



The Western Balkans: towards a better territorial integration in Europe

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“What territorial cooperation between Europe and its Neighbourhoods?”

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The South-Eastern Neighbourhood : outlines

- Almost 20 years after the Dayton Agreement (1995) *what territorial integration of the Western Balkans into European dynamics?*
- The Western Balkans: *neither EU-member* (except Croatia) *nor official neighbour* (as ENPI intended): an in-between position as Candidate Countries or Potential Candidate Countries surrounded by EU member countries
- An internal neighbourhood of limited weight (4,3% of the ESPON countries population and 5,4% of its territory) but *of major importance for the relations of the EU and its neighbourhoods (Eastwards and Southwards)*



The ITAN project: hypothesis and goals

Hypothesis 1: the EU and its neighbourhoods form one region

Hypothesis 2: The neighbourhoods show bigger opportunities than threats

How to address these assumptions?

- Building a sustainable and reliable database
- Assessing the regional integration through territorial and temporal analyses
- Assessing convergence or divergence of spatial patterns through case studies



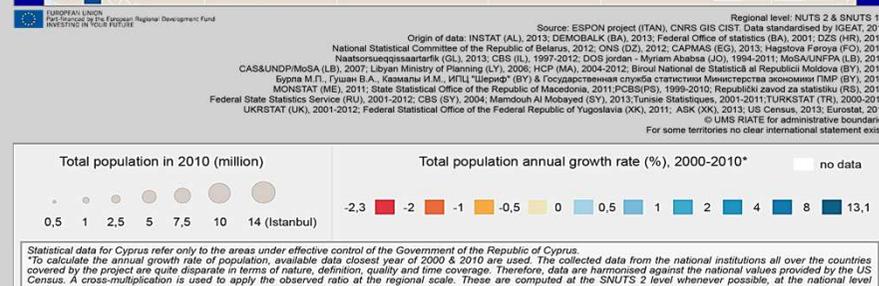
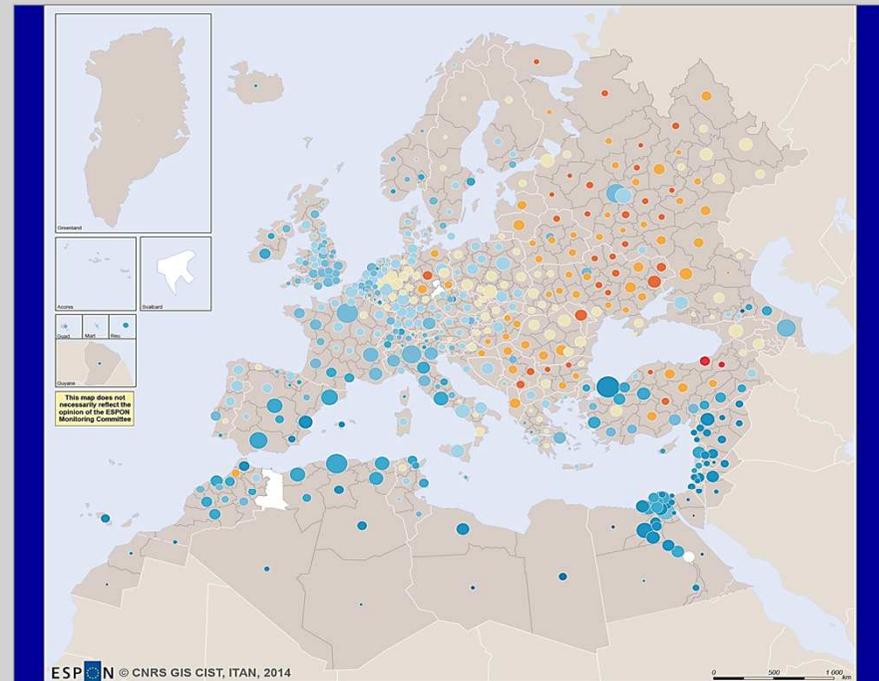
From Western Balkans to South-East Europe: convergence trends

Convergence in demographical trends with that of Western Europe

- Demographical decline (except in FYROM and Montenegro)
- An stock of working age population rather well educated.

Main point of divergence: the importance of migrations and mobility

- On-going impacts of wars
- Foreign migrations
- International migrations
- Internal migrations and their impacts



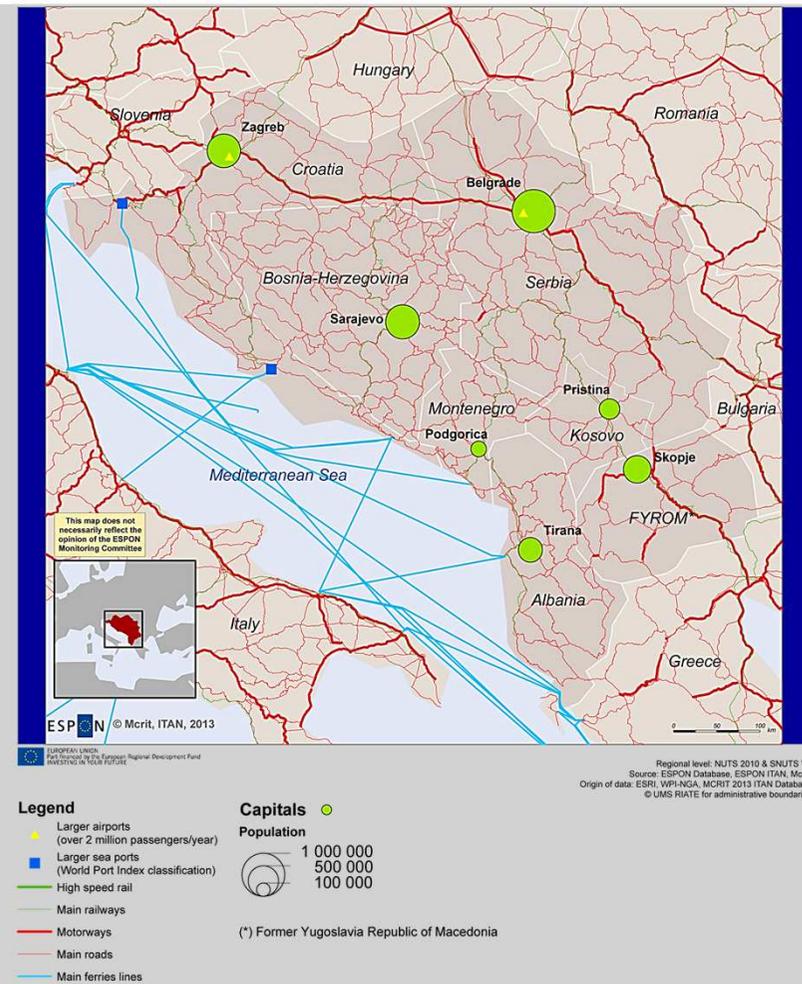
Rising discontinuities between Europe and the Western Balkans

A threatened position as crossroads

- between East and West
- to bypass the Turkish straits and secure EU energy supply

Due to:

- Fragmentation into states, new border controls and landlocked countries
- Incomplete road networks and the congestion at border checkpoints
- Postponed diversification of the European energy roads



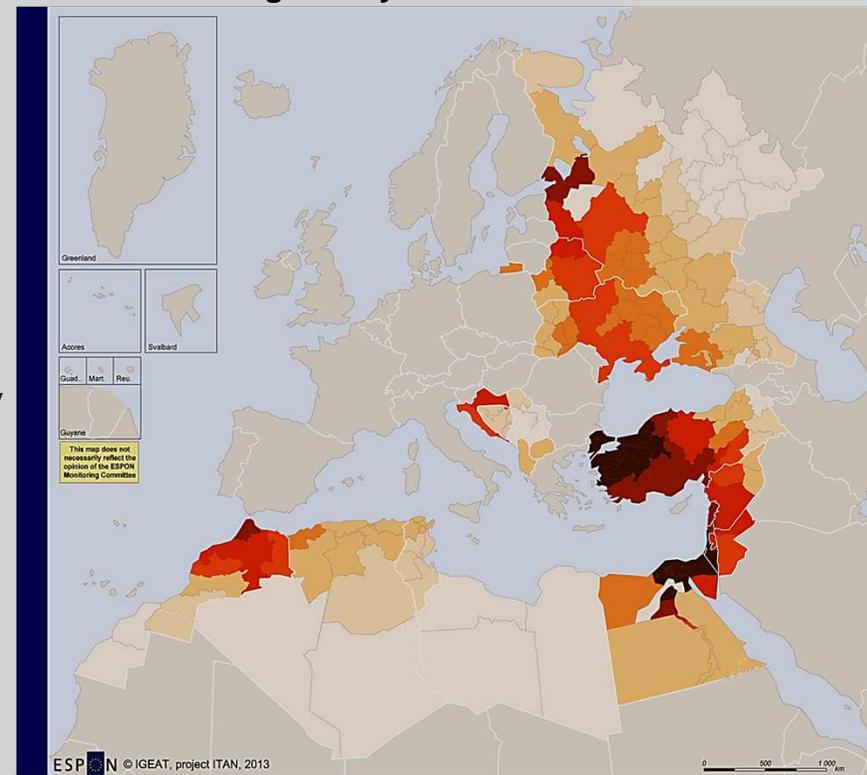
Rising discontinuities between Europe and the Western Balkans

ITAN “International openness” index

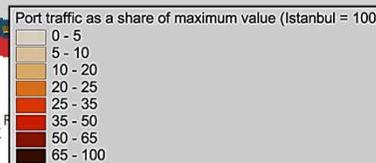
International openness weighted by time-distance to international transport facilities:

- highlights accessibility: territories can benefit from large infrastructures if they have a short time-distance access to it
- strong position of the major part of Turkey except the Eastern part
- large relegated territories in Maghreb except Northern Morocco
- **except Croatia, the Western Balkans are poorly connected to international traffic**

International Port traffic, 2012
Values weighted by the time-distance to Ports



ESPON © IGEAT, project ITAN, 2013
 EUROPEAN UNION
 Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund
 INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE
 Regional level: SNUTS 2
 Source: ESPON Database, IGEAT 2013
 Origin of data: Lloyd's, 2011
 © UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries
 For some territories no clear international statement exist



Rising discontinuities between Europe and the Western Balkans

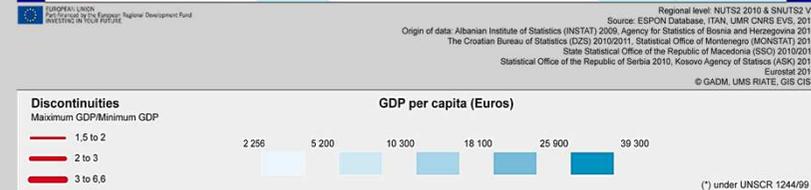
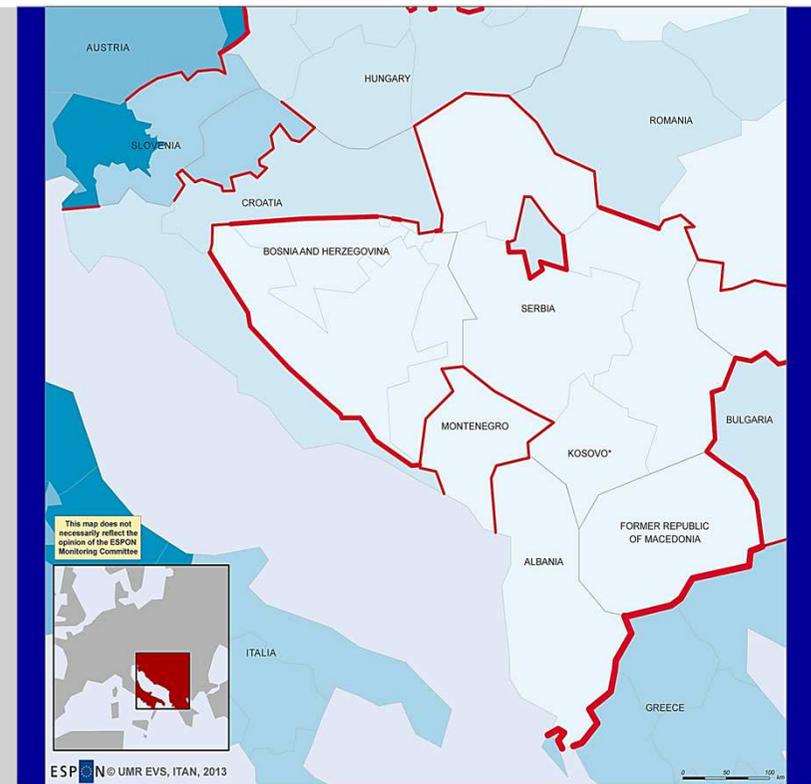
Example of the regional GDP discrepancy

(the thicker the red line is, the more GDP differences are high)

Between the Western Balkans and the EU (external discrepancy): a golden curtain?

Inside the Western Balkans (internal and regional discrepancies)

- Croatia is closer to the Hungarian and Slovenian levels than to BiH and Serbia
- Capital regions (Zagreb and Belgrade)



A core-periphery pattern between Europe and the Western Balkans

Western Balkans and EU: a strong dependency

In trade, a weak intra-CEFTA share (16%) and a deep unbalanced trade relation with ESPON countries (57%)

In FDI, except for BiH, FDI from EU-27 + EFTA members exceed the 2/3 of the total.

In ODA, Public aid from EU-27 +EFTA members exceeds 60% of the total.

Other International actors are involved: Turkey (FDI) and Russia (FDI and ODA)

*Share (%) of EU-27+EFTA members for 3 types of flows in the Western Balkans. *Kosovo under UN res. 1244/99. source: ESPON ITAN database*

Country	In trade (2012)	In FDI (2008-2012)	In ODA (2010-2011)
Albania	68	71	76
BiH	34	34	81
Croatia	58	88	N/A
FYROM	62	70	61
Kosovo*	21	65	79
Montenegro	38	N/A	66
Serbia	58	91	84

8



Policy recommendations

- **Addressing discontinuities within the Western Balkans and with Europe**
 - Connecting places for a better accessibility both within the WB and with the EU
 - Considering the working age population as a resource for labour markets and not as a potential wave of illegal migrants
- **Integrating Western Balkans markets as a prerequisite to a better integration with the EU**
 - Enhancing complementarity rather than competition between WB markets
 - Turning the core-periphery pattern into better balanced relations
- **Fostering territorial cooperation**
 - Strengthening intermediate levels as lever of stabilisation
 - Supporting a territorial approach for local development rather than a sectorial one to better cope with local and regional diversity





Thank you for your attention!

For more details on the ITAN project:

http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/itan.html

Part 5: The South-Eastern Neighbourhood
(p. 342-414)

