



## The interview

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**Bearing in mind the importance of managing the demographical shrinking, which aspects do you consider the most important for building up an adequate socio territorial planning?**

It's important that policy makers become aware of the relevance of demographic change (ageing and population decline). That being said it is important not to fight demographic change and hope to attract newcomers to the area. This approach has failed many times in the Netherlands. It would be better to focus on the remaining population and look into the ways to maintain quality of life for these citizens.

Looking into the possibilities of civil society (in other words active citizenship) is important but we must be aware that this "social capital" cannot replace (all) public services.

Innovative ways of tackling quality of life in these areas should be facilitated by policy makers and not held back (for example through too rigid laws made in and for the situation of growth).

Population decline is about the story behind the numbers: citizens should be involved in the discussions and plans how to tackle demographic change in order to avoid offering solutions for problem that was not really there. Research tells us that services are not synonym for quality of life: people can experience high quality of life regardless of the level of services provided. However, there are some basic things that need to be in place (e.g. mobility) that can enable access to the services in the region of daily life. Not every little hamlet needs to have all services as long as they are accessible.

Galicia is a good example of awareness and regional approach towards tackling this issues. You should be happy with what you've achieved with Symbios project: this can be used as an example to other European regions faced with same issues.

**Which are the key issues that should be worked on in future Symbios developments, not only as a project, but further on?**

Key issues for Symbios network would in my opinion be maintaining the discussion on demographic change: within Galicia but also across Europe (in cooperation with other regions). It is important to develop and exchange knowledge on this issues and Symbios, as project, network or something else, could be an ideal platform for this.