Dr. Chris van Egeraat
Chairman RSA Irish Branch

Welcome

New Regional Governance in Ireland
NUI Maynooth, Monday 21 January 2013
Revisiting the National Spatial Strategy Ten Years On

January 2013
The Irish Branch of the Regional Studies Association, the School of Economics UCC and the South West Regional Authority invite you to

**Regional Economic Resilience**

A One-Day Conference

Millennium Hall, Cork
Friday 22 February 2013, 10.00-17:00

**Keynote Speakers:**

**Professor Ron Martin**, Professor of Economic Geography, Fellow Cambridge-MIT Institute Research

**Dr Adrian Healy**, Cardiff School of Planning and Geography and co-ordinator of ESPON-funded leading study into economic resilience of regions in the face of economic crisis.

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Institute for Business Development and Competitiveness, School of Economics

UCC

Údarás Réigiúnaigh an Iar-Dheisceart
South West Regional Authority
Dr. Chris van Egeraat
Chairman RSA Irish Branch

Setting the Scene

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Regional Government and Development

- Do we need regional structures for regional development?
- Perceived advantages of decentralisation
  - Allocative efficiencies
    - Local actors are closer to where the problems are and know better how to allocate resources
  - Productive efficiencies
    - Decentralised actors can tap into the local knowledge that is available at regional levels to stimulate growth
  - Engagement and participation
    - *Bottom-up* approach to regional development
    - Holds for local and regional structures
    - Some issues operate at regional level and require regional oversight (e.g. gateway functions)
No strong history of regional governance

Issues with:

- Regional boundaries - can be defined by:
  - Administrative fiat (territorial region)
  - Natural features
  - Functionality (e.g. a nodal region around a central urban place)
  - Identity
  - Common characteristics (e.g. facing same problem)

- Legal and Administrative underpinnings
8 Regional Authorities

- Established 1994
- Remit:
  - Review the overall needs and development requirements of the region
  - Promote coordination between LAs and other authorities in the region
  - Promote consideration by public authorities of the effects of their activities on the region as a whole
  - Since 2001: Adoption of statutory RPGs and oversight of their implementation at local level
8 Regional Authorities

- Promotion of cooperation and coordination not realised due to limited resources, no authority
- Inadequate commitment of public authorities (Operational Committees not operational)
- Members of LAs overseeing LAs
- Spatial rationale?
  - Administrative fiat
  - Dublin and Mid-East functional region
  - Border region – common characteristics
  - Lack of concordance with boundaries of agencies and institutions
NUTS II “structural funds” Regions - Regional Assemblies

- Established 1999
- Remit:
  - Manage and monitor Regional Operational Programmes under the Structural Funds
  - Representational role on EU INTERREG programmes
  - Promote coordination in the provision of public services across their areas
  - Make public bodies aware of the regional implications of their policies and plans

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Effective in relation to managing and monitoring Regional OPs and role INTERREG programmes

In other areas overlap with functions Reg. Authorities

Spatial rationale: By mid-1990s, Ireland as a whole no longer qualified for Objective 1 status. Country split in two to create residual region still within Objective 1 criteria.
Putting People First – 3 Regions with Regional Assemblies

- For Quality Mapping, NIRSA Helpline: 01 708 3350
- Established 2014
- Rationale:
  - “… necessary to retain Reg. Ass. for the purposes of functions in relation to EU funding”
  - Statutory functions in relation to the development and implementation of RPGs
  - “Current economic conditions”
New arrangements and provisions (selected):

- Functions in relation to the Regional OPs and EU funding
- Reg. Authority projects, particularly involving EU funding
- Strengthened functions and play a significant strategic role promoting greater horizontal and vertical cooperation
- Key strategic planning and oversight role. “Support strategic planning and coordination in relation to spatial/development planning, which is the most compelling rationale for a regional dimension...”
- Adopting and overseeing RPGs with an augmented economic dimension. These being recast as a *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*
- Enhanced input of agencies and sectors (EI, IDA, higher education, etc.)
- Economic development strategies will have appropriate legal and administrative underpinning. Mandatory requirements bodies to:
  - Input and participate in development of regional strategies
  - Set clear targets consistent with the regional strategies
  - Be accountable to the regional assemblies through reporting
- “not considered necessary to create directly elected regional entities”
Putting People First – 3 Regions with Regional Assemblies

Spatial rationale:

- “Each of the current RA areas incorporated without fragmentation with the exception of the Border Region”
- “East and Midlands counties sufficiently intertwined as a region”
- “Minimise adverse impact on level of EU funding”
- “Wider configurations will also achieve greater inclusiveness of the variety of regional configurations of different bodies and sectors”

Three regional strategy docs. But the component areas (RAs) will continue to be important for spatial and economic planning purposes.
Questions

- Are the regional boundaries supportive of bottom-up regional development processes?
- Are the remit and administrative/legal underpinnings sufficient to facilitate a process of bottom-up regional development?
- Issues with implementation/scheduling?
  - New Regional Assemblies established after election 2014
  - Current OP runs to 2013
  - Who develops OPs for new regions?