

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

Identification of case	
IPM Reference Number:	459266
Creation date	14-10-2005
Modification date	
Privacy statement	
Personal Data	
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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On behalf of which of the following are you replying? Other	
Please specify the name of your organisation or institution City to City partnership* * City to City (C2C) is a Regional Framework Operation of the Programme Interreg III C. The partnership is composed by: Regione Calabria (Lead partner)(IT), Municipality of Valencia (ES), Federacion Valenciana de Municipios y Provincias (ES), Regione Siciliana (IT), Tutech Innovation and (D) (cooperation partner: Unternehmer ohne Grenzen), Cambridgeshire (UK), Ealing Borough of London (UK), Veneto Lavoro (IT), City Council of Livani (LV); Municipality of Turunç (TK), West Sweden (S)	
Country where your organisation is based International organisation	
Explanation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 objective has to be to encourage an even population growth and development, as opposed to the unsystematic way things happen today. The policy areas should be integrated with spatial planning, combined with improvement of social infra-structure to encourage more families and more children. The discussion on demographic trends and managing its impacts should be launched both at local and European level. At local level it is important to increase the awareness on the demographic changes in a country and at a European level to clarify the familiarities and differences of the demographic developments in various countries. One should also note that many themes having close affiliation with demography are lying in competency area of EU. For that reason coordination of the works, search of solution methods under the EU super view can also be very useful.</p>	
1. The challenges of European demography	
1.1. The challenge of a low birth rate	

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?

It's important to promote social programmes which combine work and leisure time. If conditions are improved, more young people will be encouraged to have children and thus counter-act against the current trends. A more balanced and equal distribution of household can be promoted also with adequate educational programmes from the primary school in order to impress on the culture. Women should be prioritised and financial incentives given to them. On the other hand, men who decide to take parental leave should also have access to incentives. Perhaps a public-private partnership for child care structures would help. The current system is obviously not working well. Providing a support system for child care, allows families to combine work with family life.

1.2. The possible contribution of immigration

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?

The migrants offer a great potential for the receiver countries in the EU. On one hand, the ways to activate the economic potentials of the migrants, on the other way, the ways to achieve the integration of the migrants should be searched and implemented. Apart from all other measures to integrate the migrants to better into the society (increasing the awareness, positive sensibility on migration themes among the local people, better language training, etc) we see "job" as the most important mean to integrate migrants. Another important theme while thinking on job as an integrative tool is professional support to the migrants at starting up with and running business, especially for the SME. Immigration mitigate certain negative effects of demographic ageing by filling in the gap left for Europeans who do not have children, especially in some countries where levels of ageing are high. Better access to language courses and recognition of their previous school attendance are essential. In addition, young migrants need specific support and advice in career decisions. Community instruments can combat discrimination by providing migrants with qualifications and specific training to meet specific market needs.

2. A new solidarity between the generations

2.1. Better integration of young people

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

A comprehensive training programme targeted to migrants should be developed and implemented across the EU. This has to be gainful employment, i.e. NO voluntary or free activities. By combining theory with practice, i.e. providing school based training combined with company-based practice. Social dialogue is here quite important and youth organisations can be activated to provide extra motivation/impulse to the process since they have access to youth groups.

- 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?

By ensuring a consistency between macro-economic policies and the family-based reality, by for example better tax relief for families and reduced VAT for food, books and other essential goods. Elderly people should on the one hand use their available resources carefully and help to assist youth based works. Young people may engage in more social causes by for example taking part in support programmes to the elderly in areas such as leisure for instance.

2.2. A global approach to the “working life cycle”

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?

By making retirement ages flexible and allowing it to take into account specific needs in each country or region. Young couples need more incentives to initiate and upkeep families. As far as the implementation is concerned, there is a need for a more consequent education policy, where emphasis on technical education on the one hand and further education on the other, may be combined. Older people can work more if work provision is flexible enough, by means of for example flexi-hours.

- 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?

By a flexible distribution of working hours and the waiving of limits on the age one is allowed to work. By opening discussing the problems, with no pre-set conditions and no dogmas, thus allowing an open dialogue where problems and solutions are discussed.

2.3. A new place for “elderly people”

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?

No retirement age should be imposed. Gradual retirement should be encouraged. By no discriminated them from other workers. By selecting sectors where they are mostly needed and ensure they are backed by sound business plans. Pensioners should not only get their benefits as if they were in the home country, but also be allowed to work as well if they want to. Emphasis should be on health prevention and the promotion on healthier living and life styles.

2.4 Solidarity with the very elderly

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?

This will provide a balance since right now many countries are elderly-friendly than others. Yes, those with dependents being entitled for more money. By raising the quality of training and providing motivation and awareness of the public need of the job. Families should have priority since elderly people are best handled in their homes. Social services institutions ought to be involved only when there is no choice. Local support care networks needed to be co-financed by the families of the users. By imposing sanctions and strict laws in case inequalities are practiced. By allowing tele-working and work from home, as well as in telemedicine.

3. Conclusion: what should the European Union's role be?

- 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?

Yes, but only if this is used to guide policy. Yes, by giving a special attention to schemes involving the elderly, especially re-training. By periodical reviews and close consultation between the member States. By more regular emphasis on the barriers and tools used to overcome them. It is already part of it and the sooner this is realised, the sooner Europe can deal with it.

The Questionnaire

How did you perceive this questionnaire? Expectations met