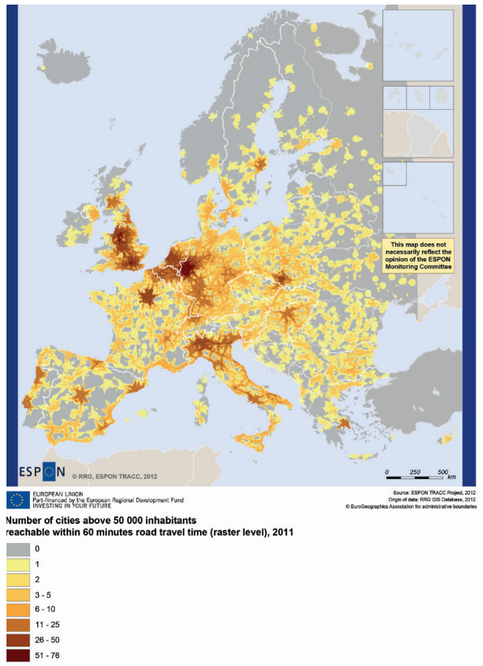
Map 3. Availability of urban functions by road in Europe, 2011



Map 3 shows that in a European perspective, the access to the nearest urban centre varies considerably across Europe. The map highlights the agglomeration areas in Europe. Accessibility is higher in the urban areas, such as in the Ruhr area in Germany, in the United Kingdom, Paris, the Benelux countries and in Northern Italy. Capital cities also hold a high accessibility position, as for example Stockholm, Madrid, Budapest or Athens, while in the Baltic Sea Region city regions as Oslo-Gothenburg-Malmö-Copenhagen stand out. Indeed, from most locations in Western and Central Europe, at least one regional city (with 50,000 inhabitants or more) can be reach within 60 minutes car travel time. From many place even more than ten such cities can be reached. In Eastern Europe, mostly only one or two cities are within reach. In this European picture, the Baltic Sea Region appears to be characterised by rather low accessibility values. Only the more densely populated parts, particularly in the south and along the shores of Baltic sea have a relatively good accessibility.

The picture is rather different when looking at map 2, displaying the information in further detail for the Baltic Sea Region. From a majority of locations in the Nordic Countries and in the Baltic States not a single city can be reach within 1 hour travel time by car. The situation in Denmark, Poland and the German part of the Baltic Sea Region is however somewhat better, with areas of basic and good availability of urban functions, opposed to areas with no availability. The greater the number of cities that can be reached from a given location in reasonable time, the greater the opportunities are provided for economic and social activities and for general interactions.

Over all the maps reflect the urban-rural divided of the Baltic Sea Region and point at the diversity of territorial development challenges and potentials in different parts of the region. In this respect areas with long travel times to urban centres and/or low population density face particular development challenges. The importance of this territorial information for policy processes becomes even more evident when considering it together with the migration information displayed above.

Territorial Monitoring system for macro-regions

A good practice example for wider use

Policy makers, administrators, practitioners and other stakeholders of transnational programmes and macro-regions can profit from the use of the ESPON territorial monitoring tools. With such tools, it is possible to compare, benchmark the position of their region in the European context and see its performance in the area of territorial development in relation to decided policy objectives. Moreover, comparisons to other macro-regions are feasible. The tool may as such also be useful for the further development of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) as well as provide inspiration for other European macro-regional strategies.

The 'Baltic Sea Region Territorial Monitoring System' is planned to be further developed by ESPON and contribute to the ESPON 'European Territorial Monitoring System' aimed at providing a continuous monitoring of territorial trends and structures, as well as identify the performance of Europe, its regions and cities in relation to key policy aims and targets. It builds on territorial evidence, existing statistical information, data and tools developed within ESPON and can be the base for a continued monitoring of the European territory, its macro-regions, as well as comparison and benchmarking of regions in Europe.

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ESPON

A territorial monitoring tool for a European macro-region: the example of the Baltic Sea Region

Territorial development has been an issue in the Baltic Sea Region for the past 20 years. Experience shows that territorial cooperation and policy approaches to transnational development potentials and challenges require a sound base of comparable transnational evidence.

The Baltic Sea Region is characterised by a long territorial cooperation tradition. For years, the countries and different networks of regional and local authorities have been cooperating on common challenges and potentials, such as city networks, accessibility and environmental issues enforcing the competitive potential of the region. Intergovernmental cooperation arrangements such as the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), the Visions and Strategies for the Baltic Sea (VASAB) defined a common vision for territorial development in the Baltic Sea Region and the European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the first EU macro-regional (adopted in 2009), opened the discussion on new directions for cooperation across national borders and between countries, regions and cities.

This ESPON Brief illustrates how policy making at macro-regional or transnational level can benefit from territorial evidence provided by ESPON. The ESPON BSR TeMo (Territorial Monitoring for the Baltic Sea Region) project has developed a tailor made territorial monitoring system, based on indicators, to promote territorial cohesion and support the contribution of the Baltic Sea Region to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as mentioned in the 'Europe 2020 Strategy'.

Territorial evidence support through the use of indicators

Tailor-made monitoring of the Baltic Sea Region

The ESPON Territorial Monitoring for the Baltic Sea Region offers access to territorial monitoring indicators, providing evidence on the regional diversity, situation and progress on main territorial challenges of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The tool provides territorial evidence and analysis for policy through a set of pre-selected indicators and maps covering various topics integrated in an easy to navigate online tool. In addition, it also includes territorial observations for policy and specific test cases aimed at testing the practical capacity of the monitoring system in providing practical and ready to use outputs for the current BSR policy making.

The active involvement of policy makers has been valuable in the process of setting up the system, shaping the test cases and discussing their depth and scope. In addition, it ensured the usefulness of the tool for day to day decision making processes related to territorial development in the BSR.

Basically, the monitoring system allows for an easy overview, comparison and benchmarking of the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region (including Russia and Belorussia) in the European context and internally at regional scale. In doing so, it constitutes a tailor-made knowledge pool for evidence informed policy making at transnational or macro-regional level.

How does the Baltic Sea Region Territorial Monitoring System work?

The tool is an interactive system granting access to a set of territorial indicators, for five domains: economic performance and competitiveness, access to services, markets and jobs, innovative territories, social inclusion and quality of life and environmental quality. Each domain is divided in sub-domains, for which a total of 29 indicators have been selected covering as much as possible the entire Baltic Sea Region[1] at regional level. In addition, headline indicators, which are statistically significant to represent an entire domain, normally available for the entire Baltic Sea Region and in time series, are presented as a subset of the main indicators.

The five headline indicators are:

- GDP per capita in PPS;
- Multimodal potential accessibility;
- Gross expenditures on R&D;
- Population at-risk-of-poverty and
- Soil sealing.

This set of indicators should be able to measure the progress in achieving territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region.

[1] *It comprehends the countries participating in the VASAB cooperation (the EU member states Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and the neighbouring countries Norway, Russia and Belarus). In Germany the Baltic Sea Region covers the Länder of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen (only NUTS II area of Lüneburg). In Russia the Baltic Sea Region covers Leningrad Oblast, Republic of Karelia, the Oblasts of Kaliningrad , Murmansk, Novgorod and Pskov.*

Besides this, the Baltic Sea Region monitoring tool presents four test cases in areas of particular policy interest agreed upon by the stakeholders involved:

- Territorial cohesion (cross-thematic scope);
- Migration (thematic scope);
- Cross-border areas (geographical scope) and
- Benchmarking (where the Baltic Sea Region is benchmarked against the Alpine Space and the North Sea transnational regions).

This produced usable output from the monitoring system that can be utilised in day-to-day policy development and assessment.

The Baltic Sea Region Territorial Monitoring System is at: http://bsr.espon.eu/

Selected examples of territorial evidence and observations for policy provided by the Territorial Monitoring for the Baltic Sea Region are presented below. This shows the practical use of the tool and its application in policy development and implementation.

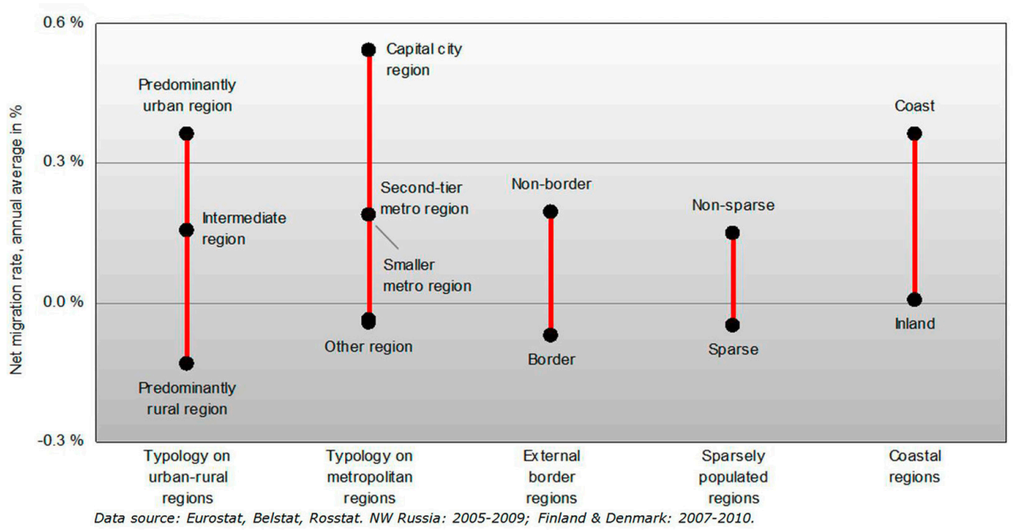
A tool to support policy development and implementation

Migration trends in the Baltic Sea Region

Demographic change is an increasingly important territorial development feature in Europe (see also earlier ESPON Brief 6). In this context net migration is considered as a proxy for the overall attractiveness of a region in terms of labour markets, education, job opportunities, quality of life, welfare state, etc. Positive net migration rates might counteract negative natural demographic trends such as declining birth rates or aging population.

Displaying the net migration in the Baltic Sea Region for the years 2005-2010, map 1 shows the difference between immigrants and emigrants in a region. Outmigration dominates in many German regions, especially regions of the eastern part of the country and the eastern and southern shore of the Baltic Sea. The highest outmigration rates can be found in East Germany, Lithuania and Murmanskaya oblast. On the other hand, southern regions of Sweden, Norway and Finland, as well as Denmark, Berlin and St. Petersburg are considered as migrant attractive territories. In-migration is observed around certain cities in Poland as well. Rural migration is affected harder by the financial crisis than other types of regions.

Figure 1. Net migration rates in the Baltic Sea Region 2005-2010



Data source: Eurostat, Belstat, Rosstat. NW Russia: 2005-2009; Finland & Denmark: 2007-2010.

ESPON EVIDENCE BRIEF A territorial monitoring tool for a European macro-region: the example of the Baltic Sea Region

Taking a wider European perspective the most attractive destinations for migrations are certain metropolitan areas. Among these are e.g. Rome, Milan, Brussels, Munich, Budapest, Manchester and Stockholm in the Baltic Sea Region. On the other hand some metropolitan areas have experienced intense net-outmigration in the same time period. Examples for these are Dublin and the bigger Lithuanian cities.

This information is supported by a range of other maps provided by the 'Baltic Sea Region Territorial Monitoring System'. These maps allow further exploration of details and nuances of the migration trends.The tool allows also downloading data sets and having a more detailed look. In the case of net migration, this allows e.g. for following further nuances as presented in figure 1.The trend of increasing territorial polarisation which is already visible in map 1 becomes here even more evident when looking at the net migration figures in the Baltic Sea Region for various types of regions. This shows e.g. that (predominantly) urban regions are taking a clear lead, whereas (predominantly) rural regions are at the bottom of the scale. When addressing the issue of net migration from the point of view of a more pronounced urban hierarchy, a very similar order emerges, where capital city metropolitan areas exceed all other types of regions, and only ten urban regions (out of 238 regions in total) stand for 47% of all migration surplus in the Baltic Sea Region. This implies also that other types of regions, such as border regions, sparsely populated ones, as well as inland areas have negative, or in the case of inland areas at least in relative terms lower, levels of migration. This trend of population concentration also reflects many other strata of socioeconomic development in the Baltic Sea Region.

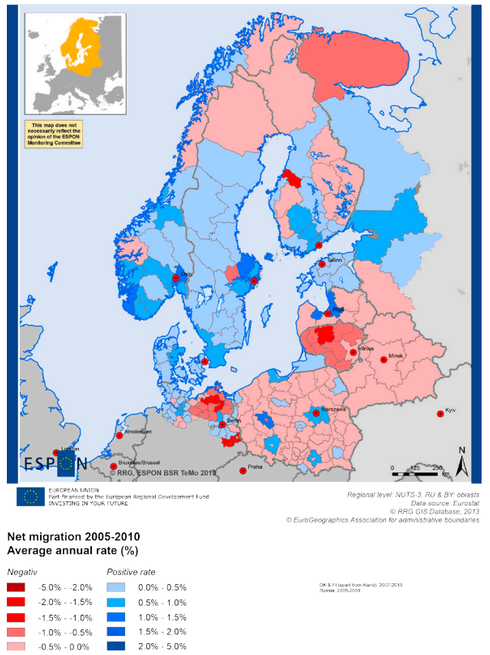
Accessibility to cities indicates the urban-rural divide in the Baltic Sea Region

Migration patterns are explained by a wide range of aspects and complex interrelations between these. The dominance of the urban areas, however, suggests that it might be worthwhile to take a more detailed look at the urban system in the Baltic Sea Region.

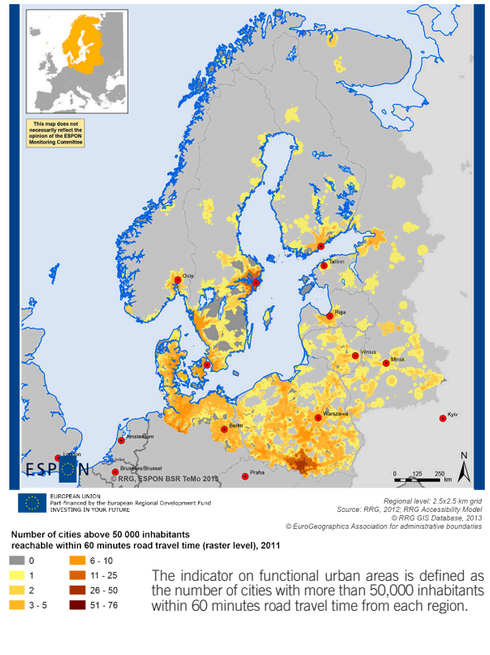
Data on functional urban areas in the Baltic Sea Region shows that despite common features, the region is also characterised by a high heterogeneity. In general, the Baltic Sea Region shows two important territorial divides. On the one hand there is the east-west and south-north divide and on the other hand there is the urban-rural divide. These have already been pointed out by the VASAB Long Term Perspective for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region.

When it comes the access to labour markets and services of general interest, including schools, health care etc., the travel time to the nearest urban centre can be of importance. Small towns and rural areas often do not have the possibility to offer the same range of services as larger cities do. Accordingly, the more cites that are within reach of a certain location, the highest is the availability of different services and the freedom of choice.

Map 1. Net migration 2005-2010



Map 2. Availability of urban functions by road in the BSR, 2011



The indicator on functional urban areas is defined as the number of cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants within 60 minutes road travel time from each region.