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Answer given by Ms Crețu
on behalf of the European Commission
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The phenomenon of depopulation is affecting regions in almost all Member States, and in particular in Eastern and Southern Europe. Depopulation has mainly occurred in predominantly rural and intermediate regions.

The Union will continue to provide support under cohesion policy, with a particular focus on less developed regions in the 2021-2027 period. It can also support regions to adapt to demographic trends, including depopulation and its economic, social and environmental consequences, including reorganisation of public infrastructure and services. Member States are invited to tackle demographic challenges in their strategic frameworks under the social inclusion, business development, education and employment objectives. According to the Commission proposals for the programming period 2021-2027, various EU funds can contribute to alleviating challenges, including the European Social Fund+, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Agricultural and Rural Development Fund. Effective coordination of EU funds measures is crucial.

A specific call under the Urban Innovative Actions initiative was launched in 2019 to test innovative solutions addressing negative demographic trends, in particular in small and medium-sized urban areas. The Common Agricultural Policy also put a special emphasis to strengthen the socio-economic fabric of rural areas, and can support the attractiveness of rural areas and diversification of rural economies.