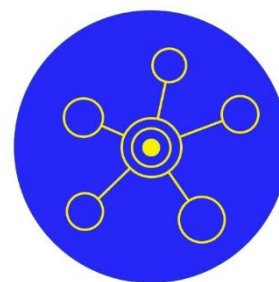


SETTLE - Population imbalances in Europe: challenges of urban concentration versus rural depopulation

Newsletter 2 1st Quarter 2021

This project studies population imbalances in Europe, their challenges, and opportunities, by contrasting two different territorial subjects: rural areas suffering from depopulation versus growing urbanization areas with a high concentration of population

The objectives of this analysis are to describe the settlement paths of population in Europe and their growth dynamics; to detect through economic and social models the factors conditioning these dynamics; to know the socioeconomic challenges in terms of services and infrastructure as well as the opportunities for a better cohesion between these two territorial realities; and to describe relations between rural areas and cities.



SETTLE

Erasmus + Project



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Main facts of population in Europe: Rural vs Urban in Eastern Europe

The collapse of the communist system in East-Central Europe was followed by dynamic processes of change in rural areas. The result has been transformation in all sectors of the economy, and also in public and cultural life.

The systemic transformation brought an intensive spatial polarisation consisting of a loss of population in rural areas during the first decade (1989-1999). However, that process was less and less remarkable the higher the fulfillments were made to meet the European standards for the accession, since these standards implied that support infrastructure (roads, public services, etc) came also to rural areas.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia are found to show the greatest stability where the situation in rural areas is concerned. As it can be seen in the map, at regional level (Nuts 2) the rate of population change is not negative in most regions. In contrast, transformation processes in Poland and Hungary have been more dynamic, giving rise to increasing socioeconomic disparities between rural areas; while it is rural areas in Romania that have been hit harder by change. [1]

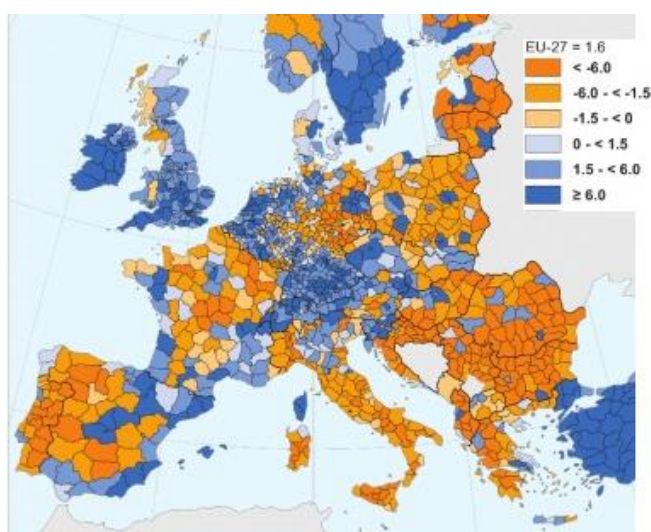
The economic development has been affected by an aging population (that also happens in Southern Mediterranean countries like Spain, Italy or Greece), together with a relatively more reduced allocation of human capital in those rural areas due to the prospects of lower economic growth rates.

The depopulation of rural areas is especially noticeable in countries like Bulgaria, with a high external migration that contributed to decrease the population by a fifth in the last three decades.

Most of the rural areas are most affected by the migration patterns than the cities. The future economic development is also harmed because the working-age population in rural areas tend to be a lower percentage of the total population in comparison with urban municipalities. In addition, the labour force has less human capital and the prospects of economic growth are lower.

This long-lasting process has been evolving since 1989 and coordinated actions would be required to stop and revert the rural vs urban imbalance.

[1] Bański, J. (2019). Spatial Differences in the Transformation Processes Taking Place in Rural Areas of East-Central Europe. In Three Decades of Transformation in the East-Central European Countryside (pp. 3-19). Springer.



Crude rate of total population change (2018) Source: Eurostat

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TOPICS for the CONFERENCE PAPERS

Due to the pandemic situation and after consultations with the Erasmus + Agency, we must tell you that the Conference will be postponed for some months, **to be held in 2022 Spring**. Those who have sent abstracts will receive an evaluation of the Scientific Committee by mid May 2021, as it was first forecasted, so that you can keep on working on your papers for an extended time.

For those that did not send a paper yet, **the abstracts reception will be open up to the end of 2021** on the topics suggested below.



- Regional policy design for a balanced population
- Depopulation
- Rural-urban proximity
- Services infrastructure and welfare for population in cities and rural areas
- Population imbalances and migration
- Entrepreneurship and university talent attraction leading to urban concentration
- Environmental and legal aspects of sustainability in smart cities and depopulated areas
- Systemic transformation and influence on population
- Population statistics advances
- Others related to population imbalances (to be evaluated by the Scientific Committee)

The SETTLE network

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NEWS

XXV International Conference “Living and Walking in Cities” LWC

LWC International Conference is organized by the Friendly City Study Centre for Safety Mobility - CeSCAM of the University of Brescia, Italy. The LWC International Conference traditionally deals with the topics of urban mobility and quality of life in urban areas, with a specific focus on vulnerable road users. The LWC Conference allows researchers, experts, administrators, and practitioners to gather and discuss policy issues, best practices and research findings from different perspectives.

[Read more](#)

A European rural agenda urgently needed for rural areas after COVID-19 crisis

The current pandemic crisis has exposed and exacerbated the consequences of several longstanding threats faced by rural areas and has added to the urgency for rural revival in regions across the EU. On the other side, the pandemic can encourage more local consumption and production patterns, remote working habits, increase the importance of quality of life and develop new forms of mobility, which may open new opportunities for sustainable jobs and growth in rural regions.

[Read more](#)

ARTICLES

European integration and its effects on population in border and peripheral regions

Border regions experienced positive effects on growth in population share since EU integration, but it did not completely reverse their relative population decline. At the same time, the process of European integration seems to have aggravated the demographic decline of EU peripheral regions compared to the EU core regions. Moreover, for the regions that are both border and peripheral, the EU integration effect has been stronger than in border only regions.

[Read more](#)

Depopulation As A Policy Challenge In The Context Of Global Demographic Trends

Depopulation is a recurring theme, but its contemporary causes tell a new story. Population decline today is the partial result of a natural development process. This report addresses depopulation from a multi-dimensional demographic perspective, not only looking at population size and age structure, but also differentiating by level of education and labor force participation.

[Read more](#)

WHO is WHO in POPULATION?

UN Habitat – For a better urban future

The UN-Habitat’s vision of “a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world” is bold and ambitious. UN-Habitat works with partners to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities. UN-Habitat promotes urbanization as a positive transformative force for people and communities, reducing inequality, discrimination and poverty.

www.unhabitat.org

 UN HABITAT

DG Regio – Regional and Urban Policy

They are some 700 professionals from all over the European Union who understand the diverse challenges faced by EU countries and their regions. They use our wide range of expertise to target investments that foster growth and create jobs. They aim to become a knowledge base within the European Commission to inform policy making with regional data and intelligence.

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/regional-and-urban-policy>



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