



EUROPE'S DEMOGRAPHIC

from challenges to local
and regional opportunities

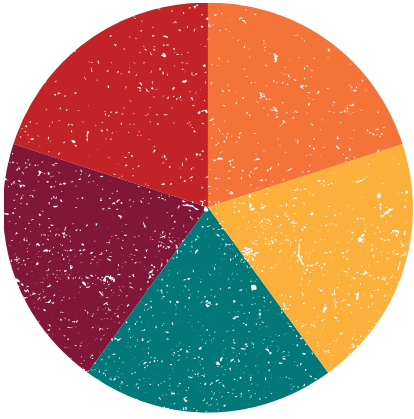
policy paper

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European Week of
Regions and Cities

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EUROPE'S DEMOGRAPHIC

FROM CHALLENGES TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

EPP Group in the European Committee of the Regions

Demographic change in the EU is a fact and handling it constitutes one of the core tasks for the future. It is rightly considered to be the major trend of the 21st century as it will drastically change the political, social, societal and economic situation in Europe. Demographic change is a process towards a new balance. It is the responsibility of authorities at all levels to guide this process.

- the EU-28 population on 1 January 2015 is 508.5 million; projections indicate that it would grow by 3.4 % to reach a peak of 525.6 million in 2048, before beginning to fall to 525.5 million by 2050.
- according to Eurostat, the number of people over 65 will represent 29,5% of the total population by 2060. This figure might even reach 12% of the European population among citizens over 80.
- future population trends suggest that the EU's population will continue to age, with only nine regions in the EU projected to have a lower median age in 2050 than in 2015.
- the social and economic consequences associated with population ageing are likely to have profound implications across Europe, both nationally and regionally.
- local and regional governments are already addressing some of the challenges generated by structural demographic change and turning these into innovative opportunities.



Demographic change is one of the major challenges facing European society today.

We therefore call for a much more innovative, coordinated and integrated response from the EU, which encompasses all policies – cohesion, innovation, transport, health, employment, rural development.

Michael SCHNEIDER

President of the EPP Group in the Committee of the Regions



#EUDemographic



HOW CAN EU REGIONAL AND COHESION POLICIES TACKLE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES?



Cohesion Policy can play an important role in supporting regional adaptation to demographic change and reversing the risks of wider development

gaps between regions due to demographic trends. Most of the priority themes of the ERDF and ESF Structural Funds can address demographic risks. The growing importance of demographic issues is reflected in their increasing prominence in the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods, even though there is no explicit attention to demographic change among the horizontal principles. It is estimated that in the 2007-2013 period a total of EUR 64.1 billion (19% of the total ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund allocated to the Member States) have been dedicated to priority themes directly or indirectly targeting demographic challenges.

→ CAP - Common Agricultural Policy



CAP under its 'second pillar' deals with rural development and helps to tackle demographic challenges. During the 2014-2020 programming period,

efforts are being made to encourage "the development of services and infrastructure leading to social inclusion and reversing trends of social and economic decline and depopulation of rural areas". The ageing of the population is a major concern in rural areas which is why the CAP is promoting generational renewal and women's employment.

→ Towards a more holistic and coordinated approach?

To respond to the ageing challenge requires work across portfolios and sectors. To optimise synergies and impact, steps are being taken towards a joined up Silver Economy Strategy.

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EUROPE'S AGEING POPULATION - EU POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Innovation and research policies drive EU initiatives to manage demographic challenges: the flagship Innovation Union initiative under the Europe 2020 strategy has given rise to the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing; the third pillar of the Horizon 2020 programme considers demographic change as a societal challenge. Other examples are the More Years, Better Lives JPI, the KIC on Innovation for Healthy Living and Active Ageing, and the Ambient Assisted Living programme. In addition, work on a 'Blueprint on Digital innovation for Europe's ageing society in the 21st Century' is ongoing. The Blueprint will mobilise a European innovation ecosystem around a shared-vision of easing the journey of emerging digital 'innovation to market', promote access to finance for innovators active in the Silver Economy and support the mobilisation of structural funds through smart specialisation. It will be revealed at the European Summit on Digital Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing, which the Commission is organising with the European Committee of the Regions in Brussels from 5-8 December 2016.



Europe is one of the continents with the oldest population worldwide. This offers opportunities but also poses massive societal challenges to sustain our care and pension systems, and to maintain our quality of life. While seizing the opportunities of the Silver Economy, we must not deepen inequalities. Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing must benefit our citizens - all of them.

GÜNTHÉR OETTINGER

EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society



I believe that a broad, coordinated and integrated European strategy on demographic change is needed. This strategy should have a firm basis in common EU values, equal treatment and human rights. A strategic approach should also involve cost-analysis and projections at national, regional and local level.

JUAN VICENTE HERRERA CAMPO President of Castilla y León,

SILVER CITIES AND REGIONS

REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF OUR AGEING POPULATION



Promoting healthy and active ageing is crucial for sustainable social, economic and territorial cohesion in the EU. Local and regional authorities often take the lead in developing new innovative and ICT-based tools for an ageing population and Europe needs more pioneering regions. However, to move from pilot projects to large scale models that can be deployed at national or EU level, cities and regions need the right supportive legal, financial and structural environment which requires action at national and EU level. National and EU investments, including through the European Structural and Investment Funds, are crucially needed to move those local initiatives to a larger scale and to ensure Europe learns to use the enormous resources of the silver potential and thus benefits from the growing silver economy.

MARKKU MARKKULA

President of the European Committee of the Regions

CHALLENGES:

➔ Austerity measures and reductions in tax revenues, transfers of competence from central authorities and a wider responsibility for service provision without the equivalent transfer of resources are among the challenges faced by LRAs. Changes in demographic patterns and trends also make it necessary to adapt service provision levels and infrastructure such as in health, transport, and social care. They also affect the development of the various regions of the EU and the maintenance of traditional ecosystems and infrastructure.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- ➔ The so-called 'silver economy', i.e. economic opportunities brought by expenditure related to population ageing and the needs of citizens over the age of 50, is an increasingly important dimension of development strategies for a number of LRAs.
- ➔ Alternative forms of production of services are also envisaged, e.g. through volunteering, civic service or privately organised forms of volunteering can help to organise a more inclusive economy.
- ➔ In health care, more ambitious prevention measures and integrated care policies combined with new technologies make it possible to envisage a more efficient use of public funds.
- ➔ Policies to support families, active ageing and lifelong learning are also seen as opportunities in the context of an ageing society since they can limit the mismatch between job offer and competencies and contribute to social inclusion in an ageing population thereby reducing the need for public measures to compensate for care and isolation.



Towards an Age-Friendly Europe

Covenant on Demographic Change

The Covenant on Demographic Change was launched on 7 December 2015 at the European Committee of the Regions and gathers European public authorities at local, regional and national level as well other relevant stakeholders, committed to developing environments that support active and healthy ageing, enhance independent living and the well-being of older persons, and create a society for all ages. The Covenant builds on the outcomes of the AFE-INNOVNET Thematic Network.

Castilla y León (ES) Population Agenda

The Regional Government of Castilla y León has agreed to a Population Agenda for the period 2010-2020 with measures addressed to three groups: young people, families and immigrants, the population groups that can help reverse negative demographic trends.

- Young people, with measures in the following fields: education, promotion of the access to housing, information and counselling services especially the promotion of youth employment and youth entrepreneurship.
- Families, with measures such as tax benefits, measures promoting work-life balance, housing services and access to public services.
- Immigrants, with measures promoting their full integration into society (reception services, complementary education services, e.g. linguistic and cultural adaptation courses and integration into the labour market).

The agenda contains quantitative indicators that are measured every year and the almost 40 measures contained in the agenda are evaluated every year.

Opolskie (PL) for Family

To address depopulation challenges in our region we have developed the 'Opolskie for Family' Plan which provides us with a long-term strategy for the demography of our region. The plan covers the full cycle of life from children - crèche and nursery care, to education and labour market measures, policies that place work as a basis for a safe family and a golden autumn for seniors.



**ANDRZEJ
BUŁA**
Marshal of
Opolskie Region (PL)

The holistic programme for a special demographic zone in Opolskie is already starting to show some results in the region. There are a growing number of enterprises in the national economy and an increase of the employment-to-population ratio. On the other hand, there is greater access for women to the labour market as a growing number of children are in care of nursery schools and crèches. There are fewer graduates among the total unemployed and there is a maximal availability of places in social help houses and in day care places for elderly people. Structural Funds have been set aside in the Regional Operational Programme of the Opole Voivodship for 2014-2020, which includes depopulation amongst its Strategic Areas of Intervention and has a budget of around 360 mln € to address this challenge.

Maia (PT) An age friendly city

Based on the World Health Organisation's recommendations, "an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities". The Maia Municipal Council's innovative approach includes the senior citizens' garden in the town centre, the mobile library, video clubs, the home support service carrying out minor repairs, family games, tourism and dance evenings for senior citizens. The Maia Senior Citizens' Club has been particularly successful at promoting physical activity and provides a weekly total of 119 hours of sports activities for over 60s throughout the city. Also of great success is the partnership with the University of Porto through which a range of thematic workshops have been organised for life-long learning in the area nutritional education for the older population, accompanied by healthy food tastings and a moment of exchange with fellow citizens.



The municipality of Maia, aware of the huge challenges facing its residents due to its ageing population has implemented new policies to support the elderly population and since 2013 is an 'Age-friendly city'.

We have a raft of initiatives and programmes which cover areas such as leisure, culture, physical activity and sport and inter-generational dialogue. As a result we are offering our older population a better future and helping to ensure that older people remain healthier, safer and happier for longer.

ANTONIO BRAGANÇA FERNANDES
Mayor of Maia (PT)

"The best approach to demographic ageing is the promotion of age-friendly communities where public spaces, transport, housing and local services are conceived with the needs of all generations in mind and where solidarity and cooperation between generations is fostered. Such communities also tend to be more environmentally friendly and conducive to greater social cohesion and better social participation of other vulnerable groups. While many examples of innovative measures that support active and healthy ageing can be found at the local level and social incubators are often local initiatives, a project-based approach is not always effective to achieve a critical mass and long-term sustainability. There is a need for a global strategic vision that encompasses issues from across the board in order to achieve inclusive and supportive environments."

ARNOLDAS ABRAMAVIČIUS

Vice-Mayor of Zarasai, CoR rapporteur on Active Ageing: Innovations, Smart Health, Better Lives



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EUROPE'S DEMO GRAPHIC

**FROM CHALLENGES TO LOCAL
AND REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

It is crucial to support cities and regions to adapt their communities to the specific needs of an ageing population and to ensure that citizens remain healthy, independent and autonomous longer into their old age.

