

Coastal regions

14





Introduction

On 10 October 2007, the Commission adopted the Blue Paper launching an integrated maritime policy for the European Union. The aims of this policy are to maximise the sustainable use of the oceans and seas, enhance Europe's knowledge and innovation potential in maritime affairs, ensure development and sustainable growth in the coastal regions, strengthen Europe's maritime leadership and raise the profile of maritime Europe. For the sake of greater coherence, this policy gives preference to a holistic approach, i.e. all areas or sectors concerned are taken into account. For example, the economic issues must incorporate environmental aspects and vice versa. Similarly, the development of a sector of activity will have to take account of all the sectors developed on the same territory or using the same maritime areas.

As natural boundaries between the land and the sea, the coastal regions of Europe fall quite naturally under this policy. These regions are, in fact, attractive places to live for their inhabitants and tourists, prime business areas for sectors with links to the sea and obligatory points of transit for goods and passengers transported by sea. It is therefore not surprising that these regions constitute a major focal point and are very much involved in the introduction and follow-up of this integrated maritime policy at local, national and European levels.

The purpose of this chapter is to paint a portrait of these regions and to present some of their demographic, social and economic features. For the sake of consistency, most of the data relate to 2007. The indicators chosen will attempt to highlight the specific features of these regions, comparing them with those of the country as a whole.

Europeans attracted by the coast

In 2007, a total of 196 million ⁽¹⁾ people lived in the 446 coastal regions of the European Union, i.e. 43 % of the population of the 22 EU countries which have a coastline.

As Map 14.1 shows, in 97 % of these regions more than 50 % of the inhabitants live less than 50 km from the sea. The population concentration in this coastal strip exceeds 75 % of the region's population in the case of 88 % of these regions. Some 194 cities with more than 100 000

inhabitants are also located less than 50 km from the sea. These major conurbations are home to 38 % of these regions' inhabitants. The biggest of them are London, Athina, Napoli and Roma.

The proportion of the national population living in a coastal region depends to a great extent on the country's geographical characteristics, such as the length and shape of its coastline. Thus, in the case of the island states, such as Cyprus or Malta, or peninsular states, such as Denmark, this proportion is 100 %, because all the regions in these countries are regarded as coastal. In contrast, the inhabitants of coastal regions represent only 4 % of the population in Romania and 9 % in Germany.

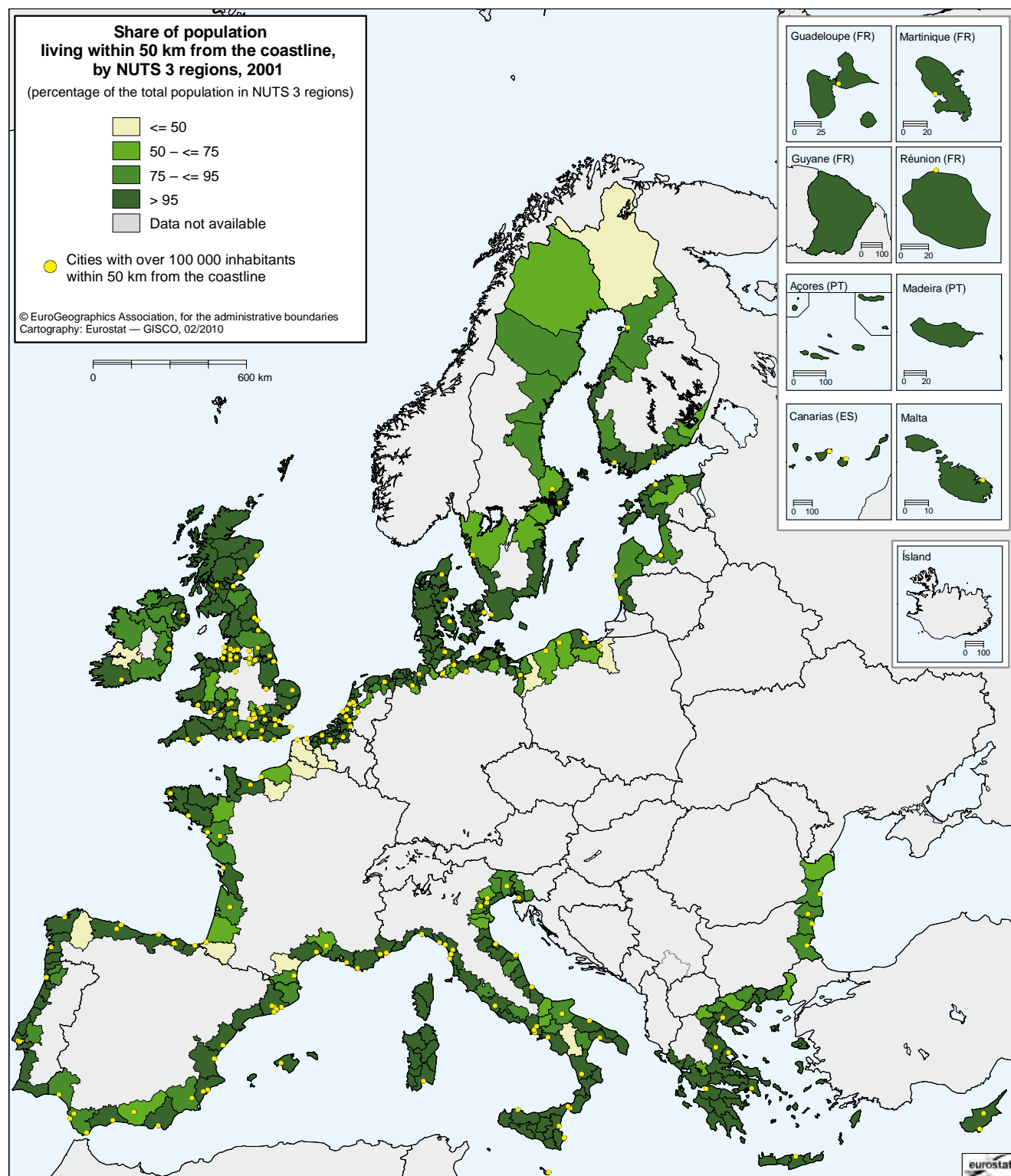
It should be noted that the area of the geographical units included in the definition of coastal regions varies considerably from one country to another. This may result in the population of the coastal regions being overestimated for certain countries, such as Sweden and Finland. However, this overestimation is fairly limited. Indeed, even if a large proportion of the area of a coastal region is far from the coast, in most cases the inhabitants and the economic activities are located close to it.

Growing old or retiring on the coast

In 2007, some 41 % of persons over the age of 65 belonging to the 22 Member States with a coastline lived in a coastal region. On average, the ageing of the population in the coastal regions is not therefore more pronounced than in these Member States as a whole. However, the proportion of elderly persons (over the age of 65) compared to the national average differs appreciably from region to region. As shown by Map 14.2, in almost 48 % of coastal regions there was a greater proportion of elderly people than in the country as a whole and in 30 % of these regions the proportion was lower. For example, the coastal regions of the United Kingdom, such as East Sussex or the Isle of Wight, were home to around 1.4 times more elderly people than the national average. This is also the case in the Arrondissement of Veurne on the Belgian coast. This phenomenon may be more marked, as on the northern coast of Spain in the Lugo region, where there were proportionally 1.6 times more elderly people than in the country as a whole. On the other hand, in the Romanian coastal region

⁽¹⁾ Excluding Northern Ireland and Scotland, for which no data are available.

Map 14.1: Share of population living within 50 km from the coastline, by NUTS 3 regions, 2001
(percentage of the total population in NUTS 3 regions)



Source: Eurostat Gisco database.



of Tulcea or the Bulgarian region of Varna the proportion of elderly people was about 0.88 times that in the country as a whole.

A number of demographic factors explain the difference in age structure between these regions and the country as a whole. First, population ageing due to the increase in life expectancy and the slowing down or fall of the birth rate: this ageing is uneven and varies according to country and region. Second, the larger proportion of elderly people can also be attributed to migratory movements, i.e. migration of such people to a coastal region because, for example, they are attracted by the prospect of spending their retirement by the sea. In this case, we can talk about the region's attractiveness for the elderly. For certain coastal regions, this attractiveness may even be a factor in promoting the region.

Conversely, a region's lack of attractiveness for the under-65s automatically increases the proportion of elderly people, who are then the inhabitants who remain in the region. There is no attractiveness for the elderly but rather a lack of attractiveness for the younger age groups. In this case, the ageing of the region's population will accelerate and the region will tend to lose inhabitants.

Ebb and flow of the active population

Between 2006 and 2008, the active population over the age of 15 increased by 1 % a year on average in the 22 coastal Member States as a whole. As shown on Map 14.3, the change in this active population in the coastal regions shows sharp contrasts. In fact, over this period the active population declined in 30 % of the coastal regions and increased by more than 1.5 % a year on average in 39.5 % of them. For example, the active population decreased markedly in the coastal regions of southern Italy, such as Reggio di Calabria (-4 % a year on average), or in those of eastern Greece, such as Kerkyra (-4.5 % a year on average). In contrast, over the same period this population increased very sharply in the French region of la Manche (+5.4 % a year on average) or in the Latvian region of Pierīga (+6.2 % a year on average).

The increase or decrease in the number of active persons can be attributed in particular not only to the age structure of the population and migratory flows but also to the dynamism or sluggishness of the labour market and its accessibility.

Accordingly, the age structure of a coastal region has a direct impact on the number of young people entering or the number of older people leaving the labour market. The same is true of migratory phenomena. Certain coastal regions can attract workers because they have a flourishing labour market. The dynamism of this market depends in particular on the presence in the region of expanding sectors of activity, such as tourism. On the other hand, some active persons will be prompted to leave the region because the sectors of activity located there are restructuring or disappearing altogether.

Unemployment in the coastal regions

In 2007, as shown by Map 14.4, the level of unemployment in the coastal regions compared with the country as a whole varied considerably from one region to another. In 44 % ⁽²⁾ of the coastal regions the unemployment rate was significantly higher than at national level and in 35 % of them it was significantly lower. For certain countries, the proximity of the sea was not the most discriminatory factor for these relative levels. Thus in Italy, and to a lesser extent in Spain and Finland, this difference was more significant between the regions of the south and the north. The same was true in Germany, where this difference was more pronounced between east and west.

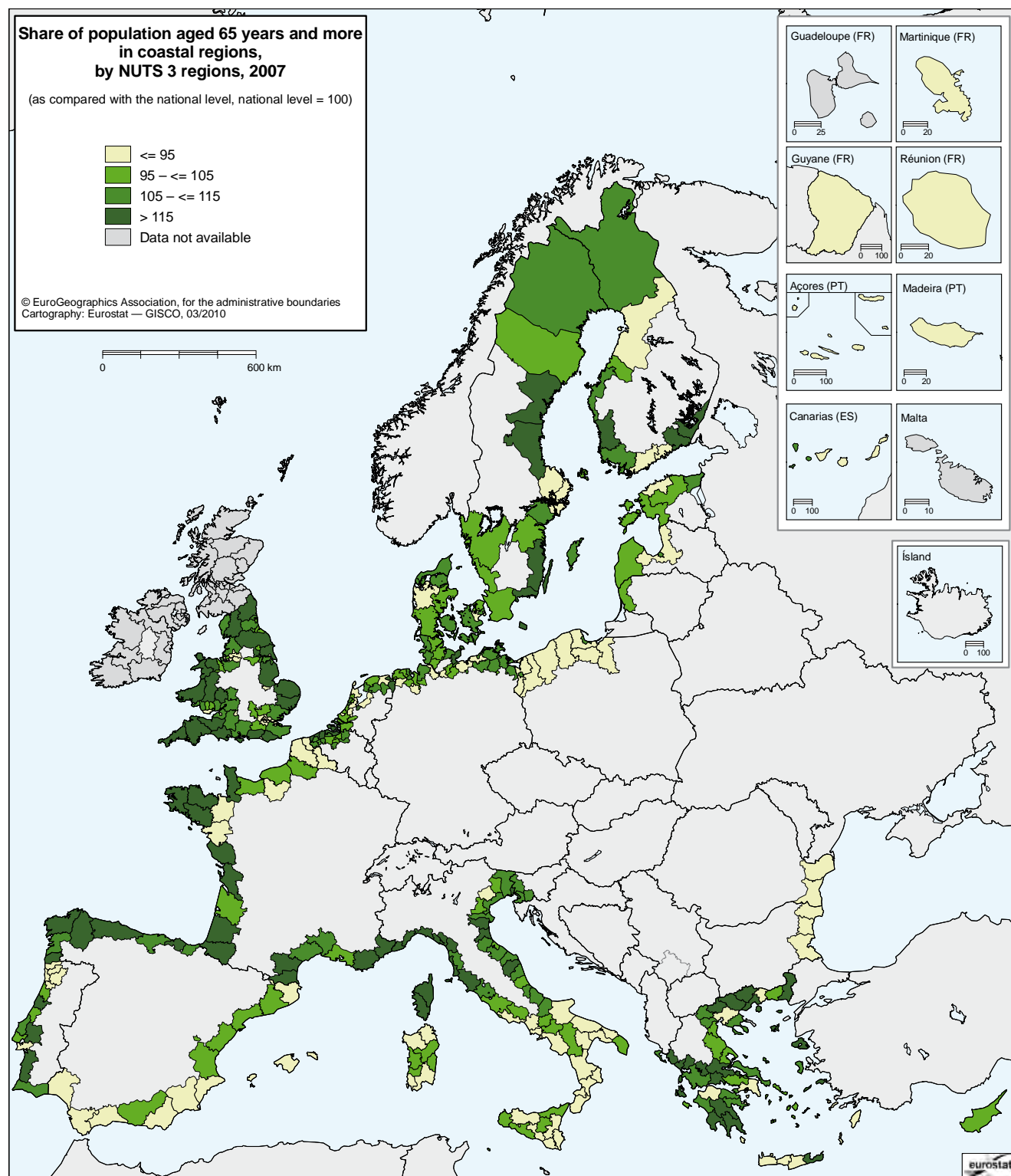
However, the three coastal regions of Latvia had an unemployment rate below the national average. In contrast, the two coastal regions of Romania were more vulnerable and had a higher unemployment rate than the country as a whole.

These differences can be attributed to the economic situation, the restructuring in progress, the structure of the population and the levels of training in these regions.

As has already been seen, the age structure of the population has an impact on the level of the active population and consequently on the unemployment rate. There may also be a combination of several factors. For example, in the outermost coastal regions of France the substantial influx of young people onto the labour market and the low density of the economic fabric, and therefore the limited number of jobs available, explains to some extent the relatively high unemployment rates in these regions.

⁽²⁾ Given the availability of unemployment rates, this percentage is calculated for 368 coastal regions.

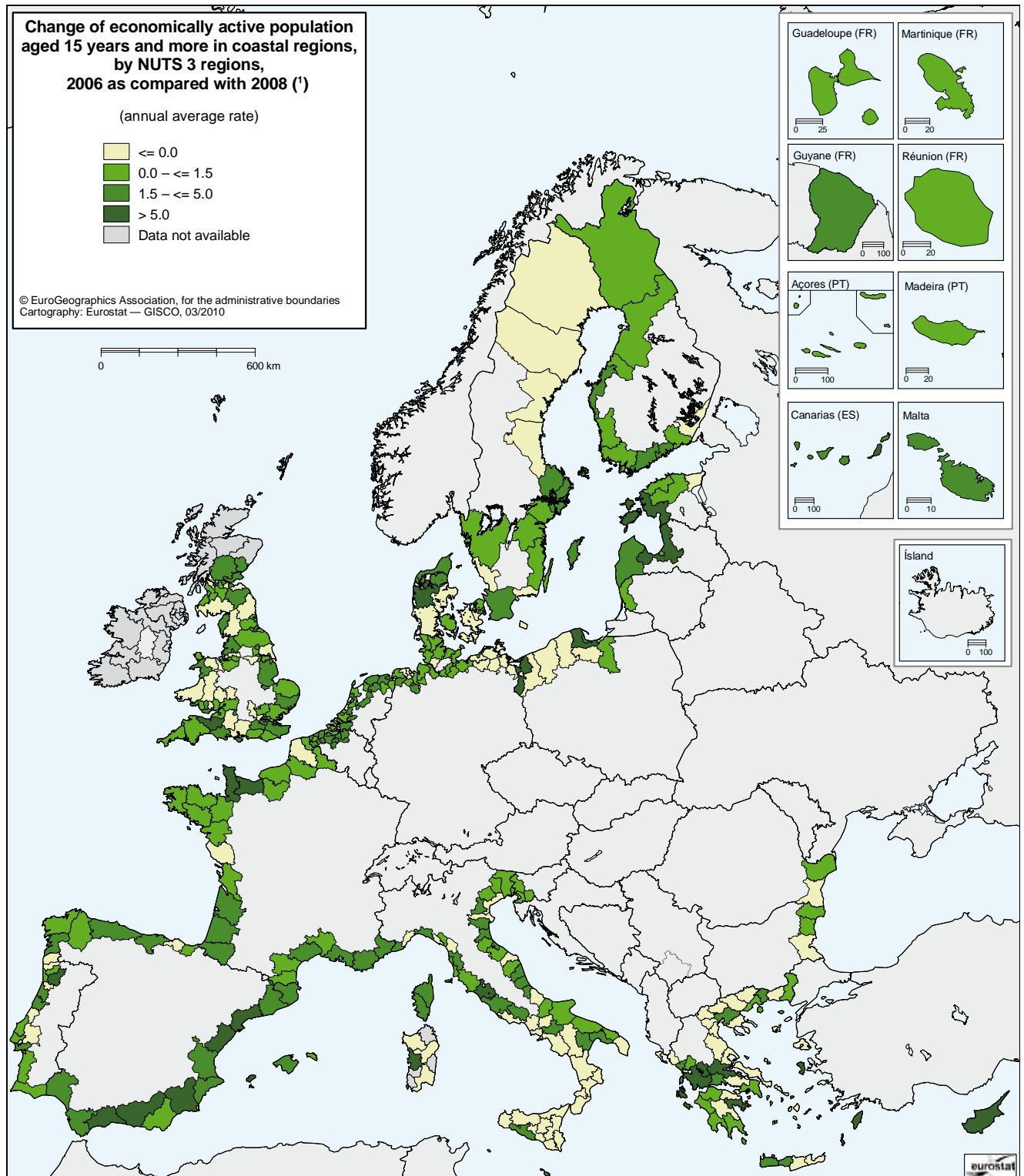
Map 14.2: Share of population aged 65 years and more in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2007
(as compared with the national level, national level = 100)



Source: Eurostat ([reg_pjanagegr3](#) and [demo_pjanind](#)).



Map 14.3: Change of economically active population aged 15 years and more in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2006 as compared with 2008 ⁽¹⁾ (annual average rate)



⁽¹⁾ When the 2008 or 2006 data were not available, the annual average rate for 2008/06 has been estimated by the annual rate for 2007/06 or 2008/07.

Source: Eurostat (reg_lfp3pop).

Services well-established in the coastal regions

In 2006, approximately 66 million ⁽³⁾ persons had a job in a coastal region of the European Union. For all the coastal regions the services sector was the biggest employer. In fact, this sector accounts for 70 % of jobs in these regions. However, as shown on Map 14.5, the proportion of jobs in services varies somewhat. For example, it is less than 35 % in the region of Tulcea in Romania and the region of Tâmega in Portugal, while it is over 85 % in the region of Byen København in Denmark and in the Dutch regions of Groot-Amsterdam and Agglomeratie's-Gravenhage, and also in the region of Roma in Italy. The presence of large conurbations in a coastal region explains this substantial proportion of jobs in services, in all the areas of activity belonging to this sector. It is in fact in the highly urbanised regions that financial services in particular are expanding or administrative services are located. This high proportion of jobs in the tertiary sector is even more pronounced in the coastal regions where the capital city is located. Moreover, the development of tourism and the presence of major port infrastructures have a positive impact on the level of employment in households services or in business services.

High gross domestic product in the capital regions

In 2007, the level of gross domestic product (GDP) per inhabitant compared to the national level was not uniform in the 446 coastal regions of the European Union. As shown on Map 14.6, in 15 % of the coastal regions it was 1.1 times higher than the national level and in 62 % of the regions it was 0.9 times lower. For some coastal regions this difference was even more significant, particularly in the case of the German region of Ostvorpommern, where the level of GDP per inhabitant was about half the national level. On the other hand, in the Dublin region of Ireland the level of GDP per inhabitant was 1.45 times higher than that for the country as a whole.

The relative level of GDP per inhabitant in the coastal regions can be explained by the make-up of the economic fabric and the presence of sizeable urban areas. In general, GDP per inhabitant is higher in the capital regions or in the regions where there are major cities. This phenomenon is due in

particular to the greater concentration of high-value-added sectors of activity in these regions. It is also in these regions that the main economic and decision-making centres are located, such as the head offices of large companies or principal group companies.

High density of tourism in the southern regions

As Map 14.7 shows, the density of tourism capacity is generally greater in the southern coastal regions of the European Union, particularly around the Mediterranean basin. In 2007, in the Italian coastal region of Rimini this density was greater than 290 bed places per km². In contrast, it is less than one bed place per km² in the Finnish region of Lappi. However, climatic conditions are not the only factors that explain this density. For example, infrastructures are also more developed in the urbanised regions or in the regions that have a significant cultural heritage. Indeed, tourists may go to a coastal region not only on account of the attraction of the seaside and a sunny climate, especially during the summer period, but also for cultural or professional reasons.

The lower density of tourism capacity in the coastal regions of northern Sweden and Finland must be seen in relative terms; in fact, these regions have a vast area, which automatically reduces this density. However, the tourism density along the coasts of the Baltic Sea is on average lower than in the regions situated along the other coasts.

Users of sea transport

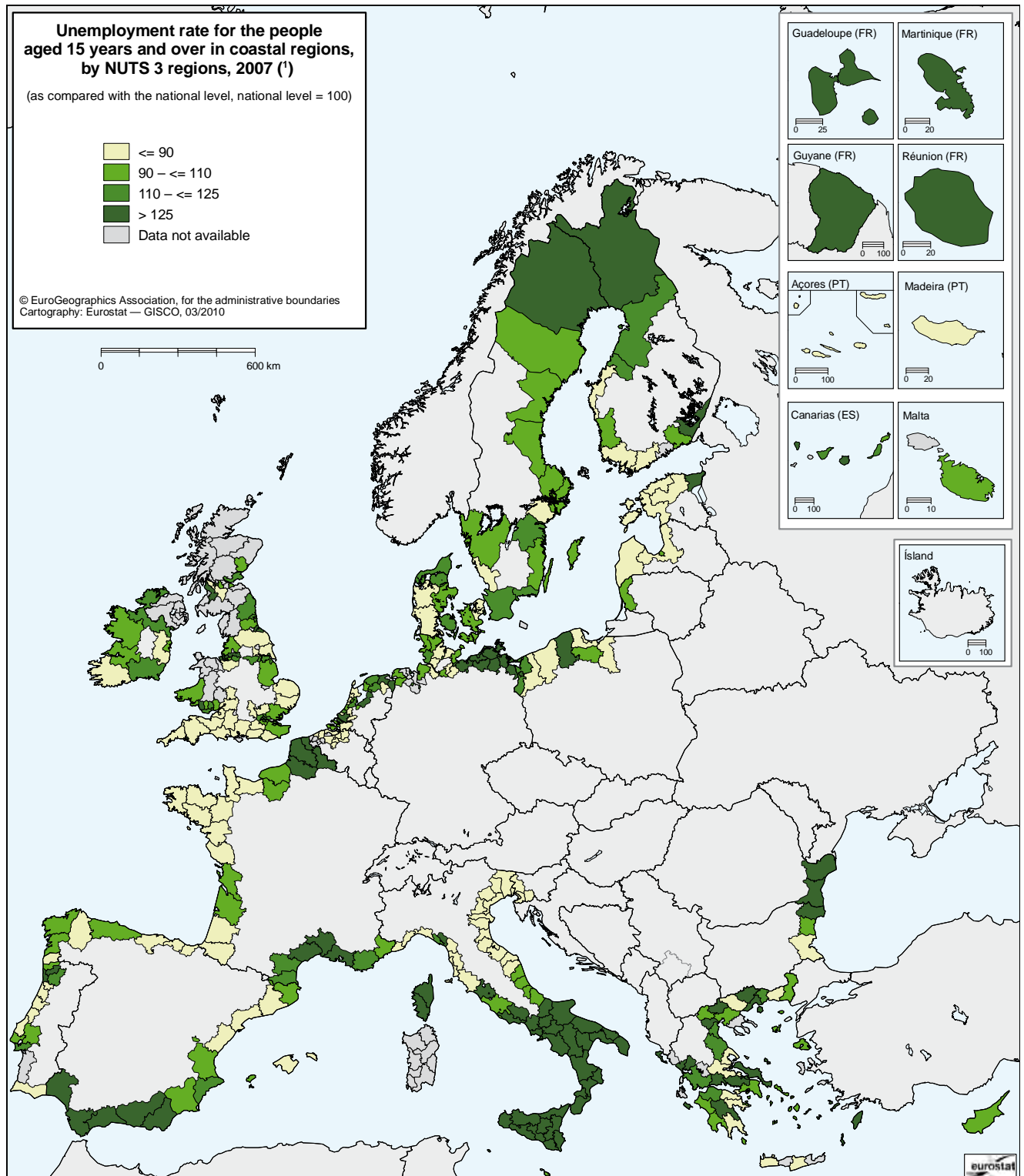
In 2007, around 410 million sea transport passengers embarked or disembarked in the coastal regions of the European Union. As shown on Map 14.8, these arrivals and departures were concentrated in a limited number of coastal regions. In 2007, the total number of passengers was more than 2.5 million in 40 regions only, and fewer than 100 000 in more than half of the coastal regions. Consequently, 77 % of sea transport passengers departed from or arrived in only 9 % of the coastal regions. The main coastal areas frequented by these passengers are Attiki in Greece, Napoli in Italy and Skåne län in Sweden.

Map 14.8 also shows a high concentration of passengers between the coastal regions of the same maritime regions; these regions are,

⁽³⁾ Excluding the UK; data not available.



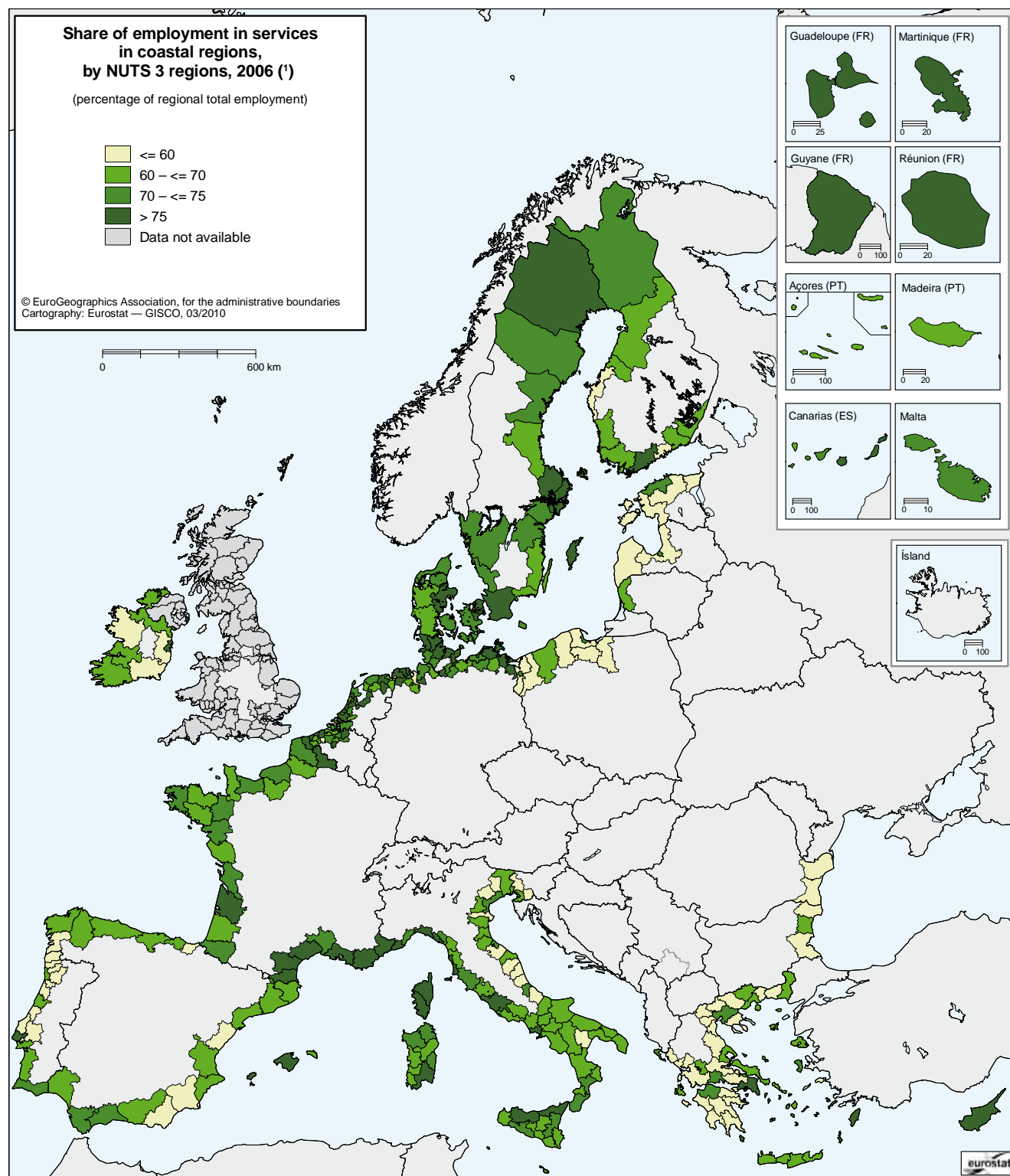
Map 14.4: Unemployment rate for the people aged 15 years and over in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2007 ⁽¹⁾
(as compared with the national level, national level = 100)



⁽¹⁾ When 2007 data were not available, the value has been estimated with 2006 data.

Source: Eurostat (reg_lfu3rt).

Map 14.5: Share of employment in services in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2006 ⁽¹⁾
(percentage of regional total employment)

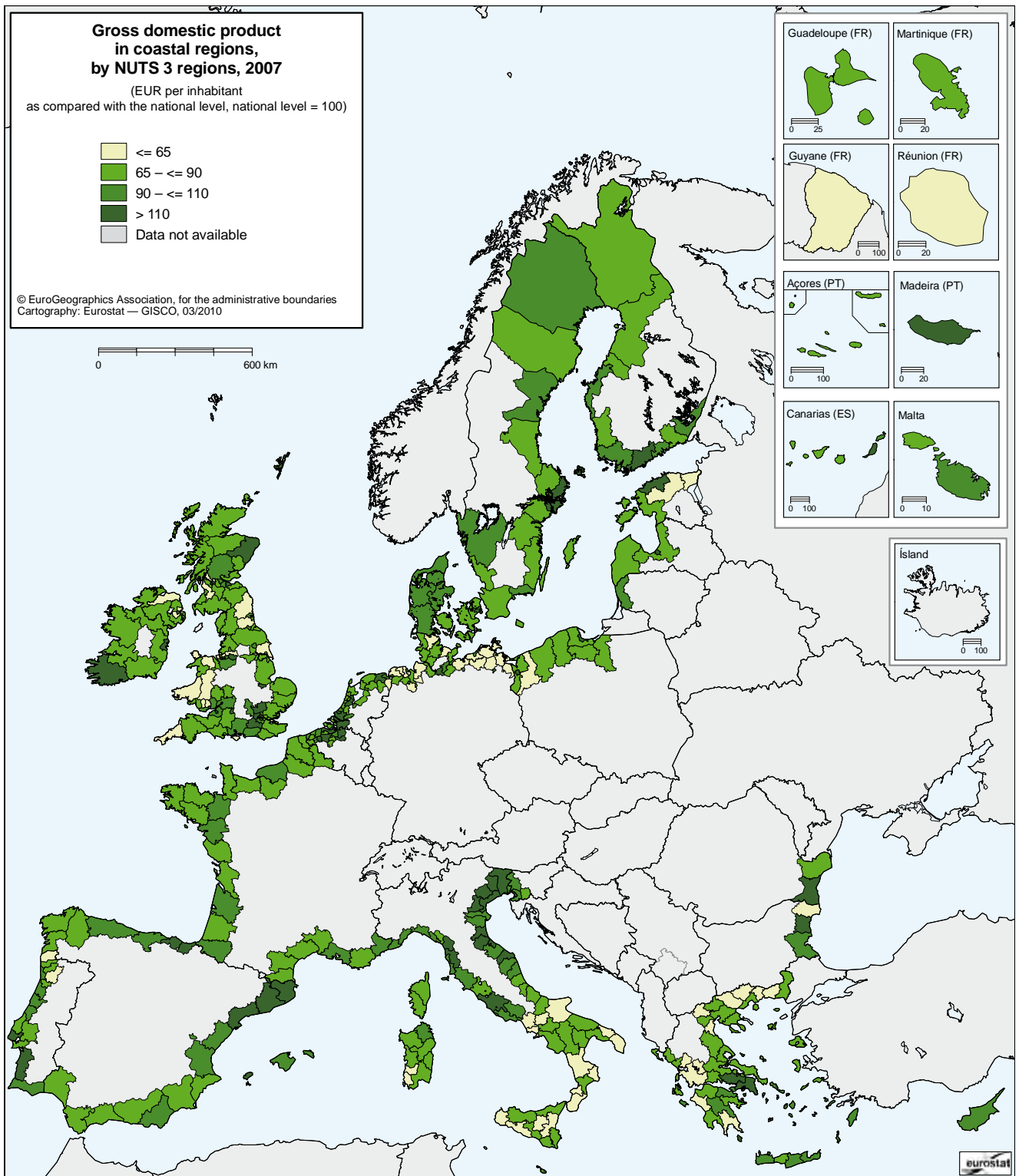


⁽¹⁾ Corresponding to employment in NACE branches G to P, excluding extra-territorial organisations and bodies.

Source: Eurostat ([reg_e3empl95](#)).

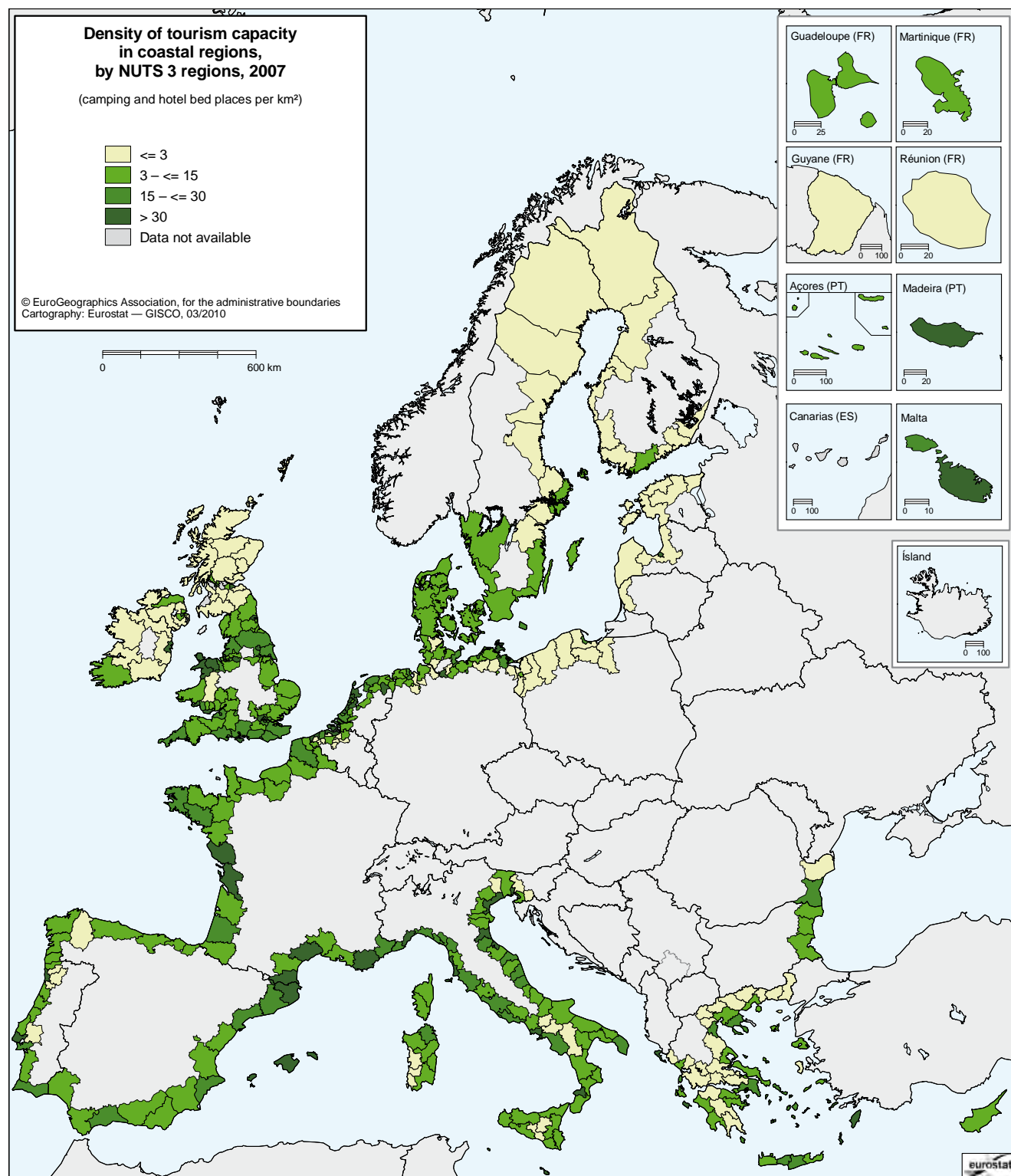


Map 14.6: Gross domestic product in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2007
(EUR per inhabitant as compared with the national level, national level = 100)



Source: Eurostat ([reg_e3gdp](#)).

Map 14.7: Density of tourism capacity in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2007
(camping and hotel bed places per km²)



Source: Eurostat ([tour_cap_nuts3](#) and [reg_d3area](#)).



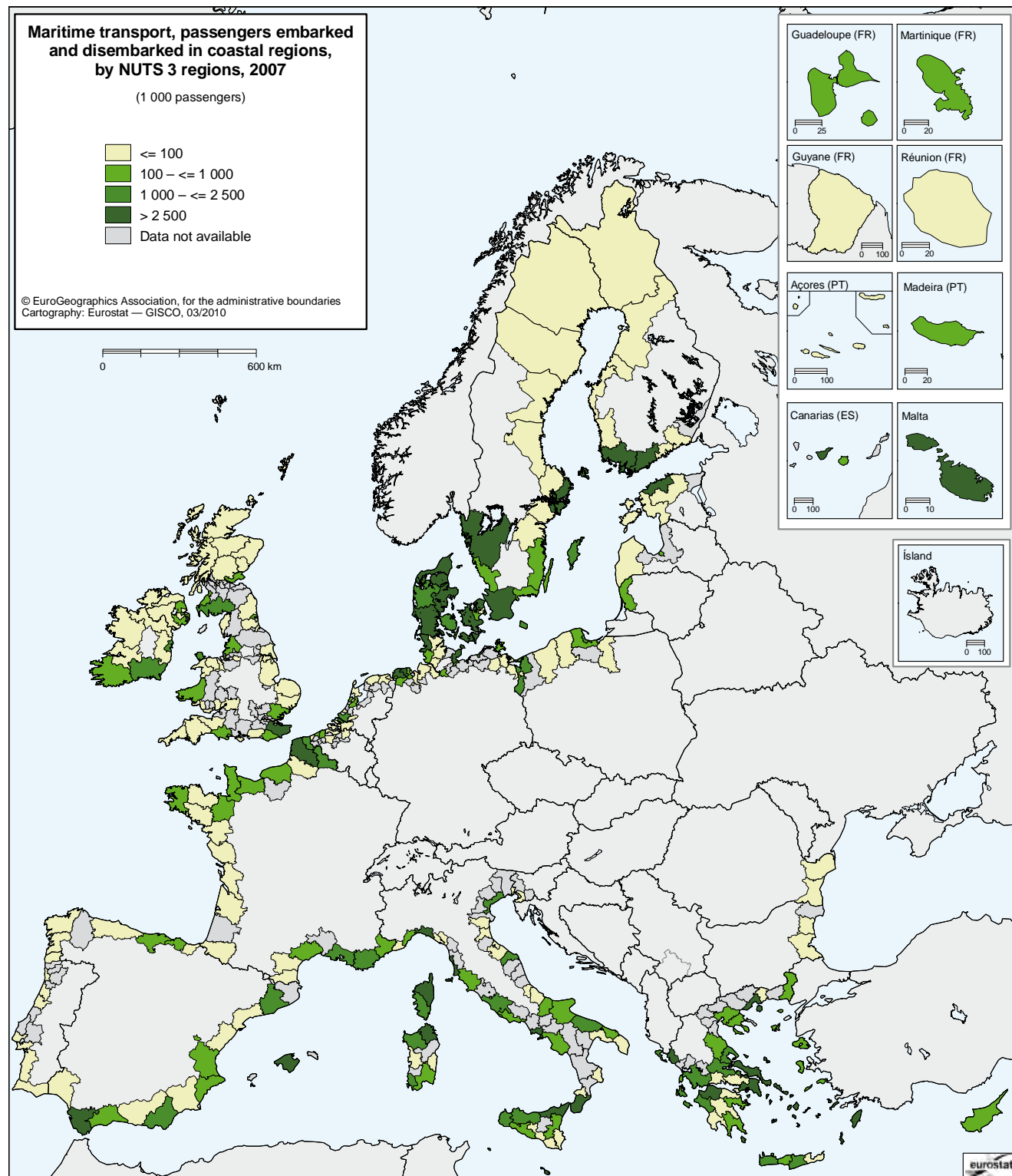
moreover, quite close together. The main reason for this is the passenger traffic density for short crossings. This is particularly the case between the coastal regions of Denmark, but also between the Danish coastal regions and the Swedish coastal regions Skåne län and Västra Götalands län. Likewise, although sea passenger transport between the United Kingdom and France faces competition from rail or air transport, the number of passenger arrivals and departures between the coastal region of Kent in the United Kingdom and the French *département* of Pas-de-Calais is quite substantial. The concentration of arrivals and departures is even more pronounced between the Maltese islands, where there are few alternative ways of making this journey.

Conclusion

The coastal regions of the European Union have a wide variety of demographic and economic

characteristics. Indeed, the structure of the population, the labour market, jobs, tourism facilities or the possibility of leaving or arriving by boat vary considerably from one coastal region to another. Accordingly, the demographic pressure exerted by the inhabitants of these regions will not have the same intensity from region to region. Likewise, the economic activities located in these regions will have differing effects on the maritime environment. From another point of view, the influence of the sea on the inhabitants or on the activities in these regions is not uniform. However, irrespective of their socioeconomic characteristics, the geographical position of these regions makes them a real interface between the land and the sea. A more thorough knowledge and monitoring of these regions will therefore make it possible to gain a clearer picture of the many interactions between these highly individual areas and the sea and thus to provide support for the integrated maritime policy of the European Union.

Map 14.8: Maritime transport, passengers embarked and disembarked in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2007 (1 000 passengers)



Source: Eurostat ([mar_pa_aa](#)).



Methodological notes

A coastal region of the European Union is a statistical region defined at NUTS3 level of the geographical nomenclature, having a coastline or with more than half of its population living less than 50 km from the sea. In the EU as a whole there are 446 such regions, belonging to the 22 Member States which have a coastline. Of these 446 coastal regions, 372 have a coastline, while 73 do not but meet the second criterion. Lastly, the German region of Hamburg has been added to the list, given the strong influence of the sea there.

The 22 Member States which have a coastline are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Map 14.2: The data used for the age structure of the population are the population figures as at 1 January. The proportion of persons over the age of 65 in a coastal region is compared with the proportion of this age group at national level. The elderly are said to be overrepresented when this relative level is higher than 105 and underrepresented when it is lower than 95.

On Map 14.3 the active population comprises the population in employment plus the population of unemployed. On Maps 14.3 and 14.4 the definitions and references relating to the active population and unemployment correspond to those used in the labour force survey.

Map 14.4: The unemployment rate in a coastal region is compared to the national unemployment rate. This rate is **significantly higher** when this relative level is higher than 110 and **significantly lower** when it is lower than 90.

Map 14.5: The data on employment are taken from the branch accounts in the national accounts. They relate to total employment, the number of wage- and salary-earners and the number of self-employed.

Map 14.6: The regional gross domestic product (GDP) per inhabitant is compared to the national GDP per inhabitant.

Map 14.8: The maritime transport data are collected by port. Here, they have been aggregated by coastal region. The data for ports outside the coastal regions and for groups of ports have not been taken into account.

The number of passengers relates to passengers embarking and disembarking, including cruise passengers. As regards the latter, the cruise stages are not taken into account.