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EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROJECT //

Collecting and analysing data for the post-27 INTERREG (Core-IB)

Germany (Brandenburg)-Poland

Border profile

March 2026



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This document is a final report.

The information contained herein is subject to change and does not commit the ESPON EGTC and the countries participating in the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context and objective of the border profile

The ESPON Core-IB project (Collecting and analysing data for the post-27 INTERREG) provides evidence-based, non-binding analytical work to support the next generation of Interreg programmes post-2027. By collecting and analysing harmonised territorial data, the project highlights key socio-economic characteristics, cross-border interactions, and governance structures. Its spatial focus covers 48 cross-border cooperation areas (40 land and 8 maritime), including all EU internal border regions and those bordering Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and Norway. The findings are analytical and informative; they do not create regulatory or policy obligations for Member States, the European Commission, or programme authorities. Each border profile serves as a comparable knowledge base for policymakers at EU, national, and regional levels, supporting dialogue and reflection rather than prescribing policy choices. The profiles aim to provide consistent, data-driven territorial evidence that can inform strategic discussions about future cross-border cooperation and contribute to the preparation of Interreg programmes post-2027.

The Core-IB border profiles are designed to support the upcoming steps in the Interreg programming process with analyses based on data that is available at the European scale, including ESPON, Eurostat, DG REGIO, JRC, and Interreg databases. Their main purpose is to ensure comparability of data analyses and to provide programme areas with access to recent harmonised data at high geographical resolution (NUTS3 level or finer). Member States may hold additional or more detailed data which can further enrich or contextualise the findings beyond the Core-IB project. These national sources are essential for refining and validating territorial evidence in policymaking processes, including additional regional, fine-scale information and insights from political processes related to prioritisation and objective setting. All border profiles follow a systematic and methodologically robust approach. They provide territorial evidence, structured along 6 thematic dimensions, offering insights into the geographic, economic, environmental, socio-economic, border security and governance characteristics of the border region. Quantitative data and qualitative analyses are combined to ensure meaningful insights into all 48 border areas. Due to methodological constraints and limited resources, local studies and national datasets falling outside the European data framework could not be included. Visualisations, such as maps and charts based on descriptive statistics, facilitate understanding and support evidence-based policymaking. The profiles analyse the border region as a whole at NUTS3 (2021) level (corresponding to the current Interreg VI-A programme area)¹ and position it within a broader European context. For comparative purposes, several reference categories are applied:

- › European averages (EU27 + Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, depending on data availability)
- › National averages
- › National border region averages
- › Aggregated border region averages

To complement the quantitative evidence, the profiles also draw on strategic and qualitative sources, including:

- › Strategic documents from the Interreg Programme 2021-2027
- › Border Orientation Papers from the 2021-2027 programming period
- › Information from the keep.eu database on cross-border cooperation activities
- › Information from the Cohesion Open Data platform
- › Information from the b-solutions initiative
- › Information from recent ESPON Projects (i.e., CROSSGOV, House4All, PROFECY Update, CPS 2.0)

¹ As defined by Annex 1, Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/74 of 17 January 2022, as amended by Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/1638 of 14 August 2023 (OJ L204, 17.8.2023, p. 9): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2022/75/oj/eng

Within the ESPON framework, the CROSSGOV project (Governance mechanisms for cross-border functional areas) has been implemented in parallel to Core-IB. The CROSSGOV hub² provides a comprehensive platform for interactive data exploration, and selected data have been incorporated into this study.

Additional project-related information can be explored separately in the Core-IB **Final Report**. Further technical information on this border profile can be found in a separate **Technical Annex** providing an overview of data and methods.

1.2 Presentation of the border area

The Interreg VI-A border region ‘Germany/Brandenburg–Poland’ covers the area between eastern Germany and western Poland (see Figure 1.1). In Germany, the programme area includes most of the region of Brandenburg-Northeast within the federal state of Brandenburg, comprising a total of 5 NUTS3 regions. In Poland, it covers parts of the voivodeship of Lubuskie in the North-West macroregion, encompassing a total of 2 NUTS3 regions.

Figure 1.1: Overview map

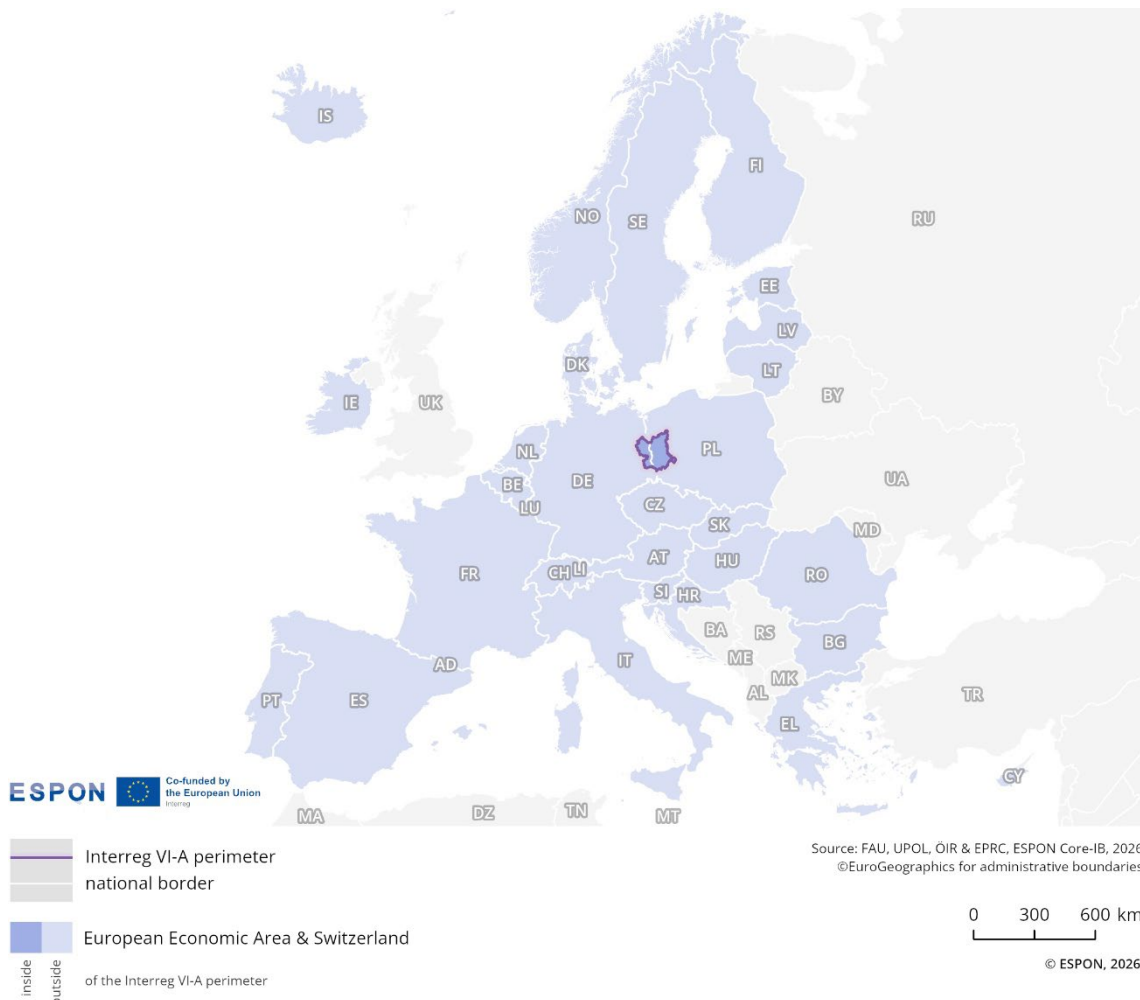
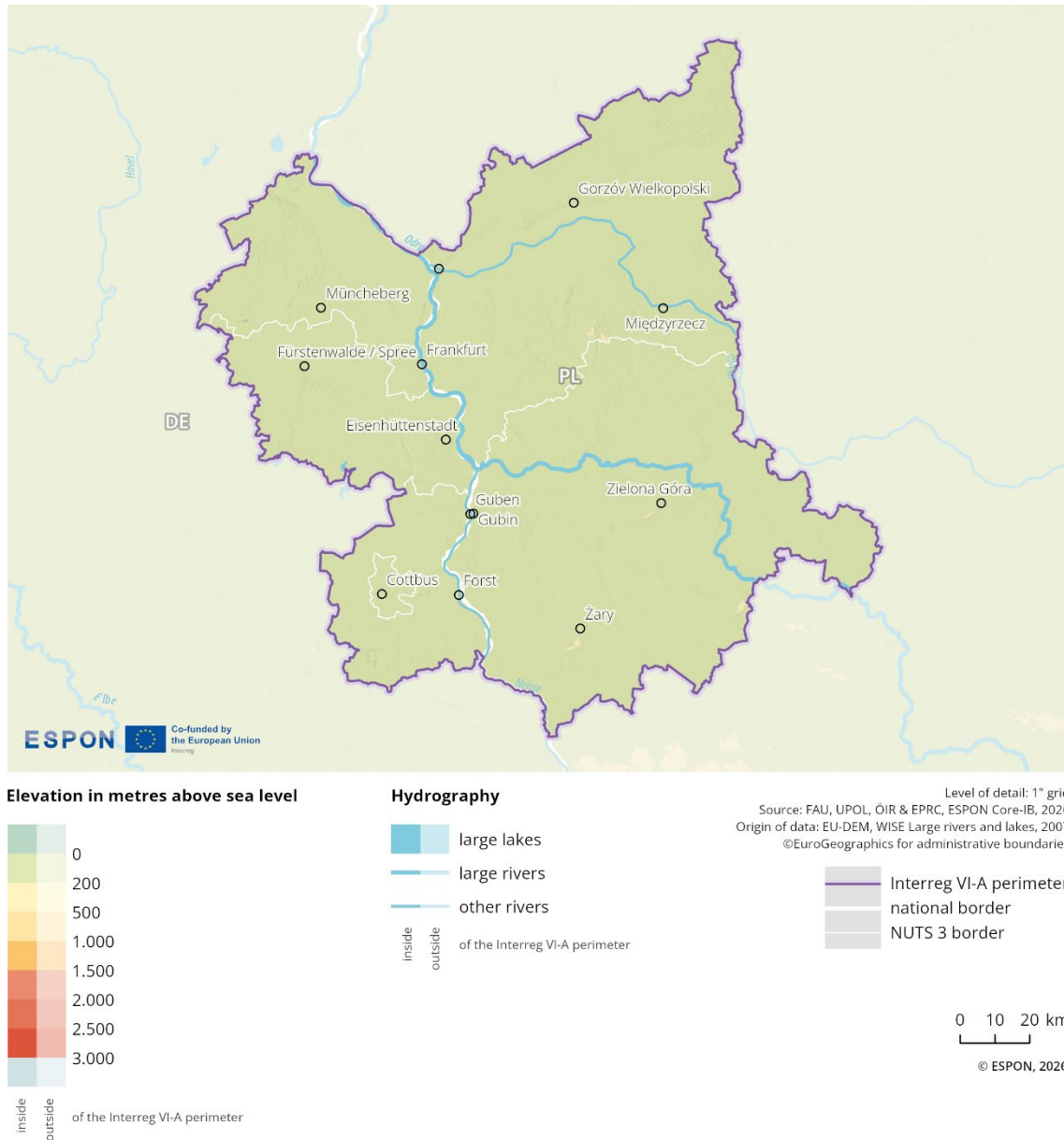


Figure 1.2 illustrates the region's geomorphological features and the boundaries of the current Interreg VI A programme area. The border region, which covers an area of approximately 20,374 km², extends

² ESPON CROSSGOV Hub: <https://gis-portal.espon.eu/arcgis/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=27e3b86ef44441b08793a2239c370607>

along the German-Polish border, mainly following the course of the Oder River. It lies between the regions of Cottbus, Müncheberg, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Żary. The landscape is completely flat, and in addition to the Oder, it contains significant rivers such as the Neisse and the Warta.

Figure 1.2: Geographical features and characteristics³



The programme area forms part of the North European Plain and is characterised by lowland landscapes that have been shaped by glacial and post-glacial processes. It includes extensive river floodplains, lake districts, moraines and wetlands. The flat topography supports extensive agricultural and forestry areas, while the Oder and Neisse rivers form distinct natural corridors of high ecological value. The numerous lakes and peatlands, especially in the Lubusz region, further contribute to the area's natural diversity.

The geomorphological structure, characterised by wide valleys and gently sloping ground moraine landscapes, offers favourable conditions for cross-border connectivity and settlement. Major towns in

³ The selection of displayed settlements is based on factors such as size, administrative or cultural importance, transport links, regional coverage and cartographic clarity. This is part of a standard cartographic generalisation process with no pre-set thresholds, and the main aim is to provide orientation.

the programme area include Frankfurt (Oder), Fürstenwalde and Cottbus in Germany, and Gorzów Wielkopolski, Słubice, Kostrzyn nad Odrą and Żary in Poland. Meanwhile, the river systems present both natural boundaries and ecological linkages between the 2 countries.

2 Cross-border analysis

2.1 Territorial dimension

The territorial dimension refers to the spatial characteristics and dynamics of a border region. It specifically depicts how factors such as population density, demographic trends, changes in settlement areas and accessibility influence and reflect cross-border integration.

2.1.1 Population and settlements

This sub-dimension illustrates the population characteristics and land use dynamics of the border region, based on analysed indicators. It examines population density, population development by age groups, and changes in settlement areas. The analysis highlights whether the border functions as a catalyst for integration or as a barrier. Comparisons with the respective countries and the EU average provide context for understanding the region's dynamics.

2.1.1.1 Population density

Indicator description

Population density refers to the number of residents per km². This indicator shows the number of inhabitants per square kilometre in a 1x1 km grid. It therefore provides information on the distribution and concentration of population across the region and allows to identify agglomerations of high density. In particular agglomerations at or close to the border area of key interest.

- **Source:** Eurostat
- **Temporal coverage:** 2021
- **Unit:** Inhabitants/km²

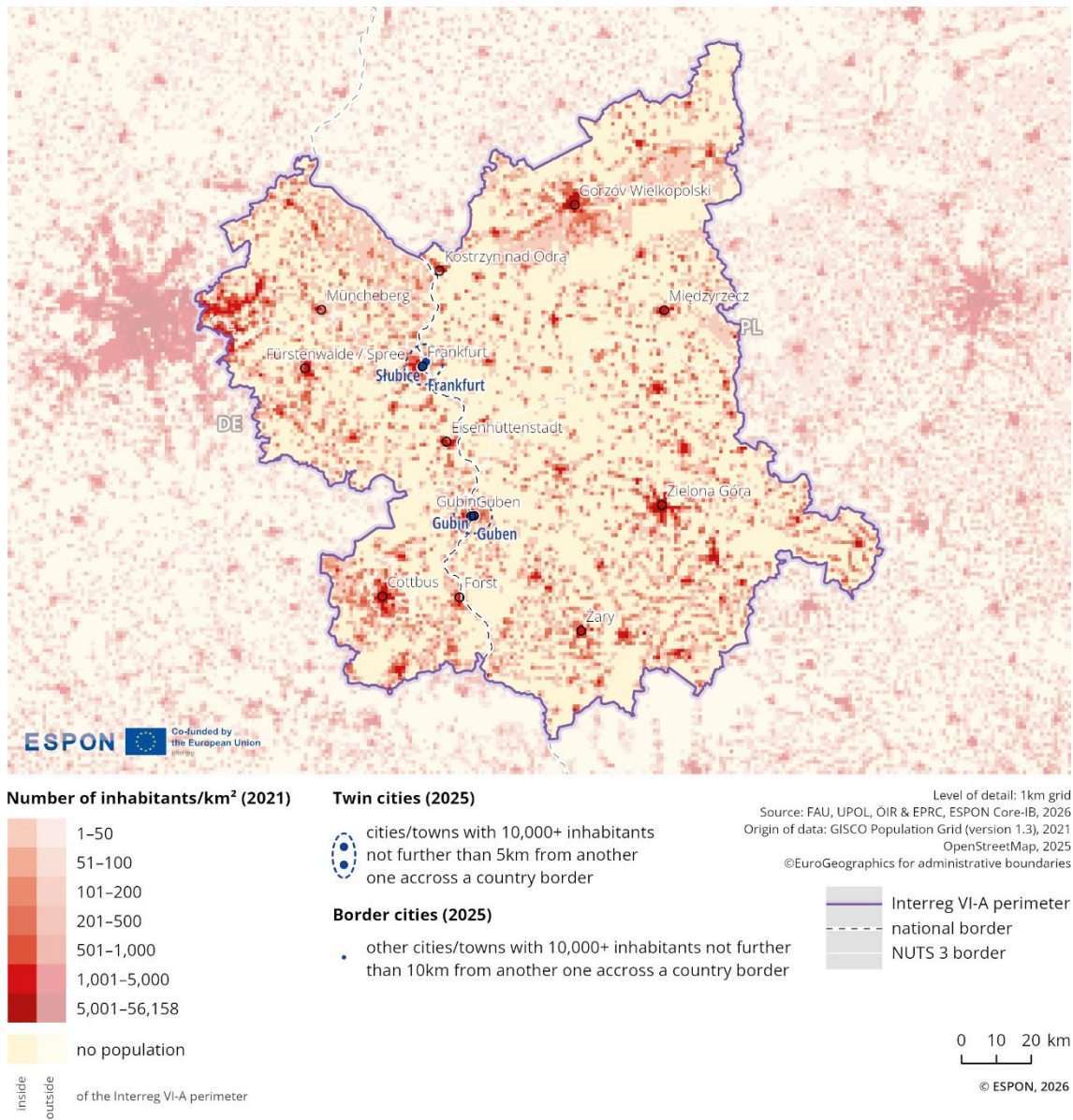
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

The border region includes 7 urban centres with a population of over 30,000 inhabitants. The map indicates that the population distribution is sparse and forms a mosaic with areas of lower and zero density. In Poland, the denser population is distributed over a larger area around the city of Gorzów Wielkopolski (approximately 120,000 inhabitants) and then in the cities of Zielona Góra (140,000 inhabitants), Lubsko, and Żary. The density is very low in other parts of Poland. On the German border, there is a part of the suburbs towards Berlin on the northwest side. The other larger towns are Cottbus (100,000 inhabitants), Fürstenwalde/Spree, Frankfurt (Oder), and Guben.

The population density in this whole border region is 79 inhabitants/km², which is therefore lower than the EU average of 109 inhabitants/km² (according to EUROSTAT), and it is also the aggregated average of all EU evaluated border regions, which is 125 inhabitants/km².

The part of the border region in Germany has an average population density of around 104 inhabitants/km². It is therefore lower than the national average population density in Germany (231 inhabitants/km²). The part of the border region in Poland has an average population density of around 68 inhabitants/km². It is therefore lower than the national average population density in Poland (118 inhabitants/km²) (see figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Spatial patterns of population distribution



2.1.1.2 Population development (by age groups)

Indicator description

Population development refers to the percentage change in population at regional level between 2014 and 2024. The data reflects on the total population, as well as on the age groups 0-14, 15-64 and 65+.

- **Source:** Annual Regional Database of the European Commission (ARDECO)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2014-2024
- **Unit:** Change in %

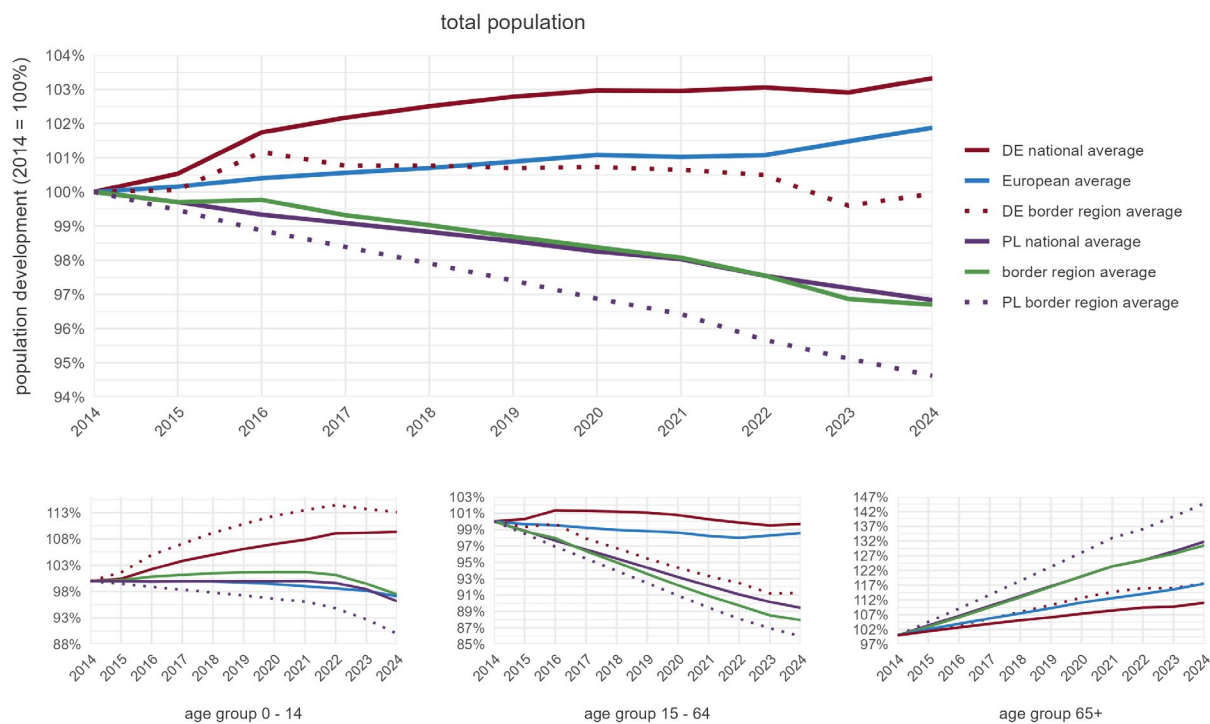
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Population in the Germany/Brandenburg–Poland region in 2024 (Eurostat): 1.6 million inhabitants, of which:

- › 59.7% in the Polish border territory (0.95 million inhabitants)
- › 40.3% in the German border territory (0.64 million inhabitants)
- › Region within the border region with the highest population change since 2014: Spree-Neiße (DE40G) at -7.0%

Figure 2.2 shows the population change in the Germany/Brandenburg–Poland region between 2014 and 2024. During this period, the region has experienced a moderate decline of -3.3%, with the most pronounced decrease observed on the German side.

Figure 2.2: Population development (2014=100)



Population development across the border region is substantially below the European average (-3.3% vs. 1.9%) and also substantially below the average development in all border regions (-3.3% vs 1.5%). While the Polish border area shows a similar decline to the national average (-5.4% vs. -3.2%), the German border area shows a minor decline compared to the growth in the national average (-0.1% vs. 3.3%).

In terms of the development of individual age groups in the region, the population aged 0–14 experienced a slight decrease of -2.5%, while the working-age population (15–64) showed a sharp decrease of -12.1%. The population aged 65 and over underwent a substantial increase of 30.5%.

2.1.1.3 Change in settlement areas

Indicator description

The indicator shows the relative change in settlement areas per LAU in the border region. It considers changes in land cover, from non-artificial areas (such as agricultural, forest and seminatural areas, wetlands and water bodies) to artificial areas (such as urban, industrial, construction sites) between 2012 and 2018. This indicator has to be viewed alongside population development in particular.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** The indicator is retrieved via processing of raster data from CORINE Land cover. The raster information is crossed with Local Administrative Units (LAU) to calculate a change in %.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2012-2018
- **Unit:** Change in %

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the change in settlement areas at municipal level between 2012 and 2018. Overall, the map shows similar patterns of change in settlement areas on both sides of the German-Polish border. Changes are evident in particular around the urban centres of Müncheberg, Fürstenwalde / Spree, Cottbus, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Międzyrzecz, Zielona, Góra and Zary. Guben is an exception, with no significant change during the observed time period. High growth in settlement areas is particularly evident around the German cities Cottbus and Spremberg as well as around the Polish cities Gorzów Wielkopolski, Głogów and Kostrzyn nad Odrą. In close proximity to the national borders, the settlement area increases mainly around the cities Cottbus and Guben as well as along the Polish border. The map also reflects the topographical characteristics of the border region, with hardly any changes in settlement areas visible around the lake areas along the German border.

Figure 2.3: Settlement area dynamics

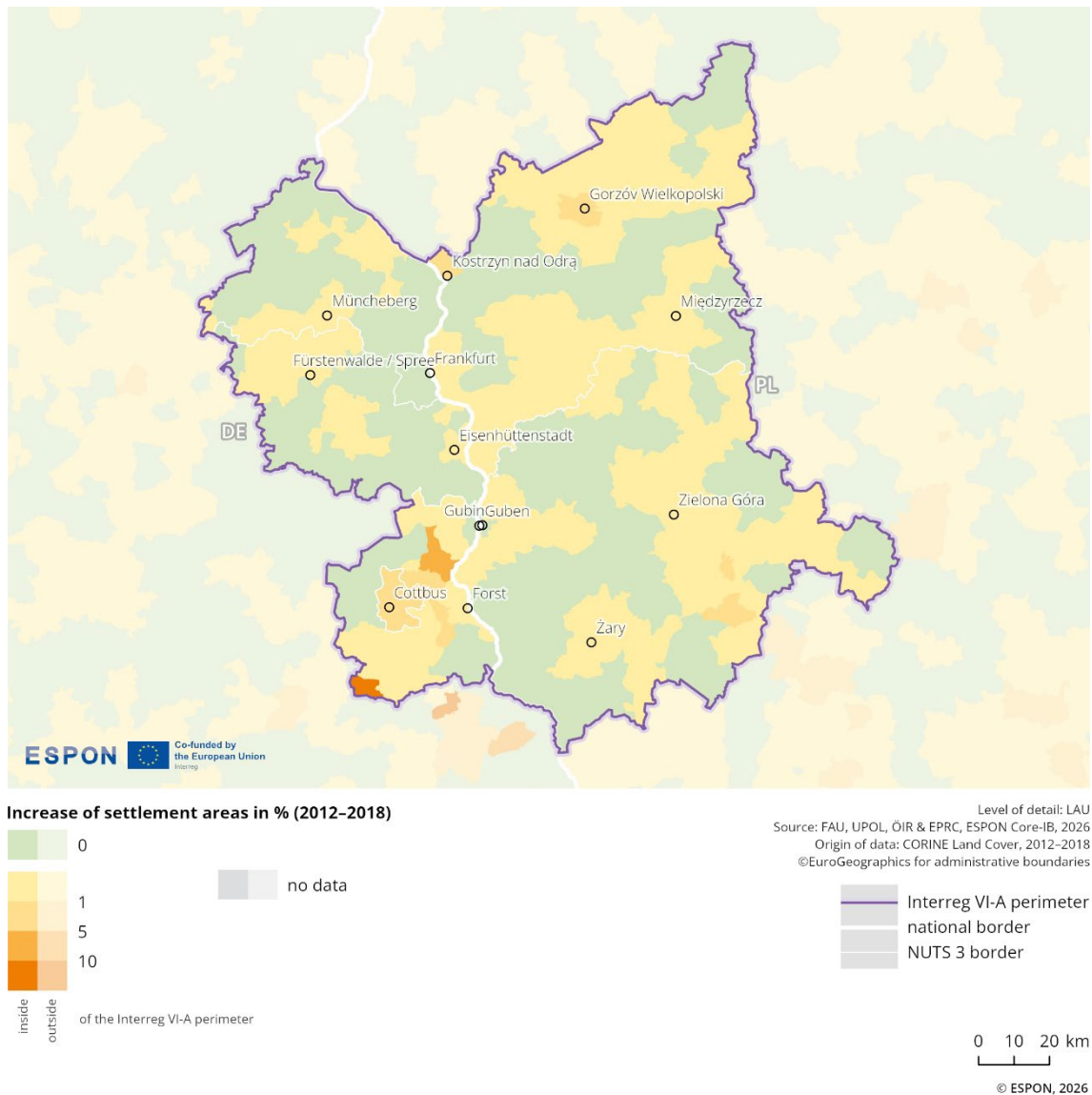
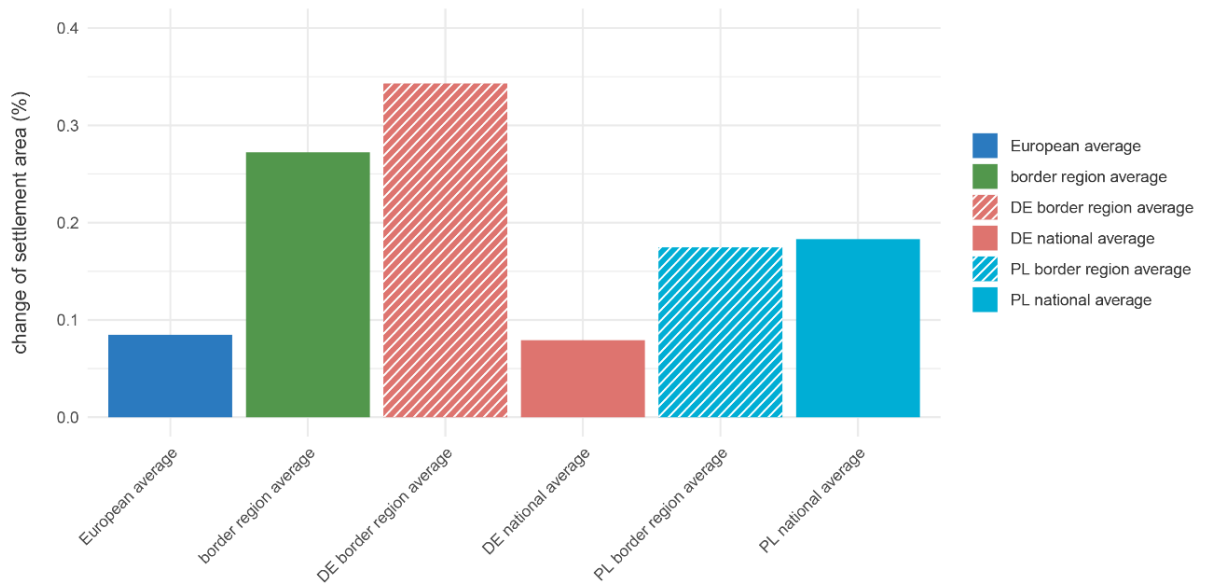


Figure 2.4 presents the change in settlement areas from a comparative perspective. The average for the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland programme area is higher than the overall European average, which includes both EU member states and the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. The national Polish value is higher than the national German one. The German border-regional average lies above the Polish border-regional average. The German border-regional average is higher than the national average. The Polish border-regional average is similar to the Polish national average

In general, the programme area shows a dynamic settlement development. The need for an integrated approach to spatial development is obvious. Spatial development has to balance the various demands on land use (e.g., residential, commercial, tourism, transport, agriculture, and nature conservation), and this requires ongoing coordination and exchange, also across the border.

Figure 2.4: Change in settlement areas (2012-2018) (comparison)



2.1.2 Accessibility of the border area

This sub-dimension illustrates the functional travel connections that already exist in the border region. It examines average cross-border travel times for different modes of transport and cross-border catchment areas based on mobility flows. It also considers travel times to and from border crossings. The analysis shows whether mobility flows are integrated between border regions or if the border hampers mobility.

2.1.2.1 Comparative quality of selected cross-border connections

Indicator description

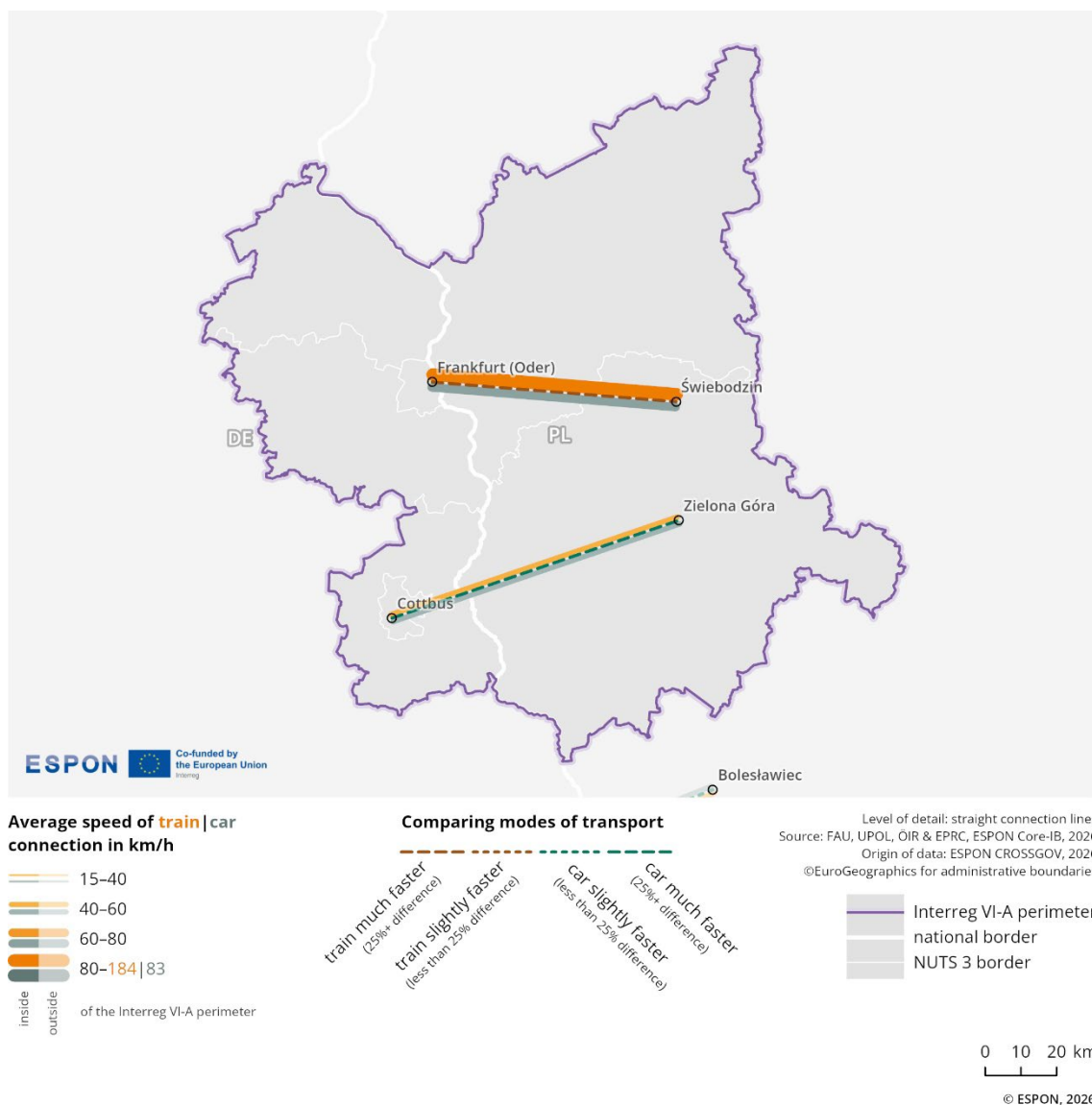
The indicator presents a comparative perspective for different modes of transport (public and private) and their average travel speed (so-called space-time-lines). As such it helps to understand and interpret accessibility patterns along the border and highlights the comparative quality of selected cross-border connections.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Average number and speed of rail connections/ferries, average speed of car connections between selected cities and towns in border regions using Rail Travel Sites, Google Maps, luftlinie.org, Direct Ferries, local ferry companies
- **Temporal coverage:** 2025 (first quarter)
- **Unit:** km/h

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Cross-border accessibility shapes cross-border interactions. Figure 2.5 illustrates this using a "space-time-line" map, which shows parts of a European overview of car and train travel times in the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland border region. This visualisation enables an assessment of transport quality by highlighting differences between public (train) and private (car) transport modes.

Figure 2.5: Comparative quality of selected cross-border connections



The selection of cities and connections covered is based on a set of criteria applied throughout Europe within the ESPON CROSSGOV project⁴. These criteria include the presence of a railway station, population size, distance to the border, node hub and functionality. The thickness of the lines (orange for trains, grey for cars) indicates the average speed of connections in km/h, with thicker lines representing faster connections. Dotted lines in-between reflect the indexed ratio between train and car speeds. A brown colour scale (values below 100) denotes that trains are faster than cars along the specific route, while a green scale (values above 100) indicates the opposite.

The selected connections within the programme area include Frankfurt (Oder)–Świebodzin and Cottbus–Zielona Góra. On the Frankfurt (Oder)–Świebodzin route, train travel clearly outperforms car travel in terms of speed, whereas on the Cottbus–Zielona Góra route, car travel is the faster option.

⁴ ESPON CROSSGOV Atlas, see Storymap on 'Space-time-lines': <https://gis-portal.espon.eu/arcgis/apps/storymaps/collections/345c978adf784ad-fac30c16b90219d35?item=4>

2.1.2.2 Cross-border catchment area based on mobility flows

Indicator description

This indicator measures the movement of people across borders. The density of cross-border movements by Twitter/X users is displayed on a grid cell covering an area of 20x20 km. The indicator does not differentiate between reasons for movement.

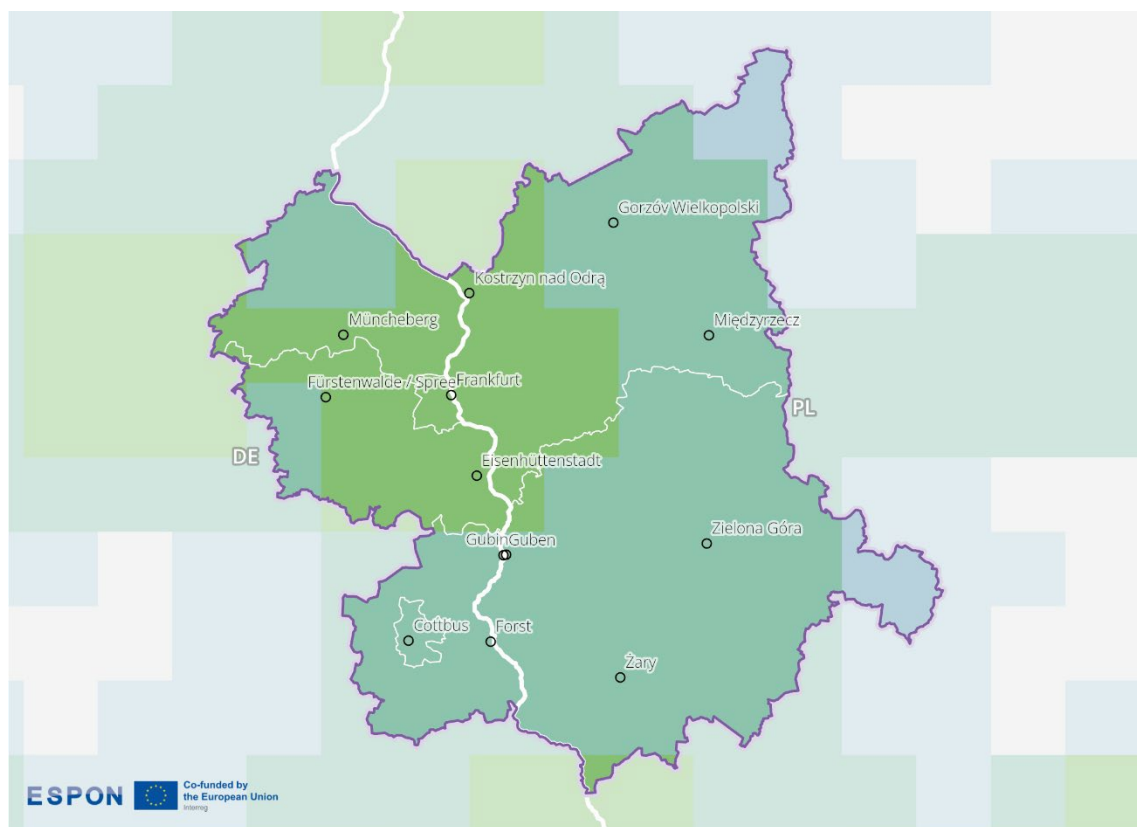
- **Source/method of retrieval:** The indicator is calculated based on Twitter (currently X) data. The digital footprint of individual users provides information about physical mobility flows and is used to calculate cross-border catchment areas of different intensity.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2013-2023
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.6 shows the cross-border catchment area in the border region based on mobility flows from 2013 to 2023, highlighting estimated cross-border mobility intensity across 3 different quartiles. The first quartile represents the 25% highest mobility intensity shown in dark green, the second quartile represents 25-50% coloured in green-blue, and the third quartile represents 50-75% in light blue.

The intensity of cross-border mobility of people within this cross-border region is relatively homogeneous. The highest mobility intensity is recorded in the northwestern part of the region, particularly around the towns of Müncheberg and Spree. Across most of the territory, mobility intensity is moderate (25–50%), including cities such as Gorzów Wielkopolski, Cottbus, Guben, and Zielona Góra. Additionally, 2 smaller areas with moderate intensity are located in the northwestern part of the German section of the region.

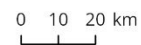
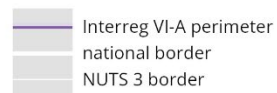
Figure 2.6: Cross-border mobility intensity



Estimated cross-border mobility intensity (2013-2023)



Level of detail: 20km aggregated grid
 Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
 Origin of data: ESPON CROSSGOV, 2026
 ©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries



© ESPON, 2026

2.1.2.3 Cross-border travel-time accessibility

Indicator description

The indicator shows the time it takes to travel from any location within a region to the next border crossing, using grid data and subsequent categorisations into accessibility groups of 30, 60 and 90 minutes. It reflects the accessibility in cross-border areas, considering road transport. The indicator can describe the quality and speed of road connections and thus spatial reach of the cross-border services.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Based on the OpenStreetMap road network, the travel time to the border is calculated for a grid of the border area. Based on this, areas are calculated within which border crossings can be reached below thresholds of 30, 60 and 90 minutes. As additional visual element, key services pharmacies, doctors, hospitals and shops (retrieved from the ESPON PROFECY project) are displayed and categorised into the accessibility groups.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2025 (first quarter, for accessibility data), 2021 (for service facility data)
- **Unit:** Minutes

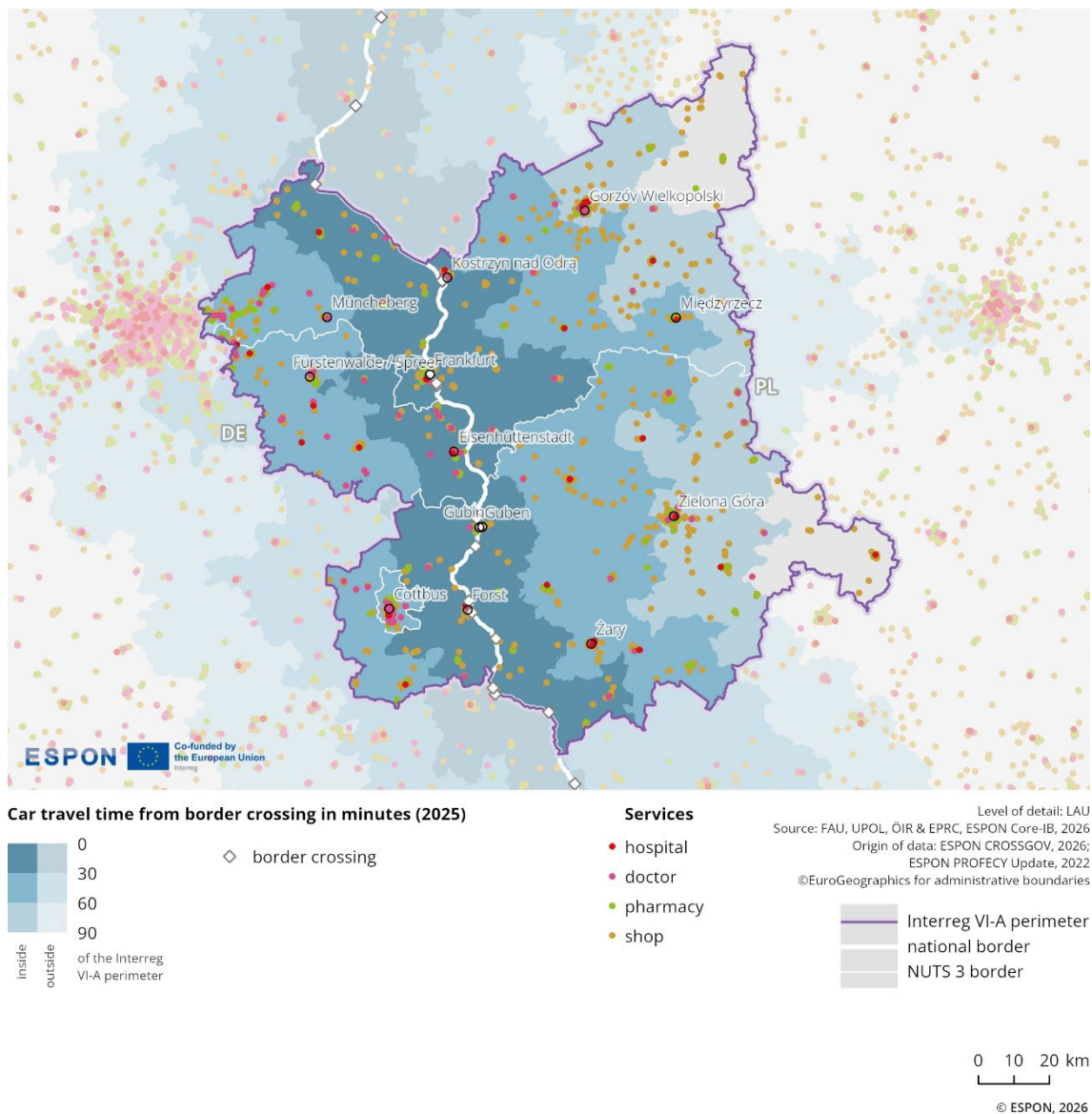
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.7 illustrates cross-border travel time accessibility in the Interreg area, showing the time distance from the national border in 2025. The legend indicates 3 travel time categories in minutes (30, 60, 90) represented by different shades of blue. In addition, it marks the location of services, including hospitals, doctors (general practitioners), pharmacies, and shops (supermarkets and convenient stores), with distinct coloured symbols.

The map shows that along the entire cross-border, the travel-time accessibility is under 30 minutes without any interruptions. This indicates a good road network and accessibility in cross-border areas. The areas of travel time accessibility thresholds 30- and 60-minute form parallel belts on both sides of the border. The entire area of Germany falls into the shortest categories, ranging from 30 to 60 minutes. The distant areas of Poland fall into the category of those accessible within 90 minutes or less of travel time.

The density of services, including shops, hospitals, doctors, and pharmacies, is similar on both sides of the border. More frequent are shops. The concentration of services is in the Frankfurt an der Oder town on border. The next cities with services are Cottbus (Germany) and Gorzów Wielkopolski (Poland).

Figure 2.7: Travel-time accessibility from border crossings



2.1.3 Key messages on the territorial dimension

The Germany/Brandenburg–Poland border region is characterised by low population density, demographic decline, dynamic settlement development and relatively high accessibility. These features together form a complex spatial structure. With 79 inhabitants per km², population density is clearly below both the EU and respective national averages. The settlement pattern comprises a few medium-sized urban centres, such as Gorzów Wielkopolski, Zielona Góra and Cottbus, surrounded by large areas of sparsely populated regions.

This demographic context is further characterised by population decrease and an ageing population. Since 2014, the region has decreased in population size by 3.3%. There has been a significant decline in the working-age population and substantial growth in the over-65 age group. The trend is more pronounced in Poland, while stagnation in Germany contrasts with overall national growth. These dynamics explain why land-use pressures appear paradoxical: despite demographic decline, settlement areas have been expanding, particularly around larger towns such as Cottbus, Gorzów Wielkopolski, and Zielona Góra. This reflects ongoing urbanisation pressures and the demand for residential and transport areas, making integrated spatial planning fundamental.

Accessibility partly counterbalances these demographic challenges. Cross-border travel times are relatively short, with most border crossings accessible within 30 to 60 minutes, and service provision is broadly similar on both sides of the border. Car and rail links perform variably, with trains outperforming cars on some routes but falling behind on others. Cross-border mobility flows are moderate and evenly distributed overall, with slightly stronger interactions in the northern part of the border area.

2.2 Economic dimension

The economic dimension includes analyses of gross domestic product, labour market conditions, competitiveness, and key infrastructure and housing indicators. The aim is to illustrate the impact of the border on economic performance, whether it acts as a barrier or a bridge, and the extent to which integration is supported by labour mobility, remote working, and infrastructure connectivity.

2.2.1 Gross Domestic Product

This sub-dimension illustrates the economic situation of the border region by analysing gross domestic product (GDP). It shows economic development within the border region and how this has changed over time. Comparisons with the respective countries and the EU average provide important context for understanding the region's dynamics.

2.2.1.1 Gross domestic product per capita at current market prices

Indicator description

The indicator shows the regional GDP/capita in current prices and its development over the past years. It highlights structural differences and similarities between the border region and the respective national figures as well as the European average. Furthermore, it highlights patterns within the border region, although has to be interpreted with care in the case of a strong presence of commuters.

- **Source:** Eurostat, Annual Regional Database of the European Commission (ARDECO)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2010-2023
- **Unit:** Euro per capita

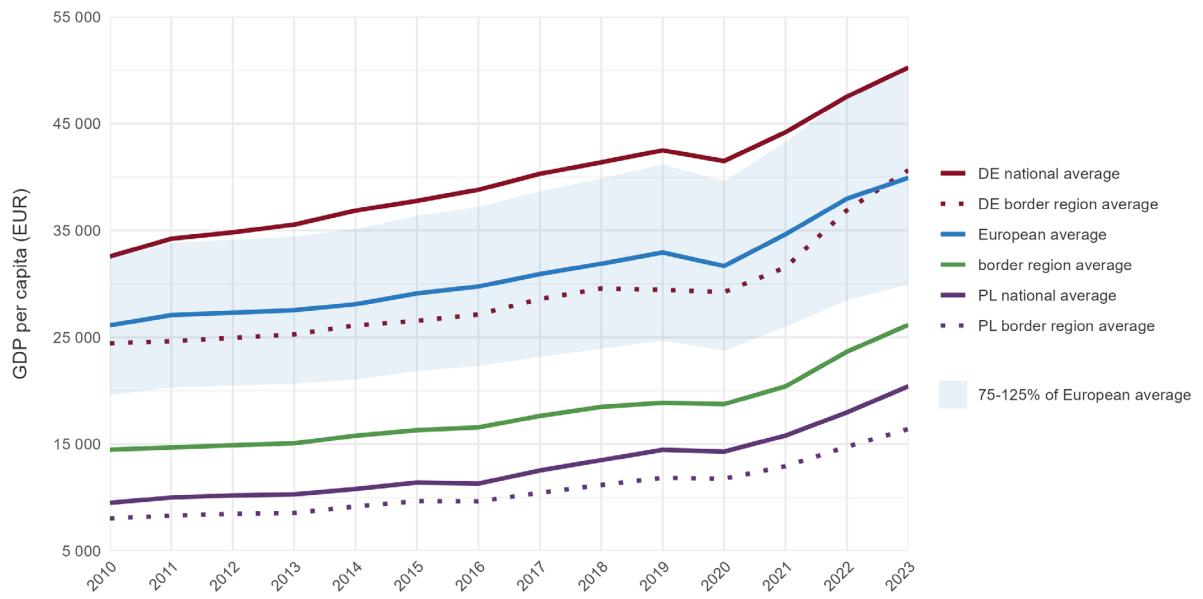
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

In 2022, the border region's GDP per capita was 65.1% of the EU average and 66.1% of the average in European border regions in general. Between 2014 and 2022, it grew by 51.6%, an increase 16.0 percentage points higher than the EU average and 16.5 percentage points higher than the average for European border regions⁵.

In the German border region, GDP per capita is roughly in line with the EU average but only about 77% of the German national average. On the Polish side, GDP per capita is lower than the national average. However, Poland's GDP per capita has been growing at nearly twice the pace of Germany's (see Figure 2.8).

⁵ Percentage changes are calculated using Eurostat data to ensure harmonised statistics from official sources. The latest year for which full coverage of all European regions is available on Eurostat is 2022. For visualisation purposes, ARDECO data has been used to enable longer time series to be visualised by filling the official dataset's existing gaps with model-based estimates. Therefore, slight deviations between the calculation and visualisation are possible.

Figure 2.8: Gross domestic product at current market prices (per capita)



2.2.2 Labour market and commuting

This sub-dimension highlights the existing and potential functional links within the labour market of the border region. It examines the employment situation and commuting patterns, as well as the role of telework agreements, and considers developments over time based on analysed indicators. The analysis identifies factors that facilitate or hamper cross-border labour market integration.⁶

2.2.2.1 Share of employment

Indicator description

This indicator shows the share of employees in the population aged 15 to 64. Although it does not fully capture entrepreneurs, marginal employees, or civil servants, this is an important statistic for understanding general labour market patterns. It covers 2 aspects: first, high values can result from a high proportion of the resident population being employed. Second, high values can result from a high number of incoming commuters (from other NUTS3 regions within the country or from neighbouring countries). The same arguments apply to low values: they may indicate low levels of employment, or they may result from high shares of outgoing commuters. Values of more than 100% are possible, since the number of incoming commuters can exceed the number of inhabitants aged 15 to 64 (including both domestic and cross-border commuters).

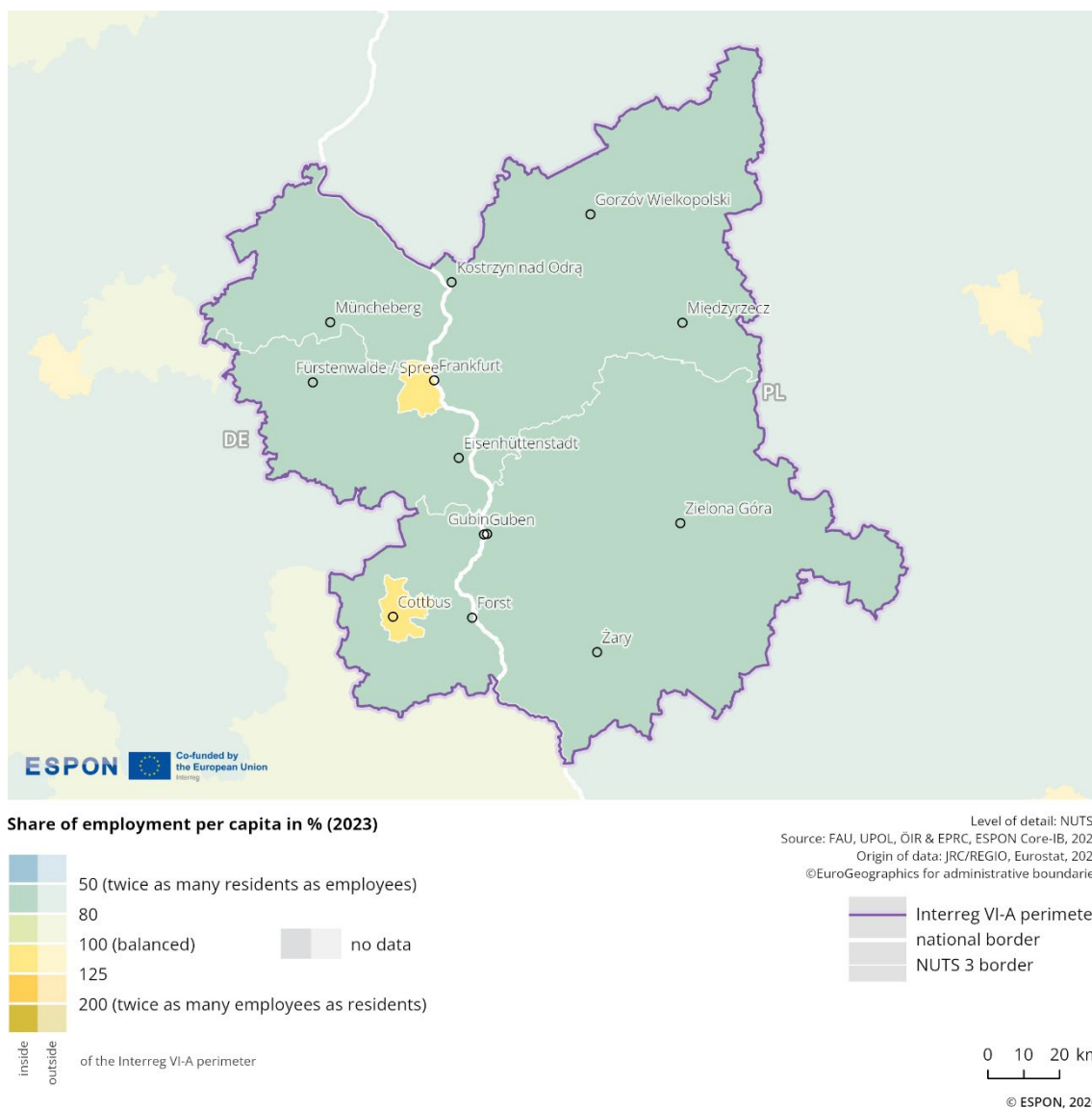
- **Source:** Eurostat, Annual Regional Database of the European Commission (ARDECO)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2014-2023
- **Unit:** Share in %

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.9 illustrates the share of employment per capita in the population aged 15 to 64 in 2023. The data are categorised into ranges from below 50% (twice as many residents aged 15 to 64 as employees) to above 200% (twice as many employees as residents aged 15 to 64), with 100% representing a balanced ratio. Blue or green-coloured regions indicate more residents aged 15 to 64 than employees, while yellow regions indicate more employees than residents aged 15 to 64.

⁶ See also: European Commission 2024: Cross-Border Regional Labour Market Analysis, <https://op.europa.eu/s/AazM>

Figure 2.9: Employment share⁷



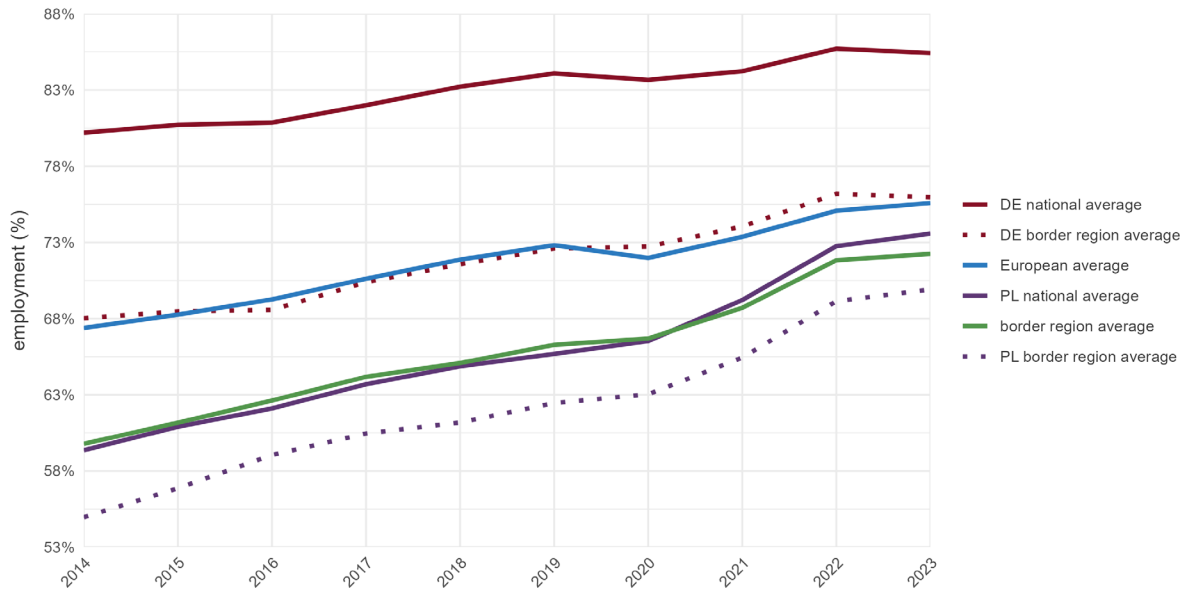
The share of employment in this border region is very stable, with the average for the entire region at 72.25% in 2023, having increased by 12.47 percentage points since 2014. Throughout the region the share of employment values lie mostly within the range of 50% to 80%. Only in the areas around the cities of Cottbus and Frankfurt the values fall in the range of 100% to 125%. When comparing the share of employment in this border region with different averages, the following can be observed (see Figure 2.10):

- › Compared to the European average, values in the cross-border region are lower by 3.3 percentage points; in 2014, they were lower by 7.6 percentage points.
- › Compared to the Polish average, values in the cross-border region are lower by 1.3 percentage points, whereas in 2014 they were higher by 0.4 percentage points.
- › Compared to the German average, values in the cross-border region are lower by 13.2 percentage points; in 2014, they were lower by 20.4 percentage points.

⁷ Note: In this map, 'residents' refers to the population aged 15 to 64.

- › The Polish border area has values 3.7 percentage points lower than the Polish national average, while the German border area has values 9.5 percentage points lower than the German national average.
- › Compared to the average of all cross-border regions, values are lower by 2.2 percentage points; in 2014, they were lower by 6.5 percentage points.

Figure 2.10: Employment share over time (comparison)



2.2.2.2 Share of working-age population

Indicator description

This indicator shows the share of people aged 15 to 64 in the total population, reflecting the potential working-age population. The population counted includes all residents who live in the country permanently, excluding foreign students and military personnel. Using the 15–64 age range is a standard European statistical proxy, since differences in retirement age or labour participation across countries cannot be captured systematically. It allows for regional differentiation of potential workforce throughout the border region.

- **Source:** Eurostat, Annual Regional Database of the European Commission (ARDECO)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2014-2023
- **Unit:** Share in %

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

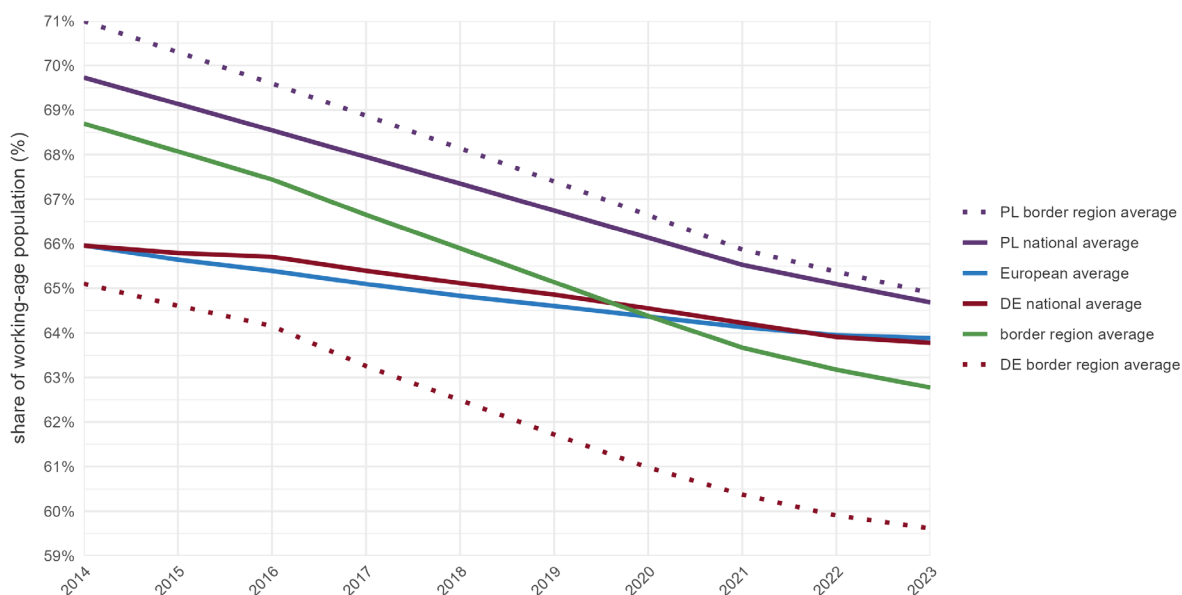
Figure 2.11 illustrates the evolution of the share of the working-age population in the Germany/Brandenburg–Poland cross-border region between 2014 and 2023. In 2023, the border region shows an average working-age population share of 62.8%, compared to the European average of 63.9% and 63.7% for the average of all cross-border regions.

The share of the working-age population in the whole cross-border region is slightly lower compared to both the Polish border average (64.9%) and the Polish national average (64.7%). In contrast, it is quite higher than the German border average (59.6%) but remains below the German national average (63.8%).

The region experienced a 5.9 percentage point decrease in the share of the working-age population between 2014 (68.7%) and 2023 (62.8%). This decline contrasts with the European average, which decreased by 2.1 percentage points during the same period. While all areas in the region show a declining trend, the rate of decline has been more pronounced in the Polish parts (-6.1 percentage points at the border and -5.0 percentage points at the national level) than in the German parts (-5.5 percentage points at the border and -2.2 percentage points at the national level). This trend in both parts of the border area leads to a potentially smaller pool of people of working age and could exacerbate the shortage of skilled workers, meaning that competition for qualified labor becomes more intense.

Although both sides of the border show a pronounced decline in the working-age population, the Polish side maintains a relatively higher share than both its national and European averages throughout the entire period. The German border area, in contrast, consistently underperforms relative to the national average and now falls significantly below the European and cross-border averages.

Figure 2.11: Share of working-age population over time (comparison)



2.2.2.3 Employment by sector

Indicator description

The indicator differentiates the number of jobs in a region by sector. This indicator focuses on workplace-based employment, providing insight into the employment landscape of a region. The dataset can be disaggregated according to “10-sector” NACE (Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne) classifications, allowing for detailed analysis of employment distribution across various industries.

- **Source:** Eurostat, Annual Regional Database of the European Commission (ARDECO)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2014-2023
- **Unit:** Share in %

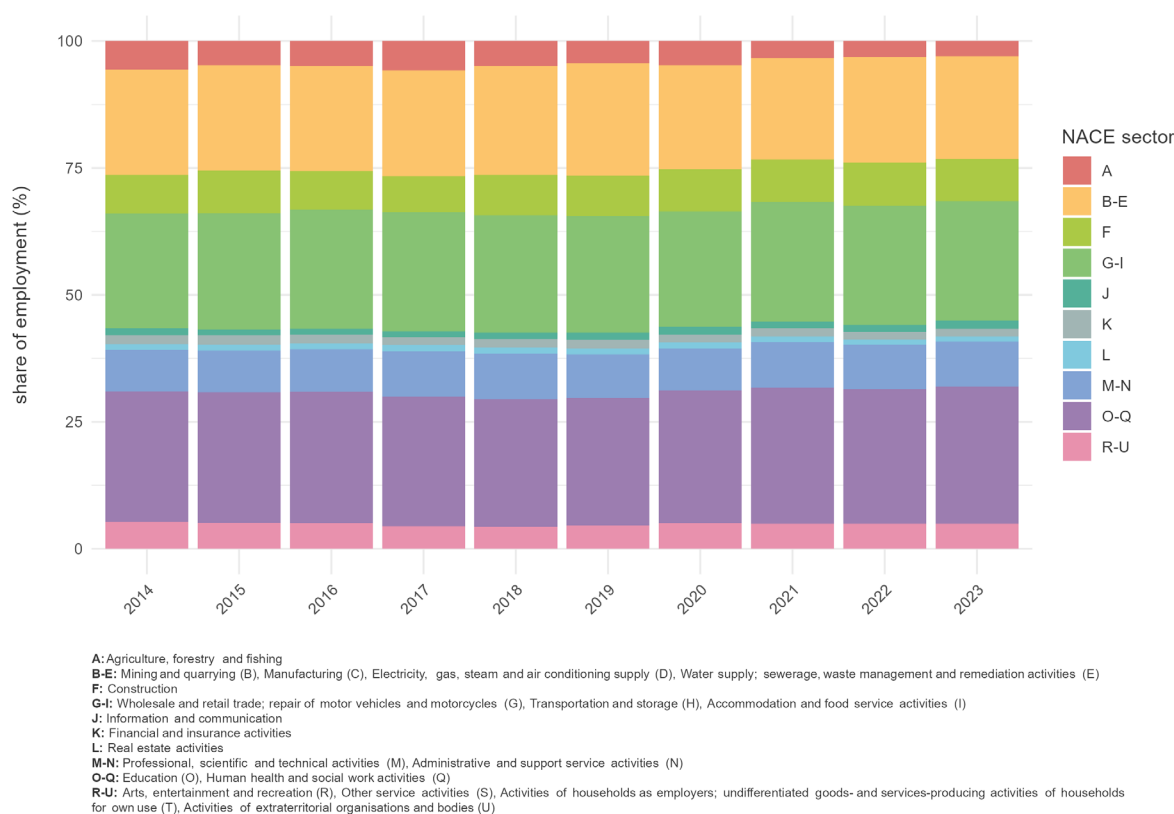
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.12 illustrates the relative number of jobs in the border area differentiated by sectors. It shows where jobs are located (not where employed persons live). This workplace-based indicator offers insight into the employment structure of a region.

The dataset uses a '10-sector' classification based on NACE categories. The sectoral breakdown is as follows:

- › A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- › B-E: Mining and quarrying (B), Manufacturing (C), Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (D), Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (E)
- › F: Construction
- › G-I: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G), Transportation and storage (H), Accommodation and food service activities (I)
- › J: Information and communication
- › K: Financial and insurance activities
- › L: Real estate activities
- › M-N: Professional, scientific and technical activities (M), Administrative and support service activities (N)
- › O-Q: Education (O), Human health and social work activities (Q)
- › R-U: Arts, entertainment and recreation (R), Other service activities (S), Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use (T), Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies (U)

Figure 2.12: Employment by sector (comparison)



Between 2014 and 2023, the relative number of jobs in the different sectors remains fairly stable. There is a slight decline in the share employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing (A) and Mining and quarrying (B), Manufacturing (C), Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (D), Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (E). Conversely, there is a modest increase in the number of jobs in Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G), Transportation and storage (H), Accommodation and food service activities (I), Education (O) and Human health and social work activities (Q).

Over the entire period, the sectors with the highest share of jobs are 'B-E' (mining, quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities, 'G-I' (wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, transportation and storage, accommodation and food service activities) and 'O-Q' (education, human health and social work activities).

2.2.2.4 Outgoing cross-border commuters

Indicator description

The indicator shows outgoing cross-border commuting dynamics at NUTS3 level. Even though no origin-destination information can be provided, it is assumed that commuters primarily travel across the nearest border. Spatial, economic and population arguments are combined to calculate the number of outgoing cross-border commuters.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Eurostat/LFS data on outgoing commuters currently available on NUTS2 level has been regionalised for NUTS3 by means of weighting by border length, NUTS3 population-weighted centroid distance to border, population per NUTS3 region (15–64 years old) and real compensation per employee
- **Temporal coverage:** 2015-2023
- **Unit:** Share in %

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Commuting is one of the most relevant cross-border flows to identify functional linkages. Figure 2.13 illustrates the share of outgoing commuters per capita for each NUTS3 region (more concretely speaking the share of outgoing commuters among the residential population of the age group 15-64 years old, resembling the potential labour force). Origin-destination information cannot be provided, but the share of outgoing commuters in regions close to the border indicates the relevance of commuting. It highlights functional relations in the labour market within the cross-border region.

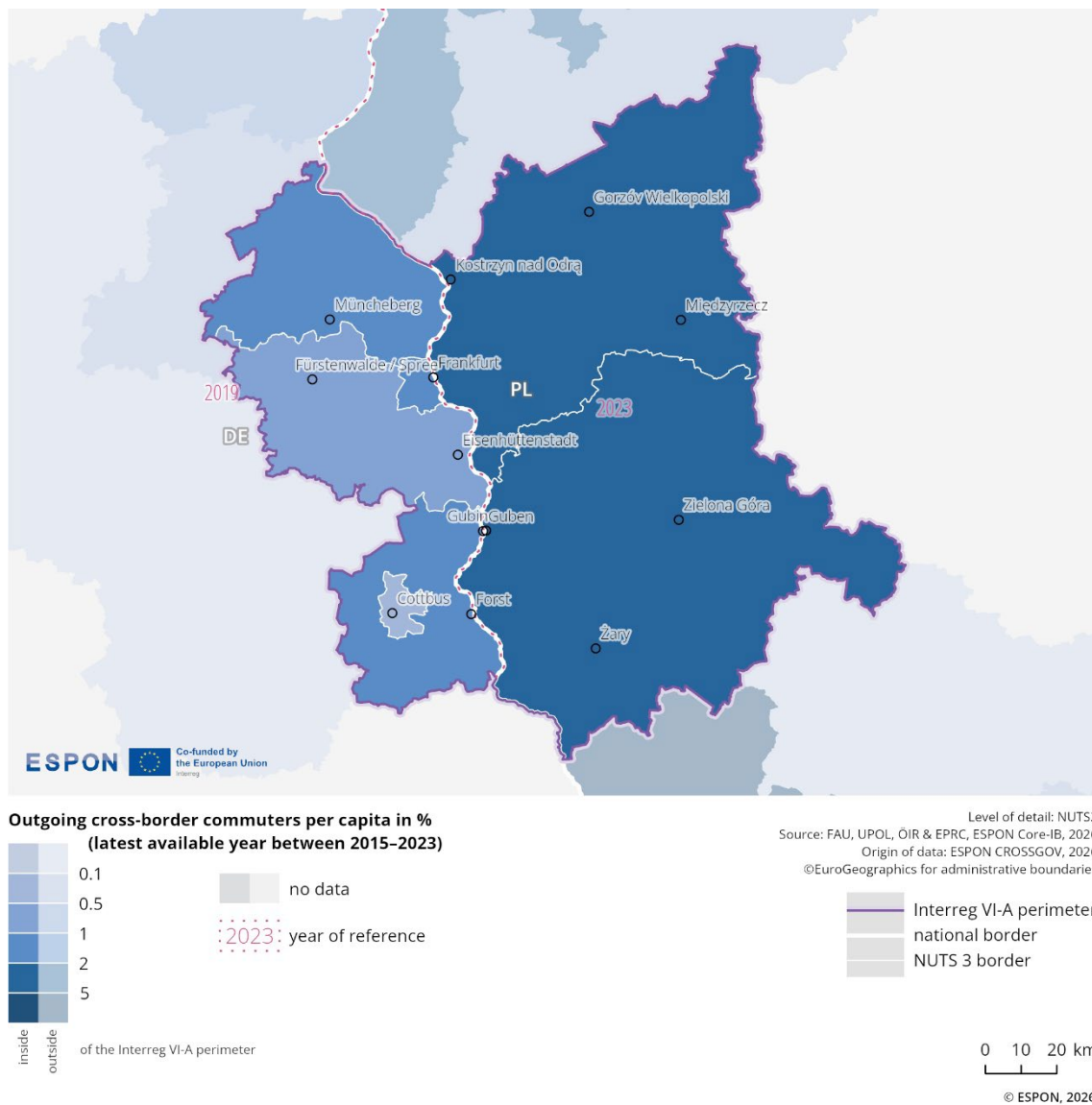
The map illustrates the share of cross-border commuters, based on the most recent available data. It shows relatively strong cross-border commuting activity in areas directly adjacent to the border, especially on the Polish side.

The Polish regions stand out in particular, with high levels of outgoing commuters in Zielonogórski and Gorzowski, highlighting the important role of this border area as a commuting corridor⁸.

Other 'hotspots' include, on the German side, the regions of Frankfurt (Oder, Kreisfreie Stadt), Märkisch-Oderland and Spree-Neiße. These NUTS3 regions also show elevated shares of outgoing cross-border commuters per capita.

⁸ See Eurostat Statistical Atlas for NUTS3 (2021) regions: <https://ec.europa.eu/statistical-atlas/viewer/?config=typologies.json&ch=NUTS&mids=BKGCNT.NUTS2021L3.CNTOVL&o=1.1.0.7¢er=49.69576,14.33324&lcis=NUTS2021L3&>

Figure 2.13: Outgoing cross-border commuting patterns



2.2.2.5 Cross-border telework agreements

Indicator description

The indicator shows what kind of legal framework for cross-border telework is enacted.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** The indicator is based on information about the legal framework for social security regarding cross-border teleworking, categorised by border pair.
- **Temporal coverage:** Status as of March 2025
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

The 2 countries involved in the programme are signatories of the 2023 Framework Agreement on Cross-Border Telework. Under this agreement, cross-border workers can telework from their country of residence for up to 50% of their total working time without affecting their social security affiliation.

2.2.3 Competitiveness

This sub-dimension illustrates the competitiveness of the border region by analysing the main industry sectors that contribute to its economic development. It assesses gross value added (GVA) at basic prices by sector, as well as nominal compensation per hour worked, in order to understand productivity levels and sectoral strengths.

2.2.3.1 Gross value added at basic prices by sector

Indicator description

The indicator shows the gross value added (GVA), which is a measure of the contribution of a country or region to the economy. Regional GVA represents the value generated by all units involved in the production of goods and services within a specific area. This indicator can be disaggregated by industry and service sector, allowing for a detailed analysis of economic contributions across different fields. Additionally, the sum of GVA across all industries or sectors, combined with taxes on products and minus subsidies on products, yields the gross domestic product (GDP) of the region. The dataset is available in "10-sector" NACE classifications, facilitating comprehensive evaluations of the regional economy.

- **Source:** Annual Regional Database of the European Commission (ARDECO)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2014-2023
- **Unit:** Million purchasing power standards (PPS)

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

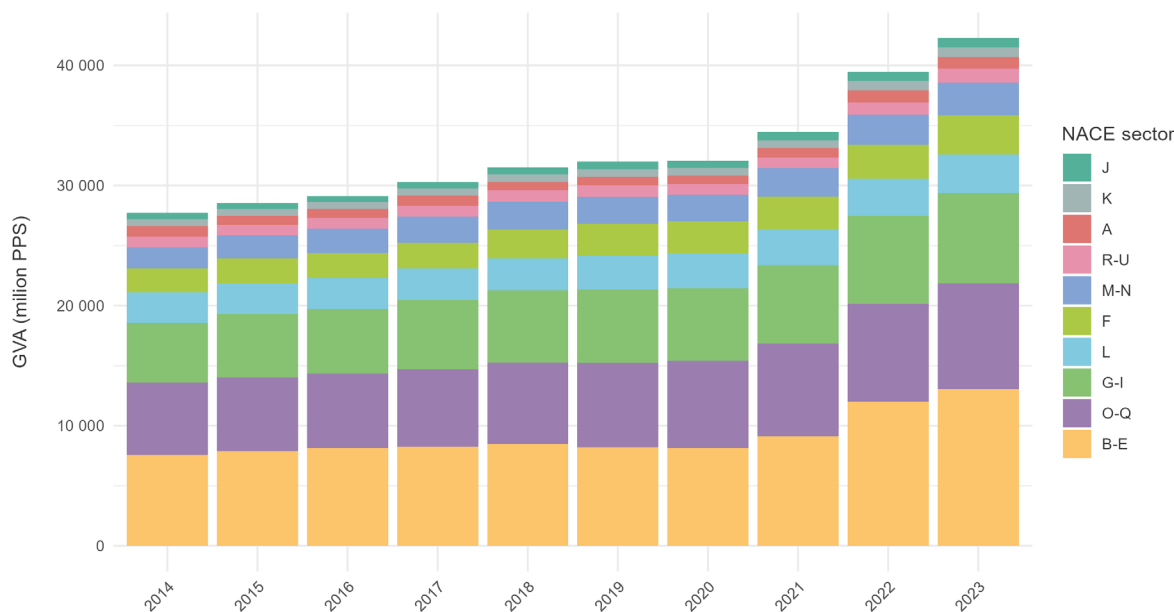
Figure 2.14 visualises gross value added (GVA), which is an important indicator of economic activity. GVA measures the value created by all economic activities involved in producing goods and services in a specific area. It is differentiated by sectors to provide detailed insights into the economic contributions of different fields.

The dataset uses a '10-sector' classification based on NACE categories. The sectoral breakdown is as follows:

- > A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- > B-E: Mining and quarrying (B), Manufacturing (C), Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (D), Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (E)
- > F: Construction
- > G-I: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G), Transportation and storage (H), Accommodation and food service activities (I)
- > J: Information and communication
- > K: Financial and insurance activities
- > L: Real estate activities
- > M-N: Professional, scientific and technical activities (M), Administrative and support service activities (N)
- > O-Q: Education (O), Human health and social work activities (Q)
- > R-U: Arts, entertainment and recreation (R), Other service activities (S), Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use (T), Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies (U)

Between 2014 and 2023, the GVA in the border area of Germany/Brandenburg-Poland increased from 27,713 million purchasing power standards (PPS) to 42,279 million PPS, a growth of 53%. Sector groups B-E and O-Q together make up over half of the total GVA, highlighting their significant contribution to the regional economy within the border area. The sector groups B-E contributed the largest share, with a total of 13,034 million PPS in 2023. This underlines the significance of sectors such as Mining and quarrying (B), Manufacturing (C), Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (D), Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (E) in the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland border region.

Figure 2.14: Gross value added at basic prices by sector (comparison)



A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing
 B-E: Mining and quarrying (B), Manufacturing (C), Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (D), Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (E)
 F: Construction
 G-I: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G), Transportation and storage (H), Accommodation and food service activities (I)
 J: Information and communication
 K: Financial and insurance activities
 L: Real estate activities
 M-N: Professional, scientific and technical activities (M), Administrative and support service activities (N)
 O-Q: Education (O), Human health and social work activities (Q)
 R-U: Arts, entertainment and recreation (R), Other service activities (S), Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use (T), Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies (U)

2.2.3.2 Nominal compensation per hour worked

Indicator description

The indicator shows the average income paid for each hour worked, known as compensation per hour worked. This measure is calculated by dividing the “compensation of employees at current prices” by the total number of “hours worked (employees).” Employees, in this context, are defined as individuals engaged by contract in productive activities for a resident unit, receiving remuneration irrespective of their place of residence. The total hours worked is considered the most appropriate measure of labour input, representing the aggregate number of hours actually worked by employees. This indicator provides valuable insights into labour productivity and wage dynamics within the economy.

- **Source:** Annual Regional Database of the European Commission (ARDECO)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2023 (missing data from 2023 in Switzerland were supplemented by values from 2022)
- **Unit:** Euro

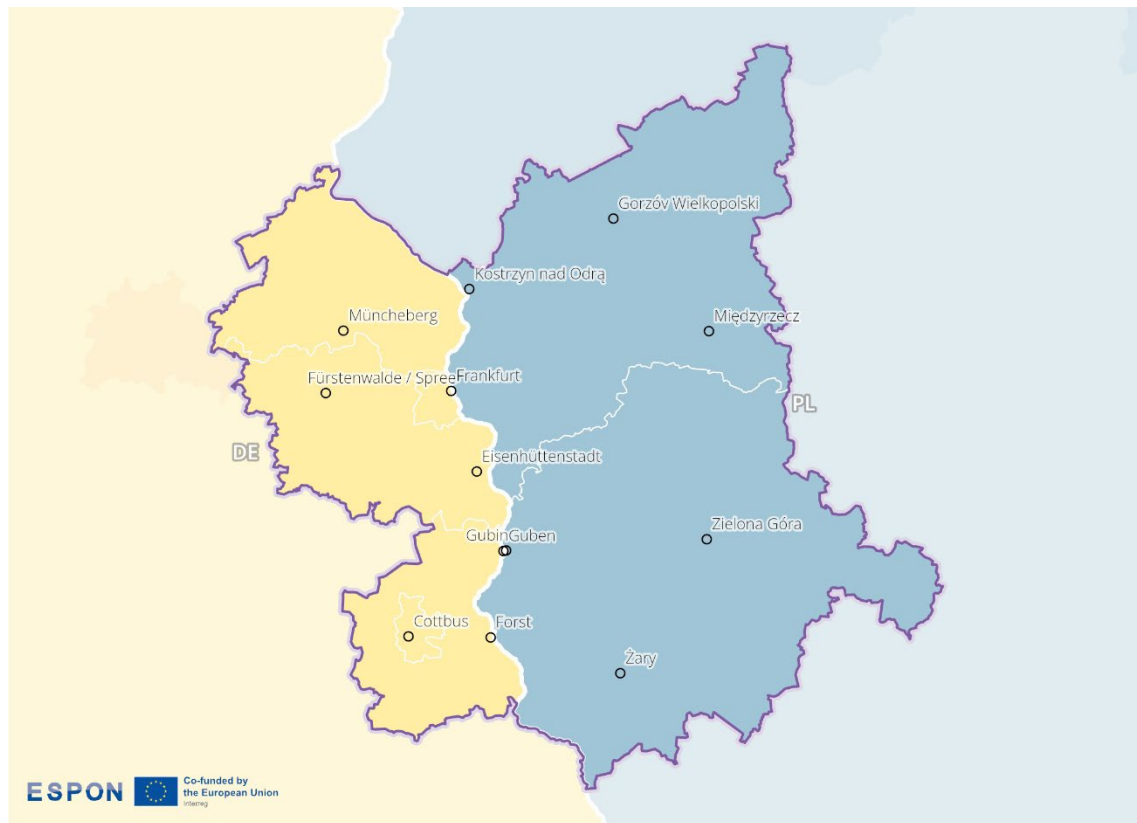
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.15 shows the average values for the 'compensation per hour worked'. This indicator is calculated by dividing the total compensation of employees (at current prices) by the total number of hours worked by those employees. In this context, 'employees' are defined as individuals engaged by contract in productive activities. The data is available for the place of work, regardless of the place of residence. Total hours worked represent the actual number of hours worked by employees and are considered the most accurate measure of labour input.

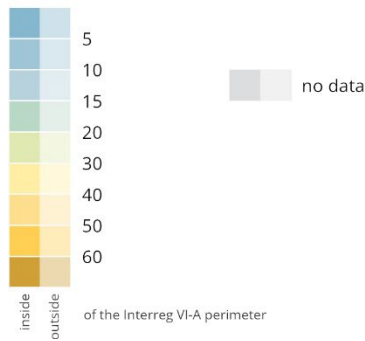
In 2023, nominal compensation per hour worked in the Germany/Brandenburg–Poland border region appears to be quite unevenly distributed. In the German areas, the average hourly income ranges between €30 and €40, with no region reporting values significantly above this range. In the Polish areas, the average hourly income ranges between €5 and €10, and no region reports a value above the general range. To contextualize the regional pattern shown in the figure, it is noteworthy that the national average hourly compensation reaches €39.40 in Germany and €9.90 in Poland, which helps situate the border region within national labour productivity context.

Cross-border wage differences can encourage labour migration from lower-wage areas to more economically prosperous neighbouring regions, creating both opportunities and challenges for local labour markets and social systems.

Figure 2.15: Average income per hour



Average income per hour worked in euros (2023)



Level of detail: NUTS3
 Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
 Origin of data: ARDECO database, JRC / REGIO, 2006-2023
 ©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

Interreg VI-A perimeter
 national border
 NUTS 3 border

0 10 20 km

© ESPON, 2026

2.2.4 Infrastructure and housing

This sub-dimension shows the impact of the border on infrastructure and housing in the region. It assesses housing prices and average internet speed in order to identify cross-border effects, including potential price spillovers and disparities. The analysis reveals whether infrastructure and housing markets facilitate integration or expose structural challenges that are specific to the border area.

2.2.4.1 Advertised sales prices

Indicator description

The indicator shows the advertised sales price per square meter for houses/appartements as retrieved from commercial real estate websites at national level. In the cross-border region, local differences between average sales prices are highlighted and the “cutting” effect of the border and its influence on price levels is visualised.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processed ESPON House4all data. The original data is collected via web-scraping of national listing websites over a one-year period.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2024/2025
- **Unit:** Average price per square meter (€/m²)

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.16 illustrates the advertised sales price of housing in 2025 across the border region. The data are categorised into ranges of average housing price per square metre, from below 250 €/m² up to more than 8,000 €/m², shown in colours ranging from purple and blue to green, yellow and orange.

Lower prices are found in the eastern part, where values drop below 1,000 €/m². The average advertised sales price in the German part of the border region is around 2,223 €/m², while in the Polish part it is about 1,025 €/m². The overall average for the entire border region is 1,704 €/m², which is near the average across all evaluated EU border regions (1,900 €/m²).

Figure 2.16: Advertised housing prices

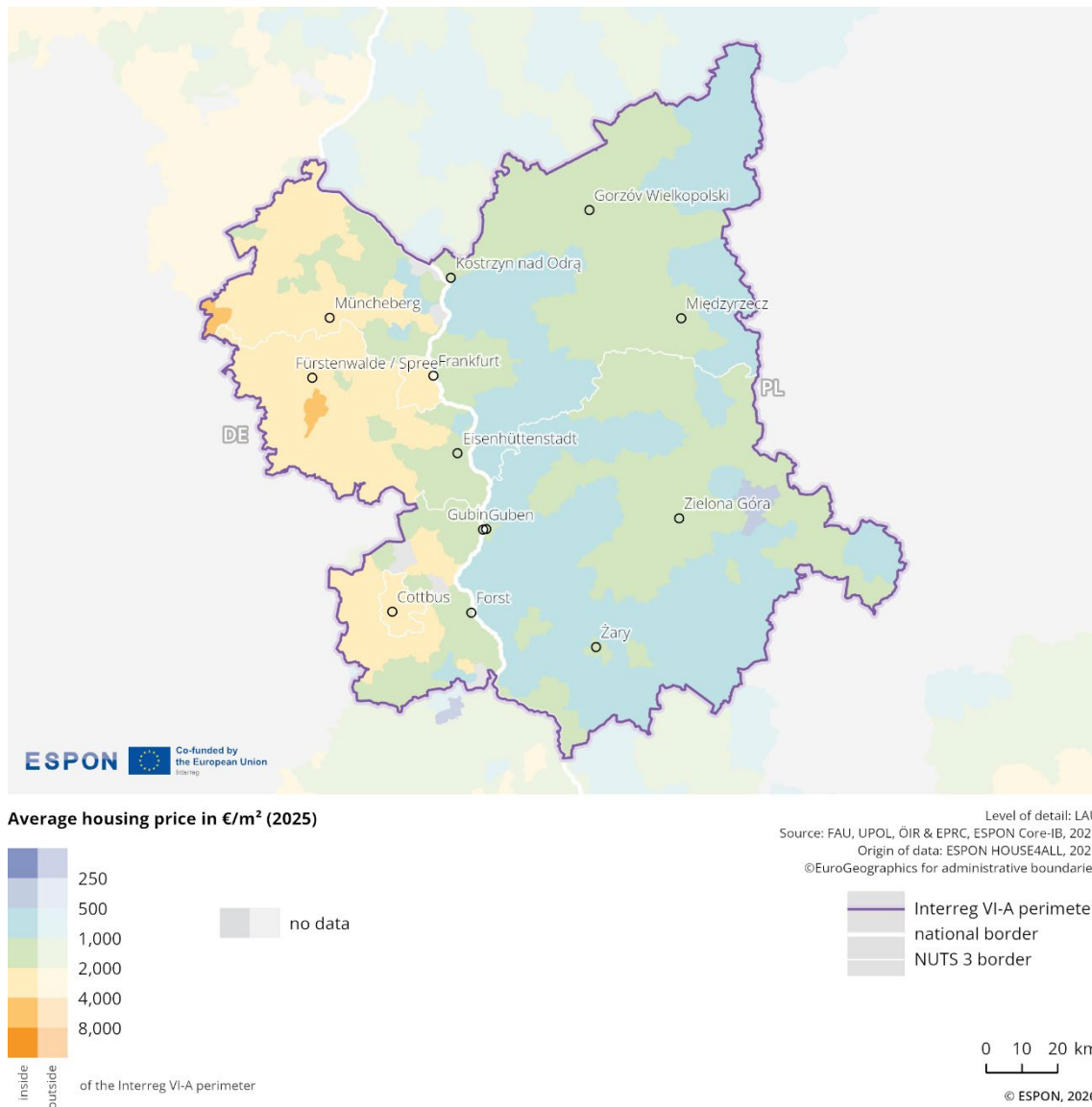
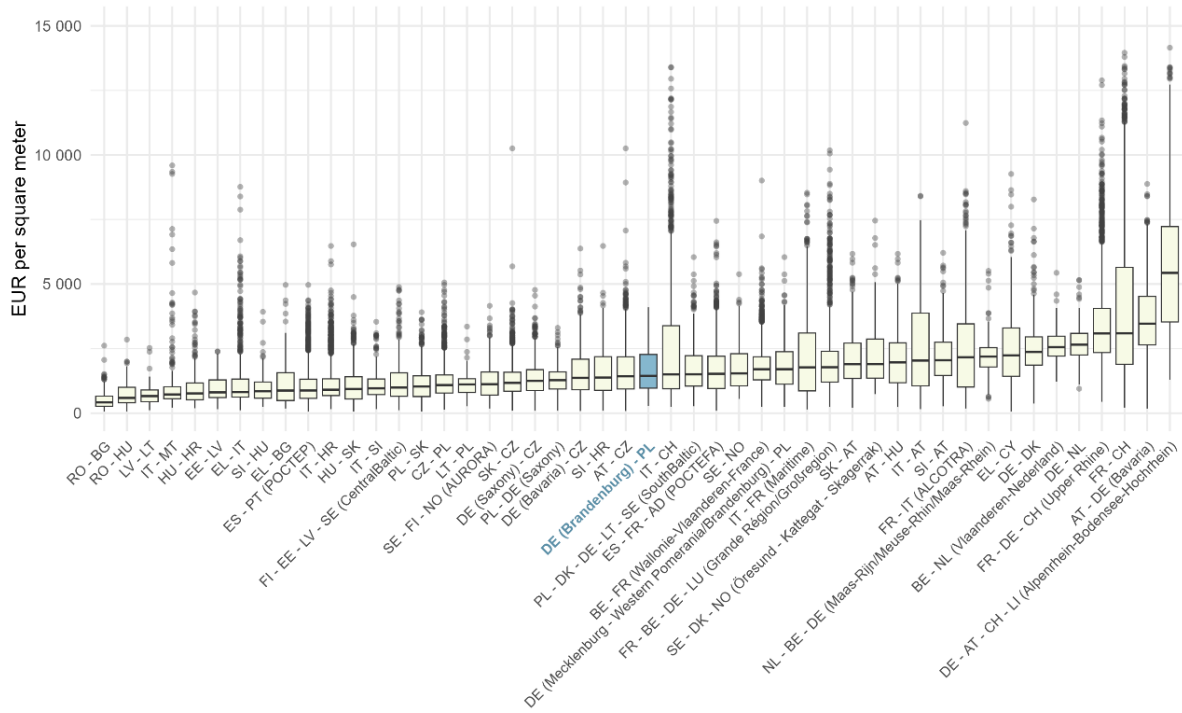


Figure 2.17 illustrates the distribution of sales prices across municipalities within the border area. The medium-sized interquartile range (IQR, represented by the box) indicates variation, highlighting existing spatial disparities in sales prices within the border area. Some municipalities record prices of up to 4,000 €/m² which is significantly lower than the European average of 5,600 €/m².

Figure 2.17: Advertised housing prices (comparison)



2.2.4.2 Average internet speed

Indicator description

The indicator shows the population weighted average internet speed available at municipal level. It highlights differences in the “digital preparedness”. In border regions, this indicator is particularly relevant for identifying digital infrastructure gaps that may hamper balanced development and cross-border integration.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing of data provided by Speedtest by Ookla Global Fixed and Mobile Network Performance Maps, based on Ookla’s analysis of Speedtest Intelligence data.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2022
- **Unit:** Download speed in Mbps

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

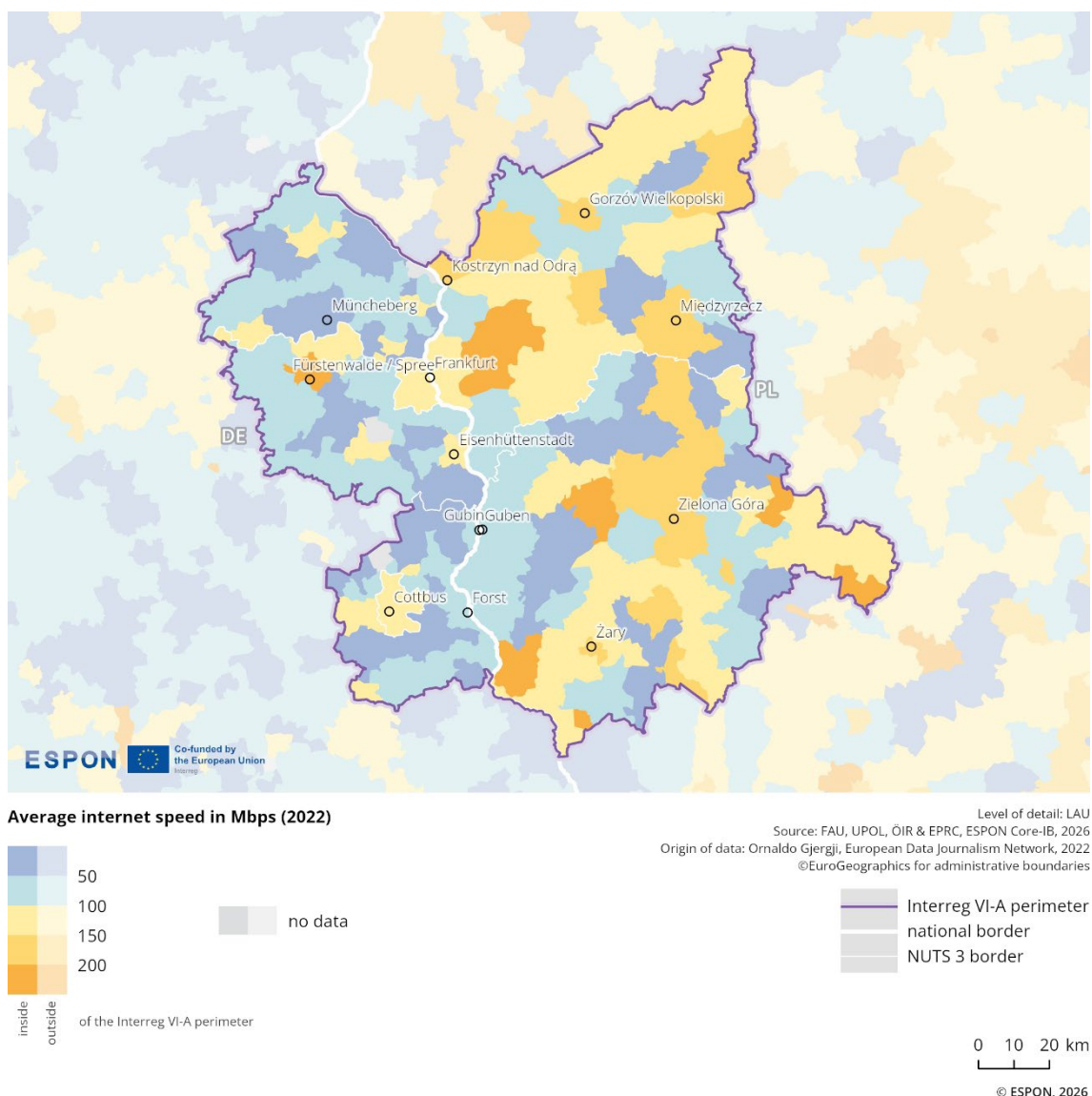
Digitalisation is a highly relevant issue in European border regions, with the overarching objective of ensuring appropriate digital access. It is widely recognised as a key precondition for successful regional and economic development. A major challenge in this process is preventing ‘digital divides’, i.e., avoiding significant disparities in economic, social, and spatial terms.

Average internet speed is a telling indicator of such disparities, highlighting differences in ‘digital preparedness’ at the local level. Figure 2.18 shows the average download speed at the municipality level. The colour scheme ranges from dark blue (very slow speeds) to orange (very fast speeds). The

data, prepared by OBC Transeuropa for EDJNet, is based on Speedtest Intelligence data from Speedtest/Ookla's Global Fixed and Mobile Network Performance Maps for the first quarter of 2022. The average download speeds are expressed in megabits per second (Mbps), not to be confused with megabytes per second (MBps).

The map reveals significant differences between urban and rural areas, with values ranging from under 50 Mbps to over 200 Mbps. Cities such as Fürstenwalde/Spree, Cottbus, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Międzyrzecz, Zielona Góra, and Żary report relatively high average speeds, while the surrounding areas tend to have significantly lower values. This may be due to the greater return on investment typically associated with digital infrastructure projects in urban areas compared to rural ones. However, not all urban areas in this border region have high download speeds, for example, Müncheberg and Guben do not stand out in this regard.

Figure 2.18: Average internet download speed



2.2.5 Key messages on the economic dimension

The border region has a complex economic profile, characterised by both convergence and ongoing disparities. Overall, the region has experienced above-average economic growth in recent years. GDP per capita increased by over 50% between 2014 and 2022, surpassing both EU and cross-border averages. While the region still does not reach the EU average, it is catching up at a faster pace. However, the pattern differs across the border: the German side is close to the EU average, yet well below the national German average. In contrast, the Polish side shows much faster growth, yet still trails behind Poland's average.

Employment levels reflect this mixed pattern. The share of employment has grown steadily and is closing the gap with the EU averages. However, values remain considerably higher on the German side of the border area. In parallel, the working-age population has declined significantly on both sides, with losses above the European average. This shrinking labour base underlines why, although rising, employment shares remain vulnerable.⁹

Sectoral structures provide another layer of insight. Traditional industries such as manufacturing and energy continue to dominate the regional economy, while service-oriented activities in health, education and trade are gradually expanding. These dynamics reflect ongoing transformational pressures, but also point to opportunities for diversification.

Labour mobility further illustrates asymmetry. Cross-border commuting from Polish regions is particularly strong, driven by wage gaps: compensation per hour worked is 3 to 4 times higher on the German side of the border. At the same time, cross-border teleworking agreements have the potential to influence these patterns, offering increased flexibility while safeguarding social security rights. Structural differences extend beyond the labour market. Housing prices and internet speeds reveal significant spatial differences, with cheaper real estate but weaker digital infrastructure in Poland.

2.3 Green dimension

The green dimension highlights the environmental characteristics, vulnerabilities and sustainability-related interactions within the border region. The analysis provides insight into the environmental interdependence of border regions. Additionally, the spatial distribution of renewable and conventional energy infrastructure, alongside indicators of resources and the circular economy, reveals whether the border facilitates collaborative transitions towards sustainability.

2.3.1 Nature protection and pollution

This sub-dimension investigates cross-border functional links in protected areas and areas affected by air and water pollution. It analyses the presence of protected areas in order to identify cross-border ecological links and conservation efforts. It also highlights the extent to which air and water pollution affects people living in border regions.

⁹ See also: European Commission 2024: Cross-Border Regional Labour Market Analysis, <https://op.europa.eu/s/AazM>

2.3.1.1 Protected areas

Indicator description

The indicator shows the presence and territorial coverage of protected areas based on the combination of 3 data sources, i.e., Nationally designated areas, Natura 2000 Network and Emerald Network.

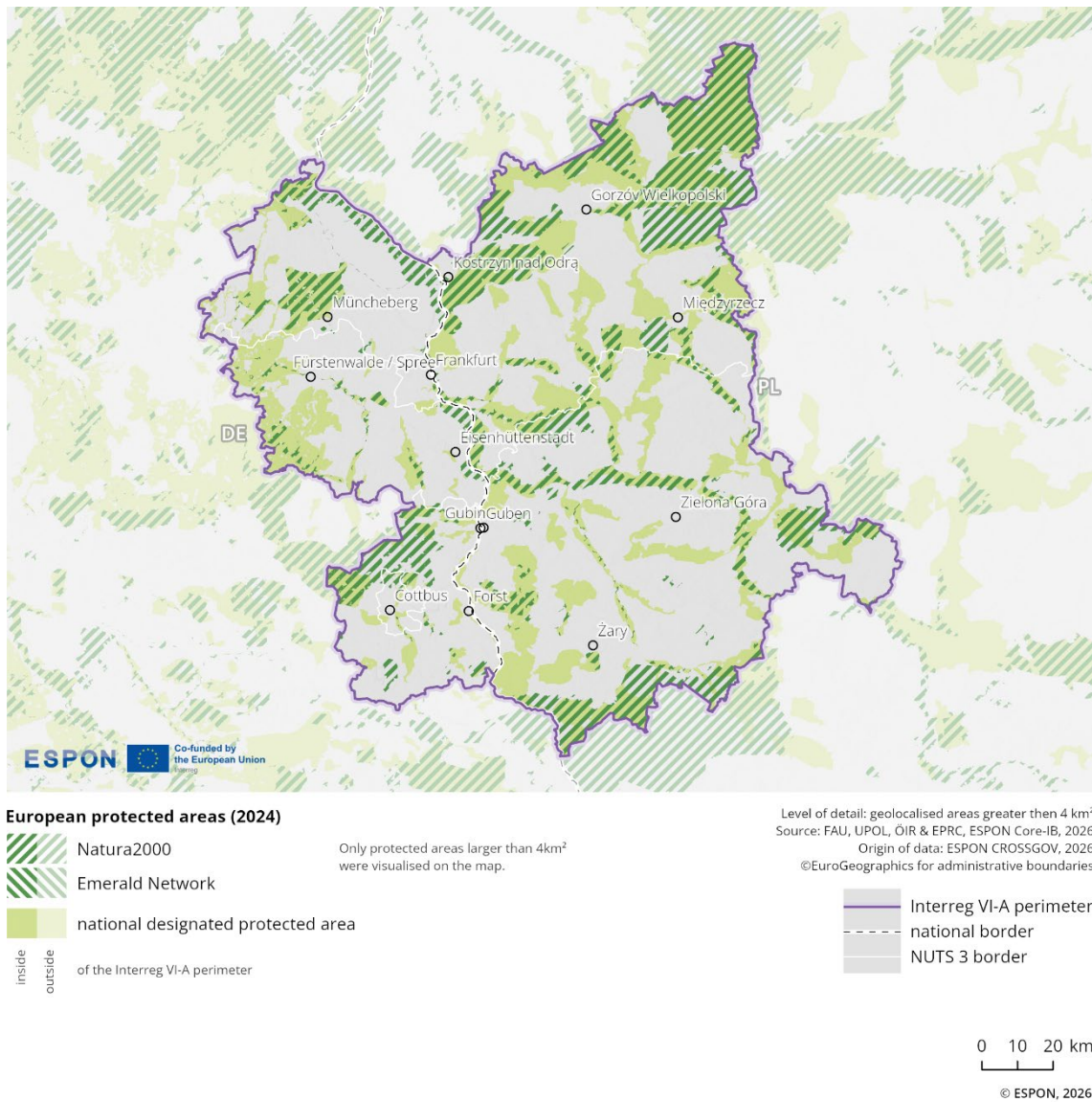
- **Source/method of retrieval:** The indicator represents a combination of nationally designated areas, Natura 2000 and Emerald network provided by EEA (European Environment Agency) Geospatial data catalogue.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2024
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.19 illustrates the distribution of protected areas in 2024 across the border region. The data differentiate between Natura 2000 sites, the Emerald Network, and nationally designated protected areas, with only protected areas larger than 4 km² displayed.

Protected areas within the Interreg region along the Germany–Poland border are spread across the whole area. The largest contiguous protected zones are located around Gorzów Wielkopolski, Międzyrzecz, Cotbuss and the border near Żary, where Natura 2000 and national designations often overlap. Several sites form cross-border continuities, especially Along the Oder and as bordering river, while more fragmented patterns are visible south of Guben. Northern and central sections show moderate coverage with some visible gaps between larger protected units for example close to Fürstenwalde/Spree.

Figure 2.19: Nature protected areas



2.3.1.2 Air pollution

Indicator description

The indicator shows the air pollution from fine particulates (PM_{2.5}) at NUTS3 level. The data shows the population-weighted average air pollution level (µg/m³), providing an indication of the extent to which the regional population is affected by air pollution.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing and analysis of European Environment Agency data
- **Temporal coverage:** 2022
- **Unit:** Population weighted average of µg/m³

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

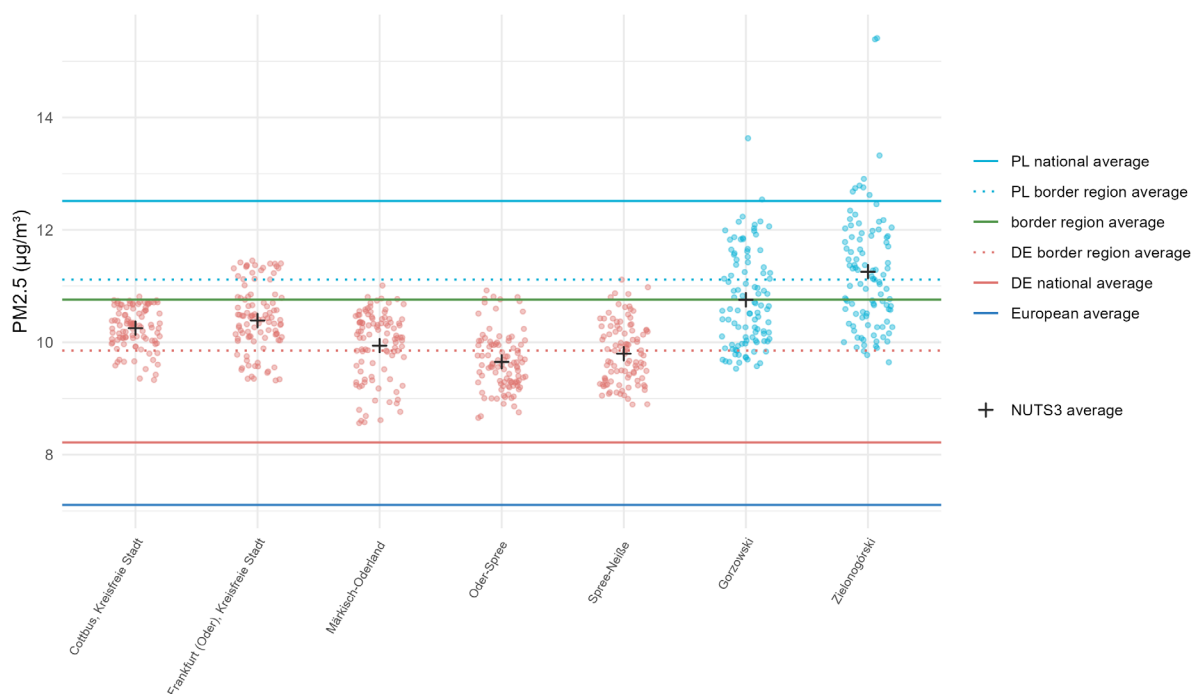
This graph illustrates PM_{2.5} concentrations (in $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) across NUTS3 regions in Germany (Brandenburg) and Poland. Each small dot represents an individual measurement, while the black crosses indicate the average PM_{2.5} concentration for each NUTS3 region¹⁰. The regions are aligned along the x-axis, with German/Brandenburg regions on the left (in red) and Polish regions on the right (in blue).

PM_{2.5} measurements in both the German and Polish regions are relatively compact, with the Polish values being slightly more dispersed. Overall, there are few Polish measurements above 12 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, while the German measurements generally remain below this value.

The national average in Poland is higher than the average in the Polish border region. In contrast, the German border region average is higher than the German national average.

For both countries, the national and border region averages are significantly above the European average. The cross-border PM_{2.5} average lies between the 2 border region averages – higher than the German values, but lower than the Polish values (see Figure 2.20).

Figure 2.20: Air pollution



¹⁰ See Eurostat Statistical Atlas for NUTS3 (2021) regions: <https://ec.europa.eu/statistical-atlas/viewer/?config=typologies.json&ch=NUTS&mids=BKGCNT.NUTS2021L3.CNTOVL&o=1.1.0.7¢er=49.69576,14.33324&lcis=NUTS2021L3&>

2.3.1.3 Water pollution

Indicator description

The indicator shows the ecological status or potential for coastal and river water bodies. It is based on an assessment of biological, hydro-morphological, chemical and physico-chemical quality elements.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing and analysis of European Environment Agency data
- **Temporal coverage:** 2022 (supplemented by 2016 data)
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

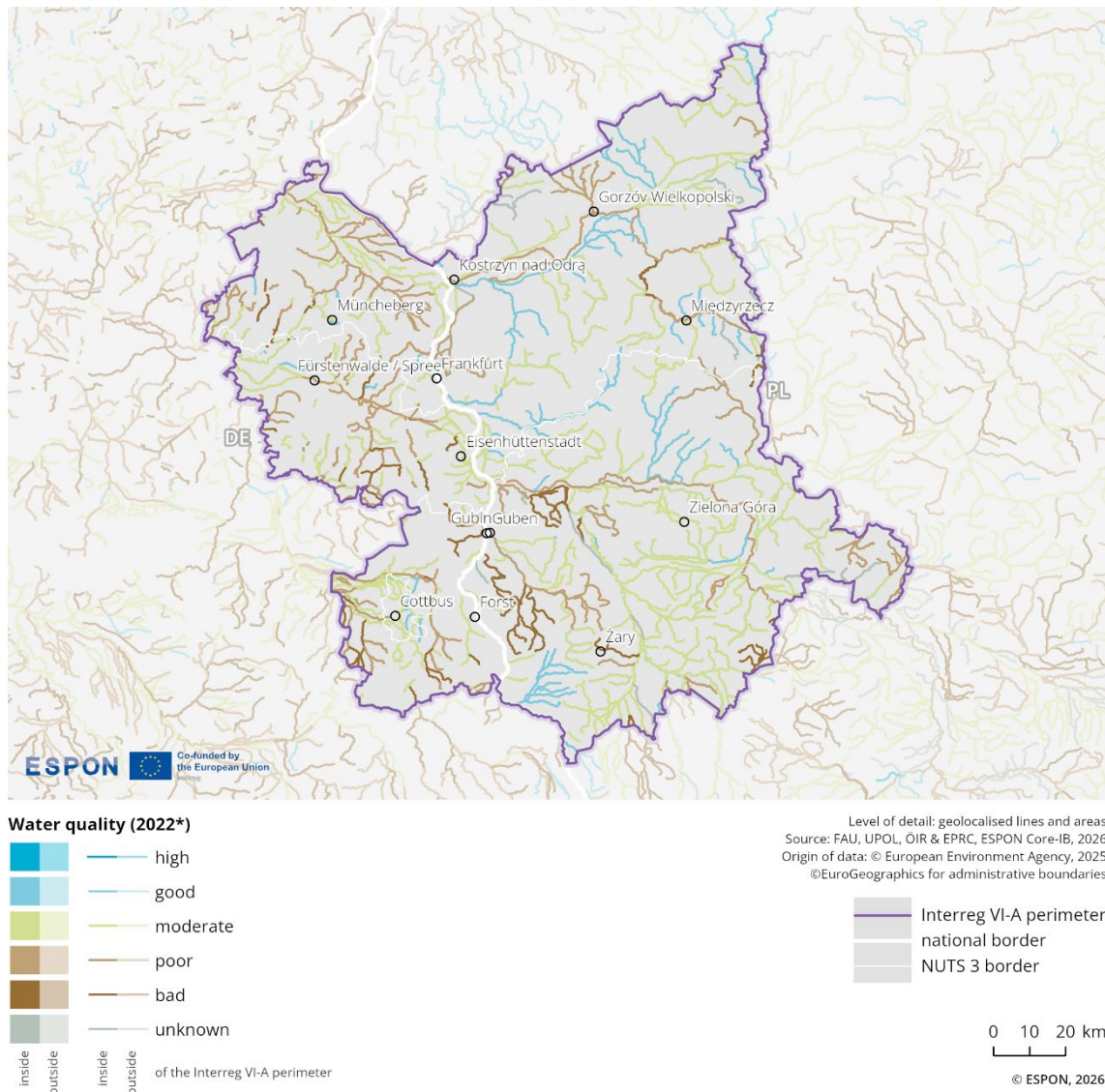
Figure 2.21 illustrates water pollution levels in the Brandenburg–Poland Interreg region in 2022. Water quality is represented using 6 colour-coded categories, ranging from "bad" to "high", including an "unknown" category¹¹.

In the German part of the Interreg region, rivers around Fürstenwalde/Spree, Cottbus, and Guben are mostly classified as "moderate", "poor", or "bad". Only a few smaller stretches are rated as "good".

In the Polish part of the Interreg region, water quality levels are rather mixed. Rivers in the south of that region are mostly rated as "moderate" with parts as "poor", "bad" and "good".

¹¹ For more information see the Water Framework Directive Reporting Guidance (2022): https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/WFD/WFD_715_2022

Figure 2.21: Water quality patterns



2.3.2 Climate risks and resilience

This sub-dimension examines cross-border functional links relating to climate risks and resilience. It analyses exposure to natural hazards such as landslides, earthquakes, droughts and floods in order to identify vulnerabilities and risks.¹²

2.3.2.1 Natural hazard risks

Indicator description

The indicator shows the risk the border region is facing in relation to natural hazards (floods, droughts, landslides and earthquakes). The map highlights potential cross-border affectedness and allows to judge the relative relevance of each risk for the cross-border region.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** The indicator is based on geodata from the Disaster Management Risk Knowledge Centre/JRC. It provides the likelihood of specific natural hazard events at grid level.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2024
- **Unit:** n/a

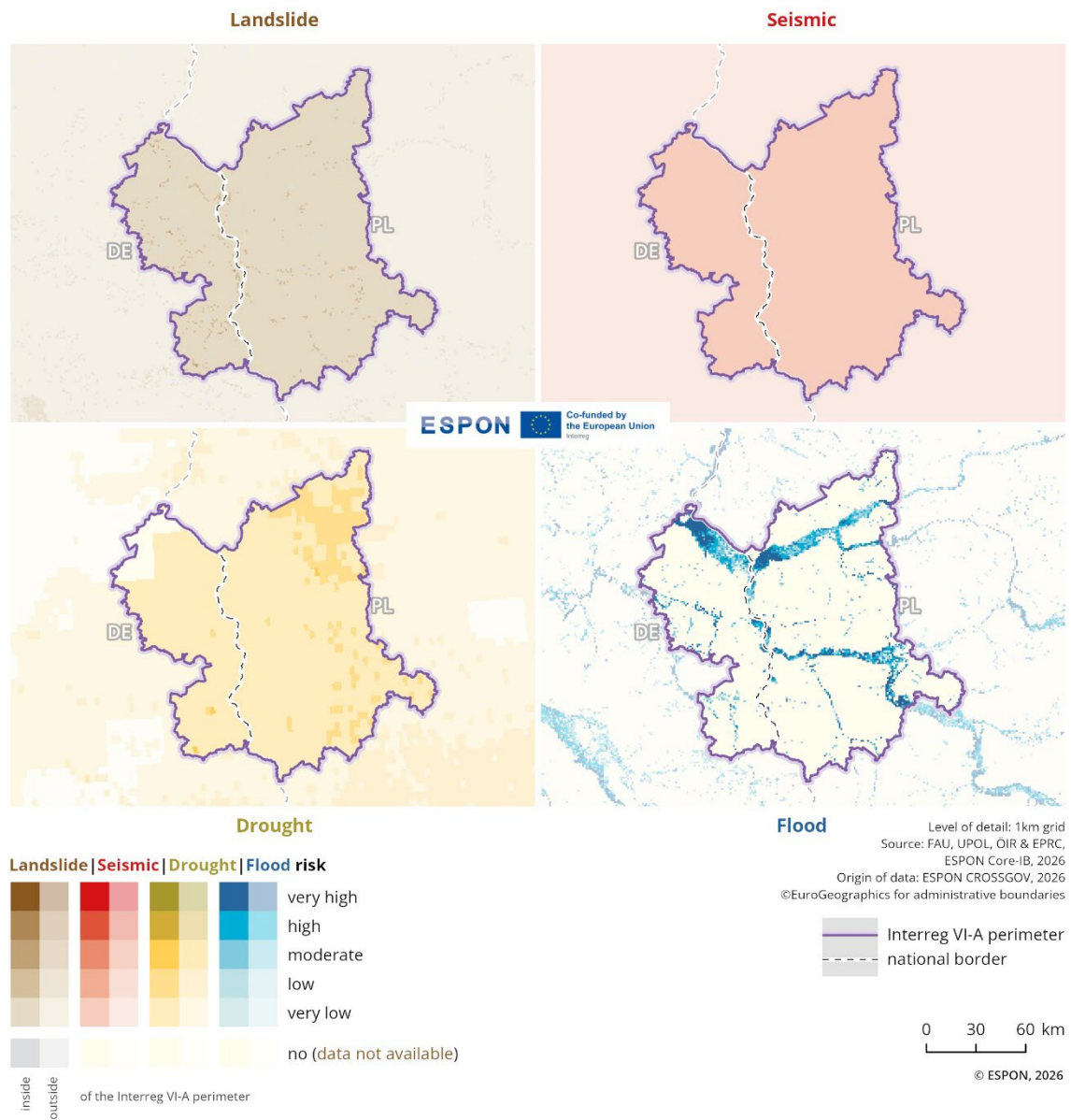
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.22 illustrates the spatial distribution of natural hazards in the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland region, highlighting areas where risks are shared across national boundaries and where risks are not necessarily cross-border relevant.

The main threat of natural disaster are floodings. The Oder River is coming from the southeastern Polish side and forms the German-Polish border. Further north the Warta River flows from the Polish side into the Oder. This leads to extensive retention areas on both sides of the border. On the other hand, the risk of drought, earthquakes and landslides is very low.

¹² See also: European Commission 2024: Strengthening the Resilience of EU Border Regions, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/studies/KN-02-24-586-2A-N.pdf

Figure 2.22: Natural hazard risks



2.3.3 (Renewable) Energy and energy infrastructure

This sub-dimension assesses cross-border functional links in energy supply and infrastructure, focusing on existing connections and missing links. The distribution of power lines, energy infrastructure and power stations is analysed to identify supply patterns and potential integration gaps. The analysis reveals whether the border facilitates energy cooperation and connectivity, or if infrastructural differences create barriers.¹³

2.3.3.1 Power lines and energy infrastructure

Indicator description

The indicator shows the distribution of power lines and energy infrastructures in the cross-border region. The geodata highlights the existing links and gaps in the cross-border interconnections of the energy transmission network.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Geodata on high-voltage energy infrastructure (100 kV and above) has been collected and processed from OpenStreetMap.
- **Temporal coverage:** 2025
- **Unit:** kV

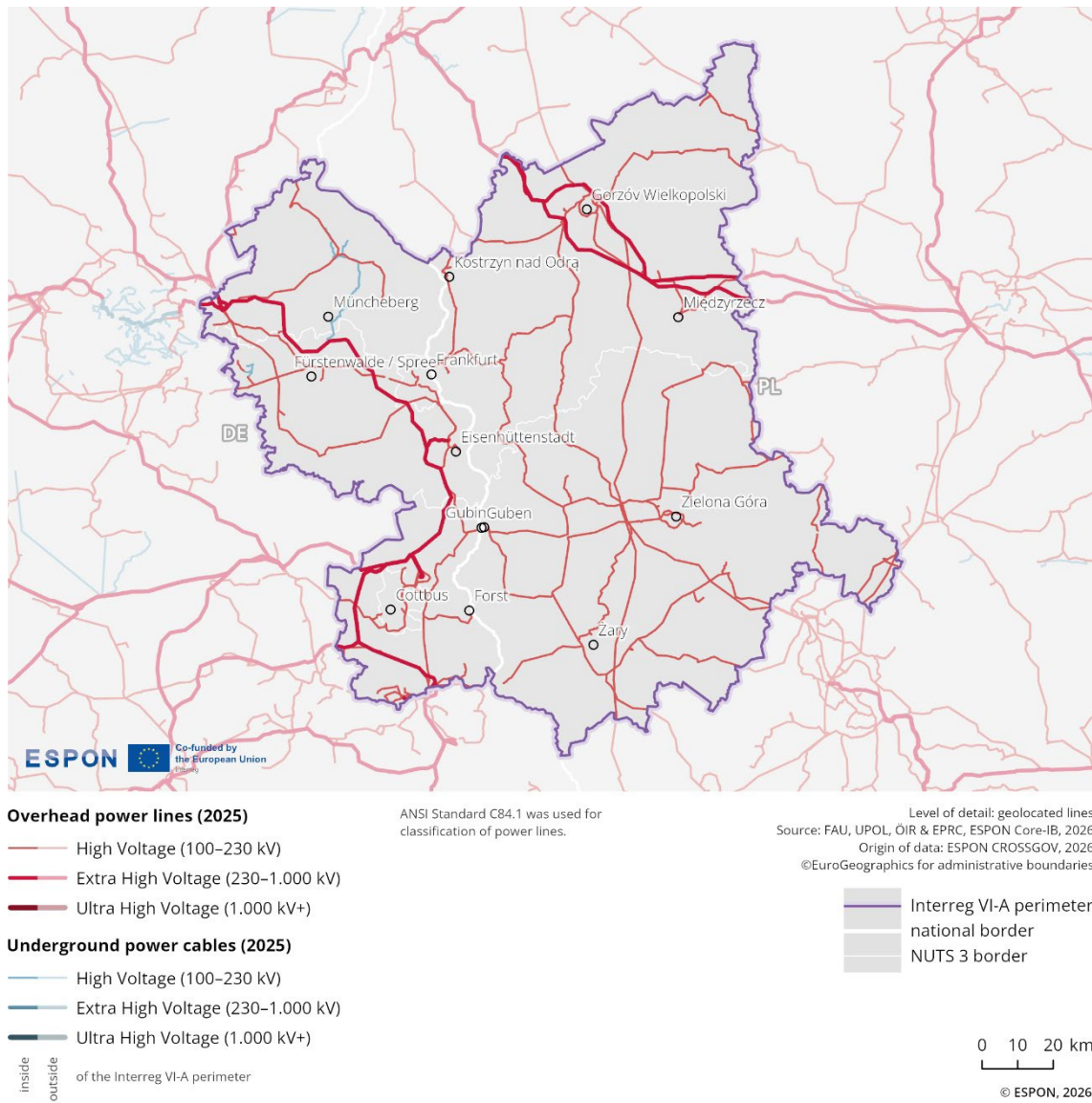
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.23 illustrates the distribution of power lines and cables in 2025 across the border region. The data distinguish between overhead and underground power lines, further classified into high-voltage (100-230 kV), extra high-voltage (230-1,000 kV), and ultra-high voltage (above 1,000 kV).

The cross-border region Germany/Brandenburg-Poland shows interconnected high- and extra high-voltage transmission infrastructure, however separated by national border; with one exception and the only direct cross-border intersection of high-voltage lines in Guben. An extra high-voltage power line runs north-south through the entire German part of the cross-border region, continuing northwestward outside the cross-border region toward Berlin. Most of the Polish part of the cross-border region is supplied by high-voltage infrastructure, except for its northern part, which is horizontally crossed by an important extra high-voltage line from the surrounding area.

¹³ See also: European Commission 2025: Handbook on Cross-border Energy Communities, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/studies/2025/Handbook_on_Cross-border_Energy_Communities.pdf

Figure 2.23: High-voltage transmission infrastructure



2.3.3.2 Power stations

Indicator description

The indicator shows the location of power stations by type and energy production levels (coal, gas and oil, nuclear, hydro). It can indicate differences and complementarities in the national energy supply systems as well as highlight potential supply-demand links when viewed in conjunction with power lines infrastructure.

- **Source:** OpenStreetMap, Global Energy Monitor, JRC Hydro-power plants database
- **Temporal coverage:** 2025
- **Unit:** MW

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

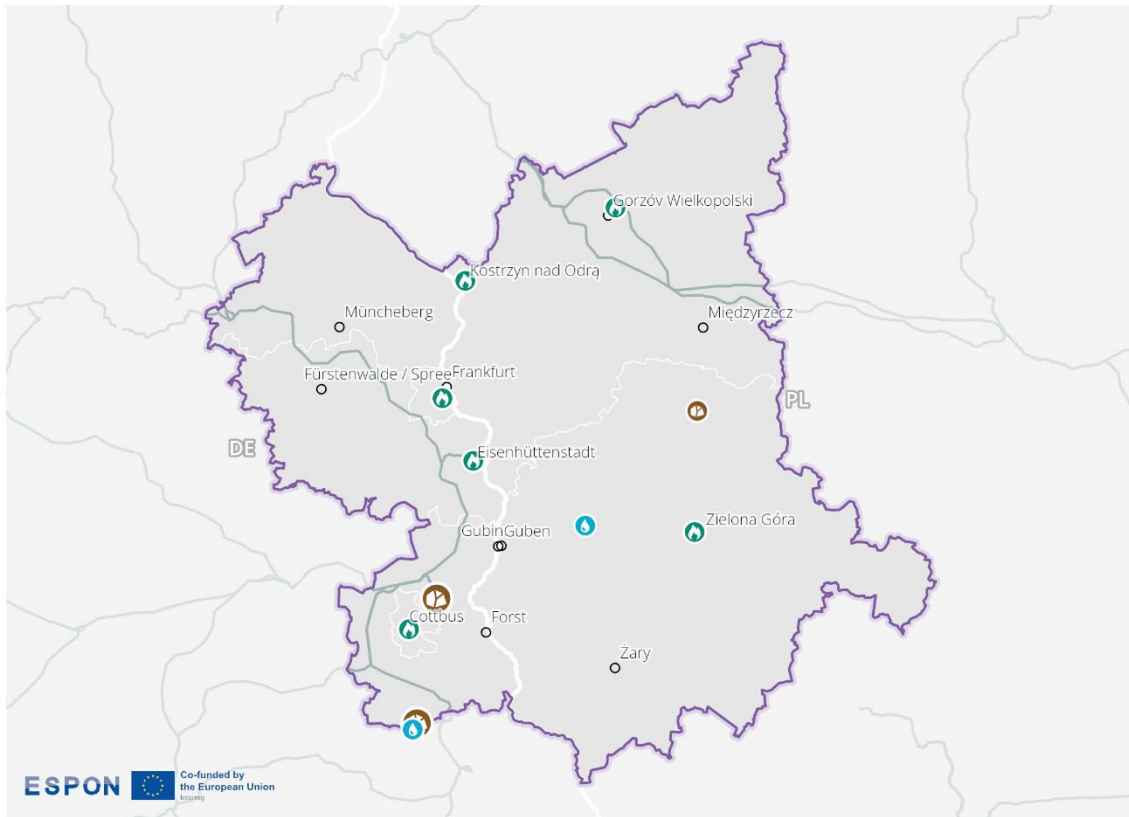
In the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland cross-border region, in total, there are 11 power station locations, while 3 represent coal power, 6 gas and oil, and 2 hydroelectric source of energy (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number and type of power stations







| Power stations/plants | Less than 1GW | 1GW and up |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------|
| Nuclear | / | / |
| Coal | 1 | 2 |
| Gas and oil | 6 | / |
| Hydro | 2 | / |

2 coal power stations represent high-power one and are both located in Germany (in vicinity and south of Cottbus), the other one is located on Polish side of the region further from national boundaries (see Figure 2.24). Although there are 6 gas and oil power station locations in the area, there are several different operations at 3 locations – 2 in Cottbus, 3 in Eisenhüttenstadt (roughly halfway along the state border north of Guben), both in Germany, and finally 2 operations in Gorzów Wielkopolski in Poland. There are 2 hydroelectric stations in the cross-border region, one in each country. No nuclear power plant is present in the whole region.

Figure 2.24: Power stations infrastructure



Power stations (2025)

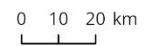
-  nuclear
 -  coal
 -  gas and oil (greater than 20MW)
 -  hydro (greater than 20MW)
-  $\geq 1GW$
 $< 1GW$

Power lines and cables (2025)

-  $\geq 230kV$
- inside of the Interreg VI-A perimeter
- outside of the Interreg VI-A perimeter

Level of detail: geolocalised point and linear features
 Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
 Origin of data: ESPON CROSSGOV, 2026
 ©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

-  Interreg VI-A perimeter
-  national border
-  NUTS 3 border



© ESPON, 2026

2.3.4 Resources and circular economy

This sub-dimension focuses on resource use patterns in the border region and their implications for circular economy practices. It analyses resource productivity and waste generation in order to evaluate the efficiency and sustainability of resource utilisation across the border.

2.3.4.1 Resource productivity

Indicator description

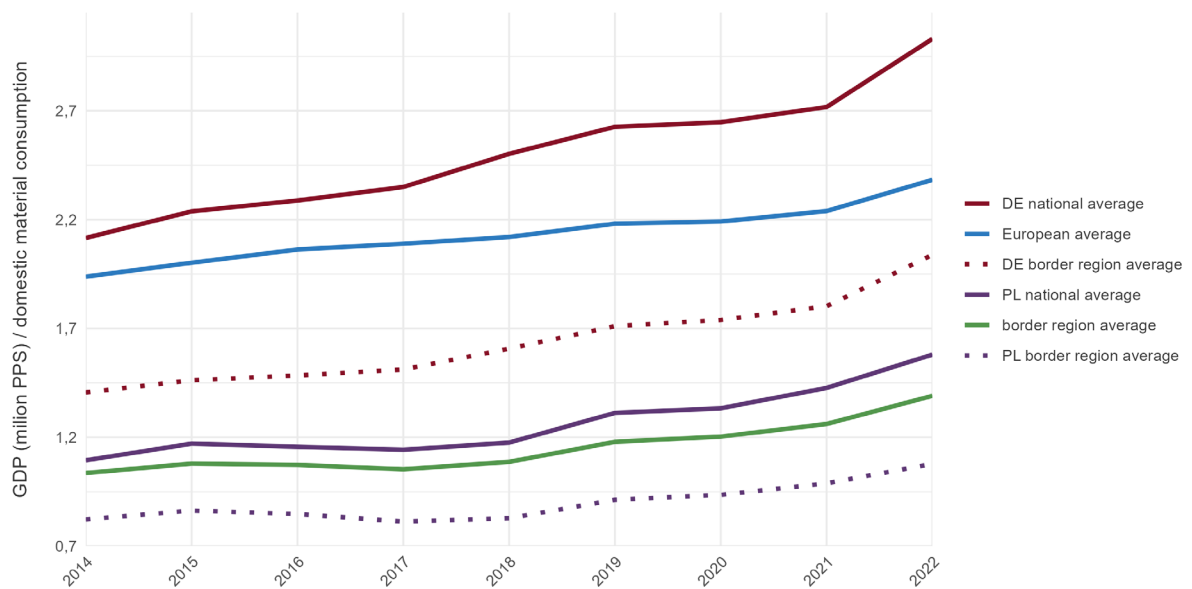
The indicator shows the economic value generated per unit of material consumed for each region within the cross-border area. Developments over time provide insights if the decoupling of productivity from resource use is progressing on regional level.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing of Eurostat and ESPON CIRCTER (Circular Economy and Territorial Consequences) Update data
- **Temporal coverage:** 2014-2022
- **Unit:** PPS/tons

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.25 illustrates the development of GDP per unit of domestic material consumption in million PPS/DMC (purchasing power standards per domestic material consumption) between 2014 and 2022. The data compare the national averages, the averages of their respective border regions, and the overall border regional average with the European average.

Figure 2.25: Resource productivity



The German national average of resource productivity is represented by the highest line in the graph, showing an increase over the period from approximately 2.2 in 2014 to over 2.7 million PPS/DMC in 2022. The German border region average follows a similar trend but remains significantly lower, reaching around 2.0 million PPS/DMC in 2022. The Polish national average also shows an upward trend

over the observed period, but remains significantly below both the German national average and the European average, while still being slightly higher than the border region average. The Polish border region average follows a similar pattern, but at lower levels.

The European average lies notably below the German national average, but is higher than the German border region average and the Polish values. The border region average represents the combined average of the higher German border region values and the lower Polish border region values, reaching approximately 1.4 million PPS/DMC in 2022. However, notable disparities exist within the border region itself.

2.3.4.2 Generation of waste per GDP

Indicator description

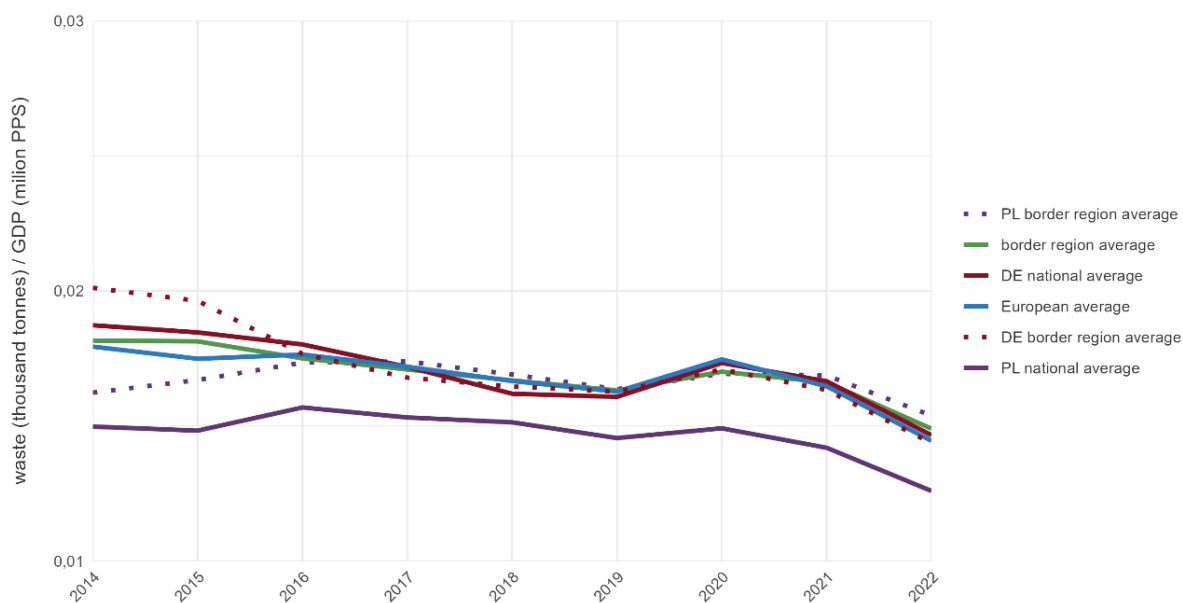
The indicator shows the regional distribution of waste creation in relation to the GDP development. Comparing waste generated to GDP reflects the waste intensity of the economy and provides a measure of “eco-efficiency”. Observation of its change from year to year permits to assess whether the economy is able to produce more wealth while at same time generating less waste.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing of Eurostat and ESPON CIRCTER Update data
- **Temporal coverage:** 2014-2022
- **Unit:** Tons/PPS

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

The graph illustrates the trend in waste generation relative to economic output, measured in tonnes of waste per million PPS (Purchasing Power Standard) of GDP from 2014 to 2022 in Germany (Brandenburg), Poland and their Interreg border region.

Figure 2.26: Waste generation per GDP



The German national and border region averages show a gradual downward trend over the entire period. The German border average is significantly higher than the Polish national average. The Polish national average is the lowest line on the graph throughout the period and also shows a slight decreasing trend. The Polish border average increases slightly until 2020, then gradually decreases. The Polish border average is also consistently notably above the national average.

The European average gradually decreases from around 0.018 in 2014 to approximately 0.015 tonnes of waste per million PPS in 2022. The cross-border regional average remains consistently in line with the European average and lies between the higher values of the German border region and the lower values of the Polish border region.

Throughout the entire period, it is also higher than both national averages. In 2022, it reaches a value of approximately 0.015 tonnes of waste per million PPS (see Figure 2.26).

2.3.5 Key messages on the green dimension

The border region has rich natural resources, common environmental challenges, and an increasingly diverse energy landscape. Large contiguous protected areas, particularly around Gorzów Wielkopolski, Międzyrzecz and Cottbus, provide ecological continuity. Natura 2000 sites and national designations frequently overlap, forming cross-border connections, particularly along the Oder River. However, there are still gaps in the network, for example near Fürstenwalde/Spree, where fragmented protection means some landscapes are less connected.

These ecological assets are matched by common risks. The most significant natural hazard is flooding along the Oder and Warta rivers, which shapes the necessity for joint management and prevention strategies. Air quality adds another layer: while PM_{2.5} levels (in $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in the region lie between German and Polish averages, they remain significantly above the European average. This reflects structural factors such as energy production and industrial legacies, as well as the cross-border impact of air pollution.

The energy infrastructure reveals both disintegration and interconnection. Although high-voltage networks exist on both sides, only one direct cross-border link is in place, near Guben. Power generation is still largely dependent on fossil fuels, with large coal-fired power stations concentrated around Cottbus and additional coal capacity on the Polish side. Gas, oil and limited hydroelectric plants diversify the mix, yet there is no nuclear capacity. These patterns explain why resource productivity in this border region lags behind national averages: energy- and material-intensive industries dominate, particularly on the German side. With regard to waste generation, the border region aligns with the European average, but remains higher than national levels.

2.4 Socio-economic dimension

The socio-economic dimension examines patterns of social integration, tourism, and access to public services in the border region. It identifies how socio-cultural links, visitor flows and essential services influence development in the cross-border area. By examining interpersonal interactions via social media, language similarities, tourism intensity, and the accessibility of facilities such as secondary schools, grocery shops, hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and cinemas this dimension highlights both functional integration and potential socio-spatial differences.

2.4.1 Social integration

This sub-dimension evaluates the level of social integration in the border region by identifying areas with low or high cross-border interactions. It analyses social interactions and language similarities across and along national borders to evaluate the potential for cultural and social integration.

2.4.1.1 Cross-border connectivity in social media

Indicator description

The indicator refers to the existing connections between users of META social media (in particular Facebook) across the border. It aims at giving an overview of the degree of personal connectivity between inhabitants of the border area. Even though not all these internet connections will relate to real communication exchanges but sometimes just “following” content from other users, they give an overview of interpersonal and cultural knowledge of the social media landscape from across the border.

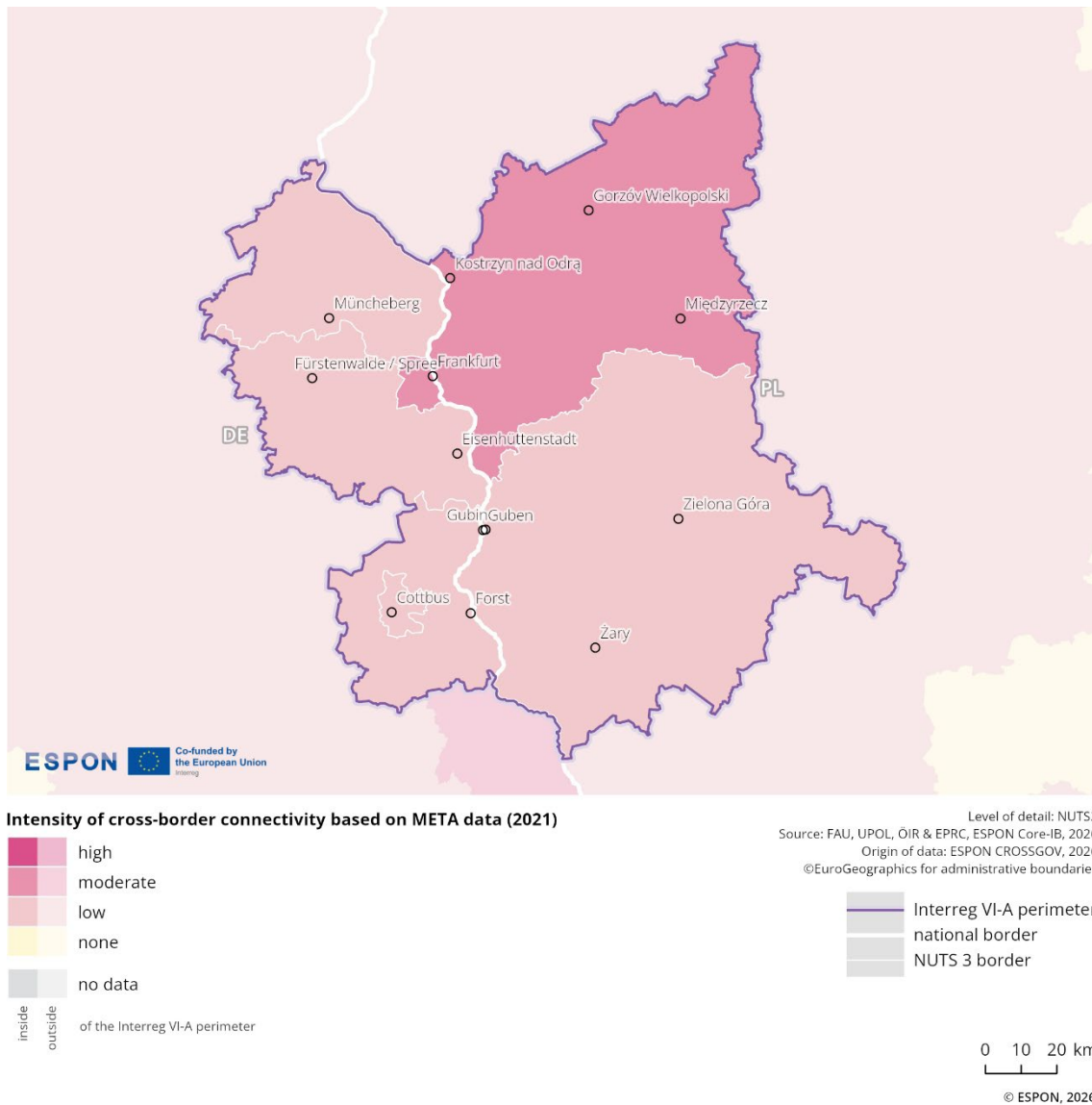
- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing Facebook data on existing connections across the border (data for Good Meta)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2021
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.27 illustrates the spatial distribution of cross-border connectivity based on Facebook information in the border area. The different shades of pink indicate varying intensities of connectivity, ranging from low to high, with darker tones representing stronger intensity of cross-border connectivity in social media.

The intensity of cross-border connectivity among residents of this border region is constant; therefore, due to similar connectivity levels on both sides of the border, no significant differences between the countries are evident. Comparatively higher cross-border connectivity is observed on the German side around Frankfurt (Oder) and in the northern part of the Polish side of the region (around Gorzów Wielkopolski and Międzyrzecz).

Figure 2.27: Cross-border connectivity in social media



2.4.1.2 Language similarities along national borders

Indicator description

The indicator specifies whether the language is the same across the border, whether the respective national languages have commonalities, whether while different, there are local linguistic commonalities, and whether the language is different.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** ESPON cross-border public services (CPS) 2.0 database along border segments
- **Temporal coverage:** 2022
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

2 different languages characterise the border region, with no similarities and no widespread knowledge of the neighbouring regions language recorded. The number of pupils learning German as a foreign language in Lubuskie Voivodeship fell by 18.6% between 2013 and 2018, reaching a level of about 45%.

2.4.2 Tourism

This sub-dimension identifies key tourism hotspots in the border region to highlight tourism dynamics. It analyses the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments in order to evaluate the attractiveness of, and developments in, the tourism sector. Comparisons with the respective countries and the EU average provide context for understanding the region's dynamics.

2.4.2.1 Nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments

Indicator description

The indicator shows the number of nights a guest or tourist actually spends in a tourist accommodation establishment or non-rented accommodation (overnight stays). This may reveal the tourism attractiveness of a region and shed light on the role of tourism in the local economy, i.e., tourists/guests staying overnight may spend more in the region than one-day visitors.

- **Source:** Eurostat
- **Temporal coverage:** 2020-2023
- **Unit:** Nights per capita

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

The spatial distribution of overnight stays highlights the importance of key tourist destinations in border areas. Tourism contributes significantly to regional income, infrastructure development and employment, and thereby supports regional prosperity. At the same time, it affects environmental and living conditions, which may reduce local acceptance despite its economic benefits. This is in particular the case in places of overtourism, seasonal pressures, and increasing land-use conflicts.

Figure 2.28 shows the number of overnight stays per capita at tourist accommodation establishments in 2023. It includes hotels, holiday and other short-stay accommodation, as well as campsites, caravan and trailer parks. The map uses a colour gradient, with darker shades indicating a higher number of nights spent per capita in 2023. It also shows the cumulative number of overnight stays from 2020 to 2023.

In Germany, the NUTS3 regions Spree-Neiße and Oder-Spree exceed 5 nights per capita in 2023¹⁴. Here, the UNESCO cultural heritage site Muskauer Park/Park Mużakowski attracts several tourists. In the other regions of the programme area, the per capita figures are lower than 5 nights per capita. In terms of total overnight stays over the 3-year period, the leading tourism region is Oder-Spree (approx. 1.2 million).

¹⁴ See Eurostat Statistical Atlas for NUTS3 (2021) regions: <https://ec.europa.eu/statistical-atlas/viewer/?config=typologies.json&ch=NUTS&mids=BKGCNT.NUTS2021L3.CNTOVL&o=1.1.0.7¢er=49.69576,14.33324&lcis=NUTS2021L3&>

Figure 2.28: Overnight stays in tourism

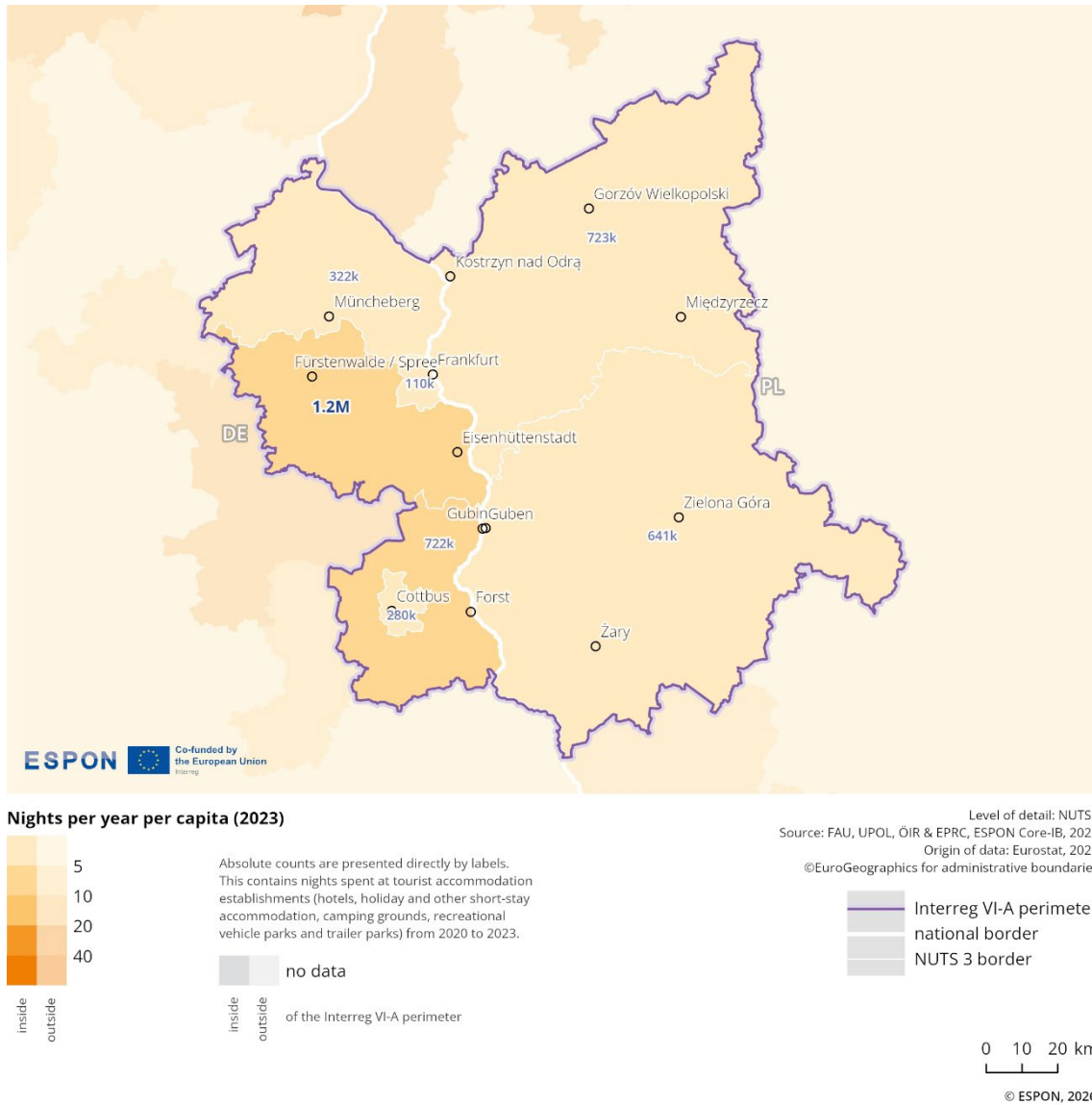
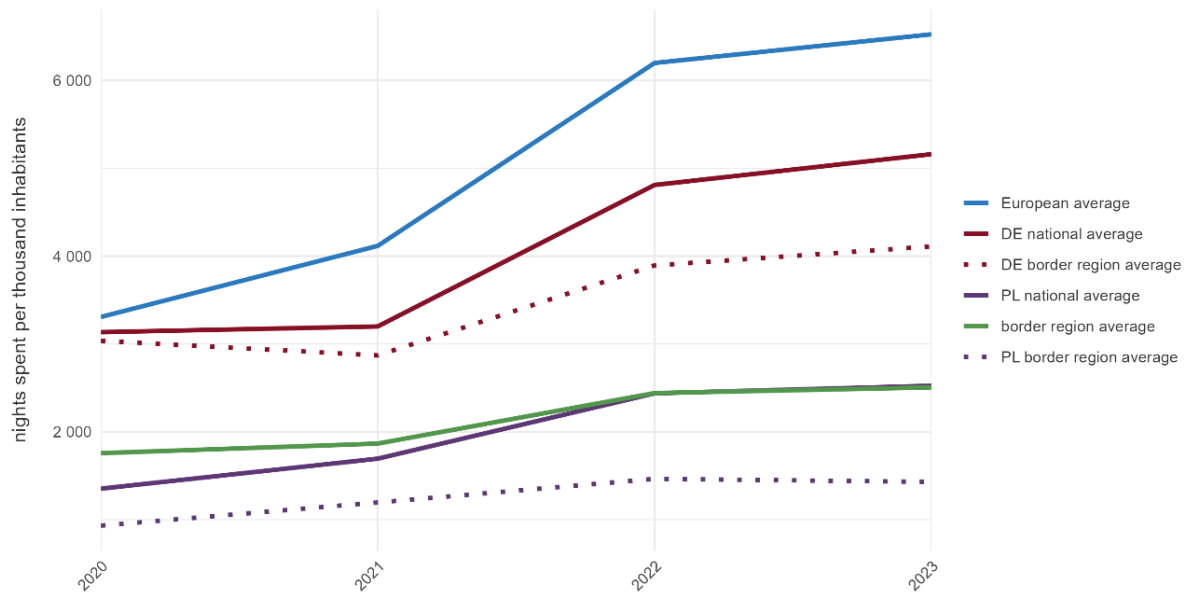


Figure 2.29 illustrates the development of nights spent at tourist establishments per thousand inhabitants from 2020 to 2023. Over the entire period, the average for the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland programme area is lower than the overall European average, which includes EU member states and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Norway. In all 4 years, the border regional averages of both countries are lower than their respective national averages. Additionally, the regional average for the German border area is significantly higher than that for the Polish throughout the given period.

Touristic patterns have a series of implications for spatial development on either side of the border. Transport infrastructure has to consider peak volumes and balancing recreating activities with socio-cultural as well as environmental heritage can be a challenge.

Figure 2.29: Overnights stays in tourism (comparison)



2.4.3 Services of general interest

This sub-dimension looks at how accessible services of general interest (SGIs) are in the border region, identifying areas that are well-served and those that are more difficult to access. It analyses access to essential services such as secondary schools, grocery shops, hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and cinemas.

2.4.3.1 Accessibility to services of general interest

Indicator description

The indicator shows, for the below listed facilities and services, the average driving time to the nearest facility of a series of services of general interest.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing and analysis of standardised travel-time accessibility to secondary schools, grocery shops, hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and cinemas available in the ESPON PROFECY Update (2022)
- **Temporal coverage:** 2021
- **Unit:** Minutes (in 2.5 x 2.5 km grid)

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figures 2.30 to 2.35 visualise average car travel times to services of general interest within the programme area. The maps display accessibility to:

- › Secondary schools (Figure 2.30)
- › Grocery shops (Figure 2.31)
- › Hospitals (Figure 2.32)
- › Doctors (Figure 2.33)
- › Pharmacies (Figure 2.34)
- › Cinemas (Figure 2.35)

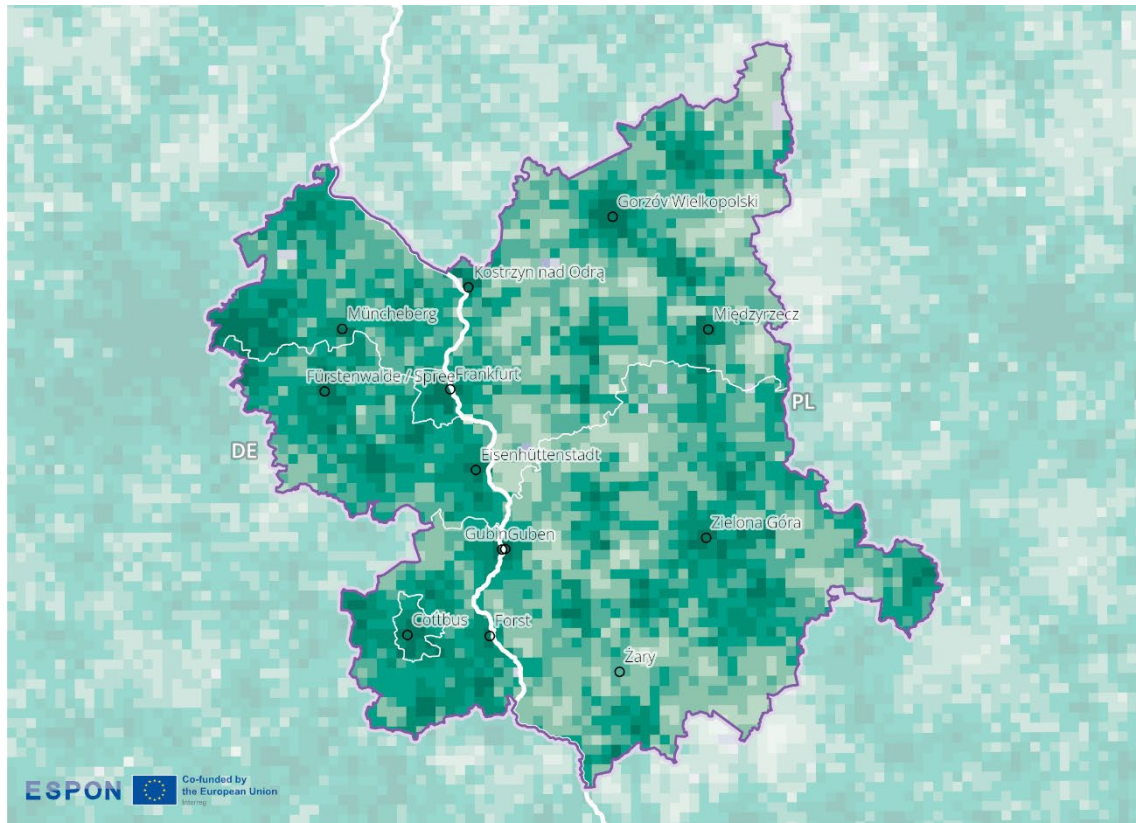
These indicators show how long, on average, it takes to reach the nearest facility by car. The data comes from the ESPON PROFECY Update project (2022) and is visualised based on a 2.5-kilometer grid.

In the Germany/Brandenburg–Poland border area, essential services such as hospitals, doctors, pharmacies, schools, and grocery shops are generally evenly distributed across most areas in both countries, although differences remain between them. In Poland, travel times sometimes exceed one hour.

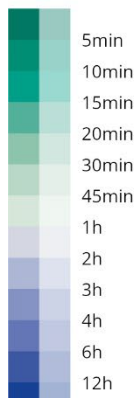
Near the national border, travel times to schools, grocery shops, hospitals, doctors, and pharmacies tend to be longer in Polish regions compared to German regions.

Hospitals, as medical services, are concentrated in cities and more densely populated areas, creating an urban–rural gradient with shorter travel times in urban centres and longer ones in rural or remote areas. The same applies to cinemas as a cultural service.

Figure 2.30: Travel time to secondary schools



Car travel time to the nearest secondary school (2021)



inside
outside
of the Interreg VI-A perimeter

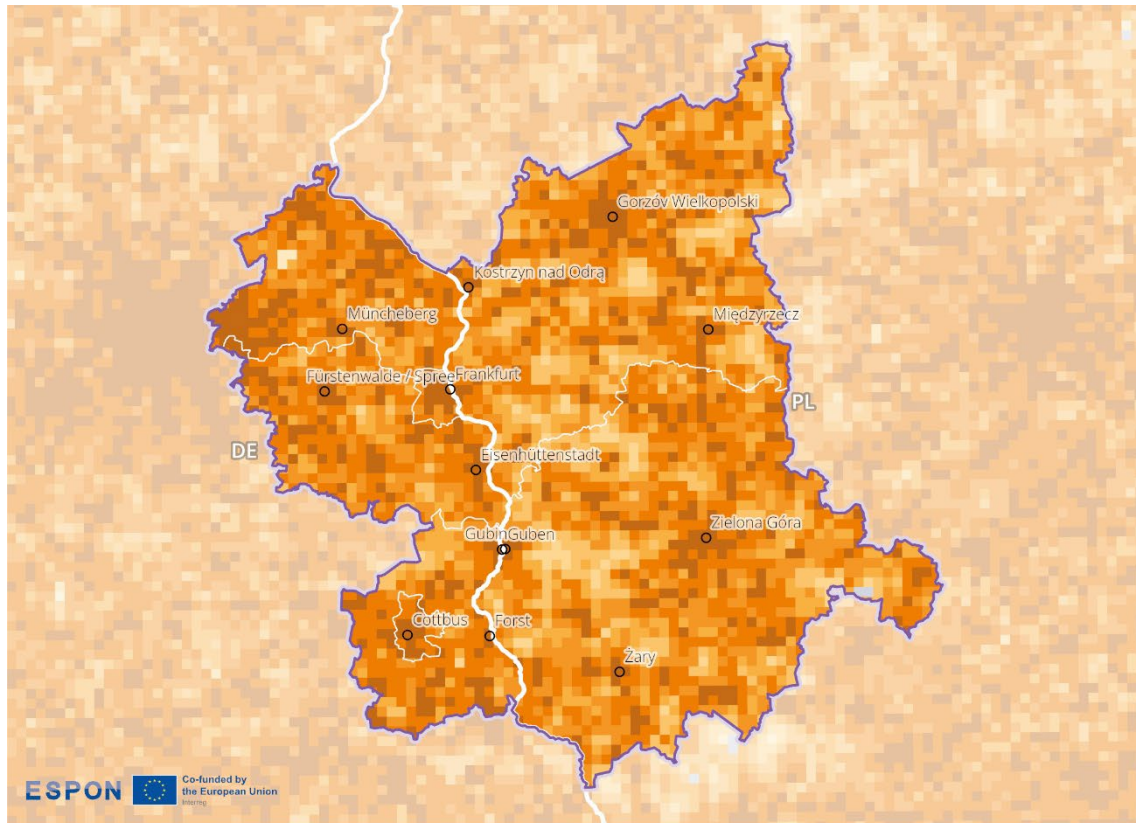
Level of detail: 2.5km grid
Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
Origin of data: ESPON PROCECY Update, 2022
©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

Interreg VI-A perimeter
national border
NUTS 3 border

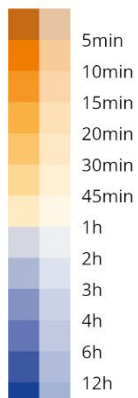
0 10 20 km

© ESPON, 2026

Figure 2.31: Travel time to grocery shops



Car travel time to the nearest shop (2021)



inside
outside
of the Interreg VI-A perimeter

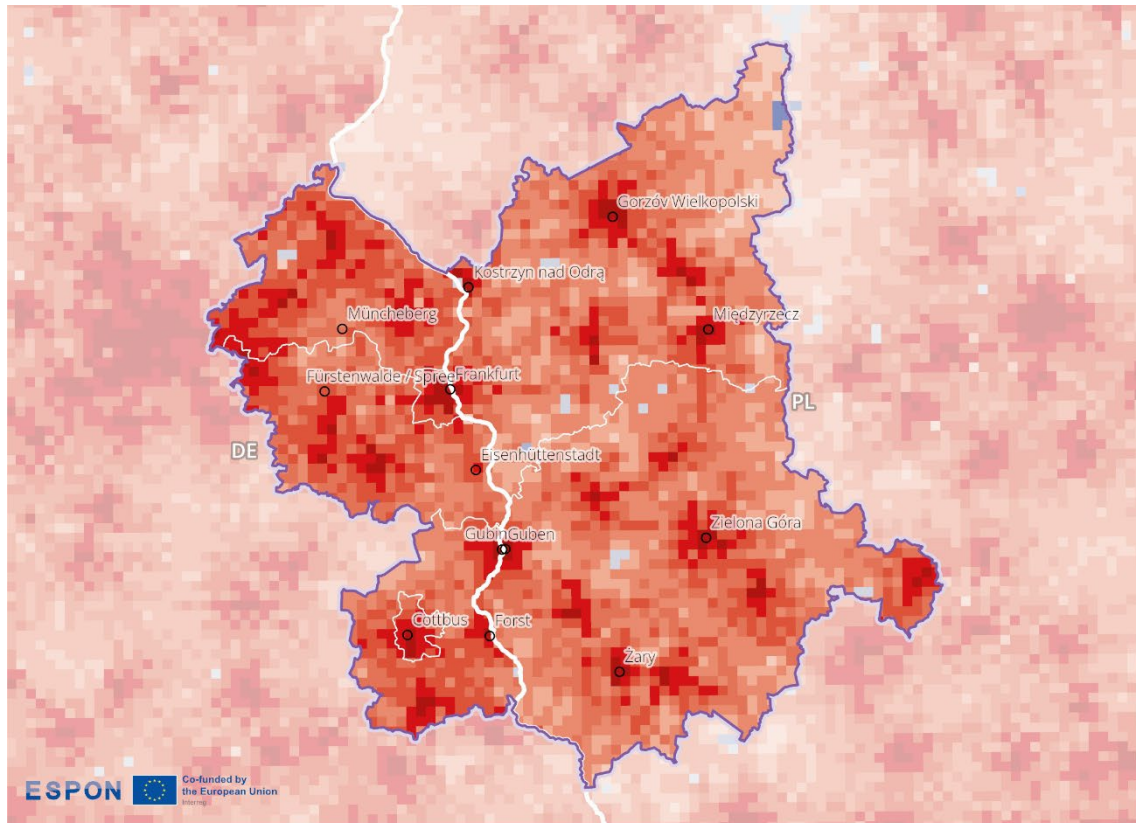
Level of detail: 2.5km grid
Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
Origin of data: ESPON PROCECY Update, 2022
©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

Interreg VI-A perimeter
national border
NUTS 3 border

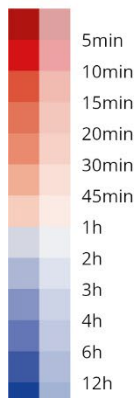
0 10 20 km

© ESPON, 2026

Figure 2.32: Travel time to hospitals



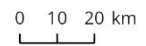
Car travel time to the nearest hospital (2021)



inside
outside
of the Interreg VI-A perimeter

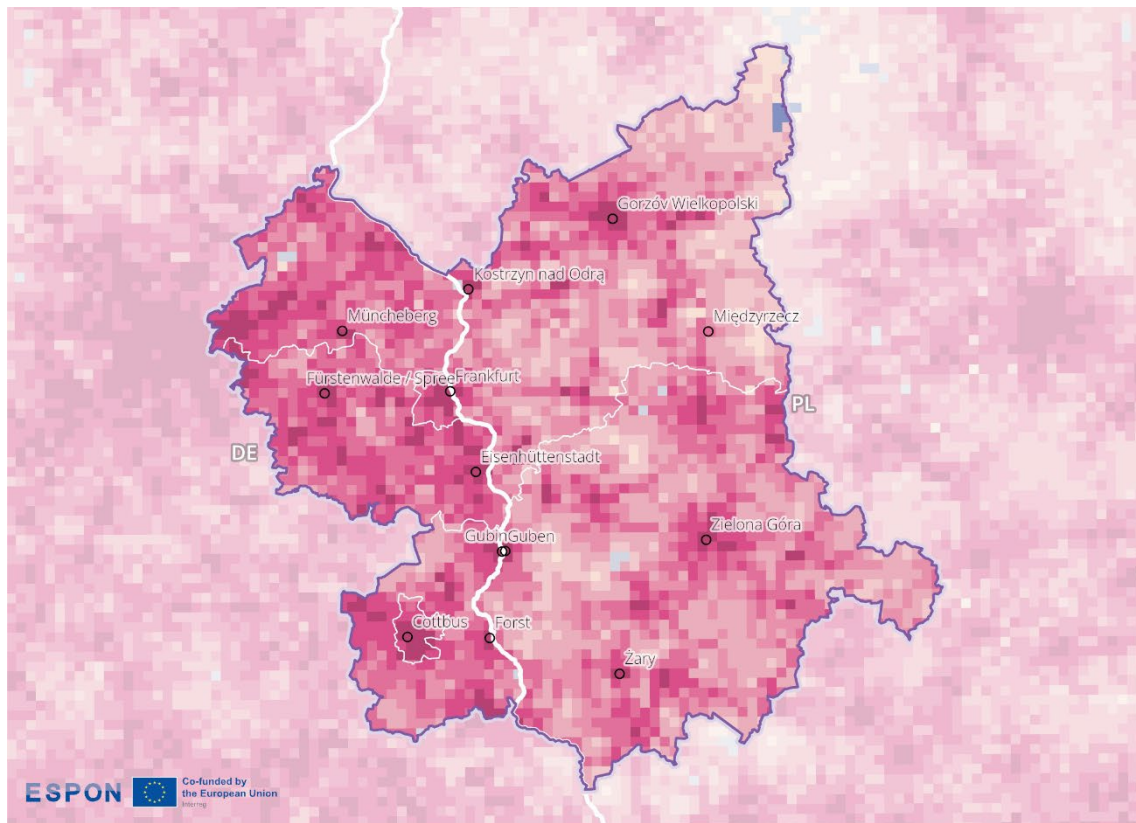
Level of detail: 2.5km grid
Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
Origin of data: ESPON PROCECY Update, 2022
©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

Interreg VI-A perimeter
national border
NUTS 3 border

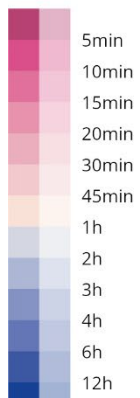


© ESPON, 2026

Figure 2.33: Travel time to doctors



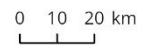
Car travel time to the nearest doctor (2021)



inside
outside
of the Interreg VI-A perimeter

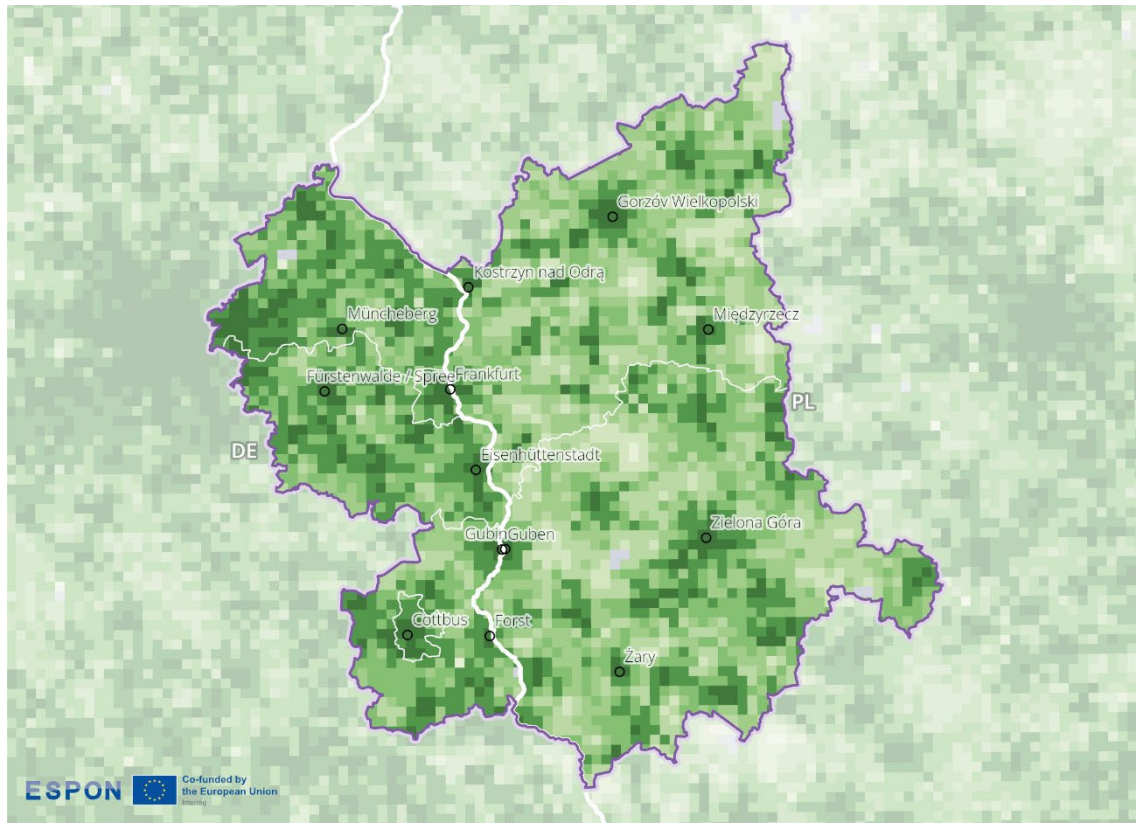
Level of detail: 2.5km grid
Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
Origin of data: ESPON PROCECY Update, 2022
©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

Interreg VI-A perimeter
national border
NUTS 3 border

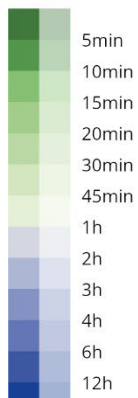


© ESPON, 2026

Figure 2.34: Travel time to pharmacies



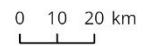
Car travel time to the nearest pharmacy (2021)



inside
outside
of the Interreg VI-A perimeter

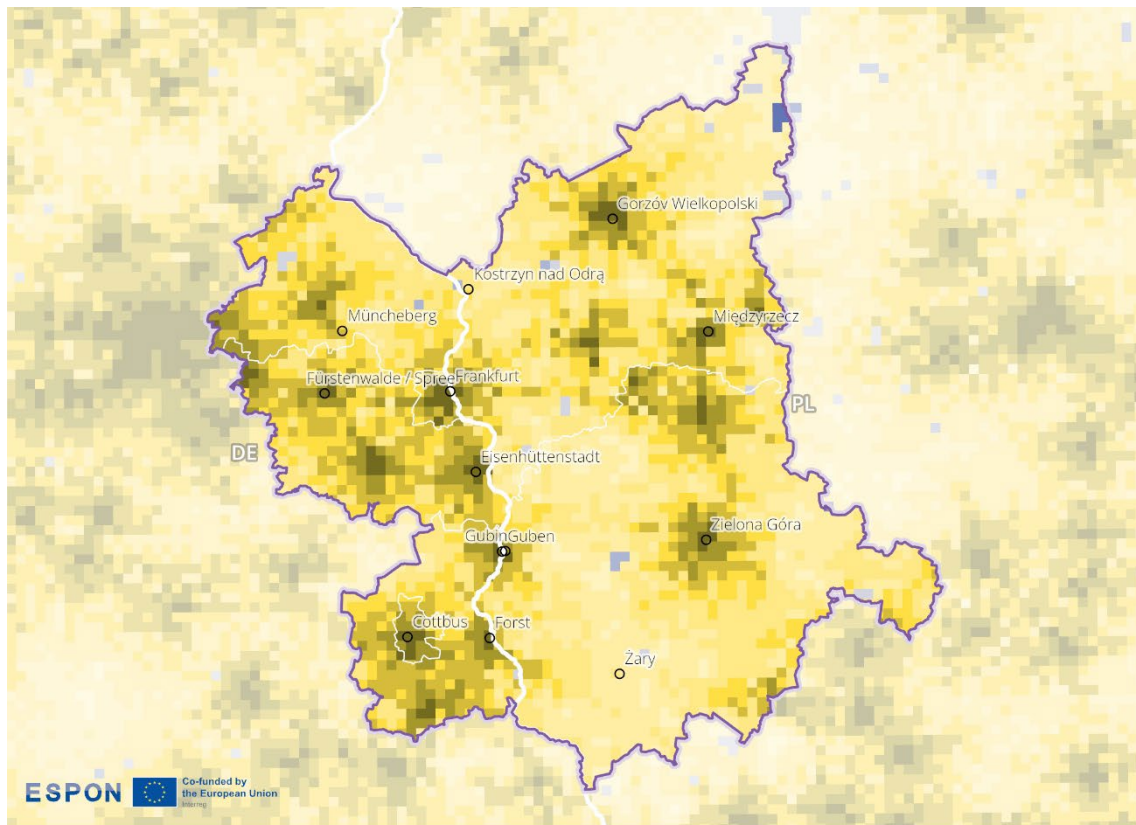
Level of detail: 2.5km grid
Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
Origin of data: ESPON PROCECY Update, 2022
©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

Interreg VI-A perimeter
national border
NUTS 3 border

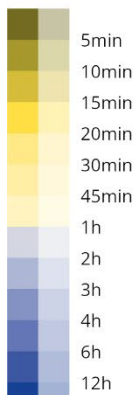


© ESPON, 2026

Figure 2.35: Travel time to cinemas



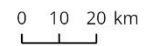
Car travel time to the nearest cinema (2021)



inside
outside
of the Interreg VI-A perimeter

Level of detail: 2.5km grid
Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
Origin of data: ESPON PROCECY Update, 2022
©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

Interreg VI-A perimeter
national border
NUTS 3 border



© ESPON, 2026

2.4.4 Key messages on the socio-economic dimension

This border region is characterised by a mix of opportunities and challenges that influence daily life and prospects for development. These patterns are often influenced by structural differences between the 2 countries, such as variations in infrastructure, public service provision and cultural-linguistic relations, which affect how the border is experienced in daily life. Social integration across the border based on social media arguments remains limited. A key barrier here is language: German and Polish are quite different languages, and few people on either side of the border know the language of the neighbouring country. This lack of linguistic connection hampers deeper social and cultural integration, despite the geographical proximity that could facilitate closer ties.

Tourism provides another perspective on the region's dynamics. It generates income, supports local jobs and stimulates infrastructure, particularly in popular areas such as Oder-Spree. However, the

overall level of overnight stays is below the European and national averages. Where tourism activity is concentrated, it also creates pressure on housing markets and the environment, raising questions of sustainability. Access to essential services reflects the geographic specificities of the border area. In German parts of the border area, travel times to schools, shops, medical services and pharmacies are relatively short, reflecting a dense and well-distributed network of services. By contrast, residents in many Polish areas face longer journeys, sometimes exceeding one hour, particularly in rural areas. The concentration of hospitals and cinemas in cities exacerbates this urban–rural divide, which is more pronounced in Poland than in Germany.

2.5 Border security and safety

This dimension shows the security and safety conditions in border regions. It analyses the number of days on which border control is temporarily reintroduced at internal borders, using this as an indicator of security concerns and restrictions on cross-border movement.

2.5.1 Temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders

Indicator description

The indicator shows the number of days of temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders, including the official reasons behind. The reintroduction of border control at the internal borders must be applied as a last resort measure, in exceptional situations, and must respect the principle of proportionality. The scope and duration of reintroduced border control should be restricted to the bare minimum needed to respond to the threat in question.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing and analysis data of European Commission information pursuant to Article 25 and 28 et seq. of the Schengen Borders Code
- **Temporal coverage:** 2006-2025 (cut-off: 08 May 2025, in order to allow data treatment before work package completion)
- **Unit:** Days per year

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

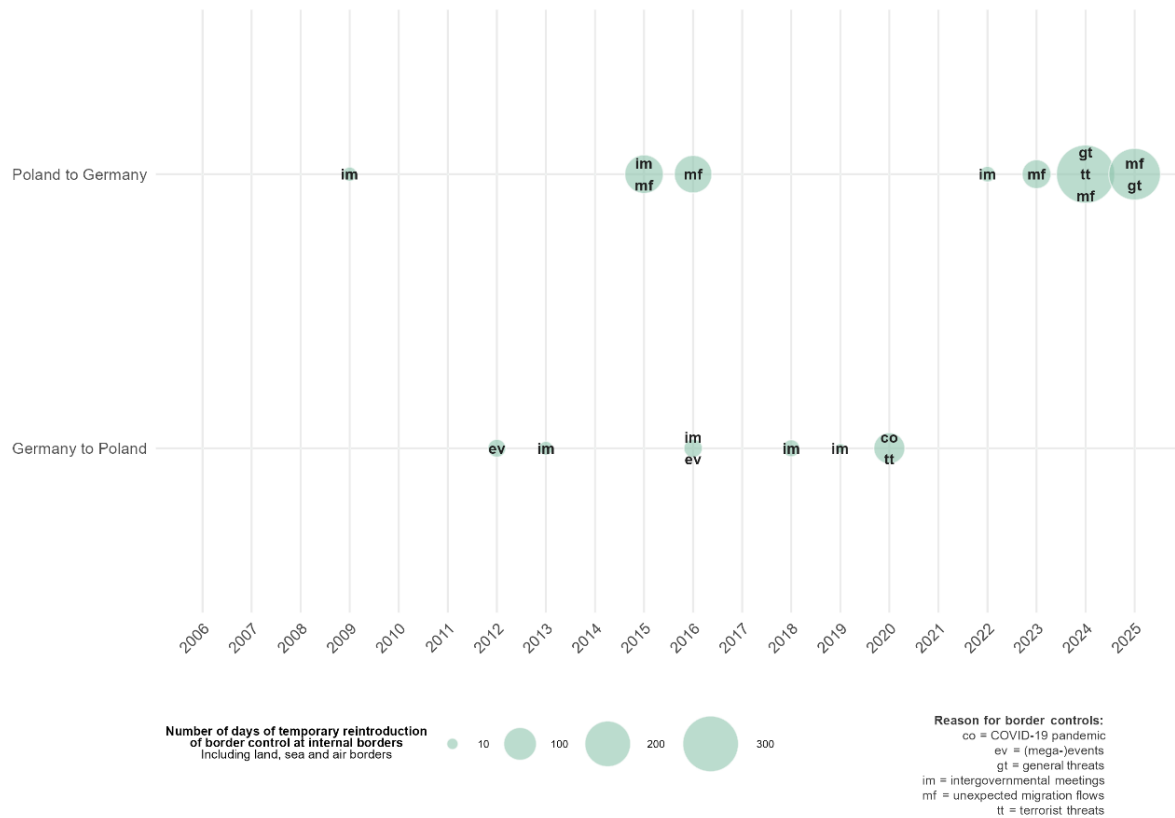
Figure 2.36 illustrates the number of days during which temporary border controls were reintroduced at internal borders within the Schengen Area. Each bubble represents a specific year with bubble sizes indicating the number of days the respective border was under control. The categories of reasons for reintroducing controls include:

- › co – COVID-19 pandemic
- › ev – (Mega-)events
- › gt – General threats
- › im – Intergovernmental meetings
- › mf – Unexpected migration flows
- › tt – Terrorist threats

The data spans from 2006 to 2025 (cut-off: 08 May 2025) and is based on notifications from the European Commission information pursuant to Article 25 and 28 et seq. of the Schengen Borders Code. In line with Schengen rules, the reintroduction of controls is to be used only as a last resort, for exceptional circumstances, and with strict adherence to the principle of proportionality—both in duration and scope.

Germany had already been part of the Schengen Area by 2006, while Poland joined in 2007.

Figure 2.36: Temporary reintroduction of border controls



ESPON Co-funded by the European Union © FAU, UPOL, ÖIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026; Origin of data: European Commission, own calculations, 2025

The Germany (Brandenburg)-Poland border area is characterised by an asymmetric pattern:

- › Crossing the border from Poland to Germany: Temporary border control occurred in 7 out of 20 years, mainly driven by intergovernmental meetings like G7/G8 summits (2015, 2022) and unexpected migration flows (2015-2025) but also by threats such as Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine or human smuggling (2023-2025).
- › Crossing the border from Germany to Poland: Temporary border controls occurred in 6 out of 20 years, most of them due to intergovernmental meetings such as the NATO summit (2016).

From a comparative perspective, Germany has implemented controls for significantly more days than Poland, indicating an unequal impact on cross-border movement in one direction.

These controls tend to have a tangible effect on the smooth functioning of cross-border flows, especially commuting and logistics, as they introduce delays and unpredictability.

2.5.2 Key messages on the border security dimension

The Germany–Poland border within the Schengen Area demonstrates how temporary border controls can disrupt cross-border life, despite the principle of free movement. Between 2006 and 2025, controls were reintroduced at various times, though unevenly. Germany applied controls for significantly more days than Poland, creating an asymmetric pattern of impact.

Examining the reasons behind these controls more closely reveals that they reflect broader European challenges. Short-term controls were implemented in response to intergovernmental meetings such as G7, G8 or NATO summits, demonstrating the impact of global political events on regional borderlands. Unexpected migration flows, especially since 2015, have also been a key reason for

controls, highlighting the role of this border in wider European migration management. More recently, concerns around public security and human smuggling have led to more frequent reintroductions. By contrast, Poland's use of border controls has been more limited, mainly occurring during major events or in response to specific security concerns.

These dynamics directly affect the main characteristics of the border region. On the one hand, the Schengen framework provides a foundation for cross-border commuting, trade and everyday interaction. However, the repeated reintroduction of controls undermines predictability for residents and businesses. Even temporary checks can delay logistics chains, complicate daily commuting and reduce trust in the stability of open borders.

2.6 Governance dimension

Territorial cooperation in this programme area builds on over 3 decades of structured collaboration, municipal partnerships, and civic exchange. Situated between the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Brandenburg–Poland programme to the north and the Saxony–Poland programme to the south, the area lies at the heart of German–Polish cross-border cooperation. At the national level, the German–Polish Intergovernmental Commission for Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation provides the main institutional framework, bringing together representatives of national and regional governments from both countries. Its work is supported by thematic committees, including one on spatial planning that contributed to the 2030 Common Future Vision for the German–Polish interaction area. Institutional engagement is strong, with Euroregions such as Spree-Neiße-Bober and PRO EUROPA VIADRINA facilitating long-standing collaboration. Twin cities like Frankfurt (Oder)–Ślubice and Guben–Gubin serve as key hubs, supported by formal action plans and joint commissions. Crisis response has improved through bilateral agreements and joint rescue services, including post-COVID crisis management units. At a broader scale, the informal Oder Partnership connects German federal states and Polish voivodeships, enabling political, administrative, business, and civil society actors to collaborate on shared regional development goals. Nonetheless, cooperation continues to face structural and cultural barriers, including differences in governance models, legal-administrative systems, and uneven levels of trust.

2.6.1 Cross-border cooperation

This sub-dimension identifies the extent of cross-border cooperation in the border region. It illustrates areas of high cooperation intensity and identifies functional links in governance structures across borders. It also identifies areas with high awareness of obstacles and the willingness and support services to overcome them, as well as areas where Interreg cooperation intensity is already strong.

2.6.1.1 Cross-border governance structures

Indicator description

The indicator shows active institutionalised cooperation that act as cross-border entities. It includes cooperation formats such as Eurocities, Euroregions, EGTC, cross-border associations, cross-border councils, etc.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Localisation and categorising of cross-border cooperation formats (Eurocities, Euroregions, EGTC, cross-border associations, cross-border councils, conferences, working communities), based on desktop research.
- **Temporal coverage:** Status as of October 2025
- **Unit:** n/a

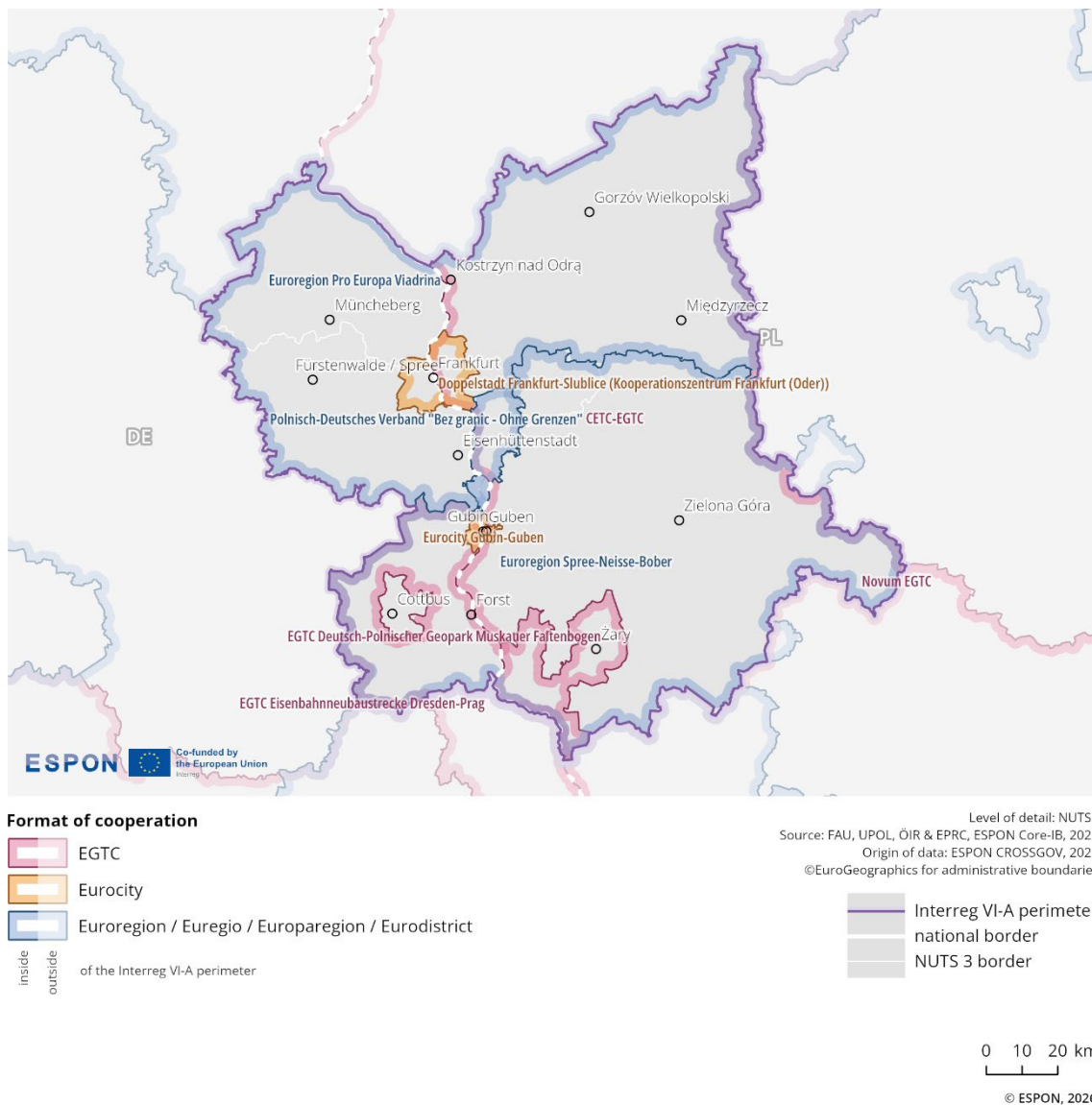
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.37 shows the different types of institutionalised cooperation. These governance structures either function as cross-border entities or bring together stakeholders from the cross-border region around shared topics. The governance structures covered include Eurocities, Euroregions, European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), cross-border associations and councils. Project-based cooperation is not included.

The coloured markings on the map indicate different types of institutionalisation: EGTCs are shown in red, Eurocities in yellow, Euroregions/Euregios/Europaregions/Eurodistricts in blue, and other formats in grey.

The multi-level governance structure in this programme area displays broad spatial coverage along the borders. Overall, the region demonstrates a high level of institutionalised cross-border cooperation. EGTCs and Euroregional formats are the most prevalent. Cross-border cooperation at city level (Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice) is also highly relevant in this border area.

Figure 2.37: Cross-border governance structures



2.6.1.2 Cross-border public services

Indicator description

The indicator shows different services specialised on cross-border challenges and development potential, including their domain of operation. As a specific form of services of general interest, cross-border public services (CPS) address joint problems or development potentials of border regions that are located on different sides of one or more national borders.

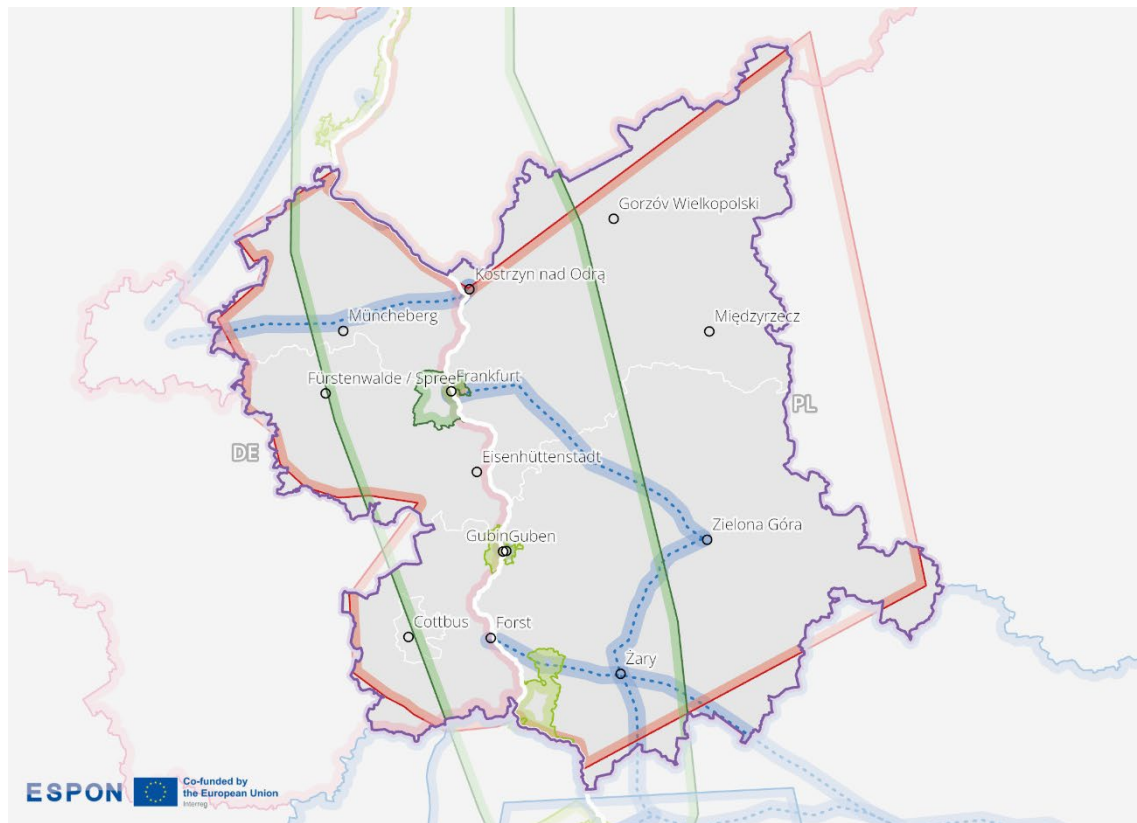
- **Source:** ESPON cross-border public services (CPS) 2.0 database
- **Temporal coverage:** 2022
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.38 depicts the geographical extent of cross-border public services in the border area in 2022. Different thematic areas are represented by distinct symbols and colours, indicating services such as disaster management, health care, transportation, education, environment, energy, job placement, and culture. The visualisation highlights where these services operate across the national boundary.

Cross-border public services in the Brandenburg–Lubuskie region are mainly characterised by a large disaster management service, covering the entire Interreg area as well as a wide span of health care services, covering the German half of the Interreg area. A strong transportation network spans from Fürstenwalde/Spree to Zielona Góra and Żary. Environment & water services cluster around Guben and south of Guben. Tourism & information services are found in a wide corridor from south to north through the entire Interreg region.

Figure 2.38: Cross-border public services



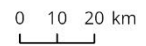
Geographical extent of cross-border public service themes (2022)

| areal | linear | character of the service |
|-------|--------|--------------------------|
| | | Disaster management |
| | | Health care |
| | | Transportation |
| | | Tourism & information |
| | | Education & research |
| | | Environment & water |
| | | Heating & energy |
| | | Job placement |
| | | Culture |

Cross-border public services covering more than one theme have been assigned only to one. Furthermore, some polygons have been excluded because they were only approximately and not accurately spatially defined.

Level of detail: geolocalised lines and areas
 Source: FAU, UPOL, OIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026
 Origin of data: ESPON CPS, 2022
 ©EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

- Interreg VI-A perimeter
- national border
- NUTS 3 border



© ESPON, 2026

2.6.1.3 Perceived cross-border obstacles in b-solutions

Indicator description

The indicator shows cases of legal or administrative obstacles selected in the framework of the b-solutions initiative. This indicator lists the number, location and nature of suggested solution of cases in the b-solutions initiative, including the topic and parties involved.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing and analysis of the b-solutions initiative data
- **Temporal coverage:** 2018-2025 (first quarter)
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

The b-solutions initiative is a European Union project that supports the resolution of legal, operational and administrative cross-border obstacles. It offers funding for pilot actions and legal expert advice in border regions. A high level of cross-border integration often reveals strong barriers of cross-border functioning. In order to exploit the cross-border potentials, these obstacles have to be overcome or at least addressed. Both the number of reported obstacles and the general interest in solutions serve as important indicators of cross-border interaction.

As part of the ESPON CROSSGOV project, all b-solutions initiatives were analysed to deepen the understanding of the thematic focus of the perceived cross-border obstacles across different border regions and the suggested solution. For the case of the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland programme area, no participation in b-solutions projects has been reported yet.

2.6.1.4 Institutionalised advice centres for cross-border issues

Indicator description

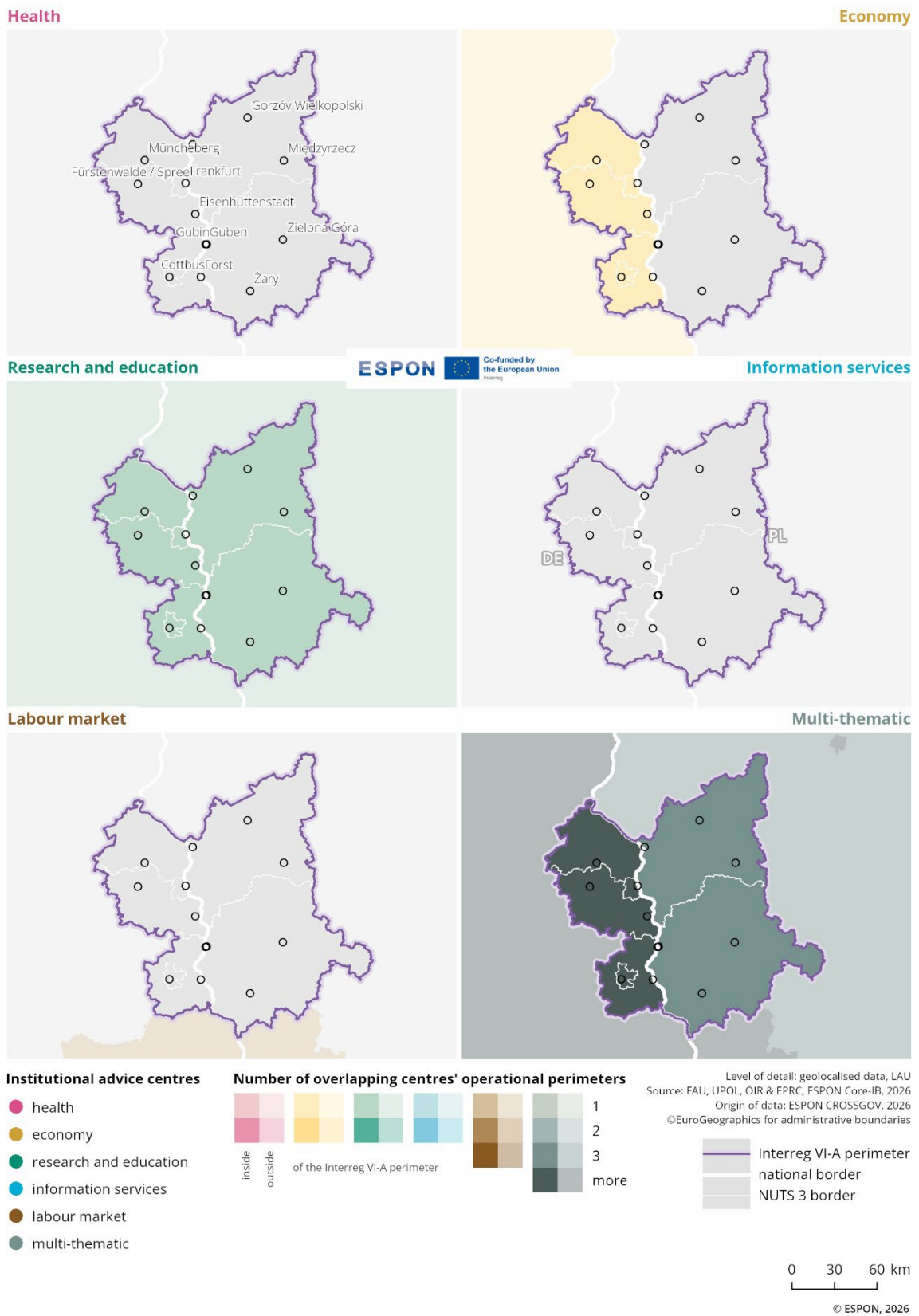
The indicator shows where institutionalised advice centres on cross-border issues are located, including their thematic focus and geographical perimeter.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Localisation and thematic focus of advice centres for cross-border issues are identified via desktop research.
- **Temporal coverage:** Status as of February 2025
- **Unit:** n/a

Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Figure 2.39 shows the locations and types of institutionalised advice centres, along with their operational domains, in the cross-border Interreg region between Poland and Germany/Brandenburg. These centres throughout Europe provide support in various fields such as health, economy, research & education, information services, the labour market, and multi-thematic issues. The operational domains of these centres are also indicated by coloured shading on the map. The more intense the colour, the stronger the influence of that specific domain in the corresponding area.

Figure 2.39: Institutionalised cross-border advice centres



There are no institutionalised advice centres in the Interreg region displayed on the map, nor are there any outside the Interreg region.

Centres with multi-thematic, as well as research and education operational domains, are represented in both countries within the Interreg area, but they are more pronounced in the German part of the Interreg region. Economic operational domains are also present in the German part.

2.6.2 Outline of Interreg activities

The following section outlines the key Interreg activities in the 2021-2027 programming period. The aspects included concern the development opportunities and challenges identified (see Table 2), the budget available and split of allocation (Figure 2.40), overlapping Interreg programmes and the key aspects drawn from the programme.

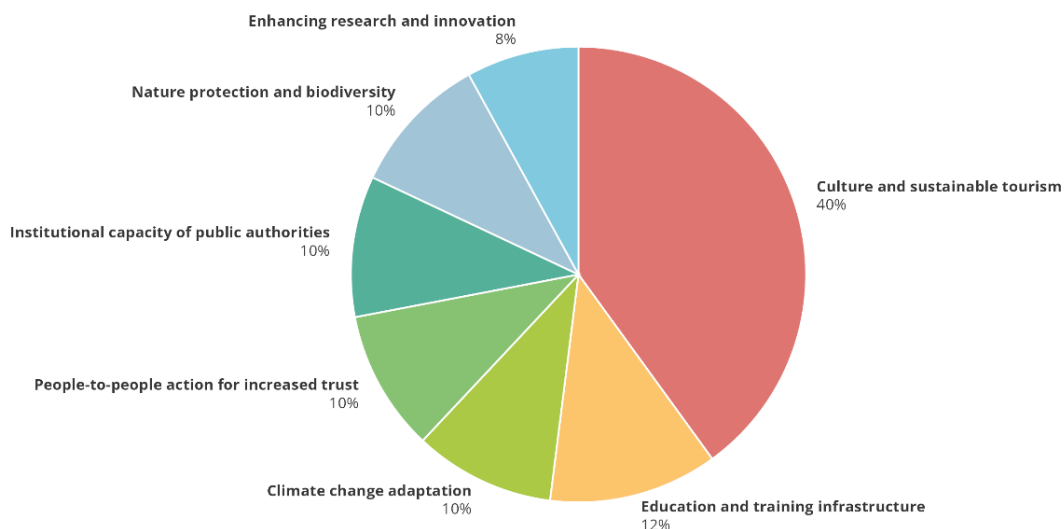
Table 2: Interreg VI (2021-2027): Opportunities and challenges

| Topic | Key development opportunities and challenges identified for Interreg 2021-27 |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The region has a mixed economy with a concentration of industry in urban areas and some rural economic disparities. ▪ Strong potential in applied research in several sectors. ▪ Universities on both sides of the border are engaged in joint academic initiatives focused on regional transformation, sustainability, and innovation. ▪ Opportunities for cooperation exist in renewable energy, electric mobility, and advanced manufacturing, supported by regional clusters and education programmes. |
| Employment, education and language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross-border labour mobility is a growing trend, especially Polish commuting to Germany, creating opportunities to align skills and job matching across the border. ▪ Recognition of qualifications and language barriers remain key obstacles. ▪ Improving bilingual education presents a key opportunity. ▪ Harmonising vocational and general education systems could enhance mobility and collaboration between schools and training institutions across the border. |
| Demographics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ageing population and declining birth rates. ▪ Disability prevalence is rising, increasing the demand for accessible services. ▪ Foreign migration is increasing, driven by refugee inflows and labour migration. |

| Topic | Key development opportunities and challenges identified for Interreg 2021-27 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environment and climate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High share of protected areas supports biodiversity and landscape management. ▪ Rich natural heritage and NATURA 2000 sites offer strong potential for eco-tourism and education. ▪ Environmental quality improving, but further action needed to meet water and soil protection targets. ▪ Climate change impacts (droughts, heavy rainfall, floods) call for increased adaptation and water management efforts. |
| Culture and tourism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rich natural and cultural heritage offers strong potential for cross-border and wellness tourism, including UNESCO-listed sites and geoparks. ▪ Post-pandemic shifts favour local recreation, highlighting the need for better connectivity and sustainable tourism offers (around cycling, hiking, and waterways). ▪ Infrastructure gaps and uneven development hinder balanced cross-border tourism, especially in mobility and accommodation. ▪ Language barriers limit access to cultural offerings; multilingual tools needed. ▪ Cultural events are concentrated in regional urban centres with cross-border appeal. ▪ Smaller towns and historic sites present opportunities for thematic tourism. |
| Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall good road accessibility, but public transport remains fragmented and underdeveloped. ▪ Rail services suffer from poor quality, low frequency, and limited cross-border connections. Rail modernisation plans offer long-term connectivity gains. ▪ Opportunities to enhance TEN-T corridor integration and support greener mobility. ▪ Need for coordinated investments to improve rail infrastructure and cross-border commuting. |
| Digitalisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall improvement in the access to broadband infrastructure, however, gaps exist in rural areas |
| Coordination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scope for better cooperation in delivering public services, e.g., healthcare |

Total Budget: EUR 110,375,000.03

Figure 2.40: Split of Interreg allocation



© FAU, UPOL, ÖIR & EPRC, ESPON Core-IB, 2026; Origin of data: Cohesion Open Data Platform/European Commission, 2025

Table 3 shows the number of Interreg 2021-2027 cross-border and transnational programmes which share at least one NUTS3 region with the border area. Each programme has its own distinct rationale, value and territorial focus. However, for the purposes of, for example, planning and capitalisation activities it is potentially helpful for programmes and programme stakeholders to be aware of and connected to other Interreg programmes with which they share a direct territorial link.¹⁵ The 4 Interreg C programmes Interreg ESPON, Interact, Interreg Europe and URBACT (Urban Action) cover the whole EU territory and provide a range of joint services and initiatives.

Table 3: Shared geographies with other cross-border and transnational programmes

| Interreg A (cross-border) | Interreg B (transnational) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 | 2 |

Key aspects

- › Interreg cooperation in 2021–2027 places a strong emphasis on culture, tourism, and education. The largest share of funding is allocated to cross-border cultural heritage and sustainable tourism, followed by investment in education and training infrastructure. Significant resources are also directed toward environmental priorities, including nature protection, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and disaster prevention.
- › Additional support is dedicated to strengthening institutional capacity and fostering people-to-people cooperation to build trust and deepen cross-border ties. More targeted funding is reserved for enhancing research and innovation, helping to anchor knowledge and technology transfer among universities, research institutions and companies.
- › Potential for synergies across programmes, particularly through the Interreg B programmes.

¹⁵ It is noted that synergies and links with a wide range of other territorial cooperation and sectoral programmes and initiatives are also valuable and this is reflected in the wider analyses presented in this border profile, but not specifically covered in this table.

- › Single NUTS3 regions from the programme area are part of the 2021-2027 Interreg VI-A Germany/Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania/Brandenburg-Poland and 2021-2027 Interreg VI-A Poland-Germany/Saxony.
- › All 7 NUTS3 regions from the programme area are part of the 2021-2027 Interreg VI-B Central Europe and 2021-2027 Interreg VI-B Baltic Sea Region.

2.6.2.1 Interreg cooperation

Indicator description

Based on the keep.eu database, this indicator illustrates the network density of Interreg V-A (2014–2020). It is derived from the geographical location of all partners within a project consortium and reflects the intensity of cooperation between them. For the analysis, project networks were visualised by drawing lines between the locations of partners within a consortium. These connections were subsequently aggregated and spatially abstracted by calculating line density using GIS software. Dark red areas indicate a high density of connections between project partners, while yellow areas represent a lower density of cooperation links.

An additional element in this section is the development of project partner numbers between Interreg IV-A (2007–2013) and Interreg V-A (2014–2020), based on data from the keep.eu database. The datasets were cleaned to remove duplicates, using the partner names as reported in keep.eu. For both programming periods, keep.eu indicates a high level of data completeness¹⁶. Nevertheless, this development should be interpreted as indicative, as variations in partner name reporting and general limitations regarding the representativeness of the dataset affect the robustness of the results.

- **Source/method of retrieval:** Processing and analysis of the keep.eu database
- **Temporal coverage:** 2007-2013 (Interreg IV-A), 2014-2020 (Interreg V-A)
- **Unit:** n/a

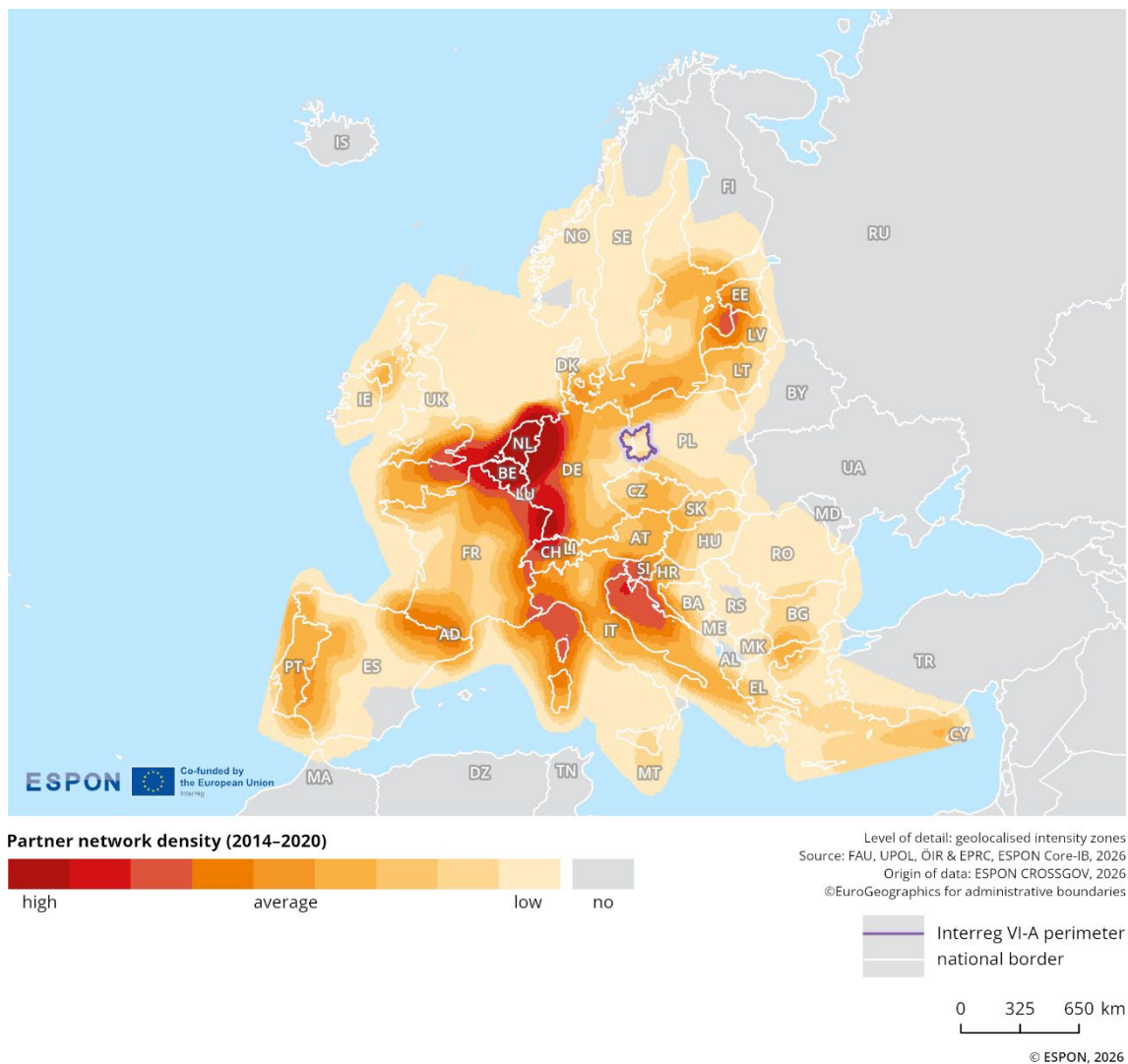
Please refer to the technical annex for more information.

Cooperation activities and networks are among the most meaningful types of information for delineating cross-border functional areas. As such, the indicator on cooperation through Interreg can help to identify networks among cross-border actors and highlight the density of cooperation in specific border segments.

Figure 2.41 shows the density of Interreg V A (2014–2020) partner networks. The indicator includes the location of, and links between, Interreg project partners within a project consortium. From a European perspective, partner network density in the Germany/Brandenburg-Poland border area appears quite evenly spread. No specific border segments within the programme area show significantly higher or lower network levels than others. Overall, the partner network density in this border area is lower than the European average. Based on the keep.eu database and excluding duplicates, the number of project partners decreased from 125 in Interreg IV-A (2007–2013) to 60 in Interreg V-A (2014–2020), a decrease of about 52%. It is important that these changes are considered in the context of factors such as change in programme budgets between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, emphasis on targeting impact, and numbers of strategic projects.

¹⁶ see [Keep.eu representativeness: Interreg, Interreg-IPA and ENI cross-border](#)

Figure 2.41: Interreg V-A partner network density



2.6.3 Key messages on the governance dimension

The border region is notable for its extensive and varied cross-border governance structures. A wide range of cooperation formats exist, including Euroregions, EGTCs, and city-level initiatives such as the one between Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. This institutional framework provides an important basis for dialogue, planning and problem solving, ensuring that cross-border cooperation is embedded in stable structures and not limited to isolated projects.

Cross-border public services are particularly well-developed in fields such as disaster management, healthcare, transport and environmental management. Their presence demonstrates that cooperation is not only about strategy, but also about providing practical solutions to everyday needs. These services can help to address common risks, such as natural hazards or health emergencies, while also supporting connectivity through transport networks and tourism information services. However, advice centres remain limited in the programme area.

Interreg plays a crucial role in sustaining and expanding cooperation. During the 2021–2027 period, the focus is on culture, tourism, education, environmental priorities, and institutional capacity building. While these themes reflect the strengths of the cross-border region, such as its rich cultural heritage, tourism potential, and natural assets, they also highlight its vulnerabilities, including climate risks and

the need to strengthen trust and social interaction across the border. However, Interreg cooperation density has decreased compared to earlier programming periods, with fewer project partners involved.

3 Summary and key observations

To support the strategic dialogue on cross-border cooperation beyond 2027, this territorial analysis provides harmonised and comparable information. Its data-driven evidence helps to inform the future direction of cross-border cooperation by facilitating alignment with EU priorities and the evolving regulatory framework. The Core-IB border profiles adopt a harmonised methodology and provide programme areas with access to recent European data. As this approach comes along with limitations, member states may hold additional or more detailed data which can further enrich or contextualise the findings beyond the Core-IB project (see final report and technical annex of this project). These national sources are essential for refining and validating territorial evidence in policymaking processes, including: a) regional, fine-scale data and b) insights from political processes related to prioritisation and objective setting. The study's findings are analytical and are intended to support reflection and discussion. They do not create regulatory or policy obligations for Member States, the European Commission, or programme authorities.

Table 4 provides 2 types of information. Firstly, it summarises the key analytical findings for the border region, as discussed earlier in this profile. Secondly, it suggests policy options based on the analytical findings. These options are intended to provide a practical and informative basis for the strategic dialogue among programme bodies, managing authorities and the European Commission.

Generally speaking, the aim of cohesion policy is to promote harmonious territorial development (also) across borders. The objective is to mitigate the impact of borders and achieve 360° functionality, thereby enhancing the quality of life and fostering prosperous development on both sides of the border. The upcoming Interreg period offers an opportunity to address these objectives and potentials through targeted cooperation projects.

Table 4: Evidence-based conclusions

| Territorial dimension | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key analytical findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region faces low population density, demographic decline, and ageing, with sharper losses in Poland, while settlement areas continue to expand around urban centres despite shrinkage; • Accessibility is relatively good, with most areas reachable within 30–60 minutes and balanced service provision, though quality of car-rail connections varies; • Overall, the region combines decline and urbanisation pressures, where coordinated spatial and mobility planning is key to unlocking integration potential. |

| Territorial dimension | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy options | <p>Population and settlement related aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A focus could be on addressing the low population density, population ageing and more pronounced demographic losses on the Polish side of the border, with the aim of limiting land consumption around urban centres while maintaining effective settlement structures and stable service provision. <p>Accessibility related aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy development and pilot actions could explore the potential to improve the quality and integration of rail connections, building on the relatively high overall accessibility and balanced basic service provision to strengthen everyday cross-border mobility and gradually reduce the reliance on private transport. <p>Cross-cutting aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated cross-border approaches could be explored to coordinate labour markets, mobility systems and environmental management, providing more cohesive responses to structural challenges such as the demographic decline and dispersed settlement patterns. |

| Economic dimension | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key analytical findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cross-border region shows strong economic growth and catching-up dynamics, yet disparities persist: the German side nears the EU average but lags nationally, while the Polish side grows faster but remains below Poland's average; Employment has risen but remains fragile due to steep demographic decline and structural dependence on traditional industries, with gradual diversification towards services; Cross-border asymmetries persist in wages, labour mobility, housing, and digital infrastructure, highlighting both opportunities for integration and the need for coordinated policy action. |

| Economic dimension | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy options | <p>Labour market related aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A focus could be placed on aligning ongoing economic catch-up processes with more balanced cross-border labour market integration, in order to support functional labour mobility while limiting asymmetric dependencies. <p>Competitiveness related aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation projects could address the demographic decline as a common cross-border economic challenge by developing joint approaches that support long-term competitiveness. <p>Cross-cutting aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border initiatives could strategically address the persistent asymmetries in wages, labour mobility, housing affordability and digital infrastructure, while supporting deeper economic integration and more balanced competitive conditions on both sides of the border. |

| Green dimension | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key analytical findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region holds strong ecological assets with extensive protected areas and Natura 2000 sites, yet gaps in ecological connectivity persist, particularly near Fürstenwalde/Spree; Shared environmental risks, especially flooding along the Oder and Warta, and air quality challenges linked to industry and energy production highlight the need for targeted cross-border cooperation; An energy mix dominated by coal and resource-intensive industries, coupled with limited cross-border energy links, explains why sustainability indicators lag behind national levels despite intensive interaction. |

| Green dimension | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy options | <p>Climate risks and resilience related aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border cooperation could focus on more coordinated management of fragmented ecological systems and the asymmetries in air and water quality, contributing to coherent environmental governance across the border region; • A focus could be on cross-border risk management and mitigation strategies addressing flood risks along the Oder and Warta rivers, as well as air quality pressures linked to industry and energy production. <p>Energy related aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint actions and strategy development could assess opportunities to accelerate the transition towards cleaner energy systems and improved resource efficiency, taking into account the continued reliance on coal, resource-intensive industrial structures and currently limited cross-border energy links; • The energy communities could be supported as a pragmatic entry point to moderate the pace of the energy transition and frame it as a shared cross-border priority with tangible local benefits. |

| Socio-economic dimension | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key analytical findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social integration remains weak due to language barriers, limiting everyday exchanges despite geographical proximity; • Tourism generates jobs and income but remains below potential overall, while concentrated hotspots create housing and environmental pressures; • Access to essential services shows clear disparities, with shorter travel times in German areas and longer, urban-rural divides more pronounced on the Polish side. |

| Socio-economic dimension | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy options | <p>Cross-cutting aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border cooperation initiatives could address the persistent language barriers via coordinated approaches in service provision, institutional cooperation and people-to-people activities, strengthening social integration across the border region; • Coordinated cross-border tourism approaches could explore ways to balance the asymmetrical distributions of economic benefits while addressing pressures on housing affordability and environmental sustainability; • A focus could be on cross-border approaches in healthcare, education and digital services to improve accessibility, particularly in response to longer travel times and service disparities on the Polish side of the border. |

| Border security and safety dimension | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key analytical findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary border controls have been reintroduced unevenly, with Germany applying them far more frequently than Poland, creating asymmetric impacts on cross-border life; • Controls are triggered by international events, migration flows, and security concerns, linking the border region to wider European challenges; • While Schengen facilitates commuting and trade, repeated controls reduce predictability, delay daily activities, and highlight the vulnerability of local cross-border interactions to national decisions. |
| Policy options | <p>Cross-cutting aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impacts of border controls on cross-border commuting and logistics can be mitigated through coordinated and institutionalised cross-border policy dialogue; • The mitigation of border control effects can form part of cross-border cooperation projects in various sectors. Economic networks, transport infrastructure initiatives and tourism-related actions can incorporate considerations related to the impacts of border controls. |

| Governance dimension | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key analytical findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The border region has a dense and well-established governance framework, including Euroregions, EGTCs, and city-level initiatives, supporting structured cross-border cooperation; • Public services in disaster management, health, transport, and environment show practical implementation of cooperation, but advice centres are limited, especially on the Polish side, reducing citizen support; • Despite strong institutionalisation, cooperation density has declined, highlighting the need for sustained engagement, balanced support structures, and investment in people-to-people activities. |
| Policy options | <p>Cross-cutting aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing institutional cross-border frameworks could be used strategically to develop integrated governance solutions that simultaneously address the demographic decline, economic transition and environmental sustainability via coordinated development approaches, policy alignment and joint implementation. |

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