

# // ESPON Policy Brief

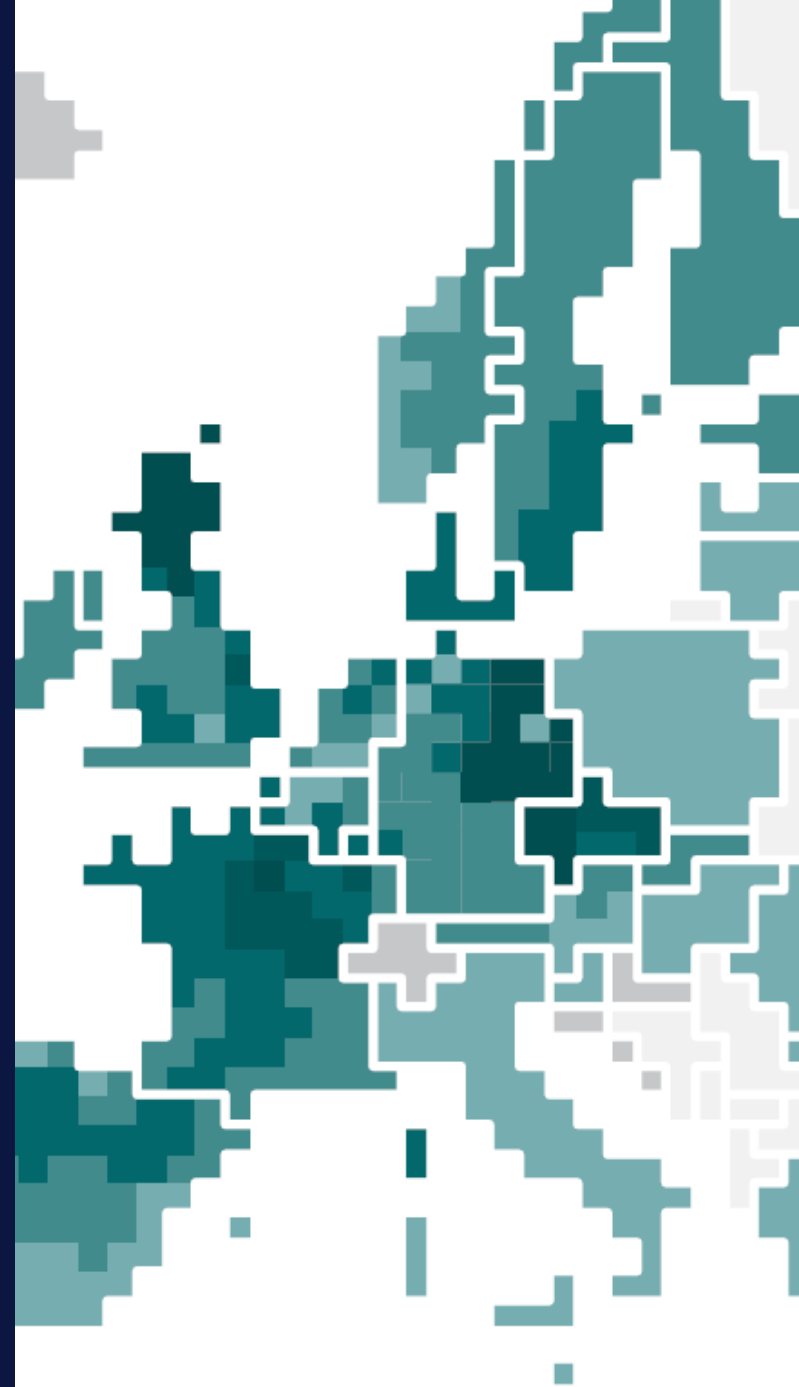
## Shrinking rural regions in Europe

# Content

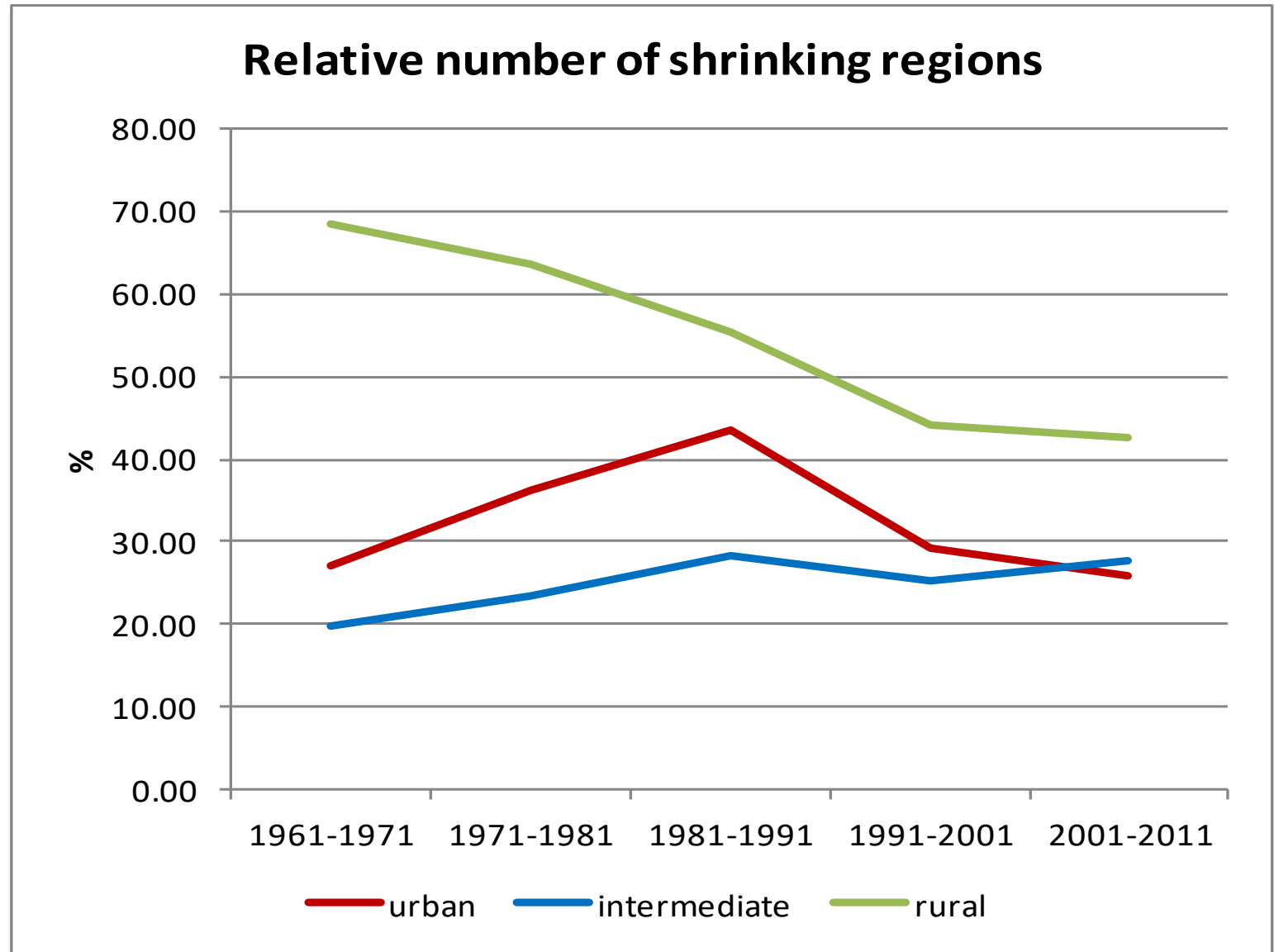
1. What are Shrinking Rural regions and where are they located in Europe?
2. What are the key development challenges and opportunities related to shrinkage?
3. What are the possible policy responses to tackle shrinkage?
4. Key policy messages

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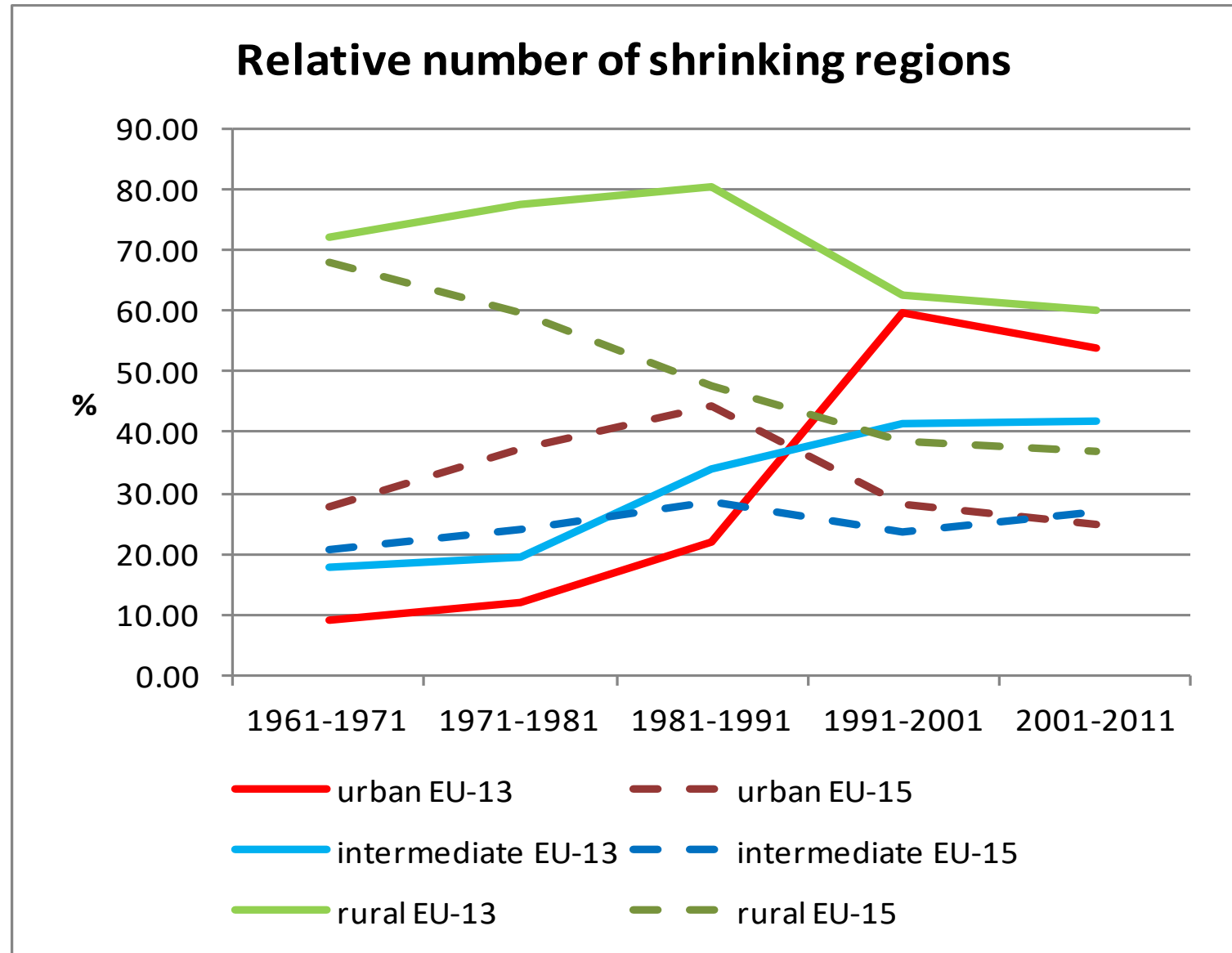
# What are Shrinking Rural regions and where are they located in Europe?



# Rural - Urban



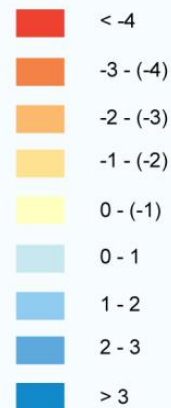
# EU-13 – EU-15



# Rural population change

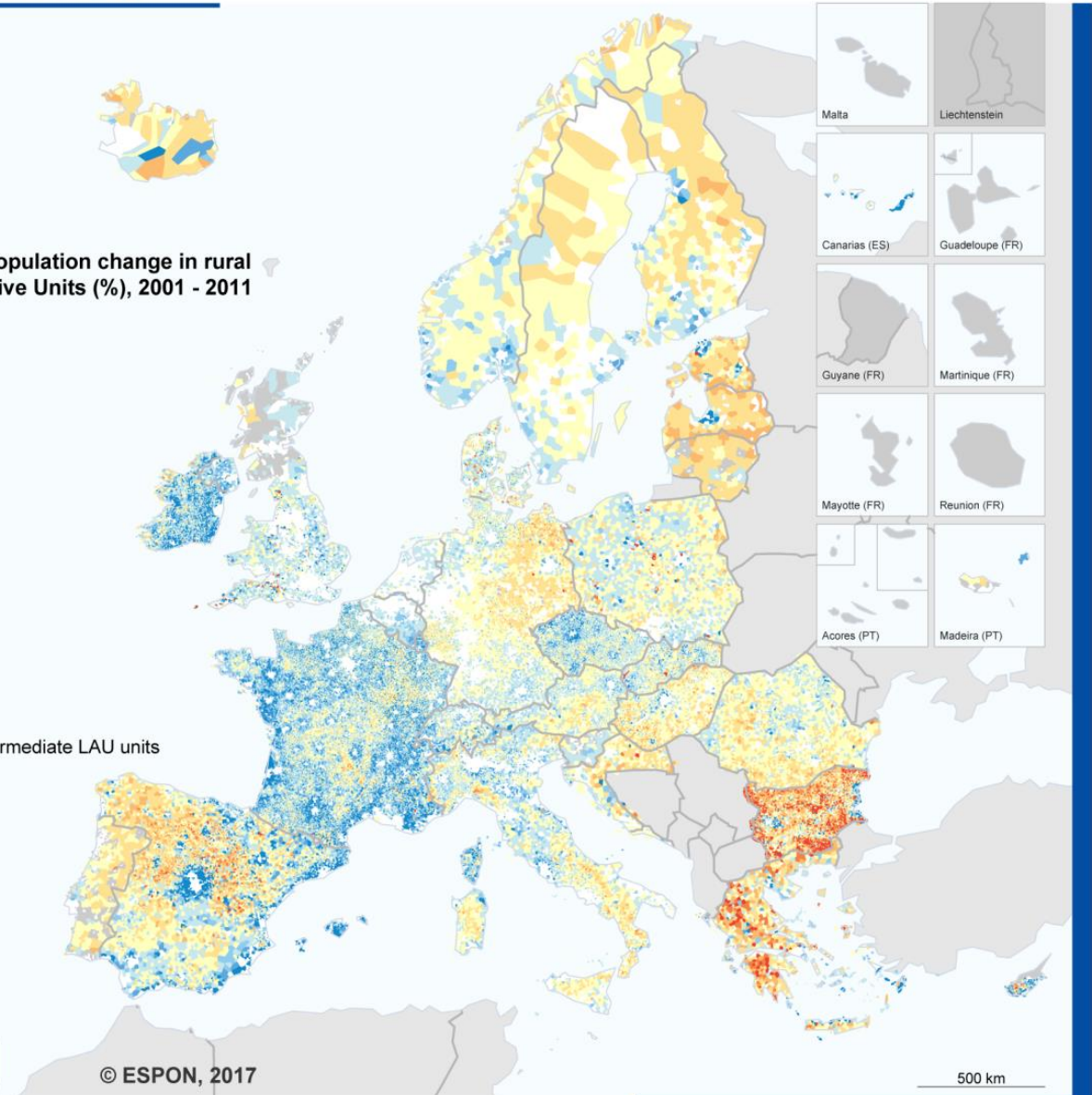
## Rural population change

Average annual population change in rural Local Administrative Units (%), 2001 - 2011

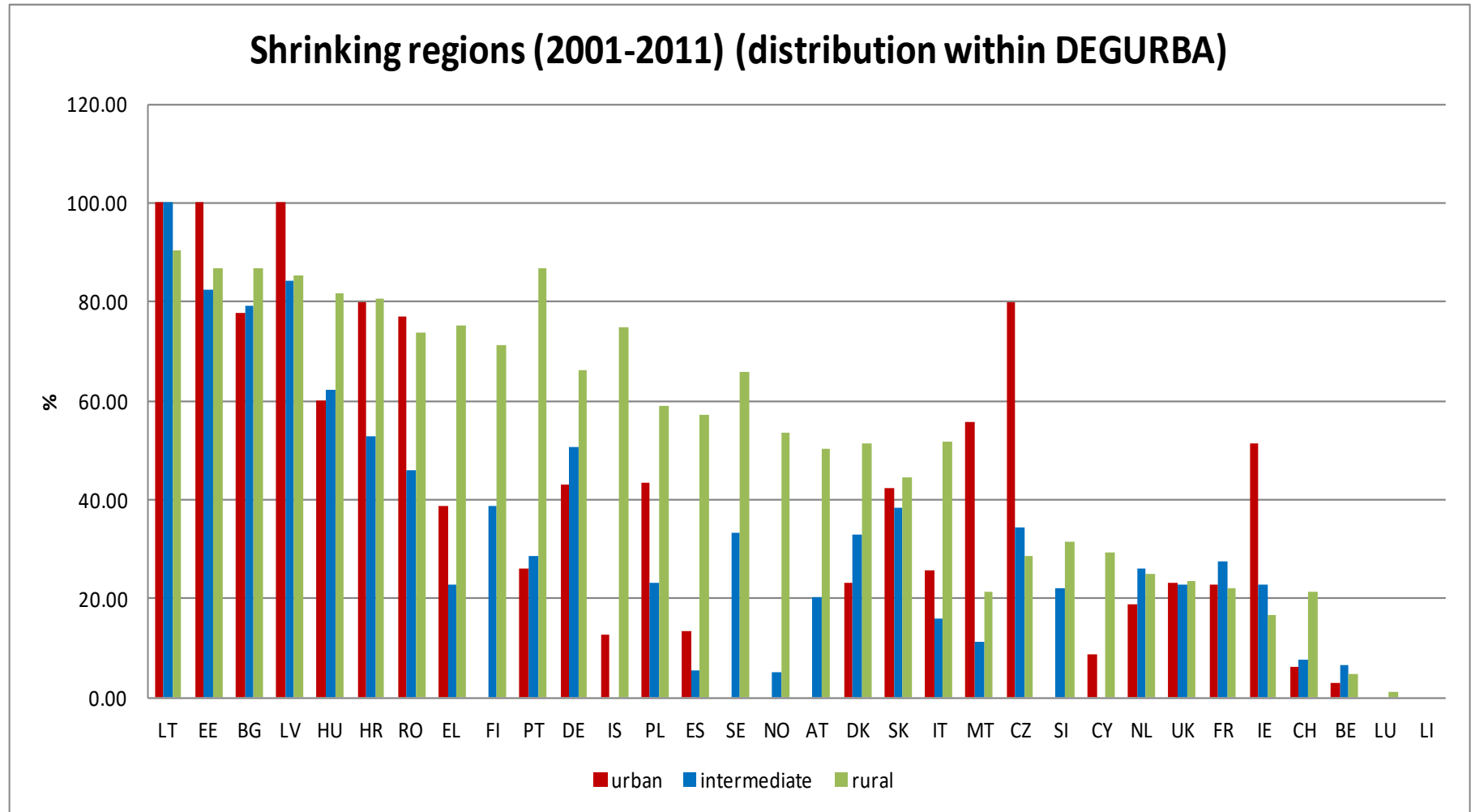


urban or intermediate LAU units  
 no data

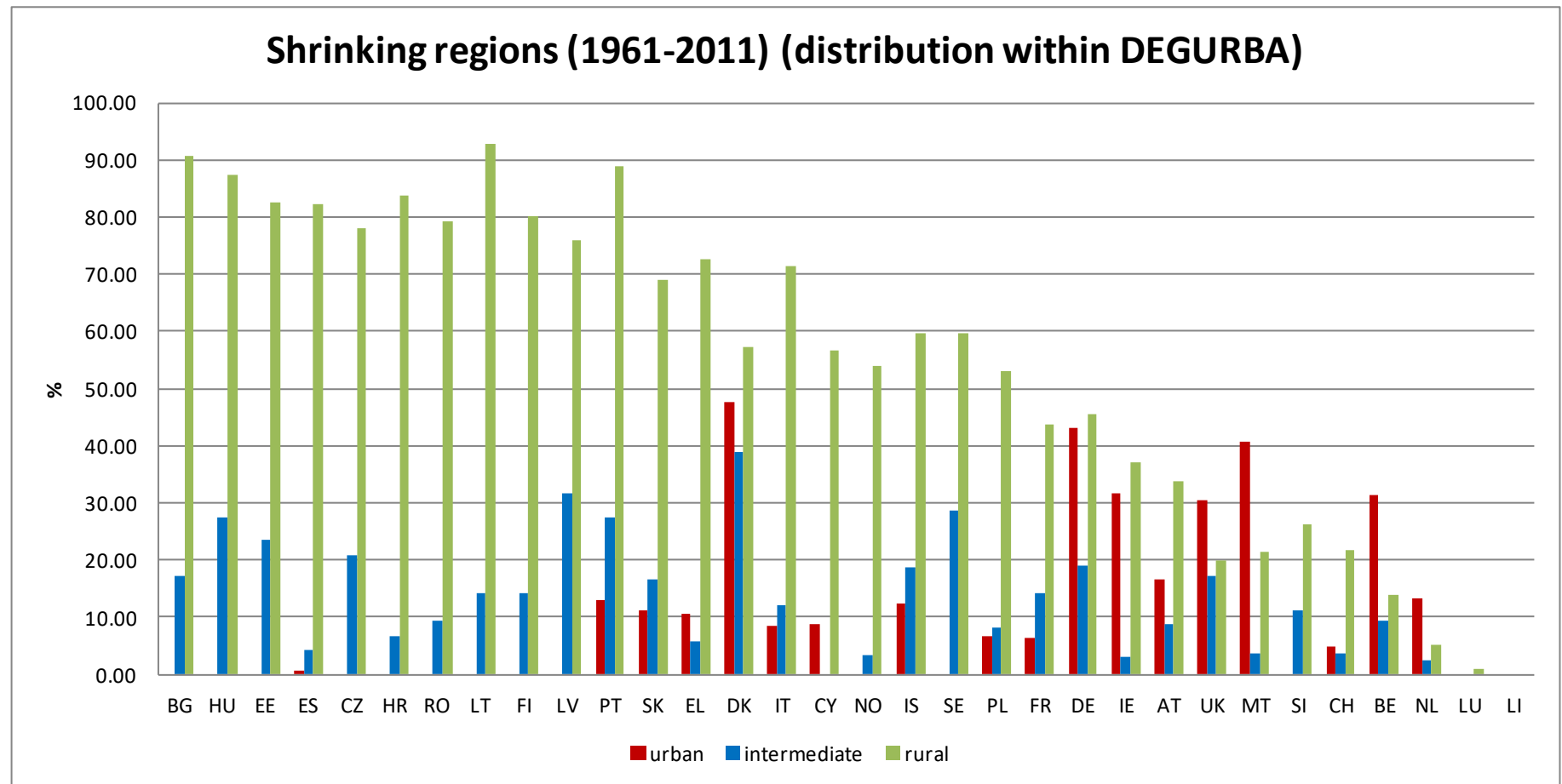
**Notes**  
 - Data for LT, PT, SI correspond to LAU1



# Last decade (2001-2011)



# Last 50 years (1961 – 2011)





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**What are the key development challenges and opportunities related to shrinkage?**

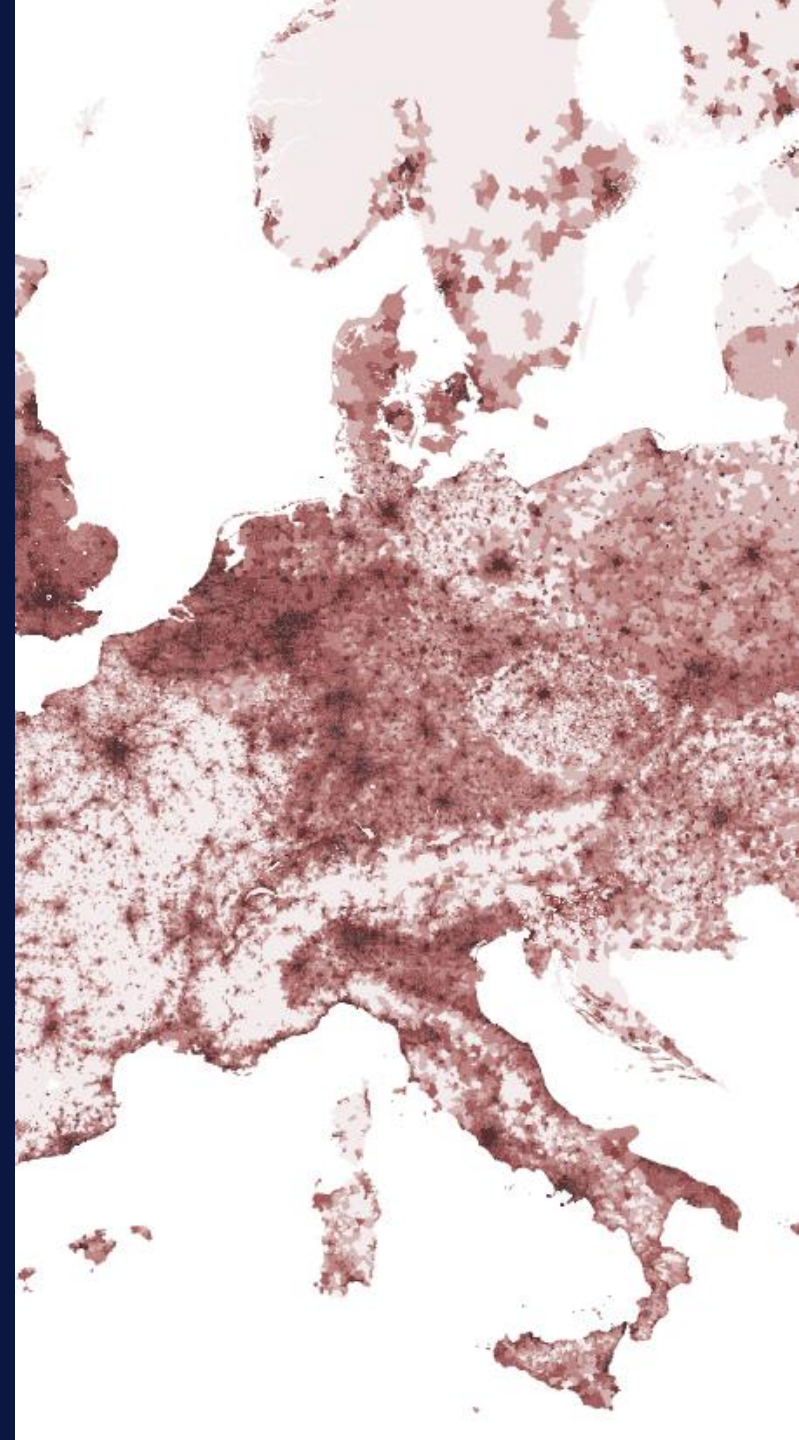


# Key challenges

- The “vicious circle”
- Innovation capacity
- Quality of governance

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**What are the possible policy responses to tackle shrinkage?**



# Policy agendas

EU Shrink Smart indicates there are three potential policy responses:

1. “Do nothing”
2. “Reverse the trend and stimulate growth”
3. “Accept and adapt to decline”

Planning for shrinkage:

- Shrinkage as an opportunity
- Effective government-led policy interventions
- Place-based approaches

# Mobilising endogenous resources

From an economic sustainable point of view, it's important to

- Diversify the local economy by using comparative territorial advantages
- Increase resilience and adaptive capacity by downsizing infrastructure and rightsizing the local economy
- Improve environmental sustainability
- Ensure access to basic services and infrastructure

# Promoting social innovation and ICT

- ICT for public services and new employment opportunities.
- Social innovation to develop a new intergenerational pact

Examples:

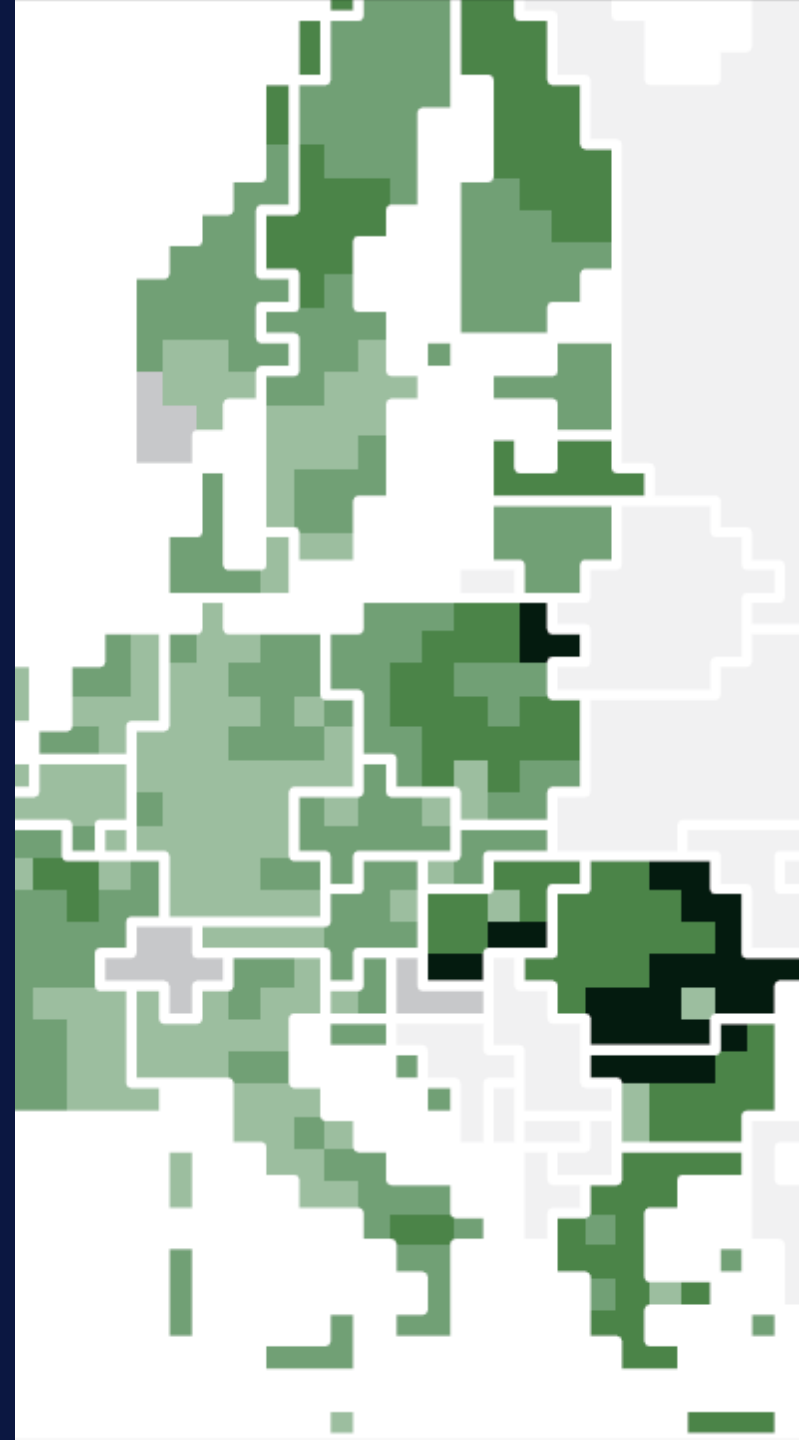
- “Silver economy”
- “White economy”

# Fostering ecosystem services and the green economy

- Using the “natural green advantage”
- Promote low-carbon economy
  - Circular economy
  - Promoting local produce supported by technology and ICT
  - Smart diversification in agri-food, energy, biomass, tourism and cultural activities

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## Key policy messages





# Key policy messages at EU level

- Improve **pan-European comparative** research for shrinking rural regions
- Improve **access to Cohesion Policy funding** to address challenges in depopulating rural regions through place-based multi-fund approaches
- Roll-out the **'Smart Villages' concept** included in the Cork 2.0 Declaration

# Key policy messages at national and sub-national levels

- Promote enhanced multi-scale **integrated strategic spatial planning**
- Improve **scenario planning and demographic checks** in policy processes
- Take a **long-term perspective** with committed leadership and far-seeing governance processes
- Strengthen **institutional capacity** at the local scale
- Improve **communication, participation and local partnerships**
- Develop **alternative economies** and promote **smart diversification**

# // Thank you

Richard Tuffs, ERRIN on behalf of ESPON EGTC

This presentation will be made available at: [www.espon.eu/vaxjo](http://www.espon.eu/vaxjo)