



DEPOPULATION CONTROL ACTION PLAN

Europe for Citizens project Nr. 595269-CITIZ-1-
2017-2-LV-CITIZ-NT DeCoDe “Challenges of
Regional Centres: Depopulation Control,
Development – best practices”

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1. Study description, goals and methodology

Project description

Daugavpils City Council, as a lead partner, together with project partners from different EU countries and cities, has launched the DeCoDe project 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". The project involves 8 partners from 8 countries: Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Romania, Italy, Denmark and Spain.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

- *DAUGAVPILS CITY COUNCIL (DAUGAVPILS PILSĒTAS DOME), Daugavpils, Latvia*
- *KAUNAS CITY MUNICIPALITY (KAUNO MIESTO SAVIVALDYBES ADMINISTRACIJA), Kaunas, Lithuania*
- *LODZKIE REGION (WOJEWODZTWO LODZKIE), Lodz, Poland*
- *CITY ADMINISTRATION OF MAGDEBURG (LANDESHAUPTSTADT MAGDEBURG), Magdeburg, Germany*
- *CEIPES (CENTRO INTERNAZIONALE PER LA PROMOZIONE DELL'EDUCAZIONE E LO S), Palermo, Italy*
- *MUNICIPALITY OF VEJLE Vejle, Denmark*
- *ACTA CENTER (ASOCIATIA CENTRUL EUROPEAN PENTRU INTEGRARE SOCIOPROFESIONALA), Oradea, Romania*
- *ADIMAN (ASOCIACION PARA DESARROLLO INTEGRAL DE LA MANCHELA CONQUENSE), Casasimarro, Spain*

The project aims 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. This project was organized within the framework of the European Union program "Europe for Citizens". The "Europe for Citizens" program aims to bring Europe closer to its citizens by promoting debate on issues of relevance to the European Union at local, regional and international level. It is important 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 members of civil society organizations and any member of society are involved in the democratic life of the European Union.¹

Project "Challenges of regional centers: depopulation control, development - best practices" (DeCoDe), which was organized within the framework of the "Europe for Citizens" program, facilitated the international exchange of experiences in the context of depopulation between regional centers in Europe to enable them to return migration processes and their impact. During this project the involved cities collaborated internationally and compiled proposals for depopulation control, which then could be used and integrated by the cities in their planning documents. The cooperation between these regional centers within the framework of this project was designed to share problems, ideas for the future and good practices to maintain or even increase the population in the participating cities. This process promoted the cultural identities, traditions, historical heritage and economic activities of cities at European level. In total, within the framework of this project five international meetings were held with participating cities, in which the depopulation prevention questions were discussed.²

¹ Europe for citizens program project "Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation control, development - best practices" Decode.

² Europe for citizens program project "Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation control, development - best practices" Decode.

Goals of the project

Goals of the project "Challenges of regional centers: depopulation control, development - best practices" (DeCoDe) are as follows:³

- Establish a network of regional centers affected by depopulation to promote the exchange of good practices between cities and develop a depopulation control action plan for the participating cities to strengthen local economic structure and raise citizens' awareness regarding mobility in European cities;
- Create and strengthen the relationship between European cities;
- Promote the European citizenship;
- Enhance and expand knowledge about depopulation process in European largest cities, regional centers and local municipalities;
- Popularize the participating cities, make them vivid with the exchange of information, tourism materials, presentations, traditions and cultural heritage;
- Make the citizens of involved cities appreciate the place where they live;
- Develop the participating cities to make them attractive and suitable for the needs of modern citizens;
- Organize international meetings and conferences on prevention measures of depopulation.

³ Europe for citizens program project "Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation control, development - best practices" Decode.

Methodology

Methodological framework of the plan:

- 1) Compilation of statistical data on the cities involved in the project. A general overview of the current situation in all the cities involved in the project was carried out; the following aspects were observed - population changes (2011-2019), age structure of the population (2017-2018), as well as the gender structure. (by external expert company "Latvijas Fakti" (Latvia))
- 2) Good practices for depopulation reduction and control from Latvia (also directly from Daugavpils), as well as from other countries were compiled, and recommendations were made for the depopulation control action plan. These possible measures to reduce and control depopulation were divided into three categories - support to promoting birth rates, measures to improve the demographic situation; measures to retain/attract the working- age population; measures to promote remigration. Under each of these categories, activities are described in detail that could help to attain these goals. (by external expert company "Latvijas Fakti" (Latvia))
- 3) Best practices combined within the project from all project partners' cities or regions.

2. Depopulation control action plan

As possible measures for decreasing and controlling depopulation one should mention:

- Support to promoting birth rates, measures for improving demographic situation;
- Measures for retaining/attracting working-age population;
- Measures for promoting remigration.

Of course, all these measures for decreasing and eliminating depopulation are mutually related and interacting, for instance, availability of kindergartens and quality increase facilitates improvement of both demographic situation, and also attracting of young and economically active people, and also remigration processes.

2.1. Support to promoting birth rates, measures for improving demographic situation

Improving of demographic situation in Daugavpils is currently the most important challenge. The analysis of the research reveals that in Daugavpils the demographic situation is characterized by unfavorable trends - negative natural growth, reduction of birth rates, increase of demographic load, decreasing number of working-age people. The reason for the decrease of number of population in Daugavpils in 2018 was the demographic problem and it was not practically influenced by migration.

It is important to emphasize that in Daugavpils already today a range of measures to improve demographic situation in the city is being implemented. Immediate outcomes are not to be expected from these measures, nevertheless, based on experience of other towns and cities, one can forecast that they will have a positive effect in the nearest future.

Improving demographic situation and promoting birth rates have been declared a priority on a national level during the last 10 years, these measures are publicly supported and approved as important, although their actual impact on improving demographic situation is not big. Position of Latvia regarding depopulation, birth rates and aging of population does not considerably differ from that of other EU Member States that face a decrease of population.

Tasks	Measures	Outcomes	Notes
SUPPORT TO PROMOTING BIRTH RATES, MEASURES FOR IMPROVING DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION			
Support for large families	Support in case of a child-birth (one-time material benefit after birth of every child).	Such a material support system after the birth of each child may promote birth rates.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for use of public transport to large families (discounts to tickets).	This facilitates daily communication of children from large families (for instance, from school to home).	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for child care until the age of one and a half years (monthly material support for each child).	Makes lighter financial burden of parents of large families shortly after child's birth (for instance, when child's mother has not returned to work yet).	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for payment for heat energy supply to large families (set amount for each child).	Ensure big families with heat energy and comfortable living circumstances.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for ensuring hot water supply (set amount within a calendar year).	Ensure possibility for large families to use hot water.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for purchase of firewood to large families (set amount once a calendar year).	Available heating to large families.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for covering costs for maintenance of living houses' infrastructure and utilities: cold water, gas, electricity supply and waste management costs (set amount monthly in a specific time period).	Maintenance of living space for large families makes daily life of families easier both financially and practically.	It's already being done in Daugavpils

Tasks	Measures	Outcomes	Notes
Support for large families	Support for covering costs for children's catering in pre-school education institutions, primary schools, secondary and vocational schools during a school year (lunch and afternoon snacks), summer camps in Daugavpils city and public catering companies during summer holiday period.	Basic needs ensured for children from big families.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for purchase of school tools that are needed for ensuring learning process for school children, once a calendar year per each school student (set amount for a pre-schooler, 1st grade pupil, primary school, secondary school and vocational school student).	Children from big families may join school life more completely since they have been provided with necessary tools for completing school tasks.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	To continue state support program for big families "3+ Family card".	Card holders can receive discounts when using services offered by state and private companies in Latvia.	It's already being done in Latvia
	Significantly larger child benefit for each next child.	Facilitation of the birth of the 2 nd child would cover as large as possible number of families and would ensure population replacement. Facilitation of the birth of the 3 rd child would popularize optimum family model. Support should be essential for people to make as their priority family enlargement, children.	
	Housing programs, tax discounts for young families.	Stimulus to large families to increase number of children.	

Tasks	Measures	Outcomes	Notes
	Game rooms or short-term day care services for families in crisis situations.	In case of absence of parents children are looked after.	
	Increase of benefits for dependents	Improvement of financial situation for families with children.	
	Creation of family centers.	Support programs for families.	
	Qualitative after-school work organization at school.	Availability of different interest groups covering wide range of students' interests.	
	Providing assistance to families in crisis situations, by lessening risk of divorcing.	Retaining complete families, possibility for children to grow up with both parents.	
	Reducing poverty risks of large families and single parent families.	Possibility to large families and single-parent families to ensure basic needs (food, accommodation).	
Qualitative health care	Strengthening of healthy life-style habits in the society, popularizing preventive medical checks.	This would decrease early mortality, and would decrease the number of cases when decision to give a birth to a child is postponed due to health problems.	
Qualitative preschool and general education services	Ensure children with access to qualitative education in the city.	Educated children in the city with possibility to continue studies locally.	

2.2. Measures for retaining/attracting working-age population

Measures for retaining/ attracting inhabitants are closely related with general development of the city. Economic growth, possibilities of employment, education, health care, culture and entertainment in the city, attractive environment and developed infrastructure are factors that most efficiently fulfil this role.

Results of the research show that the priority of Daugavpils City Council is not to lose youngsters aged 19 to 25 (during the last 5 years, this age group in the city has decreased by 38%) and to attract young specialists. The goal is to facilitate development of such age structure of city inhabitants that would facilitate demographic growth.

It should be noted that a part of possible steps for attracting working-age population and young specialists is already being implemented in Daugavpils.

Tasks	Measures	Outcome	Notes
MEASURES FOR RETAINING/ATTRACTING WORKING AGE POPULATION			
Improvement of health care infrastructure/ensuring health care	Rebuilding of interior of hospital, also purchase of new medical equipment.	Will facilitate ability to ensure health care services to population more qualitatively.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Support for covering costs of planned operations, if operation is a matter of urgency (in the amount of actual costs of the operation).	Urgent health services available.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
Available housing with attractive environment	Housing guarantees for families with children, also the young specialists.	Increased number of families and young specialists that live and work in the city.	It's already being done in Latvia
	Subsidies to families with children for purchase or building of new housing that are increased taking into account the family status and number of children.	Increased number of families with children that live in the city.	
	Flats for affordable prices to recent graduates of the university (with condition that they should live or have business in the city and pay taxes).	Presence of educated young people in the city and attracting to local labor market.	
	Possibility to rent municipality flats for families with two children.	This would help families that find it difficult to buy own flat themselves.	It's already being done in Daugavpils

Tasks	Measures	Outcome	Notes
Accessibility to education and its quality, support to studies, availability of kindergartens	Granting scholarships to residential internship (with condition about feedback). For attracting young specialists of significant sectors.	Specialists after graduating residential internship the next couple of years work in municipality institution, by assisting city inhabitants with their knowledge (for instance, in the sector of medicine).	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	To facilitate possibilities of obtaining qualitative higher education in the city.	Availability and quality of highest education possibilities in the city would motivate young specialists to stay in the city.	
	To facilitate possibilities of education, re-qualification of pre-retirement age people (offer of education could be adjusted according to needs of local companies).	This would increase the number of those preretirement age people who could be included in the labour market because they would have the necessary skills.	
	To offer assistance to those who do not have places in kindergartens, by assigning co-financing for a nanny.	This would provide an alternative to children that do not have place in a kindergarten and would provide an opportunity to parents to join labour market.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
Facilitating entrepreneurship	Making of a special economic zone in the territory of the city (tax reliefs to companies in its territory).	Tax reliefs to the companies in the territory would attract local businessmen, also foreign businessmen to the city and would facilitate creation of new jobs.	It's already being done in Daugavpils
	Facilitating entrepreneurial activities and creating new attractive jobs.	There would be more job opportunities for youngsters after graduating higher or vocational education institutions that would facilitate their staying in the city.	

2.3. Measures for facilitating remigration

Significant set of measures taking into account that a significant number of Latvians return from abroad lately.

Tasks	Measures	Outcome	Notes
MEASURES FOR FACILITATING RE-MIGRATION			
Support to families with children	Facilitation of and support to the activities of the regional remigration coordinators' network (assistance to inhabitants regarding issues related with return to Latvia in a concrete region- about availability of kindergartens and schools, living places, possibilities of jobs and business).	Would facilitate return of inhabitants since inhabitants would receive information on issues they are interested in regarding return to Latvia - that would facilitate process of returning.	It's already being done in Latvia
	Improving Internet portal where information is available with answers, indications and consultations which would be useful for people before returning (jobs, education, repatriation and citizenship, social protection, entrepreneurial activities, place of living, health).	This would ensure better awareness to inhabitants who plan to return to Latvia and would help them to get to know about possibilities of returning, and also would help to make a decision to return.	It's already being done in Latvia
	Support to school children returning and/or reintegrating into education system of Latvia, also to parents of these students.	Integration of remigrants into the local educational system.	It's already being done in Latvia
	Making children playgrounds, ensuring culture and entertainment possibilities.	Family-friendly environment in the city.	
	Recognition of foreign qualifications.	Successful inclusion of local foreign-educated specialists in the local labor market and/or education system.	It's already being done in Latvia
	Reducing different administrative barriers regarding dual citizenship, material support to repatriates).	Drafting amendments to laws for reducing administrative barriers.	

Tasks	Measures	Outcome	Notes
To facilitate tourism development	Creating of a creative city brand by using culture heritage available in the city (developing city logo by merging population participation with culture object present in the city).	Would facilitate development of a unique city "brand", population participation, city would be popularized. This would facilitate increase of the number of city visitors.	
	Marketing development of city's cultural and historical heritage. Development of mobile applications of the city, official blog, tourist guide, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook pages, linking traditional products with city logo.	Marketing of urban culture and historical heritage may help to facilitate tourism, and also to attract inhabitants and investments.	
Qualitative and modern business environment and different possibilities for start-ups	To make an inclusive entrepreneurial activities model so that entrepreneurial activities are available to different groups of people (providing services online and in presence; organizing business experts' team that would provide consultations to entrepreneurs; organization of training seminars).	Availability of such services would help people who are not yet ready to make their own company; they could improve their skills and implement their business ideas in practice. This could also help to improve employment level.	
	To adapt and re-qualify the existing buildings so that they are suitable to businessmen and technologies and innovations companies. To offer these infrastructures for low cost to companies.	Ensured, accessible infrastructure for companies.	
	To create "living laboratory" which would be a result of cooperation between local municipality, companies, development and finance agencies, health institutions, schools, and universities.	Development of such "living laboratories" would facilitate open innovation, would provide joint work places for business projects.	
	Creating training centres that involve courses (that would be interesting for investors). Municipalities, employment agencies and group of local companies could be involved in such creation.	Such training courses could help to prepare additional workforce that could get involved in the local business activities.	

Tasks	Measures	Outcome	Notes
	Creating business links and maintaining them with diaspora; providing consultations, also ensuring information to potential businessmen and investors living abroad about possibilities to start business, about available support programs and mechanisms.	Thus, start-ups by Latvian businessmen living abroad would be facilitated here locally in Latvia.	It's already being done in Latvia
	Mentoring programs for facilitating knowledge transfer between specialists of different sectors in the world and country of origin.	Thus, economic cooperation would be implemented with diaspora, also attracting of high-level professionals to the country of origin with hope that a part of these professionals would return.	It's already being done in Latvia
Living environment attractive to inhabitants	To offer moving benefits with conditions (should move to the city, should live and work there).	Material support would stimulate moving of people back to their Motherland.	
	To offer tax reliefs to remigrants from abroad, especially young professionals (with foreign higher education), professors and researchers, businessmen.	Such support will facilitate the respective remigrants to provide feedback to Latvia - will join local labor market, will provide their contribution to local educational system and development of business environment.	

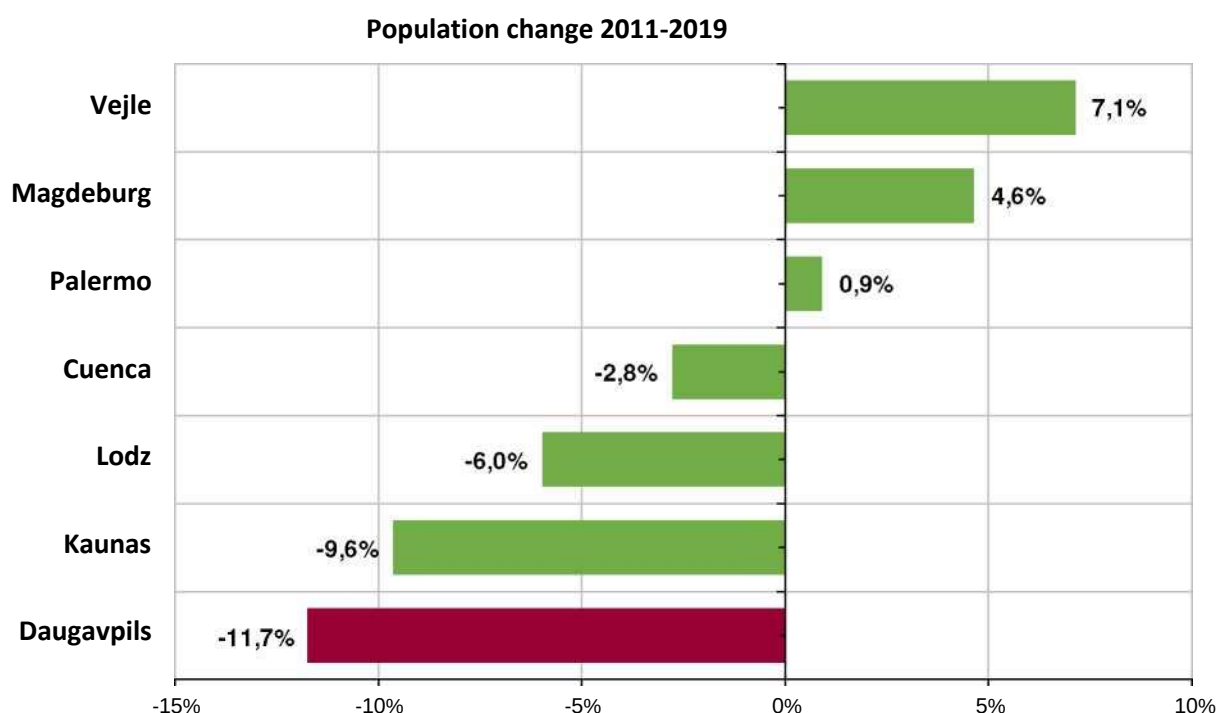
3. General overview of the current situation in the participating cities

All cities involved in the project face demographic challenges-aging of population, rising demographic burden. For all cities it is important to retain and attract young specialists, who currently often prefer to move to larger economic centers.⁴

According to the population dynamics over the last 8 years of the cities involved in the project, the demographic issues are more pronounced in Daugavpils, Kaunas (Lithuania), Lodz (Poland), Cuenca (Spain), Oradea (Romania), where the population has decreased in recent years.

Daugavpils is the only city in the project that has lost more than 10% of its population in the last 8 years.⁵

Not all cities in the project face the problem of population decline. Since 2011, a significant increase in population can be observed in Vejle (Denmark) and Magdeburg (Germany). The population has not changed significantly in Palermo (Italy) during this period. Increasing economic competitiveness, promoting entrepreneurship, improving infrastructure and education opportunities and integrating foreigners into the local society are comparatively more pressing challenges in these cities.⁶



⁴ Europe for citizens program project "Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation control, development - best practices" Decode

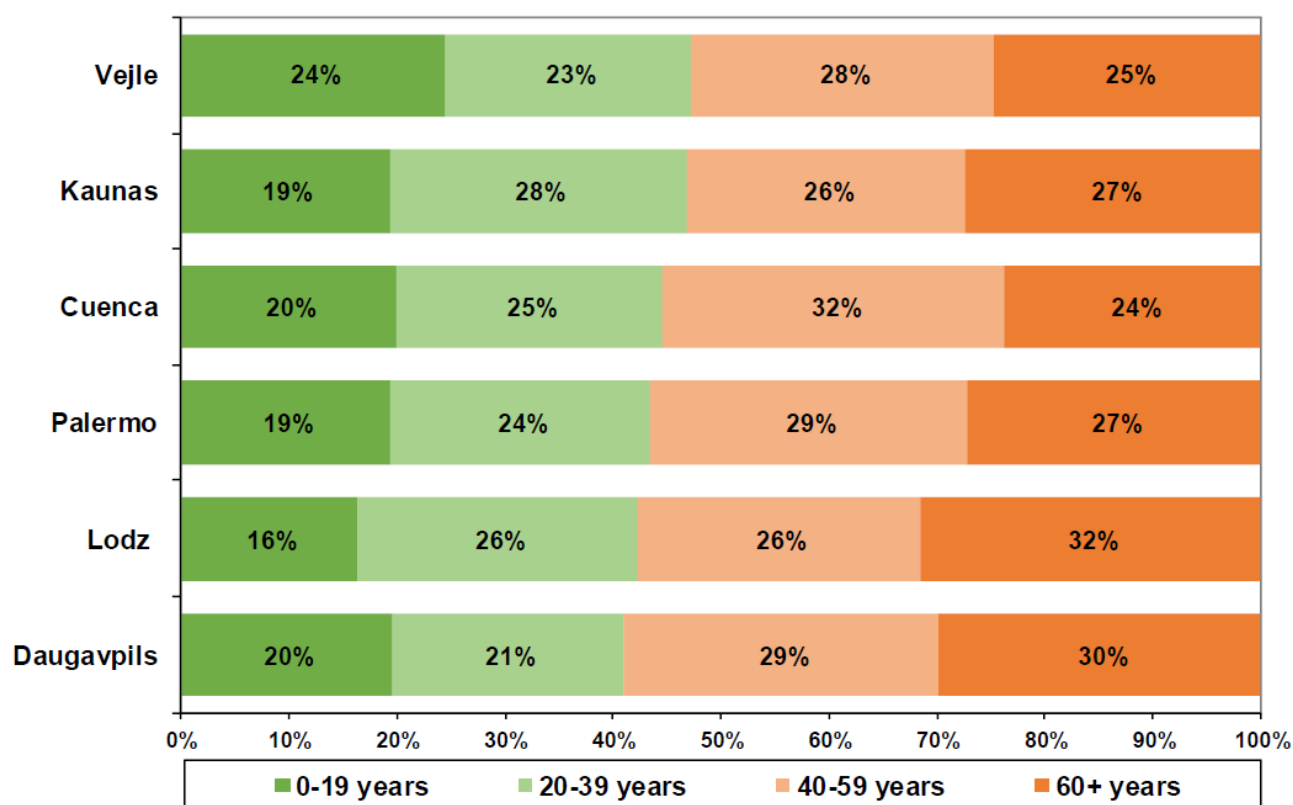
⁵ Europe for citizens program project "Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation control, development - best practices" Decode

⁶ Europe for citizens program project "Challenges of Regional Centres: Depopulation control, development - best practices" Decode

Comparing the age structure of the population in six of the eight cities involved in the project, it can be observed that in all cities the majority of population is over 40 years old. There are relatively more people under the age of 40 in Vejle and Kaunas (47%), which is positive, thinking in the context of raising the birth rate and improving the demographic situation. Older people (40+) are more represented in Lodz (58%) and Daugavpils (59%).⁷

As illustrated in the data below, the main disadvantage in Daugavpils population age structure is the relatively small proportion (21%) of the population aged 20-39.⁸

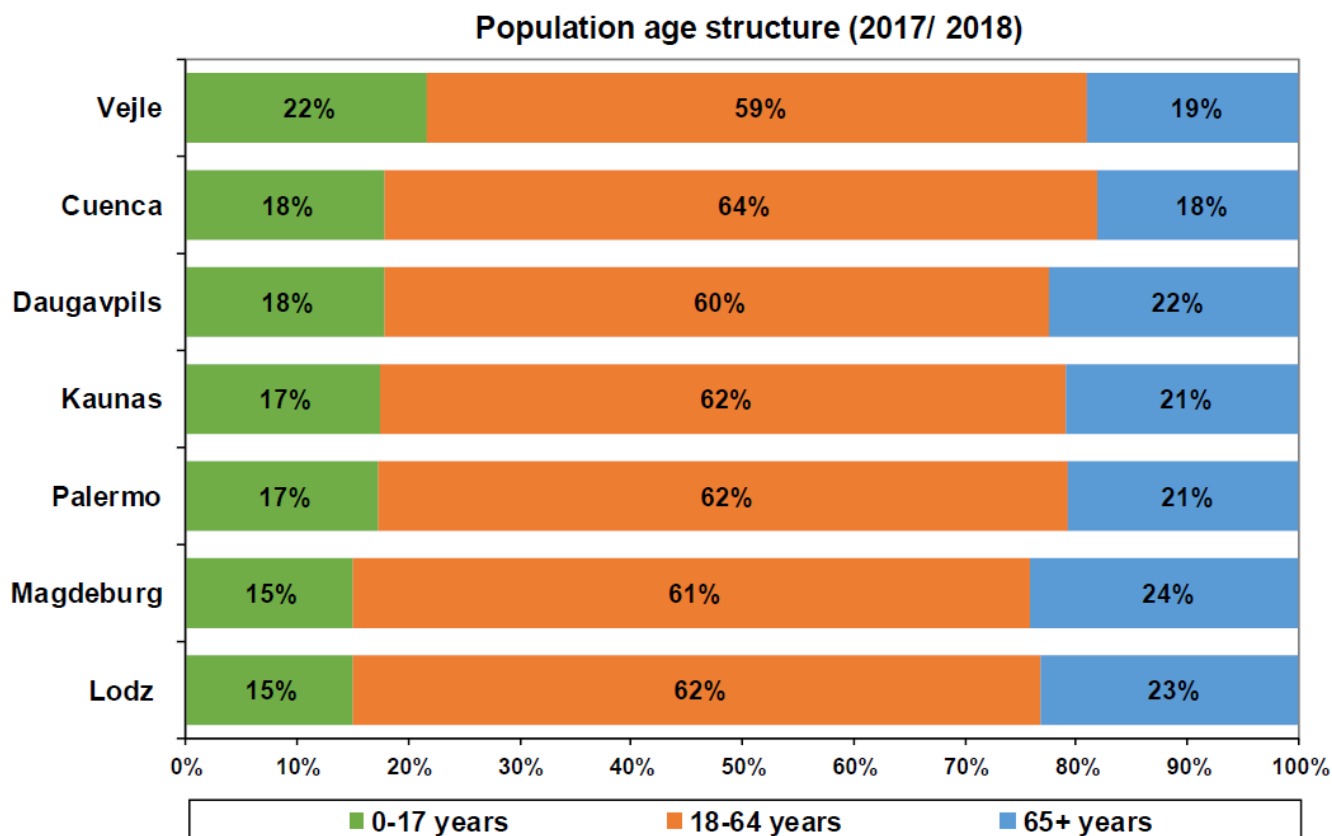
Population age structure (2017/ 2018)



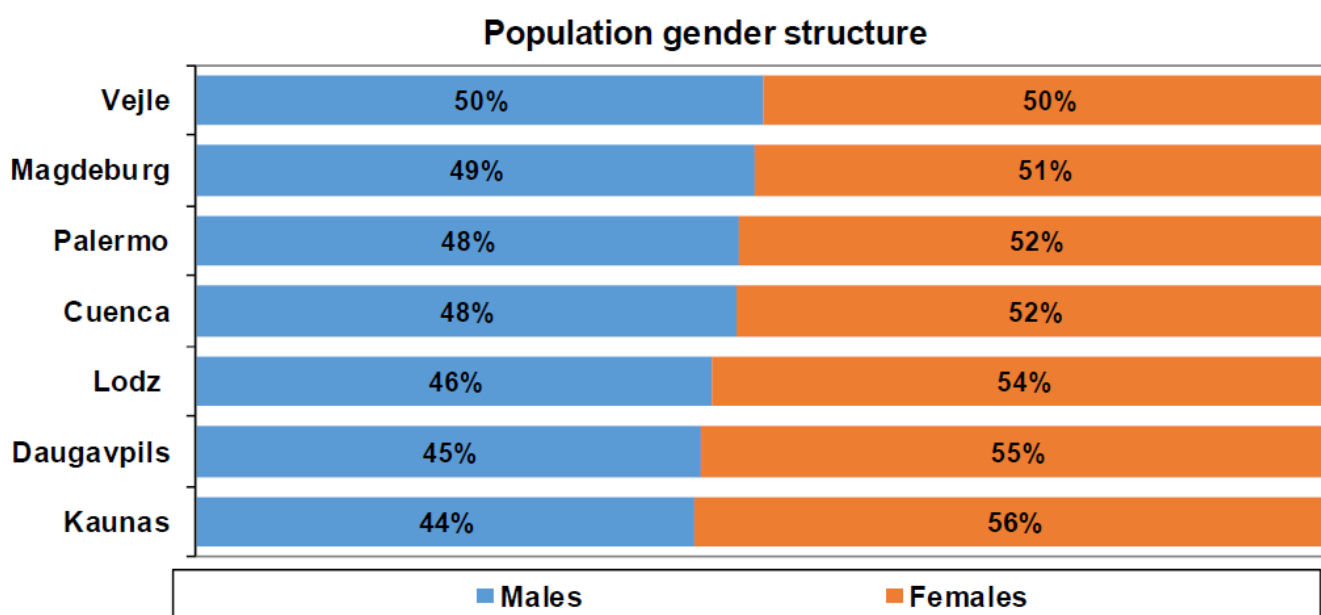
⁷ "City Population", City Population, <https://www.citypopulation.de/>

⁸ "City Population", City Population, <https://www.citypopulation.de/>

The proportion of children under the age of 17 is comparatively highest in Vejle (22%), Cuenca and Daugavpils (18% for both). Most retirees are in Magdeburg (24%) and Lodz (23%). Economically active population (aged 18-64) is most represented in Cuenca (64%) as well as Palermo, Lodz, Kaunas (62% for all).⁹



Vejle is the only city from those involved in the project, where there is an equal number of men and women. All other cities have more women. This is particularly the case in the cities on the east side - Kaunas (56%), Daugavpils (55%) and Lodz (54%).¹⁰



⁹ "City Population", City Population, <https://www.citypopulation.de/>

¹⁰ "City Population", City Population, <https://www.citypopulation.de/>

4. Good practice examples

4.1. Good practice examples in Daugavpils

Many of the possible steps to reduce and control depopulation are already being implemented in Daugavpils.

The following can be noted as examples of good practice in Daugavpils:

❖ **Attracting young professionals from important sectors**

The aim of the Daugavpils city council scholarships is to stimulate the development of students' intellectual abilities and education, as well as to attract doctors to work in Daugavpils city health care institutions. Meanwhile, the education of inhabitants is cared for and the access to health care services is provided.¹⁴

The scholarship is given to students of the second level higher medical education program, who study to be doctors and have concluded a contract with the health care institution located in the administrative territory of Daugavpils city municipality. It is important to note that specialists should commit to work in a health care institution within the administrative territory of Daugavpils city municipality for the next five years after completion of the study program and residency. That includes the full-time professional higher education or undergraduate students and residents who receive education in accordance with accredited residency education programs in medicine.¹⁵

Students who have declared their place of residence in Daugavpils city municipality, have been recommended in written form by the university administration, have had grades not less than an 8 (out of 10), do not receive the university scholarship in state-funded study places, pass the required examinations within the set time limit, obtain the full amount of credit points for the relevant semester of the academic year and actively participate in university life can apply for the scholarship.¹⁶

Residents who have concluded a contract with a municipal corporation in which the municipality owns at least 50% of the shares (in this case, a medical institution), in which they undertake to work for the next five years after finishing residency, are eligible for the scholarship.¹⁷ Scholarship amount:

- the amount of the scholarship is 43 euros per month for a student;
- the amount of the scholarship for a resident funded by the state budget is 220 euros per month;
- the monthly amount of scholarship for a resident who is not funded by the state budget is 365 euros per month.¹⁸

¹⁴ Daugavpils pilsetas domes saistossienoteikumi Nr.2. "PasvaldTbas stipendijas pieskirsanas kartTba", Likumi.lv, <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=171722>

¹⁵ Daugavpils pilsetas domes saistossienoteikumi Nr.2. "PasvaldTbas stipendijas pieskirsanas kartTba", Likumi.lv, <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=171722>

¹⁶ Daugavpils pilsetas domes saistossienoteikumi Nr.2. "PasvaldTbas stipendijas pieskirsanas kartTba", Likumi.lv, <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=171722>

¹⁷ Daugavpils pilsetas domes saistossienoteikumi Nr.2. "PasvaldTbas stipendijas pieskirsanas kartTba", Likumi.lv, <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=171722>

¹⁸ Daugavpils pilsetas domes saistossienoteikumi Nr.2. "PasvaldTbas stipendijas pieskirsanas kartTba", Likumi.lv, <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=171722>

❖ Opportunity to rent two-room municipal apartments for families with two children

Daugavpils city council has made changes to binding regulations regarding municipal assistance in solving housing issues. Until the entry into force of the amendments, municipal flats were rented out to people whose rented living space is in an emergency condition, as well as to categories of socially vulnerable people - for example, disabled people, orphans and large families.¹⁹ Since November 29 of 2018, families raising two underage children also have the possibility to receive municipal apartments.²⁰ Certain requirements are set for families to obtain rental rights - for example, they must be declared in Daugavpils. In this way, the municipality not only offers families the opportunities to improve their living conditions, but also manages its properties more efficiently. Families with two underage children are families of working age, those are young specialists that work in the city and pay taxes to the municipality. In 2019, it is planned to complete the renovation of the municipal apartment building at Gaismas street 7, where the vacant apartments will be available. The Daugavpils housing stock has approximately 4 thousand apartments, half of which are non-privatized and from those a part is being rented out to residents as an assistance. In 2018, there were about 80 people in queue for municipal apartments, and the head of the Daugavpils city council housing department mentions that interest regarding this possibility is high.²¹

In order to receive a municipal apartment, families that have two underage children in their guardianship and do not own or manage residential real estate have to correspond to criteria set by Daugavpils city council - families with two children must have declared their place of residence in Daugavpils continuously for the last ten years; had to rent or use a living space owned by a private person over the last five years; the families must have an independent income and cannot have any debt for rent and utilities.²²

¹⁹ "Gimenes ar diviem bērniem Daugavpilī vares Tret pasvaldības divistabu dzīvokļus", LSM.LV, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/gimenes-ar-diviem-berniem-daugavpili-vares-iret-pasvaldibas-divistabu-dzivoklus.a299705/>

²⁰ "Stājas spēkā grozījumi saistītajos noteikumos "Par Daugavpils pilsētas pasvaldības palīdzību dzīvokļa jautājumu risināšanā" Daugavpils Pilsētas dome, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/pasvaldiba/aktualitates/zinas/stajas-speka-grozijumi-saistosajos-noteikumos-par-daugavpils-pilsetas-pasvaldibas-palidzibu-dzivokla-jautajumu-risinasa>

²¹ "Gimenes ar diviem bērniem Daugavpilī vares Tret pasvaldības divistabu dzīvokļus", LSM.LV, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/gimenes-ar-diviem-berniem-daugavpili-vares-iret-pasvaldibas-divistabu-dzivoklus.a299705/>

²² "Gimenes ar diviem bērniem Daugavpilī vares Tret pasvaldības divistabu dzīvokļus", LSM.LV, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/gimenes-ar-diviem-berniem-daugavpili-vares-iret-pasvaldibas-divistabu-dzivoklus.a299705/>

❖Attracting local and foreign entrepreneurs

Starting from January 2 of 2017, companies intending to develop their economic activities in the Latgale region can apply for and receive tax credits in the Latgale special economic zone (Latgale SEZ). By the initiative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, intensive work was carried out in 2016 to create additional support in Latgale. Development of business environment is an important element in the development of any territory and, therefore, in order to promote development of Latgale region by attracting investments for development of production and infrastructure and creation of new jobs, in collaboration with the Latgale planning region the Latgale special economic zone law was made. The advantages of Latgale SEZ are intended for both - the local entrepreneurs who are planning to expand and diversify their production capacities and products, as well as for foreign investors who intend to start their business in Latgale territory. Local governments of Latgale planning region have not defined the maximum location and area of each territory that may be granted SEZ status. The total area of Latgale SEZ is intended to be 5% of the total area of the region. The territories to be included in the Latgale SEZ can be located virtually anywhere in Latgale, according to the company's views and needs. Businesses operating in Latgale SEZ territories will be eligible for direct tax relief - up to 80% off corporate income tax and up to 80% off real estate tax. To qualify, you must conclude an agreement with the Latgale SEZ in accordance with the law "on taxation in free ports and special economic zones".²³

Capital companies of Latgale SEZ will receive direct tax rebates from the accumulated investment amount. The maximum allowable aid intensity for the investments made will be applied accordingly:

- 35 % - the corporation corresponds to the category - large corporation;
- 45 % - the corporation corresponds to the category - medium corporation;
- 55 % -the corporation corresponds to the category - small or micro corporation.

The application of a fixed percentage of the aid (35%, 45% or 55%) is used for corporate income tax relief and the total amount of real estate tax deductions. In accordance with the law "on taxation of free ports and special economic zones", such long-term investments are supported:

- "tangible investments" - buildings and production sites, technology and equipment;
- "intangible investments"- the cost of obtaining patents and acquiring technology.

The law stipulates that the Latgale SEZ will operate until the 31st December of 2035.²⁴

Today there are 7 Latgale SEZ companies working in Daugavpils administrative territory, representing the following sectors: outerwear production, metal processing, food industry, wood processing, real estate management and renting. The companies employ 428 people.²⁵

²³ "Latgales speciala ekonomiska zona (Latgales SEZ)" <https://lpr.gov.lv/lv/lsez/#.XbbqGtXRaHt>

²⁴ Latgales speciala ekonomiska zona (Latgales SEZ)" <https://lpr.gov.lv/lv/lsez/#.XbbqGtXRaHt>

²⁵ "Latgales SEZ", Daugavpils Pilsetas dome, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/pilseta/pilsetas-attistiba/uznemejdarbiba-daugavpili/latgales-sez>

❖Improvement of health care infrastructure

On January 25 of 2018, "Daugavpils regional hospital" Ltd. concluded an agreement with the Central finance and contracting agency on the implementation of the European Union project "Improving access to quality healthcare services and infrastructure development of the Ltd. "Daugavpils regional hospital". Within the framework of the project, it is planned to improve health care infrastructure at Daugavpils regional hospital, in relation to the provision of emergency medical care and health care services in the fields of cardiovascular, oncology and children's health. The project will include refurbishment of the Daugavpils regional hospital interior, such as the reconstruction of Emergency and patient admissions department's premises with the installation of a lift, oncology surgery room rebuilding, renovation of the perinatal care center and installation of air conditioning equipment, renovation of premises for establishment of Invasive cardiology center, etc.²⁶

A variety of latest generation medical technologies will be purchased, including angiography device, ultrasonography devices, videogastrosopes, videocolonoscopes, mammography device, artificial lung ventilation devices, neonatal resuscitation table and other devices that will expand the range of available healthcare services. A total of 50 medical devices will be purchased.²⁷

The duration of project implementation is 26 months from the moment of signing the project implementation contract. The total cost of the project is 7 670 720, 00 euros. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding amounts to 6 520 112,00 euros or 85% of the total cost. State budget funding amounts to 690 364, 80 euros or 9%, and the private cofinancing is 460 243,20 euros or 6%.²⁸

This project will contribute to the improvement of the health status of the Latvian population, especially those at risk of social and territorial exclusion and poverty, and will provide opportunities to receive quality health care services.²⁹

²⁶ Krapivina S. "Sabiedrības ar ierobežotu atbildību "Daugavpils reģionālā slimnīca" kvalitātīvu veselības aprūpes pakalpojumu pieejamības uzlabošana un infrastruktūras attīstība", <https://slimnica.daugavpils.lv/par-mums/projekti/>

²⁷ Krapivina S. "Sabiedrības ar ierobežotu atbildību "Daugavpils reģionālā slimnīca" kvalitātīvu veselības aprūpes pakalpojumu pieejamības uzlabošana un infrastruktūras attīstība", <https://slimnica.daugavpils.lv/par-mums/projekti/>

²⁸ Krapivina S. "Sabiedrības ar ierobežotu atbildību "Daugavpils reģionālā slimnīca" kvalitātīvu veselības aprūpes pakalpojumu pieejamības uzlabošana un infrastruktūras attīstība", <https://slimnica.daugavpils.lv/par-mums/projekti/>

²⁹ Krapivina S. "Sabiedrības ar ierobežotu atbildību "Daugavpils reģionālā slimnīca" kvalitātīvu veselības aprūpes pakalpojumu pieejamības uzlabošana un infrastruktūras attīstība", <https://slimnica.daugavpils.lv/par-mums/projekti/>

❖ Help for those who did not get into kindergarten

In Daugavpils, each year approximately 200 children of the city do not get into the kindergartens due to their occupancy rate.³⁰ New municipal binding regulations entered into force in Daugavpils on September 1 of this year that provide the possibility of co-financing babysitting services with a monthly compensation of 140 euros.³¹ However, there could be a problem of lack of babysitters.³²

Children of Daugavpils have the opportunity to attend 27 preschools, and this opportunity is used by 4500 children in pre-school age. It is an opportunity for parents to enter the labor market, but not for all. As already mentioned, there are currently around 200 children in queue who do not get into kindergarten. Creation of additional groups is not possible because kindergartens are overcrowded. The root of the problem is that the city kindergartens started to admit children already from the age of one - it allows parents to enter the labor market more quickly; that's why the kindergarten is in demand already when the children are a year old. The head of the largest kindergarten in Daugavpils mentions that groups for children ages 1-3 are most in demand. She explains that they have created a system where parents can choose a priority kindergarten and another kindergarten, when applying for a kindergarten - if they do not get into one, they can go to another. However, if you apply later, you may be left without a place in kindergarten. For instance, last year only a third of all children who applied to a kindergarten could get in. So, the solution is that if the child does not get into a kindergarten, then municipality will provide a co-funding for the babysitter, which in the case of Daugavpils would be 140 euros.³³

Council's co-financing applies only to those babysitters who have vocational education or who have attended appropriate courses. In Daugavpils, such qualification can be obtained through the opportunities offered by an accredited program of College of Medicine with a year and a half of training and practice. The future babysitters can learn the basics of professional childcare and pedagogy there and also develop first aid skills, learn about baby hygiene, nutrition, speech therapy and other important aspects of upbringing.³⁴

³⁰ Smagare S. "Rindas uz bernudarziem Daugavpilī maziņas ar pasvaldības līdžfinansētām bērnu auklēm", LSM.LV, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/rindas-uz-bernudarziem-daugavpili-mazinas-ar-pasvaldibas-lidzfinansetam-bernu-auklem.a317167/>

³¹ "Bērnu aukle kā alternatīva rinda uz bernudarzu" Daugavpils Pilsetas Dome, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/pilseta/iedzivotajiem/izglitiba-un-zinatne/zinas/bernu-aukle-ka-altemativa-rinda-uz-bernudarzu>

³² Smagare S. "Rindas uz bernudarziem Daugavpilī maziņas ar pasvaldības līdžfinansētām bērnu auklēm", LSM.LV, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/rindas-uz-bernudarziem-daugavpili-mazinas-ar-pasvaldibas-lidzfinansetam-bernu-auklem.a317167/>

³³ Smagare S. "Rindas uz bernudarziem Daugavpilī maziņas ar pasvaldības līdžfinansētām bērnu auklēm", LSM.LV, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/rindas-uz-bernudarziem-daugavpili-mazinas-ar-pasvaldibas-lidzfinansetam-bernu-auklem.a317167/>

³⁴ "Bērnu aukle kā alternatīva rinda uz bernudarzu" Daugavpils Pilsetas Dome, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/pilseta/iedzivotajiem/izglitiba-un-zinatne/zinas/bernu-aukle-ka-altemativa-rinda-uz-bernudarzu>

❖Support of Daugavpils city municipal institution "Social Service" for large families

Large families are eligible to receive:

1. Aid to cover the costs of heat supply for the period from October 1st to 31st of March (including), if the average monthly income of each family member does not exceed 80% of the national minimum monthly wage. Support is 25 euros per month for each child, but not more than 125 euros per month;
2. Aid for the provision of hot water supply, if the average monthly income for each family member does not exceed 80% of the national minimum monthly wage for the period concerned. The aid amounts to 20 euros per calendar year.
3. Aid for the purchase of heating oil for individual heating purposes, if the average monthly income for each member of the family does not exceed 80% of the national minimum monthly wage for the period concerned. The aid is 200 euros once per calendar year.
4. Aid for residential home technical maintenance (inspection, maintenance and routine repair of the dwelling house, its equipment and communications) and coverage of sanitary maintenance costs for the house manager, the costs for cold water, gas, electricity and waste management, if the average monthly income per family member does not exceed 80% of the national minimum monthly wage for the period concerned. The aid is 15 euros per month for the period from October 1st to March 31 (including).
5. Aid for coverage of catering expenses in Daugavpils pre-school educational institutions, if the average income of each family member during the last three months does not exceed the minimum monthly wage established in the country for the period concerned. The aid provided is 100% of the amount of catering expenses. Aid for covering the cost of catering for children is granted for the period from September 1st to May 31 and from June 1 to August 31 for the entire month in which the application is submitted, together with proof of expenditure (or other documents certifying the payments made), containing the child's requisites.
6. Aid for coverage of cost for catering expenses of children in Daugavpils elementary schools, secondary schools and vocational secondary schools during the school year (lunches and afternoon snacks) and also during the summer camps in Daugavpils city and in public catering companies during the summer holidays, if the average income per each family member during the last three months does not exceed 80% of the national minimum monthly wage for the period concerned. The aid is 100% of the amount of catering expenses from the date of submission of the application. Aid for covering the cost of catering for children is granted for the period from September 1st to May 31 and from June 1 to August 31 for the entire month in which the application is submitted, together with proof of expenditure (or other documents certifying the payments made), containing the child's requisites.

7. Aid for the purchase of educational equipment necessary for the education of students once per calendar year for every student, if the average income for each family member over the last three months does not exceed 80% of the national minimum monthly wage for that period.

Here are the amounts:

- For students in Daugavpils pre-school educational institutions- 25 euros;
- For 1st grade students of Daugavpils educational institutions - 50 euros;
- For students in Daugavpils primary schools, secondary schools and vocational education institutions, except 1st grade students - 35 euros.

8. Aid for the cost coverage of a planned operation. Every resident of Daugavpils city municipality is eligible to receive support for coverage of expenses (payment or reimbursement) of a planned operation, which, according to the doctor's opinion is necessary to perform urgently. The aid is equal to the actual cost of the operation, but does not exceed 1500,00 euros per person (except for the costs borne by the state or insurer).

In order to receive support, the person or his/her legal representative shall submit an application to the Social Service, attaching copies of such documents: a statement signed by the head of the medical institution regarding the length of the queue for the operation in question, the planned date of the operation on a first-come and first-served basis, the planned cost of the planned operation and the need for performing operation urgently (when requesting support for the coverage of operation costs).

9. Aid for covering expenses for sauna.

There is aid for a large family living in a private home or apartment without a bath, if the average monthly income for each family member in the last three months does not exceed the national minimum monthly wage during the respective period. The aid is 100% of the sauna visit expenses (up to 24 sauna visits in the sauna specified by the service).

10. Aid in case of childbirth.

One of the parents of a child who has declared his/her main place of residence in the administrative territory of Daugavpils city for at least the last 9 months before the birth of the child, or another person in whose care the child has been placed in accordance with the decision of the custody court are both eligible to receive aid in case of the birth of a child. Aid is 300 euros per child. The aid can be claimed within three months after the registration date of child's birth and the declaration of residence in the administrative territory of Daugavpils, unless it was not possible to apply for aid for objective reasons. The one-time support is paid in the form of a transfer to the beneficiary's bank account.

11. Aid for public transport cost coverage.

A member of a large family can receive a 100% discount for using tram and bus.

12. Aid for child care (up to the moment when child reaches one and a half years of age).

Child care allowance (up to the moment when child reaches one and a half years of age) of 200 euros per month for each child (if three or more children have been born in the same childbirth), if the family has been granted the status of poor or low-income family.³⁵

³⁵ "Atbalsts daudzbernu ģimenēm", Daugavpils pilsētas pasvaldības iestāde. Sociālais dienests.
<http://www.socd.lv/aktualitates/sociala-palidziba-daudzbernu-ģimenem>

4.2. Good practice examples- support programs in Latvia

❖State aid for the purchase of housing

It is a vital support for families with children and young professionals. Launched in 2015, the Altum support program guarantees are intended for a bank loan for the purchase or construction of housing for families with children and young specialists with regular income, but not enough savings to make the first payment.

❖Housing guarantee for families with children

The guarantee is granted to families with children (up to 23 years of age included), if the transaction amount for purchase and/or construction and repairs costs of the housing does not exceed 200,000 euros. Guarantee term is up to 10 years, and the amount of guarantee is up to 10% from the principal amount of the loan, and not exceeding 10,000 euros, if there is one child in the family; amount of guarantee is up to 15% from the principal amount of the loan, and not exceeding 15,000 euros, if there are two children in the family ;amount of guarantee is up to 20% from the principal amount of the loan, and not exceeding 20,000 euros, if there are three or more children in the family. If the bank has issued one loan both for purchase of the housing and the repairs, guarantee shall be applicable to both purposes.³⁶

A housing guarantee is issued if the bank confirms in writing that the loan is granted to a person living with and supporting at least one child up to 23 years of age (including) (the age of the child is fixed on the date, when the bank submits a guarantee application to Altum). Applicant's declared place of residence must be the Republic of Latvia, and within the framework of the program the receiver of the guarantee cannot have an already received another guarantee for the purchase or construction of the living space.³⁷

❖Housing guarantee for young specialists

The guarantee is granted to the young specialists - persons who have acquired the vocational secondary or higher education and do not exceed the age of 35. Guarantee term is up to 10 years, and amount of guarantee is up to 20% from the principal amount of the loan, and not exceeding 50,000 euros. If the bank has issued one loan both for purchase of the housing and the repairs, guarantee shall be applicable to both purposes.³⁸

³⁶ "Par majokju garantiju programmu", Altum, <https://www.altum.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/iedzivotajiem/majoklu-garantiju-programma/par-programmu/>

³⁷ "Kas var sanemt majokja garantiju", Altum, <https://www.altum.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/iedzivotajiem/majoklu-garantiju-programma/kas-var-sanemt-garantiju/>

³⁸ "Par majokju garantiju programmu", Altum, <https://www.altum.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/iedzivotajiem/majoklu-garantiju-programma-jaunajiem-speicalistiem/par-majoklu-garantiju-programmu/>

Housing guarantee can be obtained by a young specialist who has completed vocational secondary or higher education, does not exceed 35 years of age and applies for a home purchasing or construction loan in a bank that has signed a cooperation agreement with Altum. A copy of the certificate of obtained secondary vocational or higher education must be submitted.

If the receiver of the guarantee in this project has not received any other guarantee for the purchase or construction of the living space within the framework of the program.³⁹

In 2018, it was reported that 10,000 families had received housing with support from the state, and the average guarantee that was received for housing purchase was 7,100 euros - this is the amount by which the down payment is reduced.⁴⁰

❖Reduced fares for public transport for large families

In Latvia, the government decided that from September 1, 2018, pupils and students who are members of a large family can receive a 90% discount on the cost of a single ticket for a regional bus or train. Other large family members are eligible for a 50% discount on one ticket or 40% of the subscription ticket price. Therefore, pupils and students of large families can pay 10% of the full ticket price, while the rest of the family can pay half of the ticket price and 60% of the subscription ticket price. In order to receive the discount, one must show a "3+Family card" as well as an identity document (passport or ID card or eID card). "3+ Family card" is a state-created support program for large families, which meanwhile serves as a proof of raising three or more children under the age of 18 in the family, as well as persons of legal age who have not reached the age of 24, if they are obtaining general, vocational or higher education. Owners of this card can receive discounts, when using services offered by public and private companies in Latvia. Large families must carry this "3+Family Card" and their ID and student card at the time of ticket purchase and during the trip.⁴¹

³⁹ "Kas var sanemt majokļa garantiju", Altum, <https://www.altum.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/iedzivotajiem/majoklu-garantiju-programma-jaunajiem-speicalistiem/kas-var-sanemt-majokla-garantiju/>

⁴⁰ "Valsts atbalstu majokļa iegādei izmantojums 10 000 ģimeņu", LSM.LV, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/ekonomika/valsts-atbalstu-majokla-iegadei-izmantojums-10-000-gimenu.a302746/>

⁴¹ "Daudzbernu ģimenēm palielināta atlaides sabiedriskajā transportā", Cilveks. Valsts. Likums, <https://lvportals.lv/skaidrojumi/298195-daudzbernu-gimenem-palielina-atlaides-sabiedriskaja-transporta-2018>

❖PAPS Remigration Program (We help you to return to your own backyard)

PAPS (We help you to return to your own backyard) is a pilot project "Regional Remigration Coordinator", implemented by the ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (VARAM). This project was implemented as part of the government action plan task, which was implemented in 2016. This task is intended to support activities that promote the participation of people living abroad, both political and civic. Also, to support events that involve compatriots in Latvia's education, science, as well as cultural and economic life. This project also provides support for families living abroad who are considering returning to Latvia.

To take a step towards the promotion of remigration, in 2018 VARAM established a network of five remigration coordinators. Accordingly, in each region there is one regional coordinator. Coordinators help municipalities to get their citizens back, as well as help compatriots to return to their homeland.

There is a possibility to receive a free consultation of the regional coordinator regarding the issues that are important to you in connection with returning to Latvia in a particular region. Everyone interested can receive coordinator's consultation. The coordinator helps compatriots abroad to prepare for a successful return to Latvia and assists in making informed decisions and evaluating aspects. Coordinators can help compatriots to remotely evaluate the benefits of a well evaluated decision regarding returning.

It has to be taken into account that each remigrant has very individual needs and circumstances. During the communication process, the coordinator in Latvia discusses with compatriots any questions that are of interest to them and helps to find answers to them. If necessary, the coordinators also cooperate with different national authorities, as well as with the municipalities. Particular attention is paid to the interest of potential remigrants in various municipal services (for example, accessibility of kindergartens and schools for families with children), place of residence (information on housing options, who to contact and where to search). Also, about job and business opportunities (where you can find vacancies, consultation on starting and developing a business in Latvia, and where you can get information on support opportunities in the municipality).

In order for the pilot project to be carried out, in 2018 the state budget of 425 699 euros was allocated to it. The breakdown of this budget is as follows: 9% represents the administrative costs, 18% is for the provision of ten project manager work in the municipalities, 42% for business support and 31% for the work of five regional coordinators.

Regarding the results of the PAPS project- between March 2018 and June 2019, 2921 proposals were made, 2403 families were involved in the project, 243 families already have returned to Latvia, and 252 families are planning to return to Latvia. This project has already helped compatriots in the process of returning and hopefully will help many more to return.

In the PAPS website, a support for business is described, which remigrants can begin. From September 2 to October 4, remigrants can apply for a contest that's organized by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (VARAM) and planning regions, in order to qualify for grant support for the implementation, development or launch of a business. Such contest is being organized already second year in a row in order to provide support in form of grants to remigrants for the launch and implementation of their business. Such support is very important for compatriots who have been away for a long time and are returning to Latvia and want to start their own business. They have fewer opportunities to receive support and to qualify for it from other national programs for support.

Funding for one project is up to 10 000 euros, but in order to obtain it, the remigrant must give his/her personal contribution for launch or implementation of business by providing his/her attracted investment. Similarly, after the start of the project, within a three-year period personal income tax (PIT) and state social insurance mandatory contribution (VSAOI) payments must be paid. The minimum amount of attracted investment must be 50% of the support funding requested in the project application.

Remigrants, as well as potential remigrants who have been living abroad for at least three years and have indicated their address abroad in the population register, qualify for the contest. Applying for the contest takes place in Zemgale, Kurzeme, Riga, Latgale and Vidzeme planning regions. Remigrants must apply directly in the region, where the idea of economic activity is to be realized.⁴²

◆Remigration informative support

The portal www.latvija.lv, maintained by the State Regional Development Agency, provides information regarding various issues to those who are planning or have already decided to return to Latvia. The "Return to Latvia" section of the portal offers a variety of answers, directions and advice that would be important and useful for people to know before returning. This information in the portal is grouped into themes, covering the following topics: work, education, repatriation and citizenship, social protection, entrepreneurship, residence and health.

The job section contains information related to the job search question; it is described there, where to look for job offers and where to receive help finding a job. It is also indicated there, where it is possible to find information about living and working conditions in Latvia. It also includes information on where statistical information about average wages in different sectors and other useful statistical information is available, as well as instructions on how to check if a potential employer is on the list of tax debtors of the State Revenue Service or has a suspended economic activity and how much he/she has paid in taxes. It is also possible to find out the reputation of a business, which includes information such as the company's insolvency proceedings.

⁴² Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrijas (VARAM) un planošanas reģionu Tīstenošais projekts, <https://www.paps.lv/par-projektu/>

There is also information on job safety, as well as regional mobility promotion measures, which include support for unemployed people from regions, where they are unable to find work, and they are directed to available job vacancies in nearby cities and regions, providing financial support for covering expenses of housing rentals. It also describes the possibility of finding out about financial support obtainment opportunities, when starting work in a more remote region.

The education section contains information about pre-school educational institutions (where they can be found in Riga, and how they can be found outside of Riga, about private preschool educational institutions and questions of expenses, about payments in kindergarten and where it is possible to enroll a child in municipal kindergarten, as well as the possibility for children and their parents to remotely learn Latvian, if there is such necessity). Information on general primary education is also available (a link to the list of schools in Latvia and specific municipalities; there are also answers to frequently asked questions related to general primary education). There is also information about general/vocational secondary education (for example, about the general secondary education programs, additional information about vocational secondary education, language learning, youth programs and internship opportunities). Education for adults is also included in this section (there are available links to training of the unemployed, additional information about career support programs and accredited universities and colleges).

There is a link in the section about repatriation and citizenship, which gives you detailed information about obtaining Latvian citizenship. There is also a link where you can find information about the admissibility of dual citizenship and formalizing status of repatriate. It also answers the question of how repatriate status is granted and what material assistance a repatriate can receive.

The social protection section provides information on where you can introduce yourself with social insurance benefits claim site, as well as where to find information about the types and granting of state social benefits. There is also information about municipal social assistance options, as well as information about old-age pension and unemployment benefits, when returning to Latvia.

In the entrepreneurship section you can find information on starting a business, doing and completing a business, health at workplace, domestic production, animal husbandry, the food industry and more.

The residence section contains information on what to do when you move, answers the question about where you can get information about your declared place of residence, links to information about whether the municipality can provide as apartment, and whether it is possible to find out about another person's declared place of residence.

The health section provides information about state-funded health care services, about family doctors and registration with them, as well as information on whether you can apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), if you want to stay in Latvia, and where it is possible to receive it.⁴³

⁴³ "Atgriesanas Latvija", Latvija.lv, <https://www.latvija.lv/DzivesSituacijas/atgriesanas-latvija>

❖Study on remigration policy

Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, the University of Latvia Diaspora and Migration research center, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the University of Latvia jointly conducted a study "Remigration policy in Europe and other countries." The experiences of a number of countries - Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Albania, Ireland, Turkey, Israel, Kazakhstan and Ecuador - were examined in relation to remigration policy.

The research literature identifies different remigration policies, and this study uses a division that distinguishes three types of measures in remigration policy: 1) reduction of various obstacles to return (for instance, reduction of bureaucratic procedures and provision of information), 2) support for groups that might otherwise not return (financial and other support measures) un 3)reintegration support measures.

More specifically, the mentioned policy instruments are dual citizenship (aimed at reducing various administrative barriers for the members of diaspora assisting them with return to their country of origin), recognition of education obtained abroad (also focused on reducing various administrative barriers for the diaspora members), mentoring programs to promote knowledge transfer between professionals from different disciplines around the world and country of origin (focuses on economic cooperation with the diaspora and on promoting the attraction of high-level professionals to the country of origin with the hope that some of them will return; such programs also apply to the return of groups that might otherwise not return), provision of information and consultations about person's resettlement in the country of origin (refers to reintegration support measures), support for pupils, who are returning and their parents (refers to reintegration support measures) and material support for remigrants returning to their country of origin (reintegration support measure) and support for those groups that are returning, but might not return without support (country comparative analysis indicated that support is intended for the following groups: young professionals (students with foreign higher education), scientists and diaspora entrepreneurs. ⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Supule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Krieke L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstīs" (15.-65.lpp).

4.3. Good practice examples abroad

For most cities participating in this project, increasing employment is an important goal that could help in the context of depopulation. For instance, Kaunas has specifically mentioned the development of entrepreneurship in the city as a goal for 2020 in the context of depopulation prevention. In Daugavpils it would also be important to develop entrepreneurship in order to facilitate the movement of people to the city. Therefore, we have included an example of good practice in entrepreneurship development from Spain:

❖Promoting entrepreneurship (Barcelona, Spain)

In Spain (Barcelona) an inclusive entrepreneurship model has been developed. Barcelona City Council's development agency launched the inclusive entrepreneurship model (IEM) in 2004 to make entrepreneurship accessible to everyone. Entrepreneurship is a way to create jobs and raise individuals' economic and social autonomy. However, many barriers prevent many people from becoming entrepreneurs - especially it applies to some groups, such as women, youth, and people over 45. Closely involving expert stakeholders, IEM is for everyone willing to be an entrepreneur. Tools and services of this program are adapted also to the most vulnerable population who may not benefit from conventional entrepreneurship services.

The model incorporates both online and face-to-face services, allowing people with time and mobility constraints to create a personalized plan to start the business creation process. IEM provides training opportunities for people who are not yet ready to start a company, so that they can improve their professional profiles. IEM's aim is to coach aspiring entrepreneurs on their way from their business idea to the setting up of their company. The first step to access the services is a welcome session where all the available tools are presented. Each year, 226 welcoming sessions are organized both online and in person. All the attendees are offered different services according to their needs. This includes personalized advice from a team of entrepreneurship experts that coach entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into viable business, using a set of online tools to produce SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), used for analyses of business ideas, self-assessment of key entrepreneurial skills, well-structured business plans, important information about legal procedures, access to funding and market research. There are also training seminars going on that provide entrepreneurs with training in areas that are very important for the management of a new company; such areas include market research, legal status and procedures, entrepreneurial skills and financial plans.

The program is tailor-made - it is also aimed at groups that face particular obstacles due to their social and personal circumstances. It also offers individual and group training. This approach provides help for a large critical mass, but also adapts to the needs of each individual. The model is implemented in permanent contact with the different stakeholders operating at economic and social levels in the city of Barcelona, which makes it possible to adapt to changes in the society and economy. These stakeholders include different levels of governance (Catalan government, Spanish government and European Union); the academic community (universities and research centres); the private sector (other companies, financial sector).

Barcelona Activa (city council agency) is the closest administrative institution to the citizens. It develops its activities in cooperation with stakeholders and professional associations - because of this close cooperation the specific needs are better identified. Barcelona Activa works closely with interested experts to develop IEM. The project is being developed and implemented by cooperation of various stakeholders:

- Interdisciplinary partners (for instance, Chamber of Commerce, business associations and employee associations) participate in the provision of permanent services and co-design events. They also participate in the organization of BizBarcelona (the largest entrepreneurship event held, with more than 300 organizations involved).
- Co-development and implementation of sector-focused programs: sector-focused promotion institutions, high schools, professional guilds or big business players act as experts and get first-hand connection to the newest and most promising ideas and startups of the sector within the sector-focused programs;
- There is a permanent connection to finance sources: Caixa Capital Risc, Microbank, Banc de Sabadell, as well as Business Angels and other investment platforms are in permanent connection and co-organize events together with BA, providing them with a flux of technically viable projects to invest in.

This current entrepreneurship model started in 2004, and in the period from 2004 to 2016 more than 100,000 people were using the services it provided. This participation turned into 26,000 business plans coached and 18,000 companies created. Up to now, these companies have created 32,000 jobs. This model has promoted entrepreneurship and its growth. It has helped to tackle unemployment by facilitating the adaptation of people's skills to new demands on the labor market. At the moment, an innovative entrepreneurship environment can be observed in the city, which fosters the emergence of new small companies and the transformation of new ideas into entrepreneurship.

This good practice example could also be valuable to other European cities because it could help to increase employment. The European Union needs about 4 million jobs to return to pre-crisis employment levels. Groups such as women, young people, seniors and people with disabilities are at high risk of being excluded from the labor market. Policies need to address this problem, and self-employment and entrepreneurship (which would target also disadvantaged and underrepresented groups) are under-explored possibilities. According to OECD data, only 2.6% of the adult population in the EU were new business owners in the 2009- 2013 period. Across the EU, women are half as likely as men to be new business owners (1.8% vs. 3.5%); businesses run by young people tend to have lower survival rates; and older entrepreneurs (+45) tend to run only small companies. For this reason, IEM would be an interesting good practice in EU cities.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ "Inclusive entrepreneurship model", URBACT, <https://urbact.eu/inclusive-entrepreneurship-model>

❖Tourism development (Alba Iulia, Romania)

The next good practice example comes from Romania. We mention this example because we see parallels between Daugavpils and Alba Iulia in terms of using the cultural wealth potential for city's development and attracting investment. Daugavpils can be proud of the Daugavpils fortress, the Mark Rothko museum, the historic center, the century-old wooden houses of the old suburbs and the Church hill. We think that it might be useful for Daugavpils to borrow some ideas from the good practice example in Romania, where Alba Iulia has successfully used its cultural wealth to attract investment and increase the number of tourists and population.

Alba Iulia has a rich history and cultural heritage, including a citadel, historical sites and a medieval library. At first, all of this was left to ruins. However, Alba Iulia built an integrated branding approach, directly linked with the city's strategic planning process. By strategically positioning and strengthening the local identity, the city of 73 000 population was able to become a target for investors, tourists and citizens. The city managed to attract important funding for the renovation of the citadel (60 million €), increased its population by 10 000 inhabitants in five years, due to working opportunities, and the number of tourists by 65% during the same period.

All this was achieved through several actions. Seven years ago, a local strategic planner to one of the largest advertising companies in the world created pro bono the visual expression of the city's identity and slogan. Next, a branding manual was launched with a set of rules for using the city brand, aiming to maintain a strategic brand consistency and addressed to the local economic actors. Alba Iulia became the first Romanian city to have a professional city branding and a brand manual, as well as a pro-made marketing strategy. Alba Iulia is also the first city in Romania to launch a complete touristic tool: a touristic guide, a mobile app, an official blog, an Instagram and Twitter page, targeting different types of audiences. After gaining visibility at national level, the city went across borders, being awarded the title of European Destination of Excellence. The city was reborn with the creation of its own brand; this city with a multicultural past, which suffered a decline was able to make an impressive comeback after the country joined the EU. This city relied on European support and solidarity to build a new future, starting with the city's cultural heritage.

This city is now one of Eastern Europe's most impressive success stories. The efforts of Alba Iulia were acknowledged as the city was awarded the Europa Nostra award (which was created in order to recognize excellent initiatives of cultural heritage preservation). Elected representatives, local artists, public officials and citizens were involved in the creation of city's branding strategy and its implementation phase. The logo was launched shortly after the citizens of the city became the "owners" of the citadel, a forbidden place which was in the custody of the army and closed to the public until then. A logo in the form of a citadel was created, representing the first step towards a better understanding of Romania's largest fortress.

There are two interesting and successful initiatives that reflect the local involvement in the creation of the city's brand.

In 2009, The Big Hug from Alba Iulia gathered 100,000 people to set the world record for the biggest human hug around the citadel. This was an innovative type of marketing event, which was planned by a local photographer and Alba Iulia Municipality. It was the largest photo ever made to promote a Romanian city. The large poster is still used in the campaigns organized by the local administration. An important number of citizens living in Alba Iulia Municipality had the chance to take part in the creation of the logo of the city.

Other participatory examples came from local economic actors who decided to link their traditional products with the logo of the city. Both the Citadel Wine as well as the Starshaped Bread of the Citadel are using the branding identity regulated by the branding manual.

Tourists have a range of events that they can attend and where they can be involved, when arriving in Alba Iulia, depending on their profile. Investments in professional marketing strategy and tourism have made a significant impact in recent years:

- Increase in the number of residents has occurred: there were 63, 536 in 2011 and 73,937 in 2015.
- The number of visitors at the museum has increased from 91,608 in 2013 to 167,200 in 2016.

The city attracts more and more people every year due to the events organized there. It is not easy to make all relevant stakeholders understand that they do have a role in the development of the city brand. The results achieved by Alba Iulia, as well as the developed marketing tools could be used also in other small and medium-sized European cities. Thanks to the European support, Alba Iulia was given the opportunity to restore the largest Romanian citadel and use it to create a new city identity. The city's cultural heritage and its historical value made it possible.⁴⁶ As we have already mentioned, Daugavpils could also use its cultural wealth to attract investments, residents and tourists.

⁴⁶ "City branding: making the invisible visible", URBACT, <https://urbact.eu/city-branding-making-invisible-visible>

- **Integration of refugees (Altena, Germany)**

The next good practice example comes from Altena, Germany. This example seemed worth mentioning due to this city's capacity to increase population, its approach to involving citizens in city's development and the process of integrating migrants and refugees that it performs. For example, Palermo (one of the participants in the project) had mentioned the inclusion process between the residents of Palermo and foreigners as one of the main challenges in order to prevent depopulation in the city. Perhaps it could also be useful for Daugavpils to learn more about the Altena refugee integration approach, which was one of the key factors in the city's population growth.

Altena (a city of 18,544 inhabitants) reflects a strategic approach to long-term decline and stagnation. After local industries closed, the population of Altena shrank by 43% between 1975 and 2014.

The city's municipality started to work more closely with the citizens. Such actions were performed: organizational restructuring (such as downsizing and resource-sharing), developing civil society (including the involvement of hundreds of volunteers), economic revitalization (through tourism, for example), and integration of refugees. The population of Altena increased in 2015 for the first time since 1970, mainly because more refugees were invited than required by federal allocation; this increased the city's ability to respond to the problem of depopulation.⁴⁷ In 2017, the city even received the National Integration Prize by Chancellor Angela Merkel for its work in integration. Now, municipal finances have improved, and unemployment has fallen for the first time in 40 years.⁴⁸

The strategy framework for the city was developed in cooperation with local citizens and is called "Altena 2015"; this strategic framework was managed by the municipality together with civil society organizations. Given that the municipality was close to bankruptcy at that time, the active contribution of the people working and living in Altena was a major factor that helped the city. This could be of interest to other cities facing a long-term decline, to get ideas from the activities performed in Altena. The aspects mentioned above were included in the framework of this strategy:

- Integration of refugees: Altena has cooperated well with the civil society organizations in order to prepare the arrival of refugees and is now a recognised good practice example for combining its municipal with civil society resources;
- Restructuring public agencies and services: Altena is an example where the municipality reduced services and introduced new governance arrangements, while downsizing municipality personnel by 20% and making resource sharing arrangements with a neighbouring town;

⁴⁷ "Finding opportunities in declining cities", URBACT, <https://urbact.eu/finding-opportunities-declining-cities>

⁴⁸ "Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Altena", OECD, 12. LPP. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264299320-en.pdf?expires=1572274183&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=36225939A203483F46E35792EA5E09AE>

- Economic revitalization: Altena has several examples where new sustainable enterprises and nonprofit organizations were created through innovative collaboration with local actors, including tourism, hospitality and retail enterprises;
- Developing civil society: Investing in the voluntary sector continues to have far-reaching impacts across the city. Today over 500 regular volunteers of all backgrounds and ages contribute to a wide range of services.⁴⁹

Particular emphasis could be placed on the Altena's strategy to increase the size of the population, which includes the reception of refugees. The population of Altena has stabilized over the last three years, thanks to the reception of refugees. Altena believes that refugee integration helps both the city and the refugees - both sides benefit from this situation.

- A volunteer program (Kummerer) has been created in Altena, within which migrants are introduced to volunteers who, in cooperation with local authorities and civil society groups, help refugees to settle, find work and go to school;⁵⁰
- The city performs actions to prepare refugees for the labor market by providing consultations and helping to set up a mechanism for assessing their skills/qualifications. The Lennethal Adult Education Center offers refugees language courses as well as vocational courses. Transportation to the venue is reimbursed. The local employment center offers internship and education opportunities after recognition;⁵¹
- Refugees have access to basic health services and receive special social benefits related to their status. Until refugees are recognized, the municipality is entitled to provide basic health services, including additional services to vulnerable groups (pregnant women, disabled people, etc.);⁵²
- Unlike many other cities, Altena houses refugees in separate units of private homes, not in centralized shelters. Altena's decentralized accommodation approach is a good practice to avoid segregation. This concept is based on the availability of vacant apartments and is mainly implemented in cooperation with a local housing firm.⁵³

⁴⁹ "Finding opportunities in declining cities", URBACT, <https://urbact.eu/finding-opportunities-declining-cities>

⁵⁰ Hollstein A., "New Neighbours, New Citizens: Migrant integration in Altena, Germany", <https://www.oecd-forum.org/users/103878-andreas-hollstein/posts/32270-new-neighbours-new-citizens-migrant-integration-in-altena-germany>

⁵¹ "Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Altena", OECD, 12. LPP. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264299320-en.pdf?expires=1572274183&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=36225939A203483F46E35792EA5E09AE>

⁵² "Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Altena", OECD, 12. LPP. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264299320-en.pdf?expires=1572274183&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=36225939A203483F46E35792EA5E09AE>

⁵³ "Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Altena", OECD, 12. LPP. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264299320-en.pdf?expires=1572274183&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=36225939A203483F46E35792EA5E09AE>

❖Promoting education, innovation and entrepreneurship (Fundao, Portugal)

Another example of good practice is the Portuguese city of Fundao, which has had a number of good initiatives and has developed over recent years. Fundao practices include education, innovation and entrepreneurship development. For example, the development of education has been mentioned by several participating cities in the depopulation prevention project as a tool to combat depopulation. For example, Poland has mentioned the development of education as one of the targets for 2020 in the context of depopulation. Similarly, the development of entrepreneurship is also relevant to the other participants in the depopulation prevention project. The city of Fundao is one of the participants in the Osiris project, which can be considered a good practice example, as it helps cities to develop in different aspects. Also, action plans are being developed within the project framework. It could be valuable for Daugavpils to learn about the good practices in Fundao, as well as the structure of the Osiris project, in order to get ideas for city's development strategies.

In the beginning, Interreg Europe (2014-2020) should be mentioned, which helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. Interreg Europe creates an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions; this initiative tries to ensure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and places. Interreg Europe aims to get maximum return from the 359 million euros financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for 2014-2020. Interreg Europe offers opportunities for regional and local public authorities across Europe to share ideas and experience on public policy in practice, therefore improving strategies for their citizens and communities.

The Osiris project is part of the Interreg Europe program and focuses on the implementation of social innovation policies and action plans. Seven countries participate in the Osiris project - Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Greece and Slovakia. Together all the partners rethought the challenges regarding employment, education, innovation, social integration and climate. All the involved participants tried to identify and implement the desired changes in all 7 regional policy instruments. The project also involved transnational exchange meetings, where representatives of each partner country exchanged best practice ideas, case studies and developed new ideas in their region, based on learning and experience. The Osiris project is divided into two parts - in the first part the project methodology was developed. At local level, it includes the following activities:

1. Creation of the local action group with representatives from the public and private sector;
2. Stakeholder analysis;
3. Definition of key problems and challenges;
4. Collect evidence based on case studies;
5. Generating ideas for solutions;
6. Transnational visits to partner countries with exchange of best practices and learning;
7. Definition of actions and completion of tables of action;
8. Identification of potential funding mechanisms for action plan actions;

9. Communication and consultation with key stakeholders and validation of action plan;
10. Further improvement of the action plan after consultation with stakeholders;
11. Completion of phase 1 and formal launch of action plan.

However, the second part of the project consists of the implementation of these action plans. Action plans should be implemented by September 2020. Fundao city plan is divided into 4 categories: job opportunities, housing situation, local trade and education/training improvement. There are a total of 16 actions included in the action plan. Further details regarding the specific actions can be found at: https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevproiects/library/file_1545388692.pdf

Fundao is a city that has experienced emigration and increasing aging of its population. However, since 2015, for the first time in a few decades, Fundao has achieved a positive migration flow thanks to the Fundao Innovation Plan (created in 2012), whose strategy consisted of 4 parts:

1. Provide spaces, infrastructures and hosting services, through the adaptation and re-qualifying existing buildings, so that they fit into new functionalities dedicated to welcoming entrepreneurs and companies of an innovative and technology-based nature. Thus, in addition to the valuation attributed to existing assets based on their recovery, infrastructures are also offered at low cost to both the creative community and companies;
2. Support and encourage entrepreneurship and creativity, encouraging the installation of new companies in redeveloped spaces, guaranteeing them the provision of framework services and support to the development of their businesses;
3. Innovate, highlight, affirm solutions and initiatives that go beyond the borders of the city, promoting and facilitating partnerships between local producers and entrepreneurs in different contexts;
4. Communicate and promote all the work to be developed within the scope of this strategy, with a view to attracting, internationalizing and disseminating.

The most significant action that resulted from this strategy was the creation of the Living Lab Cova da Beira, which is the result of a collaboration led by the municipality, composed of companies, financing and development agencies, schools, health units and the University of Beira Interior. This Living Lab aims to generate a creative ecosystem in the spirit of open innovation, providing shared workspaces for incubating companies and entrepreneurship projects with the supply of home shops in the old center of the city of Fundao.

In principle, the Living Lab Cova da Beira consists of a Co-work space, Fab Lab and a Social and Business Incubator:

- Co-work spaces - they provide everything needed for the first phase of company incubation, encouraging the exchange of productive ideas and best practices in a multidisciplinary environment;

- Fab Lab - it is a prototyping laboratory designed to develop, manufacture and test innovative solutions. It provides, for example, a 3D printer and aims to connect the creative community to educational institutions and the wider community.
- Social and Business Incubator - supports and creates an environment that fosters new business development from new ideas. It also seeks to promote urban and social regeneration by locating new companies and the fruits of their incubation process in the old town.

78 new companies and projects have gone through the Incubator, Co-work space and Fab Lab since 2013. In four years, the project drove an integrated ecosystem that generated 68 startups and supported more than 200 private investment projects, focusing on research and development and digital skills. Since 2013, 150 million private investments have been attracted to the city. 15 new companies have been established solely in the field of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). Overall, since 2012, 1,300 new jobs have been created in Fundao, and unemployment has fallen to its lowest level since 2009. This is an indicator that could positively influence the preservation of the population and possibly also promote its growth. The municipal management has also implemented policy to attract companies with investment potential to remain in this territory. For example, Fundao creates conditions such as the availability of lots of land in industrial parks below the cost price, and also exempts them from municipal tax

In conclusion, two other initiatives from Fundao are worth mentioning: the Cova da Beira training center and the Academia de Codigo.

As a result of a protocol between the Municipality of Fundao, the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training and a group of local entities and companies, the Cova da Beira Advanced Training Centre was recently inaugurated in 2017 and aims to adapt school and professional business needs. Three training courses are already taking place, and a total of 60 trainees are involved. Partners are committed and available to create any courses that may be relevant to investors.

Academia de Codigo - the bootcamps of this academy help very talented people who have not found a job in their field - in this case, programming. The lack of programmers is recognized worldwide. Each bootcamp at the academy lasts 14 weeks, during which students learn several computer programs; more than 240 people saw their life radically change over 12 bootcamps. The employment rate is 100%, into ICT companies in Fundao.

There is also a program organized for children, in order to develop their digital competence; the coding skills of children are being developed in all Fundao elementary schools. Academia de Codigo programs have already received two national and international awards: 1st prize for social impact in Portugal and southern Europe, and the World Summit Prize for Information Society in 2017.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ "Osiris Action Plan: Make Fundao a Better City", https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevprojects/library/file_1545388692.pdf

❖ **Moving allowance offer (Candela, Italy)**

The next good practice example comes from Italy - it motivates people to move to them by offering them money. This specific offer comes from the city of Candela in Italy. Candela's management has come up with an offer to pay a moving allowance to people who would choose to move to this city and also would help them find cheaper housing. The offer from Candela is as follows - for one person the moving allowance to this city would be 800 euros, for a couple it would be 1200 euros, but for a family of more than 4 people the allowance would be already 2000 euros. Of course, there are also conditions for this offer - the money will be paid only to those new Candela residents who will move to the city, will find a job there (with a salary of at least 7,500 euros per year) and will rent a house in Candela for at least a year. Thanks to this financial motivation, already six Italian families have moved to Candela and another five have applied for this support and are planning to move.⁵⁵

❖ **Tax incentives (Italy)**

Another good practice example also comes from Italy, and it concerns motivating people to move to Italy. The Italian tax system provides tax incentives for people who are moving to Italy to work or live there. Tax incentives are offered to professors and researchers, impatriate workers (people who have completed school and then worked abroad, students with academic qualifications obtained abroad, workers and managers with high qualifications and specializations) and new residents. This good practice example can help to combat depopulation in all countries involved in the project, including Daugavpils. It should also be noted that the development of educational institutions in Daugavpils would be important, and such tax relief practice can help to attract highly qualified specialists, which could contribute to the development of the educational system in the city. Attracting other people who have acquired work and education skills abroad would also help to promote the development of the labor market and entrepreneurship.

Professors and researchers are granted a tax exemption of 90% on their income obtained in Italy from self-employed and employed work for a period of four years, from the year of acquisition of the residence for tax purposes in Italy. The requirements are that professors and researchers must have been resident abroad (not occasionally), must have a university degree or equivalent qualification, must have carried out documented research and course activities abroad for at least two consecutive years in public or private research centers or universities, must have obtained tax residence in Italy and must carry out teaching or research in Italy.

Impatriate workers receive tax exemption of 50% on income obtained in Italy from selfemployed and employed work for 5 years, from the year of acquisition of the residence for tax purposes in Italy. The requirements for impatriate workers are distributed separately for those who have worked or studied abroad and those in managerial and highly qualified positions.

⁵⁵ "Itālijas «maza Neopole» aicina ikvienu parcelties pie viniem - gimenem sola pat 2000 eiro", <http://m.travelnews.lv/?pid=107759>

Requirements for those who have worked or studied abroad are the following - must have a degree, must have been employed or self-employed abroad for at least two years, or must have studied abroad for at least two years and have obtained an academic qualification; must obtain a tax residence in Italy and work as an employed or self-employed person in Italy.

Requirements for those in managerial roles and with high qualification are the following - they must be acquiring a tax residence in Italy, they must have not been resident in Italy in the 5 tax periods prior to the moving and must have decided to stay for at least 2 years; they should be working mainly within the Italian territory; must be working in an enterprise resident in the territory of the Italian State by virtue of an employment relationship established with this company or with a subsidiary (even foreign), parent or "sister" company of that company; must be holding managerial roles or must meet the high qualification or specialization requirements.

For new residents there is a possibility of paying a substitute tax on income generated abroad amounting to 100,000 euros per year (25,000 for each family member); duration of the scheme is 15 years. Requirements include transfer of residence for tax purposes in Italy, and one must have resided abroad for at least 9 tax periods during the previous 10 years.⁵⁶

◆Housing assistance program (Poznan, Poland)

The next good practice example comes from Poznan, Poland, where affordable flats have been created for people who have recently graduated from university. Tenants are chosen on the basis of several selection criteria: they should be university graduates who graduated within the last five years, they must not be more than 36 years old, and should not own any other apartment in Poznan. They must work in or run a business in Poznan and pay taxes there. There is also an upper and a lower income limit. Each person can rent a flat for up to 10 years. In the first wave of recruitment there were 250 applicants, and later about 130.

The residential estate, which is aimed at university graduates, includes 4 residential buildings with 143 apartments, including 77 one-room and 66 two-room flats and two underground garage areas. This program helps people settle in Poznan, which helps stop the negative migration trend. The 10 year renting period helps young people become financially independent because they receive help in the beginning of their careers. This practice can also help other cities in Europe, which are confronted with the emigration of young people. Daugavpils is also facing the emigration of young working-age people and offering more affordable housing could help with people staying in the city.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ "Tax Incentives for Attracting Human Capital in Italy", L'agenzia Informa, https://www.agenziaentrate.gov.it/portale/documents/20143/233483/Tax+incentives+for+attracting+human+capital+in+Italy_Tax_incentives_for_attracting_human_capital_in_Italy.pdf/f4a91a80-8ed0-92a5-0186-424a9013bfc3

⁵⁷ "Apartments for Graduates", URBACT, <https://urbact.eu/apartments-graduates>

❖Family housing support program in Hungary (for increasing birth rate)

In order to support families with children and combat negative demographic trends, in 2015 the Hungarian government announced a major new policy: families will receive generous subsidies for the purchase or construction of new homes, and subsidies will be increased based on people's marital status and the number of children they have. Young couples make important decisions, especially about the number of children they would like to have, considering the availability of housing. This program was created in order to reduce the financial challenges and to encourage married couples to have more children. Under this "Family housing support program", married couples are eligible for grants to purchase new homes, as well as used ones. A family with three or more children can receive up to 30,380 euros for a new home, a family with two children can receive 7,899 euros, and a family with one child can receive 1,823 euros. For used homes families with four children can receive 8,356 euros, families with three children can receive 6,685 euros, families with two children can get 4,345, and families with one child can get 1,822 euros. Married couples who have or are planning to have three or more children can receive a loan of up to 30,382 euros with a fixed, three percent rate for 25 years. Couples can get a value added tax (VAT) refund of up to 15,191 euros for the expenses of house construction, and for newly built houses the VAT rate is reduced from 27 to 5 percent.⁵⁸

There are some restrictions - in order to be eligible for support, applicants must meet certain criteria regarding their status in the social security insurance system, and they cannot have a criminal record and must have a good credit rating for a low interest rate loan. The size of the new home, expressed in square meters, must correspond to the number of children times 20. Children are considered dependents until the age of 25, while they are studying. In addition, the subsidies require that their receivers must pay back the subsidies, if they fail to fulfill their obligations regarding the number of children they have committed to raise. Adopted children are included in the program, and families that are unable to fulfill their obligations due to health status, are not penalized.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ "Putting Families at the Core: the Family Housing Support Program (CSOK)", <http://abouthungary.hu/issues/putting-families-at-the-core-the-family-housing-support-program-csok/>

⁵⁹ "Putting Families at the Core: the Family Housing Support Program (CSOK)", <http://abouthungary.hu/issues/putting-families-at-the-core-the-family-housing-support-program-csok/>

❖Promotion of remigration

In conclusion, we will look in more detail at the experiences of Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Ireland with regard to the policy of promoting remigration.

✓Latvia

Dual citizenship (partially introduced because it includes a certain number of countries). According to the amendments in the citizenship law, which came into force on October 1 of 2013, Latvian citizenship must be retained for persons who have acquired:⁶⁰

- citizenship of another member state of the European Union or a citizenship of European Free Trade Association member state;
- citizenship of another NATO member state;
- citizenship of New Zealand, the Union of Australia or the Federal Republic of Brazil;
- citizenship of a country with which Latvia has a concluded agreement regarding the recognition of dual citizenship (currently no such agreement exists);
- citizenship of a country not mentioned above, with a condition that a permit from the Cabinet of Ministers is received for the maintenance of dual citizenship (in relation to important national interests);
- citizenship of a country not mentioned previously, if it is acquired automatically through adoption or marriage.

For children of Latvian citizens dual citizenship is possible with any country.

Latvian citizen who has achieved a dual citizenship with an unauthorized country by the time he/she has reached 18, will have to make a choice between retaining Latvian or unauthorized state citizenship in the time period after turning 18 until reaching the age of 25. This obligation does not, however, apply to a Latvian citizen who has registered Latvian citizenship as a descendant of exiles or has a dual citizenship with an authorized state. Persons who register Latvian citizenship because they are Latvians, Līvi or exiles will be allowed to maintain dual citizenship with any other country. Once Latvian citizenship has been acquired, a new citizenship of another country can only be obtained in accordance with the general conditions (permission of the Cabinet of Ministers, allowed countries, marriage, adoption).⁶¹

Recognition of education obtained abroad is available in Latvia. This is done in accordance with article 11.1 of the education law, "Recognition of education documents issued abroad in Latvia". It is implemented by the Academic Information Center, and it is a paid service.

⁶⁰ Supule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Kriekle L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstīs" (31.-34.lpp)

⁶¹ Supule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Kriekle L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstīs" (31.-34.lpp)

Also, business relations with the diaspora are being created and maintained in Latvia. The Latvian Investment and Development Agency (LIDA) provides consultations and information to potential entrepreneurs and investors living abroad regarding the opportunities to start a business, the available support programs and mechanisms. LIDA organizes various economic forums, discussions and conferences in Latvia and abroad with Latvian businessmen living abroad. This happens also during visits of officials and businessmen delegations. For example, in July of 2013, the First World Latvian Economy and Innovation Forum (PLEIF), organized by the PBLA, the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took place in Riga. There were 350 participants in the first forum. In the summer of 2015, the second PLEIF took place, which was organized by PBLA and MFA in cooperation with partners (LIDA, Ministry of Economics, American Chamber of Commerce in Latvia, Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Riga School of Economics and Latvian Institute). More than 200 participants from 17 countries participated in the forum.

Mentoring programs (to promote the knowledge transfer between specialists of different fields in the world and the country of origin) are partially accessible to us (such were launched in 2015).

In order to promote the growth of Latvian young entrepreneurs and professionals, in 2015, as a pilot project and a part of the World Latvian Economy and Innovation Forum (PLEIF), a "World Latvian Mentoring Program" was established to promote knowledge transfer between professionals of various industries in the world and young professionals in Latvia.

In Latvia, we also have the provision of information and consultations going on regarding questions of person's moving to their country of origin and remaining there after the return. In 2014, the Ministry of Economics in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and National Agency for Regional Development, as well as the ministries of the respective industries, created a section "Return to Latvia" in the joint portal of state and municipal services www.latvija.lv, which I have already described previously in some detail. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also created a guide on its webpage "For compatriots abroad", where information is compiled regarding the consular support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as various useful internet links about practical support and services provided by Latvian institutions. Administration of Citizenship and Migration Affairs regularly updates the information in its website, including issues of interest to the Latvian diaspora such as dual citizenship and repatriation, as well as other services provided by the institution. The Ministry of Economics has created a section on its website, entitled "Remigration support measures", where you can read about the Remigration support action plan - its objectives, development process, etc. Ministry of Economics has also developed an infographic entitled "Return to Latvia". There you can find answers to important questions with guidance regarding institutions, where you can get answers to questions in various life situations. Infographic is available on the Ministry's website.

There currently isn't a single institution in Latvia providing consultations and information to those wishing to return to their country of origin. When the Remigration Assistance Action Plan was developed, the Society Integration Fund (SIF) was identified as a potential institution to implement the National Integration Center (NIC) project with funding from the European Fund for the integration of third-country nationals. However, in 2015, the NIC ended its operations due to the end of funding. SIF applied for funding, but it was not granted.

Latvia also promotes access to labor market information. Publicity events are carried out on a regular basis in order to increase the visibility of the State Employment Agency, and its vacancy/CV portal among representatives of the Latvian diaspora. Latvian portals in the UK and Ireland receive press releases on SEA activities and current services. In cooperation with the Latvian embassy in Ireland, the consultants of the SEA European job mobility portal (EURES) participate in information events for Latvian nationals organized by the Latvian association in Ireland and the Latvian embassy in Ireland. For example, in 2015, in international fairs and previously mentioned events in Ireland, SEA EURES advisers consulted 239 Latvian nationals.

The promotion of return of highly qualified specialists to Latvia is partly implemented because the number is low and has little effect. VK developed a remigration program for young people called "Work in public administration", which was launched in 2015. The aim of the program is to facilitate the return of young specialists who have obtained education abroad to Latvia, as well as to attract young people to work in public administration in general. In the framework of the program, in 2015 during the period from June 1 to 31 December, 5 young people had internships in the following public administration institutions: Competition Council, Fiscal Discipline Council, School of Public Administration, Rural Support Service and Latvian Investment and Development Agency. After the end of the program, 3 young people continue working in public administration, while 2 young people have started working in the private sector. In 2016, 7 young people had internships, but in 2017 there was no funding granted for the program.

Language training for remigrants is available in Latvia. In 2014, within the framework of the program "Latvian language learning", SIF signed 4 project implementation agreements regarding the organization of Latvian language training for remigrants and their family members for a total financing of 86,1 thousand euros. For example, in 2014/2015, 171 participants completed the Latvian language training in the established groups.

Support is also being provided in Latvia for pupils returning to or/and joining the education system of their country of origin, as well as their parents. Cabinet of Ministers regulations of 2015 no. 591 have been established "Order of enrollment and withdrawal from general education institutions and special preschool education groups, and transfer of pupils to the next grade", which also governs the enrollment of students in educational institutions, who have returned from studies abroad. Seminars are organized for educators of Latvian educational institutions, in order to improve their skills and knowledge in working with students who have returned from studies abroad.

The Latvian Language Agency has organized teacher training courses for their professional development, in which 19 teachers were educated in 2013, 36 teachers in 2014 and 79 teachers in 2015.

Material support for returning remigrants is available, subject to conditions.⁶² The information provided on the homepage likumi.lv is as follows:⁶³

Section 19. Right to Material Assistance.

(1) A repatriate who has left Latvia in the period of up to 4 May 1990 or was born abroad or left Latvia after 4 May 1990 and at the time of departure was a minor has the right to receive material assistance. Those repatriates who in escaping from the terror of the communist and fascist regimes left Latvia as refugees or who have been unjustifiably repressed or deported have a prior right to material assistance.

(2) If a person, due to reasons referred to in Section 12 of this Law, has lost his or her status of a repatriate within five years from the day when the decision was taken to grant the status of a repatriate, he or she shall reimburse the sum received as material assistance.

(3) If a person does not repay the material assistance received, he or she shall lose the right to immigrate to the Republic of Latvia up to the moment when the material assistance received has been fully repaid.

Section 20. Type and Amount of Material Assistance.

(1) A repatriate who in accordance with Section 19 of this Law has the right to receive material assistance, shall be paid:

- 1) An allowance to cover travel expenses related to moving for permanent residence in Latvia if the repatriate has submitted documents verifying travel expenses not later than one year after the issue thereof. The amount of the allowance per person shall not exceed 711.44 euros;
- 2) A monthly allowance in the amount of 90 % of the minimum wage if the repatriate has submitted an application to the Office within a year after moving for permanent residence to Latvia and has been registered as an unemployed person with the State Employment Agency. The allowance shall be paid for six consecutive months.

(2) The Office is entitled to provide material assistance to repatriates also in other cases.

(3) The material assistance for repatriates referred to in Paragraphs one and two of this Section, shall be provided by the Office from the funds allocated for this purpose in the State budget for the current year. Benefits shall be paid in the order of the submission of documents.

⁶² SGpule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Krieke L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstīs" (31.-34.lpp)

⁶³ Likumi.lv

✓Lithuania

Dual citizenship. Partially available-a number of conditions must be met. Dual citizenship can be obtained by certain groups, in accordance with the regulatory framework. A citizen of the Republic of Lithuania can at the same time be a citizen of another country, if the person or his/her family members were deported from Lithuania before 11 March 1990, or if the person acquired citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania before 15 June 1940 or is a descendant (a child, a grandchild or a great-grandchild) of a person who was a citizen of Lithuania prior to 15 June 1940.

Recognition of education obtained abroad. Is available. Academic recognition of a qualification obtained abroad is different for various qualification levels and by purpose, so recognition is necessary. In Lithuania, it is implemented by several institutions - Vilnius University, Lithuanian Science Council, Ministry of Education and Science, Higher Education Quality Assessment Center, etc.

Building and maintaining business connection with the diaspora is happening. It is a very important aspect in the context of Lithuanian migration policy. Government implements a number of activities in the context of Lithuanian migration: the annual World Lithuanian Economic Forum, which brings together leading international and local entrepreneurs from various sectors; working visits abroad and meetings with target groups.

At the same time, state budget funding is also provided for the following activities: "Global Lithuanian Leaders" (mentoring program, database of professionals).

A network of professionals has been set up, which includes a memorandum of agreement between public administration institutions - Global Lithuanian Leaders (GLL) (<http://www.lithuanianleaders.org/about-gll/>), as well as a trilateral agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GLL and a subordinate institution of the Ministry of Economy- the non-profit agency Enterprise Lithuania (<http://www.enterpriselithuania.com/en/about-us/who-we-are>).

There are also mentoring programs in Lithuania. In order to promote the development of young Lithuanian people, young entrepreneurs and professionals, the "Global Lithuanian leaders" (mentoring program, database of professionals) is regularly implemented. The program is implemented with public funding and co-financing of NGOs and stakeholders. The initiative currently includes around 700 participants from almost 40 countries worldwide. Within the framework of the initiative, projects are being implemented to promote the return of talented young people back home, to provide support for entrepreneurs, etc.

Lithuania also provides information and consultations regarding moving to and staying in the country of origin after returning. Informative support is one of the cornerstones of Lithuania's migration policy and provides comprehensive information, both on moving to Lithuania and on culture, tourism opportunities, scholarships, etc.

In Lithuania, one of the ways of implementing migration policy is the creation of innovative technologies and the development of a new communication system to facilitate communication with the diaspora: Lithuanian World News, "Identity LT" program on national television; special TV and radio programs about Lithuania and Lithuanians living abroad, their organizations and opportunities that can be seen in their homeland; alumni city-a virtual platform to help two Lithuanians meet in their city, where they lived before emigrating; an online platform for communicating individual initiatives that are becoming global.

An institution that provides consultations and information to those who would like to return to their country of origin and informs about the labor market- since 2015, the Lithuanian branch of International Organization of Migration has established a Migration Information Center, which provides consultations to those Lithuanians who are returning or plan to return. The range of consultations is quite wide - regarding work, social protection, education, health, family members.

The promotion of return of highly qualified specialists in Lithuania has been partially implemented (relatively low results, similar to those in Latvia). Policy makers associate this initiative with the support for young people rather than for professionals. Lithuania has implemented a program "Create for Lithuania", which provides a one-year internship in the public sector for young professionals from abroad. There is support available for students returning to and/or joining the education system of the country of origin, as well as parents of these students. Although support is offered to children returning to Lithuania under the policy guidelines, experts admit that it has not been systematic enough so far. As one of the reasons is mentioned the fact that there is no precise data and information regarding the actual number of children who have returned to Lithuanian schools. Country's policy mentions that a 30% bigger funding is intended for those students who return and have spent more than a year abroad. There are several schools in Lithuania, which provide additional support for Lithuanian language acquisition in integration classes, for example. It is planned to provide 3 additional classes for teachers who are purposefully working with children of remigrants. The fact that Lithuania does not have a systematic approach to language teachers working with children who do not speak Lithuanian, can be evaluated critically. Only some individual projects and seminars have been implemented. An example of good practice is the model, where researchers and practitioners collaborated to create an online platform to help teachers better deal with students with different abilities and understand them.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Supule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Krieke L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstis" (38.-40.lpp)

✓Poland

Dual citizenship is possible in Poland. Polish legislation states that any person with several citizenships, including Polish, is considered to be a Polish citizen regardless of any other citizenship a person has. Recognition of education obtained abroad is available. Education and qualification obtained abroad are recognized by the Polish Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Academic Information Center.

There is also provision of information and consultations regarding questions of person's moving to his/her country of origin and staying there after returning. The Polish government created a voluntary return program for 2008-2010 (it was extended until 2013) and is called "Have you got a plan to return?". It is an information campaign to encourage Poles to return to their homeland. There is a national level program implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Human Resources Development Center. The main tool of the campaign is an Internet information platform on job opportunities and current developments in the Polish labor market. Website visitors have the opportunity to ask questions of interest to representatives of institutions in order to facilitate successful reintegration in the country. In 2011, by combining two services, the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Policy launched a website, in which information and services are offered to Poles who have just returned or are planning to return to Poland. There is information regarding taxes, benefits, entrepreneurship, property management and jobs. Address of the website - [http:// powroty.gov.pl/](http://powroty.gov.pl/)

Promoting the return of highly qualified professionals has taken place. There is a regional level program "12 Polish cities to return to, but where to go?" Also, there is the Poland Street Association, which is a non-governmental organization in London. 12 Polish municipalities are involved: Bialystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdansk, Katowice, Krakow, Lublin, Lodz, Poznan, Rzeszow, Szczecin, Warszawa and Wroclaw. The target group is Polish immigrants based in the UK. Representatives from each city traveled to London and told the Poles living there about business, education and job opportunities in the particular city. Program implementation period was January-August of 2009, but it was canceled due to the insufficient funding and crisis. ReturntoPoland.pl was a national event, realized by the employment agency Hays Polska and the Polish-British Chamber of Commerce. It targeted the highly qualified Polish immigrants who were abroad at the time. Time period was 2007-2011.

Other events - the Polish card, which offers certain benefits. The Polish card is a document that certifies one's belonging to the Polish nation. This card is issued to non-citizens of Poland. In order to obtain the card, you must prove your connection with Poland (kinship through parents, grandparents who have been Polish citizens), must have a basic knowledge of the Polish language and an understanding of Polish culture and traditions. The Polish card owner does not need a work permit in Poland, has the right to set up his/her own company, attend education institutions and perform research, receive a scholarship, use health care services in emergency situations, get 37% discount for public transport in Poland and a free entrance in country's museums. Since 2014, Polish card owners can apply for a permanent residence permit. Since September 2, 2016, Polish card owners can acquire Polish citizenship after being in Poland for one year.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Supule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Krieke L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstīs" (49.-50.lpp)

✓Romania

Dual citizenship is allowed in Romania.

There is recognition of education obtained abroad in Romania. Romanian citizens can request that the education they have obtained abroad is compared to the Romanian education levels. This procedure is carried out by the Romanian Ministry of Education in cooperation with the National Centre for Diploma Recognition and Equivalence.

Building and maintaining business links with the diaspora is happening in Romania. There is a Diaspora Start-Up Program, launched in fall 2016. Romanian citizens abroad can apply their project for an opportunity to receive funding and take part in internet business training programs in subsequent rounds of the project. This way contacts are made between organizations and workers in Romania who would like to cooperate with other Romanians abroad. It would encourage Romanians to do business and become self-employed.

Mentoring programs- some car factories in Romania allow their employees to participate in experience exchange and training programs abroad, so that the knowledge and skills acquired there can be applied locally.

Provision of information and consultations regarding person's moving to his/her country of origin and staying there after return - in 2008 there were information campaigns organized for Romanian workers in Italy and Spain in order to help them decide to return home and work in Romania. There was also the MEDIT Project (2009-2011), developed by the Romanian Employment Agency in cooperation with Italy and co-financed by the European Social Fund. The aim was to create a transnational cooperation return model for Romanian migrants by creating tools to inform Romanian migrants in Italy about the real situation in Romania and about the improvement of services of local institutions, for them to support remigrants in Romania then, when they decide to return.

One institution providing consultations and information to those who would like to return to their country of origin - the Department for Romanians Abroad (1995) is working to complete the National Strategy Plan that relates to Romanians abroad. Main tasks of the institution are to expand contacts between Romanian representatives or organizations from the diaspora with the Romanian country; to strengthen cooperation with the Member States of the European Union; to promote the preservation of Romanian cultural values and to strengthen bilateral relations between countries in which Romanians live.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Supule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Krieke L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstīs" (54.-55.lpp)

✓Ireland

Dual citizenship is allowed in Ireland.

Recognition of education obtained abroad - education and qualification acquired abroad are recognized by the Academic Information Center in Ireland (ENIC/NARIC-European Network of Information Centers/ National Academic Recognition Information Centers).

Building and maintaining business relationships with the diaspora - the Irish diaspora has many private initiatives for the development of economic cooperation. Some of them: the Young Leaders Association of Ireland brings together young professionals for them to have the opportunity to network and support charity/philanthropic work. The Young Leaders Association provides a forum for young philanthropists, working closely with the international foundations of Ireland and important business and civic leaders who support the organization.

The Irish Young Leaders Association has 3 main goals:

- (1) Develop a charity culture in the country by engaging young people in the leadership program, promoting contacts with the Irish diaspora, providing information about supported programs and donations.
- (2) Support innovative ideas in the non-profit sector through financial support, sharing experience and knowledge, giving broader contacts, introducing with leadership program's participants and broader financial support opportunities.
- (3) Ensure a sustainable and innovative non-profit sector by supporting revolutionary ideas in areas of interest, sharing practices, identifying projects with potential for development in the future.

The Young Leaders Association of Ireland cooperates with international funds in Ireland. Irish International Funds (1976) is a charity/philanthropic network that supports projects around the world. Their mission is to be the largest supporter network of Ireland that supports peace and reconciliation programs, arts and culture, education and development of society. Since their founding, Irish international funds have been operating in 12 different countries around the world, raising 5 million dollars in donations to support a total of 300 organizations.

The Irish Technology Leaders Group, founded by John Hartnett, works to provide Ireland as a strategic target with investments of USA technology companies to support the global growth and development of the Irish technology companies. It is a non-profit organization, which is based in Silicon Valley and founded in 2007 for technology leaders of Irish or Irish-American origin. The Irish Technology Leaders Group is an Irish start-up and network organization of such small companies that are looking to attract partners and funding from USA. The Irish Technology Leaders Group has 1,500 members, and it organizes visits, seminars and innovation awards ceremonies. In July 2009, the Irish Technology Leaders Group signed a transatlantic agreement with Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin, to create new business and innovation opportunities for Irish companies.

One of the goals is to create a hedge fund for companies that operate in the research center of these colleges. The hedge fund is also intended to enable potential investors, with the support from the Irish government, to invest their money in start-ups that may need investment.

Mentoring programs - an ongoing business networking creation is going on with the assistance of the Irish Executive Mentoring Program, where people of Irish origin share their experience regarding the development and maintenance of companies to recognize the business talent in the diaspora.

Providing information and consultations regarding person's moving to his/her country of origin and staying there after returning - the Irish Department of Diaspora Affairs acts as a major consultation center, providing migrants with a diverse information regarding the Irish labor market, education and development opportunities for returning migrants. Information is passed on to the Irish communities internationally via the internet.

One institution that provides consultations and information to those wishing to return to their country of origin - the Irish Department of Diaspora Affairs is creating a new Interdepartmental Committee on the Irish Abroad. It engages consultants and Irish embassies abroad in order to stay in touch with Irish communities and identify the needs of the diaspora and remigrants before they return home.

Language training for remigrants - cultural awareness and language learning initiatives are supported by offering diaspora communities abroad (in UK, USA, Australia) to learn Irish, sponsored by the Emigrant Support Program.

Support for returning students and/or those students who are joining the education system in their country of origin, as well as their parents - the Freamhacha educational program offers expatriate children a two-week program during which they go to Ireland to learn about their country of origin, its culture and language (the program is currently only available in the USA).

Material support for remigrants - Safe Home organization that offers consultations, assistance and housing for older Irish expats who have recently returned to Ireland or would like to return.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Supule I., Apine L., Salmina L., Karklina I., Krieke L. "Remigrācijas politika Eiropa un citas valstīs" (63.-65.lpp)

4.4. Best practices from project partner cities and regions

1. Green house farming (ACTA, Romania)

Project Partner (homepage)	ACTA Center www.actacenter.ro
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Toboliu village, Bihor region, Romania https://valentinoland.ro/
Title of the best practice	Green house farming, SC Valentino Land SRL
Keywords	Farmers, investments, depopulated village
Aim	-increase in tomato production -efficient use of European funds -creating jobs in depopulated areas
Activities	Growing tomatoes in the greenhouse Marketing of agricultural products
Results <i>(expected or already reached)</i>	Increase in turnover New jobs in agriculture Fresh tomatoes all over the year
Short description <i>(including main challenges, achievements, plans)</i>	Built with European co-financing, the greenhouse is fully automated and will produce cherry tomatoes grown in water, not on the ground, from the second half of August. "The Romanians do not realize what the European funds are. All it is to have a good idea for you to fight and courage to borrow for your financing," says the young Oradea. And he had both of them ... The investment of more than 726,000 euros, conducted by the Romanian student Robert Muntean, was co-financed by 70% of the European funds. Valentino Land's green field stretches over 2,688 square meters, it has 26 rows of plants and is fully automated. The system extracts water from its own well and "cleanses" it with impurities through an osmosis process. "The water you get is as good to drink as any flat water," says Robert. Then the water is mixed with fertilizers according to a frequently updated recipe, depending on the stage of plant growth, and transported to the greenhouse where it is dripped directly to the root of the plants. "The plants thus fed can reach more than 12 meters." As the greenhouse is not so high, when it reaches the ceiling, the plant is palm, and it is directed to grow it in the desired direction, connected with the supports, "explains the young man. Greenhouse production will be about 100,000 kilograms a year, which

	means a daily average of 300 kilograms. "The tomatoes collected in the casseroles and boxes will be shipped to customers the same day to be as fresh as possible," says the young man.
3 Theses on the best practice	Efficient use of own resources (land) and European funds Healthy food Jobs in depopulated area
Goal for 2020 in the context of depopulation	Increasing production capacity for more jobs Encouraging young people to work and invest in depopulated rural areas



2. Muma Codrului (ACTA, Romania)

Project Partner (homepage)	ACTA Center www.actacenter.ro
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Colesti, Bihor Region, Romania http://www.mumacodrului.ro/
Title of the best practice	Muma Codrului
Keywords	Local work, depopulation, traditional products, village
Aim	Promoting local products Creating jobs in depopulated area Promoting healthy food
Activities	Collection of farmers products (milk, eggs) Traditional cheese production Home made jam and syrup
Results <i>(expected or already reached)</i>	Two families who use to live in a big town (Oradea) or in other European country (Spain) moved in this small depopulated village and starts this project. Their products are sold in local market or are send in Spain.
Short description <i>(including main challenges, achievements, plans)</i>	First this project starts with a two young married (a Spanish and Roumanian girl) who decided to buy a land in Colesti, though they did not know anyone, thinking maybe they would someday come back. And that's how it was! In 2011 they packed their bags, left their relatives in Spain behind, and moved to Romania. They bought an old house from Colești, which, with a lot of work, turned it into a home. When they moved to the village, Quim and Ioana bought a herd of goose, then a few cows, and began to make traditional cheeses (Rueda cheeses) Two years ago, Rueda cheeses found out the young George and Larisa Hopopan, who had a traditional grocery store in town. They wanted to know the producers from Colesti and, quickly, the two families became friends. Soon George and Larisa decided to move to Colesti. Since they lives in Colesti, both families live only from what they produce and sell, and they say are enough. "If you work, you also have money," quims Quim. Also, both families have

	grown up there: Quim and Ioana have a little boy, Felix, for two years, and Larisa and George are the parents of Matei, a seven month old baby. "If we were living in a city, we did not have a child today. We would have always said that we do not have time, we can not afford ... But here we are," says George.
3 Theses on the best practice	- Youngs people left behind big cities for small village - They became antreprenors - They are promoting local products and helthy food
Goal for 2020 in the context of depopulation	They intend to reopen the kindergarden in the village



3. Support LEADER Rural Development Programs in the EU (ADIMAN, Spain)

Project Partner (homepage)	2.600 Local Action Groups in Europe https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/lag-database_en
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_es www.adiman.es
Title of the best practice	Support LEADER Rural Development Programs in the EU
Keywords	Rural Development, entrepreneurial culture, work networks, employment, consolidated employment, sustainable development, smart populations, intelligent tourism, school cooperatives, business incubators.
Aim	Promote the interrelation and enhancement of local resources (people, cultural and natural resources) in a sustainable way in rural areas through the support of innovative public and private initiatives designed and supported from the territories through the GALs Generate employment opportunities in rural areas
Activities	The Local Action Groups and ADIMAN develop many activities, highlighting 3 projects in the Manchuela Conquense: 1.- Foster the Entrepreneurial Culture. Individuals and companies must observe the opportunities offered by the rural environment for investment. 1.1.- Schools and Institutes 1.2.- Manage a Local Business Incubator 2.- Promote Smart Tourism. Promoting sustainable and intelligent tourism means making the town attractive to tourists and residents. 3.- Participate in Networks. It consists of exposing our experience and observing good practices to be able to adapt them to the county/region according to the scope of the competencies.
Results (<i>expected or already reached</i>)	Nivel GAL ADIMAN (1994- 2018) General indicators of the program 880 Subsidized investment projects - 48.000.000 € of investment - 480 jobs generated - 950 consolidated jobs - 20.000.000 € of public aid FEADER General indicators of projects/activities: Foster the Entrepreneurial Culture • 33 schools • 1.027 students • 103 teachers • 3 school courses • 51 school cooperatives Promote Smart Tourism Test a management model of sustainable rural tourism based on the strategy of smart villages. Participate in networks for example: • SSPA network against depopulation • DECODE • RedPoblar
Short description (<i>including main challenges, achievements, plans</i>)	A.- In relation to the LEADER program on ann European level: LEADER is implemented within the framework of the national and regional rural development programs (RDP) of each EU Member State, co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice_es

B.- In relation to ADIMAN's activities:

1.- Foster the Entrepreneurial Culture.

1.1.- In Schools and Institutes

- Objective.
Design a company, products, etc. that will be sold at the end of the course in a local market. To achieve this, they will use all the subjects of the curriculum at the service of the company. The benefits obtained were donated to non-profit associations in the locality.
- Strategy.
Collaboration between parents, teachers, town mayor, financial institution, etc ...
- Note.
Some of these school cooperatives served as an example of collaboration between students and continued to develop their business activity from the school and beyond.

Parents and educational authorities congratulated the initiative. The aim of ADIMAN is to integrate, just like another subject, this practice into the curriculum of the centres.

1.2.- In mature ages. Manage a Local Business Incubator

Business incubators and business centres in rural areas can supply the necessary initial support when they are undertaking.

Normally, business incubators are located in cities. In the rural environment, they are even more necessary, since the existence of industrial sites, warehouses and establishments to undertake are more complicated to find.

In the town of Motilla del Palancar (Cuenca), there was a Business Incubator in need of successful management.

ADIMAN reached an agreement in 2017 with the City Mayor to manage this incubator.

The management of a business incubator can prevent companies from leaving for an urban environment and give them instead an opportunity for entrepreneurs to create their business in their home rural area, without needing to leave for the city.

2.- Promote Smart Tourism.

Promoting sustainable and intelligent tourism means making the town attractive to tourists and residents.

The project aims to increase the attractiveness of Cuenca's rural environment as a tourist destination and as a balanced and dynamic territory where innovation and competitive advantages are generated in the socioeconomic and environmental areas to help curb depopulation and attract new inhabitants. In the field of tourism, the project aims to improve the competitiveness of this sector.

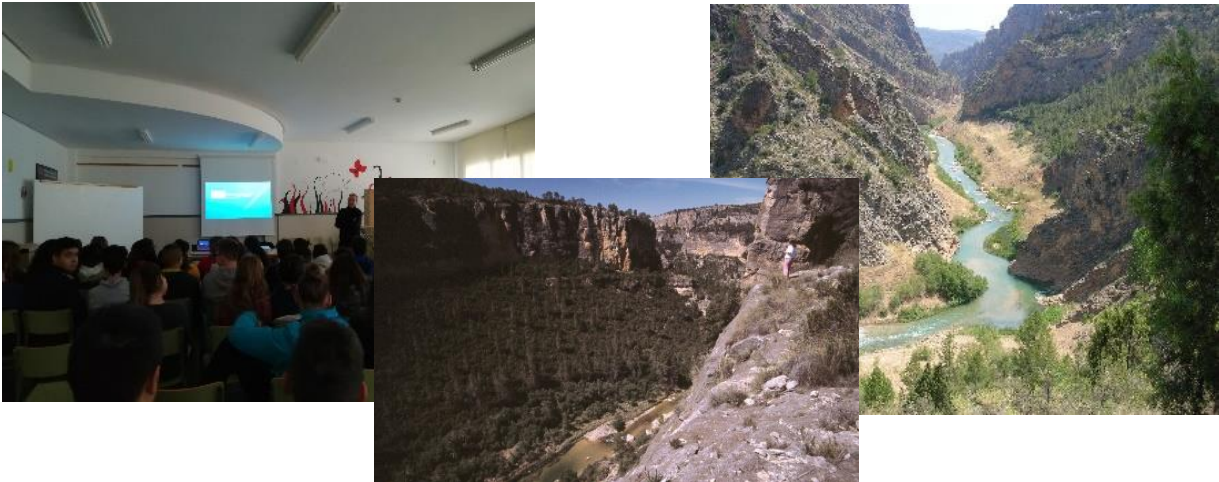
Specifically, and based on the detection of technological and non-technological deficiencies to interconnect the territory, the project aims to:

- Improve public-private governance, especially that which concerns tourism.
- Install an innovative and positive image regarding the quality of life and work in rural areas.
- Promote the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the implementation of the information society in rural areas as an element of attraction and population fixation.

	- Promote innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in rural areas. 3.- Participate in Networks. It consists of exposing our experience and observing good practices to be able to adapt them to the county/region according to the scope of the competencies Examples: - SSPA Network against Depopulation. From the work of this network composed of the Local Action Groups of Cuenca, Soria and Teruel, business organizations and some areas of Croatia and Greece, the proposal arises, among others, to ask the government for a special reduced tax for people and companies that live in rural areas in order to make it more attractive for business. - DECODE - RedPoblar
3 Theses on the best practice	- The pilot experiences or good practices must be assumed by the various administrations with competences. - The problem of depopulation cannot be addressed as the sum of isolated good practices but through transversal politics. - Generate opportunities in rural areas accompanied by investments in services to citizens: health, education, housing for young people, etc.
	

4. Valorization of the Cabriel Valley as a Biosphere Reserve within the MAB program (ADIMAN, Spain)

Project Partner (homepage)	www.adiman.es Cooperation Project between 4 Local Action Groups, along with the Association of Towns of the River Cabriel bankside. ADIMAN being the leaders of the project.
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Spain Regions: Castilla La-Mancha – Valencia - Aragón Provinces: Cuenca – Albacete – Valencia – Teruel Local Action Groups = 4 Towns = 52 https://www.parquenaturalhocesdelcabriel.com/reserva-biosfera/para-que-una-reserva-de-la-biosfera
Title of the best practice	Valorization of the Cabriel Valley as a Biosphere Reserve within the MAB program.
Keywords	Biosphere Reserve, Sustainable Human Development, Economic Development, Environmental Education, Research.
Aim	• Promote a sustainable and integrated economic development, with the maintenance of the local population and the generation of employment in the area, in addition to attracting visitors to achieve a tourist boost of the territory. • Establish strategic lines with unified actions in which efforts and contributions by the different administrations and organizations are unified and coordinated. • Promote the conservation of biological diversity, the preservation of ecosystem services and the conservation and enhancement of traditional culture.
Activities	- Promote economically the territory from a sociocultural and ecological point of view. - Value the cultural and environmental heritage - Establish strategies to act jointly with various public authorities: services to the population, etc ... - Environmental education
Results (<i>expected or already reached</i>)	It is expected to have the geographical area of the Biosphere Reserve of the Cabriel Valley as a territory where employment opportunities are improved, Services to the population are offered, etc ... contributing to the reduction of depopulation in the medium and long term.
Short description (<i>including main challenges, achievements, plans</i>)	Since 2010, work is being done jointly by several Local Action Groups from the provinces of Cuenca, Albacete, Valencia and Teruel, within the framework of the LEADER rural development program and in coordination with local, regional and national administrations, in the attainment of the declaration of Biosphere Reserve of the Cabriel Valley. During this time, we have been working hard to raise awareness among the population, gathering information, working with the public authorities until we were able to develop in 2011 and finally in December 2017, create the final document of candidacy planning. For us, it was crucial to observe the good result that this practice was assuming in other depressed rural areas and we decided to incorporate it into our district development strategy, just like the rest of the Local Action Groups. The future declaration of the Biosphere Reserve is serving to encourage certain companies to bet on tourism ventures: Rural Houses, Rural Hotels, etc ... by young people, so we can expect a promising future.

3 Theses on the best practice	- It is a practice that can be transferred to areas of interest - It is a practice that contributes to the adaptation to climate change - It is a practice that can generate attractive opportunities to undertake in rural areas.
Goal for 2020 in the context of depopulation	Given that UNESCO will declare the Biosphere Reserve of the Cabriel Valley at its meeting in Paris on June 17, 2019, in 2020 we will begin planning the set of activities and budget of the actions, which will be implemented as of 2020. The actions are expected to have an impact on depopulation after 2021.
	

5. Plan against depopulation in small towns and territorial planning (ADIMAN, Spain)

Project Partner (homepage)	Provincial Council of Castellón
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Castellón, Spain https://participacion.dipcas.es/es/procesos/abiertos/plan-contra-la-despoblacion/
Title of the best practice	Plan against depopulation in small towns and territorial planning
Keywords	Territorial Organization, Functional Areas, Public Services, new governance
Aim	Arrange the rural territory in functional areas or zones to optimize investments and access to public services managed from a new participatory governance.
Activities	- Design a plan that allows to know in an objective, detailed and exhaustive way the measures to reduce the causes of depopulation or counteract the effects it has among the population and promote a greater territorial balance between the urban areas of the coast and the rural areas of the interior. - Promote the means and conditions necessary to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the interior regions of Castellón. - Design strategies that help these towns create attractive ecosystems based on measures that integrate an economy of the territory with the maintenance and dynamism of life in rural areas. - Promote the employability and inclusion of women with difficulties when finding a job. - Manage the area or functional area by public and private agents to allow the adaptation of regulations and legislations, public services (health, education, grants and subsidies, etc.) according to the needs of the functional area. - Strengthen geographical areas for the design and implementation of public services adapted to the needs of the region
Results (<i>expected or already reached</i>)	▪ The causes of depopulation will be known objectively, in detail and exhaustively ▪ We will counteract the effects it produces among the population and encourage a greater territorial balance between urban coastal areas and rural inland areas. ▪ The means and conditions necessary to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the interior regions of Castellón will be sought. ▪ Strategies will be designed to help these municipalities create attractive ecosystems based on measures that integrate an economy of the territory with the maintenance and dynamism of life in rural areas. ▪ Promote the employability and inclusion of women with difficulties when it comes to finding a job.
Short description (<i>including main challenges, achievements, plans</i>)	In geographic spaces with low population density, access to Public Services is very important, as well as flexibility in legislation to adapt it to the needs of the area.

	The excessive number of towns in Spain, does not allow the existence of all types of services in it, compared to the reality of cities or urban environment. Rural geographic areas where the demographic problems become more acute could be called functional areas. In these areas it is necessary to propose and manage policies related to economic revitalization and administrative and territorial reorganization for the implementation and management of Public Services. In these areas, policies must be developed that promote and encourage their economies and take advantage of their patrimonial resources (cultural, environmental, etc ...). For this, a political effort must be made in the government of the territory in which new political-administrative structures and new instruments of governance and regional development based on citizen participation are included. Citizen participation in which the application of a new integral and sustainable governance of these functional areas can be focused can have a positive effect, logically in close collaboration with public administrations.
3 Theses on the best practice	- It is a medium to long term practice. - The involvement of citizens is fundamental. - It is essential to work in close collaboration with the various administrations, due to the dispersion of public powers.
Goal for 2020 in the context of depopulation	Reduce depopulation or reverse it.
	

6. Resto al SUD (CEIPES, Italy)

Project Partner (homepage)	CEIPES
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Palermo, Sicily, Italy
Title of the best practice	Resto al SUD
Keywords	Funds, entrepreneurship, young
Aim	It is the incentive that supports the birth of new business activities initiated by under46.
Activities	- Production of goods in the fields of industry, craft, processing of agricultural products, fisheries and aquaculture. - Provider of business services and to people; - Tourism.
Results (expected or already reached)	- Start a business - Economic self-sufficiency
Short description (including main challenges, achievements, plans)	https://www.invitalia.it/cosa-facciamo/creiamo-nuove-aziende/resto-al-sud
3 Theses on the best practice	- To help local market - To create employment - To decrease the youth depopulation
  	

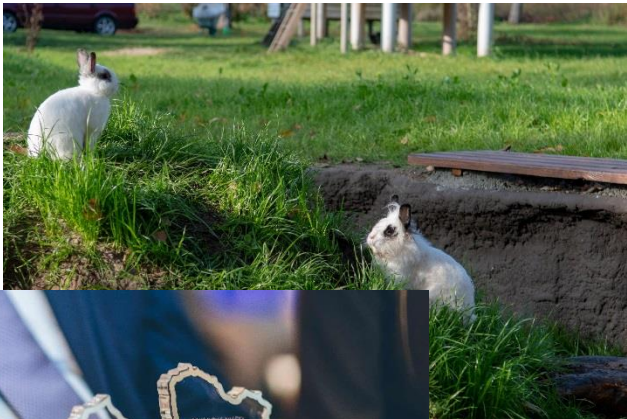
7. PAPS, the “Regional Remigration Coordinator” project – a pilot project carried out by the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoEPRD) (Daugavpils, Latvia)

Project Partner (homepage)	Daugavpils City Council (https://www.daugavpils.lv/)
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Daugavpils , https://www.daugavpils.lv/ Latgale region , http://visitlatgale.com/en/ Latvia , https://www.latvia.travel/en
Title of the best practice	PAPS, the “Regional Remigration Coordinator” project – a pilot project carried out by the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoEPRD)
Keywords	remigration coordinators, support for families, business support
Aim	Actions of the project are aimed at supporting Latvian diaspora’s political and civic participation, diaspora’s involvement in the economic and cultural life of Latvia, as well as support for education and science. The project also provides support for families currently living abroad who are considering returning to Latvia.
Activities	- regional remigration coordinators help both their fellow countrymen to return home and the municipalities to regain their citizens. (Everyone has the opportunity to receive free advice from a regional coordinator on issues related to return to a particular region in Latvia. The coordinator is a supporter who remotely helps compatriots living abroad to consider the benefits of returning in order for them to be able to make a well-considered decision and prepare for a successful return to Latvia.) - financial support for the implementation and development of business activities of remigrants - support for initiatives at local level in ten pilot municipalities in Latvia
Results (<i>expected or already reached</i>)	Results until April, 2019: Number of offers made - 2348 Families involved in the project - 2065 Families returned to Latvia - 190 Families planning to return to Latvia – 225
Short description (<i>including main challenges, achievements, plans</i>)	PAPS is the “Regional Remigration Coordinator” project – a pilot project carried out by the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoEPRD). The project is implemented in accordance with a task set out in the Government Action Plan in 2016 which entails carrying out actions aimed at supporting Latvian diaspora’s political and civic participation, diaspora’s involvement in the economic and cultural life of Latvia, as well as support for education and science. The project also provides support for families currently living abroad who are considering returning to Latvia. Network of coordinators has been set up in five regions of Latvia. The main task of the coordinators is to prepare a personalized offer of information in accordance with the interests and needs of the potential remigrant and support them in their return to Latvia after a long absence, in their engagement in the local community and the labour market. What information can the coordinator offer? Information on: • services for families with children, • business and employment opportunities, • housing offers, • other municipal services.

	Several project managers cooperate closely with the regional coordinators. One of their main tasks is to address residents of their municipality currently living abroad and offer support for their return to Latvia. Upon the initiative of the “Centre for Demographic Affairs”, support for local level remigration project managers in 2018 is provided in Daugavpils city, Dobeles municipality, Gulbene municipality, Rundale municipality, Ozolnieki municipality, Saldus municipality, Skrunda municipality, Smiltene municipality, Tukums municipality un Vecumnieki municipality - "ten pilot municipalities in Latvia". According to the findings of the 2016 study by Professor Mihails Hazans of the University of Latvia on the needs of remigrants in order to return to Latvia, support for entrepreneurship and personal business launch would help one third of the respondents. Within the framework of the PAPS pilot project, financial support for the implementation and development of business activities of remigrants is available, with grants provided via a competition procedure. The total amount of funding available for each planning region in 2018 is 36 000 euros and the maximum amount for a single project is set at 9 000 euros. This is determined by the Cabinet of Ministers’ regulation on financial support for ideas of economic activity by the remigrants, which came into force on August 15, 2018. Funding for the implementation of the project PAPS in 2018 was provided by state budget funds of 425 699 euros – 9% were allocated for administrative costs, 42% was aid for business activities, 18% to ensure the operation of ten project managers in the municipalities, 31% to ensure the operation of five regional coordinators. The name PAPS is the abbreviation of the pilot project’s motto – “Supporting your return to your home”. The visual identity is based on traditional Latvian symbols, where the combination of symbols of the Well and the Sun represents the home that is calling for people to return. The symbol also signifies roads far and near that intersect with home at the centre, a place to return to.
3 Theses on the best practice	- A family - friendly municipalities are the source of economic development - Building happy and strong families is an investment in a healthy society - Putting family friendly municipalities as one of the main priorities for prosperous future
	

8. The Family-Friendly Municipality programme (Daugavpils, Latvia)

Project Partner (homepage)	Daugavpils City Council (https://www.daugavpils.lv/)
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Daugavpils , https://www.daugavpils.lv/ Latgale region , http://visitlatgale.com/en/ Latvia , https://www.latvia.travel/en
Title of the best practice	The Family-Friendly Municipality programme
Keywords	municipal services, family-friendly
Aim	Aim of the initiative is to establish a functioning, clear and simple website for the long-term, on which the general public can study comprehensive information about the diverse opportunities, offers and support for families with children available from municipalities.
Activities	- E-tool - comprehensive and easy-to-read summary of local government support for families with children. www.vietagimenei.lv - Motivation - organizing the competition "Family-friendly municipality"
Results (<i>expected or already reached</i>)	- More family-friendly places in Latvia (e.g. educational playground developed in Latgale Zoo, Daugavpils; -improvement of infrastructure in the playground "Uniparks", Dobeles, new equipment at the Youth Park's playground, Gulbene, etc.) - Easily perceived and comparable information in infographics that are available on the web page www.vietagimenei.lv - Cartographic information on playgrounds and sports grounds available for children - Public participation and proposals
Short description (<i>including main challenges, achievements, plans</i>)	The Family-Friendly Municipality programme is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (VARAM). The latest information about the support provided by the municipalities of Latvia to families with children and family-friendly infrastructure is available on website www.vietagimenei.lv. The data has been obtained from the information submitted by municipalities, as well as from the Ministry of Welfare, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and the State Treasury. In order to encourage municipalities to provide data, in 2017 the first ever competition Family-Friendliest Municipality was organised, in which the accomplishments and involvement of municipalities are appraised in two stages, based on the information provided. The public is also invited to express their views and vote via www.vietagimenei.lv and send comments, including specific proposals for improving municipal services. On 2nd stage of the competition municipalities are visited by the jury, who listen to a presentation with justification why the municipality is family friendly and visit family-friendly site/ facility or participate in family events. As the

	result of the competition family friendliest municipality receives grant (e.g., in 2018 - 30 000 EUR), winner in each municipality group also receives a grant (e.g., in 2018 - 15 000 EUR) and there are also additional nominations. Received grants should be invested in a formation of a family friendly environment within municipality, support activities and services.
3 Theses on the best practice	- A family-friendly environment as one of priorities to tackle demographic challenges - Daugavpils – the city – that supports instruments in order to provide families with more favourable conditions for raising children - The family friendly municipalities are one of the most important keys of the territory thrive
  	

9. The year of growth and attracted investment (Kaunas, Lithuania)

Project Partner (homepage)	www.kaunas.lt https://visit.kaunas.lt/lt/
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Kaunas, Lithuania
Title of the best practice	The year of growth and attracted investment
Keywords	Startups, long-term employment contracts, investments, salary, decreasing neto migration
Aim	Promoting new ideas and new business growth is a priority for our city
Activities	Startups - http://kaunasin.lt/2018-kaunas-lithuanian-startups-year-growth-attracted-investment-new-players/ Medical tourism – (https://visit.kaunas.lt/en/plan/medical-tourism/); Tourism attraction – (https://kaunas.loyalhub.lt/en).
Results (<i>expected or already reached</i>)	Reached results – neto migration decreased 84 % per year (2017-2018) Average salary increased 39 % (2015-2018) and now reaches - 741 Eur per month (neto) Attracted investment - Several new factories in Kaunas region have been reported in recent years. Hella, Continental, Hollister are planning or are already developing. These investments in Kaunas should result in approximately 5–6 thousand new jobs, which will raise the overall level of wages.
Short description (<i>including main challenges, achievements, plans</i>)	One of the most prominent startups of Kaunas last year undoubtedly is “BrachyDOSE” – the system that helps to ensure the quality of treatment during radiotherapy (cancer treatment with irradiation, non-medication) procedures. Another star of the year is Kaunas startup “Helis”, which in December was bought by other fast-growing startup from Lithuania “Tesonet”. The growing number of employees is a reflection of overall economic growth, showing that new companies operating in Kaunas, investing in Kaunas or developing in Kaunas are developing and hiring new employees. Sufficiently rapid growth also shows that Kaunas is able to attract employees from other regions of Lithuania and foreign countries, and these, respectively, choose Kaunas as a city that sees the opportunity to exploit their potential and realize their dreams. Businesses opting for their own development or establishment in Kaunas usually name four key components of the city’s attractiveness: people with the right competencies, higher education institutions that are preparing specialists, adequate infrastructure, and a convenient geographical location both for local and international travel. Meanwhile, startups and creators of innovations care about the availability of talents, the conditions, costs of launching and developing startups, the availability of capital and the quality of the local startup system. Kaunas Higher Education Institutions, Vocational Training Centers are the main source for talented professionals coming to the market, bringing the most innovative ideas and raising sectors of the city that attract the most investments: medical technologies, information and communication technologies, automotive components, and aviation.

	But not only that: Universities are actively working and initiating entrepreneurship promotion programs and collaborating with a startup community that develops technology-based products. http://kaunasin.lt/startup-ecosystem-kaunas-emerging-features-reflect-strengths-city/
3 Theses on the best practice	In Kaunas, positive developments were influenced by the modernization of the city infrastructure, the increasing variety of quality services, the abundance of different projects and the diversity of cultural life. All this increases the attractiveness of the city for entrepreneurs. The university also completes new, multidisciplinary specialists each year. This enables the business sector to create teams of young professionals.



10. UCYFROWIENI (DIGITALIZED SENIORS) (Lodzkie Region, Poland)

Project Partner (homepage)	Lodzkie Region (Województwo Łódzkie) www.bruksela.lodzkie.pl
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Lodzkie Region, Poland www.lodzkie.pl
Title of the best practice	UCYFROWIENI (DIGITALIZED SENIORS)
Keywords	IT competences of senior citizens of the Lodzkie Region
Aim	Improvement of digital skills of the population of 45+ from the Lodzkie region.
Activities	IT courses for senior citizens in relation to e-office, e-government, cybersecurity, e-health, e-education, e-culture etc.
Results <i>(expected or already reached)</i>	In 2018 – 100 participants in IT trainings organised (in 10 groups) 100 participants of the final conference Altogether 300 participants in different forms of activities offered within the project. The project is continued in 2019 due to high interest. Target group for 2019 I 140 persons form LR.
Short description <i>(including main challenges, achievements, plans)</i>	Project "Digitized" is part of the task of the Information Society Unit of the Department of Digitization, The Marshall's Office of the Lodzkie Region, i.e. education of society in the implementation of modern IT solutions, as well as an obligation of public administration to conduct activities to stimulate the constant growth of digital competences of residents and public administration employees. Target groups: Lodzkie region citizens at the age 45+ without computer skills or having basic knowledge of this range, which thanks to the project will acquire basic IT knowledge. Trainers: employees of the Department of Digitization of the Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region. Each workshop will be run by 2 department employees. Recruitment of participants: open recruitment on a first-come-first-served basis published on the website www. Lodzkie.pl, www.si.lodzkie.pl, sending information about the workshops to LR municipalities and institutions attended by potential participants of the workshops. Registration for the workshop will be held at the Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region. Anyone interested will be able to contact by phone or in person at the office, where it will be saved for a given month. Each workshop will be qualified to a maximum of 10 people. A reserve list will be created. Frequency of meetings: 4 meetings a month for 4 teaching hours with a 30-minute break. Since the beginning of 2017 for more than 2 years



11. Senior Card of the Lodzkie Region (Lodzkie Region, Poland)

Project Partner (homepage)	Lodzkie Region (Województwo Łódzkie) www.bruksela.lodzkie.pl
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Lodzkie Region, Poland www.lodzkie.pl
Title of the best practice	Senior Card of the Lodzkie Region
Keywords	Seniors 60+; discounts programme; seniors' card
Aim	• promoting social activity and improving the quality of life for seniors, • strengthening the financial condition of seniors, • encouraging people 60+ to use cultural goods, education, sports and other in the Lodzkie region, • enabling seniors to develop their passions and interests and to promote active leisure activities.
Activities	Allowances and discounts offered by the partner institutions (both public and private) for the senior citizens of Lodzkie region in possession of the Senior Card of the Lodzkie Region
Results (expected or already reached)	In the period from January 2, 2018 to December 31, 2018, 14.733 applications for the card were submitted, of which 14.664 cards were issued and 69 applications were left unanswered.
Short description (including main challenges, achievements, plans)	The Senior Card of the Lodzkie Region is a collection of allowances offered to the inhabitants of the Lodzkie region, who are over 60 years of age. The partners of the program may be regional self-government units, institutions and enterprises. The card entitles you to take advantage of the concessions and entitlements offered by the program partners, whose list can be found at: http://www.rcpslodz.pl/index.php/seniorzy/karta-seniora-wojewodztwa-lodzkiego-wydawanie-kart-od-2-stycznia-2018-r/informacja-o-programie or on the websites www.bip.rcpslodz.pl, www.bip.lodzkie.pl The card is issued free of charge and indefinite. The application should be submitted in person or via post to the address of Regional Center for Social Policy in Łódź. The card is issued within 30 business days from the date of submitting a correctly completed application. The card can be picked up in person or received by mail at the address indicated in the application. At present the card entitles its owner to benefit from the allowances and price reductions in 46 business entities and institutions operating in the fields of culture, leisure activities, health services, transport, sports and recreation and other. Those are amongst others theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, hotels, fitness centres, regional railway. The Senior Card of the Lodzkie Region is a support programme established by the Regional Parliament of the Lodzkie Region in October 2017 and financed from the budget of the region.
	

12. University of the Third Age (Lodzkie Region, Poland)

Project Partner (homepage)	Lodzkie Region (Województwo Łódzkie) www.bruksela.lodzkie.pl
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Lodzkie Region, Poland www.lodzkie.pl
Title of the best practice	University of the Third Age
Keywords	U3A; social activity of seniors, educational activity of seniors
Aim	The goals of the first Polish U3A established in 1975: • including older people in the lifelong learning system • intellectual, psychological and physical activation of students • development of education methods and implementation of gerontological prophylaxis • conducting observations and scientific research
Activities	General lectures conducted by eminent specialists from various fields, classes of various interests, among others foreign language classes, tourism and gymnastics, mutual assistance, cooperation with daytime living houses. Each of the University has its own profile and sections: biological and medical, daytime living, gymnastic, art history and museology, historical, linguistics, cultural studies, social sciences, art and psychology.
Results <i>(expected or already reached)</i>	40 years of experience in creating cooperation and activity of seniors in the formula of U3A in Lodzkie Region.
Short description <i>(including main challenges, achievements, plans)</i>	The purpose of the University of the Third Age (U3A) is to stimulate the activity of older people (seniors – the post-working age population, other referred to as in their age), create a common space for the exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as stimulate social interactions. Today, older people in the Lodzkie Region make up almost 23% of society, and it is estimated that in 2050 they will already constitute of 38% of the total population of the region. Seniors have, among other the following needs, that can be fulfilled by taking part in the University of the Third Age: • the need for self-education • the need to learn about the environment • the need to expand knowledge and skills • the need to perform socially useful activities • the need to be recognized as part of a society, a group • need to fill free time • the need to maintain social ties • the need for mental and physical stimulation • the possibility of realizing youthful dreams that were so far incompatible with professional life and family responsibilities. Al together there are 32 U3A in the Lodzkie Region, organised in the French model (closely connected with the University of Lodz, Lodz

University of Technology, Medical University of Lodz and main private academies' in the region, as well as run by NGOs).

The first U3A established in the region was created in 1979

(<http://www.3wiek.uni.lodz.pl/about>)

Other U3A active in the region, with their web pages and description of activities can be found at:

<http://www.rcpslodz.pl/images/Pobieranie/2018/2018-07-20-Infomator-UTW/UTW.PDF>



(photos copyright by @Grzegorz Gałasiński – form the 2018/2019 academic year inauguration of Third Age University in Łódź)

13. Dual Education System (Magdeburg, Germany)

Project Partner (homepage)	www.magdeburg.de
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany www.magdeburg.de
Title of the best practice	Dual Education System
Keywords	Work-based learning, vocational education, combination of theory and practice
Aim	After completing their course, the students emerge as well-trained professionals who are familiar with everyday working life in the training company. They know the 'corporate culture' and are already an integral part of the company's networks.
Activities	Dual education, which alternates between education in a vocational training academy and in a company, is focused more on practice. The subjects offered mainly include engineering, economics, information technology, nursing care and social work. The vocational training academy provides the theoretical knowledge, while the companies offer practical training for the students. At the end of the two or three-year course (depending on the profession), the students graduate not only with a bachelor's degree but also with a vocational training certificate from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK).
Results <i>(expected or already reached)</i>	Over two thirds of the trainees in Saxony-Anhalt (68,5%) are very satisfied with their vocational training. 70,8 % of trainees will continue to work in the same sector where they had their vocational training 47,2 % of trainees can imagine to work in the company where they had the practical part of their vocational training https://ms.sachsen-anhalt.de/fileadmin/Bibliothek/Politik_und_Verwaltung/MS/MS/5_BB_2016/2016_BerufsBilBer_Berichtstext.pdf
Short description <i>(including main challenges, achievements, plans)</i>	In order to attend dual courses, students are required to have qualified for university and to have a training or internship contract with a company. A contract is not easy to come by. Companies usually have a number of applicants to choose from, and can select those who best fit their needs. They then invest substantial amounts of money in training these candidates.
3 Theses on the best practice	-Businesses that take part in the dual training scheme consider vocational training to be the best form of personnel recruitment. Companies which provide training not only save on recruitment costs but also avoid the risk of hiring the wrong employee for the job (https://www.bmbf.de/en/the-german-vocational-training-system-2129.html)

	-There is a growing awareness across Europe and all over the world that excellent work-based vocational education and training is vital for competitiveness and social participation. -There are currently around 330 occupations requiring formal training in Germany. Employer organizations and trade unions are the drivers when it comes to updating and creating new training regulations and occupational profiles or modernizing further training regulations.
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

14. EMI – Consultation and Coordination Center for migrant entrepreneurs (Magdeburg, Germany)

Project Partner (homepage)	www.magdeburg.de
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany www.magdeburg.de
Title of the best practice	EMI – Consultation and Coordination Center for migrant entrepreneurs
Keywords	Consulting, coaching, workshops, setting up one's own business, intensive training courses, integration, support for migrants' projects
Aim	To provide migrant entrepreneurs with the targeted advice and legal support accompany their foundation.
Activities	Consultations, Coaching, Workshops, Intensive Training Course "Business German" and tax law, matching of potential business partners
Results <i>(expected or already reached)</i>	From 2016 till 2019 629 project participants were informed about business start-up possibilities in Saxony-Anhalt; 36 migrant entrepreneurs (8 Women and 28 Men) have built their own small businesses with the support of the EMI professional Team
Short description <i>(including main challenges, achievements, plans)</i>	The advisors of the EMI Project are accompanying the migrant entrepreneurs and university graduates in the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt in developing a business plan and business creation. On their way to self-employment potential entrepreneurs will be offered with a wide range of free of charge workshops, coaching's and individual trainings, which will cover an important economic and financial issues. Intensive trainings in the Business German and German tax law are also included in the teaching program.  The EMI Project Services: - Individual Consultation - Coaching - Wide range of Workshops - The Business German language course - The German tax law - Organisation and hosting of informational events for the migrant entrepreneurs

	https://eplan-consult.de/ https://eplan-consult.de/news/ https://www.instagram.com/eplan_consult/
3 Theses on the best practice	More Chances for the migrants to start a new life (new business) in the host country Positive example of empowerment of the migrant community Cooperation and exchange of know-how between the EMI team and potential entrepreneurs (a win win situation)
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

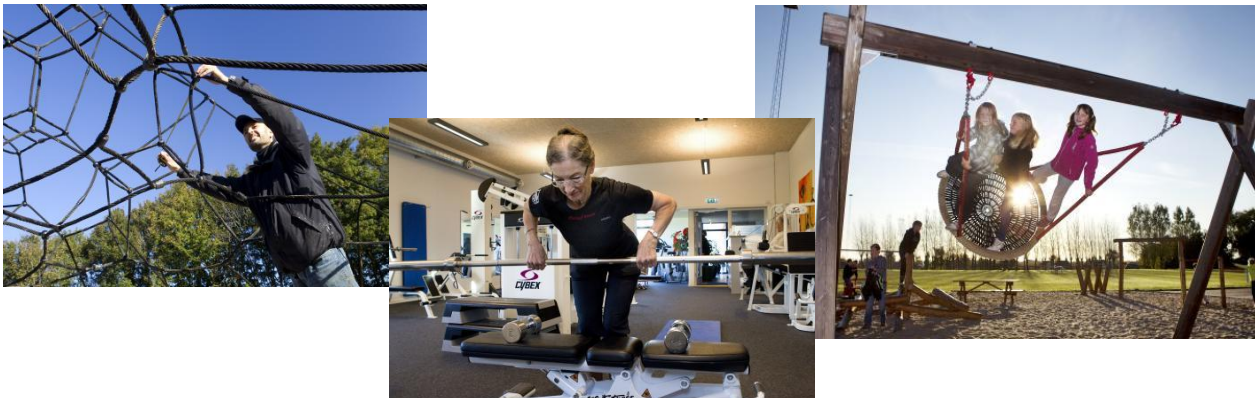
15. Welcome Center Saxony-Anhalt Landesinitiative Fachkraft im Fokus Sachsen-Anhalt (Magdeburg, Germany)

Project Partner (homepage)	www.magdeburg.de
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany www.magdeburg.de
Title of the best practice	Welcome Center Saxony-Anhalt Landesinitiative Fachkraft im Fokus Sachsen-Anhalt www.fachkraft-im-fokus.de www.welcomecenter-sachsen-anhalt.de
Keywords	Support, Consultation, qualified Workers, personnel planning and recruitment, personnel development, job exchange
Aim	Attraction and support of the qualified workers looking for job in the Saxony-Anhalt
Activities	- Central contact point for all the necessary information concerning the return of workers from the old federal states to Saxony-Anhalt. - Support measures for the employers who are affected by the lack of skilled labour and looking for qualified workers. - Promotion of companies - Support for newly arriving
Results (expected or already reached)	Many positive feedbacks from the skilled workers, who moved to Saxony-Anhalt in order to find a job and from those who decided to stay in Saxony-Anhalt, because of the new perspective job opportunities.
Short description (including main challenges, achievements, plans)	Welcome Center Saxony-Anhalt provides: 1. Consulting service for the skilled workers: -further training: development of the professional perspectives, career planning. Improvement of employment situation. -career development: Consultation and Coaching. 2. Promotion of companies: -personnel recruitment -strategic workforce analysis -human resources development -further training for the skilled workers 3. Support for the workers -family-friendly organisation of working time -the reconciling of work and family life -information about living and working in the region of interest. Cooperation partners: Municipalities, promotion of the economy, chambers, educational institutions, universities, employment agencies associations, Job centre, trade unions Welcome Center is a project of Förderservice GmbH der Investitionsbank Sachsen-Anhalt in cooperation with der isw Institut für Strukturpolitik and Wirtschaftsförderung gGmbH and der MA&T GmbH The project is being financed by the European Social Fund and the State Saxony-Anhalt. https://www.welcomecenter-sachsen-anhalt.de/home.html
3 Theses on the best practice	- Support and consultation for the skilled workers aim at improving their own vocational prospects. - Preventing migration of the skilled workers. - Support measures to help the skilled workers to move to Saxony-Anhalt with their families. -Promotion of the State of Saxony-Anhalt as attractive and perspective place with regard to the labour market opportunities and family life.

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
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16. “Landsbykerner i centrum” – The core of villages in focus (Vejle, Denmark)

Project Partner (homepage)	VIFIN, https://vifin.dk/index.php/en/ Vejle Municipality, https://www.vejle.dk/welcome-to-vejle/
City, Region, Country (homepage of the city, region)	Vejle Municipality, South Region, Denmark Homepage: https://www.vejle.dk/welcome-to-vejle/
Title of the best practice	“Landsbykerner i centrum” – The core of villages in focus
Keywords	Village programmes, active citizenship, urban development, local engagement, successful solutions
Aim	The objective of the project was to create local development strategies for 10 villages within Vejle Municipality. The strategies were developed in collaboration between the municipality, architects, local village councils and the residents of the villages.
Activities	-Identifying the local villages characteristics and distinctiveness (local guides and architects) -Three meetings with each village • The first meeting served as a pre-meeting between the municipality and collaborating partners • At the second meeting, the project group and local citizens mapped the relevant themes and human resources in the village • The third meeting was an open village meeting, where all villagers could discuss and prioritise the best ideas for the village’s development. -Architects developed a village plan based on the meetings and their expertise in urban development of rural areas - Public consultation, the village plan was discussed on a public meeting to secure the villagers supported of the plan. - The politicians would be presented for the village programme in the city council and discuss approval - If the politicians approves the plan, the village receive 100.000 DKK, (app. 13.400 euro) to implement the plan in reality.
Results <i>(expected or already reached)</i>	The project started in 2008, and throughout four years, it engaged approximately 800 citizens/villagers, who took part in the development of the village programmes. Furthermore, the project created new initiatives and engaged new volunteers locally. Since 2012, the local councils have begun a second round of the village programmes, implementing and improving the current programmes, and discussing possibilities for new local projects. In 2016, 12 local villages (in all) had developed their own village programmes. Vejle Municipality expects that the project idea will expand to include all the 22 villages in the municipality within the next four years 2019-2022.
Short description <i>(including main challenges, achievements, plans)</i>	In 2007, there was an extensive structural change in Denmark, called the Reform of Municipalities. As part of this reform, Denmark’s 271 municipalities were merged into 98 and its 14 counties were closed down, and five regions created instead. The purpose of the reform was to improve the public sector, however the consequences have been a greater centralization of jobs, hospitals, municipalities, and other public institutions. In the aftermath of the reform, many villages needed to rethink their local identity, and fight to make local schools and medical clinics etc. stay in the area. In this perspective, “The core of villages in focus” presents an opportunity for villages in Vejle to develop a local strategy in cooperation with Vejle municipality and the residents of the villages, and to identify concrete goals for the future in order to improve the wellbeing of the villagers and ensure an attractable environment for new comers.

	The project is inspired by the methodological approach called: Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)-method, which derives from North Western University, Chicago. It aims at engaging local citizens by mapping local resources and emphasizing on success stories, hereby taking the best from the past and bring it to the future. By emphasizing on the good stories rather than a village's problems, the project endeavors to create a positive energy and investment in the future plans. Furthermore, it has been essential for the project that the employees at the municipality understood the importance of the villagers' actual and practical engagement in the project to ensure local ownership and successful solutions. The local village programmes are supporting the development of more attractive local environments and villages that improve the living conditions for the residents in the village and attract other people to settle down there. I.e. the vision of one of the participating villages is: - to ensure good facilities for local engagement in associations and leisure time activities - to have a school in the village with classes up to 9th grade - to preserve good shopping possibilities - to promote and develop an environment that attracts people - to promote and develop an attractive working-environment for smaller companies -to ensure the wellbeing of the whole family For more information about the project, see: https://www.livogland.dk/vidensbase/projekter/landsbykerner-centrum
Goal for 2020 in the context of depopulation	The goal for 2022 is that all villages in Vejle Municipality have a village programme that ensure local engagement and successful development of the rural areas.
	

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