



Intervention

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The Government of Castilla-La Mancha is firmly convinced that the future of the European Union depends on ensuring a future for our rural areas.

If all territories do not grow together and develop in parallel, we will be creating a two-speed Europe, which would therefore be an unequal Europe.



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That is why today we are here today, to reaffirm our commitment to this long-term vision for these rural areas, which are so important for our Region, and to which we have been devoting our efforts for many years.

As you may know, Castilla-La Mancha was a pioneer in adopting, in 2021, a Law on Economic, Social and Fiscal Measures against Depopulation, which guarantees the protection of public services in rural areas (healthcare, education, and social services).



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This Law also establishes zoning by counties to better identify territorial needs, and introduces a differentiated tax policy that benefitted 90 000 taxpayers through depopulation-related tax deductions in the 2023 income tax period (the most recent for which official data is available).

The ultimate goal of these measures is to make our villages attractive places to live in.



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But we also need them to be attractive places to invest in, which is why we apply positive incentives and specific support measures for companies and entrepreneurs who choose to settle in these areas.

The data from this evaluation are encouraging: the cumulative migration balance between 2021-2024 in the depopulated areas stands at 15,423 people. Out of every 100 people who move to our region, 23 choose sparsely populated areas.



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Behind these figures lies a strong commitment to territorial equality, which is also reflected in the Castilla-La Mancha Budget. In the 2026 Budget, 2.116 billion euros will be allocated to the fight against depopulation. That is 1 out of every 4 euros.

Our firm commitment is also shown through maintaining continuous medical care within 30 minutes, promoting rural schools with fewer than four pupils, and working to ensure residential care for our elderly within a 40-kilometre radius of their homes.



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All these initiatives are being developed within the framework of our Regional Strategy against Depopulation, a long-term plan running until 2031, which is now undergoing its mid-term evaluation in 2025.

We will continue along this path. We are developing Urban and Rural Development Agendas to take a closer look at these counties, identify their strengths and needs, and implement tailored measures for these areas.



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We are fully aware that significant challenges remain, such as internal mobility in each county and housing. Inter-town connectivity and territorial mobility have been designated as essential services, and a demand-sensitive transport model has been developed to address them.

As for housing policies, we call for flexible programmes from the European Union and national governments that can adapt to the specific realities of each territory.



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Thank you!

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