

21st

European Week of Regions and Cities

Thriving Regions, Stronger Europe

**Governing quality of life in the Alps -
mission impossible?**

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9-12
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2023

#EURegionsWeek

The Alps as fuzzy territory

Understanding of the Alps based on networks, Alpine identity, functional integration

Continuance and interconnectedness of three types of territory: mountain rural, intermediate and urban areas

Constant flow and exchange between these three areas: daily commute, tourist flow, immigration of the population, exchanged of resources

Economic dichotomy: tourism brings the necessary income, but also negatively impacts the environment and quality of life

Is consideration of the Alpine area as fuzzy region for explaining the quality of life valid?

Is governance framework set to address this fuzziness?



Quality of life concept

No common term to name QoL (also well-being, standard of living, welfare)

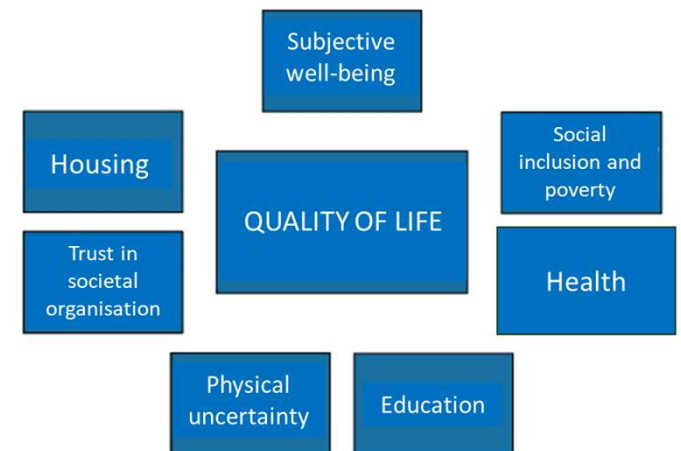
Several existing platforms, monitoring systems to measure QoL (go beyond GDP, NUTS2 or higher as territorial unit)

Objective measurement via indicators (dashboards, infographics, maps)

Subjective perception of the people living on certain territory (satisfaction with the living conditions, one's personal fulfillment)



Grafik 30
Dimensionen der Lebensqualität

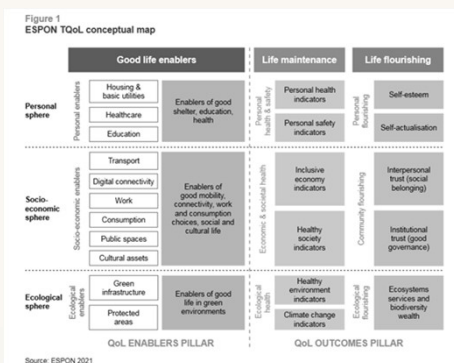


Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Wie geht's Österreich?



Quality of life concept

Based on the ESPON QoL study



MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK OF QoL	GOOD LIFE ENABLERS	LIFE MAINTENANCE	LIFE FLOURISHING
ENVIRONMENT	ENVIRONMENT	SUSTAINABLE / ECO-CONSCIOUS SOCIETY	SATISFACTION WITH ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
	ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY		
	BUILD ENVIRONMENT		
	CONSERVATION & PROTECTION		
INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	RESILIENCE	HEALTHY, EDUCATED AND LIVELY SOCIETY	SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES
	HOUSING		
	CONNECTIVITY		
	PUBLIC SERVICES		
GOVERNANCE	LEISURE & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY	SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE
	COMMERCIAL SERVICES		
	PUBLIC POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES		
	ENABLING, PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE		
WORK AND FINANCIAL SECURITY	INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION	PROSPEROUS SOCIETY	SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF WORK AND INCOME
	JOB OPPORTUNITIES		
	WORK CONDITIONS		
	SOCIAL SECURITY		
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS	INNOVATION CAPACITY AND SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC TRANSITION	INCLUSIVE, CARING AND CONNECTED SOCIETY	SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
	SOLIDARITY, INTRAGENERATIONAL AND INCLUSIVE CARE		
	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS		
	SAFETY		

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Quality of life measurement

Happiest and most satisfied in intermediate/fuzzy areas

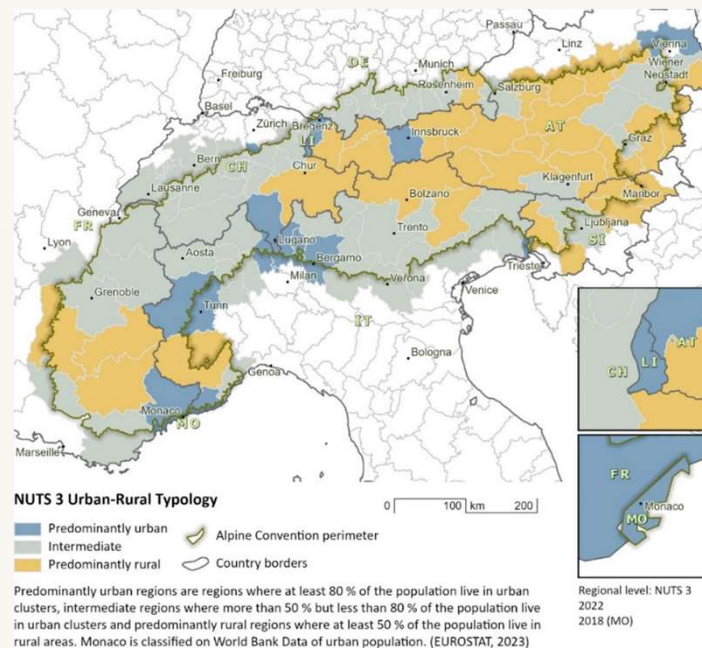
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	Perceived level of happiness (10 – extremely happy)	Life satisfaction (10 – extremely satisfied)
AC	7,53	7,64
Urban	7,31	7,2
Intermediate	7,81	8
Rural	7,46	7,5

Source: European Social Survey



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Quality of life measurement

Rural areas expectedly more remote to services, but with good ecological indicators – which might be at threat due to land take. Slightly less work hours and higher governance quality.

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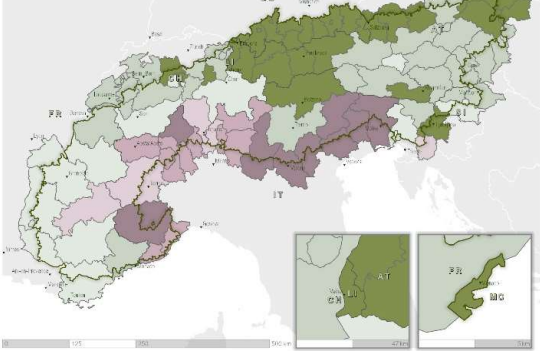
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		AC	Urban	Interm	Rural
	ENABLERS				
Environment	Projected number of extreme heatwaves	1,82	2,05	1,65	1,86
	Land take intensity	0,035	0,03	0,03	0,05
	Share of waterbodies with ecological quality elements status good	57%	44 %	59 %	59 %
Infrastructure and services	Ave. pop. weighted-distance to cultural amenities	3.499	1.936	2.693	5.471
	Ave. pop. weighted-distance to grocery store (m)	1.277	944	1.134	1.665
	Average population weighted-distance to hospital	6.851	4.438	5.354	10.354
	Average population weighted-distance to nursery	2.861	1.766	2.629	3.707
	Ave. pop. weighted-distance to primary school	1.443	1.008	1.272	1.921
	Ave. pop. weighted-distance to community centre	5.452	3.569	4.896	6.987
	Average pop. weighted-distance to fire station	2.735	3.347	2.866	2.344
	Average population weighted-distance to police	3.296	2.225	3.101	4.118
Work and financial security	Employed persons commuting to another region within their country	10	2,7	8,8	10
	Average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job	36,6	37,1	36,3	36,5
Government	Quality of Government index	0,38	0,19	0,23	0,69

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Fire station

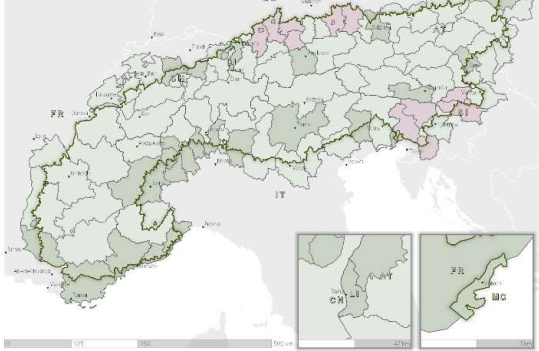


Average distance to fire station

0-1,5 km 1,5-2,5 km 2,5-3,5 km 3,5-4,5 km 4,5-5,5 km 5,5-8 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Police station

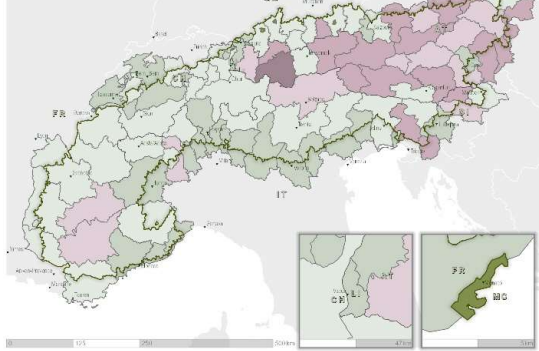


Average distance to police station

0-2,5 km 2,5-5 km 5-7,5 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Hospital

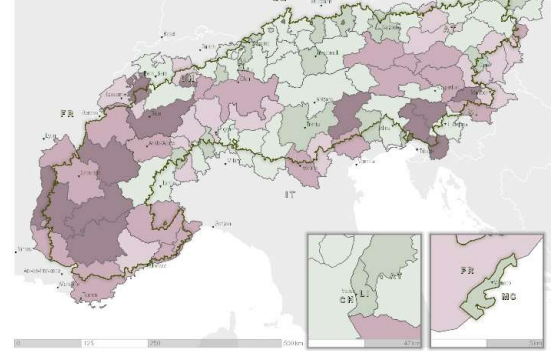


Average distance to hospital

0-2,5 km 2,5-5 km 5-7,5 km 7,5-10 km 10-15 km 15-22 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Nursery

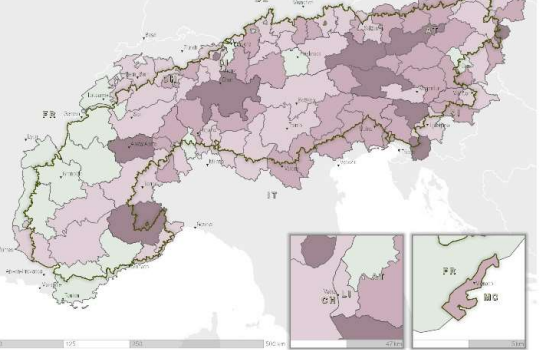


Average distance to nursery

0-0,5 km 0,5-1,5 km 1,5-2,5 km 2,5-3,5 km 3,5-5 km 5-9 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Community center

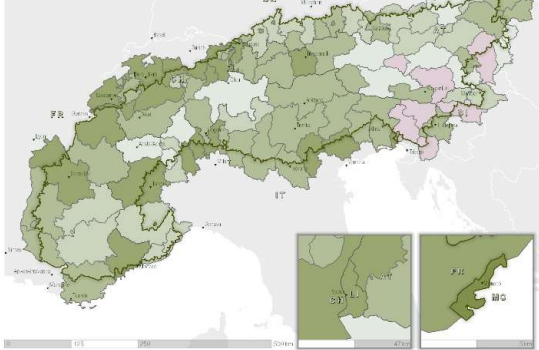


Average distance to community centers

0-1 km 1-1,5 km 1,5-2,5 km 2,5-5 km 5-10 km 10-30 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Primary school

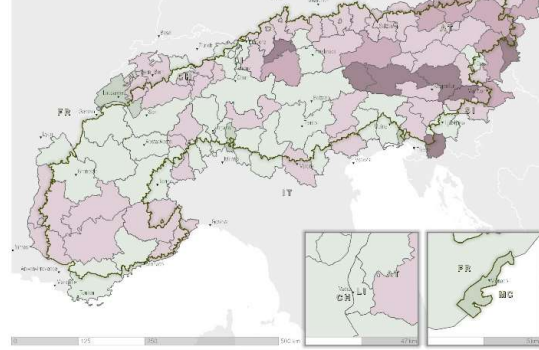


Average distance to primary school

0-0,5 km 0,5-1 km 1-1,5 km 1,5-2 km 2-2,5 km 2,5-3,5 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Theatre, library, cinema

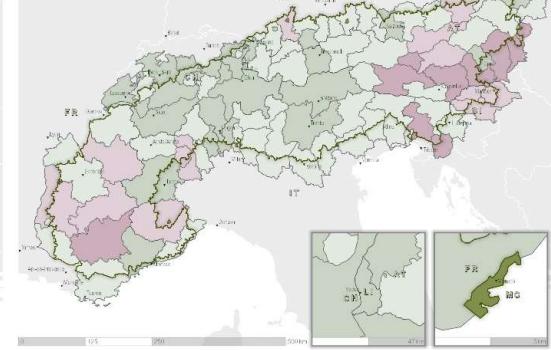


Average distance to theatre, library or cinema

0-1,5 km 1,5-2,5 km 2,5-5 km 5-7,5 km 7,5-17 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Grocery stores



Average distance to grocery store

0-0,5 km 0,5-1 km 1-1,5 km 1,5-2 km 2-2,5 km

Alpine Convention perimeter Country borders

Accessibility: only for police stations distinction between the core and the border, otherwise no clear pattern.



Quality of life measurement

Rural and intermediate areas have more favorable demographic and economic indicators. Intermediate areas seem less politically active, while rural seem more vulnerable to climate change.

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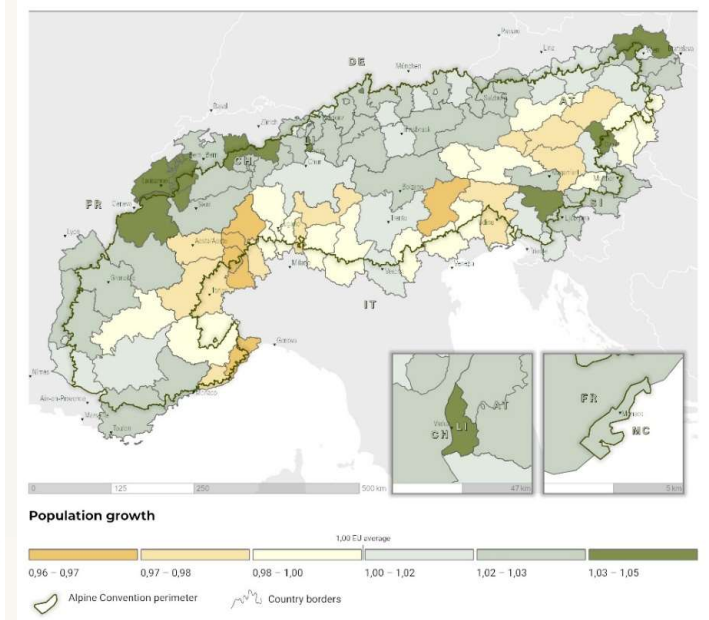
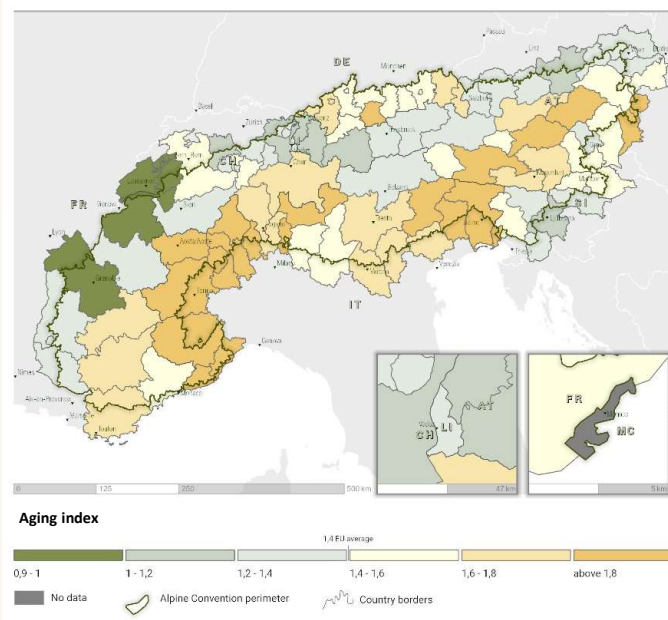
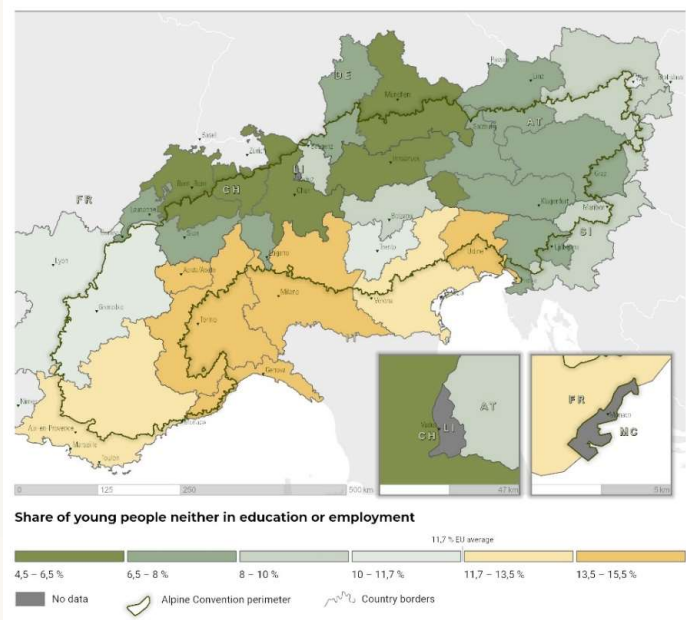
		AC	Urban	Interm	Rural
	LIFE MAINTENANCE				
Environment	Aggregate expected impact of climate change by 2070	0,24	0,21	0,21	0,32
	Premature deaths due to air pollution per capita	42,2	68,81	43,10	30,24
Work and financial security	Young people neither in employment nor in education and training	9,4	11,15	9,09	8,1
	Share of employed persons in service sector (NACE)	49,8	53,2	53,3	44,4
	Income of households (balance of primary income/disposable income)	24.664	24.788	38.700	25.738
Social relationships	Share of people at risk of poverty rate	16,2	17,13	16,3	15,01
	Population growth trend (index 2021/2017)	1,01			
	Aging index	1,63	1,75	1,62	1,59
	Percentage of people who have friend or relatives to rely on in case of need	91,1	90,6	92,1	90,1
Governance	Share of voters turn out on national elections	69,27	73,4	62,8	73,4

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Quality of life measurement

Rural and intermediate areas have more favorable demographic and economic indicators. Intermediate areas seem less politically active, while rural seem more vulnerable to climate change.



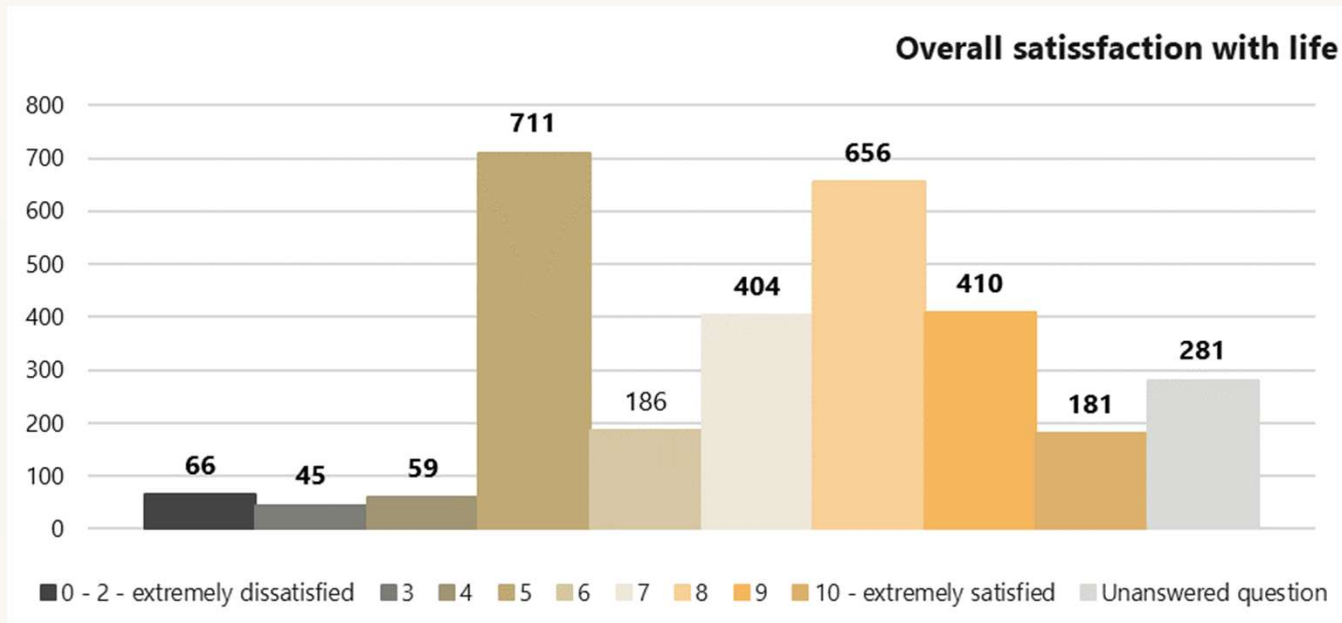
Quality of life measurement

Highest perception of quality of life in intermediate areas, followed by rural. Urban areas more critical to quality of life.

		AC	Urban	Interm	Rural
	LIFE FLOURISHING				
Environment	Perceived effect of environmental issue on daily life and health (1 - totally agree)	0,77	n/a	0,84	0,76
Infrastructure and services	Perceived own health (1 - very good)	1,99	2,09	1,88	2,02
Work and financial security	Perception of own income for comfort of living (1 - living comfortably)	1,63	1,71	1,58	1,64
	Satisfaction with main job (10 - very satisfied)	7,49	7,29	8,00	7,59
Social relationships	Feeling of safety in local area after dark (1 - very safe)	1,76	1,85	1,63	1,75
Governance	Satisfaction with democracy in country (0 - extremely dissatisfied)	5,51	5,14	6,37	4,8

Survey on QoL in the Alps

Satisfaction with the QoL in the Alps: overall, n=3.000

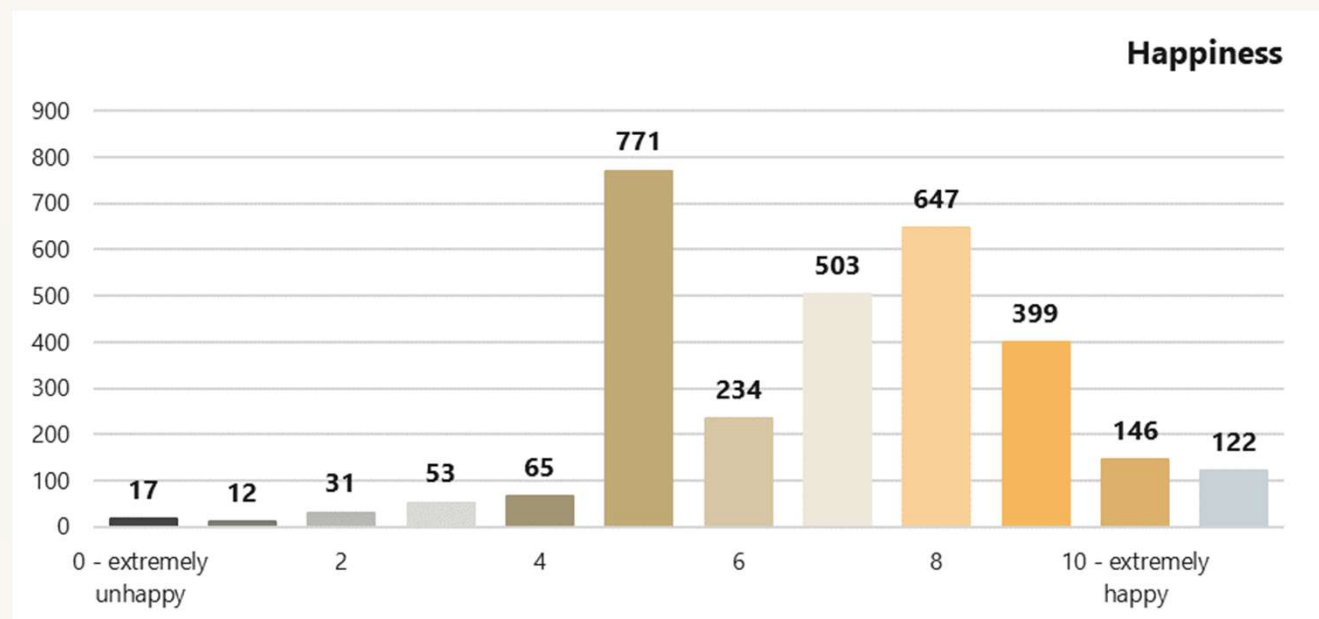


Average value: 6,88

- Rural areas: the highest satisfactions – 7,12
- Intermediate: 6,74
- Urban areas: the lowest – 6,43

Survey on QoL in the Alps

Happiness, n=3.000, no responses: 122



Average value: 6,78

- Rural areas: the happiest – 6,99
- Intermediate: 6,33
- Urban areas: 6,67



Survey on QoL in the Alps

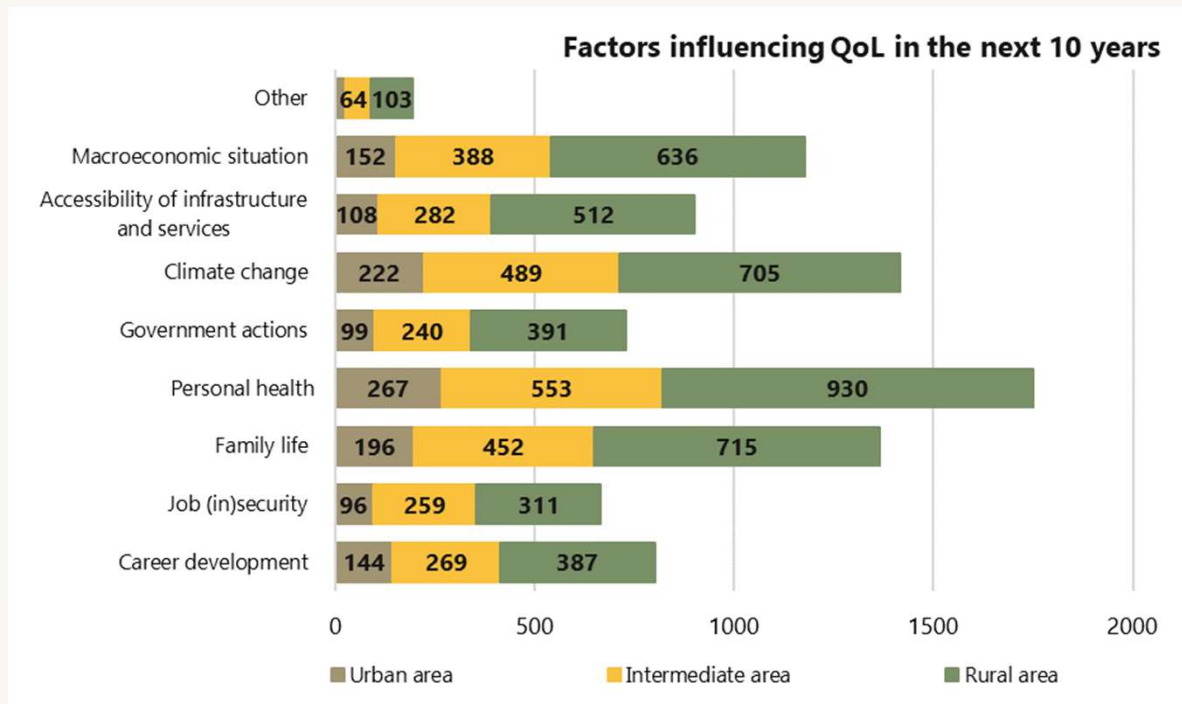
Satisfaction with the five core topics of QoL, n=3.000, average values

	Average	Urban	Intermediate	Rural
Environment	3,62	3,36	3,54	3,76
Infrastructure and services	3,27	3,56	3,3	3,17
Work and financial security	3,33	3,3	3,24	3,41
Social relations	3,59	3,59	3,55	3,65
Governance	2,71	2,93	2,64	2,269



Survey on QoL in the Alps

Factors to influence QoL in the next ten years



Governance framework of QoL in the Alps

Only few umbrella policies targeting specifically QoL (e.g. Slovenian development policy, Swiss Sustainable Strategy)

QoL as policy topic divided among several sectors (environment, transport, tourism, family affairs, regional development etc.)

Most related to QoL also all sustainable development policies, assessments, monitoring tools etc.

Various monitoring systems and institutions, mostly national statistical offices in charge (e.g. Austrian “Wie geht es Oesterreich?”); **in addition, individual QoL studies, targeting specific territories** (e.g. Slovenian QoL Atlas, study for Bavaria, South Tyrol etc.)

Several instruments (Environmental impact assessments, Integrated management and development of water bodies and their landscapes, Climate Change adaptation/mitigation Policies) **and initiatives to support better QoL** (EU cohesion funds, rural development programs, agricultural allowances, subsidies, subsidies for densified residential areas construction, Financial support in Forestry adaptation to climate change)



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Conclusions

The intermediate areas seem to score the best in all three pillars of QoL

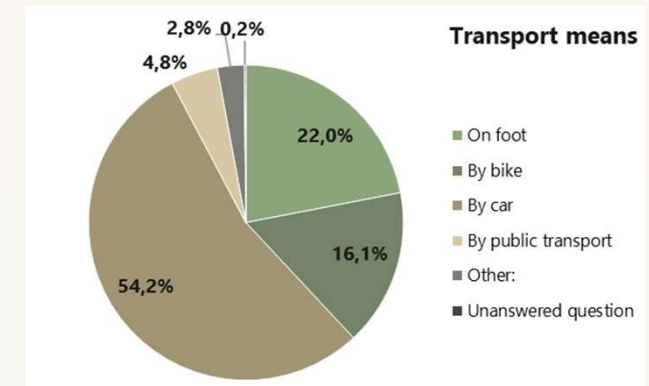
No clear polarization of evaluating QoL regarding type of the area => are place-based policies necessary?

QoL governance divided across the sectors, a challenge to set umbrella policies and implement them

Fuzziness can be best mitigated by addressing the enablers, such as accessibility of services, public transport

Discrepancy between good state of the living conditions (to EU average), and larger dissatisfaction with “infrastructure and services” due to expensive, non-accessible housing, distance to services etc.

A car – tool to fight the fuzziness of the Alps (prevailing mode of transport)



Thank you for your attention!

The presentation is based on the draft content of the technical part of the 10th Report on the State of the Alps: Quality of life.

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Slovensko predsedovanje Alpski konvenciji 2023-2024
Slovenian Presidency of the Alpine Convention 2023-2024



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