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Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies



Future Trends Series - GR:REEN Project

Title of the report

Regions 2020 – Demographic Challenges for European Regions

Area

Demography

Reporter

European Commission (EC)

Type of the Reporter

International Organisation

Periodically updated?

No

First issued year

2008

Latest update

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Official website

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/regions2020/index_en.htm

Language available

English

Short summary

The challenge of demographic change and its widespread economic and social implications have received considerable attention in Europe in recent years. All Member States and regions will have to tackle the complex effects of population change in the coming years and decades. "The nature and the scale of the demographic developments will however differ substantially across European territories".

The European Commission (EC) report explores the main underlying factors influencing the magnitude of regional variations of population change in Europe and examines the implications of demographic change for regional growth, equity and environmental sustainability.

The results reveal "significant divergence in regional demographic patterns in Europe, which will most likely generate a substantial asymmetric impact on European territories". Economic and social disparities between different geographical areas in Europe will further increase due to such an impact.

Key trends

- All European regions will have to tackle the complex consequences of demographic change, however with different intensity and divergent patterns. Regional variability will depend on a combination of factors such as "differences in fertility rates, migration flows, life expectancy, gender composition, health status, disability and the location and demographic patterns of ethnic groups".

- Around one third of European regions will experience population decline by 2020. “Many of them are less affluent regions characterised by relatively low levels of income, low participation rates and a high proportion of the workforce employed in declining economic sectors. A shrinking labour force will potentially impact on regional growth potentials in these areas.” At the other end of the spectrum, a particular challenge in terms of sustainable urban development will be posed by the steady population growth that will be faced by some European regions.

- Population change is also expected to lead to large increases in public spending, “mainly on pension, health care and long-term care as well as on other public infrastructure”. Ensuring access to high quality public services will constitute a major challenge for European Member States and regions. “The socio-economic integration of migrants and marginalised groups of society will be preconditions to mitigate the effects of a rapidly ageing population in several regions”.

Suggestions

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Methodology

Modelling

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

- European Commission (2006), The Impact of Ageing on Public Expenditure: Projections for the EU25 Member States on Pensions, Health Care, Long-term Care, Education and Unemployment Transfers (2004-2050), European Economy, ECFIN, 1/2006

- European Commission (2007), Europe’s Demographic Future: Facts and Figures on Challenges and Opportunities. Commission Staff Working Document

- G. Lanzieri (2007) Long-term Population Projections at National Level, Statistics in focus, Eurostat, Population and Social conditions, 3/2006

- G. Lanzieri (2007), Long-term Population Projections at Regional Level, Statistics in Focus, Eurostat, Population and Social conditions, 28/2006