



Key sustainability issues and the spatial classification of sensitive regions in Europe

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Severe and cross-cutting environmental, social and economic changes have particular impact in sensitive regions and the geographical delineation of sensitive regions is essential to address sustainability issues by policy measures. Based on the European impact assessment guidelines from 2005, sensitive regions were identified using cluster analysis, UNEP priorities and expert knowledge. On a regionalised NUTS level and for pre-defined sensitive region types (post-industrial zones, mountains, coasts and islands) 31 % of Europe's area was identified as sensitive. However, the delineation mainly referred mainly to social and economic issues since the regionalised data base on environmental indicators and including issues on soil quality is limited and does not allow the separation of medium-term vital clusters. Some visions on short-term and long-term perspectives will be discussed to ensure sustainable development in sensitive regions.