

## 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?	No, references to the personal data should remain anonymous
Name	****
E-mail address	****
Are you replying as an individual or an organisation?	Individual
Gender	Male
Age	40-54
Country of residence	NL - Netherlands
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?	They should take place at both levels. national and European. Instead of focussing on tighter immigration rules, especially by the North European memberstates, one should focus on the contributions of immigration for the country and Europe as a whole.
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?	Child friendly politics are the basis of change. Also one should consider the cost of living and the career opportunities if there were to be an increase in childbirths. There is no one solution but a combination of solutions. In my opinion it is not just the fact that the work/life balance or extra advantages or child care structures are at the root of the issue. Even a reduced VAT is no real incentive for a family to make the choice for more children. We in Europe made a choice, Women were to enter the labour market and enjoy the same benefits as men have had for ages. I fully agree with that. But at the same time such a society, based on the principle of equality, cannot expect of the people to keep on having children at the rate necessary for a balanced demography. It is simply not realistic.

<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?  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?</p>	<p>Immigration should be encouraged but controlled to such an extent that there should be a good mix of highly qualified citizens and lower qualified citizens. To many unskilled immigrant would topple the social balance of any country and a possible risk with regards to integration in society. It is difficult to create an overall package for "the migrant". The migrant does not exist. One should create possibilities on the basis of the country of origin. In the end these new citizens should accept the European way of living and therefore it will be difficult, due to all kinds of cultural backgrounds. European regulations should not make it impossible for national governments to create own laws in order to "control" the migration flow.</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>Again this is a difficult topic. Not only are policies regarding training no easy task but the main actor on this field, in the end, is the labour market. Economics determine the employment possibilities. Low wage countries determine the opportunities for low skilled people, even highly trained people find it hard to compete. Global economy should be the focus. Big industries, multi nationals etc. should be made aware of a social obligation in society. High profits without investments, short term vision and goals are amongst the reasons for gaps. Privatisation of national basic necessities like electricity, gas, water have made companies very rich and at the same time there is hardly any investing. Even the networks run by those companies are no longer properly maintained. Of course should the emphasis be on good education. Many national governments struggle with the cost of education. On a European level funding in that area would be a positive choice.</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>On national levels decisions have been made to balance the nations financial households. Results are cuts in the social welfare systems. Rich countries within the Union focus on not so rich countries and the welfare systems are slowly brought to, a somewhat same level. Cost of living however is much higher in the Northern European countries than it is relatively in the Southern European countries. In our society, the way we choose it to be social exclusion cannot be prohibited. Poverty cannot be prohibited. Having an education system where everybody can get the opportunity to enter is essential. Communities depend on the funding of the national governments and are therefore very inhibited in their possibilities. Regional funding by the EU is slowly made redundant, structural funding by the EU is slowly diminished. The EU itself should look at the way the funds are used.</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>As I said before the "employers" play a major role in this issue. Fleeing to lowcost countries is not the answer. Economics determine the need of employers for workers. Age is an issue for employers and not for the people of that age. One should ask oneself if modernization is the answer. Look around you and search for best practices. Look at them and ask why they work. New is not always better. The aging of the present EU population is a temporary problem (if at all a problem) Taking in to account the mortality rate amongst pensioners, it will take probably 25 years and the problem will have solved itself. Politicians tend to forget that or conveniently forget it. In the beginning of this consultation I stated that it is a combination of factors whether to have children or not. Simple example: My employer (public) depends on the ministry as funding is concerned. We used to have excellent childcare measures in our collective agreement. Excellent possibilities to work part time etc. Due to substantial cuts by the government these were the first to go. There you have it. It's the employers who decide in the end.</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>One should have a combination of national thinktanks. Employers, national governments and representatives of the unions should start to not only talk but also come up with ways to solve this. After the national there should be a working group on EU level. This working group however should be highly independent.</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>There should be a minimum retirement age. Let's say 65 (long live Bismarck) But one should be able to work longer if one wanted to and get compensation for the fact that one is working longer and therefore paying longer taxes. Less hours, less taxes, everything is debatable. As long as politicians don't abuse the willingness of people to work longer. The voluntary sector? This is nothing more than a third labourmarket, if employers get the adequate resources to hire people they would not need voluntary workers. In my opinion Pensioners mobility is no option to be considered seriously. If the national governments would stop cutting funding in the healthcare sector problem would be easier solved. As long as hospitals have to make life and death decisions on the basis of available budgets there can never be a real benefit for the older people.</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>Need to think longer about his one. Have allready answered part of this question above.</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>Numbering 1. yes as long it is not an excuse to spend money 2. Absolutely. Look back at the beginning of the EU. 3. Not quite sure what is meant by this question 4. civil society? Economics and politics rule they decide what the society can do 5. By having a qualified department with qualified people and a European parliament in control (I voted Yes to the constitution)</p>
<p>How did you perceive this questionnaire?</p>	<p>Expectations met</p>