



**WORKING GROUP ON
DEPOPULATION AND AGEING**

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2017

CHAIR

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INTRODUCTION

Depopulation and ageing are one of the biggest challenges facing the European Union. To a greater or lesser extent this feature affects all European regions without exception and, even if it can be unnoticed by daily life duties, it is undoubtedly one of the most important silent problems touching the European Union.

Population pyramid imbalance and, notably, low demographic dynamics affect almost all European countries, mainly transforming population structure. Beyond circumstantial factors, the effects of low birth rates, the decline in the number of young people and a marked aging process are becoming increasingly appreciated.

From 2000, population growth in Europe has been very moderate compared to the previous 50 years; around 0,5 annually. In 2014, twelve member States experienced population losses while in sixteen member States population grew.

Furthermore, population forecast for 2015-2060 period, based in fertility dynamics, life expectancy and migration flows anticipates big changes in the EU age population structure. Currently population dependency ratio is 4 to 1 and it will become approximately 2 to 1.

Moreover, European population will be more elderly in 2060 and it will also be distributed very unevenly. In particular, it can be noticed in most European countries a global growth pattern in urban areas while in rural



areas, territories with big amount of elderly, dispersed areas or insularity areas count with a significant population drop.

Demographic change will have an enormous economic, social, budget and ecological impact at EU national and regional level. The impact of the ageing population on sustainability of the Welfare State is noticeably, mainly due to the pressure on the health systems and the social services of care for the elderly and dependent people. Likewise, depopulation will also have repercussions on the maintenance of traditional ecosystems and on the infrastructure network itself, with an impact on different territories' development.

There are undeniable consequences for the EU as a whole, even some regions or areas, based on its particular circumstances, will be touched for these changes at a latest stage or to a lesser extent.

In view of this background, European regions are privileged agents by means of their Legislative Assemblies, to launch measures addressed to meet demographic change needs at regional and local level.

Besides, demographic change is at such magnitude in Europe that it cannot be tackled without important vertical cooperation initiatives designed at national and supranational level to reinforce actions promoted at regional level.



OBJECTIVES

The main goal of Depopulation and Ageing Working Group is to make awareness in the EU on the need to give an answer to demographic change through the development of an **European strategy to face depopulation and ageing**. The main aim of this strategy will be to ensure that all EU policies and actions take into account demographic challenges and foresee mechanisms to face it.

Therefore, future European strategy should be focused on **two key elements**:

1. Mainstream demographic features **in all policy arenas and in the shape of future multiannual financial framework** including in its budgets chapters aimed at developing policies and actions to meet the challenges ahead as well as establishing priority mechanisms for those regions where the consequences of demographic change have a particular incidence.
2. To give due consideration to **the role of local and regional authorities in the fight against depopulation** as key players in the implementation of European policies focused on prevention and intervention.



ACTIVITIES

Activities to develop within this Working Group are the following:

1. Development of a **detailed study on developed initiatives** by regional legislative assemblies or other bodies **in the field of demography**. In order to undertake this study it will be sent a questionnaire aiming to get systematic and homogeneous information.
2. Development of a **meeting with EU institutions and bodies representatives** aiming to know all EU policies and activities undertaken in the field of depopulation and ageing.
3. Establishment of a **panel of experts** to develop technical analysis of fundamental aspects related to demographic change as well as the definition of measures to be taken to overcome depopulation and ageing, such as:
 - Ageing.
 - Low birth rates.
 - The loss of population for socio-economic reasons.
 - Migrations.
 - Maintenance of rural environment, biodiversity and landscape.
 - Policies to boost job creation in rural areas mainly related to the following sectors:
 - Agriculture, farming and agro alimentary sector.



- Forest sector.
 - Tourism.
4. Organization of **a seminar** to present the results of the studies carried out and to provide a forum for discussion among the Presidents of the Regional Legislative Assemblies that are members of this Working Group.
 5. To draw up **an opinion** to show results and conclusions of undertaken works. This opinion will be presented during the CALRE Plenary Assembly and it will be also sent to all European institutions.



AGENDA

- APRIL 2017: it will be sent a questionnaire to the Regional Legislative Assemblies.
- MAY TO JUNE 2017: establishment of a panel of experts and development of workshops for data assessment.
- JUNE 2017: organize a meeting with representatives of EU institutions/representative bodies.
- SEPTEMBER 2017: celebrate a seminar for the presentation of results of data assessments undertaken and to provide a forum for discussion.
- OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2017: presentation of final report of the Working Group in the CALRE Plenary Assembly.