



Farland
Future Approaches
to Land Development



Republic of Macedonia
Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy



5th International Workshop
Skopje


21-24 April 2013

Land Abandonment and Shrinking Settlements
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Outline

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2. Drivers of Farm Land Abandonment
3. Drivers of Rural Population Decline
4. Connecting the Two
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 - - Alternative measures
5. Policy Connections



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Introduction, definitions and perspectives

Shrinking rural settlements reflect, amongst other things, a concentration of investment and growth in urban areas, a changing age structure and an increased population mobility both nationally and internationally and..




Land abandonment is traditionally viewed from economic and environmental view, but can also be understood in terms of changing social and cultural ideas and practices.

Farmland Abandonment is a cessation of management which leads to undesirable changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services (Terres and Nisini 2012)

Land use planning that is attentive to the relationship between FLA and settlement dynamics can better serve policies to mitigate adapt and hopefully, develop..




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Select Estimates of Farm Land Abandonment

- Pointereau et al (2008) – Measured FLA as **the loss of Utilized Agricultural Area** in rural areas between Farm Structural Surveys, excluding farmland converted to artificial areas. Poland, France and Spain total UAA loss of 3.3 million hectares, 2% of UAA lost in France, 4% in Poland and 8% in Spain
- Keummerle et al (2008) – used **remote sensing images** from 1986, 1988 and 2000 for study of Carpathian areas. 20.7% agricultural land abandoned in Slovakia and 13.9% in Poland. In Poland, abandonment rates were twice as high on land that was formerly collectivised compared to land that was in private ownership
- Rural Development Plans 2004-06, Poland 17.6% of farm land abandoned, Estonia, 10.1, Latvia 21.1 and Lithuania 10.3%. (IEEP and Veen 2005)
- Between 2008-10, the Hungarian authorities identified approximately 890,000 hectares of land which was no longer worked or was no longer suitable for agricultural activity and therefore neither the owners, nor the users could receive direct payments (European Court of Auditors 2012)



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Drivers of Farm Land Abandonment

Terres and Nisini study created two sets of drivers – those that related to **low farm stability and viability**:

- low farm income
- lack of investments on the farm
- farm holders age
- farm managers qualifications
- low farm size
- Involvement in specific management schemes

Those related to a **negative regional context**

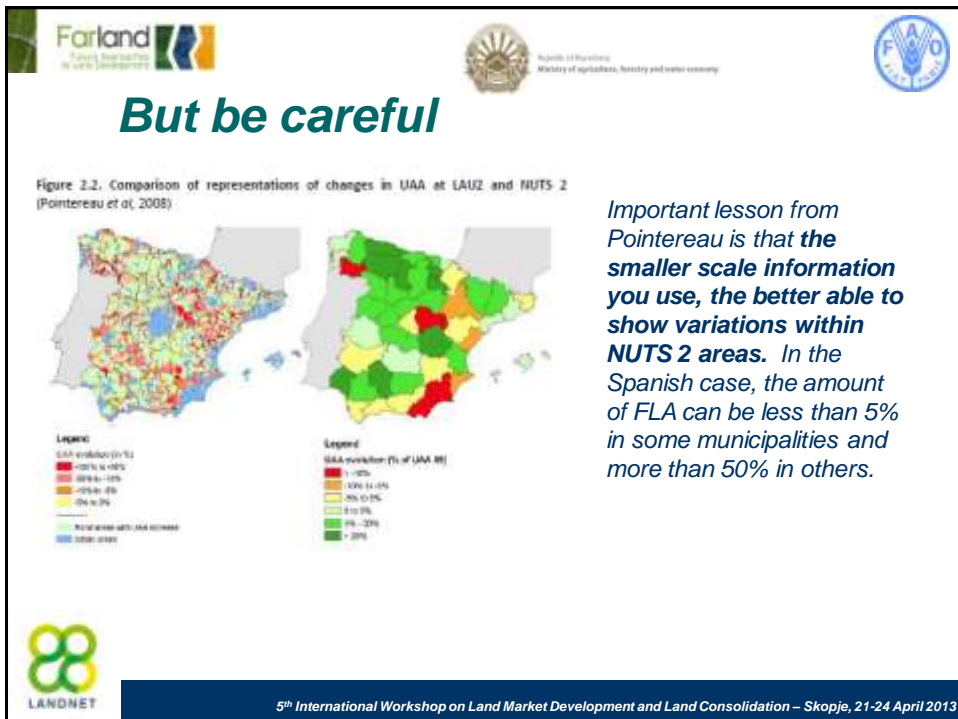
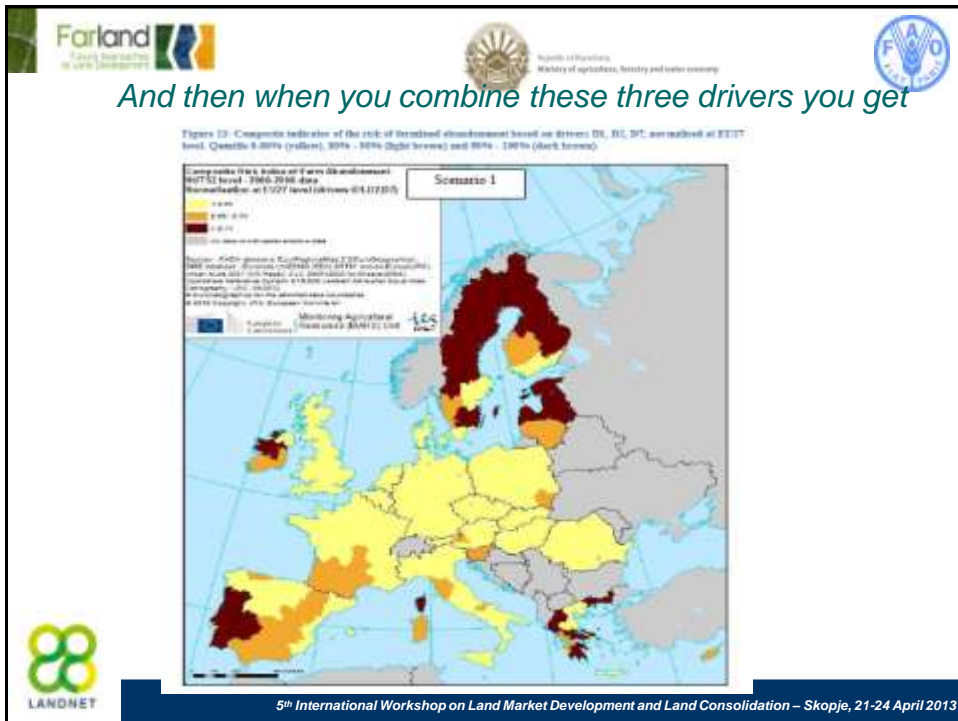
- weak land market
- low population density and remoteness (from market opportunities and services)




Each driver was calculated f policy relevance, analytical soundness, data availability and robustness, the most powerful drivers of FLA were


- - **Weak Land Market**
- - **Low Farm Income**
- - **Low Population Density and Remoteness**

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Weak land market has a negative effect on FLA.









Drivers of Rural Population Decline

Karcagi-Kovats and Katona Kovacs (2012) analysed how National Rural Development Plans and National Sustainable Development Plans interpreted the drivers of rural population decline.

- In EU 15 **ageing population** is most often mentioned
- in EU 12 **unemployment** higher importance
- **Living conditions** second most important consideration in EU12
- **Poverty and low salaries** stressed in nearly 90% of NRDPs in EU12
- Declining agriculture **not the most important factor** given in the NRDPs
- Education – **discrepancy between the actual needs of the economy and the structure of education and training**





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Relative speed of decline

Countries where the rate of rural population loss between 2005-2020 is greater than 20%

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Where decline is between 10-19%

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Where decline is less than 10%

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and Thriving?




*Romanian villages with about 2000 people tend to have the **most return migrants** and the following profile*

- *Heterogeneous from ethnic and religious point of view*
- *Larger proportion of younger people*
- *Higher education stocks*
- *Larger number of former village to city commuters*
- *Return migrants from cities*
- *Integrated into transnational spaces*
- *Located close to cities*
- *Modern roads*

(Sandu 2002)




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Connecting FLA and shrinking settlements

- Some important weaknesses in existing knowledge. FLA – Data not current, imprecise, hard to interpret
- From space, it is **sometimes difficult to detect land use changes**, for instance, the conversion of arable land to grassland. CORINE has **plenty of room of subjective interpretation** (18% (Keenleyside and Tucker 2010))
- Verburg and Overmars (2009) difficult to distinguish abandoned land from CLC data due to its **spectral resemblance to grassland**. Also very difficult to separate **hobby farming** from former agricultural land using land cover data.
- Farm Structural Survey – only every 10 years, but aggregates data from individual to region, also **does not include very small holdings** as well as **common grazing land**. Variability within NUTS 2 lost.
- Farm Accountancy Data Network – Collected every year, based on sample survey of commercial farms, tends to **under-represents the smallest farms, those less than one Economic Size Unit, but it does cover 90% of total UAA and accounts for 90% of agricultural production**.
- LUCAS – Land Use Cover/Area Frame Statistical Survey, **does not include Cyprus, Bulgaria or Romania** but based on combination of satellite images and ground level observation from 230,000 survey points in EU 25




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Misreading rural populations?

Population figures too static. For example, there might not be reliable information on the following that is known outside of the settlement itself

- Migrants
- Regular weekend visitors (Urban Peasants)
- Less regular visitors and other tourists
- Children staying with their relatives
- Abandoned houses
- Family land ownership and use



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Alternative methods for capturing rural population dynamics

Incorporate scattered information on functions, occupancy and visits to villages

- New house construction – **are migrants building in their home villages?** Is upgrading their family home or making an extension for themselves?
- What does information on water, electricity and gas usage say about changing occupancy? Is it characterised by **specific peaks and troughs** that coincide with weekends, national and religious holidays?
- Telecommunications information?
- Road traffic figures, again **what do the flows tell about connectivity** – public and private transport.

Try and aggregate and as with the LUCAS dataset supplement with actual observation points



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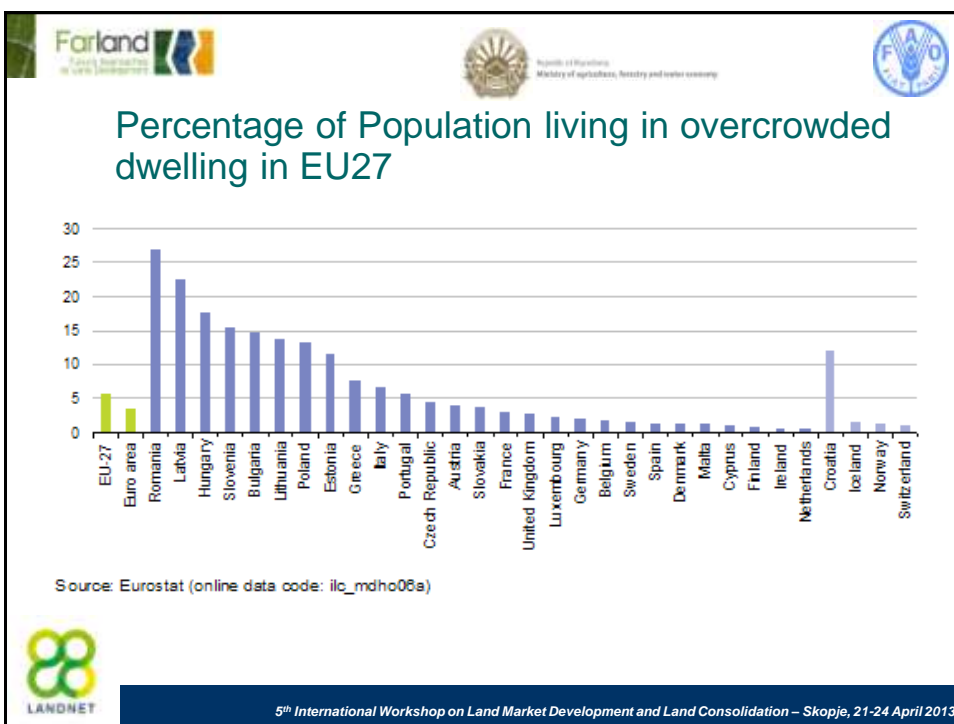



Policy connections

- i) Connecting Land Banking closer with territorial planning groups. Cohesion Funding soon higher than CAP funding
- ii) Foster greater connections between urban and rural via rural services planning ..service clusters around health, education, amenities, logistics and light industries..
- iii) Encourage inward investment by matching migrant remittances for local development funds
- iv) Social housing agencies to deal with unwanted properties and urban overcrowding



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Need for more pro-elderly rural policies?

Few explicit programs dealing with rural elderly even though they own significant portions of (small) land, they live in areas with great deal of population turnover and often with limited contact with children

- Land for Pensions
- Village Relocations?
- Mixed residential institutions – school boarders with older full time and part-time residents




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Conclusions

- Similar techniques to understand nature of land and settlement marginalisation?
- Draw on local, regional, national and private sources, supplemented by on the spot verification.
- Potential use in territorial planning
- Will it fail for want of co-ordination? Who will most want to use it?



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Thank you for your attention



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Group questions

- What are the most promising sources of information on farm land abandonment?
- What are the most reliable sources of information on rural population changes?
- Name two other sources of information that would help us better understand these changes.



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