

Call for Papers for a Special Issue on:

Innovative Land Policies in Europe

Scope

For the first time in decades, land policies are again high on the political and public agenda in many European countries. This is caused by the concurrence of multiple debates which are overwhelming established planning approaches. For example, calls for more – and more affordable – housing have become more prominent again, especially in urban agglomerations (DifU/vhw 2017), due to the strong rise in asset prices. However, easy solutions through urban expansion are unviable as awareness of the detrimental ecological consequences of a continued conversion of agricultural land into urban land has grown, resulting in calls for a reduction of net land take (land thrift) (EEA/FOEN 2016; Colsaet 2019). These debates challenge the development of adequate strategies through land policies (Hartmann/Spit 2018; Jehling/Hecht 2022). Land policies consider (changes in) the framework of rights and obligations that ownership of land entails, which – depending on the definition and national legal framework – is either part of planning or goes beyond it. Land policies are applied by actors and comprise instruments such as building obligations, pre-emption rights, land value capture and development strategies that rely on the public ownership of land (Gerber/Hartmann/Hengstermann 2018).

The current urgency of many topics of land policies is triggering the development of new approaches and instruments. There are numerous examples of such innovations, either proposed or already legally implemented (Hartmann/Hengstermann 2019). In Germany, for example, bans on new single-family homes and the nationalization of housing associations are being discussed. Switzerland is experimenting with building obligations to push inward development. Some Austrian states are reviving the idea of public land banking. In the Netherlands, land readjustment was recently introduced to reduce financial risks for municipalities in land development. Also, the idea of public value capture has gained attraction in the Czech Republic and England (Askew 2018). In France, new (rather strict) regulations on land development foster affordable housing (Guelton 2018). These are only a few examples of innovations in land policies (Shahab/Hartmann/Jonkman 2021). In this special issue, we compile current developments in the land policies of various countries worldwide, with a focus on Europe, with regard to sustainable spatial development, to allow a cross-country comparison without neglecting the locational specificity of new measures. This special issue seeks to explore such innovations in their respective contexts.

Research Gap

While there has been a recent surge in political and scientific interest in the development of new strategies and instruments of land policies (e.g. Adrian/Bock/Bunzel et al. 2018; Jehling/Hecht/Herold 2018), the often-times national discussions rarely inform each other (Oxley/Brown/Nadin et al. 2009). Many countries worldwide are facing similar challenges and have also initiated or already implemented legal reforms that reposition property rights in land and affect how public land policies can interfere with these rights.

Aim

The aim of this special issue is to collect inspiring and relevant cases of recent developments in land policies from different countries to open a discussion and allow for reflection on viable pathways to inform the international debate on sustainable urban development through land policies. The proposed special issue addresses material and procedural changes in fields such as land management, land banking, cooperative land development models and land use planning.

The special issue is closely linked to the ARL International Working Group “Land Policies in Europe”. The aim of the group is to make international experiences available for the German debate on land policies.

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Timetable

The timetable projected is as follows:

- Deadline for abstract submission: 30th June 2022.
- Authors receive feedback on their submitted abstracts: 31st July 2022.
- Deadline for submission of completed manuscripts: 31st October 2022.
- The initial online publication (online first) will take place approximately four weeks after the respective contribution has been accepted.
- The print publication of the special issue is scheduled for summer 2023.

The Guest Editors will be happy to answer any questions regarding content. For organisational questions, please contact the editor-in-chief Prof. Dr. Andreas Klee (klea@arl-net.de).