

Rural proofing – a foresight framework for resilient rural communities

Interim Report Presentation at the CoR NAT meeting

31.3.2022 | Roland Gaugitsch

Rural Proofing and the Better Regulation Agenda

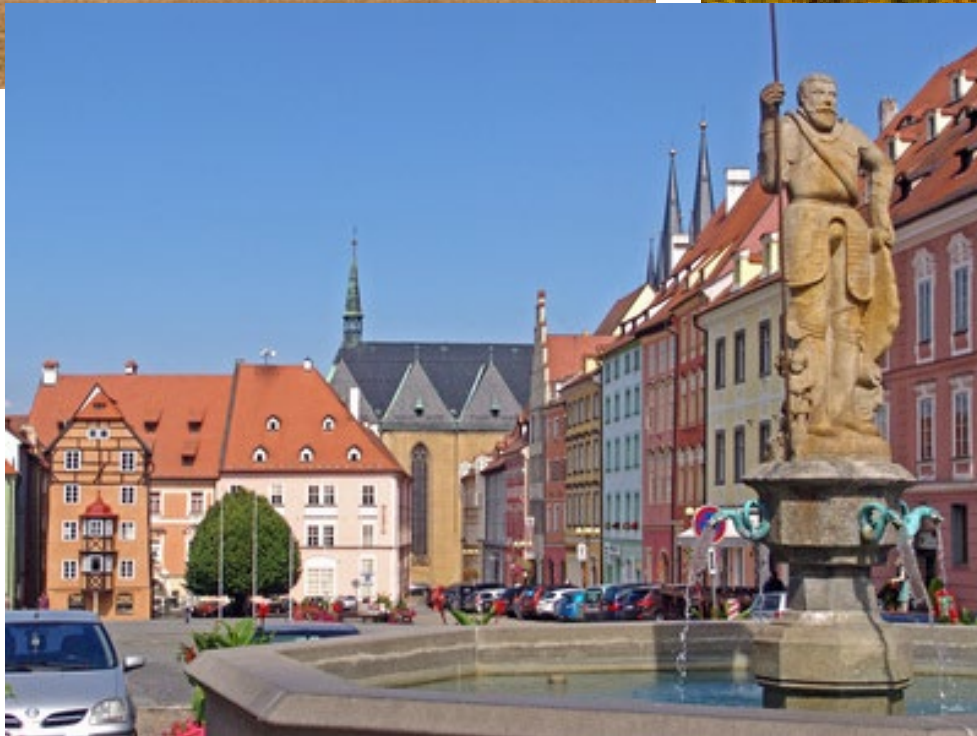
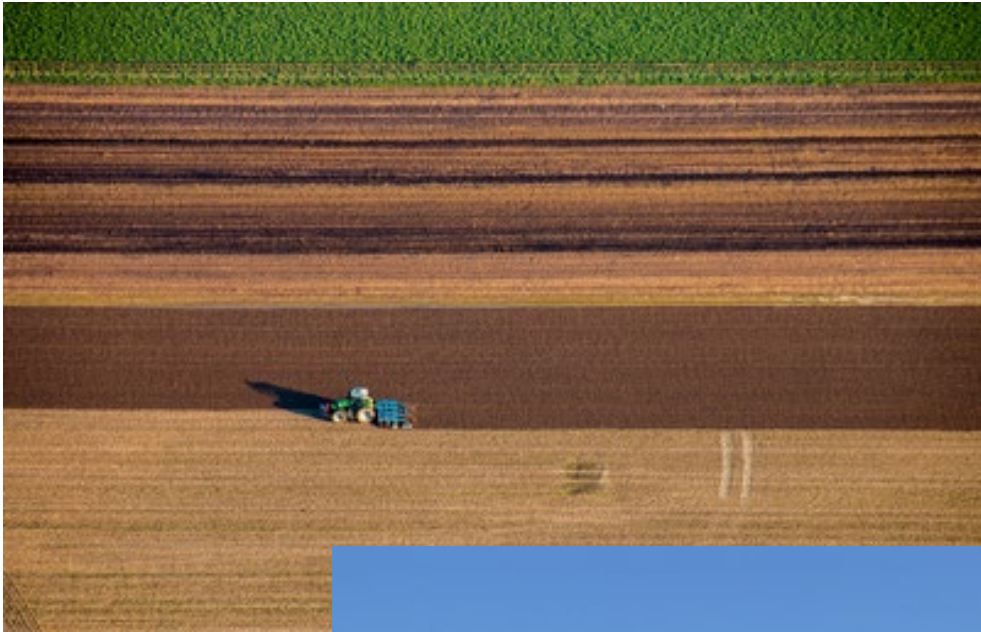
“rural proofing is a systematic process to review the likely impacts of policies, programmes and initiatives on rural areas because of their particular circumstances or needs (e.g. dispersed populations and poorer infrastructure networks). In short, it requires policy-makers to ‘think rural’ when designing policy interventions in order to prevent negative outcomes for rural areas and communities.”

– Atterton, 2022

- ▶ Rural proofing called for by **Cork Declaration 2.0** and **EU long-term vision for rural areas**
- ▶ Pick up in the Better Regulation Guidelines:
 - Rural areas explicitly mentioned in 11 tools of the Better Regulation Toolbox
 - Strong link to **Tool #34 – Territorial Impacts**
 - No concrete methodology or approach for rural proofing!

mmunities

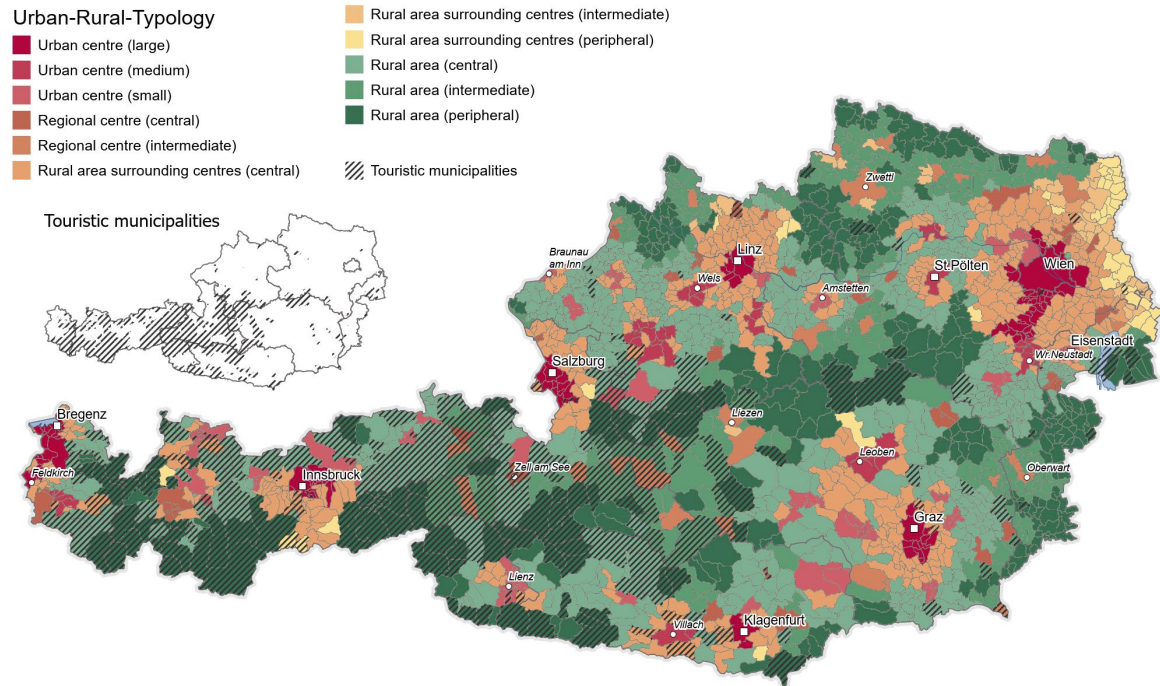
Rural?



Sources: Uwe Kunze / Kasina / Walter J. Plisak / Rosel Eckstein / pixelio.de

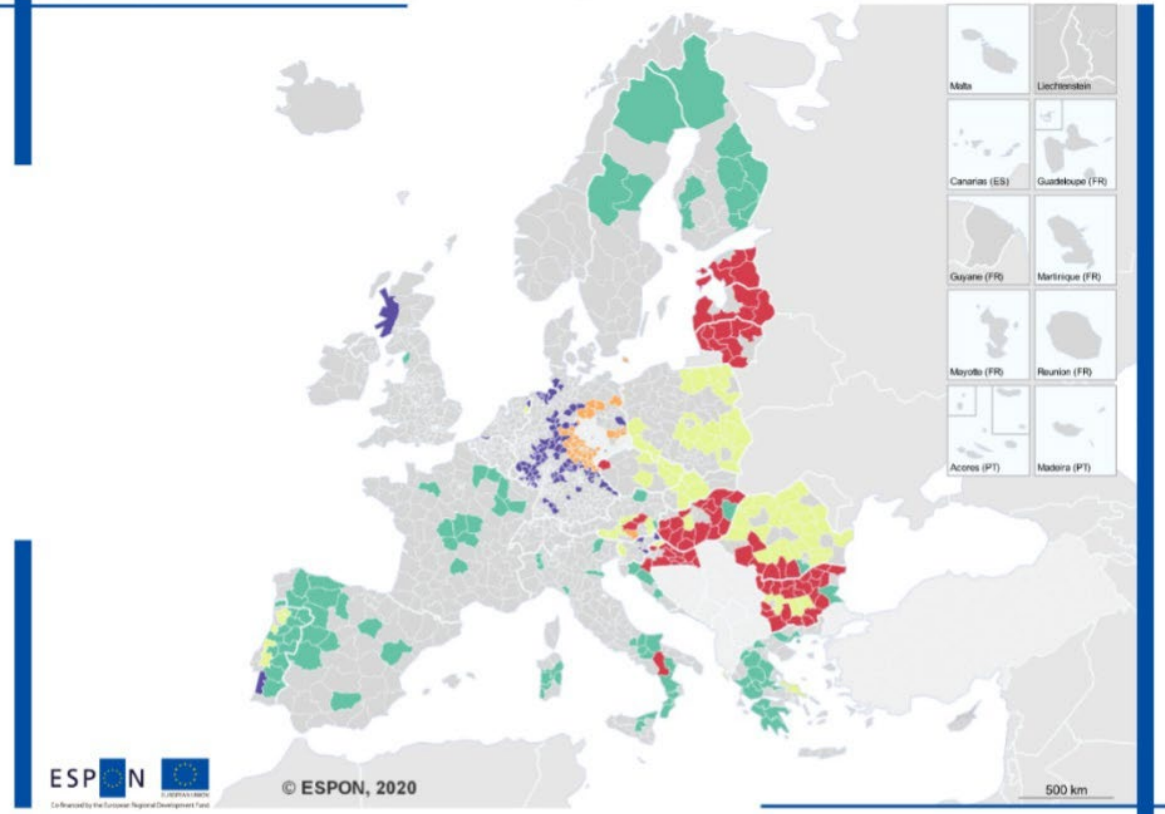
Rural Areas

- ▶ Similar challenges, similar characteristics?
- ▶ Different challenges, different characteristics?
- ▶ **No one-size-fits-all approach!**



Source: Statistics Austria

Typology of complex shrinkage in shrinking rural and intermediate regions (5 classes)



Regional level: NUTS 3 (2013)
Source: ESPON ESCAPE, 2020
Origin of data: Eurostat, 2020
© UMS RATE for administrative boundaries

- Label of clusters**
- Agricultural, very low income regions with severe legacy and active shrinking
 - Industrial, mid-income regions with severe legacy and active shrinking
 - Agro-industrial, low income regions with moderate, mostly legacy shrinking
 - Servitised, mid-low income regions with moderate legacy shrinking
 - Industrial or servitised, mid-income regions with moderate, mostly legacy shrinking
 - Other regions
 - No data

Source: ESPON ESCAPE

Reviewed approaches

- ▶ Rural Proofing
 - Finland
 - Australia
 - Canada
 - New Zealand
 - England
 - (Sweden)
- ▶ Territorial Impact Assessment
 - TIA Quick Check
 - Rhomolo
 - Luisa
 - EATIA
 - Target_TIA
 - Territorial Foresight

Example case: hypothetical rural proofing of the REPowerEU plan using Territorial Foresight – potential pathways on different types of rural areas

	▶ Rural areas with high potential to produce renewable energy	▶ Rural areas with high energy dependency for their local economies	▶ Peripheral rural areas with high need of long-distance transport
▶ Fast-forward transition to carbon-neutral society	1. Fast increase of renewable energy production in rural areas ↑ 2. Risk of competition of land for food and energy production ↓	3. Start of green transition process of rural enterprises ↑ 4. Increasing energy costs especially in the transition period reducing competitiveness of rural business ↓	5. Increasing transport costs especially in the transition period ↓ 6. Increasing infrastructure and use of sustainable transport means ↑
▶ Temporary energy shortage and energy poverty	7. Increase in renewable energy production and distribution in and from rural areas ↑ 8. Risk of competition of land for food and energy production ↓	9. Risk of bankruptcies of energy intensive business in rural areas ↓ 10. Increasing energy poverty especially in less well-off rural areas ↓	11. Isolation of rural areas due to reduced connectivity. ↓ 12. Speeding up digital transition to bridge the physical connectivity gap. ↑
▶ Return of the nuclear age	13. Loss of economic potential of rural areas as renewable energy exporters ↓ 14. Small scale renewable	15. No major disruption for energy intensive rural industries ↑ 16. Industrial decline & aging in rural areas no push for transitions ↓	17. Nuclear energy does not fully solve the issue of long-distance transport ↓ 18. Speeding up digital transition to bridge the

Success factors

- ▶ Methodology
 - Selection of appropriate methodology
 - Depth of assessment fitting the policy stage and geographic level
 - Appropriate classification of rural areas, taking into account all relevant factors
 - Inclusion of stakeholders in the assessment (for most cases)
 - „Positive approach“ towards rural areas

- ▶ Wider implementation
 - Targeted application – don't overburden the policy process
 - Targeted support – „Rural proofing core group“
 - „Quick and early“ preferred over „in depth but too late“

Outlook

- ▶ Methodological recommendations for improving existing tools – „integration of rural proofing and TIA“
- ▶ Guidance for selecting the most fitting methodology for:
 - EU level
 - National level
 - Local and regional level
- ▶ Recommendations on
 - When and how to include rural proofing in the policy cycle
 - How to promote rural proofing on a wider basis

Rural proofing ist part of the policy design, not a „checkbox“ after everything is already finalised

Additional information

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