

**Question for oral answer O-000041/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 136

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Subject: Putting forward an EU Strategy for Demography

The EU is currently facing many demographic challenges. According to the European Commission, 30.3% of the European population is projected to be aged 65 or older by 2070 (compared to 20.3% in 2019). According to Eurostat, in 2019 the total fertility rate in the EU was 1.53, with a constantly decreasing trend, which is far below the fertility rate considered as the replacement level in developed countries (2.1 births per woman). According to the study entitled 'Demographic Outlook for the European Union'¹, household composition has a direct impact on the risk of poverty. The risk of poverty looms as soon as there are children to look after at home and rises with the number of children. Having a child or several children generally imposes more costs on the family and thus entails a higher risk of poverty for its members. Furthermore, a number of EU regions are experiencing accelerated population decline and a brain drain due to the lack of development opportunities locally. The EU risks representing an ever-shrinking proportion of the world's population and GDP, since the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these negative trends, affecting the economic and social expectations of young people and families. As was recently stated by Vice-President Dubravka Šuica, for the EU, the demographic decline means 'an ageing population, low birth rates and decreasing working-age population. These changes significantly affect our economy, our social and employment policies, public finances and territorial cohesion'. We therefore ask the Commission:

1. Is it willing to put forward an EU Strategy for Demography, developing the concept of an 'economy of wellbeing' for families, thereby promoting intergenerational solidarity, in a long-term investment for sustainable and holistic development?
2. How is it investing in the participation of women and young people in the labour market, and in achieving a better work-family balance?
3. Is the Commission exploring ways of addressing the situation of population decline and the brain drain, which lead to a subsequent lack of investments in infrastructure and services, and in the desertification of some EU regions?
4. How will it inform and educate citizens on demography, highlighting the importance of intergenerational fairness?
5. What could the Commission do to enhance the sharing of best practices between Member States in the context of family policies?

¹ European Parliament, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services, Members' Research Service, 25 March 2021.

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