



# ESPON Workshop

## Polycentric Territorial Structures and Territorial Cooperation:

*What, where and how?*

Brussels, 14 September 2016



Inspire policy making by territorial evidence

# Aim of the Discussion Paper

## Guiding questions

- **WHAT** has been done in terms of European policy development related to polycentricity?
- **WHERE** can polycentric structures be found in Europe and where are there opportunities for more polycentric development?
- **HOW** could policy-makers at European, national, regional and local level, as well as in macro-regions and cross-border areas, engage in territorial cooperation arrangements to further enhance polycentric settlement structures in EU?

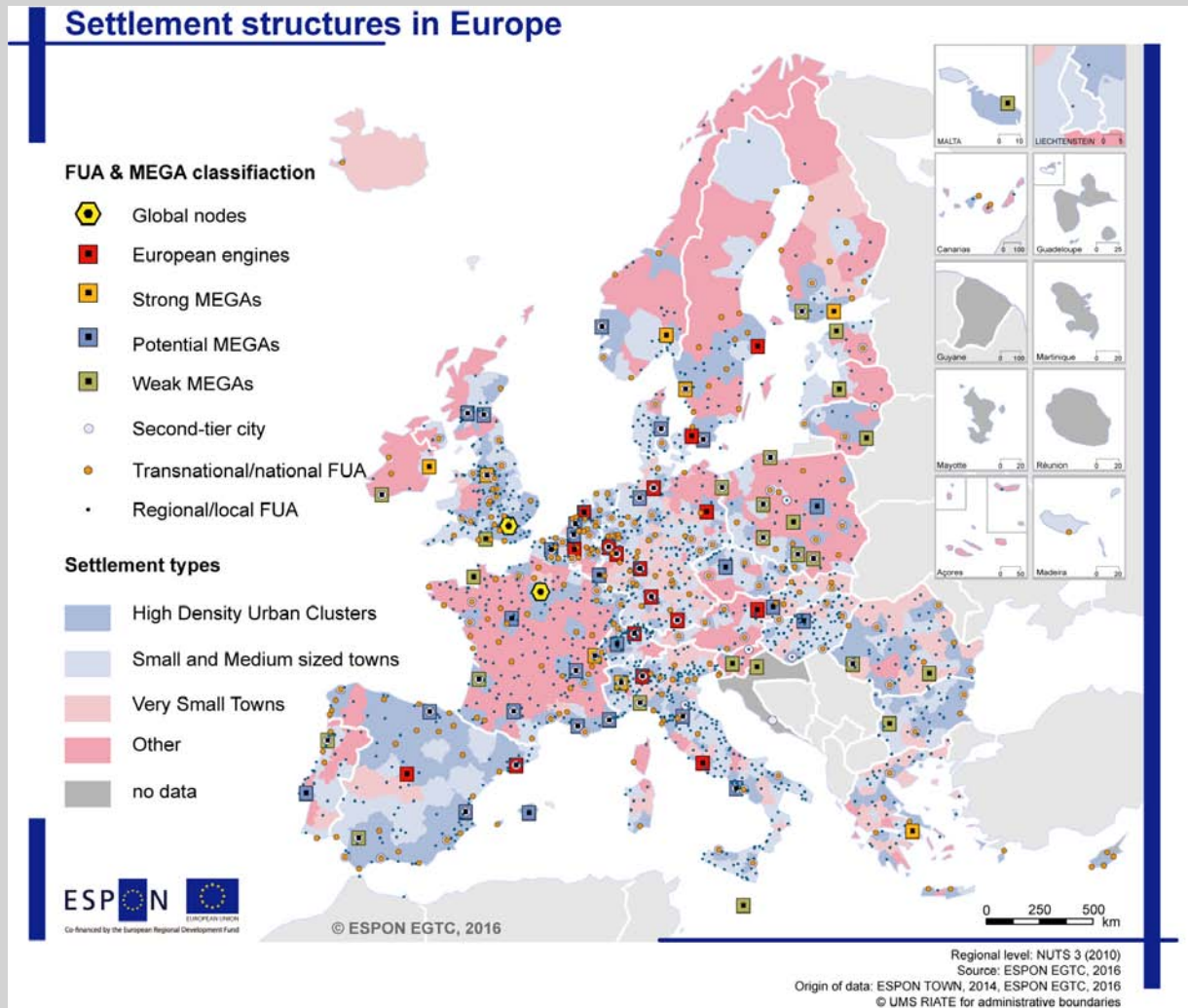
## Main focus

- **Relational aspects of polycentricity** that stress **functional networks and cooperation practices** as important preconditions to achieve the benefits of polycentricity.

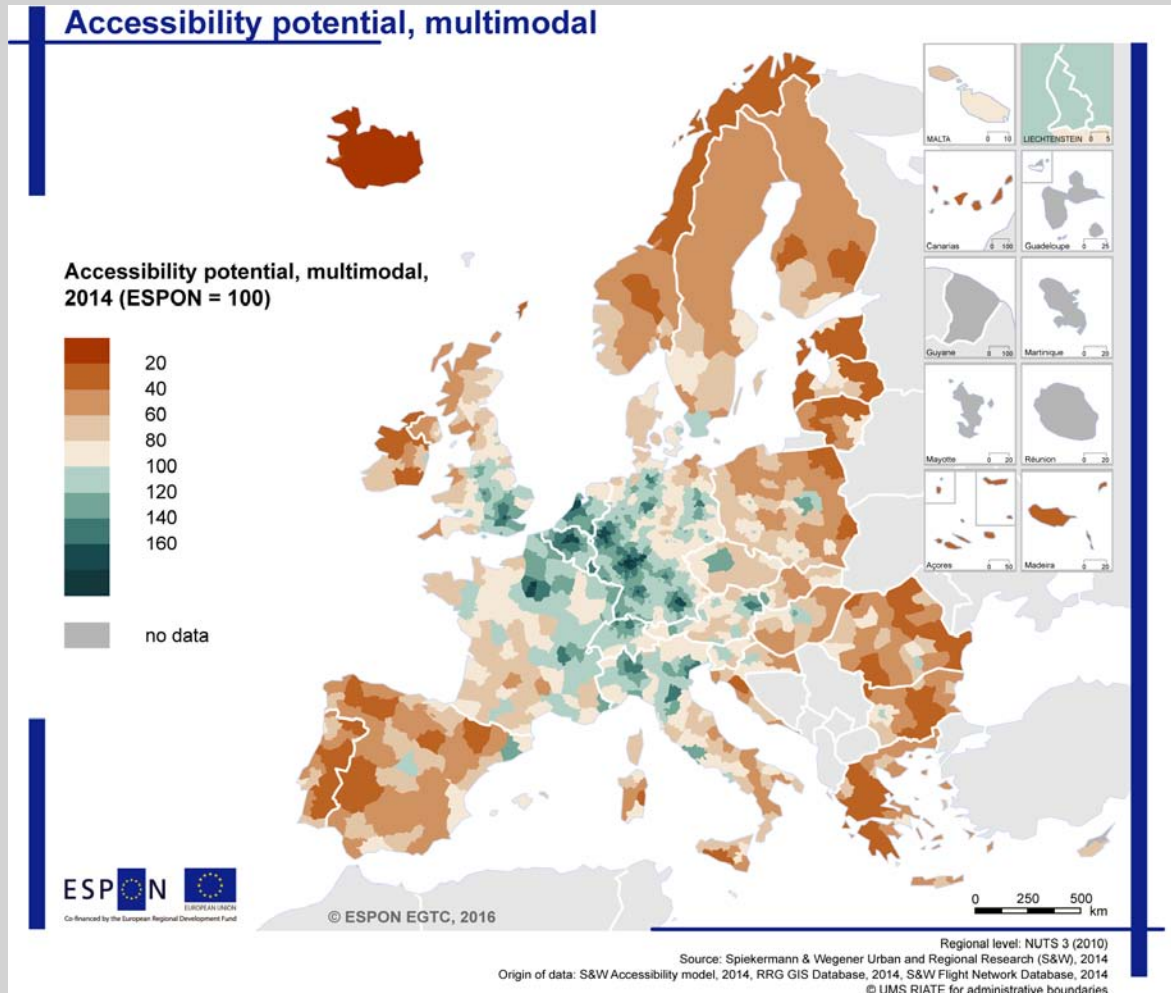
Territorial structures + Accessibility + Cooperation

→ Potentials for further polycentric development

# Map 1: Territorial settlement structures

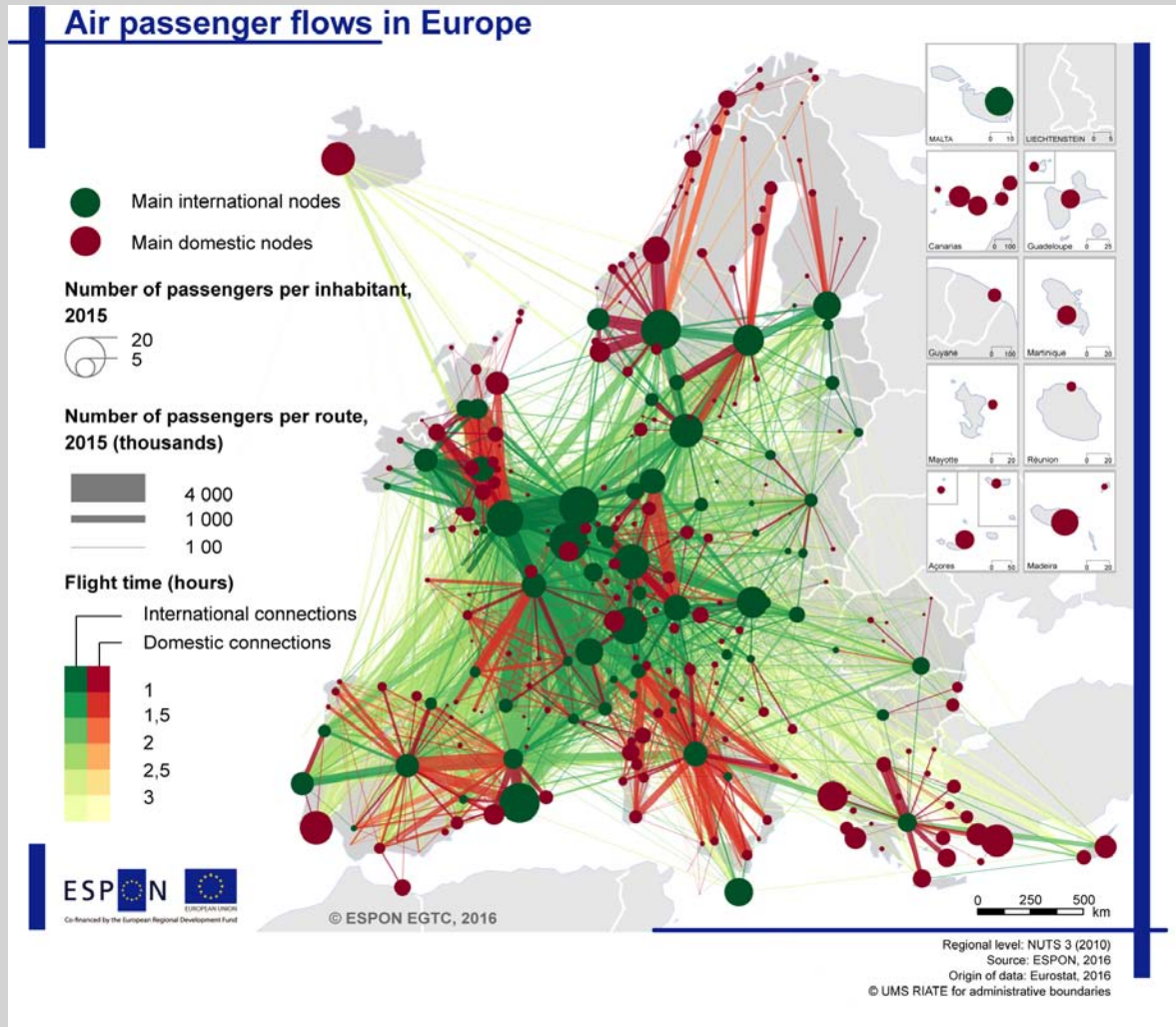


# Map 2: Accessibility potential, multimodal

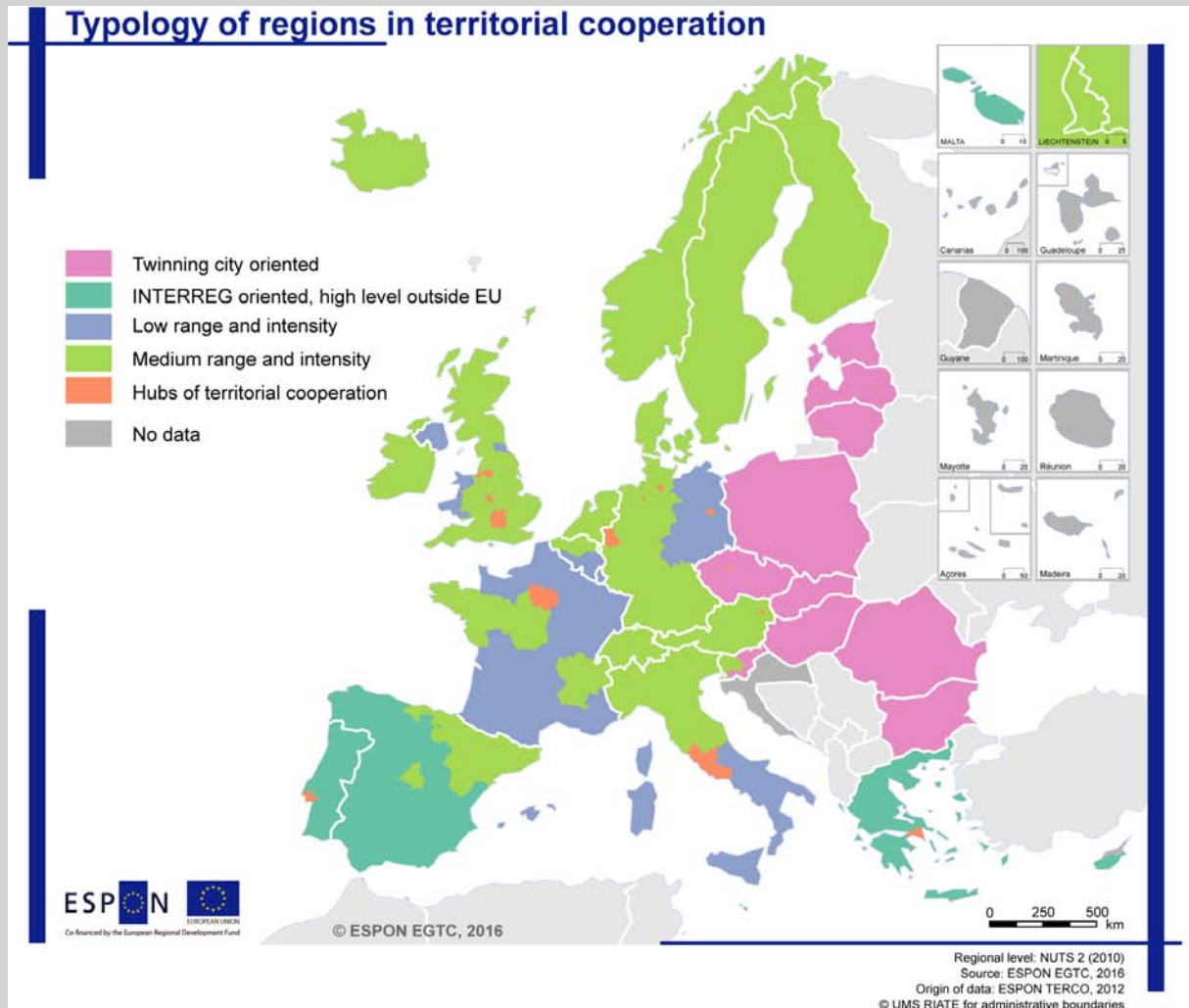




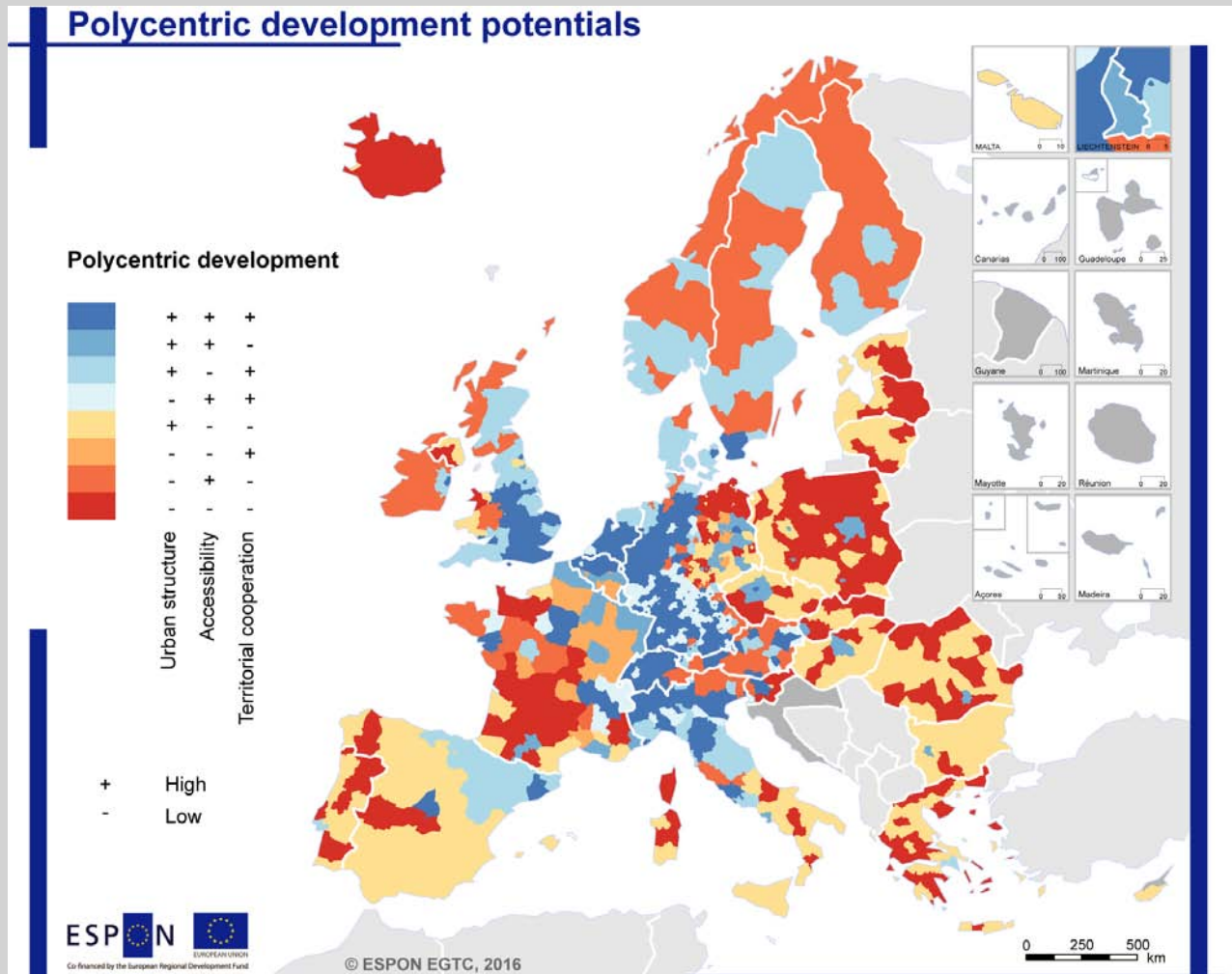
# Map 3: Air passenger flows



# Map 4: Typology of territorial cooperation



# Map 5: Polycentric Development Patterns



Regional level: NUTS 3 (2010)  
 Source: ESPON EGTC, 2016  
 Origin of data: ESPON TOWN, 2014, ESPON EGTC, 2016  
 © UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

## Main observations on polycentricity in Europe

- **High degree of polycentricity**

Large parts of the Netherlands and Belgium, the larger metropolitan areas in France, Western parts of Germany, Northern Italy, South-east UK, and Switzerland

- **Low degree of polycentricity**

Large parts of Portugal, South-western parts of France, the Baltic States, Romania, Greece, Iceland, and the rural parts of Poland



## Main observations on polycentricity in Europe

- **Potential for further polycentric development**

*Dense territorial structures and good accessibility*

e.g. The metropolitan areas in Central and Eastern Europe, except for the Baltic States

*Dense territorial structures and territorial cooperation*

e.g. Northern Spain, the metropolitan regions in the Nordic countries, and Northern UK

*Dense territorial structures but low accessibility and co-operation*

e.g. Slovakia

*Weak territorial structures, low accessibility and co-operation*

e.g. Parts of Baltic states, Hungary, Poland, southern parts of France

**Promoting better accessibility and territorial cooperation is most crucial for those parts of Europe that are characterised by weak urban structures**

## Key policy messages

- Successful polycentric development not only rely on its “backbone” of urban centres (nodes), but also of the **flows and interactions among places in the metropolitan region.**
- Polycentric cooperation brings **benefits in terms of increased competitiveness and better life quality through the specialisation and cooperation.**
- Rather than competing by building up the same type of functions, cities and regions should **cooperate by joining complementary assets.**
- Promoting a more polycentric development around Europe requires **practical solutions to building cooperation structures** in order to increase their competitive potential by combining resources and ensure positive spill-over effects.

## Case studies and stakeholders

- A transnational polycentric network of metropolitan areas  
*Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague and Vienna*
- A potential macro-regional polycentric network in South-East Europe  
*Bucharest, Sofia, Athens*
- Functional integration in a cross-border polycentric metropolitan region  
*The Upper Rhine region*
- Towards A Functioning Urban Region  
*Oslo metropolitan area and wider region*

# Recommendations for territorial cooperation

- Establish national policy framework for promoting collaborative practices and support bottom-up initiatives!
- Political will and engagement of decision-makers is crucial!
- Go beyond the range of public authorities! Identify and mobilise all stakeholders in business, academia, NGO's and citizen initiatives!
- Establish a strategic framework for cooperation – Identify your comparative advantages, potential specialisation, and potential complementarities!
- Develop a joint vision for the cooperation and agree on a common strategy and establish a long-term plan for its implementation!
- Establish a legal framework for cooperation (if needed)!
- Build structures to co-ordinate actions of involved stakeholders and ensure their regular use/operation for practical purposes!
- Support co-operative practices resource-wise!





# Thank you!

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