



# Final report

## MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

Bienvenida, 1st - 3rd of April

*Demographic development in rural areas. Ageing and decrease of the population and the effects for the liveability in the villages*

### Workshop programme

Day	Time	Issue
1 <sup>st</sup> april	09:15 – 13:15	Ageing
2 <sup>nd</sup> april	11:30 – 13:00	Liveability. Institutional speech
	16:30 – 18:00	Liveability.
3 <sup>rd</sup> april	09:00 – 10:00	Migration
	10:00 – 12:00	Final Conclusions

As the table show, we organized the meetings trying to separate our workshops in three main topics regarding to demographic development.

Ageing	Liveability	Migration
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We will keep this division to order our report.

### 1<sup>o</sup> issue: Ageing

The first workshop treated during 4 hours this topic. After a presentation which included a general explanation of what demography means and the presentation of some statistics of the past and previsible future, we saw a video of the Berlin institute for demographic studies. The explained very well the keys of Europe's demographic future and its problematics.

([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry9\\_6LX08XM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry9_6LX08XM))

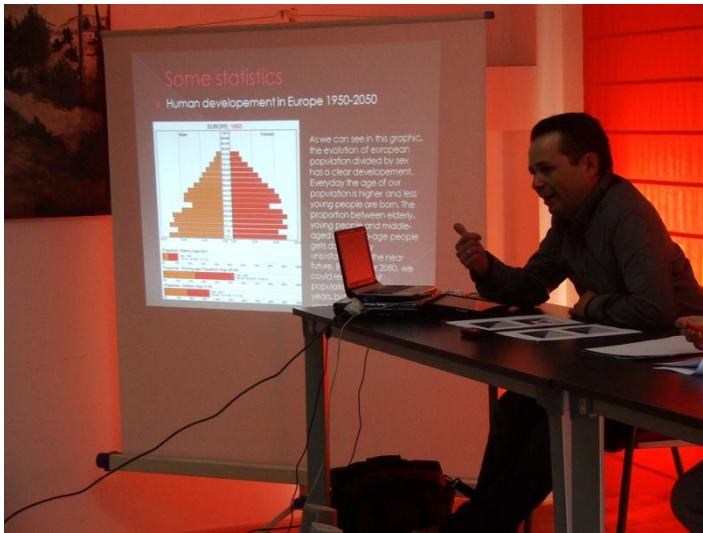


After an open debate about this issue, each delegation explained to the participants their own situation in each country and proposed ideas and solutions that have been applied or that should be applied in the near future.

The main conclusions of this workshop could be identified as follows:

- The public transport service should be improved and guaranteed in rural areas in order to keep living the local workers in their own towns and making it compatible with jobs in nearby areas.
- The working age needs to be longer in the near future, due to ageing and better health situation of the elderly european people. 40 years could be a reference.
- Retirement in some jobs, should not be obliged and the workers should be free to choose when retiring after a minimum age.
- The towns should improve their services of vocational job schools  
so youngsters don't have to leave to finish their studies.
- Change our minds about ageing, considering it a opportunity for many aspects, and not always only a problem.
- Active ageing has to be promoted, involucrating the elderly to a more active colaboration in voluntary iniciatives, in cultural and sports activities, in sharing their knowledge to younger members of the society, etc.
- It's necessary the development of family policies that preview the ageing of population. Nevertheless, the authorities should prevent possible abuse of public funds for "birth-help" since many young people in some countries, leave studies due to these subventions.





## 2º Issue: Liveability

We divided the matter in two different sessions. In the morning, politicians related us about the solutions that have been applied in rural areas of Extremadura in the last 30 year since democracy came. They explained some clear conclusions:

- Basic services need to be guaranteed in every single municipality, unregarding the number of population
- The relation between work and life, has to be simplified and improved. New technologies and work from home are basic instruments to maintain the population in rural areas.
- The colaboration between several nearby situated municipalities is very important to make possible the main services that citizens deserve.



In the afternoon, also after a presentation of the meaning of this concept, we provided to the participants, a personal questionnaire asking them for their opinion in related questions. (document attached). In addition we added up the results previously mailed by the different delegations of a general questionnaire (document attached).

With this information, we built groups of work that analyzed the actual problematics of liveability and each group made a list of positive and negative aspects that concern liveability in rural areas.



The results are the following:

POSSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECTS
More safety than in cities	Less job oportunities
Better prices in general	Less leisure and cultural offer (theatre, cinemas, shopping-center, etc.)
Calmer life	Lower salaries
Quality of life for elderly and children	Worse educational possibilities
Good social services in most cases	Bad conditions in new-technologies service
Natural environment	
Better housing prices and better prices in general	





### Final conclusion:

Future policies in European countries, should center its focus in resolving these problems: Housing prices for young people, job-opportunities in rural areas by promoting work from home and improving the services of new-technologies and vocational education as a resource of local job promotion.

### 3rd Issue: Migration

We treated this topic in the first hour of the last day. A small Powerpoint presentation introduced us into the matter. Two groups were formed to analyse the positive and negative aspects to take in consideration. Netherlands, United Kingdom and Luxembourg, identified the "Pro's" and Spain, Portugal and Belgium treated about the "Con's" of this fact.

POSSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECTS
Multiculturalism enriches society	If less jobs are available, problems appear
Greater tax revenues in legal immigration	Immigration increases housing costs and prices in general because of a higher demand
Immigrants are normally young and help to increase the birth rate	The demographic solution is of short-term, since second generations of immigrants have similar birth-rate behaviour than natives.
They do manual and menial jobs that natives reject	In large numbers, there is the risk to form "ghettos" and problems of integration to "European way of life"
Professionals will be attracted and improve our knowledge base	Illegal immigration don't pay taxes but need similar services that have to be provided and financed by local authorities
The workforce gets cheaper for the companies	Educational problems when young people have difficulties with the local language.
Migration can enrich knowledge in general and help improve the cultural and economic richness when the person returns to his country	

### Final conclusion:

Before the closing act of the journeys, we mentioned the main topics and conclusions we had talked during all the Workshop. Finally we celebrated a closing ceremony with local authorities and with an emotive participation of our oldest (106 years) and youngest (few days) members in town.

