
REGIONALVERBAND FRANKFURTRHEINMAIN
DEZERNAT I – ABTEILUNG METROPOLREGION, EUROPA UND INTERNATIONALES

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Why we are peri-urban

We are peri-urban for various reasons. Here is one based on legal designations. Just to remember, we are talking about the area of the Regionalverband FrankfurtRheinMain, the regional Authority FrankfurtRheinMain, covering 75 towns and cities, this is called the Ballungsraum Frankfurt/Rhein-Main in the Law (Gesetz zur Stärkung der kommunalen Zusammenarbeit im Ballungsraum Frankfurt/Rhein-Main vom 19. Dezember 2000; “Ballung” means “agglomeration”).

There are two legal sources that define which of these 75 towns and cities are legally rural. Interestingly, there is a considerable difference between the two: a) according to our own Plan (Regionaler Flächennutzungsplan, Regional Land Use Plan) only two towns in the north are part of the rural area, i.e. Münzenberg (5500 inhabitants) and Rockenberg (4300 inhabitants). b) According to the Rural Development Programme (implementing the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)) the rural area is larger, including 20 more towns, among them the city of Friedberg with 27 000 inhabitants).

This difference as such is interesting. More important, however, is what these sources say about the remaining 73 or 53 towns and cities. As far as the Rural Development Programme is concerned the answer is easy: Nothing. In case of the Regional Land Use Plan it is a bit confusing: Anything that isn't rural is designated as “Ordnungsraum”, parts of that are also “Verdichtungsraum”. “Raum” means “space”, “Ordnung” means “order”, “Verdichtung” means “densification”. However, in practice these categories do not imply any legal consequence. So is this all Urban? Certainly not. However, a concise definition of Urban is missing.

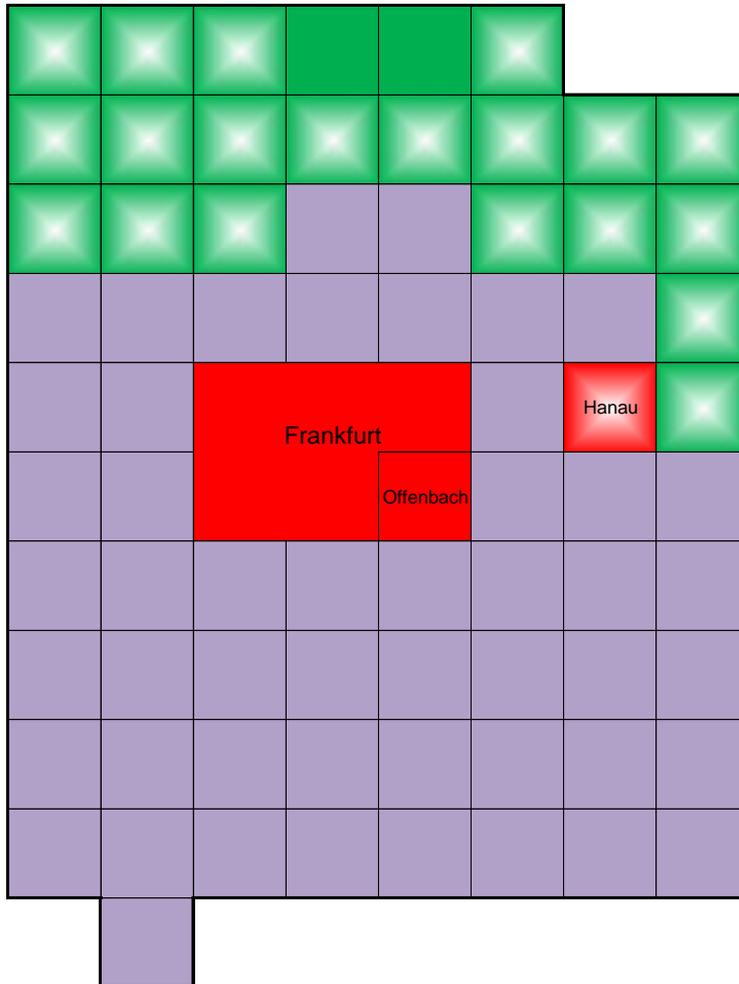
A good approximation is looking for the “Kreisfreie Städte”, single tier local government NUTS3 entities. There are only two of them: Frankfurt and Offenbach. All other towns and cities are LAU3 entities and thus not existing in EU terms. An alternative approximation is using the new quasi-official definition applied by the commission (Dijkstra and Poelman: “A harmonised definition of cities and rural areas: the new degree of urbanisation”, Regional Working Papers, WP 01/2014, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Brussels 2014): According to that there is one more City here, so it is Frankfurt, Offenbach and Hanau.

Summing up, when the equation is: Region minus Rural Area minus Cities = Peri-Urban, at least 50 of our towns and cities fall into this category.

Frankfurt Rhein-Main

Peri-Urban Areas

Diagrammatic map, not to scale, based on legal designations (see text for details)



75 municipalities, among which

Cities		Kreisfreie Städte "City" (Dijkstra and Poelman only)
Rural Area		Regional Land Use Plan Rural Development Programme only
Peri-Urban		Region minus Rural minus Cities