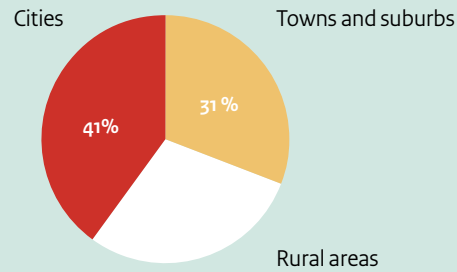
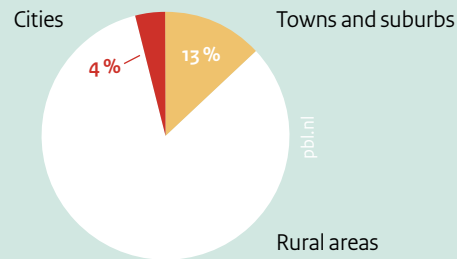


Most Europeans live in urban areas

72% of the EU population lives in urban areas...



...on 17% of the land area.

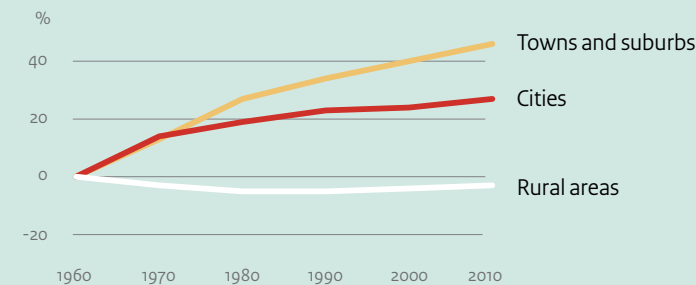


According to the harmonised definition by Eurostat and the OECD, urban areas — defined as cities, towns and suburbs — provide a home to 72% of the EU-28's population; 41% live in cities and 31% in towns and suburbs. Over the past 50 years, the urban population has continued to grow. However, the strongest growth took place in towns and suburbs. Many people have settled in the newly developed residential areas surrounding the existing cities. In contrast to the urban growth rates, the rural population showed a steady decline throughout the past decade. The share of people living in rural areas has decreased from 35% in 1960 to 28% in 2010.

What is the degree of urbanisation?

The degree of urbanisation is a density-based classification originally introduced in 1991 to distinguish densely populated areas with more than 50,000 inhabitants (cities), intermediate urbanised areas (towns and suburbs) and thinly populated areas (rural areas). In 2011, work carried out by the European Commission, Eurostat and the OECD resulted in a harmonised definition of the degree of urbanisation which is based on more precise population data (see appendix).

The urban population is growing.



Degree of urbanisation

Based on population grid from 2006 and Local Administrative Units (LAU2) 2011
Source: Eurostat, JRC, EFGS, Regio-GIS, adaptation by PBL

