

About SSPA Network



The network SSPA (**Southern Sparsely Populated Areas**) is a European interest group registered in the EU Transparency Registry. It was founded to fight against depopulation and its negative consequences. It came into being when CEOE Teruel, FOES and CEOE-CEPYME Cuenca decided to join forces. From its inception, the network has sought to reach out to all the territories, organizations and entities- both public and private- that share their vision and mission, incorporating all actors that may help them reach their objectives. Thus, it was at the beginning of 2017 that two new organizations from other sparsely populated regions in Europe joined the network: the Lika-Senj county (Croatia) and the Evrytania region (Greece). SSPA encompasses the 5 sparsely populated provinces found in Southern Europe (**Cuenca, Evrytania, Lika-Senj, Soria and Teruel**), recognised as such by the European Union since their **population density is lower than 12.5 inhabitants/km²**. At the end of 2017 the 16 Local Action Groups (LAG) of the provinces of Cuenca, Soria and Teruel were incorporated into the network.

SSPA seeks fundamentally **to turn sparsely populated territories into attractive areas to live, invest, work and grow**, ensuring their future. To that aim, SSPA is to:

1. **Propose and support specific proposals and policies** that can be applicable to the reality of our surroundings while helping substantially to revert the social, economic and demographic crisis that the sparsely populated territories in Europe are experiencing.
2. **Promote and coordinate efforts of the different socioeconomic actors** so as to achieve the creation of a regulatory framework at the European level supporting the development of new specific coordinated, cross-sectional and proactive actions, strategies and policies aimed at fighting depopulation while achieving the socioeconomic revitalization of the hardest-hit rural areas.
3. **Raise awareness and disseminate among society as a whole the socio-economic opportunities** for SSPA territories as well as the policies and strategies best suited to reverse the processes of depopulation, aging and loss of economic activity these territories are currently undergoing.

SSPA Milestones



2013-2016

18 SEPTEMBER 13

First meeting of CEOE-CEPYME Cuenca, FOES and CEOE Teruel

3 JULY 14

Spanish Congress of Deputies recognize Cuenca, Soria and Teruel as sparsely populated areas

26 MAY 15

Meeting in Brussels of the three organizations with the cabinet of the Regional Policy Commissioner

18 APRIL 16

Agreement between the three organizations with the Rural Savings Banks of the three provinces

8 NOVEMBER 16

Constitution of the SSPA Network by the three organizations

2017

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 17

Accession of the Evrytania region (Greece) and the Lika-Senj county (Croatia) to the SSPA network

MAY 17

Study visits of good practices in Scotland and in the NSPA territories

SEPTEMBER 17

Presentation of the Report *“Successfully combating rural depopulation through a new model of rural development”*

NOVEMBER 17

Adhesion of the local action groups of the three provinces

2018

JANUARY 2018

Territorial visit of the Special Commission of the Spanish Senate on demographic evolution to the three Spanish provinces

MARCH 2018

Meetings at the European Commission with the position paper regarding the new post-2020 programming period

MAY 2018

Presentation of the document with the proposals on depopulation for the Government of Spain.