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ESPON Seminar

Small and medium-sized cities in Europe

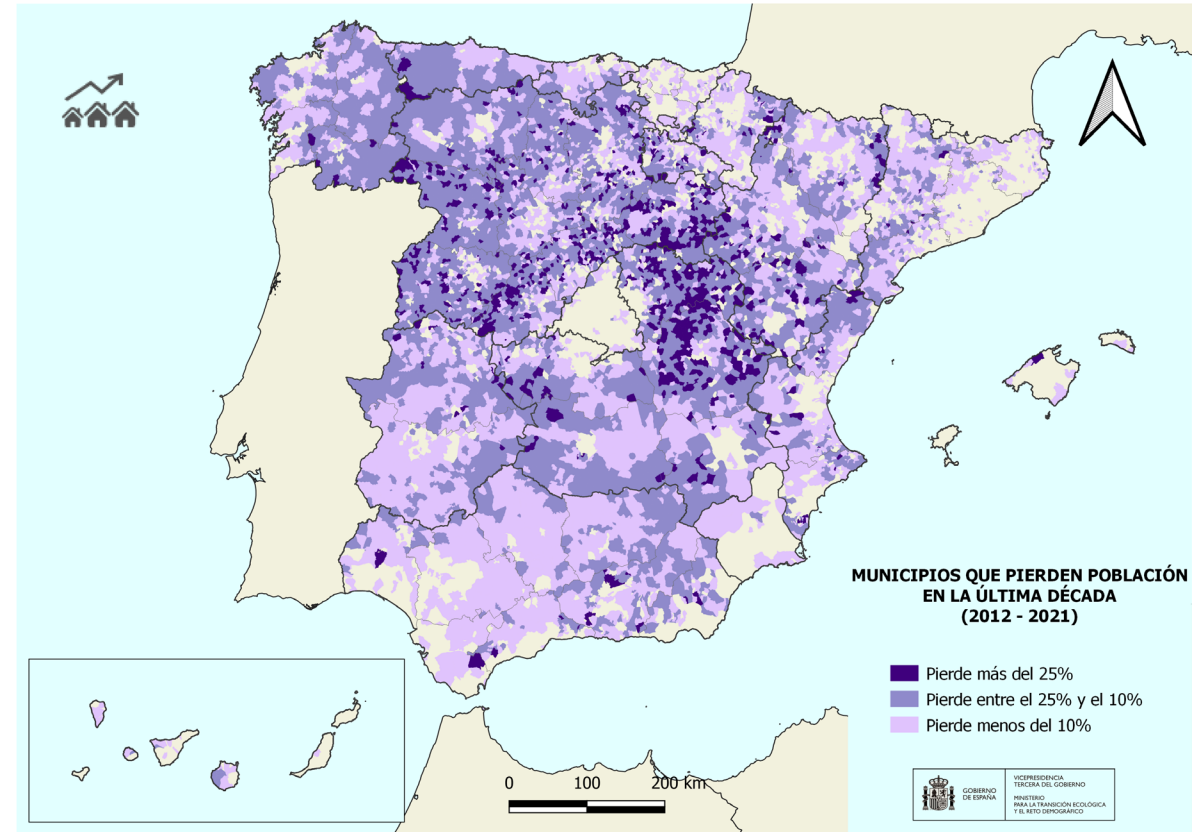
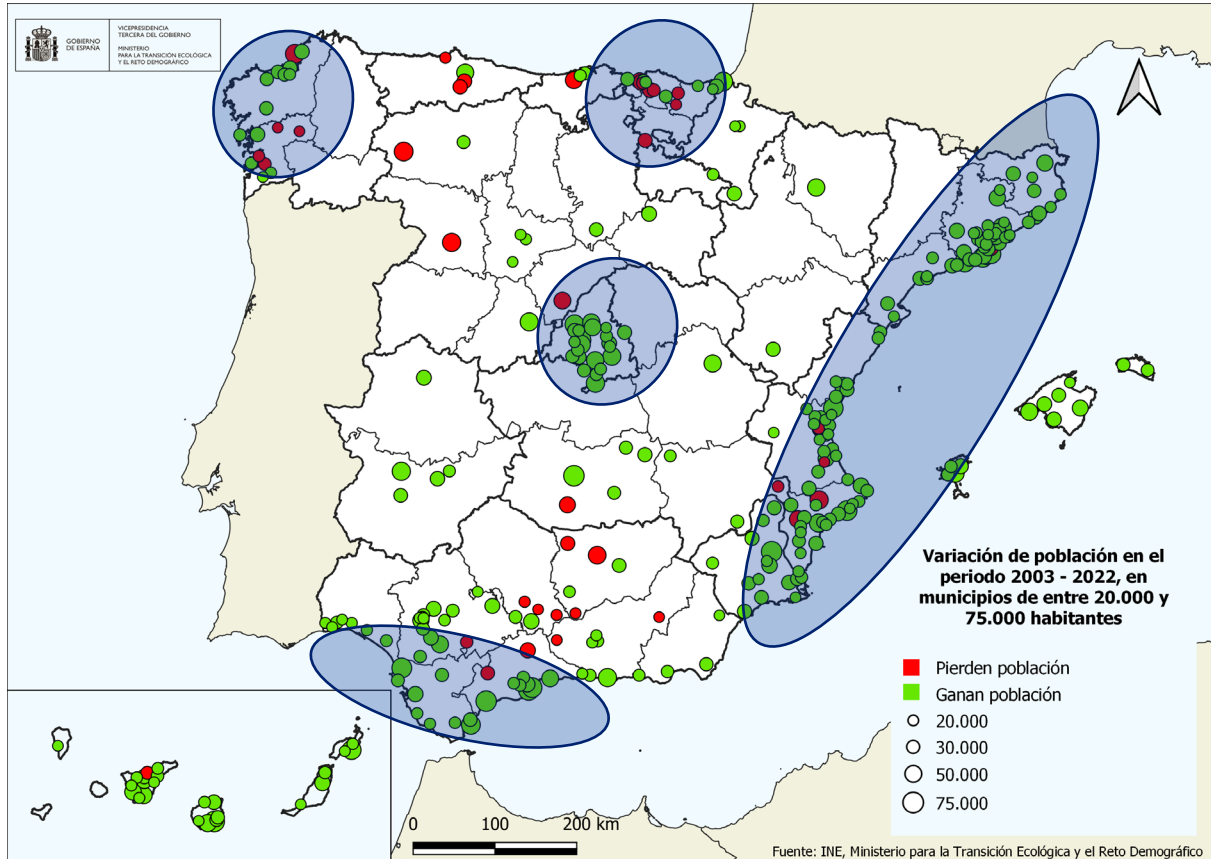
15-16 November 2023 in Cuenca, Spain

*Policies to tackle depopulation in
the context of Spanish Small and
Medium-Sized Towns and Cities
(SMSTCs)*

Alba Villamor Anguiano

Overview of Small and Medium Sized Towns and Cities (SMSTC) in Spain

- ✓ 316 municipalities with a population between 20 000 and 75 000 inhabitants, hosting 23% of the population



- ✓ 3 location typologies: linked to large cities, coastal areas and inland cities. Positive trend (1.47 accumulative increase in the last 20 years)

130 Measures Plan to Combat the Demographic Challenge

- ✓ Promoted by the General Secretariat for Demographic Challenge and aligned with the 2030 National Strategy for Demographic Challenge
- ✓ For the period 2021-2023
- ✓ Over 13,000 million EUR, with more than 90% of expenditure mobilised



Axis 1. Promotion of the Ecological Transition

Axis 2. Digital Transition and Full Territorial Connectivity

Axis 3. Development and Innovation in the Territory

Axis 4. Promotion of Sustainable Tourism

Axis 5. Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Youth

Axis 6. Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Business Activity

Axis 7. Strengthening Public Services and Promoting Decentralization

Axis 8. Social Welfare and Care Economy

Axis 9. Promotion of culture

Axis 10. Policy and Institutional Reforms to Address the Demographic Challenge

- ✓ Specific measures for **modernisation and digitalisation** of the industrial fabric and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and the **promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship**, especially among women and young people.

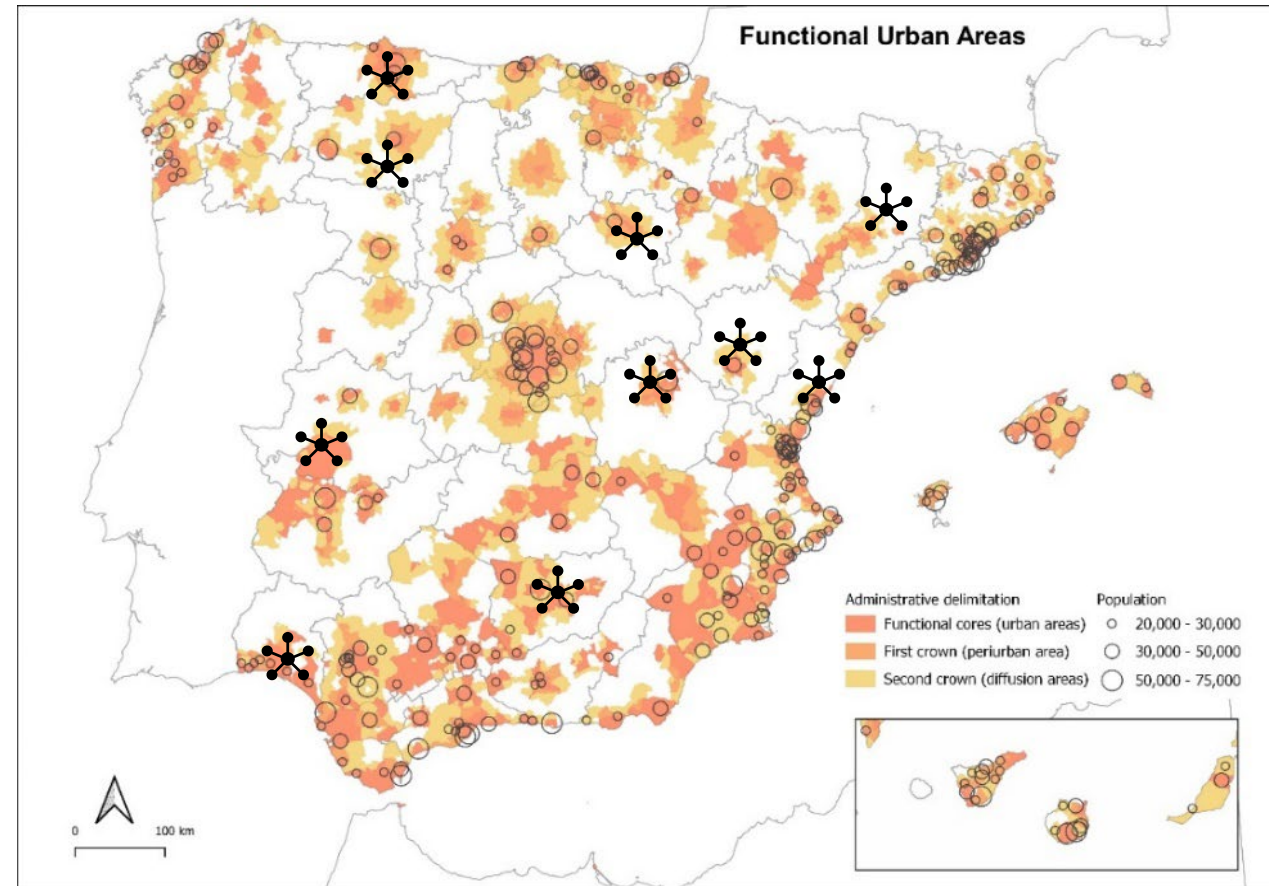
Digitalization and the 130 Measures Plan to Combat the Demographic Challenge

- ✓ New technological developments associated with innovation and digitalisation can provide an opportunity to improve living conditions and reduce the different gaps and situations of inequality and vulnerability of rural residents
- ✓ SMSTCs have similar digital infrastructure to larger cities
- ✓ UNICO Program for digital infrastructure: national target to cover all the territory by 2025
- ✓ National Digital Skills Plan: 80% of the population to have basic digital skills to perform everyday tasks by 2025.
 - ✓ Digital skills programme and demographic challenge . Reinforce **capacity building for a digital era: the General Secretariat for Demographic Challenge will train 384,868 people by 2025**
- ✓ Specific sectoral digitalisation programs for agriculture and livestock farming, tourism industry, mobility, education, among others

FINAL TARGET: to improve the living conditions, services and rights of citizens living in rural areas, reduce digital gaps between the rural and urban world and generate opportunities for job and wealth creation

Centres for Territorial Innovation

- ✓ Promoted by the **General Secretariat for Demographic Challenge**
- ✓ Need to **rethink the economic model to face territorial vulnerabilities**
- ✓ Example of **multilevel coordination** to guarantee regional employment, polycentric dynamics and economic development
- ✓ Settle the **necessary conditions** at regional level to enable for innovation, capacity building, economic resilience & prosperity
- ✓ Creation of **networks**
- ✓ Reinforce **capacity building to attract local investment and competitiveness**



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