

Inspire Policy Making by Territorial Evidence

Applied Research project

Inner Peripheries: national territories facing challenges of access to basic services of general interest

Theme: Inner Peripheries

Scope

All EU Member States have regions within their territory, sometimes even between or in the vicinity of urban centres, where population density is low and declining, that are economically and socially lagging behind and where, often as a consequence, the remaining citizens have low access to basic services of general interest (education, transport, jobs, social care, etc.). This phenomenon is basically about a certain type of peripherality within the national territories, which has a marginalising effect on groups of the local population.

These areas are, however, also often positively linked to natural and cultural resources with different functions such as good housing, recreation and leisure activities, which can be used to develop regional attractiveness for inhabitants, companies and visitors. There might also be a potential in the production of renewable energy, food, timber, etc. So besides the challenges to handle, these areas can exploit different opportunities for development, such as green economy, eco-innovation and tourism.

The concept of inner peripheries or inner areas as such is quite new in the European policy arena. In most European countries inner peripheries are not addressed in national policies and the few countries dealing with them use heterogeneous interpretations. Inner peripheries seem not only characterized by accessibility but by a combination of various aspects linked to a configuration of physical, social, economic, institutional and cultural networks and by long-term historical development. In addition, the scale at which regions can be defined as inner peripheries matters, making the exact delineation of inner peripheries a challenge.

Inner peripheries are an issue of growing political concern at EU level and in many member states, and more regionalised information is needed to consider developing specific territorial policy measures. Moreover, since inner

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peripheries are better embedded in the European territorial structure compared to outer peripheries they could play an important role in territorial cohesion.

The main objective of this tender on “Inner Peripheries” is therefore to develop strategies for inner peripheries at European level to overcome their marginalising effects.

Policy questions

- What are the key elements in the concept of inner peripheries? How can these be mapped? What is the current pattern of inner peripheries in the European territory? Which areas are at risk of becoming inner peripheries?
- How can the European inner peripheries be characterized in relation to issues such as different age groups, gender balance, price development of the property market, and different types of regions?
- What processes drive marginalization and how can these be reversed and/or overcome? (processes such as demographic decline, ageing, economic decline, decrease in employment, changed availability of networks of services of general interest, public financing, ...).
- How can inner peripheries explore and utilise their territorial potentials, support their competitiveness, create jobs and improve the quality of life for their citizens given their conditionalities?
- What national, regional and local strategies for inner peripheries, including more functional cooperation approaches and governance aspects, could be considered in order to improve their situation?
- How have inner peripheries been integrated in the EU policy agenda and cohesion policy? And how can this be strengthened in the future? How do inner peripheries compare to lagging regions?

Main expected results

- Definition of inner peripheries at European level.

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- European territorial evidence on the presence and characteristics of inner peripheries, including two or more geographical delineations of inner peripheries at European level.
- An analysis of the current dynamics related to inner peripheries in Europe, their different territorial contexts, the likely development prospects ahead and areas at risk of becoming inner peripheries.
- Options for integrated approaches addressing the specific needs of inner peripheries making use of their development potentials and proposing strategies for inner peripheries at European, national, regional and local level, all to help overcome the marginalising effects of inner peripheries.
- Short analysis of already implemented cohesion policy instruments and incentives for inner peripheries, and proposals on how future cohesion policy could address inner peripheries vis-à-vis lagging regions.
- Case studies (up to five) on a selection of the inner peripheries identified to find general development trends, opportunities and experiences with addressing the specific needs of inner peripheries. Issues to be considered include bottom-up processes for merging and/or cooperating across borders (national, regional and local) to overcome disadvantages of being an inner periphery.
- European maps of access points and access to a selected number of services and of access to regional centres, for all 32 countries (28 EU countries and CH, LI, NO, IS), as well as the datasets behind.

Contractors

- University of Valencia, ES (lead contractor)
- Nordregio, SE
- CREA, IT
- ILS, DE
- MTA KRTK, HU
- Federal institute for less favoured & mountainous areas, AT
- TCP International, DE
- University of Lodz, PL

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Project Support Team

- Sverker Lindblad, Sweden
- Barbara Acreman and Zaira Piazza, Italy
- Eedi Sepp, Estonia
- Katalin Brenner, European Commission

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- Final delivery, 7 December 2017

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