



## BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS

# DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE; AGEING POPULATIONS

The European Commission describes current demographic change as comprising an ageing population, low birth rates, changing family structures and migration. Following consultation with its members, Eurodiaconia is focussing on the aspect of an ageing population, whilst also considering the other elements.

## How is the European Union involved?

Following a public consultation in 2005 an EU policy paper was published by the European Commission in 2006, identifying five key policy responses to manage demographic change: supporting demographic renewal through better conditions for families and improved reconciliation of working and family life; boosting employment – more jobs and longer working lives of better quality; raising productivity and economic performance through investing in education and research; receiving and integrating migrants into Europe; ensuring sustainable public finances to guarantee adequate pensions, health and long-term care.

Every two years since 2006, a European Demography Forum has taken place, for policymakers, stakeholders and experts to share knowledge and to discuss how to address demographic change. To feed into these debates, the Commission publishes a European Demography Report biennially setting out the main facts and figures concerning demographic change and discussing policy responses.

A Group of Experts on demographic issues, made up of representatives from all Member States, advises the Commission on demographic change and policy responses. It is also designed to assist in the sharing of best practice and knowledge sharing in areas such as elderly care. In addition to this the European Alliance for Families was created in 2007 to facilitate sharing and cooperation in this field of family policy.

The EU's 10-year Europe 2020 strategy finalised in 2010 mentions the importance of promoting a healthy and active ageing population to help, among other things, achieve high-employment, invest in skills and reduce poverty. In 2010 the Commission proposed that 2012 be the European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity and in December 2010 social affairs ministers agreed for the year to be the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY2012). The objectives are *“to encourage and support the efforts of Member States, their regional and local authorities, social partners, civil society and the business community to promote active ageing and to do more to mobilise the potential of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and above, thereby creating a society for all ages and fostering solidarity and cooperation between generations”*.

## Why is demographic change relevant at European level?

Eurodiaconia members report an impact on many of their services due to an increasingly ageing population; it is a Europe-wide trend. Therefore there is much that can be gained from cooperation between European countries, both in terms of policy and practice-based solutions to ensure dignity for all whilst demand for services is rising. The European Commission can highlight key areas of concern and promote certain policy or other solutions among the member states. This is especially true in light of the EY2012.



## What is Eurodiaconia doing?

In 2005 Eurodiaconia submitted a contribution to the Commission consultation on demographic change, in cooperation with the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe.

In consultation with members Eurodiaconia published a policy paper in 2010 entitled Demographic Change: Services and Social Inclusion. It presents analysis and recommendations to tackle demographic change, with a focus on older people. The policy paper will provide input into EU level discussions and processes.

In 2011 Eurodiaconia established a network for members on elderly care and healthy ageing and the meetings discuss relevant topics of interest to member organisations, both policy and practice.

Eurodiaconia has joined the NGO Coalition on Intergenerational Solidarity and through the coalition is contributing to the preparations for the EY2012. Eurodiaconia will assist members to make use of the opportunities provided by the EY in their respective countries.

## What can you do?

Representatives of Eurodiaconia member organisations are encouraged to contribute their experience and expertise in the network on elderly care and healthy ageing. Diaconal organisations can use the EY2012 to highlight their concerns, policy proposals or the important work they do in ensuring all can live dignified lives despite demographic changes.

The Eurodiaconia policy paper is designed to be used to influence relevant policy discussions at national or local government level. We believe that the policy paper is an important document and we would encourage you to translate it into your own language, promote and disseminate it within your network.

We welcome feedback on the document as it will be reviewed regularly. If you do translate it please send it to the Eurodiaconia secretariat so we can put it on our website. We would also like to know when and how you make use of it. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.

## Further information and links

**Eurodiaconia:** Demographic Change web page, including the policy paper:

<http://www.eurodiaconia.org/our-work/other-social-policies/demographic-change?lang=>

**European Commission** (*many documents available in all official languages*)

2006 policy paper: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0571:EN:NOT>

European demography forums: 2010:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=284&furtherEvents=yes> Presentations:

[http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/demographic\\_change/library?l=/2010\\_11\\_2223&vm=detailed&sb=Title](http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/demographic_change/library?l=/2010_11_2223&vm=detailed&sb=Title)

2008: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=502&langId=en&eventsId=121&furtherEvents=yes>

2006: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=502&langId=en&eventsId=120&furtherEvents=yes>

European demography reports

2008: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=502&newsId=419&furtherNews=yes> ,

2007: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=502&newsId=420&furtherNews=yes>

EU Group of Experts: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32007D0397:EN:NOT>

European Alliance for Families (EN,FR,DE):

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/emplweb/families/index.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/families/index.cfm)

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