

## Armenia adopts UNECE recommendations on ageing

UNECE today launched the report of its first 'Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing', a project to help guide Armenia in devising policies relating to ageing and older people. The Government of Armenia has formally adopted the recommendations as a part of their National Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing.

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The Armenian Road Map includes an analysis of existing laws and documents relating to ageing; chapters on integration of older persons, social protection, health, institutional care, housing and independent living, education, the labour market, and gender; a consideration of monitoring and evaluation strategies, involvement of stakeholders, and existing research and data collection infrastructures; and finally a consideration of Armenia's integration in international processes relating to ageing.

Specific recommendations of the Road Map include:

- pension and housing reform;
- promotion of lifelong learning;
- media campaigns to combat negative stereotypes;
- improved medical training in gerontology and geriatrics;
- changes in labour law to provide incentives to employers and employees alike for continued labour market participation;
- formal recognition of family-based care;
- and improvements in institutional care facilities.

While population ageing is often thought of as a feature of the Western European countries, the phenomenon is rapidly emerging in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well.

11 per cent of Armenia's 3.1 million inhabitants are aged 65 years or older, and this share is projected to reach 18 per cent by 2030 ([see chart 1](#)). While currently much lower than the levels seen in Western European countries such as Germany (20 per cent) or France (17 per cent), and somewhat below that of Russia (13 per cent) the proportion of older persons in Armenia is rapidly catching up, and this fast rate of increase makes the changes especially challenging. A significant factor that has quickened the pace of change is the massive emigration of young people: around two thirds of Armenians live outside of the country and in the period 2005-2010 net migration out of the country totalled 15,000 people (about 0.5 per cent of the total population) each year.

Combined with a total fertility rate of 1.74 children per woman — well below the level of about 2.1 required for long-term generational replacement — and a gain in life expectancy of almost six years since 1990, the phenomenon of demographic ageing in Armenia is now striking.

UNECE and the Government of Armenia have developed the Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing to help ensure that these growing numbers of older people are integrated into Armenian society, economically, socially and culturally; that their needs are met, their potential fulfilled and their contributions recognized.

Anahit Martirosyan of the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Issues is the vice-chair of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing and acted as the national coordinator of the Armenian Road Map project:

*“The development of the Road Map is an essential basis for enabling Armenia to develop a comprehensive policy framework to address the challenges of population ageing”* she explains, *“it has helped us to form a precise vision for building a society for all ages”*.

Vitalija Gaucaite-Wittich, Chief of the UNECE Population unit, adds: *“Armenia has taken an important step by integrating the recommendations of the Road Map into their National Strategy on Ageing. We hope that other countries in the region will follow their lead, so that the challenges of ageing can be transformed into opportunities for healthy, productive and happy lives for people of all ages”*

A similar Road Map project is now underway in the Republic of Moldova.

The Road Map report is available at [www.unece.org/index.php?id=18554](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=18554)

In the framework of this project, UNECE produced a film exploring the lives of older people in Armenia. Watch it on UNECE's YouTube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhe3iBdR0-k>