



TALENT4S3

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Retention and attraction of TALENT for a better deployment of Smart Specialisation Strategies

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Tionól Réigiúnach
an Deiscirt
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Talent retention and attraction critical to regional prosperity

Southern Region joins forces with seven regions across Europe to explore how talent retention can sustain balanced regional development

The regions that perform best across Europe are those that take the time to identify and then invest in those unique strengths and opportunities that set them apart and help them to compete in global markets. This is reflected in Ireland's National Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) 2022-2027 which is focussed on place-based, sustainable, innovation-led growth in our regional enterprises, and has guided investment in the Southern Region under the ERDF Regional Programme.

One of the critical enablers of smart specialisation strategies is the availability of a skilled and innovative workforce within a region and this requires a coherent policy approach at national, regional and local levels. The Southern Regional Assembly based in Waterford, together with European partners, has recently commenced a new European interregional project **"TALENT4S3- Retention and attraction of talent for a better deployment of Smart Specialisation Strategies"** to share best practices between regions. This extensive collaboration includes partners from Spain, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Lithuania, and the Netherlands.

At the recent kick-off meeting the project leader FUNDECYT- Science and Technology Park of Extremadura, from Spain, emphasised that the European Union, and consequently individual countries and regions such as the Southern Region in Ireland are facing significant social, economic, and environmental challenges. The EU's population is aging, and young and skilled labour are emigrating. In just five years since 2020, the number of working-age individuals in the EU decreased by 3.5 million, and by 2050, it is projected to decrease by an additional 35 million. Without immediate action, demographic changes will hinder the resilience and competitiveness of the EU, and disparities between regions will deepen.

"We are thrilled to be a part of the TALENT4S3 project" expressed David Kelly, Director of the Southern Regional Assembly. "This initiative not only addresses the pressing challenges of demographic shifts and regional disparities but also opens up new avenues for sustainable growth and innovation in our region. By collaborating with our European partners, we will

work towards ensuring that the Southern Region continues to attract and retain the skilled individuals necessary for our future success."

The Interreg Europe programme has identified the TALENT4S3 project as a crucial initiative to combat challenges posed by demographic changes, which are diminishing the competitiveness of European regions. Interreg Europe provides local and regional authorities with the opportunity to examine and benchmark various strategies and policies that have been developed across different regions. A primary objective for the next four years of the project at the Southern Regional Assembly is to adapt best practices to enhance the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and further develop the region in its ambition to become a Learning Region.

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