



# Social Farming for the Elderly

## Module 1.1 The elderly in Europe



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ASSOCIAÇÃO DE DESENVOLVIMENTO  
RURAL INTEGRADO DAS SERRAS DO  
MONTEMURO, ARADA E GRALHEIRA



**BIOTEHNIŠKI  
CENTER NAKLO**



**Eberswalde University  
for Sustainable  
Development**



**ELO**  
European Landowners' Organization

**HOF UND  
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**mozaik**  
društvo za socialno vključenost



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# Module outline

## Overview

**This module will present you with a basic knowledge of the demographic changes occurring in Europe and how these will impact elderly people over the coming years.**

**As well as giving some examples of the challenges it will also give you an insight into how these issues could be addressed.**

## Learning Objectives

**After going through the slides you should understand the current demographic trends in Europe as they relate to elderly people; be aware of the main implications of the demographic change occurring in Europe; and understand that innovative solutions such as social farming will be needed to address some of the challenges arising from an ageing Europe.**



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A group of eight people, including a young woman, a man in a cap, and several older adults, are standing in a grassy field. In the background, there is a wooden fence, some trees, and a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent green banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title.

# 1 The demographic challenge for Europe



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**Demographic forecasts bring new challenges for regions especially in rural and mountainous areas.**

**EU Commission**





# Increasing proportion of older people



**Most European countries are facing a situation in which the proportion of the population that is retired or elderly is increasing significantly compared to the younger and working-age population.**

**According to Eurostat, projections show the proportion of older people (over 65) could reach almost 30% of the total population in the European Union by 2050, compared to 19% in 2018.**





# Trend in rural areas

This demographic trend is even more pronounced in rural areas, where ageing populations are combined with high rates of rural depopulation.

These trends result from a vicious circle of inter-related social and economic factors involving the out-migration of younger people to urban centres.

In predominantly rural areas, there are now fewer than two people of working age for every elderly person.

(Augère-Granier & McEldowney, 2020).







## 2 Some examples



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Credit: Raw pixel



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**Every problem has in it the seeds of its own solution. If you don't have any problems, you don't get any seeds.**

**Norman Vincent Peale**



# Portugal and Ireland



Credit: Getty Images

**In Portugal, it is predicted that between 2018 and 2080, the proportion of elderly people will rise to 32% of the total population.**

**In Ireland, there are currently 4 workers for every pensioner. By 2050, however, it is expected that the ratio will decrease to 2 workers.**





# Slovenia and Germany

**In Slovenia, 21% of the population were elderly people in 2021 and 44% of the elderly work in the agricultural sector.**

**A look at the demographic change in Germany shows that the proportion of the elderly is growing. The elderly population is already about twice as big as the population of people under 30.**

**Also, the population aged between 65 - 69 years old has doubled in the last decade.**



© Associação dos Amigos da Pontemieiro



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### 3 What does the challenge mean?



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**It's not how old you are.  
It's how you are old.**

**Jules Renard**



# Challenges for policy makers

Europe's ageing population raises many challenges for policy makers particularly in relation to employment, working conditions, living standards and welfare.

## Less young people

This will mean changes in the workforce.

These changes will be felt acutely in rural areas where an ageing and declining population is leading to fewer services such as shops, medical facilities and transport.

## More old people

This means there will have to be changes in elderly health care and pensions.

Some European countries are already raising the age of eligibility for the state pension.





# Needs, demands and opportunities



Photo by Vlad Sargu on Unsplash

**An ageing population means there will be an increased need for meaningful activities for retired and semi-retired people.**

**An ageing population means more demand for care facilities and carers. Figures from Germany show that between 75 and 79 years of age, every 10<sup>th</sup> person is in need of care. Between 80 and 85 years of age the number in need of care increase to every 5<sup>th</sup> person.**

**Structural changes in the workforce will also mean greater opportunities for elderly people to contribute to the workforce should they wish to do so.**





## 4 Addressing the challenge



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**Whenever there is a challenge  
there is also an opportunity to  
face it.**

**Dalai Lama**



# Much to do for the European Union

Aware of the problem of demographic decline the European Union is currently working intensively to address it.

Issues such as health and long-term care, age discrimination, pensions, employment and retirement policies relating to active ageing, gender equality and solidarity between the generations. All are being examined.

The problem will need to be addressed at the individual, local, national and European levels.



Credit: Sol Stock







Photo: Stiftung Pusch

# Creative solutions needed

**For such a multi-strand approach to be successful creative solutions will need to be developed and partnerships created between the public and private spheres.**

**Social farming professionals, be they farmers, support workers, or advocates can have a significant impact on addressing some of these issues.**

**The following modules will explore these matters in more detail.**





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**Getting old is like climbing a mountain. You get a little out of breath, but the view is much better.**

**Ingrid Bergman**





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