

## Age as an Economic Factor

Germany is continuing the debate begun by the European Commission on the issue of demographic change with special focus on the issue "Economic Factor Age" – the so called "silver market". The challenges of demographic change can only be overcome if the potential and know-how of the older generation is put to better use. Economic potential is of particularly increasing importance in view of demographic development and is also increasingly important for the international competitiveness of European national economies.

The issue "Economic Factor Age" forms, therefore, a central focus of work for the German EU presidency. On 17 and 18 April 2007 a congress will be held in Berlin on the issue of "Demographic Change as Opportunity: The Economic Potential of Older People".

## Equal Opportunities for All Children and Young People

The German EU presidency wants to include the needs and interests of children and young people in the political decision-making and processes of the EU. Youth organisations and,



furthermore, young people outside organisations have been involved in the planning of further activities as before. The European Pact for Youth is presenting a comprehensive framework for this – the new EU youth programme, "YOUTH IN ACTION" supporting its implementation.

With a German chair, two youth ministers' Councils meet on 16 February 2007 and from 24–25 May 2007 in Brussels which are engaged in the implementation of the youth pact, the promotion of equal opportunity and social integration for all young

people, and reflection on common objective proposals for youth policy in the next 10 years.

For the time from 13 to 16 April 2007, young people from 34 European countries are invited to Cologne for a youth event linked to the presidency, to devise a plan of action on the issue, "Equal Opportunities and Social Participation", and to discuss these issues with the 27 EU Director Generals for youth policy and the EU Commission.

Alongside, within the framework of the German EU presidency, a symposium will be held in Leipzig from 26 to 28 June on the issue, "Children and Youth in Social Focal Points – New Strategies for Cohesion".

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Federal Ministry for  
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## \* Focal Points and Objectives of the German EU Council Presidency 2007





## Foreword

The member states of the EU are faced with great social and economic challenges – triggered mainly by demographic development. Rising life expectancy provides great potential for the state, society, family and the economy too: by strengthening solidarity between the generations and by more intensive use of older people's knowledge and experience, new potential can be harnessed – socially and economically. At the same time, fewer children means less prosperity, less dynamic social and economic development and less innovation. To meet the challenges of the future, we must actively shape social change. We need more children in families and more families in society. We must provide for a better integration of all people in our society and equal opportunities at work – for older and younger people, women and men and families. In particular, we must promote equal opportunities for women and men in employment and in the family. This is also a component of the Lisbon Strategy, better reconciliation of family life and work and needs-based childcare facilities. We will pursue these priorities in the course of our EU presidency and bring our national experiences and projects into politics at European level. In its implementation of the EU presidency, the federal government is emphasising co-operation with non-governmental organisations in particular.

Federal Minister for Family Affairs,  
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

## Social Policy Focus of the German EU Council Presidency

Under the guiding principle, “to seize demographic change as an opportunity and to promote equal opportunities for all at work and in society”, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is committed to the following points within the framework of the EU presidency 2007:

1. To strengthen families: more children in families and more families in society
2. To promote equal opportunities for women and men at work and in family life
3. Experience shapes the future: recognising opportunities – using knowledge and experience – developing markets
4. To strive for equal opportunities and social participation for all children and young people

There is a range of initiatives and plans to implement these objectives, which should be adopted. These are, amongst others:

### The European Alliance for Families

Reconciliation of family life and work is an important locational factor and to a large degree influences our opportunities for growth. The objective of the European Alliance for Families, put forward by the German EU presidency, is to establish a framework for an exchange of experience and opinion in the EU about family-friendliness as a locational factor in the EU and to propose projects as concrete as possible, without however, transferring responsibilities or creating new competencies for the EU.

The European Alliance should contribute to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy for economic growth and employment, for sustainable population development, to increasing social cohesion and implementing the Roadmap for equality between women and men. The Alliance is to be seen as a commitment to policy at European level, which makes it easier for people to decide to have children.

### Equal Opportunities for Men and Women

The federal government supports European efforts to promote equality between women and men.

The informal meeting of ministers for equality and family affairs on 15 and 16 May 2007 in Bad Pyrmont is a mark of equal opportunities for women and men in work and family life. Also in focus: the role of alliances with industry and the promotion of women and children with migrational backgrounds.

A conference on the issue of gender budgeting with the title, “Let's share the benefit – with gender budgeting towards social justice and equal opportunities” on 4 and 5 June 2007 in Frankfurt/Main should make concrete steps in this area in the EU.

During its EU presidency, Germany will suggest a set of indicators for reviewing the implementation of the chapter “Education and Training of Women” of the Beijing Platform for Action.

In addition, Germany is actively participating in the implementation of the European Year of Equal Opportunities 2007. Alongside the main opening conference in January, the German EU presidency is organising jointly with the European Social Network of directors of social services, the German Association for Public and Private Welfare, and welfare organisations a specialist EU conference on the issue, “Opportunities and Possibilities for All – Social Services and Health in a Multiform Europe” from 18 to 20 June 2007 in Berlin.