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**DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCE
AS A THREAT TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY
(USING THE EXAMPLE OF CHINA OR THE EU COUNTRIES)**

**Демографический дисбаланс
как угроза социально-экономической стабильности
(на примере Китая или стран ЕС)**

The modern world is facing an unprecedented demographic challenge – a steady decline in the birth rate and a rapidly aging population. These processes undermine the foundations of economic growth and create pressure on labor markets and social systems. Although the problem is global in nature, its manifestations and responses vary. The purpose of this study is to analyze the consequences of demographic imbalances for the economy, labor market, and social sphere using the example of China and the EU countries, as well as to evaluate strategies used to overcome them.

The report examines two contrasting response models: China, which is overcoming the effects of years of birth control policies, and the EU, which is compensating for labor shortages through migration. A comparative analysis reveals the unique challenges and effectiveness of these approaches.

From 1979 to 2015, China had a «One family, one child» policy, which temporarily restrained population growth, but led to a demographic crisis. Despite the transition to a policy of two and three children, the birth rate continues to decline: in 2024 it amounted to about 1.01–1.1 children per woman, with the required level of 2.1. The population has decreased to 1.408 billion, the number of deaths exceeded the number of newborns. The number of citizens over the age of 60 is growing rapidly and is projected to reach 400 million by 2035 (almost a third of the population). The working-age population is declining: in 2024 – 858 million people (61 %). This leads to an increase in the demographic burden – fewer and fewer workers must provide for an increasing number of pensioners. A shrinking workforce threatens the economy: growth is projected to decline from 4 % in the 2020s to less than 2 % by 2050. The reasons are a shortage of workers, a decrease in consumer demand, a slowdown in innovation and an increase in government debt. The pension system is experiencing an overload, and the government has begun a gradual increase in the retirement age.

EU countries also face low birth rates and an aging population, but rely on labor migration. Demographic changes are exacerbating labor shortages, especially in healthcare, construction, and care for the elderly. This threatens the realization of green

and digital transformation. The EU is actively developing mechanisms for attracting qualified personnel: the Migration and Asylum Pact, the EU Talent Pool digital platform. These measures simplify legal migration and help fill gaps in the labor market. However, migration generates socio-political challenges: tension, the growth of nationalism, and the polarization of society. EU countries are balancing between controlling illegal migration and the need to attract labor. At the same time, migration does not solve the problem of population aging, but only mitigates its economic consequences.

China and the EU demonstrate different strategies for overcoming demographic imbalances. China is trying to correct the consequences of domestic policy, while the EU is adapting to global changes through external resources. Chinese measures to stimulate the birth rate have so far been ineffective, and the EU's migration policy causes internal conflicts and does not solve the problem of low fertility. The experience of both regions shows that there is no simple and quick solution to demographic problems. To ensure long-term socio-economic stability, an integrated approach is needed, combining both internal reforms (family support, increased labor efficiency, pension reforms) and a balanced migration policy that can mitigate the most acute consequences of inevitable demographic changes.

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THE IMPACT OF ENTERPRISE BRANDING ON THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC IMAGE OF BELARUS

Влияние корпоративного брендинга на национальный экономический имидж Беларуси

In today's global economy, a country's image is becoming as much a strategic resource as its natural resources. Investment flows, export volumes, and the state's standing on the international stage directly depend on its perception. In this reality, it is the brands of Belarusian industrial enterprises that are becoming true representatives of national interests in global markets.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of branding of Belarusian industrial enterprises on the formation of the national economic image.

The methodological basis of this study is based on the concept of the «country of origin effect», which posits that product perception is directly dependent on the image of the country of origin. This implies that successful corporate brands strengthen a country's positive image through synergy, particularly through «national champions» – industry leaders who represent the country internationally.