

ABSTRACT

DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

This study examines the historical background and subsequent evolution of the European Union and the emergence of the contemporary European welfare state. I conclude that declining birth rates and extended life expectancy will require more than changes in the way state pensions are funded. Economic and cultural changes are inevitable throughout the EU. The structure of the welfare state must evolve with the changing role of older citizens in every part of the EU. I look at current EU pension reform efforts to forestall the financial crisis created by state pension commitments. While focusing on France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (with reference to the United States) my conclusions apply to the EU as a whole. There is obvious need for further study of the integration of the growing “third age” segment of the population into contemporary society.

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