Sustainability under rapid demographic change

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Demographics

Age structure of Europe (E-27) in 2010

16.6%

77.3%

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

16.1%

Eurostat Yearbook 2008

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Demographics

Dependence ratios (15-64) : (>65)

	EU	US	Japan
2005	4.1	5.5	3.4
2050	1.9	2.9	1.3

Relevance for sustainability

- Sustainability is only possible if populations stop growing, and even decline
- But the transition will be difficult. Future efforts to achieve sustainability will be made in the context of an ageing society
- Sustainability implies stability - not populations that boom and bust. Need to move towards demographic balance

THE AGS

Commercial innovation

Segregating the elderly

The Villages - a gated community in Florida - pop. 100’000

Innovation needed

- Ageing in place - assistive technologies, adaptable housing, mobility for the elderly
- Redesigning cities - compact, multiple-use, inclusive
- Social innovation - redesign work, three generation households, family enterprises
- Claiming the sustainability dividend - reduce urban sprawl, restore ecosystem services
- In developing countries - anticipate the demographic transition

Conclusions

- The age of ageing has arrived
- The developed world is most affected for now. But all countries will go through a similar demographic transition in the next few decades
- Maintaining human welfare and economic stability will pose huge challenges for an ageing society
- Innovation will be essential to ensure that we gain the sustainability dividend