

ESPON Territorial Diversity: Development Opportunities in Areas with Geographic Specificities

ESPON Territorial Diversity (TeDi) belongs to the second strand of the ESPON 2013 programme, "ESPON Targeted Analysis Based on User Demand".

The focus is on opportunities for growth and sustainable development in areas with geographical specificities: mountains, islands, sparsely populated areas and areas with a peripheral position and high population densities.

The project was initiated by the following stakeholder consortium:

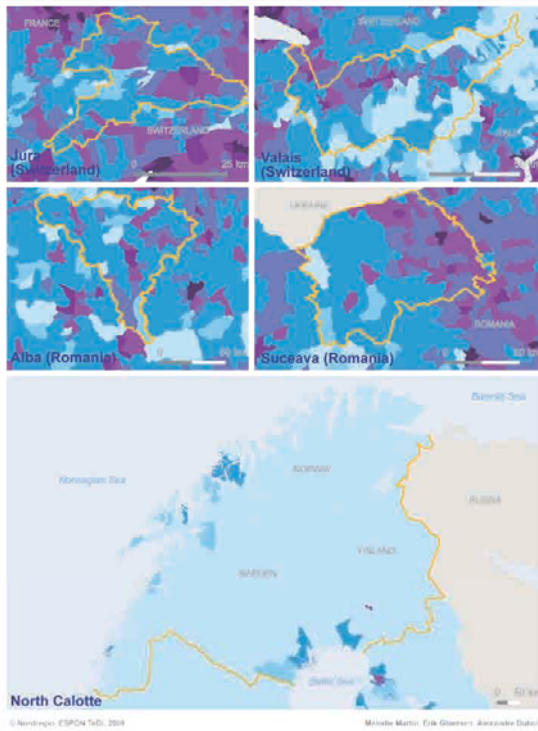
- The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,
- The Finnish Ministry of Employment and Economy,
- The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth,
- The Malta Environment and Planning Authority,
- The Cyprus Ministry of the Interior, Department of Town Planning and Housing

- The Romanian Ministry for Development, Public Works and Housing,
- The Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Planning.

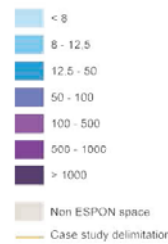
The North Sea Commission, Euromontana and Iceland have observer status. The project partners are Nordregio, Panteion University, CEFIDEC Romania, and the University of Geneva. Islands Consulting Services (Malta) and the University of Akureyri (Iceland) contribute as subcontractors.



Disparate and internally contrasted case study areas



Municipal population density (inh/km², 2001)



The study is based on a series of case studies:

- the North Calotte (Norway, Finland, Sweden)
- North Iceland
- Jura and Valais (Switzerland)
- Alba and Suceava (Romania)
- Malta and Gozo (Malta)
- Marathasa and Tylliria (Cyprus)

The case studies are disparate and internally contrasted. These contrasts concern both the scale of the regions and their municipal population densities.

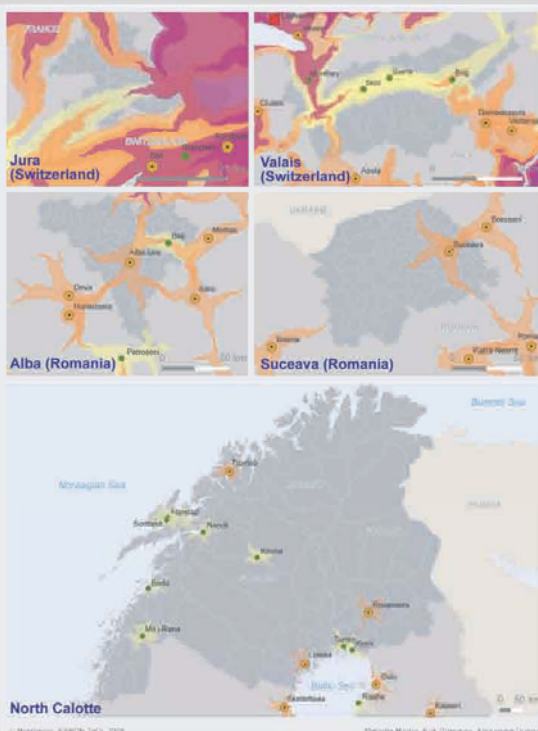
North Iceland, the North Calotte, Marathasa and Tylliria are all characterised by extensive areas with extremely low population density, below 8 inh/km². Similar values can also be found in the most mountainous parts of the Swiss Canton of Valais.

These municipal figures however correspond to very diverse settlement patterns. All these types of situations lead to different challenges in terms of social and economic development.

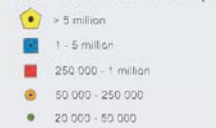
At the other end of the scale, Maltese planning policies need to deal with high population densities reaching 1540 inh/km² in Malta (against 440 inh/km² in Gozo).

Source: municipal data: ESPON NUTS DB Database

Access to urban nodes - a critical parameter for local development



Number of inhabitants of the Functional Urban Areas (FUA)



Corresponding potential commuting area



Access to urban nodes is a critical parameter for local development, as a factor of increased connectivity, out-commuting possibilities, enhanced opportunities for the tourism development and a generally broader scope of public and private services.

This map shows the areas situated within 45 minutes car drive from urban nodes classified according to the population of their labour market area.

It illustrates the diversity of situations in case study areas. The Swiss canton of Jura is partly accessible from large urban nodes, but has no own functional urban areas of more than 20 000 inhabitants. In the Valais and the Romanian counties of Alba and Suceava, the external urban accessibility is lower, but some significant centres can be identified within the regions.

The North Calotte is characterised by an intense polarisation between the areas within commuting distance from main towns and cities and the rest of the territory. In Marathasa and Tylliria (Cyprus), North Iceland and Gozo (Malta), the difficulty of accessing major urban centres is similarly a significant development challenge.

Source: Isochrones ESPON 1.1.1