

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

# **INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN AGEING SOCIETIES**

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UNITED NATIONS  
New York and Geneva 2010

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges colleagues Wolfgang Keck, Aafke Komter, Nienke Moor, Allan Puur, Chiara Saraceno, and Niels Schenk from MULTILINKS for their analyses of GGP-data and of policy and legislative frameworks in Europe. MULTILINKS (How demographic changes shape intergenerational solidarity, well-being, and social integration: A multilinks framework) is a research programme funded through the seventh framework programme of the European Commission (grant number 217523).

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This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union.

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UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION
Sales No. 10.II.E.13
ISBN: 978-92-1-117030-6

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Printed at United Nations, Geneva (Switzerland)

# PREFACE

In the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), population ageing is the dominant demographic trend of this century. Simultaneously, other pertinent demographic developments such as declining fertility, increasing age at family formation, and changing family patterns also challenge many areas of public policy. The policy responses have to include reconciliation of work and family life and measures to facilitate flexibility in life-course transitions among education, work and retirement. Equally important is to promote intergenerational solidarity and collaboration, and ensure gender equality in family, community and society at large.

In the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) and in the León Ministerial Declaration “A Society for All Ages: Challenges and Opportunities” (2007), UNECE member States have committed themselves to respond to challenges and opportunities of their ageing societies. In 2008, UNECE established the Working Group on Ageing – an intergovernmental body with the mandate to coordinate and streamline implementation of major international policy documents on ageing. In order to provide knowledge base for population policy measures, the UNECE initiated in 2000 and continue to coordinate the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). GGP has two main pillars: the first pillar is the system of national Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS), and the second pillar is the contextual database that provides information on macrolevel factors influencing demographic trends. GGP also serves as an important source of data in various programme elements of the Working Group on Ageing.

One of the many international research initiatives based on GGP data is the Multilinks project led by the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute. Multilinks is specifically designed to support sound policymaking through new insights into how changing social contexts are affecting social integration and intergenerational solidarity in different European countries. Relying on the conceptual framework of that project, and based on the examples of policies and programmes from UNECE countries, the Working Group on Ageing held an in-depth discussion on intergenerational relationships at its second meeting in 2009. This report is derived from this in-depth discussion. It also summarises the most relevant research findings in the area of intergenerational family relationships.

UNECE is grateful to the author and UNECE member States for contributing to this report. UNECE also wishes to acknowledge the financial support from the European Commission, which was essential for establishing and functioning the Multilinks research project.

It is expected that this report will be of interest to a broad audience concerned with matters of intergenerational relationships, and will increase awareness about the need for policy measures for promoting greater solidarity among family members of all ages.

Ján KUBIŠ

Executive Secretary

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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