Demographic change will have a major impact on many cities and regions over the coming decades. While it is often believed that population decline is limited to rural areas, in reality roughly one in five cities in the world have already experienced population decline in past years, and an even greater number will be facing it in coming decades. After several years during which many policymakers remained in a state of denial about the problem, the need for action is increasingly being recognised. But the knowledge base both on the academic and policy side on how to best manage situations of shrinking populations remains patchy.

The semi-plenary will bring together views from academics and policy makers who are on the forefront of thinking about managing demographic change. The discussion will point both to what policymakers need to do going forward, as well as to areas where further research would be important to ensure that cities and regions that will shrink can do so smartly.