

DEMOGRAPHIC AGE EXPLOSION

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Europe is undergoing a dramatic demographic shift. The population is ageing at such unprecedented rates that the European continent will soon be home for the oldest population in the world.

The given phenomenon called by scientists as «demographic age explosion» is regarded by experts as irreversible process. Progressing ageing of the population has led to the necessity to differentiate demographic structure by criteria of age and sex of a person, to realization that it submits not only to growth laws, but also to transformation in the structure correlation of gender and age [1].

Population ageing is a shift in the distribution of a country's population towards older ages. This is usually reflected in increase in the population's average age, decline in the proportion of the population composed of children, and rise in the proportion of the population that is elderly. Population ageing is widespread across the world. It is most advanced in highly developed countries.

Population ageing arises from two (possibly related) demographic effects: increasing longevity and declining birthrate. An increase in longevity raises the average age of the population by increasing the number of older people. A decline in birthrate reduces the number of babies, and, the number of younger people in general. A possible third factor is migration.

In Belarus the process of demographic ageing is also observed. The population is considered to be aged if the part of people of more than 65 years old is 7% (according to the classification of U.N.O.). At the beginning of 2009 the part of this aged category of the population achieved 14.1% in our republic.

Population growth in Belarus has declined because of a rapid drop in birthrate and because of increase in infant and child mortality, which had been in decline before the Chernobyl accident in 1986. In our republic population ageing is qualified as one of the real demographic threats to social and economic development and causes a number of various consequences of the following character:

- demographic;
- economic;
- social;
- political;
- scientifically-conceptual;
- sociocultural.

In Belarus the population began to decrease in 1994. Based on figures produced by the UN, by the year 2050 there may be only 7 million people left in the country [2].

National Programme of demographic security in Belarus of 2007-2010 contains an integrated system of socio-economic, legal and organizational measures implementation of which will help ensure gradual stabilization of the population size and formation of the pre-conditions for the subsequent demographic growth.

So in order to improve demographic situation in our country a range of measures should be undertaken to raise birth rate, reduce death rate, increase longevity and improve migration policy.

The overall objective of the family policy is to help a family develop and realize its potential to fulfill its basic functions. Therefore the state will enhance its support for families who give birth and bring up children. These measures help to maintain a birth rate growth.

In order to cement this positive trend the size of child care allowances for kids under three is to reach the certain wage level. It makes sense to raise these allowances to fully compensate for the loss of income of the parent who looks after the child. The legal mechanisms will be streamlined to enable parents to combine their parental and professional duties. The state will provide special support for families with disabled children, families with many children and single-parent households.

More efficient measures should be implemented to improve preventive, medical and diagnostic health care, accident prevention, early detection and treatment of vascular diseases and cancer. The policy response should emphasize promotion of a healthy lifestyle, prevention and treatment of alcohol addiction and discouragement of bad habits.

Health of a nation is among the fundamental characteristics of a civilized society. It depends on numerous factors of public life. An integrated approach to health protection has been laid down in the national demographic security programme for 2007-2010, national anti-drunkenness programme for 2006-2010, national HIV prevention programme for 2006-2010, national anti-tuberculosis programmes and some other national and sectoral programmes.

Migration is one of the underrated factors contributing to a better national demographic record. A more efficient and powerful response should be adopted to stop the outflow of specialists from the rural areas and to encourage young professionals to stay in the countryside [3].

The ageing of the population is indeed a global phenomenon that requires international coordination of national and local activities. So the recommendations intended to mitigate the adverse consequences of population ageing are the following:

- reorganization of social security systems,
- changes in labor,
- immigration and family policies,
- active and healthy life style propaganda,
- fruitful cooperation between the governments in resolving socioeconomic and political problems posed by population ageing.

The older retired population relative to the shrinking able-bodied population creates social and political pressures on social systems. In many countries, rapid population ageing results in a strong pressure on social security programs [4].

But older people can live vigorous and active lives as well and if they're encouraged to be productive, they can be economic contributors.

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