

EN

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Answer given by Ms Šuica
on behalf of the European Commission
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Family policies and policies to boost birth rates remain under the competence of Member States. The Commission put forward a wide range of initiatives, tools and funding opportunities within the Demography Toolbox¹, notably to help Member States create favourable conditions for people to pursue their life and family aspirations. The implementation of the Toolbox is a priority for this Commission, along with support measures on the labour market, pensions, health systems, long-term care provision and territorial cohesion.

These measures address the demographic challenge with a long-term restructuring and adaptation of socio-economic and territorial systems, rather than aiming for explicit population targets. To date there are no examples of government policies that have directly and effectively managed to curb the decline in birth rates.

EU actions to address demographic challenges include initiatives² to mitigate the shrinking of the labour force³ and preserve territorial cohesion in regions particularly affected by demographic decline⁴. These policies are supported by the EU Cohesion Policy, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF).

Moreover, demographic change puts additional pressure on the sustainability of social systems, including pension systems. In this context, the Savings and Investments Union strategy announced measures to support further uptake of supplementary pension schemes.

¹ [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/communication-demographic-change-europe-toolbox-action_en](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 The Work-Life Balance Directive, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the Council Recommendation on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care (ECEC).

³ The EU Action Plan for Labour and Skills Shortages and the Youth Guarantee.

⁴ The Rural Pact, the Rural Action Plan and the Talent Booster Mechanism.