

Regional policies for European level promotion

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Agencia pentru Dezvoltare Regională
București - Ilfov

BIRDA - Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency

- 1999 - founded as NGO of public utility, non-profit body
- 2004 - update of regional development law in Romania
- 2007 - intermediate body for **REGIO** - Regional Operational Programme (2007-2013; 2014-2020)



163 Mihai Eminescu Street, Bucharest

Brussels as European capital

- Brussels' Government stresses the international rank as a capital: **home** to the EP, the European Council, the Council of the EU, and the European Commission + many executive agencies, EESC, CoR => roughly **40.000 employees**)
- the European Quarter accounts for roughly 3,5 million m² of offices (**¼ of all offices** in the Brussels-Capital Region)
- 30.000 **lobbyists**
- 1.000 accredited **journalists**

Regions and cities representations in Brussels

- Since 1980s, 2 models of European representation for regional/local authorities:
 - German model - see their role as a political one (powerful bodies with a sizeable budget) - **most widespread ?**
 - British model - represent local authorities with limited political power and money). Their primary concern is **obtaining EU funding**, often working in partnership with the private sector

Source: <http://www.commissioner.brussels/>

A new framework encouraging the proliferation of representations

- The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and the establishment of the CoR in 1994, supported the direct dialog with subnational entities and increased the power of local and regional institutions.
- As a result, regional and city delegations came to Brussels to gather materials for their hometowns, gain insights into European processes, give voice to their diverse interests and create their own built emblems (Rowe, *apud* C. Hein, 2015).

But also the regions itself

- In the pre-accession to the EU, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, for example, have created regional levels (even if these states had other local levels) in order to benefit from European regional policy
- Romania: Regional development law in 1998, establishing 8 regions.

Regions and cities representations in Brussels (I)

- After the 2004/2007: the presence of one office from a new Member State was soon followed by other regions establishing their own representation at NUTS 2 or even 1 level. Representations from Poland were followed by those from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in particular. In some cases most regions and/or municipalities are as yet represented through a collective body only.
- The presence in the heart of Europe was seen as a good way to raise the profile of the region at European level but also in their home country.
- These presence and involvement can be part of a boarder marketing and branding strategy.

Regions and cities representations in Brussels (II)

- 2007: 226 accredited offices (165 regions, 17 local or sub-regional authorities, 26 networks, 18 other entities)
- Currently: more than 300 representations of EU regional & local authorities, regional business environment representing the economic, political, touristic and other interests in Brussels.

The survival in a dynamic environment

- Being usually smaller entities in a dynamic place, subnational offices are at times more attentive to questions of identity and representation;
- While they are small in size, their impact on urban form can be vast, as they make novel contributions to Brussels as capital of Europe, both physically and virtually on the web.
- They confirm the city's function as the seat of EU but usually they try to represent the home region by architecture, design (C. Hein, 2015)

Strategies to achieve the goal (I)

- The political, economic and physical manifestations of cities and regions suggest that these European city and regional institutions have power beyond their physical space. (C. Hein, 2015)
- Through strong cooperation with the private sector, regions partly presenting themselves as actors of functional representation and thus playing by the same rules of most lobbying actors in Brussels: providing specialised and genuine information to EU institutions in exchange for inclusion in the policy-making process. (R. Trobbiani, 2016)

Strategies to achieve the goal (II)

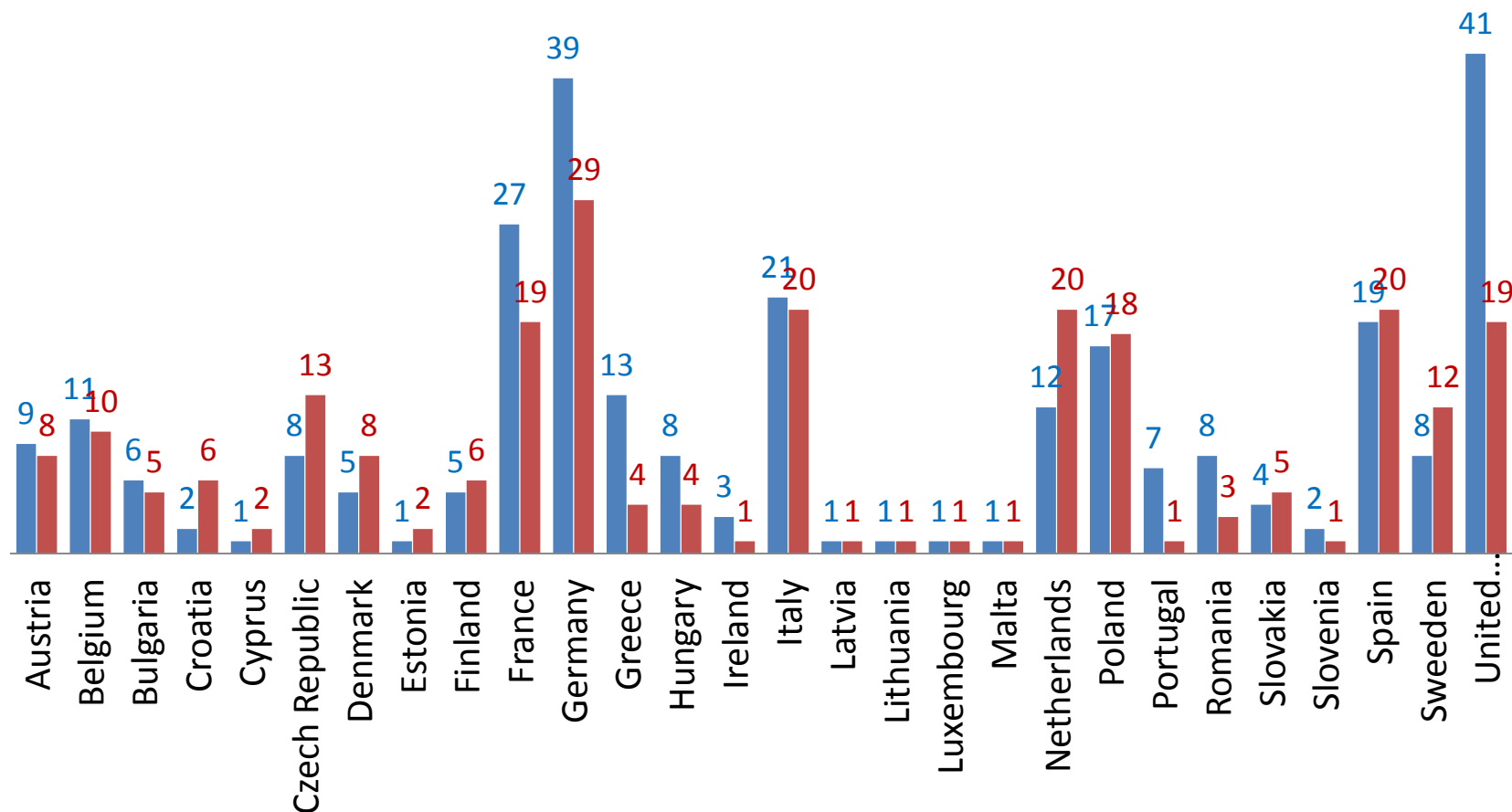
- On the contrary – as highlighted by Olsson's (2009:25) set of interviews to 40 directors and deputy-directors of regional offices – **the only way to achieve some results is to 'team up' with other regions** in Brussels, which explains the proliferation of a huge number of interregional networks in the last decades.
- The latter are channels used to carry out all the core activities of the offices: gather and share information, organize brokerage events for European calls for projects, and – most importantly to this enquiry – lobby (*apud* Trobbiani, 2016)

The main functions of regional offices in Brussels

1. information management
 2. networking/partnerships
 3. liaison between local and regional authorities and the EU
 4. the influencing of EU policy (regions with legislative power vs. others)
- Even if there are working 2-3 employees in an office in Brussels, this is warranted for regional authorities because it allows to obtain, besides the official documents available on official websites, crucial unofficial information on the necessary subject. (M. Huyseune and T. Jans, 2008).

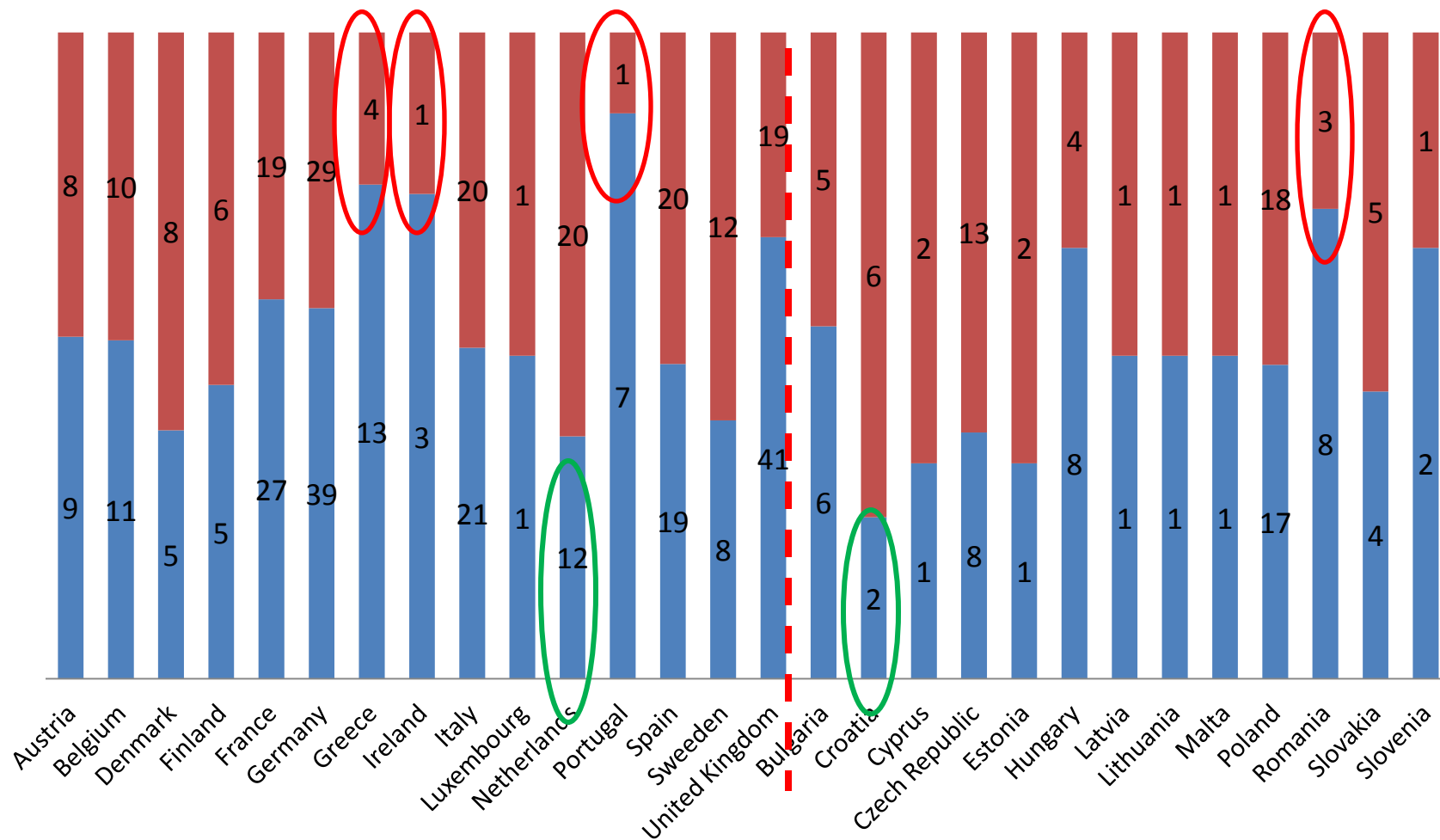
NUTS 2 level regions and number of representations in Brussels

■ No. of NUTS 2 regions (2018) ■ No. of offices in Brussels (2013)



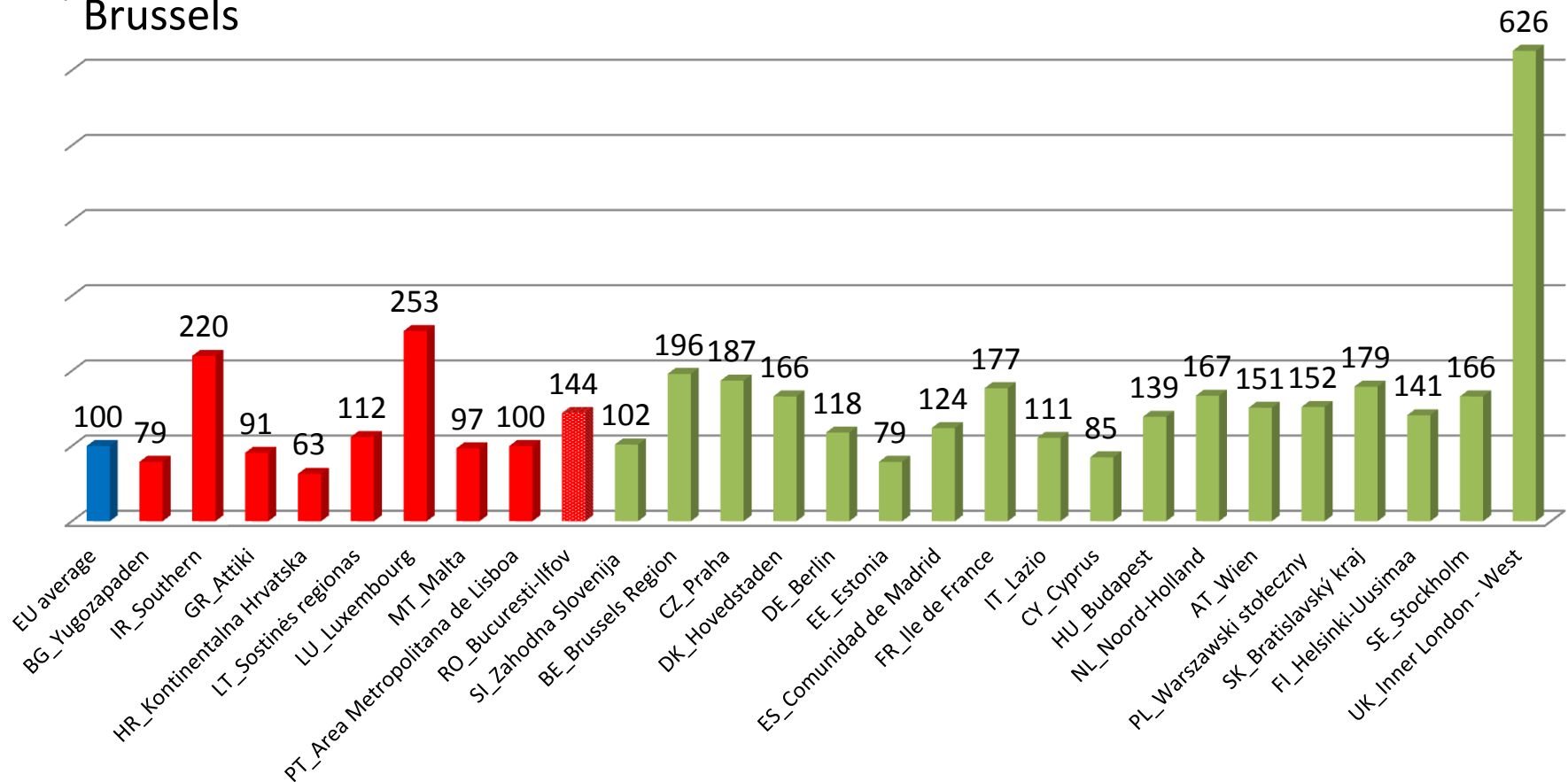
EU old countries vs. new countries

■ No. of NUTS 2 regions (2018) ■ No. of offices in Brussels (2013)



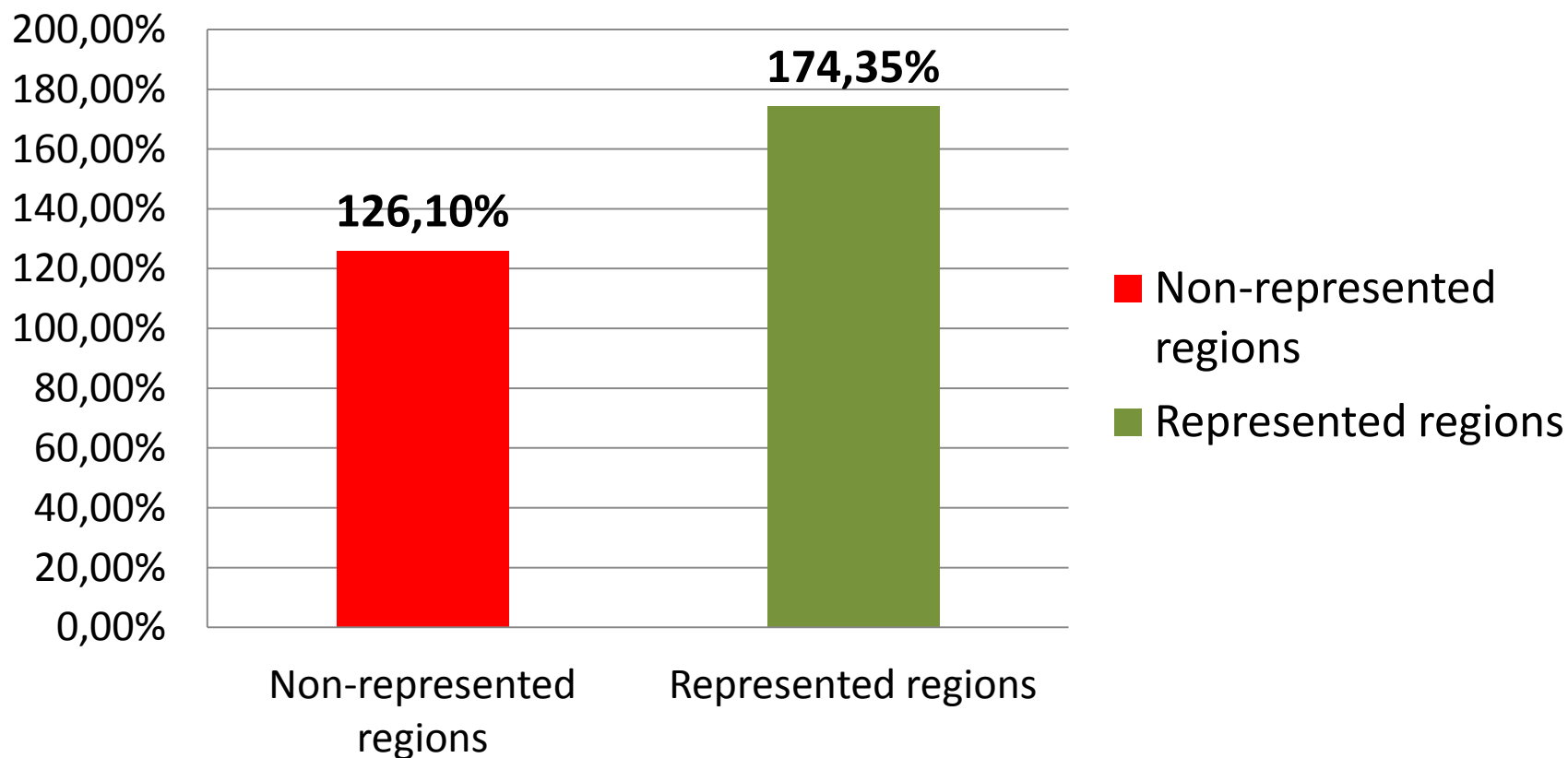
GDP/capita PPS, EU28=100

Green – region has its own office; **red** – region hasn't its own office in Brussels

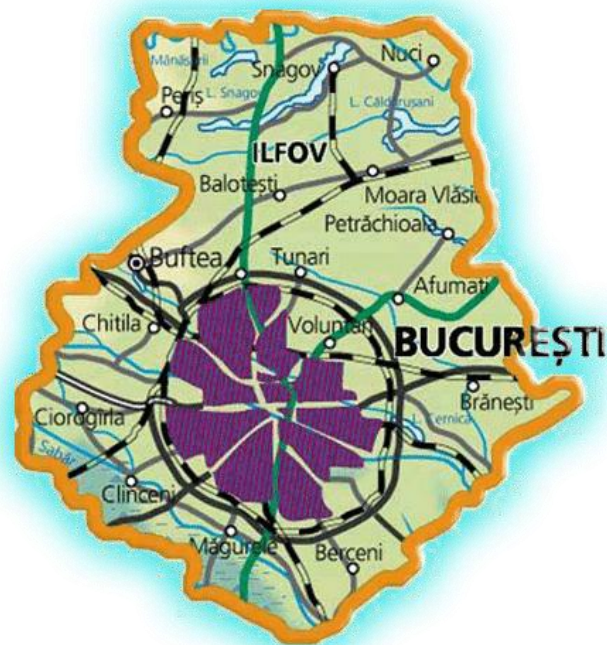
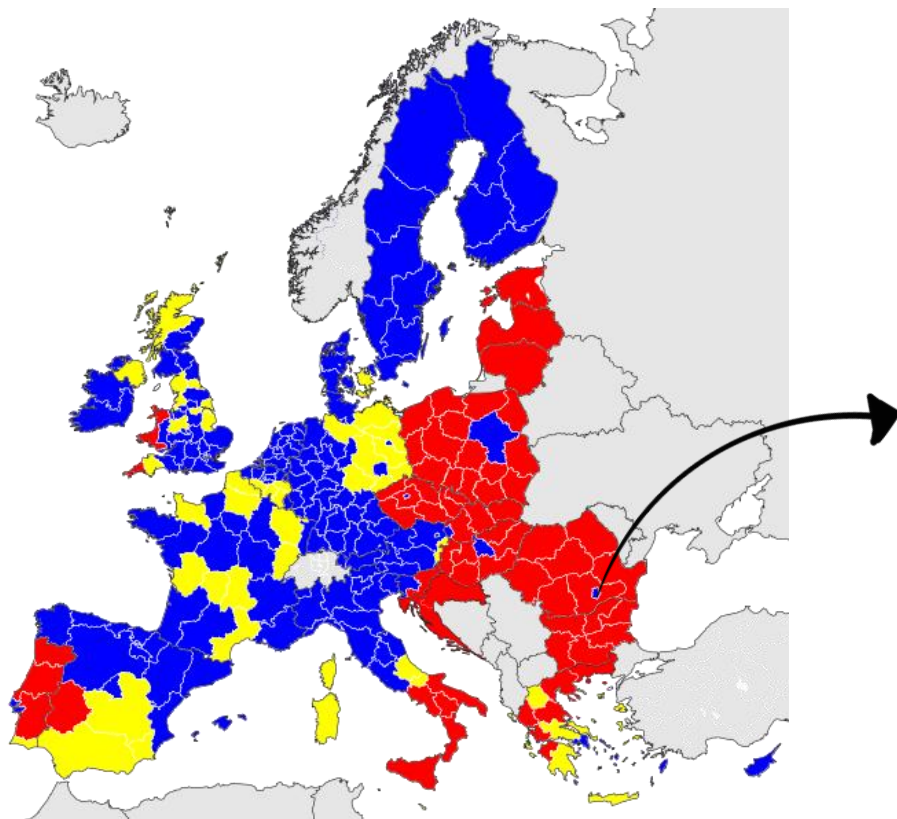


The wealth of the regions

GDP/capita PPS average, EU28=100

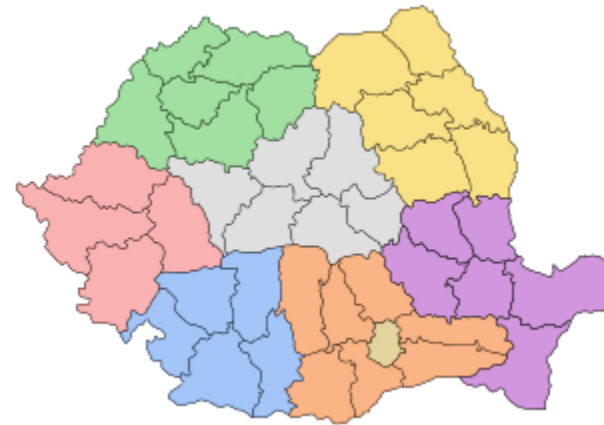
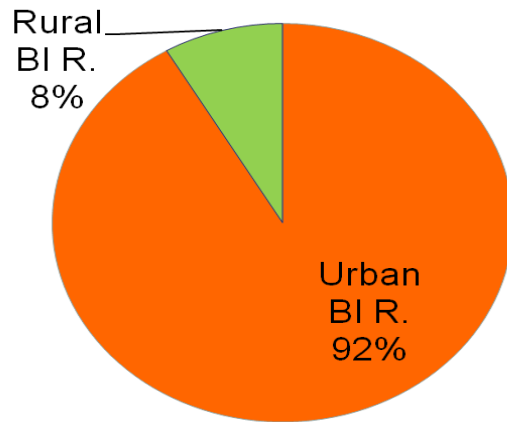


Bucharest-Ilfov Region



Population and surface

**Total BI Region: 2.25
million inhabitants**



Bucharest
8 cities
32 communes
91 villages

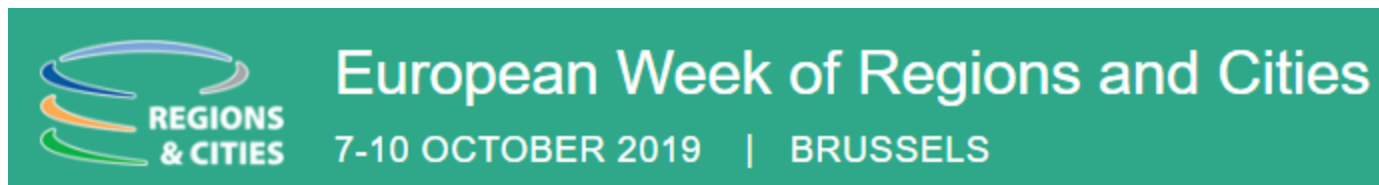
1821 km² = 0,76% of the country

Bucharest-Ilfov Region data

- 144% GDP/capita in PPS of EU28
- Ranked 255th/272 EU Regional Social Progress Index (2011)
- 238% GDP of the Romanian national average
- 59.3% of the total national FDI
- 23% of the total national SMEs
- Less than 1% of the Romania surface, but more than 11% of the population
- Ranked 11th in the world (1st in the EU) on Tom Tom Traffic Index (congestion level 48%)

Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency

- Even without a permanent representation in Brussels, regions have an opportunity to participate at the European Week of Regions and Cities each October
- Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency - partner since 2013



Conclusions

- The importance of being part in networks and partnerships should be understood by authorities because these are strategic investments that will bring new resources
- As example, September 2016 - 170 regions signed the declaration for the future of cohesion policy, the initiative of the region of Lower Austria, showing the power of a common interest

BUCHAREST-ILFOV REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Intermediary Body for Regional Operational Programme

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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