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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

POLICY BRIEF

The **ageing** revolution: towards a **European Silver Deal?**

Demographic transformations for
age-friendly territories

Ageing is an opportunity

Europe's population is ageing. This process will continue in the coming decades. Projections suggest that the number of people aged 65 and above will have risen to 24% by 2050 and that there will be fewer than two persons of working age for every person aged 65 or more.

ESPON has played a timely role in supporting designing our territories in an age-friendly way and keeping older people's interests in mind in policy making. In a conference on ageing in November 2020, the idea of turning ageing into an opportunity and **launching a Silver Deal**, just like the Green Deal, was advocated by cities and well received by participants.

This policy brief aims to inform European, national, regional and urban authorities about success factors for age-friendly territories. We also aim to support the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing by providing evidence of successful policies and good practices that contribute to healthy and inclusive ageing in cities.

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

- **Ambition. Need for long-term strategy: a Silver Deal just like the Green Deal?** Policymakers should prepare to facilitate healthy and inclusive ageing. This starts with formulating a **long-term strategy** that includes a vision with strategic and tactical goals. While developing such a strategy, they should be supported by European, national and regional support mechanisms, including funds, knowledge exchange and collaboration platforms. This would ensure that planned policy interventions are feasible, making use of best practices and involving all relevant stakeholders. **Europe has the opportunity to take the lead in developing its 'silver economy'**. 'Silver is the new green' is one of the conclusions of the European Week of Active & Healthy Ageing of November 2020 and '**A Silver Deal just like the Green Deal**' has been promoted at the ESPON Conference on Ageing.
- **Flexibility and tailor-made approach.** **We are not all ageing the same way.** A flexible approach is recommended in policy development related to ageing. Keeping an eye on developments and demands from older people and diversifying populations can be crucial for successful policies. Inequalities in later life and how inequalities are addressed across a wide range of areas affect the lived experiences of ageing adults across multiple domains. Old people are not a homogeneous group; different groups may be at greater risk of disadvantage and lose the chance to age better, because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion etc.
- **Positivity.** **Raising public awareness about ageing:** positive approaches and language help to overcome negative stereotypes and secure the buy-in of older people for cities to become age-friendly. More should be invested to **raise awareness across the whole of society** to understand what ageing means and how it can be supported. **Ageing is an opportunity:** Commissioner Šuica, in her opening speech at the ESPON Conference on Ageing, said that ageing is not just about challenges, it is also about embracing the opportunities that come with ageing, and there are many (Šuica 2020).
- **Outreach. From the local to the European level:** user involvement is key to developing age-friendly cities and territories in line with people's needs. This requires the regular consultation of older people about their wishes and needs. Within **municipalities**, all departments should work together. **Ageing should be a subject on all sectoral agendas.** At the same time, there is a need for greater involvement at the European level.
- **Learning.** It is crucial to place **more emphasis on monitoring and evaluation.** Using wider expertise from academia, and a 'test and learn' approach, can drive innovation. Proper *ex post* evaluation will be necessary to further improve efforts by cities and other territories to become age-friendly.

SOME FACTS ABOUT AGEING

IN 2050, PEOPLE AGED 65+ WILL FORM APPROXIMATELY A THIRD OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IN EUROPE. THAT IS AN INCREASE OF 43% COMPARED WITH TODAY.

Source: Eurostat (2020)

IN THE NETHERLANDS ABOUT 37% OF PEOPLE AGED 65+ FEELS LONELY. IN THE UK, THIS IS 40%. LIVING ALONE AND HAVING BAD HEALTH INCREASES THIS LIKELIHOOD BY 10 TIMES.

Source: Statistics Netherlands (2020); ONS UK (2018); Sundström et al. (2009)

OVER A THIRD OF ALL OLDER PEOPLE IN EUROPE LIVING ALONE ARE UNABLE TO FACE UNEXPECTED FINANCIAL EXPENSES

Source: Eurostat (2019)

TWO OUT OF EVERY FIVE PEOPLE IN EUROPE AGED 65-74 YEARS HAVE NEVER USED A COMPUTER

Source: Eurostat (2019)

SOME FACTS ABOUT AGEING

ON AVERAGE, A THIRD OF EUROPEANS AGED 75 AND OVER SPENDS AT LEAST THREE HOURS A WEEK ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES IN ESTONIA (70%) AND DENMARK (63%)

Source: Eurostat (2020)

HALF OF ALL PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER IN EUROPE LIVE IN UNDER-OCCUPIED DWELLINGS, WITH THE HIGHEST FIGURES IN IRELAND (90%), CYPRUS AND MALTA (85%), THE UK (83%) AND BELGIUM (81%)

Source: Eurostat (2019)

THERE ARE BIG NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN LIFE SATISFACTION ACROSS EUROPE, WITH 60% OF PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER IN DENMARK BEING VERY SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIFE, COMPARED WITH A LITTLE OVER 5% IN BULGARIA AND PORTUGAL

Source: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (2012)

1. Introduction

Ageing, time for a European Silver Deal

The European population is ageing rapidly and this is particularly evident in cities. The number of older people increased by 24% in metropolitan areas between 2001 and 2011. In some European city and regions, even increases of over 50% are visible. This trend is expected to grow in the coming decades.

Population ageing raises common challenges for cities: they need to adapt their environments physically and socially, for older people's quality of life to remain unaffected. This challenge has become even more evident in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, which has affected our society and older people in particular. The crisis has threatened their lives, while survivors faced increased loneliness.

Fortunately, the idea of an **age-friendly city** has been growing for more than a decade now, sparked by the crucial work of the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO has declared 2020-2030 the Decade of Healthy Ageing (World Health Organization 2021).

WHAT IF we turn the risk of ageing into an opportunity and launch a 'Silver Deal' just like the 'Green Deal'?

ESPON has played a timely role in supporting designing our territories in an age-friendly way and keeping older people's interests in mind in policy making. In 2018 a group of cities, which formed the Eurocities Urban Ageing Working Group, addressed their needs to ESPON in order to understand the impact of ageing populations in the urban context, develop effective policy responses, and bring policymakers, researchers and experts to work together rather than in silos that limit progress. The results of this experience are evident in ESPON's (2020a) tar-

geted analysis *Adapting European Cities to Population Ageing* (ACPA), which combines conceptual approaches to ageing, principally WHO's age-friendly city model, with practical and forward-looking examples of how cities are implementing change. The effort culminated in a conference on ageing in November 2020, at which the idea of **turning ageing into an opportunity and launching a Silver Deal, just like the Green Deal**, was advocated by cities and well received by participants, including the European Commission's Vice President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica.

Last December, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia signed a **Trio Presidency declaration on ageing** (Council of the EU 2020). The three countries are jointly advocating urgent adaptation to demographic change and mainstreaming of ageing-related matters in all policy areas. This is an important achievement in strengthening the rights of older persons. The declaration stresses a human rights-based approach to ageing well, in order to ensure that increased life expectancy is accompanied with continuing good health and economic conditions.

Furthermore, the European Commission has launched a consultation on the **Green Paper on Ageing** (European Commission 2020). The Green Paper sets out the key issues related to ageing and discusses possible ways to anticipate and respond to the socio-economic impact of Europe's ageing population.

This ESPON policy brief aims to inform European, national, regional and urban authorities about success factors for age-friendly territories. It addresses and illustrates various solutions and policy recommendations to develop age-friendly cities.

We also aim to support the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing by providing evidence of successful policies and good practices that contribute to healthy and inclusive ageing in cities.

2. Evidence on the impact of ageing

2.1. Geographical distribution of population ageing in Europe

The European population is ageing rapidly, largely because of historically low fertility rates and increases in life expectancy, resulting from healthier living and improved healthcare. These developments mean that there is a growing number of people in the older age groups in all European countries, while the shares of young people and people of working age are either stag-

20%

The share of population aged 65 and over in Europe

nating or shrinking. However, the intensity of population ageing differs quite noticeably between countries and regions. Overall, in the EU around 20% of the population was aged 65 and over in 2019; this share was highest in Italy (23%) and lowest in Ireland (14%) (Eurostat 2020).

The magnitude of population ageing does not only differ between countries, but **differences between the regions of Europe are in many cases even more significant**. Map 2.1 shows the shares of older people at the regional level in Europe in 2019. Significant regional variations within the same country can be observed in the UK, for instance, where the proportion of older people in 2019 varied from approximately 12% in London to over 23% in Lincolnshire. In France, this share ranged from around 15% in Île-de-France to nearly 27% in Limousin. As highlighted in the Atlas for the Territorial Agenda 2030, western EU Member States have older populations with more regional differences. In Spain and Portugal, larger shares of old people live in peripheral regions; in France, people aged 65 and over tend to live in rural regions; in Germany, a higher share of old people live in the eastern regions. These observations reflect the general trend that population ageing is generally more pronounced in rural than urban regions. With the exceptions of Belgium, Poland and Slovakia, all EU Member States had proportionately more older people living in rural than urban regions. This

is the case especially in sparsely populated regions, where population ageing is amplified by outmigration of younger people, who are leaving in search of job opportunities or a better quality of life.

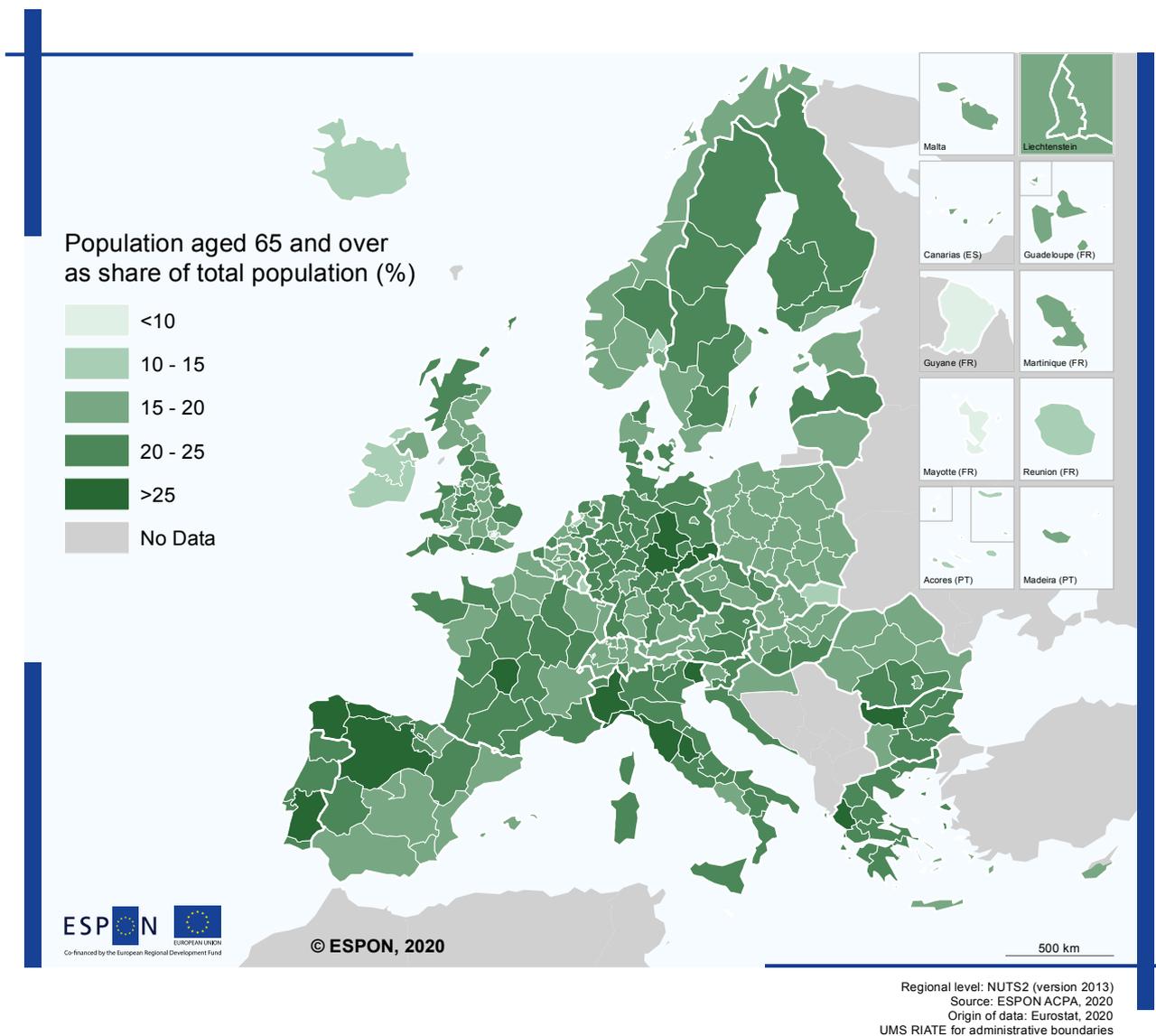
2.2. 20 years of ageing – temporal dynamics

While population ageing can be observed in more or less all regions in Europe, Map 2.2 shows significant differences in the intensity of population ageing during the past two decades. For example, in Spain, the population change among people aged 65 and over was over 58% in the Balearic Islands, but only around 12% in Castile and Leon between 2000 and 2019. Regional differences in the intensity of ageing are perhaps most significant in Germany, where for instance Brandenburg witnessed an increase of over 59% in the older population compared with a 19% increase in Arnsberg.

Population projections suggest that **population ageing will intensify in Europe in the coming decades**, but to different degrees depending on countries.

Map 2.3 shows the projected share of older people in 2030, when approximately 24% of the EU population is expected to be aged 65 or older. In western and northern Europe, most countries are expected to have shares of older people either similar to or lower than the European average in 2030. In southern Europe, most countries have had and will continue to have older population age structures than the EU average. This is largely due to their long history of below replacement-level fertility. This trend includes Italy, which is projected to have the highest share of older people in the EU in 2030. Among countries in eastern Europe, most had lower proportions of older people than the European average in 2000. However, in most of these countries, ageing has occurred at a significantly faster pace than in other countries, largely owing to low fertility and outmigration (ESPON 2020a).

By 2050, more than two thirds of the EU Member States are projected to have an old-age dependency ratio above 50%, meaning that there will be fewer than two persons of working-age for every person aged 65 or more (Eurostat 2020). As projections suggest that average life expectan-

Map 2.1:**The proportion of the population aged 65 and over among the total population in European regions (NUTS 2) in 2019**

cies for women and men aged 65 will increase by 3.8 and 4.6 years respectively until 2065 (OECD 2019), this means significant increases in the very old age groups. For instance, the number of people aged 85 years or more is projected to increase from 12.5 million in 2019 to 26.8 million by 2050, and the number of people aged 100 years or more is projected to grow from 96,600 in 2019 to almost 500,000 by 2050 (Eurostat 2020).

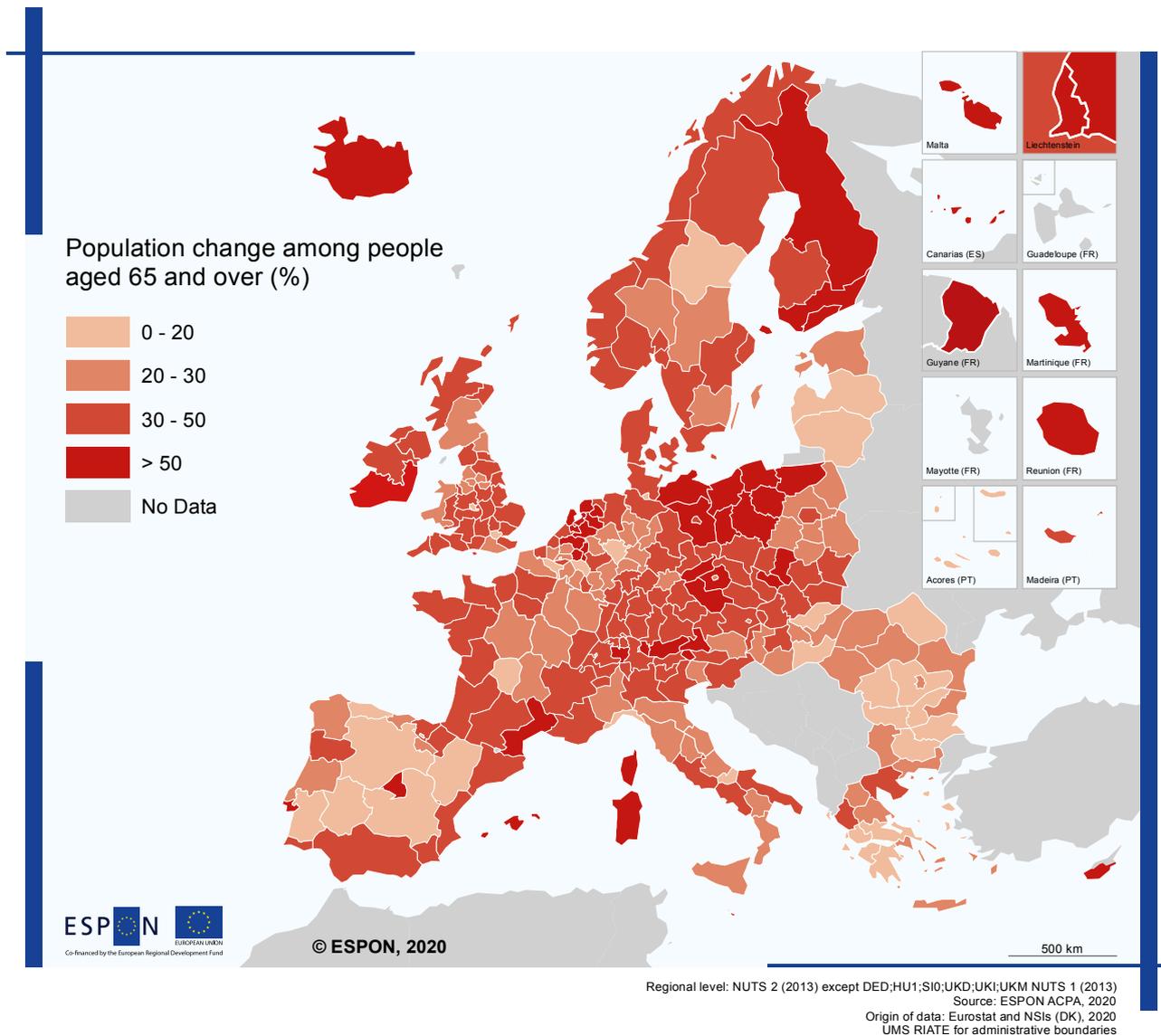
2.3. Challenges related to ageing

Among all continents in the world, Europe is characterised by the most significant level of population ageing. As a consequence, several policy initiatives have been launched at the EU level as well as within individual countries and cities to deal with population ageing.

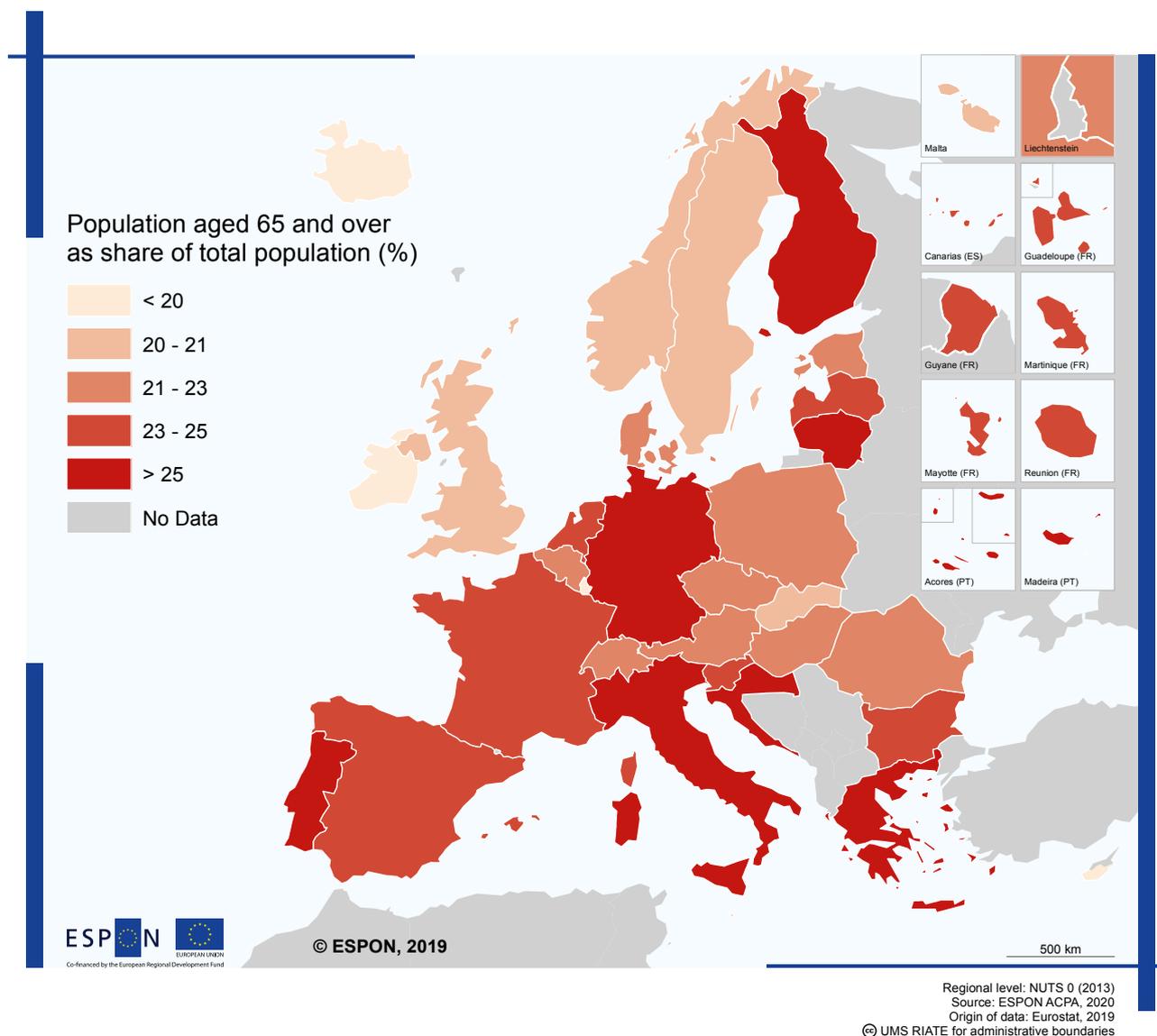
Population ageing is both a rural and an urban (yet geographically fragmented) phenomenon. Still, urban ageing is at risk of being overlooked by policymakers. Urban regions in Europe need to become more aware of the challenges caused by population ageing. These challenges concern especially the labour market, housing, public service provision and social inclusion. Examples of such challenges include the availability of sufficient public funding for public services for older people, the availability of suitable housing for older people, and overcoming negativity, stereotypes and polarisation.

Population ageing is also referred to in the European **Cohesion Policy**. The **Territorial Agenda 2030** stresses that ageing will have a major impact on rural and peripheral regions in particular, posing challenges to social and territorial cohesion policy, especially in relation to the labour market, housing and the provision of public services. Ageing is a major parallel demographic challenge, in particular for many regions witnessing population shrinkage (ESPON 2020b). Nevertheless, ageing also concerns cities and urban areas.

Map 2.2:
Change in older people in European regions, 2000-2019



Map 2.3:
Projected share of older people in European countries, 2030



This introduces challenges for European cities and regions. A prominent and concrete one is that population ageing will require **more public funding**. Older people make more intensive use of healthcare services and other public services. The increase in public expenditure on long-term care due to ageing, the pressure on public budgets, and the growing demands for care products and services are common challenges of governments. The SILVER project is a successful initiative on how to tackle these challenges together by forming a transnational joint procurement group (ESPON 2021).

We can also observe that in most parts of Europe **old-age dependency is increasing**. Old-age dependency is higher than young-age dependency in Germany, Greece, northern Spain, central and southern France, Italy, Portugal, Romania and eastern Finland. This provides

evidence that ageing is particularly challenging for these territories (Map 2.4).

Therefore, population ageing may also require the **calibration of strategic focus areas** when city administrations face pressures in terms of public finance.

Population ageing is not yet on the priority list of many European cities. The consultation on the **Green Paper on ageing** is an opportunity to debate the long-term impacts of ageing, with an emphasis on care and pensions, intergenerational solidarity and how to foster active ageing. The Green Paper dives into the impacts, challenges and opportunities of ageing on the economy and society and across the regions.

A second group of challenges can be jointly described as **overcoming negativity, stereotypes and polarisation**.

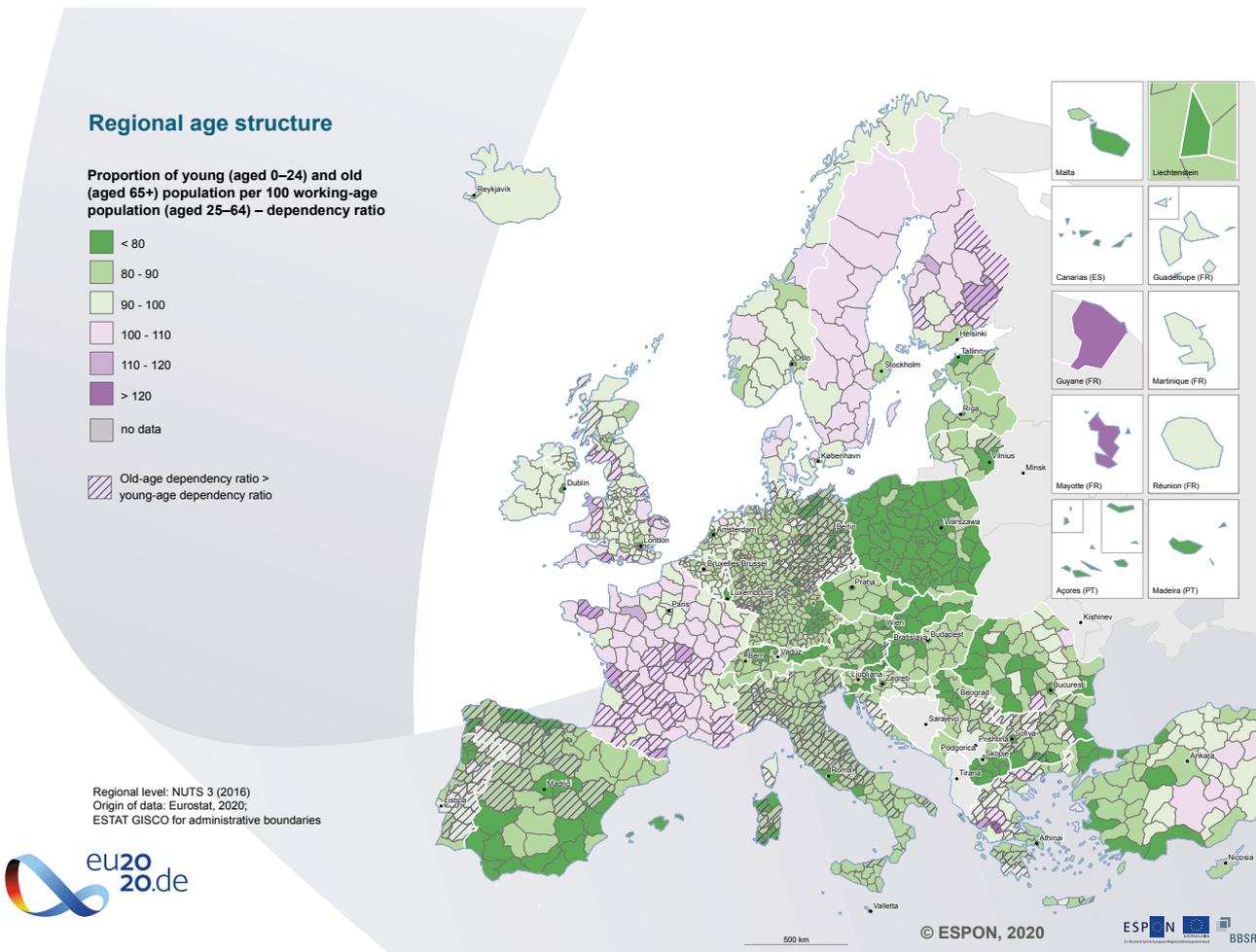
Population ageing is often regarded as a negative phenomenon, associated with costs and burden. Yet research has shown that there is a big demand for showing the positive side of population ageing. Polarisation is also a big issue. It acts as a barrier to inclusion. Currently there are various forces that fuel this, including financial polarisation among older people, digitalisation, cultural differences and the risk of loneliness.

A third group of challenges is to be found on the policy side. **Continuation of initiatives for older people** is an important one. The ESPON ACPA research has clearly shown that many good practices come from projects that can be described as occasional pilot projects with a short life span. There is a need for stability and steady results.

In addition, **more and better learning from ageing policy** is a challenge, as this is not yet part of the policymakers' DNA or of the city councils' routines throughout Europe.

There is a need for (a) more peer learning between cities and (b) more and better monitoring and evaluation of policies and activities/interventions. **Involvement of the relevant European bodies** (including the European Commission, as well as European knowledge exchange platforms) will also be crucial to get population higher on the political agenda and to exchange good practices in the coming years.

Map 2.4:
Proportion of young and old population per 100 working-age population – dependency ratio 2019



3. On the ground: policies to develop more age-friendly environments across Europe

3.1. Commonalities and differences in policies and initiatives

During the ESPON ACPA project, case studies were conducted in eight cities across Europe. These case studies have shed light on inspiring policies and initiatives that contribute to achieving more age-friendly environments. It has become clear that there are differences and commonalities in the way European cities are mitigating population ageing.

Differences in policies and initiatives

In the first place, there are different **levels of governance** at which cities in Europe have designed and implemented population ageing policies:

- *District level:* some cities such as Amsterdam and Greater Manchester have enabled their city districts to develop their own policies. The benefit is the ability to implement initiatives that are tailored to the local context and policy needs.
- *City level:* the majority of policies take place at the city level. This makes a clear, coherent and integral approach possible.
- *Regional level:* some cities, including Barcelona, work together with other municipalities in the same region. This enables them to gain financial advantages (e.g. more funding and more cost-efficient procurement).

Furthermore, European cities tend to use different **definitions and policy demarcations** within the age-friendly city concept. The WHO framework for age-friendly cities, developed in *Global Age-friendly Cities: A guide* (World Health Organization 2007), proposes eight interconnected domains that can help to identify and address barriers to the well-being and participation of older people.

Different age thresholds are used for identifying a 'senior' (e.g. 55+, 60+, 65+ or even 75+ years), and likewise different subgroups are identified: ethnic minorities such as Black, Asian and minority ethnic, or based on cultural identity (e.g. Roma) and socio-economic status (impoverished older people). Other cities do not identify subgroups and prefer to improve the lives of all older people in their territories.

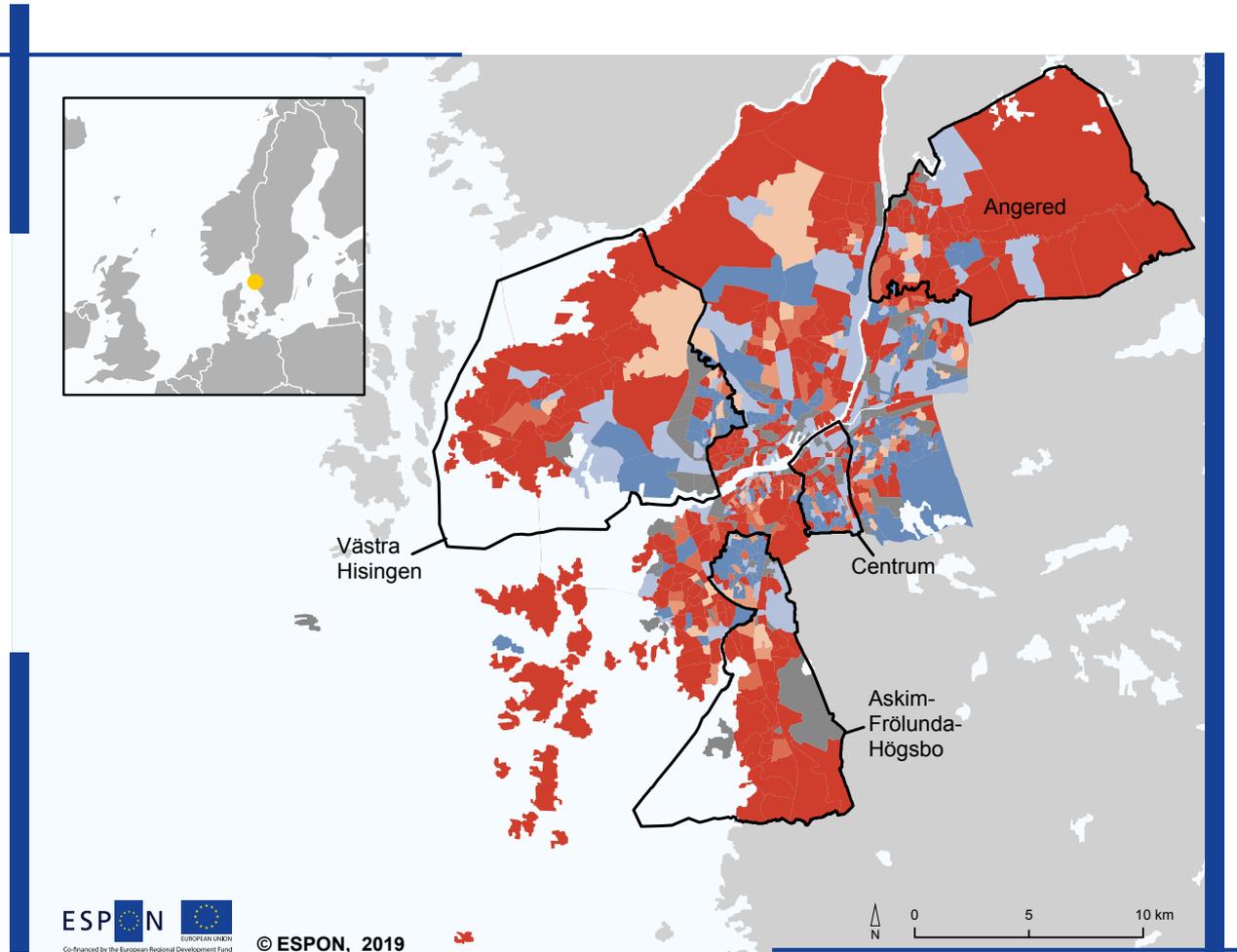
Commonalities in policies and initiatives

However, the commonalities in policies and initiatives are more apparent. Firstly, most European cities are seeing large **local increases** in the number of older people. For example, this can be seen in Gothenburg and Greater Manchester (Maps 3.1 and 3.2). Such territorial analysis at the neighbourhood level shows that the picture can be quite fragmented even if, usually, the suburbs of European cities experience the most intensive population ageing. It is important for city administrations to perform such analyses, to be aware of particular neighbourhoods that require special attention, or will require extra attention in the (near) future.

Besides, most European cities have very similar **policy targets and thematic focus areas**. Most of the policies observed are aimed at making older people more active and independent. It is worth noting that the focus seems to be predominantly on older people who are relatively active. It is important for frail older people not to be ignored by city administrations. The most popular thematic focus areas of policies and initiatives are social participation, inclusion and community support. This is not surprising, since relatively large advances can be made in these domains with limited financial resources.

Finally, the **actual design and implementation of policies and initiatives** observed is very similar. The ESPON ACPA project has identified multiple inspiring initiatives from different cities that have the same approach. The

Map 3.1:
Change in older population in Gothenburg, 2001–2017



Territorial level: Basområde
 Source: Espon ACPA, 2019
 Origin of data: Göteborg Stad: Statistik och Analys, 2019
 Gothenburg municipality for administrative boundaries

Population change among people aged 65 and over (%)

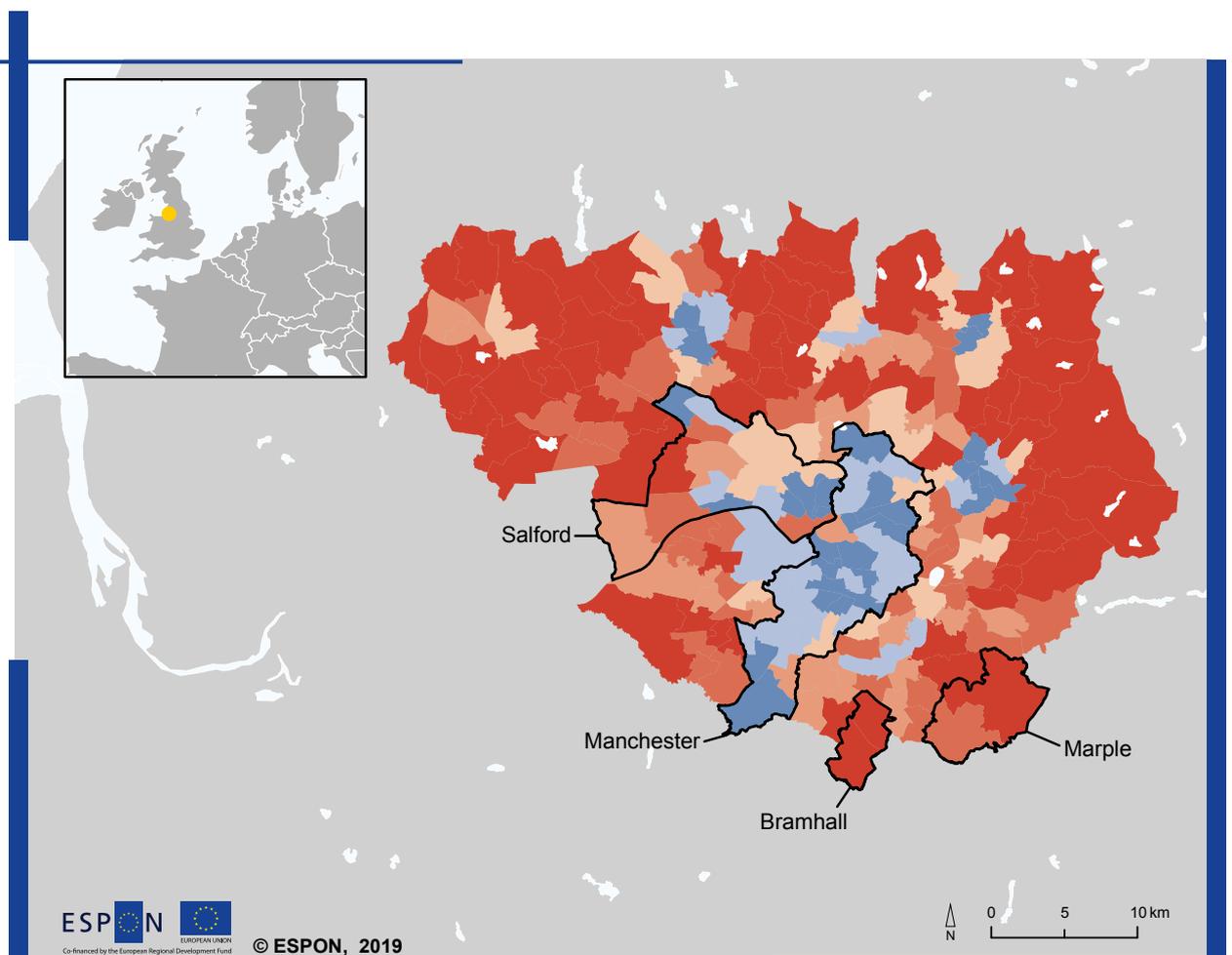


 City district mentioned in the reports (main report, policy handbook and/or city report)

availability of (often cultural) activities in neighbourhood centres or public spaces is a notable example, as can be seen in the ACPA policy handbook (ESPON 2020c). Likewise, tailored transport modes for older people and physical adaptations to homes aimed at facilitating ageing in place can be found in diverse yet similar cases.

One might wonder what best practices come from these groups of inspiring policy interventions. The next section provides overarching best practices for each of the eight policy domains that are related to an age-friendly city.

Map 3.2:
Change in older population in Greater Manchester, 2001–2017



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0 5 10 km

Territorial level: Ward
 Source: Espon ACPA, 2019
 Origin of data: Office for National Statistics, 2019
 ONS Geography, UK for administrative boundaries

Population change among people aged 65 and over (%)

< -10
 -10 - 0
 0 - 10
 10 - 20
 20 - 30
 > 30

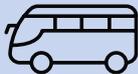
City district mentioned in the report (main report, policy handbook and/or city report)

3.2. Good practices by policy domain

Table 3.1 shows the overarching good practices associated with each of the eight age-friendly city domains formulated by WHO. For each domain, the table also lists an

inspiring project or initiative implemented in the stakeholder cities analysed in ACPA. The ACPA policy handbook (ESPON 2020c) can be a helpful resource, as it provides more examples, with explanations of transferability, ways of implementation and possible impact.

Table 3.1:
Good practices and inspiring examples for each age-friendly city policy domain

POLICY DOMAIN	GOOD PRACTICE	EXAMPLE (CITY)
 <p>1. Outdoor spaces and buildings</p>	Taking away barriers to visit outdoor spaces and buildings. Such barriers can have a physical and a social/cognitive dimension	Age-friendly shopping (Zaragoza)
 <p>2. Transportation</p>	Tailored solutions that can bring older people to destinations where public transport is unavailable	Pink pick-up buses (Oslo) ¹
 <p>3. Housing</p>	Optimal use of scarce residential real estate and stimulating intergenerational contact by having seniors and students live in one building	Viure i Conviure (Barcelona)
 <p>4. Social participation</p>	Platform for discussion of ageing – including sensitive topics – by older people without problematising it	UP! – a new perspective on ageing (Amsterdam)
 <p>5. Respect and social inclusion</p>	Cultural activities adapted to cultural backgrounds of older people	AVEM groups ² (Hengelo)
 <p>6. Civic participation and employment</p>	Active involvement of older people in the design and implementation of policies and activities	Working Well (Greater Manchester)
 <p>7. Communication and information</p>	Combining multiple demands in one project: teaching seniors to use digital technology, letting them share personal experiences and reflect on their quality of life, as well as giving them a voice in the city council	Life filming (Gothenburg)
 <p>8. Community support and health services</p>	Don't forget about the people around the seniors. Informal caregivers in particular tend to find it a burden to perform their tasks and should be relieved where possible	Maison des aidants (Nantes)

1 Pink pick-up buses is a flexible door-to-door and on-demand mobility service for older people. Older people can book by phone or using an app. The cost is low. The service is open to friends of older people. Drivers have received special training.

2 AVEM groups: Arbeidsparticipatie Vrouwen Etnische Minderheden (Participation of migrant women)

4. Policy recommendations for developing more age-friendly environments

Ambition. Need for long-term strategy: a Silver Deal just like the Green Deal?

WHO's age-friendly city framework has proved to be successful; all European cities might find its use a strategic approach to ageing. Yet even many of the cities that have already adopted the framework do not have a long-term strategy running up to 2030. Cities should therefore invest in **developing formal strategic and tactical goals** related to population ageing, based on a mission and vision. Senior strategic politicians (e.g. mayors, ministers) can be influential in supporting and prioritising such a strategy.

An age-friendly city strategy should be **place specific**. Population ageing differs widely between neighbourhoods in European cities. A geographically differentiated (neighbourhood) approach is therefore paramount.

A solid strategy running up to 2030 should ensure more stability in the long run and a higher probability of changing in a stable way, instead of running occasional pilot projects without continuations. We need to build on existing projects that work, because there are already a lot of good initiatives that can be improved.

WHO (2021) has declared the Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020–2030), which provides a useful opportunity to bring together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media and the private sector and to develop a strategy and actions together. The European Commission's (2020) Green Paper on Ageing should guide regions and cities in the development of a strategy and actions.

In fact, the ESPON Conference Week on Ageing (ESPON 2020d) has shown that there is widespread demand for going even a step further. In her opening speech, Commissioner Šuica highlighted that where we live also affects how we age and that therefore it is vital that cities can be a shining example of intergenerational solidarity, caring and inclusiveness. She added that it is important that we balance our policy making for older people. Finally, she called to seize the moment together to find the best policy solutions to make our cities a wonderful place to live, through the whole life cycle (Šuica 2020).

'**Silver is the new green**' is one of the conclusions of the European Week of Active & Healthy Ageing of November 2020, and '**A Silver Deal just like the Green Deal**' has been promoted at the ESPON Conference on Ageing.

Flexibility and tailor-made approach. Not all ageing the same way

A flexible approach is recommended in policy development related to ageing. Keeping an eye on developments and demands from older people and diversifying populations can be crucial for successful policies. Inequalities in later life, and how inequalities are addressed across a wide range of areas, affect the lived experiences of ageing adults across multiple domains. Old people are not a homogeneous group; different groups may be at greater risk of disadvantage and lose the chance to age better because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion etc.

Learning from already developed policies and initiatives through proper evaluation is one thing; another is to keep critically reflecting on the current priorities and to **match them with ongoing societal developments and demands** from older people. Below we mention a few examples of developments and demands that European, national and local governments should keep an eye on. The ACPA policy handbook (ESPON 2020c) contains more of these examples.

- **Digitalisation as impediment to inclusion:** seniors aged 75 and over, in particular, tend to have difficulties with using computers and smartphones. Governments and other providers of services for older people should be aware of seniors who cannot use or do not wish to use digital channels, and provide relevant alternatives. This also applies to communicating municipal policies to older people. Governments and other stakeholders should create the right circumstances so that the risks (e.g. exclusion) are mitigated and older people can benefit from the opportunities.
- **Diversifying populations:** among older people in cities, there are many different subgroups. It is important that older people are not seen as a homogeneous group. For example, there are well-known inequalities in origin (older migrants), gender, sexual orientation and income. These developments require a tailored approach. To increase social inclusion, stakeholders implementing activities for older people should become more aware of these diverse groups and their demands. Recently, the municipality of The Hague has developed a structured and scientifically validated approach (Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Questionnaire) to measure age-friendliness in several dimensions (Dikken et al. 2020). Cities should regularly measure

how age-friendly their neighbourhoods are, for different population groups.

- **Need for holistic approaches:** combating loneliness requires involvement from stakeholders across various WHO domains, including social participation and inclusion, health and community services, and housing. The same applies to many other examples. Successful ageing policy requires that policymakers from different thematic backgrounds join forces to develop age-friendly environments, at the local and national levels as well as the European level.
- **An infection-controlled city is an age-friendly city:** coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has made it clear that older people are hit disproportionately by the virus. It demonstrates perfectly why a holistic approach is necessary, because working towards an infection-controlled city requires a broader view than focusing only on traditional age-related measures.

Positivity. Raising public awareness about ageing

In today's society, ageing is often seen negatively and misunderstood. Public campaigns are usually targeted at younger generations. Positive and strength-based approaches and language help to overcome negative stereotypes and secure the buy-in of older people for cities to become age-friendly. Coalitions are needed to get ageing on the agenda.

More should be invested to **raise awareness across the whole society** to understand what ageing means and how it can be supported. For instance, when service providers are more knowledgeable about dementia, they may be in a better position to identify and counteract problems that dementia sufferers are coping with. In addition, when younger generations are more aware of the precautions they can take to facilitate healthy and active ageing, they will profit from them directly, and society will profit indirectly through lower healthcare costs.

Outreach. From the local to the European level

Facilitating urban ageing is relevant at all geographical levels. Many good practices have in common that they rely on professionals and volunteers who act at the local level, where they know the inhabitants. Cities should do more to make use of these experts, and not forget older people themselves. User involvement is key to developing an age-friendly city in line with people's needs. We need to know older people's needs and ways of living.

Therefore, we have to talk to them in order to take decisions adjusted to their needs. This requires regular consultation of older people about their wishes and needs.

Within **municipalities**, all departments should work together. **Ageing should be a subject on all sectoral agendas within city administrations.**

At the same time, there is a need for greater involvement at the European level. An increasing number of cities are already **sharing experiences** through platforms such as Eurocities, AGE Platform Europe and the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. It is recommended that more cities join such networks to share good practices and learn from each other.

There is also a suggestion to create **synergies with other movements**, for example smart cities and healthy cities.

Financially, improved use of European funding is possible. The ESPON ACPA study has shown that many age-friendly cities use almost exclusively their own budgets for the implementation of active ageing policies. Possibilities to use European funds were discussed; however, none of the civil servants saw this as an option for their own city, usually because they lacked knowledge about funding possibilities. Therefore, the relevant European bodies are encouraged to make policymakers and other practitioners more aware of opportunities for European knowledge exchange and funding by outreach and dissemination activities.

Learning. More monitoring and evaluation

Plenty of inspiring examples of success stories can be found in various cities across Europe, but often factual substantiation of the results is lacking. In order to gain a more reliable insight into how effectively best practices really work and which ones are less effective, it is crucial to place **more emphasis on monitoring and evaluation**. Using wider expertise from academia, and a 'test and learn' approach (trying new ideas and not being deterred by unsuccessful ones), can drive innovation. A good example can be seen in the learning network approach, whereby the municipality works together with local universities to set up experiments within projects, measure results and evaluate the outcomes.

Proper *ex post* evaluation, measuring the project outcomes and comparing them with the baseline measurements both quantitatively and qualitatively, will be necessary to further improve efforts by cities to become age-friendly.

5. What if?

WHAT IF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN THE CITIES BECAME FREE FOR OLDER PEOPLE?

Where: Gothenburg and in other cities

WHAT IF OLDER PEOPLE THEMSELVES BECAME PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SERVICE PROVISION WITHIN SOCIAL GATHERING CENTRES?

Where: Zaragoza

WHAT IF OLDER PEOPLE BECAME RESEARCHERS OF AGE-FRIENDLINESS?

Where: Greater Manchester

WHAT IF THERE WERE SPECIAL MEETING AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE GROUPS FOR OLDER MIGRANTS AND OTHER MINORITIES AMONG OLDER PEOPLE?

Where: Hengelo
How: AVEM groups

WHAT IF EUROPE LAUNCHED A WIDE DEBATE ON AGEING?

How: public consultation on the Green Paper on ageing

WHAT IF OLDER PEOPLE PRACTISED URBAN GARDENING AND SPORTS TOGETHER WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS?

Where: Oslo
How: Green and healthy city initiatives

WHAT IF WE ALSO CARED FOR THE OLDER PEOPLE'S CAREGIVERS?

Where: Nantes
How: Maison des Aidants

WHAT IF OLDER PEOPLE DEVELOPED A VIRTUAL NETWORK OF THEIR CONNECTIONS THROUGH A SMARTPHONE APP?

Where: Barcelona
How: Vincles app

WHAT IF PROVEN HEALTHCARE INTERVENTIONS WERE ADAPTED TO SUIT THE SENIOR'S CULTURAL BACKGROUND?

Where: Amsterdam
How: A Matter of Balance for Older Migrants

More information and inspiration on the case studies mentioned above can be found in the ESPON (2020c) policy handbook.

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