ESPON

EUROPEAN UNION

Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

Looking ahead at territorial futures for rural and inner areas

the outcomes of ESPON research at a glance

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Evidence and Outreach

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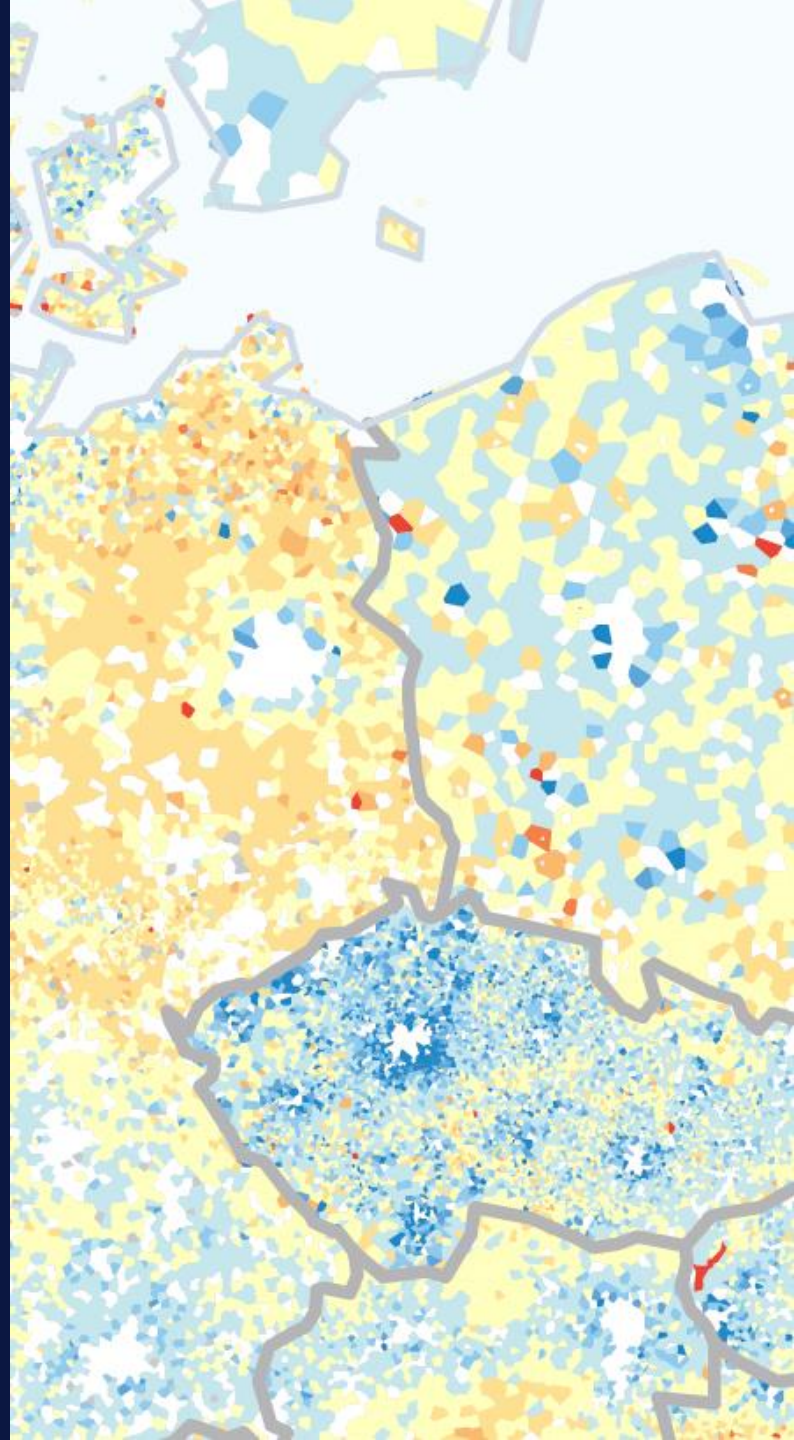
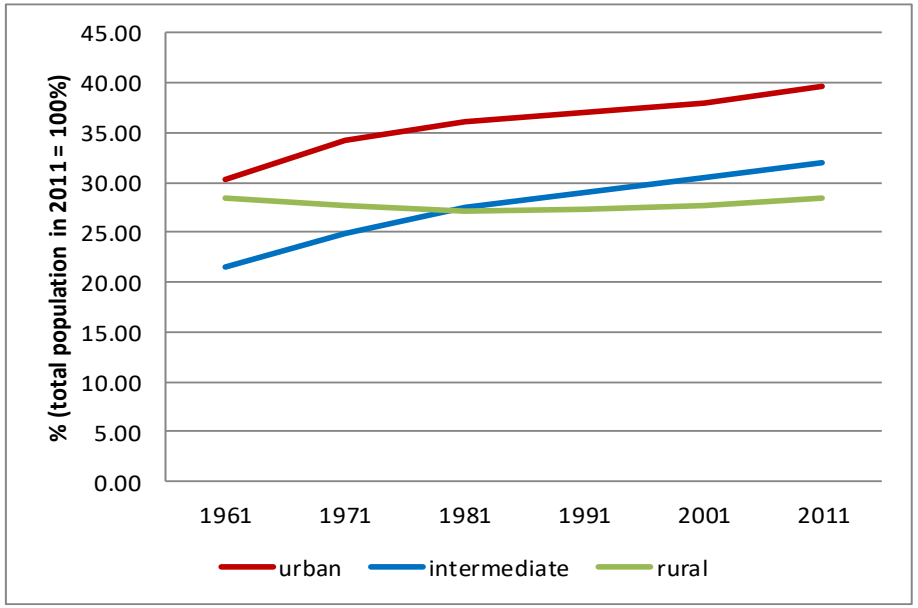
1

Historic trends and current situation

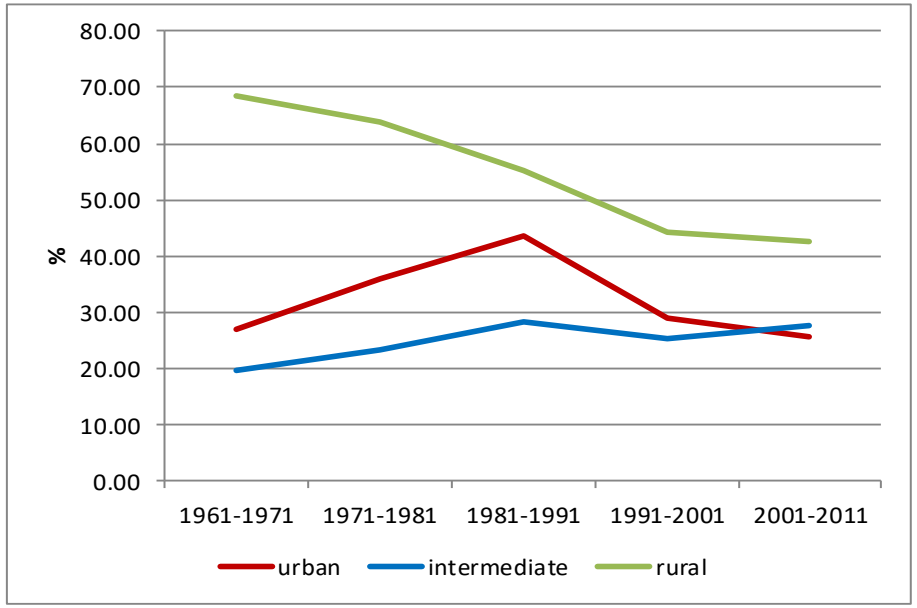


Shrinking rural areas in perspective

- The population of rural areas has remained broadly constant
- The proportion of shrinking rural areas fell from 70% to 42%



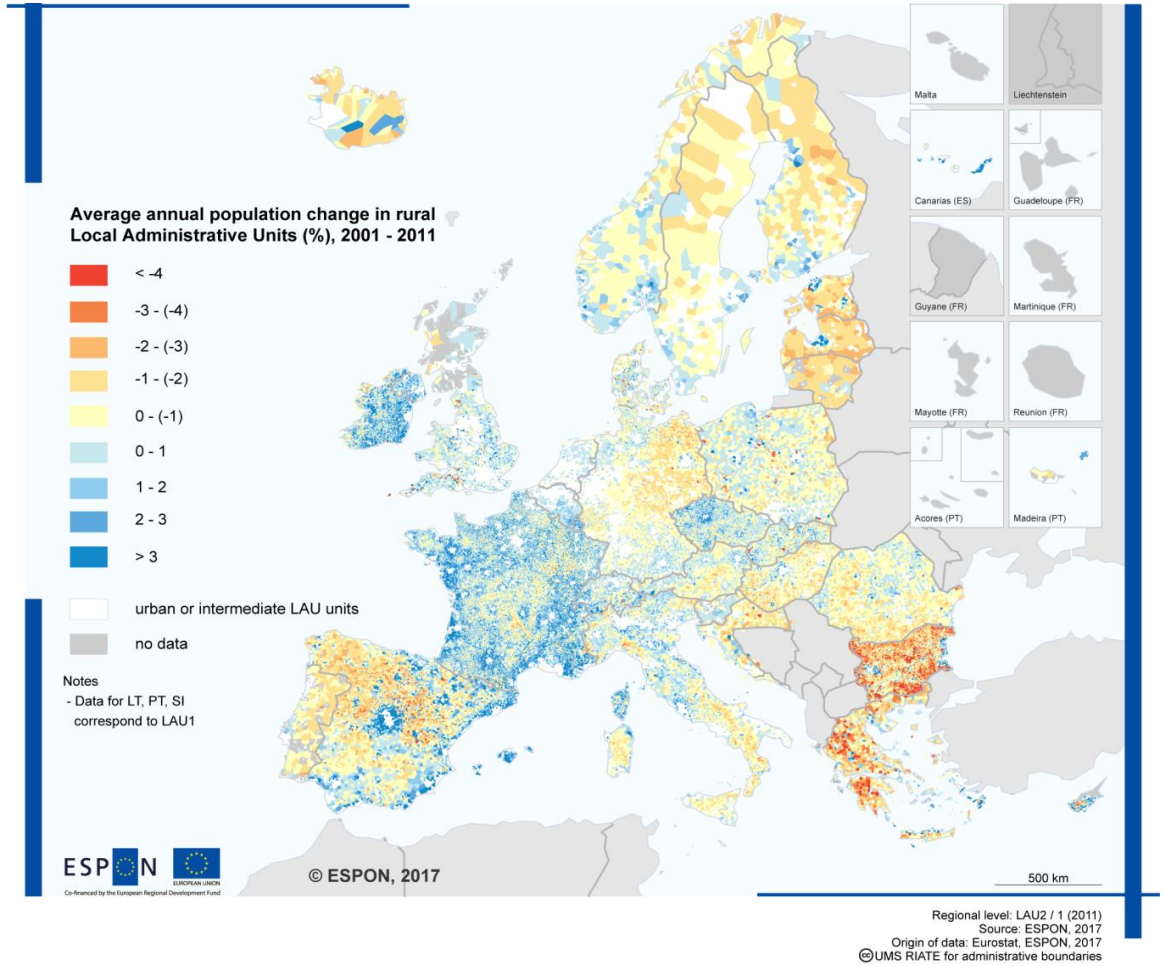
Overall population distribution in European LAU2 areas by type of area



Relative proportion of shrinking LAU2 areas in Europe

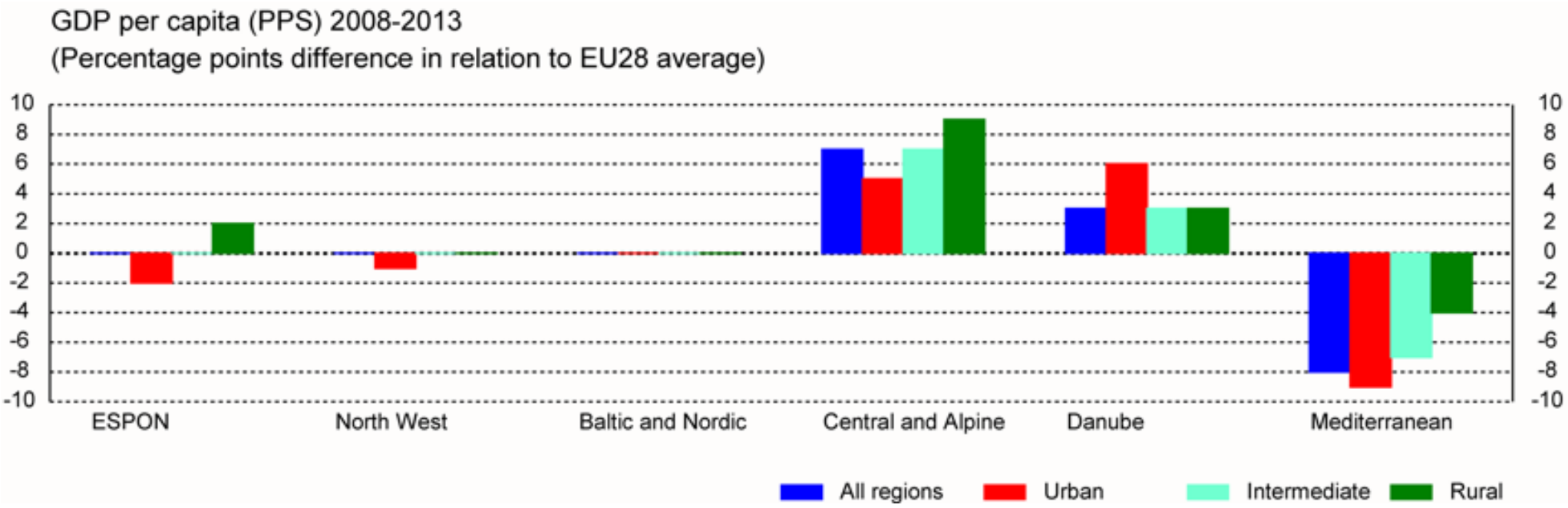
Rural population changes are uneven over space and time (2001-2011)

- **EU-13** - In Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Latvia and Hungary, **more than 80%** of rural regions shrunk
- **EU-15** - Relatively high proportions of shrinking rural regions in the Nordic countries of Finland and Sweden (and Iceland), southern European countries of Spain and Portugal, former East Germany



Urban-rural disparities

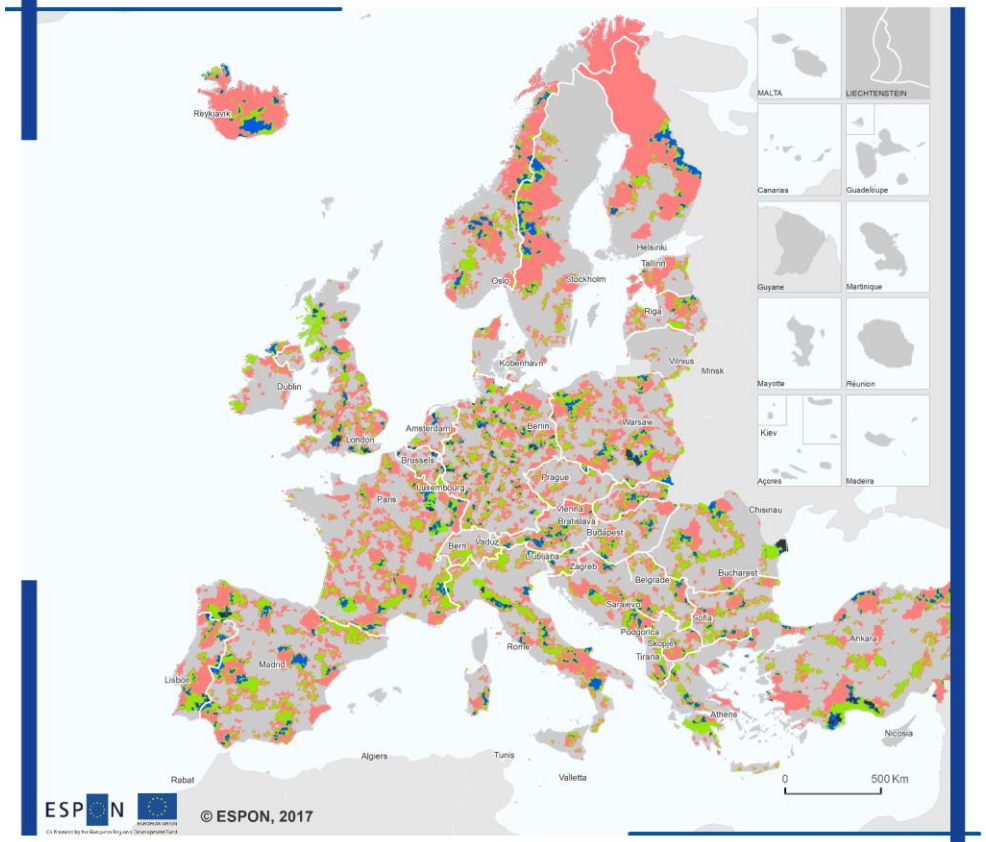
- Accelerated by economic and financial crisis
- Urban vs. rural resilience – no obvious pattern, broader geographical context matters



Inner peripheries cover 45% of the entire European territory

- Delineation 1:
  Higher **travel time** to regional centres
- Delineation 2:
  Low **economic potential** due to low potential accessibility
- Delineation 3:
  Areas of **poor access to services of general interest**
- Delineation 4:
  Depleting areas (poor demographic basis)

Combinations of the four delineation approaches



Overlay of results of the four individual delineations: Number of IP assignments

- non-IP area
- IP area in just one delineation
- IP area in two delineations
- IP area in three delineations
- IP area in all four delineations

Level: grid cells (2.5x2.5 km)
Source: ESPON Profecy
Origin of data: TCP International, 2017;
TCP International Accessibility Model, 2017
CC - UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

Note:
Outermost regions excluded from analysis.

Key drivers and territorial patterns of inner peripheries

46% of all inner peripheries

Poor economic potential
and **poor demographic situation**

45% of all inner peripheries

Lack of access to centres or services

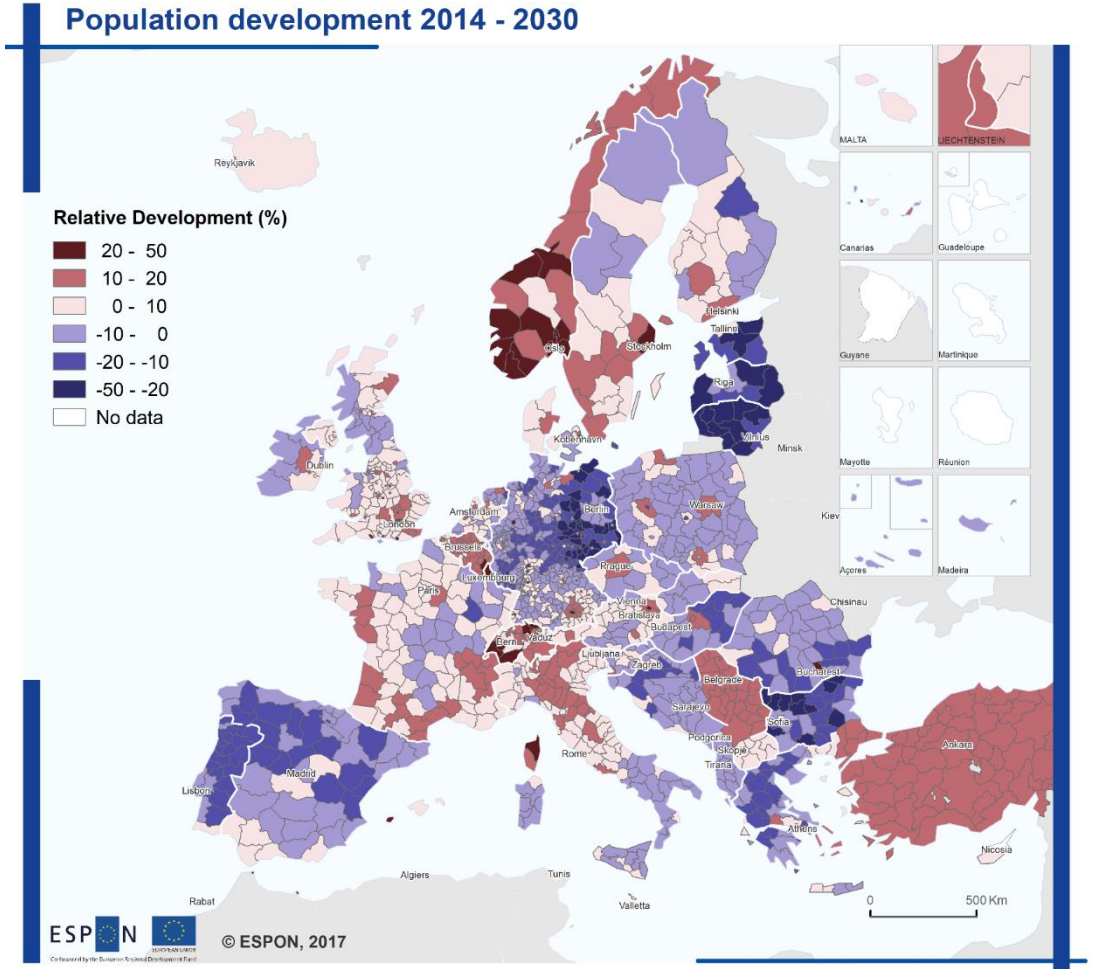
- The most **peripheral areas** in geographical terms frequently appear as IPs
- **Border regions**, not only national but also regional, show a greater incidence of IPs than their non-frontier counterparts
- IPs with poor accessibility tend to overlap with **intermediate, rural and mountain areas**
- Depleting IPs also overlap significantly with **urban and metropolitan areas**, which imply that processes of peripheralisation could affect “enclaves” in these territories too

2

Territorial future(s)

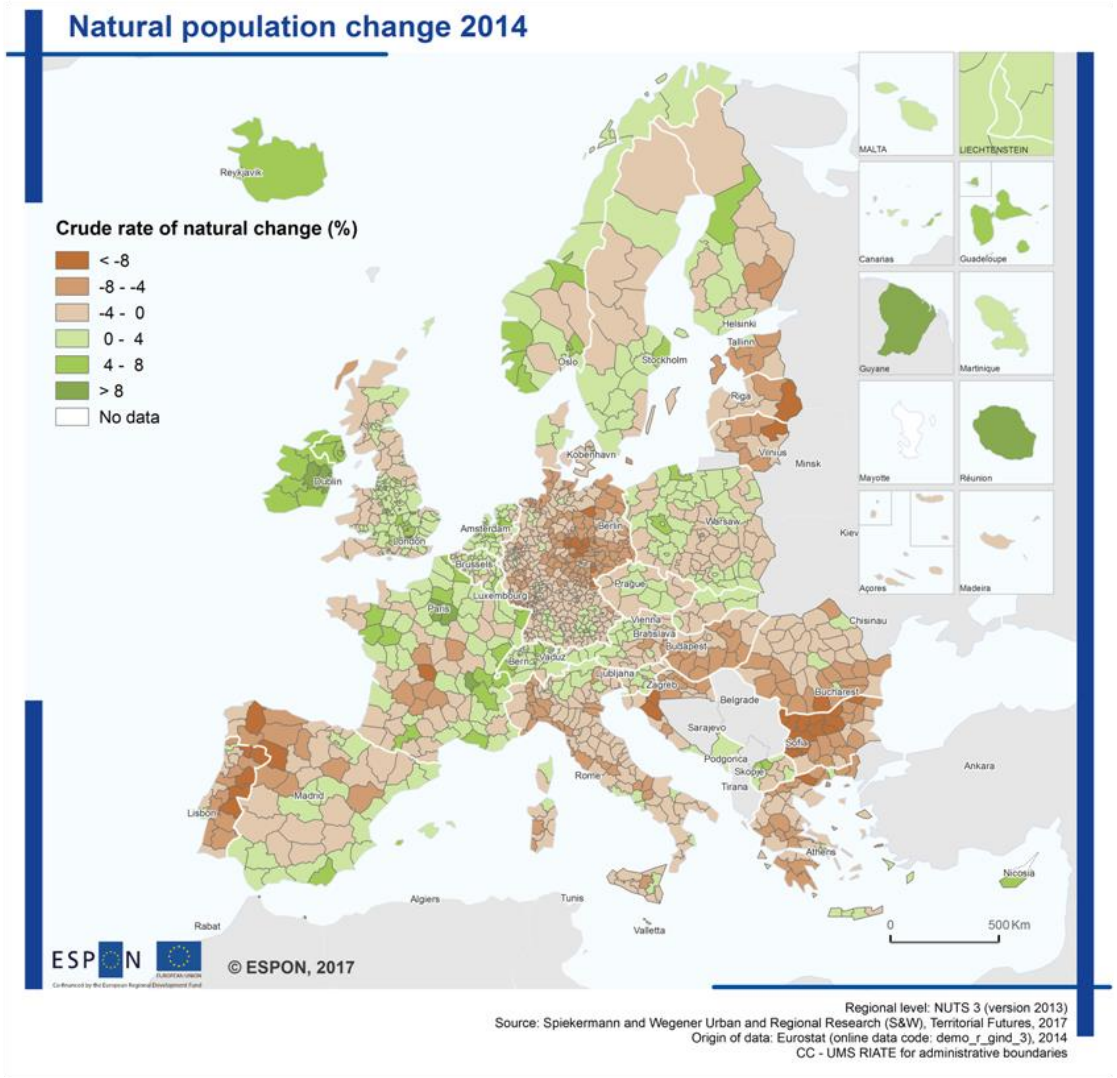
An increase of population overall but not everywhere…

- Population increase expected by 2050 – 7% with considerable variation between and within countries
- High population growth - in western and northern European countries as well as in the main urban centres in eastern European countries
- The population in most parts of eastern European countries and Germany will continue to decline
- In 2030 the populations of Bulgaria and Latvia are expected to be as much as 20 per cent lower than in 2014



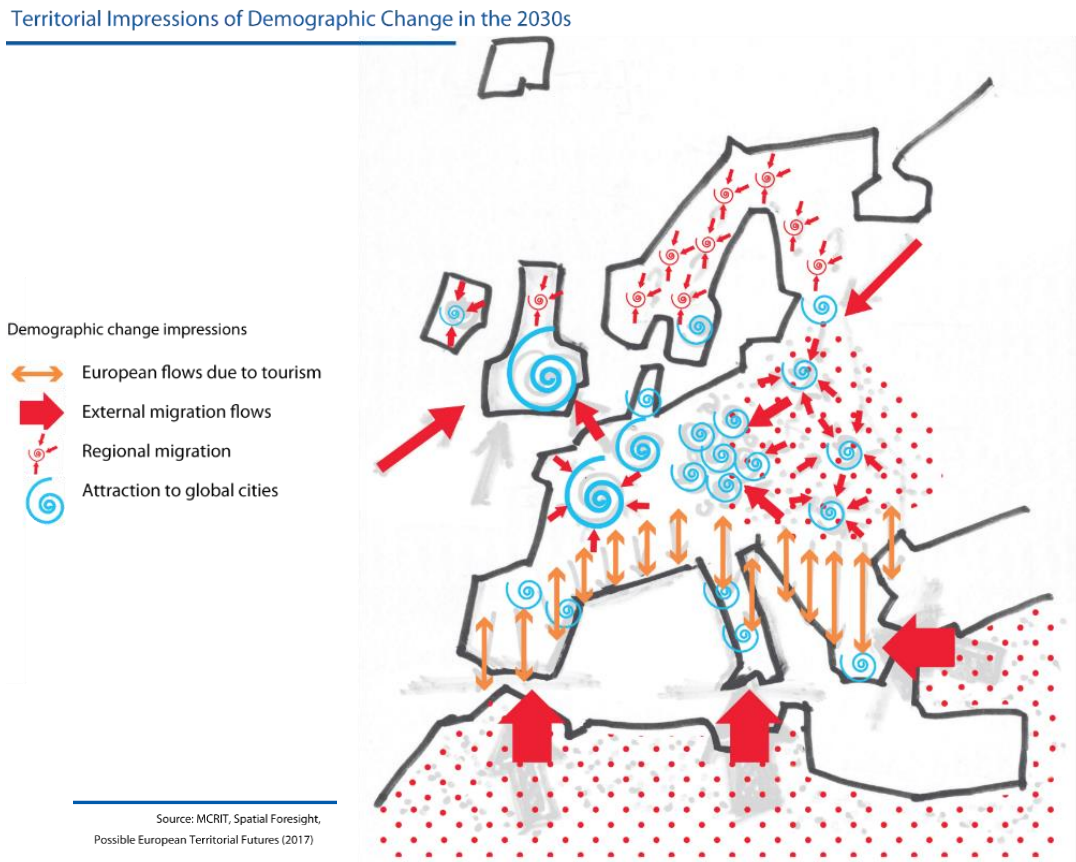
Population changes in urban and rural areas

- Highest population growth and increase in young people and working-age population should be seen in metropolitan areas and their surroundings
- Significant population increase can also be expected in some rural areas (e.g. southwest France, some regions in northern Italy, Norway, southern Sweden and Ireland)
- Some metropolitan and urban regions will lose people, not only in Germany and the Eastern European countries, but also for example several regions in Portugal



Migration flows

- Migration flows from the rest of the world to Europe, particularly from Southern Mediterranean regions, represented (red arrows)
- Increasing number of young and talented Europeans migrating to young and vibrant metropolitan areas in and outside Europe
- In the case of Eastern European and some Baltic cities, people from rural sparsely populated areas continue to move towards large cities and capitals in their countries, as well as towards Western cities (red arrows, blue circles)



- More intense north-south flows linked to residential tourism (orange arrows). These movements will increase all over Europe with increasing number of temporary residents, especially in large cities and most touristic areas.

More areas risk becoming inner peripheries, if service provision deteriorates further

Areas of risk to become inner peripheries: Areas with poor access to three or four SGIs in Delineation 3, but which have not been identified as IP

Areas-of-risk ro become IP in future

Remarks:
All areas which have, according to results of Delineation 3, poor access to three or four SGIs are considered as areas-of-risk.

Level: Grid cells (2.5x2.5 km)
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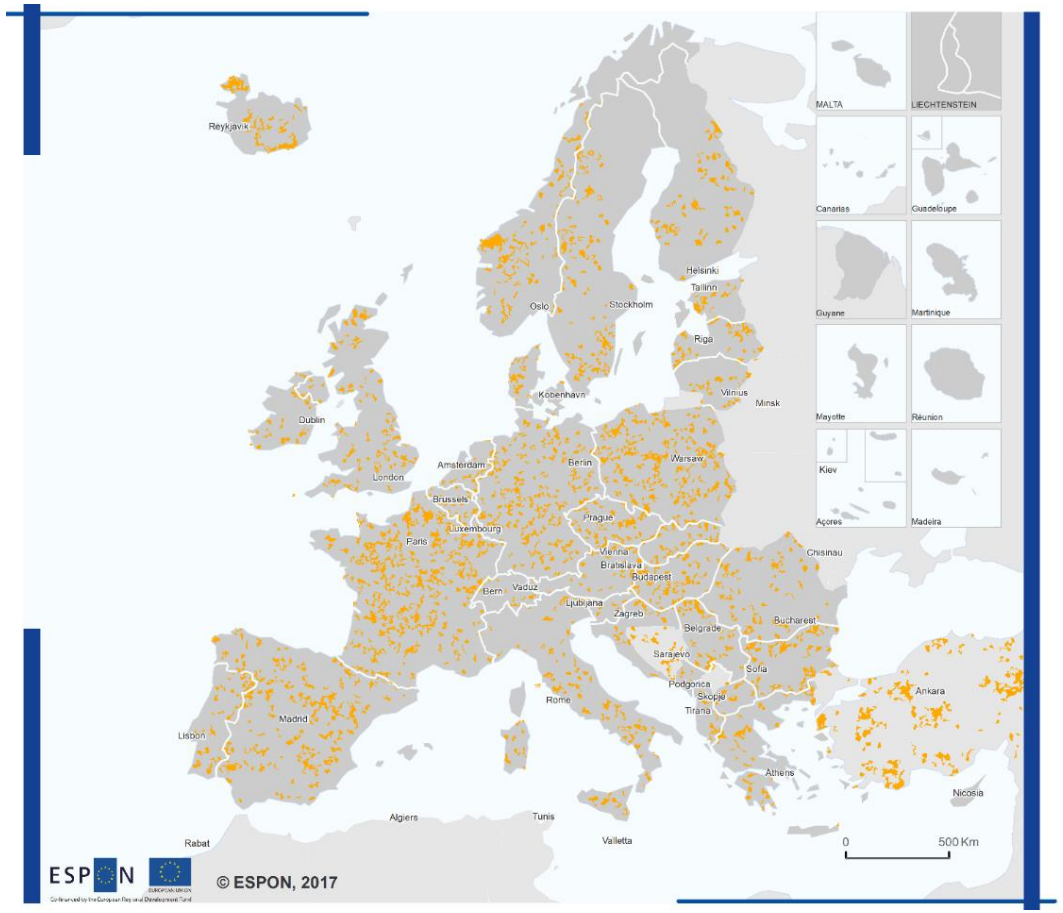
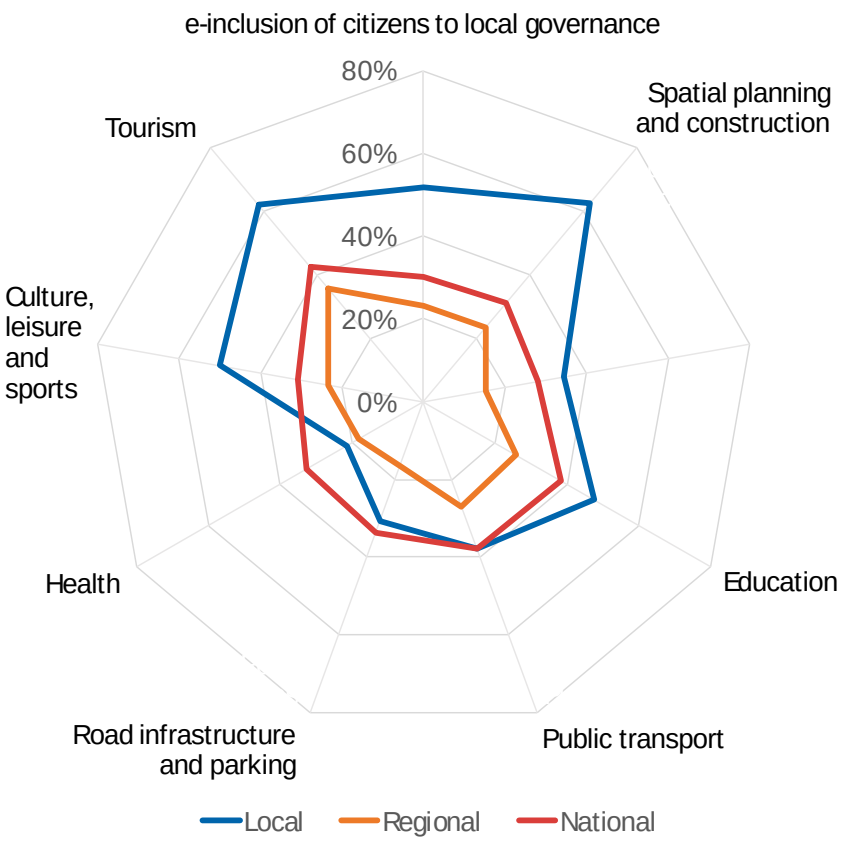


3

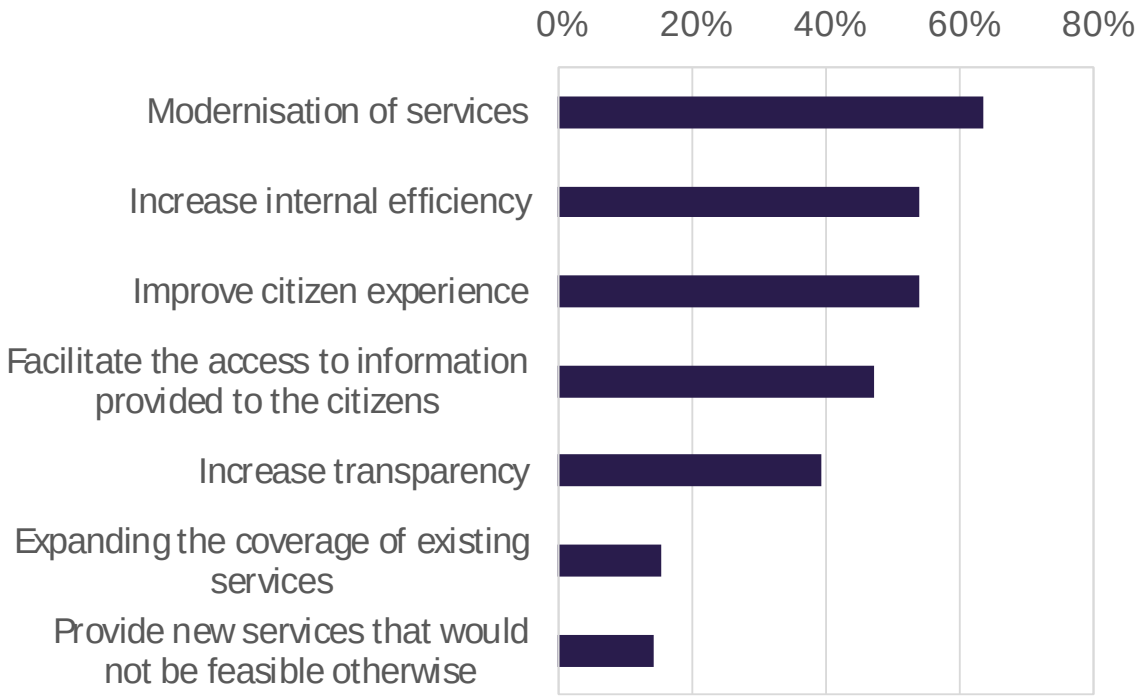
Transformation and transition potentials

Digital transformation of public services

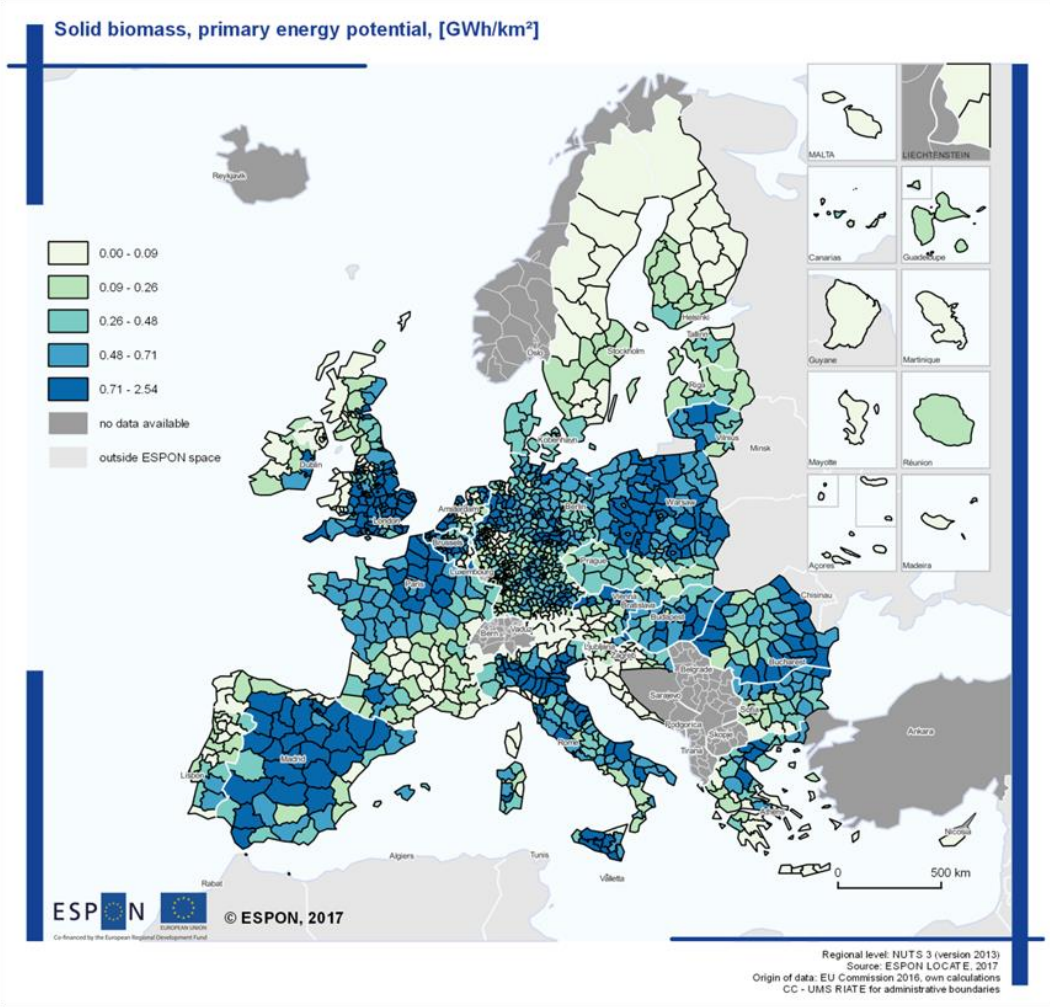
Share of digitalised services provided at local, regional and national levels, by type

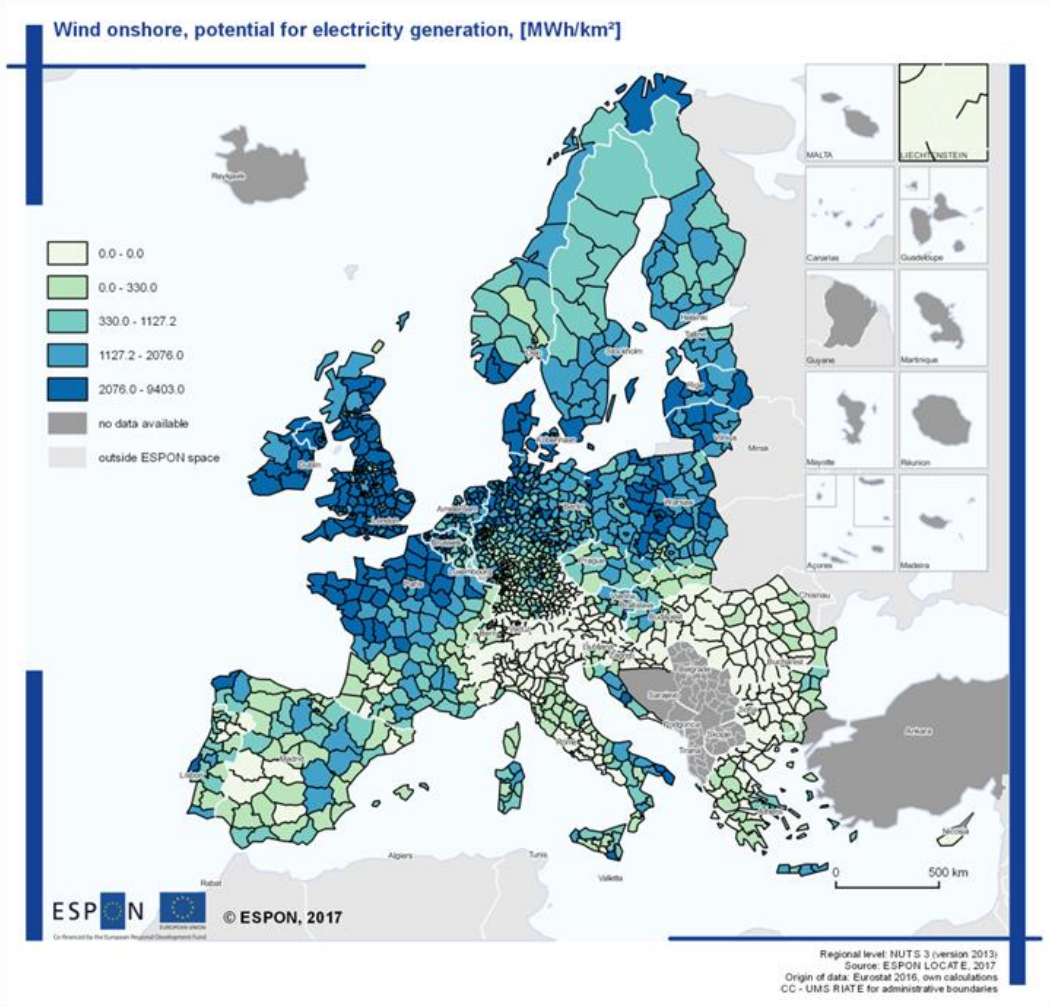


Main drivers of digital strategies



Transition to a low-carbon economy





4

Challenges and opportunities for action and further research

Challenges and opportunities for action

National and sub-national levels

- Promote **multi-scale integrated strategic spatial planning**
- Improve **scenario planning** and demographic checks
- Take a **long-term perspective**
- Strengthen **institutional capacity**
- Improve communication and **partnerships**
- Develop **alternative economies** and smart diversification

EU level

- Improve **comparative research** for shrinking rural regions
- Roll-out the **Smart Villages** concept
- Enhance **place-based approach of ESIF funding**

Opportunities for future research

Gather, harmonize and develop **data and indicators at more disaggregated territorial levels** (LAU2 or grid)

Complement the compiled Pan-European **services of general interest database** with other services (stadiums, city halls, police stations, restaurants, universities, etc.) and information on the quality and the development of SGIs

Explore the **functional roles of regional centres**

Create new **knowledge for policymakers to re-grow greener**, smaller and provide new openings to be innovative, modernise governance and public services

Develop new, smarter ways to **harness ICT** to more efficiently deliver public services and generate new employment opportunities

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