

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

Identification of case	
IPM Reference Number:	459160
Creation date	12-10-2005
Modification date	
Privacy statement	
Personal Data	
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? European NGO	
Please specify the name of your organisation or institution European Association for Population Studies	
Country where your organisation is based International organisation	
Explanation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? <p>On behalf of the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS), I have the pleasure to answer to your call for consultations concerning the Green Paper on Demographic Change. EAPS, founded in 1983, is a scientific association of individual members and associated institutions. EAPS is an international and multidisciplinary forum for population studies with a special focus on Europe's population. It aims to stimulate the interest in population issues among governments, national and international organizations and the general public. EAPS warmly welcomes the great attention on the part of the European Commission towards demographic change as it appears from the Green Paper initiative. As a scientific organisation, our contribution to the consultation will not focus on specific policy suggestions, but on the knowledge base for the understanding of demographic change. We would like to focus on three issues. We address those issues in the conclusions. We provide no comments on Sections 1 and 2 as they would represent specific views that may not be shared by the members of our scientific association. However, we clearly recognise the fundamental importance of issues addressed in Sections 1 and 2. A postal version of this response has been sent to you, not including this paragraph or the following 'No comments'.</p>	
1. The challenges of European demography	
1.1. The challenge of a low birth rate	

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?

No comment (see above)

1.2. The possible contribution of immigration

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.

- 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?

No comment (see above)

2. A new solidarity between the generations

2.1. Better integration of young people

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?

No comment (see above)

- 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?

No comment (see above)

2.2. A global approach to the “working life cycle”

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?

No comment (see above)

- 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?

No comment (see above)

2.3. A new place for “elderly people”

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?

No comment (see above)

2.4 Solidarity with the very elderly

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?

No comment (see above)

3. Conclusion: what should the European Union's role be?

- 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?

Monitoring and understanding demographic change in Europe requires a high level of scientific competence in the complex field of demography and population studies. Research in this field is related to actual societal challenges and opportunities, and it is both by tradition and by necessity intrinsically interdisciplinary and internationally oriented. For these reasons of interdisciplinarity and international orientation, demography and population studies have not been particularly prominent—with limited exceptions of high quality—in research agendas at the national and international level, as well as in higher education. Review procedures, for instance, also at the international level, are predominantly organised along disciplinary lines which hampers interdisciplinarity, and international comparative research has a low priority in national research agendas. EAPS believes that promoting research and training in demography and population studies at the European level is needed to help in finding answers to the fundamental questions posed by the Green Paper and by future issues concerning demographic change. EAPS encourages the European Commission to support population research and training with instruments targeted on interdisciplinarity and international comparison. EAPS also believes that policies responding to the challenges of demographic change should be based on solid scientific knowledge. As in the “best practice” case, this knowledge is assured by the opportunity to collect and analyse data on demographic change both at the macro and at the micro level. Of particular relevance to knowledge-based policy-making in Europe are longitudinal data collection ventures, of the type that is available in some European countries and in the USA. These ventures usually transcend the capacities of individual countries and would benefit from a European approach. EAPS encourages the European Commission to support the regular collection of comparative data on demographic change in Europe, including micro-level data and especially longitudinal surveys. Public discussion of demographic change is fundamental to promote a better understanding of its determinants, to raise awareness among the relevant actors including citizens, to foster synergies of knowledge between policy-makers and the public sectors, NGOs, the private sector and the scientific community. Since 1985 EAPS has organised a European Population Conference usually on a bi-annual basis. The next conference is scheduled to take place in Liverpool (21-24 June 2006). EAPS would strongly favour that, given the prominence of demographic issues in Europe and the potentialities for research on the issue, the European Population Conference will become an event on an annual basis. As these conferences are a perfect platform to exchange information and to strengthen the knowledge base for policymaking, this would benefit a regular science-policy debate and also allow to potentially host policy-oriented discussions and workshops and meetings on European projects. EAPS would particularly welcome the collaboration of the European Commission in view of the organisation of an

annual European Population Conference. The Council of EAPS salutes the European Commission for organising the consultations on the Green Paper and appreciated the opportunity to participate in these consultations. The Council invites the Commission to continue its important work on demographic change in Europe and hopes for a continued collaboration with the Commission.

The Questionnaire

How did you perceive this questionnaire? Expectations met