



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 51 – 19-23 January 2004

It's just happened ...

Experts Address Population Trends and Challenges in a Diverse Region

Population and reproductive health experts at the European Population Forum 2004, 12-14 January, have affirmed Europe's strong commitment to the 20-year action plan adopted in Cairo a decade ago. Participants examined the impact of changing demographic trends in the region, and assessed global efforts to implement the Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The Forum, hosted by the Swiss Government and co-organized by the UNECE and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), was part of a series of regional meetings marking the tenth anniversary of ICPD.



Empowering young people to fully enjoy healthy sexual and reproductive lives was identified as a key priority in a region with rising rates of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. Other regional concerns identified included widespread human trafficking and gender-based violence. Priority concerns in transition countries include weakened health care infrastructures and restricted access to quality health care, in particular to reproductive health information and services. Efforts to improve health care are hampered by a lack of reliable data systems. Some countries face high rates of maternal mortality and unsafe abortion. Low fertility was identified as a major policy concern in a growing number of countries. The Forum stressed the importance of gender equality and heard examples from the region of national policies promoting more male responsibility for parenting and greater participation of older persons.

The **impact of low fertility on the labour force** is a concern in much of Europe – in some European countries a dramatic decrease in working-age populations in the next 50 years will be combined with an increase in the number of retirees depending on benefits and pensions. It was recognized that the shrinking workforce problem could be helped in part by admitting more migrant workers to the region. **International migration** was seen as an increasingly important resource in a globalized world, and a number of participants called for more transparent immigration and social integration policies, better coordinated at local, national and regional levels.



The Forum identified implementation of the Cairo agenda as indispensable to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including halving world poverty by 2015 and slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS. More funds for sexual and reproductive health are especially needed in transition countries that are currently undergoing health and social reforms. The lack of adequate resources for population and reproductive health programmes was identified as the primary obstacle to achieving the Cairo objectives, including gender equality and universal access to reproductive health care by 2015.

For more information about the Forum, including agenda and background papers, see www.unece.org/ead/pau/epf, or contact Miroslav Macura (miroslav.macura@unece.org). Further information about population issues, reproductive health and the ICPD can be found at www.unfpa.org, or contact William A. Ryan (ryanw@unfpa.org).

Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries plan their transport infrastructures

The countries participating in the UNECE-sponsored TEM and TER Projects are elaborating a Master Plan aimed at the development of their priority transport infrastructure. The TEM and TER Master Plan, started in October 2003, is intended to identify main bottlenecks, missing links and other priority infrastructure needs in their road, rail and combined transport networks, and design a realistic investment strategy to meet those needs. It is expected to provide a useful contribution to the work of the European Commission on the development of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TENT) in

the new EU member countries and to the future development of Transport Corridors outside the EU. Two of the 9 work packages have already been completed. Two groups of governmental experts, with the support of two independent consultants, will be collecting and analysing the relevant information and preparing proposals. The work is expected to be completed by September 2004. For more information contact Michalis P. Adamantiadis (michalis.Adamantiadis@unece.org). See also UNECE Weekly N° 34

Coming up soon ...

A report on the Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development, which took place on 15 and 16 January, will appear in UNECE Weekly N° 52

19-23 January	Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
20-21 January	Working Party on Gas
22 January	Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Use and Supply of Gas

Facts and figures:

Real GDP growth in selected Western economies

(changes over the previous period)

	2000	2001	2002	2003		
				Q1	Q2	Q3
France	3.8	2.1	1.2	0.2	-1.4	1.5
Germany	2.9	0.8	0.2	-1.0	-0.6	0.9
Italy	3.1	1.8	0.4	-0.8	-0.5	2.0
Austria	3.4	0.8	1.4	0.5	1.4	1.3
Belgium	3.8	0.6	0.7	0.9	-0.6	...
Finland	5.1	1.2	2.2	-2.7	3.2	3.2
Greece	4.4	4.0	3.8	12.1	2.1	7.6
Ireland	10.1	6.2	6.9	-6.1	9.3	...
Netherlands	3.5	1.2	0.2	-1.3	-2.4	0.5
Portugal	3.7	1.6	0.4	0.8	0.6	-2.1
Spain	4.2	2.8	2.0	2.2	2.8	2.9
Euro area	3.5	1.6	0.9	-0.1	-0.4	1.5
United Kingdom	3.8	2.1	1.7	0.7	2.4	3.0
Denmark	2.9	1.4	2.1	1.5	-2.8	-1.0
Sweden	4.4	1.1	1.9	1.7	1.1	1.9
European Union	3.6	1.7	1.0	0.1	0.0	1.8
Norway	2.8	1.9	1.0	-0.3	-0.6	3.3
Switzerland	3.7	1.0	0.2	-2.0	-0.7	1.0
Canada	5.3	1.9	3.3	2.0	-0.7	1.1
United States	3.8	0.3	2.4	1.4	3.3	8.2

Source: Eurostat, New Cronos Database; OECD National accounts (Paris), various issues; National Statistical Offices

Notes: Quarterly data are seasonally adjusted and annualised.

New ...



The first issue of EIA/SEA UPDATE has just been produced. The UPDATE is an informal newsletter providing information on the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context and its new Kiev Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). It is available on the Convention web site, www.unece.org/env/eia, together with the reports on the workshops and meetings described therein. Issue number 2 of UPDATE will be produced immediately before the 3rd Meeting of Parties to the Convention and 1st meeting of Signatories to the Protocol, to be held in June 2004 in Cavtat, Croatia.

For further information please contact:

**Information Service,
UN Economic Commission
for Europe (UNECE)
CH - 1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland**

**Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44
Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05
E-mail: info.ece@unece.org
Web site:
<http://www.unece.org>**