

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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Gender	Male
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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?	please see section 1.2
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?	please see section 1.2

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?

Immigration alone cannot completely solve the European demographic crisis, and is already quite a controversial subject in Europe. However, a recent personal experience gave me a new idea about the type of immigration that Europe could potentially benefit from and could possibly find more socially acceptable. I would like to discuss the possibility of all European countries attempting to follow the lead of Italy in creating repatriation laws regarding reclaiming citizenship beyond the first generation. I was born in the United States and recently was able to reclaim my Italian citizenship from a few generations back due to Italy's "Juris Sanguis" citizenship laws, which provide for this possibility. Ireland had a similar program but a change in law in 1986 has made it virtually impossible to retrieve citizenship beyond the first generation since then. It seems to me that reforming the laws regarding this area could potentially create a wave of people seeking to return to Europe based on European ancestors beyond their parents' generation. The number of second and third generation Italian, Portuguese and Spanish peoples in South America alone must enter into the millions. In North America, a nation based on immigrants, there must be even more second and third generation Europeans. Of course there are also many Europeans scattered across the world from the after-effects of colonization. Furthermore if you take into account their children, who can subsequently gain European citizenship, the numbers continue to multiply. Also, it is not just in poorer areas such as South America where people would find this possibility enticing. Even in the United States I find many people, who upon hearing my story would love to be able to do the same. Especially with the current political mood and the policies of the Bush administration being so unpopular with about half of the entire population. Many Americans find the ideals of Europe to be superior in many ways to those in the United States. Could a program such as this, perhaps with an EU residency contingency, help to address this difficult issue while also being more socially acceptable, as many of these potential immigrants would still have linguistic and cultural ties to Europe. A study on European Diaspora populations could reveal the size of potential candidates across the globe. If the Italian example is any guide it would reveal a few things: The first is that there is a strong desire for such an opportunity and the second that there has been little public knowledge about it. I find that many Italian descendents in North and South America have no idea of this possibility and the ones that do know about it do not have the proper information or resources in order to actually do it. Therefore the number of people who have actually gone through this process with Italy is probably much smaller than the actual potential number. This type of policy, on a pan-European scale, combined with the proper dissemination of information could create a surge in migration to every corner of the European Union by people with strong ties to Europe. Europe, in its vast history had, along with its great achievements, many hardships that forced people to leave even against their will. Poverty in southern Italy, famine in Ireland and war across the continent are a few of these reasons. Italy and Ireland developed their Juris Sanguis laws exactly for these reasons—to allow people who were virtually forced to leave the opportunity to return. I think the idea warrants at least a study into the potential of such a repatriation policy and its social acceptability by the European public.

<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>please see section 1.2</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>please see section 1.2</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>please see section 1.2</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>please see section 1.2</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>please see section 1.2</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>please see section 1.2</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>please see section 1.2</p>
<p>How did you perceive this questionnaire?</p>	<p>Expectations met</p>