

# AGENDA

## Peer-to-peer knowledge exchange event

*Shrinking small and medium-sized  
cities*

14 June 2024

9:30-17:30 (CET)

 OECD Headquarters (Paris)

To attend the event in person, please reach out to [david.burgalassi@oecd.org](mailto:david.burgalassi@oecd.org)

# AGENDA

9:30-10:00		<i>Welcome coffee</i>
10:00-10:15		<b>Welcome and overview of the day</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Event facilitator: <b>Marc Bournisien de Valmont</b>, Policy analyst, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities</li></ul> <b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Aziza Akhmouch</b>, Head of Division, Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities</li><li>▪ <b>Martijn Brons</b>, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission (online)</li></ul>
10:15-10:45	SETTING-THE-SCENE SESSION	<b>Shrinking small and medium-sized cities: challenges and solutions</b> <p><b>Presentation</b> by <b>David Burgalassi</b>, Economist - Urban Systems, Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, OECD</p>
10:45-12:30	SESSION 1	<b>Re-thinking urban functions in shrinking cities and their regions</b> <p>This session will discuss the key role that small and medium-sized cities can play for well-being and development in shrinking and ageing regions. Small and medium-sized cities have the potential to act as 'regional hubs', driving economic activity, providing essential services, and enhancing the quality of life for surrounding rural areas. This requires re-thinking functions, for instance concentrating services like healthcare, education, and social services in these cities to serve broader areas, thereby ensuring efficient and high-quality service delivery and their accessibility despite reduced populations.</p> <p>The session will focus on innovative strategies for rethinking service provision in light of these demographic changes. By examining case studies and best practices, participants will share insights into how small and medium-sized cities can adapt to demographic change and support regional cohesion.</p> <p><b>Introduction by prof. Evert Meijers</b>, Associate professor in Economic Geography, Human Geography and Spatial Planning department, Utrecht University (The Netherlands)</p> <p><b>Policy case studies</b> moderated by <b>Miquel Vidal Bover</b>, Policy analyst, Regional Development and Multi-level Governance Division, OECD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <b>Dr. Robert Greenwood</b>, Deputy Minister of Rural and Regional Development and Engagement, and Chief Economic Development Officer of Newfoundland and Labrador, <b>Canada</b></li><li>– <b>Vincent Delaere</b>, Senior policy officer, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, <b>Netherlands</b></li><li>– <b>Dr. Hans-Gunther Clev</b>, Managing Director of the FutureRegion West Palatinate Association, Kaiserslautern, Rhineland-Palatinate, <b>Germany</b></li><li>– <b>Kadri Jushin &amp; Eedi Sepp</b>, Advisors to the Regional Development</li></ul>

Department, Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture, **Estonia** (online)

### Q&A discussion

**Key takeaways and summary** by **prof. Evert Meijers**.

12:30-14:00

*Lunch Break*

14:00 –  
15:30

### SESSION 2 **Revitalising shrinking cities by creating opportunities for all ages**

This session will discuss how cities can address population shrinkage and promote quality of life for citizens of all ages (including residents, students, workers, tourists,...), by fostering a better living environment to support social cohesion and city attractiveness. To this aim, urban policies should meet the community needs and benefit all segments of the population.

The participants will share insights on increasing the attractiveness of small and medium-sized cities to retain young talents while supporting the needs of ageing populations. The discussion will also cover key sustainable urban development strategies and actions, such as affordable and quality housing, revitalisation of city and town centres, environmental quality, and improvements in external connectivity and infrastructure.

**Introduction** by **prof. Karina Pallagst**, Dean of the Faculty of Spatial and Environmental Planning, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau, Germany.

**Policy case studies** moderated by **Camille Viros**, Head of Unit, Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, **OECD**

- **Luc Faraldi**, International Policy Coordinator, Agence Nationale de la Cohésion des Territoires (ANCT), **France**
- **Alexandru Kelemen**, Executive Director of the Association for Integrated Territorial Development of Jiu Valley, **Romania**
- **Jan Horak**, Guarantor of the Strategic Plan of Ostrava, **Czech Republic** (online)
- **Dr. Hans Schlappa**, Network Leader for Transfer Networks Placemaking 4 Cities and ReGrowth Town.

### Q&A discussion

**Key takeaways and summary** by **prof. Karina Pallagst**.

15:30-15:45

*Coffee Break*

15:45-17:15

### SESSION 3 **Adapting buildings and the urban fabric in shrinking cities**

This session will explore the critical need for adapting buildings and infrastructures in shrinking small and medium-sized cities. As urban populations decline, it is essential to reimagine and repurpose the existing built environment to respond to new realities, including an ageing population, and the imperative to adapt the urban fabric to meet climate and sustainability goals.

Major topics that will be discussed in this session include: how to effectively retrofit and repurpose unused or underutilised buildings, how to re-design urban infrastructures for changing population needs, and how to align adaptation to demographic change with the goals of the green transition in cities.

**Introduction** by **Dr. Hans Schlappa**, Retired Senior Lecturer in Public Management at Hertfordshire Business School & Network Leader for Transfer Networks Placemaking 4

## Cities and ReGrowth Town

**Policy case studies** moderated by **Oscar Huerta**, Project Manager, Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, **OECD**

- **Gratian Dobre**, Chief Executive for Development and Investments at the Municipality of Reșița, **Romania**
- **Ricardo Gonçalves**, Head of Division of Innovation, Investment and Planning, Municipality of Fundão, **Portugal** (online)
- **Prof. Keiro Hattori**, Professor at the Faculty of Public Policy Studies at Ryukoku University, Kyoto, **Japan**
- **Dara Kovel**, Chief Executive Officer of Beacon Communities, LLC, Greater Boston Area, **United States** (online)
- **Cosimo Pacciani**, Head of Research, Poste Italiane, **Italy** (online)

### Q&A discussion

**Key takeaways and summary** by **Dr. Hans Schlappa**

17:15-17:30

**CLOSING  
SESSION**

### **Conclusions and Way Forward**

- **Jose Enrique Garcilazo**, Deputy Head of Division, Regional Development and Multi-level Governance Division, **OECD**

## ■ Meeting information

The meeting will be held in **Room CC20** of the OECD Conference centre. The entrance is located at: 2, rue André Pascal – 75016 Paris. More information available here: [www.oecd.org/conference-centre/](http://www.oecd.org/conference-centre/)

### Public transport:

Metro/RER

- Line 9, La Muette station (9 minutes by foot)
- RER C, Avenue Henri Martin (7 minutes by foot) or Boulainvilliers station (11 minutes by foot)

Bus routes 22, 32, 52, 63, PC1 Stations

- La Muette-Boulainvilliers • Octave feuillet • Porte de La Muette

More information at: [https://www.oecd.org/site/conferencecentre/Get\\_to\\_OECD\\_Muette.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/site/conferencecentre/Get_to_OECD_Muette.pdf)

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## ■ Badge and security

Security arrangements are tight around the OECD complex. Participants will need to be registered for the meeting to obtain access to the conference centre (security badge). There is an initial security check outside the Conference Centre where participants must show a QR pass (sent out by email to registered participants and can be in either printed form or on a smart phone) to receive a visitor's badge. There is a second security check inside the OECD. Please bring an ID with you.

You need to plan around 30 minutes to go through the security measures at the entrance. For security reasons, you must wear your visitor's badge at all times.

## ■ About the project

The OECD initiated the project "Shrinking Smartly and Sustainably: Preparing Regions for Demographic Change", financed by the European Commission (DG REGIO), in February 2023. This project aims at producing a framework and associated guidelines to manage demographic change in regions experiencing strong and sustained population decline. It comprises two main pillars:

1. The **analytical pillar** uses internationally comparable data and complementary sources for selected countries to disentangle the drivers of demographic change and produce indicators relevant to regions facing population decline. It uses new and updated data on demographics, land-use, built environment, housing, infrastructure and fiscal data to analyse population shrinkage. The pillar will propose:
  - internationally comparable indicators relevant for shrinking regions:
    - on demographic scenarios and their consequences;
    - on land use, infrastructure, housing density/quality, and environment;
    - and on multi-level governance, public finances, and service delivery and infrastructure.
  - and a technical paper on demographic scenarios.
2. The **policy pillar** explores the relationship between depopulation, ageing, multi-level governance structures and finance, including for service delivery and infrastructure. Looking at policy options

available at the national and regional levels, mainly adaptation measures, but also mitigation, the policy pillar will propose:

- a **working paper** proposing a policy framework to address demographic change;
- a **compendium of good policy practices** to manage population decline;
- a set of **guidelines** for the multi-level governance of demographic change;
- three **peer-to-peer knowledge-exchange dialogues** – bringing together policy practitioners from a variety of OECD member states and providing a wealth of different experiences that will feed the project's deliverables – on:
  - adapting governance, finance, services and infrastructure smartly in shrinking regions (15 December 2023);
  - shrinking small cities (2024);
  - and spatial planning, land use, infrastructure, and housing (2024).

In addition, the project combines cross-country and case-study evidence, in particular through **three country case studies**:

- Shrinking small cities, in **Portugal**
- Land use planning, built-up growth, and housing, in **Korea**
- Multi-level governance and finance – with a focus on service delivery and infrastructure – in **Finland**.

A Consultation Group made up of experts and academics reflecting the various policy areas of the project is supporting the OECD throughout the project.

Finally, all the deliverables of this project will be summarised in a comprehensive synthesis report to be published at the end of the project.

## Contact

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