

ESPONTrain

Transnational Networking Activities 2013/4/

Final Report | Version 21/5/2013



This report presents the draft final results of Transnational Networking Activities conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The partnership behind the ESPON Programme consists of the EU Commission and the Member States of the EU27, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Each partner is represented in the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the Monitoring Committee.

Information on the ESPON Programme and projects can be found on www.espon.eu

The web site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

This basic report exists only in an electronic version.

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A. Executive summary

ESPONTrain -“Establishment of a transnational ESPON training programme to stimulate interest to ESPON2013 knowledge”- has been a Priority 4 ESPON project aiming at making ESPON2013 knowledge operational in a coordinated and transnational way for practical use, through a specifically designed ESPON Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The Project Consortium was comprised of ten ESPON European Contact Points (ECPs) – Greece as Lead Partner and nine Project partners (Italy, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Cyprus, and Malta).

The main aim of the ESPONTrain Project was to develop the first ESPON educational platform -a distance learning tool- making ESPON knowledge accessible and familiar to a targeted public, including postgraduate students and practitioners/stakeholders through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

For this purpose the ESPONTrain partners prepared and delivered a specific ESPON course design where a set of teaching material based on a number of applied research and targeted analysis ESPON Projects was developed. This ESPON VLE activity was offered to higher education institutions at postgraduate (Masters) level as well as to public and private professionals and policy makers in 10 ESPON countries.

ESPONTrain developed six thematic teaching packages (TTPs) based on eight Final Reports of ESPON Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects (see list below). In each ESPONTrain country at least three thematic packages were adapted to the VLE and taught by training experts selected at national level by each participating ECP, through an open nationwide call, following a set of common selection criteria. The trainers came from relevant academic fields and being familiar with ESPON knowledge as well as adequate experience with teaching and e-learning.

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was built around an open source Moodle platform. Using this tool, the trainees were able to study and consult the available educational material guided by the training experts, either through asynchronous or synchronous learning (teleconference meetings). Apart from studying the teaching material, students could interact, share opinions, ask questions related to the study text as well as to the topic in general practice, test their knowledge in quizzes and confront it with the latest outcomes produced within the ESPON 2013 programme. They were also asked to carry out final assignments as part of their final evaluation.

The ESPONTrain Project was highly transnational, including countries from different geographical areas (namely Northern Europe, Central Europe, Mediterranean Region and the Balkans) using the experience of different ECPs, either universities or governmental bodies, on the concerned themes and issues. Exchanges between the trainers and the coordinating ECPs were facilitated by the Lead Partner’s central Technical VLE Team, based in Athens.

The educational material corresponding to ESPON related major topics was developed and organized in English especially for the ESPONTrain and was validated by an editorial committee and submitted for commenting by the ESPON CU and the ESPON Monitoring Committee. The Thematic Teaching Packages (TTPs) covered the following themes and issues:

- Demography-Migration (based on the DEMIFER project)

- Energy (based on the ReRisk project)
- Climate change (based on the ESPON Climate project)
- Urban (based on the FOCI project)
- Rural (based on the EDORA project)
- Specific types of territories (based on the TeDi and EUROISLANDS projects)
- Territorial cooperation and governance (based on the METROBORDER project).

Besides the above-mentioned compiled course texts, the teaching material also included PowerPoint presentations with notes, a selection of ESPON maps, key readings and references, quizzes, discussion forums, audio-visual material, suggested readings and national libraries of related policy documents. Furthermore, each student had to deliver a short assignment based on the thematic teaching package he followed and including a related case study. At the same time special forms of assessment and evaluation were developed both of the project and the training procedure to be fulfilled by the different groups involved.

An educational methodology and course design based on the specific ESPON Project's content and the learning objectives set by the steering committee was developed and provided by the LP which was further adapted by the participating partners. The educational cycle for each Thematic Teaching Package lasted three weeks per package and one of the main innovative activities were the on-line meetings of both trainers and trainees (two teleconference meetings of a minimum duration of 2 hours were previewed per TTP) through the ESPONTrain Platform (WizIQ virtual classroom).

The educational material was adapted to the specific training processes of the two main target groups:

- For the first group of post-graduate students and young researchers in spatial planning and territorial development that were selected in cooperation with professional associations and bodies in each country, the focus was more on the academic approach, ESPON concepts and methodologies, and case studies.
- For the second group of policy makers and practitioners coming mainly from the public sector (i.e. ministries, general secretariats, regional and local authorities, municipalities etc), but also from the private sector dealing with territorial cohesion and development issues and strategies, the focus was on policy implications and case studies.

The trainers selected by each ECP were academics or "pracademics" with strong experience in territorial issues, experience in distance learning and training and a sufficient knowledge of English. They had the opportunity to get familiarized with the teaching material and the ESPONTrain Virtual Learning Environment with the guidance of the LP. In addition, a short Trainers' Manual was developed in order to provide a set of recommendations aimed at harmonizing as far as possible the teaching in the participating ESPON countries. During the teleconferences the

trainers had the opportunity to ask the LP platform team for online assistance for any problem, constraint or difficulty.

Regarding the overall control, the implementation strategy and the promotion of ESPONTrain were both coordinated by the Lead Partner (Greek ECP). A Steering Committee was established with a representative of the CU and the participating ECPs to ensure coordination, complementarities, to avoid overlapping activities in practice, to minimize costs and maximize the overall added-value. The educational cycle, which was implemented in the period from September to December 2012, involved in total 120 post-graduate students and professionals. The following key facts describe the high level of activity of the participants:

- The ESPONTrain VLE had 191 registered users – trainers and trainees- and the average log-in frequency per user was 29 entries.
- In total 105 virtual courses were created for the participating countries (Bulgaria didn't implement the educational cycle and Malta did not use the e-class possibility); 49 courses for the stakeholders (Malta did not join) and 56 for the students.
- A full educational cycle was comprised by 3 basic courses per country and per group of trainees and lasted 3 weeks each; two weeks for studying the educational material and for participating in the scheduled teleconference meetings, and one week devoted to the final assignment. The educational cycle was complemented by 4 additional courses (all-in one) per country and per group that lasted in total 2 weeks.

Even if the main teaching philosophy was unique for both target groups, there was a slight adaptation of the educational material, the content of the assignments and the teaching approach and methods (academic approach for students, policy-oriented approach for stakeholders). Furthermore, the trainers created an interactive education environment through the discussion forums, in which a total of 1379 questions, answers or other kind of messages were posted. More than half of the participants submitted a final assignment.

Despite the intensive character of the educational cycle, the trainers considered the response from the trainees to have been very good and the final assignments of high quality. In some cases the trainees claimed that the knowledge acquired through ESPONTrain had a direct impact on their every-day work: e.g. students making use of the ESPON HyperAtlas for their papers, civil servants at a municipality making use of some of the thematic maps for a bid, etc.

The overall impression has been that the trainees easily adjusted to the platform and the learning environment. However, the pilot character of the project led to a tight time schedule that proved to be quite demanding and thus difficult to follow for some of the professionals who belonged to the second target group.

The main outcomes of the ESPONTrain Project have been:

- ESPON knowledge has been shared with a targeted audience which otherwise would have limited or no access to it. The realized educational cycles succeeded to transfer ESPON knowledge thus increasing awareness about ESPON to a wider public.

- The participation of various target groups (students, civil servants, professionals, etc) from different countries was a major strength for the educational programme.
- The second target group was beneficial for the enhancement of the role of public sector in strategic planning, territorial development and cohesion policy in order to take into account the ESPON findings. This task should be considered to be further developed.
- The implementation of ESPONTrain showed that this type of dissemination activities is well received both by professionals and students.
- The development of the Virtual Learning Environment acted as a transnational tool - connecting policy makers and practitioners of Central, South Eastern Europe and the Nordic region - for education and communication based on ESPON knowledge.
- The project's transnationality was mainly developed through the possibilities of networking that the VLE provided and further enhanced by the final transnational ESPON Train Conference in Athens.
- ESPONTrain introduced a European wide ESPON consultation process through the e-learning procedure, as a large group of people got involved and will keep following ESPON's work in the future.
- It is widely reported that the best part of the teaching/learning experience is the fact that ESPONTrain largely neutralized some of the skepticism surrounding the ESPON projects.

Finally, ESPONTrain contributed in clearly marking the limits of the ESPON Projects and largely highlighted the benefits from their use in every-day planning and policy making. ESPON research results have proven to be interesting and stimulating for its audience; although it is still generally acknowledged that the specific European geographical and territorial cohesion vocabulary, the ESPON concepts and methods as well as the ESPON maps are complex and largely inaccessible.

Nevertheless, ESPONTrain clearly demonstrates that there is a large potential in ESPON education. Although the call for participation reached a quite high percentage of potential trainees, it is believed that the total number of possible interested persons is considerably higher.

Besides, the ESPONTrain project has also contributed to the strategic goals of ESPON: On the one hand by preparing a next academic generation in ESPON related research, and on the other hand contributing to the "European territory of tomorrow" by developing learning efforts towards higher education institutions.

As already mentioned, the transnational experiences were further enhanced through the 2-day ESPONTrain transnational final conference which was held in Athens on April 3-4, 2013 under the title "Are European planners familiar with ESPON findings? : Integrating ESPON in higher education and policy making at central, regional and local levels". The transnational conference consisted of two major parts. On the one hand, an internal part joining ECPs, ESPONTrain training experts and trainees, and a Conference open to a wider public aimed at stimulating further interest in integrating ESPON knowledge in education and implementation of territorial development and cohesion in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean.

The ESPONTrain Transnational Conference brought together academics, practitioners and stakeholders in the field of territorial development and cohesion to discuss on how the ESPON findings could further efficiently be used both by higher education and by national and regional/local authorities.

In addition, the philosophy and experiences of the ESPONTrain project will be underpinning the planned VLE activities in the latest Priority 4 Transnational Networking Activity project - USESPON - and thus ensure the continuation and further expansion of the successfully implemented e-learning platform.

Finally, since a large majority (70%) of the countries involved in the ESPONTrain Project were Mediterranean and Balkan (namely Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, Romania and Bulgaria) and due to the successful implementation of the project in the these regions, a new initiative could be considered, based on the ESPONTrain VLE Project, in form of an educational ESPON “pole of competence” in the Mediterranean region. This would also contribute to the extension of ESPON towards neighboring countries.

The ESPONTrain VLE can be accessed by following the link below :
www.espontrain.eu

B. Report

1. Introduction

The ESPON findings and ESPON related knowledge remains in principle, “property” of a relatively restricted academic and professional environment in Europe, despite the significant and intensive efforts of the ESPON network. This is due, on the one hand, to the significant volume of the knowledge already produced within ESPON and on the other hand on its complexity. Furthermore, there is great diversity of ESPON knowledge levels as well as ESPON evidence comprehension and integration, between national environments and within the national environments themselves, that is across ESPON related disciplines in each country (geography, spatial and urban planning, environmental science, regional science and economics, environmental economics etc). This is obvious also in the composition of the ESPON TPGs where certain academic and research institutions are predominant due to their specialization in the ESPON methodologies and approaches, starting from the 2000-2006 ESPON Programme.

Thus, ESPONTrain has been designed by the Greek ECP in collaboration with 9 other ECPs so as to make ESPON 2013 knowledge operational in a coordinated and transnational way for practical use at regional and local level, and trying to translate Europe-wide information to the regional/local level. It has also been designed as an innovative tool to **synthesise and integrate all these efforts** produced at regional/local level, as well as at the transnational level, which is considered as an added value to the ESPON Programme in general.

The main aim of the ESPONTrain Project was to develop a Virtual Learning Environment, the first ever in the ESPON Programme, which would make the education and comprehension of the ESPON knowledge familiar to a wider public starting from postgraduate students and national/regional/local stakeholders.

For this purpose the ESPONTrain partners prepared and delivered a specific ESPON course design and a set of teaching material based on some applied research and targeted analysis ESPON Projects. This ESPON VLE activity addressed a/ to higher education institutions at postgraduate (Masters) level and b/ to both public and private professionals and policy makers in 10 ESPON countries.

With the completion of the educational cycle in December 2012 ESPONTrain proved to be a useful and successful tool for postgraduate students, public servants and professionals interested in ESPON related spatial and territorial analysis and policy. Furthermore the demand for the ESPONTrain e-classes showed that this kind of initiative can be very popular amongst different target groups like students, planners, geographers, decision-makers, etc.

The specific aims of the ESPONTrain Transnational Networking Activity were:

- To make ESPON 2013 knowledge operational for practical use at regional and local level in a coordinated and transnational way and translate Europe-wide information to become known and useful at the regional/local level.
- To disseminate knowledge already produced by the ESPON2013 Programme and the thematic TPGs focusing both on the “Applied Research” and the “Targeted Analysis” priorities.

- To stimulate an e-learning transnational educational and training ESPON Project founded on the networking promoted by the involved ECPs.
- To transform the already produced ESPON2013 knowledge in a comprehensible and easy to deliver course with educational and training material of logical volume, maintaining however its scientific soundness.
- To set-up structured national e-learning VLEs managed by the involved ECPs, providing information so as to enhance the comprehension of the ESPON scientific outcomes and results.
- To identify efficient target groups within the national educational environments and within policy makers in the public sector so as to be the multipliers of the dissemination and diffusion of the ESPON philosophy, ideas and results.
- To create a first transnational body of “ESPON teachers” adapted to national needs of ESPON related education.

This report highlights the **methodology**, the **strategy**, the **implementation** and the **dissemination procedures** of the ESPONTrain project.

2. Aims, Objectives and Strategy

2.1 Background of the ESPONTrain Methodology

The main aim of ESPONTrain was to implement an innovative distance learning method in order to get a wider target group involved in the ESPON concepts and themes related discussion. The main target groups were: firstly, the **postgraduate students and early career researchers** and, secondly, **the professionals (decision makers, planners, city officials, etc)** who already have a basic knowledge regarding issues of territorial analysis and policy. Apart from that, the project had a pilot character for the establishment of similar activities in the future and has been a major mean of dissemination of the work done within ESPON the last years.

The methodology has been based on previous projects of ESPON with similar goals, but also on the experience of the ECPs – especially since some of the ECPs are linked to higher education. The way the ESPONTrain Project was conceived and planned, is governed by the idea to create synergies and complementarities between the Project and the other Transnational Networking Activities, mainly INTERSTRAT and CADEC. Most of the synergies concern ESPONTrain and INTERSTRAT projects because many of the partners namely Greece, Italy, Romania and Bulgaria have participated in both TNAs.

2.2. Methodological Approach

2.2.1. ECPs Partnership Composition

The Lead partner of the ESPONTrain project was the Greek ESPON Contact Point with a long capitalization activity within both ESPON periods (2000-2006 and 2007-2013). The large consortium also include the ECPs from Italy, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Cyprus and Malta. The consortium,

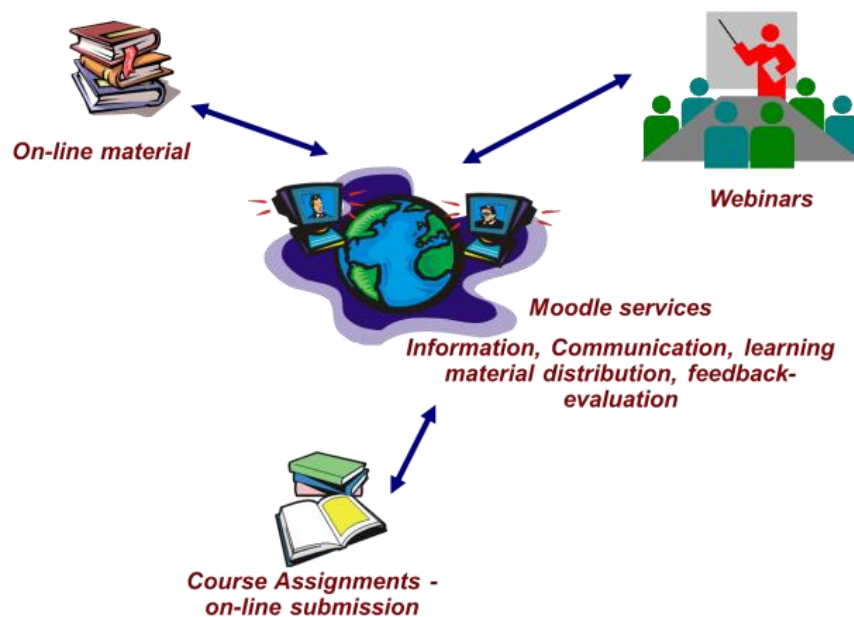
which geographically represented the Southern European, the Central-East European and the Nordic regions, proved to be quite flexible.

It is important to note that five of the ECPs are higher education Institutions (Universities) and the other five are governmental bodies (Ministries or Ministerial Institutes or Authorities). This fact allowed a balanced approach between the academic and the operational and the enrichment of the project from diverse environments (higher education, public administration). Another advantage was the mix of senior and newly appointed ECPs. This led to a quite efficient co-operation within the partnership and stimulated fruitful synergies and exchanges as well as capacity building for newly appointed ECPs.

2.2.2. Platform design and functions

In order to design and implement an effective and user friendly virtual learning environment for the needs of the ESPONTrain Project, a variety of organizational, administrative, instructional and technological components had to be created (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Components of the ESPONTrain learning environment



The cornerstone of the ESPONTrain learning environment was the Moodle Learning Management System. Moodle (abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) is the most popular and usable open source e-learning software platform, which was customised for the needs of ESPONTrain (i.e. customisation of the theme, the course structure, and the integration of specific plug-ins). As of October 2012, it has been used in over 6 million courses. Moodle was chosen for ESPONTrain because it enables to create online courses with a focus on interaction and collaborative construction of content, and is in continuous evolution.

The Moodle VLE was used to provide a learner-centred, flexible, stimulating and effective environment. The web-based course-ware (e.g. the flipping books, quizzes, videos, etc.) as well as tools for supporting learning activities (e.g. assignments, self-assessment, web-conferencing) were integrated into the Moodle (version 2.4).

Three types of ESPONTrain Moodle user profiles were created:

- The *learners (trainees)*, who were *postgraduate students and stakeholders*. They could use Moodle in order to participate without any time and place constraints to the educational process. In fact, the learners are the focal users of Learning Management System (LMS), in the sense that these systems are being developed in order to satisfy some of their needs and resolve their problems.
- The *instructors (trainers)*, being the teachers and their assistants that used Moodle in order to coach, supervise, assist and evaluate the students (e.g. notify for important issues on an electronic notice board, engage in discussions in electronic fora, communicate and exchange messages with learners, collect, assess deliverables, etc.).
- The *administrators* of the system who undertook the task of supporting all the other users of the Moodle system and safeguarding its proper operational status.

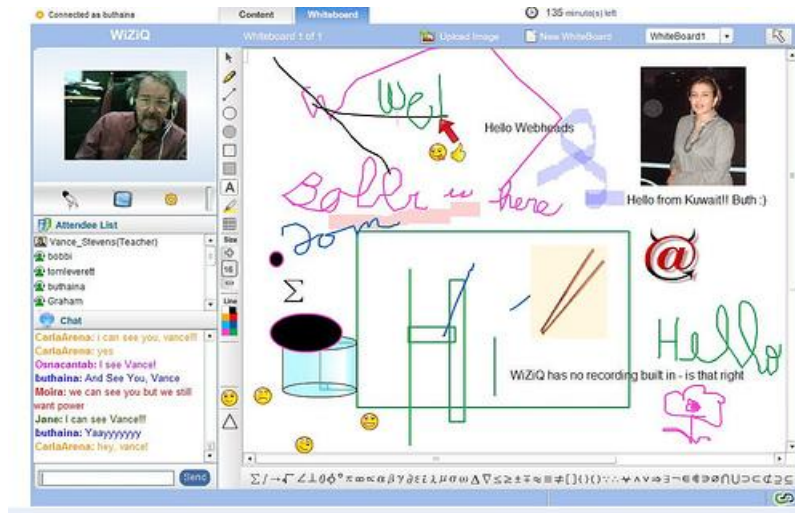
The *ECPs* also had access to the platform in order to be able to follow the educational procedure.

Furthermore, the ESPONTrain Moodle environment offered services for satisfying specific instructional needs and/or automating (partially or fully) instructional events. It supported the development and execution of four basic tasks via a simple, friendly and uniform user-interface:

1. *Information distribution*, e.g. announcing the deadlines or information about course issues, such as upcoming webinar, glossary, etc.
2. *Management of learning material*, e.g. structuring of the learning material into folders of the online library, extra uploading of the learning material for the needs of specific learners, etc.
3. *Multiple communication*, e.g. asynchronous communication via web forum and synchronous communication via chat and WebIQ.
4. *Class management*, e.g. on-line marking of students' assessments, tracking learners' participation, etc.

Especially for the synchronous communication between the learners & instructors in the form of webinars, WizIQ was used and integrated into Moodle (see Figure 2). WizIQ is an online tele-conferencing platform which enables learners and instructors to come together online and attend virtual learning sessions in real time. It also allows the easy recording of the sessions and communication with live audio and video chat. Instructors can share most commonly used file types such as PDF, Word/PowerPoint/Excel documents, video and audio files during the live conferencing. WizIQ offered a simple interface enabling users to focus on learning and not on technology skills.

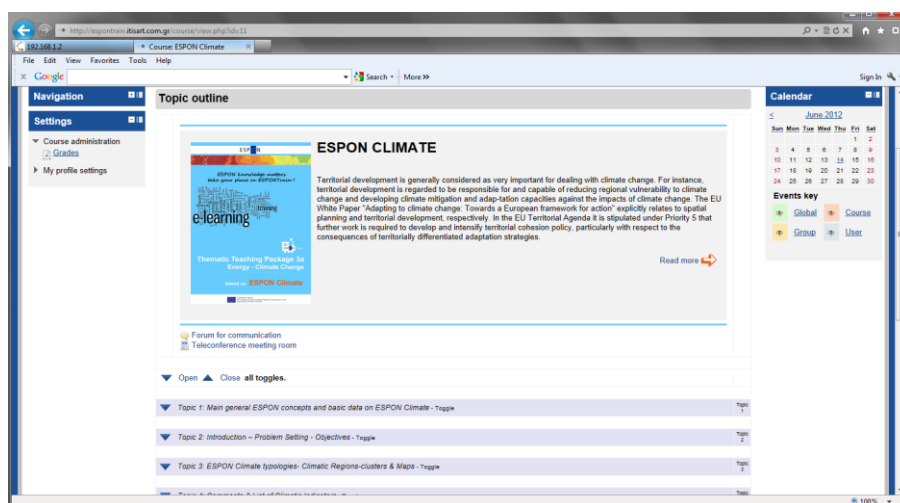
Figure 2. Sample of the WizIQ platform



Learners in this integrated Moodle-based learning environment were asked to perform synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The duration of the learning process of each thematic teaching package (TTP) was 3 weeks: two weeks with a requirement of 2,5 hours learners' involvement in teleconference activity per week, plus an additional week for the elaboration and finalisation of the assignment. Each week included activities that were divided into four or five sections, one of which was webinar that lasted for about two hours (see Figure 3).

The learners who could not attend the Webinar were able to access the session online at anytime, since all sessions were recorded. Furthermore, topics for discussions were suggested by the instructors, in order to stimulate the discussion and active involvement of learners. These discussions took place in asynchronous web forum. Learners had to solve quizzes for practicing their level of understanding of the content of each thematic teaching package. They were also asked to submit online assignments.

Figure 3. A snapshot of ESPONTrain Moodle course structure



The learning content created and uploaded to the Moodle-based learning environment consists of:

1. Course description, study guide and announcements concerning deadlines and webinars

Figure 4. Screen shot of the ESPONTrain VLE

ESPON CLIMATE

Territorial development is generally considered as very important for dealing with climate change. For instance, territorial development is regarded to be responsible for and capable of reducing regional vulnerability to climate change and developing climate mitigation and adaptation capacities against the impacts of climate change. The EU White Paper "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action" explicitly relates to spatial planning and territorial development, respectively. In the EU Territorial Agenda it is stipulated under Priority 5 that further work is required to develop and intensify territorial cohesion policy, particularly with respect to the consequences of territorially differentiated adaptation strategies.

However, territorially differentiated adaptation strategies call for an evidence basis. This is what the ESPON Climate project is mainly about; a pan-European vulnerability assessment as a basis for identifying regional typologies of climate change exposure, sensitivity, impact and vulnerability. On this basis, tailor-made adaptation options can be derived which are able to cope with regionally specific patterns of climate change. In the ESPON Climate project this regional specificity is addressed by seven case studies from the transnational to the very local level.

Discussion	Started by	Replies	Last post
Lecture about ESPON Programme by Stella Kyriakou (INTERSTRAT meeting, November 2011)	Stella KYRIELOU	0	Sat, 29 Sep 2012, 01:27 AM
LIFE +Adapt'08 Project about climate change and forest management in Greece	Stella KYRIELOU	0	Fri, 28 Sep 2012, 08:04 PM
Teleconference time correction	ESPONTrain Admin	0	Fri, 21 Sep 2012, 06:51 PM
Goodmorning ! Thanks for your contribution yesterday evening!	Stella KYRIELOU	0	Fri, 21 Sep 2012, 09:07 AM
Instructions about teleconferences	Stella KYRIELOU	0	Wed, 19 Sep 2012, 03:55 PM
Teleconference of 20.9.2012	Stella KYRIELOU	0	Wed, 19 Sep 2012, 01:30 PM
Teleconference instructions	ESPONTrain Admin	0	Wed, 19 Sep 2012, 01:30 PM
User guide for ESPONTrain platform	ESPONTrain Admin	0	Tue, 18 Sep 2012, 06:10 PM
Welcome you to the ESPONTrain Virtual Learning Environment !	Stella KYRIELOU	0	Mon, 17 Sep 2012, 04:16 PM
Welcome	ESPONTrain Admin	0	Fri, 14 Sep 2012, 06:53 PM

2. Flipping books for each thematic pack.

Figure 5. Sample of a flipping book

3. Self-assessment quizzes

Figure 6. Sample of the online quizzes

Match the numbers with the appropriate word:

Climate variability: Choose...
 Mitigation: Choose...
 Adaptation: Choose...
 Sensitivity to climatic stimuli: Choose...
 Exposure to climatic stimuli: Choose...
 Adaptive Capacity: Choose...

Answer the following questions.

Both adaptive capacity and mitigative capacity consist of only two dimensions, awareness, ability.
 True False

Northern, Western and Central Europe have [] adaptive capacity than Southern Europe.

Eastern Europe on the whole has [] capacity than other parts of Europe.

Within countries, adaptive capacity was [] in capital city regions in comparison to other regions in the countries.

Only a few countries had uniform [] capacity across all regions.

[] partially being measured with same indicators as adaptive capacity, shows similar trends to adaptive capacity in Europe.

4. On-line library with links to resources

Figure 7. Screenshot of indicative national library

2.2.3. Teaching Material

The teaching material was developed on the outcomes of the research which had been delivered within the ESPON 2007-2013 programme by end of 2011¹. The topics that have been chosen are related to the main themes of territorial development. The Teaching Packages covered the following major ESPON Applied Research and Targeted Analysis:

1. Demographic-Migratory issues (DEMIFER);
2. Energy related issues (ReRisk);
3. ESPON Climate change related issues (ESPON Climate);

¹ The existence of the projects' final reports was a pre-requisite for their further transformation into educational material.

4. Urban issues (FOCI);
5. Rural issues (EDORA), Specific territories issues (TeDi, EUROISLANDS) and
6. Territorial cooperation and governance building issues (METROBORDER).

The drafting of the material was developed in a decentralized way with the assistance of a Steering Committee and external experts and, in some cases, from the respective ESPON projects. The challenge was to transform the ESPON reports (which are quite technical and extended) into educational material and to assure correspondence between the ESPON final reports and the educational Packages. A main and an assistant editor were appointed for each Thematic Teaching Package from the participating ECPs. The editors were assisted by an Editorial Committee which consisted of professors and experts from the participating ECPs and other external experts in order to ensure high quality of the educational material. The formation of the Editorial Committee as well as the main and assistant Editors of each thematic teaching package was approved by the Steering Committee at the ESPONTrain project kick-off meeting in Athens.

For practical reasons, taking into account that the final reports were not completed at the moment of the development of the thematic teaching packages, the ESPON projects SGPDT and TERCO were excluded, in agreement with the ESPON Coordination Unit.

The educational material was revised by the ESPONTrain Project Partners after comments and amendments made by the ESPON Experts, the TPGs Lead Partners and the MC. The final versions of the educational material was uploaded by the LP on the ESPONTrain VLE, adapted to the ESPONTrain Course design and Teaching methodology already elaborated by the LP, for the specific needs of the Project.

Both the course design/teaching methodology and the adaptation of the material to the VLE were quite demanding tasks and crucial for the VLE functionality, and they were all carried out by the LP and then shared with all the participating ECPs.

2.2.4. Educational groups

The ESPONTrain Project was implemented in all participating countries in 2 successive training cycles. The initial goal was to involve about 200 attendees (20 participants av. per ECP) in each ESPONTrain cycle. A selection procedure was established for both trainers and trainees:

- Training staff (2–3 trainers per ECP country) was procured and selected by the Editorial committee, following a proposal by the local (national) members. The trainers played a major role in the projects as they guided the trainees through the education/training procedures.
- Trainees were selected in each participating country by the local (national) editorial committee members after an open national wide call by each ECP. The selection criteria were defined by the national committee and approved by the Steering Committee.

The project focused on two distinctive target groups:

- The first consisted of post-graduate students and young researchers/professionals in spatial planning and territorial development. The selection of the young professionals was made in cooperation with

professional associations and bodies in each country. This target group was crucial for a more efficient dissemination of ESPON in the higher educational environment.

- The second one consisted of policy makers and practitioners coming –mostly- from the public sector (i.e. ministries, general secretariats, regional and local authorities, municipalities etc), but also from the private sector dealing with territorial cohesion and development issues and strategies. This target group was beneficial for the enhancement of the role of public sector in ESPON related strategic planning and territorial development and cohesion policy making, as stated by the trainees.

2.2.5. Communication Strategy

A Communication Plan aimed at the ESPONTrain target groups on a local/regional/national/European level interested in the e-learning activity was developed. Actually, all the ECPs involved, being either universities or ministries, already had a quite developed network of potential participants that was approached and extended through several actions, such as events, calls of interest, mailing, etc.

The Communication Plan described all the promotional activities necessary for the implementation of the project activities.

A logo was designed and a motto was agreed by all partners to promote the project : *“ESPON knowledge matters : take your place in ESPONTrain!”*, Furthermore a number of press releases, newsletters, brochures, leaflets and posters for the promotion of the ESPONTrain VLE and the educational cycles were developed mainly in electronic form (due to the overall philosophy of the project) and in some cases in hard-copy form.

The promotional material circulated through the ECPs websites, the ESPON website, the e-learning platform, the social media, while the hard-copy material was distributed during the events. The material was developed in English while translation in partners’ native languages was optional **after a discussion and agreement among the partners.**

Several actions were developed in order to communicate the ESPONTrain project:

1. An open call for trainees was carried out in each country and ECPs proceeded in the most appropriate ways (press release, announcement, events) in order to attract participants.
2. At least one open call for trainers was carried out in each country, in order to attract competent ESPONTrain teachers.
3. Social media like a Facebook page and a Twitter page were developed to disseminate the ESPONTrain Project content and its progress.
4. The project was also disseminated via the ECPs websites.

Furthermore, 16 newsletters entitled “ESPONTrain Bulletins” served as an internal update on important issues in order to keep all the partners and the CU informed on the project’s ongoing activities.

3. Activities

3.1. Educational material (thematic teaching packages) and course design development phase

The thematic teaching packages were designed with the contribution of all project partners and implemented to the ESPONTrain VLE so as to adapt to a unified course design the structure of which was initiated by the LP, assisted by an external expert and was agreed upon by all partners.

3.2. Selection of trainers and trainees

3.2.1 Trainers' Selection and "Training of the Trainers"

3.2.1.1 Selection of trainers

Each partner country (ECP) was responsible for appointing the **trainers** to be involved as tutors in the e-learning seminars. The trainers were selected according to an agreed **set of criteria**, prepared by the Slovenian ECP in collaboration with the LP, mainly focusing on their experience in ESPON programmes and distance learning. The selected trainers were either academics or experienced practitioners or "pracademicians" with a particular know-how in spatial and territorial issues. The selection process took into account their familiarity to the information and communication technologies. Fluency in English was also another prerequisite for their selection. Up to 6 trainers were selected in each country. A shortlist of potential Trainers was maintained by each ECP as a **Trainers' Support System (TSS)**, and **special on-line (teleconference) seminars** were organized by the LP, to train the trainers.

During the teleconference seminars organized by the LP and assisted by an external expert team, each trainer had the opportunity to try out the tools, upload files, adjust settings and have conversations with the other trainers. During the training but also during the courses, the VLE administrator was on-line in order to assist in case of technical problems or constraints.

The trainers had the opportunity to get familiarized both with the educational material organized in thematic packages and the operation of the VLE. Several special familiarization training courses (tutorials) were delivered by the web administrators which included demonstrations of the platform. Apart from that, meetings and seminars were organized at a local level, e.g. a "Training the Trainers" seminar organised in Athens by the LP especially for the Greek trainers that undertook both Greek and Cypriot groups of trainees.

The group of trainers that was appointed following national procurement procedures is presented in Annex V.

3.2.1.2 Selection of Trainees

As already mentioned above, the trainees were selected amongst two distinct groups: a first one consisting of postgraduate students and young researchers/professionals coming from the fields of Geography, Spatial Planning, Regional and Urban Development, Engineering, Environmental Economics etc., and a second one consisting of policy makers, government officials, local/regional authorities' staff, involved in the aforementioned fields and disciplines.

In the participating countries one of the groups was, more or less, prioritized. Five of the participating countries (Greece, Italy, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia) where the ECPs come from the higher education environment focused on the 1st group while the other 5 participating countries (Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus), where the ECPs come from the governmental sector focused on the second group.

Before the selection, there was a call for participants among the members of the two groups. The participants were selected at the national level, according to a set of criteria agreed between the LP and the ESPONTrain partners. Nevertheless, the considerations that were taken into account for the final choice of the trainees differed slightly between the countries, since the specific circumstances were not the same.

The reason why the selection was made at national level has to do with reducing the costs and the time consumption as well as increasing the effectiveness. A main goal was to create groups that would have the possibility to follow the teleconferences thus creating a dynamic teaching environment, which was a major goal of the project.

3.3. Presentation and Assessment of the VLE

3.3.1. VLE design

The Lead Partner was responsible for developing the ESPONTrain Virtual Learning Environment which has been available through the web. Hence, the LP prepared the Technical and Functional Requirements and Specifications for the preparation of the VLE after discussing them with all the project partners. The VLE was common for all the partners thus ensuring the uniformity of the results.

The ESPONTrain VLE has been active since August 2012 at <http://espontrain.eu>. The Lead Partner organized a transnational on-line seminar to demonstrate the ESPONTrain Platform and train the trainers on its usage (i.e. how to contact the students, how to upload material, how to answer users' questions etc.). After the workshop, recommendations on training method and training practice have been reported and disseminated to all the trainers in the form of a brief Trainers Manual.

The e-learning educational cycles have been implemented via a user-friendly software (educational platform) adjusted to the Distance Learning Principles. The educational platform on use was a portal through which the electronic classrooms have been managed and through which the users had access to them. Each e-classroom was similar to a traditional teaching classroom. The user could access the e-classroom with a personal code number and within it he could browse the teaching material, the news, the discussion forums and the assessment tests. The educational material for each cycle was gradually provided, per teaching unit, through the electronic classrooms.

Figure 8. Screenshot of the ESPONTrain VLE home page



During the enrolment to each cycle the user could find the necessary links for the smooth implementation of the educational process, news and announcements, such as :

- Information on the trainers and messages addressed by them ;
- timetables, e.g for the submission of the tests which included the schedule of the teaching units;
- deadlines for the taking of the relevant tests ;
- a Study Guide per teaching unit which assisted the trainees to better manage their study, etc.

3.3.2. VLE statistics

During the educational cycle the trainers were able to create an interactive environment through the discussion forums. In total 1379 questions, answers or other kind of messages were posted at the forum discussions. Apart from that, the VLE had high average usage, as described below :

- 584 AvG view flipping books/pdf: 35 per item ;
- 2008 files ;

- 62 linked pages ;
- 4887 announcement Labels ;
- 416 quizzes ;
- 36 chat rooms ;
- 276 discussion fora ;
- 126 WizIQ Live Classes with a total duration for all sessions, from all countries being 5.040 min (250 hs).

At the end of each TTP, a report of about 1500 words was delivered, including, in most of the cases, a SWOT analysis on the impact of policies on territorial development and cohesion. These reports entitled “assignments” were inspired, in principle, by the existing case studies within each of the ESPON reports. More than half of the participants submitted a final assignment.

The list of the submitted Assignments per country and TTP is presented at the Annex V.

3.3.3. Participation

The ESPONTrain VLE had 191 registered users – trainers and trainees – and the average log-in times per user were 29 times. In total 105 courses were created for the participating countries (Bulgaria did not implement the educational cycle and Malta did not use the e-class possibility). 49 courses have been implemented for the stakeholders (Malta did not join) and 56 for the students.

A full educational cycle was comprised by 3 basic courses per country and per group of trainees and lasted 3 weeks each; two weeks for studying the educational material and for participating in the scheduled teleconference meetings, and one week devoted to the final assignment. The educational cycle was complemented by 4 additional courses (all-in one) per country and per group and lasted in total 2 weeks.

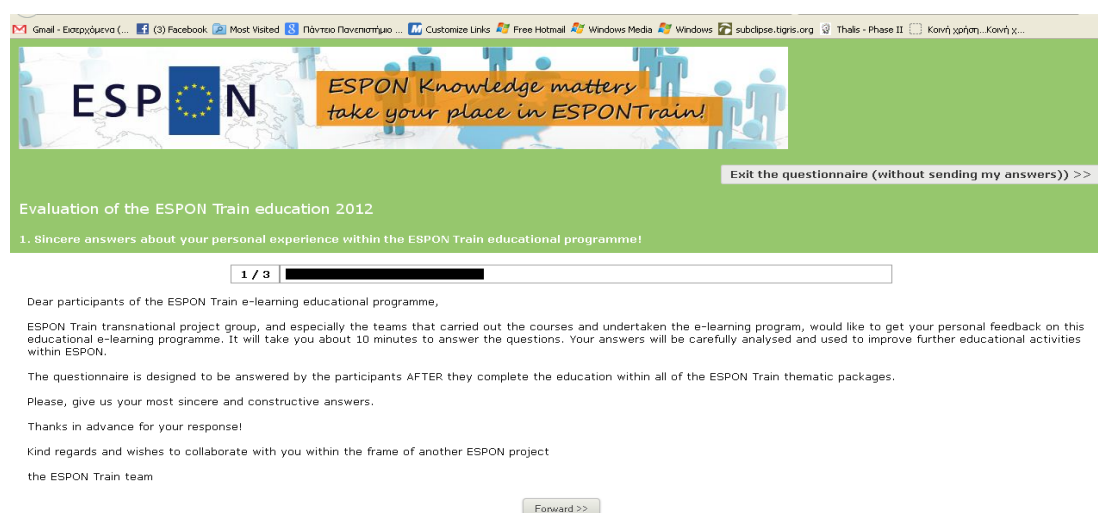
Table 1. Number of users per country

Country	Number of Users	Students	Stakeholders	Teachers	National
Lithuania	27	8	15	2	2
Estonia	26	11	10	3	2
Slovenia	39	16	15	6	2
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-
Romania	12	5	3	3	1
Czech Republic	25	4	15	3	3
Italy	18	8	6	2	2
Malta	11	7	-	2	2
Greece-Cyprus	42	19	15	4	4

Table 2. Number of discussion threads/Users

Course	Discussion threads	Num of Users
GR-CY : FOCI	29	23
Slovenia : DEMIFER stakeholders	25	21
Malta : ESPON Climate	27	9
Romania : DEMIFER	18	12
Lithuania : ESPON Climate	27	10
Italy : ESPON Climate	27	10
Estonia : ESPON Climate	27	14
GR-CY : ESPON Climate	48	33

Figure 9. Screenshot of the evaluation questionnaire



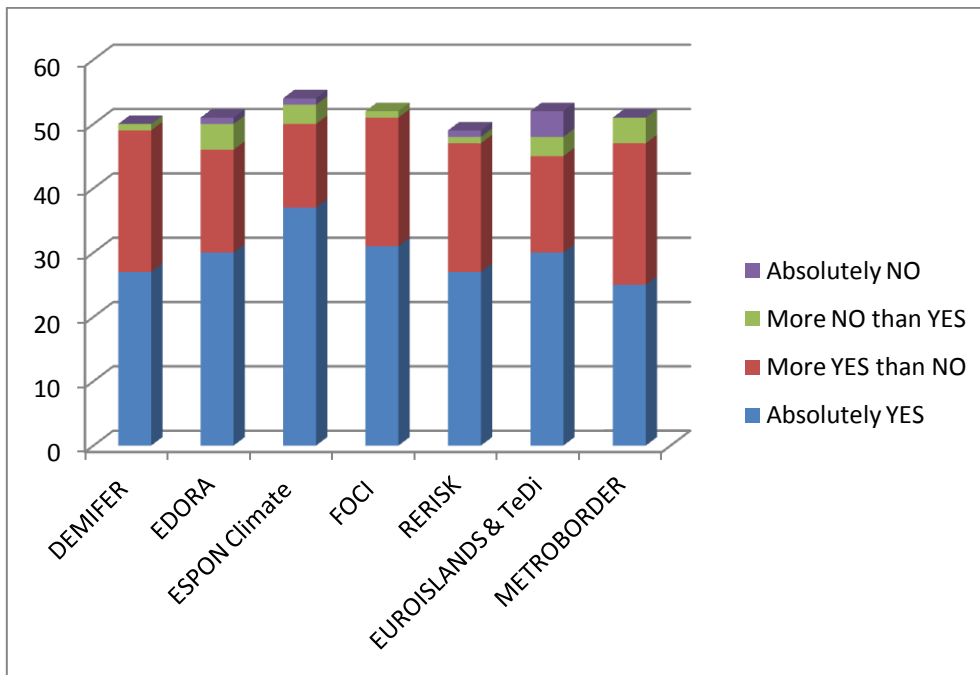
3.3.4 Evaluation

A specific questionnaire to meet the needs of the project evaluation was designed by the Slovenian partner, with input from the LP and the Italian partner. The evaluation questionnaire is accessible through the following link on the project's VLE (http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ESPON_Train).

Out of 83 participants who have responded to the questionnaire, the 55,4% were students while the remaining 44,6% were stakeholders. The majority of them (30.5%) found the overall experience within the ESPONTrain VLE good, 27.1% very good, 15.3% excellent, 11.9% sufficient and only 11,9% insufficient, while 3.4% did not express their opinion (this question was answered by 59 users).

The majority of the participants, who have answered the relevant questions, differing from 49-54 users, claimed that TTPs improved their knowledge on European territorial questions as follows:

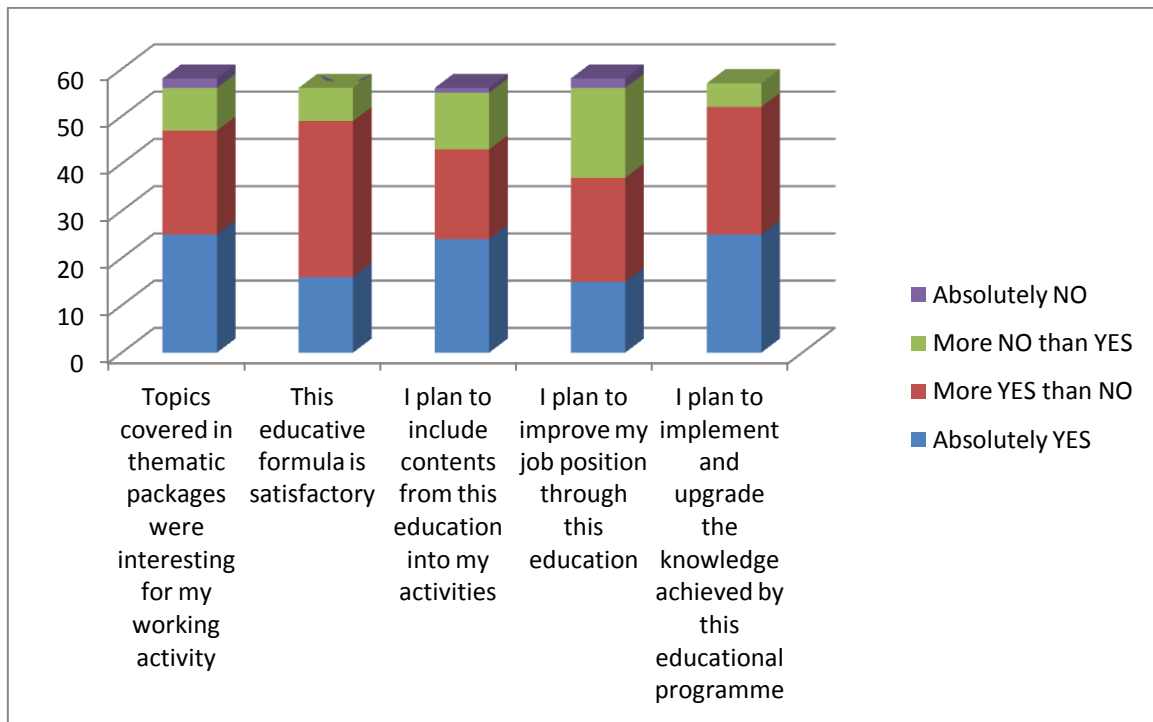
Figure 10. Improvement of participants' knowledge on the European territorial questions



To the question “what should stay in the programme?”, all the participants enjoyed the selection of TTPs and the material used. It seems, though, that the participants' expectation vary from the ones who wanted a more intense programme with more assignments to those who preferred a more loose one, with no deadlines for the submission of assignments. A few participants also noted the importance of having face to face meetings. This expectation was partially fulfilled through the ESPONTrain final transnational conference, held on April 3-4, 2013, where a number of trainers and trainees were involved and exchanged their experience thus broadening their European spatial perspective.

In general, participants found the content rich, comprehensive and coherent. Concerning the question of whether the topics covered by the thematic packages were interesting for participants' working activity or not, 43.1% (25 people) responded “absolutely YES” 37.9% “more YES than NO”, 15.5% “more NO than YES” and 3.4% “absolutely NO”. Furthermore, the majority of students plans to implement and upgrade the knowledge achieved by this educational programme (43,9% “absolutely YES” and 47,4% “more YES than NO”) and only 8,8% appears to be negative (“more NO than YES”) and NO one was completely negative on this question, while 63,8% plans to improve their job position through this educative formula (25,9% absolutely YES, 37,9% more YES than NO) in contrast of the remaining 36,2% that is more negative (32,8% more NO than YES and 3,4% absolutely NO).

Figure 11. Evaluation of the ESPONTrain project mainly related on participants working position



The overall impression both from the evaluation and the trainers is that despite the difficulties (time constraint, lack of classroom dynamics, difficulties related to new technologies, etc.) the training cycles have met the expectation of the trainees since the VLE allowed them to exchange views with the trainer and the group, receive additional information and generally be part of a unique training programme.

3.4. Implementation, Outcomes and Achievements in participating countries

3.4.1. Greece

The LP ensured coordination of the ESPONTrain activities. In this framework, the **meetings** that were organized by the LP during the project were the following:

- Kick-off meeting, Athens, 11th of March 2011;
- 2nd project meeting, Rome, 25th of May 2011;
- 3rd project meeting, Athens, 9th of November 2011 ;
- 1st unofficial Project Meeting in Budapest, 22nd of June 2011;
- ESPONTrain Steering Committee Teleconference Meeting, Monday 19th of March 2012;
- 2nd unofficial Project Meeting, Aalborg, 14th of June 2012;
- 4th Project meeting, Paphos, 6th of December 2012;
- Trainers Seminar, Friday 10th of February 2012 and 23rd of November 2012;
- Trainers Seminar, Friday 10th February 2012, 23 November 2012 and other dates ;
- Finally, the ESPONTrain's final transnational conference was held in Greece on 3-4 April 2013.

Concerning the implementation of the project, the LP undertook the design of the ESPONTrain course format and the VLE platform, as well as the compilation and ESPON 2013

upload of the educational materials provided by the project partners. Greece undertook education for both Greek and Cypriot trainees, since it was impossible for Cyprus, due mainly to budgetary constraints to recruit trainers from Cyprus. The educational cycles were successfully completed and a large number of participants conducted their assignments. The e-learning courses for the two different target groups were set in separate time-schedules with the overall duration of four months between September 2012 and December 2012.

The educational cycle included seven thematic teaching modules: ESPON Climate, EUROISLANDS & TeDi, FOCI, EDORA, DEMIFER, ReRisk and METROBORDER. The first three modules were mandatory while the others were optional which means that no assignment was required. The mandatory courses comprised 2 teleconferences per teaching module and individual work with the textbooks, multimedia, quizzes, discussions and assignments took place. The participation has led to interesting discussion and feedback. The student group consisted of a core of very motivated participants who delivered final assignments of high quality. Some of the outcomes of the TTPs referred directly to case studies in Greece and Cyprus (for example the case studies of EUROISLANDS and the case study of TeDi) and these were particularly interesting for the participants.

The duration of each course module was 3 weeks, as initially planned, which was considered to be quite intensive, by some participants. The time to study the learning material, solve quizzes for self-assessment, read suggested extra material, attend a teleconferencing session and participate to online discussions and prepare the final assignments was quite strict and in a few cases the trainers decided to allow late assignment uploads.

The courses contributed to making ESPON results accessible to both the target groups of ESPONTrain. The experience developed from the on-line discussions pinpointed the fact that these kinds of initiatives can be very useful. According to the trainers, despite the difficulties in getting familiar with this environment and the short time of the education cycle, the response from the trainees was very good and the final assignments were of high quality. In some cases the trainees claimed that the ESPONTrain TTPs had a direct impact on their every-day work. Generally, the overall impression was that the trainees easily adjusted to the platform and the learning environment and there have been no problems, besides the heavy time schedule which was difficult to be followed by some of the professionals. The teleconference meetings were able to enhance team consciousness and fruitful exchange between the trainees.

Concerning the communication and dissemination strategy the Greek ECP achieved to stimulate interest amongst the potential participants, thus creating an attractive seminar programme. The strong interest which was expressed through the ESPONTrain seminar in Greece and Cyprus is a clear evidence that these kind of initiatives are intriguing for a large part of young graduates and policy-makers.

Two different scenarios were followed regarding the implementation of the educational cycles: a/ The TTP was taught on a full basis and an assignment was delivered. b/ The TTP was taught in a shorter version and time period and no assignments were requested.

Regarding the student group in Greece and Cyprus, there were 19 participants, and ESPON Climate, FOCI, EUROISLANDS & TeDi were fully taught and assignments

were delivered for all of them. The other TTPs (DEMIFER, EDORA, ReRisk and METROBORDER) were taught on a short schedule and no assignments were asked. Regarding the Stakeholders group in Greece and Cyprus there were 7 participants and ESPON Climate, FOCI, EUROISLANDS & TeDi were fully taught and there were assignments delivered for all of them. The other TTPs (DEMIFER, EDORA, ReRisk and METROBORDER) were taught in a shorter version and no assignments were asked.

3.4.2. Italy

In Italy, the project's implementation is considered to be successful. Trainees (8 students and 7 stakeholders) participated actively in all courses (ESPON Climate, ReRisk and METROBORDER were taught in their full version, while a shorter approach was followed for the remaining ones) and submitted their final assignments in English. Trainers followed an academic approach for the first target group, while a more policy oriented one was preferred for the second group. The number of students present at the weekly virtual classroom meeting was very high. Students also had the opportunity to contact their trainers via email.

All the participants in the Italian Target Group have really appreciated the ESPONTrain Project as well as the TTPs taught. Many of them had worked with the ESPON Programme documents in the past but they have had a lot of problems when they tried to apply the ESPON results at local or regional scale. They suggested a wider use of documents as those produced by ESPONTrain in order to disseminate the results and the tools developed by the Programme, in order to further transfer research methodologies and to enable their application on different territories.

3.4.3. Czech Republic

On the 16th of November 2011, the Institute for Spatial Development (UUR) organized a Round table for representatives of Czech universities, where the director of UUR (Mr Robert Veselý) asked all attendants to participate in the ESPONTrain project. In the beginning of 2012 an official letter focusing on ESPONTrain participation was sent to Czech universities and policy makers. Selection of students met all requirements set by the ESPONTrain Lead Partner. Taking into account these requirements, 20 students were chosen – four post graduate students and sixteen policy makers² (see Annexes). The trainers were expected to meet the following conditions: a/ to come from the academic or research community b/ to have suitable teaching skills and qualifications c/ to have previous experiences in ESPON projects and e-learning. Especially due to the third condition (very limited number of ESPON projects with Czech participation) the selection was reduced to only few experts and the three finally chosen were involved in the POLYCE, ESPON TOWN.

Regarding the students' group in Czech Republic there were 4 participants and DEMIFER, FOCI and METROBORDER were fully taught. The other TTPs (ReRisk, EDORA, EUROISLANDS & TeDi) were taught on a short basis and no assignments were asked, as previewed.

² One of the policy makers decided to withdraw from the ESPONTrain programme during the course.

Regarding the Stakeholders group in Czech Republic there were 15 participants and DEMIFER, FOCI and METROBORDER were fully taught. The other TTPs (ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS & TeDi and EDORA) were taught on a short basis without assignments, as previewed.

3.4.4. Romania

The ESPONTrain project was implemented by the UAIC University of Iasi (Romania), an institution also in charge of the management of the Romanian ECP. The period of implementation coincided with the pick of the economic crisis and the restructure of the public sector, in this country, largely affecting the priorities and strategies at all institutions and levels of territorial planning. Implementing the project in this dynamic and unpredictable period was a challenge but also a major opportunity to learn.

The first phase of the implementation involved the preparation of the training package which was, in our case focusing on the ESPON DEMIFER project. Demography and migration are subtly connected to the economic regional trends and this was an issue broadly and successfully studied within ESPON DEMIFER. The dimension of the project was a real constraint to this task. The project had numerous interesting annexes: methodology of research, case studies and an Atlas. The synthesis of the project and the selection of maps, examples, and relevant data was a difficult and time consuming task.

The strategy followed during the teaching period had a double logic: **familiarizing** students and stakeholders with the **complexity** of the teaching platform and **developing their taste** for the ESPON studies. For both categories, it was not the first time that they entered in contact with an e-learning platform; it was however (according to their informal feed-back) an impressive experience. The time scheduled for the teaching process was a bit too short to fully explore and manage all the facilities implemented in the e-learning platform. A more advanced and sophisticated platform would probably limit the interaction and induce a feeling of dislocation with no positive results for teaching or learning.

The second objective for the trainers was to disseminate the information from the teaching packages and to help the trainees explore by their own the constellation of the ESPON projects. Stakeholders and students were already familiarized with the ESPON results. The trainer's stake was to let them understand why the project should be perceived as a conceptual system with impact and relevance for policy design and scientific research. In this case, using common tools (ESPON DB 2013, HyperAtlas and the maps from the projects) was the main strategy used to make ESPON intelligible. The teaching materials contain information from different fields of research – spatial economy, climatology, urban studies or demography. It is obvious that **this variety is not easy to manage** and a plus of information and clarifications was needed.

For students, the use of the courses was doubled by an introduction to the ESPON DB 2013 collection of indicators. As all the students have PhD thesis in relation with territorial planning of urban systems, the FOCI project was certainly helpful. An insight in the different methodologies used by this particular project was also provided. In the case of the stakeholders, the discussions touched more the sphere of the data projection in the future. Almost all the projects contain scenarios (i. e. DEMIFER, ESPON Climate) of evolution. Their **major question was how reliable these scenarios are for strategic decision in the planning process**. The second ESPON 2013

issues focused on the possibility to downgrade the scenarios to more refined scales of territorial analysis (from NUTS2 to NUTS 3 and from NUTS3 to LAU2 or FUA).

The impact of the ESPON TRAIN project is not necessarily measurable in terms of how much quantity of information was absorbed by the trainees or transmitted by the trainers. Probably, it would be more important to follow in time the spin-off resulted from this teaching/learning experience and the increasing returns, in terms of data and information used from ESPON source. From the point of view of persons involved in the training process, the best part of the teaching/learning experience is **the fact that ESPONTrain largely evacuated the scepticism surrounding the ESPON projects**, clearly marked their limits and highlighted the benefits.

To sum up, regarding the Students group in Romania there were 5 participants, DEMIFER, EDORA and FOCl were fully taught. The other TTPs (ReRisk, METROBORDER, EUROISLANDS & TeDi) were taught on a short basis without assignments. Regarding the Stakeholders group in Romania there were 3 participants, DEMIFER, EDORA and FOCl were fully taught and there were no assignments delivered. The other TTPs (ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS & TeDi and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments, as previewed.

3.4.5. Bulgaria

Bulgaria has participated in the communication plan of the Project and to some dissemination activities (e.g coordination of an ESPONTrain Workshop in the framework of the Rome Conference held in May 2011) but there was no educational activity in Bulgaria during the implementation of the programme due to bureaucratic and political reasons. Although Bulgaria has requested to implement an educational cycle during February – March 2013, this cycle was never realised.

3.4.6. Slovenia

In Slovenia, the ESPONTrain Project was realized by the Slovenian National ESPON Contact Point, in cooperation with the University of Ljubljana, which carried out the courses.

The courses were delivered by experienced teachers from different faculties (Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering, Faculty of Architecture, Biotechnical Faculty, Faculty of Arts – Department of Geography), who are also experts in their respective fields. Most of them have a sound knowledge of the ESPON Programme, as they have previously participated in one or more of its projects.

Generally, the Slovenian participants of the ESPONTrain educational programme praised the programme, as it provided great insight into the ESPON Programme and its projects. The technical realisation of the programme was subject to most criticism. Nevertheless, despite the criticism, the course was very successful, since all the planned activities, including the teleconferences, were carried out.

Slovenia's contribution in elaborating the educational material was very limited in their field of responsibility and this task burdened the main editor that was the Lithuanian ECP.

3.4.7. Estonia

The Estonian ECP was particularly active and efficient in ESPONTrain due to the ICT development in the country. The first part of the project implementation for the Estonian project partners involved the development of the overall ESPONTrain e-learning methodologies and concepts for the e-learning platform. The Estonian project team took part in several respective discussions during the project meetings, where different visions of the outputs of the educational material and study methods were presented. The next step was the elaboration of the educational material for the EUROISLANDS & TeDi e-learning module. The final stage of the first part of project implementation was the identification of the training staff and trainees for the course. Three tutors from the University of Tartu were selected to guide the trainees throughout the education procedure all highly qualified in regional planning, European studies and e-learning.

The courses in Estonia succeeded to attract 5 master and postgraduate level students and 7 policy makers and practitioners related to the fields of spatial planning and territorial development, public administration and economy. The e-learning course was set for the two different target groups separately, with an overall duration of three months between September 2012 and January 2013. The studies included seven thematic teaching modules developed by the ESPONTrain TPG. The first three were mandatory for the trainees to complete in order to pass the course as these topics were viewed as the most relevant in the Estonian spatial development context. The latter four modules were voluntary. The courses consisted of virtual lectures and seminars and individual work with the textbooks, multimedia, quizzes, discussions and assignments. The course was exemplified by the Estonian cases and practices of territorial development.

3.4.8 Lithuania

Despite the low popularity of distance learning in Lithuania, the ESPONTrain implementation was considered to be successful. Project partner - Research Institute of Territorial Planning of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU) has widely disseminated information about ESPONTrain using number of newsletters, brochures, and leaflets. Lithuanian ECP selected 6 students from Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Kaunas University of Technology and Klaipeda University, 2 young researchers and 15 professionals from regional/spatial planning institutions, urban development and policy makers/government representatives. Besides, both trainers are Professors at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University. Educational cycles have been implemented through real-time video conferencing and self studying opportunity on ESPONTrain e-learning platform. By the Schedule of the VLE educational cycles Lithuanian trainers have delivered 16 teleconferences through two educational cycles. It was decided that 3 TTPs should be taught in full version and 3 other TTPs in short version. According to the ESPONTrain educational cycles implementation results, in Lithuania 7 students out of 8 participated in the 1st educational cycle and 12 stakeholders out of 15 participated in the 2nd educational cycle. In both educational cycles 19 out of 23 participants, who expressed their intention, have actually participated in ESPONTrain, in Lithuania.

According to students and stakeholders, the most interesting tasks were case studies and the adaptation of ESPON project scenarios and ideas at local or regional level territories and the solutions to relevant problems.

3.4.9 Malta

The Maltese ECP took on this task, as part of a long-term strategy to analyse the understanding and implementation of spatial planning in the Maltese Islands. Whilst one must appreciate that continent-wide programmes like ESPON and their subsequent projects aim to encompass the entire territory, small states such as Malta that are double insulated through various impinging factors may not take up the wider-dimension in their strategic plan.

This said, the ESPON projects have managed to filter down into the national and local levels so as to allow administrators an understanding of the wider spatial planning concepts and have led to some interesting drivers towards change inclusive of a "Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development", (SPED) which provides a strategic spatial policy framework for both the environment and development up to 2020. This is a major step forward from the previous concept of *development planning* to an *integrated spatial planning concept*.

The ESPONTrain project's input was deemed timely since it helped to direct the trainees towards the study of project outputs that could be compared to the SPED and to offer insights into the workings. The different entities involved in the process were contacted in the initial stages of the project which allowed the project team to assess whether to select trainees coming from external organisations. Since Malta has only one planning agency at national level and no agencies at the district or local levels, the main participants were chosen from the **pool of experts involved in the SPED**.

The training targets were aimed at **understanding the ESPON outcomes in comparison to the SPED outcomes** and also to thematic aspects pertaining to the initial SPED studies. This ensures that the project outputs can be implemented within the concept of the new plan. In addition, trainees were asked to review topics based on their area of expertise as based on the initial studies pertaining to the SPED, inclusive of demography, housing, transport, amongst others. Such a process endured ownership of the training process as based on an integrated planning system which: (i) ensures the sustainable management of land and sea resources together with the protection of the environment; and (ii) guides the development and use of land and sea space.

The project outputs were deemed helpful as an aid to widen the concept of spatial planning in Malta and have served as a refreshing exercise in different training processes.

A more extended reporting on national activities is presented in Annex I.

3.5. Dissemination and Communication

Within the project implementation the following **dissemination and publicity activities** were undertaken:

1. Promotion through the ECPs website, for instance presentation on the LP Website : http://www.espon2013.panteion.gr/?q=el/header_3
2. Launching of ESPONTrain group on Facebook and a Twitter Account.

3. An ESPONTrain Info day was held in Greece during the ESPON INTERSTRAT meeting, in the presence of a great number of stakeholders and students
4. The 2nd ESPONTrain info day was held in Italy during the National event *Geography and Geographies in Italy and in Europe Rome, 26-27 may 2011*, and has raised awareness promoting, in parallel, the transnationality of the ESPONTrain project and synergies between the 3 ESPON TNAs, namely INTERSTRAT, CADEC and ESPONTrain.
5. Several partner countries developed smaller national events.
6. An ESPONTrain logo and motto was developed for ESPONTrain call for participants via internet (Facebook and other social and professional media) and Circulation of electronic posters, leaflets and other promotional material marked with the ESPONTrain logo. Apart from that a video spot in English announced the ESPONTrain Project and the call for participants. This video announcement was posted to various websites (National Contact Points Websites, relevant Universities' Websites, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn).

Figure 12. The ESPONTrain Logo



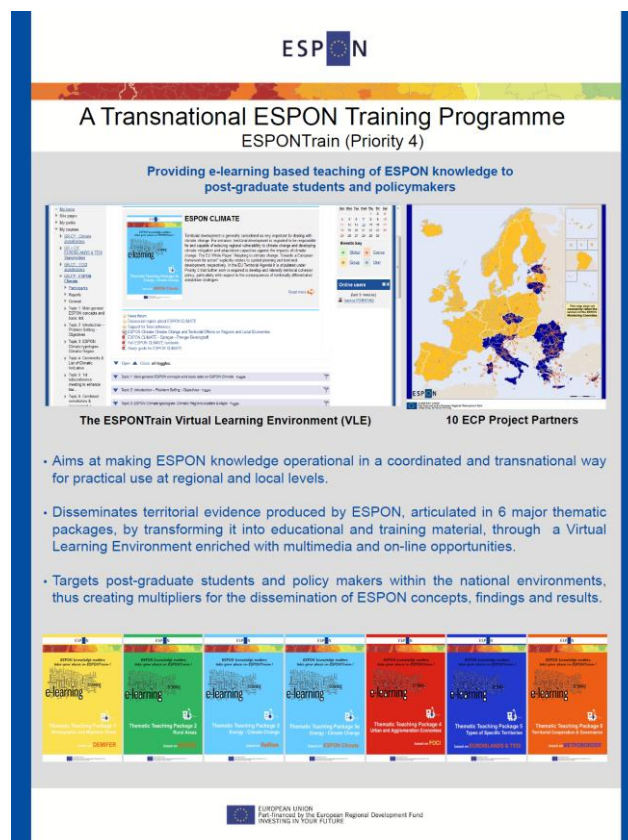
Furthermore, the dissemination material that was produced by the project's and ECPs' websites also contributed to the capitalization of the project's results.

The project was also communicated through several regional, national and European events :

- During the 1st and 2nd INTERSTRAT interactive events held at Panteion University, in Athens, on the 10th of march and the 8th of November 2012.
- During the Geography and Geographies in Italy and in Europe, organised by the Italian ECP Rome, 26-27 may 2011 (Workshop organized by the Italian ECP with the participation/moderation of the Bulgarian ECP)
- During the ESPON Seminar in Krakow, 30 November 2011 (special session on the TNAs progress, coordinated by Peter Billing)
- During the TERCO final meeting (27.4.2012), hosted by the Greek ECP, the LP of the ESPONTrain project presented shortly ESPONTrain and discussed eventual synergies among the projects.
- During the E-learning Expo (www.elearningexpo.gr) held in "Eugenides Foundation" in Athens on the 7th of October 2012 (presentation given by the Project coordinator to a wider public)

- During an event organised within the framework of the Cypriot presidency, by the Association of Town Planners of Cyprus in Paphos, Cyprus, 7 December 2012 (presentation given by the Project coordinator)
- During the National Urban Forum, 14th of October 2012, in Lithuania
- During the National Conference “Civil Engineering and Geodesy”, 21st of October 2012, in Lithuania
- The LP also prepared a poster that was displayed during the ESPON event in Paphos, on December 2012.

Figure 13. Presenting the ESPONTrain project



- An ESPONTrain Project page has been created on the FB and on Twitter.
- An info-video has been produced and posted on social media.
- Last, during the Final Transnational ESPONTrain Conference held in Athens, on the 3-4 April 2013 with the participation of representatives of partners, trainers and trainees and the CU.

4. Lessons and Conclusions

The implementation of the ESPONTrain Project provided evidence that this type of dissemination activities are received well both by professionals and students. ESPONTrain project based on capitalization of the ESPON results promoted ESPON

knowledge to the target groups of post-graduate students / young researchers and public sector servants (policy makers) active in spatial planning, territorial cohesion, sustainable development and general spatial issues. This is being achieved both by the development of the ESPONTrain Virtual Learning Environment which acted as a transnational tool for communication and education on ESPON knowledge as well as by the two educational cycles which succeeded to transfer ESPON knowledge and increase awareness on its main objectives to a wider public.

The ESPONTrain Project met its initial aims to a great extent and resulted in :

- Making ESPON2013 knowledge operational for practical use at regional and local level in a coordinated and transnational way ;
- Translating complex Europe-wide territorial evidence and information in an apprehensible knowledge still maintaining its scientific soundness, at regional/local level ;
- Promoting collaboration networking between participating ECPs thus building their capacity to create ESPON related added-value.
- Setting-up well structured national e-learning platforms managed by the involved ECPs, to provide a basis for future applications and new projects.
- Identifying a pool of ESPON experts within the national educational environments and within policy makers in the public sector so as to be the multipliers of the dissemination and diffusion of the ESPON philosophy, ideas and results.
- Creating multiplier effects : for example trainers were discussing main outcomes of other ESPON projects they were involved in (POLYCE, ESPON TOWN).

Main achievements of the implementation of the programme were the following:

- The VLE solution that has been chosen based on Moodle proved to be effective and user-friendly
- Despite the limitations of the project budget the quality the teaching services has been deemed quite high due to the commitment of the trainers selected.
- It introduced both the trainers and the trainees to the complexity of the questions dealing with territorial development and cohesion, as well as on territorial evidence in Europe.
- It has stimulated, through advanced ICT educational methods (e-learning), further interest for in the ESPON related outcomes.
- The participants, through their evaluation, confirmed the usefulness of this training for their studies or every-day work.
- Despite the initial reservations, the project succeeded in building enthusiasm for further development of similar activities.
- Finally it is important to note that ESPONTrain introduced a Europe wide ESPON consultation process through the e-learning procedure,

The main difficulties and constraints were the following:

- The main difficulty was connected to the transformation of the ESPON reports (which are quite technical and extended) into educational material in such a short time. Creating the teaching material proved to be a very demanding task. We think that there is a lot to do by ESPON in the future so as the ESPON reports take into account this parameter (to be easily transferable in educational material) from the very early stage of their elaboration.
- It has been very difficult but also challenging to encourage trainees to be active throughout the teaching courses since many of them (especially the professionals) are not used to being involved in such demanding tasks.
- Time to prepare the trainers has proved to be quite limited.
- Many professionals complained about the time schedule and in many cases there were extra teleconferences scheduled or changes of time.
- A factor that didn't allow the active participation of several trainees was connected to their technological equipment (e.g., low Internet connection, no camera or microphone on their pc, etc.).

The strategy that we followed ensured that the ESPONTrain actions received attention and had a wide coverage regarding the capitalisation of the ESPON results.

The activities were performed around the idea of supporting the ECPs in exchanging experience, building awareness raising, empowerment and capitalization of the ESPON results.

C. Annexes

Annex I: Implementation, Outcomes and Achievements per Country

Annex II: ESPONTrain Thematic Teaching Packages

Annex III: ESPONTrain Study Guide (example of ESPON Climate)

Annex IV: Identification of target groups and training staff

Annex V: Profile of ESPON trainees : analysis and statistics

Annex VI: List of presented assignments

Annex VII : List of Trainers in the ESPONTrain countries

Annex VIII: Blunder checks delivered by the ESPONTrain project

Annex IX : ESPONTrain photos

Annex X : Glossary

Annex I: Implementation, Outcomes and Achievements per Country

Lead Partner: Greece

A. Coordination

First of all, the LP ensured coordination of the ESPONTrain activities. In this framework, the **meetings** that were organized by the LP during the project were the following:

1. Kick-off meeting, Athens, 11th of March 2011

Kick-off meeting was the official start of the ESPONTrain Project. The overall purpose was to present the strategy, main objectives, tools, methodology, schedule and the financial conditions and procedures of the project. This interactive meeting brought together representatives from almost all ESPON Contact Points participating in the project as well as the ESPON Coordination Unit representative and allowed them to discuss relevant questions and decide on important issues. Each ECP had an opportunity to express its individual opinion and interest mainly on the feasibility of the project activities from a national perspective.

During the kick-off, an extensive presentation of the Moodle VLE possibilities was presented by the LP VLE Team and taken into account by all partners, in order to be helped in designing and elaborating the part of the educational material they were responsible of. (see Annex VI)

Furthermore, communication issues and financial procedures and details were thoroughly discussed.

2. Project meetings

This coordination activity was meant to bring the project consortium together for getting decisions on the project's implementation. Besides it succeeded in keeping all partners aware of the tasks already achieved and of future schedules.

In general four Project Meetings have been implemented. Due to budget limitations only two official meetings (Rome, Athens) have been carried out, while in addition several unofficial have been organized on the occasion of ECPs participation in ESPON Open and Internal Seminars (in Budapest, in Krakow, in Aalborg and in Paphos). Furthermore, a virtual steering committee meeting has also taken place via the Moodle Platform.

2.1 Trainers' Seminar, Friday 10th of February 2012 and 23rd of November 2012

These meetings aimed at helping the trainers getting familiar with the ESPONTrain VLE. All tools and applications of the VLE were thoroughly presented and participants (trainers and ECP representatives) had the opportunity to test it and ask further questions. Furthermore, ESPONTrain platform experts, apart from the available supporting material gave the opportunity to all trainers to create by themselves virtual classrooms in order to further practice and deepen their knowledge in the ESPONTrain VLE's use.

2.2 2nd project meeting, Rome, 25 May, 2011

The main purpose of this meeting was to specify the teaching material elaboration, the structure of e-learning modules, the communication issues, the selection of ESPONTrain trainers, the requirements of the 1st financial reporting. This meeting was organized as an interactive discussion between partners with the presence of the CU representative and focused on the feasibility of each project activity on a national scale. Communication and financial issues were also thoroughly discussed.

2.3 3rd project meeting, Athens, 9th of November 2011

This Project Meeting focused on teaching material presentations and the preparation of ESPONTrain platform with emphasis to the wizIQ and the innovative tools to be implemented for the specific needs of the ESPONTrain. In this context, the following issues were discussed:

- Teaching material template and its design (Estonian model)
- VLE course design
- Number of hours dedicated to teaching cycles, Schedule.
- Financial matters concerning reporting, etc.

Questions were raised by national ECPs that pointed out practical problems with regard to national specificities. At the end of the meeting, representatives from ECPs presented relevant teaching packages and the template for the elaboration of the TTPs was finalised.

2.4 ESPONTrain Steering Committee Teleconference Meeting, Monday 19th of March 2012

The purpose of this meeting was mainly to define next steps following the feedback received from the CU, in order to finalise the TTPs and set the starting dates of the educational cycles. An update concerning the final format of the VLE, course design, quizzes to be created for both target groups, the trainees' evaluation, the cycles' evaluation and other issues related to the educational procedure were discussed.

2.5 1st unofficial Project Meeting in Budapest, 22nd of June 2011

A brief meeting has taken place in Budapest where mainly issues about the elaboration of the educational material have been discussed.

2.6 2nd unofficial Project Meeting, Aalborg, 14th of June 2012

This meeting was extremely useful for the organization of the educational cycles. After presenting the updated version of the ESPONTrain VLE, issues related to the implementation of the educational cycles were thoroughly discussed. More specifically, among others, the trainers' qualifications, the timeline of the educational cycles and their evaluation and other relative issues were discussed.

2.7 4th Project meeting, Paphos, 6th of December 2012

This project meeting was mainly dedicated to the following steps that should be taken on behalf of the ESPONTrain TNA and particularly the ESPONTrain reports and final conference.

The first results (and lessons learned) of the educational cycles in all countries have been thoroughly presented by the LP VLE Expert.

The evaluation of the educational cycles, an update concerning the project's deadlines and further demands/suggestions related to the ESPONTrain educational cycles and VLE did also take an important part of the agenda. The Final Transnational ESPONTrain Conference was finally planned for the 3rd and 4th of April 2013.

B. Implementation of the distance learning programme

The Lead Partner was responsible for developing the ESPONTrain Virtual Learning Environment which has been available through the web. Hence, the LP :

- A. prepared the Technical and Functional Requirements and Specifications for the preparation of the VLE after discussing them with all the project partners. The VLE was common for all the partners thus ensuring the uniformity of the results. The ESPONTrain VLE has been active since August 2012 at <http://espontrain.eu>
- B. organized a transnational on-line seminar to demonstrate the ESPONTrain Platform and train the trainers on its usage (i.e. how to contact the students, how to upload material, how to answer users' questions etc.). After the workshop, recommendations on training method and training practice have been reported and disseminated to all the trainers in the form of a brief Trainers Manual.
- C. prepared also a part of the educational material, mainly the ESPON Climate TTP, the ReRisk TTP (in collaboration with the Italian ECP) and the METROBORDER TTP. Furthermore, the LP compiled and uploaded all the educational material provided by the project partners.
- D. As far as the implementation of the educational cycles in Greece is concerned, we can report the following :

The implementation of the ESPONTrain educational cycles was generally considered successful. Greece has undertaken education for both Greek and Cypriot trainees, since it has been impossible for Cyprus, due mainly to budgetary constraints to recruit trainers from Cyprus. The LP has also undertaken the specific course design of the VLE and the uploading of all the educational materials coming from the project partners. In Greece, the selection of the trainers was finalized at the beginning of 2012 and Prof. Stella Kyvelou (Scientific responsible and Director of the ECP, who had a supervising role in training), Nektaria Marava, Efstratios Manos and Dr Nicholas Karachalis were selected to carry out the task. The training cycles and the teleconference meetings were implemented without any serious problems or changes. There were no major problems reported (some problems with sound or video-streaming quality appeared but this was due to the equipment of the participating trainees).

The educational cycles were successfully completed and a large number of participants conducted their assignments. The e-learning courses were set for the two different target groups (post-graduate students and stakeholders) in separate time-schedules with the overall duration of four months between September 2012 and December 2012. The courses included seven thematic teaching modules: ESPON Climate, EUROISLANDS & TeDi and FOCI (mandatory) and EDORA, DEMIFER, ReRisk and METROBORDER (voluntary). The first three courses were mandatory as these programmes were relevant to the Greek and Cypriot reality and referred to familiar case studies. The other courses were voluntary which means that no assignment was required.

The mandatory courses comprised of 2 teleconferences per teaching module and individual work with the textbooks, multimedia, quizzes, discussions and assignments took place. The participation was satisfactory leading to interesting discussion and feedback. The student group consisted of a core of very motivated participants who delivered final assignments of high quality. Some of the outcomes of the TTPs referred directly to case studies in Greece and Cyprus (for example the case studies of EUROISLANDS and the case study of TeDi) and these were particularly interesting for the participants. Each course modules lasted 3 weeks as planned, which by some participants was considered as quite intensive. The time to study the learning material, solve quizzes for self-assessment, read suggested extra

material, attend a tele-conferencing session and participate to online discussions and prepare the final assignments was quite strict and in a few cases the trainers decided to allow late assignment uploads.

The courses contributed to making ESPON results accessible to both target groups that were at the center of ESPONTrain. The experience developed from the on-line discussions pinpointed the fact that these kind of initiatives can be very useful. According to the trainers, despite the difficulties in getting familiar with this environment and the short time of the education cycle, the response from the trainees has been very good and the final assignments were of high quality. In some cases the trainees claimed that the ESPONTrain TTPs had a direct impact on their every-day work: e.g. students made use of the ESPON Atlas for their papers, a civil servant at a municipality made use of some of the thematic maps for a bid, etc. Generally, the overall impression was that the trainees easily adjusted to the platform and the learning environment and there have been no problems (besides the heavy time schedule which was difficult to be followed by some of the professionals). The teleconference meetings were able to enhance team consciousness and fruitful exchange between the trainees.

Since each ECP is responsible for its own dissemination and capitalization strategy, the Greek ECP achieved to create the pre-conditions amongst the potential participants and the two groups of trainees to create an attractive seminar programme. The strong interest which was expressed through the ESPONTrain seminar in Greece and Cyprus for the Targeted Analysis Projects of ESPON is a clear evidence that these kind of initiatives are intriguing for a large part of young graduates and policy-makers.

Two different scenarios were followed regarding the implementation of the training cycles:

- a. The TTP was taught on a full basis and an assignment was delivered
- b. The TTP was taught within a shorter version and time period and no assignments were requested.

Statistics:

To sum up, regarding the Students group in Greece and Cyprus there were 19 participants, ESPON Climate, FOCI and EUROISLANDS & TeDi were fully taught and there were 9, 4 and 8 assignments delivered. The other TTPs (DEMIFER, EDORA, RERISK and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments.

In total, for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, FOCI and METROBORDER) the total time dedicated by the trainees, in hours and minutes, was : 05:05 for DEMIFER, 19:45 for EDORA, 149:21 for ESPON Climate, 51:09 for FOCI, 06:09 for RERISK, 59:47 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 13:34 for METROBORDER.

Regarding the Stakeholders' group in Greece and Cyprus there were 7 participants, ESPON Climate, FOCI and EUROISLANDS & TeDi were fully taught and there were 1,2 and 3 assignments delivered. The other TTPs (DEMIFER, EDORA, RERISK and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, FOCI and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by all the trainees (in hours and minutes) was : 03:19 for DEMIFER, 05:10 for EDORA, 33:58 for ESPON Climate, 07:16 for FOCI, 06:44 for RERISK, 16:28 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 02:24 for METROBORDER.

C. The ESPONTrain Final Transnational Conference

The LP was also charged with the organization of the **ESPONTrain final transnational conference** which was held in Athens-Greece on April, 3rd and 4th 2013.

The Greek ESPON Contact Point organized, in cooperation with the ESPON Coordination Unit and the ESPONTrain Partners, the Final Transnational ESPONTrain Conference

entitled “**Are European planners familiar with ESPON findings? : Integrating ESPON in higher education and policy making at central, regional and local levels**”.

The Conference brought together 298 participants representing the ESPON CU, ESPON Monitoring Committee, ESPON Contact Points, ESPONTrain Tutors and Trainees as well as stakeholders participating in ESPONTrain and previous TNAs (e.g INTERSTRAT), mainly Universities and training centres (e.g the National Center of Public Administration) but also ministries and regional/local authorities. Postgraduate and graduate level students in territorial development fields were also present.

During the Conference, ESPONTrain implementation was thoroughly discussed and was widely reported that ESPONTrain largely neutralized some of the skepticism surrounding the ESPON projects, clearly marked their limits and highlighted the benefits from their use in every-day planning and policy making.

Purpose of the event

The purpose of the Seminar was two-fold:

- Enhance transnationality of the ESPONTrain Project, bringing together the ESPON Coordination Unit, 10 ESPON Contact Points (ECPs) participating in the ESPON Programme as well as trainers and trainees involved in the ESPONTrain Virtual Learning Environment Project. This first day focused on the issue of using ESPON findings in higher education and in territorial development strategies. Participants mostly came from higher education institutions, both professors and students as well as from state and regional authorities ;
- Allow policy makers and practitioners to discuss themes for further integration of the ESPON knowledge in the implementation of territorial development and cohesion in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean.

The ESPONTrain Conference succeeded in promoting dialogue between political leaders, policy makers, academics and professionals on the field of territorial development and cohesion and was structured around the following topics:

- The progress of the ESPONTrain Project, its results, its evaluation as well as the perspectives of further development of the ESPONTrain VLE model in the ESPON countries;
- The use of ESPON findings in spatial planning and in territorial development focusing on European cities and regions;
- The ongoing spatial and urban planning reform in Greece and in other ESPON countries and particularly in relation to the use of the ESPON findings;
- The profile of European planners (qualifications, skills, etc.) required to meet the challenges of territorial development and cohesion in Europe and the necessary innovation that ESPON can bring in its education.

Participants were welcomed by the Vice Rector of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences of Athens and the Greek ECP. Salutations were given by : the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, the Vice Rector of the National Technical University of Athens, the Greek representative in the ESPON Monitoring Committee, Representatives of the Region of Attica, members and experts of the Greek ECP.

The opening speeches by Peter Billing (ESPON CU) and Stella Kyvelou (ESPONTrain LP) identified the ESPONTrain Project in the larger context of ESPON and its concept, structure, achievements, results and lessons learned by its implementation in the ESPON countries.

The 4 Round Tables that followed, gave the opportunity to explore the degree of appropriation of the ESPON findings both by the academic community and the state, regional

and local authorities and the great potential of ESPON knowledge demand by higher education and stakeholders that the ESPONTrain could efficiently respond to, in the near future.

These round tables also gave the opportunity to present ESPONTrain Project's implementation in each participating country from different points of view, the one of the ECPs and this of the Trainers and the Trainees involved in the educational cycles which inspired the discussion on future ideas and demands for further implementation.

Photos of the meeting are presented in Annex IX.

D. How the LP considers further development of ESPON education activities

The ESPONTrain Project clearly demonstrated that there is indeed a large potential in ESPON education, a fact that was clearly revealed during the ESPONTrain Final Transnational Conference. Thus, the participating ECPs asked for the continuation of the Project in order to reach **more target groups of potential trainees** and add **more knowledge coming from the ESPON Projects in the existing ESPONTrain Virtual Learning Environment**.

The ESPONTrain project contributed to the familiarization of specific target groups with ESPON results and vocabulary, but was also a major input to the strategic goals of ESPON: on the one hand contributing in forming the next academic generation in ESPON related research, and on the other hand contributing to the "European territory of tomorrow" by developing learning efforts towards higher education institutions.

Furthermore, since the large majority (70%) of the countries involved in the ESPONTrain Project was Mediterranean and Balkan (Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, Romania, Bulgaria) and due to the positive response of the trainees and trainers in this region, a new initiative based on the ESPONTrain VLE Project could be further considered. This could take the form of an educational ESPON "pole of competence" in the Mediterranean region, which also would contribute to the extension of ESPON towards neighboring countries. The location of this "pole" could be Greece or Cyprus which can have significant results for the **extension of ESPON towards neighboring countries**. This strategic goal of ESPON can be facilitated by and based on the ESPONTrain VLE Project.

The above proposal has been assisted by all Greek Universities (Panteion University, National Technical University of Athens, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of Thessaly) and Training Centres present at the Conference (e.g. National Center of Public Administration) as well as by Greek politicians.

Another important continuation, capitalization and synergy effect of the ESPONTrain Projects' philosophy and successful implementation is the new TNA entitled "USESPON" whose Lead Partner is the UK ECP (RTPI) and partner with tasks mainly related to VLE further development is the Greek ECP (Panteion University), that is the Lead Partner of the ESPONTrain Project.

Project Partner 2 : Italy

A. Preparation of educational material

The Italian Partner has developed the educational material about "Energy - Climate change" and "Territorial cooperation - Governance building". In particular, the Italian Partner has been fully responsible for a synthesis of ESPON ReRISK and ESPON METROBORDER and suggested other research materials (videos, ppt presentations etc) uploaded to the VLE, by the LP. The synthesis attempted to render the Target Groups familiar with the methodologies and the tools developed in the ESPON Programme. The Target Groups were composed by students and stakeholders with no previous experience in ESPON projects. Thus, the Italian ECP developed the related TTPs taking into consideration that the majority of ESPONTrain

trainees is not aware of the ESPON programme findings and tried to highlight the potential use of the ESPON projects, tools and methodologies.

B. Selection of trainees and trainers

The Italian Partner prepared and published a Call for “Expression of Interest” in order to attract potential Trainees. The call was presented in particular to the eligible participants (young researchers in geography) during the National Event “Geography and Geographies in Italy and in Europe”.

People interested in the Call sent to the Italian ESPONTrain Scientific Committee their curriculum vitae and an abstract, as suggested in the Expression of Interest, on the following themes: a. European Structural fund; b. Territorial and Spatial Planning; c. Climate change; d. Concepts in Economic Geography;

On the basis of the ESPON Train criteria discussed among partners during the kick off meeting (Athens) and the Project Meeting (Rome), the Italian Scientific Committee selected 10 trainees and, explained them (by direct contact) the objectives and the added value of the ESPON Train Project. Most of the students are involved in Geography PhD course or are starting a master degree, via e-learning too.

The second group of trainees (stakeholders) were selected between more than 300 contacts of the Italian ECP (mailing list) following the criteria set by ESPON Train project TPG.

The Italian ESPONTrain Scientific Committee selected those who would participate as trainees in the ESPONTrain Project among the stakeholders particularly interested in the last two years to understand the ESPON Programme and its framework, methodology and data production. The majority of them works in Public authorities responsible for territorial development at national, regional and local level and in Regional Research Institutes and others are involved in the URBACT Project. Unfortunately, a delay that occurred in the project reduced the initial total number (20 members) of the Target Group.

The trainers were selected from the Italian ECP staff. Both trainers chosen are Professors of the University of Rome “Tor Vergata”: Maria Prezioso, ECP Italy, is a geographer and Isabella Carbonaro is a Professor of Economic Statistics with great experience in territorial indicators. Maria Prezioso was responsible for the stakeholders (Group 2) while Isabella Carbonaro was responsible for the students (Group 1).

Both trainers participated in some ESPON Projects of Priority 1 during the ESPON 2000-2006 Programme. They are aware of e-learning applications since they have designed and organized an e-learning master degree (Master in Economics and European Planning of Sustainable Territorial development - MEPE)

C. Remarks on the educational procedure

It has been decided to use an academic approach as far as students were concerned. During the course cycle (two months) weekly synchronous learning meetings have been envisaged in the platform: the trainers gave a literature review and an illustration of the methodology of the projects analyzed.

The students produced a final assignment in English language. They chose a territory and applied on it the methodologies developed in the relevant ESPON Project. The aim was to make students familiar both with ESPON methodologies and territorial indicators. The trainers suggested developing some new indicators more suitable to the territorial scale analyzed in the final assignment.

The percentage of students present at the weekly meeting by virtual classroom was very high. In addition, the trainers answered to further questions by e-mail.

The educational approach of trainers for the Stakeholders target group was not academic. Trainers in fact introduced case studies, at national and supranational scales, and pointed out similarities and differences with other European territorial development programmes.

The participation of stakeholders to the weekly meetings by the virtual classroom was lower than the students' participation but however all stakeholders have shown interest in the project and produced the final assignments in English.

The weekly meetings, both for students and stakeholders, were structured in two parts: during the first part the Target Group was invited to express questions emerged from the study of the Thematic Package and to explain the chosen territory of their final assignment , whilst the second part was structured as a lesson. The trainers stressed the importance of the weekly meetings and strongly suggested that trainees should study the course material before the meeting so as to facilitate the discussion.

D. Conclusion- Suggestions for further development

All the participants in the Italian Target Group have really appreciated the ESPONTrain Project as well as the synthesis produced. Many of them had worked in the past with the ESPON Programme documents but they had a lot of problems whenever it was needed to apply the ESPON results at local or regional scale. **They suggested a wider use of the synthetic reports as those produced by ESPONTrain** in order to disseminate the results and the tools developed by the Programme, so as to broadly transfer research methodologies and enable their application on different territories.

Statistics:

Regarding the Students' group, in Italy there were 8 participants. The projects ESPON Climate, ReRisk and METROBORDER were fully taught and there were 6, 7 and 6 assignments delivered, while the remaining TTPs (DEMIFER, EDORA, FOCI and EUROISLANDS&TeDi) were taught in their short version without assignments. In total, for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, FOCI, ESPON Climate, ReRisk and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by all the trainees on-line (in hours and minutes) was : 19:10 for DEMIFER, 35:52 for EDORA, 41:16 for ESPON Climate, 12:14 for FOCI, 51:39 for ReRisk, 09:40 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 29:34 for METROBORDER.

Regarding the Stakeholders group, there were 7 participants. Simultaneously with the students group, ESPON Climate, ReRisk and METROBORDER were fully taught, while the other TTPs (DEMIFER, EDORA, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi) were taught in their short version without any assignments. This group delivered per project 3, 6 and 4 assignments. For all the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, FOCI and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by all the trainees for the on-line training (in hours and minutes) was 07:24 for DEMIFER, 11:28 for EDORA, 31:37 for, 08:59 for FOCI, 32:28 for ReRisk, 07:55 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 34:34 for METROBORDER.

Project Partner 3 : Czech Republic

A. Dissemination and selection of trainees and trainers

On 16th November 2011, the Institute for Spatial Development (UUR) organized a Round table for representatives of Czech universities, where the director of UUR (Mr Robert Vesely) asked all attendants to participate in the ESPONTrain project. In the beginning of 2012 an official letter focusing on ESPONTrain participation was sent to Czech universities and policy makers, particularly to:

- nine Czech universities
- fourteen regions of the Czech Republic
- three relevant ministries and

- four development departments/city authorities out of four of the largest Czech cities (Prague Brno, Ostrava, Plzen).

Selection of trainees met all requirements set by ESPONTrain Lead Partner:

- Post graduate students
- from relevant fields (Geography, Regional planning, Spatial Planning Regional and Urban Development, Engineering, Environmental Economics, Regional economics, Spatial economics)
- hold/have started a master degree in one of above fields with a focus on territorial analysis and assessments, policy development, territorial monitoring, scenarios etc.
- Policy makers, government officials, local/regional authorities
- working in one of *relevant fields* (spatial planning and development, regional planning and development, urban planning and development, territorial development, other related fields)
- active in the above mentioned fields as a *policy maker* in public sector (at national/regional/local level) or as a *senior official* working in a ministry/governmental office/general secretariat/regional or local authority
- *planner* working in planning institution in the private or public sector
- *researcher* in researcher institution

Taking into account these requirements finally 20 students were chosen – four post graduate students and sixteen policy makers³ (see Annexes).

The trainers were expected to meet following conditions:

- to come from academic or research community
- to have suitable teaching skills and qualifications
- to have previous experiences in ESPON projects and e-learning.

Especially due to the third condition (very limited number of ESPON projects with Czech participation) the selection was reduced to only few experts from whose three were finally chosen:

- Mgr. Ondřej Mulíček (involved in POLYCE, ESPON TOWN)
- Prof. Karel Maier (involved in POLYCE, ESPON TOWN)
- Doc. Luděk Sýkora (involved in POLYCE, ESPON TOWN)

B. Implementation of the educational cycles

1st educational ESPONTrain cycle implementation for Policy makers⁴

The entire work has been divided into two parts:

- Professional part: was carried out by chosen trainers

³ One of the policy makers decided to skip the ESPONTrain participation during the course.

⁴ The first cycle was finally designed for post graduate students as a tested group; policy makers were involved in the second cycle. As mentioned above in total four Czech post graduate students attended this course.

- Coordination part: was managed by UUR via phone calls and e-mails with trainers and trainees.

As agreed with the Lead Partner and the CU, each Project Partner has selected three thematic packages for the full version teaching. In case of the Institute for Spatial Development those three thematic packages were following:

- FOCI (trainer: Ondřej Mulíček)
- METROBORDER (trainer: Karel Maier)
- DEMIFER (trainer: Luděk Sýkora)

Time devoted to each project was 14 days including two teleconferences managed by current trainer:

- Teleconferences for FOCI project (1 + 2 participants)
- The main focus: introduction of the trainer/trainees and ESPONTrain platform, topics arising from the text, specifications of Final Assignment, definition of FUA
- Teleconferences for METROBORDER project (2 + 0 participants)
- The main focus: introduction of the trainer/trainees, description of ESPON 2006 and ESPON 2013, information on POLYCE and ESPON TOWN projects, topics arising from the text, specifications of Final Assignment, development potentials related to Ostrava, Brno and Vienna (background of students)
- Teleconferences for DEMIFER project (0 + 0 participants)

2nd educational ESPONTrain cycle implementation for Post Graduate students and young researches/professionals⁵

The conditions were the same as in the first cycle – each project took 14 days and included two teleconferences:

Teleconferences for FOCI project (0 + 1 participants)

The main focus: introduction of the trainer/trainees, FOCI objectives and expectations, topics arising from the text, specifications of Final Assignment, information on POLYCE and ESPON TOWN projects, development of FUA in the next 50 years, development of Liberec and Brno cities (comparison) + development problems (suburbanisation, migration, environmental protection)

Teleconferences for METROBORDER project (2 + 2 participants)

The main focus: introduction of the trainer/trainees, information on POLYCE and ESPON TOWN projects, topics arising from the text, specifications of Final Assignment, components of spatial cohesion, examples of Euroregions and transnational cooperation (Liberec – Poland, Ostrava – Katowice)

Teleconferences for DEMIFER project (2 + 2 participants)

The main focus: introduction of the trainer/trainees, information on ESPON programme and POLYCE and ESPON TOWN projects, topics arising from the text, specifications of Final Assignment, strengths and weakness of DEMIFER project,

⁵ The second cycle was finally designed for policy makers as a target group. As mentioned above in total fifteen Czech policy makers attended this course.

internal and external migration, demographic challenges, using of HyperAtlas, employment and migration in Moravian-Silesian region.

Statistics:

To sum up, regarding the Students group in the Czech Republic there were 4 participants, DEMIFER, FOCI and METROBORDER were fully taught and there were no assignments delivered. The other TTPs (ReRisk, EDORA, EUROISLANDS&TeDi) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER, the total time dedicated by all the trainees for the full time to the training (in hours and minutes) was 10:21 for DEMIFER, 00:12 for EDORA, 00:00 for ESPON Climate, 41:39 for FOCI, 00:00 for ReRisk, 00:05 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 11:28 for METROBORDER.

Regarding the Stakeholders group in the Czech Republic there were 15 participants, DEMIFER, FOCI and METROBORDER were fully taught and there were no assignments delivered. The other TTPs (ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and EDORA) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, FOCI, ESPON Climate, ReRisk and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by all the trainees for the on-line training (in hours and minutes) were 16:39 for DEMIFER, 00:06 for EDORA, 00:11 for ESPON Climate, 25:16 for FOCI, 00:01 for ReRisk, 00:06 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 16:46 for METROBORDER.

Project Partner 4 : Romania

The ESPONTrain project was implemented by the UAIC University of Iasi (Romania), an institution also in charge with the management of the Romanian ECP. The period of implementation coincided with the pick of the economic crisis and restructuration of the public sector, in this country, largely affecting the priorities and strategies at all the levels of the territorial planning and institutions. Implementing the project in this dynamic and unpredictable period was a challenge and a major opportunity to learn.

A. Preparation of the educational material

The first phase of the implementation involved the preparation of the training package, in our case, the course focusing on the ESPON DEMIFER project. Demography and migration are connected with the economic regional trends by subtle links that ESPON DEMIFER studied with a high success. The dimension of the project was also a problem. The project has numerous interesting annexes: methodology of research, case studies and an Atlas. The synthesis of the project and the selection of maps, examples, and relevant data was a difficult and time consuming task.

B. Implementation of the educational cycles

The strategy followed during the teaching period followed a double logic: familiarizing students and stakeholders with the complexity of the teaching platform and developing their taste for the ESPON studies. For both categories, it was not the first time that they entered in contact with an e-learning platform; it was however (according to their informal feed-back) an impressive experience. The time scheduled for the teaching process was a bit too short to fully explore and manage all the facilities implemented in the e-learning platform. For example, the management of the instruments allowing the exchange of files and information is essential but time-consuming, in certain moments and circumstances. Concerning the teleconference experience, the general impression is positive. The white-board tool was essential to maintain a sensation of confidence for students and stakeholders but also for trainers. A more advanced and sophisticated platform would probably limit the interaction and induce a sentiment of dislocation with no positive results for teaching or learning.

The second objective for the trainers was to disseminate the information from the teaching packages and to help the trainees explore by their own the constellation of the ESPON

projects. Stakeholders and students were already familiarized with the ESPON results. The trainer's stake was to let them understand why the project should be perceived as a conceptual system with impact and relevance for policy design and scientific research. In this case, using common tools (ESPON DB 2013, HyperAtlas and the maps from the projects) was the main strategy used to make ESPON intelligible. The teaching materials contain information from different fields of research – spatial economy, climatology, urban studies or demography. It is obvious that this variety is not easy to manage and a plus of information and clarifications was needed.

For students, the use of the courses was doubled by an introduction to the ESPON DB 2013 collection of indicators. As all the students have PhD thesis in relation with the territorial planning of urban systems, the FOCI project was certainly helpful. An insight in the different methodologies used by this particular project was also provided. In the case of the stakeholders, the discussions touched more the sphere of the data projection in the future. Almost all the projects contain scenarios (i. e. DEMIFER, ESPON Climate) of evolution. Their major question was how reliable these scenarios are for strategic decision in the planning process. The second issues centered on the possibility to downgrade the scenarios to more fine scales of territorial analysis (from NUTS2 to NUTS 3 and from NUTS3 to LAU2 or FUA).

C. Conclusion

The impact of the ESPONTrain project is not necessarily measurable in terms of how much quantity of information was absorbed by the trainees or transmitted by the trainers. Probably, it would be more important to follow in time the spin-off resulted from this teaching/learning experience and the increasing returns, in terms of data and information used from ESPON source. From the point of view of persons involved in the training process, the best part of the teaching/learning experience is the fact that ESPON TRAIN largely put aside the scepticism surrounding the ESPON projects, clearly marked their limits and highlighted the benefits.

Statistics:

To sum up, regarding the Students group in Romania there were 5 participants, DEMIFER, EDORA and FOCI were fully taught and there were 0, 1 and 1 assignments delivered for each TTP. The other TTPs (ReRisk, METROBORDER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, FOCI and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by the all the trainees for the full time to the training (in hours and minutes) were 28:15 for DEMIFER, 18:59 for EDORA, 00:24 for ESPON Climate, 11:23 for FOCI, 02:43 for ReRisk, 00:51 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 05:33 for METROBORDER.

Regarding the Stakeholders group in Rumania there were 3 participants, DEMIFER, EDORA and FOCI were fully taught and there were no assignments delivered. The other TTPs (ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by all the trainees for the on-line training (in hours and minutes) was 13:52 for DEMIFER, 05:42 for EDORA, 00:00 for ESPON Climate, 10:43 for FOCI, 00:12 for ReRisk, 00:04 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 00:07 for METROBORDER.

Project Partner 5 : Bulgaria

Even if Bulgaria contributed a lot to disseminating the Project and to its communication strategy and there was an enthusiasm for its organization and implementation at national level, finally no educational activity took place in Bulgaria during the implementation of the programme. Even if Bulgaria requested to implement an educational cycle during February – March 2013, this was not finally possible due to administrative constraints.

Project Partner 6 : Slovenia

In Slovenia, the ESPONTrain Project was realized by the Slovenian National Contact Point for the ESPON Programme, in cooperation with the University of Ljubljana, which carried out the course. The course was delivered by experienced teachers from different faculties (Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering, Faculty of Architecture, Biotechnical Faculty, Faculty of Arts – Department of Geography), who are also experts in their respective fields. Most of them have a sound knowledge of the ESPON Programme, as they have previously participated in one or more of its projects.

A. Selection of trainees and trainers

A special call for applications to take part in the course was announced, and 20 applications were submitted, of which 10 belonged to the group of stakeholders and 10 belonged to the group of postgraduate students. Later, both groups were reduced by half, due to the time delays in the project. Hence, five participants per group took part.

B. Comments on the educational procedure

Time delay on the project also affected the results of the educational programme. Namely, several comments were made that far too much study material needed to be covered in a very short amount of time. The biggest problem was the time overlap of the thematic packages, where new thematic packages were introduced before the participants were able to prepare the final assignment for the previous thematic package. It would have been much easier if one-week pauses were provided after each thematic package, making it possible for the participants to prepare their final assignments in good order.

Generally, the Slovenian participants of the ESPONTrain educational programme praised the programme, as it provided great insight into the ESPON Programme and its projects, covering a wide scope of topics related to the studies of space and space-related processes.

The technical realisation of the programme was subject to the most criticism. The online ESPONTrain platform was determined in advance and it was inflexible. The free choice of teleconferencing was disabled and so was the resubmission of final works; it was hard to change groups – for these and similar problems it was necessary to contact the web administrator. The realisation would have been much better if the teachers themselves could determine some of the parameters of the online platform, which is, in fact, the very purpose of distance learning, i.e. it should enable great flexibility in the first place. The biggest problem, however, was the tool used for teleconferencing, which was not always working, so other tools for teleconferencing were occasionally used.

C. Conclusion and suggestions for further development

Nevertheless, despite the criticism, the course was very successful, since all the planned activities, including the teleconferences, were carried out. Somewhat less successful was the work of the participants who failed to elaborate and submit all the final assignments related to packages EDORA; DEMIFER and FOCI. However, the elaboration of final papers was not envisaged in the remaining three training packages (ESPON Climate; EUROISLANDS&TeDi; METROBORDER) that were, in Slovenia, covered in an abridged form within the programme.

The distance education stage was followed by an evaluation one ; all the participants who were active in, at least, one thematic package were asked to take a short survey, which is to be found at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ESPON_Train

Finally, **we recommend preserving and maintaining/upgrading the VLE after the completion of the ESPONTrain Project.** In particular, it would make sense to differentiate the topics into groups of participants in a more targeted manner (students and stakeholders), while the topics should be upgraded with the findings of other ESPON Projects in terms of the relevant thematic fields.

We also wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their constructive cooperation, i.e. project partners, teachers, web administrators and, particularly, participants who showed a great deal of enthusiasm and desire to acquire new knowledge and recognitions.

Statistics:

To sum up, regarding the Students group in Slovenia there were 161 participants, DEMIFER, EDORA and FOCI were fully taught and there were 5, 2 and 1 assignments delivered for each TTP. The other TTPs (ESPON Climate, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by the all the students for the full time to the training (in hours and minutes) was 52:38 for DEMIFER, 14:46 for EDORA, 08:46 for ESPON Climate, 13:42 for FOCI, 01:09 for ReRisk, 03:27 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 08:28 for METROBORDER.

Regarding the Stakeholders group in Slovenia there were 15 participants, DEMIFER, EDORA and FOCI were fully taught and there were 2, 2 and 5 assignments delivered for each TTP. The other TTPs (ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS & TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER, the total time dedicated by all the trainees to the training (in hours and minutes) was 53:46 for DEMIFER, 25:21 for EDORA, 15:17 for ESPON Climate, 38:41 for FOCI, 00:48 for ReRisk, 11:52 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 03:46 for METROBORDER.

Project Partner 7 : Estonia

A. Contribution to the e-learning methodology and preparation of educational material

The first part of the project implementation for the Estonian project partners involved the development of the overall e-learning methodologies and concepts for the e-learning platform, taking part in several respective discussions during the project meetings in Athens and Rome, where different visions of the outputs of the educational material and study methods were presented.

The next step was the elaboration of the educational materials for the EUROISLANDS & TeDi e-learning module, following the methods and guidelines developed in the start-up phase of the project. These educational materials were based on two ESPON's Priority 2: Targeted Analysis projects, EUROISLANDS and TeDi and included a textbook, a PowerPoint presentation, quizzes, discussion topics, an assignment and references for further reading.

B. Identification of training staff and selection of trainees

The final stage of the first part of project implementation was the identification of the training staff and trainees for the course. Three tutors from the University of Tartu were selected to guide the trainees throughout education procedure, namely, Antti Roose, Martin Gauk and Jüri Roosaare, all highly qualified in regional planning, European studies and e-learning. The trainees were selected by promoting the course within the networks of two distinctive target groups:

- Policy makers and practitioners in the public sector (i.e. ministries, general secretariats, regional and local authorities etc) dealing with territorial cohesion and development issues and strategies;
- Master and post-graduate level students in spatial planning and territorial development.

All in all, the course attracted 5 master and postgraduate level students and 7 policy makers and practitioners related to the fields of spatial planning and territorial development, public administration and economy.

C. The educational procedure

The main body of the project involved the launch of the ESPONTrain interactive e-learning course in Estonia, where the trainees got valuable insights about the European spatial development trends and learned how ESPON's applied research and targeted analysis projects support territorial cohesion and development in Europe by creating a territorial evidence base for policy-making in local, regional and European scale.

The e-learning course was set for the two different target groups separately with the overall duration of three months between September 2012 and January 2013. The studies included seven thematic teaching modules developed by the ESPONTrain TPG: ESPON Climate, EUROISLANDS & TeDi, EDORA, FOCI, DEMIFER, ReRisk and METROBORDER. The first three were mandatory for the trainees to complete in order to pass the course as these topics were viewed as the most relevant in the Estonian spatial development context. The latter four modules were voluntary. The courses consisted of virtual lectures and seminars for every teaching module and individual work with the textbooks, multimedia, quizzes, discussions and assignments. The course was exemplified by the Estonian cases and practices of territorial development.

The concluding part involved evaluation of activities, summarizing, finalizing and closing up the programme activities. The major task was the compilation of the internal final report, consisting of a description of the project's implementation in Estonia as well as the main results in terms of capitalisation of the ESPON results accomplished during the project.

Statistics:

To sum up, regarding the Students group in Estonia there were 11 participants, the EDORA, ESPON Climate and EUROISLANDS & TeDi were fully taught and there were 6, 4 and 5 assignments delivered for each TTP. The other TTPs (DEMIFER, FOCI, ReRisk and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS & TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, RERISK, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER) the total time dedicated by all the students to the on-line training (in hours and minutes) was 03:33 for DEMIFER, 32:30 for EDORA, 26:54 for ESPON Climate, 01:06 for FOCI, 00:43 for RERISK, 78:51 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 06:16 for METROBORDER.

Regarding the Stakeholders group in Estonia there were 10 participants. The EDORA, ESPON Climate and EUROISLANDS & TeDi were fully taught and there were 5,6 and 6 assignments delivered accordingly. The other TTPs (DEMIFER, FOCI, ReRisk and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS & TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, FOCI and METROBORDER) the total time dedicated by all the trainees for the full time to the training (in hours and minutes) was 00:13 for DEMIFER, 17:50 for EDORA, 39:31 for ESPON Climate, 00:13 for FOCI, 01:21 for ReRisk, 33:52 for EUROISLANDS& TeDi and 00:17 for METROBORDER.

Project Partner 8 : Lithuania

A. Dissemination and selection of Trainers and Trainees

It is important to mention that distance learning is not widespread in Lithuania yet. However this mode of delivering education works in the country is considered as one of the most promising and acceptable ways to gain knowledge or qualifications.

Project partner - Research Institute of Territorial Planning of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU) disseminated information about ESPONTrain educational cycles and the e-learning platform via its associations which were obtained in collaboration with government, scientific institutions and the public sector by preparing spatial planning projects at national and local levels.

A few editorial activities were implemented to inform objective institutions and academic society (Table 1). Lithuanian ECP delivered the messages about ESPONTrain project in two national events. The participants had an opportunity to express their interest in participation in ESPONTrain educational cycles.

Table 3. Dissemination activities in Lithuania

No.	Details about the meeting purpose	Location	Date	Attendees
1.	National Urban Forum The call for proposals to participate in the ESPONTrain project 2 nd educational cycle. The purpose was to deliver a message about ESPONTrain project for policy makers and professionals.	Klaipėda University, Aula Magna, Klaipėda	14 th of October.	Lithuanian policy makers (Ministry of Environment, representatives from Municipalities) architects, urban/spatial planning professionals.
2.	National Conference “Civil Engineering and Geodesy” The call for proposals to participate in the ESPONTrain project 1 st educational cycle. The purpose was to deliver a message about ESPONTrain project for students and young researchers.	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University.	21 st of October 2011.	Young scientists, researchers. Students of master degree and PHD students.

Furthermore, a number of newsletters, brochures and leaflets about ESPONTrain educational cycles were widely given out to the institutions. Communication was carried on through e-mails and calls.

The target groups were comprised of those who were interested in the Calls. They all sent to the Lithuanian ECP their curricula vitae (CVs) and an abstract, as suggested in the Expression of Interest, on the following themes:

- Territorial cooperation-Governance building;
- Territorial and Spatial Planning;
- Energy-Climate change;
- Rural areas.

The Lithuanian ECP selected six students from Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Kaunas University of Technology and Klaipeda University and two young researchers (table 4).

Table 4. Lithuanian selected students target group for the 1st educational cycle

No.	Surname	Name	Institution	Criteria
1.	Staniunas	Mindaugas	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU)	PHD STUDENT Civil Engineering
2.	Truskauskiene	Egle	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU)	PHD STUDENT Architecture/Urban design
3.	Tomkeviciute	Ieva	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU)	Master's studies Civil Engineering/ Urban Planning and Engineering
4.	Sernaite	Neringa	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU)	Master's studies Civil Engineering/ Urban Planning and Engineering
5.	Urbonas	Vilius	Kaunas University of technology (KTU)	PHD STUDENT Landscape Architecture/ Town and Country
6.	Abromas	Jonas	Klaipeda university (KU)	PHD STUDENT Landscape Architecture
7.	Zorskaite	Gintare	Research Institute of Territorial Planning	Engineer
8.	Lazauskaite	Dovile	Research Institute of Territorial Planning	Researcher

The Lithuanian ECP also selected 15 professionals from regional/spatial planning institutions, urban development and policy makers, government representatives (table 5). Then, the objectives and the added value of the ESPONTrain Project were explained via phone.

Table 5. Lithuanian selected stakeholders target group for the 2nd educational cycle

No.	Surname	Name	Institution	Criteria
1.	Dubickaite	Gintare	Ministry Of Environment Of The Republic Of Lithuania/Spatial Planning, Urban Planning And Architecture Department	Chief specialist of Spatial Planning And Regional Development Division
2.	Sabaliauskiene	Kristina	Ministry Of The Interior Of The Republic Of Lithuania/Regional Policy Department	Chief specialist of Regional Policy Strategic Coordination Division

3.	Valickas	Andrius	Ministry Of The Interior Of The Republic Of Lithuania/Regional Policy Department	Senior specialist of Regional Policy Strategic Coordination Division
4.	Maksimoviene	Asta	JBC Statybu Strategija	Project manager
5.	Butvilienė	Ramune	JBC Statybu Strategija	Architect
6.	Gauce	Kristina	JBC Statybu Strategija	Head of the Department of Territorial Planning
7.	Salapetiene	Vita	JBC Statybu Strategija	Project manager
8.	Pakalnis	Mindaugas	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas	Chief Architect
9.	Grabauskas	Mindaugas	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas/General Planning Division	The Head of the department, project manager
10.	Siciunas	Nerijus	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas/ Detailed Planning Division	Architect
11.	Treinys	Jonas	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas/ Detailed Planning Division	Architect
12.	Gricyte-Rukuiziene	Zivile	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas	International Relations specialist
13.	Norkiene	Lina	JBC Atkula	Architect
14.	Vaicionis	Gediminas	The Association Of Local Authorities In Lithuania (ALAL)	Advisor for Rural And Urban Planning Issues
15.	Andriulaityte	Ieva	The Association Of Local Authorities In Lithuania (ALAL)	Adviser for Environment And Energy Issues

Similarly, the Lithuanian partner chose the trainers to implement the training procedure in the educational cycles. The definition of training staff has been implemented by selection of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University academic staff, taking into account the requirements prepared by the Slovenian partner and the LP (table 6). Both trainers are Professors at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University. They have enough experience in projects financed by European Structural Funds and distance learning. One of the selected trainers was inexperienced in working with the ESPON Programme. Therefore the preparation took longer until he gets familiar with the Programme. In general, preparation and implementation of educational cycles comprised of 96 working hours for each trainer.

Table 6. Lithuanian selected trainers for the educational cycles

No.	Surname Name	Institution	Criteria_1	Criteria_2
1.	BURINSKIENE Marija	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU)-Department of Urban Engineering	CIVIL ENGINEER Professor (Lithuanian ECP, ESPONTrain project)	TRAINER AT MASTER E-LEARNING: Master in Territorial planning, Tourism Planning, Territorial Planning Data Base, Transportation System Planning and Development Strategy, Public Transport
2.	STANIUNAS Eugenijus Kestutis	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU)-Department of Urban Design	Architect, Professor, INTERREG projects.	TRAINER AT MASTER E-LEARNING: Master in Architecture and Urban Planning Culture

The Lead Partner organized in ESPONTrain Platform a training seminar for the training staff (i.e. how to contact the students, how to upload material, how to answer users' questions etc.) (table 7). A short Trainers Manual has also been produced as a set of recommendations. Both trainers from Lithuania participated in this seminar.

Table 7. Training seminars for the training staff

No.	Trainers Seminar	Location	Dates	Attendees
1.	Training staff have been instructed how to contact the students, how to upload material, how to answer users' questions etc.	ESPONTrain Platform (http://espontrain.cs.teiath.gr)	Friday 10 th February, 10:00-12:00 am GMT	10 participants
2.			Thursday 11 th September, 15:00-17:00 pm GMT	

B. The educational procedure

Educational cycles were implemented through real-time video conferencing and self studying on ESPONTrain e-learning platform. By the Schedule of the VLE educational cycles Lithuanian trainers have delivered 16 teleconferences during the two educational cycles (tables 8 and 9).

Table 8. Teleconferences organised in relation to the 1st educational cycle

No.	Details about the meeting purpose	Location	Dates	Attendees
1.	Teleconference: FOCI TTP	ESPONTrain Platform	20/09/2012	E. K. Staniunas

		http://espontrain.eu	(17:00-19:00 pm)	+ Admin Students
2.	Teleconference: FOCI TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	27/09/2012 (17:00-19:00 pm)	E. K. Staniunas + Admin Students
3.	Teleconference: EDORA TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	4/10/2012 (17:00-19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Students
4.	Teleconference: EDORA TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	11/10/2012 (17:00-19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Students
5.	Teleconference: RERISK TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	18/10/2012 (17:00-19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Students
6.	Teleconference: ESPON Climate TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	25/10/2012 (17:00-19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Students
7.	Teleconference: DEMIFER TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	31/10/2012 (17:00-19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Students
8.	Teleconference: EUROISLANDS&TEDI TTP, METROBORDER TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	8/11/2012 (14:00-16:00 pm)	E. K. Staniunas + Admin Students

Table 9. Teleconferences organised in relation to the 2nd educational cycle

No.	Details about the meeting purpose	Location	Dates	Attendees
1.	Teleconference: FOCI TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	18/10/2012 (14:00/16:00 pm)	E. K. Staniunas + Admin Stakeholders
2.	Teleconference: FOCI TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	25/10/2012 (14:00/16:00 pm)	E. K. Staniunas + Admin Stakeholders
3.	Teleconference: EDORA TTP	ESPONTrain Platform	8/11/2012 (17:00/19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin

		http://espontrain.eu		Stakeholders
4.	Teleconference: EDORA TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	14/11/2012 (17:00/19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Stakeholders
5.	Teleconference: RERISK TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	22/11/2012 (17:00/19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Stakeholders
6.	Teleconference: ESPON Climate TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	29/11/2012 (17:00/19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Stakeholders
7.	Teleconference: DEMIFER TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	13/12/2012 (17:00/19:00 pm)	M. Burinskiene + Admin Stakeholders
8.	Teleconference: EUROISLANDS&TEDI TTP, METROBORDER TTP	ESPONTrain Platform http://espontrain.eu	06/12/2012 (17:00/19:00 pm)	E. K. Staniunas + Admin Stakeholders

Unexpected events can easily appear during the provided teleconference time considering trainers' daily professional duties. Thus, substitute personnel should be provided to avoid these kind of problems.

During this e-learning seminar, such teleconferences were available not only to participants from Vilnius, but also from other cities of Lithuania such as Kaunas, Klaipeda. Internet network facilitated the connection among the participants, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (trainers' office) and the ESPONTrain Administrators from Greece. E-mailing as well as the e-learning platform were used for communication between trainers and trainees. We have sent about 200 e-mails through the educational cycles to inform and remind about ongoing teleconferences time, to advice on some technical or thematic questions or send additional teaching material.

The Lithuanian partner determined which 3TTPs should be taught in full version. Therefore, two teleconferences were held per each chosen TTP and the time dedicated on studying for these TTPs was relatively longer and participants had to submit final assignments for the assessment of their knowledge. That was the case for : TTP2 – Rural package (EDORA), TTP3 – Energy-Climate change (ReRisk/ESPON Climate), TTP4 – Urban & Agglomeration economies package (FOCI). The remaining TTPs (EUROISLANDS&TeDi, METROBORDER and DEMIFER) was decided to be taught in a short version. Therefore only one teleconference was held per TTP and the time dedicated to studying was shorter whilst participants had the opportunity to take self-assessment tests but had no obligation to submit an assignment.

According to the data provided by the Lithuanian partner 7 students of 8 participated in the 1st educational cycle and 12 of 15 stakeholders participated in the 2nd educational cycle.

The postponement of the educational cycles was the primary cause of the decrease in participation. Following the Application Form Part B, the 1st educational cycle was supposed

to start at 12/2011-02/2012, the 2nd educational cycle at 04/2012-06/2012. Finally, training started from 09/2012-11/2012 to 10/2012-12/2012.

Those who wanted to participate in ESPONTrain project training confirmed their decision via e-mails during the preparation phase of identification of the target groups.

Those who expressed their intention to participate in educational cycles were informed about the postponement. We informed the participants that the postponement of educational cycles was related to technical development issues of the e-learning platform. During this period some of the participants have changed their jobs, or some other problems appeared and this was the reason for the relatively low participation in the training. Thus, 1 student from the students target group and 3 stakeholders from the stakeholders target group never joined the platform.

Making assessment of participants' activity indicators, we can report a high passivity of participants dealing with online tests and participation in discussion forums. Participants' attention was mostly attracted by teleconferences and direct correspondence between trainer and trainees. The nature of problems that came up between trainer and trainees during the educational cycles had to do with inconsistency with schedule (student should be able to choose from several sessions held on different times/days) and the number of the participants in the group. In fact, discussions were more effective only in a small group of participants. Otherwise the situation became chaotic and some of the participants left the e-class.

During the educational cycles trainees demonstrated great interest in ESPON Programme. Participants mentioned that the teaching material should be tailored for students' interests to be able to choose the relevant teaching material in order to further e-learning platform development.

Staff workload also increased during the educational cycles of the project. Therefore trainers organized some additional material on the national level. Besides, trainers have underlined the principle of interactivity. Due to the absence of direct relationship between trainer and trainees, it was difficult to manage the learning process. Therefore the complete interaction between trainer and trainees was not fully achieved. Technological barriers occurred in both cycles but without further consequences.

All participants were informed about their knowledge assessment procedure at the very beginning. They had to submit reports according to FOCI, EDORA and ReRisk TTPs assignment requirements. Full tasks were carried out by 3 students. They provided more than 2 reports and have earned a passing grade. 3 students provided just one report by FOCI TTP theme and failed the terms of assignment. 2 students did not provide reports. Total students' assessment grade is 96,39. Full tasks were carried out by 6 stakeholders. They provided all 3 reports and have earned a passing grade. Other 6 stakeholders failed the terms of assignment. Total students' assessment grade is 88,06.

In both educational cycles 19 out of 23 participants, who expressed their intention, have actually participated in Lithuania. That is 82,6 percent of the total list of this target group. 3 students and 6 stakeholders have earned a passing grade and this represents a percentage of 53,33 of the total list of this target group.

The participants were encouraged to carry out their assignments. For this reason we had to send e-mails and make a number of calls. Despite our efforts, participants delayed to upload their reports. According to students and stakeholders the most interesting tasks were case studies and the adaptation of ESPON project scenarios and ideas at local or regional level territories and solution to relevant problems. In this case, participants were able to use the information acquired from studying the results of ESPON project.

C. Conclusion

According to the assessment made by trainers, the participants' remarks have been constructive and reflected the actual national/regional/local challenges. Concerning the overall effect of the implemented educational cycles in Lithuania, the project partner can state that the most important objectives of the ESPONTrain project were met. It was a great opportunity for Lithuanian professionals and students to learn how they can deal with ESPON related territorial development and Cohesion Policy issues on national/local levels. Efficient information and education was provided successfully and it will probably have an efficient added value.

Statistics:

To sum up, regarding the Students group in Lithuania there were 8 participants, the FOCI, ESPON Climate and DEMIFER were fully taught and there were 4, 3 and 3 assignments delivered for each TTP. The other TTPs (EDORA, FOCI, EUROISLANDS & TeDi and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total, for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS&TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, FOCI and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by all the students for the on-line training (in hours and minutes) was 01:53 for DEMIFER, 16:02 for EDORA, 01:44 for ESPON Climate, 40:09 for FOCI, 01:23 for ReRisk, 01:34 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 05:02 for METROBORDER.

Regarding the Stakeholders group in Lithuania there were 15 participants and the EDORA, FOCI and RERISK were fully taught and there were 6 assignments delivered for each TTP. The other TTPs (DEMIFER, ESPON Climate, EUROISLANDS & TeDi and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EUROISLANDS & TeDi, EDORA, ESPON Climate, ReRisk, FOCI and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by all the trainees for the full time to the training (in hours and minutes) was 02:09 for DEMIFER, 07:52 for EDORA, 00:28 for ESPON Climate, 27:21 for FOCI, 08:10 for RERISK, 00:46 for EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 00:00 for METROBORDER.

Project Partner 9: Cyprus

The ESPONTrain project was implemented by the Town Planning and Housing Department – ECP Cyprus.

A. Elaboration of educational material

The first phase of the implementation involved the preparation of the training package. Specifically, the ECP Cyprus participated to the elaboration of the educational material for the EUROISLANDS & TeDi e-learning module, as assisting editor in collaboration with the Estonian ECP (main editor).

B. Selection of trainees and trainers and educational procedure

Two calls of interest were published and disseminated to the ECP's network, in order to raise awareness for the ESPONTrain project and mainly attract trainers and trainees. The selection of trainees was quite successful but there was only one potential trainer interested in being involved in the programme. In order to facilitate the project implementation and because the Cypriot project budget was quite low, the LP jointly with the ECP Cyprus decided to undertake this task, thus forming mixed groups of trainees from both Greece and Cyprus.

All in all, the course attracted 9 master holders and PhD students and 8 policy makers and practitioners related to the fields of regional, urban planning and territorial development, public administration and economy in the public and private sector. The educational cycles

were successfully completed and a large number of participants conducted their assignments. The e-learning courses were set for the two different target groups (post-graduate students and stakeholders) in separate time-schedules with the overall duration of four months between September 2012 and December 2012. The courses included seven thematic teaching modules: ESPON Climate, EUROISLANDS & TeDi and FOCI (mandatory) and EDORA, DEMIFER, ReRisk and METROBORDER (voluntary). The first three courses were mandatory as these programmes were relevant to the Greek and Cypriot reality and referred to familiar case studies. The other courses were voluntary which means that no assignment was required.

c. Conclusion

All Cypriot participants seemed to have benefited from the ESPONTrain project. Interaction with Greek trainees and ESPON case studies on Cyprus compared with these in Greece was a positive element of the course. For further information on the implementation of the educational cycles, the profile of trainees etc. please cf. the Greek ECP reporting). It was a great opportunity for Cypriot trainees to get involved in such a project, where ESPON findings and related tools (ESPON DB, ESPON Hyperatlas, etc.) were thoroughly presented, widening in that way research potentials, opportunities and development strategies' design and implementation especially before or within the framework of the economic crisis.

Project Partner 10 : Malta

A. Territorial policy challenges met by the Project

The scope of this report is to describe the ESPONTrain project's implementation in Malta. The Maltese ECP took on this task as part of a long-term strategy to analyse the understanding and implementation of spatial planning in the Maltese Islands. Whilst one must appreciate that continent-wide programmes as is ESPON and their subsequent projects aim to encompass the entire territory, small states such as Malta that are double insulated through various impinging factors may not take up the wider-dimension in their strategic plan. Taking into account these specificities, with the ESPONTrain project, the ESPON projects have managed to filter down into the national and local levels so as to allow administrators understand the wider spatial planning concepts. The implementation of the Project coincided with an important reform : a "Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development" (SPED) which is intended to replace the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands of 1990 and provide a strategic spatial policy framework for both the environment and development up to 2020, being complementary with Government's social, economic and environmental objectives for the same period. This is a major step to introduce *an integrated spatial planning concept* against the previous concept of *development planning*, in the country.

The ESPONTrain project's input was deemed timely since it helped to direct the trainees towards the study of project outputs that could be compared to the SPED and to offer insights into the workings. The different entities involved in the process were contacted in the initial stages of the project which allowed the project team to assess whether to take on external organisations as part of the trainees. Since Malta has only one planning agency at national level and no agencies at the district or local levels, the main participants were chosen from the pool of experts involved in the SPED. This was made possible due to the immediate access to the experts as well so as to ensure that the introductory concepts are already in place and that spatial planning concepts are already taken on board as against having to initiate a pre-study session on the concepts of development as against spatial planning.

The training targets were aimed at understanding the ESPON outcomes in comparison to the SPED outcomes and also to thematic aspects pertaining to the initial SPED studies. This ensures that the project outputs can be implemented within the concept of the new plan. In addition, trainees were asked to review topics based on their area of expertise as based on

the initial studies pertaining to the SPED, inclusive of demography, housing, transport, amongst others. Such a process ensured ownership of the training process as based on an integrated planning system which: (i) ensures the sustainable management of land and sea resources together with the protection of the environment; and (ii) guides the development and use of land and sea space. The training also allowed trainees to review the relevant topics including:

- Plans, policies and programmes issued under the Environment and Development Planning Act of 2010 (EDPA) are spatial, holistic and comprehensive so that all factors in relation to land and sea resources and related environment conservation are addressed and included and to balance demands for development with socio-economic consideration on the one hand and the need to protect the environment on the other;
- Sectoral policies, activities and inputs are interpreted and coordinated with each other combining the inputs of all disciplines and groups;
- All actions are based on clear understanding of the natural and legitimate objectives and needs of individual land users;
- It follows other national policies and plans.

As a national strategic document, the process will help sectoral policies, plans and programmes in spatial terms and direct socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands in appropriate locations together with the protection of the environment. The process is also intended to guide the spatial aspect of new Government plans and policies including those emerging from the EDPA and will form the primary basis for decisions on applications related to environment and development. The implementation of the SPED is aimed to secure a more integrated approach to the management of development and environment protection on land and sea space at a national level.

The project process ensured that the preparation of sectoral plans is in line with the Territorial Agenda which aims at ensuring implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy according to territorial cohesion principles, where the internalisation of spatial influences is an integral part of sectoral plan formulation. In addition, the SPED means to provide the spatial framework that supports the development of an integrated maritime policy at a national level. In combination with the ESPON outputs it will help Malta to perceive a wider concept.

Conclusion

The project outputs were deemed helpful as an aid to widen the concept of spatial planning in Malta and has served as a refreshing exercise in different training processes and outcomes..

Statistics:

To sum up, regarding the Students groups in Malta there were 7 participants and the DEMIFER, ESPON Climate and EUROISLANDS & TeDi were fully taught but there were no assignments delivered. The other TTPs (EDORA, FOCI, RERISK and METROBORDER) were taught on a short basis without assignments. In total for the 7 TTPs (DEMIFER, EDORA, ESPON Climate, FOCI, RERISK, EUROISLANDS&TeDi and METROBORDER), the total time dedicated by the all the students for the full time to the training (in hours and minutes) were 06:33 for DEMIFER, 08:14 for EDORA, 08:55 for ESPON Climate, 00:46 for FOCI, 01:38 for RERISK, 46:34 for the EUROISLANDS&TeDi and 07:42 for METROBORDER. Regarding the Stakeholders group in Malta, there were no participants therefore none of the courses were delivered and no assignments were delivered.

Annex II : ESPONTrain Study Guide (ESPON Climate)

An ESPONTrain study guide was prepared by the LP and delivered for each TTP. We present, below, the example of the ESPON Climate Study Guide. In paragraph 3, the 10 educational units where the initially elaborated educational material has been adapted to, are presented.

ESPONTrain e-learning program- Study Guide - Module: ESPON Climate



1. Introduction

The current study guide includes basic information about the way the “ESPON Climate” course module has been structured. In the following pages, a description of the main aspects of the module is provided and a brief presentation of the units that structure the module “ESPON ESPON Climate”. Furthermore, there is useful data about the activities and the assessment that will be held during the seminar. Important dates about the start and the expiry of the courses, as well as the deadlines for the assignments have been included. Finally, contact details of the personnel are available for the trainees.

2. Main concepts of the course module

The ESPON Climate module is one of the 7 modules of the ESPONTrain e-Learning program. It is expected to constitute an evidence basis for identifying regional typologies of ESPON Climate change exposure, sensitivity, impact and vulnerability. The aims of the module are to deepen the knowledge about territorial development in relation with the ESPON Climate change. In brief, the trainees through the ESPON e-learning platform can access learning material, will familiarize with the methods and the main methodological tools, as well as the regional typologies of ESPON Climate. Moreover, five basic indicators of ESPON Climate change will be analyzed and categorized. The impact of ESPON Climate change on Europe’s region in relation with policy implications, is a thematic area to be discussed.

The ESPONTrain e-Learning platform was built as part of the ESPONTrain Tansnational Networking Activity. The ESPONTrain TNA is aiming at making ESPON2013 knowledge operational in a coordinated and transnational way for practical use at regional and local level, and translating ESPON Europe-wide information and findings to the regional/local level.

Specifically, the project is aiming at:

Stimulating a transnational educational and training ESPON activity facilitated by both an e-learning procedure and a networking promoted by ECPs.

Identifying efficient target groups within the national environments (both educational and policy making) so as to be multipliers of the diffusion of the ESPON philosophy, ideas, findings and results.

Disseminating knowledge already produced by the ESPON2013 Programme transforming it in comprehensible educational and training material, maintaining its scientific soundness.

3. Units

The topics that will be presented in the seminar are the following.

Unit 1: Main general ESPON concepts and basic data on ESPON ESPON Climate.

This unit is an introduction to the territorial challenges that are relevant for ESPON 2013 projects and provides basic data about the project.

Unit 2: Introduction, Problem Setting and Objectives.

This unit presents the main key research questions, as well as the policy questions. Furthermore, it analyses the methodologies, the assessment methods and the main methodological tools. (The IPCC CCLM model and the A1B scenario).

Unit 3: ESPON ESPON Climate typologies, Climatic Regions, Clusters and Maps.

This unit examines the direct and indirect ESPON Climate change effects, as they are reflected in maps and introduces to the ESPON ESPON Climate typologies.

Unit 4: Comments and Lists of Climatic Indicators.

This unit examines the role of society in relation to ESPON Climate change and analyses the five basic ESPON Climate change indicators.

Unit 5: 1st teleconference meeting to enhance team consciousness and exchange between the trainees about the first 4 units

Unit 6: Combined sensitivities and assessment of the new knowledge produced by the project.

This unit focuses on the combined sensitivities for each of the five dimensions of sensitivity. Furthermore, it presents the potential impacts of ESPON Climate change on Europe's region.

Unit 7: Contribution of the project findings to territorial and sectoral policies. This unit analyses the contribution of the project findings to the future Cohesion Policy.

Unit 8: Case studies, Outputs, Conclusions and Limitations.

This unit explains the main concepts of the case study focusing on the Mediterranean coast, summarizes the main results and identifies data gaps to overcome in further research.

Unit 9: Assignment.

At the end of the seminar, a report of about 1500 words will be delivered, including a SWOT analysis on the impact of ESPON Climate change on territorial cohesion.

Unit 10: 2nd teleconference meeting to discuss conclusions, give directions for the assignment and stimulate interest for further reading.

4. Structure of courses

This course module will last 3 weeks. The two weeks trainees will be called to perform the learning activities, i.e. study the learning material, solve quizzes, read suggested extra material, attend a tele-conferencing session and participate to online discussions).

Till the end of the third week trainees have to submit online the respective assignment. During the first and second week, a teleconference meeting will be arranged in order to enhance team consciousness and exchange between the trainees

Units of the first week:

Main general ESPON concepts and basic data on ESPON Climate.
Introduction, Problem Setting and Objectives.
ESPON Climate typologies, Climatic Regions, Clusters and Maps.
Comments and Lists of Climatic Indicators.

Units of the second week:

Combined sensitivities and assessment of the new knowledge produced by the project.
Contribution of the project findings to territorial and sectoral policies.
Case studies, Outputs, Conclusions and Limitations.
Announcements of the assignment.

Learning Material

The course module will be delivered completely online through the ESPONTrain educational platform. Every unit of the course module includes audiovisual material, i.e. power point presentations, enriched with videos and images. All units consist a set of quizzes for practice. A trainee can attempt to solve a quiz up to 3 times. The performance at these quizzes does not count for the decision about the successful completion of the course module.

A trainee is obliged to submit online a final assignment. The final assignment will be a report of about 1500 words that will concern an open problem for the solution of which trainees need to show that they have acquired knowledge and skills during the two weeks course module. The successful completion of the course module depends on the trainees' performance on the final assignment.

Finally, both the first and second week, two teleconference sessions will occur, in order to enhance team consciousness and establish a more efficient and profitable communication, to stimulate interest for further research.

Learning Activities

Each unit of the seminar includes:
Quizzes, for quick embedding of the learning material.
Questions for further analysis and discussion.
Forum for resolving questions and communication between the participants.
Assignment of about 700 words.

5. Important dates

The course module will run for 3 weeks.

The start date of the course module is: 17th September 2012

The date of the 1st teleconferencing will be: XXXX at YYY o'clock (local time)

The date of the 2nd teleconferencing will be: XXXX at YYY o'clock (local time)

The deadline for the online submission of the final assignment is: 7th October 2012

During the first week (17-23 September 2012) trainees will perform the learning activities of the first 5 units. The second week (24-30 September 2012), trainees will work on the other

five activities of course module. The third week will be devoted only to working on the final assignment.

Delivery dates are strictly defined and therefore the deadlines should be respected. Extension will not be given.

The participants will have the opportunity to post questions, communicate and exchange ideas about the module, not only during the teleconference sessions, but also via the discussion forum of the platform.

6. Contact Details

Teacher contact information:

Name:

Email:

Technical HelpDesk:

Email:

Annex III : Identification of target groups and training staff

In the framework of the ESPONTrain project, an identification of trainees and trainers was made. A selection of high skilled trainers and well defined groups of trainees was carried out. The ECPs performed their own actions helping themselves with a specifically designed template and report on the results. The task was comprised of :

- Identification and selection of the trainees
- Identification and selection of the trainers
- Reporting

Identification of the trainees

This task consisted of two principal activities: identification of target groups and selection of trainers and trainees from each country to participate in training seminars. According to the project specifications, the trainees should be identified with the following target groups:

Group 1: postgraduate students and young researchers/professionals from the field of geography, spatial planning, regional and urban development, engineering, environmental economics etc.

Group 2: policy makers, government officials, staff of local/regional authorities involved in spatial planning, regional and urban development etc.

Criteria for identification of trainees for the Group 1

-Criterion 1: ***specialization in a suitable field***

The trainees should be specialized in one of the following fields:

- geography⁶
- regional planning
- spatial planning
- regional and urban development
- engineering
- environmental economics
- regional economics
- spatial economics

-Criterion 2: ***degree of formal education***

The trainee should:

hold a ph.d. in one of the above mentioned fields with a focus to territorial analysis and assessments, policy development, territorial monitoring, scenarios etc.

be a ph.d. candidate in one of the above mentioned fields with a focus to territorial analysis and assessments, policy development, territorial monitoring, scenarios etc.

-Criterion 3: ***suitable and permanent position in the educational institution***

The trainee should be currently *and in the future (until 2016)* involved in the educational process in one of above mentioned fields at least as:

⁶And particularly geography's sub-categories related to ESPON, such as urban, regional and economic geography.

- assistant
- researcher

Criteria for identification of trainees for the Group 2

-Criterion 1: ***activity in the spatial planning, regional and urban development field, territorial development***

The trainee is working in one (or more than one) of the following fields:

- spatial planning and development
- regional planning and development
- urban planning and development
- territorial development
- other related fields

Criterion 2: ***The trainees should be active in the above mentioned fields as a:***

- policy maker in the public sector at
National
regional or
local level
- official* working in a ministry, governmental office, general secretariat, regional or local authority
- planner working in the private or public sector
- researcher

Identification of the trainers

The trainers were chosen for carrying out two educational seminars in each country. Each trainer was responsible for about 10 trainees. Each project partner selected approximately 2 – 3 trainers.

A selection process was done by each partner on the basis of a set of criteria which was developed as part of the transnational networking and co-operation between partners.

The trainer had to take over certain responsibilities related to training courses which were defined by the partners. He/She should come from the academic or research community and should have suitable teaching skills and qualifications as well as previous experiences in ESPON projects and e-learning.

Selection procedure:

Each partner performed a selection procedure applied to the commonly agreed criteria. Furthermore every partner reported on the outcomes of the selection procedure and the selection results.

Criteria for identification of trainers

Criterion 1: *Suitable specialisation*

The trainer should be specialized in geography, economic science, regional, urban and spatial planning and territorial development.

-Criterion 2: ***teaching experiences***

The trainer should have at least 5 years of teaching experience as:

- lecturer
- assistant professor
- professor

-Criterion 3: ***other experience***

The trainer should have experiences in ESPON Applied Research Projects and other ESPON projects in priority 2 or 3:

- at least in 2 Applied projects
- or
- in 1 applied research project and 1 other (P2, P3)

Criterion 4: ***experiences with e-learning***

Teaching experience with e-learning tools was a plus. The trainer should briefly explain his/her teaching experience with e-learning tools.

3. Reporting

All partners were asked to write a report explaining their choices and results as mentioned above. Please, note that in Annex I, all partners report how they implemented the selection procedure of trainers and trainees, in their respective case.

Annex IV : Profile of ESPON trainees : analysis and statistics

1. Lead Partner : Greek and Cypriot Trainees' Profile in ESPONTrain

According to the project specifications, the characteristics of the trainees were:

- ⇒ Group 1 (Students): Young Researchers and postgraduate students / professionals from the field of economic and regional development, planning, engineering, environmental studies, etc.
- ⇒ Group 2 (Stakeholders): policy makers, government Officials, staff of local / regional authorities involved in. spatial planning, regional and urban development etc.

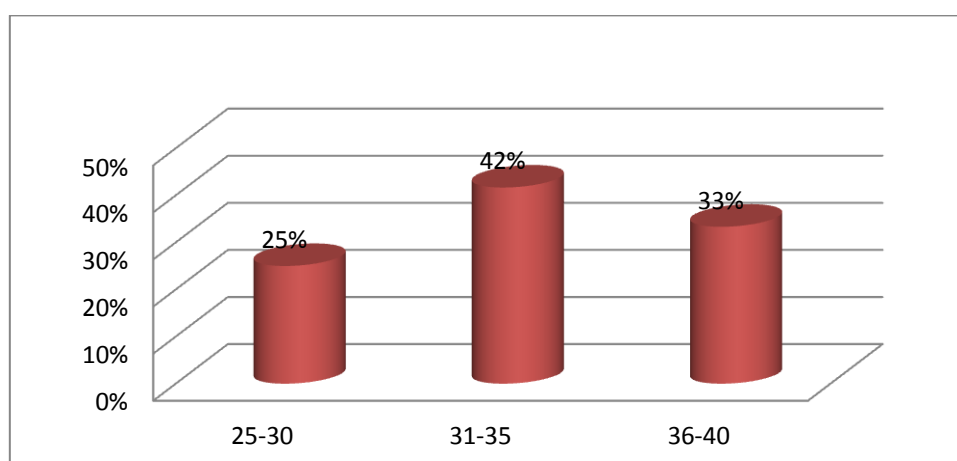
Greek/Cypriot Group1- Students' profile in the ESPON Train Project.

The first group consisted of 9 Greek and 8 Cypriot students (17 students in total). Finally, only 10 of them fully accomplished the requirements set for the educational programme by thoroughly studying the relevant teaching material and submitting final assignments.

In terms of gender, since the group consisted of 9 women and 8 men, both genders were nearly equally represented.

The average age of student's group is 33 years old.

Figure 14. Share of Greek/Cypriot students to age groups

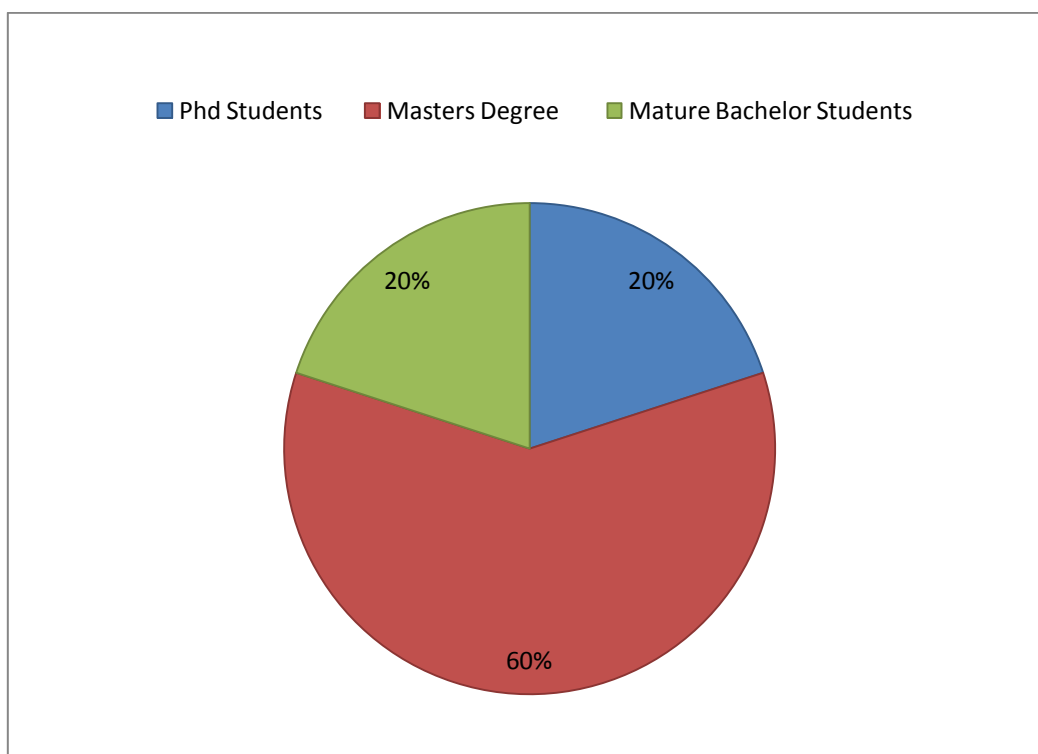


Consistent with the programme's endorsed criteria, the Greek and Cypriot group of "students" trainees were:

- students following a Master's Degree (2)
- or students which have currently graduate from a Master's Degree (6) of them
- While the last two of them were PhD Students.

One amongst them is currently working as a Researcher in a European Project while another one is really involved as a researcher to a number of ESPON projects.

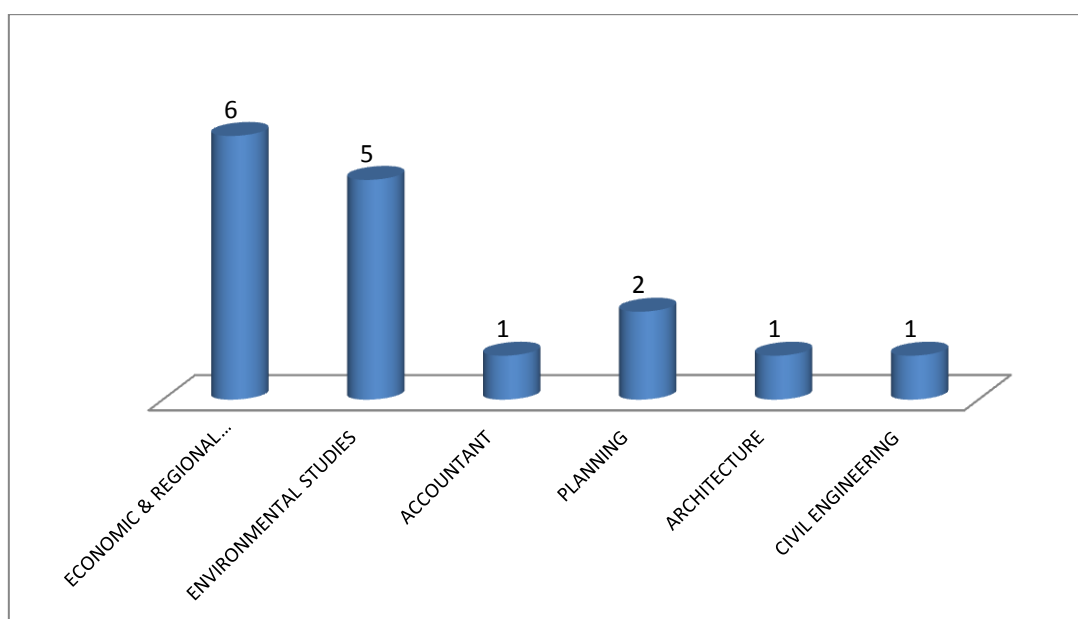
Figure 15. Academic qualification of group 1 – Greek/Cypriot students



While the majority of them were not experienced in the ESPON Programme and in some cases they have used only data and indicators, their relevant academic background was invoked an interesting approach to their participation.

The group of students is made up of economists and regionalists (6) engineers (1), planners (2), environmental studies (5) and one accountant, civil engineer and architecture. One of them has a PhD (in progress) in urban planning.

Figure 16. Academic background of group 1- Greek/Cypriot students



The group of students elaborated **24 final** assignments. For final assignment related to ESPON CLIMATE, FOCI, EUROISLANDS AND TEDI projects, each trainee elaborated an original report applying to a selected territorial area.

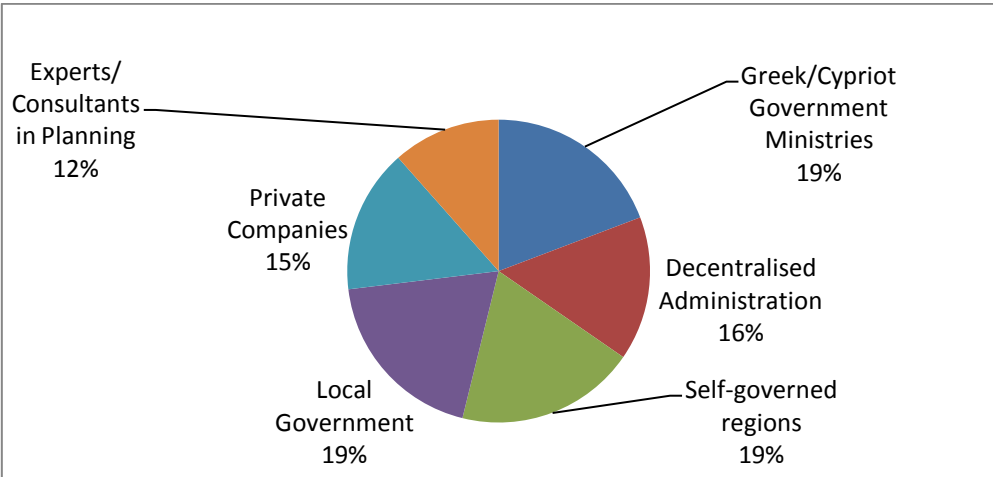
All participants used the English language for their final assignments.

Greek / Cypriot Group 2 - Stakeholders' Profile in the ESPONTrain Project.

According to the above mentioned criteria, a database has been developed concerning the Greek and Cypriot group of "stakeholder" trainees.

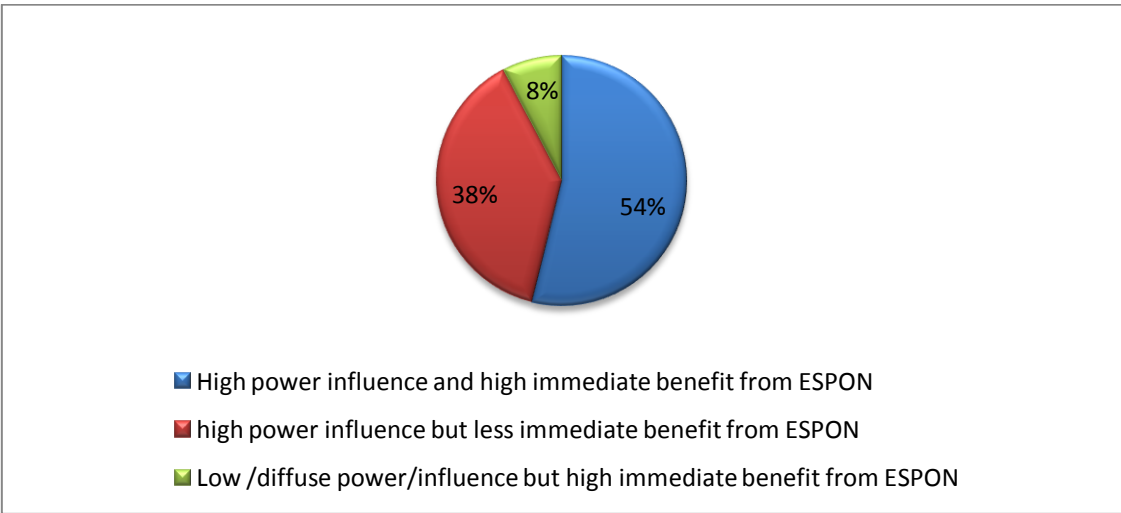
In terms of their work position, the Greek/Cypriot list had the same percentage of representatives from different territorial governance units (19%). There was also a need for the inclusion of representatives from the seven newly established decentralized units of central government. This has been achieved, as 16% were working there.

Figure 17. ESPONTrain Greek/Cypriot stakeholders



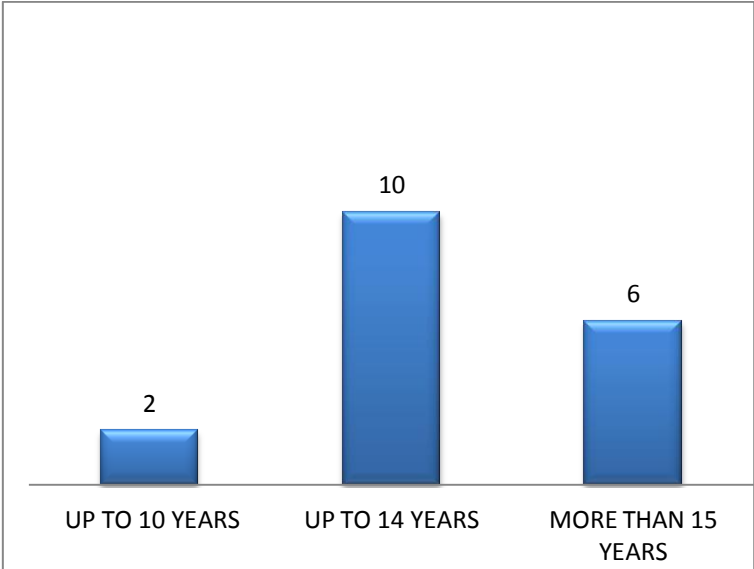
Notably, this database was reflected upon the INTERSTRAT matrix as the persons included in this list have a high power influence and high immediate benefit from ESPON. Most of them are Head/executive staff either of Planning or Development Units in Regional / decentralized/central Level.

Figure 18. ESPONTrain Greek stakeholders in relevance with INTERSTRAT stakeholder matrix



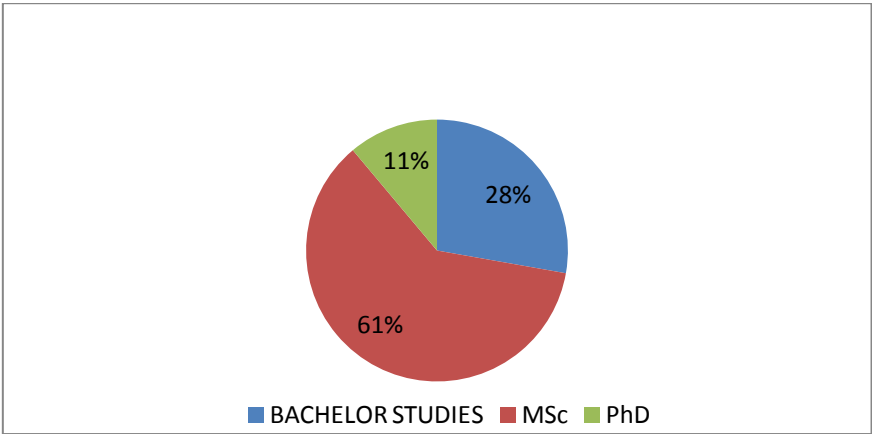
A significant factor for know-how and expertise is the time (years) of experience of the stakeholders. 88% of the stakeholders were working in the field for more than 10 years. A percentage of 34% is working in the field for more than 15 years with the outliers to be in the field for more than 30 years.

Figure 19. Years of experience of Greek stakeholders



ESPON Train database gave emphasis on the high level of expertise in the relevant fields. The understanding of the ESPON material was based not only to their work experience but to their academic knowledge as well. 61% of trainees (stakeholders) had a Master Degree either from a Greek University or a foreign one. Two of them also had a PhD in relevant to ESPON fields (agricultural science or environmental economics).

Figure 20. Categorisation of Greek stakeholders according to their level of education



Identification of Stakeholders for the ESPON Train Project.

The ESPON Train project adopted a commonly agreed procedure and a set of specified criteria for the selection of the stakeholders’ group.

The procedure that applied for the selection of the trainees’ (stakeholders group) consisted of :

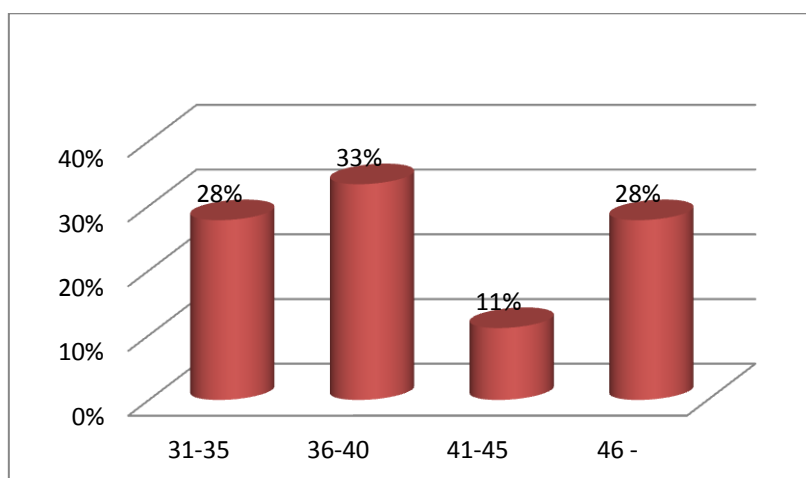
- Defining and performing the selection procedure best suited to the national situation and target groups (i.e. call to apply, announcement/invitation via university, national info day for potential applicants with filling-in papers etc.)
- Making the selection according to a set of criteria commonly decided and specified by the national teams.

The adopted criteria were two-fold :

- The first group of criteria was related to the actual work position of the stakeholders namely to the following fields.
 - ⇒ spatial planning and development
 - ⇒ regional planning and development
 - ⇒ urban planning and development
 - ⇒ territorial development
 - ⇒ other related fields
- The second group of criteria was related to the actual influence of stakeholders to policy making at different levels of governance.

Another key characteristic that eventually seemed to have a negative effect to their actual participation was the age. While the mean age was 41 years old, the oldest participants were more than 50 years old (almost half of the category from 46 years old and above). This feature of the group is in relevance with its ability to handle IT technology especially in e-learning environment.

Figure 21. Share of Greek stakeholders per age group



However, and in spite of their not actual attendance of the e-learning classes a lot of them had visited the ESPONTrain Platform.

2. Italian Trainees' Profile in the ESPONTrain Project

The Italian Target Group consisted of 8 students and 6 stakeholders, forming a total of 14 people, 3 males and 11 females aged between 29 and 60 years.

The members of the Target Group were not experienced in the ESPON Programme. Nevertheless, in some cases they had already used ESPON data and indicators.

According to the project specifications, the characteristic of the trainees were:

- Group 1 (Students): Young Researchers and postgraduate students / professionals from the field of geography, spatial planning, regional and urban development, engineering, environmental economics, etc.
- Group 2 (Stakeholders): policy makers, government Officials, staff of local / regional Authorities involved in. spatial planning, regional and urban development etc..

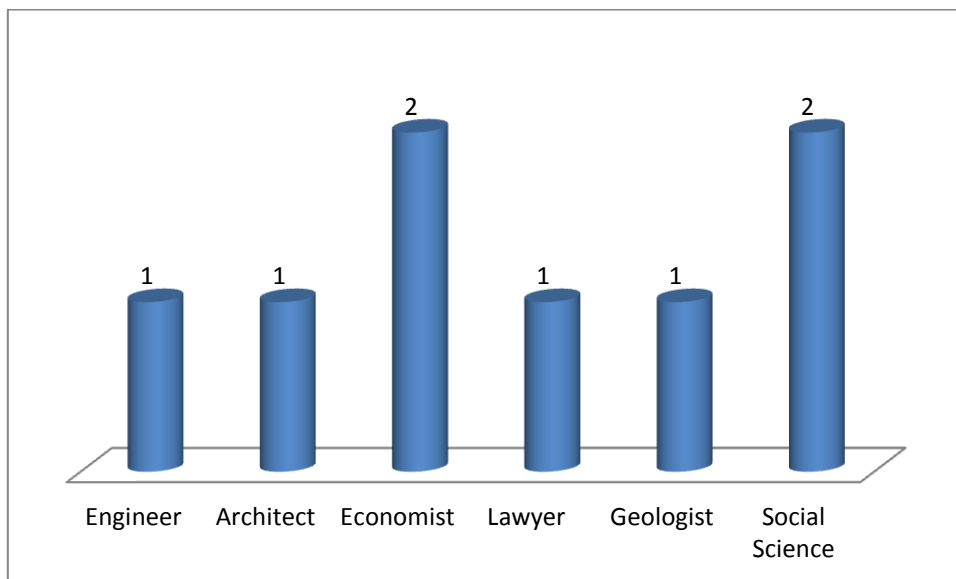
The Target Group as a whole produced 38 final assignments.

Group ONE- Students profile for the ESPON Train Project.

The first group was made upon a list of 11 students, 9 women and 2 men. While eight of them accomplished all the requirements of the project by submitting the final assignments, all of them were informed about the scope of ESPON project.

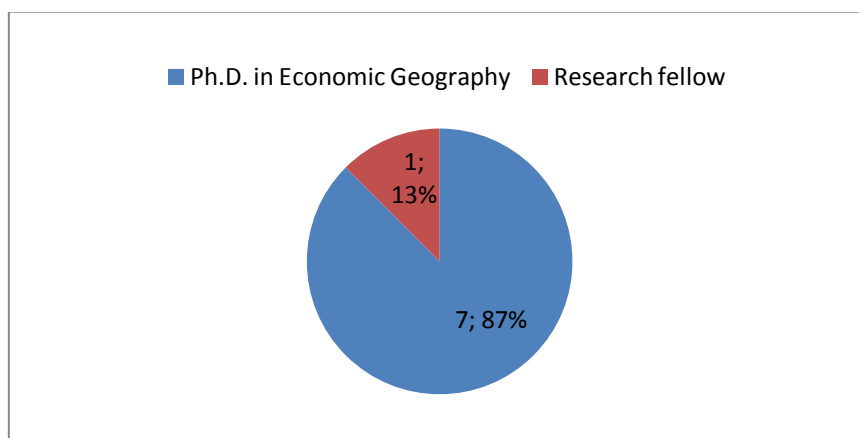
The group of participating students was made up of economists (2) engineers (1), lawyers (2), and social scientists (3) with a PhD (in progress or accomplished) in economic geography.

Figure 22. Academic background of group 1 – Italian students



More than 87% of Italian Students are PhD Students while one of them is working as a research fellow. This feature of the specific group was a significant factor for the elaboration of a remarkable and original work during this e-learning course.

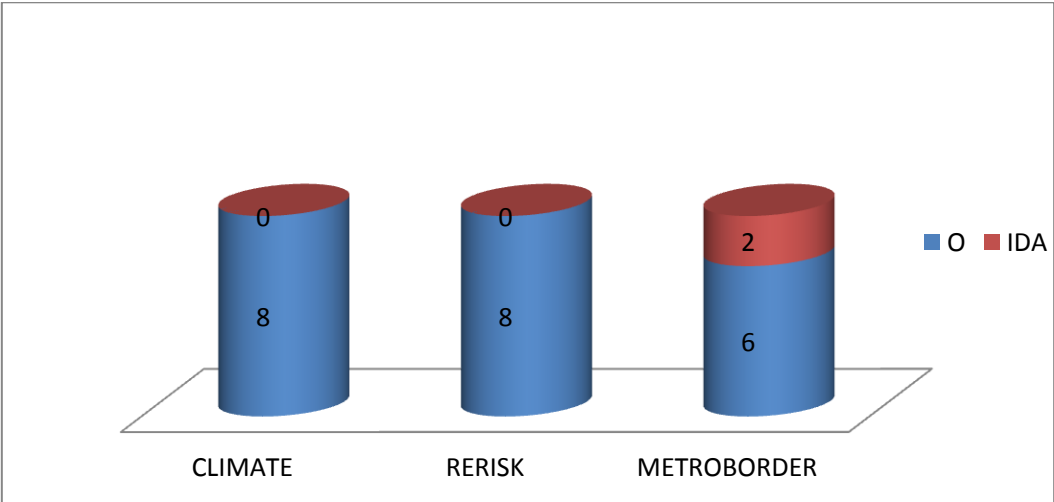
Figure 23. Categorisation of students in terms of their current educational profile and career



In total, the group of students elaborated 24 final assignments and were all written in English Language. For final assignment related to ReRISK and ESPON CLIMATE projects, each trainee elaborated an original report applying to a selected territorial area.

In the case of the final assignment of METROBORDER the students produced both original contributions (6) and in depth analysis of a case study developed within the METROBORDER project (2).

Figure 24. Originality of Italian group's assignments



O = original contribution IDA = In Depth Analysis

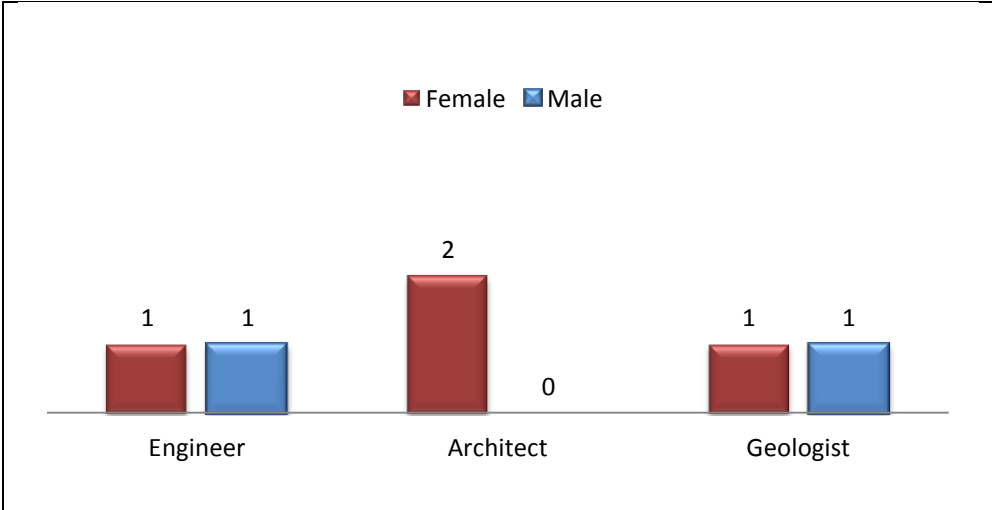
Identification of Stakeholders of the ESPON Train Project.

Italian Stakeholders in the ESPONTrain Project.

According to the projects' endorsed criteria, a database has been developed concerning the Italian group of "stakeholder" trainees. This list consisted of nine stakeholders , 6 women and 3 men. Involvement was gradually limited to six, 4 women and 2 men. Nevertheless, the same teaching material and dissemination of ESPON material applied to the whole list.

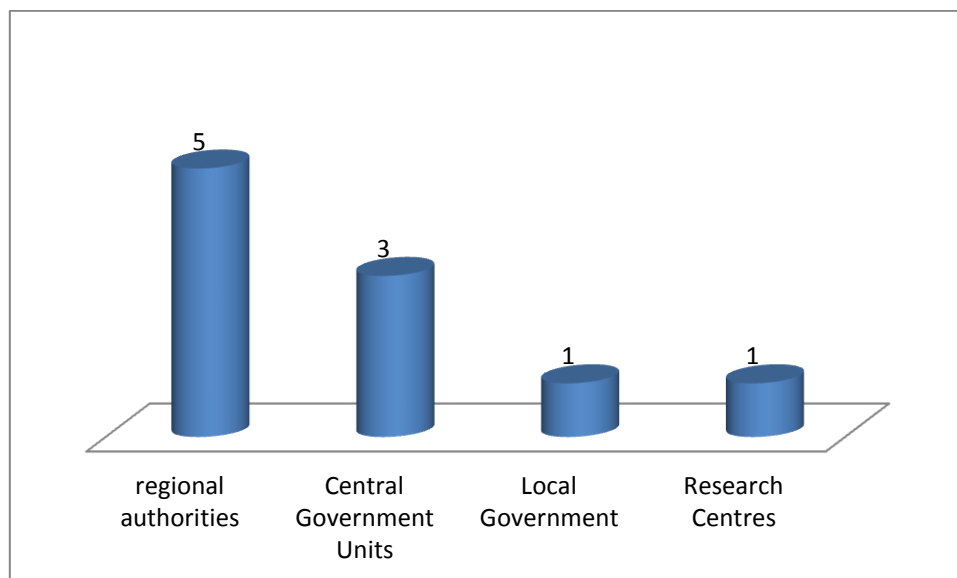
In terms of their academic background the second group was made of engineers / architects (4) and geologist/economists (2).

Figure 25. Academic background and gender of Italian stakeholders



The list of stakeholders was elaborated following the INTERSTRAT matrix as the persons included in this list have a high power influence and high immediate benefit from ESPON. Most of them are either Head/executive staff either of Urban Planning or Territorial Development Units either in central/regional and local level.

Figure 26. Categorisation of Italian stakeholders according to their current position



The six, who actually accomplished the e-learning course, work in regional Authorities on spatial planning (4) or in regional / national agencies of territorial development (2) and in total produced 14 final assignments.

As far as the stakeholders are concerned 5 original contributions and 2 in depth analysis of case studies were developed within the METROBORDER

The Thematic Package (in short version) was studied by the entire listed Target Group.

Table 10. Characteristics of the GROUP 1 - Italian Students

	Female	Male	ReRisk		CLIMATE		METROBORDER		EDORA	FOCI	DEMIFER
			O	IDA	O	IDA	O	IDA			
General data											
Group 1 - Students	7	1	8	0	8	0	6	2	8	8	8
Total Category	8		8		8		8		8	8	8
Academic background											
Engineer	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	8	8	8
Architect	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	8	8	8
Economist	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	8	8	8
Lawyer	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	8	8	8
Geologist	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	8	8	8

Social Science	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	8	8	8
Total Category	8		8		8		8		8	8	8
Current position											
Ph.D. in Economic Geography	6	1	7	0	7	0	6	1	7	7	7
Research fellow	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total Category	8		8		8		8		8	8	8
Involved in University	7	1	8	0	8	0	6	2	8	8	8
Total Category	8		8		8		8		8	8	8

O = original contribution IDA = In Depth Analysis

Table 11. Characteristics of the GROUP 2- Italian Stakeholders

	Gender		ReRisk		CLIMATE		METROBORDER		EDORA	FOCI	DEMIFER
	Female	Male	O	IDA	O	IDA	O	IDA			
General data											
Group 2 - Stakeholders	4	2	6	0	6	0	6	0	6	6	6
Total Category	6		6		6		6		6	6	6
Academic background											
Engineer	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	6	6	6
Architect	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	6	6	6
Economist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6
Lawyer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6
Geologist	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	6	6	6
Social Science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6
Total Category	6		6		6		6		6	6	6
Current position											
Regional Authority	3	1	4		4		3	1	6	6	6
National Agency of Development	1	1	2		2		2	0	6	6	6
Total Category	6		6		6		6		6	6	6

O = original contribution IDA = In Depth Analysis)

3. Czech Trainees' profile in the ESPONTrain Project

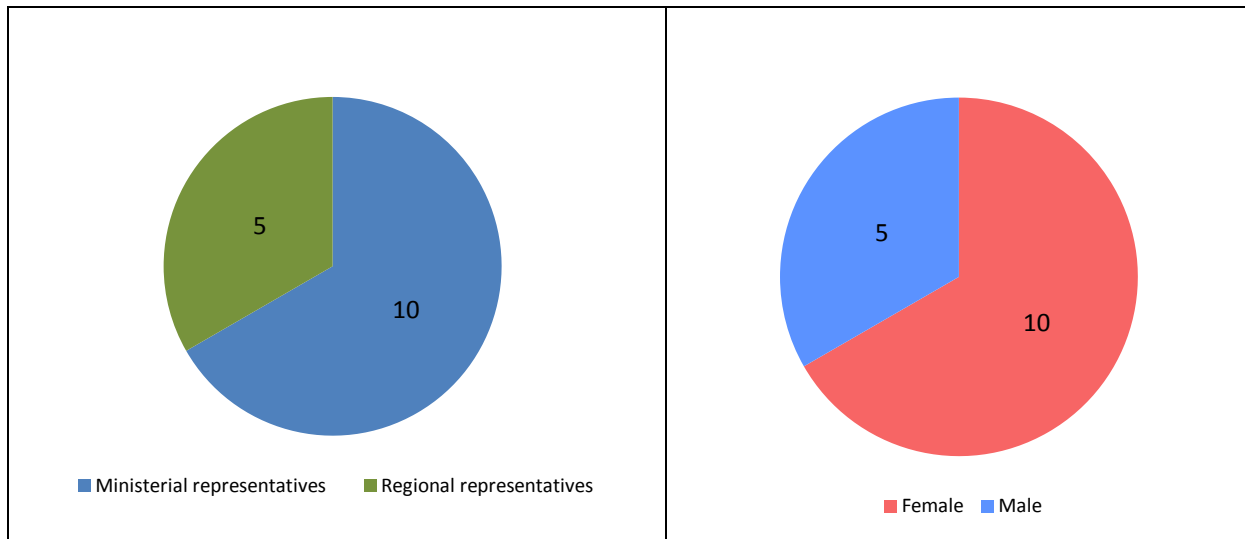
The Czech target group, chosen by ESPONTrain Lead Partner requirements, consisted of four PhD students and sixteen stakeholders. One stakeholder had to skip the course due to

his professional obligations therefore 19 students finally attended the course, i.e. 4 PhD students and 15 stakeholders.

Stakeholders came either from the Ministry of Regional Development (10) or various regional authorities of the Czech Republic (5). As for gender statistics, the list of participants consisted of ten women and five men.

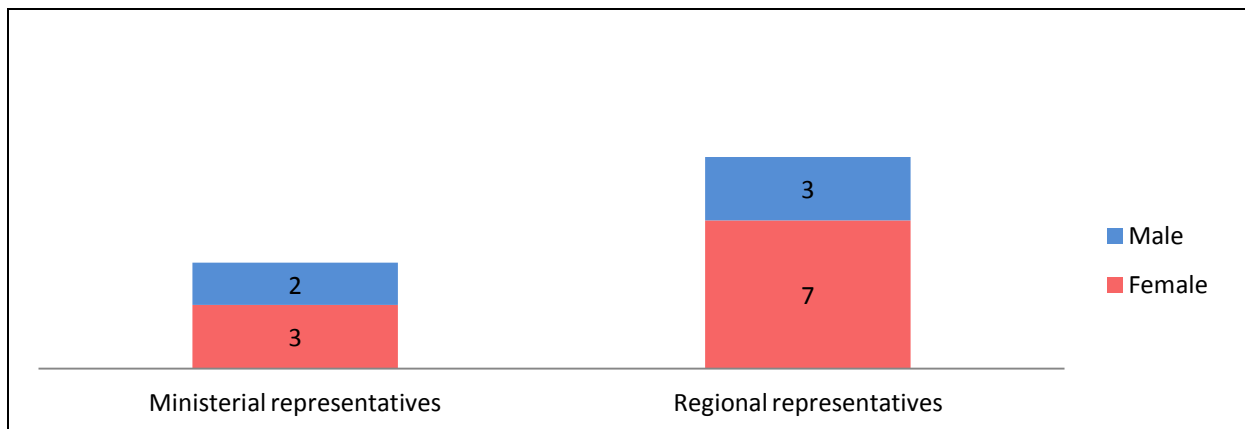
Figure 27. Czech stakeholders by current position

Figure 28. Czech stakeholders by gender



Within both groups – ministerial and regional representatives – female participation exceeded the male one.

Figure 29. Czech Stakeholders by current position and gender



Concerning the final assignments written by Czech students 13 case studies were delivered in total. Six of them were elaborated by PhD students while 7 of them by involved stakeholders. In general the quality of the final assignments was high – all case studies delivered except for one, were evaluated as “pass”. The most active authors of final assignments were regional representatives (5 case studies out of 7) and from the gender perspective men (5) superseded women (2).

Figure 30. Final assignments of Czech stakeholders by current position

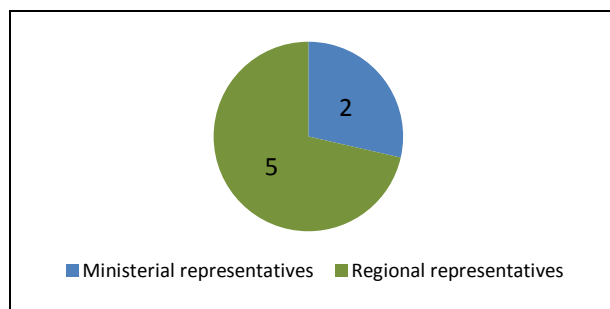
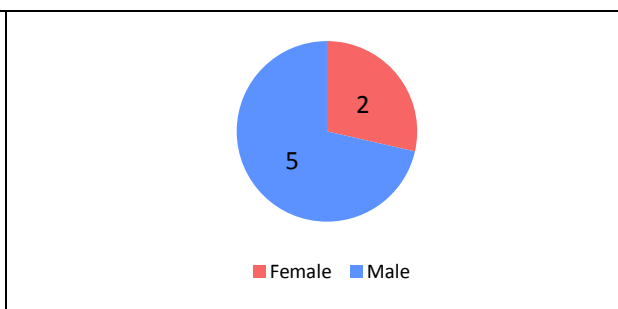


Figure 31. Final assignments of Czech Stakeholders by gender



4. Romanian trainees' profile in the ESPONTrain Project

2012 will be remembered in the Romanian history as one of the most troubled years, in the recent history. Four changes of government⁸ occurred in less than six months and a major political crisis took place at the end of August⁹ 2012. These political crises affected the way in which policy makers prioritize their decisions. Unpredictable political evolutions combined with severe economic distress leave few time to learning, in exchange to more energy for action. However, during the lifetime of the ESPON Train Project, these chaotically driven evolutions were quite hard to predict. Lists of policy and decision makers were made obsolete in a couple of weeks. Contacts shaped in years became unstable and new ones were hard to obtain.

In many aspects, this particularly complicated context partially interfered with the implementation of the project. One of the hardest things to manage was the harmonization of the time windows of the stakeholders with the project's schedule. In the background, the list of potential stakeholders (policy makers) was shortened by the implementation of another ESPON Priority 4 project - ESPON CADEC. Doubling the effective effort of the policy makers in the development of one ESPON project was not an option. Consequently, we focused on the recruitment of stakeholders involved in intermediate structures of decision, NUTS2 administrations¹⁰ in particular.

Two persons were eventually selected from the NUTS2 North-East of Romania, one of the most underdeveloped in the EU. One was the chief executive of the territorial planning of this NUTS 2 structure, the second was the person in charge with the management of the GIS division of the North-East Region. The group was later completed with participants from other structures. One person was selected from the largest university of the region, a person active in financial management and already experienced in projects of territorial cooperation. The last person combines 2 characteristics. She is involved in projects of territorial cooperation

⁸ These changes are related to the major economic crisis that affected Romania for the last 3 years (2010-2013). In this context, the political climate eventually shifted from an "austerity oriented" paradigm to a more "socially relaxed" one. As a matter of fact, during these years, no other country in the EU has ever witnessed pay cuts of more than 25 % in the public sector. These measures have altered the political stability and had deep consequences on the moral of the policy makers, in all kind of fields of interest (social, environment, territorial cooperation, etc.).

⁹ The political crisis began at the beginning of July 2012 and finished at the end of August 2012. The crisis was the consequence of the political suspension of the Romanian President, Traian Basescu, during the Parliament's political and ideological shift of 2012.

¹⁰ The NUTS2 structure in Romania functions as a "para-administrative" one. Not recognized as an administrative functional and territorial frame, these regions act as an interface between the centralized government of Bucharest and the territory. Their reason to exist is to supervise the financial absorption of EU funds. In this moment, these NUTS 2 Regions are subject to important modifications, as political institutions and geographical entities.

and benefited from a geographical education (a combination between tourism studies and geography). Considering the efforts needed to properly assimilate the educational packages and the time schedule, the chief executive of the planning division of the Romanian NUTS2 declined her participation. The other members remained and acted as inquisitive and open-minded partners in this learning and teaching experience. They quickly understood the position of the ESPON Programme, the limits of the projects involved in the educational packages and the sense of the dissemination of ESPON's results.

Of course, as decision makers, a constant criticism regarding the projects relevance was always present in their interventions. Some of the critics focused on the projects political key findings (DEMIFER and EDORA, especially), projects that they considered as interesting at NUTS2 or 3 scale, but not really useful at local level of interest. This idea looks common in the policy/decision makers' universe and underlines the need of more case studies on the mentioned topics (demography and rural spaces), studies that are mainly produced by the Priority 2 projects. Compared to the academic group, the ability of the stakeholders to navigate in the troubled waters of the scientific research and the political recommendations contrasts to the methodological curiosity of the students.

The students were constantly interested in the data collection, the geometry that the projects used, the methods of mapping and data analysis. The political recommendations and the key findings captivated their attention less. The four students selected for the teaching experience (only three actively participated) have in common two elements: PhD thesis in progress based on ESPON concepts (polycentrism and functional urban areas, rural development in peripheral areas, the relation between regional demographic structures and the quality of life) and the familiarization with ESPON projects from their undergraduate cycle of education.¹¹ As the ESPON concepts are central in the development of their thesis, the students were attracted by the educational packages proposed by the ESPON Train.

If the stakeholders were more critical towards the political relevance of the projects, the students were intrigued by the methodological and mapping issues. During the video conferences and in other meetings, constantly examining the "how it's made" and "why this method" were the major problems for the trainer. Having in mind this genuine curiosity, the trainers prepared the video conferences with a particular strategy:

step 1 : download of data and geometries from ESPON DB, if possible (DEMIFER, EDORA, FOCI mainly).

step 2 : assimilation of the metadata and verification of the spatial consistency of the indicators

step 3 : assimilation of the technical annexes of the projects

step 4 : quick debriefing of the final reports

step 5 : integration of the educational packages information in the project's context

step 6 : organization of the video conference time schedule

The efforts of the students and the trainers were not in vain. In the homework (assignment, but we prefer the term used by the students) of one student we can see how the combination of the educational packages, the ESPON data and the Priority 3 tools become an original

¹¹ The University of Iasi (Romania) has courses based on the ESPON projects since 2008. Without being explicitly labeled as "ESPON" teaching materials, some of these courses are basically vectors of diffusion of the projects, despite the fact that some of the project already ended. From this point of view, the ESPON 2006 project *Europe in the World* (3.4.1) is one of the most successful and downloaded projects. For specific interventions in seminars, the ESPON DB is one major source of data and geometry (geography of population, urban geography, spatial analysis etc.).

way to integrate an ESPON concept (Functional Urban Areas) in a national context, innovating what seemed to be an end point in a finished project.

The context of this assignment was the ESPON FOCI project. As the project introduced the concept of functional urban areas, it was easy for the students to observe the fact that some of the countries present a FUA geometry that is derived from insufficient data (the case of Romania, Poland and Hungary). As the FUA of Romania are coincident with the geometry of the urban entities (LAU2), in the final assignment one of the students proposed a more correct version of the functional urban areas, a version based on ESPON methods that are already presented in the technical reports or annexes of the projects.

Figure 32. Delineation of functional urban areas in Romania - integrating ESPON FOCI concepts at national level (1)

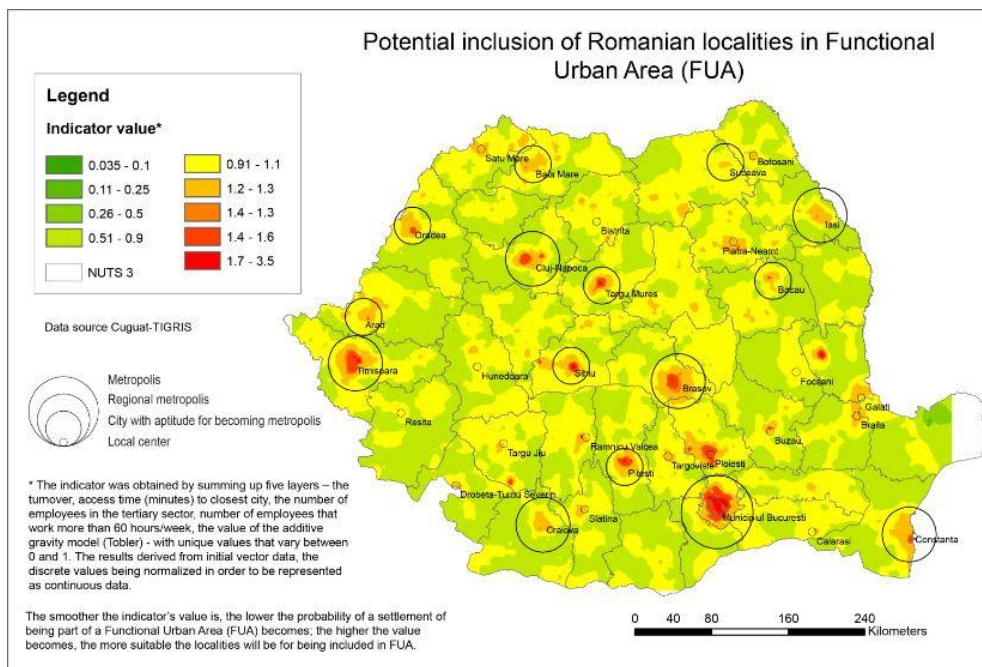
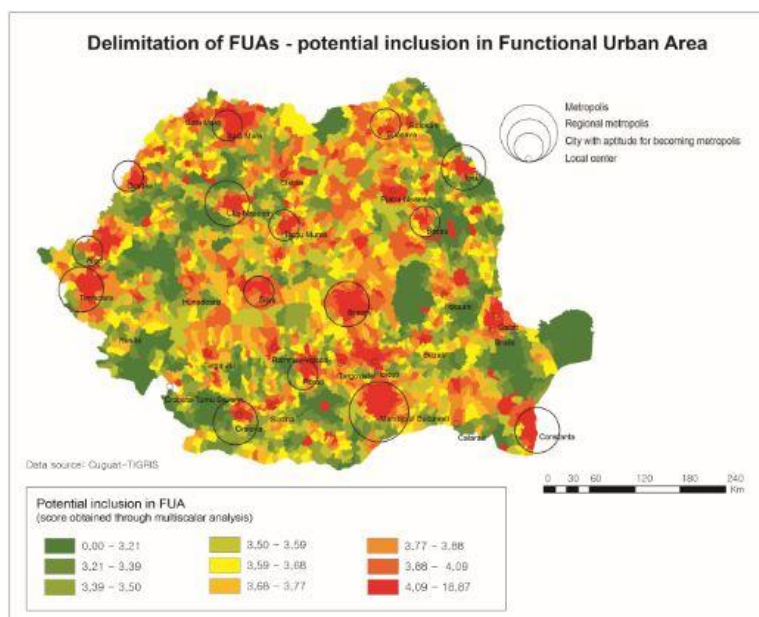


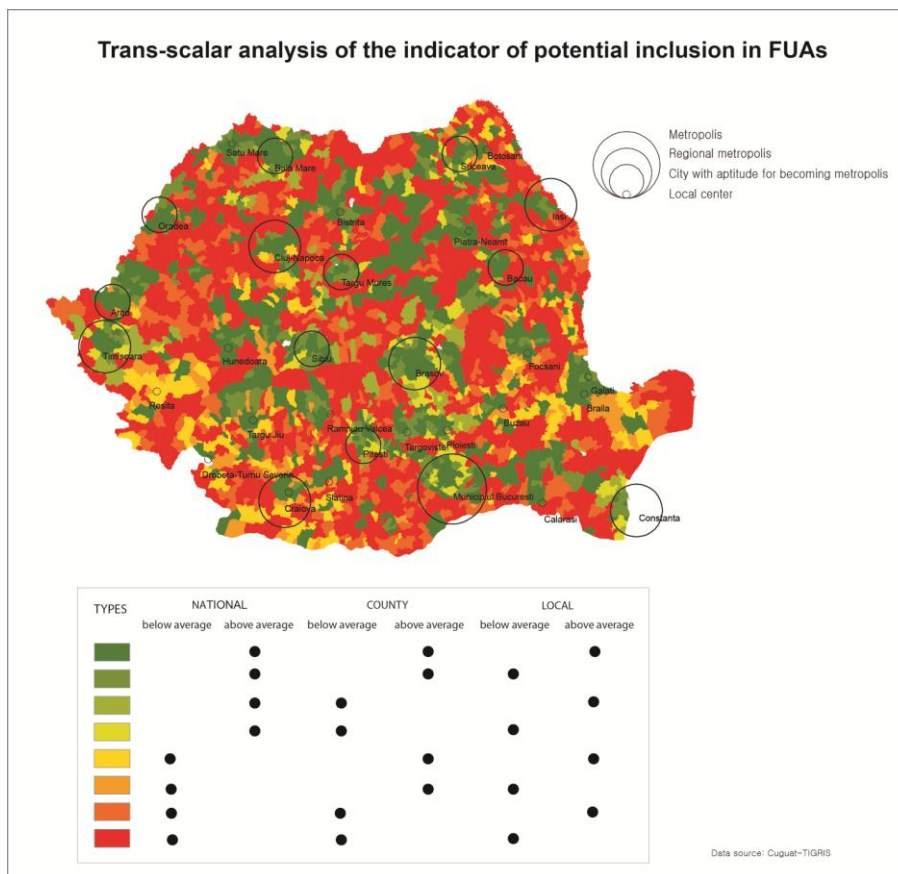
Figure 33. Delineation of functional urban areas in Romania - integrating ESPON FOCI concepts at national level (2)



Why do we consider this exercise as a good illustration of the way in which ESPON could be used? There are several reasons:

- the need of a spatially consistent representation of FUA for Europe was obvious.
- instead of being superficially critical, the student understood the limits of the FOCI project. The solution proposed was practical and proactive.
- the solution is methodologically based on ESPON projects. For instance, the first map is derived from a 1km grid that contains several indicators (the technical reports of the ESPON DB projects inspired this solution)
- the general approach was based on the targeted analysis projects (Priority 2), meaning case studies at local level that can be extrapolated to a superior territorial scale (map no. 2).
- the final map is derived from the ESPON Priority 3 methodology (ESPON HyperAtlas), proposing a policy makers friendly map.

Figure 34. Delineation of functional urban areas in Romania – integrating ESPON FOCI concepts at national level (3)



This exercise is not perfect and it can be easily criticized. However, if the ESPON projects can be compared with a huge puzzle that depicts and analyzes the European territory, every missing piece that is found could be helpful. The ESPON Train projects had no vocation in putting these pieces all together, but to indicate stakeholders and students how to look for them and where they might miss.

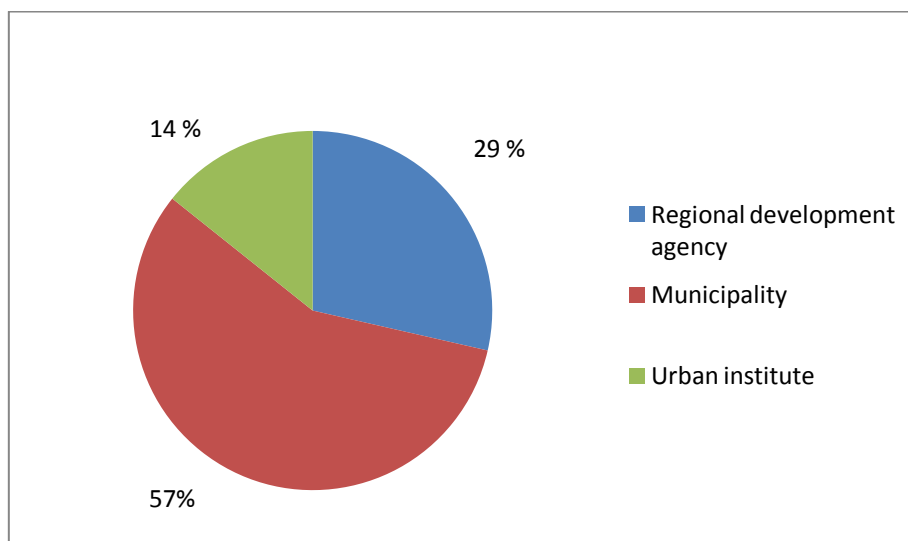
5. Slovenian Trainees' Profile in the ESPONTrain Project.

The Slovenian ECP selected both target groups following the criteria set by the TPG and created a database concerning the Slovenian group of both “stakeholders” and “students” trainees.

In terms of their work position, Slovenian stakeholders came mostly from municipalities (approx. 75 %) and regional development agencies (25 %). Unfortunately, no stakeholders from national administration participated to the ESPONTrain cycles. As far as the students’ group is concerned, all participants were PhD students at the Slovenian universities.

According to the categorization made by INTERSTRAT project, the majority of the participants should be categorized to the ones having low/diffuse power influence and high immediate benefit from ESPON. Namely, the current position of most stakeholders in their institutions is operational. All of them let us know that they search for new knowledge which could help them in everyday operational decision making.

Figure 35. ESPONTrain Slovenian stakeholders



A significant factor for know-how and expertise is the time (years) of experience of the stakeholders. All Slovenian participants (in both groups) were between age 30 and 40 and the stakeholders were working in the field for less than 10 years.

ESPON Train database has given emphasis on the high level of expertise in the relevant fields. The understanding of the ESPON material was based not only to their working experience but to their academic knowledge as well. All the trainees, not only in students but in the stakeholders’ group as well, were Ph.D. students at the University of Ljubljana and the University of Primorska in various research fields (geography, agronomy, spatial planning and global management). Therefore, all of them had a Master degree.

6. Estonian trainees' Profile in the ESPONTrain project

The trainees were selected by promoting the course within the networks of two distinctive target groups:

- 1) master and post-graduate level students in spatial planning and territorial development.
- 2) policy makers and practitioners in the public sector (i.e. ministries, general secretariats, regional and local authorities etc) dealing with territorial cohesion and development issues and strategies;

All in all, the course attracted 6 master and postgraduate level students and 6 policy makers and practitioners related to the fields of spatial planning and territorial development, public administration and economy.

1st Target group : Students

The first target group consisted of 4 master and 2 postgraduate level students, 4 women and 2 men. All the students who participated in the course were specializing in human geography and regional planning at the University of Tartu.

In total, the 1st target group elaborated 16 final assignment reports with implications on ESPON Climate, EDORA, TeDi and EUROISLANDS projects, by choosing their own case study areas.

2nd Target group : Stakeholders

The second target group consisted of 6 stakeholders, 3 women and 3 men. 2 of the stakeholders were working in the planning departments of regional governments (LAU 2), 2 in state government, 1 at the university (Estonian University of Life Sciences), and 1 in a consulting firm (cf. table 12).

According to the INTERSTRAT stakeholder matrix, the majority of the stakeholders have a high power influence and high immediate benefit from the results ESPON Programme as most of them are either head/executive staff either of planning or development units in state/regional level (cf. table 13).

Table 12. Institutional background of the Estonian stakeholders

Institution	Number	%
State Government	2	33,3
Regional government	2	33,3
University	1	16,7
Private enterprises (planning consultants)	1	16,7

Table 13. Estonian Stakeholders and their benefit from the ESPON Programme according to INTERSTRAT stakeholder matrix

Institution	Number	%
High power influence and high immediate benefit from ESPON	3	50.0
High power influence but less immediate benefit from ESPON	1	16,7
Low/diffuse power but high immediate benefit	2	33,3

3 of the stakeholders have been working in the field for more than 15 years, 2 up to 5 years and 1 up to 15 years, showing a variety of work experience.

Table 14. Experience in the field of Estonian stakeholders

Years worked	Number	%
Up to 5 years	2	33,3
Up to 15 years	1	16,7
More than 15 years	3	50

In terms of their academic background, 3 of the stakeholders were geographers, 2 landscape planners and 1 political scientist (table 4). 5 of the stakeholders had Master's degree and 1 held a PhD degree.

Table 15. Educational background of the Estonian stakeholders (field of studies)

Institution	Number	%
Geography	3	50.0
Political Sciences	1	16,7
Landscape planning	2	33,3

Table 16. Educational background of the Estonian stakeholders (level of education)

Degree	Number	%
PhD	0	0
Masters	6	100

In total, the 1st target group elaborated 18 final assignment reports with implications on ESPON Climate, EDORA, TeDi and EUROISLANDS projects, by choosing their own case study areas.

7. Lithuanian trainees' Profile in the ESPONTrain Project

The ESPONTrain target groups were selected, according to the criteria set by the ESPONTrain TPG, following the calls of interest disseminated by the Lithuanian ECP. All participants responded to the relevant call (for students or for stakeholders) by sending their curricula vitae (CV) and an abstract, as suggested in the Expression of Interest, on the following themes:

- Territorial cooperation-Governance building,
- Territorial and Spatial Planning,
- Energy-Climate change,
- Rural areas,

Lithuanian ECP selected six students from Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Kaunas University of Technology and Klaipeda University and two young researchers as follows (cf. Table 17):

Table 17. Selected Lithuanian students - target group for the 1st educational cycle

No.	Surname	Name	Institution	Criteria
1.	Staniunas	Mindaugas	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU)	PHD STUDENT Civil Engineering

2.	Truskauskiene	Egle	Vilnius Gediminas University (VGTU)	Technical	PHD Architecture/Urban design	STUDENT
3.	Tomkeviciute	Ieva	Vilnius Gediminas University (VGTU)	Technical	Master's studies Engineering/ Planning and Engineering	Civil Urban and
4.	Sernaite	Neringa	Vilnius Gediminas University (VGTU)	Technical	Master's studies Engineering/ Planning and Engineering	Civil Urban and
5.	Urbonas	Vilius	Kaunas University of technology (KTU)		PHD Landscape Architecture/ Town and Country	STUDENT
6.	Abromas	Jonas	Klaipeda university (KU)		PHD Landscape Architecture	STUDENT
7.	Zorskaite	Gintare	Research Institute of Territorial Planning		Engineer	
8.	Lazauskaite	Dovile	Research Institute of Territorial Planning		Researcher	

Following the same procedure, Lithuanian ECP also selected 15 professionals from regional/spatial planning institutions, urban development and policy makers, government representatives (cf. Table 18):

Table 18. Selected Lithuanian stakeholders - target group for the 2nd educational cycle

No.	Surname	Name	Institution	Criteria
1.	Dubickaite	Gintare	Ministry Of Environment Of The Republic Of Lithuania/Spatial Planning, Urban Planning And Architecture Department	Chief specialist of Spatial Planning And Regional Development Division
2.	Sabaliauskiene	Kristina	Ministry Of The Interior Of The Republic Of Lithuania/Regional Policy Department	Chief specialist of Regional Policy Strategic Coordination Division
3.	Valickas	Andrius	Ministry Of The Interior Of The Republic Of Lithuania/Regional Policy Department	Senior specialist of Regional Policy Strategic Coordination Division
4.	Maksimoviene	Asta	JBC Statybu Strategija	Project manager
5.	Butviliene	Ramune	JBC Statybu Strategija	Architect
6.	Gauce	Kristina	JBC Statybu Strategija	Head of the Department of Territorial Planning
7.	Salapetiene	Vita	JBC Statybu Strategija	Project manager
8.	Pakalnis	Mindaugas	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas	Chief Architect
9.	Grabauskas	Mindaugas	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas/General Planning Division	The Head of the department, project manager
10.	Siciunas	Nerijus	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas/ Detailed Planning Division	Architect

11.	Treinyas	Jonas	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas/ Detailed Planning Division	Architect
12.	Gricyte-Rukuiziene	Zivile	Municipal enterprise Vilniaus planas	International Relations specialist
13.	Norkiene	Lina	JBC Atkula	Architect
14.	Vaicionis	Gediminas	The Association Of Local Authorities In Lithuania (ALAL)	Advisor for Rural And Urban Planning Issues
15.	Andriulaityte	Ieva	The Association Of Local Authorities In Lithuania (ALAL)	Adviser for Environment And Energy Issues

According to the ESPONTrain educational cycles implementation results in Lithuania 7 out of 8 students and 12 out of 15 stakeholders finally participated in the relevant cycles.

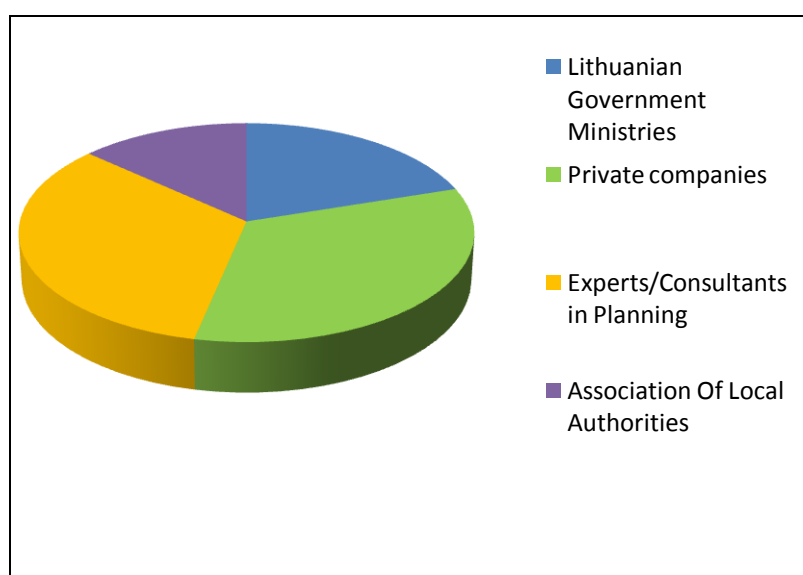
The postponement of the educational cycles had the main influence to participants' passivity. Due the Application Form Part B the 1st educational cycle was supposed to start at 12/2011-02/2012, the 2nd educational cycle - at 04/2012-06/2012. Practicably trainings started from 09/2012-11/2012 to 10/2012-12/2012.

Those who wanted to participate in ESPONTrain project trainings have confirmed their decisions via e-mails during the preparation stage of target group identification.

In both educational cycles 19 out of 23 participants, who expressed their intention, have actually participated in the ESPONTrain educational programme (7 out of 8 students and 12 out of 15 stakeholders) and out of them 3 students and 6 stakeholders. .

Out of 15 stakeholders 3 worked in Lithuanian ministries, 2 in Association Of Local Authorities, while 5 work as experts / consultants in planning and 5 in private companies.

Figure 36. ESPONTrain Lithuanian Stakeholders



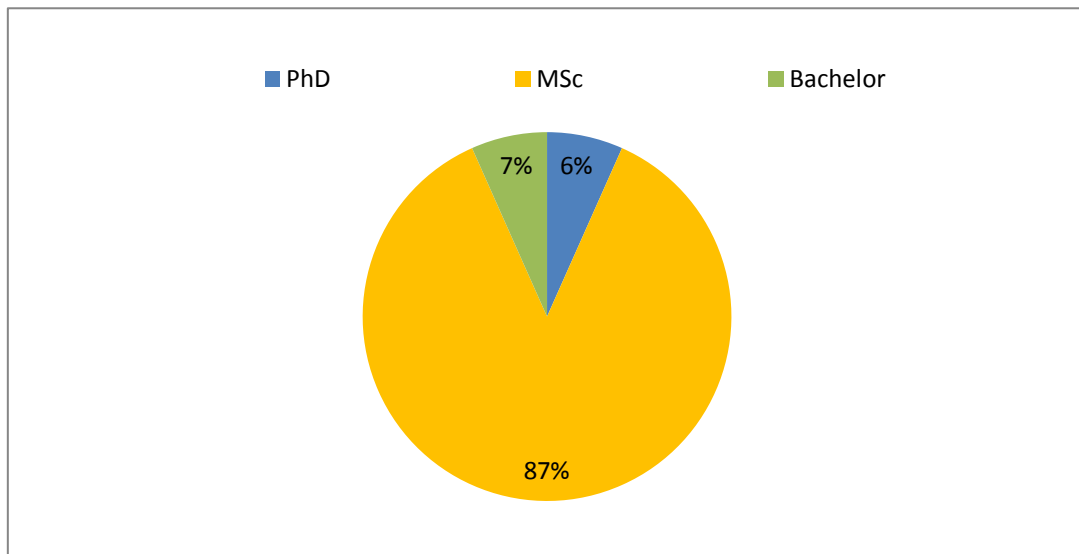
Out of them 6 have less than 10 years of experience, 3 less than 15 and 6 more than 15.

Figure 37. Years of experience of Lithuanian Stakeholders



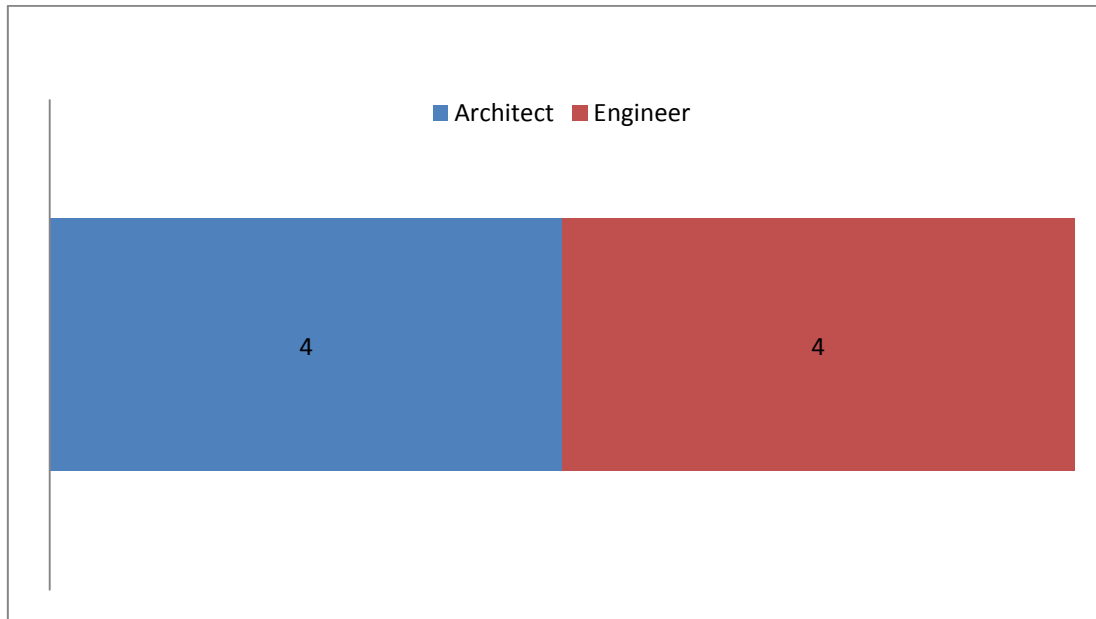
Their working experience is combined with a sufficient level of education since the majority of them, 87%, holds a master degree, 6% have a Phd, while the remaining 7% holds a bachelor degree.

Figure 38. Categorisation of stakeholders according to their level of education



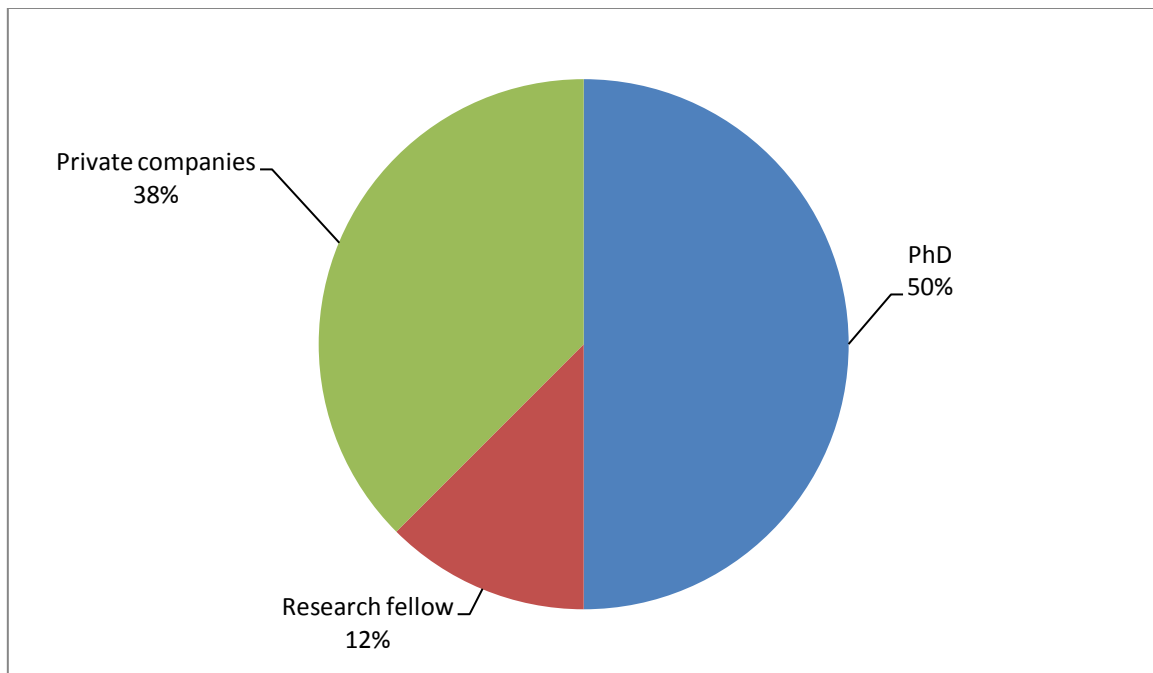
All students were interested in spatial issues since all of them were either engineers, either architects.

Figure 39. Academic background of students



As far as students are concerned, the majority of students involved in the programme were working in the academic sector, since the selected group was consisted 50% by PhD students, 38% of employees in private companies and 12% by research fellows.

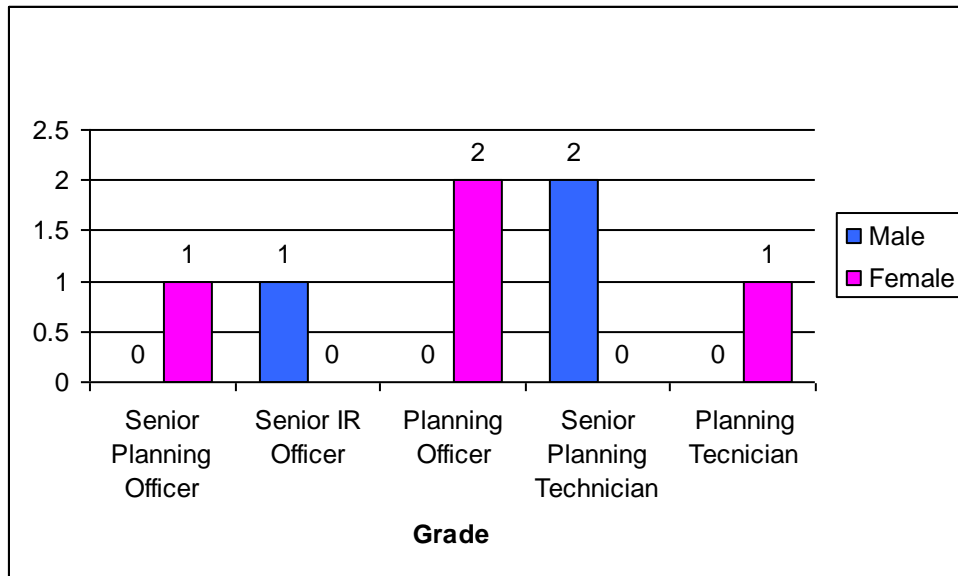
Figure 40. Categorisation of students in terms of their current educational profile and career



8. Maltese Trainees' Profile in the ESPONTrain Project

The Maltese group consisted of 7 trainees made up of 3 males and 4 females all of whom are employees at the Malta Environment & Planning Authority (MEPA).

Figure 41. Employment position of trainees in Malta

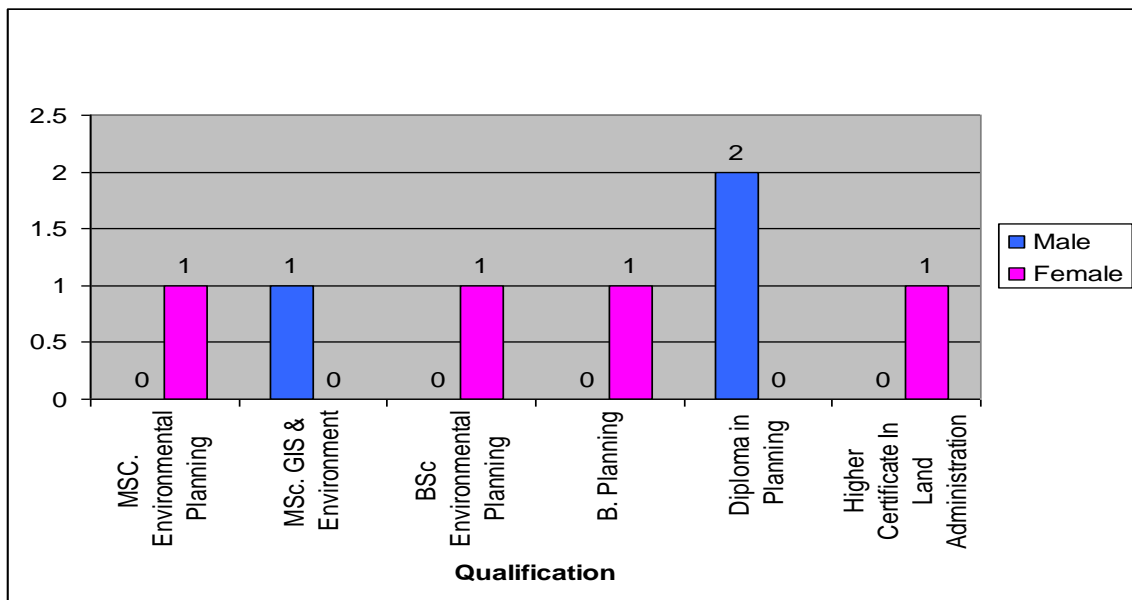


The students were not experienced in the ESPON Programme and had to be introduced to the subject by the coordinators.

The qualifications of the trainees varied :

- i. Higher Certificate in Land Administration (Planning)
- ii. Qualified Planners ranging from Diploma level
- iii. Bachelors Degree level in Land Administration & Planning
- iv. Master Degree level from the field of Land administration, Planning, engineering, environmental Planning etc.

Figure 42. Academic background of trainees in Malta



The Maltese students all work in Strategic Planning & data management which influence Local Plan policy, sustainable development and infrastructure on the Island.

The Students were taught about ESPON & the various topics. Meetings were held between the Coordinators & the students and seven assignments were given which were completed by all seven trainees. The Maltese students received training in the following subjects :

- i. DEMIFER
- ii. ESPON Climate
- iii. EDORA
- iv. ReRisk
- v. EUROISLANDS & TeDi
- vi. FOCI
- vii. METROBORDER

The main thematic teaching packages, based on ESPON projects are the following :

- i. Migration – Demography (DEMIFER)
- ii. Rural (EDORA)
- iii. Energy – Climate Change & other Risks (ReRisk & ESPON Climate)
- iv. Urban & Agglomeration Economies (FOCI)
- v. Types of Specific Territories (EUROISLANDS & TeDi)
- vi. Territorial Cooperation (METROBORDER)

Regular meetings were held to discuss issues identified during the analysis submission of the questionnaires and assignments. This was done to ensure that the students understood the applicability of the subject matter to Malta's specificities.

The value added of this experience is bound to affect the daily work of the trainees which mainly involves monitoring and policy review.

Annex V: List of presented assignments

COUNTRY/ TARGET GROUP	Title	TTP
GREECE + CYPRUS		
STUDENTS	The Wine Villages of Limassol Cyprus	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of Marathassa in Cyprus	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of the island of Cephalonia (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of Crete (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of the island of Rhodos (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of the island of Skyros (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case-study of the island of Symi (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of Messolakia (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of Skyros	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
STAKEHOLDERS	Turning territorial Diversity into Strength: The case of Tylliria (Cyprus)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of Parnon-Moustos (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	The case of Tripoli (Greece)	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
STUDENTS	Case study region of Crete- Optimization and the protection of marine environmental by sustainable development of diving tourism in the region of Crete	ESPON Climate
	Case study: Western Greece – ESPON Climate change impacts with focus on temperature increasing and lack of rain falling	ESPON Climate
	ESPON Climate Change Impacts on Energy Demands in Cyprus	ESPON Climate
	Vulnerability assessment in urban areas of Cyprus	ESPON Climate
	Case study Forest areas of Cyprus	ESPON Climate
	How could the ESPON ESPON Climate project contribute to the conceptualisation and implementation of a RAS: the case of Peloponnese	ESPON Climate
	Water Shortages of the Tourist and Agricultural Sectors at Eastern Macedonia-Thrace Region, Greece due to ESPON Climate Change	ESPON Climate
	Depletion of Underground Water Due to ESPON Climate Change	ESPON Climate
	Wine production in the Attica region and climatic impact	ESPON Climate
	ESPON Climate change impacts on tourism of the South Aegean region in Greece, exposed to the wind power potential and the mean temperature change during the	ESPON Climate

	summer months	
STAKEHOLDERS	ESPON Climate change impacts on agricultural sector exposed to saline intrusion and nitrate pollution: The case of Peloponnese region	ESPON Climate
	Planning of interventions for the management, protection and promotion of public forests and woodlands, administrative district of the municipality of Tripoli	ESPON Climate
STUDENTS	The Case Study of Thessaloniki's FUR	FOCI
	The case study for the Alexandroupolis FUR	FOCI
	The paradigm of the Nicosia Functional Urban Area	FOCI
	Perspectives of the Functional Urban Region (FUR) of Kavala City	FOCI
	The case study of FUA of Athens	FOCI
	The functional urban region of Limassol in Cyprus	FOCI
	Perspectives of Limassol Functional Urban Area	FOCI
	The FUA of Florence in Italy	FOCI
	The Metropolitan Area of Athens. Perspectives and challenges for future development.	FOCI
STAKEHOLDERS	The FUA of Tripolis (Peloponnesus)	FOCI
	The case of Nicosia Cyprus	FOCI
	The case of Patras	FOCI
ITALY		
STUDENTS		
Giovanna Spinelli	The Energy Situation: The Case Of Puglia	ReRisk
Danilo Aceto	The case of Calabria	ReRisk
Francesca Silvia Rota	The case of Navarra (Spain)	ReRisk
Marilena Labianca	The case of Apulia	ReRisk
Elvira Stephanie De Giacomo	The case of Basilicata	ReRisk
Camerada Maria Veronica	The case of Sardinia (Italy)	ReRisk
Tiziana Farneti	The case of Lazio Region	ReRisk
Federica Paolini	The case of Lazio, Italy	ReRisk
Danilo Aceto	The case of Calabria	ESPON Climate
Camerada Maria Veronica	Effects of ESPON Climate Change in Sardinia (Italy)	ESPON Climate
Elvira Stephanie De Giacomo	Tourism in Basilicata	ESPON Climate
Tiziana Farneti	The coastal plains of Southern Lazio	ESPON Climate
Marilena Labianca	CLIMATE in Puglia Region	ESPON Climate
Federica Paolini	Water shortage in the agricultural sector of Lazio, Italy	ESPON Climate

Francesca Silvia ROTA	Climate change impacts on Piedmont's mountain tourism (Italy)	ESPON Climate
Giovanna Spinelli	Climate Change and water resources: the situation in the province of Foggia in Puglia	ESPON Climate
Giovanna Spinelli	The Adriatic Cross-Border Region	METROBORDER
Danilo Aceto	The case of East Flanders, Belgian Linburg and Dutch Linburg	METROBORDER
Camerada Maria Veronica -	Sardinian-Corsican region: a polycentric multifunctional system	METROBORDER
Marilena Labianca	The case of Area Vasta Lecce 2005-2015.	METROBORDER
Elvira Stephanie De Giacomo	Greater Region	METROBORDER
Francesca Silvia ROTA	The Nice-Monaco-Sanremo (NMS) region	METROBORDER
Federica Paolini	The case of the Greater Region	METROBORDER
Tiziana Farneti	The Vienna-Bratislava Metropolitan Region (VBMR)	METROBORDER
STAKEHOLDERS		
Guido Baschenis	Piedmont: Regional Situation And Future Scenarios	ReRisk
Francesca Cremasco	The Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia: An Energy Outlook	ReRisk
Leonello Tuscano	RERISK – Lombardy Study	ReRisk
Sylvie Occelli	Notes About Piedmont, Stimulated By Reading RERISK Project	ReRisk
Maurizio Scicchitano in collaboration with Rosanna Corea, Giovanni Scimemi and Giuseppe Rizzi	How The Increase Of Electricity Costs Relates To The Different Policies Of Grid Optimisation (collective assignment of 4 participants)	ReRisk
Sara Valeri	MLG Approach For The Territory Of The Province Of Teramo	ReRisk
Pierina Zulian	THE AUTONOMOUS REGION FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA: ENERGY AND PUBBLIC BUILDINGS	ReRisk
Sylvie Occelli	Notes About Piedmont, Stimulated By Reading ESPON CLIMATE CHANGE Project	ESPON Climate
Francesca Cremasco	ESPON CLIMATE CHANGE: THE WATERS STATUS IN FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA REGION	ESPON Climate
Pierina Zulian	Autonomous Province Of Trento: Influences Of ESPON Climate Change On Alpine Tourism	ESPON Climate
Leonello Tuscano	ESPON CLIMATE - Lombardy	ESPON Climate
Maurizio Scicchitano in collaboration with Rosanna Corea, Giovanni Scimemi and Giuseppe Rizzi	How The Climate Change Relates To Touristic Flows In Tuscany	ESPON Climate
Sylvie Occelli	Building Upon The Espons' METROBORDER Project: The Case Of The Piedmont And Rhone Alpes Regions	METROBORDER
Maurizio Scicchitano in Collaboration with Rosanna Corea,	ANALYSIS OF THE ITALIAN-FRENCH BORDER	METROBORDER

Giovanni Scimemi
and Giuseppe Rizzi

Sara Valeri	Cross-Border Metropolitan Polycentric Region of The Province Of Teramo (Abruzzo Region - Italy)	METROBORDER
Leonello Tuscano	ANALYSIS OF GREATER REGION TRANSNATIONAL AREA	METROBORDER
CZECH REPUBLIC		
STUDENTS	The functional urban region of Prague	FOCI
	Analysis of selected functional urban area - Functional urban area Kroměříž	FOCI
	The case of Brno/ Vienna/ Bratislava	METROBORDER
	The case study of Vienna-Bratislava	METROBORDER
	Regional typology of the ESPON area	DEMIFER
	Regional typology of the ESPON area - NUTS 2 Střední Morava	DEMIFER
STAKEHOLDERS	Study of area „ORP Olomouc”	FOCI
	Liberec Development Area	FOCI
	Závěrečná práce metodou úvodních kroků ke SWOT analýze obsahu učebního textu	FOCI
	The case of The Upper Rhine	METROBORDER
	NUTS 2 Severovýchod Region	DEMIFER
	Závěrečná práce metodou úvodních kroků ke SWOT analýze obsahu učebního textu	DEMIFER
	The Moravian-Silesian Region as an ESPON DEMIFER Area	DEMIFER
ROMANIA		
	Rural area of North-Eastern development region of Romania	EDORA
	The public transport in the Metropolitan Area Iasi	FOCI
	A balanced socio-economic region - Metropolitan Area Iasi	DEMIFER
SLOVENIA		
STUDENTS	DEMOGRAPHIC TYPOLOGY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS: Typology of features and challenges of population aging	DEMIFER
	COMPARISON OF TOTAL POPULATION ACCORDING TO THE GROWING SOCIAL EUROPE SCENARIO AND LIMITED SOCIAL EUROPE SCENARIO	DEMIFER
	The final assignment: Growing Social Europe Scenario and Limited Social Europe Scenario	DEMIFER
	THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT DEMIFER: The population according to the Expanding Market Europe scenario and according to the	DEMIFER

	Challenged Market Europe scenario	
STAKEHOLDERS	Final assignment: Growing Social Europe (GSE) and Limited Social Europe (LSE)	DEMIFER
	The final assignment for DEMIFER in ESPON Train project: GSE - Growing Social Europe and LSE - Limited Social Europe scenarios	DEMIFER
	Final assignment: Challenged Market Europe (CME) scenario and Expanding Market Europe (EME) scenario	DEMIFER
	REGIONAL TYPOLOGY OF THE ESPON AREA	DEMIFER
STUDENTS	Analysis of functional urban region: Prague case study	FOCI
	Analysis of functional urban region: Varšava case study	FOCI
	Analysis of functional urban region: Barcelona case study	FOCI
	Analysis of functional urban region: Ljubljana case study	FOCI
	Analysis of functional urban region: Bratislava case study	FOCI
STAKEHOLDERS	Analysis of functional urban region: Vienna case study	FOCI
	Analysis of functional urban region: Glasgow case study	FOCI
	Analysis of functional urban region: Stockholm case study	FOCI
STAKEHOLDERS	Final assignment: Gorenjska statistical region	EDORA
	Analysis of Pomurska statistical region	EDORA
ESTONIA		
STUDENTS	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Tartu County, Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Hiiumaa, Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Savoy, France	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Kihnu Island, Estonia	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Hiiumaa, Estonia	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the	EUROISLANDS&TeDi

	case of Savoy, France	
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Meremäe Parish, Estonia	EUROISLANDS&TeDi
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Vormsi Island, Estonia	EUROISLANDS &TeDi
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Alatskivi Parish, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Hiiumaa, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the Case of St Pierre de Chartreuse, France	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Meremäe Parish, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Kernu Parish, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Kose Parish, Estonia	EDORA
STAKEHOLDERS	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Tartu, Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Lääne-Viru County, Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Pärnu County, Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Socio-economic ESPON Climate stressor mapping; the case of Estonia	ESPON Climate
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Piiressaar Island, Estonia	EUROISLANDS & TeDi
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Kihnu Island, Estonia	EUROISLANDS & TeDi
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Rapla County, Estonia	EUROISLANDS & TeDi
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Hiiumaa, Estonia	EUROISLANDS & TeDi
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the	EUROISLANDS & TeDi

	case of Valga County, Estonia	
	Development challenges and opportunities in specific regions; the case of Kihnu Island, Estonia	EUROISLANDS & TeDi
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of western Tartu County, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Pärnu County, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Rapla County, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Hiiumaa, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Otepää Parish, Estonia	EDORA
	Analysis of territorial capital in rural areas; the case of Võru County, Estonia	EDORA
LITHUANIA		
STUDENTS	Case study of Pakalniškių countryside in the municipality of Elektrėnai	EDORA
	The S1 scenario of EDORA urban-rural typology application to Šilalė	EDORA
	Population is main economic asset – human capital	EDORA
	Analysis of Lithuanian energy sector	ReRisk
	Energy situation in Utena County	ReRisk
	Renewable energy sources in Lithuania	ReRisk
	Functional-urban region	FOCI
	Case study of Vilnius city	FOCI
	Case study of Molėtai	FOCI
	Case study of Vilnius city	FOCI
STAKEHOLDERS	Urban environment and formation goals	EDORA
	Urban environment	EDORA
	Jašiūnų town development opportunities	EDORA
	Šiluva development opportunities	EDORA
	The case of Kaunas Panemunė barracks – post-military area	EDORA
	Lithuanian south rural and urban areas	EDORA
	Energy sector and policy analysis	ReRisk
	Energy policy – state economic activity area	ReRisk
	Vilnius city energy supply	ReRisk
	Vilnius state of engineering infrastructure	ReRisk
	The case of Kaunas Panemunė barracks – post-military area	ReRisk
	Energy Resources of Lithuanian-Polish border region	ReRisk

Urban spatial structure and its elements connections in the environment	FOCI
Urban spatial structure	FOCI
Palanga future landmark	FOCI
Case study of Vilnius	FOCI
The case of Kaunas Panemunė barracks – post-military area	FOCI
Case study of Kuršėnai	FOCI

Annex VI : ESPONTrain Thematic Teaching Packages

Thematic Teaching Package (TTP)	Topic	Indicative Projects to be used	Main Editor	Assistant Editor
Thematic Teaching Package 1	Demographic and migration flows	DEMIFER	Romanian ECP	Bulgarian ECP
Thematic Teaching Package 2	Rural areas	EDORA	Lithuanian ECP	Slovenian ECP
Thematic Teaching Package 3a	Energy - Climate change	ESPON Climate	Greek ECP	Italian ECP Maltese ECP
Thematic Teaching Package 3b	Energy - Climate change	ReRisk	Italian ECP	Greek ECP Maltese ECP
Thematic Teaching Package 4	Urban & Agglomeration economies	FOCI	ECP Czech Republic	Bulgarian ECP
Thematic Teaching Package 5	Types of specific territories	EUROISLANDS TeDi	Estonian ECP	Cypriot ECP
Thematic Teaching Package 6	Territorial cooperation & Governance building	METROBORDER	Italian ECP	Greek ECP Maltese ECP

Annex VII : List of Trainers in the ESPONTrain countries

Country/ies of trainers' responsibility		TRAINERS
Greece and Cyprus	3	Stella Kyvelou (supervising role), Efstratios Manos, Nikolas Karachalis, Nektaria Marava
Italy	2	Maria Prezioso, Isabella Carbonaro
Czech Republic	3	Karel Maier, Ondřej Mulíček, Luděk Sýkora
Romania	3	Alexandru Rusu, Daniel Tudora, Aurelian Roman
Slovenia	6	Alma Zavodnik Lamovšek, Nataša Pichler Milanović, Alenka Fikfak, Majda Černič Istenič, Marko Krevs, Matej Ogrin
Estonia	2	Antti Roose , MartinGauk
Lithuania	2	Marija Burinskiene , Eugenijus Kestutis Staniunas
Malta	2	Dr. Saviour Formosa, Joseph Gauci

Annex VIII : Blunder checks delivered by the ESPONTrain project

Acronym	Project name
ESPON CLIMATE	Climate Change and Territorial Effects on Regions and Local Economies in Europe
ARTS	Assessment of Regional and Territorial Sensitivity
ATTREG	Attractiveness of European Regions and Cities for Residents and Visitors
SGPTD	Secondary growth poles in territorial development
KIT	Knowledge, Innovation, Territory
TIGER	Territorial Impact of Globalization for Europe and its Regions
TERCO	European Territorial Cooperation as a Factor of Growth, Jobs and Quality of Life
GEOSPECS	Geographic Specificities and Development Potentials in Europe
EU LUPA	European Patterns of Land Use
SIESTA	Spatial Indicators for a “Europa 2020 Strategy” Territorial Analysis
ESaTDOR	European Seas and Territorial Development, Opportunities and Risks
SeGi	Indicators and perspectives for services of general interest in territorial cohesion and development

Annex IX : ESPONTrain Photos

ESPONTrain Kick off Meeting, 11th of March, 2011



2nd ESPONTrain project meeting, Rome, 25th of May, 2011



ESPON Seminar in Krakow, 30th of November 2011 (special session on the TNAs progress, coordinated by Peter Billing)



ESPONTrain team at the e-learning expo in Athens



1st INTERSTRAT interactive event held at Panteion University, in Athens, 10th of march 2012./Dissemination of ESPONTrain



2nd INTERSTRAT interactive event, Panteion University, Athens, 8th of November 2012./Dissemination of ESPONTrain



Final Transnational ESPONTrain Conference, Athens, 3rd and 4th of April 2013



Annex X : Glossary

Administrators or technical team instructors	The team who undertook the task of supporting all the other users of the ESPONTrain VLE and safeguarding its proper operational status (or trainers, or tutors) the teachers and their assistants that used Moodle in order to coach, supervise, assist and evaluate the students (e.g. notify for important issues on an electronic notice board, engage in discussions in electronic fora, communicate and exchange messages with learners, collect, assess deliverables, etc.).
ARTS	Assessment of Regional and Territorial Sensitivity
ATTREG	Attractiveness of European Regions and Cities for Residents and Visitors
CU	Coordination Unit
Cycle	ESPONTrain educational cycle is a two month e-learning programme as described within this report, designed and implemented by the ESPONTrain partners
DEMIFER	Demographic and Migratory Flows Affecting European Regions and Cities
ECP	ESPON Contact Point
EDORA	European Development Opportunities in Rural Areas
EDPA	Environment and Development Planning Act
ESaTDOR	European Seas and Territorial Development, Opportunities and Risks
ESPON CLIMATE	Climate Change and Territorial Effects on Regions and Local Economies in Europe
ESPONTrain	acronym of the ESPON Project "Establishment of a transnational ESPON training programme to stimulate interest to ESPON2013 knowledge"
EU LUPA	European Patterns of Land Use
EUROISLANDS	The Development of the Islands – European Islands and Cohesion Policy
FOCI	Future Orientation for Cities
GEOSPECS	Geographic Specificities and Development Potentials in Europe
KIT	Knowledge, Innovation, Territory
LCMS	Learning Content Management System (also known as LMS)
learners	(or trainees) postgraduate students and stakeholders that used the ESPONTrain VLE in order to participate without any time and place constraints to the educational process. In fact, the learners are the focal users of LMS , in the sense that these systems are being developed in order to satisfy some of their needs and resolve their problems.
LMS	Learning Management System (also known as LCMS)
LP	Lead Partner
MC	Monitoring Committee
METROBORDER	Cross-Border Polycentric Metropolitan Regions
Modules	Cf.TTPs
Moodle	abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, to which ESPONTrain VLE is based.
NCP	National Contact Point (of ESPON)
ReRisk	Regions at Risk of Energy Poverty
SeGi	Indicators and perspectives for services of general interest in territorial cohesion and development
SGPTD	Secondary growth poles in territorial development
SIESTA	Spatial Indicators for a “Europa 2020 Strategy” Territorial Analysis
SPED	Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development

TeDi	Territorial Diversity in Europe
TERCO	European Territorial Cooperation as a Factor of Growth, Jobs and Quality of Life
TIGER	Territorial Impact of Globalization for Europe and its Regions
TNA	Transnational Networking Activity
TPG	Transnational Project Group
trainees	cf. Learners
trainers	cf. Instructors or tutors
TSS	Trainers' Support System
TTPs	Thematic Teaching Packages (also appearing as "modules")
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
Discussion thread	A topic and the relevant discussion in the forum
WizIQ	a tool, appearing in the form of tele-conference platform/webinar, integrated on the ESPONTrain platform, suitable for synchronous virtual learning

www.espon.eu

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory.

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