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Answer given by Ms Šuica
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission recognises the challenge of population decline and encourages Member States to develop integrated policies to manage demographic change.

The Commission's Demographic Toolbox provides a set of tools that can support Member States and regions in these efforts. As part of the Demographic Toolbox, the Talent Booster Mechanism is targeted towards EU regions that are experiencing a decline in their working-age population and that are affected by the departure of young people. The EU Long-term Vision for Rural Areas also includes strategies to address demographic decline.

Cohesion Policy is committed to reducing disparities between regions in different Member States, including Greece, ensuring *inter alia* that people can effectively stay in the place they call home. Some EUR 639 million has been allocated to the regional programme for Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, aimed among others at fostering entrepreneurship, strengthening education and social care infrastructure, and promoting the region's natural and cultural heritage to boost the region's attractiveness. These investments will create jobs and upgrade public infrastructure, improving quality of life of residents.

Additionally, the region benefits from a programme under the European Social Fund Plus aimed at boosting employment. It improves job access and activation measures for all jobseekers, focusing on youth, the long-term unemployed, disadvantaged groups in the labour market, and inactive people. The program also promotes self-employment and the social economy with a budget of EUR 12.75 million. Current actions include supporting enterprises in hiring highly qualified unemployed individuals and helping unemployed people start businesses.