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Population Fund

# The New Demographic Regime

## Population Challenges and Policy Responses

Edited by

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## NOTE

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

The following symbols have been used throughout this document:

- .. = not available or not pertinent
- = nil or negligible

References to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars unless otherwise stated.

## ABBREVIATIONS

CEE	Central and Eastern Europe (the countries in this grouping vary between authors)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FSU	Former Soviet Union
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
ODA	Official Development Assistance
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

## COUNTRY LISTS

**UNECE:** Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan

**OECD:** Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America

**EU 15:** Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

**EU 25:** Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

**CIS:** Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

**Council of Europe:** Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom

## PREFACE

In the European context of low fertility, issues such as childbearing and parenting, morbidity and mortality, reproductive health and international migration – as well as global population and development trends – represent major challenges. These were the subjects discussed in depth at a high-level expert meeting entitled The European Population Forum 2004: Population Challenges and Policy Responses.

This publication includes the keynote and background papers prepared for that Forum. Hosted by the Government of Switzerland, the Forum was jointly organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 12 to 14 January 2004. One of its tasks was to appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, as part of the worldwide decennial review.

Three hundred and sixty experts attended the Forum. They were from the executive and legislative branches of government, academic and research institutes, civil society organisations and the private sector, and they came from 47 UNECE member states. There were also experts from the United Nations secretariat, United Nations funds, programmes and specialised agencies, as well as from other international and regional intergovernmental organisations. Given the nature of the event as a forum of experts, the participants took part in a personal capacity.

The programme of the Forum (Annex 1) was decided in consultation with the Government of Switzerland, the host of the event, several intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and the Advisory Group (Annex 2), which was established to assist the organisers with the preparatory process. Four themes were decided upon:

- Global population and development trends: the European view
- Childbearing and parenting in low fertility countries: enabling choices
- Morbidity, mortality and reproductive health: facing challenges in transition countries
- International migration: promoting management and integration.

Population ageing was not included as a theme as it was the topic of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing held only just over one and a half years earlier.

The Forum recognised the diversity of national circumstances and the continued high relevance of the Cairo Agenda for the UNECE region, together with other regional agreements such as the Recommendations of the 1993 European Population Conference, the Conclusions of the 1998 Regional Population Meeting and the Regional Implementation Strategy of the 2002 Ministerial Conference on Ageing. The Forum stressed the links of the Programme of Action with other international development objectives, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the Health Sector Reform.

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and the other regional consensus reached in this field. Recommendations on future policy directions and options for policy development and implementation were outlined. It was noted that earlier pledges for ICPD financing were never fully met and that additional resources are now required both for international assistance, and for the domestic implementation of the Programme of Action. Newly developed approaches to official development assistance (ODA) funding are being explored.

Demographic changes are affecting all countries in the UNECE region, but in a variety of different ways. It was recognised that the countries in transition are facing some particularly critical trends, especially regarding health and mortality. Persistent low fertility rates continue to influence the population dynamics of the whole region, with possible negative consequences for its future economic well-being. Forum participants stressed the importance of removing barriers for men and women to freely decide on their reproductive behaviour and parenting status, and emphasised the importance of creating national policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment as well as providing services that support families and family formation.

In general, the status of women has improved considerably in the region in recent years; however, gender inequity persists to varying degrees. In many countries access has significantly improved to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services. However, in several countries effective access is still limited. In addition, more could be done to provide contraception, protection from reproductive tract infections (including sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS) and safe abortion (where not prohibited by law). The special needs of young people in these areas were highlighted, in order to ensure they can exercise their reproductive rights. In countries experiencing economic instability and armed conflicts, human rights infringements have occurred. These include the trafficking of human beings and the forced prostitution of young women and girls. A coordinated global and regional strategy was recommended to address this problem.

Migration and the integration of migrants continue to be of concern. In some countries recent negative reactions to migrant groups have led to an intense social and political debate about the future of migration. Nevertheless, international migration is increasingly perceived as an important resource for national economies in a global world. While better integration of migrants into their host society is an agreed objective across the region, in many instances policies to facilitate this remain to be developed and implemented. Reliable information on the situation of migrants is a pre-requisite for the development of such policies. Migration and integration policies have the potential for maximum positive impact if they are coordinated not only at the local and national levels but also internationally. It would also be of benefit if all stakeholders, including the immigrant groups themselves, participate in the conception, implementation and monitoring of the relevant policies.

The Forum discussed the role of the state in the newly emerging institutional environment, an issue that is particularly relevant in the current context of EU enlargement and ongoing social and economic reforms. It was emphasised that the state should design coherent policy and regulatory frameworks, promote human rights, and adhere to the rule of law, good governance and accountability. It was recommended that new forms of partnership between the state, civil society and the private sector be established and deepened. The Forum emphasised the need for reliable and timely statistical information and scientific research as prerequisites for comprehensive policy formulation and monitoring. Cooperation between countries within and outside the region was deemed essential in order to address the new social and development challenges and to achieve the ICPD and MDG objectives. All countries were called upon to live up to their commitments to support the ICPD and MDG agendas.

Given the expert nature of the meeting, the UNECE, Government of Switzerland and UNFPA agreed that, shortly after the Forum, a Summary of Deliberations would be published under the auspices of the Chair of the Forum, Ambassador Walter Fust of Switzerland. A first draft of the Summary was prepared during the Forum by the Friends of the Chair (Annex 3). On its completion, the Swiss authorities submitted this document in February 2004 to the Secretary General of the United Nations, requesting that it be circulated at the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly and made available at the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Population and Development. The latter session was devoted to the review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Summary of the Deliberations is included towards the end of this volume.

It is hoped that this publication will serve as a valuable reference source for all those concerned with European and global population issues and policies. We believe that it will serve the needs of many people who are seeking effective solutions to the population challenges our societies are facing, whether they work in governmental or non-governmental organisations, or academic institutions.

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