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Regional Guidebook

Methods to adapt to or counterbalance shrinking

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Executive summary

In Central Europe as well as in the rest of the European Union (EU) population change represents a geographically diversified process. However, updated empirical evidence as that one provided in the ADAPT2DC document *Demographic Change in Central Europe: A Socio-economic Background Analysis* (SEB Report; Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013) shows that almost all the regions (NUTS-2) forming this portion of the EU are characterised by poor levels of total fertility rate (markedly below the replacement level) and high values of the ageing index.

It follows that a majority of regions in Central Europe will probably experience milder or sharper population decline in the next decade. How to deal with this process? There are several possible solutions. Small territorial systems such as regions and cities, in particular, can provide effective examples and concrete answers to both counterbalance the negative effects of demographic change and exploit the opportunities that eventually result from it.

In such a framework, the aim of this report entitled “Regional Guidebook. Methods to adapt to or counterbalance shrinking” (deliverable 4.1.2 of the project ADAPT2DC) is to provide a regional methodological guidebook based on the elaboration of both the outcomes of the WP3 package and the preliminary results of WP4. More specifically, it aims at providing a synthesis and analysis of the information provided by:

- I) the internal project’s deliverables “Policy overview for WP 3.1.3” and “Chapter about pilot region for WP 3.1.5”, which have been prepared by the ADAPT2DC partners;
- II) the project output “Best practice catalogue” (output 4.1.1 of the project; Ehrlich et al., 2013);
- III) the SEB Report (output 3.1.5 of the project; Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013);
- IV) the answers to the template/questionnaire UNCEM Piemonte distributed to the partners of the ADAPT2DC consortium on December 2012.

In doing that, the Guidebook proposes a territorialised description of the following regional pilot actions:

- 1) *Demography coaching* in Saale Orla District (Thuringen, DE; Proponent: Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure);
- 2) *Demography coaching* in Oberfranken Ost region (Bavaria, DE; Proponent: Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure in cooperation with the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology);
- 3) *Innovative solutions to reduce the costs of infrastructure and services* in the Krusne hory area Vejprty area (Ústi Region, CZ; Proponent: Ústi Region);
- 4) *Integral nursing services for children* in the Jászság district (Észak-Alföld, HU; Proponent: ÉARDA Nonprofit Ltd);
- 5) *Multiservices centre* in the Po valley (Piedmont, IT; Proponent: UNCEM Piemonte);



- 6) *Telemedical services for senior citizens* in the Malopolska Region (Malopolska Region, PL; Proponent: Malopolska Region);
- 7) *Potentials of culture for development* in Podravje and Maribor (Podravje region, SI; Proponent: Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia).

Each pilot action is analysed from the point of view of the main features of the proposed measures and the socioeconomic and territorial features of the pilot region (the regional or local system where the measures are to be implemented). As the report shows, in the selection of the regional pilot actions specific attention was addressed to the presence and the costs of public infrastructures (both social and technical) and services facing the challenges of demographic change.

This Guidebook consists of three chapters:

- *Chapter 1* summarizes the aim of the Guidebook in the context of the ADAPT2DC project and provides a general overview on the selected pilot actions;
- *Chapter 2* describes the main features of the pilot actions, considering also the main features and demographic challenges of the host pilot regions;
- *Chapter 3* considers both the lessons so far provided by the pilot actions and the results of the Best Practice Catalogue in order to detect some preliminary general remarks on transferrable methods;
- *Chapter 4* presents the key outcomes of the document and discloses the content of the next Transnational Guidebook.

Finally, it is worth underlying the limited and instrumental rationale/nature of this Regional Guidebook. In fact, this guidebook serves as a background or entry point for subsequent *Transnational Guidebook for Pilot Action Implementation* that will be delivered in the summer 2013.



1 Introduction

1.1 Measures to cope with shrinking population in Central Europe: A regional approach

The negative consequences of demographic change and the increasing scarcity of public financial resources that accompanied the explosion of the global crisis ask for a fundamental review and adjustment of the management tools and planning standards the regional and local administrative bodies currently adopt in the provision of public services and infrastructures. As it has been stated in many recent communications by the European Commission (EC), ageing and declining population related to low fertility rates and negative demographic flows make current trends of demographic change one of the most urgent and dramatic challenges for the future development of the whole European Union (EU). Shrinking regions and cities are more and more diffused across the EU, although with a “great diversity in terms of demographic dynamics and patterns” (EC, 2008b: 10).

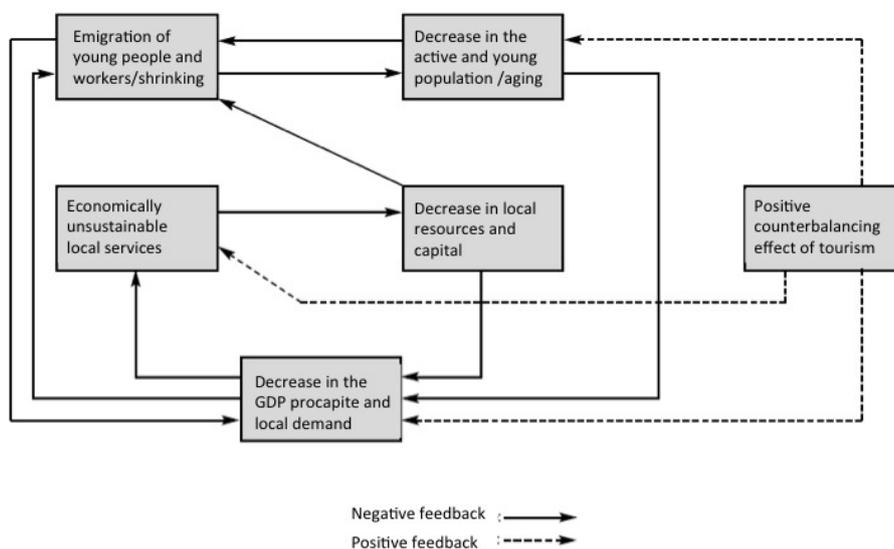
Focussing on Central Europe countries almost all the regions that occupy this portion of the European territory (whose development was greatly influenced in the past by the presence of the “Iron curtain”) are affected by the negative effects of demographic and social change. The majority of the European regions that are projected to experience population decline in the period 2005-2020 are located in Central Europe (EC, 2008b). In almost all the regions (NUTS-2) in Central Europe the total fertility rate is markedly below the replacement level, whereas the ageing index is high. It follows that a majority of regions in Central Europe will probably experience milder or sharper population decline in the next decade. How to deal with this process? There are several possible solutions. Small territorial systems such as regions and cities, in particular, can provide effective examples and concrete answers to counterbalance the negative effects of this on going demographic change. Moreover, these regions and cities also have large potentials, which have to be explored and used in order to adapt to (and counterbalance) shrinking population.

The EC *Green Paper* on demographic change (EC, 2005b) and the *5th Cohesion Report* of the European Commission (2008a) underline the need for new and urgent responses to such a challenge, posing specific emphasis on the need for cooperation and the sharing of experiences and information among EU regions and cities. In the *Territorial Agenda 2020* 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” (EU, 2011: 6). Rural regions and small cities), marginalised from the largest industrial and traffic flows, in particular, are usually contexts where shrinkage and aging hit in the most severe way, posing serious economic and technical problems in the provision of public infrastructures and services. This is the case, for instance, of the small municipalities in mountain areas, where the lack of financial resources, economic activities and human capital, combined with hostile physical and climate



conditions, difficult accessibility and mobility, facilitate the establishment of a negative cumulative process of irreversible segregation or marginalisation (Buran, Aimone, Ferlaino e Migliore, 1998; Crescimanno, Ferlaino e Rota, 2010).

Fig. 1 – The cumulative process of marginalisation



Source: adapted from Buran, Aimone, Ferlaino and Migliore (1998:9)

Within such a framework, this Regional Guidebook produced within the WP4 package of the EU project ADAPT2DC (output 4.1.2) aims at to providing a methodological guidebook illustrating concrete measures and practical methods European regions can adopt in order to adapt to shrinking population and counterbalancing its impacts. As it is stated in the Application of the ADAPT2DC project, the overall goal of the project is to develop transferable strategies for the provision of innovative solutions to both restructure the management of public services and infrastructure in shrinking regions and cities, and to support the sustainable development of European regions by adapting integrated measures and strategies for regional problems at a transnational level.

The goal is to help shrinking regions and cities to face the challenge of demographic change and indicate how to react in a positive way. To do this, skills and ideas of different territories in Central Europe have been selected and organised in a common methodological framework. Coherently, this guidebook presents international examples of pilot actions that have been proposed by the partners of the ADAPT2DC consortium in a reduced sample of regional and local contexts (pilot regions) as potential effective solutions in the adaptation of the local offer of public infrastructures (both social and technical) and services to the current process of shrinking population.



Firstly, each partner in the ADAPT2DC project detected the regional territorial system they proposed for the development of their pilot action. Secondly, they described the concrete policy measures and implementation processes to be developed by the policy action. Within the ADAPT2DC project, the selection of the pilot regions and actions constituted the preliminary step of the WP4 package. However, in the Guidebook the outcomes of the WP3 package are considered too. More specifically, the Regional Guidebook presents both a synthesis and an analysis of the information provided by: i) the project's deliverables 3.1.3 "Policy overview", 3.1.5 "Chapter about the pilot region", and 4.1.1 "Best practice catalogue"; ii) the questionnaire distributed by UNCEM Piemonte to the other partners of the ADAPT2DC consortium in order to collect data on the pilot actions they selected to adapt or counterbalance shrinking population. Generally speaking, ageing processes, immigration flows, shrinking trends etc. are accompanied by the emerging of a quite standardised sample of social needs, such the demand for new health and social services and infrastructures, new mobility and transport systems, new cultural and learning initiatives etc. Yet both the ways these demands emerge and the ways they are addressed by policy makers are influenced by the physical, economic, social and even cultural features of the local territorial systems (Barca, 2009; EU, 2011). It follows that the "one-fits-all" solutions are not feasible. Rather territorialised *ad hoc* solutions have to be found, starting from the analysis of the territorial features of the considered regional and local systems (EC, 2008b; Calza Bini and Lucciarini, 2011). For instance, in a recent document produced by the Italian Ministry of Development Policies (Dipartimento per le Politiche di Sviluppo, 2012), there is the recognition that ageing and shrinking population affect above all the "aree interne", i.e. areas characterised by marginalisation from the large agglomeration and service centers, instable development trajectories (also due to negative demographic trends), dispersed settlement models and a declining cultivated/rural areas¹.

In this Guidebook each pilot action is thus analysed from the point of view of both the practical measures proposed and the socioeconomic and territorial features of the pilot region (NUTS-3), where the measure will be implemented. To say it differently, for each pilot region a territorialised description is provided, based on:

- a synthesis of some general information (geographical location; main physical features; settlement structure; population and education; socioeconomic situation and unemployment, legal and local environment etc.) and specific data on the demographic situation and trends such as: age structure, migration flows, depopulation, shrinkage and ageing. For this a primary source was the SEB Report (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013);
- a description of the main features and expected results of the pilot action to adapt or counterbalance the negative effects of demographic change, to be put in relation with the SWOT analysis of the pilot region. For this primary sources were the preliminary outputs of the

¹ See the documents by the Italian Ministry for Economic Development. www.dps.tesoro.it/Aree_interne/ml.asp



WP4 package. The SWOT analysis, in particular, was developed in collaboration with the institutional partners for a better identification of current policy challenges and objectives, regional resources and potential tools, and potential *ad hoc* measures.

Then, the information contained in the Best Practice Catalogue (Ehrlich et al., 2013) are used to detect general recommendations for the identification of viable effective actions to cope with shrinking processes, which will be useful both for the further implementation of the pilot actions and as a preliminary material for the orientation of a wider European strategy.

The basis of the Regional Guidebook is thus a broad data collection and situation analysis in the context of Central Europe. However, the outputs necessarily remain partial and highly instrumental. Most of the arguments that have been introduced in this Guidebook, in fact, are supposed to be expanded in a second ADAPT2DC Guidebook, entitled *Transnational Guidebook for pilot action Implementation*, which will be delivered in the summer 2013.

1.2 The augmented costs of infrastructures and services in shrinking regions

In shrinking regions and cities, increasingly reduced and ageing population often determines a decline in the financial resources at a disposal of the local administrative bodies (due to reduced tax returns) and the emergence of problems of inefficiency in the provision of public services and infrastructures in many different realms (as the amount of the served users/clients goes behind the efficiency threshold). As it is clearly stated in *Regions 2020* “The ageing and shrinking of the population has fundamental repercussions for health and social security systems, for the economy and the labour market, and for public finance. Ageing leads to increased demand for health and long-term care and rising health care expenditure. Demographic change is therefore of far-reaching importance for the economy and society, since demographic decline strongly influences almost all relevant areas of policy action” (EC, 2008b: 9).

In small shrinking and isolated contexts particularly, the provision of public health, social, administrative, education, environment services come to be at risk. The provision of social and cultural services, in particular, is the first to be sacrificed via cuts in the public expenditures (and, then, in the services), as it is often perceived as less necessary than others (output 4.1.1).

This, however, has dramatic consequences on the possibility of the regions and cities to retain the existing activities and residents, as well as to attract new activities and residents from other geographical areas. It follows that, in order to obtain and maintain adequate levels of economic competitiveness², of social cohesion and quality of life, cities and regions have to develop effective

² Some authors believe that competitiveness and ageing are not incompatible: empirical evidence show that, at certain conditions, cities with a growing presence of elderly population can also demonstrated increasing levels of urban competitiveness (Kresl and Ietri, 2010).



measures to cope with demographic and social change as well as to develop agreements of inter-urban and inter-regional cooperation in order to decrease costs and increase efficiency.

Yet, the measures to adapt to and counterbalance shrinking population include a complex, vast and diversified program of actions that can be hardly managed. Above all in contexts of economic regression and credit crunch, where regional and urban administrations receive less and less financial resources from the central state, a selection of priorities is thus necessary.

Consistent with this, the partners of the ADAPT2DC consortium focussed on a practical consequence of shrinking population that needs urgent responses: the augmented costs in the provision of public infrastructures and services in a situation of ageing, reduced and dispersed population. An important aim of the project was thus to collect, implement and disseminate concrete examples of actions of cost reduction in a varied sample of fields or “infrastructure areas”: social care, health care, mobility and transport, water supply and sewage treatment, housing, culture.

In such a context, the “Best Practice Catalogue” (Ehrlich et al., 2013) offered a selection of best practices across Europe (and beyond) to detect initiatives of adaptation of public infrastructures and services in contexts of shrinking population. However, the idea was not to focus only on the six infrastructure areas covered by ADAPT2DC. Rather, the selected initiatives were thought to be (individually and as a whole) as a sort of *compendium* of different methods in different policy realms suggesting what to do at the urban/regional scale to cope with shrinkage. As it was argued also in the “Policy overview”, problems related to population change are always highly interlinked and ask for a multidimensional policy. Issues of social services, for instance, are highly interlinked with mobility, transport accessibility and technical infrastructures, which cannot be treated in a separated way. Thus, regions and cities have to be put in the condition of implementing a broad yet balanced and synergistic range of initiatives, coherent with the specific assets, problems and needs of the regional and local systems.

Relatedly, criteria in the identification of the ADAPT2DC pilot actions were both the consideration of the results of the Best Practice Catalogue to learn practical methods of cost reduction while managing public services, and the consideration of specific regional features and opportunities in order to develop *ad hoc* solutions.

1.3 The ADAPT2DC regional pilot actions: An overview

Within the ADAPT2DC project a total of seven pilot regions were identified:

1. Demography coaching in Saale Orla District (Thuringen, DE; Proponent: Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure);
2. Demography coaching in Oberfranken Ost region (Bavaria, DE; Proponent: Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure in cooperation with the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology);



3. Innovative solutions reducing the costs of infrastructure and services in the Krusne hory area Vejprty area (Ústi Region, CZ; Proponent: Ústi Region);
4. Integral nursing services for children in the Jászszág district (Észak-Alföld, HU; Proponent: ÉARDA Nonprofit Ltd);
5. Multiservices centre in the Po valley (Piedmont, IT; Proponent: UNCEM Piemonte)
6. Telemedical services for senior citizens in the Malopolska Region (Malopolska Region, PL; Proponent: Malopolska Region);
7. Potentials of culture for development (Podravje region, SI; Proponent: Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia).

The Lead Partner of the project, the Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure, is responsible for both German pilot actions, since they share the same topic. In other words, the LP takes care for one pilot action (Demography coaching) in two pilot regions, of which the one in the Bavarian region is managed together with the associated partner: the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology.

In this Guidebook the information used to describe the regional pilot actions come from the partners of the ADAPT2DC consortium themselves, who have been asked by the UNCEM Piemonte partner to fill in a template with the following information:

- Title of the pilot action
- SWOT Analysis of the pilot region
- Is a known demographic problem tackled?
- What are the new questions tackled? What are the innovative solution proposed?
- What will be the system approach?
- What practical consequences can be expected from the pilot action?
- Which positive consequences with respect to the demographic change can be assumed?
- Does the pilot action reflect public needs (bottom up approach)?
- Which regional stakeholders are interested in the pilot action (pre sounding out)?
- What is the potential for long lasting regional effects of the pilot action?
- What is the degree of transferability to other regions?
- What impact do you foresee?
- What are actual opportunities for practical realization?

The following section of the Guidebook (chapter 2) uses this information in order to provide a territorialised analysis of the pilot actions (title, aims, main features and implementation tools) and the host pilot regions (general information on the pilot region; demographic change; economic activities; SWOT analysis of the pilot region).



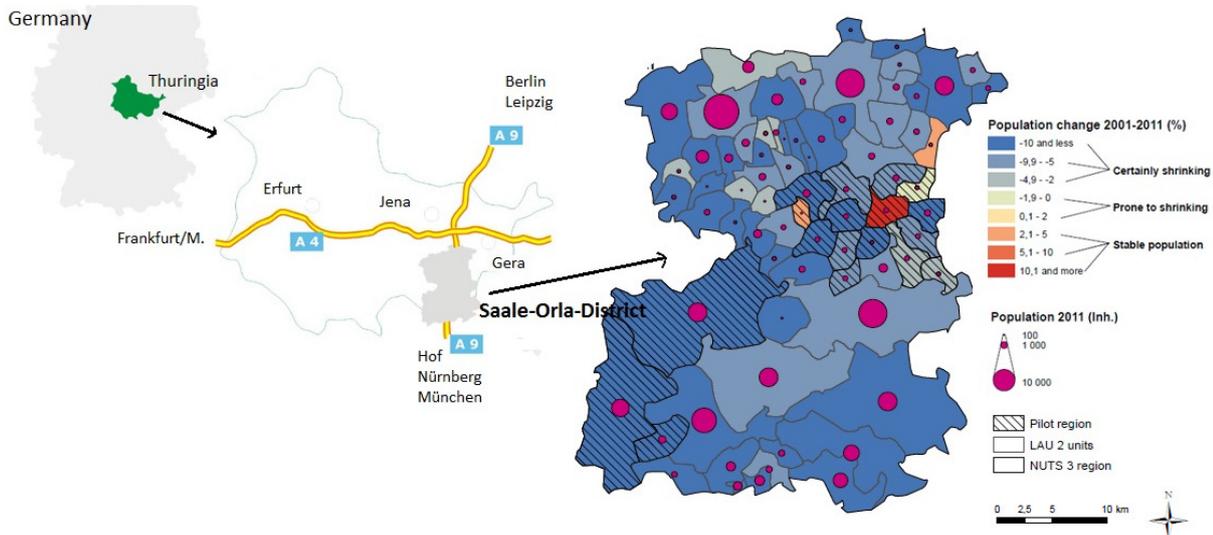
2 ADAPT2DC regional pilot actions and regions

2.1 Saale Orla District (Thuringen, DE)

2.1.1 General information on the pilot region

The Saale Orla District (Landkreis) is a former border region between East and West Germany. It is located in Thuringia, close to the Bavarian border. With an overall area of 1,148 square kilometres it is the third largest district in Thuringia. As to the physical features, it is a mainly rural district with vast forests and mountain areas. As to the regional urban system, it includes 12 cities, 5 administrative communities and 74 towns and municipalities. The capital and largest municipality is Schleiz.

Fig. 2 – The regional urban system



Source: adapted from ADAPT2DC Deliverable 3.1.5 (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 39)

2.1.2 Demographic change

In 2011 inhabitants in the Saale Orla District were 86.906 and the population density was 106 inhabitants per km². In 2010 inhabitants were 87.799 and they were even more in 2001. In fact, as it has been stated also in the SEB Report (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 39), this district is heavily affected by depopulation processes, which involve both large and small settlements. Between 1990 and 2010 the Saale Orla District lost about 16% of its population (in Thuringia the loss was lower: -14%) and by 2030 the shrinkage will probably reach -24% (Thuringia: -18%).



Compared to both Thuringia and the other Thuringian rural districts the distribution of the population according to age classes does not show relevant mismatches but for minor differences in the share of inhabitants between 50-65 years (25,2% in Saale Orla District, 24,6% in rural districts, 23,8% in Thuringia) and 75-85 years (6.7% in Saale Orla District, 6,4% in rural districts and Thuringia). Larger mismatches emerge when the demographic structure of the district is compared with Germany.

Tab. 1 – Demography

Demography (Date 2010)	Saale Orla District	Thuringia	Germany
Population	87.799	2.235.025	81.751.602
Population development	10,9	8,1	0,6
Share of population below 25 years	20,0	20,7	24,6
Share of population above 50 years	47,1	45,6	40,6
Youth age ratio	42,5	45,4	60,5
Share of foreigners	1,5	2,2	8,8

Source: data provided by the ADAPT2DC partner (annex to the UNCEM template/questionnaire)

Moreover, the district is affected by negative demographic trends that will probably cause major problems in the future. The growth rate of young people is lower than both Thuringia and Germany and the replacement given by foreign immigrants isn't sufficient compared to the national and regional one. As a result, by 2030 young population (less than 20 years) is likely to decrease of about 30%.

2.1.3 Economic activities

The Saale Orla District is one of the economically strongest districts in Thuringia. It is characterized by a multifaceted economy based on a relevant business structure (more than 5,300 companies) developing a balanced mix of rural activities, tourism, handcraft and industrial activities. In particular, there is a high density of workplaces in the manufacturing industry (important sectors are: printing, wood and cellulose, automotive and high-tech supplying industry), facilitated by some positive localisation factors such as the presence of 33 industrial estates, a good infrastructure system and fast access to the A9 motorway. Moreover, most of the companies in the district have a good position in the international market: the export rate, in fact, amounts to 35,0% whereas the Thuringian one is 33,7%.



Tab. 2 – Job market (year: 2010)

	Saale Orla District	Thuringia	Germany
Employees with social insurance	29.449	738.021	27.710.487
Employment rate	58,6	55,2	50,9
Employment rate (50-64 years)	51,2	48,7	44,4
Share of old employees	31,4	30,3	26,4
Employment rate women	56,8	54	47,4
Development of employment (2000-2010)	11,1	9,7	0,4
Unemployment rate	8,6	9,8	8,0
Tertiarisation	47,0	64,0	68,8
Part time rate	18,1	17,8	19,4
Commuters incoming	22,7	7,0	0,4
Commuters outgoing	32,4	15,6	-

Source: data provided by the ADAPT2DC partner (annex to the UNCEM template/questionnaire)

As Table 2 shows, almost all the economic indicators are positive and better than those of Thuringia and Germany. This result is probably due to the district's productive structure, which is mainly based on industry and agriculture, while the importance of the service sector is rather low. Agriculture is the second larger economic sector and half of the total land area is used for agriculture. As we read from the SEB report, in the Saale Orla District there are 369 farming businesses (large and small) that occupy 38.708 hectares as crop land and 11.448 hectares as grassland. Modern agriculture currently in the district employs 1.543 people. In particular, the district hosts very intensive livestock farming with more than 39.000 cattle, of which 14.000 are dairy cows, responsible of a relevant average "milk yield" per dairy cow: 8.170 kg milk per cow in a year compared to 8.000 kg in Thuringia.

Tab. 3 – Labour market

	Saale Orla District	Thuringia	Germany
Attendance rate (workers with children under 6 years)	67,6	70,1	57,9
SGM II ratio ³	11,1	13,2	10,3
SGB II ratio below 15 years	18,0	21,0	15,9
Share of highly qualified employees	6,8	10,0	10,6
Net migration of 18-24 years old	3,7	0,8	1,0
Training rate	4,4	5,3	6,0

Source: data provided by the ADAPT2DC partner (annex to the UNCEM template/questionnaire)

³ Share of people in a condition of SGB II (corresponding application for job seekers eligible for basic social security). Cfr: The labour market in Germany. Report on the labour market 2008-2009 <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Berichte-Broschueren/Arbeitsmarkt/Generische-Publikationen/year-of-crisis-german-labour-market.pdf>



Yet, the negative demographic trends will probably negatively affect this positive situation. The productive population, in fact, will decrease during the next 20 years whereas the share of elderly people will increase. Signals are already evident. For instance, the attendance rate to the work for workers with children under six years and the share of high qualified employees are lower in the district than in Thuringia and Germany; on the contrary rate of unemployed people (young and old) is higher and the net migration rate is negative.

In Germany this is especially true for rural districts where the balance between incoming and outgoing workers is negative, determining a negative attractiveness. But, as it is showed in Table 4, in the Saale Orla District the situation is worse than in the rest of the rural districts.

Tab. 4 – Commuting flows

(DATE 2011)	Moving in	Moving out	Total balance	index of attractiveness (in / out)
Saale Orla Kreis	1758	2109	351	0,83357
Thüringen	69868	74077	4209	0,94318
Cities	27935	26062	1873	1,07187
Districts	41933	48015	6082	0,87333

Source: data provided by the ADAPT2DC partner (annex to the UNCEM template/questionnaire)

According to this, a dramatic challenge for the district is to improve its attractiveness in order to mitigate demographic and labour shrinkage and, in the meanwhile, guarantee the provision of services maintaining costs of public transport low. In the situation of Saale Orla Kreis, however, this issue is made difficult also by the physical and settlement features of the district itself.

2.1.4 The pilot action

Title of the pilot action: Demography coaching (public services, new forms of mobility, civic engagement) in the Saale Orla District

Project partner: Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure

The aim of this pilot action is the identification of a *demography coach* who will help to identify, together with the local actors, useful projects coping with demographic change.

In particular, key measures are identified with regard to two objectives: improvement of intergenerational primary care and enhancement of mobility. However, as the involved local communities have evidently different needs and requirements, at the present stage a first step has consisted in the involvement of local actors and stakeholders in the detection of some preliminary ideas to be discussed in a collective way.

In particular, potential actions included the implementation of: a "Virtuell Supermarket" providing delivery services for smaller villages; medicine orders including delivery services; an Internet-based carpool service (for shopping, leisure, healthcare) and a system of Mobility Neighbourhood



Support; "Mobile Primary Care" solutions together with retail (City Hinterland Project); Intercomunal Daycare Service and Good delivery or "MiniBus" to shop, doctor, pharmacy.

2.1.5 SWOT Analysis of the pilot action in the context of the pilot region

Starting point of the "demography coaching" pilot action is the consideration of the diversified mix of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats that characterise the region from several aspects: economy, demography, education, health care, mobility.

Fig. 3 – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong local economy and business system - Presence of a diversified range of industries (above all in agriculture and manufacturing) - Attractive for tourism and investors - Good cultural offer - Good offer of services for mentally handicapped persons - Support for people in problematic situations - Adequate provision and equipment of kindergartens - Many options for after school education - Good coordination of public transport with school starting time and possibility for pupils in primary school to use the local transport system for free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low purchasing power of the population - Rapid loss of population (above all young) and ageing - Low incoming migration rate - Scarcity of retirement homes for the elder - Decreasing number of children and pupils - High share of children with less than 2 years who stay at home (fiscal incentives) - High commuting rate - Poor train connections and no "barrier free access" in most railway and bus stations - Bad interconnection between bus and train in some parts of the region - No support for e-mobility - No tourist tickets for public transport
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declining unemployment in the last 6 years - Long term presence of craft enterprises with a relevant share of SMEs - Relevant export attitude (e.g. in wood) - Increasing job opportunities in social and health sectors - Improving connections between education and economy - Diffusion of private mobile nursing services - Declining costs of kindergartens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low rate of new businesses - Threats of unemployment due to the crisis - Further population decline and aging - Uncertain sustainability in the provision of school services due to declining pupils - Increasing outgoing migration flows of educated people, especially young women - Uncertain sustainability in the provision of transport and mobility services due to declining demand and passengers - Closure of railway connections

Then, these elements have been put in relation with the on going demographic change in order to detect a coherent and balanced mix of actions. More specifically, a major problem the action deals with is the need for increased cost efficiency and performance in the provision of infrastructure



and services in a context that is characterised by: rapid shrinking of young population and negative trends in the local labour market due to poor incoming flows of young people and skilled workers. In such a context, the method adopted in the pilot action mainly relies on the strengthening of inter-urban cooperation as an important mean to adapt existing infrastructures and services to declining population. In particular, cooperative agreements among towns and municipalities will help local governments to reduce fix costs and wastes - which is fundamental in the current situation of limited financial resources - in the different fields (public services, new forms of mobility, civic engagement) local communities consider the most critical in the eye of demographic change. However, as we have said, at the present stage no precise actions can be detected as the demographic coach still have to start his/her work.

2.2 Oberfranken Ost region (Bavaria, DE)

2.2.1 General information on the pilot region

The region Oberfranken Ost is located in the North-east of Bavaria. As it written in the SEB report, in 2011 it covers an area of 3.615 km² with about 478.000 inhabitants and the population density is 134 inhabitants/km² (less than the Bavarian density with 177, 5 inhabitants/km²).

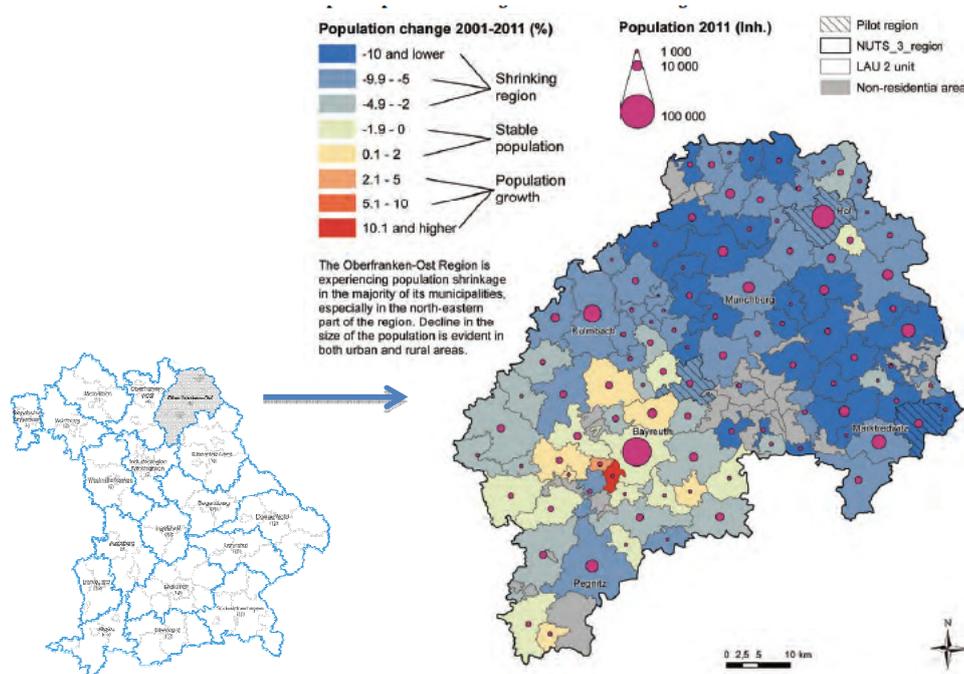
The region is characterized by two different geological structures with vast natural areas (the Mesozoic mountains in the South-west and the east Bavarian basic mountains in the North-east) and large physical local differences. Also, the characteristic landscape and the ecological function of these natural areas are increasingly impaired by the variety of utilization.

2.2.2 Demographic change

The Oberfranken Ost region includes 2 county level cities (Bayreuth, Hof), 4 counties in the Oberfranken district (Bayreuth, Hof, Kulmbach and Wunsiedel i. Fichtelgebirge) and a small part of the county Tirschenreuth, which is part of the Oberpfalz district. The demographic change represents one of the main policy fields in the region. More specifically, major issues addressed at realising a sustainable space and settlement development are: geographically diversified processes of population increase/decrease and aging of society. In fact, although in the Oberfranken Ost Region population shrinkage occurs in urban as well as rural areas, the loss of population is more pronounced in the north-eastern part of territory.



Fig. 4 – The regional urban system



Source: adapted from ADAPT2DC Deliverable 3.1.5 (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 40)

2.2.3 Economic activities

The region is characterized by the juxtaposition of two important economic sectors that are characterised by high business density and productivity (higher than in the rest of the nation): agriculture and manufacture. The agricultural area, in particular, covers 175.670 ha, which is approximately 50% of the total regional land area. Of this area: 36,0% is used for fields (acre), 24,2% for grassland and 39,3% for mixed purposes in small structured relief and location. The rest of the regional land area is largely occupied by forests: 143.000 ha of coniferous and deciduous forests, that is 39,6% of the land area (in Bavaria the share of wooded areas is lower: 34,6%).

Yet, the construction and on-going expansion of the interregional and international traffic system helps to improve the regional “localisation factors” attracting firms, labour force and investment. At the same time, however, increasing technical development of mobility infrastructure, industrial facilities and productive/residential settlements leads to conflicts between the issues of economic development and environmental protection (above all in the case of landscape and water management).



2.2.4 The pilot action

Title of the pilot action: Demography coaching (public services, new forms of mobility, civic engagement) in the Oberfranken Ost Region

Project partner: Thuringian Ministry for Building, Regional Development and Infrastructure in cooperation with the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology

The rationale, aims and methods of this pilot action are the same proposed for the Saale Orla District, just applied to a different German region. More specifically, in this case pilot areas of intervention for the demography coaching initiative are the cities of Arzberg (Wunsiedel i. Fichtelgebirge), Bad Berneck (Bayreuth) and Hof (Hof) in the Oberfranken Ost Region.

On the one hand, the general aim of the action is to implement solutions to adapt the public provision of infrastructure and services to the changing demographic situation (shrinkage and aging). On the other hand, a specific aim is the reduction of the costs by a more effective management especially in the context of social infrastructures. In Arzberg, for instance, a major challenge is the adaptation (modernization) of existing residential buildings and spaces to the needs of ageing population, so as to make it possible for elderly people to live in their familiar environment as long as possible. In Bad Berneck, instead, there is the need to install a vacancy management aiming the preservation and the sustainable use of existing buildings. While in Hof, where the share of immigrants is very high, a preliminary investigation of age related problems of foreign citizens is pursued in order to consider their specific socio-cultural needs.

The aim is to find creative approaches at the municipal level that could be transferred to other cities in the region.

2.2.5 SWOT Analysis of the pilot action in the context of the pilot region

As in the case of the Saale Orla District, also in the case of Oberfranken Ost Region the starting point of the pilot action for a demography coaching has started with the consideration of the diversified mix of strengths and weaknesses, weaknesses and opportunities that characterise the regional economic, mobility and service system.

Fig. 5 – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong local economy and business system / very high industrial density - Advantageous located in Europe – neighbourhood to (new) eastern Europe countries - Good road infrastructure - Good child care offer e.g. sufficient places in kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peripheral position in Bavaria (former boarder position) - Lacking infrastructures and services especially to elderly people - Unbalanced retail structure in the region: very good supply in small and medium cities vs. lack of supply in rural areas - Insufficient rail infrastructure esp. on the



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Various universities and education positions in the region - Low prices for land and real estate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secondary lines - Lack of physicians
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant natural resources that make the region attractive to new residents, tourism, activities and investments - Abandoned or under-used building that can to be renewed/restored and used to attract new residents - Distinctive economic/industrial structure - Strong emotional attachment of the people to the region / their home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-going aging population and reduce of population - Migration of (young) qualified employees / skilled worker shortage in enterprises - Geographically diversified demographic patterns/trends in the north-east and south-east portion of the region: risk of a two-speed development model - Risks in the management/preservation of (social) infrastructure - Closing of (primary)schools - Vacancy in and desolation of intact centres - Bad budgetary situation in the municipals

2.3 Vejprty area (Ústi Region, CZ)

2.3.1 General information on the pilot region

The Vejprty area occupies a mountain territory (760 metres of altitude) in the western portion of the Czech Republic, in correspondence of the Ore Mountains. The district is part of the Chomutov region (NUTS-3) and forms an urban and residential continuum with the German municipality of Bärenstein, from which the border creek Polava separates it. Although both these municipalities had created, in the past, their own centres attracting commuters from the rest of their regions, after the Second world a significant flow of residents (mostly German population expelled from Czechoslovakia) moved from Vejprty to other cities in Germany determining a rapid decrease in the population, change in the social and community structure and in the relationships between the municipality and the rest of the region (see SEB Report).

2.3.2 Demographic Change

Today Vejprty is a small sized city as at the end of 2011 in the municipality lived 3.074 inhabitants. In the last years Vejprty has been affected by relevant demographic problems: the number of inhabitants has been decreasing rapidly, population density decreased too. In particular, inhabitants with age 0-14 years are shrinking, whereas those with more than 65 years are growing. The natural growth rate, in fact, is negative. Negative is also the migration net rate of the last three years. Young and educated people, in particular, are leaving Vejprty to move to larger cities in the country or abroad. This contributes to determine depopulation and ageing, but also brain

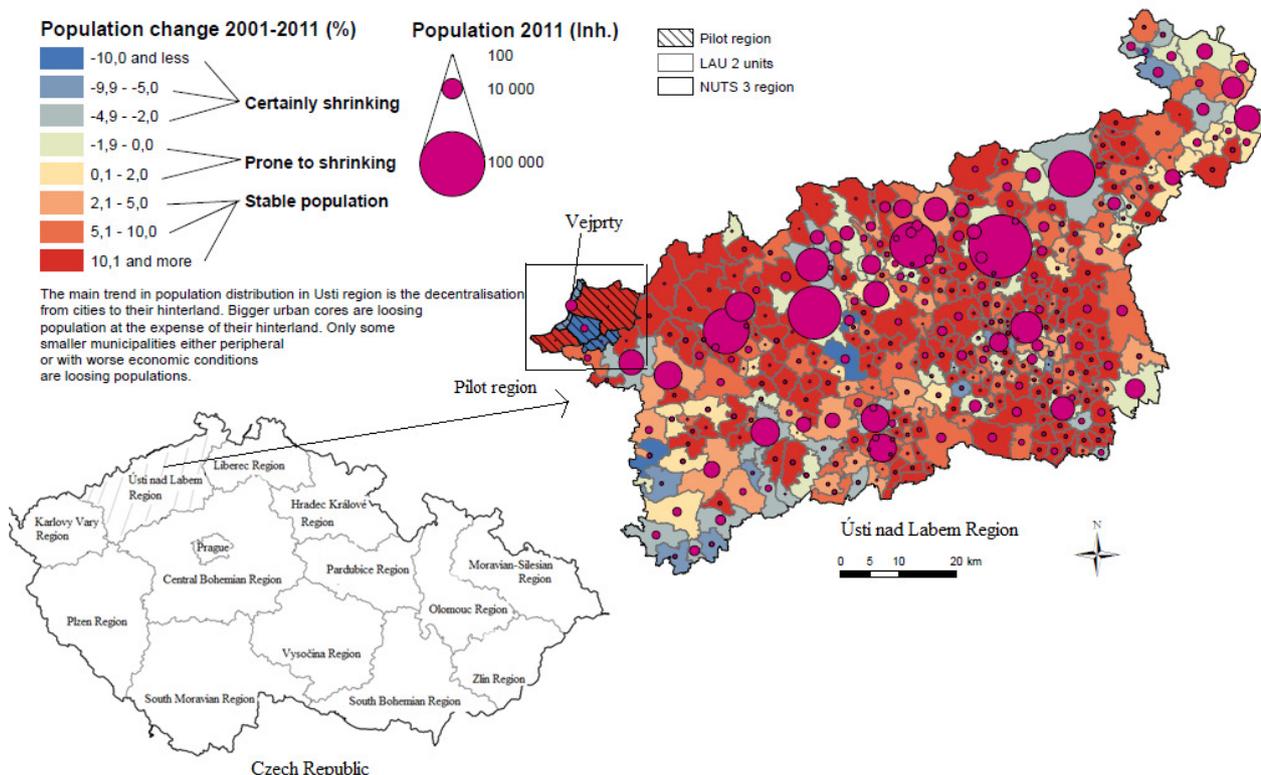


drain effect, which in its turns is at the basis of reduced shares (less than the national average) of high-level educated inhabitants and reduced attractiveness. Also, the physical image of the city itself has changed greatly because of the building of huge blocks of flats in the city center.

2.3.3 Economic Activities

The changes after the Second World War lead to a significant decrease of the prestige of the urban economy. On the one hand the transfer of the German workers determined the decline of the traditional sectors of light engineering and textile production. On the other hand, State interventions through the planned economy during the socialism period determined permanent subventions to the regional economy that caused major threats for the decline when they were abolished. At the same time, however, new possibilities also came with the liberalization of the economy, the opening the borders and the recreation of political autonomy.

Fig. 6 – The regional urban system



Source: adapted from ADAPT2DC Deliverable 3.1.5 (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 42)



Today, main sectors of economy activity are food and textile industry. There are also several small activities and entrepreneurs in the tertiary sector, above all in trade, restaurants, accommodation and other commercial services. In spite of some structural changes, the highest share of employment is in the secondary (56,7%) followed by the tertiary sector (41,1%). Unemployment rate is quite high: 14,7% at the end of the 2011 (in the Czech Republic is 9,8%; in the Ústí Region 12,9%) with a relevant share of people in age 20-29 years among job applicants and people with low education attainment (37% had secondary education without the state exam, 15% finished secondary school with the state exam or obtained higher education titles).

Commuting is diffused among Vejprty inhabitants. In 2001, 19,0% of them were occasional (38%) or daily commuters (62%) mostly working in cities such as Klášterec nad Ohří, Kadaň and Chomutov. However, commuting is quite difficult due to both financial issues and poor transportation services. Many commuters (18%) spend far more than 60 minutes to go to work.

2.3.4 The pilot action

Title of the pilot action: Innovative solutions aimed at reducing the cost of infrastructure and services while maintaining their current range in the Krusné hory area Vejprty (Vejprty, Kovarska, Medenec, Krystofovy Hamry)

Project partner: Ústí Region

A major issued addressed by this pilot action is the increasing number of abandoned/empty public and private buildings in the municipalities of the pilot region most severely hit by shrinking processes. There are many former hospitals, nursery schools, shopping centres, factories that were abandoned or are currently partly used and decayed due to the loss of clients. Indeed, in most of the cases, the maintenance and sanitation of these buildings is under the responsibility of the municipal government. Yet renovation costs are huge, while available financial resources are limited. In such a context, the first goal of the pilot action has been the identification of the buildings that were most expensive according to their maintenance for the municipality. Starting from this preliminary list, the following goal has been the identification of suggestions and advices on how to reduce costs and find new viable uses for the buildings, also creating energy audits and studies according to the specific needs of the municipality and his inhabitants.

2.3.5 SWOT analysis of the pilot action in the context of the pilot region

The proposed pilot action takes into consideration two main problems that affect the region of Vejprty and are related to declining and ageing population. On the one hand it tries to cope with the scarcity of public services and infrastructures in the region. The mountainous and peripheral features of this area have in fact hindered the development of a diffused local system of services. As to the education services, for instance, Vejprty hosts only an elementary school, an elementary practical school (for children with special needs or problems) and a primary arts school. As to health care services, there is just one ambulant care unit secured by the hospital of the city of Kadaň. On the other hand it aims at improving the transport and mobility system. Due to both



organisational (public transportation is poorly developed) and structural problems (related to physical isolation, marginalisation as well as natural/climatic conditions such as snow, ice, mist etc.), public transport is in fact really difficult for the inhabitants of Vejprty, above all in the case of an increasing number of elderly people who need to commute to other larger urban centers (Chomutov, Kadaň or Jirkov) for medical treatments.

Fig. 7 – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proximity to the German border - Presence of a relevant industrial sector - Increasing importance of the tertiary sector - Good availability of natural and landscape resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small enterprises in tertiary sector - Shrinking and ageing processes - No critical mass in the selected pilot cities (inhabitants are less than 5.000) - Unemployment and poor availability of job opportunities - Relevant stock of abandoned or decaying public and private buildings - Scarcity of public services and infrastructures in the region - Consistent outgoing commuting flows
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Union funds - Availability of cheap housing and real estate stocks for investments - New possibilities related to privatisation, liberalization and EU accession - Attraction of new inhabitants and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-going population decline and aging - Emigration of young and skilled population that produces a brain-drain effect - Socioeconomic marginalisation and dependency - On going obsolescence of public and private buildings that determines relevant maintenance costs for municipalities - Bad transportation and mobility conditions

2.4 Jász Nagykun Szolnok county (Észak-Alföld, HU)

2.4.1 General information on the pilot region

The Jász Nagykun Szolnok county (NUTS-3) is located in the Tisza Valley, at the heart of the Hungarian Great Plain, but in a peripheral position respect to the administrative region of Észak-Alföld (NUTS-2). Due to this, daily connections/flows between the Jász Nagykun Szolnok county



(and its capital, Szolnok) and many other cities in Észak-Alföld (Debrecen included) are reduced. On the contrary, several main transit corridors go through its area. The River Tisza, for instance, is an important although declining (because of the underdevelopment of the road axis along the river path and the difficult interoperability of the floodplain) transit route. And Szolnok is often referred to as the eastern gate to the metropolitan area of Budapest.

Urban structure, land use and economic activities are highly influenced by the county's geographical and physical conditions. As we read from the SEB report, for historical reasons the county can be divided into three main parts (Jászság, Nagykunság, and Külso-Szolnok) around three main cities (Szolnok, Jászberény, and Karcag) that are all located on the periphery of the county. As a result, the central part of the county is one of the most disadvantaged areas in terms of both economic and social conditions, and environmental factors like floods and drought risks.

The rest of the settlement structure mainly consists of second and third rank cities. The population density of the county is 72 inhabitants per km² (108 at the national level). 72% of the county's population lives in cities and 51% of this urban population lives in cities with over 10.000 inhabitants.

2.4.2 Demographic change

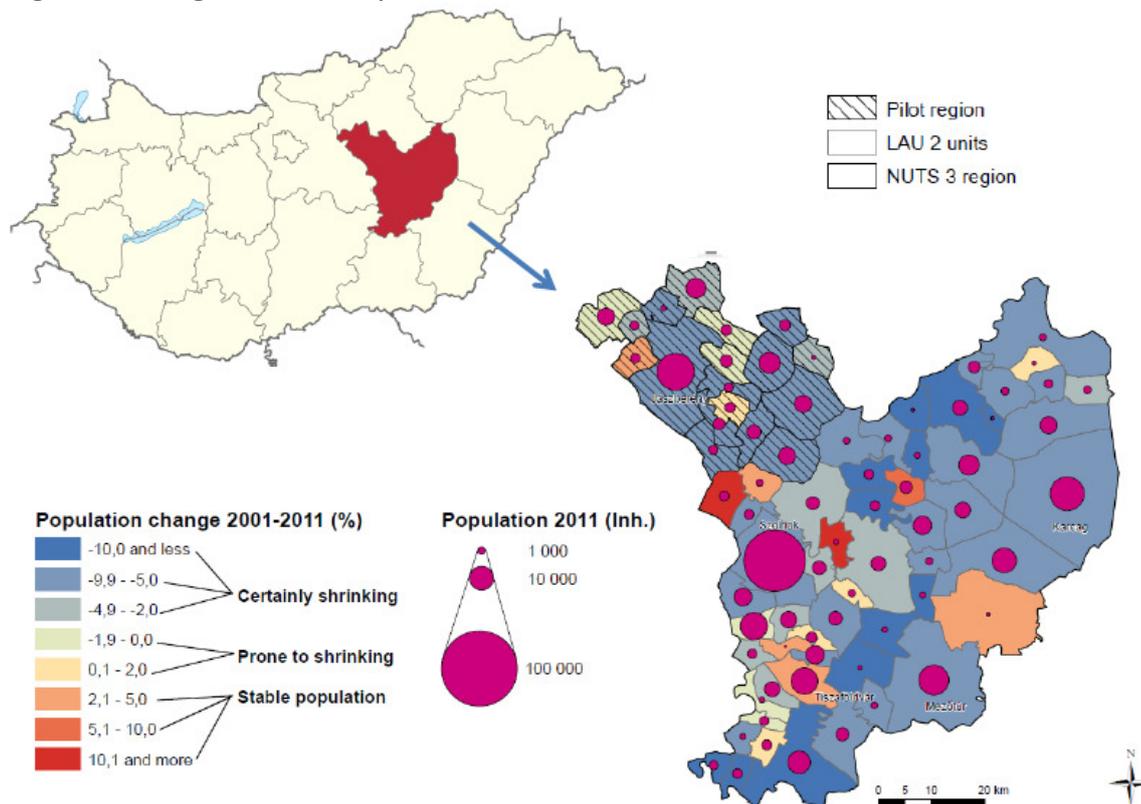
In 2012 inhabitants in the county were 383.000 but they used to be more numerous. In the last decade, in fact, population shrinkage has speeded up both in comparison to the previous decade and to the national average. Although in the period 1990-2000 population trends were positive and more favourable in Jász Nagykun Szolnok county (+1,7%) than in the rest of Hungary (+1,2%) and in several other counties (just Budapest and other eight counties registered higher values), in the period 2000-2010 population decreased at a high rate (-8,0%) compared to the national one (2,1%).

This acceleration was caused mainly by natural demographic trends and relevant migration flows above all from small municipalities with high unemployment and ageing rates. Among the pilot cities, only in Jászberényi migration flows mitigated ageing trends.

Since 2000 ageing too accelerated greatly. In the period 2001-2011 ageing index of Jász Nagykun Szolnok county grew from 88,1 to 121,5 (Hungarian one passed from 91.3 to 116.6) and the mean age of inhabitants grew of 3,0 years in the case of women and 2,3 in case of men.



Fig. 8 – The regional urban system



Source: adapted from ADAPT2DC Deliverable 3.1.5 (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 41)

2.4.3 Economic activities

The contribution of the Jász Nagykanizsa Szolnok county to the national economy is quite weak. In 2009, GDP per capita was 68% of the Hungarian average. In terms of value added (GVA) the most important sector is the service sector (51%), followed by industry (41,0%). In terms of employment, the dominant sector is manufacturing, while agriculture has an important role in providing job opportunities in marginalised and stagnating labour markets.

Between 1990 and 2001 employees decreased and the number of unemployed and inactive earners doubled. Yet this process was not ubiquitous: some municipalities were affected in a very negative way and experienced irreversible segregation. Also, some main regional disparities emerges between core cities and their surrounding rural areas, as in the case of the industrial agglomeration around Jászberény (electronics industries) compared with the larger rural region of Jászság.



2.4.4 The pilot action

Title of the pilot action: Promoting the return of women to the labour market by launching integral nursing services for children in Észak-Alföld

Project Partner: ÉARDA Nonprofit Ltd (Hungary)

This pilot action involves the settlements of Jánoshida, Jászfényszaru and Jászárokszállás in the Jász Nagykun Szolnok county (NUTS-3), which is part of the Észak-Alföld region (NUTS-2).

Main aims of the action is to promote the return of women to the labour market by launching integral nursing services for children that can also determine adaptation to the changing demographic situation and cost advantages.

Methods proposed by this action include: i) the rationalisation of children nursing services; ii) the strengthening of the capacities of children nursing services; iii) the launch of day-care nursing services tailored upon unique necessities. In doing that, a feasibility study of the planned professional services has been preliminarily elaborated. The basis of this study has been a situation analysis that considered, in each settlement: actual and potential capacities of local nurseries; legislation and policies on children nursing services; aims and will of the involved municipalities; the local demand of day-care services. As a result, the pilot action identifies a diversified framework, in which Jászárokszállás emerges as the settlement with the larger presence of children (8.124, of which 308 with 0-3 years) and a local offer of nursery places (28) and day-care places (9,1). In Jászfényszaru there are 5.819 children (0-3 years: 209). In Jánoshida there are 2.641 children (0-3 years: 103). In addition, an analysis of infrastructural and settlement conditions, needed human resources, available life long learning and retraining programmes and the possibilities of involvement of public employees was also provided.

Upon the assessment of the present situation the feasibility study also included an examination of establishment of an integrated nursing centre and an examination on the establishment of day care nurseries that operated as a network in the pilot region. The survey of tendering possibilities to cover infrastructural and equipment needs as well as the estimated costs (mapping funding options as well as cooperation possibilities with churches, civil organizations, private SMEs etc.) is also a main component of the pilot action such as the time plan, risk analysis and marketing communication strategy of day care nurseries. The final result of the action will be a detailed SWOT analysis and some political recommendations to establish effective public services in shrinking regions.

2.4.5 SWOT analysis of the pilot action in the context of the pilot region

As we have seen, demographic changes in the Jász Nagykun Szolnok county (emigration, ageing, population shrinking) have posed serious problems in the provision of public services. The operation costs of these services, in fact, do not decrease in line with the shrinkage of the local population. It follows that it is important for these settlements to adapt to demographic changes and modify their social infrastructure efficiently so as not to affect the quality of the services.



Fig. 9 – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced entrepreneurial culture • Presence of important industrial agglomerations around urban centers • Several main transit corridors • Improving active civil sphere • Improving human public services at developing the industrial potential • Strengthening entrepreneurial cooperations • Strong local culture and traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced connections/flows between the Jász Nagykun Szolnok and the rest of Észak-Alföld region. • Weak contribution to the national GDP • Declining importance of some transit corridors • Presence of economically and physically disadvantaged and segregated areas (the central ones and cities <2000 inhab.) • Increasing population shrinkage and ageing • Regional disparities emerges between core cities and surrounding rural areas
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing knowledge based economy and network cooperation to retain innovative population • Strengthening cohesion by preserving local traditions • Improving mobility conditions and environment friendly infrastructures • Multilevel policy efforts to solve problems • Programs of social integrity and professional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor intra-regional accessibility and connectivity • On-going population shrinking and ageing • On-going territorial differences • On-going social differences (difficult cohabitation with the enlarging gipsy communities) • Negative migration flows from small cities

The proposed pilot action is to be considered in the larger policy process that is affecting Jász Nagykun Szolnok. Among the several directions and fields of action indicated in the *County Development Plan*, there are also measures of social inclusion and empowerment. New types of cooperation, municipal and NGO initiatives could better work to support the competitiveness of the area within the country and either internationally, and in this regard Jász Nagykun Szolnok county plays vital role. In such a context, the proposed pilot action can help the county's administration to strengthen the local positive assets and opportunities as well as to counterbalance existing weaknesses and threats.

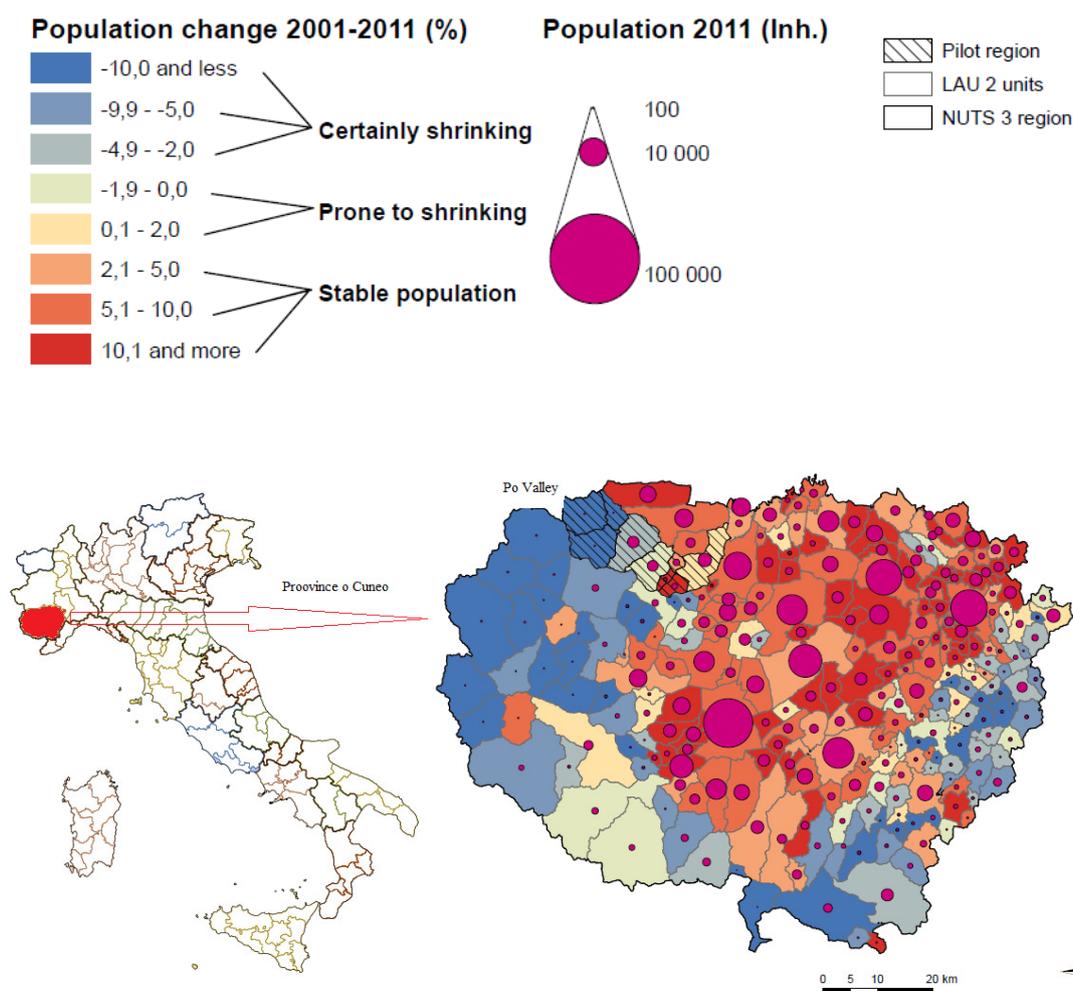


2.5 Po valley (Piedmont, IT)

2.5.1 General information on the pilot region

The Po Valley is an alpine valley in the Province of Cuneo (Piedmont, Italy), where the Po river (the longest river in Italy) originally pours from the Monviso (3841 m) and runs before reaching the Pianura Padana.

Fig. 10 – Regional urban system



Source: adapted from ADAPT2DC Deliverable 3.1.5 (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 43)



The Valley has a length of 32 km and it is composed by 10 Municipalities - the Upper Po Valley municipalities (Crissolo, Ostana and Oncino) and the Lower Po Valley ones (Paesana, Sanfront, Rifreddo, Revello, Envie, Gambaasca and Martiniana Po) - forming the Mountain Community of Monviso.

The Cuneo region (NUTS-3) too is characterised by the presence of mountainous (and hilly) areas with forests and protected areas, but it is also occupied by a vast fertile plain, crossed by some ancient very important traffic routes connecting the Ligure Sea (ports of Genoa and Savona) with Piedmont, the Savoy and the rest of Europe. Cuneo is the largest Province in Piedmont and it also hosts important medium sized historical urban centers such as Cuneo (the provincial capital; with more than 55.000 inhabitants), Alba (more than 30.000), Bra (more than 25.000), Fossano, Mondovì and Savigliano (more than 20.000).

2.5.2 Demographic Change

At the end of 2010 inhabitants in the Po Valley were 14.450. Of these, only 328 lived in the Upper Po valley. The population density is low (59,4 inhabitants per Km²), and it is in line with the average of the Piedmont mountains. However, there are substantial internal differences between the densities of the scarcely inhabited municipalities of Upper valley and the Lower valley.

Tab. 5 – Municipalities forming the Po valley

	Altitude (m)	Area (Km ²)	Population at 31.12.2010	M	F	Density
Crissolo	1318	49,04	174	99	75	3
Ostana	1282	16,98	73	43	30	4
Oncino	1220	49	81	50	31	1
Paesana	614	58,908	2937	1429	1508	49
Sanfront	490	39,67	2598	1273	1325	67
Rifreddo	433	6,78	1077	542	535	181
Revello	350	53,47	4226	2095	2131	80
Envie	327	25,07	2074	1051	1023	82
Gambaasca	479	5,77	403	214	189	68
Martiniana Po	460	13,80	767	396	371	59
<i>Po Valley</i>		<i>318.488</i>	<i>14.450</i>	<i>7192</i>	<i>7258</i>	
<i>Cuneo Province (Nuts-3)</i>		<i>6.902,72</i>	<i>592.303</i>	<i>291.172</i>	<i>301.131</i>	
<i>Piedmont Region (Nuts-2)</i>		<i>25.398,94</i>	<i>4.457.335</i>	<i>2.158.445</i>	<i>2.298.890</i>	

Source: Istat

According to the Report on the marginality of the Mountain Communities in Piedmont Region (Crescimanno, Ferlino e Rota, 2010), the municipalities of Ostana and Oncino present the worst



conditions of the valley in terms of socio-economic parameters, service availability and job market, while the situation of marginality in the Mountain Community is classified as intermediary.

Tab. 6 – Population trends

	Population					Var.%
	1991	2001	2006	2008	2010	1991-2010
Crissolo	212	210	194	182	174	- 17,9
Ostana	82	79	72	73	73	- 11,0
Oncino	106	102	100	90	81	- 23,6
Paesana	3058	3072	2960	2933	2937	- 4,0
Sanfront	2615	2611	2667	2648	2598	- 0,7
Rifreddo	1037	1032	1061	1077	1077	+ 3,9
Revello	4208	4192	4233	4254	4226	+ 0,4
Envie	1884	1890	2006	2065	2074	+ 10,1
Gambasca	329	346	387	382	403	+ 22,5
Martiniana Po	709	667	746	765	767	+ 8,2
<i>Valle Po</i>	<i>14.240</i>	<i>14.201</i>	<i>14.426</i>	<i>14.469</i>	<i>14.410</i>	<i>+ 1,2</i>
<i>Cuneo Province</i>	<i>547.234</i>	<i>556.330</i>	<i>573.613</i>	<i>586.020</i>	<i>592.303</i>	<i>+ 8,2</i>
<i>Piedmont Region</i>	<i>4.299.912</i>	<i>4.213.294</i>	<i>4.352.828</i>	<i>4.432.571</i>	<i>4.457.335</i>	

Source: Istat and BDDE Database Piedmont Region

Since the end of nineteenth century, the Po Valley was characterized by a strong depopulation, affecting above all the villages of the Upper valley. Indeed, in the last decades there have been signals of repopulation in this area, due in particular to public incentives to the settlement of young families, but they cannot counterbalance the on-going shrinkage. On the contrary evident positive demographic trends can be observed in the Lower valley, characterized by the expansion of the larger cities toward the lowland. Nevertheless, the recover of population in the Po Valley (+1,2% in 1991-2010) did not avoid the move out of the valley (to Saluzzo) of the main centers for services and job. As the Table 6 shows, the most dramatic situations are those of Crissolo, Oncino and Ostana, where in 2010 no birth was registered. As to the structure of the age groups, the distribution remained almost the same in the last decade (2001-2010).

Compared to 2001, there has been a decrease of the age group 25-44 (-4,8%) that was just partly counterbalanced by increases in the age groups 0-14 (+3,4%), 45-64 (+8,8%) and over 65 (+1,7%). As a result, the dependency ratio increased: from 55,5 to 56,1 (55,6 in Piedmont).

2.5.3 Economic Activities

According to the Census of the Population (2001), in the Mountain Community the employed population was 11.866. The unemployment rate was in line with the provincial average (3,9%). In the industrial sector 42,9% of the population with age 50-95 were employed.

The manufacture industry is relevant (31,2% of total employment) especially in the municipalities of Sanfront, Gambasca, Martiniana Po, Rifreddo e Paesana. Sanfront and Paesana, in particular,



still host an industrial district in textile and clothing (underwear dress). In the Po Valley there is also long tradition of craftsmanship specialized in wood products. The service sector is important too especially in Crissolo and Ostana, where it occupies more than 50% of the employees, most of them in the local tourist sector. The agricultural sector occupies 18,8% of the active population, higher than in other municipalities of Cuneo province, but far lower compared to the past: in 1971 it was 27%.

2.5.4 The pilot action

Title of the pilot action: The multiservices center in Ostana (Po valley)

Project Partner: UNCEM PIEMONTE

The main aim of this action is to provide a new multiservices center to solve the problem of the scarcity of shops in an area characterised by: mountain geography that makes mobility and connections difficult, shrinking and aging of the resident population, seasonal intense flows of tourists especially in the summer period (nearly 500 tourists visit the valley yearly, most of them with a property house). Due to the closing of the existing little shops, nowadays most of the people in Ostana and in the nearby municipalities have to travel about 12 km to reach the closest shop. In such a context the pilot action takes advantage of a pre-existent initiative of the municipality of Ostana. In the last summer a collective organization was established in order to buy food and other essential goods, but management and coordination was not easy. For this reason the municipality established contacts with some retailers that would be interested to open a small shop in Ostana.

The idea of the pilot action is thus to realize this shop, organising it as a multiservice centre that would also offer other basic services and that would also function as a communication and meeting point for people from different age classes. The pilot action also plans to coordinate the involvement of the relevant stakeholders and to develop a feasibility study including the evaluation of the most suitable services to be provided in the multiservice shop. At the present stage, the hypothesised services included: i) the presentation and sale of local products; ii) the sale of first-aid medications or “para-pharmaceuticals” and the weekly presence of a “family doctor”; iii) the provision of an ATM; iv) the coordination of a network of local B&Bs organised as a “diffuse territorial hotel”; v) the provision of car sharing service in collaboration with the other upper Po municipalities; vi) the provision of library and documentation services. Also, in order to make the center economically sustainable, the idea is to gather in the same building many different services that are currently dispersed in the valley such as: local associations, the postal office and the abovementioned family doctor. This will reduce fix costs and travel costs of the clients of all these services.



2.5.5 SWOT analysis of the pilot action in the context of the pilot region

After many decades of depopulation in the Po valley, in the last 20 years a demographic growth has been registered, in particular in the municipalities closer to the large service and labour centers of the Cuneo valley (Saluzzo and Barge).

Fig. 11 – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural and landscape resources - Many development projects realized with the public funding - Regional public funds to the development of mountain and rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many abandoned rural houses - Low demographic density and declining number of inhabitants - Scarcity of small shops - Difficult connections and mobility
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many abandoned rural houses to be used for new investments in tourism - Recent flows of young inhabitants - Social cohesion - Many initiatives are realized by volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lacking of private investors - Uncertain destiny of local authorities (Province, Mountain Community) in Italy - Reorganization of the Health services in the Region determining cut of services - On-going processes of shrinking and aging, above all in the Upper Po Valley

New inhabitants are an interesting challenge for the area: on one side there are retired people, that can offer to the social environment their experience and their spare time, on the other side young families that chose to go living in a particular milieu bringing new ideas and projects. This situation thus needs to be exploited and steered, gathering the energies and the initiatives towards common goals and to avoid the lack of services for those who decide to live in this area. The realization of a multiservice centre tries to be a solution in which public authorities and private people can collaborate towards the goal of employment development, social assistance and touristic promotion.

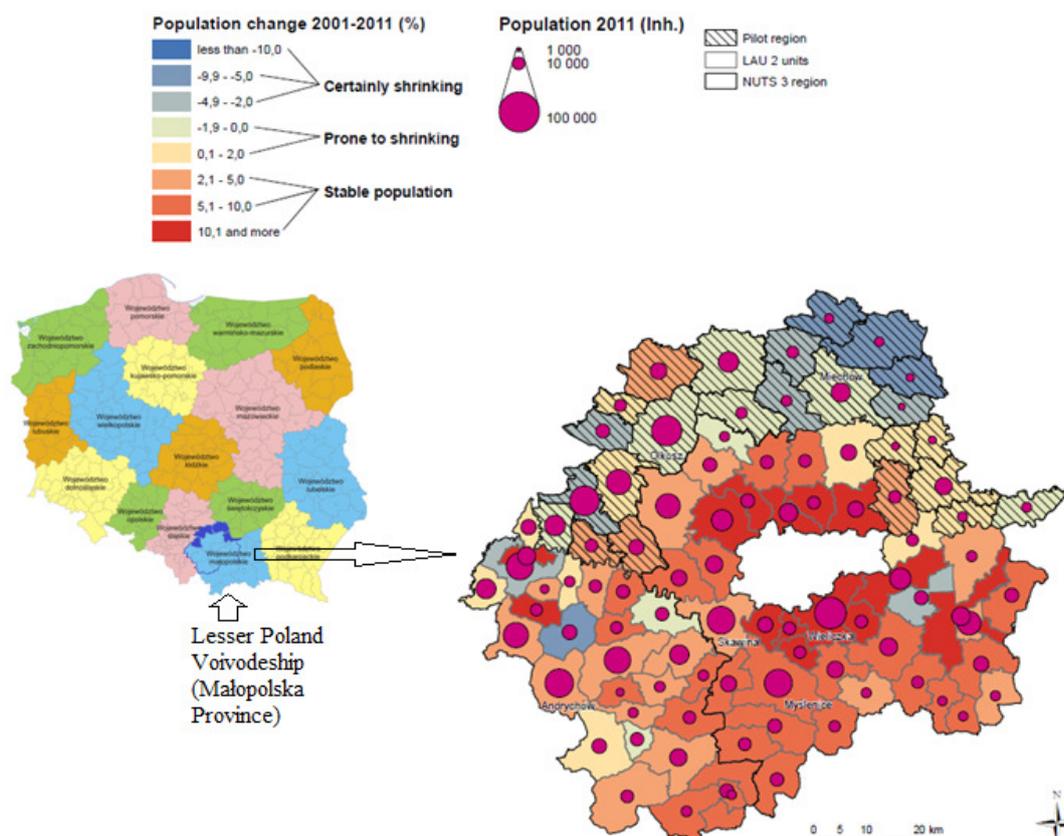
2.6 Malopolska Region (Malopolska, PL)

2.6.1 General information on the pilot region

The north-western part of Małopolska region (NUTS-2) was chosen as the implementation area of this pilot action. More specifically, the pilot area is formed by four urban areas (LAU-1) or ‘poviats’: Miechowski, Chrzanowski, Olkuski and Proszowicki.



Fig. 12 – The regional urban system



Source: adapted from ADAPT2DC Deliverable 3.1.5 (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 44)

The region covers an area of 15.108 km². As to the physical features, most of the selected land area is occupied by plains. Only a limited portion of the Olkuski powiat is occupied by hills (Jura Krakowsko Częstochowska stretching from Kraków to Częstochowa) and mountains (Góry Świętokrzyskie). As to the settlement model, it is rather rural and occupied by several small cities with less than 40.000 of inhabitants.

In 2006, the Małopolska region hosted a population of 3.267.731, whereas the overall population of the selected pilot powiats is 334.733. In these areas the population density is quite diversified: very low (below national average) in Miechowski (74 people/km²) and Proszowicki (105 people/km²). In Olkuski it is 184 people/km² (below the regional average). Whereas in Chrzanowski it reaches 343 people/km² (far higher than the national and regional average).

2.6.2 Demographic change

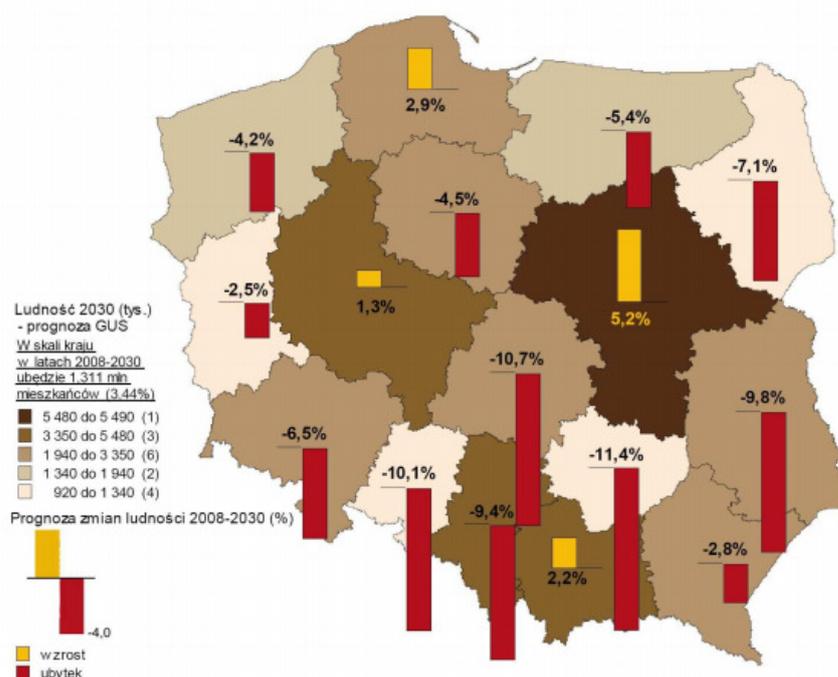
The selected pilot area is affected by evident dynamic processes of ageing and declining population mainly due to outgoing migration of young workforce (to Cracow and other economic centres) and low birth rates. In the period 2000-2010 the population decreased in all the four



poviats: -6,6% in Miechowski, -3,8% in Chrzanowski, -1,4% in Oluski, -0,5% in Proszowicki. More recently, data from 2011 confirm this negative trend, above all in Miechowski where the natural growth for 1.000 inhabitants was 4,3. Migration balance in 2011 was negative too: the only powiat with positive balance was Proszowicki.

The population structure also shows that ageing processes are more advanced than in the rest of the Małopolska region: in 2010 the average age of the population was higher than the regional one in all the considered powiats, and the demographic burden per 100 persons of working age was relevant too: 33,6 in Miechowski, 28,6 in Proszowicki, 28,5 in Chrzanowski, and 28,0 in Olkuski. Also, the future scenario is not optimistic. According to the "National Regional Development Strategy", in 2030 only the cities of Warsaw, Poznań, Kraków and Gdańsk will increase their population, while rural areas will have negative trends up to -10% and over (fig. 13).

Fig. 13 – Expected population change in Polish regions by 2030



Source: Polish Ministry of Regional Development (2010: 40)

The regional government of Małopolska itself is strongly focused on the issues of demographic change and in the strategic document "Challenges of Małopolska related to ageing society" (delivered under an INTERREG IVC project "PEOPLE Innovation for Societal Change") it is stated that prospects at 2050 foresee a stable development of young people (0-14) but a relevant increase in the elderly people (>65).



2.6.3 Economic activities

In the last decade, the original agricultural (poviats Miechowski and Proszowicki) and partly industrial (poviats Chrzanowski and Olkuski) economic profile of the selected poviats has been affected by relevant transformation processes. In particular, the area has been facing a difficult situation of high unemployment rates and low incomes. Furthermore, the geographical location in the Krakow-Katowice axis did not help the access to labour market. The hypothesis of a daily “40 km length” commuting path to reach the work place in situation of poor or not existing train connections is not attractive for employees. The cost of commuting is also relatively high in comparison to incomes.

The situation on the labour market in all four poviats is very problematic, with unemployment rates in 2011 that range from 14,2% to 9,7% (in Malopolska Region was 10,4%).

2.6.4 The pilot action

Title of the pilot action: Telemedical services for senior citizens as a tool for optimising healthcare costs in the poviats Miechowski, Chrzanowski, Olkuski and Proszowicki

Project partner: Malopolska Region

The pilot action carried out in the urban areas of Miechów, Chrzanów, Olkusz and Proszowice has been targeted at a group of senior beneficiaries, selected on the basis of health condition and place of residence (target area affected with demographic changes). The aim of the action is to provide a telemedical service (teleECG) to monitor the beneficiaries’ health condition, improve their life quality, and prevent further deterioration of health. The patients will thus receive both the telemedical equipment to measure their vital functions (ECG) and remote as well as direct services of medical assistance, consultation and diagnosis.

The pilot action was meant to induce savings and improve healthcare in the face of demographic changes. Specific objectives in fact included:

- Adapting health services to demographic changes by providing high quality medical service to elderly patients
- Reaching patients at risk of exclusion, especially in depopulating areas,
- Decreasing costs of high quality health care by early diagnosis and disease prevention

Also, the pilot action expected to bring about positive results in the area of patients’ health and life quality as well as solid economic benefits. Others results are: i) Providing recommendations for public policies in the EU regions; ii) Establishing transferable good practice in the area of telemedical services for senior citizens; iii) Producing reliable data regarding potential savings in health care via telemedical services.



2.6.5 SWOT analysis of the pilot action in the context of the pilot region

As it has been already mentioned, the administrative department of the Małopolska region considers demographic change an urgent and important issue of regional and local development. Coherently, the regional development strategy calls for an array of activities concerning services dedicated to senior citizens within the idea of promoting “silver economy”.

One of key strategic activities defined for the region is the implementation of a regional strategy related to ageing society. Consistent with this, the selected pilot areas emerge as a very relevant area of implementation of policies addressed to such an aim.

The areas of the pilot action, in fact, were selected due their relevant demographic (negative migration balance and negative natural growth that will determine in the next decade a dramatic increase in the number of elderly people) and transport/mobility problems. In such a context, telemedical services for senior citizens provide a chance for reduction of health care costs without reducing the quality of medical services. It is also a chance for increasing the accessibility of the service. During the pilot action the tested service will be limited to TeleECG for elderly patients. However, the technical solutions give the possibility of providing wider range of teleservices like: blood pressure control, body temperature control, sugar level control.

Fig. 14 – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well developed local administration ▪ Strategies of local development (LAU1 level) ▪ Well educated young generation ▪ Sustainable governance in the conditions of crisis of public finances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low density rural areas occupied by small cities ▪ Negative migration balance and negative natural growth ▪ Unemployment and difficult labour market (low incomes) ▪ Difficulties in commuting ▪ Inadequate road/transport infrastructure
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well developed local administration (LAU1, LAU2) and healthy local budgets ▪ Visioning attitudes and multilevel (vertical and horizontal) governance ▪ European Funds and national programs ▪ Funds and other external grants ▪ Strategic location between Katowice and Krakow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On-going aging and shrinking ▪ Crisis of public finances ▪ Lack of perspective on local labour market ▪ Lack of perspective on local labour market will increase the negative natural growth unless different forms of childcare are developed

Summarising, the pilot action can provide the area with several advantages and work in the direction of limiting some main weaknesses and threats related to ageing population in a context



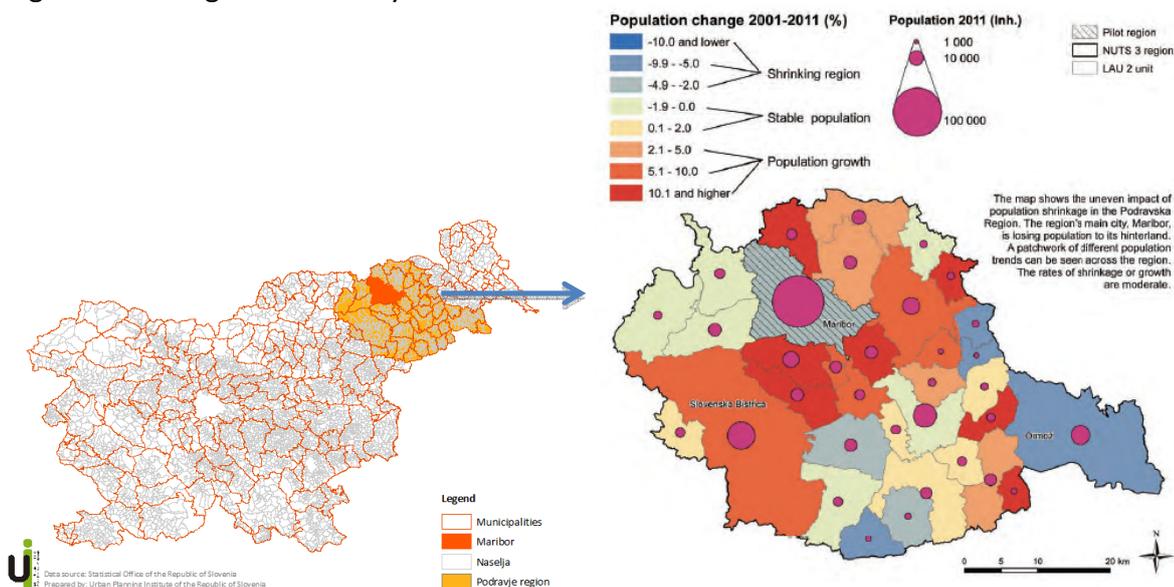
of poor accessibility. In particular, a positive element is the synergy this pilot action could develop respect to similar measures implemented or planned at the regional and national level.

2.7 Maribor (Podravje region, SI)

2.7.1 General information on the pilot region

The Podravje region occupies the north-eastern portion of Slovenia, close to the border with Austria and Croatia. From the SEB report we know that the region covers 10,7% (2.170 km²) of the national territory and it is the second largest Slovenian region in terms of population (320.961; 16,1%). In 2011 population density was 147,9. The region is divided into 41 municipalities with 678 settlements.

Fig. 15 – The regional urban system



Source: adapted from ADAPT2DC Deliverable 3.1.5 (Šimon, Mikešová et al., 2013: 45)

The largest cities are also economic and social centres: Maribor (35,2% population in the region), Ptuj (7,5%), Slovenska Bistrica (9,4%) and Ormoz (5,5%). The region is surrounded by hills in the northeast, subalpine wooded mountains (Pohorje and Kozjak) in the west and Dravsko Ptujsko polje along the Drava River. The region has the highest share of utilised agricultural area in Slovenia and is the leading region in terms of agricultural holdings (Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2011). Agricultural surfaces cover 45% of the total area (27,8% in whole Slovenia). Wooded areas cover 47,4% (66,0% in Slovenia).



As to the regional urban system, there is a strong polarisation around Maribor that is the regional capital and second most important cultural centre in Slovenia. It also the largest industrial town in the region and with its surrounding areas offers many opportunities for tourism (farm tourism, wine routes, wellness centres, health resorts) and winter activities (in Pohorje). The city is also an important traffic centre. A highway network connects go through the city West with the East (Barcelona-Kiev fifth corridor) and the North with the South (highway from Northern Europe to the Adriatic Sea, the Phyrn highway). International airport is located just a few kilometres from the city centre.

2.7.2 Demographic change

Statistical data show that in Slovenia almost half (47,7%) of the settlements (6.122 in total) faced diminishing population in the period 2008-2012. In Podravje the settlements affected by demographic shrinkage were 56,6% of the total, in many cases characterized with intensive rural depopulation (type B). In the remaining municipalities population is growing. But this does not mean that all their settlements are growing. In 55,0% of these growing municipalities, in fact, more than 15% of the total settlements are facing population decline. Table 7 shows this process of "hidden" or "relative" rural depopulation process, whose extent is very intensive in many parts of Slovenia, especially in the north-eastern areas near the Austrian, Hungarian and Croatian borders.

Tab. 7 – Number of settlements and population trends in Podravje’s municipalities. 2008-2012

MUNICIPALITI ES	POPULATION			SETTLEMENTS ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS						
	2008 (n)	2012 (n)	Var. 2012-2008	All (n)	GROWTH (n)	EQUAL (n)	DECLINE (n)	GROWTH (%)	EQUAL (%)	DECLINE (%)
TYPE A (19)	209.890	213.848	3.958	334	171	15	148	51,2	4,5	44,3
TYPE B (23)	111.891	109.686	2.205	344	97	11	236	28,2	3,2	68,6
TOTAL (41)	321.781	323.534	1.753	678	268	26	384	39,5	3,8	56,6

Source: elaboration on data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
<http://www.stat.si/eng/index.asp>

The number and share of people aged 65+ among the total population have been constantly increasing. Consequently the average age and the ageing index have also been rising above the Slovenian national average. In July 2010 the share of people aged 50+ was 38,0% (in 2003 it was 34.3%). In 2007, 16.5% of the population was 65+, the average age was 41.8 years and the ageing index was 127.7 (Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia). Maribor too, although its important economic and cultural role, has an extremely weak population age structure. Its ageing index is the highest (175) among all the 41 municipalities of the Podravje region. If the existing demographic trends will persist it will reach 255 in 2040, so as total population will diminish of



almost 27.500 inhabitants in three decades. Population projections show also that the size of all the age groups except the oldest ones (65+ and 80+) will decrease. There will be some growth before the year 2025 in the younger age groups, yet the projection for 41 municipalities indicates that population decline in Maribor will be the highest in the region. This is understandable also because it has the highest ageing index.

2.7.3 *Economic activities*

In 2011, enterprises in Podravje are 22.381, persons in employment are 121.006 and the average monthly gross earnings is 1.377 EUR. Compared to the rest of the country, the regional economy is not very strong. Also, it is affected by a high unemployment rate (16,1%).

As to the economic sectors, Podravje has a long industrial tradition and more recent tertiary sector which is responsible of the highest share of gross value added. The five main sectors are manufacturing, construction, transport and storage, market, maintenance and repair of motor and other business activities. Podravje region is the second largest economy in Slovenia considering GDP and it is predominantly export oriented (Source: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska). However, in 2009 employment population ratio (57,2%) was among the lowest in Slovenia, while the employment ratio of older persons (aged 55-64) was above the average in Slovenia. Another interesting sector in agriculture since it has recently developed towards new innovative business models: although in the period 2000-2010, the agricultural holdings and employees declined (-16,8%; -31,2%), the number of agricultural holdings with ecologic farming dramatically increased (+195%).

School attainment in Podravje is very similar to the Slovenian average with some peaks in the fields of short term vocational and vocational upper secondary level as well as technical and general upper secondary education. Data on commuting shows the intensity of daily commuting flows, typical of an industrial region with increasing tertiary and quaternary functions.

2.7.4 *The pilot action*

Title of the pilot action: Potentials of culture for development in Podravje and Maribor

Project partner: Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

Starting point of this action has been the analysis of the situation of Podravje region, as it emerged from the analyses for the preparation of the Regional Development Programme 2007-2013, and the situation of Maribor, as it emerged from "The development strategy of Maribor" (draft, 2010). On the one hand, major problems at the regional level were identified in: depopulation, ageing and rural/urban flows. Thus, adaptation to demographic changes is tackled directly and indirectly within three development priorities: a) connected, successful and visible region; b) entrepreneurship, competitiveness and knowledge for rapid development; c) balanced and sustainable development with focus on the promotion of the principles and measures of sustainable development, social inclusion, information society and universal access to public infrastructure.



On the hand, considering the situation in Maribor city, a major recognized problem is shrinkage to be avoided and counterbalanced with actions in several fields (economy, traffic, environment, education and quality of life) to: ensure new employments, create conditions for small economy, and to reduce the number of emigrants.

Urban Planning institute of the Republic of Slovenia cooperated with the municipality of Maribor in the definition of the pilot action. The subject of the action in Maribor has been the sustainability of the infrastructures realised in occasion of the attribution of the title of European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2012. The strategic insight and reflection has been on how to make public infrastructure sustainable after the implementation of ECoC. The project focused on the strategic reflections on shrinking phenomena and the spatial analysis of the ECoC. As Maribor is a shrinking city with slowly reversing trends, it should study the possibilities of rational strategic management of this public infrastructure. The spatial analysis of the ECoC project in 3 partner cities with demographic and infrastructure costs analyses will serve as a base for common transnational strategy.

2.7.5 SWOT Analysis of the pilot action within the pilot region

The pilot project addresses the problem of demographic decline (that affects the Slovenian nation as well as Podravje region and Maribor city) focussing on culture as a powerful tool to both attract new inhabitants and workers (with the aim of a positive counterbalancing effect on shrinkage and aging) and favour economic development and job creation (with the aim to contrast the current negative labour trends in Maribor and Podravje region). In doing that the pilot action also tries to capitalise the important capital of cultural endowments present in the region and the long-term efforts of the policy makers and stakeholders in Maribor to the establishment of a cultural economy. From late 20', in fact, there were the first attempts to bring life back to the city and open new development paths oriented towards small economy, tourism and culture. More recently, the ECoC2012 played a very important role opening new opportunities for creating new jobs, fostering lifelong learning, enriching the quality of life of inhabitants. But it still needs harmonised administrative support to develop it within a wider framework of proactive cultural policies. Thus, the pilot action assumes and tests (applying it to the concrete case of Maribor city) the tool of cultural mapping. The questions tackled are how and by whom the culture can be utilized in a new, creative and productive way. With regard to such an aim cultural mapping is recognized as an effective tool for development and planning. So, it has been used as a method of describing the cultural resources and assets of Maribor (resources, networks, links and patterns of usage) and the relationships between cultural agents and municipal administration.



The main stakeholder involved in the pilot action is The Municipality of Maribor. However, interest for the pilot action has been expressed at the Regional Development Agencies covering east part of the Slovenia. The culture has the opportunity of raising employment and wealth. But a diffused awareness and cooperation on such a field have to be reached in order to: collect (and share at the regional level) the necessary knowledge on regional cultural potentials; use these potentials to tackle demographic change, reverse its negative trends and boost sustainable development. Then, successive development will presuppose increased synergy among cultural actors, managers and public authorities. Only the cooperation among cultural agents and different municipal departments, in fact, can lead to realistic proposals for strategic development, capable of making Maribor an attractive and competitive place where to live and work.

Fig. 16 – SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of the second most important cultural and touristic centre in Slovenia (Maribor) - Involvement of the University of Maribor in developing the regional cultural sector - Measurement of economic benefit of cultural institutions activities - Establishment of a stable financing mechanisms for creative industries - Support to public-private partnership in culture as well as partnerships between public institutions and NGO's - Identification of permanent private sponsors of the programme - Capitalisation of the experiences of ECoC2012 and the cooperation with partners cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urban-rural relations are poorly considered - Risks of unbalanced effects of large cultural events - Limited awareness among Podravje people in considering culture as the 4th dimension of regional development
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness among public authorities about potentials of culture - Creation of a strategy for common international promotion fostering the cooperation between the economic and cultural sphere - Encouragement of the involvement of culture in lifelong learning measures - Investigation (mapping) and assessment of the potentials of culture for economic growth and social wellbeing in Maribor - Rising educational attainment level and life expectancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall reduced resources for cultural investments - Increasing financial burden in Maribor and Podravje - Economic difficulties due to high rate of unemployment, lack of job opportunities



3 Methods to adapt to shrinkage⁴

3.1 Lessons from the ADAPT2DC pilot actions

At a preliminary analysis⁵, the initiatives envisaged by the ADAPT2DC pilot actions seem to be ascribed to two main types of intervention (or methods) for the optimisation of public costs of services and related facilities/infrastructures in regional contexts of shrinking population:

- Actions that propose innovative⁶ solutions in the provision of facilities and services. For instance, half of the pilot actions develop new/novel health (telemedical services in Miechów, Chrzanów, Olkusz and Proszowice) or social services (nursing services in Jánoshida, Jászfényszaru and Jászárokszállás) for the elderly and new systems to provide citizens with daily goods or services (multiservice center in Ostana);
- Actions that propose cooperative agreements and synergies between public and private stakeholders (involvement of local actors and stakeholders in the detection of some preliminary ideas in the demographic coaching initiatives in the Saale Orla district and Oberfranken Ost region; renovation and re-use of abandoned building in Vejprty), between local, regional and national public entities (cultural planning in Maribor); between different cities and communities etc. as well as civic engagement in the realization of multifunctional services and facilities.

Also, as to the identification of the specific fields⁷ in which to intervene, at the present stage most of the pilot actions have showed a strong interest to public services (above all education and training, nursing and housing services), health and social care services, and image/cultural promotion; whereas topics such as mobility and transport, water provision or sewage treatment have been more rarely considered. On the one hand, a reason for this is that actions in water or sewage infrastructure (or indeed road infrastructure) require significant investments (that are not even foreseen in INTERREG projects) and involve several different policy levels. Therefore it is

⁴ In the application form of the ADAPT2DC project it was stated that the content of the Regional Guidebook should have been “methods to adapt to or counterbalance shrinking”. However, as the title of the paragraph highlights, a main strategic decision assumed by the ADAPT2DC Consortium was to focus on adaptation rather than counterbalance since adaptation was considered a far more realistic strategy, above all at the regional level.

⁵ At this stage of the project a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot actions is not possible since some of them have just started the implementation phase.

⁶ Although the proposed solutions can be hardly defined high-tech, in some cases they represent an important innovation/novelty in respect of the traditional local praxis. It follows that the innovative content of the pilot actions should not be defined *a priori*, but evaluated according to the specific local context of implementation.

⁷ As it is stated in the Application form, a specific focus of the project is “the provision and maintenance costs for infrastructure and supply in the areas of child care, schools, education, elderly care and housing, multi generation solutions, medical care, consumer goods, accessibility to infrastructure, culture, civil service management and image. ADAPT2DC will develop and implement pilot actions regarding these topics in the partner regions to ensure sustainable governance and management of infrastructure and services”.



rather logical that the pilot actions decided to focus on “soft” measures in other policy areas. On the other hand, the selection relies on the specific needs and policy orientations of the considered pilot regions.

Two more findings emerge from the analysis of the pilot actions:

On the one hand, they highlight the importance of adapting policies/actions to specific (legal, political, geographical) characteristics of the involved regional and urban territories. Although they are all part of the Central Europe macro-region, the regions participating in the ADAPT2DC project have relevant differences. Coherently, also the pilot regions (and cities) differ from each other in various ways:

- *physical geography*. The pilot regions include mountainous, hilly and plain areas. For instance, Malopolska is mainly a plain region. The Po valley, on the contrary, is a mountain region that hosts one of the highest peaks in the Alps. Mountain systems are present also in Vejprty and Oberfranken Ost.
- *settlement model*. Polycentric and polarised systems are both represented by the pilot regions. Region Podravje is an example of a quite polarised urban structure in which Maribor is the most important center (it hosts 35% of the regional population and it is at the cross road of important traffic/transport axis). Saale Orla or the Po Valley, on the contrary, are mainly rural regions, occupied by several small cities.
- *economic activities*. Some pilot regions are economically stronger than others. For instance, the Saale Orla is one of the economically strongest districts in Thuringia, whereas Vejprty suffers from high unemployment. Also, relevant differences can be detected according to the economic specialisations: some regional economies are mainly industrial (Jász Nagygun Szolnok) some are mainly tertiary/tourist oriented (the Po Valley) some maintain a strong agriculture sector (Saale Orla District).
- *demographic structure*. In some cases, depopulation has lead to dramatic situations (this is the case of the Upper valley in the Po valley region). In some cases low densities are related with milder demographic trends (cfr. some Poland poviats and Jász Nagygun Szolnok). However there are also cases of high densities menaced by depopulation (as in the case of Maribor) or cases of low densities recently characterised by positive demographic trends (as in some municipalities of the Po valley).
- *government and governance*. Despite the common adhesion to EU strategies, European countries, regions and cities maintain their own policy systems (policy makers, stakeholders and shareholders, development priorities, pre-existing laws, rules, uses, habits, and tacit routines). As to ADAPT2DC pilot regions, for instance, the Po Valley never experienced the planned economy of the socialism period, which had instead relevant effects on the development of Vejprty. But differences also exist at the level of local agreements and policies.

On the other hand, the pilot actions provide practical suggestions according to the implementation of demographic change policies. Although with relevant differences according to the development stage of the action itself (some actions are almost finished, some have



concluded the preliminary analytical phase, some have developed the feasibility study etc.), the proposed methods all insist on the fact that shrinking population is a very difficult policy task, as it requires, in a general context of crisis and decreasing financial and human resources, the capacity of managing/dealing at the same time with:

- several issues (healthcare, social care, housing, network infrastructures, labour market, etc.) that reciprocally interact in a complex way;
- processes that need to be managed at different scales (local, regional but also national and even European) and in different territories (urban, rural, mountain, peripheral etc.).

In this matter, important lessons can be learnt from the analysis of best practices.

3.2 Lessons from the ADAPT2DC best practices

The Best Practice Catalogue (deliverable 4.1.1 within the project ADAPT2DC) provides an overview of projects to adapt public social and technical infrastructure and services to demographic change and, at the same time, to address the issue of cost saving. Its aim is to use the information to support the realization of the pilot projects. Thus it provides a collection of examples mostly regarding infrastructure and service fields of interest of the ADAPT2DC partners (social service; health care; mobility and transport; public infrastructure; intercommunal cooperation).

Summarising, important lessons that come from the collected best practices consist above all in practical hints on: i) how to cope with specific problems related to specific infrastructure and service fields, ii) how to fulfil and measure cost efficiency and/or cost reduction.

As to the former point, hints are organised according to their main field/policy area:

- *Social Service.* Best practices from the social service sector in general deal with: developing services for the elderly, providing citizens with daily goods, shaping communication platforms. Main cost savings related to these practices include: i) activation of voluntary (for free) engagement of citizens that allows for savings in wages; ii) use of external financial sources (e.g. Eu projects); iii) bundling of services in one place that allows for savings in building managing costs such as heating; iv) efficient sanitation of unused infrastructure and buildings;
- *Health Care.* In the Catalogue, examples of health care projects pursue cost savings via: i) effective use of finance instruments; ii) use of advanced technologies and electronic devices increasing effectiveness at reduced costs and time; iii) creating integrated infrastructure to realize cost efficiency (avoiding unnecessary travels of doctors and patients); iv) efficient organisation and outsourcing of public services to private agents; v) attracting professionals (doctors) from large urban centers to work in rural areas;
- *Transport and Mobility.* Best practices initiatives show cost savings in such a policy area can be



- realized through: i) the activation of voluntary engagement that allow saving in the drivers' fares; ii) avoiding of redundant transport stops, lines, runs can help to reduce costs; iii) widening the transport offer so as to attract new clients; iv) integrating and bundling different types of services (transport that provides access to social, health and other services); v) creating public-private synergies and an efficient inter-communal and coordinated transport organisation (for instance making the school bus accessible to other passengers); attraction of public (both national and local) and private funding;
- *Public Infrastructure.* Cost savings in this field can be realized through: i) the detection of the most effective management solution of existing abandoned, not used, old buildings (demolition in some documented cases is less expensive than sanitation; reducing whole blocks is less expensive than partly reductions); ii) use of municipal and EU public funds for the funding of renovations; attraction of newcomers and elderly to renovated areas specifically thought for elderly needs that will make the provision of services to this kind of citizens easier; iii) attraction of new active population and the young that will help to tackle the consequences of demographic change; iv) supporting the Elderly to lead an autonomous lifestyle which will help them to stay longer independent (which can help to save costs);
 - *Inter-Communal Cooperation.* Cost savings can be realized through: i) inter-communal cooperation and bundling of services that allow for new concepts for reducing public spending on the provision with social and technical infrastructure such as the construction of semi-centralised sewage treatment facilities and the establishment of subsidiary medical practices; ii) adoption of flexible solutions that are less expensive than permanent ones;
 - *Water supply/sewage treatment.* Although difficult, examples of measures adapting water supply and sewage treatment with positive effects of reduction of costs are: i) reduced, refitted, re-organised (or even dismissed whether useless) facilities and infrastructure and tariffs, adapted according to the ongoing demographic situation and trends; ii) cooperation between providers and decentralised networks to reduce costs; iii) adjustment to demand-oriented channels; iv) autonomous planning, announcement and construction management of building activities; v) development of a more efficient energy supply system and a more efficient organisation of sewage water treatment; vi) creation of additional income via energy production; vii) use of locally based fermentation processes for the production of electricity and heat for neighbouring infrastructures such as schools and living complexes;
 - *Entrepreneurship.* Opportunities to reduce costs are related to the possibility to increase the amount of self-produced products (food, energy) so as import costs are reduced and new job opportunities are created, which reduce welfare state costs and those related to transports. Also, good quality of local products helps a healthier life style of local inhabitants.

Certainly, not all these methods have to be adopted by all regions. On the one hand, a selection is needed on the basis of the specific national, regional and local framework conditions. On the other hand, other selective criteria came out from the ADAPT2DC project itself. For instance, an important decision assumed by the ADAPT2DC consortium was to focus on methods to adapt to demographic change rather than counterbalance it. The rationale of this decision is that trying to



reverse trends of depopulation was recognised as a rather unrealistic task. As a consequence, a typical counterbalancing method such as the attraction of new young residents will be probably left aside.

Finally, the Catalogue also shows an interesting sample of “horizontal” practices that can be successfully pursued in order to adapt to shrinkage: cooperation between institutions of the same/different type; development of integrated calculations of profitability through considering all costs when calculating expenditures of one facility; Integration of citizens into the development of adaptation strategies for creating acceptance and awareness; adaptation models have to be realized with a long perspective in order to realize the needed re-structuring; combination of different funding schemes on several levels.

As to the latter point, although the best practices always indicate possibilities to reduce costs, seldom they measure the real cost savings directly. Also, in many cases the positive effects of the implemented actions consist in avoiding greater or future costs or obtaining new incomes deriving from the fees of newly provided facilities and services or even getting benefits that are not monetary such as an increased feeling of community, involvement and commitment, better life conditions, better policy participation etc. In other cases initiatives of adaptation to demographic change determine indirect cost savings or savings that can be appreciated only in the long run.

4 Conclusion

As a conclusion, this Regional Guidebook reveals some general remarks that may be shared as far as regional issues of adaptation to shrinking population is addressed.

A first point consists in the recognition that important methods to optimise public costs of services and related facilities in regions (and cities) affected by shrinking population can be ascribed both to the provision of new organisational solutions and the implementation of cooperative agreements and synergies between public and private stakeholders, as well as between local, regional and national public entities or between different regions, cities and communities.

A second point is that, in the identification of the adaptation pilot actions, topics such as the provision of child care and elderly care services, the management of infrastructure and buildings, the distribution of consumer goods, education/training services, promotion of culture and image and culture are more frequently selected than accessibility to infrastructure (in terms of mobility and transport services, for instance), multi generation solutions or civil service management.

Another point is that shrinking population is a very difficult policy task requiring both the capacity of facing many different issues and their interactions, and the capacity of handling processes that occur at different scales and in different types of territorial systems.

A viable way to deal with such a challenge is to increase the horizontal and vertical governance for the identification of common scenarios and solutions. This is, at least, one of the main lessons pilot regions (and the other regions in Europe) can learn from ADAPT2DC best practices. Creating



cooperation and synergies between communes and municipalities allow cost savings and the maintenance of the provision of needed infrastructure and services for the citizens while adapting to demographic change (Ehrlich et al., 2013). Above all in small peripheral and marginalised regions/cities, inter-urban and inter-regional cooperation do emerge as a necessity. As we learn from the best practices, cities that experiment cooperative management of services can in fact unify dispersed markets into larger ones, which a very important step in order to mitigate the financial burden caused by oversized infrastructure. And this is particularly true in the case of services and infrastructure with relevant fix costs such as water and sewage management.

Important, in particular, seem to be 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, could have a relevant role in coping with the challenges of ageing and reducing population. Also, they would help to push local communities to actively consider demographic change and act upon it from a proactive perspective.

A final point is that regional/urban governments have to be put in the condition of implementing a broad yet balanced and synergistic range of initiatives among those that are coherent with the specific assets, problems and needs that characterise the regional and local systems. As we read from the Best practice catalogue, “while collecting best practices [...] it became clear that the transferability of best practices depends on the national framework conditions like the economic situation or the political-administrative system of a country” (Ehrlich et al., 2013: 34). However, as we have been discussing in this Guidebook, the regional features also play a major role influencing the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of potential local policy actions. For instance initiatives that largely make use of the voluntary involvement of citizens are more likely to be successful in small communities where social capital and relational capital are strong and local commitment is diffused. Yet this is not a default property of each village, city or region. It follows that viable solutions are often *ad hoc* solutions that have been selected coherently with the territorial features of the regional/local systems in which they will be implemented.

The European policies already provide a set of policy strategies and tools that may have positive effects on that: smart cities and communities, social innovation, etc. (see for instance EC, 2010; Foray et al., 2012). An important challenge will be thus reasoning on new innovative solutions that will pursue positive synergies between the local, regional and the European initiatives.

Coherently with this and with the complex transnational nature of demographic change, the specific aim of the next ADAPT2DC guidebook will be a transnational analysis of practical issues related to the implementation of the pilot actions.

In a certain sense, the pilot actions represent vertical territorialised actions counterbalancing place specific problems and issues. The next guidebook will try to focus on the crosscutting horizontal common themes such as participatory approaches, sustainability, innovation, financing, public-private partnership that are to accompany the pilot actions in Central Europe as in the rest of the Union. Expected result of the Transnational Guidebook will be the definition of relevant transnational key topics in the construction of policies to ensure sustainable governance and management of infrastructure and services. The transnational approach is also necessary to provide the pilot projects with common basis and common evaluation parameters.



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