



# Transnational Territorial Cooperation

(INTERREG IV) North West Europe



Operational Programme  
**2007 - 2013**



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# Transnational territorial cooperation (INTERREG IVB) Operational Programme for North West Europe

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## **Notes**

### **Separate volumes:**

- I) Ex-ante evaluation report
- II) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### ***1.1 Introduction***

Regions in Europe are becoming increasingly interdependent as a consequence of globalisation, liberalisation and new emerging forms of governance. The effects of the technological revolution, the need to position the EU as an economically competitive counterbalance to the USA and Asia, EU enlargement and progress towards completion of the Single European Market present considerable challenges for territorial cohesion in an integrated Europe. The increasing interdependence of regions is demonstrated by numerous connections, such as freight and passenger transportation. For example, the port of Rotterdam serves an area stretching far beyond the Alps, and investments in high-speed train connections are currently altering the geography of North West Europe (NWE) due to considerably reduced travel times.

While regions are on the one hand becoming more interdependent, there are on the other hand some recent large-scale spatial development trends which have the potential to threaten the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the transnational cooperation area. For example, current demographic and migration trends may lead to further polarisation around large urban areas in North West Europe, while the more rural and peripheral parts of the territory are affected by depopulation. Ongoing competition between major urban areas, seaports and transport hubs often negatively affects the economic and environmental performance of cities and regions. Impacts from climate change are affecting different parts of the territory differently, thus threatening to increase imbalances across North West Europe.

It is for these reasons that there is a growing awareness of the need to coordinate objectives and policies with a spatial impact. Territorial cooperation across large contiguous transnational areas on topics that cannot be sufficiently tackled by single nation-states is therefore given considerable support by European institutions and EU Member States and regions. The EU's Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy to develop the knowledge economy whilst achieving sustainable development<sup>i</sup> is since 2000 the core overarching goal for the EU. In response to the recognition that the diverse potentials of European regions have not been sufficiently taken into account in the Lisbon Strategy, the Ministers for Spatial Planning of the EU Member States have in 2004 started a process towards the 'Territorial Agenda of the EU' policy document, to be adopted in 2007. The view that integrated territorial development approaches can enable regions to exploit their endogenous potential more effectively is promoted in this process. The EU Cohesion Policy for the period 2007-2013 will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy and the Territorial Agenda of the EU by promoting a balanced and sustainable development of the territory, making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work, improving knowledge and innovation for growth, and creating more and better jobs.

This Operational Programme (OP) on transnational cooperation in North West Europe promotes an integrated approach to territorial development, both horizontally (among different policy sectors), vertically (among different levels of government) and geographically (across administrative boundaries). The programme promotes transnational cooperation through the financing of action projects conducive to integrated territorial development. In line with the Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)<sup>ii</sup>, the main focus is on priorities concerned with innovation, the environment, accessibility and sustainable urban development in the

North West Europe transnational cooperation area in pursuit of the objectives of the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy. The programme seeks to complement other Community policies and EU funded programmes, as set out under each of the identified programme priorities. The OP for North West Europe in the Cohesion Policy period 2007-2013 will build on the achievements of the INTERREG IIIB North West Europe programme on transnational cooperation on spatial planning, which was implemented over the period 2000-2006.

This Operational Programme is being submitted to the European Commission by the members of the NWE, namely the Kingdom of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Swiss Confederation.

### ***1.2 NWE territorial transnational cooperation: achievements under previous INTERREG programmes, shortcomings and challenges***

Transnational territorial cooperation has a long history in North West Europe. Many bilateral cooperation agreements between European countries, for instance the Benelux countries, have been in place for several decades now. Some multilateral conferrals have been early on institutionalised (for example the 'Conference for Spatial Planning in North-West Europe' – CRONWE since 1962). The main reasons for these cooperation efforts can be found in the rapid urbanisation and industrialisation in North West Europe after the Second World War, and effects on the economy and standard of living that this implied. There are also numerous examples of significant cross-border cooperation, such as the Grand-Région Saar-Lor-Lux-Trier-Westpfalz and the Euregios in North West Europe. Since the early 1990s, many cross-border cooperation initiatives are being supported by the EU Community Initiative INTERREG.

Various studies and documents have raised the awareness for the need for a transnational perspective on the sustainable and mutually interdependent territorial development of North West Europe. These include Europe 2000+ and the study on the 'Central and Capital Cities' Region (CCC Study)<sup>iii</sup>. The Community Initiative INTERREG IIC (1997 -1999) provided the 'North Western Metropolitan Area Programme' with ERDF funding for altogether forty-five projects, which focused on 'soft actions' such as studies, exchanges of experience and good practice, joint territorial strategies and seminars. Among these 45 projects, the drawing up of a 'Spatial Vision for North-West Europe'<sup>iv</sup> has played a central role. This document aimed to translate the objectives and policy options of the 'European Spatial Development Perspective' (ESDP) into more concrete planning principles based on the characteristics and potential of the NWMA territory. The EU Community Initiative INTERREG IIIB North West Europe (NWE) (2000-2006) built on the Spatial Vision strategy and continued the efforts begun under the NWMA programme as well as the IRMA Programme on flood management along Rhine and Maas with a considerably higher budget. Several projects under the IIIB NWE Programme were concerned with supporting and harmonising the implementation of European policies and directives with a spatial impact across national borders. Using the EU Water Framework Directive or the Birds and Habitats Directives as a starting point, several projects were for example concerned with developing joint strategies in order to better coordinate the implementation of river basin management plans and the Natura2000



network, and to harmonise practices across administrations from different Member States.

INTERREG IIIB funding was also used to support the exchange and transfer of know-how in key areas for transnational spatial development, such as flood risk management practices. Fruitful exchanges were thus enabled between regions directly affected by each other (e.g. Germany and the Netherlands) and those facing similar concerns (e.g. UK and the Netherlands). These exchanges between regions that are at different stages of technical and administrative know-how have both resulted in more economical investments by the public sector as well as a better understanding of flood defence issues by citizens.

Transnational strategic actions for tourism networks, development of urban complementary functions and joint responses to issues of common concern have been at the heart of many projects. Towards the end of the NWE IIIB programme, first projects concerned with SME development and innovation support were approved. Despite regional differences across North West Europe, several regions are faced with similar dilemmas such as the efficient organisation of territories, sustainable development and connectivity. The opportunity to join forces and examine such cases from a multi-sectoral and multi-governance level therefore gives considerable added-value to many transnational cooperation partnerships.

The example of successful project cooperation was followed by cooperation at INTERREG IIIB Programme level. The Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation (MSUO) was established to co-ordinate cooperation between Maritime Safety Projects funded by INTERREG, related initiatives and maritime stakeholders. The cooperation between the INTERREG IIIB NWE, North Sea, Baltic Sea and Northern Periphery Programmes under MSUO has become a collective driver for maritime safety on the European and international agenda. As a consequence, the benefits of cooperation are increasingly acknowledged at all levels of European administrations.

The INTERREG IIC 'Spatial Vision for North-west Europe' was updated in 2005 under the guidance of the NWE Spatial Vision Working Group. The outcome of three thematic studies on polycentric territorial development and urban relations; transport and accessibility; and natural and cultural heritage, and a fourth, synthesis, study provided a comprehensive view of the spatial development trends that affect the North West European territory. Through consultations with stakeholders in the countries and regions of NWE, the key transnational issues for cooperation were identified. Stakeholders confirmed the important role of INTERREG in promoting European integration and in establishing long-term networks and more effective regional development.

However, despite the successes of transnational cooperation, the SWOT analysis for the NWE Programme (cf. chapter 2) shows that problems and regional disparities still exist in certain areas. Cooperation often continues to be ad-hoc and rarely becomes institutionalised. There is not yet a 'culture of cooperation' which would facilitate exchanges, and institutions in North West Europe often lack the capacity to engage in transnational territorial cooperation. In national and regional public administration, transnational cooperation projects are generally undertaken only by a limited number of people in a specific division or unit. In addition, differences in government and legal structures across administrative boundaries often delay or hinder cooperation. There is thus a need to find ways to overcome the barriers presented by differences in governance among the various regions, and to increase the institutional capacity of



key actors in order to ensure the continuing support for the efforts begun. Furthermore, there is an ever-growing need to take the territorial implications of sector policies at all levels – from EU to local – into consideration in order to achieve better territorial cohesion. Transnational cooperation can make an important contribution to such more effective territorial and sectoral integration.

The new transnational territorial cooperation Programme for NWE 2007-2013 also offers the opportunity to review the procedures for project development and selection. The Programme has a long standing commitment of high level of support for project developers through the Joint Technical Secretariat officers and the network of Contact Points. In order to improve the project application and implementation procedures even further, the new programming document was drafted in a more user-friendly language, and a more transparent and clearer programme structure is being implemented. Thematically, a more strategic approach is secured by aligning programme objectives with the Member States' National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSFRs) and key EU objectives as expressed in the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies and the Territorial Agenda of the EU. Furthermore, strategic initiatives (see chapter 5) will be supported in order to capitalise on the experience with transnational cooperation in NWE, including those under the previous Community Initiatives.

The transnational territorial cooperation Programme for North West Europe (2007-2013) will support actions and investments with a clear added value for the transnational cooperation area. Studies and research not linked to concrete actions will no longer be funded. Neither will projects that were approved under the previous programmes be able to simply extend their activities under the new Programme. Instead, the focus will be on innovative and tangible initiatives. Due attention will be given to engaging those key actors which have previously not been involved in INTERREG partnerships, in order to expand the cooperation networks set up under the previous cooperation programmes. Support through INTERREG, and the cooperation partnerships facilitated through this Programme, are expected to continue to be an important leverage for further consolidated cooperation. The transnational cooperation projects can make an important contribution to increasing the awareness for territorial issues of transnational concern. The funding will thus act as a catalyst for future infrastructure investments of transnational relevance, which would otherwise not be given sufficient attention.

The overall aim of simplification and transparency in the new programming period will need to be aligned with existing requirements such as rigorous reporting and monitoring procedures. For example, the continuation of the N+2 rule implies a need for detailed reporting (both on content and financial management) and a careful consideration of the ability of the project partnership to carry out the activities according to the timetable. Given the renewed focus on new and innovative solutions, project partnerships will have to find a balance between timely delivery and novel approaches.

The new transnational territorial cooperation Programme for NWE provides an important opportunity to achieve a more balanced and integrated territorial development while at the same time seeking to contribute to the Lisbon-Gothenburg objectives for jobs and growth. The foundations were laid under the previous INTERREG IIIB NWE Programme. The new Operational Programme aims to build on the acquired benefits and to fill the gaps in the promotion of interregional cooperation and regional development (see section 3.1).

### **1.3 The Joint Programming Process**

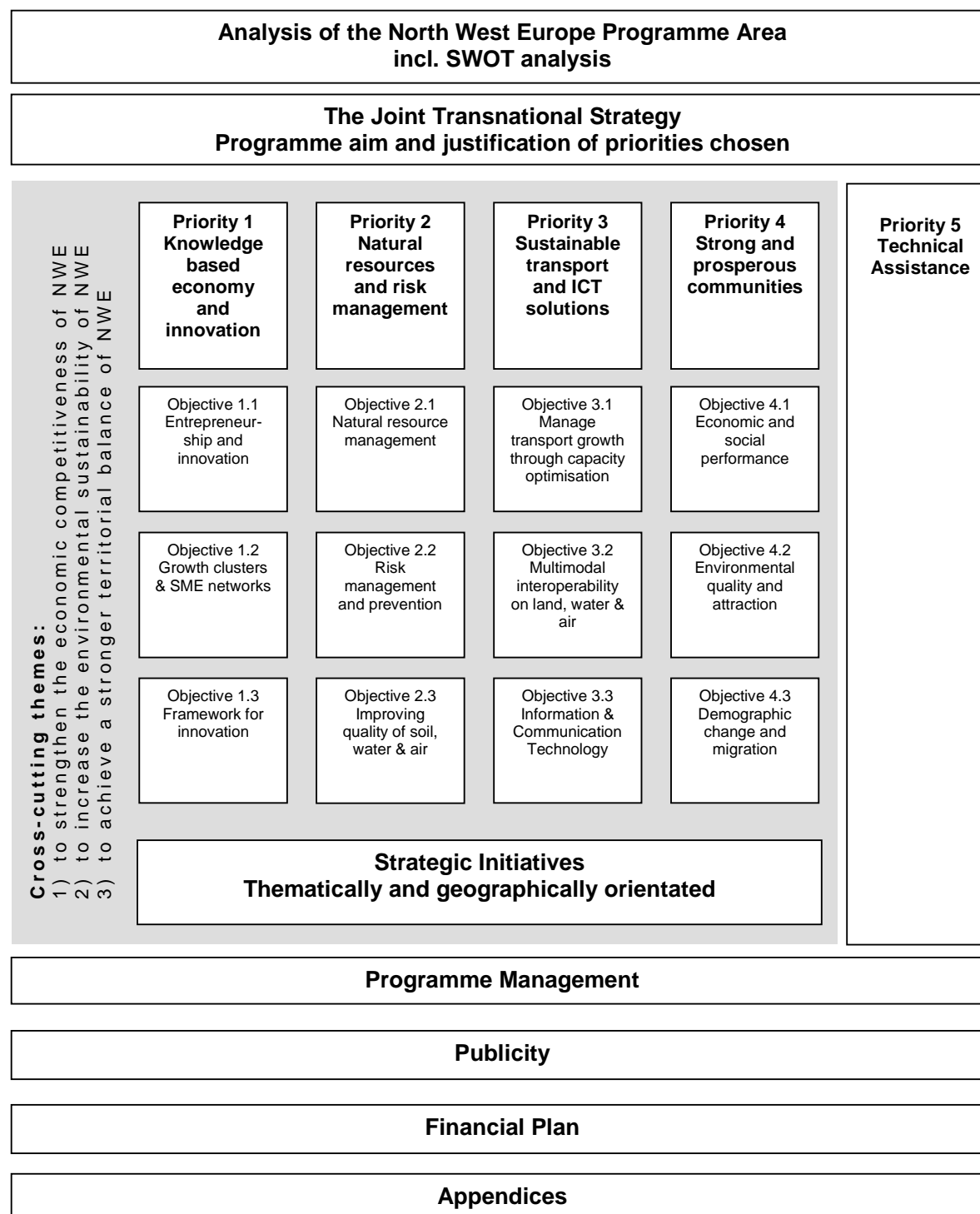
An International Working Party (IWP) was set up to prepare the Operational Programme (OP) for transnational territorial cooperation in North West Europe. The IWP comprised representatives of national and regional authorities of the seven participating Member States and the Swiss Confederation. The first IWP meeting took place on 19 January 2006, and was followed by ten subsequent meetings (10 February 2006, 13/14 March 2006, 9/10 May 2006, 19-21 June 2006, 10/11 July 2006, 11/12 September 2006, 16-18 October 2006, 13-15 November 2006, 6-8 December 2006, and 22/23 January 2007) before the formal submission to the European Commission. An Ex-Ante evaluation including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the draft Operational Programme was organised in parallel (cf. sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.5). The NWE OP is thus the result of a national and transnational consultative process based on a broad dialogue. Institutional partners from national, regional and local authorities as well as non-governmental bodies were able to contribute to its development. The process of preparing the Operational Programme for the North West Europe cooperation area culminated in the submission to the European Commission on 11 April 2007.

### **1.4 Structure of the Operational Programme**

The Operational Programme for transnational territorial cooperation in North West Europe responds to the requirements set out in the Structural Funds and ERDF Regulations, the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion and the National Strategic Reference Frameworks. The Operational Programme provides all relevant information for project promoters in order to facilitate the development of high-quality transnational cooperation projects. The structure of the Operational Programme is as follows (see Figure 1):

In chapter 2, the analysis of spatial development trends of relevance to the transnational cooperation area is presented. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the territorial cohesion of North West Europe are shown in a summarising SWOT-analysis table. Based on the SWOT analysis, chapter 3 sets out the transnational territorial cooperation strategy for North West Europe. This chapter includes the overall Programme aim, and discusses the priorities chosen in response to the challenges identified through the SWOT analysis. Furthermore, the relation between the Operational Programme and the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion and the National Strategic Reference Frameworks, as well as the results of the ex-ante evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment, are discussed. In chapter 4, the Programme priorities for transnational territorial cooperation in North West Europe, and the quality requirements for future cooperation projects are defined. In addition to these four priorities, the North West Europe transnational territorial cooperation Programme also encourages a more strategic and emphatically cross-cutting method to project development. The approach to these thematically and geographically-oriented 'strategic initiatives' is set out in chapter 5 of this Programme document. In chapter 6, the Programme management structures are explained. Chapter 7 sets out the information and publicity requirements for cooperation projects funded by the Programme. The financial plan for the cooperation Programme is presented in chapter 8.

**Figure 1:** Structure of the transnational territorial cooperation Operational Programme for North West Europe



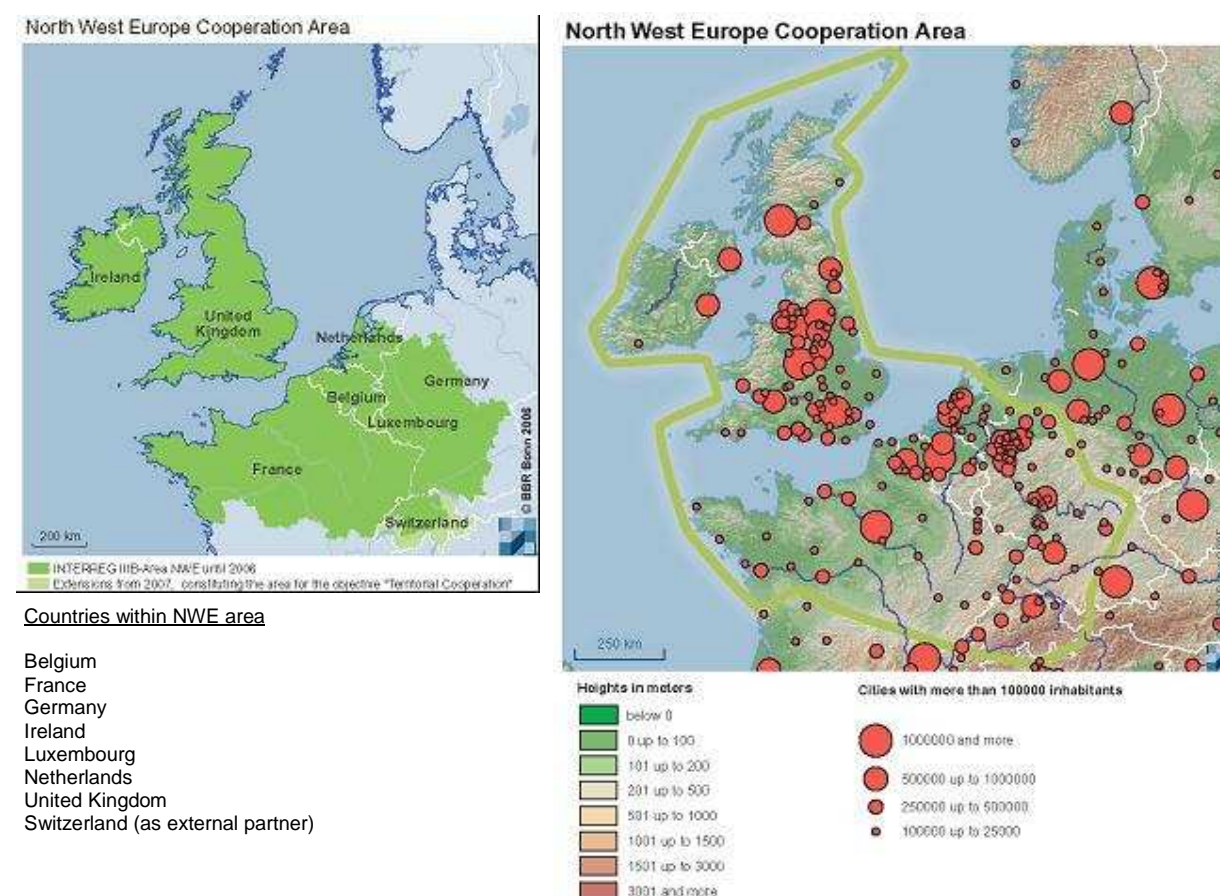
## 2. ANALYSIS OF THE NORTH WEST EUROPE PROGRAMME AREA: THE CONTEXT FOR TRANSNATIONAL TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

### 2.1 Analysis of the situation of the cooperation area

The NWE cooperation area covers 844,239 km<sup>2</sup>, amounting to 21% of the total EU25 land area (Figure 2; for the list of eligible regions see Appendix A). The largest proportion of its area is located in France (33%) and the UK (28.9%), followed by Germany (17.4%), Ireland (8.3%), Switzerland (4.9%), Netherlands (3.6%), Belgium (3.6%) and Luxembourg (0.3%). Geographically, the cooperation area is fragmented by seas separating the UK and Ireland from each other and from mainland Europe.

The NWE area has a population of 179 million, which accounts for about 39,5% of the EU-25 population. The average population density of NWE is with 307 inh/sqkm more than 2.5 times that of the EU-25 average (118 inh/sq km in 2003). About three-quarters of the population live in mainly urbanised areas with more than 500 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, an indication of the urban character of NWE. On the other hand, around one quarter of the cooperation area is sparsely populated.

**Figure 2:** The North West Europe cooperation area



Source: BBR

***The economy of NWE: trends in the labour market, knowledge base and 'Lisbon performance'***

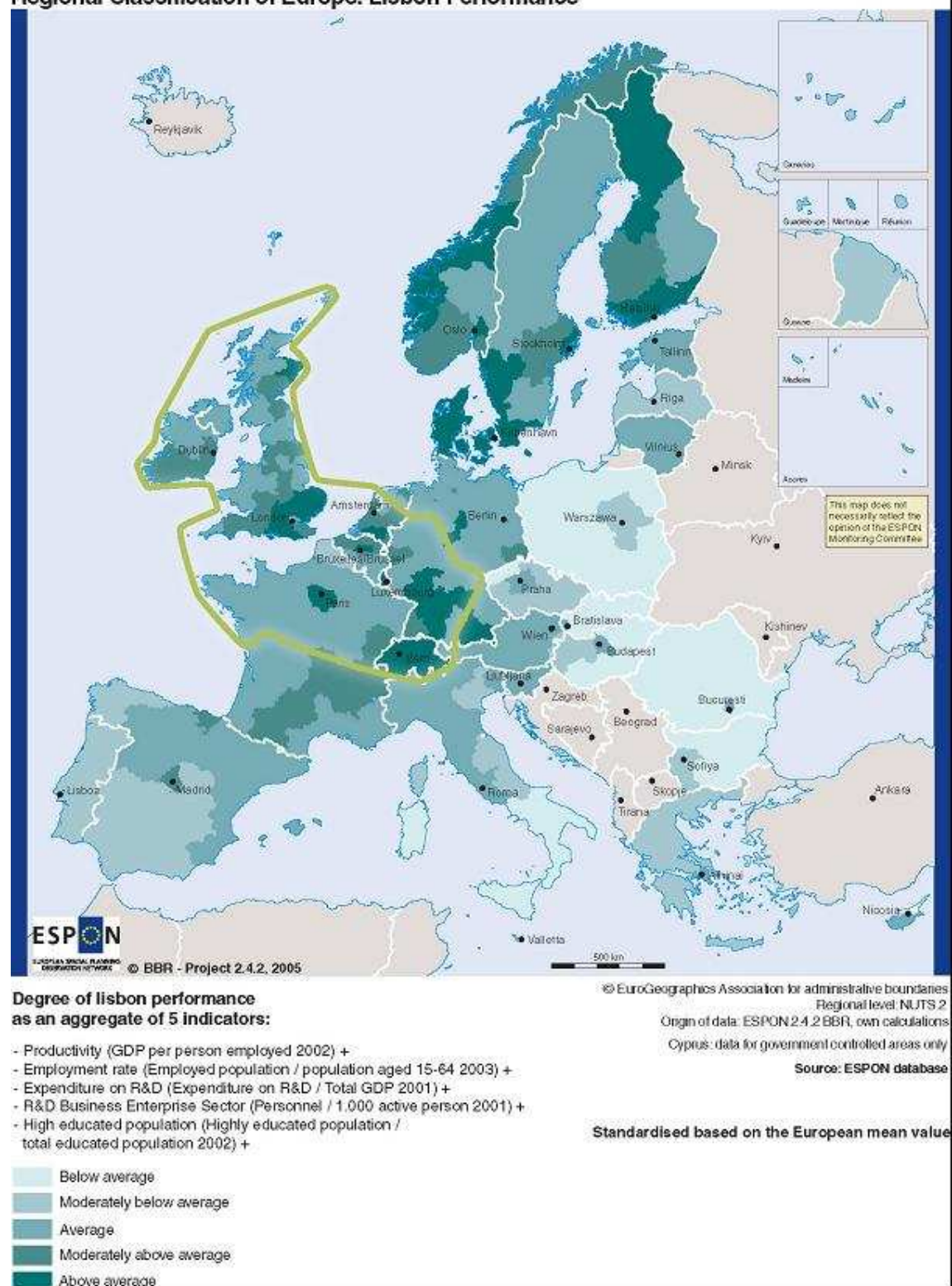
North West Europe is in socio-economic terms one of the most prosperous parts of Europe and accommodates some of the regions with the highest GDP per capita. The highest competitiveness levels – in Lisbon terms – are in the main metropolitan and industrial centres across Europe, excluding those industrial areas that are in the process of restructuring. In NWE, a group of regions mainly centred on South West Germany, South East England, Paris, Luxemburg, Brussels, Southern Netherlands and Switzerland achieved the highest Lisbon performance levels. There are also relatively high levels in much of the rest of the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium (Figure 3). Furthermore, NWE is home to important financial and decision-making headquarters. The cooperation area's contribution to achieving the objectives of the Lisbon strategy is thus unquestionable.

However, while the NWE cooperation area as a whole continues to have a stronger economy than the EU average in terms of GDP (PPS) per capita, there are considerable regional differences in the economic performance across NWE which are likely to get more pronounced if current trends continue (Figure A in Appendix B). The economic growth in some regions of North West Europe, in particular Ireland, the South of England and parts of the Netherlands, is offset by relative losses in most continental parts of the cooperation area and the English Northern regions, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Furthermore, the EU enlargement to 25 member countries in 2004 has increased the EU territory by 34% and its population by 20%, but adding only 5% to its GDP. While enlargement has thus so far led to a decline of GDP per capita across the EU by 18%, the ten new Member States seem to be catching up. Enlargement has begun to shift the centre of gravity eastward, which is reflected in the growth in GDP per capita between 1995 and 2002 (Figure 4). If these trends continue, then NWE may lose its advantage on economic performance and regional economic disparities may increase across the cooperation area.

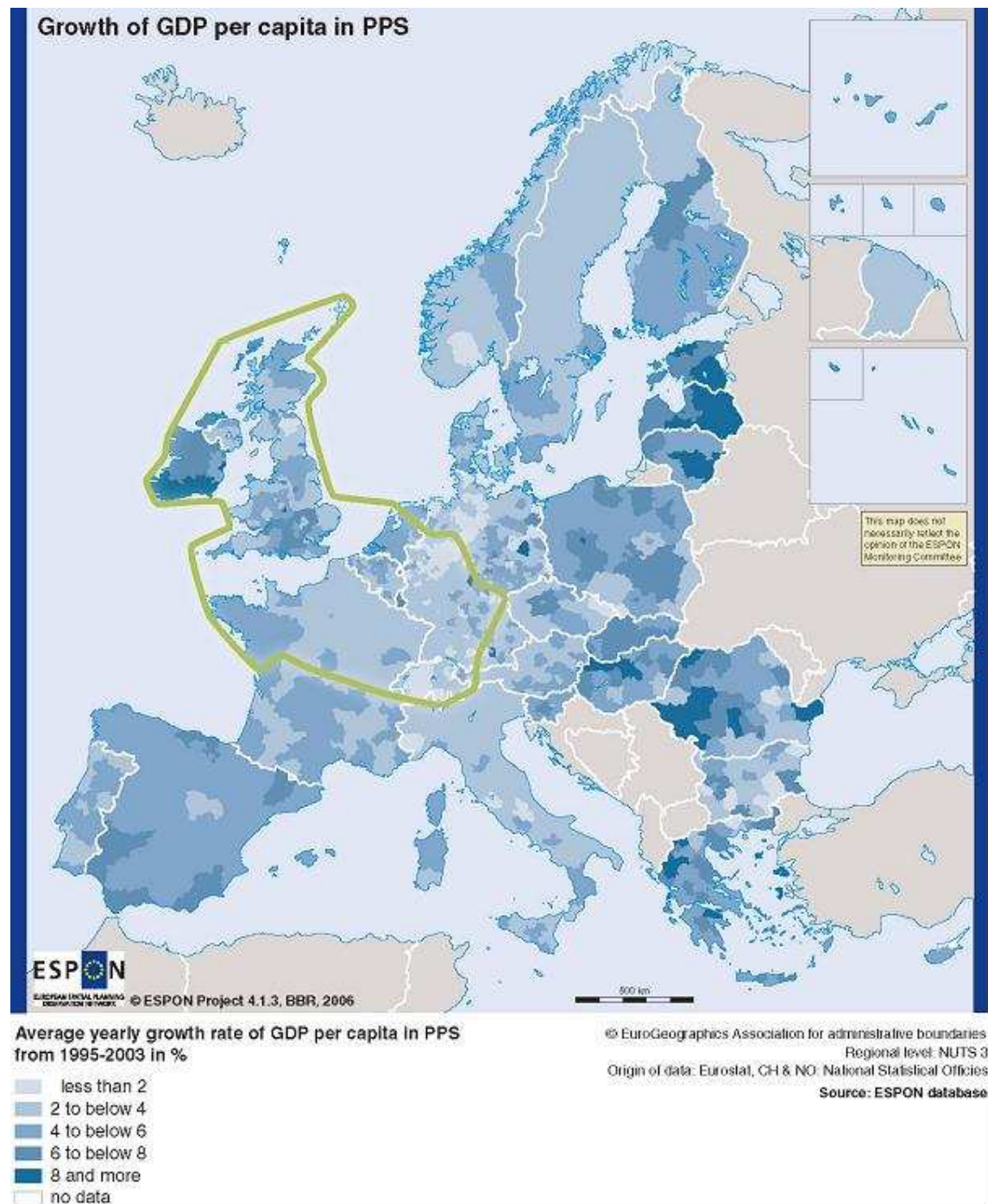
**Figure 3: Lisbon performance and competitiveness**

**Regional Classification of Europe: Lisbon Performance**



Source: BBR; © ESPON, 2006



**Figure 4:** GDP growth per capita 1995-2003

Source: BBR; © ESPON, 2006

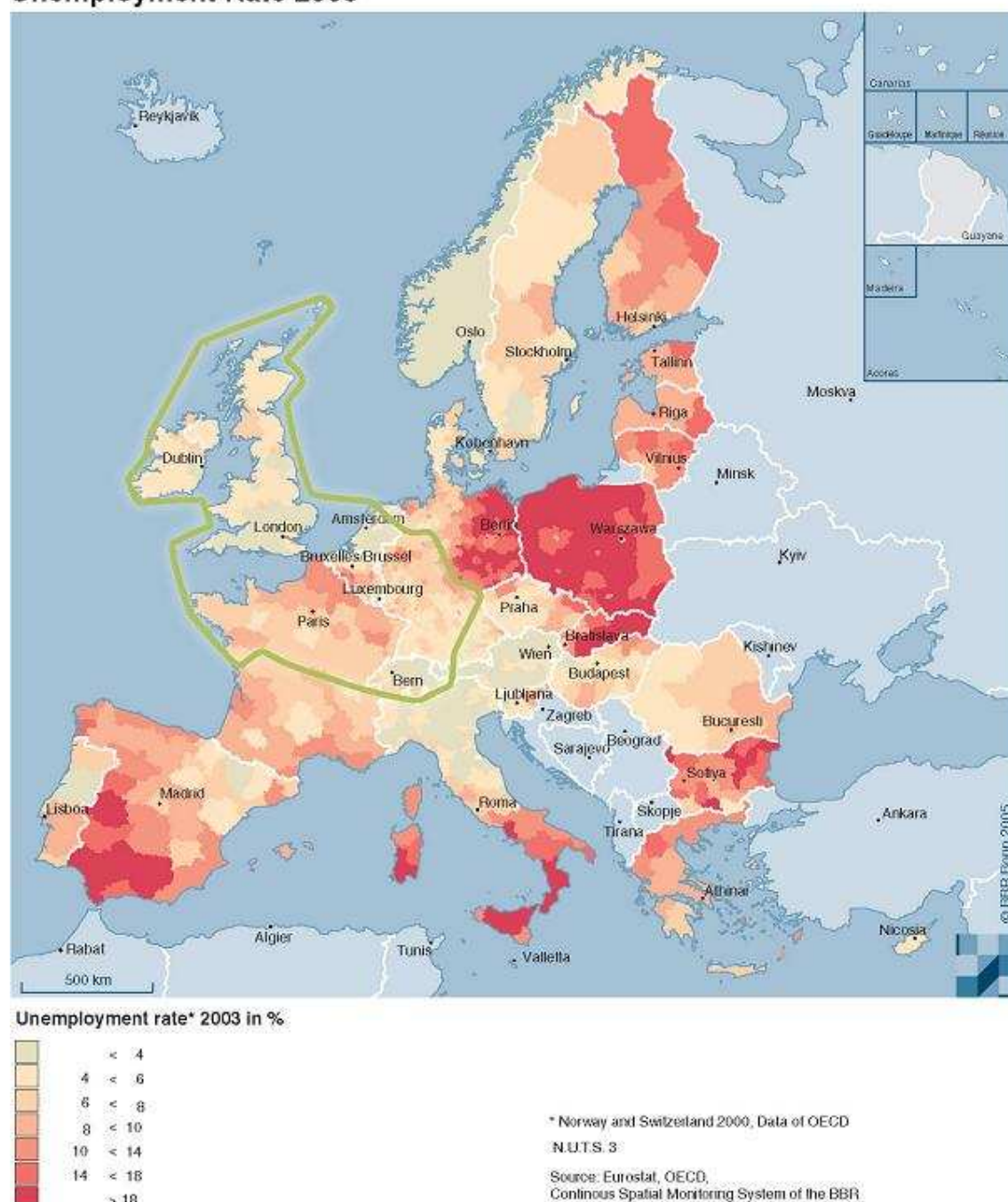
The levels of employment in NWE continue to be relatively high in comparison to the rest of Europe. However, there are again regional differences in the levels of unemployment, with regions in Germany, France and Belgium being in general more strongly affected than other parts of NWE (Figure 5). Demographic trends, including



ageing and low fertility rates, will pose an increasing challenge to the economic performance of European regions, with a need to increase activity rates of people aged 55+ and to improve the integration of young people and immigrants into the labour market.

**Figure 5: Unemployment rate 2003**

### Unemployment Rate 2003

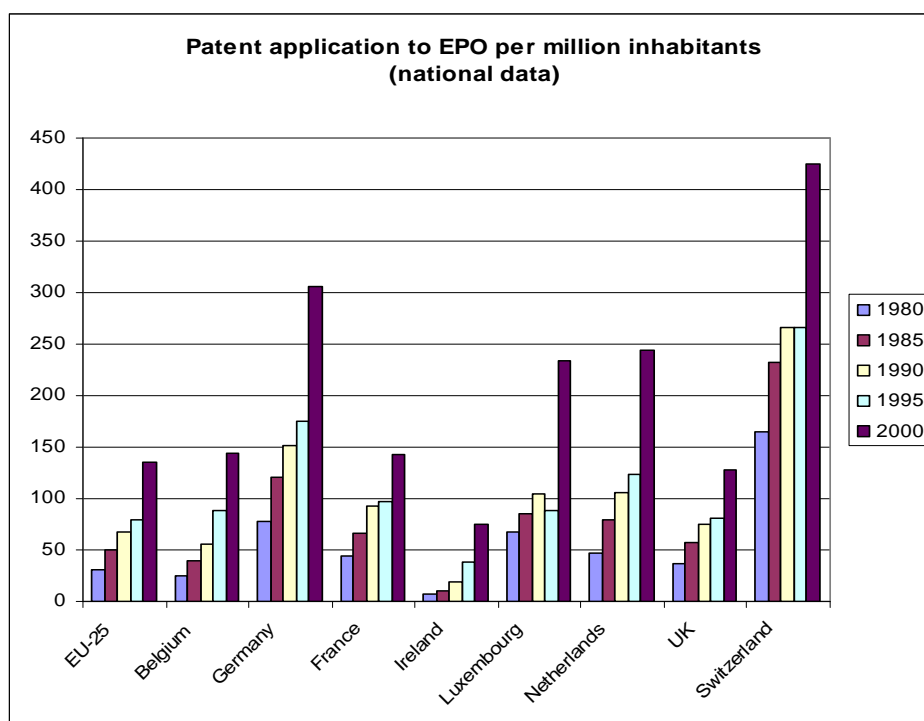


Source: BBR

### *NWE's knowledge economy*

NWE is well placed to play an important role in achieving the Lisbon-Gothenburg objectives. The European Innovation Scoreboard 2005 lists Germany and Switzerland under the five innovation performance leaders<sup>v</sup>. The two European universities that are ranked among the world's Top 10 universities, i.e. Cambridge and Oxford, are both located in North West Europe<sup>vi</sup>. NWE is performing well as regards patent applications (Figure 6), highly educated population (Figure B in the Appendix) and staff in the Research and Development (R&D) business enterprise sector (Figure C).

**Figure 6:** Patent applications to the European Patent Office (per million inhabitants)



Source: based on Eurostat data

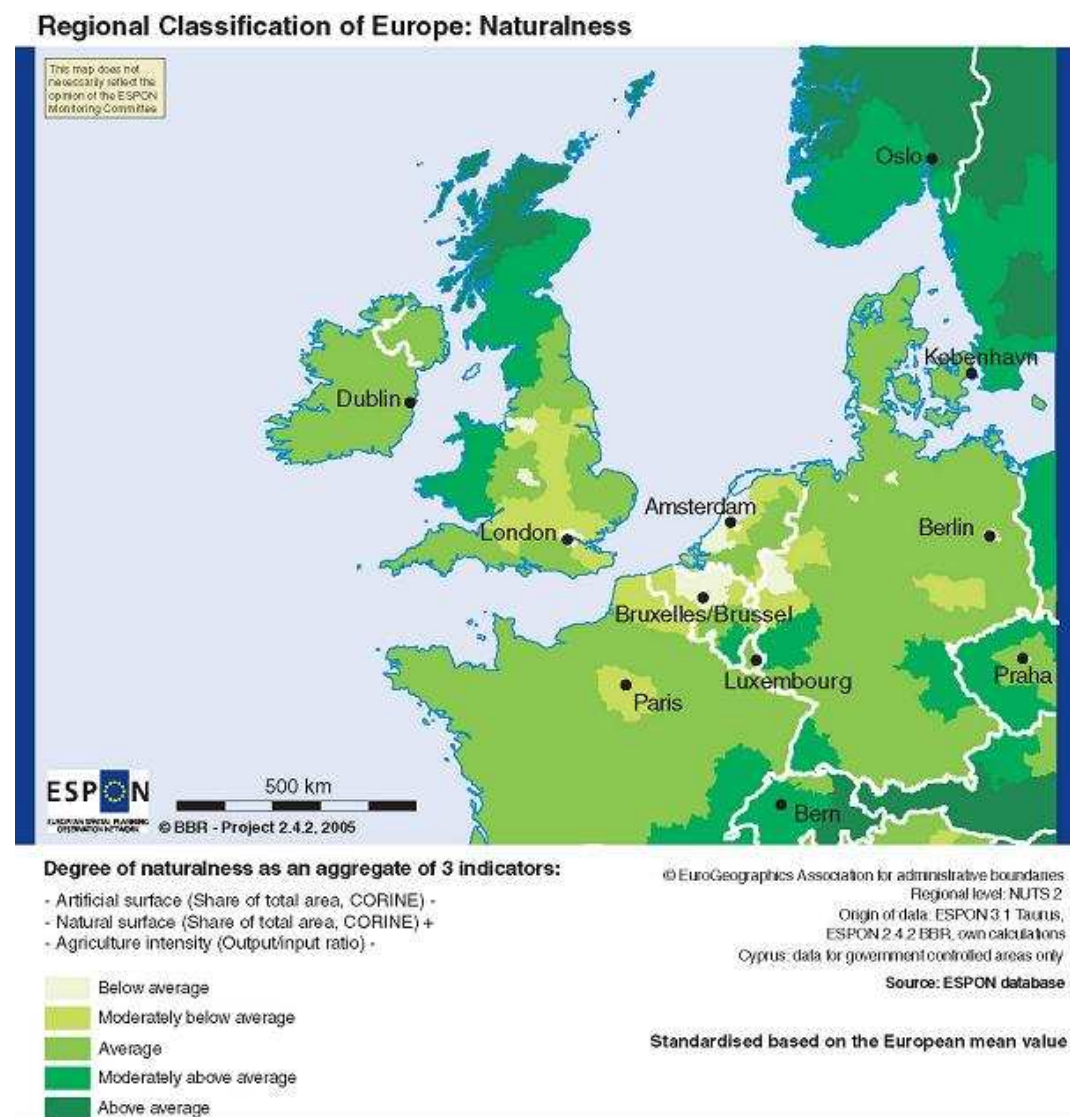
In terms of investment in R&D, countries in NWE are however only just above the EU average (Figure D in the Appendix), with the exception of Germany; and none spend as much on R&D as a proportion of GDP as the Nordic countries. Moreover, there are major regional disparities within NWE with regard to R&D expenditure and employment. An extreme example is the Île de France region (centred on Paris) which is home to 45% of France's R&D expenditure. Generally, the highest levels of investment are found around capital regions, such as London, Paris, Brussels, and also the Rhine Valley in Germany and Switzerland. Outside such Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAs<sup>vii</sup>), areas with above average R&D are often linked to the presence of universities which tend to have a relatively polycentric pattern. Thus, while much of the cooperation region has a strong position, or is developing, in knowledge intensive services and high-technology sectors, regional disparities persist across NWE. The economic situation in the transnational cooperation area is

increasingly varied, and the fact that Lisbon-relevant economic performance (in terms of R&D) is generally found only in urban areas, will potentially contribute to widening the gap between the core and periphery in NWE.

### ***Natural and cultural resources and environmental trends***

NWE enjoys a wealth of diverse cultural and natural heritage. The natural diversity is closely related to NWE's landscape characteristics. However, landscape fragmentation and loss of biodiversity are considerable problems for NWE. Overall, NWE consists to a large extent of highly fragmented semi-natural areas with disconnected 'green islands' within urbanised regions.

**Figure 7:** Degree of 'naturalness' of landscapes in Europe



Source: BBR, © ESPON, 2006 (ESPON 2.4.2) <sup>VIII</sup>

Figure 7 shows that the core area of NWE is affected by a decline in natural areas. The most extreme landscape fragmentation in NWE is found in the coastal regions bordering the English Channel and south of the North Sea (i.e. south and central England, northern France, northern and central Belgium and the Netherlands), and generally in the densely urbanised part of the Benelux countries. The least fragmentation is generally found in mountainous areas, which in NWE is mostly limited to the North and West of Scotland.

Cultural assets tend to cluster in coastal and urbanised areas. This rich cultural and natural heritage attracts a large number of tourists from across the world, creating increasing pressures on the resources and limiting the access by local people. In recent years, cultural heritage and creative industries have come to be considered as assets for future development and economic competitiveness, and as an important locational factor for the knowledge-based economy and the highly-skilled workforce. The concentration of such assets in NWE creates an opportunity for economic innovation in response to the Lisbon-Gothenburg Agenda. Figure E in the Appendix shows that NWE is already home to a number of areas with a strong correlation between economic performance and cultural professions. To build on the cultural assets of NWE and on the demand for cultural services in this densely populated region can therefore be an important part of achieving sustainable economic growth.

### *Climate change and environmental trends*

One of the main contributors to climate change is greenhouse gas emission. In NWE, while most countries have reduced their emissions over the last years, others have experienced a rise, such as Ireland and Belgium (Table 1). Climate change can affect both the frequency and intensity of natural hazards. In particular, changes in precipitation patterns are likely to lead to increased incidences of floods, drought and forest fires. Evidence shows a clear north-south split in this regard, with NWE faring better than southern Europe. There are also major spatial differentiations in terms of exposure to natural and technological hazards (Figures 8 and 9). Yet, NWE is vulnerable to a combination of natural and technological hazards (such as winter storms and oil hazards in East Scotland). Although there are large disparities within all countries, particularly within the UK and Germany, in general the more peripheral regions of Europe have a lower degree of exposure to hazards. There is a small increase in drought potential in the western and eastern parts of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the southern part of the Netherlands and parts of the southern Rhine Valley in Germany (Figure 10).

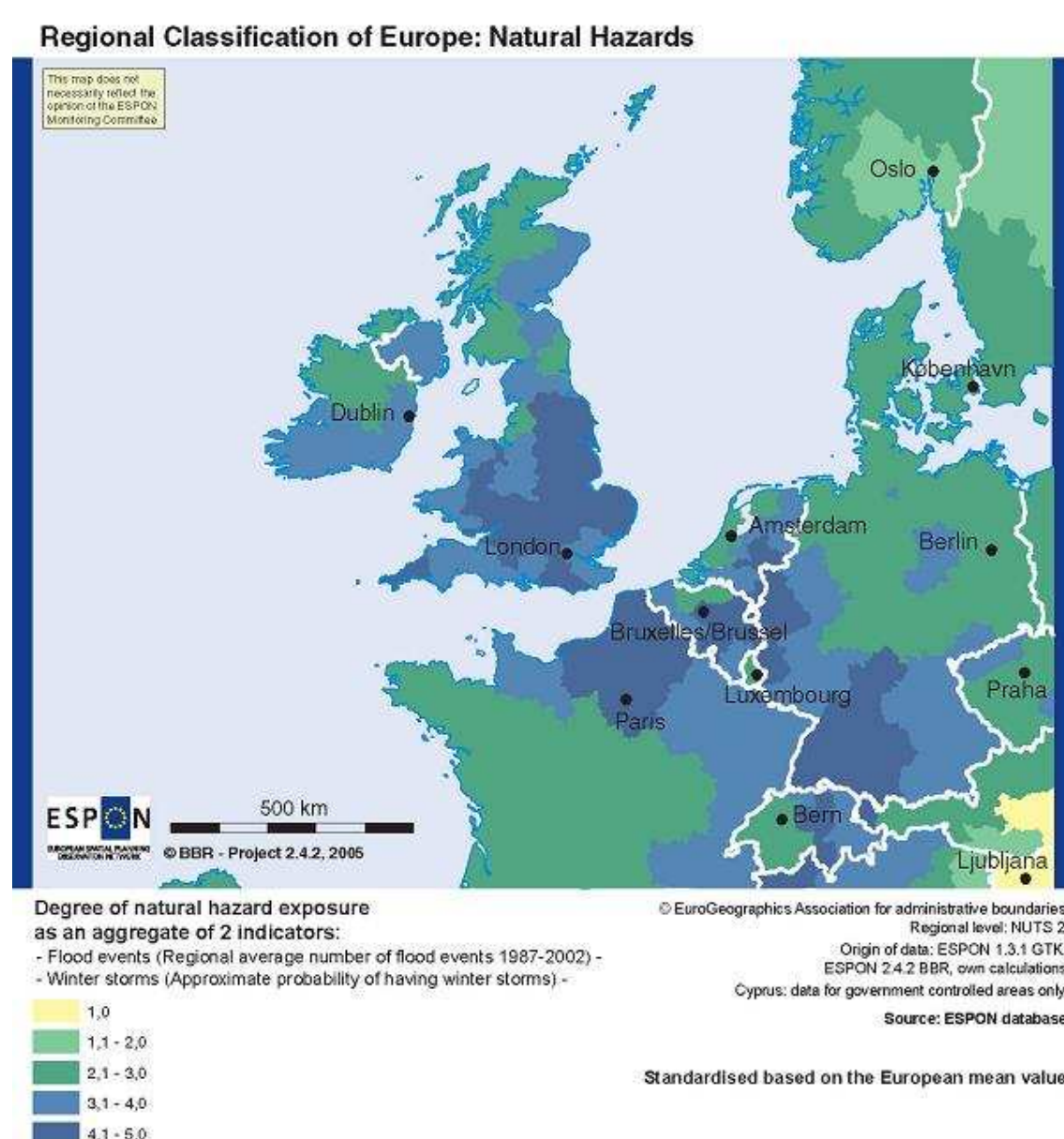
**Table 1:** Total greenhouse gas emissions and Kyoto targets (national data)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	target
EU (25 countries)	91.9	91.9	92.1	94.1	92.7	92.2	90.6	90.5	91.4	90.7	92.0	:
EU (15 countries)	96.1	96.1	97.1	99.0	97.6	97.8	96.2	96.4	97.5	97.0	98.3	92.0
Belgium	99.2	102.8	103.8	106.6	100.9	104.0	99.7	100.6	99.9	99.0	100.6	92.5
Germany	90.2	88.8	88.3	89.8	86.8	84.7	81.8	81.4	82.3	81.3	81.5	79.0
France	98.3	97.7	99.1	101.8	100.6	102.9	99.6	98.7	99.3	97.5	98.1	100.0
Ireland	102.9	106.1	107.8	110.9	116.1	120.0	123.9	127.8	131.1	128.6	125.2	113.0
Luxembourg	102.3	99.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	78.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	79.8	73.8	65.1	70.9	74.7	76.9	84.9	88.5	72.0
Netherlands	103.6	103.6	105.2	109.2	105.6	106.3	100.8	100.4	101.1	100.2	100.8	94.0
United Kingdom	94.4	93.1	91.9	95.0	92.0	91.3	86.8	86.7	88.3	85.7	86.7	87.5
United States	102.7	104.2	105.2	108.8	109.7	110.4	110.9	114.2	111.8	112.6	113.3	:

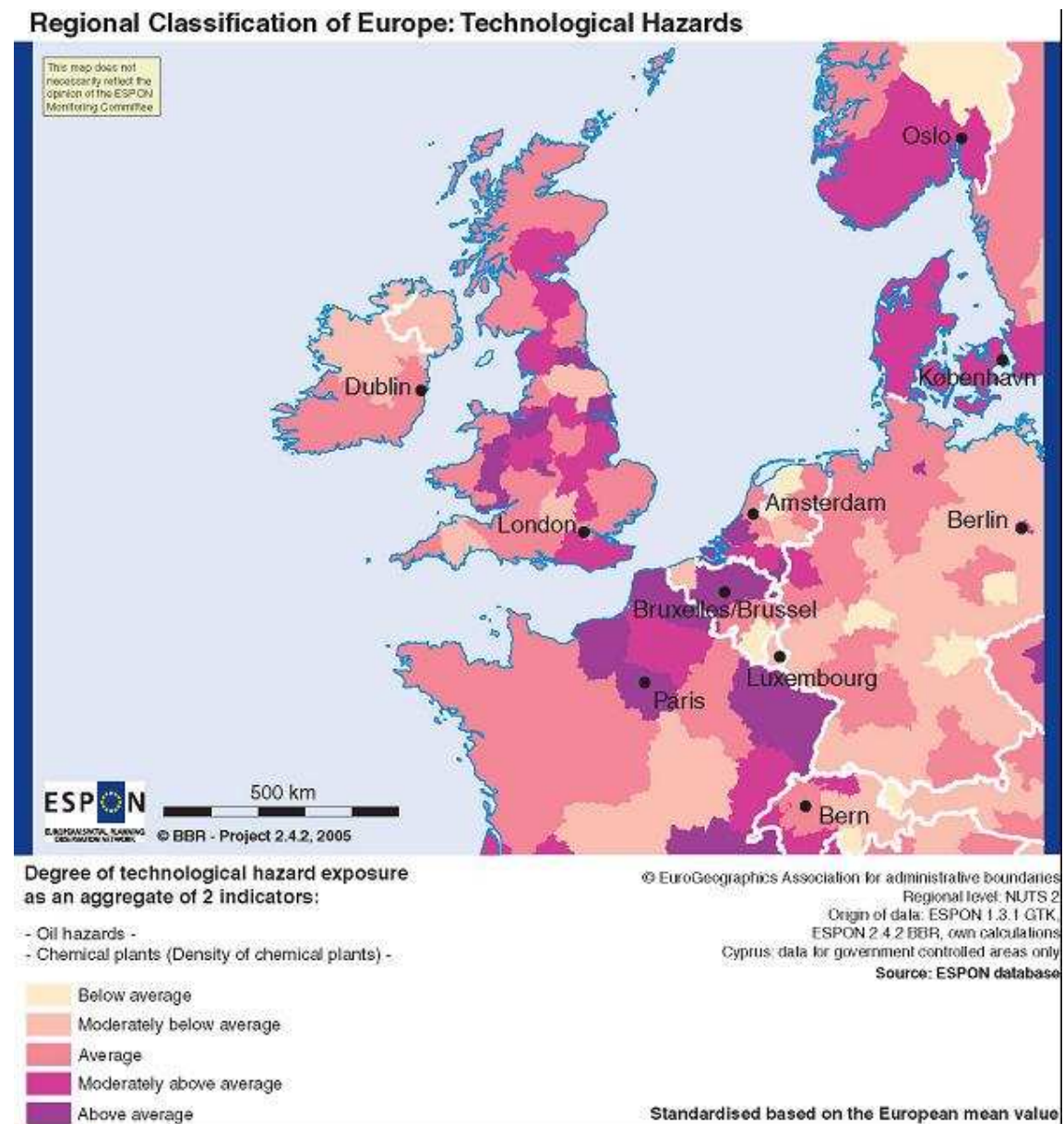
Source: Eurostat



**Figure 8: Natural hazards**

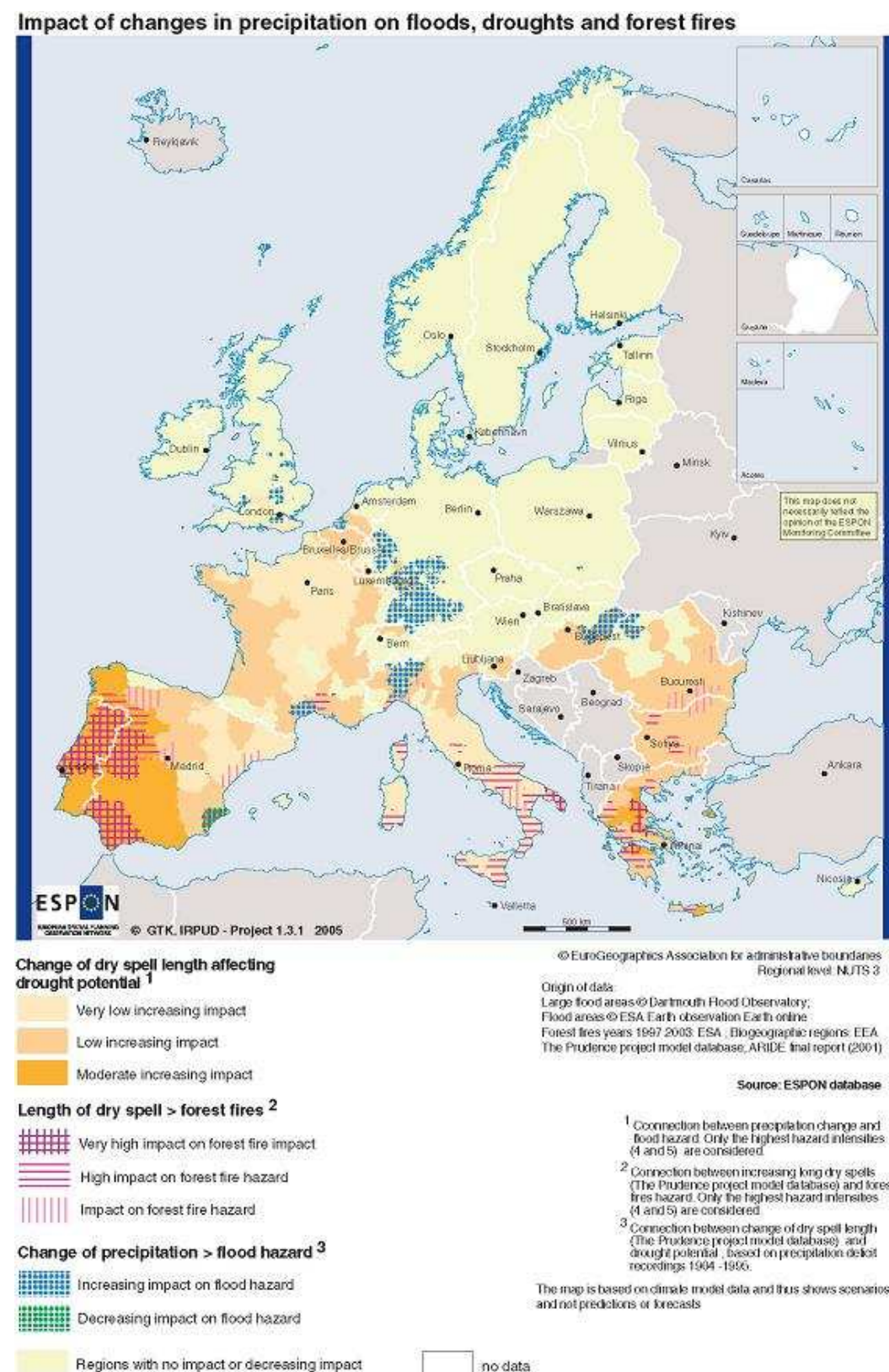


Source: BBR, © ESPON, 2006 (ESPON 2.4.2)<sup>ix</sup>

**Figure 9: Technological hazards**

Source: BBR, © ESPON, 2006 (ESPON 2.4.2) <sup>x</sup>

**Figure 10: Impacts of climate change**



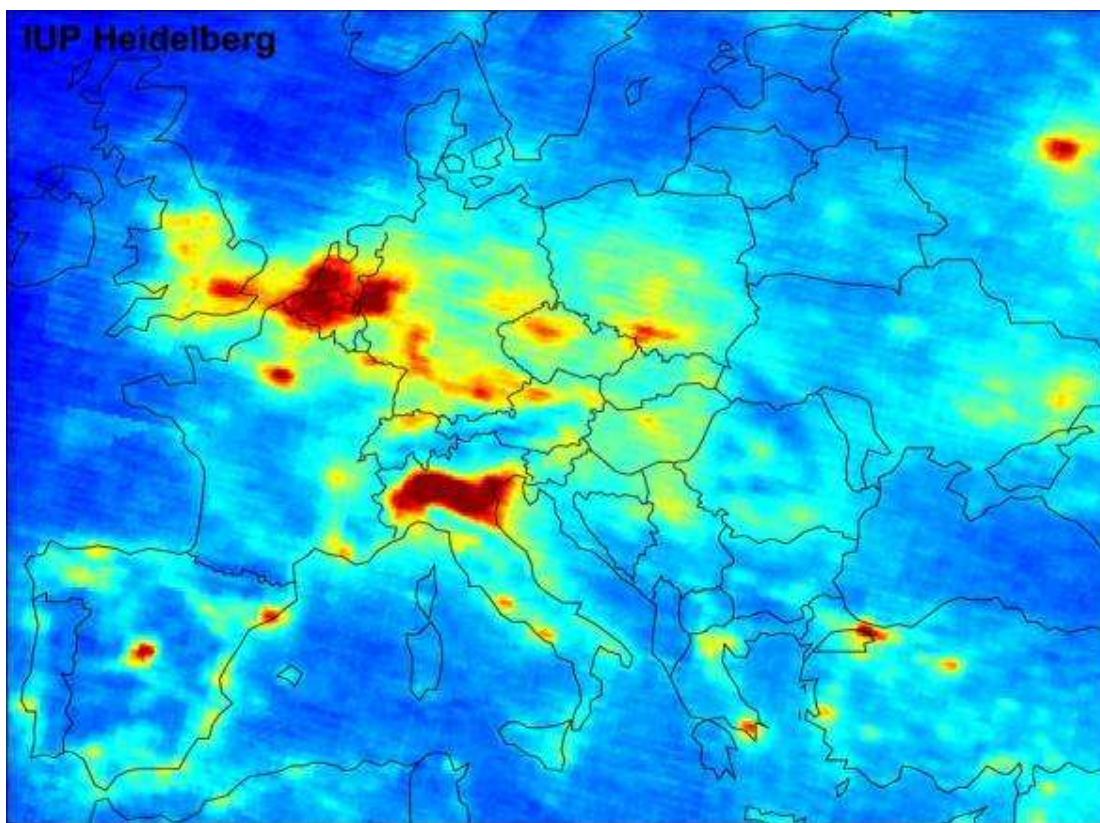
Source: © ESPON, 2006 (Synthesis Report II, page 59)<sup>xi</sup>



An area of environmental risk which is likely to get worse by the effects of climate change is river flooding. However, there are differences in river flood events both within NWE and within individual countries. While the periphery of NWE experiences very low risk, places such as South West Germany have witnessed a great number of flood events in recent years. Frequent flooding has also happened in South Belgium, the Rhine-Maas area, Eastern France, and parts of England and Wales. Rivers often form boundaries between countries or cross national borders, and therefore river flooding and flood risk management are particularly significant transnational issues for NWE. The high level of concentration of urban and economic activities along rivers, especially in the core area of NWE, and in coastal areas demonstrates the significance of effective flood risk prevention and management for the transnational cooperation area.

The pollution of air, noise, water and soil likewise respects no boundaries and environmental pollution is therefore an important transnational issue. In NWE, levels of pollution are highest in the core areas where the greatest concentrations of industrial and urban development exist. For example, a clear core-periphery pattern can be identified in Nitrogen Dioxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ) levels with the highest values in major industrial and metropolitan areas such as the Frankfurt area (Figure 11).

**Figure 11:** Air quality and public health: Nitrogen dioxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ) density in the European atmosphere



Source: KNMI/BIRA/ESA, 2004; Image produced by S. Beirle, U. Platt and T. Wagner, University of Heidelberg,  
[http://esamultimedia.esa.int/images/EarthObservation/pollution\\_europe\\_hires.jpg](http://esamultimedia.esa.int/images/EarthObservation/pollution_europe_hires.jpg)

The management of waste is another area of considerable environmental impact, and a concern shared by all regions in NWE. The following Table 2 shows that the volume of municipal waste generated has steadily increased over the last years in all countries of NWE. Over the same period, the volume of municipal waste to landfill sites has decreased (Table 3), while the volume of waste incinerated and recycled increased.

**Table 2:** Municipal waste generated (in kg per person per year)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
EU-25	461	474	490	492	517	528	529	537	531	537
EU-15	487	501	517	521	550	564	568	580	573	580
Belgium	456	451	467	460	460	468	462	463	447	469
Germany	533 <sup>(e)</sup>	543	556	546	606 <sup>(u)</sup>	610	601	640 <sup>(u)</sup>	601	600 <sup>(e)</sup>
France	489	500	511	522	523	531	544	552	559 <sup>(e)</sup>	567 <sup>(e)</sup>
Ireland	514	524 <sup>(e)</sup>	547 <sup>(e)</sup>	557	581 <sup>(e)</sup>	603	705	698	757	869 <sup>(e)</sup>
Luxembourg	592	589	607	629	650	658	650	656	662 <sup>(e)</sup>	668 <sup>(e)</sup>
Netherlands	549	563	590	593	599	616	615	622	610	624
United Kingdom	499	512	533	543	570	578	592	600	593	600 <sup>(e)</sup>
Switzerland	598	602	606	616	640	660	659	675	671	678

(e) Estimated value  
(b) Break in series

Source: Eurostat

**Table 3:** Municipal waste landfilled (in kg per person per year) (national data)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
EU-25	295	291	293	287	288	287	278	268	255	247
EU-15	294	286	287	281	282	281	276	265	252	242
Belgium	218	209	143	108	99	81	62	58	51	47
Germany	245 <sup>(e)</sup>	225 <sup>(e)</sup>	216	199	180	165	160	137	115	104 <sup>(e)</sup>
France	219	231	234	236	230	227	222	218	213 <sup>(e)</sup>	217 <sup>(e)</sup>
Ireland	398	419 <sup>(e)</sup>	439 <sup>(e)</sup>	478	517 <sup>(e)</sup>	554	540	504	480	397 <sup>(e)</sup>
Luxembourg	161 <sup>(e)</sup>	163	145	146	140	138	131	129	126 <sup>(e)</sup>	123 <sup>(e)</sup>
Netherlands	158	115	70	54	40	57	50	51	17 <sup>(u)</sup>	17
United Kingdom	414 <sup>(e)</sup>	440	461	456	469	469	474	465	440	416 <sup>(e)</sup>
Switzerland	77	69	68	66	66	40	22	11	8	3

(e) Estimated value  
(b) Break in series

Source: Eurostat

## Energy

A growing world-wide imbalance between the supply and demand of oil and gas products is driving up energy prices. Figure F in the Appendix shows that all countries covered by the NWE Programme – with the exception of the UK and the Netherlands who have North Sea oil reserves – depend to a high degree on imported energy. Generally, energy consumption in North West Europe continues to be mainly based on non-renewable resources (cf. Table 4). The consumption of renewable energy sources is low, despite national policies and financial support to increase the

share in some countries. Furthermore, there are great variations amongst European countries in the use of renewable energy (cf. Table 5). While there is obvious potential for a significant increase in the proportion of electricity generated by renewable energy sources, such as hydro-electric, wind, solar, tidal and biomass, the potentials for increasing the use of renewable energy are not equally distributed. In NWE, the UK has for example a high potential for using wave / tidal and wind energy, whereas in other countries the emphasis might be more on biomass or hydro-energy.

Given rising energy prices (cf. Figure G in the Appendix) and the ongoing depletion of oil resources, the development of renewable energy sources is crucial not only in addressing environmental concerns, but also in terms of economic development, security of supply and reduction of energy dependency. High energy prices will lead to increasing transport costs, and as a consequence interregional imbalances might increase further. However, in addition to increasing the use of renewable energies, the NWE area will also have to make a sensible effort to master the level of energy consumption and to promote energy-saving measures.

**Table 4:** Gross inland consumption of energy, 2003 (Mtoe) (national data)

	All fuels	Solid fuels	Oil	Natural gas	Nuclear	Renewables
EU25	1 726,0	314,4	645,8	408,1	251,2	103,4
EU15	1 513,4	222,5	596,0	366,1	231,7	92,1
BE	55,8	6,2	21,2	14,4	12,2	1,1
DE	344,5	85,0	125,3	79,2	42,6	11,6
FR	270,6	13,8	92,0	39,4	113,8	17,3
IE	15,3	2,5	8,7	3,7	0,0	0,3
LU	4,2	0,1	2,7	1,1	0,0	0,1
NL	80,5	8,7	31,2	36,0	1,0	2,0
UK	229,8	38,4	79,3	85,9	22,9	3,1

Source: Eurostat

**Table 5:** Gross inland consumption of renewable, 2003 (1000 toe) (national data)

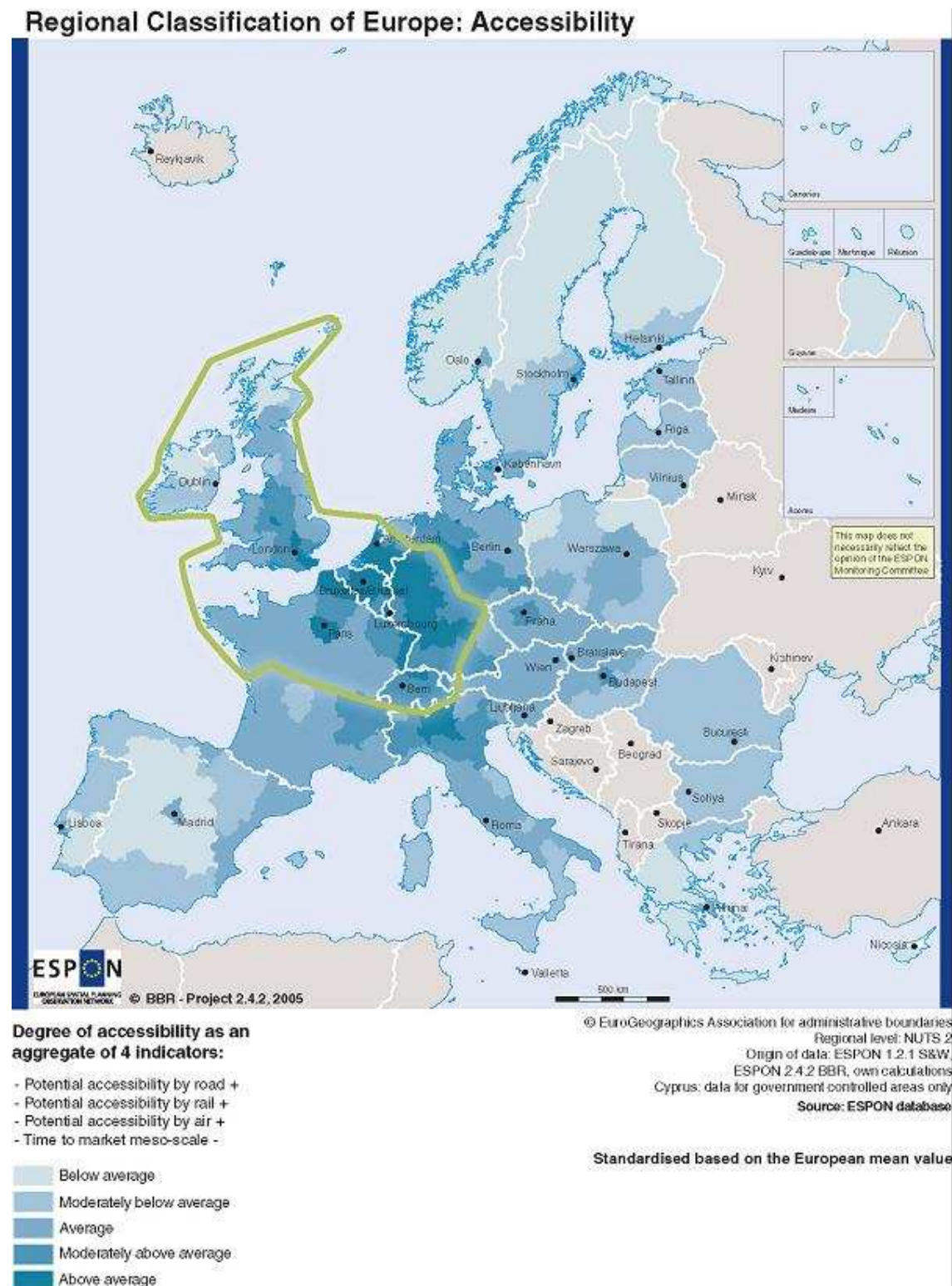
	Renewables	Biomass	Hydro	Wind	Solar	Geothermal
EU25	103 401	68 753	24 949	3 805	619	5 275
EU15	92 110	58 681	23 877	3 791	581	5 180
BE	1 056	1 023	21	8	2	1
DE	11 582	7 932	1 656	1 622	241	132
FR	17 325	12 014	5 134	29	20	129
IE	261	170	51	39	0	0
LU	60	51	7	2	0	-
NL	2 041	1 902	6	114	19	-
UK	3 105	2 695	278	110	20	1

Source: Eurostat

***Accessibility and connectivity in NWE: transport and the information society***

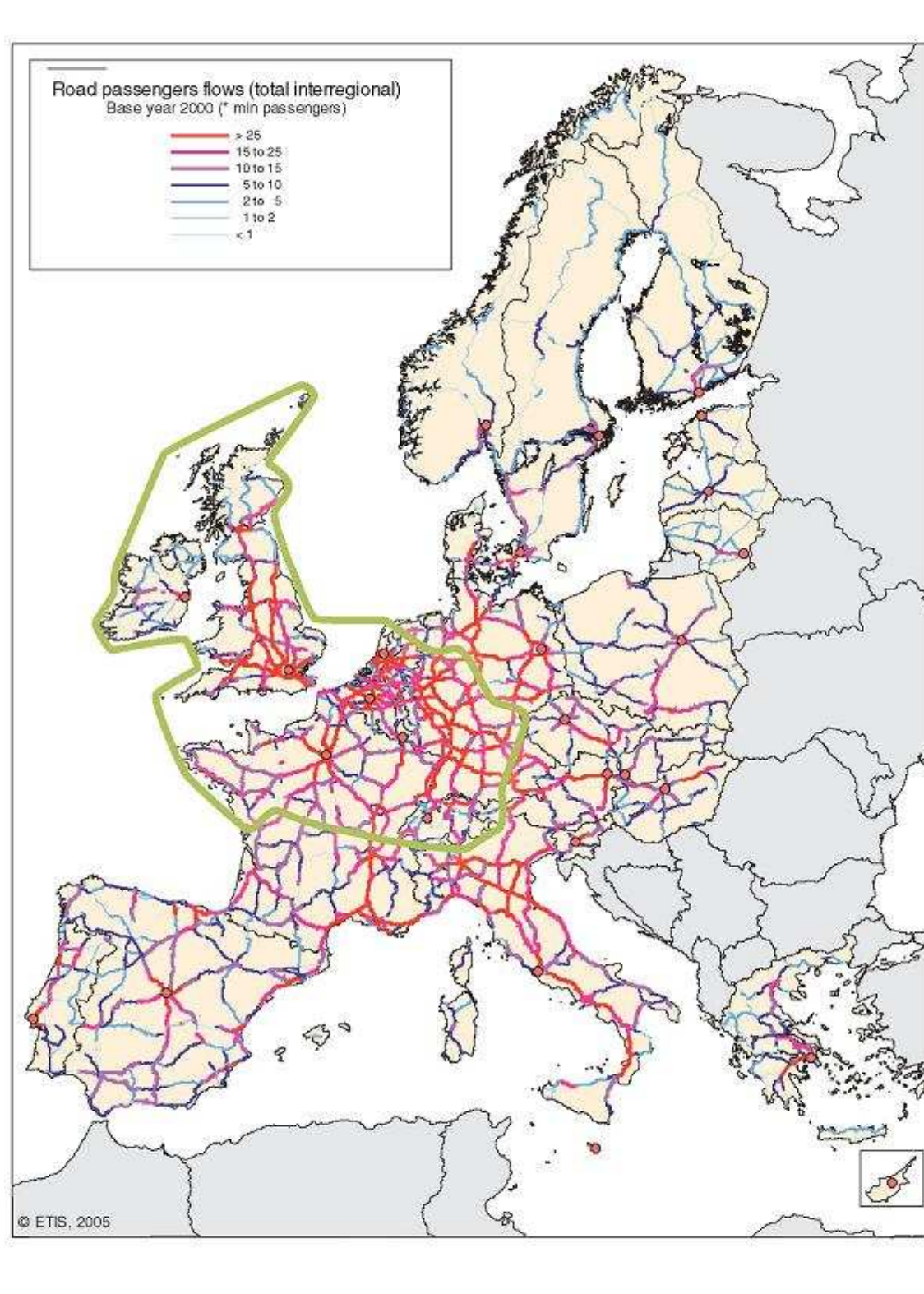
Transport infrastructure is often considered as a crucial precondition for economic competitiveness, but this relationship is not straightforward. Generally, NWE already benefits from high levels of accessibility through a dense motorway network, an excellent network of inland waterways, a concentration of major seaports, a dense and well-developed High Speed Train (HST) network, the largest airport hubs in Europe and a strong position in logistics. However, the high level of accessibility is not universal across the area and dependent on the mode of transport (cf. Figures H, I, and J in the Appendix). Figure 12 shows that there is a clear core-periphery pattern within Europe, with West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Paris and London regions benefiting from high accessibility potential<sup>xii</sup>. In contrast, the more peripheral parts of the cooperation area, particularly Northern Scotland, have a much lower level of accessibility and infrastructure endowment.

The transport system in NWE is characterised by a steady increase of flows, with growing traffic congestion especially in the central part of the area (cf. Figures 13 and 14 and Table 6). However, major flows are more multi-directional than they used to be ten years ago, with the growing importance of East-West flows complementing the traditional North-South movements (cf. Figures K-P in the Appendix). The most rapidly increasing modes are road and air transport (cf. Figure 15), which are the least sustainable ones. A related trend is the emergence of low-cost airlines which has led to a substantial increase in air travel within Europe and the expansion of regional airports across the territory.

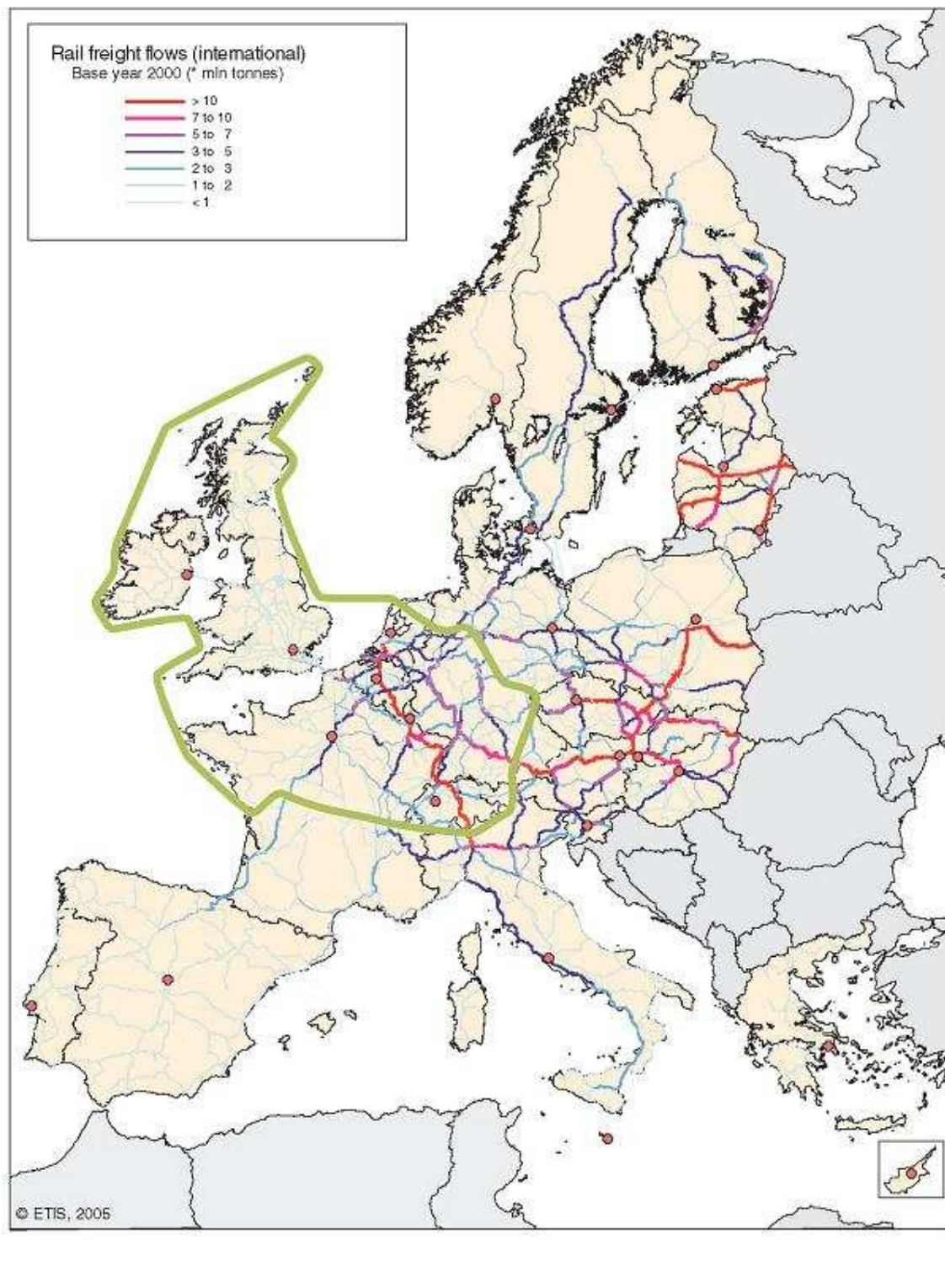
**Figure 12: Accessibility by road, rail and air**Source: BBR, © ESPON, 2006 (ESPON 2.4.2) <sup>xiii</sup>



**Figure 13:** Inter-regional road passenger flows (2000)



Source: ETIS

**Figure 14:** International rail freight flows (2000)

Source: ETIS

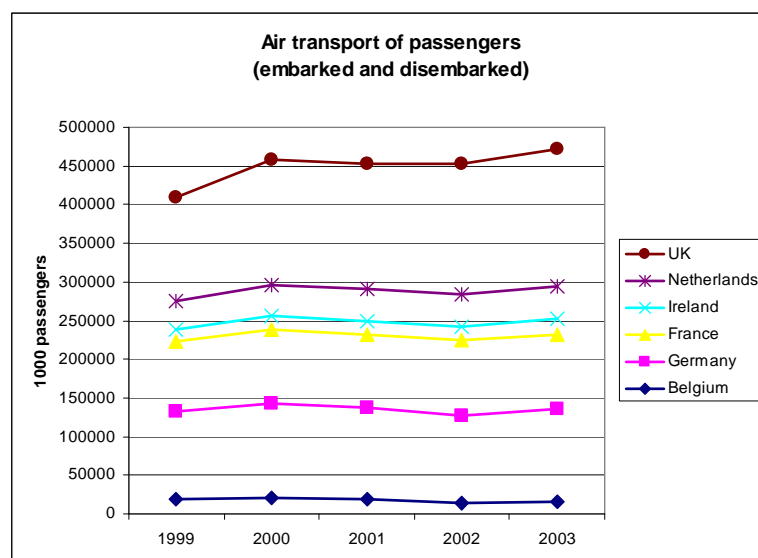


**Table 6:** Volume of freight transport relative to GDP (in tonne-km/GDP) (national data)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
EU (25 countries)	:	:	100.0	99.2 <sup>(s)</sup>	101.0 <sup>(s)</sup>	101.4 <sup>(s)</sup>	100.7 <sup>(s)</sup>	100.4 <sup>(s)</sup>	99.4 <sup>(s)</sup>	100.3 <sup>(s)</sup>	99.7 <sup>(s)</sup>	104.7 <sup>(bs)</sup>
EU (15 countries)	92.4 <sup>(s)</sup>	95.8 <sup>(s)</sup>	100.0	99.9 <sup>(s)</sup>	101.0 <sup>(s)</sup>	102.3 <sup>(s)</sup>	102.2 <sup>(s)</sup>	102.2 <sup>(s)</sup>	101.4 <sup>(s)</sup>	101.9 <sup>(s)</sup>	100.5 <sup>(s)</sup>	105.3 <sup>(bs)</sup>
Belgium	93.2 <sup>(r)</sup>	103.7 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.0	91.9	92.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	87.2 <sup>(rs)</sup>	78.9 <sup>(r)</sup>	98.1 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.0	99.1 <sup>(r)</sup>	95.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	89.7
Germany	90.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	94.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.0	97.8 <sup>(r)</sup>	99.8 <sup>(r)</sup>	101.4 <sup>(r)</sup>	103.7 <sup>(r)</sup>	103.3 <sup>(r)</sup>	103.3 <sup>(r)</sup>	102.2 <sup>(r)</sup>	103.1 <sup>(r)</sup>	107.5
France	93.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	96.9 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.0	100.0	100.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	103.3 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	96.8 <sup>(r)</sup>	94.6 <sup>(r)</sup>	92.4 <sup>(r)</sup>	92.8
Ireland	109.1 <sup>(r)</sup>	106.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.0	104.4 <sup>(r)</sup>	102.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	108.4 <sup>(r)</sup>	121.2 <sup>(r)</sup>	132.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	125.1 <sup>(r)</sup>	135.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	141.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	147.5
Luxembourg	85.7	78.4	100.0	66.6 <sup>(e)</sup>	75.0	78.0 <sup>(e)</sup>	88.9	96.5	106.4	107.3	109.0	104.8
Netherlands	97.1	100.2	100.0	99.3	101.8	104.3	105.2	98.9	96.8	94.9 <sup>(r)</sup>	96.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	105.5
United Kingdom	97.1	99.1	100.0	101.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	100.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	99.0 <sup>(r)</sup>	93.6 <sup>(r)</sup>	89.6 <sup>(r)</sup>	87.2 <sup>(r)</sup>	85.5 <sup>(r)</sup>	84.8 <sup>(r)</sup>	84.3 <sup>(p)</sup>

(.) Not available  
(s) Eurostat estimate  
(b) Break in series  
(r) Revised value  
(e) Estimated value  
(p) Provisional value

Source: Eurostat

**Figure 15:** Passenger air transport 1999-2003

Source: Eurostat

Given the density of the transport network and the high levels of accessibility in most parts of NWE, a more effective integration between transnational and secondary rail networks and an efficient and sustainable organisation of the whole network through for instance integrated territorial development strategies is more relevant than the development of new infrastructure. At EU level, the re-launching of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005 put the emphasis on the completion of Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-Ts) and the achievement of efficient cross-border interconnections. However, policy measures introduced since the early 1990s in favour of a modal shift towards more environmentally-friendly transport modes have had limited success despite progress being made in areas such as HST for passenger transport and container shuttles on specific corridors for freight transport. Other factors of global or wider European relevance have considerable effects on the modal split and affect the

transport growth in NWE, yet are more difficult to control through European policy measures. For example, the continuous growth of container traffic in ports is a result of the increase in intercontinental flows rather than European ones.

### *Long-distance intermodal services and rail transport*

The performance and profitability of long-distance intermodal systems and services beyond NWE is limited, particularly on East-West corridors. Trends show that long-distance intermodal services to and from NWE have progressed only weakly in recent years. In some areas, they have even declined. A number of obstacles remain to be overcome. The most important ones are:

- problems of interoperability of national railway systems
- insufficient effective liberalisation in the railway transport sector
- the attitude of various national railway companies, including competition between them and related protectionist attitudes
- the costs of rail freight transport.

There is a strong relationship between the development of transportation and the price of energy. For example, higher prices might increase the pressure for modal shifts in transportation and for more sustainable modes of transport in NWE. In the context of objectives for more sustainable transport policies and increased accessibility, public transport will have to play a more important role in the future. In this respect, various issues are important in the transnational context of NWE.

First, progress with the implementation of the HST network, which significantly increases the accessibility of cities that are directly serviced, is often accompanied by the reduction of services on traditional railways. This in turn negatively affects the accessibility of a number of other towns, sometimes in border areas. The lack of coordination arises partly because the new cross-border services are often run by dedicated companies such as Thalys or Eurostar which are themselves in competition with the existing national rail companies. Solutions will need to be found to counteract this negative evolution. This may partly consist of increasing the regional accessibility of the HST stations.

A second category of issues concerns public transport in rural areas. With the increasing share of elderly people in these areas, demand for public transport will increase but will also require innovative solutions to ensure viability. Due to the increasing importance of this issue in all NWE countries and the fact that a number of rural regions cut across the national boundaries, this should also be considered as a transnational issue.

Third, outside the HST network, a number of deficits still exist in transnational and cross-border public transport connections. There are a variety of obstacles, related to:

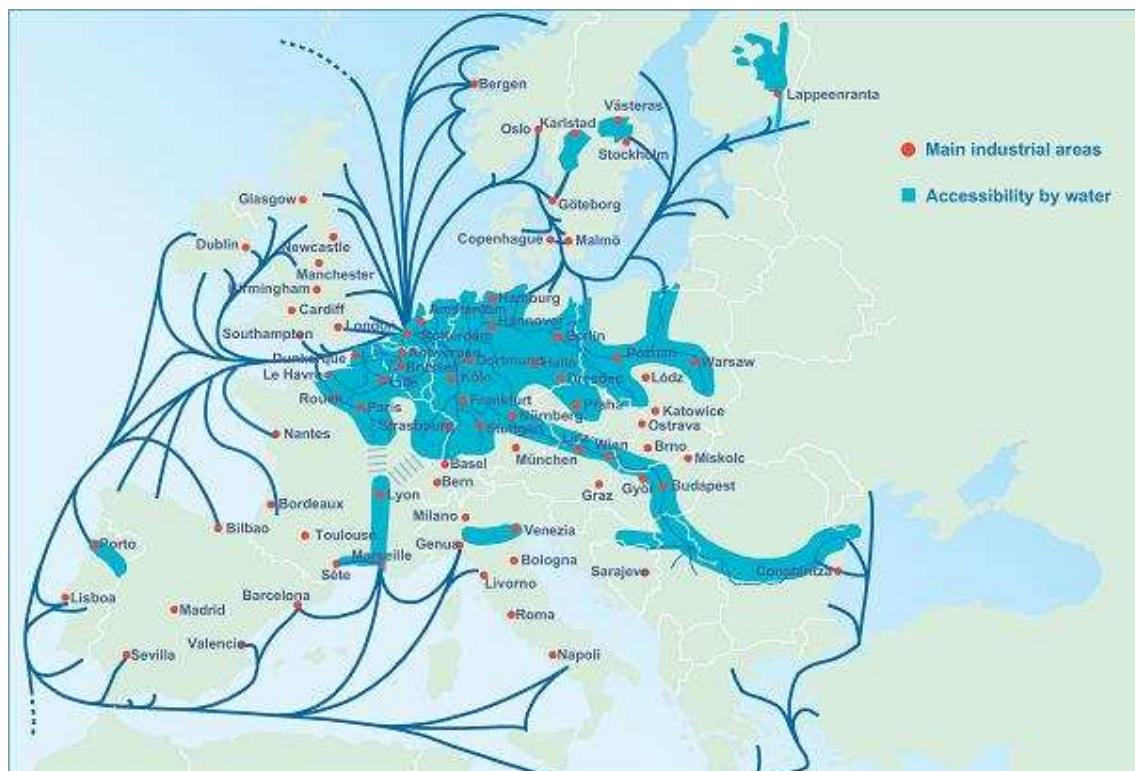
- inadequate infrastructure
- limited interoperability and differences in technical standards
- differences in national regulations
- the limited number of operators working at transnational level

- the absence of transnational access to specific national tariff rebates, etc.

### *Inland waterways, short sea shipping and maritime transport*

NWE has a navigable inland waterway network that is intensively used. It is almost 18 000 km in length and thus almost half of the total network in the EU-25. Inland waterways play a role in the transport system in all countries covered by the cooperation area, although to varying degrees depending on geographic characteristics. They are of great significance in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, where freight transported on waterways ranges from 12% (Belgium) to 42% (The Netherlands) of the total volume<sup>xiv</sup>. In addition, maritime transport connections from the many important sea ports and inland ports in NWE play a crucial role for the accessibility of the area (see Figure 16). The importance of inland waterways for a more sustainable modal split and to provide connections to and from the region's ports and seas is unquestionable and also recognised by the EU's transport policy. However, while the navigable inland waterway network is generally well interlinked, there continue to be some missing links which should be overcome in order to make the most efficient use of this mode of transport (see Figure Q in the Appendix).

**Figure 16:** Accessibility by water



Source:

[http://ine.dad.be/documents/Waternews/Publications/Brochures/INE\\_Facts\\_figures.pdf](http://ine.dad.be/documents/Waternews/Publications/Brochures/INE_Facts_figures.pdf)

The situation with maritime transport is rather contradictory. On the one hand, intercontinental container transport growth, driven by globalisation processes, prompts the expansion of coastal ports. This may result in overcapacity problems. On the other hand, intra-European maritime traffic is not progressing, with the exception of container feeder services which are part of intercontinental transport chains. The promotion of intra-European maritime transport in order to reduce inland traffic flows throughout the European continent, which the 'Motorways of the Sea' Programme supports, is therefore of great relevance to NWE. In addition, port development will remain an area of intense competition and weak cooperation. It could, however, be considered in terms of its contribution to a better coherence and complementarity between intra-European and intercontinental flows.

### *Regional airports*

Development of regional airports across NWE is mainly driven by low-cost airlines in the context of air transport liberalisation. These airports are developed largely in regions which previously had low air transport access. It has therefore contributed to significantly increasing the accessibility of the regions concerned (cf. Figure J in the Appendix). Regional airports can also play a major role in enhancing the economic competitiveness of those regions within NWE which are more peripheral or have a weaker economic performance.

However, this economic potential also presents territorial challenges. In regions where the related airports are not connected to public transportation networks, significant flows of motor-car traffic are generated, which in a number of cases are of a cross-border nature. Furthermore, a number of air connections compete against railway transport, including HST. This makes the financial viability of large-scale investment in modern railway infrastructure more difficult, and increases the need for coordination between different transport providers.

### *Use of Intelligent Transport Systems*

There has only been a limited take-up of ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) so far, despite the fact that ITS can contribute to the solution of a number of important challenges for transportation in NWE, namely:

- Increasing transport security in areas such as:
  - Maritime transport on NWE's heavily congested seas and rivers
  - Road transport on the motorway networks
  - Public transport at various scales
  - Air transport, which is becoming increasingly congested
- More efficient and inter-linked freight transport systems and logistic chains, with a view to alleviating congestion and facilitating inter-modal solutions
- Sustainable urban mobility in the metropolitan areas and cities of NWE, with a view to improving traffic fluidity by the use of traffic management systems, and by strengthening the efficiency and complementarity of different types of public transport systems.

### *Advanced telecommunication infrastructure*

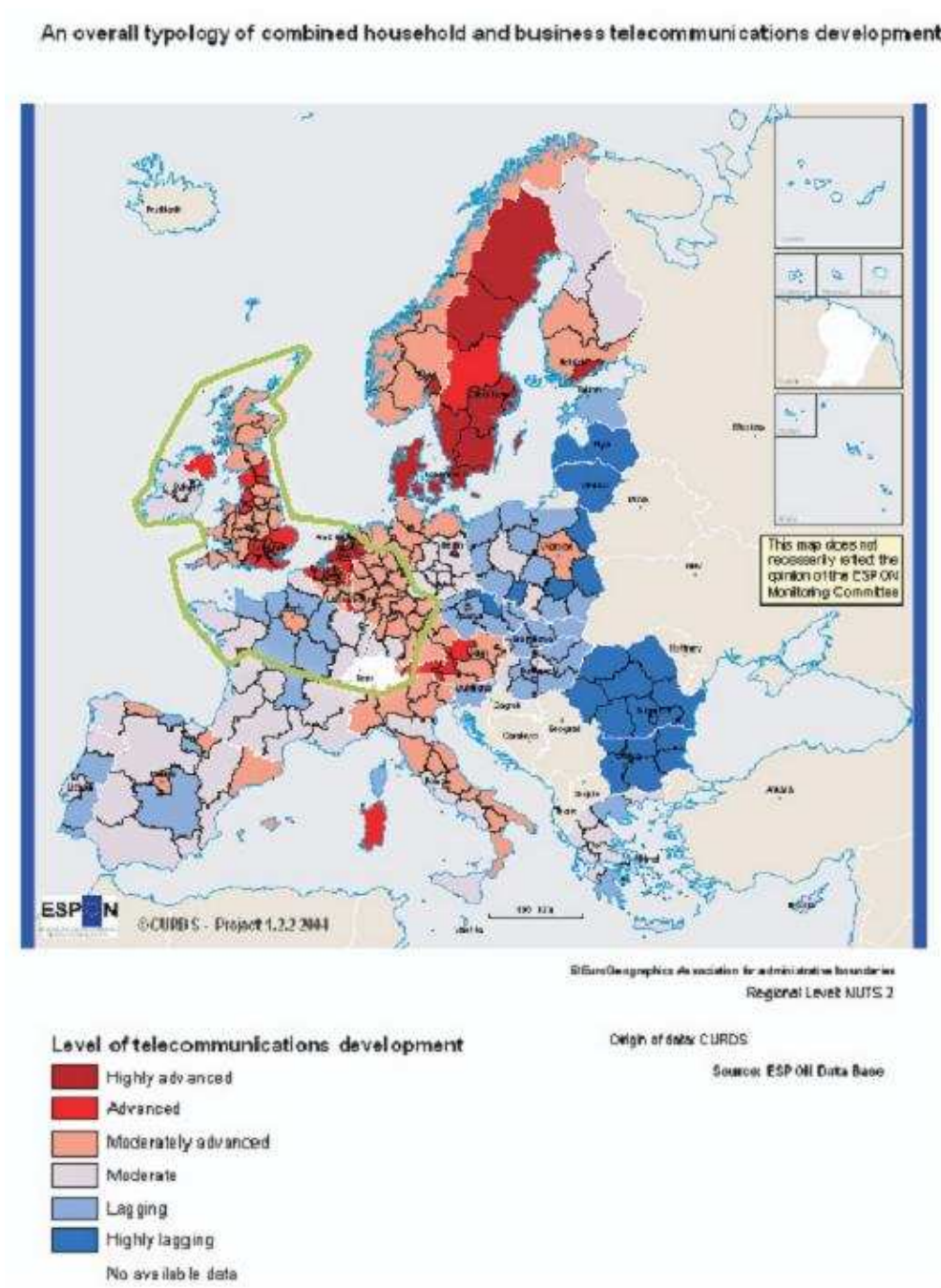
Globalisation, demographic trends and the increasing use of ICT (the 'network society') all strongly affect spatial development patterns across the territory and the movements and locational preferences of individuals and companies. The new economic structures of the network society are the joint product of technological innovation, political-economic restructuring and new enterprise strategies. One indicator of this change in socio-spatial relationships is the rise in mobility, and the most direct consequence for spatial planning is that in a network structure 'proximity' may become less relevant for social organisations than 'connectivity'.

Technological innovation in transport has resulted in the speeding up of movement and the 'shrinking of space', though sometimes with large interregional differences. The increasing use of ICT has led to a revolutionary change in the organisation of production processes, allowing for a spatial separation of functionally interdependent activities through complex logistics systems. Since distances are increasingly measured in time, locations and places that are well connected in terms of logistics and transport technologies may be more attractive for investment than those that demonstrate physical 'nearness'.

Yet, while the development of ICT was expected to lead to a 'democratisation' of the territory and an alignment of core and periphery, in reality the differences between the densely populated parts of NWE and the more peripheral areas have often become more intensified<sup>xv</sup> or have led to a more diverse pattern across the territory. More peripheral parts of NWE are generally less well connected in terms of provision with new ICT services than metropolitan areas. There are large disparities in the level of ICT development within NWE, with Ireland and France (with the exception of the Paris region), having a below average take-up (cf. Figure 17). Furthermore, it is still the case that face-to-face interaction and physical proximity often make densely populated areas more desirable as locations for businesses.

NWE is confronted with two major issues in the field of advanced telecommunications infrastructure. The first one is better use of its position as a global centre to make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy through further promotion and take-up of ICTs. The second issue relates to overcoming the existing digital divide in mature and leading-edge technologies; and to responding to the emerging digital divide in the field of new high-speed connectivity.

**Figure 17: Level of telecommunications development**



Source: © ESPON, 2006 (ESPON 1.2.2)<sup>xvi</sup>

## ***The territorial structure of NWE and demographic characteristics***

### ***Settlement patterns***

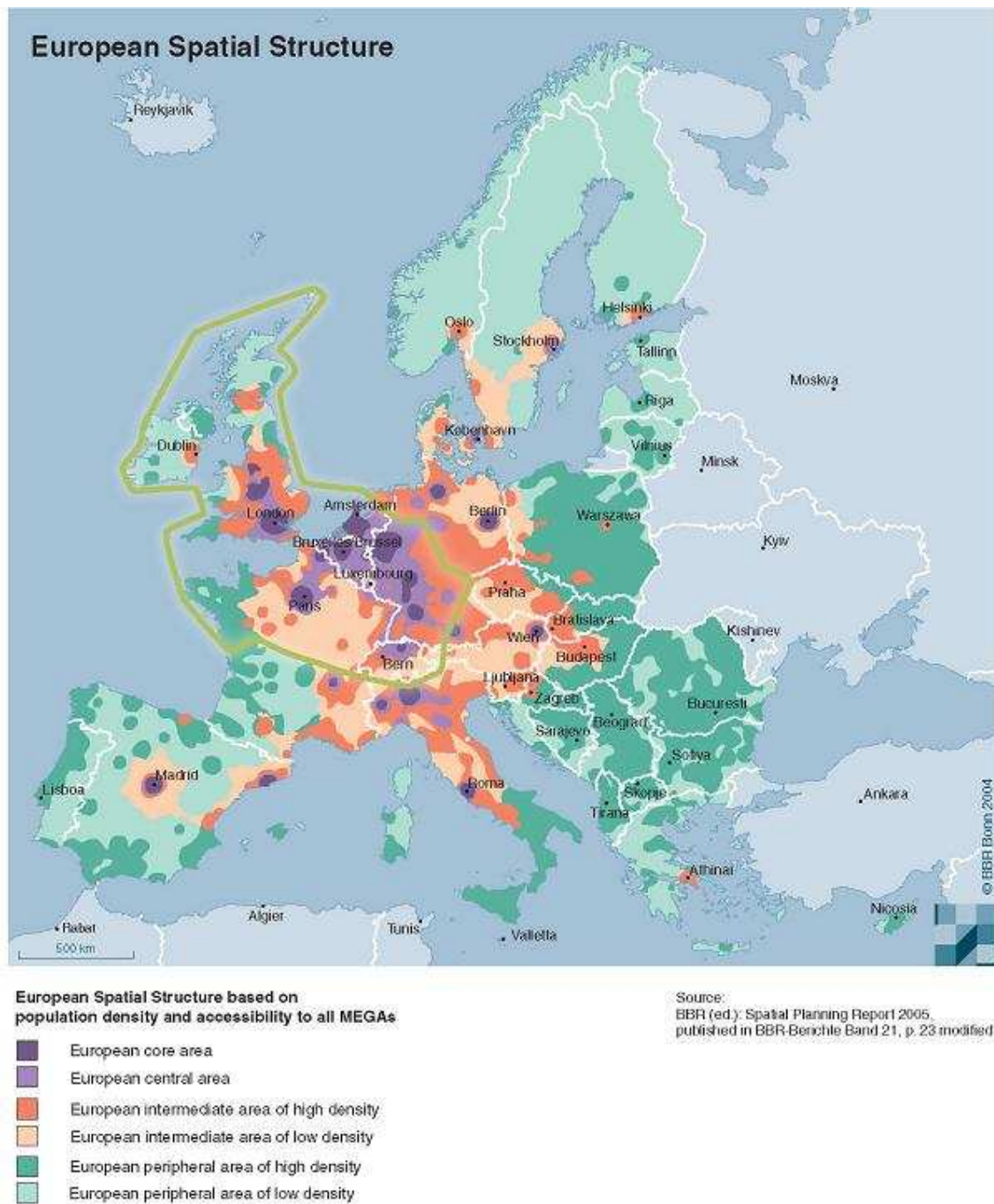
At the macro level (EU-wide), NWE is home to a significant part of the 'pentagon', which the ESDP considers to be the only zone of global economic significance in the EU. However, research undertaken under the ESPON Programme has identified other potential economic growth zones: Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAs). When MEGAs are considered in the context of the growth of GDP per capita, the following observations can be made: first, while some of the strongest MEGAs are in NWE, areas with high GDP growth are not, with the exception of Ireland and the M4 corridor in South East England. Second, there are MEGAs in NWE which, although strong in terms of GDP, are relatively weak in terms of population size or accessibility. These include, for example, Geneva, Manchester and Dublin. Third, some of the weakest MEGAs are located in high growth regions. Cork is a clear example. Finally, some potential MEGAs are located in close transnational proximity to each other, such as in Holland and Belgium. There is a high degree of spatial concentration in the form of transnational agglomerations across Europe (cf. Figure 18 and Figure R in the Appendix). In NWE, three such agglomerations can be found: Ireland and southern Scotland, countries bordering the English Channel, and South West Germany and East France.

At the meso scale (within NWE), however, it becomes clear that the strong economy of NWE is not universal across the territory, and great disparities exist both within the core and between the core and periphery. The most striking trend is that the move towards polycentrism at the European level parallels a move towards monocentrism at the national level in countries such as Ireland. The Irish economic boom of the last decade, which has turned the country into one of Europe's star performers and contributed to the polycentric development of the EU, has mainly gravitated in the Greater Dublin Area, creating a monocentric spatial pattern within the country.

At the micro level, while NWE is predominantly urban, there are also large areas with low population density and of more rural character. Around three-quarters of NWE's population live in urban areas, whereas almost one quarter of the territory is sparsely populated. In general, urban-rural interdependencies are increasing partly because of the spatial de-concentration of economic activities and the expansion of city hinterlands. Some aspects of this trend are transnational. For example, some of the long distance and 'weekly' commuting to large cities cut across national boundaries. Also, visitors from the cities in one country to the rural areas in another create a form of transnational urban-rural relations.



**Figure 18: The European spatial structure**



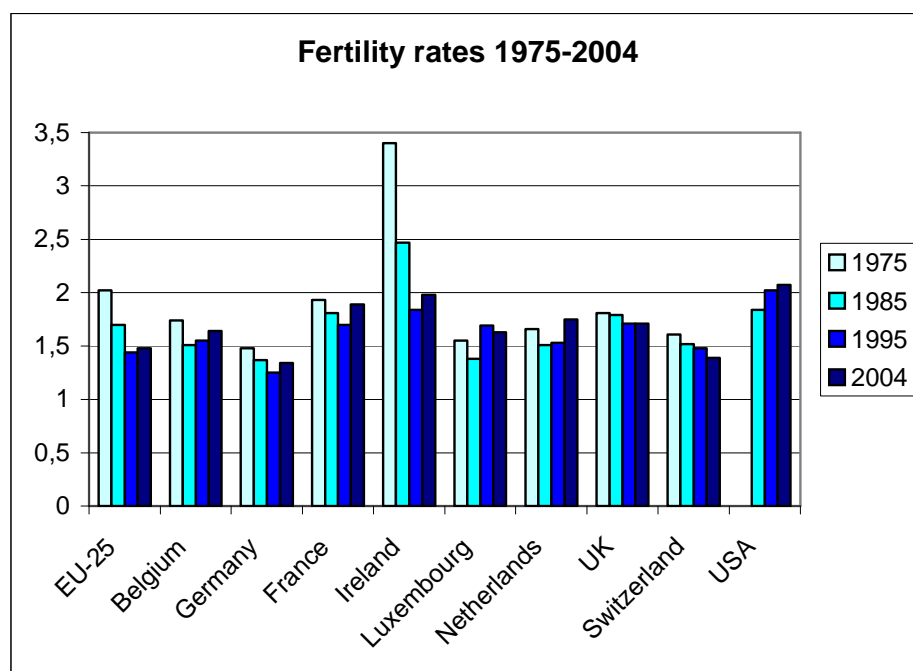
Source: BBR

### *Demographic change and migration*

Demographic change is one of the most significant challenges for spatial development in the EU. Demographic restructuring is the outcome of two trends: natural population change and migration, each of which exhibits different spatial patterns.

The predominant trend in demographic change in Europe is the ageing of population, due to a fall in fertility rates, fall in mortality rates, and increase in longevity. Whilst fertility rates in NWE are in general not as low as those in Southern and Eastern Europe, in countries such as Germany the rate stands at 1.3, well below the reproduction rate of 2.1 (cf. Figure 19). As regards longevity, it is estimated that by 2015, life expectancy at birth will be 82 years for men and 87 years for women in Europe, compared to the 1999 average of 76.5 years. The proportion of the European population above the age of 60 will increase from 21% in 2000, to 30% by 2015. Also, the proportion of the population below the age of 20 will decline from 23% in 2000 to 15% by 2015. This ageing society and high inactivity rate will increase the dependency ratios in Europe to the extent that by 2025, for every two people in work one will be dependent on them if employment rates remain the same.

**Figure 19:** Fertility rates in countries covered by the NWE Programme (national average; regional data not available)



Source: Eurostat data

However, given that the dominant intra-European migratory flows are from periphery to core, and from East to West, and that there are significant flows into NWE from outside Europe, the combined effect of migration and natural population change currently still results in an increase in population in most parts of the NWE. While this contrasts with a decline of population in the South, East and Nordic countries, it

should be noted that NWE is also home to pockets of decline, notably in the North of Scotland, Northern England and parts of France (cf. Figure 20). The key contrast in effects from in- and out-migration in NWE is between northern France and southern UK. The majority of the in-migration in England is likely to be from outside the EU or from elsewhere in the UK. Much of the high levels of migration into west and south Germany is accounted for by migrants from East Germany.

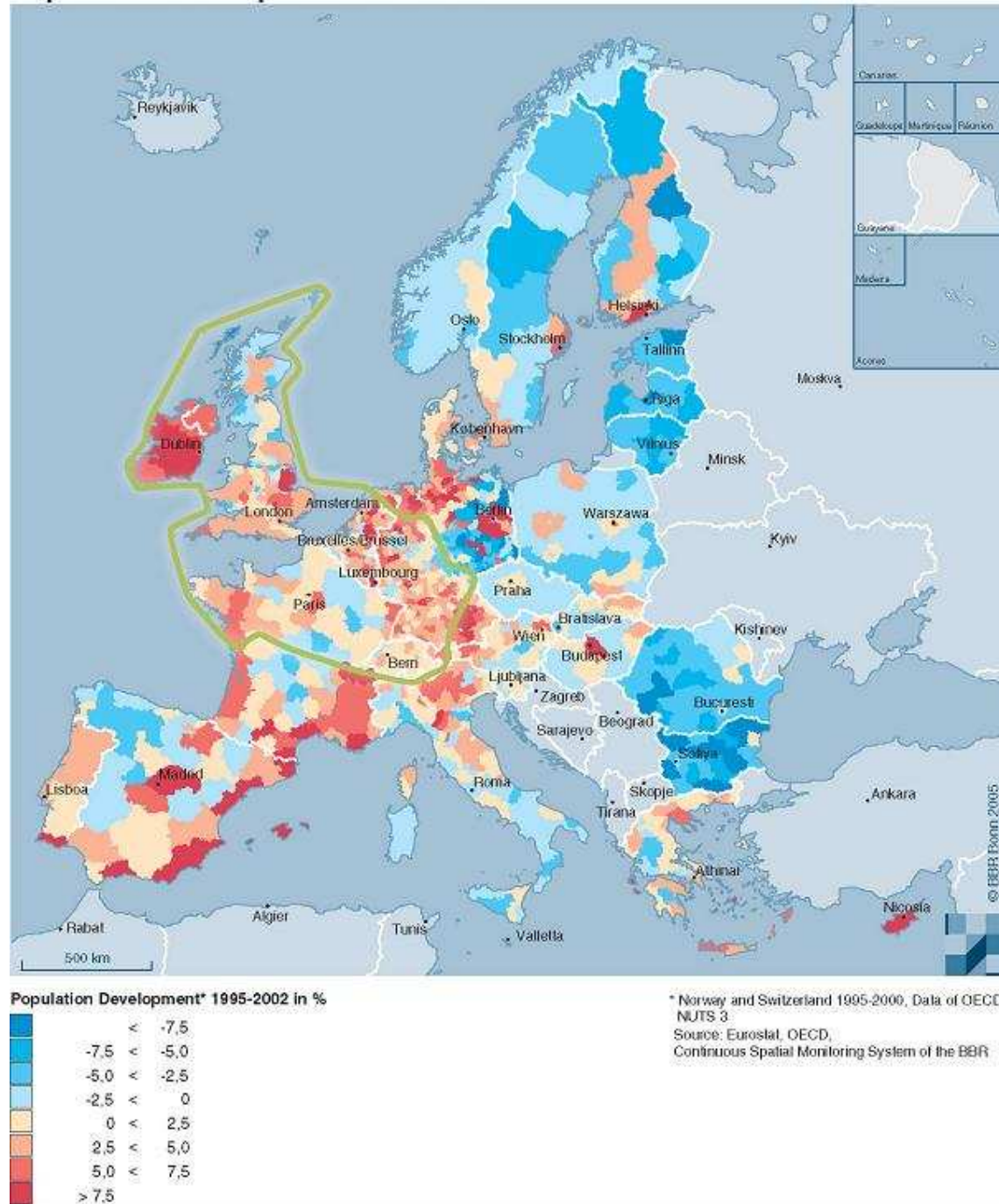
Mobility flows from the new Member States to the EU-15 are more limited than previously assumed, but migrant workers from the new EU Member States to the EU-15 are generally considered to have made a positive contribution to the overall labour market performance. Rather than 'crowding out' national workers in the EU-15, migrants from the new Member States have been shown to alleviate skills bottlenecks or work in low-paid sectors not favoured by the domestic population. Mostly, nationals from the new Member States migrate to the EU-15 temporarily for work or study, and have indicated that they intend to return to their home countries<sup>xvii</sup>. Besides intra-EU migration, there are also significant international migration flows into and out of Europe, with the former comprising both legal and illegal immigration. Highly qualified workers make up a large proportion of out-migration to countries such as North America, Japan and increasingly Singapore. This 'brain-drain', which works against the Lisbon agenda, adds to the challenges of a rising dependency ratio. Together, they will have important implications for the economic performance and spatial development of North West Europe.

The combined effects of in-migration from different parts of Europe and the rest of the world, especially to the large metropolitan areas of North West Europe, and the resulting increasingly diverse populations in many parts of NWE, raise important questions about the effective socio-economic integration of migrant workers and other immigrants.

The combined effect of migration and natural population change is shown in Figure 21. While population is still increasing in some areas of NWE, there are different combinations of reasons for this. In Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, most of Belgium, Central England, West and South Germany, and parts of Southern England, West and Central France, population is increasing because of both positive natural population growth and a positive migratory balance. In the rest of Southern England and some other parts of NWE, population is growing only because of net in-migration, while in Northern Ireland and much of Eastern France and part of Switzerland it is due to natural population growth only. It should be noted that the universally low fertility rates are of relatively recent origin and have not yet had an effect in all parts of the territory. Population decline can be seen mainly in the more peripheral parts of the UK and in parts of France. In the case of the North and West of Scotland and parts of North East England it is due to both natural population decline and net out-migration. A particularly alarming trend is the depopulation of small towns and rural areas; referred to as a 'triple demographic time bomb'- too few children, too many old people and too many young people leaving rural areas. A parallel but opposite trend is that of counter-urbanisation in the affluent parts of NWE and in countries such as the UK where every week some 1700 people move out of the cities to live in the countryside.

**Figure 20: Population development 1995-2002**

**Population Development 1995-2002**

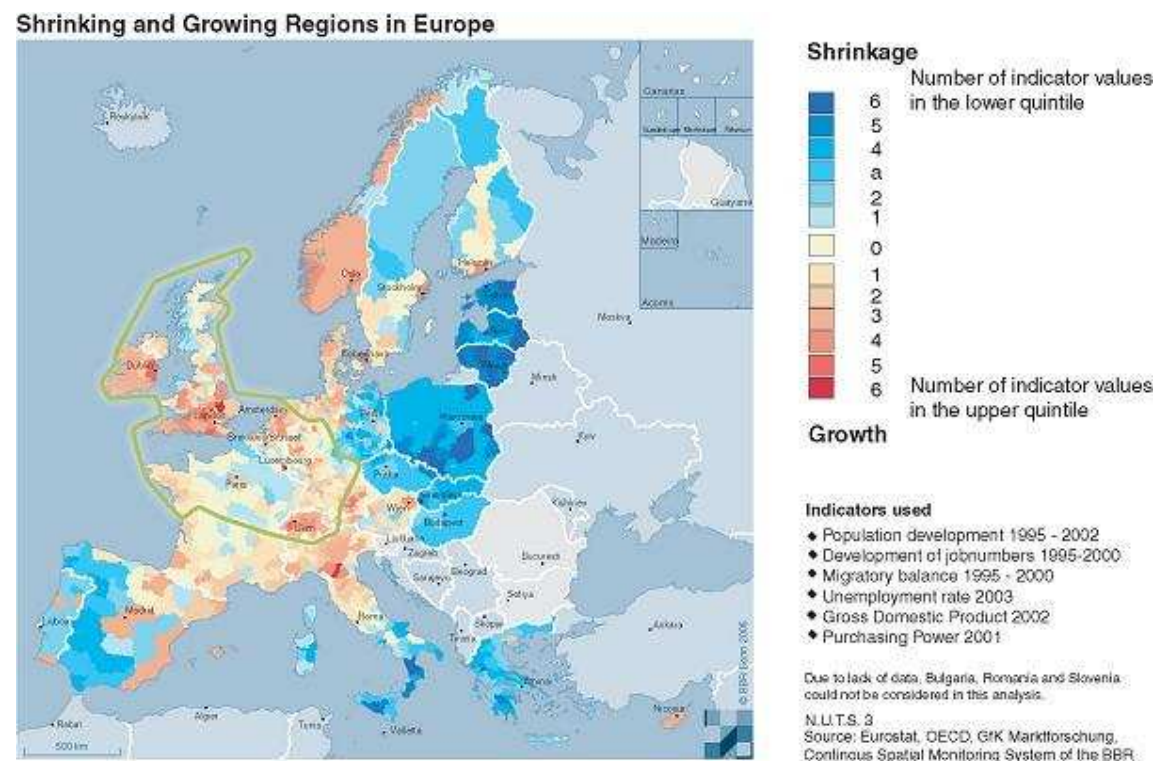


Source: BBR



Overall, NWE's population profile is quite different from most of the rest of Europe, with population growth and high population densities, particularly in metropolitan areas, currently presenting bigger challenges than depopulation. The regions with demographic problems lie outside the boundaries of NWE, to the south and east, with only a part of Central France, which already has an above average share of elderly people, coming into this category. The areas least affected by the demographic challenges in NWE are large metropolitan areas such as Paris and London, a region stretching from South East England via the Netherlands to northern Germany, all of the island of Ireland, some parts of Southern Germany, Northern Switzerland and Alsace. Yet, demographic trends and effects of migration have undoubtedly considerable implications for all parts of the NWE territory. While depopulation, ageing and out-migration affect mainly the more rural areas, the metropolitan areas have to deal with changing and sometimes growing populations in the city centres. The challenge here lies in developing strategies to better integrate the large number of international migrants into the society.

**Figure 21: Shrinking and growing regions in Europe**



Source: BBR

### *Governance: the institutional perspective*

It is widely recognised that transnational cooperation faces problems arising from differences in the organisation and competences of government administrations. North West Europe exhibits considerable variety in the fundamental organisation of government from the more unitary nations to the federal. However, it must be

remembered that the actual situation is much more complex with significant variations in the distribution of competences within countries. For example, in Switzerland the German speaking cantons have more autonomy than the French speaking cantons. Variation in the regulatory frameworks of countries and regions means that a particular process or strategy may be compatible with the existing framework of one country, but that it can be incompatible with that of another country.

A comparison of the governmental systems in each country and the views of key actors in NWE countries<sup>xviii</sup> suggests two key issues for transnational cooperation:

- the capacity of regional level institutions to engage with regions in other countries and/or
- the existence and capacity of cooperative arrangements among local authorities which may provide a larger platform from which to engage in transnational cooperation.

This is linked to the significant resources and expertise (capacity), including language skills, that are needed to engage in transnational working and the creation of strategic actions at the regional level which can identify planning and development issues of transnational significance.

Where regions are large and have strong competence there are more opportunities to engage at the transnational scale. This is demonstrated by the experience of the Belgian regions and the German Länder. Here, 'regions' play a strong role in cross-border collaboration networks such as the Saar-Lor-Lux and Euroregions. For the other countries of North West Europe, regions are likely to find more difficulties in engaging transnationally because of a more narrow range of competences and less capacity. For example, Dutch provinces are much smaller and this is considered a disadvantage in regional cooperation. There is, however, an informal and 'low key' form of inter-provincial cooperation in *Landsdelen* which may offer opportunities for collaboration.

Where 'regional governance' is made up of indirectly elected members and/or associations of local authorities there is also the need to reach agreement among, and be accountable to, the constituent bodies. This can make for very complex planning and reporting arrangements. For example, in England, regional bodies outside London are established by cooperation among many local authorities and other actors such as businesses and the civic society. They have limited capacity, although there is a general tendency for increased administrative capacity at regional levels, and informal arrangements do not necessarily preclude effective cooperation. In Ireland, long standing regional competences for, and experience in, co-ordinating structural fund spending has lend some support to regions engaging in the INTERREG Programme.

At the local level, small local authority units generally lack the critical mass and thus the capacity to engage independently in transnational cooperation. There is a need for inter-authority working, even to some extent in England where the local authorities are relatively large. Groupings of local authorities for other purposes such as to create critical mass for service delivery is very common and particularly well established in France. These groupings sometimes provide a platform for transnational cooperation and there is more potential here. For example, in parts of Germany there are associations of local authorities at the regional level where collaboration has been encouraged as a response to international place competition

and to secure national investments. These local authority cooperation networks also work transnationally, for example the QuattroPole cooperation initiative among Saarbrücken, Trier, Metz and Luxembourg, and the Rhine-Schelde Delta.

There is some evidence of the building of inter-authority institutions also for functional regions, such as national parks or river catchments, and for informal 'associations' of local authorities in city networks or across urban-rural regions, such as the 'urban communities' in Wallonia and the regional city networks and city-regions in the Netherlands. In Ireland, the National Spatial Strategy has designated a number of population centres for improved linkages to achieve critical mass to act as 'gateways', and possibly in the longer term to become city regions, for example the Athlone-Tullamore-Mullingar area of the Midland Region. In England, inter-regional networks have been formed linking the regional bodies and identifying city-regions for informal strategic planning purposes. There are also groupings of particular types of authority, for example the G4 group of largest cities in the Netherlands.

These varied arrangements for building the capacity of governments to engage with service delivery and strategic planning at an appropriate level offer considerable potential as platforms for transnational working. One example is the long tradition of transnational cooperation between municipalities around three cross-border agglomerations involving Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany. However, from discussions with key actors and examination of documents, it is apparent that the transnational dimension (and to a lesser extent the cross-border dimension) to strategic planning issues is seldom addressed in their plans. There are examples of transnational working by inter-authority groupings but these seem to be the exception rather than the rule, and few such organisations are systematically considering the transnational dimension.

The reasons may be self-evident. The legal status of such organisations may be weak and may be questionable for working at the transnational level. There may be little attention to the transnational dimension in the 'terms of reference' for such organisations. They have relatively limited resources for difficult co-ordinating tasks. In addition, they are already complex partnerships, thus working transnationally means dealing with exceedingly complex administrative and reporting arrangements.

Cooperation networks are not limited to formal government. Business cooperation networks such as the 'Grand Région' (Saar-Lor-Lux) and for the metropolitan area around Lille; or representative bodies such as the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Deutscher Industrie-und Handelskammertag) may provide a basis for transnational cooperation. However, whilst they may be playing important roles in international networks, they have only very limited engagement with INTERREG and in some cases with governmental networks generally.

Building up governance relations is not easy and needs sufficient time, long-term external assistance and investment, and devolved powers and responsibilities. In general, there are three forms of interconnected cooperation which need to be in place for effective transnational spatial development. These are: vertically among levels, horizontally among sectors, and geographically across administrative boundaries. Developing such relations is much more challenging in the context of a transnational cooperation area, because here, firstly, partners are drawn from beyond the boundaries of formal institutions of government. Secondly, they are spread among public, private and voluntary sectors (NGOs and non-profit organizations). Thirdly, they are also spread across the boundaries of different

political and administrative jurisdictions. Fourthly, at the transnational level, there are very different forms of constitutions and governments in the countries of NWE, ranging from federal, through strongly regionalised, to highly centralised. As a consequence, competences for policy and action on spatial development vary considerably.

## **2.2 SWOT analysis**

The NWE cooperation area has a strong position within Europe, being home to important global command centres and with a high concentration of important economic and political structures. Being the 'economic powerhouse' of Europe, NWE plays an important role in achieving the Lisbon objectives of strengthening the competitiveness of the whole of Europe. The density in the central part of NWE and the overall polycentric pattern of cities and towns is another important strength of the area, and offers considerable potential for urban cooperation based on functional interdependencies. The high level of education and highly qualified professionals, including in knowledge-intensive industries, give NWE a crucial competitive advantage in becoming a highly successful knowledge economy. Geographical features, such as NWE's excellent network of inland waterways, and generally high levels of accessibility will help to achieve more sustainable modes of transport and can contribute to decoupling transport growth from economic growth as promoted by the Lisbon-Gothenburg strategy.

However, despite the general strength of NWE in Europe, the SWOT table (Table 7) also shows significant weaknesses and threats to NWE. These are in particular regional disparities in terms of accessibility and population density between the core area of NWE and the more peripheral and rural areas. Furthermore, in order to maintain its economic position, NWE needs to increase or at least maintain its economic growth, in particular in knowledge-based sectors, and should aim to overcome regional disparities with regard to R&D expenditure and employment. This implies a better and more efficient distribution of work, labour and functions.

In addition, while overall NWE is characterised by high levels of accessibility, increasing transport volumes and congestion in the central parts of the area as well as poor access in peripheral areas are of increasing concern both in terms of negative environmental effects from traffic and in terms of economic performance. The increase in energy prices will strengthen the case for a better modal shift, and for most efficient use of modern information and communications technologies to substitute physical mobility. The digital divide as regards access to advanced ICTs, which continues to disadvantage the more remote parts of NWE, is therefore of particular concern.

Overall, the high density of population, traffic and industrial activity in NWE is responsible for high levels of pollution of air, water, soil and noise. The large amount of greenhouse gas emissions, which result from this dense human activity are an important factor for climate change. Effects from climate change, in particular (river) floods and winter storms, are expected to increase in NWE. Human-made hazards, such as oil spills, are also of increasing concern from both an environmental and an economic perspective, and require more attention to maritime safety. In addition, landscape fragmentation (especially in coastal regions bordering the Channel and the Southern part of the North Sea) and loss of biodiversity are worsening across NWE.

Demographic change is – besides climate change – the most fundamental challenge for territorial development in Europe, and polarisation tendencies in NWE will exacerbate existing regional disparities in terms of population and access to infrastructure and services. This will affect the economic potential of peripheral and rural areas which are experiencing depopulation tendencies, but also those of urban areas faced with growing land use pressures and increasingly heterogeneous populations. It is therefore of great importance to strive for a more balanced settlement structure across the territory. An important precondition for this will be improved transnational governance in order to overcome institutional differences in the field of territorial planning, and the better integration of sector and spatial policies at all levels of scale.

The following Table 7 summarises the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the NWE cooperation area.



**Table 7: SWOT table**

	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>The economy of NWE: trends in the labour market, knowledge base and 'Lisbon performance'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High economic performance (GDP/capita): the 'powerhouse of Europe'</li> <li>• critical mass in terms of high density of population and economic activities (e.g. human resources, proximity to large consumer markets)</li> <li>• home to important financial and decision-making headquarters</li> <li>• high levels of employment</li> <li>• good 'Lisbon performance': highly educated people and high number of staff in the R&amp;D business enterprise sector</li> <li>• good provision of universities and research institutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regional disparities in economic performance and growth (metropolitan versus rural areas)</li> <li>• innovation and knowledge-economy sectors mainly concentrated in and around urban areas / regional disparities in R&amp;D expenditure and employment</li> <li>• comparatively low level of R&amp;D investment and employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large number of potential economic growth areas: due to economic mass well placed to contribute to Lisbon objectives</li> <li>• further development in knowledge-intensive services and high-technology sectors</li> <li>• immigration of highly-skilled young people to metropolitan areas from other parts of Europe and the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low economic growth rates in many parts of NWE following EU enlargement</li> <li>• regional disparities in levels of unemployment</li> <li>• widening gap between urban and rural areas in Lisbon-relevant economic performance</li> <li>• rising dependency ratios as result of demographic change (ageing and low fertility rates)</li> <li>• brain drain of highly qualified workers from NWE to the US, Japan, or Singapore</li> <li>• urban-rural brain drain within the NWE area</li> </ul>
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Natural and cultural resources and environmental trends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wealth of diverse natural and cultural heritage and of landscapes</li> <li>• within wider Europe comparatively low exposure to natural and technological hazards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high levels of pollution in core due to density of transport, population and economic activities</li> <li>• landscape fragmentation and loss of biodiversity</li> <li>• strong dependence on imported energy in some parts of NWE</li> <li>• low levels of use of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• economic potentials of natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>• decoupling economic growth from increase in pollution and greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• increasing levels of energy efficiency and use of renewable energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overuse of natural and cultural assets (high population density, large number of tourists)</li> <li>• Increasing number and severity of natural and technological risks, especially in highly urbanised parts of NWE</li> <li>• More serious river flood</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>renewable energy</li> <li>increased flood risk due to concentration of human activities along costal areas and in river valleys</li> <li>high volumes of waste generation</li> </ul>	sources in response to rising oil prices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>events expected as consequence of climate change in parts of NWE</li> <li>Effects of rising energy prices on the territory given unequal distribution of potentials for increasing use of renewable energy</li> </ul>
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Accessibility and connectivity in NWE: transport and the information society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High levels of accessibility: good road and rail networks, excellent network of inland waterways, concentration of major seaports, largest airport hubs in Europe</li> <li>Strong position in logistics</li> <li>Crucial geographical position in Europe, connecting North-South and West-East</li> <li>Comparatively advanced level of ICT development in many parts of NWE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core-periphery difference in levels of accessibility</li> <li>Transport congestion in core areas of NWE</li> <li>lack of interoperability and of integration between transnational and secondary networks</li> <li>limited performance and profitability of long-distance and intermodal services</li> <li>limited take-up of Intelligent Transport Systems</li> <li>continuing digital divide and regional disparities in take-up of ICTs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved and more sustainable modal split prompted by rising energy prices and geographical characteristics (e.g. inland waterways, maritime transport)</li> <li>better organisation and use of existing networks, especially road and rail</li> <li>increased use of ITS by building on NWE's innovation potential in relevant sectors</li> <li>strengthen NWE's position as a global centre and its contribution to the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy through further take-up of ICTs and overcoming the digital divide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>steady increase of flows through the area, increasingly multi-directional</li> <li>rapidly increasing unsustainable modes of transport: road and air</li> <li>different passenger transportation requirements due to demographic ageing, especially in rural areas</li> <li>competition among ports, airport authorities, and among airports and rail service providers preventing better territorial balance</li> <li>increasing regional imbalances (urban versus rural) through unequal provision with ICT</li> </ul>
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>The territorial structure of NWE and demographic characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High density of population and activities</li> <li>Currently still growing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polarisation and depopulation effects: increasing territorial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transnational agglomerations (Ireland/Southern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polarisation and depopulation tendencies as effect of demographic</li> </ul>

	<p>population (mainly due to in-migration)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good secondary urban networks</li> </ul>	<p>imbalances between urban and rural areas due to migration movements (often resulting in brain-drain)</p>	<p>Scotland; countries bordering the English Channel; SW Germany and East France) with potential for territorial integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic gain in metropolitan areas due to in-migration of mainly young people</li> </ul>	<p>change and migration (e.g. increasing land use pressures in urban areas; overcapacity of infrastructure in rural areas)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial and economic effects of low fertility rates and ageing of population</li> <li>• Variety in the organisation of governments as barrier to efficient transnational cooperation</li> </ul>
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### **3. THE JOINT TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This joint transnational strategy responds to the identified opportunities and threats of the NWE transnational territorial cooperation area by setting out an overarching aim and by defining priority axes for the programming period 2007-2013. The Programme priorities take the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion, the National Strategic Reference Frameworks of the Member States involved in the Programme and the results from the Ex-ante evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) into consideration. The priorities identify the range of actions and transnational projects envisaged to achieve the priority objectives as well as the key actor groups which should be involved in the implementation of the joint activities.

The priority axes are specified by targets, and quantified by output and result indicators, which shall help to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness of the targets in implementing the priorities.

North West Europe is the 'economic powerhouse' of Europe, and home to important global command centres. While the cooperation area thus makes an important contribution to achieving the objectives set out in the Lisbon-Gothenburg strategy, the future performance of the region might be affected by the slow economic growth, especially in the continental parts of NWE, over recent years. Joint transnational cooperation projects under the previous INTERREG IIC (1997-1999) and INTERREG IIIB (2000-2006) Programmes have aimed to increase territorial integration by promoting a balanced spatial development and by supporting durable cooperation networks between organisations and institutions within NWE. However, NWE is a diverse territory where regional imbalances continue to present a challenge for territorial integration. Further cooperation efforts are therefore necessary to improve the integration and coherence of this macro-region.

The North West Europe Programme (2007-2013) presents the next phase of transnational territorial cooperation in the area, by building on the achievements of its two predecessor programmes. It will continue the mutual learning process, which began with exchanges of experience in spatial planning under INTERREG IIC and continued with joint actions and strategies under INTERREG IIIB. The Programme focus is on achieving better territorial cohesion through transnational cooperation, thus strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of the cooperation area. In doing so, the Operational Programme addresses the challenges formulated by the EU Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs, greater social cohesion and environmentally sustainable development patterns.

The North West Europe Programme 2007-2013 – reflecting the trends and tendencies of the region's socio-economic situation – will address those issues which require intervention at the transnational level. The Programme will concentrate on the need to strengthen the knowledge economy by providing a more conducive climate for innovation and thus contribute to maintaining the competitiveness of the NWE cooperation area. It will seek to actively maintain the natural and cultural resources of the region and alleviate negative environmental impacts on the territory, including the promotion of innovative approaches to the management and prevention of natural and technological risks in the context of climate change. It will address the regional disparities in the region with a view to achieving better accessibility and connectivity



across the territory and by promoting a more balanced settlement pattern. The Programme also promotes adaptation strategies for global trends that have a considerable effect on the territorial development of the territory, such as demographic change, with a view to actively strengthening the performance of urban networks and alleviating negative developments in rural and more peripheral areas. In doing so, the NWE Programme will not substitute any national or EU-funded programmes in related areas, but will concentrate on achieving an added-value by demonstrating the transnational and territorial dimension of the envisaged actions.

Operations financed under the transnational territorial cooperation Programme for NWE are set apart from any initiatives financed under cross-border and interregional programmes for the following reasons: transnational cooperation involves larger regions compared to the cross-border cooperation component. Furthermore, transnational programmes focus on actions of relevance to the transnational territory, i.e. issues which nation-states or regions cannot solve alone or for which transnational cooperation offers considerable benefits.

Transnational cooperation actions in NWE can be distinguished from those of other INTERREG programmes, or even by actions financed under the other 2 new objectives of the Regional Policy: the Convergence objective and the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective. They all share however the same overarching goals inspired by the Cohesion Policy. They aim to respond to the challenges linked to economic, social and territorial inequalities, the acceleration of economic restructuring and the ageing of the population, reflecting the Lisbon (growth, competitiveness and employment) and Gothenburg (environment) objectives. Furthermore, the compliance of activities funded by the NWE Programme with other Community policies is essential to strengthen the impact of the funds (detailed analysis in section 3.4.3).

There are clear synergies to be sought across these financial instruments by ensuring consistency and complementarity among them at the different levels of operation (local, regional, national, transnational). For the new programming period the NWE cooperation Programme envisages additionally the development of strategic initiatives (as detailed in chapter 5) which aims to provide further added value to the distribution of funds.

The joint transnational strategy of the NWE Programme has been developed in line with the principles of relevant Community funds as well as different national programmes in the Member States and the national strategic framework references (NSFRs) (see section 1.2). During the implementation of the Programme such alignment will be verified at the level of project selection as well through the formulation of appropriate eligibility and selection criteria.

### **3.2 Programme aim**

The overall aim of the North West Europe Operational Programme on transnational territorial development (2007-2013) is as follows:

The North West Europe Programme aims to capitalise on the cooperation between key actors to address territorial issues across the NWE area. This is in order to contribute to the NWE's economic competitiveness while equally promoting regionally balanced and sustainable development.

The priorities and objectives defined in the Operational Programme are seen as the specific vehicles by which approved NWE projects will contribute to delivering the overall Programme aim.

### ***3.3 The added value of transnational cooperation in North West Europe***

The Operational Programme for North West Europe promotes an integrated approach vertically (among different levels of government), horizontally (among different policy sectors) and geographically (across administrative boundaries). This approach makes the Programme unique in comparison to other EU programmes that are aimed at the integration of different policy sectors, different levels of government, or cross-border cooperation of adjacent regional entities, but do not actively promote a combination of these across a large geographical area. The cross-sectoral approach to territorial development promoted by the Programme, and the involvement of public authorities, universities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector in cooperation projects of transnational territorial significance is therefore a unique contribution to the cohesion and competitiveness of the European Union. The transnational cooperation Programme offers the advantage of establishing links between actions at regional, national, cross-border and inter-regional levels, thereby enhancing the complementarity of activities, policies and programmes for this contiguous space. The Programme thus offers a platform for cooperation which is integrated vertically, horizontally and geographically in pursuit of achieving sustainable development and economic competitiveness.

The added-value of transnational territorial cooperation in North West Europe lies in its invaluable potential for mutually beneficial learning from solving shared problems, and by increasing the awareness for the transnational dimension of territorial development among key actors in North West Europe. The support given by the Programme – both in material and immaterial terms – helps to increase the institutional capacity for transnational cooperation and to improve the framework conditions for territorial challenges that might not be considered a priority in the domestic context. Previous transnational cooperation Programmes have already contributed to the emergence of far-reaching policy networks across North West Europe and by building on this experience the new Programme can motivate other key stakeholders to become involved in transnational territorial cooperation. The focus of the Programme on supporting novel, innovative and sometimes even experimental solutions to shared and transnational concerns provides a unique platform to solving key problems of transnational relevance and to even overcome political sensitivities. By providing funding for cooperation projects, INTERREG works as a catalyst for subsequent infrastructure investments of transnational relevance, thereby contributing to the further territorial integration of the European Union.

In line with the principle of subsidiarity, and building on experiences with transnational cooperation under the INTERREG IIIB Programme, the greatest potential for added-value through transnational territorial cooperation can be achieved in projects where the problem addressed is of such nature that it cannot be satisfactorily tackled within one nation-state. Where the project results are of relevance to the wider NWE area and can therefore be transferred to other parts of the transnational territory, the multiplier effect of INTERREG support can be most effectively demonstrated. The cooperation between partners can improve the quality of results considerably, compared to the possible achievements of a partner working

alone. The learning effects from cooperation are the greatest where the project objectives are jointly defined and the work carried out is shared between partners from different countries.

The consideration of other European programmes and initiatives is crucial for transnational territorial cooperation, as all of these are targeted towards achieving the objectives set out in the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy. By complementing other European initiatives, the NWE Programme adds an important transnational cooperation dimension to a wide variety of policy problems with a territorial impact. It thus helps to achieve added-value and synergies with EU initiatives as well as public and private sector funding. The most relevant EU Programmes and initiatives in relation to the identified priorities for the NWE OP are set out in the relevant sections in chapter 4 and summarised in Appendix C.

In addition, the complementarity with other territorial cooperation programmes focusing on cross-border and interregional cooperation, and transnational cooperation in areas partly overlapping NWE (such as the North Sea Region or the Atlantic Area) is crucial in order to make the best use of available resources. The transnational territorial cooperation Programme for NWE has been set up with a view to achieving synergy effects with these other programmes and initiatives by inviting project promoters to identify gaps and make the appropriate links between the programmes at transnational level, and – most crucially - to consider the territorial implications of proposed actions and to respond to these appropriately.

### **3.4 Justification of the priorities chosen**

The NWE region, considered at the macro level (i.e. within the European or global context), has a competitive advantage with comparatively high levels of education, R&D expenditure and employment which is above EU average. The area is characterised by a rich variation of natural ecosystems and landscapes. The generally high levels of accessibility and the excellent network of inland waterways imply the potential for modal shift to more integrated and sustainable means of transport. The high population density and 'critical mass', as well as a good network of secondary cities and towns besides the metropolitan and more rural areas, provide a great opportunity to achieve territorial integration.

However, at meso level, that is within North West Europe, the picture is considerably more varied, and regional disparities become apparent. For example, economically successful regions and areas with structural weaknesses co-exist within the cooperation area. Especially the continental parts of North West Europe have been affected by sluggish economic growth over the last years, and the high density of population and activities, especially in the core area, have considerable negative effects on the environmental quality in the region. Climate change effects also increase the need for more integrated approaches to risk management, especially in the highly urbanised areas, such as along the large river basins and the coastal zones in the cooperation area. Transport growth on road and rail has resulted in increasing congestion in the core area of NWE, whereas the more peripheral parts of NWE continue to have low levels of connectivity. The development of regional airports across Europe has important territorial implications and arguably balances the dominant position of the large urban areas in terms of accessibility. However, negative environmental effects from air traffic growth as well as rising energy prices will require a shift to more energy-efficient and integrated modes of transport, and more consideration to the use of ICT to manage transport flows and to reduce the need to travel. Demographic change, ageing and migration affect different parts of the NWE differently, thus exacerbating polarisation and depopulation tendencies across the territory, with large urban areas continuing to grow in population and rural and more peripheral regions declining. The challenge is therefore to counteract this trend and through transnational cooperation among cities and between urban and rural areas achieve a better territorial balance.

The NWE transnational cooperation Programme will be delivered through four priorities of particular relevance to NWE, as well as a pro-active approach to developing strategic initiatives for the cooperation area. The Programme priorities and strategic initiatives respond to the opportunities and challenges identified in the SWOT analysis. The Programme places strong emphasis on the integration of different policy sectors and different levels of governance across the transnational territory. Consequently, four priorities have been defined to facilitate the identification of the main focus for actions of approved projects. For practical purposes each project will be approved under a single priority. All projects are nevertheless explicitly encouraged to make appropriate connections between objectives of different priorities and wherever appropriate to respond to more than one Programme priority. In addition, project proposals under all four priorities should respond to the following three cross-cutting themes:

- to strengthen the economic competitiveness of NWE in response to the Lisbon agenda;

- to increase the environmental sustainability of NWE in response to the Gothenburg agenda, and
- to achieve a stronger territorial balance of NWE by reducing regional disparities reflecting the aim of the EU Cohesion Policy.

The four priorities defined for this Programme cover the following:

1) ***Fostering innovation and strengthening the knowledge-based economy*** in NWE is an important aspect for the further development of the cooperation area. Although innovative approaches will be promoted across all four priorities, this specific priority is dedicated to innovation in the field of natural and technical sciences of relevance to NWE and governance aspects in order to create a better 'innovation climate' across national boundaries and thereby strengthen the knowledge-based economy of NWE. A particularly high potential for innovation is offered by the horizontal co-ordination of actors outside the normal value-added chains, and the attention should therefore be given to the integration of different economic sectors, technologies and services. One of the most important challenges in this respect is the development of effective and internationally competitive innovation systems within the regions, particularly in rural areas. Innovations arise especially at interfaces where different perspectives and opinions are exchanged. For NWE, one of the core interfaces for growth might therefore be the interconnection of technological sectors with creative industries. The specific focus of this priority will be on three main issues: (a) to promote greater entrepreneurship and facilitate the translation of innovation and knowledge into products, processes and services; (b) to develop new and strengthen existing growth clusters and SME networks; and (c) to strengthen the institutional and territorial framework for innovation and the transfer of knowledge in NWE through transnational cooperation.

2) The high density of people and activities in NWE imply that the environment is under considerable pressure. Environmental problems from congestion in the core area, for instance, are of increasing concern. The ***sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks***, including strategic actions to better adapt to spatial effects from climate change are therefore of great importance to NWE. Given the dominance of large river basins in NWE and important maritime environments such as the English Channel, the Irish Sea and the North Sea, emphasis will be placed on transnational actions to improve risk management related to river and coastal flooding, increasing maritime safety, and the protection of the marine environment. In addition, the transnational dimension of waste management, and actions aimed at addressing the spatial impacts of distribution structures for renewable energy and increased energy efficiency where transnational benefits can be demonstrated will be supported. Support will also be given to actions that address the transnational territorial dimension of the pollution of air, soil and water.

3) NWE is characterised by regional disparities in the level of accessibility and connectivity between the central and more peripheral regions. Improving the ***connectivity and internal and external accessibility of NWE*** is therefore an important priority. The focus will lie on joint transnational solutions in the field of transport and ICT which help to overcome the barriers to the diffusion of



innovation and knowledge and to facilitate transport flows, and thus to strengthen NWE's sustainable economic growth and territorial cohesion. The barriers include: national borders, which continue to be characterised by low operability of national transport networks; the English Channel and the Irish Sea, which are considered a physical barrier to the better connection through flows of goods and passengers between the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe; interfaces causing low compatibility between European, national and regional transport networks; congestion especially in the central area of NWE; low population density preventing the provision of large-scale public transport infrastructure and market-provided ICT infrastructure in the more peripheral areas; lack of harmonisation of transport and ICT policies with spatial policies at all levels, and lack of coherence with comprehensive territorial development actions.

4) The spatial structure of NWE will be considered from the perspective of ***promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level***. The priority will allow for multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral strategic actions at the transnational level in order to achieve better integration of institutions and governance. Polarisation and depopulation tendencies across the territory should be counteracted and the region, in particular smaller towns and cities, be made more attractive for young and highly skilled labour from other parts of the world. The thematic scope of the priority includes: transnational actions that strengthen the economic and social performance of cities, towns and rural areas in NWE; improvements to the natural and cultural environment in order to strengthen the economic competitiveness of NWE; the promotion of sustainable and innovative energy practices; and transnational responses to the impacts of demographic change and migration on the settlement pattern of NWE.

In addition to these four Programme priorities, which are further elaborated in chapter 4, the transnational territorial cooperation Programme for North West Europe 2007-2013 places increasing emphasis on a pro-active and strategic approach to the development of initiatives which are of key transnational relevance to the Programme area. These key areas respond to the opportunities and threats identified in the SWOT analysis, and provide for a coordinated, cross-cutting and integrated approach to territorial transnational development in North West Europe. Given the importance of these ***Strategic Initiatives***, which can have a thematic or geographical focus, the Member States of the North West Europe Programme will pursue a targeted approach to the development of suitable projects. The focus of, and approach to, strategic initiatives is explained in chapter 5.

#### *3.4.1 The relation to the Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion*

The European Commission and the Member States advocate a new strategic approach to cohesion, with an emphasis on economic growth and employment and in pursuit of the objectives of the renewed Lisbon agenda<sup>xix</sup>. This strategic approach to the EU Cohesion Policy period 2007-2013 is set out in the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy of the Council Decision of October 2006<sup>xx</sup>.

The Community Strategic Guidelines stress the importance of the territorial dimension of cohesion policy, and in particular the role of the European territorial cooperation objective in ensuring the balanced and sustainable development of the

Community territory. The success of the European territorial cooperation objective, according to the Community Strategic Guidelines, depends on shared development strategies of the territories concerned at national, regional and local level and on networking, especially to ensure the transfer of ideas to the 'mainstream' national and regional cohesion programmes.

The programmes supported by cohesion policy should target resources on the following three priorities:

1. improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality of services, and preserving the environment,
2. encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by increasing research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies, and
3. creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

The territorial cooperation programmes are meant to complement these three priorities by speeding up economic development and the achievement of higher growth through closer cooperation across EU regions. National borders are often an obstacle to the development of the European territory as a whole, and can restrict the potential for higher economic competitiveness.

The Operational Programme for NWE responds to the priorities set out in the Community Strategic Guidelines and the National Strategic Reference Frameworks of the Member States involved in the transnational Programme by promoting transnational territorial cooperation in pursuit of the Lisbon-Gothenburg objectives under four NWE-specific funding priorities. These are: developing the knowledge-based economy in NWE; the sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks; improving connectivity by promoting intelligent and sustainable transport and ICT solutions; and promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level. Furthermore, the strategic initiatives of thematic or geographic focus are being promoted which add a holistic and cross-cutting dimension to the Programme in fields of key strategic relevance to the cooperation area.

#### *3.4.2 The National Strategic Reference Frameworks*

The National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRFs) contain the national strategic priorities for cohesion 2007-2013, and were prepared by the national authorities of the Member States involved in the NWE Programme on the basis of the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013<sup>xxi</sup>.

The Operational Programme for NWE follows the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, the general Structural Funds Regulation and the ERDF Regulation, and sits within the framework of the NSRFs of the participating Member States. The NSRFs for Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK, France and Luxembourg (cf. Appendix D) have been reviewed as regards their objectives for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment and the European territorial

cooperation programmes vis-à-vis the priorities covered by the NWE territorial transnational cooperation Operational Programme.

The proposed priorities of the NWE Operational Programme have been formulated in compliance with, and are complementary to, the relevant NSRFs. The NWE focus on developing the knowledge-based economy in NWE; the sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks; improving connectivity by promoting intelligent and sustainable transport and ICT solutions; and promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level, is thus in line with the priorities identified by the Member States. The NWE Programme adds a transnational and wider European dimension to the NSRFs by facilitating the economic and social integration and cohesion across national borders, thus seeking to increase cooperation across the NWE Member States and Switzerland on matters of strategic importance.

### *3.4.3 Compliance with Community policies*

The compliance of activities funded by the NWE Programme with Community policies is crucial in order to make the most effective use of Community resources and to create synergy effects between activities aimed at achieving the Lisbon-Gothenburg objectives. In preparing the Programme, every care has been taken to ensure that the activities funded will take special and complementary action over and above that of the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) to promote the economic diversification of rural areas and of areas dependent on fisheries. Improving the competitiveness and quality of all areas, including rural ones, is encouraged in the Programme.

There is good scope for functional complementarity with actions financed through the ESF whose goal is to foster balanced economic and social development in order to support national policies promoting full employment, improved quality and productivity at work and reduced social exclusion and regional employment disparities. With an accentuated emphasis on employment and social cohesion issues, all efforts will be made to combine effects with NWE actions in particular those on Priority Four which aims at “Promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level”.

Whenever relevant, activities to secure the economic, environmental and social sustainability in the fisheries sector will also be supported. Two of the four Programme Priorities include specific provisions for such activities: the Priority on “Sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks” and the one on “Promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level”.

Other relevant Community policies and activities in relation to the four funding priorities of the NWE OP have been set out in the respective priority definitions in chapter 4, and are summarised in Appendix C. Both the relation with other EU activities and the compliance with Community policies are thus considered both at Programme level as well as at project level.

If regions in the Programme area are involved in the Regions for Economic Change initiative, the Programme will take steps to:

- a) make the necessary arrangement to support innovative operations with transnational impact that are related to the results of the networks and projects;
- b) make relevant suggestions to the Monitoring Committee at least once a year for the Programme, and invite representatives of the networks (as observers) to report on the progress of the networks' activities;
- c) describe in the Annual Report actions included within the Regions for Economic Change initiative.

Special attention shall be given to the services provided by the INTERACT II Programme. This EU-wide Programme focuses on the good governance of territorial cooperation and provides needs-based support to stakeholders involved in implementing programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation objective. The target groups for INTERACT are primarily the authorities to be established according to Council Regulations 1083/2006 and 1080/2006 as well as other bodies involved in programme implementation. In order to ensure maximum benefit from the INTERACT Programme for the implementing bodies of this Programme, the use of INTERACT services and documentation as well as the participation in INTERACT seminars will be encouraged. Related costs are eligible under Technical Assistance.

In line with Articles 16 and 17 of the General Regulation, the Member States, in drawing up the Programme, have taken care to ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective will be promoted during the various stages of the implementation of the Programme and of the supported activities. The Programme objectives, and the objectives of the projects funded by the Programme, are to be pursued in the framework of sustainable development, and expected to contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment.

#### *3.4.4 Ex-ante Evaluation process and Strategic Environmental Assessment process*

The call for tender for the Ex-ante Evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the new Operational Programme for North West Europe was launched in early 2006. The call was publicised on the Programme website, and in addition a large number of consultancies and experts were directly invited to tender for conducting the Ex-ante evaluation and the SEA. A consortium led by Ecotec, and involving IDEA consult (experts on indicators) and Belconsult (experts on the SEA process), was selected in May 2006 to undertake the work.

Between May and November 2006, the consortium monitored the work of the International Working Party (IWP) and the progressive development of the Operational Programme closely. As part of the evaluation, they participated in several meetings of the IWP. They had access to the shared website of the IWP where all available documents were uploaded. They were also in constant contact with the JTS to facilitate the process.

The consultants produced a total of four notes on the Ex-ante Evaluation as well as an interim and final report to the IWP reflecting on the different draft versions of the Operational Programme. A specific tool was developed to monitor and record the follow-up of recommendations. This 'recommendation tracker' was introduced to

allow an interactive process between the IWP and the Ex-ante consultants and to ensure that all relevant issues were appropriately addressed. Smooth communication and reciprocal exchange of information was beneficial and contributed to a continuous improvement of the Operational Programme.

The SEA was run in a more independent manner in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive). At the beginning, all member state delegations provided the consultants with a list of the relevant national and regional environmental authorities to be contacted for that purpose. An advanced draft Operational Programme was sent to the appointed authorities together with a proposed strategy on how to conduct a SEA appropriate for such a Programme. The comments of this scoping exercise were collected and analysed directly by the relevant consultants.

It was for the first time that a consultation of the public and the environmental authorities was required for the Operational Programme. The SEA process played a central role in the preparation of the respective documents. The process had to be well-timed to take into account the additional requirement for public consultation. The process was launched with a well-developed draft of the Operational Programme which was ready in July 2006 and was translated into all four official languages of the Programme. The English version of the Operational Programme was published on 24 July 2006 and all translated versions were made available on 22 August 2006. The Environmental report was published on 31 July in English and on 22 August 2006 in all other programme languages. The public consultation closed on 30 September 2006.

The final report of the Ex-ante evaluation and the Report on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Report) were received on 21 November 2006. The final set of recommendations concerned the entire Programme. The IWP have therefore carefully examined them and adjusted the Operational Programme accordingly. Attention was paid to the formulation of the Programme priorities and other relevant areas. Moreover, the recommendations will continue to be taken into account during the implementation of the Programme in a number of ways:

- 1) in the formulation of eligibility criteria: As was the case in the previous programming period, all projects carrying out investments will be required to submit evidence of Environmental Impact Assessments complying with national and regional regulations.
- 2) in the formulation of selection criteria: All relevant recommendations will be taken into account when finalising the set of selection criteria for the evaluation of project proposals.
- 3) in the monitoring of project implementation: The scope of the potential environmental impact of project activities and their by-products will form part of the overall continuous project monitoring methodology.

Delegates of the PSC committee often represent the relevant environmental authorities in delivering a position for project selection. To assure the appropriate selection of projects, experts will be invited whenever necessary to assist the PSC in their task of project selection enhancing thus the environmental competence of the PSC committee.



Similarly, relevant Regional Advisory Councils will be invited whenever necessary to provide advice in the selection of projects related to the common fisheries policy.

Two Regional Advisory Councils related to NWE are:

- North Western waters: [http://www.nwwrac.org/about\\_nwwrac-EN.xhtml](http://www.nwwrac.org/about_nwwrac-EN.xhtml)
- North Sea: <http://www.nsrac.org/>

Both the full Ex-ante evaluation report and the SEA report are available as separate volumes.

#### 3.4.5 Main conclusions of the Ex-ante evaluation process and Strategic Environmental Assessment process ("Summarising statement")

The Programme has taken all necessary steps to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC by taking into account the following elements:

1. A Non Technical Summary of the information provided in the Environmental Report, as foreseen by Annex I(j) of the SEA Directive, is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report (separate volume).
2. The statement foreseen by Article 9(1)(b) summarising how environmental considerations and the opinions expressed have been taken into account is part of this section.
3. The description of the measures decided concerning monitoring foreseen in the Articles 9(1)(c) and 10 (monitoring) is part of section 3.4.4; they are laid down in more detail in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report (separate volume).
4. Information on the consultations with the public and the environmental authorities concerned (Article 6 of the SEA Directive) will be given to the public via the Programme's website and to the relevant national and regional environmental authorities mentioned in section 3.4.4 via e-mail. This will be done in parallel to sending in the Operational Programme to the Commission for approval.

#### Ex-ante Evaluation (excerpts from the report):

*Overall, the ex ante evaluators consider the Operational Programme to be a relevant and coherent document. In terms of **relevance**, the needs identified in the background and SWOT are sound and generally well organised and are clearly reflected in the priorities and objectives proposed. The current version of the Programme represents an appropriate strategy to meet the challenges confronting North West Europe.*

*In terms of **internal coherence**, the aim, priorities and objectives of the Programme hang together, even if the overall aim of the Programme remains ambitious. Overall, our view is that the strategy is well defined with clear objectives and priorities.*

*In terms of **external coherence**, a strong positive relationship between the priorities and objectives of the Operational Programme and the core Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives, as articulated in the Community Strategic Guidelines, can be found. The compliance of the NWE Programme with the NSRFs of the Member States concerned is also generally good.*

***Strategic initiatives** are considered to be a good instrument for contributing towards the OP's aims and can be supported from a conceptual perspective. Yet, there are certain implementation arrangements to be specified, especially related to the project selection criteria and mechanisms, as well as the roles of the various stakeholders involved.*

***Overall**, on the basis of the information provided, the evaluators are confident that the Operational Programme provides a solid basis for the implementation of the Programme.*

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment (summary of report):

*The central message of the SEA process is that the potential environmental impact depends not on the NWE Programme itself, but on the kind of actions and projects financed by it. Specific comments are given for each Priority covering the range of possible actions. Special attention should be paid to the **methodology of project selection and monitoring procedure** where adequate emphasis on environmental issues and sustainability should be placed.*

*The implementation structure, as described in the Operational Programme, is seen as sufficiently thorough to ensure an appropriate selection of project applications. Projects need to be selected based on the potential to meet the priorities and objectives of the NWE Programme, including its environmental goals and positive environmental (side) effects. The "strategic initiatives", as described in the Programme, which are initiated in a top-down approach, are set up especially for this purpose.*

*As a final remark, the report indicates that if the recommendations are followed, the selection procedure as described in the Operational Programme should guarantee that all selected projects not only fit within the priorities and objectives of the NWE Programme, but to some degree also contribute to environmental objectives that are not specifically addressed by the Programme.*



## **4. PRIORITIES FOR TRANSNATIONAL TERRITORIAL COOPERATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Four priorities for the transnational territorial cooperation Programme for North West Europe have been defined as follows:

- 1) Developing the NWE knowledge-based economy by capitalising on our capacity for innovation
- 2) Sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks
- 3) Improving connectivity in NWE by promoting intelligent and sustainable transport and ICT solutions
- 4) Promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level

Projects to be funded under each of these four priorities have to incorporate three cross-cutting themes in their outline, methodology and actions, namely (1) to strengthen the economic competitiveness of NWE in response to the Lisbon agenda; (2) to increase the environmental sustainability of NWE in response to the Gothenburg agenda; and (3) to achieve a stronger territorial balance of NWE by reducing regional disparities reflecting the aim of the EU Cohesion Policy.

The context and rationale, the benefits of transnational cooperation, the priority aim and objectives and examples of transnational actions are set out in this section for each of these four priorities. A fifth priority on Technical Assistance is also defined in this section. There are a number of quality requirements that apply to all transnational projects across the four Programme priorities for future transnational cooperation projects. These are set out in section 4.2.

Besides these four Programme priorities, the Programme also encourages strategic initiatives in areas of key transnational relevance to the territorial development of North West Europe. These are discussed in chapter 5.

### ***Priority 1: Developing the NWE knowledge-based economy by capitalising on our capacity for innovation***

#### Context and rationale

The Lisbon strategy (2000) set out the goal to make Europe the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. In the knowledge economy, knowledge and information are the main inputs and outputs. The knowledge economy is a network economy, where time, functional relationships and thus connectivity increasingly matter. Across Europe, innovation is considered the most important driving factor behind sustainable economic development. Innovation is the process whereby ideas for new (or improved) products, processes or services are developed and commercialised in the marketplace. The process of innovation affects the whole business – not just specific products, services or technologies.

The NWE area is highly urbanised and urban areas are important focal points of the knowledge economy: it is mainly in cities that knowledge is produced, processed, exchanged and marketed. Cities are best endowed with knowledge infrastructure (universities, research institutes, etc.), they tend to have higher than average shares of well-educated people, they are well equipped with economic infrastructure, they are well connected to the global economy through airports, and they have a function as a place where knowledge is exchanged, and as a breeding nest for talent and new combinations.

However, the knowledge economy also has a tendency to produce a dual economy: socially with an increasing polarisation between well-paid knowledge workers and people who lack the skills and resources to participate, but also spatially given the tendency to favour urban areas and geographical proximity in networks, which can increase regional disparities and disadvantage rural areas. The polarisation is also felt strongly in cities with a legacy of declining industries. The risk to widen the gap between urban areas and more peripheral and rural areas as regards their participation in the knowledge economy is of particular concern to NWE (cf. Table 7). This Programme therefore encourages all parts of the territory equally to contribute to the development of an innovative and knowledge-based society in NWE.

By defining NWE's urban system as networks consisting of nodes and linkages (rather than individual cities), larger regions with considerable knowledge resources and potential can be identified. Where resources become better aligned to each other, the potential could be fully reaped. For example, an international electronics manufacturer recently encouraged the cities of Eindhoven, Aachen and Leuven to think in this way.

There are also examples of bottom-up transboundary city networks in NWE where there is potential to create critical mass in some specific fields. An example for cross-border cooperation to improve the knowledge base is cooperation in research and technology transfer via the Network of Euregional Universities (Münster, Osnabrück, Dortmund, Enschede and Nijmegen). Also, the regions of Münster, Osnabrück and Enschede/Hengelo work together to strengthen the networks between research and education institutes and companies. There is potential to widen this cooperation to the transnational level and to achieve benefits for the whole of NWE.

Therefore, to establish structures and to provide services directed to those active in the field of technological and economic innovation is an important task for regional and local authorities in pursuit of the Lisbon-Gothenburg objectives. Improvements to



the governance of 'knowledge networks' in transnational areas and across national borders are crucial if the full potential of 'knowledge regions' or 'knowledge networks' is to be achieved. It is important that the appropriate institutional and financial framework is in place for actors to engage in innovation and knowledge transfer which will benefit sustainable economic growth in NWE.

### Benefits of transnational cooperation

In order to develop the 'top league' of the knowledge economy, it is not enough to encourage and promote regional initiatives. For an increasing number of activities, there may only be room for one or a few top locations in Europe, because of the critical mass and high investments needed, and because of unprecedented complexity and specialization. Europe has been successful in this regard in the aircraft industry (Airbus) and in the promotion of nuclear research (CERN, Hamburg), and NWE has the potential to strengthen its position as a prime location of the knowledge economy.

Recent studies on innovation in Europe have shown that among the ten current 'outperformers' in the EU, six are located within North West Europe. These are Noord-Brabant (Eindhoven), East of England and Cambridge, Île-de-France, Bavaria, the South East of England and London, and Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart)<sup>xxii</sup>. The strengths of the knowledge and research base of NWE can be found in the areas of mechatronics<sup>xxiii</sup>, automotive, electronics, medical technology, IT and telematics, transport logistics, multimedia devices and cultural industries. There is also potential in emerging areas, such as embedded systems<sup>xxiv</sup>, microelectronics and nanotechnology, and life sciences.

There is a need to build on and strengthen the existing competences and skills in NWE. Real competitive advantage comes from making a difference, and a mere repetition of concepts which have been successful elsewhere (e.g. 'Silicon Valley' activities, biotechnology, or other high-tech clusters) should therefore be avoided. Instead, the focus needs to be on strengthening existing clusters or specializations. A key challenge is the creation or support of centres or networks of excellence on a transnational scale. If NWE fails to create more of such centres, it will continue to lose talent and resources to other countries. A better coordination of research and innovation policies within and among EU Member States is therefore needed.

Appropriate governance structures and support for innovation and knowledge-based activities at all levels of scale are crucial preconditions for the future economic performance of NWE. An institutional framework conducive to innovation also involves the cooperation of different actors and different levels of government, especially across national borders. In the global economy, business and economies increasingly operate outside the restrictions of administrative boundaries, and the appropriate framework conditions and policies should be put in place to facilitate these developments. The NWE transnational cooperation Programme intends to support these processes, by highlighting the relevance of a coordinated response at transnational level and by supporting transnational actions aimed at improving the framework for innovation.

### Considerations for project promoters

Projects funded under this priority should have a clear focus on the implementation of the joint transnational actions. This action-oriented approach implies that key stakeholders in the field are included in the joint transnational partnership, and other relevant actors are involved in the proposed project activities. The Programme will neither support research and development activities which are not linked to actions or demonstration projects nor purely academic networking. Project activities should be clearly linked to territorial development, and not be merely focused on networking within the specific scientific/business sector, for which the interregional cooperation strand might be more appropriate.

In developing projects under the theme of innovation, it is of great importance to consider other European programmes and initiatives, such as the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes, the Research Framework Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, the INTERREG IVC Programme on interregional cooperation as well as the JEREMIE (Joint European Resources for Micro and Medium Enterprises) (cf. Appendix C). The coordination of initiatives and activities at national and regional level is encouraged. Transnational cooperation projects funded by the NWE Programme should, where appropriate, refer to activities under these programmes and provide synergies through, for instance, transnational knowledge transfer.

### Priority aim

The overall aim of the priority is

*to strengthen the innovative capacity and the knowledge-based economy of NWE and to support the mobilisation of regional and local potentials through transnational cooperation.*

### Objectives and possible actions

The emphasis of this Programme priority is on the diffusion of innovation and knowledge and on strengthening the knowledge-based economy.

Three objectives are defined. The list of possible actions is non-exclusive, but should give directions to project promoters on the type of initiatives that are expected.

**Objective 1.1:** to promote greater entrepreneurship and facilitate the translation of innovations and knowledge into (marketable) products, processes and services that strengthen the competitiveness of NWE

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Actions aimed at improving the access to, and transfer of, scientific/technological knowledge for prospective entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses
- Actions aimed at linking up R&D facilities of NWE organisations and those of international centres of excellence in order to facilitate access to scientific knowledge and technology transfer between them

- Transnational actions aimed at promoting collaboration between institutions and agencies that provide information to SMEs so as to strengthen support at regional and EU level for technology transfer, including public-private partnerships, and transnational partnerships
- Joint actions to promote the innovative use of existing/new knowledge, products and services in businesses and their wider application across NWE (e.g. in the fields of renewable energies, carbon footprint reduction,...)
- Joint actions to assist businesses in integrating/implementing innovative products, processes and services in their activities.

**Objective 1.2:** to develop new and strengthen existing growth clusters and SME networks by building on the endogenous potentials of NWE cities and regions

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Transnational actions to stimulate the establishment of cross-sectoral innovation platforms across the NWE territory, in both 'stronger' and 'weaker' regions
- Actions aimed at establishing links between education facilities, research institutions and SME's for the joint use of R&D facilities and infrastructure or to undertake joint investments (to increase research and technology capacities)
- Actions aimed at establishing links between education facilities, research institutions, centres of excellence and SME networks in NWE through joint transnational marketing efforts (with a view to attracting Foreign Direct Investment)
- Actions aimed at raising the international profile of innovative NWE clusters and SME networks through joint transnational marketing efforts (with a view to attracting Foreign Direct Investment)
- Transnational actions aimed at strengthening business clusters by providing communication and social infrastructure

**Objective 1.3:** to use and improve territorial cooperation in order to strengthen the institutional and territorial framework for innovation and the transfer of knowledge within NWE

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Actions aimed at a better coordination, formulation and application of innovation and territorial policies by public authorities and related agencies across the transnational territory
- Actions aimed at an improved horizontal coordination of public and private actors involved in innovation and territorial development across NWE
- Actions aimed at finding transnational responses to territorial implications of the 'knowledge economy' (for example to reduce the contrast between 'stronger' and 'weaker' regions in NWE; to attract the right labour force to NWE; to create and retain the right skills within NWE...)

## Targets and indicators

<b>Priority 1 'Developing the NWE knowledge-based economy by capitalising on our capacity for innovation'</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Result</b>
O1: to promote greater entrepreneurship and facilitate the translation of innovations and knowledge into (marketable) products, processes and services that strengthen the competitiveness of NWE	<b>N° of projects strengthening the competitiveness of NWE</b>	<b>N° of new marketable products, processes and services produced through transnational cooperation</b>
		<b>N° of joint transnational strategies implemented to promote transfer of knowledge</b>
O2: to develop new and strengthen existing growth clusters and SME networks by building on the endogenous potentials of NWE cities and regions	<b>N° of projects supporting the mobilisation of regional and local potentials through transnational cooperation in NWE</b>	<b>N° of transnational enterprises created</b>
		<b>N° of transnational growth clusters or SME networks created or strengthened</b>
O3: to use and improve territorial cooperation in order to strengthen the institutional and territorial framework for innovation and the transfer of knowledge within NWE	<b>N° of projects improving the institutional capacity for innovation in NWE</b>	<b>N° of institutions and organisations with improved innovation capacity</b>
<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE AT PROGRAMME LEVEL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
		<b>Impact</b>
		<b>No. of transnational projects promoting the NWE knowledge-based economy</b>
		<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE = 10</b>

<b>Priority 1 'Developing the NWE knowledge-based economy by capitalising on our capacity for innovation'</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Result</b>
O1: to promote greater entrepreneurship and facilitate the translation of innovations and knowledge into (marketable) products, processes and services that strengthen the competitiveness of NWE	<b>N° of projects strengthening the competitiveness of NWE</b>	<b>N° of new marketable products, processes and services produced through transnational cooperation</b>
		<b>N° of joint transnational strategies implemented to promote transfer of knowledge</b>
O2: to develop new and strengthen existing growth clusters and SME networks by building on the endogenous potentials of NWE cities and regions	<b>N° of projects supporting the mobilisation of regional and local potentials through transnational cooperation in NWE</b>	<b>N° of transnational enterprises created</b>
		<b>N° of transnational growth clusters or SME networks created or strengthened</b>
O3: to use and improve territorial cooperation in order to strengthen the institutional and territorial framework for innovation and the transfer of knowledge within NWE	<b>N° of projects improving the institutional capacity for innovation in NWE</b>	<b>N° of institutions and organisations with improved innovation capacity</b>
<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE AT PROGRAMME LEVEL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
		<b>Impact</b>
		<b>No. of transnational projects promoting the NWE knowledge-based economy</b>
		<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE = 10</b>

An indicative breakdown of use of the Funds for the Programme is attached as Appendix E. For Priority 1 the following categories have been included: 01 (20%); 03 (20%); 04 (20%); 74 (20%); 80 (20%).



## ***Priority 2: Sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks***

### Context and rationale

The high density of people and activities in NWE implies that the environment is under increasing pressure. Transport congestion, especially in the core area, has considerable negative environmental and economic implications. Environmental pollution and the degradation of landscapes in NWE are posing a threat to not just the quality of life in this transnational area. They may also affect its further economic competitiveness, as the attractiveness of places is increasingly recognised as an important location factor for the knowledge-based industry and services (cf. Table 7). The sustainable management of natural resources is therefore of crucial importance for the NWE area, and calls for a broad range of activities aimed at minimising and preventing the pollution of land, water and air.

Climate change and its spatial implications are of particular concern to the management of natural resources in NWE. Climate change can be expected to affect mainly the frequency of natural hazards and thus influence decisions on the risk management of all hydro-meteorological hazards. Hazards can include latent conditions that may represent future threats and can have different origins: natural (geological, hydro-meteorological and biological) or induced by human processes (environmental degradation and technological hazards). The risk depends on the potential damage a hazard can cause (probability/magnitude of occurrence) and the perception of potential impacts as perceived by a community or system.

Climate change affects weather variables such as averages and extreme events in temperature, precipitation/rainfall (including snow and ice cover) and wind. Coastal zones and wetlands are amongst the areas most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Actions in support of coastal areas and inland water systems should concentrate on integrated coastal zone and river basin management and on developing strategic actions to tackle diffuse pollution from e.g. agriculture, traffic and untreated sewage overflows. For NWE, sea level rise and more frequent and more damaging occurrences of river floods and storm events are expected and will have considerable spatial impacts. These risks are potentially exacerbated by the high level of urbanisation along river basins and coastal zones. This calls for policies and practices which can prevent damage or address opportunities associated with climate change.

Climate change and its consequences are at the forefront of the debate on natural hazards, but also technological hazards are of increasing concern in NWE, especially in the area of maritime safety. The regions most affected by potential technological hazards include harbour areas and major centres of oil and chemical industries (e.g. along coasts, estuaries and major rivers). An integrated, multi-hazard approach to disaster risk reduction should be factored into policies, planning and programming related to sustainable development, relief, rehabilitation, and recovery activities. An important aspect in tackling the challenge posed by hazards is to shift from a reactive (post-event) to a preventive orientation. Civil protection, however, is only part of coping with hazards. In accordance with the preventive orientation, stress should be put on a broader strategy of vulnerability reduction, i.e. not putting people and/or other valuable assets in threatened areas. Vulnerability is defined as the conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. From this

perspective, spatial and urban planning can be seen as key instruments for the prevention of natural and technological risks.

Areas with a high population density and those with important and/or fragile ecosystems should therefore be avoided when making locational decisions on infrastructure and services with major spatial impact. Furthermore, spatially balanced development is generally less vulnerable to hazards than the concentration of population and productivity around single growth poles. In sum, a polycentric, spatially and socially balanced economic development that takes necessary environmental precautions is beneficial for the reduction of vulnerability in NWE, but contributes also to the competitiveness of the European Union.

Besides the alleviation of and adaptation to effects from climate change, the reduction of further greenhouse gas emissions is important. In this context, the promotion of energy efficiency and a shift to renewable energy production and consumption patterns provide scope for the development and implementation of innovative environmental design and technologies in different sectors and practices. Linked to this is the promotion of a more sustainable management of waste, which has both an economic and an environmental dimension. Due to the much urbanised nature of NWE and high level of economic activity, the waste volume in this region is very high.

#### Benefits of transnational cooperation

The pollution of air, water and soil, and many other environmental impacts are of key transnational concern, as they do not respect national borders. Coordinated and integrated approaches are therefore required, which involve relevant key actors, and result in actions aimed at improving the quality of the environment of the transnational cooperation area.

Likewise, climate change and its consequences, such as rising water levels, environmental and technological hazards and maritime accidents, are also by definition of transnational concern. Joint strategic actions, which are developed by different sectors and levels of administration to the benefit of the transnational area, are therefore required in order to respond effectively to potential threats and to minimise negative impacts.

Given the dominance of seas surrounding parts of the cooperation area and large river basins in NWE, emphasis will be placed on increasing maritime safety, the protection of the marine environment as well as transnational actions to improve risk management related to river and coastal flooding. For example, joint and coordinated approaches to the monitoring of disasters and integrated and coordinated early warning systems at transnational level, such as on flooding impacts along coasts and large river basins, could be considered. An important prerequisite for a proper mitigation strategy is better communication between the different actors involved, and a better coordination of policy measures at all spatial scales. In particular, this will imply improved integration and cooperation between spatial planning experts and civil protection authorities.

The need to achieve more sustainable patterns of energy consumption and production, including the need to increase the share of renewable energies, is of common concern to all regions in NWE. Transnational benefits can for example be

achieved through eco-innovation or through the development of joint approaches to the spatial impacts of changing distribution structures of renewable energy sources.

While EU environmental legislation covers an increasing number of environmental aspects, there is scope to add a transnational and territorial dimension in order to harmonise standards and the implementation across national borders. Examples for areas which might offer opportunities to add value to EU directives and initiatives are the Water Framework Directive and the EU maritime thematic strategy as well as the emerging thematic strategic actions on natural resources and soil protection. In the area of waste management, the EU Framework Directive on waste disposal (Council Directive 75/442/EEC) and the Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste (COM/2005/0666 final) set targets for recycling and disposal of municipal wastes, while other Directives cover the disposal of waste from specific activities (cf. Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive 2002/96/EC). Transnational cooperation on the development and application of new environmental technologies, especially for waste recycling, waste minimisation and generation of renewable energy, and incorporation of sustainable practices in business products and processes, would however allow the sharing of experiences and more appropriate and coordinated responses to shared concerns. This will of course require the involvement of the relevant authorities in order to ensure the implementation of these actions and strategies. The development of practical, efficient and economical waste management strategies for commercial and industrial undertakings of transnational relevance could also be considered.

#### Considerations for project promoters

Projects funded under this priority should have a clear focus on the implementation of the joint transnational actions. This action-oriented approach implies that key stakeholders in the field are included in the joint transnational partnership, and other relevant actors are involved in the proposed project activities. Preference will be given to cross-sectoral projects addressing obstacles in legislative systems and lack of integration of institutional and governance structures, which are focused on improved and better integrated responses. In the case of coastal, marine and river flooding, preference will only be given to projects which tangibly transfer knowledge and transnationally develop innovative responses across the whole of the NWE including its main islands. Projects limited to data collection and management, or local/regional activities and flood defence investments that are not relevant to the wider transnational cooperation area will not be supported. Sectoral strategic actions on the use and management of natural resources, which do not stimulate the economic development of NWE and do not contribute to wider territorial development objectives, are also not supported.

In developing projects under this priority, synergies and complementarities should be achieved with relevant EU strategies and initiatives, such as the Rural Development Guidelines, the Sixth Environmental Action Programme and its Thematic Strategies, the EU Climate Change Programme and the Green Paper on Energy (cf. Appendix C). Activities in the area of marine environmental policy and legislation, and in the area of maritime safety (e.g. the cross-programme initiative 'Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation') should be given due attention when preparing projects under this priority. In addition, while the implementation of EU environmental directives as such is ineligible for funding under this Programme, there might be potential to

investigate transnational aspects of the legislative frameworks in order to achieve better integration and harmonisation across the territory. Furthermore, projects under this priority should consider other European programmes, such as LIFE+, the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-Es) and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, as only those projects which have a significant transnational and territorial dimension can be funded by the NWE Programme.

## Aim

The overall aim of the priority is

*to promote an innovative and sustainable approach to natural resource management, risk management and the enhancement of the natural environment through transnational cooperation.*

## Objectives and possible actions

The emphasis of this Programme priority is on the sustainable management of natural resources, including the management and prevention of natural and technological risks. Strategic actions to better adapt to spatial effects from climate change, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the management and prevention of risks, in particular water management are therefore of great importance to NWE. Transnational actions promoting coordinated responses to improving the quality of soil, water and air and to reducing noise pollution can also be supported. In addition, actions aimed at addressing the spatial impacts of distribution structures for renewable energy, eco-innovation<sup>xxv</sup> and increased energy efficiency where transnational benefits can be demonstrated, will be supported. The sustainable integrated management of waste has been identified as another area which would benefit from transnational cooperation.

Three objectives are defined. The list of possible actions is non-exclusive, but should give directions to project promoters on the type of initiatives that are expected.

**Objective 2.1:** To promote an innovative and sustainable approach to natural resource management, including water, landscapes<sup>xxvi</sup>, biodiversity and energy, and waste management

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Integrated transnational approaches to the management of trans-boundary river basins, coastal zones, seas, fresh water resources, forests and landscapes of transnational significance
- Joint strategic actions and concepts for offshore and onshore planning to protect and enhance the maritime environment and coastal zones, e.g. through common standards, harmonisation of data and information and common principles for use
- Joint measures complementing EU environmental policy and legislation by adding a transnational and territorial dimension, e.g. in the area of enhancing biodiversity

- Promotion of responsible production and consumption patterns and energy efficiency in all economic sectors and society at large, through for example joint awareness-raising measures and integrated concepts and action plans to increase energy efficiency
- Joint strategic actions for energy savings, promotion and transfer of knowledge in alternative and renewable energy management patterns
- Transnational actions to promote eco-innovation, improved management tools for green technologies, lifecycle thinking and cleaner production processes
- Joint cooperation on development, application and dissemination of environmental technologies and processes for sustainable waste management; including minimisation, recycling, and disposal particularly for energy generation.

**Objective 2.2:** To promote an innovative approach to risk management and prevention, in particular water management (effects of the high concentration of human activities in coastal areas and river valleys; impacts of sea level rise on coastal areas and flood risk; the marine environment) in the context of climate change

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Coordinated approaches to improved risk management governance across national borders, e.g. by integrating spatial planning and civil protection policies and better integration of sector and spatial policies.
- Integrated flood risk management in coastal zones and large river basins of NWE, including: harmonisation of different standards; improved institutional cooperation and better integration of national and regional administrative structures; interdisciplinary partnerships and PPPs; jointly developed hazard strategies/risk management plans and damage limitation; and harmonised standards for qualifications in the area of risk management.
- Coordinated actions to increase maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment (e.g. from technological hazards such as oil spills, a harmonised approach to dealing with ships in distress and accidents), for instance through contingency planning for marine pollution at sea and in coastal regions.
- Coordinated transnational actions on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, in line with the EU Marine Strategy Directive whenever relevant.

**Objective 2.3:** To promote a transnational and spatial approach to improving the quality of soil, water and air, to minimising greenhouse gas emissions and to reducing noise pollution

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Transnational actions aimed at improving the quality of water and coastal areas, with a clear link to the territorial development of the NWE territory
- Transnational actions aimed at improving the marine environment and integrating maritime activities with territorial development objectives of the NWE region (e.g.

by developing a common maritime spatial planning concept for the English Channel and the Irish Sea).

- Joint innovative approaches to dealing with high groundwater tables in old mining areas
- Joint innovative approaches to territorial development, which are of transnational relevance, to improve the quality of soil and to combat soil erosion
- Transnational and coordinated actions aimed at the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Joint innovative approaches to territorial development, which are of transnational relevance, aimed at improving the quality of air and at reducing noise pollution



## Targets and indicators

<b>Priority 2 'Sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks'</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Result</b>
O1: To promote an innovative and sustainable approach to natural resource management, including water, landscapes, biodiversity and energy, and waste management	<b>No. of projects promoting an innovative and sustainable natural resource management (incl. water, energy, biodiversity and waste)</b>	<b>No. of transnational measures implemented to enhance the management of natural resources</b>
		<b>No. of transnational measures implemented to enhance waste management</b>
O2: To promote an innovative approach to risk management and prevention, in particular water management (effects of the high concentration of human activities in coastal areas and river valleys; impacts of sea level rise on coastal areas and flood risk; the marine environment) in the context of climate change	<b>No. of projects promoting innovative risk management relating to environmental and technological hazards</b>	<b>No. of transnational risk management plans implemented to address environmental and technological hazards</b>
		<b>N° of joint transnational schemes/solutions/applications for sustainable water management</b>
O3: To promote a transnational and spatial approach to improving the quality of soil, water and air, to minimising greenhouse gas emissions and to reducing noise pollution	<b>No. of projects enhancing the quality of the natural environment (incl. soil, water and air)</b>	<b>No. of transnational technologies/solutions tested and applied to improve soil/ water/ air quality</b>
<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE AT PROGRAMME LEVEL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
		<b>Impact</b>
		<b>Number of transnational projects enhancing the quality of the NWE natural environment</b>
		<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE = 10</b>

An indicative breakdown of use of the Funds for the Programme is attached as Appendix E. For Priority 2 the following categories have been included: 12 (12.5%); 13 (12.5%); 14 (12.5%); 16 (12.5%); 26 (12.5%); 28 (12.5%); 30 (12.5%); 31 (12.5%).

### ***Priority 3: Improving connectivity in NWE by promoting intelligent and sustainable transport and ICT solutions***

#### Context and rationale

While NWE is characterised by a generally high level of accessibility, regional imbalances persist with the core area suffering from congestion and the more peripheral and rural areas having a generally lower level of accessibility (through transport infrastructure) and connectivity (through advanced ICT). There also continues to be a need to improve and harmonise transport connections across national borders, as well as along European and transnational transport corridors (cf. Table 7). Accessibility is defined as the possibility that activity spaces can be used by individuals or be reached by goods within stated budgets of time, cost and discomfort. Connectivity is the sum of (infrastructural) relations within a city or region, including both transport and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) connections.

Besides being a hub of extensive economic and transport activity within Europe, NWE is also characterised by considerable inter-regional transit flows and international passenger and freight flows to other parts of Europe and the world. There is an expected increase in both passenger and freight flows across Europe following EU enlargement and reflecting increasing globalisation, and the impacts of this will be felt strongly in the central area of NWE in terms of worsening congestion and increasing levels of pollution. Besides North-South transport corridors, the volume of, and demand for, West-East connections are steadily increasing. Greenhouse gas emissions from transport and industrial activity are largely responsible for climate change, and densely populated areas such as the central area of NWE therefore have a particular responsibility to achieve more sustainable forms of mobility. The promotion of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and advanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can help to alleviate transport problems along transnational corridors and bottlenecks and to make better use of existing transport infrastructure capacity. ITS are systems which consist of electronics, communications or information processing and which are used independently or in an integrated way to improve the efficiency or safety of surface transportation.

Furthermore, the increase in energy prices will demand a thorough rethinking of travel patterns and levels of mobility, and there is a need to achieve more efficient solutions for accessibility and connectivity. The rapid development of ICT has become an important competitiveness factor, which affects the economic and social attractiveness of locations. The promotion of better use of ICT across NWE provides an important opportunity to replace physical mobility through virtual exchanges, and to mitigate the impacts of geographical distances and physical barriers to accessibility. In addition, the efficient use of modern ICTs is also an important prerequisite for the further development of an innovative and knowledge-based economy in all parts of the cooperation area.

#### Benefits of transnational cooperation

The focus of this priority is on joint transnational solutions in the field of transport and ICT which help to overcome the barriers to both the diffusion of innovation and

knowledge and to traffic flows, and thus strengthen NWE's sustainable economic growth and territorial cohesion. The barriers include:

- national borders, which continue to be characterised by low operability of national transport networks;
- the English Channel and other seas, which are considered a physical barrier to the better connection through flows of goods and passengers between the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe;
- Interfaces causing low compatibility between European, national and regional transport networks;
- congestion in the central area of NWE;
- low population density preventing the provision of large-scale public transport infrastructure and market-provided ICT infrastructure in the more peripheral areas;
- lack of harmonisation of transport and ICT policies with spatial policies at all levels and lack of coherence with comprehensive territorial development actions.

The emphasis of the NWE Programme is on overcoming these barriers, not only through demand management and a more efficient and sustainable use of existing capacity, but also through the provision of new and targeted small-scale infrastructure. In order to succeed in the transnational coordination of transport and ICT-related solutions, for example to achieve intermodal shift, to relieve bottlenecks or to harmonise railway timetables, the involvement of key players in the Programme will be of utmost importance.

A key area for further development is logistics, i.e. the planning, organisation and execution of transport operations. Optimising the use of all transport modes and facilitating their integration into a single supply chain will allow European businesses to cut costs, giving them a more competitive edge and fostering economic growth. More efficient logistics chains will also serve to tackle pollution, congestion and energy dependence in line with the EU Transport White Paper. Moreover, interoperability, multi-modal transport chains, the introduction of smart technologies at relatively inexpensive prices and simplification of administration all have a transnational dimension, and creating transnational partnerships increases the chances of more efficient responses to such challenges.

#### Considerations for project promoters

Projects funded under this priority should have a clear focus on the implementation of the joint transnational actions. This action-oriented approach implies that key stakeholders in the field of transport provision and ICT are included in the joint transnational partnership, and other relevant actors are involved in the proposed project activities. The Programme favours a multi-stakeholder approach in response to the identified barriers. It will not support research or purely application-oriented tools in logistics without achieving better spatial integration, increased capacity in multimodal transport corridors, and interoperability of transnational, national and regional networks. Future projects should pay attention to the harmonisation of regional innovation, transport and spatial strategic actions; the better integration of transport and territorial development, especially across national borders; and on

strengthening the political and institutional framework for enhancing the quality and performance of infrastructure and services across the transnational territory.

In developing projects under the theme of accessibility and connectivity, it is of great importance to consider other European programmes and initiatives, such as the TEN-T priority axes in NWE, the Marco Polo II Programme, the CIVITAS initiative, the NAIADES Action Programme, and the QuickStart Programme in the field of transport. In the field of ICT, synergies should be explored with the ICT Policy Support Programme, eContentPlus, and IDABC (European eGovernment services) (cf. Appendix C).

## Aim

The overall aim of the priority is

*to improve the functional integration of NWE through improved connectivity and accessibility by promoting sustainable transport connections for both passengers and freight on rail, waterways, sea and air, and to develop innovative approaches to the use of ICT, for the transnational territory and beyond.*

## Objectives and possible actions

The emphasis of this Programme priority is on improving the connectivity and internal and external accessibility of NWE and promoting more sustainable modes of transport.

Three objectives are defined. The list of possible actions is non-exclusive, but should give directions to project promoters on the type of initiatives that are expected.

**Objective 3.1:** to manage transport growth through optimisation of the capacity of existing (uni-modal) transport infrastructure for both passenger and freight transport

*Examples of possible actions:*

- more energy-efficient modes of travel by, for instance, achieving a modal shift from road to rail transport
- actions to make more efficient use of existing transport infrastructure capacity

**Objective 3.2:** to support effective and innovative multi-modal strategic actions and efficient inter-operable systems on land, water and air

*Examples of possible actions:*

- the development of inter-regional territorial development strategic actions to promote effective transport and trading flows, and to maximise the related economic development potential of transnational development corridors (e.g. from Ireland across the English Northern Way to continental Europe and the East; from Randstad and Rhine-Ruhr to Eastern Europe; between Frankfurt-Stuttgart-Rhein/Neckar, Strasbourg and Zürich-Basel; a North-South axis from Randstad-

Central Belgian Urban Network-Paris/Luxembourg; and between the ArcManche regions)

- Integrated territorial development programmes to tackle the 'by-pass effect' of major rail transport connections, such as the Channel Tunnel Rail link or other HST lines, on secondary centres. This can include improvements to feeding systems of secondary rail networks into the HST connections to strengthen regional access to transnational networks, and enhanced inter-operability of national and regional systems
- Integrated territorial development programmes to maximise the economic potential of regional airports and port gateways in balance with environmental impacts. This includes improved surface transport access to regional airport and port gateways, improvements to feeding systems and enhanced inter-operability of national and regional systems.
- increasing the potential of inland waterway and maritime transport (short sea shipping and long-distance maritime transport), related inter-modal shift and better integrated logistical chains, and improved sustainable hinterland connections
- Improving interoperability and intermodality of passenger and freight transport on land, inland waterways, sea and air, including harmonisation of all forms of public transport across national borders and on transnational East-West and North-South corridors

**Objective 3.3:** to develop innovative approaches to the use of ICT in order to improve connectivity, including approaches aimed at reducing the need to travel and at replacing physical mobility through virtual activity for both passenger mobility and freight transport

*Examples of possible actions:*

- joint transnational actions aimed at promoting the use of ICT in order to overcome the 'digital divide' in North West Europe
- the use and promotion of advanced ICT or ITS to improve transnational transport connections (in particular rail and sea transport)
- Promoting the use of advanced transport information systems and advanced traffic management systems (including the innovative use of real-time information systems or navigation systems using e.g. Galileo) to improve transnational transport flows
- Harmonisation of standards in, and compatibility of, ICT and ITS transport technology across national borders, with a view to improving the functional territorial integration of NWE and a more balanced territorial development
- The use of advanced ICT to reduce the need to travel and to replace physical mobility through virtual exchanges

## Targets and indicators

<b>Priority 3 'Improving connectivity in NWE by promoting intelligent and sustainable transport and ICT solutions'</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Result</b>
O1: to manage transport growth through optimisation of the capacity of existing (uni-modal) transport infrastructure for both passenger and freight transport	<b>No. of projects piloted to promote existing uni-modal transport infrastructure (passenger and freight)</b>	<b>No. of uni-modal transport connections improved with transnational cooperation (passenger)</b>
		<b>No. of uni-modal transport connections improved with transnational cooperation (freight)</b>
O2: to support effective and innovative multi-modal strategic actions and efficient inter-operable systems on land, water and air	<b>No. of projects piloted to promote multi-modal transport (passenger and freight)</b>	<b>No. of multi-modal transport connections improved with transnational cooperation (passenger)</b>
		<b>No. of multi-modal transport connections improved with transnational cooperation (freight)</b>
O3: to develop innovative approaches to the use of ICT in order to improve connectivity, including approaches aimed at reducing the need to travel and replacing physical mobility through virtual activity for both passenger mobility and freight transport	<b>No. of projects increasing the use of ICT/ITS</b>	<b>No. of transnational transport and communication links improved with the use of ICT/ITS</b>
<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE AT PROGRAMME LEVEL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
		<b>Impact</b>
		<b>Number of transnational projects improving connectivity in NWE</b>
		<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE = 10</b>

An indicative breakdown of use of the Funds for the Programme is attached as Appendix E. For Priority 3 the following categories have been included: 41 (12.5%); 46 (12.5%); 48 (12.5%); 49 (12.5%); 51 (12.5%); 53 (12.5%); 54 (12.5%); 55 (12.5%).



#### ***Priority 4: Promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level***

##### Context and rationale

Strong and prosperous communities are vital to sustainable territorial development. Open markets, the delivery of fundamental services and attractive living spaces are all required to provide sustainable and secure cities, towns and rural communities within the North West European space. The overall purpose of this priority is therefore to put in place transnational actions that will help to enhance economic and social cohesion within and between cities, towns and rural communities.

Actions could include the more traditional approaches to improving the way in which cities, towns and villages work together. The priority will however also wish to realise the potential of regional assets (both natural and business), aim to improve the attractiveness of environments, examine the potential for energy efficiencies in the construction and use of buildings and find solutions to the impacts of demographic change and migration.

Strong and prosperous communities, which contribute to a better territorial balance at transnational level and to the economic competitiveness of the cooperation area overall, build on functional strengths and diversification. They provide examples of good governance at transnational level, by helping to overcome institutional and administrative barriers that prevent the effective use of trans-boundary potentials and by sharing responsibilities for their wider hinterlands.

Against this background it is noted that the settlement structure of the NWE is characterised by a densely populated central part, which is home to global command centres (Paris and London) as well as other important metropolitan areas (Rhine-Ruhr, Frankfurt/Main, Randstad, the Central Belgian Urban Network) and a good network of smaller cities and towns. The more peripheral parts of NWE, in particular Scotland, Western Ireland and parts of France, are of more rural character. Regional disparities, thus, exist in NWE with regard to access as well as demographic 'mass', which both impact on the economic potential of the cooperation area. Current migration trends exacerbate this structure, with increasing polarisation and concentration of population in and around metropolitan areas, while at the same time rural areas are affected by out-migration and depopulation (cf. Table 7).

Due to the settlement structure of NWE, cities and towns in the central part benefit from physical proximity, but cooperation at transnational level should consider the more strategic connections between urban areas. In order to achieve a more balanced territorial development and maintain the economic performance of NWE overall, the concentration should therefore be on networks of flows and corresponding actions on the ground, both in material (e.g. trade, Foreign Direct Investment) as well as in immaterial terms (e.g. transfer of knowledge). The performance of NWE relies on the strengthening of both metropolitan centres and secondary urban nodes and agglomerations. However, there is still a need to identify strengths and areas that would benefit from strategic cooperation and networking, which should be taken into account for further cooperation between cities, and also between cities and universities. In addition, transnational responses to improving the relationship between cities and their hinterlands, and to strengthen rural areas in NWE are encouraged. Alongside transnational actions aimed at enhancing the economic and social performance of cities, towns and rural areas, this will increase

the attractiveness of the NWE area overall and thereby support sustainable economic activity.

The high level of economic activity, transport and dense development also affect the natural environment of NWE, and landscape fragmentation and loss of biodiversity are of considerable concern. However, the quality of places and environmental assets are increasingly recognised as important location factors in the knowledge economy. For the territorial development of the cooperation area, the relevance of pleasant surroundings and the availability of cultural services of high-quality is considered to be of increasing relevance to attract key and highly skilled knowledge workers and to provide an environment conducive to innovation. Part of a more attractive environment and a considerable contribution to strengthening the sustainable economic competitiveness of the NWE area is the promotion of sustainable and innovative energy practices, for example in the built environment. Likewise, the transnational value of the cultural heritage of NWE can be considered as an important location factor, as contributing to the regional identity of the transnational area and an important asset for economic development through sustainable tourism activities.

Demographic change and low fertility rates are a concern in most regions of NWE, but much of this population decline is currently still offset by in-migration, certainly in the metropolitan areas (cf. Table 7). However, the increasing number of in-migrants, especially in the urban areas of NWE, raises important questions about the most effective ways for the integration of migrants into communities, and the most conducive urban design to foster this. The successful social and economic integration of migrants is also a crucial aspect of providing liveable communities and attractive places for further investment and to strengthen the economic performance of cities and towns.

While population decline is less severe in NWE than in other parts of Europe, the low fertility rates and ageing of the population will affect the territorial development of the region in the medium to longer-term. The territorial development consequences of demographic change and ageing are numerous, ranging from changing transport requirements (modes of transport, times of travel) to land use demands (housing needs for the elderly population, imbalanced development due to increasing urban and depopulating rural areas and related impacts on the availability and need for infrastructure and services).

A more efficient use of Information and Communication Technologies across the territory might help to respond to the impacts of demographic change and ageing, especially in those parts of the territory affected by depopulation. While a digital divide continues to exist in NWE between the central and more peripheral parts of the region, there are also some important problems related to attitude, lack of computer skills and language barriers of the general public and smaller businesses which affect the efficient use of modern ICTs and e-commerce.

This priority, therefore, aims at actions and model solutions for adapting policies to achieve a better balance in the settlement structure and avoid further polarisation and depopulation tendencies, and to make better use of the potentials of NWE in order to enhance its competitiveness. Promoting strong and prosperous communities, which contribute to achieving the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives, requires medium- to long-term efforts in the urban and rural regions across the whole territory of NWE. These should help to overcome administrative and institutional

boundaries, support the principles of sustainability, engage a wide range of actors and challenge or complement existing planning policies and strategies.

#### Benefits of transnational cooperation

Transnational cooperation can contribute to making the cities and towns in NWE more competitive. A more balanced territorial development of the NWE territory, including stronger complementarities and synergies between cities and towns, and between cities and their hinterlands, will be crucial for achieving sustainable communities which are safe, fair, thriving, environmentally sensitive, well run, served, connected and designed, as agreed through the Bristol Accord<sup>xxvii</sup>. The Bristol Accord states that sharing experience and exchanging best practice across Europe will help to speed up the process of creating stronger, more competitive, more balanced cities and regions, and to improve policy-making at European, national, regional and local levels. The added value of transnational cooperation for this Programme priority lies in the provision of a platform for developing integrated solutions to shared problems across the territory. By bringing together key actors through transnational cooperation, the governance of cities, towns and rural areas can be improved and coordinated, and the institutional capacity to respond to issues of common concern be increased.

#### Considerations for project promoters

Projects funded under this priority should have a clear focus on the implementation of the joint transnational actions. This action-oriented approach implies that key stakeholders in the field are included in the joint transnational partnership, and other relevant actors are involved in the proposed project activities.

The priority will allow for multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral strategic actions at the transnational level in order to achieve the better integration of institutions and governance. The priority excludes support of purely local/regional actions and the restoration and regeneration of local sites. For projects on urban networking and urban-rural partnerships, projects which concentrate on local actions with no transnational synergy effects, and which do not provide wider territorial development benefits for the transnational area, will not be supported.

In developing projects under this priority, it is of great importance to consider other European programmes and initiatives, such as URBACT, the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme), and measures of the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes (cf. Appendix C).

#### Aim

The overall aim of this priority is

*to strengthen the attractiveness and performance of cities, towns, rural areas and regions through joint actions that will encourage sustainable economic activity and social cohesion*

## Objectives and possible actions

The emphasis of this Programme priority is on promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level and making the cities and towns in NWE more competitive at the European level.

Three objectives are defined. The list of possible actions is non-exclusive, but should give directions to project promoters on the type of initiatives that are expected.

**Objective 4.1:** to promote transnational actions that will enhance the economic and social performance of cities, towns and rural areas; including the economic potential of local and regional assets

*Examples of possible actions:*

- actions that will promote transnational cooperation between local and regional authorities to create better conditions for economic growth
- actions aimed at realising and using the economic potential of regional assets (natural and business assets) through transnational cooperation across the NWE territory
- actions aimed at improving transnational cooperation for organisations representing urban interests in order to improve economic performance and social cohesion
- actions aimed at strengthening the role of secondary towns and cities in NWE in order to develop counterweights to the dominant metropolitan areas
- actions aimed at developing and implementing joint pilot actions to identify solutions that will help to reduce the transnational impacts of commuting between cities, towns and rural areas

**Objective 4.2:** to identify and develop collective actions that will improve the environmental quality and attraction of towns and cities including the sustainable use of the cultural heritage, tourism, the creative economy and sustainable and innovative energy practices

*Examples of possible actions:*

- develop and implement joint actions to encourage sustainable practices that will enhance the quality and attractiveness of natural and cultural assets in order to strengthen the overall competitiveness of the NWE area
- pilot actions to improve the attractiveness and liveability of cities and towns by for example encouraging the good use of public space and encouraging a safe and attractive environment
- develop and implement joint actions to stimulate the development of sustainable tourism activities across the NWE area
- develop and implement transnational pilots and actions that will encourage sustainable development and practices in the construction and use of buildings
- develop and implement joint transnational actions to stimulate the use of renewable energy sources in settlements across NWE

**Objective 4.3:** to promote transnational responses to the impacts of demographic change and migration on the NWE territory

*Examples of possible actions:*

- elaboration and implementation of transnational actions, models and tools, to respond to the impacts of demographic change and migration patterns
- transnational pilots and actions to improve the accessibility of, and access to, services, including ICT, for areas affected by ageing and depopulation
- transnational actions that will facilitate the integration of the skilled labour force into cities and towns
- transnational actions to increase the institutional capacity of public and voluntary authorities to engage in transnational and international cooperation and exchanges

## Targets and indicators

<b>Priority 4 'Promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level'</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Result</b>
O1: to promote transnational actions that will enhance the economic and social performance of cities, towns and rural areas; including the economic potential of local and regional assets	<b>No. of projects enhancing the economic and social performance of the NWE regional potentials</b>	<b>No. of transnational applied solutions promoting economic assets of NWE regions</b>
		<b>No. of transnational applied solutions promoting social assets of NWE regions</b>
O2: to identify and develop collective actions that will improve the environmental quality and attraction of towns and cities including the sustainable use of the cultural heritage, tourism, the creative economy and sustainable and innovative energy practices	<b>No. of projects improving the environmental quality and attractiveness of NWE cities and towns</b>	<b>No. of transnational actions implemented to enhance the environmental quality of NWE</b>
		<b>No. of transnational actions implemented to enhance the creative economy and cultural heritage of NWE</b>
O3: to promote transnational responses to the impacts of demographic change and migration on the NWE territory	<b>No. of projects responding to the impacts of NWE demographic trends</b>	<b>No. of transnational measures adapted addressing demographic change and migration processes (incl. their impact on education and labour market)</b>
<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE AT PROGRAMME LEVEL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
		<b>Impact</b>
		<b>No. of joint transnational projects promoting strong and prosperous communities</b>
		<b>TOTAL TARGET VALUE = 10</b>

An indicative breakdown of use of the Funds for the Programme is attached as Appendix E. For Priority 4 the following categories have been included: 50 (20%); 58 (20%); 59 (20%); 61 (20%); 81 (20%).



**Priority 5: Technical Assistance**

Effective management is crucial to meet the Programme objectives and to ensure the successful completion of the various transnational activities provided for.

Responsibility for implementing the NWE Programme will be shared by the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority, the Monitoring Committee and the Steering Committee (see chapter 6 for a list of detailed tasks and responsibilities). In order to fulfil their tasks, these bodies must rely on on-going technical assistance from the Programme Joint Technical Secretariat.

Technical assistance has therefore to be made available and will be used to finance the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control of activities of the Operational Programme, together with activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for implementing the Funds.

**4.2 Quality requirements for future projects**

The promotion of transnational projects of high quality is of utmost importance for the success of the Operational Programme for North West Europe. In this section, general principles are therefore set out which projects are encouraged to follow.

Programme aim and objectives

Projects to be funded by the Programme should contribute to achieving the Programme aim and the priority objectives for transnational territorial cooperation as outlined in this Operational Programme.

Furthermore, projects should positively contribute to the sustainable territorial development of NWE by incorporating the following three cross-cutting themes in their outline, methodology and actions:

**1) To strengthen the economic competitiveness of NWE in response to the Lisbon agenda**

This is one of the three Programme cross-cutting themes and is an important element of the Operational Programme aim, in response to the Lisbon Agenda for growth and jobs. It is also consistent with the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion, which emphasise the need to capitalise on different regional potentials for development. Moreover, it responds to the Territorial Agenda for the European Union, which emphasises the need to strengthen regional endogenous potentials. As the SWOT analysis shows, the NWE has an important role in contributing to the overall competitiveness of the Community territory in a globalised world, and a wide range of regional potentials.

**2) To increase the environmental sustainability of NWE in response to the Gothenburg agenda**

This is one of the three Programme cross-cutting themes and is an important element of the Operational Programme aim, in response to the Gothenburg Agenda for more sustainable development, and is consistent with the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion. As the SWOT analysis shows, NWE faces distinctive major pressures on natural and cultural resources, and

distinctive threats from natural and technological hazards including those due to climate change. Projects will need to undertake a formal environmental impact assessment in accordance with national legal requirements, if their nature or scale falls within these requirements.

**3) To achieve a stronger territorial balance of NWE by reducing regional disparities reflecting the aim of the EU Cohesion Policy**

This is one of the three Programme cross-cutting themes and is an important element of the Operational Programme aim. It reflects the fundamental basis of EU Cohesion Policy and is consistent with the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion. The European Spatial Development Perspective (adopted in 1999), and the Territorial Agenda for the European Union (proposed for adoption in 2007), also place much emphasis on geographically balanced development of the European territory. The SWOT analysis has highlighted that disparities in regional and urban development, especially economic development, are a distinctive feature of NWE.

**Transnationality**

In order to receive funding, projects have to be transnational and respect the subsidiarity principle, i.e. the project theme is of such nature that it can not be sufficiently tackled by nation-states or regions alone and requires cooperation of partners from at least two countries within the cooperation area, of which at least one shall be an EU member state. The requirement for transnationality implies that:

- the project addresses a topic of importance for, or having an impact on, the whole or an important part of the NWE cooperation area;
- the project develops model solutions and provides for exchange of know-how and learning in a transnational context through the involvement of relevant actors in different countries of the Programme area; and/or
- the project provides joint strategic actions, programmes or concepts for the whole of NWE or large contiguous parts of the transnational cooperation area.

**Tangible and innovative results**

Transnational projects funded by the NWE cooperation Programme should bring about tangible and innovative results which are of common benefit to a large number of partners in NWE. An innovative approach to transnational territorial cooperation implies that projects introduce novel approaches to tackling problems of transnational concern. Project applications should clearly set out the state of knowledge on which they build, by making appropriate references to existing projects, actions and studies in the field in order to avoid duplication and to take into consideration other relevant EU-funded projects and relevant initiatives at wider European level, including previous relevant INTERREG projects. Projects will not be supported if they present merely a continuation of existing activities. While the experiences gained under the INTERREG IIIB Programme should be taken into account, this should result in new approaches and a project aimed at achieving tangible and innovative results.

**Impact**

The project should aim to produce results and establish structures which will last beyond the lifetime of the project, i.e. have a long-term perspective, are durable and lay the ground for further investments or initiatives.

#### Types of projects

The following types of projects will be supported: action projects, small-scale investments, and feasibility or supporting studies where these can be linked to concrete actions. Study projects without concrete actions will not be supported.

#### Integrated approach

Future transnational projects should contribute to an integrated territorial approach, by fostering cooperation vertically (among different levels of government), horizontally (among different policy sectors) and geographically (across administrative boundaries).

#### Partnership

The bidding partnership must be consistent, by bringing together the relevant key actors with the capacity to deliver and make practical use of the project results. If partners from outside the Programme area are involved, or if actions are foreseen to take place outside the Programme area, it has to be demonstrated that these are crucial to the success of the project and bring additional benefits to the Programme area. In such exceptional, duly justified cases, a small part of the Programme budget may be spent outside the Programme area and/or the EU.

#### Communication and dissemination

Projects should put forward a professional and effective communication strategy which, besides ensuring excellent communication between project partners and the Programme management structures, is explicitly aimed at disseminating project information and findings to interested parties outside the project partnership and to a wide audience of policy- and decision-makers. One of the key aspects of transnational territorial cooperation programmes is the expectation that projects result in organisational learning effects and that project actions will lead to model solutions which can be transferred to other interests outside the partnership. Project partnerships should therefore develop appropriate methods for sharing the knowledge gained during the project with other actors and thus achieve synergy effects and contribute to making the best use of resources at Programme and EU level.

## 5. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Member States responsible for the North West Europe Programme, through this Operational Programme, will apply a novel approach for project development in a limited number of strategic fields. This effectively combines a strategic top-down perspective with the tradition of bottom-up involvement of key actors.

With this approach, the geographical and socio-economic distinctiveness of the NWE area will be taken into consideration, and a strategic response to significant thematic and territorial gaps in the Programme area will be promoted. For example, although NWE is home to the EU's economic core and its Member States share economic, cultural and transport links, there are still gaps in cooperation across maritime areas. The SWOT analysis shows that there are several other issues where strategic cooperation is needed. Therefore, the Member States involved in the NWE Programme will actively encourage a number of initiatives for transnational action. These are of particular strategic relevance for achieving the NWE Programme aim and priority objectives and linked to major issues in the SWOT analysis (cf. Table 7).

Strategic initiatives aim to promote a coordinated and integrated approach in areas of relevance to the wider Programme territory, by providing an effective and economically-efficient approach which reflects the distinctive character of the NWE cooperation area. They will enable the NWE Programme to maximise its strategic impact by creating a momentum for territorial change. The emphasis is not on creating new instruments and procedures but on ensuring more complementarity of existing development instruments, and thus achieving better social, economic and territorial cohesion of the transnational area.

The strategic initiatives are expected to:

- deal with topics of major importance for the NWE cooperation area in response to the NWE SWOT analysis;
- make a significant contribution to achieving the Programme aim by promoting an integrated territorial approach that addresses several of the priority objectives;
- focus on providing a joint strategy, programme or concepts with relevance for the whole of NWE or large contiguous parts of the transnational cooperation area;
- promote a cross-sectoral approach and involve a wide strategic partnership, by bringing together key relevant actors with the capacity to deliver and make practical use of the results of the initiative;
- have a long-lasting effect beyond the lifetime of the project funding;
- have the potential to attract follow-up investments funded by other external sources;
- clearly demonstrate that they strongly influence and help to better coordinate the territorial impact of other relevant EU funding by creating a momentum for change;
- draw on ESPON and ESPON2013 material wherever appropriate.

The Programme will develop strategic initiatives through a three step process.

**Step 1:** The Programme will invite experts from EU, national and regional levels to a joint working seminar to further refine the identified issues for strategic initiatives and to identify the relevant actors.

**Step 2:** The Programme will invite the relevant actors to a further working seminar. This will identify and specify the kind of actions and projects which have the potential to deliver a significant strategic impact.

**Step 3:** The Programme will launch targeted calls to enable relevant integrated cross sector and cross-national partnerships to submit projects based on the outputs of the second seminar.

Strategic initiatives will thus create focused clusters of a limited number of strategically relevant projects which have a close working relationship at the strategic level as well as at operational levels, and are coordinated to maximise strategic impact.

Other projects submitted outside these targeted calls, but thought to be of strategic relevance, could be invited by the Programme to join a strategic initiative.

The resulting project bids would be submitted under any of the Priorities 1-4, as a combination that reflects the joint transnational strategic framework for that particular strategic initiative. The strategic initiative as a whole will be expected to demonstrate a beneficial impact across more than one priority to reflect its cross-cutting nature.

Projects submitted under this process will be working in partnership with the Programme. The Programme will therefore set up and directly support project cluster coordination arrangements from its budget. These arrangements will guide and maximise each project's contribution to the strategic impact of their parent strategic initiative.

The Programme will provide a guideline detailing the procedures for implementing the strategic initiatives concept.

Because of this pro-active steering and project development, and their cross-cutting nature, strategic projects and initiatives are thus distinct from 'regular' transnational cooperation projects arising from other calls in the Programme. Projects outside of the strategic initiatives will be able to apply to the Programme in response to these calls.

The focus of strategic initiatives will be either of a thematic nature of high strategic relevance, or geographically based on contiguous parts of the NWE territory with relevance to the wider area, as follows:

**Thematically orientated strategic initiatives** are encouraged for those cross-cutting issues of great significance to achieving social and territorial cohesion, economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability of the NWE territory. For example, the production and consumption of renewable energy sources is often strongly decentralised and has therefore considerably different spatial implications than the more centralised and large-scale production and transport of non-renewable energy. A possible strategic initiative could therefore be the setting up of a 'North West European Agency for Renewable Energy', which would provide a platform for small-scale producers of renewable energy and focus on the efficient transfer of energy to nearby consumers in such a decentralised energy network of producers.

Another example of a possible strategic initiative, reflecting the highly urbanised character of most of NWE and the expected spatial impacts of climate change, could be a coordinated, cross-sectoral and transnational response to river basin and coastal flood risk management and prevention. A different strategic initiative could aim to develop a linked system of centres of excellence for technology transfer and to promote the translation of research knowledge into business innovations. This could include putting more investment into existing and new centres, possibly using the overall concept of an inter-regional 'Knowledge Agency' for these linked centres. The centres might involve cooperation on various activities, for example co-ordinated specialisation or areas of expertise, development of quality branding such as an award scheme for businesses, practical exchange of staff and expertise between centres. This kind of initiative could also be used to link together weaker and stronger regions in order to better balance the NWE territory.

Furthermore, a strategic initiative to develop innovative solutions to meeting the challenges posed by the in-migration of both unskilled and skilled people could be promoted. Although inward migration is often seen negatively, the development and testing of effective strategies to accommodate and harness the potential of migrant skills can help to improve the liveability of many NWE communities by increasing their economic capacity and consequently their ability to develop sustainable and competitive environments. This initiative could also be used to generate transnational and regional projects aimed at reducing commuting flows through actions and thereby improve the economic, environmental and social attractiveness of secondary communities and cities.

Another example of a strategic initiative is the development of innovative solutions to strengthen the global competitiveness of regions and cities in North West Europe. Regions and cities should be attractive places to live and work, and be appealing for foreign direct investment. Cooperation could be established between communities in NWE in order to strengthen their economic capacity and territorial capital, and consequently their ability to develop sustainable and competitive communities. This could be done in close cooperation with enterprises and government agencies.

A **geographical orientation** will be the second focus for strategic initiatives under the NWE Programme. These can be envisaged along potential transnational development corridors or zones in NWE in order to align the economic potential along for example existing and planned multi-modal transport axes through more effective cooperation on inter-regional development programmes. Besides land-based development corridors or zones, this geographic focus equally applies to sea-based connections (such as strategic gaps in the 'Motorways of the Sea' priority lines) that might negatively affect the connectivity and territorial cohesion of the NWE territory overall, as well as along large river basins. Accordingly, a strategic initiative, focusing on developing and creating a momentum for transnational logistics supply chains, will be promoted to draw on the success of previous NWE modal shift projects, and improve the territorial impact of other related EU programmes.

Strategic initiatives along development corridors and zones are particularly (but not exclusively) promoted where there is considerable scope for co-ordinating the regional strategic actions of the areas that have potential for economic growth and provision of services. Several potential corridors and zones could be considered, of which the following are examples:



- from Ireland and northern UK to continental Europe and central and eastern Europe;
- from the Randstad via the Rhine Ruhr area to eastern Europe;
- the ArcManche Regions;
- from the Channel to the North Sea and Baltic Sea;
- from the Netherlands and Belgium to the Île de France and beyond;
- from Ireland and the UK across to France;
- from South Holland to Switzerland;
- connecting and developing cross-border metropolitan regions.

Effective transnational cooperation within these areas would help to achieve a more balanced development of the territory. In order to make the best use of available funds towards achieving transnational territorial benefits in pursuit of the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy, project promoters are encouraged to consider applications for related infrastructure investments to relevant Regional Competitiveness and Employment programmes and other relevant EU and national programmes alongside their application to the NWE Programme.

Transnational actions as part of thematically or geographically oriented strategic initiatives could result in:

- the provision of incentives for testing the complementarity of regional development and spatial strategic actions and seeking opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation;
- selective investments in critical hard and soft infrastructure to reward cooperation and to help achieve the objectives of the strategic initiative;
- the creation of added value from other EU Cohesion Policy and national and regional policy;
- a response to the specific challenges of the NWE territory where appropriate and beneficial through the new cross-programme flexibilities and bilateral maritime cooperation opportunities.

All of the examples given above are non-exclusive. All NWE regions are eligible to participate. Strategic initiatives of different thematic and geographical nature will be encouraged throughout the course of the Programme.

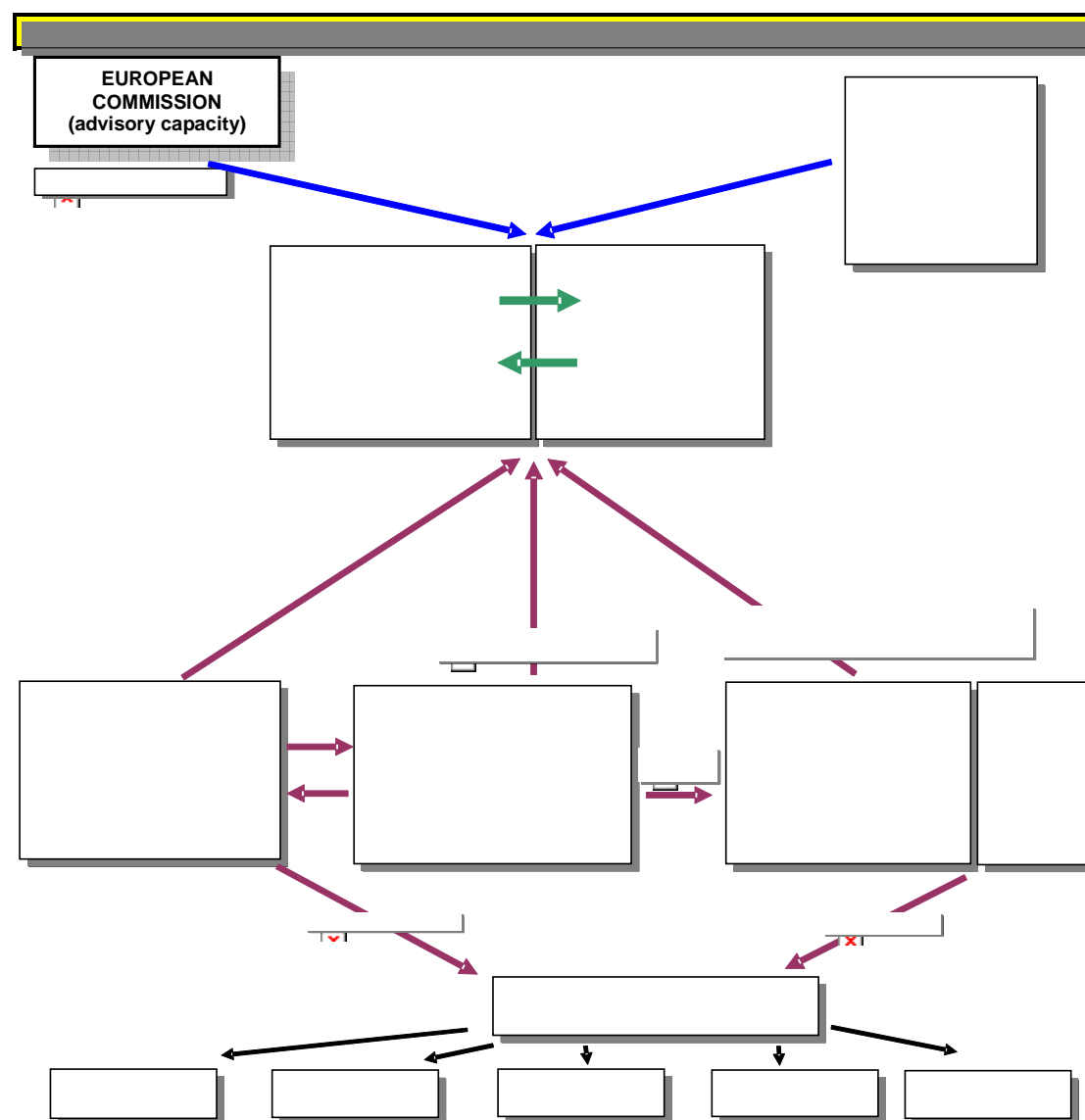
## 6. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Building on the experience of the NWMA INTERREG IIC and NWE INTERREG IIIB Programmes, the Member States and the Swiss Confederation participating in the North West Europe Programme have established a common structure to manage, co-ordinate and supervise the implementation of the Programme.

The main bodies involved in the Programme management are the Monitoring and Steering Committees, the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority. They will be assisted by a Joint Technical Secretariat in charge of the day-to-day management of the Programme (Figure 22).

The Member States will sign a convention with the Managing Authority establishing their shared respective responsibilities concerning the execution of the Programme and the role of the Secretariat.

**Figure 22:** Programme management structure



The list of responsible ministries, acting as national authority, in the participating countries is attached in Appendix F.

## **6.1 Programme management bodies**

### ***Managing Authority***

The Nord–Pas de Calais Region (France) has been appointed to act on behalf of the Member States as the Managing Authority for the North West Europe Programme. The seat and the main offices of the Managing Authority (MA) are located in Lille.

#### ***Tasks and responsibilities***

Pursuant to Article 60 of the General Regulation, Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the ERDF regulation and Articles 7, 13, 16, 17, 18 and 21 of the Commission Regulation, the Nord–Pas de Calais Region will be responsible for the sound financial management and implementation of the NWE Operational Programme (OP).

This includes the following tasks and responsibilities:

- Accuracy and legality of payment transactions including internal controls and corrective measures (including the certification of service provision)
- Information and publicity measures related to the OP
- Liaison between the authorities implementing the Programme and other interested parties where necessary
- Liaison with the European Commission and the implementation of all accepted recommendations for amending management and monitoring procedures

The Managing Authority is assisted by the Joint Technical Secretariat in the implementation of its responsibilities and related tasks.

### ***Certifying Authority***

The Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (specifically its ‘Direction Bancaire – Département Gestion sous Mandat’ based in Paris) has been appointed Certifying Authority for the North West Europe Programme.

#### ***Tasks and responsibilities***

Pursuant to Article 61 of the General Regulation, Article 14 of the ERDF regulation and Articles 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24 of the Commission Regulation, the Certifying Authority will be responsible for the payment of ERDF assistance. This includes the following:

- Drawing up and submitting payment claims to the European Commission
- Certifying the accuracy of payment certificates presented to the Commission

- Receiving funds from the Commission
- Making payments to final beneficiaries
- Ensuring that the Managing Authority fulfils its financial responsibilities in a legal and proper way
- Maintaining records of all expenditure declared to the Commission and keeping account of all recoverable amounts

A joint bank account held by the Certifying Authority will be opened to receive and effect all necessary payments.

### ***Audit Authority***

The 'Commission Interministérielle de Coordination des Contrôles portant sur les actions financées par les fonds structurels' (CICC-FS) has been appointed as the Audit Authority for the North West Europe Programme.

The CICC-FS is the Audit Authority designated for all French programmes co-financed by ERDF, ESF and EFF, including the European Territorial programmes with a Managing Authority located in France. The CICC-FS is therefore functionally independent of the NWE Managing and Certifying Authorities.

### ***Tasks and responsibilities***

Pursuant to Articles 62 and 73 of the General Regulation, Article 14 of the ERDF regulation and Articles 16, 17 and 23 of the Commission Regulation, the Audit Authority will be responsible in particular for:

- Presenting an audit strategy to the Commission within nine months of the approval of the OP
- Ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control systems of the Operational Programme
- Ensuring that audits are carried out on operations on the basis of an appropriate sample to verify expenditure declared
- Submitting an annual control report to the Commission at the end of each year from 2008 to 2015
- Issuing an opinion, on the basis of the controls and audits carried out under its responsibility, as to whether the management and control system functions effectively
- Submitting, where applicable under Article 88 of the General Regulation, a declaration for partial closure
- Submitting a closure declaration to the Commission at the latest by 31 March 2017

The Audit Authority will be assisted by a group of auditors from each member state participating in the Programme. The group of auditors will be set up within three months of the approval of the OP.

### ***Monitoring Committee***

In line with Article 63 of the General Regulation, a Monitoring Committee (MC) will be set up within three months of the official approval of the OP by the European Commission.

The Monitoring Committee will draw up its own Rules of Procedure and will agree them with the Managing Authority.

#### ***Tasks and responsibilities***

Pursuant to Article 65 of the General Regulation, the Monitoring Committee will supervise the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the ERDF assistance. It is responsible for the overall strategic management and monitoring of the OP. This includes the following responsibilities:

- Implementing the OP including the indicators used to oversee the Programme
- Approving amendments to the OP
- Approving the project selection procedure, including relevant eligibility and selection criteria
- Approving the Joint Technical Secretariat workplan and the use of the Technical Assistance budget
- Reorienting the project development process to ensure that the strategic objectives of the Programme are met

#### ***Membership***

The Monitoring Committee will be made up of representatives of the national and regional authorities of the participating Member States and the Swiss Confederation. Representatives of the European Commission, the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority will participate in the work of the Monitoring Committee in an advisory capacity. Observers may be invited.

### ***Steering Committee***

The Steering Committee (SC) will be set up by the Monitoring Committee at its first meeting. The Steering Committee will draw up its own Rules of Procedure and agree them with the Monitoring Committee.

#### ***Tasks and responsibilities***

The Steering Committee will take on the following tasks:

- Selecting projects
- Monitoring of projects' implementation

### *Membership*

The Steering Committee will be made up of representatives of the national and regional authorities of the participating Member States and the Swiss Confederation. Representatives of the European Commission, the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority will participate in the work of the Steering Committee in an advisory capacity. Observers may be invited.

Transnational advisory working groups may also be formed around specific issues of relevance to the Programme. They will act in a strictly advisory capacity; will not be involved in any kind of pre-selection and their activities will not be funded by the Technical Assistance budget.

Delegates of the PSC committee often represent the relevant environmental authorities in delivering a position for project selection. To assure the appropriate selection of projects, experts will be invited whenever necessary to assist the PSC in their task of project selection enhancing thus the environmental competence of the PSC committee.

Similarly, relevant Regional Advisory Councils will be invited whenever necessary to provide advice in the selection of projects related to the common fisheries policy.

Two Regional Advisory Councils related to NWE are:

- North Western waters: [http://www.nwwrac.org/about\\_nwwrac-EN.xhtml](http://www.nwwrac.org/about_nwwrac-EN.xhtml)
- North Sea: <http://www.nsrac.org/>

### ***Joint Technical Secretariat***

Pursuant to Article 14.1 of the ERDF Regulation, a Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) based in Lille will assist the Managing Authority, the Audit Authority, the Group of Auditors, the Monitoring Committee and the Steering Committee in the implementation of their tasks and responsibilities.

### *Tasks and responsibilities*

The Joint Technical Secretariat undertakes the day-to-day implementation of the Programme and is responsible for:

- Implementing and following up all Monitoring and Steering Committee decisions
- Preparing and providing all necessary information to the Managing Authority and Certifying Authority to allow the fulfilment of their responsibilities
- Coordination of and liaising with the Contact Points in their work to develop project ideas and promote the Programme
- Facilitating and proactively initiating the development of transnational projects
- Ongoing monitoring of project outputs and analyses with reference to the
- Programme objectives/strategy. Proactive support of capitalisation of projects/the Programme

- Assisting candidates in the development of projects, including technical and financial advice
- Assisting Lead Partners and project co-ordinators during project implementation
- Implementing the publicity strategy approved by the Monitoring Committee
- Informing the Steering Committee of projects' closure

### ***Network of Contact Points***

The Programme will establish Contact Points in each of the Member States to facilitate the implementation of the Programme within the Member States, to involve authorities responsible for local and regional development in the generation of transnational projects and to act as a network to assist the Joint Technical Secretariat in the project development process.

### ***Tasks and responsibilities***

The Contact Points will take on the following tasks:

- Advising candidates in the preparation and implementation of projects
- Acting as ambassadors for transnational cooperation, in particular at local and regional level
- Capitalising on their knowledge of local and regional conditions, advising candidates on the best way to improve the transnational characteristics of their projects and proactively stimulating the project development process
- Facilitating international partner searches
- Assisting the Joint Technical Secretariat in the development and implementation of the publicity strategy in order to catalyse the development of transnational NWE projects

The Contact Points, in close association with the Joint Technical Secretariat, will play an advisory role in the development of projects but will not take part in the project selection process.

## ***6.2 Selection of operations***

### ***6.2.1 Promoting the Programme and fostering quality projects***

The communication and promotion strategy will aim to target a very wide public to make them aware of the opportunities provided by the NWE Programme. Through its public awareness campaigns, the Programme will strengthen the involvement of decision-makers and will actively seek the participation of the private sector.

The Publicity and Communication strategy is described in chapter 7.

Potential project promoters can approach the Secretariat or the Contact Point in their member state for advice on their project proposal. They will help the project promoter to define their objectives, identify other partners and draw up a detailed work plan, including a forecast budget.



### 6.2.2 Who can participate?

A wide range of actors from the public, private and third sectors are potential beneficiaries of NWE ERDF funding, including:

- National, regional and local authorities including sector departments and related public agencies, especially those contributing to the territorial development process (transport, environment, regional development, agriculture etc)
- Transnational bodies and partnerships
- Universities, research and development agencies
- Non-profit organisations
- Organisations, which from a legal perspective constitute private organisations, can participate in projects under the North West Europe Programme as public similar partner (Article 2 (5) of the General Regulation) if:
  - they constitute a legal body.
  - act as a non-profit organisation in the context of the project – this does not exclude companies acting on a for-profit basis in other contexts.
  - they make all project results available to the general public free of charge. This includes securing public access to the project results.
  - project activities are carried out in accordance with the principle of real costs.
  - project activities are carried out in accordance with public tender rules i.e. Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts.

*Swiss organisations can participate in NWE projects but are not entitled to ERDF funding. They may receive funding from the Swiss federal government to co-finance their share in the project budget, or may be expected to provide their full contribution.*

*Swiss organisations can only be project partners; they cannot act as Lead Partner of a NWE project.*

### 6.2.3 How to apply for funding

The Secretariat will launch an official Call for Proposals at least three months before each Steering Committee meeting (via the Programme website, specialised press, the Contact Points and by e-mail).

A standard application form will be included in the information and application pack. It will be widely circulated and available from the Joint Technical Secretariat, the Contact Points and on the Programme website.

The information and application pack will include the necessary guidance to assist project partnerships in the preparation of their application, including an indicative model of a partnership agreement.

Original applications will be submitted in English to the North West Europe Programme Secretariat by the project lead partner.

The starting date for the eligibility of expenditure is 1 January 2007. Expenditure will not be eligible for an ERDF contribution if it has actually been paid by the final beneficiary prior to this date.

Further information about the selection process will be available to potential partners in a separate document once this Operational Programme has been approved.

### **6.3 Financial implementation**

#### **6.3.1 Payments and commitments at Community level**

Following the provisions of Article 76.1 of the General Regulation, payments by the Commission of ERDF contributions shall be made in accordance with the corresponding budget commitments.

The Member States have designated the Certifying Authority, the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, to receive payments from the Commission on behalf of the NWE Programme.

To fulfil its responsibilities, the Certifying Authority will open two Euro bank accounts within its books: one for the Programme, one for Technical Assistance.

Any interest earned on the payment on account will be allocated by the Certifying Authority to the Programme on the recommendation of the Monitoring Committee.

The Commission will automatically decommit any part of a commitment for which it has not received an acceptable payment application by the end of the second year following the year of commitment. The ERDF contribution will be reduced by that amount.

#### **6.3.2 ERDF contribution**

An NWE project may benefit from ERDF contributions from the NWE Programme only. An operation may not be financed simultaneously by more than one Operational Programme or other Structural Funds programme.

The ERDF contribution must be consistent with the financial plan laid down in the decision approving the OP. It shall principally take the form of non-repayable direct assistance as well as other forms, such as repayable assistance, an interest-rate subsidy, a guarantee, an equity holding, a venture capital holding or another form of assistance. Assistance repaid to the Managing Authority will be reallocated to the same purpose.

In compliance with Article 53.3 of the draft General Regulation, ERDF funds will contribute up to 50% of the project's total eligible cost.

#### **6.3.3 Payments to final beneficiaries**

A 'Subsidy Contract' signed by the Managing Authority will be addressed to the project Lead Partner to notify the decision of the Steering Committee, including the conditions imposed on the execution of, and the maximum amount of ERDF funding

allocated to, the project. Moreover, the Subsidy Contract points out the financial and legal responsibilities that fall on the project Lead Partner.

The Joint Technical Secretariat will monitor the progress of projects. Lead Partners will present an activity report and payment claim to the Secretariat at least every six months. The Secretariat will check those documents against the Subsidy Contract and the approved application and ensure consistency with performance targets and eligibility criteria.

All payment claims shall be backed up by invoices or other properly certified accounting documents. The Lead Partner must ensure that each payment claim has been audited in accordance with the system set up by the Member States for verification of the delivery of products and services co-financed (1<sup>st</sup> level control).

Based on the request from the Lead Partner, the Joint Technical Secretariat will recommend the Certifying Authority to transfer the requested amount directly to the Lead Partner's bank account.

## **6.4 Monitoring, reporting and evaluation**

### **6.4.1 Monitoring**

Pursuant to Article 66 of the General Regulation, the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee will hold joint responsibility for monitoring the Programme. The monitoring will ensure the quality and effectiveness of implementation through progress assessments towards the attainment of Programme objectives.

In order to assist the monitoring and evaluation of the Programme, a number of indicators have been identified (Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006), and have been developed taking into account guidance by INTERACT (Study on Indicators for Monitoring Transnational and Interregional Cooperation Programmes) and the European Commission (Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators). They comprise output, result and impact indicators broken down per priority, whenever possible. These indicators are quantitative in nature and are included in section 4.1 (indicators per priority) of the Operational Programme.

Another set of qualitative indicators will be developed to capture more qualitative aspects of project implementation such as the added value of cooperation. These will appear in the Activity Reports of projects and will form the subject of continuous assessment and discussion with the Lead Partners. Progress will be monitored on several areas of project implementation including the promotion and publicity areas and the extent and effectiveness of dissemination of results.

Project promoters will declare expected output and result target values in the Application Form. These targets will be set against those at Programme level as defined in the Operational Programme. Projects will be asked to specify the indicator in quantitative and qualitative terms. Whenever applicable, projects will furthermore be asked to specify indicators in terms of gender and geographic impact (e.g. urban or rural areas).

The project Activity Reports will be an important source of information to monitor the implementation of operations towards the target indicators specified in the Operational Programme and the Application Forms. Programme progress will be

presented at the Programme's Annual Reports to the European Commission containing both updated target values and the values achieved thus far at Programme level.

The JTS on behalf of the Managing Authority will provide all relevant information to the Monitoring Committee to ensure proper implementation of the Programme. The Secretariat will gather the relevant data throughout the whole Programme period. A computerised Programme Management System will be developed for this purpose. It will secure a smooth exchange of compatible data with the relevant services of the Commission.

#### *6.4.2 Annual and final implementation reports*

Pursuant to Article 67 of the General Regulation, the Managing Authority will, by 30 June each year and for the first time in 2008, submit to the Commission an annual implementation report. The final report will be submitted by 31 March 2017.

The annual and final reports will be drafted by the Secretariat, considered and approved by the Monitoring Committee before they are sent to the Commission.

#### *6.4.3 Ex-ante evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*

In accordance with Article 48.2 of the General Regulation, an Ex-ante evaluation was carried out by ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd under the responsibility of the International Working Party for the NWE Programme. It included a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The process and findings of the Ex-ante evaluation report and the SEA are set out in sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.5. The complete Ex-ante evaluation report and the SEA report are available as separate volumes.

#### *6.4.4 Evaluation during the Programme period*

During the Programme period and in accordance with Article 47 of the General Regulation, Member States participating in the Programme will carry out evaluations closely linked to the monitoring of the Programme, in particular where the monitoring of the Programme reveals a significant departure from the goals initially set or where proposals are made for the revision of this Programme, as referred to in Article 33 of the General Regulation.

The Joint Technical Secretariat on behalf of the Managing Authority together with the Member States will develop an evaluation plan before summer 2009 in order to coordinate the evaluation exercises in the separate Member States. On the basis of the results of the coordination a more comprehensive evaluation on Programme level can be proposed to the Monitoring Committee. Where needed external expertise will be used.

The results of all on-going evaluations and the evaluation plan will be sent to the Monitoring Committee and to the Commission.

#### *6.4.5 Ex-post evaluation*

In compliance with Article 49.3 of the General Regulation, the ex-post evaluation will be the responsibility of the Commission, in collaboration with the Member States and the Managing Authority. It will be carried out by independent assessors and cover the utilisation of resources, the effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance and its impact, conclusions regarding policy on economic and social cohesion, the factors contributing to the success or failure of implementation as well as the achievements and results, including their sustainability.

## **6.5 Controls and financial corrections**

### **6.5.1 Liability**

The national authorities of each member state participating in the North West Europe Programme have, by the joint forwarding of the Operational Programme, agreed to retain overall administrative and financial liability for the total ERDF granted to Lead Partners in each individual country according to the General Structural Funds regulations and the ERDF regulations.

According to Article 17 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006, if the Lead Beneficiary (term interchangeably used with Lead Partner) does not succeed in securing payment of an amount unduly paid from a beneficiary, the member state on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the Certifying Authority for the amount unduly paid to that beneficiary.

The Member States will retain liability for the Technical Assistance budget proportionally to their contribution to the TA budget.

### **6.5.2 Financial control by the Member States**

According to Article 16 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006, each member state will set up a system for verification of the delivery of products and services to projects. The system will also verify the soundness of the expenditure and its compliance with Commission and national rules on the eligibility of expenditure and public procurement.

The delivery of these tasks comprises two key elements: desk-based checks and on-the-spot checks. The desk-based checks are delivered as part of the processing of progress reports and payment claims from projects. The on-the-spot checks are carried out on a sample basis.

The Member States will designate controllers (1<sup>st</sup> level control) for this purpose. The method of designation will be detailed in the Agreement to be signed between the Managing Authority and the Member States.

### **6.5.3 Financial control by the Commission**

According to Article 72 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, the Commission may carry out spot checks, including sample checks, on the operations financed by the Structural Funds and on the management control system with a minimum of 10 working days notice. The Commission will give notice to the Member States with a view to obtaining all the assistance necessary. Officials from the Member States may take part in such checks.

Without prejudice to its responsibilities described above, the Commission may, in exceptional circumstances, require particular Member States to carry out on-the-spot checks to verify the correctness of one or more transactions in respect of projects or part of projects being implemented within the jurisdiction of each of the Member States concerned.

#### *6.5.4 Irregularities and financial corrections*

In accordance with Article 98(1) of the General Regulation, each member state is responsible in the first instance for investigating irregularities, acting upon evidence of any major change affecting the nature or conditions for the implementation or control of operations or operational programmes and making the financial corrections required.

Financial corrections will be made in connection with individual or systemic irregularities and will consist of cancelling all or part of the Community contribution. Community Funds released in this way may be reused by the Programme for the assistance concerned.

Without prejudice to the Member States' responsibility for detecting and correcting irregularities and for recovering amounts unduly paid (Article 70(1)(b) of the General Regulation), the Certifying Authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the Lead Partner. The beneficiaries shall repay the amounts unduly paid in accordance with the agreement existing between them (Article 17(2) of the ERDF Regulation).

If the Lead Partner does not succeed in securing repayment from a beneficiary, the member state on whose territory the relevant beneficiary is located shall reimburse the Certifying Authority the amount unduly paid to the beneficiary (Article 17(3) of the ERDF Regulation). The Managing Authority shall ensure that the Programme's Monitoring Committee is informed on a regular basis of all irregularities detected and all financial corrections undertaken.

### **6.6 Computerised exchange of information between Member states and the Commission**

The national authorities of each member state participating in the North West Europe Programme have agreed that all exchanges concerning financial transactions between the Commission and the Managing Authority (mandated by the Member States) shall be made by electronic means in accordance with the Article 66 of the General Regulation on Structural Funds<sup>1083/2006</sup>.

This exchange of data shall be carried out using a computer system – SFC2007 – established by the Commission that permits secure transactions. All documents (and updates) for which the Programme Authorities are responsible shall be recorded in this computer system. All exchanges of data shall bear an electronic signature, legally recognised by the Member states and the Commission. The computer system for data exchange shall be accessible to the Member states and the Commission, either directly or via an interface.

The French "Délégation Interministérielle à l'aménagement et à la compétitivité des territoires" (DIACT) is the central national authority in charge of coordinating access requests as laid out in the Commission implementing regulations.



## 7. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

In line with Article 69(1) of Council Regulation 1083/2006 (the General Regulation), the Member States participating in the Programme and the Managing Authority must provide information on, and publicise operations funded by, the NWE Programme. The information will be addressed to European citizens and beneficiaries with the aim of highlighting the role of the Community and ensuring that assistance from the Structural Funds is transparent.

The Managing Authority will designate the persons responsible for information and communication and inform the Commission accordingly.

A Communication Plan as defined in Article 2(2) of the Commission Implementing Regulation will be drawn up by the Managing Authority in consultation with the Monitoring Committee. The Managing Authority will submit the Communication Plan to the Commission within four months of the date of approval of the Operational Programme.

### 7.1 Aims

The overall aims of the Communication Plan are to:

- Help generate new partnerships by increasing awareness amongst potential beneficiaries on the funding opportunities offered by the NWE Programme
- Provide potential beneficiaries and stakeholders with accurate and reliable information to stimulate high quality applications
- Promote the benefits and added value of cooperation to the general public in its widest sense by highlighting project results and outputs and their European dimension
- Raise the profile of transnational cooperation within national and regional administrative systems
- Encourage active dissemination of projects and Programme results to professionals and political stakeholders

### 7.2 Target groups

There are four major target groups for the NWE Programme Communication Plan: potential beneficiaries; beneficiaries; politicians and key decision-makers; and the general public.

#### 7.2.1 Potential beneficiaries

This target group encompasses all organisations and public authorities that could benefit from funding. Potential beneficiaries are principally professionals involved in the Programme's fields of action and can be broken down into three sub-categories:

- Those who have no prior knowledge of the Structural Funds and who are concerned with one of the issues covered by the Operational Programme
- Those who have some prior knowledge of the Structural Funds but have not been involved so far

- Those who have already been involved in transnational or cross-border projects and who wish to get involved in the Operational Programme 2007-2013.

To reach potential beneficiaries, the Programme must inform widely differing stakeholder groups acting as information relay organisations about its activities. These include development agencies, trade associations, chambers of commerce, universities and other academic institutions and associated press.

### *7.2.2 Beneficiaries*

This target group includes all organisations and public authorities that have benefited from INTERREG IIC or IIIB funding in the past, including those directly involved in project development and all partners in funded operations. It is important to stimulate their desire to continue publicising the positive outputs of their projects and to encourage them to share their knowledge of the benefits of transnational cooperation.

### *7.2.3 Politicians and key decision-makers*

This target group is key to the success of the NWE Programme. The communication strategy will aim at increasing the level of interest and awareness of politicians and key decision-makers at all levels to get their political support and commitment.

Firstly, this will help project partners to secure adequate match funding in an increasingly difficult context. Secondly, policy makers and heads of organisations have powerful communication channels at their disposal and can therefore act as important multipliers to inform beneficiaries and the wider public of the benefits and positive impacts that the Programme has on their every day lives.

Programme communication will focus particularly on national and regional policy makers who have a decisive role in the go/no-go decisions made on project applications and on the availability of match-funding as well as MEPs who play a key role in defining Europe's regional policy.

### *7.2.4 General public*

These are the inhabitants of the cities and regions that are directly concerned with operations funded by the EU and which benefit indirectly from transnational cooperation and the Structural Funds. The territorial impact of projects often goes well beyond its direct geographical area. This wide target group includes groups with specific interests or those which hold a particular voice within society such as local community groups, schools and associated press.

## **7.3 Messages**

Consistent messages will be developed to convey the benefits of the NWE Programme, its added value and its achievements to a wide range of target groups through a wide range of media including digital, print and oral. These messages will show the link between cooperation projects and citizens' everyday lives and, in the case of professionals, demonstrate how projects meet the interests of their organisation. They will answer the question, "What's in it for us?"

Messages directed towards decision-makers will need to demonstrate the added value and contribution of INTERREG projects in driving forward regional and national policy agendas as well as in shaping future policies.

#### ***7.4 Roles and responsibilities***

At Programme level, there are two key responsible actors: Programme management (the coordinated activities of the Monitoring Committee, Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat) and the Contact Points. At project level, Lead Partners have a very clear role in promoting the Programme's communication operations. Their respective roles are defined below.

##### ***7.4.1 Programme management***

The Monitoring Committee is responsible for approving the Programme's communication strategy, including defining and monitoring publicity and information procedures and terms of reference for calls for project proposals.

The Managing Authority is responsible for promoting and representing the Programme within and outside the NWE area. It will ensure that the approved Communication Plan is implemented using all suitable forms and methods of communication at the various appropriate territorial levels. The MA can delegate all or part of these responsibilities to the Joint Technical Secretariat.

The JTS is responsible for both setting up and developing the overall communication strategy and preparing and implementing the various lines of action that meet the strategy's objectives within budgetary limitations. It will be in charge of the day-to-day implementation of the strategy.

##### ***7.4.2 Contact Points***

In order to develop the broad and coherent promotion of the Programme, each Contact Point will include a section on communication in their work plan. This will show which means or lines of action they intend to use to promote the Programme to various concerned national target groups. Their role in communication is an extension of that of the JTS as they follow and contribute to implementing the Programme's communication strategy within the respective Member States.

##### ***7.4.3 Lead Partners***

Publicising the support received from the Structural Funds is a basic requirement of the Commission. In order to develop a coherent approach, Lead Partners must establish a joint communication plan with their regional partners which will be submitted to, and reviewed by, the Secretariat. This comprehensive and effective communication plan must promote the Programme amongst beneficiaries and the general public at a local level.

Moreover, the Lead Partner is in charge of coordinating the communication plan and ensuring that the project has been sufficiently promoted towards various decision-makers, local media and the general public. This will be done in cooperation with the

Secretariat's communication staff who will provide guidance at all stages of project development, application and implementation.

As the final beneficiary of ERDF funds, the Lead Partner is responsible for informing the public of the assistance received and the positive results of this. All forms of communication (digital, print or oral) produced by the project, or by any of the partners on behalf of the project, must include the European flag and clear reference to the financing provided by the NWE Programme.

### ***7.5 Monitoring the Communication Plan***

A section on communication indicators and periodic evaluations will be included in the annual implementation reports to the Commission. Specific reports on the implementation of the communication plan will be made in the annual implementation report for 2010 and then in the final implementation report as foreseen in Article 4 of the Commission Implementing Regulation.

## 8. FINANCIAL PLAN

The budget available for the INTERREG IVB – North West Europe will amount to EUR 355,443,293 ERDF.

### **8.1 Allocation of funds by year 2007–2013**

According to Article 75.1 of the General Regulation, ERDF commitments by the Commission to the NWE Programme are made on an annual basis (cf. Table 8). (These commitments should not be confused with funds committed to individual projects by the Steering and Monitoring Committees after signature of the Subsidy Contract).

**Table 8:** Allocation of funds by year 2007-2013

	<b>ERDF FUNDING</b>
2007	46,216,124
2008	47,340,020
2009	48,820,743
2010	50,633,949
2011	52,499,284
2012	54,129,669
2013	55,803,504
<b>TOTAL 2007-2013</b>	<b>355,443,293</b>

In line with Article 93.1 of the General Regulation, committed funds not actually paid to final beneficiaries by 31 December of the second year after the year of initial commitment (N+2) will be automatically decommitted by the European Commission and lost to the Programme.

The period allocated to project implementation will extend until 31 December 2015.

### **8.2 Allocation of funds by priority 2007–2013**

The table 9 below show the indicative allocation of expenditure co-financed by the ERDF by priority for the whole commitment period.

**Table 9:** Allocation of funds by priority 2007-2013

	<b>ERDF FUNDING</b>	<b>NATIONAL PUBLIC FUNDING</b>	<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>CO- FINANCING RATE</b>
<b>Priority 1</b> Knowledge based economy and innovation	89,348,419	89,348,419	178,696,838	50%
<b>Priority 2</b> Natural resources and risk management	86,930,420	86,930,420	173,860,840	50%
<b>Priority 3</b> Sustainable transport solutions and ICT	89,357,665	89,357,665	178,715,330	50%
<b>Priority 4</b> Strong and prosperous communities	68,480,191	68,480,191	136,960,382	50%
<b>Priority 5</b> Technical Assistance	21,326,598	7,108,866	28,435,464	75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>355,443,293</b>	<b>341,225,561</b>	<b>696,668,854</b>	<b>51%</b>

The co-financing rate for project partners applying under priorities 1 to 4 is 50% of the total eligible costs.

The proportion of funding allocated to technical assistance represents 4.08% of the total funding amount allocated to the Programme. Therefore, it does not exceed the 6% ceiling set by Article 46 of the General Regulation. The co-financing rate for Priority 5 - Technical Assistance – is 75% of the total eligible costs.

## APPENDICES

### A) THE ELIGIBLE AREA – LIST OF NUTS III AREAS

- Belgium – whole country
- Germany – Baden Württemberg, parts of Bayern (Ober-, Mittel-, Unterfranken and Schwaben), Hessen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland
- France – Alsace, Basse Normandie, Bourgogne, Bretagne, Centre, Champagne/Ardennes, Franche-Comté, Haute Normandie, Ile de France, Lorraine, Nord-Pas de Calais, Pays de la Loire, Picardie
- Ireland – whole country
- Luxembourg – whole country
- Netherlands – Flevoland, Gelderland, Limburg, Noord-Brabant, Noord-Holland, Overijssel, Utrecht, Zeeland, Zuid-Holland
- United Kingdom – whole country
- Switzerland\* – whole country

*\* **N.B.:** Swiss organisations can participate in NWE projects but are not entitled to ERDF funding. They may receive funding from the Swiss federal government to co-finance their share in the project budget, or may be expected to provide their full contribution.*

BELGIUM			
BE1	RÉGION DE BRUXELLES-CAPITALE / BRUSSELS HOOFDSTEDELIJK GEWEST		
BE10		Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	
BE100		>BE1	Arr. de Bruxelles-Capitale / Arr. van Brussel-Hoofdstad
BE2	VLAAMS GEWEST		
BE21		Prov. Antwerpen	
BE211			Arr. Antwerpen
BE212			Arr. Mechelen
BE213			Arr. Turnhout
BE22		Prov. Limburg (B)	
BE221			Arr. Hasselt
BE222			Arr. Maaseik
BE223			Arr. Tongeren
BE23		Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen	
BE231			Arr. Aalst
BE232			Arr. Dendermonde
BE233			Arr. Eeklo
BE234			Arr. Gent
BE235			Arr. Oudenaarde
BE236			Arr. Sint-Niklaas
BE24		Prov. Vlaams-Brabant	
BE241			Arr. Halle-Vilvoorde
BE242			Arr. Leuven
BE25		Prov. West-Vlaanderen	



BE251			Arr. Brugge
BE252			Arr. Diksmuide
BE253			Arr. Ieper
BE254			Arr. Kortrijk
BE255			Arr. Oostende
BE256			Arr. Roeselare
BE257			Arr. Tielt
BE258			Arr. Veurne
BE3	RÉGION WALLONNE		
BE31		Prov. Brabant Wallon	
BE310			Arr. Nivelles
BE32		Prov. Hainaut	
BE321			Arr. Ath
BE322			Arr. Charleroi
BE323			Arr. Mons
BE324			Arr. Mouscron
BE325			Arr. Soignies
BE326			Arr. Thuin
BE327			Arr. Tournai
BE33		Prov. Liège	
BE331			Arr. Huy
BE332			Arr. Liège
BE333			Arr. Verviers
BE334			Arr. Waremmes
BE34		Prov. Luxembourg (B)	
BE341			Arr. Arlon
BE342			Arr. Bastogne
BE343			Arr. Marche-en-Famenne
BE344			Arr. Neufchâteau
BE345			Arr. Virton
BE35		Prov. Namur	
BE351			Arr. Dinant
BE352			Arr. Namur
BE353			Arr. Philippeville
<b>GERMANY</b>			
DE1	BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG		
DE11		Stuttgart	
DE111			Stuttgart, Stadtkreis
DE112			Böblingen
DE113			Esslingen
DE114			Göppingen
DE115			Ludwigsburg
DE116			Rems-Murr-Kreis
DE117			Heilbronn, Stadtkreis
DE118			Heilbronn, Landkreis
DE119			Hohenlohekreis
DE11A			Schwäbisch Hall
DE11B			Main-Tauber-Kreis
DE11C			Heidenheim
DE11D			Ostalbkreis
DE12		Karlsruhe	

DE121			Baden-Baden, Stadtkreis
DE122			Karlsruhe, Stadtkreis
DE123			Karlsruhe, Landkreis
DE124			Rastatt
DE125			Heidelberg, Stadtkreis
DE126			Mannheim, Stadtkreis
DE127			Neckar-Odenwald-Kreis
DE128			Rhein-Neckar-Kreis
DE129			Pforzheim, Stadtkreis
DE12A			Calw
DE12B			Enzkreis
DE12C			Freudenstadt
DE13		Freiburg	
DE131			Freiburg im Breisgau, Stadtkreis
DE132			Breisgau-Hochschwarzwald
DE133			Emmendingen
DE134			Ortenaukreis
DE135			Rottweil
DE136			Schwarzwald-Baar-Kreis
DE137			Tuttlingen
DE138			Konstanz
DE139			Lörrach
DE13A			Waldshut
DE14		Tübingen	
DE141			Reutlingen
DE142			Tübingen, Landkreis
DE143			Zollernalbkreis
DE144			Ulm, Stadtkreis
DE145			Alb-Donau-Kreis
DE146			Biberach
DE147			Bodenseekreis
DE148			Ravensburg
DE149			Sigmaringen
DE2	BAYERN		
DE24		Oberfranken	
DE241			Bamberg, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE242			Bayreuth, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE243			Coburg, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE244			Hof, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE245			Bamberg, Landkreis
DE246			Bayreuth, Landkreis
DE247			Coburg, Landkreis
DE248			Forchheim
DE249			Hof, Landkreis
DE24A			Kronach
DE24B			Kulmbach
DE24C			Lichtenfels
DE24D			Wunsiedel i. Fichtelgebirge
DE25		Mittelfranken	
DE251			Ansbach, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE252			Erlangen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE253			Fürth, Kreisfreie Stadt

DE254			Nürnberg, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE255			Schwabach, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE256			Ansbach, Landkreis
DE257			Erlangen-Höchststadt
DE258			Fürth, Landkreis
DE259			Nürnberger Land
DE25A			Neustadt a. d. Aisch-Bad Windsheim
DE25B			Roth
DE25C			Weißenburg-Gunzenhausen
DE26		Unterfranken	
DE261			Aschaffenburg, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE262			Schweinfurt, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE263			Würzburg, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE264			Aschaffenburg, Landkreis
DE265			Bad Kissingen
DE266			Rhön-Grabfeld
DE267			Haßberge
DE268			Kitzingen
DE269			Miltenberg
DE26A			Main-Spessart
DE26B			Schweinfurt, Landkreis
DE26C			Würzburg, Landkreis
DE27		Schwaben	
DE271			Augsburg, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE272			Kaufbeuren, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE273			Kempten (Allgäu), Kreisfreie Stadt
DE274			Memmingen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE275			Aichach-Friedberg
DE276			Augsburg, Landkreis
DE277			Dillingen a.d. Donau
DE278			Günzburg
DE279			Neu-Ulm
DE27A			Lindau (Bodensee)
DE27B			Ostallgäu
DE27C			Unterallgäu
DE27D			Donau-Ries
DE27E			Oberallgäu
DE7	HESSEN		
DE71		Darmstadt	
DE711			Darmstadt, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE712			Frankfurt am Main, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE713			Offenbach am Main, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE714			Wiesbaden, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE715			Bergstraße
DE716			Darmstadt-Dieburg
DE717			Groß-Gerau
DE718			Hochtaunuskreis
DE719			Main-Kinzig-Kreis
DE71A			Main-Taunus-Kreis
DE71B			Odenwaldkreis
DE71C			Offenbach, Landkreis
DE71D			Rheingau-Taunus-Kreis

DE71E			Wetteraukreis
DE72		Gießen	
DE721			Gießen, Landkreis
DE722			Lahn-Dill-Kreis
DE723			Limburg-Weilburg
DE724			Marburg-Biedenkopf
DE725			Vogelsbergkreis
DE73		Kassel	
DE731			Kassel, Kreisfreie Stadt
DE732			Fulda
DE733			Hersfeld-Rotenburg
DE734			Kassel, Landkreis
DE735			Schwalm-Eder-Kreis
DE736			Waldeck-Frankenberg
DE737			Werra-Meißner-Kreis
DEA	NORDRHEIN- WESTFALEN		
DEA1		Düsseldorf	
DEA11			Düsseldorf, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA12			Duisburg, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA13			Essen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA14			Krefeld, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA15			Mönchengladbach, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA16			Mülheim an der Ruhr, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA17			Oberhausen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA18			Remscheid, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA19			Solingen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA1A			Wuppertal, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA1B			Kleve
DEA1C			Mettmann
DEA1D			Neuss
DEA1E			Viersen
DEA1F			Wesel
DEA2		Köln	
DEA21			Aachen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA22			Bonn, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA23			Köln, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA24			Leverkusen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA25			Aachen, Kreis
DEA26			Düren
DEA27			Erftkreis
DEA28			Euskirchen
DEA29			Heinsberg
DEA2A			Oberbergischer Kreis
DEA2B			Rheinisch-Bergischer Kreis
DEA2C			Rhein-Sieg-Kreis
DEA3		Münster	
DEA31			Bottrop, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA32			Gelsenkirchen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA33			Münster, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA34			Borken
DEA35			Coesfeld
DEA36			Recklinghausen

DEA37			Steinfurt
DEA38			Warendorf
DEA4		Detmold	
DEA41			Bielefeld, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA42			Gütersloh
DEA43			Herford
DEA44			Höxter
DEA45			Lippe
DEA46			Minden-Lübbecke
DEA47			Paderborn
DEA5		Arnsberg	
DEA51			Bochum, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA52			Dortmund, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA53			Hagen, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA54			Hamm, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA55			Herne, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEA56			Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis
DEA57			Hochsauerlandkreis
DEA58			Märkischer Kreis
DEA59			Olpe
DEA5A			Siegen-Wittgenstein
DEA5B			Soest
DEA5C			Unna
DEB	RHEINLAND-PFALZ		
DEB1		Koblenz	
DEB11			Koblenz, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB12			Ahrweiler
DEB13			Altenkirchen (Westerwald)
DEB14			Bad Kreuznach
DEB15			Birkenfeld
DEB16			Cochem-Zell
DEB17			Mayen-Koblenz
DEB18			Neuwied
DEB19			Rhein-Hunsrück-Kreis
DEB1A			Rhein-Lahn-Kreis
DEB1B			Westerwaldkreis
DEB2		Trier	
DEB21			Trier, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB22			Bernkastel-Wittlich
DEB23			Bitburg-Prüm
DEB24			Daun
DEB25			Trier-Saarburg
DEB3		Rheinhessen-Pfalz	
DEB31			Frankenthal (Pfalz), Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB32			Kaiserslautern, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB33			Landau in der Pfalz, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB34			Ludwigshafen am Rhein, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB35			Mainz, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB36			Neustadt an der Weinstraße, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB37			Pirmasens, Kreisfreie Stadt

DEB38			Speyer, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB39			Worms, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB3A			Zweibrücken, Kreisfreie Stadt
DEB3B			Alzey-Worms
DEB3C			Bad Dürkheim
DEB3D			Donnersbergkreis
DEB3E			Germersheim
DEB3F			Kaiserslautern, Landkreis
DEB3G			Kusel
DEB3H			Südliche Weinstraße
DEB3I			Ludwigshafen, Landkreis
DEB3J			Mainz-Bingen
DEB3K			Südwestpfalz
DEC	SAARLAND		
DEC0		Saarland	
DEC01			Stadtverband Saarbrücken
DEC02			Merzig-Wadern
DEC03			Neunkirchen
DEC04			Saarlouis
DEC05			Saarpfalz-Kreis
DEC06			St. Wendel
<b>FRANCE</b>			
FR1	ÎLE DE FRANCE		
FR10		Île de France	
FR101			Paris
FR102			Seine-et-Marne
FR103			Yvelines
FR104			Essonne
FR105			Hauts-de-Seine
FR106			Seine-Saint-Denis
FR107			Val-de-Marne
FR108			Val-d'Oise
FR2	BASSIN PARISIEN		
FR21		Champagne-Ardenne	
FR211			Ardenne
FR212			Aube
FR213			Marne
FR214			Haute-Marne
FR22		Picardie	
FR221			Aisne
FR222			Oise
FR223			Somme
FR23		Haute-Normandie	
FR231			Eure
FR232			Seine-Maritime
FR24		Centre	
FR241			Cher
FR242			Eure-et-Loir
FR243			Indre
FR244			Indre-et-Loire
FR245			Loir-et-Cher
FR246			Loiret

FR25		Basse-Normandie	
FR251			Calvados
FR252			Manche
FR253			Orne
FR26		Bourgogne	
FR261			Côte-d'Or
FR262			Nièvre
FR263			Saône-et-Loire
FR264			Yonne
FR3	NORD - PAS-DE-CALAIS		
FR30		Nord - Pas-de-Calais	
FR301			Nord
FR302			Pas-de-Calais
FR4	EST		
FR41		Lorraine	
FR411			Meurthe-et-Moselle
FR412			Maas
FR413			Moselle
FR414			Vosges
FR42		Alsace	
FR421			Bas-Rhin
FR422			Haut-Rhin
FR43		Franche-Comté	
FR431			Doubs
FR432			Jura
FR433			Haute-Saône
FR434			Territoire de Belfort
FR5	OUEST		
FR51		Pays de la Loire	
FR511			Loire-Atlantique
FR512			Maine-et-Loire
FR513			Mayenne
FR514			Sarthe
FR515			Vendée
FR52		Bretagne	
FR521			Côtes-d'Armor
FR522			Finistère
FR523			Ille-et-Vilaine
FR524			Morbihan
<b>IRELAND</b>			
IE0	IRELAND		
IE01		Border, Midland and Western	
IE011			Border
IE012			Midland
IE013			West
IE02		Southern and Eastern	
IE021			Dublin
IE022			Mid-East
IE023			Mid-West
IE024			South-East (IRL)
IE025			South-West (IRL)
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>			

LU0	LUXEMBOURG (GRAND-DUCHÉ)		
LU00		Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	
LU			Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)
<b>THE NETHERLANDS</b>			
NL2	OOST-NEDERLAND		
NL21		Overijssel	
NL211			Noord-Overijssel
NL212			Zuidwest-Overijssel
NL213			Twente
NL22		Gelderland	
NL221			Veluwe
NL222			Achterhoek
NL223			Arnhem/Nijmegen
NL224			Zuidwest-Gelderland
NL23		Flevoland	
NL230			Flevoland
NL3	WEST-NEDERLAND		
NL31		Utrecht	
NL310			Utrecht
NL32		Noord-Holland	
NL321			Kop van Noord-Holland
NL322			Alkmaar en omgeving
NL323			IJmond
NL324			Agglomeratie Haarlem
NL325			Zaanstreek
NL326			Groot-Amsterdam
NL327			Het Gooi en Vechtstreek
NL33		Zuid-Holland	
NL331			Agglomeratie Leiden en Bollenstreek
NL332			Agglomeratie 's-Gravenhage
NL333			Delft en Westland
NL334			Oost-Zuid-Holland
NL335			Groot-Rijnmond
NL336			Zuidoost-Zuid-Holland
NL34		Zeeland	
NL341			Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen
NL342			Overig Zeeland
NL4	ZUID-NEDERLAND		
NL41		Noord-Brabant	
NL411			West-Noord-Brabant
NL412			Midden-Noord-Brabant
NL413			Noordoost-Noord-Brabant
NL414			Zuidoost-Noord-Brabant
NL42		Limburg (NL)	
NL421			Noord-Limburg
NL422			Midden-Limburg
NL423			Zuid-Limburg
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>			



UKC	NORTH EAST		
UKC1		Tees Valley and Durham	
UKC11			Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees
UKC12			South Teesside
UKC13			Darlington
UKC14			Durham CC
UKC2		Northumberland and Tyne and Wear	
UKC21			Northumberland
UKC22			Tyneside
UKC23			Sunderland
UKD	NORTH WEST		
UKD1		Cumbria	
UKD11			West Cumbria
UKD12			East Cumbria
UKD2		Cheshire	
UKD21			Halton and Warrington
UKD22			Cheshire CC
UKD3		Greater Manchester	
UKD31			Greater Manchester South
UKD32			Greater Manchester North
UKD4		Lancashire	
UKD41			Blackburn with Darwen
UKD42			Blackpool
UKD43			Lancashire CC
UKD5		Merseyside	
UKD51			East Merseyside
UKD52			Liverpool
UKD53			Sefton
UKD54			Wirral
UKE	YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER		
UKE1		East Riding and North Lincolnshire	
UKE11			Kingston upon Hull, City of
UKE12			East Riding of Yorkshire
UKE13			North and North East Lincolnshire
UKE2		North Yorkshire	
UKE21			York
UKE22			North Yorkshire CC
UKE3		South Yorkshire	
UKE31			Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham
UKE32			Sheffield
UKE4		West Yorkshire	
UKE41			Bradford
UKE42			Leeds
UKE43			Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield
UKF	EAST MIDLANDS		
UKF1		Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	
UKF11			Derby
UKF12			East Derbyshire

UKF13			South and West Derbyshire
UKF14			Nottingham
UKF15			North Nottinghamshire
UKF16			South Nottinghamshire
UKF2		Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire	
UKF21			Leicester
UKF22			Leicestershire CC and Rutland
UKF23			Northamptonshire
UKF3		Lincolnshire	
UKF30			Lincolnshire
UKG	WEST MIDLANDS		
UKG1		Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire	
UKG11			Herefordshire, County of
UKG12			Worcestershire
UKG13			Warwickshire
UKG2		Shropshire and Staffordshire	
UKG21			Telford and Wrekin
UKG22			Shropshire CC
UKG23			Stoke-on-Trent
UKG24			Staffordshire CC
UKG3		West Midlands	
UKG31			Birmingham
UKG32			Solihull
UKG33			Coventry
UKG34			Dudley and Sandwell
UKG35			Walsall and Wolverhampton
UKH	EAST OF ENGLAND		
UKH1		East Anglia	
UKH11			Peterborough
UKH12			Cambridgeshire CC
UKH13			Norfolk
UKH14			Suffolk
UKH2		Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	
UKH21			Luton
UKH22			Bedfordshire CC
UKH23			Hertfordshire
UKH3		Essex	
UKH31			Southend-on-Sea
UKH32			Thurrock
UKH33			Essex CC
UKI	LONDON		
UKI1		Inner London	
UKI11			Inner London - West
UKI12			Inner London - East
UKI2		Outer London	
UKI21			Outer London - East and North East
UKI22			Outer London - South
UKI23			Outer London - West and North West
UKJ	SOUTH EAST		

UKJ1		Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire	
UKJ11			Berkshire
UKJ12			Milton Keynes
UKJ13			Buckinghamshire CC
UKJ14			Oxfordshire
UKJ2		Surrey, East and West Sussex	
UKJ21			Brighton and Hove
UKJ22			East Sussex CC
UKJ23			Surrey
UKJ24			West Sussex
UKJ3		Hampshire and Isle of Wight	
UKJ31			Portsmouth
UKJ32			Southampton
UKJ33			Hampshire CC
UKJ34			Isle of Wight
UKJ4		Kent	
UKJ41			Medway
UKJ42			Kent CC
UKK	SOUTH WEST		
UKK1		Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset	
UKK11			Bristol, City of
UKK12			North and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire
UKK13			Gloucestershire
UKK14			Swindon
UKK15			Wiltshire CC
UKK2		Dorset and Somerset	
UKK21			Bournemouth and Poole
UKK22			Dorset CC
UKK23			Somerset
UKK3		Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	
UKK30			Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
UKK4		Devon	
UKK41			Plymouth
UKK42			Torbay
UKK43			Devon CC
UKL	WALES		
UKL1		West Wales and The Valleys	
UKL11			Isle of Anglesey
UKL12			Gwynedd
UKL13			Conwy and Denbighshire
UKL14			South West Wales
UKL15			Central Valleys
UKL16			Gwent Valleys
UKL17			Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot
UKL18			Swansea
UKL2		East Wales	
UKL21			Monmouthshire and Newport
UKL22			Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan
UKL23			Flintshire and Wrexham
UKL24			Powys

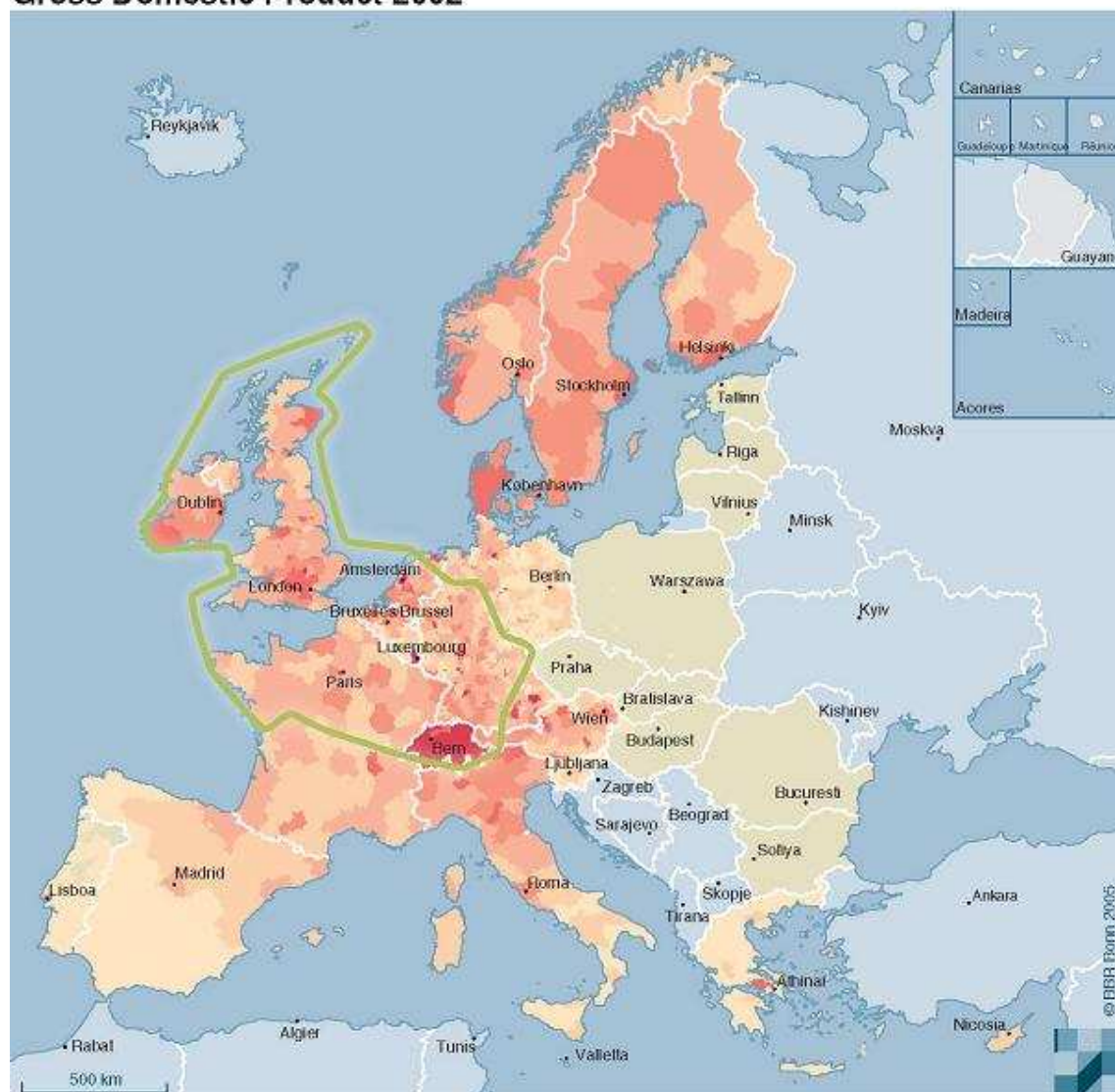
UKM	SCOTLAND		
UKM1		North Eastern Scotland	
UKM11			Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and North East Moray
UKM10			
UKM2		Eastern Scotland	
UKM21			Angus and Dundee City
UKM22			Clackmannanshire and Fife
UKM23			East Lothian and Midlothian
UKM24			Scottish Borders, The
UKM25			Edinburgh, City of
UKM26			Falkirk
UKM27			Perth and Kinross and Stirling
UKM28			West Lothian
UKM3		South Western Scotland	
UKM31			East and West Dunbartonshire, Helensburgh and Lomond
UKM32			Dumfries and Galloway
UKM33			East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire Mainland
UKM34			Glasgow City
UKM35			Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire
UKM36			North Lanarkshire
UKM37			South Ayrshire
UKM38			South Lanarkshire
UKM4		Highlands and Islands	
UKM41			Caithness and Sutherland and Ross and Cromarty
UKM42			Inverness and Nairn and Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey
UKM43			Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh and Argyll and the Islands
UKM44			Eilean Siar (Western Isles)
UKM45			Orkney Islands
UKM46			Shetland Islands
UKN	NORTHERN IRELAND		
UKN0		Northern Ireland	
UKN01			Belfast
UKN02			Outer Belfast
UKN03			East of Northern Ireland
UKN04			North of Northern Ireland
UKN05			West and South of Northern Ireland
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>			
CH01		Région lémanique	
CH011			Vaud
CH012			Valais
CH013			Genève
CH02		Espace Mittelland	
CH021			Bern
CH022			Freiburg
CH023			Solothurn
CH024			Neuchâtel
CH025			Jura

CH03		Nordwestschweiz	
CH031			Basel-Stadt
CH032			Basel-Landschaft
CH033			Aargau
CH04		Zürich	
CH04			Zürich
CH05		Ostschweiz	
CH051			Glarus
CH052			Schaffhausen
CH053			Appenzell Ausserrhoden
CH054			Appenzell Innerrhoden
CH055			St. Gallen
CH056			Graubünden
CH057			Thurgau
CH06		Zentralschweiz	
CH061			Luzern
CH062			Uri
CH063			Schwyz
CH064			Obwalden
CH065			Nidwalden
CH066			Zug
CH07		Ticino	
CH07			Ticino

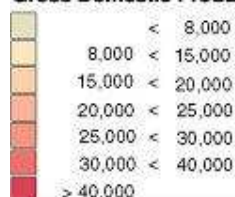
## B) MAPS AND FIGURES

**Figure A: Gross Domestic Product per capita (2002)**

### Gross Domestic Product 2002



#### Gross Domestic Product \* 2002 in € per inhabitant



\* Norway and Switzerland 2000, Data of OECD

N.U.T.S. 3

Source: Eurostat, OECD,

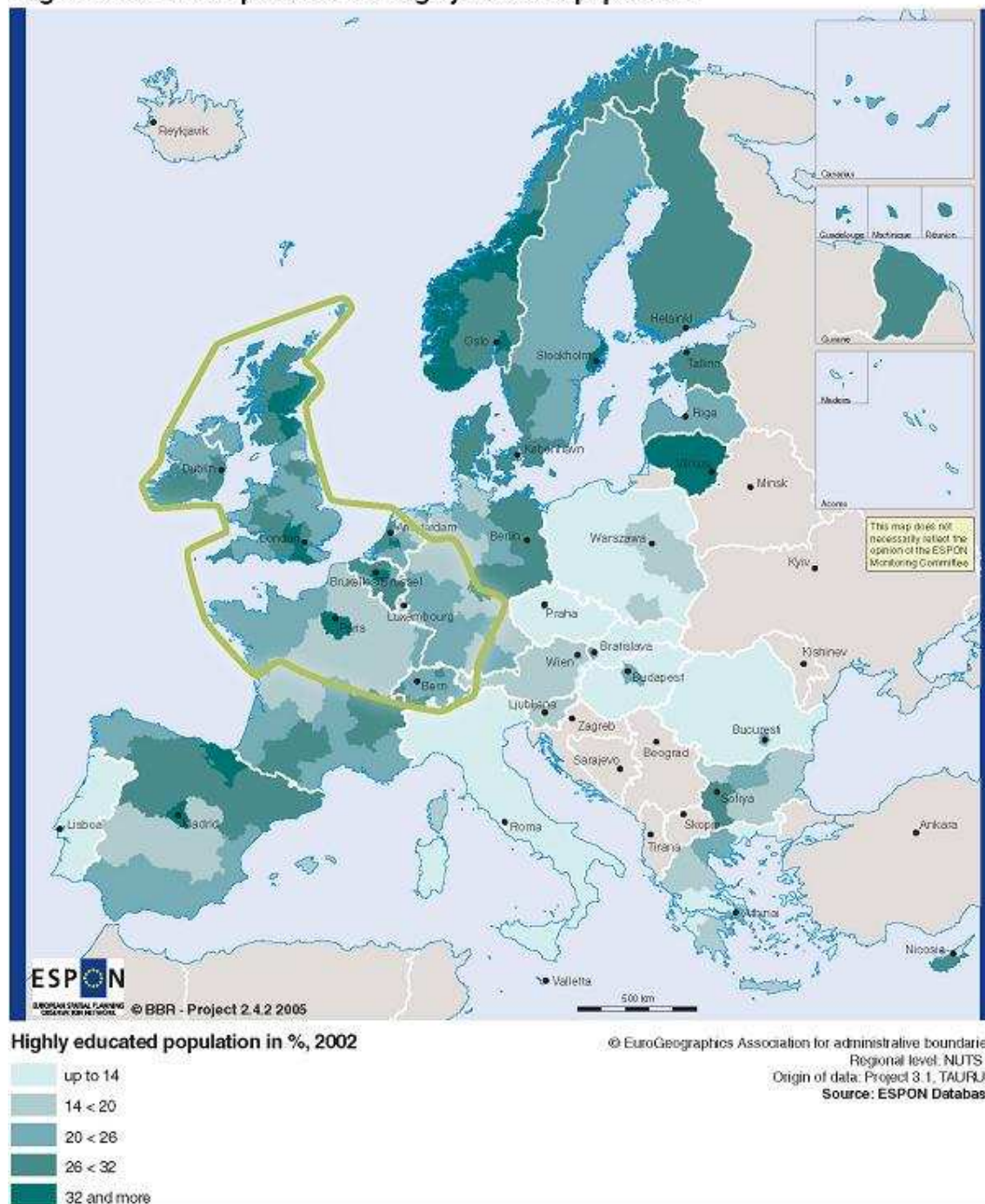
Continuous Spatial Monitoring System of the BBR

Source: BBR



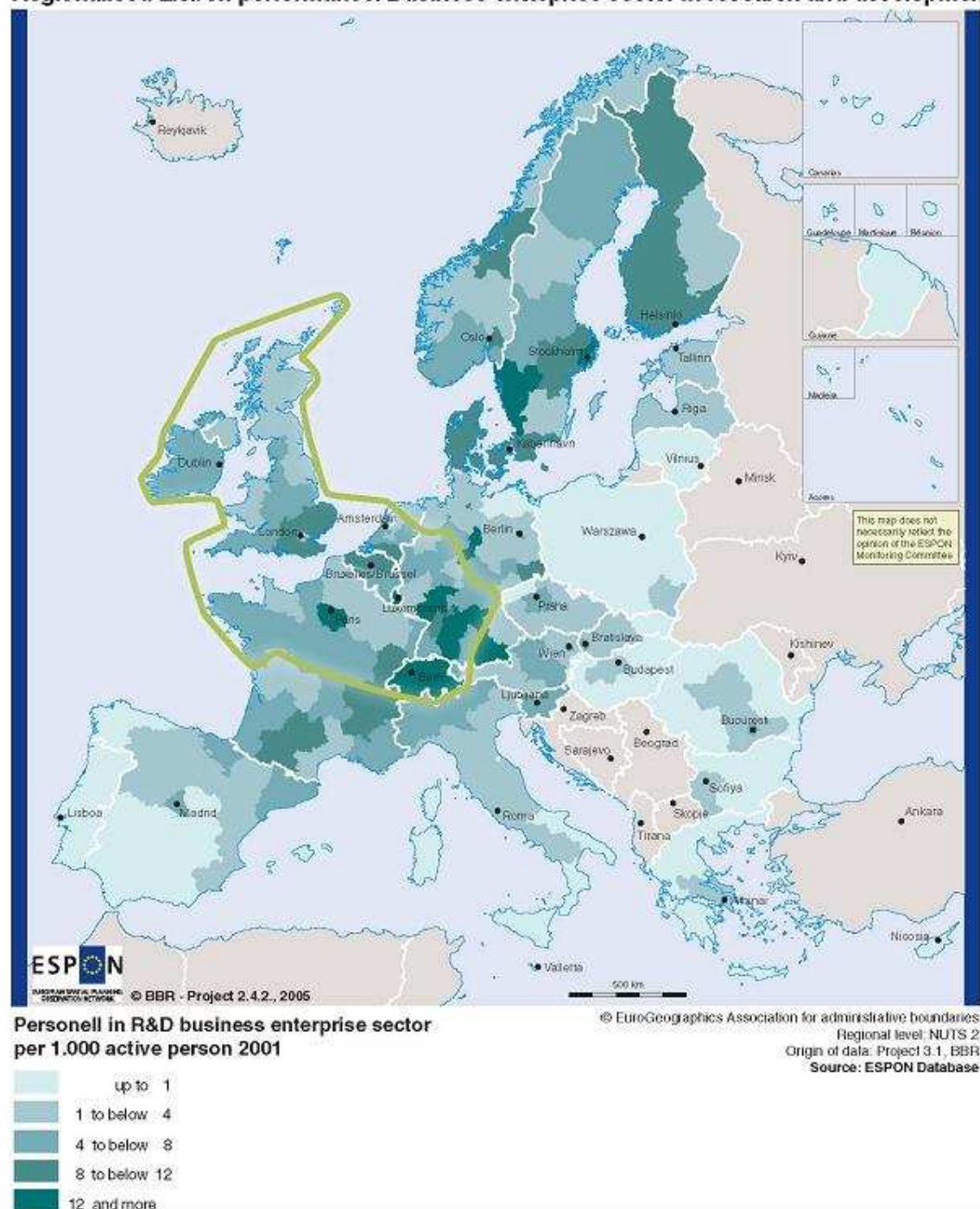
**Figure B:** Regionalised Lisbon performance: Highly educated population

**Regionalised Lisbon performance: Highly educated population**



**Figure C:** Regionalised Lisbon performance: Business enterprise sector in research and development

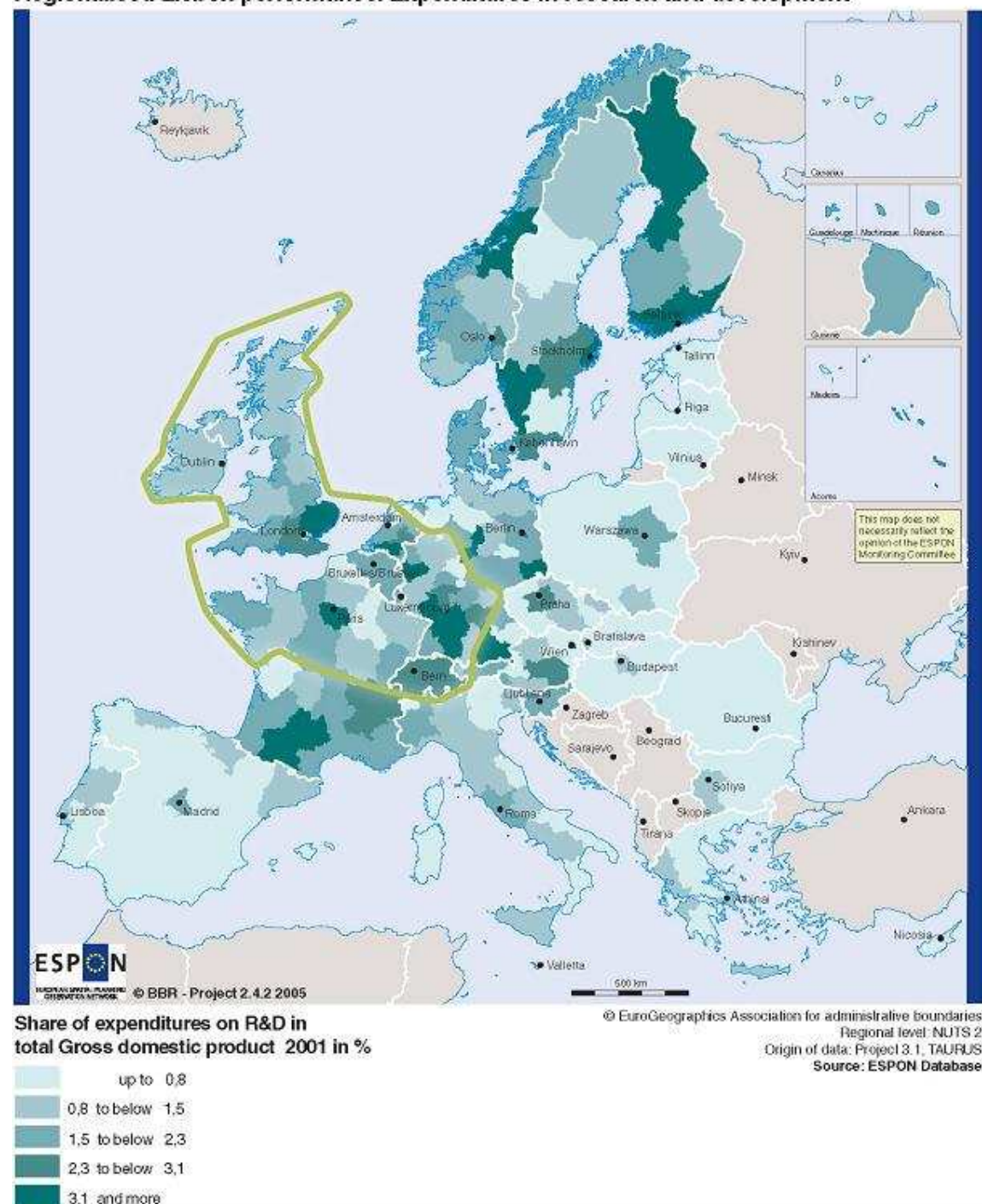
**Regionalised Lisbon performance: Business enterprise sector in research and development**





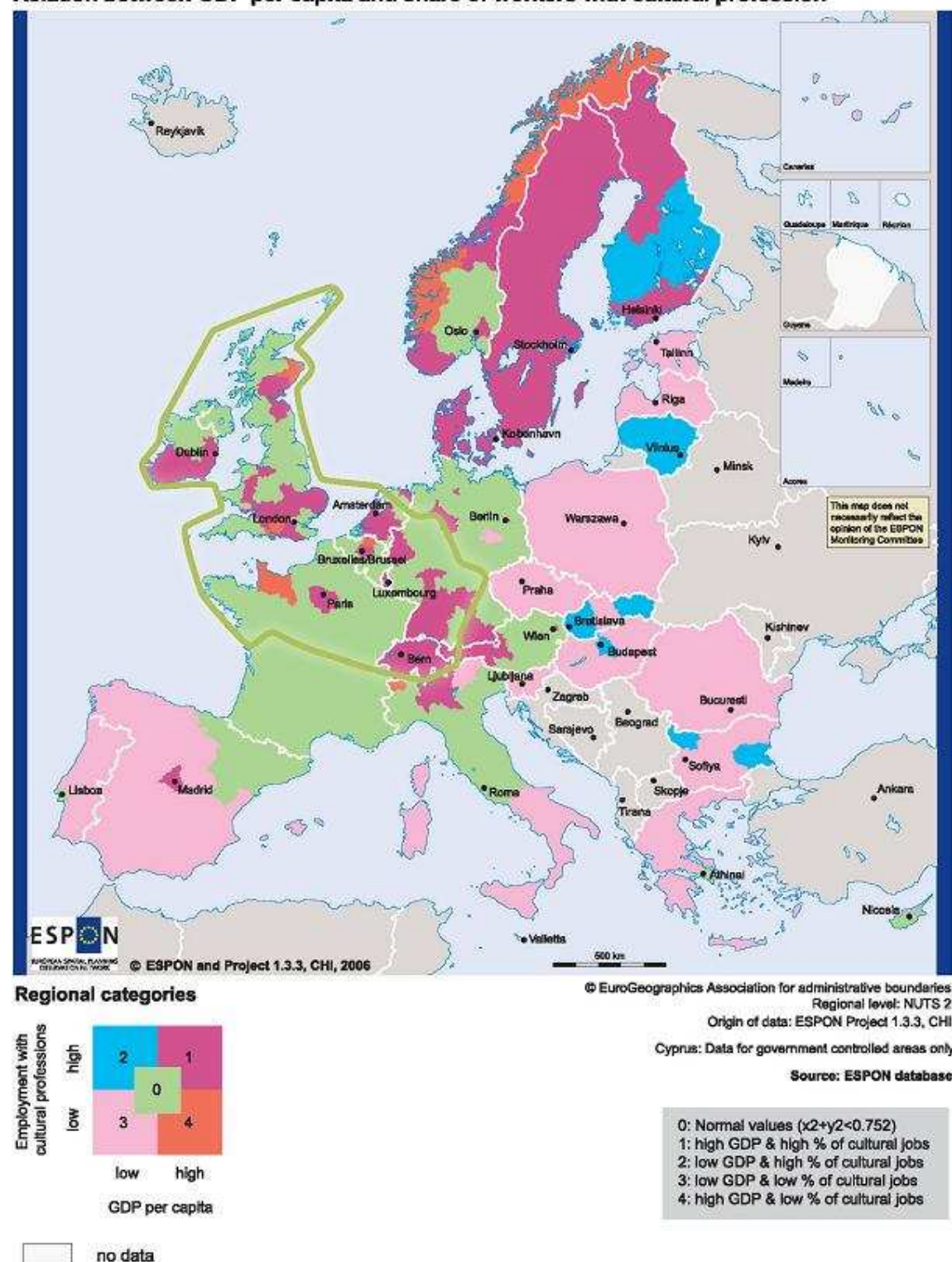
**Figure D:** Expenditure in Research and Development

**Regionalised Lisbon performance: Expenditures in research and development**



**Figure E:** Relation between GDP per capita and share of workers with cultural profession

**Relation between GDP per capita and share of workers with cultural profession**

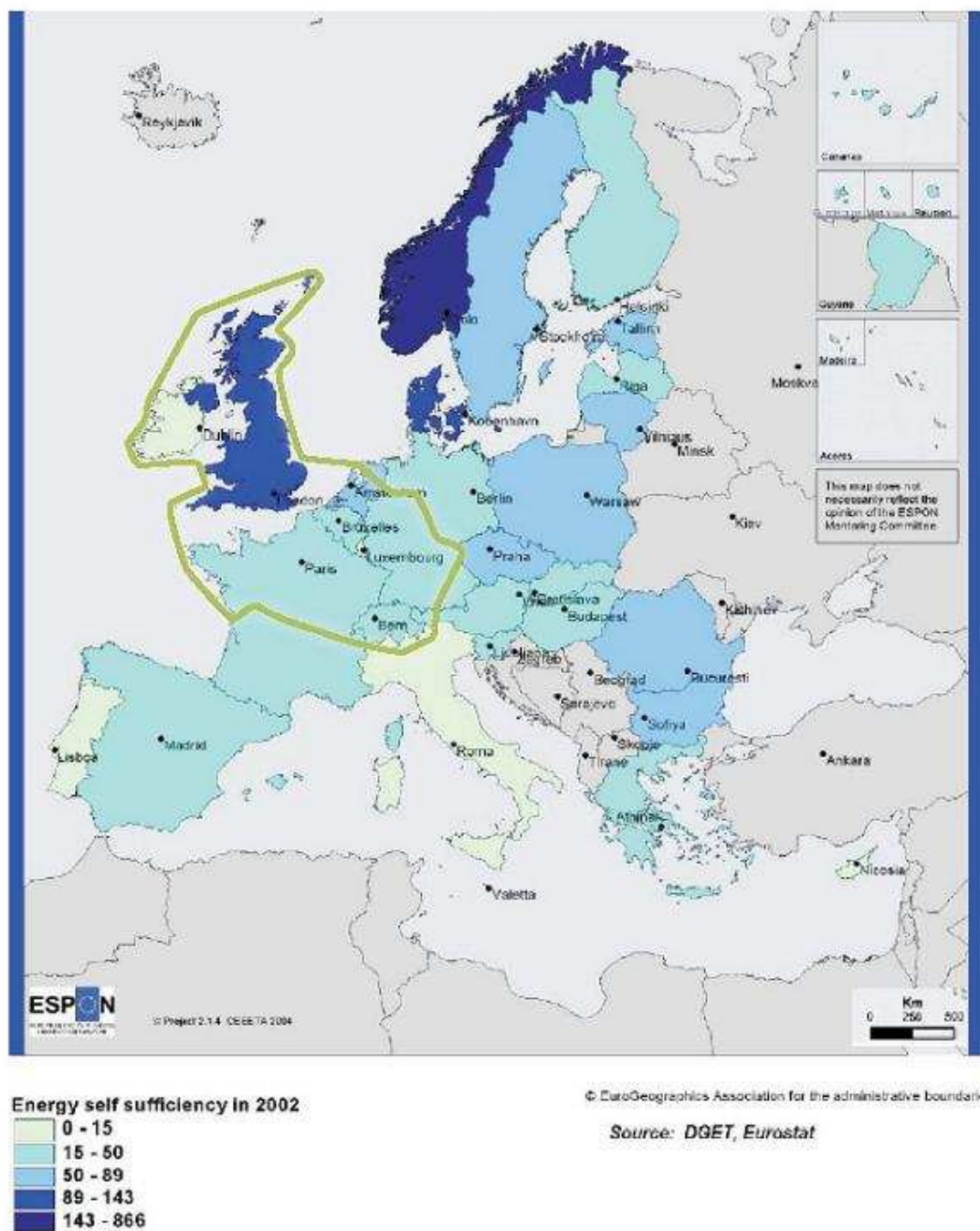


Source: BBR, © ESPON, 2006 (ESPON 1.3.3) xxviii



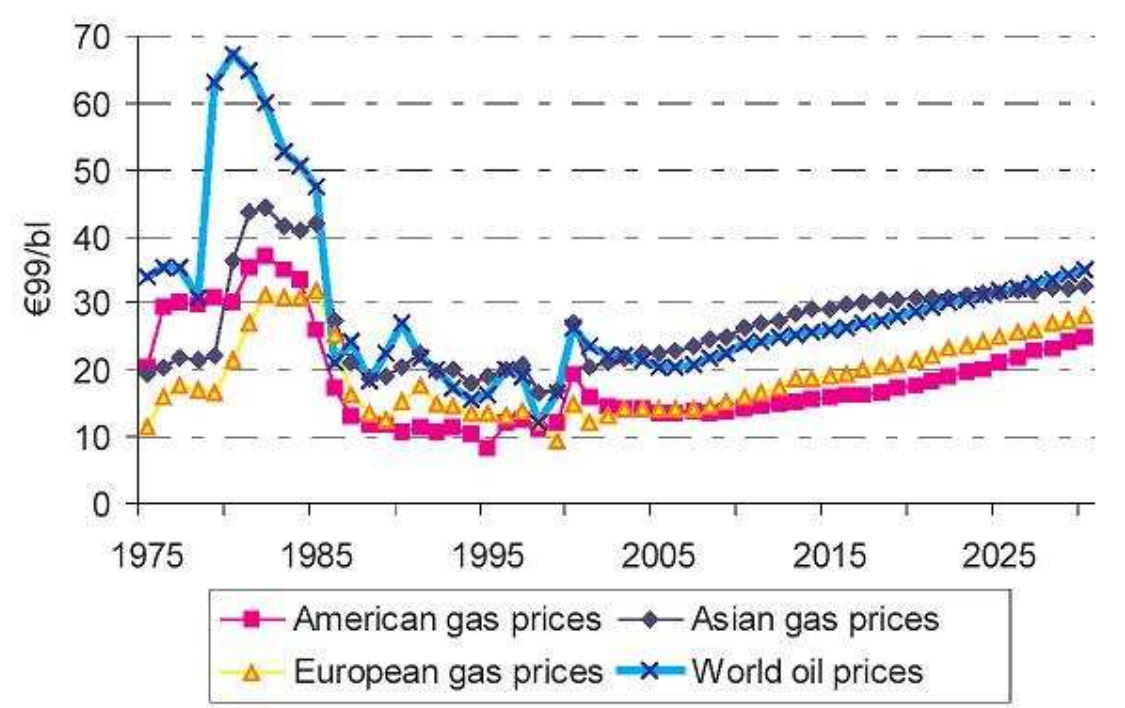
**Figure F: Energy self-sufficiency in Europe 2002 (%)**

**Map 1 Energy self-sufficiency in Europe in 2002 (%)**



Source: © ESPON 2006 (Project 2.1.4, final report page 15)

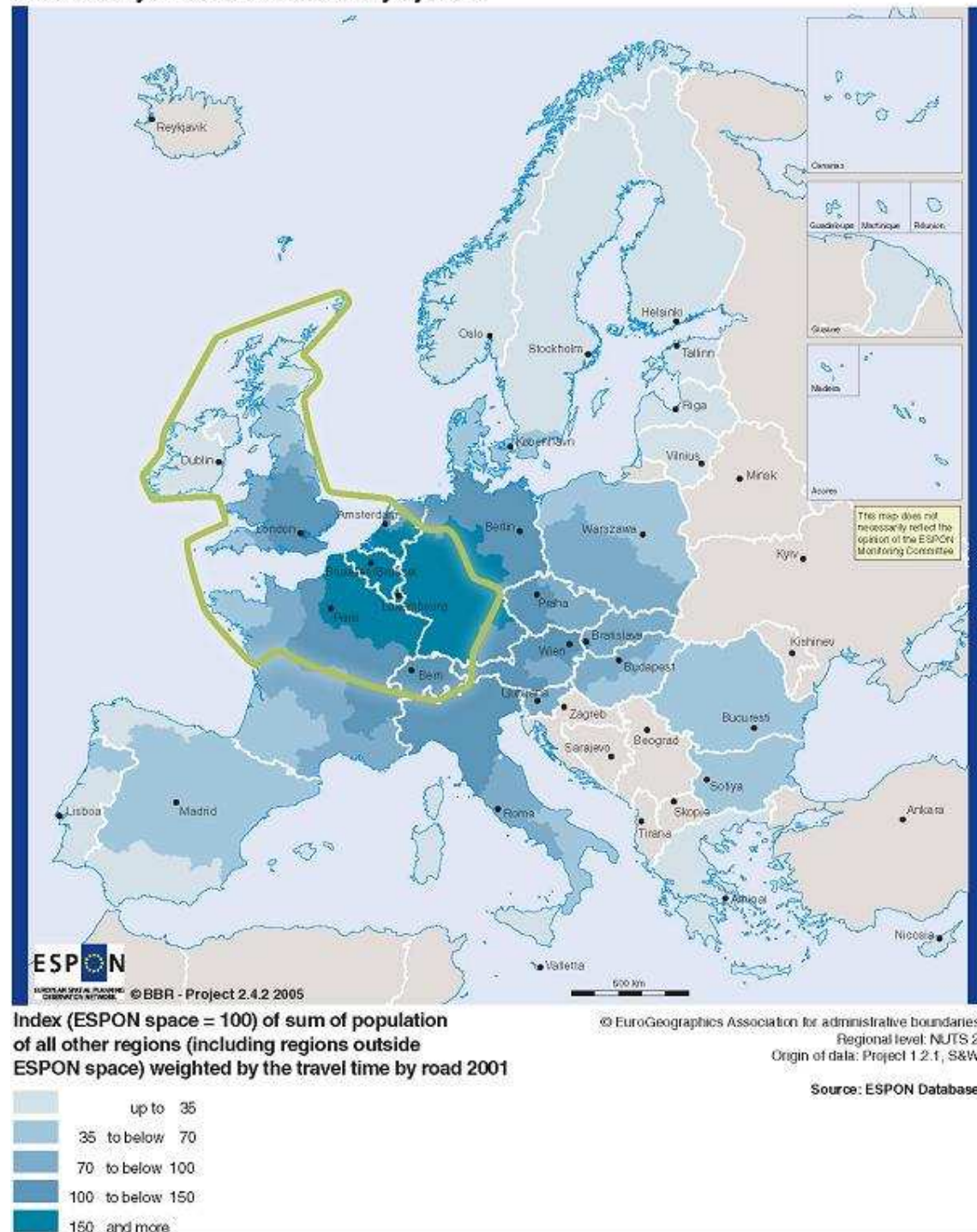
**Figure G:** Forecast of oil and gas prices



Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/pdf/weto\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/pdf/weto_final_report.pdf)

**Figure H: Potential accessibility by road**

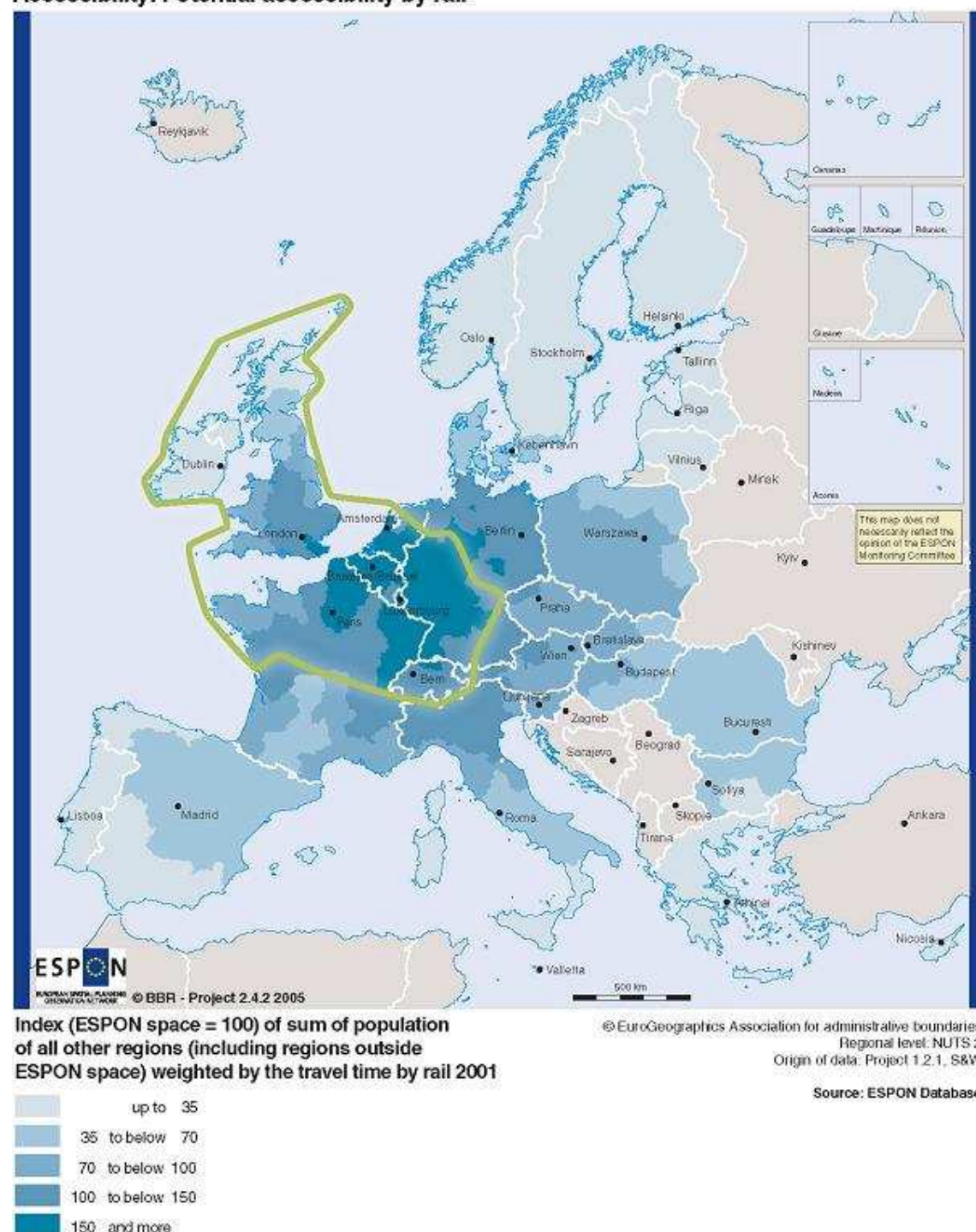
**Accessibility: Potential accessibility by road**



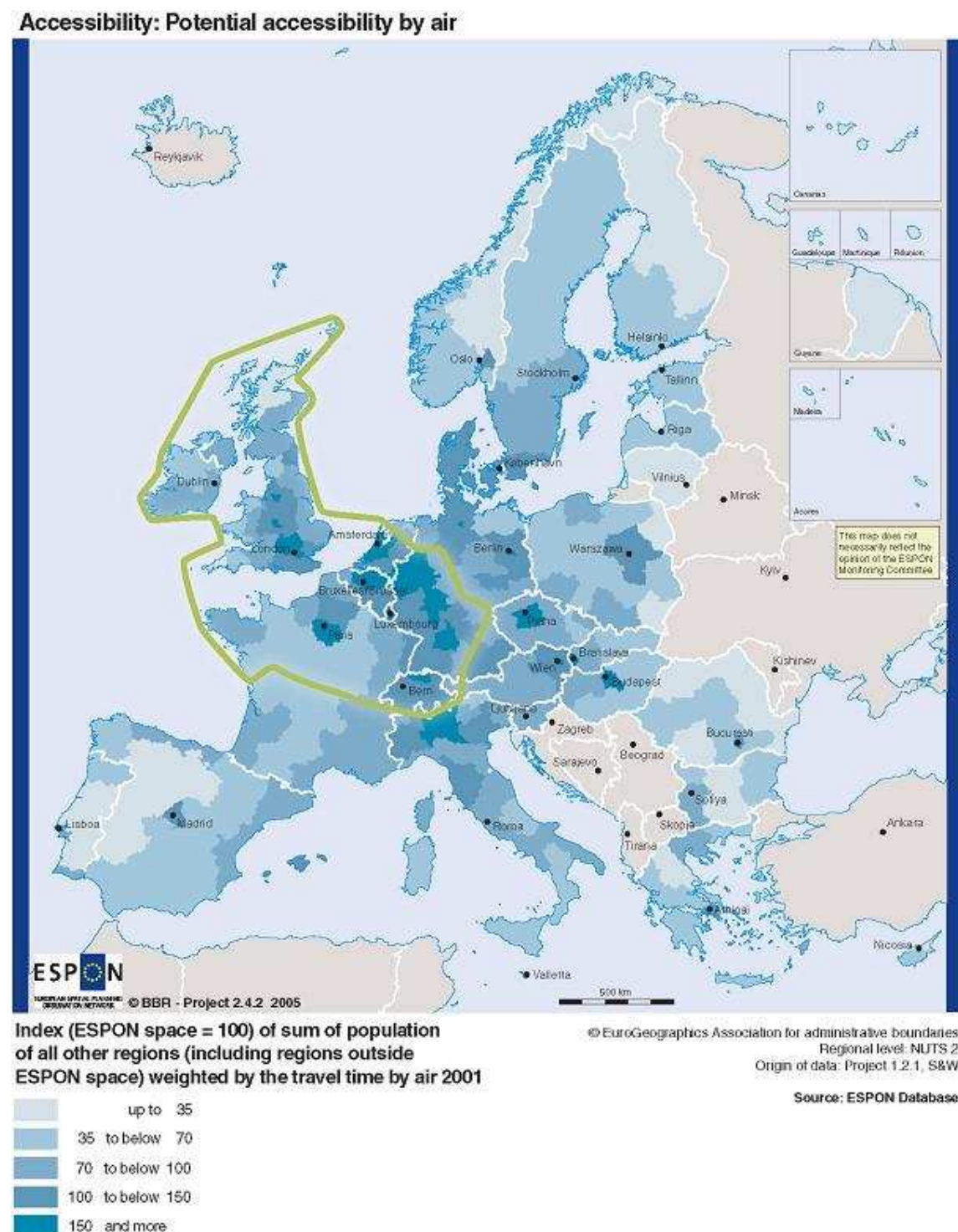


**Figure I: Potential accessibility by rail**

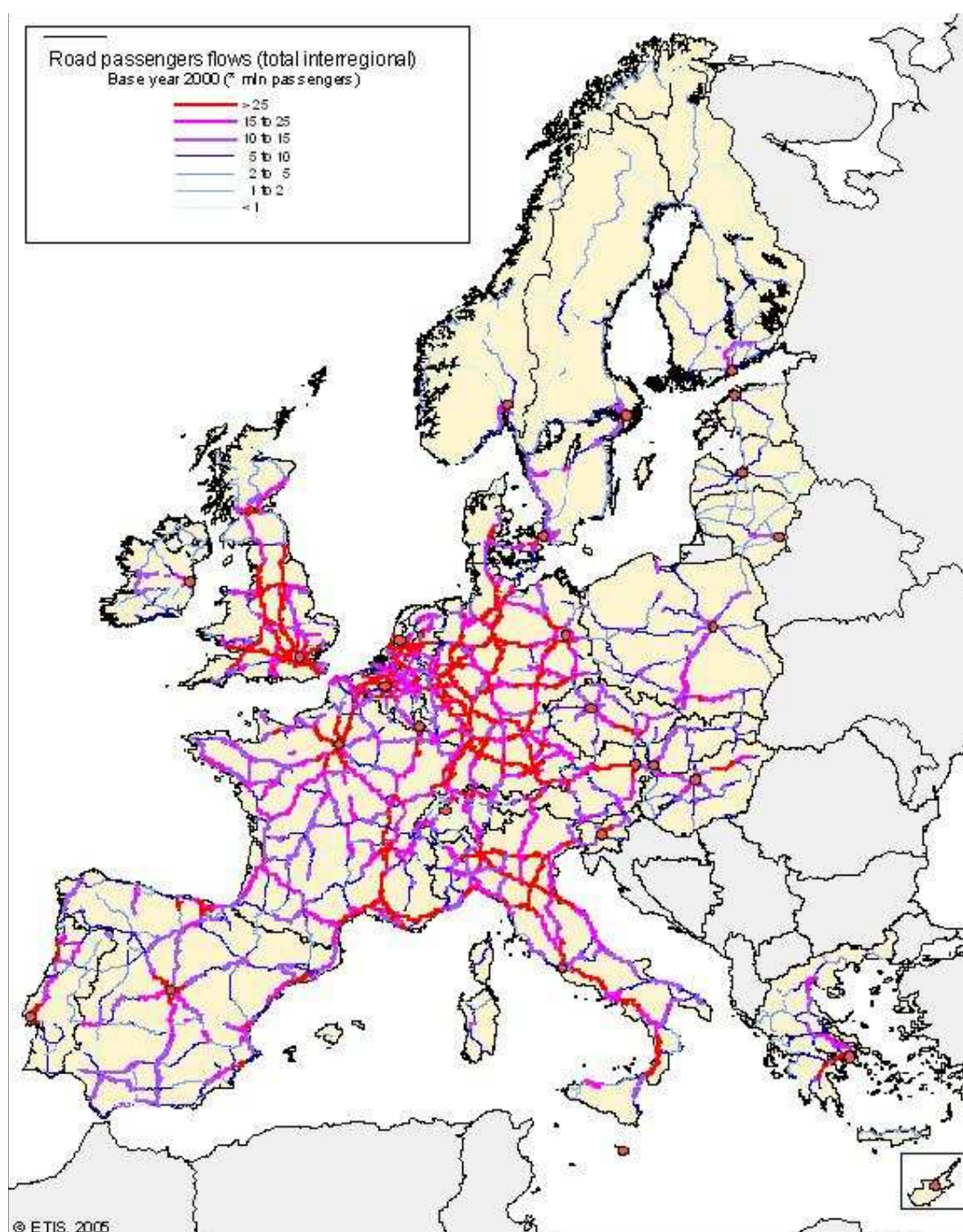
**Accessibility: Potential accessibility by rail**



**Figure J: Potential accessibility by air**



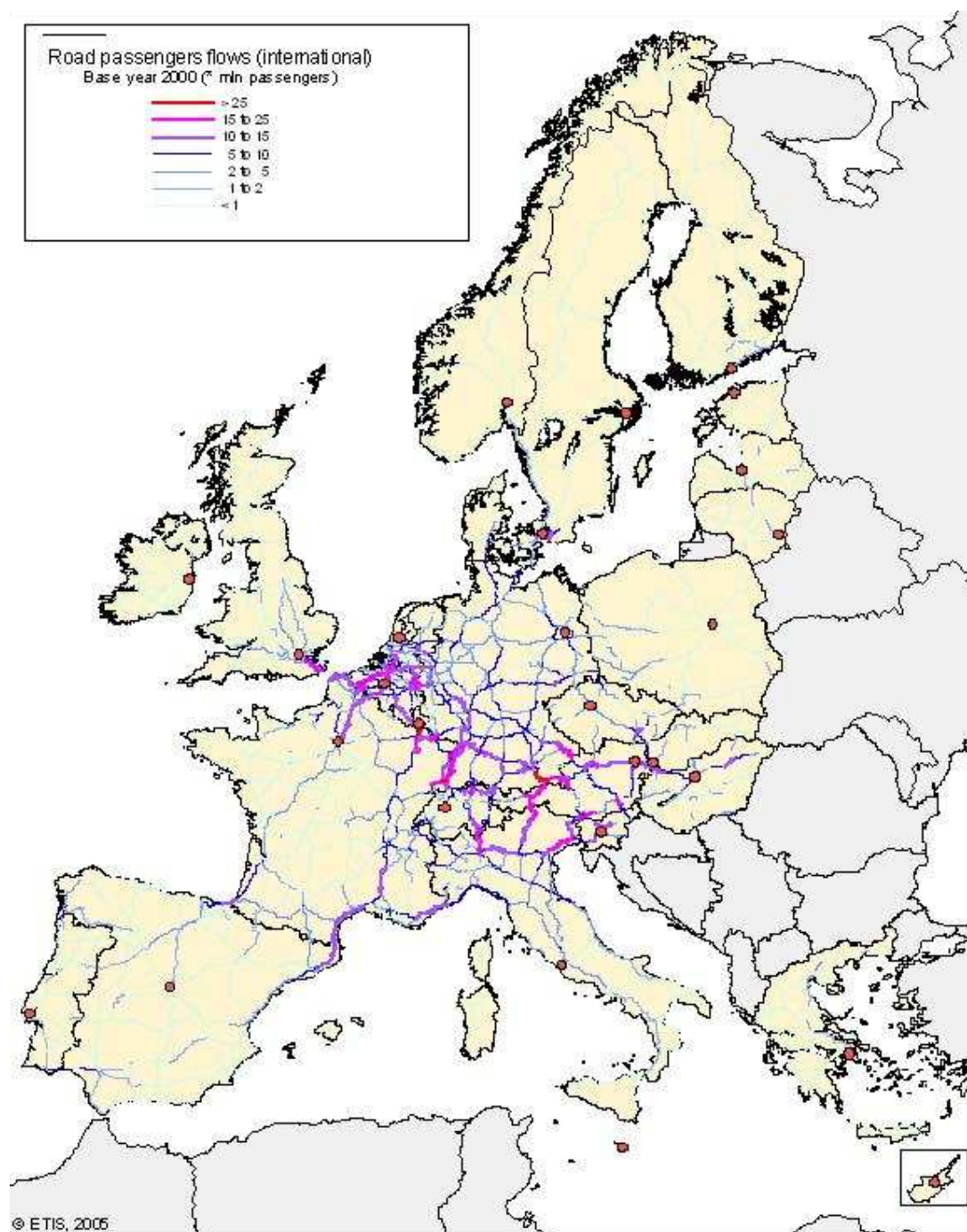


**Figure K: Inter-regional road passenger flows (2000)**

Source: ETIS

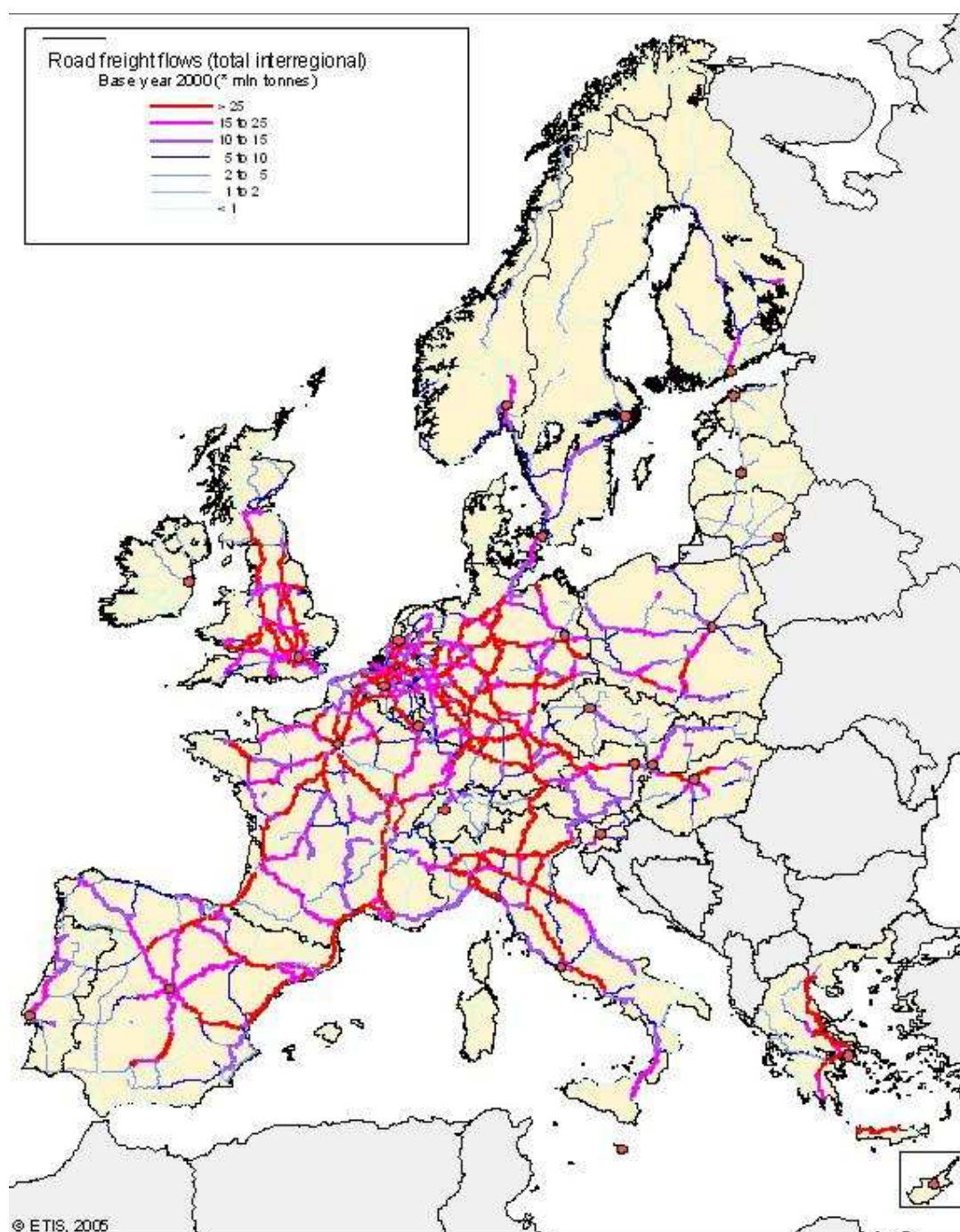


**Figure L:** International road passenger flows (2000)



Source: ETIS

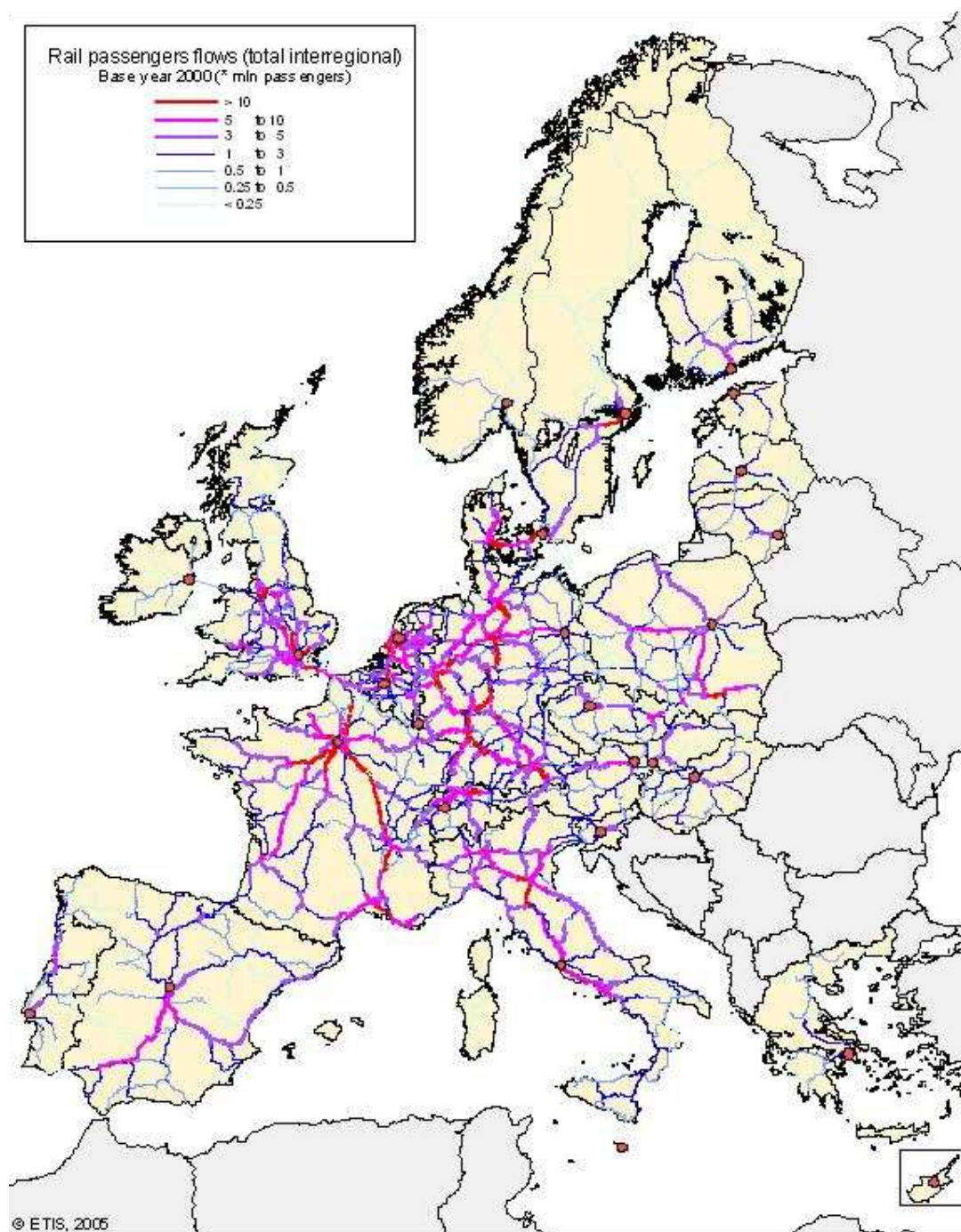
**Figure M:** Inter-regional road freight flows (2000)



Source: ETIS

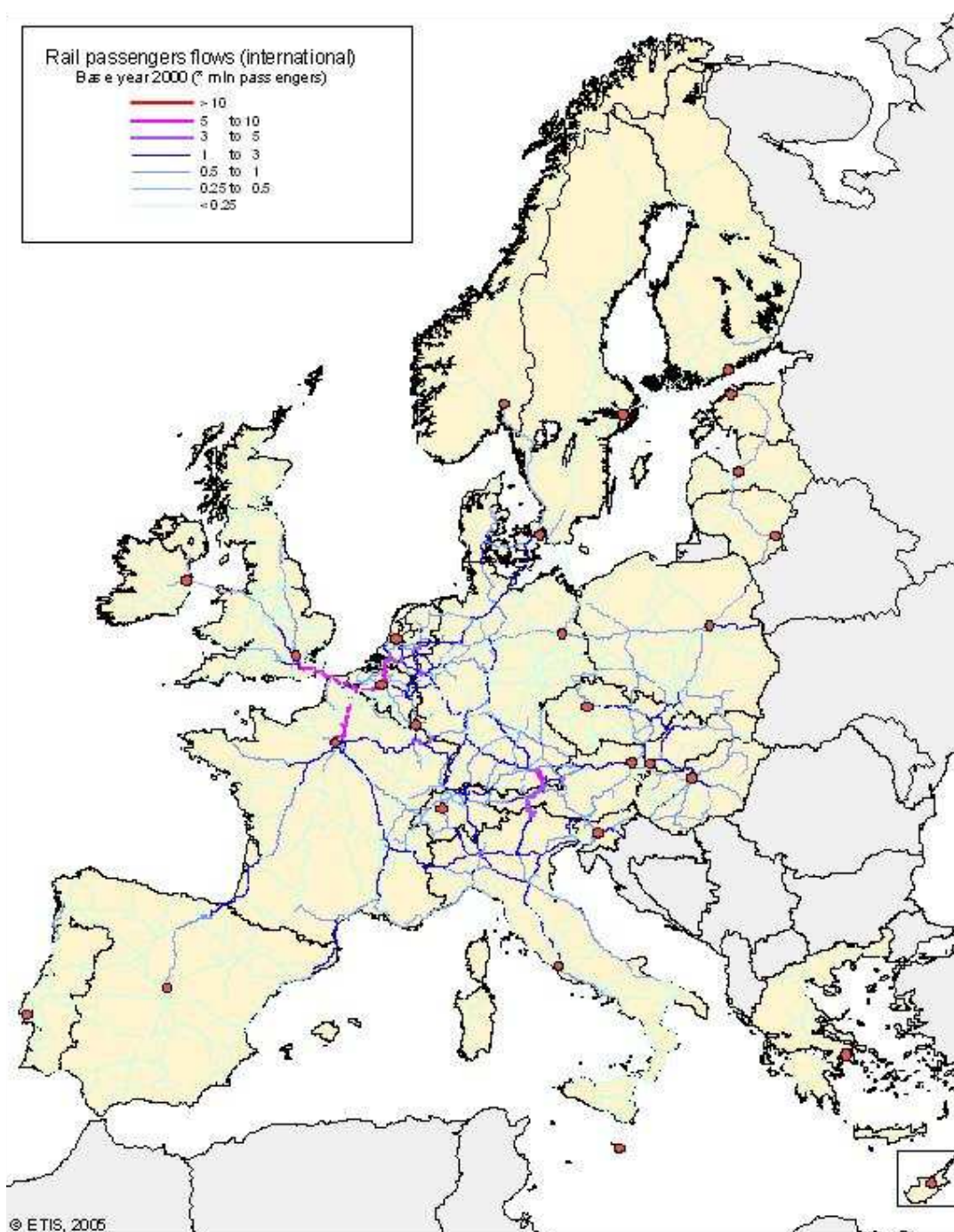


**Figure N:** Inter-regional rail passenger flows (2000)



Source: ETIS

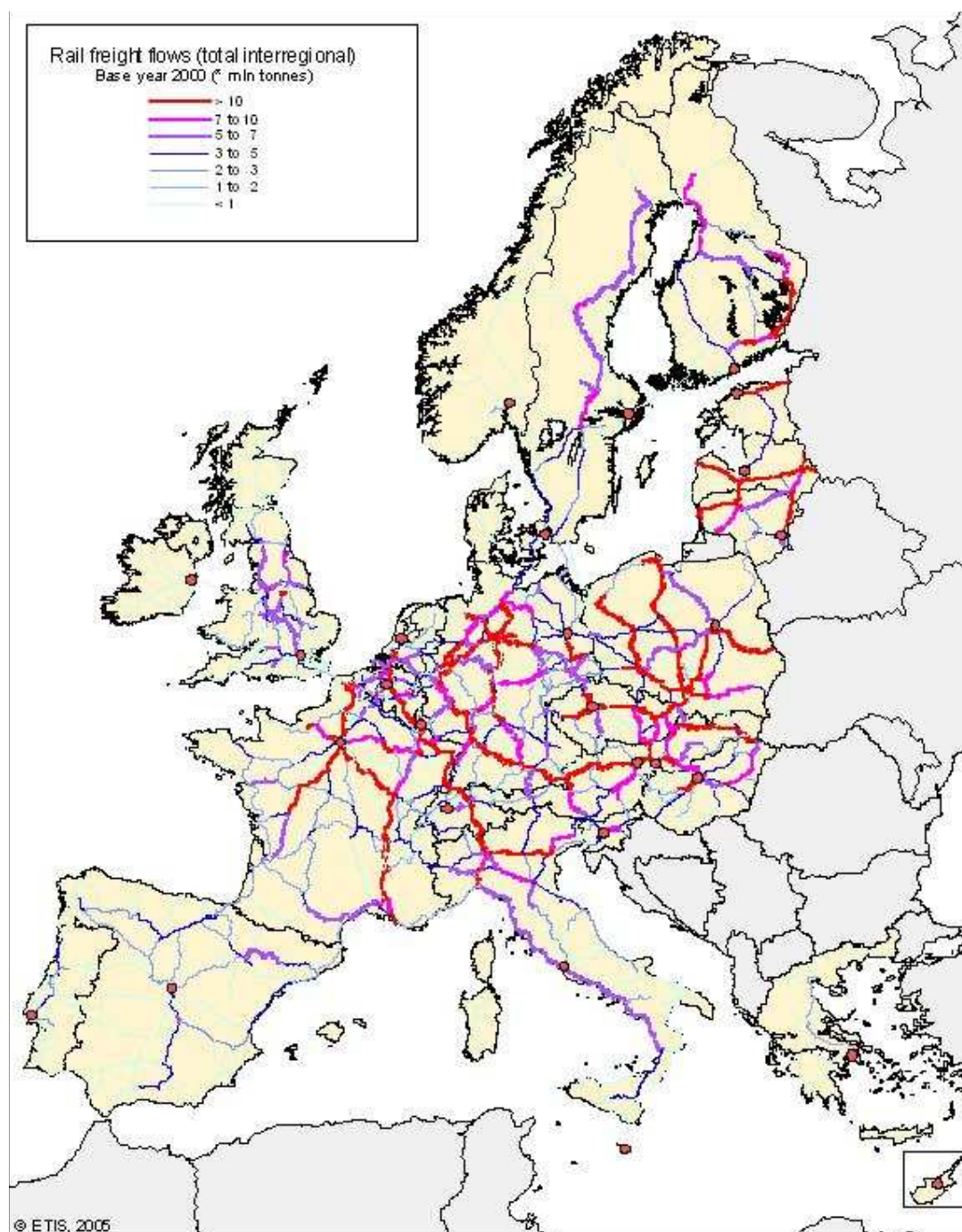
**Figure O:** International rail passenger flows (2000)



Source: ETIS

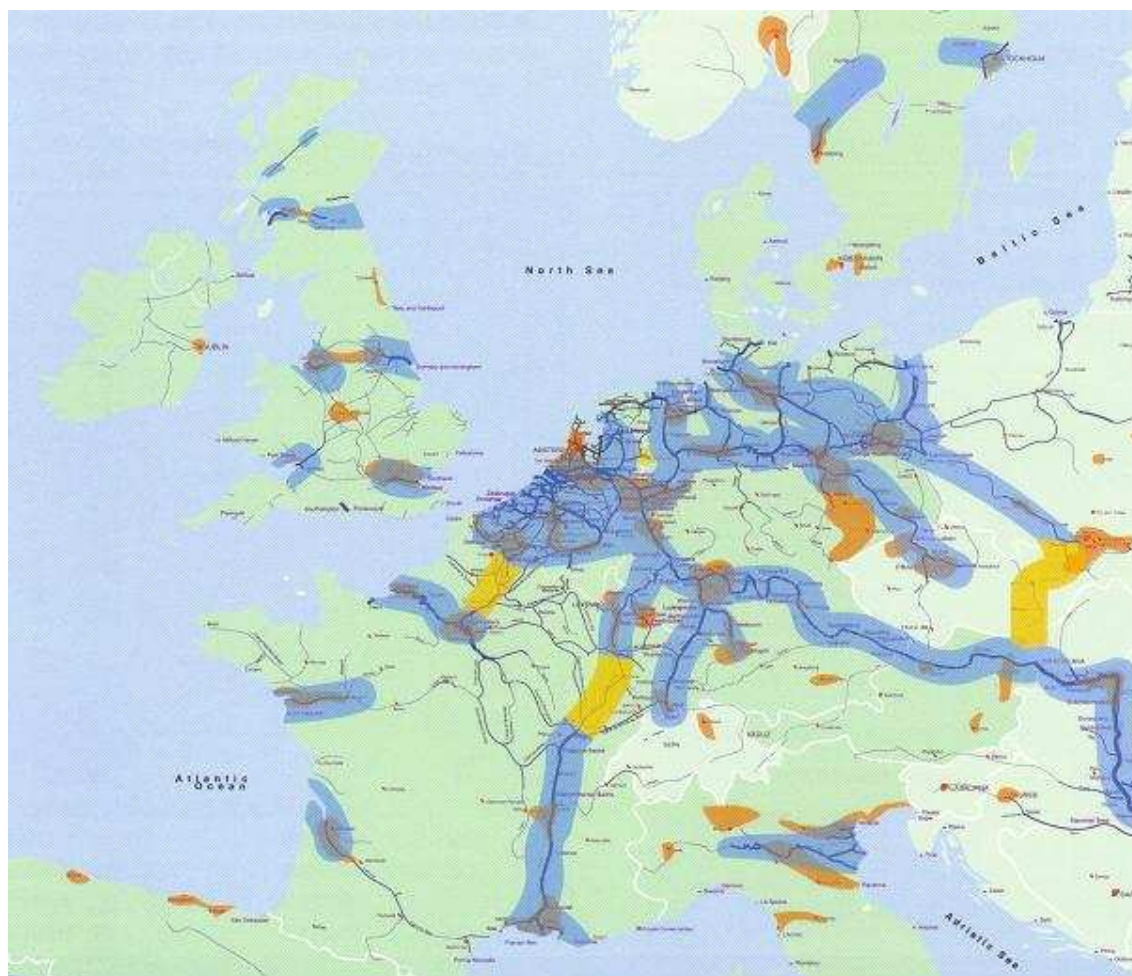


**Figure P:** Inter-regional rail freight flows (2000)



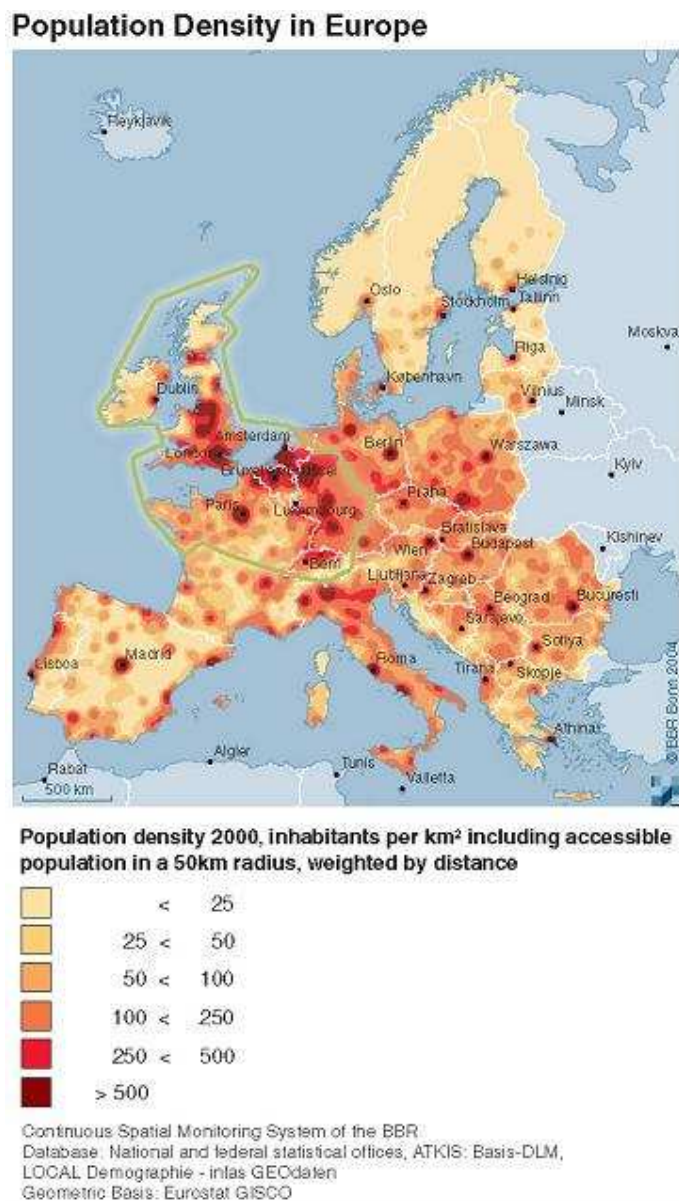
Source: ETIS

**Figure Q:** Pan-European waterway network and missing links



Source: <http://www.inlandnavigation.org>

**Figure R: Population density in Europe**





## C) OVERVIEW OF EU INITIATIVES WITH CONNECTION TO THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR NWE

as of December 2006

### INNOVATION

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Aim / themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
FP7 Research Framework Programme	Funding programme Budget ca. EUR 50.5bn	2007-2013	<p>four specific programmes:</p> <p>1. "Cooperation" on collaborative research, under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Food, agriculture and fisheries, and biotechnology</li> <li>• Information and communication technologies</li> <li>• Nano-sciences, nano-technologies, materials and new production technologies</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Environment (including climate change)</li> <li>• Transport (including aeronautics)</li> <li>• Socio-economic sciences and the humanities</li> <li>• Space</li> <li>• Security</li> </ul> <p>2. "Ideas", including the establishment of a European Research Council (ERC)</p> <p>3. "People" for human resources</p> <p>4. "Capacities" dealing with the potential research capacities of EU SMEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research infrastructures</li> <li>• Research for the benefit of SMEs</li> <li>• Regions of knowledge</li> <li>• Research potential</li> <li>• Science in society</li> <li>• Coherent development of research policies</li> <li>• Activities of international cooperation</li> </ul>		adopted	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/home_en.html">http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/home_en.html</a>

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Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme	Framework Programme EUR 3.6bn in total	2007-2013	<p>The CIP has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to foster the competitiveness of enterprises, in particular SMEs;</li> <li>to promote all forms of innovation including eco-innovation;</li> <li>to accelerate the development of a sustainable, competitive, innovative and inclusive Information Society;</li> <li>to promote energy efficiency and new and renewable energy sources in all sectors including transport.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst eco-innovation will be a transversal theme of the whole programme, CIP is composed of three specific programmes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start up and growth of SMEs: the "<a href="#">Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme</a>" with a budget of € 2.17 billion (including € 430million to promote eco-innovation), will facilitate SMEs access to finance, better integrate the existing networks of business support services (EuroInfoCentres and Innovation Relay Centres) and support innovation activities (INNOVA, Pro-Inno etc).</li> <li>2. Information and communication technologies: the "<a href="#">ICT Policy Support Programme</a>", with a budget of € 730 million, will contribute to competitiveness, growth and jobs through stimulating a wider adoption and more efficient take up and better use of ICT. In particular, it will include support for pilot actions using innovative ICT-based services of public interest; for the development of digital content and for enhancing the security of, and trust and confidence in, ICT and its applications.</li> <li>3. Increased use of renewable energy and reduced energy consumption: the "<a href="#">Intelligent Energy-Europe Programme</a>" with a budget of € 730 million will support energy efficiency, new and renewable energy sources, and technological solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emission cause by the transport sector.</li> </ol>	<p>Combines several existing EU activities</p> <p>Framework for 3 programmes (cf. themes)</p>	agreed	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm</a>

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Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme	Funding programme Budget EUR 2.1bn	2007-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programme aims to help enterprises innovate by providing access to finance: sharing risks and rewards with private equity investors and providing counter or co-guarantees to national guarantee schemes. The financial instruments will be operated by EIF.</li> <li>Through the programme, SMEs will have simple, clear and efficient access to the EU via the business support networks consisting of information and advice through EICs (Euro Info Centres) and IRCs (Innovation Relay Centres).</li> <li>The conditions for innovation will be improved through innovation actions, including exchanges of best practices between Member States and evidence (innovation trend chart, innobarometer, innovation scoreboard).</li> </ul>	<p>Part of Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme</p> <p>brings together activities from the <u>Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (MAP)</u>, the eco-innovation part of the <u>LIFE-Environment programme</u>, and innovation activities under FP7</p>	agreed	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm#entr">http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm#entr</a>
Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises (JEREMIE)	Joint initiative	2007-2013	<p>JEREMIE will enable European Member States and regions to use part of their structural funds to obtain a set of financial instruments that are specifically designed to support micro and small and medium enterprises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aimed at improving access to finance for the development of SMEs, and to enhance support on competitive terms for start-ups and micro-enterprises, through technical assistance, grants, as well as non-grant instruments such as loans, equity, venture capital and guarantees.</li> <li>Funding made available through JEREMIE must be used to provide financing to SMEs making investments in fixed assets and long-term working capital. This may involve new projects or the modernisation or expansion of existing businesses within sectors such as manufacturing, agribusiness, environment, services, ICT, life sciences, etc.</li> <li>3 main financial instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory and technical assistance</li> <li>Equity and venture capital</li> <li>Guarantees (both for micro credit loans and SME loans)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		Agreed by the member states in 2005	<a href="http://www.eif.eu.int/jeremie/">http://www.eif.eu.int/jeremie/</a>

## ENVIRONMENT

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development	Strategic guidelines	2007-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors</li> <li>Improving the environment and countryside</li> <li>Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification</li> <li>Building Local Capacity for Employment and Diversification</li> <li>Translating priorities into programmes</li> <li>Complementarity between Community Instruments</li> </ul>	CAP reform, based on LEADER+	Guidelines adopted in February 2006	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/capreform/rdguidelines/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/capreform/rdguidelines/index_en.htm</a>
Sixth Environmental Action Programme		2002-2012	Preparation of seven thematic strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Pollution (adopted September 2005)</li> <li>Prevention and Recycling of Waste (adopted December 2005)</li> <li>Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment (adopted October 2005)</li> <li>Soil (adopted September 2006)</li> <li>Sustainable Use of Pesticides</li> <li>Sustainable Use of Resources (adopted December 2005)</li> <li>Urban Environment (adopted January 2006)</li> </ul>	Cf. Thematic Strategies on air pollution, waste, marine environment, soil, sustainable use of resources and the urban environment	Adopted in 2002	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/newprg/index.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/newprg/index.htm</a>
Thematic Strategy on the sustainable use of natural resources	Strategy Budget EUR 10.5m	2006-2030	Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to improve the understanding and knowledge of European resource use, its negative environmental impact and significance in the EU and globally</li> <li>Develop tools to monitor and report progress in the EU, member states and economic sectors</li> <li>Foster the application of strategic approaches and processes both in economic sectors and in the member states and encourage them to develop related plans and programmes</li> <li>Raise awareness among stakeholders and citizens of the significant negative environmental impact of resource use.</li> </ul>	6 <sup>th</sup> EAP	Adopted December 2005	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/natres/index.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/natres/index.htm</a>

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Thematic strategy on soil protection	Thematic Strategy		<p>The Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection consists of a Communication from the Commission to the other European Institutions, a proposal for a Framework Directive, and an Impact Assessment.</p> <p>The proposed Directive includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of a common framework to protect soil on the basis of the principles of preservation of soil functions, prevention of soil degradation, mitigation of its effects, restoration of degraded soils and integration in other sectoral policies.</li> <li>• The requirement to identify, describe and assess the impact of some sectoral policies on soil degradation processes with a view to protect soil functions.</li> <li>• The requirement for land users to take precautionary measures when their use of the soil can be expected to significantly hamper soil functions.</li> <li>• An approach to soil sealing to ensure a more rational use of land in accordance with Article 174 of the EC Treaty and to maintain as many soil functions as possible.</li> <li>• Identification of areas at risk of erosion, organic matter decline, salinisation, compaction and landslides, and establishment of national programmes of measures.</li> <li>• Measures to limit the introduction of dangerous substances into the soil, to avoid accumulation in soil that would hamper soil functions and create a risk to human health and the environment.</li> <li>• Setting up an inventory of contaminated sites, a mechanism for funding the remediation of orphan sites, a soil status report, and establishing a national strategy for remediation of the contaminated sites identified.</li> </ul>	6 <sup>th</sup> EAP	<p>Thematic Strategy adopted in September 2006</p> <p>Proposal for Framework Directive presented in September 2006</p>	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/soil/index.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/soil/index.htm</a>

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste	Thematic Strategy		Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewed emphasis on full implementation of existing legislation</li> <li>• Simplification and modernization of existing legislation</li> <li>• Introduction of life-cycle thinking into waste policy</li> <li>• Promotion of more ambitious waste prevention policies</li> <li>• Better knowledge and information</li> <li>• Development of common reference standards for recycling</li> <li>• Further elaboration of the EU's recycling policy</li> </ul>	6 <sup>th</sup> EAP	Adopted December 2005	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/strategy.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/strategy.htm</a>
LIFE+	Funding programme ca. EUR 2.1bn	2007-2013	Objective: Contribute to the development and implementation of EU environment policy and legislation, thus contributing to sustainable development under the 6 <sup>th</sup> EAP priorities: climate change; nature and biodiversity; environment & health; sustainable use of resources; strategic approaches to policy development; implementation and enforcement (incl. EIA and SEA); ex-post evaluation of Community environmental policy measures  Priorities: Implementation and governance (75-80% of budget) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contribute to the development and demonstration of innovative policy approaches and instruments,</li> <li>• contribute to consolidating the knowledge base for the development, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of environmental policy and legislation,</li> <li>• support the design and implementation of approaches to monitoring and assessment of the state of the environment and the drivers, pressures and responses that impact on it,</li> <li>• facilitate the implementation of Community environment policy, with a particular emphasis on implementation at local and regional level,</li> <li>• provide support for better environmental governance, broadening stakeholder involvement, including that of non-governmental organisations, in policy consultation and implementation.</li> </ul> Information and Communication (20-25% of budget) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disseminate information and raise awareness on environmental issues,</li> <li>• provide support for accompanying measures (information, communication actions and campaigns, conferences, etc).</li> </ul>	6 <sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme	adoption of the regulation currently in conciliation, formal meeting of the Conciliation Committee expected in February/March 2007.	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/news/futureoflife.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/news/futureoflife.htm</a>

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Water Framework Directive	Law	transposition into national legislation in 2003, final river basin management plans incl. programmes and measures in 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection of rivers, lakes, coastal areas and groundwater</li> <li>• objectives to ensure that all waters meet "good status" by 2015.</li> <li>• identification by member states of individual river basins</li> <li>• ensuring appropriate administrative arrangements for each river basin district within national territory</li> <li>• requires cross-border cooperation to ensure appropriate administrative arrangements for each <i>international</i> river basin district</li> <li>• Ensures active participation of all stakeholders, including NGOs and local communities, in water management activities.</li> <li>• Ensures reduction and control of pollution from all sources like agriculture, industrial activity, and urban areas, etc.</li> <li>• Requires water pricing policies and ensures that the polluter pays.</li> </ul>	<p>Proposals for daughter directives on groundwater and flood risk management</p> <p>Replaces seven earlier directives: on surface water, on measurement methods and sampling frequencies and exchanges of information on fresh water quality; the fish water, shellfish water, and groundwater directives; and the directive on dangerous substances discharges</p>	Adopted in 2000	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html">http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html</a>
Proposal for a daughter directive on groundwater protection against pollution	Law		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• criteria for the assessment of good groundwater chemical status;</li> <li>• criteria for the identification and reversal of significant and sustained upward trends and for the definition of starting points for trend reversals.</li> <li>• establishes a requirement to prevent or limit indirect discharges of pollutants into groundwater</li> </ul> <p>Member States will be required to monitor and assess groundwater quality on the basis of common criteria and to identify and reverse trends in groundwater pollution. The Directive introduces a mixed regime – on the one hand, compliance to quality standards and on the other hand, measures to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater. The Member States will have to establish some of the standards themselves at the most appropriate level, taking into account local or regional conditions.</p>	Cf. Water Framework Directive, Nitrates Directive, Landfill Directive and future Soil Framework Directive	Directive adopted by Parliament in December 2006	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index.html">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index.html</a>



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Proposal for a daughter directive on the assessment and management of floods	Law		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood risk assessment for each river basin district</li> <li>Flood risk maps</li> <li>Flood risk management plans</li> </ul>	Cf. Water Framework Directive	Proposal by the Commission (January 2006)	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/flood_risk/pdf/com_2006_15_en.pdf">http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/flood_risk/pdf/com_2006_15_en.pdf</a>
Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment	Strategy		<p>Promote the sustainable use of the seas and conserve marine ecosystems</p> <p>A framework for enhanced cooperation should ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A high level of protection for Europe's oceans and seas</li> <li>An improved knowledge base to inform policy making</li> <li>Integrated and cost-effective actions to reduce pressures</li> <li>Effective monitoring and assessment to make sure goals are achieved and actions deliver results</li> </ul>	6 <sup>th</sup> EAP Proposal for a Directive establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy Green Paper on Maritime Policy	adopted	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/marine/com_504_en.pdf">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/marine/com_504_en.pdf</a>
Proposal for a Directive establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy	Law		A framework for the development of Marine Strategies designed to achieve good environmental status in the marine environment and to ensure the continued protection and preservation of that environment and the prevention of deterioration	6 <sup>th</sup> EAP Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment	Proposal dated October 2005	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/marine/dir_505_en.pdf">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/marine/dir_505_en.pdf</a>

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Maritime Policy Green Paper: "Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and Seas"	Green Paper		<p>Consultation on an integrated future Maritime Policy for the European Union.</p> <p>Consultation questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are we to assure Europe's economic leadership and competitiveness not only in the shipping, ports and shipbuilding sectors, but also in fast growing industries such as blue biotechnology, ocean monitoring and marine robotics, modern aquaculture, cruise shipping and the sea-based energy sector?</li> <li>• How can we maximise our knowledge of the oceans and seas through scientific research and technology, and use that knowledge to ensure that we protect the ocean resource base and reverse environmental degradation?</li> <li>• How can we maximise quality of life in our coastal regions, and boost the development of sustainable coastal tourism?</li> <li>• What instruments can be developed and used to manage our relationship with the sea better, including data collection, spatial planning and financial instruments?</li> <li>• How can we establish better governance in maritime affairs for optimal results at a regional, national, European and international level, and how can we foster cooperation in the offshore activities of governments?</li> <li>• How can we sustain and promote our European maritime heritage, and strengthen the maritime identity of Europe?</li> </ul>	Thematic Strategy for the Marine Environment (which is seen as the environmental pillar of a future maritime policy) Link to Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution	Green Paper adopted in June 2006	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy_en.html">http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy_en.html</a>
EU Integrated Coastal Zone Management	Policy recommendations	2007 – onwards	The Commission Communication of 7 June 2007, COM(2007)308 final presents the conclusions of this evaluation exercise et sets out the main policy directions for further promotion on ICZM in Europe.	Marine Strategy and the EU Integrated Coastal Zone Management policy	Commission Communication	<a href="http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0308en01.doc">http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0308en01.doc</a>
MSUO – Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation	INTERREG cross-programme Jointly funded by four Interreg IIIB programmes (NWE, NSR, Northern Periphery, BSR)		<p>Assistance to INTERREG maritime safety projects by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a European and International Network for cooperation on maritime safety</li> <li>• Promoting project outcomes to establish Europe and partners at the forefront of maritime safety activity</li> <li>• Increasing project competence in maritime safety by closing gaps in knowledge and encouraging cooperation</li> <li>• Assisting programmes to become a collective driving force for maritime safety on the European and International agenda</li> </ul>	Interreg IIIB (NWE, NSR, Northern Periphery, BSR)		<a href="http://www.maritime-safety.org/">http://www.maritime-safety.org/</a>

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Air Quality Framework Directive	Law		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlining of existing provisions and merging five legal instruments into a single directive</li> <li>The introduction of new air quality standards for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) in air</li> <li>Objectives for ambient air quality to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole</li> <li>Assess the ambient air quality in member states on the basis of common methods and criteria</li> <li>Obtain adequate information on ambient air quality and ensure that it is made available to the public</li> </ul>	Four daughter directives	Adopted in 1996	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/air/ambient.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/air/ambient.htm</a>
Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution	Thematic Strategy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making environment legislation work better</li> <li>Integrating air quality concerns into other policy areas</li> </ul>	6 <sup>th</sup> EAP	Adopted in 2005	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/air/cafe/index.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/air/cafe/index.htm</a>
'Intelligent Energy Europe' Programme	Funding programme EUR 727m grant rate usually 50%	2007-2013	Promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources through projects and other actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New and renewable energy sources (ALTENER)</li> <li>Energy efficiency, notably in buildings and industry (SAVE)</li> <li>Energy aspects of transport (STEER)</li> <li>Cooperation with developing countries (COOPENER)</li> </ul>	Part of Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme	agreed	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/intelligent/index_en.html">http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/intelligent/index_en.html</a>
A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy	Green Paper		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy for growth and jobs in Europe: completing the internal European electricity and gas markets</li> <li>An Internal Energy Market that guarantees security of supply: solidarity between Member States</li> <li>Tackling security and competitiveness of energy supply: towards a more sustainable, efficient and diverse energy mix</li> <li>An integrated approach to tackling climate change</li> <li>Encouraging innovation: a strategic European energy technology plan</li> <li>Towards a coherent external energy policy</li> </ul>		Public consultation closed in September 2006	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/energy/green-paper-energy/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/energy/green-paper-energy/index_en.htm</a>
Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-E)	yearly budget of about 25 Million Euros		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>finances electricity and gas transmission infrastructure projects of European interest</li> <li>mainly support for feasibility studies. Most projects cross national borders or have an influence on several EU Member States.</li> </ul>	TEN		<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/energy/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/energy/index_en.htm</a>

## ACCESSIBILITY

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
TEN-Ts	Proposed total budget of EUR 20.35 billion (ca. 3 bn EUR / year) for 2007 - 2013	2007-2013	30 priority axes, out of which the following 13 are partly or fully located in NWE: 2. High-speed railway axis Paris-Bruxelles/Brussels-Köln-Amsterdam-London 4. High-speed railway axis East 5. Betuwe line 9. Railway axis Cork-Dublin-Belfast-Stranraer (completed 2001) 13. UK/Ireland/Benelux road axis 14. West coast main line 17. Railway axis Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Wien-Bratislava 18. Rhine/Maas-Main-Danube inland waterway axis 21. Motorways of the Sea: Motorway of the Sea of western Europe (leading from Portugal and Spain via the Atlantic Arc to the North Sea and the Irish Sea) 24. Railway axis Lyon/Genova-Basel-Duisburg-Rotterdam/Antwerpen 26. Railway/road axis Ireland/United Kingdom/continental Europe 28. "Europaprail" on the Brussels-Luxembourg-Strasbourg railway axis 30. Inland waterway axis Seine-Scheldt	TEN	Adopted  Calls for proposals	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/transport/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/transport/index_en.htm</a>  maps: <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/transport/maps/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/transport/maps/index_en.htm</a>
Motorways of the Sea	Part of the TEN-T Legal guidelines and funding		Initiative to promote sustainable transport of goods to and through the European economic area, and to aid port development by introducing new intermodal maritime-based logistics chains in Europe.  Three main objectives for the sea motorways projects: (1) freight flow concentration on sea-based logistical routes; (2) increasing cohesion; (3) reducing road congestion through modal shift.  Four corridors have been designated for the setting up of projects of European interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Motorway of the Baltic Sea</i> (linking the Baltic Sea Member States with Member States in Central and Western Europe, including the route through the North Sea/Baltic Sea canal);</li> <li><i>Motorway of the Sea of western Europe</i> (leading from Portugal and Spain via the Atlantic Arc to the North Sea and the Irish Sea);</li> <li><i>Motorway of the Sea of south-east Europe</i> (connecting the Adriatic Sea to the Ionian Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, including Cyprus);</li> <li><i>Motorway of the Sea of south-west Europe</i> (western Mediterranean, connecting Spain, France, Italy and including Malta and linking with the Motorway of the Sea of south-east Europe and including links to the Black Sea).</li> </ul>	Transport White Paper  TEN-T	TEN-T guidelines adopted on 29 April 2004  By 2010 the network of motorways of the sea should be established throughout Europe on the four corridors	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/intermodality/motorways_sea/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/intermodality/motorways_sea/index_en.htm</a>  map: <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/transport/intermodality/motorways_sea/doc/2004_07_30_map_motorways_sea.pdf">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/transport/intermodality/motorways_sea/doc/2004_07_30_map_motorways_sea.pdf</a>

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NAIADES – Integrated Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport	Communication / Action Programme	2006-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five strategic areas for a comprehensive Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) policy: Market, Fleet, Jobs and skills, Image, Infrastructure.</li> <li>Reflections on an appropriate organisational structure, and recommendations on legislative, coordination and support measures.</li> </ul>	White Paper: European Transport Policy for 2010 – time to decide	Communication adopted in January 2006	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/transport/iw/prospect/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/transport/iw/prospect/index_en.htm</a>
European transport policy for 2010: time to decide	White Paper	Until 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shifting the balance between modes of transport</li> <li>Eliminating bottlenecks</li> <li>Placing users at the heart of transport policy</li> <li>Managing the globalization of transport</li> </ul>		Adopted in 2001	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/transport/white_paper/documents/doc/lb_texte_complet_en.pdf">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/transport/white_paper/documents/doc/lb_texte_complet_en.pdf</a>
Marco Polo II Programme	Funding programme EUR 400m	2007-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce road congestion, improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system within the EU and enhance intermodality</li> <li>Support of actions in the freight transport, logistics and other relevant markets, motorways of the sea and traffic avoidance measures.</li> </ul>	White Paper: European Transport Policy for 2010 – time to decide	Regulation agreed in November 2006	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/marcopolo/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/marcopolo/index_en.htm</a>
CIVITAS Initiative	Co-financed by the EU  overall budget of the Initiative more than 300 M €.	CIVITAS II (2005-2009)	<p>Programme coordinated by cities</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to promote and implement sustainable, clean and (energy) efficient urban transport measures</li> <li>to implement integrated packages of technology and policy measures in the field of energy and transport in 8 categories of measures (i.e. access restrictions, clean fuels and vehicles, collective passenger transport, integrated pricing strategies, less car intensive lifestyle, soft measures, transport management, urban goods transport)</li> <li>to build up critical mass and markets for innovation</li> </ul>	(also relevant for sustainable urban development priority)	Running  Continuation under discussion	<a href="http://www.civitas-initiative.org">http://www.civitas-initiative.org</a>

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
QuickStart Programme	Ca. EUR 60 bn until 2010	Until 2010	<p>Programme identifies key areas for investment in network and knowledge that can be underway in three years. Projects cover:</p> <p>1) Investing in networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QuickStart Transport projects: segments of TEN-T segments, mainly cross-border rail connections, sea and inland waterways or road links interconnecting with other networks such as the "motorways of the sea"</li> <li>Support of Galileo Satellite navigation system</li> <li>17 Potential Quick-Start Energy links (from energy TENs proposals)</li> <li>3 Broadband QuickStart projects: digital divide project (remote and rural areas), Mobile Communication and technologies project (research on the introduction of 3G mobile communication systems); ICT-based research network infrastructure project (upgrading the Géant network connecting universities and research centres)</li> </ul> <p>2) Investing in knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focus on key technology sectors: nanoelectronics, next generation lasers, hydrogen as a source of energy and electricity</li> <li>the EU's presence in space: GMES – continuing support for the new satellite-based Global system for Monitoring of the Environment and Security (expected to be fully operational by 2008); and a launch facility for Soyoz rockets</li> </ul>	TEN Structural Funds		<a href="http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/rpt/2003/com2003_0690en01.pdf">http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/rpt/2003/com2003_0690en01.pdf</a>

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
ICT Policy Support Programme	Funding programme Budget EUR 728m	2007-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stimulate the new converging markets for electronic networks, media content and digital technologies</li> <li>Test solutions to the bottlenecks that delay wide European deployment of electronic services</li> <li>Support the modernization of public sector services that will raise productivity and improve services</li> </ul>	<p>Part of Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme</p> <p>programme will build on the aims of the <a href="#">e-TEN</a>, <a href="#">Modinis</a> and <a href="#">e-Content</a> programmes in line with the new integrated strategy <a href="#">i2010 - European Information Society 2010</a>.</p>	agreed	<p><a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm#ict">http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm#ict</a></p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/eten/newroom/programme/framework/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/eten/newroom/programme/framework/index_en.htm</a></p>
i2010 - A European Information Society for growth and employment	Strategy		<p>Three policy priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to create an open and competitive single market for information society and media services within the EU.</li> <li>to increase EU investment in research on information and communication technologies (ICT) by 80%.</li> <li>to promote an inclusive European information society.</li> </ul>		Initiative adopted on 1 June 2005	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm</a>
eContent Plus	Funding programme EUR 149m	2005-2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to tackle organisational barriers and promote take up of leading-edge technical solutions to improve accessibility and usability of digital material in a multilingual environment.</li> <li>addresses specific market areas where development has been slow: geographic content (as a key constituent of public sector content), educational content, cultural, scientific and scholarly content.</li> </ul>		approved	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/econtentplus/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/econtentplus/index_en.htm</a>
IDABC (European eGovernment services)		2005-2009	<p>IDABC= Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Business and Citizens.</p> <p>Builds on ICT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to encourage and support the delivery of cross-border public sector services to citizens and enterprises in Europe,</li> <li>to improve efficiency and collaboration between European public administrations and,</li> <li>to contribute to making Europe an attractive place to live, work and invest.</li> </ul>	eEurope	Work programme adopted on 28 February 2006	<p><a href="http://europa.eu.int/idabc/">http://europa.eu.int/idabc/</a></p> <p>work programme: <a href="http://europa.eu.int/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=24379">http://europa.eu.int/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=24379</a></p>



## SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment	Thematic Strategy		<p>Better integration of existing EU environment policies and legislation at the local level by supporting local authorities to adopt a more integrated approach to urban management</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on integrated environmental management</li> <li>• Guidance on sustainable urban transport plans</li> <li>• Support for EU wide exchange of best practices</li> <li>• Commission Internet Portal for Local Authorities</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	6 <sup>th</sup> EAP	Adopted January 2006	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/pdf/com_2005_0718_en.pdf">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/pdf/com_2005_0718_en.pdf</a>
"A European approach to sustainable communities" (the Bristol Accord)	Policy		<p>Bristol Accord set out eight characteristics of a sustainable community and a commitment to share good practice case studies</p> <p>Sustainable communities should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active, inclusive and safe</li> <li>• Well run</li> <li>• Well connected</li> <li>• Well served</li> <li>• Environmentally sensitive</li> <li>• Thriving</li> <li>• Well designed and built</li> <li>• Fair for everyone</li> </ul> <p>Further proposals included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance the impact of European Investment Bank loan finance and</li> <li>• To foster generic "place-making" skills</li> </ul>		Agreed under UK Presidency: EU Ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities, November 2005	<a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/523/PolicyPapersUKPresidencyEUMinisterialInformalOnSustainableCommunities_id1162523.pdf">http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/523/PolicyPapersUKPresidencyEUMinisterialInformalOnSustainableCommunities_id1162523.pdf</a>
Culture 2007	<p>Until 2006: EUR 167m</p> <p>From 2007: proposed budget of EUR 408 m</p>	2007-2013	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to promote the preservation and knowledge of cultural heritage of European significance;</li> <li>• to promote the transnational mobility of people working in the cultural sector;</li> <li>• to encourage the transnational circulation of works and cultural and artistic products;</li> <li>• to encourage intercultural dialogue.</li> </ul>		formal adoption pending	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index_en.html">http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index_en.html</a>

Title	Type / funding available	Period covered	Themes / priorities	Link to other initiatives	Status	Website
URBACT follow-up		2006-2013	Proposal for new framework programme to extend URBACT to cover all cities across Europe as well as the experience gained under individual national networks and the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)	EUKN (www.eukn.org)	Continuation under discussion	www.urbact.org
EUKN European Urban Knowledge Network	Network / interactive portal		<p>Six themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• social inclusion &amp; integration;</li> <li>• housing;</li> <li>• transport &amp; infrastructure;</li> <li>• urban environment;</li> <li>• economy, knowledge &amp; employment;</li> <li>• security &amp; crime prevention.</li> </ul> <p>Best practice, summaries of practical urban research, descriptions of successful urban policies at a local, regional, national or European level, and descriptions of relevant networks.</p>		Launched in 2005	www.eukn.org
Cohesion Policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the region	Commission staff working paper	November 2005 – ongoing	<p>Attractive cities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport, accessibility and mobility</li> <li>• Access to services and amenities</li> <li>• The natural and physical environment</li> <li>• The cultural sector</li> </ul> <p>Supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions for SMEs and micro-enterprises</li> <li>• Innovation and the knowledge economy</li> </ul> <p>More and better jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paradox of cities: many jobs, yet high unemployment</li> <li>• Improving employability by raising levels of educational achievement and training</li> </ul> <p>Disparities within cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities</li> <li>• Increased security for citizens</li> </ul> <p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities and regions</li> <li>• The integrated approach to sustainable urban development</li> <li>• Citizen participation</li> <li>• Networks and exchange of experience (URBACT extension)</li> </ul> <p>Financing urban renewal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing financial engineering (JEREMIE)</li> <li>• Public-private partnership (PPP)</li> </ul>	EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 / Community Strategic Guidelines	Public consultation until February 2006 Results were integrated into the final version of the Community Strategic Guidelines	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/consultation/urban/contri_urban_en.pdf">http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/consultation/urban/contri_urban_en.pdf</a>

## D) OVERVIEW OF THE PRIORITIES IN NATIONAL STRATEGIC REFERENCE FRAMEWORKS OF MEMBER STATES INVOLVED IN THE NWE PROGRAMME IN RELATION TO THE COMPETITIVENESS AND COOPERATION COHESION POLICY

<b>Belgium (Flanders)</b>	<p><b>Updated NSRF Flanders-Belgium</b></p> <p><u>Overall aim</u> Strengthen competitiveness and attractiveness of the Flemish economy, further development of Flanders as knowledge region and entrepreneurial region with attention for sustainable and balanced development of urban and rural areas</p> <p>The strategy of the Flemish draft NSRF regarding the ERDF has been organised around <u>4 main priorities</u>. Sustainable and balanced development of rural areas will be integrated in the three first priorities.</p> <p>Three <u>horizontal themes</u> are integrated throughout the 4 priorities: territorial dimension, sustainable development and environment, interregional cooperation</p> <p><b><u>Main priorities:</u></b></p> <p><b>1) Promote and stimulate knowledge economy and innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising within profit and non profit sector on importance of knowledge and cooperation between/with other knowledge actors (enterprises, research centres, knowledge institutions,...)</li> <li>• Support coaching and guidance actions for improved knowledge transfer (knowledge brokers, facilitating access to strategic and job specific knowledge, individual and collective support by knowledge actors, business modelling)</li> <li>• Set up cooperation initiatives (networks, clusters, platforms) and stimulating interaction between different actors (public sector, large enterprises, SME's, non profit, research centres, knowledge institutions)</li> <li>• Focus on the international character of the knowledge economy (support SME's in accessing international programs, link up Flemish and foreign clusters, optimise international commercialization)</li> <li>• Support innovative examples/pilots of knowledge applications (emphasis on demonstration effect and transferability of knowledge)</li> <li>• Support innovation with a view to increasing eco-efficiency, sustainable production and consumption patterns, attention for environmental and energy technologies and system innovation</li> <li>• Stimulate innovation in typical sectors of rural economy (tourism, regional branding,...)</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Stimulate entrepreneurship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulate entrepreneurial behaviour of individuals, businesses and society (with specific attention for certain groups like young people, women, 45+, immigrants)</li> <li>• Better regulatory framework for entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Facilitating start-up, growth and take-over of enterprises</li> <li>• Better information on risk capital/financing</li> <li>• Stimulate international and ethical entrepreneurship</li> <li>• A mix of complementary measures in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, with special attention to the rural areas</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>3) Optimize external spatial-economic factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve external spatial-economic factors in order to create an attractive environment for the location and development of enterprises (including brownfield development)</li> <li>• Sustainable business sites/industrial estates (design, development, functioning, sustainable long term management of business sites)</li> <li>• Improve the accessibility of business sites/industrial estates</li> <li>• Improve and optimise the logistical system, strengthening the (international) accessibility and functioning of 'economic gates' as important locational factor for enterprises</li> <li>• Adapt policy according to the requirements of the area (e.g. other accents and/or enterprises in rural areas than in more urbanized areas), integrated localisation of business sites/industrial estates in rural areas</li> <li>• Integral water management (flooding prevention, protecting water quality, developing waterways in the logistic network, safeguard the touristic and natural attraction of waterways)</li> <li>• Develop a healthy and natural environment (in line with Natura 2000)</li> <li>• Safeguard the reservoir function of rural areas both with regard to quality of the living and natural environment as well as the attractiveness as location for small innovative enterprises</li> </ul> <p><b>4) Improve urban development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen cities and urban areas to create growth, innovation and employment</li> <li>• Urban renewal - renewal of deprived urban areas in major cities</li> <li>• Develop and strengthen complementary spatial networks, support integrated urban development projects (focus on economy and mobility as pull factors for other issues)</li> <li>• Stimulate intercity cooperation in regional cooperation platforms with a view to creating critical mass</li> <li>• Four main action lines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening the economy in urban areas (creating and maintaining space for enterprises and economic activities)</li> <li>- Improve the internal and external accessibility in and between urban areas and improve the attractiveness of cities</li> <li>- Improve the quality of life in cities/urban areas</li> <li>- Develop the socio-cultural sector as a means to a positive socio-economical development of cities</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>NSRF and Objective 3</b></p> <p>Reference is made to the importance of ever closer cooperation between European regions in order to enhance competitiveness and economic growth.</p> <p>Great importance is attached to the further supporting of the dynamic/momentum created by current Interreg III programmes.</p> <p>Future Objective 3 programmes in which Flanders will cooperate are mentioned.</p> <p><b>NSRF and interregional cooperation</b></p> <p>The possibility is included for actions on interregional cooperation with at least one region of another member state, for exchanging experiences and best practices, within the 4 priorities.</p>
<b>Belgium</b>	Wallonia has chosen to apply its NSRF explicitly to the "Convergence" and "Regional competitiveness and employment" objectives and optionally to

<b>(Wallonia)</b>	<p>the “Territorial cooperation” objective.</p> <p>The Walloon NSRF foresees an effective/real complementarity between programs and actions under the “Territorial cooperation” objective and programs and actions under the “Convergence” and “Regional competitiveness and employment” objectives.</p> <p>Internationalization, or the international dimension, which is inherent to the territorial cooperation objective, is considered as an essential element for supporting the general economic development strategy of Wallonia.</p> <p>The following priorities are identified in order to support the economic development strategy of Wallonia in its international dimension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internationalization of enterprises/businesses, insert them in European networks;</li> <li>• Development of cooperation schemes with neighbouring “pôles de compétitivité”;</li> <li>• Insert and link up Wallonia in European research networks;</li> <li>• Internationalization of targeted urban areas and insert them within the networks.</li> </ul>
<b>Belgium (Brussels)</b>	<p>The overall objectives of the Brussels Capital Region NSRF are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>a balanced territorial development of the Brussels Region and a decrease of the economic, social and environmental inequalities within the Region;</i></li> <li>• <i>a growth of the economic dynamism, innovation and employment.</i></li> </ul> <p>The three thematic NSRF priorities for Brussels are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To strengthen territorial cohesion The main objective of this priority is the sustainable and integrated development of the socio-economic fragile zone of the Region. The issues that will be addressed within this priority intervention zone consist of strengthening the economic potential, creating socioeconomic infrastructures, improving the quality of life and the attractiveness of the zone, reducing urban barriers, valorisation of the tourist and commercial potential of the zone.</li> <li>2. To improve territorial competitiveness The main objective of this priority is to make the socio-economic fragile zone of the Brussels Region more attractive, thanks to economic development and innovative initiatives within this priority intervention zone, supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the creation of new businesses in sectors generating jobs</li> <li>- specific economic sectors that are already present in the zone</li> <li>- management and professionalisation of the guidance and consultancy services for businesses and support investment and access to capital for starters investing in the zone</li> <li>- the set up of new innovation centres in the zone.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Employment and social cohesion The main objective is to strengthen social cohesion in order to increase employment in the Brussels Capital Region, supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- job seekers to help them increase their ability to enter the labour</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<p>market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- initiatives concerning professional integration of the unemployed</li> <li>- female participation in the labour market</li> <li>- development and management of partnerships in favour of job seekers and employers</li> <li>- actions to meet the needs of the labour market and to provide accurate forecasts of these needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>The three transversal NSRF priorities for Brussels are:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sustainable development</li> <li>2. Innovation</li> <li>3. Governance, partnership and equal opportunities.</li> </ol> <p><i>Territorial cooperation</i></p> <p>The goal is to develop coherent projects enabling actors, within the frame of territorial cooperation, to work closely in line with the orientations and subjects chosen within the main Objective (II), and to put the emphasis on structuring projects, aiming at different objectives at the same time within an inter-sectoral approach. Project partnerships will have to take the Regions' specifications into account: its size, its triple status of city, region and national, regional and European capital.</p> <p>The aim of the Brussels-Capital Region in matters of territorial cooperation is on supporting the regional priorities referred to in the NSRF. For Brussels, which is both a city and a region, it seems particularly important to focus the theme of urban development on cooperation networks, and particularly in Northwestern Europe where comparable situations exist. The Region will pay particular attention to get involved in projects with high stakes for its development: items dealing with concepts such as polycentrism (creation of networks of complementary cities), seeking synergies, setting up cooperation, new kinds of governance and instruments in favour of harmonious relationships between cities and between cities and their hinterland. Cities and urban regions are important growth centers. These growth centers help, among others, to achieve the objectives of Lisbon and Gothenburg, which are priorities today. In order to achieve these objectives, cities must have appropriate means and tools at their disposal. They have to develop (existing) functional specializations (niches), establish complementary centres of growth and make good use of their respective (human resources) potential through the creation of, for instance, SME and innovation networks and competence centers. The term "innovation" needs to be used in its wider sense, i.e. innovation in every sector of activity and also, for instance, in the sectors inherent in a city and important to Brussels such as construction, services, tourism, creative industries (fashion, art...). Common initiatives can be taken concerning training and the increase of enterprise spirit and innovation. Actions can especially be taken aiming at attracting businesses, innovative activities, SME and other types of investment activities in socio-economic weaker areas of the city. As at the same time, cities are confronted with problems endangering this process of innovation and creativity (social exclusion, poverty, quality of public space in some central areas, air pollution, problems of traffic congestion,...), these problems can also be addressed in the frame of the future territorial cooperation programmes. Common strategies need to be set up to efficiently approach the different inner city problems, a.o. via the</p>
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	<p>implementation of the projects referred to above concerning training of human resources, attracting investments and innovation, etc. Urban sprawl can be addressed through actions aiming at increasing the city's attractiveness for inhabitants and investments, improvement of the urban environment and of the availability and quality of urban infrastructure, (public) services, etc. Projects developing and strengthening the city cultural assets (heritage, art, cultural diversity...) are part of this strategy.</p> <p>Priorities in the field of management of natural resources and prevention of climate change are a.o. actions reducing pollution, increasing energy efficiency in all activity sectors, actions in the field of renewable energy sources, etc. Particularly, projects can be developed concerning eco-construction and sustainable architecture, including aspects such as training and increasing public awareness.</p> <p>In the field of transport and accessibility, priorities include smart and sustainable transport solutions, which are especially important in urban areas with very high traffic flows (optimization of transport flows and of the existing infrastructure), reduction of road congestion and of car dependence developing public transport solutions, creating efficient logistic systems and promoting multimodal transport solutions with the emphasis on sustainable transport modes, improvement of the interoperability and intermodality of freight transport (rail and waterway transport), strengthening the potential and competitiveness of inland waterway transport, as well as of connections and cooperation between sea- and inland ports, and the integration of inland ports into their (urban) environment.</p> <p>New intermodal nodes – as recently developing zones with mixed development programmes, specific functions and assets – must be fully integrated into their immediate environment and in the city. The quality of the public space is a determining factor of the attractiveness of these new city areas. More generally, common strategies can be developed favouring high quality public space (public space as shared space, integration of light plan, etc.).</p>
<b>Germany</b>	<p>The strategy of the German draft NSRF has been organized around 3 main priorities, the so called strategic funds-spanning priorities.</p> <p>The NSRF stresses the regional distinctions of the 16 federal states. Therefore, these 16 states will on the basis of SWOT-analyses develop their individual strategies to strengthen the economic competitiveness of the respective <i>Land</i>. Beside the distinctions, Germany's regions show similarities regarding their characteristics and problems. These are the need to reduce unemployment, to strengthen competitiveness as well as the support of growth and the accomplishment of globalisation. Aiming at this the regions have to take demographic change into account. Additionally the economic structure which is characterised predominantly by small and medium-sized enterprises is a common feature of German regions.</p> <p>Within the strategy and the main priorities of the NSRF, both sustainable urban development and rural areas are considered.</p> <p><b>Three priorities</b></p> <p><b>1) Innovation and expansion of the knowledge-society as well as strengthening of economic competitiveness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of knowledge-society as main precondition for a sustainable modern society;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive design of markets;</li> <li>• Improvement of general conditions for entrepreneurial activities particularly the reduction of constraints regarding private initiatives and funding of medium-sized businesses;</li> <li>• Use of ecological innovations as competitive advantage.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Increasing of the attractiveness of regions for investors and inhabitants through sustainable urban and regional development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring and enhancing of location attractiveness of German regions;</li> <li>• At the same time ensuring the attractiveness of German regions for employees and inhabitants;</li> <li>• Reduction of regional development constrains and disparities;</li> <li>• Need to adjust the related measures according to regional strengths and weaknesses. Therefore particularly support for regions with weak industrial structure, urban problem spaces as well as rural regions and regions depending on fishery;</li> <li>• Within these measures main importance is attached to ensuring and enhancing the quality of infrastructure (both high-capacity transport and technological infrastructure);</li> <li>• Furthermore targeted improvement of environmental quality as well as use of ecological potentials and realisation of ecological innovation.</li> </ul> <p><b>3) Orientation of the labour market according to new challenges – more and better jobs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of new and competitive jobs;</li> <li>• Adjustment of labour market with regard to new challenges in the context of progressive globalisation and demographic change;</li> <li>• Increasing of labour participation;</li> <li>• Improvement of adaptability of employees;</li> <li>• Increased flexibility of labour market;</li> <li>• Enhancement of labour participation of elderly employees and integration of low-skilled workers and migrants into the labour market;</li> <li>• Further education and life-long learning;</li> <li>• Expansion of knowledge-society and accomplishment of economic structural change</li> </ul> <p><b>NSRF and Objective 3</b></p> <p>Only rather general description of the aim of transnational cooperation. Particular emphasis on integration of regions that are lacking in infrastructure and economic structure. Transnational cooperation as important development factor for German towns and regions.</p>
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	<p><b>Overarching objectives</b></p> <p><i>Environment – protection of Nature and Environment:</i></p> <p>Consideration of related needs both within planning and realisation as well as monitoring of cohesion policy through the following strategic aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realisation and compliance of EU environmental law and acquis communautaire regarding environmental issues (for instance the Water Framework Directive, Birds and Habitats Directives etc.);</li> <li>• Compliance of climate protection goals (Kyoto-Protocol);</li> <li>• Compliance of national environmental standards within all funded regions and measures;</li> <li>• SEA for all projects with significant environmental impacts or effects;</li> <li>• Improvement of risk management as an important precondition for the security of regional economic locations;</li> <li>• Creation of attractive general conditions for enterprises and their employees;</li> <li>• Consideration of environmental sustainability within all measures strengthening the economic and social cohesion.</li> </ul> <p><i>Equal opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of habitats and promotion of compatibility of job and family both for men and women;</li> <li>• Consideration of needs and potentials of men, women and families,</li> <li>• Improvement of labour participation of women,</li> <li>• Strengthening of entrepreneurship and start-ups of women,</li> <li>• Promotion of gender equality in the fields of education, research and innovation.</li> </ul> <p><i>Sustainable urban development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrative strategies regarding the prevention of concentration of economic, ecologic and social problems within urban regions;</li> <li>• Promotion of local economies and local employment;</li> <li>• Restoration of the physical environment;</li> <li>• Redevelopment of brownfields;</li> <li>• Maintenance and use of historic and cultural heritage for the sake of growth and employment;</li> <li>• Measures taking the changing demographic structures into account;</li> <li>• Strengthening of the role of towns concerning regional growth in a sustainable way.</li> </ul>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<p>Draft strategy covers three main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• innovation, entrepreneurship and knowledge economy</li> <li>• attractive regions and cities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more and better employment</li> </ul> <p>Section on transnational territorial cooperation makes reference to Rotterdam agenda and 4 ERDF themes (innovation, environment, accessibility, and sustainable urban development). Content is in outline to allow flexibility for transnational discussions on content of the programmes.</p> <p><u>Innovation</u>: transnational cooperation to strengthen links between universities and to stimulate knowledge exchange</p> <p><u>Environment</u>: river flood protection, maintenance of large natural areas, biodiversity, natural resources, improvement of water quality and impacts of recreation and tourism activities on water quantity and quality. Energy efficiency and risk prevention, external safety (minimisation of natural and technological risks, e.g. through innovative transportation of hazardous substances). Maritime safety and environmental improvements in ports, but also planning and environmentally-responsible installation of energy infrastructures.</p> <p><u>Accessibility</u>: joint studies on structure planning, track decisions and cross-border PPP constructions, traffic management models and small-scale investments such as connections to main infrastructure. Integrated approach is promoted, such as the development of the Amsterdam-Paris axes or the main structure connecting to Eastern Europe. Water transport, e.g. 'river information systems' and cooperation between ports.</p> <p><u>Sustainable urban development</u>: development and improvement of urban networks and urban-rural relationships.</p> <p>Investments should be of pilot character, given the limited budget which does not allow large-scale strategic projects to be undertaken.</p> <p>Cross-programme cooperation (North Sea and Baltic Sea) in the areas of port, coastal areas and safe energy (applying the 20% flexibility rule).</p>
<b>Ireland</b>	<p>The National Strategic Reference Framework for Ireland focuses on three priorities. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation, knowledge and entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Strengthening the competitiveness and connectivity of urban centres through improved access to infrastructure and environmental and sustainable development</li> <li>• Up-skilling the workforce and increasing the participation and activation of groups outside the workforce</li> </ul> <p>Reflecting Ireland's commitment to the success of the Lisbon Agenda, the investment strategy of the NSRF is fully consistent with the achievement of these goals. In addition, the NSRF has identified three horizontal principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting sustainable development</li> <li>• Supporting Equality</li> <li>• Promoting social inclusion</li> </ul> <p>The NSRF does not set specific priorities for the European Territorial Co-operation Objective. However, Ireland is committed to the Objective and will be an active participant across all the programmes that it is eligible for. In</p>

	<p>addition, the priorities which have been identified in Ireland's NSRF broadly complement the priorities for the North West Europe Programme.</p>
<b>UK</b>	<p>The UK draft NSRF strategy is organised around <u>6 main priorities</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting innovation and knowledge transfer</li> <li>• Stimulating entrepreneurship and enterprise</li> <li>• Up-skilling intermediate job sector employees</li> <li>• Reducing the numbers of the economically inactive</li> <li>• Building sustainable communities</li> <li>• Improving access and connectivity</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall aims</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain macroeconomic stability</li> <li>• raise the rate of sustainable growth</li> <li>• improve the economic performance of every UK region</li> </ul> <p>All Structural Fund Programmes to include integrated strategies for environmental concerns and sustainable development</p> <p>Special encouragement to innovative environmental technology</p> <p>Special focus on addressing market failure to provide goods or services</p> <p>Three <u>horizontal themes</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sustainable development, production and consumption</li> <li>2) Environmental sustainability</li> <li>3) Equal opportunities and non-discrimination</li> </ol> <p><u>NSRF and Objective 3.</u></p> <p>The UK NSRF does not set priorities for Objective 3 because these must be developed in close consultation with the other Objective 3 member states. But the Government remains firmly committed to the future Cooperation Objective, including all the cross-border, transnational and interregional programmes that the UK is eligible for in the 2007-2013 period.</p>
<b>France</b>	<p>As the analysis of the diagnosis of France and its regions shows, the country faces great economic, social and environmental challenges, which are closely related to the issues covered by the Lisbon-Gothenburg agenda.</p> <p>Based on the Community Strategic guidelines and objectives of the cohesion policy, consultations carried out with the main partners at the national and regional level allowed for the identification of strategic axes distinguishing thematic priorities for each programme and for each fund and territorial priorities for 2007-2013.</p> <p>Strategic priorities constituting a potential key direction of future programmes refer to four main fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic environment and support for enterprises with particular</li> </ul>

	<p>attention put to innovation and territorial excellence;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, employment, human resources management and social integration;</li> <li>• Environment and preventing risks;</li> <li>• Sustainable development.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>The French strategic orientations regarding two of the three objectives of social and economic cohesion</u></b></p> <p>1) REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYMENT IN MAINLAND FRANCE</p> <p><i>A – In the regions: promotion of attractiveness and excellence of the regions for investment and employment: strategic orientations for ERDF</i>  Priority 1: Promotion of innovation and knowledge-based economy  Priority 2: Development of ICTs for economy and information society  Priority 3: Support for enterprises under the territorial development measures  Priority 4: Environmental protection and risk prevention in the context of sustainable development  Priority 5: Development of means of transport, which are alternative for road transport for the individual users and economic entities</p> <p><i>B – Support to employment, valorisation of human capital and ensuring social integration: strategic orientations under the European Social Fund</i>  Priority 1: Contribution to the adjustment of employees and enterprises to the changes in the economic environment  Priority 2: Improvement of access to employment for the unemployed  Priority 3: Strengthening of social cohesion and combating discrimination for the benefit of social integration  Priority 4: Investment in human resources  Priority 5: Development of partnerships and creation of a network for employment and integration  Priority 6: Support for cross-border actions and cooperation between regions in the field of employment and social integration</p> <p><i>C – Territorial dimension of cohesion and sustainable development</i>  1. Define strategies of intervention within the project covered territories  2. Urban zones – sources of economic, social and cultural dynamism  3. Special aid necessary for rural areas and for areas dependent on fisheries  4. Interregional areas and areas with geographical and natural handicaps</p> <p><b>2) NSRF and objective 3</b></p> <p>For the 3 strands: develop strategic projects</p> <p><u><i>A – Cross border cooperation:</i></u>  Projects for territories with high potential for integration  Economic cooperation  Accessibility, innovation, research and academic activities  Risk prevention</p>
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	<p>Natural and cultural resources</p> <p><u><i>B – Regional integration of overseas regions in their environment</i></u></p> <p><u><i>C - Interregional cooperation</i></u></p>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	<p><b>Background:</b> cooperation across national boundaries is of particular importance to a small country like the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg because of strong interdependencies not only with neighbouring countries (with a focus on the Grand Region) but also with countries all over Europe</p> <p>As Luxembourg and the Grand Region are not part of a metropolitan area and neither located in a Eurocorridor, there is a need to look for alternative strategies related to the idea of counterweight global centres as foreseen in the Spatial vision for NWE in 2000.</p> <p><b>Overall aim:</b> enforce cooperation not only within the Grand Region but also with other dynamic areas in Europe, especially in North West Europe, by participating in strategic projects with a strong territorial impact that contribute to the implementation of national objectives.</p> <p><b>Benefits from synergies and complementarities</b> between cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation programmes are expected.</p> <p>The importance of the <b>territorial dimension</b> of themes/projects is highlighted.</p> <p><b>6 priorities</b> for territorial cooperation have been identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Development/support of SMEs</li> <li>2) stimulation of higher education and research</li> <li>3) territorial development</li> <li>4) accessibility</li> <li>5) environment</li> <li>6) governance</li> </ol> <p>Some possible project themes such as development of corridors and peripheral areas to counterweight metropolitan areas within NWE, reduction of flood risks or closer cooperation between universities and research centres in Europe are mentioned.</p>

## E) INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION BY CATEGORY IN THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Commission reference No: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the programme: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the last Commission decision for the OP concerned: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

(in euros)

(in euros)

(in euros)

Dimension 1	
Priority theme	
Code	Amount
*	**
01	17,869,684
03	17,869,684
04	17,869,684
12	11,169,708
13	11,169,708
14	11,169,708
16	11,169,708
26	11,169,708
28	11,169,708
30	11,169,708
31	11,169,709
41	10,866,303
46	10,866,302
48	10,866,303
49	10,866,302
50	13,696,038
51	10,866,303
53	10,866,302
54	10,866,303
55	10,866,302
58	13,696,038
59	13,698,038
61	13,696,038
74	17,869,684
80	17,869,683
81	13,696,039
85	14,928,618
86	6,397,980
Total	355,443,293

Dimension 2	
Form of finance	
Code	Amount
*	**
01	355,443,293
Total	355,443,293

Dimension 3	
Territory	
Code	Amount
*	**
09	355,443,293
Total	355,443,293



\* The categories should be coded for each dimension using the standard classification.

\*\* Estimated amount of the Community contribution for each category.

### Categorisation of Funds<sup>1</sup> assistance for 2007-2013

Table 1: Codes for the priority theme dimension

Code	Priority theme
<b><i>Research and technological development (R&amp;TD), innovation and entrepreneurship</i></b>	
01	R&TD activities in research centres
02	R&TD infrastructure ( <i>including physical plant, instrumentation and high-speed computer networks linking research centres</i> ) and centres of competence in a specific technology
03	Technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks between small businesses (SMEs), between these and other businesses and universities, post-secondary education establishments of all kinds, regional authorities, research centres and scientific and technological poles ( <i>scientific and technological parks, technopoles, etc.</i> )
04	Assistance to R&TD, particularly in SMEs ( <i>including access to R&amp;TD services in research centres</i> )
05	Advanced support services for firms and groups of firms
06	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes ( <i>introduction of effective environment managing system, adoption and use of pollution prevention technologies, integration of clean technologies into firm production</i> )
07	Investment in firms directly linked to research and innovation ( <i>innovative technologies, establishment of new firms by universities, existing R&amp;TD centres and firms, etc.</i> )
08	Other investment in firms
09	Other measures to stimulate research and innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs
<b><i>Information society</i></b>	
10	Telephone infrastructures ( <i>including broadband networks</i> )
11	Information and communication technologies ( <i>access, security, interoperability, risk-prevention, research, innovation, e-content, etc.</i> )

<sup>1</sup> European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund

12	Information and communication technologies (TEN-ICT)
13	Services and applications for the citizen ( <i>e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.</i> )
14	Services and applications for SMEs ( <i>e-commerce, education and training, networking, etc.</i> )
15	Other measures for improving access to and efficient use of ICT by SMEs

### ***Transport***

16	Railways
17	Railways (TEN-T)
18	Mobile rail assets
19	Mobile rail assets (TEN-T)
20	Motorways
21	Motorways (TEN-T)
22	National roads
23	Regional/local roads
24	Cycle tracks
25	Urban transport
26	Multimodal transport
27	Multimodal transport (TEN-T)
28	Intelligent transport systems
29	Airports
30	Ports
31	Inland waterways ( <i>regional and local</i> )
32	Inland waterways (TEN-T)

### ***Energy***

33	Electricity
34	Electricity (TEN-E)
35	Natural gas
36	Natural gas (TEN-E)
37	Petroleum products
38	Petroleum products (TEN-E)
39	Renewable energy: wind
40	Renewable energy: solar
41	Renewable energy: biomass
42	Renewable energy: hydroelectric, geothermal and other
43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management

### ***Environmental protection and risk prevention***

44	Management of household and industrial waste
45	Management and distribution of water ( <i>drink water</i> )

46	Water treatment ( <i>waste water</i> )
47	Air quality
48	Integrated prevention and pollution control
49	Mitigation and adaptation to climate change
50	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land
51	Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection ( <i>including Natura 2000</i> )
52	Promotion of clean urban transport
53	Risk prevention ( <i>including the drafting and implementation of plans and measures to prevent and manage natural and technological risks</i> )
54	Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks

***Tourism***

55	Promotion of natural assets
56	Protection and development of natural heritage
57	Other assistance to improve tourist services

***Culture***

58	Protection and preservation of the cultural heritage
59	Development of cultural infrastructure
60	Other assistance to improve cultural services

***Urban and rural regeneration***

61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration
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***Increasing the adaptability of workers and firms, enterprises and entrepreneurs***

62	Development of life-long learning systems and strategies in firms; training and services for employees to step up their adaptability to change; promoting entrepreneurship and innovation
63	Design and dissemination of innovative and more productive ways of organising work
64	Development of specific services for employment, training and support in connection with restructuring of sectors and firms, and development of systems for anticipating economic changes and future requirements in terms of jobs and skills

***Improving access to employment and sustainability***

65	Modernisation and strengthening labour market institutions
66	Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market
67	Measures encouraging active ageing and prolonging working lives
68	Support for self-employment and business start-up
69	Measures to improve access to employment and increase sustainable

	participation and progress of women in employment to reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market, and to reconcile work and private life, such as facilitating access to childcare and care for dependent persons
70	Specific action to increase migrants' participation in employment and thereby strengthen their social integration

***Improving the social inclusion of less-favoured persons***

71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people; combating discrimination in accessing and progressing in the labour market and promoting acceptance of diversity at the workplace
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***Improving human capital***

72	Design, introduction and implementation of reforms in education and training systems in order to develop employability, improving the labour market relevance of initial and vocational education and training, updating skills of training personnel with a view to innovation and a knowledge based economy
73	Measures to increase participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle, including through action to achieve a reduction in early school leaving, gender-based segregation of subjects and increased access to and quality of initial vocational and tertiary education and training
74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses

***Investment in social infrastructure***

75	Education infrastructure
76	Health infrastructure
77	Childcare infrastructure
78	Housing infrastructures
79	Other social infrastructure

***Mobilisation for reforms in the fields of employment and inclusion***

80	Promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives through the networking of relevant stakeholders
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***Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level***

81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.
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***Reduction of additional costs hindering the outermost regions development***

82	Compensation of any additional costs due to accessibility deficit and territorial fragmentation
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83	Specific action addressed to compensate additional costs due to size market factors
84	Support to compensate additional costs due to climate conditions and relief difficulties

**Technical assistance**

85	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection
86	Evaluation and studies; information and communication

Table 2: Codes for the form of finance dimension

Code	Form of finance
01	Non-repayable aid
02	Aid ( <i>loan, interest subsidy, guarantees</i> )
03	Venture capital ( <i>participation, venture-capital fund</i> )
04	Other forms of finance

Table 3: Codes for the territorial dimension

Code	Territory type
01	Urban
02	Mountains
03	Islands
04	Sparsely and very sparsely populated areas
05	Rural areas ( <i>other than mountains, islands or sparsely and very sparsely populated areas</i> )
06	Former EU external borders ( <i>after 30.04.2004</i> )
07	Outermost region
08	Cross-border cooperation area
09	Transnational cooperation area
10	Interregional cooperation area
00	Not applicable

Table 4: Codes for the economic activity dimension

<b>Code</b>	<b>Economic activity<sup>2</sup></b>
01	Agriculture, hunting and forestry
02	Fishing
03	Manufacture of food products and beverages
04	Manufacture of textiles and textile products
05	Manufacture of transport equipment
06	Unspecified manufacturing industries
07	Mining and quarrying of energy producing materials
08	Electricity, gas, steam and hot water supply
09	Collection, purification and distribution of water
10	Post and telecommunications
11	Transport
12	Construction
13	Wholesale and retail trade
14	Hotels and restaurants
15	Financial intermediation
16	Real estate, renting and business activities
17	Public administration
18	Education
19	Human health activities
20	Social work, community, social and personal services
21	Activities linked to the environment
22	Other unspecified services
00	Not applicable

<sup>2</sup> Based on the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE Rev. 1); Regulation (EC) No 29/2002 of 19.12.2001 amending Regulation (EEC) No 3037/90 of 9.10.1990.

Table 5: Codes for the location dimension

Code <sup>3</sup>	Location <sup>4</sup>
NUTS	<p>1. Operational programmes submitted under the “Convergence” objective shall be drawn up at the appropriate geographical level and at least at regional level NUTS II.</p> <p>Operational programmes submitted under the “Convergence” objective with a contribution from the Cohesion Fund shall be drawn up at national level.</p> <p>2. Operational programmes submitted under the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objective shall be drawn up at regional NUTS I or NUTS II level, in accordance with the institutional system specific to the member state, for regions benefiting from financing by the ERDF, save as otherwise agreed between the Commission and the member state. They shall be drawn up by the member state at the appropriate level if they are financed by the ESF.</p> <p>3. Operational programmes submitted under the “European territorial cooperation” objective for cross-border cooperation shall be drawn up, as a general rule, for each border or group of borders by an appropriate grouping at NUTS III level, including enclaves. Operational programmes submitted under the “European territorial cooperation” objective for transnational cooperation shall be drawn up at the level of each transnational cooperation area. Interregional cooperation and exchange of experience programmes shall relate to the whole territory of the Community.</p>

<sup>3</sup> The codes for this dimension may be found in the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) which appears in the annex of Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of 26.05.2003 amended by Regulation (EC) No 1888/2005 of 26.10.2005.

<sup>4</sup> Article 34 of Regulation (EC) No .... of ..... laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund



## F) LIST OF RESPONSIBLE MINISTRIES IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Belgium (Flanders)	Agency for Economy - Flemish government Ellipsgebouw bus 12 Koning Albert II-laan 35 B-1030 Brussel Belgium
Belgium (Brussels)	Ministère de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale Service du Secrétaire général 20 Boulevard du Jardin botanique B-1035 Bruxelles Belgium
Belgium (Wallonia)	Ministère de la Région wallonne Division des Relations internationales Philippe SUINEN, Directeur général Place Saintelette, 2 B-1080 Bruxelles Belgium
Germany	Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology Scharnhorststr. 34-37 D-10115 Berlin Germany  Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs Invalidenstraße 44 D-10115 Berlin Germany
France	Ministère délégué à l'aménagement du territoire Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement et à la compétitivité des territoires (DIACT) 1, avenue Charles Floquet 75007 Paris France
Ireland	Department of Finance Government Buildings Merrion Street Dublin 2 Ireland
Luxembourg	Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Aménagement du Territoire Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire 1, rue du Plébiscite L-2341 Luxembourg Luxembourg
Netherlands	Ministry of Housing, Spatial Policy and the Environment (VROM) Rijnstraat 8, P.O. Box 20951 NL-2500 EZ Den Haag The Netherlands
United Kingdom	<i>For England:</i> Department for Communities and Local Government International Planning Unit

	<p>Eland House Bressenden Place, UK-London SW1E 5DU England</p> <p><i>On behalf of Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:</i> Scottish Executive European Structural Funds Meridian Court 5 Cadogan Street UK-Glasgow G2 6AT Scotland</p>
Switzerland	<p>Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications DETEC Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE Mühlestrasse 2, CH-3063 Ittigen,</p> <p>Postal address: CH-3003 Bern Switzerland</p>

## NOTES

<sup>i</sup> The Brundtland Report ('Our Common Future', 1987) defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' and as consisting of three fundamental components, i.e. environmental protection, economic growth and social equity. This definition is still widely accepted today, and is also used for the understanding of sustainable development in this Operational Programme.

<sup>ii</sup> Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999

<sup>iii</sup> CEC Commission of the European Communities (1991) Europe 2000. Outlook for the Development of the Community's Territory. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

CEC Commission of the European Communities (1994) Europe 2000+ - Co-operation for European territorial development. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications.

CEC Commission of the European Communities (1996) Prospects for the development of the central and capital cities and regions. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

<sup>iv</sup> NWMA Spatial Vision Group (2000) A Spatial Vision for north-west Europe. Building cooperation. Den Haag: VROM.

<sup>v</sup> The others are Sweden, Finland and Denmark, cf. <http://trendchart.cordis.lu/scoreboards/scoreboard2005/index.cfm>

<sup>vi</sup> The other eight of the world's top 10 universities are located in the United States, according to rankings by Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China (cf. <http://ed.sjtu.edu.cn/rank/2005/ARWU2005Main.htm>).

<sup>vii</sup> MEGAs are areas of potential growth which have been identified in research carried out by the ESPON programme. These are identified on the basis of the following criteria: demographic mass, competitiveness, connectivity and knowledge base.

<sup>viii</sup> Texts and maps stemming from research projects under the ESPON programme presented in this Operational Programme do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

<sup>ix</sup> Texts and maps stemming from research projects under the ESPON programme presented in this Operational Programme do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

<sup>x</sup> Texts and maps stemming from research projects under the ESPON programme presented in this Operational Programme do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

<sup>xi</sup> Texts and maps stemming from research projects under the ESPON programme presented in this Operational Programme do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

<sup>xii</sup> Here accessibility is measured by the number of opportunities for the population to be reached, weighted by the time it takes to reach them, based on multi-modal (road, rail, air) transport.

<sup>xiii</sup> Texts and maps stemming from research projects under the ESPON programme presented in this Operational Programme do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

<sup>xiv</sup> Source: [http://ine.dad.be/documents/Waternews/Publications/Brochures/INE\\_Facts\\_figures.pdf](http://ine.dad.be/documents/Waternews/Publications/Brochures/INE_Facts_figures.pdf)

<sup>xv</sup> ESPON (2003) ESPON in Progress. Preliminary results by autumn 2003, Luxembourg: ESPON.

<sup>xvi</sup> Texts and maps stemming from research projects under the ESPON programme presented in this Operational Programme do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

<sup>xvii</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (2006): *Report on the functioning of the transitional arrangements set out in the 2003 Accession Treaty (period 1 May 2004-30 April 2006)*. COM(2006) 48 final. Brussels, CEC, p. 14

Migration Information Source online <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=306>

<sup>xviii</sup> The information is based on Spatial Vision Study No. 1

<sup>xix</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/key/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/key/index_en.htm)

<sup>xx</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l\\_291/l\\_29120061021en00110032.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_291/l_29120061021en00110032.pdf)

<sup>xxi</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l\\_291/l\\_29120061021en00110032.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_291/l_29120061021en00110032.pdf)

<sup>xxii</sup> 'Top Technology: Crossing borders, moving frontiers', 2003. <http://www.programmahorizon.nl/>

Other relevant studies are for example:

van den Berg, L.; Pol, P.; van Winden, W.; Woets, P. (2004) *European Cities in the Knowledge Economy. The cases of Amsterdam, Dortmund, Eindhoven, Helsinki, Manchester, Munich, Münster, Rotterdam and Zaragoza*. Euricur

van Winden, W.; van den Berg, L. (2004) *Cities in the knowledge economy: new governance challenges*. Discussion Paper. STRIKE – Euricur

<sup>xxiii</sup> Mechatronics is the synergistic combination of mechanical engineering ("mecha" for mechanisms), electronic engineering ("tronics" for electronics), and software engineering. The purpose of this interdisciplinary engineering field is the study of automata from an engineering perspective and serves the purposes of controlling advanced hybrid systems.

<sup>xxiv</sup> An embedded system is a special-purpose system in which the computer is completely encapsulated by the device it controls. As opposed to a general-purpose computer, such as a PC, an embedded system performs pre-defined tasks, usually with very specific requirements. In an application where the system is dedicated to a specific task, design engineers are able to optimize the system extensively, thus considerably reducing the size and cost of the end product. Due to the low-cost advantage, embedded systems are commonly built into products designed for mass production.

<sup>xxv</sup> Eco-innovation is the process of developing new products, processes or services which provide customer and business value but significantly decrease environmental impact.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Under the terms of the European Landscape Convention, also known as the Florence Convention

<sup>xxvii</sup> Under the UK Presidency of the second half of 2005, EU ministers agreed to renew their engagement to deliver jobs, economic prosperity, social justice, and improved quality of life for Europe's 450 million citizens by signing the Bristol Accord. This builds on the Rotterdam urban acquis, the Lisbon agenda for jobs and growth, the goals of environmental sustainability agreed at Gothenburg, and effective democratic governance agreed at the Warsaw Summit in May 2005. (cf. [http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/523/PolicyPapersUKPresidencyEUMinisterialInformalOnSustainableCommunities\\_id1162523.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/523/PolicyPapersUKPresidencyEUMinisterialInformalOnSustainableCommunities_id1162523.pdf))

<sup>xxviii</sup> Texts and maps stemming from research projects under the ESPON programme presented in this Operational Programme do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.