

# Ageing in rural Europe: opportunities for local economies

SILVER SMEs  
final event

SILVER SMEs  
Interreg Europe

European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



DAY  
**21**

MONTH  
**02**

YEAR  
**23**

Brussels, Belgium

**21 February 2023 | 14:00-18:00**  
**Residence Palace - International Press Centre**  
**Rue de la Loi 155, 1040 Brussels, Belgium**

**By 2070, 30% of Europe's population will be aged 65 and over**, which is 10% more than today. Rural and mountainous areas are particularly affected by this demographic change but often lack the goods, services and infrastructure that meet the needs of the older population. **Rural Europe must create living environments that meet the needs of older people.** In these territories, **the Silver Economy can help** to improve the quality of life of older adults, while at the same time creating economic opportunities for businesses.

For 5 years, **SILVER SMEs** partners worked to build regional policies that promote the development and **competitiveness of Silver Economy SMEs in rural territories.** From training and communication with entrepreneurs to the creation of calls dedicated to SMEs and the integration of the Silver Economy as a territorial development axis, partners of the SILVER SMEs project managed to find **solutions adapted to each of their territories** in order to develop the Silver Economy, for the benefit of the older rural population.

SILVER SMEs final conference will be an opportunity to **explore the challenges of ageing** in rural and mountainous areas and to discover how partners have successfully boosted the development of the Silver Economy in response to these challenges. The event will provide **inspiration** to territories facing similar challenges and will showcase **concrete actions** to be replicated in other regions.

*Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish.*

## 14.00 - 14.30 OPENING

Opening remarks

*Manuel Rando López, President of the Provincial Government of Teruel, Lead Partner of SILVER SMEs*

Interreg Europe state of play and future opportunities

*Erwin Siweris, Programme Director, Interreg Europe*

Introduction of the SILVER SMEs project

*Blandine Camus, Communication & Policy Officer, Euromontana*

## 14:30 - 15:20 SESSION 1: THE CHALLENGES OF AGEING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S RURAL AREAS

*The latest reports on European demography demonstrate that the entire Europe is ageing. The European Union institutions report on this trend in rural areas and attempt to propose solutions for the quality of life of older generations.*

How do recent EU policies take into account the needs of older adults in rural areas?

*Toma Šutić, member of cabinet for ageing policies, cabinet of European Commission's Vice-President Dubravka Šuica, Commissioner for Democracy and Demography*

Digitalisation opportunities for Silver Economy SMEs operating in Europe

*Birgit Morlion, Programme and Policy officer within the "eHealth, Well-being, and Ageing" Unit at DG CONNECT, European Commission*

EU regions' contribution to the quality of life of older adults in rural areas

*Birgitta Sacrédeus, member of Dalarna Regional Council and member of the European Committee of the Regions*

Best practice video | Social entrepreneurship programme of region Aragon

## 15:20 - 16:00 SESSION 2: HOW TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS AND ENCOURAGE RURAL SMES TO EMBRACE THE SILVER ECONOMY?

*The Silver Economy sector and the diversity of its business applications are often too unknown by rural entrepreneurs. SILVER SMEs raises awareness among SMEs of the many business opportunities related to the Silver Economy in rural areas and implements support schemes for companies developing new goods or services.*

The communication campaign "Teruel: a silver friendly territory" raises awareness on the Silver Economy

*Laura Gascon Herrero, European Project Manager, Provincial Government of Teruel, Spain*

Training for social enterprises and the care sector contribute to building rural businesses' capacities

*Dorota Bazuń, PhD at the Sociology Institute of the University of Zielona Góra, Poland*

Integration of the Silver Economy in the tourism offer through training of SMEs

*Paulo Costa-Pinto, Senior Technician on Strategic Planning Unit, Comunidade Intermunicipal do Ave, Portugal*

Questions & answers

16:00-16:30 Coffee break

**16:30-17:05 SESSION 3: HOW TO SET UP A FINANCIAL SUPPORT DEDICATED TO SMES IN THE SILVER ECONOMY?**

*Developing new goods or services can be costly for businesses. To support their investments, SILVER SMEs' partners created dedicated financial support mechanisms.*

Specific calls for rural entrepreneurs boost the rural Silver Economy in the Province of Burgos

*Beatriz García Val, Institutional Cooperation Officer at SODEBUR, the Society for the development of the province of Burgos, Spain*

Silver Surfer calls accelerate Silver Economy businesses outside the care sector

*Sohail Nourestani, e-health business consultant, Eurasanté, France*

Questions & answers

Best practice video | Smarter Homes, region Dalarna

**17:05-17:45 SESSION 4: HOW TO ENSURE LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR THE SILVER ECONOMY IN RURAL AREAS?**

*The ageing trends in rural areas call for a continuous support to the Silver Economy. SILVER SMEs strives to engage with policy makers in order to sustain this support beyond the project's timeframe.*

The Dalarna Strategy 2030 connects with the Silver Economy

*Nils-Åke Norman, Project Manager, Region Dalarna, Sweden*

The Strategy for the elderly of Municipality of Tolmin addresses the challenge at local level

*Vesna Kozar, Project Manager at Soca Valley Development Centre, Slovenia*

The Silver Economy as an action in the Irish South-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

*Dr. Aisling ConwayLenihan, Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence, Munster Technological University, Ireland*

Questions & answers

Video | Benefits of interregional cooperation

**17:50 - 18:00 CONCLUSION AND CLOSING REMARKS**

Closing remarks

*Blandine Camus, Communication & Policy Officer, Euromontana*