



EURUFU



EURUFU Mail Letter 01/2012

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1 EURUFU started!

Erfurt, March 2012

Dear reader,

Thuringia – together with other European regions – faces great challenges due to the demographic change. That's why the Thuringian Ministry for Construction, Regional Development and Transport created a network of seven European countries to further develop cross border experiences from different pilot regions and projects.

EURUFU wants to save the future potential of rural areas in Europe and is – besides the Central German Demography Initiative and the Service Agency Demographic Change – an important brick stone in the strategy of the Ministry to establish forward-looking activities to arrange the demographic change. For these activities EURUFU creates an international platform for the exchange of experience.

Together we face the challenge to organize the demographic change actively and sustainable. That's why it is important to stay in close touch, dialogue and knowledge transfer with other European regions, to create networks with regional stakeholders. Only on a common international basis we can benefit from innovative solutions. I am convinced that the project will contribute to answer to the challenges of demographic change on local and regional level.

I wish the project much success!

Yours sincerely,



Christian Carius

Thuringian Ministerp for Construction,
Regional Development and Transport



2 About this Newsletter

We are pleased to present you the first edition of the EURUFU newsletter. From now on it will be edited every half year. With the newsletter you will be informed regularly about the project's news. At www.eurufu.eu you have the opportunity to subscribe to the newsletter mailing list. Any comments to the editors (see the end of the newsletter) are warmly welcome.



proof those ideas throughout Europe. That's the idea behind EURUFU.

By now a lot of individual good examples exist and it is time to exchange ideas all over Europe, to test and proof them. This is what EURUFU is going to do.



3 What is EURUFU?

EURUFU is a Project within the Central Europe Programme area in the priority Competitiveness. The project started its work in May 2011 and will run until April 2014.

3.1 Project Idea

Many regions in Europe face the same situation: The total population is declining and aging at the same time. The reasons are different and often specific. For example, the de-industrialization in Central and East Germany led to deep structural changes caused by a strong reduction of jobs in industry and mining sector after German reunification. People were forced to commute or migrate to get sufficient work. Due to the economic situation of families and migration of young people a drop in the birth rate took place in the following years. Thus especially rural peripheral regions in Central Europe a severely affected by demographic change. But the regions don't feel exposed. They discern the chances of demographic change and develop strategies and measures to enhance the situation.

By now there are many best practice examples and it is time to exchange them, to test and

3.2 Aims and Results

The overall goal of EURUFU is to create a tool for rural regions to identify innovative solutions in order to ensure sustainable public supply in regions with declining population. The partnership will focus its efforts on defining relevant criteria for a valid benchmarking of the main themes of public services in the following areas: social and health care; education; local economy and job opportunities & mobility. EURUFU aims to develop a model that aggregates regional best-practice approaches for rural development, evaluates them scientifically and transfers them into transnational reliable strategies. Finally pilot actions are implemented and their results will be transferred into a joint action plan.

The **main aims** of EURUFU are:

1. Sensitization of the regional actors through transparent informing about the coming challenges of the demographic change

with emphasis on possibilities and chances of an active behaviour.

2. Active supporting of the demographic change in close cooperation with different partners and stakeholders from administration, politics, economy, schools, associations, ... in the region.
3. Adaptation of infrastructure to changing total population and population structure.
4. Initiation of pilot projects for adaptation to demographic change.
5. Knowledge transfer at European level and the beginning of a long-term, durable and intensive dialog between the stakeholders of the regional development.

EURUFU wants to develop a joint transnational benchmarking tool for the different regional standard assessments to be used as decision support for regional stakeholders. The pilot actions, which aim to adapt public social infrastructure, social housing in rural areas, adult education, starting business, promotion of local identity, public transport and non-motorized transport, will test the feasibility and transferability of specific approaches developed.

The results of the pilot actions will be compiled within the so-called „EURUFU-tool“. The tool will support rural areas in their decision-making process in specific fields of action. An upgraded "EU-tool" will offer solutions for regions beyond the project partnership.

3.3 Partner Structure

EURUFU brings together 11 partners from 7 European countries (A, CZ, D, H, I, PL, SLO). They all deal with demographic change issues and complement each other due to their practical experience. In the project, the

partners have specific roles and work individually or in groups on topics related to demographic change.

Lead Partner is the Thuringian Ministry for Construction, Regional Development and Transport (D).



Further partners are: University of Applied Sciences Erfurt (D), Ústí Region (CZ), Salzburg Institute for Regional Planning and Housing (A), EU Regional Management Upper Styria West (A), VÁTI Hungarian Public Non-profit Limited Liability Company for Regional Development and Town Planning (H), Central Transdanubian Regional Development Agency (H), Local Development Agency Langhe Monferrato Roero (I), Development Agency Sora (SLO), Biotechnical Centre Naklo (SLO), Municipality of Brzeg Dolny (PL).

3.4 Work Packages

To achieve the aims of the project, the structure of EURUFU is divided into the following work packages:

- WP1: Project management and coordination
- WP2: Communication, knowledge management and dissemination
- WP3: Identifying rural potentials
- WP4: Testing and evaluating measures
- WP5: Joint strategy: Recommendations and solutions for Central Europe

3.5 The Partnership

The project idea and outline was developed in 2008 by the Thuringian Ministry of Construction, Regional Development and Transport and the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt and in 2009 the search for potential project partners was launched. The project idea was born due to the challenges of demographic change Thuringia is facing since the reunification and the need to ensure a sustainable future in the rural areas of the country. Rural areas face the problem of declining population and a significant increase in the proportion of elderly residents. This development has impact on the economic situation of communities and thus on the costs of public services and infrastructure because with declining tax revenues they have to maintain the public infrastructure for fewer and fewer people. Especially rural communities have to face these challenges of demographic change.

These facts lead to the question of sustainable rural development in predominantly rural communities and the necessary measures to maintain and strengthen economic competitiveness and social attractiveness of rural areas. Within the framework of the project development it became clear that demographic

change and the maintenance of public services are not only a regional problem in Thuringia, even other regions in Central Europe are facing similar problems.

The development of the EURUFU partnership started on this shared knowledge base. The partners were involved in developing the detailed project concept by delivering their specific topics, ideas for pilot cases and suggestions for activities. Partners also contacted further stakeholders which will join the partner consortium as associated partners and bring in local expertise and further possibilities to apply the project results.

4 Demographic change – Situation and Strategy in Thuringia

Thuringia as well as whole Europe is facing complex and concrete touchable changes. These are not stand alone but have to be integrated into social framework conditions.

Many especially rural region are facing a change in population dynamics and a change in age structure. Globalisation and individualisation additionally cause new problems. Thus demographic change is a European Process, a German process and at least a Thuringian process.

In 1990 around 2.7 million people lived in Thuringia; today the average population is around 2.2 million; forecasts estimate that in the year 2030 the average population number is most likely around 1.8 million inhabitants.

The development started at the beginning of the 1990s with a strong migration of young people to other regions causing as a dramatic drop in the birth-rate. Today these factors continue to have a negatively effect on the population development causing a continuous decline in population due to the demographic echo even if the migration losses started to decrease and in and out migration will be on a stable level.

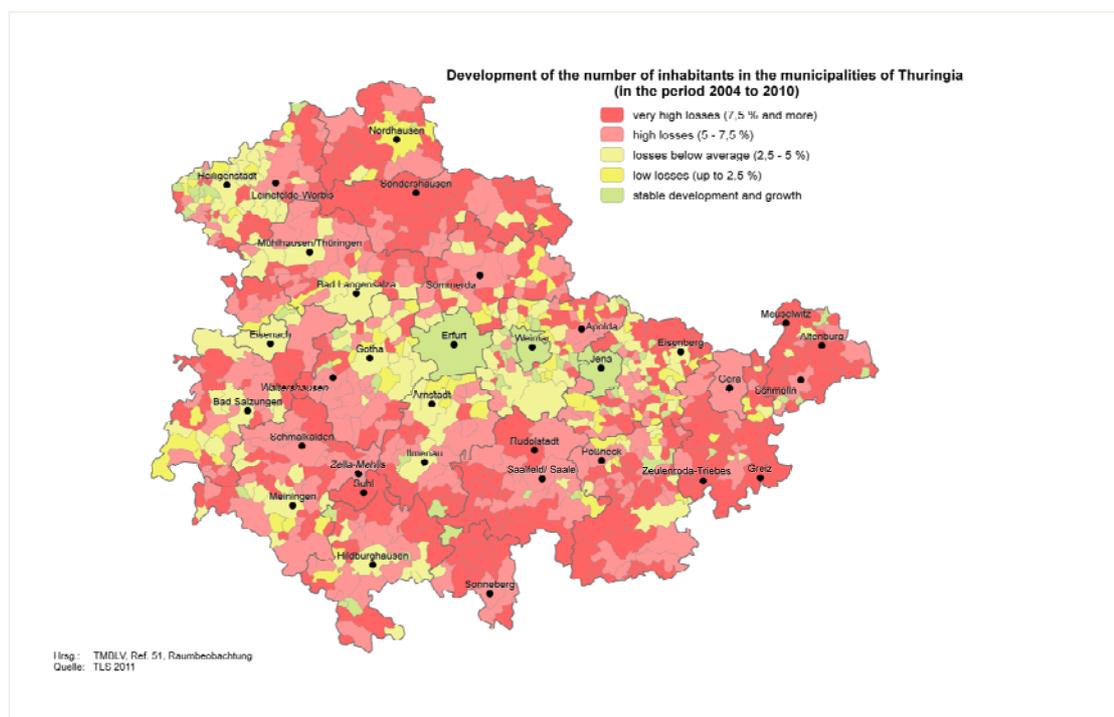
In the same period the life expectancy has increased. Both facts caused a continuous increase of the average age of the Thuringian population which will go on in the future. Today

the average age of the Thuringian population is about 46 years, in 2030 the average age will be 51.

There will be unique spatial and temporal differentiation of the demographic development within the districts and municipalities of Thuringia (Fig. 1). Only towns like Erfurt, Jena, Weimar will grow, medium-sized towns with up to 10,000 inhabitants can stabilize themselves as central places but particularly smaller municipalities under 5,000 inhabitants are concerned by population decline. These are the regions and town of action.

On the other hand these regions have large potentials which have to be explored and used. The consequences of demographic change and increasing scarcity of public resources thus require a fundamental review and adjustment of the management and standards of public services and infrastructure.

Integrative strategies with a special view to issues related to the management of infrastructures and services have to be developed to actively adapt to the shrinking process and mitigate negative effects on European regions and cities. This will strengthen the attractiveness of cities and



regions under decline and create social and territorial cohesion. EURUFU want to cope with it.

All stakeholders – politics, municipalities, organizations, associations, enterprises and citizen – are therefore requested to think the future newly. The approaching, multilayered and complex tasks require engagement by society as a whole, creative and innovative ideas as well as the courage to change.

For the successful arrangement of the demographic change the Thuringian government follows a strategy of adaptation to future needs and of counter-steering. In demographic policy Thuringia orientates itself at the following six theses:

- I. Framing the Demographic Change is a long term interdisciplinary task.
- II. There are no standard solutions.
- III. Demographic change causes an enforced competition for human resources
- IV. The central place system will gain in importance as a concept for the general interest in rural areas.
- V. Reorganisation of the social and technical infrastructure is needed.
- VI. New flexible funding opportunities have to be introduced.



The Thuringian Ministry for Construction, Regional Development and Transport pushes the common design of demographic change with innovative plans and projects to make the country fit for the challenges of tomorrow:

- Service Agency Demographic Change
- Regional Development Program 2025
- Second Demography Report
- Demographic thematic years
- Thuringian future price
- EU projects EURUFU and ADAPT2DC
- Urban construction supporting program „Small towns and municipalities“

Demographic change is present and future reality in Europe; EURUFU wants to adapt to and frame it !!!

5 EURUFU-website now online

Since 15th of January the EURUFU-website is “on air”. At www.eurufu.eu you are warmly invited to join the project and inform about the progress. Basic information about EURUFU and the partners, thematic links and – regarding the progress – results will be provided and updated continuously. For interested stakeholders a newsletter will be provided regularly.

6 Reports on Meetings

6.1 Kick Off in Erfurt

From 30th Mai to 1st June 2011 the EURUFU Kick Off took place in Erfurt.

The purpose of the meeting was to set up the internal project management structure, discuss the workload and the timing of the project results, clarify each partners reporting obligations and define the internal and external communication procedures. As a first result a Project Steering Board and Technical Management Board have been established.



EURUFU group picture in the city of Erfurt

6.2 First Consortium Meeting in Loucna (CZ)

EURUFU was guest in the lovely mountainous German-Czech border region. Here the First Consortium Meeting took place from 7th to 9th of November 2011. One highlight in the Work Package 3 session was the definition of the thematic scope of rural areas as a basis for further investigations.

In many presentations and inspiring discussions the participants have shown the progress in demography-related studies like on regional social and healthcare situation or regional education situation.



EURUFU members in front of the meeting venue

7 Upcoming events

- 6th March 2012 Workshop on medical care in the Kyffhauser district (Thuringia) in Erfurt
- 26th/27th March 2012 EURUFU Meeting Budapest mainly on pilot actions
- 26th to 29th June 2012 EURUFU-Partner Meeting Austria

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