



European Year for **Active Ageing**
and **Solidarity between Generations 2012**



The EU Contribution to Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

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Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Unit D.3

Manuscript completed in June 2012

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012

ISBN 978-92-79-25123-8

doi:10.2767/67267

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Printed in Belgium

PRINTED ON ELEMENTAL CHLORINE-FREE BLEACHED PAPER (ECF)

Foreword by Commissioner Andor



We tend to forget that population ageing is a major achievement – the result of healthier living conditions and medical breakthroughs that reduce premature mortality. Additionally, people now have more freedom to choose whether and when to have children.

Yet it is undoubtedly true that the rapid ageing of Europe's population over the coming decades and the upcoming retirement of the 'baby-boom' generation presents real challenges. Many people fear that life will be harder in the much older societies in which we will be living and that tensions or even open conflict between the generations will be unavoidable.

The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 has sought to forestall any such negative developments. The key is to support active ageing across all aspects of life, from professional, community and familial activities to the capacity to age healthily and independently. This will be the basis for solidarity between generations in the years to come. It means that, as we age, we retain control over our own lives rather than having to depend on the younger generations.

Active ageing starts in the workplace. A third of Europeans said recently in a Eurobarometer survey that they would like to stay in work after they have reached the age at which they are entitled to a pension, though not necessarily full time. But not many Europeans currently get the chance to do so.

At the same time, it means changing our attitudes to what it means to be older, shifting upwards the borderline between 'young' and 'old' as our life expectancy increases and increasing our appreciation of the support and experience older people can and do offer in all areas of life. Active ageing also means offering better support to older people who need it so that health impairments do not automatically lead to exclusion and excessive dependence on the help of others, ensuring a life of dignity.

It is a vast agenda to which all levels of government, businesses, trade unions and civil society must contribute. The main policy instruments are in the hands of policymakers in the Member States. However, the European Union (EU) has a role to play in this regard. It can mobilise a wide range of policy instruments to support Member States and other stakeholders in their efforts.

The European Year provides an opportunity for all of us to think about what we can do to make active ageing a reality and to commit to new initiatives in the years to come. This brochure presents the EU's contribution to the active ageing agenda and shows that the EU is a strong partner in this regard.

I hope this brochure will help strengthen the resolve to work together at European level and inspire more determined efforts in all Member States to promote active ageing, thereby ensuring that solidarity between generations can withstand the test of population ageing.

László ANDOR

Commissioner responsible for employment, social affairs and inclusion

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Introduction

The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 seeks to incentivise stakeholders at all levels to set ambitious goals and to take action that will enable our societies to cope with demographic ageing by strengthening the contribution that older people make to society and enhancing their independence.

This is a timely initiative, since the large cohorts born in the late 1940s and the 1950s are now reaching retirement age. Thus, demographic change is happening now in the EU, with massive social, economic, budgetary and political consequences.

Two trends are particularly noticeable. Firstly, the total working-age population (15-64 year-olds) is set to fall by 20.8 million from 2005 to 2030 as the baby-boom cohorts retire. This has tremendous implications for the future of jobs and growth in the EU, as well as for the sustainability of social protection and health systems, which face a widening gap between spending needs and revenues from taxes and contributions.

Secondly, the number of elderly people is increasing rapidly. The number of people aged 80+ is set to increase by 57.1 % between 2010 and 2030 ⁽¹⁾. This will mean 12.6 million more people aged 80+ in Europe, with significant implications for health and care services.

Demographic change can be successfully tackled through a positive approach that focuses on the potentials of the older age groups. The concept of active ageing is at the heart of this positive response to demographic change, which is essential to preserve solidarity between generations. Active ageing principally means three things:

1. Enabling both women and men to remain in employment longer – by overcoming structural barriers (including a lack of support for informal carers) and offering appropriate incentives, many older people can be helped to remain active in the labour market, with systemic and individual benefits.
2. Facilitating active citizenship through enabling environments that harness the contribution that older women and men can make to society.
3. Enabling both women and men to keep in good health and to live independently as they grow older, thanks to a life-course approach to healthy ageing combined with adapted housing and local environments that allow elderly people to remain in their own homes as long as possible.

Europe can only meet the challenges of demographic change through active ageing; its future prosperity and social cohesion depend on it.

The EU's **Europe 2020 strategy** aims to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. It has set five specific targets for the EU to meet by 2020, including an employment rate of 75 % for all 20-64 year-olds and at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion ⁽²⁾.

Active ageing is an essential part of the Europe 2020 strategy, the success of which depends to a large extent on enabling older people to contribute fully within and outside the labour market. Older people have to be empowered to remain active as workers, consumers, carers, volunteers and citizens.

Eurobarometer Survey on Active Ageing

According to a 2012 Eurobarometer survey, the majority of Europeans (60 %) reject the need for higher retirement ages. Rejection is strongest in Romania (87 %), Latvia (86 %) and Slovakia (83 %). Only in Denmark (58 %), the Netherlands (55 %), Ireland (53 %), the UK (51 %) and Austria (49 %) the majority of respondents agrees on the need for the official retirement age to rise.

This rejection does not, however, mean that Europeans are not ready or willing to consider working longer. Some 61 % support the idea that people should be allowed to continue working once they have reached the official retirement age, and 53 % reject the idea of compulsory retirement age.

Active ageing is the basis for solidarity between generations – a goal of the EU enshrined in Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty. It means that older people can take charge of their own lives and contribute to society – and allows more to be done for those elderly people who depend most on the support of others.

The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 aims to create new momentum to achieve the goals set, including the wider economic and societal goals, by raising awareness of these crucial issues, by changing attitudes and by engaging all levels of society in an effort to offer better opportunities to older people to remain active and to participate as full members of society alongside the younger generations.

The European Commission hopes that the Year will produce new actions and new commitments on the part of Member States, local and regional authorities, social partners and civil society organisations to promote active ageing and thus strengthen solidarity between generations. Each of these

⁽¹⁾ Eurostat base scenario.

⁽²⁾ Other targets cover Education, Climate Change and Energy, and Research and Development spending. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/targets/index_en.htm

players has to make a specific contribution and should see the Year as an occasion for reviewing what more can be done to promote active ageing.

This is also true for the EU, which has only limited competence in many key areas of the active ageing agenda, but can nevertheless make a significant contribution in supporting the actions taken in the Member States. This brochure sets out what the EU is doing to encourage active ageing. It presents the instruments that can support an active ageing policy:

- European legislation;
- EU funding through the Structural and Cohesion Funds;
- European research and innovation initiatives;
- Numerous EU-level strategies, programmes, processes and initiatives designed to facilitate mutual learning between Member States and regions.

The brochure covers existing measures at EU level, but also looks at others that are still being discussed, such as legislation in the pipeline and proposals for funding programmes in the new 2014-20 budget cycle.

1. Active ageing and the fundamental goals and values of the EU

The EU's commitment to the active ageing agenda is based on its core values, as defined in the Treaties. The 2009 [Lisbon Treaty](#) confirmed that 'The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights ⁽³⁾ ... It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men [and] solidarity between generations.'⁽⁴⁾

The strongest and most explicit manifestation of these values can be found in the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#), which is legally binding for actions by any EU body, and also applies to Member States when they are implementing EU law. The chapter on equality in the Charter contains two articles (see box) which clearly show the links with the active ageing agenda.

The Charter also contains additional rights relevant to active ageing objectives in areas such as gender equality, social security, healthcare and education.

The EU has signed the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), which covers individual autonomy, non-discrimination, full and effective participation in society, equality of opportunity and accessibility. These are key active ageing issues for many people who have developed a disabling condition.

Additionally, Article 6(2) of the Treaty on European Union commits the EU to accede to the [European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#) (of the Council of Europe), which notably establishes the European Court of Human Rights.

The European Commission has created the [e-Justice Portal](#) to help people understand the rights conferred by these instruments and how they can be enforced.

Active ageing in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

Article 21(i) – Non-discrimination

Any discrimination based on any ground [– including disability and age –] shall be prohibited.

Article 25 – The rights of the elderly

The Union recognises and respects the rights of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life.

⁽³⁾ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union: Article 2.

⁽⁴⁾ Ibid. Article 3.

2. EU legislation supporting active ageing

While the most relevant areas for active ageing remain a primary responsibility of the Member States, there are several key areas where EU legislation contributes to the overall active ageing agenda. Such laws can only be adopted on issues where the Treaties give the EU the power to act.

Anti-discrimination

A **directive** is a legislative act of the EU that requires Member States to adopt legal provisions to achieve a certain result, without prescribing the exact form and means of implementation.

Implementing the core values of the EU as defined in the Treaties involves tackling discrimination on a number of different grounds, including age and disability. Age-based discrimination threatens individuals' ability to participate fully in the labour market and in

society more broadly. Discrimination also undermines society's efforts to meet employment targets and address the challenges of demographic change.

Tackling age discrimination in the labour market is essential to achieving active ageing in employment. Whilst older workers are being asked and encouraged to remain in work longer, it is essential that there are employment opportunities available to them. Age-based discrimination unjustly limits the range of opportunities available to older workers.

In 2000, the EU adopted **Council Directive 2000/78/EC** which lays down a general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation as regards employment and occupation. It requires Member States to make illegal the unequal treatment of people, including on the grounds of age and disability, in the areas of employment, occupation or self-employed activities, including recruitment conditions, promotion, vocational training, working conditions, and membership of organisations.

The directive requires Member States to put in place national legislation that prohibits direct and indirect discrimination and also harassment and victimisation on the basis of age. Differences in treatment on grounds of age are only allowed where they are objectively justified by a legitimate labour market aim and if the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

All Member States have transposed this non-discrimination principle into their national law. The European Commission has monitored this process, launching wherever necessary infringement procedures against Member States which have not satisfactorily implemented the principles of the directive.

In view of the European Year 2012, Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, has published in September 2011 a report on **Tackling Ageism and Discrimination** based on a survey of the work of equality bodies on the age ground.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has stated that the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of age is a general principle of EU law in that it constitutes a specific application of the general principle of equal treatment ⁽⁵⁾. For a detailed study on ECJ interpretations of key issues such as retirement and recruitment ages, see *Evolution of ECJ Case-Law on Age Discrimination*, Robin Allen QC ⁽⁶⁾.

Proposed legislation

Anti-discrimination in access to goods and services

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a directive prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of age (among other grounds) in access to goods and services, social protection and education.

This directive would complete the EU legislative framework on equal treatment on the basis of age. It is still under negotiation in the Council.

Accessibility

The European Commission is exploring the development of a new European Accessibility Act to improve accessibility of goods and services to consumers.

The act would focus on potentially vulnerable consumers such as persons with disabilities and older people. A public consultation closed in February 2012.

Gender equality legislation

Equality between women and men is one of the common values on which the Union is founded, and promoting it is listed among the tasks of the Union in the Treaties. Article 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights states that 'Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay'.

The EU has adopted several specific **gender equality directives** that contribute to the achievement of active ageing objectives. They do this by tackling key areas of gender inequality that limit access to employment and lifelong learning opportunities. These inequalities result in lower retirement income and higher risks of poverty in old age for older women.

Gender equality legislation of particular relevance for active ageing are the directives on:

- Implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (**2006/54/EC**). This

⁽⁵⁾ See ECJ Cases: C-144/04 Mangold (2005); and C-555/07 Seda Küçükdeveci (2010).

⁽⁶⁾ <http://www.cloisters.com/news-pdf-downloads/robin-allen-qc-evolution-of-ecj-case-law-march-2011.pdf>

recast directive incorporates the previously applicable directives on:

- Equal Pay (75/117/EEC);
- Equal Treatment as regards Access to Employment, Vocational Training and Promotion, and Working Conditions (76/207/EEC amended by 2002/73/EC);
- Occupational Social Security Schemes (86/378/EEC, amended by 96/97/EEC).
- Progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (79/7/EEC).
- Application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity (2010/41/EU). From August 2012, this directive repeals the earlier directive (86/613/EEC).
- Implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (2004/113/EC).

These directives are complemented by non-legislative action in the context of the EU strategy for equality between women and men 2010-15 (p. 16) and with funding provided under the EU programme for employment and solidarity, Progress (p. 17).

Health and safety at work

Health and safety at work is essential for preventing occupational accidents and work-related diseases. Ensuring the health and safety of workers throughout their working career is a precondition for a sustainable working life and for active and healthy ageing after retirement. It forms an important part of the comprehensive measures to enable and encourage people to continue working longer and thus support the sustainability of pension systems.

The EU has adopted a series of **health and safety at work directives** setting out general requirements on the prevention and protection of occupational risks at the workplace. Member States must ensure that their national legislation respects these directives and that they are effectively implemented.

The European Commission supports Member States' efforts through European campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives in the context of a multiannual strategy on health and safety at work (2007-12) that is currently being evaluated. The **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)** is a key player in this strategy.

Social security and free movement

Active ageing also requires that EU citizens can enjoy their social protection rights anywhere in the EU. The EU has agreed measures that serve to protect the access of people who are, or have been, geographically mobile to the social security and social protection systems that allow older people to participate in society and live independently.

Social dialogue and active ageing

The European Commission fosters bipartite 'social dialogue' between business organisations and trade unions, as well as participating in tripartite dialogue. This has led to framework agreements, some of which have become part of European legislation. They can be highly relevant for active ageing in the labour market, for example, on:

- Parental leave
- Part-time working
- Fixed-term work
- Teleworking
- Working conditions for temporary workers

Dialogue has been taking place around extending parental leave to filial leave (caring for any dependent family member) and also extending childcare targets and provisions to cover care services for all dependents.

A European regulation on the coordination of social security systems (883/2004) ensures that citizens can build up social security entitlements even if they were covered by different jurisdictions throughout their career, and that they can enjoy their statutory pensions and social protection anywhere in the EU.

The build-up of occupational (second pillar) pension rights of people who move across borders is not yet protected in a similar way by EU legislation. **Directive 98/49/EC of 29 June 1998** ensures that people moving across borders can receive their occupational pension rights anywhere in the EU and that they are not treated less favourably than people who change jobs within their country, but **legislation on ensuring that mobile workers can acquire vested pension rights and that these are preserved** after a worker has left an occupational pension scheme is still pending.

Occupational pension rights, not just of workers who move across borders, are also protected by two European directives. One of them covers institutions for occupational retirement provision (2003/41/EC) and provides for cross-border oversight and rules for occupational pension systems in the internal market. The other directive concerns the protection of employees in the event of the insolvency of their employer (2008/94/EC) and requires Member States to take measures to protect occupational pension rights.

Access to healthcare is particularly important for older people. The regulation on the coordination of social security legislations (883/2004) provides for equal access to statutory health insurance and healthcare systems for people who move across borders. In addition, the Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (2011/24/EU) protects patients' right to all the information they require on receiving healthcare in another EU Member State.

3. How European Structural and Cohesion Funds support active ageing

A major proportion of the EU budget is used to support Member State efforts to create jobs, promote economic development and to achieve social, economic and territorial cohesion across the Union. Active and healthy ageing is a central element of meeting these overall goals and is therefore prominently visible in the funding programmes and projects.

The European Social Fund (ESF)

With a budget of EUR 75 billion for the programming period 2007-13, the ESF promotes more and better jobs by funding initiatives to help people improve their skills and job prospects across Europe, but particularly in the less prosperous countries. The European Commission agrees funding priorities but is not directly involved in selecting projects, which are managed through ESF **managing authorities** in each country.

The **ESF** is a major source of European innovation, experimentation and progress in promoting active ageing in employment. It has already been used to fund initiatives by a wide range of bodies to (re-)train older workers, adapt enterprises to the employment of older workers and combat age discrimination in the job market and workplace.

The ESF has funded local and regional projects testing new and creative ways of enabling active ageing in employment and also created transnational networks that promote the exchange of the good ideas and policies developed.

In October 2011, the Commission proposed rules for the future cohesion policy, including the ESF. The proposal foresees an overall increase of ESF funding to EUR 84 billion for the programming period 2014-20. Promoting active and healthy ageing is one of the proposed investment priorities of the ESF in the new period.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The **ERDF** has a budget of EUR 201 billion in the current programming period 2007-13 to support initiatives to promote the general economic and social development of Europe's regions, the reduction of regional disparities by helping in particular the most disadvantaged regions, and to improve equal access to public services. The ERDF is contributing significant funding to developing social and health infrastructure and services to provide national and regional responses to some of the challenges of societal ageing, including transformations of the social and healthcare systems.

A network to promote a more effective role of the ESF in promoting active ageing

The **ESF-AGE Network** of public authorities from 14 EU Member States and regions. By sharing and pooling knowledge and good practice, they define, validate and disseminate guidelines and other tools to support policymakers and other stakeholders in the preparation, development and implementation of age-management strategies in the new programming period.

In the context of European Territorial Cooperation, projects addressing the issues of active and healthy ageing are supported under the Interreg IV-C sub-programme and URBACT programme.

Two of its sub-programmes – jointly funded by ERDF and the participating Member States – provide particular support to regional development initiatives that can contribute to the objective of active and healthy ageing.

An Interreg IV project on ageing in cities: Q-ageing (Quality ageing in an urban environment) has been a cooperation between **nine cities and organisations** to share information and ideas on improving public services and the urban environment to meet the emerging needs of an ageing population.

The **Interreg IVC** sub-programme has funded initiatives to promote senior entrepreneurs, cross-generational business innovation, healthcare technologies, independent living and cities for all ages. These projects have been part of an overall approach to support exchange of good practice, new ideas and strategic planning between regions to create better policymaking for jobs and growth.

The **Urbact II** Urban II sub-programme has funded networks of cities to explore solutions to major economic, environmental and social urban challenges, notably ageing populations. It has funded networks looking at issues such as tackling the barriers to the employment of older workers in cities, and urban accessibility and security issues, as well as effective strategies in promoting the positive potential of the young generation.

The Baltic Sea Region Programme, through ERDF investments, is strengthening the development towards a sustainable, competitive and territorially integrated approach across borders. Ageing is one of the topics that this programme seeks to address.

An Urbact II project for mutual learning

ActiveAge was an interregional cooperation project to actively promote mutual learning between nine European cities to develop common methodologies, identify good practices and improve cities' capacity to face demographic change. It looked at key issues such as: 'age and the economy' (looking in particular at conditions for a longer working life); 'age and care' as well as 'age and inclusion' with actions addressing active citizenship and access to adequate housing.

The Commission proposes in the 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework to allocate EUR 376 billion for spending on cohesion policy instruments. According to this proposal, the ERDF would have up to EUR 183 billion from the wider structural funds. The investment priorities broadly reflect, and should help to implement, the headline targets and initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, making them highly relevant also to active ageing goals around employment, participation in society, and healthy and independent living.

Cooperating on ageing in the Baltic Sea Region: 'Best Agers'

The '**Best Agers**' initiative focuses on people aged 55 and older. Its goal is to promote cross-generational innovation and to get the 'best agers' to work together with younger people in the areas of business and skills development, generating new ideas and sharing experiences and knowledge.

Cohesion Fund

The Cohesion Fund is the EU's financial instrument for achieving the objective of convergence between the least developed and most developed Member States in the EU. It aims to reduce economic and social gaps and to stabilise the economies of Member States. The budget of EUR 69.6 billion for 2007-13 is spent only in the poorer Member States whose gross national income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90% of the Community average.

The fund notably supports environment and transport infrastructure projects in these countries. By developing accessible transport systems, the Fund can contribute to active ageing. Moreover, public sector reform in social- and healthcare, with a special attention on ageing, has been identified as a key objective of the post-2013 cohesion policy.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

With a budget of EUR 96 billion for the programming period 2007-13, the EAFRD is the EU's financial instrument for supporting rural development. It supports activities to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, the diversification of the rural economy, the environmental conditions and attractiveness of the countryside and the quality of life in rural areas.

Tackling isolation of older people in rural areas

Village Meeting Point is a project funded by the EAFRD. It created a meeting place for previously isolated elderly people in the Danish village of Idestrup. It included IT facilities and training, a fitness centre, a café and a small shop, greatly facilitating active ageing in the community.

The **EAFRD** notably funds projects that support the development of social services and social infrastructure for the benefit of ageing communities in rural areas. Many rural areas are particularly affected by demographic change as young people move away in search of job and education opportunities elsewhere, leaving behind a rapidly ageing population.

The wide range of activities to promote active ageing that are eligible for support through the EAFRD include promoting knowledge and human potential through vocational training and advisory services, the diversification into non-agricultural activities and the promotion of local services in rural areas ⁽⁷⁾.

The rural development programmes also support projects based on the 'Leader approach'. This approach offers local partnerships the possibility to design projects to address very specific local problems – related for example to ageing communities, the lack of job opportunities and inadequate public services for older people.

The Commission proposal on support for rural development by the EAFRD for the programming period 2014-20 (COM(2011) 627) foresees possible actions for ageing communities in rural areas, such as knowledge transfer and information actions, advisory services, basic services and village renewal, farm and business development and the establishment and support of specific local development strategies addressing active ageing in rural areas under 'Leader approach'.

⁽⁷⁾ The RDP Projects Database demonstrates how the EAFRD is being used in practice: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm

4. Research and innovation

The EU has a major role to play in supporting and coordinating research and innovation, including in the field of active and healthy ageing. Its main funding instrument is the seventh framework programme, but funding for research and innovation can also be mobilised from other sources. In addition, the EU can promote partnerships that can develop synergies thanks to the pooling of resources and a better coordination of research efforts.

The seventh framework programme for research and technological development (FP7)

FP7 has a total budget of EUR 50.5 billion for the period 2007-13 and co-finances transnational research, technological developments and demonstration projects that provide answers to Europe's challenges in the global knowledge-based economy.

The programme provides the overall framework for all the EU's research initiatives, including those aimed at providing responses to demographic change. Through its numerous research strands ⁽⁸⁾, the programme has funded projects covering an impressive range of disciplines, themes and tools related to active and healthy ageing, including:

- fundamental research into ageing, unravelling the mechanisms of ageing and longevity;
- technological innovation to support independent living of older citizens;
- e-inclusion and e-health;
- more accessible public transport;
- ICT solutions for longer working lives;
- research into new treatments targeting diseases more common in elderly populations;
- public health and social sciences.

EU-funded projects are documented on the website of **CORDIS**, the Community Research and Development Information Service.

Multilinks (FP7 – Cooperation – socioeconomic sciences)

Multilinks has explored the realities of demographic change, intergenerational solidarity, well-being, and social integration to provide the basis for better policy-making for avoiding the risks of social exclusion for all age groups.

⁽⁸⁾ See 'Understanding the Seventh Framework Programme', http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=understanding

The next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation **Horizon 2020** will, according to the Commission proposal, have a EUR 80 billion budget for the period 2014-20, and will focus on implementing the **Innovation Union**, a flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 agenda. It will aim to turn innovative ideas into breakthroughs to address key societal challenges such as active ageing and gain competitive advantages to promote jobs and growth. It will be accompanied by a set of measures destined to further develop the **European Research Area**. Roadmaps are foreseen to provide overall strategies for research into ageing.

Cohesion Policy supporting research and innovation

EU Cohesion Policy has a strong focus on innovation, which is a requirement of the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion policy for the programming period 2007-13. The guidelines stress that in order to promote sustainable development and strengthen competitiveness it is essential to concentrate resources on research and innovation (RTDI), entrepreneurship, ICT and training and adaptability of workers.

Innovation-related measures are included in most of the 455 operational programmes with a foreseen investment of EUR 86 billion (of which around EUR 7 billion from the ERDF and EUR 14 billion from the ESF). Cohesion policy with its system of design and delivery that encompasses multi-level governance is in a unique position to deliver a systemic approach to innovation that includes all regions.

Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)

With a budget of EUR 3 621 million in the period 2007-13, the **CIP** supports innovation activities – including eco-innovation and better ICT use, particularly in SMEs which often struggle to access finance for such activities.

The CIP has supported small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing innovative activities that respond to the challenges and opportunities of demographic change and provide solutions for active ageing.

The CIP has three sub-programmes, each of which can be directly relevant to healthy and active ageing objectives:

1. The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (**EIP**) can fund innovative practices around employing older workers or delivering innovative products to older consumers.
2. The Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme (**ICT-PSP**) stimulates a wider uptake of innovative ICT-based services, including ICT for health, ageing and inclusion.
3. The Intelligent Energy Europe Programme (**IEE**) can address green mobility issues which may also reduce obstacles to active ageing.

The Commission proposes a new Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (**COSME**) for 2014-20 with a budget of EUR 2.5 billion. This programme will include only the competitive part of the **CIP**. The innovative part of the CIP will be transferred to the Horizon 2020 programme.

InCasa (ICT-PSP)

InCasa has developed an ICT-based system integrating user-focused health and environment monitoring and a specialised services network to protect frail elderly people and prolong the time they can live well in their own homes.

AENEAS (IEE)

Aeneas has aimed to become a European reference project for Attaining Energy-Efficient Mobility in an Ageing Society. It has promoted progress on the supply and demand side in encouraging the urban mobility of older people.

Joint programming in research

Joint programming, through public-public and public-private research partnerships, is becoming an increasingly important means for tackling the challenges of demographic change in Europe. Such voluntary approaches aim to avoid duplication between research efforts at national levels in different countries and between different types of research institutions.

The **Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme (AAL)** aims to enhance the quality of life of older people. It funds projects using intelligent products and the provision of remote services, including care services to improve the lives of older people at home, in the workplace and in society in general. It has a total budget of around EUR 700 million for the period 2008-13, sourced approximately 50-50 from public (national and EU) and private bodies.

ALIAS (AAL Joint Programme)

ALIAS has developed a mobile robot system that interacts with elderly users and provides assistance in daily life promoting healthy ageing and independent living.

The EU and Member States have also launched two specific **Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs)** aimed at facilitating the achievement of active and healthy ageing. JPIs aim to ensure better coordination and collaboration between European and national research programmes, including the possibility to launch joint initiatives.

The **More Years, Better Lives** JPI aims to address the specific challenges and opportunities of demographic change by developing new multi-disciplinary knowledge as the basis for future research, innovation and policymaking.

The **Neurodegenerative Disease Research** JPI aims ultimately at finding cures for neurodegenerative diseases – in particular Alzheimer's. It seeks to collaborate to improve understanding of the disease and develop tools to enable early identification and treatment, including structures to assist patients and their families.

Additional funding for research on Alzheimer's is also provided through the **Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)**, a EUR 2 billion public-private partnership between the European Commission (FP7) and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) to support the development of tools and methodologies for safer and more efficient drugs.

PharmaCog (IMI)

PharmaCog is a pan-European partnership of experts – who would normally be competing – working together to deliver high quality Alzheimer's medication.

The European Innovation Partnership for Active and Healthy Ageing

An ambitious new initiative to step up research and innovation for active and healthy ageing is the pilot **European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing**. It has set itself the target of increasing the average healthy lifespan by two years by 2020. This would imply a triple win: improving the health status and quality of life of older people, enhancing the sustainability of social and healthcare systems, and creating new business opportunities and jobs around innovative products.

Its approach is to facilitate the engagement of all stakeholders in overcoming the barriers to the delivery of practical innovation in the fields of:

1. prevention, screening and early diagnosis;
2. care and cure;
3. active and independent living of elderly people.

In practical terms, the Partnership will look to join up resources and expertise in the field, bridge knowledge gaps, speed up the innovation process and facilitate the scaling up and multiplying of new products and services. It will do this notably by overseeing the optimisation, alignment, coordination and efficiency of the existing EU financial tools.

A **Strategic Implementation Plan** of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing was agreed by a Steering Group of stakeholders in late 2011. It foresees the first set of specific actions of the Partnership to be carried out by public authorities, businesses and civil society from now to 2020. They include:

1. finding innovative ways to ensure patients follow their prescriptions;
2. finding innovative solutions to prevent falls and support early diagnosis for older people;
3. promoting cooperation to help prevent functional decline and frailty, with a particular focus on malnutrition;

4. promoting successful integrated care models for chronic diseases amongst older patients, such as through remote monitoring;
5. improving the uptake of interoperable ICT-based independent living solutions through global standards;
6. promoting innovation for age-friendly and accessible buildings, cities and environments.

A [Communication on Taking Forward the Strategic Implementation Plan](#) from the European Commission looks at EU support for these actions through ensuring an adequate regulatory and funding framework and creating a European marketplace for evidence and innovative ideas.

5. EU support to national policymakers: coordinated strategies and mutual learning

Understanding demographic change

At the heart of promoting active ageing and meeting the targets of the Europe 2020 agenda is a sound understanding of the unprecedented demographic changes facing modern society. The EU has taken an active role in encouraging Member States, regions and stakeholders to develop their understanding of the challenges and potential solutions for harnessing the full potential of an ageing population.

The **European Demography Forum** brings together, every two years since 2006, key European policymakers, stakeholders and experts to discuss how to address demographic change. The European Commission publishes a supporting **European demography report** setting out the main facts and figures concerning demographic change and discussing appropriate policy responses.

In 2007, the European Commission set up an **Expert Group on Demographic Issues**, made up of representatives from all Member States. It is tasked with advising the Commission notably in relation to implementing the policy guidelines set out in the Commission's 2006 policy paper. The Commission holds **regular seminars and good practice workshops** on demographic issues which feed into the group's work.

Developing a research agenda for well-being in families

In the context of the EAF, the project **FAMILYPLATFORM** has been funded for a duration of 18 months (October 2009-March 2011) by the European Union's seventh framework programme to take stock of existing research and to define a research agenda aimed at increasing the well-being of families across Europe.

In view of the European Year, Eurostat published a comprehensive set of data on **Active ageing and solidarity between generations: A statistical portrait of the European Union 2012**, with statistics covering demographics, the labour market, transition from work to retirement, well-being and healthcare, living conditions and participation in society. A **Eurobarometer survey on active ageing**, also published in January 2012, gives an idea of European attitudes to issues such as ageing, retirement ages, voluntary work, elderly care and technology for older people, revealing some interesting cultural differences.

The **European Alliance for Families** (EAF) has brought together EU and government representatives to exchange ideas, knowledge and experience since 2007. It focuses on promoting more family-friendly policies that enable people – particularly women – to balance their working and family lives in the face of demographic change, notably increasing caring responsibilities.

The European Commission's Communication on **The Demographic Future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity** (COM(2006) 571) set out policy responses to demographic change, including better reconciliation of working and family life, longer working lives of better quality, increased productivity, a better integration of migrants, and sustainable public finances to guarantee adequate social protection systems in the long run.

The European Employment Strategy

Promoting active ageing in employment is both an essential part of the active ageing agenda and a key element of achieving Europe's economic and social goals for the future. It is essential that ways be found that overcome the structural and behavioural obstacles that prevent older workers from remaining active in the labour market.

Employment policies are a Member State competence. However, the EU can play a role in achieving mutually shared employment objectives. The European Commission works to oversee and facilitate mutual learning between Member States on promoting more and better jobs in the EU. The **European Employment Strategy** provides a framework⁽⁹⁾ for EU countries to share experience, learning and ideas in employment policy with overall analysis and recommendations provided by the Commission.

The Europe 2020 strategy has set an EU employment rate target of 75 % of women and men aged 20-64 by 2020. To achieve this rate, the Commission is encouraging Member States to implement active ageing policies that both discourage the use of early retirement schemes and aim at favouring employment retention and the reintegration of senior workers.

One of the flagship European initiatives of Europe 2020 is the **Agenda for New Skills and Jobs**. This highlights the importance of skills upgrading of older workers who are particularly vulnerable to economic restructuring and policies to support labour market transitions of older people, particularly from unemployment back to work. The Lifelong Learning Programme is highly relevant in this context (p. 18).

In April 2012, the Commission adopted a new **employment package** to encourage Member States to stimulate labour demand, reduce taxes on labour, support skills development in areas with the biggest future job creation potential such as the green economy, health services and ICT. It stressed in particular lifelong learning as a key to security in employment.

⁽⁹⁾ See the Open Method of Coordination: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm

Eurofound: A tripartite EU agency providing policy expertise on living and working conditions

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin provides information, advice and expertise – on living and working conditions, industrial relations and managing change in Europe – to the key actors in the field of EU social policy, including governments, EU institutions and the social partners. It has developed a resource pack on active ageing that looks in particular at what needs to change at the workplace to keep older workers in employment, and at labour force participation of people above the official retirement age.

The Open Method of Coordination in Social Inclusion and Social Protection

Active ageing in the labour market, active ageing in the community and healthy ageing are all affected by social protection systems and issues around poverty and social exclusion. Social protection systems and employment policies need to support each other to encourage and enable people to work longer, while social transfer schemes as well as health and social services ensure that older people can actively participate in society and live independently.

As with employment, social protection and social inclusion policies are a matter of Member State responsibility. Nevertheless, the EU makes an important contribution by supporting reforms through the definition of common goals and a process of mutual learning. This process is known as the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion (OMC)⁽¹⁰⁾. The OMC covers pensions, healthcare and long-term care, and social inclusion. It provides Member States with:

1. common objectives;
2. shared indicators to measure success;
3. a framework for reporting;
4. benchmarking to compare performance and identify best practice.

Reporting in the context of the **Social Protection Committee** helps to assess progress and identify key challenges and future priorities. Peer review seminars provide for the dissemination and discussion of good practice between Member States.

Making a decisive impact on poverty and social inclusion

Achieving the **Europe 2020 target** of lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion will require, in many countries, looking also at the situation of older people and older women in particular.

The OMC on Social Protection and Social Inclusion supports Member States in promoting access for all to the resources, rights and services needed for participation in society, combating exclusion and its causes, and enabling access to the labour market.

As well as supporting mutual learning and exchange through the OMC process, the European Commission has established the **European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion** as one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 agenda. It aims to strengthen work at all levels to reach the EU headline poverty reduction target. Notably, it seeks to promote new partnerships and social innovation and to make best use of all EU funds towards social inclusion objectives.

The Platform was created as an outcome of the **European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010**.

A priority of the European focus on combating poverty is to overcome discrimination and increase the integration of people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, immigrants and other vulnerable groups. This is directly relevant to the situation of vulnerable older people. The Platform against Poverty and Social exclusion also contains a special focus on the social risks of elderly migrants within this context, including consideration of the specific cultural and linguistic needs they may have and the particular risks of poverty and isolation they face.

A comprehensive strategy for adequate, sustainable and safe pensions

The future sustainability of adequate pension systems is a key requirement for active ageing in the coming decades. Many older people have no other source of income than their retirement pension, and without sufficient income, people are restricted in their ability to take part in society fully.

The EU has set a common framework for Member States to share ideas, approaches, knowledge and experiences with regard to pensions. This process⁽¹⁰⁾ has the following common objectives:

1. Adequate retirement incomes for all in the spirit of solidarity and fairness between and within generations;
2. Financial sustainability of public and private pension schemes, notably by supporting longer working lives and active ageing;
3. Pension systems that are transparent and well adapted to individual and societal needs.

Pensions Peer Review Examples

In 2011, nine EU countries peer reviewed the Dutch approach to **Balancing the security and affordability of funded pension schemes**.

In 2011, 10 EU countries peer reviewed German work on the **Effects of life courses on women's pensions**.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Open Method of Coordination: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm

The **2010 Joint Report on Pensions** highlighted that more reform is needed, particularly around achieving active ageing in employment – particularly for older female workers. The EU facilitates national reform efforts notably through peer reviews.

On 16 February 2012, the Commission adopted a **White Paper on Pensions** setting out how the EU and Member States can best work towards ensuring adequate incomes in retirement, notably through active ageing. It proposed measures to promote a better balance between years spent working and years spent in retirement and to enhance the opportunities for making additional retirement savings.

Cooperation in the area of healthcare and long-term care

Systems of healthcare and long-term care play a major role in enabling healthy ageing and independent living. However, these systems are under tremendous pressure at a time of demographic ageing and strained public budgets.

Organising these systems is down to national and often regional policymaking. However, an EU process ⁽¹⁰⁾ is supporting mutual exchange and learning in identifying solutions to achieve:

1. Access – to a mix of home, community and institutional services, including through affordability or insurance coverage and shorter waiting times;
2. Quality – including through better coordination between levels of care and priority on rehabilitation and helping people remain in their own home;
3. Sustainability – including through an appropriate mix of public and private finance and better coordination between services, as well as health promotion.

The EU facilitates reform processes in the Member States through peer reviews and by funding projects aimed at giving better access to international experiences to national policymakers.

Healthcare and long-term care peer review examples

In 2011, seven EU countries peer reviewed the Swedish approach to **Dealing with expanding care needs and limited resources**.

In 2009, eight EU countries peer reviewed French work on **Alzheimer's and other related diseases: coping with behavioural disorders in the patient's home**.

The EU supports active and healthy ageing also by promoting a better quality of care for frail older people, both in institutional settings and in the home. It has focused in particular on preventing elder abuse. A **Special Eurobarometer report on health and long-term care** of 2007 found that 55% of Europeans believed that many dependent older people are victims of abuse from people who are supposed to look after them.

In March 2008, the European Commission organised a major conference on **Protecting the dignity of older persons – the prevention of elder abuse and neglect** to help develop a better understanding of the phenomenon and how it can be tackled effectively across Europe.

Following this the European Parliament requested a pilot action, which the European Commission implemented through a Call for Proposals for projects focused on monitoring elder abuse through public health and long-term care systems and identifying good practice for its prevention.

A pilot initiative against elder abuse: three projects funded by the EU

EuROPEAN – European reference framework for the prevention of elder abuse and neglect
<http://www.preventelderabuse.eu>

MILCEA – Monitoring elder abuse across the European Union through public health and long-term care systems <http://www.milcea.eu>

WeDO – European Partnership for the Wellbeing and Dignity of Elder People
<http://www.wedo-partnership.eu/>

The Commission has also funded an action called **ABUEL**, which provides a multinational prevalence survey of elder abuse under the Public Health Action Programme.

The EU's **Daphne programme** fights against all forms of violence against children, young people and women and protects victims and groups at risk. It has also funded actions to tackle elder abuse. These have covered better ways for detecting, monitoring, tackling and preventing elder abuse, including physical and financial abuse. The Daphne project **Eustacea** created a **European Charter of rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance**.

The DAPHNE programme: tackling abuse within families

Breaking the Taboo 2 is working to empower health and social service professionals to combat violence against older women within families. It follows up a first project which resulted in the publication of the report **Breaking the Taboo** in 2008.

Challenging age-based discrimination

The legislation presented above is not the only means of tackling discrimination. A major contribution to this work at EU level has been activities to increase understanding and awareness of the phenomenon of age discrimination – often alongside other forms of discrimination – and how it negatively impacts on individuals and society. The Commission:

- Has been funding since 2003 a European campaign **For Diversity, Against Discrimination** which publishes films, images and written material to fight stereotypes and raise awareness of discrimination and the laws that combat it.
- Supports **Groups of Non-Discrimination Experts** which aim to provide analysis and information exchange between Member States on socioeconomic issues, the law, equality bodies and good governance. The groups validate good practice and produce publications, including two on age-discrimination and employment.
- Commissioned a **Special Eurobarometer survey on Discrimination in the EU** in 2009 to understand public attitudes to this phenomenon. It found that age was perceived by citizens to be the most common disadvantage when seeking work.

The Commission has made explicit its commitment to fight against discrimination on different grounds including age in a Communication on **Non-discrimination and equal opportunities: A renewed commitment**. The Commission promotes the systematic incorporation of non-discrimination on the grounds of age into all policies.

The Commission also funds an EU level **Exchange Platform on National Diversity Charters** – to promote this approach which encourages businesses to voluntarily meet diversity commitments. The Platform is made up of organisations that promote and implement national diversity charters and works to spread a successful diversity management culture, based on the benefits that a diverse workforce, including older workers, bring to a business.

Equal opportunities for people with disabilities

While old age is not synonymous with disability, the risk of having a physical or mental impairment rises sharply in old age. Helping the many older people who, in combination with barriers in the environment, are affected by some form of disability to overcome these barriers is an important means of promoting active ageing.

Disability policy remains mainly a Member State competence. However, the EU aims to add value to Member State policies through the promotion of good practice and mutual learning, notably from innovative projects. This seeks to contribute to implementation of the EU commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (p. 5).

The **European Disability Strategy 2010-20** elaborates the actions and instruments at EU level for overcoming the barriers to participation in employment and economic and social

life experienced by those living with a disability. The strategy covers the following topics:

1. Accessibility – following a ‘Design for All’ approach in the development of the built environment, transport, and information and communication, including the definition of European standards. (See the section on the envisaged European Accessibility Act p. 6)
2. Participation – including in social, cultural and political life.
3. Equality – the European Directive on anti-discrimination in employment (p. 6) is a major tool for tackling discrimination on the grounds of disability, which is a barrier to active ageing in employment.
4. Employment – supporting job training, education and projects developing accessible workplaces (see p. 8, 18 and 19) as well as the anti-discrimination legislation (p. 6).
5. Education and Lifelong Learning – equal access to education and lifelong learning opportunities throughout people’s whole lives (p. 18).
6. Social Protection and Inclusion – supporting mutual learning on ensuring adequate schemes in Member States (see p. 14-15).
7. Health – including equal access to high quality healthcare (p. 15) and promotion of rehabilitation and preventative care, crucial for healthy ageing (p. 11-12). The EU also promotes health and safety at work to reduce accidents that can lead to invalidity and dependence (p. 7).

The European Day of People with Disabilities – 3 December – supports these aims by bringing together the relevant stakeholders and policy actors.

A strategy for gender equality

The European Commission has adopted a dual approach to achieving gender equality, by adopting specific gender equality measures, including legislation and awareness-raising, and introducing a **gender equality perspective** into all EU policy areas, notably in the framework of the European 2020 strategy and the pension reform agenda.

Gender inequalities and gaps throughout the life-cycle result in lower retirement income and a higher risk of poverty in old age for women. Moreover, older women are the main users and providers of care services. The EU seeks to contribute to ensuring that both older women and men can benefit from an active, healthy and decent life by tackling these inequalities.

The Commission strengthened its commitment to equality between women and men with its 2010 **Women’s Charter** and its **Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-15**. It seeks to support Member States’ progress towards gender equality by:

- publishing **annual reports on equality between women and men**;
- setting up **structures** at EU level, such as the High level group on gender mainstreaming and the advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to promote gender equality, gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities for women and men;
- Creating **Networks of Gender Equality Experts**.

In 2011, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men adopted an Opinion on **The gender dimension of active ageing and solidarity between generations**

In 2011, the Gender Equality Experts Network published the report: **Active ageing and gender equality policies: the employment and social inclusion of women and men of late working and early retirement age**

Gender issues have been addressed in Commission communications, European Parliament resolutions and Council conclusions which have focused on topics such as **equal pay, equal opportunities to active and dignified ageing and the role of women in an ageing society.**

Social innovation

The EU promotes social innovation as an increasingly important concept and a source of new and creative solutions to social and societal challenges. This includes finding new ways to promote active ageing. Support is provided in the form of seed financing for new initiatives, funding for scaling up successful small-scale projects and initiatives to share good practice and innovative ideas across regional and national boundaries.

The flagship European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion has included a 'European initiative on social innovation' to develop an evidence-based approach to social reform. The initiative accesses a number of existing EU funds to support these actions, including the European Social Fund (p. 8) and Progress (see below). Social innovation is also an important element of the Innovation Union flagship initiative (p. 11).

The proposals the Commission adopted for the ESF and ERDF regulations for 2014-20 both include social innovation. This means that Member States and regions can choose to invest in social innovation and allocate structural funds money for that purpose. A guide on social innovation for the EU's regions will be issued by the Commission before summer 2012.

The EU Programme for employment and social solidarity (Progress)

With a budget of EUR 743.25 million for the period 2007-13, Progress funds activities including studies, legal and policy training, NGO networking, transnational exchange and public awareness campaigns. It contributes to the active ageing agenda through numerous activities such as:

- exploration of evidence-based policies for the transition from work to retirement;
- experts' networks on anti-discrimination, diversity and gender equality;
- training of legal and policy practitioners on anti-discrimination and gender equality;
- studies on accessibility in Europe and the European Award on Accessibility;
- social innovation projects.

Progress also gives a voice to older people by co-financing the **AGE Platform Europe**, which brings together older people's associations from across the EU, as well as similar networks on gender, disability, etc.

For the period 2014-20, the Commission has proposed a successor Programme for Social Change and Innovation. It would integrate Progress, the European Employment Services (**EURES**) and the **European Progress Microfinance Facility**.

Public health priorities, physical activity promotion and funding

Defining health policies is a Member State competence, but the EU can help develop knowledge and understanding to tackle public health issues, prevent diseases and tackle health threats. It also works to draw attention to key public health priorities in line with long-term aims of promoting healthy and active ageing.

In this context, the EU **Health Strategy 2008-13** has three stated aims:

1. Fostering good health in an ageing Europe;
2. Protecting citizens from health threats;
3. Supporting dynamic health systems and new technologies.

In 2008, European Council Conclusions urged Member States and the Commission to develop effective **public health strategies to combat neurodegenerative diseases associated with ageing**, while Council Recommendations of 2009 focused on the need to ensure **patient safety and the prevention of healthcare-associated infections**.

The European Commission has published Communications on **Telemedicine systems and services** and a **European initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias** to promote progress in these key areas for active and healthy ageing.

In the area of sports, the EU is taking on a particular role in promoting health-enhancing physical activity, including as a means for achieving active and healthy ageing. It has produced a **White Paper (2007)** and a **Communication (2011)** on sport recognising the social and economic benefits of physical activity. An Expert Group 'Sport, Health and Participation', set up by the Council, works on the promotion of physical activity. It has published specific **EU Physical Activity Guidelines** – including a specific section on services for seniors. A new EU policy initiative on the implementation of these Guidelines at national level is under preparation. **Funding for transnational projects supporting physical activity** and active ageing has been made available in 2009 and again in 2012.

The Commission has also set up health committees and expert groups to improve exchange and learning amongst key national, local and regional stakeholders on important healthy ageing issues, including topics such as **smoking, obesity, alcohol abuse, cancer** as well as cooperation mechanisms on **nutrition and physical activity, HIV/AIDS, health security and information**.

A dedicated **EU Health Programme** has provided EUR 321 million, 2008-13, to actions that promote health and reduce health inequalities; with the aim of increasing healthy

life-years and promoting healthy ageing – as well as actions around issues such as patient safety and health information. Various other EU funding programmes – research in particular (see p. 10) – also have a public health dimension.

The EC has proposed a new **Health for Growth Programme 2014-20** oriented towards the Europe 2020 objectives, in particular around employment, innovation and sustainability. It foresees specific support to the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (p. 11). The sports chapter of the Commission's proposal for the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, **Erasmus for all 2014-20**, puts a focus on the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity.

Promoting accessibility and mobility

Transport is one of the EU's foremost common policies. It has focused on enabling the free movement of individuals and goods to support the internal market. However, it has also looked at mobility issues which can be essential to enabling people to remain active in the labour market and community as they age.

The **EU Action Plan on Urban Mobility** (2009) promotes the delivery of integrated transport solutions focused on citizens in the context of demographic ageing. It notably supports greener urban transport, accessibility, passenger rights and intelligent transport systems. The EC supports innovative projects and the sharing of experience and knowledge between Member States and regions through several funding streams, including **FP7 cooperation – transport** (p.10) regional development funds (p. 8) and the **Intelligent Energy Europe** programme (p. 10).

To further promote making Europe's urban environment accessible for all, the Commission supports the **European Access City Award** that recognises and celebrates cities that are dedicated to providing an accessible environment for all, covering the physical environment, transportation, information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services.

Active ageing also requires access to goods and services (see legislation in the pipeline p. 6). The EU **Consumer policy strategy** (2007-13) specifically identifies growth in the number of older consumers as both a challenge and an opportunity for suppliers of goods and services. The strategy is directly supported by a **Consumer policy Community Action Programme** which funds activities to protect consumers' health, safety and economic and legal interests. This work will be taken forward into a new European Consumer Agenda and a Consumer Action Programme (2014-20) that will include a clear focus on older consumers.

Active ageing is also supported by an innovative project to promote social tourism. The **Calypso Programme** supports low-season tourism that benefits both disadvantaged groups, who may not otherwise be able to go on holiday, and the regions that depend on tourism for jobs and growth. Seniors who are retired or aged 65+ are a specific target group of the initiative.

Promoting ICT for active ageing

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play an increasingly important role in supporting active ageing. The Internet and new technologies provide often cost-effective and easy access to information, goods and services, social interaction, and democratic and civil processes. The EU works to facilitate the practical development of realistic ICT solutions that enable active and healthy ageing.

In 2007, the Commission launched a European Action Plan on Information and Communication Technologies and Ageing, named **Ageing Well in the Information Society**. This aimed to take advantage of the opportunities for creating new, more accessible ICT products and services for older people. These solutions aim to both support active and healthy ageing in all areas of life, as well as creating job opportunities to benefit the wider economy.

The Ageing Well Action Plan forms an integral part of the EU's **i2010 Initiative on e-Inclusion**, which aims to ensure progress by the ICT industry and public bodies towards the accessibility of all ICT products and services to disadvantaged groups. This strategy emerged following a 2008 Communication **Towards an accessible information society**, which set out suggestions for improving e-accessibility and particularly access to the Internet for people with disabilities and elderly persons.

The EU's ambitious **Digital Agenda 2020**, one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, seeks to better exploit the potential of ICTs to foster innovation, economic growth and progress. It has a specific focus on the potentials offered by the use of ICTs in responding to the needs of an ageing population, through **digital literacy and skills, e-health and telemedicine systems and services**. It contains specific actions to improve accessibility for older persons and those with disabilities, thus contributing to active ageing goals.

These various related actions plans are also supported by numerous European funding programmes, notably: **FP7-ICT** (see p. 10); **ICT-PSP** (p. 11); **AAL** (p. 11), the EIP (p. 11), and the EAFRD sub-programmes (p. 9).

Encouraging lifelong learning

Making lifelong learning a reality will enable active ageing by developing and maintaining the skills and competences people need to work and to take part fully in society. Education policies are a Member State responsibility; however the EU works to support the contribution education can make to meeting overall EU economic and social objectives in the context of an ageing society. **Education and Training (ET) 2020** provides the strategic framework for this European cooperation.

The European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training set out their priorities for enhanced European cooperation up to 2020 in the **Bruges Communiqué**. It specifically addresses the importance of updating the skills and competences of older workers. Meanwhile, the **European Agenda for Adult Learning** emphasises well-developed learning provision for seniors to promote active, autonomous, and healthy ageing. To promote and steer the policy process, the European

Commission launched the study on Learning for active ageing and Intergenerational learning. The outcomes of the study will help to identify the key elements of the role of learning in an ageing society and its implications for Europe.

The EU's **Lifelong-learning Programme** (LLP) facilitates both active ageing in employment through vocational training initiatives as well as active ageing in the community and at home through the development of personal skills. Projects target individual students and learners, but also teachers, trainers and organisations. With a budget of nearly EUR 7 billion over the period 2007-13, the LLP supports learning opportunities for people at all stages of their lives through exchanges, study visits and networking activities. The Lifelong Learning Programme will be followed on by Erasmus for All programme (2014-20). It is an ambitious proposal to address common education and training challenges in Europe. Adult education including learning in later life is part of this agenda.

The **Grundtvig** programme is a specific strand of the LLP supporting learning for all adults. One of its objectives is to promote people's personal development, independence and contribution to society as they age.

Grundtvig support for older learners

EuBiA developed networking and exchange of best practice around reaching and empowering senior learners. It created a guide to getting older people involved in learning and established an ongoing network of practitioners.

An interesting Grundtvig initiative which directly promotes active ageing in the community is the **Senior Volunteering Programme**. It promotes the contribution older people can make as volunteers in other countries and thus strengthens solidarity between generations.

Another useful strand of the LLP for promoting active ageing in employment is the **Leonardo da Vinci** programme for vocational education and training, which can be used for both training of, and promoting demand for, older workers.

The Lifelong Learning Programme will be followed on by the **Erasmus for All programme** (2014-20). It is an ambitious proposal to address common education and training challenges in Europe. Adult education, including learning in later life, is part of this agenda.

Cedefop: An EU agency to support the development of vocational education and training policies

Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training based in Thessaloniki, runs a project on ageing workers. It aims to provide new insights into ageing and work through new research, and to suggest active ageing policies intended to discourage early retirement and to stimulate longer working lives.

Conclusion

This brochure demonstrates that the EU supports active ageing and solidarity between generations in many different ways – and that it will intensify its efforts in a number of areas. However, it also makes it clear that we have to deal with a very broad range of issues and that most of the work will need to be done in the Member States, at national, regional and local levels and in collective bargaining processes.

The EU has much to offer in support of reform efforts in the Member States, but many of the funding instruments and programmes presented in this brochure are, to a large extent, demand-driven. A top-down approach to active ageing, where the EU takes the lead and tells policymakers in the Member States what needs to be done, will not work. Many of the obstacles that need to be overcome to make active ageing a reality have to be tackled in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, which requires that this be done in the individual Member States on behalf of their citizens.

The policy instruments presented in this brochure do, however, facilitate partnerships between the EU and public authorities in the Member States, as well as between policymakers and stakeholders from different countries. It is their commitment to advance the cause of active ageing which will determine how effective the EU's policy instruments will be. Their ideas for new solutions can benefit from the EU's support in testing them and in ensuring that good practice spreads widely across the EU.

European Commission

The EU contribution to active ageing and solidarity between generations

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

2012 – 19 pp. – 21 × 29,7 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-25123-8

doi:10.2767/67267

This brochure presents the EU's contribution to the active ageing agenda and shows that the EU is a strong partner in this regard. The objective is to inspire more determined efforts in all Member States to promote active ageing, thereby ensuring that solidarity between generations can withstand the test of population ageing.

This publication is available in printed format in all EU official languages.

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