

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	Female
Age	25-39
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?	As the demographic issues that must be faced are similar across the EU, it makes sense to at least discuss them within the context of the EU. Moreover, the contributions asked from the working people for the retired people, could distort the competition between the Member States in services or goods. Therefore, social benefits (including payment for child care to reverse the low birth rate) ought to be harmonised at a minimum level.
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?	People should be stimulated to continue working, e.g. less hours or days. It is impossible to change patterns of family behaviour by law, because it is not enforceable. On the contrary, it is easy to maintain unequal patterns of behaviour by law. Therefore, it requires careful action to try to encourage a balanced distribution of household and family tasks by law. This should be a choice for people. Certain things, such as childbirth, are not equally distributed between men and women. As a consequence, it would be unjust to link all awards to an equal distribution of tasks. I think it would be best to strive for an approach in which benefits for child care can be obtained by parents independent of their sex. Why should it be incredibly expensive to raise future taxpayers? I see it as the responsibility of the state to offer child care. I am positive that tax paid by working women will offset the costs. A reduced rate of VAT contributes, because it makes legal child care cheaper. This means that more people will use legal child care. By assuring parents that the childcare offered is of good quality, parents will keep on working more easily.

<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>To a low extent, because there is not enough work within the EU, so why invite immigrants instead of striving for more internal immigration. Why should so many Germans be job-less? The EU should try to facilitate internal movement of workers more than it does now, in particular for people from the new Member States. The EU should encourage movement from jobless people in the old Member States. I don't see why so much money should be devoted on immigrants. Give them a fair chance to get work, encourage the Member States to offer language courses at a low rate for people who have immigrated or moved into their country, and that is it!</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>It would be best if the policies would depart from the point of view that solidarity between rich and poor people is a good thing. It is not necessary for rich old people to obtain extra benefits, while poor old people deserve benefits or social programs as much as poor young people.</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>I think that this is not the moment to panic about old people not working. If it is possible to let young people work, then, due to the raise in productivity, it is not necessary for old people to work. Of course, if they need to work because their pension is too low, I'd rather see them farming. It is a crazy idea to oblige old people to continue working when they are not fit enough. So, it is to be hoped that working remains a choice for people who have saved enough for their retirement.</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>pensioner mobility: If old people are granted a pension in a Member State, they should be entitled to bring it along, together with their home State insurance, to a host State where they like to enjoy their old age. I don't see a problem. It is nice for the host State to receive these people, they spend their pensions, their insurance pays for any medical insurance and the home State should be happy too because it liberates room. At least in the Netherlands it is crowded enough without all these pensioners. I love to see them in France, where they live in villages deserted by the French, who prefer to work and live in the city. health promotion and prevention: Encourage school and after school sport activities and sponsor biological farming. If people eat healthy and sport, they get healthier.</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>It should at least become more clear to women that if they do not work enough because they stay with their kids, they have to find a solution for their retirement. I think the best option is to invest in child care. The babyboomers have always had the best for themselves, they are not as pityful as the present old people. Many of them live in expensive, owned houses, they have a good health, they can and do retire at 55 or 60. Do not panic. Do not pity. Pity the people who are young now. Houses are expensive, child care is expensive, payments for pensions and health care is expensive. Everything is a burden on us. Try to support the young working force, invest your money in them, in particular through child care. If all men and women who could work, would work, there would be no grey issue.</p>
<p>How did you perceive this questionnaire?</p>	<p>Expectations met</p>