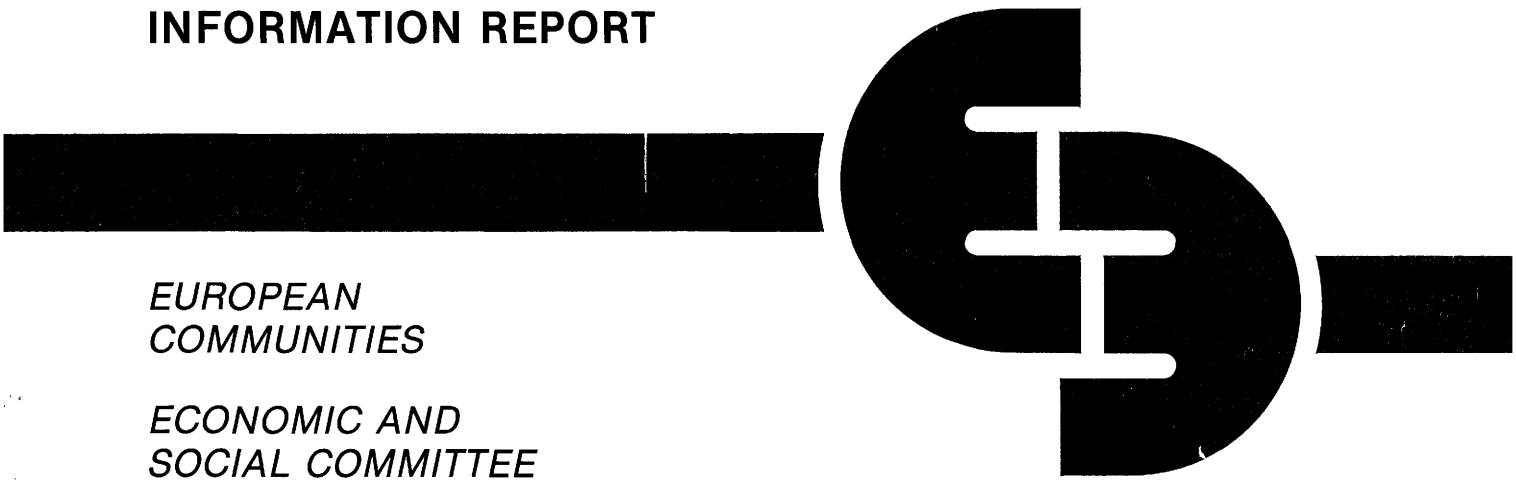
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN THE COMMUNITY

INFORMATION REPORT



EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Brussels 1986

The European Communities' Economic and Social Committee, chaired by Mr Gerd MUHR, decided at its 228th Plenary Session of 3 and 4 July 1985 unanimously (with 4 abstentions) to forward this Information Report to the Council and to the Commission.

The Information Report was drafted by the Section for Social Questions chaired by Mr Enrico KIRSCHEN. Mr Roger BURNEL acted as Rapporteur.

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Rapporteur : Mr Roger BURNEL

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INFORMATION REPORT

of the

Section for Social Questions

Procedure

On 24 January 1984, acting under Article 24 of the Rules of Procedure, the Bureau instructed the Section for Social Questions to draw up an Information Report for the members of the Committee on the Demographic Situation in the Community.

At its 168th meeting, held on 15 March 1984, the Section set up the following Study Group:

Chairman :	Mr	NIERHAUS
Rapporteur :	Mr	BURNEL
Members :	Mr	BERETTA
	Mr	DASSIS
	Mr	DE BRUYN
	Mr	HEMMER
	Mr	LÖW
	Mrs	NIELSEN M.
	Mr	PAGGI
	Mr	PEARSON
	Mr	ROYCROFT
	Mr	SCHOEPGES
Rapporteur's expert :	Mr	CALOT
Group II expert :	Mr	HUTSEBAUT
Group III expert :	Mr	CHESNAIS

The Study Group met on the following dates:

— 29 May 1984
— 2 October 1984
— 18 December 1984
— 14 March 1985

The Information Report was adopted by a majority vote with 2 abstentions by the Section on 13 June 1985.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The aim of this Information Report is to analyse the demographic situation in the European Community - as characterised by the changing profile of the age pyramid - identify the causes of it, assess the consequences and suggest remedies.

Demographers work on the long term. Their reference is the duration of a human life. From birth, and for more than three quarters of a century, a child is a component of the age pyramid - for much longer if one accepts that people will continue to live longer.

Demographers are therefore a cautious race, especially in their predictions and in the consequences they foreshadow, which may be influenced by technological, economic, social and political factors that are difficult to predict with accuracy, both as regards the time of their appearance and their effects.

For instance, statistical forecasts like those in Table 17 announcing a very steep and rapid increase in the population of certain parts of the world must be seen in conjunction with such things as the physical ability of these regions to cope with a population boom. But one must take trends into account, especially as regards overall quantitative differences and their distribution among the major age groups.

The food resources of countries which experience a steep and rapid population increase are often so scant, and their poverty so great, that they could slide into a state of endemic famine which could lead to the death of entire communities. Such momentous, and very tangible, possibilities are a challenge to the developed countries. They should lead to a rethink of certain individual and collective attitudes, with the aim of sharing out the resources needed for life in a truly fair way.

Demographers reason on the basis of trends. They select hypotheses. They think through the consequences. They warn. They alert people. Demographic facts and hypotheses are important factors when political, economic and social decisions have to be taken by the powers-that-be. Such factors can no longer be ignored; if they are, the human dimension of decision-making becomes truncated. But demographers do not merely quantify the overall population; they also consider its structure and, in doing so, its quality.

Since 1964, the birth rate in each of the countries which now make up the EEC has been falling constantly. After 1975, there were some very slight improvements here and there. However, there is nothing to indicate when, or even if, we shall regain the average of 2.1 children per woman which is needed merely to keep the population stable.

Ireland still has a fertility rate of more than 2.1 children. But it is experiencing a fairly big drop in its birth rate; the fertility rate has fallen from 4.07 children per woman in 1964 to 2.95 in 1982. If a country's fertility rate is nearer the threshold of replacement to start with, the situation is even more serious.

This situation is not peculiar to Europe. The birth rate in the USA started to fall in 1960. After reaching Europe, lower birth rates started to occur first in Japan, and then in Australia. The phenomenon therefore affects all the developed countries, and has no historical precedent.

This Information Report is essentially concerned with population issues.

It fits in perfectly with the nature and aims of the Economic and Social Committee's work. It respects the spirit of tolerance which characterises the Committee's debates. Thus this Report cannot pass over the human and cultural factors raised by demographic data.

In accordance with the spirit and letter of previous Committee Opinions, the Section for Social Questions affirms the obligation incumbent upon the Member States, when implementing their policies, to respect the consciences of couples and women, who alone should have the right to choose freely whether or not to have children. This is a basic democratic right of the individual and the family.

A child is not the property of any State, of any church, of any school of thought, or even of his or her family. A child is a person. Parents, educators and society must direct their attention towards creating the conditions necessary to develop children's personalities, teach them about freedom and solidarity, and help them find the place in society that is open to any person and the rights that derive from it.

Right from birth, children are consumers. Gradually, they come to play an active civic, social and economic role. One day, they will probably become parents themselves. It is therefore essential that they be prepared properly for all this. Such work is the joint reponsibility, first and foremost, of the child's parents, and also of society. Demographic policies should never consider children as an instrument in the service of a State or a society. However, any State or society which did not seek to guarantee harmony between the elements of which it is made, especially its population, would create very serious problems for itself, whether it wished to do so or not.

A child is the incarnation of hope. No child is unnecessary. This is a fact which all policies, starting with family policies, must take into account, so that all children, whatever their social origins, and irrespective of any handicaps they may suffer from, may have equal rights - and therefore equal opportunites - and be able to express the richness of their personalities throughout their personal, family and working lives. The Economic and Social Committee has stressed on many occasions that this should mean areas as varied as the right to culture, the right to a job, the right to health and social protection, and the right to housing. Much has still to be done in all these areas.

Of course, the maintenance and education of a child involves responsibilities and burdens for both its family and for society. But a child adds that vital extra "something" to its parents' happiness. Social life is learnt together, and it is in the family that a child first learns all about mutual support and loyalty. Thus, any developments in marriage and family models should not be prejudicial to children's rights, including the right to respect and protection.

Europe is a human, economic, social and cultural community, and it will be constructed all the more firmly if it is founded on a dynamic and harmoniously structured population, where each age has its place. This means that a higher birth rate is necessary in order to correct the present shape of the age pyramid, especially as people are tending to live longer.

1. Facts and figures

Introduction

On 1 January 1985 the Ten had 273 million inhabitants. There is a trend towards zero growth in population: the average annual population growth rate has declined from 0.88% in 1960-61 to 0.34% in 1979-80 and 0.19% in 1982-83. This trend towards demographic stagnation has various causes: a large drop in the fertility rate (between the high point of 1964 and the low point of 1978, after which the rate stabilised somewhat, the number of births fell by 30%: 3,295 as compared with 4,692 million; Table 1), a reduction in immigration, a gradual slowdown in the decline of the general mortality rate (since 1960 the number of deaths has moved in parallel with the population trend: the rising proportion of old people in the population offsets the effects of a falling mortality rate in various age groups).

Although the rate of population growth is slowing down in all the Member States (Table 2), there are nevertheless major differences between individual countries. For about a decade (since 1974) Germany has been experiencing a decline in population; four countries (UK, Belgium, Luxembourg and Denmark) have had zero growth since the beginning of the eighties; another country is in a similar position (Italy: + 0.20% per annum between 1980 and 1982); on the other hand, owing to the relatively high proportion of young people in their population, France, the Netherlands and Greece have had an appreciably higher growth rate (0.5, 0.6 and 0.8% per annum respectively between 1980 and 1982). Only Ireland, with 1.6% for the same period, diverges appreciably, this being due to the particular history of the country: a turnaround in the traditional pattern of migration in the seventies (time-honoured emigration giving way to substantial immigration) and above all continued relatively high fertility (about 4 children per woman on average) up until the end of the sixties.

The gradual decline in the mortality rate

After making considerable progress in the 1950s (for the Ten as a whole the average life expectancy of women increased by 5.4 years, that of men by 3.6 years), the fight against death marked time during the 1960s. The rise in life expectancy was one third of the previous decade's increase. In some countries there was no increase or even a fall for men. There was further improvement in the 1970s, but with more modest increases than in the 1950s: 2 years for men, 3 for women. Hence for some thirty years the gains in female life expectancy have regularly been, on average, half as much again as those for men. The difference in average life expectancy between the two sexes has therefore risen from 4.2 years in 1951 to 7.3 years in 1981 (Table 3).

As the trend in infant mortality rates for EEC countries shows, the differences in mortality are now relatively small: there has been a rapid improvement in the less well-placed countries (Italy, Greece) over recent decades. But progress has been general: everywhere infant mortality rates in 1982 were 1/2 - 1/3 of what they were in 1960. Four countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, France) now have an infant mortality rate below 10%, a threshold which for a long time was considered to be impossible to pass; nor, so far, has there been any sign of a let-up in the fall in these countries. For the Community of Ten as a whole the infant mortality rate is 10.4% (Table 4).

From a purely demographic point of view, given the results already achieved, one cannot expect a major overall gain. If the average infant mortality rate for the Community was brought down to the lowest national rate, that of Denmark, this would mean gaining some 7,000 children. But as each human life is of great value, particularly that of a child, it is hoped that the fight against infant mortality will be continued, especially since infant mortality, like death in general, is still distributed very unequally from a social, sociological and geographical point of view.

Halt to the international migration of labour

As a result of the decisions taken in 1973-74 by the main host countries, the immigration of workers into the EEC has been halted. This is reflected statistically in the net migration trend: net migration fell from + 4,545,000 in 1960-1973 (i.e. an annual average of + 325,000) to + 1,033,000 in 1974-1981 (i.e. an annual average of + 129,000, or about one third). Residual immigration is primarily of families (reunification) and secondarily political (refugees) or illegal. Its direct contribution to population growth (net inflow) is markedly less than before 1973, but the indirect influence of international migration, via the foreign population already present, is far from negligible: on account of its relatively high proportion of young people and greater fertility, the foreign population slows down the overall population decrease.

As soon as sufficient reliable information is available, there should be an examination of the demographic effect of the legislation which, since 1982, has encouraged migrant workers and their families to return to their countries of origin.

The falling birth rate: a general phenomenon of major proportions

The variation in the natural increase is very different from that in net migration: while the latter fell by about 200,000, the natural increase dropped by 1,500,000 (500,000 around 1980 as compared with 2,000,000 around 1964). As the number of deaths has barely increased, this change is therefore due essentially to the fall in the number of births. The decline is 30% for the Community as a whole. In some cases, such as Germany and particularly Italy, the fall has been much more pronounced, reaching 40% to 45% (Graph 1): in 1964 the annual number of births exceeded 1 million, but is now around 600,000: relatively small generations were involved in the fall in fertility. Conversely, in the Netherlands and to a lesser extent in France, the fluctuation has been less pronounced; the fall has been cushioned by the presence of relatively large cohorts in the high fertility age groups. The trend in the UK is somewhere between the two; while, as in Italy and Germany, 1964 was a high point with over a million births, the decline has been less steep, the number of births wavering around 700,000 since 1974 (table 5).

This falling birth rate is primarily linked to the fertility trend, which went into a sharp decline in the countries of Western Europe in 1964, and a little later in Southern Europe. With, for 1980, an index of 2.2 children on average per women, Greece maintains a fertility rate near to the generation replacement level, while the historically unique position of Ireland is gradually disappearing: its index has fallen from 4 to 3. It is unprecedented in time of peace that in all the other countries the fertility rate should, some ten years ago, have dropped below replacement level (2.1 under present conditions) and remained very low, without any sign as yet of an appreciable and lasting upturn (Table 6).

Four Member States have a fertility index of 1.5 or less (Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands), two others are around 1.6 (Belgium and Italy), while the UK and France have stabilized around 1.8 (graph 2).

However, these indices tend to exaggerate, in one or other direction, the actual changes from one generation to another. Thus, up until the beginning of the 1960s, the rise in the index exaggerated the increase in the final number of births for the generations concerned; conversely, the fall in the indices from 1964 onwards overstates somewhat the decline in the final number of births for these generations. These changes in the timetable of family formation are expressed statistically in the trend of the average age at maternity. Up until the beginning of the 1970s the average age at childbirth was in most instances falling continually (people getting married earlier); since then, despite the fact that large families have become rarer (births in older age groups), the trend is in the opposite direction: the average age at maternity has begun to rise appreciably (+ 0.5 year, for example, in Germany, France, Denmark and the Netherlands, between 1977 and 1982). Young couples, if they get married, marry later. Furthermore, the interval between marriage and the birth of the first child and between successive births is tending to increase (Table 7).

Although it is difficult to anticipate the future behaviour of generations which are still far from having reached the upper age limit of fertility (50), we can still provide fairly precise indications about those who, having reached their thirties, have already had most of their children. We can see that, since the generation of 1950, fertility has been appreciably lower than the replacement level; this was the case even earlier (1940 generation) in Germany and Italy, and probably in England and Denmark too: on account of the infant and juvenile mortality rate at this time, the replacement threshold was higher than its present value (for the female generations of 1930, 1940 and 1950 in France, 2.35, 2.30 and 2.20 respectively were required). The final number of children for the 1954 generation was 1.55 in Germany, 1.7 in Denmark and the Netherlands, about 1.9 in Italy and England, 2.0 in France. Whichever country we look at, the number of offspring will therefore be insufficient - by from 6% (France) to 30% (Germany) - to guarantee a one-for-one replacement of mothers by daughters (Table 8).

The disappearance of large families

The decline in fertility has not affected the proportion of first children, second children, etc. uniformly, and in this respect there are major differences from one country to another. In France, for example, there has been hardly any decline in first child frequency, this remaining close to the physiological maximum; in Germany, on the other hand, a marked fall can now be seen from one generation to the next: many couples are choosing not to have any children at all (in the 1954 generation, 1 woman in 5, as compared with 1 in 10 in France). Similar differences are found in the case of second children; according to some estimates (Munoz Perez, 1984), a little less than half the women of the 1954 generation in Germany have two or more children, as compared with nearly two-thirds in France. But beyond these differences from one country to another, there is an underlying similarity: the declining number of "large" families (defined as with 3 or more children), which largely explains the fall in the fertility indices. Increasingly the cutoff point is between the second and third child. Thus in France, in the 1930 generation, four women in ten had a third child (or more), while for the 1950 generation the figure is only two in ten.

The trend, in the different Member States, in the proportion of third or higher order births in total births clearly reflects this structural change. Setting aside Ireland, in a mere twenty-odd years this proportion has been nearly halved: in 1960 it ranged from 28% (Germany) to 42% (the Netherlands), in 1982 from 15% (Luxembourg) to 23% (France and UK). The most marked falls are in the Netherlands and Denmark (Table 9).

A shake-up in the marriage pattern

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the fall in the birth rate has been reinforced by changes in the marriage pattern: the number of marriages has declined; people are older when they get married, and their marriages are becoming more fragile. In all the Member States marriage, often preceded by a varying period of cohabitation, is being entered into at a later age and less frequently, so that between the beginning of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s the total number of marriages contracted fell by 20%, from 2.0 to 1.6 million. The index of first marriages, calculated every year from the number of first marriages according to age, has fallen rapidly from around 1, or even temporarily above 1 (owing to the fact that people were getting married younger) to levels unprecedented in history (0.5 in Denmark, 0.6 in Germany) (Table 10).

In other words, if the behaviour observed over recent years in the various age groups were to hold for a whole generation, throughout its life-cycle, marriage would cease to be the norm and would involve only half or a little over half of the population. However, it is likely that in this instance, too, the current indices give a somewhat exaggerated view of the trend over successive generations: the scale of the changes in the timing of marriage, reflected in the trend in the average age at first marriage, indicates that the fall in the indices is intensified by the upward movement of the age at which people are getting married. After having fallen during the 1960s, the average age at first marriage moved up again during the next decade (Table 11).

What has been the marriage pattern of the post-war generations according to the current data? In the generations born between 1940 and 1945, practically all women (91 to 99% according to country) got married sooner or later; in later generations an ever-increasing proportion has remained single. Of the women born in 1960, the proportion of single (or pseudo-single) women at the age of 50 should reach a quarter in England and France, a third in Germany and nearly a half in Denmark (where the number of couples cohabiting outside wedlock could, in time, exceed the number of married couples (Table 12).

The increase in the frequency of cohabitation outside wedlock among young people is accompanied, with a varying time-lag, by an increase in the proportion of births outside marriage. However, this increase is not at all in proportion to the scale of the decline in marriages, owing in part to the above-mentioned time-lag, and in part to the difference in fertility between the two types of union: the fertility of unmarried couples is lower than that of married couples (in some countries, such as Germany, the birth of children to cohabiting couples is still relatively rare). For the Community as a whole, the proportion of births outside marriage doubled between 1970 and 1982 (10.2% in 1982 compared with 5.2% in 1970) (Table 13).

While the trend is common to all the countries, its strength varied considerably from one to another. With nearly 40% of births outside marriage, the position of Denmark is quite exceptional (the proportion of such births more than quintupled between 1960 and 1982); the UK and France have about the same figures (14% and 13% respectively in 1982); then come, with a much smaller proportion, Germany (8.5%), Ireland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (6%), Belgium (5%) and finally Greece (less than 2%). The trend is by far the slowest in Germany, although its index of first marriages is the closest to that of Denmark (between 1960 and 1982 the proportion of births outside marriage increased by only a quarter).

Over the same period, since the middle of the 1960s, and since 1970 especially, there has been a very rapid rise in the number of divorces, which tripled between 1964 and 1982. The ending of marriage by divorce is becoming more frequent, and is occurring at an earlier stage in the marriage. The increase in the frequency of divorce and the shorter duration of the marriages dissolved in this way are reflected in a soaring index of divorces (Table 14): between 1965 and 1980 the divorce rate, measured by the current indices, doubled, tripled or quadrupled, depending on the country.

According to the initial data available, the final proportion of marriages contracted in 1975 and ending in divorce should be more than 1 in 5 in France, more than 1 in 4 in England/Wales and nearly 1 in 3 in Denmark (Festy, 1983).

The erosion of the traditional model of marriage is therefore clear: people are marrying later and fewer people are getting married; marriages are being ended earlier and more often by divorce.

There is a big increase in the number of people living alone, such as widowers, widows and divorcees either without children or whose children live away from them. Cohabitation is growing and a new pattern is emerging, whereby couples live together periodically while at the same time maintaining their individual homes. There are more single parent families. These new situations help increase physical insecurity (especially for people living alone) and psychological and moral insecurity (where duration is no guarantee).

While single parent families often tackle their educational duties with a good deal of courage, their educational and support role is more difficult because a child needs a mother and a father and parental responsibilities are generally better shared.

2. Possible causes of the fertility crisis

The changes which are affecting family life and the institution of marriage are complex. One is immediately struck by two facts:

— the international convergence of trends, despite differences in family legislation and in economic, sociological, political or religious environment; and

— the relative concomitance of a number of changes in behaviour: the decline in fertility, particularly the increasing tendency not to have a third (or successive) child; later marriage; a rise in the number of couples cohabiting out of wedlock with a corresponding drop in the frequency of marriage and in the proportion of children born in wedlock; a big increase in the number of divorces; a rise in the number of women having a job, etc.

All these phenomena accompany the gradual arrival at adulthood of the generations born after the war. One is thus faced with a fundamental change in attitudes to life which is not caused by political or economic factors peculiar to a region or social background. There is definitely a major transformation underway affecting all the advanced countries and sparing no element of their social or regional structure, and the movement is universal. The causes are therefore to be sought in factors which are deep-seated, common to all the western countries and capable of changing mentalities.

Among these factors, the following may be mentioned:

The continued rise in average life expectancy and the progressive elimination of pre-adult mortality

As a result, the births which were at one time needed to replace children who died in infancy are no longer necessary and, above all, death before the age of 50 has become so rare that a new code of ethics has come into being: death is a taboo subject and everyone behaves as if he or she were immortal; the biological need to reproduce is less obvious, and less pressing.

It is neither unreasonable nor illogical to suppose that life expectancy will continue to rise, thanks to progress in preventive techniques, food hygiene, medicine and surgery. For instance, some types of research on the DNA chain should lead to a considerable increase in the age at which people die and to the disappearance of certain signs of ageing.

Although such progress is a good thing, and nobody would seriously think of asking that it be stopped or even subject to a moratorium, it does require vital demographic solutions to be found for achieving a balanced age pyramid structure; as people live longer, something must be done to prevent them feeling useless as they see themselves excluded from all sorts of activities because of their age; more training and information must be provided, so that people do not feel overtaken by technological progress, and a re-think is required about welfare financing norms, which have been profoundly influenced by 30 years of exceptional economic growth. With the recession, should we not think about other types of financing, especially as needs differ and accumulate (old age, unemployment, family)?

There are still profound social inequalities where illness and death are involved. Demographic statistics highlight such situations, which pose questions for those who have to administer health and social policies, policies which should be marked by solidarity.

The extraordinary economic growth of the post-war period

Wages tripled in real terms in the space of twenty-five years. Both the rate at which consumption has increased and its present level are without precedent in history. At the same time, this exceptional improvement in living standards has led to a rise in aspirations even more rapid than the increase in incomes. With the development of the media, people have become much more aware of differences in economic and social position than in the past, and much more sensitive to them (political and social debates on the rise in prices, pay, welfare benefits, various forms of indexing, etc.). In this context, children are seen as restricting the ability to maintain or increase consumption; deciding to have a child, let alone more than one, means accepting a big drop in one's standard of living for at least twenty years, despite the compensation of family benefits and lower taxes. Legislation aimed at offsetting the costs of having a family closes only a small part of the gap in the standard of living between families and childless couples.

The rapid rise in the direct, and especially the indirect, costs of having children

In a wage-earning urban civilization, where the production and reproduction functions are completely separated, and where the old mutual help networks are disappearing, the decision to have a child means of course the creation of a unique source of joy and gratification, but it also means that one's independence is curtailed. Having a child means giving up a certain life-style, particularly as regards leisure (outings, weekends, holidays in faraway places) and money and time in general. In addition, when there is a second and especially a third child, the mother has to give up her job at least temporarily, with all the psychological and economic consequences that this involves: difficulties in finding a job later on, having to start a career from scratch at the age of 35 or 40, loss of pension contributions, but, above all, concentration on domestic duties and having fewer social contacts, the whole being capped, as it were, by the loss of her wages and the consequent feeling of being completely dependent financially on her husband. The household is deprived of income which is very often indispensable (e.g. where loans have to be repaid, the husband's income is inadequate, ...). All this is accentuated when - as is the case among the younger generations - the woman has the same level of education as her male partner or higher. This phenomenon may be further exacerbated by the trend towards declining purchasing power and rising prices.

A vague feeling of unease about the future

The economic and social situation also plays a part in the fears felt by couples, not only for their own future but also for that of their children.

Having a child means shouldering a long-term responsibility, and doing everything necessary to launch that child successfully into adulthood - if possible on a higher social orbit than one's own. But the future seems uncertain; the massive rise in unemployment among the young makes people think that today's children will find it more difficult to carve out a niche in society than was the case a few decades ago.

Moreover, young adults are now both more aware of their responsibility as parents towards their children and more uncertain of their own capability of facing up to that responsibility. The meaning of living together as a couple, whether married or not, has changed: people live together more for love than for reasons of financial interest or duty; the decision to live with a person is no longer an irreversible one, but the decision to have a child is. For parents to fall down on their responsibilities towards the child is a very grave dereliction of their duty.

The possibility of completely planning the birth of one's children and the will to do so

Not only have young people today easy and effective means of doing this, but, above all, they wish to eliminate any element of chance in this area. While previous generations were somewhat hazy about their plans as parents, those today reject the idea of having an unplanned child. The liberalization of contraception and abortion tends more to highlight the emergence of this new wish than provide the means of implementing it. There has been a continuous fall in fertility both in countries that were late in liberalizing and in the other countries; in countries where the fall in fertility set in before liberalization, the trend has not been accentuated following changes in legislation.

It is probable that if births can be planned more precisely, they will be less frequent. In particular, the phenomenon of the "later addition", born several years after the preceding child and when the parents are somewhat older will tend to occur less often, if not disappear.

A number of other underlying factors, such as taxation, unsuitable housing, the feeling of overcrowding which has resulted from urbanization and which has become more noticeable through the increased use of the car, concern about the environment and industrial pollution, fears about world over-population (feelings which are very widespread in the most densely-populated areas of Europe, such as West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark), the impression of saturation, unease and danger which has been put about by the media, and even the ultimate threat of total destruction in a nuclear holocaust.

Finally, the absence of blueprints for our societies, where the level of consumption is still high but where religious, or simply disinterested, activities are dying out, where social ties are becoming looser and are only tightened up on rare occasions to defend highly material and sometimes even selfish interests, and where the political parties in power sometimes have wafer-thin majorities which reflect the deep divisions in the electorate. It is interesting here to recall the period just after the last war, when the time seemed least suited for a rise in fertility: wages were low, many things were rationed, there was a housing shortage, and yet couples were fired by the ideal of rebuilding their countries materially and decided to have more children. This tends to highlight the moral and social factors - solidarity in particular - which affect the personal demographic choices of couples as well as public opinion in general. The question is whether we really have the ability to change our life style, to share more, to put real needs before mere status.

One's mind turns naturally to the present economic recession and the unemployment it has led to, which has hit women and young adults particularly hard. But it should not be forgotten that the demographic crisis appeared well before the economic crisis, and while the latter may have aggravated it, it was certainly not its primary cause.

In conclusion, it is worth remembering one basic fact: fertility started to fall simultaneously in all the highly industrialized countries of the Community; all the fertility indicators show a sudden decline beginning in 1964-1965. There was no change at this time in the factors that traditionally contribute to a secular fall in fertility (urbanization, industrialization, increase in education and the number of women with jobs, etc.) and the economic situation was still very favourable, with high growth rates. The socio-economic indicators showed no interruption in the trend.

But an event was taking place which went completely unnoticed at the time: the first generations born after the war were starting to reach child-producing age. These post-war generations adopted behaviour which, in many ways, was quite different from that of their elders:

— Not only had these generations not experienced the Great Depression, or war, or hardship, but their childhood and adolescence had been marked by a period of strong and sustained economic growth quite unique in modern history. The consumption of goods soared; consumption gradually became a new way of life. Society itself was even labelled the "consumer society" and rejected as such by students, in the revolts at western universities in 1967-1968.

— The post-war generations witnessed the most remarkable revolution in education; there was an explosion in the numbers of those attending school and university. But this revolution did not yield all the fruits it promised; the growth in the number of diplomas did not stand up to the test of the market place: people gradually lost confidence in educational establishments, which often seemed poorly suited to fulfil the hopes of upward social mobility placed in them: young people with paper qualifications found that these meant nothing, and that unemployment lay in wait for them. This trend was evident, albeit in a masked form, from the mid-1960s; after the world recession (from 1973-1974 onwards) it emerged much more clearly.

— The rise in the level of education among women went hand in hand with a number of other factors which were equally indicative of the profound changes taking place in the status of women: the rise in the number of women in paid employment, the rapid modernization of electrical household goods (especially washing machines), control over fertility, the growth in the number of magazines for women, the spread of new demands ... Women's horizons were gradually extending beyond the home.

While the relationship between the pursuit of an occupation by women and fertility is unclear, there is no doubt that, (i) having a second wage raises a couple's aspirations, and thus increases the opportunity cost of having a child (as the mother's wage is lost while she gives up her job), and (ii) the more children a mother has, the more difficult it is to reconcile the demands of a job with the demands of being a mother. Without any doubt, this is one of the most critical challenges to the future of western society.

In the absence of adequate arrangements to enable women, and couples in general, to combine an occupation with the raising of a family, a good many family plans are revised downwards in view of the accumulation of constraints: the main decisions regarding both career and family planning are concentrated into the same crucial - but short - phase of an individual's life.

Furthermore, too little emphasis is placed on the importance of parenthood, which has an economic value in its own right.

3. Implications of a continued low fertility rate

The demographic situation in the European Community has changed radically. Not only has the birth rate fallen to an historically unprecedented level, almost 20% below replacement level, but the mortality rate is now falling only slowly, and only in the middle/advanced age groups; finally, although immigration still exceeds emigration, the numbers have become very small. Hence there is a marked slowdown in population growth and, if the present trends continue, in about ten years the population of the Community will cease to grow and gradually start to decline. Unless there is a major rise in fertility or mass immigration, demographic ageing (increase in the proportion of old people in the total population) will continue its time-honoured slow rise for another twenty years or so before suddenly accelerating around 2005-2010. An ageing of the working population will make itself felt much earlier. Up to now, however, this trend has been offset by the increase in the number of young women in employment and above all the rapid fall in the number of those working after 55.

The demographic prospects for the European Economic Community

For the Community as a whole the main findings are based on two hypotheses for the fertility rate (in each case net migration is taken as zero and the same mortality rate is assumed: average life expectancy increases slightly; the data are taken from the most recent UN forecasts in 1980). However, to illustrate more clearly the implications of different fertility scenarios, estimates are given for the total population of two countries, the Federal Republic of Germany and France, up until the middle of the next century (likewise assuming zero net migration and a slight increase in average life expectancy).

Total population

The different fertility hypotheses produce very similar population totals at the beginning of the projection period, but these totals diverage rapidly as the horizon recedes.

Taking into account the size of the reproductive age groups, the population will continue either to grow until the turn of the century (France) or to fall slightly (FRG), even if the fertility rate drops well below replacement level. But once the protective influence of the initial age structure has gone, the trends diverge increasingly with time. Thus in the case of France, the population in the year 2000 will be between 54 and 60 million, according to the variant adopted (i.e. variation of only 6 million), from 2025 the difference will increase to 20 million, will reach nearly 40 million in 2050 and finally exceed 80 million in 2100 (20 and 101 million inhabitants respectively); similarly, in the lowest hypothesis (average of 1.2 children per woman) the population of Germany will fall by 50% in the first half of the next century, from 55 million in 2000 to a mere 27.5 million in 2050.

The consequences of relatively small variations in the fertility rate are therefore crucial in the long term for total population: in France's case, the highest and lowest hypotheses, although quite close to each other (1.5 and 2.4 children per woman), result in a 1 to 5 difference between total populations after one and a quarter centuries: if fertility drops to 1.5 and stays about there for the whole of the next century, France will have a population of only 20 million in 2100. Conversely, a gradual rise in fertility and its maintenance around an average of 2.4 children would lead to a population of over 100 million.

Birth rate

From the point of view of economic and social policies, the most important demographic indicator is the birth rate. It is the birth rate which determines, five or six years later, the number of primary school entries, eighteen years later the number of new electors, twenty years later the number of potential new entrants on the labour market (and hence the number of people paying social security contributions and taxes), sixty years later the number of retirements and pensioners. The future repercussions of demographic trends stem therefore from the reduction in the total number of births and not merely from variations in the fertility rate.

In the long term, differences in the fertility rate quickly become decisive. The choice of fertility hypothesis becomes increasingly important as the horizon recedes: for the birth rate, the divergence between the highest and lowest hypotheses increases quasi-exponentially with the result that the ratio is 1 to 10 in 2100 (159,000 births in France in the low hypothesis, 1,672,000 in the high). In 2050 the ratio is 1 to 4: for Germany 200,000 births (compared with 600,000 today) with a fertility rate of 1.2 and 827,000 with a fertility rate of 2.25; for France 300,000 births (compared with 750,000 today) with a fertility rate of 1.5 and 1,270,000 with a fertility rate of 2.4.

A fall in fertility has an immediate impact on the base of the age pyramid. These effects are acute already. We are experiencing an abrupt contraction in the number of under-15s. The fertility rate of the 1960s pointed to 40 million under-15s in Western Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland) in 1985; the actual figure is expected to be only 29 million, showing the medium-term effect of variations in the fertility rate.

Age distribution

Graph 3 shows the population pyramid (EEC 10) for 1 January 1985. The slump in fertility has already made a severe dent in the base of the pyramid, greater even than the combined deficit of births in the last two wars.

The long-term consequences of a continuing low fertility rate on the age pyramid are illustrated by the results of a calculation made for France, taking the same fertility hypotheses as Table 16 (average of 1.5: 1.8: 2.1 and 2.4 children per woman) and covering the period 1975-2050. Over the years the age pyramid changes shape, starting at the base and working up: in 2000, i.e. 25 years after the start of the projections, only the under-25s are affected by changes: in 2025 the differences extend to the under-50s, and so on. In 2050 the shape of the age pyramid is very different depending

on the variants used. The "high" hypothesis (2.4) produces a true pyramid shape with a relatively wide base, while the "low" hypothesis produces a truncated shape with a very narrow base: the lower the age group, the greater the decline in numbers. For the new-born group, the ratio is 1 to 4 between the lowest and highest variants, while for the very old the numbers are absolutely identical (Graph 4).

Even if the base of the age pyramid shrinks in both absolute and relative terms, the top is bound to grow in relative terms and to an extent markedly above that currently indicated, particularly in the highest age groups. In view of the considerable progress made by research into the human ageing process, the chances of extending average life expectancy seem far from exhausted: a boom in the number of elderly people therefore seems inevitable, and the higher the age group the greater the increase. The precise proportion of old people in the total population will depend on whether fertility remains low (or even drops further) or revives. At all events there will be an inevitable ageing of the population (unless fertility returns to its post-war level or there is a resumption of mass immigration). The question is basically one of degree: in a country such as Germany, even without a substantial fall in the mortality rate and assuming a fertility rate slightly above its current level (1.5 instead of 1.3), the number of old people (65 and over) would exceed the number of young people (under 19) in about thirty years, even though in 1977 the ratio was 1 to 2 in favour of young people (9.1 and 16.5 million respectively). In the low hypothesis, the closest to the present trend, it will take only fifty years for the initial 2: 1 ratio to be reversed in favour of the elderly: thus in 2040 there will be twice as many old as young people (9.3 and 4.8 million respectively).

It is as if a proportion of the young population were to disappear to be replaced by a corresponding increase in the elderly population. Continuation of the present fertility rate will result in the not too distance future in an inversion of the age pyramid.

Inertia is a characteristic feature of demography. Every child born today will count in the population of Europe for at least 75 years; catastrophe apart, he will still be there to see in the second half of the next century. The surpluses or deficits of present generations vis-à-vis their predecessors will have a lasting effect on the pyramid. In demography the consequences of current trends go far beyond the present and leave an indelible mark for nearly a century. Demographic phenomena carry great weight; their influence tends to grow as the horizon recedes. The process is cumulative: the daughters of today are the mothers of tomorrow. Those not born can never be replaced: there will be that many fewer possible mothers tomorrow. The consequences of certain trends appear only in the very long term, but then on a massive scale. In a country such as France, for instance, to freeze the old-age index at its 1983 level and prevent a worsening of the burden imposed by a rising proportion of elderly people, a total adult population (20 to 60 years) of 41.7 million would be needed in 2035 instead of the 26.6 million forecast: the deficit is around 15 million. However, as a comparison of the demographic history of the various European countries shows, such a low fertility scenario would only materialize if there were no influx of immigrants. There is a close link, over a long period, between the fertility rate and migration flows. Under these circumstances it seems quite possible that the rate of demographic ageing will be slowed down by immigration. But the size of the deficit of young people and adults is such that, unless immigration is on a massive scale and hence liable to change radically the population of the societies concerned, immigration will not be able to prevent demographic ageing.

While in the medium term, taking into account the available labour force (high unemployment rate, increase in the number of women at work, continued entry of large age groups on to the labour market), the role of migration would seem to be only minimal, in the longer term, when the potential labour force begins to decline (small age groups reaching working age), the phenomenon should reappear, all the more so as the migratory pressure from the southern countries can only increase over the coming decades. But the scale of such migratory flows is too uncertain for any precise figures to be given. Thus in the following comments attention will be concentrated on a low fertility scenario with zero net migration.

This is only a hypothesis which could be invalidated by migratory flows whose nature and scale it is, however, difficult to predict at the moment. Without being over-pessimistic, it does seem a good idea to consider this eventuality. It must be stated that in view of the profound cultural differences involved, it will be much easier to build multiracial societies if the host societies themselves have a sufficient number of young people in their population.

The economic and social consequences of continued low fertility

While the idea of a revival in fertility enjoyed some popularity during the seventies, nowhere has this actually happened yet; nor is there a shortage of arguments to support the idea that there will, on the contrary, be a further downturn. The hypothesis of a continuation of present fertility rates is given further credence by the fact that fertility has remained around its historical minimum for about a decade in those countries first to experience the decline.

If such an hypothesis turns out to be true, the consequences are twofold: firstly, in the short and medium term (up to around 1990) they are generally beneficial, at least as far as the visible changes wrought by low fertility are concerned; secondly, the longer term consequences are undoubtedly adverse to the Community. The probable situation can be summarized as follows:

Short and medium-term consequences

Provided that young people actually find a job, the fall in the number of young people will mean a reduction in certain financing requirements: education, health, family benefits, etc. To a certain extent such an effect is mechanical and hence inevitable. On the other hand, the economic repercussions are more debatable because they are less direct and more contradictory.

a) Repercussions for public finances

The fall in the birth rate may seem doubly beneficial for public finances: firstly, it reduces the expenditure necessary to cover young people's needs; secondly, it tends to swell tax revenue and social security contributions by increasing the number of couples with two incomes. The social security budget, for instance, benefits in the short and medium term from any fall in fertility; only in the long term, when the small age groups reach working age, is there a lasting reversal of the effects. Initially, therefore, the fall in the birth rate brings numerous financial advantages, all other factors being equal: a fall in health expenditure arising from maternity and childhood; reduction in expenditure on family allowances, further reduced by the dwindling number of large families (benefits are generally graduated according to the number of children); decline in tax allowances for dependent children; increased social security revenue (higher proportion of women in work).

b) Economic repercusions

The medium-term economic repercussions of demographic changes comprise both definite effects (good and bad) and indefinite effects, which are generally controversial.

— **Definite effects**:

- **Growth then decline in potential working population**

After a lengthy phase of growth in the labour supply, reinforced in the current period by the entry of relatively large generations on to the labour market, from the 1990s we are gradually going to see a fall in the number of young people entering working life. For some time this decline may be lessened by a rise in the number of women at work. But in the long term the fall in the labour supply will be so great that it cannot be offset by the usual means.

- **Depressive effects on certain sectors**

A fall in fertility narrows the base of the age pyramid; consequently it implies a dropping-off in demand for the products bought by these age groups. First, babies; then it is the turn of the pre-school age group, then school age, and finally adolescents and young adults. During the sixties the increase in the youth population led to an explosion in certain specialized markets (books, records, motorcycles, various products for sports, leisure and daily life, ...). Faced with a contraction of their potential customers, these markets must now rely, if they are to expand (or simply maintain) their business, on finding new outlets for the goods and services which they offer or on a signficiant rise in the standard of living.

The fall-off in demand is particularly noticeable in two areas: a) the building industry and school supplies; b) housing. The future decline in the number of young adults, the reduction in family size and the slowdown in geographical mobility should lead to a slump in the demand for new buildings.

— **Less certain aspects and imponderables**:

- **Volume and structure of consumption**

The impact on aggregate consumption of the trend towards smaller families will be influenced by a number of variables such as changes in income per capita and the increase in the number of women in paid employment. In the medium term, however, consumption per person is likely to go up. The question is, however, whether it will increase enough to offset the slowdown in the increase in the number of consumers on the domestic market.

The stabilization of the population and the change in the age pyramid is likely to lead to a major change in the pattern of demand. The demographic slowdown has a major effect on sectors such as agriculture (food is virtaully income inelastic, i.e. the demand for food is basically a function of the size of the population)[1], building and construction (demand for schools, hospitals, subsidized housing, roads, various infrastructure). The ageing of the population changes consumption; the demand for products more specific to the old (health, leisure, etc.) will expand, that for products specific to the young (post-natal care, school buildings and equipment) will lose ground relatively.

- **Savings and investment**

Economic growth is not just a function of consumption and public expenditure. It also depends on the formation of capital, i.e. savings. These savings are provided to a large extent by households. The reduction in the size of the average family, by reducing consumption needs, tends to increase the proportion of income available for savings. Or at least so classical economics theory would have it.

In reality, there is no straightforward link between savings and the size of families. The cost of an additional child may be met by cutting down non-essential expenditure, not by cutting savings. It is true that broadly speaking the smaller the number of dependent children the higher the level of savings, but this is only true for monetary savings. The reverse may be true if we consider saving in the sense of the formation of human capital. Schultz and Kuznets, for instance, have shown the crucial role played in long-term economic growth by investment in human capital.

We must also consider the quality of saving, and not just its quantity. In the period when the French population was stable (first half of the century), the country had a high level of investment but that investment was unproductive or badly allocated.

Although the financial impact of a drop in fertility is favourable in the medium term (less spending on the younger generation), the economic effects are definitely adverse in some sectors and overall controversial and less beneficial than is often supposed. Reduced spending on youth did not, in the countries most affected by the demographic decline, generate a positive growth differential. The reduction in fertility did not have the beneficial effects attributed to it around 1970, when enthusiasm for zero growth reached its peak in the general public.

Long-term consequences

Continuing low fertility has two main consequences - political and economic. All factors lead to an ageing and weakening of the Community in both absolute and relative terms (particularly the latter) without securing a substantial improvement in affluence.

(1) Clearly any assessment of the possible consequences for agriculture must also take account of its export potential.

a) Economic repercussions

A birth rate substantially below the replacement level leads to an ageing labour force in line with the ageing of the population generally. This will lead to a heavier burden on the economy. But it is not possible at present to gauge accurately the long-term impact on jobs of the new technologies.

— Contracting labour force, permanent shortage of young workers

From the nineties, the number of new entrants to the labour force will dwindle to below that of departures. If the fertility rate remains unchanged, in the year 2000, for the Community of 10, the number of people old enough to begin economically active life will be only two-thirds that of the number of people nearing the end of their working career. The impact of this factor on the size of the labour force will increase as time passes.

— Ageing labour force

At the moment the labour force is growing younger (earlier retirement, entry to the labour market of women and those born in the post-war baby-booms), but eventually it will start to age as the proportion of young people entering the labour market drops to unprecedented levels.

Such a development will have three consequences: upward pressure on labour costs, less geographical and occupational mobility, reduced renewal of the economically active population.

The increase in the proportion of elderly workers is liable to increase the conflict between the worsening shortage of young workers and the increasing tendency to peg wages to length of service. In the countries which are advancing rapidly technologically, there will be an increasing temptation to rely on the best adapted and most productive sector of the labour force, i.e. to secure the early retirement of older workers, who earn higher wages and are assumed to be less efficient; this development will make for a further increase in social security costs. Japan is a case in point. In this scenario, production - provided there are enormous productivity gains - could be maintained by a smaller and smaller proportion of the population, basically the young and the middle-aged. This would lead to upward pressure on the wages of young workers, and might generate conflict about the distribution of incomes, especially as the few new entrants to the labour market will be better trained and will thus tend to demand higher wages.

The second consequence of an ageing labour force would be a reduction in geographical and occupational mobility. Mobility is basically the prerogative of young people, whose roots (family, job, house ownership) are shallower than those of adults who have settled down in life. Small families are more geographically mobile, but this can be offset by the increasing trend towards two-income or even two-career couples. Increased competition, and continuing changes in the international division of labour, accelerate both job repatterning and the geographical movement of industry. Steps should therefore be taken to reduce the labour-market rigidities associated with an ageing labour force.

It is clear that the labour force is renewed more slowly in a decreasing population than in an increasing population. The slower flow of new entrants to the labour market means a slower diffusion of technological innovation, since it is primarily through recently trained young people that skill patterns adapt to production requirements. The need for continuing training and retraining is greater in such a situation, leading to extra costs and a further reduction in the number of persons available for work.

— Dependence on inward migration

Given the above factors and the loss of flexibility they imply, it is always possible that a new inflow of immigrant labour will be needed in ten years or so - especially since the birth-deficit generations, which will be better qualified, will be able to take up the more attractive jobs while the labour force from undeveloped countries will be very much a birth-surplus generation and mostly unskilled. The conventional problems associated with migration could thus be compounded by others linked with the demographic imbalance between sending countries and host countries.

If it becomes structurally indispensable to the survival of European countries, immigration could take on a family and permanent character, generating fundamentally new costs and demands. The supplier countries will, furthermore, not be European but African and Asiatic. This will aggravate immigration difficulties (immigration from different ethnic groups and cultures, etc.). Faced with competition from newly industrializing countries with an abundant supply of cheap labour, Europe, lacking raw materials, has only its human resources; if it does not want to be left behind, it must adapt, innovate, redevelop and thus call on external human resources; this will entail a danger of increased dependence, all the more intractable because the labour shortage caused by a collapse of the fertility rate will be substantial and lasting.

— **Increasing number of old people**

A drop in fertility leads, in relative terms, to replacement of the young age groups by the old. Some conclude that the increase in expenditure on the old is offset by a corresponding decrease in expenditure on the young. The actual situation is much more complicated, for five reasons:

— The cost of supporting young people is met essentially by their families. But expenditure on old people is increasingly a charge on society, based on a precarious contract between the generations, and obviously does not have the same macro-economic impact on investment and productivity.

— A young person does not cost society the same amount as an old person. Most old people (close on two-thirds) are heads of households; children never (they are the third, fourth or whatever member of their household), so that their marginal cost is smaller. The existence of a household presupposes shared expenditure on accommodation, however many persons occupy it. Furthermore, consumption scales usually assume that a young child costs half as much as the first adult in the household. It is hard to imagine that old people need less, given that they are usually heads of household.

— The reduction of the cost of the younger generation and the increase in the cost of the older generation do not occur at the same time. When the cost of old people increases in the EEC, in the nineties and above all 2005-2010, the cost of young people will no longer be dropping. The previous economies will not have been "stored", let alone capitalized, so it is wrong to say that changes in costs will balance each other out.

— The real decrease in the cost of young people is less than appears at first sight. It is not simply a function of the decrease in the number of young people. The effects of such a decrease are not the same as those of an increase. More than three-quarters of the education budget, for instance, is made up of staff expenditure and fixed overheads. Furthermore, the change in the size of families is such that the average child belongs to a small family (1, 2 or 3 children). Obviously, the living and training costs of such children are generally higher.

— The change in the relative size of the major age groups must not mask the change in absolute numbers, whose economic and political importance is far greater.

— **Threat to competitiveness**

Continuing low fertility thus eventually generates a danger of a permanent shortage of young workers. These are the most mobile and adaptable, and the best trained in new technologies. Adjustment of the economy to changes in the international environment depends in part on them. There are also grounds for doubting the ability of economies to maintain their international competitiveness if they are subject to substantial pressures on their production costs (increasing scarcity of labour, ageing of the economically active population, increase in expenditure on pensions and health, increase in tax pressure on the individual because of local and regional depopulation). Especially if these economies are also affected by social changes which make society turn towards the past rather than the future. What happens to the spirit of initiative and innovativeness in an ageing and contracting population?

A survey of economic history since the industrial revolution shows that over a very long period economic growth and population growth have not conflicted with each other. On the contrary, they have gone hand in hand (though it does not appear possible to identify a statistical relationship between the rates of growth of the economy and of population). An evaluation of the major phases suggests that there is a fundamentally ambiguous link, if anything, between recession and population contraction, affluence and population growth. The fact that the population explosion in Europe coincided with an unprecedented economic boom suggests that there may well have been a link and that consideration should be given to the hazards associated with a cessation of demographic growth - or even contraction. There is only one case of population stability in modern European history - that of France in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. This period was an adverse one for France not only in terms of power (France's share of the European economy dropped from 15.5% in 1800 to 5.2% in 1950), but also in terms of the growth of affluence (between 1830 and 1930, for instance, real income per capita rose at an annual rate of 1.1% in France as against 1.2% in the United Kingdom, 1.4% in Germany and 1.6% in the United States).

b) Political repercussions

The lags in demographic transition (change from high death/birth rate to low death/birth rate) and their enormous impact on population figures have been particularly apparent in recent years. They lie behind the increased demographic contrast between rich and poor countries. The West has attained a sort of demographic maturity, herald of a period of ageing and its attendant effects; the less developed countries, pushed by the extraordinary youth of their population, are expanding - and will continue to do so for a long time - at a rate of between 1.5 and 3.5% per annum.

— **Towards new kinds of relations**

The countries of North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia), for example, have less than half the population of the Ten (125 million as against 273 million in 1985), but nearly twice as many births (5.1 million compared with 3.2 million per annum). In these countries of North Africa, close to 4 million are older than 65, i.e. less than the number of births per annum and less than one-tenth the EEC figure (36.6 million in 1985). This comparison of the numbers of young and old people tells us a lot about the past and the future.

The above is typical of the general pattern. The demographic transition in the developing countries is occurring at a rate of growth twice that experienced by Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the continent's population expansion was at its maximum. The more belated the transition, the sharper the expansion of the population during the transition period. In the period between the date when the death-rate began to drop and the date when the fertility rate dropped below the replacement level, the population of most European countries only increased by a factor of between 3 and 5. But the population of Mexico - far from an exceptional case - will increase by a factor of between 7 and 10, depending on how quickly the fertility rate drops. While Asia and Latin America have reached the peak phase of their population expansion, in black Africa (where the death rate is still relatively high) the major increase in the rate of population expansion still lies ahead. It is Africa which seems to have the largest potential - by far - for population growth. Table 17 compares the outlook for the next 40 years for the EEC and certain regions of Africa (UN figures).

It is doubtful whether societies where fifty and sixty year-olds are going to dominate, and where there will be more pensioners than children, can be genuinely forward-looking. It is more likely that they will devote themselves to contemplating their past grandeur.

Demographic changes are slow and allow the time needed for adjustment. But the fact that they are relatively inconspicuous in the short term makes it easier to forget them. It is in the long term that demographic changes exert a crucial influence. People in the densely populated countries of Europe have long been mesmerized by the environmental advantages of a contracting population. We must now wake up to the possible long-term disadvantages, in particular those of the reversal of the age pyramid. The direct influence of an ageing population on social-security costs and taxation is obvious and familiar. But the more indirect impact on the ability of a society to master advanced technologies and to establish an adequate foothold on export markets is probably not insignificant, and doubtless still more crucial in the long run.

There is a divergence between the short-term interests of the individual and the long-term interests of society. Should not our leaders, who are responsible for the future well-being of society, ensure that their policies take account of those parents who, by deciding to have children, and by rearing and educating them, secure the future of the human, economic, social and cultural community?

In the past, quite a large proportion of children were not born as the result of the deliberate choice of their parents.

Today, childbirth is virtually a voluntary decision, made by women and couples. This development is irreversible, and will certainly be reinforced by medical progress and the better provision of information.

Economic and social policies cannot disregard the demographic and family dimensions. The family, seen as a biological, emotional and educational unit, is a dynamic social force. Families play a crucial educational role. It is the social unit in which solidarity is first learnt. It is a dynamic unit of consumption.

4. Conclusions

The birth rate in the EEC countries has fallen to unprecedented levels, well below the generation replacement threshold (the deficit ranges from 15% to 40%, depending on the country). Recent trends indicate that, contrary to what was expected some years ago, there is little likelihood of any major spontaneous turnaround. If present behaviour patterns are maintained, the economic, social and political picture for Europe gives cause for concern, especially in view of the more or less automatic effects brought about by the ageing of the population. As the present demographic situation is unfavourable, and there is no indication of it getting better on its own, it is up to the public authorities, as guardians of the long-term interests of the societies in their charge, to concern themselves with the radically new factors which have led to such an imbalance and to help restore equilibrium to the age pyramid by making it easier for parents to choose what size family they want.

While the decision to have children is one for couples (or women) alone, the choice of family size is not an abstract or once-and-for-all decision. Public opinion surveys in various countries show that, for any couple, family plans are likely to change over time in the light of such things as changes in the economic situation and in social legislation. Many couples hesitate about what size family they want (most often between having two or three children); because of the many obstacles facing larger families in a salaried and urbanized world, most of them decide on the lower figure, but some say they are ready to consider having an additional child if society as a whole agreed to pay more towards bringing it up.

Intervention by the public authorities is justified, in a modern democracy, by the state's brief to help its citizens achieve their personal goals, with priority being given to those which coincide with the general interest. In other words, the state's job is not to dictate to couples, but to allow them to have as wide a range of choices as possible in accordance with the principles of freedom and fairness. Thus, couples who wish to have no children - or no more children - should have the possibility of preventing births, which is now an accomplished fact. At the same time, couples who do wish to have children should be allowed to have sufficient resources to have real freedom of choice.

In countries where the number of self-employed workers is largely tending to disappear - though this is not the case in all Member States, e.g. Italy - the economic benefits associated with the arrival of children no longer go to the family but to society at large, while most of the costs (which, moreover, are rising) are still borne by the family. In ancient societies, children helped to increase the income of the family business unit; but nowadays, the arrival of children leads to a cumulative fall in the family's standard of living, due to the lack of adequate and proper legislation. This drop in the standard of living is felt particularly acutely when a third child arrives, not only because this leads to direct and specific costs (mainly housing) but also because, very often, the mother has to give up her job, which leads to a big drop in the family's income[2].

(2) The ESC has already drawn attention to this situation in its Opinion on the Proposal for a Council Decision on Specific Community Action to Combat Poverty (OJ No. C 25 of 28 January 1985).

It is not surprising that in almost all the Member States, the recent fall in the birth rate is mainly due to the increase in the number of couples deciding not to have a third child. Such a situation calls for a political response consisting of finding ways of making it easier for couples to decide to have a third child, without in any way detracting from the importance of the benefits granted for the first or second child.

But is such an aim practical? History suggests that it is. There are effective measures which are compatible with individual liberties. Two examples are provided by France after the Second World War and by East Germany over the past ten years. Such examples - those of France and East Germany - are unusual in that they are quantifiable. But one must not overlook the fact that political and social factors also played a role. Thus however interesting they may be, the measures mentioned below may not be universally applicable.

In France, at the end of the Second World War, a bold new family policy was introduced, based mainly on reducing the fall in living standards associated with having children; population growth followed; the baby-boom in France was more pronounced and lasted longer than in neighbouring countries, and despite the watering-down of this policy and its obvious need for a thorough overhaul, France was the country which best resisted the recent trend towards lower birth rates. From being the country with the lowest birth rate in Western Europe in the inter-war period, France now has one of the highest.

Up until 1975, the birth rates of East and West Germany were virtually the same (the cyclical indicator had fallen to around 1.5 in that year). From then on they diverged markedly; since 1978, East German women have had an average of 1.8-1.9 children, while the figure for West German women has been around 1.3-1.4. Legalized abortion, which was introduced in East Germany in 1972, has not been called into question, and modern contraception methods are widely used there. The rise in the East German birth rate can be explained by two measures: firstly, the inauguration of a "Baby Year" granting a year's leave with almost full pay for the birth of a second or succeeding child, and secondly, the introduction of a family housing policy (priority to families with children, low-interest loans for owning property or domestic equipment). Such measures are naturally very effective in a country where a particularly high number of women have a job and there is still an acute housing shortage.

Of course, the long-term effectiveness of this policy will probably not be as great as the present birth rate gap might suggest (some of the extra births in recent years in East Germany are due to couples having children earlier, rather than having more children). The long-term difference between France and the rest of Western Europe over the forty years since the war seems to be O.2-O.3 children per woman. It is unrealistic to claim that a democratic state can radically change birth rates, but it is also untrue to say that the public authorities can do nothing. They can have some, albeit fairly small, influence which may be decisive over the long term and make all the difference between having a stable or a declining population.

It is essential that the cohesion and dynamism of the European Community be developed. There must be a sufficient number of young people to fire Europe with their enthusisam and talents. The importance of each age group within a harmonious age pyramid has been shown. If the age structure is wrong, our old countries, so proud of their past, will become full of old people lacking the energy needed to tackle problems before they become insoluble.

High birth rates in other countries will encourage their young people to emigrate to one or other of the EEC Member States. The development of a multiracial society will pose fewer problems, and be more positive for all concerned, if the host countries themselves have sufficient numbers of young people in their own population.

Some recommendations

Despite the relative convergence of demographic trends in the EEC countries, the consequences of a continuation of the present very low fertility rates will be felt sooner/later and be more/less serious according to the initial shape of the age pyramid. A country such as the Netherlands, for instance, where the proportion of young people was relatively high, will be sheltered from the effects of the decline for a few decades yet. The Federal Republic of Germany presents the opposite case. The gravity of the national situation and hence the extent to which urgent action is called for by the authorities is not identical in all the Member States.

Any policy must be based on a thorough knowledge not only of the demographic facts, but also of the aspirations of couples in the reproductive age group. An analysis of such data would seem to indicate that families with four or more children are doomed to disappear: in most countries, however, given the degree of uncertainty in their choice, a substantial proportion of couples having now stopped at the second child could opt for a third if circumstances improved.

In all the EEC countries, whatever the level of female employment, the same trend towards an increase in paid employment, i.e. outside the home, emerges very clearly. This fundamental change is certainly a step in the right direction and probably irreversible. It must underlie any consideration of family policy. In the younger generations, few women wish to limit themselves to the role of wife and mother. The vast majority want to reconcile two aims which are largely incompatible, at least as far as time (and income after the second child) are concerned: to experience the joys and emotional rewards of motherhood and, at the same time, to have a professional, social and cultural life outside the home. This conflict is particularly acute in the case of a third child, especially when the first two are still very young. The different generations must therefore work together to make working-hours arrangements less rigid and to reduce the workload. Family expenses must be offset by financial transfers, thus recognizing the social role played by individuals who take upon themselves the responsibility of raising and educating future generations, i.e. who invest in the future and in the long-term well-being of society. In addition, the negotiation of more flexible working hours would go some way to reconciling the family and professional duties of the father and mother. This would require (a) the retention or extension of existing measures, e.g. as regards social security benefits, housing or working conditions, and (b) the adoption of specific provisions whereby couples wishing to have a child could do so without the quality of their life suffering. Family benefit policies must apply for all children. It must always be socially possible for a child to be born, regardless of its social status, the socio-economic class of the parents or the extent of their resources. A first child, for example, necessarily entails significant investments, while a third child and sometimes also a second may force the family to find a larger and inevitably more expensive home. One of the parents, and it is often the mother, may have to partially or temporarily stop working and hence do without an income.

Whatever measures are taken to boost the birth rate, their benefits must not be cancelled out by contrary provisions in other policy sectors (education, employment, income, housing, etc.). Hence we must ensure that the demographic factor is taken into account when policies are formulated. We must also ensure that the needs of urban children are fully recognized and that public and private decision-makers (local authorities, employers, trade unions, cultural and religious leaders, etc.) are instilled with a concern for the long-term future.

Migration policy can play a part in short-term structural adjustments, but is not a solution which will safeguard the long-term demographic and cultural survival of Europe. The demographic imbalance is reaching unprecedented proportions: making good the deficit in Europe would require immigration on a massive scale, unlike anything seen so far. But the geographical reservoirs capable of remedying these deficits come from cultures increasingly distant from the western heritage, hence even greater difficulties of integration. Nor is it certain that such immigration, while inevitable to some extent on account of the population pressure in the countries of the southern hemisphere, will be welcomed by public opinion in the West. History shows that in some countries the capacity to absorb immigrants is greatest when there is internal demographic dynamism.

In short the ESC makes the following proposals and recommendations:

1) The demographic factor must be included in the various economic, social and cultural projects and debates undertaken at national and Community level.

   The ESC will continue, as always, to express its concern for demographic and family matters, for instance in its Opinions on the social and economic situation.

2) Regular meetings between the ministers responsible for family matters and account to be taken of the demographic and family factor by all the Community institutions. To be preceded by consultations of family, trade-union and economic organizations.

3) Financial support for family responsibilities, provided by family benefits and tax concessions, should be considered as a right of all parents who are responsible for bringing up a child.

A first child, for example involves particular outlay which is considerable from the moment of birth. A third child, and sometimes even a second, may sometimes oblige the family to find new accommodation. One of the parents and usually the mother, may be forced partially or temporarily to withdraw from the labour market with the result that the family's income from work is reduced. Depending on the age of the children, there will be changes in the consumption required for their upkeep and education. If measures to offset the financial cost of children are to be fair and effective, they must take account of these facts.

The costs and responsibilities assumed by parents in raising and educating a child call for financial compensation and the creation of a physical, social, psychological and moral environment in keeping with the responsibilities of the parents and the needs of the children.

The regulations guiding the allocation of financial aid for family responsibilities were generally drawn up a very long time ago. It is not clear whether these arrangements meet families' expectations, either in terms of demographical effectiveness or equality between families or whether they measure up to the kind of solidarity which should exist between families and the nation as a whole. Moreover, the methods of financing these measures are not necessarily compatible with present-day economic and social conditions which have changed considerably since their inception.

It is therefore imperative that thought be given to the whole question of financial aid towards family responsibilities. One aid should be to simplify bureaucratic structures, which are sometimes complicated for the families concerned and do not enhance the transparency of the funds available or the costs. The other aim should be to gauge the effectiveness and impact of social support for families, and the way it is financed.

The goal should be to create a more just system which would promote solidarity and fairness, to the benefit of all families and children.

A study of the socio-economic and geographical distribution of families in terms of numbers of children reveals differences which prove that certain arrangements for family financial support (amount, form, eligibility criteria) do not permit all potential parents to exercise their freedom of choice and do not create genuine equality of rights or opportunities amongst all families or children. That is, for example, one reason why certain proposals call for the subsumption of all forms of financial support for family responsibilities under one form of benefit. Other proposals would like to see a clear-cut distinction between tax concessions and benefits which would, for example, entail rejecting the principle of apportioning benefits according to income. Yet others wish to prevent in certain circumstances, the level of family benefits/tax concessions rising in line with the number of children.

This is a weighty problem which cannot be dealt with briefly in this Report. Any guidelines which emerged from a debate on this subject would have a definite influence (a) on the birthrate, parenthood being regarded as a right which all families should be able to enjoy, (b) on family policies.

The Community institutions - the ESC in particular - must be called upon to tackle a fundamental problem which it would be neither socially just nor realistic to shirk.

4) The creation of a physical environment (town planning, transport, environment, green spaces, child-minding facilities, educational, social, sporting, cultural amenities, etc.) and a psychological and moral environment (less violence in the media and a greater educational effort to promote peace through, for instance, international exchanges between young people, increased participation in development, etc.) which is hospitable to children and young people.

5) There are numerous reasons for the decline in the birth rate, including worsening unemployment and the fear that it will last.

The ESC has frequently made specific suggestions and demands aimed at helping combat unemployment. Such urgent measures, beyond their social and economic objectives, have an effect on families and population. Family plans and educational plans need a guarantee of real security.

6) As the ESC has already stressed, everything must be done to ensure that the right of all young people to a job becomes a reality.

   Providing for young people without a job is a direct burden on the budget of their families, made all the more onerous by the fact that these are often low-income families, large families and families in which one of the parents is also unemployed (multiple unemployment is a reality). Policies for helping unemployed young people (financial assistance, training, social and psychological support, ...) and unemployed parents with dependent children must be developed and adjusted. The ESC has already mentioned these points in previous Opinions.

7) Everything must be done to enable parents to reconcile their working and family lives better. The role of parent has an educational, social and economic value which must be stressed and taken into account, given the services rendered by families.

8) The implementation of policies aimed at combating the marginalization of the aged[3], who are necessary for the balance of society, the care and education of children and keeping traditions alive.

9) The campaign against infant mortality and complications during pregnancy has achieved some positive results. It must be continued, even if it no longer has a very significant effect on population size. Social, economic, cultural and geographical factors still affect the likelihood of illness and death. These inequalities must be removed. Such measures are, however, aimed more at enhancing human dignity than simply at increasing the population.

10) The campaign against sterility must be stepped up.

    Legislation must be amended to facilitate adoption, e.g. of children from other countries, with the aim of giving every child a family and reducing the "differences" connected with their origin.

11) In accordance with the debate held by the Ministers for Social Affairs in April 1984, the Community should study the joint launching of a public information campaign on the demographic situation, its economic and social consequences and family aid measures.

12) Demographic research and information must be better funded at both Member State and Community level.

13) The inclusion of demography in school and university courses (history, geography, social sciences, economics, civics, etc.) is a must.

Some of the recommended measures will clearly require substantial funding; others will not affect costs. If a state and a society are convinced of the long-term benefits of a demographic policy they must undertake a firm and lasting political commitment to provide the means to back it up, with due respect for individual liberty. The funding of family and demographic policies should be based first and foremost on an appeal to national solidarity. At all events family benefits are something to which the child has a right and must, as such, apply to all children without discrimination.

Admittedly, the seriousness of the economic and social situation means that choices have to be made. From the demographic point of view priority must be given to the following: child benefits must take account (a) of family wishes and interests and (b) of the need to restore balance to the age pyramid. The greater the satisfaction experienced by parents at a birth, the more inclined they will be to have another child; assistance for housing and the environment; measures enabling parents to organize their time better; measures for the vocational training and retraining of young people so that the right to work becomes a reality for more people.

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(3) On this subject, see the Opinion on Social Developments in the Community in 1984 (Official Journal C 218 of 29 August 1985).

The debate on future population is a philosophical and political debate. It has a personal aspect. It has a social and economic aspect. It is a debate about social policy.

With this in mind we must effectively promote solidarity in all its aspects. To do this we will have to radically alter, firstly in cultural terms, the egoistic attitudes towards progress which increasingly characterise our society.

As has just been pointed out, the present economic and social situation obliges us to take decisions. Priority must be given here to measures for the vocational training and retraining of young people, thus helping to safeguard their right to work, which is one of the preconditions for their integration into society and the exercise, in due course, of their freedom of choice and parental responsibilities.

APPENDIX

Table 1 : General demographic data : population, births, deaths, net migration, marriages, divorces, 1960 - 1983, EUR 10 (in '000s)

Year	Population on 1 Jan.	Births	Deaths	Natural increase	Net migration	Marriages	Divorces
1960	239 497	4 319	2 585	1 734	385	1 889	125
1961	241 615	4 425	2 567	1 858	401	1 919	127
1962	243 874	4 471	2 682	1 789	1 035	1 933	131
1963	246 698	4 594	2 756	1 838	132	1 961	136
1964	248 667	4 704	2 613	2 091	182	1 983	148
1965	250 940	4 621	2 720	1 901	88	1 975	156
1966	252 929	4 588	2 719	1 869	- 94	1 959	161
1967	254 704	4 477	2 722	1 755	- 476	1 974	170
1968	255 983	4 373	2 855	1 518	60	1 951	177
1969	257 561	4 296	2 892	1 404	431	1 988	194
1970	259 396	4 136	2 839	1 297	618	2 028	210
1971	261 311	4 131	2 837	1 294	771	2 029	261
1972	263 376	3 946	2 872	1 074	519	2 039	332
1973	264 970	3 762	2 895	867	493	1 978	316
1974	266 330	3 641	2 864	777	2	1 921	342
1975	267 109	3 461	2 923	538	- 71	1 882	356
1976	267 577	3 373	2 921	452	8	1 786	370
1977	268 036	3 309	2 831	478	113	1 771	350
1978	268 627	3 298	2 874	424	234	1 716	323
1979	269 285	3 329	2 860	469	358	1 709	383
1980	270 112	3 407	2 882	525	383	1 708	419
1981	271 021	3 360	2 881	479	6	1 657	434
1982	271 505	3 313	2 862	451	268	1 636	—
1983	272 224	3 207	2 915	292	14	—	—
1984	272 530	—	—	—	—	—	—

Source : Eurostat

Table 2: Average total population, by country (in '000), 1960-1983

Year	Belgium	Denmark	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Germany	UK	EUR 10
1960	9 119	4 581	45 684	8 327	2 832	50 198	314.9	11 487	55 433	52 559	240 530
1970	9 638	4 929	50 772	8 793	2 950	53 661	339.8	13 039	60 651	55 522	260 291
1980	9 847	5 123	53 714	9 643	3 401	56 416	365.1	14 150	61 566	56 360	270 585
1982	9 856	5 118	54 430	9 790	3 483	56 639	365.5	14 313	61 638	56 335	271 968
1983	9 856	5 114	54 652	9 848	3 508	56 836	365.8	14 367	61 423	56 377	272 347

Source : Eurostat

Table 3 : Life expectancy at birth (in years and tenths of years) EUR 10, 1951-1981.

Year	Men	Women	Difference
1951	64.0	68.2	4.2
1961	67.6	73.6	6.0
1971	68.7	75.1	6.4
1981 (*)	70.7	78.0	7.3

(*) Provisional estimate

Table 4 : Infant mortality rates, 1960 - 1983 (as a °/oo)

Year	Belgium	Denmark	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Germany	UK	EUR 10
1960	31.2	21.5	27.4	40.1	29.3	43.9	31.5	17.9	33.8	22.5	31.3
1970	21.1	14.2	18.2	29.6	19.5	29.6	24.9	12.7	23.4	18.5	21.9
1980	11.0	8.4	10.1	17.9	11.1	14.3	11.5	8.6	12.7	12.1	12.0
1982	11.7	8.2	9.4	15.1	10.5	13.0	12.1	8.3	10.9	11.0	10.9
1983	11.2	8.0	8.9	14.6	9.8	12.4	11.2	8.4	10.3	10.2	10.4

Source : Eurostat

Table 5 : Annual births (in '000), 1960 - 1983, EUR 10

Year	Belgium	Denmark	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Germany	UK	EUR 10
1960	155	76.1	820	157	60.7	910	5.0	239	969	918	4 310
1964	161	83.4	878	153	64.1	1 016	5.2	251	1 065	1 015	4 692
1970	142	70.8	850	145	64.4	901	4.4	239	811	904	4 132
1975	120	72.1	745	142	67.2	828	4.0	178	601	698	3 454
1980	124	57.3	800	148	74.1	644	4.2	181	621	754	3 407
1982	120	52.7	797	137	70.9	618	4.3	172	621	719	3 313
1983	117	50.8	749	133	66.8	600	4.2	170	594	721	3 207

Source : Eurostat

Graph 1

Trend in number of births, 1960-1982.

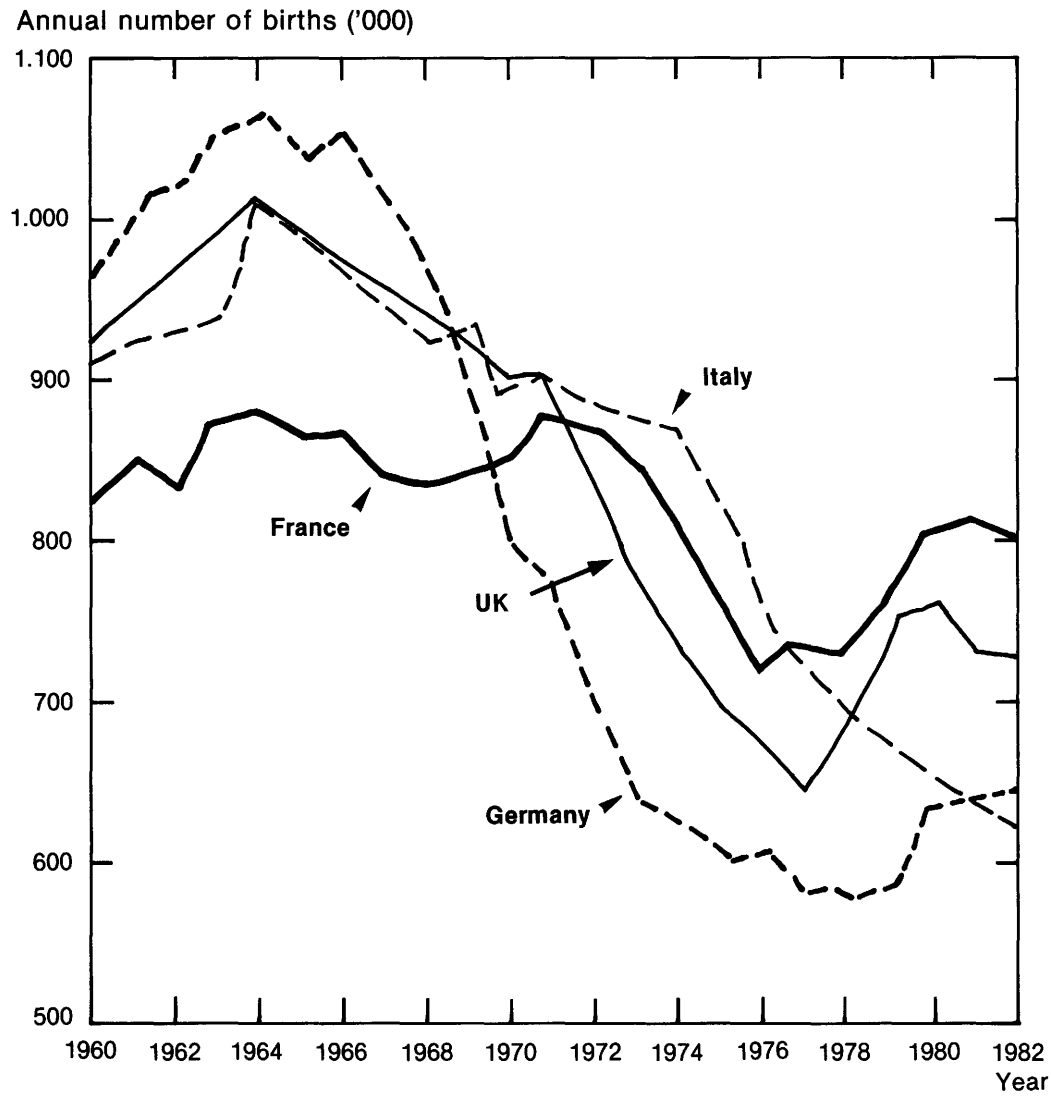


Table 6 : Index of fertility (average number of children per woman), 1960 - 1983, EUR 10

Year	Belgium	Denmark	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Germany	UK
1960	2.57	2.54	2.73	2.28	3.75	2.41	2.28	3.11	2.37	2.69
1964	2.71	2.60	2.90	2.31	4.07	2.70	2.34	3.15	2.55	2.93
1970	2.20	1.95	2.48	2.34	3.87	2.43	1.97	2.58	2.02	2.44
1975	1.74	1.92	1.93	2.37	3.39	2.19	1.50	1.67	1.45	1.80
1980	1.67	1.55	1.97	2.23	3.23	1.66	1.51	1.60	1.44	1.89
1982	1.60(*)	1.43	1.94	—	2.95	1.57	1.49	1.50	1.41	1.75
1983	—	1.38	1.82(*)	—	—	—	1.45	1.47	1.32(*)	—

(*) Provisional estimate.
Sources : Eurostat and INED.

Table 7 : Average age at maternity (in years and tenths of years), 1971 - 1982, EUR 10

Year	Belgium	Denmark	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Germany	UK
1971	27.05	26.71	27.11	27.39	30.17	28.19	26.99	27.97	26.81	26.67
1974	26.67	26.58	26.78	26.92	29.76	27.77	27.03	27.37	26.72	26.42
1977	26.61	26.54	26.52	26.50	29.71	27.50	27.19	27.45	26.82	26.67
1980	—	26.82	26.81	26.13	29.66	—	27.64	27.69	27.05	26.91
1982	—	27.14	27.06	—	—	—	—	27.96	27.30	—

Source : INED

Table 8 : Final number of children of female generations

Generation	England-Wales	Denmark	France	Italy	Netherlands	Federal Republic of Germany
1930	2.32	2.34	2.64	2.24	2.67	2.14
1940	2.37	2.27	2.41	2.16	2.24	1.97
1950	2.03	1.87	2.09	—	1.86	1.68
1954	1.94	1.71	2.03	1.87	1.71	1.55

Sources : Festy, P. : *La fécondité des pays occidentaux de 1870 à 1970,* Travaux et Documents de l'INED, n° 85, INED-PUF, Paris, 1979, 300-301.
Munoz Perez, F. : L'évolution de la fécondité dans les pays industrialisés depuis 1971, *Population*, n° 3, 1982, p.501.

Table 9 : Proportion of third or higher order births (as a %).

Year	Belgium(*)	Denmark	France(*)	Greece	Ireland	Italy(*)	Luxembourg(*)	Netherlands	Germany(*)	UK(*)	EUR 10
1960	37.3	36.0	38.8	27.4	60.9	34.8	27.8	41.8	28.2	33.2	34.4
1970	29.2	22.2	29.9	20.5	51.3	30.2	25.9	27.5	26.3	28.8	28.7
1980	19.2	17.1	21.2	17.7	46.6	—	15.9	19.8	17.0	22.2	21.0
1982	—	16.6	23.1	—	46.9	—	15.2	21.0	16.2	23.0	—
1983	—	16.6	—	—	—	—	15.6	20.6	—	—	—

Source : Eurostat
(*) Children born to marriages only.

Graph 2

Index of fertility, 1960-1982.

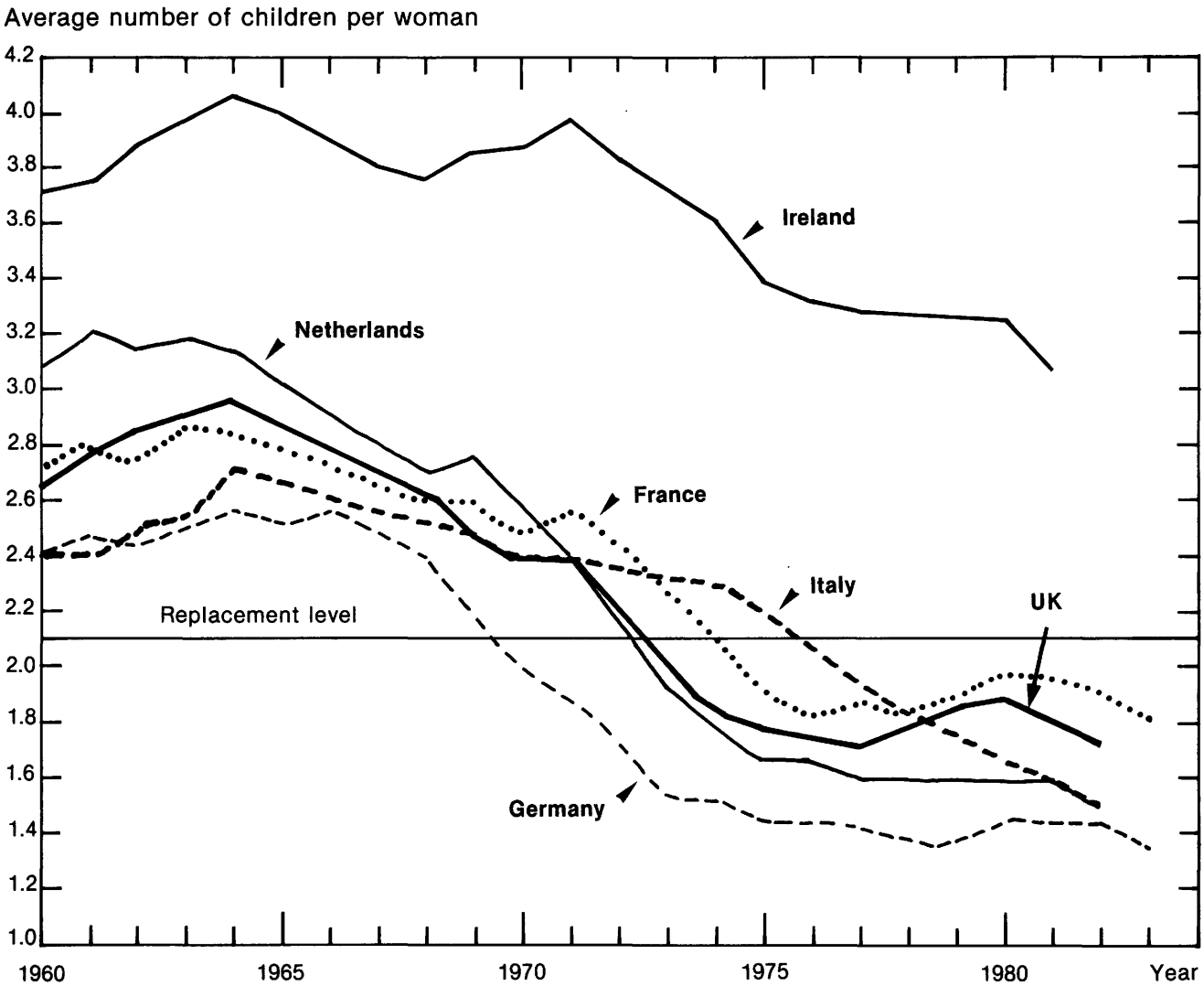


Table 10 : Index of first marriages

Year	England-Wales	Denmark	France	Italy	Federal Republic of Germany
1965	1.006	0.970	0.993	—	1.102
1970	1.047	0.811	0.919	—	0.974
1975	0.882	0.663	0.858	0.931	0.764
1980	0.772	0.532	0.713	0.765	0.656
1982	—	0.480	0.658	—	0.619 (*)

(*) provisional.
Source : INED, Projet international d'analyse démographique conjoncturelle.

Table 11 : Average age at first marriage, women (in years and tenths of years), EUR 10

Year	Belgium	Denmark	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Germany	UK
1960	23.4	22.9	23.5	24.4	26.0	24.8	—	24.5	23.7	23.3
1970	22.4	22.9	22.4	22.9	24.3	24.1	23.2	22.9	23.0	22.4
1980	23.0	24.8	23.0	22.3	24.1	24.1	23.0	23.2	23.4	23.0
1982	—	25.4	23.4	—	—	—	23.0	23.5	23.8	—
1983	—	25.8	—	—	—	—	—	23.7	—	—

Source : Eurostat

Table 12 : Proportion of women married by 50 (as a %)

Generation	England-Wales	Denmark	France	Federal Republic of Germany
1940	96.9	93.2	92.8	94.3
1945	99.2	91.1	91.9	92.9
1950	94.9	85.7	89.6	87.3
1955	89.1	70.7	84.2	79.2
1960	74.9	52.6	73.0	67.4

Source : INED, Projet international d'analyse démographique conjoncturelle.

Table 13 : Proportion of births outside marriage (as a %), 1960 - 1982, EUR 10

Year	Belgium	Denmark	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Germany	UK	EUR 10
1960	2.1	7.8	6.1	1.2	1.6	2.4	3.2	1.4	6.3	5.2	4.5
1970	2.8	11.0	6.8	1.1	2.7	2.2	4.0	2.1	5.5	8.0	5.2
1980	4.1	33.0	11.4	1.5	5.0	4.1	6.0	4.1	7.6	11.5	7.6
1982	4.9	38.3	13.2	1.7	6.1	4.6	6.2	5.9	8.5	14.1	10.2

Source : Eurostat

Table 14 : Index of divorces (sum of divorce rates by duration of marriage : proportion of marriages ending in divorce - as a %)

Year	England-Wales	Belgium	Denmark	France	Netherlands	Federal Republic of Germany
1965	10.7	8.2	18.2	10.7	7.2	12.2
1970	16.3	9.6	25.1	12.0	11.0	15.9
1975	32.2	16.1	36.7	17.2	20.0	21.0
1980	39.3	20.9	39.3	24.7	25.7	22.7

Source : INED, Projet international d'analyse démographique conjoncturelle.

Table 15 : **TOTAL POPULATION** Trend 1960 - 1985 and projections 1985 - 2025. EEC 10 - total population in millions

Year	"low" hypothesis*	"high" hypothesis**
1960	240.6	
1985	269.9	270.7
2000	267.4	274.6
2025	241.5	268.5

* continuation of present fertility rate

** gradual rise in fertility rate from about 1990, up to about generation replacement level (gross reproduction rate equal to 1 around 2020)

Source : United Nations : *World population prospects as assessed in 1980,* New York, 1981

In both cases the population varies little between now and the end of the century; in the 'low"hypothesis it falls lightly, while in the "high" hypothesis it continues to grow, albeit very slowly. The divergence widens after that : by 2025 it will have fallen back to slightly above its present level (around 270 million) according to the "high" hypothesis; according to the "low" hypothesis it will have fallen by 10% and be equal to its 1960 level (around 240 million).

Taking an even longer horizon, the following results would be obtained for Germany and France :

Table 16 : **TOTAL POPULATION** Trend 1950 - 1985 and projections 1985 - 2100, Federal Republic of Germany and France, total population in millions

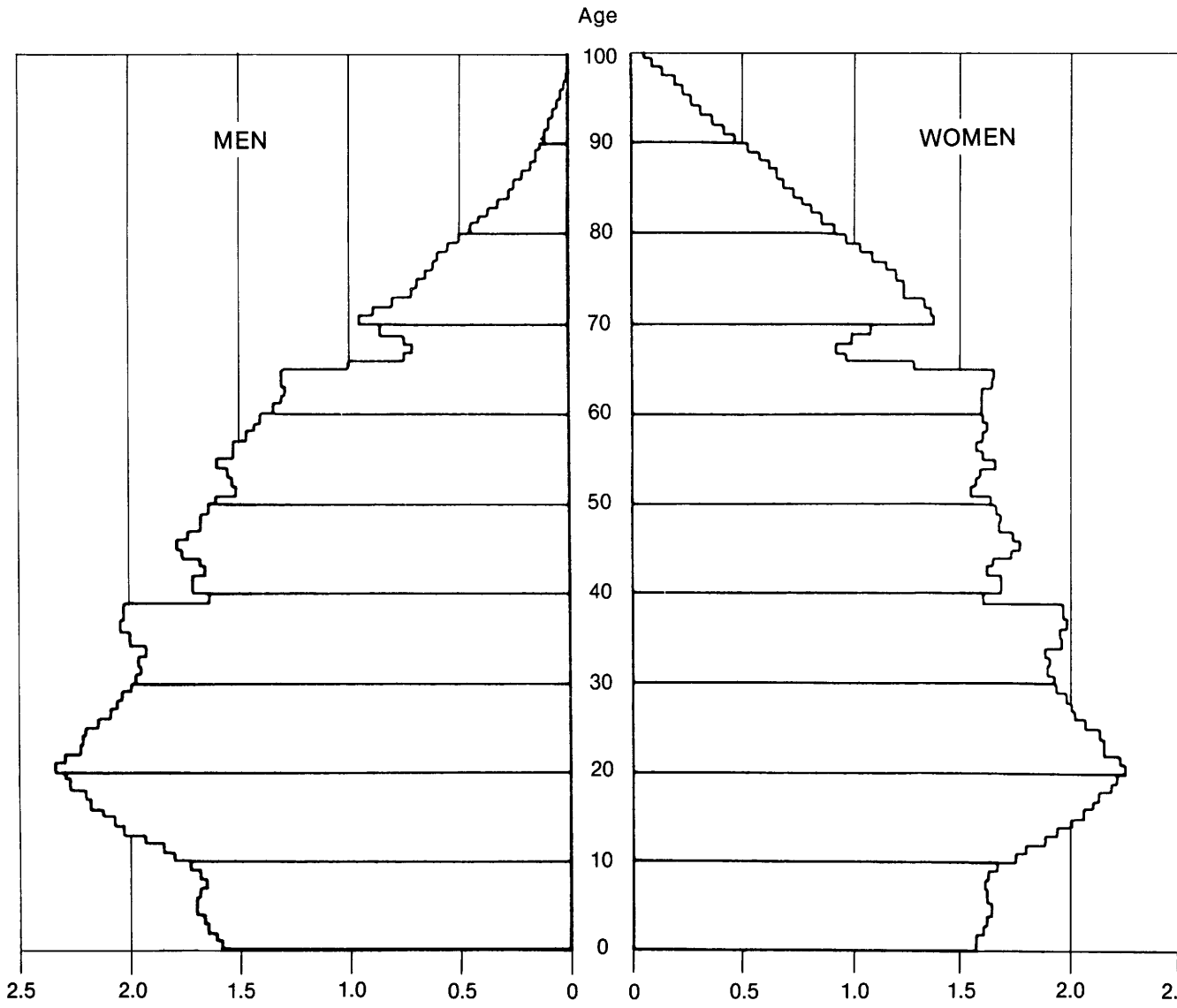
Year	FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY				FRANCE			
	FERTILITY (Average number of children per woman)							
	1.2	1.5	1.87	2.25	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.4
1950	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	41.6	41.6	41.6	41.6
1985	59.6	60.0	60.5	61.0	54.0	54.4	54.8	55.1
2000	55.0	57.0	59.5	62.0	54.0	56.0	58.2	60.2
2025	42.0	46.7	53.3	60.6	48.7	54.6	61.6	68.6
2050	27.5	34.6	45.6	59.4	37.9	48.6	62.1	77.3
2100	....	....	....	....	20.2	....	....	101.1

Sources: - **Modellrechnungen zur langfristigen natürlichen Bevölkungsentwicklung in Bund und Ländern**, 1978

- INED: **La situation démographique de la France, Rapport au Conseil central de planification**, Paris, 1979

Graph 3

Age distribution of EEC population on 1 January 1985



Graph 4

France. Age pyramid in 1975, 2000, 2025 and 2050 according to long-term fertility rate (1.5; 1.8; 2.1 or 2.4 children per woman).

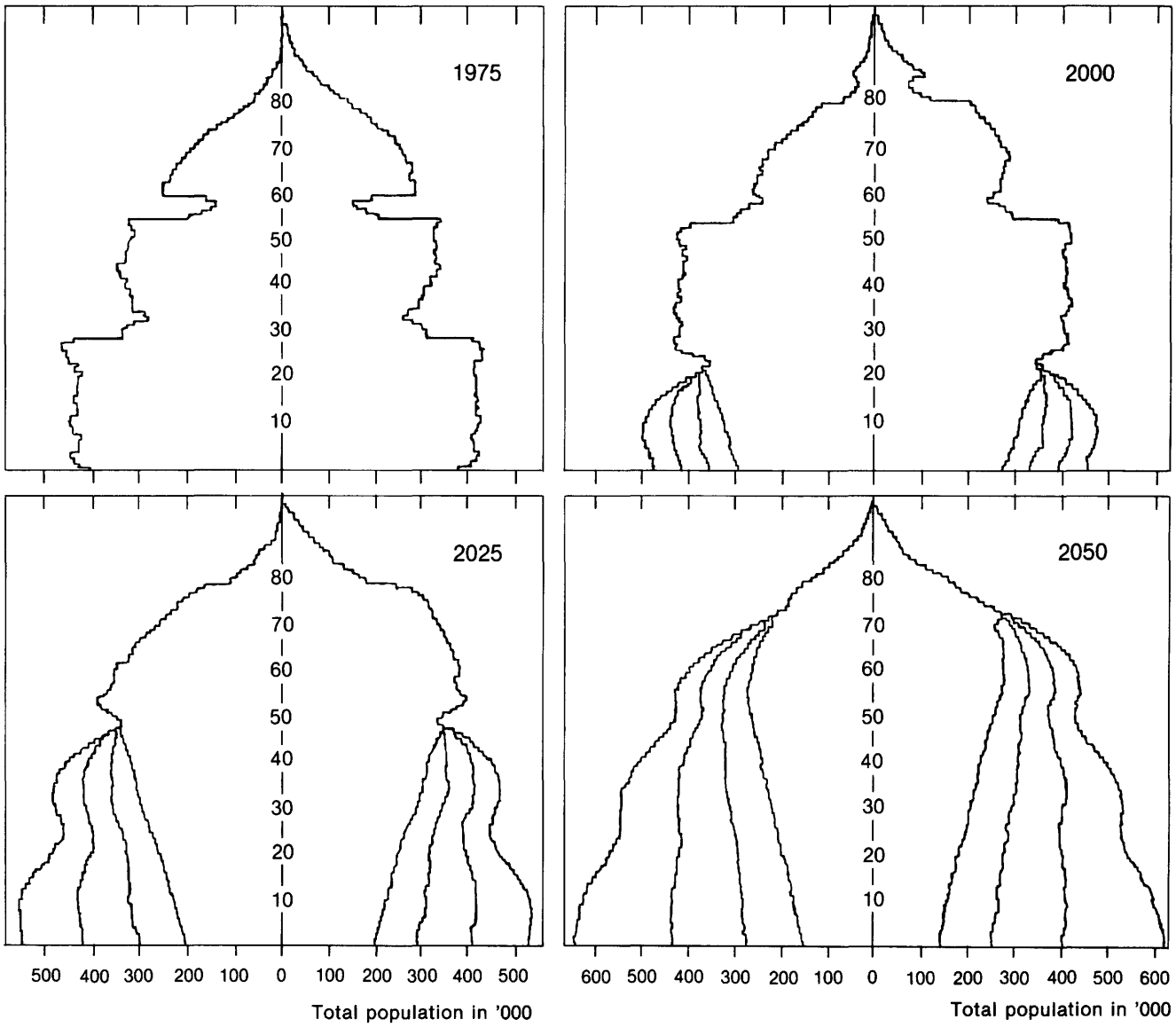


Table 17: POPULATION OF THE COMMUNITY AND AFRICA: TREND 1950-1985: OUTLOOK, 1985-2025 ('000,000)

	1950	1985	2000	2025
EAST AFRICA	61.5	155.8	250.0	477.9
NORTH AFRICA	52.1	125.8	186.2	295.9
AFRICA	220.3	546.2	852.9	1,541.7(*)
EEC - 10	222.9	270.7	274.6	268.5
Ratio AFRICA/EEC-10	0.99	2.02	3.11	5.74
EEC SHARE (%) OF WORLD POPULATION	8.8%	5.6%	4.5%	3.3%

(*) These forecasts should be considered, although the serious effects of the disastrous famines now taking place, and which could spread, should not be overlooked.

The pattern is striking. In 1950 the population of Africa and the EEC, (i.e. the present ten Member States) was similar. Today, Africa has twice as many inhabitants; in forty years' time it may well have 1,500 million, i.e. six times as many.

A number of African countries which are currently considered small or medium-sized will exceed the present populations (55-60 million) of the biggest EEC countries - Federal Germany, France and the United Kingdom. These African countries include the Sudan (55 million), Algeria and Morocco (60 million) and Egypt (95 million).

The abrupt and massive changes in world population geography resulting from the demographic trends of the next few decades will lead to a repatterning of world political geography whose general outline can already be foreseen. Young powers will emerge, basing their strength in large part on population growth and the stimulus it creates; old powers could fade.

SOME DEFINITIONS[4]

Ageing: increase in the proportion of old people in the population. The term "demographic ageing" is often used to distinguish it from individual ageing, a biological phenomenon.

Birth rate: ratio of number of births to average population for the year.

Cohort: a group of individuals having a statistical factor in common.

Death rate: ratio of number of deaths to average population for the year.

Demographic transition: process whereby a society moves from a regime in which high fertility and mortality are more or less in balance to a regime where low fertility and mortality are also more or less in balance.

Fertility: ratio of birth rate to total number of women of reproductive age.

Fertility rate: ratio between the number of births to women of a given age and the total number of women of the same age.

Final number of children: average number of live-born children at the end of period of female fertility, in the absence of death. This average number is often calculated in generations.

Generation: total number of persons born in a given civil year. (This meaning is different from current usage where it refers loosely to the interval of time separating the birth of parents from that of their children).

Household: all the persons inhabiting the same unit of accommodation; can be just one person. (This meaning is different from current usage where it tends to refer to couples).

Life expectancy at age x: average number of years left to live for persons aged x years, in accordance with the mortality rates described in the life tables. In particular, life expectancy at birth is the average duration of the life of individuals subject from birth to the mortality rate in the tables; also known as average life.

Life table mortality rate: table describing, according to an age scale, the likelihood of death in a generation. Reference is usually to current life tables, measured over a year or several years. It contains a series of "mortality quotas", i.e. the percentages, for each given age and sex group, of persons dying in the year, and all the tables derived from this series: survival table, death table, life expectancy tables.

Marriage rate: ratio of number of marriages to average population for the year.

Medium-term index of births (or **reduced births total**): average number of children borne by a female generation subject for their whole life to the fertility rates per age of the observation period, in the absence of death. It is obtained by adding up the fertility rates per age from 15 to 49 years. With the present death rate, a medium-term index of births of 2.1 children per woman is required for generation replacement.

Natural increase: the difference over a given period between the number of births and the number of deaths.

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(4) Published by the review "Population et avenir" and based on a brochure prepared, with the aid of INED, by the French Ministry for Social Affairs under the title : "La France et la population".

Natural increase rate: ratio of natural increase to average population for the year. Generally expressed as a % per annum. It is the difference between the birth and death rates, which are generally expressed per 1,000 inhabitants and per annum.

Net migration: difference, for a country or administrative district, between the number of immigrants and emigrants. The balance is positive if immigration exceeds emigration.

Replacement of generations: level of fertility such that net reproduction equals 100%. The number of girls in the children's generation is therefore equal to the number of women in the parents' generation, taking the mortality rates into account.

Reproduction: way in which children's generations replace parents', frequently measured by the ratio between the number of girls in the children's generation and the number of women in the parents' generation; the gross reproduction rate is an index of fertility, the net reproduction rate takes account of deaths up to child-bearing age.

Sex ratio: ratio at birth, or at a given age, of males to females.

Small age groups: the "small age groups" are those generations born in periods when the birth rate is temporarily substantially lower.

Total increase: the difference over a given period between the size of the population on two different dates. The total increase is the sum of the natural increase and net migration.

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