

LEVEND, Sinan; ERDEM, Rahmi

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## EVALUATING STRATEGICAL SPATIAL PLANNING APPROACH IN CASE OF ISTANBUL

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# **EVALUATING STRATEGICAL SPATIAL PLANNING APPROACH IN CASE OF ISTANBUL<sup>1</sup>**

**Sinan LEVEND**

**Rahmi ERDEM**

## **Abstract**

In Turkey, The law of Institutional Strategic Planning (ISP) issued in order to compliance with European Union is unfortunately insufficient recovering spatial-oriented strategic planning (SSP) decisions. There is not a fundamental Spatial Strategic Planning model based on strategic spatial planning and an integrated structure that can be coordinated with both the strategic plans prepared by municipalities and strategic plans prepared by the government. Strategic Spatial Planning (SSP) process that sub-units have to correspond is not clearly defined although the Public Strategic Plan is mandatory by the legal regulation.

Istanbul as a metropolis has got a lot of urbanization problems. Its operational planning boundaries surpass its provincial boundaries. It exposes to a high level of risk because of earthquake, and its natural and cultural values are under threat because of rapid urbanization. The need for a planning organization that is taken as a whole up to the scale of urban design, transparent, comprehensive participated, cooperative and continuous is the major undisputed fact.

This paper aims to evaluate SSP approach in Turkey in the case of Istanbul. For this purpose, firstly a literature review is conducted to define Strategical Planning. Eventually, in Istanbul Institutional Strategical Planning and Environment Arrangement Planning (100000 scale) are analyzed and these plans are evaluated in terms of adequacy of strategical planning approach.

**Key Words:** strategic, strategical spatial planning, Istanbul

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## **Strategical Spatial Planning**

Strategy owes its scientific development to its importance in military field. Strategy in military meaning is the art of designing and managing the movements and operations of militaries in case of war (Yılmaz, 2007). Lexically it means integral- comprehensive action against tactics (Bilsel, 1990).

According to Kaufman & Jacobs (1987), strategic planning was started to be used in 1950s in private sector. The origin of it comes from effective planning and management for changing and growing needs of legal people. At the start of 1970s, the managers in America started to be interested in strategic planning due to negative situations such as oil crisis, democratic problems and economic instabilities. Traditional planning systems were insufficient in terms of producing solutions for problems arising due to the problems which have reached to different dimensions in settlements systems). Starting from the 1980s many scientific studies in America highlighted the usage of strategic planning approach for the development of local government and common world (Albrechts, 2001b). However, flexible and negotiation-based strategic spatial planning approach was started to be used in some cities of Europe and America.

Strategic Spatial Planning has been perceived and adapted in different ways because of different planning traditions and legal arrangements of the countries. Therefore, since the day it was started to be perceived as a new approach to today, many meaning and content has been given to this approach.

Preuss (2003) emphasizes that strategic spatial planning is mostly relevant to regional and metropolitan scale which is between country scale and local scale. Long term developing strategies and general frame should be formed in order to lead regional spatial development. Strategic policies needs to be revised in certain time intervals and new strategies should be determined according to changing conditions in order to provide the continuity of strategic perspective (Yıldız, 2006).

According to Albrechts (2001a), strategic planning has been developed as a method to associate long and short term objectives with different objectives and strategies (country-region- urban-urban sub-region); it has been developed as a method which will provide participation of different actors. Traditional planning estimates that current trends will continue. But strategic planning projects also new trends, discontinuities and surprises. Strategic planning projects “uncertainties of future” against “determining future” mission of static planning.

Strategic Spatial Planning process can be defined as below:

- It focuses on limited number of static keys. It adapts a critical view about environment which will put the strong and weak parts of opportunities and threats and it evaluates outer trends and current resources.

- It determines the main participants and brings them together (private and public)
- It gives opportunity for wide (multilevel governance) and different (public, economic and civil society) participation.
- It develops different leveled (realistic), long term mission/perspective and strategies; it takes power structures into consideration; it designs uncertainties and competitive values planning structures and it develops the content; it creates vision and decision frames for Spatial change and management.
- It is related with forming new ideas and processes which will move forward. By doing so, it forms the agreements; it creates new ideas to affect different areas, make organization and provide movement capability.
- It has focused on both short and long term decisions, activities, results and application. It includes elements such as observation, feedback and revision.

This planning shows that strategic spatial planning isn't a single directional perspective, procedure and tool. Strategic Spatial planning is a concept, procedure and tools of events and it may be changed for different situations to reach the desired one (Albrechts, 2001b).

METREX (Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas) lists the functions of strategic Spatial Planning as below (METREX, 1999; Yıldız, 2006):

1. Strategic Spatial Planning puts development decisions through a general open strategy and integrated sectorial and regional policy, program and projects.
2. Strategic Spatial Planning considers the carrying capacities of ecosystems and it puts the most proper development strategies to provide protection and sustainability for natural, cultural and environmental values.
3. Strategic spatial planning determines future long term development strategies. In order to provide sustainable development, validity and affectivity of the determined strategy needs to be regularly revised.
4. Strategic spatial planning and development should also consider social, economic and environmental situations. In addition to this, sectorial and regional subjects should be integrated and they should be balanced with environmental values.

Strategic plan is a document which covers all of the strategies that are going to be followed to reach a defined object. It states long term object and principles to which short term projects and tactics need to adapt. It states positive and negative results which are possible to be arisen from conducted projects and applications. Independent, alternative scenarios are prepared for each of the conditions that may arise in future. So a preparation is done for the unexpected

developments. Later on, uncertainties may be decreased by continuously watching and evaluating the current developments. The scenario that is to be followed is decided. The process of strategic spatial planning is as Figure 1 (Aysu et al. 2006).

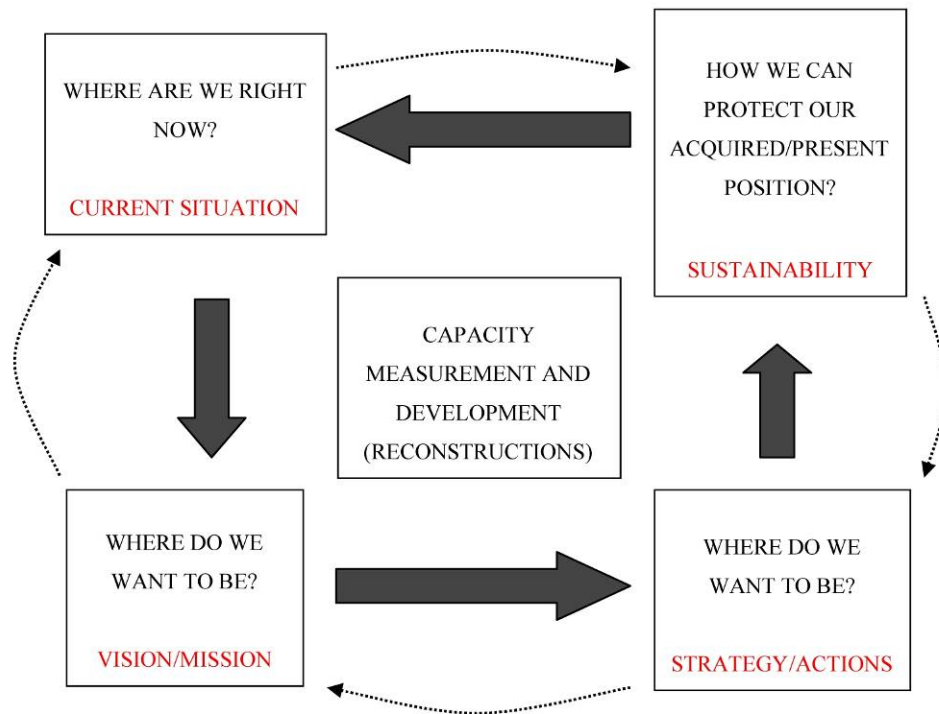


Figure 1: Strategic Planning Process

The success of strategic planning follows a parallel path with participation, transparency and accountability. Seeing strategic planning as a social process rather than a technical one requires mutual and active work of politic and economic organizations, social dynamics on this process (Yıldız and Çıracı, 2006). By this way, it is also ensured than the public adapt the plan.

### Strategic Spatial Planning In Europe

Strategic Spatial planning mainly includes regional and metropolitan area scale but day by day, it starts to include inter countries and Europe scale (Yıldız, 2006). Creating a common policy agenda on sustainable development, economic competitiveness and social integration requires countries to develop common strategies and cooperate with each other (Albrechts et al. 2003).

The need for developing Spatial development strategies of metropolitan areas, improving local potentials according to global scale evaluation, considering sustainable development principles, adapting a planning approach where related groups and public participation in Europe is visible (Çıracı and Yıldız, 2006). Enhancing regional scale in the strategic developments of metropolitan areas and developing management capacity issues have an important place on the politic agenda of Europe. In 1999 European Spatial Development Perspective report of European Commission, economic and social integration, sustainable development, balanced competitiveness within Europe, the need for

developing policies at the scale of metropolitan area are highlighted (CEC, 1999). These policies are given below:

- Social integration, equality and reconstruction in urban areas,
- Protecting and amending urban environment for global and local sustainability,
- Enhancing city management and local managements.

Although planning system may change from country to country in terms of institutional arrangements, legal and managerial procedures; the developments in recent years are in the direction of participation of public and private groups to planning process for determining regional development strategies and developing institutional interaction and a planning approach based on common consensus (Çıracı and Yıldız, 2006). In this respect, inter-institutional relationships, creating a policy agenda, determining the responsibilities of related groups, developing new partnerships and strategic approaches are important subjects (Healey, 2000).

Thus, starting from the recent strategic spatial planning experiences of metropolitan areas in Europe, common strategies such as enhancing the roles of regions in Europe and world economy, creating a center of attraction for economic activities, developing high level functions etc. are developed in order to reach the objects of European Spatial Development Perspective. Together with these, METREX which has been formed to exchange information about spatial planning and strategic development in order to provide corporation between cities in Europe and contribute to the metropolitan dimension of planning at European scale conducts studies and projects for strategic spatial development of metropolitan areas. METREX which was found with the support of European Commission in 1996, develops measures to increase the affectivity of strategic spatial planning in metropolitan area scale and develop institutional capacity in order to reach the objects of European Spatial Development Perspective. METREX (2003) has determined standards about authorization in strategic spatial planning at metropolitan area scale within country spatial planning system integration, participation of public and private interest groups, non-governmental organizations and society to planning, application, control and revision of plan (Çıracı and Yıldız, 2006).

Recently, creating a common policy agenda on sustainable development, economic competitiveness and social integration in Europe has required countries to develop common strategies and make corporations. The objective “Providing a multi-centered and balanced development in Europe” which was put forward with European Spatial Development Perspective which was developed to determine spatial development strategies about European Union and spatial development strategies on country scale and is seen as a significant policy for European Commission and EU member countries(Çıracı and Yıldız, 2006).

In this part of study, it will be beneficial to give examples from London Strategic Plan and Zurich Plan which are analyzed due to differences in means of plan management, plan qualifications and organization.

### **London Plan**

Reasons such as population increase related with global changes, economic growth, environmental problems, change of lifestyle and technological changes required strategic spatial planning; therefore 1999 dated Big London Management Law gave the Mayor authorization to produce strategic plan of London. At the end of a long preparation process, London Spatial Development Strategy Plan was confirmed in 2004. Instead of current strategic directions, new directions were projected in the plan; local plans were handled again in terms of compliance to this plan. London Plan was tried to comply with national policies and international obligations (Big London Management Laws, AMGP and EU regulations) (Sinacı, 2009).

London Plan is a plan which may differentiate from other strategic plans due to its method and fiction and legal bases. London Strategy Plan was given under the responsibility of Mayor as a legal obligation within the frame of laws that have been determined by government in advance and country policies that have been determined in laws. The mission of determining vision and strategy about city was given to local president who knew the city best and other local service units were also legally given under the order of president to support application of plan.

The most important subject in determining the vision of London is to sustain its development as a world city in order to protect its competitive power over world with an environment-sensitive approach. For determining the strategies, first of all the basic problems of London were put forward and strategic objects were determined with a solution-solving approach. First of all, the residents of London were considered and their problems were focused. Main studies about this subject are transportation, public common places, social unions and the adaptation of minorities, unemployment, inadequacy and low quality of housing. Besides, environmental problems and global warming issue have been given importance and objects and effective application tools and organization structures were determined for this subject.

The basic strategy of London Strategic Plan is “integrated and multi-centered development”. Targets of the plan are; growing without spreading to open areas within London borders; directing the growing to most needed places; becoming a much richer country with strong and multi-directional economic growth; accomplishing social integration; solving separation and exclusion problems; developing the accessibility of city; providing cheap housing; developing social services; establishing justice in accessing to the opportunities of the city (Sinacı, 2009).

The factors that affect the success of London Strategic Plan are creating planning decisions as sub-regions, active participation of all relevant regions to planning process, establishing partnerships and

sub-groups for authorization confusions that delay the solution of problems or development of city (Sinaci, 2009).

London plan put forwards some performance criteria in order to accomplish the objective of plan and the progress on the application of policies is observed also. Design is highlighted in projects which are done with the corporation of public, private sector and non-governmental organizations and principals are determined for a better design.

Finally, London Strategic Plan is an example of successful strategic plan because it priorities human needs and rights; there is a legal basis and although the main decisions were given from a single center, multi-stakeholders worked for giving and applying the objectives dependent on target.

### **Zurich Planning Approach**

The basic policy in Zurich region is inward urban development. It objects to peripheral development. Criteria of Zurich plan is mostly about promoting and giving opportunity. The weakest part of the plan is that it doesn't include limitative criteria. This is the solution of protecting the plan from the threats of non-confirmation. Limitations of the government about construction on the periphery are insufficient. Also there isn't a limitation that restricts inward urban road projects in future (Eryoldaş, 2006).

Traditional plan making is getting decreased in Switzerland. Plan making process is focusing on two points. The first one is determining spatial strategies as a reference frame in cantons and the second one is preparing action plans for significant areas. Therefore, investment and private sector are given chances by this way. Wide range of analytical planning studies is replaced with planning models where actors are compromised and an agreement has been settled. Here the role of planner is to become a moderator who takes part in compromising process. The planners have to know where successful projects are done; they have to spread and explain this project to other people (Eryoldaş, 2006).

The previous Zurich canton level planning has a traditionally limiting planning approach. Instead of a planning understanding that states the suitable and unsuitable regions for development, a planning understanding that states to investors which regions are preferred for investments is brought.

### **Strategic Spatial Planning Studies in Turkey**

When strategic spatial planning process on a metropolitan scale in Turkey is evaluated according to new planning approaches in Europe; since there isn't a healthy planning systematic within country spatial planning integration; there are significant problems in determining the strategies of metropolitan areas. Inexplicit and unclear definition of authorization and responsibilities in legal regulations of planning causes authorization contradictions between both central management and Metropolitan Municipality and central management ministries. Judicial process is operated for the



solution of contradictions. Since there isn't an integrity and harmony between planning legislation and local management legislation; the problems and uncertainties of planning system and authorizations continue. From the studies on the subject, it is known that there isn't a basic strategic planning model based on a tested strategic spatial planning in Turkey; the design of such model has a privileged and significant role (Çıracı and Yıldız 2006).

Preparing institutional strategic plan in Turkey became legally obligatory with 5216 coded Metropolitan Municipality Law, 5393 coded Municipality Law, 5018 coded Public Financial Management Control Law and 5302 coded Province Private Administration Law within Local Management Reform Program. Thus, ministries, municipalities form the legal basic of province private administrations and institutional strategic plan application (Kalkan, Çetiz and Akay, 2005). Together with arrangements in local management laws and other laws, strategic planning became a legal obligation for many local management units.

Although institutionally producing strategic plans is obligatory, Turkey couldn't form the legal frame of strategic spatial planning in planning legislation, the relationship between institutional strategic plans and space is getting weaker. Besides, although there isn't a relation between 1/100000 scaled Master Plans and Institutional Strategic Plans in terms of spatial strategy, these plans should be prepared harmonically because annual objectives, investment programs and institutional strategic plans preparing budget become determinant for applying strategies that are determined with spatial strategy plans (Yıldız, 2006). Therefore, it is very important to consider spatial strategy plans in preparing institutional strategic plans.

### **Strategic Spatial Planning Studies in Istanbul**

Istanbul Metropolitan Area has entered into a quick growing era especially within the last 50 years, and has presented an unhealthy development due to unplanned and uncontrolled structuring. Institutional strategic plan which was made obligatory in order to overcome these problems was prepared in 2006. But since legal dimension of strategic spatial planning hasn't been organized yet, 1/100000 scaled Master Plan for Istanbul which was prepared with a strategic approach have been analyzed instead of Institutional Strategic Plan which was made legally obligatory in Istanbul.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality prepared institutional strategic plans for 2007-2010 periods in 2006. In this plan which was approved in Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Council, there were decisions affecting direct spatial planning and explanations, policies and strategies for the management of planning process. It has been stated under strategies for planning unit that 1/100000 scaled Master Plan is going to be made.

Within this frame, a protocol dated 01/12/2004 was signed between Ministry of Environment and Forest and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality about preparing Istanbul Province Environment Plan in 2005. According to this protocol, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality was authorized to make

1/100000 scaled Master Plan for a 5,400 km<sup>2</sup> area including Metropolitan Municipality borders which was widened to include the whole Istanbul province.

In order to accomplish preparing of 1/100000 scaled Master Plan and 1/25000 scaled Master Plan; the tenders made by directorates of Department of Planning and Construction Office were undertaken by BİMTAŞ A.Ş., one of the companies of Municipality. A working group including over 300 academicians and experts and called as Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Urban Design Center (UDC) was formed within this frame. The plan was produced in abovementioned center with the studies of 15 different sector group and relevant unit authorities of Municipality.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Council accepted the 1/100000 scaled Master Plan with the decision dated 14/07/2006 and the plan was confirmed by the President of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in 22.08.2006. Although this confirmed plan was prepared with strategic spatial planning approach, it was legally a 1/100000 scaled Master Plan. But the execution of plan was stopped by Administrative Court in 2008.

Thereupon, it was revised again within the direction of the working team constituted within Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Urban Planning Directorate and the decisions of Administrative Court and it was confirmed in 15/06/2009.

The basic approach of the plan was to overcome the conflicts between natural and artificial environment systems and develop relationships that may provide sustainability of relationship between socio-economic activities and natural resources.

In addition to this, it is aimed to decentralize, restructure the labor in terms of country and region, create sustainability of natural structure and life; produce regional planning strategies in transportation and logistics functions.

During planning, sustainability, democratic attendance and gaining social elements to Istanbul city have been emphasized. According to this, single centered function which makes the basis of structural problems of Istanbul Metropolitan Area will be transferred to multi-centralization and amending the natural structure by protection form the basic objectives. Within this frame, the plan has been prepared with the consideration of a multi-centered and balanced regional development approach which includes differentiated precautions for the problems and potentials of Marmara Region and to be integrate with Trakya and Kocaeli 1/100000 scaled Master Plans. European Spatial Development Perspective criteria were taken as an example during the production of decisions related with Economic, Social and Ecologic Environment. Besides, it was aimed to make necessary participation promotions and provide functional integration between institutional and spatial strategic plans (Figure 2).

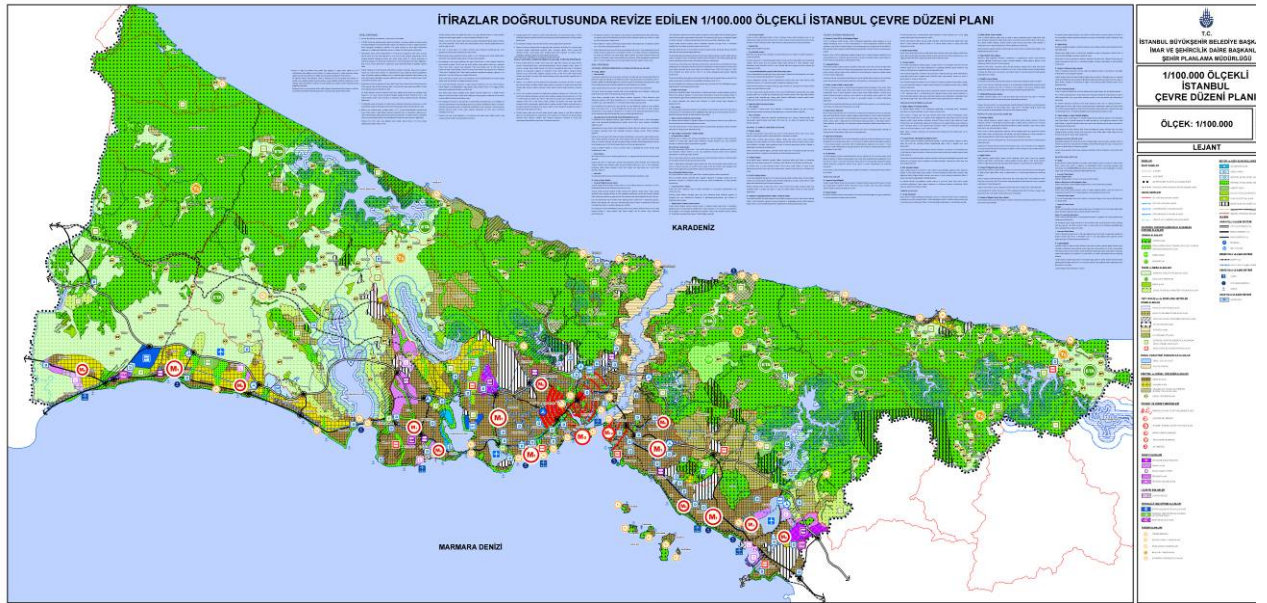


Figure 2: Istanbul Master Plan

Planning process of Istanbul although being a process of understanding the importance of participation, highlighting the participation of NGOs, supporting public-private corporations it hasn't reached a sufficient affectivity in participation. But on the other hand, it could be evaluated as a process which handles working groups and economic-social perspective of city together; aims to increase global competitiveness by evaluating the potentials of city; combines physical planning decisions and long term strategic policies. It is aware that planning problems of a metropolitan such as IMP (Istanbul Metropolitan Planning Department), Istanbul cannot be solved within city borders and it continues its studies to produce regional scale planning policies and decisions (Özalp 2006). In addition to this, it projects that a single centered development isn't sufficient, multi-centered development should be supported for a healthy and realistic planning process.

Even though they are different in means of plan qualifications and organization; London and Zurich strategic spatial planning approaches which may be showed as good examples have been compared in Table 1(Levend 2008). As it can be also seen here, in spite of amendments during EU harmonization process, sufficient participation level hasn't been reached. Besides, there isn't a legal infrastructure for Strategic Spatial Planning in Turkey; Istanbul Strategic Spatial Planning study weakens the legal infrastructures of strategic spatial planning.

Table 1: Comparing Strategic Spatial Planning Approaches of London, Zurich and Istanbul (Levend 2008)

<b>COMPARING STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING APPROACHES OF LONDON, ZURICH AND ISTANBUL</b>				
	<b>London</b>	<b>Zurich</b>	<b>Istanbul 2006</b>	<b>Istanbul 2009</b>
<b>There Is A Strategic Approach</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Planning Studies Are Conducted By An Administrative Organization</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Special Budget Is Provided For Strategic Planning Studies With Law</b>	✓	-	-	-
<b>Participation Is Enabled</b>	✓	✓	-	✓
<b>Vision Compounds Are Defined</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>There Is A Legal Basis</b>	✓	✓	-	-
<b>Main Decisions Are Taken On A Single Center</b>	✓	-	-	-
<b>Approach To Planning Sectorial</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Highest Representatives Of Corporations Lead Strategic Planning Studies</b>	✓	-	-	-
<b>It Put Forwards Some Performance Criteria And The Recorded Progress Is Observed</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Transparency Is Important</b>	✓	✓	-	✓
<b>A Vision For Future Is Formed For City By Moving From Potentials, Weaknesses</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Planning Process Include Not Only Planners But Also Different Actors</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Plan Has Been Handled With An Integrative Approach</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Necessary Infrastructure Is Present For Making A Plan</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Plan Also Includes Environmental And Social Protection Issues</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>In A Strategic Plan, Forming A Global Vision Is Focused On</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Plan Has Formed A Comprehensive Platform Which Doesn't Exclude Any Sector</b>	✓	✓	-	-
<b>Beside Of Being Leveled, Strategic Plan Includes All Unit And Activation Areas</b>	✓	✓	-	-

## **Conclusion**

In world, strategic planning experiences show great differences from country to country and even sometimes city to city. Countries interpret strategic planning according to their own planning understandings. In spite of that, common strategies such as reaching Europe Spatial Development Perspective objectives, enhancing the roles of regions in Europe and world economy, forming a center of attraction for economic activities, developing high quality functions etc.

In Europe, METREX was formed to exchange information about spatial planning strategic developments and contribute to the metropolitan dimension of planning at European scale. Therefore, criteria for increasing spatial planning at metropolitan scale and developing institutional capacity have been developed.

In Turkey, it seems that strategic planning understanding which is a policies and criteria system will mark the future of our urbanization process. Institutional strategic planning law which was discussed at academic level and introduced within European Union harmonization laws is insufficient for producing spatial-based strategic plan decisions.

But strategic planning which became legally obligatory is being tried to be adapted to public (together with the pressure of European Union harmonization process). It should be included within public management and space planning according to original conditions of Turkey not as a mold that was presented in strategic planning approach and free from hastiness.

Establishing a healthy planning system requires first of all making legal arrangements that clearly and openly defines missions and authorizations. But although Public Strategic Plan was made obligatory on legal arrangements, Strategic Spatial Planning process which should be done by sub-units wasn't openly and clearly defined. In addition to this, although the law makes it obligatory for institutions (municipalities, province special administrations) to separately make Public Strategic Plan, it hasn't stated a coordination table which shows the limits and relationships of these. As a result of this, strategic plan processes are performed in different managerial levels but deprived of information exchange and disconnected to each other. The coordination of Spatial-Sectorial- Institutional plans is both conceptually important and meaningful in means of application levels and accomplishing objectives.

Within this frame, with the objective of increasing urban quality and life standards, a transition ( within the frame of sub-titles such as enhancement, amendment, protection, enlivening) which has legal, social, cultural, economic and physical dimensions should develop a spatial strategy planning understanding for Istanbul. Therefore, instead of area usage of Istanbul high scale plan, a strategic plan which has aim, capacity, process, resource, application tool and similar dimensions should be adapted.

It is an indisputable fact that a metropolitan area such as Istanbul whose functional planning borders exceed the borders of province, which has a great urbanization problem, whose natural and cultural values are under threat and which is subjected to disaster risk especially earthquake needs a planning organization that is considered as a whole from high level spatial strategy plan to urban design scale, transparent, participative and continuing.

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