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Research on Ageing in Central and Eastern Europe

*OIA Seminar Series “Implications of Population Ageing
in Central and Eastern Europe”*

23 February 2006

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Outline

1. Developing a strategy for future research on ageing in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)
2. Demographic indicators of population ageing in CEE
3. Current themes of research on ageing
4. Building the “Eastern-European Ageing in Societies of Transition (EAST)” network
5. Expert ‘interviews’ with Eastern European gerontologists
6. Preliminary findings of these interviews
7. Outlook





1.

Developing a Strategy for Future Research on Ageing in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)





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1. Developing a strategy f. future research in CEE

Starting point:

- to develop a strategy for future research on CEE
- to be integrated into the OIA's ***Global Ageing*** programme
- to link into current research interests at the institute
- to be integrated into the University's ***James Martin School of the 21st Century***





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1. Developing a strategy f. future research in CEE

Twofold strategy:

- to write a '*scoping paper*' mapping previous research on ageing + to identify gaps in existing research in CEE
- to build a network of researchers working on ageing issues in CEE countries
 - ⇒ develop international research projects involving CEE countries





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1. Developing a strategy f. future research in CEE

Timetable

- 2006 - scoping paper, develop website;
small workshop with participants from CEE
- 2007 - Conference on “Implications of Population Ageing in Central and Eastern Europe”
- 2008 - develop 2 international research projects involving CEE countries + apply for funding





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1. Developing a strategy f. future research in CEE

Range of countries to be covered

- New EU member states:
 - Estonia
 - Latvia
 - Lithuania
 - Poland
 - Czech Republic
 - Slovakia
 - Hungary
 - Slovenia





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1. Developing a strategy f. future research in CEE

Range of countries to be covered (continued)

- Accession countries (2007):
 - Romania
 - Bulgaria
 - Croatia
- To be extended?
 - ➔ no active networking at the moment





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1. Developing a strategy f. future research in CEE

The James Martin School of the 21st Century Seminar Series at the OIA

- 19 Jan 2006 Dr Zsuzsa Szeman, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest
Demographic and Social Ageing in Central and Eastern Europe
- 26 Jan 2006 Dr John Round, University of Leicester
Responses to Marginalisation amongst the Elderly in Russia/Ukraine
- 02 Feb 2006 Prof Nick Manning, University of Nottingham
Social Policy Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe since 1990
- 09 Feb 2006 Prof Ewa Fratzczak, Warsaw School of Economics
Ageing and Intergenerational Relationships in Poland
- 16 Feb 2006 Dr Christopher M Davis, Dept of Economics, Oxford
Ageing in Russia during the Transition to a Market Economy
- 23 Feb 2006 Dr Kevin McKee, University of Sheffield
Quality of Life in Polish and UK Family Carers of Older People
- 02 Mar 2006 Dr Jolanta Perek-Bialas, Jagiellonian University of Cracow
Barriers for Employment of Older People in Poland
- 09 Mar 2006 Dr George Leeson, Oxford Institute of Ageing
Migrants and Migration in Europe





2.

Demographic Indicators of Population Ageing in CEE





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Factors determining population ageing

1. Mortality

- life expectancy; premature deaths

2. Fertility

- birth rates; postponement of births; childlessness

3. Migration patterns

- number and age of immigrants/emigrants





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Hypothesis on determinants of demographic development in Western and Eastern Europe

Determinants	Western Europe	Eastern Europe
Life expectancy	↑	↗
Fertility	↘ / →	↓ / ↘
Migration patterns	Immigration	Emigration





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(a)

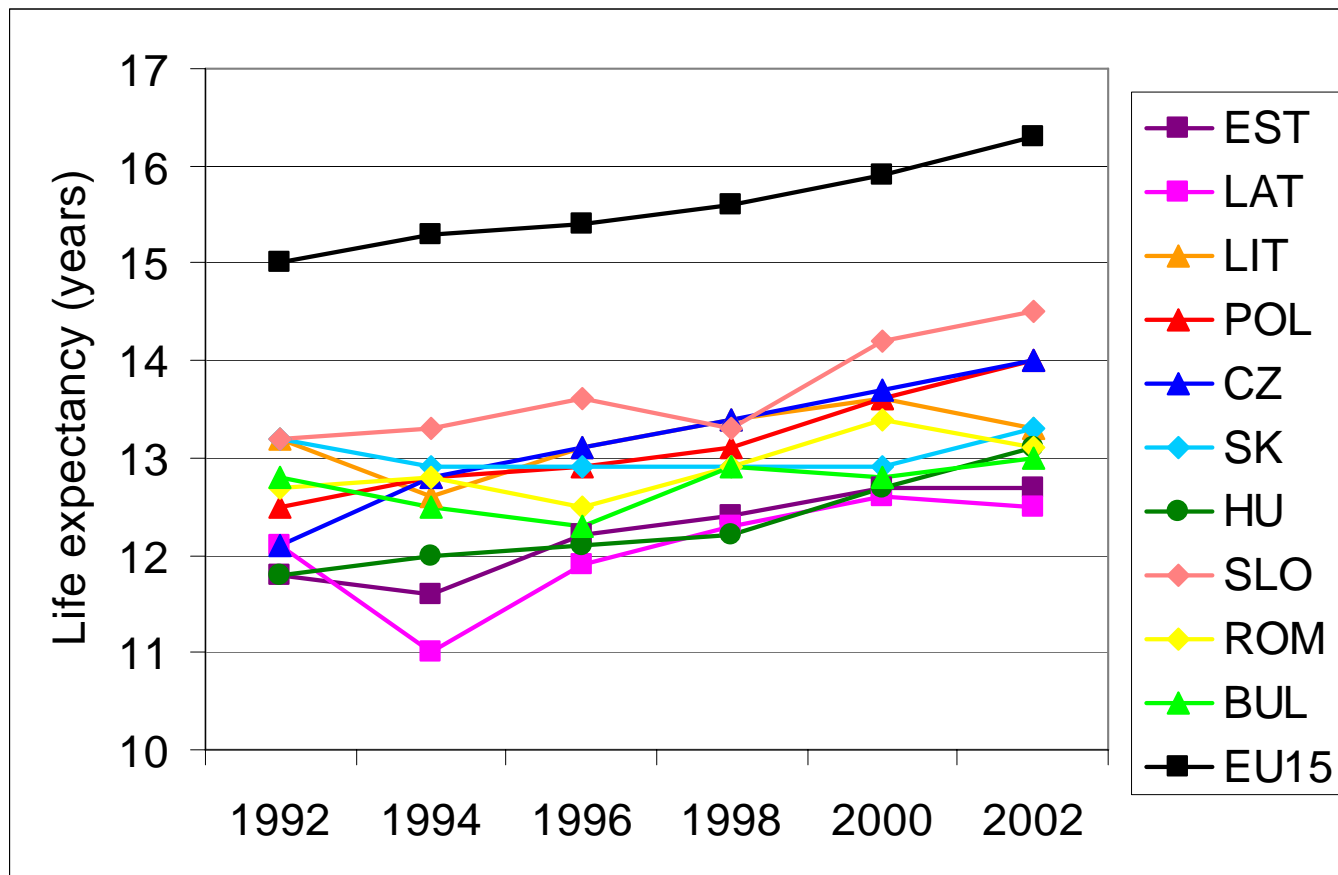
Mortality (life expectancy)





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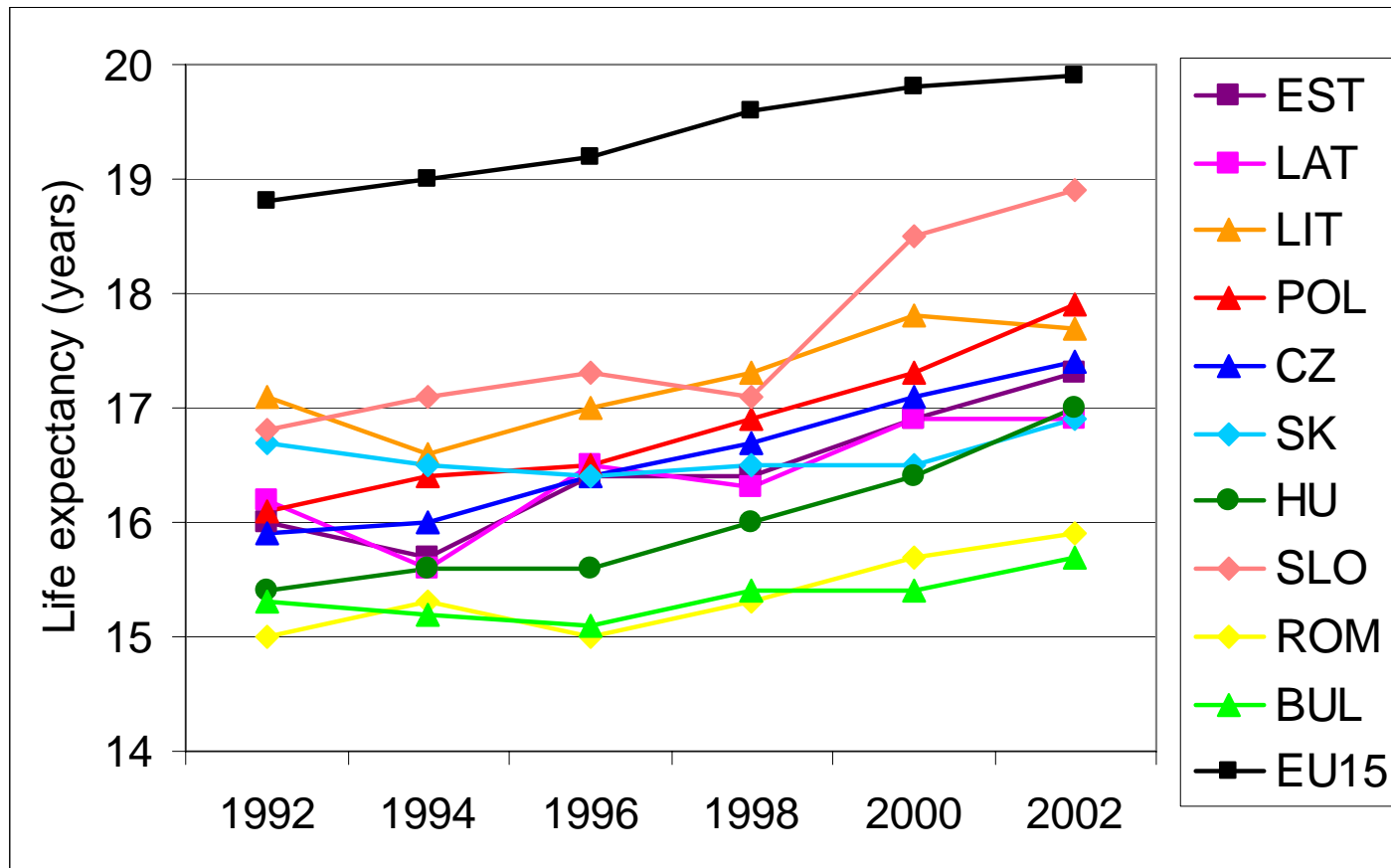
Further life expectancy for men aged 65 (Eurostat 2005)





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Further life expectancy for women aged 65 (Eurostat 2005)





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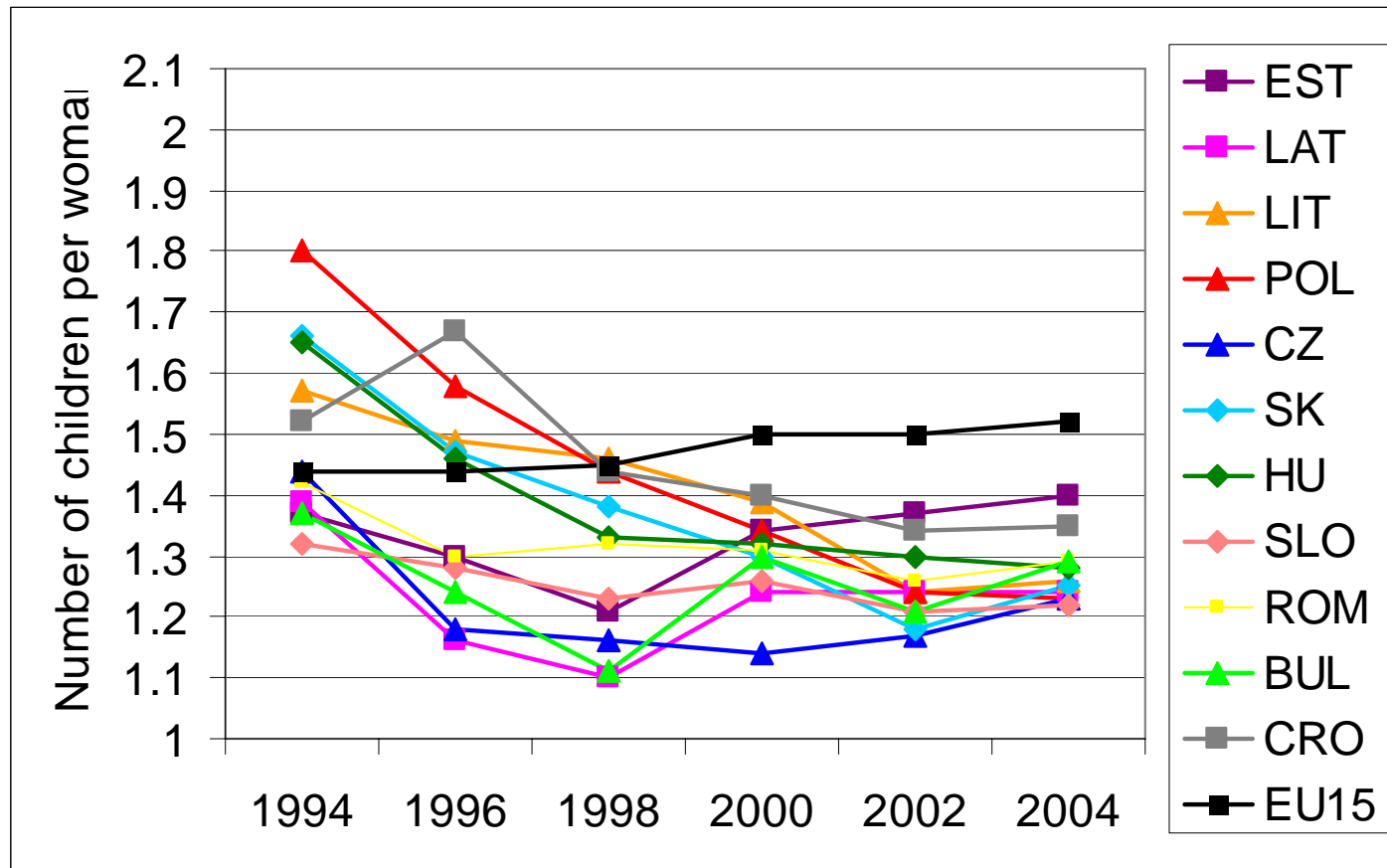
(b) Fertility





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Total fertility rates (Eurostat 2005)





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(c)

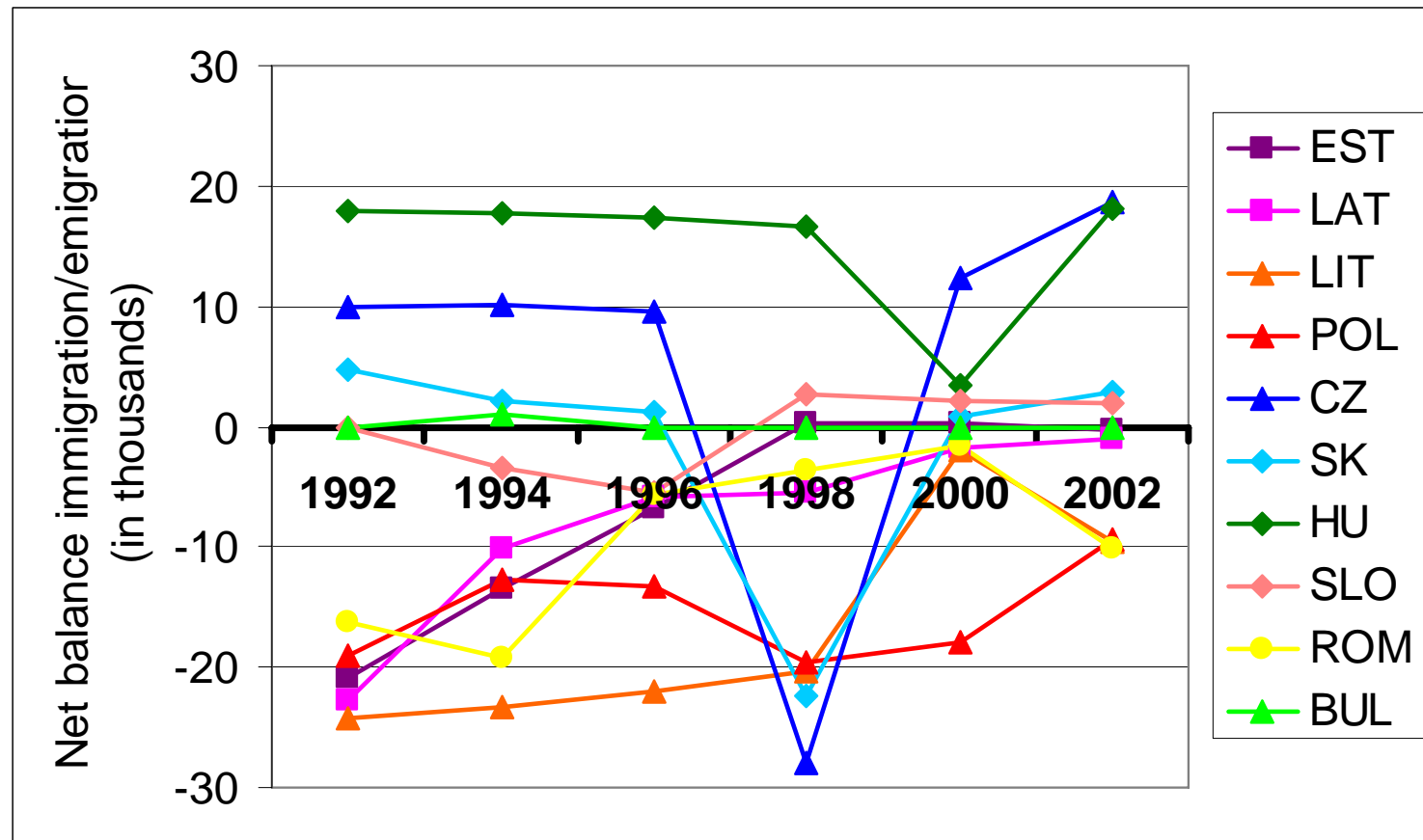
Migration patterns





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Immigration/emigration patterns (Eurostat 2005)





(d)

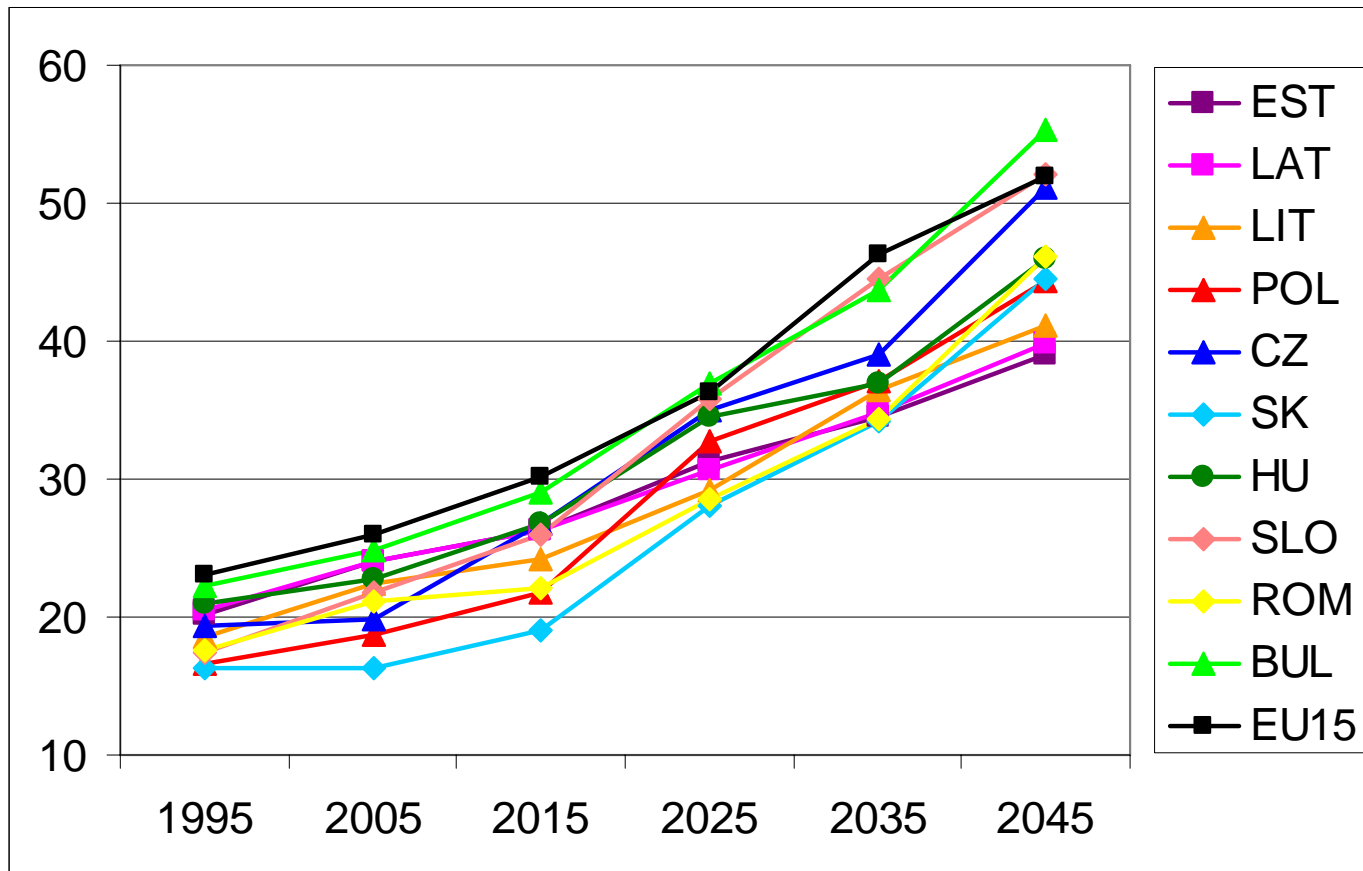
Old-age dependency, labour market participation





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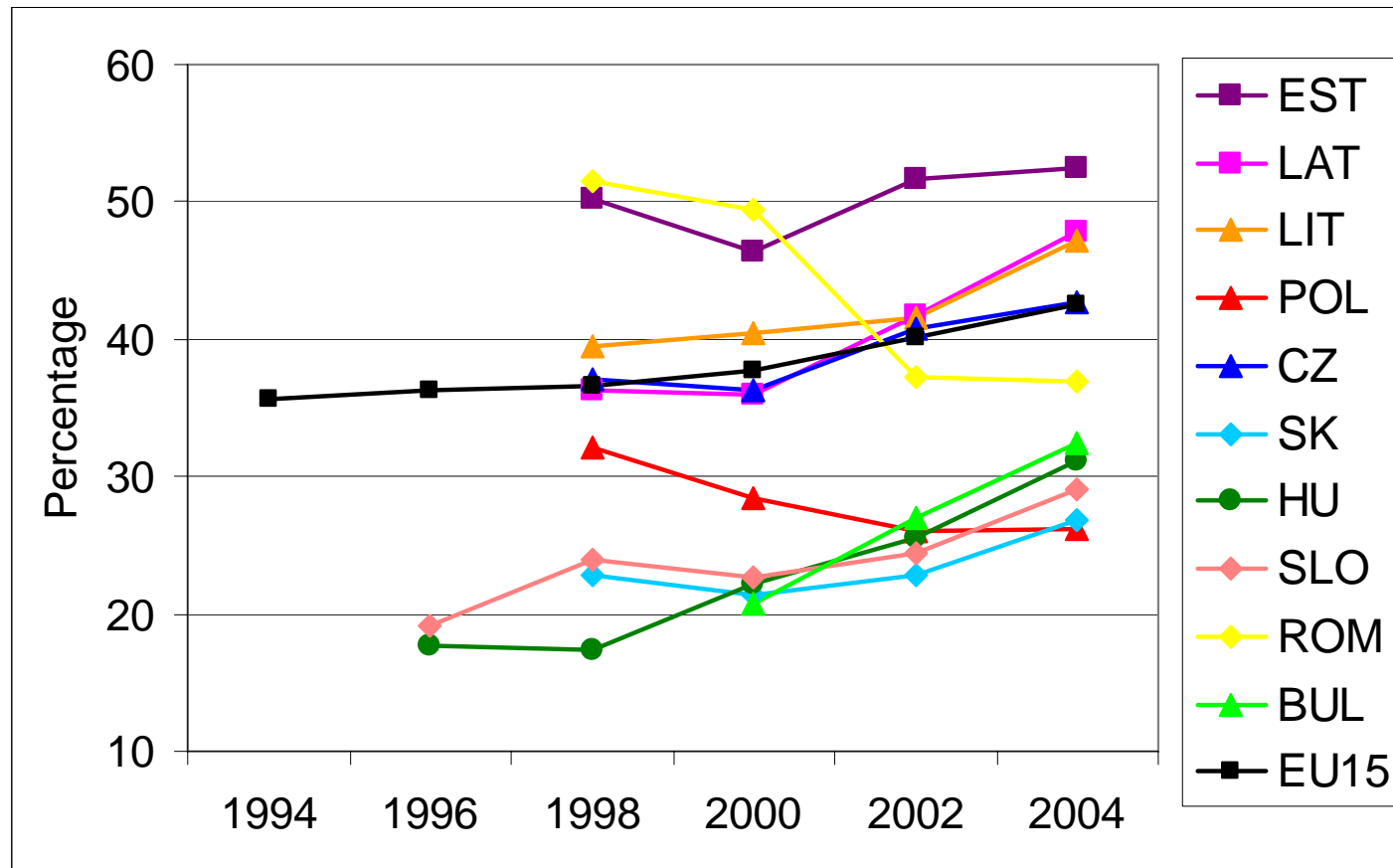
Old-age dependency ratio (Eurostat 2005)





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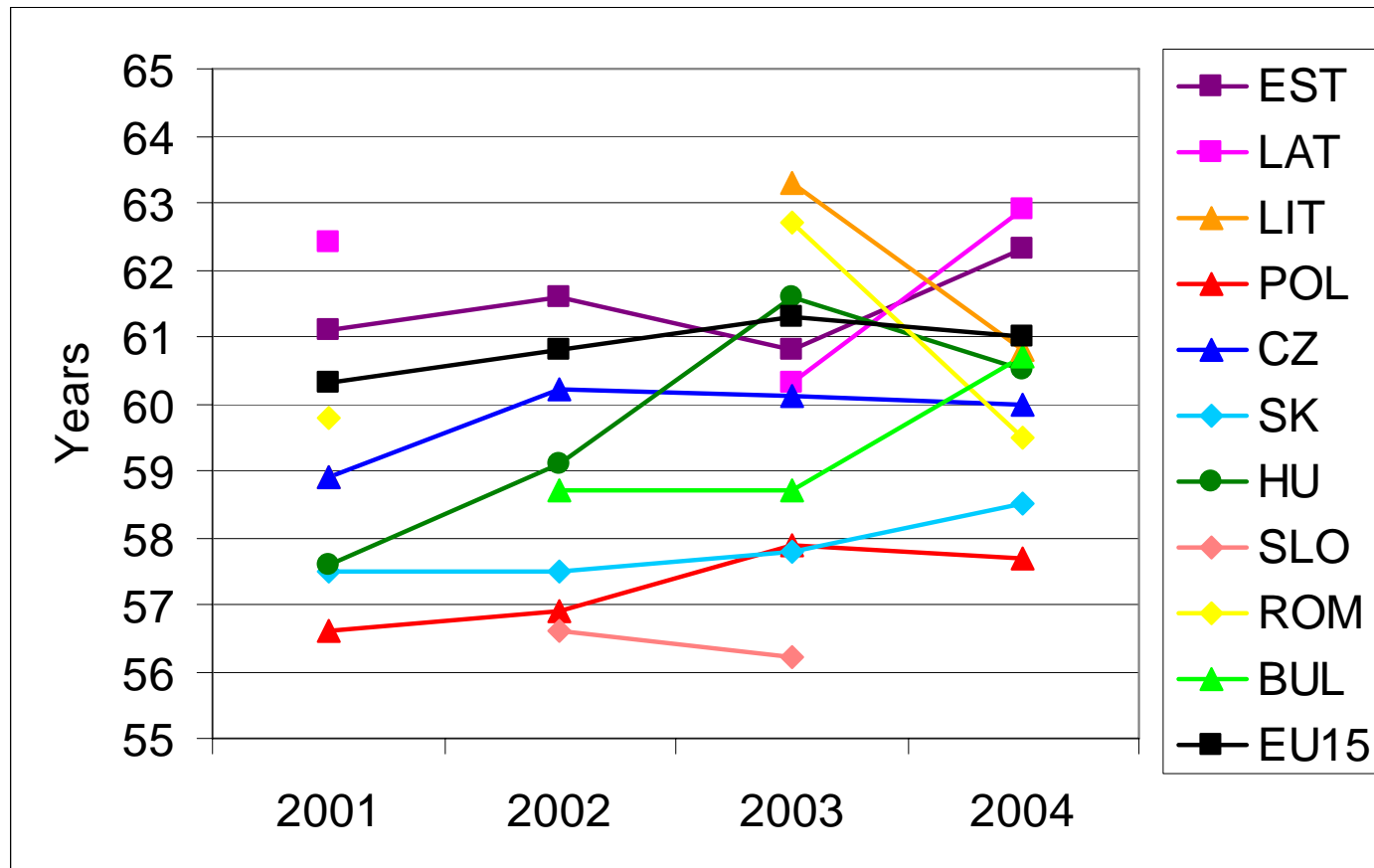
Employment rate (55-64) (Eurostat 2005)





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Average exit age from the labour market (Eurostat 2005)





3.

Current Themes of Research on Ageing in CEE





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3. Current themes of research on ageing in CEE

Initial problem:

Lack of information!

- **Social problems in Eastern Europe – yes**
→ **BUT Ageing in CEE ...???**





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3. Current themes of research on ageing in CEE

- **How to get information?**

- Internet
- Literature review (problem: very few in English)
- Documents by international organisations (e.g. Council of Europe, United Nations, World bank)
- Final reports of international research projects (e.g. EUROFAMCARE, ACTIVEAGE, ENABLEAGE)
- Conference papers (e.g. ESA Conference Torun 2005)
- Informal exchange with Eastern European colleagues





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3. Current themes of research on ageing in CEE

- **Where to get information?**

- Oxford, Social Science + Bodleian library
- ‘Staatsbibliothek Berlin’: Special Library Eastern Europe
- German Social Science Information Centre, Department of Information Transfer Eastern Europe in Berlin
- Eastern Europe Institute at Free University of Berlin
- Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun + Warsaw School of Economics in Poland





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First findings





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Main, overarching problem:

***Prevalence of very negative stereotypes
about older people!***





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3. Main themes of research on ageing in CEE

Themes with urgent priority based on lack of data:

1. Older workers and early exit from the labour market
2. Intergenerational relations and family support
3. (The role of the voluntary sector/NGOs in service provision)





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3. Main themes of research on ageing in CEE

Other themes:

- Social expenditure for pensions + retirement policies
- 'Active ageing' (mainly employment related)
- Poverty and social exclusion of elderly; esp. with multiple deprivation (low income, poor health, social isolation)
- Consequences of family change (divorces, lone parents, patchwork families)
- Family care + family carers
- Informal support and family solidarity
- Generational identity





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Research questions

1. Older workers + early labour market exit

- Are older workers really less productive than younger workers?
- How to change the very negative attitudes towards older people? (70% of Polish agree that older people ought to retire early + give their jobs to young unemployed)
- How to promote employment as a crucial element of an 'active ageing' strategy?
- How to remove barriers to employment for older people?





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Research questions

2. Intergenerational relations

- Data needed on intergenerational relations at society level – attitudes of the young towards the old and vice versa!
- How does family change impact on family solidarity?
- Is there a decline in informal support provision? Can it be reversed?
- How can family carers be supported? (insufficient salaries or financial support, tax-breaks, equipment; transport; counselling; co-ordination with social services + municipalities; consistent state policies; professional assoc.; conflicts with care recipient/family; new technologies)





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Research questions

2. Intergenerational relations (continued)

- How to promote rehabilitation?
- How to combine social care + health care?
- Lack of systematic data on care in the family!

3. Other research questions

- Social inclusion strategies for older people with multiple deprivations (financial, health, social networks)?
- **OVERALL: Lack of comprehensive, reliable survey data!**





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Problems with existing information

- Ageing is not really top of the agenda in CEE
- Overall lack of knowledge on research on ageing
- Language bias
 - ⇒ Selectivity of small sample publications in English, German
- Difficulty to find researchers working in field of ageing in CEE
 - ⇒ Selectivity of contacts (again: language!)
- Difficulty to identify key themes + research that really matter in CEE!
- Lack of knowledge of relevant statistics, data sets, surveys





4.

Building the 'Eastern-European Ageing Societies in Transition' (EAST) network





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4. Building EASTnet

Original motivation:

- to build a network of gerontologists across CEE for future international research collaboration

*If I am going to build a network anyway –
why should I not use it (while I'm building it)
for the collection of information about
research(ers) on ageing, key publications (not in English),
data resources, current + future research themes?!*





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4. Building EASTnet

Methodology:

- 'Snowballing'
 - ⇒ selectivity? → practicality!
 - ⇒ for networking effort irrelevant
 - ⇒ relevance for information collection: reduce selectivity by using contacts outside network (if possible!)
- Started off using existing contacts in 6 out of 11 countries: Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia (1 contact per country)





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Country: Number of contacts (total n = 95)

1.	Poland	18
2.	Czech Republic	15
3.	Slovenia	13
4.	Hungary	10
5.	Bulgaria	10
6.	Croatia	6
7.	Lithuania	6
8.	Romania	5
9.	Slovakia	5
10.	Latvia	4
11.	Estonia	3





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Bias towards certain countries?

- At this moment in time – yes
- **Reasons?**
 - (a) Selectivity resulting from initial contacts (head start)?
 - (b) Selectivity resulting from lesser interest in ageing issues in these countries?





5.

Expert Interviews with Eastern European Gerontologists





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5. Expert interviews with gerontologists from CEE

Methodology

- Snowballing – see my earlier comments!
- Questionnaire (semi-structured), circulated by email
15 Questions: 11 on their country, 4 on CEE, 4 on West/East
Questions include: most important current+future issues; key people; key institutions; key publications; statistics, data sets, surveys; funding sources; potential for collaborative research





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Country: Number of returned questionnaires (total n = 21)

1. Poland	5
2. Bulgaria	5
3. Slovenia	5
4. Czech Republic	2
5. Hungary	1
6. Romania	1
7. Croatia	1
8. Lithuania	1
9. Latvia	-
10. Estonia	-
11. Slovakia	-





6.

Preliminary Findings of these Interviews





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6. Preliminary findings

Some general, introductory comments:

- Impossible to generalise anything!
- Only 3 countries with more than 2 responses:
⇒ Bulgaria, Poland, Slovenia
- Only few are aware of gerontological research in other CEE
- Lack of awareness of other geront. researchers even in home country
- Massive problems in getting gerontological research funded! (gerontological research not top of agenda)
- Lack of appropriate research facilities
⇒ Great interest in high-profile international collaboration (mainly EU)





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(a) Most important current issues

- Poverty, i.e. socio-economic deprivation as well as social exclusion of older people
- Health care reform – privatisation
 - ⇒ lack of financial resources; lack of information
- Older workers (productivity, conditions) + early exit
- Consequences of very rapid ageing
- Public attitudes towards the elderly
- Poor health of many older people





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(b) Most important future challenges

- Change of intergenerational family relations + family care
- Consequences of rapid population ageing
- Lack of public expenditure to finance ↑ pensions; to finance other social policy measures for older people
- More customer-friendly, service-oriented health care
- Implications of an ageing workforce
- Role of voluntary sector, NGOs in service provision
- Social participation of older people





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(c) Disciplinary backgrounds

- **Dominant:**
 - Social Sciences (Sociology, Social Policy)
 - Human Medicine
 - Demography
- **To a lesser extent:**
 - Economics
 - Public Health
 - Social Work
 - Gerontology
- **CAUTION** – possibly sampling effect!





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(d) Institutions

- Universities (esp. Poland, Romania)
 - National Academies of Science (esp. Hungary, Bulgaria)
 - National research centres
 - Gerontological research centres (mainly Czech, Slovenia)
 - ⇒ in all other countries is lack of a gerontological research centre seen as major deficiency
- in exceptional cases also National Statistics Office; National Ministry





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(e) Central publications

- **Many publications on:**
 - demographic issues (e.g. \uparrow share of elderly; \downarrow fertility)
 - ageing in general
 - health + social care (e.g. how to link them effectively!)
 - social policies for the elderly (financially, social services)
 - intergenerational transfers + family care
- **Other issues covered include:**
 - public attitudes; early retirement; subjective health; autonomy/independence; quality of life





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(f) Recent + current research projects

- Population + mortality; fertility
- Socio-economic status of older people
- Adult training network
- General ageing
- Ageism, negative public attitudes towards elderly
- Older workers
- Maintaining individual autonomy
- Family care
- Intergenerational contract
- Social networks + social integration
- Quality of life
- Centenarians





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(g) Data + surveys

- **Overall picture: very few survey data!**
- Very few exceptions:
 - (1) Surveys carried out by National Statistics Offices
 - (2) EC funded international surveys, including CEE:
 - EUROFAMCARE, MOBILATE, ENABLE-AGE
 - (3) only 2 national surveys mentioned:
 - Poland: „Elderly in Polish society“
 - Slovenia: „Social networks of older people“
 - (4) regional surveys in Poland





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(h) Funding

- Research on ageing is generally not funded, unless in relation to another discipline (e.g. Demography, sociology, economics, human medicine)
- No private funding bodies – it's the state or no-one!
- In some countries limited funds from National Academies
- **Problem:** lack of quality evaluation + peer review
⇒ decisions taken by old generation (without appr. training)





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(i) What to learn from the West?

- Research methods, research design
- Comparative research
- International collaboration
- Peer review
- Experiences with ageing populations
- How to lift social taboos
- Health promotion





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(j) What to learn from the East?

- **Rapid change in transition from collectivist to individualist society**
 - Learn new realities in welfare provision
 - Greater role for NGOs, voluntary sector
 - Flexibility
-
- **PATIENCE !!!**





7. Outlook





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Areas of potential collaboration

- **Internationally, comparative research on any ageing related issue very welcome!**
- **Methods transfer also very welcome!**
- **Funding!**

- How does EU enlargement affect economic + social position of older people?
- Establish a European Centre of Ageing Research to co-ordinate European research on ageing!

