

# ESPON SCALES Seminar in Budapest

Seminar report

27/10/2011

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# 1 Background and focus

## 1.1 Thematic scope of the seminar

As the recently updated Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union states, the relationship between rural and urban areas differs widely throughout Europe. First of all, a fundamental difference exists concerning urban-rural relations in Western and Eastern Member States. This is due to the special characteristics of the latter group such as the less developed “culture” and tradition of cooperation and partnership between municipalities, together with suburbanisation in the East where urban sprawl has boomed in recent decades. Although the distinction between rural and urban areas is becoming increasingly blurred, in particular rural areas



*Mr Adam Radvanszki presents the thematic scope of the Hungarian seminar*

close to urban centres where a process of integration of rural and urban spaces is taking place, more remote rural areas with low population density and weak economic background face increasing challenges. The polarisation between capital regions and their wider hinterland is also growing.

Relevant policy documents such as TA2020 also recognises the diverse links that urban and rural territories throughout Europe can have with each other, ranging from peri-urban to peripheral rural regions. The TA2020 also emphasises that polycentric development at the macro-regional, cross-border and also on national and regional level can contribute to this aim.

The aim of the seminar in Budapest was to address these issues. Besides focusing on the theme of urban-rural relationship the event presented the possible utilisation of ESPON results on each territorial scale.

The Hungarian seminar focused on how the ESPON programme can contribute to tackling the following challenges:

- **Interdependence between metropolitan regions and their catchment areas**

What are the impacts of metropolitan regions on their wider influence areas?

How to manage uncoordinated territorial expansion in immediate surroundings of metropolitan regions?

- **Rural periphery: challenges and opportunities: the role of small and medium sized towns**

What are the main challenges the different types of rural peripheral areas facing with?

What can be the role of small and medium size towns in tackling these challenges?

- **Structural change in traditional agricultural areas**

How important is the rural employment for Europe?

How can these areas adapt to the changing economic environment?

## 1.2 Seminar outline and dissemination strategy

The conference was held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2011 (9.00 – 16.00), and aimed at reaching the decision-makers at different levels. The seminar began with a brief overview on the on-going ESPON project results and was followed by presentations of Hungarian ECP on three challenges focusing on the theme of the seminar. In the second section four ESPON project stakeholders of each territorial level shared their experiences on the utilisation of ESPON results, in the framework of a panel discussion involving the audience as well. The discussion brought together representatives of transnational, national, regional and local levels:

- **Judit Tímár**, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre for Regional Studies (Representative of SEMIGRA project) – Hungary
- **András Nagy**, (VÁTI) in the name of Ministry for National Economy responsible for national spatial strategic planning– Hungary
- **Paul Grohmann**, City of Vienna, Municipal Department 18: Urban Development and Planning (Stakeholder of POLYCE project, Representative of CENTROPE region) – Austria
- **Thomas Dax**, Federal Institute for Less-Favoured and Mountainous Areas (Representative of EDORA project) – Austria

We chose English as the official language of the Hungarian seminar. That could be the reason why the participants were mostly researchers from different universities and research institutes. We concluded that the real target group could be easier reached by choosing Hungarian as the language of the seminar.

## 2 SCALES approach

### 2.1 Main dissemination challenges

#### Relevance of NUTS2 level

- in Hungary there is no governmental competence of NUTS2 regions
- there is only 7 NUTS2 units in the country which cannot make visible the regional differences
- the status of NUTS3 level has been increased from 2011 but in most cases only NUTS2 data are available

#### Lack of data on urban-rural relationship

- up-to-date study on urban-rural relationship is not available by the time of the seminar

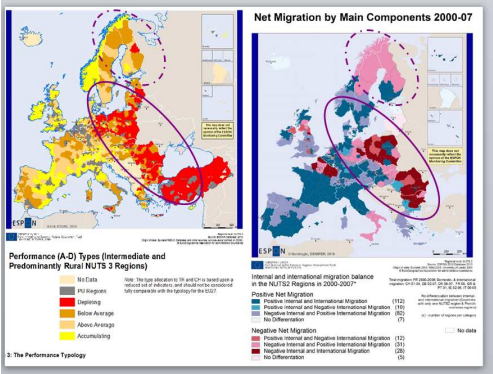
- the nature of urban-rural relationship is different throughout Europe, there is no common definition
- in Hungary Budapest is the only metropolitan region, in the context of small and medium sized towns relevant study is needed

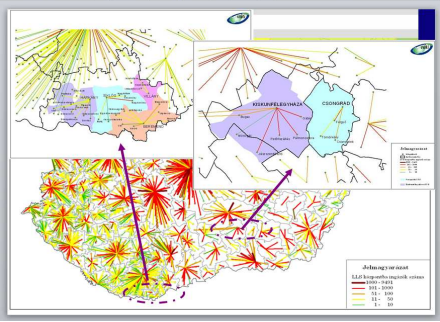
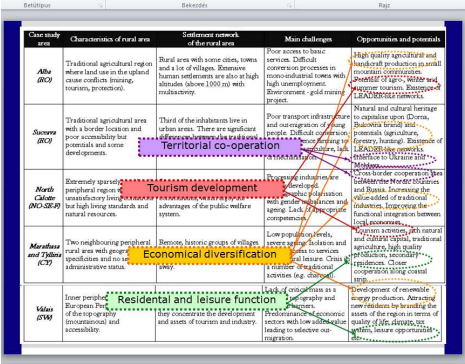
### Interest of local stakeholders on ESPON results

- stakeholders on local and/or subregional level do not see the added value of the results at first glance, they do not have experience to deal with territorial data and maps

## 2.2 Methodology: Addressing the scales problematic (CO-ZI-CO)

The following table briefly summarises the tools that have been used in order to address the challenges in connection with "scale". These tools follow the steps of comparison, zooming-in, and completion (co-zi-co).

<b>Main dissemination challenges</b>	<b>"CoZiCo tools"</b>	<b>Example used during the seminar</b>
<p><b>Relevance of NUTS2 level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in Hungary there is no governmental competence of NUTS2 regions</li> <li>- the status of NUTS3 level has been increased from 2011 but in most cases only NUTS2 data are available</li> <li>- there is only 7 NUTS2 unit in the country which makes the comparison difficult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Compare:</b> comparison between results of different ESPON projects</li> <li>- <b>Zoom-in:</b> using case studies of EDORA, TeDi projects</li> <li>- <b>Completion:</b> completion of ESPON results by national study</li> </ul>	<p>Comparison between results of DEMIFER and EDORA projects</p> 
<p><b>Lack of data on urban-rural relationship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up-to-date study on urban-rural relationship is not available by the time of the seminar</li> <li>- the nature of urban-rural relationship is different throughout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Compare:</b> comparison between Budapest and Munich based on FOCI, EU-LUPA, TIPTAP results</li> <li>• <b>Zoom-in:</b> zooming into the</li> </ul>	<p>Completion by Local labour systems of Hungary (State and perspectives of the Hungarian Settlement Network evaluation report)</p>

<p>Europe, no common definition</p> <p>- in Hungary Budapest is the only metropolitan region, in the context of small and medium sized towns relevant study is needed</p>	<p>FOCI, ESPON DATABASE, Map Updates, TRACC results to gain information about Budapest</p> <p>- <b>Completion:</b> comparison with national study completing the ESPON results</p>	
<p><b>Interest of local stakeholders on ESPON results</b></p> <p>- stakeholders on local and/or subregional level do not see the added value of the results at first glance, they do not have experience to deal with territorial data and maps</p>	<p>- <b>Compare:</b> comparison between national and ESPON results</p> <p>- <b>Zoom-in:</b> using of local level case studies of ESPON as best practice</p> <p>- <b>Completion:</b> an additional map was created about the influence areas of metropolitan regions based on their population</p>	<p>Zooming into the results by using local level case studies of EDORA project</p> 

### 3 Outcomes

#### 3.1 Content related results

As part of the Seminar programme, three scales of urban-rural relations were demonstrated by the Hungarian ECP and with reflections from partner ECPs related to the topic. The content of the presentations can be summarised as follows:

##### 3.1.1 Interdependence between cities and their catchment areas

As the first theme, the main interrelationships between metropolitan regions and their catchment areas were investigated. The scale can be defined on two levels: immediate surroundings and wider influence areas. It is also an element of our discussion to unfold the main drivers of urban sprawl and its major challenges, and relate their effects to the hinterlands. The findings of former and actual ESPON results extracted from FOCI, SS-LR, RERISK, and some additional

results from CLIMATE and METROBORDER. From local-regional (immediate surrounding) to macroregional (wider influence area) scales were used. As part of this process, a good delimitation should be utilized for both categories of impact areas. The abovementioned approach was used to compare the status of Budapest and Munich, in terms of these interrelationships. Furthermore, similarities and differences in the structures and functionalities of the two catchment areas can be revealed. A completion method as a potential tool for measuring the impact area was involved from the evaluation report of State and perspectives of the Hungarian Settlement Network and an additional map was created about the influence areas based on their population. For comparison, Munich was the counterpoint of Budapest.

The Luxemburgish ECP presented the national and cross border results which can be compared by the Budapest and Munich examples.

### **3.1.2 Rural peripheries – challenges and opportunities and the role of small- and medium size towns**

The presentation concentrated on the main problems and challenges rural peripheries are facing with and potentially some development opportunities. This was based on existing ESPON results applying the findings of the projects EDORA, GEOSPECS and SS-LR with some completions from DEMIFER, SGPTD and POLYCE. It analysed core-periphery relations in terms of urban-rural connections both at macro-regional and national as well as at regional/local levels. The issue of peripherality was concerned firstly at macro regional and national levels, with special emphasis on types of rural regions relevant for core-periphery relationship (outer peripheries – remote rural areas with the challenge of depopulation; and internal rural peripheries lagging behind). Due to the fact of data and map constraints one of the main outputs at local/regional levels were the best practices collected from EDORA and TeDi projects in the form of a synthesis table. The case studies with special information about pilot regions can support the stakeholders at lower territorial levels as best practices to be used in the future as alternative development solutions. During the analysis of existing ESPON results themes emerged that have not been examined in the ESPON 2013 programme so far like the role of small and medium size towns.

The German ECP completed the ESPON project results by zooming into the national findings and presented the processes at lower territorial scale.

### **3.1.3 Structural change in traditional agricultural areas**

The presentation built mainly on the findings of EDORA project and focussed on the changing urban-rural relationship from economic point of view and the special challenges these areas facing with. Using the structural types developed by the EDORA project distinction was made between the different regions of Europe with special attention to Hungary and the other SCALES countries. The presentation highlighted the results at macro (European, national) and micro (regional, local) levels by using the maps, graphs as well as one of the case studies of the project.

As a comparison the Swiss ECP presented the situation of the country by using the findings of EDORA and TeDi projects completed by national results.

### 3.1.4 Panel discussion

The aim of the panel discussion was to explore the concerns and experiences of stakeholders at different territorial levels on the usage of ESPON results. We invited representatives of national, transnational, regional and local level in order to better understand the usability of ESPON results on each level.

The project's idea comes from the fact that disseminating ESPON results goes along with several challenges with regard to scales; especially stakeholders from the sub-national level often question the relevance of ESPON for their purposes.

Taking into account that the attendants mainly came from the scientific sphere the afternoon session tried to connect the researcher and the stakeholders, namely the users of results. The answers to the question **“What is the added value of the ESPON programme concerning polycentricism?”** can be concluded as follows:

- Analysing of the urban-rural relationship is a great challenge, every new results coming from ESPON could be useful for future planning of the metropolitan areas, because new information helps the researchers to approach the problems from different views. Practitioners and stakeholders need a unique and clear delimitation method of metropolitan regions, ESPON can contribute to this.
- The program's main aim is not making new typologies, rather utilising and disseminating the outcoming results. The typologies cannot be permanent because of the continuously changing regions. For researchers ESPON projects can provide new ideas for development of methodologies by using them in their own contexts.
- Concerning urban-rural relationship it is of a great importance that we have distinguished that rural is not equal to agricultural.
- ESPON can contribute to avoiding that polycentricism becomes only an academic problem by raising the awareness on political analyses and territorial consequences. ESPON is a process towards creativity.

## 3.2 Dissemination related results

The ESPON Programme provides comparable spatial information on a European level in order to support spatial policy.

The Budapest seminar approached very directly the challenges of urban-rural relationship at macro-regional, national and local/regional levels. However, there is certain incongruence which has to be overcome by stakeholders to increase the usability of the results. These problems arise as the available statistical data do not reflect real processes completely and depend on the regional level presented. In general stakeholders may not have the competence to influence the regional levels on which statistical data are available. Following this, some problems of a specific regional level will for example not be identified on a higher level.

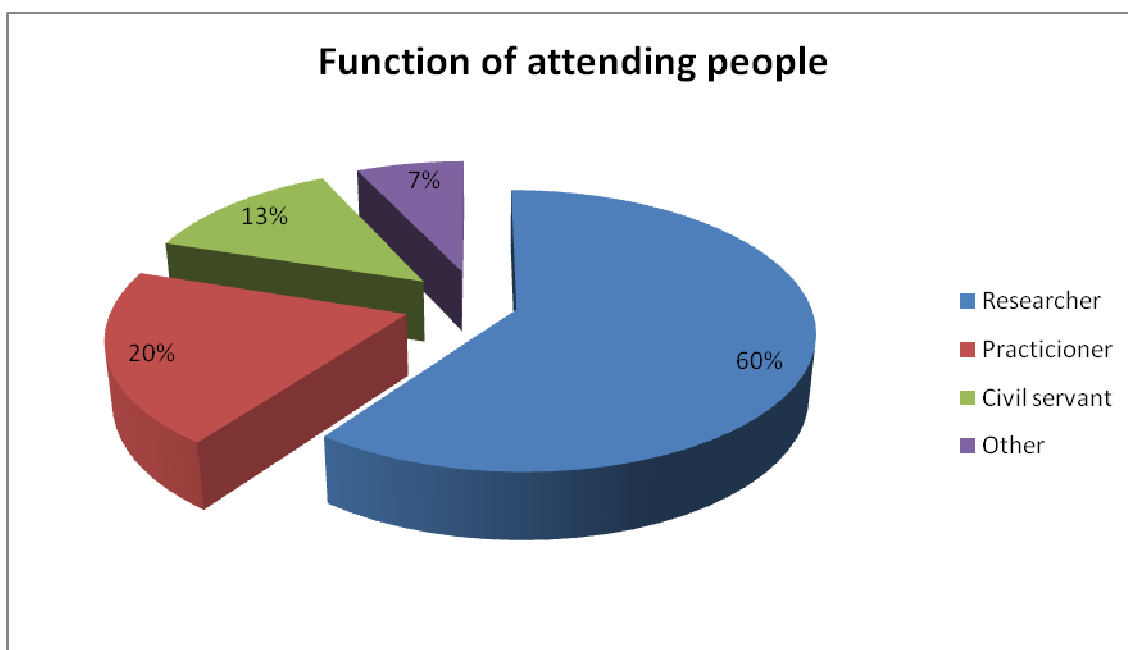
Based on this we intend to explore and highlight potential and existing usage of the results at different level.

In the framework of this seminar, the conclusion cannot be completed. Still, the results can be utilised not only by European level policies, but also on lower territorial levels.

### 3.3 Seminar participation feedback

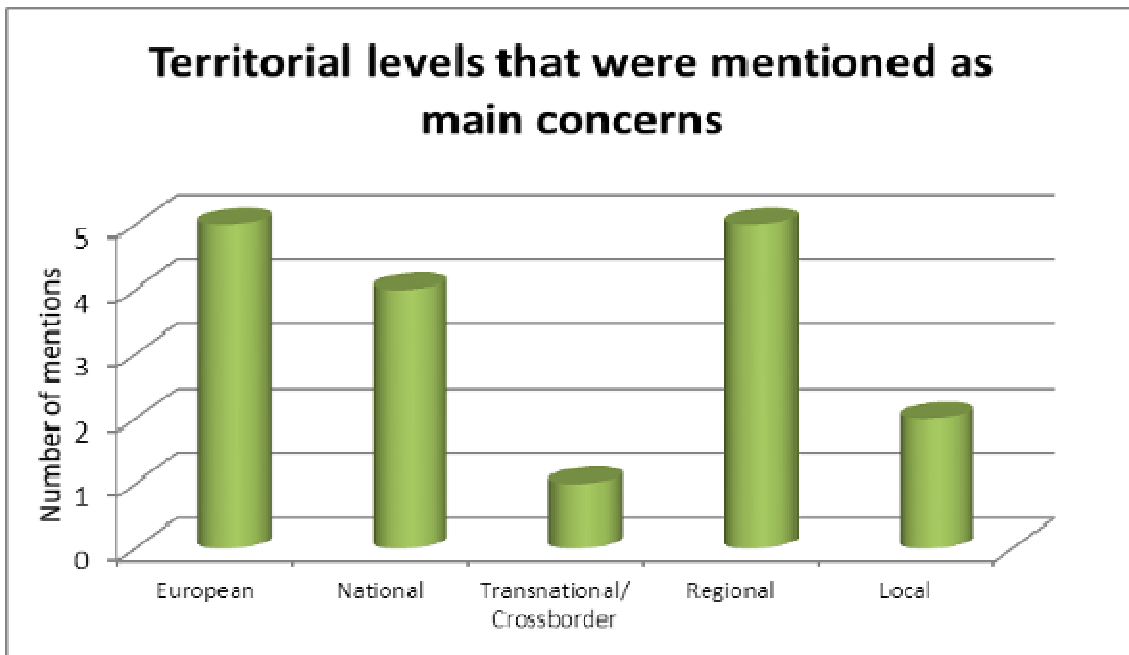
The participants were asked to fill a feedback questionnaire: the following questions were the most relevant for being able to reach the purpose of this seminar:

- What is your function?
- Which territorial level is your main concern?
- Have you known ESPON before coming to this conference? If yes: how did you get to know the ESPON programme?

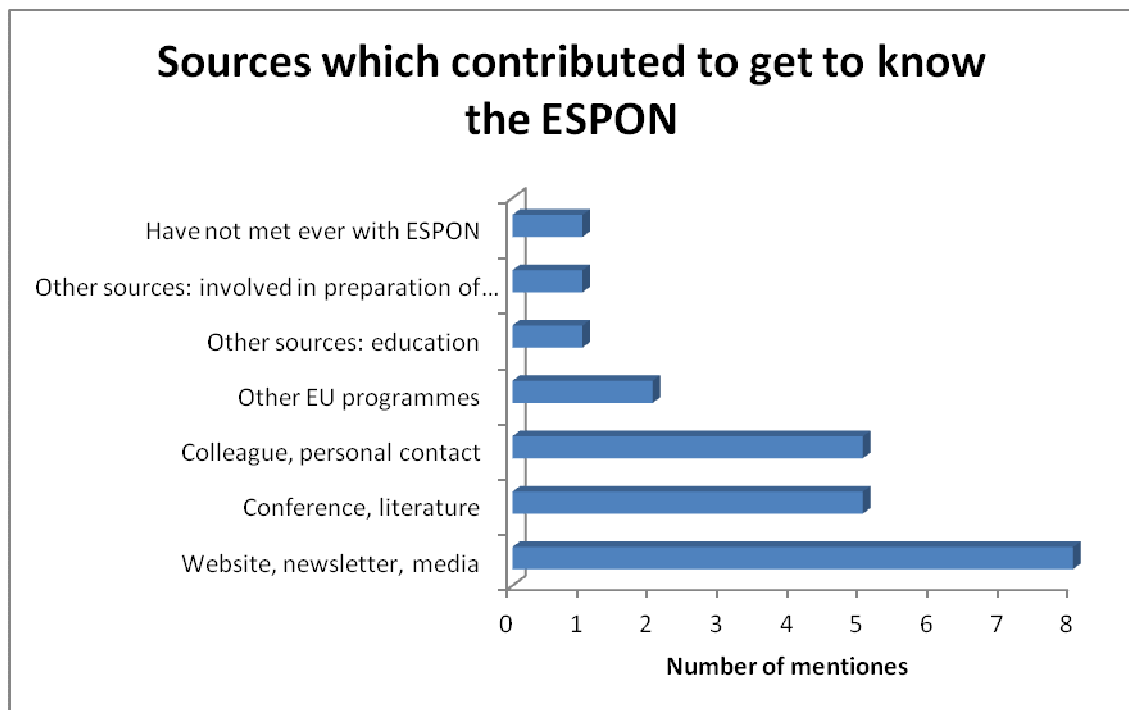


**Figure 1.**





*Figure 2.*



*Figure 3.*

Evaluating the feedback questionnaires we can say that most of participants of the seminar were Hungarian, and half of them work as researcher. It is interesting from the project's point of view that in contrast to the Luxemburgish seminar the transnational or cross-border level are not the main concerns of Hungarian researcher among the five territorial levels (European, national, transnational/cross-border, regional, local) – see figure 2. Considering the profession of these people half of them are geographers. It might be considered as a positive feedback that only one person has not met ESPON yet, but most of the others got to know it through websites, newsletters, or media (figure 3.).

Summing up the results of the main questions of the questionnaires the participants were satisfied with the information provided by the seminar but they need more results.



*SCALES Hungarian Seminar, team foto – in front of the VATI building*

## 4 Lessons learnt

### 4.1 Lessons learnt for ESPON

Using the responses of the audience it can be concluded as follows:

#### **What do they expect? What could the future perspectives of ESPON be?**

- The most useful parts of ESPON outputs were the maps and diagrams from different projects, supporting the positioning of Hungary and other SCALES countries within the ESPON space.
- ESPON results can be used on several territorial scales but the main concern is now the European level which has to be translated into regional or local levels.

- By different levels of analyses cities can get standardised information about their surroundings.
- Small and medium size towns' topics should get a bigger emphasis within ESPON frameworks in the coming years
- More results are needed in topics of cross-border and transnational functional regions, and cities, rural and specific regions.
- In many cases the local stakeholders may not see the added value of the ESPON programmes, they need more local information.
- ESPON results are very useful for teaching.
- ESPON should say something provocative in order to convince politicians to use the results.
- We should be proactive and sell the results to the media.

## 4.2 Lessons learnt for the national dissemination

Using the responses of the audience it can be concluded as follows:

### **What do the stakeholders learn? /How do they understand the results?**

- Local stakeholders may not see the added value of the ESPON projects at first glance, the results should be translated or completed by national results.
- The ECP may teach the audience how they can easily define their cities' position in the European territory.
- Stakeholders need brief overview of results (dissemination papers).
- The language barrier is remarkable.