European convergence has many faces. This note focuses on the impact of the enlargement process on social research, in particular demography, including:

- Developing human and social capital of researchers,
- Developing new knowledge,
- Developing channels of communication between research, policy making and civil society.

Research is always at the forefront of societal change and science has no borders. Therefore, the European co-operation in the field of demography has already an established history. The milestone in the scientific contacts between demographers from the CESEE and other European countries was the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS) established formally on March 31, 1983 on the initiative of Dirk van de Kaa and Guillaume Wunsch who followed the idea of Günther Beyer to strengthen institutionally collaboration on population studies in Europe.

Jerzy Z. Holzer, Director of the Institute of Statistics and Demography, was among the father-founders of EAPS. The Power of Attorney form was signed by 30 scholars representing 21 different European countries, including Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Romania. Since 1987 the EAPS European Population Conference was regularly organized and researchers from the CESEE shared increasingly their scientific achievements with other colleagues. This collaboration as well as existing contacts enabled Polish researchers to participate in the international projects and to pay scientific visits to the leading demographic institutions. Moreover, Polish demographers contributed markedly to the EAPS activities. Between 1995 and 2008 Janina Jóźwiak was a member of the EAPS Council, of which five years as a President and four years as a Deputy President. Poland also organized twice – in 1997 and in 2003 the European Population Conference that gathers demographers from Europe and outside to discuss contemporary problems and issues in the demographic research. In particular, the 2003 Conference on “Population of Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges and Opportunities” made is possible to disseminate knowledge about population change in this region of Europe just before the EU extension in 2004.

The EU accession widened the opportunities and possibilities for international cooperation in demographic research, including the training of researchers, developing and implementing research projects, which lead to the development of human and social capital among the researchers as well as stimulate creating new knowledge.

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1 The views expressed in this document are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the European Commission.
In the area of developing human capital in research on population, one of the initiatives that were possible in the enlarged Europe was the establishment of the European Doctoral School of Demography. The EDSD was founded in 2005 on the initiative of the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS). It currently receives the support of 12 universities (Amsterdam, Groningen, Lund, Roma, Rostock, Tallinn, Warsaw School of Economics, London School of Economics, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Université catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, University of Southampton, University of Southern Denmark) and five research institutions (CED, INED, MPIDR, NIDI, VID). The EDSD is open to students of all nationalities. Its participants develop an extensive network of contacts with established researchers from throughout Europe. Moreover, through Erasmus programmes and other similar initiatives, students and researchers from the new member states have also an opportunity to study and develop their academic abilities in universities and research institutes around Europe. Young researchers summarise their experience with EDSD in the following way:

Participation in the European Doctoral School of Demography (EDSD) had an enormous impact on my professional life. First of all, thanks to the EDSD I had an unique opportunity to acquire knowledge in advanced methods in demography and statistics which I could not have obtained in my country. Also, being in the stimulating environment of the scientific institutions (MPIDR and INED) as well as meeting many prominent lecturers with an extensive experience in the field of demographic and social research broadened my horizons significantly, which was helpful in writing my PhD thesis and afterwards in preparing scientific papers and proposal for presentations at many national and international conferences. I learned not only theory but also practical issues (i.e. programming or organization of research) which I am using in preparing research grants and educating the students. Moreover, personal, informal relationships with other participants of the EDSD project (students and teachers) are of great importance as well. Finally, being a Dean of the EDSD allowed to acquire/develop exceptional organizational skills which I use in other educational projects at my university.

(dr Anita Abramowska-Kmon, Head of Demography Unit, Institute of Statistics and Demography, Warsaw School of Economics)

Participating in the European Doctoral School of Demography (EDSD) had without a doubt an important impact on my scientific development. I benefited greatly from the increased depth and breadth of knowledge and experience gained during this intense 11-month training. It allowed me to develop significantly my statistical as well as programming skills, which I use now to conduct sophisticated analysis of large databases that include demographic data. Since graduating from the EDSD program, I was able to present my research results at the most important and prestigious international demographic conferences, e.g. European Population Conference, Population Association of America (at which my poster received the award of the PAA Poster Winner). Also, EDSD provided a very stimulating scientific environment which allowed to expand my research network by meeting the talented young scholars from all over the world.

(Sylwia Timoszuk, researcher, Institute of Statistics and Demography, Warsaw School of Economics)
The EU accession also widened the opportunities to take part in the international research projects. These includes, among others, participation in projects funded from the Framework Programmes, including the recent Horizon 2020 Programme as well as European Research Council grants. What is important, being members of teams responsible for the assessment of European projects Polish researchers could collect hands-on knowledge on developing successful research proposals.

The European standards in research policy, including rules for calls, procedures for review and selection research proposals are also applied in national granting institutions. In Poland, the establishment of the National Science Centre and the National Centre for Research and Development was based on the European standards and practices, that Polish researchers could learn as they took part in the project assessment process at the European level.

The broadening of the European research cooperation builds new knowledge. This is achieved by extending the scope of research to cover developments in the new member states. The time of the transition from centrally-planned to market economy and the pre-accession period represent a quarter of a decade of very intense social, economic and cultural transformations. This was an unprecedented social experiment. These changes provide an invaluable source for research in many areas. For example, the rapid change to market economy and labour market transformations was accompanied by shifting fertility to the low and lowest levels, marked improvements in mortality and migration on rise. Family-related behaviours changed visibly in the line of indications of the second demographic transition and resulting low fertility. Their different interpretations have opened debates about reasoning family change observed in the CESEE and other European countries within this demographic theory. Studies on these developments enriched remarkably both theoretical considerations and empirical evidence.

Persisting low fertility and remarkable improvements in mortality, from which the numerous post-war cohorts could benefit, advanced the population ageing in these countries. During this period, many institutions also evolved, including for example paradigm changes in pension systems, governance, education policy and many others. The outcomes of these institutional changes as well as their further development are an important research topic to researchers from all around the world.

It is worth noting that many of the initiatives that build necessary social research infrastructures were also extended to the new member states. This includes for example the European Social Survey, the Generations and Gender Programme, the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe.

Furthermore, EU enlargement also stimulated further harmonization of statistical data and information. Data collected in surveys such as Labour Force Survey or European Survey on Income and Living Conditions allow for conducting comparative research in wider range of European countries.

Extended cooperation between researchers in population-related fields in a variety of forms called for new ways of knowledge exchange and communicating the research findings to the broader
audience. The Population Europe respond to the new needs of communication and dissemination of research activities and output. The Population Europe is the network of Europe’s leading research centres in the field of policy-relevant population studies including partners from all over Europe (among them from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Czechia). This unique knowledge pool disseminates the most relevant research findings to policy audiences and the public. The network has established collaborations with a broad range of stakeholders interested in population developments. Population Europe also has an extensive network of eminent population experts throughout Europe that are nominated by the partner institutes. These experts support the activities of the network, for example, by participating in various events and contributing to the network publications. One of the very first Population Europe event “Riding the Demographic Wave: Policy Options for the Ageing Baby-Boomer Generation in Europe” was organized in May 2012 in Warsaw under auspices of the Polish President, Mr Bronisław Komorowski, contributing to a dialogue between researchers and policy makers in Poland and Europe.