

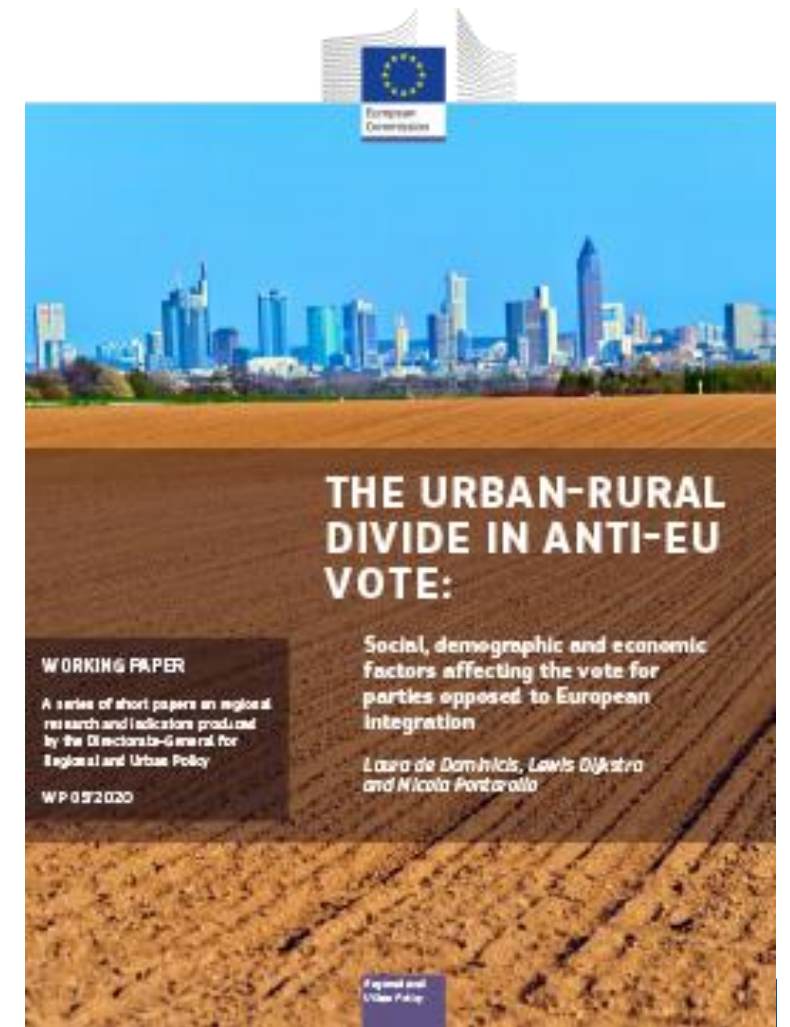
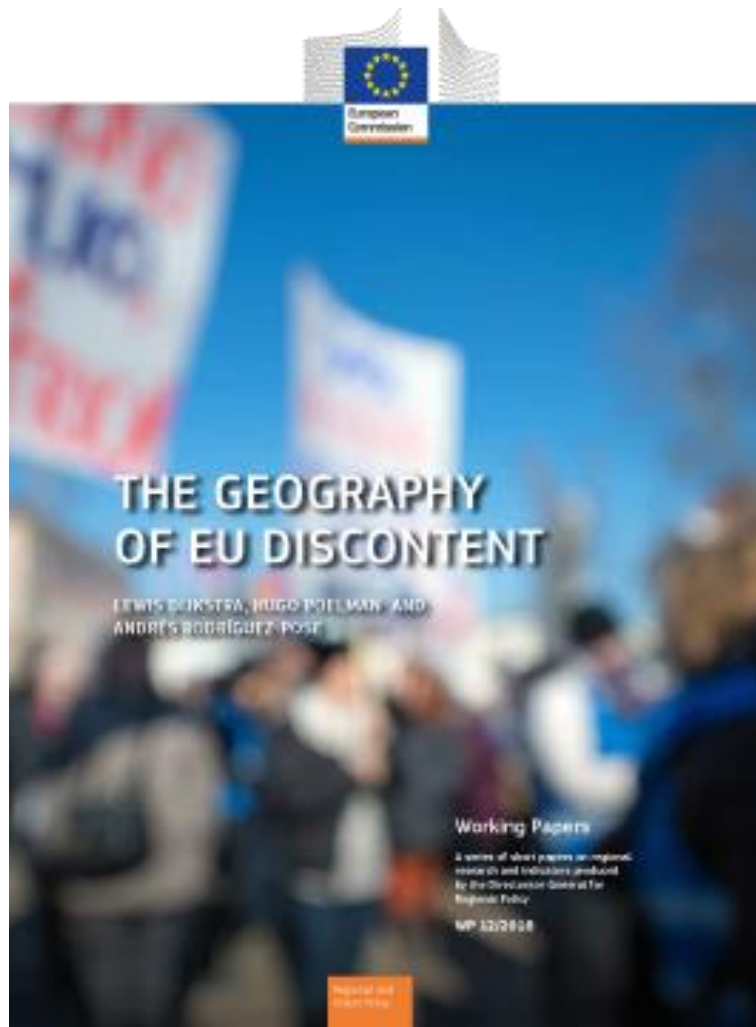


# The geography of EU discontent & the regional development trap

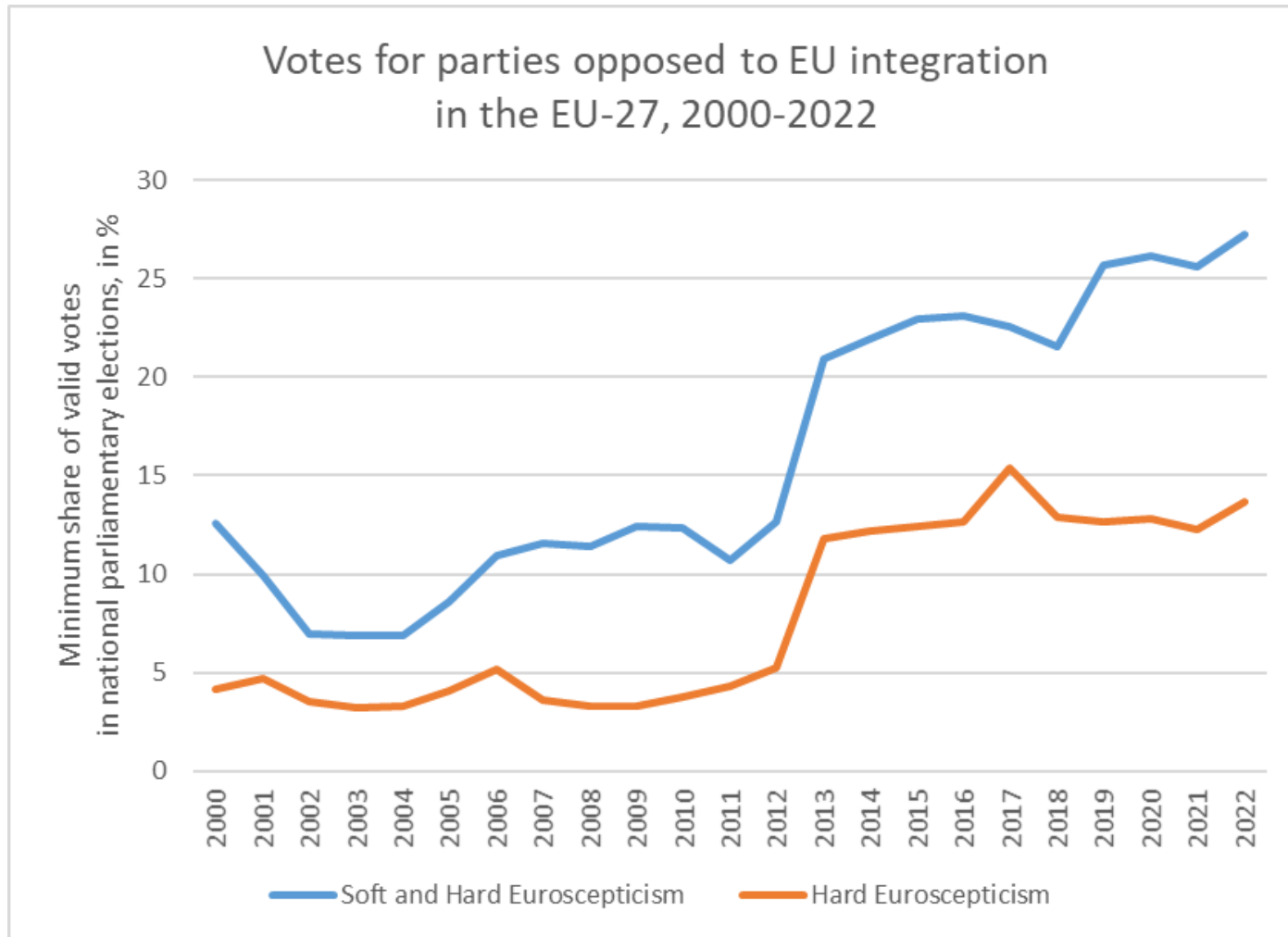
by Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, Lewis Dijkstra and Hugo Poelman

*High Level Committee on the Future of Cohesion Policy, 19 June 2023*

# Three initial REGIO Working Papers



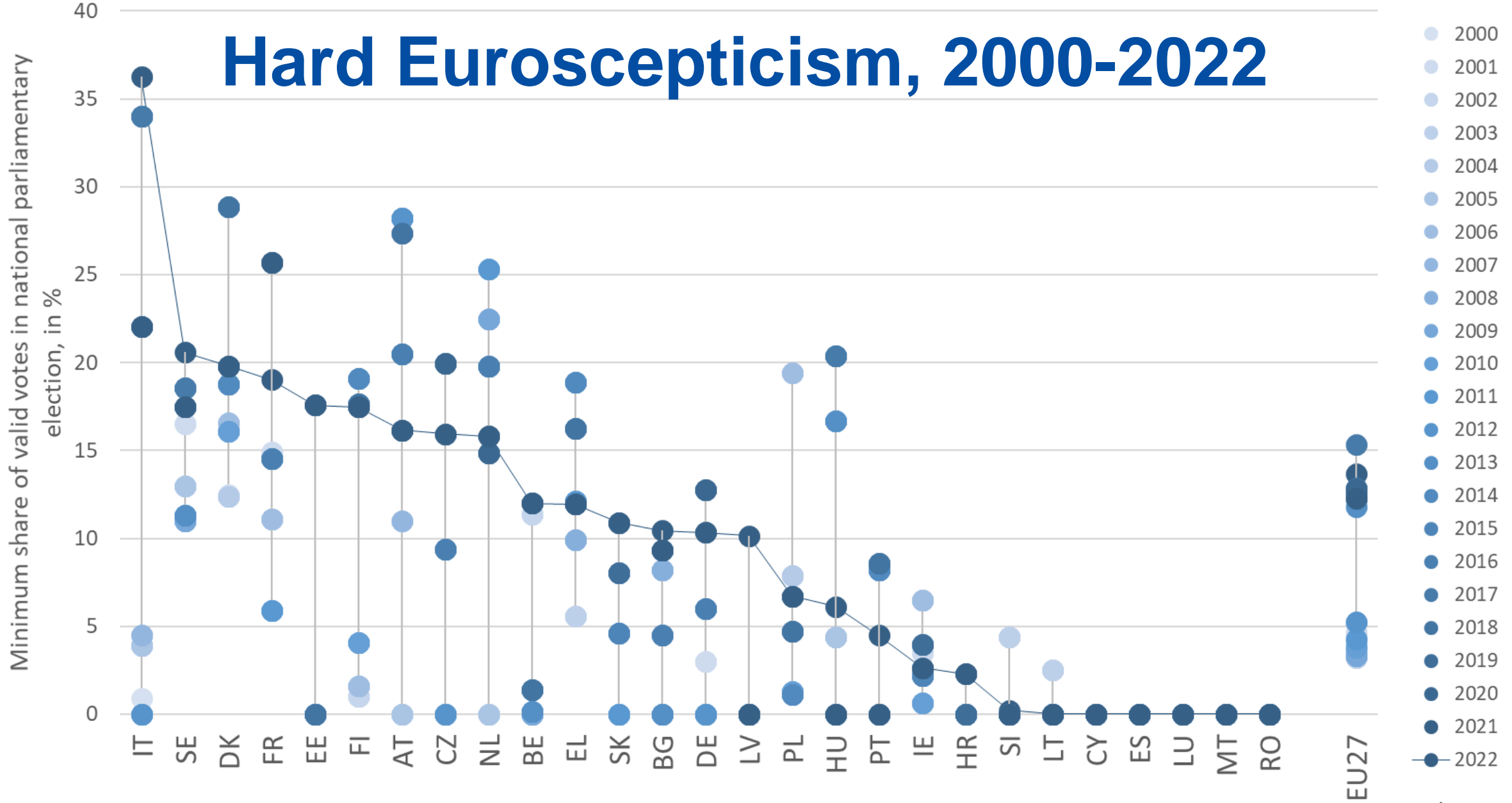
# Euroscepticism on the rise



- A big increase following the economic and financial crisis of 2008
- Brexit may have reduced appeal of hard Euroscepticism
- But softer Euroscepticism continues to grow

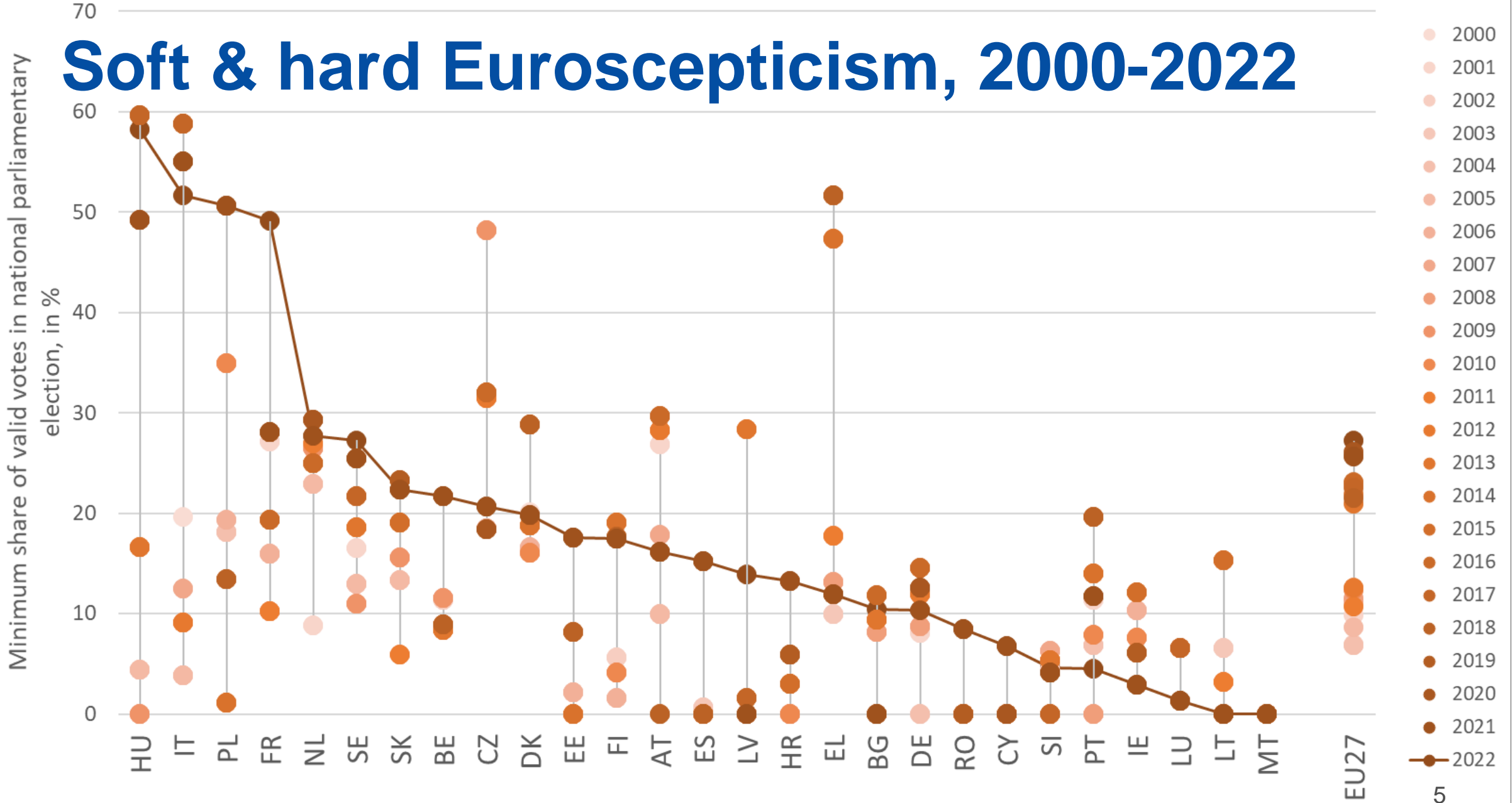
Votes for hard Eurosceptic parties by Member State, 2000-2022

# Hard Euroscepticism, 2000-2022

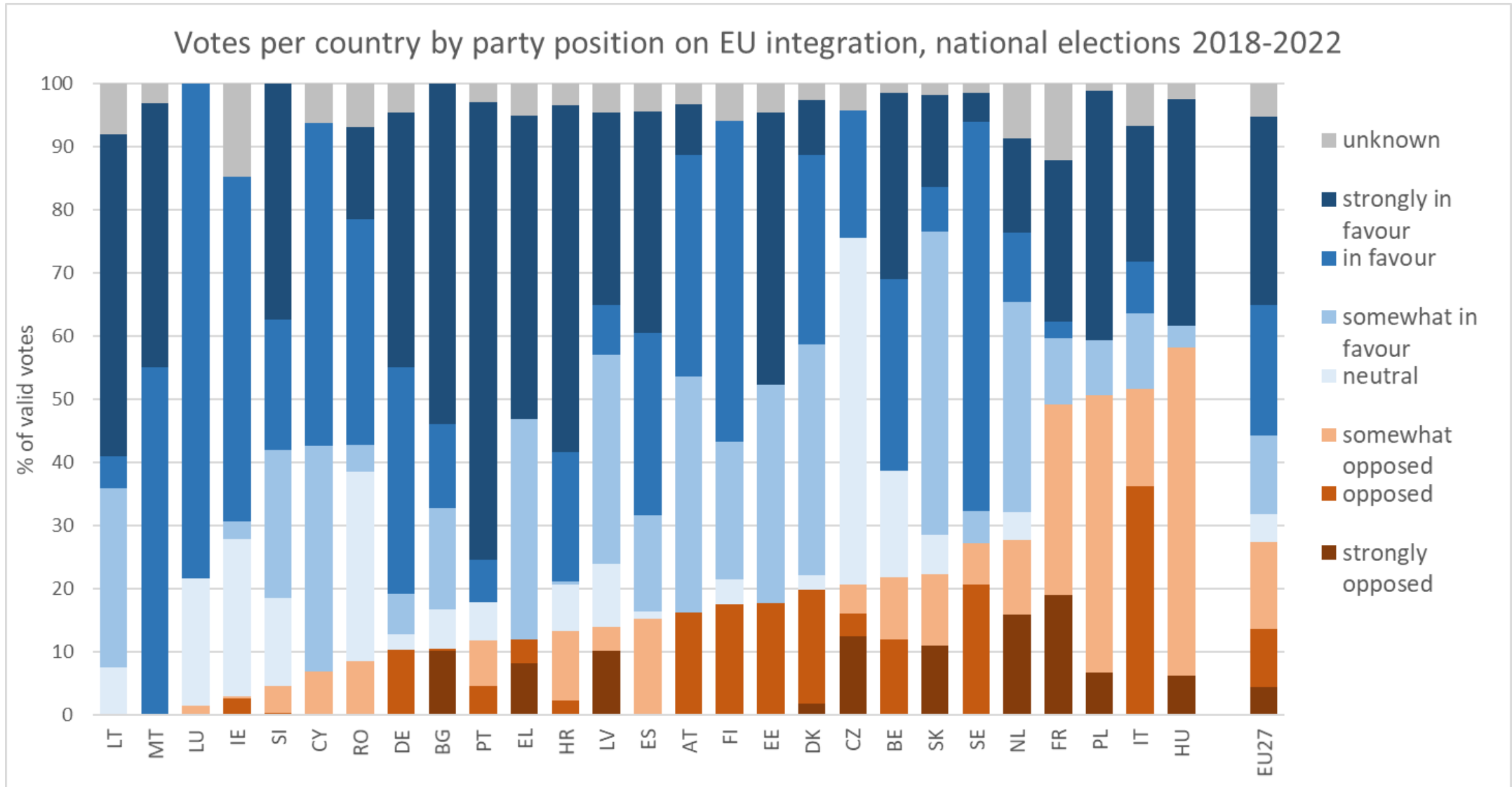


Votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties by Member State, 2000-2022

# Soft & hard Euroscepticism, 2000-2022

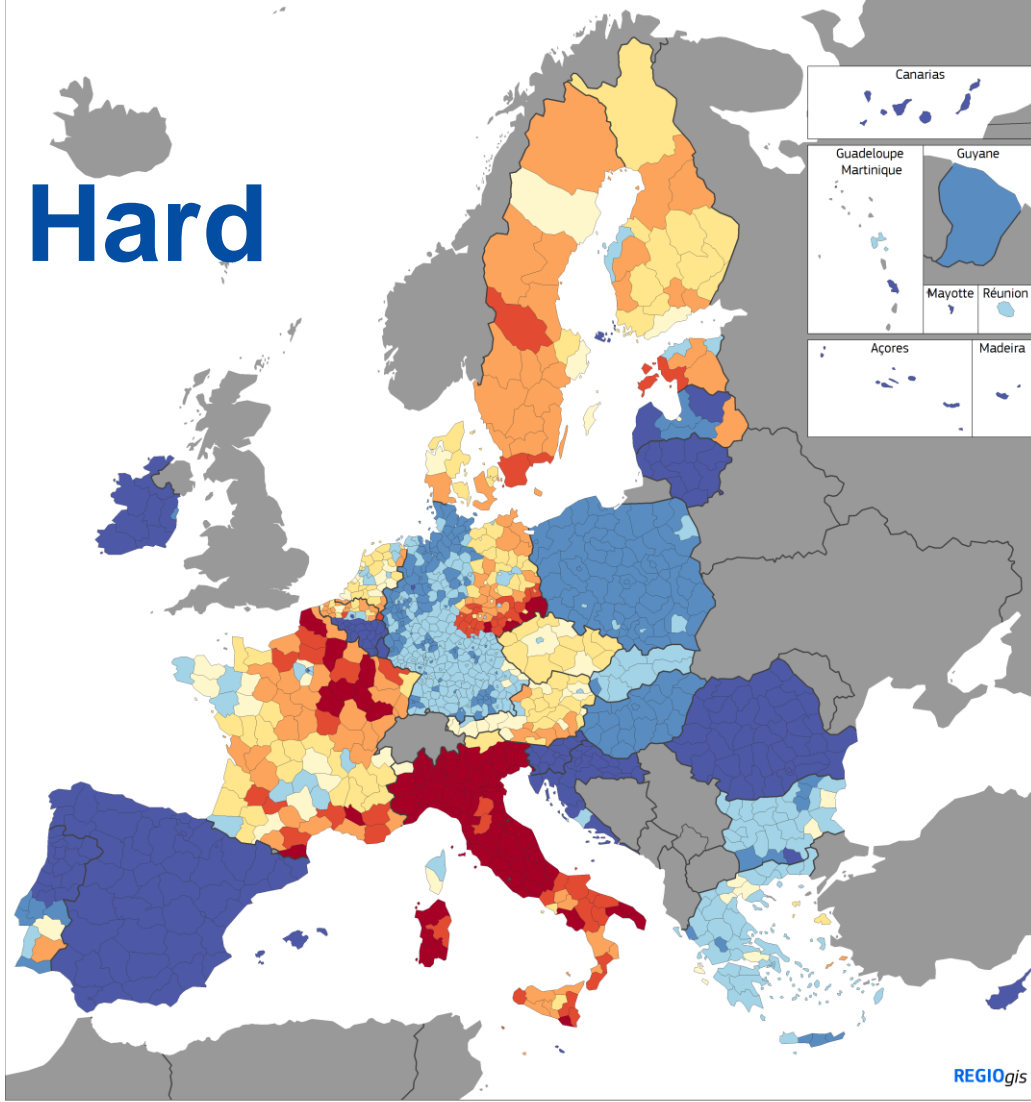


# Votes by party position on EU integration



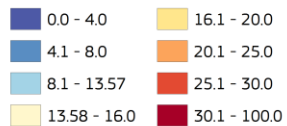


# Hard



Minimum share of votes for hard Eurosceptic parties, 2018-2022

% of valid votes

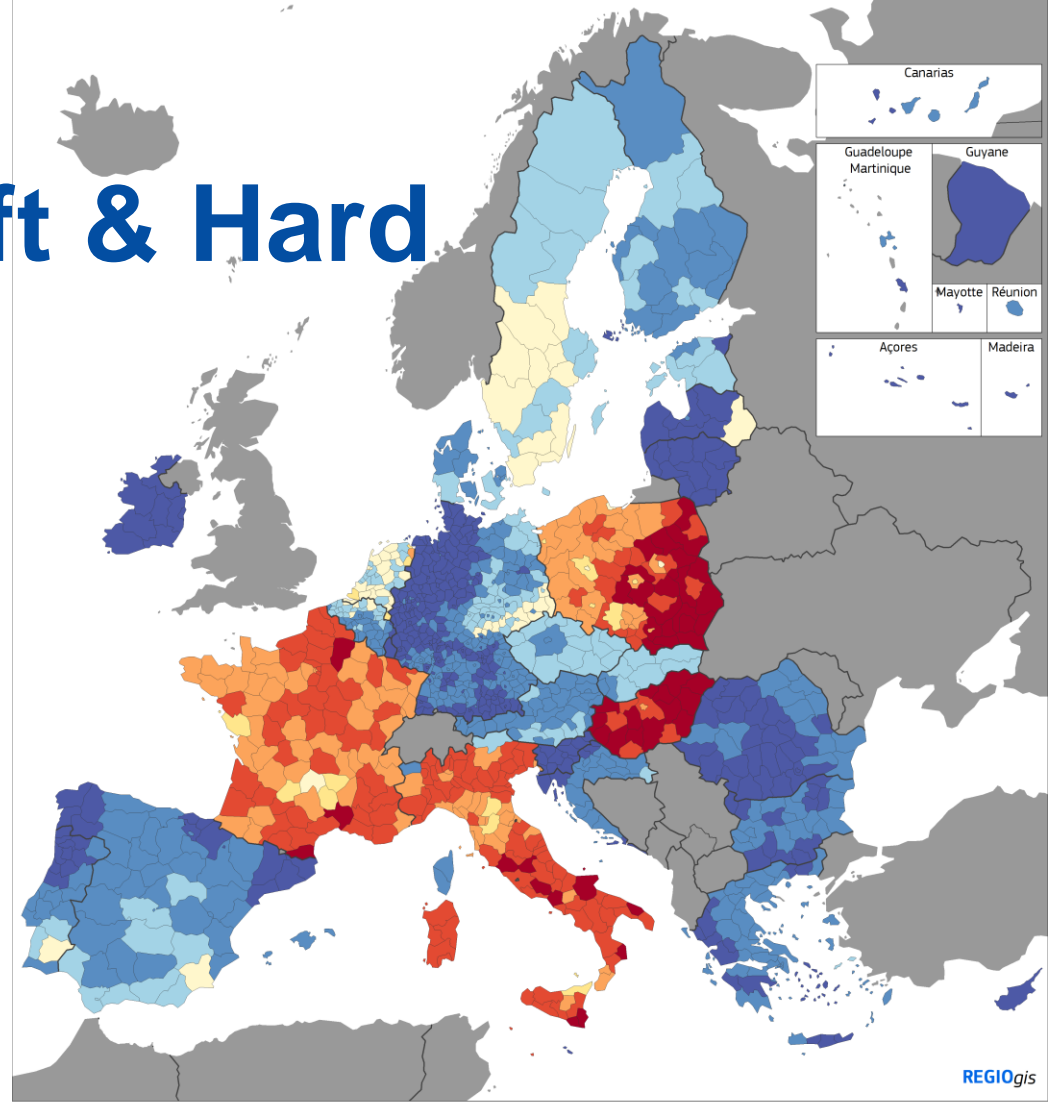


BG, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PT, SI, SE: 2022  
CZ, DE, CY, NL: 2021  
IE, HR, LT, RO, SK: 2020  
BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, AT, PL, FI: 2019  
LU: 2018

Source: DG REGIO based on EU-NED database, national administrative sources and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019

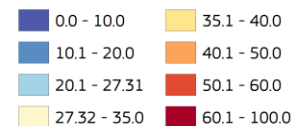
0 500 km

# Soft & Hard



Minimum share of votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties, 2018-2022

% of valid votes

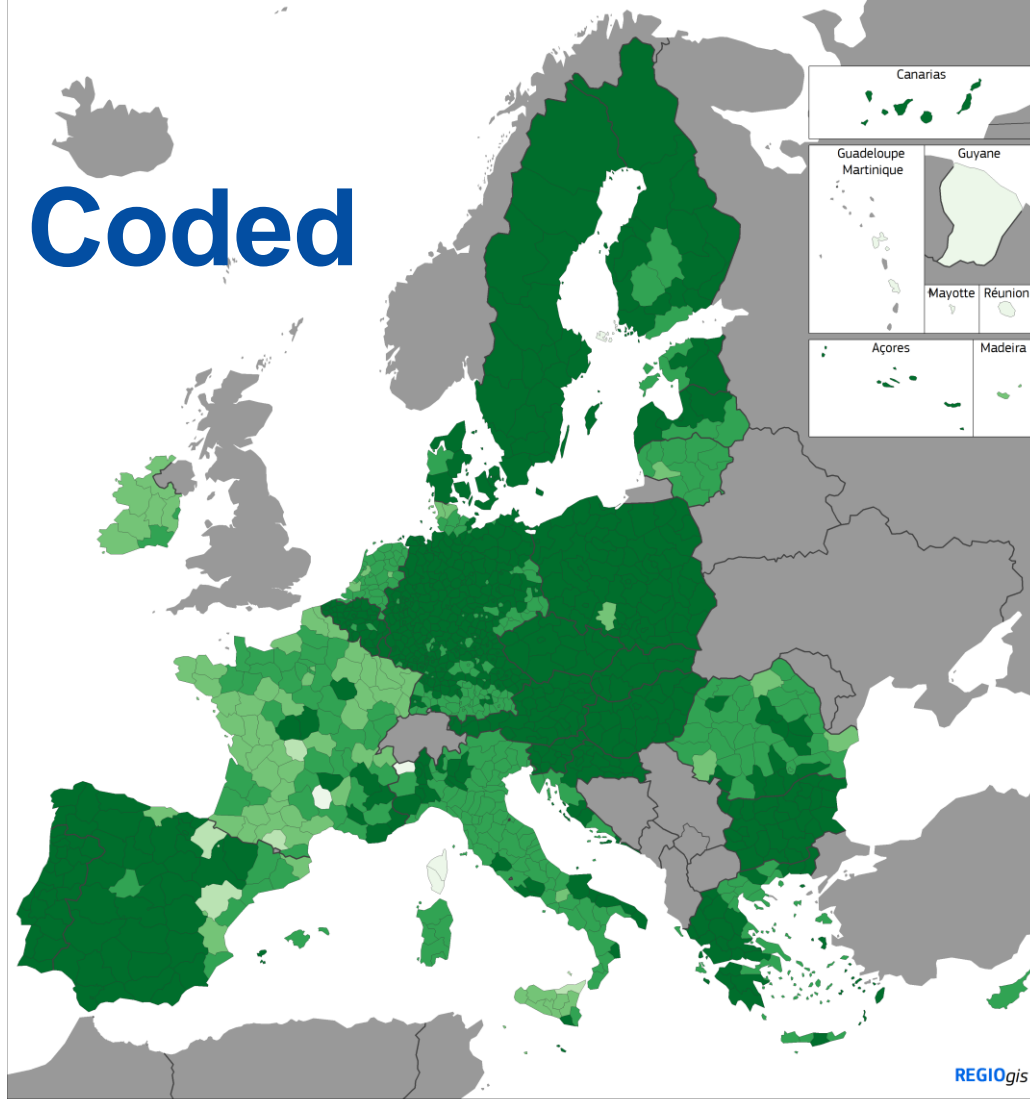


BG, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PT, SI, SE: 2022  
CZ, DE, CY, NL: 2021  
IE, HR, LT, RO, SK: 2020  
BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, AT, PL, FI: 2019  
LU: 2018

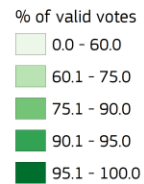
Source: DG REGIO based on EU-NED database, national administrative sources and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019

0 500 km

# Coded



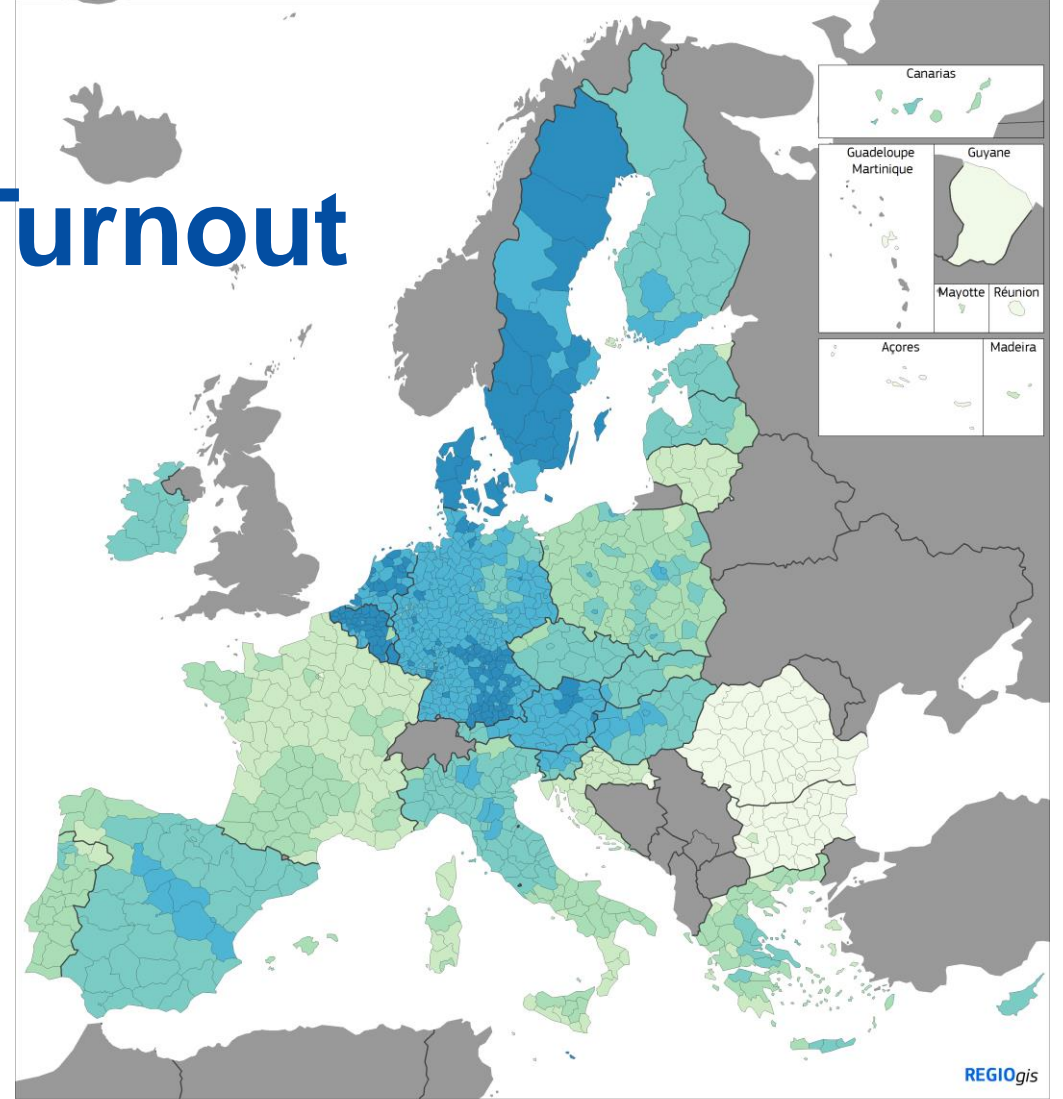
Votes for parties coded by position towards EU integration, 2018-2022



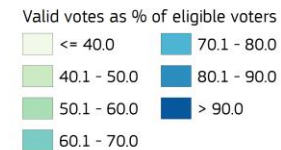
BG, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PT, SI, SE: 2022  
CZ, DE, CY, NL: 2021  
IE, HR, LT, RO, SK: 2020  
BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, AT, PL, FI: 2019  
LU: 2018  
Source: DG REGIO based on EU-NED database, national administrative sources and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019

0 500 km

# Turnout



Valid votes turnout of national elections, 2018-2022



BG, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PT, SI, SE: 2022  
CZ, DE, CY, NL: 2021  
IE, HR, LT, RO, SK: 2020  
BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, AT, PL, FI: 2019  
LU: 2018  
Source: DG REGIO based on EU-NED database and national administrative sources.

0 500 km



# Classic and new explanations

## Classic



**Individual factors: Education, ageing, migration**



**Geography: Location, rurality, density**

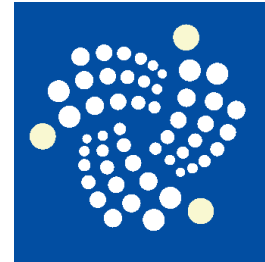


**Economy: Employment, industrial decline, lack of opportunities**

## New: Development trap



**Risk of a development trap**



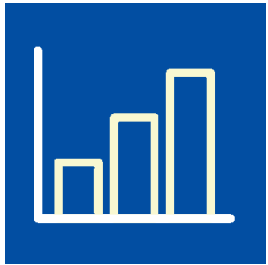
**Intensity of the trap**



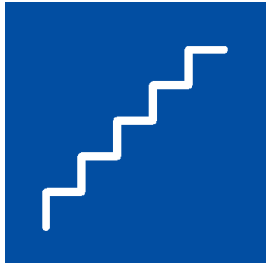
**Length of the trap**

# Defining a development trap

## Three measures of economic dynamism



GDP per capita



Productivity

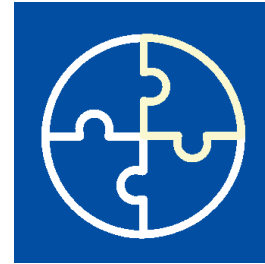


Employment per capita

## Measured at three geographical scales



The region itself in the past



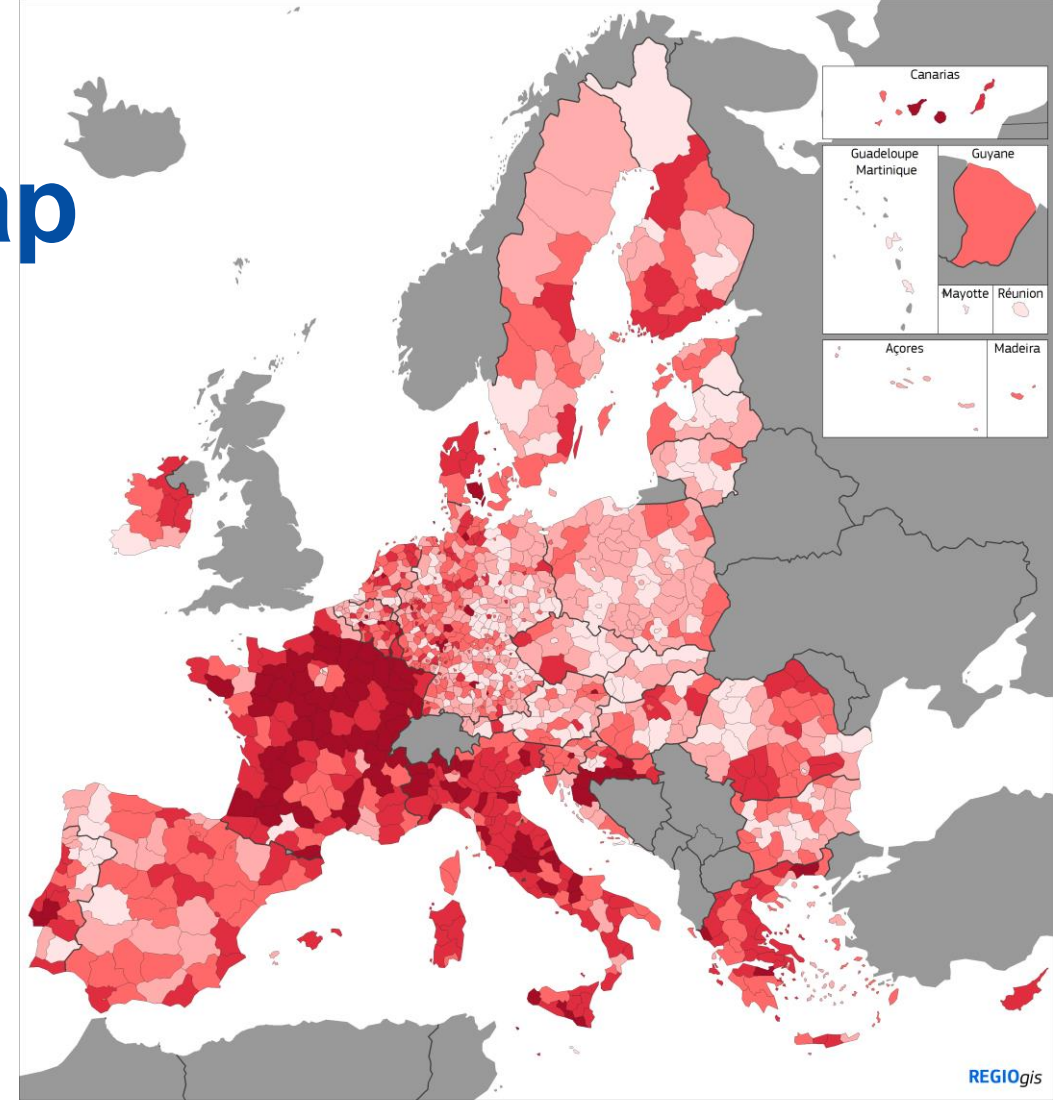
The country it belongs to



The EU

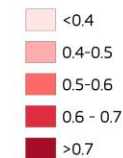
# Risk of a development trap

- Counts how many times (out of a possible maximum of 9) a region scores below others in the country or the EU or itself in the past
- Standardised to 0-1
- Average over the number years observed



Development trap index 1 at NUTS-3 level, 2001-2018

Likelihood of being in a development trap

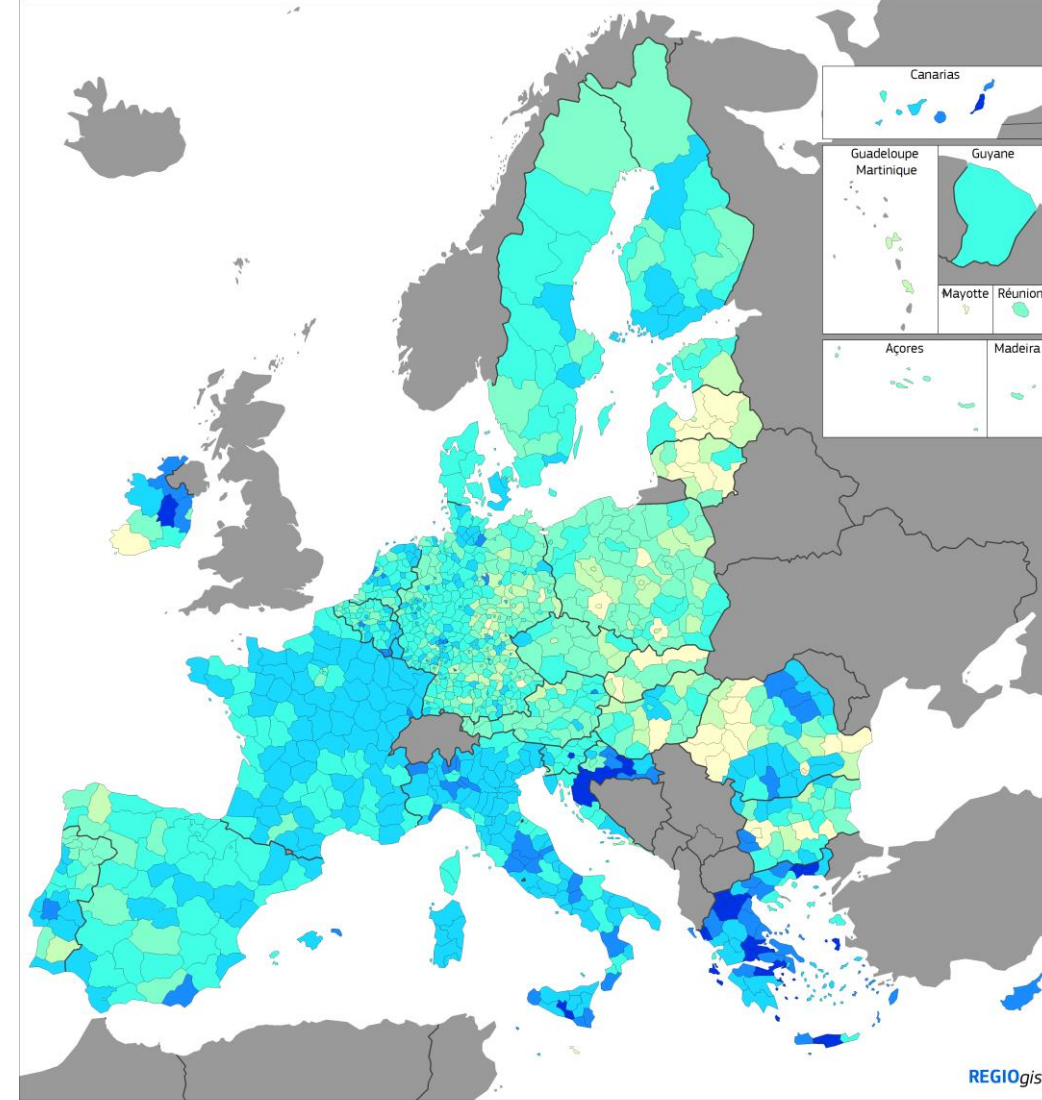


This index measures if a region's growth is lower than that of the EU, of its country or of the same region during the previous 5 years. It considers growth in GDP per head, productivity and employment over a five-year period.  
A region scores 1 for each time its growth is lower. This score between 0 and 9 is then rescaled to 0-1.  
Source: DG REGIO calculations based on JRC and Eurostat data

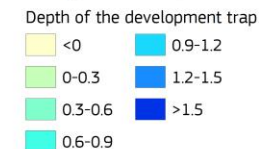
0 500 km

# Intensity of the trap

- This measures how much lower growth is in a region compared to the EU, the country it belongs to and its own performance in the past for the three economic indicators (GDP per head, productivity and employment per head)
- Higher figures imply a more intense trap



Development trap index 2 at NUTS-3 level, 2001-2018

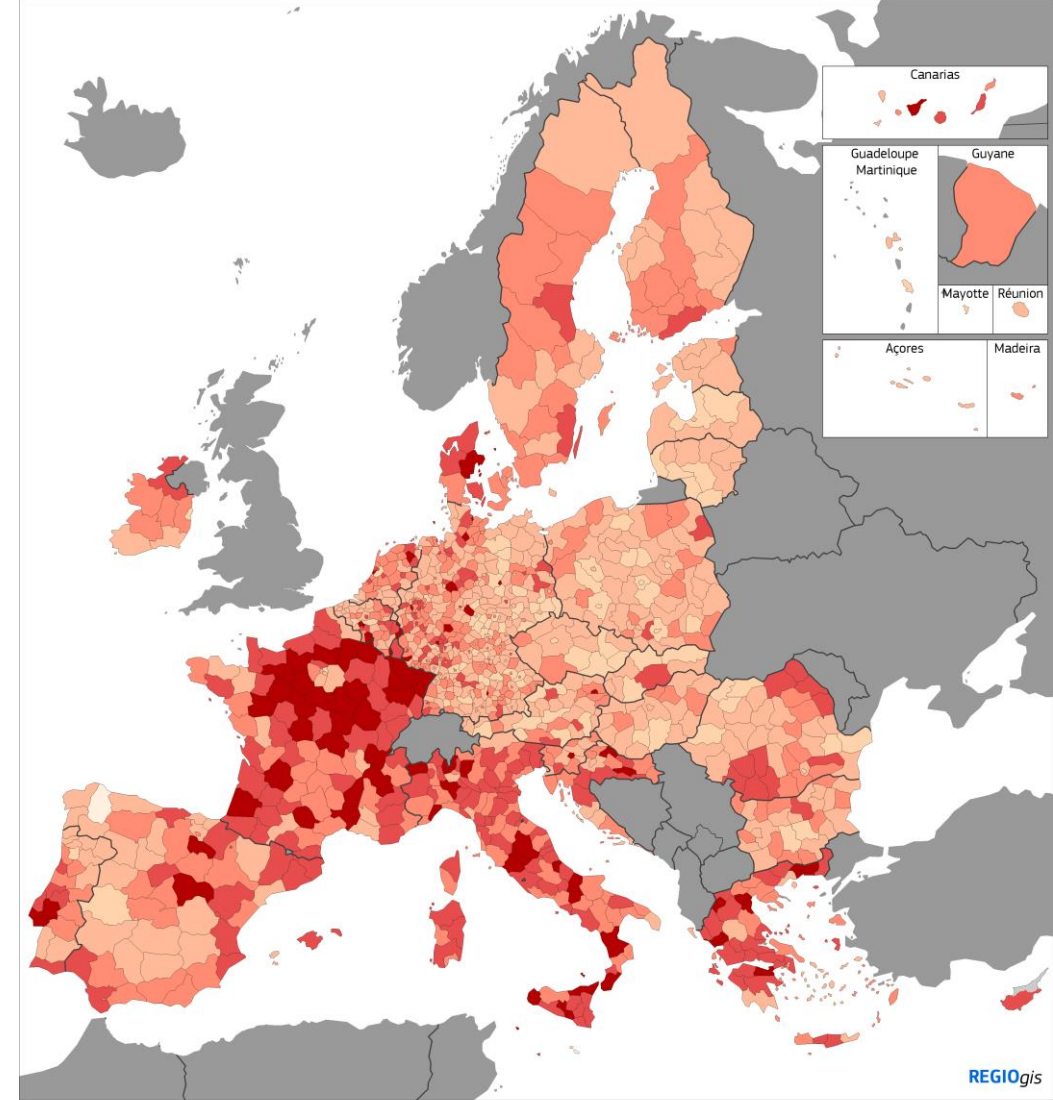


This index measures the extent to which a region's growth is lower than that of the EU, of its country or of the same region during the previous 5 years. It considers growth in GDP per head, productivity and employment over a five-year period. The index is standardised using the mean and the standard deviation of the first period.  
Source: DG REGIO calculations based on JRC and Eurostat data

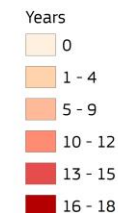
0 500 km

# Length of a trap

- Captures the number of years a region is considered development trapped (score of 0.5 or more in DT1)
- Only one region has not registered a single year of entrapment
- Regions in France, Italy, Greece, & Croatia are confronted with persistent entrapment



Number of years in a development trap during 2001-2018



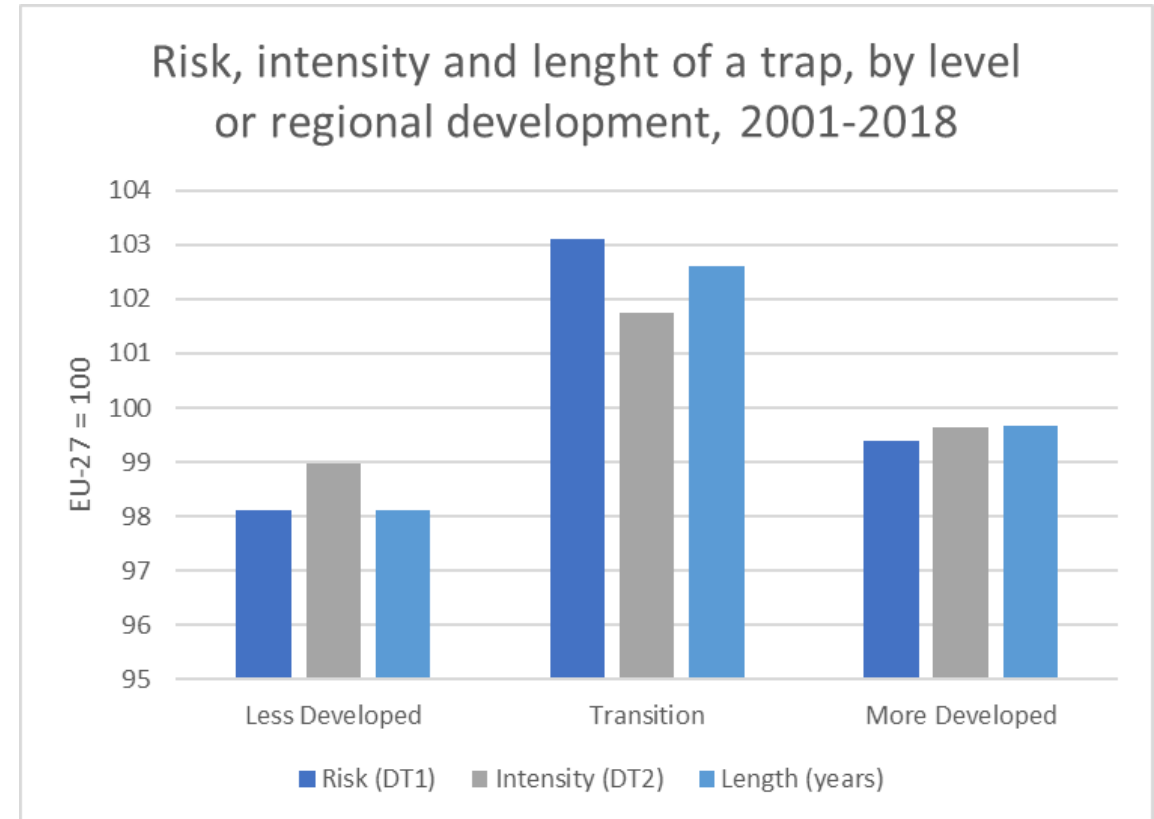
This map shows the number of years that a region scored 0.5 or more on the Development Trap Index 1.  
Source: DG REGIO calculations based on JRC and Eurostat data

0 500 km



# Development trap by level of development

- All regions can be at risk of a development trap
- But the risk is highest in the transition regions, followed by the more developed regions
- The risk is lowest in the less developed regions, but they are not immune to this risk



# Results

## Less Eurosceptic voting



Higher population density



Higher employment rates



More people with higher education



More people born in another MS



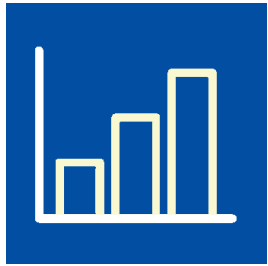
Higher quality of government



Higher turnout

# Results (II)

## More Eurosceptic voting



Higher GDP per head



More industrial jobs



Higher net-migration

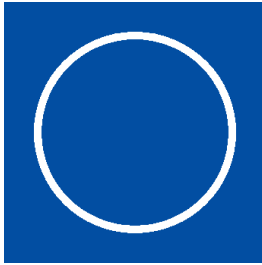


More elderly residents (hard)



More people born outside the EU (hard)

# People vote more Eurosceptic if



Their region (1) is at risk of a development trap, (2) is in an intense trap or (3) spent more years in a trap



This applies to both hard and soft plus hard Euroscepticism



For two electoral cycles (2013-2028 and 2018-2022)



Effect increases with time: **Seven times** bigger if measured over the entire 2001-2018 period than if considering 2018 alone

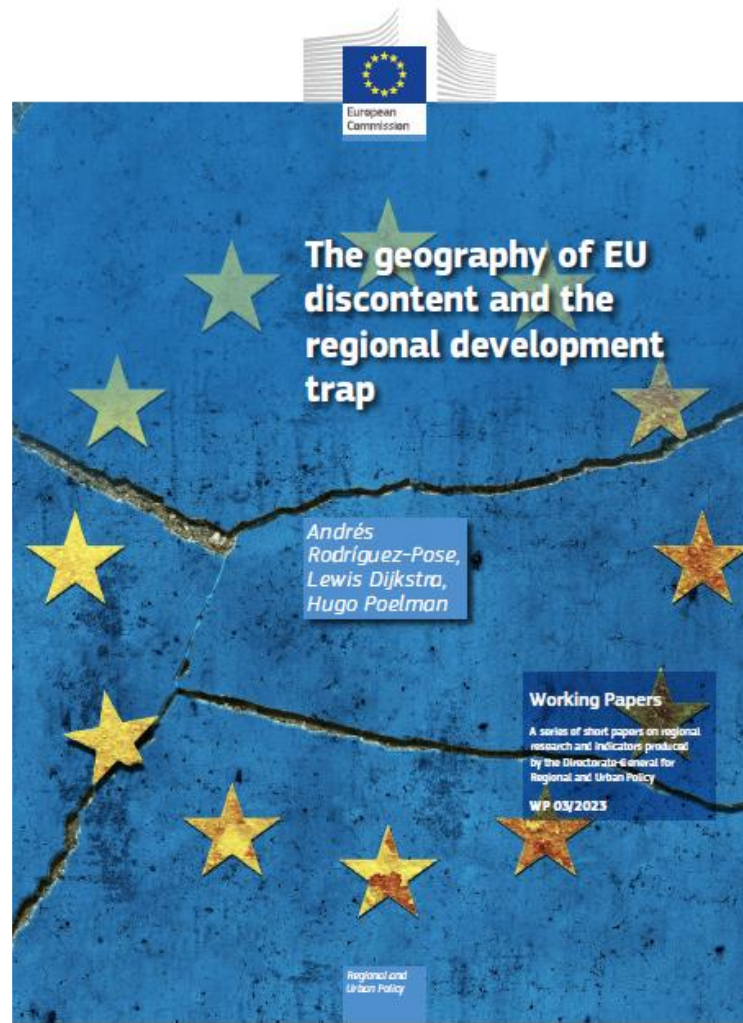
# Conclusions: What do we need?

- A strong, better-targeted policy that can help regions to escape from their development traps;
- A better understanding of the causes of the regional development traps and how they can be overcome;
- To improve the quality of government, increase innovation and boost education and training in trapped areas;
- To engage with residents of smaller cities, towns, and rural areas to grasp their needs and to adapt policies on the basis of their territorial impacts;
- To investigate on whether disinvestments in local public and private service generate feelings of discontent and being left behind



# Working paper now available

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/whats-new/newsroom/06-12-2023-geography-of-discontent-regional-development-traps-lead-to-less-support-for-european-integration-and-values\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/whats-new/newsroom/06-12-2023-geography-of-discontent-regional-development-traps-lead-to-less-support-for-european-integration-and-values_en)



# More information

- [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2018/the-geography-of-eu-discontent\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2018/the-geography-of-eu-discontent_en)
- [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2020/does-cohesion-policy-reduce-eu-discontent-and-euroscepticism\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2020/does-cohesion-policy-reduce-eu-discontent-and-euroscepticism_en)
- [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2020/the-urban-rural-divide-in-anti-eu-vote-social-demographic-and-economic-factors-affecting-the-vote-for-parties-opposed-to-european-integration\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2020/the-urban-rural-divide-in-anti-eu-vote-social-demographic-and-economic-factors-affecting-the-vote-for-parties-opposed-to-european-integration_en)
- [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2023/the-geography-of-eu-discontent-and-the-regional-development-trap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/publications/working-papers/2023/the-geography-of-eu-discontent-and-the-regional-development-trap_en)

# Thank you



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