



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY
CRIS

Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies



Future Trends Series - GR:REEN Project

Title of the report

Foresight Report: Facets and Preconditions of Wellbeing of Families

Area

Demography

Reporter

FAMILYPLATFORM (Social platform on research for families and family policies funded by the European Commission)

Type of the Reporter

Regional Organisation

Periodically updated?

No

First issued year

2011

Latest update

2011

Official website

http://europa.eu/epic/docs/wp3_final_report_future_of_families.pdf

Language available

English

Short summary

This report aims at identifying future societal challenges and policies that will have a strong impact on families. Future Scenarios are developed describing future key policy issues and possible futures of families in Europe in 2035. The method used is the "Foresight Approach", a method of bringing to life possible futures for families. This approach defines "possible scenarios and kinds of families in the form of narratives and research issues, as well as key policy issues and social innovations for researchers, policy makers, NGOs and all others involved in working with and for families."

Key trends

Key trends for future scenarios by 2035 predicts:

- Decreasing marriage rates, increasing divorce rates and increasing rates of re-marriage;
- "The proportion of people over the age of 60 in Western Europe will rise dramatically from 21 per cent in 2008 to 33 per cent in 2035. In Eastern Europe the increase is virtually identical: from 19 per cent in 2008 to 32 per cent in 2035";

- “Increasing number of out-of-wedlock births; later marriages are also reflected in an increase in out-of-wedlock births. Being married has lost its central role as a precondition for family formation. However, cohabiting relationships are often a transition phase to a later marriage”;
- “Increasing diversity of living arrangements/increase in new types of family life; the “nuclear” family (often also referred to as the “classical” family) remains the dominant family type across Europe, but its numbers are decreasing and numbers of families of other forms are increasingly prevalent. In particular, growth is observed in the number of lone parents, stepfamilies and cohabiting couples, but also in “new” or “rare” forms such as foster and adoptive families, rainbow families, multi-generational households and families with more than one common household, such as “living apart together” and commuter families”;
- “Intact family bonds remained a crucial element of the wellbeing of the individuals in all of the narratives. The complexity of each family’s environment varied, but on the whole most families are valued by their members because, as a safety net, they reduce uncertainty and provide a framework for mutual support in the complexity of their environment.”

Suggestions

“Families need the support of local, national and European policies to build the families they wish for. Policies should help them to have the number of children they desire, have specific assistance when difficulties are faced, and to lead their lives according to choices, whilst respecting their obligations. Ensuring this would enable families to have and raise children that become the responsible citizens of tomorrow’s Europe. Because of the importance of the wellbeing of families for the future of Europe, policy makers should make it a key priority. The EU2020 strategy and most European treaties are centred on the economy: we are calling for more attention to be paid to the families who produce the economic agents of the future.”

Methodology

Research from primary and secondary sources
Modelling (“Foresight Approach”)

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

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