

A Regulation for the Urban Audit - a blessing or a curse?

Urban Audit



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Structure of the talk

- ① Why a legal base?
- ② What was achieved since a year
- ③ Next steps



Chapter 1

Urban Audit



Reasons for a legal
base for urban
statistics

Dimensions of the Urban Audit

- More than **300 variables** collected from Member States
 - Cover many demographic, economic and social aspects in European cities
- Data collections
 - Exhaustive collection every three years – 2004, 2007, 2010
 - Annual data collection of 38 variables since 2010
- Three spatial units
 - **369 core cities**
 - **larger urban zones** (=including the city hinterland)
 - **sub-city** information (reduced dataset)

Current situation of Urban Audit

- ◆ The Urban Audit project has been started more than 10 years ago in successive data collection rounds
- ◆ **Ambitious** objective to provide a comprehensive statistical picture of urban life in more than 350 cities with over 300 indicators
- ◆ The Urban Audit data has been **intensively used in EU Policy** context and analyses
- ◆ Urban Audit has been very useful in defining **harmonised concepts** for core cities, larger urban zones and sub-city districts
- ◆ Currently the 4th data collection is ongoing. Data dissemination to be expected in 2011

Major challenges in the Urban Audit

◆ Data **delivery delays**

- ➔ As a consequence the quality control, which needs a critical mass of data, is very delayed

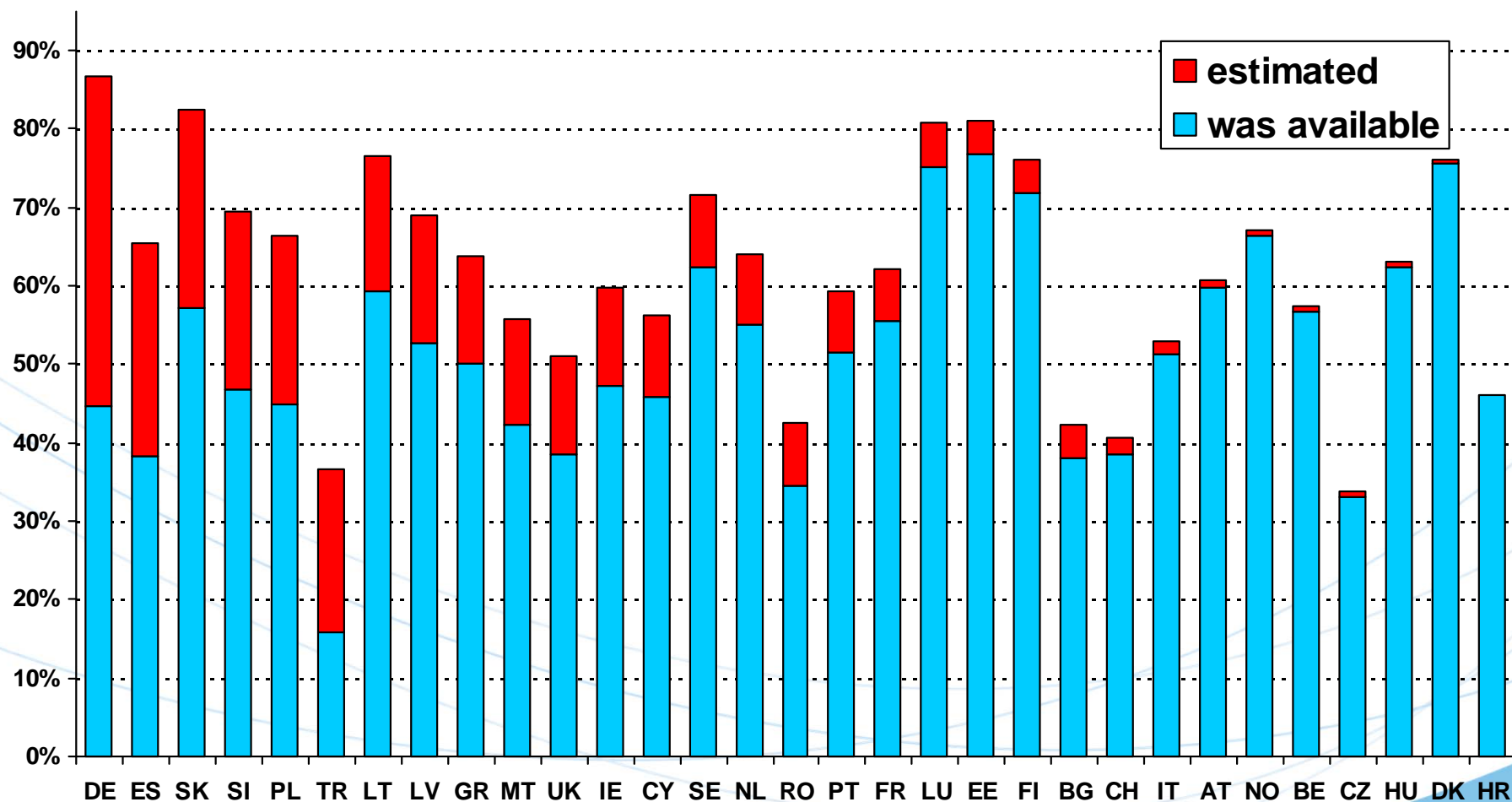
◆ **Comparability** of the data is questioned by some

- ➔ This reduces the usability of the data for political analysis

◆ **Missing data** is a problem for all countries

- ➔ Different gaps in different countries due to diverging social and statistical history
- ➔ Estimations required – some countries estimate a lot, others don't estimate at all

Part of estimation in data delivery



Why can't we go on like in the past 10 years?

- ◆ After ten years the Urban Audit collection is no longer a pilot study
- ◆ The weak points mentioned before need to be tackled
- ◆ In several Member States no human resources are provided if there is no legal obligation to produce these statistics
- ◆ In general some worrying signs of waning support for Urban Audit

Difficult context

- ◆ Severe **resource constraints** in Member States and Eurostat
- ◆ The economic crisis has led to a **re-focusing of priorities** in statistics (Economic governance, Europe 2020, Stiglitz Report)
- ◆ The importance of Urban Audit for **EU policy making and national policy** is not fully accepted by all

Chapter 2

Urban Audit



What we achieved
in the last 12
months

Initiative towards a legal basis

- ◆ Discussion of the necessity of a legal base in the Working Group meeting of October 2009
- ◆ Creation of a Task Force with delegates from Germany, Greece, France, United Kingdom and DG REGIO
- ◆ Draft concepts for:
 - ➔ **Regulation** with a selection of key variables
 - ➔ **Gentlemen's Agreement** for voluntary indicators and proposal for financing

Why both a Regulation and a Gentlemen's Agreement?

- ◆ In case of a Regulation, **no financial support** is possible
 - ➔ Logic: if there is a legal obligation, there is no funding
- ◆ On the other hand, financial support is a **condition sine qua non** for the Urban Audit since 10 years
 - ➔ Urban Audit data collection is different from other statistical collections: many stakeholders involved, not only central and regional offices, but to a large extent also the cities
- ◆ In a Gentlemen's Agreement the National Statistical Offices **promise to do their best** to send the data, i.e. no binding obligation
- ◆ **Funding is possible** in a GA

Chapter 3

Urban Audit

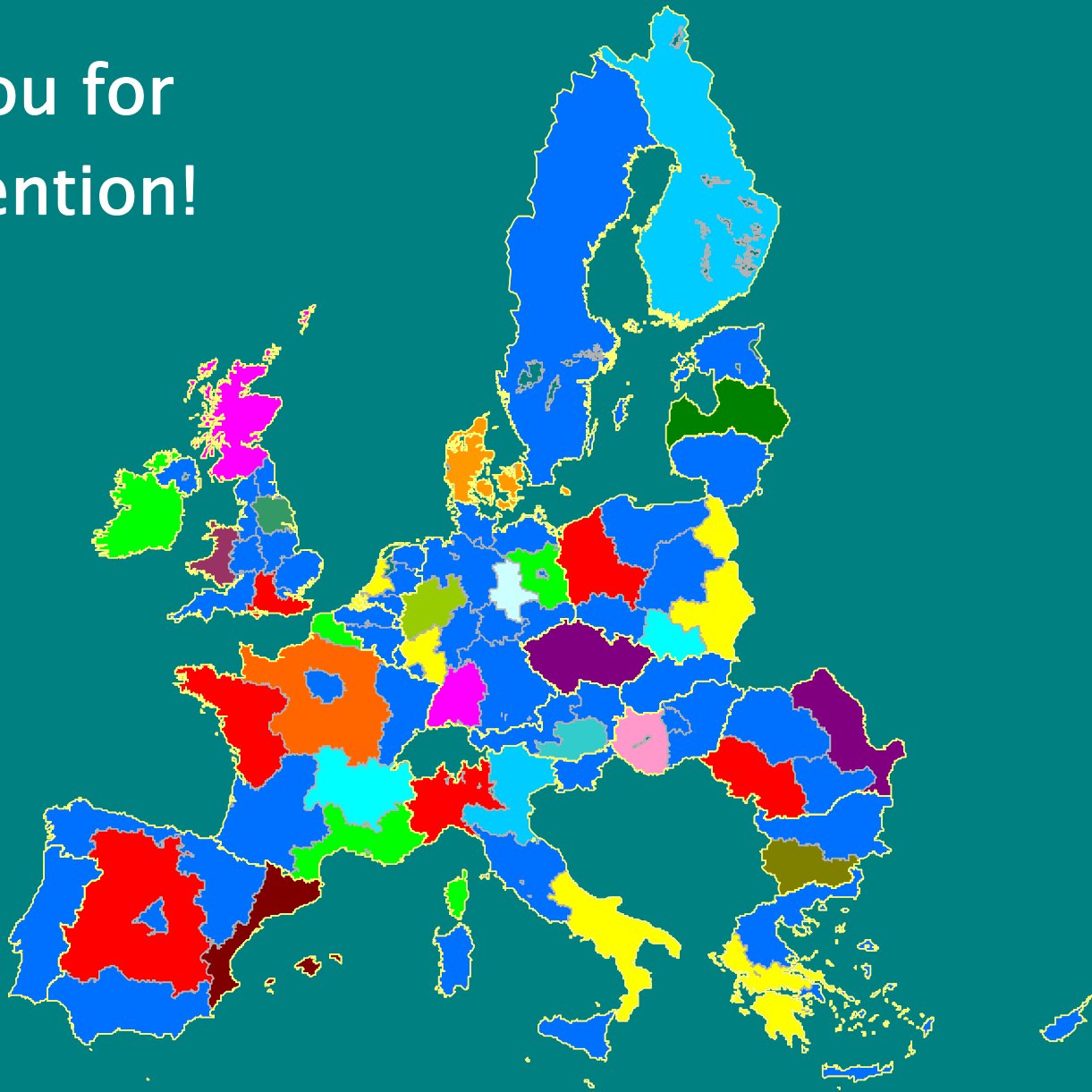


Next steps

Where are we now?

- ◆ **Set-back** for legal base in near future, since there are clear signs that there is **not sufficient support** from Member States
- ◆ Need for a consistent and convincing strategy to sub-national statistics
- ◆ Need to show clearly the added value of Urban Audit within the larger context of statistics, EU policy and national policy
- ◆ Need to implicate National Statistical Offices in the debate
- ◆ **Current data collection round is assured and progressing**
- ◆ Timeframe of about 2 years to succeed

Thank you for
your attention!



Any Questions ?