

# Global Britain Briefing Note

No 69

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## The Coming EU Demographic Winter

*Between 2010 and 2050, while the USA gains 36 million in working-age population, EU-27 loses 54 million*

*“The European project, with a black hole forming at its epicentre, will disintegrate”*

*Allemagne, Chronique d'une mort annoncée, by Yves-Marie Laulan, Paris, 2004, published by François-Xavier de Guibert, ISBN 2 86839 959 2*

The latest population projections of the United Nations Population Division show that, between 2010 and 2050, **EU-27 will lose 16 per cent, or 54 million, of its current working-age population.** Over the same period, the USA will gain 36 million of its working-age population.

For EU-27, such a drop in its working-age population is **the equivalent of the entire present-day working-age population – 54 million - of EU-27's most populous country and biggest economy, Germany.** The working-age population of Germany itself is projected to drop to 39 million by 2050. (Only five EU-25 countries: the UK, Ireland, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Sweden will see increases in working-age population during this period; Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU on 1st January 2007, will experience steep declines.)

To appreciate the magnitude of the contrasting changes in the working-age populations of, respectively, the USA and EU-27, it might be helpful to imagine some divine hand detaching Germany and all its population from the European continent, towing it across the Atlantic and attaching it to the American mainland. The EU, figuratively-speaking, loses the entire productive power of Germany; the USA gains the bulk of it.

Putting it another way: **the “swing” of working-age population from Europe to the USA in the next 40 years is 90 million:** EU-27 loses 54 million and the USA gains 36 million.

Working-age population (15 to 64 years inclusive in the UN definition) is a proxy for the “productive” part of the whole population: the men and women whose work and incomes provide for children at one end of the spectrum and for old-age pensioners at the other. Changes in working-age populations may be a better predictor (than changes in whole populations) of countries' economic growth, strength and prospects.

<b>Table 1: Working-Age (15-64 years) Population in 2010 &amp; 2050: Regions</b>				
<i>Country/region</i>	<i>2010 mn</i>	<i>2050 mn</i>	<i>Change mn</i>	<i>Change %</i>
<b>EU-27<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>334</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>(16%)</b>
<i>USA</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>248</i>	<i>+36</i>	<i>+17%</i>
<i>NAFTA<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>308</i>	<i>354</i>	<i>+45</i>	<i>+15%</i>
<i>Anglo-Sphere<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>297</i>	<i>332</i>	<i>+45</i>	<i>+15%</i>
<i>Source: UN Population Div: World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision: Medium Variant <a href="http://www.un.org/esa/population">www.un.org/esa/population</a></i>				

1. *EU-27: the present (2010) 27-member EU*
2. *NAFTA: USA + Canada + Mexico*
3. *Anglo-Sphere: USA + Canada + Australia + New Zealand + Ireland + UK*

<b>Table 2: Working-Age (15-64) Population in 2010 &amp; 2050: Countries</b>				
<i>Country</i>	<i>2005 mn</i>	<i>2050 mn</i>	<i>Change mn</i>	<i>Change %</i>
Germany	54	39	(16)	(30 %)
France	40	38	(2)	(5 %)
<b>UK</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>+ 3</b>	<b>+7 %</b>
Italy	39	30	(9)	(23%)
<i>Source: UN Population Div: World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision: Medium Variant <a href="http://www.un.org/esa/population">www.un.org/esa/population</a></i>				

See also: *The Demographic Future of Europe – from Challenge to Opportunity*, European Commission, COM(2006)yyy final [www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int) ; *Eurostat News Release 48/2005*, 8.4.05, [www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int); Global Britain Briefing Notes No 26, *Old Europe, Young America*, 25.4.03 & No 18, *Demographic Change 2000-2050*, 15.2.02 [www.globalbritain.org](http://www.globalbritain.org)

# Global Britain

Lord Stoddart of Swindon

*(Independent Labour)*

Lord Pearson of Rannoch

*(United Kingdom Independence Party)*

Lord Willoughby de Broke

*(United Kingdom Independence Party)*

Lord Harris of High Cross *(1924- 2006)*

*(Cross-Bencher)*

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