



# **WORKING GROUP ON DEPOPULATION AND AGEING**

## **ANNUAL WORKING PROGRAMME 2018**

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## **1. BACKGROUND AND GOALS OF WORKING GROUP 2018**

CALRE Working Group on Depopulation and Ageing, was created at the CALRE Plenary Assembly held in Varese (Italy), in November 2016 and has started its activity in 2017. During its first year of work, the Working Group has developed a two-fold task: on one side, the assessment of current state of play of member regions on population data and socioeconomic level; on the other hand, devise potential solutions to challenges depopulation and ageing involve at regional level.

The work carried out during the year 2017 shows a progressive abandonment of rural areas, especially of those defined as mountain areas; modern society advances, every day more, towards urban territorial model. The abandonment of rural areas particularly affects youngest population and causes an accelerated population ageing of these areas.

Inhabitants of rural environment play a key role for the future of regions, it is therefore extremely important revitalize these territories and generate attractiveness in them in order young people can return to rural areas.

Given this scenario, the European Cohesion Policy, which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary, is presented as a tool at the service of the territories which promotes innovation and the exchange of ideas between involved regions. However, greater coordination between different existing funds is necessary in order to improve its effectiveness.



Currently we are facing a key moment, a moment in which the future of cohesion policy and the European Union financial programming period after 2020 is under debate.

Consequently, it is crucial that regions raise their voices aiming the challenge of depopulation and ageing which affect our regions is taken into consideration as a priority element.

To this regard, it is worth to highlight the Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion presented in Brussels last 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017, which brings together progress achieved by cohesion policy aiming to promote a more sustainable territorial development. This report establishes an indication for EU future measures and policies needed to strengthen regional cohesion and achieve EU priorities.

Among future measures, this document clearly determines that regional competitiveness outside of capitals of the regions in Europe is a key development challenge. Therefore, a regional development policy focused on improving rural and peri-urban areas is key to the EU's future regional and rural development policy.

Hence, we need a strong cohesion policy after 2020, especially once we are aware on funds reduction of 10%, as it was announced by the European Commissioner for Budget, Günther H. Oettinger, on November 23 at the REGI Committee of the European Parliament.



## 2. ACTION PLAN 2018

The Annual Working Programme of Depopulation and Ageing Group for 2018 is composed by the following **action lines**:

### 1. DISSEMINATION OF WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2017

- **Presentation of the Conclusions of the Working Group achieved in 2017** to the main European agents in charge of preparing the future cohesion policy, in light of the upcoming determination of the next period of EU financial programming.

In particular, we will present the results of work done **to the members of the European Commission** responsible for regional policy, rural development policy, social policy and transport policy.

Furthermore, these results will be also presented **to regional and local agents** which operate at European level as well as at regional and local level and are involved in territorial development.

### 2. COOPERATION OF THE GROUP AT EUROPEAN LEVEL ADDRESSED TO FACE DEPOPULATION AND AGEING

- We are going to establish a **closer cooperation with other European networks**, such as the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe.



We want to raise the voice **at European level** and cooperate with other associations involved in the defence of a more efficient future cohesion policy, which recognises as priority depopulation and ageing in large European regional areas.

In this regard, it will be essential to continue developing a joint activity with the **Committee of the Regions**. Notably, in the context of the development of a common support action related to the **Cohesion Alliance** which calls for an ambitious budget after 2020 that allow invest in our regions, and thus mitigate inequalities between regions, to move forward towards social integration.

### **3. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE GROUP AT EUROPEAN LEVEL ADDRESSED TO FACE DEPOPULATION AND AGEING**

- **May** is an important month at European level: next 9th May it will be celebrated the Europe Day, a key date for the future of the Union and its territories. And what is more important, also in May **the European Commission will present the proposal for the future financial framework of the EU after 2020.**

Taking advantage of this circumstances, from the coordination of the Working Group **it will be drafted a document which assess the proposal for the future financial framework from the point of view of depopulation and ageing.** This document will be addressed to the Group members for their assessment, which will allow us to elaborate an agreed **position paper**, which reflects the joint opinion of the Group.



- In parallel, we will work on the development of **a project framed in European programs** with the aim of helping our regions to obtain concrete solutions to face the challenges depopulation and ageing of the population involves in their territories with the help of European funds.

The aim is to **strengthen territorial cooperation** by promoting greater collaboration between regions affected by this problem and thus take advantage of their potential development and opportunities offered by cooperation, especially by **cross-border cooperation**.

#### **4. DEEPENING ON SHARED KNOWLEDGE OF SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES AGAINST DEPOPULATION AND AGEING**

- Given the need to provide a greater visibility to implemented solutions by different regions and to exchange regional best practices adapted to the specificities of each territory, a **Discussion Forum** will be created **for the exchange of local and regional initiatives via online**. Initiatives addressed to face depopulation and ageing in different European territories.

A forum that will host projects in images and videos, so that they can be presented on a global scale and promote the participation of all European regions. In doing so, each member region could evaluate how resources are being implemented regarding different territories needs. **This Forum will be hosted in the Cortes de Castilla y León web page.**

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- A report will be elaborated which reap **main highlighted elements of showcased practices in the field of depopulation and ageing** and which can help regions to face this challenge.

Moreover, to reinforce the participation of the regions in this project, a **prize** will be created to award the *best practices* disseminated through the Forum.

- To further advance in the study and in the implementation of regional solutions which tackle the problem of depopulation and ageing, also we will proceed to a **shared study of best practices in the area of regional depopulation and ageing** with the aim of achieving transferable common elements from these best practices.

Notably, it will be developed a close cooperation with two successful projects: the **Highlands** in Scotland (United Kingdom). A region that has gone from having a depopulation situation to be a dynamic region in economic and population terms. And the entrepreneurship centre called "El Hueco", in Castilla y León (Spain), which operates promoting the revitalization of the territory specially affected by depopulation.

- In this regard, and with the purpose of make known more in more depth specific challenges faced by Working Group member regions, we will organise a **Study Visit to showcase the regional reality of Castilla y León** to representatives of the Committee of the Regions and members of the European Commission.



### 3. ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2018

**21st February 2018**

- **Participation at the European Commission Public consultation on EU funds in the area of cohesion** through the elaboration and the presentation of a position paper.

**15th March 2018. BRUSSELS - 1<sup>st</sup> Standing Committee of CALRE 2018.**

- **Presentation of the annual Working programme 2018** of the CALRE Working Group on Depopulation and Ageing.

**9th May 2018. CASTILLA Y LEÓN**

- **Participation in the “Spring Days”** carried out by the social and business entrepreneurship centre of “El Hueco” (Soria, Spain). An interesting Spanish regional initiative developed to face depopulation and ageing.
- **Launch of the online Discussion Forum**, addressed to promote the interchange, the knowledge and dissemination of initiatives at regional and local level against depopulation and ageing.



## 23th May 2018. BRUSSELS

- **Meeting with High representatives of the European Commission** aimed at giving known the Working Group position paper on the proposal for the future financial programming period post 2020, as well as the achievements gotten through undertaken works by this Group.

## 29th June. BRUSSELS

- **Meeting of CALRE Working Group on Depopulation and Ageing**, on the occasion of the celebration of the CALRE 2nd Standing Committee.
  - At this meeting it will be presented the publication containing the **Working Group conclusions 2017** as well as all **undertaken work** by the Group up to date.
  - Moreover, it will be presented to the Working Group a **position paper** which will assess the European Commission proposal for the next multiannual financial period published in May.

We will take as starting point the document submitted on February to the European Commission **public consultation** on the future of EU funds linked to the cohesion policy post 2020.

- It is also intended to **give visibility to outstanding projects carried out at the regional level**, inviting to representatives of case of the Highlands in the United Kingdom or the centre of social entrepreneurship called "el Hueco" in Soria, Spain, to



present their projects as promoters of successful regional initiatives to tackle depopulation and ageing. To this extend, we will count with regions of all European space.

### **17th-18th September. VALLADOLID**

- Organize a **Study Visit to Castilla y León** with members of the Working Group and representatives of the Committee of the Regions and members of the European Commission, to showcase initiatives launched in Castilla y León aimed at facing depopulation and ageing.
- We will take advantage of this occasion to present a **Report on the main highlighted elements** of all the projects on depopulation and ageing studied during the development of the Group works, as well as those acknowledged **through Web Discussion Forum**.
- **It will be celebrated the prize** which will be delivered to the *best practice* submitted to the web exchange, through the web Forum, **of regional and local initiatives** to face depopulation and ageing in different European territories.

### **21<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>th</sup> November. HORTA, ISLAS AZORES**

- **Final presentation of achieved results** through works developed by the CALRE Working Group on Depopulation and Ageing 2017-2018 during the celebration of the CALRE Plenary Assembly 2018.