

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?	National employers' organisation
Please specify the name of your organisation or institution	Chambers of Commerce of Ireland
Country where your organisation is based	IE - Ireland
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. As a society and an economy we are either growing or we are shrinking. Accordingly we need to foster a growth oriented mentality to do this we need vibrant and strong economies. Too many European economies are in a lacklustre state with stagnant growth. this is affecting our confidence, which directly affects demographic trends
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?	These questions appear to miss the point of low birth rates. these are directly linked to our confidence in the future strength and growth of our economies. Prescriptions such as those outlined above do not and will not result in improved birth rates alone. We obviously need to tackle work life balance issues however a fundamental requirement for a thriving demographic birth rate is immigrants and economic self confidence. In addition to the outlined measures to improve life long participation in the workforce by men and women, coupled with greater flexibility by employers to enable flexible working hours, thereby encouraging more female participation in the work force, we must also radically reform our economies in Europe to make it easier to hire and also to fire staff. This will enable employers to 'take a chance' on hiring workers as they need them, raise employment and after some initial pain as our economies are reformed will enable our economies to emerge reformed and more economically vibrant.

<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?</p> <p>What policies should be developed for better integrating these migrants, in particular young people?</p> <p>How could Community instruments, in particular the legislative framework to combat discrimination, the structural funds and the Employment Strategy, contribute?</p>	<p>It can do so hugely. The first is to offer clear and transparent paths to citizenship for new European residents and their dependents. The second is to ensure that the partners of skilled migrant workers are also allowed to work and contribute to this society upon arrival here. Unless these two issues are addressed, we face every prospect of expending valuable time in a debate that fails to ensure that we attract sufficient numbers of new migrants to fill our economy's need for talent. Europe is not alone in its need for skilled talent. Permanent residency and ultimate citizenship is one of the most attractive elements of the US Green Card system. It is for this that many skilled highly educated engineers, scientists and medical practitioners opt for America over other first world economies around the globe. These are the kind of people that Europe needs as we seek to reach our goal of a knowledge-driven highly productive economy. Upon receipt of a green card and completion of a crime free time period in that country, US immigrants know that they too can become citizens of that society. If we are to successfully compete for this well of ambition and energy that the US, Australia and other high cost economies gather from around the world each year, then we must make this option explicitly available to skilled workers looking at Europe as a possible new home. A further impediment to acquiring and keeping talent here is current regulations that impede the partners of skilled migrants from working here. It is deeply unfair to attract highly educated workers to Europe whilst impeding their efforts to integrate here by prohibiting their partners from working. Granting a working visa to the partners of skilled immigrants into Europe would enhance the continent's status as an economy that welcomes new talent. It would also significantly enhance the attractiveness of our economy to skilled migrants. Offering this benefit would also represent a competitive advantage for Europe over the US in our efforts to recruit skilled human capital. If we do not address these two key issues then we will undermine our efforts to further grow and develop our economy and our society.</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>We must also radically reform our economies in Europe to make it easier to hire and also to fire staff. The inability of employers to fire staff is directly stopping them from making new hires. Instead they always seek mechanisation to avoid further exposure to pan european anti business legislation that is stifling entrepreneurship. In liberalising employment protection rules we will enable employers to 'take a chance' on hiring workers as they need them, raise employment and after some initial pain as our economies are reformed will enable our economies to emerge reformed and more economically vibrant.</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>Create a strong vibrant tax generating entrepreneurial European economy that generates lots and lots of jobs and you will do more to fight child poverty than any other policy implementation strategy. Accordingly deregulate.</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>The above answers address these topics. Create a strong flexible economy that generates jobs and full employment and flexible work practices will follow.</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>This is a very passive and defeatist attitude to take. Combined with a revitalised economy that offers hope for the future, we also need to encourage immigration into Europe. These two actions will ensure that we have more young people rather than less.</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>We need to raise and or abolish statutory retirement. There is no better way of maintaining social connectivity and vibrancy than working. However short or flexible the hours. Accordingly we need to encourage older workers to remain in the workforce by offering greater flexibility in working hours but also incentivising them by reducing the taxes paid on marginal income earned in addition to agreed pensions upon reaching retirement age.</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>First do no harm. the regulatory burden is stifling business creativity in Europe. Accordingly lighten the burden on business and economic vitality will return. Create more flexible labour laws and more jobs will be created, including more part time jobs and that many parents want when their children are young. Increase and encourage immigration and the integration of these immigrants into our societies in the same way that America and Australia manage to do it and will raise our birth rates and improve our demographic trends dramatically. Second</p>
<p>How did you perceive this questionnaire?</p>	<p>Expectations not met</p>
<p>Why?</p>	<p>Irrelevant in content</p>
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