Metropolises and Urban Systems in Europe and France

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My aim in this presentation is to describe DATAR's new approach to urban areas and to the "metropolitanisation" of regions in France and Europe. DATAR has drawn on a corpus of academic studies that were conducted since the end of 2009 whose findings we will be publishing soon, as well as on studies carried out by the BBSR and ESPON.

I will focus on three points. First, a lot has been said about the definition of terms and the scope of "metropolitanisation". It is useful to call to remind various senses given to the term metropolis. Then, I wish to expose you the approach that the DATAR has taken and on which stakes our work is based. Indeed our activities aim to advance political thinking on a regional, national and European scale.

"Metropolis": a term with different meanings and connotations

What exactly do we mean by the term "metropolis". It is important, to avoid the confusions or the bad interpretations to know which senses are given to the term of "metropolis". Has a legal meaning (as defined in the law of 16/12/2010 on reforming regional authorities), a "metropolis" is the highest degree of integration of public inter-municipal cooperation governance (EPCI). Another sense is similar to the territorial marketing when a assembly (a City, an EPCI) decides to add the term "metropolis" to its name. It is important to be called metropolises: many in France are called metropolises, include those whose population does not quite fit the definitions given this morning.

It is especially the functional sense of the metropolis that matters: an urban, variable-sized space, which concentrates populations and activities but above all which assures functions of command, of impulse and is an actor of the process of globalization by its national and international connections. In this last meaning the term of metropolis concerns only some continental and/or world large-scale large cities.

The metropolis has been researched by DATAR since its inception

Since the DATAR was founded fifty years ago, metropolitan areas and regions have been one of its main and constant subjects of research. Earlier we referred to the gap between Paris and the "French desert" - "Paris et le désert français" – which led to the policy of developing other urban hubs outside Paris to balance France's metropolitan regions. There have been other policies to create networks between regions: the creation of networks of towns, the decision by the DATAR decision to interlinked polycentrism. There have been more contractual links between the government and the regions in the form of urban plans or "contrats de ville", conurbation plans and from the year 2000 partnerships between metropolitan regions to enable their elected representatives to engage in joint projects with the support of the national authorities.

A systemic approach to metropolisation

DATAR is currently analyzing metropolitanisation as a phenomenon in preference to terminology. Our approach is not on inventories or on degrees of concentration which of course have strategic importance but which are not the only indicators. Instead, we have sought to reappraise metropolitanisation for what it is first and foremost, viz. flows and exchanges between the regions and key stakeholders. We therefore have a totally systemic, multi-dimensional and multi-functional approach to regional development. Our aim is also to approach metropolitanisation in terms of the strategic importance it has for nations and continents but also in terms of its importance for the regions themselves by going behind the dichotomy between strategic interests and local interests.

Evaluation of key regional forces

Over the last two years we have conducted an extensive regional audit to compare regional forces and local forces with a view to making recommendations. Our aim is to meet the challenges related to three different periods: one short-term, 2014-2020, during which the next series of contracts will be awarded. One mid-term period, 2020/2030, during which the public policies that will be undertaken during this decade, will begin to have a regional impact. Finally, a prospective study will be under-

taken from 2030 through to 2040 and beyond on trends and scenarios, ranging from the most extreme to the most likely and widespread.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, we will list and rank the regions in terms of their performance, the strengths and weaknesses to determine their role in the national and European urban and metropolitan dynamic and to identify future trends to be promoted and shared with all the stakeholders.

To meet this aim, we have gone beyond a town/city and conurbation based approach in the institutional sense. We have adopted a minimum scale based on urban areas as defined by the INSEE in France and by the FUA/ESPON within a European context and have analysed how they interact within systems. This preliminary mapping of our regions enables us to understand how these urban networks are structured within their regional contexts and how these different systems are interlinked in the mid and longer term. We have studied the interaction between local and global factors from different angles.
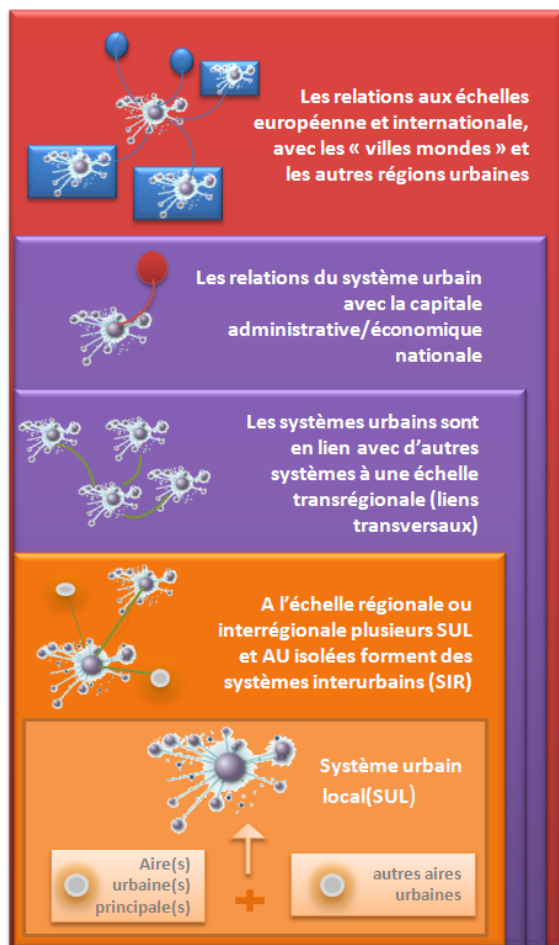
Systematic functioning and scales of the urban dynamics:
Le fonctionnement systémique et les emboîtements d'échelles dans les dynamiques urbaines et métropolitaines en France et en Europe

Essai de représentation des échelles d'analyses du fonctionnement urbain et métropolitain dans les analyses de la

Datar
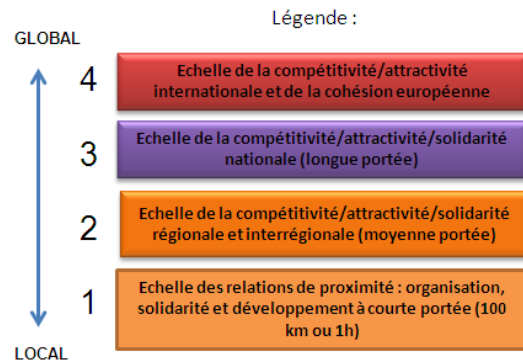
We have analysed the driving factors that influence public policies: economic development and higher education, research and innovation as underpinning the production of wealth. The second strategic driver is mobility and accessibility via different modes of transport (air, high-speed rail) and networks via digital high-speed broadband networks. On this basis these regions can expand and attract businesses, residents and art and culture. Topping the pyramid are sustainability and cohesion policies that must not prioritise certain regions over others, concentrate wealth in some regions to the detriment of others nor exclude or sideline other regions. We have studied the link between urban and rural areas and the barriers that exists within urban areas. These drivers lead us to take into account all stakeholders.

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Renewing our working tools

Based on the working tools available to us we have sought to revamp our body of knowledge by acquiring analytical data that enables us to approach these regions differently. We wanted to go farther than a simple updating of the previous studies financed by the DATAR.

We began two innovative studies two years ago.

An initial study was entrusted to a consortium of European researchers[1] who were tasked with producing a comparative analysis of European functional urban areas (FUAs). Different indicators available or specially developed were used to study all the FUAs with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants in order to cover a maximum number of metropolitan regions in 29 countries (the 27 EU States plus Switzerland and Norway). 357 urban areas were analysed.

Versus the DATAR 2003 study which provided a ranking of European towns and cities, our aim was to abandon this approach in favour of highlighting metropolitan profiles of each urban area and to compare them in relation to major European metropolitan regions.

A dozen profiles were identified from the statistical model (map1): Paris and London as world metropolises largely outperformed the average of the other European regions. Apart from these two metropolitan hubs, we have identified around twenty urban regions with highly diversified metropolitan functions and others whose functions are slightly less diversified and more specialised.

Our analysis highlights a large number of regions with an "average" profile in Europe. The term "average" is not pejorative but denotes urban areas, ranked as standard deviations, which do not diversify in a consistent or substantial way when compared with the European average in the light of the indicators used. From this analysis we identified these profiles.

We are now studying different regions and profiles to see which of them are comparable, which are distinctive and what their development potential is**.**

Mapping urban systems

The second study[2] focused on the French context. The Laboratoire Géographie Cités compiled an initial map of French urban systems which no longer identified the potential and endogenous identity of urban areas but highlighted the links between these urban areas by aggregating several indicators.

We can then identify networks of urban areas (map 2) which interact on a daily basis in different spheres of regional development (mobility, leisure activities, the knowledge-based society and innovation, economic and financial aspects) and on different scales, from the sub-regional to the international. 26 " urban systems " were characterised so, as well as an approach was dedicated in the Paris region (see p 55).

The second part of our study involved measures of the degree of metropolitanisation of these systems not based on the performances of the central urban area or areas if they are bipolar systems but on how all the urban areas forming the system fit on a global scale in relation to the different indicators used. This approach to the potential of metropolitanisation and these systems is highly innovative in France and will help us in drafting future policies.

In addition to above, the DATAR has also commissioned studies on into the link between urban and rural areas, innovation in the regions, economic excellence, the creation of networks with added economic value and sustainable development on a regional scale.

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[1] Study : « *Quelle métropole en Europe ? Des villes en réseau* », Ludovic Halbert, Patricia Cicille, Céline Rozenblat. Collection *Travaux* de la DATAR, La Documentation française, Paris, November 2012
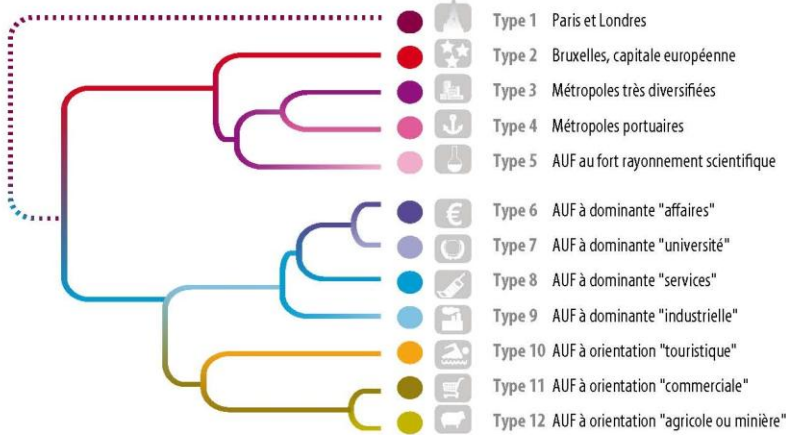
[2] Study « *Les systèmes urbains français et leur métropolisation* », Sandrine Berroir, Nadine Cattan, Marianne Guérois, Fabien Paulus, Céline Vacchiani-Marcuzzo. Collection *Travaux en ligne* de la DATAR, Paris, March 2013 (www.datar.gouv.fr).

Map 1: Typology of the urban areas of more than 200 000 inhabitants in Europe
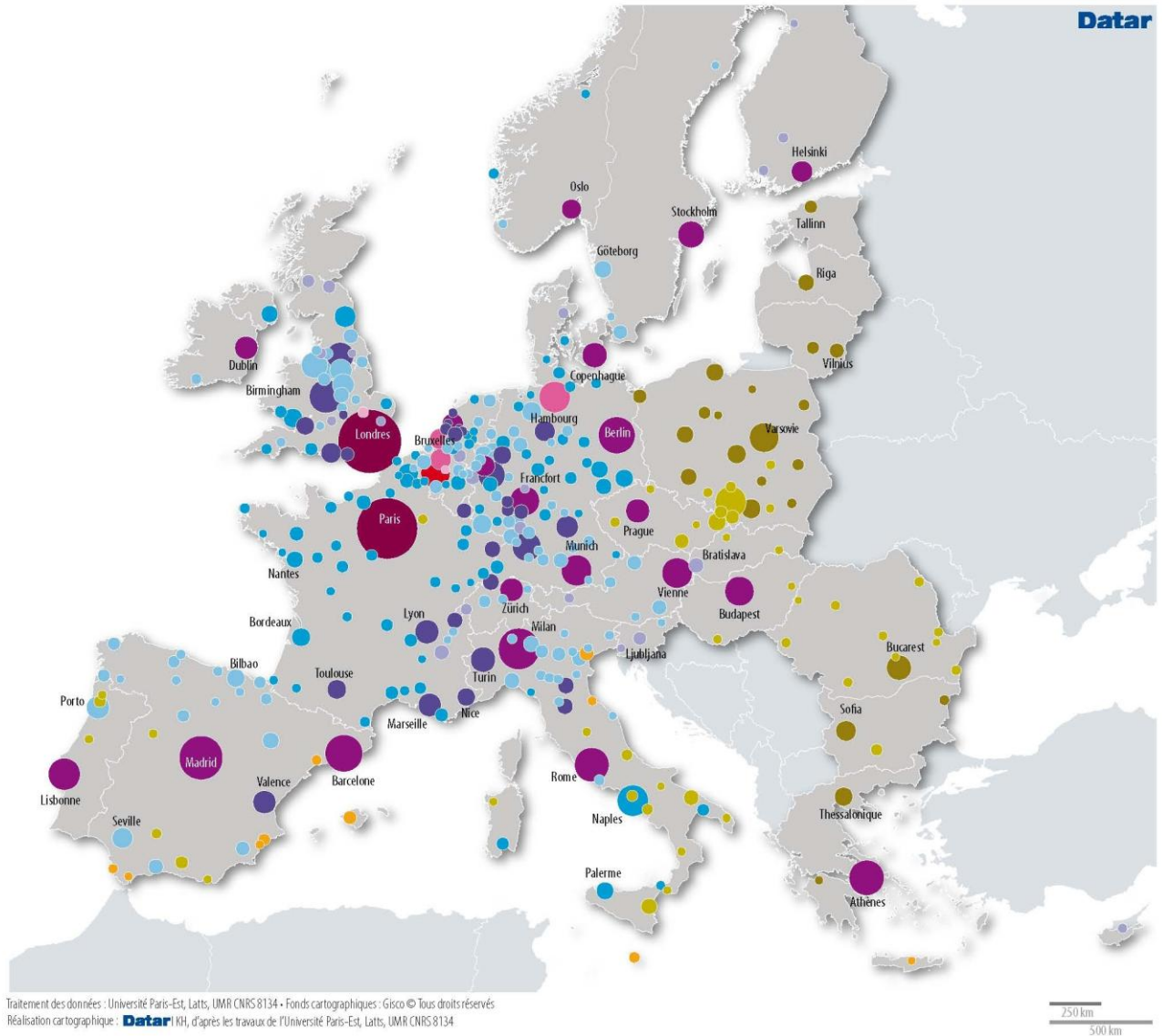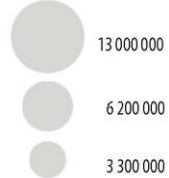

Typologie des aires urbaines européennes (AUF)
Types d'après une classification ascendante hiérarchique (CAH) sur 25 indicateurs

Type 1 Paris et Londres
Type 2 Bruxelles, capitale européenne
Type 3 Métropoles très diversifiées
Type 4 Métropoles portuaires
Type 5 AUF au fort rayonnement scientifique
Type 6 AUF à dominante "affaires"
Type 7 AUF à dominante "université"
Type 8 AUF à dominante "services"
Type 9 AUF à dominante "industrielle"
Type 10 AUF à orientation "touristique"
Type 11 AUF à orientation "commerciale"
Type 12 AUF à orientation "agricole ou minière"

Nombre d'habitants en 2006
(exprimé par aire urbaine fonctionnelle - AUF)

13 000 000
6 200 000
3 300 000

Traitement des données : Université Paris-Est, Latts, UMR CNRS 8134 • Fonds cartographiques : Gisco © Tous droits réservés
Réalisation cartographique : **Datar** I KH, d'après les travaux de l'Université Paris-Est, Latts, UMR CNRS 8134
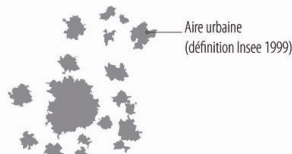
250 km
500 km

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Map 2: the " French urban system " consisted of region-wide networks of urban areas and of transverse links between these systems

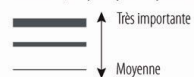Le système urbain national
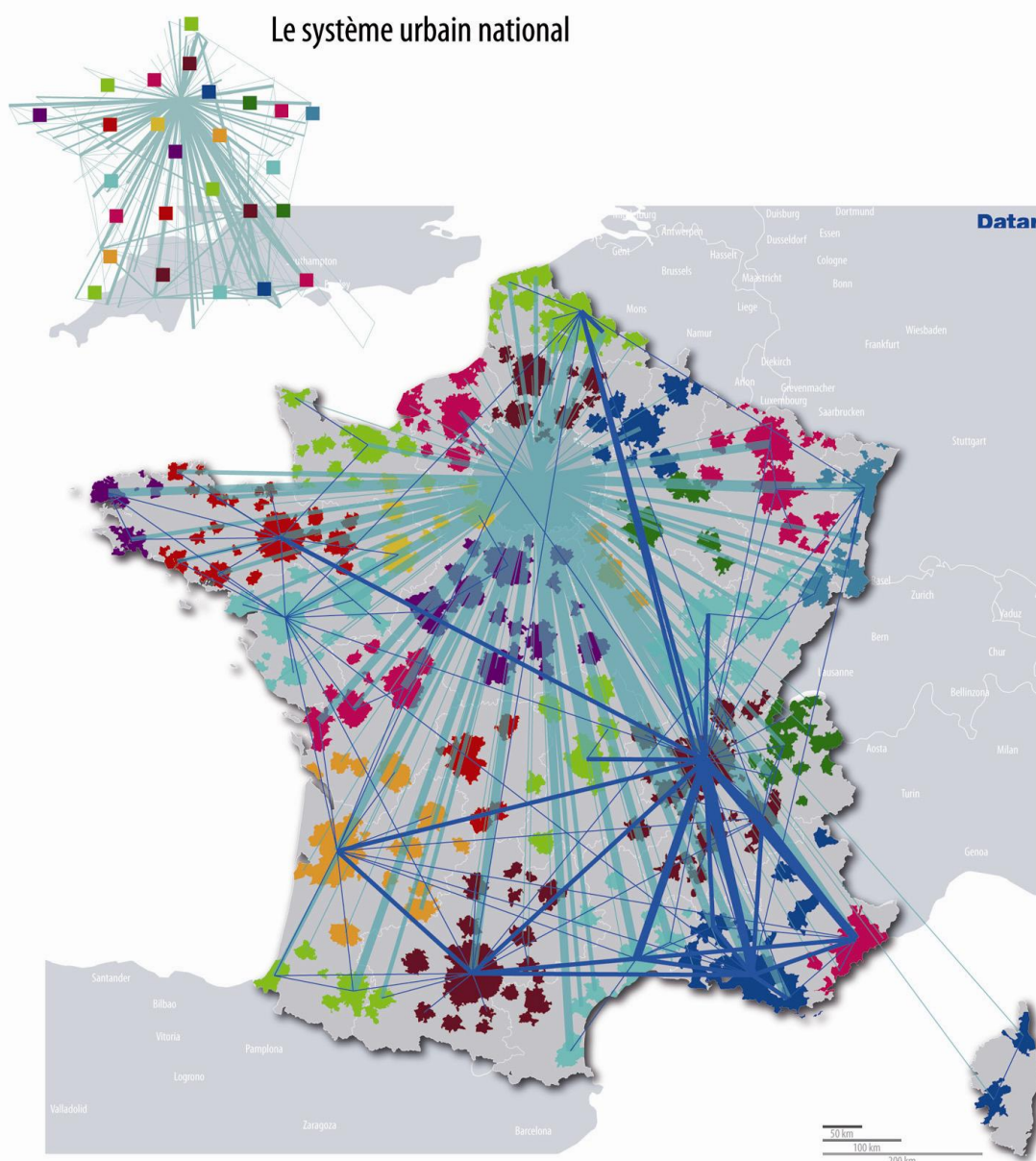
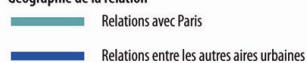Système interurbain régional ou interrégional

Aire urbaine
(définition Insee 1999)

Les 26 systèmes interurbains régionaux ou interrégionaux

Intensité de la relation entre les aires urbaines (flux principaux supérieurs à 16)

Très importante

Moyenne

Géographie de la relation

Relations avec Paris

Relations entre les autres aires urbaines

Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Premier ministre

Datar

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An integrated approach to the way our regions operate

This scientific interpretation of the way regions operate must be evaluated in relation to existing administrative and political structures in France and elsewhere since at least in the short and mid-term, existing institutions will have to acquire this knowledge and develop their public policies.

The challenge in the present period is therefore to inform», to make all this knowledge and material available to influence public-policies at all levels so that system-based approach and metropolitanisation receive more attention and is better taken into account as expressions of the way territories operate.

A lot of work still remains to tailor public policies, which today are often too sector-based, to systemic and global ("integrated") approaches that the development of our metropolitan areas requires. Attempts exist, including legal attempts through legal provisions, to create metropolises and metropolitan functions and to devise metropolitan strategies in Europe, (mainly in Germany, Italy and Spain), Asia (Korea, Japan) and in the USA. Progress has been achieved, including in France, since recently the law to reform local and regional authorities enables some regions to network via "metropolitan hubs" which cluster several inter-communal districts around a regional development project serving "metropolitan interests" (to quote the text of the aforesaid law). The biggest French inter-communal districts may evolve towards a "metropolis" status, except in the Ile-de-France (cover under the Great Paris project).

These "experiments" deserve to be extended since metropolitanisation concerning most regions at different levels of performance and in different modes of expression is at least as important, even more important, than urbanisation for the future of our societies.

The analyses of the DATAR aim at going further in this domain in order not to stay in the diagnosis there but formulate also interpellations (for example by producing strategic reports entitled "Metropolitan territorial review" for the twelve main metropolitan regions in France.

The metropolis: walking the talk

How can we develop our metropolitan areas? It is not enough to take about metropolises; we must also create them through action and on a metropolitan scale.

It's a whole work on the stakes and the means to answer it, and not a single question of thresholds.

To create metropolitan areas we must weigh up the challenges, develop economic, scientific and other forms of excellence on the scale of a large region and in cooperation with other regions. We must go further than the segmentation between global and local since we must be able to articulate the key metropolitan functions in our own metropolitan region, create more jobs, develop business tourism, host major events and develop its economic and scientific potential be drawing on the basic functions of urban regions (land development, access to services, quality drainage and sewage systems). Socio-economic cohesion is also very important: we must not only focus on developing excellence but on cohesion between communities who live in the metropolis.

In summary, the corpus of knowledge gained by the DATAR, that we may call an "metropolitan analytical database", must serve the interests of regional strategies that must be consistent at both local, national and international levels, so that we can set specific objectives and prepare tangible plans such as the effective regional deployment of national and European sector-based policies, renewed and specific contracts on metropolitan issues or, on local scale, plan piggy-backing structures since many local structures (mixed units, economic development structures, transport organising authorities, promotion agencies) have not yet reached the scale of a metropolitan region.

The DATAR is drawing on its database, not only on the principles, broad strategies and through prospective studies but with a view to upgrading tools made available to national and regional stake-holders in keeping with the context and challenges of our metropolitan regions.