



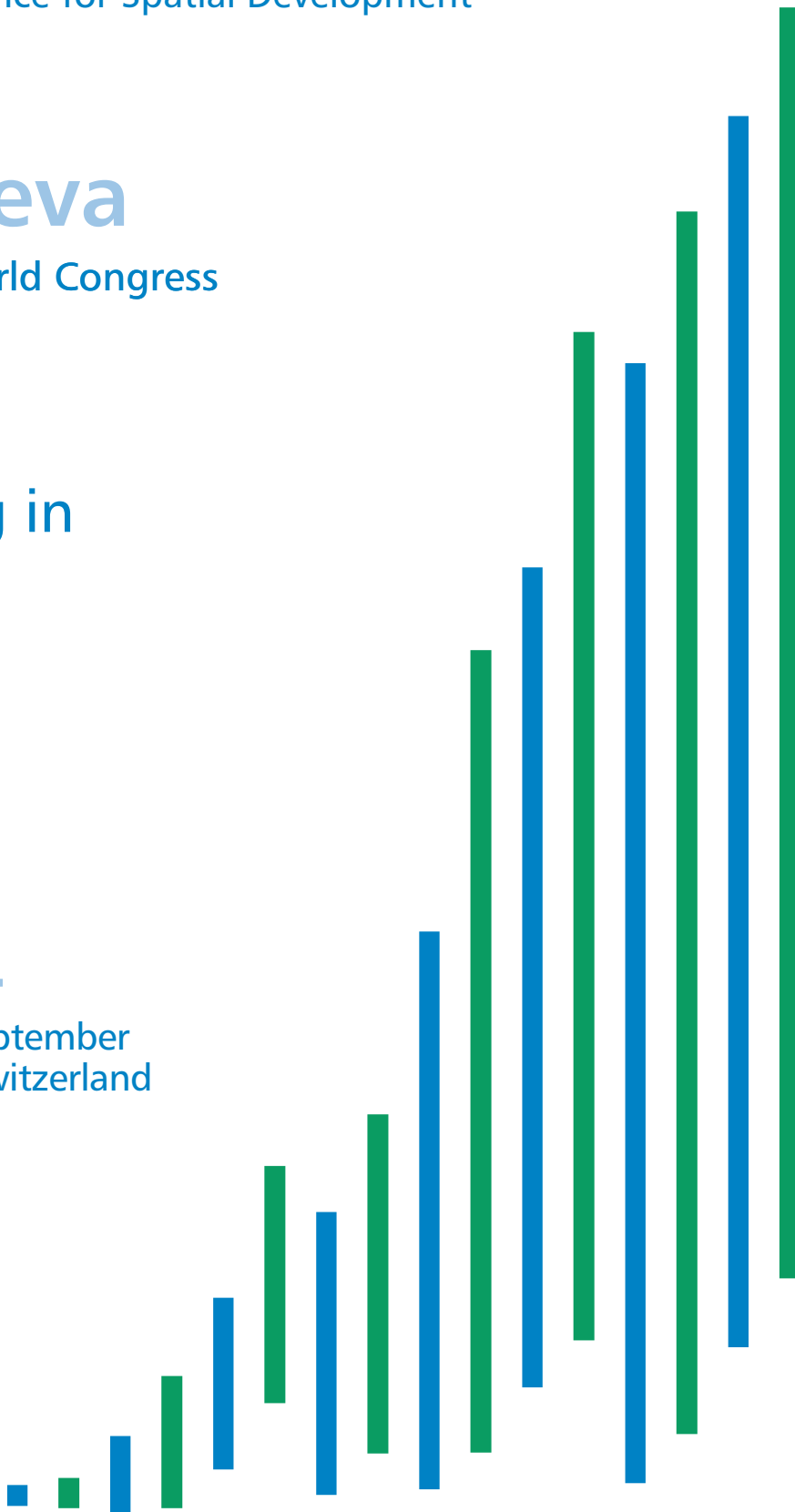
Special Bulletin

International Society of City and Regional Planners
Federal Office for Spatial Development

Geneva 40th World Congress

Spatial planning in Switzerland

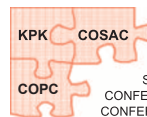
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Federal Office for Spatial Development



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Editor

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Editorial office

Rolf Signer, (ISoCaRP)
Martin Vinzens, (ARE)

Translation

French: Laurent Auberson, Florence Torre Rubio
German: Susanne Alpiger, contra-punto: Helen Glaser
English: bmp translations ag: Jane Catterall

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Spatial planning in Switzerland

40th World Congress of ISoCaRP –
International Society of City and
Regional Planners in Geneva



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*Prof. Dr. Pierre-Alain Rumley
Director of Swiss Federal Office for
Spatial Development ARE*

Urban Switzerland – the challenges of spatial planning policy

This publication has been occasioned by the 40th World Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP) in Geneva. We are eager to provide our foreign guests – who include professional planners, economists and authority representatives – with an impression of spatial development and spatial planning policies in Switzerland. With urban development topping the conference agenda, it is only appropriate to give this issue particular prominence in our brochure.

The population of Switzerland currently stands at 7.4 million. With a geographical area of 42'000 km², the country is small compared to its neighbours. Given that a mere 30 percent of this is amenable to development, the strong pressure from competing and, in some cases, conflicting land use demands is hardly surprising. Hence the need for clear-sighted control and co-ordination strategies in urban and transport planning.

Before you delve into the individual articles, I should like to familiarize you with a few key features of the Swiss planning framework. Spatial development in Switzerland is federally organized. In its spatial planning act, the Swiss Confederation outlines targets and principles along with key procedures and tools that are designed to ensure a rational use of land and appropriate settlement growth. The responsibility for implementing these provisions lies with the 26 cantons and 2'780 municipalities.

The amended Federal Constitution, as adopted by the Swiss population in a referendum in 1999, now gives considerable weight to two key issues of significance to spatial development. The first concerns the commitment to sustainable development, while the second centres on the Confederation's closer collaboration with the towns/cities and agglomerations and the federal assistance provided for co-operation within the agglomerations.

What changes has urban Switzerland undergone?

While the clear-cut distinction between construction and construction-free zones provided by planning legislation has nipped in the bud many potentially flawed planning developments, it failed to stem the urban sprawl of the 1980s and 1990s. The upshot is a still-expanding hotchpotch of settlements in the Swiss central plateau, coupled with a proliferation



of private motorised transport above all, as well as high operation and maintenance costs for infrastructure, severe pollution and the blighting of landscapes and scenery – our key tourist attraction.

The three large metropolitan areas of Zurich, Geneva/Lausanne and Basel have become key commercial centres in Switzerland. This is due, in large part, to the outstanding private motorised and public transport infrastructure provided at these locations. The Swiss metropolitan areas are small compared to those in other countries. Indeed, one striking feature of urban Switzerland is that it comprises a multitude of small and medium-sized towns or cities with catchment areas extending ever farther into their rural surroundings.

73 percent of the population currently lives in towns, cities or conurbations. At 82 percent, the proportion of jobs located in these areas is even greater. The high priority attached to mobility is exacerbating traffic problems, especially in the larger agglomerations.

In the wake of deindustrialisation, Swiss industry has withdrawn from the urban realm. Quite apart from the general decline in industrial employment, the migration of jobs from the urban centres to the areas surrounding the cities and conurbations is one reason for the many disused industrial sites. In fact, together, the unused and underused industrial sites in Switzerland account for an area the size of the city of Geneva. Unique opportunities beckon for the

promotion of «inward» urban development and enhancement of civic amenity through suitable regeneration schemes.

Tackling new challenges

The lifestyle of the population has changed radically, blurring the once clear distinction between urban and rural space. Mass mobility has triggered a shift in shopping and leisure patterns. Higher demands are placed on dwelling space and the quality of the living environment. The division of work between the sexes is changing. The population is growing and, above all, ageing. Towns and cities are increasingly facing the consequences and needs of a multi-cultural population.

The steady growth in traffic volumes and continuing high land take for urban development fly in the face of all sustainability precepts. The overriding challenge is to check the sprawling expansion of conurbations and safeguard civic amenity in the built environment to make room for space that offers genuine quality of life. With its agglomeration policy, the Swiss Confederation aims to usher in a new strategy of collaboration and inward urban development.

Only attractive, vibrant metropolitan areas and urban regions can hold their own in face of global locational competition. These drivers of the Swiss economy need to be protected and strengthened.

Yet these broad-brush issues contrast with localised institutional structures in a country that exhibits enormous political and cultural diversity. This will pose a stiff test for a national planning system run on federal principles.

At the same time, Switzerland is not an island within Europe. The integration of the Swiss urban network in the European system of metropolitan areas and the cultivation of cross-border collaboration are key planning policy objectives.

Outlined above are some of the principal challenges confronting urban Switzerland today and tomorrow. Through our spatial development strategies, we seek to shape the future in such a way as to safeguard the options of coming generations.

The 40th ISoCaRP World Congress is being held in one of Switzerland's most beautiful cities. I wish those attending a stimulating and rewarding time and hope the event will receive a warm reception from planners, architects, urbanists, authority representatives, companies, students and the general public.

Spatial planning in Switzerland



Inhabitants (2000)	town center	agglomeration
Zürich	363 273	1 080 728
Genève	177 964	645 608
Basel	166 558	731 167
Bern	128 634	349 096
Lausanne	124 914	311 441

Sources: INFOPLAN-ARE, GEOSTAT-BFS, SABE, © ARE

1. Comprehensive planning and co-ordination obligation for all authorities

The new article on spatial planning, incorporated in the Federal Constitution in 1969, transferred responsibility for framework spatial planning legislation to the Confederation. However, practical planning implementation was to remain essentially a matter for the cantons, which in turn often delegate a number of tasks to the municipalities (local authorities). In addition to this federal framework legislation, the Confederation promotes and co-ordinates the spatial planning of the cantons and also takes into consideration the «demands» of spatial planning in its own activities.

However, the reality of Swiss spatial planning is not as simple as stated in the article of the Constitution. In fact, Confederation, cantons and municipalities are jointly responsible for ensuring economical land use. They do this, inter alia, by harmonizing their activities which have spatial impact and «implementing planning which is orientated towards the desired development of the country». In detail, the tasks of the Law on Spatial Planning are distributed as follows:

2. The spatial planning tasks of the Confederation

2.1 Framework legislation

In the matter of legislation, the Confederation must limit itself to laying down principles. The principles may indeed touch on the whole range of spatial planning tasks, but should not deal with the subjects in depth. However, the Confederation may regulate in detail particularly important areas which are key for the whole of Switzerland, such as the implementation of the principle of the separation of building zones and non-building zones as laid down in the Constitution.

Federal law principles relate in particular to

- the aims and planning principles which must be considered for any spatial planning;
- the planning instruments and related rules of procedure;
- those individual questions which are central for the overall functioning of spatial planning, such as the permit obligation for all buildings and installations, the size of building zones, exceptional

permission for building outside building zones and ensuring the infrastructure provision of building land.

2.2 Promotion and co-ordination of cantonal spatial planning

Co-operation of the Confederation with the cantons is a central postulate of co-operative federalism. The Confederation promotes and co-ordinates the spatial planning of the cantons first and foremost through the aforementioned framework legislation and through the approval of cantonal structure plans. However, it also has a duty to co-ordinate its own tasks with the spatial planning of the cantons. Important instruments for this are the basic studies drawn up by the Confederation and its planning instruments, the sectoral strategies and sectoral plans. An example to illustrate the necessity for a sectoral plan is provided by the aviation sector: The Sectoral Plan for Aviation Infrastructure is intended to achieve the necessary co-ordination with the spatial planning of the cantons. The sectoral plan is not directly binding on private individuals, but lays down how the Confederation should make use of its decision-making scope when issuing permits and licences under aviation law.

2.3 Taking account of spatial planning when fulfilling federal tasks

When fulfilling the tasks conferred on it, the Confederation is also bound by the aims and principles of spatial planning. Therefore, at all levels of action – planning, legislation, administration, case-law – it remains subject to spatial planning law itself. Being tied to the «demands» of spatial planning also means that the Confederation is bound by cantonal law and the planning studies based on it unless exempted by special provisions. Finally, approval of cantonal structure plans by the Confederation ensures that cantonal spatial planning does not unlawfully hinder the Confederation from fulfilling its duties.

3. The spatial planning tasks of the cantons

According to the text of the Federal Constitution, the cantons are responsible for the actual «creation» of spatial planning.

3.1 Spatial planning and building regulations

The cantons enact cantonal implementing legislation for the Federal Law on Spatial Planning. As already mentioned, the federal law lays down only the principles and therefore does not constitute a set of rules which answers all important questions. Cantonal spatial planning and building regulations also contain public building regulations, and often road construction regulations and regulations on building land rationalisation. In simple terms, the cantonal public building regulations are concerned with the requirements for building, the integration and form of buildings as well as for construction, operation and maintenance. In addition, there are rules of procedure. When enacting their spatial planning regulations, the cantons are bound by the aims and principles as well as the instruments of the federal law. This together with the related case-law of the Federal Court allows a certain standardization of planning law. However the spatial planning and building regulations of the cantons differ markedly from each other in the extent of regulation and the terminology.

3.2 Cantonal structure plan

The main planning instrument of the cantons is the structure plan (Richtplan in German, plan directeur in French), which is subject to approval by the Federal Council. The structure plan shows how the many activities of the Confederation, the cantons and the municipalities (local authorities) which have spatial impact are to be harmonized with each other in the area. The structure plan also deals with the question of when and how the public tasks which have spatial impact are to be carried out. This produces a plan binding on the authorities which, in agreement with the Confederation, shows neighbouring cantons and bordering countries how cantonal spatial planning is intended to progress towards the desired spatial development. Depending on the state of planning work, the information may be simply orientations, interim results or firm statements. They may concern public transport networks, nature conservation areas of cantonal importance, sites for waste disposal facilities and the like to name but a few. The cantonal structure plan is therefore not an outline of a «desirable final state» of the cantonal territory, but a process plan for co-ordinating and steering the next stages of spatial development al-



ready underway. A map serves to clarify and define the content of the structure plan. During the course of the structure plan process, inconsistencies and conflicts become clear, which can be resolved in the prescribed spatial planning procedure. Structure plans are constantly adjusted in line with developments and revised at least every ten years.

3.3 Regional planning associations

Large cantons often delegate supramunicipal spatial planning tasks to public-law planning associations (regional planning associations). In the canton Zurich, for example, these draw up regional structure plans, which develop spatial planning on the basis of the structure plan for the whole canton. In Geneva, a structure plan for the Swiss-French metropolitan area is available (*Charte de l'agglomération Franco-Valdo-Genevoise*).

4. Municipal land use planning

Most Swiss cantons have a highly developed municipal federalism. In the spatial planning sector, the following demarcation of responsibility is often undertaken in these cantons: whilst the canton is responsible for structure plans binding on authorities and covering its whole territory, it hands over to the municipalities land use planning binding on

landowners, in particular delimitation of the building area from the non-building area and determination of the type and extent of specific building use in the building zones.

The land use plans (*Nutzungsplan* in German, *plan d'affectation* in French) must meet the provisions of the Federal Law on Spatial Planning. The rules are more detailed here than in the case of cantonal structure plans, because land use planning is assigned the important task of laying down the boundary between building zones and non-building zones. Building zones must respect the planning aims and principles and must not exceed the size laid down in federal law. In addition, the standards of environmental law must increasingly be taken into account. Designation of a building zone requires, for example, that certain noise pollution values are not exceeded. Inextricably linked with the specification of building zones is the task that these should then be serviced for development and made ready for building. The restriction of building to building zones only makes sense if the latter marked out for the needs of fifteen years ahead and are made ready for building in appropriate stages. Another task of the municipalities is the financing of building land infrastructure provision. It is a matter for the cantons or municipalities to regulate this. Landowners are usually involved in the financing of building land

infrastructure provision with contributions. Municipal land use planning should not simply cover the building zone but should also include the area outside the building zone. Zones with particular purposes can be designated there (e.g. disposal of material, small village zones, ski slopes etc.). Designation of protected zones based on landscape planning is also imperative in most cases.

Since municipalities have considerable decision-making scope, they draw up overall concepts and municipal structure plans for their area as the basis for land use planning and co-ordination with their other public tasks.

The tasks of cantonal structure planning and municipal land use planning are interlinked in a variety of ways. In this sense, one can talk about a dual hierarchy in cantonal spatial planning:

- Even though the municipalities are responsible for land use planning, they must respect the plans of the higher state level.
- Swiss planning instruments provide for various levels: the structure plan binding on the authorities sets requirements for land use planning binding on landowners and this in turn usually limits the possibilities of the even more detailed special land use plans which often regulate very specific building projects (also called «Gestaltungsplan», «Überbauungsordnung», «Bebauungsplan» [local plan]).

Most cantons delegate the tasks of infrastructure provision for building land, building land rationalisation and issuing building permits to the municipi-

palities. The permit responsibility of the municipalities for buildings outside the building zones (mostly agricultural land) is ruled out by the Federal Law on Spatial Planning: permits require the approval of a cantonal authority at least.

5. Material planning aims and principles of the Federal Law on Spatial Planning

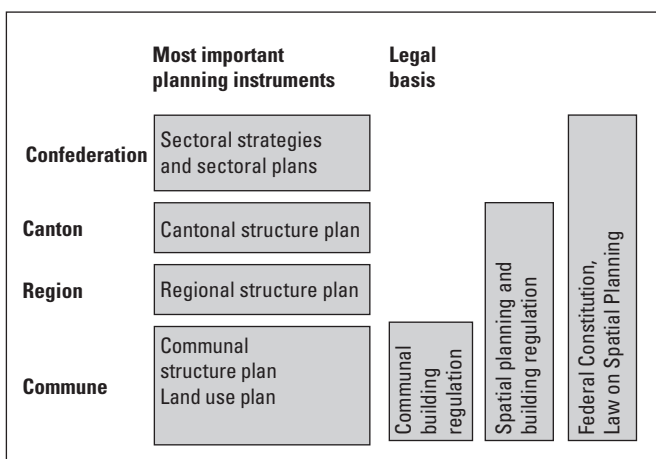
5.1 Economical land use

The Federal Law on Spatial Planning lays down the aims and principles of spatial planning for the whole of Switzerland. Its primary aim is economical use of the limited land area. The importance of this aim can be understood better if one considers that only 30 percent of the comparatively small area of the country of 42'000 km² is suitable for intensive human use. High mountains, forests and water bodies take up a large area. This 30 percent of the land area has to provide adequate space for all needs such as housing, employment, transport, leisure, agriculture, nature conservation etc. The aim of economical land use covers two aspects:

- In view of the continuous and rapid spread of settlements during the last decades, land consumption must be restricted. Agglomeration and change of use in the existing settlement area are central.
- Economical land use, however, also means optimum spatial organisation of the different land uses. Concentration of buildings in a well serviced settlement area ensures economical land use much better than creating small scattered settlements each with its own infrastructure provision.

5.2 Co-ordination requirement

The second aim of Swiss spatial planning is the co-ordination of all activities with spatial impact carried out by the federal, cantonal and municipal authorities. It goes without saying that successful co-ordination contributes towards economical use of land. For example, a lack of co-ordination between the arrangement of residential areas (municipal land use planning) and the building of transport infrastructures (primarily federal planning) can result in neither being used appropriately. A lack of co-ordination therefore leads to plans being impossible to implement and finally to bad investments.



Overview of the planning instruments and the legal basis in Switzerland

5.3 Orientation towards the desired spatial development

The third aim demands that the activities of the authorities which have spatial impact be orientated towards a desired spatial development. The necessary spatial planning concept is laid down at federal level in the «Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines» and at cantonal level in the corresponding «Spatial Development Guidelines» and structure plans. An important element of planning policy expressed there is the orientation towards «decentralized concentration», i.e. a network of compact settlement areas of different sizes. This does not mean settlement development simply in the large agglomerations of the Swiss Plateau. The agglomerations and regional centres in the Alpine valleys also have important potential for growth.

In pursuing these aims, the needs of people and the environment must be considered equally. The forward-looking spatial planning required is thus not simply an instrument for promoting economic development, but also conservation and environmental protection that are precautionary in nature. Spatial planning also makes an important contribution to housing construction policy, to promoting the country's disadvantaged regions, to agricultural policy and to national defence. It is not possible to lay down in law which needs should prevail in case of procedures. The answer must be provided by planning procedures, comprehensive balancing of interests and finally by the subsequent political decisions.

5.4 Planning principles as aids to decision-making

To balance the different spatial planning aims, Art. 3 of the Law on Spatial Planning lays down a number of «planning principles». These are decision-making criteria which are intended to act as a guide to balancing interests. The planning principles do not in themselves form a definitive consistent system, so that they have to be weighed against each other in each individual case.

Planning principles are for instance the preservation of the landscape by e.g. protecting cultivable agricultural land. Furthermore, the arrangement of settlements according to the needs of the inhabitants and limitation of settlements is demanded. This principle should be achieved by appropriate location of homes and workplaces and adequate linking by public transport, for example.

*Fritz Wegelin, Deputy Director of
 Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE
 Fred Baumgartner, Head of Settlements and
 Landscape Section, Swiss Federal Office
 for Spatial Development ARE*

Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines

Issued by the Swiss government in 1996, the Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines provide the national parliament, cantons and general public with an outline of federal policy on spatial development and physical planning.

Background

The Swiss government's planning policy report was based on a highly critical assessment of past urban development trends, in particular the continuing surge in land take and urban sprawl, despite the considerable development reserves available within existing built-up areas. These trends not only prevent the creation of urban amenity, but also inflate the costs of the construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure.

With the growth of agglomerations, many problems regarding transport, pollution and the funding and operation of major facilities require solutions transcending municipal boundaries; successful collaboration between the individual conurbation municipalities thereby becomes a key success factor for the maintenance and improvement of amenity for the population and of locational quality for business.

In rural areas too, the Swiss government views the general direction of spatial development as problematic. At the same time, the underlying framework and trends in rural Switzerland vary substantially from region to region: sprawl and visible signs of environmental strain in tourist areas, multi-functionality of the cultural landscape jeopardized by



- big-city agglomerations of international importance
- agglomerations of national importance
- central urban agglomerations of regional importance
- small urban agglomerations of regional importance
- regional centers
- ▲ large tourism centers
- ◆ foreign centers

Fundamentals of the area planning Switzerland, Berne 1996,
 interlaced city system Switzerland

dramatic shifts in agricultural economics and the steady deterioration of regional economic structures in the peripheral Alpine areas away from tourist centres.

Strategies

The Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines do not enshrine a fixed vision of how the country's built environment and landscape should one day be. Instead, the report sets out a cohesive raft of principles to ensure the consistency of federal policies and measures in planning-related issues.

The concept of an interlinked system of towns/cities and rural areas is fundamental to the planning policy guidelines. Such a network – not confined to transport – is seen as a means of diminishing and alleviating imbalances and potential conflicts of interest between different parts of the country, urban and rural areas, centre and periphery. Sustainability and the unity of Switzerland as a federally organized country, with its immense geographical, cultural and commercial diversity, form the cornerstones of physical planning policy. Key planks in a sustainable approach to spatial development include the more efficient use of existing built-up areas and a focus on inward rather than greenfield development.

The strategies proposed for urban areas are aimed at boosting the appeal of towns, cities and agglomerations as places to live and work. This can only be achieved by a comprehensive regime of urban renewal. An efficient, spatially economical, environmentally friendly transport system, the enhancement of living quality through mixed-use planning and good public transport access, flexibility and adaptability for companies faced with economic shifts – these will be the focus of future agglomeration policies.

In view of the quickening pace of structural change, the Confederation's rural development strategies are geared to the varying potential offered by the central plateau area, Jura arc, Alpine foothills and Swiss Alps. Rural areas need both greater self-sufficiency and efficient links to the national and regional urban centres.

Finally, Switzerland is not an island in Europe: in the context of increasing European integration, the linking-up of the Swiss urban network to the European system of metropolitan areas and the cultivation of

cross-border collaboration are central to spatial planning policy.

Achievements so far

The release of the Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines in 1996 set in motion a wide range of positive developments. Overall, despite many unsolved problems, considerable progress has been achieved on the aforementioned issues. The Swiss Confederation has drawn up and implemented its announced agglomeration policy. Planning-related political issues such as financial equalization and regional policy are undergoing a fundamental overhaul. Considerable headway has been made with the concepts and sectoral plans developed at federal level. Decision-making processes have been simplified and the associated co-ordination improved. The dialogue between partners at federal, cantonal and urban/municipal level has been stepped up and structural planning better co-ordinated, while cross-border collaboration has also intensified. At the same time, progress has been made in reconciling the needs of spatial planning and environmental protection.

Yet, despite this success, many current features of spatial development run counter to the objectives underlying the guidelines: urban sprawl and excessive land take continue to figure prominently. An amorphous hotchpotch of settlements and spiralling traffic volumes are the result. Settlement areas have grown out of all proportion to the rise in population, with no turnaround in sight. Urban development is eating up ever more greenfield land, thus flouting all the economic, environmental and social precepts of sustainability. Moreover, regional discrepancies reminiscent of the post-war years are re-emerging.

The measures adopted to date have been necessary and proper, though in no way adequate to satisfy the constitutional requirement (Art. 75) of ensuring the appropriate and rational use of land and suitable development control. The scope of the available instruments therefore needs to be amended or broadened. For improved control of spatial development, the freedoms enjoyed by municipal planning departments must be underpinned by more binding targets imposed from above. New instruments, such as agglomeration programmes, land take thresholds or market-economy tools, are required.

A spatial planning report, based on an evaluation of the measures and developments to date, will attempt to stimulate discussion by outlining future scenarios along with the various strategic options. Wide-ranging discussions and consultations in 2005 will culminate in a revision of the Planning Policy Guidelines. The new document will need to be more concrete, participative and binding than the current framework if we truly wish to tackle the problem of land consumption and urban sprawl.

*Georg Tobler, Head of Agglomeration Policy
Strategy Group, Swiss Federal Office
for Spatial Development ARE*

Agglomeration policy in Switzerland

Challenges facing urban Switzerland

Just under 75 percent of Switzerland's resident population lives in urban areas¹. The living, business and cultural environment they provide is particularly crucial to the country. Yet, these urban areas are today confronted by a host of problems that are jeopardizing the maintenance and improvement of amenity for the population and locational quality for business.

The Swiss conurbations continue to encroach on rural areas. At the same time, the typical distances between home, workplace and recreational venues are on the rise owing to a combination of economic trends and underpriced mobility. Moreover, social segregation is becoming an increasingly prominent feature of agglomerations. Yet these broad-brush issues contrast with localized institutional structures: agglomerations frequently extend beyond cantonal and national boundaries, while the municipalities are very small by international standards and enjoy a large measure of autonomy. What is more, Switzerland's federal system entails an elaborate division of responsibilities between the Confederation, the cantons and the municipalities.

The Confederation responds

The Swiss Confederation has recognized its duty to help solve the problems and provide support to urban centres. At the end of 2001, the Swiss government approved a report on federal agglomeration policy², which was triggered by a new article in the Federal Constitution that obliges the Confederation to give due consideration to the particular situation of the towns/cities and agglomerations³.

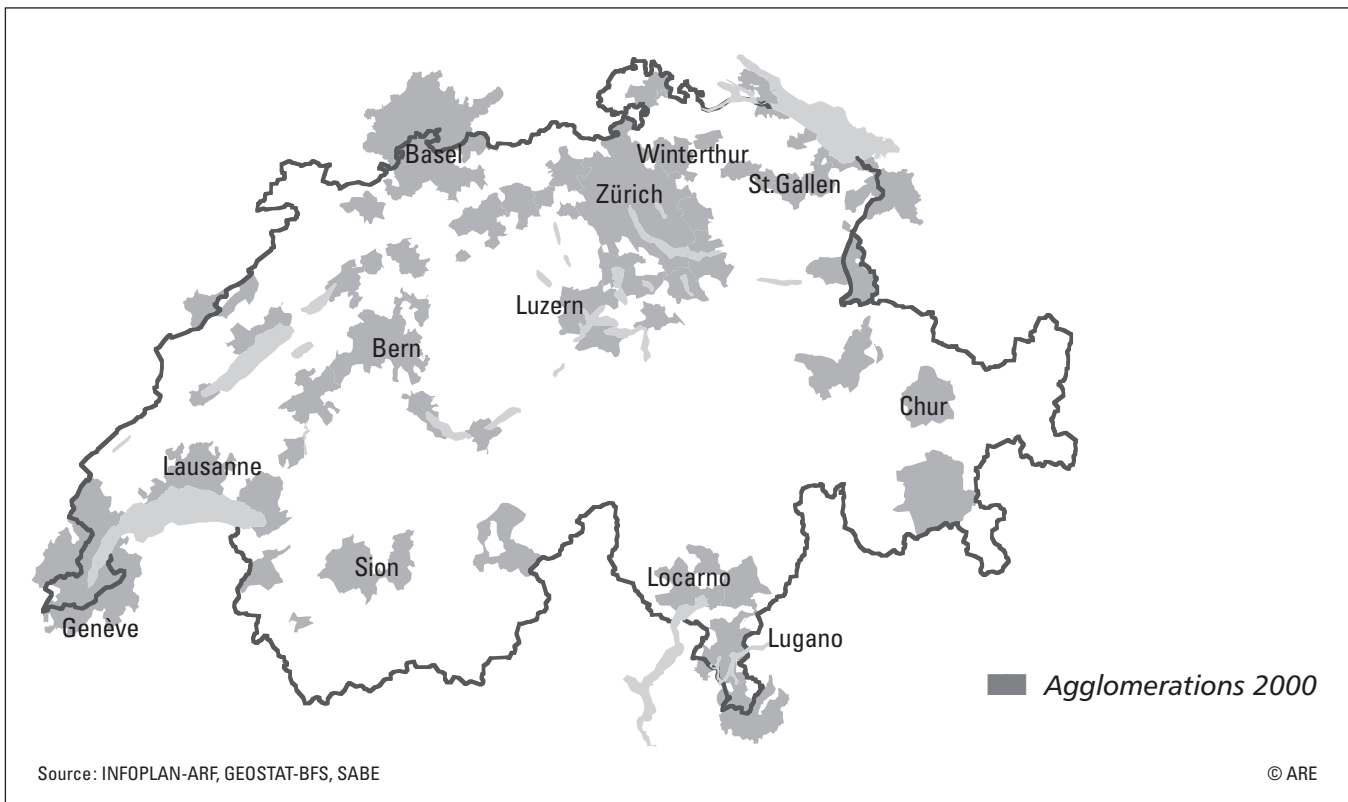
Given the social and economic significance of urban centres, the sustainable development of the living environment in Switzerland is inextricably linked to the sustainable development of urban space. From this principle, the Confederation derives three key objectives:

- First, the economic appeal of the towns and cities needs to be enhanced and civic amenity improved for the population.
- Second, every effort must be made to preserve Switzerland's decentralized urban system, with its complementary and mutually supportive towns and cities of different sizes and functions.

¹ Urban areas specifically comprise: agglomerations (comprising core city and agglomeration municipalities), individual towns/cities, cross-border agglomerations and metropolitan areas. Allocation to one of these categories is governed by definitions drawn up by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and is subject to revision every 10 years on the basis of the national census. Commuter statistics are particularly relevant for classification.

² The report and a summary (in German, French and Italian) may be downloaded from the ARE website (<http://www.are.admin.ch>) or are obtainable from the Swiss Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (Bundesamt für Bauten und Logistik) (order no. 812.012 d/f/i).

³ Art. 50, Para 3, Swiss Federal Constitution



- Third, the growth of agglomerations is to be contained, in large part, within their existing boundaries (inward urban development). Continuing urban sprawl is undesirable for economic, environmental and planning reasons.

Two key elements: co-ordination and collaboration

No long-term solutions will be found to the problems facing agglomerations as long as the action taken by municipalities is limited to their own territories and to individual sectors. As the Confederation sees it, at least two elements are key to solving the problems in conurbations:

- Collaboration within the agglomerations needs to be improved. Although the relevant municipalities already co-operate within a wide range of committees and legal entities, these partnerships are generally on a sectoral basis and vary widely in scope.
- An integral approach is required to tackle the problems. Improved co-ordination is needed between the different sectoral policy areas, particularly between urban development and transport. The Confederation aims to support the agglomera-

tions in the adoption of this approach, and will offer suitable incentives.

Model projects

Some agglomerations have recognized the need for action and are developing innovative projects. The Swiss Confederation seeks to encourage those implementing such measures, while also ensuring that other conurbations benefit from the results and are inspired to embark on similar schemes of their own. For this reason, the Confederation has launched the model projects initiative as a key plank in its agglomeration policy.

The Confederation is currently sponsoring 25 model projects throughout Switzerland, which feature a wide variety of methods and approaches. Some of the schemes are initially limited in scope and primarily serve to foster a spirit of partnership. Other projects start from a broad thematic analysis of the collaboration required. With some, the focus is on structural issues. There are projects in Alpine and border areas, urban development schemes and initiatives to co-ordinate settlement and transport planning⁴.

Agglomeration programmes

A new instrument, the agglomeration programme, is designed to improve collaboration and co-ordination within conurbations. An implementation-oriented tool should be developed by the agglomerations to serve as a vehicle for all conurbation-related issues, such as social and cultural policy, spatial planning, etc. It is not intended as a panacea to remedy all problems and accommodate all measures, but as a means of picking out priority issues from the general framework and implementing the necessary action concertedly and efficiently⁵. To encourage use of this tool, the Swiss Confederation provides financial incentives: it has pledged to accept a share of the costs for the conurbation transport system provided conurbations can demonstrate the optimum alignment of urban and transport planning within the framework of the agglomeration programme. Over 20 agglomeration programmes are currently being developed, with initial drafts scheduled for the end of 2004.

federation has managed to keep up the momentum by offering carefully targeted incentives. For the first time ever, federal planning agencies are in a position to offer financial rewards for greater collaboration and the improved co-ordination of urban and transport planning. This unique opportunity must not be squandered.

Agglomerations – a federal challenge

Ultimately, the Swiss Confederation is forced to take a back-seat role in matters of agglomeration policy. The cantons, towns/cities and municipalities are the key players, without whose close collaboration the problems facing conurbations cannot be solved. Hence the establishment, in early 2001, of the Tripartite Agglomeration Conference (Tripartite Agglomerationskonferenz, TAK), a forum in which politicians from all three levels of government work together in formulating joint agglomeration policies. At present, the focus is on foreign nationals, their integration and social policy. The TAK has also drawn up recommendations on collaboration within conurbations.

Final thoughts

Agglomeration issues are now firmly on the political agenda and the need to act is undisputed. The Con-

⁴ A brief description of each model project may be downloaded (in German, French and Italian) from www.are.ch.

⁵ A summary of the agglomeration programme may be downloaded (in German, French and Italian) from www.are.ch.

Barbara Schär, Transport Policy Section,
Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE

Swiss transport policy¹

1. Departmental strategy

Swiss transport policy is geared to the principle of sustainability as formulated by the Swiss Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) in its departmental strategy of May 2001². This states, as its primary principle, the implementation of an integrated transport policy. Means of implementing this policy include the areas of technology, infrastructure and operation, with guaranteed provision of a basic nationwide service and a broader application of the «polluter-pays» principle. Moreover, of growing importance in recent years have been the co-ordination of Swiss and European transport policies and the maintenance of high traffic safety standards.

2. Planned and ongoing concepts and measures

Sustainable policies have been successfully applied to the heavy-goods transport sector in recent years with the launch of various schemes.

In a referendum on 20 February 1994, the Swiss people voted in favour of the Alpine Protection Initiative. In addition to rejecting any further expansion of motorways through the Alps, this initiative called for the transfer of freight from road to rail. By adopting the initiative, the Swiss population came out expressly in favour of a shift from road to rail for the first time. Now as a part of the Federal Constitution, the new provisions have significantly shaped the development of freight transport policy in Switzerland, in which the improvement of the modal split enjoys high priority.

The move to shift freight to the rail system is focused on four main areas:

- Bilateral Overland Transport Agreement between Switzerland and the EU

The Bilateral Overland Transport Agreement between Switzerland and the EU forms the basis for an improved co-ordination of transport policy in the Alpine region. One key element of the agreement, from a Swiss perspective, is the incremental increase of the weight limit for trucks (from 28 to 34 tonnes in 2001, rising to 40 tonnes as of 2005). The abolition of the 28-tonne limit, one of the EU's essential prerequisites for the successful conclusion of these negotiations, represents a vi-

¹ This article will ignore aviation issues as these go beyond the present scope.

² DETEC strategy (German, French and Italian): <http://www.uvek.admin.ch/departement/div/00501/index.html?lang=de>



able solution for the Swiss side given that 40-tonne vehicles are able to carry more freight per journey. This is one of the reasons why there has been a decrease in road performance on Swiss roads since 2001. Another important point is the acceptance by the EU of the distance-related Heavy Vehicle Fee.

- Distance-related Heavy Vehicle Fee (HVF)

The Heavy Vehicle Fee is a fee which, for the first time, includes the external costs of freight transport in infrastructure charging. The rate of the HVF depends on the kilometres travelled on Swiss roads, on the maximum permitted weight and on the pollutants emitted by the vehicle. Application of the polluter-pays principle in allocating costs to heavy-goods traffic paves the way for fairer competition between road and rail. The HVF has now been successfully in operation for 3 years: the kilometres travelled on Swiss roads have dropped by some 7 percent and the incentives to use less pollutant vehicles are effective.

- Modernisation of railway infrastructure

The rail infrastructure modernisation programme adopted by Parliament and the Swiss people provides for investments to the tune of CHF 30 billion (by 2015) and includes the construction of

two new Alpine transit tunnels (Gotthard and Lötschberg). The modernisation schemes will be largely funded by income from the HVF.

- Rail reform

Infrastructural improvements aside, the railway needs to become more competitive. This is the chief goal of the rail reform, the first stage of which took effect on 1 January 1999. The rail reform is to be seen as a process by which the railway system will be brought into line with new economic, social and political realities.

This four-pronged strategy is backed up by complementary measures (e.g. compensation system for combined transport, route price subsidies in rail freight sector).

Private motorised transport is currently the dominant form of passenger transport. It is hoped, through its improved co-ordination with public transport (road/rail) and non-motorised transport, that public transport's share of the total will increase. To enhance the appeal of local, regional and intercity rail services, the Swiss Confederation has committed substantial investments in recent years to improvements in the public transport infrastructure (high-speed links, Bahn 2000 rail improvement scheme, New Rail Link through the Alps [NEAT]

Alpine transit schemes). It also plans to step up its activities in the fields of non-motorised, agglomeration and leisure transportation. These areas offer great potential and, in some cases, considerable scope for achieving a more favourable modal split. Urgent action is needed in the agglomerations, where transport systems are stretched to breaking point. While financial support from the Confederation is seen as the key to solving these problems, neither the legal framework nor the resources are currently available (following rejection, on 8 February 2004, of the transport improvements put forward in the «Avanti» referendum counterproposal) and new solutions must now be sought³.

In the non-motorised and leisure transport sectors, the Confederation plans to intensify its activities at a strategic level.

In addition to the aforementioned projects and measures in the heavy goods and passenger sectors, the government has addressed a number of other transport issues in recent years. These include co-ordinated transport planning (transportation sectoral plan), the second phase of the Bahn 2000 rail improvement scheme and the second part of the rail reform. The various measures, initiated or already in force, will provide a sound basis for a sustainable transport policy.

³ If the proposed reorganisation of financial equalisation and division of responsibilities between the Swiss Confederation and cantons is adopted by referendum, it will create a constitutional basis for the co-funding by the Confederation of transport systems in agglomerations.

*Armand Monney, Silvia Jost, International Affairs,
Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE*

Switzerland and the EU's INTERREG programmes

Swiss participation in INTERREG programmes

Switzerland has been involved in the INTERREG programme since the European Union launched the first INTERREG initiative in 1990. Several Swiss cantons then participated in setting up cross-border projects. This was followed by the INTERREG II initiative, launched in 1995 for the period 1997 to 1999, part of which was devoted to cross-border co-operation (later named INTERREG II A). At the time, the Swiss government proposed to parliament that a budget of CHF 24 million be allocated to support the cantons in their efforts to collaborate with neighbouring regions. As a result, Switzerland has been a partner in five regional programmes covering all of the country's external borders.

In 1996, the European Commission added a further dimension to the INTERREG II initiative (INTERREG II C), primarily to encourage transnational co-operation in the field of spatial development, flood prevention and efforts to combat drought. As part of this venture, Switzerland agreed to co-operate in a transnational area referred to as the «Western Mediterranean and Latin Alps». In parallel with this INTERREG programme, the Commission launched five pilot activities, one covering the eastern Alps. Eight cantons in eastern Switzerland took part in this pilot study.

A further strengthening of trans-European cooperation was envisaged with the launch, on 28 April 2000, of the INTERREG III initiative, which covers the 2000 – 2006 period. On this occasion, the European Commission planned for a transnational dimension (INTERREG III B) with three carefully defined priorities, which also correspond exactly with the options of the European Spatial Development Concept (ESDP). These priorities are territorial development strategy, which includes the issues of polycentrism and urban/rural relations, the development of efficient and sustainable transport systems, access to the information society and promotion of the environment, which includes sound management of natural and cultural heritage. To take part in this European programme, the Swiss government submitted a draft law to Parliament with a projected budget of CHF 29 million. Of this sum, six million francs were earmarked for transnational and inter-regional co-operation.

To set transnational co-operation in motion, the

European Commission, in consultation with the Member States, has defined thirteen transnational areas. At the invitation of its neighbours, Switzerland has shown interest in three of these: the Alpine Space, North-West Europe and the Western Mediterranean. Switzerland supports this kind of co-operation because – in compliance with the Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines (a general guidance document formulated at national level but without binding legal status) – it is helpful in ensuring a better integration of Swiss territory into the overall organisation of European territory. To ensure co-operation while respecting the country's federal character, the Confederation has set up an organisational structure which involves the cantons very closely. Working within this structure, it has been decided to give priority to co-operation in the Alpine Space, which in any case concerns all the cantons.

INTERREG III B projects involving Switzerland

Very many schemes were submitted in response to cause for project proposals relative to the three transnational areas in which Switzerland is co-operating. By mid-2004, the steering committees for these areas had approved 60 projects in North-West Europe, 44 in the Western Mediterranean, and 35 in the Alpine Space. Of the 35 approved for the Alpine Space, 30 involved Swiss partners, which effectively reflects Switzerland's strategy of giving priority to this area.

As it is not easy to make transnational co-operation work effectively, especially given the cultural diversity of the regions involved, the first projects originated from existing networks, some of which have been active for a long time in the Alpine region. Of the topics covered by INTERREG III B, the Swiss partners opted primarily for projects concerned with polycentrism, urban/rural relations, and the protection of historical monuments and the soil. In the Alpine Space, the risk of natural disasters figured prominently among the concerns of the co-operating parties. Public services and modern communication technologies were also high on the list, however. The partners are almost exclusively public-sector cantonal bodies and institutes dependent upon the further education institutions invited to take part in the projects.

The ESPON programme

Where the issue of spatial development is concerned, we must also mention ESPON (the European Spatial Planning Observation Network), which is part of the INTERREG programme. Switzerland participates as a full partner in this network. Its involvement is positive, because it means that Switzerland no longer features on maps produced by the states of the European Union as a kind of no man's land. The ESPON programme is also in Switzerland's interests because of its close links with the ESDP. Moreover, one of the projects launched as part of this programme is concerned with the implementation of the ESDP and its effects on Member States. It is important that the ESDP should not become a paper tiger, but that it should be used to bring about concrete spatial development initiatives in Europe. In this respect, the European Spatial Planning Observation Network is a very useful instrument.

Thanks to Switzerland's full-partner status in this programme, it has been possible to include Swiss research institutes (especially the Federal Institutes of Technology and universities) in a number of projects. This also enables these third-level institutes to be included in a European research network concerned with the challenges of spatial development. Topics regarded by Switzerland as a high priority in terms of research collaboration are polycentrism, the spatial impact of transport infrastructures, spatial development scenarios, and territorial governance.

Conclusion

Thanks to the diversity of its cultures and languages, and to its federal structures, Switzerland has a long tradition of inter-regional co-operation. It is therefore a natural development that the country should be willing to co-operate in cross-border matters, especially in the field of spatial development. After all, it occupies a position right at the heart of Europe.

Fred Wenger
Architect and planner, Urbaplan SA, Lausanne

Geneva, a cross-border conurbation

Geneva owes its prosperity to the very special status that its people have gradually established by making good use of their independence at the heart of a Europe characterised since the Middle Ages by power struggles between powerful states. Profiting from its advantageous position on the international stage, and economic development disproportionate to its real size, over the last twenty years Geneva has multiplied its efforts in the field of cross-border co-operation with a view to controlling its urban expansion.

Geneva, an achievement which defies geography

«The awareness of having little to expect from their restricted geographical territory has motivated the people of Geneva to create an abstract territory of global scope.»

Prof. Claude Raffestin

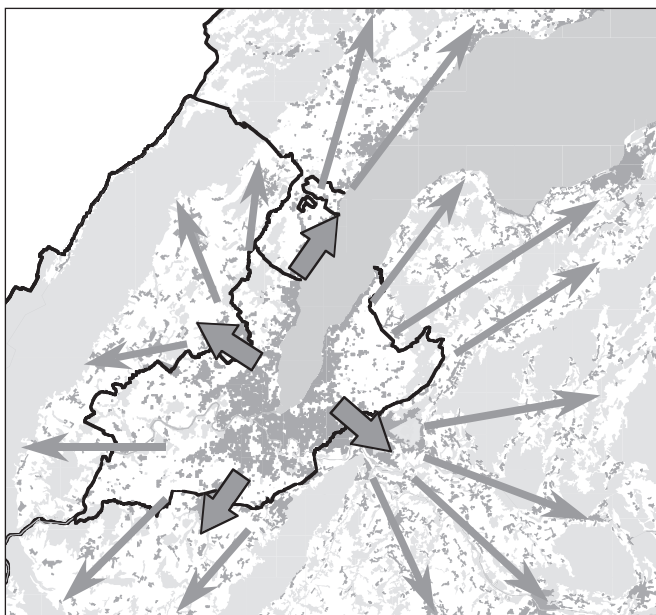
These are the words used by the geographer Claude Raffestin, in an article published in 1989¹, to explain Geneva's exceptional international status. How else could one account for this city's importance and the place it occupies on the international stage? The population of the canton of Geneva is barely half a million², the city has no «hinterland», its territory is tiny. These factors all highlight the special status of Geneva and the acumen of its inhabitants, who over the centuries have exploited their political independence and geographical isolation to place for them in an unparalleled position. And they have built this «abstract» territory on invisible foundations³: the ebb and flow of commerce, the circulation of ideas, and the exchange of different currencies.

In the Middle Ages, Geneva benefited from its status as centre of trade, in Switzerland and in Europe. As a result of its prosperity and independence, in the 16th century it was able to welcome the thinkers of the Reformation. As the «Protestant Rome», for almost two centuries it attracted and was home to large numbers of highly talented immigrants, particularly from France. It was then that Geneva established its tradition of welcoming refugees, but the chief benefit was to its manufacturing industries, in particular clock and watch-making. At the same time, Europe's emergent system of commercially based capitalism could not function without Geneva and its banking system. Thus the city carved out for itself a virtual space which was global in scope. Attached to Switzerland in 1815 after the Napoleonic wars, the Republic and canton of Geneva succeeded in retaining its prerogatives, in spite of its new affiliation. Having become the hub of European tourism in the 18th and 19th centuries, Geneva finally consolidated its international vocation when it was designated as the seat of the League of Nations, in 1920, then of the United Nations, after World War II. This enabled Geneva to function as the key centre for internation-

¹ Les paradoxes genevois [The Geneva Paradoxes], Claude Raffestin, in revue SIA no 10/89, «Genève et sa région».

² According to 2002 federal statistics, the canton had 476'100 inhabitants

³ idem note ¹



al negotiations throughout the 20th century, especially during the Cold War, thanks also to Swiss neutrality.

Geography catches up with Geneva

Over the last twenty years, much of the city's expansion has taken place beyond the borders of the canton and, as a result of its widespread growth, the neighbouring areas of France and the canton of Vaud have experienced a population explosion. A large number of municipalities now form part of the conurbation, and transport and pollution problems have become more pressing. The border problem creates tensions in terms of taxation, land tenure and trade. The labour market is unbalanced because of disparities in salaries between Switzerland and its neighbour, France.

Over the same period, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, Geneva lost its exclusive advantages. During the last decade, the city for the first time became aware of its fragility. It is now obliged to compete on an equal footing with other European and international cities.

In these circumstances, territory has become an issue. Vital resources in the city's development, space

and labour are fundamental concerns. Today, for the first time in its history, the city has to come to terms with its geographical situation and boundaries by managing a vast cross-border conurbation of almost 800'000 inhabitants.

An institutional Tower of Babel⁴

The need for cross-border co-operation is obvious to everyone. However, it is hampered by immense difficulties, in particular incompatible institutional and decision-making systems, which are totally different in the case of Switzerland and France, and correspond to only a very limited extent in the case of the canton of Vaud and Geneva itself.

This explains why co-operation within the built-up area has developed only very gradually and has encountered many obstacles. There has nevertheless been progress over the years: first, a co-operative effort to protect the waters of Lake Geneva (1962, renewed in 1973), then an agreement whereby the canton of Geneva returns tax revenues to the neighbouring French municipalities, since French cross-border workers pay tax in Switzerland. These initial acts of co-operation led in 1974 to the establishment of a partnership involving Swiss and French institutions in the Comité régional franco-genevois (CRFG)⁵ Franco-Genevan regional committee. This committee, working under the auspices of the Swiss Confederation and the French Government, examines issues affecting the cross-border conurbation which are wider in scope than straightforward urban development. In 1993, the CRFG published a Franco-Genevan white paper on cross-border issues then, in 1996, a charter for the conurbation. A charter for the development of regional public transport involving the local authorities and Swiss and French operators is also in preparation.

We are currently working on a project for the conurbation with the aim of making the cross-border issue a matter of fundamental importance – this is essential to solving the problems associated with national and cantonal borders.

⁴ Genève s'arrime aux Alpes pour rester au sommet [Geneva lashes itself to the Alps to stay at the top], Richard Quincero, in the revue «Urbanisme», no 278/279 Nov/Dec 1994

⁵ cf. www.geneve.ch/crfg

*Benedetto Antonini, consultant to the
Cantonal Department of Spatial Planning,
canton of Ticino*

Cross-border territorial planning: the case of southern Switzerland and the Lombardy region of Italy

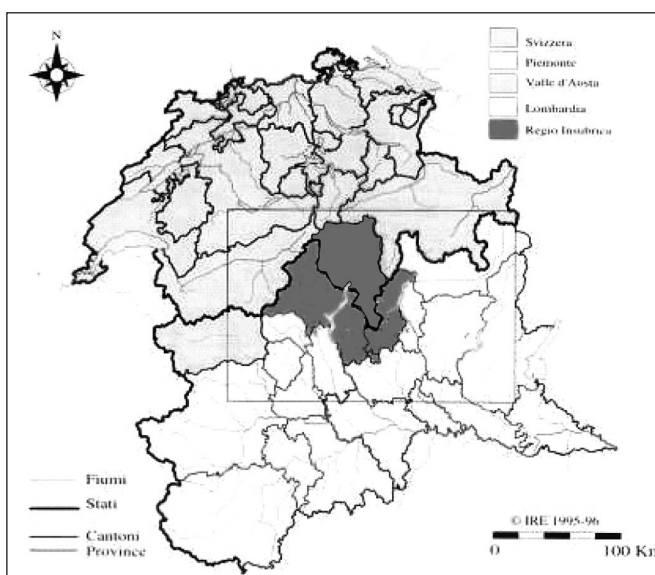
Switzerland is so small that, to flourish, it frequently has to involve other countries. This is especially true in the economic sphere, the transport sector and even the armed forces for some exercises. Nevertheless, for many years the Swiss government did not have a real foreign policy; a jealously guarded policy of neutrality prevailed. Where territorial planning is concerned, we have also been very slow in opening up to cross-border realities, so much so that even today it is legitimate to ask if such planning exists and if it is possible. We have to admit that cross-border spatial planning, in the conventional sense, does not exist. However, in Switzerland, we do have the beginnings of a vision for a policy of territorial organisation which goes beyond national boundaries in the shape of 1996 Swiss Planning Policy Guidelines. This document makes it clear that the network connecting Swiss towns extends beyond national boundaries and links up – in theory and in practice – with the main centres of the border zones of neighbouring countries. Timid though it may be, this reflects a change of mentality.

As for back as 1979, the federal law on spatial planning established the exchange of information between adjacent regions, including adjacent regions of neighbouring countries, as a prerequisite for the co-ordinating cantonal development plans (see Art. 7 of the Act). However, this also indicates the extent to which cross-border planning policy is left to the initiative of the cantons.

As a result, inter-regional cross-border organisations were gradually set up: first the Regio Basilensis, followed by the Geneva/Rhône-Alpes region, the territories surrounding Lake Constance, and so on.

In 1994, the Regio Insubrica was eventually founded. This region lies to the south of the Alps, grouping the canton of Ticino with the Italian provinces of Como and Varese, in the Lombardy region, and with the province of Verbania-Cusio-Ossola, which is part of Piedmont. Other provinces have since joined, with observer status. The formal bases for cross-border planning have therefore also been laid on the southern front, though for the time being the results are more theoretical than practical.

This is not to underestimate the moral and political value of organisations which exist to discuss



*The Regio Insubrica in the Italo-Swiss
regional context*

common problems and, by comparing situations, which from an institutional point of view are often very different, look to ways to solve them. It has to be admitted, however, that the obstacles arising from different territorial circumstances are still as difficult to overcome as they are anachronistic.

Despite the difficulties inherent in spatial planning and cross-border co-operation as a global activity, we can point to successes at the sectoral level, above all in transport policy, which has inevitably had a cross-border dimension right from the start.

The necessity of co-operation in this sphere is true of roads, has become so for the railways – despite the obstacles put in the way by the birth of nations and, worse, by nationalism – and has since been confirmed by the advent of motorways. The policy of modernising Europe's traffic infrastructure networks ensure that it is a burning issue at the present time.

In addition, navigation on lakes which cross frontiers – in Switzerland's case Lakes Lugano and Maggiore – has also been regulated internationally for many years.

Aviation policy also merits special mention, not

only because the air space of concern to Swiss airports extends far into foreign territory, but also because some airport facilities, such as those of Basel/Mulhouse, are actually on foreign soil. Two infrastructures are of special interest to the Regio Insubrica and to the Ticino in general: the regional airport of Lugano-Agno, for medium-distance and connecting flights to hub airports, and the international airport of Malpensa, which is only an hour's journey from Lugano.

Another field in which cross-border co-operation is essential is that of water resource regulation and flood protection. In the case of Lake Maggiore, the problems are far from being solved owing to the diametrically opposed views of the lake-side authorities and those of the Po Valley.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Other fields of activity which do not have a direct bearing on physical territory, but are nonetheless important for the way it is organised, such as hospital policy or further education, deserve consideration but are beyond the scope of this article.

A more concrete example is a railway project, small in terms of investment (approx. CHF 400 million), but very significant if we consider its positive territorial consequences, the planned new rail link between Lugano, Mendrisio, Varese and Malpensa Airport. This is an integral part of a high-added-value regional railway transport network planned jointly by the canton of Ticino and the Lombardy regional government. The construction of a new stretch of track just 7 km long would make it possible to connect:

- the built-up areas of Lugano with those of Varese and Como, via Mendrisio;
- Lower Ticino and part of Varese Province with western Switzerland, cutting an hour from the present journey time of four and a half hours;
- the economic hub of Ticino, the city of Lugano, with Malpensa Airport, in less than one hour.

So far, the four partners promoting the project – the canton of Ticino, the Lombardy region, Swiss Federal Railways and the Italian rail operator Rete ferroviaria italiana – have been able to proceed on a basis of equality and consensus, quickly achieving excellent results. If, despite present financial constraints, it is possible to make this project a priority for the Swiss and Italian governments, the new line could be inaugurated in 2009.

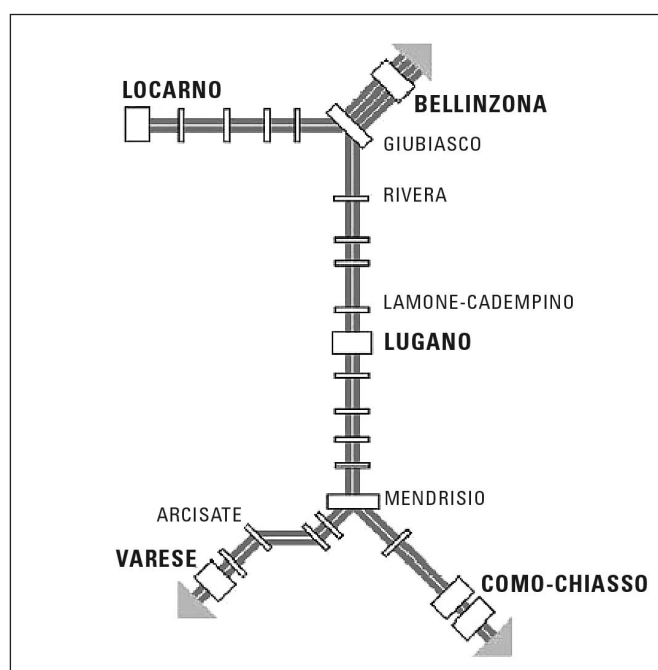


Diagram of the new Ticino-Lombardy regional express railway network, TILO



Geneva 2004
40th World Congress

Not only will this project have functional advantages; we hope it will also have symbolic value, opening the way for many other much-needed projects.

*Hans-Georg Bächtold, cantonal planner and
Head of the Planning Department,
canton of Basel-Landschaft*

From divided city to transnational conurbation

Cross-border spatial planning in the trinational agglomeration of Basel

Intelligent use of common space

In recent years spatial development has grown in importance in Europe. The process of European integration increasingly necessitates a consideration not only of economic framework and transport systems, but also of the planning situation. Intelligent physical planning policies are essential in meeting the rising and varied demands placed by society on our limited spatial resources and the requirement for a rational use of land. Cross-border collaboration in developing spatial strategies offers tremendous opportunities for transnational regions, not least the trinational agglomeration of Basel.

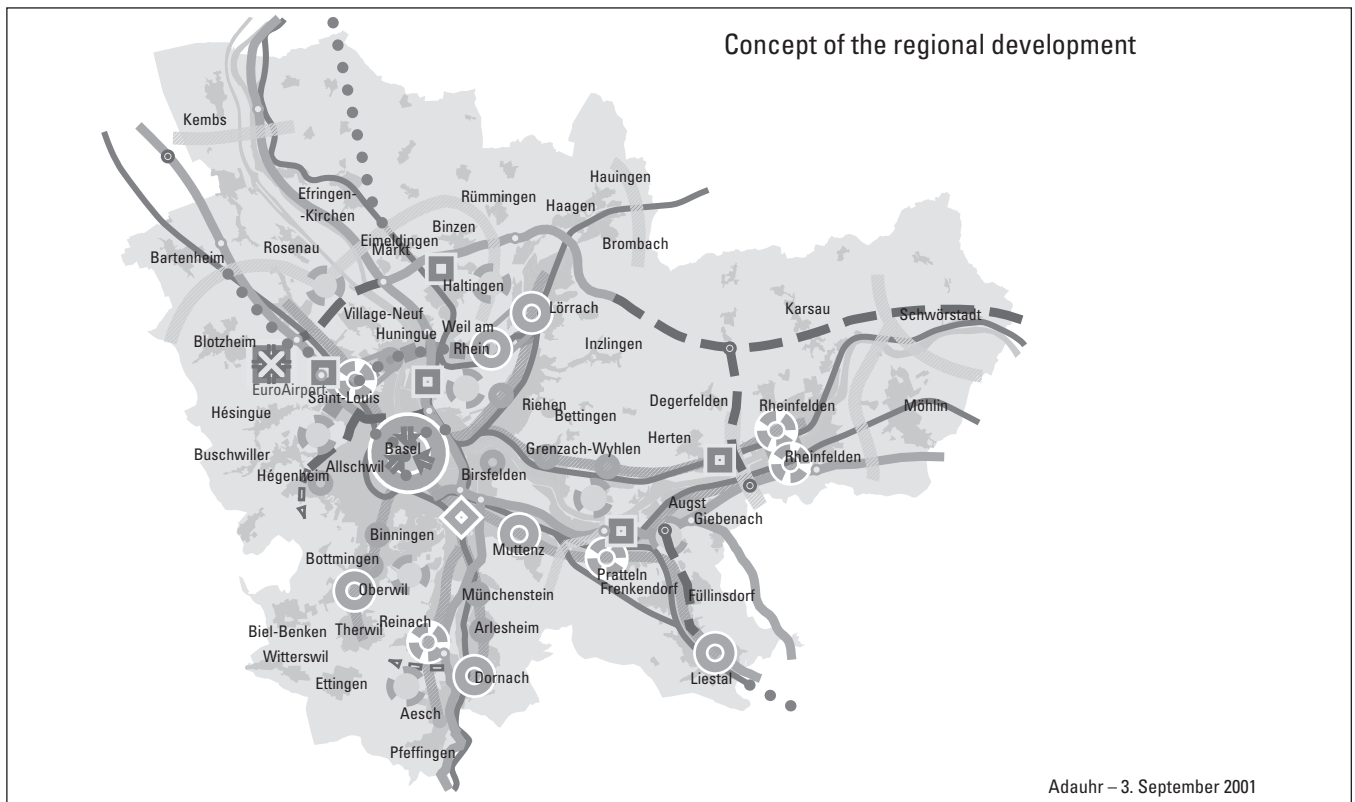
Long tradition of collaboration

Of all European cities, Basel enjoys the most distinctive border location. National and cantonal boundaries dissect the immediate conurbation, with its population of some 600'000. The urban fabric stretches unbroken across the Swiss-French and Swiss-German borders. The various boundaries severely obstruct both personal and economic mobility. The division of the conurbation into sectors, located on the fringes of their respective countries, compounded by the multiplicity of governmental levels, bodies and institutions, has hampered attempts at a concerted development. A pooling of efforts in finding joint solutions, the co-ordination of schemes and the linking of infrastructure networks thus seems the obvious way forward. Collaboration of this kind has existed in the Basel area for 40 years under the banner of the «Regio Basiliensis», Europe's oldest cross-border institution. Expansion of the Basel conurbation beyond the French and German borders has intensified the need for cross-border planning. Yet despite the long tradition of co-operation, there have to date been no jointly agreed goals and objectives for the overall development of the region.

Trilateral future

A meeting on 8th December 1995 – symbolically held on a ship anchored near the point where the three boundary lines converge – brought together busi-

¹ The Trinational Agglomeration Basel (TAB) comprises 53 participating municipalities (CH: 30, D: 13, F: 10) within the immediate region, covering an area of 558 km² (CH: 40%, D: 42%, F: 18%). The population densities likewise vary between the different countries (CH: 1'800 inhabitants/km², D: 579 inhabitants/km², F: 450 inhabitants/km²)



ness, political and planning representatives from the border municipalities and regions in southern Baden (Germany), southern Alsace (France) and north-western Switzerland to discuss the vision of a trilateral future and closer cross-border collaboration. A technical co-ordination group, comprising 15 planners from the relevant authorities in the three border regions, was then set up to lay the foundations for a joint transnational development concept in the rechristened «Trinational Agglomeration Basel» (TAB)¹. The first phase, completed by the end of 2001, produced two important results.

A planning document, which may be termed a «transnational development plan», with comprehensive policy statements on urban development, the transport network and landscape planning.

Individual descriptions for some 30 «key projects» of significance to the development of the entire TAB, including urban development poles, transport and landscape/environmental schemes.

Realizing the vision

In the past, the readiness and will of the involved politicians had been the main driving force behind

the preparation of the joint transnational development concept. Apart from an agreement concluded in 1995 on participation in the Interreg II EU initiative, no contractual basis existed. To formalize the collaboration effort, the partners met in St. Louis on 28 January 2002 to set up the «Association for the Sustainable Development of the Trinational Agglomeration Basel» (Verein zur nachhaltigen Entwicklung des Raumes der Triationalen Agglomeration Basel). The executive committee of the association is responsible for both project management and the appointment of a technical co-ordination group, comprising six representatives from each country. Operational management is the responsibility of an agglomeration planning office with two experts based on the Palmrain bridge. The budgeted expenditure of over EUR 2 million for 2002–2006 is borne by Germany and France (16.7 percent each), the European Union and Switzerland (33.3 percent each). By setting out the overall strategic considerations for co-ordination in the fields of urban, transport and landscape planning, the finished TAB development concept represents a further step in the improvement of cross-border collaboration. This general development concept will now be refined as

part of the forthcoming third stage of the pan-European INTERREG programme and feasibility studies performed to establish the technical and financial viability of selected key projects. The three main projects:

1. Cross-border tram extension to St. Louis (France) and Lörrach (Germany)
2. Development of Basel's northern axis (Lörrach-Rhine – St. Louis-EuroAirport)
3. Joint development of Swiss and German Rheinfelden

Future challenges

The TAB is shaped in large measure by its inner boundaries, which pose obstacles to both business and the population. Cross-border relations are consequently gaining in importance and need to be strengthened further still. The finished TAB development concept sets out the overall strategic considerations for co-ordination in the fields of urban, transport and landscape planning. It is now important to assess the feasibility of the key projects and to press ahead with their implementation. Still to be drawn up are a joint strategy for the conurbation's longer-term urban and spatial development and a definition of the functions of Basel, as the core city, and of its neighbouring sub-regions. This will be the key challenge for the future.

*Dr. Christian Gabathuler, cantonal planner
Office of Spatial Planning and Surveying
of the canton of Zurich*

Controlling residential and transport development in fast-growing urban landscapes

1. Zurich economic area

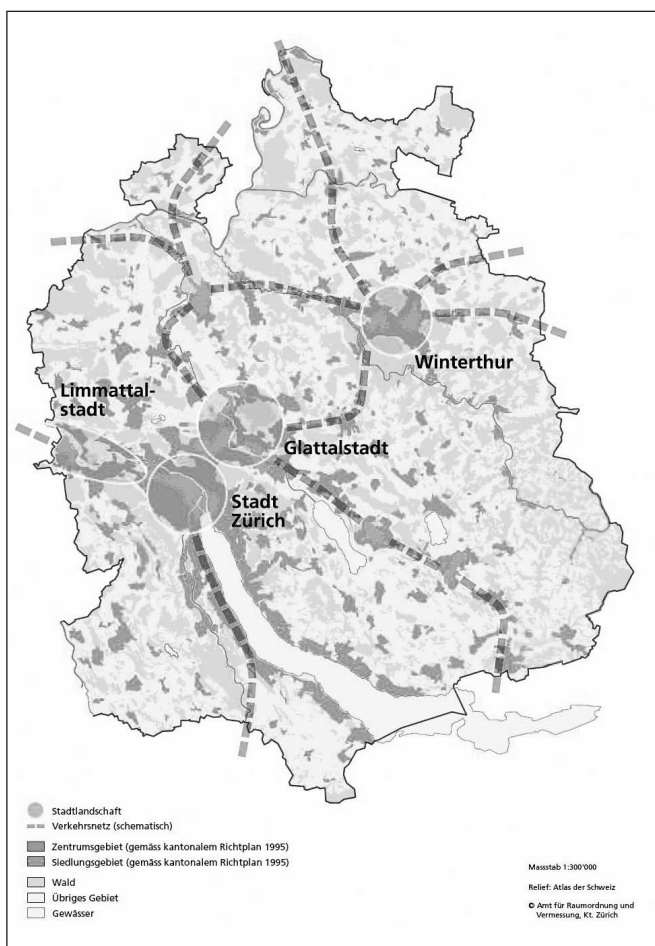
Though accounting for a mere 4 percent of Switzerland's geographical area, the canton of Zurich accommodates some 17 percent of the Swiss population and 20 percent of the country's workforce. A good 22 percent of the Swiss national income is earned in the region. The canton of Zurich forms the core of what, even by European standards, is a prime economic area, boasting a population of around 1.8 million and a 1 million-strong workforce and embracing large parts of the neighbouring cantons. The ever-closer links forged between different parts of the economic area have heightened the importance of collaboration with neighbouring cantons. Many planning-related issues, particularly in terms of transport and major infrastructure, thus necessitate close intercantonal co-operation.

2. Formulating a cantonal structural plan

The structural plan is the instrument used by the canton of Zurich to co-ordinate planning-related activities and to outline general spatial development policies for its territory. It defines «inward» development, i.e. the use of existing reserves in built-up areas, as the focus of urban planning. Planning must also be geared to public transport provision, in particular the suburban railway system. The underlying aim is to conserve the open countryside as a unified, undeveloped natural space (www.richtplan.zh.ch). All amendments to the structural plan must be approved by the cantonal parliament. Hence, the challenge facing spatial planning policy is to ensure that the rise in demand for residential and commercial premises (which is likely to continue) does not spawn still more edge-of-town green-field schemes, but is increasingly met by the development and regeneration of existing urban districts already served by infrastructure. Furthermore, the corresponding growth in mobility needs can only be accommodated by focusing on the development of suburban railway network.

3. Potential for sustainable spatial development

A radically improved rail service, launched in 1990 under the banner «Zürcher S-Bahn», soon recorded



a sharp increase in users. The volume of passengers surged by a remarkable 19 percent in the very first year, with a further 38 percent rise achieved over the next decade. The integrated public transport network, embracing railway, tram and bus, now serves practically all urban areas in the canton of Zurich. Some 95 percent of inhabitants and employees live or work within easy reach of a stop or station somewhere on the network.

The current stock of residential and commercial premises totals some 108 million m² in gross floor area (GFA). The development zones specified in the statutory plans can accommodate the additional construction of some 100 million m² GFA – the reserves still available in the developed planning zones within built-up areas accounting for around two-thirds of this figure and greenfield sites at peripheral locations for the other third.

43 percent of the identified reserves are situated within the immediate catchment area of a suburban railway station and therefore enjoy excellent public transport links. Hence, overall, the canton of Zurich has adequate, well-located reserves for the necessary renewal and development of its property stock.

4. Enhanced co-ordination required in high-density areas

The floor space reserves identified in the canton of Zurich are largely concentrated on four high-density areas. These are the historic, organically structured cities of Zurich and Winterthur and the more recent urban landscapes of the Glattal and Limmattal. Each of these areas already has a well-developed infrastructure.

However, the high planning density and spatial constraints increase the risk of conflicts (e.g. through noise) and bottlenecks in the road system. Moreover, the rapid pace of development places particular demands on urban and transport planning control. To address the greater need for co-ordination in high-density areas, the structural plan for Zurich will be supplemented by provisions for the drafting of tailored regional transmodal transport concepts.

In the case of the Glattal urban corridor, work commenced at an early stage and has already borne fruit. Of particular note is the Glattal suburban railway scheme, funding for which was successfully se-

cured by a referendum. Construction of the first phase is scheduled to begin in September 2004 (www.vbg.ch/glattalbahn).

5. Growing traffic bottlenecks in Limmattal

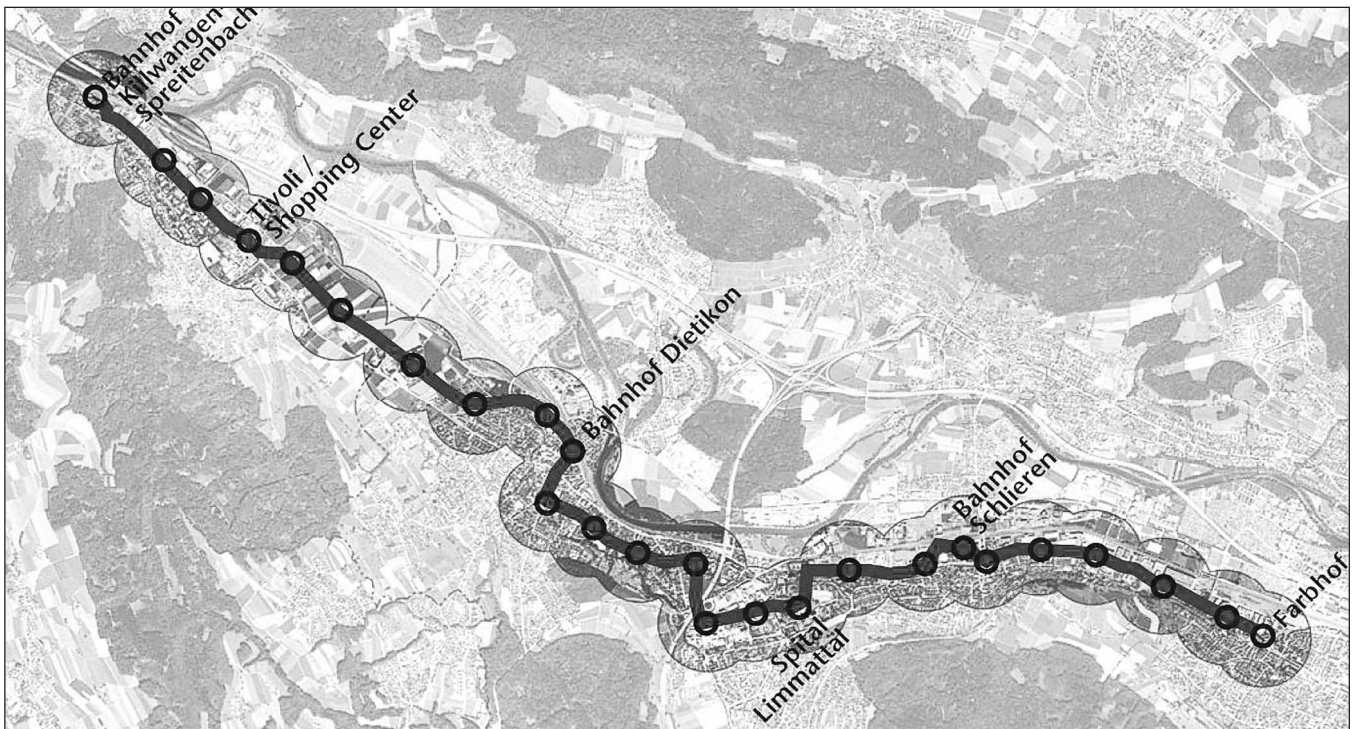
The Limmattal urban region has the distinction of spanning a cantonal boundary and is thus divided between the cantons of Zurich and Aargau. Initiated several years ago, the Aargau – Zurich platform sets out to meet the additional collaborative requirement at institutional level (www.paz.ch). The co-ordination platform has already been instrumental in the launch of various joint schemes to tackle cross-border problems.

With the A1 motorway and four-track railway section, Switzerland's main east-west links run through the Limmattal. Yet, despite substantial improvements, both are increasingly prone to bottlenecks. Various large shopping centres and newly built superstores are responsible for additional congestion on access roads in the evenings and on Saturdays. Improvements to the regional road network offer no remedy as the primary motorway routes crossing the area already reach maximum capacity at rush hour and are unable to accommodate any extra traffic. In fact, it is more than likely in future that tailbacks from motorway slip roads will extend back into urban districts.

This would significantly detract from the living quality of the local residents and employees, while the lack of infrastructure capacity would prevent exploitation of the existing development reserves. The search for alternative, uncongested sites would hasten the process of urban sprawl – with all its negative implications, such as the development of precious greenfield land and additional motor traffic owing to the inferior public transport links to peripheral locations.

6. Regional transmodal transport concept for Limmattal

Improved management of regional transport and urban planning, coupled with a significant rise in public transport passenger volumes, offers a solution to this dilemma. The aim is to create an urban environment offering high amenity and a proportional use of public transport on a par with that cur-



rently achieved in the cities of Zurich and Winterthur.

One centrepiece of the transport initiative is the planned Limmattal suburban railway line. Its routing is such as to allow large sections of the new population and workforce to profit from the improved service. Some 37'000 residents and 27'000 employees are currently located within 400 m of the future stations. The projected development of the existing reserves will push these figures up to around 48'000 and 50'000 respectively.

The Limmattal regional transmodal transport concept also provides for improvements to the bus system, alterations and refinements to the road network and works benefiting cyclists and pedestrians. Of paramount importance in achieving objectives will be the operational measures to optimize multi-modal traffic flows, including road capacity management and giving buses the right of way on congested stretches of road. Future urban planning policies will also be adjusted in line with the findings on key issues.

Regional mobility management, including the development of new mobility products and services, will also feature prominently. Mobility management will no longer focus exclusively on traffic control, but on catering for a maximum of mobility demands while minimizing traffic volumes.

*Cla Semadeni,
Head of Office for Spatial Planning,
canton of Grison*

INTERREG III B – Alpine Space: Participation of Swiss cantons in transnational spatial development schemes

Political and administrative collaboration within the Alpine Space at national and regional level dates back several decades. Partnerships and networks such as the ARGE ALP, ARGE Alpenstädte and REGIONALP along with the implementation of the Alpine Convention in 1995 have deepened the perception of the Alpine Space as an integral geographical area.

The Alpine Space programme follows on directly from the joint INTERREG IIC initiative, launched in 1996, which seeks to promote cross-border collaboration within the European Union in the field of spatial development. Switzerland was invited to participate in schemes in the Western Mediterranean and Latin Alps regions. This programme is complemented by various pilot projects launched by the EU and financed under Art. 10 of the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) regulations. Switzerland has taken part in a pilot scheme centred on the eastern Alps.

Interest at cantonal level

2000 saw the launch of the INTERREG III B programme. Geared to transnational collaboration, INTERREG III B chiefly focuses on spatial planning and spatial development issues within the various regions of Europe. As equal partners of the Confederation, the cantons are eager to capitalize on the European Interreg initiative. INTERREG III B offers them a platform to contribute their own ideas and plans for the refinement and implementation of the European Spatial Development Concept (ESDP). They are also able to liaise directly with the planning agencies in the programme regions, i.e. beyond the immediate border area.

The INTERREG III B programmes are something of a departure, particularly for the cantons, with the only truly relevant experience stemming from the REGIONALP project. The stance adopted by the cantons is, accordingly, both critical and open-minded. INTERREG III B may thus be viewed as a learning process for all involved.

The focal issues include:

Drafting of spatial development strategies entailing collaboration between urban centres and between town and country with the aim of promoting sustainable polycentric development.



Development of efficient, environmentally compatible transport systems and improvement of access to the information society

Promotion of environmental protection, sustainable management of the natural and cultural heritage, and conservation of natural resources (particularly water) with due consideration to natural hazards

Programme implementation in Switzerland

The schemes selected to date and newly submitted project proposals testify to the widespread readiness to address proactively the specified priority issues and objectives of spatial development in the Alpine Space and to profit from the added value it is hoped will be achieved – funds permitting – through the transnational collaboration with EU partners. Switzerland's involvement extends across all the key thematic issues and project areas, as witnessed by the following selection of ongoing projects in the Alpine Space.

ALPENERGYWOOD: The aim of the project is to map out a «wood energy route» that identifies best-practice plants for interested visitors and encourages know-how exchange in the field of wood energy

technology and use. Lead partner: European Wood Energy Technical Institute, France.

ALPINE WINDHARVEST: The project sets out to investigate the potential offered by wind turbines in the Alpine Space. Lead partner: University of Salzburg, Austria.

ALPS MOBILITY: The scheme focuses on the development of car-free mobility concepts at selected tourist resorts united under the banner «Alpine Pearls». Lead partner: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Vienna, Austria.

DYNALP: The project serves the implementation of the Alpine Convention. Some 50 municipalities are implementing schemes for tourism, environmental protection and landscape management, mountain farming, sustainable development and spatial planning. The pilot projects are set to trigger investments in the order of at least EUR 20 million. Lead partner: Municipality of Mäder, Austria.

QUALIMA: The project sets out to tackle the increasing marginalization of specific Alpine regions and the attendant deterioration in trade and social services observed at these locations. It is hoped that co-ordinated regional concepts will strengthen the existing structures for public and private

service provision. Lead partner: Regione Veneto, Italy.

TUSEC-IP: The project specifically addresses the issue of soil and land as limited resources in the Alpine Space. The goal is to develop harmonized tools for the improved management of urban soils in planning procedures. Lead partner: City of Munich, Germany.

Conclusions

With their cross-border collaboration on spatial development issues, the Swiss cantons are entering uncharted waters. INTERREG III B will thus be seen as a learning process set to open up interesting perspectives. Palpable results readily accessible to a wider audience will soon be available.

