

Focus on European cities

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One crucial aspect of the Europe 2020 strategy is a greater focus on sustainable and socially inclusive growth in cities and urban areas, which are often major centres of economic activity as well as transport network hubs. As well as their importance for production, cities are also focal points for the consumption of energy and other materials, and are responsible for most greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, cities and urban regions often face a range of social difficulties, such as crime, poverty and social exclusion. The Urban Audit assesses the current situation and monitors developments across the cities of the [European Union \(EU\)](#), as well as Norway, Switzerland, Croatia and Turkey.

Main statistical findings

Cities are the home of most workplaces, businesses and tertiary education institutions. This chapter presents a few indicators reflecting some of the challenges cities and urban areas face, like the age structure of the population, students in tertiary education, unemployment and air pollution, as well as documenting perceptions in relation to the ease of finding a good job or difficulties faced when paying bills at the end of the month. The indicators presented are just a few examples, as these are but a few of the challenges.

Cities and urban areas

Based on an urban–rural typology (see Chapter 14), 40 % of the EU's population lived in predominantly urban regions, and a further 36 % in intermediate regions. The two most populous cities in the EU were London and Paris. Apart from these two megapolises, the EU has a polycentric structure of large, medium and small cities: Map 12.1 illustrates the distribution of city dwellers across a range of different-sized cities in Europe. Each circle on the map represents an Urban Audit city and the size of the circle reflects the number of inhabitants in the core city.

The latest Urban Audit data set includes 323 cities in the EU, of which only four capital cities had more than 3 million inhabitants, namely London (United Kingdom), Paris (France), Berlin (Germany) and Madrid (Spain), and another two had more than 2 million inhabitants, namely Athina (Greece) and Roma (Italy). Another 20 cities, of which 11 were capital cities, had a population of between 1 million and 2 million inhabitants. Apart from capital cities, the largest cities in the EU were Hamburg in Germany with 1.8 million inhabitants and Barcelona in Spain with 1.6 million inhabitants, while there were three other large French cities with over 1 million inhabitants (Lyon, Lille and Marseille), two more in Germany (München and Köln) and one each in Italy (Milano) and the United Kingdom (Birmingham).

There were 36 cities with a population of between half a million and 1 million inhabitants, including the following capital cities: Amsterdam (Netherlands), Rīga (Latvia), Vilnius (Lithuania) and København (Denmark). A further 72 cities were in the next tier, with populations ranging between a quarter of a million and half a million, including Bratislava, Tallinn and Ljubljana, the capital cities of Slovakia, Estonia and Slovenia. The Urban Audit also provides results from a further 189 smaller EU cities with fewer than 250 000 inhabitants. While the data set does not include every city in the EU, the capital cities of Lefkosia (Cyprus), Valletta (Malta) and Luxembourg all figured in this final category.

Within each size category mentioned (more than 2 million inhabitants, between 1 and 2 million, between half a million and one million, between a quarter and half a million and less than a quarter of a million) the aggregated population of all the cities covered by the Urban Audit was about the same, between 22.7 million and 27.4 million for each category. The entire population of the 323 Urban Audit cities was 127.6 million persons: Urban Audit information for 2008 is available for most of these.

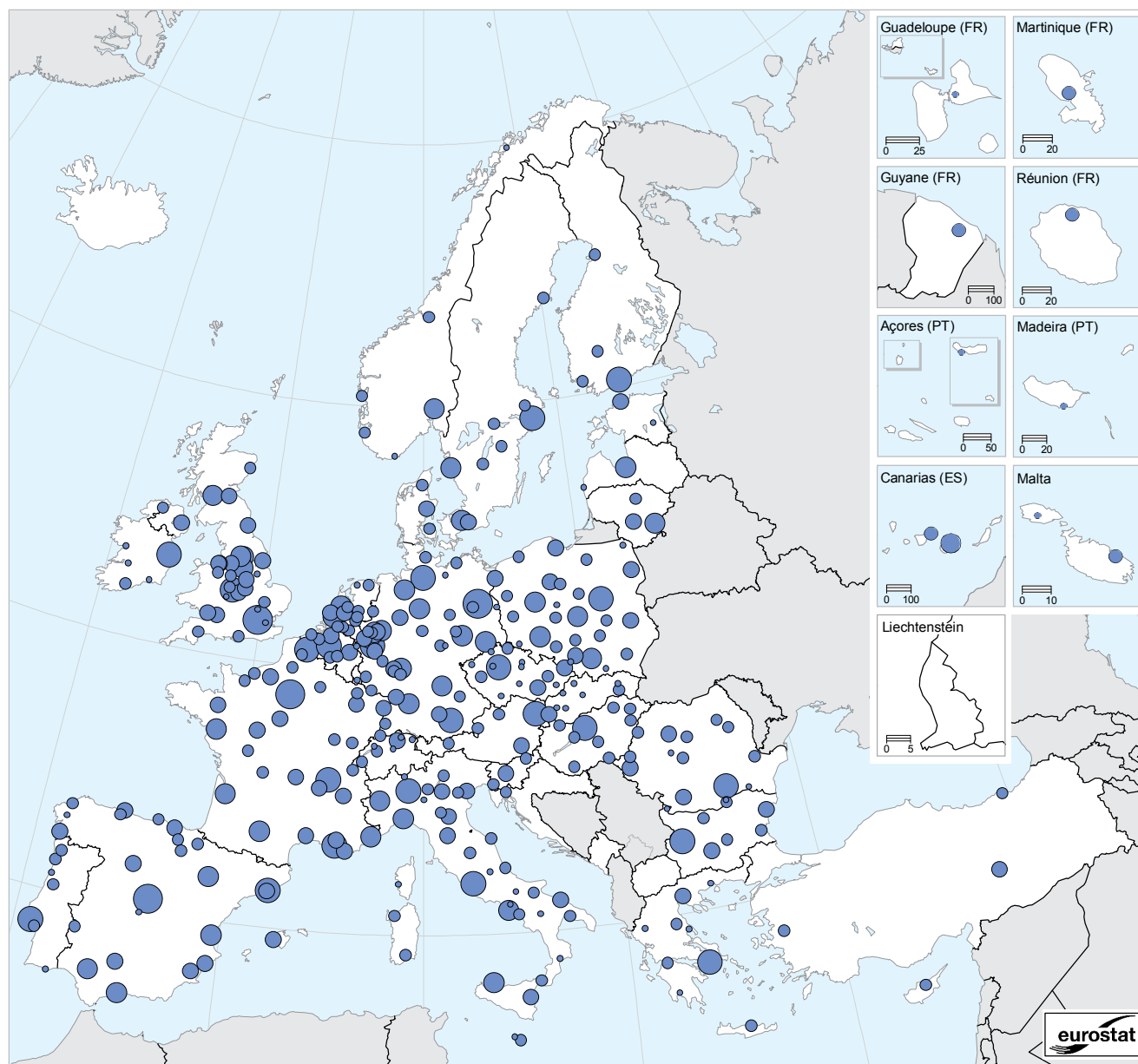
In Norway and Switzerland, the largest cities were Oslo with 560 000 persons and Zürich with 377 000, and there were no other cities with more than 250 000 persons.

Figure 12.1 analyses the capital cities in terms of their size relative to the national population. Valletta was the second smallest of all capital cities in the EU, but accounted for nearly half of the Maltese population (note that information on neighbouring localities has been added to the data for the administrative city of Valletta in agreement with the national statistical institute of Malta and the Directorate-General for Regional Policy). Five other capital cities accounted for more than one quarter of their national population: they were Riga, Tallinn, Lefkosia, Dublin (Ireland) and Athina. The largest cities in absolute terms, namely London and Paris, accounted for 12.5 % and 10.3 % of the population of the United Kingdom and France respectively. In four Member States the capital city had less than 5 % of the national population: this was the case in Roma, Warszawa (Poland), Berlin and Amsterdam.

Old-age dependency

Figure 12.2 shows two examples of how the age structure has changed over time in a capital city and a Member State as a whole. The example for Belgium and Bruxelles/Brussel shows how the developments have diverged: over time (moving from the inner rings to the outer rings) there is a greater share of younger persons (aged less than 20) and of working age persons (aged 20 to 64) in the capital city and a smaller share of older persons (aged 65 and over); whereas in the Belgian population as a whole the opposite developments can be observed for younger and older persons,

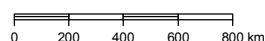
Map 12.1: Total resident population in Urban Audit core cities, 2008 ⁽¹⁾
(inhabitants)



(inhabitants)

- ≤ 100 000
- 100 000 – 250 000
- 250 000 – 500 000
- 500 000 – 1 000 000
- 1 000 000 – 3 000 000
- > 3 000 000

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, 03/2012

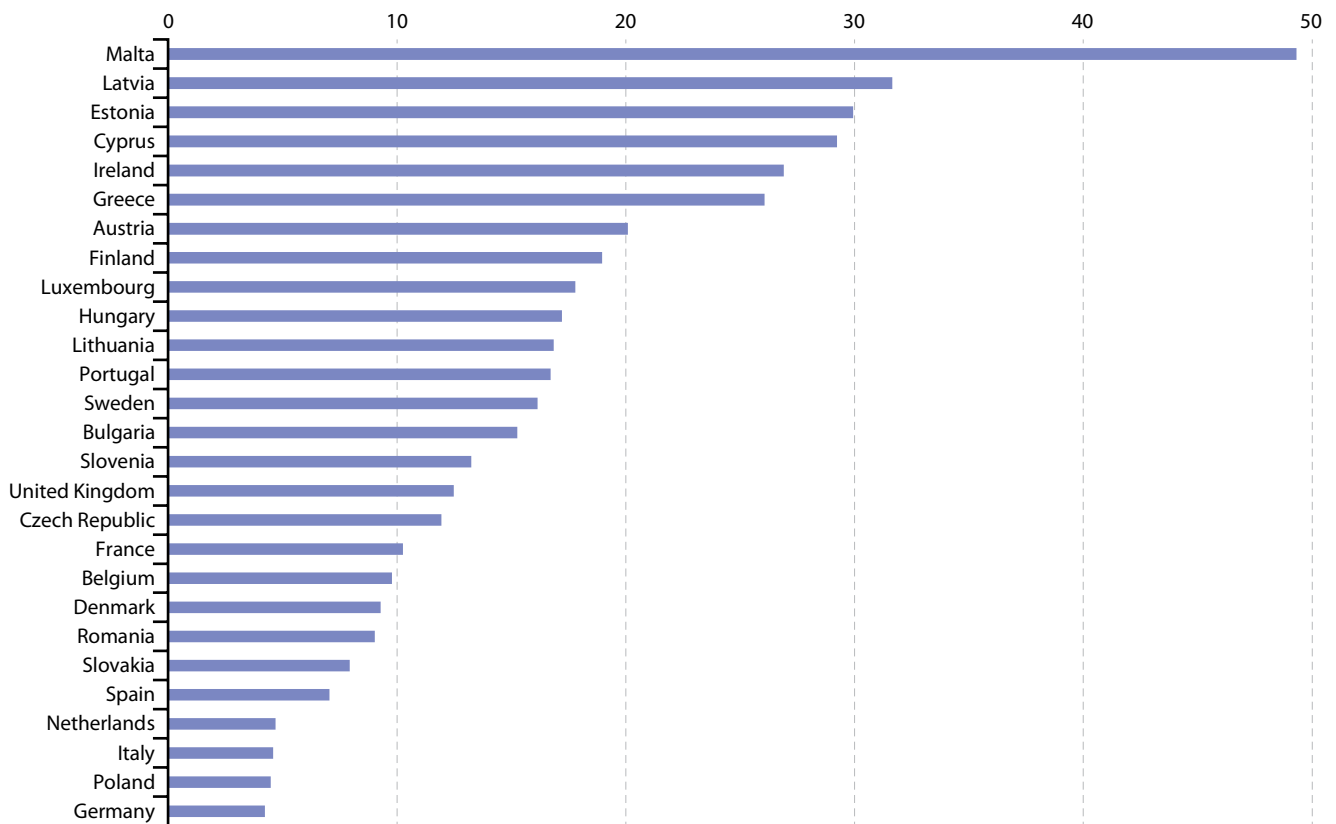


⁽¹⁾ The Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden (except Stockholm), 2011; France, 2006; Denmark, Ireland, Athina (EL), Rijeka (HR), Malatya (TR), Manisa (TR) and Trabzon (TR), 2004; Athina (EL), Paris (FR), Lisboa (PT), Helsinki (FI) and Stockholm (SE), kernel city.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [urb_icity](#))



Figure 12.1: Relative importance of the capital city in relation to national population, 2008 ⁽¹⁾
(% share of total population)



⁽¹⁾ The Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands and Portugal, 2011; France, 2006; Ireland, 2005; Denmark and Greece, 2004; Dublin (IE), Athina (EL), Paris (FR), Lisboa (PT), Helsinki (FI) and Stockholm (SE), kernel city.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: urb_icity)

with a more stable share for persons of working age. The second example, namely for Roma and Italy, shows how the developments in the capital city reflect the overall developments in the country as a whole, with a steadily increasing share of older persons in the population, and increasing and then decreasing share of working age persons; the share of younger persons fell in Roma and in Italy over most of the time period presented, but increased in Roma in the latest period (2008).

The ratio between the number of older persons and those of working age is referred to as the old-age dependency ratio, and this is shown in Map 12.2 for 323 Urban Audit cities in the EU and 18 cities in Norway, Switzerland and Turkey: note that the data are generally for the year 2008 or 2011, but for some cities the data are from 2006 or 2004. Cities with an old-age dependency rate in excess of 35% were mainly located in Italy (18 cities including Roma and Milano) and Germany (11 cities), with two cities in France and one in Greece. Among the 10 cities with a rate above 40% all except Mülheim an der Ruhr (Germany) were in Italy, with Trieste (49.8%) and Genova (46.5%) at the top of the ranking.

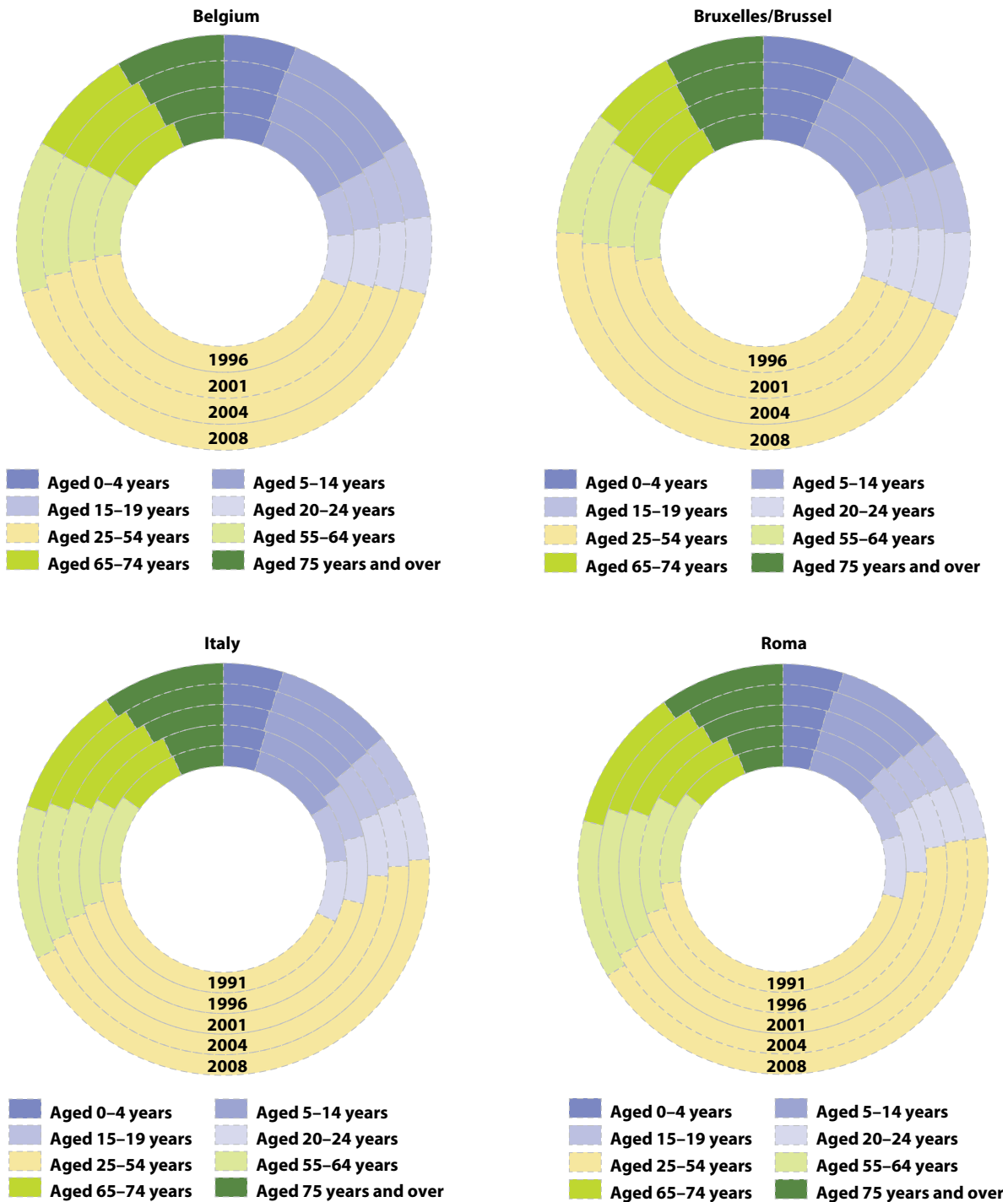
The lowest rate was 9.3% in Cayenne, Guyane (France). In total there were 61 cities with an old-age dependency rate of 20% or less: 12 were in Romania, 10 in Poland, between five and seven each were in Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria and the Netherlands and the remaining 14 were spread across nine different Member States. In among these cities with relatively low old-age dependency rates were eight capital cities, including the largest city (London) and two others with more than 1 million inhabitants (Helsinki and Dublin).

Students in tertiary education

Whether cities experience a so-called 'brain drain' or a 'brain gain' depends on a number of factors, including their ability to attract students to their colleges and universities. Retaining university and college graduates in the city is the next step to establishing a skilled workforce. Map 12.3 shows the number of students in universities and other tertiary education establishments per 1000 resident population. Generally, large cities tended to have a relatively low value for this ratio, although many host prestigious and large universities. Almost all participating countries have so-called 'university cities'.



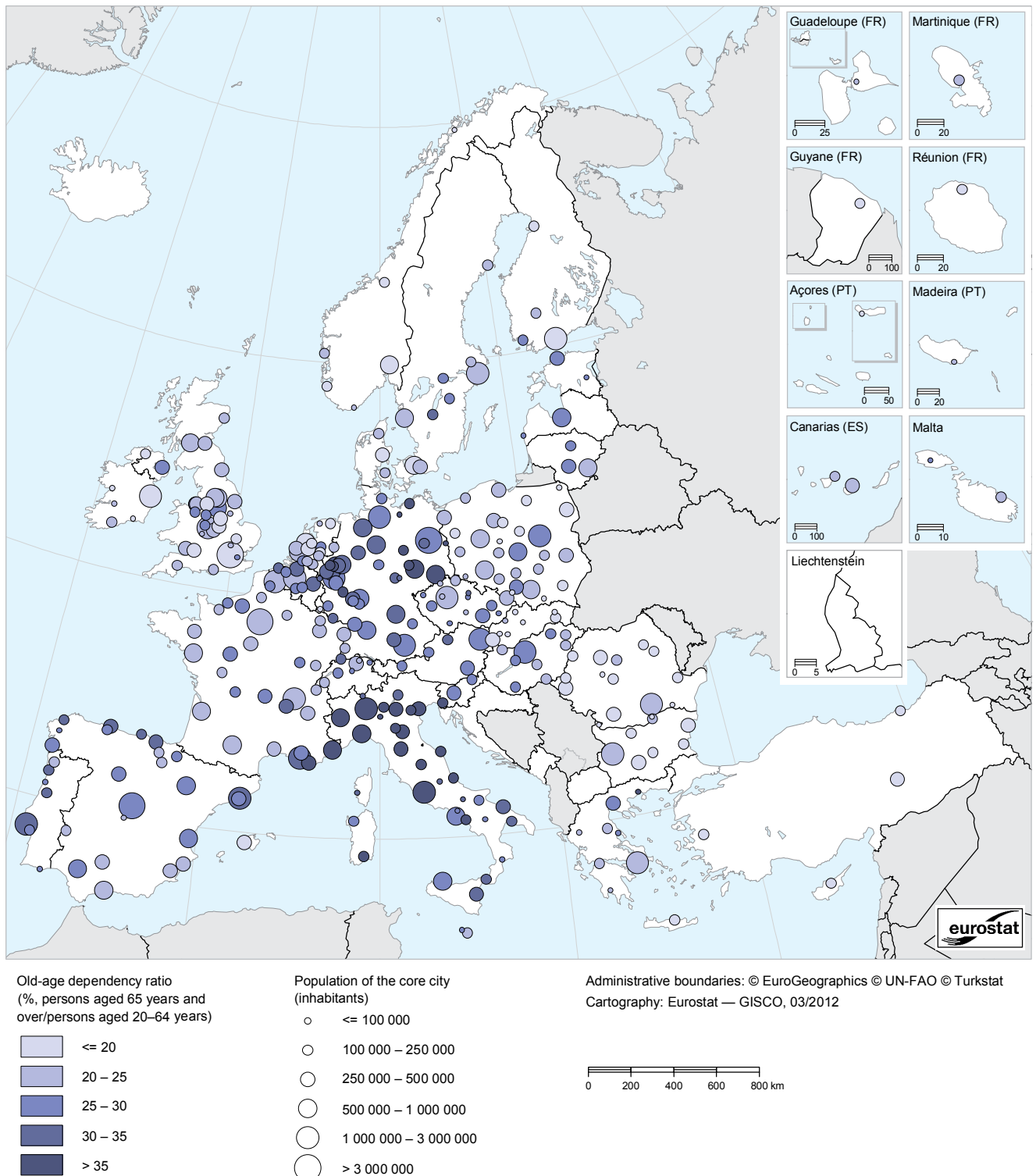
Figure 12.2: Age structure of the population for Bruxelles/Brussel and Roma compared with Belgium and Italy (% share of total population)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: [urb_icity](#))



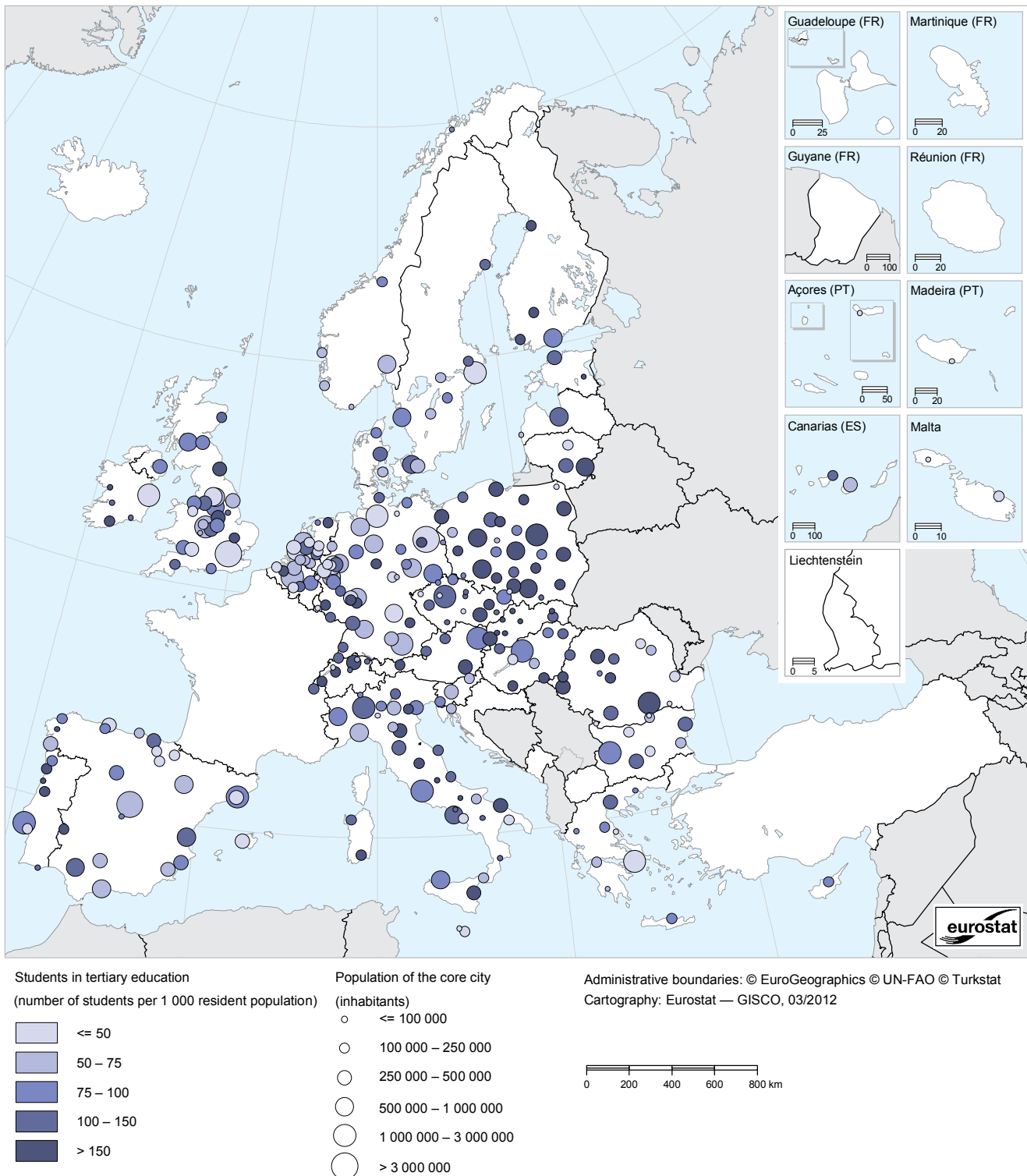
Map 12.2: Old-age dependency ratio in Urban Audit core cities, 2008 ⁽¹⁾
(%, persons aged 65 years and over/persons aged 20–64 years)



⁽¹⁾ The Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal (except Lisboa), Romania and Sweden (except Stockholm), 2011; France, 2006; Denmark, Ireland, Athina (EL) and Turkey, 2004; Lefkosia (CY), old-age dependency ratio, 2004; Athina (EL), Paris (FR), Lisboa (PT), Helsinki (FI) and Stockholm (SE), kernel city.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [urb_icity](#))

Map 12.3: Students in tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 and 6) in Urban Audit core cities, 2008 ⁽¹⁾
(number of students per 1 000 resident population)



⁽¹⁾ Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Sweden, 2011; Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Liepāja (LV), Luxembourg and Rijeka (HR), 2004; Malta, 2003; Dublin (IE), Athina (EL), Lisboa (PT), Helsinki (FI) and Stockholm (SE), kernel city.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [urb_icity](#))



A total of 65 cities in the EU had more than 150 students enrolled in tertiary education per 1 000 inhabitants. These were widely dispersed across the EU, and only four were capital cities, namely Bratislava, Warszawa, Vilnius and București, with the Polish and Romanian capitals the only cities with a population of more than 1 million persons to have more than 150 tertiary education students per 1 000 inhabitants. In total, 16 of these cities with a high ratio of students in tertiary education were in Poland, eight were in Italy and seven were in Slovakia. Among all EU cities in the Urban Audit, the highest ratio of students in tertiary education to the number of inhabitants was 353 in Rzeszow (Poland), and the next highest 315 in Santiago de Compostela (Spain).

Among the capital cities with over 2 million inhabitants, Roma had 82 tertiary education students for every 1 000 inhabitants, ahead of Madrid (56); London, Berlin and Athina all had less than 50 tertiary education students for every 1 000 inhabitants (no data available for Paris).

The ratio of tertiary education students to population was relatively evenly spread across the Norwegian cities in the Urban Audit, ranging from 54 in Kristiansand to 79 in Trondheim. The range in Switzerland was much greater, from 33 in Biel/Bienne to more than 150 in Bern and Zürich, peaking at 191 in Lausanne.

The labour market: perception of job hunting

The image of a city has its roots in associations, memories and feelings linked to the city. Therefore, in addition to hard facts, the perception of a city's residents is important. The Urban Audit perception survey was undertaken in November 2009 in 75 cities to find out how citizens feel and think about their city. Figure 12.3 summarises the proportion of respondents that agreed (strongly or somewhat) that finding a good job in their city was easy. When analysing the results it is important to bear in mind that the survey was carried out when the effects of the financial and economic crisis were still being felt: GDP fell in 2009 by 4.3 % in the EU-27 and Poland was the only EU Member State which recorded an increase in GDP in real terms (1.8 %) in 2009, while the largest contraction in economic activity was in Latvia (-17.7 %).

The proportion of the population that expressed the view that finding a good job was easy exceeded 50 % in seven cities: München and six capital cities, namely Stockholm (Sweden), København, Praha (Czech Republic), Amsterdam, Warszawa and Lefkosia. At the other end of the ranking, there were five cities in the EU where less than 10 % of respondents agreed that it was easy to find a good job, namely Málaga (Spain), Riga, Miskolc (Hungary), Napoli and Palermo (both Italy); this was also the case in Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır (Turkey). It should be noted, however, that in several cities a large proportion of respondents — mostly

retired persons — did not express an opinion on the ease of finding a good job, for example 27 % in Liège (Belgium) and Rotterdam (Netherlands), 28 % in Bruxelles/Brussel and 44 % in Antwerpen (Belgium).

The labour market: unemployment

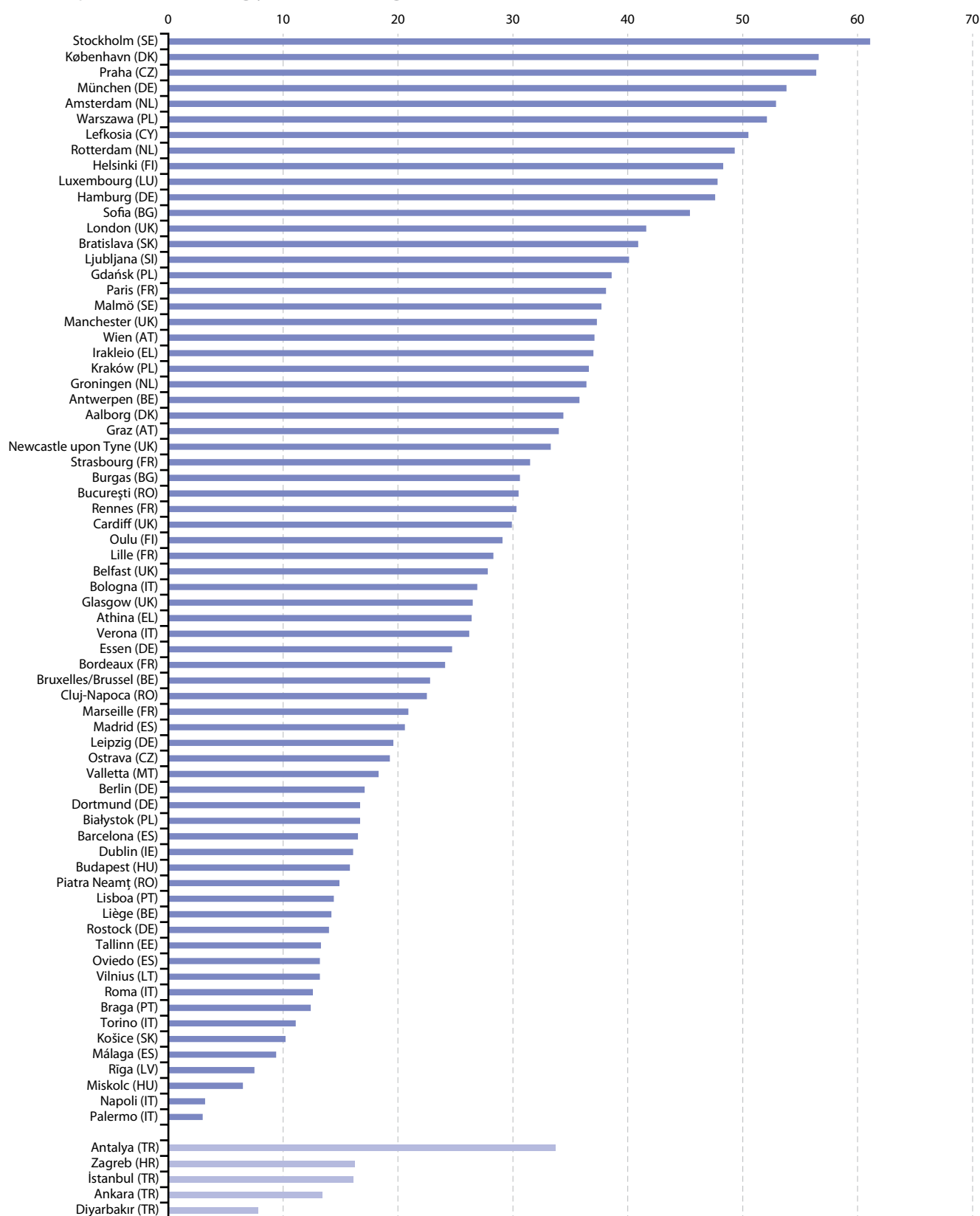
While there are large differences in unemployment rates between Member States and regions (see Chapter 5 for more details on the labour market), the range across the cities is considerably wider. As the reference year of the last available data for unemployment differs, the analysis below is divided accordingly as the years covered concern the period leading up to the financial and economic crisis (when unemployment was generally falling) and the crisis years themselves (when unemployment rates were generally on the rise). As an illustration, the average unemployment rate across the EU-27 in 2004 was 9.2 %, falling to 8.3 % in 2006 and 7.1 % in 2008, before rising to 9.6 % by 2011.

In 2011 (data for Lithuania, Finland and Sweden) all three Lithuania cities in Map 12.4 had unemployment rates over 12 % and therefore above the EU-27 average, while rates in three cities in Finland were well below the average, at less than 7 % (as was the case for Helsinki in 2008). In Sweden, unemployment rates ranged from 7.5 % in Uppsala to 15.5 % in Malmö in 2011 (no data available for Stockholm).

Turning to 2008, a year when EU-27 unemployment was at a historic low, unemployment data are available for 137 cities. Unemployment rates over 15 % were recorded in the German cities of Halle an der Saale, Leipzig and Berlin, followed by three more cities in eastern Germany with unemployment rates just under 15 %, namely Rostock, Schwerin and Magdeburg. Apart from Berlin, the only other city in Map 12.4 with a population of more than 1 million inhabitants and an unemployment rate above 10 % in 2008 was Birmingham (United Kingdom). In total, there were 27 cities shown in Map 12.4 which had unemployment rates below 5 % in 2008, of which 11 were in the Netherlands, with Breda recording the lowest rate (2.2 %) for the Dutch cities. Particularly low unemployment rates were recorded in the Bulgarian cities of Sofia (1.1 %), Burgas (2.4 %) and Varna (2.6 %), and there were three other Bulgarian cities with rates below 5 %. Five British cities had rates below 5 %: three in the South West region of England and two in Scotland, and this group was completed by two more cities from each of Estonia and Slovakia and one from Spain. Data for 2008 are also available for six Norwegian cities, all of which had very low unemployment rates, below 2 %.

In 2006, the unemployment rate was above the EU-27 average in all 34 French cities for which data are available. Rates ranged from 8.8 % in Rennes to more than 15.0 % in seven cities including Marseille (a city of more than 1 million inhabitants): the highest rate was 28.3 % in Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe).

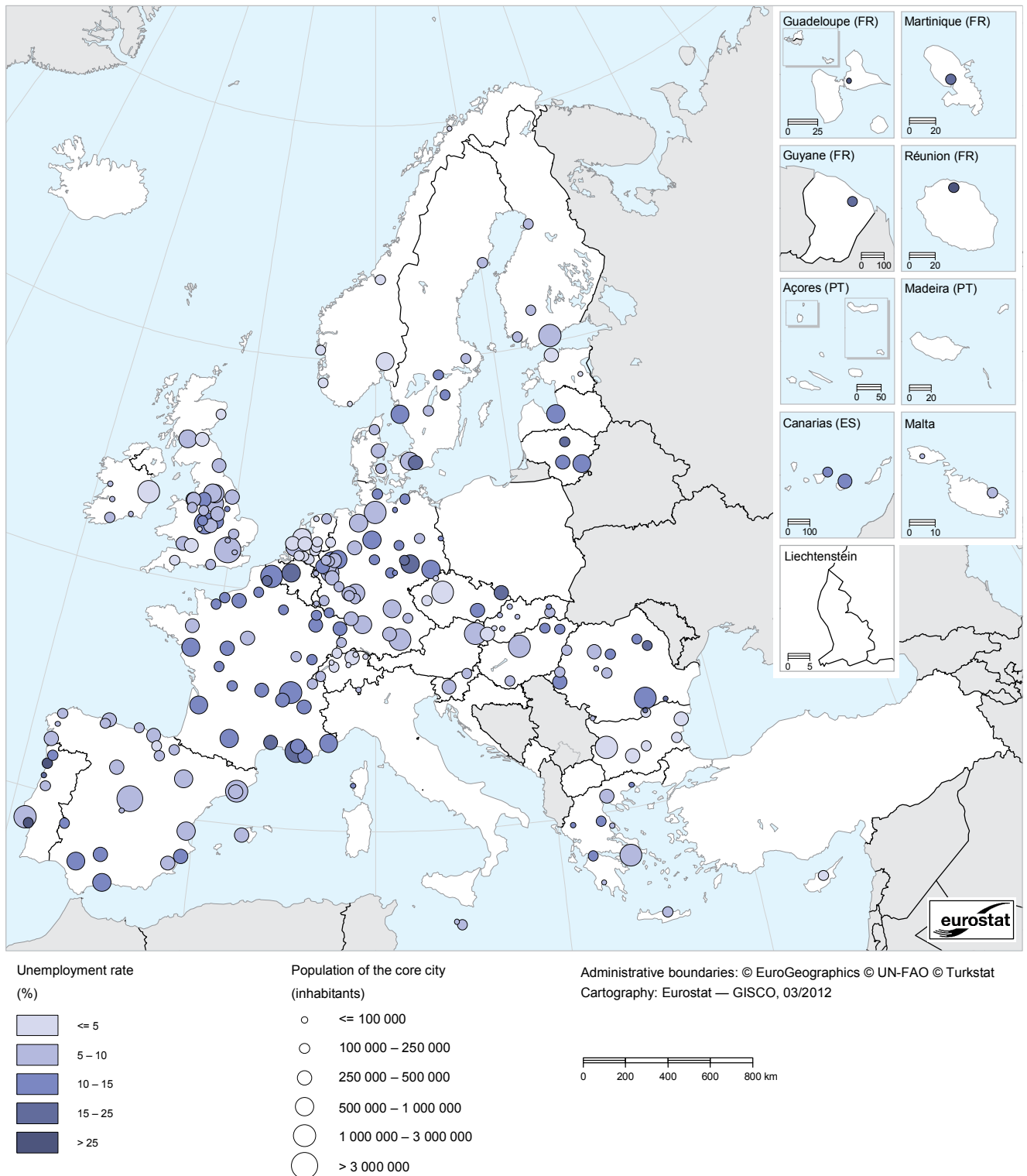
Figure 12.3: Perception regarding the ease of finding a good job in Urban Audit cities, 2009
(% of respondents that strongly or somewhat agreed)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: urb_percep)



Map 12.4: Unemployment rate in Urban Audit core cities, 2008 ⁽¹⁾
(%)



⁽¹⁾ Lithuania, Finland (other than Helsinki) and Sweden, 2011; France, 2006; Dublin (IE), 2005; Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland (other than Dublin), Athina (EL), Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Austria, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia, 2004; Dublin (IE), Athina (EL), Lisboa (PT) and Helsinki (FI), kernel city.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [urb_icity](#))

Turning to the oldest data (2004), the unemployment rate exceeded 15% in three Portuguese and three Romanian cities, and one city each in Belgium and the Czech Republic. The highest rates were in the Portuguese cities of Porto (29.1%) and Setúbal (26.0%). In contrast, four cities shown in Map 12.4 reported unemployment rates below 5% in 2004; three of these cities were in the Czech Republic and one in Cyprus, while Dublin also reported an unemployment rate below 5% in 2005.

An analysis of the dispersion of unemployment rates between different cities within an individual Member State is less influenced by the variety of different reference years that are presented. The largest disparities were recorded in the Czech Republic (2004 data), where rates ranged from 2.8% in Usti nad Labem to 17.4% in Ostrava. Bulgaria (2008 data) also recorded a high level of dispersion due to an unemployment rate of 9.5% in Vidin which was out of line with the generally low rates recorded in other Bulgarian cities. Apart from Estonia and Malta (with data available for only two cities in each case), the lowest levels of dispersion in unemployment rates between the cities covered by the Urban Audit were recorded in Ireland (2004/05), the Netherlands (2008) and Greece (2008, other than data for Athina which are for 2004), while unemployment rates were also relatively similar across the Norwegian cities (2008).

Perception of financial difficulties

The data presented in Figure 12.4 concern perceptions about financial difficulties assessed through a question about the difficulty of paying bills at the end of each month. These data come from the same November 2009 survey as the analysis of the perception of the ease of finding employment presented earlier in this chapter, and again it is worth remembering that the effects of the financial and economic crisis were still being strongly felt in many parts of the EU at this time.

More than half of the respondents in Napoli (Italy) and Riga always or sometimes had problems paying their bills; a situation that was repeated in all four Turkish cities surveyed. Between 40% and 50% of respondents in Valletta, Irakleio (Greece), Sofia, Athina and Palermo (Italy) also reported always or sometimes having problems paying their bills. On the other hand, less than one in 10 respondents in Malmö, Graz (Austria), Stockholm and Aalborg (Denmark) reported such financial problems. These same four cities, as well as Luxembourg and København, were the only ones where three in every four respondents said that they never had such financial difficulties.

Air pollution — ozone

Air pollution is perceived as a problem in many cities. Map 12.5 presents an analysis of the frequency (number of days per year) that the ozone level exceeded $120 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$:

the analysis is presented for 187 cities within the EU, one in Norway and nine in Switzerland.

By far the highest frequency of ozone exceeding this threshold in 2008 was recorded in Italian cities: Torino recorded 77 days above this level and was the first of eight Italian cities at the top of the ranking, followed by Murcia (Spain, data for 2004) and then another four Italian cities, all of which recorded at least 40 days of ozone concentration above $120 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. A further 21 cities reported more than 25 days but less than 40 days above this threshold, and one third of these were in Germany.

Among all 34 cities where ozone levels exceeded $120 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for more than 25 days were four cities with 1 million or more inhabitants, namely Milano, Budapest (Hungary), Wien and Bucureşti, as well as one other capital city, namely Bratislava. In Switzerland, Lugano, Zürich and Lausanne all recorded more than 25 days of ozone concentration above $120 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, with the frequency in Lugano (64 days) close to the highest frequencies seen in the EU.

Some 24 surveyed cities in the EU reported that the level of ozone concentration never (0 days) rose above $120 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and a further nine cities reported just 1 day above this level of concentration. These 33 cities were found in 10 different Member States: 10 of the regions were in the United Kingdom, six in Spain, five in Ireland, four in Germany, three in Poland and the remainder (one each) in Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and Slovenia. The largest of these cities, and the only one with a population of 1 million inhabitants or more, was Dublin (data are for 2005); Riga was the only other capital city to report no days of high ozone concentration. The only Norwegian city for which these data are available is Bergen and here too there were no days with an ozone concentration in excess of $120 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

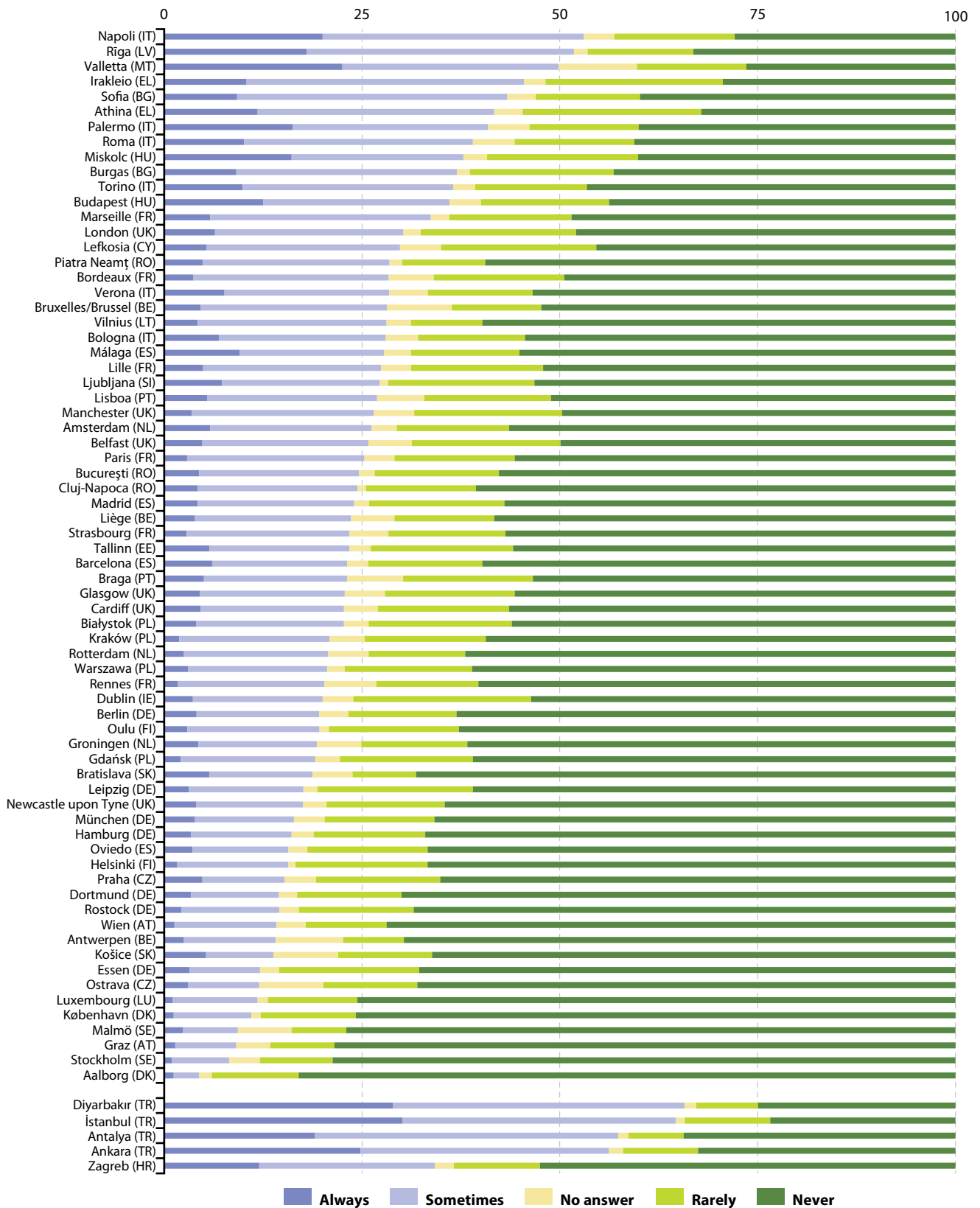
Data sources and availability

The Urban Audit is the result of joint work by participating cities, the national statistical offices belonging to the European Statistical System (ESS) and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy. Data collection currently includes more than 350 cities.

A city can be designated as an urban settlement (morphological concept) or as a legal entity (administrative concept). The Urban Audit uses the latter concept and defines a core city according to political and administrative boundaries. Data used to produce the maps in this chapter reflect this definition. However, economic activity, the labour force, air pollution and other issues clearly cross the administrative boundaries of a city. To capture information at this extended level, a larger urban zone was defined for some cities based on commuter flows. These zones include the core city and the so-called 'commuter belt' around it. The selection of Urban



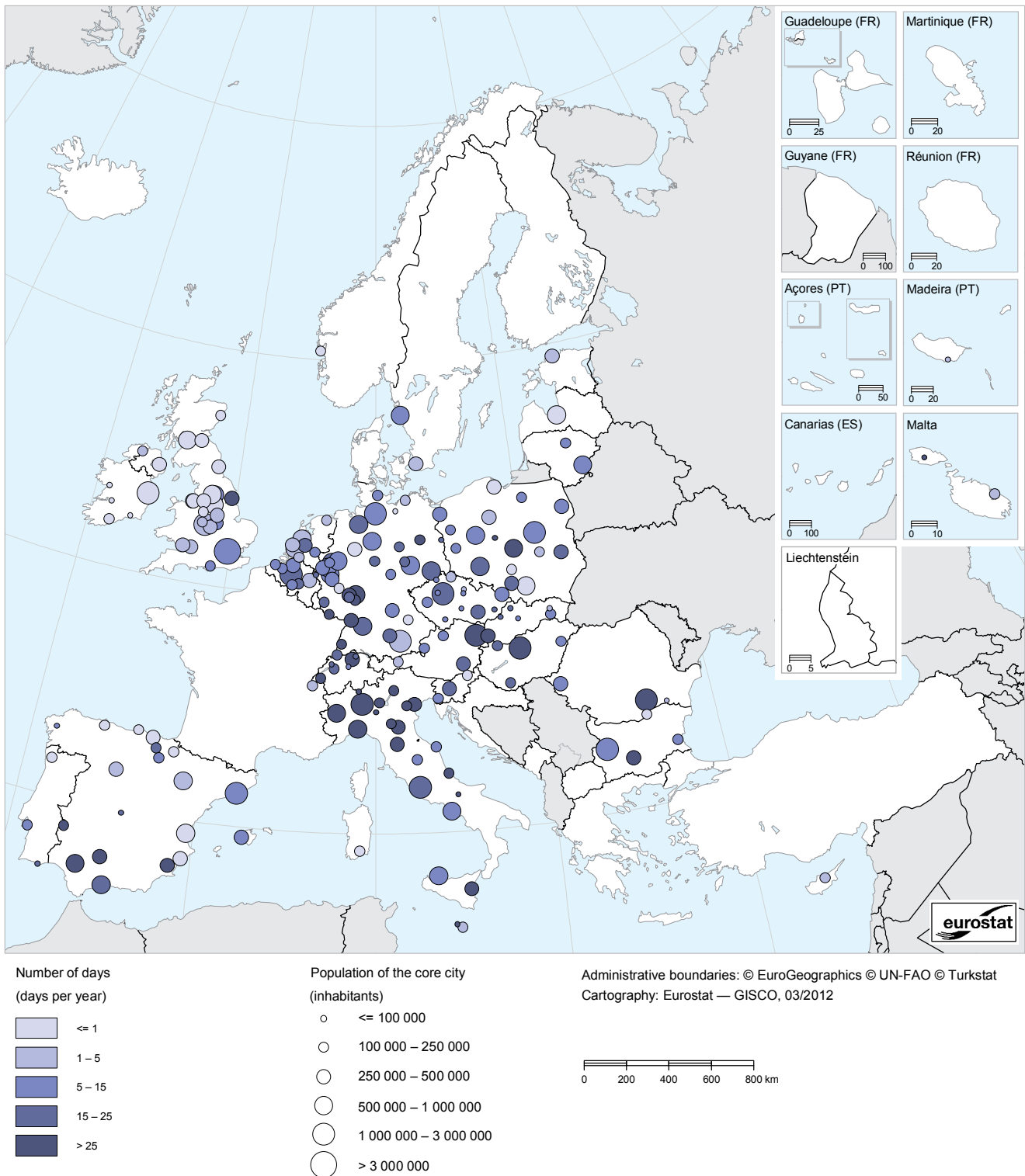
Figure 12.4: Perception regarding the difficulty of paying bills at the end of the month in Urban Audit cities, 2009 (% of respondents)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: urb_percep)



Map 12.5: Number of days ozone concentration exceeded $120 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in Urban Audit cities, 2008 ⁽¹⁾
(days per year)



⁽¹⁾ An alternative reference year (the latest information available) has been used for many cities; Dublin (IE), kernel city.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: [urb_icity](#))



Audit cities was based on several criteria and agreed bilaterally with each national statistical office.

Six reference periods have been defined so far for the Urban Audit and for each period a reference year was set: 1991, 1996, 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2011. At the time of writing, 2011 data were only available for a relatively limited number of cities. More than 300 indicators have been defined and calculated, covering most aspects relating to the quality of life in a city, including: demography, housing, health, crime, the labour market, income disparity, local administration, educational qualifications, the environment, climate, travel patterns, the information society and cultural infrastructure. Data availability differs from domain to domain. Data on demography are available for more than 90% of the cities, whereas data on the environment are available for fewer than half.

The Urban Audit perception survey is a complement to the regular Urban Audit data. The last survey took place in 2009 and included 75 cities in the EU, Croatia and Turkey. Survey data were collected through telephone interviews for samples of 500 people per city.

Further information

For further information about city statistics please consult Eurostat's website at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/city_urban.

Context

Suburbanisation, congestion and the risks of poverty, social exclusion and unemployment are challenges faced by many cities. Complex issues such as these require integrated answers in terms of urban planning, infrastructure, transport services, housing, training and employment. Urban development issues have been integrated to a large extent in all regional and national programmes supported by structural

and cohesion funds. Furthermore, the exchange of best practice and networking between urban planners and other local experts is facilitated by the **Urbact II** programme. The **joint European support for sustainable investment in city areas** (Jessica) initiative of the European Commission promotes financial engineering for sustainable investment, economic growth and employment in Europe's urban areas, in cooperation with the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank.

Urban development — future cohesion policy

In October 2011 the European Commission published proposals for **cohesion policy between 2014 and 2020** (COM(2011) 615 final). Among other issues, these proposals put an increased emphasis on investing in urban environments and in urban transport. For example, they proposed that: at least 5% of resources from the European Regional Development Fund should be focused on sustainable urban development; that innovative actions for sustainable urban development should be supported; and that an urban development platform should be established to develop networks between cities and to introduce exchanges on urban policy.

One element of this policy is the European Commission's intention to seek direct, long-term, interaction with mayors, aiming to identify future urban challenges and how they can be tackled successfully. The **Urban Forum** has been designed as an opportunity to discuss new proposals for policy developments with mayors, with a particular focus on the role of cities in promoting sustainable growth. The first forum was held on 16 February 2012 and focused on:

- the challenge of coordinating thematic investments in cities and promoting integrated urban development;
- innovative actions for sustainable urban development;
- integrated territorial investment: how may it work for fostering the urban dimension of cohesion policy?