Depopulation in remote areas: is tourism a solution?

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Outline

• ESPON Transnational Outreach
• Workshop in Soria
• ESPON – Shrinking rural regions
  • Policy responses
• Case studies
  • Castilla la Mancha – Integrated Territorial Investment
  • Andalucia – general support to services
  • Fundão – using agri-food as basis of tourism activities
  • Castilla y Leon – supporting social enterprise

• Conclusions
Transnational Outreach Events
20 events over three years 2017-2019
  3 in 2017
  9 in 2018

Topics
• Spatial planning
• Transport
• Rural depopulation and rural economies
• Integrated Territorial Development
• Functional Urban Areas
• Metropolitan Development
• Inner and outer Peripheries

Europe’s territorial futures and spatial planning systems: reflections on three ESPON projects (COMPASS, SPIMA, Territorial Futures) with links to the proposed Estonian ‘regional and spatial planning green paper’

Economic development in rural regions – new thinking and policies in finding and exploiting endogenous capacities

Implementing spatial plans – regulations and governance

Spatial planning: public participation processes

Impact of Refugee Flows and Migration
TNO Workshop Soria

Panel discussion, day 2

Press attention for the Commissioner

- 56 participants attended the Workshop over two half days...
- Key challenges on rural depopulation
- High level speakers from 5 Spanish regions
- Input from Romania
- Panel discussion and practical case studies, Spain, Italy, Portugal...

Edelmira Barreira Diz, Commissioner for the Demographic Challenge, Spain

Over 25% of audience not aware of ESPON activities before the event
Evolución de la población en el territorio (1901-2011)

- 1901-1930. Fuerte urbanización en el conjunto del país
- 1931-1950. Asentamiento de la población y fuerte crecimiento vegetativo
- 1951-1981. Gran intensidad flujos migratorios campo-ciudad y notable emigración al extranjero
- 1981-2011. Agotamiento demográfico en municipios más pequeños que contribuyen a la despoblación
Spanish Strategic objectives against depopulation

• Encourage balanced development to promote the equality of all citizens in care and access to services.
• Encourage equal opportunities regardless of the place of residence.
• Enhancing /strengthening resources against depopulation.
• Special attention to key groups in areas with low population and rural areas: young people and women
• Awareness and commitment to a balanced and sustainable development
Rural population change 2001-2011

Average annual population change in rural Local Administrative Units (%), 2001 - 2011

-4
-3 (-4)
-2 (-3)
-1 (-2)
0 (-1)
0 - 1
1 - 2
2 - 3
> 3

urban or intermediate LAU units

no data

Notes:
- Data for LT, PT, SI correspond to LAU1

Regional level: LAU2 / 1 (2011)
Source: ESPON, 2017
Origin of data: Eurostat, ESPON, 2017

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Policy agendas

EU Shrink Smart indicates there are three potential policy responses:
  1. “Do nothing”
  2. “Reverse the trend and stimulate growth”
  3. “Accept and adapt to decline”

Planning for shrinkage:
• Shrinkage as an opportunity
• Effective government-led policy interventions
• Place-based approaches
Mobilising endogenous resources

From an economic sustainable point of view, it’s important to:

• Diversify the local economy by using comparative territorial advantages
• Increase resilience and adaptive capacity by downsizing infrastructure and rightsizing the local economy
• Improve environmental sustainability
• Ensure access to basic services and infrastructure
Fostering ecosystem services and the green economy

• Using the “natural green advantage”

• Promote low-carbon economy
  • Circular economy
  • Promoting local produce supported by technology and ICT
  • Smart diversification in agri-food, energy, biomass, tourism and cultural activities
Integrated territorial development
The SWOT diagnosis and matrix are based on Castilla-La Mancha’s **Thematic Objectives (TO’s)** *:

1. **Preserving and protecting the ENVIRONMENT while promoting resource efficiency.**
2. **Improving COMPETITIVENESS of small and medium enterprises within the farming sector.**
3. **Encouraging the transition to a LOW CARBON economy in all sectors.**
4. **Improving the use and quality of and access to ICT’s.**
5. **Promoting research, technological development and INNOVATION.**
6. **Supporting sustainability and quality of JOBS while boosting labour mobility.**
7. **Promoting SOCIAL inclusion and fighting poverty and any form of discrimination.**
8. **Investing in EDUCATION, capacity building and lifelong learning through educational development and training infrastructures.**

The diagnosis of the entire ITI regional area is supplemented with ITI subarea diagnoses identifying territorial peculiarities.

* TO’s 5 and 7 are not included in Castilla-La Mancha’s OP.*
The Strategy's main goal is the sociodemographic recovery of ITI areas by means of three development vectors: digitizing the territory, boosting economic activity and supporting a sustainable use of available resources.

- **Digital**
  - Promoting telecommunication infrastructure in order to improve digitization of the ITI area.

- **Job opportunities**
  - Encouraging productive investments compatible with the territory's sustainability in the following sectors: agri-food, tourism, green economy & social economy.

- **Making the most of our resources**
  - Developing environmental infrastructure enabling the preservation and value of territorial resources: water, biomass, renewable energies and heritage.

- **Attracting population.**

- **4 thematic axes**
  - **INNOVATION**
  - **ECONOMIC FABRIC**
  - **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**
  - **HUMAN ENVIRONMENT.**
Retaining and improving services
For Repopulation and Maintenance of the rural population:

- Improvement in the provision of basic services to the population.
- Provision of essential services for the implementation of economic activities.
- Training aimed at young people and women from rural areas and emigrant population.
- Special treatment of priority rural areas: on tax incentives for companies and entrepreneurs, special budgets for small municipalities, etc
- Put in value the services and infrastructures of the municipalities that facilitate the location of new economic activities and the settlement of population.
- Design of a common strategy to fight against depopulation.
Agrifood opportunities
Overview

• Fundão is located in the Centro region of Portugal (Cova da Beira).

• In terms of their identity genesis, the Fundão county is characterized by geographical dispersion in which contrast markedly urban areas, such as the city of Fundão.

• Principal activity sectors: trade and services, herding and forestry, and agriculture (fruit, olive oil and wine production). In terms of industry, we emphasize the food and agriculture one.

Area: 700,20 km²
Population: 29 000 inhabitants
Density: 42 inhabitants per km²
Agro-food Products

ANNUAL PRODUCTION:

- Wine: 4,000,000 l
- Olive Oil: 1,400,000 l
- Cheese: 4,000 ton / 3,500 per day
- Smoked sausages: 3,000 ton
- Fruit concentrated: 4,100 ton
- Fruit jelly: 200,000 units
Cherry from Fundão
the original one

63% of national production
7,000 ton / year
1500 jobs
500 direct
1000 seasonal

2004 – selling price: 1,4 € / Kg
2015 – 3€ / Kg

Economic value
20 M €
In June, every year
In November, every year
In May, every year
THANKS,
COME TO VISIT US.
Social enterprise
1. Build an adequate **legal framework** that typifies social enterprises.

2. Improve access to **capital generation of specific fiscal** and financial incentives to develop enterprises and social enterprises in sparsely populated areas.

3. **Promote the spirit of social entrepreneurship** in the Educational System and in public employment devices.

4. **Promote social innovation and knowledge.**

5. Promote markets for social enterprises through **alliances with the public sector and other actors** (companies, consumers, etc.).

6. Improve **support infrastructures** (physical and internet) in sparsely populated areas, favoring their connectivity.
Conclusions

• To combat depopulation
• Tourism possible solution but depends on region
  • Landscape value, cultural heritage, climate, connectivity, facilities, etc.
  • Connectivity
• Needs to be integrated into a wider strategy
• Build on local differenciation
• Connectivity important
• Tax breaks and investment opportunities
• Social enterprise EL Hueco in Soria [http://www.elhueco.org/](http://www.elhueco.org/)
Opportunities

• Walking routes (1 week?)
• Stevenson Trail
• Kerry Way

€445,000 allocated to 13 agri-food tourism projects in rural areas

It provides opportunities for farmers, producers and artisans to develop their market produce and brands, connect with the community and visitors to an area, and improve skills and best practice all within the wider backdrop of tourism.