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DRAFT REPORT

on the Report on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2014/2255(INI))

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the Report on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2014/2255(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011 on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)¹,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation²,
- having regard to the Commission report of 15 September 2014 on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (COM(2014)0562),
- having regard to the Commission report of 17 January 2014 entitled ‘Joint Report on the application of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (“Racial Equality Directive”) and of Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (“Employment Equality Directive”)’ (COM(2014)0002),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 February 2013 entitled ‘Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020’ (COM(2013)0083),
- having regard to the Commission’s Policy Roadmap for the 2014 Implementation of the Social Investment Package,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper of 16 February 2012 entitled ‘An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions’ (COM(2012)0055),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 29 February 2012 entitled ‘Taking forward the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing’ (COM(2012)0083),
- having regard to the Council declaration of 7 December 2012 on ‘the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012): The Way Forward’,
- having regard to the report jointly prepared by the Social Protection Committee and the Commission of 10 October 2014 entitled ‘Adequate social protection for long-term care needs in an ageing society’,

¹ OJ L 246, 23.9.2011, p. 5.

² OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

- having regard to the European Parliamentary Research Service in-depth analysis of March 2015 entitled ‘European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)’,
 - having regard to the Ecorys final report of 15 April 2014 entitled ‘Evaluation of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations’,
 - having regard to the EY2012 Stakeholders’ Coalition ‘Roadmap towards and beyond the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 (EY2012)’, of 10 December 2012,
 - having regard to Special Eurobarometer 378 of January 2012, entitled ‘Active Ageing’,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 May 2013 on an Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 November 2010 on the demographic challenge and solidarity between generations²,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A8-0000/2015),
- A. whereas the objective of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY 2012) was to raise awareness of the value of active ageing, to stimulate the exchange of information, to promote active ageing policies and to create a framework for concrete action by the Union and its Member States;
 - B. whereas the EU is facing unprecedented demographic, social and structural changes;
 - C. whereas active ageing and solidarity between generations are key to achieving the Europe 2020 goals and targets and bringing about a competitive, prosperous and inclusive Europe;
 - D. whereas the success of active ageing policies is strongly linked to the effectiveness of a range of social inclusion policies developed throughout the active lives of EU citizens and workers;
 - E. whereas visible discrepancies exist between Member States and regions as regards active ageing policies, support infrastructure and budgetary resources;
1. Recognises that EY 2012 provided important political momentum which helped to open a discussion of the challenges of active ageing in Europe;
 2. Notes that the specific objectives of EY 2012 were partly achieved, with the best results being in the area of awareness-raising initiatives and events;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0204.

² OJ C 74 E, 13.3.2012, p. 19.

3. Points out that EY 2012 succeeded in its goal of mobilising relevant actors around active ageing and intergenerational solidarity; considers it regrettable, however, that the objective of establishing new networks was rarely achieved; regrets the fact that the involvement of social partners was variable and that private businesses were not reached to any significant extent;
4. Welcomes the fact that EY 2012 helped to refine national policy agendas on active ageing, stimulated the exchange of good practices between Member States, increased the number of initiatives to promote active ageing and strengthened stakeholders' knowledge and skills;
5. Considers it essential that the initiatives launched as part of EY 2012 be followed up and transformed into a strong political commitment followed by concrete action to ensure social inclusion and the well-being of all generations;
6. Highlights the need to intensify the coordination triangle made up of the decision-making level (including the EU, national, regional and local levels), civil society and the private sector;
7. Considers it regrettable that the relatively late approval of EY 2012 resulted in contracting and implementation delays, as a result of which certain events – such as the Seniorforce Day initiative – did not realise their full potential;
8. Recalls that active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health and for participation in society in order to enhance quality of life as people age; takes the view that active ageing policies should increase people's potential for physical, social and mental well-being through the course of their lives so as to allow better social inclusion and greater participation in society; highlights the fact that active ageing does not simply mean better conditions to enable older people to work longer, but also better access to health and social services and to lifelong learning, the elimination of age discrimination and stereotypes, action to combat poverty and social exclusion, and greater awareness of the value of active ageing;
9. Strongly rejects the consideration of active ageing policies solely as an instrument to maintain the employability of older workers, and calls on the Member States to make all the necessary assessments before raising the mandatory pension age;
10. Considers it regrettable that older workers are still often exposed to age discrimination, stereotypes and barriers; calls on the Member States, therefore, to correctly implement Directive 2000/78/EC on equal treatment in employment and occupation;
11. Calls on the Commission to study the worrying problem of unemployment among people over the age of 50 and, in conjunction with the Member States, to develop effective tools for reintegrating such workers into the labour market;
12. Welcomes the fact that active and healthy ageing is one of the European Social Fund's investment priorities for the 2014-2020 programming period, as stated in Regulation 1304/2013; calls on the Member States to use the resources allocated effectively; recalls that funding for projects to promote active ageing is also available

under programmes such as the European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020, Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the Health Programme;

13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve the targeting of funds for active ageing, together with the effectiveness of funds absorption; further calls on the Commission to explore the feasibility and added value of a new European financial instrument to address the problem of reintegrating dismissed middle-aged workers;
14. Considers it essential to support older people in living independently for as long as possible, and to develop and maintain people-oriented and demand-driven support and care services;
15. Reiterates the need to develop the ‘silver economy’, which caters to the needs of the ageing population on the basis of the economic opportunities arising from the public and consumer expenditure related to population ageing and from specific products, services, innovative solutions and needs, resulting in new jobs and growth;
16. Takes the view that older people should be a fully fledged part of society and that their participation in daily life should be supported; considers, furthermore, that a structured dialogue between young and elderly people should be actively encouraged;
17. Welcomes the forthcoming EU Covenant on Demographic Change as a major outcome of EY 2012 and of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing; asks the Commission to provide funding for the covenant, which is an open, large and independent network bringing together local and regional stakeholders committed to tackling European demographic change by promoting age-friendly environments in close cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO);
18. Welcomes the Guiding Principles on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations developed jointly by the Social Protection Committee and the Employment Committee; welcomes in particular the role of the Social Protection Committee in enabling a direct exchange of experience among Member States, including in respect of long-term care and pensions;
19. Welcomes the Active Ageing Index, which aims to capture the untapped potential of older people for more active participation in employment and social life and for independent living, together with the ongoing follow-up project being conducted by the Commission in conjunction with the UN Economic Committee for Europe; encourages the Member States to set targets based on the index which are to be achieved through comprehensive active ageing strategies, and to monitor progress towards those targets;
20. Points out that promoting age-friendly environments is an essential tool for supporting older workers and jobseekers and promoting inclusive societies that offer equal opportunities to all; welcomes, in this connection, the Commission’s joint management project with the WHO aimed at adapting the WHO Global Age-friendly Cities guide to the European context;
21. Stresses the importance of volunteering, which promotes intercultural learning and intergenerational solidarity, fosters active ageing and lifelong civic participation, and

enables older people to make a contribution to society and earn recognition, thereby improving their quality of life, well-being and general state of health;

22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

The year 2012 was designated as the “European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations”¹. The overall objective was to facilitate the creation of an active ageing culture in Europe based on a society for all ages.

The specific objectives were:

1. To raise general awareness of the value of active ageing and its various dimensions;
2. To stimulate debate, to exchange information and to develop mutual learning;
3. To offer a framework for commitment and concrete action;
4. To promote activities which will help to combat age discrimination, to overcome age-related stereotypes and to remove barriers.

The decision on the European Year 2012 defined a budget envelope of five million euro for the period between January 2011 and December 2012.

The concept of active ageing

The Decision 940/2011/EU² refers to the following World Health Organisation definition of active ageing: “the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. Active ageing allows people to realise their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout the life course and to participate in society, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need it. Accordingly, the promotion of active ageing requires a multi-dimensional approach and ownership by and lasting support among all generations.”

The concept of active ageing is rather broad, it is not limited only to keeping people longer in employment. It is linked to several policy areas like pensions, health and long-term care, employment, ICT, antidiscrimination, adult education, transport, accessibility etc.

The implementation of the European Year 2012

The Year 2012 was celebrated through a series of European events and different awards were granted on the occasion of the year. In addition, two important outputs of the Year were the Active Ageing Index and the Guiding Principles for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. National programmes were also designed and implemented by participating countries. Opening events involved on the whole 4500 participants. A total of 748 national and transnational initiatives were implemented during the Year counting only those included in the EU database. In terms of thematic coverage, the focus was on bridging generations, support for social engagement and health promotion and preventative health care.

¹ Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011 on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012), Official Journal L 246, 23/9/2011

² DECISION No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011 on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)

Gender mainstreaming was considered from the start of the European Year 2012 and included in the activities promoted. In general, the EY2012 was led predominantly by women and the main national events attracted and included women more often than men.

The European Year 2012 covered a wide range of issues that elderly people face related to disability, especially health and independent living. The initiatives addressed disability directly and indirectly, both at EU and MS level. The activities of the European Year 2012 ensured the accessibility of the built environment at events and provided facilitations such as sign language interpreters and transportation at various occasions. The EU website contained options for larger fonts.

The plans made at the beginning of the European Year 2012 in the National Programmes were respected to a large extent in the majority of countries. The best results were achieved on awareness-raising through EU-level and national initiatives and events. The Year achieved its intermediate objectives of strengthening existing networks, creating synergies and partnerships between government levels and policy areas, promoting policies and long-term strategies and making available technological, organisational and social innovations. The objective of establishing new networks was however rarely achieved. The development of national policies, strategies and comprehensive programmes on active ageing in a number of countries provides evidence of the policy impact of the European Year 2012. The Year succeeded in its goal of mobilising relevant actors around active ageing and intergenerational solidarity. Nonetheless, the involvement of social partners was variable and private businesses were not reached to any great extent.

The various EU level events made a strong contribution to the achievement of the goals. However, some of them did not realise their full potential due to the delayed implementation schedule. The EU website was widely appreciated as a cost-effective initiative, but the number of visitors was comparatively lower than for other European Years. The degree of engagement with social media on the part of participants and stakeholders also appeared limited, at least at the EU level.

At EU level, there was strong complementarity between the European Year 2012 and other on-going policy activities, such as the White Paper on Pensions, the Demographic Forum, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing and the planned Accessibility Act.

The European Year 2012 helped refining the national policy agendas on active ageing and stimulated the exchange of good practices between countries. The EU added value of the Year is demonstrated by the evidence of volume, process, scope, agenda setting, innovation and learning effects. The European Year 2012 increased the number of initiatives for promoting active ageing in the Member States and strengthened the knowledge and skills of stakeholders involved in the organisation of the Year.

In terms of the budget, the European Year 2012 falls within the European Years of lower budgets, second only to the least funded Year in the series 2009-2012 (European Year 2009, which had no specific budget). Nonetheless, a great deal could be achieved by the European Year 2012. We can state that comparable results were achieved using fewer resources than in

other European Years.

There are indications that the effects of the European Year 2012 are lasting beyond the Year itself and at least some of them will be sustained over a longer time period. In certain countries comprehensive strategies and plans were adopted, while in other ones there were outputs at the level of concept papers, charters, pieces of legislation covering specific issues, or projects. Without being exhaustive some examples of the national policy outputs of the European Year 2012 can be highlighted as follows:

- Federal Plan for Seniors and National Strategy on Lifelong Learning, work and health in Austria
- Strategy for active ageing 2013-2020 in Estonia
- National Program for active ageing 2014-2020 in Slovakia
- National Action Plan on Ageing 2013-2017 in the Czech Republic
- New pension legislation and new Labour market legislation in Slovenia

Recommendations

The rapporteur is of the view that the initiatives launched in the frame of the EY 2012 shall be followed-up and continued, the sustainability of the results is of utmost importance. He praises the two major outcomes of the EY 2012, i.e. the Guiding Principles on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations and the Active Ageing Index and encourages the Member States to use them more actively and to set based on them targets to be achieved through comprehensive active ageing strategies and to monitor progress towards these targets. He also highlights a further major outcome, the upcoming Covenant on Demographic Change and requests the European Commission to provide funding to the upcoming Covenant, an open and large network bringing together already more than 270 local and regional authorities, researchers, civil society organisations, committed to tackle European demographic change by promoting age-friendly environments in close cooperation with the World Health Organisation.

When moving past the EY 2012, the rapporteur insists that the demographic changes awaiting Europe should be seen as an opportunity rather than a burden for the European society. One of the main aspects of this would be to acknowledge the contribution of older citizens and to enhance the positive role they play in the society, working on improving the intergenerational dialogue. He points out that promoting age-friendly environments are essential in view of the upcoming demographic changes. Tools for supporting older workers and jobseekers and promoting inclusive societies need to be developed in a sustainable manner in order to offer equal opportunities to all. He supports in this context the Commission's joint management project with WHO aiming at adapting the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide to the European context and at developing a framework allowing cities and regions to commit themselves to age-friendly environments.

He also considers necessary to develop the 'silver economy' based on the economic opportunities arising from the public and consumer expenditure related to population ageing and the specific products, services, innovative solutions and needs of the population over 50 resulting in new jobs and growth.

He furthermore highlights the problems of age-related prejudices, discrimination and stereotypes and calls on Member States to make steps for their removal.

As funding plays always a crucial element, he encourages the Member States to use the available EU funding opportunities, like ESIF, Horizon 2020, EaSI, Health Programme to reach active ageing policy objectives.