

## EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AIMED AT ACTIVE LIFE OF ELDERLY

URSZULA MICHALOWSKA

RESEARCHER ON THE PROBLEMS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

**GERMANY**

URSHULA@MAIL.BG

**ABSTRACT:** THE EUROPEAN UNION IS CONCERNED WITH GREAT CONCERN TO DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS, WHICH TRANSLATES INTO A LASTING TREND TO CHANGE THE AGE STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION, LEADING TO AN INCREASE IN THE SHARE OF THE ADULT POPULATION. IN RESPONSE TO THESE CHALLENGES, THE UNION SHALL DRAW UP A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS RELATED TO SOLVING PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY, WHICH ARE DETAILED AND ANALYZED IN THIS ARTICLE.

**KEY WORDS:** DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS, DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, DEMOGRAPHIC FORUM, ELDERLY, STRATEGY, EMPLOYMENT, PENSION SYSTEM, INDEPENDENT LIVING, ACTIVE LIFE

**MEETING** the demographic challenges ranks among main political priorities of the European Union. Along with the need for an adequate response to the effects of globalization and technology advances, action in response to demographic change is considered urgent and takes priority in joint strategic planning and action by the Member States of the European Union.

**DEMOGRAPHIC** change in the European Union are expressed in consistent trend change in the age structure of the population, leading to an increase in the share of the adult population, which as a result suggests overall aging of the population. In response to these challenges, the Union shall draw up a number of important documents related to solving problems of the elderly, among which the main are:

### 1. EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION "TOWARDS A EUROPE FOR ALL AGES" – 1999

IT made detailed formulations of the importance of the process of aging - declining and aging population of working age, the emergence of the need to adapt public financial systems and adapting social protection systems and health services, increase the needs of older people and the need arises for appropriate action to prevent the risk of social exclusion and poverty, taking into account the gender-aspects of aging, due to the large number of older women. [3]

### 2. LISBON STRATEGY 2000-2012

**OUTLINES** the parameters in the development of the European Union for the period 2000 - 2010 the Council, in which lies the policy for the elderly. One such policy is aimed at preventing premature termination of the labor activity and at the same time directed towards modernizing social protection systems of the elderly. To achieve the objectives of the Lisbon

strategy, the Member States of the European Union must endeavor to achieve an employment rate of 50% for the age group of 55 to 64 [10].

### 3. GREEN PAPER ON DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, 2006,

**THE** book stresses the need for full participation of people of all ages in the process of social and economic development of the European Union. Put the question to promote solidarity between generations, improving the integration of young people taking an approach to understanding global activity throughout life, providing conditions for higher activity of older people and to alleviate the age transitions. They insist on the continuation of the policies set out in the Lisbon Strategy relating to integration in the labor market, innovation and increased productivity. It is also recognized the need for policies to support families, and modernize the social protection system, especially the pension system. [8]

### 4. EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER /REVISED/,

**ACCORDING** to its Article 23 guarantees the right of elderly persons to social protection. In order to ensure the effective exercise of the right of elderly persons to social protection, the Contracting European countries undertake to adopt or promote, directly or in collaboration with public or private organizations, appropriate measures designed: to enable elderly people opportunity as long to remain full members of society with the help of funds sufficient to enable them to lead a decent life and play an active part in public, social and cultural life; provision of information about services and facilities that are available to the elderly and their opportunities to use them. EU countries have to give the elderly the opportunity freely to choose their way of life and to lead independent lives in their familiar surroundings, while willing and able, using a provision of housing suited to their needs and their state of health or of adequate support for adapting their housing, as well as providing health and care required by their condition. They must ensure appropriate assistance to elderly people who living in institutions, while respecting their privacy, and participation in decisions concerning living conditions in the place. [7]

### 5. INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON THE ELDERLY - MADRID 2002

**THE** Madrid plan sets 33 objectives and 117 specific recommendations, grouped into three priorities: 1. Older people and development; 2. Improved health and well-being in old age; 3. environment, provides various opportunities and support for older people.

**THE** plan sets a vision and requirements for values that can make a welcoming society for all ages. He calls for a change in attitudes, policies and practices in order to the enormous potential of the elderly to be used. Emphasizing the rights of the elderly to develop calls for an end to discrimination and emphasizes the need to involve the elderly as a guideline in the global development of humanity.

**THE** main objective of the plan is to provide security and dignity for the elderly, as well as the opportunity to continue to participate in the life of their societies as full citizens. Governments are called upon to put the problems of older people in the center of the conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations, the special session of the General Assembly and to control subsequent processes. Implementation of the agreements reached at these conferences and meetings will enable older people to contribute more fully to the development of society, and also to learn from it.

**THE** plan describes as a key element support and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development; overcoming discrimination based on age characteristics; inclusion of aging issues in global development plans; recognition of the ability of older people to contribute to society. Urge Governments to adopt the potential of the elderly as a basis for future development. [9]

## PRIORITIES:

### *Priority 1: Elderly people and development*

- Active participation in society and its development;
- Work and labor in the third age;
- Rural development, migration and urbanization;
- Access to knowledge, education and training;
- Solidarity between generations;
- Poverty eradication;
- Income security, social protection / security and prevention of poverty;
- Emergency.

### *Priority 2: Improved health status and well-being in the third age*

- Promotion of health and wellbeing throughout life;
- Universal access to health services;
- Elderly and AIDS;
- Training of health professionals and specialists to provide care;
- Needs related to mental health in older people;
- Elderly and disability.

### *Priority 3: Environment, provides various opportunities and support for elder people*

- Environment, including the home;
- Care and support for people who are care;
- Neglect, violence and abuse;
- Presented for the third age.

### **Implement the plan and consequences**

- Actions at national level;
- Actions internationally;
- research;
- Global monitoring, review and update [9].

## **6. EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON "THE DEMOGRAPHIC FUTURE OF EUROPE - FROM CHALLENGE TO OPPORTUNITY", OCTOBER 2006,**

**THE** Communication outlines five priority areas and actions to address the demographic challenges:

**PROMOTE** demographic renewal of the population in Europe by providing the best conditions for families and promote the reconciliation of family and professional life;

**PROMOTING** employment in Europe: more jobs, longer and better quality active life;

**PROMOTING** productivity to ensure the economic security of Europe;

**PROVIDING** conditions for the integration of legal migrants;

**ADAPTATION** of security systems to demographic change [4].

## 7. CONCLUSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL TO TAKE ACTION ON THE PROBLEM OF AN AGING POPULATION IN THE NEW LISBON CYCLE (2008 - 2010)

**THE** European Council emphasizes the need for continued modernization of pension systems in order to promote active aging by increasing the opportunities for employment, reduction of early retirement schemes, increasing flexibility in retirement and strengthening incentives to work. Emphasizes that these actions must be accompanied by efforts to open labor market for older workers and by adequate protection for those who can not work, for example due to severe disability or because you have to take care of someone. Recognized that pension reforms today will have consequences for decades and therefore need regular monitoring of their impact on future adequacy and sustainability of pensions and pension funds. The necessity of raising awareness on issues related to the various pension schemes, to enable citizens to make informed choices.

**SOCIAL** policies have a strong impact on health and health is an important determinant for the realization of life chances. Action is needed to reduce persistent inequalities in health. Approach is indispensable for the promotion of health in all policies; health protection is related to the provision of access to prevention for all, quality health care and long-term care, including the most difficult to reach the public. Since changes in demographic and social generate increasing needs for quality long term care, providing access for all, improving coordination of care and providing support for institutional forms of care continue to be a challenge. It is necessary to strike the right balance between public and private responsibilities and institutional and non-institutional care. [1]

## 8. EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION "PROMOTING SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS" – 2007, BRUSSELS,

**THE** European Commission draws attention to improving the quality of services for elderly people in need of assistance and protection against abuse, as well as measures that can be taken at European level, in cooperation with Member States to accelerate the development and modernization of infrastructures and services for the elderly. Encouraged to take national family policies. Creating conditions for better meeting the needs of families in raising children and caring for those in need of assistance, and for the equal sharing of family and household responsibilities, national family policies will strengthen the links between the generations. Thus can expect a better life for all, as well as more favorable conditions for the realization of family plans.

**IN** early 2008, the European Commission has placed new emphasis in policy to meet demographic changes. With the increasing number of older people due to demographic change are identified prerequisites for the growth of cases of neglect and violence against older people. During a special conference in March 2008, the European Commission calls on Member States to make efforts to identify the signs of neglect and violence against older people and thus to take action to prevent such events. [2]

## 9. THIRD EUROPEAN DEMOGRAPHY FORUM, 22-23 NOVEMBER 2010

**THE** Forum discussed the demographic dimension of the European Strategy of 2020. In connection with the processes of aging and goals for smart and sustainable growth, adaptation of European societies to new demographic challenges seem more urgent. The forum unites around the conclusion that achieving the Europe 2020 strategy for smart and sustainable growth requires taking specific action to solve the problems of an aging population, which will affect more and more systems of public finance, social protection and market labor. [11]

## 10. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION OF 7 SEPTEMBER 2010 ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AN AGING SOCIETY,

**BY** resolution, the European Parliament pays particular attention to overcoming gender inequalities in older age, it calls for the Commission to pay attention to: protection of the rights of older people; non-discrimination on grounds of age; the need to reconcile work and care; ensuring equal access to health and social services and care; strengthening the scientific and research knowledge to the needs of older people and others.

**IN** 2011 the European Commission initiated the adoption of a European Parliament and Council of the European Union to declare 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing. It should contribute to the adoption and promotion of positive attitudes towards the greater use of the great potential and resources of older people in economic and social terms. [5]

*Content, objectives and tasks of those European strategic documents target explication of the main tasks facing the European countries and their governments' active aging:*

- Full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons;
- Achieving a safe aging, which is accompanied by a confirmation of the targets to eliminate poverty among older people, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations concerning the elderly;
- Enabling older people to participate fully and effectively in the economic, political and social life of the community, including through paid and voluntary work;
- Providing opportunities for individual development, self-realization and living in good health throughout life and in old age by providing access to lifelong learning and participation in public life provided the recognition of older people as a heterogeneous group;
- Ensuring the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against older people;
- Ensuring gender equality among older persons through elimination of discrimination based on the ground of "sex";
- Recognition of the crucial importance of family, of the interdependence of generations, solidarity and reciprocity in terms of social development;
- Providing health care, support and social protection for older persons, including preventive and rehabilitative health care services; Ensure partnership between all levels of government, civil society, private sector and among the elderly in the transformation of the Plan of Action into practical action;

- Adaptation of the social protection system in response to demographic change and related social and economic consequences; Consideration of the labor market with economic and social consequences of aging;
- Promoting lifelong learning and adapting the education system to the changing economic, social and demographic conditions; Accepting and respecting gender - approach to an aging society, support for families that provide care for the elderly and promote solidarity between generations in the family;
- Support for families who provide care for the elderly and promote solidarity between generations within the same family and others.

## REFERENCES

1. **CONCLUSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL TO TAKE ACTION ON THE PROBLEM OF AN AGING POPULATION IN THE NEW LISBON CYCLE (2008 - 2010)**, MARCH 2008, BRUSSELS, COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 16616/1/07, REV 1
2. **EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION "PROMOTING SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS" – 2007**, BRUSSELS, 10.5.2007, COM(2007), 244 FINAL
3. **EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION "TOWARDS A EUROPE FOR ALL AGES" – 1999**, COM (99) 221 FINAL, 21 MAY 1999, EU COMMISSION - COM DOCUMENT
4. **EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON "THE DEMOGRAPHIC FUTURE OF EUROPE - FROM CHALLENGE TO OPPORTUNITY"**, OCTOBER 2006, BASIS OF COM(2006), 571 FINAL
5. **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION OF 7 SEPTEMBER 2010 ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AN AGING SOCIETY**, OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EU C 308 E, 20/10/2011, pp. 0049-0055
6. **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AN AGING SOCIETY**, SEPTEMBER 2010, EP REFERENCE NUMBER: A7-0237/2010 / P7\_TA-PROV(2010)0306
7. **EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER /REVISED/**, STRASBOURG, COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 3.V.1996
8. **GREEN PAPER ON DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE**, 2006, BRUSSELS, 16.3.2005, COM(2005), 94 FINAL
9. **INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON THE ELDERLY - MADRID 2002**, UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 2002A/CONF.197/9
10. **LISBON STRATEGY 2000-2012**, BRUSSELS, 20.7.2005 r., COM(2005), SEC (2005) 98 1
11. **THIRD EUROPEAN DEMOGRAPHY FORUM**, 22-23 NOVEMBER 2010, BRUSSELS, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION, UNIT D.4; EUROSTAT, THE STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, UNIT F.1