

Demographic Change Regions Network contribution to the Public consultation on the Europe 2020 Strategy

This contribution is supported by the following European Regions:

Aragón (ES), Asturias (ES), Brandenburg (DE), Castilla La Mancha (ES), Castilla y León (ES), Dolnośląskie (PL), Extremadura (ES), Galicia (ES), Limburg (NL), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE), Mid Sweden European Office (SE), Regional Council of Jämtland County (SE), Sachsen (DE), Sachsen-Anhalt (DE)

Introduction

1. All European regions will be affected by demographic change and its impact in the next years.
2. Europe 2020 should focus more on demographic change (including the quantitative change of the total population, age structure, and territorial distribution of the population and migration movements) as a whole apart from only ageing.
3. A new flagship initiative, a territorial focused European Semester and European as well as national budgets should be instruments to tackle these demographic challenges and to pave the way for the inclusion of demographic change as a horizontal objective in the future cohesion policy.

The Europe 2020 Strategy has not paid enough attention to demographic change even though all European regions will be affected in the upcoming years. Nowadays it is no more a normal demographic development, which takes place at all time at all places. Demographic change is about the apparent and profound changes in our society, which are caused by higher life expectancy, lower birth rates, the breakdown of traditional family structures and migration. Demographic change affects almost all areas of life. Some stand out in particular, in which the effects of population decline, low density and ageing take on specific significance. Apart from prosperous centres of dense development, other parts of Europe (these areas account for approximately 75% of the regions) experience the change as a contraction with increasingly emptying areas due to depopulation and a rapid increase in the ratio of the older population. At present, especially densely populated areas, profit from migration gains at the expense of rural sources. On the other hand, they are facing problems like shortage of housing or high traffic volume.

This polarization of the regions in Europe as a whole, but especially in the individual countries, will intensify further in the competition for human and financial resources. A superposition of these challenges prevents the numerous affected areas from having a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and excludes them more and more from the gains of the Strategy. Therefore, the envisaged sustainable, inclusive and smart growth must be also a balanced growth, letting all the regions and territories in Europe benefit from the Europe 2020 Strategy and not creating two categories of regions in Europe: those that attain the objectives of the Strategy and those that lag behind.

These handicaps cannot be put aside when designing the European Strategy for Europe's economy for the 21st century and European policies. They have to be at the core of the Strategy in two ways:

- Taken into account when defining the challenges.
- Taken into account when defining the instruments that will help Europe's territories to achieve the Strategy's objectives.

In both cases, taking into account challenges and designing instruments, a flexible, territorial dimension within the Strategy is needed. It should be on the basis of new benchmarking systems and indicators (e.g. change of population, density, fertility rate, average age, share of the population older than 65, migration balance, rural and urban areas and rate of population at working age) that reflect the challenge of demographic change.

As long as the instruments to achieve the Strategy objectives are the European budget and European policies, specially the cohesion policy, we underline the importance that these instruments can be efficiently used to overcome the demographic challenges that impede the affected regions to attain the Strategy goals.

There is a chance to influence processes positively by taking joint European actions now since Demographic change does not happens overnight - it is a gradual process.

1) Taking stock: the Europe 2020 Strategy over 2010-2014

The current Europe 2020 Strategy and demographic change:

The current Europe 2020 Strategy has not paid attention enough to demographic issues. It has focussed in the field of ageing but it has forgotten other demographic challenges.

Ageing has been taken into account in the current Europe 2020 Strategy, particularly through the creation of a dedicated European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Active and Healthy Ageing in the framework of the flagship initiative "Innovation Union".

This EIP, and especially the "Marketplace" platform, constitutes a unique opportunity to gather the main stakeholders involved in the field of healthy and active ageing and to exchange information on projects and initiatives at a larger scale. It can be considered as the main European portal to get information on this topic. This explains why many European local authorities involved in the ageing sector have already joined the EIP.

Outside the Strategy, other European initiatives have also been dedicated to demographic challenges, but again, focusing only on ageing:

- The Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) "More Years Better Lives", which aims at coordinating the research activities of 14 countries on demographic change;
- The future Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) on Innovation for Healthy Living and Active Ageing, which is being currently selected by the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT).

These three demographic-related initiatives mainly focus on the “ageing” side of the demographic challenges without taking into account other important issues like for example out-migration of a young and qualified workforce and the decrease in the number population that often leads to the decline of many rural or peripheral regions. Moreover, these initiatives are very much driven by a technological innovation perspective, whereas many of the problems related to the demographic change could often be solved by social innovation, organisational innovation or non-technological innovation measures, like in the field of transport, housing and urban-rural development, work and productivity, social systems and welfare and education for instance.

It is important to note that the European Commission also included a number of other elements that are relevant to older people – among others – in other Europe 2020 flagship initiatives. For instance, one of the goals of the flagship initiative “A Digital Agenda for Europe” is to promote internet access and take-up by all European citizens, through actions supporting digital literacy and accessibility.

Concerning the European Semester process, demographic challenges have been taken into account in a very partial way, only when referring to its consequences on the sustainability of the pensions systems.

Demographic change is a process towards a new balance. It is the responsibility of authorities at all levels to guide this process. A holistic approach is needed. The current version of the Europe 2020 Strategy lacks a comprehensive or holistic response to the demographic-related challenges.

Regions affected by demographic change have more difficulties in reaching the targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy:

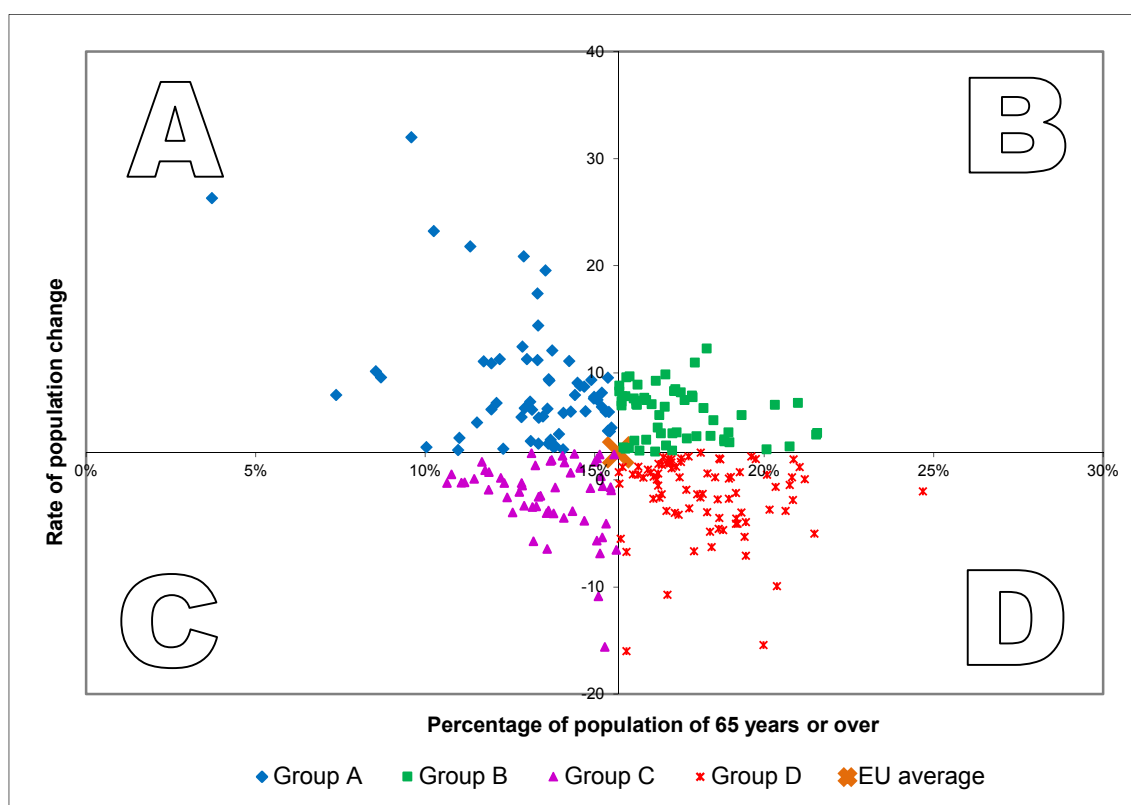
According to available statistics and regional experiences, those regions affected by demographic change have more difficulties than those not affected by these handicaps to reach the Europe 2020 headline targets. These have to devote more internal resources to overcome the demographic related handicaps that limit its possibilities and resources to invest in the Europe 2020 Strategy. More scientific evidences would be needed to analyse deeply the links between demographic difficulties and Europe 2020 Strategy.

Regions that experience a decline in population face additional challenges in reaching the Europe 2020 goals. When faced with demographic shrinkage, public and private organisations face additional challenges in providing services for citizens, and have less room to invest in research and innovation. To illustrate this point, one can divide the NUTS-2 regions according to the statistics on population change and ageing¹ into four groups and compare the difficulties they have in attaining the Europe 2020 goals:

¹ Average of crude rate of population change for the period 2008-2012 and average of the percentage of population of 65 years or over for the period 2008-2012.

- Group A: regions where the rate of population change is higher than the EU average, and where the percentage of population 65 years and older is lower than the EU average.
- Group B: regions where the rate of population change is higher than the EU average, and where the percentage of population 65 years and older is higher than the EU average.
- Group C: regions with a lower rate of population change than the EU average, and where the percentage of population of 65 years and older is lower than the EU average.
- Group D: regions with a lower rate of population change than the EU average, and where the percentage of population of 65 years and older is higher than the EU average.

The following figure shows the four groupings of regions with the EU average used as a reference.

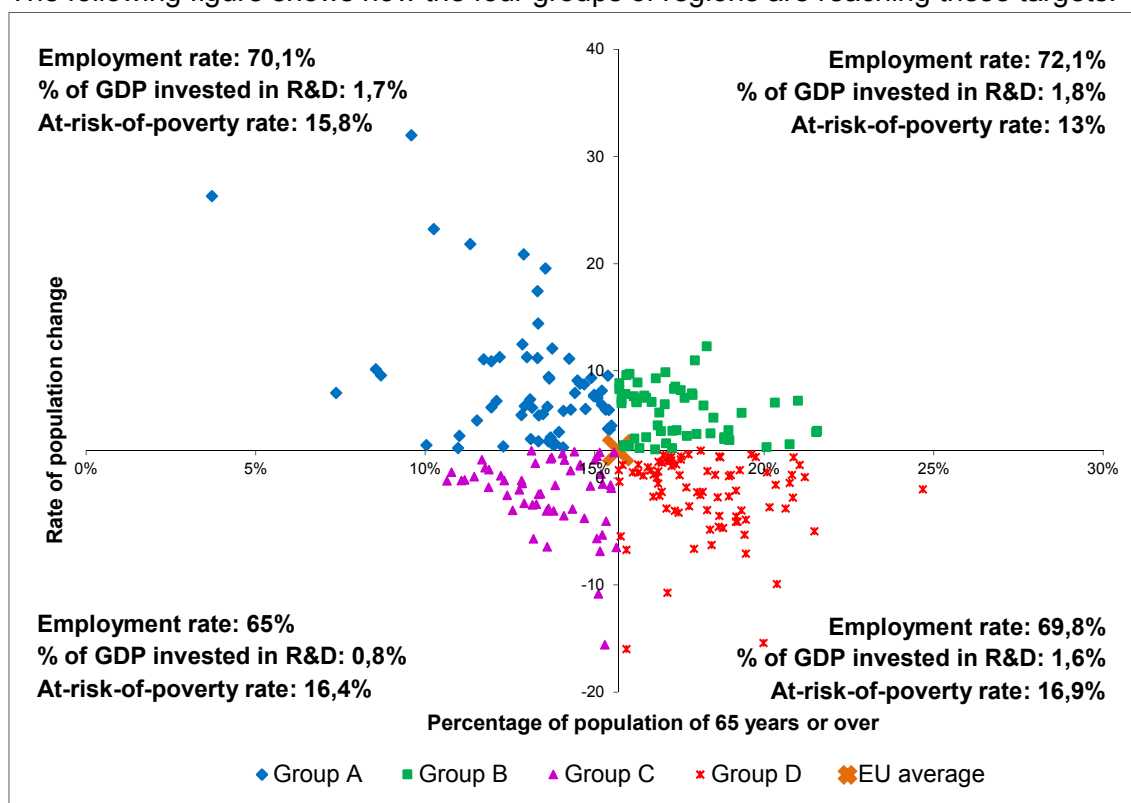


Source: Eurostat (Demography - Regional data at NUTS 2 level, 2008-2012)

A number of data related to the Europe 2020 headline targets more directly linked to demography have been taken into account, these are: employment rate, GDP invested in research and development and risk of poverty rate.

When data are analysed for each of these groups of regions, it is confirmed that, in general, the regions in groups A and B have fewer problems attaining the targets. The regions in group C and D however have lower employment rates, their rates of people at risk of poverty are higher and they invest less in R&D.

The following figure shows how the four groups of regions are reaching these targets:



Source: Eurostat (Demography - Regional data at NUTS 2 level)

From this comparison, it is clear that comparatively ageing and demographically shrinking regions have a disadvantaged position to reach some of the Europe 2020 headline targets.

The whole set of data used to make this comparison are available in Annex I to this document.

A more complete set of data comparing different demographic challenges and the attainment of Europe 2020 goals would be welcome to clearly identify the main difficulties that these regions affected by several demographic challenges have to overcome to benefit from the results of the Strategy.

2) Adapting the Europe 2020 Strategy: the growth strategy for a post-crisis Europe

Demographic handicaps cannot be put aside when designing the European Strategy for Europe's economy for the 21st century and European policies. The renewed Europe 2020 Strategy must be able to provide instruments that help European countries, regions and municipalities to attain the objectives of the Strategy. It could be done through two instruments:

- A new flagship initiative on demographic challenges.
- A territorialised approach in the European Semester process.

Flagship initiative on demographic challenges

A new Flagship initiative on demographic change could be foreseen. This initiative could be designed as a horizontal instrument, linked at the same time to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Some examples of actions that are already being undertaken in demographic challenged territories to overcome its demographic difficulties are given in the annex. These actions could inspire the European Commission for design of the new flagship initiative.

The Flagship initiative on demographic change, which could be called “**Demographic Agenda**”, could include a set of actions falling into these three categories, such as:

- Smart growth: Measures to help regions affected by demographic challenges to undertake actions in the fields of ICT, innovation and SME support, taking into account the lack of economic dynamism in most of these areas.
- Inclusive growth: Specific actions to fix young people in the territory, boosting birth rate, promotion of self-employment, social inclusion measures for immigrants, etc.
- Sustainable growth: Measures to help these regions to invest in the green economy including sustainable transport systems.

A compilation of actions that are currently being undertaken in European Regions to overcome demographic challenges can be found in Annex II. In some cases, the actions are being funded with European Funds, in the majority of the cases, actions are funded with own resources. These actions could be considered as a catalogue to give content to the future European Flagship Initiative on demographic change.

As the rest of Flagship initiatives, even if no specific financing is accompanying the initiative, it could be supported by several European Instruments, mainly the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) including European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Many of these actions can already be undertaken through different European instruments but it lacks of a global and coherent action. With the new Flagship Initiative we could gathered all the actions in a whole instrument that would seek first of all, to help overcome the challenges that these regions are facing to have a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Concerning governance, it would be preferable that one commissioner would be the final responsible for this new flagship initiative, even if several portfolios and services could cooperate together. Up to now, demographic issues are spread out between several DGs such as Employment and Social Affairs, Regional Policy and DG Agriculture and Rural Development.

European Semester process

The Europe 2020 Strategy must be put again at the core of the European Semester. The design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Reform Programmes (NRP) should be designed and implemented in partnership with local and regional authorities (multilevel governance). The process should take into account territorial disparities including demographic challenges of subnational territories and include measures that could help them to have a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (territorial approach).

With the crisis, the European Semester has derived attention to the macroeconomic policy coordination. Now, attention needs to be focused on the Strategy and the main economic, environmental and social challenges threatening the EU. Employment and social cohesion targets and relative flagship initiatives may need to be updated to reflect current challenges. Significant drivers of growth and employment may need to become a more integral part of the Strategy.

A multilevel governance is needed:

The Strategy needs to take more into account the subnational authorities as most of the actions to increase growth, jobs, competitiveness and sustainability are undertaken at local or regional level. The success of the Strategy needs the direct involvement of the local and regional authorities.

In this respect, the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Reform Programmes (NRP) should be carried out in partnership with subnational authorities by adopting a multi-level governance approach. A tool similar to the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the ESIF would encourage a better participation of the local and regional authorities in the economic coordination process and allow a better awareness of their expertise and competences. Without their involvement, meeting the Europe 2020 targets will not be achieved.

A territorial approach is needed:

The European Semester, from the Annual Growth Survey to the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR), and in general the whole yearly cycle of economic policy coordination, should take into account the regional disparities inside the Member States.

Europe 2020 would be better prepared to tackle the different demographic challenges faced by regional and local authorities: ageing, depopulation, low density, dispersion, etc. Current NRPs and CSRs do not reflect properly the difficulty of these regions in coping with the consequences of their demographic trends: shrinking public finances, lower demand, higher public expenditure, etc.

For example, in Spain, 6 out of the 17 Autonomous Communities account for the 60 % of the Spanish territory whereas they just represent 23 % of the country's population. In Germany, since 1990 the Eastern regions have lost 13.5 % of their population (nearly 2 million inhabitants) while the Western regions' population grew by 6.7%. However, these trends go further and have a clear impact on innovation, industrialisation and climate change indicators that cannot be ignored.

Conclusion

Europe 2020 should take seriously into account the demographic challenges and pay a particular attention to the regions already facing their consequences. These territories could act as forefront players in preventing and mitigating demographic change with the support of the EU.

ANNEX I

*Note that all data are averages of available data from EUROSTAT from the years 2008-2012

GROUP A

NUTS2 CODE	Name	Percentage of people of 65 years or over	Crude rate of population change per 1.000 inhabitants	Employment rate of age group 20 to 64 years	At-risk-of-poverty rate	Total intramural R&D expenditure as percentage of GDP
FR93	Guyane (FR)	3,7%	26,3	52,9%	-	-
FR94	Réunion (FR)	7,4%	7,9	50,3%	-	-
NL23	Flevoland	8,5%	10,2	79,0%	11,5%	1,9%
UKI1	Inner London	8,7%	9,6	7	31,5%	1,2%
ES64	Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla (ES)	9,6%	32,0	53,4%	31,4%	0,2%
SK04	Východné Slovensko	1	3,1	61,1%	15,1%	0,4%
ES63	Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta (ES)	10,3%	23,3	52,8%	36,4%	0,1%
PL41	Wielkopolskie	11,0%	2,8	65,7%	-	0,6%
PL63	Pomorskie	11,0%	3,9	64,2%	-	0,6%
CY00	Kypros	11,3%	21,8	74,1%	-	0,5%
FR10	Île de France	11,5%	5,4	72,3%	12,3%	3,0%
ES70	Canarias (ES)	11,7%	11,1	56,2%	31,9%	0,6%
SK01	Bratislavský kraj	11,9%	6,6	76,0%	6,4%	1,1%
FI1B	Helsinki-Uusimaa	12,0%	10,9	79,3%	8,6%	4,4%
NL31	Utrecht	12,1%	7,2	80,9%	10,5%	2,1%
UKI2	Outer London	12,2%	11,3	73,6%	26,0%	0,6%
PL21	Malopolskie	12,3%	2,9	65,8%	-	1,0%
ES62	Región de Murcia	12,8%	5,9	61,0%	28,6%	0,9%
ES53	Illes Balears	12,9%	12,5	66,8%	19,1%	0,4%
LU00	Luxembourg	12,9%	20,9	70,3%	-	1,6%
UKN0	Northern Ireland (UK)	12,9%	6,7	71,0%	-	1,4%
UKJ1	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire	13,0%	11,3	80,2%	-	3,4%
NL32	Noord-Holland	13,1%	7,3	78,7%	11,7%	1,9%
AT34	Vorarlberg	13,1%	3,6	77,0%	13,1%	1,5%
MT00	Malta	13,2%	6,6	60,6%	-	0,6%
EL42	Notio Aigaio	13,3%	11,2	63,7%	-	0,2%
SE11	Stockholm	13,3%	17,4	82,3%	10,6%	3,8%
CZ02	Střední Čechy	13,3%	14,4	73,7%	7,1%	1,4%
PL12	Mazowieckie	13,3%	3,4	70,2%	-	1,3%
NL33	Zuid-Holland	13,4%	5,8	76,9%	11,3%	2,0%
ES30	Comunidad de Madrid	13,5%	6,0	70,3%	14,9%	2,0%
BE10	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	13,5%	19,6	59,1%	-	1,5%
ES61	Andalucía	13,6%	6,7	54,6%	30,2%	1,1%
NL21	Overijssel	13,6%	3,4	78,8%	10,6%	1,9%
UKE4	West Yorkshire	13,6%	9,4	71,7%	-	0,9%
UKD3	Greater Manchester	13,7%	9,3	70,9%	-	1,1%
NL41	Noord-Brabant	13,7%	3,8	78,6%	8,9%	2,2%
UKH2	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	13,7%	12,1	78,3%	-	3,0%
CZ03	Jihozápad	13,8%	3,1	73,1%	6,8%	1,1%
NL22	Gelderland	13,8%	3,2	78,3%	9,2%	2,3%
AT33	Tirol	13,9%	4,3	76,8%	10,7%	2,8%

NL11	Groningen	14,1%	2,9	74,2%	14,7%	1,8%
UKF2	Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire	14,1%	6,3	76,5%	-	1,5%
UKM5	North Eastern Scotland	14,3%	11,1	80,1%	-	1,9%
UKG3	West Midlands	14,3%	6,4	67,6%	-	1,3%
BE31	Prov. Brabant Wallon	14,4%	8,0	68,8%	-	7,7%
BE34	Prov. Luxembourg (BE)	14,5%	9,1	68,0%	-	0,3%
FR71	Rhône-Alpes	14,6%	8,8	71,0%	11,6%	2,7%
SI02	Zahodna Slovenija	14,7%	8,7	72,0%	9,6%	2,6%
BE22	Prov. Limburg (BE)	14,7%	6,4	69,5%	-	1,1%
CZ01	Praha	14,9%	9,4	76,4%	5,1%	2,3%
BE35	Prov. Namur	15,0%	7,6	64,7%	-	1,2%
AT13	Wien	15,0%	7,8	71,0%	19,3%	3,8%
UKE3	South Yorkshire	15,1%	7,5	69,0%	-	1,2%
HU10	Közép-Magyarország	15,2%	6,8	66,2%	-	1,5%
UKM2	Eastern Scotland	15,2%	8,2	75,4%	-	2,0%
UKF1	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	15,3%	6,4	73,5%	-	2,4%
UKK1	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area	15,4%	9,6	78,4%	-	2,9%
ES51	Cataluña	15,4%	4,6	68,2%	15,8%	1,7%
UKL2	East Wales	15,4%	6,4	74,9%	-	1,6%
BE32	Prov. Hainaut	15,4%	4,5	58,6%	-	1,4%
UKC1	Tees Valley and Durham	15,5%	4,9	69,1%	-	1,2%
	European Union	15,7%	2,6	68,7%	16,6%	2%

GROUP B

NUTS2 CODE	Name	Percentage of people of 65 years or over	Crude rate of population change per 1.000 inhabitants	Employment rate of age group 20 to 64 years	At-risk-of-poverty rate	Total intramural R&D expenditure as percentage of GDP
FR51	Pays de la Loire	15,7%	8,3	71,2%	11,0%	1,1%
UKJ4	Kent	15,7%	8,8	75,0%	-	2,7%
BE33	Prov. Liège	15,8%	7,0	62,0%	-	1,5%
UKJ3	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	15,8%	7,3	77,9%	-	3,0%
ITH1	Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano/Bozen	15,8%	7,8	75,8%	8,4%	0,7%
PT17	Lisboa	15,9%	3,0	69,7%	-	2,3%
EL43	Kriti	15,9%	2,9	65,6%	-	1,0%
UKC2	Northumberland and Tyne and Wear	15,9%	7,8	70,4%	-	1,2%
UKH3	Essex	15,9%	9,6	76,3%	-	3,3%
UKG2	Shropshire and Staffordshire	16,0%	3,0	75,4%	-	0,5%
FI20	Åland	16,0%	9,7	85,3%	-	0,3%
BE24	Prov. Vlaams-Brabant	16,2%	7,6	73,7%	-	3,7%
UKE1	East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	16,2%	3,7	73,6%	-	0,6%
ES22	Comunidad Foral de Navarra	16,2%	7,1	70,4%	7,8%	2,1%
DE30	Berlin	16,2%	7,4	68,9%	19,0%	3,5%
SE23	Västsvrige	16,3%	7,0	79,5%	13,1%	4,2%
BE21	Prov. Antwerpen	16,3%	8,9	69,9%	-	2,5%
AT12	Niederösterreich	16,3%	2,8	76,5%	10,1%	1,4%
DE21	Oberbayern	16,5%	7,7	79,5%	8,8%	4,6%
FI19	Länsi-Suomi	16,5%	3,8	73,0%	-	3,9%
BE23	Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen	16,5%	7,5	73,5%	-	2,2%

SE12	Östra Mellansverige	16,7%	7,1	77,0%	13,8%	4,4%
UKG1	Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire	16,8%	2,7	79,0%	-	1,9%
SE22	Sydsverige	16,8%	9,3	77,4%	14,9%	4,6%
DE60	Hamburg	16,9%	4,9	75,4%	13,5%	2,2%
ES42	Castilla-la Mancha	16,9%	6,1	61,2%	31,1%	0,7%
DE71	Darmstadt	17,0%	4,4	76,3%	11,0%	3,5%
FR52	Bretagne	17,1%	6,9	70,7%	11,0%	1,9%
UKH1	East Anglia	17,1%	9,9	77,6%	-	5,6%
FR24	Centre (FR)	17,1%	3,2	70,9%	11,5%	1,7%
UKM6	Highlands and Islands	17,3%	2,8	79,4%	-	1,0%
ES13	Cantabria	17,3%	4,4	64,9%	15,2%	1,1%
UKE2	North Yorkshire	17,3%	8,3	78,2%	-	1,8%
UKJ2	Surrey, East and West Sussex	17,4%	8,5	78,5%	-	1,6%
PT15	Algarve	17,4%	4,5	70,6%	-	0,4%
ITH2	Provincia Autonoma di Trento	17,5%	8,2	70,9%	9,0%	1,7%
FR62	Midi-Pyrénées	17,7%	7,5	72,3%	13,8%	4,6%
AT11	Burgenland (AT)	17,7%	3,9	74,7%	11,0%	0,8%
ITI4	Lazio	17,9%	7,9	63,6%	16,8%	1,7%
FR61	Aquitaine	17,9%	7,7	69,6%	12,8%	1,5%
FR81	Languedoc-Roussillon	18,0%	11,0	61,7%	18,4%	2,6%
ITH3	Veneto	18,0%	4,1	69,3%	10,5%	1,0%
ITC4	Lombardia	18,2%	6,7	69,7%	9,5%	1,3%
FR83	Corse	18,3%	12,3	64,4%	19,7%	0,3%
BE25	Prov. West-Vlaanderen	18,4%	4,1	72,8%	-	1,0%
UKF3	Lincolnshire	18,5%	5,6	76,5%	-	0,5%
ITC2	Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	18,8%	3,6	71,3%	8,9%	0,6%
EL11	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	18,8%	3,8	60,9%	-	0,6%
FR53	Poitou-Charentes	18,9%	4,5	70,4%	13,5%	0,9%
UKK4	Devon	19,0%	3,5	76,1%	-	0,9%
UKK3	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	19,3%	6,1	72,2%	-	0,2%
UKK2	Dorset and Somerset	20,1%	2,9	77,0%	-	0,8%
EL41	Voreio Aigaio	20,3%	7,0	60,4%	-	0,5%
ITI3	Marche	20,8%	3,1	67,9%	12,8%	0,7%
ITH5	Emilia-Romagna	21,0%	7,2	72,5%	8,7%	1,4%
ITI1	Toscana	21,5%	4,3	68,3%	11,0%	1,2%
ITI2	Umbria	21,6%	4,4	67,2%	13,7%	0,9%
	European Union	15,7%	2,6	68,7%	16,6%	2%

GROUP C

NUTS2 CODE	Name	Percentage of people of 65 years or over	Crude rate of population change per 1.000 inhabitants	Employment rate of age group 20 to 64 years	At-risk-of-poverty rate	Total intramural R&D expenditure as percentage of GDP
HU33	Dél-Alföld	15,6%	-6,5	59,5%	-	1,0%
FR43	Franche-Comté	15,6%	2,4	70,8%	12,4%	2,8%
EE00	Eesti	15,5%	-1,0	71,3%	-	1,7%
FR21	Champagne-Ardenne	15,5%	-0,7	68,0%	14,3%	0,8%
RO31	Sud - Muntenia	15,3%	-4,1	63,4%	22,2%	0,4%
LT00	Lietuva	15,3%	-15,6	67,7%	-	0,8%

BG41	Yugozapaden	15,2%	-0,6	73,1%	10,8%	0,9%
EL30	Attiki	15,2%	-5,3	62,7%	-	0,8%
FR41	Lorraine	15,2%	0,4	67,4%	13,6%	1,3%
HU23	Dél-Dunántúl	15,2%	-6,8	57,0%	-	0,5%
ES52	Comunidad Valenciana	15,1%	2,4	61,5%	21,6%	1,1%
HU31	Észak-Magyarország	15,1%	-10,8	54,0%	-	0,6%
UKM3	South Western Scotland	15,1%	2,0	70,9%	-	1,2%
RO41	Sud-Vest Oltenia	15,1%	-5,7	64,9%	32,8%	0,2%
AT31	Oberösterreich	15,0%	1,7	77,5%	9,4%	2,5%
HU22	Nyugat-Dunántúl	14,9%	-0,7	65,7%	-	0,6%
BG33	Severoztochen	14,7%	-3,8	62,9%	24,1%	0,2%
NL12	Friesland (NL)	14,6%	1,1	77,0%	10,9%	0,9%
SI01	Vzhodna Slovenija	14,6%	1,2	69,0%	15,4%	1,3%
FR23	Haute-Normandie	14,4%	2,5	67,8%	12,7%	1,4%
PT11	Norte	14,3%	-2,9	68,1%	-	1,4%
ITF3	Campania	14,3%	0,7	44,3%	36,5%	1,3%
AT32	Salzburg	14,1%	1,7	78,1%	9,6%	1,3%
HU21	Közép-Dunántúl	14,1%	-3,5	64,3%	-	0,7%
CZ06	Jihovýchod	14,0%	2,3	70,8%	9,2%	1,7%
CZ07	Střední Morava	13,8%	-0,7	69,8%	10,8%	1,0%
PL11	Lódzkie	13,8%	-3,1	66,1%	-	0,6%
FR22	Picardie	13,7%	1,9	67,9%	14,1%	1,3%
CZ05	Severovýchod	13,7%	1,8	70,5%	7,5%	1,2%
PL33	Swietokrzyskie	13,6%	-2,8	65,0%	-	0,4%
HU32	Észak-Alföld	13,6%	-6,4	55,1%	-	1,1%
RO22	Sud-Est	13,6%	-3,1	59,1%	26,9%	0,2%
RO21	Nord-Est	13,4%	-1,5	67,4%	31,9%	0,3%
PL34	Podlaskie	13,3%	-1,5	67,0%	-	0,3%
RO42	Vest	13,3%	-2,5	63,6%	17,6%	0,2%
FR30	Nord - Pas-de-Calais	13,2%	1,4	62,6%	18,1%	0,8%
FR92	Martinique (FR)	13,2%	-5,7	56,4%	-	
PL31	Lubelskie	13,2%	-2,5	65,1%	-	0,6%
RO32	Bucuresti - Ilfov	13,1%	2,5	68,1%	4,4%	1,2%
CZ08	Moravskoslezsko	12,9%	-2,4	67,8%	13,6%	0,9%
RO12	Centru	12,9%	-0,5	58,8%	19,1%	0,2%
PT30	Região Autónoma da Madeira (PT)	12,8%	-0,3	69,3%	-	0,3%
RO11	Nord-Vest	12,8%	-1,1	62,7%	17,6%	0,4%
PL52	Opolskie	12,6%	-3,0	63,3%	-	0,2%
PL22	Slaskie	12,4%	-1,6	61,9%	-	0,5%
PL51	Dolnoslaskie	12,3%	-0,3	62,3%	-	0,5%
CZ04	Severozápad	12,2%	0,2	67,4%	14,2%	0,3%
PL32	Podkarpackie	11,9%	0,8	64,1%	-	0,7%
SK02	Západné Slovensko	11,9%	-0,9	68,3%	10,7%	0,4%
PT20	Região Autónoma dos Açores (PT)	11,8%	0,9	67,9%	-	0,5%
FR91	Guadeloupe (FR)	11,7%	1,7	55,1%	-	2,3%
PL61	Kujawsko-Pomorskie	11,4%	0,1	62,1%	-	0,3%
PL42	Zachodniopomorskie	11,2%	-0,2	59,6%	-	0,3%
SK03	Stredné Slovensko	11,1%	-0,2	63,5%	12,7%	0,4%
PL43	Lubuskie	10,8%	0,5	62,3%	-	0,1%
PL62	Warminsko-Mazurskie	10,6%	-0,3	60,7%	-	0,4%
	European Union	15,7%	2,6	68,7%	16,6%	2%

GROUP D

NUTS2 CODE	Name	Percentage of people of 65 years or over	Crude rate of population change per 1.000 inhabitants	Employment rate of age group 20 to 64 years	At-risk-of-poverty rate	Total intramural R&D expenditure as percentage of GDP
ITC3	Liguria	24,7%	-1,0	67,1%	12,7%	1,4%
PT18	Alentejo	21,5%	-5,0	69,3%	-	0,7%
FR63	Limousin	21,2%	0,1	70,6%	14,5%	0,9%
ITH4	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	21,0%	1,2	68,0%	11,3%	1,4%
ITC1	Piemonte	20,9%	1,9	68,2%	12,4%	1,9%
ES41	Castilla y León	20,9%	-1,8	64,7%	20,5%	1,2%
EL25	Peloponnisos	20,8%	0,3	67,1%	-	0,4%
EL21	Ipeiros	20,8%	-0,4	61,5%	-	0,9%
DED2	Dresden	20,6%	-2,9	75,1%	18,6%	4,1%
DEE0	Sachsen-Anhalt	20,4%	-9,9	73,1%	21,2%	1,4%
ES12	Principado de Asturias	20,3%	-0,6	60,4%	13,1%	1,0%
ITF2	Molise	20,2%	-2,7	55,9%	26,7%	0,5%
ES11	Galicia	20,1%	0,5	64,4%	18,6%	1,0%
BG31	Severozapaden	2	-15,4	61,2%	31,4%	0,1%
EL24	Stereia Ellada	19,8%	2,0	60,9%	-	0,4%
ITF1	Abruzzo	19,6%	2,2	61,0%	20,2%	0,9%
DEG0	Thüringen	19,5%	-7,1	75,4%	18,1%	2,2%
EL13	Dytiki Makedonia	19,5%	-3,9	57,5%	-	0,2%
DEC0	Saarland	19,4%	-5,3	71,5%	15,4%	1,4%
EL14	Thessalia	19,3%	-3,0	63,1%	-	0,4%
EL22	Ionia Nisia	19,3%	0,7	67,6%	-	0,1%
PT16	Centro (PT)	19,2%	-4,1	73,6%	-	1,3%
DE91	Braunschweig	19,2%	-3,6	72,6%	15,8%	7,9%
DE73	Kassel	19,2%	-4,1	75,3%	15,0%	1,6%
SE32	Mellersta Norrland	19,2%	-1,2	77,4%	13,0%	0,9%
SE31	Norra Mellansverige	19,0%	0,3	77,6%	14,8%	1,2%
DE50	Bremen	19,0%	0,2	69,7%	21,1%	2,7%
DE92	Hannover	19,0%	-1,7	74,1%	16,2%	2,3%
DEB1	Koblenz	18,8%	-4,7	76,6%	15,6%	0,7%
ES24	Aragón	18,7%	1,9	68,5%	15,7%	1,1%
DE40	Brandenburg	18,7%	-3,5	75,8%	16,6%	1,6%
FR72	Auvergne	18,7%	2,0	69,7%	13,8%	2,2%
DE24	Oberfranken	18,7%	-4,5	76,4%	13,4%	1,7%
DEA1	Düsseldorf	18,6%	-1,8	72,3%	14,8%	1,9%
DEF0	Schleswig-Holstein	18,6%	0,3	75,9%	13,6%	1,4%
DE80	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	18,4%	-6,3	72,1%	23,2%	2,0%
DEA5	Arnsberg	18,4%	-4,8	71,3%	16,6%	1,5%
FR26	Bourgogne	18,3%	0,6	69,9%	12,3%	1,0%
ITF5	Basilicata	18,3%	-3,0	52,1%	30,9%	0,7%
DEB2	Trier	18,2%	-1,3	78,4%	13,9%	1,1%
SE21	Småland med öarna	18,1%	2,6	80,4%	13,9%	1,2%
UKD1	Cumbria	18,1%	-1,6	76,8%	-	0,7%
DE93	Lüneburg	18,0%	-1,3	77,4%	13,4%	1,0%
EL23	Dytiki Ellada	17,9%	-6,6	59,5%	-	0,8%
DEA4	Detmold	17,8%	-2,6	75,5%	14,9%	1,8%

FR82	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	17,8%	2,2	67,2%	15,6%	2,0%
DEB3	Rheinhessen-Pfalz	17,7%	-0,9	75,2%	13,7%	3,2%
ES43	Extremadura	17,6%	2,0	56,1%	35,2%	0,9%
DE25	Mittelfranken	17,5%	1,7	78,0%	12,3%	3,6%
SE33	Övre Norrland	17,5%	0,3	77,1%	14,8%	2,6%
DE26	Unterfranken	17,5%	-3,2	77,4%	12,7%	2,2%
UKL1	West Wales and The Valleys	17,4%	1,3	68,9%	-	0,8%
DE72	Gießen	17,4%	-3,1	74,8%	14,5%	2,2%
DE27	Schwaben	17,3%	1,1	79,1%	10,4%	1,2%
DE12	Karlsruhe	17,3%	2,0	77,1%	11,9%	4,2%
ES21	País Vasco	17,3%	1,6	68,8%	11,0%	2,1%
FR25	Basse-Normandie	17,2%	1,6	70,4%	13,0%	1,2%
DE13	Freiburg	17,2%	2,0	80,6%	10,7%	2,7%
BG32	Severen tsentralen	17,2%	-10,7	61,6%	26,8%	0,1%
ES23	La Rioja	17,1%	1,6	68,1%	21,1%	1,0%
EL12	Kentriki Makedonia	17,1%	-2,9	59,1%	-	0,7%
F11C	Etelä-Suomi	17,0%	2,1	73,2%	14,9%	2,8%
DEA2	Köln	17,0%	1,4	72,7%	14,7%	3,0%
DEA3	Münster	17,0%	-1,3	73,2%	14,4%	1,0%
ITF6	Calabria	16,9%	-1,6	46,6%	33,2%	0,5%
DE11	Stuttgart	16,9%	1,5	78,7%	10%	6,5%
DE22	Niederbayern	16,9%	0,6	78,1%	11,9%	-
DE23	Oberpfalz	16,9%	-0,5	77,7%	12,4%	-
ITG2	Sardegna	16,8%	0,1	55,2%	20,7%	0,7%
DE94	Weser-Ems	16,7%	0,3	75,9%	16,1%	0,7%
AT21	Kärnten	16,7%	-1,7	72,8%	15,0%	2,7%
ITG1	Sicilia	16,7%	0,7	46,7%	40,4%	0,8%
AT22	Steiermark	16,6%	1,0	74,7%	12,5%	4,1%
NL34	Zeeland	16,4%	0,2	76,9%	8,4%	0,7%
DE14	Tübingen	16,3%	1,3	79,3%	10,3%	4,7%
ITF4	Puglia	16,3%	0,5	49,0%	27,9%	0,8%
F11D	Pohjois- ja Itä-Suomi	16,1%	0,5	68,8%	16,5%	3,9%
LV00	Latvija	15,9%	-16,0	68,1%	-	0,6%
BG42	Yuzhen tsentralen	15,9%	-6,7	64,3%	24,0%	0,3%
UKD4	Lancashire	15,8%	1,2	73,5%	-	1,5%
BG34	Yugoiztochen	15,8%	-5,5	65,3%	23,7%	0,2%
NL42	Limburg (NL)	15,7%	-0,3	74,1%	9,9%	1,8%
NL13	Drenthe	15,7%	0,7	75,6%	9,3%	0,8%
	European Union	15,7%	2,6	68,7%	16,6%	2%

Annex II: Compilation of good practices that could integrate a future European Flagship on Demographic Change

SMART GROWTH: EDUCATION, RESEARCH & INNOVATION AND SME SUPPORT

Brandenburg - Fit for taking over the management of a handicraft enterprise

More than 3.000 handicraft enterprises will face a generation change. With this project, young craftsmen in the southern part of the Brandenburg region receive a special additional training to approve their skills for taking over a handicraft enterprise.

Brandenburg - Campus for the generations

The objective of this project is to develop new ways for training of older work force. The participants, mostly job-seeking older people, work together with students on tasks, which are provided by firms. The project is supported by universities of Brandenburg. The creativity and innovation ability of the older people should be build up by these new methods and their job opportunities should be improved. For more information, follow this [link](#) (EN).

Castilla-La Mancha – Upgrade Plan for Tourism Infrastructures (PLAMIT)

PLAMIT aims to train people in marketing and tourism skills and to raise awareness about artistic, natural and historical heritage, and refurbishment of building. It is developed in 40 municipalities and has a budget of EUR 7 000 000. For more information, follow this [link](#) (ES).

Extremadura - Language teaching in rural areas

Extending the language provision in 20 municipalities in classrooms attached to the Official Language Schools in rural areas, in particular in areas that are geographically remote from these specialized training centres. The people of those territories have more difficulties to access this type of studies and achieve the relevant qualifications.

Extremadura - Plan for Health Care and Implementation of e-Health in Rural Areas.

Conceived for the incorporation of new technologies of communication and information and developing e-Health Systems with initiatives such as the incorporation of 3G technologies to access the Electronic Health Record of the patient in all ambulances of Extremadura.

East and North Finland - Growth programme Hyrrä for well-being enterprises

In the [Growth Programme HYRRÄ](#), the well-being industry covers social and health care services, everyday life management, free time services, work-related well-being, well-being tourism and adequate equipment production. The goal of the programme is to facilitate the strategy based on long-term development of knowledge management in well-being business for expanding companies. Additional goal is also to intensify cooperation between municipalities, SMEs and third sector. In addition, the aim is to create a multi-provider model and increase the use of service vouchers in Joensuu region. Compared with the situation before, cooperation between companies has improved. Compared with forecast development regional well-being industry has developed.

Border, Midland and Western Ireland - 'Against tide' the economic regeneration of Kiltimagh

Kiltimagh suffered from 75% emigration, 40% deserted buildings, no investment in business, low-income levels, high unemployment and underemployment. The projects objective was to increase employment, stabilise population, improve training, improve economic activity, boost entrepreneurship, as well as develop tourism, arts, culture and heritage and put in place an enhancement programme. In addition, there were no natural tourism products, little industrial employment, few facilities and a general deserted-like townscape. Compared with the situation before the project has considerably improved the local economy.

Province of Limburg - Service centre lifelong learning

The stimulation of the knowledge economy is served by taking lifelong learning into a higher level. The service centre lifelong learning in the Limburg region (the Netherlands) does so by combining expertise in the field, developing expertise and consequently sharing the expertise with businesses and institutions. The partners develop a transparent and univocal set 'accreditation of prior learning', develop a vision on the needs of flexibilisation of learning paths, a virtual on-line network as well as a platform for information and knowledge exchange between the project partners. Furthermore, they develop an e-portfolio and criteria for effective active career/job management. The products are tested in on going and related projects with businesses and companies.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern – Promoting sunrise industries

The regional economy has been strengthened by a focus on sunrise industries, such as life science including telemedicine, renewable energy, information and communications technology (ICT). Partnerships and network structures between industry, research institutions and universities have been specifically expanded in order to increase R&D-capacities. This has laid the foundation for more innovative products that improve the competitiveness of enterprises in the region and develop new markets. For more information on the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's approach towards demographic change, follow this [link](#) (DE)

Free State of Saxony: Modern e-government solutions - The Citizens Terminal and the Citizens Suitcase

Access to government services in the Free State of Saxony will be possible over many methods of communication in the future. Being there – even in time of demographic decline. Two of them are already in place in a testing phase and will be implemented successively in several municipalities: the Citizens Terminal and the Citizens Suitcase, the "town hall on the road"

The objective is a location-independent virtual access to administration while guaranteeing a personal contact to administrative staff. The target groups are citizens and companies in rural areas as well as the elder generation and disabled persons. The service contains the reception of information related to administrative processes and the mobile digital handling of administrative processes. [Brochure](#) of these projects (EN). For more information, follow this [link](#) (EN).

Free State of Saxony - Supermarkets of generations

Especially in ageing towns or quarters with a high share of the elderly population, retail trade companies should meet the needs of all generations and especially of the ageing people. The project has contributed to an independent life of elderly people by a full accessible supermarket in Chemnitz in the free state of Saxony.

Free State of Saxony - Improcenter for precision engineering

Growing demand for skilled labour force requires new strategies to commit young people and skilled employees to staying in their home region in Saxony. Objective of this project is the long-term safekeeping of a skilled labour force in the region.

Veneto - Eliser Long Life Elixir

Generational change is common to all advanced economies characterised by the well-developed and mature generation of entrepreneurs. In the light of the current demographic changes, ageing population can threaten the socio-economic sustainability of the Veneto region and its competitiveness in the coming years. Therefore, it becomes vital to intervene in order to limit the damage and expand the scope of opportunities. To manage by means of a comprehensive intervention model a generational passage both in the traditional economic sectors and in specific contexts, such as e.g. restructuration and processing high degree of innovation. Purposes of the project was to come up with concrete proposals in terms of new legislation and services facilitating the process of generational change.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH: JOB CREATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Aragón: Teruel Investment Fund

Teruel Investment Fund was created in 2007 to compensate for the fact that Aragón presents significant inter-territorial inequalities that regional policy cannot act effectively with the general mechanisms available in Spain. With the aim of financing investment projects that directly or indirectly promote the generation of income and wealth in the province of Teruel, the Government of Aragón allocates EUR 30 million per year.

Aragón: Training program for employment in rural areas

In Aragón, in 2008, a training program for employment in rural areas with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants was launched. In particular, through the use of ICT, are trained in appropriate specialties to the labour market in rural areas. For this purpose, the Government of Aragón spent more than EUR 4 500 000.

Asturias: “More than a break” –Asturias Plan to help the Asturias women in the rural areas

Specific training on farm and cattle works and family cares (children and old people) addressed to 15 women, in order to replace temporally the women in rural areas (working trips, holidays, hospital stays etc.) Institutional and political framework: Asturias Demographic Challenges Regional Pact. Budget: EUR 24 000, own funds from the Region. For more information, follow this [link](#) (ES).

Brandenburg: Lack of doctors in rural areas

In nationwide comparison, Brandenburg is the region with the lowest density of general practitioners. Brandenburg created a package of several measures ranging from recruiting new doctors by offering them financial support for opening a surgery, scholarships for medicine students willing to work in Brandenburg after their studies, supporting medical staff for general practitioners (so called mobile nurses) and telemedicine. For more information, follow this [link](#) (EN).

Castilla-La Mancha – CREA2 programme

[CREA2](#) is a training programme offering resources for employment and self-employment solutions in mountain areas. Budget: EUR 1 580 000.

Castilla y León - Population Agenda

The Regional Government of Castilla y León has agreed 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 on the following fields: education, promotion of the access to housing, information and counselling services, and specially, 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. Evaluation is made by the Regional government and the civil society.

Castilla y León - Promotion of kindergarten in rural areas

The Regional Government has fostered the creation of childcare places in small municipalities in rural areas. In December 2013, there were 3,000 places. In the whole Region, the places offered covered 58% of the total population under 3 years old in Castilla y León.

Castilla y León – Setting-up aid to facilitate the establishment of young farmers

As, in general, rural areas are more affected by demographic change, shrinking and ageing of population. In this context, the Regional Government has put in place measures to facilitate the establishment of 4,100 new young farmers in the period 2007-2014.

Extremadura - Promotion of entrepreneurship among young farmers and women

This action has the objective of encouraging young farmers to become farm owners, in order to contribute to a necessary generational change in this sector and, as ultimate goal, the fixing of the population in rural areas.

Extremadura – Actions to promote entrepreneurship

Among other actions, Extremadura has developed an ambitious plan with measures for companies and entrepreneurs under the [3E Plan \(Employment, Entrepreneurs and Enterprise\)](#) in every corner of the region. It has arrived to more than 60 municipalities. The region Extremadura has especially focused on the Promotion of entrepreneurship among young farmers and women and has created a network between municipalities to value those Extremaduran towns that stand out for their commitment to the promotion and improvement of conditions for entrepreneurship and business creation.

Extremadura - Grants to promote birth rate and home buying

This initiative is focused in municipalities with less than 3,000 inhabitants. Of the 409 municipalities and small towns of Extremadura, 348 (85 % of the total) have a population not exceeding 3,000 inhabitants. These municipalities have 320,299 inhabitants, 29 % of the regional total.

East and North Finland - Abloy's agemaster programme

The goals of the Abloy Agemaster programme were to boost the work ability and well-being of personnel, and especially, the mature workers, decrease use of sick leave by one percent each year, raise the average retirement age (from 59 to 61 within two years), boost self-confidence of agemasters, highlight the value of older workers' experience and input, and ensure the transfer of accumulated and tacit knowledge in the region of North Karelia. Results of the project are a rise in the average retirement age; older workers feel more appreciated and feel better than before the programme activities.

Galicia - Net Houses

In rural areas with a very low demand of childcare services, the Galician Government provides interested people with training and certification to look after 2-3 children at their home. Thus, Net Houses avoids building specific facilities in areas where the demand is not enough and reinforces the social cohesion in those towns. This measure is included in the Plan to boost demographic trends, a horizontal plan composed of 69 specific measures for demographic recovery in the fields of raising social awareness, family policies, socioeconomic support for birth rate, and coordination and mainstreaming amongst public authorities.

Galicia - The SYMBIOS Project

The [SYMBIOS Project](#) aims to facilitate transnational and transregional exchanging of knowledge and practice about the consequences of demographic change on the wellbeing and social inclusion of the territories, namely the rural ones. It is coordinated by the Galician Government, with the participation of entities from North of Portugal, Castilla y León, Limburg (NL), North Karelia and Southern and Eastern Ireland. As a part of the Galician ESF Operative Programme (Axis 4), SYMBIOS project analyses with rigour what is really happening; exchanges and disseminates experiences, projects and alternatives; and formulates, in a participative way, proposals and recommendations.

Jämtland - Regional collaboration on the theme of migration / demographics for maintaining employment and tax base

Nordic countries outside metropolitan areas face a number of challenges. The territories have adjacent large number of retirements where the available youth groups compensate only a part of this. Many companies / organizations are experiencing today that it is difficult to recruit the right skills, something that will be necessary if in the future they will be able to meet their needs. Although the public health and social care sector has large employment needs in the near future. Unless the situation, with a reduction in the working age population and an increasing proportion of older people is turned, the ratio of citizens in working age will decrease rapidly and every working person will then have to support more persons. The project aims to take a holistic approach to break the population decline for maintaining tax-funded welfare for citizens and an attractive business environment. This will include the establishment of a long-term method how work with occupancy / demographics based on good experiences from other regions in the country and in other Nordic regions, establishment of a user-oriented platform for people that wants to move here – on door in concept, coordinated marketing of the county regarding working possibilities and the attractiveness of the region and continuous analysis and statistical follow-up of the work.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern – Securing qualified workforce for the region

In 2011 business associations and chambers, trade unions and all levels of public administration formed an alliance ([Fachkräftebündnis](#)) agreeing upon more than 100 practical measures in order to secure a qualified workforce for the region's economy. These measures include fields such as preparing juveniles for and support them in the transition from school to work life, creating attractive working conditions, e.g. by enhancing possibilities to combine family and work life, and promoting the region as an aspiring business location and an attractive place to live and work.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern – Strengthening social cohesion

As regards social cohesion and attractive living conditions, active citizenship and civil involvement play an important role especially in rural areas. Thus, the government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern supports this by erecting a foundation with a focus on fostering small, local initiatives and e.g. by providing insurance cover for volunteers.

Schleswig-Holstein - Projects Best Agers / Best Agers Lighthouses

In the light of demographic change and the current economic challenges, it becomes more and more important for cities and regions to uncover and use their economic potentials in a creative way. One of these potentials are people at the age of 55 or older whose experience and knowledge are to be seen as an important factor for the local or regional labour market. Those so called "Best Agers" are the growing part of the working-age population and should be involved in economic activities as long as possible, but in a motivating way:

- The [Best Agers Project](#) (INTERREG IV B – 2010-2012), which comprised 18 regional partners from seven Baltic Sea Countries and one partner from the United Kingdom, explored how the inclusion of older people in the area of business and skills development.

- [Best Agers Lighthouses](#) (2013-2014). Based on the experiences and results of the predecessor project, the Lighthouses approach was to create and promote practical examples of age management interventions in selected enterprises and public organizations.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN ECONOMY

Aragón: Transportation suitable for the disabled in rural areas

Aragón Institute of Social Services offers to all supra-local and local entities to organize a public transport service to transport disabled people in situations of dependency and risk of social exclusion. The routes are planned depending on the number of beneficiaries and the number of resources that can be coordinated. For this purpose, the Government of Aragón spent EUR 424 000 per year.

Castilla-La Mancha – Broadband expansion plan in rural and isolated areas

In order to reduce the digital gap for citizens, institutions and companies in all the territory, it improves the broadband internet access through any of the available technologies (telephone lines, cable, satellite, 3G or Wimax). For more information, follow this [link](#) (ES)

Castilla y León - On demand transport initiative

With a wide and rural territory, on demand transport is becoming a solution to provide better transport services in rural areas especially for the elderly. It consists on booking one day or several hours in advance a concrete journey from one municipality to another. Bookings are recorded by a telematics platform that organizes on a day-to day basis the bus routes in these rural areas. The cost of the journey is affordable. Scholar buses are also being integrated into the system and both services are starting to be jointly provided. Nowadays, Castilla y León counts on 810 routes, relying 3,500 municipalities that provide transport to a million people.

Extremadura - Project of water purification for small towns

This project is addressed to install the optimal purification system for municipalities with less than 2,000 inhabitants.

Extremadura - E-Government for less paper

The regional Government has developed a computer tool to eliminate post and paper in the communications between the municipalities and the Regional Government. In 2012, the Directorate General of Local Administration has received more than 5,000 municipal minutes on paper.

Extremadura - Virtual and real-time exchange of administrative records

The Regional Government of Extremadura will facilitate the municipalities of the region the access to the ORVE Project of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, which allows this exchange.

Galicia - Galician Shared School Transport Programme “TES+BUS”

In the rural areas where the demand of school transport is not enough to fill a bus, [TES+BUS programme](#) allows people to use the school transport as a normal public transport. Therefore, it increases the efficiency of the public transport system in those areas, avoiding parallel lines of school and regular transport.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - A new integrated mobility concept for the region

A new integrated mobility concept for the region is currently being drafted in order to ensure access to basic services and promote regional and local development by cross-linking different modes of traffic more effectively. For more information, follow this [link](#) (DE).