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Answer given by Ms Šuica
on behalf of the European Commission
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Demographic evidence indicates there is no single solution to address population ageing and decline. The Commission demography toolbox¹ considers a wide range of instruments, resources and policy frameworks to help Member States respond to demographic changes, from adaptation and support measures on the labour market, to pension and health systems, child-care and to long-term care provision, with a view to ensuring intergenerational fairness and territorial cohesion. The Commission sees that migration can play a complementary role to address labour shortages in specific sectors, in addition to measures to activate and upskill the existing EU workforce². The determination of the conditions for the naturalisation of third country nationals and acquisition of citizenship is an exclusive competence of the Member States.

Family policies and policies to boost birth rates remain primarily under the competence of Member States. The Commission has put forward a wide range of initiatives, tools and funding opportunities that help create favourable conditions enabling people to pursue their life and family aspirations in the place they call home³. These are supported mainly through the cohesion policy funds⁴. Under the European Social Fund Plus, Greece will establish a National Observatory of Demographic Policy to contribute to the implementation of the national action plan for demography. The design of tax-benefit systems is within the competence of Member States.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/communication-demographic-change-europe-toolbox-action_en; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023DC0577>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0090>.

³ For example: The Work-Life Balance Directive aims to improve the balance between work and family lives for parents and carers. The EU Strategy on the rights of the child aims to combat child poverty, improve access to childcare, education and healthcare, and support families in vulnerable situations. The European Child Guarantee aims to ensure that all children at risk of poverty or social exclusion have access to essential services such as education, care, healthcare, nutrition and housing. The Council Recommendation on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care (ECEC) encourages Member States to increase availability, affordability, accessibility and quality of ECEC.

⁴ The EU cohesion policy, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) provides support for start-ups, local small and medium-sized enterprises, investment in public services and transport, thereby contributing to socio-economic and territorial cohesion. The Talent Booster Mechanism directly addresses brain drain and talent retention, including in Eastern and Southern Europe. The Youth Guarantee aims to ensure that young people receive a job, education or training offer within four months of becoming unemployed.