

Report of the inaugural meeting of the  
international working group (IAK) on

## **Land Policies**

of the Academy for Territorial Development in the Leibniz-Association (ARL)

**Ústí nad Labem, 17 February 2020**

### **1 Introduction**

The IAK met on the sidelines of the international conference on "Planning, Law, and Property Rights" in Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic on February 17, 2020. During the meeting, the IAK discussed in an interactive format the substantive land policy challenges, starting from housing, land thrift and densification, discussed how to work together and defined next steps. The working atmosphere was very good and all of our colleagues are highly motivated and enthusiastic. It was a successful kick-off of the ARL IAK on land policy.

In addition:

- The results so far (especially from exploratory workshop in August 2019) were presented and discussed during the PLPR conference in Ústí nad Labem (CZ). Thomas Hartmann presented the work of the IAK in the roundtable on "Land Take" at this year's conference on Planning, Law, and Property Rights, and the topic was discussed in particular from the perspective of land thrift. The roundtable was organized by the UFZ based on research in the SURFACE project by UBA.
- A scientific abstract entitled "Land thrift, housing, and densification - international perspectives on strategies of land policy" was submitted for the conference "Sustainable & Resilient Urban-Rural Partnerships International Conference" in Leipzig, November 25 - November 27, 2020. Here, explicit reference is made to the work of the IAK and the ARL (authors: Thomas Hartmann & Andreas Hengstermann).

### **2 The meeting**

The meeting took place on the evening before the conference from 5 to 8 p.m. Ms. Gustedt welcomed everyone present via Skype and explained the importance of the IAK for the work of the ARL. The 11 participants from 10 different countries have each discussed from their national perspective challenges of land policy, based on the findings of the earlier workshop in Mannheim. Some Full Members and some Associate Members were present. That way, most countries were represented (except Finland and Sweden). Two members of the Advisory Board also attended the

meeting (Prof. Dr. Benjamin Davy, Prof. Dr. Tejo Spit). This turned out to be extraordinarily useful because the Advisory Board helped a lot to classify and reflect the discussion accordingly.

It would make sense to be able to invite the Advisory Board to the next meetings as far as possible - however, this requires a corresponding budget.

### 3 Debates and results

Besides clarifications of procedural questions, the inaugural meeting already initiated several content-related debates, they concerned the terminology and concepts used, and stakeholders involved.

#### 3.1 In search for a common language – the term “land policy”

One of the first results of the meeting is that the term „land policy” itself is used differently in different countries. In the Netherlands, land policy refers to a specific form of municipal land development, whereas in Switzerland the term is used in a much broader way to describe an understanding of roles beyond the traditional land-use planning. The German understanding of linking the term closely to the question of availability of land, seems to be somewhere in between. In the UK however (the only country represented where English is the official language), the term does not exist in planning practice at all. In order to successfully work on land policy, it became clear that the IAK needs to develop a common understanding of land policy.

It has been decided to put the issue of the definition on the agenda for the next meeting. As the entire IAK’s work takes German land policy in the centre and reflects on it from different perspectives, a definition will be taken that is anchored to the German understand of Land Policy. In addition, different other definitions shall be collected in a working paper to already work out peculiarities of German land policy debate and to ensure links to scientific literature.



Interactive discussion on terminology and relevant topics of land policy

### 3.2 Topics of land policy - a broad field

The debate at the explorative workshop in Mannheim centred around the three main issues of housing, land thrift and densification. One of the results of that discussion was to broaden the debate. So during the meeting in Ústí nad Labem, important topics for land policy have been identified in an interactive session. The following lists of important aspects and issues of land policy has been generated (sorted in order of importance for the debate).

Content of land policies:

- Housing: How to supply (land for) housing in general for growing demands, but also how to provide affordable/social housing
- Land thrift (respectively urban sprawl): How to protect agricultural and/or natural land(scapes) and curb urban development
- Environmental challenges: Climate change adaption, resilient spatial development, retrofitting residential areas, re-usage of former industrial areas
- Availability of land for public policy purposes in general: how to provide land for flood risk management, infrastructure etc.
- Land value capturing: How to deal with economics of land, such as land value, land taxation, but also land devaluation in shrinking areas.

Processes of land policies

- Governance on and in planning and land policy: On different tiers, with regulation in building codes, etc.

Context of land policies:

- Understanding property rights systems in their specific contexts (such as restitution law in Eastern and Central European Countries)
- Understanding and governing the central role of land for many policy fields and the different disciplinary shaped perspectives on land (such as planning, law, policy and economic to name a few only).

So, the session confirmed that housing and land thrift are indeed pressing issues. However, land policy is linked to many other fields. The question of how to make land available for public proposes and public policy goals can be seen as common baseline in many current challenges of planning.



**Constructive discussions on land policy**

### **3.3 Land policy, who...**

... and for whom? Land policy is enacted and influenced by a huge variety of stakeholders – beyond spatial planning. It was discussed to explore the roles and influences of different stakeholders in land policy – including banks, investors, developers, planners, landowners etc. A first idea of how to conduct the analysis was developed. This will be further discussed in future meetings.

## **4 Products**

The IAK also discussed potential products and ways to work in the next years. In particular the idea of a book series has been discussed and how to engage in land policy practice in Germany.

### **4.1 Book series in land policies in Europe**

The IAK aims at working towards a book series on European land policies. This aim has been critically discussed. The IAK sees potential for the book series and embraces the idea, but the members also agree that it is important that it links to existing research and literature to contribute to fill a gap. The 1993 comparative work by University of Dortmund in cooperation with the Bundesministerium für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau (BMRBS) was mentioned as a frontrunner project, though it is outdated nowadays. Working towards a newer and also broader version of this has been discussed as an option. One of the next steps for the chair and vice-chair of the IAK is to identify the knowledge gap to steer the IAK in the direction of a successful book series. Although the book series focus will be on land policies, other more planning-related publications need to be considered, such as the ESPON Compendium, the work of ISOCARP, the OECD reports and some others. In conclusion, the book series and its content will evolve over time

during the meetings – it will be complementary to existing publications and contribute to fill a knowledge gap.

#### **4.2 Transdisciplinarity in practice**

The IAK is eager to embrace transdisciplinarily and therefore want to link with practical institution in land policy in Germany. Germany will then serve as a reference case to reflect upon the respective land policies in the other countries. Therefore, the meetings will be organized in close cooperation with partner institutions (cooperation partners of the IAK). This approach also strengthened the practical relevance of the IAK's work.

#### **5 Next Steps**

As a strategic decision, it was decided to put German Land Policy in the central focus of the IAK's work and link other experiences in relation to Germany. E.g. for the next meeting a German definition will be used as reference point.

A link will be established with another ARL activity around "Flächenkreislaufwirtschaft". Potentials for collaboration will be explored at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be organized in collaboration with the German Association of Cities (Deutscher Städtetag) and potentially another institution. It will take place in Cologne and Bonn on **31. August - 2.Sept. 2020**. More information will follow soon – all involved partners are invited to save the date already.

## Colophon

This is an internal document of the ARL IAK Land Policies. For future reference and questions, please contact the organizers or the German Academy of Spatial Planning and Research.

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