



TOWARDS AN **AGE-FRIENDLY** EUROPEAN UNION BY 2020



December 2012

Table of contents

Forewords	3
Introduction	5
_01 Creating an age-friendly EU as a response to EU demographic challenges	7
What do we mean by an age-friendly European Union?	7
What are the benefits of an age-friendly EU?	8
EU contribution to age-friendly environments	8
_02 AGE campaign to promote age-friendly environments in the EU	11
The need for an EU Covenant on Demographic Change	12
Who supports the Covenant?	13
How can you get involved and support AGE's campaign?	15
_03 Some concrete examples of Age-Friendly Environments initiatives	17
1. A positive attitude to ageing...	17
2. An inclusive labour market...	19
3. Accessible outdoor spaces, buildings and transport as well as adapted housing and physical activity facilities...	20
4. Goods and services that are adapted to the needs of all	22
5. Digital inclusion...	24
6. The possibility to have a voice...	25
7. The opportunity to actively participate in volunteering, cultural, sport and recreational activities...	26
8. Access to lifelong and intergenerational learning...	27
9. Social protection systems based on intra- and inter-generational solidarity...	29
10. Conditions and opportunities to grow and age in good mental and physical health...	30
Conclusion	32
Recommendations	33
Annexes	34

Foreword

Gerhard Stahl, Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions

I am pleased to present this brochure on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. During the series of seminars that the AGE Platform Europe organised together with the Committee of the Regions we learned that across the European Union there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise on the issue at local and regional levels which can be applied to strengthen social cohesion and create well-functioning societies that provide opportunities for people of all ages. With demographic change transforming our cities and regions, innovative approaches to adaptation are needed. The seminars detailed in this brochure indicate very positive ways of responding to this demographic change. My hope is that these will be widely taken up by interested parties. Moreover, in view of the perspectives on demographic change for the years ahead, I would welcome further dialogue and active participation by stakeholders in this important area.

The Committee of the Regions has adopted an Opinion on Active Ageing which provides fresh insights. It calls for the creation of a Covenant of Mayors on Demographic Change as a positive legacy of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012. It also advocates a participatory approach to tackling social exclusion and marginalisation. It is only through cooperation and multilevel governance that labour markets, social protection systems and environments will be adapted in age-friendly ways that truly respond to the needs of our changing societies and thus contribute to the achievement of the goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth to which the European Union is committed.



The economic and social benefits of an age-friendly and inclusive Europe are self-evident. Encouraging older people to remain active and independent for longer and promoting the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next will contribute to the creation of well-functioning communities and societies. By working to achieve cohesive societies that give hope and opportunity to all regardless of age or background, we also contribute to the realisation of an important goal of the European Union, that of solidarity, including solidarity between generations.

The Committee of the Regions looks forward to working to achieve these objectives in collaboration with stakeholder groups and government partners at various territorial levels. My hope is that by providing new information and ideas this brochure will help all interested parties in their efforts to create a fairer and more encompassing European society for all.

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Foreword

Marjan Sedmak, President of AGE Platform Europe

Thanks to the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 and the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, AGE's vision of a European society for all ages has gained a lot of visibility and is now shared by an increasingly large number of stakeholders across the EU (local, regional, national and EU policy makers, NGOs, service providers, researchers, industry).

All agree that demographic change is a major challenge facing all EU countries and an area where the EU can provide useful complementary support to strengthen Member States' effort to achieve fair and sustainable solutions that promote the best use of our financial and human resources. In today's context of economic and sovereign debt crisis, EU action is even more important. The EU can and must help Member States develop and implement innovative solutions to help their ageing population remain as active, healthy and autonomous as possible in order to reduce the impact of demographic ageing on public budgets and on future generations.

Together with a large group of partners, AGE is campaigning for the launch an EU Covenant on Demographic Change. Such Covenant would create the necessary political framework to bring together local and regional authorities - and other stakeholders across the EU - who want to develop smart and innovative solutions to support active and healthy ageing, develop age-friendly environments and coordinate better their action toward the relevant Europe 2020 Strategy objectives.

We have worked for several years already with the Committee of the Regions on the crucial role that local and regional authorities play in meeting the needs of our ageing population and we thank the Committee of the Regions for its support to our idea of a Covenant in its Opinion on "Active Ageing: Innovation - Smart Health - Better Lives" adopted on 4 May 2012.

The Covenant will seek to create a mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities who will voluntarily commit to supporting various initiatives aimed directly at promoting longer working lives, active participation of older people in their communities and in the economy, and independent living in old age.

With this brochure, which summarizes the discussions held during the three seminars AGE co-organised with the Committee of the Regions in 2012, we wish to share our vision of what we can do together if all levels of governance - local, regional, national and EU - coordinate their action to promote age-friendly environments across the EU, and we hope that you will join our movement to achieve an age-friendly EU by 2020.



Introduction

In 2012, AGE co-organised with the Committee of the Regions a series of three thematic seminars to promote an age-friendly EU and mark the **European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 (EY2012)**. The first seminar - organised in March - discussed age-friendly labour markets and social protection systems. The second one - organised in June - tackled the impact of the crisis on older people. The third - organised in November - looked at the role of local and regional authorities in the creation of an Age-Friendly European Union by 2020.

This brochure is built on the outcomes of these three seminars and on AGE's on-going work in the field of age-friendly environments. It is published as a legacy of the EY2012 to foster a more positive approach to demographic change and promote innovative and supportive solutions to respond to the needs of our ageing population across Europe. We thank all those who have contributed to our work and whose input is reflected in our brochure.

Active ageing and intergenerational solidarity are key aspects in the EU's growth and jobs strategy for this decade - the so-called **Europe 2020 Strategy** - whose aim is to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In our view it will not be possible for the EU to achieve this overarching objective without the development and implementation of new solutions to address the demographic changes taking place in our societies.

For several years AGE Platform Europe has been working closely with the Committee of the Regions on mobilising both local and regional stakeholders and the existing financial resources at local level to support our common vision of a society for all ages. Together with the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission, we produced a brochure on the European funding programmes that can be used by local and regional authorities to promote active ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

Upon request of the Danish Presidency of the EU, the Committee of the Regions prepared an **Opinion on Innovation - Smart Health - Better Lives** to integrate sub-national authorities in the EU-level dialogue on how to face the demographic challenge and maximise the opportunities of our ageing population. AGE contributed to the drafting of this Opinion as an expert nominated by the Rapporteur. This Opinion was adopted at unanimity by the Committee of the Regions on 4 May 2012 and calls on the European Commission to launch a **European Covenant of Mayors on Demographic Change** as a legacy to the European Year 2012 to gather local and regional authorities interested in promoting innovation, smart health and better lives solutions in support of active and healthy ageing and to provide administrative and financial support to the Covenant.

This brochure seeks to explain what can be done to create an age-friendly EU by fostering solidarity between generations and enabling the active participation and involvement of all age groups in society while providing them with adequate support and protection.



— 01



Creating an age-friendly EU as a response to EU demographic challenges

What do we mean by an age-friendly European Union?

Eurostat population projections foresee that the number of people aged over 60 will increase by about two million persons per annum in the coming decades, while the working age population will start to shrink (as a result of lower fertility rates among post baby boom generations). This will result in an increasing number of very old persons (aged 80 or over) and fewer young persons to care for them (family members or healthcare professionals).

“Scientifically proven is the fact that in a period of one generation – i.e. 30 years - no considerable change in demographic structures of a population is possible. Even efforts to increase the number of births or to liberalize immigration policy show only marginal results in near future.”

European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions - CESI

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the physical and social environments are key determinants of whether people can remain healthy, independent and autonomous long into their old age. Promoting age-friendly environments (AFE) is one of the most effective approaches for responding to demographic change and increasing the Healthy Life Year indicator. Creating age-friendly environments means adapting our everyday living environment to the needs of the

ageing population in order to empower people to age in better physical and mental health, promote their social inclusion and active participation and help them maintain their autonomy and a good quality of life in their old age. They enable older workers to remain at work for longer, lower the pressure on traditional care and assistance and boost the economy through demand for innovative solutions.

We believe that the best solution to Europe’s demographic challenge is therefore to empower older people to age in better health and to contribute more actively to the labour market and to their communities. This will help lower the pressure on public budgets and will enable our societies to better cope with demographic ageing in a way that is fair for all generations.





What are the benefits of an age-friendly EU?

As discussed in the [Peer Review on age-friendly goods and services](#) organised in Warsaw (Poland) on 29-30 October 2012, promoting age-friendly and supportive environments across the EU will contribute significantly to the following Europe 2020 key objectives:

- ▶ Increase the employment rate of both young and older workers and raise the effective retirement age: this will contribute to the 75% employment target of 20-64 year olds, embedded in Europe 2020;
- ▶ Reduce the number of younger and older people at risk of poverty and social exclusion: this will contribute to the European Platform against Poverty's target of reducing by 20 million the number of people experiencing poverty in the EU;
- ▶ Help older people to remain healthy and autonomous as they age: this will contribute to the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing's (EIP-AHA) objective to increase the average healthy lifespan of Europeans by 2 years by 2020. The EIP-AHA is the first of such partnership to be launched under Europe 2020 Innovation Union flagship initiative;
- ▶ Develop more efficient health, long-term care and social services for our ageing population and support innovative co-production models for active and healthy ageing in their region: this will support evidence based and cost efficient health systems and will help reduce the cost of population ageing on public health and social budgets, a key objective of Europe 2020;
- ▶ Help match better training and skills demand through occupational training and life-long learning opportunities for seniors and youth. This will contribute to Europe 2020 New Skills for New Jobs flagship initiative.

EU contribution to age-friendly environments

THE EUROPEAN YEAR FOR ACTIVE AGEING AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS 2012 (EY2012)

The EY2012 succeeded in mobilising thousands of stakeholders at local, regional, national and EU level who share the same vision of a society for all ages and agree on the need for an age-friendly European Union. Together they identified and disseminated examples of good practice and encouraged other policymakers and stakeholders to make commitments in this direction. Many events and initiatives promoting the objectives of the Year were organised all across Europe and can be consulted on the [EY2012 website](#).

THE EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP ON ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING (EIP AHA)

At the end of 2010, the European Commission released its "Innovation Union", one of its flagship initiatives in the framework of the EU 2020 Strategy. Innovation Union introduced the concept of European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) to promote breakthroughs to address societal challenges and gain competitive advantage.

The overarching goal of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP AHA) is, by 2020, to enable citizens to live longer independently in good health by increasing the average number of healthy life years by two.

The partnership is described as a 'triple-win' for Europe as it seeks to:

- ▶ Enable EU citizens to lead healthy, active and independent lives while ageing;
- ▶ Improve the sustainability and efficiency of social and health care systems developing EU and global markets for innovative products and services;
- ▶ Ultimately create new opportunities for businesses.

In 2011, the 30 members of the Steering Group set up by the European Commission (including AGE) developed a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) which was published on 7 November 2011. The SIP is articulated around six main action areas:

- ▶ Prescription and adherence action at regional level
- ▶ Personalised health management: Falls prevention
- ▶ Prevention of functional decline and frailty
- ▶ Integrated care for chronic diseases, including remote monitoring at regional level
- ▶ Interoperable independent living solutions
- ▶ Age friendly buildings, cities and environments



_02

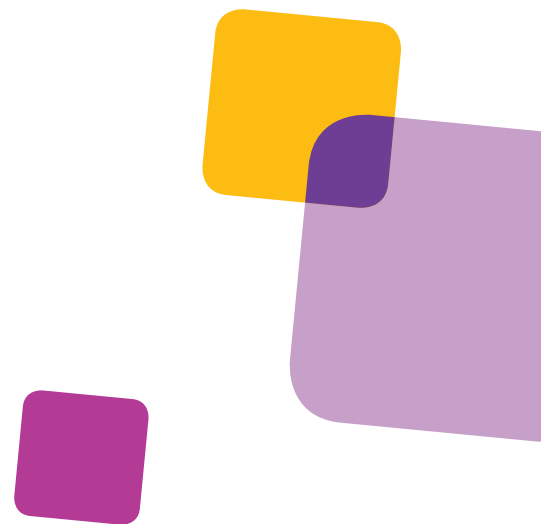


AGE campaign to promote age-friendly environments in the EU

In the framework of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012, AGE managed to mobilize 70 diverse stakeholders in the **EY2012 coalition** who are working on the topic not only at EU, but also at national and local level. In particular, AGE closely collaborated with the European Local Inclusion and Social Action Network (ELISAN), the European Network of Social Authorities (ENSA) and the Social Inclusion Regional Group (SIRG), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and EUROCITIES, the network of major European cities, dealing with various aspects of age-friendly environments.

AGE also seized the opportunity offered by the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP AHA) and responded to the invitation for commitments launched by the European Commission to implement the Strategic Implementation Plan of the EIP AHA. In its proposal submitted on 31 May AGE committed to set up and moderate an **EU virtual forum on Age-Friendly Environments (AFE)** to link stakeholders (public authorities, NGOs, service providers, industry, researchers) interested in the promotion of AFE at local, regional, national and EU level. With a long list of partners, AGE also committed to run a campaign to convince the European Commission to launch an **EU Covenant on Demographic Change** to create the necessary political framework to bring together local and regional authorities across the EU who want to find smart and innovative solutions to support active and healthy ageing and develop age-friendly environments.

The virtual network was launched at the beginning of June 2012 and more than 150 stakeholders have already joined in. This action will be pursued in the coming years as a follow-up to the EY2012 and in the framework of the EIP AHA.



The need for an EU Covenant on Demographic Change

Many of the services and policies that enable citizens of all ages to play an active role in society and stay in good health are provided by local and regional actors: transport and urban infrastructure policies, health and long-term care services and trainings are just some examples.

To create an age-friendly European Union by 2020, the goal of our Campaign for the European Year 2012 (EY2012), we need to support local and regional actors to adapt to demographic change in a way that is fair and sustainable for all generations.

Many solutions supporting active and healthy ageing have already been developed as pilots across the EU, but they remain isolated and do not get scaled up, not even in their own country. This means that their impact on addressing Europe demographic challenge is limited. Except in a very few countries that have national programmes on ageing, the various governance levels that need to work together to support age-friendly environments do not coordinate their action and there is no structure at EU level to coordinate local/regional/national actors willing to develop AFE.

There is at present no EU network in existence which enables all stakeholders interested in promoting and supporting age-friendly environments (AFE) to link up, benefit from each other's experience and work together on shaping the EU agenda on active and healthy ageing. For this reason, the EY2012 Coalition members and an increasing group of stakeholders have joined forces to campaign for the launch of an EU Covenant on Demographic Change that will seek to create the necessary political and technical framework to bring together local and regional authorities – and other stakeholders – across the EU who want to find smart and innovative evidence based solutions and

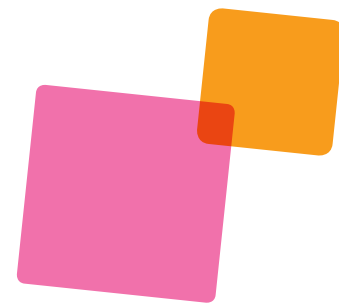
to facilitate the creation of a EU repository to support active and healthy ageing and develop age-friendly environments.

AGE, EUROCITIES, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and WHO Europe, have disseminated an on-line survey addressed to local and regional authorities to assess the needs of regions, cities and towns regarding a European Initiative supporting age-friendly environments. A first analysis of the results is available below. A comprehensive report on the survey will be available in mid-2013.

To the question *“What are the biggest problems for you region / city / town at present in becoming an age-friendly environment?”*, 62,2% replied the lack of funding, 35,4% stressed the lack of knowledge/expertise, 32% the lack of coordination with other levels of government and 24% the lack of consultation with older people and their organisations.

To the question *“What activities should an EU-wide initiative on active ageing include to meet the needs of your region/city/town?”* 62% replied through sharing good practice, 53% asked for information on funding, 43% answered through organizing formats for learning between practitioners from cities and regions (e.g. peer reviews), 42% said through securing the commitment of politicians (e.g. through a signature or formally joining the initiative), and 36% through support in assessing the situation of older people in their region/city.





Given the huge potential of new technologies and social innovation in support to age-friendly environments, mobilizing local and regional actors who can pick up such solutions and deploy them across the EU will bring a great added value that only an EU initiative can deliver.

The planned Covenant is therefore expected to play an important role in reducing health inequalities between regions in Europe, which is also indispensable for reaching the EIP AHA headline target of increasing by two the average number of Healthy Life Years.

The **objectives** of the Covenant will be to:

- ▶ promote a comprehensive and integrated approach of ageing in linking all relevant stakeholders working at local, regional and national levels on the promotion of age-friendly environments;
- ▶ create a European network of age-friendly local and regional authorities supporting the same vision of a society for all ages based on the WHO Guide for age-friendly environments adapted to the EU context;
- ▶ build synergies between local and regional initiatives and relevant EU policy processes, such as the development of national programmes to support local and regional initiatives to create age-friendly environments,
- ▶ help local and regional actors contribute to the Knowledge and Innovation Community for healthy living and active ageing;
- ▶ support healthy competition and higher competitiveness among “silver economy” industries.

Who supports the Covenant?

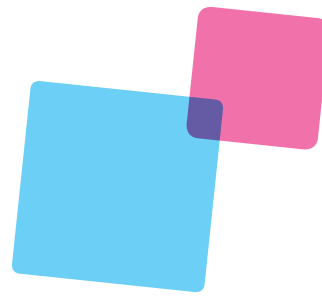
As said earlier AGE’s idea of the EU Covenant on Demographic Change was supported by the Committee of the Regions’ (CoR) in its Opinion on ‘Active Ageing: Innovation – Smart Health – Better Lives’, which was unanimously adopted by the CoR in May 2012. It stressed the need to promote age-friendly environments and called on the European Commission to launch the EU Covenant as a legacy to the European Year 2012. It also recommended that EU funds should be allocated for the adequate development of an EU network in close cooperation with the World Health Organisation and recommended that the Commission should initiate research into providing for the growing numbers of older people.

On 4 June 2012, the European Commission organised a conference on “Good Governance for Active and Healthy Ageing” to look at how different levels of government can cooperate to design more effective and comprehensive strategies for active and healthy ageing. It gathered about 150 participants from different levels of governance and stakeholders and aimed to prepare the ground for the development of integrated national or regional strategies for active and healthy ageing to be adopted in the wake of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012.

During the Closing Conference of the EY2012, the initiative of the Covenant was also supported by many of the speakers including the Cyprus and Irish Presidencies.

On 20 November 2012, AGE co-organised with the Committee of the Regions a thematic seminar on “Creating an Age-friendly European Year by 2020” in order to reflect on how to make this Covenant possible and what should be done at grass-root level to adapt goods, products and services to the specific needs of all age groups.

The Covenant of Mayors on Local Sustainable Energy is a good example of a European framework for reaching one of Europe 2020’s targets. Concretely, this tool sets out practical ways in which local and regional authorities can reach, and in many cases, go beyond, the set out target. It also shows the commitment of local and regional authorities and willingness to work and achieve such targets. The main advantage of such a Covenant is that it shows the commitment and practical implementation of specific goals by local and regional authorities, both at political and technical level. This encourages others to get involved.





How can you get involved and support AGE's campaign?

- ▶ **Register to our virtual network:** www.age-platform.eu/en/component/content/article/1457. Through this network, you will receive a monthly update on our campaign. We will use this tool to keep as many organisations as possible on board and regularly inform them or ask them for relevant input.
- ▶ **Disseminate our campaign material.** You can use our publications to inform NGOs, companies, service providers and other relevant stakeholders on what can be done to promote age-friendly environments. We regularly update our list of publications on [AGE website](#). You can also add our banner "Towards an age-friendly EU" on your communication tools (website, email signature, publications...).
- ▶ **Help us translate our campaign material in more languages.** You can help us translate our brochure - or a part of it - in your language. This will help us reach more relevant stakeholders. We will add your translation to our website and disseminate it within our network.
- ▶ **Help us collect examples of good practice on age-friendly environments.** If you are aware of any initiatives taking place in your country to promote age-friendly environments, thank you for sharing the information with us. We will add it on the section of our website dedicated to good practice.



- ▶ **Inform your municipality/county/region about our campaign.** You can help us disseminate the information on the potential benefits of an EU Covenant on Demographic Change by informing policy makers at local and regional level on our campaign and disseminating our brochure.

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Some concrete examples of Age-Friendly Environments initiatives

Together with the EY2012 Stakeholders' coalition, AGE is promoting a vision of an age-friendly European Union which fosters solidarity between generations and enables the active participation and involvement of all age groups in society while providing them with adequate support and protection.

As outlined on our [EY2012 Manifesto](#), through an age-friendly European Union every age and population group will benefit from:

1. A positive attitude to ageing...

... that recognises the value of all age groups' identities and contribution to society.

As shown by the Eurostat statistical portrait of the EU in 2012 (p. 112), more than half of the interviewed feel that there are not enough opportunities for older and younger people to meet and work together in associations and local community initiatives and some 90% think that schools should promote better relations between the young and the old.

Local and regional actors can promote a positive attitude to ageing in their communities by supporting activities that bring together different generations, such as sport clubs, cultural and heritage associations, choirs, neighbourhood days, joint activities between school age children and nursing homes, recruiting older volunteers to help in schools, open days in the

local schools, etc. These activities are unfortunately the first ones to be victims of cuts in time of budget constraint although their benefit for social cohesion is huge. Public authorities facing difficulties should seek to develop private-public partnerships to support such initiatives.

"If young and old people have to work together they have to develop mutual respect and gain recognition of their own skills and abilities. How says the proverb? The younger run faster, but the older know the short cut." (CESI)

"To ensure a society for all ages, we must confront stereotypes and invest in active ageing."

EU Commissioner László Andor (EY2012 closing conference)

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

The **Generations@school** project, launched by the European Commission last year to mark both the EY2012 and the European Day of Solidarity between Generations celebrated on 29th April, aims at engaging students and older people in intergenerational dialogue. During the weeks around April 29th, all schools in Europe are invited to open the doors of their classrooms to older generations to explore how the dialogue between generations can contribute to a better education and a better understanding of each other's contribution to society, needs and expectations.

To participate in the project, schools must contribute:

- ▶ to break down intergenerational stereotypes and encourage people to spend more time with someone from a different generation in their neighborhood.
- ▶ to share knowledge and skills and learn about each other.
- ▶ to increase awareness of diversity and what active ageing means.
- ▶ to share the results of the work in their classroom with other schools in the EU and with the community at large.

As 2013 will be the European Year of Citizens, the second edition of generations@school will in particular invite teachers, pupils and older people to organise discussions about Europe, its past, its present and about what old and young can do together to build the Europe of tomorrow.

The **Hiša Sadeži družbe** (House of the Fruits of Society) in Slovenia is an intergenerational community house which provides learning and mutual support for people of all ages. The aim of the Centre is to bring the generations together and encourage older and younger people to be sensitive to each other's needs. Intergenerational programmes are designed to meet the needs and abilities of older as well as younger people. Activities mainly revolve around developing creative skills and learning traditional arts and crafts. Workshops are also organised to promote a healthy way of life: cooking classes to prepare healthy, traditional dishes take place in the specially designed kitchen. Workshops are also provided on gardening, including how to use traditional herbs (in herbal medicine), which are grown in the garden. There are also workshops on traditional music, photography, art theatre, script writing, outdoor games, and intergenerational yoga classes. Grandparents come to the house with their grandchildren and they gain mutual support while the children enjoy playing with

each other or taking part in the many activities in the Centre. Children also come to the Centre alone and enjoy the benefits of spending time with substitute grandparents, who can act as role models. In 2011 the centre supported nearly 200 people aged from 6 to 84 years old and 30 volunteers (both young and old) provided 1566 hours of voluntary work.

The **Equality Authority in Ireland** operates an Annual Say No to Ageism Week which seeks to challenge ageist attitudes with the use of outdoor advertising, a poster campaign for workplaces and promotional materials for general venues. The "Say No to Ageism Week" is an initiative developed by three organisations, the Health Service Executive, the Office for Older People and the Equality Authority. Its aim is to raise public awareness about stereotyping of older people and to promote and support practical action for 'age friendly' service provision in key sectors. The 2012 edition was the ninth year of the initiative and it received support under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013). It has also prepared general guidance on age friendly customer service and targeted guidance for the health, transport, hospitality and leisure services.

Left to our own devices is a UK-wide photography competition, part of an awareness-raising campaign about older people's experiences with technology. Winning images from the competition have already toured UK Parliaments and Assemblies, telling stories, challenging stereotypes and provoking discussion. In March 2013, the exhibition will move to the European Parliament in Brussels, hosted by the Member of the European Parliament Sajjad Karim.





2. An inclusive labour market...

... that ensures the participation in paid work of younger and older people, including those with disabilities or chronic conditions, supports the intergenerational knowledge transfer and enables workers to both maintain their health and reconcile their work and private lives.

According to the Eurobarometer on discrimination in the EU in 2012, to the question “When a company in your country wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates of equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage”, 54% responded “the candidate’s age, if he/she is over 55 years old”, 40% answered “a disability”, 39% “mentioned “the candidate’s skin colour or ethnic origin”, 19% stated the “candidate’s sexual orientation” and 13% stressed “the candidate’s age if he/she is under 30 years old”. These figures show that a lot needs to be done still to achieve inclusive labour markets and work places.

The crisis affects older people but also other age groups; the rapid ageing of the population implies longer careers for older people but raises the issues of access to employment for younger cohorts and the implications of career breaks on pension rights for example for women who carry most often the burden of care responsibilities.

“Employment policies must seek to support longer working lives by tackling the particular challenges that both young and older workers face. Young people should be offered a framework to improve their working skills through formal and informal training provided by older colleagues committed to transfer the so called “know-how” skills. An effective involvement of

young people, and women, in labour market can increase revenues for social systems and thus improve solidarity.”

Francesco Briganti, European Association of Paritarian Institutions (AEIP)

“The responsibility lies not only at Member State level but at regional and local levels. Public authorities must aim at investing money to create jobs. Furthermore good working conditions must be created to enable workers to remain in work.”

Henri Lourdelle, European Trade Union Confederation - ETUC

“Second careers and gradual, prolonged transitions from employment to retirement are good for life & the economy”

EU Commissioner László Andor (EY2012 closing conference)

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

The **ESF-AGE Network** was supported by the European Social Fund (February 2010 - February 2013) and its aim was to identify, validate and disseminate high-level strategies to manage the ageing workforce in Europe effectively. The project has produced a good practice guide which provides examples of major publicly funded programmes reviewed by the Network. The aim of these programmes was to support older people find work, improve their employment prospects or help them to extend their working lives either directly or by promoting age management policies and practices amongst employers.

Helsinki City makes special efforts to support the working ability of seniors. Older personnel are offered physical activity courses, flexi-time, redeployment, and retirement advice. A management action plan has been developed to promote fitness for work among different age groups. A set of methodologies for

the management of different age groups has been prepared, which includes models, guidelines and examples of how to implement practices.

The **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)** in Britain (United Kingdom) has a 'Working Better' project which seeks to promote innovative ways of working, particularly more flexible options, in order to improve equality and human rights in the workplace. The project has a stream that focuses specifically on the needs of older workers who want to stay longer in the labour market.

The **Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism** in Belgium has developed an easy-to-use web tool to help employers assess and confirm whether their job advertisements are written in a non-discriminatory manner.

Adecco is trying to support workers in the second part of their careers by fighting against age discrimination at work and by making their clients more aware of the implications of demographic change.

50-plus entrepreneurs is a German non-profit initiative which provides expert advice and sympathetic help to people aged 50+ who wish to start their own business due to financial difficulties and/or because they have a long-standing business idea that they would like to bring to fruition in order to make a contribution to society. The project seeks in particular to help those who are at risk of poverty to prevent them from falling into poverty. The advice service receives public funding and is available throughout Germany.

3. Accessible outdoor spaces, buildings and transport as well as adapted housing and physical activity facilities...

... that promote independent living and participation in society for longer, while increasing opportunities for exchange within and across generations.

According to a recent Eurobarometer on accessibility, nearly 40% of respondents who say that they or a member of their household have a longstanding illness or health problem have experienced difficulties using pavements or crossing at traffic lights. The same proportion say that they have experienced difficulties entering into a building or an open public space, while more than a third have experienced difficulties taking a taxi, bus, train or flight.

Urbanisation, globalisation, climate change and demographic shift are universal trends that are both accelerating and converging. They are all linked and need to be looked at together. But in Europe's current focus on economic recovery, we are in danger of ignoring the twin challenges of the quality and physical accessibility of our environments, and the challenge of ensuring that our short, medium and long-term action plans recognise and accommodate a population that is ageing quickly. This is indispensable to enable our ageing population to remain active and independent for much longer through supportive environments.





“Taking older people better into account in cities also means listening to their needs and expectations. We seek to promote this objective with the support of the district gerontology Councils based on input from the neighbourhood Councils and through our participation in the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Programme. Through these actions to support our seniors, we wish to build a ‘living well together’ city which upholds the value of solidarity and offers everyone the right conditions for self-fulfillment whatever his or her age.” (City of Lyon, France)

“Home is not only a spatial idea, is a way of living, a network of emotional bonds that become increasingly important. Most older people is so closely tied to this subjective links that they prefer to bear unhealthy and non-decent residential situations than leaving their homes. The spatial idea of home is fluid, therefore it extends beyond the household, including immediate neighbourhoods, meeting places, corner stores, and other dwellings, as well as social interaction with family, friends or community members. Therefore, ageing at home is much more than a statistical growing reality, it is an opportunity for better ageing if provided with the improvements, services and products needed; and in doing so it is also an opportunity for employment and economic stimulus. All this factors need to be considered. And that is what the Barcelona Declaration does.”

Fernando Alonso López Aceplan

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

The German National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (**BAGSO**) made a survey among 2.000 older citizens to assess their experience in their urban environment. Based on the results of surveys BAGSO addressed recommendations to local policy makers on how to improve urban environments and make them more age-friendly. The BAGSO “Age-Friendly Cities” survey’s results were published in a final report (in German).

The League of Historical and Accessible Cities (LHAC) launched in 2010 by The **European Foundation Centre Consortium**, aims to improve the accessibility of historical towns and promote sustainable tourism development bringing added value for all. The League launched a best practice guide to help implement similar projects in historical cities elsewhere.

MEDIATE (Methodology for describing the accessibility of transport in Europe) is an EU funded project that sought to establish a common European methodology for measuring accessibility of public transport. A brochure describing the various tools developed within Mediate can be downloaded in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Polish.

On 3 December 2012, the European Commission handed the Access City Award 2013 to the city of **Berlin**. The jury selected Berlin for its strategic and inclusive disability policy, which has invested heavily in turning the formerly divided city into an accessible, barrier-free environment. The jury highlighted Berlin’s transport system and investment in accessibility for disabled people in reconstruction projects. Berlin’s comprehensive approach to accessibility is fully embedded in the city’s policies and broadly supported by its decision-makers.

The other finalists were:

Nantes (France): rewarded for its complete approach to designing a city accessible for all and variety of activities to raise awareness of accessibility in everyday life. Nantes has invested in training for designers and architects and maintains a dialogue with citizens to allow people with disabilities to meet and set up common projects.

Stockholm (Sweden): chosen for its long-term, inclusive approach following Design for All. The “Vision Stockholm in 2030” aims to turn the city, where 30% of the central area consists of water, into a world class city accessible to all. Good examples include accessible pedestrian crossings, public toilets and playgrounds to ensure that they are accessible to children and parents with disabilities.

Ventspils’ Council (Latvia) ensures accessibility for its ageing population through a special programme developed to help senior citizens leave their homes, wheelchair-accessible public buildings and public transport, specially designed street infrastructure (traffic lights with audible signals, in many areas the sides of pavements have been brightly marked, wheelchair-accessible pavements in accordance with universal design principles; where necessary, road sign poles have been brightly marked). The local council has landscaped parks and created footpaths that senior citizens use for walking, hiking or other physical activities. Open-air gym equipment has been installed in the parks which senior citizens can use to keep fit.

In the competition organised by the disabled association ‘Apeirons’ to find the most people- and environmentally friendly buildings, the ‘Golden Crutch’ (Zelta kruķis) was awarded to 5 sites in Ventspils. Infrastructure improvements ensure seamless mobility for senior citizens, offer them the opportunity to take an active part in society and to participate in political, economical, cultural and other social activities.

4. Goods and services that are adapted to the needs of all

By 2047 there will be more people older than 60 than younger than 15 worldwide (United Nations World Population Prospects, 2010 revision). Yet the offer of goods and services do not adapt accordingly to the needs of Europe’s rapidly ageing population. Yet solutions exist and are usually based on the concept of Design-for-All or Universal Design.

Design for All is the intervention on environments, products and services with the aim that everyone, including future generations, regardless of age, gender, capabilities or cultural background, can enjoy participating in the construction of our society, with equal opportunities participating in economic, social, cultural, recreational and entertainment activities while also being able to access, use and understand whatever part of the environment with as much independence as possible (Design-for-All Foundation).

The **European Disability Strategy 2010-2020** identifies actions at EU level to supplement national measures in eight main areas. Accessibility is at the heart of the strategy. It means that people with disabilities and older people should have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications technologies and systems (ICT), and other facilities and services in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities, ratified by the EU in 2011.

To this end, the European Commission intends to propose a Directive to improve the market of goods and services that are accessible for persons with disabilities and elderly persons, based on a “design for all” approach. This business friendly initiative will include binding measures to promote procurement and harmonisation of accessibility standards. An open consultation allowed stakeholders to contribute to the reflection of the European Commission. Together



with its members, AGE Platform Europe submitted a contribution stressing the need for binding legislation and EU standards to ensure the promotion of Design-for-All in all goods and services one needs to function in today's society.

“In today's context of demographic change, well designed ICT can play a key role to support older people's full participation in society and independent living. The winning apps are clear examples of what can be done to facilitate equal access for all.”
AGE Platform Europe, Vodafone Smart Accessibility Award 2012

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

A team of researchers of the School of Engineering at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Spain, have developed a GPS wayfinding application for mobile phones with Android systems which helps users get around cities. According to its creators, the application, named **OnTheBus**, is based on the principles of Universal Design and hence useful for anyone, but particularly for people with visual, hearing or cognitive impairments. The application offers a selection of the best routes for reaching a specific destination, and guides the user from their current position to the closest bus stop, where it informs them how much time remains until the next bus arrives. Once the user has boarded the bus, the application provides information about stops and indicates when it is necessary to ask the bus to stop. Having disembarked, the user is guided to their destination. The application is now available from Google Play in several different languages, and in versions which function in Barcelona, Madrid and Rome, shortly to be followed by Valencia, Zaragoza and Helsinki. In addition, the creators are working on adaptations for other cities and languages. For further information, visit the UAB website. Videos showing how the application works can also be viewed on YouTube.

OASIS is a European project that aimed at facilitating access to information, public services and economic promotion by grouping online services in a unified portal following a user-centered logic. Federating services in a unique environment enabled public administrations to make better use of customer and businesses information and adapt public services (e-services) so they more often meet the needs of people and businesses. The result will be services that are more accessible, more user-friendly, more efficiently run by public authorities and less expensive for the taxpayer. The OASIS project will take advantage of open platforms and open standards using a cloud architecture.

The **Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy** organized a **Peer Review**, in Warsaw (Poland) on 29–30 October 2012, to discuss how encouraging older people to participate in social activities, developing goods and services tailored to their needs, and supporting their economic activity can improve their quality of life, and provide opportunities for social and economic development. Eight peer countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Slovenia, and Sweden) joined the host country to learn from its experiences and to offer their own examples. The peer review concluded that new products should be based on a 'design for all' generations approach, which helps avoid inter-generational conflict. Standards should be harmonised across the 27 EU members thus creating a Single Market for the silver economy.

A team of expert information providers in Europe have joined together to create a comprehensive information service on assistive technology (AT) serving older and disabled people, their families and carers across the globe. Through the **Eastin website** an easy-to-use tool, they help users to find solutions for independent living or remove obstacles in the way of



a full life. The website gives access to several national databases, so users can look up the information they require and have it immediately translated into their own language, where necessary. Visitors can analyse, compare and choose the best and most up-to-date solutions for their needs.

5. Digital inclusion...

... to enable participation in the increasingly ICT-based society as citizens, employees, consumers, service users and carers, friends and family members.

According to Eurostat statistical portrait on the EU 2012 “Active ageing and solidarity between generations”, while 61% of people aged 55-64 have access to an internet connection, they are only 35% in the age group 65-74 and 18% in the 75+ group, and more than 40% of them limit their use of mobile internet because they are concerned about the charges.

“Accessibility should not be seen as a burden. There is a strong economic case for it. Accessibility offers new business opportunities, as the candidates of the Smart Accessibility Awards have demonstrated. And better accessibility solutions in smartphones allow citizens to be informed, to communicate, to learn and to take advantage of the host of possibilities made possible by modern information and communication technologies.”
Viviane Reding, Vice-President, European Commission

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

The Spanish NGO **Cybervolunteers Foundation** is leading a series of projects to increase the social participation of seniors through the use of new technologies. It helps seniors to use their own mobile phones (“Manejo de Telefonía Móvil” project) and it

runs workshops on different ICT tools (“Soy Mayor y me Gusta Navegar” project). The organisation also raises awareness among seniors on the importance of new technologies to manage their work in a more effective way, as well as communicate more efficiently. This is the main aim of the project “Evoluciona en Red”. Finally, Cybervolunteers Foundation shows seniors in need of care situation how the Internet can be a place where to communicate their experiences, to interact with other persons in their situation, to find information and resources through the “Recursos en la Red” project.

The **Vodafone Foundation Smart Accessibility Awards** is a contest to promote the development of IT applications designed to improve the lives of those with disabilities and people that are older, to help them get more actively involved in society. It is part of the Vodafone Foundation’s ‘Mobile for Good’ programme, which supports initiatives around the world which use mobile technology to drive positive social change. The awards are helping to extend the smartphone revolution to as many communities as possible. The Smart Accessibility Awards are supported and co-organised by AGE Platform Europe and by the European Disability Forum (EDF), the NGO that represents the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities.

Eldy is a free software package designed to help senior citizens use computers and access the internet. It numbers more than 400000 users worldwide. It was specifically designed for older people with a six-buttons interface, large font, strong colour contrast and simplified language in order to meet the needs of older people and help them access easily online services. To promote active ageing by reducing the digital divide, Eldy carried out an intergenerational project called “young and seniors online together with Eldy” in 2011. The project involved over 20.000 people throughout Italy: pupils from secondary and primary schools, teachers, seniors and public administrations.



6. The possibility to have a voice...

... in the decision-making and research processes that affect them.

The older people's community is organised in various ways at local, regional and national across the EU. In a few Member States, there are older people's councils in all local municipalities who are consulted by the local authorities, and an umbrella organization which works closely with the national authorities.

However, in most countries the older people's community is very fragmented and older people struggle to have their voice heard in the debates that concern them. Public authorities can help a lot by fostering a vivid civil dialogue with representative organisations.

**“We need to give a voice to those who do not have a one. There is a need for prevention and a strategic approach of ageing well.”
(Tweet, EY2012 Closing Conference)**

“From the perspective of older people, the major benefit from participating in policy planning and influencing policy implementation is the improvement in the quality of life for older people in general. Through civil dialogue on ageing, policy measures can be developed which will better meet older people's concerns and needs. Civil dialogue is about listening to people's views and encouraging and recognising their contribution to the communities in which they live.”

AGE Platform Europe

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

In 2006 the Czech Government established the **National Council for Seniors and Ageing Population**, a permanent advisory body where 28 representatives from different older people's organisations and civil servants from various ministries have a regular exchange on ageing-related issues. The overall objective of this Council is to create an age-friendly environment which promotes healthy, active and dignified life in old age. Additionally, the Council promotes an active involvement of older persons in the development of economic and social policy formulated in the context of demographic ageing. The Council meets at least three times a year and on a further ad hoc basis if necessary. It has the power to investigate citizens' complaints directly. Organisational, technical and administrative work including the dissemination of the Council's decisions and measures is provided by its secretariat which is ensured by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Council has four working groups on: 1) health and long-term care, 2) labour market, lifelong learning and income-related social protection, 3) anti-discrimination and social participation and 4) residential housing and social services.

The city of **Poznan** (PL) established the **Centre for Senior Citizens Initiatives** – a municipal organisational unit, whose task is to work towards raising the quality of life of mature persons and seniors. The Centre seeks to create the right conditions for active and independent ageing in Poznan, meaning full participation in city life, as well as in shaping local policy. Various initiatives were undertaken, from advocacy and facilitating access to information, to educational activities that promote the ideas of active ageing and solidarity between generations.

The Centre managed to create a place for everyone interested in the events organised for seniors. Within the scope of the 50+ Information Point in the Centre, it provides a website with information on what is on offer and publishes a weekly newsletter that is sent to approx. 500 recipients as well as a dedicated column

in the local press (30 editions by June 2012). Thanks to volunteers from local radio and television, it can also reach people who do not use the Internet or read newspapers.



7. The opportunity to actively participate in volunteering, cultural, sport and recreational activities...

... thus creating and/or maintaining their social networks, gaining new competences and contributing to their personal fulfillment and wellbeing.

In the Eurostat statistical portrait of the EU 2012 on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, around 30% of older people get involved in volunteering, more or less the same as for the 15-24 years old and 75% of all respondents feel that older people make a major contribution as volunteers in charitable and community organisations. Yet many more would like to get actively involved but do not know how and do not dare to ask. Local actors can play a crucial role by supporting initiatives that encourage older volunteers to join local groups who are active in community activities.

“There is no Europe without volunteers – they contribute greatly to both social Europe and its growth. Volunteers mirror the diversity of European society with people of all ages, women and men, employees and the unemployed, people from different ethnic backgrounds, belief groups and citizens from all nationalities being involved.”

Gabriella Civico, European Volunteer Centre - CEV

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

Since 2009, the Province of Rovigo (Italy), Department of Social Policy and Family, has been carrying out a series of projects and policies to promote senior volunteering, active ageing and solidarity between generations. These initiatives include intergenerational computer programs, as well as health and transportation services. Thanks to its solid partnership with other local institutions and NGOs, the Province of Rovigo also organises the initiative “October: the month of the elderly” to mark the International Day of the Elderly (1st October of each year). The event aims to highlight initiatives and activities taking place at local level as well as facilitate the debate on ageing in the territory among experts, professionals, administrators, associations and older people themselves.

Gdynia’s seniors’ policies: Gdynia is a Polish town where 20% of its citizens are over 65 and 25% of senior citizens are over 80. The city has a Senior Activity Centre, which includes a University of the Third Age, home-help and care services, day-care homes, support centres, and 24-hour care services. It also provides 26 Senior Clubs and a 55+ Active Ageing Programme. Gdynia also has a Senior Citizens City Council, which advises on programmes for senior citizens, proposals for new activities, and evaluates local services.

The educator and curator of the Museum of Art in Timisoara, Romania, took the initiative of approaching senior clubs and organisations/institutions that



deliver services to the elderly, with the proposal to train them as museum guides and offer them, twice weekly the possibility to use these skills, voluntarily, by leading guided tours in the museum. The volunteer programme of Timisoara's Museum of Art started targeting youth in 2009, and is focusing on seniors since last year. The project targeted seniors, over the age of 55, either retired or in the pre-retirement phase, aiming to provide them with an opportunity to learn, interact and engage in activities that would keep them active, involved and with a better attitude towards life.

Seniors took part in training modules and learned to deal with visitors with special needs such as Parkinson or Alzheimer's patients. Some visitors suffering from Parkinson's disease became volunteer guides as well. For seniors involved in the projects as well for the visitors participating in museum tours guided by senior volunteers the experience was life-changing.

8. Access to lifelong and intergenerational learning...

... to acquire new skills and knowledge at any age.

Learning opportunities targeting older people are essential to help national and local authorities achieve a wide range of social and economic objectives, notably to support longer working life, reduce dependency by improving older people's autonomy, health and well-being. Public authorities should therefore write into their policies a broader vision of lifelong learning, which fosters common understanding across ministries and sectors, is inclusive of people beyond working age and enables and encourages flexible forms of non formal learning, as well as informal and formal ones.

Often an "educational" intervention can be a very cost-effective way of achieving these social and economic objectives. Structures may already be in place – NGOs, libraries, health services, community centres, religious organisations, workplaces, families, associations and clubs, sport venues etc., and often they can be very effective at reaching hard-to-reach target groups. However, many people and agencies do not see these activities as "learning", and the expertise is not formally recognised or accredited. Addressing the needs effectively calls for more collaborative working between agencies and services. (One Step Up in Later Life: learning for active ageing and intergenerational solidarity, Brussels, 19-21 November 2012)

"Voluntary activities are part of informal and non-formal learning for people at all ages and at all stages of their lives and contributes to personal development and to learning skills and competences enhancing employability and providing life-long learning opportunities."

The Knowledge Volunteers

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

The EAEA Award for adult learning (Grundtvig Award) 2012 aimed at awarding projects that promote the active participation of older learners in society. **"Moving stories and Generations"**, sub-project of the Crosstalk project, targeted senior citizens, children and young people who live together closely but often rarely communicate with each other, and allowed them to come into contact and exchange stories about their youth. It won the prize in the European category.

TKV -The Knowledge Volunteers promotes the acquisition of digital competences among older people at risk of social exclusion as well as intergenerational relations that benefit the education of young people. Voluntary participation of youth and the elderly provides a learning opportunity for both generations,

allowing them to improve their self-esteem while reducing the risk of social isolation among older people.

TKV conducts dedicated pilot training courses in various European countries with the involvement of older people in voluntary activities. The beneficiaries are schools and older people's centres, young volunteers, teachers, older volunteers, and local citizens at large.

The project develops and brings to EU level a didactical ICT learning methodology especially adapted for mature learners, which has been defined and successfully applied at local level by Fondazione Mondo Digitale (FMD). This methodology is enriched with the application of the peer-to-peer course approach carried out by older experienced volunteers to new older students. The didactical intergenerational approach is based on the active role of young students, who act as individual teachers or tutors to the elderly participants. A didactical toolkit has been set up and can be downloaded free.

Stichting Belangenbehartiging Pleeg grootouders

Nederland (SBPN) is a foundation which is currently working across the whole of the Netherlands. It works exclusively to support grandparents who are the primary care givers to their grandchildren (Foster Grandparents). There are around 5 million children and young people in the country, of whom around 23,000 are currently in the care system. SBPN are able to support these grandparents in a number of ways. They can act as an intermediate between them and the Youth Care Agency, identifying where the foster grandparents could benefit from additional support, and then acting as advocates for them. In other cases they are put in contact with other foster grandparents in their area and the project facilitates peer to peer support. Many of the ad hoc local groups come about in this way. The project also publishes a newsletter around 6 times a year which offers a forum for foster grandparents to support each other and provides SBPN with an opportunity to disseminate any information which might be of benefit to the grandparents.

Every year they run an extremely popular Annual Event. As well as the mutual support grandparents can find in these events, they often form the start of social networks which can be ongoing over time.

OWLE50+ The OWLE50+ was a GRUNDTVIG funded project aimed to identify and address issues relating to employability and entrepreneurship and later life skills for women aged 50+. The project resulted from the experience gained by the Centre for Micro-Enterprise (CME) at London Metropolitan University in working with and researching the needs of older women over a number of years. The project involved partners in Sweden and Italy who addressed:

- ▶ Older women's enterprise competencies and micro business start up
- ▶ Employability and life skills
- ▶ ICT for social and business growth
- ▶ Community involvement
- ▶ Effective senior citizenship in the EU and own country



9. Social protection systems based on intra- and inter-generational solidarity...

.. that prevent and alleviate poverty, guarantee adequacy of old-age income and sustainability of pension schemes for both current and future generations, ensure access to quality social and healthcare services across the life course and support informal carers.

The objective of social protection systems should be to guarantee a decent life for both today's and future citizens. The current economic recovery reforms implemented across Europe are unfortunately losing sight of the fundamental social objectives that used to underpin our social protection systems and are prepared without a proper social impact assessment. This leads to an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion and creates huge challenges for local authorities who are faced with deteriorating social cohesion and increasing demand for support including from new groups of vulnerable people.

“Pension reforms need to be based on the principle of social justice and, therefore, changes in retirement age should be determined according to the type of profession with an aim to satisfy individual aspirations, as well as to take account of health and professional capacities. Adequacy of pensions should not be further undermined but rather preserved in order to guarantee younger cohorts with certainty towards the future”.

Professor Henri Sterdyniak, Observatoire français des conjonctures économiques

“Gender equality in pensions needs to be addressed according to individual women's career paths. Women are not a homogeneous group and their needs evolve considerably over time. Compensations for informal care is just one aspect of what should be offered to women. Adequate infrastructure of childcare provision and measures facilitating the return of women to full time employment are equally important.”

Eva-Maria Welskop-Deffaa, German Federal Ministry

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

The **municipality of Fredericia** (DK) is running the project Life Long Living, a new model for interaction between elderly citizens and the municipality, focusing on “Everyday Rehabilitation”. The objective of the model is to regain physical, social and cognitive abilities in order to postpone age-related weakening and dependence. Citizens requiring practical or personal assistance are offered to enter an intensive 6-8 weeks rehabilitation program training their capabilities to independently perform daily tasks such as cooking, dressing, shopping, engaging in social activities, etc. After the intensive rehabilitation programme, the citizens' needs for practical and personal assistance are considerably reduced, and many of them do not need any further assistance. The number of requested services and the cost has decreased significantly. Moreover, the greatest benefit of developing this practice-oriented model and rehabilitative approach is:

- ▶ Satisfied citizens, who are coping with their own lives and express pride and improved quality of life by regaining independent everyday life.
- ▶ Satisfied employees who express significantly greater job satisfaction and commitment working with the new empowering model.
- ▶ Decrease in sickness absence among employees.



- ▶ Significant reduced use of care services in Everyday Rehabilitation and similar results in the Home Help Training project.

Interesting initiatives of dementia-friendly environments are deployed in Belgium, ViaDem in Wallonia, and in De Hogeweyk in the Netherlands,

Buren voor Buren, Kortrijk (BE): Buren voor Buren (Neighbors for Neighbors) is a partnership set up by the local centre for social welfare (OCMW) between professional staff and young senior volunteers who share the care for the lonely elderly persons living at home. The project is implemented in the four districts of the city and involves volunteers who live nearby. Together they organise afternoon meetings, home visits and serve as contact points for the socially excluded.

Flemish care Insurance (BE): The Flemish region care insurance system was introduced in 2001 and **provides those with care needs part or full cover for the costs of non-medical care** offered by professional or informal carers. The day-to-day administration of the Flemish health insurance system is assigned to health care funds accredited by the *Vlaams Zorgfonds* (Care Insurance Fund). The health care funds are set up by health insurance funds or insurance companies. The *Vlaams Zorgfonds* has also set up its own healthcare fund, the *Vlaamse Zorgkas*, within the framework of which the public social welfare centres act as local agents. Since 2001, **anyone over the age of 26 living in Flanders is required to join a healthcare fund and to pay an annual fee**. People seeking to qualify for coverage for informal care and home care are required, in particular to produce a certificate or a needs assessment from an authorised needs assessor. Since 2004 a residence certificate is all that is required to be eligible for the cost coverage of residential care, in a rest home, care and rest home or psychiatric care.

10. Conditions and opportunities to grow and age in good mental and physical health...

... through disease prevention and the promotion of physical activity, a healthy diet, wellbeing and health literacy, as well as action on key social determinants of ill-health.

Physical activity can prevent and help treat many of the most common age-related chronic medical conditions. Engaging in some form of physical activity adapted to their condition can help older adults maintain physical and mental health and quality of life for much longer. But this is easier said than done. Promoting physical activity among older adults can be quite challenging and requires the help of trained professionals or volunteers and well-designed programmes. The development of social networks supporting older people is indispensable in the promotion and prevention of social exclusion, depression and mental disorders amongst older people. Social networking provides emotional support, increases feelings of security, self-esteem and self-purpose and helps individuals cope with stressful situations.

“Frailty in old age should not mean dependency. A state of dependency can be reinforced through inappropriate environments/structures.”

Anne-Sophie Parent - EY2012 Closing Conference

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

SIEL Bleu (France): A good physical condition positively affects daily activity and supports a longer active and independent life. SIEL Bleu is an association of professionals mostly trained in physical education and sport. SIEL Bleu members receive special training and offer programmes across France for different audiences such as young retirees, older people living in residential homes or in institutions, people with disabilities and people with chronic or serious illnesses.

York Dementia Without Walls (United Kingdom): While dementia is not a consequence of old age, it is more common in older people. In York, this is a particular challenge because there is a relatively higher older population already, so the number of people with dementia is set to grow.

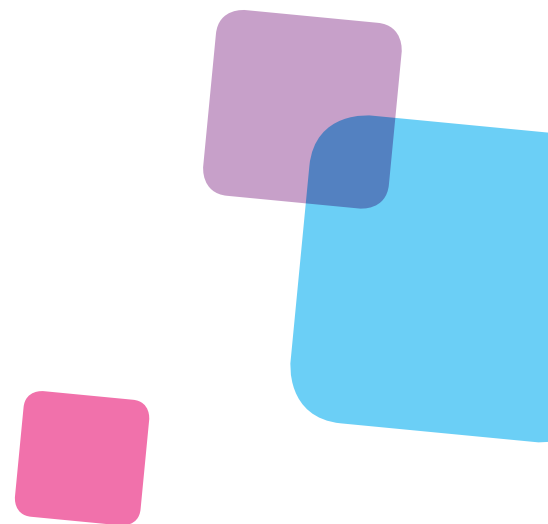
Communities that are dementia-friendly have more opportunity to support people in the early stages of dementia, maintaining and boosting their confidence and their ability to manage everyday life. The project shows how many of the resources and services in a place can be harnessed for the benefit of people with dementia.

WeDO (EU): The project aimed at helping public authorities, long-term care service providers and funders to respond adequately to the growing needs of our ageing population in today's context of economic crisis, budget consolidation and rapid societal change. The WeDO partners developed a voluntary European Quality framework for long-term care in institutional, home care and community settings and established an open and lasting partnership of European, national and regional/local stakeholders who share the same vision and are committed to work together to tackle the complex challenge of elder abuse through the promotion of quality long-term care (LTC).

EurohealthNet has developed a very comprehensive website on Healthy Ageing where lots of useful information, examples of good practice and tips can be found: <http://www.healthyageing.eu/>

The European Commission also published an interesting series of ICT based innovative solutions to support the physical and mental health of our ageing population: "Active and Healthy Ageing, For you and with you"

The project Healthy Ageing: a challenge for Europe, produced in 2007, which has become a reference book across the EU and includes numerous examples of what can be done at local level to improve and support good physical and mental health among older people which are still very relevant in today's context.





Conclusion

“We are very satisfied with the large mobilisation around the European Year 2012 (EY2012)”, declared Anne-Sophie Parent, AGE Secretary General, at the closing conference of the European Year 2012. *“The EY2012 has clearly highlighted the need to rethink our economic and social policy framework in order to meet the needs of the growing number of older people while enhancing solidarity between generations. We hope that the numerous actions and commitments made during the Year will lay the first milestone towards creating a European society for all ages.”* AGE is also happy to see that the collaborations built in 2012 will continue in 2013 in the framework of the European Innovation Partnership for Active and Healthy Ageing. This confirms that the EY2012 has not just been an awareness raising initiative. The work that has started in 2012 will continue in the years to come with all the interested parties who became mobilised during the European Year.

AGE hopes that this mobilisation will extend to new Member States and others to foster the creation of a mainstream European movement supporting age-friendly environments, goods and services through an EU Covenant on Demographic Change.

The Covenant should involve local, regional and national authorities willing to commit to supporting various initiatives aimed directly at active and healthy ageing, promoting longer working lives, active participation of older people in their communities and in the economy, and independent living in old age, as well as greater youth participation in employment and in the community life.

Europe is at a crossroads as it re-shapes its vision of itself and its priority action areas in the light of the current economic situation. We want and need it all – jobs, competitiveness, jobs, competitiveness and growth as well as security, a sustainable future

and a dignified quality of life for all. The problem is not just Europe’s. Urbanisation, globalisation, climate change and demographic shift are universal trends that are both accelerating and converging. They are all interlinked and need to be addressed together. But in Europe’s current focus on economic recovery, we are in danger of ignoring the twin challenges of the quality and physical accessibility of our environments, and the challenge of ensuring that our short, medium and long-term action plans recognise and accommodate a population that is ageing quickly. If we continue to consider older people’s needs in terms of health, welfare or social participation as burdens to be assumed by the ‘at work’ generations, we are missing the point. Older people are an enormous economic and social resource that will grow in number and can grow in quality - but we need to provide smart, sustainable, inclusive and connected places and overall supportive environments for all of us to engage, contribute and prosper.

This is the reason why AGE welcomes the Social Investment Package released by the European Commission on 20 February 2013. This bundled document aims at giving guidance to Member States on more efficient and effective social policies in response to the significant challenges they currently face such as increasing poverty and social exclusion, record unemployment combined with the challenges of ageing societies and smaller working age populations which test the sustainability and adequacy of national social systems.



Recommendations

The three thematic seminars organised by AGE in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions to mark the European Year 2012 highlighted a series of age-friendly measures which could help us address demographic ageing.

Age-friendly labour markets and social protection systems should...

- ▶ provide conditions for healthy ageing as a prerequisite for longer working careers;
 - ▶ increase the effective retirement age before postponing mandatory retirement age;
 - ▶ maintain skills by stimulating professional mobility and life-long-learning, anticipate and manage career-paths;
 - ▶ facilitate flexibility and transition periods (for example between studies and work, between work and retirement, for workers with caring duties) based on individual or collective formal agreements;
 - ▶ empower employees and strengthen their capacity to adapt to the changing work environment, recognise their competencies and experiences to benefit individual workers and their companies;
 - ▶ combat age discrimination in employment and stereotypes through the promotion of a positive image of older people in the media;
 - ▶ enforce gender equality and address the needs of informal carers in access to social protection rights (mainly women). Do not just 'transfer' the care burden and related inequality from women to men as this will not solve the problem but redistribute the burden of care more equally across the whole society.
- The thematic seminar on the impact of the crisis on older people concluded to the need to:**
- ▶ promote universal access to healthcare and ensure that services are offered according to people's needs rather than their capacity to pay;
 - ▶ when reforming their employment, pension and care systems, Member States should improve gender equality for all age groups and empower women to take a more active role in the labour market through age and gender-friendly labour markets and social protection systems. Local authorities can help through an adequate offer of child and eldercare facilities;
 - ▶ the European Union has a key role in supporting informal carers, mainly women, and an EU proposal for legal provisions on carers' leave is most needed;
 - ▶ raise awareness of the collective and individual responsibilities in ensuring active and healthy ageing to all;
 - ▶ need to develop a common EU methodology to assess poverty and dignity in old age and define criteria for an adequate income in old age based on people's individual needs. A European benchmark is needed for that purpose;
 - ▶ strengthening solidarity within and between generations at national and local level and within the community remains a challenge in today's context of demographic ageing. Innovative solutions are needed to allow family members of different age and population groups to 'interconnect';
 - ▶ better coordinate actions between the various health and social services that older people need to grow in good health and remain autonomous. A holistic approach to wellbeing and active ageing is necessary and this is not only a matter of financial resources;

- ▶ give a strong voice to older people and their organisations at all levels to enable them to co-produce the solutions they need to be involved in society and to contribute to their community.

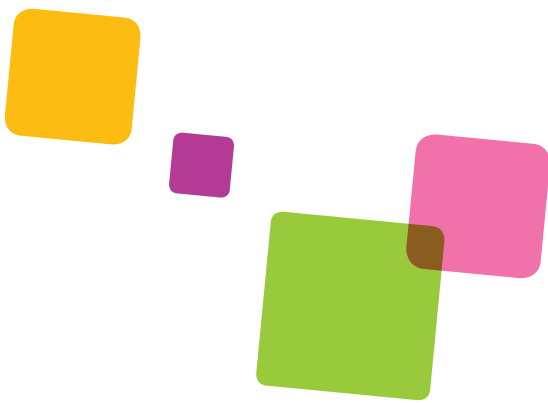
The thematic seminar on age-friendly environments confirmed the need to:

- ▶ mainstream the promotion of an age-friendly environment in all relevant EU policy processes and funding programmes to support action at all levels;
- ▶ a European Strategy for Active and Healthy Ageing and an Age-Friendly European Union to help Member States achieve their Europe 2020 objective to create smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;
- ▶ build synergies between existing EU policy processes and funding programmes and the UN policy instruments and implementation programmes on ageing to ensure that these processes will deliver better outcomes in the promotion of active ageing and solidarity between generations;
- ▶ Create an EU Age-Friendly Environment Network;
- ▶ Create an EU Covenant on Demographic Change to gather and support local;
- ▶ and regional public authorities committed to fostering active ageing and intergenerational solidarity in their communities.

Annexes

I. Useful links

- ▶ Active Citizens for Europe: A guide to the EU: www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/activesenior_citizens_for_europe_-_a_guide_to_the_eu.pdf
- ▶ How to promote active ageing in Europe - EU support to local and regional actors: www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/brochure_activeageing_en.pdf
- ▶ Older people also suffer for the crisis: www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/olderpeoplealsosufferforthe_crisis-en.pdf
- ▶ EY2012 dedicated page on AGE website: www.age-platform.eu/en/age-policy-work/employment-and-active-ageing/2012-european-year-on-active-ageing-and-intergenerational-solidarity
- ▶ Link to AGE Campaign for an Age-Friendly European Union by 2020: www.age-platform.eu/en/component/content/article/1457 (including AGE Roadmap and Manifesto).
- ▶ AGE thematic seminar on Age-friendly labour market and social protection systems: www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/Special_Briefing_Seminar_15_March_FINAL.pdf



- ▶ AGE thematic seminar on The impact of the crisis on older people: www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/CoverAGE/EN/Special_Briefing_June-Jul12.pdf
- ▶ AGE thematic seminar on Creating an Age-Friendly EU by 2020: www.age-platform.eu/en/age-policy-work/accessibility/lastest-news/1544-age-thematic-seminar-on-qcreating-an-age-friendly-european-unionq
- ▶ WHO Europe: www.euro.who.int/en
- ▶ WHO Guide: www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities_guide/en/index.html
- ▶ WHO Age-friendly Environments Programme: www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities/en
- ▶ Peer review on age friendly goods and services: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1024&langId=en&newsId=1395&furtherNews=yes>
- ▶ Social investment package: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en>

II. List of main acronyms

AEIP	European Association of Paritarian Institutions
AFE	Age-Friendly Environments
AT	Assistive Technology
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CESI	European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions
CEV	European Volunteer Centre
CoR	Committee of the Regions
EIP AHA	European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EU	European Union
EY2012	European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
LTC	Long-Term Care
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SIP	Strategic Implementation Plan
WHO	World Health Organisation



TOWARDS AN **AGE-FRIENDLY** EU

Join AGE Virtual Network on age-friendly environments in Europe!

www.age-platform.eu/en/component/content/article/1457

Would you like to be regularly updated on our campaign for an age-friendly European Union? Are you interested in supporting our work to get an EU Covenant on Demographic Change? Register to our growing network of stakeholders (public authorities, NGOs, service providers, industry, researchers). You will receive a monthly update on our work. We will also use this tool to keep as many organisations as possible on board and ask them for relevant input when needed.