



EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAM PROJECT

**“CHALLENGES OF  
REGIONAL CENTRES:  
DEPOPULATION CONTROL,  
DEVELOPMENT –  
BEST PRACTICES”,  
DECODE**

Daugavpils is a city in Latvia, located on the banks of the Daugava River. With a population of over 92 000, it is the second largest city in the country after the capital Riga. It is an industrial and educational centre, as well as an important cultural, sports and recreation centre. It is the city with multi-ethnic and multicultural environment. Daugavpils City Council works actively on making city an attractive place for living and doing business, therefore on implementing different projects, including international. Daugavpils has more than 15 twin and cooperation cities and has been a part of many EU funded projects with many different partners from European countries.

The EU program “Europe for Citizens” aims to bring Europe closer to its citizens by stimulating the debate on topical issues of the European Union at local, regional and international level. It is essential to create conditions that enable citizens to participate in the European Union policy-making processes, to strengthen solidarity among European citizens, and to ensure that civil society organizations, their members and any member of society are involved in the democratic life of the European Union.

Daugavpils City Council (Latvia), as a lead partner, together with 7

project partners from EU countries such as Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Romania, Italy, Denmark and Spain, has launched the project „Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation Control, Development – Best Practices” (DeCoDe) in the framework of the Measure “Networks of Towns” of Action 2 “Democratic Engagement and Civic Participation” of the European Union programme “Europe for Citizens”. A total of 156 projects were submitted from all the Member States of the European Union for the call of proposals of September 1, 2017 for Measure 2.2. “Networks of Towns” of the programme. 15 projects received funding.

The project’s aim is to create an international, sustainable network of European cities, which are regional centres in their countries, in order to share experiences on depopulation and return migration processes and their impact. By implementing this project, the participating cities will promote international cooperation and sum up proposals for the control of depopulation, which will be available for cities to use and integrate into their planning documents.

Why depopulation as a main focus? The problem of depopulation is mostly affecting the cities and their territories with weak economic structures or cities, which lost their inhabitants

after the last crisis few years ago. The European Union, according to goals of the strategy Europe 2020, is paying great attention to this process to address, among other things, the environmental degradation and the risk of hydrological instability of these territories. Very important as well is to promote the protection of cultural identities, traditions, historical heritage and economic activities at European level of these cities.

To attract people not only to the capitals, but also to the other biggest cities it is necessary to develop the specific network of European cities, which have in common this problem of depopulation and which are interested in the development of the strategy of depopulation control. This strategy should be developed and implemented in aim to share problems, ideas for future and best practices for achieving the challenges to preserve the number of population or even to increase it in the participating cities.

Project partners do believe in successful cooperation in the process of solving depopulation problem, retaining and attracting young people to the cities and creating significant network of involved European cities.

# PROJECT „CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL CENTRES: DEPOPULATION CONTROL, DEVELOPMENT – BEST PRACTICES” (DECODE)

**PROGRAMME:** European Union programme “Europe for Citizens”, 2nd strand “Democratic engagement and civic participation”, action 2.2 Networks of Towns

**AIM:** The project is aimed at creating a network of the largest cities after capitals, regional centers, which are significantly affected by depopulation in order to promote the exchange of good practices and to develop action plan of depopulation control for stronger local economic structures and raising citizens’ awareness about mobility in the European cities. It is essential to popularize the participating cities, to make them vivid with the exchange of information, tourism materials, presentations, traditions and cultural heritage. It is also important to make proud the citizens of involved cities, make them appreciate the place they live in. The project foresees the promotion and development of involved cities in aim to make them vivid, attractive and suitable for modern citizens’ needs.



## PROJECT PARTNERS:

### LP DAUGAVPILS CITY COUNCIL

(DAUGAVPILS PILSĒTAS DOME), Daugavpils, Latvia

### PP2 KAUNAS CITY MUNICIPALITY

(KAUNO MIESTO SAVIVALDYBES ADMINISTRACIJA), Kaunas, Lithuania

### PP3 LODZKIE REGION

(WOJEWODZTWO LODZKIE), Lodz, Poland

### PP4 CITY ADMINISTRATION OF MAGDEBURG

(LANDESHAUPTSTADT MAGDEBURG), Magdeburg, Germany

### PP5 CEIPES

(CENTRO INTERNAZIONALE PER LA PROMOZIONE DELL'EDUCAZIONE E LO S), Palermo, Italy

### PP6 MUNICIPALITY OF VEJLE

Vejle, Denmark

### PP7 ACTA CENTER

(ASOCIATIA CENTRUL EUROPEAN PENTRU INTEGRARE SOCIOPROFESIONALA), Oradea, Romania

### PP8 ADIMAN

(ASOCIACION PARA DESARROLLO INTEGRAL DE LA MANCHELA CONQUENSE), Casasimarro, Spain

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

01/03/2018 – 01/02/2020

**The main PROBLEM:** depopulation

**KEYWORDS:** depopulation, environmental degradation, protection of cultural identities, traditions and historical heritage, regional centres, strategy of depopulation control.

## INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS:

event 1 – kick-off meeting in Daugavpils, Latvia – May, 2018

event 2 – thematic transnational meeting in Kaunas, Lithuania – September, 2018

event 3 – thematic transnational meeting/seminar in Palermo, Italy – February, 2019

event 4 - transnational meeting/work-shop in Lodz, Poland – May, 2019

event 5 – dissemination conference in Daugavpils, Latvia – November, 2019

## ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS:

- Creating and strengthening the relationship between European cities;
- Promoting the European citizenship;
- Sharing good practices in aim to obtain them in other cities;
- Enhancing and expanding knowledge about depopulation process in European largest cities, regional centres and local municipalities;
- Popularization of the participating cities;
- Developing depopulation control action plan;
- Organization of international meetings and conference on prevention measures of depopulation.



LOGO of the project "Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation Control, Development – best practices", DeCoDe, Nr.595269-CITIZ-1-2017-2-LV-CITIZ-NT

Logos are everywhere. On the clothes we wear, on the phones we use and on the food we buy — we're surrounded by logos. Some of them are straightforward — a letter form or a pictorial representation, but some are more complex.

Logo of the project DeCoDe looks simple, however, it has a deeper meaning in it. European Union flag symbolizes the values of EU and specific objectives, aims and priorities of the program Europe for Citizens, which will be implemented within the project. The shapes and colours are not chosen by accident. These three colours reflect traffic light, which shows, that the project will try to stop depopulation (De - red), we will be getting ready to control our challenges (Co - yellow) and we will go straight forward to the development (De - green) of involved cities.

Nr.595269-CITIZ-1-2017-2-LV-CITIZ-NT

# LATVIA

DAUGAVPILS  
Daugavpils City Council

Motto/slogan  
**DAUGAVPILS IS DIVERSITY**

Daugavpils is the second largest city of Latvia. It is located relatively close to Belarus and Lithuania (distances of 33 km and 25 km respectively), and some 120 km from the Latvian border with Russia. Daugavpils is a major railway junction and industrial centre of the Latgale region.

Total area of Daugavpils is 72 km<sup>2</sup> and the population is 93 308 people, density of population is 1 296 inhabitants per 1 km<sup>2</sup> in the beginning of 2018. According to the data, 58 614 or 62,8% of the total number of city population were at working age in Daugavpils. The number of working age population continues to decrease – by 1 056 people in 2017. The population of the age group under working age increased slightly – by 107 people and the population of the age over working age decreased by 329 people.

Daugavpils is a city with different nationalities and the ethnic structure. 49% of the inhabitants of Daugavpils were Russians, 18,7% - Latvians, 13,9% - Polish, 7,3% - Belarussians, 1,9% - Ukrainian and 8,2% other nationalities.

The goal: Daugavpils city – an attractive place for living and making business in the Eastern Baltics. Due to this the priorities of the Daugavpils City by 2020 are:

1. Society (S) - Satisfied with life, educated, creative, active and healthy residents, who are proud of their city
2. Economics (E) - Economics, in which the industries with high added value are developed
3. Environment (En) – Aesthetic and functionally arranged and developed urban environment.



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

The data of the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) of Latvia show that at the beginning of 2018 Latvia population accounted for 1 million 934 thousand, which is 16 thousand people fewer than a year ago. Since the beginning of 2010 (until the end of 2017), Latvian population has dropped by 170 thousand or 8 %. Migration has resulted in a decrease of 113 thousand and negative natural increase in a drop of 57 thousand people. The long-term Development Strategy of Latvia claims that by the 2020 elderly population will exceed the number of kids and young people together till 18 years.

The most notable population drop in 2017 is registered in Latgale region – of 6.3 thousand or 2.3 %, which is 0.3 percentage points more than in 2015. Latgale region is the region of Latvia with the worst population decline in a whole country. The number of residents of Latgale region is decreasing every year because of low average monthly wage, lower job, entertainment and other daily needed opportunities.

Since Latvia joined the EU the country has lost one-fifth of its population. Borders are open, information about life in other EU states is available, many people leave Latvia and go abroad searching for opportunities of better living, work etc.

The number of the inhabitants in Daugavpils is decreasing every year. Over the last five years the population has fallen by 4 781. Every year there are changes in the age groups of residents of the Daugavpils, mostly this change are negative – working age population and elderly population of the city are decreasing, but there is some insignificant increase in the young population group.

Population decrease in whole Latvia is explained by the working population emigration to the other EU countries, in Daugavpils city – with youth emigration to the capital city Riga. In addition, the overall negative demographic situation in the country is the cause of the depopulation.

## MAIN CHALLENGES OF DEPOPULATION IN OUR CITY:

1) **Retention the existing population** - as the death rate in the city is much higher than a birth rate, but people at working age emigrate to other countries, our society is aging. An aging population can lead to increasing

amount of economic and social problems to face so the municipality has to react and find new solutions for attracting young people to stay living or return in Daugavpils.

2) **Economic growth** - because of the working age population decrease, Daugavpils has a relatively high unemployment rate compared to other cities in the country (2017 - 7,9%), that has an impact on economic growth and well-being of the inhabitants of the city. That also reduces the attractiveness of the city in the eyes of potential inhabitants.

3) **Increase of quality of life** - in general well-being of individuals, societies and population in present city having positive features of life. It observes life satisfaction, including everything from physical health, family, education, employment, wealth, safety, security, freedom, religious beliefs, finance and the environment. At the present time the city is family friendly, safe, vibrant and attractive city which strives to the new achievements and sustainable development.

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

The city is proud of Daugavpils Fortress, Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre - a multi-functional contemporary art and culture centre that is the only place in Eastern Europe where you have an opportunity to get acquainted with the original works of Mark Rothko. We are proud of city landmarks - Daugavpils Fortress, the historical centre, century-old wooden homes of the Old Suburb and the Church hill can be considered the most significant town building landmarks of Daugavpils. Daugavpils can be proud of the large number of water bodies (there are 12 lakes, Daugava river etc.), as well as parks and the vast wood park that surround the city. We are proud of our history and people who made it as well as of city inhabitants who succeed now in sport, culture and other competitions, events etc.

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

The goal for 2020, according to Daugavpils City Development Program 2014 - 2020 is to stop the threat of depopulation and increase the population of the Daugavpils city to 100 000 inhabitants (instead of 93 308 in 2017).





# LITHUANIA

KAUNAS  
Kaunas City Municipality

Motto/slogan  
**KAUNASTIC FANTASTIC**

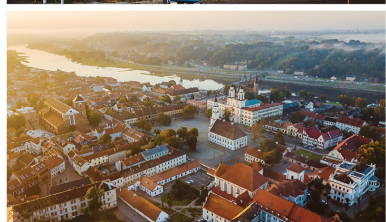
Kaunas City is the second largest town in Lithuania and the largest town of the Kaunas County with total population of 306 838 people.

Kaunas is located in the central part of Lithuania on the confluence of the two largest Lithuanian rivers the Nemunas and the Neris, therefore the City has excellent opportunities for the development of water transport. Kaunas is located 100 kilometres from the capital Vilnius and 212 kilometres from the Country's major seaport Klaipėda.

The city is also located at the crossroads of the country's two major motorways: the A1 motorway Vilnius – Kaunas – Klaipėda is a connection between the capital city of Vilnius and the ice-free Klaipėda Seaport. The Via Baltica (road E67) leading from Estonia via Latvia to Poland is integrated into the TransEuropean motorway system, serving as a connection between Nordic countries and Central and Western Europe.

Kaunas region is one of the most important regions in Lithuania. There are 8 municipalities in Kaunas region. They are compactly situated round the administrative centre – Kaunas city. The Region comprises the city of Kaunas, Birštonas town, and the districts of Kaunas, Kalsiadorys, Prienai, Raseiniai, Kedainiai and Jonava with the population of 673 thousand.

Kaunas Region is the central Region in the country. It is the geographical, educational, as well as industrial and transport centre of Lithuania.



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

According to the data of 2018, Kaunas city has 288,5 thousand inhabitants. of the population, the number of which tends to decrease by about 1.4% annually in the last three years. Part of the departing for about 20 percent migrating in the territory of Lithuania and the major part is about 80% emigrate abroad. According to the composition of the population during this period, in particular, the working age population is decreasing in Kaunas city. The average age of the population in Kaunas city is on average 42 years, which means that the older and younger people are decreasing, though the birth rate is increasing every year, but in comparison with other major cities of Lithuania remains one of the smallest. It affects that the city of Kaunas has a high demographic coefficient of old-age at the country level - 141 (for every 100 inhabitants of the age group aged 0-15 there are 141 retired people) and it remains constant.

## MAIN CHALLENGES OF DEPOPULATION IN OUR CITY:

Emigration of working age people; internal migration to the suburbs; population aging.

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

Kaunas of Lithuania seeks to become a changing force for a local community as well as for the communities with similar problems and issues all over Europe. The main goals: strengthening of communality, promote business and innovation, etc.

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

To create a complete city of culture and entrepreneurship, in which it is convenient to live and study, as the greatest potential for growth of the city is the young people entering Kaunas, therefore the aim of all of us is to create an environment in Kaunas that after graduation these people do not go to other cities or suburbs.



# POLAND

ŁÓDŹ  
Lodzkie Region

Motto/slogan  
**PROMOTES LODZKIE**

Lodzkie Region is located in the centre of Poland and consists of 5,8% of value the area of Poland ( 18 219 square km, being the 9th in Poland in case of area). The administrative division of the region consists of 177 gminas (communities – 18 urban gminas, 26 urban-rural gminas, and 133 rural gminas). The voivodship consists of 21 Poviats (counties), 3 cities with Powiat status - Łódź (being the capital of the region, Piotrków Trybunalski and Skierniewice), 44 towns and 5009 rural localities.

Population of the region is 2 485 323 persons, with 62,9% of residents in the urban areas. With 16,8% of population in pre-working age, 60,7% in working age and 22,5% of inhabitants in post-working age. The life expectancy of the inhabitants of the region is for women 80,8 years of age and for men 72,0 years of age.

Compared to other regions, the Lodzkie Region is relatively well developed economically, it is also characterised by a high rate of labour force participation. Current unemployment rate in the region is 8,5%.

Lodzkie is a regional self-governing community and relevant territory. Represents the highest level of administrative sub-division of Poland and is responsible for creating and implementing numerous regional policies, including management of European Union funding, support of the entrepreneurs. As a province it also has legal personality. The provincial government performs specific laws and other legal acts regarding public tasks of regional character, not restricted to government bodies.

LORIS 2030 emphasises the role of silver economy in the region's development. Aging, and related with it depopulation, is an issue of special concern for Lodzkie Region, as it has one of highest and fastest rising proportion of elderly persons in Poland (above 25%). Seniors are perceived by LORIS as excluded social group, while services for the elderly, related to their social inclusion are identified as market niches.

Strategic documents in relation to depopulation:

- Plan przeciwdziałania depopulacji w województwie łódzkim 2020, Łódź 2015
- (Plan to counteract depopulation in the Lodzkie region 2020).



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

In the last twenty years in the Lodzkie Region, we can observe a decreasing number of people, combined with the simultaneous aging of the population, i.e. an increase in the number and share of older people in the population. Both processes will be continued in the future and will accelerate especially after 2020.

Elements that certainly have a negative impact on the population potential of the voivodship are:

- quality of life felt by residents,
- poor housing conditions,
- and poor health of residents.

Particularly puzzling is the low subjective assessment of living conditions and the level of satisfaction of needs, which is not reflected in objective indicators of living conditions.

## MAIN CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE LODZKIE REGION IN DEPOPULATION CONTEXT:

1. Migrations in the Lodzkie Region

The Lodzkie region is perceived as a depopulated area, with high mortality and negative migration balance. Based on data, in the last quarter of a century, Lodzkie Region (voivodship), recorded the highest level of mortality in Poland (Przybylski, Szukalski 2015). In case of migration, the last decade was characterized by a surplus of emigrants over people settling, although this negative balance was not of catastrophic sizes, answering only for a certain part of the drop in the number population (Kałuża Kopias 2015).

The demographic data clearly indicates the persistence of unfavourable situation in the Lodzkie Region in terms of migration balance (both internal as well as external). However, the data from the registration registers do not reflect the entire scale of migration flows in individual years. This fact is due to failure to fulfil the obligation of registration or making it with a long delay by a large number of some migrants.

2. Role of the silver economy under conditions of demographic changes in the Łódzkie Region

Statistical data clearly indicates the aging process of society in the Lodz region. These phenomena may cause some anxiety related to the decrease of potential labour resources included in the creation process of GDP in the region. In the long term, this may imply braking development of the region and deterioration of the quality of life. This scenario is likely but does not have to be confirmed. It is important to approach the observed, diagnosed demographic changes that do not have to limit the development of the region, but create new opportunities for it.

The silver economy concept is reflected in the Development Strategy for the Lodzkie Region 2020 and the Regional Innovation Strategy for the Lodzkie Region – LORIS 2030 (Smart Specialization Strategy). This proves the authorities' awareness that the development of the Lodzkie region in the future will depend on the ability to use the potential the elderly. The strategy promotes the activities that are supposed to provide first intensification of social assistance and expansion of services for the elderly and after secondly, activities leading to the creation of an active and decent opportunity for seniors participation in the labour market.

3. Social innovations improving the quality of life of the inhabitants  
Currently Lodzkie Region lacks systemic solutions that meet the needs

of elderly people and the challenges associated with this social group. High activity of local communities, in the dimension of social activity of seniors' environments reveals their needs in the system. Solutions and locally implemented ideas are at some point unable to be replicated due to legislative difficulties, etc.

In this regard the identified challenge and its effects, which the Lodzkie Region will experience, the main objective of the regional public and local policy is to create conditions for an active and high quality of healthy life, in which people are provided with optimal and safe opportunities to participate in business life (also understood as involvement in the labour market), social, educational, cultural and civic, without the existence of discrimination, allowing the satisfaction of independence manifesting itself in good health.

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

The Lodzkie Region is the „promised land” for entrepreneurs investors and Residents, where:

- any innovative idea is feasible,
- tradition meets modernity,
- creativity is the driving force of development.

The Lodzkie Region in 2030 is the region:

- Where diversity is strength.
- Which has its cultural and economic identity.
- Which is open and favourable to businesses.
- Of creative people and businesses.
- Of strong and competitive local business.
- Of local patriots.

(Loris 2030)

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

- Priority I. Health and functional abilities of the region's inhabitants
- Priority II. Security
- Priority III. Activity on the labour market
- Priority IV. Educational activity need for new qualifications and the changing demographic situation in the education system
- Priority V. Social and civic activity
- Priority VI. Cultural activity
- Priority VII. Non-discrimination policy
- Priority VIII. Information and communication technologies
- Priority IX. Sector of the silver economy

For each specific objective, existing implementation tools were indicated in the perspective up to 2020 (mainly within the framework of European Union funds and national programs).  
(based on Plan przeciwdziałania depopulacji w województwie łódzkim 2020, Łódź 2015).





# GERMANY

## STATE CAPITAL MAGDEBURG

Department for Business Development Tourism and Regional Co-operation

### Motto/slogan

### CITY OF OTTO

Magdeburg (approx. 240.000 inhabitants, 7,8 % migration background) is an attractive major city that is an excellent place to live for all generations. Alongside its wide variety of cultural and leisure activities, sports and educational facilities and care and support services for children and young people, the metropolis known as the City of Otto also offers plenty of peace, quiet and relaxation thanks to its close proximity to the river Elbe and its many parks and green spaces.

The people of Magdeburg benefit from a well-developed network of healthcare facilities and social support, a comprehensive range of residential buildings and building plots and outstanding connections to local and long-distance transport routes and services. Excellent accessibility, a good infrastructure and two universities are just some examples of the many advantages of the City of Otto. In recent decades, the city has undergone extensive development and introduced a number of positive changes, above all in the fields of science, business and culture and most visibly with regard to its urban development.

In the past 25 years in particular, a large number of building projects have been completed in Magdeburg. The face of the city has been completely transformed and is still changing today. Magdeburg's urban development has a large impact on the quality of life in the city and is an essential economic factor. Nowadays, the City of Otto is a progressive and cosmopolitan location that is a great place to live. There are countless arguments as to why Magdeburg is not only an excellent place to work, establish a company and make an impact, but also a location in which you can feel right at home.

Magdeburg is an attractive business location for both German and international companies. Well-networked contacts in the city's economic development department work efficiently to support entrepreneurs. Quick approval procedures, extremely well-developed industrial sites at affordable property prices, extensive funding possibilities, optimal transport connections, qualified workers and opportunities to cooperate with scientific and research institutions are just a few of the many highlights that make Magdeburg such an impressive investment location.



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

Hardly anyone had a resurgence of this city on the Elbe after 1990. And yet the history of the place has become a success story at the latest since the millennium change – economically, but also culturally. Prosperity is growing steadily and the number of unemployed has halved in recent years. Large companies such as the IT giant IBM have opened a branch in Saxony-Anhalt's capital city. And the population has been growing again for five years, in the meantime 233,000 inhabitants: The post-Exodus – 60 000 citizens left Magdeburg after 1990 – could be stopped. The city is alive. The Institute of the German economy in Cologne has already named Magdeburg the most dynamic city of the Republic two years ago. This city is < exemplary for a successful structural change >, the scientists said.

## MAIN CHALLENGES OF DEPOPULATION IN OUR CITY:

- Establishment of companies and recruitment of skilled workers
- Development of the research and development landscape
- Digitalisation and Economy 4.0
- Structural change

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

Since 1994, Dr. Lutz Trümper has been in the city Council, 2001 he became mayor. When he talks about Magdeburg problems, he sometimes changes to the first person. «I have to build three high schools and five daycare centers next year.» he says. Knowing that this is also a cause for joy. Since 2003 Magdeburg attracted more people than to leave the city. In the last 14 years, the birth rate has increased by 26 percent. In the conversation the mayor calls another key figure. With the trade tax, the 100 million euro mark was cracked in the year 2013. «Per capita we are at the top in East Germany.» says Trümper. If you ask about the reason for the trend, the city leader begins a ten-minute monologue. In essence, he calls two reasons. One reason has always been there, the other is new. The one is the Elbe. The other targeted economic development.

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

The Integrated Urban Development Concept, for the state capital Magdeburg, establishes strategic objectives as the basis for the actions of administration and politics up to the year 2025 and includes the following objectives:

- Update of the urban conversion concept of 2001, which is the basis for EU structural aid 2014-2020 in particular
- Strategies for a city between growth and shrinkage
- Sustainability of investments
- Integrated concept of urban development







# ITALY

## PALERMO

International center for the promotion of education and development

### Motto/slogan

**“WE BELIEVE THAT EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ARE CRUCIAL VALUES TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND DIGNITY FOR ALL HUMAN BEINGS”**

Palermo is a city of Southern Italy, the capital of both the autonomous region of Sicily and the Metropolitan City of Palermo. It is located in the northwest of the island of Sicily, right by the Gulf of Palermo in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Palermo, with 668.630 habitants is the 5th bigger city of Italy and it is the Italian Capital of culture 2018 (And it was the Italian capital of youth 2017).

From 2015 it is recognized as UNESCO heritage for its arab-norman path and its cathedral.

In 2019 Palermo has 24.381 foreigner habitants (Sri Lanka: 3.512 Bangladesh: 3.450 Romania: 2.237 Philippine: 1.280 Tunisia: 1.129 Mauritius: 1.122 Ghana: 1.077 Cina: 889 Marocco: 844 Serbia: 538).



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

The population of Palermo, after a little increasing rate of 2013, is decreasing year by year.

The last date collected belong to the 31th December 2016 is 669.329, so 5.106 (2.475 men and 2.630 women) less than the year before (+0.8%). Also the births are decreasing: in 2016 there were 5.725 (first time less than 6.000).

<https://www.tuttitalia.it/sicilia/81-palermo/statistiche/popolazione-eta-sesso-stato-civile-2017/>

Indeed the presence of foreigner habitants is increasing:

<http://www.comuni-italiani.it/082/053/statistiche/stranieri.html>

## MAIN CHALLENGES OF DEPOPULATION IN YOUR CITY:

1. To increase the employment of youth citizens.
2. To increase the inclusion processes among citizens from Palermo and foreigners
3. To decrease the poverty level of the city.

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

1. Of its unique cultural and artistic heritage, made by more than 3000 years of history.
2. The “Arab-Norman” architecture, recently inserted by Unesco in the Unesco World Heritage list.
3. Its cosmopolitan population, that make Palermo one melting-pot of cultures, religions and languages.
4. It's vibrant cultural scenes, with concerts, exhibitions, theatres and other cultural events.
5. The entrepreneurship of its young people, who, despite all odds, are able to create new opportunities and keep the city alive.

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

The Municipality of Palermo set out a series of priorities that, in the light of the 2020 horizon, strive to refrain the depopulation trends.

These concern:

- An increasing in both quality and quantity of the local labour market, so to make Palermo a more attractive job environment for those who decide to remain;
- To invest in a fully-fledge strategy for attracting enterprises and economic realities able to generate occupational opportunities.
- To set up a range of incentives for young couples, both in term of accessibility to real estate and in the local tax-regulation. All this, with the aim of making the city more and more family-friendly.
- To link the ending of the school career with traineeship opportunities in the local market as to increase the opportunity of finding a job after school
- To invest in the social and cultural integration of the “new citizens”: those second generation of migrants who already feel themselves citizens of Palermo.



# DENMARK

VEJLE  
Municipality of Vejle

Motto/slogan  
**VEJLE...MAKING THINGS HAPPEN**

Located on the Jutland peninsula in Southeast Denmark, the Municipality of Vejle is the sixth largest in the country (population: 110,000), and the capital of Region South Denmark. «Vejle...Making things happen» sum up Vejle's vision. To efficiently deliver services, the municipality employs over 12,000 workers, and operates on an annual budget of ca. € 724 million.

Embracing the opportunities and challenges of globalization, the municipality developed an international strategy, working with international institutions and organizations to share experiences and learn from colleagues abroad. International cooperation enhances employee skills, provides them with new knowledge and experiences which in turn will strengthen the municipality's professional development at the political and administrative levels. This becomes all the more important for municipal workers as Vejle is a member of Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities Network, where Vejle is the only Scandinavian city represented. Vejle employees need to have competences in international work so they can optimize the cooperation and learning from foreign partners as they transform Vejle into a smart, resilient city, providing world class service to its residents. Vejle addresses and copes with the challenges of the 21st century through a strategic, innovative approach to development. To survive global challenges and preserve the residents' living standards, new methods are constantly developed and tested to transform Vejle into a smart city that rationalizes the use of digital solutions for its services.

Vejle is part of the seven municipalities that comprise the Triangle Region – a central location in the heart of Denmark. It has access to 240 km of coastline and scenic spots. It has UNESCO Heritage sites and access to the rest of the world via the international airport in Billund. Approximately 415,000 people live in the Triangle Region, and is home to over 22,300 companies in more than 70 different fields. In all, The Triangle Region's population has easy access to 600,000 jobs – and Denmark's most diverse training.

Vejle has cooperated with over 70 municipalities, learning institutions, government and private institutions, NGOs and professional organizations across Europe, and globally, which enabled the staff to improve their competences in a wide range of areas. International work is an integral aspect of Vejle Municipality, as this expands the staff's perspectives, and provides inspiration to improving the service that the municipality provides to its residents. Likewise, the municipality believes that its experience in various international projects would be interesting for similar organizations in Europe. Vejle is looking to enrich its knowledge with the experiences of partners, and is looking to contribute to the development of a common European best practice in this area.



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

In Denmark, the population is expected to increase with 4,8 % over the next ten years, but for nearly half of the 98 municipalities the numbers of inhabitants are expected to decrease. The mobility among young people is the greatest, as they often move from the countryside to continue their education, which result in an average age of 42 in the rural districts in contrast to the average age of 38 in the big cities such as Copenhagen and Aarhus

Currently, Denmark do not only experience a movement of population from the countryside to the big municipalities, but also within the municipalities, where the depopulation of rural district is expanding. However, the population in Vejle Municipality is expected to increase with nearly a thousand people each year, while the population density in the city-center generates new housing challenges; the population in the rural district around Vejle city is expected to stay at 20.-21.000 people.

## MAIN CHALLENGES OF DEPOPULATION IN OUR CITY:

Currently, Vejle does not experience a depopulation, but within the South Region, the main challenges of depopulation are:

- Too few education-possibilities in the South Region
- A low productivity and job- opportunities for people with a higher-education
- A lack of doctors in certain areas of the region
- An inefficient public transport in certain areas of the region

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

In the rural districts of Vejle municipality, the success criteria is to develop strong and living local societies e.g. by:

- 1) Increasing the job-opportunities and possibilities for creating your own company
- 2) Branding the life style at the countryside and the unique opportunity of living next to great nature
- 3) Supporting the social and cultural cohesiveness of the local areas, e.g. through local projects.

As part of the Region of South Denmark, inhabitants living at the countryside of Vejle Municipality have the possibility to apply for financial support to the local action group (called LAG). They normally support projects that strives to create small businesses, develop activities for tourists and/or improve the possibilities for culture-and free time activities.

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

In order to maintain the current success of an increased population, Vejle Municipality will continue to support the local development and embrace the individual village's unique characteristics and profile.

In the South Region of Denmark, the goals are likewise to focus on the unique housing and landscapes of the rural districts as advantages.

Furthermore, the Region aims to continue the decentralization of educational institutions in order to spread the students and resourceful professions across the whole region.

In addition to this, the region wish to increase the local growth and hereby increase its attractiveness. The goals for 2020 are:

- 1) That the Region of South Denmark has the greatest growth in the yearly production on a national level.
- 2) That 82 % in working age are ready to work.





# ROMANIA

ORADEA  
European Center for Socio Professional Integration  
ACTA

Motto/slogan  
**ACTA – ABILITIES CAREER TRAINING ATTITUDE**

Oradea is the capital city of Bihor County and Crişana region, the most important crossing point on the west border (with Hungary). It ranks tenth in size among Romanian cities.

• **Demographics:** At the 2017 census Oradea had a population of 222,193, a decrease of 657 from the figure recorded at the 2016 census. The ethnic diversity is as follows: Romanians: 157,757 (73.1%), Hungarians: 55,328 (24.9%), Roma: 2,665 (1.2%), Other (Germans, Slovaks): 1,443 (0.8%)

• **The religious diversity** is as follows: 59.8% Romanian Orthodox, 14.3% Reformed, 9.4% Roman Catholic, 5% Pentecostal, 3.7% Baptist, 3.4% Greek-Catholic and 4.4% other, undeclared or none.

• **Geography:** The city is located in the north-west of Romania and covers an area of 11,556 hectares. It is situated at an altitude of 126 m above sea level, in the opening of the Criş valley and the plain area, in an area of contact between the extensions of the Apuseni Mountains and the extended plain Crişana-Banat. It lies as the area of transition from relief hills, to the Pannonian plain.

Oradea is famous for its thermal springs. The river Crişul Repede crosses the city right through the center, providing it with a picturesque beauty.

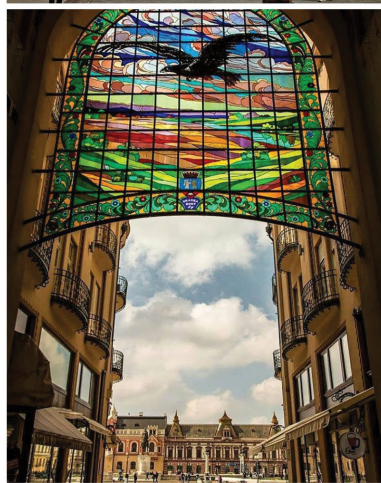
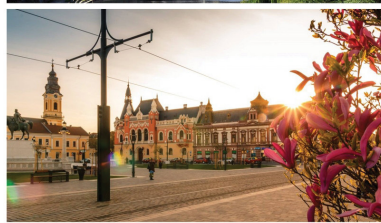
The climatic action of the city is determined by the prevailing Western winds. Climate is Temperate Continental, with some oceanic influences. The annual average temperature is 10.4 °C. Rainfall is variably distributed throughout the year, with a maximum in June and a minimum in the late Autumn and Winter months of the year and it is enough to support the woods and vegetation of the zone.

• **Economy:** Oradea has long been one of the more prosperous cities in Romania.

After 1989, due to its important base of consumers, Oradea has enjoyed a prosperous economic renewal, not so much in industry but rather in the wide range of services provided such as trade and tourism.

Oradea has an unemployment rate of 6.0%, slightly lower than the Romanian average but much higher than Bihor County's average of around 2%.

Oradea currently produces around 63% of the industrial production of Bihor County while accounting for the county's 34.5% of the population. Its main industries are furniture, textiles and clothing, footwear and food processing. The economy of Oradea is significantly sustained by small and medium



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

One of the most important socio-cultural factors influencing the development of Oradea is the demographic evolution.

The post-1989 period was marked by a strong downward trend, aggravated by the lack of a coherent demographic policy.

At national level, there are a number of measures to boost birth rates, but these are counterbalanced by the economic difficulties faced by young people.

Another social factor with major effects on demographic evolution is represented by the phenomenon of external migration and the politics in the field of social assistance.

- Migration of the population abroad. The social effects of migration are:
  - increase in the number of single parent families
  - Increased school dropout
  - Increase juvenile delinquency
- The rate of labor force replacement in the municipality leads to the creation of a labor shortage/ a lack of specialized workforce.
- Significant increase in the divorce rate between 2006 and 2014
- Aging population as a result of the decrease in the number of newborns
- Reduction in the number of residence establishments in Oradea as a result of the drop in the number of students

## MAIN CHALLENGES OF DEPOPULATION IN OUR CITY:

The development between 2000-2016 at a country level emphasizes a general tendency regarding a decrease of the urban population.

On the 1st of January 2016, there was a decrease of 57 thousand people in the number of Romania's population by comparison with the same date in 2015.

This particular decrease has been brought about mostly by the negative population growth.

The decline was more prevalent in the urban area (in cities such as Oradea, which had more than 100 thousand inhabitants), where the downfall was of 39,6 thousand people, while in the rural area it consisted of 17,0 thousand people.

Reasons for the decrease of Oradea's population:

- **The negative natural growth of the population**, which has been sensed in the education system, as the tuition plan cannot be implemented from one year to another, and schools are obliged to merge or even close.
- **External migration and the lure of going abroad**, which has an influence on the adult as well as on the young population, whose members are still in a stage of development. Adults are willing to accept offers on the foreign market because they are paid at a higher level in comparison with the

local labour market. Furthermore, students find appealing the educational offers provided by the most important European universities; in most cases, they find a job abroad and do not return after graduation.

- **Migration towards other economic centres in our country:** motivated by the offer of the labour market and higher payment not only in the capital city but also in towns larger than Oradea, adults within the age group of 20-40 years find jobs in these places of residence. They sometimes keep their residence in Oradea; however, in most cases they change it.
- **Demographic aging.** Between 2010-2016, there has been an increase in the aging process of the population of Bihor County, the statistical weight of the overall young generation under the age of 14 decreased from 18.4 % to 16, 2 %.

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

- A policy of social integration that helps reduce inequalities and prevent social exclusion will be the best guarantee for maintaining depopulation in our city
- Supporting birth rates at national level through government incentives (aid for children, allowances etc.)
- Sustainable economic development of the city can lead to the return of the population going to work abroad
- Due to the increase in the number of jobs, it is possible to encourage the establishment of the outside population in the municipality, which will lead to a demand for new dwellings
- Investments for increasing the quality of life will attract people with higher education
- Territorial annexation of surrounding rural areas

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

The Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Oradea Municipality, elaborated in 2017 and having a strategic approach by 2023, includes the following strategic objectives:

- A policy of social integration that helps reduce inequalities and prevent social exclusion will be the best guarantee for maintaining depopulation in our city
- Sustainable economic development of the city can lead to the return of the population going to work abroad
- Due to the increase in the number of jobs, it is possible to encourage the establishment of the outside population in the municipality, which will lead to a demand for new dwellings
- Investments for increasing the quality of life will attract people with higher education
- Territorial annexation of surrounding rural areas



# SPAIN

CASASIMARRO / MOTILLA DEL PALANCAR  
Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de La  
Manchuela Conquense (ADIMAN)

Motto/slogan  
**ANOTHER REGION IS POSSIBLE**

The Manchuela Conquense is located in the southeast of the province of Cuenca (Castilla-La Mancha), located between the rivers Júcar and its tributary the Cabriel (called by some as the Mesopotamia de la Mancha). The Manchuela Conquense, integrates 33 municipalities in a total area of 2,601.29 square kilometers (15.17% of the surface of the province of Cuenca). It has a population (year 2017) of 38,645 inhabitants, which represents 19.45% of the population of the province of Cuenca. The productive structure of La Manchuela Conquense is that of a developed economy, with a greater weight of services (59.76%), followed by industry (18.27%) and a lower weight of the primary sector (10.63) %. The gross domestic product generated in the Manchuela Conquense represents about 20% of the GDP of the province of Cuenca. The region is characterized by the existence of important natural and cultural values.



## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION IN THE CITY, REGION, COUNTRY:

Most of the municipalities of La Manchuela Conquense (23 of the 33) have a population of less than 1,000 inhabitants and 17 of them have less than 500 inhabitants.

The density of inhabitants in the whole territory is 15 inhabitants per square kilometer, much smaller than that of the Castilla-La Mancha region (26 inhabitants/Km<sup>2</sup>), the whole of Spain (93 inhabitants / Km<sup>2</sup>) and the European Union (116.9 inhabitants / Km<sup>2</sup>). 19 municipalities do not reach 10 inhabitants per square kilometer, that is, 58% of the municipalities of the region fall within what experts call the demographic desert, density less than 12.5 inhabitants / Km<sup>2</sup>, figure below which the European Commission considers the territories as *sparsely populated areas*.

## MAIN CHALLENGES OF DEPOPULATION IN OUR CITY:

Between 2008 and 2017 the Manchuela Conquense has a net loss of inhabitants of 8.68%.

Except in three municipalities, the Vegetative balance (Birth Rate-Mortality Rate) has negative values, some of them with values below -15 %.

The last 10 years have negative migratory balances.

## WE ARE PROUD OF:

Work since 1994 on the application of territorial development programs according to the LEADER method. This method, enforced by the EU, seeks to involve local actors in the design and implementation of strategies, decision-making and the allocation of resources for the development of their rural areas.

## GOAL FOR 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPOPULATION:

Stop population loss and obtain positive population balances globally.



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