
CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN THE EU

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Abstract: While well-being is experiencing rapid growth in the European Union, a ghost is hovering over it: the aging of its population. Fewer children are born and labor markets and health systems are forced to cope with increased pressure. Demographic reports are alarming: the European population dies. In this sense, the list of negative effects derived from a situation of senile high dependence, such as that which is looming for the whole western environment, especially for Europe, is very long: decrease in the number of people who make up the active population; Progressive aging of the labor force; Imbalances that require changes in retirement policy; Imbalances in investment and savings at the collective and family level; Decrease in disposable family income; Increased health spending in an exorbitant way; Underutilization and redundancy in the education sector; Primacy of conservative values in politics; Imbalances in family structures; Increasing the problem of intergenerational socialization; Weakening of primary support relationships; Increase in the proportion of the female population; Possible bankruptcy of the social security system. The EU faces two intertwined types of migration demand. A structural one: that of economic immigrants. Another circumstance: that of asylum seekers. The first ones are trying to escape misery in poor non-communist countries, the others flee from situations of civil wars. This strategy has worked with relative success until 2008. But the economic crisis, increasing inequalities between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, the sudden impoverishment of Eastern countries undergoing ruthless structural adjustment policies, uncontrollable chaos in the Middle East with the destruction of the Iraqi state in 2003 and the decomposition of Syria since 2011, are the cause for the flight of millions of people to Europe. Faced with this huge demand for relief, the wall of the Schengen and Dublin agreements has been demolished. Even more serious, the EU has been unable to react collectively. The current trend towards renationalisation of migration policies, which had been in place since the year 2010, is well documented. According to reports, while migration to the EU from third countries is still substantial, a declining trend has been observed in recent years. This may be partly explained by the economic climate in Western countries and the economic growth in middle-income developing countries. Immigration of young adults, especially from non-EU countries, may slow the impact of reduction in the labor force, but will not reverse it.

In the future, Europe will probably need to attract migrants both to offset the aging of its population and to meet the demand for high-skilled workers. However, if more and more migrate to developing countries, Europe could face shortage. Also, if economic growth remains sluggish and unemployment remains high, attracting migrants will be increasingly difficult, labor migration under strained economic conditions may create more and more tensions.

Keywords: rapid growth, economic immigrants, intergenerational socialization, unemployment.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN POPULATION

Europe is a continent populated since Prehistory. Throughout the history the environment has changed deeply, which is visible into the massive presence of humanity and a territory ordered with numerous networks of communication and a very important urban mesh. Europe has a developed capitalist economy. This allows a high population density (average more than 70 h/km²) providing its inhabitants with high degrees of comfort. The density of the population in Europe is very unequal. Central Europe exceeds 100 h/km², and even 300 h/km² in the Low Countries. Around this nucleus the population density is between 50 h/km² and 100 h/km². In The Nordic countries it doesn't exceed 25 h/km², and in the cold areas of these countries the density of the population doesn't exceed 2 h/km². The European population grew very rapidly throughout the century XX, it went from 400 million, to 800 million that were reached in the 1980s, and since then it has hardly grown.

The demographic problem that worries the old continent today is the aging of the population. The majority of the European population is of advanced age. More than one in three Europeans are between 25 and 45 years old. In addition, life expectancy at birth is very high, all countries survive over 70 years of age, which is expected to mean that aging will be every year greater, until these generations disappear. Except during the war of Yugoslavia, catastrophic mortality has been eradicated in Europe since the end of the Second World War. However, the number of inhabitants in most European countries continues to grow. In 2005 the population of the European Union increased by 2 million people. Nevertheless, we can find fourteen countries in the European Union (eg. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, etc.) where the population's development took a

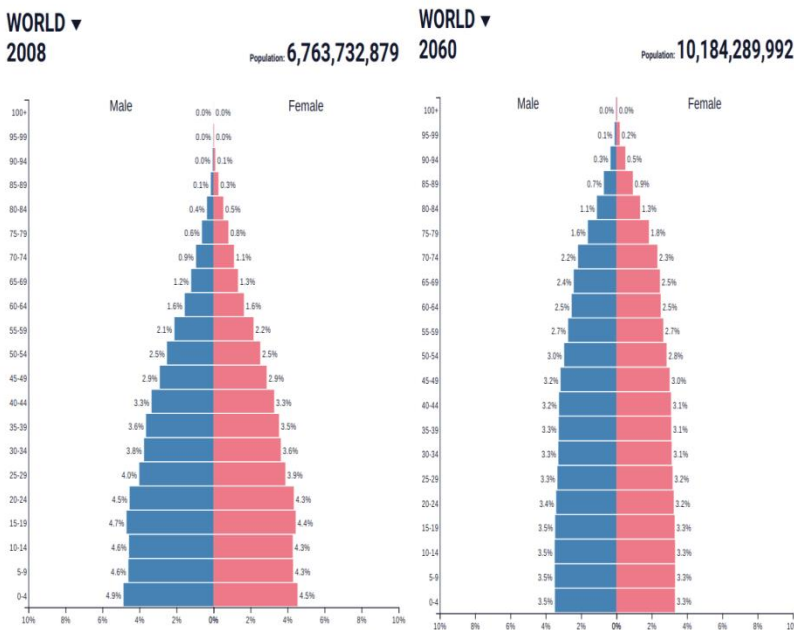
opposite turn. In general, the average growth has slowed down in recent years and the number the population is growing slower among all continents. At the current rate of growth that is currently 0.4%, the European Union would need 157 years to double its population. In several European countries, the population growth is caused by immigration.

It is estimated that the number of Europeans by the year 2050 will decrease slightly. The number of Europeans will fall from 457 million to 454 million, the active population (15 to 64 years) will fall by 48 Million (by 16%) by 2050, while the population over 65 will increase by 58 Million (77%).

The countries with the greatest population growth in the European Union are Ireland and Luxembourg, followed by France and other countries of Western Europe, like United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, etc. The countries where the negative growth of the population was noted are Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe, such as Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, etc. The countries that will gain population until the 2060 are France, Spain, Portugal, the Benelux countries, United Kingdom, Ireland, Austria, Denmark and Sweden. It's presumed that the population growth will be caused more by migratory movements than by natural growth. Among the list of countries that will lose population in the future belong: Germany, Poland, Italy and the countries of Eastern Europe.

The population's pyramid is a fundamental instrument that is used to study, analyze and compare the distribution of the population by age and sex. In the vertical axis we have the groups of age of 5 years in 5 years, on the left are the data corresponding to the male population and on the right the female. On the horizontal axis are marked the bars that indicate the number of people that is in each age group. In the pyramid of the population 2008 we can observe an increase of the adult and elderly population, which today forms the majority of the European population. In the year 2060 according to the data of Eurostat, the majority of the population will be senior citizens.

Fig. 1 Pyramid of the European population:



2. THE CAUSES OF THE AGING OF THE EUROPEAN POPULATION

2.1. Much lower fertility since the phenomenon "baby boom"

The fertility, which is the number of children born alive to a woman throughout her life reproductive age (15-49 years), declined dramatically in recent years. In the year 2010 the rate of Fertility of the EU ranges around the number 1.51 (infants born/female). The fertility rate is necessary to maintain the constant level of the population, assuming that the net migration is null. The fertility decreases for several reasons. The social and economic costs associated with the birth of the children increase. More and more people are going from the countryside to the cities. The society offers many more alternatives to women and they have greater decision-making power related to the birth of children, to decide how many they will have or even to have none. This reflects to the greater granting power to women in society and is undoubtedly a success of it. Our civilization also offers to the women different opportunities beyond living in a family where the man is the one who sustains it economically and beyond staying at

home taking care of the children. From indeed, women can hope to obtain better opportunities and equality of them in the future and consequently remain active in the labor market. This implies a decrease in the number of children per woman or a delay of maternity at more advanced ages. In general, the women with higher socioeconomic level have fewer children. But even here there are exceptions, for example women in the countries of northern Europe. Women of high =nal level help to maintain relatively high fertility rate in these countries.

The Europe's highest fertility rates have been reached in Ireland (2.02), France (1.96), United Kingdom (1.91), Iceland (1.89), Luxembourg (1.77), Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden. The lowest rates among European countries were reached in Lithuania (1.25), Czech Republic (1.26), Romania (1.29), Slovenia and Poland (1.3).

2.2. Increased life expectancy in the elderly

The aging of the population is, among other things, the consequence of the prolongation Of human life. The hope of life was prolonged markedly in the 20th century thanks social development, the best conditions of life and work, inventions and successes in the medicine, nutrition and quality of health care. Women always lived longer than men. To compare: the life expectancy for the Men in the world is 62.7 years and for women 67 years. In the EU27 in the year 2010 life expectancy for men reached 75.7 years and for women 82.12 years it is a large difference compared to the world. The explanations may be as follows: differences between men and women, men generally have more insecure jobs, smoke more, they drink more alcohol than women and become the victims of crimes more than women. It is assumed that until the year 2050, life expectancy will be prolonged, without however, the greatest growth will be observed in males, so that the inequality between men and women is going to match. Today the highest life expectancy is reached in Monaco (89.73) and the lowest in Latvia (72.68).

The extension of life is linked with the increase of the part of population over 65 years and over of the total population. In 2006 the largest number of the population aged 65 and over lived In Italy (19.7%), Germany (19.3%) and Greece (18.5%). The indicator that facilitates the expression of the problem of the aging of the population is the old-age dependency ratio. This demographic indicator expresses the relationship between the dependant population (65 and over) and the productive population (15-64 years), on which it depends. Because the population ages, the rates of this indicator will increase in most developed countries. In other words, there will be fewer and fewer workers paying taxes and will increase the demand for state aid. The three key factors that can influence this indicator are: the level of fertility; the migration of the inhabitants of the countries with an aging population; the participation of older people in the labor market. In 2005, the highest rates of this indicator reached the following countries: Italy (29.4%), Germany (27.8%), Greece (26.8%), Sweden (26.4%) and Belgium (26.3%). The lowest rates were reached in Slovakia (16.3%), Ireland (16.5%), Cyprus (17.7%) and Poland (18.7%).

2.3. Aging of the baby-boom generation

Another reason of the aging of the population is the aging of the generation “baby boom” by exceeding the age of 65 in 2010 and in subsequent years. People of this generation were born in 1945 and in the 10-20 years thereafter. This is the generation that began retiring in 2000. In this way, there will be a large number of people who will retire in the next couple of decades. The main problem has been that the phenomenon of the "baby-boom" has not continued. Actually we have observed a much lower fertility rate after this period.

3. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE IMPACTS OF POPULATION AGING

Each country should prepare itself for the aging of its society and the problem is only in their hands. I think there are four main different areas of public policy because of their importance in preparing for the aging of the future societies:

- 1) Pension policy
- 2) Health policy and long-term care
- 3) Employment policy
- 4) Migration policy

These policies should be adopted in such a way as to make it possible to benefit from the potential of the aged people and to make possible in our societies to have place for people of all ages. In addition, the concept of "active aging" will have to be the focus of all our future strategies.

3.1. Pension Policy

The countries will have to continue providing adequate pensions that can guarantee decent levels of life and it is useful to mention that one of the objectives of the pension policy is to provide adequate resources to pensioners. If one pension policy didn't achieve this objective, it was reformed and was searched new ways to provide resources for that pension policy. Some reports have shown that recent pension reforms taking place in European countries are too worried about the fiscal balances. The countries are concerned about the share of GDP destined to the provision

of pensions and by how it will grow in the future. To secure balance sheets in the future, the number of pensioners is often reduced in these reforms. The countries with this reforms will have to face a series of challenges once a older people are at risk of falling into poverty. The societies also have the challenge of providing economically sustainable pensions. The systems shouldn't be too generous (for example in the case of Greece) - not so generous as to get to the point of not being sustainable in the future and of not being able to provide promised pensions.

An important tendency in the reproduction of the population is its aging. Aging populations affect the economy in several main directions:

- Employment and quality structure of the labor force, including the employment of pensioners
- Pension provision and standard of living for older people as a significant proportion of the population
- Health, organization of healthcare and social services. (Naydenov, Kl. 2017)

Another challenge that pension policy must take on is to continue to modernize its functionality, so as to cover the majority of groups at risk of receiving low pensions. There is a need to ensure the ownership of pensions to those who are not completely covered in the formal systems, for example, those women who allocate part of the time to care not only for their children, but also for their parents. The system of pensions will have to present ways of considering these groups that provide services to the society, so that they are also covered in the pension system. I take the example of Sweden and Bulgaria, which has provided pension provision schemes to women who renounce a part of the time of their professional career to take care of their children or their parents. Another challenge that should be assumed by the pension policy of the future is to ensure justice Intergenerational. If much generosity is allowed in the pensions perceived to the present generation of workers, there is a risk that future generations of workers will have to suffer the burden of that generosity. In addition, the pension policy should be designed in such a way as to fair between generations. In the context of many European countries, the private sector plays an important role in the provision of pensions. In fact, more financial products should be available to save money and after the retiring to benefit from this savings.

3.2. Health policy and long-term care

The long-term care policies will face a number of challenges, and it should be noted that there is considerable doubt about the nature and scope of these challenges. An important aspect with regard to preparedness lies in preventive measures: the adoption of the lifestyle that implies improvements in the health and functional status of people in the last stage of his life. We should know that during the early stages of the life course, a healthy lifestyle will provide not only a longer life but also a good health during those years of life that we will gain. That is a challenge that societies as a unit must assume, and we as individuals are responsible for making appropriate changes in our daily life.

With regard to the provisions of public policies and the private sector, societies in process have to facilitate the provision of mechanisms - both formal and informal - care to respond to the long-term care needs of the elderly. An important point is that public policies will have to ensure that care provisions continue to play an important role in the future. Public policies need to encourage the individual members of families to care for older members of the family. It is also very important the coordination between all the agents involved in the provision of long-term care. In this case, a rapprochement between the public and private sectors and between the different layers of government would be desirable to find in the future more long-term care of higher quality. The private sector always has been a leader in finding innovative ideas and this should see a clear motive for bringing innovations in the satisfaction of the additional demands of social and health care, care which can be provided at home, in a daily center, or in formal institutions.

3.3. Employment policy

With regard to employment policy, we must remember the phenomenon related to the aging of the population: the decline of the working-age population. That means that in the future we will not only have a smaller proportion of working-age population but also a total population decrease. The best way to facilitate the transition of a small population is obviously to encourage people to work up to the barriers of their forces. Pension policies have already adopted changes to improve incentives to longer career paths by increasing the retirement age, restricting the pathways that facilitate early retirement and eliminating the compulsory retirement. It is important to mention in this respect the potential of women's employment, not only the part time, but also full-time employment. Policies that encourage women to participate in the labor market, through better child care incentives, will help women to redirect the balance between work and family. It is needed to take advantage also from the employment potential of certain groups with normally high levels of unemployment (for example, to make more efforts to find greater employment of disabled people). We should also keep in mind the migrant population which also contributes to the strength of the labor market of their new countries of residence.

In countries where there was potential for early retirement, already was made a series of reforms to restrict this formal access to early retirement (eg. In Austria, France and Belgium). Measures have also been taken to tighten up the requirements for obtain disability benefits (for example in Denmark, the Netherlands and England) and unemployment (Austria, Finland and the Netherlands). Anyway, we should be cautious in interpreting these because the experience of different countries shows that there is a risk of substitution between the possible ways of early retirement. For example, the repeal of retirement systems anticipated in France and Belgium was countered by an increase in unemployment among older people.

It also requires sectoral changes so that more and more people are found working in the sectors that provide services to the elderly. More people should be trained to work in health, nursing and social services. This is an important development infrastructure that societies will have to face in the process of aging in the future.

3.4. Migration Policy

The societies in the process of aging will consider attracting more younger workers from other countries as very important as this would calm the labor market, although it would not prevent the aging of the population as the number of required would be enormous. Here is one of the greatest challenges for the European countries: the integration of these immigrant workers in the labor market and in the society. We can say that Spain is at the head of other European countries on this issue. Spain has been able to provide immigrants and has successfully integrated them into the labor market. However, the challenges of migration policy should not be over-conceived negatively. If we look at this whole region in a global way, we will appreciate that some of the people who are not employed in their own countries will be able to find work opportunities in other countries and in that way they will be able to contribute resources to their country of origin contributing in the long term to its development.

Brain drain or human capital flight is a large emigration of individuals with technical skills or knowledge, normally due to conflict, lack of opportunity, political instability, or health risks. A brain drain is usually regarded as an economic cost, since emigrants usually take with them the fraction of value of their training sponsored by the government. It is a parallel of capital flight, which refers to the same movement of financial capital. It should not be overlooked that the brain drain can be accompanied by the opposite process of "brain return" at a later stage. This may also lead to "brain circulation" or short-term movements, as the National Economy becomes more integrated into the global one. (Naydenov, Kl. 2017)

CONCLUSION

The aging of the population is a phenomenon involving an increasing number of aging people and a decline in the population. However, I think it is not such a disaster, in fact it is offering us new opportunities to find ways to living together and for prospering. The main message of this article is that the aging of the population can lead to a disaster but can also be considered an opportunity, depending on how societies in the aging process prepare to meet this challenge.

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