

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?	Individual
Gender	Female
Age	25-39
Country of residence	LU - Luxembourg
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, because feertility rate, although low across Europe, is higher in some Memebr States, which managed to stop the birth rate to fall. They might encourage other Member Staes to follow them (e.g. France)
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?	Reconciliation of family duties and work is a void term, it is just contradictory. When you have one or two children, you can try, but with more it is impossible, regardless of how hard you try. It is impossible to get every child dressed in the morning, make them have breakfast, get ready yourself, drive each child to a creche/kindergarten/scholl and to be on time for your work (provided you did not spend your night going from one child to another, which tend to wake up at night and call for mum or dad), then to collect each child after work, do shopping, have dinner, play with younger ones, talk to older ones etc. A day is simply too short for that. Besides, children have a bad manner to get sick, and then you have to stay at home or arrange a care for your child. The simple fact that young people are being told that they should "reconcile" makes them to give up having more children - after one child they realise they have to choose - children or work, and they choose work. Not because they want to be reach, but simply because the more children you have, the more money you need to bring them up - and the less you can work. Moreover, a day care is too expensive - when you realise that all you earn you have to spend on crèche/kindergarten/after school care, the only reasonable decision is to stop working. People are generally responsible and they decide not to have more children, even if they would like to. Those who decide to have more than one or two and one parent gives up professional activity, are faced with financial problems (it is more visible in the new Member States, where the birth rate is the lowest and where there is no help for families), since they end up with one salary for at least four people. On top of that we should add that young couples usually take credit for their home and they have to pay it back - with one salary it becomes impossible. And, the bigger the family, the bigger the house they need. Also, the more children you have, the less you can save for your pension, because instead

	<p>of saving, you spend on shoes, toys, books etc. And those you give up their professional activity, face even a greater risk of being poor at the old age (a feature of social security schemes). Here are some proposed solutions: 1. provide families with family/children allowances, which will cover or help cover extra costs of having children; this is especially needed in the new Member States, where there are quite often no incentives for families to have children; 2. provide a "free choice allowance", in fact a remuneration for those who give up professional activity and decide to bring up future generations; if we pay kindergarten staff for that, why shouldn't a parent be paid for the same? This remuneration should be high enough to constitute a true free choice between professional career and family career; 3. Provide more incentives like reduction in pension premiums - the more children you have, the less you pay with the same amount of future pension guaranteed. This would be logical - your input into the future are children, future workers; those who do not take the effort of having children have no other contribution but money. (Remember that long ago, children were the best guarantee of quiet old age - the more you had, the greater chances you had that one of them will take care of you; now it is the opposite; we should try to restore that relationship) Also, tax rebates for families having children and cheap day care for those who decide to pursue their professional activity, so that the day care would not be a disproportionate burden for parents discouraging them from having more children. One should also consider such incentives as 100% reimbursement of medical costs (consultations, procedures and operations, medicines) for pregnant women and small children and greater help for families to pay their mortgage. Also, a reduced VAT rate (0%) on items connected with having children might be helpful.</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>Child poverty - and poverty of families having children - might be combated in various ways, financial help is essential. The most important is to realise that children contribute to major risk of family poverty - and that is why wider assistance is needed (some solutions in point 1.1) Elderly people should be encouraged to provide help to families having small children in terms of e.g. volunteering in creches or help at home with children. Here, an awareness raising campaign is needed as well as some financial incentives (e.g. some benefits for the elderly helping families)</p>

<p>How can work organisation best be adapted to a new distribution between the generations, with fewer young people and more older workers?</p> <p>How can the various stakeholders in the Union contribute, in particular by way of social dialogue and civil society?</p>	<p>Having children (or not having them) has become a private thing, although it has a huge impact on the society as a whole. People do not think that anybody cares about their family decisions and that anybody appreciates that they take such a huge effort to have children. On the opposite, sometimes young couple might think that they are being discouraged from having children, both in financial and social terms. Starting from lack of help for families, through lack of cheap day care for children, till the lack of public support such as priority seats in public transport for pregnant women or priority cash desks at shops. A great, Europe-wide awareness raising campaign is needed to make people realise that having children is the new form of patriotism, that if you want to do anything for your country, the best thing you can do is to have children. Also, that campaign should encourage shops, post offices, public transport etc. to provide priority for pregnant women and people with small children. This is also important for employers, who tend to discriminate covertly against women having children - such a campaign should be carried out together with employers' associations. Also, there should be a public debate on the issue how to earn money for help for families to make societies realise that there is no more urgent need than promote higher birth rate.</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>Undoubtedly, demographic challenge should be revised regularly at the EU level and many activities should be taken at that level.</p>
<p>How did you perceive this questionnaire?</p>	<p>Expectations not met</p>
<p>Why?</p>	<p>Too technical</p>