

## Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations"

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Do you consent to the publication of your personal data/data relating to your organisation with the publication of your replies to the consultation?	Yes
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Are you replying as an individual or an organisation?	Organisation
On behalf of which of the following are you replying?	Individual company
Please specify the name of your organisation or institution	Expertise in Labour Mobility
Country where your organisation is based	NL - Netherlands
Do you take the view that the discussion of demographic trends and managing their impact should take place at European level? If so, what should be the objectives, and which policy areas are concerned?	Yes, this should be tackled at a European Level, involving all stakeholders, but particularly 'the' labour market, consisting of both academic institutions (which train our future employees) as well as employers (which hire this employees). We need to ensure that everyone is involved actively in the employment market. For economic reasons we can no longer afford to leave either women, migrants or older workers at a side track of our active labour force.
Over many years, the Union has been making considerable efforts to achieve equality between men and women and has coordinated national social protection policies. How can a better work/life balance help to tackle the problems associated with demographic ageing? How can a more balanced distribution of household and family tasks between men and women be encouraged? Should the award of certain benefits or advantages (leave, etc.) be linked to an equal distribution of tasks between the sexes? How best to ensure an adequate income for both parents on parental leave? How can the availability of child care structures (crèches, nursery schools, etc.) and elderly care structures be improved by the public and private sectors? Can a reduced rate of VAT contribute to the development of care services? How can parents, in particular young parents, be encouraged to enter the labour market, have the career that they want and the number of children they want?	A better work/life balance is essential to fight the demographic challenges ahead of us. Companies need to ensure that individual managers are rewarded for creating diversity among their staff. Hiring women for senior positions should be perceived as creating a better functioning team. Differences between men and women should not be disregarded, but should be seen as creating a balance in the functioning of teams. To encourage men to take over household tasks the entire society needs to go through a change and allow careers to be less steep. Currently the career curve forces people to work long hours, with little flexibility in time and place of where and when the work is being done. However many tasks can take place at different times and different places allowing both partners an increased flexibility to also be involved in raising their children. (meetings do not have to start at 5pm, they could also end at 4.30 pm!) However, we need to remain realistic and acknowledge the fact that (senior) careers require time, involvement and the willingness to 'go for it'. Working 3 days a week and in school hours only, from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, will hinder for most people to have a serious career. Therefore, the education system needs to allow for children to go to school and afterwards attend their hobby and sports classes in a relaxed atmosphere, while being taken care of, leaving their parents some time to work. Such daycare facilities should bring some flexibility to those that want or need it.

<p>The Thessaloniki European Council in June 2003 declared that an EU integration policy for immigrants should help to meet the new demographic and economic challenges currently facing the EU. This is the debate initiated by the Green Paper adopted last January.</p> <p>To what extent can immigration mitigate certain negative effects of demographic ageing?  What policies should be developed for better integrating these migrants, in particular young people?  How could Community instruments, in particular the legislative framework to combat discrimination, the structural funds and the Employment Strategy, contribute?</p>	<p>The current situation by which we have said as 'old' Member States to those 10 Member States that have recently joined: "Sorry but we will impose legislation not allowing you to enter our labour markets" has been the greatest blunder of the last decade! Looking at the demographic changes we will need all labour we can possibly integrate. I'm not blind to the direct consequences this might have on certain areas of the labour markets in certain countries, we will need to accommodate for this too. But we should have thought more in advance about the consequences for the future by not allowing them freedom of movement from the start. The signal we sent was a mistake!</p>
<p>European objectives have been laid down for the prevention of long-term youth unemployment, combating early school leaving and raising the level of initial training. The structural funds help to attain them at grass roots level. How can initial training and adult training schemes be improved? What can non-formal education and voluntary activities contribute? How can the structural funds and the instruments for achieving better access to the knowledge society contribute? How can the bridges between school and working life and the quality of young people's employment be improved? What role should social dialogue play? What can dialogue with civil society, in particular youth organisations, contribute</p>	<p>Allowing young people to see the practical relevance of their training can combat school drop outs. Internships, practical projects in organisations, summer jobs, etc can all help to ensure young people understand the importance of learning and see the fun in what it can bring. Employers should understand that these young people can help fill certain gaps and do small-scale projects that would otherwise never have been carried out.</p>
<p>How can Community policies contribute more to combating child poverty and poverty among single-parent families and to reducing the risk of poverty and exclusion among young people?  What forms of solidarity can be fostered between young people and elderly people?</p>	<p>Incorporating single-parents families more into the active labour force by ensuring child-care facilities are affordable and available will help.</p>

<p>In order to foster the transition to a knowledge society, EU policies promote the modernisation of work organisation, the definition of lifelong learning strategies, the quality of the working environment and “active ageing”, in particular raising the average retirement age. Demographic changes reinforce the importance of these policies, whilst raising new questions: How can the organisation of work be modernised, to take into account the specific needs of each age group? How can young couples’ integration in working life be facilitated and how can we help them to find a balance between flexibility and security to bring up their children, to train and update their skills to meet the demands of the labour market? How can we enable older people to work more?</p>	<p>This global approach to work finds its key in how we 'educate' employers! Do contact me personally at <a href="mailto:n.ripmeester@labourmobility.com">n.ripmeester@labourmobility.com</a> to discuss further ...</p>
<p>How can work organisation best be adapted to a new distribution between the generations, with fewer young people and more older workers? How can the various stakeholders in the Union contribute, in particular by way of social dialogue and civil society?</p>	<p>Allowing each age group to contribute what they have on offer naturally, i.e. older workers should be allowed to work less hours as they might want to spend less energy on work, but they have a tremendous wealth of experience, whereas younger workers have a surplus in energy but still need to gain a lot of experience to understand all the processes at work ...</p>
<p>The European coordination of retirement scheme reforms is promoting more flexible bridges between work and retirement. Should there be a statutory retirement age, or should flexible, gradual retirement be permitted? How can elderly people participate in economic and social life, e.g. through a combination of wages and pensions, new forms of employment (part-time, temporary) or other forms of financial incentive? How can activities employing elderly people in the voluntary sector and the social economy be developed? What should be the response to pensioner mobility between Member States, in particular with regard to social protection and health care? How should we be investing in health promotion and prevention so that the people of Europe continue to benefit from longer healthy life expectancy?</p>	<p>Gradual retirement should absolutely be permitted! A combination of new/different forms of work combined with wages and gradual pensions, as well as tax incentives can all help without putting the burden just on one stakeholder.</p>

<p>The coordination of national social protection policies is due to be extended to long-term care for the elderly in 2006. How can this help to manage demographic change? The coordination of national social protection policies is due to be extended to long-term care for the elderly in 2006. How can this help to manage demographic change? In particular, should a distinction be drawn between retirement pensions and dependency allowances? How do we train the human resources needed and provide them with good quality jobs in a sector which is often characterised by low salaries and low qualifications? How do we arrive at a balanced distribution of care for the very old between families, social services and institutions? What can be done to help families? What can be done to support local care networks? And what can be done to reduce inequality between men and women when they reach retirement age? How can new technologies support older people?</p>	<p>allow more budgets!! is the sole advice here</p>
<p>Should the European Union be promoting exchanges and regular (e.g. annual) analysis of demographic change and its impact on societies and all the policies concerned? Should the Union's financial instruments – particularly the structural funds – take better account of these changes? If so, how? How could European coordination of employment and social protection policies better take on board demographic change? How can European social dialogue contribute to the better management of demographic change? What role can civil society and civil dialogue with young people play? How can demographic change be made an integral part of all the Union's internal and external policies?</p>	<p>The European Union's role can be large here, although the Commission needs to be careful not to come across as 'allmighty'. Coordination of employment and social systems is essential to allow a good functioning labour market within the entire EU. I've many ideas in particular as how to structure your labour market policies to help organisations anticipate demographic changes. I'm more than willing to expand on my ideas. But I hope that the answer above have slightly helped ...</p>
<p>How did you perceive this questionnaire?</p>	<p>Expectations met</p>