

22.- Number of second homes

Key message

- The majority of second homes are located in coastal areas
- Recreational areas and major cities tend to attract the development of second homes



Vacation dwellings at Marsalforn Bay on the Island of Gozo (Photo: MEPA database)

Why monitor the number of second homes?

This indicator belongs to the set of 3 indicators that monitor the progress towards achieving the fifth goal for coastal sustainability set out in the EU Recommendation concerning the implementation of ICZM: to reduce social exclusion and promote social cohesion in coastal communities.

The indicator has 1 measurement: 22.1. ratio of first to second homes. Second homes at the coast can have significant socio-economic impacts on the local communities as demand for second homes may increase property value thus while this may help to revitalise certain coastal settlements, it may lead to unaffordable housing for local residents, especially young couples, thus driving local communities away. Second homes may also result in a migration of retired home owners to gradually change the social structure over time, putting a greater demand for services and infrastructure catering for the elderly. From an environmental perspective, the demand for land to accommodate second homes is inevitable; if this demand is met through re-use of developed land rather than previously undeveloped land, the impacts could be considerably less.



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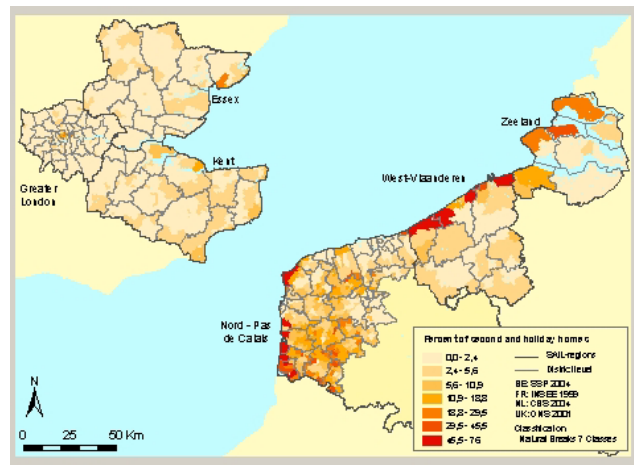


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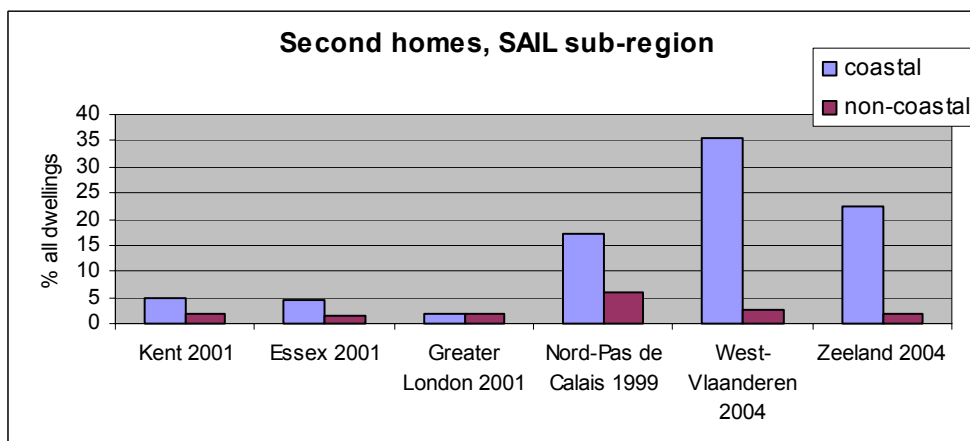
Results and assessment

What does the indicator show from European to local level?

Whilst no data on second homes exists at the European level, data from the Southern North Sea region illustrates that most second homes are along coastal areas, with significantly higher numbers for the coastal areas on Nord-Pas-de Calais, Zeeland and West-Flanders, respectively. While 20% of the total housing available at the Southern North Sea coast are estimated to be second and holiday homes, only 2% of all dwellings in the hinterland are use temporarily or for vacation. In some sea side resorts percentages of second and holiday homes can reach 75%.

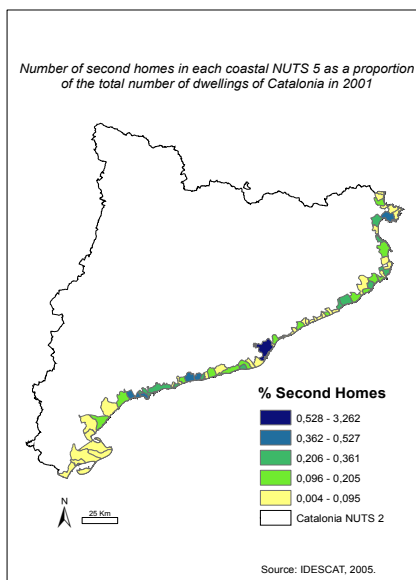


Source: UK ONS 2001; INSEE 1999; SSP 2004; CBS 2004

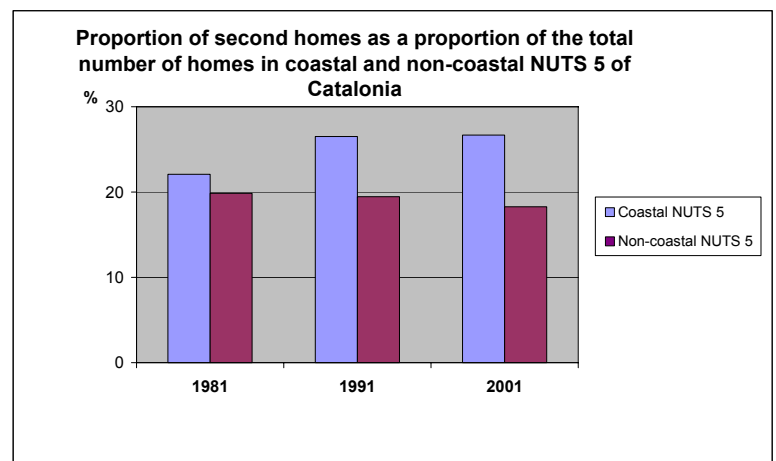


Source: UK ONS 2001; INSEE 1999; SSP 2004; CBS 2004

This trend is also present along the Catalan coast which experienced a constant increase in second homes over a 20 year period since 1981. In 2001 second homes constituted 20% of the total homes in coastal areas. The focus of second homes is around the major coastal cites with more than 50% of all second homes in Catalonia being located in Barcelona, Tarragona and Girona.



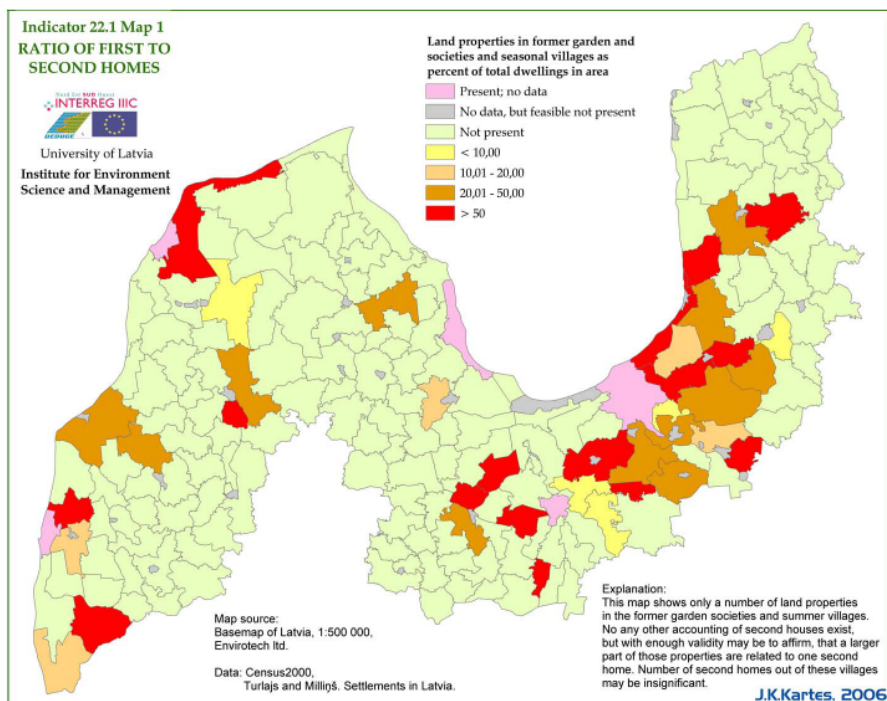
Source: IDESCAT, 2005



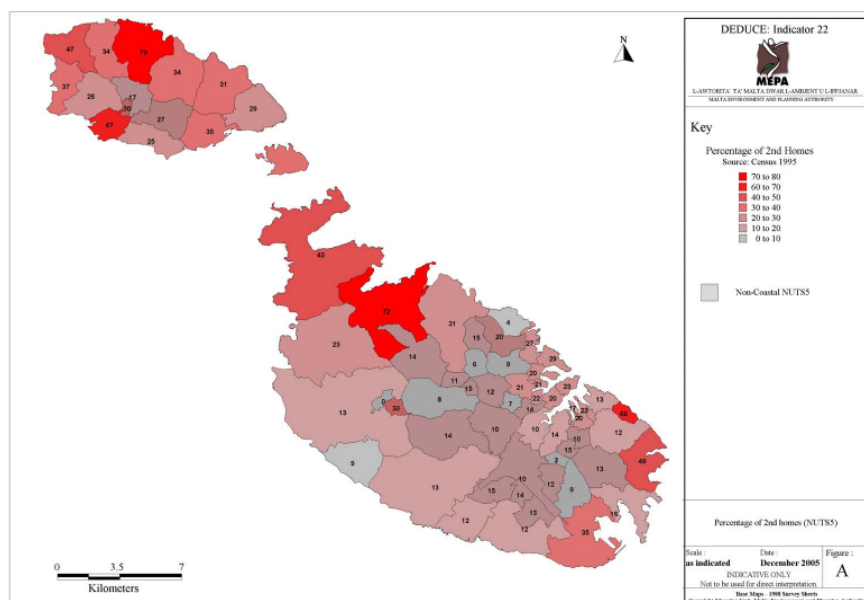
Source: IDESCAT, 2005

Results and assessment

This tendency for second homes to be concentrated around major cities is somewhat mirrored along the Latvian coast, where areas for the development of seasonal facilities were designated in the 1970s and 1980s. These garden societies and seasonal villages have not all been developed but they provide an indication on the trends for development of seasonal facilities along coastal areas.



Source: Central statistical bureau of Latvia, 2000

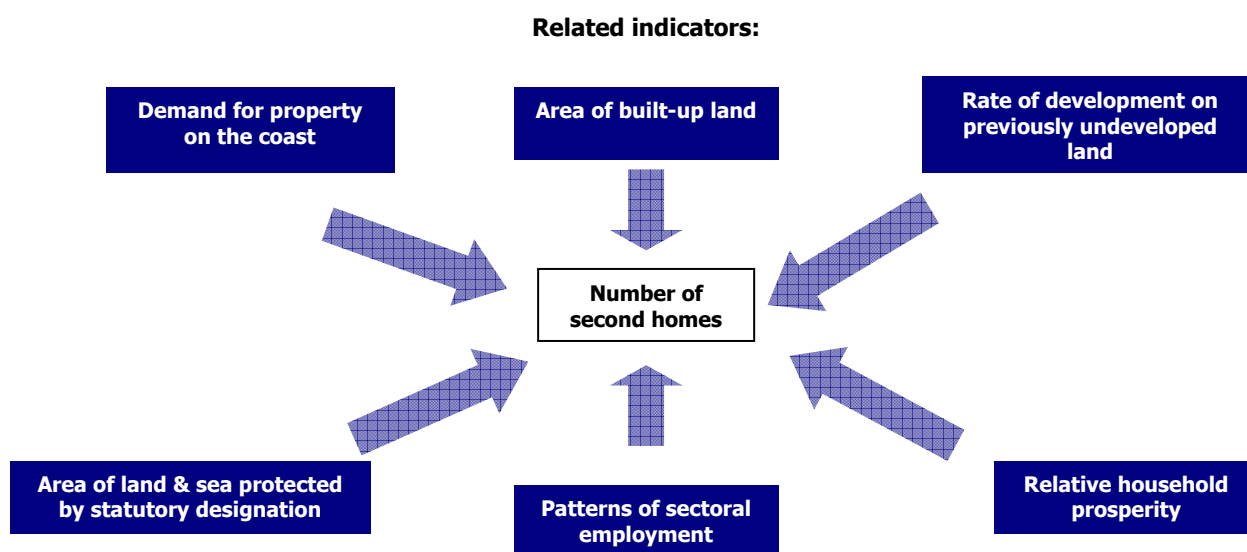


Source: NSO, 1995

From a small island perspective the distribution of second homes in Malta is also along coastal NUTS 5, suggesting that second homes are built primarily as vacation homes, with most development occurring in coastal NUTS 5 areas close to beaches or tourist resorts. Over the second half of the 20th century, coastal locations with second or vacation homes were transformed into permanent residential areas, changing the socio-economic infrastructure of these areas and increasing pressure for more second homes in new areas.

What are the implications for planning and managing the coastal zone?

This particular indicator can provide a picture on whether coastal areas are being sought for vacation purposes or not, as opposed to the hinterland. From the results obtained through DEDUCE it seems that coastal areas are in demand for second homes, with an indication that such areas tend to be transformed as permanent residential localities either for the more affluent members of the local communities or for retiring migrants. This would imply a higher demand for infrastructure facilities and services that cater for different social groups, namely the elderly. Recreational areas and major cities tend to attract the development of second homes and in addition, the phenomenon of second homes may well be related to real estate investment opportunities, which would have a larger impact on the coast as property value and possibly building densities increase augmenting the pressures on coastal systems and uses. This indicator, together with the related set of environmental, economic and social indicators can provide a holistic view on coastal development which could enable the preparation of specific planning policies targeted to meet the demand for second homes. Such policies could aim to secure that second homes are developed in already developed sites, and ensure that social issues are being considered in redevelopment projects to secure an adequate amount of affordable housing for the local community. This would be in line with the EU Recommendation's strategic direction for ICZM which should support sustainable economic opportunities and a functioning social and cultural system in local communities.



Further work needed

The indicator is based on census data which is collected at 10-year intervals, and not at the same time for different countries. To enable a more real-time evaluation of trends and a quicker policy response, it would be ideal to have more frequently collected data, perhaps even at an annual rate. From a spatial point of view, gathering data at the NUTS 5 level may provide for a fuzzy picture of what is happening on the coast, whereas a buffer of 0-1km, or even less, from the coastline may provide more focus on the issue of second homes and their related socio-economic and environmental impacts on coastal areas and communities.

Data sources

Province of West-Flanders and local network of partners

West-Flanders : Steunpunt Welzijn, Provincie West-Vlaanderen. 2003, 2004

Nord-Pas-de-Calais : Institut nationale de la statistique et des études économiques – Insee. 1968, 1975, 1982, 1990, 1999

Zeeland: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek – CBS. 1992-2004

UK: Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2001 Census data

Department of Environment and Housing, Catalonia

IDESCAT (Statistical Institute of Catalonia) 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census data.

Malta Environment & Planning Authority

National Statistics Office. 1995 Census data

University of Latvia

Turlajs J., Milliņš G. Latvijas apdzīvotās vietas [Settlements in Latvia]. Jāņa sēta: Rīga, 1998, 271 pp, with maps.
Census 2000. Central statistical bureau of Latvia.

Reliability of the indicator

Most of the data is collated by national statistical institutions and is considered to be reliable however the lack of specific data on vacant dwellings and/or second homes implies that the final data sets in certain cases are representative estimates. Given that the indicator relies on census data collected every 10 years, not all the results may represent the current situation.



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