

Session 9: Ripensare la città nell'era delle crisi multiple: tra trasformazioni e resistenze



New Perspectives on European Spatial Development: a response to geopolitical subjectivism

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Why speaking about a new ESDP

- territorial diversity was/is the base of Cohesion Policy and of EU open coordination method
- open coordination method encouraged and stressed subjective political characteristics more than common attitudes
- subjective political characteristics (no coordinated) have replaced geopolitical ones in Western democracies
- territorial subjectivism prevailed over territorial and urban cohesion
- cooperative and inclusive approach in cities based on sustainability is now in crisis

Then:

- since ESDP has been **the** cohesive perspective of a real territorial/political/economic integration by spatial planning (for which the EU has not responsibility)
- a renewed ESDP towards 2030 might sustain the overcoming of political/territorial subjectivism facing this polycrisis period

European urban leadership is in crisis: role of cities and regions

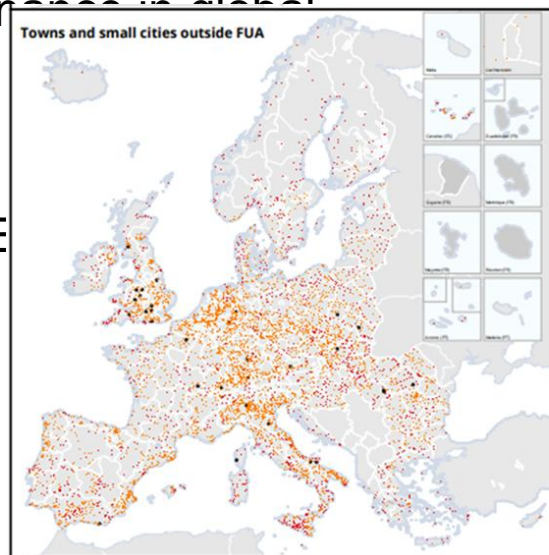
- Cities as drivers of competitiveness
- Decline in the collective urban role
- Obsolescence and overcoming of MEGA city models
- Growth of medium-sized and intermediate cities in metro areas and of polycentric networks

But

- The challenge of urban governance in a global competition is weak

Then

National diversity pops up in UE



Towns and cities and their functional connectivity

Towns and cities

- Very large city
- Large city
- Medium-sized city
- Small city
- Town

Functional connectivity

- Within metropolitan FUA
- Within small or medium-sized FUA
- Outside FUA
- Outside FUA, remote



New multiple Pentagon: Prezioso, 2025 revisiting Müller, Gödecke-Stellmann, 2000

III Scenarios (2014) toward 2050

3 scenarios hypothesis of programming in 2014 (A-B-C) and ESDP provisional models:

- Scenario B (second-tier cities and towns): 2.30% of yearly growth
- Scenario A (large metropolis): 2.20% of yearly growth
- Scenario C (rural and social reallocation): 1.80%

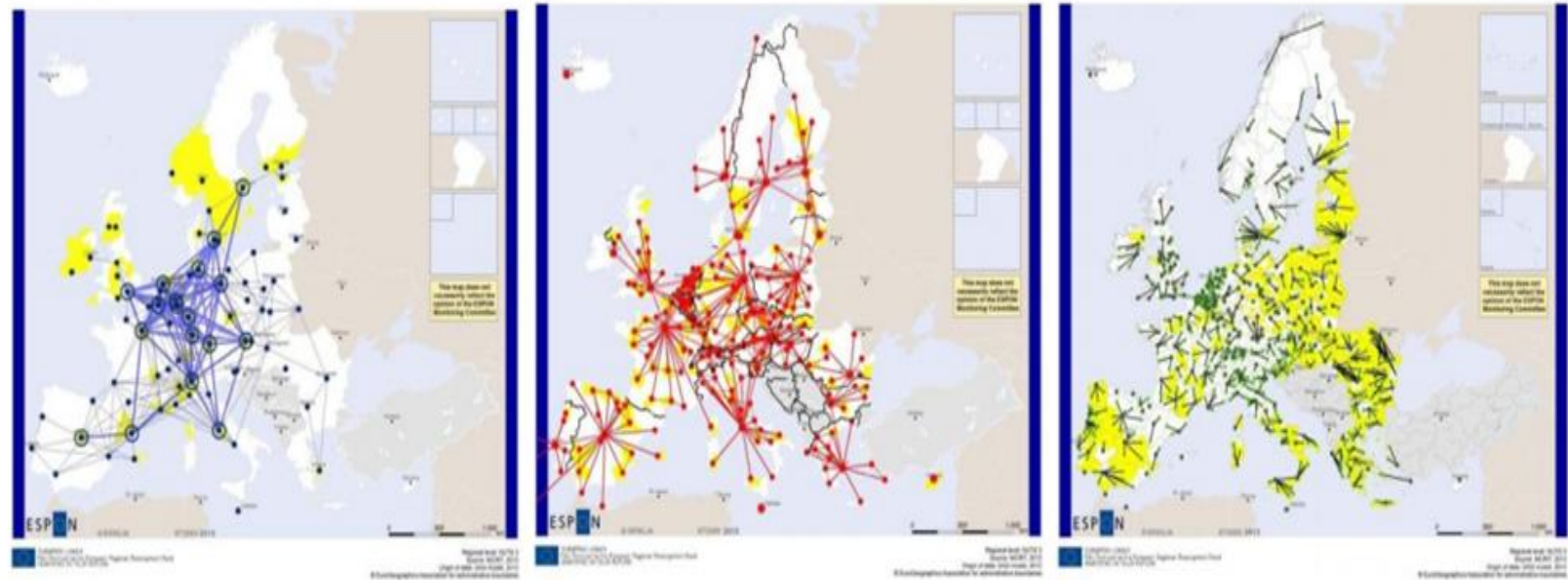


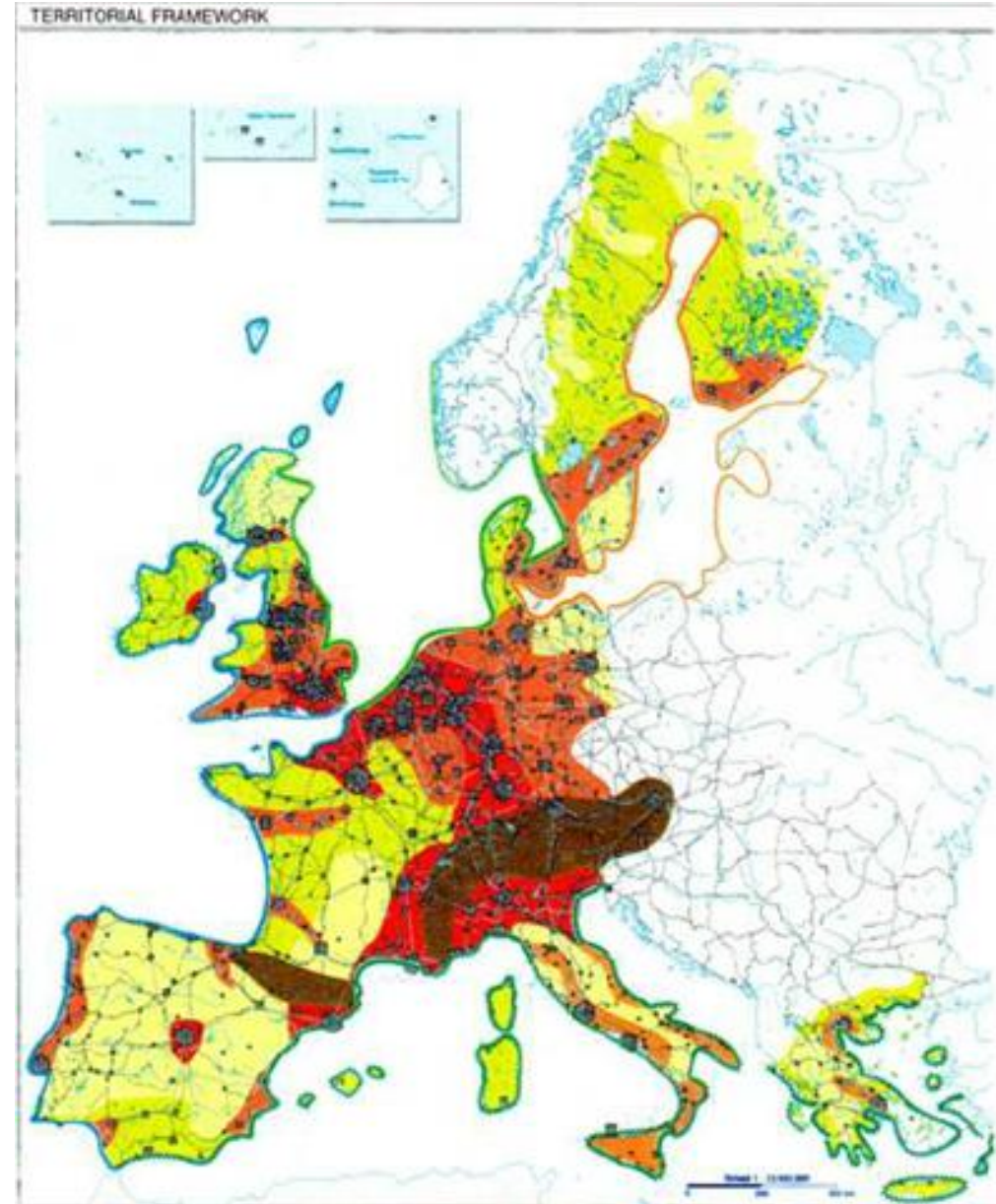
Illustration 5 Territorial Strategies towards 2050 (A, B and C)

The impact and role of territorial capital on competitiveness was stressed

ESPON, 2014

2

An unpublished map made during the preparation of the first ESDP



Zonneveld, 2011

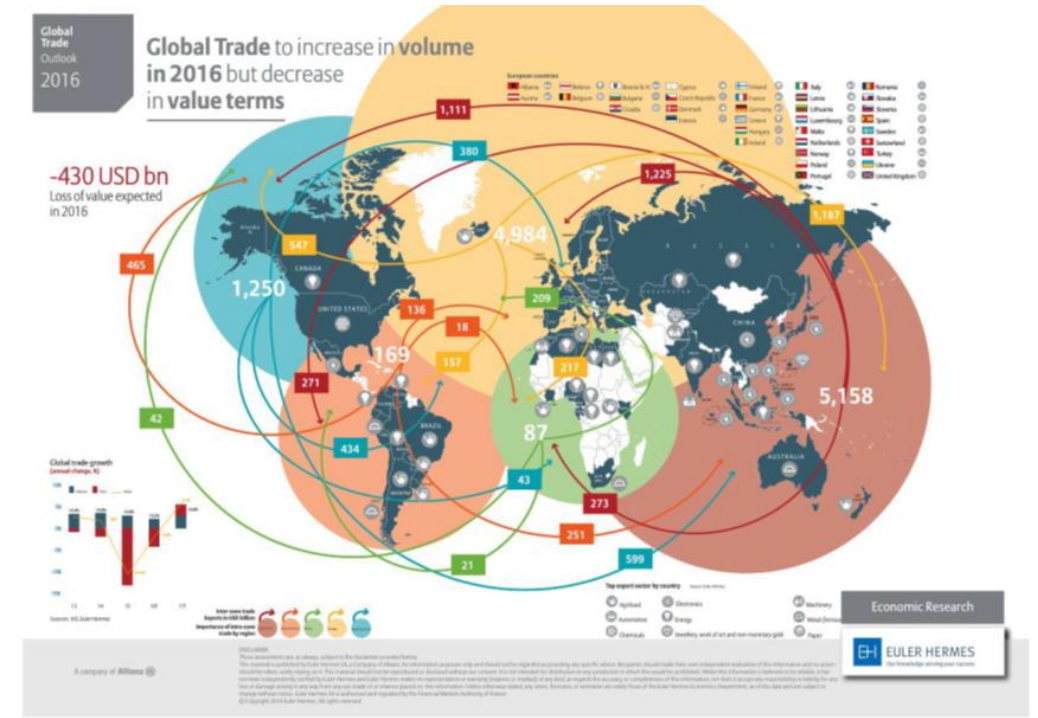
Subjectivism evolution: from strategic city to urban tapestry

- **2014-2016:** Cities as drivers of sustainable competitiveness (NL); Cities for a better future in employment and quality of life (DG Regio), Urban Agenda (NL) with priority themes for a new form of master plan; Quito Habitat III Conference; European city obsolescence: a future not in MEGAs, or in polycentric system of medium-sized cities, or in a 'robust' model of intermediate cities (Science PO, OECD, ESPON); cities no longer collective actors in the network and the charm of their governance as increasingly blurred (FR); European city opposed to the American one (market, mobility, specialization, inequality) (IT)
- **2017-2019:** behind urban liveability: smart/digital (LT), sustainable polycentric planning (BG), Green Economy (RO); digitalisation, circular collaborative economy and just transition (ES)
- **2020-2022:** Territorial Agenda (GE); Sustainable Spatial Planning and Climate Change adaptation (Circular Economy and Carbon Footprint); DNSH, New Taxonomy.
- **2023-2025** and post: urban tapestry and Cohesion crisis moving between finance, economy, urban/town planning
- **Emergency!**: reconcile the disconnect between territorial/urban policies, finance and the real economy facing the geopolitical impacts (wars, duties, CC, ...)

Critical issues in policy: divisions and crises of cohesion

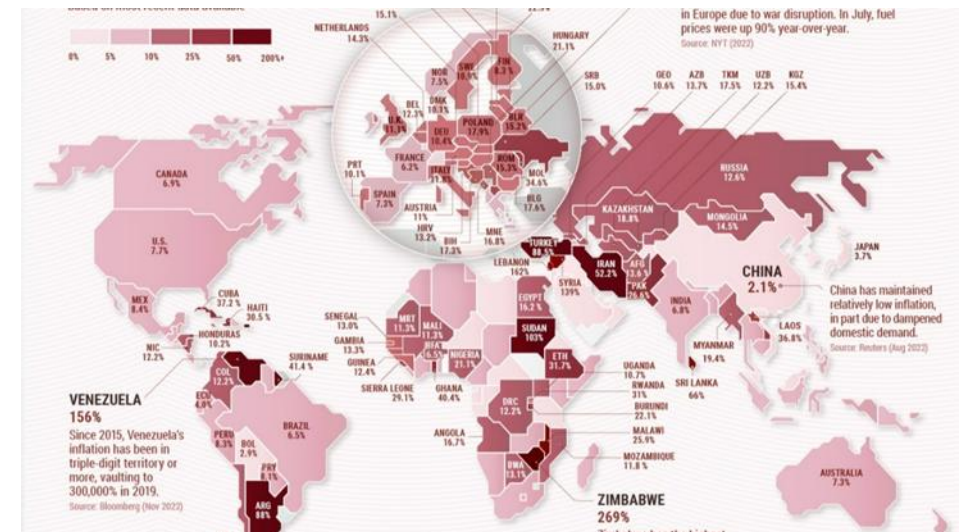
(Global trade 2016 and 2022 by IMF)

- Disconnection between economic and territorial policies
- Crisis of the European model driven by the global market
- Return of restrictive policies post-2025



Then

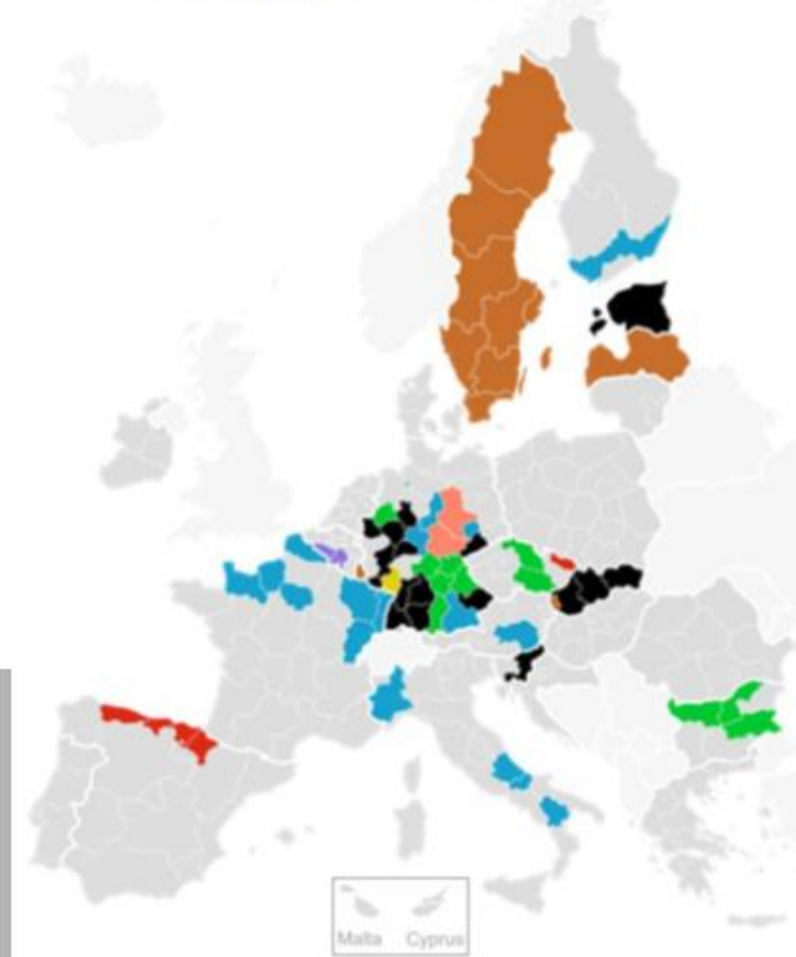
- Geopolitical subjectivism vs territorial cohesion
- Economic policies not territorially coordinated
- Negative effect of post-2025 trade restrictions



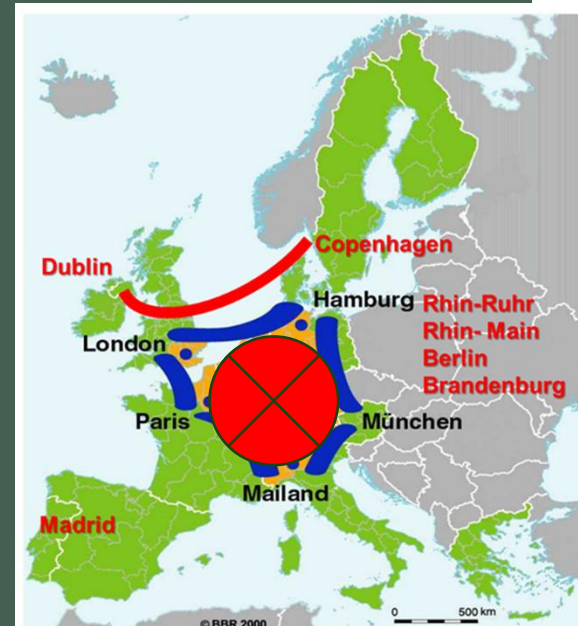
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In addition: European regions most affected by industrial decline

Machinery Automotive Construction
Fabricated metals Basic metals Non-metallic mineral products
Chemicals Several



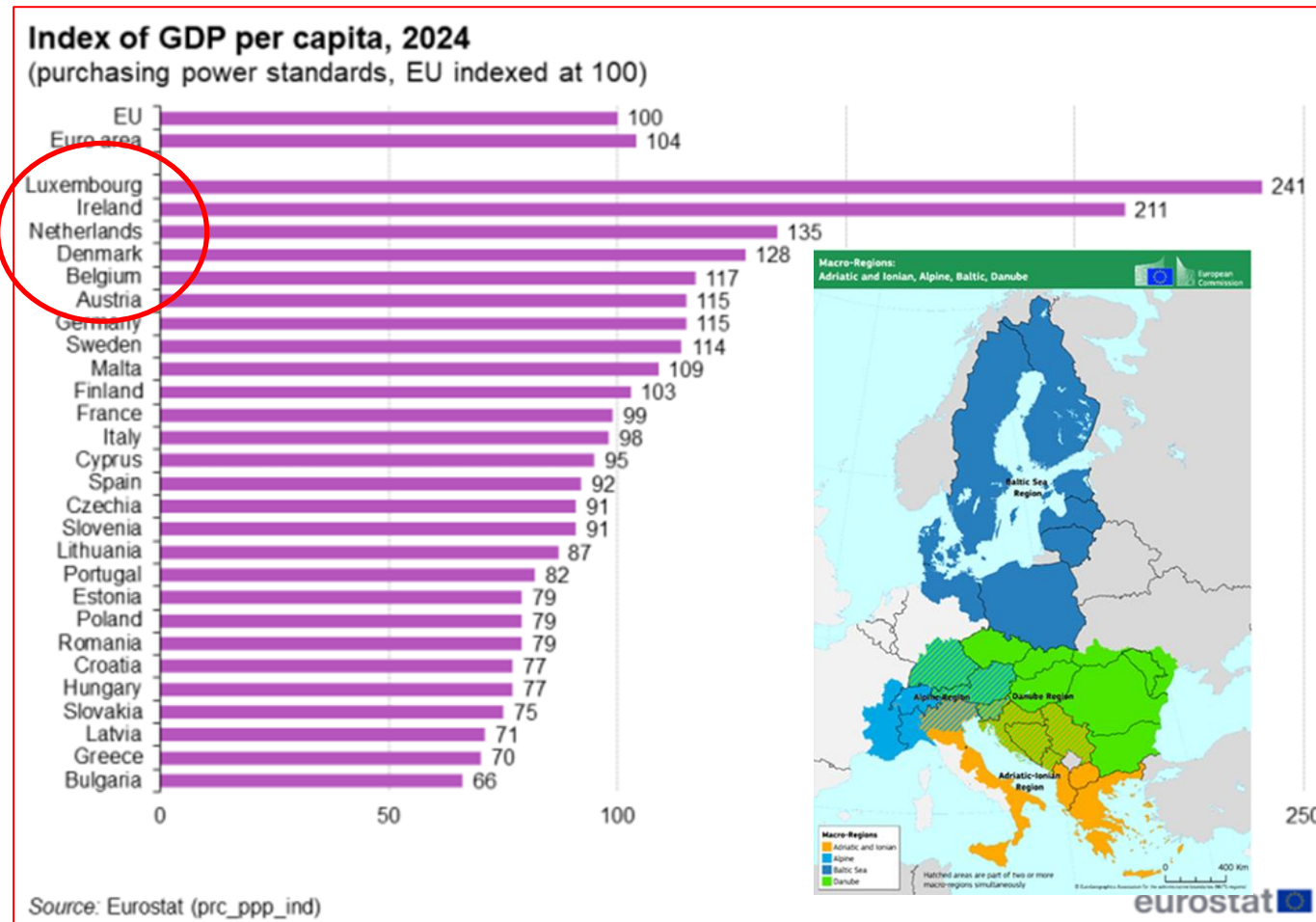
EC, 2025



Criticism of economic approaches: Economic thinking vs territorial reality

- Economic crisis not sufficiently analyzed through a territorial lens
- Lack of attention to territorial cohesion
- Need for a place-based economic geography
- Absence of spatial vision in economic theories
- Non-territorial responses to crises
- Low reference to economic and political geography

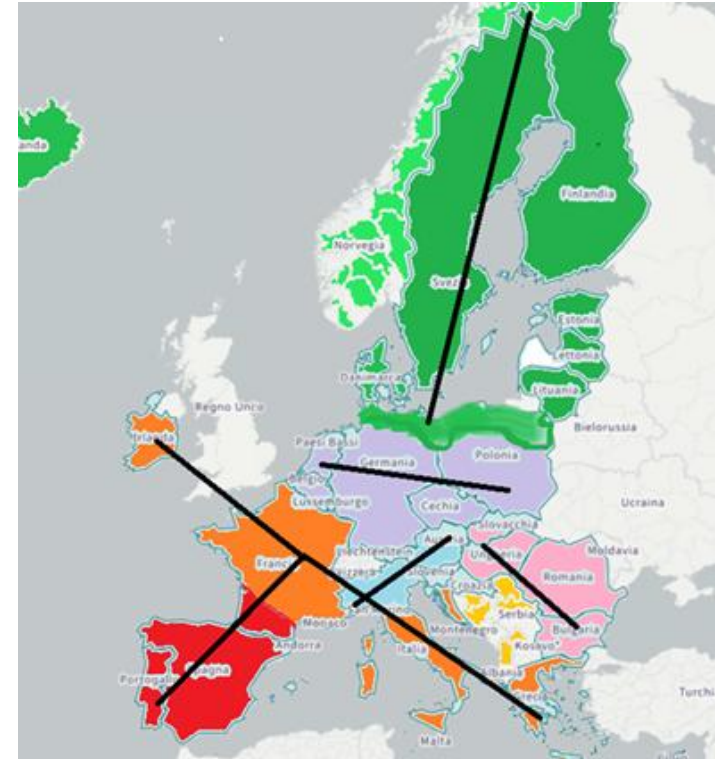
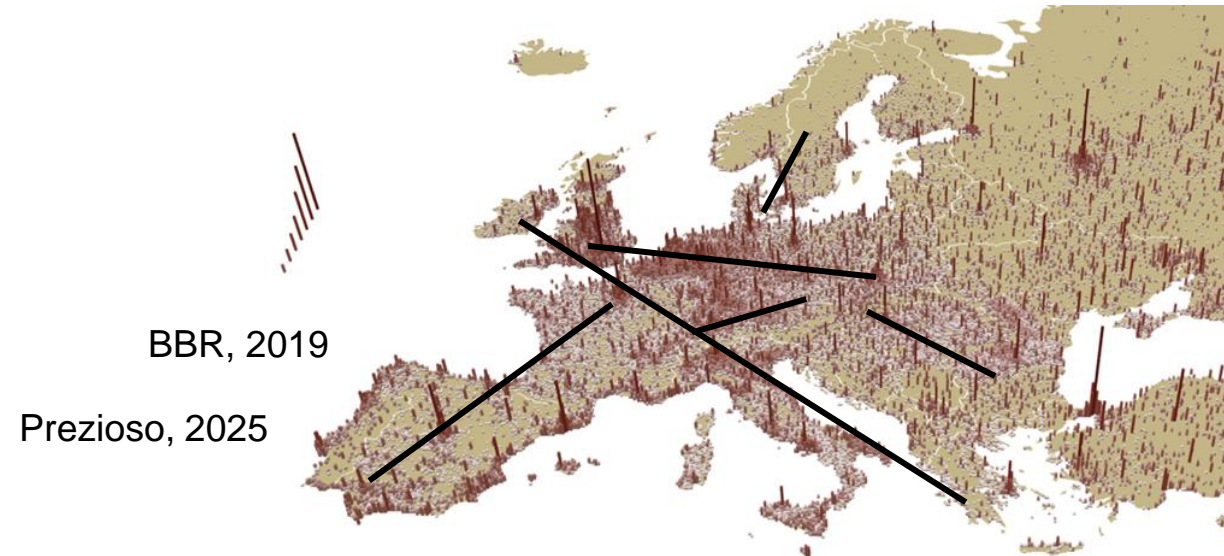
Boundaries within the new Pentagon are reinforcing



Towards a new European model: the importance of polycentrism and pragmatic federalism

- Territorial federalism as an alternative to restrictions and pervasive uncertainty facing the crisis: **the new ESDP**
- The need for EU federal governance
- Flexible regional political redesign
- Recognition of the value of territorial diversity
- Polycentrism as a framework for equity and competitiveness

Beyond restrictions: automatic redistributive mechanisms vs Reactivate sustainable investment at local and regional level: the new ESDP



City as a glue

Thank you!

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