

FUNCTIONAL AREAS IN MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Preparatory Study for the 17th Session of the
Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for
Spatial Planning (CEMAT)

Revised Version

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01. INTRODUCTION

Good governance is one of the main objectives of the Council of Europe. In this context, the formulation of development policies dedicated to functional areas can contribute to the sustainable spatial development of the European continent, by capitalizing on the local potential, by encouraging territorial democracy and by creating a flexible framework for development and planning that transcends administrative boundaries, focusing on the territorial impact of interventions. Due to their complexity, functional areas require an integrated approach that creates the premises for greater social cohesion and, at the same time, greater territorial competitiveness.

The Council of Europe member states have identified a wide variety of functional areas, described in strategic and planning documents at different territorial levels and defined by various functional relationships. Therefore, the use of the concept of functional areas in spatial development and planning policies at European level requires a flexible and adaptable approach that takes into consideration national and local contexts. Moreover, to ensure the success of a functional areas - based approach and to encourage territorial cooperation, the correct delineation and political support (for example by putting in place management / governance mechanisms or the construction of major infrastructure elements) are very important.

In order to identify good practice examples, consideration has been given to spatial planning processes, governance and modernization of public administration, preservation and promotion of local resources, mechanisms for internal and external cooperation.

02. METHODOLOGY

Given the scale of the study, different local contexts and administrative systems, **a mixed approach to functional areas analysis** was chosen, **combining the analysis of documentary sources with the quantitative and qualitative analysis**. An important role was given to the **direct dialogue** with the CoE member states, in order to better understand and identify their local

specificities and development priorities. To this end, a **questionnaire** was applied that follows the structure of the study, referring to the definition and identification of functional areas, their capitalization and protection, planning and governance mechanisms and structures, good practices.



Research questions

How is the functional area concept defined at European level, in the context of spatial development policies and tools?

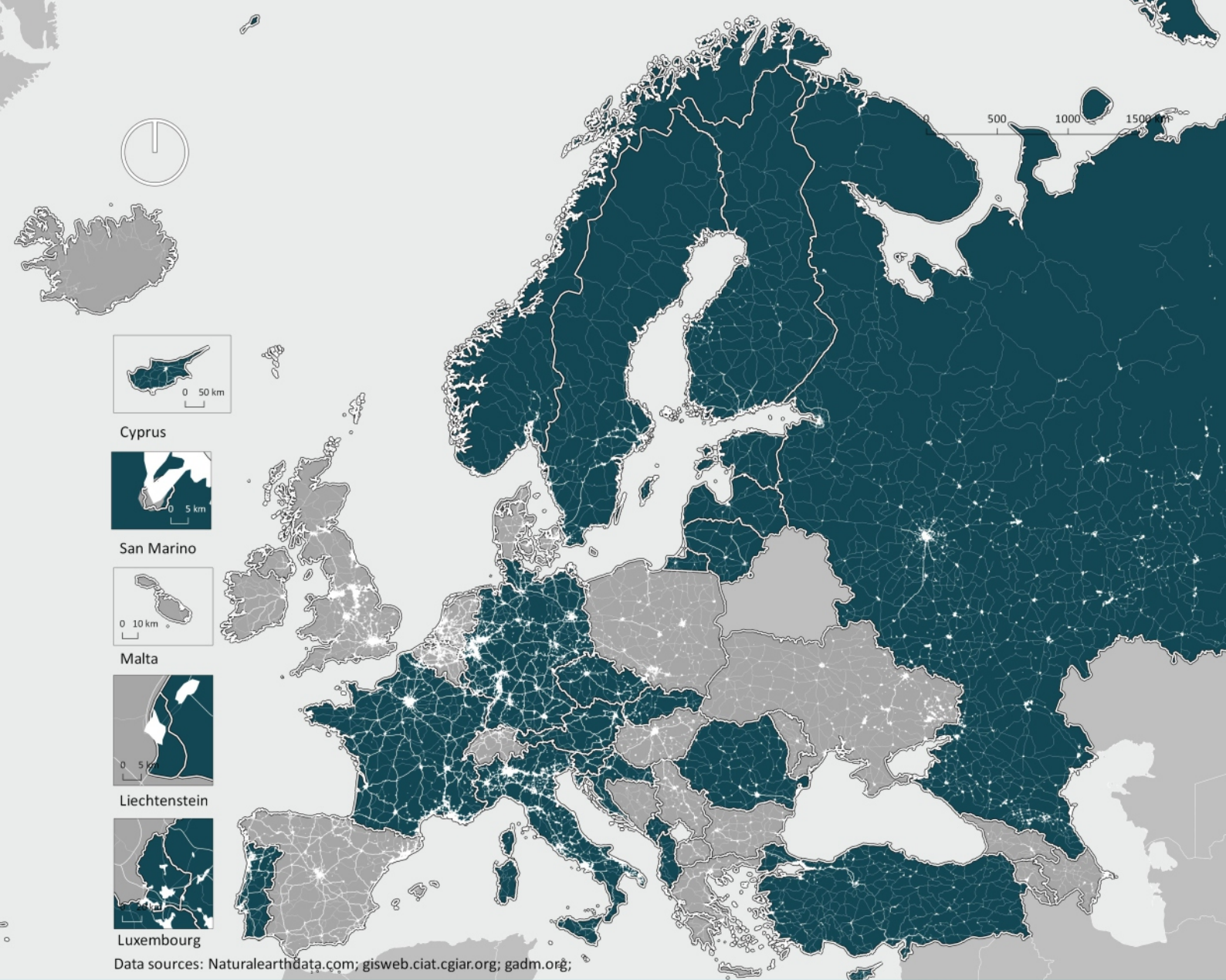
What are the territorial typologies of the functional areas according to the socio-economic and geographical specificity?

Which models and principles of governance / management / administration can be identified? What are their advantages and disadvantages?

Which planning and spatial planning tools can be identified / used for each typology? What are their advantages and disadvantages?

What types of measures, programs, projects and / or development activities that take advantage of local specificity can be identified? What is the role of territorial democracy and collaboration in streamlining development activities?

What are the principles with transferability potential at European level that can support the formulation of spatial development policies that protect and capitalize on the potential of the functional areas?



- Major road infrastructure
- Urbanized areas
- Boundary of national territory (CoE member states)
- Boundary of national territory (non-member states)
- States that completed the CEMAT questionnaire



03. DEFINITION



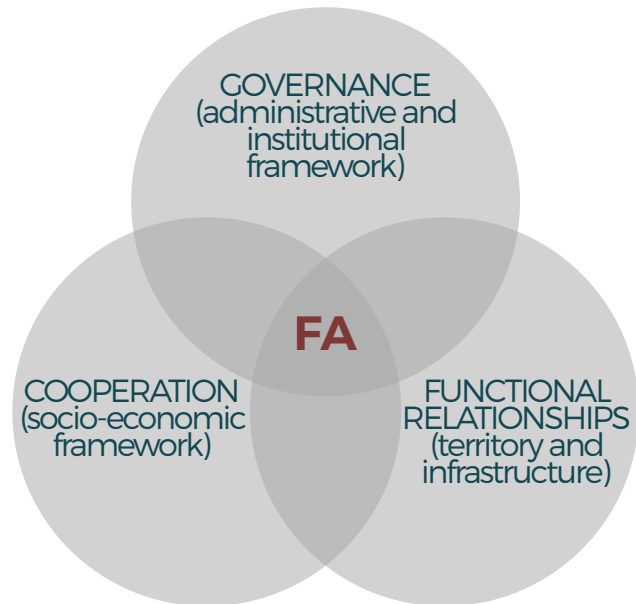
Definition

The functional area (FA) is the area or region that functions as a unitary system from a political and / or social and / or economic point of view. In other words, the FA is defined by the internal system of interactions and relationships and covers, in whole or in part, the territory of several administrative-territorial units that cooperate and are linked / united by economic, communications, transport activities, etc.

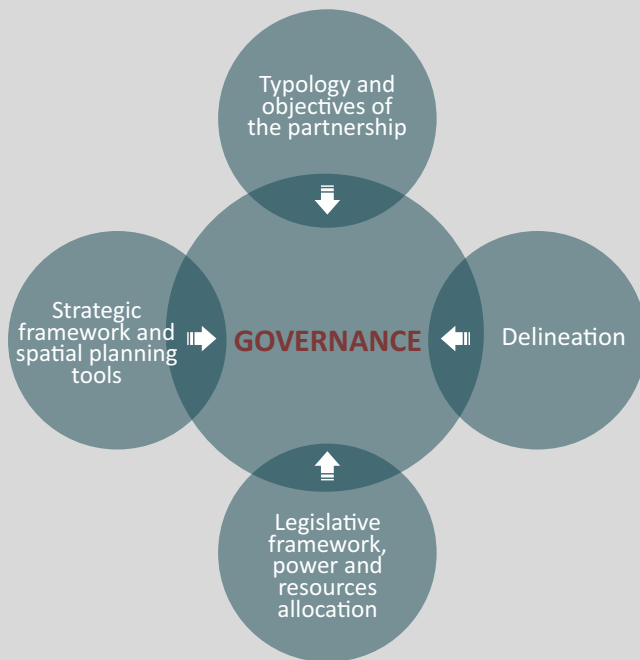
The CoE member states describe functional areas according to two main definitions: (1) territories that cluster around urban centers and concentrate systemic relations, (2) territories delineated according to one or more defining criteria (for example, geographic or socio-economic peculiarities) that determine the cohesion and nature of internal and external interactions.

In addition, given the purpose of the study, it is important to distinguish between functional areas and cohesive territories (territories that can become functional areas). Thus, a functional area implies the existence of governance mechanisms, of a system of cooperative relationships resulting from a common goal (solving common problems or capitalizing on local potential) and functional relationships, in which mobility and communications play a particularly important role.

This distinction is important in public policy, providing general criteria for the identification of already established functional areas whose development can be supported by planning tools and customized measures but also to promote a proactive attitude through national and / or regional policies for the creation and development of functional areas where latent potential exists.



04. INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK



Subsidiarity, local democracy and public participation are the main factors in the process of transforming government into governance*. However, this transformation has led to the fragmentation of local authority, highlighting the need to integrate relevant actors and to ensure coherence.

In this context, the administrative and institutional diversity of Council of Europe member states makes it impossible to propose an one-size-fits-all administrative and institutional framework. However, one can extract the **determinants and components of administrative and institutional frameworks relevant to the territorial levels corresponding to the different types of functional areas** and to national contexts within the Council of Europe.

** The conceptual difference between **government and governance** is not always clear at the level of CoE member states. For a better description of the processes that take place in the functional areas, in this study governance refers to the act of government exercised top-down by state governments and subordinate institutions, while governance refers to the coordinated actions based on continuous negotiation between local, regional, national and sometimes international actors to implement coherent and effective development policies by encouraging bottom-up initiatives.*

Key determinants of the administrative and institutional framework of functional areas

Strategic framework and spatial planning tools

The strategic framework sets the general direction for the development of functional areas, while the spatial planning tools are a result of the type of partnership that is at the base of these areas, their objectives and the legislative framework in the field of spatial planning of each state.

- The strategic objectives of the functional area are an integral part of the existing strategic framework (local/ regional/ national)
- The functional area defines its own strategic framework
- The functional area does not foresee / assume strategic objectives or development strategies

Delineation

The proper delineation of the territory of a functional area aims at the effective definition of intervention tools by assigning resources and interventions according to the target group, beneficiaries and the specific needs and requirements of the territory.

- Delineation of the territory by joining the administrative-territorial partner units
- Delineation on geographical criteria
- Delineation on functional criteria

Power allocation/ distribution

The allocation of decision-making power within the partnership at the core of the functional area defines the type and degree of intervention possible in the territory, as well as the decision-making power of local partners outside the public administration.

- Local and / or central public administration is the majority in the partnership
- The share of the public administration in the partnership is up to 49%
- Partnership consisting exclusively from local/ central administration members

Legislative framework

The legislative framework establishes the functioning and the limits of the intervention tools in the territory from the legal point of view.

- Functional areas operate within a specific legal framework (applicable to all functional areas at the national level)
- Functional areas operate within a specific legal framework (can not be applied at the national level)
- Functional areas operate within the general legal framework by adapting existing legislation
- Functional areas operate informally (without a legal framework)

Access to resources

The type of resources available at the functional area level indicates the degree of autonomy of the partnerships and the type of intervention tools that can be used in relation to local needs.

- Own funding (contribution from partners)
- Funding by higher hierarchical public authorities
- Funding from external / non-repayable funds

Typology of the partnership

The typology of the partnership plays an important role in defining the objectives and mode of operation in terms of the actors involved and the motivation behind the partnership

- Imposed partnerships
- Voluntary partnerships
- Partnerships imposed with an association process

Objectives

The objectives of the partnership at the core of the functional area represents an essential criterion for defining its operation from an administrative point of view.

- Strategic objectives self-defined or imposed by the higher hierarchical levels
- Project/ operational objectives
- Functional areas without formally defined objectives

05. MAIN CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION



Functional areas defined mainly on social criteria



Functional areas defined mainly on economic criteria



Complex functional areas



Functional areas defined mainly on heritage and landscape criteria



Functional areas defined mainly on geographical criteria

Beyond the three aforementioned dimensions (governance, functional relations, cooperation), functional areas can be classified according to criteria that describe (mainly) functional and cooperative relationships: social, economic and geographical criteria, heritage and landscape. Member states also reported a number of functional areas where one can not identify a main criterion, but rather a superposition of socio-economic and territorial relations and phenomena; these areas were treated separately, as complex functional areas.

At the same time, some member states also mentioned the administrative criterion for the delineation of functional areas, identifying functional areas as regions or other administrative structures defined at national and local level. In the study, these areas were not treated separately, as one of the premises for the proposed definition states that the functional areas and their corresponding systemic relationships transcend administrative boundaries.

The typologies of functional areas identified can be grouped into two categories, as follows.

Typologies of identified functional areas	Complex functional areas	Specific functional areas	
		Functional areas established for the development of local potential	Functional areas established for restructuring and developing of new functions
Cross-border cooperation areas (ZCT)			
Transnational macro-regions (MTN)			
Functional urban areas (ZUF)			
Functional rural areas (ZRF)			
Clusters and innovative regions (CRI)			
Areas under industrial restructuring (ZcRI)			
Touristic areas (ZT)			
Free economic/ trade zones (ZEL)			
Sparsely populated areas (ZSP)			
Areas with population at risk of poverty (ZpRS)			
Areas with important natural heritage (natural landscape) (ZiPN)			
Areas with important cultural heritage (built landscape) (ZiPC)			
Areas with complex cultural heritage (multifunctional landscape) (ZpCC)			
Mountain areas (ZM)			
Delta areas (ZD)			
Island areas (ZI)			
Coastal areas (ZC)			
River catchment areas (ZR)			

The geographic criterion is multivalent: (1) the support of complex functional areas, (2) a defining factor for the establishment of specific functional areas, (3) an element of potential to be capitalized on or (4) imposes restrictions regarding spatial and socio-economic development.

06. CLASSIFICATION



Complex functional areas

For the definition of a functional area, there are several elements showing on the one hand the essentially homogeneous character or the coherence of the territory concerned and on the other hand its specificity. In addition to the **main centre factors** around which the functional areas concentrate, relationships established in the region are also important, relationships that can be characterized by balance, cooperation, dominance or dependence, thus determining the appropriate typologies and areas of influence that can be associated with the interactions on the territory. Fundamental interrelationships, such as origin-to-destination travel for different purposes or processes related to the economic, social, political or cultural dimension, can sometimes reach a high degree of complexity.

Complex functional areas are spaces in which, although the **main centre factor** (urban centre, major natural environment, facilities of over-territorial interest, common challenges and not only) is often differentiated, **the complex relationships established both within the area and with the external environment**, call for an **integrated approach** to spatial development management that ensures **cooperation** between all relevant local and regional actors regardless of the environment or the territorial reference level.

The subcategories identified include the following:



Areas of territorial cooperation

Cross-border cooperation areas and transnational macro-regions – these are areas that bring together communities located in different territories, from two or more states, transforming the potential or common border issues into developmental resources. However, each country's specific features, together with physical barriers that separate them, sometimes make it difficult to co-operate effectively in order to manage joint challenges and to further assess the impact of actions taken.



Functional urban areas

Functional urban areas reflect the territorial dimension of the relationship between urban centres and adjacent territories of influence. Functional urban areas are the spatial representation of the bidirectional relationship between an urban centre and its adjacent territory, based on relationships and socio-economic flows that include commuting (i.e. the relationship between the supply of jobs and the labor force available in the territory), or opportunities related to education and the provision of services.



Functional rural areas

These are areas defined on the basis of cooperation and association between local authorities in neighboring rural areas (sometimes including small or medium-sized urban agglomerations). They are generally characterized by continuous flows determined by the need to provide access to certain equipment and services, but also to identify and manage common challenges or to capitalize on potential elements.

Good practice: Eindhoven Cityregion

Location: Eindhoven, Netherlands

Area: **1,370** sqkm

Administrative structure: **21** municipalities

Population: **725,000** inhabitants

Economy: **32,000** companies



With regard to good practices in functional urban areas, **the cityregions of the Netherlands** are an example that deserves to be taken into consideration, even though this territorial level is no longer administratively recognized at national level since 2015 (there is still a form of voluntary cooperation in these areas). One of these urban areas is **the city of Eindhoven**, a region located between the economic centers of the Dutch Randstad area, the German agglomeration of Ruhr and the urban centers of Brussels and Antwerp in Belgium. It includes **21 municipalities** influenced by the city of Eindhoven.

This functional area is recognized for its high level of innovation, with a range of high-tech industrial clusters, high quality services and research and development activities. In addition, the city of Eindhoven is located at the intersection of several international transport routes, being accessible by road, rail and air. Furthermore, the region also benefits from a rich "knowledge" infrastructure, many facilities of supraterritorial interest such as education, research and innovation centres are located here.

Considering the complexity of the factors and relationships established within the territory, shaping an urban functional area had a well-established role that contributed to **the correlation of interests from all component municipalities**. Thus, the functional area of Eindhoven can be considered an example of good practice due to the **integrated management** provided for a range of territorial issues such as spatial planning, transport, housing, environment, tourism and leisure activities, education, health, culture and socio-economic activities. The aim was always to ensure **a balanced development of the area** by establishing strategic development directions for both urban and rural environment, which were subsequently implemented at local level.

Good practice: The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

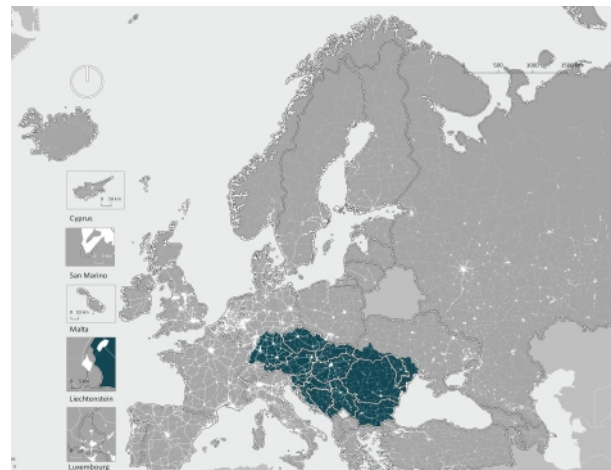
The Danube, 2,857 kilometres long, is one of the main corridors connecting Eastern and Western Europe. **The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)** is the EU's second macro-regional strategy, following the model of cooperation developed by the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (2009). EUSDR was adopted by the European Commission in December 2010 and approved by the European Council in 2011. The strategy was elaborated by the Commission in collaboration with the countries of the Danube region and the stakeholders, with which the real needs of the region were analysed and assessed. **The strategy aims to create synergies and to support the coordination between existing policies and initiatives in the Danube region by addressing common challenges in partnerships.**

The strategy is structured around **four major objectives, corresponding to specific areas of action, grouped into 11 priority areas:**

1. **Interconnection of the Danube Region** - improvement of mobility and multi-modality, encouragement of sustainable energies and promotion of culture, tourism and direct contacts between people;
2. **Protection of the environment in the Danube region** - restoration and maintenance of water quality, management of environmental risks, preservation of biodiversity, landscapes and air and soil;
3. **The rise of prosperity in the Danube region** - the development of knowledge-based society through research, education and information technology, supporting the competitiveness of enterprises, including the development of clusters, investment in human resources and skills;
4. **Strengthening the Danube Region** - improving institutional capacity and cooperation, promoting security and resolving problems related to organized crime and serious crime issues.

Originally created under the imperative of "the three no" - without any new funding, without any new institution and

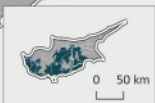
without any new regulations, the Danube Strategy has been adapted to support the implementation of projects by exploiting the existing European funds. The EUSDR is an example of multilevel governance. Technical and political coordination is provided by the Directorate-General for Regional Policy with the support of the High Level Group on Macro-Regional Strategies, composed of official representatives from all EU Member States. Each priority area is coordinated by 2 states / lands in the region, which designate a coordinator. The Coordinators of the main priority areas lead the working groups for each thematic area, involving experts and stakeholders relevant in the Danube Region States in transnational, intersectoral and interinstitutional activities for the implementation of the EUSDR. At national level, the participation of States in the implementation of the Strategy is coordinated and monitored by the National Coordinators, which have a strategic role in relating to national or regional governments.





The functional urban areas were mapped by combining delimitations realized by OECD, ESPON or other institutions/organizations active in the field of spatial or regional planning.

0 500 1000 1500 km



Cyprus



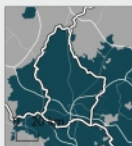
San Marino



Malta



Liechtenstein

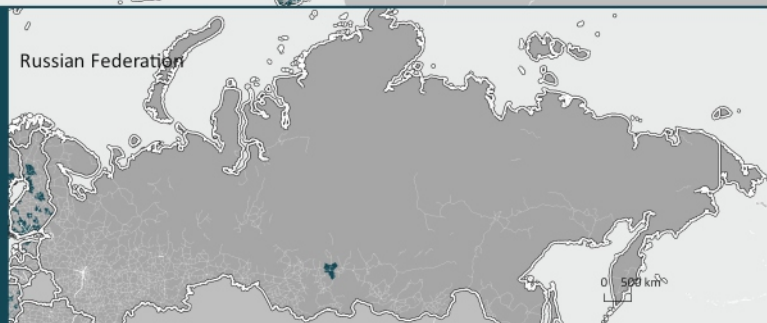


Luxembourg

Data sources: www.NatureEarthdata.com; www.gisweb.ciat.cgiar.org; OECD; ESPON; World Bank, 2017. Magnet cities : migration and commuting in Romania; Legea 794/2001 (MD); regionalni-en.weebly.com; General National Spatial Plan Albania; World Bank, 2015. Greater Baku Housing Affordability Diagnostic; OECD, 2015. The Krasnoyarsk Agglomeration, Russian Federation.

- Major road infrastructure
- Urbanized areas
- Boundary of national territory (CoE member states)
- Boundary of national territory (non-member states)
- Functional urban areas (FUA)

Russian Federation





Functional areas defined mainly on social criteria

The social criteria are transversal and can be analyzed separately in each identified functional area. For example, in the case of agglomerated areas (functional urban areas and clusters), **indicators** on population numbers and density, commuting and administrative criteria are socially relevant. At the same time, depending on the local / national context, **social phenomena** such as migration, commuting, social stratification, which influence and shape systemic relationships in the territory can be identified and considered relevant. In the case of rural areas, socio-economic specificity and peripheries become risk factors when they overlap with other factors such as: poor accessibility, low population density, declining population and aging. In this case, specific functional areas can be established.

In the Member States, **functional and cohesive areas defined mainly by social criteria** have been identified with the aim of reducing disparities and providing satisfactory living conditions, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. These areas are treated as integrated planning areas (e.g. in Turkey) and can be classified as specific functional areas for socio-economic regeneration/restructuring. This category includes sparsely populated areas, at risk of poverty or conflicts, where all these challenges have been crucial in establishing intra-territorial relations, forms of association and cooperation, as well as appropriate types of management that continue to improve the socio-economic development framework.



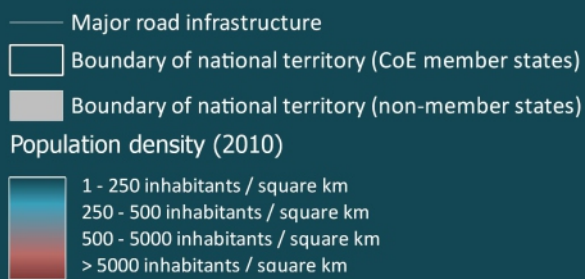
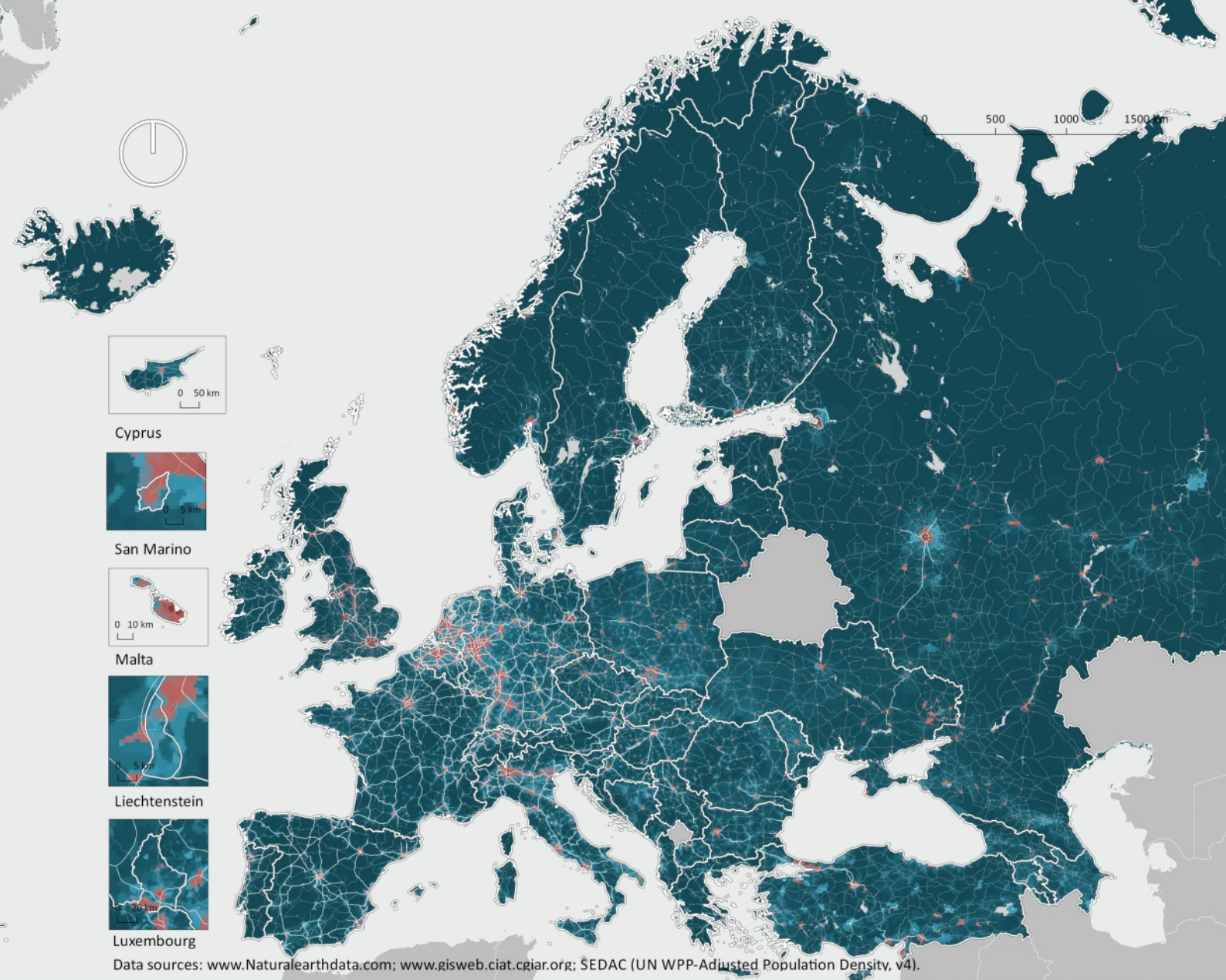
Sparsely populated areas

Are areas where the most important issue is low population density, but there are several factors that also characterize them like the vulnerability of the economy, the lack of jobs and activities, low average incomes, geographic isolation or integration difficulties with other regions (including reduced accessibility to infrastructure and socio-economic facilities).



Areas with population at risk of poverty

Areas with population at risk of poverty are areas where the measure of poverty and consumer capacity are negative, due to low incomes, dependence on measures of social assistance and the reduced rate of mobility of the population within the territory.





Functional areas defined mainly on economic criteria

Although there is no consensus on the definition of functional economic areas, it is worth noting the importance of studying **economic markets** that are based on different types of **economic flows and specializations**. However, these do not always overlap with the boundaries of the territorial administrative units, neither with each other. For example, the labor market will not always overlap with the area of influence from the point of view of commuting and / or research-development-innovation. More specifically, the definition of functional economic areas depends on the **local context** and must be formulated according to a certain economic dimension on which the **specificity / specialization of the area** is established. Three relevant factors to the delimitation of functional economic areas have been identified:

- First of all, a functional economic area is one where there is **a common degree of identity and companies cooperate and compete**.
- A second way of defining a functional economic area is related to **commuting habits**, the relationship between the areas where people live or work having significant consequences in the planning of housing areas and transport infrastructure.
- A third way of defining a functional economic area refers to the **strong characteristics of domestic trade**, but it is more difficult to establish in the case of wholesale trade, where the catchment area may be much larger than the functional area.

The subcategories identified include the following:



Clusters and innovative regions

Clusters represent a spatial group of producers, users, service providers, education and research institutions, financial institutions and other public or private bodies, which facilitate the exchange of information between stakeholders and cause the emergence of local competition based on innovation.



Areas under industrial restructuring

These areas face a number of similar problems, such as the dependence on basic industries, the rapidly rising unemployment rate, environmental problems and an infrastructure in continuous process of deterioration. Together with the decline of industries, it has been necessary to restructure these areas and transform them into innovative regional systems.



Touristic areas

Tourist areas usually overlap with other functional geographical or heritage areas, but differ in their spatial and economic coherence that transcends administrative boundaries. This is due to common physical factors and cooperation relationships and sometimes to unitary (e.g. regional) management and/or marketing aimed at the local community as well as the attraction of new visitors.



Free economic/ trade zones

Is a category of economic areas in a country or at border areas between several countries where goods can be stored, processed and/or (re) distributed and a range of preferential prices are applied. Free zones are a link for economic cooperation at international level.

Good practice: Oslo Cancer Cluster

Location: Oslo, Norway

Year of establishment: 2006

Members: 90

Area of the innovation park: 36,000 sqm

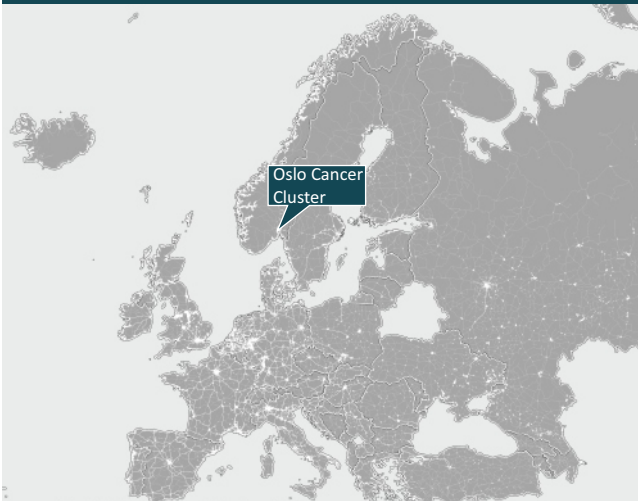
Collaboration with the academic environment: 857
highschool students

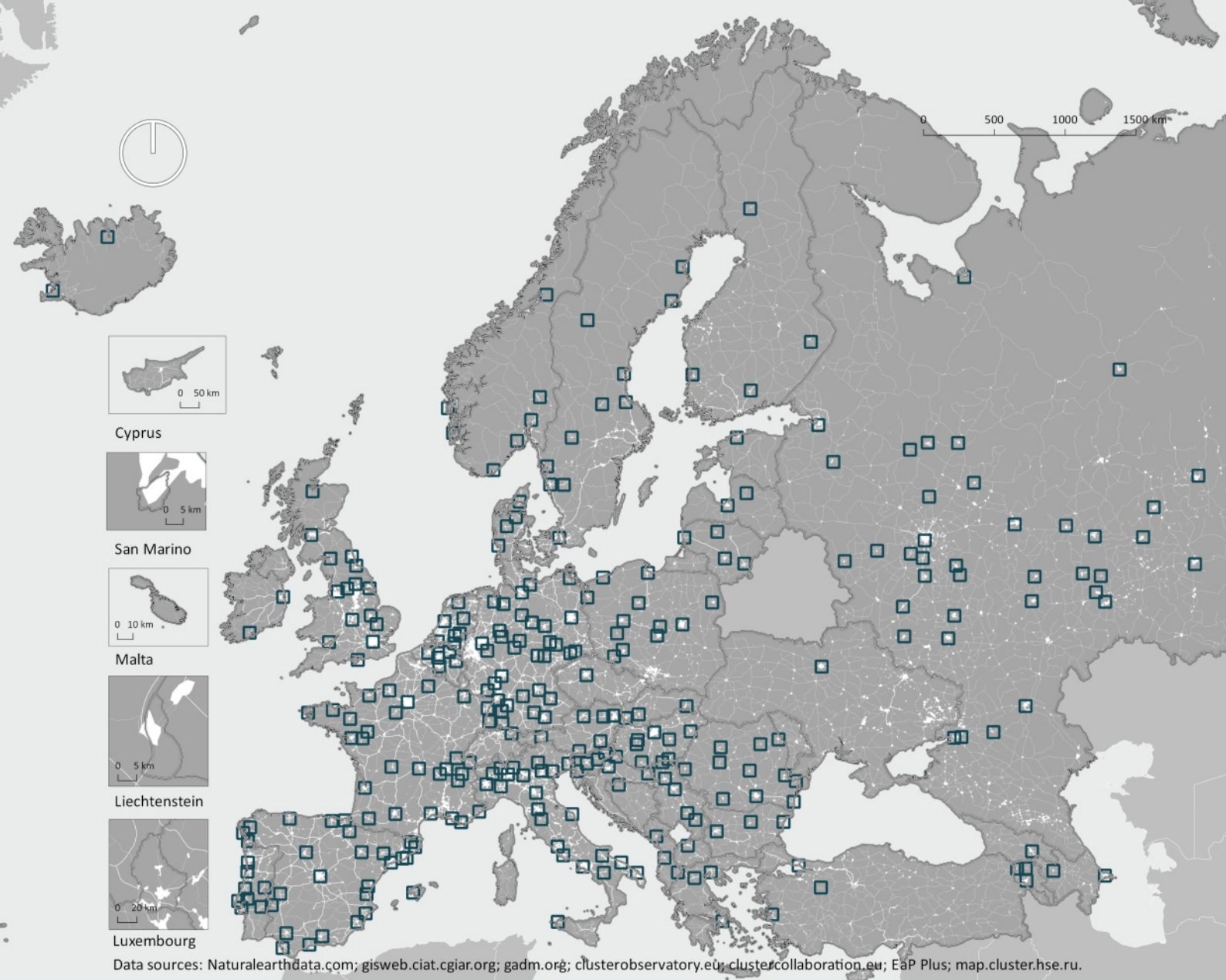
Oslo Cancer Cluster stands out as an example of good practice because it has been successful, from its establishment, in achieving and exploiting **the synergies needed for functioning as an ecosystem** that goes beyond the administrative boundaries of the territory in which it is located. The functionality of **the collaboration between concerned actors**, illustrated by the development of a whole chain of values, which has an ever increasing contribution beyond the borders of the country of origin is also worth noting. The existence of real and functional **partnerships** between public and private actors, both in the business environment and in public administration, as well as the common financing of clusters, also contribute to its definition as a functional area.

Oslo Cancer Cluster is an oncology research cluster dedicated to improving the lives of cancer patients by developing innovative methods of diagnosis and treatment as a result of initiatives aimed at facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and innovation.

The cluster is organized as a non-profit organization and consists of **90 members**: Norwegian and international private companies, research institutes, financial institutions, hospitals and many other entities working in oncology related fields. At cluster level, there is also a business incubator that aims to support companies with biotechnological potential to market innovative products.

Last but not least, although the cluster is based on the proximity of private companies, research institutes and hospitals, it is also attractive for organizations located in other parts of Norway and abroad. Since 2015, the cluster started operating on a new campus, concentrating the entire value chain in one place. **This facilitates not only interaction arising from spatial proximity, but also cognitive, organizational, social and institutional interaction.**





- Major road infrastructure
- Urbanized areas
- Boundary of national territory (CoE member states)
- Boundary of national territory (non-member states)
- Functional areas based on economic criteria (clusters)





Functional areas defined mainly on heritage and landscape criteria

More and more associations or municipalities find that the **landscape is a development engine** that can increase the level of attractiveness of a region, the degree of belonging of the population to the territory or the quality of life. The landscape itself is **a model of an integrated approach over the territory**, and it cannot be separated from other infrastructures. For these reasons, the structuring of functional areas according to landscape values is considered relevant in the current socio-economic, cultural and political context. When structuring territories according to heritage and landscape values the following have been taken into account:

(1) **Landscapes protected by applicable law** - whether natural or built protected areas. These refer to heritage

characteristics recognized as such and for which the capitalization measures are mainly structured in the sense of conservation/protection

(2) **Landscapes that have no heritage value (legally) but which are locally recognized as having special value.** These areas may include urban, rural or agricultural areas. At the same time, the landscape is also highly complex due to the variety of relationships that exist within the territory, which also represent its cohesive element.

The subcategories identified include the following:



Areas with important natural heritage (natural landscape)

These are areas where natural elements are of exceptional value because of their uniqueness and landscape coherence. The remarkable value is recognized as such and protected by national laws (national parks, nature reserves, etc.).



Areas with important cultural heritage (built landscape)

The built landscape has an identity value at territorial level through architectural and heritage units of significant importance. These areas include not only the protected heritage, but also the context in which it occurs, even if it is not defined by law.



Areas with complex cultural heritage (multifunctional landscape)

These are areas of particular value that provide evidence of lifestyles, housing, activities, crafts, agricultural or forestry traditions etc. and highlight the human interaction with the natural environment.

Good Practice: The Charter of the Regional Natural Park of the Catalan Pyrenees

Created in 2004, the **Regional Natural Park of the Catalan Pyrenees** is a landscape and a great natural wealth, while one of the main economic activities it hosts is **tourism** (mountain activities, hiking, gastronomy, etc.). **The management is collective**, represented by a mixed organization consisting of representatives of the municipal and regional administrations, the General Council and the Sector Chambers having signed the Charter. This adds complexity and legitimacy to the plan, ensuring the territorial implementation of measures. In addition, several thematic committees are responsible for issues of interest in the park (urban planning, energy, tourism, heritage and culture, cooperation, financing, etc.) and consist of representatives of local authorities, associations and stakeholders.

At the same time, the plan proposes to link municipal council planning documents to the general objectives of the park and to integrate ecological conservation into the overall territorial management strategy. In other words, **the regional natural park becomes a collaborative framework and a brand that promotes local economic development based on the quality of the landscape.**

The Regional Natural Park of the Catalan Pyrenees stands out as an example of good practice mainly due to the **collective form of management which ensures cooperation** between representatives of different administrative levels and between municipalities subscribed to the park and secondly due to **the planning tools used**, since the Park Charter is an integrated document that defines the development priorities of the entire area.

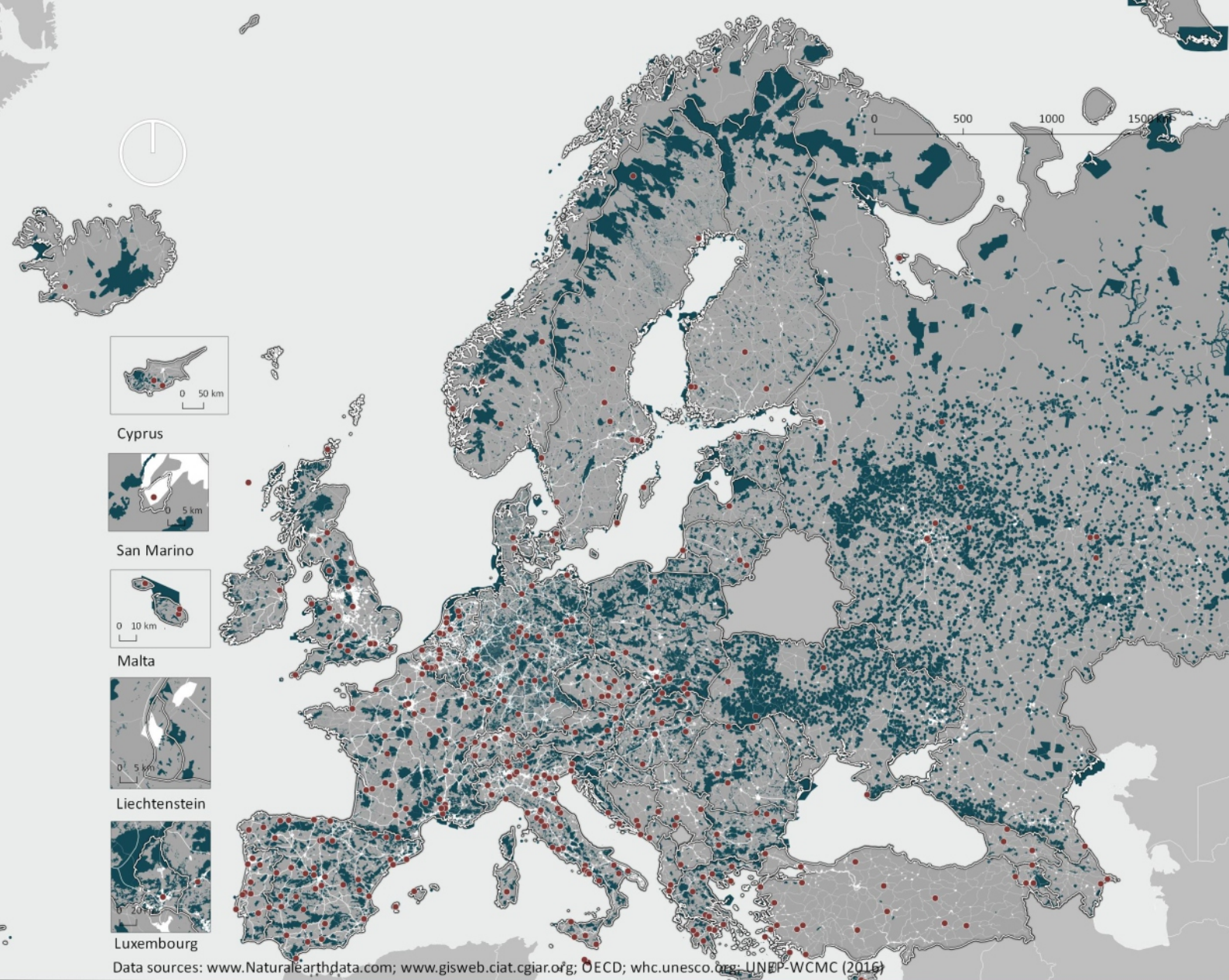
Area: **137,000** ha

Administrative structure: **64** municipalities

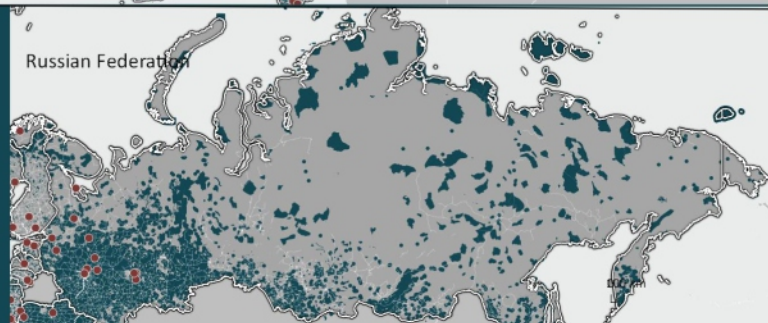
Population: **23,000** inhabitants

Altitudes: between **300-3000m**





- Major road infrastructure
- Urbanized areas
- Boundary of national territory (CoE member states)
- Boundary of national territory (non-member states)
- Cultural and mixed protected areas - UNESCO
- UNEP-WCMC protected natural areas





Functional areas defined mainly on geographical criteria

With regards to geography, the term **region (defined as a relatively homogeneous part of the terrestrial surface, with characteristics that can be related to biological, pedological, climatic, social, economic, etc. conditions)**, is used to understand the differences that exist between geographical areas. The formal (homogeneous) region that can be assimilated to potential functional areas is characterized by uniform spatial distribution of one or more natural or built elements. Territorial coherence may be related to aspects such as population and economic activities or elements of the natural environment such as climate or landforms. Where they overlap and a management/governance mechanism (even informal) can be identified, cohesive areas meet the criteria of functional areas.

A particular category of cohesive regions based on relief elements is constituted by the functional areas defined mainly on geographical criteria. These areas have special resources, but they face specific challenges related to geographical isolation, low population density, political, administrative, cultural or economic barriers. The use of the potential of these categories of territories is an opportunity to reduce economic gaps and to become competitive at regional, national, European or global level.

Finally, given the vast extent of the landforms together with the discontinuous link that exists between them and the relations established on the territory, the geographical criterion is not always the main determinant of a functional area, but it contributes with some other elements of influence to the structure of the surrounding territory.

The subcategories identified include the following:



Mountain areas

Are defined as areas with more than 50% of the surface overlapping the mountain space or with more than 50% of the population living in a mountain area. However, there are other elements to be taken into account in defining such areas like relief altitudes or slopes.



Delta areas

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.



Island areas

Are defined by fulfilling the criteria of a minimum area of 1 square kilometer, a minimum distance of 1 km from the mainland, a resident population of more than 50 people, the absence of a fixed link (bridge, tunnel) with the continental territory, as well as the absence of a capital city on the territory of the island.



Coastal areas

Represent the interface between the terrestrial and marine systems. These are defined as the total geographical area of coastal waters (surface and groundwater), coastal spaces (beaches, cliffs) with adjoining surfaces, wetlands in contact with the sea or in the immediate vicinity (lakes, ponds, etc.).



River catchment areas

River catchment areas develop along natural corridors that cross different territories regardless of their administrative boundaries. However, the existence of rivers is not the only condition for defining these areas, as factors such as population density and economic activities also reflect their influence.

Good practice: The Rhone-Mediterranean Basin

Area: **130,000** sqkm

Population: **14,000,000** inhabitants

Administrative structure: **29** departments

The Rhone-Mediterranean Basin in France is **an inter-regional area characterized by common spatial planning challenges** that transcend administrative boundaries, and therefore require **coordinated development at territorial level** in order to be effective. The presence of streams creates interdependencies between upstream and downstream territories and on both sides of the bed, and an inter-regional approach is needed to address common challenges. Public interventions are needed to address the issues of natural hazards and the protection of biodiversity.

In this respect, In France there is a series of **planning instruments used for water management and development** - SDAGE (Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et de Gestion des Eaux). These river basins need planned economic development supported by local strategies. Targets such as the protection of local communities and activities from flood risks, the preservation of water quality and of the natural environment, or the development of river transport are also important for these areas.

The Rhone-Mediterranean Basin is remarkable by **the level of cooperation reached between the crossed territories**. To provide local consultation and to address specific issues, nine territorial basin committees have been established which are open to all stakeholders and which represent the point of information and debate on the challenges in the management and development of the area.



Good Practice: The Carpathian Convention

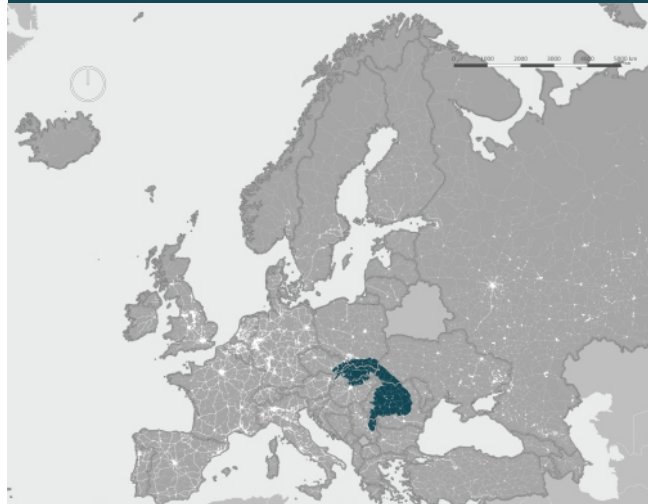
The Carpathian Convention **is a form of inter-state collaboration for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians.** The collaboration illustrates **an integrated approach** and covers ten main areas: (1) Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and landscape diversity, (2) Planning the territory, (3) Integrated and sustainable management of waters and river basins, (4) Sustainable agriculture and forestry, (5) Sustainable transportation and infrastructure, (6) Sustainable tourism, (7) Industry and energy, (8) Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, (9) Environmental monitoring / computer system, monitoring and early warning, (10) Increased awareness, education and public participation. In these areas the following are promoted: **the principles of precaution and prevention, the participation of the public and stakeholders, the "polluter pays" principle, cross-border cooperation, management and integrated planning of water resources, programmatic approach and the ecosystem approach.**

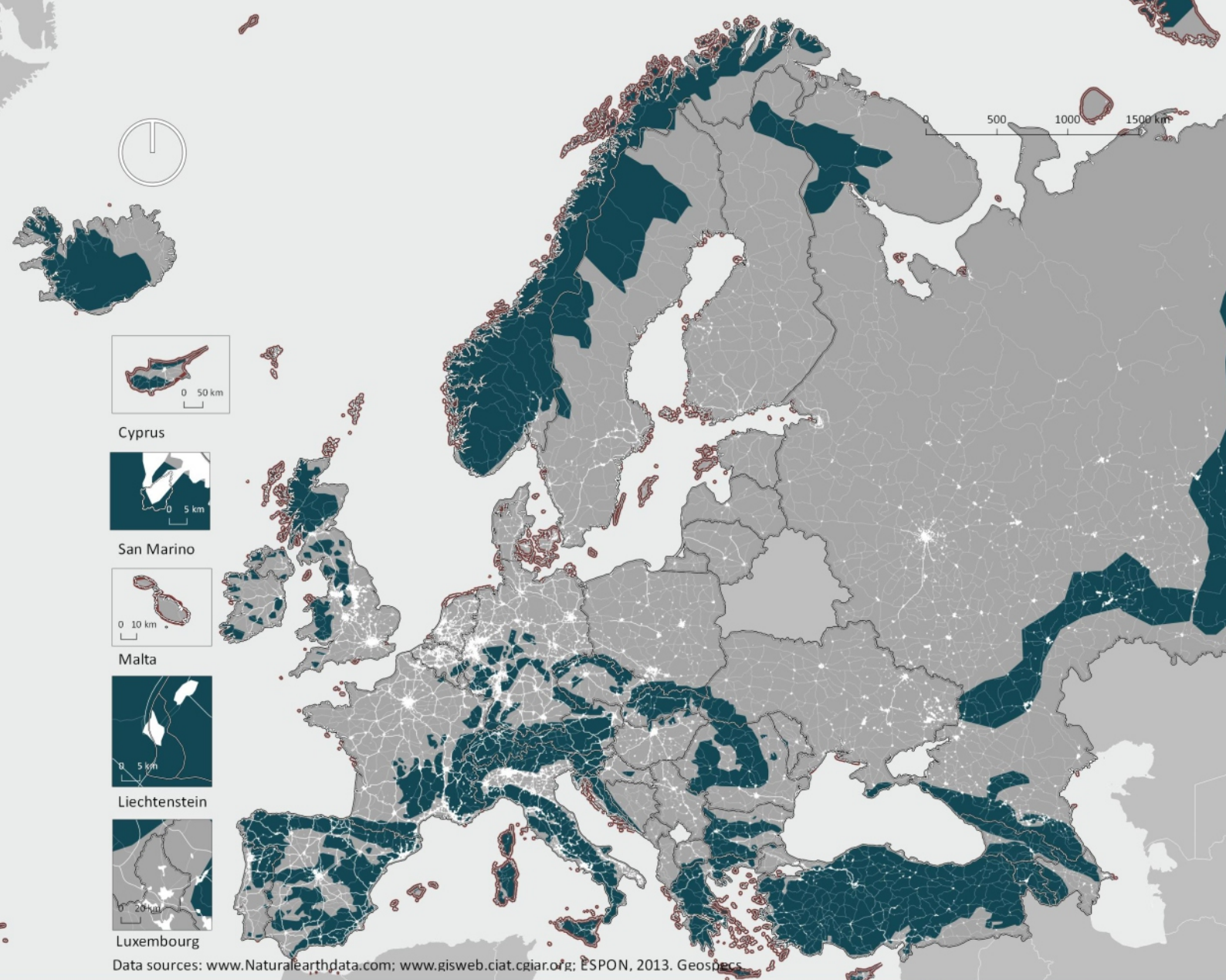
The Carpathian Convention was adopted in Kiev on 22.05.2003 by seven states: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine. In Romania, the Convention was ratified in October 2006 by Law no. 389/2006, and by law no. 137/2010 a number of objectives and measures were formulated and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians was described. **The Carpathian Convention is supported by a variety of meetings and working groups with cross-border cooperation projects to exploit the territory of the Carpathians.** The projects under the convention include: the Alps-Carpathian-Corridor - AKK, the Carpathian Project, SARD-M - Sustainable agriculture and rural development in the mountains, the development of the "Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians" (CarpatSusTourStrat) Access2Mountains - Sustainable mobility and tourism in the sensitive areas of the Alps and Carpathians, Via Carpatia, etc.

Administrative structure: **7** states and their territorial administrative units, other relevant stakeholders in the Carpathian region

Area: **209,000** sqkm

Length: **1,500** km





- Major road infrastructure
- Urbanized areas
- Boundary of national territory (CoE member states)
- Boundary of national territory (non-member states)
- Island regions
- Mountain regions



	ZCT	MTN	ZUF	ZRF	CRI	ZcRI	ZT	ZEL	ZSP	ZpRS	ZiPN	ZiPC	ZpCC	ZM	ZD	ZI	ZC	ZR
ALB																		
AND																		
ARM																		
AUT																		
AZE																		
BEL																		
BIH																		
BGR																		
HRV																		
CYP																		
CZE																		
DNK																		
EST																		
FIN																		
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MKD																		
TUR																		
UKR																		
GBR																		

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