



EUROPEAN UNION

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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

## PRE-EVENT BRIEF

# ESPON Forum on Sustainable Urbanisation and Land-use Practices

Virtual

27th January 2022, 10.00-13.00 (EET)



## Introduction



Managing urban growth plays a significant role in achieving sustainability and balancing the trilemma of the environmental, economic, and social spheres. To make urbanisation more sustainable, governments, municipalities, civil society, and businesses attempt to address the sustainable use of land and put different approaches into practice.

Sustainable land use relates to a long-term approach to urbanisation, infrastructure, and policies. Compact settlement structures and mixed uses of land could be important strategies for sustainability. These strategies can be achieved by urban planning at a city-region scale, which prevents urban sprawl through a strong control of land supply. There are some examples of tackling land take already implemented by policies. The German land take reduction target provides a great example which will be introduced during the roundtable. Put into practice by the German “National Sustainable Development Strategy” (2002), it is an intervention that aims to reduce the daily increase of settlement and transport areas to under 30 hectares by year 2030.

Lithuania has introduced a new law for municipal infrastructure development that entered into force from the 1st of January 2021. It mandates that municipality administrations define priority (and non-priority) territories for infrastructure development which allows for a more systematic approach to infrastructure development. It also aims to create transparent conditions for developers so they can contribute to the development of the necessary infrastructure. In addition, the Lithuanian Government recently approved a new National Comprehensive Plan which highlights the need for compact urban structure development and provides guidelines and provisions for sustainable land use at the municipal level.

## Objective

The ESPON Urban Forum on SUPER aims to give insight into the results of the ESPON project SUPER (Sustainable Urbanization and land-use Practices in European Regions) which analysed land-use change in Europe since the year 2000 and gave an overview of different interventions and their impact on urbanisation. According to the SUPER project, land-use change between nature and agriculture was roughly equal in the period of 2000-2018 but land-use change to urban use happens mainly in one direction – towards continuous urbanisation.

The EU goal is to have no land take (no land-use change to urban) by 2050. To achieve this goal different possible forms of urban development, and how to manage them accordingly, must be considered. Stakeholders responsible for national and regional planning in Lithuania and beyond are thus interested to know more about how to evaluate the sustainability of different forms of urban development.

The discussions during the workshop will address the following questions:

1. **What kinds of interventions have proven effective in promoting sustainable urbanisation?**
2. **How can the support for sustainable land-use interventions be strengthened in country and regional-level spatial planning?**

The workshop addresses policymakers responsible for national and regional planning in Lithuania and its neighbouring countries. It further invites researchers and stakeholders that were involved in the ESPON SUPER project to discuss the research outcomes on the current status of urbanisation in European Union and share evidence of the best interventions in tackling land take and promoting sustainable urbanisation in national and regional planning practice. Time will also be available for participants to ask questions as well as share their experiences and practices.

## Evidence from ESPON SUPER

ESPON SUPER investigated the drivers behind and the mechanisms of land-use changes and the extent to which these changes are affected by territorial governance and spatial planning interventions, and has recently delivered its findings (see <https://www.espon.eu/super>). This includes an overview of land-use changes in Europe since 2000 and land-use modelling up to 2050, an overview of over 230 interventions (e.g. strategies, plans, fiscal measures, and investments) and their impacts on urbanisation; eleven of these were examined as in-depth case studies.

The SUPER project found that it is possible to design interventions that adjust the payoffs or orientation of stakeholders, and thus their behaviour in the development process, to more sustainable ends using a combination of carrots, sticks, and sermons. The case studies signalled a need for interventions to be embedded into a clear and comprehensive strategy or vision that covers all relevant topics and involves all relevant stakeholders. A final consideration with respect to temporal sustainability is the durability of policies (e.g., stability of funding, and vulnerability to political/economic cycles). In other words, to effectively steer long-term processes such as urbanisation, the measures themselves should have a degree of longevity.

## Agenda (Lithuanian Time)

**10:00 - 10:15**

### Introduction

Moderated by **Ingmar Pastak** (University of Tartu, Estonia)

Welcome by **Dr. Marjan van Herwijnen** (ESPON) and **Mr. Karolis Kinčius** (Representative of ESPON Contact Point Lithuania, Lithuanian Ministry of Environment)

**10:15 - 11:15**

### ESPON SUPER project results

(1) ESPON SUPER project: Sustainable Urbanisation and land-use Practices in European Regions by **Dr. David Evers** (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency; ESPON SUPER) Q&A

(2) ESPON SUPER spin-off Lithuanian case study by **Dr. Erblin Berisha** (Politecnico di Torino, Italy) Q&A

**11:15 - 11:30**

### Break

**11:30 - 12:00**

### Pitching session and discussion

Moderated by **Mr. Karolis Kinčius** (Lithuanian Ministry of Environment)

Examples of tackling urbanisation and preventing land take – an overview of different strategies

(1) Law of infrastructure: practice and challenges of implementation in Vilnius – **Mr. Anton Nikitin** (Chief Engineer of Infrastructure, Vilnius city)

(2) German land take reduction target – **Mr. Volker Schmidt-Seiwert** (BBSR – German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial development)

**12:00 - 12:40**

**Open debate on the following questions:**

1. What kinds of interventions have proven effective in promoting sustainable urbanisation?
2. How can the support for sustainable land-use interventions be strengthened in country and regional-level spatial planning?

Participants: **Dr. David Evers, Dr. Erblin Berisha, Prof. Dr. Giancarlo Cotella, Mr. Anton Nikitin, Mr. Volker Schmidt-Seiwert.**

**12:40 - 12:50**

**Conclusions**

Short sum-up and key take-aways by **Prof. Dr. Giancarlo Cotella** (Politecnico di Torino)



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#### **ESPON 2022**

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