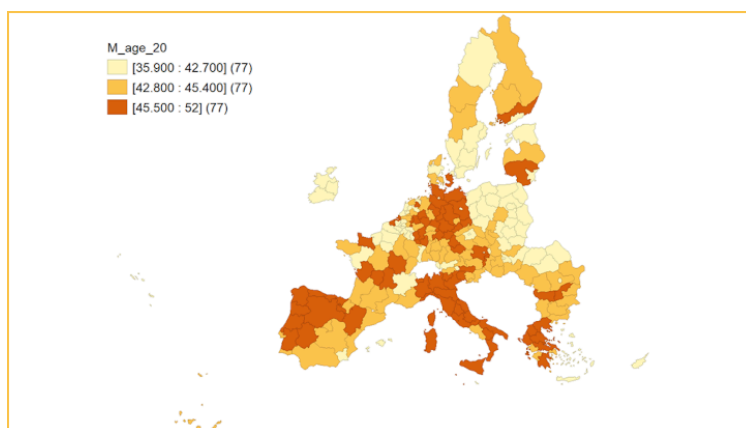


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## Ageing and immigration in Europe: a territorial issue



The European Union presents a clear territorial pattern, with areas where population ageing is more evident. A new study analyses the economic consequences considering the spatial dimension and shows that migration has a compensatory effect. Ageing and immigration, in combination, are positive factors for economic growth.

Median age in the European Union (2020) - Eurostat

In several industrialized countries, population ageing is the combination of low-fertility rates and a sizable increase in life expectancy. The direct consequence of the shrinkage of the working-age population is the reduction of the productive capacity of an economy and, hence, of its potential growth perspectives. In the European Union (EU), these issues are even more relevant for the long-term growth perspective at the sub-national (regional) level. It is worth noting that the ageing process in the EU presents a clear territorial pattern: there are areas (regions) where the ageing process is more evident than in others.

The spatial concentration of elderly people leads to an increase in the demand for specific services (mainly health or home care services) to be provided in these places. The shortage of working-age natives in these areas to provide the requested services can be compensated by the incoming flow of international immigrants. The entrance of immigrants in these local labour markets -filling those positions- can be an effective tool to fuel economic growth and, hence, offsetting the economic effect of the exit of retired persons from the labour market.

Under these circumstances, the ageing process does not appear to harm the economic growth perspectives in regions with high concentrations of elder people.

Our study explores to what extent ageing may not become a negative factor for economic growth in the EU regions. On the one hand, we offer an original empirical analysis to assess whether the territorial patterns of ageing can affect the growth process in the EU regions. On the other hand, we provide an original quantitative approximation of the impact of immigration as a tool to boost economic growth in ageing regions.

Our results refer to all EU regions for the period 2000-2020 and suggest that ageing and immigration turn out to be positive and statistically significant factors for growth only if we take into account the spatial dimension of the ageing process.

Thus, the possible synergy between migration and ageing is limited to each geographical area (region) without having any spillover effect on the economic growth of the other closer areas. In this sense, our study provides novel quantitative evidence that can contribute to policy planning (in particular, territorial policies given the relevance of the spatial dimension) to tackle the potential negative impact of ageing on local growth perspectives and social cohesion.

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## References

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