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Abstract:

The part of WP 4 that is being worked on at present focuses on how location matters in the relation between policies aimed at promoting economic growth and social well-being and the context of local territorial cohesion. It is based on the hypothesis that local conditions such as territorial cohesion, here broken down to the elements of patterns of collective efficacy, governance and the capacity of the community sector to engage are often neglected conditions impacting on the way that policy programmes are able to alleviate inequalities and generate economic growth and social well-being.

The claim guiding this part of the project is that the elements of territorial cohesion could impact both in a positive sense by boosting local innovation and ownership of forms of intervention, and in a more problematic sense by creating local inertia and resistance to local development and sustainable change. A cross-national comparison of territorial cohesion in different types of areas and related to different scales (Rural, Suburban, Metropolitan) has been conducted in order to develop knowledge about these relations, which will form the basis of policy recommendations. It is central to explore how citizen involvement is a contribution to strategic development sustainable economic growth and how this relates to territorial cohesion. Hence, interviews with stakeholders, civil society representatives and citizens focused on the relation between local attachment and participation in policy programmes. The data material consists of interviews in 21 localities. In each locality, 20 interviews have been conducted with stakeholders and engaged citizens focusing on firstly the themes of local attachment and cultural interaction at a local scale, secondly on experiences of policy programmes and strategies to create economic growth.

The preliminary findings call for redefining territorial scale and the way it is used in academic analyses and policy programmes that seek to alleviate territorial inequality and generate economic growth and social cohesion. These new units must be flexible and meaningful so they are able to capture the specificities of localities and through this process to grasp the way place matters at different scales. We must be aware that local scale is as much a matter of relatedness to place and turbulence, as it is a matter of density and it is therefore important to have flexible and meaningful classifications when working with conditions that influence the way that policy programmes are able to alleviate territorial inequalities and generate economic growth and social cohesion. Thus, the new units must not be pre-given uniform but instead result in a locations-sensitive typology that are able to underpin the development of place-sensitive policies. The units have to be able to grasp places as a result of an interrelation between micro-relatedness to place and macro-relations. Therefore, it is important to pay attention on the way social relations tie to place and how this attachment is of great importance in understanding local dynamics that are often neglected. These new units will ensure that it is the boundaries of the territorial challenges that determine the approaches and solutions applied rather than administrative boundaries.

Keyword list:

Scale, Scale-related issues, flexible and meaningful units, patterns of collective efficacy.

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1 Introduction

Since Policy brief no.3, the COHSMO-project has conducted case studies in the selected 21 specific case-locations – one rural, one sub-urban and one metropolitan location in each of the participating countries. 20 qualitative interviews has been conducted in each locality and divided across different types of important local actors: 5 with entrepreneurs and business-actors, 5 with community-actors and 10 with governance-actors, which amounts to a total of 210 COHSMO-interviews. Data has been condensed, and gently analyzed and delivered as D 4.4 and the COHSMO-team has started the subsequent tasks that are to result in D4.5, which is a discourse analysis of collected policy-documents from the case areas, and regional scales: policy strategy documents, reports, local documents generated by local stakeholders and evaluation reports from each case area. The principal idea is to provide a critical overview of current discourses which inform policy, in particular how territorial cohesion is constructed (or not constructed) as a relevant object and if it is at what scale and to locate scope and relevant scale of policies in terms of territorial cohesion. Focus is on analysing policy documents and strategies and on identifying symbolic, innovative spearhead projects and approaches. Further, the policy analysis should, together with D4.4, result in Task 4.10 (topic list for the 3x5 interviews with policy makers, to be conducted in autumn 2019). Summing up – the COHSMO-project is in the midst of the analyzing process of the Work Package 4. Thus, Policy Brief no. 4 reports some of the crosscutting findings and some of the methodological reflections that the analysis until now has resulted in. The results of the critical discourse-analysis will be presented, further elaborated on and tested in the coming phases of the COHSMO-project.

1.1 Policy brief No. 4



INEQUALITY, URBANIZATION AND TERRITORIAL COHESION:
DEVELOPING THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEMOCRATIC CAPACITY

European POLICY BRIEF 4

Bridging the gap between territorial, economic and social cohesion calls for flexible and meaningful units that are able to capture the specificities of localities and through this process to grasp the way place matters at different scales.

From the COHSMO case studies, it can be seen that many locations are suffering from a lack of coherence between the policies made at different governance levels and the responsibility of the local units. Central actors, structures and flows are not related to overall structures and relations of regions in a coherent and consistent way. Overlapping boundaries across different governmental levels confuses local responsibility, finances and implementation of policies and is an obstacle for bridging the gap between territorial, economic and social cohesion.

There is a need for redefining territorial scale and the way it is used in academic analyses and policy programmes that seek to alleviate territorial inequality and generate economic growth and social cohesion. We need to consider if boundaries are drawn by policy administrations in meaningful ways. Moreover, the analysis raises reflections on how social relations tie to locations in varied ways and are maintained in specific localities. Methodologically, this implies a need for identifying geographical units and boundaries that allows for more robust and accurate comparisons between locations.

How and Why

In order to understand the compound dimensions of territorial cohesion it is necessary to bridge the gap between economic, political and social perspectives and to be aware that (local) scale is as much a matter of relatedness to place, and turbulence as it is a matter of density. Place does not just matter as an arbitrary matter of number of inhabitants. The COHSMO case studies identifies a clear need for more meaningful and flexible place-based classification principles when working with conditions that influence the way that policy programmes are able to alleviate territorial inequalities and generate economic growth and social cohesion. This problem relates to the ESPON based boundaries of NUTS (Nomenclature Des Unités Territoriales Statistiques) level 1, 2 and 3 and to the boundaries of LAU (Local Administrative Units) but also to boundaries based on national place-based classification-principles as they are suffering from the same lack of flexibility and danger of losing meaningfulness. The risk is that the administrative boundaries rather than the boundaries of the territorial challenges determine the approaches and solutions applied.

So far, we have recommended a pragmatic distinction between *comparability* and *conjunction* in order to meet scale-related differences. Comparability where cases are alike and units are uniform (narrow, rigorous, well-known repetitive units); Conjunction where cases are related, back each other up and justify each other (develop or evolving each other's differences). There are no pre-given uniform units and one of the envisioned results of the project is to point to new and more useful (meaningful) smaller units. Due to different administrative principles, unequal degrees of devolution of competences or differences in constitutions, e.g. federal states versus unity states, any attempt to compare local political room for maneuver will experience major difficulties. Moreover, the simple fact that some countries are relatively small in terms of population and others relative large, e.g. compare Italy or United Kingdom to Denmark or Lithuania, further complicate comparisons. Such conditions are a part of reality.

However, the differentiation between *comparability* and *conjunction* is not sufficient in order to solve the problem in an exhaustive way. Even though the motto of the European Union “united in Diversity” in a way might be reflected by it, there is a need to get beyond and develop units and boundaries that are both more flexible and more meaningful.

This is why it is significant that the COHSMO project by the end of the research process results in a location-sensitive typology that is able to underpin the development of place-sensitive policies. This typology has to be able to grasp places as different according to the social features that relate to them. At the same time, it has to be able to grasp places as a result of an interrelation between micro-relatedness to place and macro-relations such as economic growth, social inequality, democratic capacity, social investment and policy development – all with a differentiated approach to how place matters.

How social relations tie to place

In order to uncover the social features that relate to place it is very important to pay attention to the way social relations tie to place and how this attachment is of great importance in understanding local dynamics both related to resilience and austerity.

It is based on the hypothesis that local conditions such as territorial cohesion here broken down to the elements of patterns of local attachment, identity and interaction between groups are often neglected conditions impacting on the way that policy programmes are able to alleviate inequalities and generate economic growth and social well-being. Based on comparative results according to the dimensions of territorial capital, collective efficacy and territorial governance these dimensions appear to be intertwined in different ways in the different localities and in varying degrees related to degrees of austerity measures in the national context. The different types of locations are facing different types of territorial problems, have different territorial capital and different levels of collective efficacy.

A strong example on these local social relations from COHSMO-case study can be found in the suburban case of Italy and Denmark. Here local alliances of actors within local government, business and civil society has initiated and organized local networks actively working on creating and maintaining activity, (physical) investments and jobs locally. These networks has a strong local identity and are keen take a joint-responsibility and to some extend also to raise capital for the further development of the location. Similar examples has been found in rural cases and to some extend in metropolitan cases but these still need further analysis in order to be robust knowledge. By now rural locations appears to be small effective units that has a high capacity to mobilize and to act but with a limited capacity to address all types of problems within the wide range of problems that these locations are facing especially related to demographic decline. In metropolitan cases issues of demographic turbulence much more seem to be a problem especially related to the level of collective efficacy.

Tentative crosscutting issues in the material

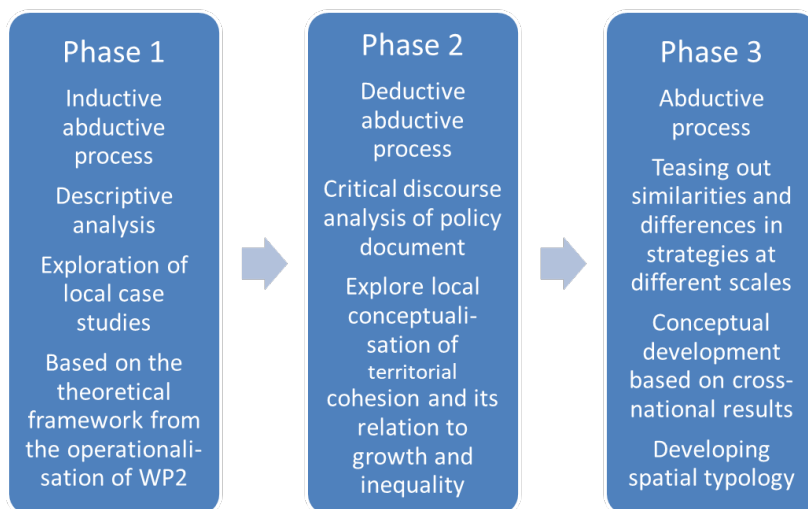
- Competitiveness and growth policies have a dominant role in territorial development.
- Issues of balanced growth and social sustainability have to be coupled with infrastructure, which is where the territorial funding is focused.
- Issues of demographic turbulence and segregation set the direction of policy visions regarding territorial development.
- Informal governance processes based on interlocking networks play a significant role in strategic territorial development.
- Complex relations of belonging and local identities are the basis of these interlocking networks and governance alliances.
- There is potential to develop especially collaboration between business and civic sectors further in many case localities as successful collaboration between active communities and business seems a recipe for cohesive development. Case localities show that such collaboration in many instances is facilitated and supported by pro-active and agile local governance.
- In especially the metropolitan case localities, territorial governance is not aligned with the functional regions challenging metropolitan answers to territorial problems.
- Both strong traditions for collaborating horizontally across sectors of municipal governance and business, and problems of lack of joining up issues and developing policy bundles and political capacity for dealing with crosscutting territorial issues.
- Scale is used strategically, and the strategic capacity of local governance is improving in many case localities. Resulting in policy innovations and new directions from both small areas and metropolitan cases.
- Regional governance play varying roles. In some instances regional governance and EU funding supports policy focus on balanced development and social cohesion. However, in many case localities EU funding and regional development strategies focus on entrepreneurial development and infrastructure and not aligned with the needs of local communities.
- In case localities marked by austerity measures structural conditioned access to central welfare services is of major importance for developing spatial justice and territorial cohesion.

Next steps in COHSMO

Currently, the COHSMO-team are working on identifying the best way to, on one hand, analyse the most relevant documents for each case within the most relevant policy themes for the locality while on the other hand incorporating cross-cutting policy themes to allow for comparison across countries and cases. This is a methodological issue but it reflects the challenges of scale and of working within and across contexts at the same time.

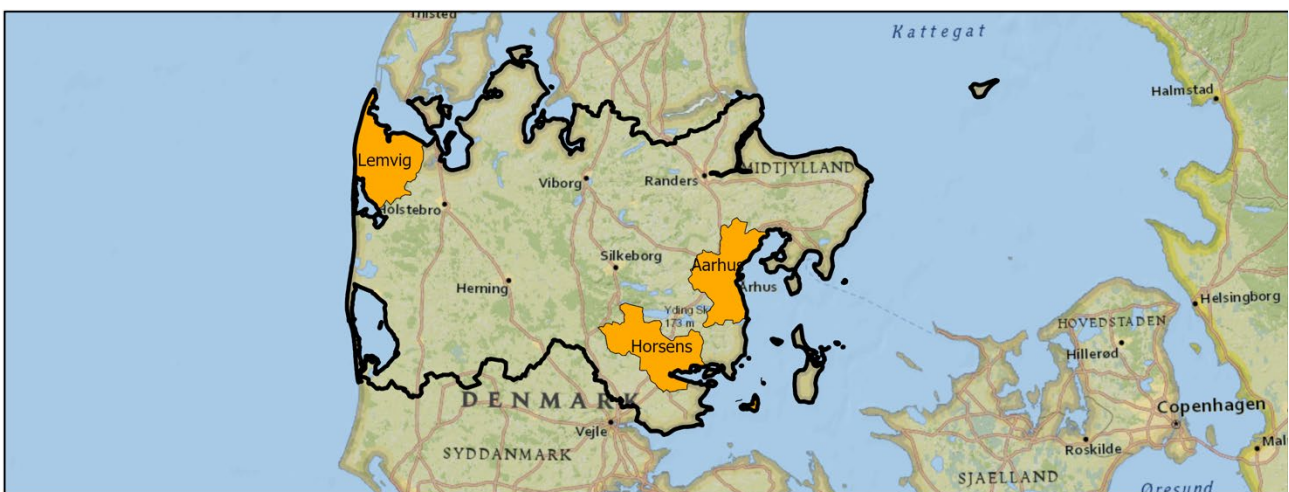
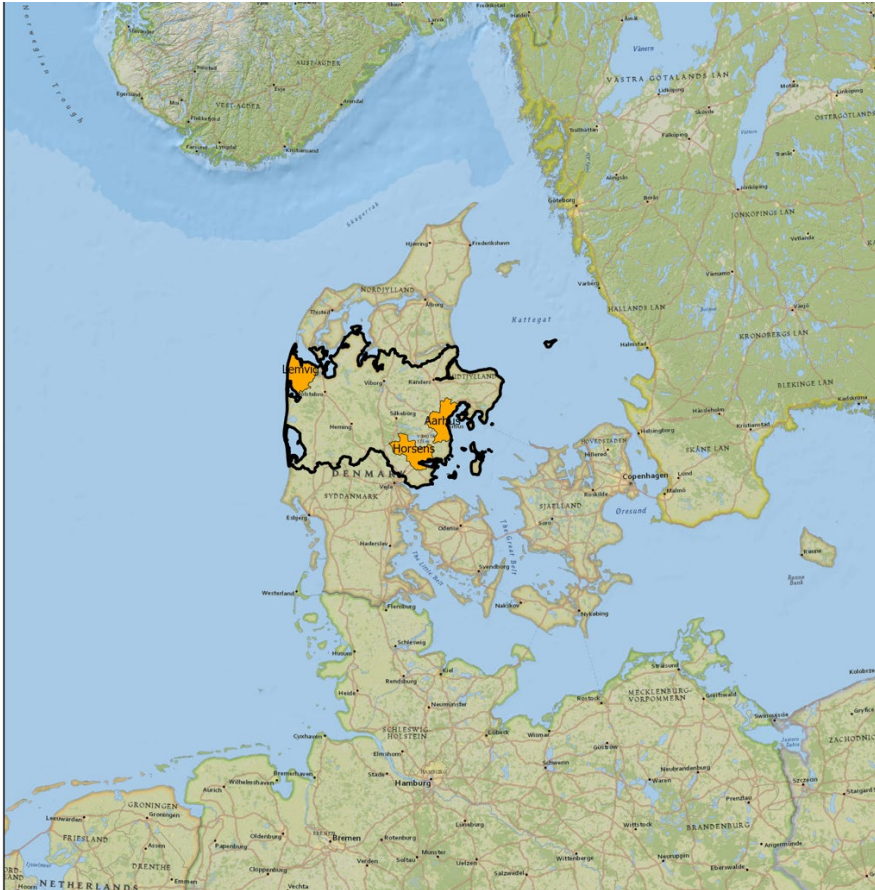
Within the coming months, the data-collecting process related to the case-locations will end and the analytical process will move into a more systematic process of data crunching and interpretation in order to reach a framework of validated and empirically grounded conclusions. The analytical phases will be deductive and based on the theoretical clarifications from WP2 as well as inductive and data-driven aiming at establishing concepts grounded in the narratives from the field. The ultimate objective of this process is the construction of a location-sensitive typology.

Analytical phases in WP4

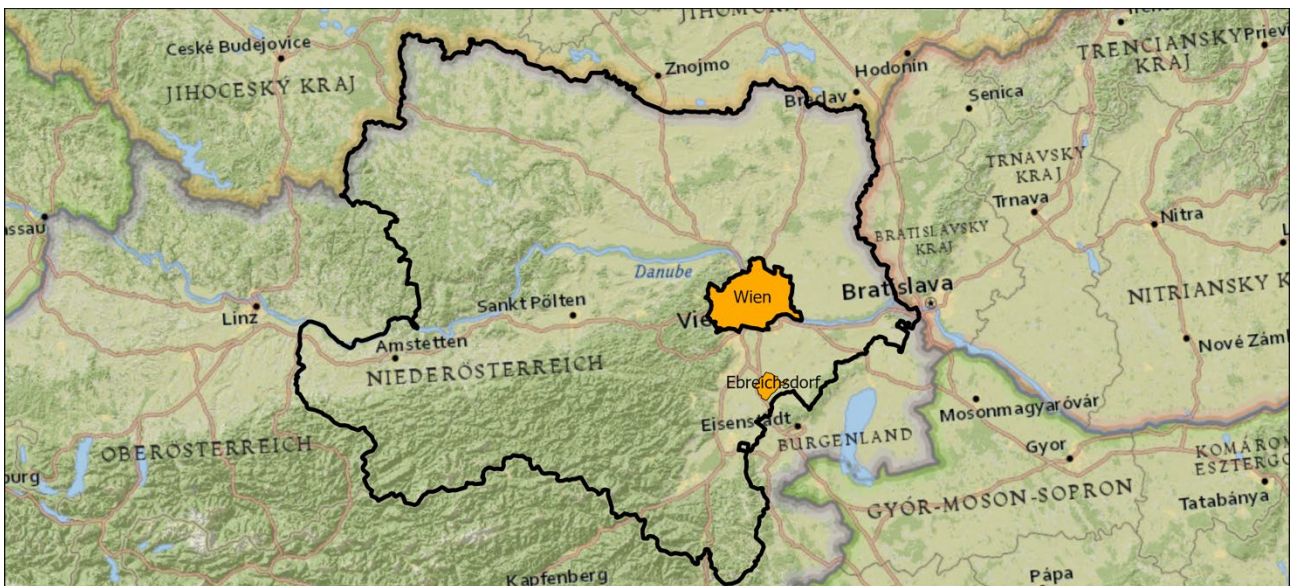
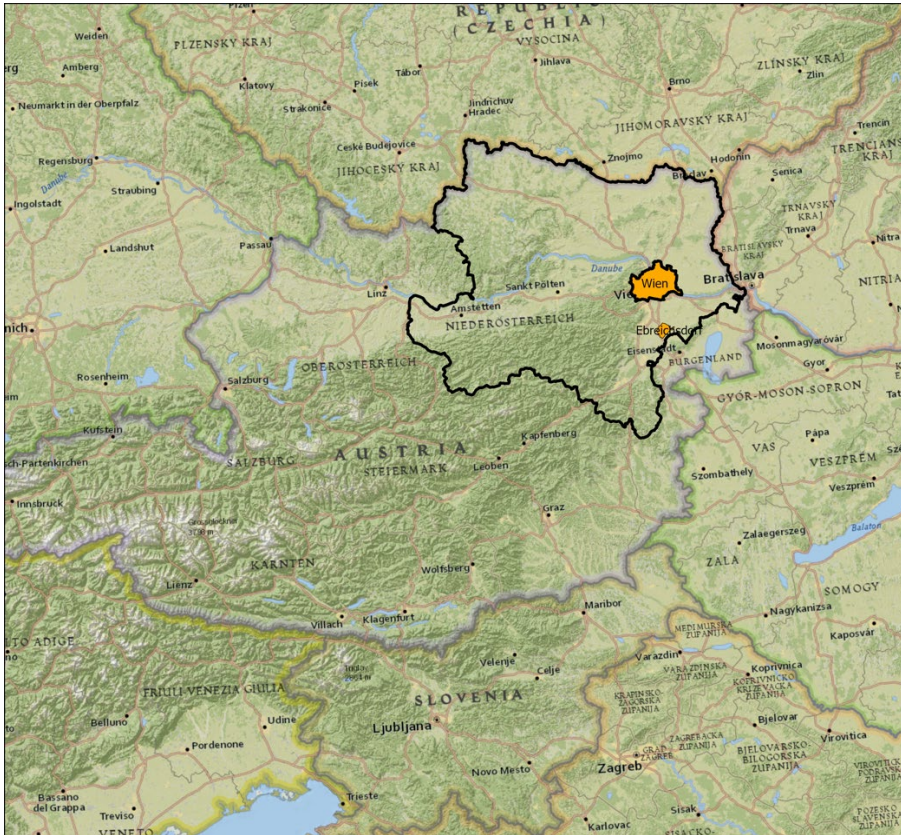


The 21 COHSMO-case-locations consist of seven rural, seven suburban and seven metropolitan locations:

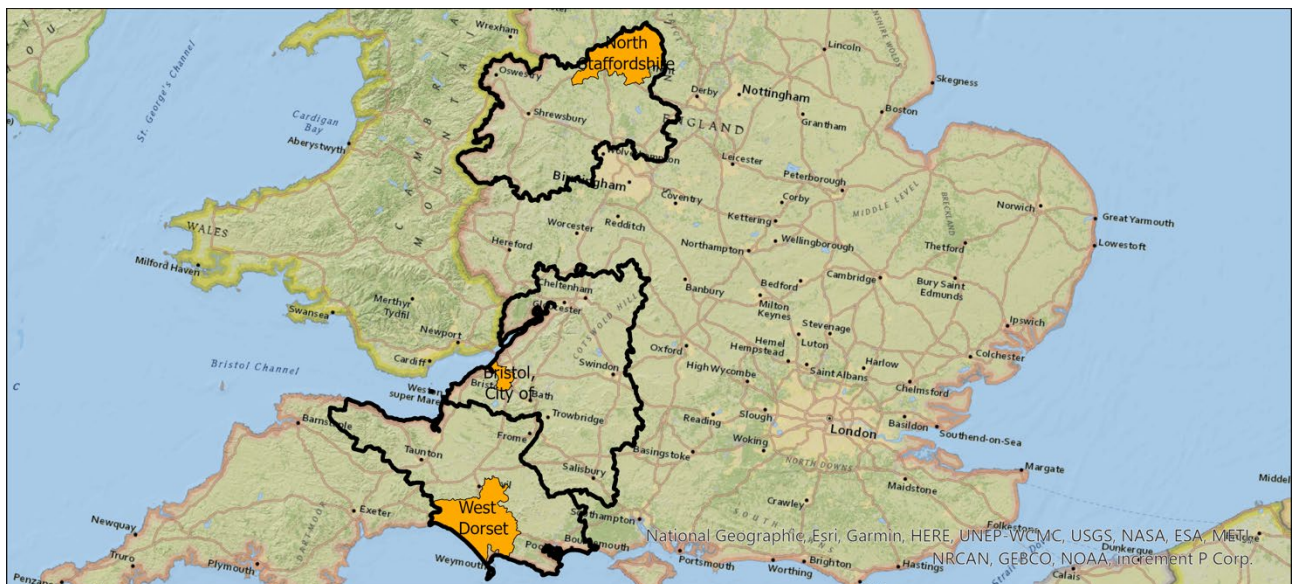
In Denmark – Århus, Horsens and Lemvig



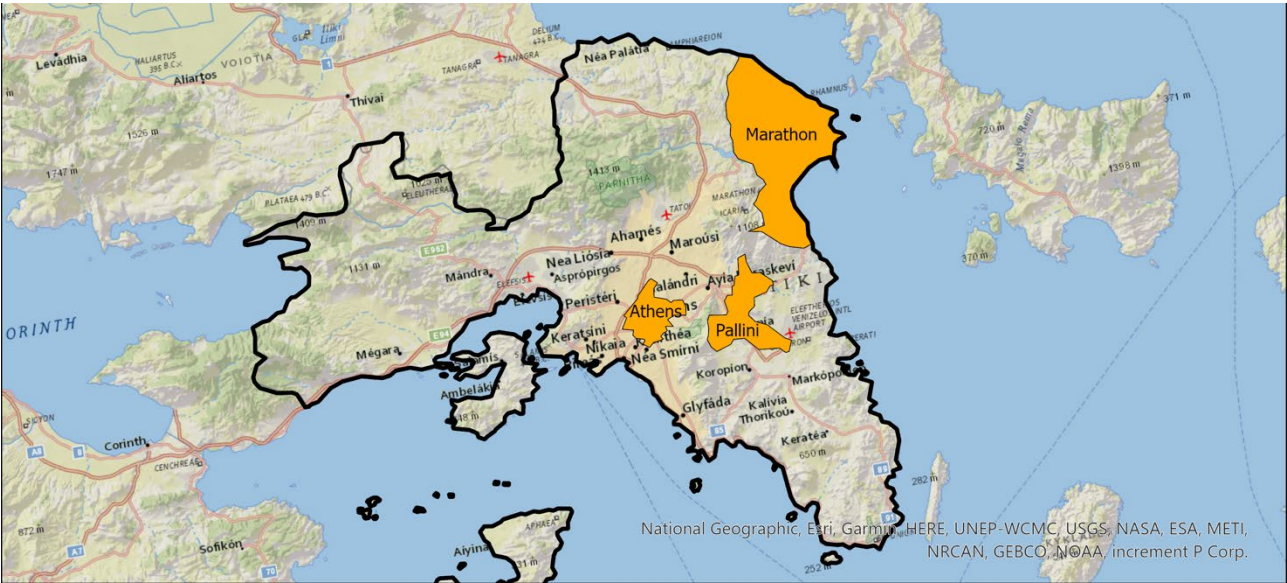
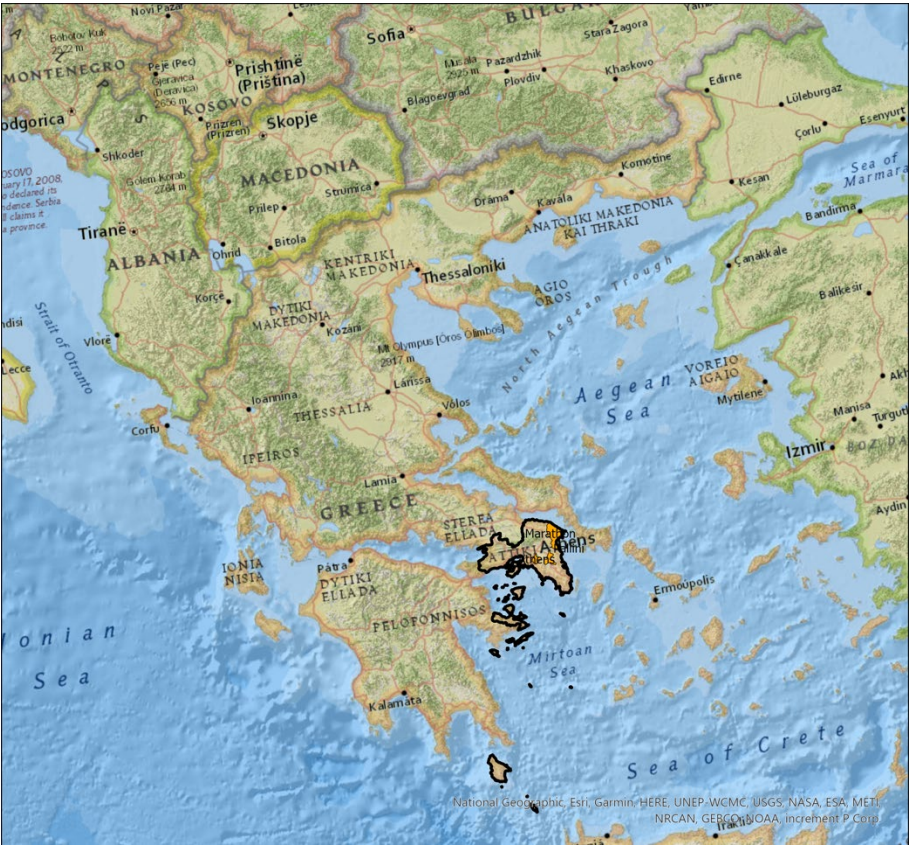
In Austria – Vienna, Ebreichsdorf (Kleinregion Ebreichsdorf), Kleinregion Waldviertler Kernland



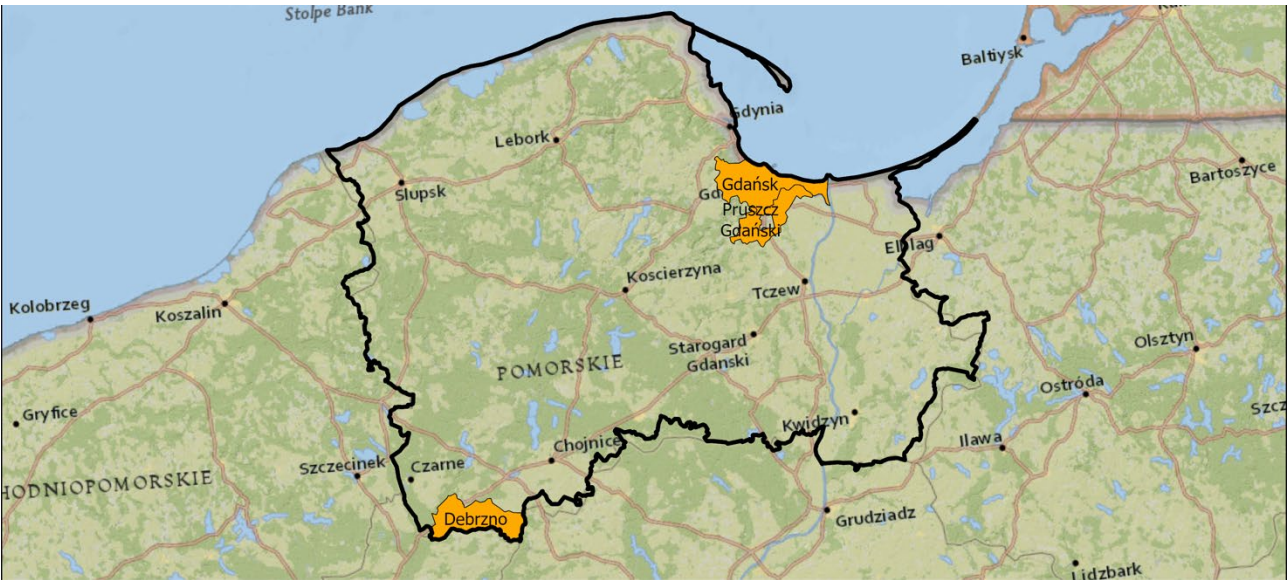
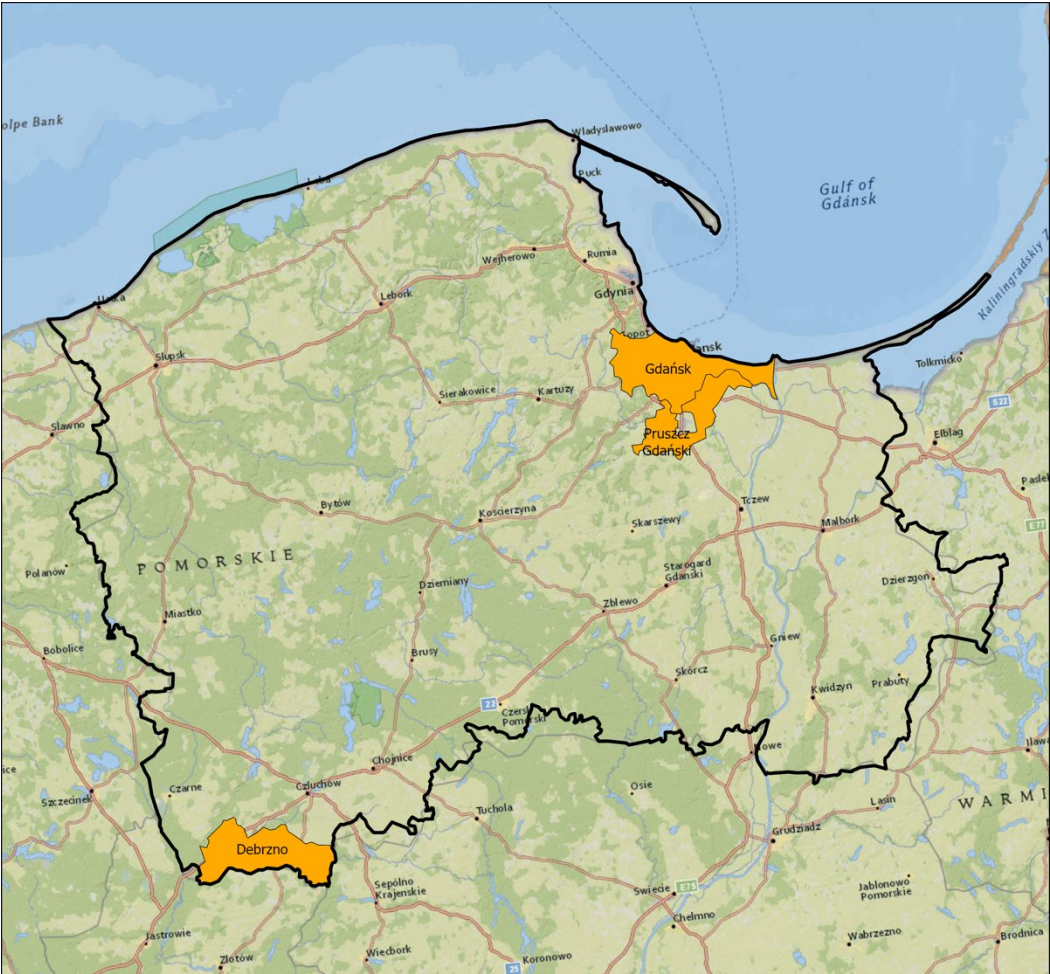
United Kingdom – Bristol, North Staffordshire, West Dorset



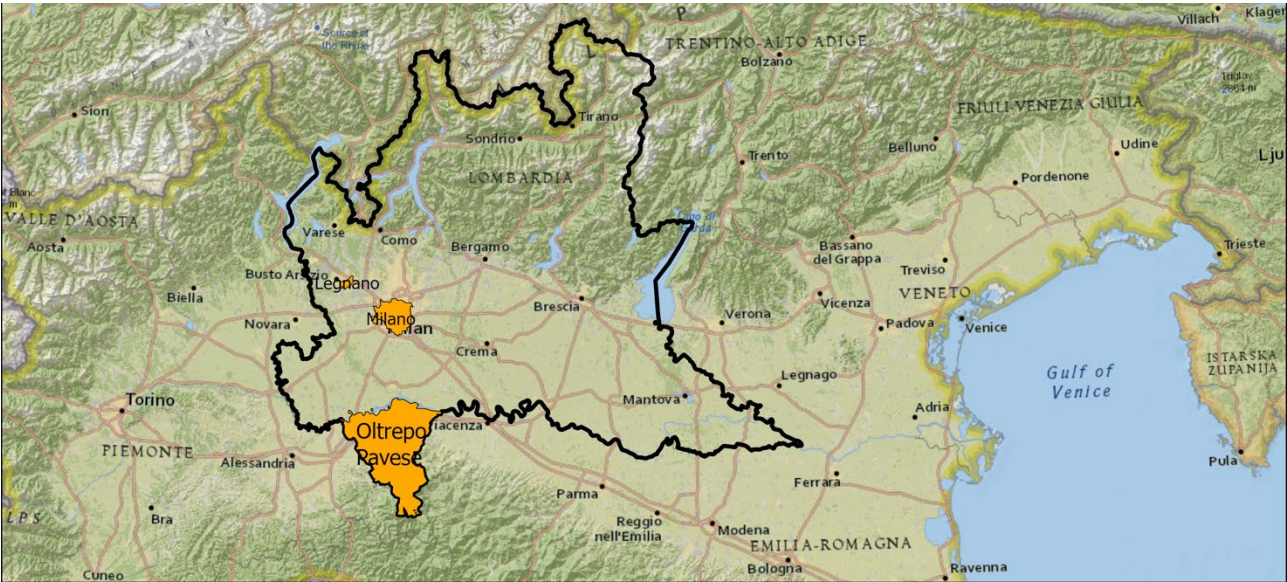
Greece – Athens, Pallini/Peania, Marathon



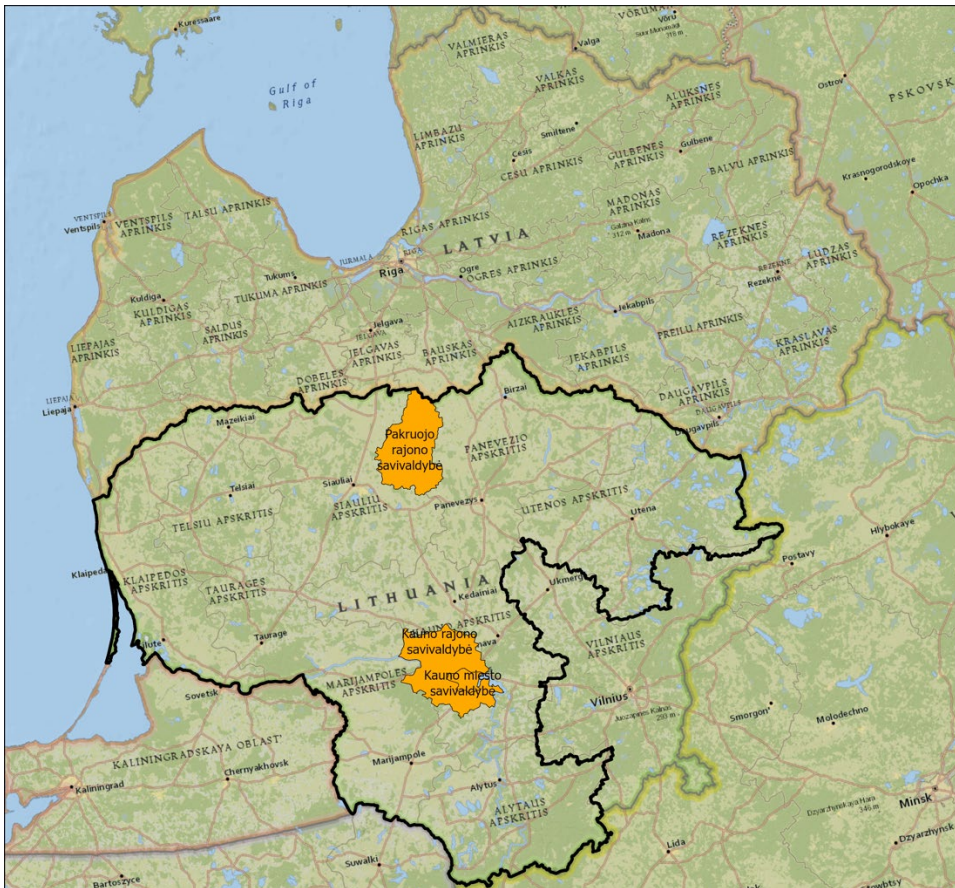
Poland – Gdansk (Urban), Pruszcz Gedanski (Suburban), Debrzno (rural)



Italy – Milan (Urban), Legnano (Sub-Urban), Oltrepo Pavese (Rural)



Lithuania – Kaunas (Urban), Kaunas District Municipality (Sub-urban), Pakruojis (Rural)



Project Identity

H2020, Grant agreement No 727058

Project Name

COHSMO

Coordinator

Hans Thor Andersen, Aalborg University

Consortium

AAU – Aalborg University, The Danish team (Leading COHSMO)

UW – Uniwersytet Warszawski, The Polish team

POLIMI – Politecnico di Milano, The Italian team

UWE – University of the West of England, Bristol, The British team

UNIVIE – Universität Wien, The Austrian team

VMU – Vytautas Magnus University, The Latvian team

HUA – Harokopio University, The Greek team

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