
Urban-Rural Partnership and Territorial Cohesion in Latvian Regional Policy and Practice Context

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- Territorial Cohesion and Urban-Rural Partnership
- Regional disparities in Latvia
- Latvia regional policy context
- Urban-rural partnerships: post-Soviet peculiarities
- Urban-rural partnership practice in Latvia



Territorial cohesion and urban-rural partnership concepts at European level

- Discussion on the EU Cohesion policy change - the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC 2008) – more than 400 responses were received, including from Latvia government
- The discussion highlighted the urban-rural partnership aspects in spatial development at local level.
- Not new - return to the European Spatial Development Perspective as its one of spatial policy options mentioned are the urban-rural partnership (CSD 1999) and based on policy guidelines for the spatial development adopted by spatial planning ministers in 1994

Urban and rural and their relations as concepts

- Urban and rural are contradictory - binary concepts and continuum at the same time.
- Social construction ; various meanings (Schaffter et al., 2009:3) spatially and socially contextual
- To grasp the variety and complexities in-between categories are created (Champion, Hugo, 2004; Hoggart, 2005)
- Associated with geographic (physical) and socio-economic (relational) space

Urban-rural interrelations and partnerships

- Urban-rural interrelations and partnerships seldom studied (Davoudi, Stead 2002; Caffyn, Dahlström, 2005).
- Often use types of interrelations identified by Preston, 1975
- Urban-rural interactions - visible and invisible flows of people, capital, goods, information and technologies between urban and rural areas, physical and socio-economic connections
- Highly contextual and scale dependent (Champion, Hugo, 2004; Cloke, Johnston, 2005; Soja, 1969).
- Best to be analysed within the functional region (Funnell, 1988).
- Permits policy interactions and partnerships, as often sectoral policy overlapping
- To tackle complexities often studies are concentrating on isolated aspects of urban-rural interrelation. The focus often are on rural areas rather than urban

Territorial cohesion and urban-rural partnerships in Latvia policy discourse

- Both new terms in Latvian policy rhetoric and there are no official definitions in policy documents currently under implementation

The Latvian government's interpretation for the EU debate on territorial cohesion

- Territorial cohesion is 'horizontal guidelines for sustainable and co-ordinated development of all EU regions oriented towards provision of **equal standards of quality of life** and **access to the basic services for citizens** support to **less developed regions** to enhance their competitiveness' (MRDLG 2009: p 1).
- Emphasis also on **local level**, subsidiarity, territorial cooperation, common strategies, bottom-up planning and the implementation of appropriate regional strategies that capitalise on the **specific territorial capital** of each individual region as well as the promotion of **polycentric development, urban networks and urban-rural partnerships**

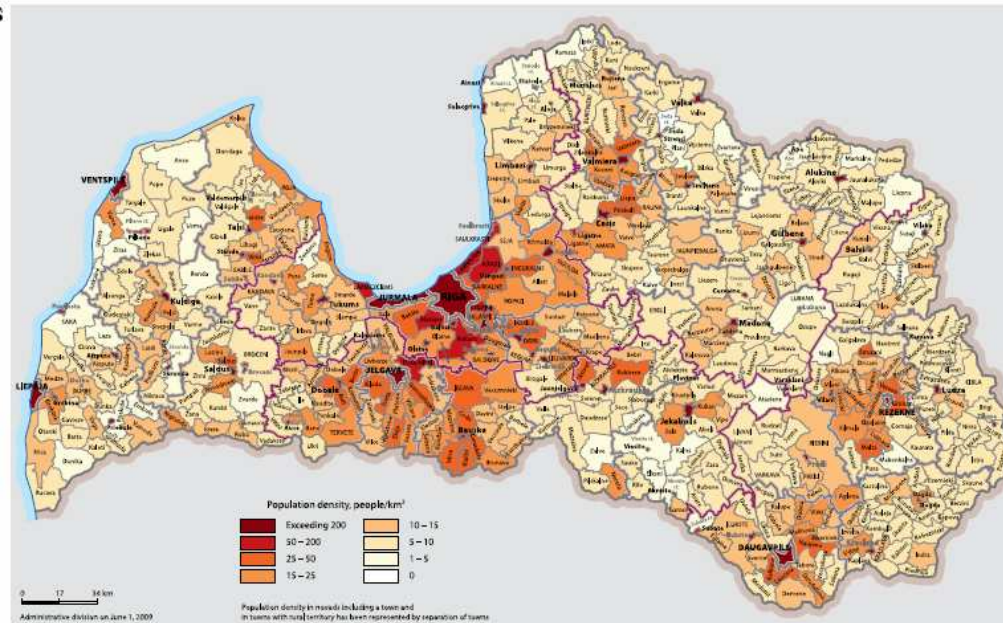
Study on rural-urban relations in Latvia

- Applied research was financed by the Latvian State Regional Development Agency to revealed peculiarities, potentials and barriers for using the concept of urban-rural partnerships in the Latvia's context (Kule *et al.* 2009)
- Group interviews with experts in 27 selected local municipalities
- Data of 522 local municipalities were analyzed

Regional differences in Latvia as conceptualized by researchers

- the capital city Riga versus the rest of Latvia (Krauklis 2000) core-periphery disparities (Paazlow 2006), and Riga inter-linkages with rest of the country (Sleinis, Sleinis 1938),
- urban versus rural areas (Melluma, 1994; Krauklis 2000)
- South Eastern Latvia region Latgale versus the other regions (Melluma 1995, Krauklis 2000 Paazlow 2006, Adams et al. 2006)

Population density in local municipalities, 2008

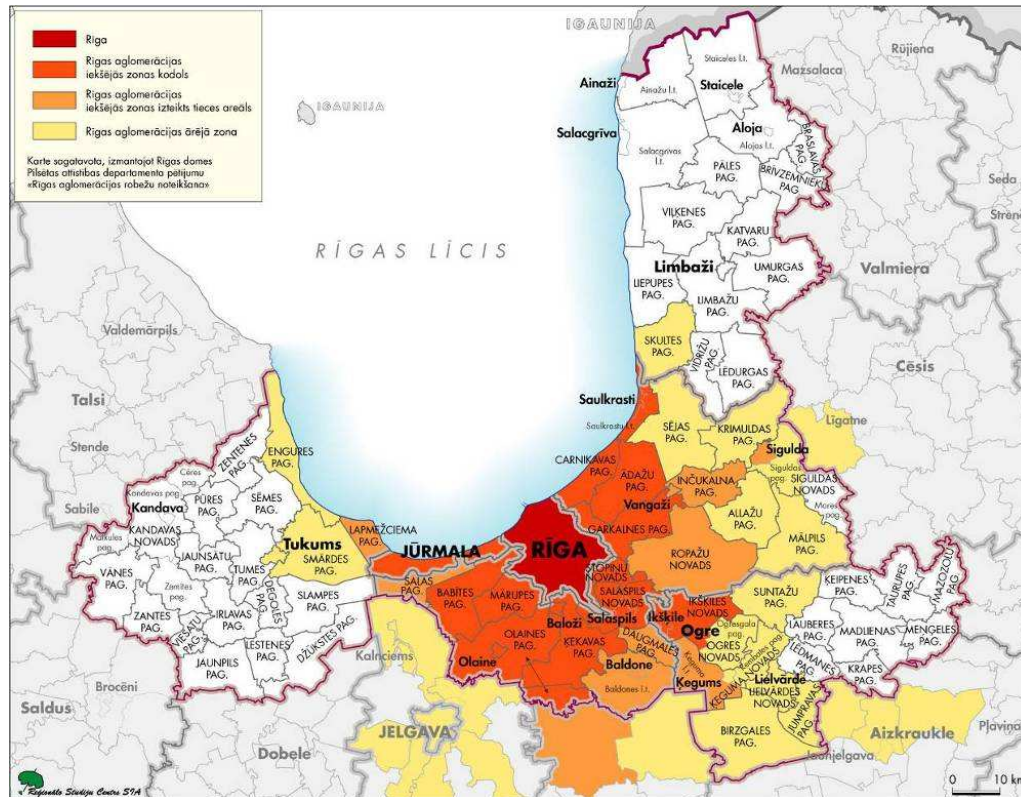


Source: www.vraa.gov.lv

In 2008 according to national statistics 67.9% were urban
In Riga City lives 31% of all population
35 of total 77 Latvian towns had population <5000. Densities varies.
Rural population approx half lives in single farmsteads, the rest in rural villages from which majority has less than 100 inhabitants
The average rural population density 11.7
Built-up area approx. 4%, agriculture 38 %, forests 46 %

Territory	Area %	Population		GDP %	Non-financial investments	Employment rate	Primary sector		Secondary sector		Tertiary sector	
		Inhab %	Changes 2001-06				GVA	Employees	GVA	Employees	GVA	Employees
Riga Planning region, incl.	16.1	47.8	-1.7	68.5	66.8		22.8	21.1	63.2	50.3	71.8	55.6
Riga City	0.5	31.7	-4.0	55.3	41.2	72.0	8.3	2.3	46.9	33.2	59.7	41.2
Non-metropolitan planning regions	83.9	52.2	-4.2	31.5	33.2		77.2	77.9	36.8	49.7	28.2	44.4
Zemgale	16.6	12.5	-2.1	7.2	9.0	63.6	22.9	20.3	8.6	12.8	6.2	10.2
Kurzeme	21.1	13.4	-3.6	10.3	11.3	63.0	18.5	16.9	12.8	13.7	9.2	11.5
Vidzeme	23.7	10.6	-4.7	6.6	7.2	65.5	21.0	16.4	7.7	9.1	5.6	8.9
Latgale	22.5	15.7	-6.2	7.4	5.7	56.8	14.8	24.3	7.7	14.1	7.2	13.8

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, www.csb.gov.lv

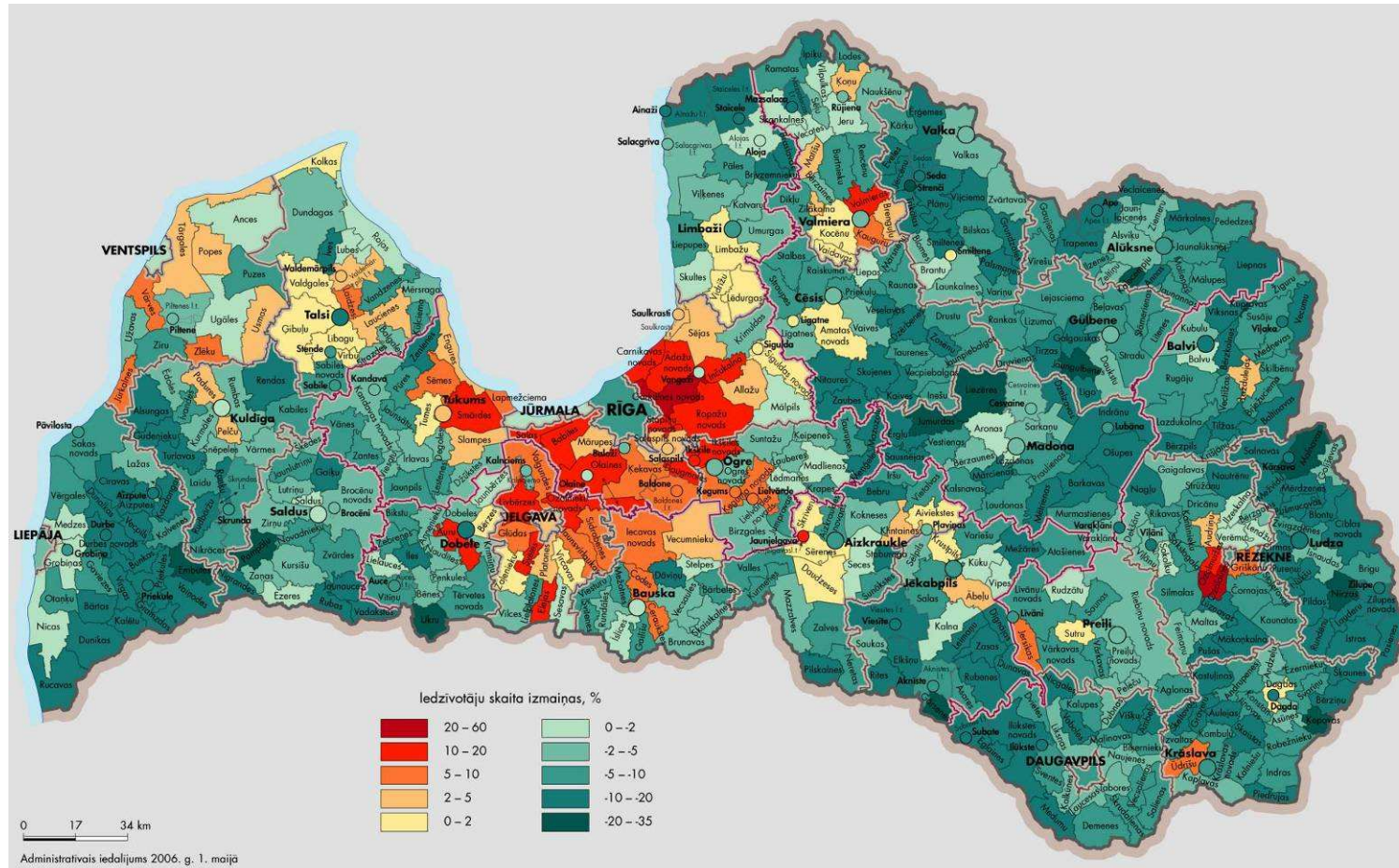


Riga city daily commuting area, (orange more than 25% are commuters of all employed), 2004

Source: www.vraa.gov.lv

43% of all rural employed were job commuters to urban areas, including 13,7% to Riga city, daily average distance for travel 21km, from rural areas to Riga – 36km. Opposite job commuter flows to rural areas are negligible (Hazans, 2004). Urban to rural migration flows 30% of total interregional migration volume; from rural to urban 28%, from urban to urban 31% and only 11% from rural to rural. (Krisjane, 2007).

Changes in population numbers in municipalities (1999-2006)



ledzīvotāju skaita izmaiņas pašvaldību teritorijās no 1999. gada sākuma līdz 2006. gada sākumam.

Source: www.vraa.gov.lv

Rural and urban at Latvian policy discourses

- Separate rural and urban Land Reform and privatization in 1990s –high autonomy of local municipal level
- The Latvia regional development policy emerged in mid 1990s as response to donor organizations
- Regional policy emphasis on responsibilities and rights to local level - self development (more than 500 municipalities), quality of life, preserving identity, territorial cooperation and support to lagging behind places
- Rural Development Program 1998 – agricultural, but also cross-sectoral, mobility, learning and service provision -oriented
- Regional Development Law, 2002 - principles of programming, concentration, partnership, additionally, subsidiary, sustainability
- Rural development plans 2004-06, 2007-13 adjusted to the EU policy frame, less cross-sectoral
- After administrative reform of 2009: more complex rural/urban governance pattern – new challenge for regional policy

Urban and rural concept

- Latvia inherited the administrative division between rural and urban areas from the Soviet period. There are no strict threshold value that classifies an area as rural
- Since 1994 urban and rural are treated equal in relation to local municipal government functions and spatial planning (with some exceptions, in coastal and transport planning or calculating Territory Development Index).
- *Ad hoc* 'rural' definition for the instruments of the National Rural Programme 2007-13 and *ad hoc* 'urban' (growth centres and their surrounding area) for the urban policy instruments within the frame of the National Development Plan 2007-13

Rural and urban at Latvian policy discourses

- By suggestion of the European Commission urban aspect was included under the subtitle “Polycentric Development” of the National Development Plan 2007-13.
- ‘Urban’ to be supported at various spatial levels:
 - 1) at **international level** emphasis is on the development of **Riga City**
 - 2) at **trans-national level and trans-boundary** cooperation emphasis to five planning regions
 - 3) at national level the priority is a **polycentric development** meaning in Latvia context both the **network of towns** and the **urban-rural co-operation**.

Rural-urban relations

People versus places

Urban people versus rural space

Built-up areas, centres of commercialized human activities versus the rest: farmland, forestland and nature

Spatial concentration, dispersion and fragmentation

High complexities

Places of flows

Human, information and material movements and cycles.

Interactions.

Human places of spaces

Local communities. Perception of rural and urban as categories, rural/urban identities, life-style, place names and brands.

Rural/urban as frame, container for policies

Drivers of rural-urban partnerships

- Individual household survival/ livelihood strategies
- Individual strategies of enterprises
- Individual local municipality strategy of service provision, support to growth

based on

- Differences between rural and urban > should be known, comprehended , and used within the regional frame
 - **Formal and informal:** space, trade, transport, energy, material resources, food, information, skills, human capital, services , life-style, landscape, brands based on place identity

Barriers: legislation, institutional and organizational structure, taxes, lack of information, knowledge and skills, bias, stereotypes

Path-dependent process

- Soviet regional and spatial policy and its instruments were not clearly defined or transparent.
- Since K. Marx the communist ideology was aiming to abolish discrepancies in capitalist society, including rural-urban (Bonner, 1998).
- In Soviet Union urban/rural policies were introduced after 1955 political and the economical reform of 1965 and were consolidated in the Constitution of USSR of 1977.
- Rural and urban population was treated differently - there were different types of collective and individual ownership and forms of entrepreneurship, government structures, mobility restrictions .
- Various instruments existed, including rural industrialization, the control of the growth of large cities, the coercive movement of labour, the subsidization of energy and transport costs and agricultural production, the provision of basic services, concentration of rural population and change rural villages into improved urban-type village, agro-towns
- However, the dominance of large urban centres and the discrepancies between rural and urban areas continued despite these measures.

Soviet peculiarities of the urban-rural interactions

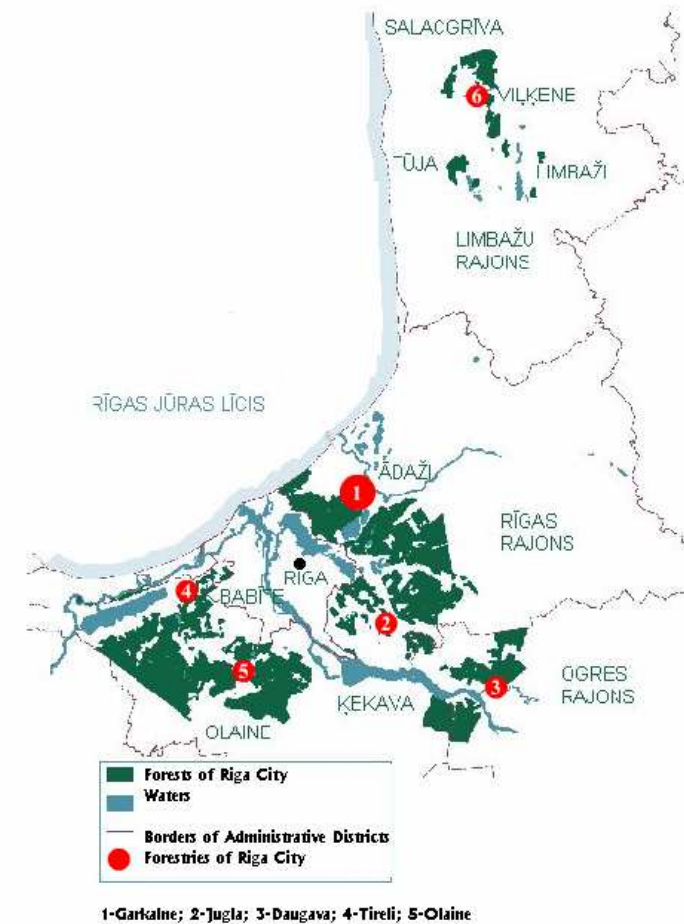
- The Constitution of USSR (1977-1991) declared strengthening social homogeneity by removing barriers of social classes that exist between city/town and village, as well as between mental and physical work and between ethnic groups.
- Almost each Soviet urbanite had spent longer or shorter periods in agricultural farms doing compulsory “voluntary” manual work. Rural also as space for leisure. There were different social roles, how urban inhabitants gain rural experience.
- Rural was also a place for both forced resettlement and voluntary escape and shelter from Soviet repressions
- State ownership and industrial work were considered superior over co-operative and collective farms ownership and agricultural work. In reality collective farms were more ‘free’ to be innovative, including cooperation with urbanites. Leadership and other local obstacles matter. Rural people experienced political repressions, deportations, compulsory registration because of being rural

Practice of rural-urban partnerships in Latvia

- Group interviews with municipal politicians and staff members revealed urban-rural relations that are not measured by national statistics and current policy reviews.
- Informal and formal cooperation
- The most often mentioned : inter-municipal agreements on shared, delegated municipal service provisions
- Rural-urban partnerships particularly on service provision are permitted by national legislation; nonetheless they are not monitored or supported by the central government.
- Interviewed municipalities asked for stronger regional or national level intervention to coordinate rural -urban aspects.
- Service objects are not always in the urban/rural central places due to peculiarities of Soviet period civil and military investments

Rural-urban partnerships: the Riga City-region

- Adjacent rural municipalities to Riga City are tended to cooperate with adjacent smaller towns and other rural municipalities and with Riga district (district level municipalities are abolished in 2009). Reluctant to cooperate with Riga City due to its large size and disinterest in its neighbours.
- The practise exist with soft (culture, social and education) projects.
- Cooperation exist with Riga City as there many physical connections – like transport, energy, water and waste infrastructure objects, as well as Riga City owns 568 km² of forest in other rural municipalities (Riga City, 2010).

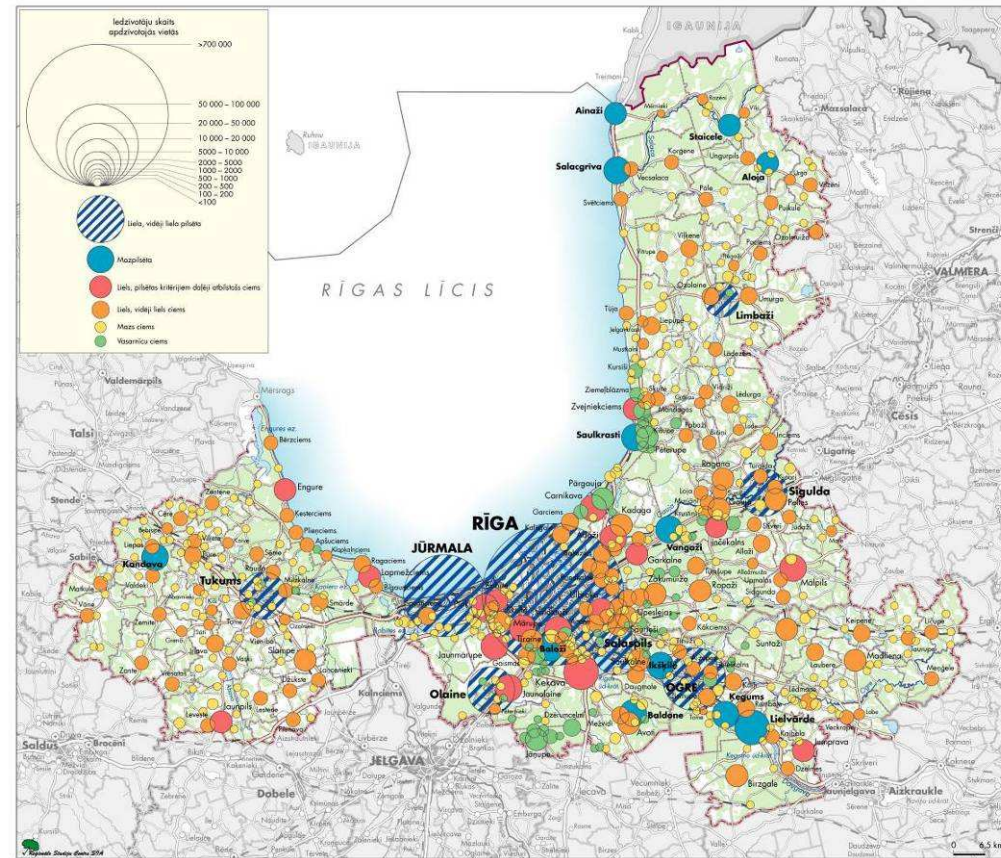


Source: Riga City Council, 2008

Rural-urban partnerships in Latvia

- Many aspects are not covered by legislation and/or not commercialized (dominance of informal activities) particularly these that are refers to leisure and the use of countryside resources by not-local population:
 - second home, small allotment garden areas, outdoor recreation, particularly the use of waters, forest and coastal areas by urban population (problem of littering), public transport coordination, some aspects of culture and education activities, creative forms of social economy, social aid and care (food provision), NIMBY problem
- New types of urban-rural linkages as teleworking, creative industries, rural tourism, therapeutic landscapes, alternative education, warehouse and logistics areas, were mentioned although these are more characteristic for rural areas adjacent to large cities and transit corridors (including electricity and ITC access).
- In general rural areas are not using their strong place identities, local/national/international brands (well-known places) to intensify rural-urban interactions

Urban (cities and towns – in blue), large rural settlements (in red-yellow) and second home settlements (in green) in Riga planning region



Attēls K16. Apdzīvotās vietas

Source: Riga Planning Region Spatial Plan 2007

Conclusions

- The study of 2009 provided evidence that multiplicity and variety of urban-rural interactions are associated with higher economic performance at local municipality level.
- Rural-urban partnerships only additional to the provision of basic services. Dialogue and good cooperation possible among equals
- Rural values and resources as potential from the urban context needs to be revealed and communicated among rural actors. There was an agreement among interviewed at municipal level that more information and knowledge is needed on rural-urban partnership and good practices as there were interest from rural local development leaders and experts.

Conclusions

- The study of rural-urban relations revealed inadequate governance at local, regional and national level as a main obstacle for developing more successful urban-rural partnerships and become an instrument for territorial cohesion .
- New local municipalities after 2009 reform includes various types 1) entirely urban or 2) rural area, 3) central urban with adjacent rural area, and 4) rural area with more than one urban centre.
- The application of urban-rural partnerships is dependent from governance at various levels inner-municipal, inter-municipal, regional, sectoral and cross-sectoral

Formal status of local municipalities in Latvia, before and after the amalgamation, by number

Cities and towns, (11 towns include adjacent rural area) 1995-2009	Rural Before 07.2009	Cities After 07.2009	Municipalities – mixed rural/urban or rural only After 07.2009
77	455 (in 1995 were 492 units)	9	109
Total 522		Total 118	



Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government, 2010

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- Thank you for your attention!

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