

Forum 2004

Session 4: International migration: promoting management and integration

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Thank you, Mr Chair Person
Good morning everyone

Thank you to the distinguished colleagues to provide us the excellent background papers.

I take the floor to present you some additional information about my country.

Portugal is a low fertility country (1.46 children per women) but observes a high fertility rate among the adolescents. The proportion of older persons outnumbers the proportion of the young population.

Portugal, traditionally a country with net emigration, as it was referred became receiving country, in particular since the end of the 20th century. The largest percentage of foreigners comes from Africa and Brazil. However, in the 90s immigration from Eastern Europe rose, especially from Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Romania. The immigrants with foreign nationality are an important contribution at the moment to the population growth and ageing process because they are younger than the national population and have higher levels of fertility. But the demographic studies show that with the integration process immigrants adopted the fertility patterns of destination countries. It happened in France with the Portuguese emigration.

The last Portuguese projections based on the final results of 2001 census, with a time horizon of 2050, indicate depopulation in overall scenarios and the forecast a continuing ageing process. The predicted population is lower in 2050 than it was in 2000. This evolution reflects the conclusions presented in this forum.

The baseline scenario calls for a slight increase in the total fertility rates, reaching the level of 1.71 and a reduction in mortality with a fall in infant mortality to 3‰ by the year 2050. Data shows a rapid increase on life expectancy (79.0 years for men and 84.7 for women). It was retained a positive net migration over the period with a trend to decrease. The cumulative arrivals of foreign population predicted are about 850 thousands persons, declining gradually from 51 000 in 2001 to 15 000 in 2008; since 2009 until 2050 the net migration is projected to stabilise around 12 600 per year.

The immigration explains from the present time until 2014 the population growth in Portugal and also reduces the pace of ageing. But it is not a realistic solution for ageing. The immigrants themselves become older. Thus the ageing is a challenge to be recognized.

A set of different factors explains the current low fertility and it is difficult to measure international migration in a globalised world.

The statistics provided by countries receiving Portuguese emigrants have enabled recent migration movements to be quantified more accurately. This data is very useful to estimate the annual fluxes. However not all countries are using the same definition of migrants (e.g. duration in destination country). As consequence, it is necessary to rapidly improve the international migration data and harmonised the concepts of migrants.

On the other hand, the mortality due to sexuality transmitted diseases, in particular the HIV/AIDS prevalence rates among young people, influence the fertility behaviour and, consequently growth and the structure of population. The rising of the infertility prevalence, especially among men, is also an important matter to debate.

So, I suggest that major issues, such as reproductive health, concept adopted in ICPD, the causes of infertility, should be remained in the international agenda of population and development.

To summarize, the co-operation in the field of population data collection, analyses and research in the ECE Region, must continue, as it was stressed in the Budapest meeting in 1993.

Finally, let me say that is very good pleasure for me to be in this forum. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisation for its invitation.

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