



Latvian Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union

EU2015.LV

Use of ESPON results by Latvian Presidency

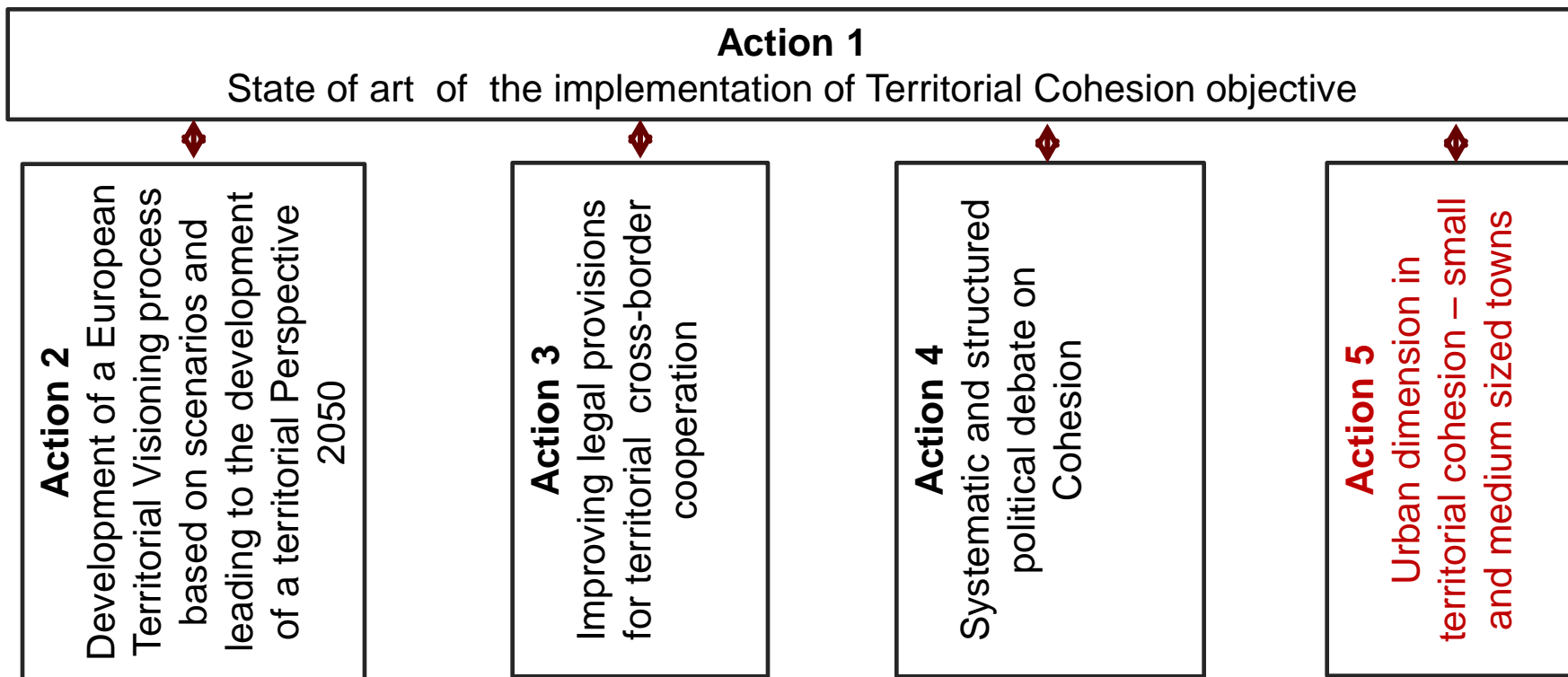




TRIO PRESIDENCY PROGRAMME

Objective

To stimulate awareness and debate on the way the Union's territorial cohesion objective is implemented



Small and medium sized urban areas in the EU

- Small and medium sized urban areas are underrepresented in both policy and research, which tends to focus more on capital cities, second tier cities, and metropolitan areas
- The Urban Agenda and the EU2020 strategy have no specific reference to small and medium sized urban areas at the moment

However!

- Significant part of EU inhabitants (about 25%) lives in small and medium sized urban areas
- SMUAs are the prevailing type of settlement in EU (more than 8 000)

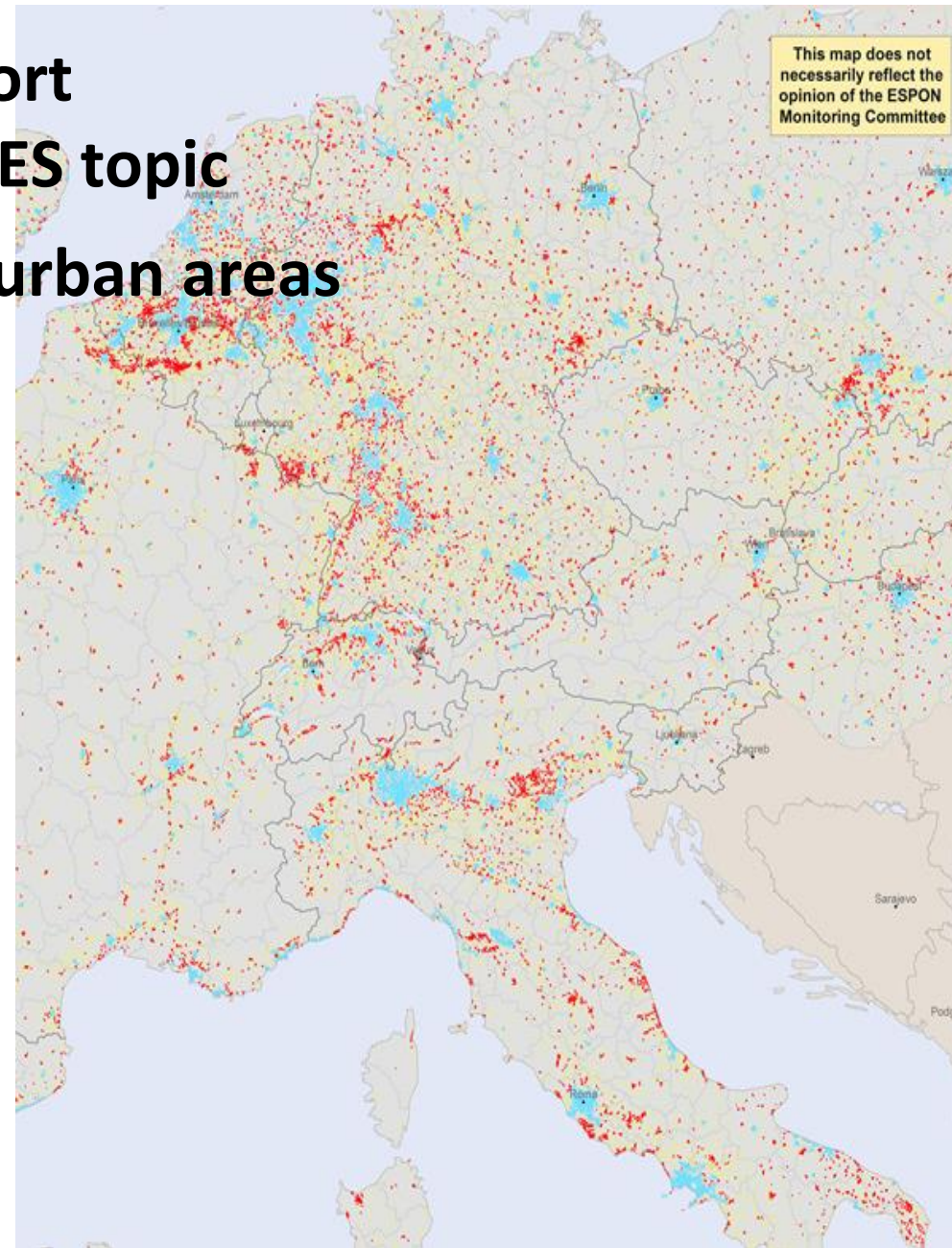


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The Research Report supporting the TRIO PRES topic

– small and medium sized urban areas

- Research questions and approach
- Urban Europe in a global context
- Key findings on characteristics and challenges of SMUAs in Europe
- The significance of SMUAs
- Development directions and strategies
- Recommendations



Research approach

- Review of recent literature on SMUAs
- Analysis of statistical data
- Case studies
- Assessment of EU and other foreign financial instruments

Focus

- Trends and challenges
- Contribution to economic growth and territorial development
- Successful strategies

Case studies

- 10 case studies in LV
- Case studies other MS



Riga Declaration: a Step Towards an EU Urban Agenda

- ✓ Overall EU Urban Agenda framework
- ✓ role of small and medium sized urban areas:
 - specific PRES TRIO contribution to the EU Urban Agenda development
 - integral part of EU Urban Agenda



Main elements of the EU Urban Agenda (according to the draft RIGA Declaration)

- Respect urban diversity and unlock the potential of different urban areas
- Focus on the opportunities of urban areas, besides addressing challenges
- Framework and instruments to improve the urban dimension in European policymaking (e.g. TIA, place sensitive EU-funds)
- Promote cooperation among urban areas of all sizes and knowledge base

Role of SMUAs I (according to the draft Riga declaration)

- **Fulfil important economic and social functions**
- **Essential to avoid rural depopulation and urban drift** promoting more balanced overall regional development
- **Contribute to development of metropolitan areas** being connected in a polycentric network
- **Significant existing and potential collective contribution of SMUAs to EU common strategic goals**, especially regarding employment, climate change and energy sustainability and fighting poverty and social exclusion

Role of SMUAs II (according to the draft Riga declaration)

- **Common challenges**

declining and ageing population, emigration of young people, low economic activity and diversity, lack of highly educated and skilled labour, job creation, provision of and access to services, insufficient connectivity, lack of access to financial resources and capital investments, insufficient administrative and technical capacity, energy transition and climate change

- **Significant development potentials**

great opportunities for balancing economic activity and quality of life aspects, more flexibility to shift development orientation and more agility for policy innovation and experimentation

Role of SMUAs III

(according to the draft Riga declaration)

- **Especially important for development of SMUAs**
- foster diversification of economic activities and smart specialisation
- find solutions for provision of qualitative, accessible and cost-efficient public services
- foster urban-urban, urban-rural, including inner areas, and cross-border co-operation within functional areas and to generally improve their attractiveness
- strong capacity of local authorities and active involvement of local community and stakeholders
- Integrated and place-based support measures



From projects to policies

ESPON TOWNs

project

RIGA Declaration

EU Urban Agenda

EU policies

National policies





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Thank you for attention!



1. How has ESPON evidence supported the intergovernmental debate during your Presidency? What are your lessons learned from that experience?
2. Are you planning to use ESPON evidence during your Presidency?
3. What are the main advantages of ESPON in supporting the intergovernmental debate on territorial development issues?
4. How should ESPON adapt its tools, procedures or content in order to serve better the intergovernmental discussion at EU level?

