

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

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<b>Privacy statement</b>	
<b>Personal Data</b>	
Do you consent to the publication of your personal data/data relating to your organisation with the publication of your replies to the consultation? <span style="float: right;">Yes</span>	
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Are you replying as an individual or an organisation? <span style="float: right;">Organisation</span>	
On behalf of which of the following are you replying? <span style="float: right;">Other</span>	
Please specify the name of your organisation or institution Permits foundation	
Country where your organisation is based <span style="float: right;">NL - Netherlands</span>	
<b>Explanation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you take the view that the discussion of demographic trends and managing their impact should take place at European level?</li> <li>• If so, what should be the objectives, and which policy areas are concerned?</li> </ul> <p>Yes</p>	
<b>1. The challenges of European demography</b>	
<b>1.1. The challenge of a low birth rate</b>	
<p><i>Over many years, the Union has been making considerable efforts to achieve equality between men and women and has coordinated national social protection policies.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can a better work/life balance help to tackle the problems associated with demographic ageing?</li> <li>• How can a more balanced distribution of household and family tasks between men and women be encouraged?</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	

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?

## 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?

1. Permits Foundation agrees that immigration and shorter-term economic migration will help to mitigate the effects of demographic ageing. 2. The policies that should be developed include allowing the legally resident spouses / partners / family members to work freely. This will facilitate integration, combat discrimination and encourage more women and young people into employment. Currently, many European member states do not allow accompanying spouses / partners / family members to work freely. Even although they are legally resident, they need to fulfil a separate economic needs test if they wish to work. This means that a potential workforce that is already legally resident within the EU is being under-utilised and actively discouraged from working. This particularly affects women who represent the majority of accompanying partners. 3a. The EU's legislative framework should deliver of a secure legal status and a guaranteed set of rights to assist the integration of those who are admitted and to support equal opportunity to employment of legal residents. Open work permits for partners is one of the most important examples of this. Specifically, Permits Foundation proposes: · Family members should be allowed to accompany the principal work permit holder. Once the spouse/partner is legally resident, he or she should be granted an open permission to work for the same duration as the principal work permit holder. This permission should not require a separate test of the employment market and should apply to the partner rather than their employer, so that subsequent changes of employment are also possible without further restrictions during the course of the assignment. · The permit should allow spouses and partners to take up either employment or self-employment. · This principle should apply equally to both the private and public sectors. 3b. Structural funds and the employment strategy can also contribute by encouraging EURES and the Public Employment Services to use their web sites to give clear information about entry into and settling/working in the EU. Great improvements have been made in recent years. However, EURES and Public Employment Service websites are still largely concentrated on local/EU citizens. Information for third country migrants is much more limited. There is currently little recognition of the special needs of accompanying spouses/partners/family members of both European citizens and third country migrants. Background on Permits Foundation <http://www.PermitsFoundation.com> Permits Foundation is dedicated to the promotion of open work permits for the spouses and partners of expatriate staff worldwide. The companies and international organisations that support Permits Foundation have considerable experience with international mobility and the transfer of staff between countries. All of this experience shows that when moving staff internationally, it is the benefits that apply to the family as a whole that make or break the assignment. Several major international surveys show that concerns about spouse employment are the most important reason why staff turn down an international assignment.

## 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

- 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?

## **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?

- 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?

## **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?

## 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?

## 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

## The Questionnaire

How did you perceive this questionnaire? Expectations met