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# Thematic study: Demographic change and knowledge development in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme



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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
1. Executive Summary .....	3
2. Introduction and Methodology.....	8
2.1 Introduction .....	8
2.2 Methodology.....	10
3. Thematic Background.....	12
3.1 Introduction .....	12
3.2 Main Trends and Challenges .....	16
3.3 Current EU and national policy framework and programmes .....	21
3.4 Future EU policy and demographic change .....	26
4. Thematic Achievements .....	30
4.1. Individual project analysis under sub-theme 1 .....	31
4.2. Individual project analysis under sub-theme 2 .....	44
4.3. Case studies .....	53
4.4. Analysis of results per theme .....	60
4.5. Policy and implementation .....	66
5. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	74
5.1. Conclusions .....	74
5.2. Recommendations .....	75
Annexes .....	80
Annex 1 Overview projects .....	81
Annex 2 Maps and Statistics .....	83
Annex 3 References.....	86
Annex 4 Questionnaire .....	88
Annex 5 CV of Expert .....	91
Annex 6 Acknowledgements.....	92



## 1. Executive Summary

Demographic change is about population decline or population growth. But demographic change is also about outmigration of young people, shrinking labour force, ageing, changing ethnic composition of the population or a changing household composition. Even if a region is not shrinking the components of demographic change may just as much result in specific challenges for service delivery, housing, the labour market or governance structures.

This study analyses the results achieved by 16 projects supported by the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme dealing with an ageing society and population decline. CENTRAL EUROPE is a European Union Programme funded by the European Regional Development Fund within the European Territorial Cooperation objective (ETC). The goal of this study is to show the relevance of transnational cooperation for Demographic Change and Knowledge Development (in relation to human capital) based on the analysis of project achievements and their contribution to policies, cross-sector collaboration and the EU2020 Strategy, which is the leading strategy for the coming European programme period 2014-2020.

The theme for this study “Demographic change and knowledge Development”, is broken down in two further sub-themes. The first sub-theme is ***“Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain”***, the second sub-theme is ***“Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change”***. Knowledge Development is considered a cross-cutting theme.

### *Project achievements*

Work force qualifications do often not sufficiently match the needs of regional economies and this hinders economic growth, competitiveness and employment. To overcome this problem a majority of the projects focused on matching local skills with business needs and retaining competences for regional growth, for example by creating tools to improve the regional workforces or to improve the climate for innovation, especially within the creative industries, green economy and ICT sectors. Counterbalancing brain drain in these regions is important and mostly focused on facilitating the return of migrants or young well-educated women.

Projects also focus on the younger generations, e.g. via setting up business academies to support talented pupils, improving career orientation or providing comprehensive support and services to young entrepreneurs at the beginning stages of their start-ups.

Increasing the attractiveness of shrinking regions is another topic covered by CENTRAL EUROPE projects. Most projects investigate a wide range of solutions that will help shrinking regions with structural problems in relation to public services. These relate to social services (like child care), healthcare or housing. Improving accessibility of shrinking regions is tackled through looking into innovative mobility concepts, including voluntary engagement, and through solutions to reduce the costs of infrastructure and transport services.



Access of vulnerable groups to the labour market is an important issue in central Europe. This is visible in the high number of projects contributing to this topic. For example, different approaches are tested to increase the number of elderly involved in the labour market and voluntary work. Lifelong learning is often regarded as the key to enhance labour market participation. It is becoming increasingly important that older workers continue to work for a longer period and that regions in Europe make better use of the existing potentials of an ageing society. Extending working lives is not only an economic necessity, there is also evidence that shows that continuing to work or stay active can improve older people's social, mental and physical wellbeing.

Several projects contribute to testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly, for example to support patients in their own homes. Several projects contribute to adapting the housing stock for the elderly. In most EU countries, the demand for adapted housing is growing, and this is likely to increase with the strong ageing developments in the coming decades. Most elderly are satisfied with their housing and do not wish to move, meaning the focus should lie on services for the elderly that enable them to remain in their home. Half of the projects are establishing transnational strategies to counteract the brain-drain in central European regions, fostering human capital in regions by developing new cooperative ways, e.g. through establishing regional 'knowledge' systems which combine education, economy and policy (the triple helix approach).

#### *Policy learning and uptake*

With regard to policy uptake or influencing policies (on local, regional, national and on a European level) the analysis shows that this forms a challenge for projects, and the project partners within them encounter difficulties to reach this aim. Although all projects have decision makers (especially local and regional politicians) as their target group, to really change or influence policies is a different matter. Most projects have reached the stage whereby pilot action plans and implementation plans are drawn, often in the presence of politicians.

#### *Added value of transnational cooperation*

Although social-economic disparities exist between and within the regions of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area they also show strong similarities with regard to social-economic characteristics and trends. Therefore, transnational cooperation creates a possibility to implement pilots and new policies and strategies on topics that are relevant in ageing and shrinking regions. It proves a much more cost-efficient way compared to individual efforts. It also helps to put the subject on the agenda of national and regional authorities and gives financial support. The experimental character of the programme gives opportunities to find creative solutions and new strategies to deal with the consequences of demographic change.

#### *Territorial impact*

Transnational cooperation also creates the opportunity for a sustainable network that will survive the project lifetime. Knowledge is kept and experiences in the project can be disseminated in the new project.



The territorial impact of projects may also manifest through the involvement of stakeholders. Involving stakeholders is crucial for embedding results and policy uptake. Follow up mechanisms for integrated governance in central European regions encourages strong involvement and commitment of local communities. Several projects show a clear territorial impact with regard to tackling the issues in regions suffering from brain drain, for example through developing transnational management tools to re-attract former out-migrants back to the region or to allow young women to obtain the necessary qualifications to achieve professional careers without migration. In coherence with territorial cooperation programmes all projects show a territorial impact (mostly on local and regional level, but in some cases also national level or European level). The analysed projects have a territorial impact on all fields addressed, e.g. attractiveness, services, mobility, ageing etc.

### *Contribution to Europe 2020*

The projects show a high relevance in terms of their contribution to EU 2020 priorities for especially inclusive and smart growth, with a main emphasis on new skills and jobs and social inclusion (inclusive growth), but also contributions are made to youth issues and innovation (smart growth) and sustainable transport and regional development (sustainable growth).

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The analysis of the 16 projects assigned to the “Demographic change and knowledge Development” theme, shows that overall the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme contributes significantly to making shrinking regions more attractive, especially through matching local skills with business needs and retaining competences for regional growth. In addition attention is given to adapting services for the younger generations in order to keep them in shrinking regions. Improving access to the labour market for older people, active ageing and improving quality of life, and developing or testing care and telemedicine tools for the elderly are all well covered. Projects focussing on adapting the housing stock for the elderly or improving accessibility of areas are less numerous, but still count around a quarter of all projects (and also covered in other themes of the programme). Five projects focus on making use of skills and competences of the 60+, but only two projects have this as a main topic. Fostering knowledge development is a priority for over half of the projects.

Transnational cooperation supports exchange of experiences and stimulates the opening up of new channels, networks, methods and tools. It functions as a mirror and raises awareness or acts as a catalyst for change. All analysed projects have the potential to influence regional policies. The real effect relies on the ability to transform new knowledge into new or improved practices, to remove administrative constraints, set up cooperation structures with the right stakeholders, and to mobilise the right form of funding.

On the basis of these results it can be concluded that the projects funded within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme clearly present a wide range of relevant topics in relation to demographic change and knowledge development and offer great potential for future



actions in relation to Europe 2020 goals. Nevertheless, in the new programme period 2014-2020 no thematic objective or investment priority as pre-defined by the European Commission is specifically addressing demographic change, but there are ample opportunities to tackle the broad issues of demographic change through working transnationally on for example innovation, silver economy (the sector which focusses on producing or providing aged population oriented products and services), sustainable transport concepts, or promoting cultural and natural heritage, thereby tackling demographic change as a horizontal topic.

On the bases of the aggregated analysis of the 16 projects and building on the achieved results in the current programme some recommendations for the future programme are formulated on both programme and project level.

Programme level:

- Continue to put effort in including the regions now underrepresented, to strengthen the collaboration between stakeholders from experienced and less experienced regions to increase an equal spreading of knowledge and opportunities within the context of demographic change.
- Acknowledge that regions are in different phases of progress; some regions or organisations can act as mentors, while others are the ‘receivers’, which contributes to mutual learning and development of joint solutions
- Projects investing in project pilots should be prioritised over the ones focussing mainly on identifying good practices or on research.
- Structure the processes of exchange in order to improve them and stimulate collaboration between projects (not only at events or within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area) to make sure methods are shared.
- Stimulate cooperation with other programmes, like Horizon 2020 or other ETC Programmes and link with the Smart Specialisation Strategies implemented in the regions to create horizontal and vertical cooperation among relevant stakeholders.
- Although covered in other priorities in the programme and in pilot actions of several projects it is recommended to pay more attention to mobility and accessibility issues and develop and introduce smart and innovative regional mobility concepts also in relation to demographic change.
- Because of its potential, to facilitate more projects fostering the silver economy and increase the knowledge on good practices, also outside the programme boundaries. Lifelong learning and knowledge transfer should be an essential part in this.
- Continue down the path of knowledge development in order to ensure economic competitiveness, the connection of the educational system to technology and business practices and the availability of complementary knowledge from different actors.
- The demand for adapted housing is growing, and therefore it is recommended to facilitate more projects that contribute to the adaptation of the housing stock. Services for the elderly should enable them to remain in their own homes.
- For the future programme it will be even more important to have social capital and active citizenship included in the projects - for example to safeguard the inclusion of older people, the challenge is to develop neighbourhood contacts and local solidarities.
- The complex system of interactions involving economic, social, political and environmental aspects within the issue of demographic change makes the



transformation of the European governance models one of the greatest challenges for European policy makers. To come up with innovative and strong policies to deal with the impact of shrinkage may even involve de-investment or the loss of functions, which is generally not easy to explain. Therefore, it is recommended to facilitate especially projects that foster governance innovation, emphasizing greater co-ordination between different societal stakeholders and aligning resources and strategies between private and public actors of different governance levels.

#### Project level:

- Raise awareness about the consequences of demographic change before implementing the solutions.
- Pay more attention to the inclusion of policy makers at an early stage of the project to guarantee policy uptake at a later stage. With a subject like demographic change, which touches upon so many policy fields, this is of great value. Guarantee strong coherence with the already existing policies at local and regional level to make implementation easier.
- Capitalise “good practices” from different projects in (and outside) central Europe, make them accessible for stakeholders in the regions and establish direct contact between organisations dealing with demographic changes. More attention should be given to failures to be able to share the pitfalls and how to avoid them.
- Build on successful demographic change projects, to up-scale them, uplifting from the pilot stage.
- Also within demographic change related issues it is recommended to increasingly include SMEs, for example by setting up hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Involve more active ageing experts and the end-user - the elderly themselves, the care givers or volunteers.
- Involve other stakeholders than the ‘usual’ ones to create innovative solutions and ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking. For example, designers could be involved next to health care organisations and technical businesses to find feasible and sustainable solutions that keep senior citizens physically and socially active and that provide them with the care they need.
- An internal evaluation and quality control activity within the project implementation process could be a tool to increase the quality of the project results.



## 2. Introduction and Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

CENTRAL EUROPE is a European Union funding Programme within the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective. The CENTRAL EUROPE programme area includes Austria, the Czech Republic, part of Germany, Hungary, part of Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and some border regions of Ukraine<sup>1</sup>. It covers about 1,050,00 square kilometres, an area that represents approximately a fifth of the EU landmass. About 148 million citizens or 28 percent of the EU population live in this area<sup>2</sup>.

The programme is financed by the European Regional Development Fund and runs from 2007 to 2013. With a budget of EUR 231 million it co-finances EU transnational cooperation projects between regions that promote economic, environmental and social development by elaborating joint solutions, concrete outputs and results.

The programme focuses on four priorities<sup>3</sup>:

1. Facilitating innovation;
2. Improving accessibility;
3. Using the environment responsibly;
4. Enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions.

The CENTRAL EUROPE Programme broke down the Priorities into six themes, whereby enough critical mass of projects and actors was identified and the thematic value of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is demonstrated. These six themes are:

- Technology transfer and business innovation
- Sustainable public transport and logistics
- Environmental risk management and climate change
- Energy efficiency and renewable energies
- Demographic change and knowledge development
- Cultural heritage and creative resources

Target groups are national, regional and local authorities, development agencies, universities and research institutes, chambers of commerce, innovation centres and other relevant actors in the field of innovation, economic development, transport and environment.

Similar to other European initiatives, capitalisation of results is part of the strategic framework of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme in order to take advantage of achieved

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Czech Republic, Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen), Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Provincia Autonoma Bolzano/Bozen, Provincia Autonoma Trento, Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste, Veneto), Hungary, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine (Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Volyn, Lviv, Zakarpattia.

<sup>2</sup> [www.central2013.eu](http://www.central2013.eu)

<sup>3</sup> These 4 thematic Priorities are further subdivided in 14 so called Areas of Intervention. See <http://www.central2013.eu/about-central/priorities/>



project results and “helping to link these to the wider political framework of EU Cohesion Policy and the EU 2020 Strategy”. For each of the six themes the results are capitalised. This study analyses the results achieved by 16 transnational projects assigned to Demographic Change and Knowledge Development, thereby identifying the relevance of transnational cooperation and their contribution to policies, cross-sector collaboration and the EU2020 Strategy, which is the leading strategy for the coming European programme period 2014-2020.

The thematic study focusses on achievements along two predefined sub-themes, these are:

- 1) Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain;
- 2) Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change.

In both sub-themes knowledge development is considered a cross-cutting theme. Knowledge Development is understood “as improving the framework for the knowledge development as it relates to human capital in order to ensure economic competitiveness, the connection of the educational system to the leading edge of technology and business practices, and availability of complementary knowledge from different actors” which aims at, among others, “implementing joint strategies and action plans for strengthening human resources and knowledge development” (CENTRAL EUROPE Programme<sup>4</sup>).

The objective of this study is to show the relevance of transnational cooperation for Demographic Change and Knowledge Development based on the analysis of achievements of the projects supported by the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme dealing with the consequences of an ageing society and population decline. Furthermore, the study should give evidence of the critical mass mobilised at transnational level, to verify the potential relevance of project achievements and their contribution to policies (regional, national or European) and to identify the added value of the transnational cooperation for the territories concerned.

The study analyses the projects implemented within the current CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and investigates which actions have proven to be relevant and successful on the territorial level for tackling the consequences of ageing and shrinkage and fostering knowledge development. And finally the study tries to find an answer to the question of which type of actions could be considered in the future programme 2014-2020.

In the next paragraph the methodology of the study is explained. Chapter three introduces the policy context of demographic change and explicates the challenges of dealing with the consequences of the demographic developments in the last decades. Chapter four describes the thematic achievements of the 16 projects and illustrates these with several case studies. At the end of chapter four it aggregates the analysis per theme and looks into regional networks, implementation of activities or policy uptake. Finally, in chapter five conclusions are drawn and recommendations for the future programme are given.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.central2013.eu/about-central/priorities/innovation/knowledge-development/>



## 2.2 Methodology

Within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme the theme Demographic Change and Knowledge Development is covered by 16 relevant projects (see annex 1), which include 180 partners in total (see annex 2, map 1 for the territorial distribution of partners).

The first step in the study was the collection of data and the initial analysis of the projects to get a first impression of the topics addressed. Specific project documents and data were provided by the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme. These consisted of the Application Forms and main project outputs, such as strategies or tools developed, pilot action reports, investment preparation reports etc. In addition to these documents relevant information was gathered through the projects' websites.

The next step was a desk research of relevant studies and data published on demographic change (see Annex 3 for the list of references) to describe the main trends and challenges and to analyse the current EU policy framework with regard to ageing, shrinking regions and knowledge development.

The projects were then clustered according to their thematic content and analysed on the basis of pre-defined topics. The first sub-theme (***Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain***) comprises:

- Adapting services for younger generations
- Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth
- Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions
- Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas
- Matching local skills with business needs

The second sub-theme (***Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change***) covers:

- Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market
- Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups
- Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly
- Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation
- Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly

Knowledge development is considered a cross-cutting theme, therefore all 16 projects have been analysed with the aim to collect relevant achievements in this field. Five projects have been submitted under the programme Area of Intervention "Fostering Knowledge Development" (see footnote 3) and are prioritised in the analysis with regard to this theme. The contribution to each topic is rated through one, two or three stars, which respectively mean a contribution to a small, reasonable and large degree.

In addition, all projects were analysed individually on the contribution they make to policy learning or policy uptake (or contributing to it), to strengthening regional networks and with regard to their specific contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy. The topics used in this study are:



- Policy learning / policy uptake
- Strengthening regional networks (e.g. cross-sectoral, public-private, triple helix)
- Contribution to EU2020
- Identifying and dissemination of good practices
- Improving or testing existing practices
- Developing and implementing new practices

A questionnaire (see annex 4) was designed and sent to all Lead partners to pursue in-depth information about achievements and (expected<sup>5</sup>) results. It contains questions on main outputs and results, added value of transnational cooperation, cross-sector collaboration, policy implementation and good practices, contribution to the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and the relation with the EU 2020 Strategy (and more specific the seven Flagships), policy uptake and sustainability of the project. 11 of the 16 project lead partners returned the questionnaire and gave further inside in the project results and specific outputs. The outcome of the qualitative analysis method is then further processed in the study.

On the basis of the individual analysis six case studies have been selected, two for each sub-theme and two for fostering knowledge development. The criteria for selection (in no particular order) are the degree of sustainability in relation to follow-up activities, strategies of further use, ownership, etc.; the extent to which the project succeeded in a clear project design and - as a result of that - in delivering concrete results (improved policies, best practices, new collaboration, platforms, innovative methods, important events and publications); a good example of a triple helix or even a quadruple helix approach; an example of improved and tested existing practices or developed and implemented new practices; and, the selection ensures a variety of target groups (youngsters, elderly, migrants).

Next, an aggregation of the analysis results took place to answer the questions as described in the introduction. Finally, from the attained data and the analysis results, conclusions were drawn and recommendations for future actions were formulated.

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<sup>5</sup> Some projects are not yet finalised.



### 3. Thematic Background

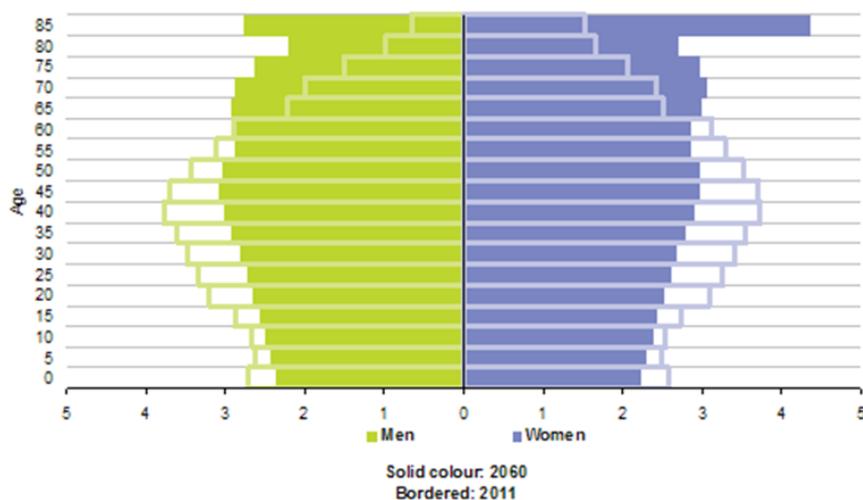
In this chapter the policy context for the theme of demographic change in relation to the current EU framework is described. First an introduction on demographic change and some of the main trends and challenges with regard to dealing with the consequences of demographic change are elaborated upon. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 describe current and future EU policy in relation to demographic change and knowledge development.

#### 3.1 Introduction

On 1 January 2012 the population of the EU-27 was estimated at 503.7 million; 1.3 million people more than the year before and part of an uninterrupted EU-27 population growth since 1960 (402.6 million in 1960)<sup>6</sup>. According to Eurostat's population projections, the EU-27's population is predicted to grow at a slower rate before peaking in 2040-45, and slightly decreasing afterwards. The majority of the central Europe countries (whose development was greatly influenced in the past by the presence of the "Iron curtain") are projected to experience population decline in the period until 2020 (EC, 2008b).

Due to low fertility rates and continuous rises in life expectancy older people make up a much greater share of the total population in the coming decades; in the last 20 years a rise of almost 40 % of persons aged 65 and above. In contrast, the number of 0 to 19 year olds fell by 15.5 %. Consistently low fertility levels and higher life expectancy transform the shape of the EU-27's age pyramid (see figure 1).

Figure 1: The EU-27 age pyramid.



Source: Eurostat 2011, 2060 data are projections (EUROPOP 2010)

6

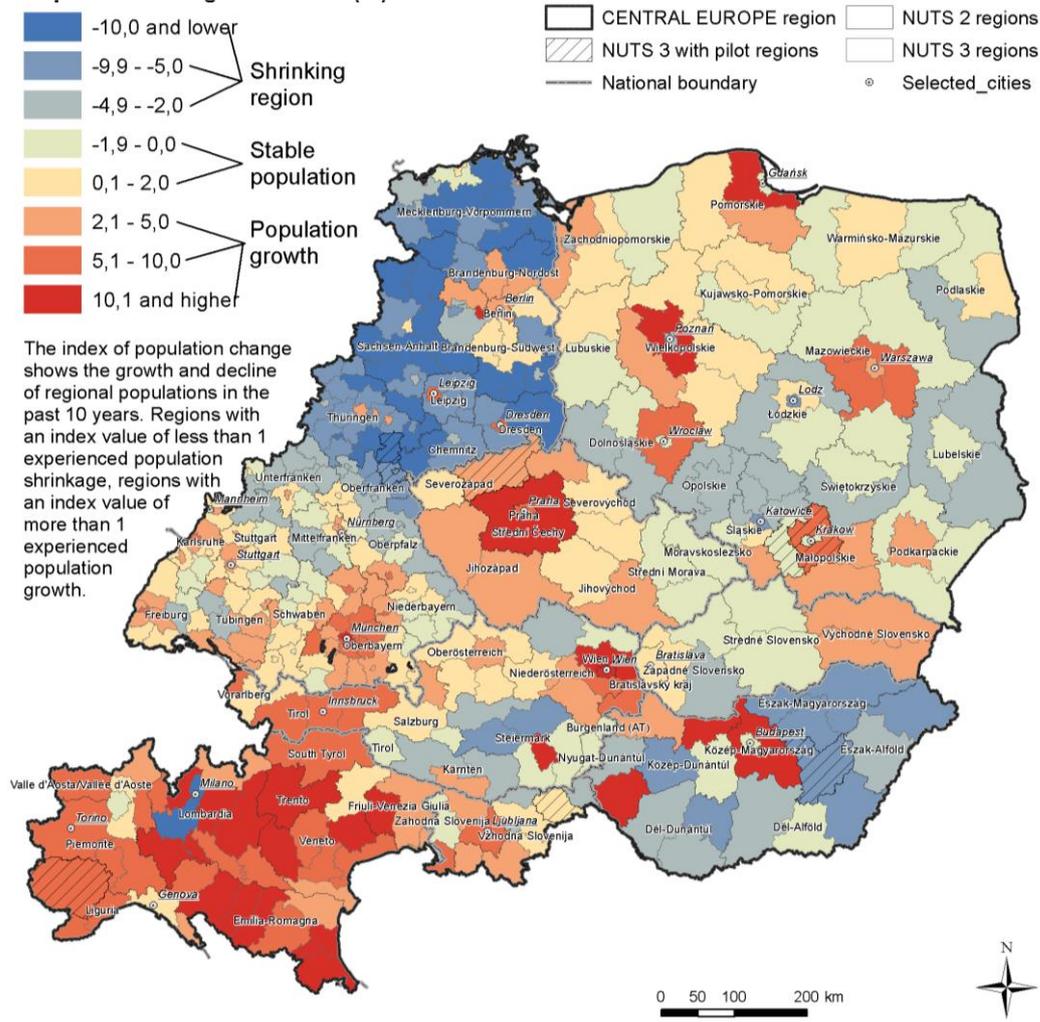
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Population\\_and\\_population\\_change\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Population_and_population_change_statistics)



The Demography Report 2010<sup>7</sup> indicates that the trend towards a much older population is already becoming apparent in several Member States.

Besides an ageing population many regions in Europe are faced with population decline. On a regional level considerable variations can be observed across countries and the differences between growing and shrinking regions become apparent (Annex 2, Map 3). The figure below shows that in the central Europe area population decline<sup>8</sup> has advanced mostly in East German, Polish, and Hungarian regions and in smaller areas in the other central Europe countries for the period 2001-2011. It also shows that declines in total population size occur in urban as well as rural areas.

Figure 2: Population change in central Europe 2001-2011 (%)



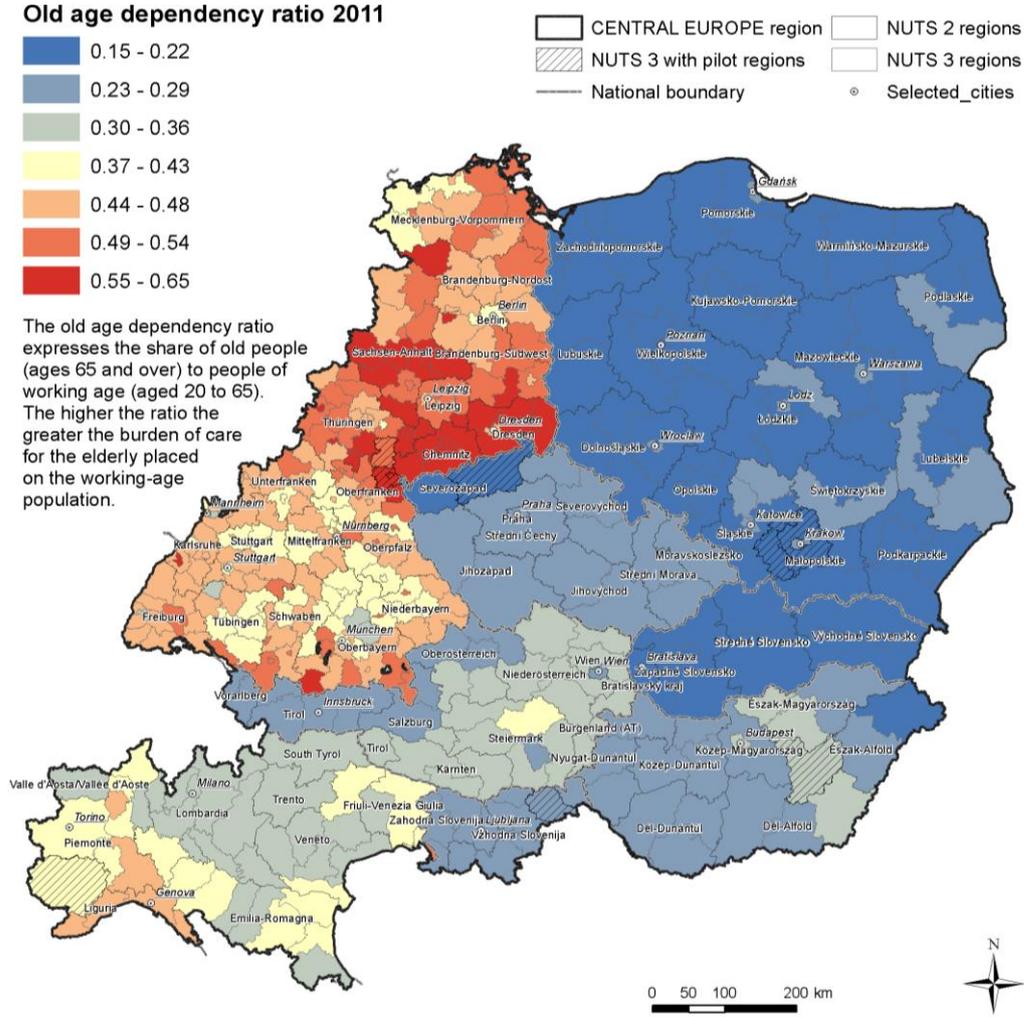
Source: ADAPT2DC project (2013)

<sup>7</sup> The Report is published every two years by the European Commission and provides the latest facts and figures that are needed to assess where Member States stand in responding to the challenges of demographic change.

<sup>8</sup> Population decline or shrinkage is defined as the relative decline in the total population size in a region in a ten-year period.

The share of older persons in the total population and particularly the age group of 85+ will increase significantly in the coming decades, due to the post-war baby-boom generation reaching retirement. This will, in turn, lead to a change in the age dependency ratio and the projected increased burden on those of working age to provide for social expenditure required by the ageing population<sup>9</sup>. Figure 3 shows the regional pattern of the old-age-dependency ratio in central Europe (in 2011).

Figure 3: Old-age-dependency ratio in central Europe in 2011.



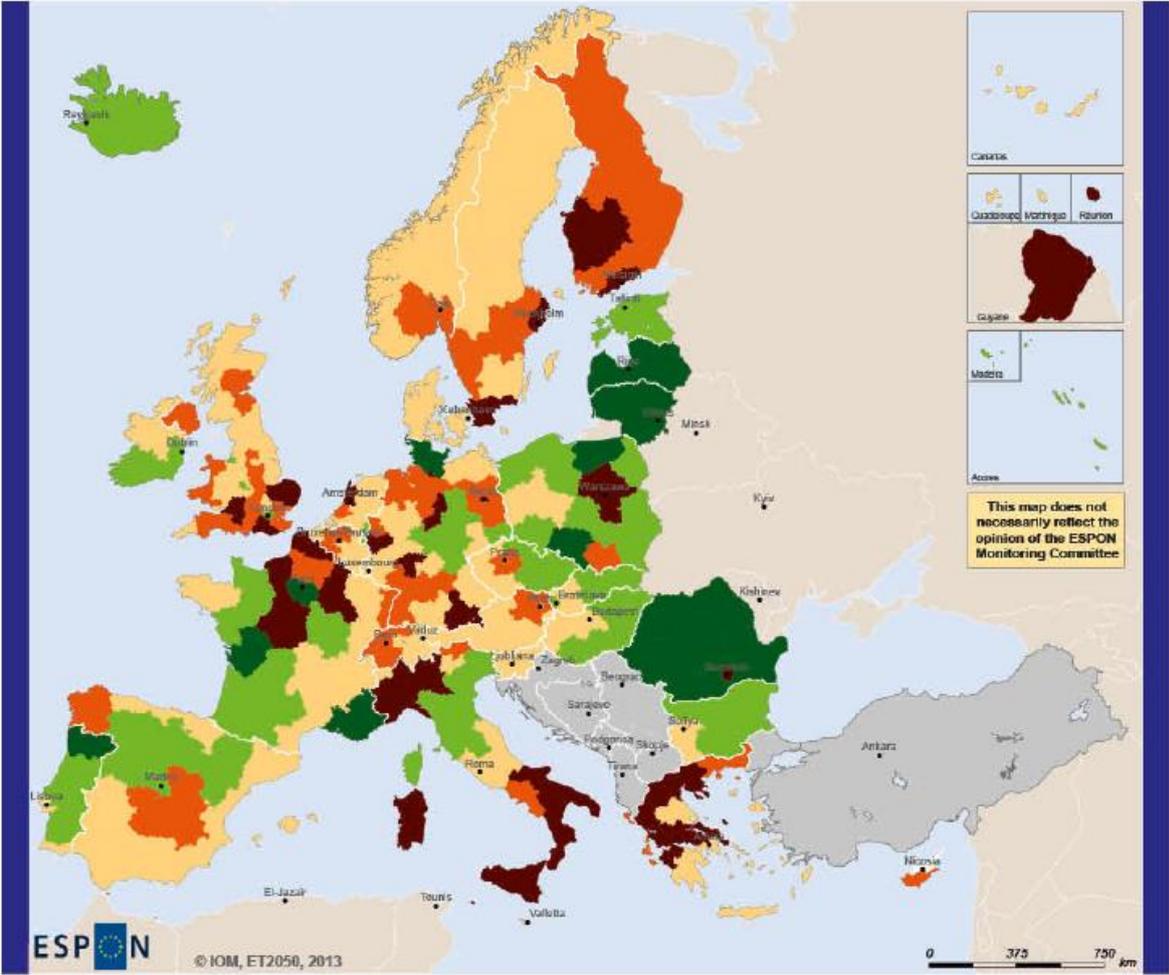
Source: ADAPT2DC project (2013)

Poland and Slovakia show a low old-age-dependency ratio due to their younger population and lower life expectancy. Slovenia, Czech and Hungary have medium old-age-dependency ratios, expected to rise in the next decade. The highest levels of the old-age-dependency ratio are found in the Eastern part of Germany indicating the high differences between regions in central Europe. Where the old-age dependency is high ‘problems’ encountered are the pressure on public budgets and social protection, and the fact that old age is still associated with isolation, illness and dependency.

<sup>9</sup> The old-age-dependency ratio is the ratio of the number of elderly people at an age when they are generally economically inactive (i.e. aged 65 and over), compared to the number of people of working age (i.e. 15-64 years old). EUROSTAT 2013

Another important aspect of demographic change in central Europe is shown in figure 4. Migration plays a significant role in the population dynamics of European societies. According to the latest ESPON results and available data many regions in central and Eastern Europe will continue to lose population.

Figure 4: Net-migration in Europe 2010-2030



**Annual Net Migration (Units: Persons)**

Results obtained by MULTIPOLES forecast model

- < -5000
- 5000 - 0
- 0 - 5000
- 5000 - 10000
- > 10000
- No data

Source: ESPON 2013

Out migration flows from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary towards Western Europe are expected to increase and will affect the high skilled labour force in those

countries. The ESPON results also indicate that current factors behind this migration can be found in demographic and income differences between East and West Europe. At regional level migration flows from rural to metropolitan regions continue as well. In Poland and Romania these are expected to increase resulting in territorial development challenges in relation to population ageing and economic growth (ESPON 2013)<sup>10</sup>.

The developments as described above are confirmed in the regional analysis carried out by the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme in 2012<sup>11</sup>. The main outcomes were:

- Depopulation tendencies and the average life expectancy as most important issues;
- Slower rate of depopulation on the medium and long term;
- Variances within population numbers;
- Shrinking population (1998-2008) within the Eastern part of the Czech Republic as well as in Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia and Poland;
- Diversity of shrinking and growing regions exists side by side;
- Highest values of average life expectancy in Western Austria, South-Western Germany and Western Slovenia;
- Relatively low average life expectancy was observed in Hungary;
- The average life expectancy tends to increase gradually from East to West;
- Highly polarized CE population in terms of income, education, health care, demographics, ICT accessibility and employment;
- Largest numbers of immigrants in Germany and Italy (national values), additionally high numbers in Austria (national values)
- Partly recovery of the fertility rate (Czech Republic, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia)
- Fertility rate below the EU-27 average (Germany, Italy and Hungary).

### 3.2 Main Trends and Challenges

While ageing and population decline are often closely interlinked, regional population decline as such is not just a demographically driven development, but can only be understood in view of a number of worldwide developments in the position and role of regions in the global economy. Globalisation, the costs of communication, the rise of the knowledge economy and selective migration are the fundamental processes that affect regions in very diversified ways. Local and regional impacts increasingly depend on external events taking place in other parts of the world. As a result some regions experience high population growth, whereas others have to cope with population decline.

Demographic change in a narrow sense is about population decline or population growth. But demographic change is also about diminishing number of young people, shrinking labour force, ageing, changing ethnic composition of the population, changing household composition. Even if a region is not shrinking the components of demographic change may just as much result in specific challenges for e.g. service delivery, housing and the labour market.

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<sup>10</sup> According to ESPON (2013) migration is an advantage on the long-term because it “contributes to generate new skills and experiences acquired by the people moving, and contributes to innovation

<sup>11</sup> CENTRAL EUROPE (2012). Results of the regional analysis: Document analysis, online survey, interviews, SWOT.



The three strands in this study include shrinking territories, ageing societies and knowledge development as formulated in the two sub-themes and the cross cutting theme (see Chapter 2). This section shows some of the main trends and challenges that are encountered in Europe - and specifically refers to the development in the central European region - and shows how the sub-themes in the underlying analysis are linked to tackle these challenges.

## Public services

The regions in central Europe dealing with the consequences of demographic change often encounter decreasing accessibility to public services and a strong rise in the costs to provide and maintain these services: “a decline in the total population will increase the cost of services per capita for certain infrastructures [...]. There will also be changes in the supply of services (fewer services and poorer access to them) and the demand for services (a decrease due to decreasing population size)”<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, challenges are encountered in the type of services since a change in the age structure of the population will also influence the demand of certain services, especially with regard to the (long-term) health care systems, infrastructure, and housing. It will be very important to identify the changed needs of the population and provide for customer-oriented sustainable services. Goals linked to sub-theme 2 (*Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change*) include adapting houses for the elderly, test care solutions for the elderly and support active ageing and improve the life for the elderly.

To keep the regions attractive as is the topic of sub-theme 1, and accessible for younger generations it is also important to adapt the services for this target group, for example through supporting young people in their vocational orientation and education. Retaining of competences is important in this respect and relates closely with the challenges found on the labour market.

## Labour market

Despite a growing population in the whole of Europe, the EU labour force is shrinking which results in a higher age dependency ratio (see footnote 9). Figure 3 shows the rather large differences that exist within the central European areas and the effects of demographic change on sectors of the labour market can be quite different though. For example, the effects on the health care sector differentiate on those of the industrial sector were potentially more labour can be rationalised or outsourced to other parts of the world (Coenen and Galjaard, 2009). In general, within the context of an ageing population and a reduction in the younger working age group, it is becoming increasingly important that older workers continue to work for a longer period and that regions make better use of the existing potentials of an increasingly diverse and ageing society. As people can expect to

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<sup>12</sup> Šimon, M. , Mikešová, R. (2013). Socio-economic background analysis of shrinking regions and cities in Central Europe - ADAPT2DC project.



live 20 to 30 years beyond their retirement, extending working lives is not only an economic necessity, there is also evidence to show that continuing to work or stay active can improve older people's social, mental and physical wellbeing.

In sub-theme 2 (*Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change*) several goals link to the above mentioned challenges:

- Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market;
- Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation; and
- Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly.

Another challenge in this respect is the mobility of the workforce which leads to a brain-drain of young and well-educated people in some regions in Europe. To reduce brain drain it is generally acknowledged that it is important to improve the accessibility of the area, attract competences, match local skills with business needs and develop human capital (knowledge development): *Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain*). Regions with low economic performance and high unemployment share a larger risk of out-migration of the working-age population and therefore are more vulnerable to demographic shrinkage. Moreover, regions with high unemployment of young people are particularly prone to out-migration and shrinkage. In most regions in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area that were already defined as shrinking regions the unemployment of young people is the highest in the country (Šimon and Mikešová, 2013).

*Paid employment is crucial for ensuring sufficient living standards and it provides the necessary base for people to achieve their personal goals and aspirations. Moreover, employment contributes to economic performance, quality of life and social inclusion, making it one of the cornerstones of socioeconomic development and well-being.*

*European Commission 2013*

To tackle the mismatch between supply and demand on the labour market educational innovations are needed. Particularly in areas of Europe where the population is shrinking, it is a huge challenge to maintain high-quality education systems. Lifelong learning, long distance learning (e-learning) and the connection of the educational system to technology and business practices lies at the heart of this necessary innovation.

Another challenge in relation to these issues is the concept of human capital<sup>13</sup>. Knowledge, skills and competences are essential in relation to 'sustainable' growth and reducing social inequality. As we move into "knowledge-based" economies the importance of human capital becomes even more significant than ever (OECD, 2011). The CENTRAL EUROPE Programme refers to human capital as being an essential part for Knowledge development, which in turn is important "in order to ensure economic competitiveness, the connection

<sup>13</sup> Short definition would be: individual skills and resources. A broader definition, as defined by the OECD is: "the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being" (2001).



of the educational system to the leading edge of technology and business practices, and availability of complementary knowledge from different actors”. It states that by improving the human capital within a region it will reinforce collaboration “between relevant players such as decision makers, education and training facilities, research institutions, business sector, labour market organisations, and many other national, regional and local actors”<sup>14</sup>.

Therefore knowledge development is regarded as a cross-cutting theme both for sub-theme 1 on shrinking regions as well as sub-theme 2 on challenges with regard to ageing.

## Quality of life

The transition from growth to decline poses challenges to maintain the liveability of areas and the quality of life for inhabitants. As we have seen regional population decline and ageing affect public services, housing, public infrastructure and the labour market. But since these are difficult to adapt quickly, there is the risk that some people get excluded. An important challenge for European societies in connection with ageing populations is the isolation of older people. The elderly’ exclusion from family and community life is partly due to the lack of regular human interactions. Therefore, to safeguard the inclusion of older people, the challenge is to develop neighbourhood contacts and local solidarities, especially in view of active ageing, since maintaining independence with increasing age occurs in the context of others: family, friends or the local community.

In the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects are funded to adapt services to actual needs with the aim to increase social inclusion, as stressed in sub-theme 1. The focus is on improving the attractiveness of and quality of life in cities and regions, but also on promoting equal opportunities in relation to education and labour market issues. In sub-theme 2 the main aim is to improve the inclusion of the elderly and disadvantaged groups both in relation to the labour market and volunteer work as in improving the life of the elderly in terms of active ageing.

In the last couple of years more attention is given to the social dynamics of demographic change (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012) and its relevance for knowledge development and finding responses to the challenges that demographic change poses to declining and ageing regions, including the role of social capital<sup>15</sup> and active citizenship (Ročak, 2013). Social capital is seen as a way to keep liveability in a neighbourhood through actions of the citizens themselves. As we saw earlier social capital and active citizenship may also be seen as a way to solve those challenges that state governments can not tackle under the circumstances of shrinkage.

In Leipzig, the example of the Urban Forum<sup>16</sup> shows that bottom-up action can become a very elaborate type of organisation with a high degree of professionalism and also which

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.central2013.eu/about-central/priorities/innovation/knowledge-development/>

<sup>15</sup> The networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.

<sup>16</sup> A platform for groups, initiatives, independent specialists and active citizens of Leipzig. The urban forum carried out intensive publicity work, participation in or organisation of podium



influence this involvement can attain not only at local, but also at regional governance levels (Haase et al, 2012). This brings us to the last challenge as described in this study.

## Governance

Demographic decline and ageing form a complex system of interactions involving economic, social, political and environmental aspects and it is therefore impossible to take a sectoral approach to the problem. It is difficult to plan or steer shrinkage because under the conditions it produces, governance arrangements become more unstable: this is true because of the dependencies on external resource, funding or decisions.

According to the EU Commission (Ageing Report 2012), the key challenge for policymakers in the EU will be to transform the European social models in such a way that the implications arising from an ageing population will become manageable.

Following the recommendations from recent studies (Interreg IVC<sup>17</sup> and URBACT<sup>18</sup> capitalisation and the study from the European Urban Knowledge Network on shrinking areas<sup>19</sup>) it is increasingly important “to come up with innovative and strong policies to deal with the impact of shrinkage on their territories” and to face “the governance of shrinkage, which may involve de-industrialisation, de-investment and the loss of functions” (Haase et al, 2012). This means involving “all stakeholders and stimulate cooperation between different levels of governance”(Galjaard, 2013) and working towards a regional innovation strategy whereby the regional smart specialisation strategies may offer good starting points since smart specialisation aims to foster innovation via entrepreneurship, technological adaptation and governance innovation<sup>20</sup>.

*There is a need for new thinking and policies to overcome some of the expected challenges ahead (e.g. ensure financing of services that are likely to see increased demand with the growth of the ageing population; balance employment opportunities for the youth and the elderly; innovate the management of urban infrastructure).*

*OECD report on Demographic Change and Local Development: Shrinkage, Regeneration and Social Dynamics 2012*

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discussions or colloquia, signature or postcard campaigns, the publishing of brochures, demonstrations and above all discussions with decision makers on a local and sometimes on a national level.

<sup>17</sup> Galjaard, R. (2013)

<sup>18</sup> Schlappa, H. , Neill, W.J.V. (2013).

<sup>19</sup> Haase, A. et al (eds) (2012)

<sup>20</sup> A strategic approach to economic development through targeted support for research and innovation with a focus on identifying niche areas of competitive strength, solving major societal challenges (bringing in a demand-driven dimension), innovation partnerships emphasizing greater co-ordination between different societal stakeholders and aligning resources and strategies between private and public actors of different governance levels.



### 3.3 Current EU and national policy framework and programmes

Demographic change, and population ageing in particular, has been a policy priority at both Member state and European Union (EU) levels for more than two decades and is, besides climate change and globalisation, now recognised as one of the most significant challenges facing Europe and its regions.

In 2005 the EC Green Paper on "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations" focused on reversing the demographic decline through birth-friendly policies and even through addressing "the possible contribution of immigration in a balanced way". It advocated greater employment participation, particularly by women and older people, encourages investment in human resources and higher productivity through economic reforms, research and innovation emphasising the need to implement the Lisbon Agenda<sup>21</sup>. This was followed by "The demographic future of Europe - From challenge to opportunity" (2006) that shows the positive aspects and opportunities arising from higher life expectancy and at the same time emphasises that the problems encountered are related to retirement rather than ageing: "it is the inability of current policies to adapt to the new demographic order and the reluctance of businesses and citizens to change their expectations and attitudes, particularly in the context of labour market modernisation". In that same year the European Demography Forum is launched and will take place every two years targeted at policymakers, stakeholders and experts to share knowledge and to discuss how to address demographic change. To feed into these debates, the Commission also published a European Demography Report which sets out the main facts and figures concerning demographic change and discusses policy responses.

The recession in the last couple of years has not diminished the commitment of Member States to respond to demographic change. Despite the savings on public finances, the European Commission emphasizes that the demographic dimension is to be taken into account by Member States when they are formulating their exit strategies from the current recession.<sup>22</sup>

In the European Parliament resolution of 15 November 2011 on demographic change and its consequences for the future cohesion policy of the EU (2010/2157(INI)), the EU Parliament calls on Member States and regions to exchange experience, best practices and new approaches to preventing the negative consequences of demographic change. It stressed that the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) should address the challenges, in particular the increase in the number of older people and the decline in the young population. In the conclusions to the Fifth Cohesion Report (European Commission 2010) Member States and regions are encouraged to draw on the structural funds to develop tailor-made strategies. Projects on dealing with the consequences of demographic change are implemented in the framework of the European regional policy. In their operational programmes for the 2007-2013 programming period, the Member States allocated some EUR 30 billion to measures in this field (EC 2010).

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<sup>21</sup> The Lisbon Agenda was launched in 2000 to increase its productivity and competitiveness in the face of ever fiercer global competition, technological change and an ageing population.

<sup>22</sup> Demography Report 2010: Older, more numerous and diverse Europeans, 2011



In the “Territorial Agenda 2020”<sup>23</sup> it is stated that Europe faces “increasing and territorially differentiated demographic challenges. Ageing and depopulation will bring about changes in many regions” “and lead to severe impacts for social and territorial cohesion, public service provision, labour market and housing”.

The European Demography Report<sup>24</sup>, which is generated every two years, and current EU policy initiatives concerned with demographic change and active ageing might offer a useful starting point for policies addressing the challenges related to population decline and ageing.

Policies related to demographic change in central Europe show substantial differences in the importance of demographic change for decision makers. It is not surprising that policies reflect the history of demographic change in regions. In countries with a significant share of shrinking and/or ageing regions, relevant policy documents are more developed. Policies at the national and also the regional level usually include demographic change as a part of the wider background for policy documents; policies exclusively focused on demographic change are not common. As stated in the synthesis report during the Hungarian Presidency of the council of the European Union: “Most countries in the EU are in the process of implementing a step-by-step intervention, gradually altering the way the welfare state functions. The constant growth of the elderly segment of the European population necessitates a thorough restructuring of the pension, health care and elderly care systems, and there are changes with regard to the retirement age as well. However, we must stress that the increase in the retirement age does not automatically lead to an increase in the labour force, as the older generation is only partly healthy enough and equipped with up-to-date skills in order to be able to remain in the labour market. Further public policies have been introduced which aim to compensate for the loss of the younger part of the workforce and thus to maintain the economic competitiveness of the EU. They mostly plan to increase productivity and the employment level”(Ministry of Hungarian Interior, 2011).

In the following section a general overview<sup>25</sup> of national policies or policy fields with regard to demographic change in the central European area is given to describe the background of the countries involved.

### *Germany*

In Germany demographic change is a widely addressed topic at different levels of governance, at the national, federal and regional level. Key topics related to demographic shrinking include the cost of infrastructure (social, technical), life-long learning, health and adaptation to shortages of skilled workers. Also the consequences demographic change has for other fields like economy and employment, finances, climate change, administration and education are regarded. The latest publication of the national

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.eu2011.hu/files/bveu/documents/TA2020.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=502&newsId=1007&furtherNews=yes>

<sup>25</sup> Summary based on “Demographic change in Central Europe, a socio-economic background analysis” (Output WP 3.1.5. ADAPT2DC), except for Austria which is based on information provided by the website of the Bundeskanzleramt Osterreich <http://www.bka.gv.at/>, and Slovakia on <http://www.vlada.gov.sk/manifesto-of-the-government-of-the-slovak-republic/>



government related to the aspect of demographic change is the National Demographic Change Strategy: 'Jedes Alter zählt, Politik für alle Generationen' (every age counts, politics for all generations), from 2012.

### *Hungary*

Hungary, despite its long experience with population decline, has no exclusively demography-related policy papers or strategies. On the other hand, policies related to demographic changes are included in other policy documents on national and regional level regarding economic development and labour market, social inclusion, education, healthcare and social services. Policies focused on structural changes such as improving the economic situation of local communities and retaining and attracting new residents, are seen as a cure that will lead to a positive change in the demographic situation of peripheral areas.

### *Czech Republic*

In the Czech Republic policies on population ageing exist, but mostly as part of other sectorial policies (active ageing, country development and agriculture, regional development). At the regional level there are policies for rural areas, where population shrinkage is seen as a part of depopulation processes in peripheries. Generally, population change is not a key topic, it is usually part of policies focused on regional development and labour market.

### *Italy*

In Italy demographic change is included as part of other policy documents, mostly at the level of the ministries dealing with topics such as labour and welfare, education and economic development. At the regional level demographic change is dealt with in policies focused on polycentric development, sustainability, economic development and agriculture.

### *Poland*

In Poland, there are several strategic documents at the national level dealing partially with demographic change with a particular focus on women (employment, economic behaviour or families). Quite often demographic changes are included in documents focused on broader economic development, but there are also specific population policy documents. At the regional level policies are focused on population ageing, health care and the development of a 'silver economy'.

### *Slovenia*

In Slovenia population ageing is considered one of the largest economic and social challenges. The main theme is active ageing (regarding economic growth and productivity) and intergenerational solidarity. At the regional level a strategy for coping with urban shrinkage has been developed with measures to ensure the creation of new jobs and conditions for a small economy, and to decrease the amount of migration.



## *Austria*

Austria has demography related policy papers with a special focus on migration and integration politics. At the regional level demographic change is dealt with in policies focused on economic development and innovation, demographic ageing and the role of youngsters in economic development.

## *Slovakia*

Slovakia aims to reduce regional disparities in synergy with the European Union and the economic and social development policies. Population change is not a key topic, but usually part of policies focusing on regional development, cohesion and the labour market. Active ageing and regional development policies exist to tackle the consequences of ageing.

## **European programmes**

In this paragraph we provide a brief overview of selected European programmes beyond transnational and cross-border cooperation that support demographic change and knowledge development and are relevant for the stakeholders from the Central European area. Furthermore, the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is analysed in relation to these initiatives to identify the added value for transnational cooperation relevant for the theme.

**Interreg IVC** is carrying out a thematic capitalisation study on 12 themes, including demographic change. A first year's report has been published online on the Interreg IVC website [www.interreg4c.eu](http://www.interreg4c.eu). At the heart of this analysis report lie the lessons that emerged from the INTERREG IVC projects on demographic change and the recommendations derived from them. It shows the most important themes the projects have been working on; common challenges and interesting or innovative practice or policies and the usefulness of certain projects for other regions and projects in Europe.

The **URBACT Programme** also carried out a capitalisation exercise with one of the themes being 'Shrinking Cities: Challenges and Opportunities'. Building on the results of this capitalisation a next round of URBACT Capitalisation activities is planned for, focussing on relevant topics with regard to demographic change like Jobs and Growth; Social Innovation; Young People and Resilience. Please see the website for more information: [www.urbact.eu](http://www.urbact.eu).

The aim of the **ESPON** research project Demographic and Migratory Flows affecting European Regions and Cities (**DEMIFER**) was to assess future changes in population growth, the size of the labour force and the ageing of the population in European regions, and to explore different policy options aiming at regional competitiveness and territorial cohesion. The project was carried out by a consortium of seven European research institutes led by NIDI, see [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu). The project started in July 2008 and was completed at the end of 2010. The main conclusions of DEMIFER were that regions in Europe will be affected in different ways by ageing but increasingly in all regions. In addition, 35 to 40 per cent of all NUTS2 regions will face labour force decline. Migration



was seen as beneficial for affluent regions and increases regional disparities. DEMIFER recommends to policy makers to find ways to cope with these challenges through new fiscal and social policies to keep regions prosperous (maintaining competitiveness) and to avoid worsening of inequality (maintaining cohesion)<sup>26</sup>.

**The 7th Framework Programme (FP7)** for Research and Technological Development has been the main instrument for funding research in Europe between 2007 and 2013 (in the period 2014-2020 the research programme will be continued as Horizon 2020, <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en>). The programme includes topics related to health and SMEs. Specific ICT research is conducted in the fields of sustainable high-quality health care, demographic ageing, social and economic inclusion, and governance. It also supports cooperative activities targeting developing and emerging countries, focusing on their particular needs in various fields, including health.

The objective of the **Ambient Assisted Living (Joint) Programme** is to create a better quality of life for the elderly and to strengthen the economic opportunities in Europe through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Like the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, it co-finances projects in which at least three countries are involved. Another criterion for funding is in the involvement of small and medium enterprises (SME), research bodies and user's organisations (representing the elderly). One of the aims is to support the development of innovative ICT-based products, services and systems for ageing well. Besides creating a favourable environment for participation by SMEs, the programme is working on a coherent European framework for developing common approaches. Each year an Ambient Assisted Living Forum is organised with a full programme and exhibitions to show practices and insights on Ambient Assisted Living from all over Europe. The programme itself has funded almost 130 projects since 2008 and several of them are now beginning to show results and demonstrate real market potential. More information can be found on [www.AAL-europe.eu](http://www.AAL-europe.eu).

The above shows that the themes in this study on shrinking areas, ageing and knowledge development are well covered at European level by different types of programmes. Joining a European cooperation project is a possibility to exchange ideas and best practices, invest in pilot actions, new policies and strategies on topics that are relevant in shrinking regions in Europe. Moreover, the structure of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme encourages transnational cooperation for the achievement of joint outputs, like joint strategy and action plans, transnational tools, joint management establishment, investment preparation and pilot actions.

The possibility for policy makers to be involved in EU programmes as CENTRAL EUROPE offers a unique open framework for necessary policy adjustments towards the paradigm shift from growth to decline. It helps to bring the subject on the agenda of national and regional authorities and gives financial support. The experimental character of these programmes gives opportunities to experiment and to find creative solutions and new strategies to deal with the consequences of demographic change.

According to the CENTRAL EUROPE regional analysis report (2012) "the main traits of the area are that there is hardly any programming area in the EU with higher disparities and

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<sup>26</sup> Final report DEMIFER 2013.



varieties of socio-economic conditions. On the other hand, there is no other area in the EU representing the bridge and hinge function between the EU and the neighbouring countries. Still this geo-political position also creates the challenge of periphery with all its disadvantages for some of its parts”.

The specific geographical position of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme also shows its relevance to find ways to deal with its challenges in a transnational way, while keeping a regional focus. Each project is composed of a consortium of partners from different countries which gives the opportunity to enhance territorial cohesion and economic competitiveness in the regions addressed, including the peripheral and strongly declining areas. Since the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is open to public and private actors, opportunities for triple and quadruple helix cooperation are strongly embedded - creating opportunities for knowledge development and innovation.

### 3.4 Future EU policy and demographic change

The EU legislation for the EU funding period 2014 to 2020 states that in the future all Structural Funds of the EU (Social Fund/ESF, Regional Fund/ERDF, Rural Development/EAFRD, Cohesion Fund/CF, Fisheries Fund/EMFF) must be coordinated with the Europe 2020 growth strategy and its core targets to support implementation of the strategies in the member states. The Common Strategic Framework (CSF)<sup>27</sup> has been established at EU level and serves as a link between the EU framework and the individual national/regional operational programmes of the various funds. It states: “In order to strengthen its economic, social and territorial cohesion, the Union is to aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions or islands, and that particular attention is to be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps”. It indicates that EU programmes should take actions to support the achievement of these objective.

The objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy is ‘Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive growth’. Smart growth focusses on education, research and innovation (creating new products/services that generate growth and jobs and help address social challenges) and the digital society, while sustainable growth aims mainly at building a more competitive low-carbon economy that makes efficient, sustainable use of resources, and protecting the environment<sup>28</sup>.

To face the challenges of an ageing population and the global competition the EU2020 Strategy aims at ‘inclusive growth’ with a strong emphasis on job creation with a target of raising the employment rate of 20 to 64 year olds to 75 % by 2020.

The three Priorities of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive growth are addressed by seven flagship initiatives:

- Digital agenda for Europe

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<sup>27</sup> As laid down in REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

<sup>28</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020>



- Innovation Union
- Youth on the move
- Resource efficient Europe
- An industrial policy for the globalisation era
- An agenda for new skills and jobs
- European platform against poverty

Several of these flagships tackle demographic change. For example, the ‘agenda for new skills and jobs’ aims to modernise labour markets and empower people by developing their skills and improving flexibility and security in the working environment. This includes lifelong learning and e-skills. A prominent focus of the flagship ‘Innovation Union’ is on ‘Active and healthy ageing’ to mobilise actors across the innovation sector in order to speed up innovative solutions to societal challenges. To promote breakthroughs in addressing societal challenges the European Commission launched the European Innovation Partnership on Active Healthy Ageing (EIP- AHA). In the Digital Agenda for Europe the European Commission acknowledges the widespread usage of telemedicine services as an opportunity for citizens and a driver of great economic impact.

Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union and is the follow-up programme of the 7th Framework Programme. Horizon 2020’s objective is to tackle societal challenges ‘by helping to bridge the gap between research and the market’ - including coping with the challenge of an ageing population.

The High Level Economic Policy Expert Group "European Forum on Forward Looking Activities" (EFFLA) advises the following: “Health, demographic change and wellbeing are key challenges for European research and innovation as they concern citizens and have enormous economic implications and innovation opportunities. However, in spite of the potential in the EU, and the successes so far reported, studies in health and well-being are often not coordinated or comprehensive enough to take advantage of the synergies between research findings or their potential capacity to feed into policy making. Recent political and economic developments within Europe and global pressures related to environmental and population trends magnify the relevance of health and well-being issues so that particular attention should be paid to:

- The financial crisis and its impact on socioeconomic dynamics, service delivery, and mental health challenges,
- The pressure that demographic changes such as an ageing population and young immigrant populations place on health systems and social safety nets,
- Climate change, environmental pressures and globally emerging pathogens,
- An out of control epidemic of obesity and associated diseases such as diabetes. This would involve engagement with research on food security and its role for health.

Source: EFFLA <sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The High Level Economic Policy Expert Group "European Forum on Forward Looking Activities" was established in 2011 to enhance collective forward looking intelligence, to help the EU in tackling upcoming societal challenges and to devise comprehensive and pro-active European Research and Innovation Policies.



## Future Cohesion Policy and CENTRAL EUROPE Programme 2014-2020

CENTRAL EUROPE 2020 will be one of the 14 transnational programmes of the “European Territorial Cooperation” (ETC) Objective. The programme will be co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and will be part of the wider EU Cohesion Policy<sup>30</sup> for the 2014-2020 period (see the figure below), contributing to the achievement of the European targets of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive growth outlined in the “Europe 2020 Strategy”<sup>31</sup>.



Source: EC - regional policy<sup>32</sup>

For the 2014-2020 programming period the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme focusses on a number of thematic objectives<sup>33</sup>, these are:

- TO 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
- TO 4: Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
- TO 6: Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency;
- TO 7: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures.

Aligned to these thematic objectives the programme defined the following future programme priorities:

- Priority axis 1: Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive
- Priority axis 2: Cooperating on energy to lower the carbon footprint in CENTRAL EUROPE
- Priority axis 3: Cooperating on natural and cultural heritage for green growth in CENTRAL EUROPE
- Priority axis 4: Cooperating on transport to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE

<sup>30</sup> The Cohesion Policy seeks to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union and is the EU's principle investment tool for delivering the Europe 2020 goals

<sup>31</sup>

[http://www.central2013.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Downloads/CE2014/CENTRAL\\_EUROPE\\_2020\\_-\\_Guidance\\_to\\_Stakeholder\\_Consultation.pdf](http://www.central2013.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Downloads/CE2014/CENTRAL_EUROPE_2020_-_Guidance_to_Stakeholder_Consultation.pdf)

<sup>32</sup>

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/thefunds/funding/data/graphics/cohesionpolicy20142020\\_full\\_highres.png](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/funding/data/graphics/cohesionpolicy20142020_full_highres.png)

<sup>33</sup> In line with the required thematic concentration (EU regulation 1299/2013 Art. 6) programmes have to select among the 11 thematic objectives (as defined in EU regulation 1301/2013 Art.5) the ones most relevant for their territories.



The consequences of demographic change and the required knowledge development can be mainly tackled in TO 1 through priority 1 of the programme which is “cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive”. The aim is to support skills and knowledge development to increase the innovation capacity along regional value chains, e.g. strengthening capacities for social innovation\* including management of demographic change, migration and brain-drain; and to strengthen regional innovation capacity by improving the framework conditions for innovation.

Out migration flows from some of the central European countries like the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary towards Western Europe and from rural to metropolitan regions in for example Poland and Romania (see figure 4 in chapter 2) may pose challenges in relation to the EUROPE 2020 policy objectives of Smart Growth in terms of employment and productivity: “investment in regions need to take into account the sensitivities of areas facing large positive or negative migration balances, so that these do not erase the potential of these areas to contribute to Smart, Sustainable en Inclusive growth” (ESPON, 2013).

Indirectly the consequences of demographic change are tackled in TO 6 through CENTRAL EUROPE’s priority 3: cooperating on natural and cultural heritage for green growth in CENTRAL EUROPE. Besides careful use of natural resources and environment issues it also aims to improve quality of life in urban areas and promote and develop cultural heritage expecting to have a positive effect in shrinking towns and villages. Potential actions are on “integrated cultural and economic concepts and measures generating regional added value and employment” and “actions for developing cultural and creative entrepreneurship and skills”. Particular attention is paid to areas with specific nature or demographic features, with additional allocation for the outermost and sparsely populated regions.

Future projects on mobility solutions in shrinking or ageing regions are accommodated through priority 4 whereby the aim is to enhance regional mobility through connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to national and European transport networks, e.g. the development and introduction of smart and innovative regional mobility concepts.



## 4. Thematic Achievements

The thematic study focuses on 16 projects approved in four calls and one strategic call of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme. Since the projects were submitted in different calls, they are at different stages of implementation, but all of them were implemented for at least one year at the time of analysis. By the end of 2013 six projects are finished (Q-AGEING, YURA, IDEA, ET-STRUCT, QUALIST and CE-Ageing Platform), and 10 projects (i.e. SMART, WOMEN, Senior Capital, Traditional & Wild, EPOurban, ADAPT2DC, HELPS, SPES, EURUFU and Re-Turn) will end in 2014. Annex 1 shows the full list of projects that were reviewed in this study.

The previous chapter set the framework in terms of relevance for analysis of the reviewed projects along the two sub-themes and the cross-cutting theme Knowledge Development. In this chapter the projects are first analysed individually and categorised per sub-theme. The contribution to each of the topics as outlined below is rated through one, two or three stars, which respectively visualise a contribution to a small, medium and large degree<sup>34</sup>. If there is no contribution to the specific topic, no stars are given. In addition, examples of project outputs per topic are provided.

The topics covered in sub-theme 1 (*Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain*) are:

- Adapting services for younger generations
- Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth
- Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions
- Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas
- Matching local skills with business needs

The topics covered in sub-theme 2 (*Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change*) are:

- Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market
- Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups
- Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly
- Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation
- Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly

Knowledge development is considered a cross-cutting theme, therefore all projects have been analysed with the aim to collect relevant achievements in this field.

From the individual analysis some case studies have been identified and described in section 4.3 according to the three strands in this study: shrinking areas, ageing and knowledge development.

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<sup>34</sup> A similar approach was developed in the innovation study within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.



Next, the data of the projects are analysed in an aggregated way: first for each sub-theme investigating the evidence of the critical mass mobilised at transnational level and then with regard to their contribution to policy learning or policy uptake (or contributing to it), to strengthening regional networks and with regard to their specific contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy. Lastly projects are analysed on the basis of implementation of practices, looking at three types of implementation:

- Identifying and dissemination of good practices
- Improving or testing existing practices
- Developing and implementing new practices

**4.1. Individual project analysis under sub-theme 1**

10 projects contribute to sub-theme 1 (*Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain*). Some of these projects relate also to sub-theme 2, especially with regard to improving access to the labour market, testing care solutions and telemedicine tools and active ageing. Nevertheless, these projects are only described within the analysis of sub-theme 1. If relevant, their relation with topics in sub-theme 2 is mentioned in the text.

**YURA: Developing Transnational Transversal Youth Strategies in Regions with Migration**

Aim: Against the background of migration and a growing competition between regions for residents and skilled professionals, YURA aims to encourage the cooperation between schools and regional companies to bring pupils closer to a vocational training or employment in the region.

Analysis:

Project title: YURA						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆☆	☆☆			☆☆☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs	Business Academy	Future laboratory			Learning Partnerships and Pupils Research centre	Transnational youth seminar, Future Laboratory and Business Academy

YURA carried out a total of 18 pilot actions following four common concepts:

- Learning partnership: local school-enterprise cooperation;

- Business Academy: support of gifted pupils;
- Future Laboratory: participation of youth in regional development; and
- Pupils Research Centre: introduction of the local economy to pupils.

YURA developed and tested concepts to actively involve young people in educational offers (e.g. Future Laboratory and Business Academy). Transferable cooperation models and on-the-job training strategies were set up as well as joint development of strategies to improve quality of life in rural areas whereby the youngsters themselves are strongly involved. Transnational exchange of experiences between youngsters was organised via meetings and summer camps. The pilot actions underwent a detailed evaluation after implementation in order to obtain a clear picture of the lasting impacts in the regions and to identify potential future actions.



Picture: Pilot action targeting pupils

An important result in YURA is the involvement of stakeholders: 52 regional companies, 103 schools and 129 regional political stakeholders. It resulted in 39 new collaborations with 60 follow-up projects and activities planned. YURA succeeded in a quadruple helix approach by involving 3.560 pupils in several project activities. In addition, the access of vulnerable groups (especially youngsters) to the labour market was improved showing its relation with sub-theme 2.

In terms of knowledge development YURA was able to foster the human capital in the project partner regions through the Future Laboratory and Business Academy but also for example through organising a transnational youth seminar, where youngsters from five Central European countries discussed the status-quo of regional development and education in their home regions. By means of different media they raised awareness among politicians on youth migration from rural regions and loss of human capital.



## IDEA: Innovative Development of European Areas by Fostering Transnational Knowledge Development

**Aim:** IDEA aims at the development of a strategy which will enhance small and medium sized enterprises in the regions of central Europe to face the increasing demand of innovative and highly qualified workers (High Potentials, HP) with tested methods and instruments. The project aims at the development of new approaches, to foster and strengthen the new innovative potential in the participating regions.

### Analysis:

Project title: IDEA						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆	☆☆	☆		☆☆☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs	Learning Partnerships	Business Academies	Future Laboratories & International Youth Seminar		Learning partnerships & Business Academies	Strategy for safeguarding human capital for innovation processes

The IDEA project addresses a broad spectrum of target groups, including educational institutions (from primary schools to universities), employers in public and private sector (production and service branches) and regional authorities (regional governments and municipalities). Based on a SWOT analysis of all regions and the identification of good practices, activities and recommendations led to pilot actions with the following goals:

- To find and attract high potentials through activities targeting pupils or students before they start vocational education or study and increase of the image of technical education;
- To bind high potentials as result of long-term oriented activities promoting (the attractiveness of) a region, a business branch and SMEs;
- To develop high potentials by offering employees the opportunity to improve their qualification for more ambitious work or to get qualified in a more professional way;
- To support the achievement of other goals supporting regional organizations and networkstackling brain drain and the divergence between supply and demand of high potentials.

The Pilot Actions covered different aspects of cooperation between education and industry (SMEs) in order to test the supply-demand alignment. The evaluation of the Pilot Actions and measures provide valuable conclusions enabling the formulation of 14 recommendations for the IDEA strategy. The major contribution to identifying High



Potentials resulted from different approaches to promote science and technology education among pupils and youngsters and offering career orientations. Through these actions IDEA facilitates the access of vulnerable groups (in this case the youth) to the labour market (sub-theme 2).

A core output of IDEA is a strategy for safeguarding human capital for innovation processes, thereby contributing to a reasonable degree to knowledge development. Moreover, the final transnational strategy was provided to decision makers in the partner regions and presented to the public at the IDEA Final Conference.

Worthwhile mentioning is the innovative character of the project. In order to stimulate cooperation between education, industry and policy, new methods and instruments have been used (e.g. GeoCaching, Theatre of Engineers, joint lectures at university, short films Trainee of the Day, etc.). Connecting and interlinking vocational orientation initiatives instead of organizing competing events in a CE region may lead to more efficiency and effectiveness in the field of safeguarding High Potentials.

### QUALIST: Improving Quality of Life in Small Towns

**Aim:** Responding to negative impacts of demographic and social change in small towns, QUALIST aims to develop and implement measures to improve the quality of life of existing inhabitants and to raise awareness on potentials for attracting new citizens.

#### Analysis:

		Project title: QUALIST				
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution			☆☆☆	☆☆		☆
Examples of outputs			Urban Vision Central Europe Small Town 2020 handbook; Multi-generation residential area and revitalization brown fields, regional marketing		Small town mobility concepts, Cross border mobility centre	

Based on data and trends from the past the project partners, with involvement of mayors of small towns, worked out new concepts for public transport, regional marketing and strengthening the attractiveness of small towns and rural areas, e.g. with new housing concepts. The cross-border mobility centre South Bohemia/Waldviertel is identified as a





good example of cross-border cooperation. It is worth noting that this pilot is partly based on the idea of attracting people to the region (in other words competitiveness between regions) instead of accepting and adapting to demographic change.

This attractiveness is also fostered through an improved regional marketing and the changing of the regional image often associated only to the negative aspects of a shrinking territory. The project developed knowledge in this field by testing new approaches, by training regional agents and also setting up a regional ambassador system.

The main project results are resumed in the "URBAN VISION CENTRAL EUROPE SMALL TOWN 2020" handbook providing guidelines on future mobility, shopping and commerce, living forms, cultural offers, possibilities for seniors and disabled persons, whereby partners were encouraged to implement and disseminate these guidelines. In the context of transnational cooperation and the transferability of the results the Small Town Vision ends with recommendations to combine the cognitions and to further raise awareness to the challenges of demographic and social change in the European Union.

### ET-Struct: Economic Educational Territorial Structure

**Aim:** ET-Struct focuses on the creation of regional management triangles: a network of regional experts and decision makers in the field of politics, economy and education in order to overcome the mismatch between workforce qualifications and the needs of regional economies.

#### Analysis:

Project title: ET-Struct						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆	☆			☆☆	☆☆☆
Examples of outputs	ET-Learn Train	ET-Inventory & ET-Learn Train			Regional management triangles, ET-Inventory & ET-Learn Train	ET- Academy & ET-Management



Within “ET- Inventory” the 10 project partner regions carried out surveys to determine the skills sought by employers and to give investors insight into the regional economies. Based on these analyses an e-learning platform, named “ET-Learn Train”, was developed, tested, evaluated and improved to offer online and on-site training for regional workforces in the ET-Struct regions. This platform offers 24 transnational and regional training modules that cover a wide range of subjects.

Two other tools developed by ET Struct, “ET-Academy” and “ET-Management”, clearly contribute to knowledge development: ET Academy includes the experiences and lessons learned in implementing the ET-Learn Train Platform, which can be a useful tool for other regions or organisations in Europe addressing structural changes in employment. ET Management offers other European regions a blueprint for creating their own management triangles (between public authorities, education and business).

The Joint Policy Guidelines Action Plan “ET-Strategy and Action” and the negotiations and decisions at local and regional level (in regional management triangles) represent a perfect example of connecting the educational system to the leading edge of technology and business practices. A Memorandum of Agreement signed by each project partner with the backing of politicians creates a basis for further transnational cooperation and mainstreaming of the project results.



Picture: transnational module for eLearning course on entrepreneurship

## EURUFU: European Rural Futures

**Aim:** The overall aim of EURUFU is to ensure the future viability of rural areas by adaption of the infrastructure to the changing population structure and initiation of pilot actions in this field. Further aims are creating awareness of regional actors on upcoming challenges of demographic change, active monitoring of demographic change in close cooperation with various partners and stakeholders (government, politics, businesses, schools, associations) in the region and finally knowledge exchange on European level and initiation of a long lasting continuous and intensive dialogue between actors and regional development.

### Analysis:

For increasing the attractiveness of shrinking territories the project develops a multitude of approaches focusing thereby on the following themes: social and health care, education, local economy and job opportunities, mobility.

First, relevant good practices were identified and during stakeholder workshops the findings were shared at regional and local level. Based on the discussion 17 pilot in line with the four themes were developed and implemented, e.g.: “Clothes make Stories”



(innovative approaches with elderly in the “Retirement Home Castle New Teufenbach”); “Citizen consultants” (citizens help fellow citizens using public transport), the shared space approach for improved mobility and local attractiveness (“Begegnungszone Tamsweg”) and language and jobseeker’s competences courses.

Project title: EURUFU						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆		☆☆☆	☆	☆	☆
Examples of outputs	New housing opportunities for young people		Joint strategy for shrinking territories, innovative solutions for social infrastructure & housing	Citizen consultants for mobility, handbook shared space concept	Discovering the potentials: pilot action on job opportunities; language and jobseeker’s competences	Transferability report of pilot actions; Summer university

A strong aspect to be highlighted in EURUFU is the involvement of political decision makers. For example in the development and realization of pilot action “Improvement of Ambulant Medical Care in Kyffhaeuser District”, the regional level (Ministry for regional development, Ministry for health) and local administration (district) interacted with representatives of science (University Jena), medicine (GP’s offices from villages and small cities), chambers (doctor’s chambers; insurance chamber) and economy (transport business) to guarantee a sustainable ambulant medical service in the region. The pilot action is one of the examples of how the project contributes also to testing care solutions and is supporting active ageing (topics within sub-theme 2).

Based on the preliminary work (the identification of rural potentials and the 17 pilot actions) transferable and transnational strategies will be developed and form the basis for a joint transnational action plan.

### Re-Turn: Regions Benefitting from Returning Migrants

**Aim:** Re-Turn aims to identify, advance and implement measures to capitalize on returning migrants and thus enhance human capital and re-migrants’ entrepreneurial abilities in participating regions in order to improve the regional knowledge base and intercultural competences of innovative actors.

#### Analysis:

Since its start in May 2011, Re-Turn’s transnational research advisory group studied current migration flows in central Europe resulting in a ‘Comparative Report on Re-migration



Trends' as well as the Online Visualization Platform<sup>35</sup>. Existing return initiatives in CE were analysed in the Baseline Report 'Returning people to the homeland: Tools and methods supporting re-migrants in a European context'. This report was then transferred into the Re-Turn Toolkit, which assists stakeholders to develop own measures to support return migration.

Project title: Re-Turn						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution		☆☆☆			☆☆	☆☆☆
Examples of outputs		Report "Tools and methods supporting re-migrants in a European context"; Toolkit for re-attracting, re-integrating, re-employing return migrants			Welcome Agencies; Integration office assisting re-migrants; Business report	Comparative Report on Re-migration Trends; Online Visualization Platform; Transnational Strategy; Handbook for stakeholders and policy makers

Furthermore, an online survey conducted among 2000 migrants from eight countries was complemented by a business survey that investigated regional companies' human resource needs and their attitudes towards return migrants as potential workforce. In total, 110 interviews were held with business representatives all across central Europe. Results of both surveys were presented and discussed in regional workshops and documented in two major reports. Finally, an International Working Paper on 'Barriers for a Successful Capitalization on Returning Migrants' points to potential fields of intervention. All outputs are available on the project website<sup>36</sup>. Supported by a transnational advisory board, regional task forces - including political stakeholders, entrepreneurs, migrants and administration officers - discussed the barriers and potentials associated with return migration in their own case study regions and prepared pilot activities to support return migration.

The project partners defined three areas of intervention: re-attract, re-integrate and re-employ returning migrants. Re-Turn developed a toolkit based on these interventions. For example: emigrants can act as ambassadors for the home region, launching an online job portal, organizing a commuters 'day, offering training in entrepreneurship, etc. Also hotlines, one-stop shops and welcome-agencies (offices assisting re-migrants to re-migrate

<sup>35</sup> <http://return-platform.um.si/>

<sup>36</sup> [www.re-migrants.eu](http://www.re-migrants.eu)



and find a job) were improved and tested (see section 4.3 Case studies). In this regard Re-Turn strongly contributes to sub-theme 2 “improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market”.

Several activities focus on sustainability of project achievements, e.g. through a policy workshop at the EU Parliament in Brussels in April 2014 and via regular meetings with regional policy makers. In addition, a Transnational Strategy to facilitate the EU regions’ capitalization on return migration is produced and a Memorandum of Understanding, planned to be signed by regional/national policy makers and stakeholders, which ensures transnational cooperation after the project lifetime . As important output is a handbook for stakeholders and policy makers with tools to improve the capitalization on return migration for regional development, thereby contributing to knowledge development in central Europe.

**EPOurban: Enabling Private Owners of Residential Buildings to Integrate them into Urban Restructuring Processes**

Aim: EPOurban aims to build capacities of private owners of residential buildings, to take adaptation measures and to generate private investment into the residential building stock in order to reduce negative impacts of demographic and social change on urban development and work against social segregation. This is embedded in the overall urban-revitalisation strategy and is a pro-active approach to tackle issues such as empty buildings and deprived districts.

Analysis:

<b>Project title: EPOurban</b>						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge development
Contribution			☆☆☆			☆
Examples of outputs			Ready-to use investments plans for private owners to utilize their property and setting off private investment in decaying locations			EPOurban academy; consultants trainings; learning tool

After assessing the economical, social, financial and cultural framework of the housing market in the nine partner cities in the so called “Triangulation report”, the partners

selected up to 15 cases per city for consultation by qualified consultants. The type of consulting services are: finances or business plans, subsidy or fund possibilities, renovation, housing market developments, concepts and moderation between owner and users/tenants, law (e.g. tenancy law). Common standards for consultation are developed and laid out in a specific training concept, which the consultants trained in all project partner cities followed.

In total two consultation rounds of each around 90 consultations will take place allowing to set the base for urban revitalisation and the adaptation of the residential areas to the needs of the owners (including the elderly). Each consultation will lead to a ready-to-use investment plans for the adaptation and improvement of the respective properties.

In order to foster the knowledge development and exchange of experiences among professionals involved in the consultation a peer review process is foreseen, an online learning tool is being developed and after each consultation round an EPOurban academy is scheduled.

Furthermore, knowledge gained in other initiatives is valorised in the project, as notably the city of Leipzig, Lead Partner of EPOurban, has also gained experience with private ownership and urban revitalization in the URBACT-project CSI Europe. Because private owners with less financial capacity are often elderly people and the demand for affordable barrier free housing rises with an ageing society, EPOurban is also contributing to sub-theme 2 “Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups”.

### **ADAPT2DC: New innovative solutions to adapt governance and management of public infrastructure and services to demographic change in shrinking regions and cities of CE**

Aim: The overall goal of ADAPT2DC is the development of transnational strategies in the field of public infrastructure and services to reduce the maintenance and provision costs in shrinking regions and cities.

#### Analysis:

ADAPT2DC develops cost effective options and political recommendations for the management of infrastructure and services in shrinking regions and tests them in pilot actions.

To set the frame a socio-economic background analysis giving an overview of previous and upcoming demographic developments in the different countries of central Europe was developed. The analysis focused on NUTS 3 level (i.e. regions) all across Central Europe (also see figure 2 and 3 in chapter 2). In order to achieve this, the partners compiled a database with different indicators, ranging from birth rates to unemployment quotas. The analysis maintains that the regions of central Europe face the tide of an ageing population, which negatively affects the economy and subsequently the quality of life in peripheral areas.

In order to valorise already existing knowledge a Best Practice Catalogue was developed. It gives an overview of practices relating to social service, health care (contributing to sub-



theme 2 “testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for elderly”), mobility and transport, public infrastructure, and inter-communal cooperation. Additionally, project examples in the fields of water provision and sewage treatment as well as entrepreneurship are included.

Project title: ADAPT2DC						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge development
Contribution			☆☆☆	☆☆		☆
Examples of outputs			Regional action plans, Innovative solutions in social services: e.g. energy audits, shop run by volunteers, bundling of social services, meeting points, reduction of public dwelling stock	Transport and accessibility: citizen bus driven by volunteers, combined transport, combining school bus and public transport		Training curricula; regional and transnational training courses

Based on this background analysis and taking into consideration the existing knowledge the partners implemented pilot actions with the aim to further develop and test solutions which allow for the saving of costs while maintaining existing quality of infrastructures and services. Different tools were tested for the different sectors: innovative solutions for public transport; cost savings in public property management; new health care services; innovative forms of cohabitation of generations; new tools to manage public infrastructure; new strategies to rationalize services on micro regional level.



Picture: Ustí Region in the Czech Republic, one of the partner regions in ADAPT2DC

At the time of the study the pilot actions are on-going. Their results will feed in into “Regional Action Plans” which include individual recommendations tailored to the area and the specific needs

of the pilot region. The action plans will be the basis for future activities and furthermore the action plans will include proposals for future priority activities, financial estimation and funding sources as well as the responsibilities of the partners.

Furthermore a “European Strategy” will be developed, which includes recommendations to policymakers as to how infrastructures can efficiently be adapted to demographic change, tackling infrastructure costs in shrinking regions. This strategy could be interesting for other European regions, because it will consider the transferability of measures in the context of regional, national and transnational framework conditions. In that sense it might provide a valuable contribution to innovative governance models as well.

**i.e. SMART: Training Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Sustainable Economic Sectors**

Aim: The main aim of i.e. SMART is to implement a transnational management structure that will deliver a new transformative business approach to innovation and entrepreneurship in three different economic sectors: creative industries, green economy and ICT. The role of the partners (educational and political institutions) is to develop, promote and introduce this management structure and support the regional and transnational growth of SMEs.

Analysis:

Project title: i.e. SMART						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆☆	☆☆			☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs	Services for business start-ups, SMART Training and SMART Site: a knowledge management tool for SMART Trainers and entrepreneurs	SMART Points & SMART Campus			SMART Points & SMART Trainers	Joint strategy and action plans (e.g. Train the SMART Trainers and SMART CAMPUS)

The creation of the management structure is to be achieved through so-called regional SMART points in each partner region. These points (physical offices) will provide motivation, trainings (already two training sessions implemented for about 35 participants), counselling and other related support for emerging entrepreneurs.

The basic element of each of the SMART points is a SMART trainer - a person, who has knowledge and experience with fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of the target groups. The networking of the individual SMART points into a transnational network will provide strong support for the SMART Trainers. She or he can utilize the knowledge, skills and

experience of other existing SMART points and hence provide enhanced support for the entrepreneurs.

Another important activity related to the project is the implementation of the so-called SMART Campus (in 2014). Seven regional SMART points supported by their SMART Trainers will launch regional competitions for emerging entrepreneurs to evaluate the business plans they create. The best five entrepreneurs per region will go to the SMART Campus - a one week event organized by the project, to improve their business plans under the strong support of international experts and SMART Trainers. In this way the project strengthens knowledge development fostering human capital.

Ultimately, the project aims to institutionalise its outputs and safeguard their sustainability through the setting up of a permanent structure supporting emerging entrepreneurs. At the time of conducting this study, 333 entities are actively involved in the project in one way or another. By addressing individual entrepreneurs and young people i.e. SMART also features links to “improvement of access to the labour market for vulnerable groups” (sub-theme 2).

**WOMEN: Realizing a Transnational Strategy against the Brain-drain of Well-educated Young Women**

Aim: The main objective of WOMEN is to mitigate the brain-drain of well-qualified young women from rural central European regions.

Analysis:

Project title: WOMEN						
Topic	Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆	☆☆			☆☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs	Women are future award: promotion of social networks for female start-ups	Women are future award; Demography managers seminars			Women are future award; International Scientific Conference	Trans-national Strategy and Joint Action Plan

The approach of WOMEN is to enhance the conditions that allow young women to participate in knowledge management processes to obtain the necessary qualifications to achieve professional careers without migration. WOMEN tackles challenges in relation to strengthening human capital and reducing brain drain. The target group is (young) women,



so the project will also contribute to improving the access of vulnerable groups to the labour market (in sub-theme 2).

Picture: Promotion campaign of the WOMEN project

WOMEN project introduces a “women are future - award” for female entrepreneurs, female friendly companies and female start-ups. It tries to stimulate women to stay in their region and to provide a working environment for women where they are “treated equal and with dignity”<sup>37</sup>.

WOMEN project organised an International Scientific Conference about challenges faced by women on labour markets in rural areas and gender sensitive policies. One of the main outputs will be Transnational Strategy and Joint action plan as well as seminars for HR managers in regional companies to support them in creating interesting career opportunities for young women and in better foreseeing demographic developments.

## 4.2. Individual project analysis under sub-theme 2

Six projects contribute to sub-theme 2 (*Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change*).

### Q-AGEING: Quality Ageing in an Urban Environment

Aim: Q-AGEING aims at improving the living and working environment for the elderly and focuses on active ageing in an urban environment. Since active ageing is a broad concept, Q-AGEING focuses on four thematic areas: enhancing social security for elderly within the community and avoiding isolation; improving elderly friendly public spaces and mobility; fostering senior economy and promoting age-management; and providing better access to life-long learning and promoting voluntarism for elderly.

#### Analysis:

In the first phase of the project nine project partners carried out analysis of the needs of the elderly in their regions and a qualitative analysis of existing policies related to the theme. One of the conclusions is the correlation between education and the level of access to recreation and self-organisation, thereby giving evidence for the importance of life-long learning programmes. Another important component of the project is fostering a self-responsible and independent lifestyle.

<sup>37</sup> <http://women-project.eu/women-are-future-award/>



Project title: Q-AGEING						
Topic	Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆		☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs	Life-long learning programmes, Access to voluntary work: Academy of the elderly, Silver age centre			Fostering senior economy and promoting age management: age-positive campaign, market place of good businesses	Mobility of the elderly, self-organisation, independent living, health & prevention, social participation: lifestyle coach, senior platform, senior recreation park, benefit card.	Toolbox of tested solutions promoting active ageing at local level  Ageing Resource Centre (an online platform)

The pilot actions focus on access to voluntary work; creating elderly friendly public spaces; fostering senior economy and promoting age-management; mobility for the elderly, health and prevention; self organisation and social participation.

As main outputs partners created the “Toolbox of tested solutions promoting active ageing at local level”, describing the most relevant pilots, and the Ageing Resource Centre, a



website collecting the existing knowledge regarding active ageing on EU level. The aim of knowledge sharing within the project was to make sure that policy and practice was based on sound evidence and to bridge the gap between the two.

Picture: Bike for elderly developed by the Q-Ageing project

The Toolbox is an easy-to-use guidebook with selected model projects, focusing on the municipal level, transferable to other regions in Europe. The results were promoted during the final conference on 19/10/2011, in Budapest and during the CENTRAL EUROPEAN good practice fair - promoting active ageing at local level.



## Senior Capital: Develop Human Capital of Seniors to increase their Economic and Social Value in a Knowledge based and Competitive Economy

**Aim:** Senior Capital focuses on the competences of elderly employees. It concentrates on the skills and resources of elderly people and their contribution to society and economy through employment, self-employment and voluntary work. The aim of Senior Capital is to develop tools for a better involvement of elderly employees and to raise awareness on the potential of 50+ employees in companies.

### Analysis:

Project title: Senior Capital						
Topic	Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆☆			☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs	New methodology for education of 50+ generation			Joint overview of good practices	Offering modular forms of education: life-long learning especially for seniors, Senior fairs	Joint collection of good practices; New methodology for education of 50+ generation

Senior Capital investigates the role of enterprises, municipalities, training organisations and 50+ employees. Central questions are how to make use of knowledge and experiences of older employees; how to change the attitudes of employers towards elderly employees and how to increase volunteering activities of the elderly. The project is based on the assumption that elderly employees represent a potential especially for small and medium enterprises due to their strengths such as being well structured and reliable.

Picture: education and employment opportunities for the elderly



One of the early outputs of this project is an overview of good practices and existing initiatives in the field of senior education and employment in Europe. The document offers a detailed information about the most relevant activities and achieved results in this field.



As a continuation of the joint collection of good practices, data on successful businesses is collected and provided in a unified form including information on the scope of the activities, number of employees, implemented actions and their results. Another output represent regional roadmaps, which define framework conditions (legal, financial, institutional) necessary for implementing education/employment models custom-made to senior needs in regional context.

Furthermore, the project elaborates regional action plans that describe operating and financing of integrated senior-oriented education and employment services in participating municipalities.

Expected results of Senior Capital are a “new methodology for the education of 50+ generations, a redefined role of local/regional authorities as facilitators/coordinators promoting seniors integration in education and work, a positive change in attitude of the society towards seniors increased economic role, their knowledge/experience, better labour demand, supply balance in under-financed sectors lacking workforce (e.g. care) where knowledge and capacities of seniors can best be exploited”.<sup>38</sup>

Although the project distinctively matches sub-theme 2, Senior Capital also clearly contributes to sub-theme 1 with regard to retaining competences for regional growth and matching local skills with business needs.

### **CE-Ageing Platform: Central European Knowledge Platform for an Ageing Society**

Aim: The CE-Ageing Platform aims to develop and find solutions tackling challenges of an ageing society. This is carried out through actions targeting awareness raising, research and activities fostering economic growth, regional development and social cohesion.

#### Analysis:

The main outcome of the CE-Ageing Platform project represents the development and implementation of the CE-Ageing Strategy and the Age-Practice Peer Reviews.

The CE Ageing Strategy, published as a green paper, provides links between most central policies and recommends measures and actions in order to enable regions to adapt to demographic change and improve the framework conditions for the knowledge development. The strategy aims to:

- minimise negative effects and impacts of demographic trends on the ageing society and the economy by improving framework conditions through adapting policies, governance processes and mechanisms to demographic change in the field of regional and urban development, health, education, labour market, migration and social policy;
- initiate regional platforms and new cooperation models through life-long learning, work-life balance and age / diversity management;

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<sup>38</sup> <http://seniorcapital.eu/?p=27#more-27>



- upgrade skills of the employees (in particular older workers aged 45+, women 45+, migrants 45+, employees under 45 years within life-cycle oriented programs, etc.) to meet the demands of SMEs.

Within the project the project partners also conducted several Age-Practice Peer Reviews aimed at the active involvement of the elderly implemented at the national as well as the regional levels in Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Project title: CE-Ageing Platform						
Topic	Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆			☆☆	☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs	Regional training concepts			Regional training concepts, cross-generational HR strategies, Pilot action age diversity management, work-life balance	Regional ageing strategies	CE-Ageing strategy; regional training concepts

In addition, the project developed and implemented several human resources, work-life balance and age and diversity management strategies and training concepts. For example, two ageing strategies were elaborated for rural areas aimed at strengthening capacities of SMEs, and for large companies and regional authorities to better managing of demographic change. In addition, several activities demonstrated the necessity of setting up comprehensive training arrangements for older people. In addition, five pilot actions were developed in cooperation with SMEs to improve employability of older workers by establishing cross-generational human resource development strategies, contributing to enhanced work-life balance as well as implementing age and diversity management.

An important outcome was the acquisition of SMEs to cooperate in the CE-Ageing Platform, and raising awareness for the topic amongst this target group.

On the other end, one of the main lessons learned was that contact with political stakeholders proved to be a challenge, especially at national level. Nevertheless, the project managed to establish some contacts at the policy level as a result of the conducted pilot actions.



**SPES: Support Patients through E-services Solutions**

Aim: SPES aims to improve the social cohesion in the central Europe area through implementing innovative and shared solutions in the field of telemedicine. Furthermore, it strives to make sure that the deployment, testing and adoption of scalable and portable e-health instruments at regional and local level becomes a priority for health services providers.

Analysis:

	<b>SPES</b>					
Topic	Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	Knowledge Development
Contribution			☆☆☆		☆☆	☆
Examples of outputs			Telemedicine and entertainment platform		ICT tools to improve the quality of life of patients	Strategic Political Committee

SPES project implements tele-health and entertainment platforms in four cities: Ferrara (IT), Vienna (AT), Brno (CZ) and Kosice (SK), focusing on respiratory problems, dementia, handicapped people and social exclusion. It builds on the approach and results of the FP6-funded OLDES project (Older people’s e-services at home) which developed a new technological solution, designed to ease the life of older people in their homes. Patients will have the opportunity to test an easy-to-use telemedicine solution, lowering their displacement costs and the time necessary for going to care service providers (hospitals, grand physicians, medical centres) improving their daily life and general well being.



Picture: Pilot action in Vienna, Austria supporting people suffering from dementia

There is a major role for technology in SPES. Technologies can enable seniors or people who already encounter difficulties (e.g. cognitive, functional or financial) in their daily life, to increase their autonomy and to safely stay as long as possible in their familiar environment.

For seniors the evolution of information and communication technologies may first appear as hard to follow or even as a contributor to their isolation. To reduce mistrust in the tools, a functional collaboration between a technical partner and a partner involved in the social field of the pilot was established. This working method can represent a guideline in the future, for organizations that want to implement successful telemedicine projects.

In the framework of SPES, a Strategic Political Committee (SPC) was set up with strong involvement of policy makers. The committee contributes towards an area of tele-assistance in Central Europe through cross-border collaboration, initiating a dialogue on the supra-regional level and promoting innovative developments between the partner regions participating. Hereby it aims to contribute to the goal of the European Commission to move towards a "European e-Health Area" and the adoption of the e-Health Action Plan drawing on best practices and experience from across the EU<sup>39</sup>.

**Traditional and Wild: Promoting Traditional Collection and Use of Wild Plants to Reduce Social and Economic Disparities**

Aim: The aim of Traditional and Wild is the identification and revival of traditional knowledge on the properties of wild plants and their sustainable use for the benefit of vulnerable and marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities (especially the Roma population), women, elderly and school children. By reviving regional cultural traditions through utilisation of plants it also strives to protect and share this diminishing cultural heritage.

Analysis:

<b>Project title: Traditional and Wild</b>						
Topic	Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	Knowledge Development
Contribution	☆☆☆			☆		☆☆☆
Examples of outputs	Capacity building strategy, Market and income generation strategies in marginalised regions, Guidelines for product certification			Package of training materials, training sessions		Database of plants, Training sessions, Toolbox and Transnational Manual, Ethnobotanical study

<sup>39</sup> In the Digital Agenda for Europe the European Commission's eHealth Action Plan 2012 - 2020 provides a roadmap to empower patients and healthcare workers, link up devices and technologies, and invest in research towards the personalised medicine of the future.

Specific for Traditional and Wild is the focus on the ethnic minorities, especially the Roma population, which is not tackled by any other CE project dealing with demographic change. As a starting point, Traditional and Wild prepared a Strategic analysis of socio-cultural and economic profiles of the target population of the regions involved in the project. The scope is to explore the natural and socio-cultural potential of the target regions and, while keeping a connection with local traditions, to develop a viable product chain suitable for the selected target groups.

A database of available plants was also created with details and peculiarities on how plants were traditionally used in the partners regions. A Capacity Building Strategy was then drawn up, providing a transnational guideline on how to train the different target groups. This document also provides an analysis of their needs, necessary tools and promotes a sustainable use of the plants for the benefit of vulnerable groups, particularly ethnic minorities, women, elderly and schoolchildren.

Based on this strategy, training sessions were designed with the aim to help targeted beneficiaries to better understand the main aspects of sustainable plant collection and utilisation activities, to build-up the entrepreneurial and marketing skills, and enhance employment opportunities.

The project has conducted so far several training sessions in the partners regions, in which more than 800 persons from different age groups participated. Small-case investments were carried out to equip selected facilities for processing of plants, and a Folklore House with a demonstration laboratory was opened to promote traditional plant use.. An interactive online toolbox ([whygowild.com](http://whygowild.com)) summarises in an easy-to-use way the achievements of the project and provides thorough information as well as facts and figures on the use of wild plants as experienced during the project lifetime.

Moreover, “Guidelines for product certification” presents procedures, necessary steps and requirements for obtaining different types of certifications for products from collected wild plants. An “Ethnobotanical study” presents how plants are used and their connections to the traditional knowledge as well we their linked to history, religion, beliefs. The study also highlights comparisons among traditions and different uses in the participating of countries.

A transnational model is a final output that summarizes the experiences of the nine partners from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, that deal with the negative effects of social and demographic changes and loss of historical traditions. Based on experiences and background studies, the model analyses both the similarities and the peculiarities of the different regions and describes the available transnational developed tools and methods for replicating the model in any area of central Europe. Therefore the project also partially contributes to matching local skills with business needs.



Picture: picking of wild roses



## HELPS: Housing and home-care for the Elderly and vulnerable people and local Partnership Strategies in Central Europe cities

Aim: HELPS project promotes innovative housing and homecare solutions by intervening through an highly integrated approach on six challenges: Access to information on available services supporting active and independent living for elderly; people with disabilities and their families; accessibility of daily life spaces and urban areas; empowerment of human resources dedicated to healthcare; building up of social networks in neighbourhoods; adoption of ICT solutions strengthening self-sufficiency and sustainability and efficiency of care systems.

### Analysis:

Project title: HELPS						
Topic	Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	Knowledge Development
Contribution		☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆
Examples of outputs		Information point for housing and home care solutions; Permanent exhibition; adaption of a flat based upon design-for all criteria.	IT tool (Web nurse portal), Training programmes for persons in formal and informal care	IT tool (Web nurse portal), Training programs for persons in formal and informal care	Information point; Integrated home-care and community development and co-housing experimentations.	Main findings report; Catalogue of practices and working paper; Trans-national toolkit

One of the first achievements in HELPS is the “Main findings report” that encompasses a comparative study of the contextual factors and best innovative practices in the eight participating central European countries. The following “Catalogue of Practices” presents innovative practices in housing and care for the elderly and people with disabilities evaluated in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and sustainability. The next step is setting-up of Local Support Groups, i.e. partnerships of local public, private stakeholders, and beneficiaries, that implement one pilot action per country, e.g. the city of Leipzig establishes a permanent exhibition in the local residential counselling centre, which presents technological solutions facilitating independent living of the elderly and disabled persons, while in Slovakia intergenerational self-help groups at neighbourhood level and ambient assisted living for informal care have been launched.

A Working Paper summarises the most important findings from the research activity and gives recommendations directed at both the national and the transnational stakeholders



with regards to the following topics: *new housing solutions for elderly, new technologies for better care and open access to information.*

The Working Paper describes current trends in the field of housing and social care with respect to population ageing. In the context of the CENTRAL EUROPE countries these trends have been identified over the last two decades in Austria, Germany and to some extent also in Italy. In the post-socialist countries they represent relatively recent tendencies and are thus not as developed as in the case of Western European countries, primarily because of the lack of funding for such innovations. This proven time lag of the post-socialist countries behind their Western neighbours is an interesting outcome of the research activities in HELPS.

The results of the pilot actions and the final transnational recommendations and toolkit follow in 2014. This will provide for patterns of transferability of the project's activities and results at transnational level. It will include recommendations for the institutional, political and financial sustainability of the initiatives that could be carried out at local level in a participated bottom-up manner, while pointing out opportunities and critical aspects.

Due to international comparison of solutions and thanks to the standardisation of the main analytical tools for the description and evaluation of practices in comparative research (a detailed standardised questionnaire, elaboration of unified methodology) this research activity is unique among Central European studies of housing and care options for the elderly. The international comparison of practices (Catalogue of best practices) therefore adds original and new findings to already existing knowledge.

### 4.3. Case studies

On the basis of the individual analysis six case studies have been selected, two for each sub-theme and two for fostering Knowledge Development. The criteria for selection (in no particular order) are:

- The degree of sustainability in relation to follow-up activities, strategies of further use, ownership, etc.;
- The extent to which the project succeeded in delivering concrete results (improved policies, best practices, new collaboration, platforms, innovative methods, important events and publications);
- At least a triple helix approach and preferably a quadruple helix approach;
- Not just identifying and dissemination of good practices, but moreover improving or testing existing practices and developing and implementing new practices;
- Finally, the selection ensures a variety of target groups (youngsters, elderly, migrants).

First the case studies for shrinking regions (sub-theme 1) are described, taken from the YURA and ADAPT2DC projects. The two case studies selected with regard to dealing with the consequences of ageing (sub-theme 2) are coming from Q-AGEING and HELPS. The selected case studies for Knowledge development are from the projects ET-STRUCT and Re-Turn.



### Sub-theme 1 “Shrinking regions”: “YURA” case study

YURA enabled direct exchange between youngsters, enterprises, policymakers and stakeholders. Especially the involvement of youngsters is worth mentioning, showing a quadruple helix approach. To give an example: YURA encourages young people to join in discussions about future regional development. *Future Laboratories* were carried out in all project regions. The pupils learned to work in groups and to identify problems and the potential of developments in their region. In this way, the YURA project activities helped to define issues that the young people perceived as relevant. This increased the link between young people and their town or region. In face-to face meetings with the municipalities’ representatives, the students presented their views as well as possible solutions, while gaining first-hand experiences in local development processes.

Another good example is the *Business Academy* concept, which compiles a variety of didactic approaches to establish a link between high schools, local universities and companies. Young high school talents explored natural sciences, mathematics, macro economy and business management, topics relevant for admission to regional universities or for employment at local companies. In one partner region twenty pupils with excellent school grades in natural sciences and mathematics were invited to participate in workshops whereby the students’ skills in acquiring scientific knowledge was improved and where they developed ideas for their future career.

Similarly, the *Learning Partnership* concept is developed to improve the skills of young people and to prepare them for vocational training after school. Local companies profit from the cooperation with schools as well, since they establish contacts with talented pupils. For example, in a YURA partner region six pupils designed and built an energy-optimised electric kart, a project that drew the attention of local politicians, other companies and the public to the issue of energy efficiency and attracted them as future apprentices.



Picture: YURA project

Finally, during an *International Youth Seminar*, young participants worked with different media formats - radio, video, web and print - to tell stories about their vocational career. Experienced media and communication experts supervised the youths during these workshops. The young Europeans presented the seminar results at the State Parliament of Saxony-Anhalt to representatives of the governmental, business and educational sectors. In a youth declaration they formulated important claims towards a better life of young people in rural regions.



## Sub-theme 1 “Shrinking regions”: “ADAPT2DC” case study

ADAPT2DC focusses on solutions which allow for cost-saving while trying to maintain the quality level of existing infrastructure and services. A relevant project conclusion is that important methods to optimise public costs of services and related facilities in regions (and cities) affected by shrinking population can be ascribed to the provision of new organisational solutions and the implementation of cooperative agreements between public and private stakeholders, between local, regional and national public entities, or between different regions, cities and communities.



Picture: ADAPT2DC leaflet

In Germany, two regions (Thuringia and Bavaria), establish a Demography Coach. The coach works with local government and other local stakeholders and develops strategies to secure the provision of public services. With the help of the coach, the municipalities are then able to prepare and implement concrete measures, which forms a good basis for further cooperation between regions and municipalities. With regard to healthcare, in Poland, tele-medical units are distributed to patients to test how early diagnosis can reduce health care costs. The patients receive tele-medical equipment to measure their bodily functions (ECG) at home, and are provided with medical assistance, consultation, and diagnosis both through communication technology and in person. This is expected to lead to a decrease in healthcare costs and an improvement in the beneficiaries' quality of life. In the Czech Republic, the region Vejrty has many abandoned, unused or only partially used buildings from after the war and from the post-socialist period. The operating costs are a burden for the municipalities, especially the heating costs. Energy audits are installed to reduce these.

To improve accessibility in remote rural areas ADAPT2DC implemented a combined bus system in two rural districts of Thuringia (Germany). It combines passenger and freight transport, compensating the declining number of passengers by scheduled services and parallel transport of goods. These combined operations will make public transport in rural areas more efficient and attractive.



## Sub-theme 2 “Ageing”: “Q-AGEING” case study

Q-AGEING aims at improving the living and working environment for the elderly and focuses on active ageing in an urban environment. The main transnational output of Q-Ageing is a toolbox of tested solutions promoting active ageing at local level. The toolbox contains a collection of easy-to-understand actions, developed and tested by the Q-AGEING partnership, covering four thematic areas:

- Improving social security for elderly within the community and avoiding isolation

In the toolbox six pilot projects are presented reflecting different aspects of community development, like for example practical solutions on how to introduce a “benefit card”, how to establish a local exchange trading system, how to implement community building actions for elderly, how to operate a community website addressing the broader environment of elderly, how to organise a community space for people coping with dementia and Alzheimer’s disease and new training initiatives and a specific survey as tools for establishing wider community development actions.

- Improving elderly friendly public spaces and mobility

To change the local environment requires serious effort and significant budget from mainly municipalities. However there are some “soft” actions (requiring small scale investment only) which foster elderly’ mobility and help maintain their social contacts and activities like for example a senior recreation park. This need small-scale investment only, but it communicates efficiently the importance of active ageing by their high visibility. Furthermore a few new transport-related options are presented, like bicycles and buses for elderly. Senior Urban Map is a good method to take new ideas into consideration while preparing any local infrastructural projects, like improvement of the walking surface, handrails on steep gradients, improvement of public lighting, placing more street furniture, seating places, etc..

- Fostering senior economy and promote age-management

Municipalities can act as facilitators among local companies by organising awareness raising actions, like some partners did within Q-AGEING. Two of these actions are described. Potential employers could be convinced by presenting statistics, case studies or best practices from the business world of other cities. A case study on age-management in a German enterprise could be a good basis to start with.

- Providing better access to life long learning and promote voluntarism for elderly

Different approaches which Q-AGEING partners implemented successfully are presented. Tailor-made courses for elderly organised by municipalities with support of local NGOs and a small-scale investment action which aimed to transform local libraries to venues of elderly-friendly courses.

The Toolbox is a concept store. Senior-friendly bicycles, the activating design of public spaces, entrepreneurial activities to support elderly workers, neighbourhood-based participatory processes, etc. All ideas presented, even the low cost solutions, serve the city and the district to make them a liveable place, especially for elderly persons.



## Sub-theme 2 “Ageing”: “HELPS” case study

Helps is the only project fully focussing on *new housing solutions for elderly*. For example, one of the partners in the project, the Municipality of Leipzig, offers a permanent exhibition on assistive solutions for elderly and vulnerable people. The exhibition includes a great variety of solutions for everyday life at home: from the bathroom settings to fully equipped kitchens. The local staff offer counselling to families on how to improve their own home accessibility standards; moreover, they offer assistance about budgeting and affordability. The catalogue of Best Practices describes relevant ‘Best Innovative Practices’ in the area of housing accessibility and affordability, social and health care, community building and access to information.

The pilot actions with regard to *new technologies for better care and open access to information* support the autonomy of elderly, but also the services of general interest for inclusion and quality of life. Good accessibility to information and services is a factor able to prevent institutionalization and to encourage independent living. For example, the municipality of Debrecen and the Maltese Charity Service focused their action on the importance and empowerment of informal care givers, by combining “on-field” training courses with online learning, through the realization of an innovative IT tool (“Web Nurse” portal). In that sense the pilot action also contributes to the development of human capital, which is an asset for cohesion and competitiveness. Practitioners dedicated to the care of the elderly and disabled persons are empowered to respond to changing demands.



Picture: HELPS project ‘web nurse’ portal [www.webnover.hu](http://www.webnover.hu)

Another example is the Information Point which was opened by ZDUS (Slovene Federation of Pensioners, a HELPS project partner in Ljubljana). This Information Point provides information and counselling for elderly and families about housing, home care solutions, better quality of life such as sheltered houses and nursing homes, home care assistance and legal support on estate/housing options. Furthermore, the info point provides a flexible space for public debate on relevant topics and is intended to act as an innovative interface between citizens and the various local services.

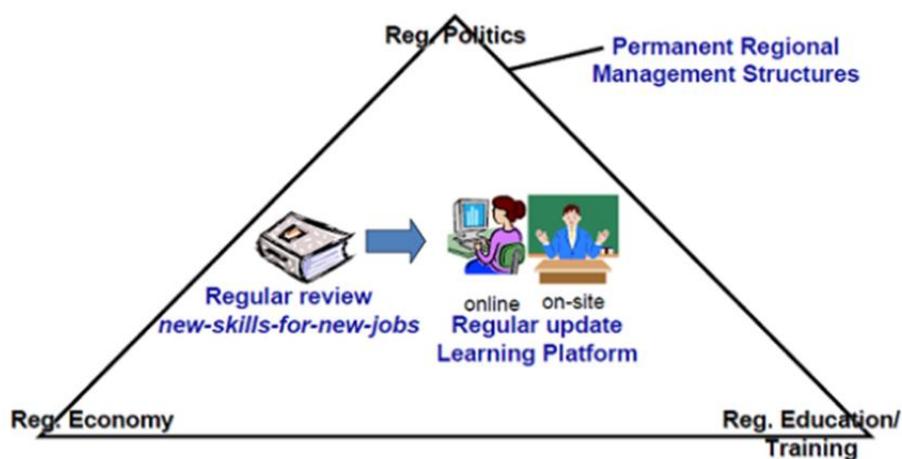
The (pilot) actions in HELPS are aimed not only at the direct implementation of the project activities, but also at providing follow up mechanisms for integrated governance in the cities, regions or countries by ensuring strong involvement and commitment of local communities in local action plans. One of the following activities in HELPS is therefore presenting the lessons learnt (from the pilot action results) with a specific focus on public-private partnership strategies for the management of innovative housing and care policies, through the involvement of target groups and stakeholders.



## Knowledge development: “ET-Struct” case study

ET-Struct shows a very clear project design. By following 4 working steps (1. Analyse and predict economic needs, 2. Prepare and provide training, 3. Implement regional triangles, 4. Make sustainable) ET-Struct succeeded in delivering project results which are suitable to transfer to other regions.

In ET-Struct ten permanent regional management structures were established (on the basis of a Joint transnational strategy and action plan) to structurally connect regional politics, regional labour market organisations, and regional education or training institutions. It meant the start of changing regional policy in the 10 ET-Struct regions. One section of the document was a template which had to be filled in by the partner regions as a basis for discussion with their regional stakeholders. This served as a basis for the implementation of the regional management structures.



Picture: Regional management structure ET-Struct

The policy adjustments achieved differed for each of the partner regions. Hranice (CZ) installed a new position, a so-called “City-Manager”, who is responsible for the regional management structure and the coordination of the triple helix approach - the cooperation between policy, labour market, education and training levels - in the region; a successful policy adjustment to tackle the mismatch between labour market needs and education. In Vienna (AT) a policy document was signed by regional politicians to improve the education and training of young people with a migrant background in the area of health care in order to meet the increasing demand for health care workers for an ageing population of citizens with a migrant background. The partners also signed a Memorandum of Agreement to guarantee the sustainability of transnational cooperation after the project lifetime.

With ET-LearnTrain, an eLearning Platform, many individual work forces were reached (quadruple helix). Based on an evaluation conducted by the partnership eLearning modules could be improved accordingly. The main method of disseminating the platform was through seminars or workshops in the regional partner institutions. Information about the platform was also publicised through the website and via e-mail sent to the regional target groups in the project’s database. The dissemination and evaluation of ET-LearnTrain was successful because of the direct contact between the partner institutions and their regional clients.



## Knowledge development: “Re-Turn” case study

Re-Turn aims to identify, advance and implement measures to capitalize on returning migrants and thus enhance human capital and re-migrants' entrepreneurial abilities in central European regions in order to improve the regional knowledge base and intercultural competences of innovative actors.

Several studies were carried out to understand the needs and potentials of returning migrants and regional conditions for re-integration. A main output is a handbook which provides a comprehensive guide to set up pilot projects as a response to the specific brain drain situation in central Europe. It contains transnational management tools to promote migrants as a source to foster knowledge development. The target groups are local, regional and European key actors, shareholders and decision makers. The handbook explains how to adapt existing and implement new services in three areas of intervention:

1. Tools to *re-attract* former out-migrants to the region (incl. marketing): emigrants as ambassadors of the home region/connecting internet platform, telephone hotlines, marketing at international airports and train stations, creating of returning jobseekers website/ online social remigration platform;
2. One-Stop-Shops to *re-integrate* migrants to the benefit of the regional economy: Welcome-Agencies, integration office assisting re-migrants and help them to find a job;
3. Assisting returning migrants in becoming innovative entrepreneurs (*re-employ*): Entrepreneurial Training Contact Point, training sessions to help returning migrants to enhance their entrepreneurial spirit.

A good practice is the Welcome Agency “Zuhause im Harz” in the region Harz in Germany. Harz AG, an existing regional public-private organization for economic promotion, cooperates with employment offices, public authorities and companies in the region. Employees are trained to answer a hotline which provides relevant information on job offers, housing, child care and social and cultural life in the region to people who wish to return or have already returned. The hotline is combined with a new website, sharing similar information for those return migrants who prefer web info. The website is also linked to Facebook to address younger migrants. In addition, employees of the Harz AG are trained to be available for face-to-face meetings to assist with reintegration.



Picture: from [www.zuhause-im-harz.de](http://www.zuhause-im-harz.de)

Due to the public and private shareholders of Harz AG, both companies (potential employers of return migrants) and policy makers supported the “welcome agency”; it received a ‘Demography award’ by Saxony-Anhalt. As such, Central Europe money was used efficiently to set-up a structure which helps to welcome return migrants.



#### 4.4. Analysis of results per theme

In the following paragraphs the data of the projects are analysed in an aggregated way: first for each sub-theme investigating the evidence of the critical mass mobilised at transnational level and then with regard to their contribution to policy learning or uptake and implementation.

##### Aggregated analysis for sub-theme 1

Ten of the 16 projects deal with the consequences of shrinkage and fully contribute to sub-theme 1. Some of the remaining six projects contribute indirectly to sub-theme 1 as well, for example with regard to matching local skills with business needs. For instance, Senior Capital plans to improve the balance between demand and supply on the labour market of sectors lacking workforce (e.g. care) through exploiting knowledge and capacities of seniors, while Traditional and Wild builds entrepreneurial skills and employment opportunities for the local population to sell plants and herbs and deliver to for example whole food stores or distributors of herbs and healthy food.

The table below shows that a majority of the projects under sub-theme 1 focus on matching local skills with business needs and retaining competences for regional growth. Work force qualifications do often not sufficiently match the needs of regional economies and this hinders economic growth, competitiveness and employment. To overcome this problem projects executed surveys to determine which skills employers are looking for (e.g. ET-Inventory executed by ET-Struct) and projects like YURA, IDEA and ET-Struct created tools to “improve the future working prospects of regional workforces, so that citizens in these regions will be equipped and trained for the new challenges of a dynamic labour market situation” (ET-Struct). i.e.SMART aims to improve the climate for innovation thereby attracting and retaining competences for regional growth, especially within the creative industries, green economy and ICT sectors. Re-Turn focusses on attracting competences for regional growth through facilitating the return of migrants and thus enhance human capital while WOMEN aims to limit a further brain-drain of young well-educated women from rural areas already severely challenged by demographic change.

Table 1 shows the projects contributing to each topic in sub-theme 1.

<b>Table 1: Sub-theme 1: Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Number of projects (% of total)</b>	<b>Projects</b>
Adapting services for younger generations	6 (37%)	YURA, IDEA,ET-Struct, EURUFU, i.e SMART, WOMEN
Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	7 (43%)	YURA, IDEA, Re-Turn, ET-Struct, i.e SMART, WOMEN, Senior Capital
Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	5 (31%)	IDEA, QUALIST, EURUFU, EPOurban, ADAPT2DC
Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	3 (18%)	QUALIST, EURUFU, ADAPT2DC
Matching local skills with business needs	8 (50%)	YURA, IDEA,ET-Struct, Re-Turn, i.e SMART, WOMEN, Senior Capital



These projects focus primarily on the young population as target group. Therefore part of their strategies is to adapt services for younger generations. In YURA, for example, one of the pilot actions contained the set up of a business academy to support talented pupils, while IDEA focused on improvement of career orientation. i.e. SMART and WOMEN chose different approaches: i.e. SMART provides comprehensive support and service to young entrepreneurs at the beginning stages of their start-ups. WOMEN adapts services through creating better conditions for young women seeking a career. It tries to mitigate the brain-drain from young educated women and looks into the pull-factors that cause the outmigration.



Picture: i.e. SMART trainers workshop

Increasing the attractiveness of shrinking regions is another topic central to half of the projects in sub-theme 1. Projects investigate a wide range of solutions that will help shrinking regions with structural problems in relation to public services. These relate to social services (like child care), healthcare or housing. EPOurban for example looks into the possibilities on how to generate private investment into the residential building stock in order to reduce negative impacts of demographic and social change. The ageing society, shrinking population but also the changing household patterns, new lifestyles and the growing number of poor households puts pressure on the housing market. Although public and private housing companies have difficulty tackling these challenges, it is even more a challenge for private owners to become active in this field.

Improving accessibility of shrinking regions is a topic tackled by 3 projects, representing 18% of the total number of projects. QUALIST and EURUFU both looked into innovative mobility concepts. QUALIST created these specifically for small towns and EURUFU for peripheral rural areas, including voluntary engagement (e.g. “Citizen consultants for mobility” and “Citizens help fellow citizens using public transport”). ADAPT2DC investigates solutions to reduce the costs of infrastructure and transport services while still ensuring good quality services. One of the ways of doing this is the combination of passenger and freight transport (also see the case study in paragraph 4.4), which makes public transport in rural areas more efficient and attractive<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Although not included in the table of sub-theme 1, several projects in sub-theme 2 (like Q-AGEING) shared good practices on mobility; these are taken into account in the topic of active ageing in sub-theme 2.



## Aggregated analysis for sub-theme 2

Table 2 shows the projects contributing to each topic in sub-theme 2.

Table 2 : Sub-theme 2: Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change		
Topic	Number of projects (% of total)	Projects
Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	9 (56%)	Q-AGEING, YURA, ET-Struct, CE-Ageing Platform, EURUFU, Re-Turn, Traditional and Wild, i.e. SMART, Senior Capital
Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	2 (12%)	EPOurban, HELPS
Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	5 (31%)	Q-AGEING, SPES, EURUFU, ADAPT2DC, HELPS
Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	5 (31%)	Q-AGEING, CE-Ageing Platform, EURUFU, Traditional and Wild, Senior Capital
Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	5 (31%)	Q-Ageing, CE-Ageing Platform, SPES, HELPS, Senior Capital

Access of vulnerable groups to the labour market is an important issue in central Europe. This is visible in the high number of projects contributing to this topic<sup>41</sup>. Three projects contributing to this topic (Q-AGEING, CE-Ageing Platform and Senior Capital) try to increase the number of elderly involved in the labour market and voluntary work after retirement or from a situation of unemployment. Another approach to increase access to the labour market is through education and lifelong learning.

The analysis shows that central European regions are aware of the importance of lifelong learning which in turn is linked to the development of knowledge and competences. For example within Q-AGEING the Újbuda Academy of the Elderly (Hungary) was set up to provide an opportunity for lifelong learning, acquire new knowledge and to reduce the digital backlog existing among many older citizens. In the CE-Ageing Platform project lifelong learning was identified as the key to enhance labour force participation to be achieved through flexible working environments such as part-time work and possibilities for an individual voluntary prolongation of years in employment.

The Municipality of Maribor (Slovenia) and partner in Senior Capital builds on the experiences of CE-Ageing Platform and Q-Ageing to set up a ‘Senior education and business centre’ where older citizens will be able to receive training and services towards employment.

EURUFU, a project contributing mainly to sub-theme 1, also included adult education and training centres in its strategy to improve the quality of life in rural areas dealing with population decline and ageing. It says “concrete modification should be realised, giving

<sup>41</sup> The nine projects include five projects from sub-theme 1 (YURA, ET-Struct, i.e. SMART, EURUFU and Re-Turn).



also the network of public universities and local centres of lifelong learning the formal status to validate and recognize (on the basis of formal certification) the acquired knowledge”. In Traditional and Wild the activities focus on training and capacity building on plant collection and utilization activities (e.g. training materials, training sessions, equipping training centres) in order to build up entrepreneurial skills and employment opportunities for local vulnerable groups in central Europe, like the Roma, the elderly or women.

The main target group in sub-theme 2 is the ageing society. Being a broad topic, including many type of activities, active ageing and improving life for the elderly are well covered by more than a third of the total projects and in almost all projects in sub-theme 2 (the only exception being Traditional and Wild which focusses more on ethnic minorities).

In almost one third of the projects in this analysis the aim is to make use of skills and competences of the 60+. As described in chapter three it is becoming increasingly important that older workers continue to work for a longer period and that regions in Europe make better use of the existing potentials of an increasingly diverse and ageing society. As people can expect to live 20 to 30 years beyond their retirement, extending working lives is not only an economic necessity, there is also evidence to show that continuing to work or stay active can improve older people’s social, mental and physical wellbeing. The Province of Treviso (partner in Q-AGEING) launched several training courses focused on mainly highly qualified older people who are willing to transfer and exchange their professional knowledge, experience and skills within the local community. The aim of the trainings was to have active older people who can teach other elderly on how and where they can use their experience and skills within the local community. After the training participants created a “Bank of Competences” of local 60+ people and opened the so called Q-AGEING Front Office (info point) in the headquarters of Province of Treviso. Sub-theme 1 project EURUFU included a pilot action called “Triple-I” whereby knowledge of pensioners is used for regional development. Specific regional problems are tackled by these older citizens and their knowledge is valued for finding new approaches and ideas.

Five out of all projects contribute to testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly. From the sub-theme 2 projects these are Q-AGEING, HELPS and SPES of which only the latter has this as a main focus. In SPES the aim is to support patients in their own homes through ICT “contributing to the quality and the cost-effectiveness of their care, as well as their independence”. Care and telemedicine tools for the elderly is a topic also covered by sub-theme 1 projects EURUFU and ADAPT2DC<sup>42</sup>.

Several projects contribute to “adapting the housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups”. In most EU countries, the demand for adapted housing is growing, and this is likely to increase with the strong ageing developments in the coming decades. Most elderly are satisfied with their housing and do not wish to move, meaning the focus should lie on services for the elderly that enable them to remain in their home. HELPS is the only project in the analysis that has adapting the housing stock for the elderly as a main focus - specifically on innovations in elderly housing<sup>43</sup>. Innovations may include various measures

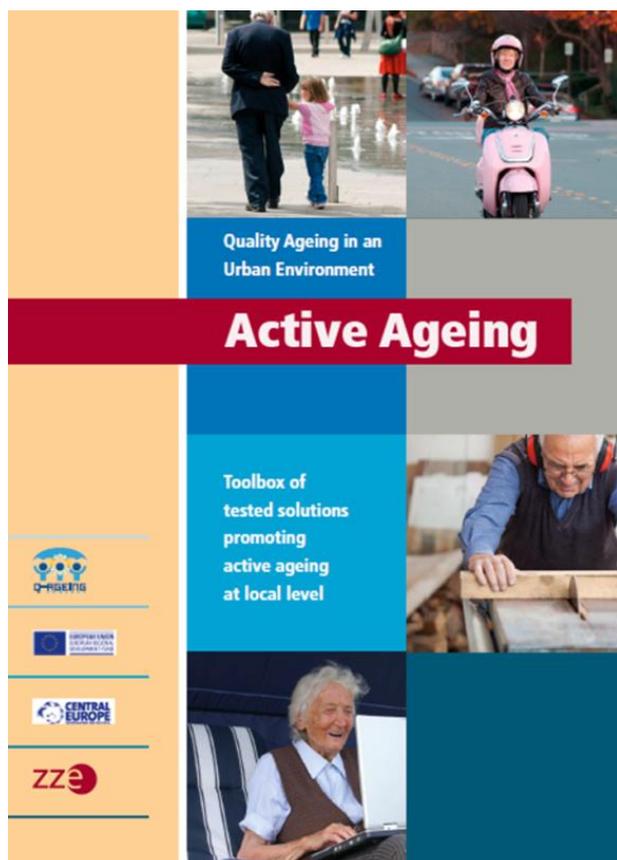
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<sup>42</sup> For instance, half of the pilot actions in ADAPT2DC is focussing on developing new/novel health services.

<sup>43</sup> See case study on HELPS in paragraph 4.3.



like lifetime homes and smart home technologies. The changes in housing for the elderly in the context of ageing societies focus on the issue of promoting independence and inclusiveness as new paradigms in care for the elderly (HELPS). The policy aim of these innovations is twofold: “to decrease state expenditures on long-term care, since home care has been found to be less expensive than institutional care. This goal seems to be essential in the context of population ageing and increasing expenditures for social and health care. Second, home care should lead to better quality ageing, greater independence and satisfaction of the elderly with their ageing”<sup>44</sup>. EPOurban focusses on the housing stock as well, but not specifically on the elderly; here the emphasis is on building capacities of private owners of residential buildings, to take adaptation measures.



Five projects contribute to active ageing and improving life for the elderly: Q-Ageing, CE-Ageing Platform, SPES, HELPS and Senior Capital. Innovative health technologies can enable the elderly to increase their autonomy and to safely stay as long as possible in their familiar environment. Convinced by this and relying on its experience in e-health related projects, the SPES project adapted a software solution to the needs of older people, especially those suffering from breathing problems, dementia or physical and mental disabilities. The patient application can be used on a touch screen terminal (without keyboard or mouse) or on a classical laptop. Its intuitive user interface has been especially designed to be easy to use by people who are less or even not familiar with computers.

Picture: Q-AGEING Active ageing toolbox

In addition, active and healthy ageing is recommended for implementation within central Europe by the CE-Ageing Platform and included in their CE-Ageing Strategy. Projects like Senior Capital aim at increasing the economic role and added value of a growing number of senior (50+) people representing a major human “capital reserve. By doing so it contributes to the active involvement of the elderly, be it in paid labour or volunteer work.

One of the main outputs of Q-AGEING is the toolbox of tested solutions promoting active ageing at a local level. An example is Café Oz, a community space for people coping with dementia and Alzheimer’s disease in the municipality of Genoa, Italy.

<sup>44</sup> HELPS WP3 Main Findings Report, page 28.



## Cross-cutting theme knowledge development

Five of the projects in sub-theme 1 (IDEA, ET-STRUCT, Re-Turn, WOMEN and i.e. SMART) contribute directly to fostering knowledge development<sup>45</sup> while it can be argued that the projects YURA, Q-AGEING, Senior Capital, CE-Ageing Platform, Traditional & Wild, EPOurban, EURUFU, ADAPT2DC and Qualist, have contributed indirectly to knowledge development through their joint actions plans or transnational strategies. The CE Ageing Strategy, published as a green paper, provides recommendations on measures and actions for regions to adapt to demographic change, including fostering human capital. Senior Capital focuses on the competences of elderly employees. It concentrates on the competences and resources of elderly people and their contribution to society and economy through employment, self-employment and voluntary work. It develops tools for a better involvement of elderly employees and raises awareness on the potential of 50+ employees in companies.

Re-Turn implements measures to capitalize on returning migrants and thus enhances human capital and re-migrants' entrepreneurial abilities. It provides a handbook with transnational management tools to promote migrants as a source to foster knowledge development. In YURA and WOMEN the focus lies on transnational strategies to counteract the brain-drain which takes place in rural areas in central Europe and especially in relation to young qualified people. IDEA, ET-Struct and i.e. SMART focus on “new-skills-for-new-jobs”, e.g. optimising work force qualifications in relation to the needs of regional economies, attracting and developing high potentials, fostering human capital in regions by developing new cooperative ways. For example, a core output of IDEA was a strategy for safeguarding human capital for innovation processes. In order to stimulate cooperation between education, industry and policy, new methods and instruments were used like the ‘Theatre of Engineers’, joint lectures at university, short films of Trainee of the Day, etc. Connecting vocational orientation initiatives instead of organizing competing events resulted in more efficiency and effectiveness in the field of safeguarding so-called ‘High Potentials’. Within the i.e. SMART project so-called SMART points and SMART Trainers are installed to facilitate entrepreneurship . The networking of the individual SMART points in the transnational context provides support for the trainers by utilizing the knowledge, abilities and potential of other existing SMART points and hence provide an even better support for the entrepreneurs.

ET-Struct showed the growing relevance of transnational and horizontal cooperation as it aimed at connecting the main regional players (policy/economy/education-training) in a dynamic ‘knowledge management triangle’ to train regional staff to meet the needs of the regional labour market. This led to the strengthening of central European regions increasing the number of well trained personnel by means of transnational expertise, practices and models. ET Management offers other European regions a blueprint for creating their own management triangles (between public authorities, education and business). Actually, all projects that foster Knowledge Development aim to establish regional ‘knowledge’ systems consisting of the public sector, the business community and the higher education institutions and refer to their roles in multi-level policy governance and decision-making policy. The next section will take a closer look at these systems and how projects have contributed to strengthening the regional networks.

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<sup>45</sup> As area of intervention. Please see page 10 for a description.



#### 4.5. Policy and implementation

As concerns the achievements of projects distinction has been made between those in relation to policy (policy learning/policy uptake, strengthening regional networks and the contribution of projects to EU2020 Strategy) and implementation of initiatives or practices. The latter is distinguished on three different levels, these are: identifying and dissemination of (good) practices; improving or testing existing practices; and developing and implementing new practices.

This section relates to the second goal of this study to verify the potential relevance of project achievements and their contribution to policies (regional, national or European) and identifies the added value of the transnational cooperation for the territories concerned (third goal).

##### Policy

###### *Policy learning/ policy uptake*

Policy learning (exchange of know-how and experiences) is well matured in those projects that were submitted in the first calls. Some first results now become visible in fourth call projects (i.e. SMART, WOMEN and Senior Capital) as well. Most policy learning takes place through exchange visits, evaluation exercises, selecting good practices, territorial and situation analysis, drawing up transnational visions, action plans, guidelines, toolboxes and strategies. Re-Turn for example wrote an International comparative working paper on barriers for returning migrants. Some projects, e.g. HELPS, have pilot actions built on a shared methodology. Others, like Q-AGEING started with a knowledge sharing strategy, which goes hand in hand with organised dissemination activities, like lobby, project presentations, etc. According to Q-AGEING these “could generate more influence on policymakers than the highest quality of results. Although it is possible to identify many levels of knowledge sharing, this level is the most important from a transnational project’s point of view”.

With regard to policy uptake or influencing policies (on local, regional, national and on a European level) the analysis shows that this forms a challenge for projects, and the project partners within them encounter difficulties to reach this aim. Although all projects have decision makers (especially local and regional politicians) as their target group, to really change or influence policies is a different matter. Most projects, especially the ones that have been finalised, have reached the stage whereby pilot action plans and implementation plans are drawn, often in the presence of politicians. In the case of HELPS partners are forming so called local action groups. These are interdisciplinary local working groups that produce a policy strategy for local development. Due to the variety of the partnership each with a different thematic focus, ranging from ICT based components (Austria), national recommendations for integrated neighbourhood development (Germany), recommendations on spatial housing policy (Czech Republic) or the strengthening of the visibility of alternative housing options (Slovenia). It is set up in such a way that HELPS can be used as a vehicle to influence the policy making process. The process is now ongoing.

In several projects (e.g. EURUFU and SPES) politicians were involved in the pilot actions in order to guarantee sustainable services in the regions (also see chapter 4). In the



framework of SPES a Strategic Political Committee (SPC) was set up with strong involvement of policy makers. The committee contributes towards an area of tele-assistance in central Europe through cross-border collaboration, initiating a dialogue on the supra-regional level and promoting innovative developments between the partner regions participating. Hereby it also contributes to the goal of the European Commission to move towards a "European e-Health Area" and the adoption of the e-Health Action Plan drawing on best practices and experience from across the EU.

In Re-Turn policy makers and stakeholders have been involved from the start of the project as project partners and associated partners. Regular meetings with regional policy makers in the frame of regional workshops and regional task forces help to facilitate the policy uptake. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding, to be signed by regional/national policy makers and stakeholders and a handbook for stakeholders and policy makers with tools to improve the capitalization on return migration for regional development are steps to make sure the policy uptake is guaranteed. As was described in the case study for ET-Struct ten permanent regional management structures were established (on the basis of a Joint transnational strategy and action plan) to structurally connect regional politics, regional labour market organisations, and regional education or training institutions. It meant the start of changing regional policy in the 10 ET-Struct regions.

#### *Strengthening regional networks*

An important result from the analysis in this study is that projects prove to be strong on strengthening of regional networks. These can be cross-sectoral, public-private cooperation or triple or quadruple helixes. Four projects included the triple helix approach as a main aim to reach their goals. It is not only a way of reaching the goals, but part of the aim. As we have seen in the case study of ET-Struct the triple helix can contribute to changing regional policy. YURA created networks between schools and business within The Learning Partnership concept which was developed in reaction to the inadequate level of knowledge and skills among school graduates. The idea is to complement regular school subjects with practical units in companies and to include the needs of local businesses when drafting the school curricula. IDEA introduced new methods and instruments to stimulate cooperation between education, businesses and government. For example through short YouTube films of the Trainee of the Day in Austria (the needs of the companies meet the needs of the trainees, presented in film documentation with main actors: trainees, students, employees and entrepreneurs) and in Hungary regional intermediary centres were initiated to support networking between actors of tertiary education and industry via training, services, supply-demand-alignment, project development and knowledge transfer.

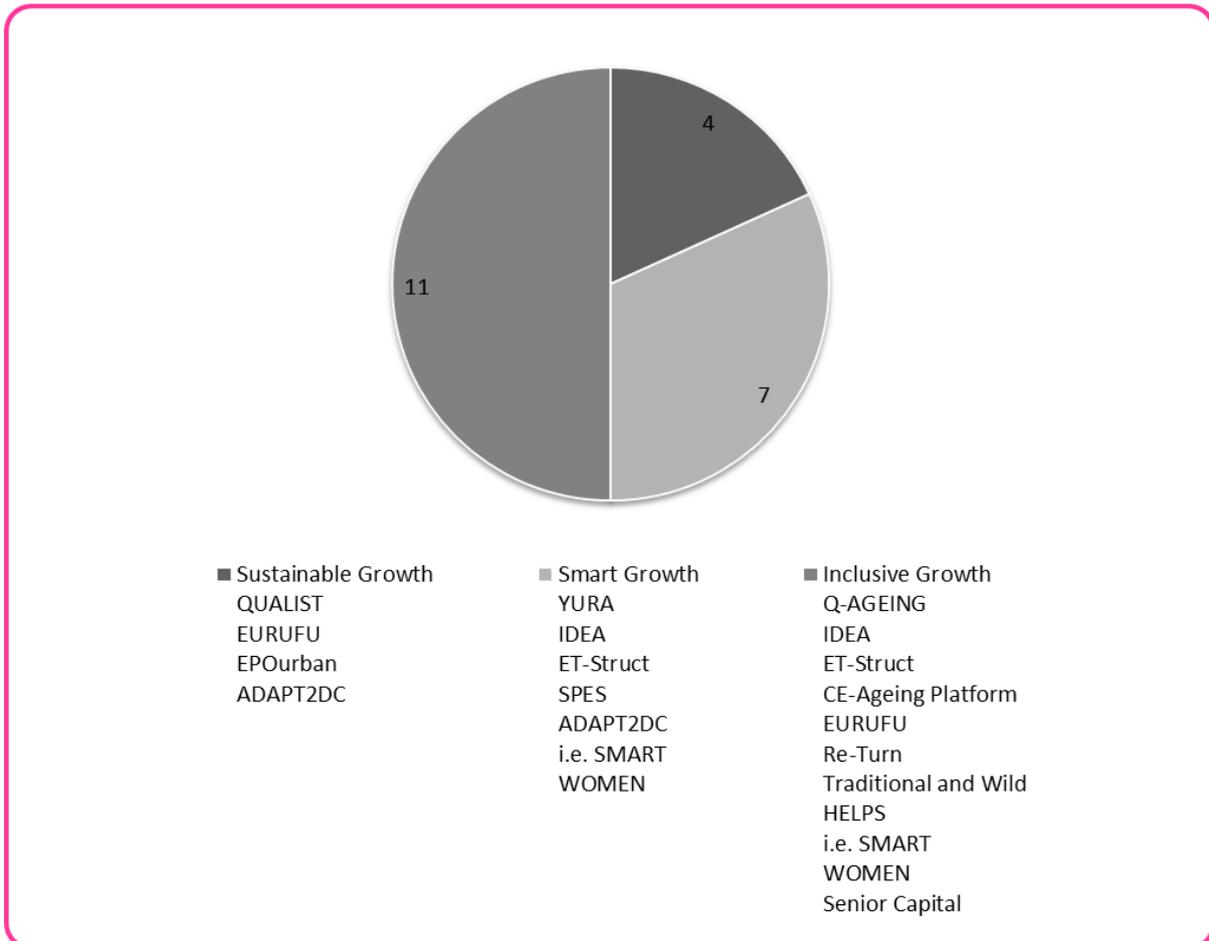
In EPOurban public-private partnerships are established in urban restructuring processes while HELPS established these for the management of innovative housing and care policies through the involvement of target groups and stakeholders: public health, social and housing institutions together with NGOs and third sector organisations. One of the lessons learned in ADAPT2DC relates to the horizontal cooperation between cities and regions, as well as the involvement of local private actors and civil society. Initiatives of social innovation, for instance, can have a relevant role in coping with the challenges of ageing and shrinking population and help to push local communities to actively consider demographic change and act upon it from a proactive perspective.



## Contribution to Europe 2020

As highlighted in an internal study by the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and the programme evaluation report from 2012, where a special focus was set on analysing the alignment of approved projects with the EU 2020 strategy, CENTRAL EUROPE projects contribute broadly to the EU 2020 Priorities of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive growth (see paragraph 3.4).

Figure 5: Projects contribution to EU2020 targets



The 16 projects being subject of this thematic study show a high relevance in terms of their contribution to EU 2020 targets especially for Inclusive and Smart growth and less for Sustainable growth. The projects are supporting all flagship initiatives, with a main emphasis on new skills and jobs and social inclusion (Inclusive growth). Other strong contributions are made to the flagships youth on the move, innovation union (Smart growth) and resource efficient Europe (Sustainable growth) (mainly sustainable transport and regional development, e.g. brown field sites). 11 projects directly contribute to Inclusive Growth. The European Union has agreed on an employment rate target for women and men of 75% for the 20-64 years age group by 2020. A skilled workforce is an essential asset to develop a competitive, sustainable and innovative economy in line with Europe 2020 goals. To meet all these challenges and raise employment rates substantially, focus is particularly on women and young and older workers. This ‘Agenda for new skills and jobs’ flagship initiative to reach Inclusive Growth is covered through half of all projects analysed in this study. ET-Struct for example supports this flagship by equipping

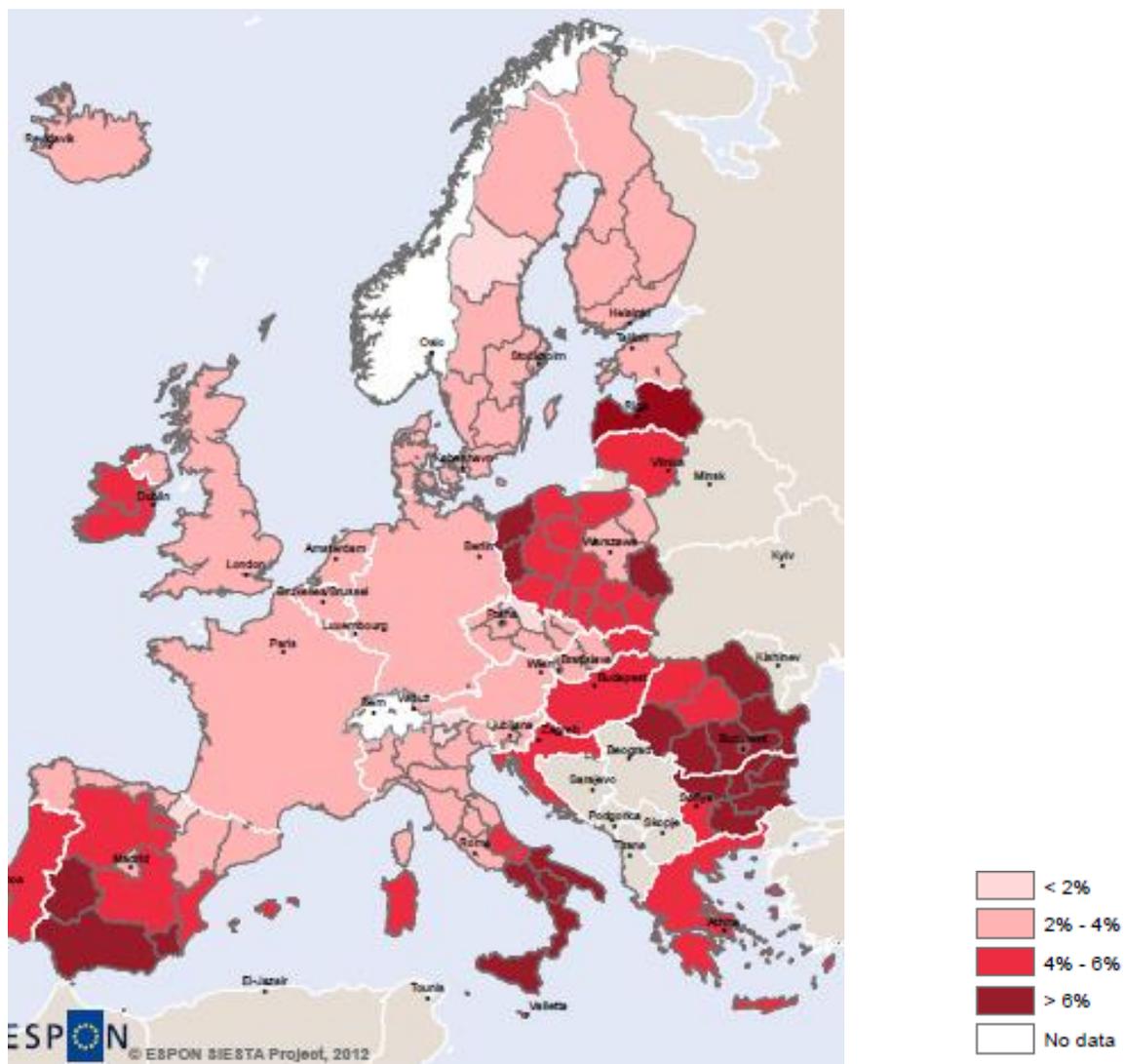


people with the right skills for jobs also for the future and Q-AGEING implemented pilot actions on age-management.

Figure 6 shows the need for activities contributing to the other flagship initiative in Inclusive growth: against poverty and social exclusion.

For example HELPS builds social networks as a response to the need for social inclusion, starting from the neighbourhood level, while Traditional & Wild offers opportunities to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable people in rural parts of central Europe, like the Romas.

Figure 6: Distance in percentage of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in relation to EU 2020 Target (%)<sup>46</sup>, 2010.



Source: ESPON 2013

<sup>46</sup> Considering that all regions should make the same contribution: app. 17%. ESPON 2013



## Implementation

A majority of the projects work on developing, *identifying and dissemination of good practices*. Good Practices catalogues and practice matrixes are compiled and shared. One of the early outputs of Senior Capital was an overview of good practices including existing initiatives in the field of senior education and employment in Europe. It includes information on the target group and the activities, actions and effects. Outputs like these are helpful, also for other (future) projects in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme. The “Catalogue of practices” edited within the HELPS project presents a list of innovative practices in housing and care for the elderly and people with disabilities in central European cities. 12 partners and 3 associated partners from 8 central European countries (Italy, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Poland) involved in the international HELPS project realised the catalogue which focuses on the analysis of already existing, innovative best practices. The aim is to share experiences and inspire other European cities or regions to introduce innovative housing and care solutions for the elderly and people with disabilities with a view to increase their autonomy.

Good Practices catalogues may also function as support towards the realisation of pilot actions. ADAPT2DC gathered international examples concerning the possibilities of adapting technical and social infrastructures and services to demographic change and at the same time addressing the issue of cost saving. The presented examples support the realisation of the planned pilot projects within the partnership of ADAPT2DC. In turn, evaluation of these practices is important to facilitate further analysis of their results and to draw conclusions for strategies and implementation plans.

Good practices overviews may also function as a raising awareness tool. In CE-Ageing platform 200 practices were included in the Green paper “CENTRAL EUROPEAN AGEING STRATEGY”. Initiatives, projects, programmes and networks successfully tackling the challenges of demographic change are listed in this paper. Interesting is the analysis of these practices with regard to funding, the implementation period as well as the sustainability of the practices. It states that these differ significantly from practice to practice<sup>47</sup>. An important component in the process of selecting good practices is the raising awareness effect and commitment this can have for the stakeholders involved. For example EURUFU selected good practices on the basis of their relevance for the EURUFU topics (Public social infrastructure, Social housing, Education, Job opportunities, Ethnic minorities and rural social economy, Mobility) and then organised stakeholder workshops where findings were shared with the regional and local level.

Good practices can be distinguished with regard to their opportunity of being transferred to other regions; a mainstreaming process is then likely to occur. CE-Ageing Platform gives an example of the Austrian ‘Fit2 work’ practice which started in the provinces of Lower and Upper Austria and was then implemented in other provinces from 2013 onwards.

And last but not least, the catalogue may also function as evaluation tool. The main criteria of evaluation in the earlier mentioned HELPS project were: efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability. The description of the practices also

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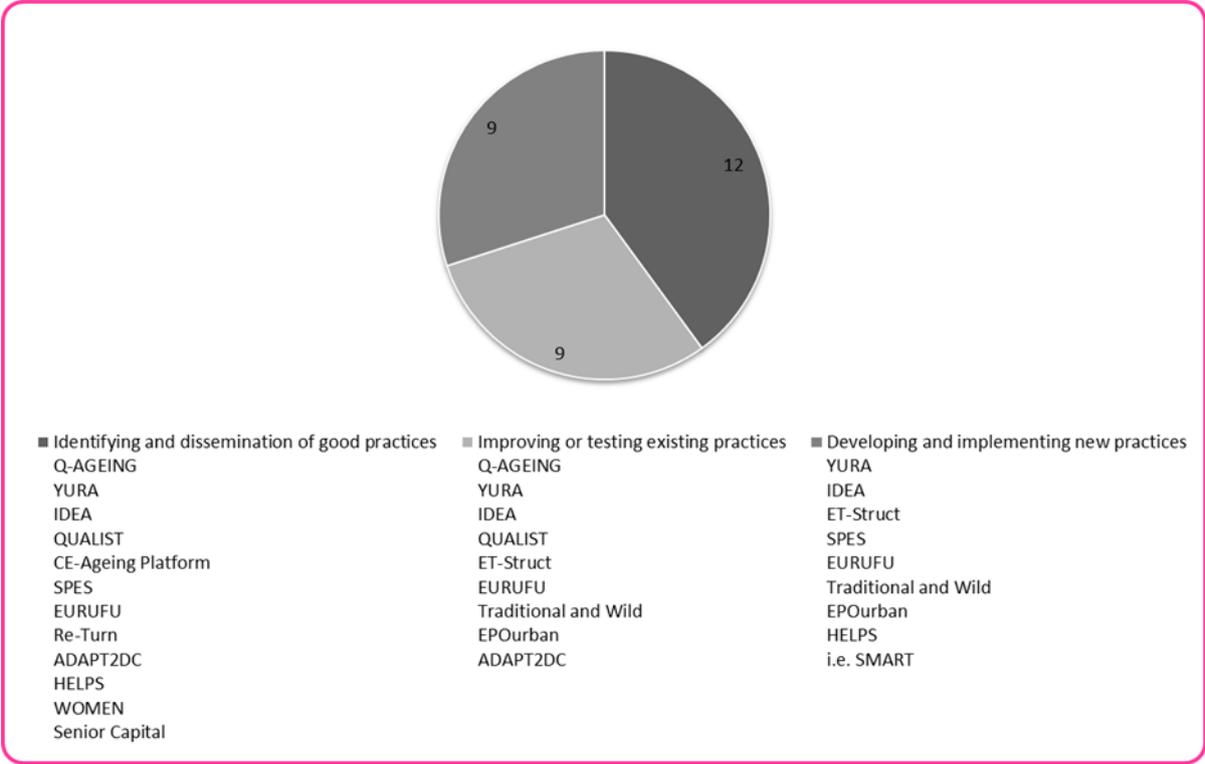
<sup>47</sup> Important to note is that some projects do not make a distinction between good practices and pilot actions, although the latter are actually new practices implemented.



focused on management solutions as well as the participation of the elderly in the design of the practices. The aim of the review of practices is to identify innovative aspects of the practice that may be relevant for an international audience. The international comparison of practices therefore adds original and new findings to already existing knowledge.

Nine projects improved or tested existing practices. EURUFU for example implemented the concept of Shared Space to improve the economic vitality and public services in the rural areas. Furthermore, in Southern Poland unexploited buildings were not demolished but renovated and strengthened as communication centres, meeting places. This is not something new, but is tested to investigate barriers and success factors for implementation. ADAPT2DC addresses a wide range of mobility concepts and applies pilot actions to test innovative solutions. Furthermore, the polish partner region is testing how early diagnosis can reduce health care costs. The evaluation and outcome of the testing is very valuable and may prevent other regions.

Figure 7: Projects implementation of practices



Traditional and Wild uses case studies in the training sessions organised for potential plant collectors and include skilled specialists to discuss these and increase its success of implementation. These training sessions are part of the capacity building for the sustainable collection and the use of wild plants and can be regarded as *developing and implementing new practices*. The new practical experiences are then input for a transnational model that can be disseminated throughout central Europe.

i.e. SMART develops new practices (SMART Campus and SMART Network) to tackle problems identified e.g. a general lack of interest in innovation and entrepreneurship in the involved partner regions as well as a low survival rate of business start-ups, high unemployment, and demographic and socio-economic brain drain. In order to tackle these

challenges, i.e. SMART develops solutions for the regions (“improve the climate for innovation”) as well as for individuals (“improve the framework for knowledge development”). The SMART Network serves as hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The main objective in SPES is to demonstrate that ICT tools can effectively improve the quality of life of patients even at their home, by, for example, reducing the number of accesses to the emergency department of a care centre. The tested methodology represents a guide for organizations that want to implement successful telemedicine projects.

### **Added value of transnational cooperation**

In general, initiatives aiming at addressing demographic trends benefit from transnational cooperation, since demographic change is not limited to borders and people are on the move since the beginning of history.

Regions in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area show disparities, but also some strong similarities with regard to social-economic characteristics. Therefore, transnational cooperation creates a possibility to exchange ideas, best practices and new policies and strategies on topics that are relevant in ageing and shrinking regions. It proves a much more cost-efficient way compared to individual efforts by regions. One key requirement for CENTRAL EUROPE projects is that they go beyond know-how transfer, exchange of experience and learning from each other. Emphasis is put on jointly developed outputs of transnational character. Integrated, adapted and concrete actions among Member states and also among different type of actors may result in well-defined Joint strategies and Action Plans that are tailor made, but relatively easy to disseminate and to transfer to similar regions in the area.

Also in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area there is still a need to address the risks and opportunities arising from an ageing society. Healthy and active ageing for example is often mentioned in strategic governmental documents but the implementation remains a challenge. Transnational cooperation can be the start of mutual adjustment in policy answers to demographic change. It helps to put the subject on the agenda of national and regional authorities and gives financial support, thereby creating the necessary conditions for experiment, finding creative solutions and new strategies.

A critical aspect encountered by several projects in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is the fragmentation of stakeholders, not used to cooperate with each other, which hinders the implementation of successful activities. Building the project through transnational cooperation are steps towards European integration.

### **Territorial impact**

One of the effects of transnational cooperation is the territorial impact, the effects of physical development in the area. Transnational cooperation creates the opportunity for a sustainable network that will survive the project lifetime. Several projects have a



continuation of (part of) the partnership in new projects (like Senior Capital as follow up of Q-AGEING and i.e. SMART of ET-Struct). Knowledge is kept and experiences in the project can be disseminated in the new project. It also gives ample opportunities for testing or implementing good practices gathered in a previous stage.

ET\_struct developed a Joint transnational strategy and action plan, which served as a blueprint for the customisation and implementation of 10 regional management structures, which was implemented in the partner regions. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed by all the partners (representing their regions) to guarantee the sustainability of transnational cooperation after project lifetime. Partners have committed themselves to facilitate contacts between the members of their regional management structure with members of other regional structures; inform each other regarding any significant amendments to local or regional or national legislation covering education, training, and the labour market and enhance cooperation.

The territorial impact of projects may also manifest through the involvement of stakeholders. Involving stakeholders is crucial for embedding results and policy uptake. In the project lifetime of YURA 52 regional companies, 103 schools and 129 regional political stakeholders were involved. This resulted in 39 new collaborations with 60 follow-up projects and activities planned. YURA succeeded in a quadruple helix approach by involving 3.560 pupils in several project activities. As a result the access of vulnerable groups (especially youngsters) to the labour market was improved. YURA was able to contribute to human capital for example by organising a transnational youth seminar, where youngsters from five central European countries discussed the status-quo of regional development and education in their home regions. By means of different media they raised awareness among politicians on youth migration from rural regions and loss of human capital.

HELPS provides follow up mechanisms for integrated governance in the cities, regions or countries and managed to ensure strong involvement and commitment of local communities in the local action plans. The action plans have a specific focus on public-private partnership strategies for the management of innovative housing and care policies.

Projects like WOMEN and Re-Turn have a clear territorial impact with regard to tackling the issues in regions suffering from brain drain. Re-Turn developed transnational management tools and services to re-attract former out-migrants to the region, to re-integrate migrants to the benefit of the regional economy and assisting returning migrants to help them to find a job, and to assist returning migrants in becoming innovative entrepreneurs and to enhance their entrepreneurial spirit. The approach of WOMEN is to enhance the conditions that allow young women to participate in knowledge management processes to obtain the necessary qualifications to achieve professional careers without migration. In this way WOMEN also tackles challenges in relation to strengthening human capital and reducing brain drain.



## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The aggregated analyses as described in the previous chapter result in conclusions and recommendations on programme and project level.

### 5.1. Conclusions

The 16 projects altogether consist of 180 partners in central Europe, who work together in 75 pilot activities and established almost 30 cooperation networks. Moreover, the 16 projects carried out almost 1 million EUR of investments with another 2 million EUR prepared for. In total the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme invests around 27 million EUR ERDF (11% of the programme budget) to address demographic change issues and contribute to knowledge development.

The analysis of the 16 projects shows that overall the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme contributes significantly to making shrinking regions more attractive, especially through matching local skills with business needs and retaining competences for regional growth. A lot of attention is given to adapting services for the younger generations including improving their access to the labour market.

Improving access to the labour market for older people is also a topic that is considered in the projects. In addition, active ageing and improving quality of life, care and telemedicine tools for the elderly are well covered. Projects focussing on adapting the housing stock for the elderly or improving accessibility of areas are less numerous. 18% of the projects look into the accessibility of shrinking regions and 25% (4 projects: EURUFU, QUALIST, ADAPT2DC and EPOurban) tackle issues related to housing for elderly. Regarding accessibility this is partly due to integrated approaches on increasing attractiveness, including mobility and infrastructure. Five projects focus on making use of skills and competences of the 60+, but only two projects have this as a main topic.

Almost all projects contribute to knowledge development to safeguard human capital for innovation and increasing economic competitiveness. It shows that fostering knowledge development is prioritised as a horizontal issue and increasingly regarded important when tackling the consequences of demographic change.

The analysis also shows that the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is relevant for experimenting, testing new approaches and finding new ways of maintaining the quality of life in the rural areas, villages, towns and cities in the central Europe area. Doing this in a transnational way supports exchange of experiences and stimulates the opening up of new channels, cooperation, methods and tools. It functions as a mirror and raises awareness on the topic.

As the study shows, the transnational cooperation in the analysed projects allows for enhancing European integration: the partnerships consisting of institutions from different countries and different levels (governmental, non-governmental, privates including profit-making bodies) created a critical mass at transnational level with relevant project achievements with regard to tackling the challenges caused by the demographic development in central Europe.



More generally it shows how these types of transnational cooperation projects can be a catalyst for implementing change: all projects have the potential to influence regional policies and their implementation, but the real effect relies on the ability to transform new knowledge into new or improved practices, to remove administrative constraints, set up cooperation structures with the right stakeholders, and to mobilise the right form of funding.

Since the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is open to public and private actors, opportunities for triple and quadruple helix cooperation are strongly embedded - creating opportunities for knowledge development and innovation.

On the basis of these results it can be concluded that the projects in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme clearly present a wide range of relevant topics in relation to demographic change and knowledge development and offer great potential for future actions in relation to Europe 2020 goals.

## 5.2. Recommendations

In the new programme period 2014-2020 no thematic objective or investment priority which is pre-defined at EU Commission level, is specifically addressing demographic change, although REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 urges to pay particular attention to rural areas and regions “which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps”. As this analysis shows there are ample opportunities to tackle the broad issues of demographic change through working transnationally on:

- Innovation, e.g. social innovation and public services applications, product and service development, promotion of business investment in innovation and research etc., silver economy;
- Sustainable transport concepts, tackling the challenges posed by population decline and ageing;
- Public infrastructure and housing, adapted to an ageing population or less inhabitants;
- Increasing attractiveness of shrinking places through protecting or promoting cultural and natural heritage.

*The silver economy (referring to the elderly workforce) and the white economy (referring to the economic opportunities of healthcare) could be new sources of growth together with opportunities from green economy activities, but there is a need to create an enabling environment by providing appropriate support to local governments and business.*

*Source: OECD report on Demographic Change and Local Development: Shrinkage, Regeneration and Social Dynamics, 2012*



Building on the framework and the achieved results in the current 2007-2013 programme some recommendations for the future programme can be formulated on both programme and project level.

### **At programme level**

The three maps in Annex 2 present the involvement of partners in the programme with regard to the theme demographic change and knowledge development, cooperation links and projects in this field and population change in Europe. Put on top of each other the maps show that some regions in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area are underrepresented or not evenly involved, like some parts of Poland, Northern and South-Eastern Germany. The main cities are well represented in the current programme. To tackle the consequences of demographic change and the unequal territorial characteristics it is recommended to put more effort in including the regions now underrepresented, to strengthen the collaboration between stakeholders from experienced and less experienced regions, to increase the learning effect and to increase an equal spreading of knowledge and opportunities.

As is understood by the programme, acknowledging that regions are in different phases of progress, helps to build the structure around the implementation and the transfer of good practices and policies. Some regions or organisations can act as mentors, while others are the 'receivers', which creates an added value for mutual learning and development of joint solutions. It is advised to continue on this path.

The analysis shows that networking between regions in central Europe proves to be a valuable approach to increase good practice and solutions in relation to demographic change, but it could be worthwhile to structure the processes of exchange in order to improve them. Successful projects may function as examples. Collaboration between projects (not only at events or within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area) is a good way to make sure methods are shared.

Projects that invest in pilots could be prioritised over the ones focussing mainly on identifying and sharing of good practices.

Cooperation with other programmes, like Horizon 2020 or other ETC Programmes might be valuable, especially in search of collaboration in the context of the triple and quadruple helix approach, and fostering innovation or knowledge development.

An existing obstacle for innovative solutions for demographic change challenges is the gap between national, regional and local governments. A suggestion is to link the project activities with the Smart Specialisation Strategies implemented in the regions in Europe and find ways to create horizontal and vertical cooperation among relevant stakeholders.

Although covered by a few projects in the current CENTRAL EUROPE Programme it is recommended to pay more attention to mobility and accessibility issues in relation to demographic change, like small town mobility concepts and trans boundary mobility centres.



With an ageing population and a European ambition towards growth it is increasingly important to make use of skills and competences of the 60+. In the current programme only a few projects dealt with this issue. In the next programme period it is recommended to facilitate more projects fostering the silver economy, and to search for collaborations also outside the programme boundaries. Lifelong learning and knowledge transfer could be an essential part in this.

Another key issue relates to the challenge of reducing brain drain. In the coming decade it will be even more important to improve the accessibility of the territory, attract competences, match local skills with business needs and develop human capital to foster the social-economic development of places and to make sure a quality of life is maintained, also in places dealing with population decline. As we move into “knowledge-based” economies the importance of human capital has become even more significant. Therefore, it is highly recommended to continue the chosen path during the current programme to foster knowledge development, in order to ensure economic competitiveness, the connection of the educational system to the leading edge of technology and business practices, and availability of complementary knowledge from different actors.

In most EU countries, the demand for adapted housing is growing, and this is likely to increase with the strong ageing developments in the coming decades. It is advisable to respond to this need and to continue to facilitate more projects that contribute to adapting the housing stock or services that enable the elderly to remain in their own homes.

Chapter 3 of this study touched upon the social dynamics of demographic change and its relevance for knowledge development, including the role of social capital and active citizenship. Since social capital is seen as a way to maintain the quality of life through actions of the citizens themselves, the programme could consider to include this more strongly in its implementation of the future programme. As we saw earlier social capital and active citizenship may also be seen as a way to solve those challenges that state governments can not tackle under the circumstances of shrinkage.

As mentioned earlier the complex system of interactions involving economic, social, political and environmental aspects within the issue of demographic change makes the transformation of the European governance models one of the greatest challenges for European policy makers. To come up with innovative and strong policies to deal with the impact of shrinkage may even involve de-investment or the loss of functions, which is generally not easy to explain. To give European policymakers a bit of support the programme could facilitate projects that foster governance innovation, emphasizing greater co-ordination between different societal stakeholders and aligning resources and strategies between private and public actors of different governance levels.

### **At project level**

A first recommendation is to raise awareness of the consequences of demographic change before implementing the solutions. Is the problem shared among all stakeholders, is the solution prioritised in the regional plans? In the case of demographic change it is important



to realise it affects a broad range of policies; an integrated approach is requested, while tailor made solutions have to be implemented.

Like several of the analysed projects understood very well, it is important to include policy makers at an early stage of the project to guarantee policy uptake at a later stage. The involvement of politicians in the exchange activity has a positive effect on the success for transferring solutions and strategies. It creates a higher degree of political commitment and offers opportunity for continuation, also after the project itself has ended. With a subject like demographic change, which touches upon so many policy fields, this is of great value. Related to this, strong coherence with the already existing policies at local and regional level might be an advantage to make implementation easier.

It is strongly recommended to build on successful projects, since transnational cooperation should result in a sustainable network that survives the project lifetime. Part of the partnership could continue in a new project and search for new partners to make the partnership even stronger in relation to the topic. In this way, knowledge from the previous project is kept and experiences can be used for improving the new project. The new built project might also test good practices gathered in a previous stage or try to up-scale them, uplifting from the pilot stage to a more general implementation.

It is suggested to capitalise “good practices” from different projects in (and outside<sup>48</sup>) central Europe and to make them accessible for stakeholders in the regions, and establish direct contact between organisations dealing with the same topic. Some practices are valuable first attempts and might actually fail instead of succeed in which case there is also a lot to learn from them. A better word for these good practices could be “initiatives” whereby more attention is given to the experimental character as well. It is recommended to get stakeholders together to be able to share the pitfalls and how to avoid them. Experiences with these initiatives could be shared and should be stimulated in order to make use of the lessons learned from this programme period in the next programme period. This will enhance the practical implementation of measures or policies. This means not only to put attention to new ideas, but also bringing previous experiences some steps further.

In addition, projects should be stimulated to make even more of an effort to include SMEs, for example by setting up hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The local level has a key role in providing the framework for local NGOs, citizens and movements to organise community actions to (re)integrate elderly into the society. For projects dealing with ageing in their regions, it is therefore recommended to involve more active ageing experts and the end-users, being the elderly themselves or the care givers and volunteers.

In addition, involvement of stakeholders beyond the ‘usual’ ones could add great value to create innovative solutions and ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking. For example, designers could be involved next to health care organisations and technical businesses to find feasible and sustainable solutions that keep senior citizens physically and socially active and that provide them with the care they need.

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<sup>48</sup> E.g. Interreg IVC, URBACT etc.



And finally, internal project evaluation should be designed using a structured quality control mechanism, since regular, systematic evaluation and monitoring of the project is important, also within the implementation phase. This proposed evaluation and quality control activity could be a tool to increase the quality of the project results. Although externally this is captured in the programme processes, a more structured way *within* the projects themselves might be valuable to improve the quality of the project and to structure the process based on the results.



## Annexes

- Annex 1 - Overview projects
- Annex 2 - Maps and statistics
- Annex 3 - References
- Annex 4 - Questionnaire
- Annex 4 - CV of expert
- Annex 5 - Acknowledgements



## Annex 1 Overview projects

Full list of projects on demographic change and knowledge development.

Project	Title	Call/ Priority /Sub- theme	Lead Partner	Website
Q-AGEING	Quality Ageing in an Urban Environment	1 / P4/ 2	Local Government and Municipality of District 11 of Budapest, Újbuda, Hungary	<a href="http://www.Q-ageing.eu">www.Q-ageing.eu</a>
YURA	Developing transnational transversal youth strategies in regions with migration	2 / P4/ 1	Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt, Germany	<a href="http://www.yura-project.eu">www.yura-project.eu</a>
IDEA	Innovative Development of European Areas by Fostering Transnational Knowledge Development	2 / P1/ 1	Institute of Mechanical and Plant Engineering Chemnitz e.V., Germany	<a href="http://www.idea-strategy.eu">www.idea-strategy.eu</a>
QUALIST	Improving quality of life in small towns	2 / P4/ 1	Saxony Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Transport, Germany	<a href="http://www.qualist.eu">www.qualist.eu</a>
ET-Struct	Economic/Educational Territorial - Structure	2 / P1/ 1	The European Office, Vienna Board of Education, Austria	<a href="http://www.etstruct.eu">www.etstruct.eu</a>
CE-Ageing Platform	Central European Knowledge Platform for an Ageing Society	3 / P4/ 2	Chamber of Labour Upper Austria, Austria	<a href="http://www.ce-ageing.eu">www.ce-ageing.eu</a>
SPES	Support Patients through E-services Solutions	3 / P2/ 2	ENEA -Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, Italy	<a href="http://www.spes-project.eu">www.spes-project.eu</a>
EURUFU	European Rural Futures - New opportunities to secure the provision of public services in rural cities and municipalities	3 / P4/ 1	Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure, Germany	<a href="http://www.eurufu.eu">www.eurufu.eu</a>
Re-Turn	Regions benefitting from returning migrants	3 / P1/ 1	Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany	<a href="http://www.re-migrants.eu">www.re-migrants.eu</a>
Traditional and wild	Promoting traditional collection and use of wild plants to reduce social and economic disparities	3 / P4/ 2	Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary	<a href="http://www.traditionalandwild.eu">www.traditionalandwild.eu</a>

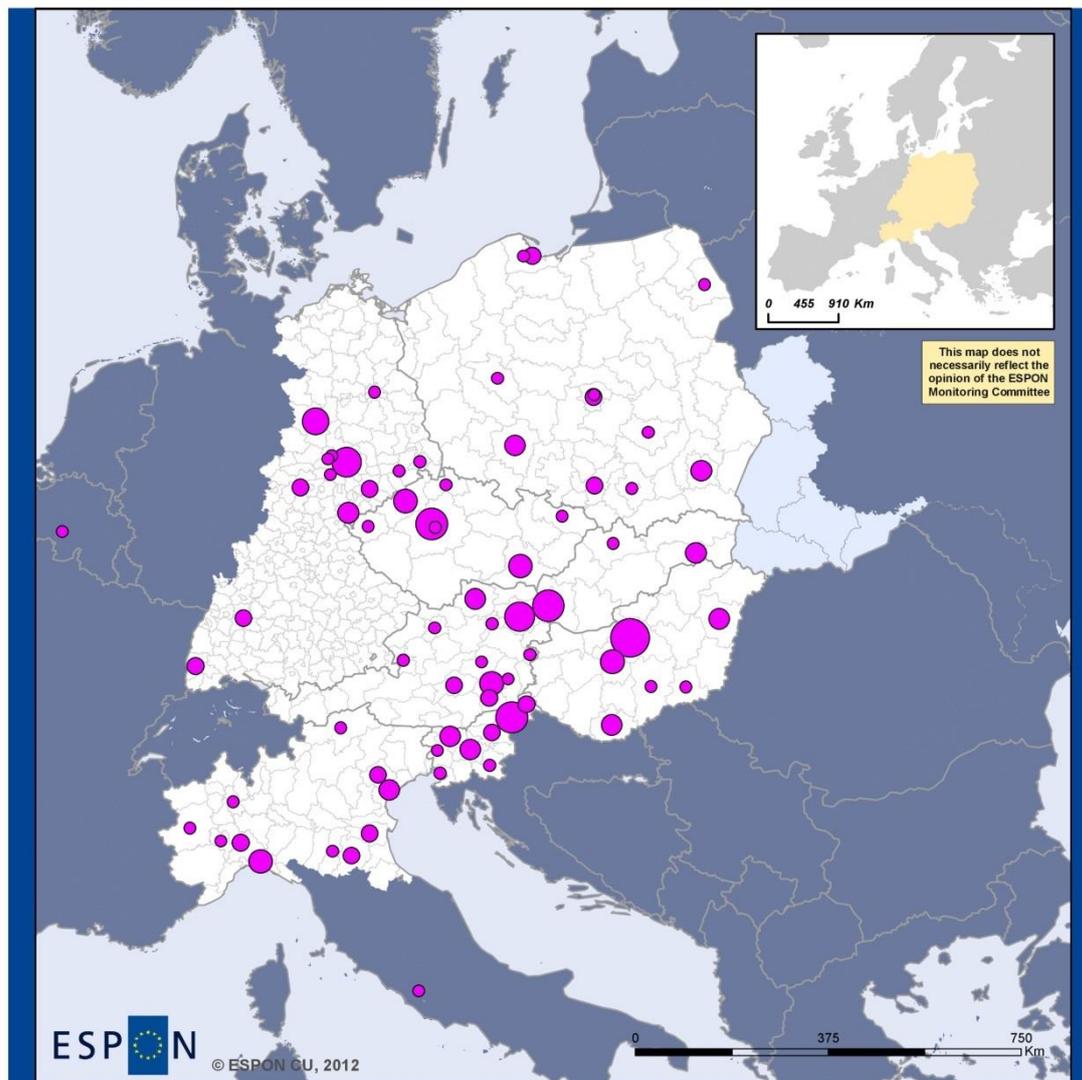


EPOurban	Enabling Private Owners of Residential Buildings to Integrate them into Urban Restructuring Processes	3 / P4/ 1	City of Leipzig, Germany	<a href="http://www.epourban.eu">www.epourban.eu</a>
ADAPT2DC	New innovative solutions to adapt governance and management of public infrastructure and services to demographic change in shrinking regions and cities of CE	3s / P4/ 1	Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure, Germany	<a href="http://www.adapt2dc.eu">www.adapt2dc.eu</a>
HELPS	Housing and Home-care for the Elderly and vulnerable people and Local Partnership Strategies in Central European cities	3s / P4/ 2	Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region - Central Directorate for health, social health integration and social policies, Italy	<a href="http://www.helps-project.eu">www.helps-project.eu</a>
i.e. SMART	SMART Training Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Sustainable Economic Sectors	4 / P1/ 1	European Office, Vienna Board of Education, Austria	<a href="http://www.iesmart.eu">www.iesmart.eu</a>
WOMEN	Realising a Transnational Strategy against the brain-drain of well-educated young women	4 / P1/ 1	Ministry for Regional Development and Transport Saxony Anhalt, Germany	<a href="http://www.women-project.eu">www.women-project.eu</a>
Senior Capital	Develop human capital of seniors to increase their economic and social value in a knowledge based and competitive economy	4 / P1/ 2	Local Government and Municipality of District 11 of Budapest, Újbuda, Hungary	<a href="http://www.seniorcapital.eu">www.seniorcapital.eu</a>



## Annex 2 Maps and Statistics

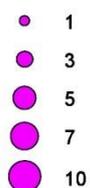
Map 1: Partners involved in projects within the theme : “Demographic Change and Knowledge Development”



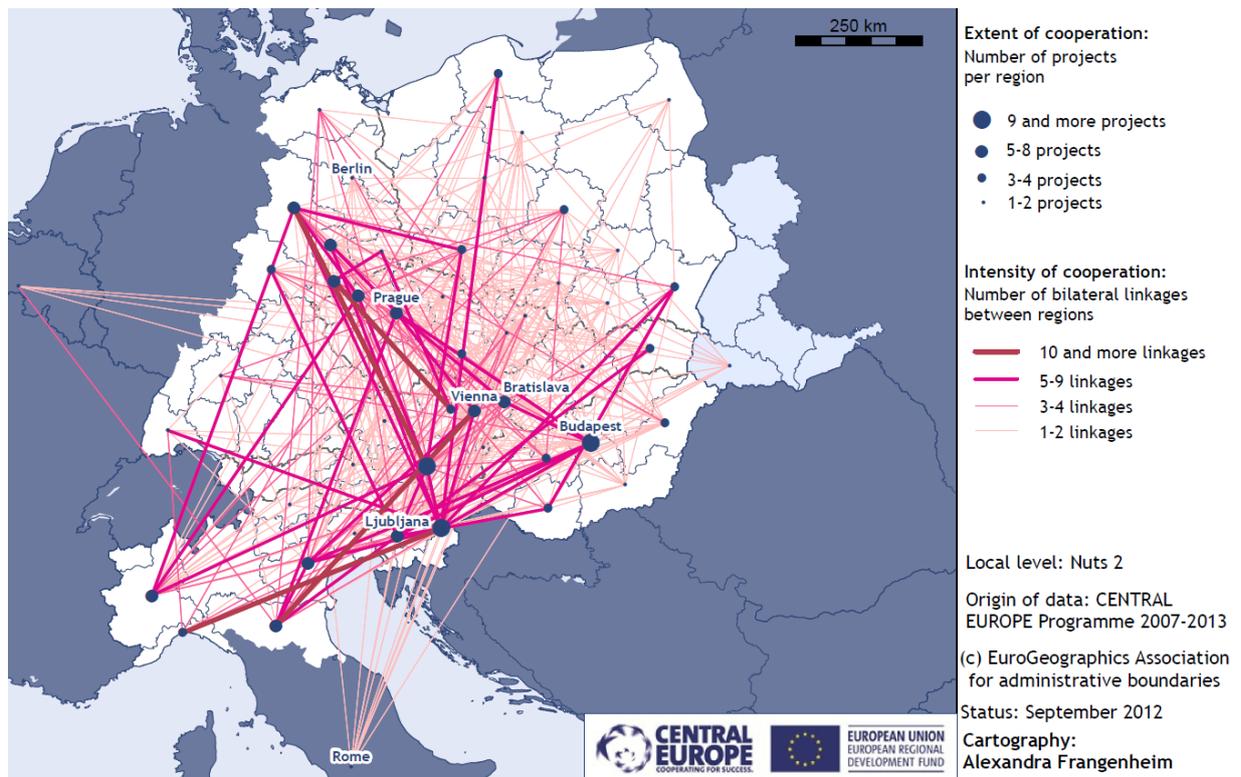
EUROPEAN UNION  
Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund  
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE

Local level: NUTS3  
Source and origin of data: CENTRAL EUROPE 2007-2013 (Status: Oct. 2012)  
© EuroGeographics Association for administrative boundaries

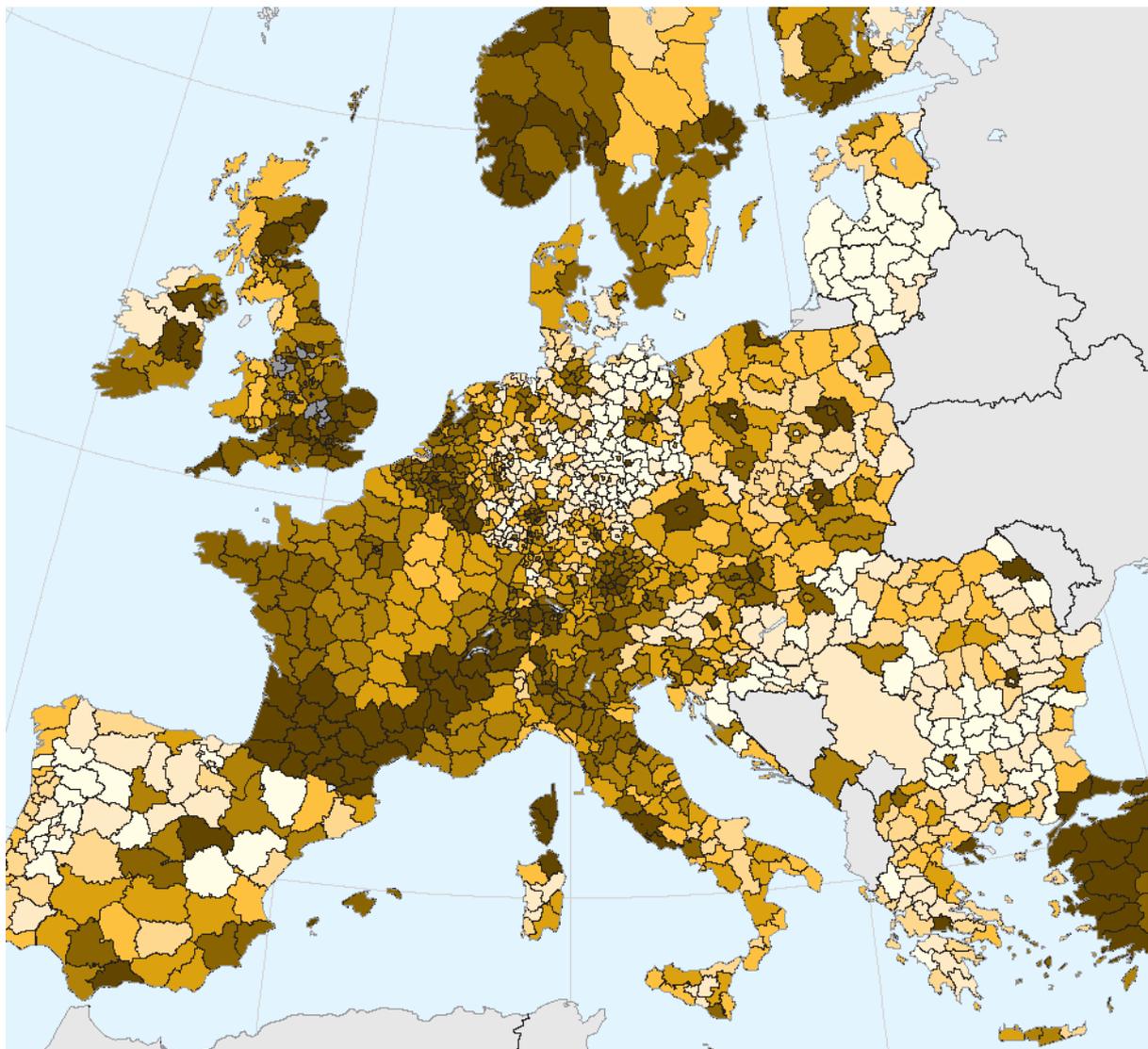
### Partners involved in projects of Topic "Demographic change and knowledge development"



Map 2: Cooperation links and projects in the field of Demographic change and Knowledge Development in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.

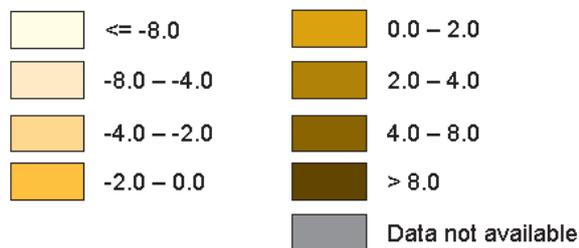


Map 3: Population Change in Europe, NUTS 3 level, 2011



Per thousand inhabitants

EU-27 = 2.6



Source: EUROSTAT 2013<sup>49</sup>

49

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php?title=File:Population\\_change\\_by\\_NUTS\\_3\\_regions\\_2011\\_\(1\)\\_per\\_thousand\\_inhabitants.png&filetimestamp=20130528081520](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Population_change_by_NUTS_3_regions_2011_(1)_per_thousand_inhabitants.png&filetimestamp=20130528081520)



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## Annex 4 Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Lead Partners of CENTRAL EUROPE projects contributing to DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

1) With regard to the identified sub-themes please indicate to what degree\* your project is contributing to each issue below:

Sub-theme 1: Making shrinking regions more attractive by adapting services to actual needs, thereby increasing social inclusion and reducing brain drain					
Adapting services for younger generations	Attracting and retaining competences for regional growth	Increasing attractiveness of shrinking cities and regions	Improving accessibility of (scarcely populated) areas	Matching local skills with business needs	Knowledge development

Sub-theme 2: Improving the inclusion of elderly and disadvantaged groups to help minimize the negative impact of demographic change					
Improving access of vulnerable groups to the labour market	Adapting housing stock for elderly and vulnerable groups	Testing care solutions and telemedicine tools for the elderly	Making use of skills and competences of the 60+ generation	Supporting active ageing and improving life for the elderly	Knowledge development

\* a large degree      a reasonable degree      a small degree

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\*



- 2) Can you describe and quantify the main achievement(s) of the project in relation to the project goals? Please try to describe and to quantify 3 achievements.

Type of achievement	Number	Description
1.		
2.		
3.		

For example: policy guidelines, improved policies, best practices, new collaboration, platforms, innovative methods, important events.

- 3) Can/could you identify a good practice<sup>50</sup> (one or more) in your project? If yes, please describe it shortly and explain why it is regarded as good practice.
- 4) With regard to good practices, your main focus was on:
- Identifying and dissemination of good practices
  - Improving or testing existing practices
  - Adopting and implementing external practices
  - Developing and implementing new practices

Please explain and give examples.

- 5) What is/was the added value of transnational cooperation in the project (for you as a project partner)?

Please answer this question with regard to the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme (in comparison with other funding sources) and the territorial impact of that cooperation, e.g. territorial relevance and added value created for the territories concerned.

- 6) If this was the case in your project could you explain the added value of cross-sector collaboration in your project (for you as a project partner)?
- 7) What were the main target groups in your project?

<sup>50</sup> An initiative (for example methodology, pilot or process) which has already proved successful and has the potential to be transferred to a different geographic area. A good practice has proven to be successful when it has provided tangible and measurable results in achieving a specific objective.



- 8) Could you describe the degree of sustainability of your projects in relation to follow-up activities, strategies of further use, ownership, etc. Please answer this question in three ways:
- Financial (financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenues for further operation of results)
  - Institutional (how the results will remain in place after the end of the project, which structures will allow it)
  - Political (structural impacts of the project results - e.g. improvement of legislation, methods, etc.)
- 9) To what extent did the project contribute to the EU 2020 Strategy (Targets and Flagships, see figure below) ? Please explain.

**Figure 0.1: The Europe 2020 strategy's key priorities, EU overall headline targets and flagship initiatives**

	Targets	Flagship Initiatives
<b>Smart Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 3 % of GDP to be invested in the research and development (R&amp;D) sector.</li> <li>— Reduce the rates of early school leaving to below 10 %, and at least 40 % of 30 to 34 year olds to have completed tertiary or equivalent education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Innovation Union</li> <li>— Youth on the move</li> <li>— A digital agenda for Europe</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 % compared to 1990 levels.</li> <li>— Increase the share of renewables in final energy consumption to 20 %.</li> <li>— 20 % increase in energy efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Resource efficient Europe</li> <li>— An industrial policy for the globalisation era</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusive Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 75 % of 20 to 64 year old men and women to be employed.</li> <li>— Reduce poverty by lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— An agenda for new skills and jobs</li> <li>— European platform against poverty and social exclusion</li> </ul>

- 10) Which lessons learned and achievements could be interesting for other European regions?
- 11) Please mention the three most important recommendations with regards to dealing with demographic change / knowledge development from your project.
- 12) How have you ensured the uptake of results to the policy level. Please explain and give examples.
- 13) If available, could you send recent project documentation (results) which are not on your project website or sent to JTS?



## Annex 5 CV of Expert



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Mrs R. (Roos) Galjaard studied human geography at the University in Groningen, the Netherlands after living abroad for several years. Galjaard has worked as researcher, consultant and project manager at Bureau PAU since 2007. She has more than ten years of experience with INTERREG projects; being INTERREG coordinator and lead partner of several projects since 2001. In 2007 she was introduced to the issues of demographic change in Europe, through the INTERREG IVB NSR project DC NOISE (Demographic Change: New Opportunities in Shrinking Europe), which cooperated with projects in other INTERREG programmes like the Baltic Sea Region, North West Europe and IVC. In 2011 she initiated the INTERREG IVB NSR project iAge: e-inclusion in ageing Europe as a follow up to DC NOISE. In addition Galjaard conducted research on the consequences of demographic change in the province of Groningen and on policy responses to population decline in Scotland, France and Germany for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Netherlands. In 2012 she was appointed as expert to execute the Interreg IVC capitalisation on Demographic Change.

Roos has been supported in writing paragraphs 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 by Mrs M. (Marieke) Harkink, colleague at Bureau PAU.



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