

INFORMATION NOTE  
**European Population Forum 2004:  
Population Challenges and Policy Responses**  
12–14 January 2004  
Geneva, Switzerland

## **Background**

As a preparatory meeting for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) convened, in collaboration with other organisations, the European Population Conference (EPC) in Geneva in 1993. In preparation for the Twenty-first Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 1999, the UNECE also held, in collaboration with other organisations, the Regional Population Meeting (RPM) in Budapest in 1998. The two UNECE events conducted reviews of unprecedented demographic developments taking place in the UNECE member States and reached agreements and commitments on policies required to respond to those developments. The EPC and RPM adopted *Recommendations* and *Conclusions*, respectively, which were issued as UN publications.

The ICPD adopted the *Programme of Action*, while the Twenty-first Special Session of the General Assembly adopted *Key Actions for the further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development*. The UN has published the two documents.

## **Objectives of the European Population Forum 2004**

UNECE, along with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as co-organiser, and the Swiss Government, as host country, will convene an expert meeting – the European Population Forum (EPF) 2004 – in Geneva on 12-14 January 2004. The Forum will, *inter alia*, consider important, newly emerging population changes, examine challenges they pose and identify best policy responses to them. In this context, the Forum will examine the implementation of the ICPD-related regional and global agreements of the 1990s in the UNECE region, particularly in countries in transition. Also, it will consider how the UNECE region can further the implementation of these agreements in the future. In brief, the Forum will contribute to a continuing debate on population issues in the UNECE region.

## **Nature of the Forum**

The Forum will bring together noted experts from executive and legislative branches of government, academia, research, intergovernmental organisations and institutions, civil society, including non-governmental organisations and the private sector. All participants will take part in the Forum in their personal capacity.

The Government of Switzerland will host the Forum. The UNECE Executive Secretary, the Swiss Foreign Minister and the UNFPA Executive Director as well as high-level personalities from the Council of Europe and the European Commission will address the Forum and take part in its proceedings and deliberations.

The Forum will not negotiate or adopt documents. Rather, its outcomes will include a Chair's summary of deliberations, a report on the Forum to be prepared by the Secretariat and the proceedings containing background papers for the meeting. The Chair's summary and the report will be communicated to the UN Secretary-General by the Swiss Government, host of the EPF, for circulation.

### **Overview of the Forum's programme**

The co-organisers have been consulting with representatives of regional intergovernmental organisations and institutions, academia and research, and national and international NGOs as well as with some government representatives. The co-organisers are also being advised by an Advisory Group for the EPF 2004 on various substantial issues pertaining to the event. As a result, it is now envisaged that the programme of the Forum will feature opening and closing sessions, two keynote addresses and four thematic sessions.

### **Funding**

Most of the cost of organising and holding the Forum will be covered from the extrabudgetary contributions being received by the UNECE secretariat from the UNFPA and the Swiss and other Governments. Extrabudgetary staff preparing the Forum will be supported from these contributions. In addition, the background papers and the participation in the Forum of their authors as well as of panellists and experts from countries in transition will be financed from these contributions.

### **Updates on preparations**

As the preparations for the Forum continue relevant information will be shared through the following web site to be created by the middle of August 2003 by the UNECE secretariat: <http://www.unece.org/ead/pau/epf/>.