Developing the first global statistical standard defining cities, urban and rural areas: a progress report

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Why do we need a global definition?

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include many indicators that should be measured in rural areas or in cities
- Many of these indicators are highly sensitive to where the boundary is drawn.
- National definitions are too different to use for international comparisons

What is the solution?

- Develop a global, people-based definition of cities, urban and rural areas that could be generally used across the world for international statistical comparisons
- Have this definition approved for international statistical comparisons and SDG measurement by the UN Statistical Commission in 2020

Who committed to develop the global definition?

- Work on global definition launched at Habitat III conference in 2016 by the European Commission, OECD and World Bank
- Later, FAO, ILO and UN-Habitat joined the coalition
- UNSD organised several events and actions

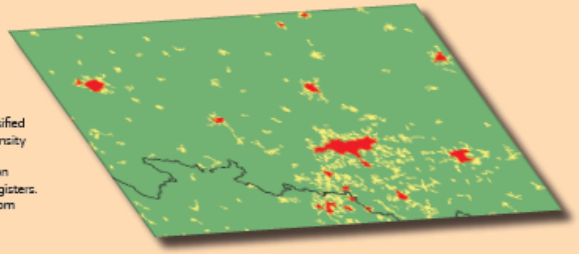
How is this definition used in SDG monitoring?

European Commission

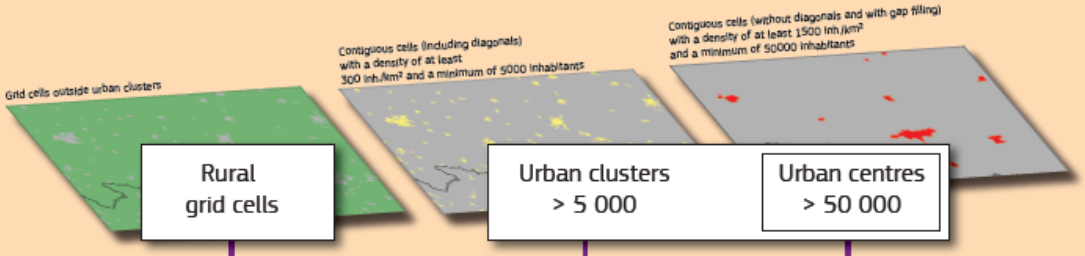
Degree of urbanisation

A classification of local administrative units

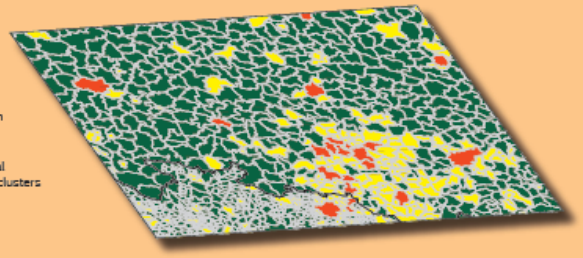
Grid cells



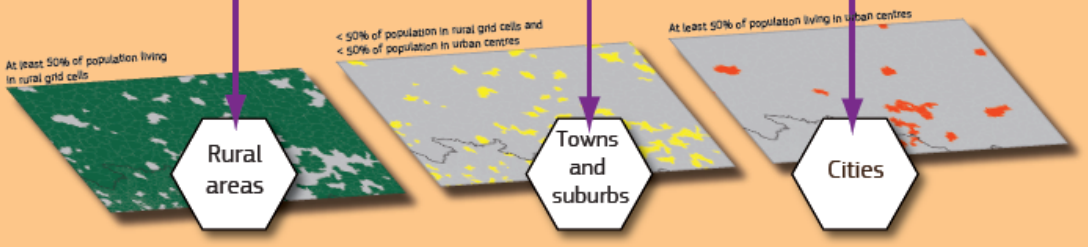
Raster cells of 1 km² are classified using criteria of population density and contiguity.
Where available, the population distribution is derived from registers. Elsewhere, it is downscaled from local (LAU) population figures.



LAU units



The degree of urbanisation is a classification of local administrative units (LAU) based on the share of local population living in urban clusters and in urban centres.



Thinly populated areas | Intermediate density areas | Densely populated areas

This typology has been developed by DG Regional and Urban Policy in co-operation with DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Eurostat, DG Joint Research Centre and OECD.

Data sources: Eurostat, DG JRC, national statistical institutes

Regional and Urban Policy

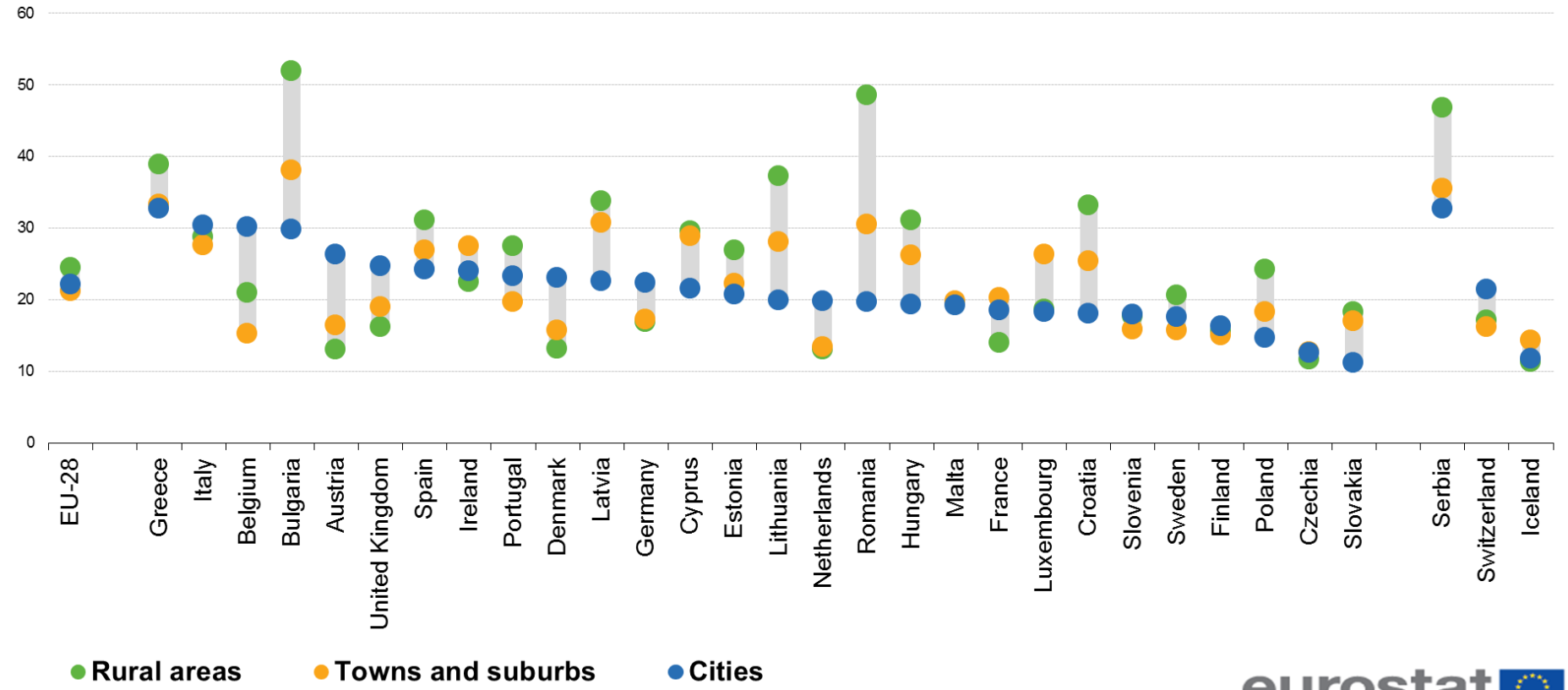
For more information:

Degree of urbanisation classification:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Degree_of_urbanisation_classification_-_2011_revision

Correspondence table of LAU:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/miscellaneous/index.cfm?TargetUrl=DSP_DEGURBA

SDG 1: No poverty

Proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by degree of urbanisation, 2017
(% share of population)



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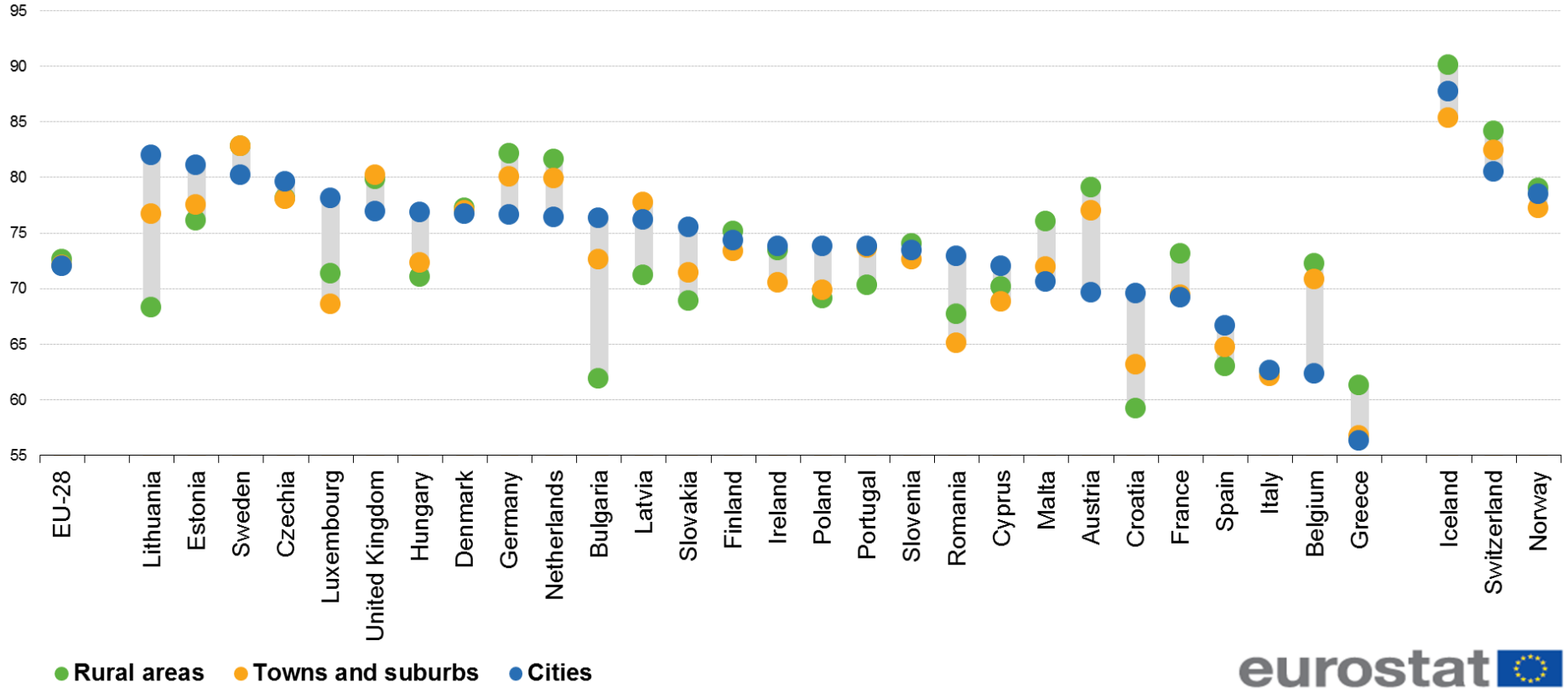
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

Employment rate,
by degree of urbanisation, 2017
(% share of population aged 20-64)



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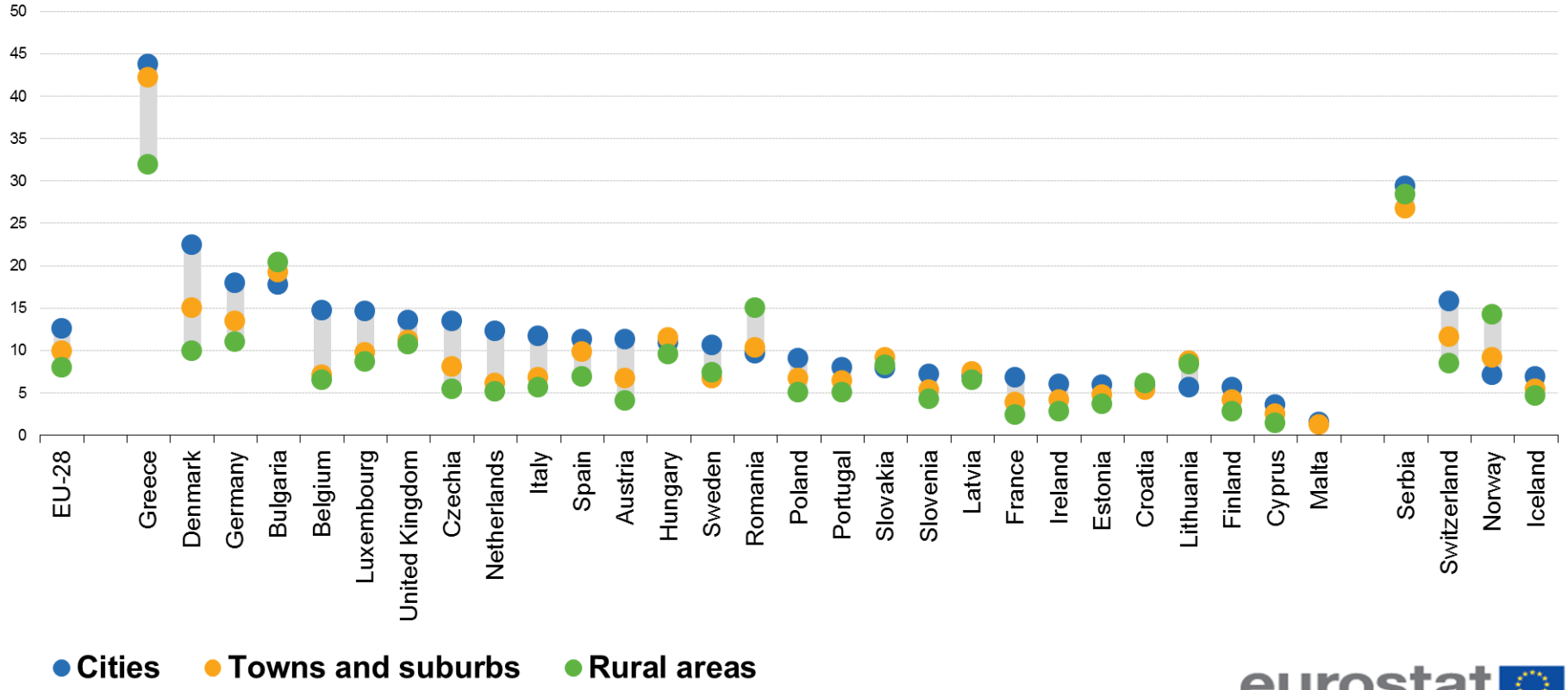
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Housing cost overburden rate
by degree of urbanisation, 2017
(% share of people living in households where total housing costs represent more than 40 % of disposable income)



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SDG indicators sensitive to the rural definition used

- 3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution
- 4.1.1 Children in school & proficiency
- 4.6.1 Adult literacy and numeracy
- 6.1.1 Access to safe drinking water
- 7.1.1 Access to electricity
- 8.10.1 Use of banking services
- 9.c.1 Coverage by mobile network
- 9.1.1 Rural population with access to an all-weather road

SDG indicators sensitive to the city definition used

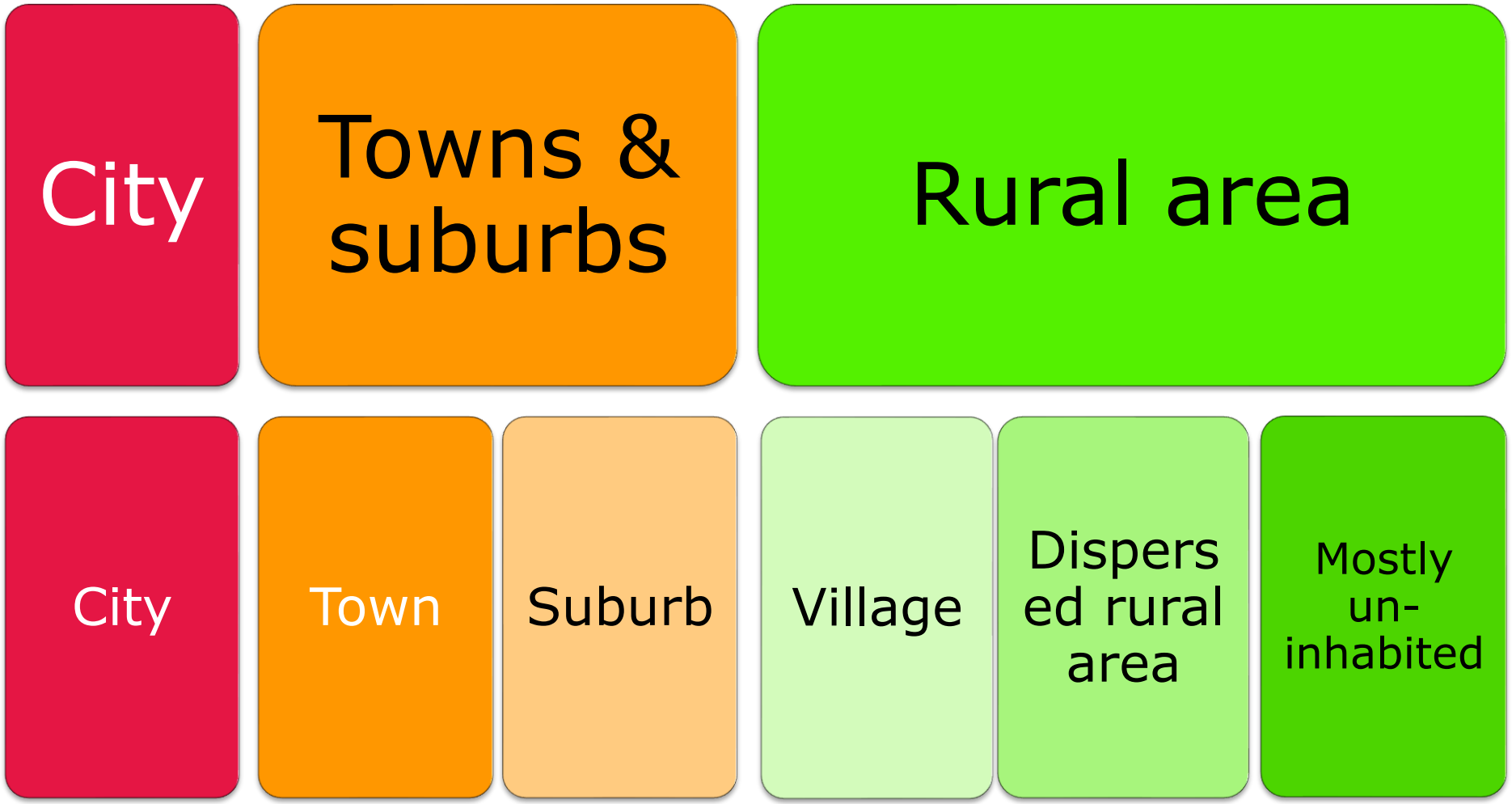
- 11.2.1 Population that has convenient access to public transport
- 11.3.1 Land consumption over population growth
- 11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities
- 11.7.1 Open public space for public use for all

New development: 2nd level degree of urbanisation

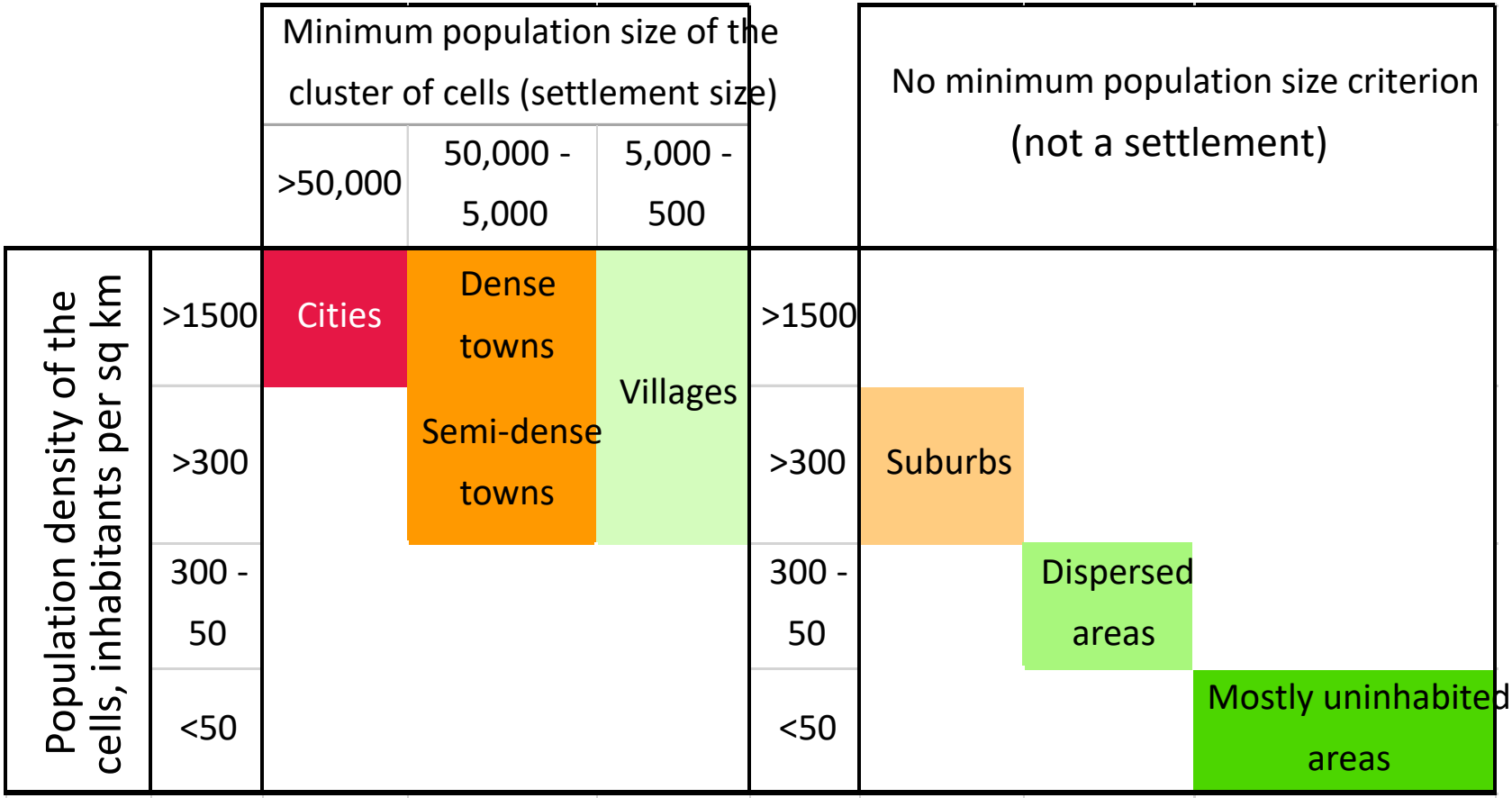
Why a 2nd level of degree of urbanisation?

- Capture the full settlement hierarchy from the largest metropolis to the smallest villages
- Split towns from suburbs
- Identify different types of rural areas from concentrated to dispersed to mostly empty
  - **Villages**
  - **Dispersed rural areas**
  - **Mostly uninhabited areas**

Degree of urbanisation: Level 1 & 2



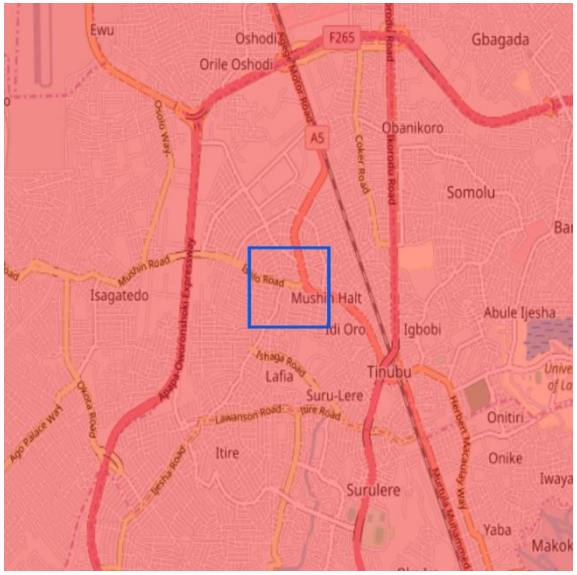
The level 2 of degree of urbanisation

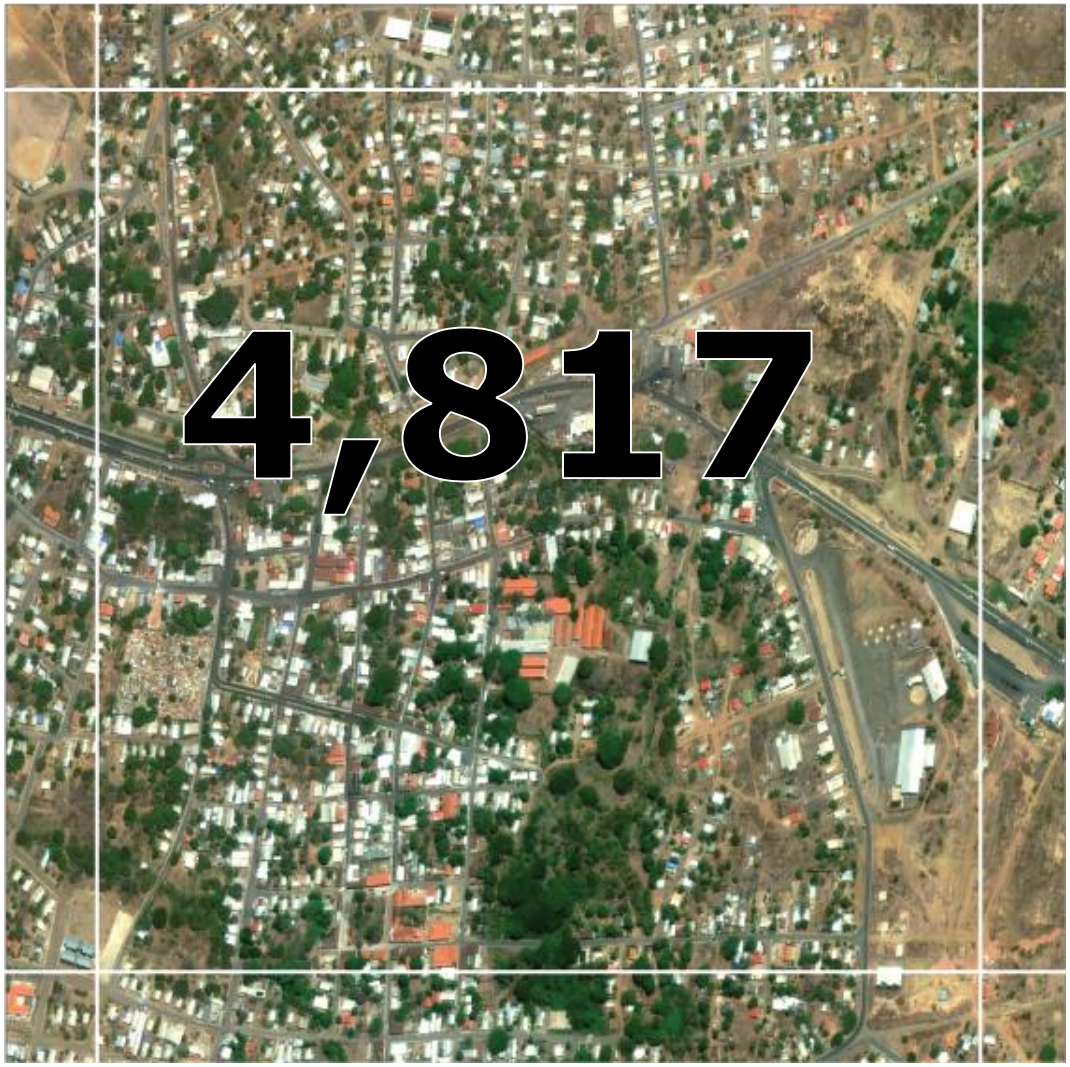


Suburbs are contiguous with or within 2km of a city and/or a dense town

A city

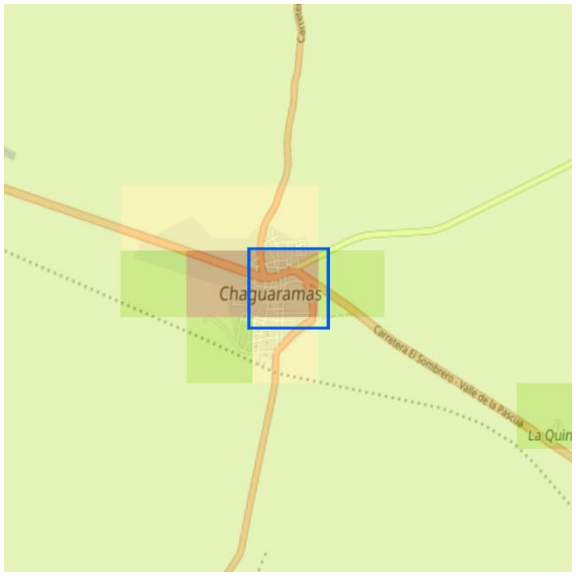
Lagos, Nigeria





A town

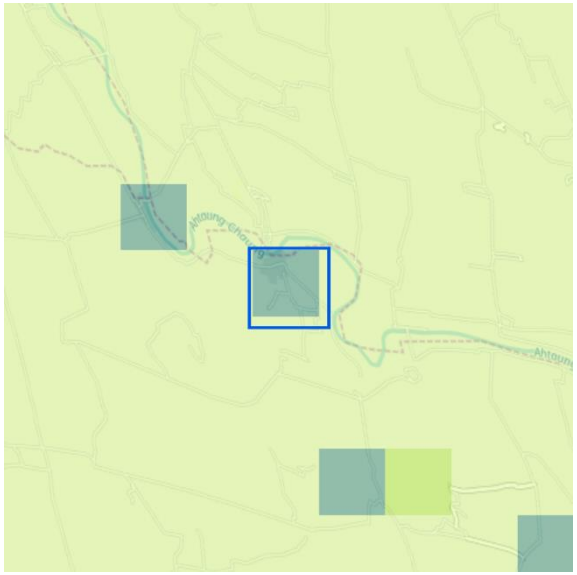
Chaguaramas, Venezuela

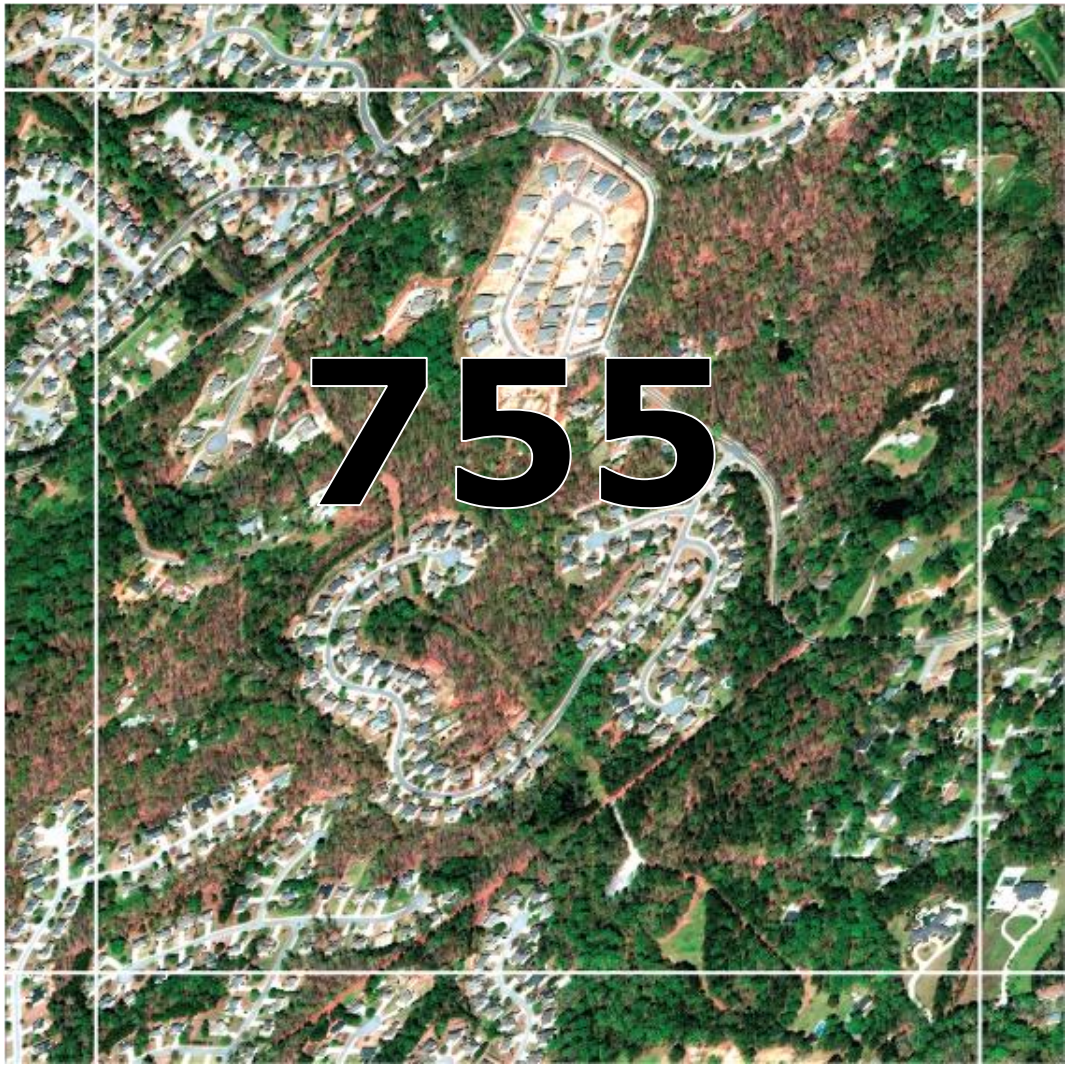


A village

Ayeyarwady region

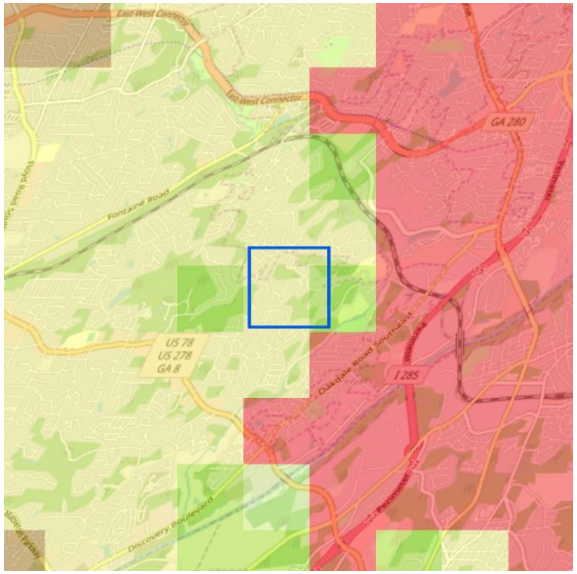
Myanmar





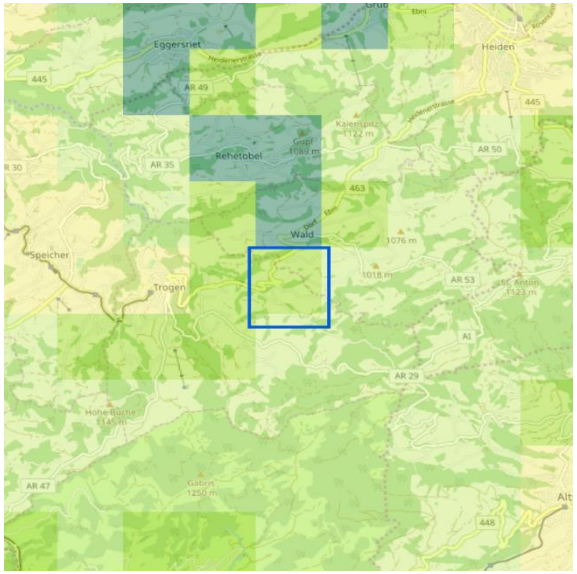
A suburb

Atlanta, USA



A dispersed rural area

Wald, Switzerland



Outlook and conclusions

Timeline

- **2019 Territorial Typologies Manual published by Eurostat accompanied by the Typology viewer in Statistical Atlas**
- **2019 UN Expert Group meeting**
- **2019 UN SD side event at UN Statistical Commission**
- **2019 Refinements in Methodology**
- **2020 UN Statistical Commission – definition for discussion**
- **2021 Implementation post census ?**

Conclusions

- A strong policy demand: SDGs
- A new statistical classification: building on the population grid
- Enabling the use of geospatial data

- A unique coalition of six international organisations …
- … that aims to create the first globally recommended definition of cities and rural areas to facilitate international comparisons (and not replace national definitions!)

More information

- *https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/content/global-city-and-settlement-definition_en*

- *http://ghsl.jrc.ec.europa.eu/degurba.php*

Acknowledgement

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- *DG Regional and Urban Policy*
- *DG Joint Research Centre*
- *DG Eurostat – Unit E4*

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