

Alpine Space Forum

**Coping with Demographic Change – Shaping policies**

**22.-23 February 2011, Innsbruck**

# **Session 1, Economic Centers & Peripheries**

## **Results**

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# Key questions

1. **Which are the main trends and effects** of demographic change for economic centers and peripheries? **Which are the 3 most relevant threats and the 3 most relevant options/chances** from your point of view?
2. **What should policy makers do** in order to cope with these trends and effects, threats and options?
3. **Which roles can small towns play** as service providers for adjacent regions?
4. **Which new approaches** (methods, instruments, policies) should be enforced to (better) manage these challenges?

Other remarks

**Taboos**

## First remarks

1. Not only centers and periphery: mosaic of different patterns: cities, sub-urban, stable rural, strong tourism, declining peripheral municipalities: no general solutions
2. Centers, urban regions, touristic areas: manage growth, immigration, land use conflicts, environmental damage: nothing new, concepts are well known (compact cities, public transport etc.)
3. Periphery: manage shrinking: infrastructure and services, brain drain etc.
4. Both: Cope with challenges of overaging population

**Journalist: headlines for the best ideas to solve problems of daily life ...**

Journalist headlines are about other topics ...

# Politician: issues on the agenda in 10 years, how to sell them to the people

1. Choose between promoting non-european immigration or closing down of infrastructures and services in certain areas – even better: do both!

*- Non european immigration is a must also for rural areas: learn to live with social diversity, welcome your new neighbours, learn languages*

*- Shrinking and retreat must become a planning topic: learn to give up, to say goodbye, accept and welcome the new, which is different ... deal with emotional and psychological dimension and integrate it into planning*

*- Slow down the speed of change ...*

2. Family and career must not be a contradiction any more. Learn from the French example! Sell it to your spin doctors and to the private companies, people already know.

# Politician: issues on the agenda in 10 years, how to sell them to the people

3. You will not be able to solve the future challenges alone: Multilevel governance is the new paradigm. Improve your soft skills! Those who co-operate, are the winners in the long run.

- *Good co-operation needs strong and competitive partners.*
- *Develop endogenous potentials: The most important regional resource is the human resource*
- *Foster empowerment and civil participation: share decision making power with temporary groups and platforms*
- *Local zoning and land use plans will be made on regional level in the future. Prepare your majors!*
- *Land market: locals must be able to afford a piece of land or a flat at home.*
- *Proposal: make a study how to better manage secondary housing: analysis of standards and good practice, hand over tools to municipalities*

# Politician: issues on the agenda in 10 years, how to sell them to the people

## 3. Strengthen small towns as the backbones of rural areas!

- *Regions, small towns: position yourselves, find your niche!*
- *Create high quality education offers in small towns (branches of universities etc.). Co-operate with regional enterprises*
- *Provide high quality infrastructure and mobility offers for commuters*
- *Fix minimum density standards*
- *Adapt financial instruments: re-distribute public funds in co-operation areas (governance issue!)*
- *Strengthen regional identity: Create attractive offers for young people, before they leave: they will rather like to come back to an open minded, interesting home place with good memories than to a boring and narrow minded one*

## **Developer: Top priorities on investment plan for the next 10 years**

1. Invest in urban regions and maybe in small towns. They will remain the centers of growth.
2. Create innovative tools to make daily life easier for elderly people (barrier-free housing, mobility)
3. Invest in private health-care infrastructure in attractive rural locations: the rich urban seniors will afford it.
4. Create tools for multifunctional use of public infrastructure
5. Invest in mobility solutions for the post peak-oil period
6. Develop offers for wilderness tourism
7. Invest in own human resources: attract well educated youngsters – also from abroad, integrate family and career for women & men, keep the senior staff, learn languages!