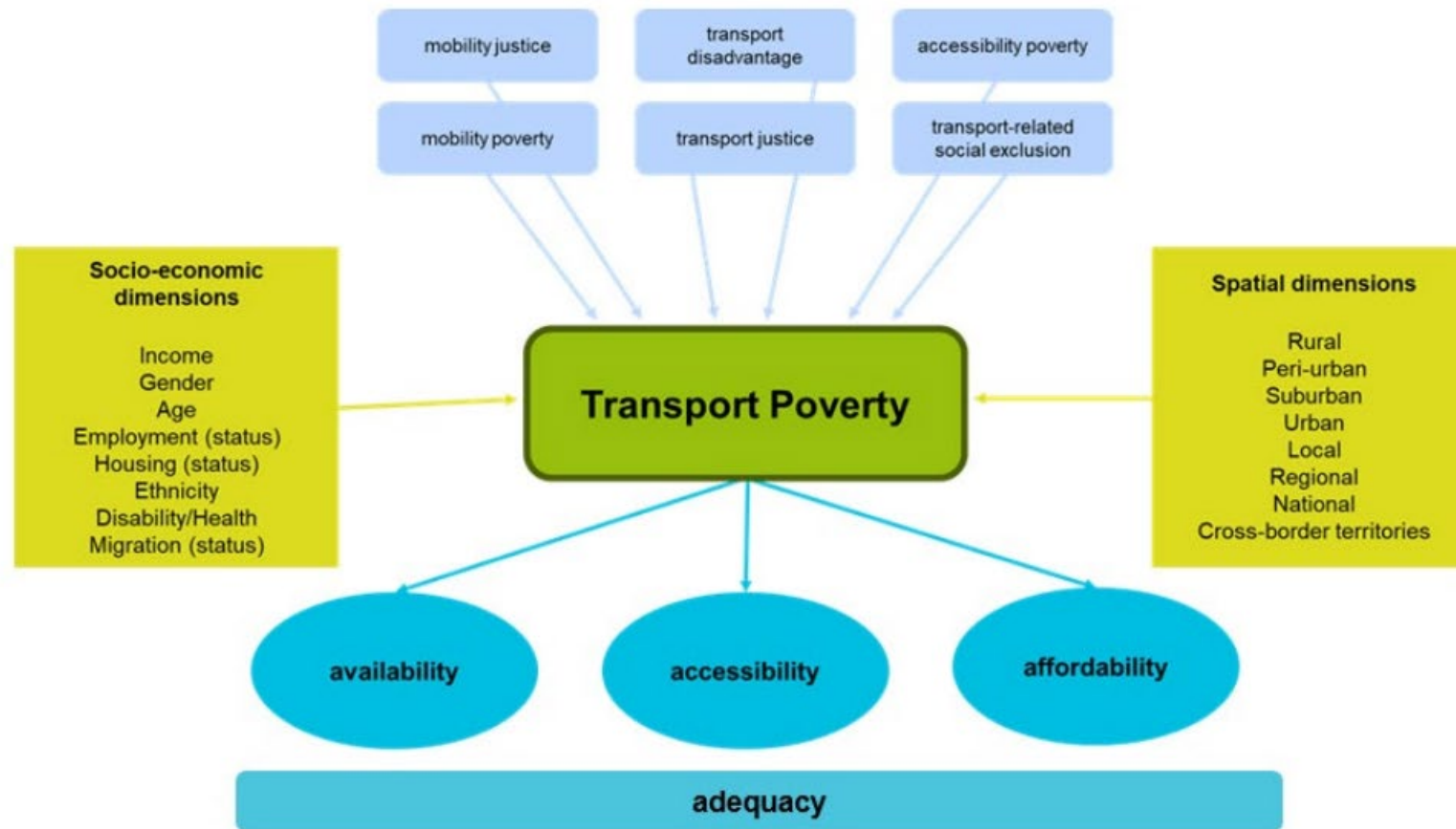# Transport Poverty
Concept, monitoring and mitigation

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Transport poverty: conceptual framework

Transport Poverty: the three As

- Availability
    - Refers to the presence and frequency of transport options.
    - Household or individual face availability issues when they do not have transport (public and/or private), available to them.
- Accessibility
    - Refers to the access to (other) essential goods and services, such as education, health care and employment.
    - Presented in the form of inability, difficulty and/or excessive time spent to reach those destinations.
- Affordability
    - Refers to the ability to cover the costs of transport in relation to income.
    - Presented in the form of high expenditures (in relation to income); and/or trade-offs within individual/household budgets and associated debts.

Transport poverty: definition

- The Social Climate Fund Regulation (2023) provides a definition of transport poverty for this specific context for the first time at EU level. Article 2(2) of that Regulation defines that:

- "'transport poverty' means individuals' and households' inability or difficulty to meet the costs of private or public transport, or their lack of or limited access to transport needed for their access to essential socioeconomic services and activities, considering the national and spatial context."

Measuring and monitoring transport poverty at EU level

Dimension	Indicator	Source
Availability	Materially and socially deprived (MSD) individuals who own a car	Yearly EU-SILC + EU-SILC material and social deprivation rate
	Public transport stop "too far away"	2014 (2013) EU-SILC ad-hoc module 'Material deprivation'*
	"Very difficult access" to public transport	EQLS 2016 by Eurofound**
Accessibility	One-way commute to work more than 30 minutes	LFS 2019 ad-hoc module on work organisation and working time arrangements
Affordability	Enforced lack of a car	Yearly EU-SILC
	Public transport "too expensive"	2014 (2013) EU-SILC ad-hoc module 'Material deprivation'*
	6% threshold	2015 HBS
	2M	2015 HBS

*Question will be repeated (slightly revised) in the upcoming EU-SILC 2025 rolling module.
**Eurofound currently working on new EQLS 2026, with a dedicated transport poverty section.

Availability: Materially and socially deprived (MSD) individuals who own a car
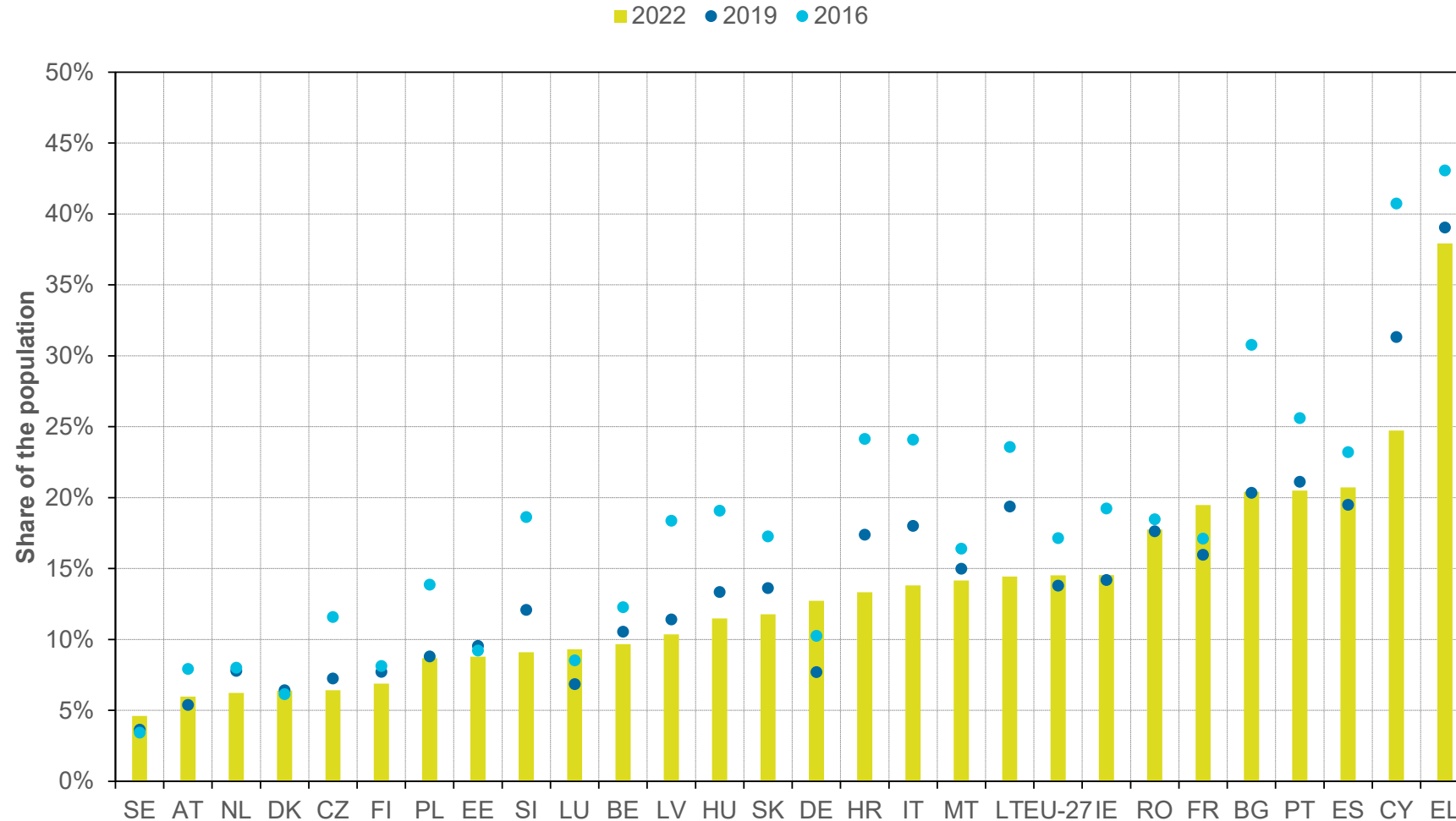

- Individuals are assumed to own a car due to lack of alternatives, especially regarding public transport

- Based on the yearly EU-SILC survey question: "Do you own a car?" and new Material and Social Deprivation indicator

- Reduced between 2016 and 2022

- Indicator is above the EU average in EL, CY, ES, PT, BG, FR, RO, IE

- Relatively high in MS in southern Europe

Source: DG EMPL and Oeko-Institut own calculations based on EU-SILC microdata

Availability: Share of the population affected by the unavailability of public transport "Stop is too far away"
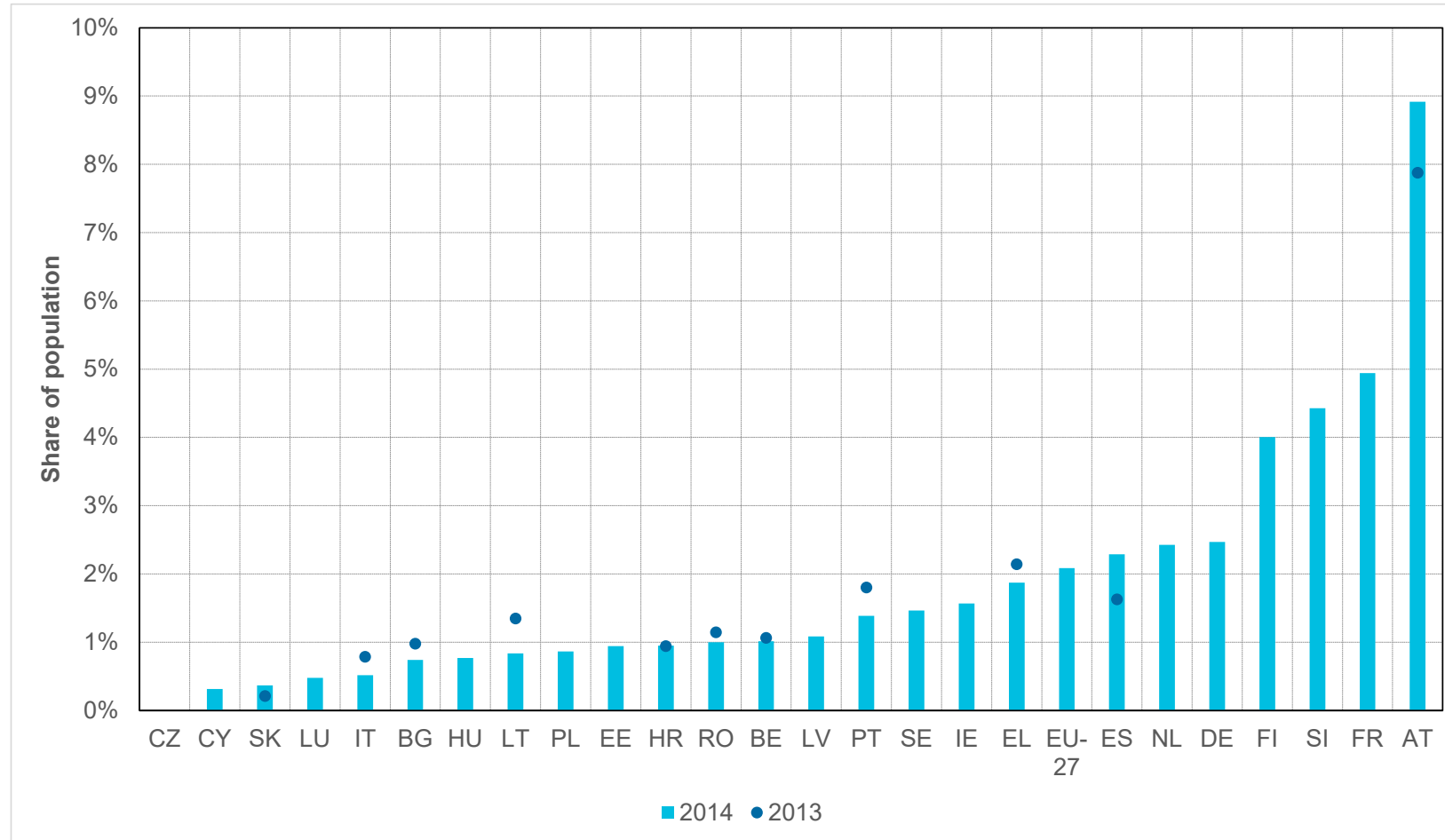
- Based on EU-SILC question from 2014 ad-hoc module 'Material deprivation': "Do you regularly use public transport?" (PD090)

- Answer: No - station too far away

- Answers are mutually exclusive -> have to assume that this is main reason for not using public transport

- Similar question in the upcoming EU-SILC 2024 rolling module 'Access to services'

- Highest shares in AT, FR, SI and FI

Accessibility: Share of active working-age (15-74) population in employment spending more than 30 minutes commuting to work (one-way)
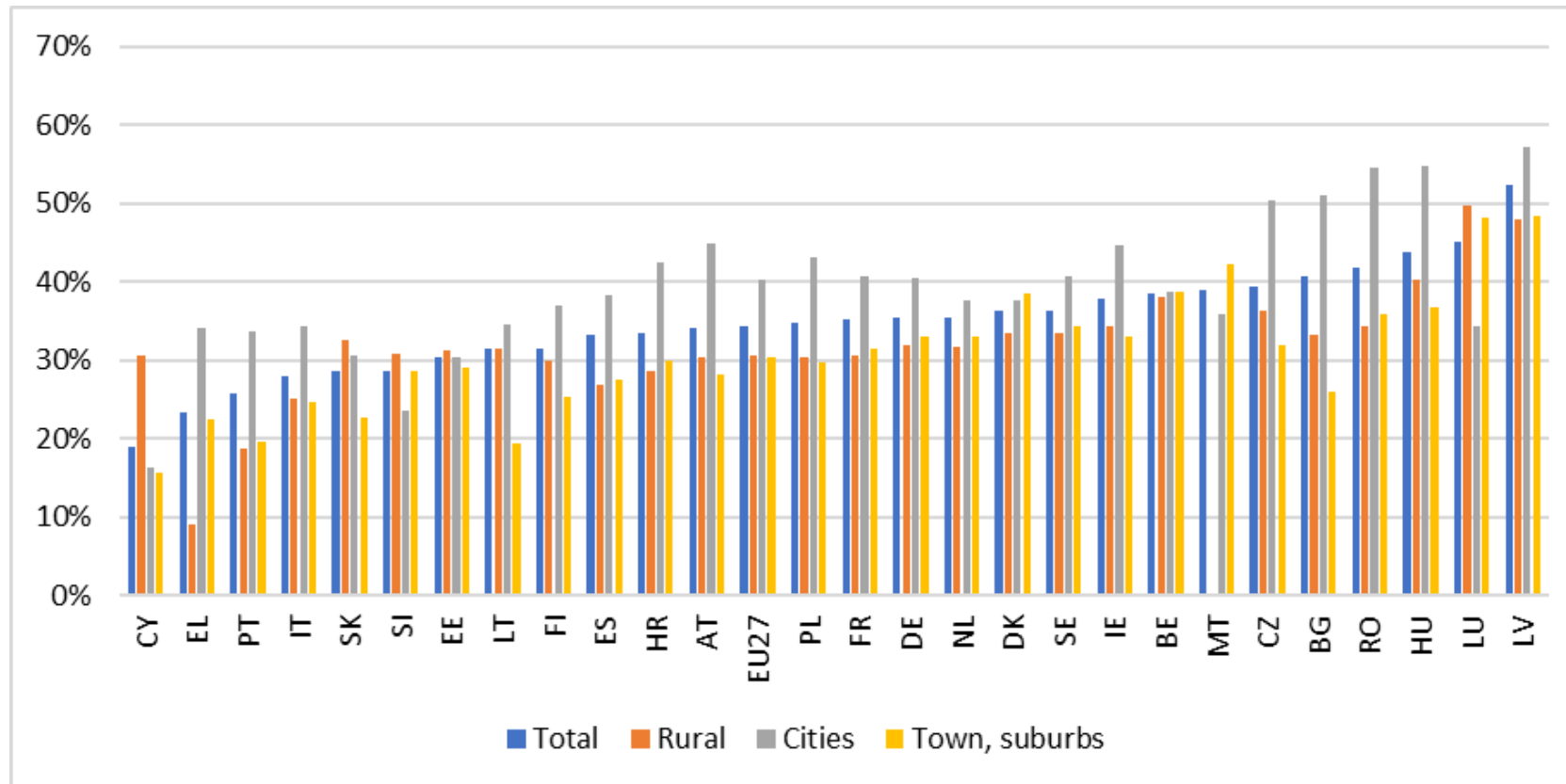
- Based on Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2019 ad-hoc module on work organisation and working time arrangements

- Average commute time according to the LFS published data is 25 minutes (one-way)

- Overall share is 34%, particularly low in CY at 19% and high in LV at 52%

- Higher in rural areas only in CY, EE, LU, SL, SK → private transport and less congestion likely play a role

- Conclusion: spatial data is key!

Transport Poverty │Oeko-Institut, Cambridge Econometrics, University of Manchester, WiseEuropa, CSD, ecoserveis │26/06/2024

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Affordability: Share of the population for whom public transport is too expensive "Ticket too expensive"
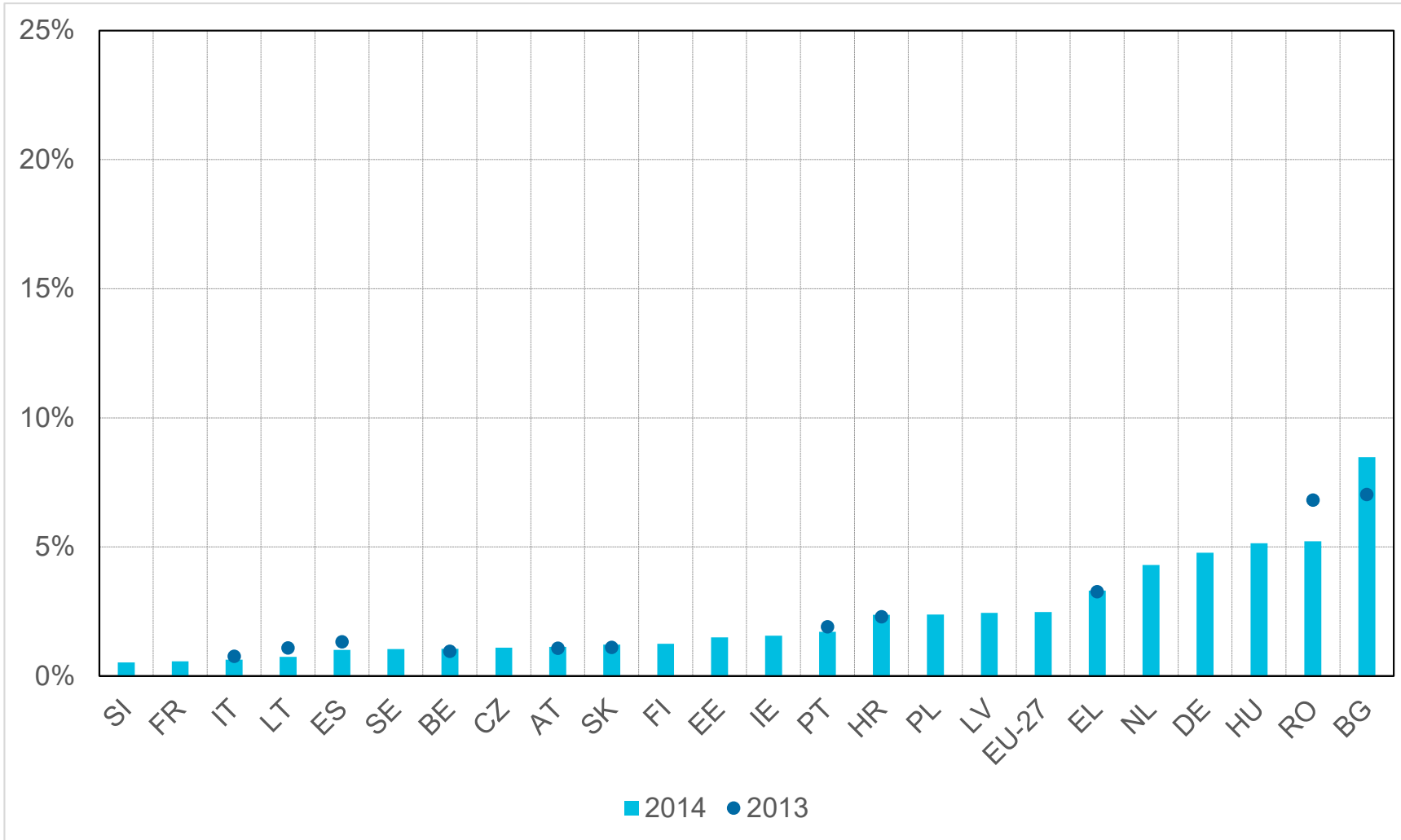
- Based on EU-SILC question from 2014 ad-hoc module 'Material deprivation': "Do you regularly use public transport?" (PD090)

- Answer: "No – ticket too expensive"

- Answers are mutually exclusive -> have to assume that this is main reason for not using public transport

- Similar question in upcoming EU-SILC 2024 rolling module 'Access to services'

- Ranging from 0.5% in SI to 8.5% in BG. Above average values in BG, RO, HU, DE, NL and EL.

Source: Oeko-Institut own calculation based on the EU-SILC 2013 microdata ad-hoc module 'Wellbeing' and the EU-SILC 2014 microdata ad-hoc module 'Material deprivation'.

Transport poverty study
Key conclusions

- Transport poverty is a complex phenomenon that cannot be measured using one single indicator.

- Currently there are important limitations to data availability and quality at the EU level.

- Although no straightforward pattern emerges, some trends are clearly identified:

  - Transport poverty is not an exclusively rural phenomenon, but analysis point to greater issues in rural areas.

  - Unaffordability of transport is a much greater issue for vulnerable populations.

  - Availability issues appear to be more prominent in southern European countries (e.g. Greece, Cyprus, Spain and Portugal).

  - Affordability indicators of private vehicles are particularly high on central and easter European countries (e.g. Romania, Latvia, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia).

  - Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Germany and the Netherlands show the lowest performance specifically related to the affordability of public transport, as they have the highest share of the population stating that tickets for public transport ticket are too expensive.

Final Report

Transport poverty:
definitions, indicators, determinants,
and mitigation strategies

Examples of targeted cost-effective measures to tackle transport poverty

Focus on supporting low-income or lower-middle income households in underserved geographical areas

- Improvement of public transport services and launch of bus/coach/rail lines in predominantly low-income sub-urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

Focus on supporting vulnerable groups

- Subsidized specific door-to-door transport on demand or demand-responsive zero or low-emission public transport services for vulnerable groups.

Combining improvement of public transport (available to all) with financial support schemes for vulnerable groups

- Setting up zero-emission on-demand transport services in areas lacking adequate public transport services or for the 'last mile' connection, possibly combined with vouchers/digital mobility wallets for vulnerable transport users.

Thank you

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