The Impact of the EU’s Ageing Societies on the “European Agenda for Culture”

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The Development and main Targets of the EU: Seeking Peace and Prosperity

After the 1\textsuperscript{st} World War:
Oswald Spengler’s “The Decline of the West” (1918):
It prophesied the end of the power of European culture.
Culture is not seen as a constantly linear development process towards self-improvement.
In contrast to the teleological concepts of Idealism (Hegel) and Materialism (Comte) the culturally Darwinian approach is a shocking counter-model:
Culture is as transient as life.

After the 2\textsuperscript{nd} World War:
In order to overcome the permanent change between times of war and times of peace:
introducing a common policy built on the principles of sustainable peace.
The European Union born by the intention to further prevent war and the decline that followed afterwards.

Nowadays:
Economic growth (more than peace) became the paradigm that rules almost the whole world
Hypothesis:
Ageing as the most important Challenge:

The societies of the EU are ageing. We Europeans have to find a new concept of man and culture: (social) peace + economic growth + (as new element) long life society: Sustainability and life experience despite the Mantra of Youth and Growth

LISBON EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 23-24 March 2000:

The Union has today set itself a **new strategic goal** for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.
The ways, the European Commission accompanies and fosters this paradigm shift: The “European Agenda for Culture”? 

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world

{SEC(2007) 570}

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Background:

The Treaty of Lisbon dedicates an article to Union action in the field of culture (Article 167), which should ‘contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.’

The term *culture* is not defined by the European Commission: It is to be defined by the EU’s member states.

The two main objectives of the Agenda:

For instance: The EU's European Capitals of Culture flagship initiative is one of the most ambitious European cultural events. The objective is to bring European citizens closer together by

- promoting a better understanding of our common cultural heritage, as well as
- showing the richness of our cultural diversity.

The European Agenda for Culture – progress towards shared goals, 19.07.2010

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MAIN OBJECTIVES FOR A EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR CULTURE

The extensive consultation process carried out in 2006 has enabled the Commission to identify a strong consensus for a new EU agenda for culture, so as to build on past achievements and reinforce on-going activities. This would be built on three interrelated sets of objectives:

- promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue [Lisbon Treaty – EU immanent];
- promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy [related to] for growth and jobs;
- promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations [EU transcendent].

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Specific Objectives [to be analyzed by reference to ageing]:

(a) promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue:
   — encouraging the mobility of artists and other professionals in the culture field,
   — promoting cultural heritage, namely by facilitating the mobility of collections and fostering the process of digitisation, with a view to improving public access to different forms of cultural and linguistic expressions,
   — promoting intercultural dialogue as a sustainable process contributing to European identity, citizenship and social cohesion, including by the development of the intercultural competences of citizens;
promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth, employment, innovation and competitiveness:

— promoting better use of synergies between culture and education, in particular by encouraging art education and active participation in cultural activities with a view to developing creativity and innovation,
— promoting the availability of managerial, business and entrepreneurial training capacities specifically tailored to professionals in the cultural and creative fields,
— fostering a favourable environment for the development of cultural and creative industries, including the audiovisual sector, thus maximizing their potential, in particular that of SMEs, namely by making better use of existing programmes and initiatives and by stimulating creative partnerships between the cultural sector and other sectors, including in the context of local and regional development;
(c) **promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations:**

— enhancing the role of culture in the EU's external relations and development policy,
— promoting the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and contributing to its implementation at international level,
— fostering intercultural dialogue and interaction between civil societies of EU Member States and third countries,
— encouraging further cooperation between cultural institutions of EU Member States, including cultural institutes, in third countries and with their counterparts in those countries.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL on a European Agenda for Culture, 2007

**Interim Result:**
The Ageing of the European Societies is not reflected adequately in the Agenda for Culture.
Since the mid-1990s, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (hereafter ‘Eurofound’) has conducted research on age management – firstly, across the ‘older’ 15 EU Member States (EU15) and then in the 10 new Member States that joined the EU in 2004 (NMS)1. Eurofound has gathered and analysed company cases of good practice in age management designed to improve job opportunities and working conditions for older workers in relation to issues such as recruitment, training, flexible working, health and ergonomics. The analysis of these cases helps provides a better understanding of what works in practice and what conditions need to be in place for employers and workers to develop new age management practices which aim to extend working lives and postpone effective labour market exit.

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1. THE NEED FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION

The European Councils at Lisbon and Stockholm set ambitious targets for raising employment rates in the Union by 2010, to close to 70% for the working-age population as a whole, to over 60% for women and to 50% for older workers. These targets imply an increase in employment of about 20 million overall, of 11-12 million women and of 5 million older workers. A considerable number of inactive people will need to enter the labour market to reach the Lisbon and Stockholm objectives.

Achieving these targets will depend on improving the functioning of capital, product and labour markets in a context of macro-economic stability conducive to sustainable growth, which is necessary for social cohesion and sustainability of public finances, especially in the area of pensions as well as for health systems. These targets refer to the employment rate, and while it is clear that raising employment is directly linked to raising levels of participation, reducing unemployment will also have to play a role.


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Raising participation will not be easy, partly because it will depend on changes in cultural and socio-psychological factors, in particular attitudes to older people in employment, and partly because it will require important changes in policy instruments to achieve changes in behaviour of employers and workers. Governments and social partners will need to co-operate in reforming the legal and institutional framework to encourage such changes in behaviour.

Moreover, active ageing is an important contribution to the overall EC objective - as stipulated in Article 2 of the EC Treaty - to improve people's well-being. The Lisbon strategy, strengthened at Stockholm, addresses already this dimension on improving living standards and quality of life in policy terms. This report together with the other inputs into the Barcelona European Council, should further refine this approach and lay down clear priorities.
Foreword

Over the last decade, the issue of Europe’s ageing population has emerged as a central priority for policymakers in the EU. This demographic shift calls into question both the sustainability of pension systems and the future of Europe’s labour supply, which in turn pose serious challenges for the prospects for economic growth.


The challenge of ageing

In one sense, population ageing represents a human success story: increased longevity, one important determinant of our ageing society, is a direct reflection of the success of societies in securing higher living standards. However, the steady, sustained growth of older populations also poses challenges for policymakers in many societies. Although there is no single way in which population ageing affects economic growth, many sources indicate that the net impact of the ageing process may be negative.

Ibid., p. 5

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Demographic Change in the EU

The European Union is facing unprecedented demographic changes (an ageing population, low birth rates, changing family structures and migration). In the light of these challenges it is important, both at EU and national level, to review and adapt existing policies.

Following a public debate, a [2006 EU policy paper](#) identified five key policy responses to manage demographic change:

1. supporting demographic renewal through better conditions for families and improved reconciliation of working and family life
2. boosting employment – more jobs and longer working lives of better quality
3. raising productivity and economic performance through investing in education and research
4. receiving and integrating migrants into Europe
5. ensuring sustainable public finances to guarantee adequate pensions, health care and long-term care.
1. THE AGEING POPULATION IN EUROPE: TRENDS AND OUTLOOK

Demographic ageing, i.e. the increase in the proportion of older people, is above all the result of significant economic, social and medical progress giving Europeans the opportunity to live a long life in comfort and security that is without precedent in our history. However, as was stressed by the Heads of State and Government at their Hampton Court informal Summit in October 2005, it is also one of the main challenges that the European Union will have to face in the years to come.

This Communication responds to the concern raised at this Summit, which is also widely felt by Europe’s citizens. It is a follow-up to the Commission’s communication to the European Council entitled “European values in the Globalised World” and the Commission’s Green Paper on “Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations”. It examines the possibilities for Europeans to confront the demographic challenge by drawing on the renewed Lisbon strategy for Growth and Jobs and the Sustainable Development Strategy.

2. IMPACT OF THE AGEING POPULATION
2.1. Impact on the labour market, productivity and economic growth
2.2. Impact on social security and public finances

EC, The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity, 2006

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European Demography Forum

Held every two years since 2006, the European Demography Forum gives policymakers, stakeholders and experts from all over Europe opportunities to share their knowledge and to discuss how to address demographic change.

- European demography forum (2010) (Download the presentations).
- European demography forum (2008)
- European demography forum (2006)

To underpin these debates, the Commission services present a biennial European Demography Report setting out the main facts and figures concerning demographic change and discussing appropriate policy responses.

- European demography report 2010
- European demography report 2008
- European demography report 2007

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Third European Demography Forum: The Demographic Dimension of the Europe2020 Strategy

“Europe 2020”, the European Union’s strategy for jobs and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, was adopted by the European Council in June 2010.

It can only succeed if it takes into account a rapidly changing demographic context and if it finds ways of unleashing the full potential of an ageing and increasingly diverse population.

The 2010 Demography Forum will provide policy makers and stakeholders with an opportunity to:

- explore how to promote active ageing, notably in view of the European Year for Active Ageing envisaged for 2012;
- examine how families can be supported so that they can ensure solidarity between generations; this involves notably taking stock of the activities developed in the framework of the European Alliance for Families and discussing its future;
- debate how to tackle the crisis and consolidate public finances without jeopardizing investment Europe’s demographic future.

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Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Concretely, the Union has set five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU and national levels underpin the strategy.
The conclusions of the European Council of 13 and 14 March 2008, which launched the new cycle of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs (2008-2010) and which, with the aim of fully developing the potential for innovation and creativity of European citizens, confirmed that particular attention should be given to further initiatives for joint programming of research; ...

The Council conclusions of 2 December 2008 concerning joint programming of research in Europe in response to major societal challenges, which established a dedicated configuration ... to identify and substantiate the first list of a limited number of joint programming themes;

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What is active ageing?

Active ageing means growing old in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in our jobs, more independent in our daily lives and more involved as citizens. No matter how old we are, we can still play our part in society and enjoy a better quality of life. The challenge is to make the most of the enormous potential that we harbour even at a more advanced age. The European Year 2012 seeks to promote active ageing in three areas:

**Employment** – as life expectancy increases across Europe, pension ages are rising, but many fear that they will not be able to stay in their current jobs or to find another job until they can retire on a decent pension. We must give older workers better chances in the labour market.

**Participation in society** – retiring from one’s job does not mean becoming idle. The contribution of older people to society as carers for others, typically their own parents or spouses and their grandchildren is often overlooked and so is their role as volunteers. The European Year seeks to ensure greater recognition of what older people bring to society and create more supportive conditions for them.

**Independent living** – our health declines as we grow old, but a lot can be done to cope with this decline. And quite small changes in our environment can make a big difference to people suffering from various health impairments and disabilities. Active ageing also means empowering us as we age so that we can remain in charge of our own lives as long as possible.
ERC projects promote a culture of active ageing

Europe's population is ageing: average life expectancy has increased from 55 in 1920 to over 80 today. At the beginning of 2010 there were 87 million people in Europe aged 65 or above: more than 17% of the total population. This demographic change poses significant challenges for Europe's society and economy. To address the impact of its ageing population, the European Union has launched a set of measures to promote healthy and dignified ageing: 2012 was declared the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

The ambition is to create a culture of active ageing across Europe, built on the foundation of a society equipped for all stages of life and with the ultimate aim of strengthening solidarity between the generations.

The chief goals of the European Year for Active Ageing are:

- To ensure that older workers have a sustainable place in the labour market, where they can benefit from greater security and share their experience with their fellow workers.
- To highlight the role that older people play in society: as carers, as grandparents, as volunteers. Such activities are vital, both socially and economically, and they should benefit from greater support.
- To empower older people, so that ageing does not mean surrendering independence, particularly in terms of healthcare choices.

Among the initiatives taking place this year, the Intergenerational Federation on Ageing (IFA) organizes its 11th Global Conference on Ageing, entitled 'Ageing Connects', in Prague from 28 May – 1 June 2012. The conference aims to have a positive effect on age-related policies and practices globally. An ERCEA delegation will attend the conference and present both the ERC's funding schemes and some of its research in the field of Ageing.
The EY2012 Coalition will encourage the European Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and WHO-Europe to pool their resources and coordinate their action to launch a European Strategy on Active Ageing and an Age-Friendly EU to help the EU achieve its Europe 2020 objective to create smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU.
Inclusive growth – a high-employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion

Inclusive growth means:

- raising Europe’s employment rate – more and better jobs, especially for women, young people and older workers
- helping people of all ages anticipate and manage change through investment in skills & training
- modernising labour markets and welfare systems
- ensuring the benefits of growth reach all parts of the EU

EU target for inclusive growth include:

1. 75% employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 by 2020 – achieved by getting more people into work, especially women, the young, older and low-skilled people and legal migrants
2. better educational attainment – in particular:
   - reducing school drop-out rates below 10%
   - at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education (or equivalent)
3. at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion
Conclusion:

Culture is still seen from a strategic point: related to the development of the EU as (the world’s most important) knowledge economy [not society]; culture should be subordinated.

But:
Long life societies will influence not only the economy but the society as a whole and so we have to redesign the EU’s strategy: first of all its conception of Man and then its [economic, social, cultural, etc.] purpose and objectives accordingly.