

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

id_request	456382
DT_CREATE	18/07/2005
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
Name	Elias Amor Bravo
E-mail address	c/ San Vicente Martir, 16-5-1 Valencia 46002 (Spain)
Are you replying as an individual or an organisation?	Individual
Gender	Male
Age	40-54
Country of residence	ES - Spain
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>Yes, the European level is not only adequate but also it is necessary for making an analysis and evaluation on the consequences of demographic trends in Europe. Of course there are many important differences among regions and state countries in this process, but qualitative and quantitative dimension of the problem is so important that it has become necessary the european level approach. I understand that the main objective should be to attend the ageing process in order to redesign and reorient economic and social policies according to these trends. Most of these instruments have been designed in the past for a different social scenario and trends. But changes demand a new approach. Technological innovation, productivity gains, delays in labor retirement age, promotion of new sectors, products and services are, among others, the main objectives to be considered. Employment, R+D activities, knowledge and education are the main policy areas.</p>

<p>Over many years, the Union has been making considerable efforts to achieve equality between men and women and has coordinated national social protection policies.</p> <p>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?</p>	<p>The policies to stimulate and increase the birth rate in all countries of Europe have proved to be a failure, according to the results that have been observed in the different countries. Of course it is not a short or medium term question, but it is necessary to attend to social changes that have taken place in many European countries in the last three decades. Distribution of labour, fiscal incentives and grant's policies or the implementation of services for child care have not provided the expected results. The reality is that parents, and particularly women, have decided to reduce the number of their sons and daughters and this process is a social trend that will maintain in the future. We have to consider the very important influence of social media and the construction of social models that are widespread observed by populations in most countries.</p>
<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>The immigration can contribute to the increase in the birth rate in a short term, because parents and women of these nationalities present and defend social values that are quite different from the social trends observed in Europe. But the influence varies notably from one country to another and it has been observed an approach process of immigrants to European values that in the medium and long term will provide a very modest birth rate. Racial diversity in Europe is a relevant aspect for the future. The social and labor integration of young immigrants is less problematic than the integration of their elders. Structural funds provide an stimulating instrument to correct social divergences in Europe and their distribution in the future should observe this concern with immigration.</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>It is necessary to promote a great European level effort to increase long life training for young people and that this training process should respond to the demands of firms and the structure of productive system. Particularly, efforts have to be done in most countries to reduce the disequilibria that exist between education and labour demand, implementing European strategies for the recognition and accreditation of qualifications. It is also necessary to reform the information and counseling services in the educative system, among young students, and their families.</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>The knowledge society must facilitate the full recovery of the "experts" institution inside the productive firms. These professionals must develop a strategic role in the implementation of long life learning strategies in firms. There is a source of value added in this group of professionals if a good strategy is put into motion. European institutions have to play a central role. Decentralization of firms in the global world, the extension of working from home practices and jobs, and "experts" organizations are going to create new structures for a more flexible organization of productive firms.</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 participation of older people in work life has to provide a more flexible age of labor retirement that has to be delayed in many cases when the new organization of firms (experts, work abroad from home, etc) allows it. In many firms it will be necessary to provide trainers among these older workers, their knowledge, experience and dedication will serve as a way to facilitate the integration of young couples in working life, promoting a higher quality of life and an extension of sectors and productive firms specialized in the new older people demands.</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>"Elderly people" sector is confronted in most European countries with a phase of development in its initial process but with a rapid growth and learning from the experience of every day activities. These aspects provide a special feature and background for this sector. Given the notable differences between European countries in their retirement systems, it is difficult to promote an integration of policies in this area, but there are favourable perspectives on a medium and long term for this coordination of strategies.</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>Structural funds play a central role in policies concerned. It is also very important to make an effort to promote social dialogue at the European level and the coordination of employment and social protection policies to confront demographic change. It is necessary to provide more information to societies and civil institutions concerned with this process.</p>
<p>How did you perceive this questionnaire?</p>	<p>Expectations met</p>