

Peer-learning workshop:

Supporting the establishment of Riga Metropolitan Area Action Plan

SUMMARY

Time and place: June 13-14, 2018. Riga Planning Region, Latvia

Venue: Jurmala city museum, Tirgonu street 29, Majori, Jurmala

Participants: Overall **50 participants** – ESPON EGTC, SPIMA experts, Riga Planning Region, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Road Transport Administration, VASAB Secretariat, Riga City Council Development Department, Jurmala City Council, Jelgava City Council, spatial planners from Riga metropolitan area local municipalities, University of Latvia, Urban Institute, NGO's, consultants and other stakeholders.

Format: Peer-to-peer learning workshop – 2 days & 3 sessions

1st day – I and II plenary session (feedback & discussions, questions & answers session)

2nd day – III workshop session (results presentation & recommendations)

Context: Involving current stakeholders of SPIMA Targeted Analysis to act as ambassadors in a peer-to-peer learning exercise together with selected external experts, the workshop provided a **critical review and advice on ongoing policy developments of Riga Metropolitan planning approach**. The discussions held on the basis of the results of this targeted analysis and the experience of invited stakeholders in their application.

Objectives: The workshop aims at supporting Riga Planning Region (RPR) in designing Riga's Metropolitan planning approach and identifying research topics and partnerships for future potential cooperation projects on metropolitan challenges. In that perspective, the workshop included two stages:

- Selection of relevant SPIMA outputs and discussion about RPR policy development according to the different policy approaches and experiences for metropolitan planning implemented by invited stakeholders;
- Discussion about knowledge gaps which could usefully be filled with an external support and providing useful and innovative insights for other European metropolitan areas.

Situation and challenges: Riga Planning Region is a capital region, one of five planning regions in Latvia, that ensures the planning and coordination of regional development and cooperation between local governments and other state administrative institutions. During last decade, because of expansion of urban territories, great changes of spatial structures have taken place in Riga and its surrounding areas forming Riga's functional region. Riga is the capital of Latvia and around the city there is a large metropolitan area which is home to more than half of the country's residents (1,1 million). As a result, various suburban spatial units have formed that differ by their social structure, economic performance and mutual collaboration. Metropolitan area can be regarded as a bordering space between two interacting areas - city and rural areas.

Scope of the workshop: As determined by national and regional planning documents, the **main strategic issues in the Riga metropolitan area are related to the promotion of the international competitiveness of Riga metropolis**. Aiming at this goal it's essential to coordinate development processes in the area, including key issues such as population structure, transport and mobility, regional competitiveness and the coordinated development and promotion of business infrastructure, public services (education, health, culture, etc.) and the state of the natural environment.

As the decision to start the elaboration of a Metropolitan Area Action Plan has been taken, Riga Planning Region is looking for advice from other European metropolitan policy makers. At the beginning phase of elaboration of Metropolitan Plan, RPR already defined main thematic directions:

- **Metropolitan area governance;**
- **Regional and international competitiveness;**
- **Settlement structure and housing;**
- **Transport and mobility;**
- **Public services;**
- **Natural environment.**

Riga Planning Region has selected the following most topical themes for discussion during workshop:

- **Metropolitan area governance** (common understanding of metropolitan area territorial coverage (core area, outer metropolis, peripheral areas), governance models, cooperation between different stakeholders, responsibilities, decision-making and implementation mechanisms);
- **Regional and international competitiveness** (identification and advancing of main driving forces, regional marketing and branding – representation of metropolitan area values and resources in the international arena);
- **Settlement structure - Transport - Public services interaction** (role of smaller satellite cities and regional development centers around capital city Riga, solutions in urban sprawl areas, provision of effective public services and mobility).

RIGA METROPOLITAN AREA – FACTS, SITUATION & TENDENCIES

- Riga metropolitan area territory is defined in “Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030”;
- Riga metropolitan area – space of national interest;
- Riga metropolis is the **driving force of Latvia's economy**, education, science, tourism, sports and culture;
- **Administrative region vs. Functional region (Figure 1);**
- Metropolitan area holds about **20 % of Latvia's territory** and **60 % of Latvia's overall population** – 1,1 million inhabitants;

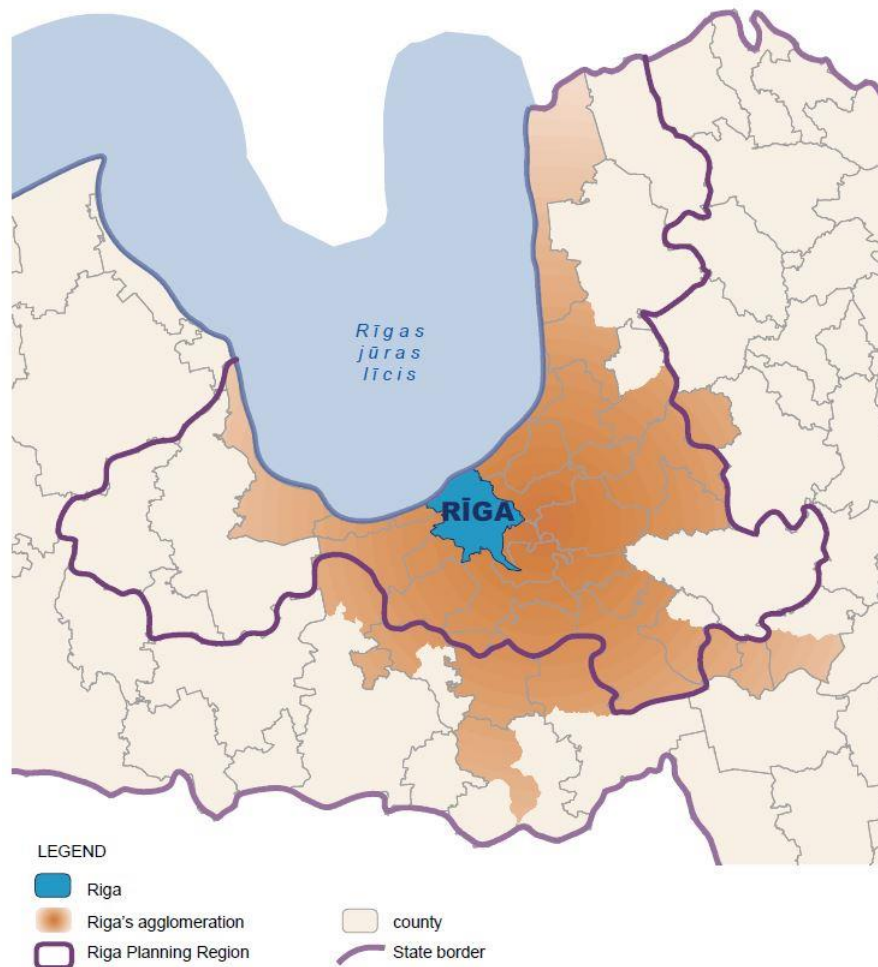


Figure 1. Riga Planning Region and Riga's agglomeration

- About **80 %** of Latvia's overall socio economic activity (GDP, industry, investments, education & science, etc);
- Major cities – **Riga** (700 K inh.), **Jelgava** (61 K inh.), **Jurmala** (57 K inh.);
- **Regional centres** – Ogrē, Sigulda, Tukums (varies 15-30 K inh.) Possibly also Bauska and Limbazi to be included;
- Number of local municipalities – about 30 (core area 15 and outer area 15);
- **Population growth in core area** (Pieriga), but **decrease in remote areas**;
- Population change 2010-2017 – core area (varies +5 % till 25 %), Regional centres (varies +5 % till -5 %), Remote areas (varies -5 % till -15 %);
- **Population density** – average in metropolitan area 110 inh./km², core area 180 inh./km²;
- **Economics** (in Riga region) – GDP per capita 16 647 EUR, average bruto salary 1006 EUR, unemployment 3,3 %;
- The most topical issues are connected with **mobility** – internal and external accessibility, Rail Baltica context and Riga-Pieriga transport system integration;
- Still visible **urban sprawl consequences** – especially regarding **settlement structure and functionality**, as well as **public services and public transport** provision;
- **Commuting intensity** from adjacent municipalities to Riga exceeds 50 % of labour.

RIGA METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING APPROACH

Aim of “Riga Metropolitan Area Action Plan” (Metropolitan Plan) elaboration is to achieve **coherent development of Riga metropolitan area and coordination of ongoing processes** by using integrated approach and complex solutions in order to coordinate the interests of state, Riga city, surrounding local governments, state and inhabitants. **Metropolitan Plan serves as a basis for negotiations** between metropolitan municipalities, national government and ministries on attracting the necessary funding both in the current EU funds planning period and in preparation for the distribution of investments for the next programming period (2020+). The **indirect goal is to create qualitative dialogue among main metropolitan development actors** during the process of elaboration and implementation of this Metropolitan Plan.

Riga Planning Region (RPR) initiated and currently is leading process of metropolitan issues. According to 16.03.2018. decision of RPR Development Council terms of reference for elaboration of “Riga Metropolitan Area Action Plan” has been approved. It’s stated that directions of action and **specific activities should be planned by taking into account 3 dimensions – TIME, TERRITORIAL and THEMATICAL framework.**

1) TIME FRAMEWORK:

- **Long-term strategic objectives** – common understanding of metropolitan area and long-term vision (2030+);
- **Mid-term solutions** – issues to be addressed (2020+);
- **Short-term solutions** or immediate steps (‘acute needs’ of next 3 years).

2) TERRITORIAL FRAMEWORK:

- **Riga metropolis CORE area** – Riga, adjacent and closest areas
- **Riga metropolis OUTER area** – Metropolitan centers and nearest territories
- **Riga metropolis DIRECT IMPACT area** - Direct functional areas of influence, mainly in the direction of major transport corridors

3) THEMATICAL (STRATEGICAL) FRAMEWORK, main directions:

- **Metropolitan area governance** (governance models, cooperation between different stakeholders, responsibilities, decision-making and implementation mechanisms);
- **Regional and international competitiveness** (business environment, tourism, culture, sports, regional marketing and branding);
- **Settlement structure** (housing and the living environment of populated areas, urban sprawl consequences);
- **Transport and mobility** (accessibility and public transport);
- **Public services** (education, lifelong learning, health, culture and leisure time activities);
- **Natural environment** (quality and condition of the environment, natural resources management, effects of climate change).

RELEVANT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Main territory development planning documents to be reviewed during Metropolitan Plan elaboration process:

- **Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030**;
- National Development Plan 2014-2020;
- Regional Policy Guidelines 2013-2019;
- **Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2014-2030** and Development Programme 2014-2020;
- Zemgale Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2030 and Development Programme 2015-2020;
- Sustainable development strategies and development programmes of metropolitan area local municipalities (focus on **Riga City Sustainable Development Strategy 2030**);
- Thematic sectoral policy planning documents related to major metropolitan area development issues – regional policy, mobility, education etc.

Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030 (approved 2010)

Territories and **areas with outstanding value and importance for sustainable development** of the country, preservation of identity and which contain strategic resources significant for the development of the country are considered as the **spaces of national interest**. Concurrently different conflicts of interests and problems exceeding the competence of regions and certain sectors are emerging in these territories, therefore, **complex solutions** and purposeful state policy is necessary.

The perspective of spatial development marks the following as the spaces of national interest (**Figure 2**) - rural development space, coast of the Baltic Sea, **Riga metropolitan area**, Eastern border and outstanding areas of nature, landscapes and cultural history territories.

Riga metropolitan area is formed by the city of Riga together with nearby cities of different size – Jūrmala, Olaine, Jelgava, Baldone, Salaspils, Ogre and Sigulda. Taking into account the arched location thereof and relatively convenient accessibility of Riga, strong functional links have emerged which are determined by the attractiveness of Riga as economical, financial and cultural centre and which are promoted by everyday commuting of inhabitants in the direction work-home.

The morphological border of the city of Riga is extending far over its administrative borders – **the zone of urban development of Riga has emerged** which is stimulated by different economic activities. However, the lack of co-ordinated planning of the development of suburban territories causes whole spectrum of problems, including deterioration of transport situation, reduction of green and recreational territories of Pierīga, lack of appropriate infrastructure etc.

Co-ordinated development of the spatial structure of the area of Riga metropolis and co-ordination of the processes occurring therein should be attained by drawing up an **integrated perspective for spatial development (thematic planning)** and using integrated approach and complex solutions in order to co-ordinate the different interests of Riga, surrounding local governments, state and inhabitants.

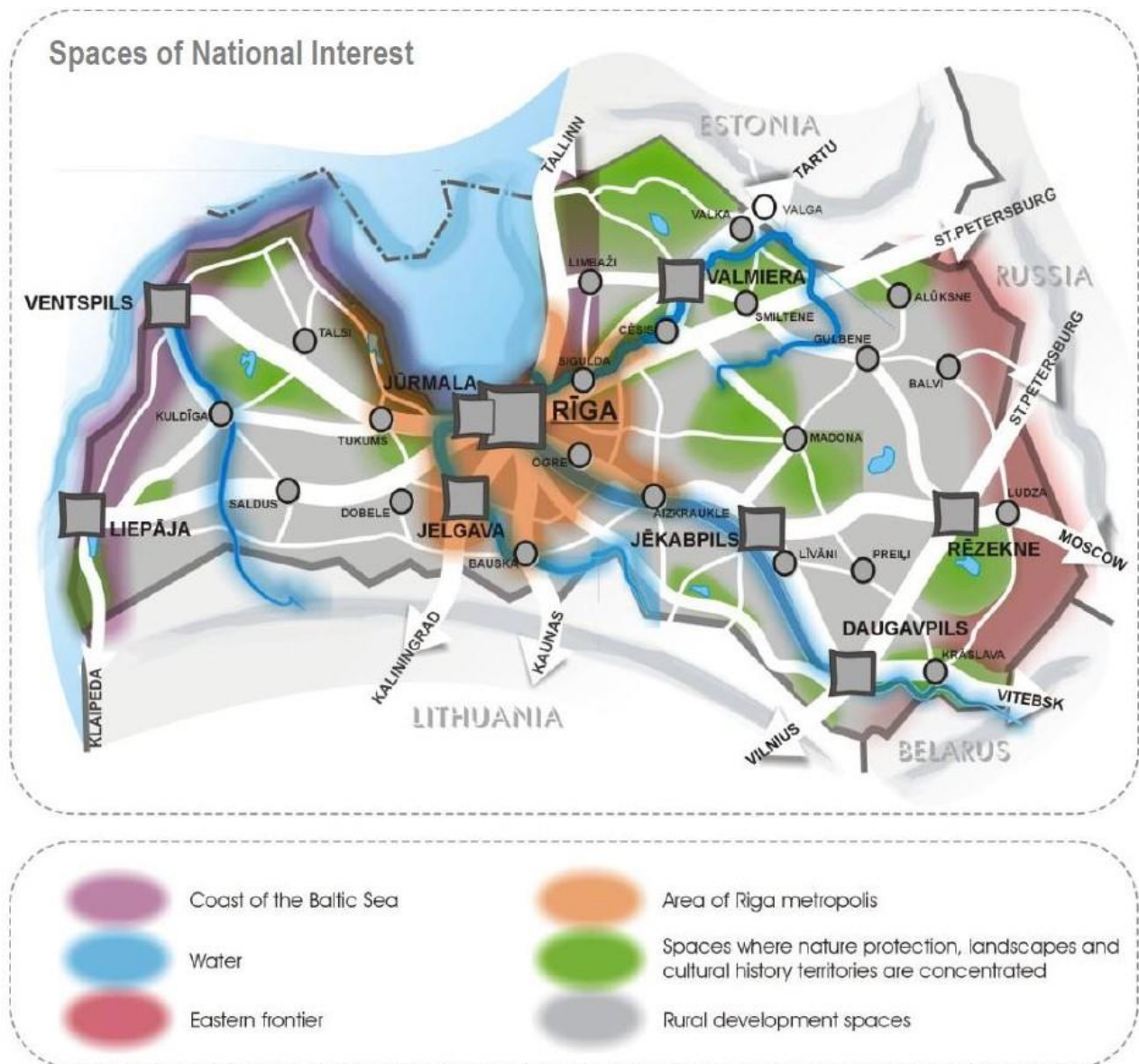


Figure 2. Spaces of national interest in Latvia

Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2014-2030 (approved 2015)

The socio-economic, technological and scientific development of the region is defined by a development centre of national, international and European significance – the city of Riga along with its agglomeration. The functional space of the region noticeably surpasses the borders of the region, which also includes the territories of the surrounding regions in the economic and spatial population distribution structure (Figure 3).

Riga metropolitan area holds the most significant cultural, educational, scientific, sports, healthcare, and transport infrastructure objects of the state.

Respecting the idea of polycentrism and increasing role of a place in social planning, as well as taking into account Rīga's particular international scale in Latvia and the region, the **strategy emphasises the ensemble of relationships between the centre and remote areas in different spatial scales.**

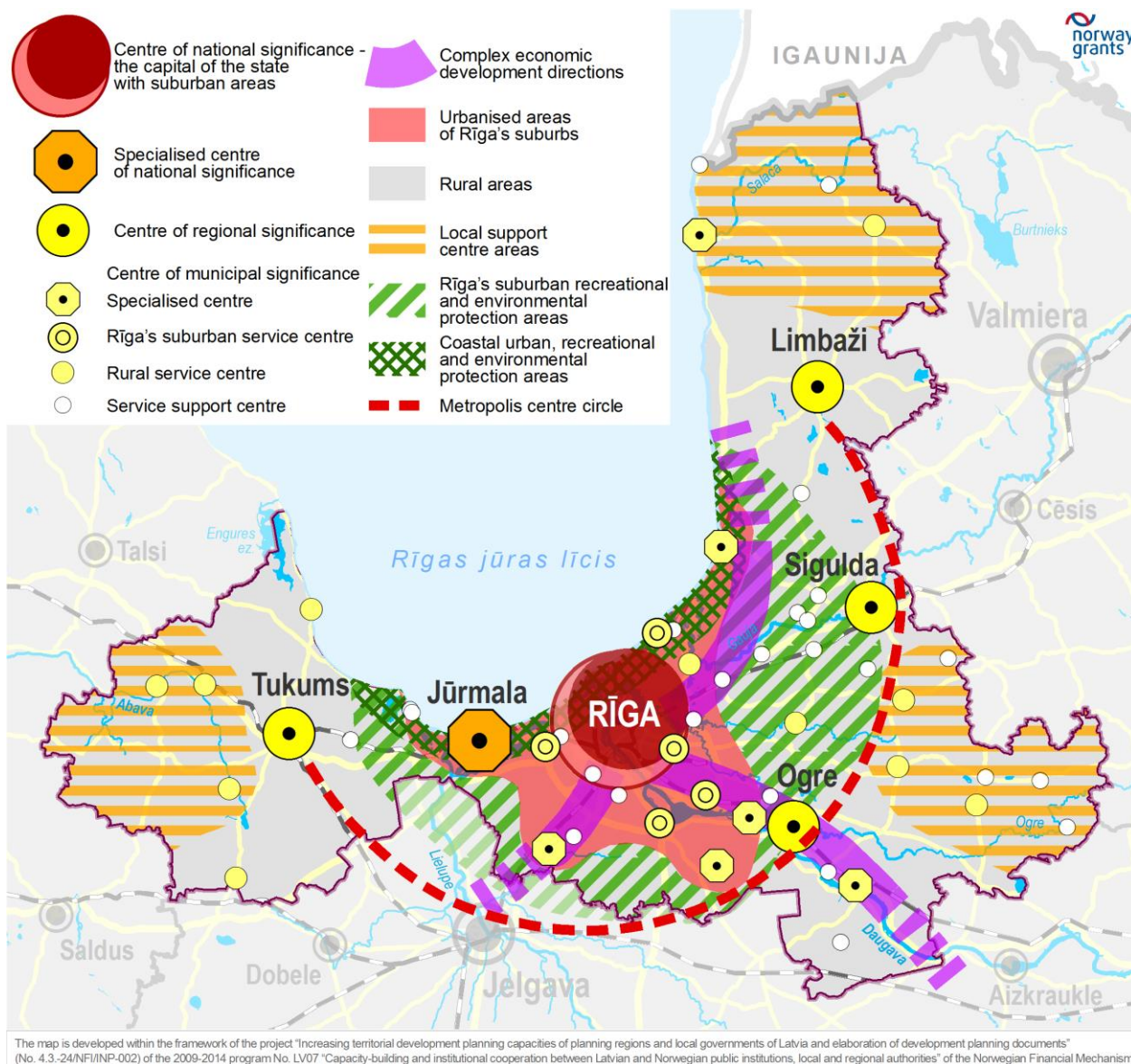


Figure 3. Spatial perspective of the distribution of population in Riga region

Integration of Riga and areas of its suburbs is essential in the regional scale, forming an administratively and economically fragmented but **functionally unified space that requires jointly coordinated development planning and cooperation.**

Riga City Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 (approved 2014)

Development vision - Riga in 2030 is an **internationally recognisable Northern European metropolis**. Absolute affiliation of Riga with the Northern European metropolises is grounded by life quality in the city, an innovative economy, smart and resource-saving administration, and modern management combined with the active participation of inhabitants.

Riga is a compact city. Riga is well-known for its distinctive atmosphere, architecture, cultural environment, city rhythm, and creative people. The city fits well within the international transport networks. **A single economy of the area of the metropolis of Riga is the basis for the welfare of all the inhabitants of the area**, as well as it greatly contributes to the development of the entire country.

Riga till 2030 will strive for the **achievement of good cooperation within the agglomeration**.

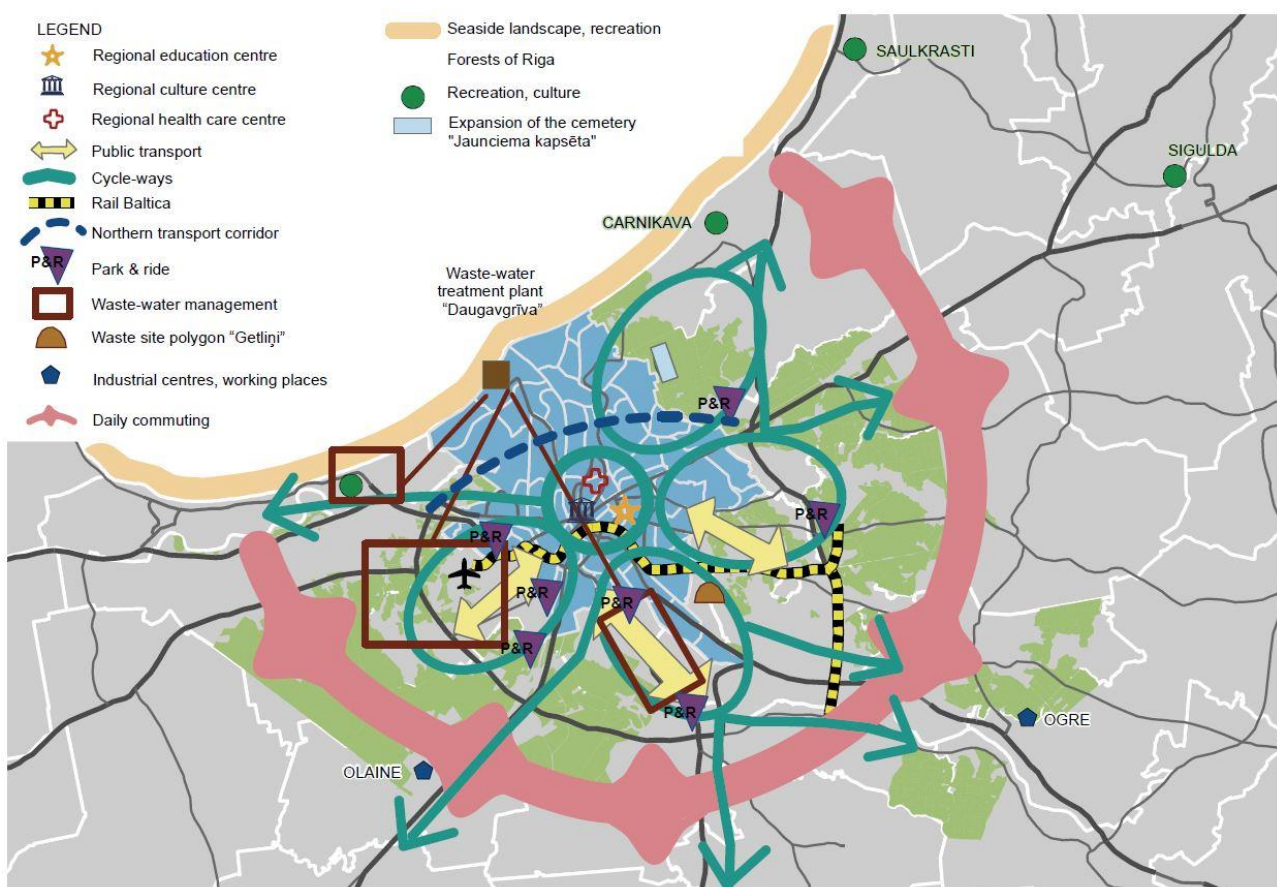


Figure 4. Main cooperation directions of Riga city

Territory specialisation of Riga as a regional centre is mainly related to the **daily commuting of inhabitants of Riga's agglomeration to the metropolis**. On a regional scale, Riga is the centre of the economy, general and non-formal education, cultural and unique urban environment, health care, as well as the centre for shopping, leisure activities, and various services.

A precondition for the development of the agglomeration of the entire Riga — close and constructive cooperation of municipalities ([Figure 4](#)).

Municipality of the city of Riga has changed the planning paradigm in the city — from very liberal and fragmentary scattered planning to one that emphasises socially responsible, sustainable, and compact development of the city. **The development model of a compact city corresponds to demographic tendencies in Riga and its agglomeration** as well, and such an approach is considered to be the most appropriate by many local and foreign city development experts. In the new city development strategy, the priority development territories are concentrated around the core of the city continuing it. Also certain specific territories in the periphery of the city have been determined as a priority — for recreation and the development of manufacturing.

TERRITORIAL FRAMEWORK – METROPOLITAN SPACES

As defined in Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030 and RPR planning documents also in context of Metropolitan Plan **Riga metropolitan area is seen as a space** of economic and social movement which is **functionally linked with the capital**.

Population mobility indicators show that **Riga together with Pieriga is an important link for the whole territory of Latvia**. After a relatively high intensity of daily commuting the metropolis covers not only the territories adjacent to Riga, but also extends further covering parts of the municipalities of Riga metropolitan centers (Tukums, Jelgava, Ogre, Sigulda, Limbazi).

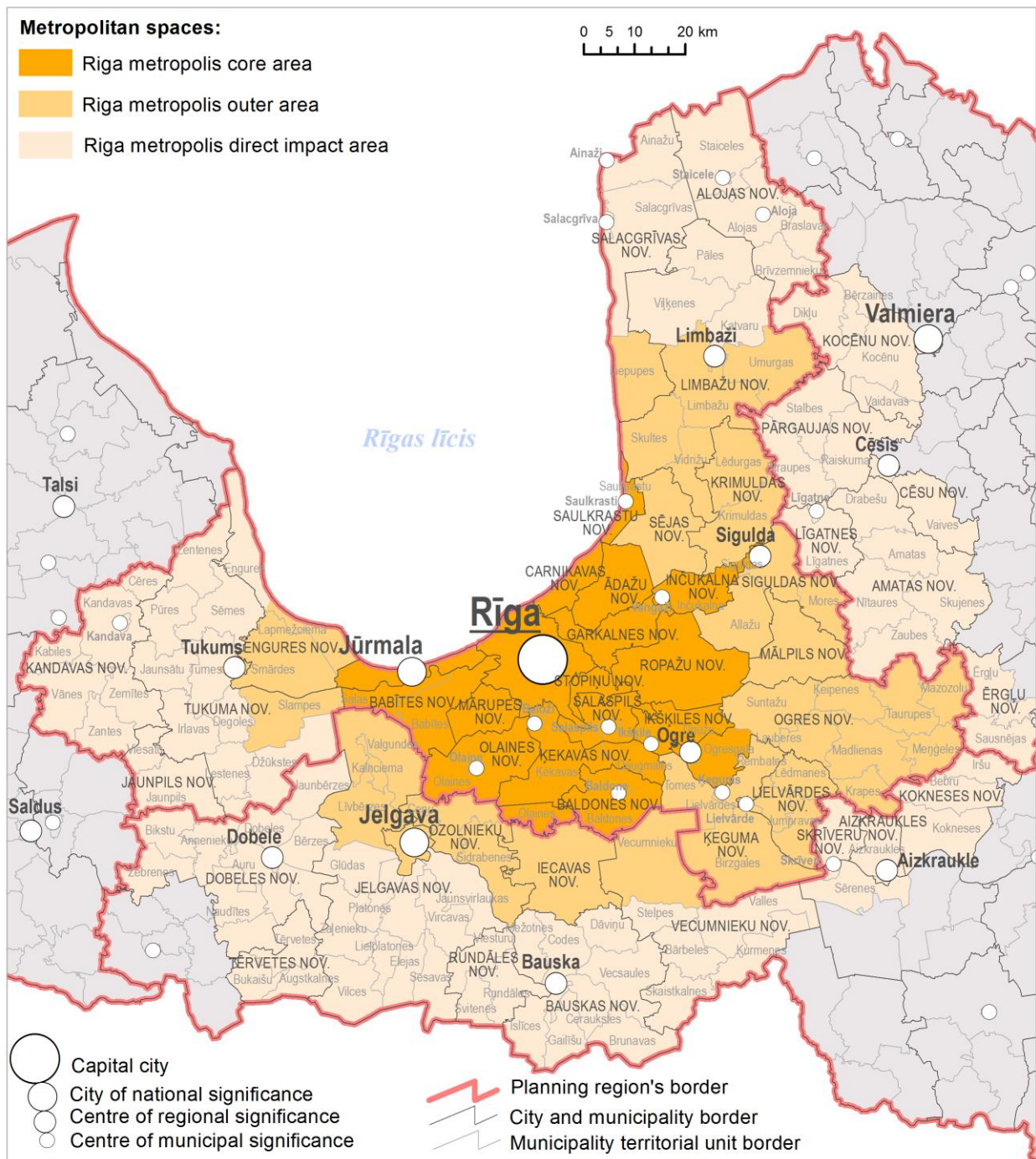


Figure 5. Spaces of Riga metropolitan area

Migration of the population is not the only indicator characterizing the metropolitan area - also the concentration of population, demographic and economic situation, transport infrastructure and population structure indicate the metropolitan spatial coverage. In the vicinity of the metropolitan area, mainly in the direction of significant transport corridors, there are areas that are functionally directly connected to the metropolis of Riga and form a circular area, including the nearest territories of Zemgale and Vidzeme regions.

Taking into account the above-mentioned factors **in the framework of Metropolitan Plan 3 different metropolitan spaces are identified** - two of which are covering Riga metropolitan area (core and outer), as well as directly functionally impacted area of the metropolis of Riga ([Figure 5](#)).

The division of the Riga metropolitan area in 3 different spaces (**CORE area**, **OUTER area**, **DIRECT IMPACT area**) is based on the characteristics of each of these spaces, taking into account such features as - distance to the capital Riga, commuting intensity, trends in population changes, directions of traffic flows, availability of public services, as well as other specific features.

MAIN FEATURES	CORE area	OUTER area	DIRECT IMPACT area
Territorial coverage (distance to Riga)	50 km	75 km	100 km
Commuting intensity (working age people works in Riga)	>50 %	30-50 %	>20 %
Population change	Increasing	Slightly negative trend	Mainly negative trend Aging population
Public transport and traffic flows	Riga direction	Riga and regional centers direction	Mainly regional centers direction
Location of public services	Mainly Riga	Riga and regional centers	Mainly regional centers
Availability and quality of public services	Relatively good availability and quality of services, but in Pierīga there are problems with insufficiency of services (particular in the field of education and health)	Limited availability and quality of services, especially outside regional centers	Limited availability and quality of services
SPECIFIC FEATURES	Low unemployment relatively high income level with a tendency to increase International tourism Education and science concentration	The role and potential of regional centers significantly exceeds the development potential of surrounding areas	Relatively poorly developed public transport system and related infrastructure The state of local and regional roads of lower quality

ISSUES DISCUSSED DURING ESPON WORKSHOP

1st DAY – JUNE 13 PLENARY SESSIONS

Plenary session beginning with a welcoming introduction process ([Rūdolfs Cimdiņš](#), Riga Planning Region) and with a presentation of the framework and the objectives of this peer-learning workshop ([Nicolas Rossignol](#), ESPON EGTC).

SESSION I – plenary session focusing on discussions regarding **approach and process of Riga Metropolitan Area Action Plan elaboration**. Presentations from main Riga metropolitan area stakeholders introduced existing situation and topical metropolitan planning issues – **national context** ([Ilze Jurēviča](#), Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development), **regional context** and ongoing Metropolitan Plan process ([Rūdolfs Cimdiņš](#), Riga Planning Region) and **Riga city context** ([Māra Zīra](#), Riga City Council Development Department).

SESSION II – plenary session with **more focused and detailed insight into metropolitan planning processes**. Presentation ([Rūdolfs Cimdiņš](#), Riga Planning Region) about main aspects of the future Metropolitan Plan and introduction with June 14 workshop themes – (1) metropolitan area governance; (2) regional and international competitiveness; (3) settlement structure – mobility – public services interaction. Scientific view on existing situation in Riga metropolitan area ([Diāna Orlovskā](#), University of Latvia) focusing on governance development opportunities. Continuing with competitiveness issues ([Sabīne Zāgere](#), Riga Planning Region) in context with local challenges (settlement structure, mobility, public services). Following with invited **SPIMA stakeholders** ([Peter Austin](#), City of Oslo Urban Development Department, Norway; [Michael Rosenberger](#) – City of Vienna Planning Department, Austria; [Edouard Fleury](#), Métropole Européenne de Lille, France) feedback and questions and answers session with local Riga metropolitan area stakeholders. **Main themes:**

- Aim and main issues to be solved within Riga metropolitan planning initiative;
- Scale and territorial coverage of Riga metropolitan area;
- Governance issues – main players and leader of metropolitan processes;
- Regional scale solutions – public transportation, public services, natural environment;
- International competitiveness and significant driving forces as basis for development;
- Collaboration between different stakeholders (national – regional – local – businesses);
- Role of national level and support from local actors;
- How to empower metropolitan issues;
- Taxation and financing system;
- Spaces in metropolitan area for economic activities, land use planning aspects;
- Riga role, specialisation of development centers and smaller ‘satellite’ villages;

2nd DAY – JUNE 14 WORKSHOP SESSION

SESSION III – workshop session beginning with **short feedback from first day June 13** and **introduction and instructions for workshop** ([Rūdolfs Cimdiņš](#), Riga Planning Region). 3 parallel workshop groups focus on pre-defined topics. 3 parallel work groups - participation of SPIMA Targeted Analysis stakeholders (**3 experts**), ESPON, Riga Planning Region, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, VASAB Secretariat, Riga City Council Development Department, Jurmala and Jelgava cities, Pieriga and regional centers municipalities and other Riga metropolitan area stakeholders.

Riga Planning region and local stakeholders has been invited to **identify priority themes** to be discussed during workshop session - accurate challenges in Riga metropolitan area context context faced during elaborating of future Metropolitan Plan. Following Reflection of **SPIMA Targeted Analysis results and findings** - different policy approaches and experiences for metropolitan planning ([Oslo](#), [Vienna](#), [Lille](#)).

Work in **3 parallel groups** (overall time **1h 20 min**) led by SPIMA stakeholders and supported by ESPON and Riga Planning Region:

- **Metropolitan area governance** (leader - [Peter Austin](#), City of Oslo Urban Development Department, Norway / coordinator – [Ilona Raugze](#), ESPON EGTC);
- **Regional and international competitiveness** (leader - [Michael Rosenberger](#) – City of Vienna Planning Department, Austria / coordinator – [Piera Petruzzi](#), ESPON EGTC);
- **Settlement structure - Transport - Public services interaction** (leader - [Edouard Fleury](#), Métropole Européenne de Lille, France / coordinator – [Nicolas Rossignol](#), ESPON EGTC).

Workshop format:

Identification of issues – 10 min

Identification of questions to be raised and issues to be solved in Riga metropolitan area

Expert presentations – 20 min

SPIMA Targeted Analysis outputs focusing on specific theme in each work group

Local stakeholder insight – 20 min

What each of group members can propose to support topical Riga metropolitan area development? (concrete proposals & actions - only regional / metropolitan scale aspects)

Preparation of presentation – 30 min

Findings and solutions in Riga metropolitan area context

For better insight of peer-to-peer workshop contents please see Plenary session presentations and Workshop results uploaded in ESPON website.