

Demographic challenges and solidarity between the generations

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The Council held a policy debate on demography and human capital covering, in particular, the following issues:

- Member State and EU measures to increase the overall employment rate for people of working age and improving human capital support in order to underpin this work.
- Specific measures that Member States should pursue in order to maximise the employment opportunities of young people, older workers and disadvantage groups as well as barriers to raising the employment rates for these groups.

The debate followed the presentation of a Commission Communication “Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations” which was published in March 2005. Delegations referred to the following issues that need to be taken into account when seeking to achieve the objective of an increased overall employment rate:

- increasing the skills and qualifications of workers through lifelong learning;
- the notion of “making work pay”;
- ensuring an adequate management of migration flows;
- reconciling family life with professional life.

The outcome of the debate will serve as input to the Commission’s on-going work on the demographic challenge.