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Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies



Future Trends Series - GR:REEN Project

Title of the report

Europe's Demographic Future; Growing Imbalances

Area

Demography

Reporter

Berlin Institute for Population and Development

Type of the Reporter

Non-Governmental Organisation

Periodically updated?

No

First issued year

2008

Latest update

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Official website

www.berlin-institut.org

Language available

English

Short summary

The study analyses the implications of demographic change and assesses 24 demographic, economic, social and environmental indicators to analyse the sustainability of all EU member states as well as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and other non-EU members states in Eastern Europe in the next decades. The focus is more particularly on the 285 European regions within those countries. The study is multilayered as besides demographic indicators, it includes data related to economic performance, population age composition, employment levels, investment in research and development and carbon dioxide pollution levels. The results show that in 2007, the population of the EU countries was still growing, but this tendency is likely to change between 2007 and 2050 as there will be a global decline in the EU's population. At the same time, population will be growing in Western Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and will remain younger than the EU's population. By 2050, Africa will be doubling its demographic weight and Russia will be the only region of the world that will have fertility rates below the ones of Europe. Low fertility rates are in both the EU and Russia below the level required for stable population development.

Key trends

- Between 2007 and 2050, Europe's population will decline by 8.3 per cent and 21.1 per cent in Russia. In US and Canada it will grow by 30.7 per cent, by 37.6 per cent in Latin America and Caribbean, by 30.1 per cent in Asia and 105.2 per cent in Africa.

- The European population is globally ageing at a rate of roughly two days per week. In 1950 the median age of the population was 31 years old. In 2005 the same figure had reached 38 years old and projections indicate that this number will raise to 48 years old in 2050.
- European integration allows an increasing mobility throughout the continent paving the way to new migration patterns.
- Europe has great potential in the current changing demographic configuration. Europe will have an increasingly ageing population and will need to consider immigration as a mean of closing the demographic gap. Europe will also need new creativity to tackle future problems due to demographic shifts.

Suggestions

- The EU should focus on three main goals to face the forthcoming change in demographic trends and ensure its international competitiveness: more education, innovation and sustainability.
- The EU would emerge strengthened from the crisis if each EU member state improves its family and immigration policies (with a particular focus on integration of immigrants), enhances its education and social systems and reshapes its public finances according to the forthcoming demographic changes.
- There is a need for Europe to focus on education as it is an important sector that would provide jobs. Europe needs well-qualified workers as the demand will continue to rise in the next decades. In most highly developed countries the share of employed people with a University degree is already higher than workers with basic school education, only Malta, Portugal and Spain has as main group of low-skilled employees.

Methodology

Modelling and research from secondary sources

Reference to other trends reports? If yes, which reports?

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