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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

The case of inner peripheries: Downward spiral or chance for a policy redesign? (ESPON PROFECY)

Dr. Mar Ortega Reig
Polytechnic University of Valencia
m.violeta.ortega@uv.es

Dr.-Ing Carsten Schürmann
TCP International
cs@tcp-international.de

VNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA

INSTITUT INTERUNIVERSITARI DE DESENVOLUPAMENT LOCAL

TCP INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT CONSULTING PARTNERS

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What are inner peripheries?

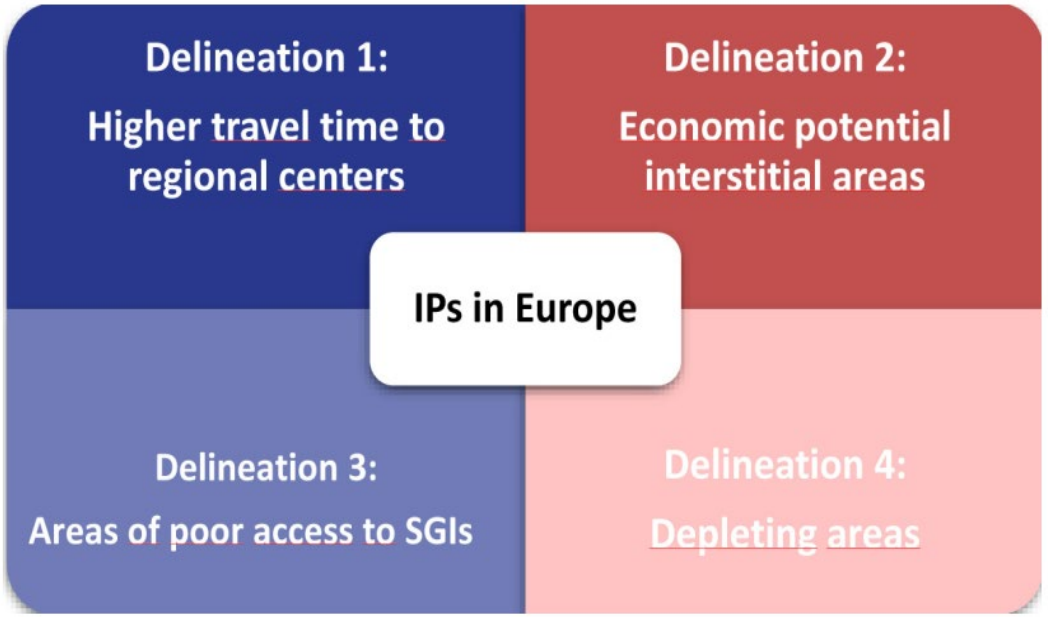
- ✓ ESPON PROFECY “Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner Peripheries in Europe” (Noguera et al. 2017a)
- ✓ Inner peripheries have in common the fact that their general performance, levels of development, access to services of general interest, and quality of life of the population are relatively worse than those of their neighbouring territories.
- ✓ Inner peripheral areas can be

  (a) enclaves of low economic potential,

  (b) areas with poor access to services of general interest or

  (c) areas experiencing a lack of relational proximity.

  A combination of these is, of course, also possible.

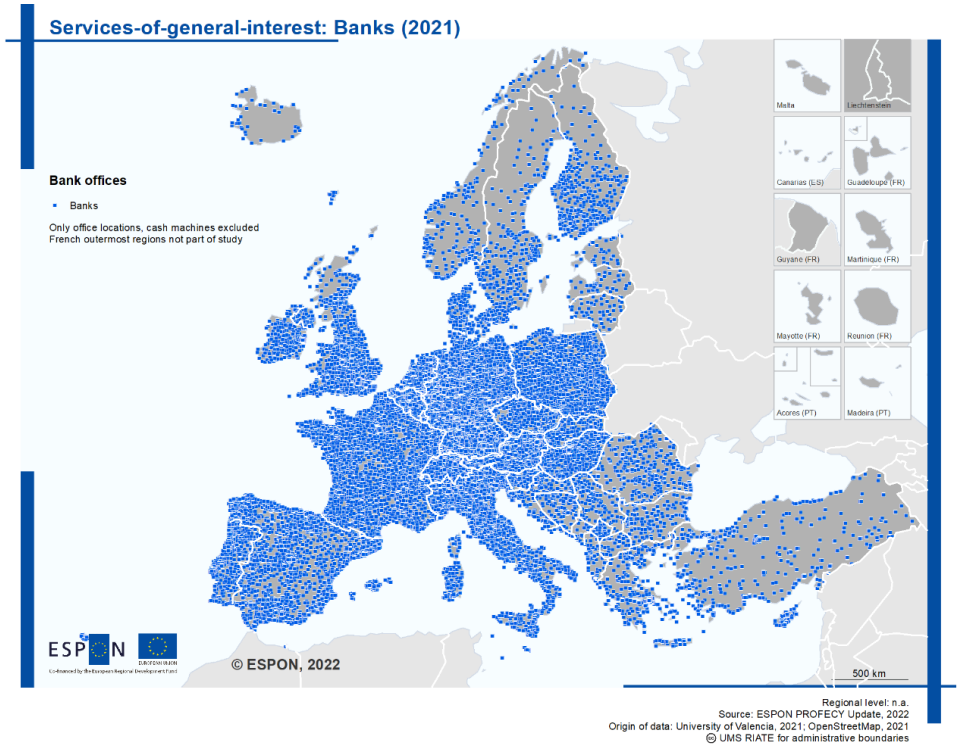


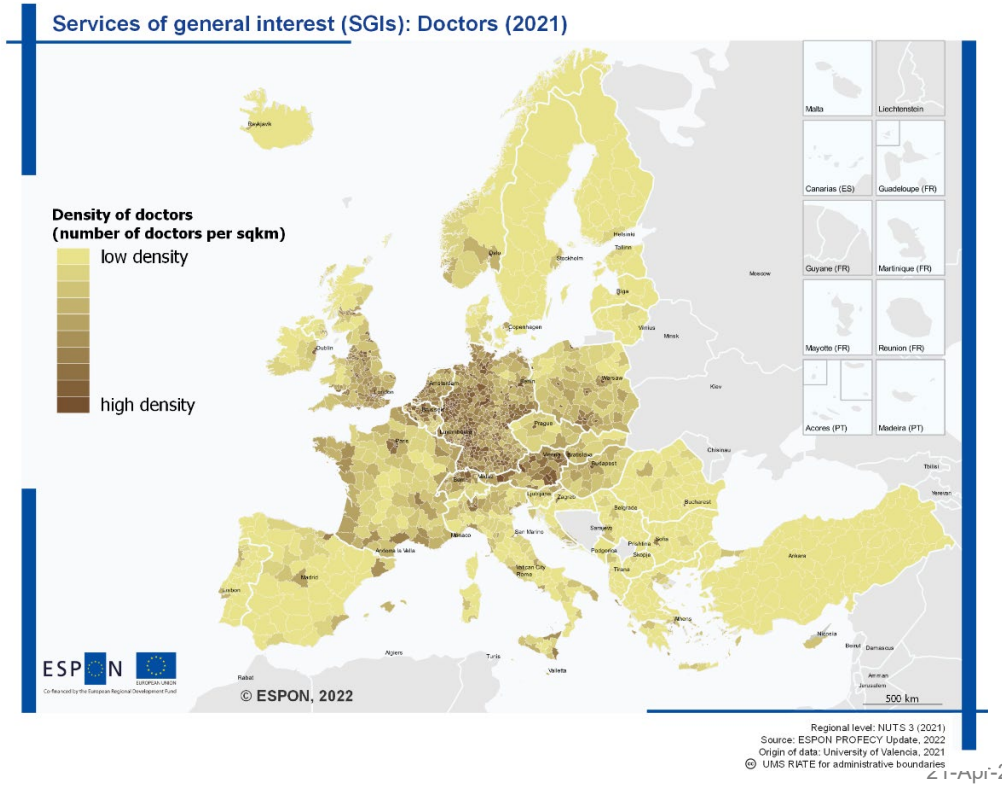
Dealing with the challenges

- ✓ The core characteristic of IPs is poor connectivity (spatial, aspatial and often a mixture of both) generally resulting in those areas lagging in socio-economic development.
- ✓ Whatever the combination of causal processes and factors, inner peripherality is usually associated with ‘vicious cycles’ where the relative disadvantages (i.e. in levels of economic activity, poor access to services or less connectivity) further impact economic performance, tax revenues, and out-migration. Those processes may, in the long-term, exacerbate accessibility problems, worsen the provision of services, and make the area become less attractive for residents and newcomers, eroding human and social capital. These intertwined feedback loops explain the difficulty of reversing the trend once the cycle is triggered.
- ✓ Inner peripherality is not a new phenomenon. Yet, despite the efforts to define it and map it, it has not been very visible in the policy arena until now.

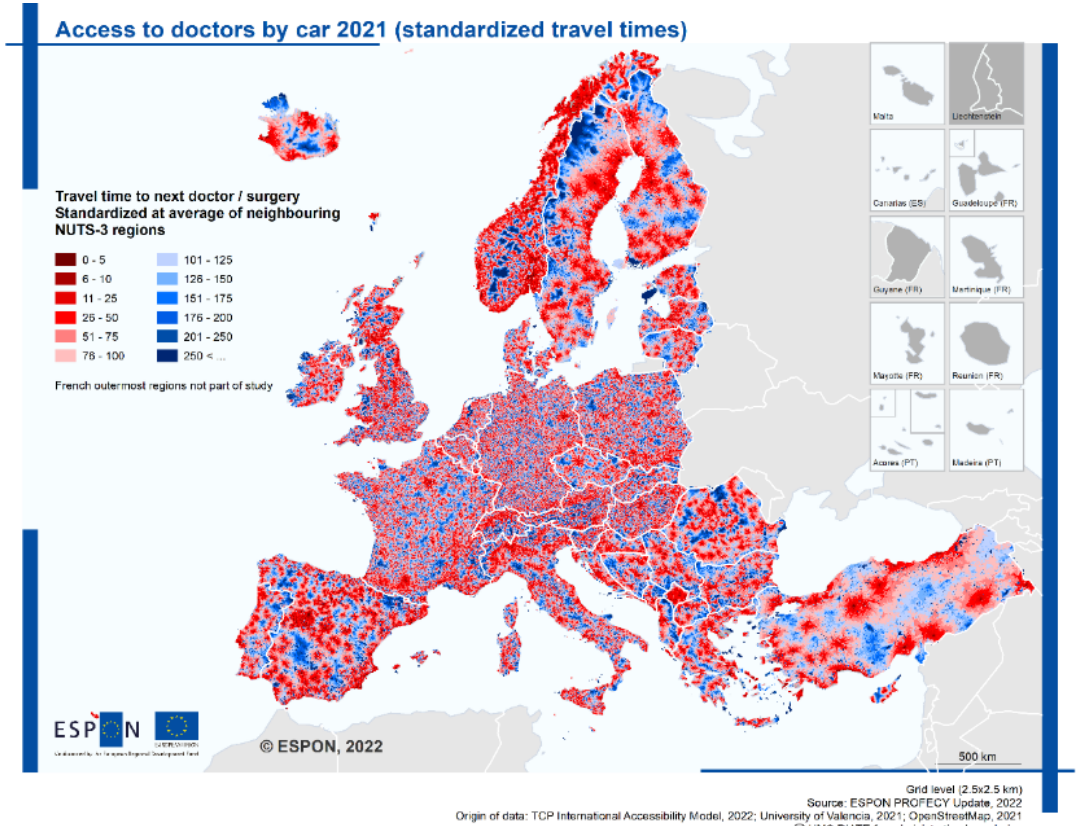
Assessment of access to services-of-general-interest

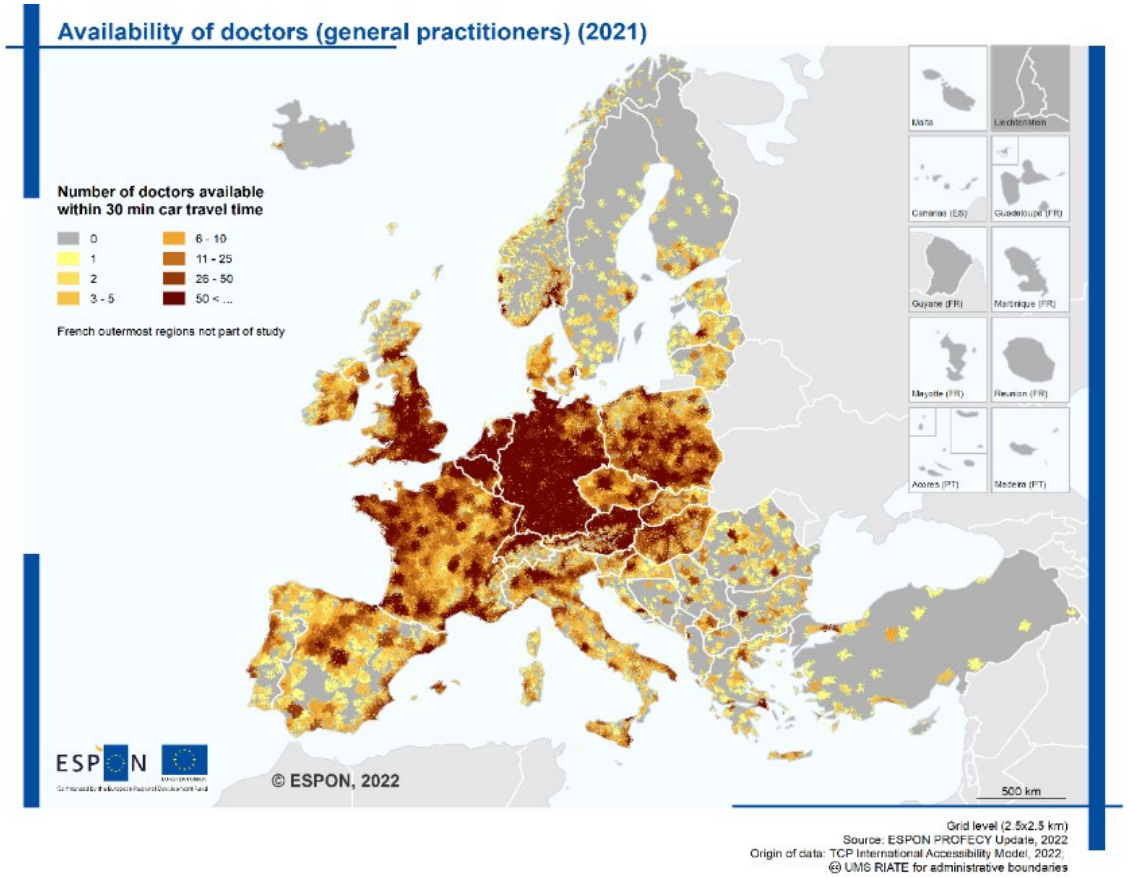
- ✓ **Banks**, **health care** (doctors and pharmacies), **schools** (primary schools and secondary schools), **retail** (supermarkets and convenient stores).



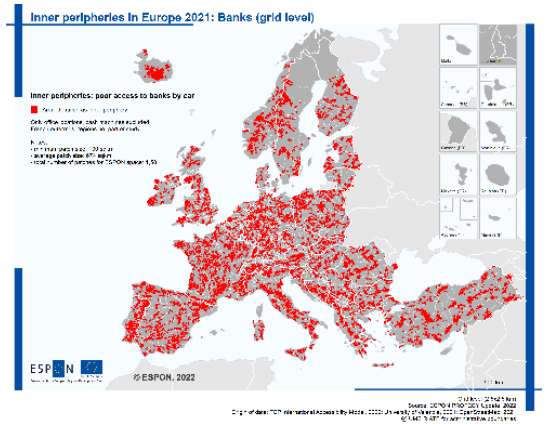


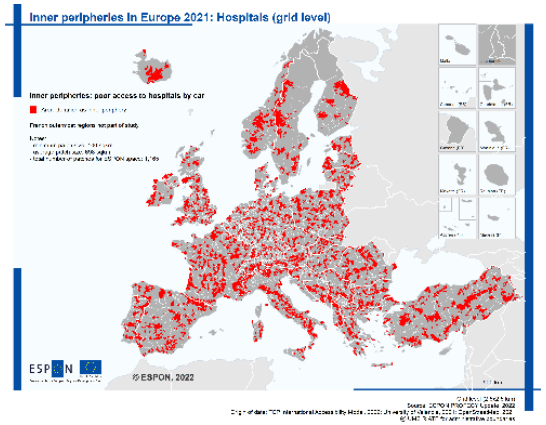
Assessment of access to services-of-general-interest

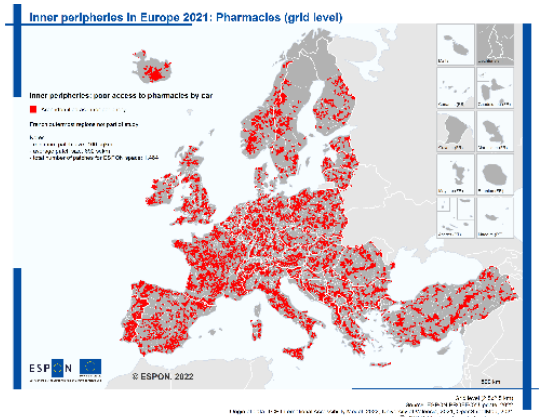


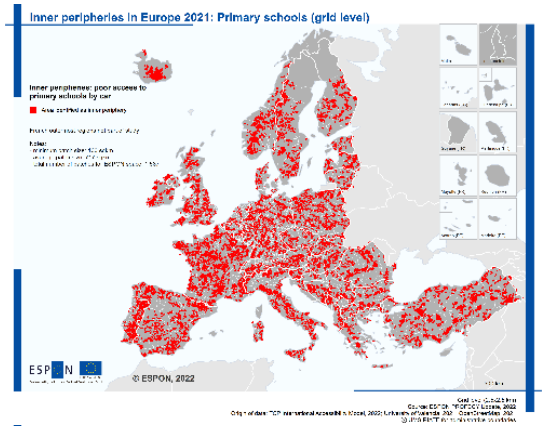


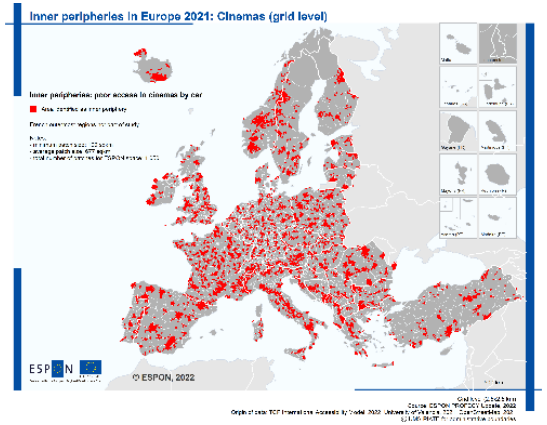
Identification of areas with poor access to services-of-general-interest

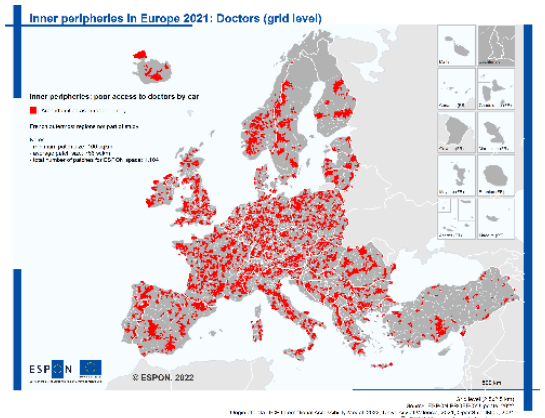


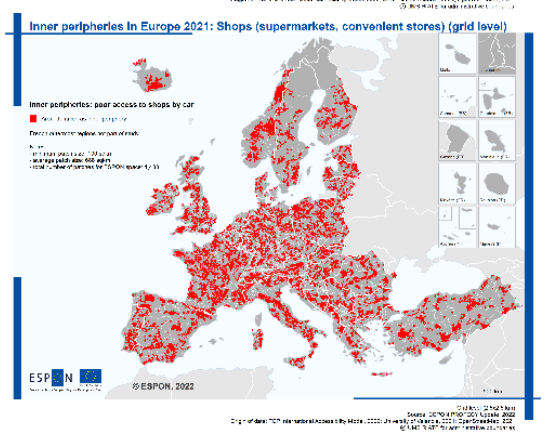


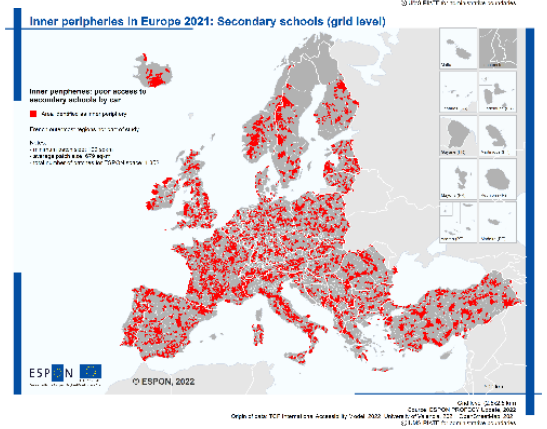






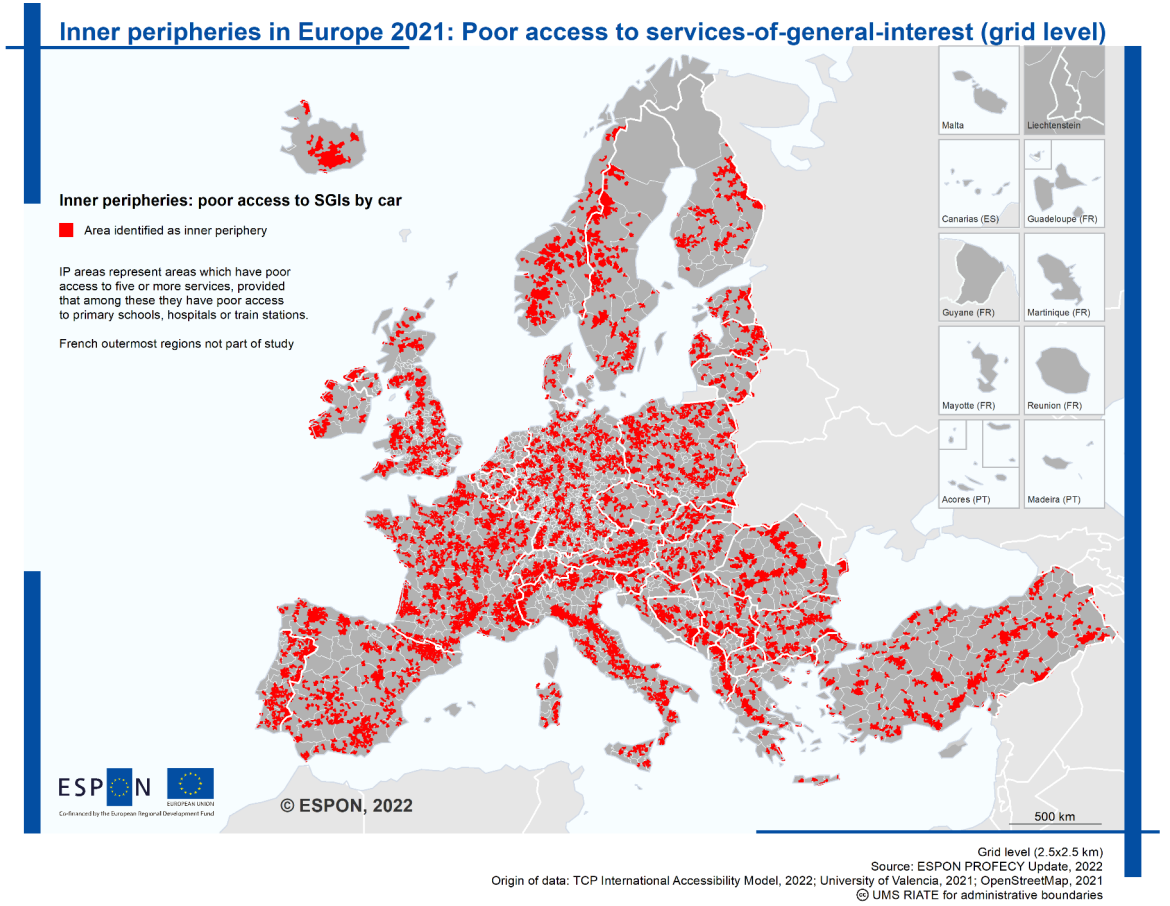






Identification of poor areas with access to services-of-general-interest

- ✓ Areas identified as inner peripheries can, across all service types, generally be characterized as:
  - Mountain areas (examples: parts of the Alps, Pyrenees, Apennines, mountains in southern Norway, and the Carpathian mountains),
  - Rural areas off the main roads in all countries,
  - Interstitial areas between agglomerations in all countries, and
  - Areas along national borders (examples: Portuguese-Spanish border, Bulgarian-Rumanian border, Norwegian-Swedish border) or NUTS3 borders.

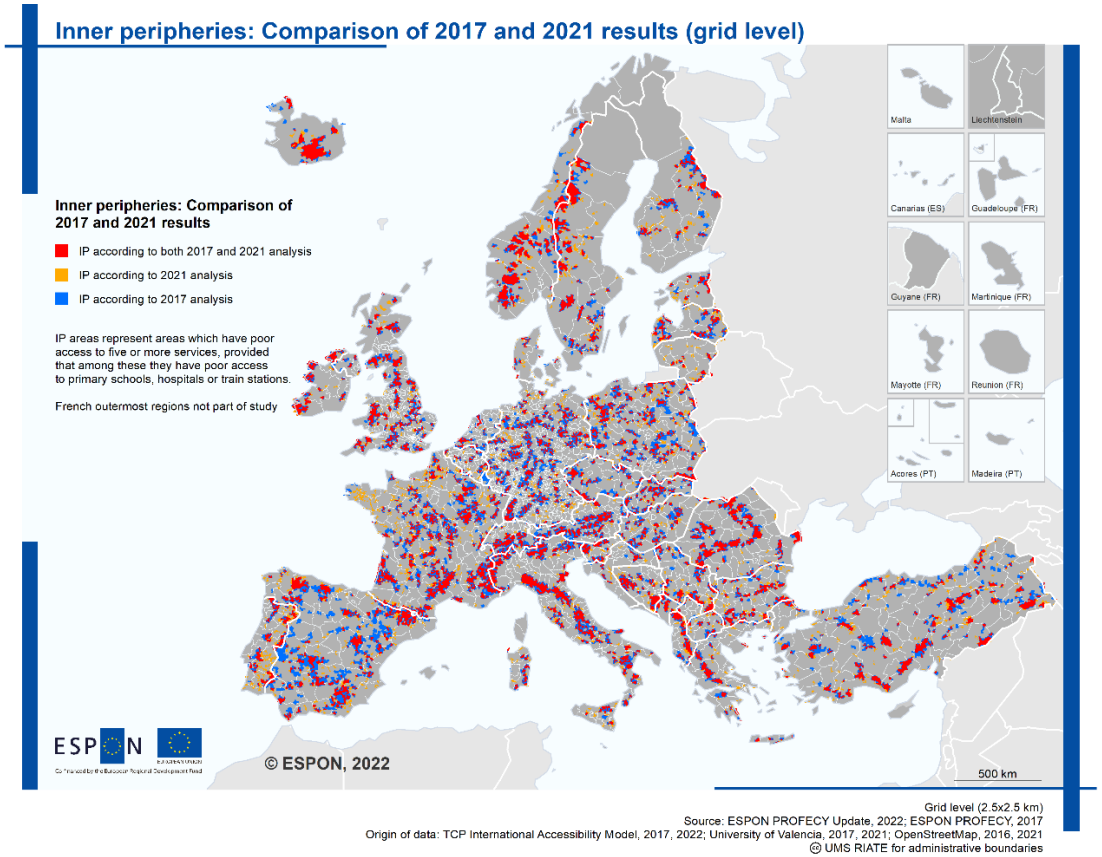


Changes in accessibility to individual SGIs (2017-2021)

- ✓ Inner peripheries **are in a constant state of flux.** New IP areas emerge when service facilities close. The expansion of road networks and opening of new facilities can also lead to a reduction in IP areas.
- ✓ Shifts in accessibility appear both from changes in:
  - Service provision
  - Transport infrastructure.
- ✓ However, the effect of the improvement of services in some areas is not directly and straightforwardly translated into improved accessibility to SGIs, and vice-versa.
- ✓ Time-accessibility to services varies to a large-extent within a NUTS3 region and even within a LAU area. Similarly, improvements in roads and transport networks affect different areas in a heterogenous way.
- ✓ New transport infrastructures tend to increase this fragmentation. In this case, the average patch size of IPs may become smaller, however, the number of IP patches may increase (i.e. same effect as habitat fragmentation in environmental sciences caused by new transport infrastructures)

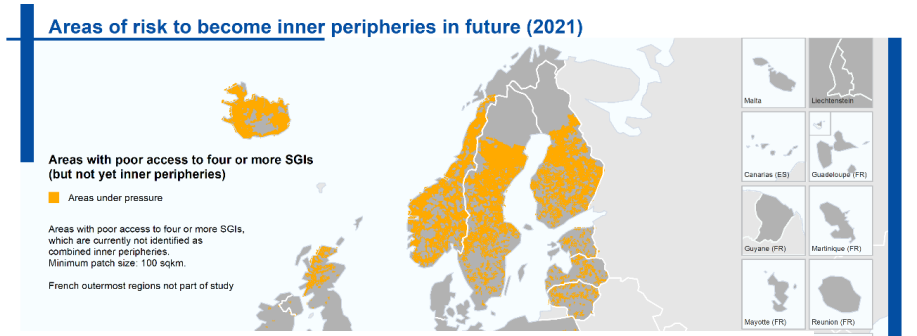
Changes in accessibility to SGIs (2017-2021)

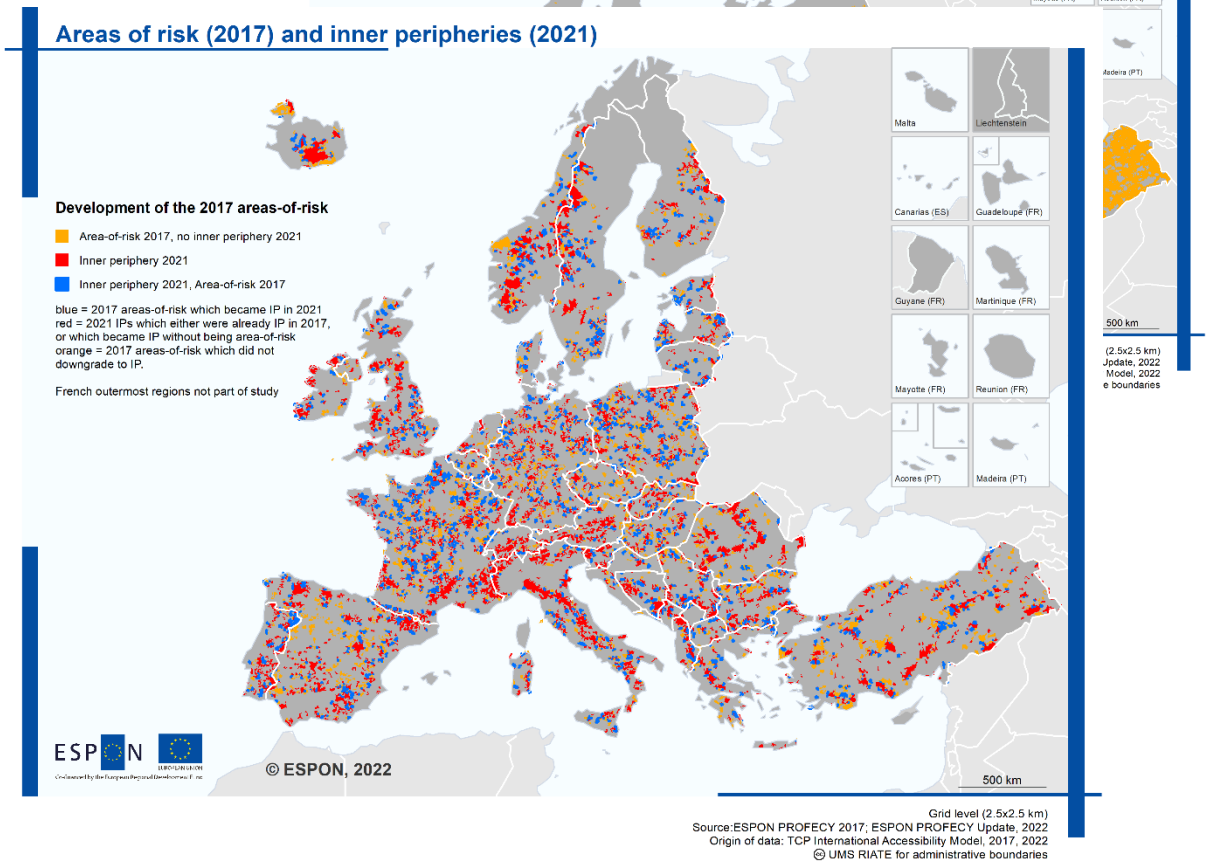
- **Core areas** of inner peripheries in all European countries. Even though borders are fluid, some core areas remain: 75% of the 2021 IPs were already inner peripheries in 2017
- Large areas **who lost their IP status** from 2017 to 2021 through improved accessibility. Adjacent to the core IP areas.
- **New IP areas emerged** either through closure of facilities or to worsened relative accessibility (if road infrastructures in the neighbouring regions were improved).
- Countries such as Poland, Germany or France are thus experiencing **opposing developments** in different parts of their territory: areas where IPs have receded contrast with others where new IPs have emerged.
- The **net result** is that there are countries such as Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovakia or the Czech Republic where the share of IP areas on the national territory has decreased significantly; in contrast, it has increased in other countries (Portugal, Lithuania, Denmark, Estonia).



Areas of risk to become IP in the future

- ✓ Areas most at risk are those from which today **only one facility per service type** is within reasonable driving time.
- ✓ A comparison with 2017 shows that for most services, there has been little change for the most affected countries.
- ✓ Across all services, the Nordic countries and Eastern Europe (including Turkey) are the ones with the most at-risk areas.
- ✓ **For public services (schools, hospitals), the risk areas turn out to be smaller** and there are less affected countries, whereas the risk areas for privately operated services (e.g. stores, banks, etc.) are larger and affect more countries. State planning tends to create more homogeneous conditions within the states.
- ✓ Regarding areas of risk of becoming an inner periphery, approximately **18% of the areas identified in 2017 have further 'downgraded' and became an inner periphery in 2021**.





Dealing with complexity and diversity

- ✓ In addition to poor access to SGIs, **limited economic potential and socio-economic situation overlap with aspatial peripherality** leading to weak social outcomes: poor access to education and opportunities, poor quality of infrastructure and public services, lack of community participation and networks, vulnerability to economic and health crisis.
- ✓ Usually, many actors are involved in providing SGIs. The **lack of coordination** contributes to feed vicious cycles
- ✓ **Inner peripheral areas behave in a complex way, as the improvements in road infrastructure are not simply translated in total reduced IP areas but on a higher fragmentation.**
- ✓ **Addressing aspatial 'Connectedness'** such as access to knowledge circuits, entrepreneurship and innovation networks, local collaboration (associations of municipalities to develop strategic plans or improving service provision), or support from regional agencies or platforms, contributes to long-term development.

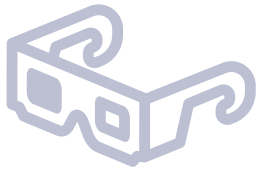
How do current policies address the challenges of IPs?

- ✓ Some of the existing challenges are addressed by current policies in a transversal or **indirect manner**.
- ✓ **Transport and infrastructure development policies do rarely address the relation with** subsequent **changes in the provision of SGIs** which is a crucial aspect for the future development of those areas.
- ✓ Although some policy tools address **aspatial challenges** of IPs (social capital, business networks, global-local linkages, institutional networks, multi-level governance, etc.), there is a need to implement them with an 'IP perspective' so to translate them into effective changes.
- ✓ Policies **rarely address the link between poor access to services**, poor economic potential and dynamism **with demographic change** (ageing and out-migration), which tend in turn to weaken social capital.

Key recommendations

Prioritising access to SGIs, and promoting collaborative and innovative solutions.

Embrace a more integrated approach and the multi-faceted nature of IPs



Increasing the visibility of IPs in the policy arena.

Key recommendations

Targeting core areas of IPs and areas-of-risk, and addressing connectedness.

Dealing with the phenomenon at an appropriate scale. NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 level are limited (use of grid data)

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Results ESPON PROFECY Data and Maps Update :

- Updated distance matrices for NUTS versions 2016 and 2021;
- Updated PROFECY datasets integrated in the ESPON 2020 Database Portal;
- Updated PROFECY maps, interpretations and observations, incorporated in the ESPON online MapFinder;
- Reports explaining methodological issues and results

Availale at:
https://www.espon.eu/projects/espon-2020/monitoring-and-tools/profecy-data-and-maps-update

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// Thank you

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