



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 5 June 2008**

**10321/08**

**SOC 345**

**NOTE**

---

from : The Commission  
to : COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)

---

**Subject : Activities of the Expert Group on Demographic Issues  
- Information from the Commission  
(Any other business item)**

---

Delegations will find attached a note from the Commission.

---

9 JUNE 2008

**Subject: One Year of Work of the Expert Group on Demographic Issues**

**1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GROUP**

The Expert Group on Demographic Issues was announced in the Commission Communication of 12 October 2006 on the demographic future of Europe (COM (2006) 571) and officially established through a Commission decision of 8 June 2007 for a period of five years<sup>1</sup>. It is chaired by Ms Eleonora Hostasch, former minister for labour, health and social affairs of Austria.

**2. ROLE AND ADDED VALUE OF THE GROUP**

The Group's task is to advise the Commission on monitoring of demographic change and on the implementation of the broad policy guidelines set out in the Commission Communication of 12 October 2006. The Group assists the Commission in drawing conclusions from the research results, in identifying relevant data for the demography reports and in fostering exchanges of good practice, thus contributing to the biennial demography reports and the assessment of the EU's state of preparation for demographic change which should be included in the progress report on the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

The Group allows Member States to give their opinions on the broad responses required to meet the demographic challenges as well as on the specific initiatives resulting from the Communication of 12 October 2006. The Group should focus in particular on those fields that are not already sufficiently well covered by the existing committees and advisory groups.

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L150 of 12 June.2007

The Group provides a platform for exchanges of experience and good practice in the field of family policy, and for supporting efforts to improve the quality of life of persons with care responsibilities. The Group is also the forum for the implementation of the activities agreed under the European Alliance for Families which was launched by the German presidency and supported by EPSSCO in May 2007.

***Information exchange: Commission – Member States – Civil Society – Social Partners***

The meetings of the Group provided an opportunity to inform its Members on a wide range of demography-related activities conducted by the Commission and international institutions, including the Council of Europe, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the OECD. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions also disseminates its findings via the Group. The areas covered until now include: research, statistics, migration, health, employment, housing, child poverty and long term care.

The Commission also encourages the Members of the Group to use it as a platform for mutual information and networking. At each meeting, presentations were given by national delegates on major new developments in the Member States or on the plans of future presidencies.

There is a strong interest from civil society in the work of the Group. For this reason, the Commission has organised either separate meetings with civil society stakeholders and the social partners after the meetings of the Group or open seminars and conferences on key topics of interest to the Group. One seminar dealt with child care (November 2007). A major conference on the prevention of elder abuse was organised in March 2008. The June meeting of the Group will be followed by a seminar on the development of a framework for assessing family policies. A third meeting of the Group is planned on the second day of the Demography Forum (24-25 November).

### *Demographic change as a challenge, not a threat: outlook*

The Commission has invited the Group to take an active part in the follow-up to its key policy documents on demographic change. These include notably the biennial reports and fora on demography, the preparation of a Commission Communication on the needs of an ageing society and the development of the European Alliance for Families. The Commission has invited the members of the Group to take part in working groups to help with the preparation of the 2008 demography report and forum.

As far as the European Alliance for Families is concerned, the Group was involved in the preparation of a brochure to promote the use by local stakeholders of EU Structural Funds in projects aimed at supporting families. The appointment of national correspondents for the web portal of the European Alliance for Families also took place through the Group.

During this first year of existence the Group has proven its usefulness and the Commission thanks the members of the Group and its chairperson for the constructive cooperation and valuable exchanges that have taken place so far. The Commission hopes that the work of this Group will contribute to a better coordination of research activities and to strengthening the ability of Member States and the European Union to develop coordinated and comprehensive strategies allowing the EU to make the most of the opportunities of demographic change. The Commission will continue to inform the Council about the work of the expert group.

---