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Press release

Regions have a key role to play to tackle demographic change in rural and mountainous areas

On 21 April 2021, Euromontana organised an online conference on the **challenges and solutions to cope with ageing in rural Europe**. The conference was held as the public consultation on the Green Paper on Ageing was closing and the European Commission is about to publish its Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas.

Speaker at the event, Birgitta Sacrédeus, member of Dalarna Regional Council and member of the European Committee of the Regions, stressed that rural regions must invest in the Silver Economy sector. **“Many solutions are available”** she pointed out before adding **“but we need to bridge the digital divide and to deploy broadband and equipment’s in rural areas to enable rural older adults to benefit from these innovations”**.

Grégory Tempremant, member of the Hauts-de-France Regional Council in charge of the Silver Economy also stressed that **“regions have a competency on the regional economy, territory planning, and innovation and we know that the Silver Economy is a key source for innovation”**.

The event, co-organised with the Provincial Government of Teruel, in the framework of the Interreg Europe SILVER SMEs project, also looked at **solutions to deal with the ageing** of the population in rural and mountain areas which often offer few goods and services adapted to the needs of our elderly. Various **initiatives implemented in rural and mountainous regions** were therefore showcased, such as the Social Entrepreneurship Programme that accelerates new SMEs in region Aragon (Spain), Smarter Homes which provides businesses from the Silver Economy sector with a show flat to exhibit their products, in region Dalarna (Sweden) or the Age-friendly town programme which raises awareness on the needs of seniors in four rural towns of County Cork (Ireland).

Through the promotion of inspiring examples and discussions on possibilities offered by regional policies, the SILVER SMEs conference demonstrated that business creation and development of the **Silver Economy** is not only a prerequisite for local development, but also an essential factor for the **well-being** of older generations.

The event also demonstrated how useful is **interregional cooperation** and Euromontana hopes that SILVER SMEs’ results can inspire other rural and mountainous areas in designing economic strategies that can benefit their territories and populations.

For more information

The [SILVER SMEs](#) project aims to support regional policies in rural and mountainous areas by enlightening the potential for SMEs to develop new innovative products and services of benefit and joy for a senior population. By supporting the development of new SMEs in the Silver Economy, an intrinsic objective is to stimulate growth and competitiveness of rural areas and mountainous areas. This 5-years Interreg Europe project was launched in June 2018. The project leader is the Spanish province of Teruel, and the other 8 project partners come from Ireland, Slovenia, Portugal, Spain, France, Sweden and Poland.

SILVER SMEs' conference website "[Challenges and solutions to cope with ageing in rural Europe: the role of the Silver Economy](#)".

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Euromontana is the European multisectoral association for co-operation and development of mountain territories. It embraces regional and national mountain organisations throughout greater Europe, including regional development agencies, local authorities, agriculture organisations, environmental agencies, forestry organisations and research institutes. Euromontana's mission is to promote living mountains, integrated and sustainable development and quality of life in mountain areas.

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