

**Regions for economic change:**  
**Regional Policy responses to demographic challenges**  
**25 and 26 January 2007 in Brussels**

Draft version

The purpose of this conference is to demonstrate how European regional policy and its instruments allow European regions to respond to demographic challenges and make the most of the opportunities presented by demographic change. The event will showcase examples of best practice and is intended to provide a learning opportunity for programme managing authorities. There will be room for up to 500 representatives of national, regional and local administrations, institutions and networks, equal opportunities organisations and representatives of universities.

Apart from the opening and closing plenary meetings, the conference will be focussed around 3 workshop sessions, with 3 workshops per session. Working languages of the plenary meetings will be English, French, German, Polish, Spanish and Italian, and there will be English, French and German interpretation for the workshops.

The conference will be held between 25 January, 10:00, and 26 January 2007, 12:45, in the Charlemagne building in Brussels, rue de la Loi 170, in the Charlemagne building in Brussels, rue de la Loi 170.

## **Conference Programme**

### **25 January 2007**

**10:00 - 10:05 Opening of plenary session by Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner for Regional Policy (tbc)**

**10:05 – 10:25 Keynote speeches (tbc) (German regional Minister & Commissioner Hübner)**

**10:25 – 12:25 Workshop Session 1: Managing and Benefiting from Demographic Change**

The session looks at sustainable ways of managing demographic change through developing coherent interventions allowing regions to adjust to the challenges. Interventions take place in different institutional contexts according to the Member States (e.g. public and private roles in the provision of services for elderly people) and should take into account the links between the use of Cohesion Policy funding and other measures aiming at tackling ageing through changing incentives. Workshop session 1

looks at adapting infrastructures, maximising labour market participation of those who can work and the opportunities presented by an ageing society in that context.

□ **Workshop 1A: Active ageing strategies: planning and adaptation of infrastructures to demographic change**

Demographic developments require planning interventions to support adaptation of infrastructures to changing needs, including changes to social and health infrastructure, tourism, transport, communications, housing, public spaces, universities and cultural facilities. This workshop will look at how Cohesion Policy can be used to support these interventions and developments.

□ **Workshop 1B: Supporting new markets: the creation of specific goods and services for elderly people**

An ageing society presents opportunities in terms of new markets for goods and services for elderly people, including home-based services (e.g. shopping), financial services, tourism, new media and telecoms, health and well-being. This workshop will look at how, through Cohesion Policy, managing authorities can help to create a favourable environment for research into and the development and production of these goods and services, including through direct support measures for entrepreneurs looking to develop goods and services for older people.

□ **Workshop 1C: Attracting and retaining people at work: adapting regional and local labour markets**

Maximising labour market participation by all social groups regardless of gender, ethnic origin or age is one key aspect of addressing demographic challenges. This workshop will examine how Cohesion Policy can support active labour market policies to attract and retain people at work, including through education and lifelong learning, training, childcare, ICT solutions (e.g. tele working).

**12:30 – 13:00 Press conference (for regional and specialist press) (tbc)**

**12:30 – 14:30 Lunch break and networking opportunity**

**14:30 – 16:30 Workshop Session 2: Diverse territories, diverse problems?**

Addressing the demographic challenge may require different approaches depending on the varied territorial make-up of regions. The second session will be made up of three workshops: one focussing on rural and sparsely populated areas, another on urban areas and densely populated areas, and a third on the pivotal role of ICT as a tool for territorial cohesion.

□ **Workshop 2A: Developing rural and sparsely populated and ultra peripheral areas: strategies and actions**

Remote and sparsely populated areas face a number of demographic challenges including an often significantly older demographic profile than national averages and out-migration/depopulation exacerbated by a lack of employment opportunities and low qualification levels. This workshop will examine how Cohesion Policy can contribute to the development of responses to demographic developments in rural and sparsely populated areas, including ICT connections (broadband), innovative transport solutions, and integrated service provision.

□ **Workshop 2B: Urban areas and densely populated areas**

Urban areas and densely populated areas present a number of challenges and opportunities: while their populations may be large and relatively young, high inactivity rates and social exclusion can be a challenge. Infrastructures also need to be adapted both for older people and for those who require access to public transport. This workshop will look at how Cohesion Policy can help to maximise the rich potential of Europe's urban and densely populated areas through addressing labour market participation, social inclusion of young people and migrants and adapting infrastructures.

□ **Workshop 2C: Potential of e-inclusion to strengthen territorial cohesion**

ICT solutions such as e-government, e-business, e-learning and e-health can be a pivotal tool for territorial cohesion. This workshop will look at how Cohesion Policy can be used to support the development and application of these possibilities with the objectives of increasing accessibility to public services, to jobs and business opportunities and improved health increasing the number of healthy years of work.

**16:45 – 17.30**      **Concluding Plenary (Round table)**

**18:00**              **Cocktail**

**26 January 2007**

**09:00 – 09:30 Welcome coffee**

**09:30 – 10:00 Keynote speech by European Commissioner (tbc)**

**10:00 – 12:00 Workshop Session 3: Regions learning from each other**

This session will examine how regions are already working together to share and apply best practices on addressing demographic challenges.

**□ Workshop 3A: Mobilising the full potential of people; Regions Cities and densely populated areas adapting labour markets**

This workshop will look at how Cohesion Policy is helping regions and cities and densely populated areas to put in place a wide range of active labour market and active ageing policies with a view to improving local and regional labour markets.

**□ Workshop 3B: Regions working together to seize the opportunities presented by demographic challenges**

This workshop will look at how already existing networks of regions and partnerships – including public authorities, private and voluntary organisations and third level educational institutions - are directly addressing the demographic challenge, lessons learned, and the (potential) role of Cohesion Policy.

**□ Workshop 3C: Regions working together through inter-regional cooperation**

This workshop will look at how Cohesion Policy is already helping regions to work together on a wide range of themes directly linked to addressing demographic challenges, including ICT (e.g. e-government), tourism and transport.

**12:00 – 12.15 Break**

**12:15 – 12:45 Concluding Plenary**