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ESPON 2013 Programme

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ESPON Progress on Demography, Development Opportunities in Rural Areas and Orientations for Cities

Three applied research projects commissioned by ESPON have now delivered their Interim Reports which have been approved by the ESPON Monitoring Committee. The projects cover three important research areas in order to support policy development related to territorial development and cohesion.

The project **DEMIFER** (Demographic and Migratory Flows Affecting European Regions and Cities) deals with the effects of demographic and migratory flows on European regions and cities and examines the latter's implications for regional competitiveness and European cohesion. The Interim Report reveals the results obtained so far in analysing demographic and migration differences across NUTS2 regions since 2000. In particular, it shows that the percentage of regions experiencing population decline has increased further, from 27% in the 1990s to 30% in the years 2000-2006. Likewise, there are more regions with a high percentage of people aged 65 or over.

The aim of the **EDORA** project (European Development Opportunities in Rural Areas) is to develop a better understanding of the development opportunities and challenges facing diverse types of rural areas in Europe. The Interim Report identifies three "*Grand Narratives*" of rural change that may be defined as overarching social and economic trends which play a role in the differentiation of rural areas. The original rationale for the project has been reinforced by the onset of the recession, which will pose challenges and present opportunities for rural Europe.

The **FOCI** project (Future Orientations for Cities) aims at creating a better understanding of the future development opportunities of cities and urban agglomerations in Europe. This analysis is to support policymakers in taking decisions on urban development. It identifies the driving forces of urban development which are the most relevant for understanding urban evolutions and offer scenarios for the development of Europe's cities leading to alternative policy options. In particular, the possible impacts on changes in evolutions due to the financial and economic crises are carefully listed and form an important source for inspiration and debate amongst both scientists as well as policy makers.

The three projects will deliver their Draft Final Reports on 30 April 2010 and their Final Report on 30 September 2010.

The Interim Reports, as well as all background documents, are available for free downloading at the ESPON Website www.espon.eu

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The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON shall support Cohesion Policy development with European wide, comparable information, evidence, analyses



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and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions, cities and larger territories. In doing so, it shall facilitate the mobilisation of territorial capital and development opportunities, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to the widening and deepening of European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.

The Managing Authority responsible for the ESPON 2013 Programme is the **Ministry of the Interior and for Spatial Development of Luxembourg**. More information: www.espon.eu