

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Brussels, 24 April 1990

COMMUNICATION ON THE ELDERLY

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on Community Actions for the Elderly

(presented by the Commission)

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which established the European Community in 1957, the demographic fabric and composition of European society have changed dramatically. The evolution is continuing and the consequences of present trends will continue to affect our societies far into the next century.
2. The composition of age groups in our population is changing as a consequence of the dramatic fall in the birth rate and increased life expectancy. This evolution is reflected in the shape of the traditional population pyramid turning into a population column which, in the next century, could develop in a reverse, unstable and truncated pyramid. These phenomena are accentuated in certain sectors of the economy, in agriculture, for example, and in certain regions, mostly rural, of the Community, where an inverted age pyramid is already to be found. We must note, for instance that more than half of the population engaged in agriculture is aged over 55 years.
3. The changes in size of age groups combined with a growing individualism in our societies pose increasing problems for the relationships between age groups and generations and for the integration and cohesion of our societies.
4. The main features of these developments are the greying of our population, the changing relation between the economically active and non-active parts of the population, the shift in the emphasis from child care to care for very old and frail people and the change in the family structure, as was already recognised in the recent Communication of the Council on Family Policies.
5. It goes without saying that this remarkable evolution - towards not only greater numbers of elderly people but also towards greater numbers of very old and frail elderly people - will result in major social, economic and financial problems, with implications for society as a whole. (1)
6. A positive approach will certainly be facilitated by the fact that the elderly people of today are not the elderly people of the past. The majority of the "new" elderly are better educated, in better health and less dependent on public or private welfare, which makes them more active than ever before. This new situation is such as to allow much greater participation by elderly people in their environment and it is already clear that they can contribute positively to social and educational activities.
7. Furthermore, completion of the Internal Market will produce effects in a number of areas of relevance to the elderly population. The easing of the mobility of retired people within the Community (notably from Northern towards Southern countries) has social and economic consequences, such as, for example, in the question of the services to be made available to the elderly population on the relationship between the elderly and their pensions funds in their countries of origin or the implementation of the Directives recently adopted by the Council concerning residence rights of retired and non-active persons.

8. A people's Europe can only be developed in a spirit of solidarity of generations taking into account the interests of all concerned. This has been repeatedly stressed by the European Parliament. (2)

9. The Community Charter of Basic Social Rights for Workers recognises this and mentions explicitly for the elderly the entitlement to adequate social protection and medical assistance.

10. At the same time, the development of new medical and technological aids for handicapped people (while all the elderly are not handicapped, 60% of the handicapped are elderly) enhances the standard of care, restrains the rising demands on social and medical services, and makes those cared for better able to play a full role in society.

11. This Communication will present an analysis of the current situation and will propose actions to be carried out at Community level in order to make known the efforts of Member States in this area and to complement these actions with a view to the promotion of solidarity between generations.

12. A draft Council Decision on the development of Community Actions for the elderly will complete this document.

I. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

A. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF AN AGEING POPULATION

a. General Trends

13. The current demographic ageing of the population is the consequence of both a dramatic decrease in fertility - far below the replacement rate of 2.1 per fertile woman - and an increase in life expectancy, thanks to medical progress and improved living conditions. The striking character of demographic ageing in Europe is shown by Table 1 (Annex 1).

14. The elderly do not however form a homogenous group. Generally they can be divided into three categories, each with its specific characteristics and needs; older workers upwards of 50, retired persons and the very old, of whom the majority are women.

15. Whether Europe will be able to cope with the social, economic and financial consequences of the rapidly growing needs of its retired population will depend on many factors. In this context, we must ask whether, for example, economic growth be maintained against the background of a decreasing general population and a decreasing active population and to what extent can our society provide for a continuing growth of female labour force participation without lowering the birth rate?

16. In this regard, interaction between the different active and non-active age classes has great importance, especially for control of social expenditure and for transfers between revenue consumers and producers. The question of the contribution of elderly people to social development also arises in this context - a contribution which is reinforced by the rising educational level of the elderly as well as through scientific and medical progress.

17. Ageing will affect two critical components of the economy: the labour market and public social welfare expenditure. A substantial degree of solidarity between generations and social integration is needed to cope with problems in these two fields.

b. The Labour Market

18. The population in the Community is expected to grow slowly and then decline in the coming years. After peaking in about 2005, by the year 2010 the population will be less than 2% higher than at present and by 2025 there will actually be about 2,3 % fewer people in Europe. The cause of this decline is the fall in the fertility rate in all countries, except Ireland, to well below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman.

19. Because of this Europe faces a sharp drop in the number of young people coming on to the labour market. The chart in Annex I shows that, if participation rates were to remain at their 1985 levels, net entrants to the labour market would be negative by the mid-1990's.

20. This is of course an unrealistic scenario. Female labour force participation rates have grown rapidly in recent years and, while the rate of growth might slow down, especially in those countries where participation levels are already high, there is no reason to suppose that it will stop.

21. Policies which are aimed at increasing female labour force participation (e.g. through provision of child care facilities, job-breaks, job-sharing, care for elderly and sick people outside the home etc.) and those which are directed to the re-integration of the unemployed back into the labour market (e.g. through training and counselling) may also alleviate the potential labour supply shortages.

22. Two other major problems need urgent analysis : trends towards early retirement and the "greying" of the economically-active part of the population. This analysis should examine especially the consequences of these trends in rural parts of the Community in all their aspects - social, environmental economic, etc - with a view to the development of greater socio-economic cohesion within the Community.

23. Almost all of Europe shows tendencies - inspired by economic or social considerations - to reduce the duration of economically active life. This is caused essentially by three factors : reduction of the legal pensionable age, adoption of pre-retirement schemes and longer years of study resulting in later entries to the labour market (and a rise in sabbatical periods for continued adult education). The move towards more flexible retirement age in many Member States should be noted.

24. Such developments - greater longevity, shorter working life - may well favourably influence short term solutions but their long term effects, both for the individual and the economy will have to be monitored closely. Consideration must to be given to policies directed towards introduction of:

- loss rigid retirement ages, through taking account of the length of working life as well as age;
- flexible, progressive retirement formulas (part-time work);
- alternate periods of education and training employment and leisure.

25. There are questions about the marginal productivity of older workers, their reduced occupational mobility and potential for retraining to new technology and industrial processes. Studies and research, carried out e.g. in the framework of the FAST programme (3), make it clear however that in industrialised countries such as in Western Europe there are insufficient reasons to conclude (following the examination of biographical data) that age is responsible for a general decline in qualifications and capacities.

26. New approaches, which take into account both the needs of the business and its personnel management policy, need to be developed. Provision needs to be made for ongoing training and for retraining in the spirit of the Community Charter of Basic Social Rights for Workers.

27. Questions concerning older workers need to be dealt with carefully so that they are not excluded or marginalised but integrated in new ways into the working environment. (4)

c. Social Expenditure

28. Public social welfare expenditure will be affected by the actual and foreseeable population developments, with implications for present efforts towards the containment of social expenditure. Low birth rates will favourably affect financial outlays on family allowances and education while it should be noted, however, that in order to increase participation rates of women in the labour force, child care and education services will have to be developed in terms of facilities or allowances.

29. Revenue for social expenditures depends largely on the number of economically active people, whose effectiveness will depend more and more on the quality of permanent adult education, which will require financial resources.

30. There is also the rapid rise in the number of retired people, with large numbers of older women who have never built up pension rights. This situation is all the more worrying given that different forms of atypical work, especially part-time work, mainly affect women. This state of affairs has been pointed up in the Commission's 1989 report on "Employment in Europe" and in several studies carried out in the context of the equal opportunities action programme. At the same time, trade unions are demanding a link between retirement pensions and current earnings.

31. Health expenditure has been contained to some degree in recent years. However the number of older people requiring treatment is increasing continuously as is the number of over 75s with substantially higher medical and social costs resulting from dependence on the services of institutions and organisations.

32. In all these fields policy solutions have to be found and the interrelationships between these factors and effects in the short and long term considered. For the European Community, developments are further complicated as the aforementioned tendencies have different timescales in different Member States.

33. The national answers to these problems will not be completely unaffected by developments in other Member States and could affect mobility and paramedical consumption flows between different Member States. These are additional reasons to study and to follow developments closely in these fields.

34. In the area of social expenditure greater solidarity between the different population categories appears vital for the future. This implies that sector-specific social security regimes such as are found, for example, in the agricultural sector in some Member States, should be brought more into line with the general regime in order to bring about a situation of equal treatment for elderly people.

B. THE POSITIVE RESOURCE OF THE ELDERLY

35. There has been a shift in emphasis in recent years from old age being seen as a problem time with inevitable frailty and dependency to more positive images of retirement as a time for personal fulfillment. However, there has also been a growing tendency to treat elderly people as a class apart, different from the rest of the population, as is demonstrated by the emergence of clubs and travel agencies for elderly people and a whole series of separate activities for the 'third age'.

36. The 100 million people in the Community aged over 50, (44 million of whom are over 65) and whose numbers are growing in absolute and relative terms, cannot be set aside as a class apart. It is not only in their interest but in the interest of society as a whole that they be fully integrated. (5)

37. Apart from the older workers (over 50) and the 5% of workers who are 65 and over and are still economically active in the formal labour market, there is - as a consequence of lower retirement age, better health and greater mobility provisions - an unprecedented number of elderly people who enjoy an active retirement, making an important contribution to economic, cultural and social life as consumers, volunteers in their local community and providers of care and support within their families and neighbourhoods.

38. Pensioners in Europe currently have higher disposable incomes than ever before and are targeted by an increasing number of commercial and consumer concerns, particularly in the leisure and tourist industries. Their importance as leisure consumers is such that many commercial and public organisations in these fields offer specific products and concessions for senior citizens, in particular in off-peak times or low season. Long stay tourism by senior citizens from northern Community countries in southern Europe continues to grow and results in improvement for regions which suffer from economic decline.

39. In the local community, elderly people make important and enriching contributions to social life by working as volunteers for charities and local organisations, offering professional and practical skills without which many social and cultural organisations would be unable to survive. In other cases, elderly people can contribute in positive ways to the economic activities of younger people : agricultural undertakings are such a case with mutual assistance across generations and replacement services which enable younger people to take time off. A number of projects exist already in Member States which offer interesting examples which could serve as inspiration for actions in favour of the elderly.

40. Last but not least, many elderly people play an important role within the family and household economy, looking after grandchildren and enabling their own children to go out to work or care for very old relatives. By so doing, they make a major contribution to the economy.

41. It is therefore of the utmost importance to take more account of the place and responsibilities of older people in our society. Their potential as producers, consumers and taxpayers must be acknowledged positively as part of normal economic dynamism. In the family, at social, economic and cultural levels they should be encouraged to offer to the collectivity their full potential of experience, wisdom and skills. This is also important for the elderly people themselves as greater participation on their part in social and working life is likely to further their integration into social and professional life.

42. The promotion of solidarity between generations is therefore one of the greatest challenges for the next decades.

C. THE INTERNAL MARKET AND ELDERLY PEOPLE

43. The completion of the internal market will have significant consequences for the economic and social life of elderly people. These consequences can be positive - for example, as far as their mobility within the Community, for example, there may also be consequences which require attention: there is, for example, the problem of providing additional services for the elderly.

1. Consequences of workers' mobility

44. Social protection measures and systems and availability of medico-social services for the elderly are not without importance given the effect of existing regulations on free movement, social security of migrant workers and residence rights, especially in the context of reunited families. This emerges in the framework of the strategy of convergence of the objectives and policies in the area of social protection as announced by the Commission in its Action Programme relating to the implementation of the Community Charter of Basic Social Rights for Workers and of the Commission's reflections on complementary social security regimes in the context of the same programme, following the conclusions of the Social Affairs Council of 29 September 1989.

2. Mobility of Elderly People

45. A significant development is taking place in the mobility of older retired people in the Community, particularly towards southern countries. This poses the problems of infrastructure, especially in the context of regional development, reception, medical and housing arrangements as well as social protection measures and levels. Given greater convergence of social protection, policies such mobility can contribute to a reduction in regional imbalances and thus to a reinforcement of social and economic cohesion.

3. The Internal Market and Living Conditions of the Elderly

46. Increased mobility of workers and their families may have effects on urban development, especially the housing of at-risk categories, amongst which are found numerous elderly people, as has been shown through Community work in the context of the series of anti-poverty programmes. The risk of accelerating the phenomenon of the 'two-speed city' in this context is a phenomenon of particular concern to the elderly.

11. COMMUNITY MEASURES FOR THE ELDERLY

47. Except in the case of certain sectoral Community policies such as free movement of persons, action for the benefit of the elderly is for the greater part the concern of the Member States at national, regional or local level. As is stated in the Action Programme relating to the Implementation of the Community Charter of Basic Social Rights for Workers, the Commission does not intend to propose new legislation in this area.

48. The Community cannot substitute for measures taken in Member States at the appropriate level. In extending a limited number of actions already undertaken (see 50 - 55, below), the Community should limit its role to encouraging the exchange of information and experience as well as the transfer of knowledge and innovative initiatives on topics of common interest.

49. Community action for the elderly must further take account of other actions carried out at Community level on certain aspects (for example, the HELIOS and poverty programmes) which are relevant to the elderly.

A. INITIATIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

50. A number of legal instruments have already been adopted by the Council or are being examined by the Council, which directly concern elderly people, wholly or partially.

51. Amongst these are :

- Council Directives 79/7/EEC and 86/378/EEC concerning equal treatment of men and women in area of social security
- the Council Recommendation of 10 December 1982 on the principle of a Community policy on retirement age
- Council Regulation 88/1096/EEC on early retirement for farmers
- the following proposals :
 - the proposed Directives on rights of residence
 - proposed modification of Regulation 68/1612 EEC of 15/10/68 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community and Directive 68/360/EEC of the same date on the abolition of restrictions on movement and residence within the Community for workers of Member States and their families with a view to the extension of the right to residence of workers to all their ascendants (currently only applicable to dependant ascendants);

- proposed modification of Regulation 71/1408/EEC of 14/7/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, self-employed persons and members of their families moving within the Community with a view to simplifying the liquidation of pensions and the integration of the case law of the Court of Justice into Community legislation;
- proposed regulation on unemployment and pre-retirement aimed at the suppression of the conditions of residence for entitlement and payment of pre-retirement benefits (7);
- proposed Directive completing the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in statutory and occupational social security schemes (8).

52. In addition, the Commission adopted a recommendation in May 1989 on a European citizens' over-60 card. This aims at facilitating access by elderly people to reduced charges which exist in Member States in the areas of transport and cultural activities.

53. The Commission has also carried out a number of studies and seminars in this field, especially on the following topics:

- consequences of ageing on the evolution of social protection
- contribution of older people to economic and social life
- housing conditions of elderly people, including the impact of new technologies
- socio-economic repercussions of long-stay tourism
- health of the elderly.

54. It should also be noted that reflections and actions, which in part concern elderly people, took place within the framework of programmes such as the anti-poverty programmes, the HELIOS programme for the handicapped, the programme for promotion of equal opportunities between men and women, the FAST programme and Community activities relating to the family such as those based on the conclusions of the Council of 29 September 1989. The reports published in the framework of the second anti-poverty programme, for example, point to the growing impoverishment of certain categories of elderly people and to the importance of developing actions to prevent their isolation and to stimulate their integration into the social and economic environment. In the context of the equal opportunities action programme also, the Commission conducted studies into the problems of the elderly.

55. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin has undertaken a certain number of activities on the topic of elderly people, concerning in particular the response of business and public authorities to the ageing of the population.

B. ACTIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT (1991-1993)

56. Following on actions already undertaken at Community level, the Commission proposes that the actions to be carried out should be grouped around the following three themes, concerning not only the situation of elderly people, particularly in the context of completing the Internal Market, but also their positive contribution to their environment.

1. Studies and Knowledge Transfer

57. Studies will be undertaken, especially in the following fields.

- a. the effects of the completion of the Internal Market on the elderly, especially the following points : socio-medical services, housing and living conditions;
- b. the combined effects of the ageing of the population and Community policies in the areas of regional development, tourism and consumer affairs;
- c. Income of elderly people, in particular of women and migrants;
- d. examination and prevention of the most common causes of handicap in old age; medical and paramedical technologies to promote autonomy, in close liaison with the HELIOS programme and the HANDYNET network.

58. Further, studies will be undertaken - where possible via voluntary service - on the contribution of the elderly to the economic and social environment, especially in the following areas:

- a. education and training
- b. the development of social and cultural services.

59. In order to promote the transfer of knowledge, the Commission will create a database which will centralize information and documentation on all issues of interest to elderly people. This database will include especially information on steps taken in the Member States for the benefit of the elderly, statistical information, inventories of research and studies as well as information on meetings and events of significance to elderly people. This databank will, in time, be open not only to public authorities at the different levels but also to organizations representing or working for elderly people as well as to research centres. The Commission will examine the ways of establishing and operating this databank in cooperation with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin.

2. Organisation of events and exchange of information

60. The Commission will lend its support to a series of meetings, conferences and seminars organized at European level in Member States on a certain number of topics of common interest to organisations working for the elderly, to social workers, to the social partners and to many others, including the younger generation. The topics for these events will include both elderly people's potential positive contribution to economic, social and cultural life (especially from the perspective of social and voluntary work) as well as: the effects of the ageing of the active population on the labour market, the costs of elderly people on social security budgets (life and sickness insurance), prevention of accidents, physical autonomy, etc.

61. Further, the Commission, will support the launch of a targeted information campaign on the special food and dietary needs of elderly people.

3. Preparation for networking of innovative experiences

62. Based on a preliminary study of current efforts in Member States to strengthen the socio-economic integration of elderly people in their environment and taking into account the studies and exchange of information mentioned above, the Commission will explore the usefulness and feasibility of setting up a European network of innovative experiences on topics such as: the contribution made by elderly people and the use of their skills and experience by younger people, the development of new services for the elderly (meals at home and home cleaning services, social accompaniment services, etc), taking into account the special needs of the elderly in rural environments.

63. The actions proposed by the Commission and set out in paragraphs 57-62 above will be implemented by the Commission with the assistance of a Consultative Committee composed of two representatives from each Member State. The Commission will, further, take steps to generate a wide-ranging debate with organizations which represent elderly people at European level. In order to strengthen this dialogue, the Commission will set up and chair a Liaison Group, to be composed of representatives of those organisations with a European orientation which work with and for the elderly.

III. EUROPEAN YEAR OF THE ELDERLY AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS

64. The Commission proposes that 1993 be designated "European Year of the Elderly and Solidarity between Generations", in response to the request of the European Parliament. During that year, the initiatives proposed by the Commission and the Member States within the framework of the various actions set out above will be examined and evaluated at a European Conference on the Elderly with the participation of representatives of elderly people's organisations, parliamentarians, governments, social partners and other involved in the formation of policies on ageing. This conference will provide an opportunity to explore future possibilities in this area and to lay the foundations for future actions which the Commission will propose to the Council at the beginning of 1993.

65. Among the activities envisaged for that year are e.g. awareness raising events, poster campaigns and conferences which are organised simultaneously in several Member States.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) - UN Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing : 1982
- ILO Demographic evolution and social security : 1987
- IMF Ageing and social expenditure in the major industrial countries 1980-2025, 1986
- OECD Social expenditure 1960-1990, Problems of growth and control, 1985
- Council of Europe - "The role of the elderly in the family in the context of the society in the 1980's, Conf. 1983
- OECD Ageing Populations, the Social Policy Implications, 1988
- ILO From Pyramid to Pillar, Population change and social security in Europe, 1989
- ESC report on the demographic situation in the Community, 1985
- Social security : themes of common interest (dealing with the demographic evolution). COM (86) 410 fin.
- "Demographic transition and grey revolution", Conference Florence, 1986
- "General aspects of Ageing", Seminar Paris, 1988.
- "The Future of Social Security", Seminar Lille, 1988

- (2) - Resolution of 18/2/82 on the situation and problems of the aged in the European Community (O.J. nr C 66 of 15/3/82 p. 71)
- Resolution of 10/3/86 on Services for the Elderly (O.J. nr C 88 of 14/4/86 p 17)
- Resolution of 15/5/86 on Community measures to improve the situation of old people in the Member States of the Community (O.J. C 148 of 16/6/86 p. 61)

- (3) - Occasional paper 212, March 1988/ The over fifties.

- (4) - "Ageing and the working population", Colloquium Brussels, 1988.

- (5) - "Les apports des personnes âgées à la société", Colloquium Marcinelle, 1988.
- "The social activities of retired persons", enquiry 1988.
- "Participation of elderly in society". Conference The Hague, 1988.
- "Pour une meilleur autonomie des personnes âgées", study 1982.
- "Social integration of the pre-retired", study 1988.
- Retirement, a time of transition ? Dublin Foundation, 1988.

- (6) - COM (89) 275 final 200 of 26/6/89

- (7) - O.J. C 169 of 9/7/80

- (8) - COM (87) 494 final of 23/10/87

TABLE 1 : DEMOGRAPHIC AGEING IN EUROPE
 % of total population aged over 65 years

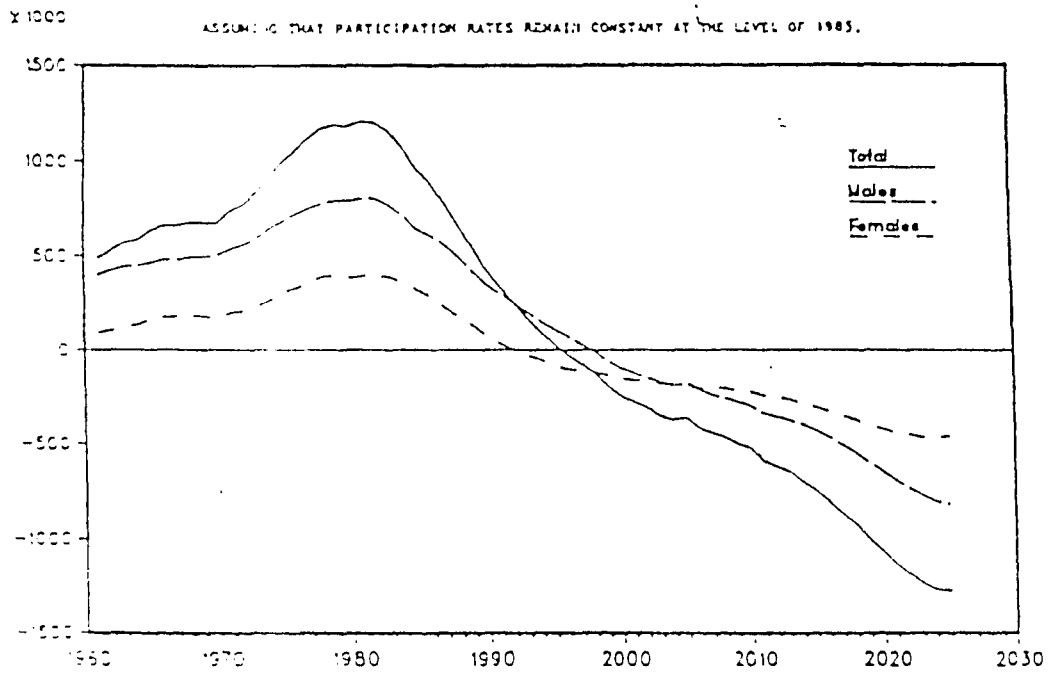
MEMBER STATE	1965	1990	2000	2020	2040*
Belgium	12.6	14.8	16.7	19.6	22.3
Denmark	11.6	15.5	15.4	19.9	25.2
Germany	11.8	15.6	17.3	23.0	28.0
Greece	8.6	12.7	15.0	16.1	21.2
Spain	8.8	13.0	15.0	16.2	23.3
France	12.0	13.9	15.7	19.7	23.1
Ireland	11.0	10.2	9.1	10.6	17.2
Italy	9.7	14.3	16.6	20.0	24.9
Luxembourg	11.6	13.0	13.7	15.6	22.3
Netherlands	9.5	12.8	13.6	19.0	25.0
Portugal	8.3	12.4	13.6	15.0	20.6
UK	12.1	15.7	15.6	17.9	20.6
<hr/>					
TOTAL (EC 12)	10.9	14.4	15.8	19.1	n/a
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SOURCE : Demographic and Labour Force Analysis based on Eurostat Data Banks, Eurostat, 1988; Social Expenditure Trends and Demographic Developments, OECD, 1988.

* OECD projections.

CHART

NET ENTRANTS TO THE LABOUR FORCE PER ANNUM, 1961 TO 2025
EC 12



Source : EUROSTAT

TABLE 2 : DEPENDENCY RATIOS UNTIL THE YEAR 2020

	1985	2000	2020	1985		2000		2020	
	Total Population (x10)3			Aged dependency	Total dependency	Aged dependency	Total dependency	Aged dependency	Total dependency
B	9858	9894	9423	22,8	66,9	28,3	66,0	35,2	68,8
DK	5114	4710	4559	25,6	70,6	29,3	73,1	38,0	78,4
D	61024	60876	54285	23,8	61,9	28,1	60,7	36,3	62,5
EL	9934	10116	-	23,1	73,1	26,6	68,4	-	-
E	38505	40746	40699	21,1	78,3	25,3	67,5	26,6	63,4
F	55170	57882	58664	22,1	72,1	26,9	70,7	34,2	73,4
IRL	3540	3342	3348	21,4	97,9	20,7	74,7	28,0	69,7
I	57141	57611	53484	21,4	68,4	28,1	60,3	37,6	65,2
L	367	383	385	21,2	60,6	24,4	60,1	31,3	62,0
NL	14492	15717	16220	20,0	67,5	22,3	61,4	31,4	66,5
P	10157	11141	-	21,2	79,0	22,7	65,8	-	-
UK	56618	59079	60740	26,0	73,7	26,8	72,6	30,8	73,1

Source : EUROSTAT

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION
on Community Actions for the Elderly

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission (1),

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament (2),

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (3),

Whereas account must be taken of the European Parliament's Resolution of 18 February 1982 on the situation and problems of the aged in the European Community (4), its Resolution of 10 March 1986 on the assistance to elderly people (5) and its Resolution of 14 May 1986 on Community action to improve the situation of elderly people in the Member States (6);

Whereas account must be taken of the Council's Recommendation of 10 December 1982 on the principles of a Community policy with regard to retirement age (7);

Whereas current demographic developments tend to an increase of the elderly population with a particular emphasis on the very old which will have considerable economic and social implications, in particular for the employment market, social security and social expenditure;

Whereas the completion of the Internal Market in 1992 should contribute to the improvement of the situation of elderly people in Europe;

Whereas exchange of information and experience, concertation and consultation between the Commission, the Member States and representatives of the elderly on policies for the elderly are important for the development of solidarity within the Community;

Whereas the European Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights for Workers recognizes the right of elderly people to adequate social protection;

(1) OJ No

(2) OJ No

(3) OJ No

(4) OJ No C 66, 15.3.82, p. 71.

(5) OJ No C 88, 14.4.86, p. 17.

(6) OJ No C 148, 16.6.86, p. 61.

(7) OJ No L 357, 18.12.82, p. 7.

Whereas the actions to be carried out at Community level have the purpose of making known and complementing the different types of actions carried out in Member States at different levels;

Whereas the Treaty does not provide the specific powers necessary for the adoption of this Decision;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Actions at Community level for the elderly will be carried out in the period 1 January 1991 to 31 December 1993.

Article 2

The actions shall have the following objectives :

1. to contribute to the development of preventive strategies to meet the economic and social challenges of an ageing population;
2. to identify innovative approaches to strengthening solidarity between the generations and integration of the elderly population, involving all economic and social agents, in rural as well as in urban contexts;
3. to develop and highlight the positive potential of elderly citizens in contributing to the Community.

Article 3

1. The objectives shall be pursued through the following actions:
 - (a) the organization of the exchange of information;
 - (b) the carrying out of studies and establishment of a database;
 - (c) the exploration of the usefulness and the feasibility of setting up a European Network on innovative experiences.
2. The measures referred to in paragraph 1 shall be decided in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 6.

Article 4

The Commission shall have responsibility for the implementation of the actions and shall take the appropriate measures.

Article 5

The Commission shall establish the necessary annual appropriations to be included in the preliminary draft budget within the framework of the financial perspectives incorporated in the interinstitutional agreement.

Article 6

The Commission shall be assisted by a Committee of an advisory nature composed of the representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission.

The representative of the Commission shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft, within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes; in addition, each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes.

The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the Committee. It shall inform the Committee of the manner in which its opinion has been taken into account.

Article 7

The year 1993 shall be designated as "European Year of the Elderly and Solidarity between Generations".

Article 8

This Decision shall be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

It shall take effect on

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

FINANCIAL STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING THE DRAFT DECISION CONCERNING THE ELDERLY

1. Budget heading involved
Article 6430.
2. Legal basis
Application of Article 235 of the E.E.C. Treaty. New Decision by the Council expected during 1990.
3. Proposed classification of expenditure
Non-compulsory expenditure
4. Description of and grounds for the action
 - 4.1 Objectives
The objectives of the actions are as follows :
 - 4.1.1. to contribute to the development of preventive strategies to meet the economic and social challenges of an ageing population.
 - 4.1.2. to encourage new initiatives in favour of solidarity between the generations and integration of the elderly population, involving all economic and social agents.
 - 4.1.3. to develop and highlight the positive potential of elderly citizens in contributing to the Community.
 - 4.2. Target groups
The actions cover
 - older workers
 - retired persons
 - the very old, including their carers.
5. Nature and methods of calculation
 - 5.1. Nature
 - Subsidies, studies, expenditure on seminars and meetings, information and dissemination costs, related services and secretarial work.
 - Establishment of a database.
 - Community contribution towards preparatory work on European network of innovative experiences in the Member States.

5.2. Calculation

5.2.1. The total amount necessary for the period 1991-1992 is estimated at ECU 2.4 million.

5.2.2. The appropriation requested includes :
evaluation of current experiences and, based on this, the exploration of the usefulness and the feasibility of setting up a European network of innovative experiences; creation of a database; cost of studies, seminars and meetings as well as provision and diffusion of general information.

6. Financial implications for operating appropriations

The Commission will propose necessary adjustments within the framework of its annual budget proposals, taking account of the results of the programme and of any needs which appear in the course of execution and taking account of the current revision of financial projections. The question of the provision to be made for these actions beyond 1992 will be examined in the light of the new financial projections.

7. Comments

None

8. Staff

The actions will be carried out with external technical assistance, the cost of which will figure in the general budget.