

Portrait of EU coastal regions

In 2007, 196 million people lived, 88 million people worked and 410 million people embarked or disembarked in EU coastal regions

In 2007, 43 % of the inhabitants of the 22 EU Member States¹ lived in coastal regions² and 38 % of coastal region inhabitants resided in one of the 194 cities with over 100 000 inhabitants located within 50 km of the sea.

The service sector is the biggest employer, accounting for 72 % of the jobs in these regions. However, involvement in the service sector is not homogeneous all over the regions. High density of tourism capacity or large marine passenger traffic is linked with the level of employment in sectors such as households and enterprise services. Administrative and financial services, for their part, are most often related to the level of urbanisation of these regions.

An analysis of these characteristics enabled five main profiles to be drawn of these highly specific regions.

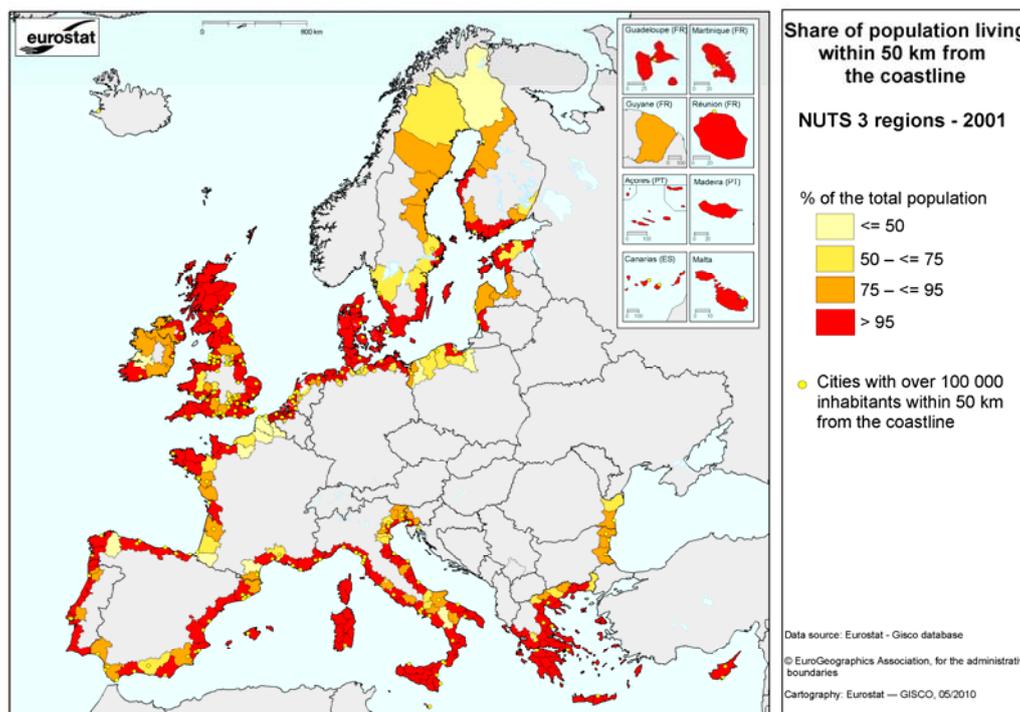
The data contained in this publication can be used for the monitoring of coastal regions profiles in the framework of the EU integrated Maritime Policy³.

¹ Excluding Northern Ireland and Scotland, data not available;

² EU coastal regions: regions with a sea border, regions with more than half of its population within 50 km of the sea and Hamburg;

³ On 10 October 2007 the Commission presented its vision for an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union (Blue Book – COM (2007) 575);

Figure 1: Share of population living within 50 km from the coastline, NUTS 3, 2001



Source: Eurostat GISCO database.

Inhabitants of coastal regions prefer the seaside

In 2007, 196 million¹ people lived in the 446 EU coastal regions²; these people represent 43% of the population of the 22 EU countries having a sea border. Coastal regions (NUTS3) either have a coastline (83%) or have at least more than half of their population within 50 km from the coastline (17%) and Hamburg has been added to the list as well. It is noteworthy that in almost all (96.7%) coastal regions having a coastline the majority of people live within 50 km of sea as well. As shown in Table 1, almost all coastal regions have a population

density in this coastal strip of more than 50%. Moreover, 91% of coastal region inhabitants reside within 50 km of the sea. Therefore, residents of coastal regions (coastal population) exert greater pressure near the coastline.

¹ Excluding Northern Ireland and Scotland

² See coastal region definition in Methodological notes

Table 1: Distribution of EU coastal regions and share of coastal population within 50 km of the sea

EU countries with a sea border	Coastal regions (NUTS3) with a sea border	Coastal regions (NUTS3) without sea border and more than half of its population within 50 km of the sea	Total number of coastal regions (NUTS3)	Share of total coastal regions with more than 50% of its population within 50 km of the sea	Share of total coastal regions with more than 75% of its population within 50 km of the sea	Share of the coastal regions inhabitants residing within 50 km of the sea
BE	5	9	14	100%	93%	97%
BG	3	0	3	100%	100%	85%
DK	11	0	11	100%	100%	100%
DE	29	14*	43	98%	86%	73%
EE	4	0	4	100%	75%	95%
IE	7	0	7	86%	86%	88%
EL	40	4	44	100%	91%	98%
ES	31	0	31	97%	94%	94%
FR	30	0	30	80%	67%	72%
IT	60	7	67	99%	90%	95%
CY	1	0	1	100%	100%	100%
LV	3	0	3	100%	100%	95%
LT	1	0	1	100%	100%	98%
MT	2	0	2	100%	100%	100%
NL	15	9	24	100%	96%	97%
PL	7	2	9	78%	44%	74%
PT	13	4	17	100%	100%	97%
RO	2	0	2	100%	50%	72%
SI	1	2	3	100%	100%	95%
FI	10	1	11	91%	73%	89%
SE	14	0	14	100%	64%	86%
UK	83	22	105	100%	95%	97%
EU22	372	74	446	97%	88%	91%

*Hamburg has been included in this column

Source: Eurostat Gisco database

This coastal population is concentrated in 194 cities with over 100 000 inhabitants located within 50 km of the sea. These urban centres house 38% of the inhabitants of coastal regions. The largest cities are London, Athinai, Napoli and Roma.

The share of the national population living in a coastal area mainly depends on the geographical characteristics of a country, such as the length of the coastline and its configuration. In the case of island states such as Malta or Cyprus or peninsulas such as Denmark, this share is 100% because all regions of these countries are considered to be coastal. Conversely, the share of

inhabitants of coastal regions is only 4% of the total population in Romania and 9% in Germany.

As can be seen in Figure 1, coastal regions in Northern Sweden and Finland are very large. A consequence of this is that the total population of these coastal regions are considered as coastal population, even if part of this population lives far away from the sea. On the other hand, thanks to their small population, these coastal regions do not lead to a distortion of the Swedish and Finnish coastal population. However, this distortion is quite limited as a significant share of inhabitants of coastal regions and economic activities are in fact located near the sea.

Table 2: Coastal regions population, ranking by share in total population and main cities located within 50 km from the coast, EU-22, 2007

EU countries with a sea border	Coastal regions population millions inhabitants	Total population millions inhabitants	Share of coastal population in national total	Main cities within 50 km from the coastline
Romania	1.0	21.6	4%	Constanta
Germany	7.2	82.3	9%	Hamburg**, Rostock
Lithuania	0.4	3.4	11%	Klaipeda
Poland	4.4	38.1	12%	Gdansk, Szczecin
Bulgaria	1.1	7.7	14%	Varna, Burgas
Slovenia	0.3	2.0	14%	-
Belgium	3.4	10.6	32%	Antwerpen, Gent
France	24.2	63.6	38%	Marseille-Aix-En-Provence, Bordeaux
Netherlands	8.8	16.4	54%	Amsterdam, Rotterdam
Spain	26.5	44.5	60%	Barcelona, Valencia
Italy	35.8	59.1	61%	Napoli, Roma
Latvia	1.4	2.3	61%	Riga, Liepaja
Finland	3.3	5.3	63%	Helsinki, Turku
United Kingdom*	40.2	60.8	66%	London, Greater Manchester
Estonia	1.0	1.3	74%	Tallinn
Sweden	7.4	9.1	81%	Stockholm, Göteborg
Portugal	8.7	10.6	82%	Lisboa, Porto
Greece	10.5	11.2	94%	Athinai, Thessaloniki
Ireland	4.1	4.3	94%	Dublin, Cork
Cyprus	0.8	0.8	100%	Nicosia, Limassol
Denmark	5.4	5.4	100%	København, Aarhus
Malta	0.4	0.4	100%	Valletta
EU-22	196.3	460.8	43%	London, Athinai, Napoli

* UK: excluding Northern Ireland and Scotland

** Hamburg is located more than 50 km from the coastline but has been added to the coastal regions

Source: Eurostat Gisco database ([reg_pjanagegr3](#), [demo_pjan](#))

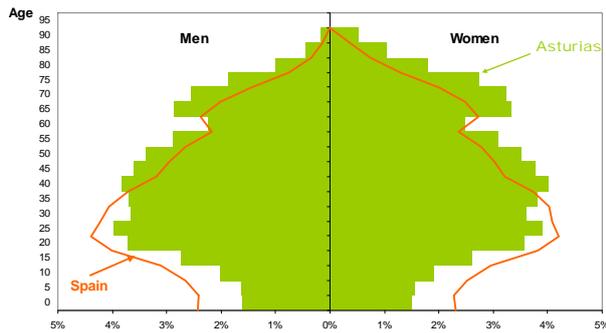
Ageing in coastal regions and attractiveness of the coastline for senior citizens

In 2007, 41 % of people aged 65 and over resided in one of the coastal regions belonging to the 22 Member States with a sea border. On average, ageing in these regions is not greater than in the total population of coastal Member States. However, the share of seniors (people aged 65 and over) compared to the national average shows a wide disparity between regions. Thus, as shown in Figure 4, in almost 60 % of coastal regions, the share of seniors is higher than the national level and in 34 % of these regions the over-representation is greater than 1.1 times the national level. Coastal regions of the United Kingdom such as East Sussex or the Isle of Wight have more than 1.4 times the national average of people aged 65 and over. This is also the case on the Belgian coast in the region of Veurne. Conversely, in the coastal region of Tulcea in Romania or in the Bulgarian region of Varna the share of seniors is about 0.88 times the national level.

Several demographic factors explain the difference in age structure between these regions and the national level. On the one hand, population ageing is due to longer life expectancy and decelerating or decreasing birth rates. But this ageing is not uniform and varies across countries and regions. On the other hand, the over-representation of seniors also originates in migratory movements to coastal regions.

In each region, the combination of these demographic factors is expressed differently. For instance, in 2007, in the Spanish coastal region of Asturias and in the French region of Pyrénées Orientales the over-representation of seniors has the same level. However, as shown in figures 2 and 3, the demographic profiles of these regions are different.

Figure 2: Age pyramid of Asturias as compared with Spain, 2001

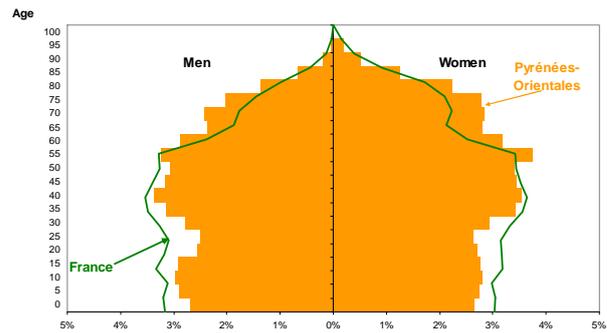


Source: Eurostat ([cens_rsmarcoh](#))

Example of Spanish coastal region of Asturias

In 2007, the share of seniors in the Spanish coastal region of Asturias was 1.3 times the national share. This over-representation of seniors is not a recent phenomenon as clearly shown in Figure 2 (2001). In fact, the pyramid highlights an over-representation of people aged 40 years and more as compared to the national level and not only an over-representation of seniors. In contrast, people aged 40 years and less and, in particular, children aged 14 years and less are under-represented in this region. Between 2001 and 2007, the population of the region remained stable. However, the two largest cities of the region, Gijon and Oviedo, gained inhabitants. At the same time, most rural areas lost inhabitants and the ageing of the population became more acute¹.

Figure 3: Age pyramid of Pyrénées Orientales as compared with France, 2007



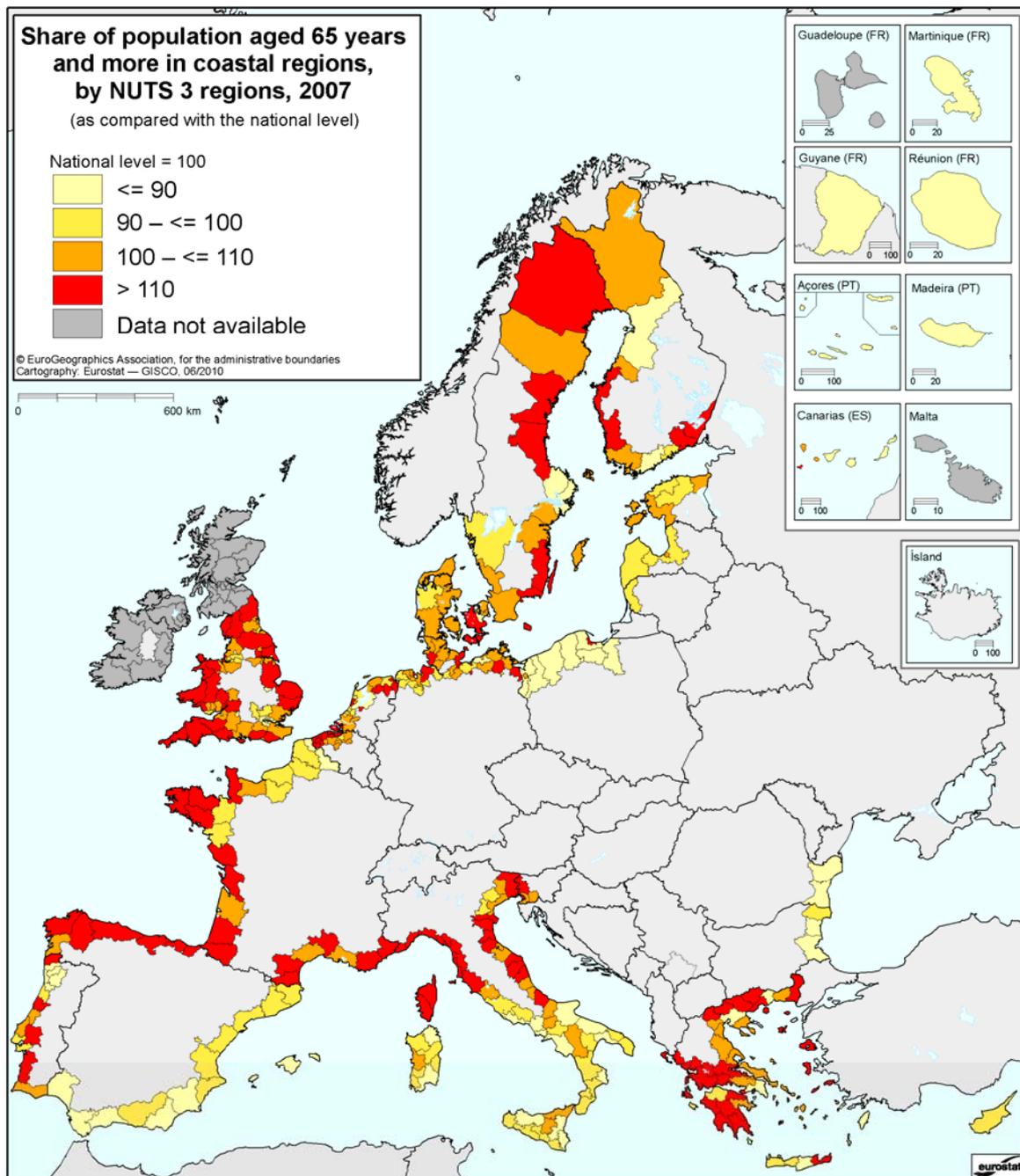
Source: Eurostat ([reg_pjanagegr3](#), [demo_pjan](#))

Example of French coastal region of Pyrénées Orientales

Seniors are also over-represented in the French department of Pyrénées Orientales, where their share is greater than 1.3 times the national level. However, as shown in Figure 3, the configuration is different from the Spanish coastal region of Asturias. Here only seniors are over-represented. Furthermore, the number of younger people in this French coastal region is increasing which has the effect of slowing down the population ageing¹.

¹ See Reference Publications

Figure 4: Share of population aged 65 years and more in coastal regions, by NUTS3 regions, 2007
As compared with the national level, national level = 100



Source: Eurostat ([reg_pjanagegr3](#), [demo_pjan](#))

Unemployment rates in coastal regions vary greatly

In 2007, as shown in Figure 5, the unemployment rate in the coastal regions as compared to the national level was highly dispersed. In half of the Belgian coastal regions, the unemployment rate is lower than 0.56 times the national level. Conversely, in half of the Romanian

coastal regions, the unemployment rates are 1.7 times higher than the national level. However, the closeness of the sea border is not systematically the most discriminating geographical factor for the relative levels of unemployment. In Italy and to a lesser extent in Spain

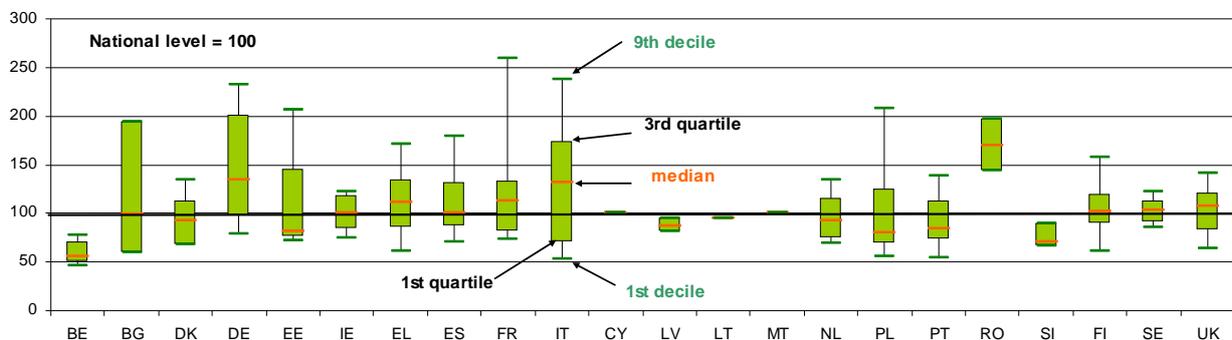
and Finland, significant differences exist between the southern and northern regions. Similarly, in Germany, the difference in unemployment is more significant between the eastern and western regions.

The three Latvian coastal regions show an unemployment rate below the national level. And at the same time, the two coastal regions of Romania are more exposed and have an unemployment rate higher than the national level.

These differences can be explained by the state of the economy, the population structure and education levels in these regions. The number of young people coming

onto the labour market or the number of older people retiring has an influence on active population and therefore on the unemployment level. Several factors can also be combined. For example, in the French outermost coastal regions, the large flow of youths into the labour market and the limited labour supply partly explains the higher unemployment rates in these regions.

Figure 5: Dispersion of unemployment rate in coastal regions, 2007
As compared with the national unemployment rate, national level = 100



Source: Eurostat ([reg_lfu3rt](#)).

Note: When 2007 data were not available, the value has been estimated with 2006 data

Example of Italian coastal regions

For 10% of the Italian coastal regions, the unemployment rate is less than 0.52 times the national level, and so in 90% of Italian coastal regions the unemployment rate is over 0.52 times the national level (**1st decile** = 52).

For 25% of the Italian coastal regions, the unemployment rate is less than 0.70 times the national level (**1st quartile** = 70).

For half of the Italian coastal regions, the unemployment rate is less than 1.31 times the national level (**median** = 131).

For 75% of the Italian coastal regions, the unemployment rate is less than 1.74 times the national level (**3rd quartile** = 174).

For 90% of Italian coastal regions, the unemployment rate is less than 2.38 times the national level (**9th decile** = 238).

Services anchored in coastal regions

In 2007, around 88 million¹ people had a job in the EU coastal regions. For the total of the coastal regions, the services sector is the biggest employer, accounting for 72 % of jobs in these regions as compared to 69 % for the total of the 22 EU coastal Member States. However, as shown in Figure 6, the structure of employment is not

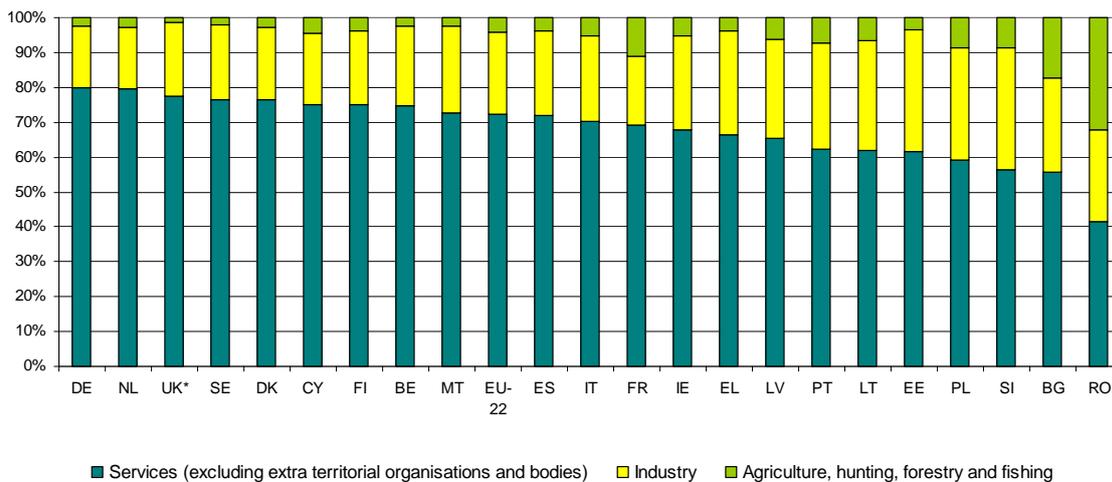
homogeneous among the coastal regions of the EU. In the Romanian coastal regions, the agricultural sector accounts for 32 % of jobs (30 % in the whole country), while it employs only 2 % of people in the Swedish coastal regions (equal to the national figure). Similarly, the service sector employs 80 % of people in Dutch

coastal regions (77% in the Netherlands) and 56% in Bulgarian coastal regions (52 % in the whole country). Thus, the employment structure varies from country to country. But also, the presence of large urban centres in a coastal region may increase the share of jobs offered in the service sector as financial and administrative services are very often in highly urbanised regions. In addition, tourist hotspots or the presence of large

harbour infrastructures will have a positive impact on the weight of the jobs in services sectors such as tourism or maritime transport.

¹ Excluding Northern Ireland, data not available

Figure 6: Employment structure in EU coastal regions, by country* and main activity branches, 2007
Ranking by share of employment in the service sector



Source: Eurostat ([reg_e3empl95](#)).

*UK: Northern Ireland not available

Tourism capacity highly dense in some areas

Tourists are occasional users of coastal regions. Consequently, they exert an additional pressure while they are staying in these coastal regions. This pressure varies in intensity among the regions but also at different times of the year.

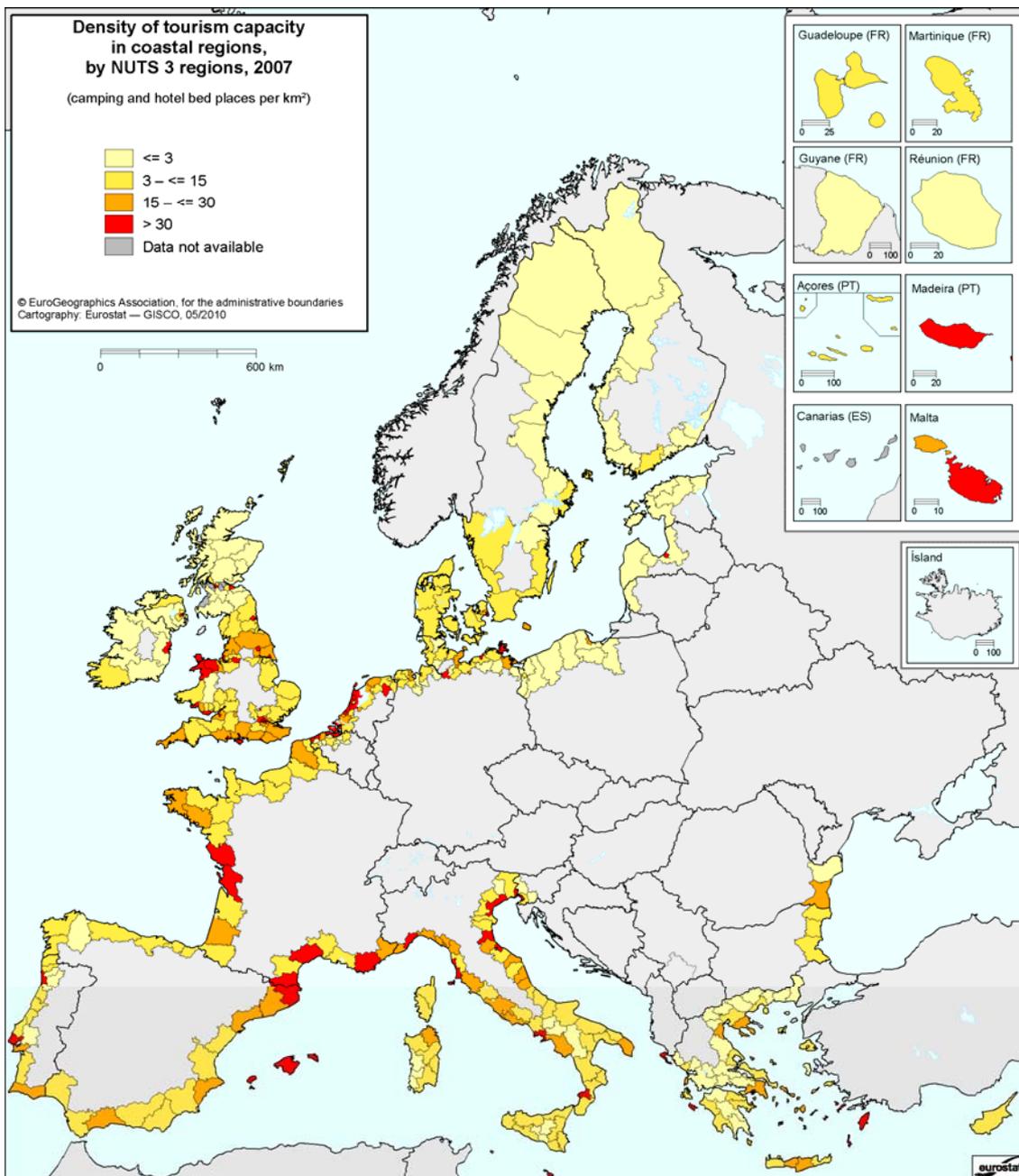
As Figure 7 shows, the density of tourism capacity is generally greater in the southern coastal regions of the EU and particularly around the Mediterranean coast as well as around the Belgian and Dutch coasts. In 2007, the density of tourism capacity in the Italian coastal region of Rimini was greater than 290 bed places per km². In contrast, the density is less than 1 bed place per km² in the Finnish region of Lappi. The higher the density of tourism capacity, the heavier the pressure can be as these regions will be able to welcome a substantial flow of tourists.

Climatic conditions and significant cultural heritage may have a positive impact on the density of tourism capacity.

Tourists can visit a coastal region for the attractiveness of the seaside, its sunny climate, particularly during the summer, but also for cultural reasons or for professional reasons.

When considering the lowest density of tourist capacity in the coastal areas of Northern Sweden and Finland, it must be taken into account that these regions have a large surface area, which mechanically decreases the density. However, the tourist density along the coasts of the Baltic Sea is on average lower than in regions located along other coastlines.

Figure 7: Density of tourism capacity in coastal regions, by NUTS 3 regions, 2007
Camping and hotel bed places per km²



Source: Eurostat ([tour_cap_nuts3](#), [reg_d3area](#))

Arrivals and departures of marine passengers are concentrated in certain regions only

In 2007, about 410 million marine passengers embarked or disembarked in the EU coastal regions. As Figure 8 shows, these inflows and outflows are concentrated in a limited number of coastal regions. In 2007, the total number of passengers per coastal region was more than 2.5 million in 40 regions only, and less than 100 000 in

more than half of the coastal regions. Thus, 77 % of marine passengers depart or arrive in only 9 % of coastal regions. The coastal areas most frequented by passengers are the coastal regions of Attiki (48 million) in Greece, the Italian coastal region of Napoli

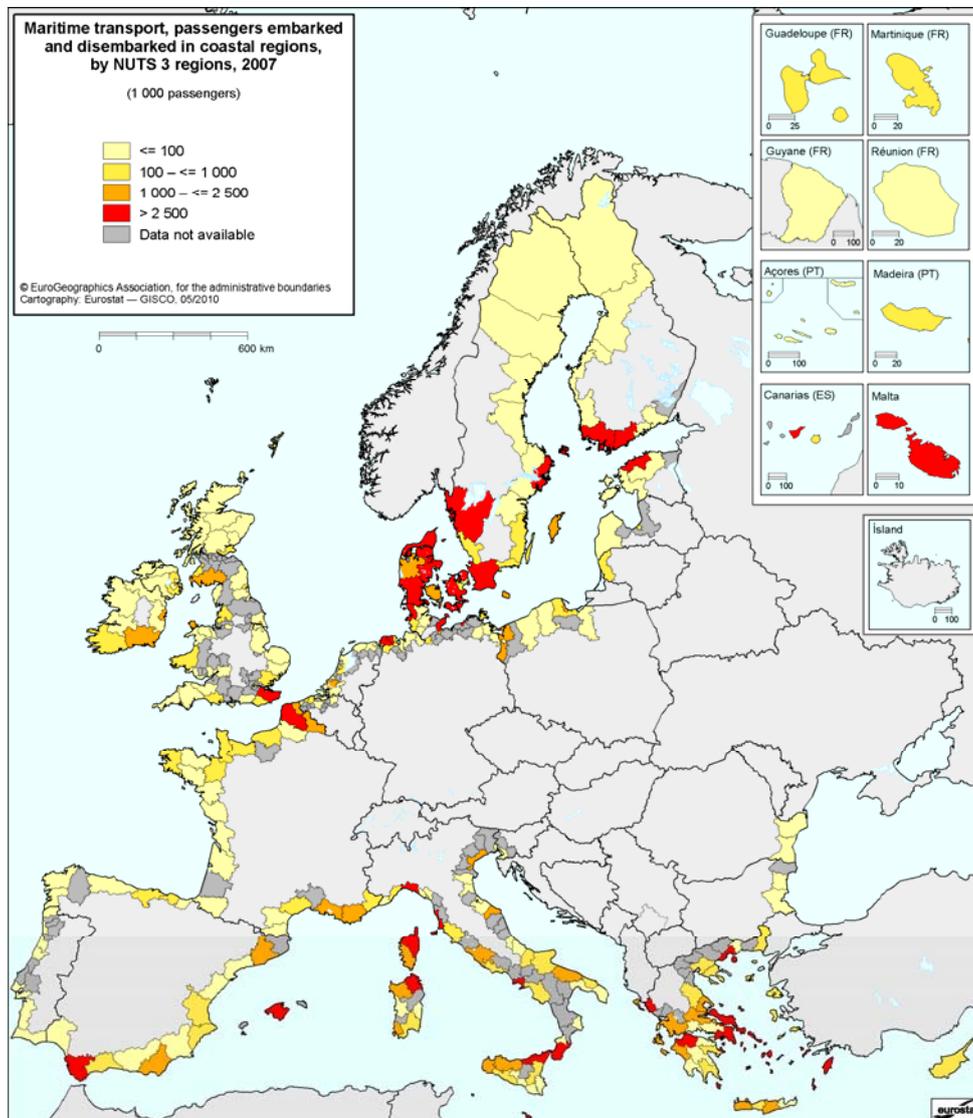
(20 million) and the coastal region of Skåne län in Sweden (15 million).

To make use of maritime transport facilities, passengers are therefore induced to go to or to cross coastal regions. However, the pressure does not necessarily increase with the number of passengers. While tourists exert an additional pressure on the coastal region where they stay, this is not always the case for marine passengers. These users may inhabit the region or simply cross it without staying there. However, the presence of tourist infrastructures in a coastal region influences the number of people frequenting it.

Figure 8 also shows a high concentration in the number of passengers in the coastal regions located fairly close

to each other. This can be explained by the density of passenger traffic for short crossings. This is particularly the case between the coastal regions of Denmark but also between them and the Swedish coastal region of Skåne län and Västra Götalands län. Similarly, although maritime transport of passengers between the UK and France is competing with either rail or air transport, the number of arrivals and departures of maritime passengers are significant between the coastal region of Kent in the United Kingdom and the French department of Pas-de-Calais. The concentration of movements is even more marked among the Maltese islands, where there are no alternative connections.

Figure 8: Maritime passengers embarked and disembarked in coastal regions, NUTS3, 1000 passengers, 2007



Source: Eurostat ([mar_pa_aa](#))

Inhabitants and visitors define the profile of coastal regions

To provide an overview of all the characteristics of these regions, a classification using the different demographic, social and economic criteria reported in the preceding paragraphs has been set up on the basis of five main classes of coastal regions. For data of availability and statistical reasons, 64 % of the coastal regions were taken into account to build this classification.

Class 1 includes the coastal regions where the demographic pressure exerted by all types of users is high. In this class are found the Danish coastal regions, most of the coastal regions of Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands, but also the Mediterranean coastal regions of south-eastern France, north-western Italy and the coastal regions of the extreme south of Spain. As shown in Table 2, this class is characterised by a high concentration of population within 50 km of the sea, over-representation of seniors, high density of tourism capacity and dense marine passenger traffic. The attractiveness of these regions for all of these users is also reflected in the significant weight of jobs in services related to residents, such as administrative and financial services.

Class 2 includes most of the coastal regions facing the hinterland. Having fewer tourists and not being much involved in maritime passenger transport, this group of regions usually shows unemployment rates lower than the national level. Industrial activities account for more jobs than in other coastal regions and these regions are

less oriented towards the service sectors. The coastal regions of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and most of the coastal regions of Estonia belong to this class, as well as coastal regions of north-west France, a big part of the coastal regions from the north and east of Spain and the Italian Adriatic coast.

Class 3 includes coastal regions more involved in primary sectors and very little oriented to the financial and administrative sectors. In these regions the share of seniors is higher than the national level. Most of these regions are Greek but Bulgarian regions are also represented.

Class 4 includes a very small number of regions with a relatively young population and highly specialised in tourism and consequently in services but also in the construction sector. Coastal island regions such as the Balearic Islands or the Greek regions of Kerkyra and Irakleio and also Portuguese coastal regions such as Grande Porto and Tâmega belong to this class.

Class 5 includes coastal regions with a lower share of seniors and where the unemployment rate is higher than the national level. The fact that the largest share of jobs is in the administrative sector can be partly explained by the difficulties of the labour market: this sector became dominant by default. In this class we find, for example, French overseas departments as well as coastal regions of southern Italy, including Sicily.

Table 3: Coastal regions profile

Characteristics	Classes				
	1	2	3	4	5
Share of population living within 50 km from the coast	+++	---	=	+	+
Density of tourism capacity (camping and hotel bed places)	++	--	-	+++	=
Share of employment in primary sector (agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing)	---	=	+++	=	=
Share of employment in industry (excluding construction)	-	+++	-	-	-
Share of employment in construction	--	=	=	+++	=
Share of employment in services (trade, repairs, hotels and restaurants, transport, etc.)	+	--	=	+++	--
Share of employment in financial services (financial intermediation, real estate, renting and business activities)	+++	-	---	-	=
Share of employment in administration, public services, defence, health and social work, etc.	+++	-	---	-	+++
Share of the population aged 65 years and more	++	=	+	---	---
Maritime transport passengers	+++	--	=	=	-
Unemployment rate as compared to the national level	-	--	=	=	+++

Source: Eurostat

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

EU coastal region

An EU coastal region is a statistical region defined at NUTS3 level, responding to one of the following criteria:

- Region with a sea border -372 correspond to this criterion-
- Region with more than half of its population within 50 km from the sea -73 regions correspond to this criterion-
- Hamburg, this German region, which does not correspond to the definition criteria, has been added to the EU coastal regions list, taking into account its strong maritime influence.

According to this definition 446 EU coastal regions have been selected. These regions belong to the 22 Member States with a coastline.

The 22 Member States with a sea border are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Population

Population data refer to the population on 1 January. For **Figure 4**, the share of people aged 65 years and over in a coastal region is compared to the share of this age group at national level.

Active population and unemployment

The active population is composed of people having a job and unemployed people.

The definitions related to active population and unemployment are the definitions used by the labour force survey.

For **Figure 5**, the unemployment rates of coastal regions are compared with the national unemployment rate.

Figure 5 shows the dispersion of these relative unemployment rates of coastal regions by country. The box plots shown in this figure are: the 1st and 9th deciles, the 1st and 3rd quartiles and the median. For example, for a given country, the 1st decile is the value such that 10% of the coastal regions of this country have a lower value and 90% have a higher value.

Employment

The employment data used in **Figure 6** come from the branch accounts (ESA95). These data refer to total employment, i.e. both wage earners and self-employed.

Maritime transport passengers

Maritime transport data are collected by ports. For **Figure 8**, the data were aggregated by coastal regions. Data related to ports located outside the coastal regions

and groups of other ports have not been taken into account.

The number of maritime transport passengers include embarked and disembarked passengers as well as cruise passengers. For cruise passengers, ports of call during the cruise are not taken into account.

Classification — profiles

The profiles of coastal regions have been obtained with a *Hierarchical Ascending Classification* using quantitative reduced data of these regions. Among the 446 coastal regions, 153 did not contribute to the classification process because of missing data and 6 regions were excluded because of their great specificity.

The variables involved in the classification process are:

- Share of population within 50 km from the coastline,
- Share of people aged 65 years and more as compared with the national level,
- Unemployment rate as compared with the national level,
- Shares of employment in the main activity branches,
- Density of tourism capacity,
- Maritime passengers embarked and disembarked.

The strategy used for this classification is **Ward's method**. At each step of the algorithm, two regions or two groups of regions are aggregated. The aggregation chosen is the one which causes the smallest decrease in interclass inertia. This means that the two regions or the two groups of regions will be aggregated if they are the nearest neighbours. At the end of the process, the result is a classification tree. The main branches of the tree correspond to a class of coastal regions. The classes obtained in this way include coastal regions that have the closest characteristics without, however, being identical.

Table 2 presents the characteristics of the different classes obtained. However, one region may belong to a class without matching all its features but only a majority of them.

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Nomenclature of territorial units (NUTS)

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/nuts_classification

Eurostat – SiF n° 47/2009 – [Nearly half of the population of EU countries with a sea border is located in coastal regions](#)

INSEE – [Repères chiffres](#) n°10 avril 2008

INE - [INE database - Demography and population](#)

Further information

Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on "Regional statistics"

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

Select "Regional demographic statistics"

More information about "Regional statistics"

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/introduction

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Manuscript completed on: 08.07.2010

Data extracted on: 01.03.2010

ISSN 1977-0316

Catalogue number: KS-SF-10-038-EN-N

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