

# *Alpine Space Forum*

## Coping with Demographic Change - Shaping policies

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# ***Public Services & Civil Engagement under the perspective of demographic changes and the specific geographic situation of the alpine regions***

- **Differences and similarities of Public Services & Civil Engagement**
- **Challenges and opportunities being responsive to the demand of demographic changes**
- **Further procedures because of the specific situation of the Alpine regions**

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## ***What do we mean when we speak about Public Services (civil services)?***

**Services provided by government to its citizens, either directly (through the public sector) or by financing private provision of services.**

**The term is associated with a social consensus (usually expressed through democratic elections) that certain services should be available to all, regardless of income.**

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***In modern, developed countries the term public services often includes:***

- **Broadcasting**
- **Education**
- **Electricity**
- **Fire service**
- **Health care**
- **Military**
- **Police service**
- **Public transportation**
- **Telecommunications**
- **Town planning**
- **Waste management**
- **Water services**
- **Public information and archiving such as libraries**
- **Social services**
- **Environmental protection**

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# ***What do we mean when we speak about Civil Engagement*** (Civil Participation)

***“Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern”***

***(Definition of the American Psychological Association)***

- **Civic engagement can take many forms— from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy.**
- **Another way of describing this concept is the sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community.**

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## ***Conclusion***

**There is a smooth transition between Public & Private in taking care of the qualified interests of the citizens**

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## ***Demand of demographic changes***

- **Demographic changes causes a spatial spread and longterm population decline and aging**
- **This leads in rural areas to a closing down of public services (cannot be compensated as in urban centers – low population density)**
- **Demographic changes threatens the territorial cohesion in Europe where many peripheral rural areas face similar processes**

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## ***We have to intensify the research***

**Even though the spatial characteristics and impacts of aging and shrinking are rather well researched we know very little about how the demographic change influences rural policy, politics and polity.**

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***Partnerships and new rural governance for reacting to demographic change in rural regions in Germany; Patrick Küpper, 2010***

**Does this mean that demographic change can, on the one hand, intensify partnerships among regional actors dealing collaboratively with the problems or, on the other, can the actors compete against each other for the fewer (young) inhabitants and public funding. Description of the interactions among the rural actors for reacting to demographic change.**

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# ***DART (Declining Aging and Regional Transformation)***

**DART are challenges for many regions across Europe. For this reason 13 regions are co-operating to benchmark, identify and transfer appropriate solutions for dealing with demographic change.**

[www.dart-project.eu](http://www.dart-project.eu)

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## ***The potentiality of Civil Engagement***

**By 2030 every third person in the EU will be 60 or older. This situation has created obstacles in ensuring the provision of adequate public services, while at the same time shrinking regional demands and the need for a sufficiently large qualified workforce are endangering the economic basis of the regions in question.**

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***„The vulnerability index report“, „Regions for economic change“, „Lisbon Strategy“, „Europe 2020“***

**There are many strategies and reports underlining the impending challenges in connection with declining and ageing regions in Europe.**

**The "vulnerability index report" identifies the influence of demographic trends as one of the biggest challenges facing Europe.**

**Meeting the demographic challenge through the consolidation of human capital and maintaining of public services are key factors in regional policies as being outlined in the EU initiative**

**"Regions for economic change" and the "Lisbon Strategy" and its successor "Europe 2020".**

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**There are already several examples showing how the economy, education, health care and social services can be boosted in shrinking regions.**

**Accordingly DART outlines these experiences, underpins them with adapted standards and indicators and works out innovative and integrated solutions that maintain the quality of life and social inclusion for all generations in declining and ageing areas.**

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## ***Conclusions***

**Political recommendations focusing on**

**“Life-cycle-proof neighbourhood and social inclusion – an integrated strategy for regional transformation in demographic change” will be formulated.**

**They will show how regions can organize themselves and adapt public and private services to demographic changes so as to exploit chances for new jobs and innovation.**

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***The recommendations will spotlight questions such as:***

***(1/2)***

- **How can home care and ambulant medical and social services of elderly and sick, especially persons living alone, be organized to ensure independence for as long as possible?**
- **Which innovations in education are needed and how to encourage people to practice lifelong learning?**
- **How to encourage SMEs (small and medium enterprises) to implement an internal age management structure? How to deal with e-learning? How to deal with older and less educated people?**

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***The recommendations will spotlight questions such as:***

***(2/2)***

- **How can SMEs be helped in dealing with demographically related changes? Succession in ownership, changes in innovative products and services?**
- **How to include older people in local society? How to avoid the generation gap?**
- **How to organize the shape of demographic change in conjunction with civil participation?**
- **Which are suitable standards for infrastructure in rural areas and valid indicators with which to benchmark demographic change and to measure success in declining regions?**

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***Thank you for your attention!***

