



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 434 — 11 - 15 July 2011

UNECE MARKS WORLD POPULATION DAY WITH A CALL TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF OLDER PEOPLE

11 JULY 2011: WORLD POPULATION DAY



Later this year, the population of the world will reach 7 billion people.

Half a billion of these people will be aged 65 years or older. In the

UNECE region, with a total population of 1.2 billion, 174 million people (14.5 per cent) are aged 65 or older. In every world region the proportion of older people is increasing as life expectancy rises and fertility declines; but this trend is especially pronounced in the UNECE region. In Germany and Italy, a fifth of the population is aged 65 or above, and by as early as 2020 this threshold will have been passed by 17 of UNECE's 56 member States.

Every person in this world of 7 billion — from newborn infants to centenarians — should enjoy the same rights and opportunities. As societies around the world strive to end poverty, protect health and safeguard education for their citizens, it must be remembered that these goals apply to people of all ages — including older people. At the same time, we need to recognize the positive contributions of older people's knowledge, experience and capacities.

In 2002 the member States of UNECE committed to building 'a society for all ages', and in this year of 7 billion they are reflecting on how far they have come. Each member State is reviewing its progress in implementing

the regional strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: a strategy which makes commitments in ten key areas including health and well-being, employment, social participation and intergenerational solidarity. Countries are looking at how they have adapted policies and programmes to fulfil this strategy, and are examining the lives of older people to see whether these policies are working, and where challenges remain. Their results will be presented next year at a conference in Vienna marking the tenth anniversary of the Madrid Plan and its regional implementation strategy.

On 11 July 2011, World Population Day, UNECE reaffirms the call for a society for all ages — one in which no need is neglected, no contribution goes unnoticed and no group is sidelined because of their age.

World Population Day has been observed annually since 1989. The day helps to build awareness of population issues, highlighting the relationships between population and development, the environment and human rights. The theme of this year's World Population Day is '7 billion actions' (www.7billionactions.org), highlighting 7 key challenges the world faces: including the unprecedented global challenge of ageing. □

For more information visit: www.unece.org/pau/welcome.html or contact: ageing@unece.org.

INNOVATION PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF KAZAKHSTAN INITIATED

A team of international experts mobilized by the UNECE visited Kazakhstan on 20-30 June 2011 to advance the preparation of the Innovation Performance Review of Kazakhstan. The experts met with a large number of innovation stakeholders in the country, including senior government officials in key institutions and local experts who will be also contributing to the Review. This participatory policy advisory service, which is undertaken at the request of the national authorities, will consider a number of possible policy actions aimed at stimulating innovation activity and improving the efficiency of the national innovation system. The draft recommendations of this Review will be discussed at the sixth session of the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (30 November-2 December 2011). □

For more information, please contact José Palacin at: jose.palacin@unece.org.



Elena Oves from the Lorkh Institute for Potato Cultivation, Rimma Usacheva and Andrei Petrov from Ramon'-Agro testing potato leaves for viral contamination at Bioreba

RUSSIAN SEED POTATO GROWERS TRAINED IN SWITZERLAND

Laboratory testing for pathogens and field control for diseases and pests are critical for producing healthy seed potatoes. Multiplication of seed should start from a disease-free in-vitro source material which then would give rise to subsequent generations of high-yielding seed.

To learn modern diagnostic techniques and efficient methods of seed potato cultivation, a group of six specialists from different regions of the Russian Federation visited in June this year the Swiss world-class plant diagnostics laboratory Bioreba and the Swiss Agricultural Research Station Agroscope Changins-Wädenswil (ACW).

Within the programme of the visit, Bioreba experts provided hands-on training on potato virus detection and Agroscope researchers shared their experience in meristime extraction and clonal multiplication of potato plantlets.

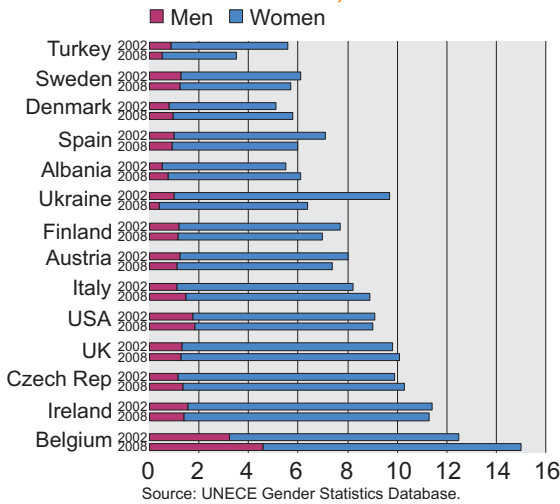
In the forthcoming years the work to modernize the system of seed potato production, quality control and certification in the Russian Federation and other CIS countries will

continue with the assistance of the experts of the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes and with the financial support of the Russian Voluntary Contribution Fund. □

For more information, please visit:
<http://live.unece.org/trade/agr/welcomee.html>
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Percentage of one-parent family households in all private households, by sex of the parent Selected UNECE countries, 2002 and 2008

ONE-PARENT FAMILIES: LITTLE CHANGE IN MOST COUNTRIES



There was little change in the percentage of one-parent families from 2002 to 2008 across UNECE countries.

Notable decrease was observed in Turkey and Ukraine, whereas in Belgium the percentage increased from 13 to 15. The level higher than ten per cent is observed also in the Czech Republic, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The share of one-parent family households varies considerably across UNECE countries, ranging from 3 to 15 per cent of all private households. A large majority of one-parent families is still headed by the mother. The percentage of one-parent families where the parent is the father ranges between one and two per cent in most countries and this has not changed much in the considered six-year period.

A one-parent family is defined as a household with a lone parent with one or more children. Those families usually emerge as a result of divorce or out-of-union childbearing. □

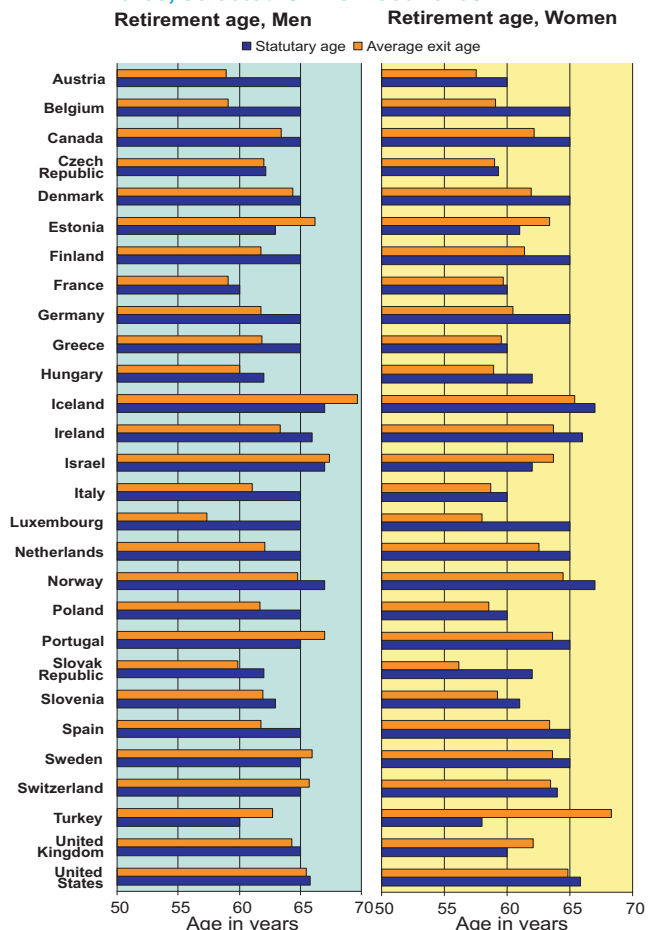
RETIREMENT AGE IN THE UNECE REGION

The average age of exit from the labour force is lower than the statutory retirement age in most of the countries of the UNECE region. For example in Germany the statutory retirement age for men is 65 years, but the average exit age is only 61.8 years. For women the tendency is the same: statutory retirement age 65 years, but average exit age 60.5 years. Only in a few countries do people continue to work, on average, beyond the statutory retirement age, and there are clear differences between men and women in these countries (e.g. Iceland, Portugal, Turkey).

After declining constantly since 1970, the effective retirement age in many UNECE countries levelled off or started to rise during the mid-to-late 1990s, according to OECD data. An upward trend is expected to continue in the future, but life expectancy beyond retirement age is rising even faster, so that the average time spent in retirement is still increasing.

As populations grow older across the UNECE region, declining shares of people in the working age range are inevitable. Measures to increase the labour force participation of those in the working ages are therefore essential. Policymakers should seek strategies to counter the causes of premature exit from the labour force. These measures may include fighting discrimination, providing training opportunities for older workers and improving their working conditions. Such steps could not only reduce early retirement, but could create opportunities for continued work well beyond the statutory retirement age for those who are still willing and able to do so. □

Statutory and average effective age of retirement from the labour force, selected UNECE countries



This subject features in the Population unit's policy brief entitled 'Age-friendly employment policies and practices' which can be found at: www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/docs/age/2011/Policy-briefs/9-Policy-Brief-Age-Friendly-Employment.pdf. This is the ninth in a series of policy briefs on topics related to ageing.

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