ESPON

EUROPEAN UNION

Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire policy making by territorial evidence

Urban-rural Connectivity in Non-metropolitan Regions (URRUC)

Targeted Analysis Activity

Annex III: Urban-Rural Linkages

10/06/2019

This targeted analysis activity is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

Authors

Coventry University, UK
Begley, J, Jarvis, D, Jones, A and MacNeill, S

Politecnico di Torino, Italy
Cotella, G, Scudellari, J, Staricco, L and Vitale Brovarone, E

Nordregio, Sweden
Grunfelder, J and Löfving, L

University of Valencia, Spain
Ferrandis, A, Noguera, J, Riera, M and Scardaccione, G

Advisory Group
Project Support Team: Bishop, J, Callen, J, Giles, C and McArdle, D

ESPON EGTC: Frideres, L, Rossignol, N and Szabo, A

Information on ESPON and its projects can be found on www.espon.eu.

The web site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

This delivery exists only in an electronic version.

Contact: info@espon.eu

ISBN: 978-2-919795-46-8

Table of contents

List of Figures

Abbreviations

DRT	Demand-responsive transport
EC	European Commission
EGTC	European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
EU	European Union
LAU	Local Administrative Unit
NMR	Non Metropolitan Region
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ToR	Terms of Reference
URL	Urban-rural linkages
URRUC	Urban-rural Connectivity in Non-metropolitan Regions

1 Introduction

The Terms of Reference mention that urban-rural transport connections in non-metropolitan regions should be analysed, looking at both existing patterns as well as new approaches. This project activity (Task 3 on existing patterns of urban-rural linkages) aims at providing a background and a frame around the following research question included in the ToR: What are the potentials, opportunities, and challenges for developing flexible urban-rural transport connections in non-metropolitan regions?

To do so, the project activity is composed of three main sections. A theoretical background and an overview on what is urban-rural linkages is provided in section 2. Its objective is to list all types of urban-rural linkages in order to identify which ones are the most relevant in Marina Alta (Spain), Scarborough (United Kingdom), Valle Arroscia (Italy) and Västerbotten (Sweden). Two out of the eight identified types of urban-rural linkages are considered as highly relevant by stakeholders and research teams in the four case study areas. Therefore a section for each of these two types of urban-rural linkages has been developed in this report to provides more information and illustrations from the case study regions. Section 3 is on urbanisation (rural-urban migration) and section 4 on public transport availability in rural areas. Finally, more specificities on the identified types of URL for each of the four case studies in the URRUC project can be found in case study annex reports.

2 Urbanisation (Rural-urban migration)

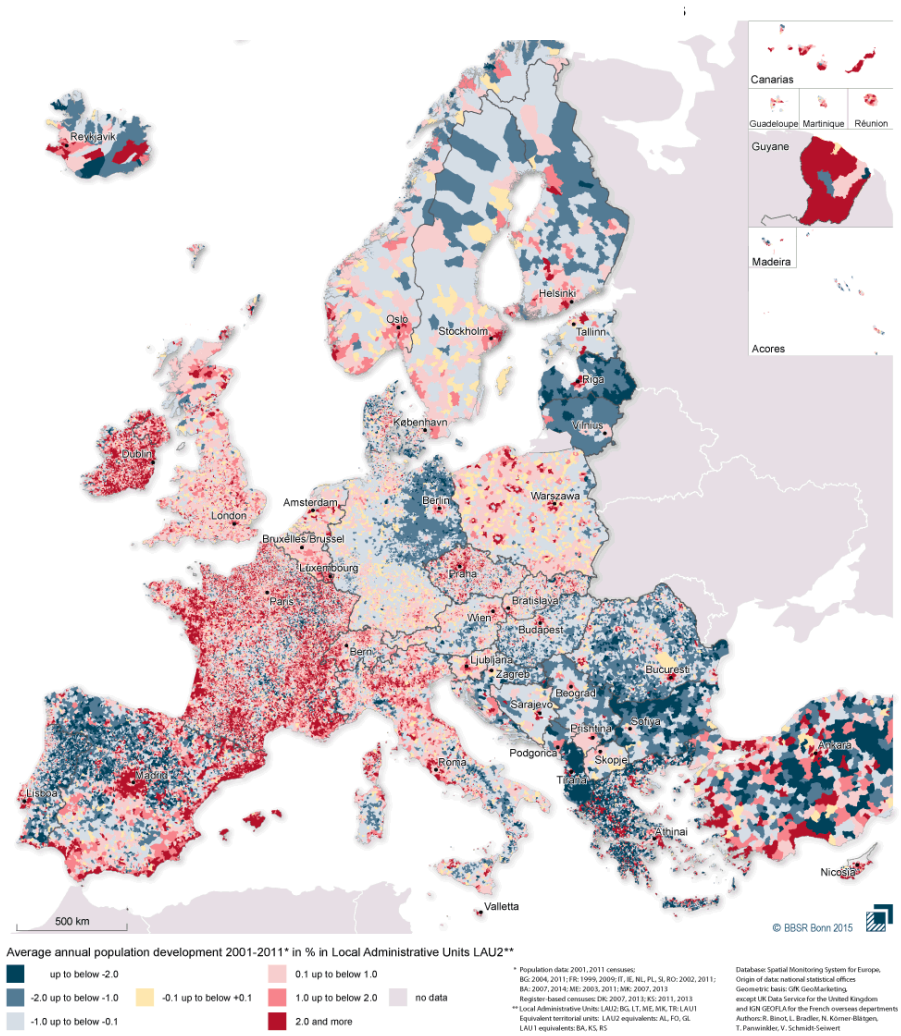
2.1 Theoretical background

Rural-to-urban migration refers to the process of people moving from rural or remote rural areas to urban centres or urban peripheries. Rural to urban migration has existed on a large scale in Europe since the industrialising years of the Nineteenth Century, but intensified after the second world war when cities provided jobs, higher living standards and an attractive lifestyle for young people. Simultaneously the availability of these opportunities declined in rural areas (Rizzo, 2016)

This trend has persisted for many decades, and estimates suggest that 24.1 million more people will live in urban regions by 2050, while people located in rural areas are projected to decrease by 7.9 million during the same period (ESPON, 2018). Currently 28 % of the population within the European Union is located in rural areas, 31.6% live in towns and suburbs and 40.4% live in cities. However, changes have begun to occur to the trend of rural shrinkage. City populations within the EU are not growing at the same rate while some rural areas are actually increasing their population (Eurostat, 2018a). The process of counter-urbanisation contributes to this change, or what is also called the deconcentration hypothesis (Renkow and Hoover, 2000; Partridge et al., 2010; Lavesson, 2014). The deconcentration hypothesis demonstrates how urban citizens move to rural areas within commuting distances to the urban area where they still work. The move to the rural area is explained as related to quality of live aspects such as lower housing prices or proximity to nature (Partridge et al., 2010). The region around the urban areas is therefore growing, both within suburbs but also in towns and to some extent “rural areas” with good communication to urban centers, while more remote rural places are shrinking.

In a wider European perspective, population decline generally occurs in the Eastern and Southern parts of Europe (see Figure 1), but also within European countries we find clear divisions, as the east-west divide in Germany and the south-north divide in Italy demonstrate. All over Europe we also see migration from remote rural or rural areas to the urban centres or urban peripheries. This means that the urban-rural divide exists not only within a country, but also within smaller regions (ESPON, 2018).

Figure 1. Average annual population development in European Local Administrative Units



Source: BBSR Bund, 2016

To understand rural-urban migration, regional and national factors should be considered before making global or European comparisons. Differences in economy or history can, for example, impact on migration patterns as can be seen between East and West of Europe (Rizzo, 2016). A more nuanced picture might also be needed when looking at the rural depopulation and the urban-rural divide in Western Europe (ibid). Not all rural areas have experienced a population decline. Rizzo (2016) talks about an “intra-rural divide” where some rural areas have managed to stabilize and/or grow while others are falling behind. Commuting distance to an urban area is of importance for population growth and economic development in the rural area but also communities with strong local labor markets, such as industry (Lavesson, 2014). Equally areas with great natural amenities, such as, for example, closeness to lakes, mountains, national parks or seashores, are more likely to be successful (Irwin et al. 2009).

Even though most areas with declining populations share similar geographical features, such as having a remote or mountain location as well as suffering from poor communication and transport infrastructure, some can also be explained by the phenomena “Inner Peripherality”. An inner peripherality is not only characterized by geographical isolation but also by a “disconnect” from other territories or networks. The different depopulated areas usually share other characteristics, such as a large distance to regional centres, large distance to some services of general interest, out-migration of the young and highly-skilled people, high old-age dependency ratio, a lack of skilled workforce and an economic sector often based on traditional activities (ESPON, 2017).

A declining and ageing population reduces tax revenues for the region or municipality, which makes it difficult to maintain adequate social and public services. Also, the lack of economic competitiveness and innovation in an area, due to population decline and loss of young and educated work force, makes the situation more difficult (ESPON, 2018). A downward spiral can be created when inadequate services make it difficult to attract population and work force. In can result in degrading quality of life for people living in rural areas with very few chances of turning the situation around.

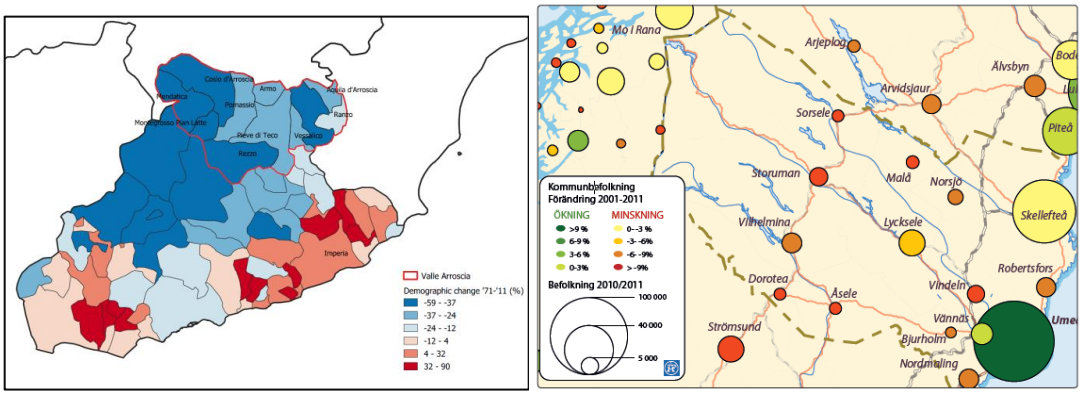
2.2 Rural-urban migration in the four case study areas

Migration from rural to urban areas is characteristic of the demographic structure in the four regions. People moving from the more rural inland areas to the more urban coastal areas is a phenomenon that is common in the four case study areas and has been identified as highly relevant by local stakeholders and research teams. It results in having a population decline in the rural parts and accentuates the ageing and gender imbalance situation. Fig 2a highlights this change in the distribution of the population in the Italian case study area within its regional context.

Valle Arroscia has lost 12.4% of its population during a 20-year period, resulting in a larger share of elderly people within its territory, whereas the urban areas along the coast had a population growth during the same period. Similar trends occurred in Marina Alta where people tend to migrate closer to urban areas along the coast, resulting in both a higher average age and a greater gender imbalance. In Scarborough Borough, the population has remained relatively stable. However, this stable situation is the result of an increase in population in the main urban centre (Scarborough town) and a decrease in the rest of the borough. Finally, the situation in Västerbotten is similar: population has generally increased on the regional level, from 251,970 in 1991 to 259,290 in 2011; but countervailing trends occurred at a more local level (Fig 2b). Negative population trends are characteristic of the more rural and inland municipalities and positive growth trends are discernible in the largest towns and cities along the coast.

One important public service that has proven difficult to maintain in rural areas is access to public transportation. The interdependence between city and countryside that provide urban areas with food production and rural areas with access to more advanced services is dependent on a smoothly functioning transport system. If the transport system is not functioning between and within rural areas, the wellbeing and continued existence of these areas and their production are threatened. From an environmental, accessibility and effectivity perspective, public transport is an important component in this structure.

Figure 2a and 2b. Demographic change 1971-2011 in Valle Arroscia and Liguria (left) and 2001-2011 change in municipalities in Västerbotten (right)



Source: Region Liguria, 2019 and Region Västerbotten, 2014

3 Public transport availability in rural areas

The car is by far the most used mode of transportation in Europe. This is mostly due to short local journeys and lack of other means of transportation in rural areas, including a lack of public transportation (European commission, 2014). In 2014 the car accounted for 74 % of the distance traveled in the European Union. Aviation as well as buses and coaches respectively accounted for 8 %, railways with 6 %, while sea travel was less than 1 % (ibid). People living in rural or remote rural areas generally have the same travel needs as people living in urban areas. However, in isolated communities, work and educational opportunities often require travel to major nearby urban centres (Trafikanalys, 2014).

The most common trip in both rural and urban areas is to-and-from-work and to-and-from-school, but people also travel for shopping, for visits to hospitals, to see family and friends as well as other recreational activities (Trafikanalys, 2014). To meet the demands of different groups is much harder in rural and especially remote rural areas. The cost to maintain public transportation all hours of the day for children, young people, elderly people and commuters is much higher because of the few numbers travelling every day (Commission for integrated transport, 2008). On top of this, rural areas also need public transportation to be easily accessible for tourists, to face the challenges of declining rural populations and economy.

A 2014 report studying transport accessibility in rural areas in Sweden highlighted the fact that public transportation in many rural places was considered a complement to the car and not a full solution. It was often used as a fall back option for a day when the car was unavailable for use (Trafikanalys, 2014). An incomplete public transport system therefore puts great pressure on the ability to drive or to own a car. In Swedish rural areas 27% of adults do not have a driver's license, while 19% of households do not have access to a car and are therefore dependent on other forms of transportation or of other people (VTI, 2017). In a similar study from the UK the authors found that even people without cars travel more by other users cars than by public transportation, which implies reliance of friends and family for travel (Gray et al., 2006).

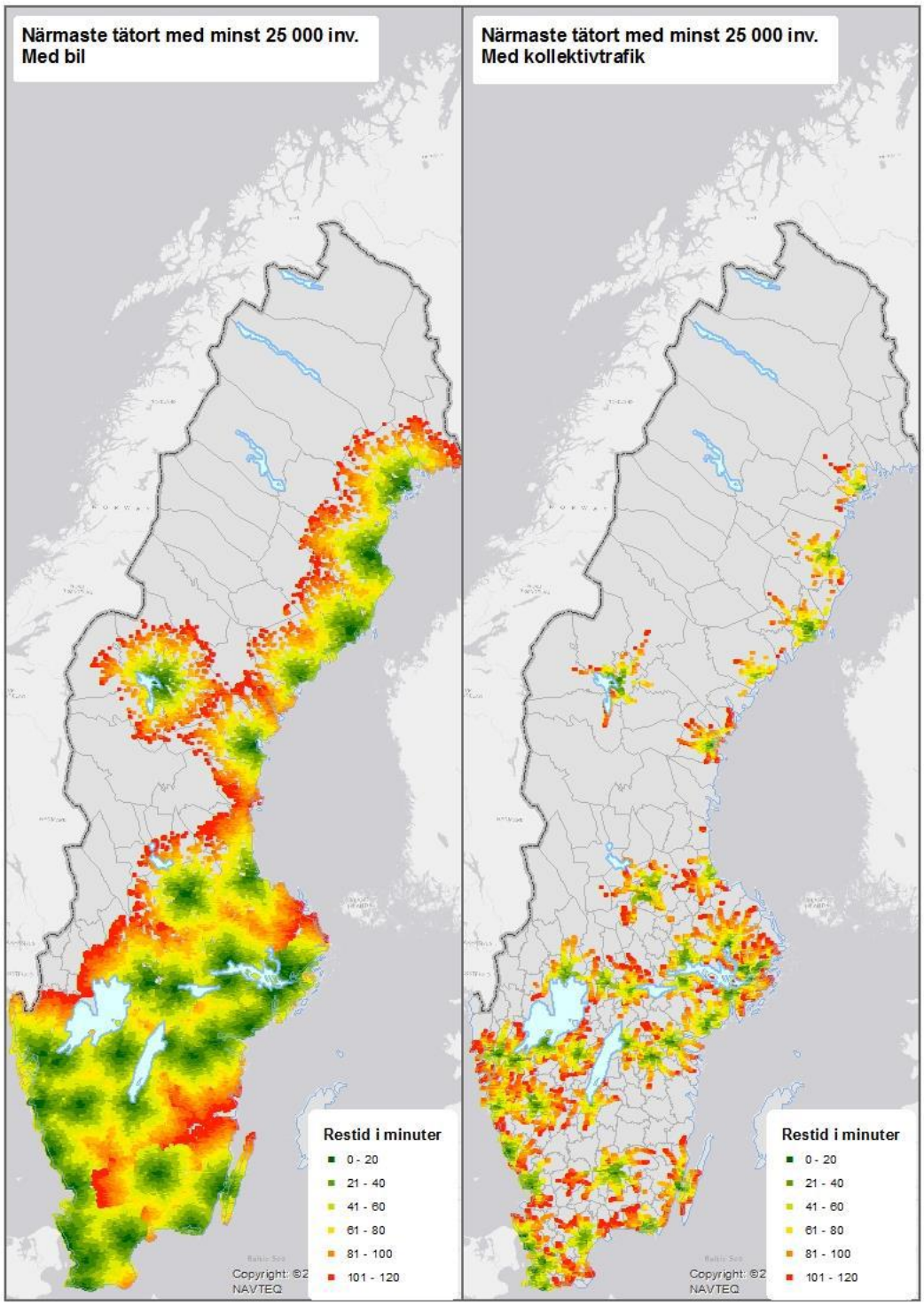
The need for this kind of social network can create travel dependency, particularly for the elderly, the young and, to a lesser extent, for women in single-car households. Additionally, it can also create social exclusion for those without access to these networks. People in rural areas are therefore at risk of becoming "transport disadvantaged" to a much higher degree than those in urban areas (ibid). Separately Gray also stresses the unique challenges facing rural households and transport providers to overcome these difficulties (2008). Analyses on difference of accessibility of transport modes for household living in rural areas show the limited service of public transport linking rural and urban areas.

In terms of Sweden, Fig 3 below clearly highlights the difference of accessibility to the nearest city (25,000 and more inhabitants) by car (map on the left) and by public transport (map on the right). The areas where the difference of accessibility between transport modes is the most important correspond to rural and remote rural areas across several parts across

Sweden. What is clear is that for all transport services, as we see in urban areas, it is almost impossible to provide for both public and private actors in remote rural areas.

It is difficult for a private company to become profitable, frequently requiring state or municipality subsidiaries to remain active. Public companies are also struggling economically to provide services and the lack of competitiveness also creates an environment without new solutions and innovation. What is proposed by studies in both the United Kingdom and Sweden is instead a system with more innovation and flexibility as well as coordination between different service providers (Commission for integrated transport, 2008; Trafikanalys, 2014).

Figure 3.Travel time to the closest city with a minimum of 25,000 people by car (to the left) and by public transport (to the right). (The green colour shows 0-20 minutes travel time and the red colour shows 100-120 minutes travel)*



Source: Trafikanalys,2014

In many locations in rural parts of Europe taxi-based schemes have, for example, been used in connection to other modes of transport by different service providers; demand-responsive transport (DRT) and other minibus services are used, some cases of kick-start funded transport solutions have also been seen. New solutions are today strongly connected to

digitalisation and the possibilities digital services bring. In the future this connection will be even more visible, both for provider and user.

3.1 Public transport availability in the case study regions

Public transport availability in rural areas is the other urban-rural linkage identified as being highly relevant by local stakeholders and research teams in the four case study areas in the context of the ESPON URRUC project. The level of service of public transport provision decreased, partially due to a lower demand. It mostly affects three population groups:

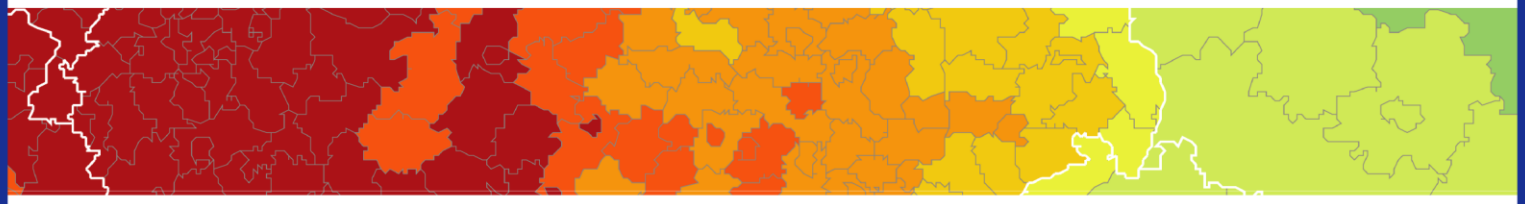
- Young people,
- The elderly
- People with disabilities

For instance, no public transport service is offered in Valle Arroscia during weekends and holidays. Marina Alta, unlike its surrounding areas, does not have any rail infrastructure, which greatly limits its access by public transport and more generally its economic and touristic development. Scarborough Borough suffers from a strong seasonal challenge of public service provision in the summer; furthermore, austerity measures since 2010 are reducing the number of bus services available to rural communities. Finally, public transport in rural areas of Västerbotten is mostly dedicated to school transport. The public transport service for other population groups in rural areas has weak potential, mostly due to the low population densities in these parts of Västerbotten.

References

- Berdegué, J.A., Proctor, F.J. and Cazzuffi, C. (2014) Inclusive rural-urban linkages, working paper series no. 123, RIMISP, Santiago.
- Commission for integrated transport (2008) A new approach to rural public transport.
- Copus, A. (2013) Urban-rural relationships in the new century: clarifying and updating the intervention logic in New Paradigm in action on successful partnerships, Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw.
- ESPON (2017) PROFECY – Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner Peripheries in Europe, ESPON Applied Research.
- ESPON (2018) Fighting rural depopulation in southern Europe, Transnational Observation, Luxembourg.
- European Commission (2010) Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Brussels.
- European Commission (2014) The European Union explained- Connecting Europe's citizens and businesses
  Eurostat (2018) Statistics of rural areas in the EU. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_rural_areas_in_the_EU.
- Gray. D, Shaw. J, and Farrington. J (2006) Community transport, social capital and social exclusion in rural areas.
- Irwin, E.G. Bell, K.P. Bockstael, N. and Newburn, A. (2009) The Economics of Urban-Rural Space Article in Annual Review of Resource Economics.
- Lavesson, N. (2014) Commuting as a rural growth strategy? Evidence from Sweden.
- Partridge, M. Ali, K. and Olfert, M.R (2010) Rural-to-Urban Commuting: Three Degrees of Integration.
- Piacentini, M. and Trapasso, R. (2010) Urban-Rural Linkages: Issues, Measurement and Policies in OECD Countries, Paper presented to the joint meeting of the Working Party on Territorial Development in Urban Areas and the Working Party on Territorial Development in Rural Areas of the OECD's Territorial Development Policy Committee, Paris, 30 Nov 2010.
- Region Västerbotten (2014) Länstransportplan för Västerbotten län 2014-2025.
- Renkow, M. and Hoover D. (2000) Commuting, Migration, and Rural-Urban Population Dynamics. Journal of Regional Science 40(2): 261.

- Rizzo, A. (2016) Declining, transition and slow rural territories in southern Italy Characterizing the intra-rural divides.
  Trafikanalys (2014) Skilda landsbygders tillgänglighet och transportpolitiska utmaningar Rapport 2014:16 .
- VTI (Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute) (2017) Vilka reser med kollektivtrafik i lands- och glesbygd? Demografi och resmönster.



ESPON 2020 – More information

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

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.