



An end to rural population decline? Some first evidence from international regional statistics

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Research questions:

Main question:

- To what extent do European regional statistics show a change in regional migration patterns since 2020?

Subquestions:

- Have regional migration flows increased or decreased since 2020?
- Has regional attractiveness changed, as measured by the distribution of immigration, since 2020?
- Have outmigration patterns changed since 2020?

Eurostat Regions database

- All EU countries, plus a number of countries (EFTA, candidate countries)
 - 2020 latest year of information
 - Only a few countries have data for 2021
- Regional migration:
 - Net number of migrants (sum of all internal and external migrations)
 - Calculated on the basis of population stocks, births and deaths

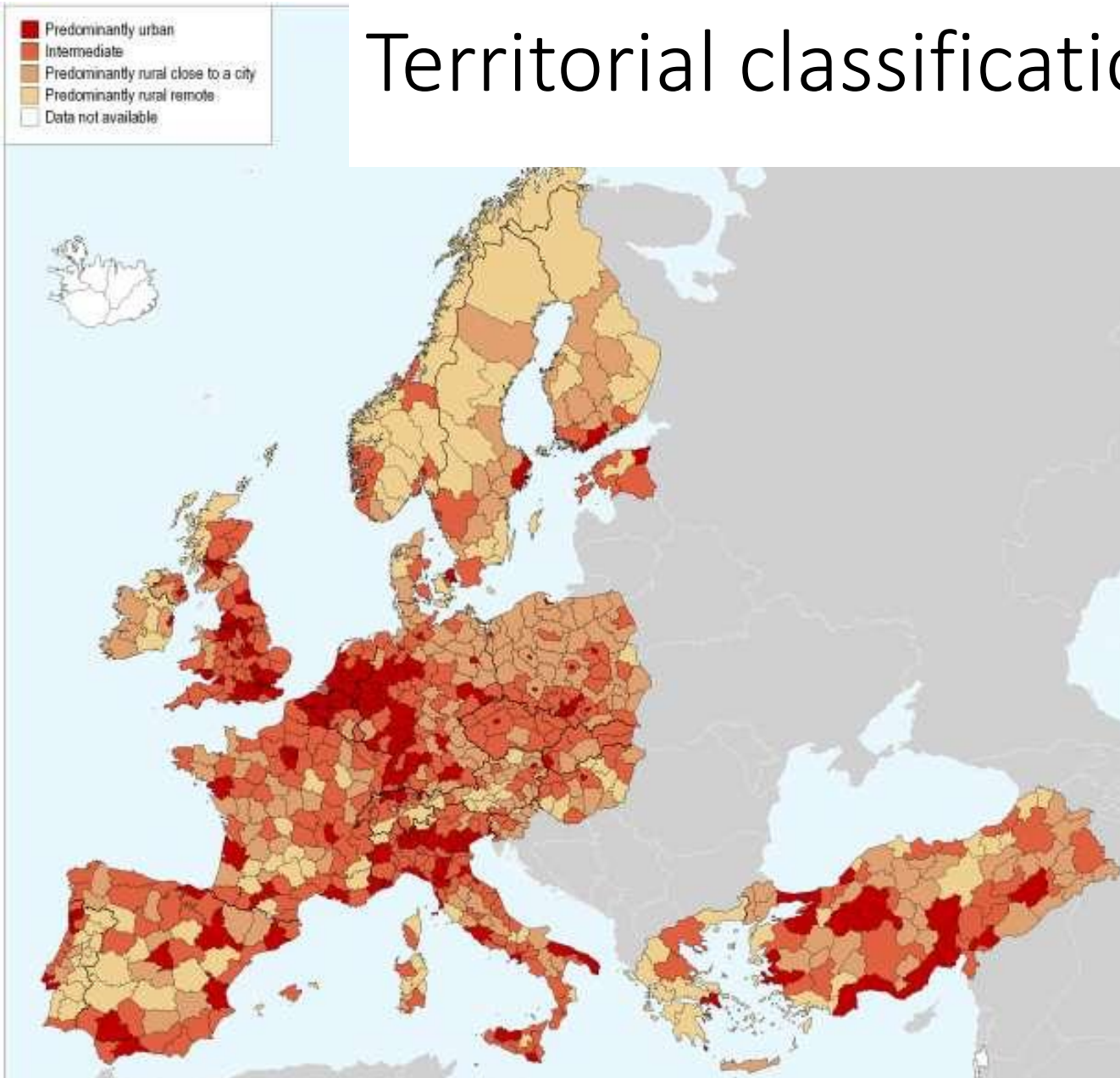
Method:

- Descriptive analysis of European regional population statistics
 - Eurostat Regions database
 - OECD Regional statistics
 - NUTS 3 level
 - Comparison of 2020 (2021) with 2017-2019
 - Classification of regions in:
 - Urban
 - Intermediate
 - Rural
- (OECD regional classification)

OECD Regional data:

- All OECD countries
 - Here: focus on European OECD countries
 - 22, but not all have data for 2020
 - Only a few countries have data for 2021
- Interregional migration flows:
 - Number of outmigrants to other regions in the country
 - Number of inmigrants from other regions in the country
 - For a number of countries these are estimates


Territorial classification OECD

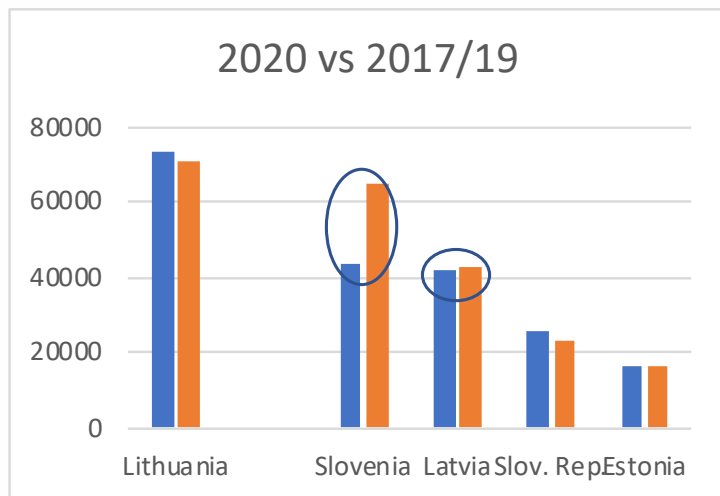
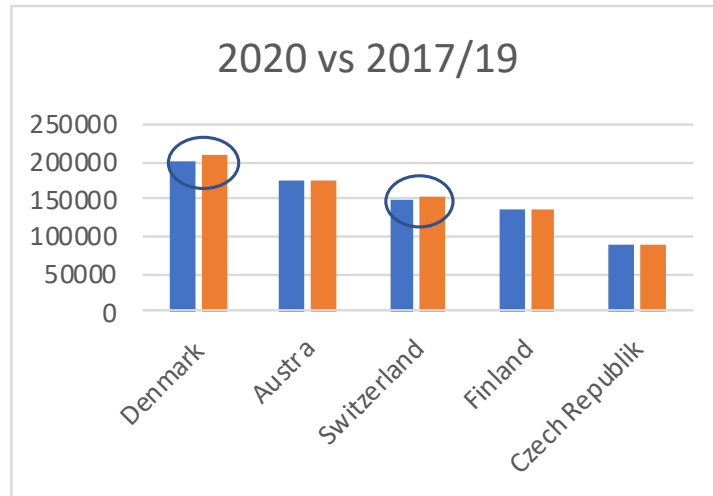
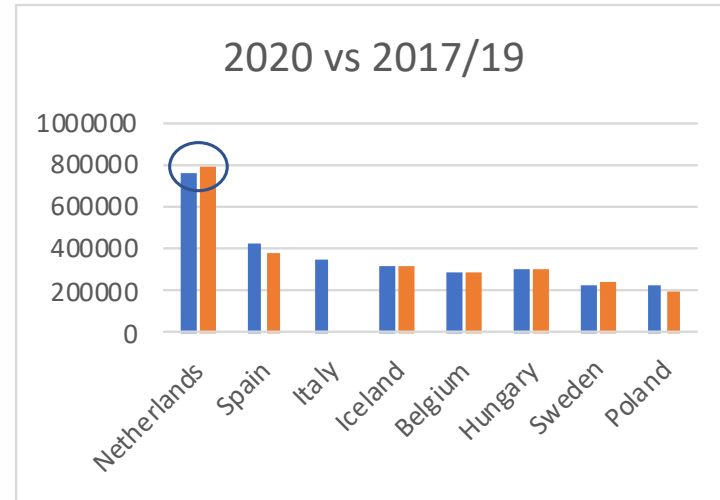
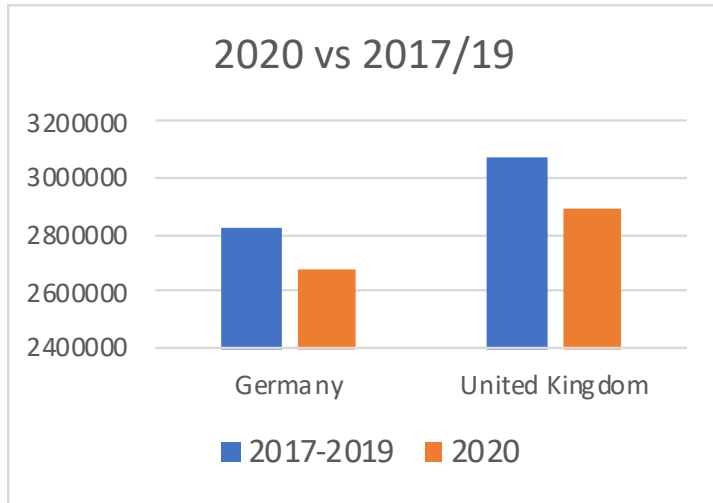


Have regional migration flows increased or decreased since 2020?

- Expectation: due to lockdowns, interregional migration has decreased
- 14 out of 19 countries showed indeed a decrease in interregional mobility

Interregional migration 2020 vs. 2017/19

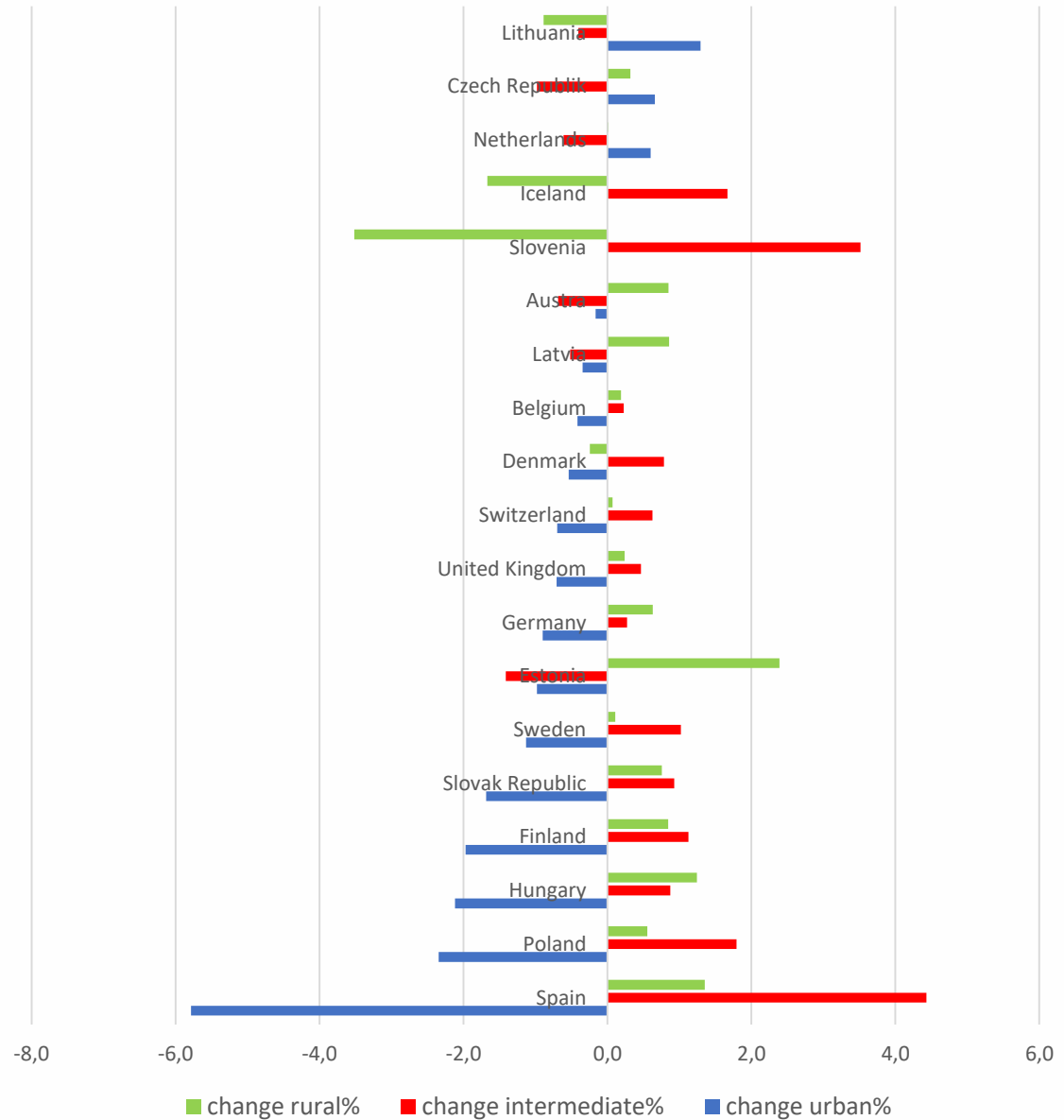
 = increase



Has regional attractiveness changed, since 2020?

- Measured as the change in the distribution of immigration over urban, intermediate and rural regions, in 2020 versus 2017-19
- Expectation: due to demand for more individual space and fear of contagion, the attractiveness of urban areas has decreased and of intermediate and rural regions increased

Changing regional in-migration shares 2020 vs 2017/19



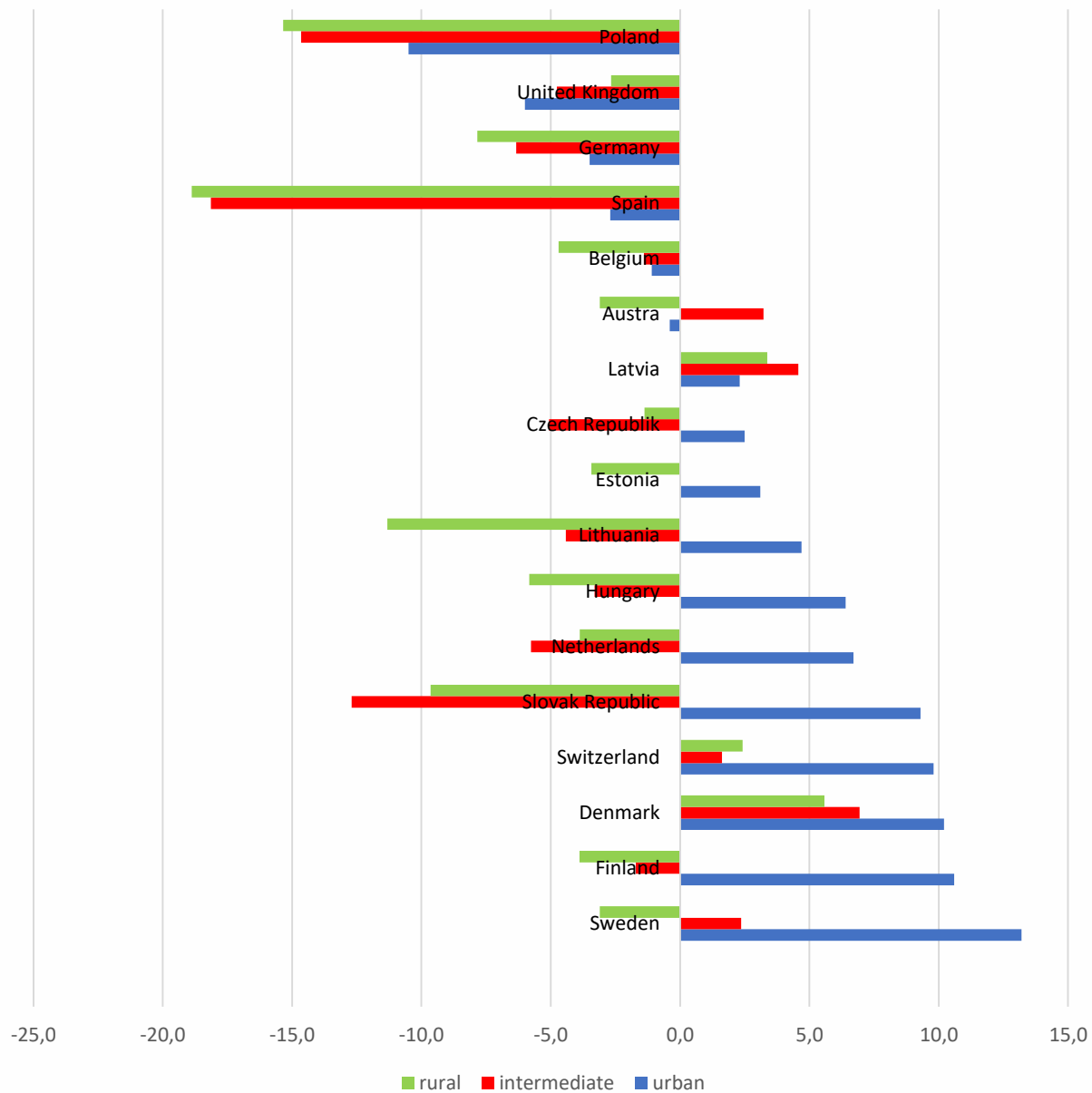
Has the regional attractiveness pattern changed?

- 14 out of 19 OECD countries showed **reduced** attractiveness of **urban** regions
- 13 out of 19 European OECD countries experienced **increased** attractiveness of **intermediate** regions
- 14 out of 19 European OECD countries experienced **increased** attractiveness of **rural** regions

Has the regional outmigration pattern changed, since 2020?

- Measured as the change in the outmigration rate of urban, intermediate and rural regions, in 2020/21 versus 2017-19
- Expectation:
 - due to demand for more individual space and fear of contagion, the propensity to leave the **urban** regions has **increased**
 - Whereas the propensity to leave **intermediate** and **rural** regions has **decreased**.

Changing regional out-migration rates 2020/21 vs 2017/19



Has the outmigration pattern changed?

- 11 out of 17 OECD countries showed **increased** propensities to leave **urban** regions
- 11 out of 17 countries experienced **decreased** propensities to leave **intermediate** regions
- 14 out of 17 OECD countries experienced **decreased** propensities to leave **rural** regions

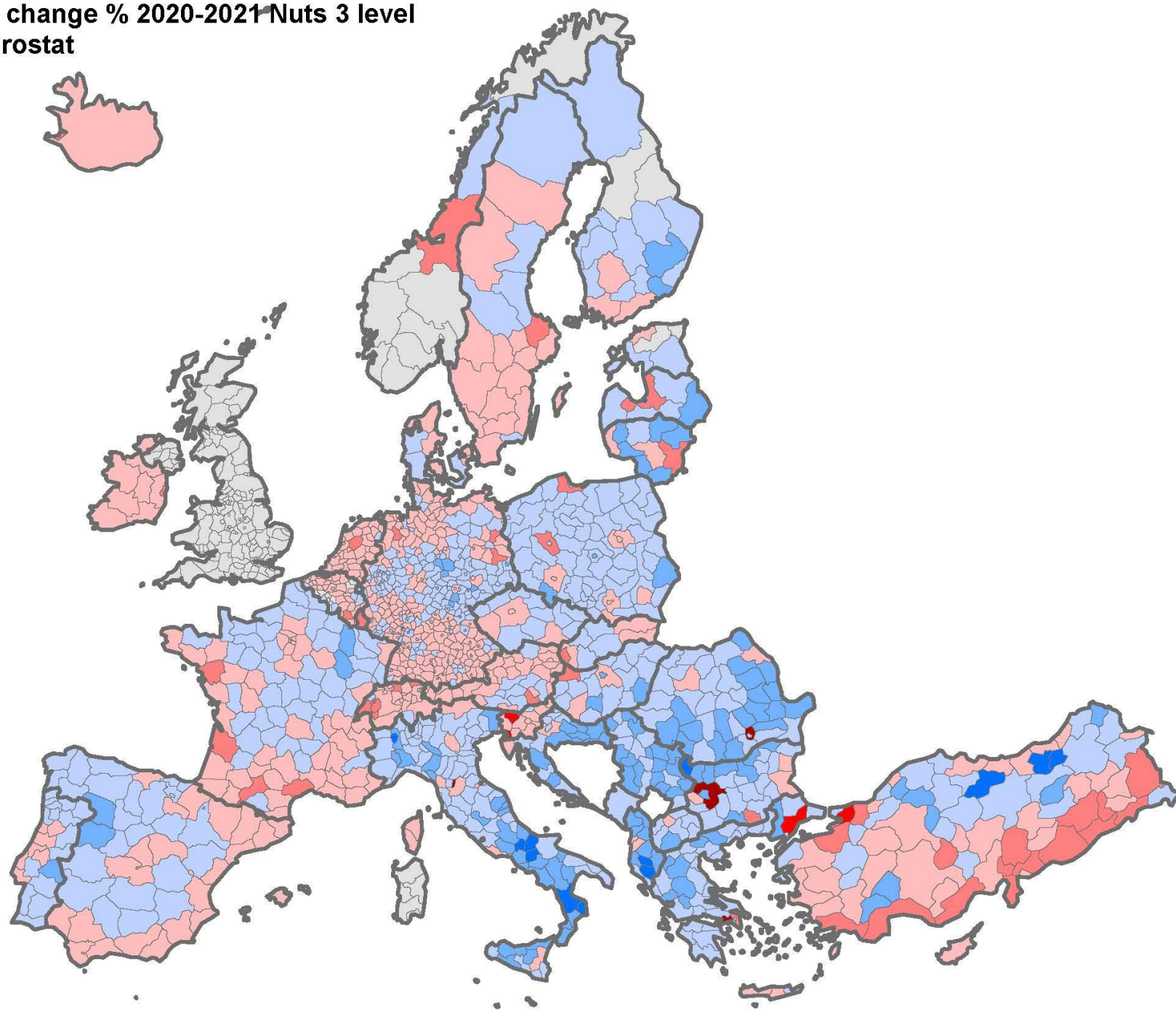
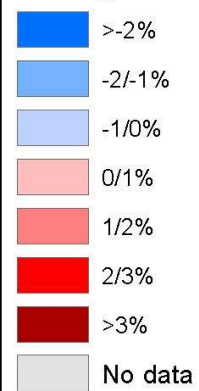
Some very tentative conclusions (1)

- Overall, internal migration intensities were lower in 2020 compared to 2017-2019
- Outmigration rates from urban regions increased, and from intermediate and rural regions decreased although not everywhere
- Internal migrants had a reduced interest in urban regions, and had a higher preference for the intermediate and rural regions

Population change % 2020-2021 Nuts 3 level

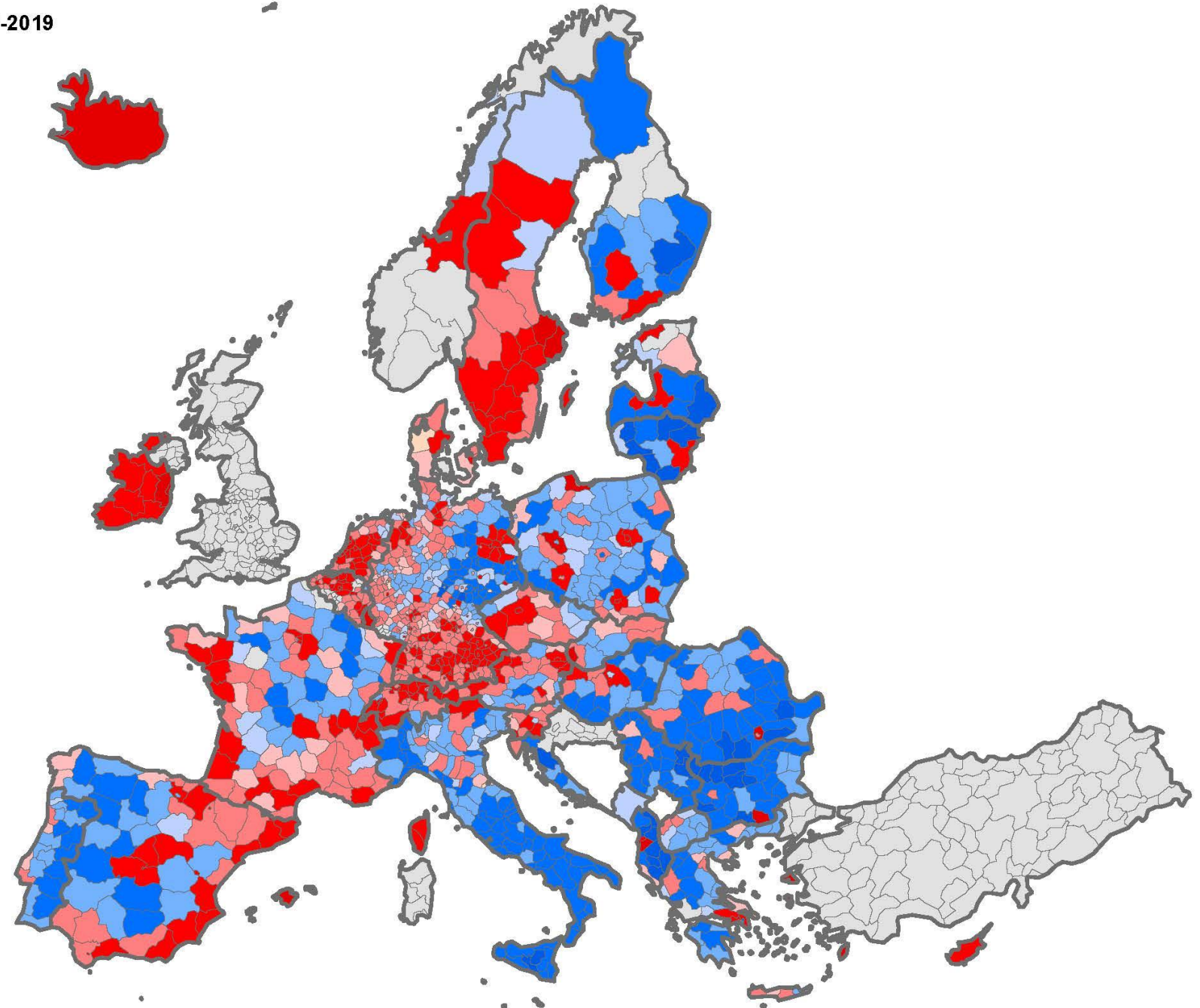
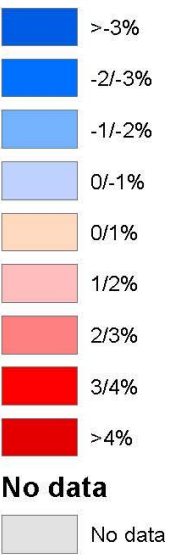
Source: Eurostat

Change %



Population change Nuts 3 regions

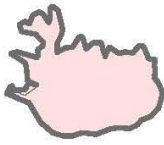
Change % 2017-2019



Population change Nuts 3 regions

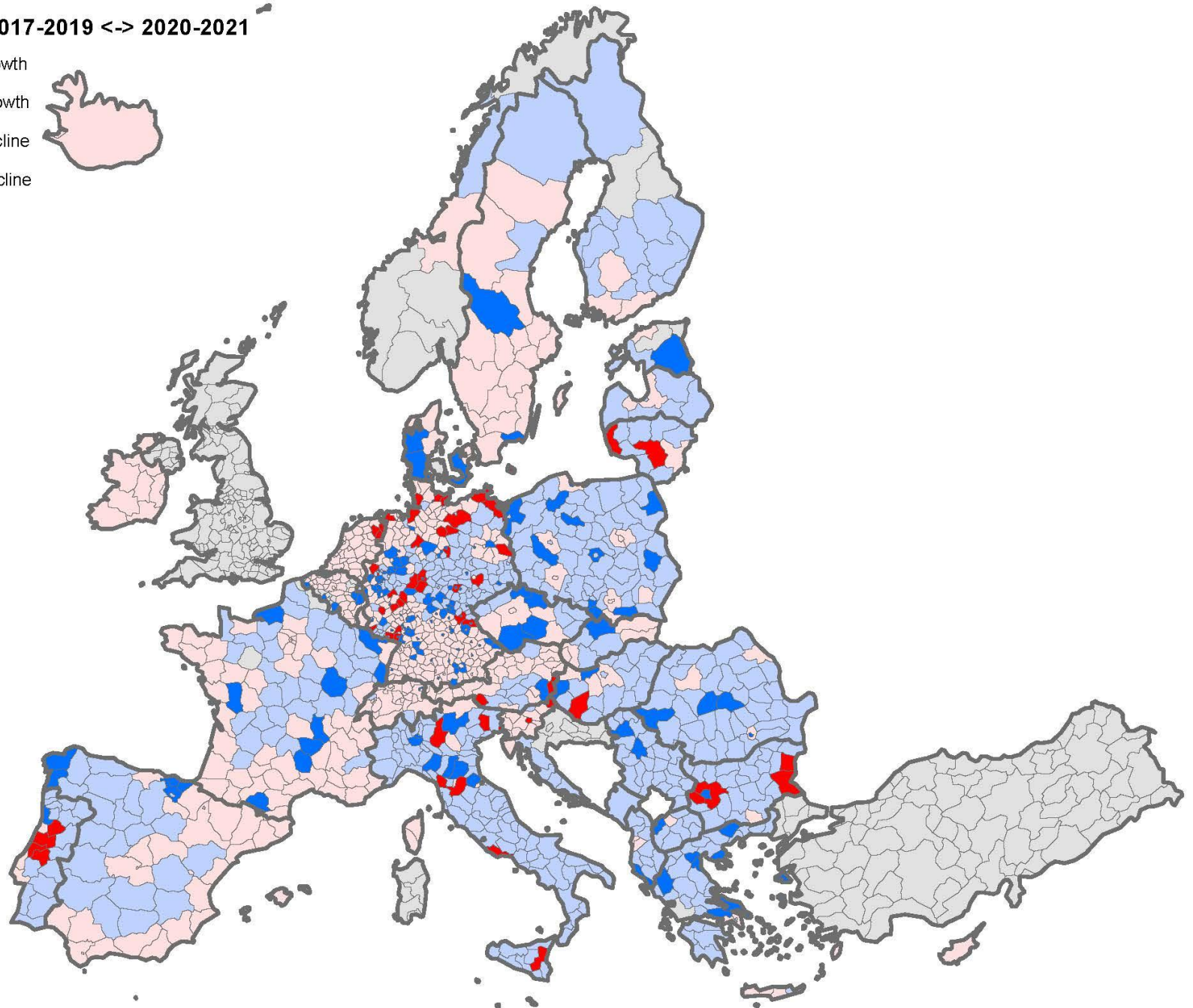
Development 2017-2019 <-> 2020-2021

- Growth - Growth
- Decline - Growth
- Growth - Decline
- Decline - Decline



No data

- No data



Some very tentative conclusions (2)

- The year 2020 showed a changing regional pattern of internal migration, compared to the period 2017-2019
- Urban areas were less attractive, and intermediate and rural regions were more attractive for internal migrants than before
- The change is too small to end population decline in most rural regions