Recommendations for relevant policies being developed for EU 27
This VOLANTE Deliverable D2.4 gives a reflection on recommendations for European policy development, as far as relevant for land use at the European level. It summarises the main conclusions of the entire Work Package 2 (Policy effects, interaction and institutions) thus far. In the further course of the VOLANTE project these recommendations will still be refined and extended on the basis of stakeholder experiences and analysis of land use transition processes in other Work Packages, so as to optimally inform the VOLANTE Roadmapping Process.

The assessment of clear-cut cause-effect policy impacts on land use appears to be a very complex matter because of many interactions:

- EU policy interacts with national and regional policies;
- EU policy interacts with global, European, national and local market development and demographic dynamics;
- various EU policies may have counteracting or mutually amplifying effects on land use;
- policy effectiveness is to a large extent determined by compliance patterns in member states, and interactions of EU, national and local governance frameworks.

Moreover, astonishingly little research evidence is available on the effectiveness of policies in achieving land use transitions (Cosor et al., 2013). This can be understood from the fact that land use as such is not a well-defined policy competence at EU level, and neither in most member countries. For the same reason it seems also that research in this effectiveness is not widely advocated, because of lacking direct political implications. It is clear, however, that many policies have effects on land use.

VOLANTE Work Package 2 focusses on these Policy effects on the shorter term, and especially on the effects of the Habitat Directive and the Common Agricultural Policy. These have been studied in literature (VOLANTE Deliverables 2.1 and 2.2) and in a number of case studies (VOLANTE Deliverables 1.4 and 2.3). Additionally, for this deliverable we studied stakeholders’ perceptions of the cause-effect relationships regarding land use transition, using Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping. This enhanced the proper interpretation of the land use transition processes not accounted for by literature.

This Deliverable concludes that institutional issues are important aspects to address, if real policy outcomes are to be expected. Also, it is apparent that the state of concern for policy integration at EU level needs further attention, as issues like nature conservation, water quality, climate mitigation and adaptation, as well as agricultural and forestry development need to be addressed in common, in order to ensure cost-efficient solutions to the land systems development. Well defined choices concerning the implementation structures of policies, taking into due consideration the legacy from existing policy implementation are crucial in the policy integration process. This can help assure that the policy integration is not just stated at EC level and then forgotten in the subsequent implementation of integrated policies at national, regional and local levels, but carried out in the local landscapes.

These conclusions are extrapolated into a number of preliminary policy recommendations.