

// ESPON Seminar in Mons, Belgium 5-6 June 2024

No net land take trajectories: policies and practices across Europe



WCCM - Wallonia Conference Center Mons

Av. Mélina Mercouri 9,
7000 Mons, Belgium



// Context and objectives

The ESPON Seminar on “No Net Land Take trajectories: policies and practices across Europe” is an event specifically dedicated to addressing topical policy debates surrounding land use in European cities, regions and countries. In collaboration with the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, this seminar aims to delve into the complexities of policies and practices aiming at reducing land conversion to artificial surfaces and their impacts on biodiversity and the provision of ecological services, affordable housing and overall demographic and economic development of all types of territories.

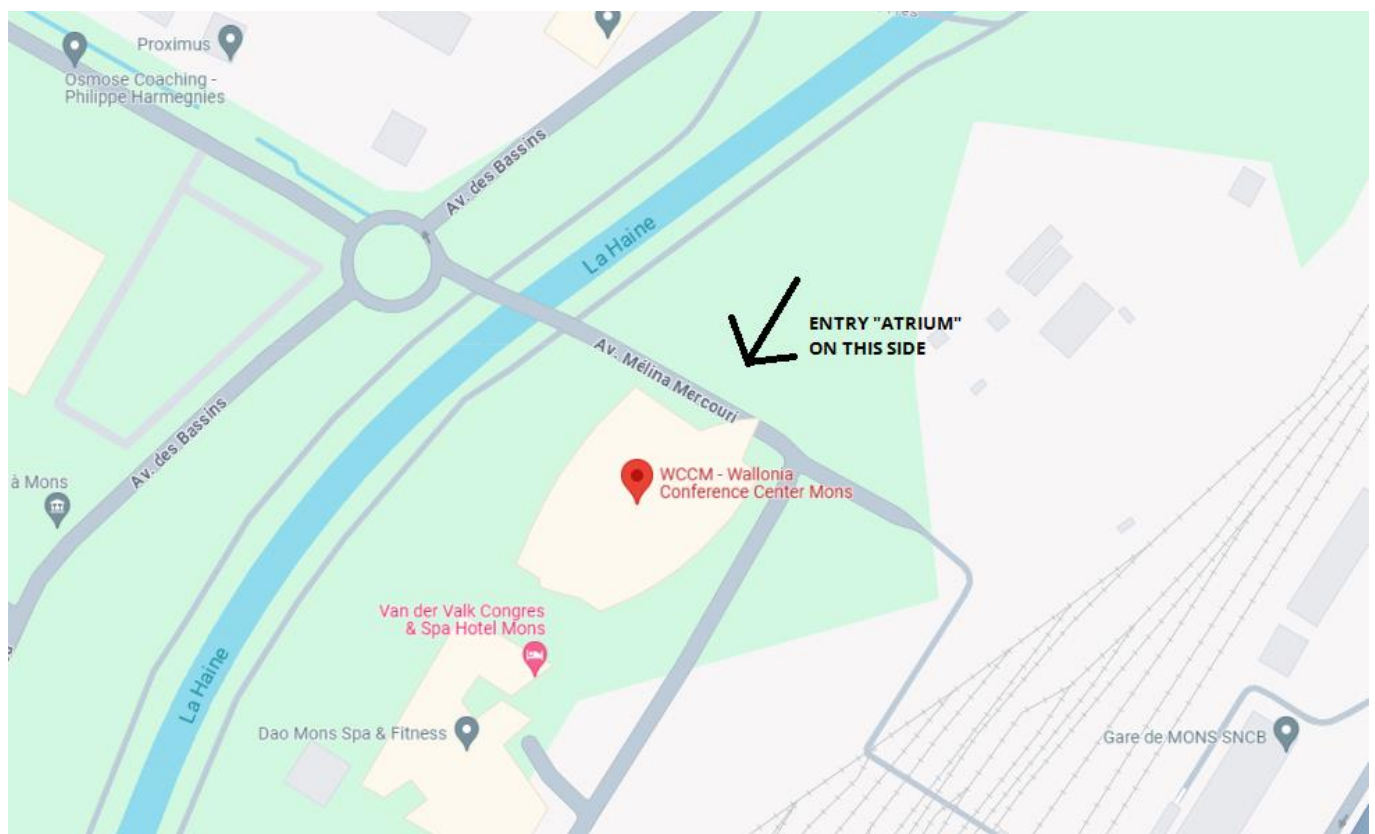
The first day will focus on the European policy goal of **no net land take** by addressing the following key themes:

- Understanding the concept and monitoring of no net land take
- Exploring strategies to combat urban sprawl and soil sealing
- Examining the ecological, social, and economic consequences of land conversion
- Showcasing successful initiatives and best practices in sustainable land management.

The second day will focus on preliminary findings of **ESPON projects**. Service providers and stakeholders will share their views and their needs on blue renewable energy, just energy transition, resilient regions, affordable quality housing, regional labour markets, functional territories and others. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss alternative views. In addition, you will have the possibility to investigate your role in applying the Territorial Agenda. The seminar will finalise with a presentation of the 9th cohesion report and you have the opportunity to express your opinion in a consultation on the future of the ESPON programme.

This seminar is essential for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders involved in shaping sustainable land use policies for a resilient and thriving future of our towns, cities and regions.

// Location of the venue



// The programme in a nutshell

// Wednesday 5 June 2024

Time	Session
09:00	Welcome and Opening
09:30	Setting the scene
10:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:45	Policy setting
12:00	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30	Inspirational examples
14:00	World café sessions
15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:00	Fishbowl session
17:00	End of the day

// Thursday 6 June 2024

Time	Session
08:45	Parallel workshops on ESPON's Thematic Action Plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance of new Geographies: Territorial governance of non-standard geographies Territorial cooperation for blue renewable energy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thriving Labor Markets in a Sustainable Tomorrow: from talent retention to proactive labour market strategies How is the Territorial Agenda 2030 used? Are we on track for a future for all places?
09:45	Coffee break
10:30	Parallel workshops on ESPON's Thematic Action Plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance of new Geographies: Territorial governance of non-standard geographies (cont.) Just energy transition Affordable and quality housing in Europe Territorial perspective of resilience in Europe: frameworks, measurement and policy needs
11:30	Cohesion Report
12:15	ESPON Moving Forward
13:00	Farewell Lunch

// The programme in more detail

// Wednesday 5 June 2024

09:00 **Welcome and Opening**

09:30 **Setting the scene**

A key note speech will give an introduction and a European view of the issues at stake regarding no net land take. After that the ESPON policy brief “No net land take trajectories: policies and practices across Europe” will be presented.

10:15 *Coffee break*

10:45 **Policy setting**

Experiences from various geographical levels will be shared, starting with a presentation of the European Commission’s proposal for a Soil Monitoring Law, requiring Member States to monitor soil health and land take. One of the long-term objectives laid down by the Soil Strategy is for the continent to achieve no net land take by 2050. Speakers from national, regional and local level will reflect upon how this objective is being addressed in their country and what regional and local authorities can do to help achieving this objective.

12:00 *Lunch*

13:30 **World café sessions and fishbowl**

The world café session will be split into three groups. Each group will focus on some particular issues related to the no net land take objective. When registering for the seminar, you are asked to select the group you want to participate in. You will remain in this group during the world café session and address different aspects within this group. The three world café groups are the following:

A. No Net Land Take: What’s in a name?

If you decide to join this group, you will be offered the opportunity to know more about definition and monitoring of land take in different countries. You will discover whether the definition chosen aligns with an effective capacity to monitor and manage land use. You will also explore the advantages and the disadvantages of setting an ambitious quantitative goal (the “no net” concept) versus more qualitative and less normative approaches.

The implications of these definitions will lead you to discuss with experts and policy makers the consequences on various public policy domains (e.g. biodiversity, agriculture, spatial planning...). While each holds significance, reconciling conflicting priorities requires discerning which goals take precedence in specific territorial contexts. During the session, you will be invited to discuss the complexity inherent in addressing land take, necessitating nuanced policy frameworks that navigate the intricate interplay between different public priorities.

B. Does the objective of achieving No Net Land Take compromise opportunities for territorial development?

Policy debates about “No Net Land Take” are both topical and sensitive, as they involve allocating an increasingly scarce land resource to various legitimate but competing public policy objectives: building homes, accommodating new economic activities, maintaining agricultural spaces, constructing transport infrastructure, preserving natural areas and biodiversity, etc.

If you choose this session, you will be offered the opportunity to know more about how to achieve no net land take while maintaining the imperative of ensuring affordable housing and revitalizing regional industries.

On the one hand, there is a growing concern about housing affordability in many European countries (ESPON HOUSEFORAL, 2024). On the other hand, restrictions on land use for urban development are increasing pressure on property markets, with repercussions on housing availability and prices. During the session, you will then be invited to discuss possible policies and practices to ensure housing remains affordable within the framework of NNLТ.

On another topic, the last decade has witnessed a series of industrial shifts in Europe. However, the urgent imperatives of climate change and geopolitical dynamics have thrust the challenge of reindustrialization back into the spotlight. Against that background, how to combine no net land take objective and the (re)location of (new) industries and infrastructure?

C. How to make an EU or a national objective (NNLT), a key instrument for the green transition at local level

The discussions on NNLТ are intricately connected to numerous ongoing debates in the field of spatial governance and sustainable land use. The issue is that in most countries, the institutional and legal frameworks in which spatial planning and territorial governance take place have historically not been designed to achieve NNLТ. In fact, most of the existing governance frameworks have been designed to facilitate development, not to share or differentiate the contribution to the green transition.

If you attend this session, you will be offered an overview of different governance frameworks in Europe and how they often seem to be contradicted by the NNLТ objective. In particular, participants will be encouraged to deliberate upon the implications of NNLТ policy for the reconfiguration of territorial cooperation for various dimensions of the green transition. Issues to be explored include: How does the implementation of the NNLТ policy impact sectors like agriculture and industry as they transition towards greener practices? Additionally, does this policy influence how local authorities approach environmental planning and strategy development in land use? What kind of innovative instruments (e.g. compensation mechanisms) could be implemented to offer win-win deals at different territorial scales?

In each group, a short presentation will explain participants the various issues that shall be discussed in the group. The presentations will show examples, explain ambiguities and/or raise debates related to these issue. After the presentations, each group will break into smaller sub-groups to start the world café discussions around various topics. At the end of the world café, the discussions will be summarised and the main conclusions will be shared in a plenary fish bowl format.

17:00 *End of the sessions*

18:30 *Travel to Dinner*

19:00 **Dinner at “la Grand Hornu”**

Dinner is offered by the Belgium EU Presidency at “la Grand Hornu”. Organised bus transport will leave the conference venue at 18:30.

// Thursday 6 June 2024**08:45 Parallel workshops on ESPON activities****D1 – Governance of new Geographies: Territorial governance of non-standard geographies**

Join us for a workshop on governance of new geographies.

D2 – Territorial cooperation for blue renewable energy

Dive into the future of Europe's seas in our workshop unveiling preliminary findings on offshore renewable energy (ORE) deployment. Explore the current use of European seas and learn about maritime spatial planning practices in Europe. Engage in open discussions as we navigate the complex landscape of ORE deployment and its implications for sustainable ocean development. Join us for a revealing session discussing the future of Europe's marine energy resources.

D3 – Thriving Labor Markets in a Sustainable Tomorrow: from talent retention to proactive labour market strategies

Join us for a dynamic workshop: "Thriving Labor Markets in a Sustainable Tomorrow." Explore new territorial insights and validate findings from three pivotal projects: the European Commission's talent retention initiative, ESPON's studies on overlapping crises and innovative planning in shrinking societies. Gain insights from diverse perspectives, from EU policy to local strategies, as we address challenges and opportunities in regional labour markets. Don't miss this opportunity to delve into proactive solutions for a sustainable future.

D4 – How is the Territorial Agenda 2030 used? Are we on track for a future for all places?

Join us for a crucial workshop discussing the initial findings of the Territorial Agenda 2030 review. Explore how the ESPON community utilizes and envisions the future of this agenda. Dive into the roles of key stakeholders, from outreach to evidence production, in shaping the future of all places. Contribute your insights and be part of charting the path forward for the Territorial Agenda 2030. Don't miss this opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaborative action for territorial development.

09:45 Coffee and Networking

During the networking, attendees can learn and discuss about the following ESPON activities:

- STARTER – Strategic Autonomy Rules for Trade in European Regions
- CROSSGOV – Governance mechanisms for cross-border functional areas
- DIGIREG – Territorial perspectives of digital transition in European regions
- RE-ADAPT – Regreening Territorial Development for Climate Risk Adaptation
- New ESPON website

10:30 Parallel workshops on ESPON activities**E1 – Governance of new Geographies: Territorial governance of non-standard geographies (continued)**

Join us for a workshop on governance of new geographies.

E2 – Just energy transition

Join us for a groundbreaking ESPON workshop on energy justice, merging security, poverty, and clean transition. Unveiling two novel research endeavours, we navigate the intersection of top-

down governance and grassroots engagement in clean energy markets. Delve into the interplay of incentives and acceptance, from legislative frameworks to social inclusion, shaping the narrative of energy justice. Don't miss this opportunity to explore cross-border perspectives and unprecedented opportunities for sustainable energy participation.

E3 – Affordable and quality housing in Europe

Join us for an inspiring workshop on social and affordable housing. Learn more about understanding the drivers and obstacles of affordable and quality housing in various countries and engage in discussions with MC representatives and the researchers on the main challenges of housing affordability.

E4 – Territorial perspective of resilience in Europe: frameworks, measurement and policy needs

Join us for a thought-provoking workshop delving into territorial resilience frameworks and metrics to meet stakeholder demands. Discover the essence of "territorial resilience" and its integration into European cohesion efforts. Explore the concept's practical applications through a Regional Resilience Dashboard and its alignment with policymaking needs. Engage in discussions spanning top-down governance perspectives and insights from regional/local initiatives. Don't miss this opportunity to shape the future of territorial development and contribute to building resilient communities.

11:30 9th Cohesion report

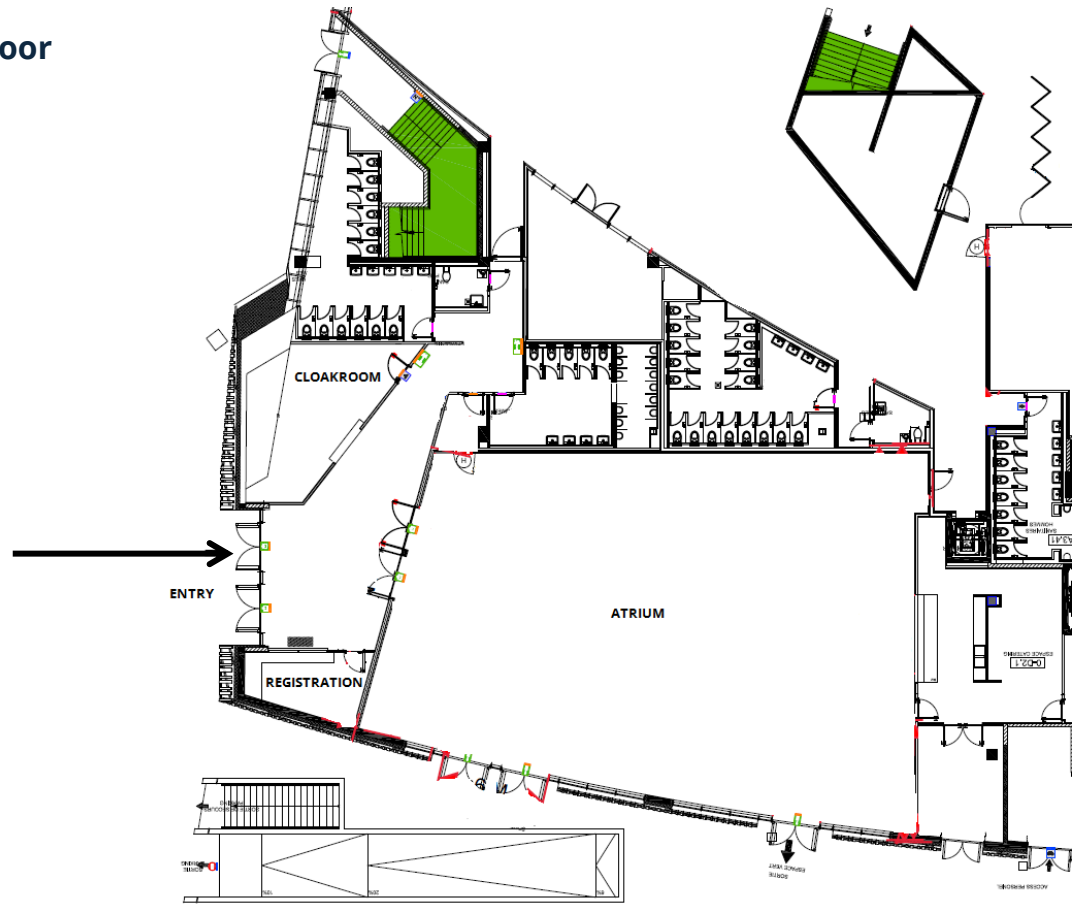
Learn more about the current state of cohesion in the EU. The Commission indicates that the success of the Cohesion Policy can be illustrated via the enlargement of 2004: the recently published 9th Cohesion Report shows that the income per head in Central and Eastern Europe increased from 52% of the EU average in 2004 to nearly 80% today. Join the presentation of and debate over the 9th Cohesion report.

12:15 ESPON moving forward

Engage in a consultation on the future of the ESPON programme organised by the ESPON Programme Managing Authority. Learn about the plans of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and discover the next steps planned within the ESPON Programme.

13:00 Farewell lunch

// Floorplan ground floor



// Floorplan first floor

