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European Cities and Regions Dataset 1960-2005:

Methods and Sources

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the procedures followed by the CPPR Project on *European Cities and Regions: Changing Regional Imbalances* to define consistent spatial units and to identify suitable data sources for analysing long-run European city trajectories. This project's broad aims are to analyse the diverse trajectories and variable performance of cities across Western and Eastern Europe, and to draw out the implications for urban and regional development policy. In order to achieve these objectives, during the 2005-2006 period, an original and extensive dataset was assembled on city performance across Europe covering demographic and economic variables. The dataset on European cities and regions is used to describe the changing fortunes of European free-standing cities and metropolitan areas over the last three-four decades. It is also used to explain the differences in city growth rates over time and in different regions and nations across the continent.

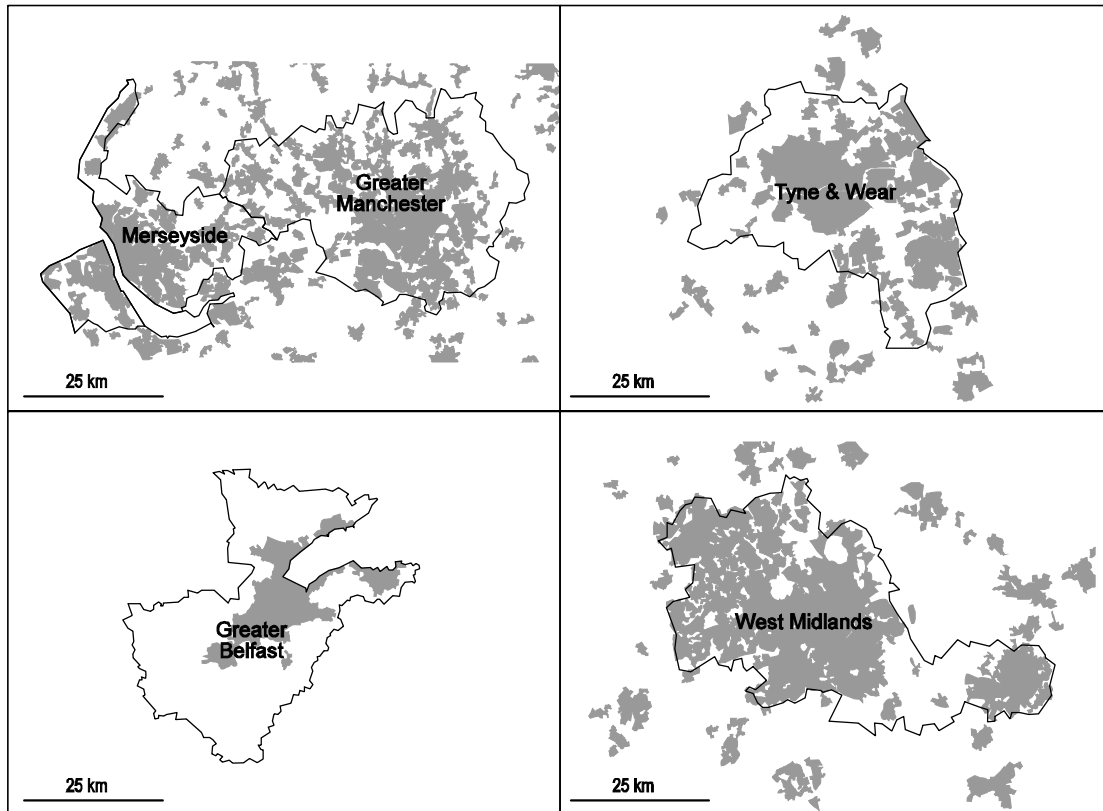
2. DEFINITION OF THE CITY

The extensive temporal and geographical scope of the analysis meant that cities had to be defined clearly and consistently in terms of internal structure, external boundary and size thresholds. The relevant concept is the commonsense idea of a continuous built-up area larger than a certain population size - a concentrated spatial form of socio-economic development. This is a physical and functional definition (the *de facto* city) rather than an administrative or legal one (the *de jure* city) (Parr, 2007). It covers the continuous or near-continuous territory devoted to land uses such as housing, industrial and commercial activity, transport, education and other public services and spaces. In larger urban areas it is equivalent to the idea of a conurbation or metropolitan area. The concern is with change in the city as a whole, rather than particular parts such as the core area or suburban ring. This avoids the possibility of population decline appearing to be a problem where it simply reflects rising incomes or falling household size and people choosing to live at lower densities in the suburbs.

The task was simplest in about a dozen countries where the national statistics agencies provide consistent population figures for spatial units that equate with continuous built-up areas. In these cases we used the national definitions of cities, after checking

that they were indeed appropriate, and making minor adjustments if not (see below). They include ‘census urban agglomerations’ in Austria and Greece, ‘principal urban areas’ in Cyprus, ‘boroughs’ (*arrondissements*) for most cities in Belgium, ‘urban poles’ for most French cities (and *arrondissements* in a few cases where the urban pole extended well beyond the built-up area), ‘metropolitan agglomerations’ in the Netherlands, ‘urban localities/areas’ for most Scandinavian cities, ‘agglomerations’ in Switzerland, and former ‘metropolitan counties’ in the UK and Ireland (for some examples, see Map A.1). In most cases the boundaries of these entities were enlarged over time to reflect the physical growth of the cities.

In the other countries we had to construct continuous built-up areas ourselves. Since different national and international data sources were used, the basic geographical building blocks had to be simple and broadly comparable. The spatial units with the most readily available data are local authorities. The point of departure in most countries was all urban local authority districts with a population of over 200,000 in 2000, or the closest available year, using population census data. To assess whether the administrative boundary of a qualifying city covered the whole built-up area, a series of topographic maps of Europe were consulted along with the national and European statistical agencies’ maps of administrative territories (Eurostat, 2004; topographic maps at www.expedia.co.uk). In cases of ‘under-bounding’, where the administrative boundaries did not encompass the continuous built-up area, the core local authority district was amalgamated with adjoining districts that clearly formed part of the larger urban area. For example, we constructed ‘Greater Belfast’ by amalgamating six adjacent local government districts of Belfast, Castlereagh, North Down, Lisburn, Carrickfergus, and Newtownabbey (**Map 1**). In some cases the NUTS-3 region was used instead of the local authority where it provided a better fit to the built-up area or local authority data was unavailable.



Map 1: Examples of different city definitions.

The size threshold was cities with a population of over 200,000 in the year 2000, or the closest available year, using population census data. This figure is inevitably somewhat arbitrary, although it accords with several previous studies, as does the timing of its application (towards the end of the time series) (van den Berg *et al*, 1982; Cheshire and Hay, 1989). At least three previous studies in Britain used a higher threshold of 250,000 (Begg *et al*, 1986; Fothergill *et al*, 1985; Turok and Edge, 1999) and the recent State of the English Cities report used a lower threshold of 125,000 (Parkinson *et al*, 2006). Clearly, there is no single correct answer.

In places where the population of the core local authority was below 200,000 in 2000, but it clearly formed part of a larger built-up area, that settlement was included on the list of cities (for example, Middlesbrough had 141,000 residents while Teesside conurbation had 464,000; Liège in Belgium had 186,000 while *Arrondissement de Liège* had 585,000). Where there was an established local name for the larger settlement, this was used (for example, Tyne and Wear covering the conurbation

around Newcastle upon Tyne, and Ruhr District Conurbation around the Ruhr valley). Otherwise, ‘greater’ was added to the core city name to distinguish the larger settlement from the core district (for example, Greater Barcelona and Greater Toulouse). The local authorities that were not contiguous with other urban districts or that covered the whole built-up area were classified as freestanding cities and their conventional city names were used (for example, Vilnius in Lithuania, Århus in Denmark and Swansea in the UK).

Recognising that the physical growth of cities can be substantial over time, and that administrative boundaries can alter radically too, we took a painstaking case-by-case approach and examined every city’s continuous built-up area in the early 2000s. The boundary drawn around each city enabled suburban expansion and edge city growth and consolidation to be captured. Similar approaches have been used before in academic research (Turok and Edge, 1999), data collection (Brinkhoff, 2006), the European Urban Audit (European Commission, 2004) and the recent State of the English Cities report (Parkinson *et al*, 2006). Brinkhoff’s work on the world’s largest agglomerations and the Urban Audit defined some of their cities on the basis of built-up areas and others on the basis of travel-to-work areas. The Urban Audit is based on a sample of cities within each country and the lower size threshold varies between countries.¹ Brinkhoff’s urban agglomerations in Europe are overlapping and not mutually exclusive. Our procedure was similar to the State of English Cities report, except that we took a broader view of selected conurbations and did not, for example, separate Birkenhead from Merseyside, Bradford from Leeds, or Bolton and Rochdale from Greater Manchester.

An alternative approach is to define cities on the basis of ‘functional urban regions’ (van den Berg *et al*, 1982; Cheshire and Hay, 1989), which are similar to travel-to-work areas but with cities always at the core. These can be very much larger than built-up areas because they include the commuter hinterlands of employment centres, including satellite towns. This is a useful concept for capturing the economic interactions between the city and its surrounding territory. However, it is a region and not a city. A study of the demographic trajectory of cities as discrete entities should arguably focus on the continuous physical area, as the city is conventionally defined (Parr, 2007). The definition of travel-to-work areas is also technically demanding and

requires regular updating in the light of changing commuting patterns. Consequently the task has been completed in very few countries. Several urban researchers have resorted instead to using NUTS-3 regions to encompass the surrounding commuter settlements of major employment centres. The NUTS Regulation lays down a minimum population threshold of 150,000 and a maximum of 800,000 for the average size of NUTS-3 regions in each country. Despite aiming to ensure “that regions of comparable size all appear at the same NUTS level, each level still contains regions which differ greatly in terms of area, population, economic weight ...” (Eurostat, 2004, p.13). For example, NUTS-3 regions range from 19,000 to 5.2 million population, and from just 12 sq. km. to 99,000 sq. km. (Eurostat, 2004, p.24-25). The indiscriminate use of NUTS-3 regions as the building blocks for every city raises bigger concerns about inconsistency between countries.

Europe was defined according to the physical meaning of the continent in order to avoid political confusion and cultural sensitivities. This is normally taken to include the land area between the Arctic Ocean, Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean, Black and Caspian Seas. The eastern boundary runs along the Ural Mountains and the Ural River. There are 36 independent states covered by this territory.

The 310 cities that emerged range in size from Bila Tserkva in Ukraine (with 200,000 population) to the Greater London metropolitan area (with nearly 10.6 million). Three clear size bands are apparent:

- (i) 145 ‘small’ cities (47% of all) with between 200,000 and 400,000 people;
- (ii) 100 ‘medium-sized’ cities (32%) with between 400,000 and 1 million; and
- (iii) 65 ‘large’ cities (21%) with a population of over 1 million.

The three capitals of Greater London (10.6m), Greater Moscow (10.4m) and Greater Paris (9.6m) are exceptionally large. In terms of political-economy, 160 cities are in Western Europe, defined as traditional market-oriented economies, including Austria (4 cities), Belgium (5), Cyprus (1), Denmark (2), Finland (3), France (30), Greece (2), Ireland (1), Italy (16), Netherlands (9), Norway (2), Portugal (2), Sweden (3), Switzerland (5), Spain (18), the UK (29) and the former West Germany (28 excluding West Berlin). Former state socialist societies of Eastern Europe have 150 cities,

including Albania (1), Belarus (7), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Bulgaria (3), Croatia (1), Czech Republic (3), the former East Germany (8 including Greater Berlin), Estonia (1), Hungary (2), Latvia (1), Lithuania (2), Macedonia (1), Moldova (1), Poland (16), Romania (11), Russia (57), Serbia and Montenegro (1), Slovakia (2), Slovenia (1) and Ukraine (31). Table 1 provides the full list of cities covered by the dataset.

Table 1: Europe’s 310 cities above 200,000 population in 2000, by country, ranked nationally according to the size of each core city.

Albania	Denmark	24. Greater Avignon
1. Tirana	1. Greater Copenhagen	25. Greater Le Havre
Austria	2. Århus	26. Greater Dijon
1. Greater Vienna	Estonia	27. Greater Mulhouse
2. Greater Graz	1. Tallinn	28. Greater Angers
3. Greater Linz	Finland	29. Greater Reims
4. Greater Salzburg	1. Greater Helsinki	30. Greater Brest
Belarus	2. Greater Tampere	Germany
1. Minsk	3. Greater Turku	<i>West:</i>
2. Homel	France	1. Greater Hamburg
3. Mahilëu	1. Greater Paris	2. Greater Munich
4. Vicebsk	2. Greater Marseille	3. Greater Cologne
5. Hrodna	3. Greater Lyon	4. Greater Frankfurt
6. Brest	4. Greater Lille	5. The Ruhr District
7. Babruisk	5. Greater Nice	Conurbation (Greater
Belgium	6. Greater Toulouse	Essen)
1. Greater Brussels	7. Greater Bordeaux	6. Greater Stuttgart
2. Greater Antwerp	8. Greater Nantes	7. Greater Düsseldorf
3. Greater Ghent	9. Greater Toulon	8. Greater Bremen
4. Greater Charleroi	10. Greater Lens	9. Greater Hanover
5. Greater Liège	11. Greater Strasbourg	10. Greater Nuremberg
Bosnia and	12. Greater Grenoble	11. Wuppertal
Herzegovina	13. Greater Rouen	12. Bielefeld
1. Sarajevo	14. Greater	13. Greater Bonn
Bulgaria	Valenciennes	14. Greater Mannheim
1. Sofia	15. Greater Nancy	15. Greater Karlsruhe
2. Plovdiv	16. Greater Metz	16. Greater Wiesbaden
3. Varna	17. Greater Tours	17. Münster
Croatia	18. Greater Saint-	18. Mönchengladbach
1. Zagreb	Étienne	19. Greater Augsburg
Cyprus	19. Greater Montpellier	20. Greater Aachen
1. Greater Nicosia	20. Greater Rennes	21. Brunswick
Czech Republic	21. Greater Orléans	22. Greater Krefeld
1. Prague	22. Greater Béthune	23. Greater Kiel
2. Brno	23. Greater Clermont-	24. Greater Lübeck
3. Ostrava	Ferrand	

25. Freiburg im Breisgau
26. Greater Saarbrücken
27. Greater Kassel
28. Greater Ulm
- East:*
1. Greater Berlin
 2. Greater Leipzig
 3. Greater Dresden
 4. Chemnitz
 5. Halle An der Saale
 6. Magdeburg
 7. Erfurt
 8. Rostock
- Greece**
1. Greater Athens
 2. Greater Thessaloniki
- Hungary**
1. Budapest
 2. Debrecen
- Ireland**
1. Greater Dublin
- Italy**
1. Greater Rome
 2. Greater Milan
 3. Greater Naples
 4. Greater Turin
 5. Greater Palermo
 6. Greater Genoa
 7. Greater Bologna
 8. Greater Florence
 9. Greater Bari
 10. Greater Catania
 11. Greater Venice
 12. Greater Verona
 13. Greater Messina
 14. Greater Padova
 15. Greater Trieste
 16. Greater Taranto
- Latvia**
1. Rīga
- Lithuania**
1. Vilnius
 2. Kaunas
- Macedonia**
1. Skopje
- Moldova**
1. Chişinău
- Netherlands**
1. Greater Amsterdam
 2. Greater Rotterdam
 3. The Greater Hague
 4. Greater Utrecht
 5. Greater Eindhoven
 6. Greater Leiden
 7. Greater Dordrecht
 8. Greater Tilburg
 9. Greater Heerlen
- Norway**
1. Greater Oslo
 2. Bergen
- Poland**
1. Warsaw
 2. Lodz
 3. Krakow
 4. Wrocław
 5. Poznań
 6. Gdańsk
 7. Szczecin
 8. Bydgoszcz
 9. Lublin
 10. The Upper Silesian Conurbation (Greater Katowice)
 11. Białystok
 12. Gdynia
 13. Częstochowa
 14. Radom
 15. Kielce
 16. Toruń
- Portugal**
1. Greater Lisbon
 2. Greater Porto
- Romania**
1. Bucharest
 2. Iaşi
 3. Cluj-Napoca
 4. Timișoara
 5. Constanța
 6. Craiova
 7. Galați
 8. Braşov
 9. Ploiești
 10. Brăila
 11. Oradea
- Russia**
1. Moscow
 2. St. Petersburg
 3. Nizhniy Novgorod
 4. Samara
 5. Kazan'
 6. Rostov-on-Don
 7. Ufa
 8. Greater Volgograd
 9. Perm'
 10. Saratov
 11. Voronezh
 12. Togliatti
 13. Ul'ianovsk
 14. Izhevsk
 15. Yaroslavl'
 16. Orenburg
 17. R'iazan'
 18. Penza
 19. Naberezhnye Chelny
 20. Lipetsk
 21. Astrakhan'
 22. Tula
 23. Kirov
 24. Cheboksary
 25. Ivanovo
 26. Br'iansk
 27. Kaliningrad
 28. Kursk
 29. Tver'
 30. Archangel
 31. Belgorod
 32. Murmansk
 33. Kaluga
 34. Orel
 35. Smolensk
 36. Vladimir
 37. Cherepovets
 38. Saransk
 39. Tambov
 40. Vologda
 41. Taganrog
 42. Kostroma
 43. Petrozavodsk
 44. Sterlitamak
 45. Dzerzhinsk
 46. Yoshkar-Ola
 47. Orsk
 48. Syktyvkar
 49. Nizhnekamsk
 50. Rybinsk
 51. Shakhty
 52. Great Novgorod

53. Staryi Oskol		
54. Pskov		
55. Severodvinsk		
56. Balakovo		
Serbia and Montenegro		
1. Belgrade		
Slovakia		
1. Bratislava		
2. Košice		
Slovenia		
1. Ljubljana		
Spain		
1. Greater Madrid		
2. Greater Barcelona		
3. Greater Valencia		
4. Greater Seville		
5. Zaragoza		
6. Málaga		
7. Murcia		
8. Palma de Mallorca		
9. Greater Bilbao		
10. Valladolid		
11. Córdoba		
12. Alicante		
13. Vigo		
14. Gijón		
15. La Coruña		
16. Granada		
17. Vitoria-Gasteiz		
18. Oviedo		
Sweden		
1. Greater Stockholm		
2. Greater Gothenburg		
3. Greater Malmö		
Switzerland		
1. Greater Zurich		
2. Greater Geneva		
3. Greater Basel		
4. Greater Bern		
5. Greater Lausanne		
	Ukraine	
	1. Kiev	
	2. Kharkiv	
	3. Dnipropetrovs'k	
	4. Odesa	
	5. Greater Donets'k	
	6. Zaporizhzhia	
	7. L'viv	
	8. Kryvyi Rih	
	9. Mykolaiv	
	10. Mariupol'	
	11. Luhans'k	
	12. Vinnytsia	
	13. Simferopol'	
	14. Sevastopol'	
	15. Kherson	
	16. Poltava	
	17. Chernihiv	
	18. Cherkasy	
	19. Symu	
	20. Horlivka	
	21. Zhytomyr	
	22. Dniprodzerzhyns'k	
	23. Kirovohrad	
	24. Khmel'nyts'kyi	
	25. Rivne	
	26. Chernivtsi	
	27. Kremenchuk	
	28. Ternopil'	
	29. Ivano-Frankivs'k	
	30. Luts'k	
	31. Bila Tserkva	
	United Kingdom	
	1. Greater London	
	2. West Midlands Metropolitan County (Greater Birmingham)	
	3. West Yorkshire Metropolitan County (Greater Leeds-Bradford)	
	4. Greater Glasgow	
	5. South Yorkshire Metropolitan County (Greater Sheffield)	
	6. Greater Edinburgh	
	7. Merseyside Metropolitan County (Greater Liverpool)	
	8. Greater Manchester Metropolitan County	
	9. Greater Bristol	
	10. Greater Cardiff	
	11. Greater Leicester	
	12. Greater Belfast	
	13. Greater Nottingham	
	14. Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County (Greater Newcastle)	
	15. Greater Hull	
	16. Greater Brighton	
	17. Greater Stoke-on-Trent	
	18. Plymouth	
	19. Derby	
	20. Swansea	
	21. Greater Southampton	
	22. Greater Aberdeen	
	23. Greater Portsmouth	
	24. Greater Bournemouth	
	25. Teesside Conurbation (Greater Middlesbrough)	
	26. Greater Reading	
	27. Greater Blackpool	
	28. Greater Luton	
	29. Medway Towns	

The 200,000 population threshold meant the exclusion of very small countries, dependent territories and islands, including Andorra, Faeroe Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Iceland, Jersey, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Isle of Man, Monaco and San Marino. Istanbul was excluded because it is the only city in Turkey that lies

(partly) in Europe compared with 28 others located in Asia. Russia also spans the two continents: 57 of its cities located within the physical entity of Europe were included and 36 cities located in Asia were excluded. Oral and Atyrau – Kazakstan’s two cities situated on the Ural River, the traditional physiographic boundary between Europe and Asia, were below the 200,000 population size threshold.

3. DATA SOURCES AND POPULATION ESTIMATES

There were three main sources of demographic statistics used in the study. The core population data was derived from the most authoritative and regular sources – annual statistical yearbooks and key population and vital statistics published between 1960 and 2005 by the 39 national statistical agencies and general register offices, routinely up-dated through their on-line databases.ⁱⁱ In addition, we used the annual international collections of national population statistics – the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* series (various years) and the UN International Statistical Institute’s *International Statistical Yearbook of Large Towns* (ISI 1962, 1963, 1964, 1970), which were especially helpful in obtaining population data for smaller countries and early historical periods. We also used Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the European Communities), especially its population collection within the *Main Demographic Indicators*

(http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136162,0_45572076&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL; latest accessed date: 14 February 2006). A complete list of 123 main data sources is provided further below.

Given the long timescale covered by the study, we felt that a five-year interval was sufficient to produce a manageable set of 10 cross-sectional times-series population data. In doing so we faced three kinds of data-related problems. First, there was missing data, especially in countries where there was no tradition of producing annual or mid-census population estimates for cities or urban areas, including France and most of southern and south east Europe. Second, there were discontinued data series, mostly involving local authority units and urban agglomerations where a boundary change occurred with no reliable official estimates linking the previous and new population figures. For example, Antwerp went from a population of 196,000 in 1980 to 490,000 in 1985. The third and biggest challenge involved countries with

comprehensive administrative reforms in the 1960s and 1970s resulting in a complete redrawing of municipal boundaries that we were seeking to use as building blocks to construct the built-up area.

Depending on the direction of the population estimate needed (a backward or forward projection), the length of the data gap and the level of the local authority or regional unit for which regular and consistent data was available, simple mathematical formulas were used to generate estimates in a consistent way. The basic principle was to consider the continuous built-up area as an intermediate level between the core local authority unit (in under-bounded cities) and a wider city-region (such as relevant NUTS-level regions of proportional size). We estimated the missing annual population growth rate for a city as the mean of the observed growth rate for the lower-level authority and the rate for the larger statistical region. For example, we were able to estimate the population of ‘our’ Great London metropolitan area in 1960, 1965 and 1970 on the basis of the growth rate of Greater London and the old statistical regions of South-East and East Anglia (minus Greater London), before using our main procedure of amalgamating the relevant core city population figures (Great London in this case) with adjoining urban districts into a continuous built-up area.

The main disadvantage of the amalgamation procedure used here is the inclusion of large, predominantly rural adjoining districts in the population of some cities where no smaller lower-level units existed in the vicinity of the core city to capture suburban growth beyond its administrative boundary. For example, the population of the city of Ulm (West Germany) had to be combined with the rural district (*Landkreise*) of Neu-Ulm to capture long-term demographic changes in the Ulm metropolitan area in a way that was consistent with the procedure used elsewhere. In some cases, therefore, our definition of the city is better suited to examining growth *trends* than to comparing its actual size with other cities.

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NOTES

ⁱ The Urban Audit (2004) aimed to include 258 cities in 25 EU member states and 2 applicant countries with data at three points in time (1991, 1996, and 2001). By June 2006, this full series of population data was available for 174 cities and partial data for another 72 cities. Of these 246 cities, 139 had a population above 200,000, 70 had between 100-200,000 and 37 had less than 100,000. The smallest settlement was Campobasso in Italy with 50,752 residents in 2001. All 139 of the Urban Audit cities with over 200,000 people were included in the database of 310 cities that we assembled.

ⁱⁱ This figure includes the statistical agency of the former GDR as well as separate general register offices for Scotland and Northern Ireland.