



**UNECE**

**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

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**How Generations and Gender Shape Demographic Change  
Conference to discuss policies and new research findings, Geneva, 14-16 May 2008**

Children and family are commonly associated with a happy and satisfied life. Recent European data suggest that many more people of reproductive age would like to form families and have children than actually do so, and many parents would like to have more children than they have. What role should public policy play regarding these issues? Should reconciling work and family life be the main avenue of policy? Concurrent with lower birth rates, European populations are ageing, which requires adaptation across all spheres of society. What are the best policy responses to these demographic trends, and how can research better support finding them?

Answers to these questions and issues of family and reproductive behaviour as well as intergenerational and gender relationships will be centre stage at the upcoming conference, "How Generations and Gender Shape Demographic Change: Towards Policies Based on Better Knowledge", to be held at the Palais des Nations from 14 to 16 May. The research findings that will be discussed at the conference originate from the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), coordinated by the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE). As part of the GGP, panel survey data have been collected from about 165,000 participants in 15 countries. In each of the three waves of data collection taking place at three-year intervals, respondents provided a wide range of information on their family plans and the contextual factors influencing them. The results of the survey offer a unique knowledge base for policymaking. To make full use of the data's potential, UNECE is inviting both policymakers and scientists to the conference.

Seven panel discussions will cover a variety of issues, such as low birth rates, the realities of parenthood and childbearing, reconciliation of career and family, better integration of young people, ageing, solidarity within and between generations, and gender equality. All sessions will combine contributions from policymakers, who will highlight the specific challenges facing their countries, and distinguished scientists, who will present policy-relevant empirical findings based on the new GGP data. Time will also be devoted to discussing the implications of the GGP findings as well as how to translate them into more effective policy strategies.

Attending the Conference will be about 150 delegates, including government representatives, scientists, and experts from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Current demographic developments in Europe have important and far-reaching implications across all spheres of society, affecting economic development, social cohesion, sustainability and equity, and posing key challenges to public policy. UNECE is thus offering a much-needed platform for international discussion.

A Press Conference will take place at 10.45 a.m. on Wednesday 14 May with selected Ministers and senior officials.

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### **UNECE – the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

UNECE is one of five regional commissions in the United Nations system. It strives to foster sustainable economic growth among its 56 member countries in the EU region, Eastern Europe, North America, and Central Asia. To this end, UNECE provides a forum for communication among States, brokers international legal instruments addressing trade, transport and the environment, and supplies statistics and economic and environmental analysis.

### **Population Activities Unit (PAU)**

The UNECE Population Activities Unit promotes policy-related dialogue among the UNECE member States on various facets of demographic change in Europe and North America. Its activities support implementation of the final documents of intergovernmental conferences on population issues, and contribute towards better-informed policymaking by organizing programmes of data collection and research. Currently, the Unit is focusing on follow-up to the 2007 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing (León, Spain) and on the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). UNECE receives financial support from the European Commission for the coordination of GGP.