took part in the elaboration and as such NorVision is both top-down and bottom-up. It was presented at the North Sea Commission's annual meeting in Bering in 2000. An adopted resolution recommends all countries to take note and to implement the recommendations put forward in the NorVision document.

blessing of the respective ministers responsible for spatial planning. However, VASAB 2010 proceeded a bit faster and received its endorsement as early as 1994, while the ESDP document was finally approved in 1999. The topics discussed in the two reports are also rather similar, and reflect mutual influences during the preparation processes, as illustrated later on. Indeed, as a number of people were involved in the preparation of both documents and because of time overlaps, it was possible to establish a discourse on this issues embedded in a hegemonic position, which firstly was characterised by VASAB and then clearly marked by the ESDP.

For the Danes both projects are of importance and are taken well into account in various national planning reports. As the Danes tried to play an active role in both processes, although possibly more visibly in the Baltic Sea efforts than in the ESDP, a few words are in order on how Denmark took part in the VASAB and the ESDP process. In the VASAB process Denmark was one of the driving forces and VASAB is generally viewed as a forerunner or testing ground for the ESDP. As far as the ESDP process is concerned, Denmark, together with France, Germany and the Netherlands, proposed the preparation of a spatial vision for Europe at the 4th informal meeting of EU ministers responsible for spatial planning in Lisbon, 1992. (Faludi and Waterhout 2002) One year later, Denmark hosted the EU Presidency and had therewith a unique opportunity to take a more pro-active role in the ESDP process. However, no ministerial meeting on spatial planning was organised during the Danish presidency, for a number of reasons. Firstly, during the beginning of the presidency there were national elections which led to a change of government. Although the new Minister for Environment and Energy, Svend Auken, was in favour of European co-operation, there was no chance to change the agenda of the presidency already in progress. Secondly, 1993 was a busy year concerning the VASAB co-operation, as this report was to be finalized in 1994. That meant a lot of the capacity of the spatial planning department was occupied with the Baltic Sea co-operation and not much more could be done by the Danes except to chair a number of CSD meeting and introduce a paper stressing environmental aspects. This paper contributed, for instance, to the image of the environmentally conscious Nordic countries in the ESDP process. (Rusca 1998) So, although having a great opportunity one might say that Denmark took a very pragmatic decision to give priority to the finalisation of the VASAB 2010 document.

Although tracing Danish influences on European planning co-operation is rather difficult, European influences on Danish planning can

easily be illustrated e.g. by analysing national planning reports. The following discussion of the three national planning reports for 1992, 1997 and 2000 shows how the trans-national dimension entered Danish planning.

Denmark heading towards the year 2018

Simultaneous to the kick-off of the VASAB 2010 and ESDP co-operation, Denmark published a national planning report with a clearly European focus. The story goes that the idea for this Danish national planning report was born in The Hague (the Netherlands), after a meeting with participation of both the Dutch and Danish ministers for spatial planning and influenced by the Fourth Dutch National Planning Report. Actually, in its overview of the rationale behind Danish national planning, the report refers to strategic physical planning being on the agenda in the Netherlands, France, the UK and the German *Länder*. (Miljøministeriet 1992a:7)

The national planning report 1992, *Denmark heading towards year 2018 (Denmark på vej mod år 2018)*, is the final starting signal for the trans-national or European orientation of Danish national planning. (Jensen 2000:91) This is already indicated by the title of a number of chapters, e.g. “Denmark in Europe, today” and the vision “Denmark in Europe 2018”. Furthermore, the report has a sub-chapter on why a European orientation is needed. Here, references are made to both the *Europe 2000* report and the decision to begin European co-operation and exchange of information by the Committee on Spatial Development. The Baltic Sea Region is also mentioned here, as an area which will develop as an important part of Europe. It is also stated that Danes have to get used to the idea that the development of the Baltic Sea Region will mean that a metropolis such as St Petersburg will be as close to Denmark as Paris is. (Miljøministeriet 1992a:6-7) In the rationale it is furthermore argued that Denmark needs to take a position on Europe’s future orientation in order to be able to work for the Danish interests. (Miljøministeriet 1992b:5)

Consequently, this report is not only the first to have a clear-cut European profile, but also the first Danish national planning report to be internationally acknowledged as marketing Denmark in the European context. (Newman and Thornley 1996:64) An indication for the international acknowledgement and Danish pride in this report can be seen from the fact that the head of the department for national spatial planning, Niels Østergård, introduced the ESDP work in 1993 under the title “European 2018” in an information leaflet for Danish Planners. He discusses the CSD decision, taken in Liège (1993), to intensify European

co-operation on spatial planning by developing a common development perspective. Furthermore, he explains that Denmark, the Netherlands, France and Germany already have such development perspectives and that the countries around the Baltic Sea are already working on a comparable/corresponding development perspective. (Østergård 1993:2) Despite the title, which makes it sound like the Danish report is to be exported, Østergård does not mention Denmark's role in the process, e.g. that Denmark together with the Netherlands, France and Germany asked for a European spatial vision at the forth CSD meeting in Lisbon. (Faludi and Waterhout 2002)

Denmark and European Spatial Planning Policy

Both VASAB 2010 and ESDP had developed considerably further when the next national planning report, *Denmark and European Spatial Planning Policy (Danmark og europæisk planpolitik)* was presented in March 1997. This time the very title highlights the European dimension of this planning report. The image or metaphor for Denmark, "a green room in the European house", presented in this report underlines the ambition of international spatial positioning, as well as the aim of making this document a central Danish document for further European co-operation. The report makes also extensive references to the ESDP process (Miljø- og Energiministeriet 1997). The goals for spatial development of this Danish report mirror exactly the policy guidelines of the ESDP document that would be presented in the first official draft of the ESDP document three months later, in June 1997, in Noordwijk. Indeed, it was with some pride that the Danish representatives presented and distributed an English version of their national planning report at the informal ministerial meeting in Noorddijk.

Despite the focus on the ESDP document and integration of the ESDP aims into the Danish aims, another source of inspiration for this Danish report cannot be overlooked. The wording and the structure of the 1997 planning report are identical with those of the VASAB 2010 document. As already indicated above the personnel working on the VASAB and the ESDP overlapped. These people were in any case representatives of the national planning level and thus also in contact with national planning. Because of time overlaps in the preparation of VASB 2010, the ESDP document and the Danish national planning report, the question of which influenced which is a chicken-and-egg problem. It illustrates once again the common discourse and the phase of creating a hegemonic project.

VASAB 2010 (adopted in 1994)	Danish National Planning Report, March 1997	ESDP policy guidelines (presented in the Noordwijk document in June 1997)
Pearls (system of cities and urban settlements)	Points (balances urban pattern)	A more balanced system of cities and a new urban-rural relationship
Strings (inter-linking infrastructure)	Lines (environmentally friendly accessibility)	More parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge
Patches (selected types of non-urban areas of distinct qualities)	Expanses/patches (Natural and cultural heritage through comprehensive landscape planning)	Prudent management and development of Europe's natural and cultural heritage
The system (planning institutions, rules and procedures promoting the pearls, strings and patches)	National Planning Policy	

Figure 4: Danish Planning in the Light of VASAB and ESDP
(own presentation)

In general, the 1997 national planning report reflects the fact that Denmark is active in a number of trans-national planning projects, e.g. around the North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat and Øresund. The main projects are the Baltic Sea Co-operation and the ESDP process, each of which to a certain extent compete with the other as regards shaping the hegemonic project.

Regarding the Baltic Sea Co-operation the report underlines that Denmark will actively participate in carrying out activities decided upon in the VASAB Action Programme "From Vision to Action", adopted at the fourth conference of ministers responsible for spatial planning and development in Stockholm 1996. Both here, as well as in the VASAB 2010 Plus process and in Interreg IIC, Denmark has been active.

The 1997 national planning report underlines statements in an article on the Baltic Sea Co-operation in a communication to Danish Planners in 1995: It is necessary not only to think nationally, but also to put national planning in a European context. (Mehlbye 1995:6) The author of this article, Peter Mehlbye, was deeply involved in preparing the 1997 national planning report and afterwards became a national

expert with the EU Commission (1997-2000) where he was in charge of ESDP tasks at DG Regio. One may speculate whether the spatial planning symbols and icons to be found in the 1997 Danish report went more or less unconsciously with him and so gave birth to the policy icons of the final ESDP document. Apart from this personal link, the Danish members of the CSD repeatedly emphasised the necessity of maps and illustrations. Maps were, however, politically highly sensitive and in the end the CSD agreed on using icons or vignettes, similar to the Danish national planning report of 1997.

Local identity and new challenges

Whatever the origin of the ESDP policy icons, they found their way into the 2000 Danish national planning report, Local identity and new challenges (*Lokal identitet og nye udfordringer*). A first glance at the report gives the impression that its main focus is on reconciling physical planning and regional economic development. Not only are the major features regional development, local competitiveness and co-operation on business development, but it also states clear aims to make a contribution to a constructive dialogue on regional policy, namely on regional development and physical planning (Miljø- og Energiministeriet 2000d:5). All this does not come as a surprise; this planning report is labelled as:

Denmark's vision of how environmental, economic and sociocultural factors can be better coordinated within a specific national and local geographical context with optimum interaction between various private and public actors. (Miljø- og Energiministeriet 2000:back cover)

In this national planning report the European dimension seems to be almost forgotten. A deeper look reveals, however, that the European dimension built up in the foregoing two national planning reports (1992 and 1997) has anything but disappeared. "Balanced development throughout Denmark" is the main feature running through this report, which at least mirrors the ESDP aim of balanced spatial development. In the case of Denmark "balanced spatial development" also comprises the designation of two new national centres, namely the Trekant Region and Mid-West Centre, which are given prominence in the Danish urban-system hierarchy. The two new national centres are a contribution towards a more polycentric urban system and a strengthening of the national centres to counterbalance the all-too-dominant capital region, the Øresund region, the only global player in the Danish urban system. In a similar way e.g. the concepts of rural urban relationships, endogenous

development or accessibility are integrated into the report, with more or less reference to the ESDP. This report thus does not copy ESDP features, as was done in the previous report, but to a certain extent a number of ESDP issues are applied and translated into a Danish context. Another aspect put forward by Gertrud Jørgensen at a conference on Nordic planning in a European perspective in Stockholm⁴⁶, was that Danish national planning reports do not actually replace each other but rather function in the form of layers. She concluded that after two European layers, the need for a layer focusing on genuine Danish conditions was felt. Indeed, the objective of the 2000 report was to go one step deeper into matter in order to see what selected policy option mean when implemented more concretely at national or regional level.

The orientation of this report toward regional policy may also represent increased influence gained by Danish regional policy, or it may be just another indication of the shifts of planning-ideology identified by Jensen (1999 and 2000 as well as Jensen and Jørgensen 2000). It is, however, related to the co-operation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

At local and regional levels the ESDP was acknowledged at an early stage. In December 1997, only a couple of months after the Noordwijk ESDP draft, the municipal plan for Copenhagen 1997 was presented. It contains a separate chapter on developments in Europe, where with reference to the ESDP the urban system, accessibility and natural and cultural heritage in Europe are described as contexts for planning in Copenhagen. This chapter is illustrated with maps presented early on during the ESDP process.

Between planning, environmental and regional policy

I believe that increasing the co-ordination of regional policy and spatial planning is the way forward in Denmark and for Europe as a whole, to find creative and improved solutions to challenges of the future in regional and local planning. (Miljø- og Energiministeriet 2000e:5)

These are the concluding words of Svend Auken, then Danish Minister for Environment and Energy, in the preface to the English version of the national planning report 2000.

During the last decades in most sectors we can witness an increasing concern for broader cross-sectoral approaches. This tendency

⁴⁶ Gertrud Jørgensen from the Danish Forest and Landscape Research Institute and gave a presentation on *Danish National Spatial Planning: Shifts to a Spatial Policy of Difference* at the conference *Nordic Planning Meets Europe*, held in Stockholm, 21 August 2000.

leads both to a growing convergence of sectors such as physical planning, environmental protection and regional policy, and to an increasing awareness of spatial planning as comprised of elements from all these three sectors.

The following discussion highlights a number of tendencies regarding the mutual incorporation of physical planning and regional policy on the one hand physical planning and environmental protection on the other.

Regional policy and national planning

Regional policy in Denmark is a rather difficult issue, as all central government incentive schemes were terminated in the budget negotiations in 1989.⁴⁷ Since that time the main components of spatial economic policy have been regional and local initiatives supplemented by EU Structural Funds (Halkier 2000:221), and regional policy was subsumed under the larger heading of business support measures. (Aalbu et al. 1999:26) This picture reflects the still valid high degree of decentralisation in Denmark, but the central government made a new entry in spatial economic policies in 1999. Previously the Ministry of Trade and Industry was solely responsible for regional policy, focusing mainly on business policy, but the Ministry of the Interior made its entrance and presented in the years 2000 and 2001 national regional policy reports (Indenrigsministeriet 2000 and 2001).

In the conclusions of the national regional policy report 2001, knowledge and co-ordination are emphasised as key elements of regional policy. According to the government's understanding numerous sector policies will often accord well with the goals of regional balance and development, although there will be conflicting interests which have to be weighed carefully and co-ordination with regional considerations needs to be taken into account within the individual sectors.

At the same time as the Ministry of the Interior is entering the field of regional policy, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has an interest in the field of national spatial planning, especially because of its

⁴⁷ "Several factors underlie these decisions: unemployment in Copenhagen increased to the same level as the national average; general budgetary problems created a strain on public expenditure; and 'market-based' solutions were generally favoured. The political case of preferential treatment for peripheral regions through highly visible forms of financial support was undermined and regional policy was subsumed under the larger heading of business support measures. Developing the competitiveness of Danish firms became the primary objective of central government policy, implying promotion of growth in both the stronger and weaker regions of the country. There is still a budget for regional policies with funding for measures directed towards the weakest parts of the country and co-funding from EU Structural Funds and a zone for business aid is defined, but there are no permanent geographically differentiated support schemes for business." (Aalbu et al 1999:25-26)

involvement in various EU programmes, e.g. representatives of the ministry took an active part in the programming of the Interreg IIIB programme for the Baltic Sea Region. Here the Danish national delegation to the trans-national steering committee consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the regional level. Furthermore, Jensen (1999:208) points out that that the Ministry of Trade and Industry represented Denmark in the first European meetings concerning European Spatial Planning Co-operation, which led to the ESDP document.

Interrelations between regional or business policy and physical or spatial planning have existed in Denmark ever since. The development of national physical planning in Denmark was interestingly enough an offshoot of regional policy questions. As illustrated above, the debate on an unequal, unbalanced Denmark (*et skævt Danmark*) was the kick-off for national physical planning in the 1950s. Even today, a strong orientation towards regional economic policies can also be found in the 2000 national planning report which is focusing on the interaction between spatial planning and business development, as well as transport and the environment. There it states:

Spatial planning that considers the regional business structure can help to create economically robust regions that are environmentally sustainable. Closer interaction between business development and spatial planning can both strengthen strategies for business development and ensure that spatial planning is more dynamic and oriented towards the future. (Miljø- og Energiministeriet 2000:6)

Regarding the relationship between national planning and EU Structural Funds, as early as 1989 the national planning report refers to them as a pre-condition for the expected positive effects of the Single European Market. (Miljøministeriet 1989:38) Understandably enough, the Structural Funds have repeatedly made their entrance in various national planning reports. Jensen (1999:212) concludes that national planning, because of its internationalisation, also focuses on topics of relevance for EU institutions and EU financial instruments.

As already mentioned, spatial economic or regional policy is rather weak in Denmark, but both actors within regional policy and spatial economic policy have a more or less explicit involvement in the planning sector and the planning sector is increasingly underlining its interest in the spatial economic development. Perhaps one could suggest, with only slight exaggeration, that the strategic thinking of economic spatial policy

shifted from regional policy to spatial planning in the beginning of the 1990s – from a policy sector equipped with financial means to a policy sector based on visions and persuasion?

Environmental protection and national planning

Both national planning and environmental protection policies lie with the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Although they lie within different departments of the ministry, a certain minimum of mutual influence can hardly be denied.

Regarding the integration of environmental issues in national planning policies, Jensen (1999) points out that during the 1990s environment became more of an issue in planning. Perhaps the clearest example is to be found in the 1997 national planning report, developing the policy image of Denmark as a green room in the European house (Mijlø- og Energiministeriet 1997). However, even in the 1992 national planning report, Denmark is labelled as a clean country in Europe, at the leading edge in environmental issues. This report is actually part of the follow-up of the ministry's report on the environmental situation in Denmark (Mijlø- og Energiministeriet 1992a and 1992b). Both reports illustrate that environmental issues are increasingly becoming an integral part of Denmark's national planning reports. Not only these specific cases, but the planning system in general and also the planning act illustrate an increasing environmental orientation.

Implementation of environmental priorities is seen as a main, common purpose of the planning system. In fact, the Planning Act, the Nature Protection Act and the Environmental Protection Act have the same common objective of: "... protecting the country's nature and environment so that sustainable development of society with respect to people's living conditions and for the conservation of wild life and vegetation is secured". This means environmental priorities are highly incorporated within the planning system and the system of land-use control. (EC1999b:22)

The environmental sector also casts a watchful eye over developments in other sectors, such as e.g. the planning sector. The Brundtland Report, published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, was significant in providing an important rationale for policy goals pursued. (Andersen 1997a:268) In the aftermath, policy integration became a topic for environmental policy making in the 1990s. This involved introducing economic instruments into environmental policies, and the Ministries of Energy and Transport were required to draw up plans for sustainable development and CO₂ reduction. (Andersen 1997:a 256-257) The involvement of other ministries illustrates the fact that,

although the Ministry of Environment and Energy is a relatively important ministry, most of the sector policies are in the hands of sector ministries. (Andersen 1997a:258)

Although Danish environmental policy does not primarily focus on spatial planning, integration between both sectors is a fact. Firstly, a wide variety of land-use issues concern both sectors, as e.g. windmills, industry and traffic corridors or environmental protection areas. Secondly, national physical planning focused clearly on environmental issues during the 1990s.

The development of increasingly cross-sectoral approaches in the field of spatial planning and development illustrates how the basic differences of the ideological goals of equality/balance and competition are carried into the planning sector, namely through the relationship between economic growth and environmental management. Jensen (1999:207) concludes that the ideals of the Brundtland report have been incorporated into planning discourse based on the idea of qualitative growth.

Summary and conclusions

This review of the Danish planning system illustrates, on the one hand, the strong position and close links to political electoral processes which planning has in Denmark and, on the other hand, the mutual influences of Danish national and trans-national European spatial planning.

Regarding Denmark's trans-national orientation it should be kept in mind that the Danish reluctance towards EU policy can be explained by a certain scepticism towards supranationalism. This might be one of the reasons why Denmark has, in the 1990s, embarked upon a policy of building a sphere of influence in the Baltic Sea Region and thus may have drawn some attention and resources away from the EU and towards Baltic co-operation.

In general, Denmark is an active planner, active both in the field of planning of its own territory and regarding its involvement in trans-national planning projects. Compared to other Nordic countries, the planning sector has a strong position in the competition between spatial economic or regional policy and spatial or physical planning policy.

A Nordic country bent on planning

Spatial planning in Denmark is embedded in a rich cultural context and shaped. Thus e.g. Denmark's corporatist tradition is closely connected to the development of the welfare state. In a symbiotic way both welfare state ideology and consensus orientation mark Danish planning to such an

extent that today's urban pattern in Denmark can be characterised as a result of corporatist planning and policy making.

The tradition of local self-government leads to a high degree of decentralisation and a finely tuned relationship between strong partners at national, regional and municipal level. The basic idea is to solve tasks at the lowest possible level with decision-making placed as close to the citizen as tasks allow. Regarding spatial planning, this means that national planning only to a limited extent functions in a classical top-down manner. The guiding role of the national level is exercised by a so-called framework control principle which implies that plans at a lower level must not contradict planning decisions at higher level.

In the field of spatial planning, Danish involvement in the Baltic Sea Region is mainly expressed in the high status accorded to the VASAB co-operation by the Ministry of Environment and Energy. It is, however, not valid to infer from this that the ESDP process was not appreciated or desired by Denmark; it was Denmark together with France, Germany and the Netherlands who proposed the preparation of a spatial vision for the EU territory at the meeting of EU ministers responsible for spatial planning in Lisbon 1992. Apart from that Denmark kept a low profile as regards influencing the ESDP debate, but it worked hard on Europeanising Danish planning.

Danish applications – First out in Europe!

As early as 1989 the national planning report got a European touch with its references to EC's regional policy and the recently created Structural Funds. In 1992, the same year as the VASAB and ESDP processes were launched, the Ministry of Environment and Energy presented a national planning report with a clear-cut European profile and ambitions of spatial positioning. The timing of a national planning report with a European focus could hardly have been better for achieving international acknowledgement.

The ambition of spatial positioning actually reached a peak in the next national planning report of 1997, called *Denmark and European Spatial Planning Policy*. This report creates the image or metaphor of "a green room in the European house" for Denmark and thus underlines the aim of making this document a central Danish text for further European co-operation. Although published three months before the first official draft of the ESDP document was presented in Noordwijk, the report mirrors exactly the goals of what was then a still forthcoming ESDP draft.

The national planning report of 2000 presents a rather low ESDP or European profile. However, a number of ESDP features can be

identified as being incorporated in the national aspects. The report actually represents an approach to cross-sectoral thinking and reconciling the ideologies of the development economy, balanced planning and environmental protection advocated in the ESDP document.

From physical planning to cross-sectoral spatial planning

The orientation of planning towards economic spatial development also has to do with the weak position of Danish regional policy, as all government incentive schemes were terminated in the budget negotiations in 1989. Furthermore, there seems to be no strategic documents giving a comprehensive picture of the spatial economic situation in Denmark with regard to development goals and policies. Only with the regional development policy reports of 2000 and 2001 do such documents begin to emerge. In the meantime, however, national planning reports filled the gap. As a result, the clear-cut, spatial economic development character of the year 2000 national planning report can either be understood as an attempt to defend this situation or it can be seen as welcoming the approach of the Ministry of the Interior and inviting dialogue.

Regarding the relation of physical planning and environmental policy, national planning policy has begun to integrate environmental issues to an increasing extent during the 1990s. There are thus increasing cross-sectoral ambitions working towards a reconciliation of the various sectors into a comprehensive, even holistic, spatial view and with the planning sector clearly the strongest sector and actor.

Planning a room in the European house

Although Denmark is often seen as a hesitant EU Member State, in the field of spatial planning it might rather be called an enthusiastic one – at least in a Nordic context. Denmark both contributes to trans-national planning in the European house and clearly takes messages from the European debate seriously and applies them. The Europeanization of national planning has been effected not the least to use national planning for spatial positioning in Europe, under the key word “a green room in the European house”.

These developments are also related to the close interlinkage of planning and politics and the rather strong position of the planning sector in Denmark as compared e.g. to regional policy. It is also a product of a planning system which is used to subsidiarity and a softer application of top-down steering.

Perhaps developments in the field of spatial planning can be understood as a forerunner or as a clear sign of the trend-shift regarding European integration which Pedersen (1996) identified at the beginning

of the 1990s. In that case, although the bridge between Denmark and Germany may never be built, spatial planning and its European approach could serve as an effective bridgehead. Or was it simply the intergovernmental character of the ESDP that made the Danes more than just a hesitant member, and encouraged them instead to be both an active partner and even a European forerunner in applying its policies?

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Nordic co-operation

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