



# PROFECY

*Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner Peripheries in Europe*

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



Inspire policy making by territorial evidence

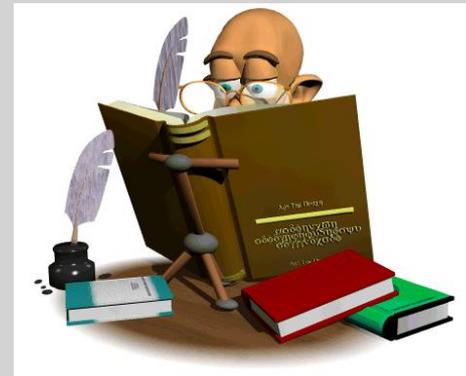
# The Policy Lab on Shrinking Regions

I will answer the Policy questions taking different roles (all experienced):

- Neighbour and vocational decision-maker in a shrinking remote rural village (Spain)
- Coordinator of an ESPON 2020 A.R. Project on peripherality, and academic with 25 years research experience on peripheralisation and rural development.



**Neighbour + D.M.**



**“Expert” + academic**

# 1. Prospects for shrinking rural areas in current and future territorial context in Europe:

- **The general prospect is not good:** current trends will continue (losing services and population)
- **Some shrinking rural areas may find “exceptional” solutions** via exogenous investments, unique assets, increased concerns with climate change and sustainability, or clear strategies by public government, etc.
- **Rural governance needs to be reinforced to avoid current weaknesses:** technical capabilities, strategic vision, organization of resources and action based on pre-established and consensual objectives.
- **Local society** is aging and young people continue leaving to go to study or in search of a job, and do not return.
- **Newcomers** to work or to fulfill their "rural idyll" from the urban environment (families with school-age children, economic immigrants, European residents with high purchasing power, etc.), stumble upon this reality.
- **There are, however, possibilities to re-energize the rural economy via strategic action, closing digital divide, multi-level, empowering rural societies with more place-based policies, new role in keeping natural resources and achieving sustainability, etc..**

## 2. Limitations of traditional policy/conventional governance and possible alternative perspectives accepting shrinkage

- We do not need to "invent the wheel" again. The philosophy of the LEADER approach (place-based policies or CLLD approach) provides the basis to stop depopulation and reverse shrinkage. But this is a demanding approach that requires good practices from design to final evaluation. Good practices that have not been given in most cases.
- It is difficult to accept shrinkage unless there is no other choice. Shrinking regions do not aspire to live in socio-economic vacuums. Alternative models centered on the conservation of natural resources, landscape, and / or knowledge of the relationship with the environment as necessary elements for global sustainability can be considered. But that costs money. How much territory can be "bought" for those laudable purposes?

## 3 and 4. Role of digital technologies

- So far, innovative digital technologies have been a lost opportunity for many areas
- This is part of the solution, but it requires initiatives that aim to continue empowering rural societies, which equip territories and societies with participatory and consensual strategies for positioning in the future, which favour the consolidation of intermediate government units (counties, LAGs, etc.). ) that make viable the provision of basic services and the implementation of area strategies.

# Neighbour and decisión-maker

## 5. How could future EU Cohesion Policy be adapted to address challenges and opportunities for shrinking rural regions?

- Lessons emerging from the Inner Peripheries project may help
- IPs and Areas at Risk cover many regions in Europe
- Most of them are shrinking regions one or another way:
  - High levels of outmigration, particularly among the youth and the high propensity of their not coming back, once they left for opportunities (higher education, labour market) elsewhere.
  - An economic sector based on traditional activities and/or mono-economy
  - A weakness of local and regional institutions that lacks experiences and understanding of cooperation, collaboration and cohesion targeting.
  - A low share of skilled labour force and/or difficulties to attract, mainly qualified, external workforce
  - A sense of “being forgotten” in the political attention from higher-policy levels.



## Combinations of the four delineation approaches

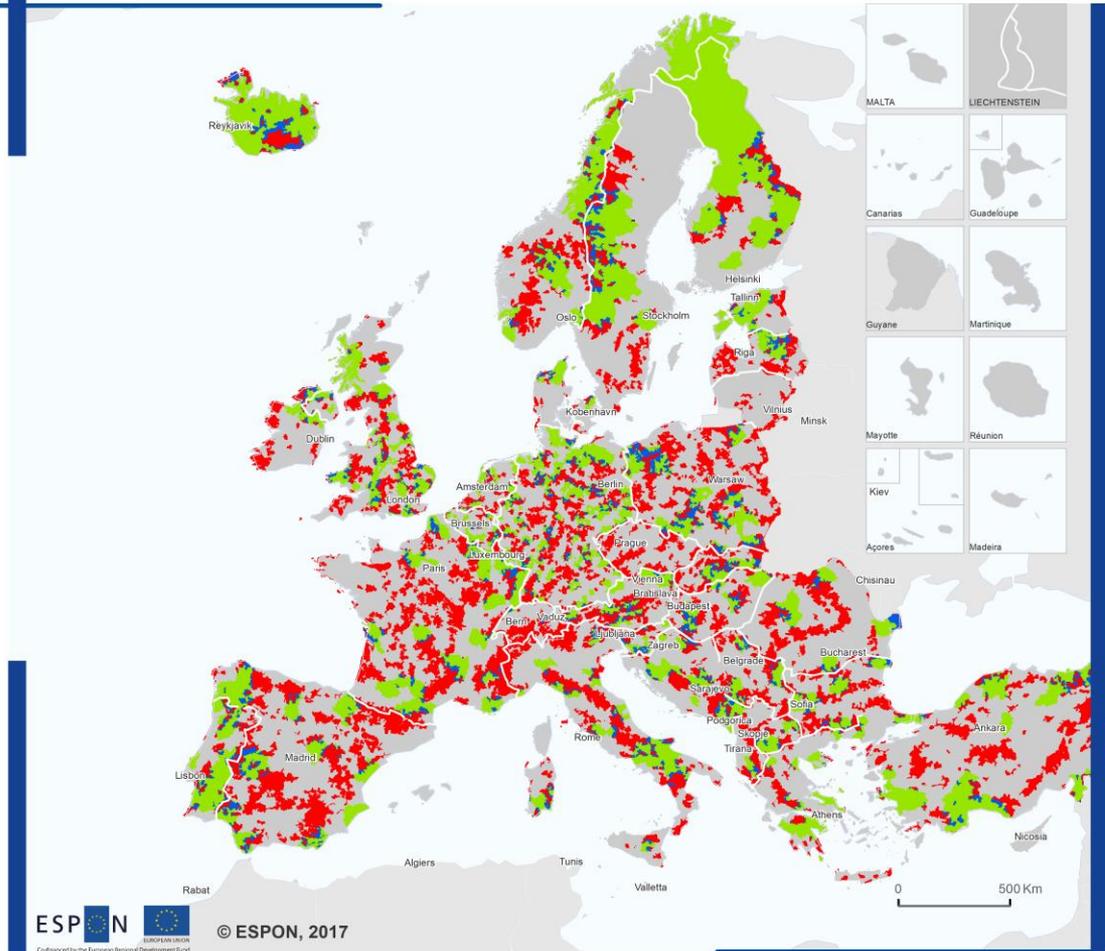
# Inner Peripheries

### Main drivers provoking peripheralisation:

A poor economic or demographic situation (delineations 2 and 4);

A poor access to services and/or to regional centres (delineations 1 and 3)

A combination (aggravation) of them



Overlay of results of the four individual delineations:  
**Main drivers of inner peripherality**  
**(lack of access vs. economic and demographic situation)**

- non-IP area
- Main driver: poor economic potentials and poor socio-economic situation
- Main driver: lack of access to centres and/or services
- Main drivers: poor accessibility and poor economic potentials/poor socio-economic situation

Level: grid cells (2.5x2.5 km)  
 Source: ESPON Profecy  
 Origin of data: TCP International, 2017;  
 TCP International Accessibility Model, 2017  
 CC - UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

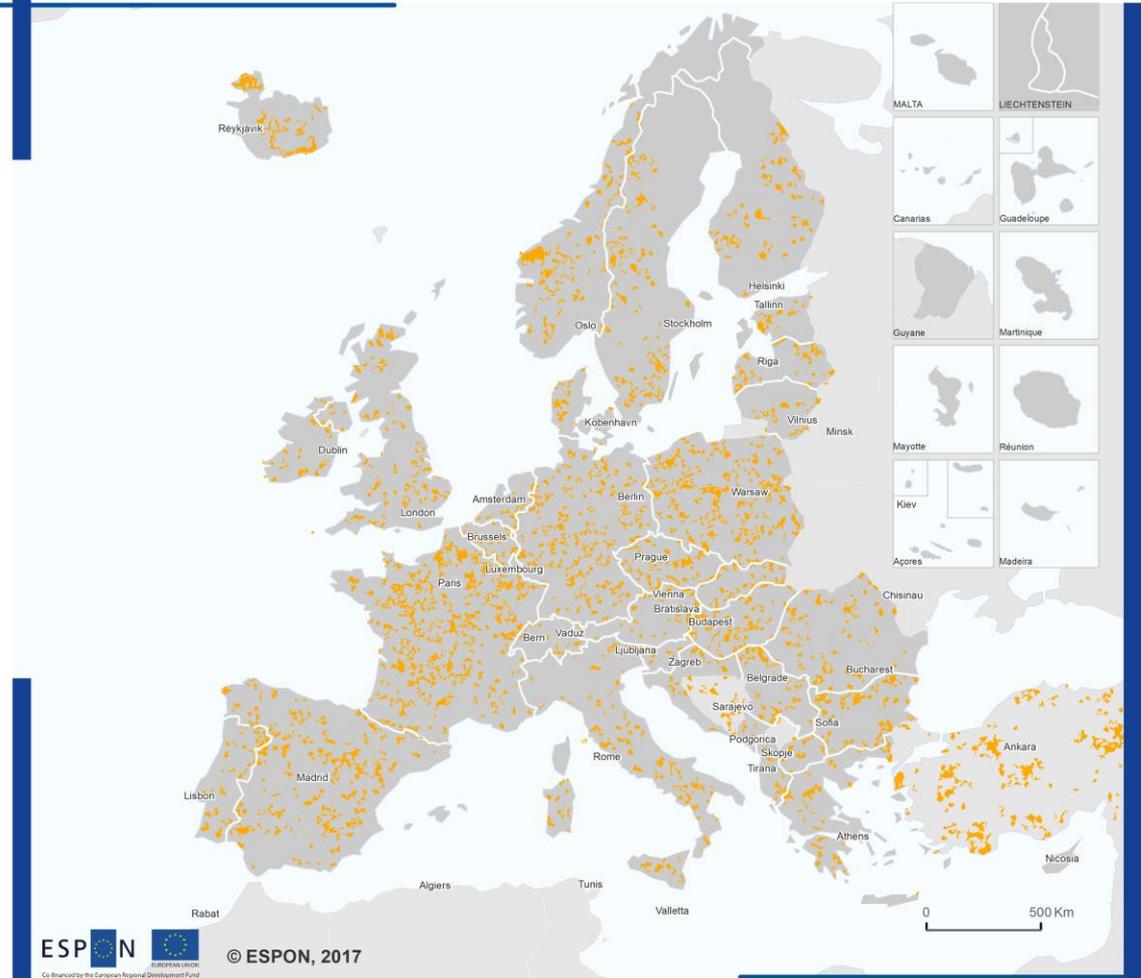
Note:  
 Outermost regions excluded from analysis.

## Areas of risk to become inner peripheries in future

# Areas at risk

Territories that today are **non-IP**, but **which already lack access to some services**. Assuming that service provision problems aggravate when less services can be reached, these areas find themselves in a situation of risk, and they **will become inner peripheries if service provision deteriorates**.

Areas at risk, presented on the map, have **poor access to three or four SGIs**. Therefore, if they lose one or two SGIs, they would be identified as IP in Delineation 3.



**Areas of risk to become inner peripheries: Areas with poor access to three or four SGIs in Delineation 3, but which have not been identified as IP**

 Areas-of-risk to become IP in future

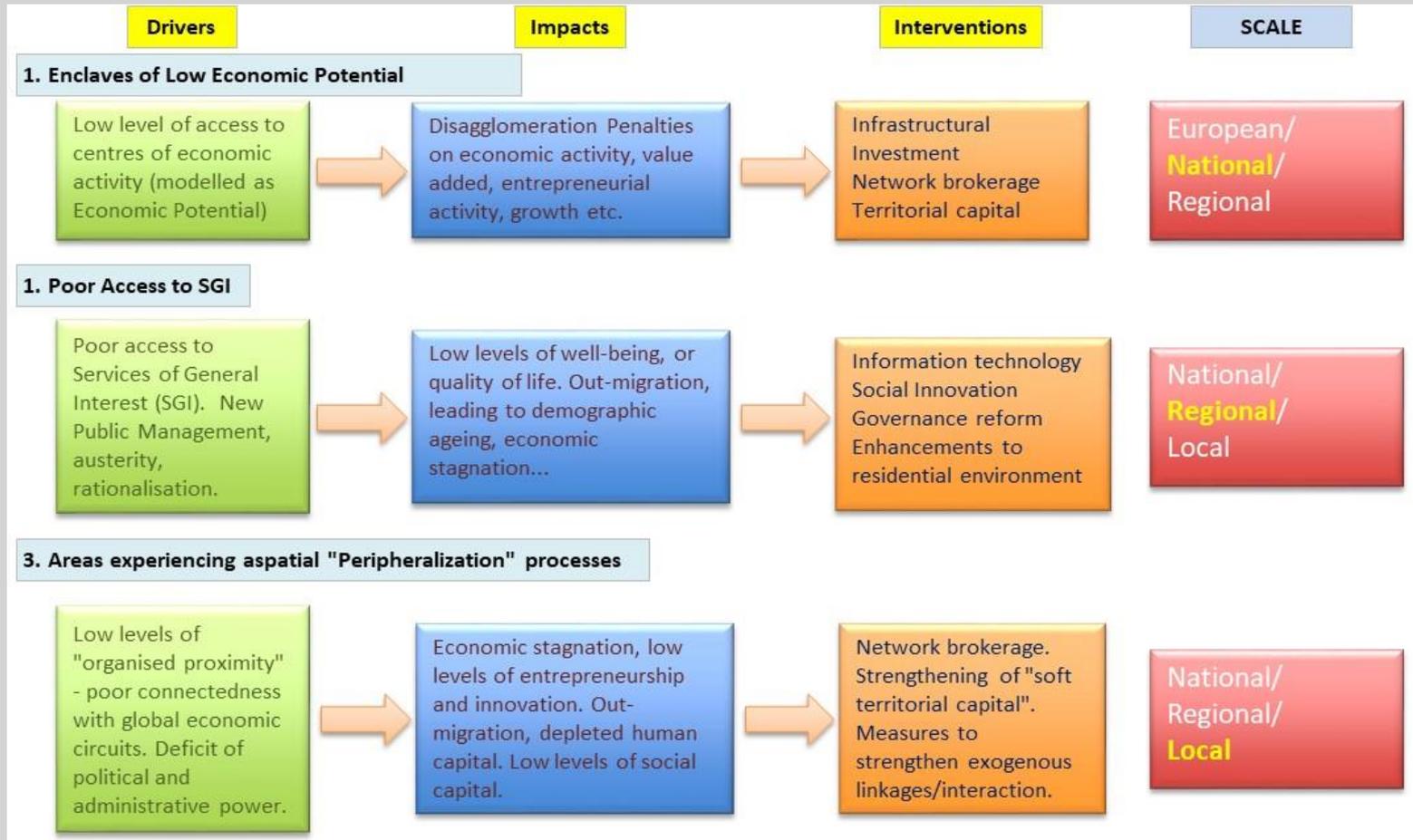
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Note:  
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Remarks:  
 All areas which have, according to results of Delineation 3, poor access to three or four SGIs are considered as areas-of-risk.

# What kind of Interventions might be appropriate?

- As with IP, there are different models of shrinking regions. In each model specific factors block development processes. **Strategies need to address the various components that lead to shrinkage in each type of "shrinking region"**. Different sets of actions should be considered (next slide)



# Strategies

- Combine local (place-based) assets with effective interaction, not only between local actors, but also with exogenous resources and agencies: **connectedness**
- **Understanding the processes** and factors that cause shrinkage and condition its evolution.
- “Positive discrimination” policies and actions in order to help **counteract trends towards spatial concentration**, supported by neo-liberal forces, that allow agglomerations to attract (additional) economic (and political) power.
- **Shaping “intangible factors”** such as community relations and social norms are pivotal might provide incentives to reverse “spiraling-down” processes of negative regional development.
- **Nurture cooperative governance.** Clarifying responsibilities, mechanisms of policy dialogue and coordination.
- **Overcome limited views** and realize the potential of shrinking regions to serve as “laboratories” for exploring future perspectives, more directly guided by the complexity of current resource use challenges.

# Strategies

- **Cohesion and Rural Development policies are highly relevant** in providing the necessary resources and policy tool driving processes of structural adjustment and innovation in different IP areas.
- **Promote integrated approaches** designed in Operational programmes and Leader approach initiatives.
- These forms of integrated approaches are usually combining different policy instruments under some single ESI Fund. **This would require, in the future, the introduction of incentives for approaches strongly based on decentralisation to local actors and new modes of governance in a multi-level framework.** This would not mean necessarily to introduce new policy tools in the present regulative framework, but rather implies to strengthen the role of place-based approaches and simplifying the working rules of ESI funds.

# Many thanks for your attention!!

