



REGI Committee

Questions for the Hearing of the candidate Commissioner responsible for regional development

1. Support age-friendly environments through new investments and innovation at national, regional and local level

Background

For the period 2014-2020, the cohesion policy will make available up to EUR 351.8 billion to invest in Europe's regions, cities and the real economy. It will be the EU's principle investment tool for delivering the Europe 2020 goals: creating growth and jobs, tackling climate change and energy dependence, and reducing poverty and social exclusion.

The above priorities will be further reinforced in the framework of the new EU Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change, announced by President Juncker in the Policy Guidelines for the new Commission. Additional investment should be engaged at EU level and focus on *“infrastructure, notably broadband and energy networks as well as transport infrastructure in industrial centres; education, research and innovation; and renewable energy and energy efficiency.”* Many of the above priorities will be implemented at regional and local level and will directly impact on older people's lives and, therefore, the EU will have the unique opportunity to address more effectively population ageing and meet specific needs of a growing number of older persons.

AGE recommendations

Demographic change is a key challenge for most European regions. With more than 350 billion Euros, the reformed Cohesion policy for 2014-2020 is a powerful instrument to support local and regional authorities tackling current and future challenges, such as demographic change. Creating age-friendly environments, i.e. adapting everyday living environment to the needs of Europe's ageing population is the most promising solution to demographic change.

Age-friendly environments help create new jobs in innovative sectors and lower the pressure of old age dependency on the public purse by empowering people to work longer, age in better physical and mental health, remain active in their community as citizens and consumers, live independently at home and enjoy a good quality of life in their old age.

A large group of stakeholders supported by EU funding is currently framing a EU Covenant on Demographic Change to create a sustainable policy framework that will bring together



local and regional, national and EU authorities and stakeholders who want to develop and implement smart and innovative solutions to support active and healthy ageing and make age-friendly environments across the EU a reality.

Questions to candidate Commissioner

- Since demographic change is identified as a cross-cutting policy objective, but has gradually lost visibility in the reformed cohesion policy, what role do you see for the EU to support the establishment of a Covenant on Demographic Change, and will you make sure it is properly funded by the Operational Programmes?
- Will you include in your work programme an objective to support the adaptation of living and working environments to the needs of our ageing population, so the Structural Funds can be used to achieve an age-friendly EU? How do you plan to use the Structural Funds to face the challenge of the expected increasing demand for care services?
- How do you intend to monitor the use of Structural Funds for the transition from institutional to community-based services for older persons, persons with disabilities and children, ensuring the availability of quality services and the conformity with human rights principles to which the EU adheres?
- How will you that ensure regional funds are also used to promote energy efficiency in order to make poor people benefit from better insulation as a means to fight energy poverty?

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