

Background information on the topic structural change in rural areas:

While Europe's 500 million population is mainly concentrated in larger settlements, 80% of its territory is rural in character with municipalities under 20.000 inhabitants – these have traditionally acted as community hubs - a focal point for economic activity, social cohesion and a specific cultural identity. These towns, villages and municipalities, however, have come under serious threat: demographic change, migration as well as economic and financial problems are pressuring the rural regions. Cultural Heritage is also affected significantly by this development.

“The demographic change increases the rural migration. The general decrease in population, which will most likely sum up to 12 million people, will mainly concern rural regions. But not only Germany is affected by this tendency. All nations with stagnating or even declining population figures - from Portugal to Central and East Europe to Japan- are experiencing the same decline of a broad range of rural areas. Many German villages therewith give us a taste of what may be everyday live for a lot of regions all over the world in the future. They are becoming the test areas of the demographic post growth society. And that is exactly where opportunity arises - also for the Country.” so said the study „The future of Germany's villages – between stability and demographic decline“, Berlin Institute for population and development and the Schloss Ettersburg foundation.

Concerning this some data from Rhineland-Palatinate:

According to the third future population calculation of the State office for Statistics “Rhineland-Palatinate 2060“ the population figure is going to decrease about 5,8% by 2030. By this calculation, on long-term, the population figure is going down about 20 %. This number is comparable with the population figures in 1952. Also in the future, the population development will strongly differ from region to region. On medium- and long-term the number of inhabitants will decrease stronger in the districts than in independent cities. On medium-term there will only be five areas with a growth in population: Trier, Trier-Saarburg, Landau, Mainz and Mainz-Bingen. In all other areas the population figure will go down on medium-term.

On long-term all independent towns and districts are going to experience a, for the most part, heavy population decline. The range of the population decline in independent town up to 2060 will reach -7,1 percent in Trier and up to -39 percent in Pirmasens and in the districts from -5,2 percent in Trier-Saarburg to -36 percent in the district South-west Palatinate.

The monument list in Rhineland-Palatinate keeps records of approximately 45.000 monuments. Around 30.000 Monuments are in private ownership 90 percent are occupied monuments. Add to this the archaeological monuments and the important cultural landscapes that give Rhineland-Palatinate its characteristic appearance.

The Focus of HISTCAPE lies on the level of the municipality its towns and villages and the smaller municipalities (municipalities with a population up to 20.000). These regional

authorities have about 25.000 listed monuments. The exact numbers maybe even higher, for there are some cultural assets that are recorded as 'monument groups'.

HISTCAPE is trying to make people aware, that even in times of a drastic structural change cultural monuments and landscapes open up opportunities and are of great value.