



RESEARCH NEWS

No 2 / December 2019

Dear Readers,

Spatial disparities in Germany and Europe have become much more important within the public perception and political discussion. Politics has reacted to this. In Germany, the results of the national committee on equivalent living conditions were presented this summer. Based on these results the German Federal Government has developed proposals how to advance the structural and regional policy.

The “Deutschlandatlas” (German Atlas), which is based on activities of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) and the Thünen Institute, was introduced to the public in July 2019. It includes 56 maps and informative texts on life in Germany.

A new European atlas issued by the BBSR takes up the German Atlas and shows how regions in Europe have developed in recent years and for which changes political and administrative decision-makers have to prepare in the future. Maps, infographics and explanatory texts illustrate key issues of regional development. On page 8 you will find more details about the consequences of the economic and financial crisis in European regions.

The publication “Equivalent living conditions in Europe – between dissatisfaction and cooperation” also deals with various perspectives on equivalent living conditions in Europe. For more information, please have a look at page 10.

Happy reading!
The editors

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Spatial Development

European networking activities of German municipalities and regions

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In Europe, cities, municipalities and regions have various opportunities to network on spatial development issues, e.g. through European networks and programmes. Among the European funding programmes, Interreg B with its focus on promoting territorial cohesion in Europe is the most important instrument for municipalities and regions to link up on the European level. In the context of various programmes and networks, German territorial authorities presently cooperate with local authorities in 34 European countries, especially in Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Sweden and Italy (see map).

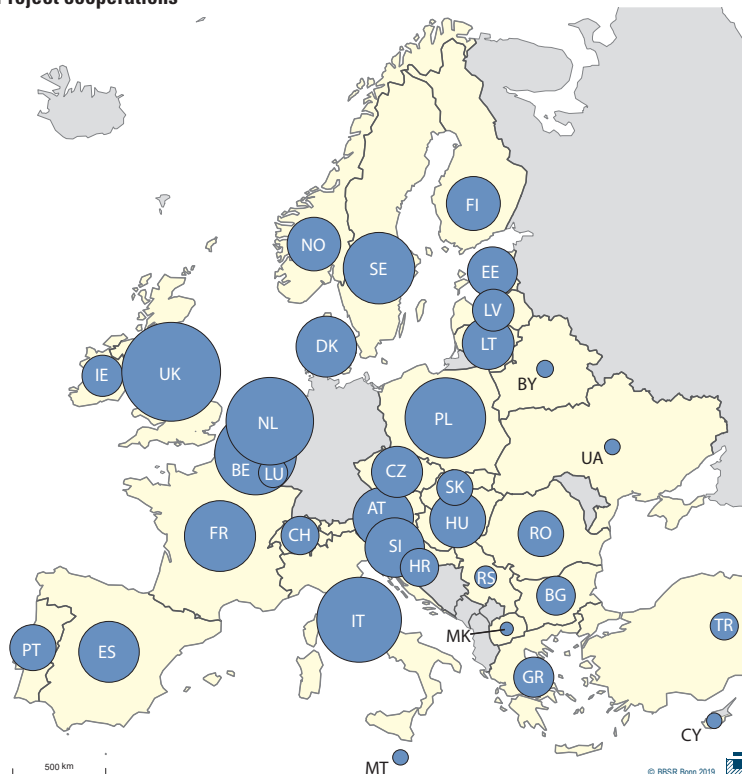
With the research project Networking successfully in Europe – shaping cities and regions jointly, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and the BBSR spotlight successful, transferable cooperation examples of local authorities of all sizes.

The examples include cross-border planning projects in the border region of Germany, France and Switzerland, cooperation projects of the City of Munich with other European large cities or the commitment to Europe demonstrated by citizens of the Hessian small town of Gudensberg.

The benefit of the joint projects shows clearly in the regions through the fact that projects in the field of local services of general interest can be qualified and extended by European cooperation. In 2018, for example, the first “mobilpunkt” (mobility hub) was created in Bergen according to the model of Bremen. Joint activities in the field of urban and regional development may also help to increase the quality of life, e.g. by jointly protecting open spaces and landscape areas in the Alpine region. Cooperation brings about new perspectives on the own situation and shows new potential solutions. Tourism is for many local authorities an important economic factor – European networking activities may contribute to increasing the attractiveness of and the knowledge about a municipality or region. The German Volcanic Eifel thus benefits from the European network of geoparks. European networking activities also increase competences and open perspectives: they initiate an exchange of experiences which motivates and qualifies employees.

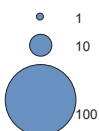
Large cities and metropolitan regions in Germany dominate with a networking rate of more than 80 per cent, medium-sized and smaller municipalities being less active - only one per cent of the municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants has so far been linked up in Europe. The investigated projects are an example for the large variety of European networking activities and show how barriers can be overcome – both in smaller and larger cities, municipalities and regions.

Project cooperations



Map 1: Project cooperations in the field of urban and regional development with local partners in other European countries (2007-2017)

Data source: Interreg B, Interreg Europe, URBACT, Horizon 2020, Leader cooperation, EUKI; 2007-2017
Geometrical basis: counties (generalised),
31/12/2016 © GeoBasis-DE/BKG
Author: P. Golzio



Thinking about the city of “übermorgen”

Which trends will change cities in the future? Which subareas in particular will be affected? And how can local actors already today prepare for possible future urban trends? These and other questions were in the centre of attention of the BBSR research project “Thinking about the city of ‘übermorgen’ (day after tomorrow)”. The project team identified main trends and drivers of urban development, systemised them and analysed their impacts on various types of cities and spaces.

In order to counteract the confusing variety of future discourses and to make them suited for application on a concrete urban space, more than 150 single trends were investigated and compressed into 16 thematic “trend molecules”. From “man-machine-life” and “hyper-diversity” to “densification of the city” they cover nearly all areas of urban life and offer numerous starting points for further research activities of the BBSR, e.g. on the consequences of digitalisation on urban spaces or on the consequences of migration on social spaces.

Experts from the administrative, economic, scientific and political sector and the civil society but also “lateral thinkers” from the artistic-creative area discussed the trend impacts by the example of specific types of cities and urban subareas during regional workshops. The results show that generalised statements on single types of cities can hardly be made while recurring patterns can be absolutely recognised. For large housing estates and single-family house areas as intensively investigated types of settlement it can be assumed that they will become strongly polarised in the future. On the one hand, in peripheral areas, which, beyond market pressure, become a refuge for people with low income or are demolished; on the other hand, in privileged areas, in which technological and social improvement processes produce partly invisible or evident “gated communities”. Possible consequences may be that, especially in prospering municipalities, people are driven out and that peripheral urban fringe areas with bad fabric are marginalised.

Above all the topic “working worlds of the future” was very ambivalently discussed by the participants of the workshop. What

are the effects of automation, robotics and artificial intelligence on the type and scope of human activities? Which economic sectors will change in particular? And what will be the impact on the space? The trends will probably have a spatial impact and an impact on certain areas so that more research activities by the BBSR may be useful. The discourses also show that the starting positions of small towns are very different depending on their geographic situation, economic equipment and social profile. Dealing with the future of small towns in more detail would therefore make sense in order to work out options how to shape and develop the various types of cities.

Participants of the inter- and transdisciplinary workshops stressed repeatedly how important it was to think about the city of the day after tomorrow in a structured way. During workshops they took a “different” and experimental view of their own town or city in terms of a “preparatory planning orientation”. It seems to be worthwhile giving local actors the necessary scope in daily life for deciding upon possible and desirable futures. In order to recognise and use options of spatial control, it is necessary to deal with the concrete basic conditions, trends and their effects in time. This is also the goal of a study on how to develop manageable work materials for carrying out local future discourses that can be used nationwide, which is presently being prepared in the context of the German Experimental Housing and Urban Development programme.



More information:

BBSR (Hrsg.), 2019: Nachdenken über die Stadt von übermorgen. Online-Publikation 11/2019 (with an English summary)

www.bbsr.bund.de > Veröffentlichungen > BBSR Online Publikation > 11-2019

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Impression from the regional workshop

Source: BBSR

Urban Development

Urban Agenda for the EU: Partnership on Culture/Cultural Heritage

Culture and cultural heritage are resources for urban development with all its social, ecological and economic dimensions. Against this background, the Partnership on Culture/Cultural Heritage, created in November 2018 under the Urban Agenda for the EU, is aimed at identifying and promoting actions that improve the legislation, the financial capacity and the knowledge transfer in the field of culture and cultural heritage at EU level.

Further information:

<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/culturecultural-heritage/about-0>

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The Partnership brings together more than 20 partners from EU member states, regional bodies, cities, the European Commission and European stakeholder organisations. Germany/the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) supported by the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) and Italy/the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism jointly with the

Italian Agency for Territorial Cohesion are the coordinators. The Partnership recently finalised its preparatory work and finished the Orientation Paper. It focuses on a holistic and integrated approach to deal with culture and cultural heritage and identifies seven main topics: Cultural tourism; Creative and cultural industries; Transformation, adaptive reuse and urban reconversion; Financial sustainability and funding; Resilience of cultural and natural heritage; Integrated and interdisciplinary approaches for governance; Cultural services and culture for inclusive cities. The Orientation Paper was presented to the Directors-General responsible for Urban Matters (DGUM) in Helsinki in October 2019 for adoption. The Partnership will now identify those actions necessary to develop an action plan to better support culture and cultural heritage as means to foster sustainable urban development processes.

Guidelines for Baukultur: Germany starts developing process for first national Baukultur Policy

The German EU Council Presidency 2020 and the anniversary "20 Years of Baukultur in Germany" shall induce the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community to develop national "Guidelines for Baukultur". The Guidelines will serve as a consensus paper which articulates the attitude, objectives and implementation measures of the Federal Government referring to Baukultur as a policy field. At the same time, the paper serves as a contribution to the Davos Declaration 2018.

Contents of the Guidelines

As part of the kick-off of the process, key actors from the political, administrative and scientific sectors, from associations and civil society articulated their contributions and central issues for the developing process during a focus meeting in Berlin. One of the objectives of the Guidelines for Baukultur should be to raise awareness and sharpen the perception of Baukultur by citizens. At the same time, the interests and needs of Baukultur as part of the everyday culture of the population are to be placed at the centre of attention.

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Architectural Policies in Europe

Some EU member states, e.g. Denmark, Finland and Austria, have established national Architectural Policies. Both the respective development processes and the programmes themselves contribute to the further development, control and maintenance of Baukultur on a national level. The concept of Baukultur is here to be understood in its broad definition:

"Baukultur embraces every human activity that changes the built environment. [...] [It] encompasses existing buildings, including monuments and other elements of cultural heritage, as well as the design and construction of contemporary buildings, infrastructure, public spaces and landscapes. [...] Baukultur is also expressed in the planning processes [...]" (Davos Declaration 2018)

Germany has taken a particular path within Europe establishing the Federal Foundation of Baukultur by law in 2008. The Foundation is an important, independent voice within the Baukultur discourse in Germany. The Guidelines for Baukultur in Germany will be issued in 2021.

“GIS-ImmoRisk Naturgefahren” climate change effect portal enabling the assessment of climate-related risks for properties

Climatologists and reinsurers already today confirm a growing number of loss-causing events in this century due to an accelerated climate change. This is why the real estate in Germany as well is increasingly threatened by climate change-related natural hazards. The reason is that every year in Germany extreme weather phenomena like storms, hail or heavy rain cause large damages on properties. This may lead to high costs for property owners and insurers.

The BBSR's research activities show that the real estate and housing industry principally knows about its affectedness by the consequences of climate change. However, adequate information for property owners helping to assess present and future natural hazard-related risks nationwide has so far not existed. Apart from hazard maps provided together with target group-oriented background information, especially for private owners, a risk assessment system ascertaining the damage to a building has been missing.

This gap is now closed by the new “GIS-ImmoRisk Naturgefahren” (GIS ImmoRisk Natural Hazards) geographical information system developed in the context of the research project “GIS-ImmoRisk – Entwicklung eines Geoinformationssystems zur bundesweiten Risikoabschätzung von zukünftigen Klimafolgen für Immobilien” (GIS ImmoRisk – developing a geographical information system to assess future climate-related risks for properties nationwide) funded under the German Experimental Housing and Urban Development programme. The tool may help owners and investors to estimate in how far their properties everywhere in Germany are exposed to extreme heat, earthquakes, forest fire, lightning, hail, storm and heavy rain. In terms of risk determination, owners may also be able to find out how well their property is protected against extreme weather and which measures might be taken to improve the robustness of buildings against natural hazards by inserting building-related parameters in the system.

Furthermore, the application is planned in a way that it can be extended in terms of contents and structure if new findings are available in the field of climate and vulnerability research.

The tool enables to assess the present vulnerability of every location in Germany and to estimate the future vulnerability trend. In the case of natural hazards for which sufficient data are available, either the expected annual damage (incl. damage rate) for the property inserted by the user is shown within a range defined or a qualitative assessment is enabled by means of a risk matrix. Analogous to the preceding, still geographically limited application, the ImmoRisk tool is based on a tripartite approach. It links the risks caused by a location's exposition with the damage-related vulnerability of a property to the relevant climate condition and the resulting damage value.

The user of the web GIS application may have a property profile generated listing the inserted parameters with the hazard and risk analyses for present and future, the uncertainty degree of the data sources as well as explanations how the profile might be interpreted as a basis for assessment. Besides the risk assessment, the user is supported by target group-oriented (background) information in planning adaptations and taking (investment) decisions for his/her property.

The development of the “GIS-ImmoRisk Naturgefahren” climate change effect portal enabling the assessment of climate-related risks was actively supported by an advisory council of scientific and practical experts during its various phases.

The portal can be found at www.gisimmoRisknaturgefahren.de or via the German-speaking BBSR homepage www.bbsr.bund.de (Programme > ExWoSt > Forschungsfelder > GIS-ImmoRisk – Geoinformationssystem zur bundesweiten Risikoabschätzung von zukünftigen Klimafolgen für Immobilien). On this website you can also find the research report of the project including an English summary (see „Veröffentlichungen“).

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Building and Architecture

Activities of International Open Data-Network for Sustainable Building (InData)



The goal of the kick-off meeting of InData in 2015 was to exchange about the harmonisation of life-cycle assessments (LCAs) and possibilities of exchanging basic LCA data with European partners. During the following meetings 2018 in Milano and 2019 in Angers, though, the results and progress already achieved became apparent.

The group started with 6 nations and has meanwhile increased to 12 nations.

Germany was, and still is, an important forerunner with the digitalised life-cycle assessment workflow within the Assessment System for Sustainable Building (BNB for the Federal Government by means of the ÖKOBAUDAT online database (www.oekobaudat.de), and the eLCA calculation tool. The data format for LCA data from environmental product declarations (EPD), developed and used within the BNB for the first time, was able to convince the international community. In the meantime, another five international LCA databases do actively use the format, and interest among further stakeholders is increasing.

In addition, defining quality rules and compliance are an important activity of InData. The goal is that InData-compliant data should be consistent with each other,

and thus allowing a comprehensive use of the data.

In view of the quickly progressing digitalisation, InData aims at linking the InData database structures to Building Information Modeling (BIM) applications.

International InData and ECO Platform cooperation

InData and ECO Platform, the international association of European programme operators of EPD welcome the objectives formulated within a cooperation agreement and consider it to be a valuable addition to their activities

The aim of ECO Platform is the digitalisation and distribution of EPD. It therefore, supports the activities of InData to establish an international exchange of LCA data and related information. Core information of EPD, verification requirements, data availability are important aspects treated by both organisations.

InData goes Online!

Since June 2019, InData has published an own web portal in order to provide access to the activities: <https://www.indata.network/>. The website currently shows information about goals and motivation of the initiative, members and activities. In a next step, the access to the data will be published.

Through the international cooperation between InData and ECO Platform and by digitalising and harmonising the life-cycle assessment of buildings, the BBSR strongly supports governmental environmental and climate protection objectives.

InData at the international "Cities to Be" conference in Angers.

Only recently, in September 2019, the BBSR was able to present and discuss its present work and activities within the InData initiative in Austria (Graz) and France (Angers) at various fora during international sustainability conferences. Please, also note the Graz Declaration. <https://www.tugraz.at/en/events/sbe19/graz-declaration/graz-declaration/>

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InData group

Photo: Milano

Exchange of knowledge with Japan: cooperation between BBSR, BRI and NILIM

In January 2013, the German construction ministry and its Japanese counterpart, the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), agreed to cooperate on measures improving the environmental performance of buildings. Since then, periodical meetings on various issues have taken place, e.g. on the development of label systems for the energy efficiency of buildings, the prefabrication of buildings or for serial construction.

In order to improve and expand the foundations for the cooperation so far, both ministries in 2017 agreed to involve scientific government agencies in the exchange. Both ministries thus decided that the BBSR on the German side and the Building Research Institute (BRI) as well as the National Institute for Land and Infrastructure Management (NILIM) on the Japanese side should support and enrich the existing bilateral cooperation with their scientific expertise.

An additional protocol on the ministerial agreement of 2013 signed by both countries, which came into force in August 2018, gave the green light for involving the three scientific institutions. Before, BBSR, BRI and NILIM had come together for a first meeting in Tsukuba,

a city about 70 km in the north-east of Tokyo, where BRI and NILIM have their headquarters. The meeting mainly served the institutes to get to know each other and to identify topics of common interest.

All parties agreed that there were many topics on which to cooperate in more detail in the future. Currently these are especially the following:

- saving energy in the building sector,
- suburbanisation and reurbanisation,
- digitalisation in the construction sector,
- serial construction/prefabrication.

In addition, all parties agreed to formulate a 'Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC)' – a principal agreement to create a formal basis of cooperation.

The development of this principal agreement has now been finished. In the context of a second visit of the BBSR on 28 May 2019 in Tsukuba, the signed MoC was handed over by Dr. Kaltenbrunner (BBSR) to the representatives of the Japanese partner institutions, Dr. Midorikawa (President of BRI) and Mr. Omata (Director-General of NILIM), in a ceremonial act.

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Handing over of the Memorandum of Cooperation in Tsukuba

Photo: Tomoko Hiratsuka

Latest Map

Consequences of the economic and financial crisis

Further information:

The map can be found in the BBSR's German-speaking European atlas "Die Unterschiede bestimmen die Vielfalt in Europa" (The disparities determine Europe's diversity).

The atlas can be found at www.bbsr.bund.de (Veröffentlichungen > Sonderveröffentlichungen > Oktober 2019: Die Unterschiede bestimmen die Vielfalt in Europa

The publication can be ordered free of charge at beatrix.thul@bbr.bund.de, keyword: "Europa-Atlas".

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Just over ten years ago, the economic and financial crisis began, which, at different times but in the second quarter of 2008 at the latest, led to a decline of the economies in the member states. Within one year, the real, seasonally adjusted gross domestic product (GDP) of the EU, by the second quarter of 2009, went down by around 176 billion euros. At that time, this corresponded to about the economic power of Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Hungary altogether. In the Baltic states, the economy shrunk the most with around 16 %, the decline amounted to just under 7 % in Germany and to around 5 % in the total EU.

In the course of the euro crisis, the economic performance in Spain and Greece by 2013 dropped to 85 % and 75 % of the pre-crisis level. In Belgium, Germany, Ireland, France, Luxembourg, Austria and the Slovak Republic, the economy, already in 2011, reached the state of 2008 again. In Poland, the sharp economic fall at national level did not happen.

In 2017, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal and Finland had not yet reached again the state of 2008. Greece remained 25 % below the initial value. Italy was around 5 % below

that value. Spain, Slovenia and Latvia were able to exceed the rate of 2008 only in 2017.

The partly very different economic development in the regions increases the disparities between and within the countries. In Spain, only a few regions and in Greece no region has nominally reached the economic power of 2008. Many of the Greek regions still were more than one third below the old value. In Spain, only Madrid with around 1% and some few regions in Catalonia were in a better position than nine years before.

In Italy, France and Portugal, the various regional development paths and speeds of the economic recovery increase the regional disparities within the countries. While in Italy not a few regions – especially in the south – were still by up to 15 % below the economic performance of 2008, the GDP in many regions in the north, like Bolzano or Bologna, has already risen by over 10 %.

In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom as well the recovery process went off hesitantly. Especially in Northern England and Wales it lasted until 2015. In the meantime, the GDP at current prices in the United Kingdom went down again in 2017 compared to the previous year.

Despite the economic growth, the labour markets developed differently following the crisis. The unemployment fell considerably in those countries which had overcome the crisis rather quickly. In Germany, the number of unemployed persons has almost halved since then. In countries like Ireland and the United Kingdom, which took longer to recover, the employment figures are also declining. The unemployment in France, however, has increased despite an altogether slightly positive economic development.

The development has made one thing clear: the industrial employment has only little benefited from the economy's and the labour market's upturn – exceptions are among other things some regions in Germany. But the crisis has often caused another shift of the employment towards the service sector.

Development of the labour market in selected countries following the euro crisis (2009–2016) in %

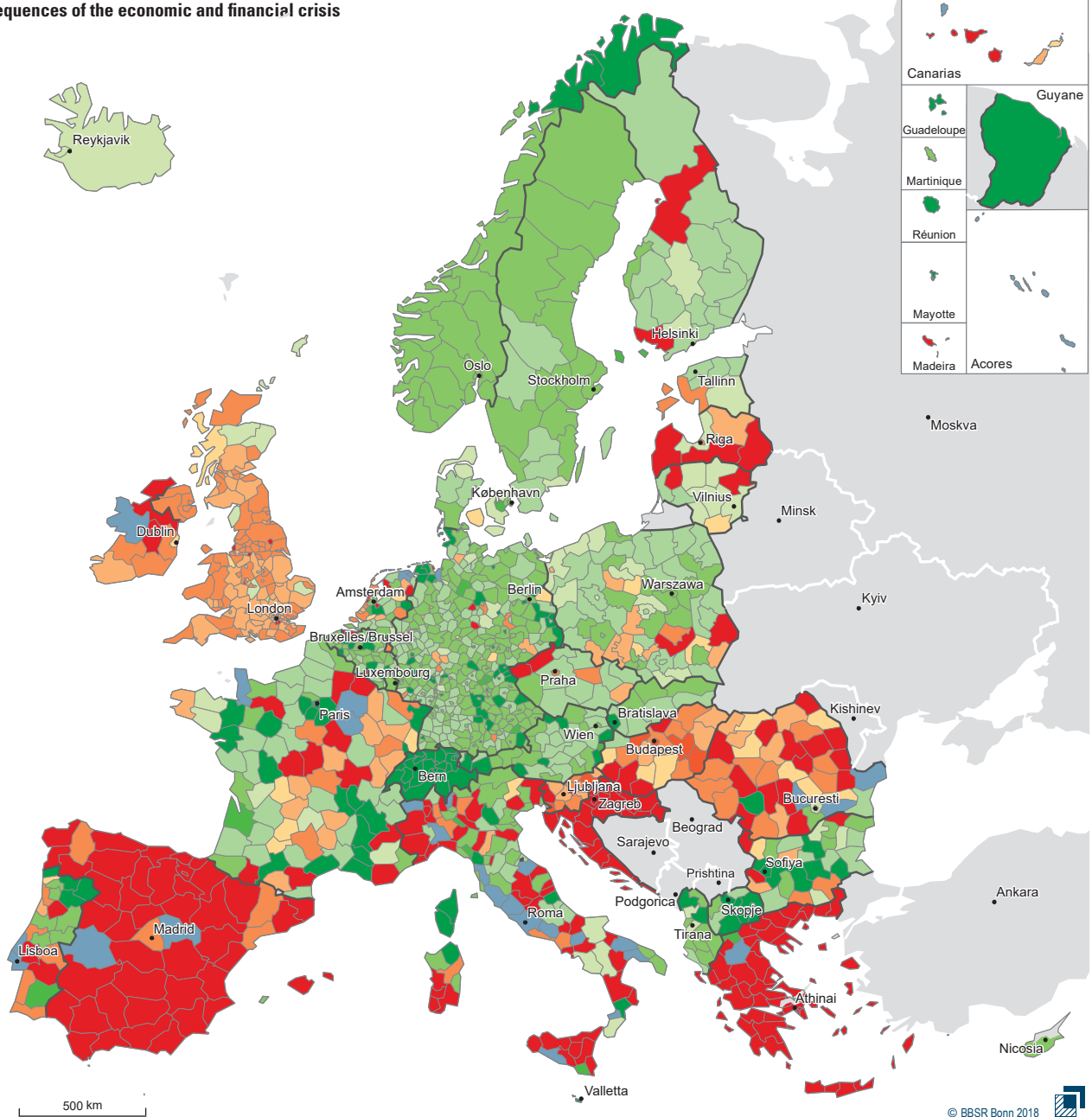


Data source: Spatial Monitoring System for Europe, data origin: Eurostat

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Latest Map

Consequences of the economic and financial crisis



Year in which the gross domestic product (GDP)* within the period until 2016** has reached again or exceeded the pre-crisis value (2007/2008)

- GDP over the whole period below the pre-crisis level
- 2016
- 2015
- 2014
- 2013
- 2012
- 2011
- 2010
- 2009
- GDP over the whole period above the pre-crisis level
- no clear development

* GDP in euro at current market prices
 2016 or last available year
 ** AL: 2014;
 AT, CH, DE, FR, EL, ES, IT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE: 2015

Data source: Spatial Monitoring for Europe
 Data origin: Eurostat
 Geometrical basis: GfK GeoMarketing,
 NUTS 3 regions
 Author: L. Kiel

Publications

Perspectives on equivalent living conditions in Europe



Photo: Jens Kurnol

Whether in Germany or Europe – whether because of populism or Euroscepticism: the objective to offer citizens opportunities no matter where they live has become a focus of regional development again. The European Union tries to support this especially with its policy of strengthening the economic, social and territorial cohesion, which is presently being renewed for the time after 2020.

Spatial disparities in Germany and Europe have become much more important within the public perception and political discussion. Analysing the impacts of this unequal development on elections helps to better understand political programmes and policy choices.

The European cohesion policy is a basic pillar of the European project both with regard to concrete improvements of the living conditions and to strengthening solidarity and the European spirit. In future, it is going to pursue five political objectives, among other things a Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.

In Germany and in Europe, structural change processes must be mitigated, regions outside centres and metropolitan regions must be made and kept worth living. This requires strategies and concrete action. Transnational cooperation, the Partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU and other instruments provide European approaches for this because cooperation does not only make local results

more reliable, they also create a European spirit.

At local level – except possibly in border regions and metropolises – “Europe” does not have priority. Against the background of critical budgetary situations and limited staff capacities, cooperation would at best be desirable but not essential. But those who cooperate benefit from it. In order to expand the Europeanisation of urban and regional development, it is important to involve local and regional authorities as partners and in good time in putting strategies and programmes at EU level into practice.

The Territorial Agenda of the European Union contains initial approaches in this context but has to be considerably improved. This strategy of the ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development from 2011 is presently being revised and shall be put into effect through concrete implementation measures. The revised Territorial Agenda is planned to be adopted during the German EU Council Presidency in the second half of 2020. The German Presidency thus faces high expectations in the field of European spatial and urban development.

Issue 3/2019 “Equivalent living conditions in Europe – between dissatisfaction and cooperation” of the BBSR publication series “Informationen zur Raumentwicklung (IzR)” (Information on Spatial Development), covers these topics. Scientists, practitioners and politicians from Germany and Europe deal with central issues on the territorial future of the EU: How can the European spatial development policy reduce disparities and stabilise Europe? Which role does the German EU Council Presidency play in this context in the second half of 2020? And how does the European policy move closer to the people?

In Germany, a national commission on equivalent living conditions presented its results this summer. Based on these results, the German Federal Government has developed twelve proposals how to advance structural and regional policy – from strengthening structurally weak areas, providing more good child care places to a regional-equivalence check that shall be applied to all future legislative proposals.

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The future of small towns: potentials of small towns in peripheral areas



(in German with English summary, original title: Zukunft Kleinstadt. Potenziale von Kleinstädten in peripheren Lagen), ed.: BBSR, Sonderveröffentlichung, August 2019

Politicians, scientists and planners have for a long time hardly dealt with small towns. Their diversity, their significance for the society as a whole and their spatial qualities have rarely been noticed. Statistically, small peripheral towns face the largest challenges. Reasons enough to take a closer look at them.

The related research field concentrated on issues like what can local politicians, administrations and urban residents do to be prepared for the future? Are the present demographic changes – which have received so much media attention – with all their consequences unchanging so that a peripheral small town must simply accept them? Eight model projects all over Germany and a large number of experts assumed the task to answer these questions and to find out how the local future potential might be defined.

Answers and suggestions may be found in this publication. By the example of the eight model projects, it presents the future strategies worked out for the related local authorities in a joint process with citizens, enterprises and associations. The work concentrated on key issues like local housing, quality of life, economy and education, digitalisation and social cohesion.

Free of charge available from: exwost-i7@bbr.bund.de
Keyword: Zukunft Kleinstadt – Sonderveröffentlichung

Hidden champions and urban development: the economic and societal importance of innovative enterprises for small towns in peripheral areas



(in German with English summary, original title: Hidden Champions und Stadtentwicklung: Die wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Bedeutung innovativer Unternehmen für Kleinstädte in peripherer Lage), ed.: BBSR, Sonderveröffentlichung, September 2019

Small towns in peripheral areas play a fundamental role in the context of a balanced spatial development. An essential element to stabilise and develop towns and cities successfully is to promote integrated urban development processes. In doing so, the local economy plays a key role. In addition to local effects such as creating or maintaining jobs, purchasing

power and tax revenues, the local commitment of businesses may have a positive effect on the development of small towns.

The research project focused on the economic significance of hidden champions. Thus, quantitative structural data on hidden champions and small towns were processed and analysed. The “hidden champion” research project addressed this action-packed topic ranging from the diverse challenges of peripheral small towns, on the one hand, and their important function within the settlement system, on the other hand. The local economy plays a key role among the stabilising factors and drivers of small towns.

Free of charge available from:

gertrud.ziegenhals@bbr.bund.de

Keyword: Hidden Champions – Sonderveröffentlichung

Heimat and urban development



(original title: Heimat und Stadtentwicklung), Informationen zur Raumentwicklung (IzR), Issue 2/2019, ed.: Bonn 2019

In Germany recently, the term “Heimat” (for “home”, “community” or “regional identity”) has been increasingly used in political discourses. The renaming of various national and federal state ministries

shows, that it has become a political field of action as well. Despite its critical historical use, the term nowadays bears for many people a feeling on which they can build their identity.

The articles in this issue deal with the question about a modern interpretation of “Heimat”. They take up debates in the field of urban and spatial development on topics from living together in heterogeneous neighbourhoods, regional building cultures to the development of peripheral areas. The aim is to approach the “home” term from various directions. Geographers, ethnologists, sociologists and architects reflect upon the current discussions. By examples from Thuringia to Latin America, they analyse concrete possibilities how to shape urban areas which might ideally turn into home. The issue is completed by an outlook to the future perspective of the city as a home.

The journal IzR is available in German language with English abstracts. Some issues contain articles in English language. The abstracts are available as free downloads (www.bbsr.bund.de > English > publications > Informationen zur Raumentwicklung).

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News**EU Expert Group on B2G Data Sharing**

On November 5th, 2019, the EU Expert Group on Business-to-Government (B2G) Data Sharing held its final session.

Starting in 2018, experts from the public and private sector discussed how to foster the data sharing of public and private stakeholders. The insights of the BBSR's research on the sustainable digital transformation of cities were part of the discussions and the development of the final report and recommendations.

In the Expert Group, the topics of responsible and sustainable data sharing as well as public interest as a goal for sharing data were given special attention and widely discussed.

The Expert Group identified good practices on B2G data sharing in order to contribute to better public service delivery and more evidence-based policy-making. Legal,

economic and technical obstacles preventing B2G data sharing were assessed. Actions how to promote B2G data sharing for public interest purposes were formulated and – last but not least – recommendations to the European Commission how to further develop its B2G data sharing policy given. The recommendations released will tackle the governance of B2G data sharing as well as legal and technical issues.

The final report and recommendations shall soon be released.

Further information:

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/meetings-expert-group-business-government-data-sharing>

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