

# Cross-Border Cooperation - Cross-Thematic Study of INTERREG and ESPON activities





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## Foreword

Cross-border cooperation has been an important instrument for achieving the goals of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), as well as implementing the aims of the Lisbon and Rotterdam processes to attain sustainable growth and territorial cohesion in Europe. Particularly the goal of cross-border cooperation within the INTERREG IIIA programme has been instrumental to ensure that national borders do not form barriers to balanced development and integration of the European territory.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the INTERREG IIIA programmes and projects and relates them to the body of research produced by the ESPON programme. In doing so it helps pave the way for further interface between programmes.

The study has been conducted within the framework of INTERACT and ESPON 2006 cooperation. KTH, Royal Institute of Technology, has had primary responsibility for this study with a core research team composed of Lisa Van Well, Camila Cortés Ballerino and José Gabriel Sterling, and with the assistance of Stephen Fournier, Feras Hammami and Giuseppe Roccasalva. Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith and Alexandre Dubois of Nordregio were instrumental in helping develop the ESPON-INTERACT cross-border cooperation survey.

Subcontractors to the project, who have contributed with case studies of INTERREG IIIA programmes are: Tomasz Komornicki of the Stanisław Leszczycki Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences and Dmitry Zimin of the Karelian Institute, University of Joensuu. Miguel Torres Garcia of KTH also wrote the case studies on Spain-Morocco and Spain-Portugal. Ivan Illés of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre for Regional Studies has provided data for the quantitative analysis.

This project was supported by the INTERREG, INTERACT and ESPON communities with regards to data, support and feedback. The report has been greatly improved by the insightful comments received on the draft version of the report presented at the ESPON-INTERACT seminar on cross-border cooperation in Riga on 14 June 2006. Mr. Jens Gabbe of AEBR has also contributed with valuable feedback and suggestions.

Many of the main ideas and choice of indicators for describing the characteristics of cross-border regions have built upon the ESPON “Enlargement” study (ESPON 1.1.3), particularly the border regions typologies by Gabriele Tatzberger and Friedrich Schindegger of ÖIR (with the assistance of Ivan Illés).

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## Summary

Cross-border cooperation is a powerful force affecting spatial socio-economic structures of neighbouring regions. It has become clearer that state borders represent not only a liability, but also an asset, when different conditions (social, economic, cultural, political and regulatory) on both sides of the border can be capitalised and exploited for the benefit of local actors. Those communities that are capable of “taming” the border potential have already been turned into centres of growth.

The aim of this study is to examine the specific situation of European cross-border regions as well as the thematic cross-border cooperation efforts within these regions as presented in the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) analyses to realise potential synergies and fruitful mutual learning for territorial development. In doing so we analyse the preconditions and potentials for integrative cross-border cooperation and the strategic themes of INTERREG IIIA projects within 64 programmes by building upon the scientific findings of ESPON. Results are presented mainly in the form of maps, both those showing the specific integration potential in cross-border regions and those that show patterns of INTERREG IIIA cooperation interposed on thematic ESPON maps. Case studies of several cross-border cooperation areas have added depth and illustration to this largely quantitative study and are presented in full in Annexes 1-3.

The main findings of this study are based on analysis of the potentials in cross-border regions and the strategic themes that projects address:

- The border regions of Europe as a whole average **much lower population density and economic strength than non-border regions**. Those regions that partly or wholly form the external border of the EU have more pronounced socio-economic challenges than “internal” border regions.
- The **geographic type of border** and **number of international border crossings** do not seem to have a bearing on the intensity of INTERREG IIIA participation. In fact, cross-border regions seem to have found ways to capitalise on the potentialities that a less “open” border represents.
- With the exception a few “hot spots”, a high rate of activity in **Euroregions or Working Communities** does not necessarily mean a high intensity of INTERREG IIIA projects. Yet while membership in several Euroregion or Working Community may not provide any corollaries as to the *quantity* of INTERREG IIIA cooperation projects, it may very well be a contributing reason to the *quality* or effectiveness of INTERREG IIIA cooperation projects.
- Large economic disparities within INTERREG IIIA programmes seem to be **neither an impetus nor a barrier** to intensity of project cooperation. However greatest project intensity seems to appear among cross-border regions where at least one group of regions exhibits high economic strength.
- INTERREG IIIA projects with **“hard” infrastructure** or tangible themes such as transport, information and communication technology (ICT) or energy have received less attention as a theme than “softer” or intangible projects dealing with growth, knowledge or culture. But the much higher average project cost of “hard” projects presumably partly explains their small absolute number.
- INTERREG IIIA programming areas with an above average focus on **transport** are almost exclusively located at the frontier between the EU-15 and EU-10, or within the new Member States or candidate countries with border crossing transnational Potential Urban Strategic Horizons (PUSH).
- **Energy** and **ICT** addressed as themes tend to congregate in cross-border areas with high or very high economic disparities.
- There appears to be very little overlap between INTERREG IIIA and INTERREG IIIB programme areas that focus on **culture and cross-border social interaction**. In fact it seems that these two INTERREG III strands complement each other nicely in this area, with IIIA, not surprisingly, taking the lead on this issue.

- INTERREG IIIA projects addressing **growth, competitiveness and employment** as a main theme tend to be clustered in areas of high economic disparities, as well as areas displaying mixed indicators for economic Lisbon performance.
- An “**arc of cross-border knowledge**” around the northern, western and southern peripheries of Germany is apparent in INTERREG IIIA programmes dealing with knowledge sharing/innovation and research. Except for the very top and bottom of this “arc” there is little overlap with INTERREG IIIB projects that deal with knowledge.
- Cross-border regions that engage in projects with **rural and remote areas** as a theme are very few and tend to be located in areas with low population density and low urban influence, particularly in mountain regions.
- Although generally applicable recommendations for future cross-border cooperation are not always relevant due to the very large diversity of cross-border regions, this study has nevertheless enumerated several recommendations for the INTERREG and ESPON communities, as well as suggestions for cross-fertilisation among the programmes.

# 1. Introduction to ESPON-INTERACT study on cross-border cooperation

“Borders are scars on the face of the earth”<sup>1</sup>

If this statement is true, then scars riddle much of the European territory. Long land borders and small country territories imply that a very large part of the European territory can be regarded as border region. According to a former definition of the European Commission, border regions are NUTS3 level territorial units situated directly at the state’s land border.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with this definition, 21,5 percent of the area of the European Union can be regarded as border region and 15 percent of the EU population is living in these regions<sup>3</sup> (ESPON 1.1.3, Second Interim Report).

Throughout history borders and border regions have played various roles, both enabling and constricting for the European territory. The function of modern borders can be understood in various ways, as barriers, bridges, resources and symbols of identity<sup>4</sup>.

Concerning the first function, borders as barriers, the introduction of the European single market made more obvious than before the limitations of seeing state borders merely as economic barriers to the working of an abstract market. Removing the obstacles to free mobility of labour, capital, goods and services did not mean the end of regulation or the end of border – rather it involved different forms of regulation and re-regulation at both EU and global levels.

The fall of the Iron curtain meant a rapid increase in cross-border networking even along the EU external border and facilitated the role of borders as bridges. The number of operational cross-border regions in Europe almost doubled during the course of the 1990s.

But borders are also places of economic and political opportunity for nations as well as for a host of other inter-

est groups and agencies. In this sense, borders can act as resources. Removal of internal border controls reveals conflicting interest between those who vested interest in maintaining barriers and those who want more bridges. The borders of current EU states still distinguish different political economies, welfare regimes, legal, political and cultural traditions. Borders are still important areas where large transnational investors can seek optimal location according to labour costs, environmental regulations and subsidies available, although European integration is pursued in order to counteract many of these tendencies.

Cross-border cooperation at its core represents a meeting of two different cultures. Their interaction naturally leads to mutual learning and integration. This milieu of inter-cultural dialogue is the place where societal innovations are bound to appear. And they do appear, as although it has not yet been fully understood whereto this process leads our societies. This report is a small attempt to understand the patterns of cross-border cooperation in Europe.

## 1.1 Aims of the Study on cross-border cooperation

The general aim of this study is to examine the specific situation of European border and cross-border regions as well as the cross-border cooperation efforts within these regions to realise potential synergies and fruitful mutual learning for the territorial development. In doing so we first provide an overview of the particular situation of cross-border regions in terms of economic development, geographic and territorial situation as well as assessing current and potential integration possibilities. This will hopefully provide practitioners within the INTERREG and INTERACT programmes with a better understanding of the spatial characteristics of their cross-border regions in relation to other regions of Europe.

<sup>1</sup> “*Enlargement of the European Union and the wider European Perspective as regards its Polycentric Spatial Structure*” ESPON project 1.1.3, Second Interim Report, 2004, available at <http://www.espon.eu>

<sup>2</sup> “*Competitiveness and Cohesion: Trends in the Regions: Fifth Periodic Report*”, European Commission, Brussels, 1994, p.107.

<sup>3</sup> “*Enlargement of the European Union and the wider European Perspective as regards its Polycentric Spatial Structure*” ESPON project 1.1.3, 2005, available at <http://www.espon.eu>

<sup>4</sup> “*New Borders for a Changing Europe*”. Regional and Federal Studies, special issue Vol 12 Nr 4, 2002.

Secondly we delve into the current 64 INTERREG IIIA programmes with a thematic overview. The thematic overview was not performed in accordance with the programming priorities, but rather with specific territorial ESPON themes in mind. The reasoning behind this was to better be able to study the cross-fertilisation of INTERREG and ESPON themes, and to suggest further development of both ESPON and INTERREG activities dealing with cross-border cooperation.

Thirdly we present concrete ideas of new projects and future perspectives for research within the ESPON programme.

## 1.2 Methodology

This study employs various quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a diverse, but hopefully illuminating picture of the needs of border regions, the scope and themes of cross-border cooperation and the gaps and synergies that can be achieved through a cooperative effort between ESPON, INTERACT and INTERREG.

### 1.2.1 Concepts

**Border regions** are conceptualised in this report as being the NUTS3 regions of a country that form that country's external land border with one or several other countries, or a water border if delineated by the INTERREG IIIA programme. Border regions are conceptualised descriptively in terms of population density, economic strength (as percentage of the EU25 GDP average in euro), as well as the territorial types of border regions (internal, external, mixed or Accession country).

**Cross-border regions (CBRs)** are defined geographically by regions with a national border separating their territory into spheres of different national administrative governance. Functional cross-border regions were born when contiguous areas along international borders, (sharing common characteristics in terms of geography, history, social and cultural backgrounds), became potential regions for cooperation according to their ability to create and achieve appropriate internal interactions while pursuing

common interests for the future. CBRs are usually assumed to have a functional role, as well as a territorial role.

The first cross-border regions in Europe were mostly based on agreements and “good will” from local, regional or municipal participants which allowed them access into a field generally reserved only to central state actors. The first official cross-border region was **Euregio**, created in 1958 along the Dutch-German border. Since then a multitude of bilateral and multilateral agreements for cross-border cooperation were signed especially in the Scandinavia and central European countries.

While this study recognises the much broader context that CBRs play in Europe, we focus much of our quantitative and qualitative analyses on a special subset of CBRs as those delineated by the INTERREG IIIA programmes for several reasons: First the focus on INTERREG IIIA programmes is one of the primary objectives of this study. Secondly, INTERREG is one of the most important sources of funding for CBR initiatives<sup>5</sup>. And thirdly, as a practical matter, there exists an ESPON-INTERACT database of most of the INTERREG IIIA projects in Europe from which we have access.

**Cross-border cooperation (CBC)** in general refers to “a more or less institutionalized collaboration between contiguous subnational authorities across national borders”<sup>6</sup>. Cross-border cooperation is a crucial element for overcoming the barriers of national borders and in achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe. In this report we also largely focus on a specific subset of cross-border cooperation, that which is entailed in INTERREG IIIA programmes.

### 1.2.2 Working methods

The working method employed in this endeavour to is three-fold and involves three separate types of data.

First we examine at NUTS3 level the characteristics of border regions in relation to non-border regions. The indicators used in this first stage are population density and the

<sup>5</sup> Perkmann Marcus, “Cross-border Regions in Europe: Significance and Drivers of Regional Cross-border Cooperation”, European Urban and Regional Studies 10(2), Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, 2003, pp. 153-171

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

economic indicators of percentage of the EU 25 GDP average in euro at the NUTS3 level in 2003 and population data from Eurostat (2002). This data is not complete for many of the non-EU 25 countries and has been complemented where possible with national data (for instance for Norway), and approximations of economic data to NUTS3 level of NUTS0 data for countries such as Morocco, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine<sup>7</sup>. We have further distinguished various types of cross-border regions according to geographic and territorial types, density of land border crossings, existing cooperation (in Euroregions, Working Communities or similar), and degree of economic disparities within INTERREG IIIA programmes.

Secondly we have utilized the ESPON-INTERACT database of INTERREG IIIA projects. The ESPON Coordination Unit has been developing an ESPON-INTERACT database of projects within all 64 INTERREG programmes. This study derives its calculations of project intensity (number of projects per programme and per theme), and we build upon this database for many of the analyses and project illustrations. This database is constantly evolving and at the time of this final report 7702 projects have been recorded. Information concerning title, description of the projects, theme, as well as some of the funding for each project has been gathered for 5939 projects. It was not possible to ascertain information on many projects since INTERREG project information is not always publicly accessible and management authorities often refuse to provide data to third parties. Hopefully in the future Managing Authorities will realise the value in providing programmes such as ESPON with this type of information so that future analyses may be more fruitful for researchers and practitioners.

Thirdly, subcontractors to the project have partners have performed **three case** studies of the INTERREG IIIA cross-border cooperation regions in 1) Finland-Estonia and Finland-Russian Karelia, 2) Poland-Germany (Brandenburg-Lubuskie) and Poland-Belarus-Ukraine and, 3) a case study performed by KTH of Spain-Morocco and Spain-Portugal. These case studies enrich the largely quantitative approaches of this study with greater understanding of the dynamics of INTERREG IIIA cross-border cooperation and

are therefore utilised within the text as well as reproduced in their entirety in annexes 1-3.

In addition, a survey was sent to 900 INTERREG IIIA Main and Lead Partners in the attempt to ascertain how cross-border cooperation could lead to learning process between regions. A similar survey for IIIB projects was formulated for the ESPON 2.2.1 on “Structural Funds Impact”. The questionnaire aimed at understanding the learning processes that take place within INTERREG IIIA projects and the conception of barriers to cooperation. Projects to which the questionnaires were sent were selected with the goal to cover a broad scope both in terms of geography and thematic scope. Disappointingly the return from the survey has not been good, with only 48 questionnaires being received even after repeated reminders. Therefore the answers to the survey can in no way be seen as representative, although they do provide fodder for pondering some of the hypotheses and assumptions regarding cross-border made in this report.

The report has been greatly improved by the insightful comments received on a draft version presented at the ESPON-INTERACT seminar on cross-border cooperation in Riga on 14 June 2006.

### 1.3 Institutional framework

The EU has been in process of continuing expansion and deepening integration for more than two decades, influencing border regions and cross-border relationships. The role and function of border and cross-border regions have changed in the last decade; regions that originally were external borders regions became internal, regions that did not play a border role at EU level became external borders. Enlargements, especially in May 2004, influenced all regions but cross-border regions play a particularly critical role within the EU enlargement.

In many cases border and cross-border regions also have a series of handicaps that have influenced their economic and social development. Geographic characteristics, distances from economic centres, depopulation and the lack

<sup>7</sup> In doing this approximation we have used NUTS0 or national level economic data were done by taking GDP per capita data from national accounts (entire country) and converting this data to euro and then the percentage of the EU 25 GDP in terms of euro per capita. While the national economic data may not exactly reflect the regional data (NUTS3), this was the best we could do in lieu of the availability of NUTS3 economic data.

of relationships with the regions at the other side of the frontier are seen as obstacles for development. This is one of the reasons the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was established in 1977 to support regions lagging behind in their development or that face high unemployment rates, in particular border regions (Article 160 of the EC Treaty).

### 1.3.1 INTERREG

The **INTERREG** initiative was created in 1990 with the objective to target border regions. INTERREG aims “to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by promoting cross-border, transnational and inter-regional co-operation and balanced development of the European Union territory. Actions in relation to the borders and border areas between Member States and between the European Union and non-member countries are, therefore, at the heart of the Initiative.”<sup>8</sup>

The INTERREG Community Initiative has evolved since 1995 to its current configuration. Strand A, cross-border cooperation, has existed longest; strand B, transnational cooperation emerged in the late 1990s, and the strand C was designed in 2000. In the period 2000-2006 the ERDF allocation to INTERREG was EUR 4,875 billion<sup>9</sup>. INTERREG Strand A focuses in particular on cross-border cooperation between adjacent regions and aims to develop cross-border social and economic centres through common development strategies. INTERREG III is the current (2000-2006) initiative for achieving cohesion objectives, running from 2000-2006.

### 1.3.2 INTERACT

**INTERACT** stands for Interreg Animation Cooperation and Transfer and since 2002 has been part of the Community Initiative INTERREG. INTERACT seeks to build on the experience and lessons of INTERREG I and INTERREG II in order to increase the effectiveness of INTERREG III during the current and next programming period. The core of the INTERACT Programme is to set up information and communication networks, to define information frameworks and flows, to proactively disseminate information and to stimulate exchange of experiences”<sup>10</sup>

### 1.3.3 ESPON

The European Spatial Planning Observation Network, **ESPON**, gathers 29 countries (EU25 plus Romania, Bulgaria, Norway and Switzerland) in a cooperation network involving national spatial planning with a focus on territorial and regional development trends in Europe.

ESPON has been set up to support policy development and to build a European scientific community in the field of territorial development. The main aim is to increase the general body of knowledge about territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impacts in an enlarged European Union. By doing so, ESPON provides evidence for policy-making at various geographical levels.

#### 1.3.3.1 Territorial cooperation and ESPON

Territorial cooperation has been addressed previously in ESPON projects, including (i) ESPON 2.2.1 “*The Territorial Effects of Structural Funds*” both in terms of policies in a national context and regionally specific implementation practices, (ii) ESPON 2.2.2 “*Pre-Accession Aid Impact Analysis*” regarding territorial cooperation’s contribution to spatial cohesion/convergence, (iii) ESPON 2.2.3 “*Territorial Effect of the Structural Funds in Urban Areas*” which developed a tool for evaluation of territorial trends/impacts of policy, plans and programs and, iv) ESPON 2.4.2 “*Integrated Analysis of transnational and national territories*” (Zoom in project) has also addressed cross-border cooperation, with a focus on transnational cooperation. ESPON 1.1.3 “*Enlargement of the European Union and the wider European perspective as regards its polycentric spatial structure*” regarding the specific needs in border regions in the Enlargement area. This report builds upon the typologies of border regions in the Enlargement area that was developed by ESPON “Enlargement” project by extending the geographic scope of the individual elements of the typologies to the entire ESPON territory (EU 27+2).

While ESPON has been concerned with cooperation between territories, the main focus of ESPON research has previously dealt with transnational cooperation, particularly in the form of INTERREG IIIB projects. This ESPON-INTERACT study will be the first time that an ESPON-related pro-

<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/interreg3/abc/abc\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/interreg3/abc/abc_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> “A study of the mid-term evaluations of Interreg programmes 2000-2006”, Interact, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.interact-eu.net>

ject or study has examined cross-border and INTERREG IIIA programmes in a broad systematic manner. The ESPON-INTERACT studies on transport and communication, hazards and on risk management do consider INTERREG IIIA projects in their analyses, but only with consideration of the specific themes of their studies.



## 2. Integration potential in cross-border regions

In the Proposal for a Council Decision on Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion (COM(2006) 386 final), the aim of the new European Territorial Cooperation Objective is to promote stronger integration of the territory of the Union in all its objectives<sup>11</sup>. While the integration process is still on-going, we hope to be able to distinguish at least some of the potentials that reside in these regions. By examining potential in regions according to the various situations they face, cooperation programmes may perhaps be more easily tailored to each cross-border region.

### 2.1 Characterising border regions

Border regions in Europe are one of the defining features of the territory. They are also for the most part lagging and relatively speaking peripherally located within their respective countries and far from e.g. national capitals (Copenhagen and Bratislava constituting the obvious exceptions)<sup>12</sup>. Thus the analysis of border regions and the understanding of their functionality and role remains an important aspect in understanding European territorial cohesion.

As a first step in analysing border regions in Europe this report examines how border regions differ from one another according to the type of political border they form. Four types are distinguished:

**Internal borders** which constitute NUTS3 regions with borders totally inside the EU 25 plus Norway and Switzerland (regions adjacent to small non-EU countries such as Andorra or Monaco are also considered to be internal border regions for purposes of simplicity).

**External border** regions are the regions of the EU 25 plus NO which form the external eastern borders of the EU 25 and the external southern border.

**Mixed border** regions are those NUTS3 regions which have a border adjacent to both an internal EU 25 + NO and CH and to a non-member country.

The fourth category of border regions includes border regions in the 2007 **Accession countries** of Bulgaria and Romania.

This preliminary typing of border regions aids in showing some of the basic characteristics of border regions. As shown in Table 1, the border regions of Europe as a whole average 50% lower population density than non-border regions. Border regions that fully or partly form the external border of Europe have again nearly 50% less population density than those border regions that are internal to the EU 25 + NO and CH. Border regions in the Accession and neighbouring countries have even smaller population densities on average.

**Table 1: Population Density in studied border regions, including EU 27+2 and Turkey**

Population Density: EU27+2+Turkey		
No. of inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup>		
	Average	Median
All NUTS 3 regions	408,1	129,7
Non-border regions	542,1	152,6
Border regions	250,6	98,3
Internal	302,0	127,6
External	159,8	58,4
Mixed	159,0	58,4
AC/Neighbours	94,2	70,0

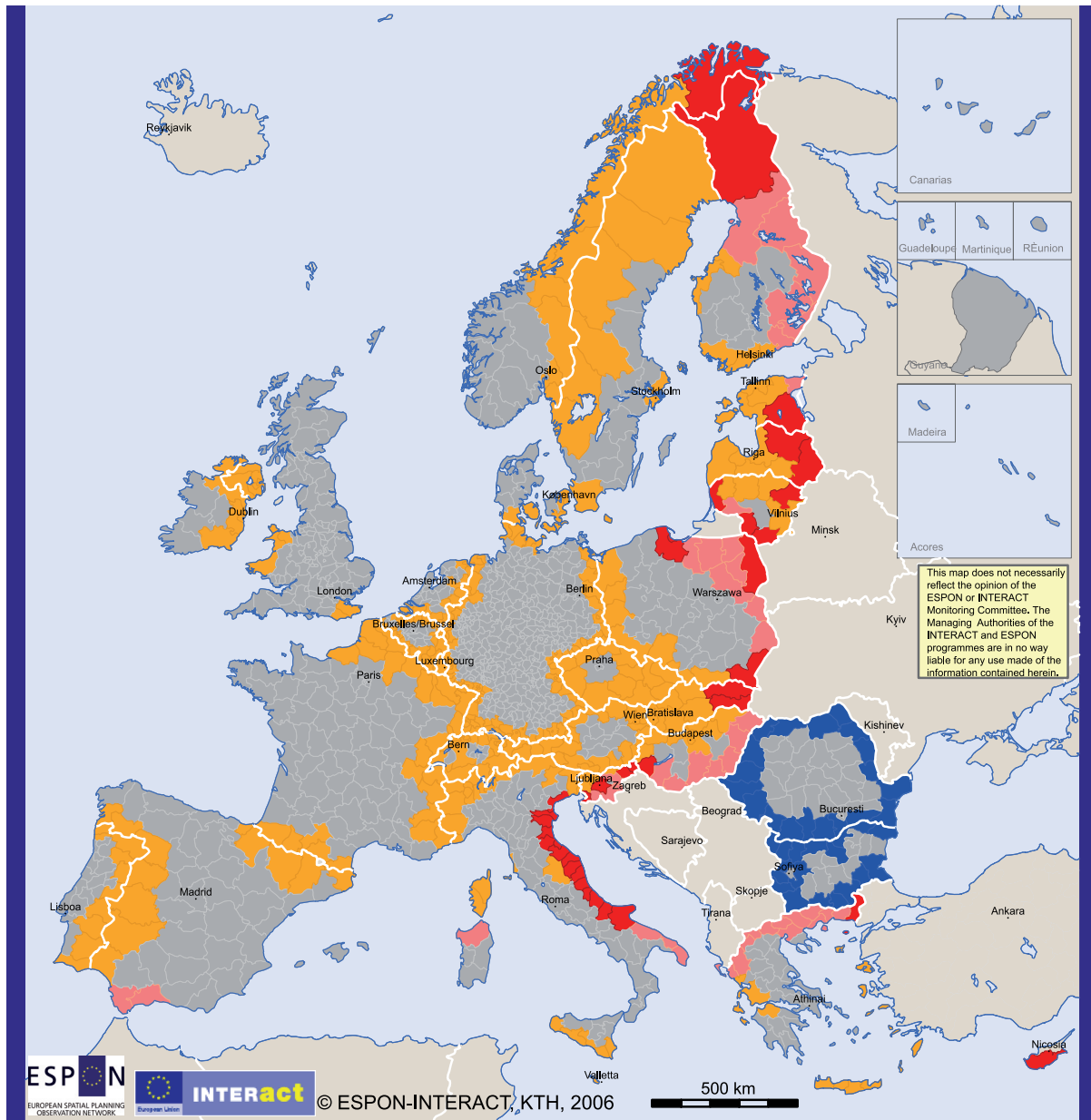
Data: Eurostat 2002

<sup>11</sup> Proposal for a Council Decision on Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion (COM(2006) 386 final)

<sup>12</sup> "Enlargement of the European Union and the wider European perspective as regards its polycentric spatial structure" ESPON Project 1.1.3, 2005, available at <http://www.espon.eu>



### Map 1: Typology of borders in NUTS3 regions participating in INTERREG IIIA Programmes



© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

Source: KTH, Border regions Database, 2006

- Non participants in INTERREG III A Programmes
- Internal Border: completely within EU 27
- External Border: Borders with non EU 27
- Internal & External Border: mixed borders with EU 27 and non EU27
- Accession Countries

A similar picture is shown in Table 2 of the difference between non-border and border regions if we examine economic strength as percentage of EU 25 average in euro in 2003. Border regions tend to be economically disadvantaged as compared to non-border regions, particularly the external border regions of the EU and its neighbouring regions. This could be due to their relative peripheral location, outside (in most cases) of the functional urban areas of capital and major cities. As well the further a border region is geographically located from the heart of Europe, the lower its relative economic strength (such as the border regions that form the external border of Europe and the border regions in the 2007 Accession countries and the European neighbouring regions). Perhaps other reasons for this could be the lack of transport infrastructure to markets in the “Pentagon”, as well as political and historical heritage whereby previously border restrictions curbed flows in and out of the border regions.

**Table 2: Economic strength as percentage of EU 25 GDP average in euro (2003) for EU 27+2 and Croatia**

Economic strength of EU27+2+Croatia	
per capita percentage of EU25 average in Euro	
EU25	100,00
Border regions	64,44
Internal	160,47
External	50,90
Mixed	79,98
AC/Neighbours	14,20

Data: Eurostat 2004 (EU27 + CH) Norway national statistics

If border regions tend on average to be lagging behind the non-border regions of Europe in terms of economic strength and population, the need to address this challenge to European cohesion becomes stronger than ever. INTERREG IIIA is one initiative designed to take up this challenge.

## 2.2 INTERREG IIIA cross-border regions

The cross-border regions examined in this report are comprised of NUTS3 regions that share an adjacent land border and/or are delineated regions of the INTERREG IIIA programmes, as shown in Map 2 on the next page. As such if a region is included fully or partially involved in an INTERREG IIIA programme, it is counted as a border region, even if it does not have a contingent land border with another country.

It is important to remember that the INTERREG IIIA regions do not always correspond fully to the NUTS3 delineations and in some cases the all of the territory does not participate fully in the IIIA programme. However extending our data to the LAU4 or 5 level would be too large a task for the scope of this study, and thus we must be willing to accept the territorial discrepancies that equating INTERREG IIIA regions on a strictly NUTS3 level may imply.

This study has further looked at intensity of INTERREG IIIA cooperation based on the total number of projects recorded for each INTERREG IIIA programming area in the ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA database, from which we have derived project intensity. For the sake of simplicity we have not weighted intensity number by population. We see from the Map 3 that the greatest project intensity in the former lagging-being regions of the Spain-Portugal Programme and in the Austrian border regions with Germany and Italy (more than 300 projects in each programme) followed by high project intensity also in the Swedish-Norwegian and the Ireland-Northern Ireland. Austria tends to have a very high intensity of INTERREG IIIA cooperation with all of its neighbours, Perhaps this is due to its central geographical location or the fact that Austria's neighbours have a longer history of cross-border cooperation. Lower project intensity is seen in border regions on some of the eastern edges of Europe due to the fact that these programmes are much newer (for example, Estonia-Latvia).

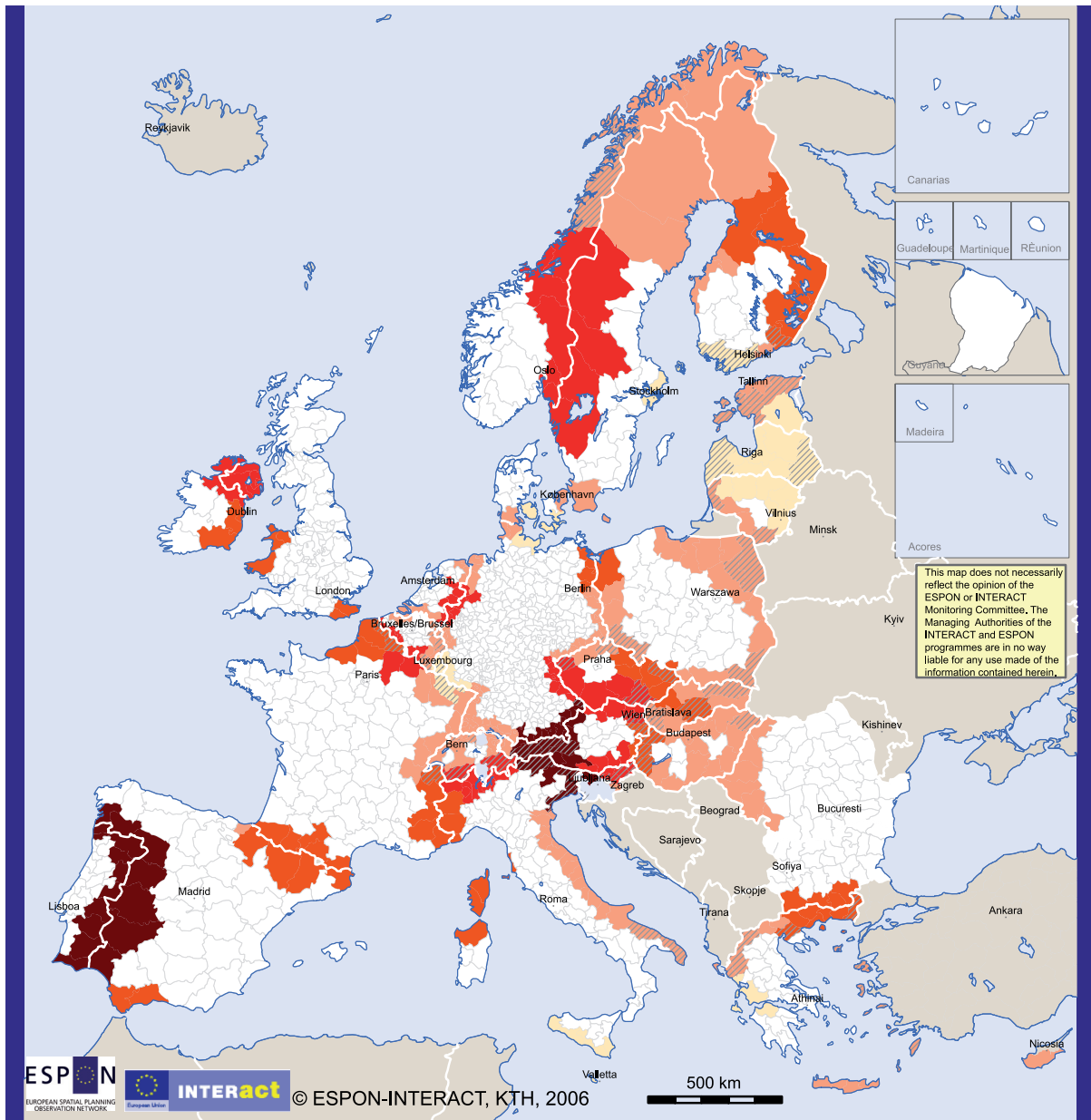
**Map 2: INTERREG IIIA programmes approximated to NUTS3 regions**



© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries  
 Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA Project Database, 2006

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Skåne-Ården</li> <li>2 Kvarken - Mittskandia</li> <li>3 Bavaria - Austria</li> <li>4 Austria - Czech Republic</li> <li>5 Austria - Slovenia</li> <li>6 Austria - Hungary</li> <li>7 Austria - Slovakia</li> <li>8 Sweden - Norway</li> <li>9 Ems - Dollart region</li> <li>10 Alperhein - Bodensee - Hochrhein</li> <li>11 Saxony - Poland</li> <li>12 Sachsen - Czech Republic</li> <li>13 Rhein-Waal and Rhein-Maas-Noord</li> <li>14 Brandenburg - Lubuska</li> <li>15 Italy - Austria</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 Alcotra (Italy-France)</li> <li>17 Islands (Italy - France)</li> <li>18 Italy - Slovenia</li> <li>19 Ireland - Northern Ireland</li> <li>20 Ireland - Wales</li> <li>21 Pamina</li> <li>22 Oberrhein Mitte S,d</li> <li>23 Bavaria - Czech Republic</li> <li>24 Fyn - KERN</li> <li>25 Sonderjylland - Schleswig</li> <li>26 Storstrom - Ostholstein-Lubeck</li> <li>27 Germany - Luxembourg - Germanophone Belgium</li> <li>28 Saarland - Mosel/Lorraine - Western Palatinat</li> <li>29 Spain - Portugal</li> <li>30 Spain - Morocco</li> <li>31 Italy - Switzerland</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32 - +resund Region</li> <li>33 Greece - Albania</li> <li>34 Greece - FYROM</li> <li>35 Greece - Bulgaria</li> <li>36 Greece - Cyprus</li> <li>37 Mecklenbourg Vorpommern - Poland</li> <li>38 Euregio Maas-Rhein</li> <li>39 Euregio Karelia</li> <li>40 Soth East Finland - Russia</li> <li>41 France - Switzerland</li> <li>42 France - Spain</li> <li>43 Nord</li> <li>44 Finland - Estonia</li> <li>45 Grensregio Vlaanderen-Nederland</li> <li>46 Wallonia - Lorraine - Luxembourg</li> <li>47 Kent-Sussex - Nord Pas de Calais-Picardie</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>49 France/Wallonia - Flanders</li> <li>50 Italy - Albania</li> <li>51 Greece - Italy</li> <li>52 Greece - Turkey</li> <li>53 Italy - Balkans - Adriatic</li> <li>54 Czech Republic - Poland</li> <li>55 Poland - Slovakia</li> <li>56 Slovakia - Czech Republic</li> <li>57 Poland - Ukraine - Belarus</li> <li>58 Lithuania - Poland - Russia</li> <li>59 Hungary - Slovakia - Ukraine</li> <li>60 Hungary - Romania - Serbia - Montenegro</li> <li>61 Slovenia - Hungary - Croatia</li> <li>62 Italy - Malta</li> <li>63 Estonia - Latvia - Russia</li> <li>64 Latvia - Lithuania - Belarus</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|---|
- /// NUTS3 involved in more than one INTERREG IIIA

**Map 3: Intensity of projects per INTERREG IIIA programmes approximated to NUTS3 regions**



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 Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA Project Database, 2006

- Non participants in INTERREG IIIA Programmes
- 1 - 25 Projects
- 26 - 100 Projects
- 101 - 200 Projects
- 201 - 300 Projects
- More than 300 Projects
- NUTS 3 regions included in more than one INTERREG IIIA Programme

## 2.3 Integration potential in INTERREG IIIA cross-border regions

The ESPON 1.1.3 project on “Enlargement” examined the special needs and potentials of border regions in the Enlargement area. It dealt with the economic and social integration potential (potential for change) of border regions by examining 118 land border regions defined at NUTS3 level in the 10 new EU Member States, as well as in Bulgaria and Romania. On the basis of border characteristics such as geographical type of border (mountain, river or “green border”, i.e. with no natural barriers of crossing) and the density of road border crossings per 100 km of border, a draft typology (Draft Typology 1) was developed to show the cross-border potential for physical flows of people and goods in terms of the potential for change. A more open border, i.e. “green” border gave a high starting position, and a high density of border crossings made the potential for change larger. Conversely, border regions with a mountain or river border were seen to have a lower starting position and a lower density of border crossings made for a less favourable potential for change. See Figure 1.

In a second draft typology (Draft Typology 2) of border regions, the degree of economic disparities between cross-border regions and membership in transnational activities was examined with the goal of determining the potential for cross-border project cooperation. The hypothesis was made that a large gap in GDP per capita between cross-border regions gives a higher potential for change and cooperation within the cross-border regions. Membership in the transnational activities of Euroregions and/or transnational Working Communities was examined, since these activities often set the institutional framework or intention for more specific cross-border activities, such as INTERREG IIIA programmes and projects. The greater the number of transnational activities, the higher the starting position. See Figure 1 below and to see in more detail the draft typology results, please see Annex 4.4.

The result of these typologies determined four different

types of regions. **Forerunners** of integration, which have both a high starting position for cross-border activities and a high potential for change, **Hardworkers** of integration, which have a high starting position, but a low potential for change, **Candidates** of integration with a low starting position for cross-border activities, but a high potential to change this situation, and **Handicapped** regions for integration, with both low starting positions and potentials for change. These border region types are silent about the scope or intensity of actual cross-border activities in the regions, but rather point out the potential of regions for cross-border activities from simple criteria (See Annex 4 for enlargement typology maps).

In this ESPON-INTERACT study of cross-border cooperation the intention was to further develop these two typologies to include the entire ESPON-space. However feedback on the enlargement typologies from INTERREG practitioners resulted in the feeling that while the typologies may not be so useful for their policy oriented purposes, the individual elements of the typologies were very interesting indeed. Thus we have chosen to examine the various types of INTERREG IIIA cross-border regions with regard to the geographic type of border, the density of border crossings (including rail crossings), the intensity of cooperation in Euroregions and Working Communities, and level of economic disparities within the 64 INTERREG IIIA programme areas.

## 2.4 Geographic type of border

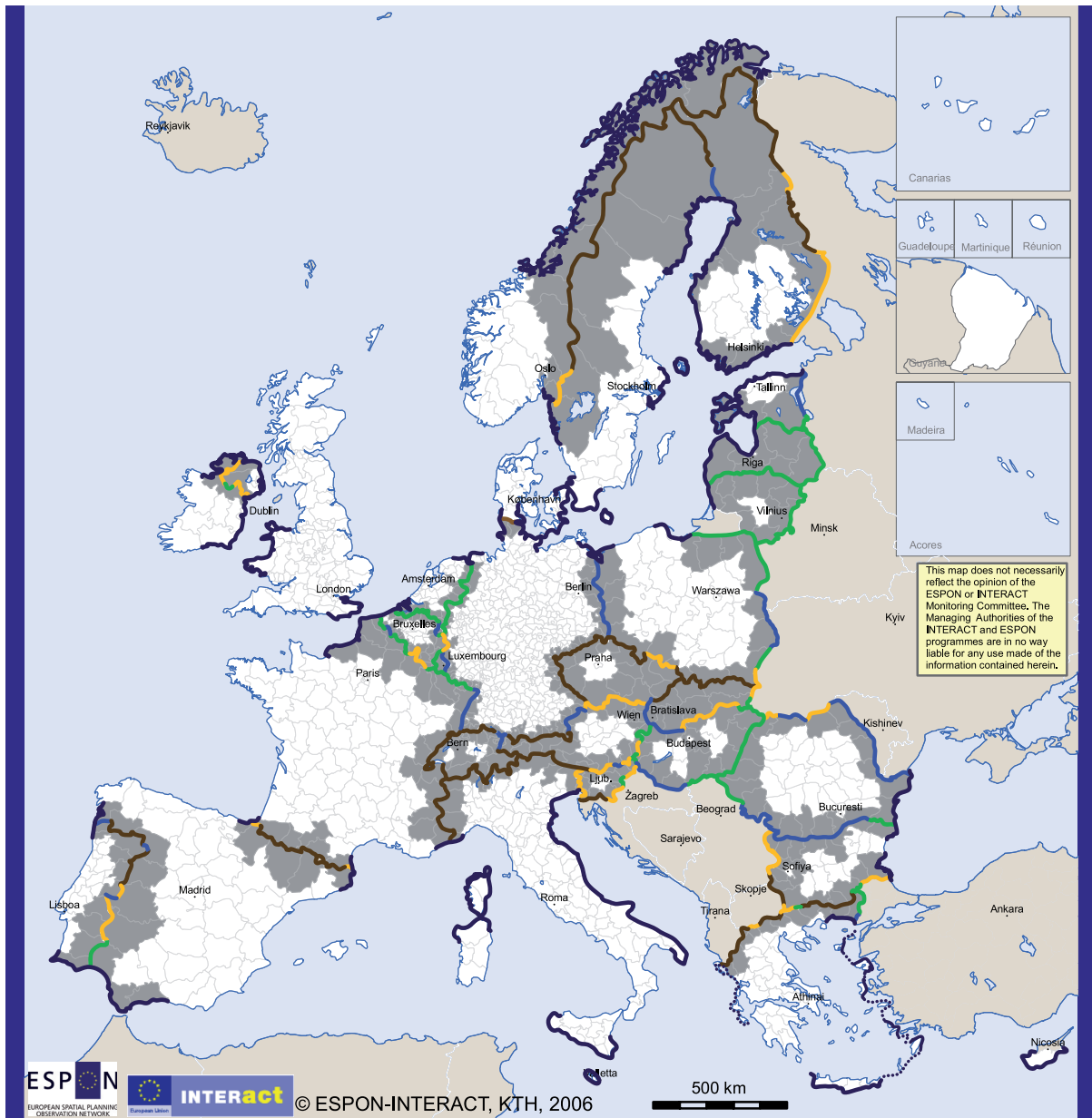
Do geographic barriers still represent a hindrance to cross-border cooperation, or do they present an opportunity to be overcome by cooperative efforts? The result of the ESPON-INTERACT survey has shown that only 4% of respondents felt that overcoming the physical barriers of national borders was the most relevant aspect of cross-border cooperation. Further most respondents felt that a geographic border consisting of a mountain range or water (river or lake) was neither a strong barrier for cooperation nor strong opportunity to overcome. Nonetheless, geo-

**Table 3: Dimensions and criteria for the ESPON 1.1.3 border region typologies**

Dimension	Criteria: Draft Typology 1	Criteria: Draft Typology 2
Starting position	Density of border crossing points	Intensity of transnational activities
Potential for change	Geographic type of border	Economic disparities



**Map 4: Geographic type of land border and sea borders of NUTS3 INTERREG IIIA programme areas**



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Source: KTH, Land crossings in border regions Database (2006) for location of rivers and green areas. Nordregio 2004/DG Regio for location of mountains

- Type of Border:**
- River
  - High Mountain
  - Low Mountain
  - Green
  - Sea border
  - Border Regions

graphy may still play a role in the intensity of INTERREG IIIA cooperation and the thematic orientation of projects, as we will see in chapter 3.

Map 4 shows the geographic type of land border between NUTS3 land regions, as well as the sea borders of cross-border regions (based on INTERREG IIIA programmes). River borders have been constructed if a NUTS3 border region consists primarily of a river or lake. Mountain border regions are those NUTS3 regions with a border composed of high or low mountains, and “Green” border regions are those whose borders are “open”, i.e. there are neither water bodies nor mountains composing the border. For further examination of the mountain range regions and density of river crossings in INTERREG IIIA regions please see the maps in Annex 4.

## 2.5 Density of Border Crossings

To what extent does the number of international road and rail crossings of a cross-border region explain the propensity to cooperation over borders? In the ESPON-INTERACT survey on cross-border cooperation, 37% of respondents felt that having many road, rail and waterway border crossings presented an opportunity for fruitful cross-border cooperation. In land border areas, a road or rail crossing may provide the essential infrastructure for trade, commuting and face-to-face social interaction. Density of border crossings may be particularly important between the “old” and “new” Member States, especially at the beginning of the transition period for the new Member States. As the case study on the Polish-German border regions (see Annex 2) states, the intensification of border crossing from Poland to the west is the characteristic feature of the border traffic in Poland during the transformation period. The yearly number of crossings of the Polish-German border increased very fast in the first half of the 1990s, which was associated with an intensive development of near-the-border trade.

Map 5 in the following pages shows the density of border crossings by land (roads and rail crossings per 100 km of border) in INTERREG IIIA areas approximated to NUTS3 regions.

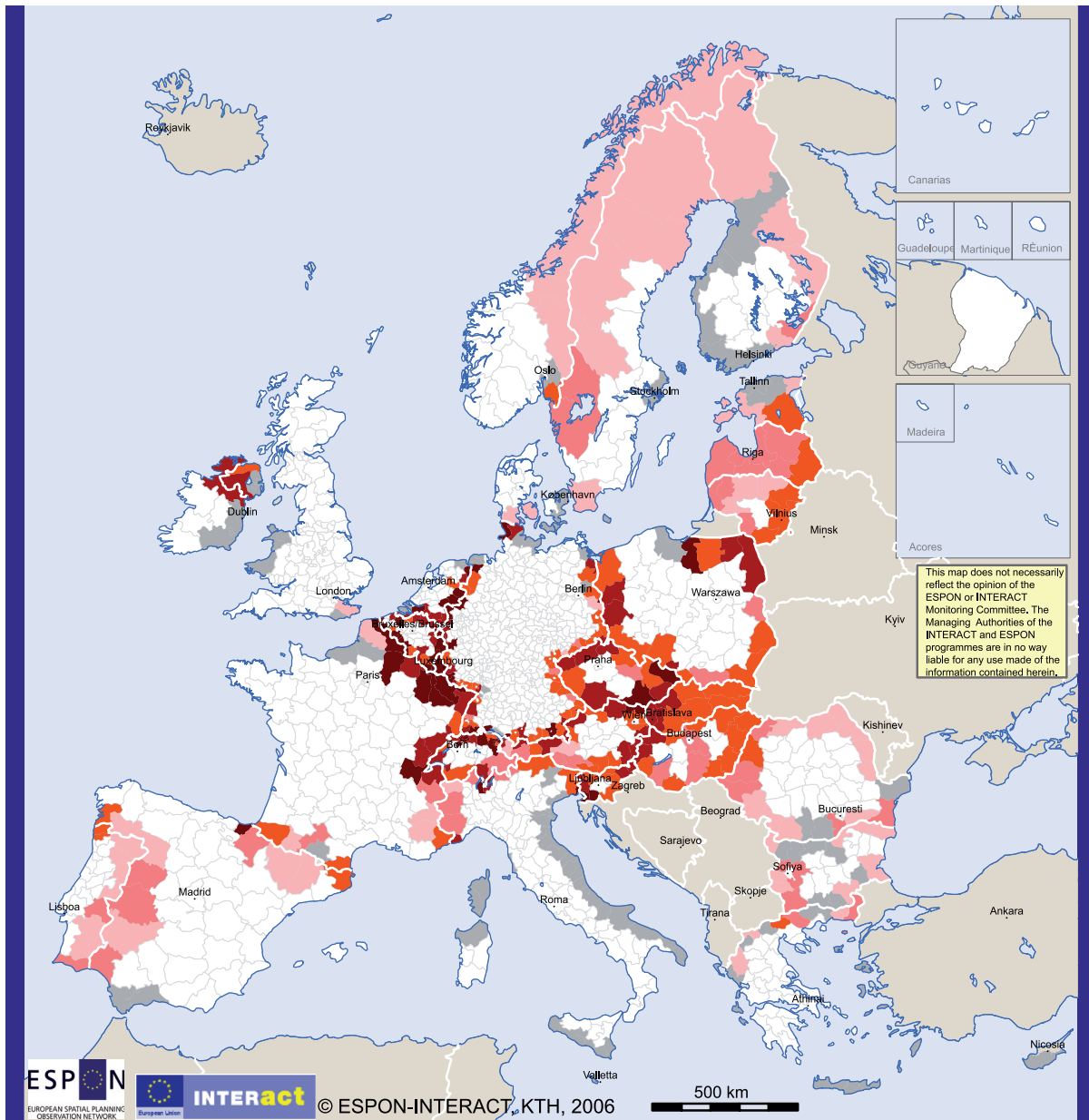
## 2.6 Combined indicators: Geographic type of border and density of border crossings

Integrating the geographic type of border with the density of land border crossings per 100 km, as in the first typology of the ESPON “Enlargement” project, shows some interesting patterns as seen in Map 6 in the following pages.

The border region typology of the ESPON 1.1.3 “Enlargement” project made the assumption that regions with “green” borders and a high or very high density of border crossings, such as the EMS Dollar region or the Lithuania-Latvia-Belarus cross-border regions might have greater potential for cross-border cooperation and European integration. On the other hand, regions with a low density of border crossings and a natural barrier such as a mountain range or river and lower density of border crossings, such as the Sweden-Norway or Spain-Portugal INTERREG IIIA Programmes would have less potential for various forms of cross-border cooperation aimed at integrating these regions in terms of economic or social development. For instance, as the example of the Spain-Portugal INTERREG IIIA Programme in the case study (see Annex 2) points out, the frontier between Portugal and Andalusia has a physical expression in the Rivers Guadiana and Chanca, a circumstance that has brought a historical issue on its permeability to cross-border infrastructure. The recent connection between Huelva and Faro by a bridge over the Guadiana has improved the situation, but the road network is still lacking: there are still 60 km of cross-border area bearing no human or economic flows. The railroad networks of each country are arranged in-bound and cross-border public transport is not up to its potential. Port and airport infrastructure at both sides of the border are complementary, but the lack of connections handicaps their combined use.

Sea borders would also be presumed to create a barrier to integration via greater cooperation. For example, as the case study on the Finnish-Estonian cross-border region points out (see also Annex 1), the Gulf of Finland divides this region, but is also regarded as an important resource for the development of tourism, as well as for environmental projects.

**Map 5: Density of border crossings (roads and rail crossings per 100 km) in INTERREG IIIA areas approximated by NUTS3 regions**

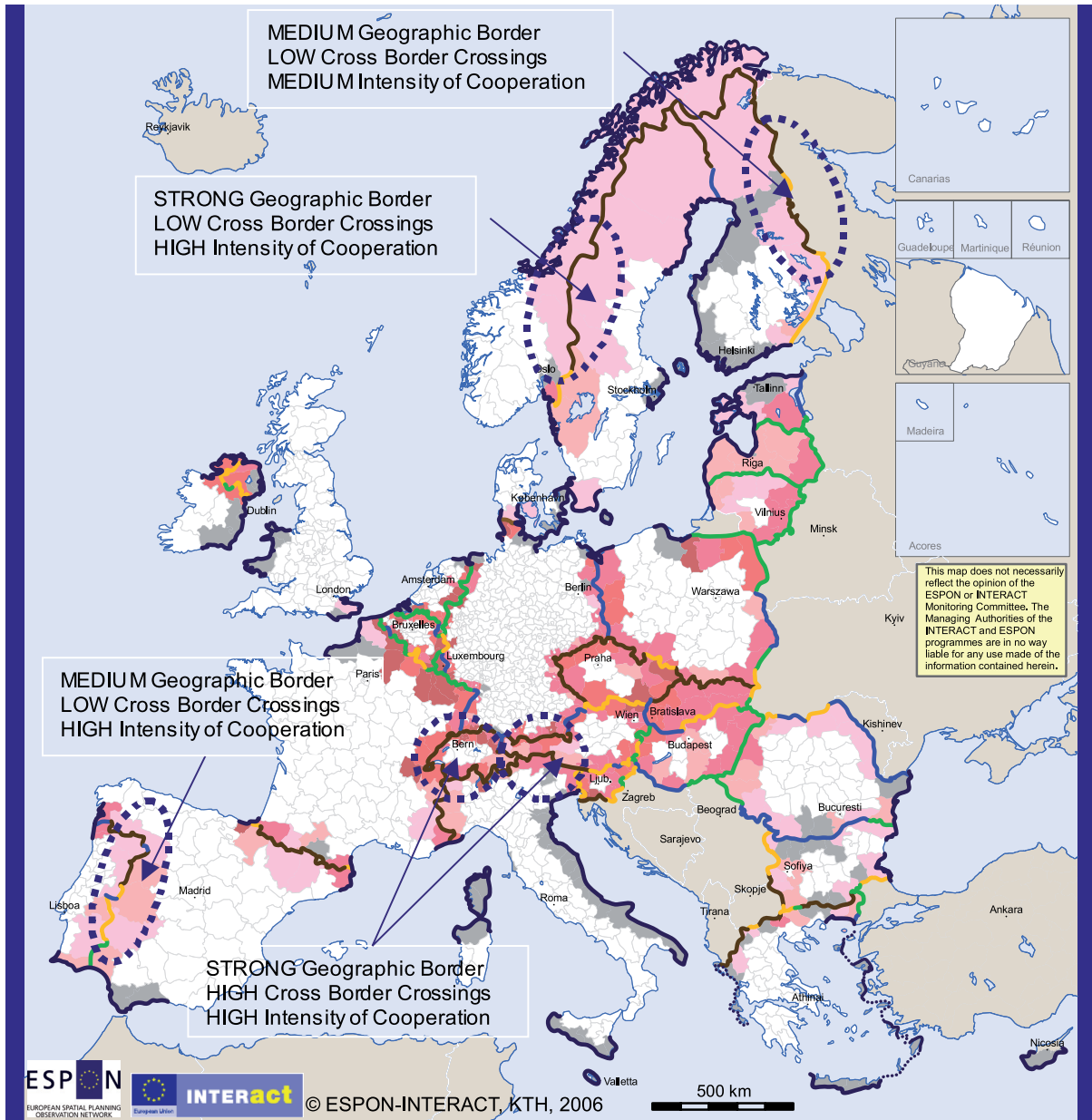


© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries  
 Source: KTH, Land crossings in border regions Database, 2006

- Non border regions
- No density (No international rail/roads crossings)
- VERY LOW (0 - 3 crossings per 100km.)
- LOW (3 - 5 crossings per 100km.)
- MEDIUM (5 - 10 crossings per 100km.)
- HIGH (10 - 15 crossings per 100km.)
- VERY HIGH (more than 15 crossings per 100km.)



**Map 6: Analysis of geographic type of border of NUTS3 regions plus density of accessibility by land (roads & rail crossings per 100km) in border regions across EU 27**



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Source: KTH, Land crossings in border regions Database (2006) for density of accessibility and location of rivers and green areas. Nordregio 2004/DG Regio for location of mountains.

- Non border regions
- No density (No international rail/roads crossings)
- VERY LOW (0 - 3 crossings per 100km.)
- LOW (3 - 5 crossings per 100km.)
- MEDIUM (5 - 10 crossings per 100km.)
- HIGH (10 - 15 crossings per 100km.)
- VERY HIGH (more than 15 crossings per 100km.)

- Type of Border:**
- River
  - High Mountain
  - Low Mountain
  - Green
  - Sea Border

In examining actual intensity of INTERREG IIIA projects within the cross-border regions (see Map 6) we find that this hypothesis is not necessarily true. INTERREG IIIA programmes such as Sweden-Norway, Kvarken-Mittskandia (Sweden-Norway), Bavaria-Austria, Italy-Austria, France-Italy or Spain-Portugal are programmes with very high or high project intensity, despite having borders that are largely made of up natural or physical (lack of border-crossing infrastructure) barriers. Contrarily, INTERREG IIIA programmes with a low intensity of projects such as Estonia-Latvia-Russia or Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus have “open” or green borders and fairly low or medium density of border crossings. That said, programmes such as those in the Baltic countries are relatively recent and have not yet had the chance to build a large number of programmes.

Thus interpreting potential for integration in cross-border regions in light of current project intensity may or may not be a useful enterprise.

## 2.7 Participation in Euroregions

Euroregions or Working Communities and other types of cross-border cooperation schemes in Europe have been important forerunners of cooperation in INTERREG programmes, particularly within INTERREG IIIA. Membership in a Euroregion or Working Community often signifies intent to cooperate on many levels and can provide a platform for which to take advantage of INTERREG IIIA project opportunities. Thus existing Euroregion-types of cross-border cooperation could signify a potential for cooperation integration.

According to the Council of Europe, several different names can be used to classify a cross-border structure under the category of “Euroregion”. Thus some of the cross-border regions are also called “Euregio”, “Euregion”, “Euroregion”, “Europaregion”, “Grand Region”, “Regio”, “Region” or “Council”.

Legally Euroregions differ among each other in terms of internal organization, but some common factors are identified are that all of them are permanent, they have a separate identity from their members, they have their own administrative, technical and financial resources and their own internal decision-making capacity (AEBR, Phare, 2000). These types of structures are not considered a new level of local or regional governance, but rather an

exchange space for public and private actors to conclude agreements concerning interests from both sides of the border.

Although the responsibility of the execution of all the projects is responsibility of the respective national authorities and other organisations according to particular national measures, Euroregions remain the main promoters for regional/local initiatives and activities of transnational cooperation.

Because of their size and number of members, Euroregions can be considered small scale cross-border regions. The geographic scope does not necessarily depend on the administrative areas and borders of its members units, but rather is determined by the extent of socio-economic integration, in any case covering moderate areas in size along international borders. Some typical examples of Euroregions are found in the Euroregion Spree-Neiße-Bober (PL-DE), Euroregion Tatry (PL-SK), Euroregion Těšínské Slezsko or Śląsk Cieszyński (PL-CZ) and Euroregion Silesia (PL-CZ) among others.

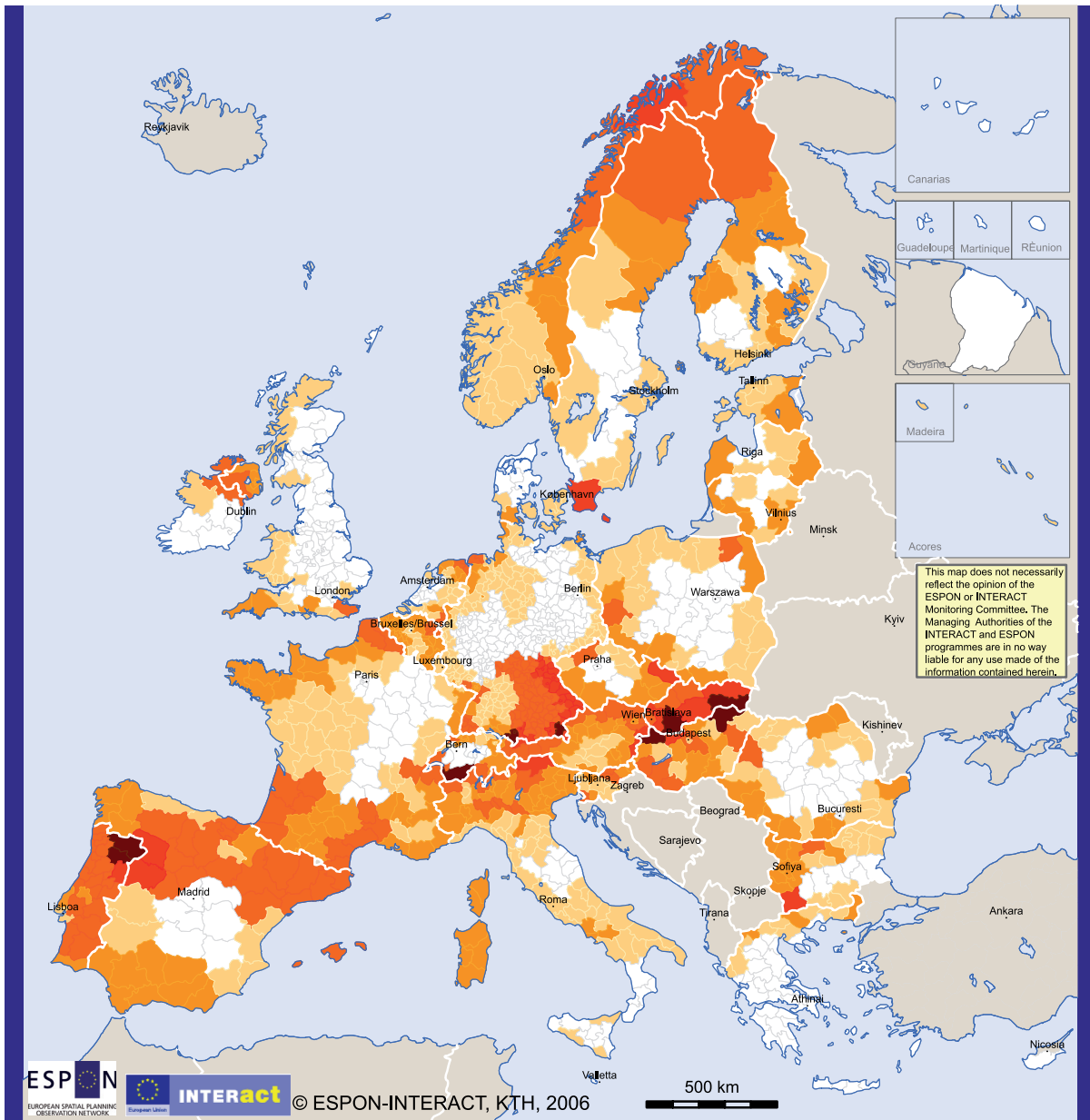
Euroregions in eastern Europe are more numerous, but quite small in size and number of members. For example Euroregion Kras or Karszt Euroregio (SK-HU), Hajdú-Bihar Bihor Euroregio (RO-HU) or Euroregion Neogradensis (HU-SK) are cases in which only two NUTS3 regions are involved, covering quite small territories, compared with other Euroregions across Europe. In general these examples can be found on the Czech Republic borders with all of its neighbouring countries, on the Slovakian borderlines with both Hungary and Poland, and along the Austrian borderline with Germany, for example in cases such as Euregio ZWK Zugspitze-Wetterstein-Karwendel, Euregio Inn-Salzach, Euregio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein and Euregio Inntal.

### 2.7.1 Euroregion-type structures in Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea Region

Although they exhibit considerable similarities with the Euroregions of the rest of Europe in terms of identity, capacity, and role in INTERREG (AEBR, Phare, 2000), a special distinction has to be made when referring to the cross-border regions in the Nordic and Baltic States.

Scandinavia was one of the pioneers in CBC after the foun-

**Map 7: Intensity of participation of NUTS3 regions in projects of cross-border cooperation regions (including Euroregions, Scandinavian type of Euroregions and Working Communities)**



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 Source: KTH, Cross Border Regions Database, 2006

- Non participant
- Participants in 1 Programme
- Participants in 2 Programmes
- Participants in 3 Programmes
- Participants in 4 Programmes
- Participants in 5 or more Programmes

dition in 1950 of the Nordic Council, and later after the “Treaty of Helsingfors” framework agreement of 1962, which formally developed multilateral agreements to create the legal basis for cooperation between the Nordic countries concerning issues of common transnational interest. In 1977 the Nordic Agreement established the basis to create cross-border cooperation between municipalities all around the Nordic countries, with the same level of intensity both internally between national municipalities and externally across international borders. In this way, the origin of the Scandinavian Euroregions is considerably different from the central European ones, being established in a top-down rather than bottom-up manner.

The other main difference between “Scandinavian” Euroregions and the rest of the European Euroregions is the much larger size of these structures, usually covering considerable areas of the Scandinavian territory, which in this sense categorizes them as large-scale structures.

### **2.7.2 Working Communities and others**

Working Communities refers to the largest scale of cross-border cooperation structures. This characteristic is indeed the main difference with the other types of CBRs. The Communauté de Travail des Pyrénées or Comunidad de Trabajo de los Pirineos (ES, FR), COTRAO, ARGE ALP, and the denominated Arc Latino (ES FR IT) and Arc Atlantique (ES, PT, FR, UK, IE) which, as its name says, covers extensive number of regions across the Atlantic coasts of Europe, and as well numerous countries like COTRAO, ARGE ALP or the Working Community of the Danube States (ARGE DONAULÄNDER).

Basically these structures are associations of regional or local authorities, or any other type of organisation which decided to sign some type of legally non-binding agreement, in order to create a transnational structure for achieving common goals. Although they have not played a major role in INTERREG, these structures have been developed since the foundation of the ARGE ALP Working Community (1972) until the most recent Working Community, the Arco Latino (2002), and are mainly focused on strategic studies and other activities towards the development of specific projects, based on committees or working groups of officials in an inter-organisational form of decision making.

Map 7 shows intensity of participation of NUTS3 regions in the various projects of cross-border cooperation including Euroregions, Scandinavian types of Euroregions and Working Communities. We see that membership in a Euroregion or similar is not only limited to cross-border regions as delineated by INTERREG IIIA programmes, but has a larger territorial coverage, which includes the scope of many INTERREG IIIB programmes. Nearly all INTERREG IIIA regions cooperate in at least one Euroregion or Working Community and several cooperate in 5 or more programmes. However with the exception of the Douro and Alto Trás-os-Montes regions in Portugal and the Traunstein, Kempten, Lindau and Oberallgäu regions of Germany, many of the other “hot spots” of Euroregion or Working Community cooperation do not necessarily exhibit a high intensity of INTERREG IIIA projects. Yet while the membership in a Euroregion or Working Community may not provide any corollaries as to the quantity of INTERREG IIIA cooperation, it may very well be a contributing reason to the quality or effectiveness of INTERREG IIIA cooperation projects, an area that unfortunately is far beyond the scope of this study.

## **2.8 Economic disparities in cross-border regions**

Economic disparities within cross-border regions are facts that must be reckoned with in CBC schemes, particularly those regions on the frontier of the European territory. The ESPON project on “Enlargement” hypothesised that large economic disparity between cross-border regions in the enlargement area provided a great potential for change and thus an impetus for potential cooperation and integration. We address levels of economic disparities in cross-border regions in this study with much of the same hypothesis. The ESPON-INTERACT survey sent to INTERREG IIIA partners had a specific question addressed to this effect. When asked if cross-border local or regional economic disparities had a: 1) positive effect creating the preconditions for cooperation; 2) a negative effect, making cooperation more difficult; or 3) neither a positive nor negative effect, only 2% of the respondents felt that cross-border disparities were a negative factor. 42% felt that this was a positive precondition for cooperation and 56% claimed that the effect was neither positive nor negative. Thus our working hypothesis has gained some credibility.

To measure cross-border disparities within INTERREG IIIA programming areas we first considered the economic strength (measured as percentage of the EU 25 average in euro per capita in 2003) of the NUTS3 regions involved in each programme. Four categories were developed: Very high performing regions (> 112% of EU 25 average in euro per capita), high performing regions (<112% but >80% of EU 25 average in euro per capita), low performing (<80% but >39% of EU 25 average in euro per capita) and very low performing (<39% of EU25 average in euro per capita). In the next step, the economic strength in euro per capita as a percentage of the EU 25 average for the highest NUTS3 region within the programme and the lowest region in the programme were considered, as well as the spread of difference between them. We then distinguished a further 10 different categories based on degree of economic strength as well as the cross-border economic disparities within the programmes.

This method produced two types of results. The first is the actual degree of economic disparities within INTERREG IIIA cross-border programmes: INTERREG IIIA programme areas without significant disparities, areas with low levels of disparities, areas with high levels of disparities and areas with very high levels of disparities, as shown in Map 8.

Map 8 in the next page, shows that INTERREG IIIA programmes exhibits varying degrees of economic disparities. Not surprisingly those programme areas at the periphery of Europe or on the border between old Member States and new Member States or Accession countries show the highest degree of economic disparities, such as Brandenburg-Lubuska (Germany-Poland), Bavaria-Czech Republic, Italy-Balkans-Adriatic, Estonia-Finland or Nord (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia). Areas without significant disparities characterise much of the new external border regions of the EU (with low relative levels of performance) and the Norwegian-Swedish border area (with high relative levels of performance).

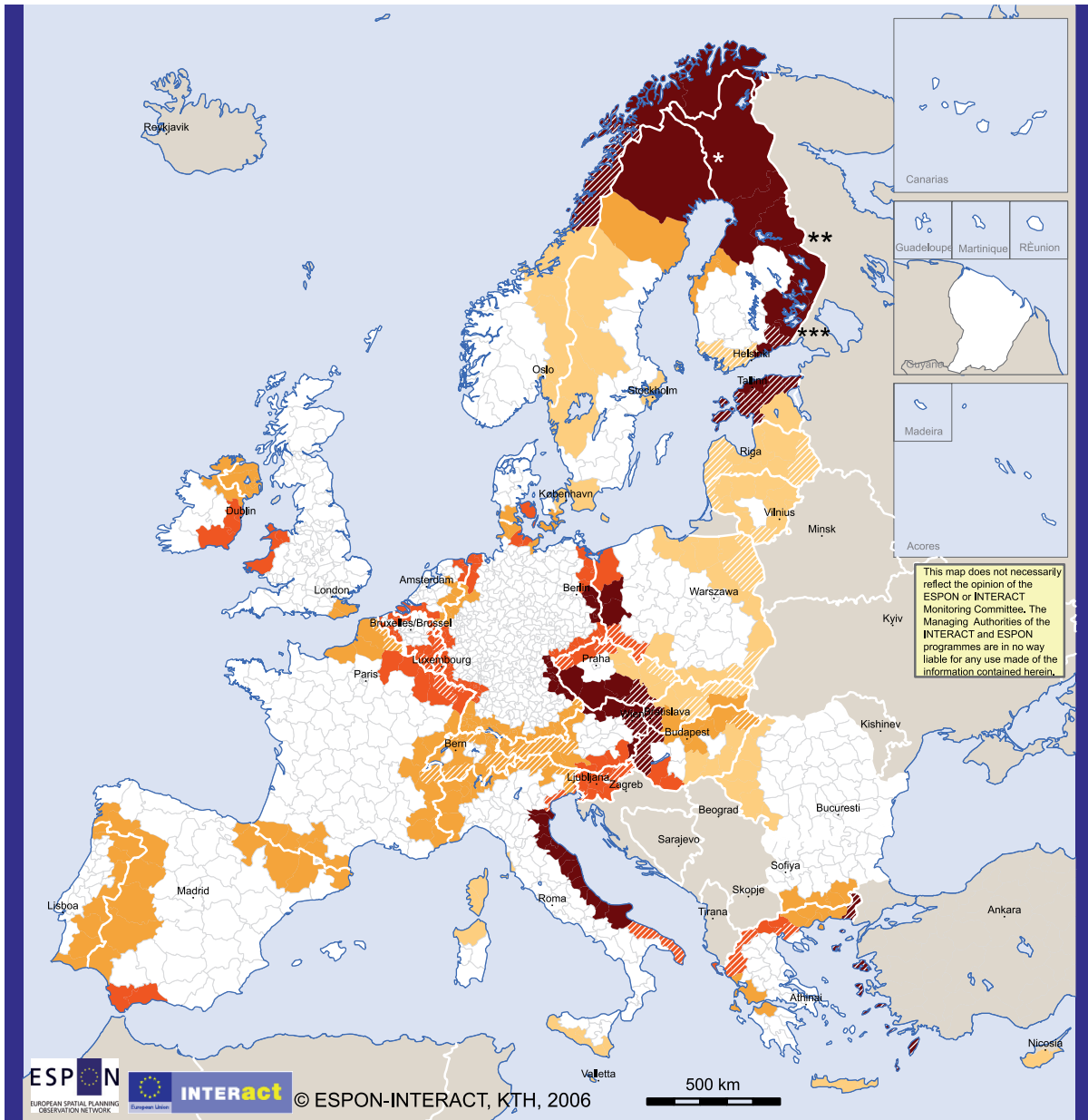
To add more depth to the analysis of economic disparities, a second type of analytical result was produced. This shows both the degree of disparities within INTERREG IIIA programme areas, as well as the relative economic strength of these regions in 10 categories as seen in Map 9 shown in the following pages. The dark red tones in the map display regions that are very high or high economic

performers cooperating with other very high or high performers, the dark blue tones show very low or low performers in cooperation with other very low or low performers. The pastel tones show high performers with low performers and other mixed degrees of disparities and the bright yellow represents the very high economic performing regions in cooperation with the very low economically performing regions- the regions with the greatest economic disparities.

The results of interpreting cooperation integration potential in terms of actual project intensity (see map 3) are again producing fairly mixed results. One “hot spot” with the very highest INTERREG IIIA cooperation intensity in Western Austria, Southern Germany and Northern Italy tends to be characterised by very high performing regions cooperating with only slightly lower performing regions, i.e. there are some economic disparities, but these are not great. The Spain-Portugal Programme, with a very large number of INTERREG IIIA projects is characterised by lower performing regions with insignificant economic differences. Northern Ireland-Ireland programme, as well as the Sweden-Norway Programme are areas with both high project intensity and very high or high economic strength, and small economic disparities.



**Map 8: Level of economic disparities between areas of INTERREG IIIA programmes approximated to NUTS3 regions**



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Source: KTH, Cross Border Regions Database (2006) for identification of border regions  
 Economic data for EU25 and Candidate Countries from EUROSTAT, 2003; for Norway and Switzerland from National Statistics Offices, 2003

- Non border regions
- Areas without significant disparities
- Areas with Low levels of disparities
- Areas with High levels of disparities
- Areas with Very High levels of disparities
- NUTS 3 regions included in more than one INTERREG IIIA Programme

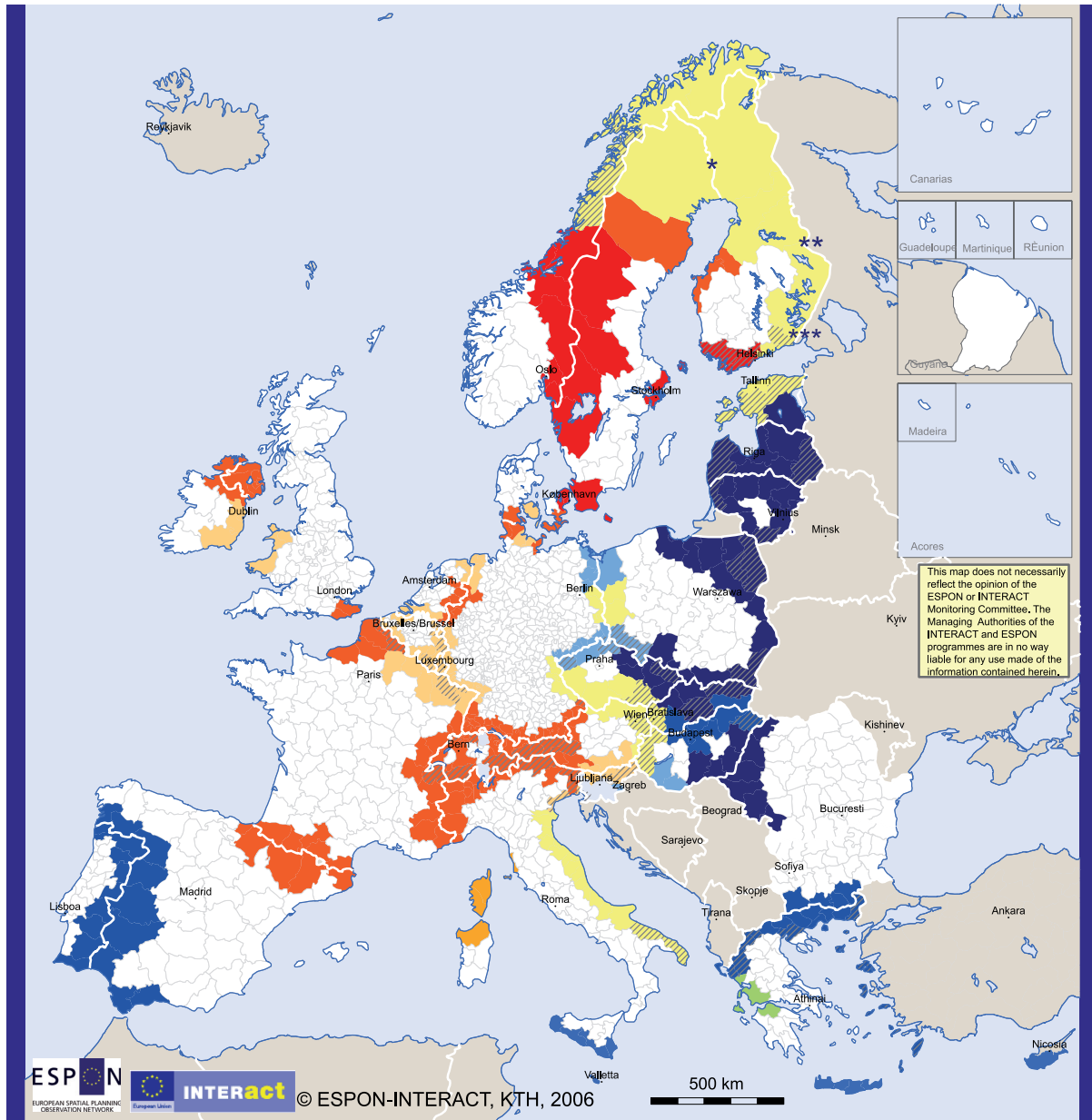
Economic disparities, based on Euro-per-inhabitant as percentage of EU 25 average, 2003

\* INTERREG IIIA Nord:  
 Programme area includes Murmansk, Russia

\*\* INTERREG IIIA Euregio Karelia:  
 Programme area includes Karelian Republic

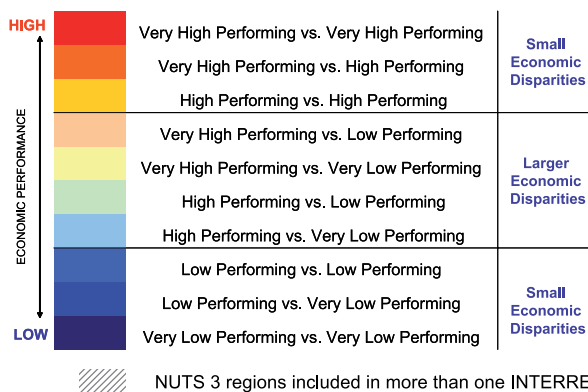
\*\*\* INTERREG IIIA South East Finland - Russia  
 Programme area includes Leningrad Oblast and St. Petersburg Oblast, Russia.

**Map 9: Level of economic disparities and relative economic strength with INTERREG IIIA Programme areas approximated to NUTS3 regions**



This map does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON or INTERACT Monitoring Committee. The Managing Authorities of the INTERACT and ESPON programmes are in no way liable for any use made of the information contained herein.

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Source: KTH, Cross Border Regions Database (2006) for identification of border regions  
 Economic data for EU25 and Candidate Countries from EUROSTAT, 2003; for Norway and Switzerland from National Statistics Offices, 2003

Economic disparities, based on Euro-per-inhabitant as percentage of EU 25 average, 2003

\* INTERREG IIIA Nord: Programme area includes Murmansk, Russia

\*\* INTERREG IIIA Euregio Karelia: Programme area includes Karelian Republic

\*\*\* INTERREG IIIA South East Finland - Russia Programme area includes Leningrad Oblast and St. Petersburg Oblast, Russia.

### 3. Themes within INTERREG IIIA programmes

The objective of classifying INTERREG IIIA in accordance with selected themes, rather than programme priorities has been to help identify the interface between the ESPON and INTERREG/INTERACT programmes, an area that seems to be ripe for further development. In the survey sent to INTERACT IIIA partners, one of the questions addressed awareness of INTERREG practitioners of the ESPON Programme. When asked if they were aware of the ESPON research programme and its scientific findings, 62% of all respondents had never heard of ESPON, 21% knew of the programme, but found it difficult to put its findings into practice, a further 13% had heard of ESPON, but were still unclear of its scientific achievements. Only 2% were very aware of the programme and its published results. Clearly there is a need for a future ESPON Programme to better incorporate the issues and needs of cross-border cooperation in its priorities.

Analysis of the themes of INTERREG IIIA cooperation according to the selected themes in the ESPON-INTERACT database has been done according to 10 themes. Thus regardless of the INTERREG priority to which the IIIA project belongs, projects were re-classified (according to project summary, description and programme web pages) with these themes in mind. Projects were coded by a pri-

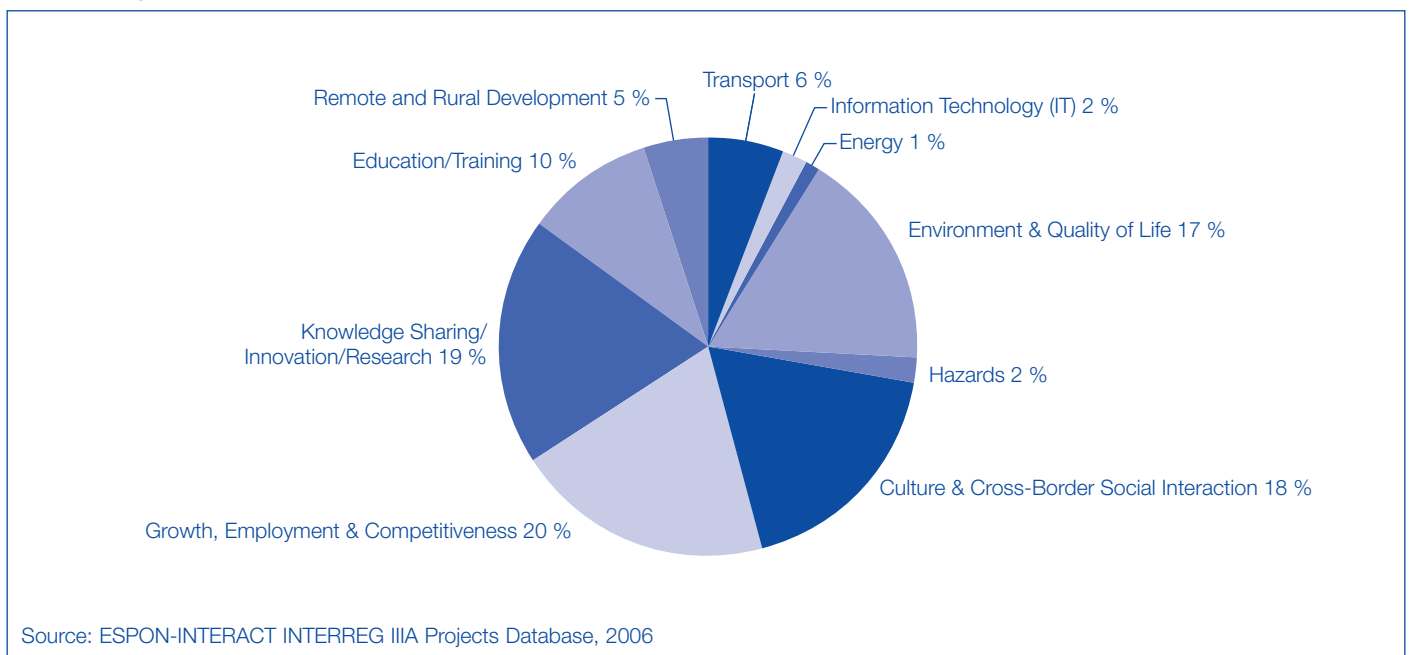
mary theme and an optional secondary, and in some cases third theme. These themes encompass:

- Transport
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Energy
- Environment / Quality of life
- Hazards
- Cultural and cross-border social interaction
- Growth, employment and competitiveness
- Knowledge sharing / Innovation/ Research
- Education /Training
- Remote and rural development

Results of the coding show that the most popular themes were growth, employment and competitiveness (20%), knowledge sharing/Innovation/Research (19%), culture and cross-border social interaction (18%) and environment/Quality of life (17%). Figure 1 in next page shows the distribution of these themes throughout the 5939 coded INTERREG IIIA projects.

On the other hand themes with very little representation in INTERREG IIIA are energy (1%), information technology (2%), hazards (2%) and remote and rural development

**Figure 1: Distribution of themes in all INTERREG IIIA Projects (as first, second or third priority)**





(5%). Even the theme of transport was only stated as a first, second or third priority in 6% of all projects. At first glance it appears that projects dealing with “hard” infrastructure issues seem to be less addressed than projects with “soft” priorities such as cultural interaction or knowledge sharing. However this may be the result of the coding process. Since all projects were coded with up to 3 themes many have stated in the project description a secondary or tertiary theme of the method used by which to attain the goal (such as research or cross-border interaction) or else the general objective to be attained (such as a good quality of life). This presumably explains to some degree the large percentage of projects that mention these themes.

In addition since the “hard” infrastructure projects are generally much more costly than “softer” projects, funds seem to be distributed to fewer projects. The table below shows the average funding (in EUR) per INTERREG IIIA project in each of the themes.

**Table 4: Average funding (in EUR) per INTERREG IIIA project according to selected themes**

Themes	Average IIIA funding per project
Transport	1 942 502,06
ICT	1 385 093,18
Energy	665 416,73
Environment/Quality of Life	789 842,85
Hazards	1 240 965,21
Culture and Cross-border Social Interaction	581 739,94
Growth, Employment and Competitiveness	688 270,42
Knowledge Sharing/Innovation/ Research	618 814,36
Education/training	429 704,68
Remote and Rural Development	607 914,90

Here we see that projects dealing with transport, ICT and hazards indeed are more expensive than smaller projects in the themes with a large number of projects. Table 5 shows the ranking of themes of priority of interest (integrated themes as first, second or third priority) for the 61 of the 64 INTERREG IIIA programmes. This table at a glance shows

that “softer” projects (the vibrant tones of red, orange and yellow on the left hand-side of the table) such as growth, employment and competitiveness, environment and quality of life, culture and cross-border social interaction and knowledge sharing and innovation make up most of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd priority themes in terms of the number of projects addressed within each programme. The pastel tones on the right hand-side of the table show the relatively lesser priority in number of projects per programme of the “hard”, more expensive, themes such as transport, energy, ICT and hazards.

The allocation of resources may also dictate the type of actor involved in thematic projects. For instance, as shown in the Spain-Morocco case study (see Annex 2), a very decentralised project such as Ma’arifa’s can affect the cooperation’s thematic span. Within the programme no projects were proposed by the partners in the fields of cross-border infrastructure or the development of joint services and facilities. This might mean that infrastructure projects are out of the scope of small-scale institutions with a limited budget. There is a larger share of resources for activities within the realms of culture, socio-economic and entrepreneurial promotion and social and institutional integration. Thus, a decentralised approach, addressing small-scale institutions brought together by meso-level administration can better foster cooperation in soft projects than hard or infrastructure ones. Many projects have both “hard” and “soft” components. Although the “soft” aspects are traditionally considered a support for implementation or sustainability of “hard” elements, projects with a dominating soft component are often enhanced by means of some infrastructure investment.

Annex 4 shows the distribution of themes within 61 of the 64 INTERREG IIIA cross-border cooperation areas for which data has been collected. However our analysis of the specific themes in INTERREG IIIA projects will be presented theme by theme, rather than by programme area. Results are mostly presented in the form of “overlays” on existing maps produced for relevant ESPON projects. This

was done to better show the interface between the ESPON and INTERREG IIIA programmes and to discern areas that may be ripe for further research or cooperation.

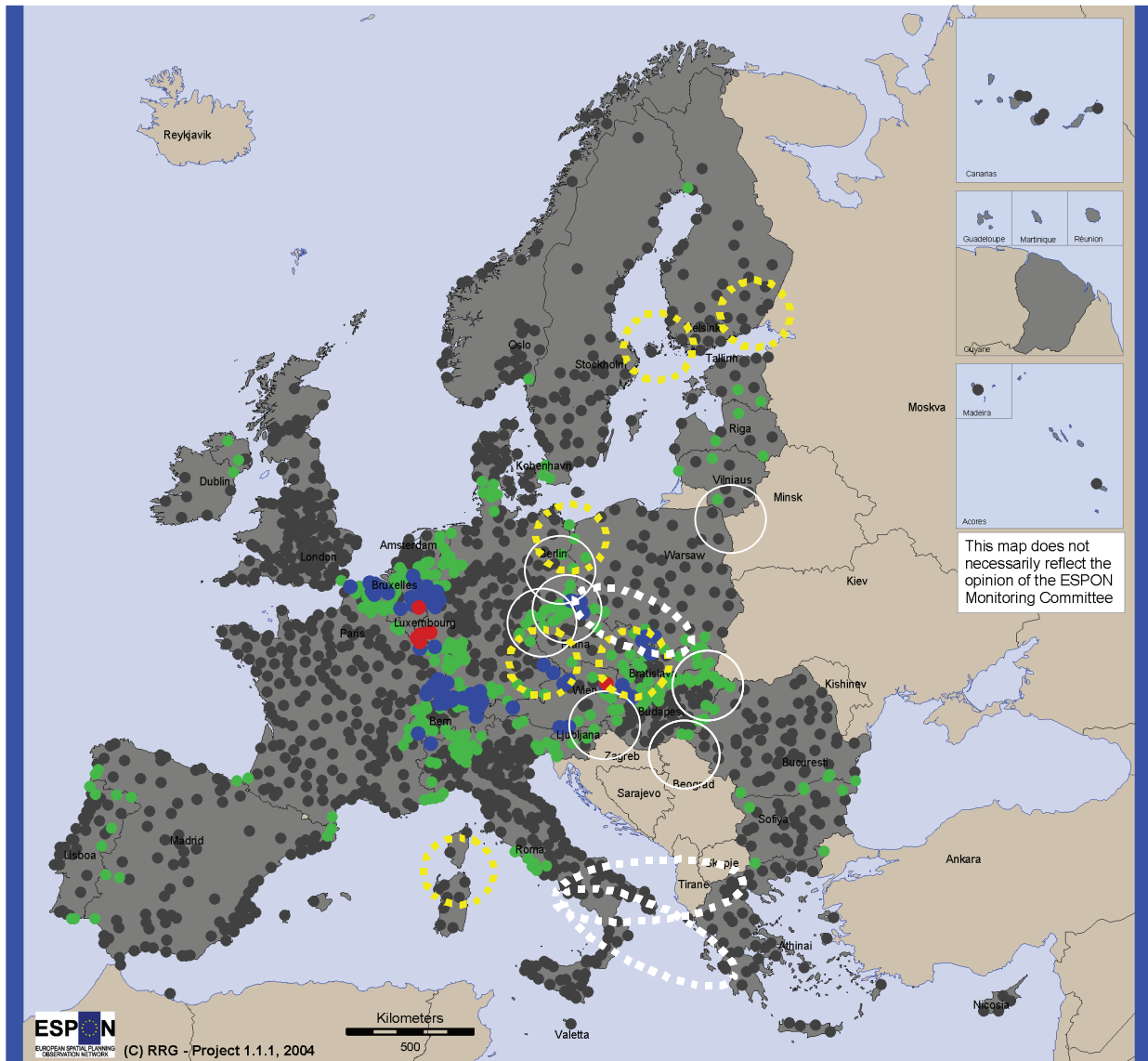
**Table 5: Priorities of interest per INTERREG IIIA programme areas by themes**

	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH	7TH	8TH	9TH	10TH
1 Skårgården	TRP	E&Q	TRP	RDVPT	KLDG	GWTH				
2 Kvarken – Mittskandia	GWTH	CULT	E&Q	KLDG	EDU	TRP	ITC	RDVPT	EGY	HZD
3 Bavaria – Austria	KLDG	RDVPT	GWTH	CULT	EDU	E&Q	TRP	EGY	ITC	HZD
4 Austria – Czech Republic	KLDG	GWTH	CULT	RDVPT	EDU	E&Q	TRP	EGY	ITC	
5 Austria – Slovenia	GWTH	CULT	KLDG	E&Q	EDU	RDVPT	TRP	EGY	ITC	
6 Austria – Hungary	GWTH	KLDG	E&Q	CULT	EDU	TRP	EGY	RDVPT	HZD	
7 Austria – Slovakia	KLDG	E&Q	CULT	GWTH	TRP	RDVPT	EDU	EGY	ITC	
8 Sweden – Norway	CULT	E&Q	GWTH	KLDG	EDU	TRP	ITC	RDVPT	EGY	HZD
9 Ems – Dollart region	GWTH	KLDG	CULT	E&Q	EDU	TRP	RDVPT	HZD		
10 Alperhein/Bodensee/Hochrhein	KLDG	E&Q	GWTH	CULT	EDU	RDVPT	TRP	EGY	ITC	
11 Saxony – Poland	KLDG	GWTH	EDU	CULT	RDVPT	TRP	E&Q	ITC	EGY	
12 Sachsen – Czech Republic	CULT	EDU	E&Q	KLDG	GWTH	TRP	RDVPT	EGY	HZD	ITC
13 Rhein-Waal and Rhein-Maas-Noord	KLDG	GWTH	CULT	E&Q	EDU	TRP	RDVPT	ITC	HZD	EGY
14 Brandenburg – Lubuska	KLDG	E&Q	CULT	EDU	GWTH	TRP	HZD	EGY		
15 Italy – Austria	GWTH	CULT	E&Q	RDVPT	KLDG	EDU	TRP	HZD	ITC	
16 Alcotra (Italy-France)	CULT	GWTH	E&Q	RDVPT	EDU	HZD	KLDG	TRP	ITC	
17 Islands (Italy – France)	CULT	E&Q	GWTH	TRP	KLDG	EDU	HZD	EGY	ITC	
18 Italy - Slovenia	GWTH	EDU	KLDG	E&Q	CULT	TRP	RDVPT	EGY	ITC	HZD
19 Ireland – Northern Ireland	GWTH	CULT	KLDG	E&Q	EDU	RDVPT	TRP	EGY	ITC	HZD
20 Ireland – Wales	GWTH	KLDG	EDU	E&Q	EDU	CULT	ITC	RDVPT	TRP	EGY
21 Pamina	KLDG	CULT	GWTH	EDU	E&Q	ITC	RDVPT	TRP		
22 Oberrhein Mitte Süd	KLDG	EDU	CULT	E&Q	GWTH	TRP	RDVPT	EGY	ITC	HZD
23 Bavaria – Czech Republic	CULT	KLDG	GWTH	E&Q	TRP	EDU	RDVPT	EGY	ITC	HZD
24 Fyn – KERN	E&Q	GWTH	KLDG	EDU	CULT	ITC	RDVPT	TRP	ITC	
25 Sønderjylland –Schleswig	EDU	GWTH	KLDG	CULT	E&Q	TRP	RDVPT	EGY	ITC	HZD
26 Storstrom – Ostholstein-Lubeck	KLDG	GWTH	EDU	E&Q	CULT					
27 Germany-Lux.-Germanophone Belgium	GWTH	E&Q	CULT	KLDG	RDVPT	EDU	HZD			
28 Saarland-Mosel/Lorraine-Western Palatinate	GWTH	E&Q	CULT	KLDG	EDU	TRP	EGY			
29 Spain – Portugal	E&Q	KLDG	GWTH	CULT	TRP	EDU	RDVPT	EGY	ITC	HZD
30 Spain – Morocco	GWTH	CULT	E&Q	KLDG	EDU	TRP	RDVPT	HZD		
31 Italy – Switzerland	GWTH	E&Q	CULT	KLDG	TRP	EDU	TRP	ITC	HZD	
32 Öresund region	KLDG	GWTH	CULT	EDU	E&Q	TRP	ITC	RDVPT	HZD	
33 Greece – Albania	E&Q	CULT	KLDG	HZD	GWTH	TRP	RDVPT	EDU	ITC	
34 Greece – FYROM	E&Q	KLDG	CULT	EDU	HZD	GWTH	TRP	EGY	ITC	RDVPT
35 Greece – Bulgaria	E&Q	KLDG	CULT	EDU	GWTH	TRP	HZD	RDVPT	ITC	
36 Greece – Cyprus	CULT	KLDG	E&Q	HZD	GWTH	EDU	ITC			
37 Mecklenbourg Vorpommern – Poland	GWTH	CULT	TRP	KLDG	EDU	E&Q	RDVPT	ITC		
38 Euregio Maas-Rhein	E&Q	GWTH	CULT	KLDG	EDU	TRP	RDVPT	ITC		
39 EUregio Karelia	CULT	GWTH	KLDG	E&Q	EDU	TRP	ITC	RDVPT	EGY	HZD
40 South East Finland – Russia	GWTH	KLDG	E&Q	TRP	CULT	EDU	RDVPT	EGY	HZD	
41 France – Switzerland	KLDG	CULT	EDU	E&Q	GWTH	RDVPT	TRP	EGY	ITC	
42 France – Spain	KLDG	GWTH	CULT	E&Q	EDU	RDVPT	TRP	ITC	EGY	HZD
43 Nord	GWTH	KLDG	CULT	EDU	TRP	E&Q	ITC	EGY	RDVPT	HZD
44 Finland – Estonia	KLDG	EDU	GWTH	CULT	E&Q	ITC	HZD	TRP	RDVPT	
45 Grensregio Vlaanderen-Nederland	E&Q	GWTH	CULT	KLDG	EDU	RDVPT	HZD	TRP		
46 Wallonia – Lorraine – Luxembourg	KLDG	E&Q	EDU	GWTH	CULT	ITC	HZD	TRP	EGY	
47 Kent-Sussex – Nord Pas de Calais-Picardie	CULT	KLDG	E&Q	GWTH	EDU	ITC	HZD	TRP	RDVPT	EGY
48 Gibraltar – Morocco	KLDG	E&Q								
49 France/Wallonia – Flanders	GWTH	CULT	E&Q	KLDG	EDU	RDVPT	ITC	HZD		
50 Italy – Albania	TRP	E&Q	GWTH	KLDG	CULT	EGY				
51 Greece – Italy	TRP	KLDG	E&Q	ITC						
52 Greece – Turkey										
53 Italy/Balkans-Adriatic	KLDG	GWTH	E&Q	CULT	EDU	TRP				
54 Czech Republic – Poland	GWTH	KLDG	TRP	CULT	E&Q	HZD	RDVPT	ITC	EGY	
55 Poland – Slovakia										
56 Slovakia – Czech Republic	CULT	KLDG	TRP	GWTH	E&Q	EDU	RDVPT			
57 Poland – Ukraine – Belarus										
58 Lithuania – Poland – Russia	CULT	GWTH	E&Q	KLDG	TRP	EDU	HZD	ITC		
59 Hungary/Slovakia/Ukraine	CULT	GWTH	E&Q	TRP	KLDG	EDU	RDVPT	EGY	ITC	HZD
60 Hungary – Romania – Serbia – Montenegro	GWTH	KLDG	E&Q	TRP	EDU	HZD	RDVPT	ITC	CULT	
61 Slovenia – Hungary – Croatia	GWTH	E&Q	EDU	KLDG	TRP	CULT	RDVPT	EGY		
62 Italy – Malta	CULT	GWTH	E&Q	TRP						
63 Estonia – Latvia – Russia	GWTH	KLDG	E&Q	CULT	EDU	ITC	TRP	RDVPT		
64 Latvia – Lithuania – Belarus	GWTH	E&Q	EGY	RDVPT	EDU	CULT	TRP	HZD		

Source: ESPON INTERACT INTERREG IIIA Programmes Database, 2006

TRP	Transport
ITC	Information Technology (IT)
EGY	Energy
E&Q	Environment & Quality of Life
HZD	Hazards
CULT	Culture & Cross-Border Social Interaction
GWTH	Growth, Employment & Competitiveness
KLDG	Knowledge Sharing / Innovation / Research
EDU	Education / Training
RDVPT	Remote and Rural Development

### Map 10: Intensity of projects dealing with the theme of transport transposed on the ESPON 1.1.1 (“Polycentricity”) map of Transnational Potential Urban Strategic Horizons.



Origin of the Data: © EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries  
Geographical Base: Eurostat, GISCO

**Border crossing PUSHs**

- 4 countries concerned
- 3 countries concerned
- 2 countries concerned

**Non-border crossing PUSHs**

- Other PUSHs



**Very High % of Transport priority Projects:**  
Italy-Albania; Greece-Italy; Czech Republic-Poland



**High % of Transport priority Projects:**  
Mecklenburg Vorpommern-Poland; Slovakia-Czech Republic; Skårgården; South East Finland-Russia; Islands; Bavaria-Czech Republic



**Medium % of Transport priority Projects:**  
Hungary-Romania-Serbia-Montenegro; Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine; Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia; Brandenburg-Lubuska; Saxony-Poland; Sachsen-Czech Republic; Lithuania-Poland-Russia

This map has been modified by ESPON-INTERACT CBC Project and shows the analysis for Transport Projects in the EU 27 based on INTERREG IIIA Programmes - Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA Projects, 2006

### 3.1 Transport

Transport as a theme in INTERREG IIIA projects is a rather wide category including all aspects of multi-modal transport, road, rail, air and sea travel, bicycle and hiking paths, as well as the necessary infrastructure such as ports, ferry terminals, border crossing stations or bridges. With the obstacles created by borders, a useful starting point for cross-border functional integration is the improvement of existing transport infrastructure and the development of new links. These are pre-conditions for establishing or developing cross-border contacts<sup>13</sup>.

Cross-border transport is thus an important theme of cooperation between border regions, as it is assumed link functional urban areas (FUAs) and even potential urban strategic horizons (PUSH). As the integration process of enlargement regions intensifies there is great potential to develop relationships, bonds and ties over national borders in the form of Transnational Potential Urban Strategic

Horizons<sup>14</sup>. Map 10 shows the intensity of projects dealing with the theme of transport transposed on the ESPON 1.1.1 (“Polycentricity”) map of Transnational Potential urban Strategic Horizons, crossing over two, three or four countries.

Map 10 yields some interesting general observations. INTERREG IIIA programming areas with an average or greater than average focus on transport are almost exclusively located at the frontier between the EU 15 (old Member States) and EU 10 (new Member States), or within the new Member States or Accession Countries. At the very least these projects are located far away from the “Pentagon” or shifted to the east to the borders between the new Member States.

The very high percentage (over 30%) of projects dealing with transport as a first, second or third theme in Italy-Albania and Italy-Greece may be due to the fact that there are so far relatively few projects in these areas (52 and 22

#### Brandenburg–Lubuska Programme

*Project example: Construction of the bypass road at Lubsko – stage 1*

The project will contribute to an essential improvement of the state of the transborder transport route connecting southern part of the Lubuskie voivodship with the town of Cottbusthrought the border crossing of Zasieki/Forst. In the future, the Lubsko bypass road, along with the Forst ring road, are meant to constitute a part of the supra-regional road connection between the Lubuskie voivodship and the Land of Brandenburg, providing the basis for the development of cross-border co-operation and contributing to the abolition of barriers in the contacts of borderland communities.

Some of the benefits from the realisation of the project to the sides of the project are as follows:

- Improvement of the capacity of the transboundary transport route along the provincial road no. 289 (linking, in particular, two large towns, i.e. Cottbus and Zielona Góra).
- Improvement of the traffic safety on the transboundary transport route along the provincial road no. 289, crossing the town of Lubsko
- Improvement of conditions of transport economics along the same transboundary route in terms of decreased costs of vehicle exploitation and decreased travel time
- activation of tourist traffic in the border region on both sides of the border, implementation of the prerequisites for the regional development of the partner towns Lubsko
- Brody – Forst in the domains of transport and infrastructure

*Source: Case study (Annex 3) and [www.interreg.gov.pl/INTERREG+IIIA/](http://www.interreg.gov.pl/INTERREG+IIIA/)*

<sup>13</sup> Proposal for a Council Decision on Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion (COM(2006) 386 final).

<sup>14</sup> “In Search of Territorial Potentials”, ESPON Synthesis Report II, Luxembourg, 2005, p. 51.

projects respectively) and many of the projects deal with port development. The Czech Republic-Poland Programme is an interesting example of a cross-border area of border-crossing PUSH areas consisting of two or three countries, with a great emphasis (20%, as a first second or third theme) on transport projects in INTERREG IIIA. These projects include not just the traditional renovation and building of cross-border roads, but also terminals and transport centres aimed at cross-border public transport, perhaps aiming to strengthen patterns of cross-border commuting within the existing Potential Urban Strategic Horizon (PUSH) areas.

Transcending water borders also appears to be important in the Skärgård (Sweden-Åland-Finland) and Islands (Corsica, FR and Sardinia, IT). In terms of the weight of transport in border crossing PUSH areas, INTERREG IIIA transport projects seem to play a role here.

The transport projects in the Brandenburg-Lubuska Programme are mainly small to medium cost projects and many involve the connection of medium-sized cities across the border in an area with several cross-border PUSH areas involving two countries, as exemplified by the project example below:

The transport projects in the Brandenburg-Lubuska Programme are mainly small to medium cost projects and many involve the connection of medium-sized cities across the border in an area with several cross-border PUSH areas involving two countries, as exemplified by the project example next page.

### 3.2 ICT

ICT (information and communication technology) is a vital means for securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge throughout Europe, one of the most important guidelines in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). Thus cross-border ICT projects can act as a motor to boost regional competitiveness of cross-border regions. In fact for those INTERREG IIIA projects coded with ICT as a first priority, one-third of these projects linked growth, employment and competitiveness as an

auxiliary priority. However ICT as a first, second or third theme is only prevalent in 2% of all INTERREG IIIA projects. Like transport, ICT projects within INTERREG IIIA are high cost, “hard” projects, if examining only main themes of cooperation, since these tend to involve the building out of ICT infrastructure such as broadband connections. But when looking at ICT projects as a secondary theme we find a wide range of lower costs projects that include distance learning, e-business and the like.

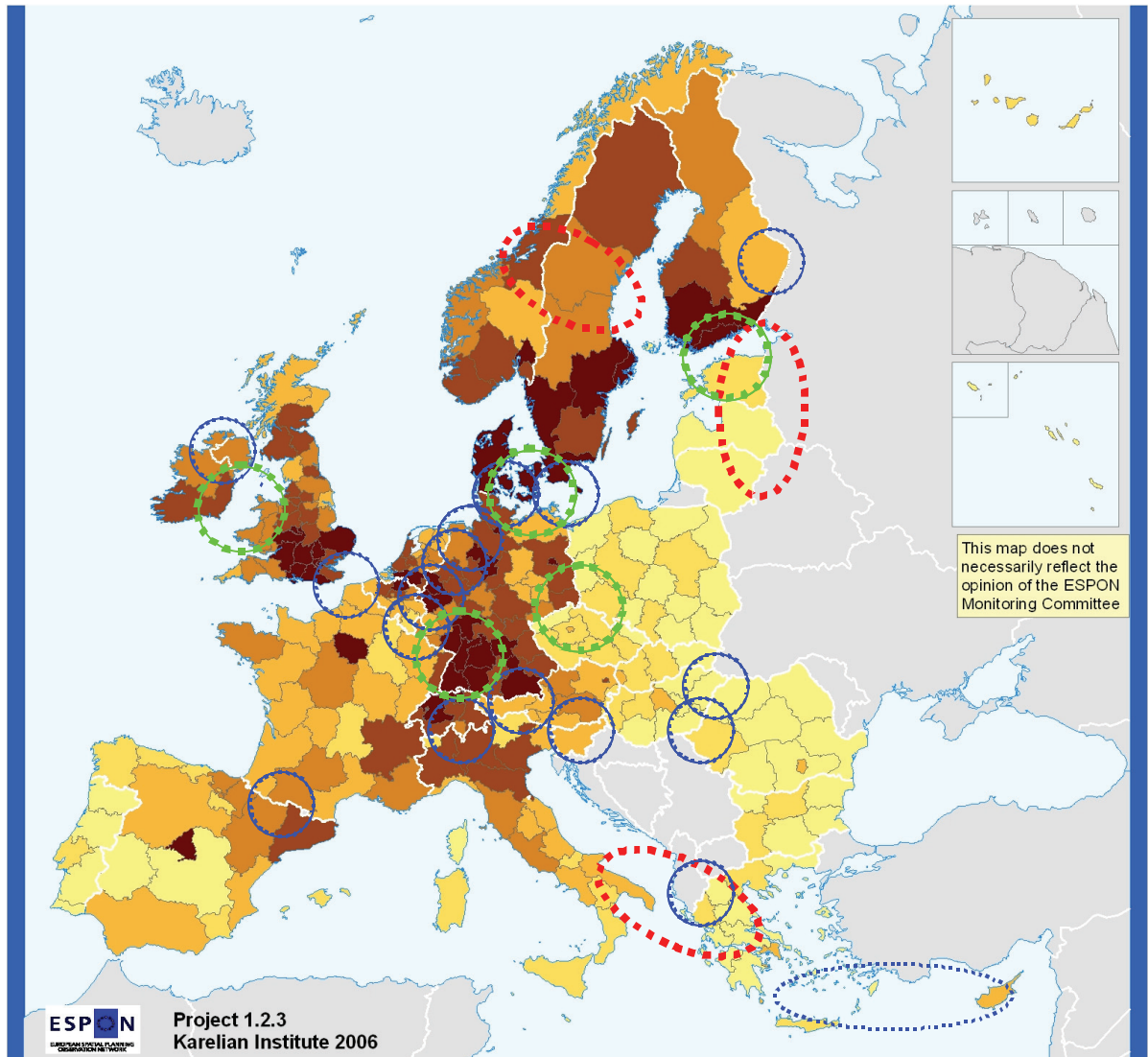
Map 11 shows the propensity of INTERREG IIIA ICT projects transposed against the ESPON 1.2.3 “Information society” map of index of information society (IS) performance based on composite indicators of the readiness, growth and impact of the IS lifecycle.<sup>15</sup> ICT projects tend to be more dispersed throughout the European territory than transport projects. Here we see a predominance of ICT projects in regions that already experience high performance in the aspects of information society, particularly in the INTERREG IIIA programmes that Finland and Denmark (as well as the Öresund) are involved in, as well as in the southern regions of Germany, although not in the Skärgården Programme. Also regions with fairly high disparities in IS performance, such as Finland-Estonia or Saxony-Poland, have a relatively high propensity to cooperate in ICT projects, perhaps largely in the form of boosting learning in “softer” types of ICT projects described above. We also see that ICT projects in the new Member States tend to be between an old and new Member State, rather than between new Member States.

Perhaps regions that have already experienced high levels of information society performance have realised the benefits of ICT on regional growth and are willing to share their experiences with neighbouring regions that have not yet achieved such IS performance levels. See the project highlighted page 35 for an example of an ICT project that strives to stimulate cross-border interaction.

<sup>15</sup> Information society is defined by ESPON “IS” as “availability and use of ICT”.



**Map 11: Propensity of INTERREG IIIA ICT projects transposed against the ESPON 1.2.3 “Information Society” map of Index of Information Society performance**



Origin of the Data: © EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

**Information Society performance by ESPON 123 IS index**

- Very Low
- Low
- Moderate Low
- Moderate High
- High
- Very High

**Origin of data:**  
Eurostat, ESPON database

This map has been modified by ESPON-INTERACT CBC Project and shows the analysis for ICT in the EU 27 based on INTERREG III A Programmes - Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG III A Projects, 2006

- Very High % of ICT priority Projects**  
Greece-Italy; Kvarken-Mittskandia; Estonia-Latvia-Russia
- High % of ICT priority Projects**  
Saxony-Poland; Ireland-Wales; Fyn-KERN; Finland-Estonia; Pamina
- Medium % of ICT priority Projects**  
Italy-Switzerland; Ireland-Northern Ireland; France/Wallonia-Flanders; EUREGIO Karelia; Bavaria-Austria, Öresund Region; Wallonia, Lorraine-Luxembourg; Sønderjylland-Schleswig; Rhein-Waal and Rhein-Maas-Noord; Nord; Kent-Sussex-Nord Pas de Calais-Picardie; Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine; Hungary-Romania-Serbia-Montenegro; Greece-Cyprus; Greece-Albania; France-Spain; EUREGIO Maas-Rhein; Austria-Slovenia

## Finland-Estonia Programme

*Project example: E-Trainer project*

**Goals:** (1) to enhance willingness to develop e-learning in the educational institutes and teacher education institutes in the target area; (2) to help in creating common e-learning study modules to be used in the organizations taking part in the project

**Partners:** Finnish and Estonian universities and colleges from Helsinki, Porvoo, Tartu and Pärnu (and a few participants from Latvia, Lithuania and Russia)

**Mode of interaction:** seminars and exchange research visits

### Results:

- Skills of arranging e-learning in educational institutes have increased;
- Routines of arranging continuing education to personnel of educational institutes have developed;
- Attitudes of teachers towards e-learning have become more positive;
- Teachers who have taken part in the training have developed better skills in using ICT;
- Such e-learning study modules have been developed that are in the future free to use to every organization that has taken part in the study module development of E-Trainer;
- Cooperation network of Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian (Kaliningrad) educational institutes for future e-learning development has been created.

**Follow-ups:** E-Trainer has enabled teachers of the participating institutions to develop their own e-learning courses. Eight such courses have already been developed and offered to students: Business English, Accounting, International Marketing, Business Management, Customer Marketing, Basics of Law, National and Regional Economics, and IT and Economics.

**Special features:** E-learning per se represents a powerful and accessible instrument stimulating cross-border interaction. E-learning study courses provide the opportunity to create genuinely diversified “virtual classes” of students from different countries, which may eventually evolve into interesting milieus for cross-border integration.

*Source: Case study (Annex 1) and [www.pkol.fi/pint/english/projects.html](http://www.pkol.fi/pint/english/projects.html)*

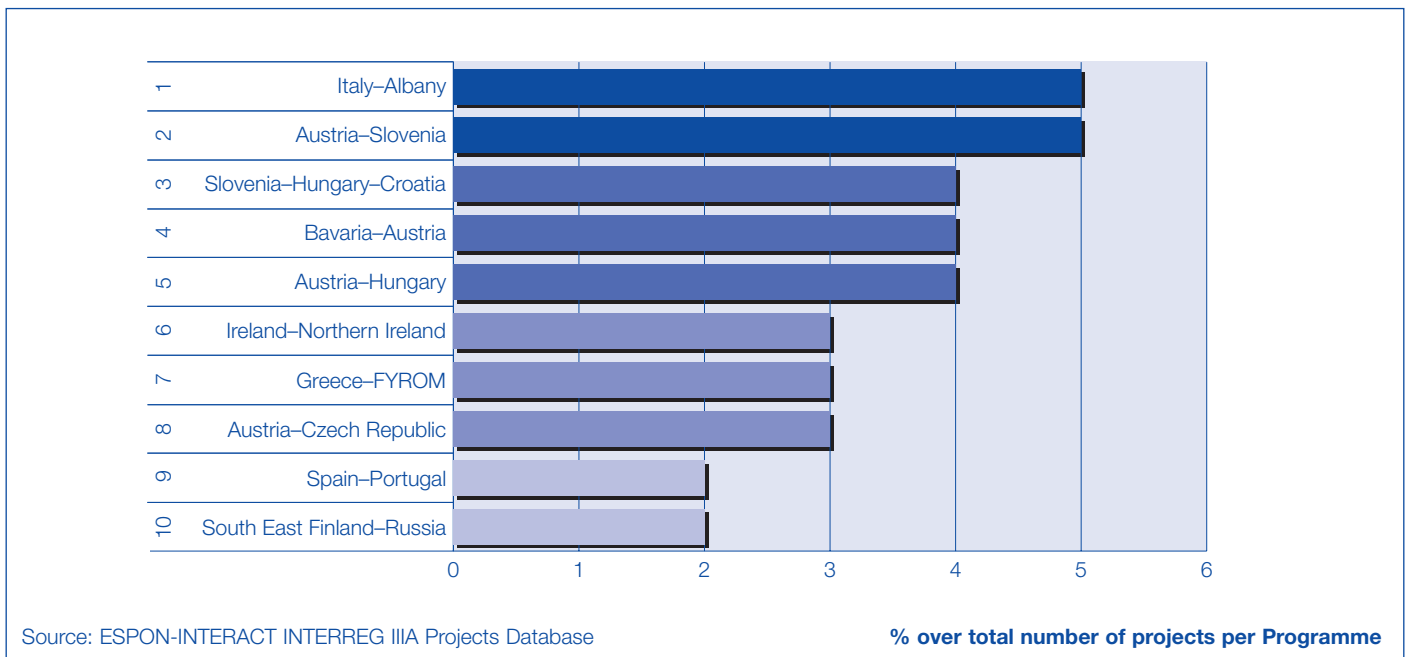
## 3.3 Energy

Energy projects in INTERREG IIIA programmes deal with a variety of energy sources: gas, wind, solar, and biomass to name a few. However projects are also focused on building energy networks, technology transfer, creating energy sufficiency/efficiency and integrated energy management. There is a great focus within INTERREG IIIA on renewable forms of energy. The ESPON 2.1.4 project on “energy” discusses how the EU energy policy is now relying more and more on renewable forms of energy development and efficiency and that this can have an important impact at the local and regional level, particularly by increasing the use of endogenous energy sources. Furthermore, the ESPON “energy” project discusses the objective to increase self-sufficiency of regions within this area. It would thus seem

that energy, particularly renewable energy, would be a priority ripe for cross-border cooperation, due to the economic and environmental benefits that could accrue to regions.

But the ESPON theme of energy shows lowest frequency as a project theme in the entire INTERREG IIIA space (1% of all project themes as shown in Figure 2). Despite the waning interest in energy priorities (perhaps due to the high average cost of projects) there are still some interesting programmes and projects addressing this issue, like Italy-Albania and some of the Austrian Programmes which turn this country into the most prolific in developing renewable energy projects with its cross-border neighbours. The Austria-Slovenia programming area exhibits a relatively high degree (5%) of projects addressing energy as a theme as does the Austria-Czech Republic Programme.

**Figure 2: Top 10 INTERREG IIIA Programmes with energy priorities**



The Austria-Hungary Programme, encompassing Győr-Ménfőcsanak, HU, Vas (HU), Zala (HU) Mittelburgenland, AT, Nordburgenland AT, Sudburgenland, AT and Wiener Umland/Sudteil, AT, have four projects dealing specifically with renewable energy as shown in the text box in the next page.

Energy-efficient projects are generally seen in those cross-border programme areas of high or very high economic disparities (see Map 8), where at least one partner has a high degree of economic strength.

### Energy Projects in Austria-Hungary

**LEE Bruck/Leitha:** Feasibility study on "renewable energy in central and Eastern Europe"

*Main Partner:*

Energiepark Bruck an der Leitha, AT

*Other partners:*

University of West Hungary, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, Mosonmagyaróvár

Energy Center Bratislava

Technische Universität Wien

Donauuniversität Krems

**Information offensive on renewable energy- West Hungary**

*Main Partner:*

Österreichisches Forschungs- und Prüfzentrum Arsenal Ges.m.b.H, Wein

*Partners:*

Széchenyi István Hochschule, Győr

**Regional economic revival by the employment of renewable energies**

*Main Partner:*

Europäisches Zentrum für Erneuerbare Energie Güssing GmbH



*Partners:*

Municipality of the City of Körmend, HU  
 Municipality of the City of Szombathely HU

**Solar Net II – Technology Offensive Solarthermie, Wien, Burgenland -Ungarn**

*Main Partner:*

Projekträger in Österreich:  
 17 & 4 Organisationsberatung GmbH Wien

*Partner:*

Széchenyi István Hochschule, Győr.

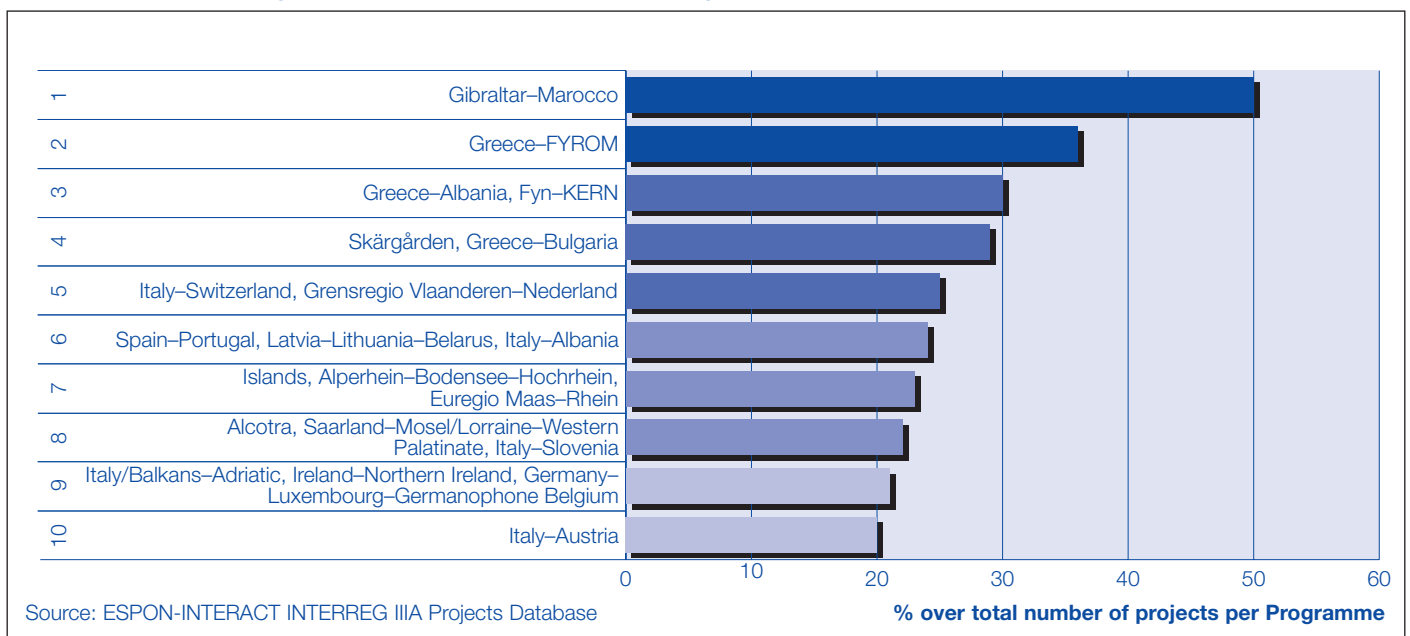
Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA database and [www.solar-net.info](http://www.solar-net.info)

**3.4 Environment/Quality of life**

“Environment/Quality of life” projects have a broad range, including both projects dealing with traditional natural environmental effects and projects that include social aspects of the “good life”. Thus the large range of topics taken up by this theme most likely accounts for the large number of projects coded as such. For instance the “Elk in Mitt Skandia” project in Kvarken- Mittskandia (SE-NO) aims to create a cross-border and active cooperation regarding maintenance of elk populations, including equipping 75 elk with GPS trackers. On the other hand another project

under the “Environment /Quality of life” theme in programme the Greece-Cyprus area involves an information campaign to young people regarding the prevention of addiction to alcohol and tobacco. Other programmes with a high degree of projects in the “Environment/Quality of life” theme address various types of environmental protection in concrete ways for each geographic type of region, such as water quality in the Skärgården Programme (Sweden-Finland) or preservation of bats in the Austria-Slovenia Programme. Figure 3 displays the top 10 programmes for which “Environment/Quality of life” is a first, second or third priority theme.

**Figure 3: Top 10 INTERREG IIIA Programmes with environment priorities**



The Greece-FYROM Programme focuses on conservation and management of various mountain biotopes as well as eco-tourism in its environmental projects, as the project example below illustrates.

In the Spain-Morocco programme, several environmental projects help diminish the negative effects of high urban growth on the coast of Spain and its cross-border effects on Morocco, as shown in project examples below:

### **Greece-FYROM Programme:**

*Project example: E-Trainer project*

**Project in focus:** Ecological tourist approach of the mountain region of Vora in the area of the municipality of Aridea

The natural environment of the mountain range of Aridea has remained to this date an insufficiently developed natural resource, which has been solely used for the production of timber. The development of forest recreation, nature and mountain tourism will bring long-term and significant economic benefits to the residents of the municipality of Aridea.

It has been shown that when this kind of development is done on the basis of strict specifications designed to protect and improve the biodiversity of the area it ensures a long-term and more effective protection of it, which is a major objective for protected regions. “New tourism” products should be designed and developed with that objective in mind.

The proposal will be modified once there is an estimate of the number of tourists and visitors and their preferences and choices are investigated in some depth. In this way, and through the direct exchange of experiences with the local community, a clearer picture will be obtained about the desired qualitative aspects of tourism sought and a framework for new employment prospects and skills acquisition will be created for the local labour resources.

The particular characteristics of the natural environment have attracted, over the last ten years, a strong interest for the development of ecotourism activities. The great variety of sites, the favourable climate for ski activities, the impressive landscape and the presence of significant, at a European level, species of plants and animals fully justify any attempts made so far to develop local tourism and also those that will follow in the future.

*Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA database*

## Spain-Morocco INTERREG IIIA (Environment and quality of life theme)

**Projects in focus:** RENALIT: Preservation of Natural Resources of the Coastline and Sea Environment.

**CRBT:** Creation of the Andalusia-Morocco Transcontinental Biosphere Reserve

**Project leader:** Regional Ministry of Environment of Andalucía (NUTS2)

The intervention areas cover relevant natural ecosystems in the provinces (NUTS3) of Cadiz and Malaga in Spain and the Tangier-Tetouan region in Morocco.

The Spanish coast to the Alb Oran Sea has had a strong urban development, having a strong effect on its ecosystem and landscape. Construction of infrastructure has altered the natural dynamics of geological materials. Highly populated urban areas generate strong flows of waste water into the sea, affecting the ecosystem and the fisheries, which are also over-exploited. This situation has a reflection in the Moroccan coast, where the new tourism-related growths and infrastructural developments are not accompanied by the appropriate protection measures.

The overarching objective of these projects is to support the preservation of the natural resources and the spreading of their sustainable use in the benefit of the local population. CRBT attempts at supporting the creation of a Transcontinental Biosphere Reserve which will help to development of both countries' networks of natural spaces. RENALIT deploys equipment and immaterial actions in order to preserve and foster the sustainable use of natural resources and the improvement of environmental quality in the Alb Oran Sea.

Both projects are done in cooperation with the Moroccan Ministry of Territorial Planning, Urbanism, Housing and Environment, within the framework of a former political agreement for jointly spotting cooperation projects regarding environmental issues. Another European funding tool, the MEDA programme, makes some of the projects' costs affordable for the Moroccan administration. This open use of Interreg as a tool brings about positive synergies to formerly existing cooperation.

*Source: Case study on Spain-Morocco (Annex 2) and [www.renalit.org](http://www.renalit.org), [www.juntadeandalucia.es/economia/hacienda/fondos/poia\\_interreg/INTERREG/proyectos/segunda-conv.pdf](http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/economia/hacienda/fondos/poia_interreg/INTERREG/proyectos/segunda-conv.pdf)*

### 3.5 Hazards

Hazards as a theme in INTERREG IIIA cooperation take up aspects of both natural and technological hazards, as well as projects that deal with risk assessment. Natural hazards are obviously much more geographically bound than technological hazards, and take the form of earthquakes in the Mediterranean area, avalanches in the mountain areas, drought in more arid or agricultural areas and flooding in costal or riparian areas, etc. The types of hazard projects in INTERREG IIIA projects are both reactive, but also proactive, in the sense of adapting or mitigating a certain type of risk through studies, civil protection or procurement of

safety equipment. The ESPON-INTERACT thematic study on "Environmental hazards and risk management" (2005) has taken the task of analysing natural and technological hazard projects in the INTERREG IIIA, IIIB and IIIC strands. As they found, and this study confirms, very few projects address hazards explicitly, whereas other projects implicitly refer to risks, as in purchasing equipment that could potentially be used for preventing disasters in a cross-border region. However the risk projects seemed to have a fairly wide geographical spread, with many focusing on mountain areas (avalanches, rescue equipment and plans) and watercourses.

Projects tend to be fairly isolated to areas that obviously experience a particular type of geographical risk. Cross-border cooperation as a tool for dealing with cross-border hazards often concerns linking actors on both sides of a national border to more effectively deal with a hazard common to cross-border regions within the area of hazards and risk, as seen in the project example in the following pages, from the Öresund region which deals with civil safe-

ly largely around the Öresund Bridge linking Sweden and Denmark.

A further interesting example of a cross-border project dealing with cooperation for procurement for hazards is found in the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine programme<sup>16</sup>, as shown in the next project example.

## Öresund Region (Denmark-Sweden)

*Project example: Civil Safety in the Øresund Region*

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the civil safety in the region by strengthening the cooperation between important actors within this field. The aim of the project is that the civil safety actors in Denmark and Sweden will be able to handle catastrophes in an efficient and smooth manner and in such a way that both systems can work side by side when solving a cross-border problem. The world is experiencing great vulnerability in connection with incidents such as September 11, the terror in Madrid etc., and some of the same things could happen here. First and foremost one must be prepared for accidents on the Øresund Bridge or major storms. It is important that there is a well-functioning civil safety system in Øresund Region to handle these potential accidents.

Some special studies and the development of support systems have been made within the project, such as:

- Description of the emergency management structures
- Identification of the existing cooperation and networking arrangements
- Demonstration of the use of Geographical Information Systems as supporting during serious accidents
- Development and implementation of Geographical Information Systems emergency vehicles
- Methods to accomplish fire protection advices
- Factors important to cooperation between municipalities from different countries
- Improved information before, under and after an accident
- The need for joint physical planning
- Methods to reduce vandalism in schools

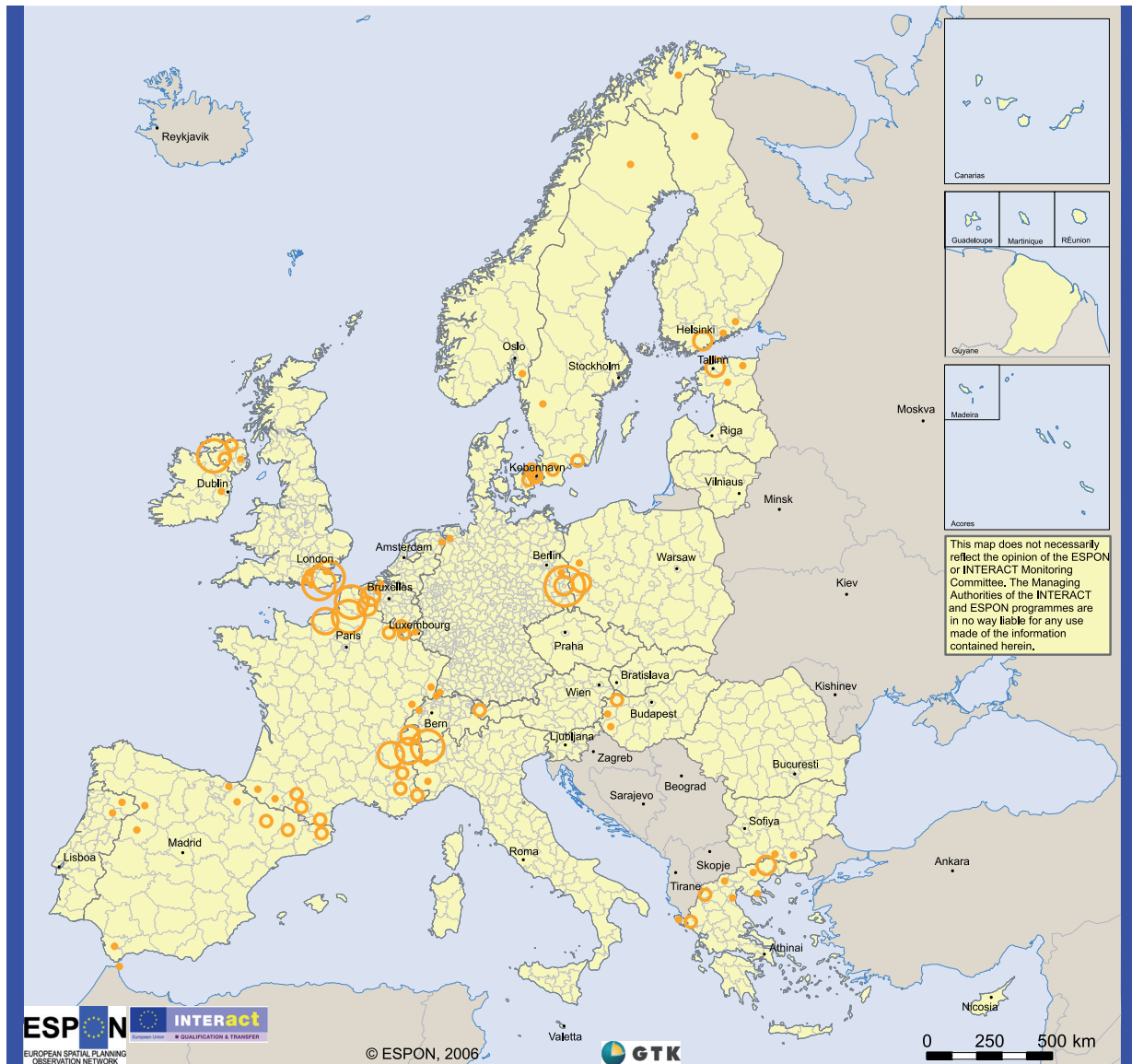
The conclusion from the studies and analysis is that there is an obvious need for intensified cooperation within the civil protection area in the region. At the same time it is concluded that there is no immediate support from the central governments in the countries for resources and funding.

*Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA project database and project home page:*

*<http://www.oresund-civilsafety.com/>*

<sup>16</sup> Details for this programme in the ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA database are incomplete and thus no coding of projects has been done. Information, however on a few projects has been provided by the case study on this area.

**Map 12: Charting of INTERREG IIIA projects related to hazards and risk management**



**Number of hazard & risk related INTERREG IIIA projects per NUTS3 area**

- 1    ○ 4    ■ Espo Space
- 2    ○ 5    ■ Non Espo Space
- 3    ○ 6-7

Origin of the Data: © EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries  
 Hazard & risk projects © ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG III project database

## Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme

*Project example: Extension of the transboundary system of natural environment protection and liquidation of the effects of catastrophes and elementary disasters on the area of the province of Lublin and the district of Lviv (Poland-Belarus-Ukraine)*

**Applicant:** Provincial Fire Brigade Headquarters in Lublin

**Project value:** 3.7 PLN, of which 75%, i.e. 2.775 PLN (roughly 685,000 ?) to be financed from the means of the ERDF

**Project partners:** Provincial Fire Brigade Headquarters in Lublin and the counterpart in Lviv

The project consists in extension of the system of protection for the natural environment as well as minimisation and liquidation of the risk of polluting the transboundary area. The effect of the project will be to introduce and locate in the crucial points of the province of Lublin the additional specialised emergency equipment. This will be the salvaging and extinguishing vehicles, equipped with the capacity of fighting various kinds of hazards. Thereby the safety of the protected area on both sides of the Polish-Ukrainian boundary will be enhanced.

### *Details of the project*

In the framework of the project six specialised rescue cars will be purchased for the county and town headquarters of the National Fire Brigades from the area of the province of Lublin, i.e. for those in Biała Podlaska (two cars), Lublin, Kraśnik, Pulawy and Włodawa.

Realisation of the project will take place through modernisation of the existing emergency system within the province of Lublin and the improvement of effectiveness of the rescue operations. The effects will consist in the rapid appearance at the location of an event and undertaking of the rescue activities aiming at limitation and liquidation of the contamination, as well as essential lowering of the costs of rescue actions.

The activities undertaken shall enhance the quality of public safety, shall strengthen the resistance to the effects of breakdowns and elementary disasters, and they will improve the state of the environment through decreased emissions to the atmosphere of the toxic products of combustion.

*Source: Case study (Annex 3), [www.interreg.gov.pl](http://www.interreg.gov.pl)*

## 3.6 Culture and cross-border social interaction

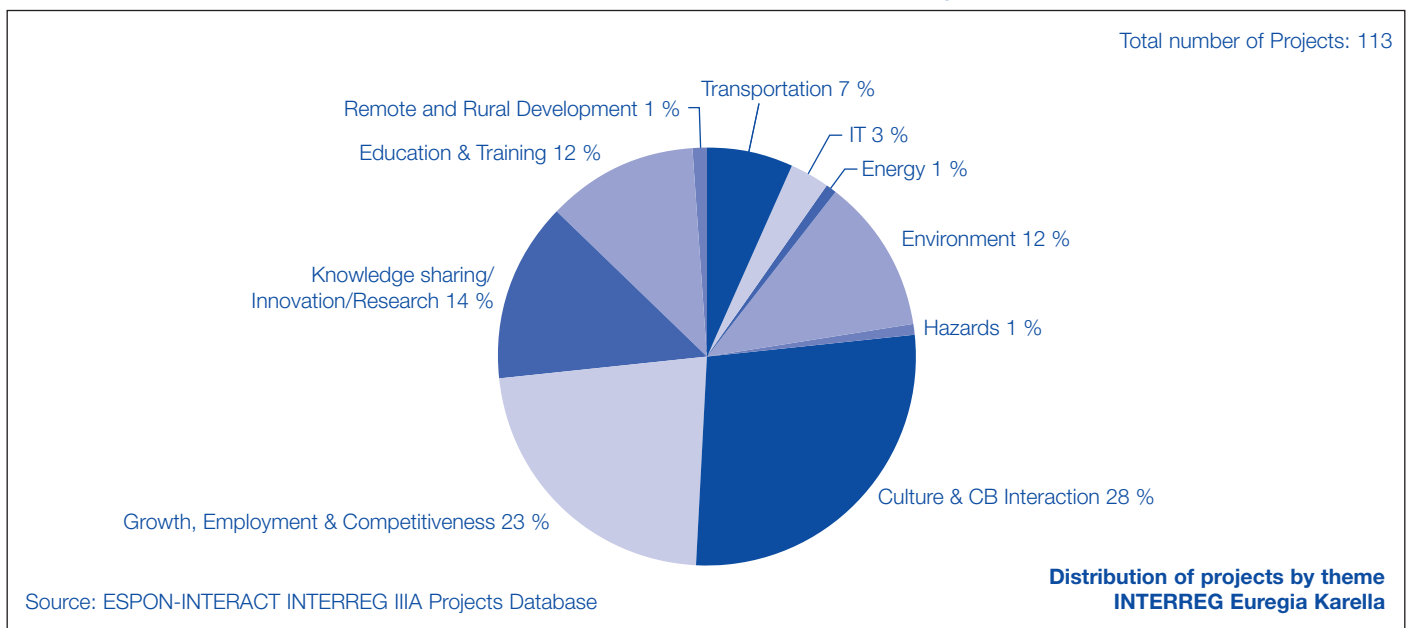
Culture and cross-border social interaction appears to be quite important within cross-border regions. Perhaps this theme more than any other plays an important role in prompting regions to gain greater understanding one another through fairly low-cost projects, which could spawn even further cooperation opportunities in other areas. The themes of culture and cross-border social interaction characterise many of the themes of INTERREG IIIA projects, with 18% of all projects addressing this in some way. The attractiveness of cultural and cross-border social interaction

projects doesn't seem to be dependent on factors such as population. Even areas with lower population focus on culture and cross-border social interaction. The "Pentagon" shows very little propensity of both INTERREG IIIA and IIIB projects dealing with this area, perhaps because there is a less of a need for this type of interaction. Concentration of culture and social interaction is partly concentrated on the border between the old and new member states in central Europe perhaps due to the greater opening of borders after accession providing opportunities for this. Also cultural and cross-border social projects may be popular in just those areas where the social, political and economic cultures are indeed "different". As the case study on the Finnish-

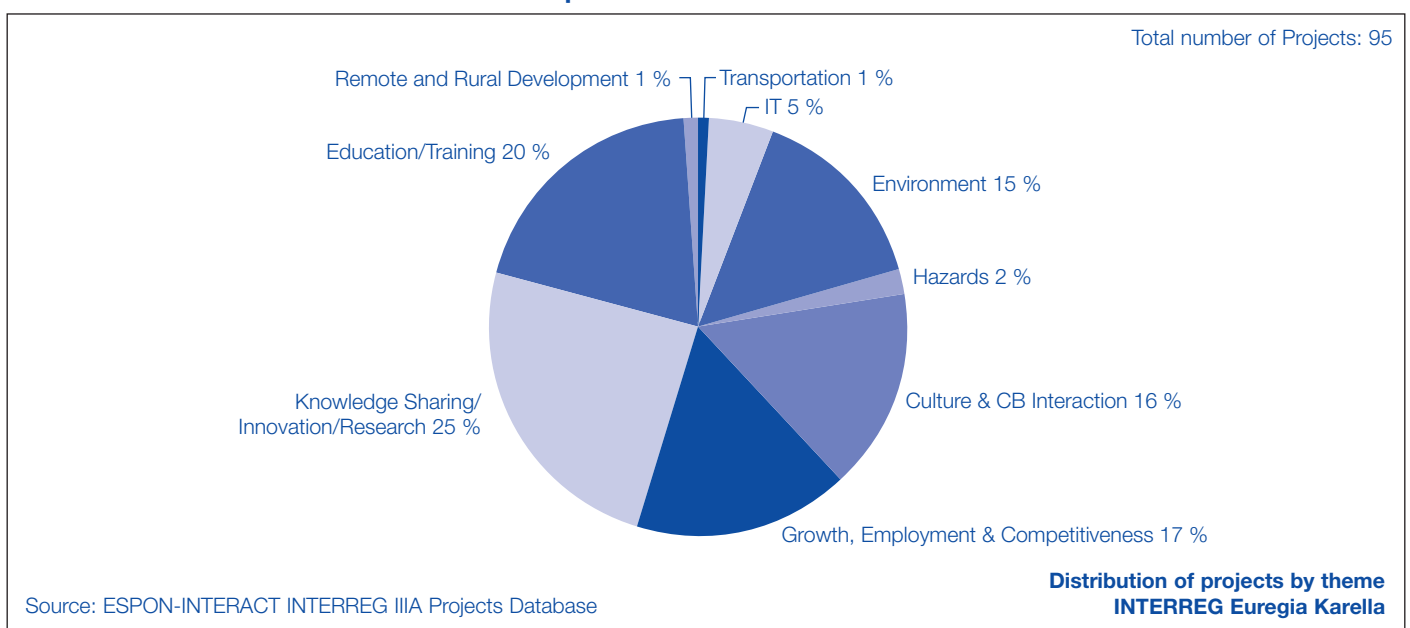
Russian and Finnish-Estonian Programmes shows, Estonia has been much closer to Finland culturally and historically than Russia. Perhaps, this provides an explanation why cultural and social projects were relatively more popular in the Finnish-Russian case: they were aimed at overcoming cultural alienation, whereas in the Finnish-Estonian case that was not an issue. Likewise, social problems were apparently more acute on the Russian side than in Estonia. As a result, they got a much higher priority in the Finnish-Russian case. See Figures 4 and 5 at below:

Cross-border social and cultural interaction can perhaps be said to be particular to INTERREG IIIA as compared to the IIIB or IIIC strands, due to the closer proximity of partners and the nature of the programme priorities. To “test” this presumption we have overlaid the patterns of the IIIA programme areas with a very high, high or average percentage of projects dealing with cross-border cultural or social interaction on the ESPON 2.4.2 “Zoom-In” map of INTERREG IIIB projects dealing with cultural heritage (Map 13).

**Figure 4: Distribution of projects addressed by theme including first, second and third priorities INTERREG 39 Euregio Karelia**

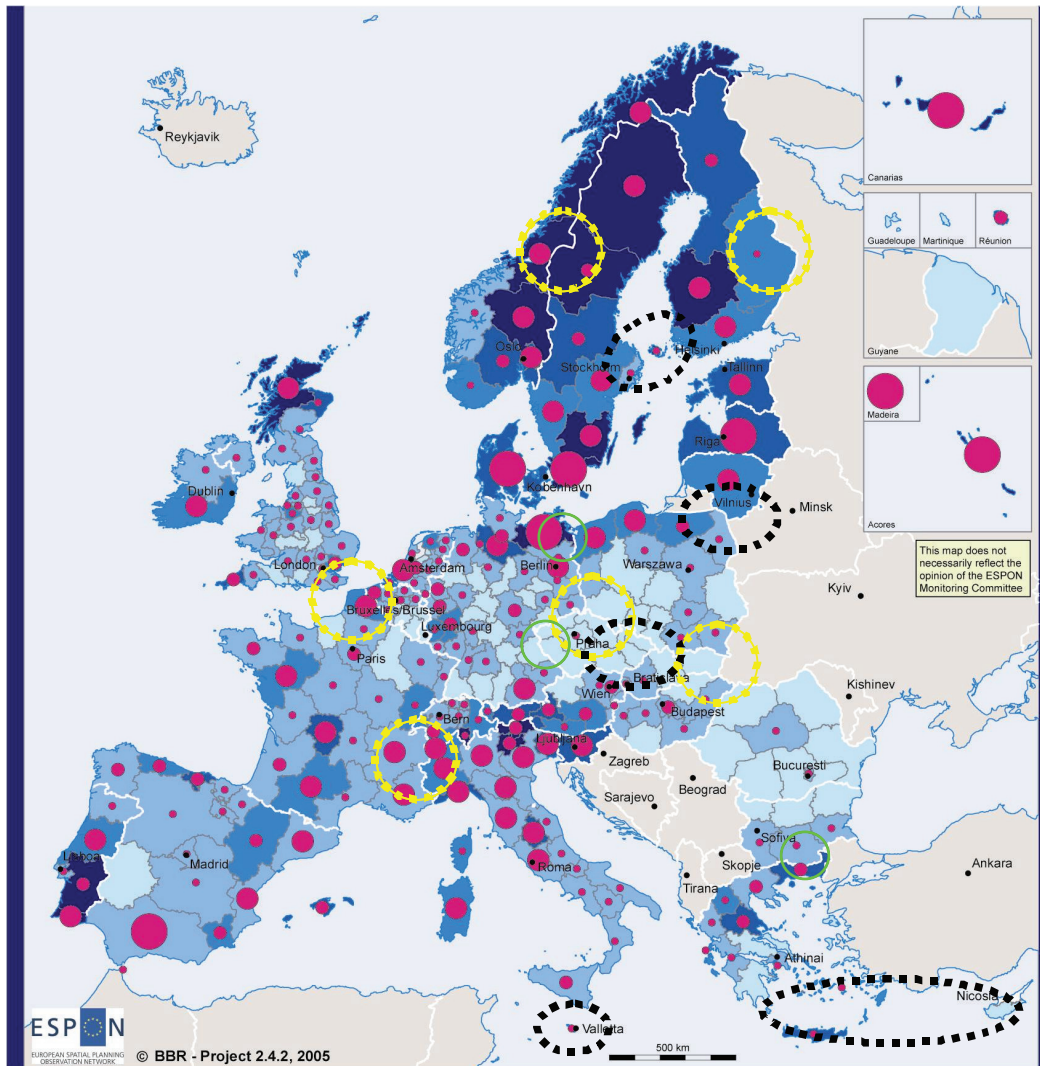


**Figure 5: Distribution of projects addressed by theme including first, second and third priorities INTERREG 44 Finland – Estonia**





**Map 13: INTERREG IIIA Programmes with culture priorities**



**Number of project co-operations according to operational programmes\***

**Thematic field: management of cultural landscapes and cultural heritage, development of tourism**

**weighted by population (in 100.000)      absolute number**



© EuroGeographics Association for administrative boundaries  
Regional level: NUTS 2  
Origin of data: ESPON 2.4.2, INTERREG project survey  
Cyprus: data for government controlled areas only

Source: ESPON database

\* based on the INTERREG co-operation areas: Alpine Space, Atlantic Area, Baltic Sea Region, CADSES, Caribbean Area, Madeira - Azores - Canary Islands, North Sea, North West Europe, Northern Periphery, South West Europe, Western Mediterranean, Indian Ocean Area

This map has been modified by ESPON-INTERACT CBC Project and shows the analysis for Culture & Cross Border Social Interaction in the EU 27 based on INTERREG III A Programmes - Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG III A Projects, 2006

**Very High % Culture & Cross Border Social Interaction priority Projects**  
Italy-Malta; Greece-Cyprus; Lithuania-Poland-Russia, Slovakia-Czech Republic; Skårgården

**High % of Culture & Cross Border Social Interaction priority Projects**  
Euregio Karelia; Sachsen-Czech Republic, Alcotra; Kent-Sussex-Nord Pas de Calais-Picardie; Kv arken-Mittskandia, Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine

**Medium % of Culture & Cross Border Social Interaction priority Projects**  
Mecklenburg Vorpommern-Poland, Bavaria-Czech Republic; Greece-Bulgaria



With a few exceptions (such as Mecklembourg Vorpommern-Poland) we see that there seems to be very little overlap between INTERREG IIIB and IIIA projects in the area of culture. INTERREG IIIB regions (on NUTS2 level) that have a very high absolute number of cultural heritage projects have under average coverage by INTERREG IIIA projects (20-25% as a theme). Thus it seems that the two strands complement each other in coverage of this thematic, rather than duplicate priorities.

Also noteworthy is the fact that programmes that focus greatly on culture and cross-border social interaction are primarily located in the eastern half of the EU, either on the “old” external border between the EU 15 and EU 10 or on the new frontiers of the Union and in the extreme north and south peripheries. For instance, a majority of Finnish-

Russian projects, as in the Euregio Karelia, strive to overcome social, cultural and economic barriers for cross-border interaction and to alleviate negative consequences of peripherality. Many projects in the Lithuania-Poland-Russia Programme aim to reinforce the cultural identity of the cross-border region, as shown in the example below:

### 3.7 Growth, employment and competitiveness

The Lisbon strategy to make Europe the world’s most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world puts and emphasis on boosting employment and invigorating the economy. Not surprisingly, the theme of growth, employment and competitiveness commands the

#### Lithuania-Poland-Russia Programme

*Project example: Reinforcement of Cultural Identity in Frontier Regions of Tczew and Klaipeda*

The project assumes continuity and strengthening of cooperation in the field of heritage of culture between the towns of Tczew and Klaipeda throughout a series of common cultural events addressed to massive audiences as well as educational actions addressed to cultural activists from both towns.

The aim of the project is to increase the level of awareness of cultural variety in frontier regions in the regions of Tczew and Klaipeda.

In order to achieve the aims the following activities will be taken:

- participation of regional groups in events in partner towns, which will help to propagate identity and cultural variety in frontier regions
- conference on best practice in propagating values of regional culture, during which the participants will achieve knowledge on tools and methods of effective promotion of regional culture
- an outdoor event, during which cultural difference of partners will be visible
- training of cultural activists on methods of preparation of cultural projects

**Project example:** WAR and PEACE” The 200th anniversary of the Battle of Heilsberg and the Treaties of Tilsit. The beginning of European Home.

**The main objective:** to develop the cross border cooperation between Lidzbark Warm and Sovietsk, the twin cities, to aim at harmonious and balanced development of European territory.

The next goal is promoting the cultural dialogue as well as the mutual knowledge of culture and history of European nations in order to overcome historical prejudices and stereotypes existing between Poles and Russians. A long-term goal is to recognize culture as an important element of social and economical development of the border area.

Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA database and [www.interreg3a.org/interregen/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=87&Itemid=62](http://www.interreg3a.org/interregen/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=87&Itemid=62)

greatest amount of attention as a theme in INTERREG IIIA projects. 20% of all projects address this issue as either a primary, secondary or tertiary theme.

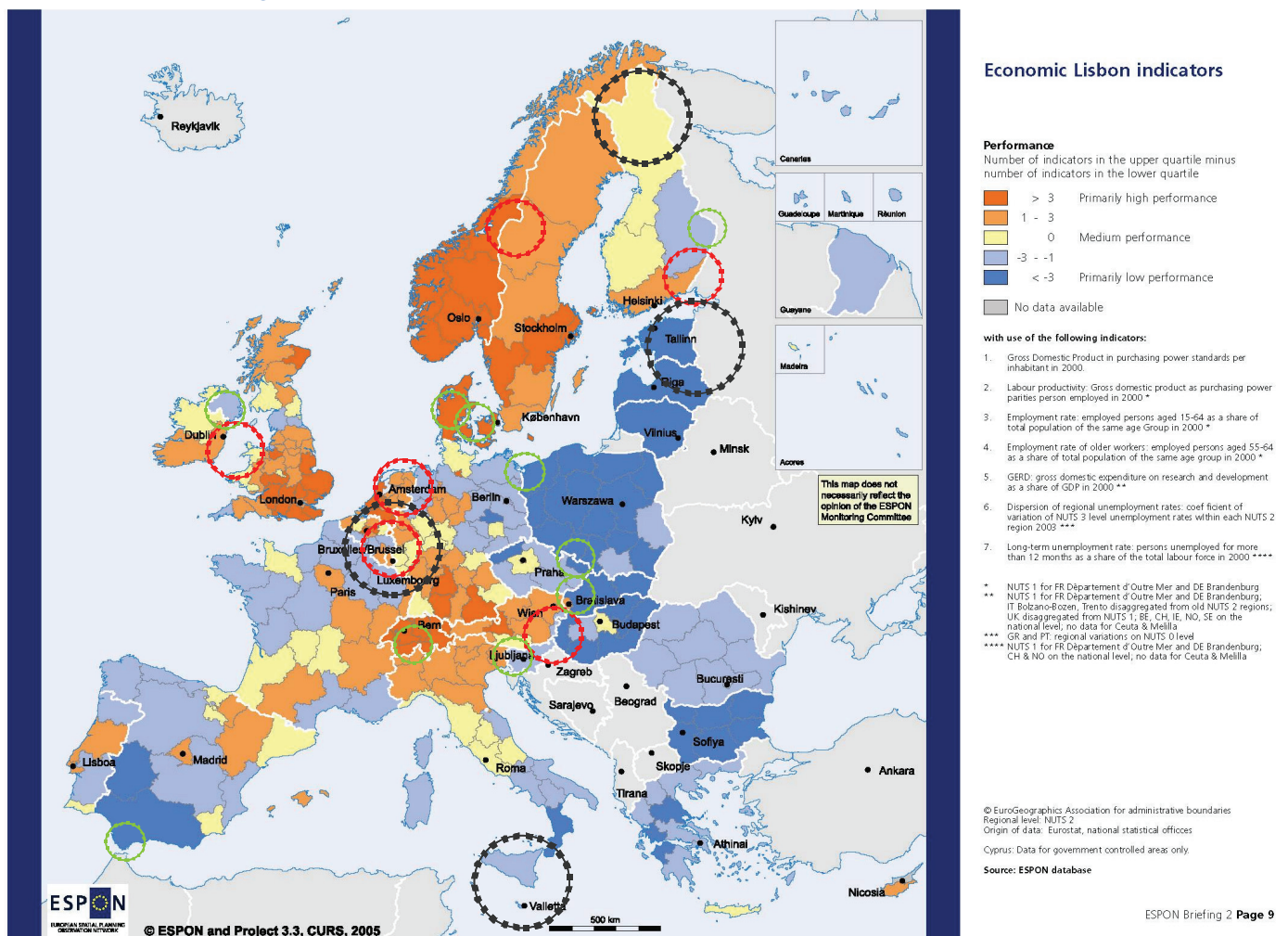
As shown on the ESPON 3.3 “Lisbon” map below (Map 14) of the Economic Lisbon indicators, as a synthetic indicator, the Economic Lisbon indicator nicely captures the dynamics of not only growth, but also employment and some of the social aspects of competitiveness.<sup>17</sup>

INTERREG IIIA projects that concentrate on growth issues to the greatest extent are clustered into three main groups.

One group is concentrated in the core of the European territory corresponding to Germany-Luxembourg-Germanophone Belgium, Saarland-Mosel/Lorraine and the EMS Dollart region. The other main clusters are focused in the eastern and northern peripheries: the Finnish cooperation with Russia and Estonia, and the central European area of Austria-Hungary, Czech Republic-Poland and Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia and Italy-Slovenia.

There are a few isolated examples of programmes highlighting growth issues throughout Europe as well, as nearly all programmes have a relatively large focus on growth.

**Map 14: INTERREG IIIA projects concentration on growth issues to the greatest extent against ESPON 3.3 “Lisbon” map of Economic Lisbon Indicators**



This map has been modified by ESPON-INTERACT CBC Project and shows the analysis for Growth, Employment and Competitiveness Projects in the EU 27 based on INTERREG III A Programmes - Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG III A Projects, 2006

- Very High priority**  
 Saarland-Mosel/Lorraine; Nord; Estonia-Latvia-Russia; Italy-Malta
- High priority**  
 Germany-Luxembourg-Germanophone Belgium; Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia; Kvarken-Mittskandia; EMS- Dollart region; South East Finland- Russia; Ireland-Wales
- Medium priority**  
 Storstrom-Ostholstein-Lubeck; Spain- Morocco; Italy-Switzerland; Fyn-KERN; Austria-Hungary; Mecklenburg Vorpommern-Poland; Czech Republic-Poland, Italy-Slovenia; Ireland-Northern Ireland; Euregio Karela

<sup>17</sup> The Economic Lisbon indicators is a synthetic indicator based on seven indicators: GDP in PPS, labour productivity, employment rate, employment rate of older workers, gross domestic expenditure on R&D, dispersion of regional unemployment rates and long-term unemployment rates.

It is difficult in this case to say from the Map 14 if cross-border regions with a relatively high emphasis on growth, employment and competitiveness as a theme are addressing a lack of competitiveness (according to the Economic Lisbon indicator) or if projects of this sort are reinforcing an already existing high performance, since these cross-border regions show a patchwork of Lisbon performance. However, what we can observe is that many of the programmes that have a heavy focus on growth objectives are found in cross-border regions exhibiting high or very high economic disparities (compare with Map 8) such as Spain-Morocco, North (Sweden-Norway-Finland-Russia),

Germany-Luxembourg-Belgian, Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia or Finland-Russia.

The Finnish-Russian case study (Annex 1) also demonstrates high popularity of economic projects. This is clearly a result of a major gap in the levels of economic development between eastern Finland and Russian Karelia. This gap serves as an incentive for the development of cross-border business links.

The text box shown in the next page illustrates on such project in an area of high economic disparities.

## Nord Project area

*Project example: Barents business, trade and investment development*

**Goals:** The project focuses on the study of problems faced by Finnish enterprises doing business in the Russian part of the Barents region (BEAR). The main aim is to identify and prioritise these problems, and to urge Finnish and Russian governments to alleviate them. The project is divided into three working groups: (1) customs and border crossing; (2) legislation and investments; and (3) logistics. The project also aims at establishing fruitful long-term cooperation between Finnish and Russian chambers of commerce.

**Partners:** two Finnish and five Russian chambers of commerce

**Mode of interaction:** regular meetings of the working groups and joint research activities

### Results:

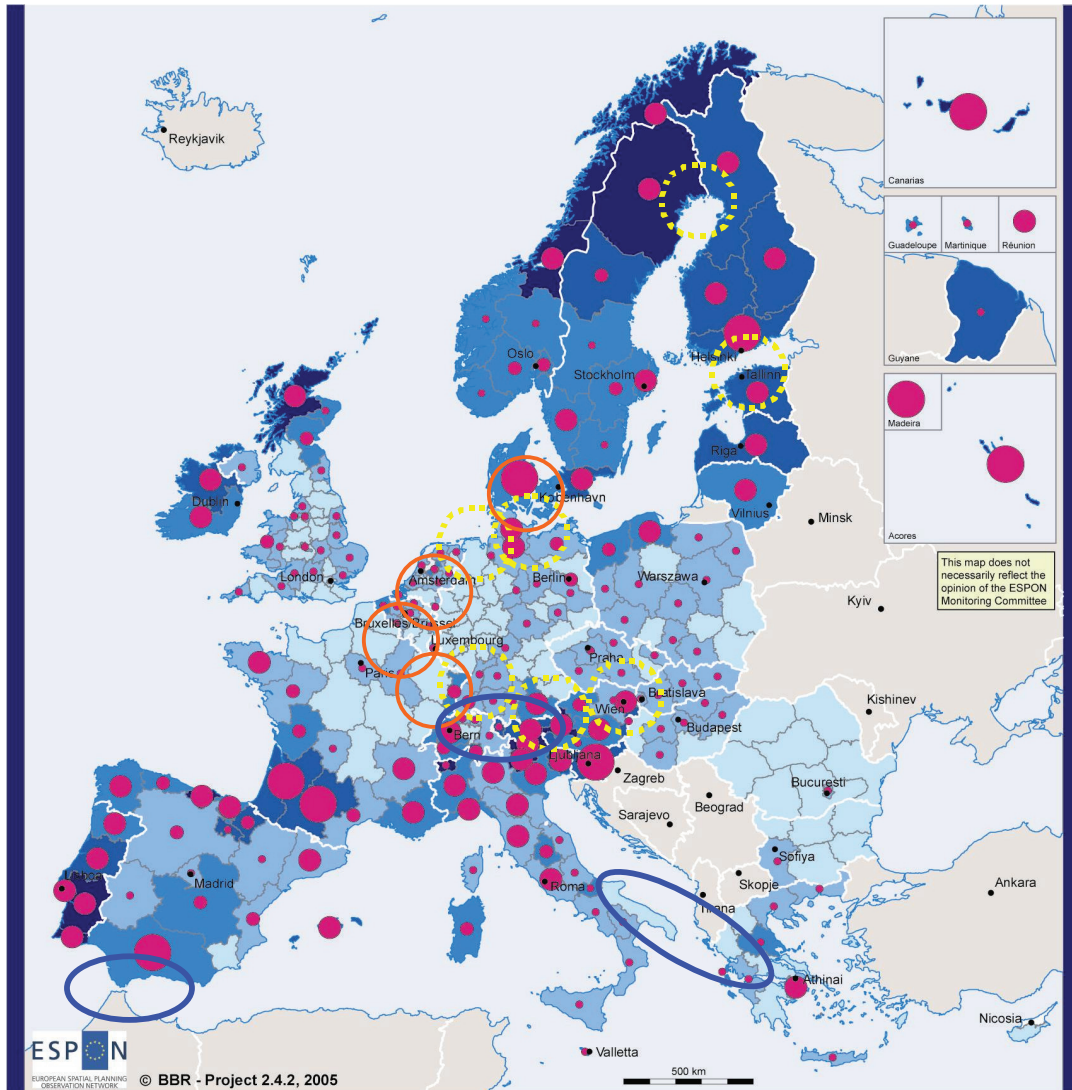
- Each working group has published a list of prioritised problems, and public officials (both Finnish and Russian) have been informed about these problems;
- In a few cases the problems have been solved;
- Good contacts with Russian public authorities (especially with Customs and Road Maintenance Administration) have been established;
- A network of Finnish and Russian chambers of commerce has been set up: it is used for regular information exchanges and for organization of joint commercial and non-commercial events (e.g. Finnish-Russian Business Forum)

**Follow-ups:** The project has de facto created a monitoring system providing on-going gathering and analysis of data on regulation of foreign trade and investments in Russia. This activity occurs within the framework of information exchanges among the chambers of commerce.

**Special features:** Business Forums provide the much-needed institutional platform (and a channel of communication) organising forward and backward linkages between Russian public authorities and Finnish business community, which helps to solve identified problems.

*Source: Case study and [www.interregnord.com/](http://www.interregnord.com/)*

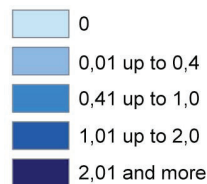
**Map 15: INTERREG IIIA programmes with special focus on knowledge compared to ESPON 2.4.2 “Zoom-In” map of INTERREG IIIB intensity in knowledge projects**



**Number of project co-operations according to operational programmes\***

**Thematic field: distribution of knowledge and information, setup of common institutions**

**weighted by population (in 100.000)**



**absolute number**



© EuroGeographics Association for administrative boundaries  
Regional level: NUTS 2  
Origin of data: ESPON 2.4.2, INTERREG project survey  
Cyprus: data for government controlled areas only

Source: ESPON database

\* based on the INTERREG co-operation areas: Alpine Space, Atlantic Area, Baltic Sea Region, CADSES, Caribbean Area, Madeira - Azores - Canary Islands, North Sea, North West Europe, Northern Periphery, South West Europe, Western Mediterranean, Indian Ocean Area

This map has been modified by ESPON-INTERACT CBC Project and shows the analysis for Knowledge Sharing & Innovation in the EU 27 based on INTERREG III A Programmes - Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG III A Projects, 2006



**Very High % of Knowledge Sharing & Innovation priority Projects**  
Gibraltar-Morocco; Greece; Italy; Alperhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein



**High % of Knowledge Sharing & Innovation priority Projects**  
Öresund region; Wallonia-Lorraine-Luxembourg, Oberrhein Mitte Süd; Rhein-Waal and Rhein-Maas-Noord



**Medium % of Knowledge Sharing & Innovation priority Projects**  
Bavaria-Austria; Austria-Slovakia; Ems-Dollart Region; Storstrom-Ostholstein-Lubeck, Pamina; Nord; Finland-Estonia



### 3.8 Knowledge sharing/Innovation and research

The theme of Knowledge sharing/Innovation and research is the second largest thematic field addressed in the INTERREG IIIA projects, with 19% of all projects taking up this issue as a first, second or third theme. Knowledge sharing has implicit properties of exchanging and building capacity in regions. The emphasis put on networking, research, innovation, knowledge-sharing and institutional learning is a way of developing social and human capital through cross-border cooperation, and to encourage regions to try to occupy a leading place in global information society.

When we transposed the patterns of programmes with a special focus on knowledge to the ESPON 2.4.2 “Zoom-In” map of INTERREG IIIB intensity in knowledge projects (Map 15) we see an interesting territorial pattern. The INTERREG IIIA areas with this focus form an **“Arc of Knowledge”**, or a “C” formed shape from Denmark, through the Benelux countries and around the western and eastern borders of Germany, curving up to Vienna.

Except for the top (Öresund) and bottom (Austria-Slovakia) of this “Arc of knowledge”, (as well as the outliers of the Nordic countries and southern peripheries) this area is one quite devoid of strong INTERREG IIIB patterns of cooperation in the area of knowledge. Again we may be able to say that the overlaps between the IIIA and IIIB programmes are

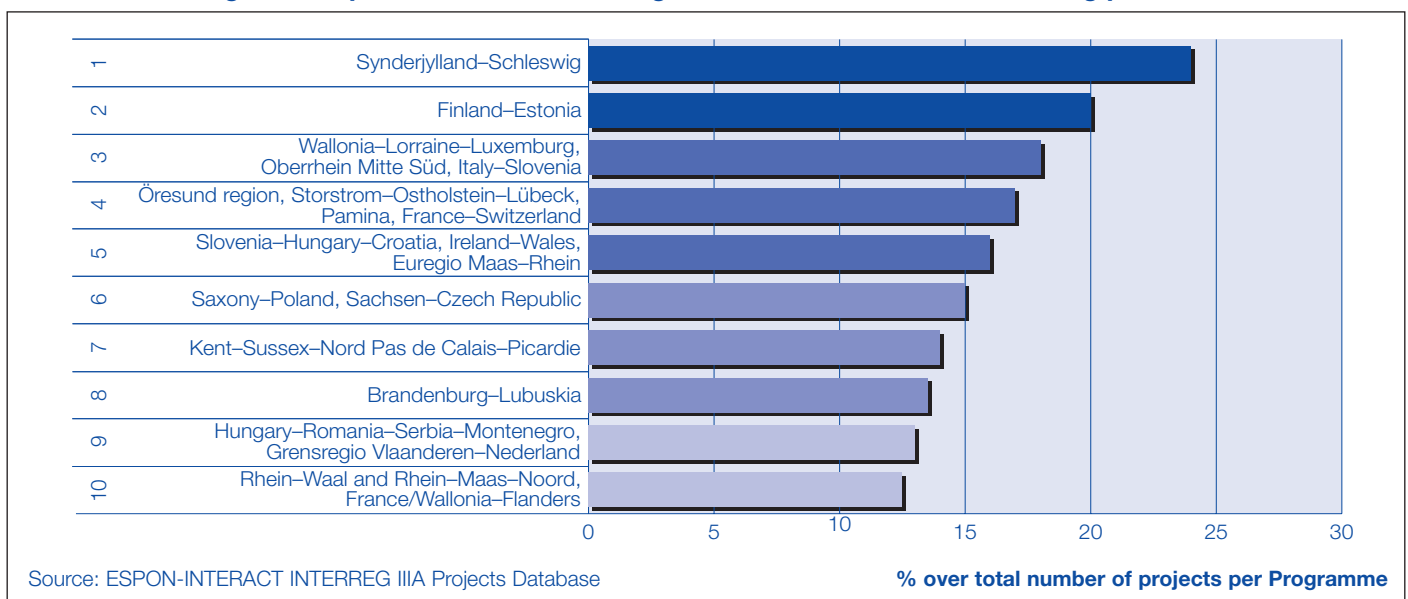
quite small in the case of knowledge forming projects. Perhaps one strand takes up the deficiencies in this area for the other, or this could be due to careful coordination among the regions for preparing projects for the IIIA and IIIB strands. Interestingly the areas where a focus on knowledge is strong in both INTERREG IIIA and IIIB projects (top and bottom of the arc) are areas that show high participation in Euroregions as seen in Map 7).

### 3.9 Education/Training

Around 10% of all INTERREG IIIA projects can be classified according to the theme of “Education/Training”. Projects with this theme tend to address various types of education and training, from instigating university level courses to vocational training to training for public administrators. The importance of this theme can also be reflected in education and training being the method used to achieve cross-border integration. As a theme, education and training is difficult to present on an ESPON map, but programming areas that have a high percentage of projects in this field (over 20%) are Sonderjylland-Schleswig, Finland-Estonia, Wallonia-Lorraine-Luxembourg, Oberrhein Mitte Süd, Italy-Slovenia, Öresund region, Storstrom-Ostholstein-Lubeck, Pamina, and France-Switzerland, Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia, Ireland-Wales and Euregio Maas-Rhein. See Figure 6 below.

Interestingly all of these programme areas, with the exception of Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia are composed of at least

**Figure 6: Top 10 INTERREG IIIA Programmes with education & training priorities**



one region or several with very high economic strength and at least one or several other regions that show lower economic power: that is, there are medium-sized disparities between most of the regions with a project focus on education and training. It may be tempting to allege that in this case it is the region with the greatest economic strength that is transferring knowledge and capacity to the regions that are lagging, but this study has not looked for evidence of this. However in the Finnish-Estonian case (see Annex 1) cross-border cooperation has aimed at promoting “cognitive integration” of participating regions. The emphasis was put on networking, research, innovation, knowledge-sharing, institutional learning, education and training. Thus, by developing their social and human capi-

tal through cross-border cooperation, the regions try to occupy a leading place in global information society. Estonia’s accession to the EU was also a major factor affecting cross-border cooperation. A major part of Finnish-Estonian projects had a knowledge-transfer component facilitating the adjustment of Estonian institutions to the requirements of the EU.

An interesting example of an education and training programme can be found in the Euregio or Euregio Karelia Programme of Finland and Russia, an area with very large economic disparities. This project focuses specifically on border region research and education as seen in the text box below.

### **EuRegio Karelia Programme(Finland-Russia)**

*Project example: EuRegBorder research: EU and Russia*

**Goals:** (1) to develop cooperation between Joensuu (capital of Finnish North Karelia) and Petrozavodsk (capital of Russian Karelia) and promote their status as centres of expertise in border research; (2) to create and promote new border-related research, development and educational projects; and (3) to produce publications for the use of teachers and university staff working in this field.

**Partners:** Finnish and Russian universities and research institutes

**Mode of interaction:** joint research projects, exchange visits, workshops and publications

#### **Results:**

- A number of joint Finish-Russian research projects in the field of border studies have been carried out;
- A study course on border issues and on Northwest Russia (with an e-learning component) has been organized at the University of Joensuu;
- A number of PhD research projects focusing on border issues have been started;
- Border-related research has been intensified in Russian Karelia and has become one of priority areas at the Petrozavodsk Institute of Economy and at the Faculty of Geography of the Petrozavodsk Pedagogical University.

**Follow-ups:** The Education and CBC Project has been recently launched with the aim to broaden the existing cooperation between Eastern Finland and Russian Karelia to include also educational research. The project aims to generate ideas how to match educational courses to the needs of labour markets. Within the project a proposal for action is going to be made in how to respond to structural changes that are in progress in the educational sector.

**Special features:** One of CBC initiatives being implemented in this field is the Cross-Border University. This is an innovative network of Finnish and Russian universities providing harmonised educational post-graduate courses. This project promotes integration of Finnish and Russian educational systems at the tertiary level. In addition, through studying at this University, students are exposed to a wider variety of study options than if they would study only at a national university.

*Source: Case study (Annex 1) and [www.joensuu.fi/ktl/index4.htm](http://www.joensuu.fi/ktl/index4.htm)*

### 3.10 Remote and rural development

Remote and rural development priorities have a much lower frequency of scope in INTERREG IIIA projects than could be expected given the priority in the INTERREG Community Initiative to the most rural areas, particularly on the external borders with the new Member States. Only 5% of all projects address this theme, as a first, second or third theme. Not surprisingly cross-border regions that engage in projects with this theme are in areas with low population density and low urban influence.

As seen transposed against the ESPON 1.1.2 (“Urban-rural relations”) map of an urban-rural typology (Map 16 in next page), those programme areas with the highest percentage of this theme (over 15%) are in areas with low urban influence and low human intervention (uncultivated) parts of Bavaria-Austria and Italy-Austria, which happen to be mountain regions, as shown before in Map 4 of geographic type of land border as well as Map 1 of mountain ranges in Europe in the Annex 4. Other programmes with a high percentage of remote and rural attention (10-15% as a theme) are in low-density agricultural areas with low

urban influence and medium human intervention, such as the Austria-Czech Republic, Saxony-Poland and Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus Programmes.

The Skärgården Programme is also included in this category, which from the map shows an area of high urban influence, but this is due to the influence of Stockholm and Helsinki and disregards the remote and rural islands of the Swedish-Finnish archipelago. Other areas of medium rural and remote thematic focus (in 5-6% of all projects) are the low urban influence, low human intervention areas of Spain-Portugal and Southeast Finland-Russia.

Also many programmes with medium coverage of this theme can be found in the centre of Europe, but these presumably address isolated pockets of rurality within a greater urban fabric.

Projects within this theme address a wide range of rural and remote area issues, ranging from cultural events, marketing rural foodstuffs, environmental concerns or capacity building for farmers, as shown in the project example below from Ireland-Northern Ireland.

#### Programme area Ireland-Northern Ireland

*Project example: Growing Relationships - leadership programme for farm women*

This Leadership Programme for farm women focuses on giving rural women enhanced confidence, communication skills, networking ability and an understanding of policy making processes.

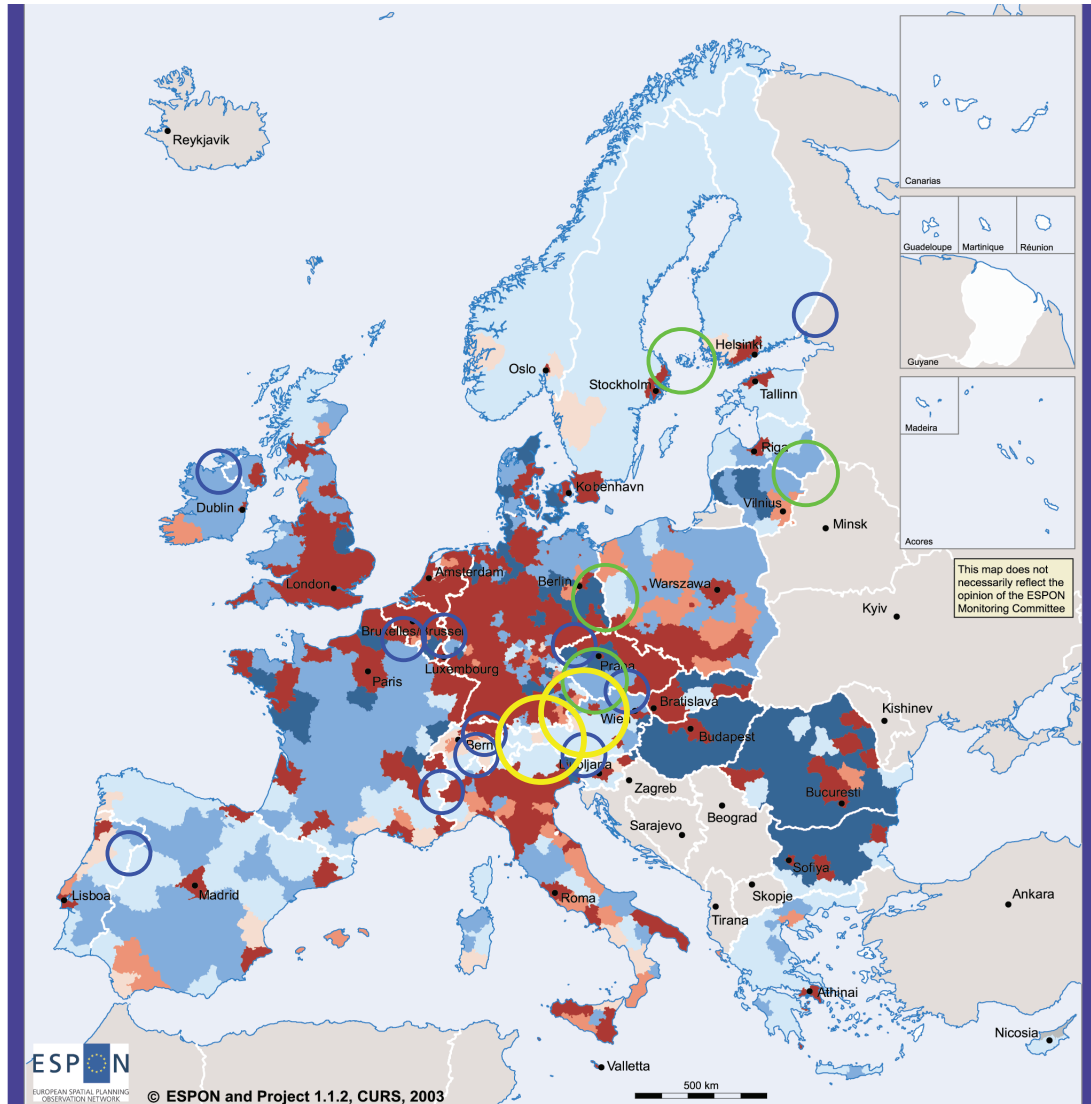
The project will involve a number of key elements, but will ultimately concentrate on personal, social and business progression of farmwomen within the North/South border areas. Specific targets have been established as follows:

- To develop a cross border Rural Leadership pilot project for farmwomen
- Recruiting at least 30 women involved in agricultural to the project
- To develop and deliver activities to enable participants in development of their business.
- This project aims to target social need within County Fermanagh & the border counties of the Republic of Ireland
- To identify the barriers which impede women from upskilling & entering and progressing within the labour market
- Developing new links locally, nationally and internationally with an interest in rural development and women’s issues at all levels.

*Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA project database*



### Map 16: Interreg IIIA with higher priority on remote rural areas development transposed against the ESPON 1.1.2 (“Urban-rural relations”) map of urban-rural typology



**Urban-rural typology, based on population density, ranking of Functional Urban Areas and land cover**

- High urban influence, high human intervention**
- High urban influence, medium human intervention**
- High urban influence, low human intervention**
- Low urban influence, high human intervention**
- Low urban influence, medium human intervention**
- Low urban influence, low human intervention**
- no data**

© EuroGeographics Association for administrative boundaries  
 Regional level: NUTS 3  
 Origin of data: ESPON Project 1.1.2, CURS;  
 CH and NO: classification on basis  
 of calculations of ESPON Project 3.3  
 Ranking of Functional Urban Areas (FUAs):  
 ESPON Project 1.1.1, Nordregio  
 Cyprus: Data for government controlled areas only  
**Source: ESPON database**

This map has been modified by ESPON-INTERACT CBC Project and shows the analysis for Remote rural areas development in the EU 27 based on INTERREG III A Programmes - Source: ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG III A Projects, 2006

- Very High % of Remote rural areas development priority Projects:**  
 Bavaria-Austria; Italy-Austria
- High % of Remote rural areas development priority Projects:**  
 Austria-Czech Republic; Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus; Skårgården; Saxony-Poland
- Medium % of Remote rural areas development priority Projects:**  
 Germany-Luxembourg-Germanophone Belgium; Alcotra; Italy-Switzerland; Ireland-Northern Ireland; Austria-Slovenia; Austria-Slovakia; France-Wallonia/Flanders; Alperhein-Bodensee-Hochrein; Spain-Portugal; South East Finland-Russia; Sachsen-Czech Republic

### 3.11 The future of Territorial Cooperation

During the next period (2007-2013) Cohesion policy in the EU will be refined to include three objectives: The “Convergence Objective”, the “Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective”, and the “European Territorial Cooperation Objective” (Objective 3). The latter, inspired by the INTERREG Community Initiative will encompass three levels: cross-border cooperation through joint programmes; cooperation between transnational zones; and networks for cooperation and the exchange of experiences, much as it does in the 2000-2006 period. However within the first strand, cross-border cooperation, structural changes will be introduced into the programme. Programme areas will become more regulated and enlarged geographically with the provision for the inclusion of sea bor-

ders of up to 150 km between cross-border regions. This will have important ramifications for the creation of new cross-border regions, particularly in the Baltic Sea Region as well as in the English Channel area.

New priorities for the 2007-2013 European Territorial Cooperation Objective are both fewer and of a more strategic nature to fulfilling the Lisbon goals. These themes consolidate many of the ESPON themes quite nicely, as shown in Table 3 below. Thus the exercise of classifying INTERREG IIIA projects according to selected themes and making observations as to the types of regions that currently address these themes may shed some light on the potential of cross-border cooperation in next period of European Territorial Cooperation.

**Table 6: New territorial cooperation themes and selected themes in ESPON-INTERACT INTERREG IIIA database**

New Priorities	Selected Themes
Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Tourism, Culture, Cross-border Trade <b>(Development)</b>	7) Growth, employment and competitiveness 8) Knowledge sharing and Innovation
Protection and management of natural and cultural resources, natural and technological risks <b>(Nature, Culture and Risk)</b>	4) Environment and Quality of life 5) Hazards
Links between urban and rural areas <b>(Urban-rural)</b>	10) Remote and rural areas
Access to transport, information and ICT, water, waste and energy facilities <b>(Accessibility and infrastructure)</b>	1) Transport 2) ICT 3) Energy
Collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructure, Health, culture, tourism, Education <b>(Capacity building)</b>	6) Social and cross-border social interaction 9) Education, training

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations for future cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation is a powerful force affecting spatial socio-economic structures of neighbouring regions. It has become clearer that state borders represent not only a liability, but also an asset, when different conditions (social, economic, cultural, political and regulatory) on both sides of the border can be capitalised and exploited for the benefit of local actors. Those communities that are capable of “taming” the border potential have already been turned into centres of growth.

### 4.1 Observed trends of themes and intensity of cross-border cooperation

This study has illuminated a number of patterns and trends regarding border regions, cross-border regions and cross-border cooperation in the EU and neighbouring countries. The border regions of Europe as a whole average much lower population density and economic strength than non-border regions. Those regions that partly or wholly form the external border of the EU have more pronounced socio-economic challenges than “internal” border regions.

The **geographic type of border** and number of international border crossings do not seem to have a bearing on the intensity of INTERREG IIIA participation. In fact, cross-border regions seem to have found ways to capitalise on the potentialities that a less “open” border represents.

With the exception a few “hot spots”, a high rate of activity in **Euroregions or Working Communities** does not necessarily mean a high intensity of INTERREG IIIA projects. Yet while membership in a several Euroregion or Working Community may not provide any corollaries as to the quantity of INTERREG IIIA cooperation projects, it may very well be a contributing reason to the quality or effectiveness of INTERREG IIIA cooperation projects.

Large economic disparities within INTERREG IIIA programmes seem to be **neither an impetus nor a barrier** to intensity of project cooperation. However greatest project intensity seems to appear among cross-border regions where at least one group of regions exhibits high economic strength.

INTERREG IIIA projects with **“hard” infrastructure** or tangible themes such as Transport, ICT or Energy have received less attention as a theme than “softer” or intangible projects dealing with growth, knowledge or culture. The much higher average project cost of “hard” projects presumably partly explains their small absolute number. “Softer” projects may also attract a different type of stakeholder or actor participant and enable more decentralised actors to participate at a fairly low cost.

INTERREG IIIA programming areas with an above average focus on **transport** are almost exclusively located at the frontier between the EU 15 and EU 10, or within the new Member States or Accession countries with border crossing Transnational Potential Urban Strategic Horizons.

**Energy** and **ICT** addressed as themes tend to congregate in cross-border areas with high or very high economic disparities.

There appears to be very little overlap between INTERREG IIIA and INTERREG IIIB programme areas that focus on **culture and cross-border social interaction**. In fact it seems that these two INTERREG III strands complement each other nicely in this area, with IIIA, not surprisingly, taking the lead on this issue.

INTERREG IIIA projects addressing **growth, competitiveness and employment** as a main theme tend to be clustered in areas of high economic disparities, as well as mixed indicators for Lisbon performance.

An **“Arc of cross-border knowledge”** around the northern, western and southern peripheries of Germany is apparent in INTERREG IIIA programmes dealing with knowledge sharing/innovation and research. Except for the very top and bottom of this “arc” there is little overlap with INTERREG IIIB projects that deal with knowledge.

Cross-border regions that engage in projects **1** as a theme are very few and tend to be located in areas with low population density and low urban influence, particularly in mountain regions.

## 4.2 Recommendations for future cross-border cooperation priorities

If this study has shown anything, it is that generally applicable recommendations for future cross-border cooperation are not always relevant due to the very large diversity of cross-border regions. The results of this study have also shown that INTERREG IIIA programmes already seem to be quite targeted in working within their territorial specificities and potentials.

Most of the themes examined seem to have a wide coverage of the most important aspects of cooperation within these themes (such as growth, employment and competitiveness or culture and cross-border social interaction) and while we certainly recommend a continuation of territorial cooperation on these themes, the analysis of the INTERREG IIIA programme according to selected themes has revealed that a few important themes seem to be under-represented in IIIA projects. Thus these recommendations for further cross-border cooperation will focus on those themes that, while extremely important, have had relatively little representation in INTERREG IIIA projects during 2000-2006.

### **Urban-rural relations in cross-border cooperation:**

ESPON research has highlighted the role of urban-rural relationships in Europe (ESPON 1.1.2 “Urban-Rural”) in terms of their structural and functional properties of both the urban and rural fabrics. This could also be an important priority for cross-border cooperation projects, especially considering that the next period of Territorial Cooperation states the “links between urban and rural areas” as a specific theme. To date, rural and remote areas command relatively little attention in INTERREG IIIA projects. But rural and remote areas, due to their low population density, may be able to deal less effectively with the processes of structural change that are affecting all European territories. Thus a future priority for territorial cooperation could be specifically focused on how rural and remote areas can develop functional links with surrounding urban areas, particularly in a cross-border setting, to discourage loss of population and unemployment and encourage preservation of the natural and cultural heritage. Envisioning such a project could entail that special emphasis would be placed on the strengthening ties between the rural and remote areas and nearby urban areas within a cross-border region and fin-

ding methods, through benchmarking, transfer of experience and generation of new solutions, to attain functional complementarity of urban and rural areas. Ideas for projects addressed could be making tourism more accessible by transport infrastructure or marketing of rural, cultural or natural heritage.

**Energy:** In light of securing energy provision, a Community priority for the future will be to reduce traditional energy dependency through improvement in energy efficiency and renewables<sup>18</sup>. It would seem that this issue would be a prime candidate for cross-border cooperation, and thus priorities for the 2007-2013 period of cross-border cooperation should make special inclusion for projects dealing with alternative and renewable forms of energy, as well as the transfer of knowledge and capacity regarding renewable energy provision. Our analysis has shown that energy projects tend to be located in cross-border areas that exhibit a high degree of economic disparity between regions and seem to include important aspects of transfer of knowledge and R&D. Thus energy projects appear to be also fulfilling the function of attempting to boost greater regional competitiveness and employment opportunities. In this sense further cross-border cooperation efforts could be targeted to renewable energy projects that have a role in job creation in addition to striving for energy self-sufficiency.

**Hazards:** hazards seem to be addressed in the geographic areas with high risk for natural or technologic catastrophes. However we can expect that this area will grow in importance as a topic for cross-border cooperation, particularly as EU regions begin to prioritise local and regional adaptation measures to a changing climate and the extreme weather events that are associated with this phenomenon. It is seen through our analysis of the potential for integration based on geographical type of border that many cross-border regions with a river, sea or mountain border could be at greater risk for the cross-border effects of natural hazards. Planning and infrastructure investments to deal with the hazards of climate change in cross-border regions sharing a similar natural environment, such as a river prone to flooding or a drought-sensitive agricultural plain, could be important areas to cooperate in, particularly for those cross-border regions that display high economic disparities.

<sup>18</sup> Proposal for a Council Decision on Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion (COM(2006) 386 Final),

**Institutional capacity building:** In the ESPON-INTERACT survey on cross-border cooperation when asked which themes of INTERREG IIIA have not been sufficiently addressed in programmes, respondents generally felt satisfied with the priorities of their programmes, but mentioned gaps in topics such as applied research, better understanding Community cooperation and developing tools for education and communication. Furthermore when asked which themes of future cooperation they would find most useful in their cross-border region, 70.8% of all respondents mentioned the theme of institutional capacity building for cross-border and transnational cooperation. Such a theme is implicit in many of the programme priorities, but could be made even more explicit, particularly in those programmes that were previously funded by the Phare, Tacis, MEDA, CARDS, ISPA and SAPARD programmes, where participants have different experiences with Community programmes and the economic disparities are greatest, as described in section 2.8 Such a theme would be in the lower spectrum of the budget, but could be specifically tailored to the territorial situation of the cross-border region.

### 4.3 Recommendations for applied ESPON research

The ESPON Programme appears to be very little known among the INTERREG IIIA community. At the same time, ESPON has previously paid very little attention to patterns of cross-border cooperation, prioritising instead the more spatial aspects of transnational cooperation. This is perhaps unavoidable given the focus of the ESPON 2006 Programme on polycentric development as a tool to achieve territorial cohesion and balanced competitiveness of the European space; a focus that does not seem to speak to INTERREG IIIA participants in the same way it does to INTERREG IIIB programmes, given their more limited territorial scope.

This study and the other ESPON-INTERACT studies can be seen as pilot attempts to unearth themes of applied research for the ESPON 2013 Programme concerning territorial cooperation. As the result of this study, several areas of applied ESPON research concerning cross-border cooperation can be delineated.

The linkages between **cross-border cooperation and spatial regional structure** to study how to link spatial

development with territorial cooperation should become a subject for further research within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme. Such a project could focus on the more strategic aspects of spatial regional structure and analyse how more “bottom-up” efforts such as INTERREG IIIA programmes have been instrumental in creating some of the preconditions for regional development. An evaluation of the effectiveness of transport, ICT and energy and growth-oriented projects of cross-border cooperation in selected INTERREG IIIA programmes would be a starting point for determining the **added-value** of territorial cooperation, particularly within the field of **urban-rural relations**. Such a study would complement the work already done by ESPON on INTERREG IIIB programmes and spatial structures (such as in the 2.4.2 “Zoom-In” project).

**The role of Euroregions in achieving territorial cohesion and balanced competitiveness** in Europe is also an idea that should be considered for an ESPON project. This project has shown that there seems to be very little relationship between the presence of Euroregions or Working Communities and project intensity of INTERREG IIIA programmes. However, we do suspect that Euroregions, while not influencing the quantity of INTERREG IIIA projects in a cross-border region, may very well have an important influence on the quality or effectiveness of such projects towards achieving territorial cohesion and balanced competitiveness. This project has not been able to explore this hypothesis, but it is an area that could fruitfully be studied in a larger ESPON 2013 project. Euroregions and Working Communities have a long history of work towards cultural and socio-economic integration in Europe, but their achievements across the European space are so wide that this is a difficult issue to address. This project idea could perhaps be included in a more encompassing project on **territorial capital**; looking at the current practices of Euroregions and the support they give to cross-border and transnational cooperation to providing visions and strategies to cross-border functional regions. Such a project could go much more deeply into how to deal with the **perceived barriers and potentials to cross-border cooperation and reinforcing cross-border urban networks**. Implicit would also be the collective learning processes of cross-border cooperation, as a complement to the ESPON 2.2.1 “Territorial effects of the Structural Funds” study on learning in INTERREG IIIB. This could be particularly pertinent with regard to the new, territorially enlarged areas of cross-border cooperation in the



new European Territorial Cooperation Objective, which may make some new cross-border cooperation areas a bit more similar to IIIB areas in terms of the mandate to help achieve sustainable growth.

Cross-border regions are also **potential stakeholders** that could benefit from targeted analysis based on user demand of the ESPON 2013 Programme. This would aid in anchoring the ESPON 2013 programme analyses with the needs of stakeholders such as cross-border regions, INTERACT or Euroregions. Such an ESPON study could examine in depth the current territorial situation of cross-border regions with regard to **certain macro-regions** such as CADSES or the Baltic Sea Region with the goal to further capitalise on the potentials for cross-border integration according to the specificities of the barriers to and possibilities for integration; geographical, cultural, structural, economic, administrative. An ESPON project of this sort could analyse the extent to which **different types of stakeholders** (public, private, and various governance levels) are involved in certain territorial cooperation programmes (either delimited by geography or theme) and the degree to which more actors have been centralised or decentralised. As the case study on Spain-Morocco and Spain-Portugal shows (Annex 2) the type of actor involved in INTERREG IIIA projects has a great bearing on the thematic choices made and the degree of horizontal integration that occurs within the projects. Thus a more focused study on the **actors** involved in territorial cooperation and how they contribute to increasing territorial cohesion through cross-border cooperation would yield very fruitful results and recommendations for further territorial cooperation. Not only would these more territorially-targeted and actor-oriented studies help in understanding the European spatial tissue on a delimited level, but they may help to increase the dissemination of ESPON and its scientific accomplishments at levels more applicable to practitioners.

The specific situation of **border regions, particularly those regions forming the external border of the EU** now and after the 2007 enlargement should be the focus of an ESPON 2013 project. As relations between the EU countries and the new neighbours grow in importance, it would benefit ESPON to take a specific look at **EU - non-EU cross-border relations**. This ESPON-INTERACT study has displayed how border regions, especially those that form the external border of the European Union, face

particular challenges in terms of economic strength. Other ESPON 2006 projects have determined that these regions also are in need of further efforts to achieve balanced competitiveness and territorial cohesion. Thus various forms of territorial cooperation with neighbouring countries such as Russia, Ukraine, the Balkans, Belarus and North Africa could become the subject of ESPON research in the future. The case studies presented in the ESPON-INTERACT study on cross-border cooperation could form a good starting point for such a project.

#### 4.4 Interface between INTERREG and ESPON

Both INTERREG (and the future Territorial Cooperation Objective) and ESPON can begin with concrete actions that could aid in the interface between the two programmes.

**INTERREG** programmes of all strands, but particularly IIIA, should be more amenable to making programme data available to ESPON and other research endeavours. This would enable a more thorough analysis of all programming areas and priorities. In addition cross-border regions organisational structures may be able to provide data on indicators such as cross-border flows, an area that ESPON has thus far been unable to tackle for the entire European Union and neighbours.

Aside from a specific focus on the dynamics of cross-border cooperation, the **ESPON 2013 Programme** would benefit from making its scientific results more accessible to the cross-border cooperation community. This could perhaps be done by publishing short pamphlets of ESPON maps to peak the interest of the cross-border community to seeing just how “their” region is performing in relation to other regions. A focus on maps, rather than descriptive text, would ease problems of language and perhaps alleviate the need for translation. This would also enable cross-border regions to make better use of the wide range of maps and datasets provided by ESPON.

Finally a continued **ESPON-INTERACT** collaboration should be extended, with a focus on spreading the results of the ESPON 2013 Programme that might be of interest to INTERREG IIIA programmes. This effort should be considered already in the initial stages of the ESPON 2013 Programme and territorial cooperation for 2007-2013.



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