

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0003/04

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Philip Bushill-Matthews and Bartho Pronk, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group  
to the Commission

Subject: Demographic trends in the EU

- Whereas low population growth and, as a result of medical advances, increasing life expectancy will have a major impact on demographic trends in Europe,
  - whereas the proportion of elderly people in the population will increase substantially within the next 10 years and in 2050 will be twice as high as it is today,
  - whereas the impact of an ageing society is already being felt in the sphere of welfare protection,
  - whereas the modernisation of pension systems is at the very top of the political agenda in all the Member States,
  - whereas pension systems must meet their social objectives and their financial viability must be guaranteed,
  - whereas pension systems must react to the changing needs of society and individuals and thus contribute to improved labour market flexibility and to equal opportunities for men and women in respect of employment and welfare protection,
  - whereas, in order to achieve the Lisbon objectives, the EU must create 17 million new jobs, whilst the age pyramid will result in one million people leaving the labour market,
1. In view of these demographic trends, what steps does the Commission plan to take with a view to achieving the objectives set at the Lisbon Summit?
  2. Is the Commission prepared to put forward proposals for more flexible rules on the compulsory retirement age and with a view to stabilising existing national pension systems?
  3. How does the Commission intend to persuade the Member States to implement at national level the conclusions of the group of experts on employment chaired by Wim Kok?

Tabled: 13.01.2004

Forwarded: 15.01.2004

Deadline for reply: 22.01.2004