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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

POLICY BRIEF

Cross-border public services in Europe



This policy brief builds on evidence provided by an ESPON Targeted Analysis that aimed to collect for the first time a European-wide, structured and cross-thematic overview of cross-border public services¹.

Exploring territorial patterns of cross-border public services, this overview highlights that cross-border public service (CPS) provision helps European border regions to better integrate. They address joint challenges of neighbouring border regions, and their provision aims to generate benefits for the general public or specific target groups in the border area. These services contribute to reducing negative border effects, providing better connections, raising awareness of the cross-border potential and supporting cross-border flows of people.

This policy brief is guided by the following questions:

- Where do CPS exist along European borders?
- What are the development potentials and future needs for CPS and what are possible access points to exploit these potentials?

- What main policy recommendations can be derived from the analysis of CPS provision?

Based on these questions, it aims to provide arguments and inspiration for those who are engaged in developing and implementing cross-border cooperation and for the development of the EU Territorial Agenda and Cohesion Policy after 2020. It seeks to attract interest not only from policy-makers in border regions but also from national decision-makers, public and private operators of services of general interest as well as from civil society organisations.

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

Why invest in cross-border public services?

- To enhance cultural, political and social integration of regions separated by national borders.
- To provide an adequate supply of health care, transport, civil protection and education services in border areas, increasing the attractiveness of these areas for people and consequently for businesses.
- To compensate for a shortage of both domestic public service beyond national borders and private service provision.

How are CPS distributed in Europe?

CPS are found all over Europe, but they are spread in a rather unbalanced way, with more CPS provided at borders of the oldest EU Member States. The majority of nearly 600 cross-border public services identified by ESPON's study on CPS are established along the borders of the Benelux countries, France, Germany and the Nordic countries.

Which sectors create demand for CPS?

ESPON's targeted analysis reveals that the majority of the CPS case studies operate in the fields of environmental preservation, civil protection and disaster management, as well as transport. In the future, CPS development is expected especially in the fields of spatial planning, economic development, tourism and culture. Many regions also explore possibilities to establish CPS dealing with health care and labour market challenges.

What are the typical obstacles that impede the development of CPS?

The challenges are quite similar everywhere, but the solutions found are mostly very specific, accounting to the specificities of each border region. Typical obstacles include unfavourable legal and administrative framework conditions, cultural divides and one-sided scarce resources. ESPON evidence also indicates a low awareness of the added value and the variety of available solutions to establishing a CPS.

1 www.espon.eu/cps

How can EU policies contribute to reducing CPS obstacles?

- Evidence shows that the number of CPS in Europe is slowly but steadily increasing. This increase coincides with the introduction of INTERREG programmes, back in 1990. The CPS project has catalogued the common solutions practised in different border areas to reduce obstacles, grouping these into categories including stakeholder involvement and needs assessment, infrastructure, legal frameworks, as well as management and organisation. All identified solutions have the characteristics of INTERREG cross-border projects, which leads to the conclusion that **INTERREG can serve as a leverage for the durable operation of CPS.**
- While INTERREG projects are the main lever for prospective CPS, **different stages of the CPS evolution might need different complementary support mechanisms.** The success rate of

INTERREG projects supporting a CPS development can be increased through seed money prior to the application stage that can support the analysis of the financial sustainability of a CPS beyond an INTERREG project. In addition, while INTERREG cross-border cooperation has proven to work well in the case of stakeholder reconciliation, feasibility studies, pilot actions and market roll-out, the prototyping and testing of technological solutions can benefit from engineering capacity in the context of research and innovation grants.

- As the research shows that many CPS require considerable efforts for appropriate implementation, **a stronger support for institutional capacity building through EU funding** would greatly assist CPS development, especially for the most recent Member States (e.g. earmarking a more important share of programme budgets for ‘governance’ matters).

1. Defining cross-border public services in a European context

Public service provision is acknowledged as an important element of the European social model and for territorial cohesion. The Lisbon Treaty states that good accessibility to public services is key for territorial cohesion. Public services are generally organised by national, regional or local authorities within their administrative boundaries.

Unfortunately, no analytical concept exists that clearly defines or delineates the exact nature and scope of cross-border public service provision activities (INTERACT, 2015). It may be argued that all cross-border cooperation activities run by regional and local authorities are still public services whatever their legal form might be (Council of Europe, 2012). However, this broad definition implies the consideration of every publicly driven

cross-border project, be it short-term (one-off) or durable. On the other hand, a use of the EU-level definitions elaborated for different categories of 'services of general interest' would neglect CPS in fields such as police, justice and statutory social security schemes.

Therefore, specific criteria have been defined by ESPON that allow for a systematic approach to determine whether a service could be considered as a CPS in a European context.

These criteria have been applied to nine policy areas, complemented by a subdivision of a total of 34 fields of intervention.

DEFINITION

A cross-border public service

1. Covers a specified cross-border area and must have been already materialised in the cross-border area.
 2. Addresses a joint problem or a development opportunity in the cross-border area.
 3. Has a target group on both sides of the border, even if they are targeted in quite different ways.
 4. Is non-discriminatory: within the target group there is no access restriction for using the CPS (non-discriminatory access).
 5. Includes actors from both sides of the border who are involved in initiation, establishment/financing and/or provision. The degree of involvement can vary, however.
 6. Is publicly organised, the service being provided either directly by a public body or by a private/non-profit organisation via a concession.
 7. Can be provided in any of the policy areas listed in Table 1 (sub-fields are not exhaustive).
 8. Is publicly financed.
 9. Is a service that means that the mere existence of a (hard) infrastructure does not represent a service (e.g. a cross-border bridge, road or pipeline).
 10. Offers a long-term service provision, i.e. there is no limited timeframe as in the case of 'one-off projects'.
 11. Delivers, which means that the service is existing and running at the time of the analysis.
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Table 1
Policy areas and fields of intervention

POLICY AREA	FIELD OF INTERVENTION
Transport	Public transport services
	Transport infrastructure maintenance
	Services at border crossing points
Spatial planning, economic development, tourism and culture	Spatial planning or sector policy planning
	Services supporting economic development
	Services for culture and cultural heritage
	Services for tourism development
Health care, long-term care and social inclusion	Primary care, secondary care and tertiary care
	Services for hospitals
	Services for non-hospital care or ambulatory care
	Medical emergency care and rescue
	Services for long-term care
	Social assistance and social integration
Education and training	Early childhood education and primary education
	Services for secondary education
	Services for tertiary education
	Vocational education and training
	Recognition of diploma and professional qualification certificates
Labour market and employment	Information/advice services for facilitating mobility of workers
	Services for job placement
	Qualification and life-long learning
Communication, broadcasting and information society	Mail delivery, telephone or mobile phone services
	Broadcasting services
	Digital services
Environmental protection, natural resources management and climate change action	Protecting/restoring and managing terrestrial freshwater water bodies (blue infrastructures), estuaries and coastal waters
	Restoring/protecting and managing valuable terrestrial ecosystems or landscapes and for developing green infrastructures incl. services for risk prevention and climate change resilience
	Resource efficiency/promoting low-carbon economy or greening of the society
	Solid waste, sewage water collection/treatment and drinking water
	Production/distribution of energy derived from renewable sources
Civil protection and disaster management	Fire-fighting and assistance in accidents
	Flood management
	Managing large-scale incidents and major disasters
Citizenship, justice and public security	Public advice and support services for citizens
	Services in the fields of justice, police and customs

2. Added value and benefits of CPS

Why develop a CPS?

Usually, cross-border cooperation aims to:

- reduce negative externalities of administrative borders that hamper everyday life;
- build on positive externalities, i.e. bundling assets or joining forces in order to better use underutilised synergies, increase the visibility and attractiveness of the border regions and thus create new opportunities.

Ensuring affordable and accessible public services is an important political objective and inherent to the European social model. Sometimes national borders can hamper achieving this objective, and CPS provision provides a solution to overcoming these issues.

In this context, CPS contribute to reducing negative border effects, for example by enhanced cultural integration, increased understanding of neighbours and a common understanding of shared issues or needs.

CPS also contribute to better connections, not only between people but also by increasing the accessibility of services, provision of missing resources, or by offering a one-stop shop and thus a simplification in dealing with a variety of border challenges. By increasing the accessibility and the scope of services, the quality of the services can be improved, as knowledge and resources from both sides of the border can be better exploited.

Eventually, CPS support cross-border mobility, for example by offering better information on the complementarities of two neighbouring regions and by better labour market matching.

Expected results of CPS provision

Cross-border public services bring different benefits to cross-border regions.

They can address a gap in domestic service provision. A CPS can overcome a shortage of service provision on one or both sides of the border. Such a shortage may result from a peripheral location of the border region, or from low demand on each side, or it may be specific to cross-border flows for which usually no domestic services exist.

CPS can bring about change in the cross-border region. A CPS can contribute to more effective service provision in the border area. They may address shared problems more effectively than individual and non-cooperative activities. Change can also be brought about by extending existing domestic services across the border, for example to achieve faster rescue responses in peripheral areas.

CPS can make service provision less costly. A CPS can generate greater efficiency gains and cost reductions for the service provider than domestic service provision.

In this sense CPS development can ensure a critical mass for affordable and accessible public service by building on:

- economies of scale, by covering a wider service area than domestic services and thus increasing the demand for the service; or
- economies of scope, by making better use of infrastructure investments and by sharing operating costs among stakeholders in the cross-border region.

3. Cross-border public services throughout Europe

The ESPON inventory includes a total of 579 CPS in Europe. The analysis gives an overview of the principal reasons that trigger the development of CPS over domes-

tic service provision and what typical challenges had to be overcome to achieve the implementation of a CPS.

Spatial and thematic distribution of CPSs

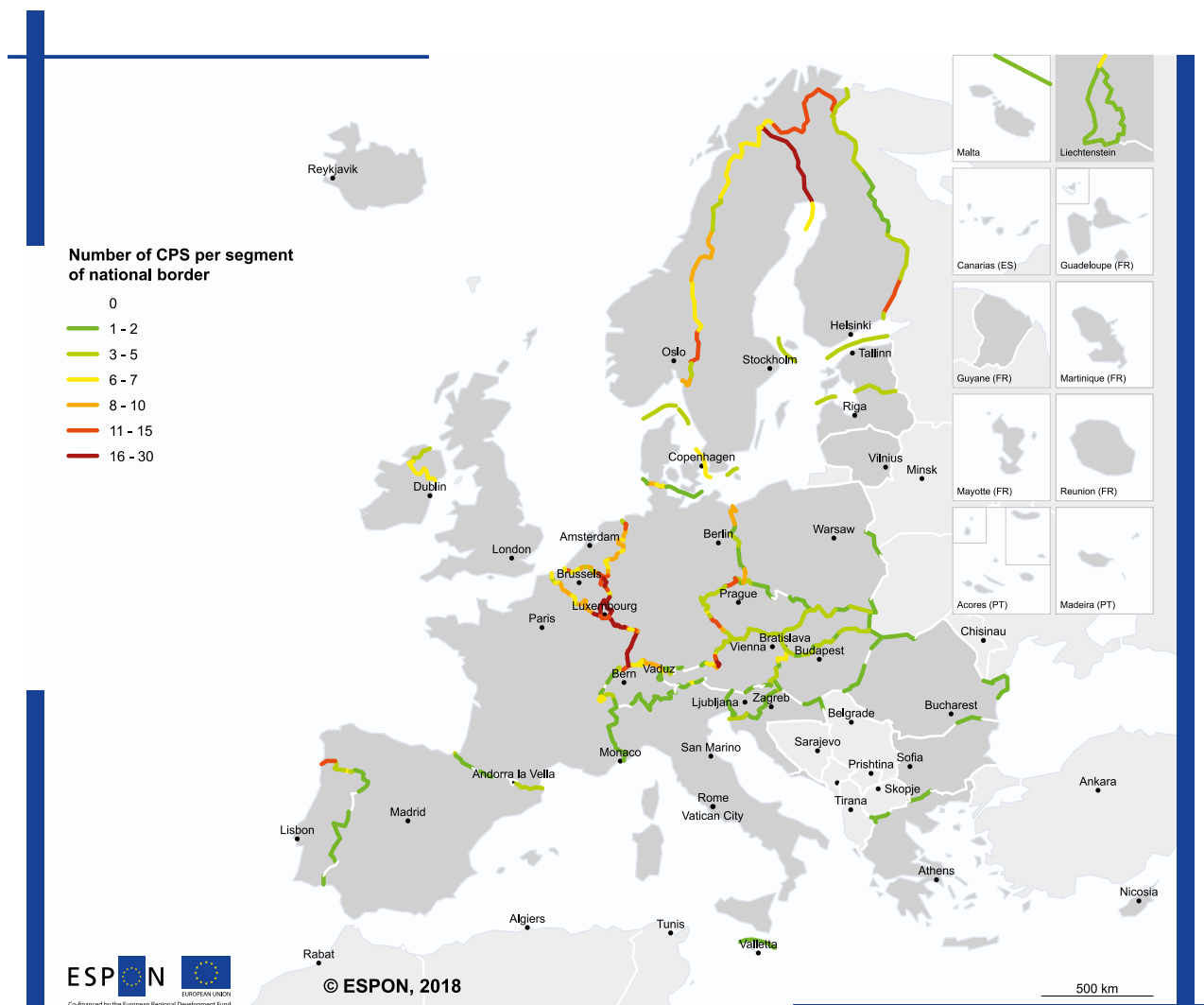
CPS are found all over Europe, but they are spread in a rather imbalanced way with more CPS provided at the borders of oldest EU Member States. It appears that CPS primarily exist along borders between countries that either:

1. have a long tradition of cross-border cooperation in areas with high population densities or rural areas (western Europe), i.e. there is a high demand or specific need for services of some kind, or in some areas;

2. have extremely low population densities and long distances between towns and villages, i.e. in areas where it is difficult and there is high pressure to maintain public services (e.g. the Nordic countries).

Most identified CPS are implemented between partners from two neighbouring countries, and only rarely involve partners from three or more countries. While this often may have legal or sometimes technical reasons, one reason could also be the complexity of the CPS implementation process — the more partners from different countries that are involved, the more complex and protracted this process may become. In any case, most of the identified CPS covering three or more countries are found in the Nordic countries.

Map 1
Number of CPS per border segment



Regional level: n.a.
Source: ESPON CPS, 2018
Origin of data: TCP International, 2018; various data sources, 2018
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Most CPS deal with environment, civil protection and disaster management or transport.**Table 2**
Number and share of CPS themes²

THEME/FIELD OF INTERVENTION	NUMBER OF CPS IDENTIFIED
Environment protection	119
Civil protection and disaster management	118
Transport	105
Healthcare and social inclusion	64
Education and training	57
Spatial planning, tourism, and culture	55
Labour market and employment	29
Citizenship, justice and public security	27
Communication, broadband, and information society	5

Source: ESPON CPS database, 2018

The spatial distribution of CPS themes is quite uneven across Europe, with borders that show a clear focus on one or two themes, and some borders showing a mixture of a wide array of fields of interventions.

In the health sector, the emphasis was on establishing CPSs in primary care (the borders of Benelux and Nordic countries, and the French borders with Germany, Italy and Spain) and on medical emergency or rescue services (for example, along Austrian, Czech and German borders and the border between Belgium and France). The types of services found in this policy field range from 'small-scale' solutions (e.g. bilateral hospital cooperation) to territorially more wide-ranging and integrated solutions (e.g. integrated health-care zones at the Belgium-France border). Highly integrated solutions can only be found in regions with a long cross-border tradition, whereas other regions seem to begin CPS provision with smaller solutions that may be further developed and become more integrated over time.

Traditionally, there are many CPSs in joint wastewater treatment and drinking water provision, the management of border rivers and other water bodies (i.e. lakes), and for nature parks, all across Europe. Their occurrence along many European borders confirms that these CPSs are often the first to be established, since they are often

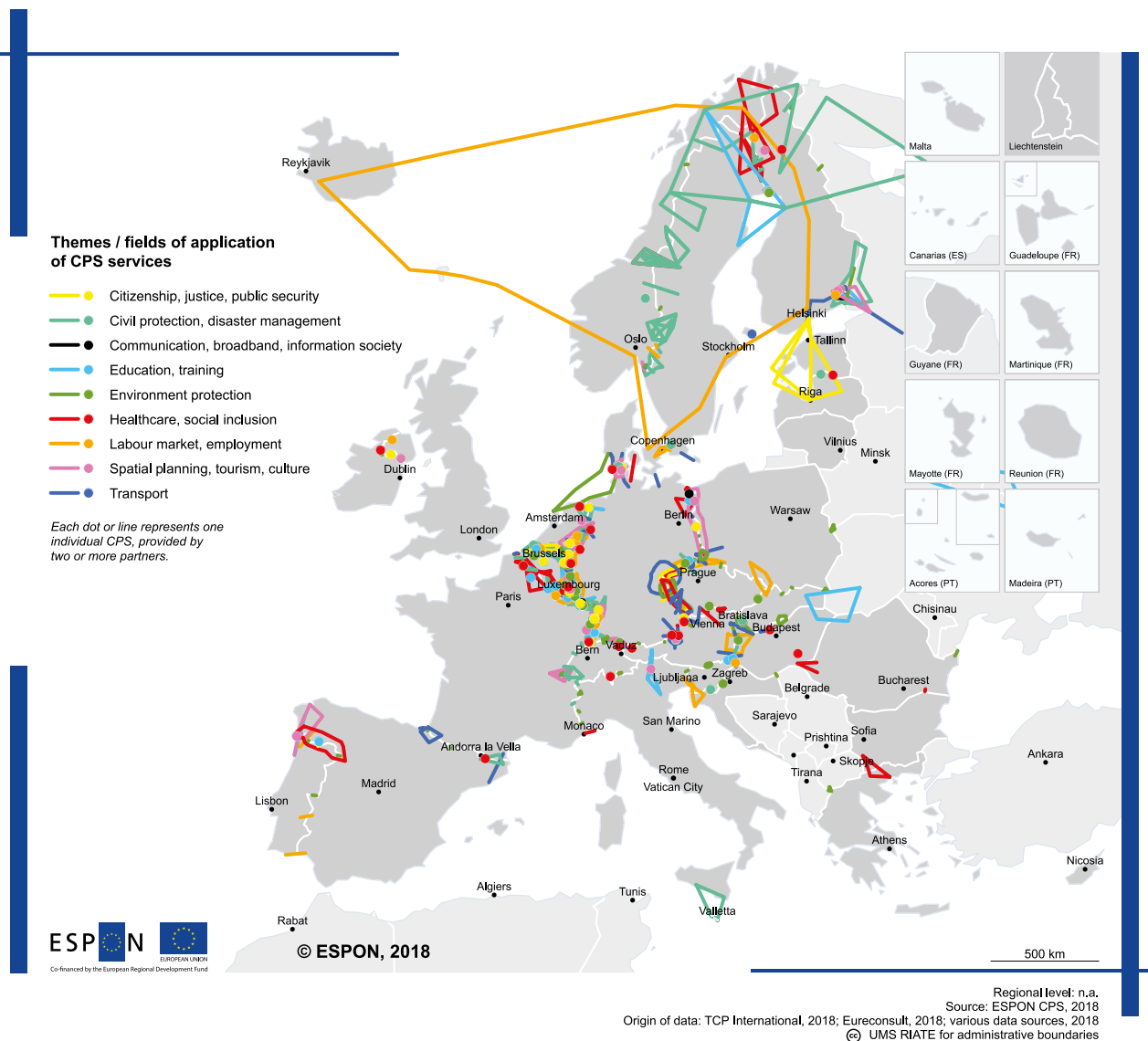
implemented more easily than, for example, CPSs in health care. Meanwhile there are also a number of CPSs in solid-waste treatment and renewable-energy-related matters. As regards education, there is a strong focus on university cooperation, but between the old and new EU Member States there are also some interesting CPSs in school cooperation. CPSs supporting cross-border spatial planning were established between Germany and the Netherlands, in the Greater Region, between France and Germany as well as between France and Switzerland.

It can be concluded that the themes addressed in the various CPS reflect:

1. **regional topographic and natural assets and specificities** (e.g. environmental CPS, CPS in civil protection and disaster management);
2. **a high demand for services** (e.g. transport CPS, CPS in spatial planning, tourism and culture, as well as education and training);
3. **urgent political issues** (e.g. health care and social inclusion, labour market and employment, citizenship, justice and public security); or
4. a combination of factors 1,2 and 3.

² Although for this analysis each CPS has been assigned to just one theme, some specific CPS have a multifaceted character, touching different fields of intervention. For example, airborne helicopter rescue services may be assigned both to healthcare and to disaster management.

Map 2
CPS by policy areas

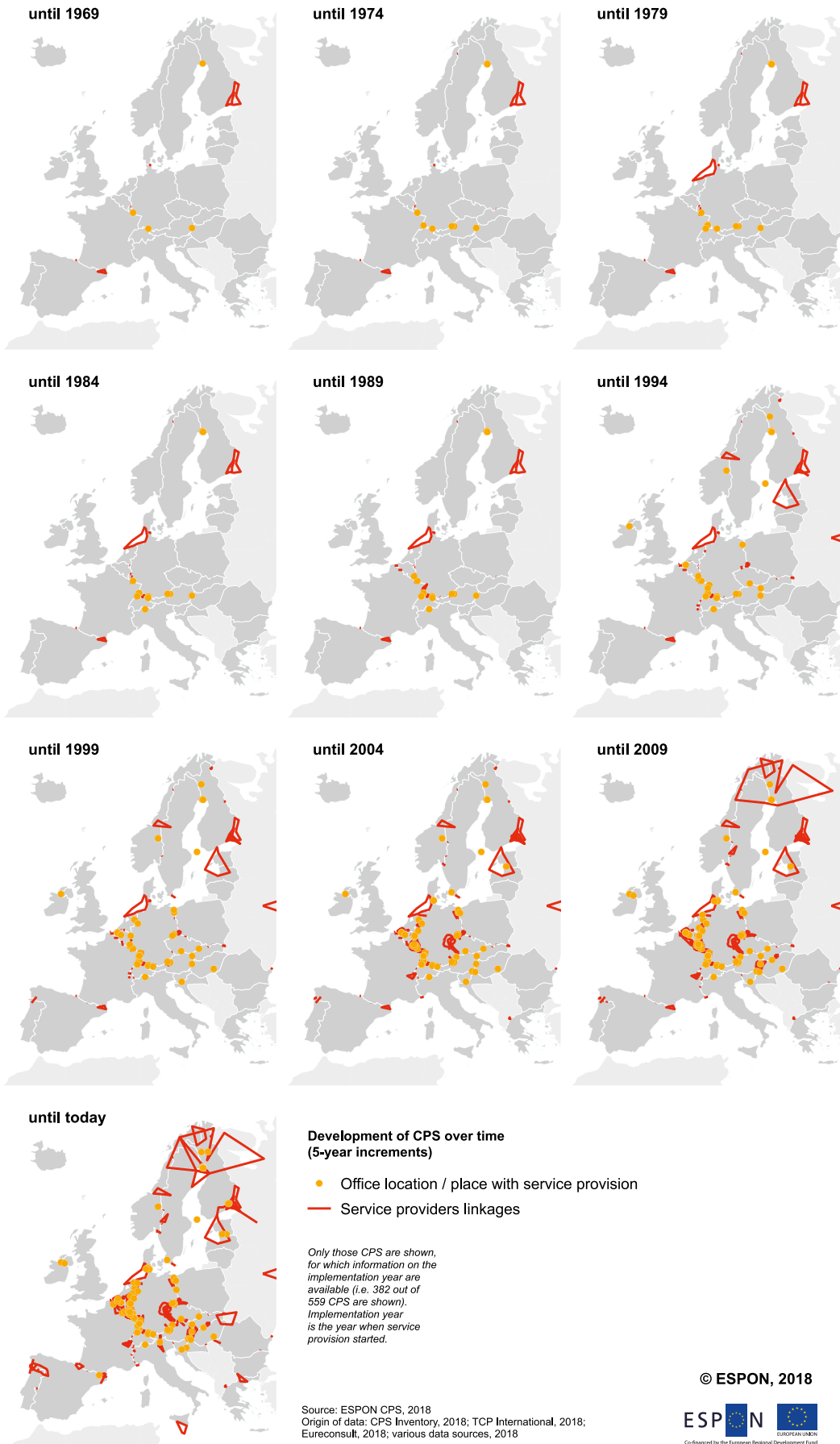


The number of CPS is steadily increasing in Europe

From 1970 to 1990, only a very few initiatives were initiated to establish new CPS, mainly in the field of environmental protection (nature parks, sewage treatment, etc.). From 1990, a strong increase has clearly coincided with

the introduction of the Interreg Community Initiative and its continuing implementation during the following years. After 2000, more CPS have been established than during previous decades. Among other reasons this is due to the more frequent establishment of CPS involving Eastern European countries.

Map 3 Development of CPS provision in Europe



4. Typical challenges and solutions

Unfavourable legal and administrative framework conditions are the main obstacles faced during the establishment of a CPS. ESPON 2018 online survey responses and case studies confirmed that legal and administrative hurdles, such as asymmetric or unclear competences of policy actors and incompatible domestic legislation, are the most relevant hurdles. In many cases more than one obstacle has been mentioned. Other obstacles are language barriers (cultural divides), one-sided scarce budgetary resources (economic discontinuity) and mental barriers (socio-cultural divides). These obstacles are the main impediment to developing further CPS, even if a need is perceived. Finally, the lack of a common strategy, the political will or the interest in engaging in cross-border activities have been named as additional challenges. When the obstacles within different policy areas are compared, no significant differences can be observed.

To overcome these obstacles, **multiple modifications of cross-border legal frameworks are necessary**. Most frequently mentioned is the conclusion of a specific local

or regional cooperation agreement between the competent entities organising the public service, followed by the elaboration of a new convention between local and regional authorities. The differences between policy areas are minor.

Independent of the delivery mode, CPS often require a **new cross-border structure or body**. Structures without a new legal identity seem to dominate CPS delivery, and often already existing structures are used and adapted, regardless of whether existing services on both sides of the border are better coordinated, a domestic service is extended or a completely new CPS is developed.

Summing up, the often **time-intensive set-up of CPS can be attributed to a combination of different needs for change that may occur individually or together** regarding legal frameworks at higher levels or the level of the CPS provision, governance adaptations for developing and implementing the CPS, and a change of domestic rules and processes.

Table 3
Challenges and solutions at different stages of CPS development

COMMON CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOUND
NEEDS, OBJECTIVES AND TASKS	
Identifying and mobilising all required stakeholders	Start with a few key stakeholders who can then collaboratively address additional stakeholders through their individual networks.
	Develop an overview of benefits of the future CPS.
Unequal distribution of benefits (even though target groups exist on both sides of the border)	Take a long-time perspective to assess non-immediate benefits. Changing macro-economic conditions may alter the encountered benefits after a certain period of time.
	Start off with small, non-formalised but clearly defined volunteer actions, serving as a 'testbed' for ideas and services.
	Look at the overall border area. Benefits may be reversed at other parts of the border area or possibly for other services. Across the full border and across sectors benefits may be balanced.
	Consider indirect and occasional benefits. Some CPS benefits become only visible once services are provided. This holds, for instance, for civil protection and disaster management CPS that are required only in case of large incidents.
Assessing closing and opening effects of the border reality appropriately	To fully understand closing and opening effects it is important to consider the border reality from both sides of the border and with a view to the policy field for which the CPS is envisaged. The same border reality can have closing and opening effects for different policy fields.
	Advocate opening effects. Often closing effects mirror obstacles or challenges that endanger the CPS development process if they are at the centre of attention.

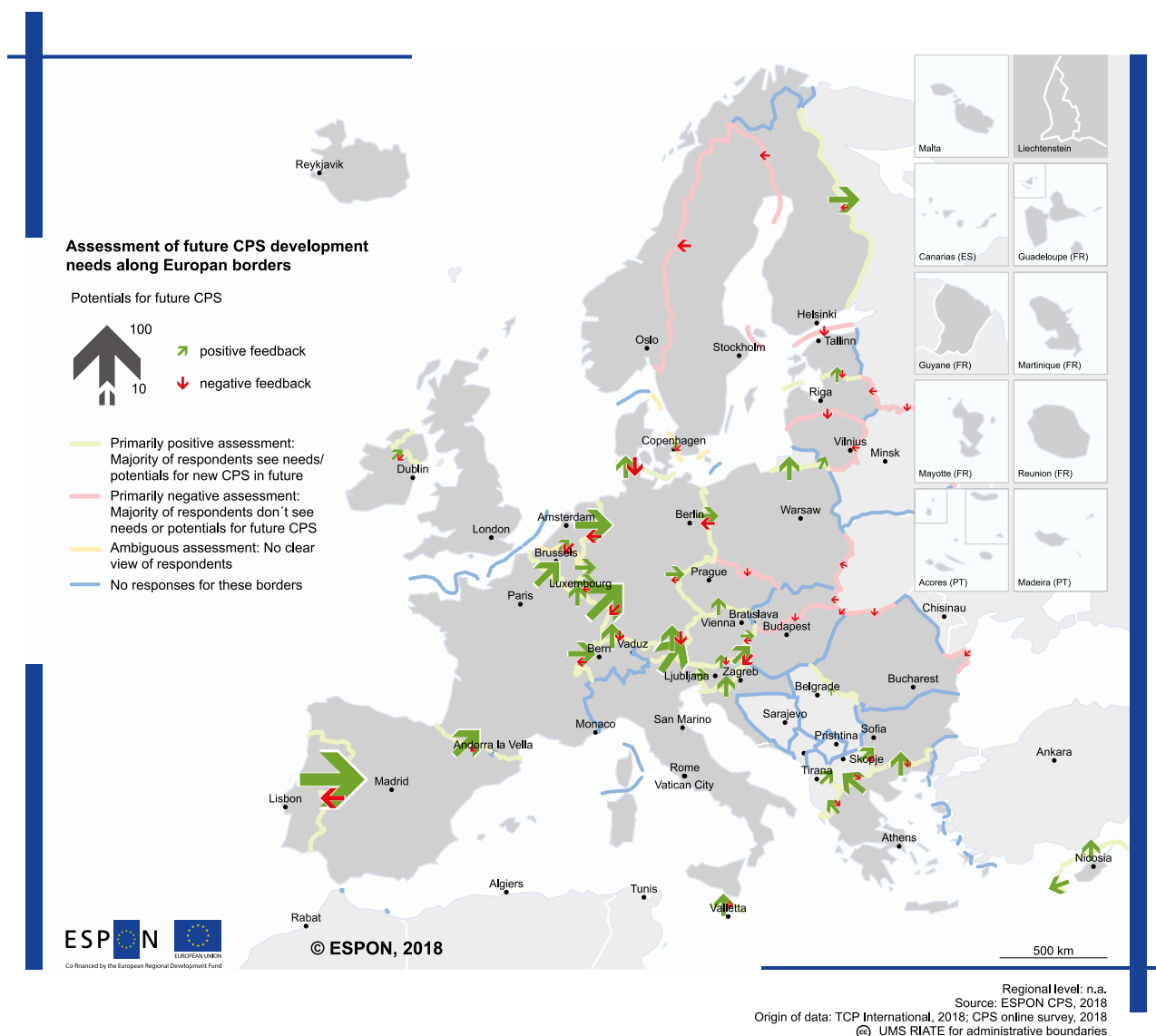
COMMON CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOUND
Lack of comparability of information and data, particularly on the demand for CPS provision	Use existing cross-border documents.
	Use ESPON or Eurostat data to develop proxies that help to build an argument.
	Develop a joint harmonised information system that takes into account different needs. This may evolve in a spatial monitoring system CPS that supports the development or improvement of other CPS.
Different domestic price systems or service levels	Implement a fee system (e.g. transport tickets) for cross-border transport that considers income differentials.
	Combine different funding sources according to the expected benefits of the target groups.
	Extend an existing fee system across the border.
INFRASTRUCTURE USE	
Domestic legal frameworks for CPS provision with different quality standards or norms	Assume the 'stricter' rules from either side of the border.
	Lobby for border area interests to initiate required legal adjustments at higher levels.
	In the future, the cross-border mechanism proposed by the European Commission may support easier adoption of relevant national rules.
One-sided scarce budgets or costs differentials	Step-wise service development building on pilot actions to test budget effects and to make it easier for the other partner to join the CPS.
LEGAL FRAMEWORKS	
Lack of a clear legal basis for CPS provision	Use existing cross-border documents to start CPS development on a voluntary basis that are politically supported.
	Develop the CPS from the bottom up, with structures being as simple as possible. Formalise the CPS gradually in accordance, with increasing success of the CPS and as required.
	Establish a cross-border structure with legal personality.
MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION	
Cultural and language barriers	Involve staff with required language skills and different domestic backgrounds.
Different or unclear responsibilities and competences or changes of responsibility of key stakeholders	Actively involving existing cross-border structures, such as Euroregions.
	Develop a relatively wide network and intensive communications with relevant players.
	Identify the added value of each partner, taking into account comparative advantages of partners.
	Define clear interim steps and milestones in the implementation process.
	Assign clear tasks to all partners involved in the implementation, to share work and to generate ownership.
Readjustments required due to changing external factors	CPS providers must constantly monitor their offerings and adapt them to changing conditions.
	CPS providers should continuously inform the general public and/or target groups of the border region about the added value of the CPS, to maintain or even increase acceptance and demand levels.
Need to clearly differentiate services provided domestically and across borders	CPS should be clearly separated from domestic services (no overlaps; complementing) and providers of related domestic services should be involved (at least consulted) in the development and implementation of the CPS (ideally they should take over CPS delivery).

5. Potentials for future CPS

In order to give an indication of future CPS in Europe, the ESPON 2018 online survey asked whether regional and local players were aware of any plans for future CPS development and, if so, in which policy fields (Map 4). The answers are not representative, but they are mapping future plans for CPS development from 49 border relations in Europe. Various responses also refer to CPS

development along external borders, including not only Switzerland, Norway and Russia but also, for instance, Belarus, Albania and Turkey. Some responses also referred to tri-national border relations. A few responses also indicated CPS development plans for maritime borders, including Cyprus, the Italian-Malta and the Danish-Swedish border.

Map 4
Survey Results: Assessment of future CPS development needs



6. Good practice examples

The good practice examples illustrate the whole variety of available alternatives for managing, financing and delivering CPS. Actual service design in terms of the services provided depend on (a) the actual need and (b) the feasibility at a certain moment in a specific cross-border region. The examples of several policy themes show that it is possible to start with single services that may be of small-scale if an all comprehensive CPS is either not necessary or may take too long to realise the potential benefits. Many good practice examples result from previous cooperation that over time becomes more comprehensive and complex.

INTERREG funding often plays an important role in supporting CPS development. Even operational CPS rather frequently make use of INTERREG funding to either develop additional service features or upgrade the existing CPS or to acquire additional resources (e.g. new infrastructure). Other typical funding sources for the everyday business of CPS are public resources assigned typically to a comparative domestic service and/or income from fees from CPS users.

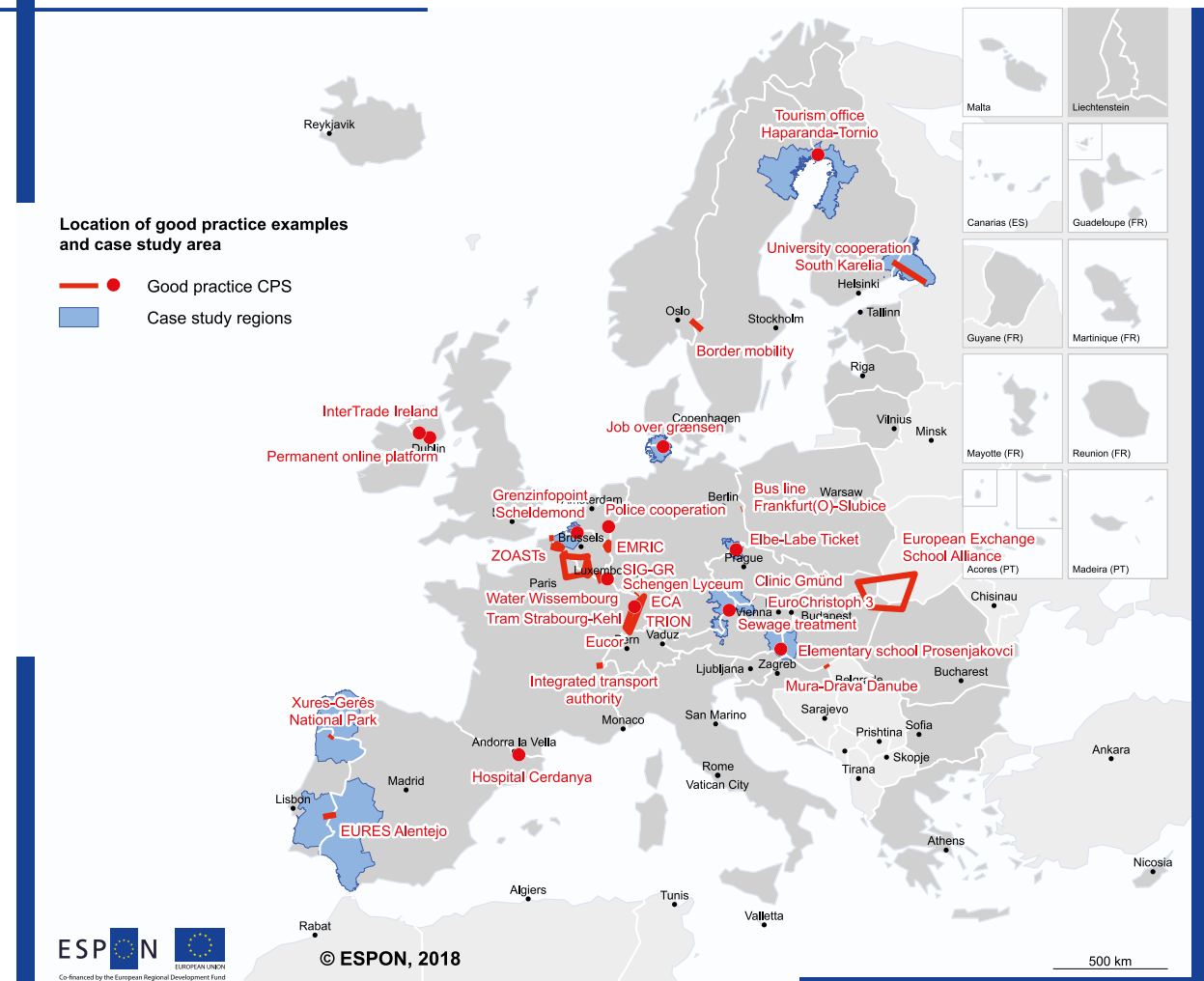
The examples show that the decision about a potentially extended use of existing hard infrastructure or

the development of a new infrastructure depends on (a) what infrastructure is needed to provide the CPS and (b) the adequacy of existing infrastructures. Many CPS have been developed making use of existing infrastructure, which in some cases required to add new infrastructure elements, such as tube connections. The good practice examples include some that required new infrastructure due to either a lack (e.g. no transport connection) or out-of-date infrastructure that required refurbishment (e.g. old hospital).

Changes in the management and delivery more often relate to the actual organisation of the service rather than hard infrastructure. Several examples illustrate that even one-sided delivery with a central management mode requires several changes in the management and organisation and may also lead to additional or changed costs.

These different elements of the comparison of good practice examples highlight that each CPS solution, that is not entirely covered by EU legislation, needs to be seen in the **context of the policy theme** and the **specific domestic context**. Principal 'building blocs' are recurring and connected in different ways to trigger solutions that may then be considered as tailor-made.

Map 5
Location of good practice examples



Regional level: n.a.
 Source: ESPON CPS, 2018
 Origin of data: TCP International, 2018
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Table 4**Overview of 28 good practice examples collected in the frame of the ESPON CPS Targeted Analysis**

	CPS NAME	BORDER	SUMMARISING COMPARISON OF CPS
TRANSPORT			
1	Tram Strasbourg-Kehl	DE-FR	Many transport related CPS aim at providing better transport connections across the border. This may be done by developing a new infrastructure (1), by extending an existing or providing a new link (2). More integrated transport CPS focus on a joint ticketing system (3) that may exist with or without cross-border transport links or even a joint authority that is responsible for organising cross-border bus transport connections and ticketing (4).
2	Twin city bus line 983 Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice	DE-PL	
3	Elbe-Labe Ticket	CZ-DE	
4	Joint transport authority for the Geneva cross-border metropolitan area	CH-FR	
SPATIAL PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, LEISURE AND CULTURE			
5	Joint tourism office Haparanda-Tornio	FI-SE	CPS of this policy fields may tackle a variety of regional development issues and different target groups. The examples illustrate approaches of very different intervention fields. For tourism joint offices and marketing activities are quite frequent (5) and primarily tackle tourists. Spatial planning CPS are often linked to information provision, in particular targeting public authorities of different sectors (6). Economic development CPS usually target companies or other economic players by providing information for cross-border economic activities with a focus e.g. on trade or investments (7).
6	Geographic Information System of the Greater Region	BE-DE-FR-LU	
7	InterTrade Ireland	IE-UK	
HEALTH CARE, LONG-TERM CARE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION			
8	ZOAST	BE-FR	While there is a wide variety of health and care CPS available, alone primary and hospital health care services show a wide variety of possible applications and degrees of integration. A comparison of these different degrees allows insights into possible step-wise approaches if a comprehensive health care integration seems unsurmountable. The most integrated examples in Europe are the integrated cross-border health care zones (8). They have been implemented at only one border relation, so far. Completely integrated cross-border care at the level of one hospital and based on a specifically established legal personality may be the next least integration level (9). The third example illustrates a cross-border extension of an existing domestic service for out-patient hospital care (10), which may be an option for border areas that first need to test cross-border health care before enterprising more integrated health care CPS.
9	Hospital Cerdanya	ES-FR	
10	Healthacross, Clinic Gmünd	AT-CZ	
EDUCATION AND TRAINING			
11	European Exchange School Alliance	HU-RO-SK-UA	CPS in education and training most often focus on either school or university education and research. The first example highlights how specialised and non-formal educational services are provided at an external EU border (11). Two school education examples illustrate how an existing domestic service may be extended to pupils from across the border (12) or a how a new service may be developed to facilitate a truly joint education with joint service management (13). The other two examples on university cooperation illustrate first approaches feasible at external borders (14) and a more integrated CPS for cross-border research cooperation with its own legal personality (15).
12	Bilingual elementary school in Prosenjakovci	HU-SI	
13	Schengen Lyceum	DE-LU	
14	University cooperation South Karelia	FI-RU	
15	Eucor – the European campus	CH-DE-FR	

	CPS NAME	BORDER	SUMMARISING COMPARISON OF CPS
LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT			
16	Grensinfopoint Scheldemond	BE-NL	Labour market and employment CPS usually address information needs of commuters and/or support cross-border labour market match-making. The examples include a one-stop-shop for cross-border workers (16), a service aiming to enhance cross-border labour mobility in view of few commuters (17) a 'headhunting de-luxe' approach which not only takes care about job placement but includes support for family members, housing and other issues (18) and another comprehensive CPS originally supporting labour mobility and now also aiming to enhance business relations (19).
17	EURES Alentejo	ES-PT	
18	job over grænsen	DE-DK	
19	Border mobility	NO-SE	
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION			
20	Xures-Gerês National Park	ES-PT	Environment related CPS may take very different access points. Thus, five examples are described that tackle different environment issues. The first two examples have a focus on nature conservation in trans-boundary biosphere reserves. The first highlights requirements for administrative changes (20) and the second takes a view on specifics linked to river protection and management (21). The three other examples deal with water and energy related CPS in support of resource management and climate change actions. They cover drinking water provision with unilateral delivery and joint management (22), biological waste water treatment through an extension of a previously domestic service (23) and renewable energy promotion based on a common climate protection strategy (24).
21	Mura-Drava Danube	HR-HU	
22	Drinking water provision Wissembourg	DE-FR	
23	Sewage water treatment plant in Salzburg	AT-DE	
24	TRION Climate	DE-FR	
CIVIL PROTECTION AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT			
25	EMRIC	BE-DE-NL	Civil protection CPS tackle various risks emerging from either natural disasters or other emergency situations. Some of these CPS are also linked to health care when they include rescue services. The two good practice examples of this policy theme highlight a comprehensive approach to ensure public safety in various areas (25) and a very specific rescue service of a rescue helicopter managed by two national automobile associations (26).
26	Rescue helicopter "Euro-Christoph 3"	AT-DE	
CITIZENSHIP, JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY			
27	German-French Centre for European Consumer Protection	DE-FR	CPS in the field of citizenship, justice and public security include services dealing with everyday life issues. The three examples presented indicate three quite different access points. The consumer advice centre is the sole binational partnership within the network of European consumer advice centres (27). Focusing more on life events etc. is the service offering a one-stop guide at the British-Irish border (28) and the third practice on cross-border police cooperation (29) may be an example of a most common CPS in this policy field.
28	Permanent on-line platform	IE-UK	
29	German-Dutch Police Cooperation	DE-NL	

Source: ESPON CPS database, 2018

7. Policy recommendations

For cross-border institutions, border regions, CPS providers and INTERREG programming bodies

Ensure sufficient commitment and capacity for CPS endeavours

Some CPS can be established in simple ways, not requiring the set-up of complex cross-border bodies with their own legal identity, etc. However, CPS require commitment to drive the process and the capacity in terms of knowledge required, personal and institutional networks and persistency.

Use INTERREG for CPS

Cross-border INTERREG programmes aim to initiate cross-border actions that may possibly become self-supporting beyond the project's duration. Stakeholders who are thinking about establishing a new CPS might use INTERREG funding for carrying out the preparatory steps or initiating a pilot service. Alternatively, existing CPS can make use of INTERREG to further enhance their service quality, level, etc.

Not everything needs to be solved at once

Experience shows that initial agreement needs clarification to develop a real common understanding. CPS development needs a starting point, most often from the bottom up. A step-wise approach leading to some benefits tends to support further commitment rather than lengthy processes without any visible results. For initial pilot projects or small-scale CPS minimise the formality and ensure only that sufficient resources are available and a common understanding exists.

Communicate cross-border needs to a higher level

To develop a CPS, many challenges cannot be solved at local or cross-border regional level. Interstate agreements, domestic legislative action or other activities at higher administrative levels may be required. National governments often do not act by themselves unless there is an obvious need. So, existing cross-border structures may intensify the communication of cross-border needs and desired action from higher levels.

Not every need is best addressed by a CPS

Experience shows that many CPS require considerable effort for their appropriate development and implementation. Thus, if a need can be solved better domestically, there is no need for a CPS. Domestic public services tend to be more resilient than CPS, as the latter depend on the political will and competences of at least two countries. A deliberate assessment to analyse the costs and benefits of a CPS compared with upgrading or better aligning domestic services on both sides of the border should be systematically carried out.

At EU level

The legal obstacles study by the European Commission³ has made clear that there is a need for the recently proposed cross-border mechanism⁴. Among other things, EU institutions should pave the way for CPS development in European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) for the 2021-2027 programming period by:

- favouring CPS-related actions in regulations; this could be done by mentioning CPS development explicitly as an expected and eligible activity;
- rethinking indicators as far as measuring the achievement of CPS development with ETC support is concerned;
- providing stronger support for institutional capacity building through EU funding (e.g. endorsing the idea of earmarking a larger share of programme budgets for 'governance' matters);
- collecting information on cross-border interaction for better and more informed decision-making processes in cooperation with the Member States, regions and municipalities, as well as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation and other cross-border structures, during preparation for the programming period to provide all relevant information to potential beneficiaries from the very beginning;
- supporting and financing specific European-wide studies, analysis and territorial research on CPS.

3 European Commission – Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (2017) 'Easing legal and administrative obstacles in EU border regions'.

4 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A373%3AFIN>

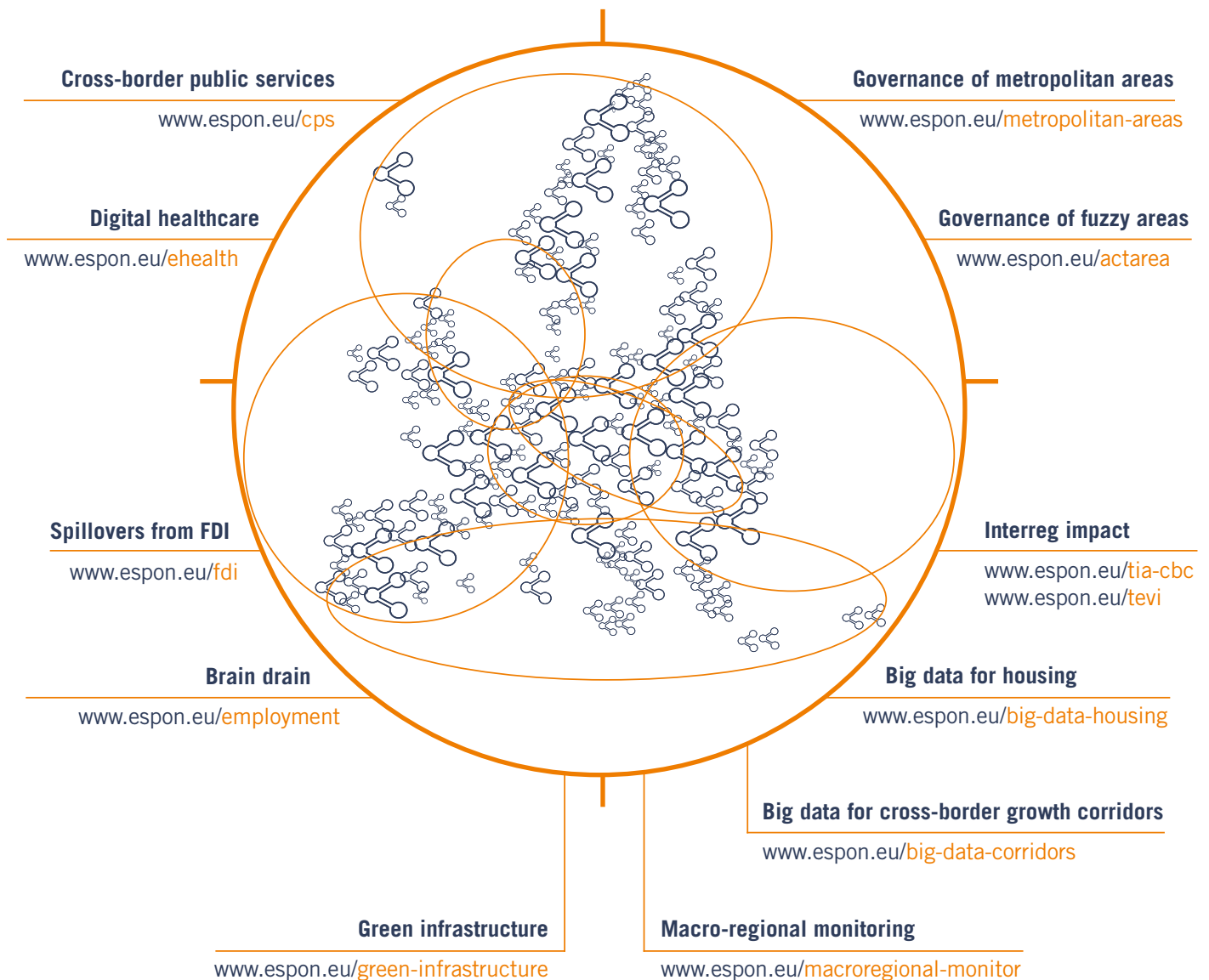
Understanding regions beyond borders: **ESPON** research



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ESPON 2020

ESPON EGTC

4 rue Erasme, L-1468 Luxembourg
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
Phone: +352 20 600 280
Email: info@espon.eu
www.espon.eu

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Editorial team:

Nicolas Rossignol, Nikos Lampropoulos, Laurent Frideres
ESPON EGTC

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