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Accompanying the document

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**My region, My Europe, Our future:
The seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion**

{COM(2017) 583 final}

In 2017, women made up half or more of members of regional assemblies across the EU in only 17 out of 297 cases. Five regional assemblies in Hungary, Italy and Romania have no women members at all and in several regional assemblies in these three countries as well as in Slovakia, less than 10% of members were women. Women were most represented in assemblies in Belgium, Spain, France, Sweden and Finland, where they accounted for 40% or more of members (Map 2.19).

The average regional assembly in the EU had only 29% of members that were women in 2017, only slightly more than in 2007 (27%), so that at this rate of progress, it would take 100 years to reach 50%. There is also no indication of a larger increase in countries with a small share of women members than in others (Map 2.20).

In some countries, the share of women has increased without the need for a gender quota. In Sweden, for example, most political parties ensure that every second candidate for election is a woman. In Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal and Ireland, however, quotas have been used to raise the number of women at national and/or regional level of government (Ireland does not have any regional assemblies and Portugal has regional assemblies only in the Acores and Madeira).

2.10. Life in the EU is among the longest in the world but regional disparities persist

The EU has one of highest life expectancies at birth in the world, 80.6 years in 2015. Spaniards and Italians have the longest expectancy in the EU (83.0 and 82.7 years at birth, respectively), while Lithuanians have the shortest (74.6 years). Most EU Member States have a life expectancy higher than in the United States, which is ranked only 31st in the world in this regard, with an expected life span of 79.3 years in 2015 (WHO 2017).

Differences between regions across the EU are, however, marked (Map 2.21). Life expectancy at birth is below 75 in many parts of Bulgaria and Romania and the eastern regions of Hungary as well as in Latvia and Lithuania. In 20 NUTS 2 regions (mainly located in France, Italy and Spain but also including the wealthiest part of London - Inner London West - which includes Westminster), life expectancy is over 83. Regional disparities in infant mortality (Map 2.22) and, to a lesser extent, road fatalities (Map 2.23) can partly explain the differences.

In 2015, an average of 3.6 children per 1 000 born alive died before reaching one year of age in the EU, a reduction from 3.8 in 2012. Infant mortality, however, was above 6 per 1 000 in 21 NUTS 2 regions in Romania and Bulgaria – all except the capital city ones – all the French overseas regions, the Spanish regions of Ceuta and Melilla (on the North coast of Africa), the most eastern region in Slovakia and the English region of Shropshire and Staffordshire in the West Midlands. By contrast, the rate was 2 per 1 000 or less in 18 regions scattered across the EU – in two or more in Austria, Finland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Spain and one each

The Road Safety Programme:

One of the objectives of the European Commission is to ensure that satisfactory standards of safety for all modes of transport throughout the EU are met. The Road Safety Programme adopted in 2011 is aimed at cutting road fatalities by half between 2010 and 2020 to 31 deaths per million inhabitants. The programme includes a mix of initiatives, at EU and national level, focussing on improving vehicle safety, road user behaviour and the roads themselves.

in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands and the UK .

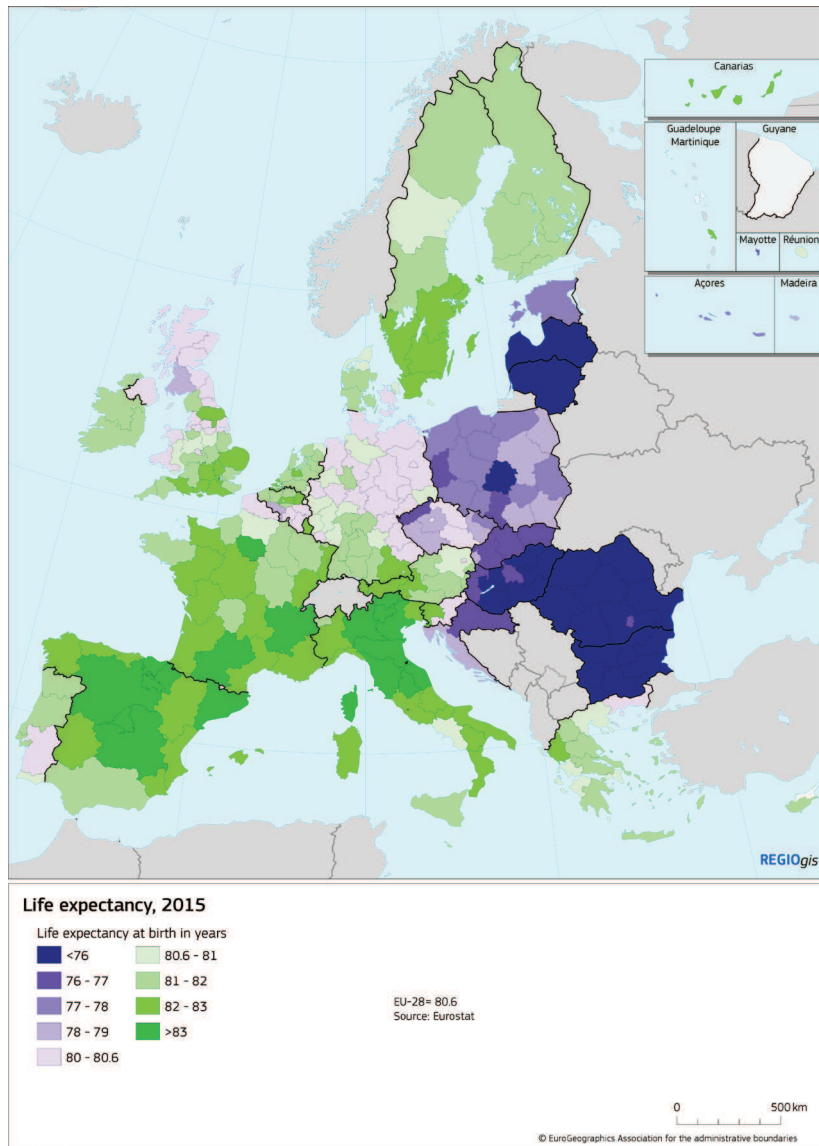
Road traffic fatalities vary equally widely across the EU. Although they declined overall by 45% between 2004 and 2014, the number still averaged 51 per one million inhabitants in 2015, though with large differences between regions (Map 2.23). (For comparison, the US figure was twice as high in 2015, at over 100 per million.) .

The regions with the highest figures, with over 99 deaths per million, are mostly in Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Croatia and the north-eastern part of Poland though also in Portugal, Corse and, above all, the Belgian province of Luxembourg, where as many as 210 road fatalities per million inhabitants were recorded in 2015, 38% more than in 2010.

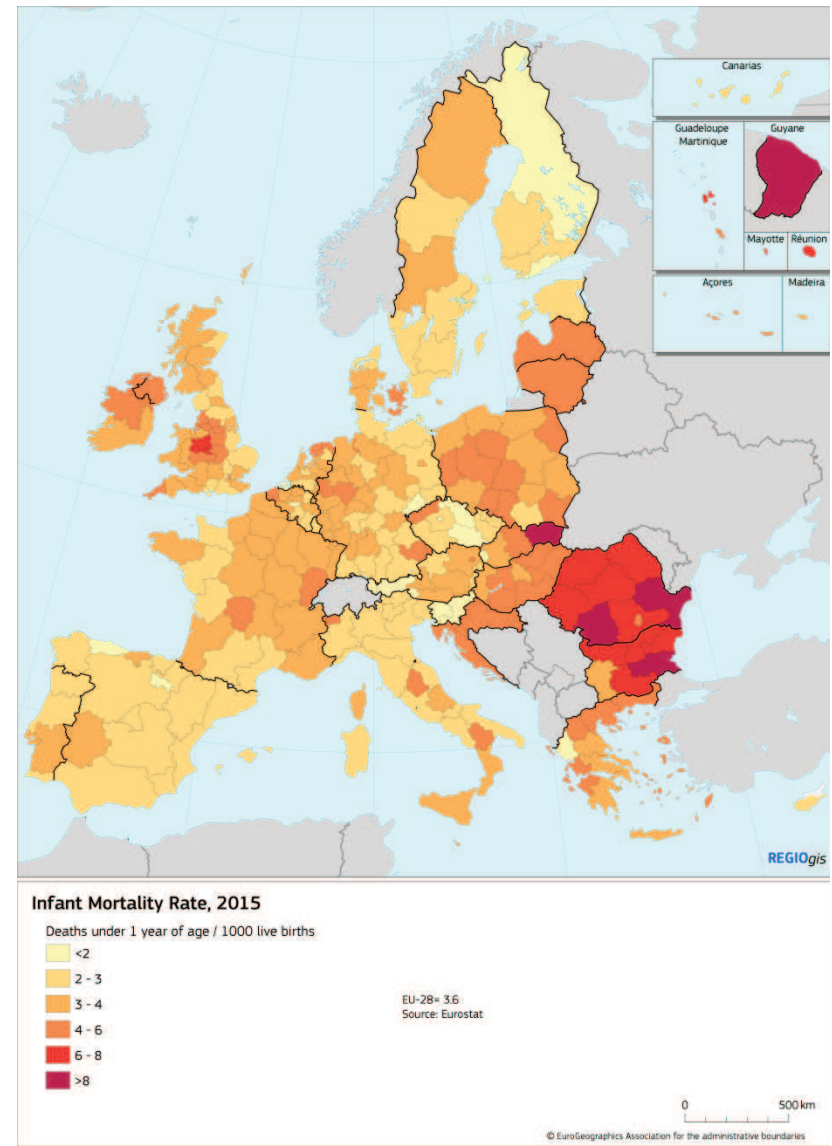
Road fatalities are, in many cases, less in capital city regions than in other parts of the country. The safest capital cities in the EU in which to drive are Stockholm and Wien, in both of which the number of road deaths was below 10 per million in 2015, while in London, Copenhagen, Paris, Madrid, Berlin and Prague, fatalities are less than in other regions (Map 2.24). This reflects in part low traffic speeds and good public transport, which gives people the option of not driving.

Cities, however, do not have lower fatality rates than other areas everywhere. In Romania, Italy, Belgium, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, rates are relatively high in cities. In Bucharest and many other Romanian cities, there were more than 90 deaths per million in 2013-2014, far above the target of 31 deaths per million set by the European Road Safety Action Programme for 2020. In 2015, this target was reached in only 16% of regions. Further efforts and more investment are, therefore, needed in most regions to improve road safety.

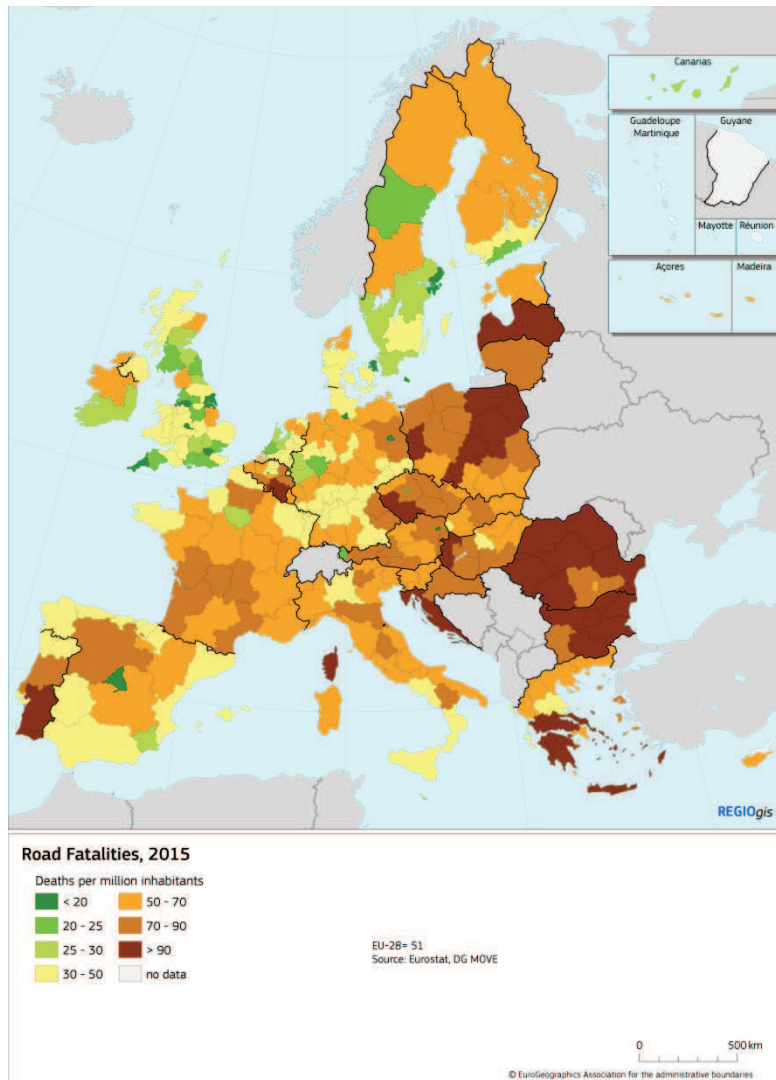
Map 2-21 EU Life expectancy at birth, 2015



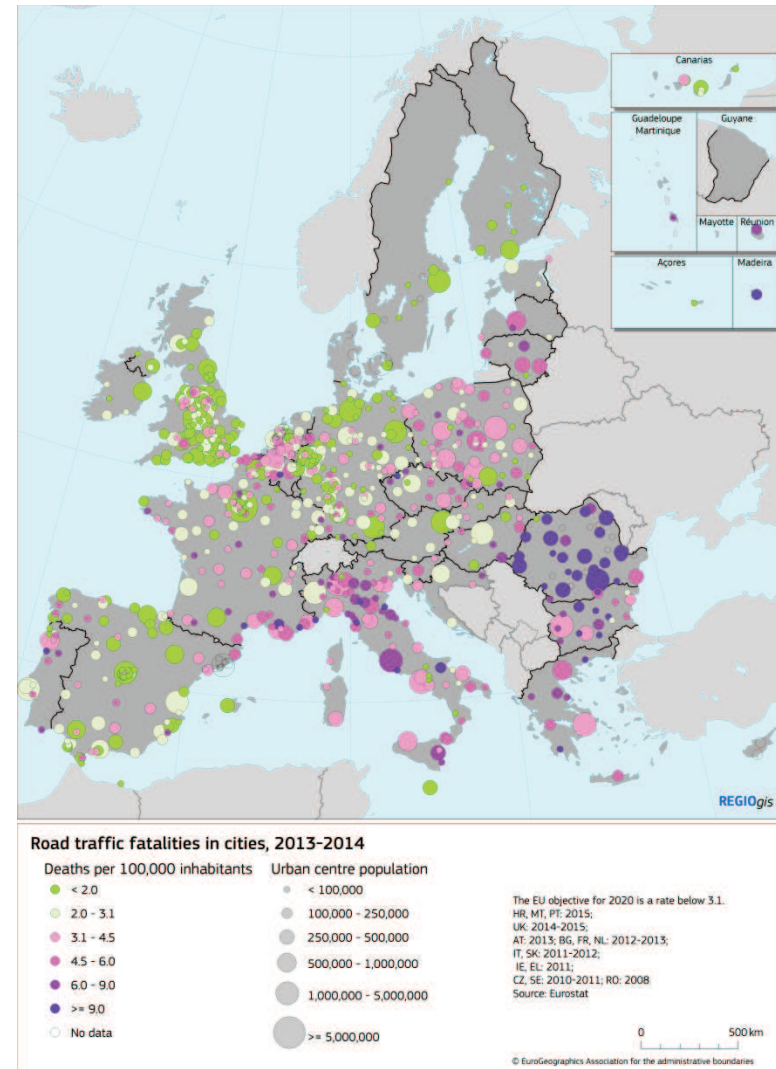
Map 2-22 Infant mortality, 2015



Map 2.23 Road fatalities, 2015



Map 2.24: Road traffic fatalities in cities



2.11. Measuring social progress at the regional level

Social progress can be defined as a society's capacity to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, to establish the basis for citizens and communities to improve and sustain their quality of life and to create the conditions for people to reach their full potential. This definition underlies the Global Social Progress Index which measures social progress at the national level in about 130 countries worldwide¹. In an attempt to measure social progress at the regional level in the EU, the European Commission recently published the EU Regional Social Progress Index (EU-SPI) that builds on and adapts the Global Social Progress Index. The EU-SPI is based on a set of 50 social and environmental indicators, drawn primarily, though not only, from Eurostat data. The EU-SPI is aimed at providing consistent, comparable and policy-relevant measures of the social and environmental situation in all NUTS 2 regions². It covers three dimensions of social progress - basic human needs; the foundations of well-being and opportunity - each of which is broken down into four underlying components (Figure 2.21).

Economic indicators are deliberately excluded which means that the EU-SPI measures social progress rather than economic performance and can be compared with economic indicators.

Figure 2.21: The framework of the EU-SPI index

Basic Human Needs	Foundations of Wellbeing	Opportunity
Nutrition and Basic Medical Care	Access to Basic Knowledge	Personal Rights
Water and Sanitation	Access to Information and Communication	Personal Freedom and Choice
Shelter	Health and Wellness	Tolerance and Inclusion
Personal Safety	Environmental Quality	Access to Advanced Education

The index has been built to identify social and environmental strengths and weaknesses, to inform regional development strategies and to support peer learning between regions. It scores the various aspects covered on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 represents the lowest possible level of social progress and 100 the highest. Results show that social progress in the EU is highest in Nordic and Dutch regions and lowest in Romanian and Bulgarian regions (Map 2.25). Social progress is also moderately high in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Ireland and the UK. Belgium and France score well too, though both show large internal differences. The largest regional variation is in Italy where central regions score better than the rest of the country (Figure 2.22).

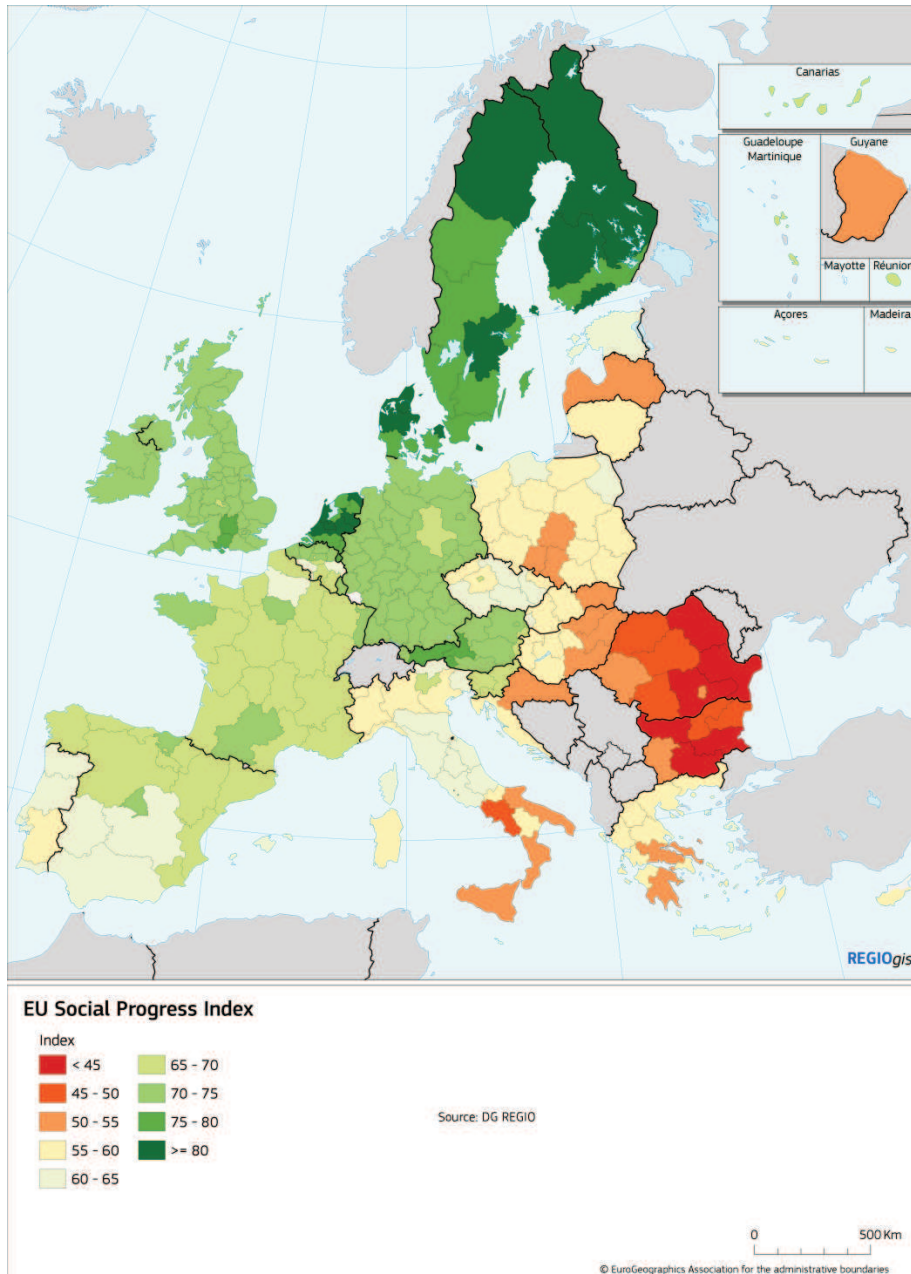
According to the SPI, except for some regions in Member States which joined the EU in 2004 or after, basic human needs are being met in almost all regions (Map 2.26). The 'Foundations of well-being' dimension shows greater variation with only the Nordic Member States, the Netherlands and Ireland scoring well in all regions (Map 2.26). The

¹ For more information on the Global Social Progress Index: <https://www.socialprogressindex.com> .

² For more information on the regional EU-SPI: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/maps/social_progress .

largest differences relate to ‘Opportunity’, with low scores in many regions in the southern and central eastern countries (Map 2.26).

Map 2.25: The EU-SPI 2016 (0=lowest level of social development; 100=highest level of social development)



Map 2.26 EU Social Progress index, three sub-indices

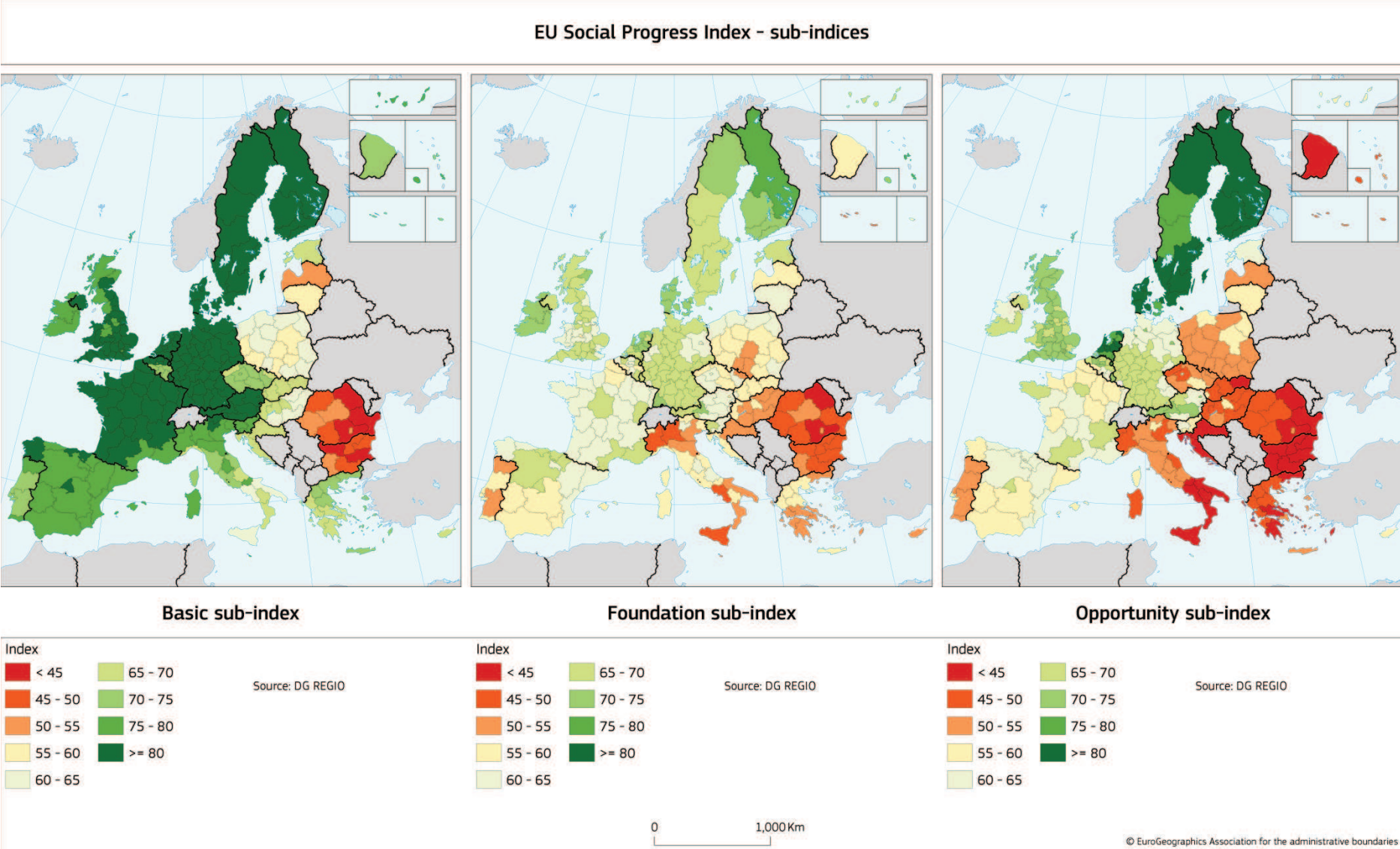
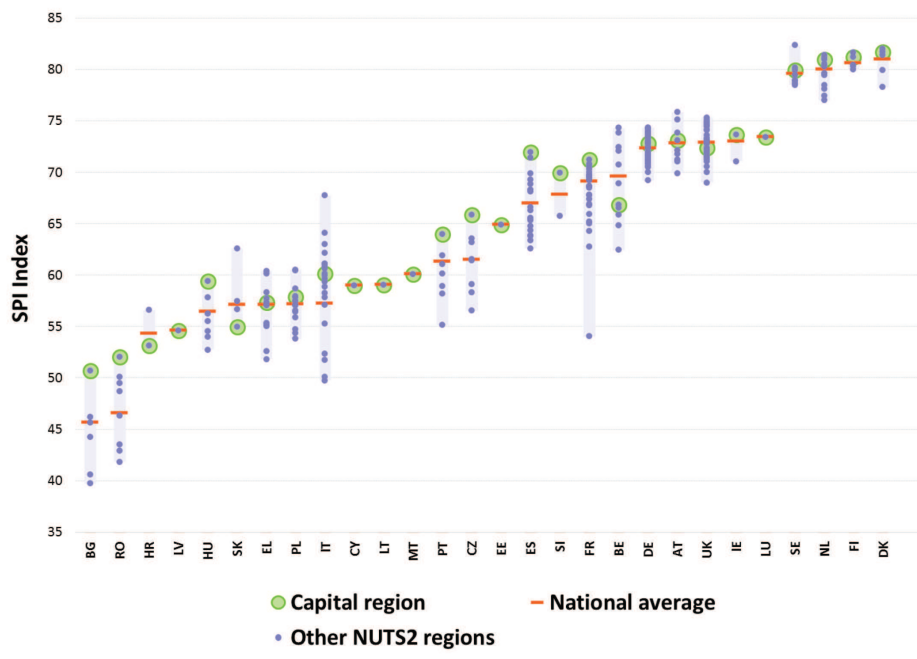


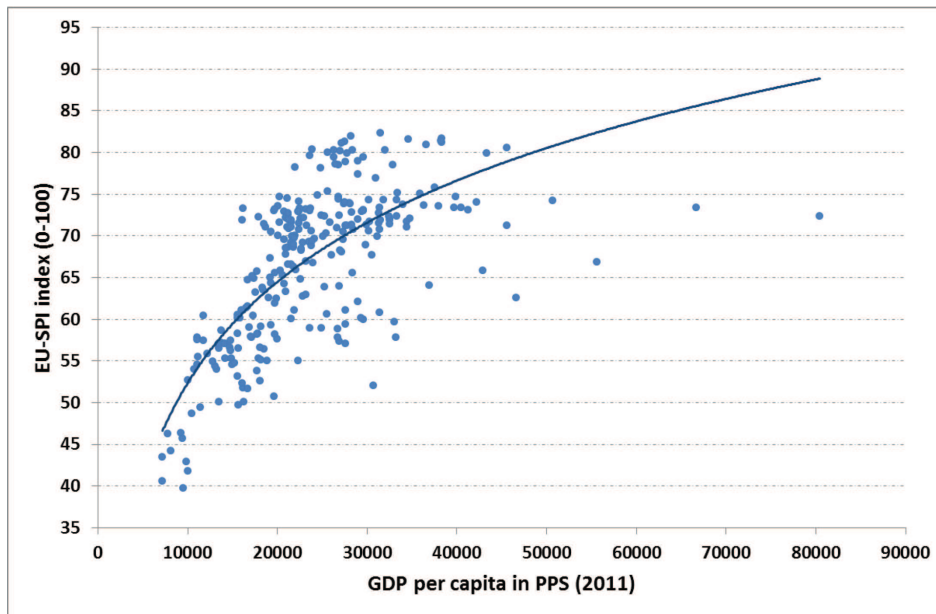
Figure 2.22: Degree of within-country variability of the EU-SPI



There is a close link between the EU-SPI and regional GDP per head, although the relationship indicates that at every level of economic performance there are opportunities for more social progress but also risks of less (Figure 2.23). In low GDP per head regions, every extra euro of GDP tends to lead to more social progress, while for high GDP per head regions, this is much less true. Among the high GDP per head regions, some regions such as the Nordic regions and most of the Dutch regions score higher than would be expected given their GDP per head.

In a small number of regions, commuting across NUTS 2 boundaries has a distorting effect on GDP per head of some significance since commuters increase GDP without being counted in the population. This is the case in Brussels and London, in particular, where around half the people working there live elsewhere. In these regions, GDP per head is an especially poor proxy for income and this may partly explain why some score poorly relative to GDP per head. Many other issues, however, make GDP per head a poor proxy for median disposable household income, such as the variable share of GDP going to wages (which on average has been shrinking), the differing degree of inequality of earnings and the varying extents of redistribution through taxes and social benefits, both between people and between regions.

Figure 2.23: Relationship between EU-SPI and GDP per capita



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