



MINISTERUL DEZVOLTĂRII REGIONALE,  
ADMINISTRAȚIEI PUBLICE ȘI  
FONDURILOR EUROPENE



# Functional areas capitalization of local potential within the territorial development policies in Europe

Technical Conference on Functional Areas

capitalization of local potential within the territorial development policies in Europe

European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning

Bucharest, 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2017

Rin Grand Hotel – Hall *București B*

# Presentation structure

- The concept of Functional areas (or the transition from an area with territorial potential - to a functional area)
- The relevance of the theme
- Territorial typologies of potential functional areas
  - Territories with geographic specificities
  - Territories delimited by socio-economic criteria

# The concept of Functional areas (or the transition from an area with territorial potential - to a functional area)

- The delimitation within a territory (national, regional) of subdivisions (categories of territories) / areas with different structural features: rural, disadvantaged areas, urban agglomerations, urban areas, metropolitan areas, etc. Territorial development objectives, policies and strategies are differentiated in relation to these categories. (Spatial Planning Report - Germany 2000)
- Functional Region - A region where one or more common phenomena connect settlements to a functionally organized whole.  
(Erdeli, G. - Dictionary of Human Geography, Corinth ed., Bucharest, 1999).



# The concept of Functional areas (or the transition from an area with territorial potential - to a functional area)

## 4 steps

- Identifying the territorial typologies with potential to become functional areas
- Establishing delimitation criteria
- Establishing the proper measures – capitalization the local potential
- Become a functional area

## Objective

- Adapting the governance and the spatial planning tools

## The relevance of the theme

Relevance at the European level – the economic development trends don't take into account the administrative limits of the localities. The economic mass and the demographic mass represent indicators facilitating the economic development of the urban areas. In this respect, more and more reports and studies have been recently developed looking for a new definition of urban areas, their demarcation following the economic and social flows. At the same time it can be noticed that, in order to increase the efficiency of economic and social policies, they must be related to the territorial specificity.

Up till now there have been identified a series of categories of territories (especially those with geographic specificity – mountain areas, island areas etc.) needing certain categories of interventions, actions aiming to make full use of the endogenous potential. In this respect, the functional areas theme, whether they represent the areas surrounding the urban centers where systemic relations are being formed or categories of areas demarcated by the geographical specificity or economic activities, becomes an increasingly debated subject within the research reports, public policies or public authorities' agenda, directly proportional to the interest exhibited for the territorial dimension of the development policies.

# The relevance of the theme

1. Relevance related to the objectives of the Council of Europe – good governance is one of the main goals of the Council of Europe.

The correct management of the functional areas and the substantiation of decisions also based on the territorial impact assessment of public policies represent the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy within the sustainable territorial development processes of the European continent, processes that must ensure a balance between the principles of human dignity, the improvement of life quality, equity and safety, protected cultural and natural environment and the transformations' dynamics of the production system which can result in intra and inter-regional disparities.

The functional areas represent a theme in line with the present trends and needs at the European territorial level, correlated also with the provisions of the Resolution no. 2 of the Nafplion CEMAT Conference which listed a series of themes that needed to be addressed by the next presidencies.

# Territorial typologies of potential functional areas

## Territories with geographic specificities

- Have enjoyed particular attention in recent years, starting with their approach in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Article 174, Article 349) and the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion 2008;
- Benefit from exceptional and potentially useful resources, but must face particular challenges related to geographical isolation, low population density, political, cultural or economic barriers;
- The use of their potential is an opportunity for these areas to resolve their socio-economic disparities and to become competitive at regional, national, European or global level

# Territorial typologies of potential functional areas

Territories with geographic specificities

Strategic documents

- Torremolinos Charter (1983)
- Guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European Continent (2000)
- Green paper for territorial cohesion - Turning territorial diversity into strength (2008)
- Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 - Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions (2011)



# Territorial typologies of potential functional areas

Territories with geographic specificities

Relevance of ESPON studies

- ESPON 2006
  - Urban-rural relations in Europe
  - Territorial trends of the management of the natural heritage
  - Impacts of cultural heritage and identity
- ESPON 2013
  - GEOSPECS - Geographic Specificities and Development Potentials in Europe
  - TIPSE - Territorial Dimension of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe
  - ESPON TEDI - Territorial Diversity in Europe
  - EUROISLANDS- The Development of the Islands – European Islands and Cohesion Policy
  - LIVELAND - Liveable Landscapes: a Key Value for Sustainable Territorial Development
  - LP3LP - Landscape Policy for the 3 Countries Park
- ESPON 2020
  - Shaping new policies in specific types of territories in Europe: islands, mountains, sparsely populated and coastal regions (POLICY BRIEF)

# Delimitation criteria territorial typologies with potential to become functional areas

## Areas delimited by geographic specificities



- Mountain areas
  - Delta areas
  - Island areas
  - Coastal areas

## Areas delimited by socio-economic criteria

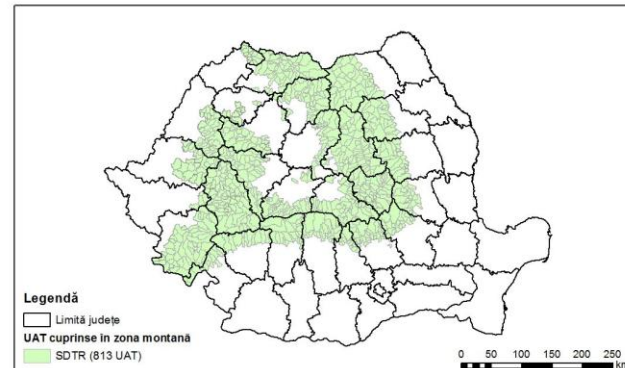
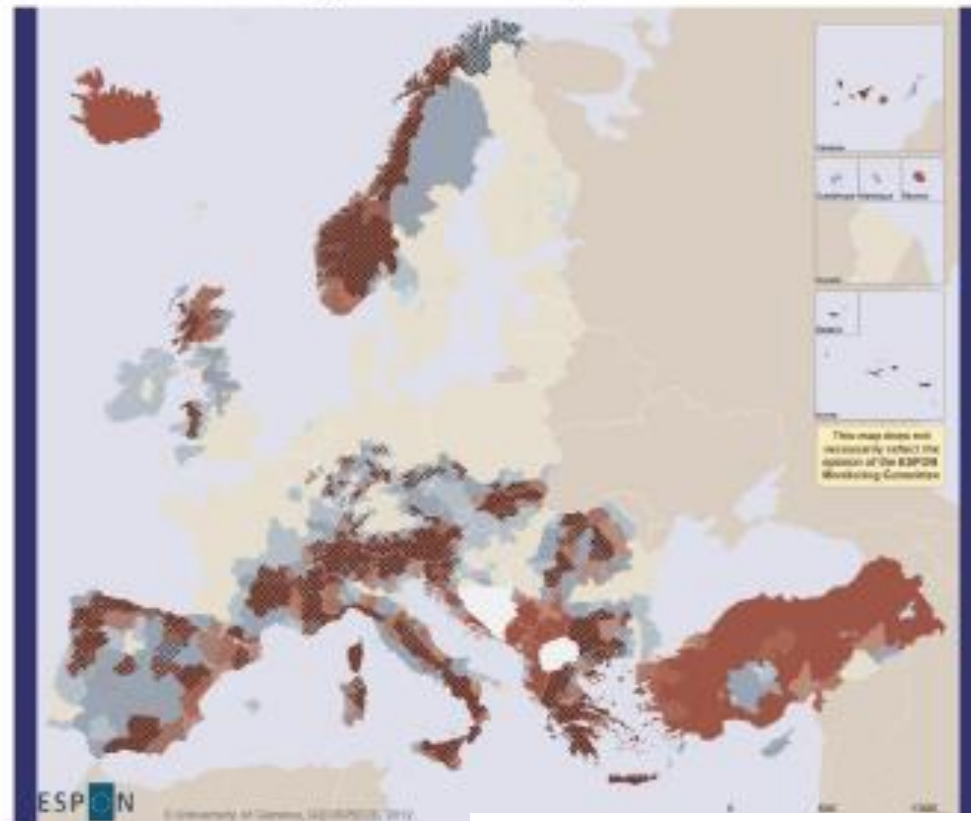


- Clusters
  - Urban functional areas
- Sparsely populated and poorly connected areas
  - Poor areas
- Areas with cultural heritage

## MOUNTAIN AREAS

Mountain areas were originally developed as a special typology by Nordregio (Nordic Centre for Spatial Development). In October 2008, the European Commission presented the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. According to the Charter, the mountain area is defined as the grid cell corresponding to the mountain habitat in which there is population. This typology was modified with the 5th Cohesion Report, so that the habitat that has the inhabited space in a non-mountain area associated with an uninhabited mountain space is also considered a mountain area. The delineation of the mountain space must be made in such a way as to equally meet the scientific criteria. In the European Union, the criteria for defining mountain areas are contained in Council Directive 75/268/EEC which uses altitude combined, in many cases, with slopes and sometimes with other criteria related to climate, topography, quality of soil, etc.

## Mountainous regions in Europe



*Example of good practice – Alpine Region*

The Alpine Region is composed of territories with contrasted demographic, social and economic trends and a great cultural and linguistic diversity. This diversity goes along with a great variety of governance systems and traditions. The Alpine Region includes 7 countries, of which 5 EU Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) plus Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

Source: <https://www.alpine-region.eu/>





## DELTA AREAS

According to the geographical definition, deltas are landforms of variable sizes that were formed at the mouth of the rivers, where several conditions are met: the rivers carry a large volume of alluvium, and the flow has low speeds, the river bed is expanded and has low slope, no tides occur, there are no littoral currents or there are remote littoral currents.

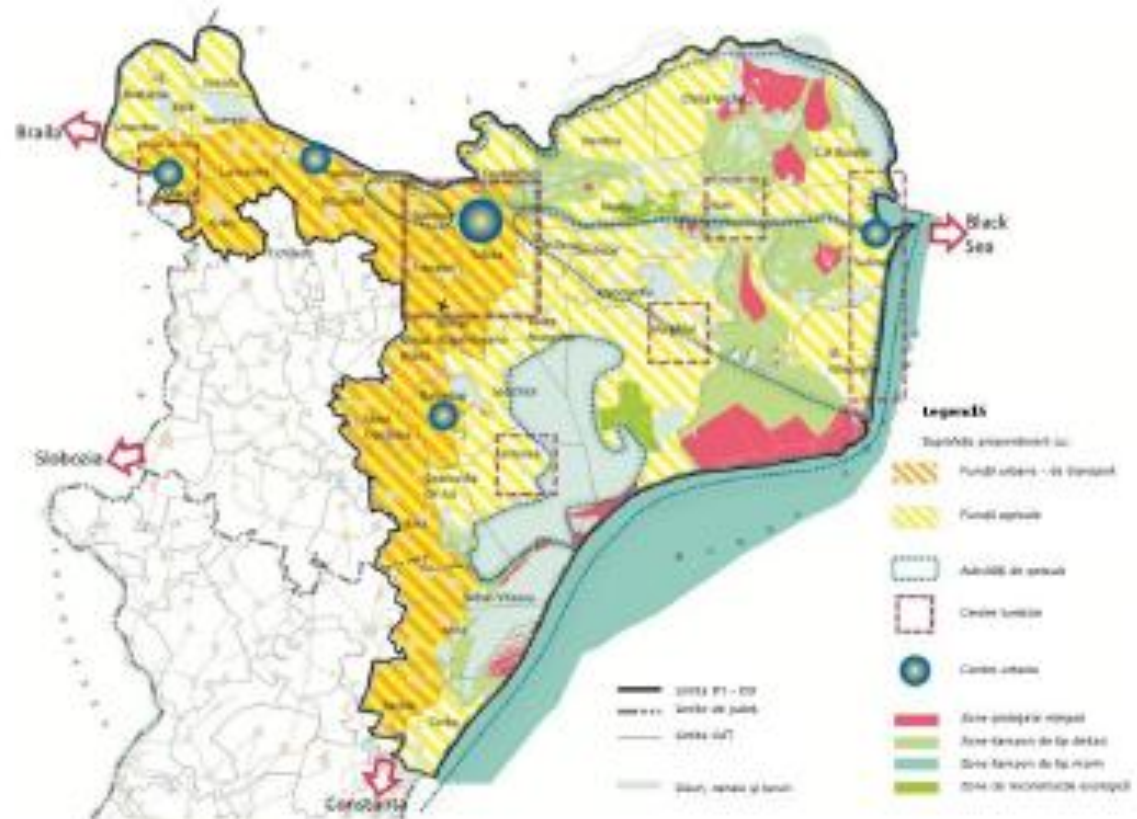


## Case study Romania – Danube Delta

The Danube Delta (DD) is the area generally referred to as the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR). It includes the area between Sf. Gheorghe and Chilia branches of the Danube River (Heart of the Delta), the Razim-Sinoe-Babadag lake system and the adjacent land areas, and the area along the Danube River west of Tulcea city towards Galați.

The Danube Delta enjoys special protection in accordance with the Romanian legislation by its designation in three international conventions: (i) 1991 – UNESCO's "Man and the Biosphere" Programme; (ii) 1991 – Cultural and Natural World Heritage List; and (iii) 1991 – the Ramsar Convention.

The Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Danube Delta was approved in 2016.



## ISLAND AREAS

The characteristics of the islands (small size, remoteness and isolation) are not compatible with the principles of attractiveness of the development models. The activities on islands cannot:

- benefit from economies of scale, since the islands have limited and less varied resources
- have good accessibility and low transportation costs because they are located at a distance from the mainland and isolated
- take advantage of agglomeration externalities because they have fewer inhabitants and limited activities.

The main challenge refers to the exploitation of the changing environment and the capitalisation on island features as advantages, so that policies must support this process.

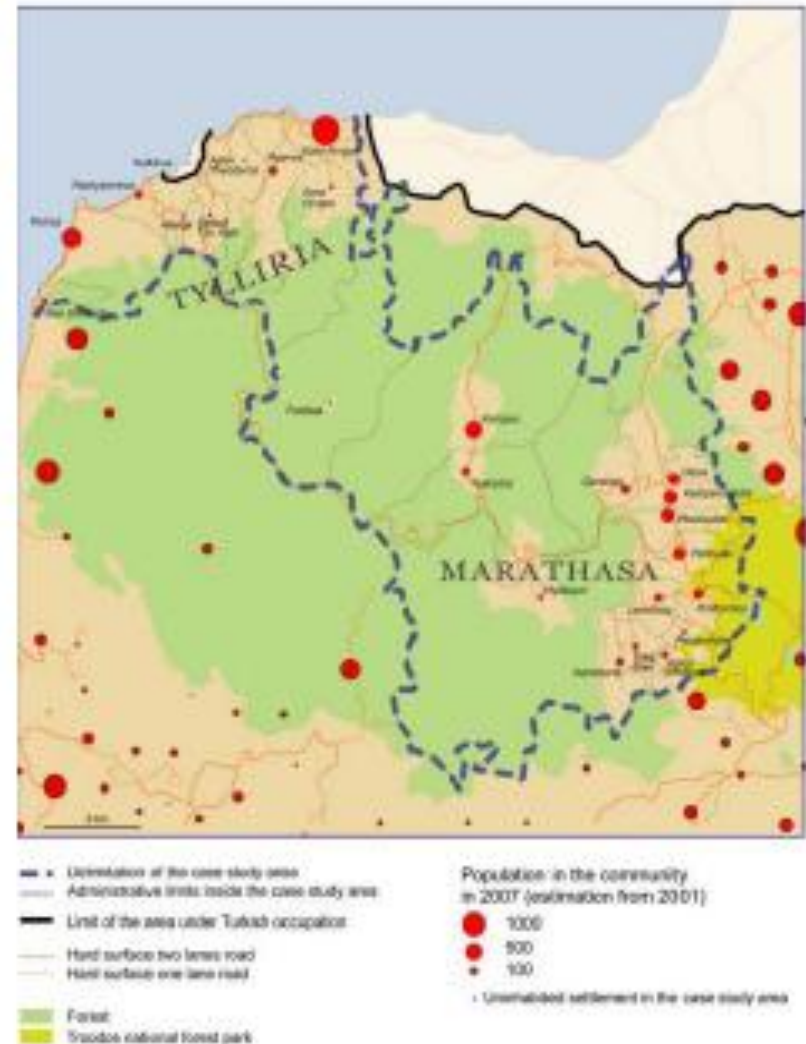
Within the ESPON EUROISLAND project, 362 islands with over 50 inhabitants and 228 very small islands with less than 50 inhabitants were identified. The population density varies from very low values (North Europe) to values well above the EU average (500 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in Malta).



## Example of good practice – Marathasa Valley Local Plan (Cyprus)

It is a territory located in the centre of Cyprus, consisting of 14 villages with a total population of 1,523 inhabitants. The Marathasa Valley is known for its historical, cultural and natural resources. Its weaknesses include the isolation from Nicosia and other urban centres, low population density, lack of the economic base, poor public infrastructure and services, underdeveloped tourism infrastructure and services.

In recent years, the Department of Town Planning and Housing (Ministry of the Interior) has made efforts to prepare and publish new Local Plans for certain territories (Marathasa, Solea, Krasochoria, South Nicosia). This political action also had another purpose - defining and identifying functional regions (outside big cities). Source: TEDI ESPON project (2013)

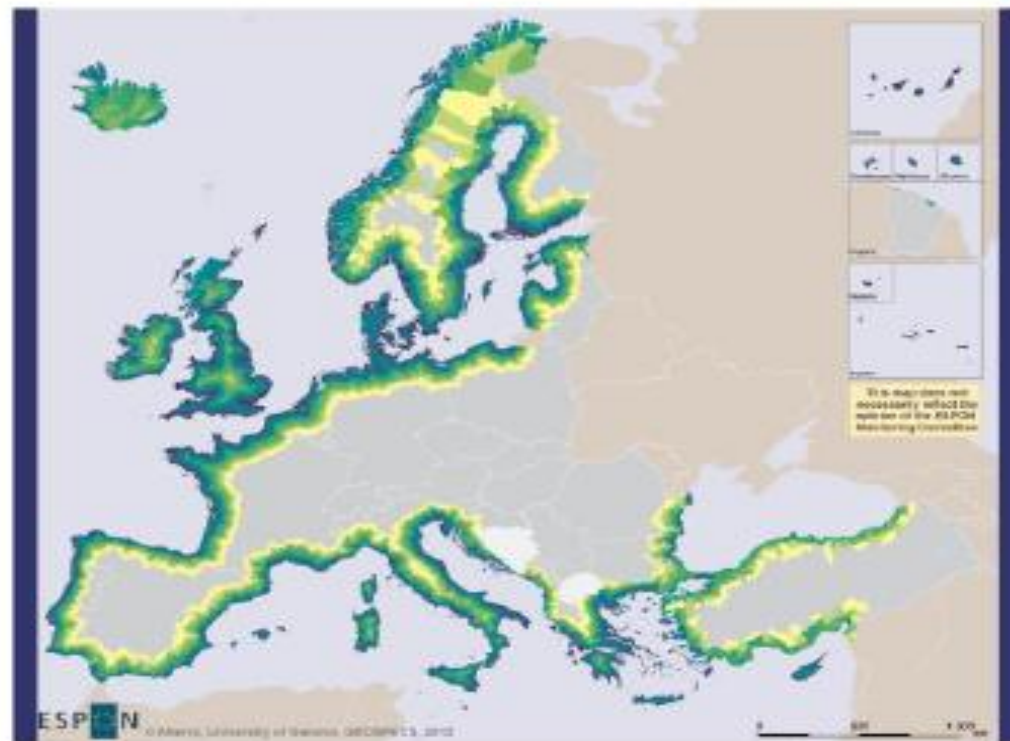




## COASTAL AREAS

The coastal area is a land / sea / ocean boundary; Setting this limit has a strictly geographic and political component. From a geographic point of view, the coastal area is defined as the geographic area that includes coastal and surface waters, coastal areas (beaches, cliffs) with areas in close proximity, wetlands in contact with the sea, or its immediate neighbourhood (lakes, brooks, delta strips).

HELCOM<sup>15</sup> / 1 Recommendation of the Helsinki Convention (1992) adopted in 1994 and reiterated by HELCOM 34/2013, recommends participating countries that a 100 to 300m wide strip from the shoreline be subjected to special protection; it is appreciated that for a distance of at least 3 km from the shoreline there is a need to analyse all construction projects and any works that may lead to the permanent modification of the landscape with negative impact on the environment.



Average travel time to the coast from LAU2 units\*



## CLUSTERS

However counter-intuitive it may seem, private companies need other companies in the same sector or related sectors so as to be effective. There is a vast literature on this matter, starting from Alfred Marshall's description of the 19th century England's industrial districts showing the benefits of co-localization. The operation of several similar companies in the same space allows for an easier flow of ideas, a seamless access to qualified workforce and higher productivity stimulated by local competition.



Sursa: Cluster Organisations Mapping Tool

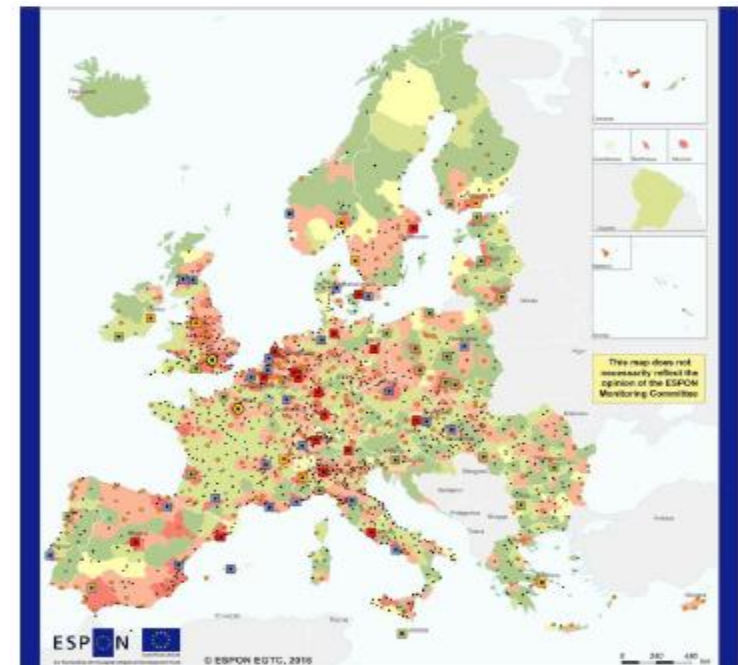
## FUNCTIONAL URBAN AREAS (areas with high population density)

Concentration of economic activities and, implicitly, jobs in cities, and especially in large cities – many of them metropolitan cities and / or national or regional capitals - is one of the major issues raised by studies conducted at European level (ESPON, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011) in terms of balanced economic development.

In the early 1990s, the OECD approached rural and urban areas by developing a three-elements classification: predominantly urban, intermediate and predominantly rural. Classification was based on population density calculated by basic territorial units. The OECD methodology classifies LAU2 as rural if the population density is less than 150 inhabitants / sq km.

The NUTS3 level is classified as follows:

- predominantly urban (% of the population living in rural LAU2 is below 15%);
- intermediate (% of the population living in rural LAU2 is between 15-50%);
- predominantly rural (% of the population living in rural LAU2 exceeds 50%).



FUA & MEGA classification

- 1 Global nodes
- 2 European engines
- 3 Strong MEGAs
- 4 Potential MEGAs
- 5 Weak MEGAs
- 6 Transnational FUA
- 7 Regional/local FUA

Type of NUTS3 region

- Predominantly urban regions
- Intermediate regions, close to a city
- Intermediate, remote regions
- Predominantly rural regions, close to a city
- Predominantly rural, remote regions

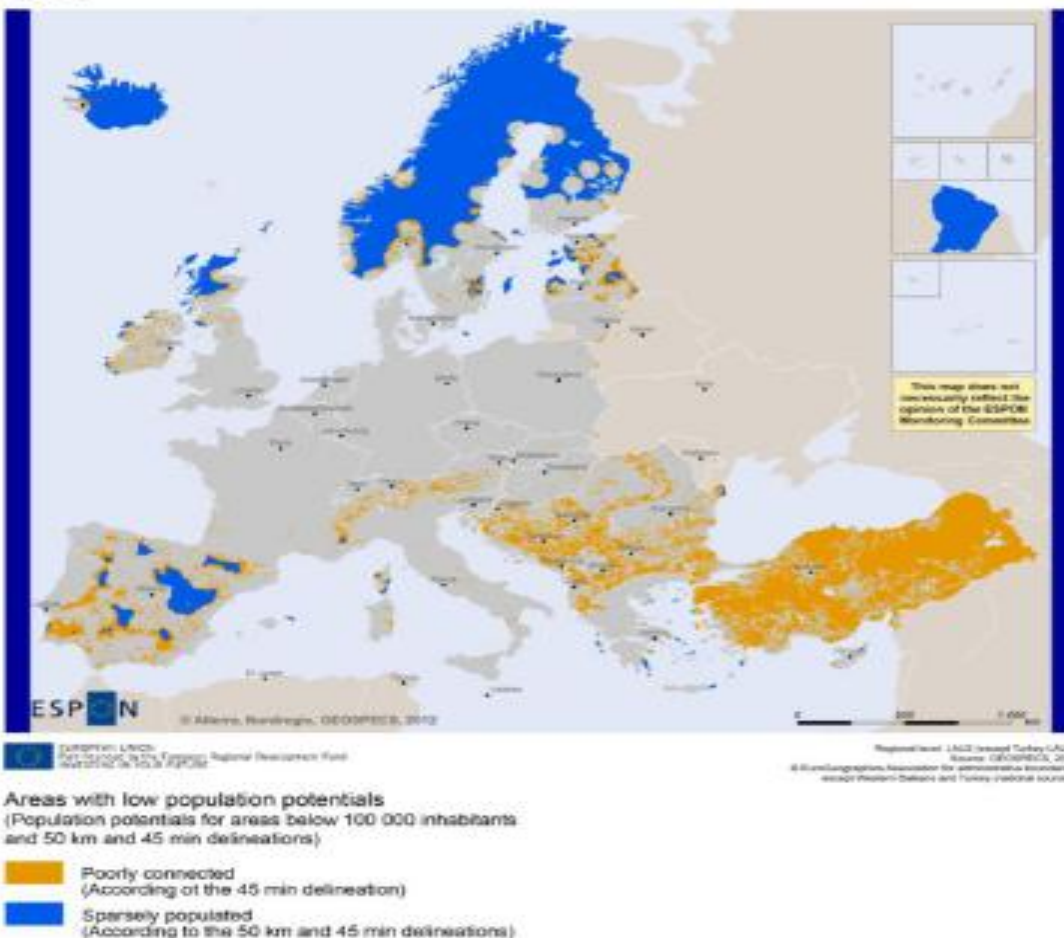
Sursa: ESPON Policy Brief Urban Partnership Themes in a Wider Territorial Context (2016)



## SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

Sparsely populated regions are the areas that have a population density below a certain threshold. Initially, the issue of sparsely populated areas was raised by Finland, Norway and Sweden in the mid-1990s, when they negotiated the accession treaty. Nordic countries have succeeded in imposing a new approach of the European Commission on the individualization of sparsely populated areas. Eligibility conditions existing in the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (European Commission, 2008) imposed the redevelopment of areas considered poorly populated and, in fact, a closer approach to the reality of several European Union countries. North of Scotland, the central part of Spain or southern Greece have also been described as sparsely populated areas. The EUROSTAT analysis on sparsely populated areas took into account NUTS 2 regions with a population density of less than 8 inhabitants / sq km or NUTS 3 regions with a density of 12,5 inhabitants / sq km. These criteria have also been taken up in the Guidelines on regional state aid for the period 2014-2020 .

## Sparsely populated and poorly connected areas, 2011

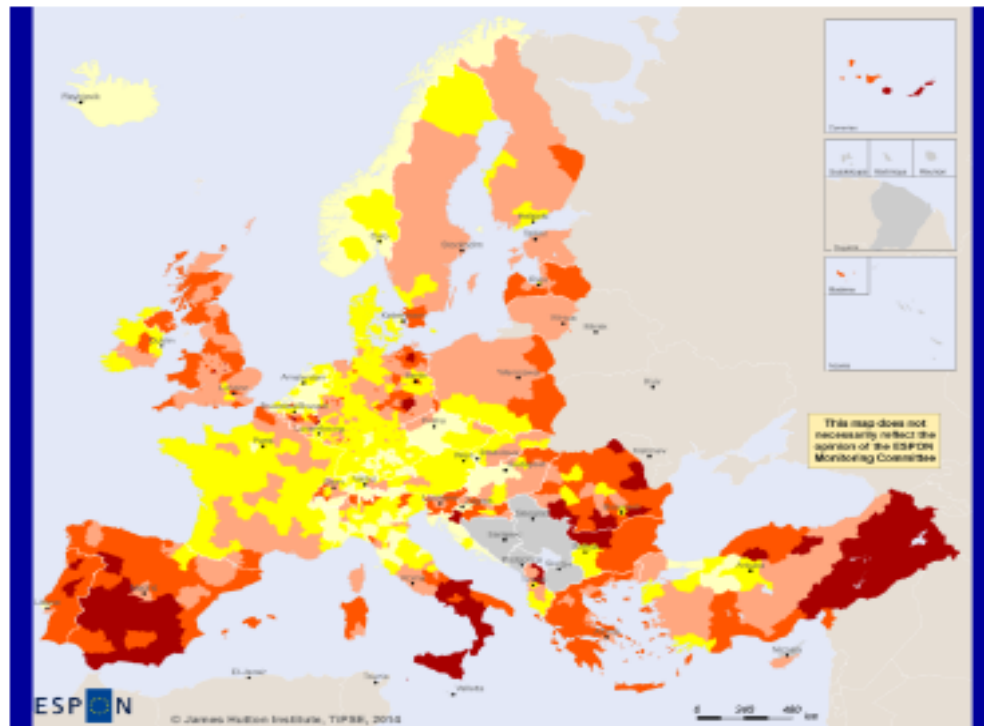


## AREAS WITH POPULATION AT RISK OF POVERTY

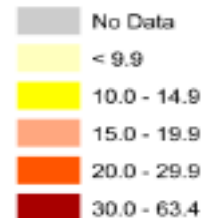
**Delimitation of poor areas.** The project TIPSE The Territorial Dimension of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe included in the ESPON 2013 programme ended in 2014. The Eurostat data allow the mapping of the at risk of poverty rates (AROP) in NUTS2 in certain European states and in NUTS1 in others. The TIPSE project mapped poverty in all the states in the ESPON area except for the Central and Eastern European states (included in a similar project run by the World Bank).

- On the macroscale, the highest poverty rates are registered in the Mediterranean countries and Turkey while the lowest in the Northern and Western countries,
- On the mesoscale, the relationships among capital cities, secondary cities and rural areas in terms of poverty rates are complex.

The major Northern and Western European cities also comprise areas with high poverty rates while in the South and the East the poverty rates are higher in the rural areas.



**Regional AROP Rates, 2011**  
(Percentage of population in households with <60% of the national median equivalised disposable income)

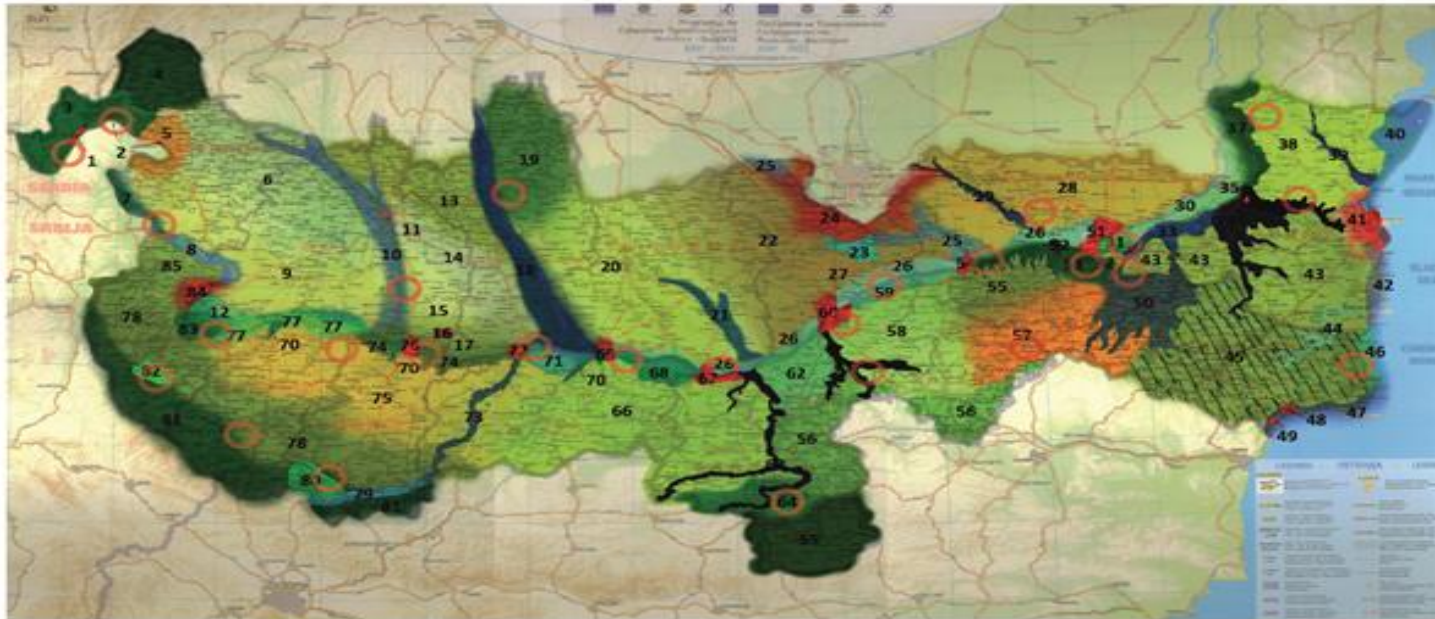


**Sources:**  
BE, DE, EL, ES, IT, PT, SI, CH - ESPON TIPSE project  
DK, DE, FI, FR, IE, NL, PL, SK, MT - National Statistical Institutes  
LV, HU, MD, BG, SR - ICDRI/ISAP  
BG, CZ, EE, CH, CY, LU, MT, PL, LT - J. Janssen Regio Database (JUTIS/ISAP)

*Rata riscului de sărăcie (nivel NUTS 3), diverse surse ale datelor*

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AREAS


The 2020 Territorial Agenda of the European Union lists among the challenges and the potential territorial development "the loss of biodiversity, vulnerable natural, landscape and cultural heritage" attracting attention to the priorities aimed at "managing and interconnecting the natural, landscape and cultural values of the regions." Article 38 sets out that the high value of European urban and rural landscapes should be protected and developed in qualitative terms as assets for development in relation to the possibility of creation "environmentally friendly jobs", diversification of recreational functions, the consolidation of local and regional identity.



### Legenda

a.7. Valorificarea peisajului

**34** Unitatea de peisaj

 Puncte de belvedere





Thank you very much!

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