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on the demographic future of Europe
(2007/2156(INI))

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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(*) Procedure with associated committees – Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

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(*) Procedure with associated committees – Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the demographic future of Europe (2007/2156(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 1997 on the Commission report to the Council and European Parliament on the demographic situation in the European Union (1995)¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 1998 on the Commission demographic report 1997²,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2000 on the Commission communication entitled ‘Towards a Europe for all ages – promoting prosperity and intergenerational solidarity’³,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Europe’s response to World Ageing – Promoting economic and social progress in an ageing world – A contribution of the European Commission to the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing’ (COM(2002)0143),
- having regard to the European Youth Pact adopted by the Brussels European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005,
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper entitled ‘Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations’ (COM(2005)0094),
- having regard to its resolution of 23 March 2006 on demographic challenges and solidarity between the generations⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 September 2006 on a European Social Model for the future⁵,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity’ (COM(2006)0571),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Promoting solidarity between the generations’ (COM(2007)0244),
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee entitled ‘The family and demographic change’⁶ of 14 March 2007 and its core proposal of a European Pact for the Family to be signed by Member States,
- having regard to the Commission Staff Working document entitled ‘Europe’s

¹ OJ C 115, 14.4.1997, p. 238.

² OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 222.

³ OJ C 232, 17.8.2001, p.381.

⁴ OJ C 292E, 1.12.2006, p.131.

⁵ OJ C 305E, 14.12.2006, p. 141.

⁶ OJ C 161, 13.7.2007, p. 66.

demographic future: facts and figures' (SEC(2007)0638),

- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A6-0024/2008),
- A. whereas demography is the combined result of various factors, including birth rate, life expectancy and migratory flows – and whereas the current rates for these factors show that by 2050 we can expect to see large-scale demographic changes in EU Member States reflected in particular by an ageing of the population of Europe, whose average age could rise from 39 in 2004 to 49 in 2050,
- B. whereas these demographic changes might, according to the Commission's estimates, profoundly alter the population structure and the age pyramid, with the number of young people aged between 0 and 14 years falling from 100 million (1975 index) to 66 million in 2050, the population of working age peaking around 2010 at 331 million and gradually diminishing thereafter to some 268 million in 2050, life expectancy increasing by six years for men and five years for women between 2004 and 2050, and the percentage of people aged over 80 climbing from 4.1% in 2005 to 11.4% in 2050,
- C. whereas the European average old-age dependency ratio (number of persons aged over 65 divided by the number aged between 14 and 65) will rise from 25% in 2004 to 53% in 2050,
- D. whereas, however, the economic dependency ratio (number of economically inactive population like pensioners, children and youth in education divided by the number of economically active population at working age) is much more important than the old-age dependency ratio for estimating the costs for society with regard to its non-active population,
- E. whereas demographic change impacts seriously the public spending, which is expected to increase by 10% between 2004 and 2050,
- F. whereas demographic changes should not affect the total size of the European population between now and 2050, but will lead to significant regional imbalances, with some areas of the Union already characterised by large outflows of young people, mainly young women; whereas, similarly, the population of Europe as a proportion of the world's population will fall from 15% 100 years ago to 5% in 2050; whereas EU regions are very differently affected by these changes, with regions that are experiencing net outward migration already having a disproportionately high number of older people, whilst regions with net inward migration are not yet seeing this process of an ageing society, thanks to young people immigrating into the areas,
- G. whereas infertility is one of the causes of demographic decline and whereas it should be recognised as a public-health concern and as a social problem affecting both men and women; reminds the Commission of the 'Call for action on infertility and demography'

which was issued by the Parliament in 2005 and called upon the Commission to put forward recommendations in this area,

- H. whereas immigration is a positive element in the make-up of the European population since the positive balance of 2 million immigrants in 2004 - 2005 is helping to slow the fall in the population of working age, and must be at least maintained if the EU is not to see its working-age population drop sharply between now and 2017,
- I. whereas immigration is only a partial and short-term solution to demographic change in Europe, which requires Member State commitments to secure respect for the principle of gender equality in the public and private sectors, to protect maternity, provide social and economic support for families and take measures to improve the reconciliation of family life with work for men and women,
- J. whereas disability is strongly linked with age and that older people are more likely to have impairment or disability,

General considerations

1. Notes with concern the demographic projections from now until 2050; stresses, however, that 50-year projections are not irreversible predictions but serious warnings to which we must respond today if we are to maintain Europe's competitiveness, the viability of the economy, social cohesion, solidarity between the generations and its social model for tomorrow; considers that the perspective of shrinking populations by 2050 may implicate a lowering of the pressure on the environment and provide an opportunity for sustainable development, which in turn needs proactive policies to adapt spatial planning, housing, transport and all other kinds of infrastructures accordingly;
2. Recalls first of all that the two chief causes of demographic change – a drop in the birth rate and the ageing of the population – are the result of progress; that increased life expectancy is the direct result of progress in science, hygiene and living standards, that women's control over their reproductive lives is the result of their emancipation and goes hand-in-hand with higher levels of education for girls and women's participation in active life and public responsibilities; considers that this should be regarded as an irreversible benefit to humanity;
3. Acknowledges that a society that places children at the centre of its policies is the precondition for a healthier birth rate; insists on the need to create a family-friendly environment and to improve living conditions for families and children and for realising families' real aspirations;
4. Stresses that the average birth rate in the EU, which at 1.5 is abnormally low, is not a reflection of women's choice or of European citizens' actual aspirations for creating a family, and may therefore also be linked to the difficulty of reconciling work with family life (lack of child-care infrastructures, social and economic support for families, and jobs for women), the anxiety-inducing social environment (unstable work situation, expensive housing) and a fear of the future (late access to employment for young people and job insecurity);

5. Recalls that the alcohol and drug usage among youngsters is risk of a public importance and with huge demographic consequences - provokes a decrease of work capacity, ability to start a family etc.; thus recommends establishment of target-oriented framework programmes for prevention of early alcohol and drug using as well as for overcoming drug and alcohol dependence upon young people;
6. Considers that prolonged life expectancy is a positive factor and should be taken as such; therefore, asks the EU to ensure that Member States guarantee that pensioners unable to afford a home, to care for themselves and to end their lives in dignity will not fall into poverty;
7. Encourages comprehensive anti-discrimination measures, since the issue of the demographic future of Europe cannot be separated from the problem of vulnerable groups living on the internal peripheries of society and suffering from severe poverty whose disadvantage is often seen as their own fault, which has an influence not only on children but also on the forthcoming generations;
8. Draws attention to the maltreatment and lack of care to which the elderly are exposed within their families or within the institutions in which they are placed; urges Member States and the European Commission to do more to uncover the extent of abuse of older people in the European Union; notes it has been estimated that as many as 10% of older people experience some form of physical, financial or mental abuse before they die; calls upon the Commission and the Member States to develop the provision of information, warning systems and penalties for maltreatment of this kind; welcomes the Commission's intention to produce a communication on the abuse of older people in 2008; calls for this communication to be the occasion for drawing up a comprehensive strategy for a large-scale information and action campaign in this field (training of care workers, definition of quality standards, penalties for maltreatment);
9. Regrets that adequate measures have not yet been taken to prepare the Union for this challenge, which has been foreseeable for a number of years; regrets in particular that the Lisbon Strategy objectives and the commitments made at the Barcelona European Council on 15 and 16 March 2002 on childcare, employment for the over 55s, better balancing of family life and work and women's participation in working life have not been met by the great majority of EU Member States, and that the Union as a whole is still far from attaining those objectives;
10. Calls on the Member States to seek to provide the high standard of care at affordable prices needed in order to accommodate children and other dependent persons, as laid down in the objectives charted by the 2002 Barcelona European Council, whereby Member States were called upon, by 2010, to provide childcare for at least 90% of children from age 3 to the start of compulsory schooling and at least 33% of children under 3; maintains that the above measures must be such as to enable parents to adjust their working patterns according to their way of life;
11. Considers that the EU's objectives should not be confined to complying with the Barcelona objectives on childcare facilities; believes that those facilities should be

viewed as universal services, available to all who need them;

12. Highlights the fact that many small businesses are poorly prepared for the challenges of an ageing workforce and may require Member State assistance in this regard;
13. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to continue the discussion on this major challenge; encourages the Commission to support the identification and exchange of good practice at regional and local level and to take this opportunity for innovation in the EU; supports its integrated approach to the demographic challenge and the five core policy directions leading to a solidarity pact between the generations, between the sexes, and among the regions; points out that, if demographic challenges are to be successfully met, the Member States must implement the Lisbon Strategy effectively and establish close coordination between macro-economic and social policies in order to enable the growth, the competitiveness and the productivity of the EU's economic system to meet the challenges posed by an ageing population and to enable the Member States to discharge the obligations incumbent upon them by planning innovative policies in the fields of public finance, health services, services of general interest (SIGs), immigration and integration;

The challenge of demographic renewal

14. Recognises that maternity choices are among the most private decisions men and women take, and must be respected; recognises that, since Member States' birth rates range from 1.25 to 2.0, it is possible to influence birth rate curves favourably through coordinated public policies, by creating a family- and child-friendly material and emotional environment; recognises that, along the lines advocated by the European Economic and Social Committee in its proposed European Pact for the Family, these measures should be applied over the long term and provide the necessary framework of stability and protection for parenthood decisions;
15. Calls on the Member States to adopt best practice as regards the length of maternity leave, which varies according to Member State from 14 to 28 weeks, and as regards parental leave, ante-natal care and counselling, a guaranteed wage during pregnancy and return to the same job; similarly, hopes that Member States will take measures and provide for penalties against domestic violence and abuse;
16. Recalls the discrimination suffered by women regarding working conditions and employers' distrust regarding their desire for motherhood; recalls that women are under-employed in spite of their qualifications and that their income level, which is below the reference wage average, is detrimental to their essential economic independence; calls on the Member States to duly implement Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation¹ and to transpose Council Directive 92/85/EC of 19 October 1992 on the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth

¹ OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

or are breastfeeding¹; calls on the Member States to take measures under the latter directive against employers who discriminate directly or indirectly against women workers wishing to start a family;

17. Urges the Member States to promote tax measures conducive to a rise in the birth rate and draws attention to the need, after the birth of a child, to offer specific protection and support to women, and to young single mothers in particular, bearing in mind the growing number of one-parent families, 85% of which are headed by women and which are more exposed than others to a serious risk of poverty;
18. Maintains that the Member States should adopt suitable legislative measures in order to ensure that working women who are thinking of having children do not put themselves at risk of unemployment, poverty and marginalisation; considers, on the contrary, that, as future mothers, working women should be offered incentives and that action should be taken against employers who do not take on women wishing to become mothers or who directly or indirectly threaten working women in order to prevent them from becoming mothers;
19. Draws attention to the need for public spending on young children and large families, particularly for the provision of childcare facilities and for the protection of single mothers and single-parent families, who are at particular risk of social exclusion, isolation and poverty; stresses that these services are in the general interest and contribute to job creation and the development of the local and regional economy; calls on the Commission to provide best practice examples of regions in various Member States;
20. Therefore recommends combined public-private investments in the childcare sector and the pre-school education system;
21. Stresses that adequate access to services for the care of children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other dependants are essential in order to enable full and equal participation of men and women in the labour market, which will have an impact on the level of informal care available within households;
22. Recalls that social dialogue culminated in agreements on parental leave and part-time work, which were the subject of Directives 96/34/EC² and 97/81/EC³; calls on the Member States and the Commission, therefore, to ensure this legislation is implemented with due regard for the subsidiarity principle;
23. Calls on the Member States to facilitate the fostering of abused children, those without parents and those raised in specialist institutions; calls for a debate at European level on the procedures for the adoption of children from Member States or third countries, and to ensure that national and international rules are respected, and where necessary amended,

¹ IJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1.

² Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC, OJ L 145, 19.6.1996, p. 4.

³ Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC, OJ L 14, 20.1.1998, p. 9.

in the interests of the child; calls for the greatest possible vigilance concerning all types of maltreatment and trafficking in human beings;

24. Stresses that family patterns are changing; therefore asks the Commission and the Member States to give serious consideration to this reality when developing and implementing policies;
25. Stresses the need for EU paternity law to be improved; calls upon the Commission to propose specific recommendations designed to encourage fathers to become involved in family life thanks to an entitlement to paternal leave; calls upon the Commission and the Member States to promote fathers' rights as regards the upbringing and the care of children (particularly in the event of separation or divorce) with a view to developing sex equality within European society;
26. Calls upon the Commission to take into consideration the sensitive issue of infertility, which affects both married and unmarried women and couples; calls for infertility to be made the subject of a specific recommendation in order to ensure that all the Member States acknowledge it and that the cost of treating infertility medically and psychologically is covered by social-security schemes; calls for the topic of adoption to be dealt with in conjunction with the topic of infertility and for the possibility of adoption to be offered to couples as an alternative to infertility treatment at all stages of that treatment; also calls upon the Member States to raise the age limit for legal adoption;
27. Notes that infertility is a medical condition recognised by WHO that can have severe effects such as depression; points out that infertility is on the increase and now occurs in about 15 % of couples; therefore calls on the Member States to ensure the right of couples to guarantee universal access to infertility treatment and medically assisted procreation by taking steps with a view to reducing the financial and other obstacles;
28. Encourages the Member States to identify good practice in favour of families, family benefits systems and social services of general interest for protecting and helping families; calls on the Member States to provide support targeted specifically at young parents pursuing their training or studies;
29. Calls on the Member States, in the context of their measures to promote the institution of the family, to recognise the social, economic and educational value of informal family work in the form of caring for children and dependent persons, while examining the possibility of recognising length of service, social security and pension rights for those who carry out such informal work;
30. Encourages the Member States to implement proactive measures in support of parents, such as additional retirement pension entitlements and tax breaks for company crèches, and to pool best practice in this area;

The human resources challenge

31. Notes that, faced with an imbalance between the active and non-active population resulting from demographic change, the Union has substantial scope to increase

employment by employing women, young people, senior citizens and people with disabilities; regrets, therefore, that the Commission and the Council have scrapped the fourth pillar of the employment policy guidelines, which included promoting access by women to the labour market and seeking to make it easier to reconcile family life and work, and that since then such policies have not been a key focus of national reform plans; maintains that full employment must become a short-term objective in the context of the review of the Lisbon Strategy in 2008;

32. Calls on the Member States, primarily together with labour and management, to give priority to increasing the level of employment of women and all those with an immigrant background;
33. Calls for a reform of current European human resource management which, by under-employing people aged less than 25/30 and people over 55, reduces by approximately 30 years the working life of a large part of the population;
34. Calls for an overall, qualitative approach to human resources and proposes defining an 'active life-cycle', combining training, lifelong learning and the optimisation of formal and informal knowledge and qualifications, as well as career, from the start to the end of a person's working life;
35. Stresses that the concept of 'active-life cycle' implies that a career is firmly established as soon as an individual embarks on working life on whatever basis (CDI, CDD, traineeship, assisted employment, etc.) and during transfers from one job to another, by means of re-training accompanied by social cover and pension contributions; recalls that the concept of 'active-life cycle' also implies that workers validate and store up what they have gained from their successive jobs, which must lead to career advancement;
36. Considers that any measures envisaged with a view to the demographic future must take account of the increase in productivity of all the working population, that is to say that not only the number of the economically active compared with the economically non-active is of significance but that the increase in productivity must also be taken into account;
37. Calls for an in-depth dialogue with the social partners, business, academia, NGOs and media in order to prepare for these demographic changes; stresses that future productivity gains will depend chiefly on investment in research and development and in technological innovations, and insists on the vital need for companies to anticipate their skills requirements through forward-looking management of jobs and careers and, through investment in lifelong learning, to assist employees in upgrading their skills;
38. Calls for practical initiatives designed to enable older people to work longer, so that they can pass on their particular work experience to young people, other workers and employers;
39. Encourages investment in education and training, including the use of new technology, in order to raise the level of basic training for everyone, which will ensure that they are able

to adapt in the future and acquire new skills through lifelong learning, as well as the development of measures to help young people with their initial integration into the labour market and older people and vulnerable groups with their reintegration in order to provide genuine career support throughout their working lives;

40. Suggests, on the basis of free collective bargaining or in consultation with works councils - in accordance with traditions of Member States - a cutback as soon as possible in companies resorting to early retirement, and calls on the Member States to promote the role of senior workers and encourage their employment; acknowledges, however, that for older workers who may no longer wish for a full-time occupation owing to the physical demands of their job, the possibilities of part-time work, flexible working hours, distance working or job-sharing may be explored, as an innovative form of gradual retirement limiting the stressful effects of retirement;
41. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to propose incentives which will make it easier for young people to enter the employment market, for example by encouraging workers who have reached retirement age to act as mentors for young workers and by introducing job-sharing and part-time working, with a view to facilitating the hand-over from one generation to the next;
42. Calls for a thorough reform of career management for senior employees, who are currently penalised from the age of 50 by discrimination on recruitment, inadequate access to training, particularly in new technology, the absence of recognition of acquired experience and the rarity of professional advancement; recalls that age bars in relation to skills training are discriminatory and calls on Member States to highlight this to employers and training providers; to that end, calls for the effective transposition and implementation of Directive 2000/78/EC¹ as soon as possible which outlaws discrimination on the basis of age in training and employment; considers that beyond the question of access to skills, older workers often need help in the more personal areas related to work such as interview technique, confidence building and CV writing, calls on Member States to consider specific employment advice for older workers and to set up more government programmes aimed at employing senior citizens; calls upon the Commission to monitor and to take action vis-à-vis Member States whose legislation continues to discriminate on the basis of age or disability;
43. Calls upon the Commission to monitor and to take action vis-à-vis Member States whose legislation continues to discriminate on the basis of age and disability (and thus infringes the treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which, with effect from 1 January 2009 at the soonest, will be legally binding throughout the EU), so that the Member States concerned repeal such legislation without delay;
44. Calls on the Commission to collect segregated statistical data on the various age groups according to the different problems faced and the wide spectrum of discrimination on the grounds of age;

¹ Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

45. Recalls that older people are not a single category, highlights in particular that older women and older people from ethnic minorities may face multiple discrimination;
46. Stresses that part-time work is a useful step towards re-entering the labour market; encourages Member States to support particularly smaller firms in the promotion of part-time and flexible working practices; reemphasises the positive value of part-time work for older workers, who may no longer wish for a full-time occupation;
47. Calls on Member States to promote the role of older workers within the labour market by highlighting the benefits of employing older workers and encouraging employers to adopt flexible working practices which encourage older workers to engage in the labour market;
48. Asks the Commission to conduct a study based on gender-disaggregated data on tax benefits and existing barriers related to employment with a focus on the ageing population;
49. Urges the Commission and Member States to improve the access to learning throughout the working life;
50. Recalls that the principle of a statutory retirement age is one of the achievements of the European social models and a guarantee against working lives being compulsorily extended beyond reasonable limits;
51. Highlights the massive disparity in average occupational pension between men and women due to career breaks taken to care for children or elderly relatives; calls upon the Member States to take action in order to ensure that work breaks for maternity and parental leave cease to constitute a penalty when women's pension entitlements are calculated; urges the Member States to envisage bonuses to be added to pensions on the basis of the number of children raised, and to recognise the role of the carer in society;
52. Calls on the Member States to take the steps required to modernise social security and welfare systems, including pension schemes, in order to make them financially viable and enable them to cope with the effects of population ageing; maintains that special attention should be focused on the situation of elderly women, who are more vulnerable to isolation and poverty;
53. Calls on the Commission to draw up a comparative study by Member State of the various pension and social security schemes for women in order to identify best practices for increasing women's employment and facilitating the combination of family life and work;
54. Urges the Commission and the Member States to urgently focus on employment support for older workers given the planned rise in the state pension age in many Member States;
55. Believes, however, that the over-65s today have a better life expectancy and quality of life than ever before; calls, accordingly, on the Member States and the social partners to promote and not prevent the establishment of rules and conventions enabling the prolongation, voluntarily on the worker's part, of working life beyond age 65, with fiscal and social benefits for both worker and employer;

56. Calls on the Member States to develop measures to enable women to reconcile work and professional advancement with their family obligations and to combat the discrimination and stereotypes which continue to affect them on the labour market and in education; recalls the principle of equality between men and women and the European social model's inviolable principle of equal pay for equal work at the same workplace;
57. Therefore calls for employment law measures finally to end this form of discrimination, especially the gender pay gap, and for gender budgeting to be applied in public budgets;
58. Recalls that a good work environment is an important productivity factor; calls on the Member States to promote actions in the workplace that reduce the risk of harm to ageing workers, these include interventions to improve the psychosocial and physical work environment, changes to work content and organisation, improving the general health, well-being, and work ability of workers, and increasing the abilities and professional competence of workers; calls on enterprises to invest in the prevention of accidents at work, occupational health, hygiene and social dialogue;
59. Underlines that it is essential that the workplace be made accessible and thus safe for older workers and workers with disabilities, through the provision of reasonable accommodation, the provision of special equipment adapted to their individual needs and requirements; also stresses that an accessible environment enables older people to pursue an autonomous life, hence saving public money spent on institutionalised care;
60. Calls for Member States to introduce the right to ask for flexible or part-time work which applies not only to parents but also to older workers who may in turn have caring responsibilities;
61. Emphasises the role of the SMEs as key job generators in the EU;
62. Notes that the service sector is the largest employer of women, immigrants and older workers, calls for the urgent completion of the internal market for services;

The challenge of solidarity between the generations and regions

63. Recalls that the principle of solidarity between the generations, a principle of excellence of the European social models, is based on working people covering the replacement incomes and social security and health costs of those who are not working (children, young people, dependants and the elderly); insists that the principle of solidarity should be maintained in spite of the foreseeable demographic imbalance;
64. Stresses the importance of active intervention by the public authorities, in particular through the provision of social services of general interest (SSIGs), to help families and young children and also to provide facilities and care for old people and all dependants; calls on the Commission to guarantee the legal security of social services of general interest in Community law guaranteeing universal access and the solidarity principle;

65. Stresses the importance of sharing of information and best practice among Member States on how health systems can prepare for the increased demand of an ageing population; particularly in light of the fact that an ageing population will have a strong upward impact on public spending on health care, as disability and illness rises sharply at older ages especially amongst the very old (aged 80+) which will be the fastest growing segment of the population in the decades to come;
66. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to take stronger action to combat the non-payment of taxes and social-security contributions, in order to ensure that pension schemes are viable; considers that the Member States should introduce active, effective employment policies and urges them to offer flexible schemes and scope for personal choice as regards the timing of retirement (beyond the minimum age) by means of incentive schemes aimed at workers who decide to remain active for longer;
67. Observes that, in view of the proven mobility of European workers and the segmentation of employment markets, there is a need for greater mutual knowledge of the various pension schemes and it must be possible for a pension to be switched from one Member State's scheme to another, irrespective of whether that scheme is public, private or based on mutual benefit;
68. Points to the huge contribution made by the elderly to social cohesion and to the economy as well as to the fact that their active participation in family and inter-generational relationships enhances the redistribution of resources within the family circle; further considers that their voluntary activities should be facilitated and encouraged within the social economy by means of financial benefits; considers, finally, that their consumption of goods and of leisure, care and welfare services is an expanding economic sector and a new source of wealth known as 'grey gold'; calls, therefore, on the Member States to promote and develop the economic and social participation of elderly people, paying particular attention to their physical well-being and the quality of their social and financial living conditions;
69. Calls on the Member States to promote the role of the elderly in order to maintain solidarity between the generations, and, in combination with partners at local level, to facilitate their participation in voluntary activities of an educational, cultural or entrepreneurial nature;
70. Highlights the importance of voluntary work as a pathway for many people re-engaging in the labour market, encourages governments to make it easier for older people to engage in voluntary work whilst receiving benefits;
71. Recalls that SSIGs (covering in particular care, health and the upbringing of young children) make it easier for parents to enter the employment market and help to combat poverty, especially in the case of single-parent families; firmly believes such services to be essential if the EU is to respond to demographic challenges; furthermore, by creating jobs, SSIGs stimulate local and regional economic development and increase the EU's competitiveness; from this point of view, considers that services of general economic interest (SSIEGs) must be identified and the impact which they have in social and economic terms must be assessed; calls for quality indicators to be established in order to

enable progress towards the Barcelona objectives to be measured; points out that SSIEGs intended for the elderly and for dependents must receive the same attention and the same treatment;

72. Stresses that in shrinking regions the voluntary sector and social networks make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of local people but cannot replace the essential role played by the public authorities in providing services of general interest in the regions; considers that this active citizenship must be recognised and the bodies involved supported as regional policy partners; stresses that this sets in motion learning processes that enable a region to meet the challenges of demographic change;
73. Encourages the Member States and regional authorities to make use of the Structural Funds to this end, and calls on the Commission to support, within the framework of Territorial Cooperation (Article 7(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund)¹, the exchange of experience between regions in which the 'silver economy' already plays a major role or where it will do so in future;
74. Calls for a wide-ranging debate on the right to a decent retirement for all as a condition for solvency, dignity and social inclusion of the elderly; recalls the huge contribution older people make to social cohesion through volunteering and caring;
75. Calls on the Member States to enter into a coordinated debate on possible reforms likely to ensure the sustainability of pension and social security systems;
76. Calls on Member States which are not already investigating the relationship between the awarding of pensions and incentives to work, particularly with regards flexible working, to consider this so as to remove disincentives to working;
77. Notes that the ageing of European society covers substantial regional inequalities; notes that, as national data on demographic changes mask differing local and regional realities, it is sometimes hard to identify needs for infrastructure and financial transfers from central government; calls on the Commission to help improve the quality and reliability of data and statistics on demographic trends, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to further accelerate the process of freedom of movement for all workers within an enlarged European Union even before 2014;
78. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider the generation dimension when considering solidarity between the regions of Europe and to take into account the major territorial impacts of the differing demographic trends at work within the Union; stresses that these impacts are important in terms of housing and infrastructure, particularly in urban areas which are likely to experience higher numbers of elderly people and higher concentrations of immigrant communities; stresses also the specific needs, at local level in regions with ageing populations, for investment in local services

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25. Regulation amended by Regulation (EC) No 1989/2006 (OJ L 411, 30.12.2006, p. 6).

so as to take account of the needs of elderly people and enable them to lead an independent life for as long as possible; proposes that the allocation of structural funds and the opportunities offered by the ESF in order to make local social capital available for services should take account of these investment needs; calls for these opportunities to be retained after 2013; points out that regions experiencing net outward migration need to take measures to maintain a natural population mix through investments to promote employment, training and access to public services;

79. Encourages Member States to promote intergenerational projects, where older people work with younger people to share skills and gain new expertise, calls on the Commission to facilitate the exchange of good practice in this area;
80. Calls on the Member States to assist regions of net emigration by guaranteeing a high level of services of general interest (e.g. education including pre-school and child care, welfare and health services, postal services) and accessibility (e.g. of public transport, transport infrastructures and telecommunications networks) and to safeguard economic participation and skills (e.g. through training including methods of lifelong learning and use of and investment in new technologies); calls for the practical framework for fulfilment of these tasks to be adapted to local needs and local actors and to improve their adaptability; draws particular attention to the situation of islands, border areas, mountainous regions and other areas remote from centres of population;
81. Welcomes the proposal for the establishment of a European Integration Fund; calls on the competent national, regional and local authorities responsible for drawing up and managing Cohesion Policy and Rural Development Policy to work even more closely together to encourage people to move to rural regions with a shrinking population, by improving the living and working conditions in these regions;
82. Welcomes the fact that, in the fourth report on social and economic cohesion, the Commission has identified the growing demographic imbalance as one of the challenges facing it; awaits with interest the results of the social consultations and the definition of the role of regional policy in combating the adverse effects of demographic change in the next programming period;
83. Reminds Member States of the multiple disadvantages that carers, particular older carers, experience; suggests that more support should be offered to these groups to enable them to overcome multiple obstacles to employment;
84. In deprived urban districts, suburban and rural areas demographic trends are likely to experience depopulation with decisive impact on housing and infrastructure;
85. Calls on the Member States to increase the availability of proper housing for families, especially for one-parent families and elderly people, for example by means of "intergenerational projects", in connection with urban development and town planning;
86. Stresses that global demographic imbalances risk accentuating development inequalities and migratory pressures; calls on the Commission and the Member States to include these elements in their immigration policies with a view to co-development;

The challenge of integrated immigration

87. Notes that the use of immigration is, and will continue to be, an element in the Union's demography and a positive contribution from an economic, social and cultural point of view; calls, therefore, on the Commission, the Member States and the social partners to develop a clear and reasoned approach to immigration in order to counter xenophobic and racist opinions and attitudes and promote the full and effective integration of migrants into society;
88. Recognises, however, that migration offers in particular to regions experiencing net outflows the opportunity to stem the negative impact of demographic change, and calls, therefore, on the Member States to recognise the integration of migrants as a strategically important policy measure;
89. Considers that integration policies should be strengthened in the EU Member States so as to facilitate the establishment of migrants in the EU; therefore welcomes Council Decision 2007/435/EC of 25 June 2007 establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'¹ and trusts that it will contribute to facilitating the social and economic integration of migrants in the EU;
90. Stresses the need for immigration policies to be laid down and to be coordinated by the Member States, with the two-fold aim of meeting the needs of the employment market and financing the Member States' pension schemes by ensuring that immigrants enjoy the same living and working conditions; calls upon the Commission to consider a strategy and specific measures relating to economic immigration and to submit them as soon as possible;
91. Stresses the need to improve coordination of the Member States' immigration policies to ensure that immigrants are better integrated into society and into the formal economy and to ensure that they receive legal and social security (including pension entitlements); calls on the Member States to fight resolutely against human trafficking and to penalise employers who employ and/or exploit illegal workers, in doing so avoiding the criminalisation of illegal migrants; welcomes the European initiative against illegal working and against the exploitation and the shameful working conditions suffered by illegal migrants;
92. Recognises the specific role of cities in this regard, as most immigrants settle in cities, and underlines the need for the Commission and Member States to take into account the impact on cities of immigration policies and to involve them closely in the shaping and implementation of policies related to immigration; notes with interest the 'Integrating Cities' process launched in 2006 by the European Commission and EURO CITIES and the Milan Declaration signed on 6 November 2007 to ensure the continuation of dialogue on the implementation of the Common Basic Principles on Integration at city level;

¹ OJ L 168, 28.6.2007, p. 18.

93. Draws attention to the fact that legal migration should benefit the EU, migrants themselves and their countries of origin; calls on the Commission and the Member States to diversify the status of third-country immigrant workers, from temporary work contracts to medium-term and long-term contracts, not only to meet employment market requirements but also to offer different life choices; calls, therefore, on the Member States to bolster the measures aimed at bringing about the social and civic integration of immigrants; advocates allowing migrant workers to change to permanent status after a certain period of stay;
94. Welcomes the initiative by the Commission and the Member States of taking into account the global dimension of immigration and the consequences of economic migration to the EU for the development of the migrants' countries of origin; stresses the need to take into account the risks of a brain drain from the country of origin; calls on the Commission and Member States to develop effective measures, together with the third countries concerned, to counter this phenomenon;
95. Insists that the human dimension of immigration should not disappear beneath strictly economic considerations and that the choice of family integration should remain a possibility for migrants who so wish; calls for close cooperation between European immigration policies and those on employment, social affairs, education and regional policy;
96. Recalls that financial remittances from immigrants in Europe are a very significant method of financing the lives of older people in developing countries;
97. Points out that immigration policy must be geared to anti-discrimination and aim for a higher degree of legal, social and societal equality, both for migrants already in Europe and those to come in the future;
98. Considers that family members accompanying immigrant labour should be given residence permits and, where appropriate, work permits;
99. Points to the important role of migrant women and calls on the Member States to accord them the place that they deserve in integration policies and to fully guarantee their rights;
100. Calls on the Member States to include on the agenda of a future summit an exchange of views on demographic changes and on recognised good practice in fields such as active ageing, young people's employment, family policy and integration of migrants;
101. Welcomes the Commission's undertaking to present a status report every two years in conjunction with the European Demographic Forum; hopes that this report will also assess the impact of policies put in place by the Member States in the areas concerned; endorses the Commission's intention to include every two years in its report a chapter on infertility, as well as a chapter on the EU's preparations for demographic change; encourages the Commission to set up a system of indicators for monitoring and analysis of demographic developments in the different Member States and in the Union;
102. Notes that the demographic future of Europe creates new problems as regards democratic

mechanisms and the channels through which the voice representing the multiplicity of Europe's components can make itself heard and exert influence in political decision-making; considers that the crucial issue in an ageing society is that of the political representation of minors, who represent the common future (and hence the political future) of the community yet currently have no voice and exert no influence in decision-making. For a variety of reasons the voice of immigrants (both adults and their children) cannot easily make itself heard. The question of a voice and political representation for social groups (in particular minors) which currently lack them is a crucial issue which calls for a thorough, wide-ranging debate;

103. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to increase awareness among EU citizens on the demographic challenges in Europe, e.g. by conducting campaigns and pilot projects on the issue

104. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, national parliaments and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

For a number of years it has been apparent that, with a falling birth rate and a steady increase in life expectancy, the population structure and age pyramid in the European Union will undergo profound changes between now and 2050. The main features of these changes, according to projections, will be an overall ageing of the population, a decline in the working-age population and an increase in the old-age dependency ratio.

The European Union could in that case be confronted with a loss of competitiveness and a drop in growth compared with the regions of the world experiencing substantial population increases. It is predicted, too, that the demographic imbalance will have significant effects on the financing of social security and on the balancing of pension schemes.

The issues associated with these demographic changes are not new. The European Union came up with an initial series of responses at the European Summits in Lisbon and Barcelona, but the commitments made have not been fully met.

In its communication on *'The demographic future of Europe - From challenge to opportunity'*, the Commission relaunches the discussion in a constructive way and proposes five core policy directions:

- for demographic renewal,
- for longer working lives of better quality,
- for a more competitive Europe,
- for better integration of migrants,
- for guaranteeing social security and solidarity between the generations.

The rapporteur follows the Commission's positive approach and her proposals are in line with the five core policy directions in the communication.

The report sets out a principal objective for the European Union: faced with these demographic changes, we must maintain economic competitiveness while guaranteeing the European social model over the long term.

That will require the development of new policies:

- on childcare and on professional equality for men and women, in order to initiate a demographic renewal,
- on education and forward-looking management of jobs and careers, to optimise human resources,
- by using new financial resources to guarantee solidarity between the generations and between regions;

- by applying a calm and reasoned approach to immigration to ensure successful integration.

18.12.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY(*)

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the demographic future of Europe
(2007/2156(INI))

Draftswoman(*): Karin Resetarits

(*) Procedure with associated committees – Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Points out that global migration flows have and will continue to have major repercussions for the countries of destination and departure; stresses that, for the EU, the impact of immigrants on population ageing in the EU depends on full economic, social and political integration of migrants, regardless of the Member State in which they are settled; points to the important role of migrant women and calls on the Member States to accord them the place that they deserve in integration policies and to fully guarantee their rights;
2. Points out that policies enabling both parents to balance work and family life, protection for mothers and compliance with the principle of gender equality in both public and private spheres are the only means of countering falling birth rates in the long term;
3. Acknowledges that a society that places children at the centre of its policies is the precondition for a healthier birth rate; insist on a need to create a family-friendly environment and to improve living conditions for families and children and for realising families' real aspirations;
4. Recommends the promotion of a special social policy for teaching responsible parental

behaviour;

5. Therefore urges balanced budgetary provision for non-discriminatory access to education at all levels, equal opportunities for men and women and measures in support of families as well as of children, childcare support measures and measures to protect single mothers;
6. Encourages the development of a variety of incentives to assist mothers and their partners in reconciling professional and family life;
7. Welcomes all measures to assist working parents and calls for the recognition of family work provided by parents, especially mothers;
8. Refers to the fact that many people suffer from unintended childlessness; calls on the Member States to adopt harmonised measures aimed at simplifying and speeding up child adoption procedures while safeguarding the rights of the children concerned as well as to drop upper-age limits for those seeking to adopt so that older people can become legally eligible for adoption; stresses that maturity can be an advantage when caring for children who may have led troubled lives;
9. Calls on the Commission to recognise that low birth rates and increased infertility are major factors of demographic decline;
10. Notes that infertility is a medical condition recognised by WHO that can have severe effects such as depression; points out that infertility is on the increase and now occurs in about 15 % of couples; therefore calls on the Member States to ensure the right of couples to guarantee universal access to infertility treatment and medically assisted procreation by taking steps with a view to reducing the financial and other obstacles;
11. Urges the Member States to apply rules providing for paid maternity/paternity leave at the time of a child's birth and to encourage couples to make use of their entitlements in such a way that parental leave can be shared fairly between women and men; to that end, urges the Member States to combat the economic, social, and cultural prejudices associated with the right to paternity leave; calls on the Commission to revise Directive 96/34/EC on parental leave;
12. Encourages the Member States to implement proactive measures in support of parents, such as additional retirement pension entitlements and tax breaks for company crèches, and to pool best practice in this area;
13. Points out that proactive measures to promote access to the labour market and career advancement will encourage people to become parents;
14. Stresses that family patterns are changing; therefore asks the Commission and the Member States to give serious consideration to this reality when developing and implementing policies;
15. Notes that equal treatment of women and men in the job market has not been achieved as women continue to be recruited to low-paid jobs that are not commensurate with their qualifications, and that women shoulder most family responsibilities without gaining

anything in return; also notes the failure to create appropriate working conditions for mothers and to entitle women to return to work after a period of maternity or parental leave, which exacerbates the falling birth rate; calls especially in this context for Member States to implement properly Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women;

16. Calls on the Member States to review their tax systems and to implement tax rates based on individual rights; recommends the development of child and family-friendly social security systems;
17. Maintains that the proven inequality, in terms of pay, between men and women and the continuing recruitment of women to badly paid jobs not matching their qualifications undermine women's essential economic independence, which directly influences their decision to have children;
18. Calls, as one of the preconditions for equal rights, for women to be given the legal right to return to work after a period of maternity or parental leave and for such periods to count towards retirement pension entitlements and seniority;
19. Therefore calls for employment law measures finally to end this form of discrimination, especially the gender pay gap, and for gender budgeting to be applied in public budgets; encourages, furthermore, the Member States to promote an equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men, including through awareness-raising campaigns, and to encourage men to make greater use of their parental leave entitlements;
20. Stresses the needs to introduce work-life balance policies covering, in addition to people in work, young people still in higher or vocational education or training, so as to enable them to balance their educational and family aspirations;
21. Encourages the Member States to acknowledge the educational, social, human and economic value of informal work within the family, looking after children or dependants, including by granting retirement pension and social security entitlements to carers, and to take appropriate steps to ensure that informal skills acquired in this way may be put to good use on the labour market;
22. Maintains, given the social and economic challenges posed by the falling birth rate, that the right conditions must be put in place to enable couples to have as many children as they wish, as otherwise no society of any kind will be able to exist or develop, and that mothers and fathers must be supported accordingly; calls for social security and welfare services to be made child- and family-friendly, for the reimbursement of, among other expenditure, childcare costs, and for lower rates of VAT to be charged on all products intended for children;
23. Urges the Member States to promote tax measures conducive to a rise in the birth rate and draws attention to the need, after the birth of a child, to offer specific protection and support to women, and to young single mothers in particular, bearing in mind the growing number of one-parent families, 85% of which are headed by women and which

- are more exposed than others to a serious risk of poverty;
24. Takes the view that targeted labour law measures should be taken to put an end to all forms of indirect discrimination based on workers' parental responsibilities;
 25. Considers that resources from the Structural and Social Funds should be used to create family-friendly living spaces in rural and urban areas;
 26. Calls on the Member States to increase the availability of proper housing for families, especially for one-parent families and elderly people, for example by means of "intergenerational projects", in connection with urban development and town planning;
 27. Calls for flexible child care places of good quality for all children, and other family-friendly services, regardless of their parents' financial situation, to give children maximum equality of opportunity; and so that parents can freely choose how best to combine family and work life;
 28. Notes that a purely quantitative increase in childcare places, as defined in the Barcelona objectives, is not enough; above all, greater diversity of supply and an increase in quality are required; as well as the needs of parents who freely choose to care themselves for their children, within the family should be considered; calls on the Member States to seek to provide the high standard of care at affordable prices needed in order to accommodate children and other dependent persons, as laid down in the objectives charted by the 2002 Barcelona European Council, whereby Member States were called upon, by 2010, to provide childcare for at least 90% of children from age 3 to the start of compulsory schooling and at least 33% of children under 3; maintains that the above measures must be such as to enable parents to adjust their working patterns according to their way of life;
 29. Therefore recommends combined public-private investments in the childcare sector and the pre-school education system;
 30. Considers that family members accompanying immigrant labour should be given residence permits and, where appropriate, work permits;
 31. Calls on the Commission to draw up a comparative study by Member State of the various pension and social security schemes for women in order to identify best practices for increasing women's employment and facilitating the combination of family life and work;
 32. Stresses the need, in the light of demographic changes, to review the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing schemes in the Member States under which women leave the labour market early, particularly in view of the general trend towards revising pension schemes;
 33. Calls on the Member States to take the steps required to modernise social security and welfare systems, including pension schemes, in order to make them financially viable and enable them to cope with the effects of population ageing; maintains that special attention should be focused on the situation of elderly women, who are more vulnerable to isolation and poverty;

34. Proposes that the Member States create and subsidise “bridge-between-generation centres”, in which older people would undertake paid work in caring for and educating children;
35. Recommends that the Commission reopen its ‘Childcare Network’ department in the relevant Directorate-General, to help pool best practice and rise to the demographic challenge;
36. Considers that immigrant labour should have the same benefits and rights/obligations as the host country's citizens;
37. Calls on the Member States, primarily together with labour and management, to give priority to increasing the level of employment of women and all those with an immigrant background;
38. Notes that birth rates are rising in a society which guarantees all citizens economic and social rights with ensuing security for all citizens;
39. Considers that any measures envisaged with a view to the demographic future must take account of the increase in productivity of all the working population, that is to say that not only the number of the economically active compared with the economically non-active is of significance but that the increase in productivity must also be taken into account;
40. Insists that people of other ethnic origin must never be used as buffers against economic shocks.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.12.2007
Result of final vote	+: 18 -: 0 0: 9
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Hiltrud Breyer, Edite Estrela, Věra Flasarová, Claire Gibault, Zita Gurmai, Esther Herranz García, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Pia Elda Locatelli, Doris Pack, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Zita Pleštinská, Christa Prets, Karin Resetarits, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anne Van Lancker, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Gabriela Crețu, Iratxe García Pérez, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Donata Gottardi, Anna Hedh, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Marusya Ivanova Lyubcheva, Maria Petre
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Manolis Mavrommatis, Paul Rübig

19.12.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the demographic future of Europe
(2007/2156(INI))

Draftswoman: Bilyana Ilieva Raeva

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Supports the Commission in establishing a long-term demographic strategy at the EU level; underlines that any solution must contain elements of public finance, appropriate economic growth, employment and labour market policies, effective policies in support of demographic renewal and policies relating to education, lifelong learning and healthcare, and must consider the different practices as regards social benefits in the Member States;
2. Recalls that the Member States should meet their obligations under the Stability and Growth Pact as a way of overcoming demographic challenges;
3. Is concerned about the forecasted increase in the age-related expenditures and its effects, which put enormous pressure on the sustainability of the Member States' public finances; calls on the Member States to modernise pension systems (contribution-based, occupational and private) and to develop new financial products for long-term care; welcomes the use of a variety of financial instruments, while stressing the need for security and transparency for individuals to save and invest;
4. Calls upon the Member States to consider tax incentives for companies employing older workers in order to ease the burden on public spending on the one hand and employees in the form of tax relief for marginal income received in addition to their pension on the other, so as to make it easier for them to remain in the employment market on a voluntary basis; urges the Member States to provide for flexible policies for those leaving the

- labour market and introducing lifelong training practices;
5. Asks the Commission to conduct a study based on gender-disaggregated data on tax benefits and existing barriers related to employment with a focus on the ageing population;
 6. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to further accelerate the process of freedom of movement for all workers within an enlarged European Union even before 2014;
 7. Recalls that boosting the number of jobs is a high priority; invites the Commission and the Member States to propose incentives and favourable conditions for the easy entry of young people into the labour market by supporting, for example, mentoring between workers having reached retirement age and young workers through job-sharing and part-time schemes, more intensive participation in extra-mural training, more part-time jobs and distance working for young people and for people with care responsibilities;
 8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to use stricter measures against any evasion of tax and social security contributions ensuring the sustainability of pension schemes; agrees that the ratio of social benefits for unemployment to the minimum salary level in certain Member States is far too low in a way that it can undermine potential employment; urges the Member States to provide for flexible systems and opportunities for personal choice with regard to the time of retirement (beyond the minimum age threshold) through incentives for workers who decide to continue to work longer and disincentives for early retirement not caused by illness;
 9. Stresses the need to define and coordinate immigration policies between the Member States with the twin aim of meeting the needs of the labour market and funding national pension systems while guaranteeing immigrants equal living and working conditions; calls on the Commission to consider and submit as soon as possible a specific strategy and measures relating to economic immigration;
 10. Calls on the Member States to focus on the impact of demographic changes on the economy in their National Reform Programmes with a view to the new stage of the Lisbon Strategy and to closely coordinate macroeconomic policies so that the growth, competitiveness and productivity of the EU can meet the demographic challenges; asks the Commission to set up benchmarks based on best practices of the most successful countries with economic and social strategies overcoming demographic challenges.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	19.12.2007
Result of final vote	+: 34 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Mariela Velichkova Baeva, Zsolt László Becsey, Pervenche Berès, Slavi Binev, Sebastian Valentin Bodu, Sharon Bowles, Udo Bullmann, Jonathan Evans, Elisa Ferreira, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Donata Gottardi, Gunnar Hökmark, Karsten Friedrich Hoppenstedt, Guntars Krasts, Kurt Joachim Lauk, Andrea Losco, Astrid Lulling, Gay Mitchell, John Purvis, Alexander Radwan, Bernhard Rapkay, Heide Rühle, Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Olle Schmidt, Peter Skinner, Margarita Starkevičiūtė, Cornelis Visser, Sahra Wagenknecht
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Daniel Dăianu, Werner Langen, Gianni Pittella, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Andreas Schwab
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Theodor Dumitru Stolojan

20.12.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the demographic future of Europe
(2007/2156(INI))

Draftswoman: Elisabeth Schroedter

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Considers that the adverse demographic changes currently taking place represent serious problems and challenges for the European Union, the governments of the Member States and the regional authorities; points out that the crisis which these changes might generate could lead to the breakdown of many European policies, including the cohesion policy; stresses that, in order to respond appropriately to these challenges, a thorough analysis is needed of the causes and possible effects of the crisis, with particular reference to its influence on regional policy;
2. Notes that the impact of demographic change on individual regions is serious and requires different adjustment strategies depending on whether the region concerned is a region of migration or of shrinking population; notes that quality of life is defined differently in regions of shrinking population, which are mostly rural regions, from the way in which it is defined in regions with a growing population, and therefore considers that different support strategies are needed;
3. Notes, however, the situation of some of the remotest regions such as French Guiana and Réunion which, in spite of sharply contrasting migration balances, share a strong population growth marked by far higher birth rates than the EU average and a population which - while not untouched by the ageing trend - is still much younger than that in the remainder of the EU, therefore calling for a differentiated approach;
4. Notes that all regions, including regions of net emigration, have specific potential in a

variety of fields; calls for them to be given help in developing that potential to the full in the interests of their regional prosperity; calls on the Member States and regional authorities, therefore, as part of their regional policy, to give priority to autonomous development strategies in such regions, since experience shows that this can stimulate local and regional economic activity, thereby making shrinking regions more attractive again;

5. Notes that, particularly in shrinking regions, innovative and decentralised infrastructure actions, together with a high degree of active citizenship, improve the quality of life and are factors which strengthen economic stability and ties to the region concerned, including among young people; calls on the Member States, in cooperation with their regional and local authorities, to support programmes to be set up for such development plans; calls on the Commission and the Member States to create opportunities in shrinking regions for cooperation between business, the public sector, schools and universities with a view to creating regional innovation systems, and for participation in national and international skills networks;
6. Notes that the constantly growing population of older people, with their specific needs in terms of goods and services, can provide a fresh economic impetus for regional development, which can in turn unlock new potential for regions with growing numbers of older people; points out that this situation can be seen as an opportunity for new jobs in a growing market for new products and services which improve the quality of life of older people, for economic growth and for improving the EU's competitiveness, this being the so-called 'silver economy' approach; encourages the Member States and regional authorities to make use of the Structural Funds to this end, and calls on the Commission to support, within the framework of Territorial Cooperation (Article 7(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund¹, the exchange of experience between regions in which the 'silver economy' already plays a major role or where it will do so in future;
7. Stresses that in shrinking regions the voluntary sector and social networks make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of local people but cannot replace the essential role played by the public authorities in providing services of general interest in the regions; considers that this active citizenship must be recognised and the bodies involved supported as regional policy partners; stresses that this sets in motion learning processes that enable a region to meet the challenges of demographic change;
8. Calls on the Member States to assist regions of net emigration by guaranteeing a high level of services of general interest (e.g. education including pre-school and child care, welfare and health services, postal services) and accessibility (e.g. of public transport, transport infrastructures and telecommunications networks) and to safeguard economic participation and skills (e.g. through training including methods of lifelong learning and use of and investment in new technologies); calls for the practical framework for fulfilment of these tasks to be adapted to local needs and local actors and to improve their adaptability; draws particular attention to the situation of islands, border areas,

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1989/2006 (OJ L 411, 30.12.2006, p. 6).

mountainous regions and other areas remote from centres of population;

9. Welcomes the proposal for the establishment of a European Integration Fund; calls on the competent national, regional and local authorities responsible for drawing up and managing Cohesion Policy and Rural Development Policy to work even more closely together to encourage people to move to rural regions with a shrinking population, by improving the living and working conditions in these regions;
10. Welcomes the fact that, in the fourth report on social and economic cohesion, the Commission has identified the growing demographic imbalance as one of the challenges facing it; awaits with interest the results of the social consultations and the definition of the role of regional policy in combating the adverse effects of demographic change in the next programming period;
11. Also urges that advantage be taken of opportunities within the regional policy framework for co-financing various activities designed to meet the challenge of demographic change during the current programming period;
12. Proposes to the Commission that it should promote, as part of Territorial Cooperation, Europe-wide networks in which regional and local authorities and civil society bodies can learn from one another in tackling the problems resulting from demographic change.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	18.12.2007
Result of final vote	+: 39 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Emmanouil Angelakas, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Jean Marie Beaupuy, Rolf Berend, Wolfgang Bulfon,, Bairbre de Brún, Petru Filip, Gerardo Galeote, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Ambroise Guellec, Gábor Harangozó, Marian Harkin, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Rumiana Jeleva, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Evgeni Kirilov, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Jamila Madeira, Mario Mantovani, Miroslav Mikolášik, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Maria Petre, Markus Pieper, Pierre Pribetich, Wojciech Roszkowski, Elisabeth Schroedter, Grażyna Staniszewska, Catherine Stihler, Margie Sudre, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jan Březina, Brigitte Douay, Den Dover, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Samuli Pohjamo, Nikolaos Vakalis, Iuliu Winkler
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	

21.11.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the demographic future of Europe
(2007/2156(INI))

Draftswoman: Magda Kósáné Kovács

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

The role of migration

1. Considers that the demographic changes in the EU, the ageing society and the demands of the labour markets require a consistent and coherent migration policy at European level; highlights that legal migration should provide benefits for both the EU and the countries of origin; urges the Member States to develop a common policy on legal migration as called for in its resolution of 26 September 2007¹, especially concerning the clear definition of economic migrants, joint residence/work permits and the possibility for immigrants to transfer their social rights;
2. Considers that integration policies should be strengthened in the EU Member States so as to facilitate the establishment of migrants in the EU; therefore welcomes Council Decision 2007/435/EC of 25 June 2007 establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'² and trusts that it will contribute to facilitating the social and economic integration of migrants in the EU;

Families and children

¹ P6_TA-PROV(2007)0414.

² OJ L 168, 28.6.2007, p. 18.

3. Agrees that, besides legal immigration, the increase in the birth rate is a priority; emphasises that this priority can be pursued through efficient family and social policies on fighting poverty of certain families, reducing the number of children at risk of poverty and promoting equal opportunities;
4. Considers that, for the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women and for the assurance of children's rights to family and protection, a more balanced and flexible organisation of work and family life and improved social services are necessary; the different role of men and women in society should however be taken into account;
5. Considers that the family policies of the Member States should, among other things, aim to reduce the inequality of opportunities offered to citizens with and without children, ensure the availability of parental help services in the form of education and care for young children, care and supervision for older children and offer both men and women better opportunities for lifelong learning and for achieving a balance between their private and professional lives;
6. Calls on the Member States to more actively utilise the European Structural Funds to implement various family policies, including support for equal opportunities and the balancing of family and professional life at national, regional and local levels;

Discrimination against older workers

7. Welcomes the fact that the life expectancy of European citizens has grown significantly, and therefore the employment rate of older workers has been rising rapidly since 2000; encourages Member States to develop policies and exchange best practices to favour the employment of older workers;
8. Recalls that Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation prohibits discrimination on grounds of age in employment and occupation and gives Member States the possibility to take positive action to prevent discrimination and to create equal opportunities;
9. Strongly condemns the discriminatory prejudices which older workers may face; calls on Member States to promote lifelong learning and launch information campaigns aimed at employers on the benefits of hiring older workers.
10. Calls on the Commission to collect segregated statistical data on the various age groups according to the different problems faced and the wide spectrum of discrimination on the grounds of age;
11. Urges the Commission to extend the scope of Directive 2000/78/EC to sectors other than employment and occupation.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	20.11.2007
Result of final vote	+: 37 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Philip Bradbourn, Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg, Giuseppe Castiglione, Giusto Catania, Carlos Coelho, Panayiotis Demetriou, Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop, Armando France, Roland Gewalt, Elly de Groen-Kouwenhoven, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Livia Járóka, Ewa Klamt, Magda Kósáné Kovács, Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, Esther De Lange, Roselyne Lefrançois, Sarah Ludford, Dan Mihalache, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Bogusław Rogalski, Martine Roure, Inger Segelström, Søren Bo Søndergaard, Károly Ferenc Szabó, Vladimir Urutchev, Manfred Weber, Tatjana Ždanoka
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Simon Busuttil, Gérard Deprez, Sophia in 't Veld, Ona Juknevičienė, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann, Mary Lou McDonald, Marianne Mikko, Hubert Pirker
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Louis Grech

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	23.1.2007
Result of final vote	+: 35 -: 11 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Jan Andersson, Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Luigi Cocilovo, Jean Louis Cottigny, Harald Ettl, Richard Falbr, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Ona Juknevičienė, Jan Jerzy Kułakowski, Jean Lambert, Raymond Langendries, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Ana Mato Adrover, Maria Matsouka, Elisabeth Morin, Csaba Öry, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Rovana Plumb, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Elisabeth Schroedter, José Albino Silva Peneda, Kathy Sinnott, Gabriele Stauner, Ewa Tomaszewska, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Françoise Castex, Donata Gottardi, Monica Maria Iacob-Ridzi, Anna Ibrisagic, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Roberto Musacchio, Agnes Schierhuber
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	[Mihael Brejc]