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Committee on Regional Development

2010/0242(COD)

12.11.2010

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council
on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012)
(COM(2010)0462 – C7-0253/2010 – 2010/0242(COD))

Rapporteur: Lambert van Nistelrooij

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Commission has proposed to make 2012 the European Year for Active Ageing. The general aim of this European Year shall be to encourage and support the efforts of Member States, their regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society to promote active ageing and to do more to mobilise the potential of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and above, thereby preserving solidarity between generations. It defines active ageing as creating better opportunities and working conditions to enable older workers to play their part in the labour market, combating social exclusion by fostering active participation in society, and encouraging healthy ageing.

Article 2 of the Proposal for a Decision sets out a number of aims. The practical measures to be taken for their attainment are outlined in Article 3 and include initiatives that are to be organized and carried out by the EU and the national, regional and local authorities of Member States.

The amendments the REGI Committee is proposing are therefore intended to

- Ensure that active ageing is firmly placed on the policy agenda;
- Add a subtitle to the name of the European Year - Promoting intergenerational solidarity - by which an important reason for societies to promote active ageing is put more into the spotlight;
- Stress the key role the European Year can play in supporting and leveraging local and regional projects and initiatives that allow older people to contribute to their community, and to benefit from an adequate protection, security and health care;
- Ensure that general awareness is raised in cities and regions of the Member States;
- Ensure that initiatives taken in the light of the European year for active ageing will have a decentralised approach and, as stressed in the Territorial Pact of Local and Regional Authorities on Europe 2020 Strategy, are based on multi-level ownership;
- Provide for accurate coordination, coherency and effectiveness through the setup of a strategic guidance on the implementation of the projects that are initiated in the light of the European Year.
- Raise awareness of the importance of ICT technologies development, which can effectively respond to the challenges of an ageing society.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Amendment 1

Proposal for a decision Recital 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2a) Pursuant to Article 156 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Commission is to encourage cooperation between the Member States and facilitate the coordination of their action in social policy field;

Or. en

Justification

Addition as to the new institutional framework provided for by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Amendment 2

Proposal for a decision Recital 3 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(3a) The part of the population of the European Union comprised of persons in their late 50s and over will increase at a much faster rate than ever before. The largest increase is expected to occur during the period 2015-35 when the population aged 60 and over will be increasing by 2 million people per year. This increase is very positive as it is a logical consequence of the improvement of health care and quality of life. Nevertheless, due to the reality of demographic change, the EU faces a number of challenges such as a shrinking population in certain cities and regions, a high degree of pressure on pension funds, and problems maintaining the sustainability of financial provision for

Justification

Clarification as to outline the numbers of the demographic challenge of ageing and its impact on elementary activities and services of our society.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a decision

Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

(10) The Commission emphasised *it* its Communication on ‘Europe 2020 — A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ the importance to the European Union of promoting a healthy and active ageing population in the interests of social cohesion and higher productivity. It proposed a flagship initiative ‘An agenda for new skills and jobs’, under which Member States should notably promote active ageing policies, and a flagship initiative on a ‘European Platform against Poverty’. Achieving these policy goals requires ***action from all levels of government and*** various non-governmental stakeholders; ***they can*** in turn be supported, at the Union level, by European Year activities aimed at raising awareness ***and*** fostering the exchange of good practice. National coordinators should see to it that ***national action is*** coordinated and ***is*** consistent with the overall objectives of the European Year. The participation of other institutions and stakeholders is also planned.

Amendment

(10) The Commission emphasised ***in*** its Communication on ‘Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ the importance to the European Union of promoting a healthy and active ageing population in the interests of social cohesion and higher productivity. It proposed a flagship initiative ‘An agenda for new skills and jobs’, under which Member States should notably promote active ageing policies, and a flagship initiative on a ‘European Platform against Poverty’. Achieving these policy goals requires ***an approach based on multi-level ownership, through which stronger involvement and action by all local and regional authorities as well as*** various non-governmental stakeholders ***is created***; in turn ***these actors should*** be supported, at the Union level, by European Year activities aimed at raising awareness, fostering the exchange of good practice ***and creating synergies***. National coordinators should see to it that ***actions at both central and decentralised level are*** coordinated and consistent with the overall objectives of the European Year. The participation of other institutions and stakeholders is also planned.

Justification

To promote a healthy and active ageing population in the interests of social cohesion and higher productivity, as aimed for by the Europe 2020 Strategy, it is crucial to engage with local and regional authorities. Taking action and creating initiatives by a multi-level ownership approach ensures their engagement. Moreover, through active engagement of government at central and decentralized levels and an accurate coordination of the European Year activities, new synergies will be created.

Amendment 4**Proposal for a decision****Recital 13***Text proposed by the Commission*

(13) In its Communication on "A Digital Agenda for Europe", the first EU2020 flagship initiative adopted on 19 May 2010, the Commission stressed the importance of ICT for ageing well, proposing in particular the reinforcement of the Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme. The Digital Agenda for Europe also recommended taking concerted action to increase the digital competences of all Europeans, including older persons, a group that is over-represented within the 150 million citizens, or about 30% of the total, who have never used the internet.

Amendment

(13) In its Communication on "A Digital Agenda for Europe", the first EU2020 flagship initiative adopted on 19 May 2010, the Commission stressed the importance of ICT ***applications and services*** for ageing well, proposing in particular the reinforcement of the Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme. The Digital Agenda for Europe also recommended taking concerted action to increase the digital competences of all Europeans, including older persons, a group that is overrepresented within the 150 million citizens, or about 30% of the total, who have never used the internet.

Justification

Clarification as to the role of ICT for ageing well.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a decision Recital 13 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(13a) In the context of 'Europe 2020', the Commission has proposed launching a pilot project on active and healthy ageing by the beginning of 2011 within the framework of the Innovation Union. This pilot project, which is the first Innovation Partnership, aims by the year 2020 to enable citizens to live independently and in good health for longer, by increasing the average number of healthy life years by two. Moreover, it seeks to bring about an improvement in the sustainability and efficiency of European social and healthcare systems and the creation of an EU and global market for innovative ICT applications and services. This would give EU businesses new opportunities, thereby improving EU competitiveness and providing for job growth in Europe's regions.

Or. en

Justification

In order to have a more comprehensive overview of the EU's actions and initiatives, this recent announced pilot project should be recognized.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a decision Recital 15

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(15) Active ageing is targeted by several Union programmes, such as the European Social Fund, the European Regional **and** Development Fund, the PROGRESS programme, the Life Long Learning

(15) Active ageing is targeted by several Union programmes, such as the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the PROGRESS programme, the Life Long Learning

Programme, the Public Health Programme, the specific programmes on information and communication technologies and on socio-economic sciences and humanities in the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development, the Action Plan on ‘Ageing well in the information society’, the Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme for research and innovation, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme with pilot deployment projects on ICT for Ageing Well and the Action Plan on urban mobility. Union co-financing of European Year activities will be in accordance with the priorities and rules applying, on an annual or multi-annual basis, to existing programmes and autonomous budget lines in the field of employment, social affairs and equal opportunities. Where appropriate, programmes and policies in other fields, such as education and culture, health, research, the information society, regional policy and transport policy, may support the European Year.

Programme, the Public Health Programme, the specific programmes on information and communication technologies and on socio-economic sciences and humanities in the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development, the Action Plan on ‘Ageing well in the information society’, the Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme for research and innovation, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme with pilot deployment projects on ICT for Ageing Well and the Action Plan on urban mobility. Union co-financing of European Year activities will be in accordance with the priorities and rules applying, on an annual or multi-annual basis, to existing programmes and autonomous budget lines in the field of employment, social affairs and equal opportunities. Where appropriate, programmes and policies in other fields, such as education and culture, health, research, the information society, regional policy and transport policy, may support the European Year, *in particular where it is necessary for social inclusion concerns, such as conditions of low wellbeing or even poverty are addressed.*

Or. en

Justification

In some cities and regions in the EU, older people cannot benefit of concrete initiatives that promote active ageing due to the fact that they live under average well-being standards or even in poverty.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a decision Recital 16

Text proposed by the Commission

(16) The objectives of the proposed European Year for Active Ageing cannot

Amendment

(16) The objectives of the proposed European Year for Active Ageing cannot

be fully achieved at Member State level due to the need for transnational exchange of information and the Union-wide dissemination of good *practice, and can therefore*, by reason of the scale of *the* proposed *action*, be better achieved at Union level. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on the European Union, this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary to achieve those objectives.

be fully achieved at Member State level due to the need for transnational exchange of information and the Union-wide dissemination of good *practices. It should be acknowledged that cities, regions and Member States play a pivotal role in carrying out those specific actions and that, without prejudice to the subsidiarity principle and* by reason of the scale of proposed *actions, those objectives can* be better achieved *when the initiative is taken* at Union level. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on the European Union, this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary to achieve those objectives.

Or. en

Justification

Based on the principle of subsidiarity, it is up to the European Union to initiate a year for active ageing. Nevertheless, it will be key to involve regional and local actors in Member States in carrying out the specific actions.

Amendment 8

Proposal for a decision

Article 1

Text proposed by the Commission

The year 2012 shall be designated as the European Year for Active Ageing (hereafter referred to as ‘the European Year’).

Amendment

The year 2012 shall be designated as the European Year for Active Ageing: ***Promoting intergenerational solidarity*** (hereafter referred to as ‘the European Year’).

Or. en

Justification

By adding this subtitle to the name of the European Year, it fully covers an important reason for societies to promote active ageing: promoting solidarity between generations. Moreover,

it covers the fact that mentalities have to be changed and lasting support for active ageing should be developed.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a decision

Article 2 - introductory part

Text proposed by the Commission

The overall purpose of the European Year shall be to encourage and support the efforts of Member States, their regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society to promote active ageing and to do more to mobilise the potential of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and above, thereby preserving solidarity between generations. Active ageing means creating better opportunities and working conditions to enable older workers to play their part in the labour market, combating social exclusion by fostering active participation in society, and encouraging healthy ageing. On this basis, the objectives shall be:

Amendment

The overall purpose of the European Year shall be to encourage and support the efforts of Member States, their regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society to promote active ageing and to do more to mobilise the potential of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and above, thereby preserving solidarity between generations. ***In order to do so it is key for the European Year to support and leverage local and regional projects and initiatives that allow the people of an ageing society to contribute as much as possible to their society and to let the older people in this ageing society benefit from adequate protection, security and quality care. Moreover, it is the task of Member States and their cities and regions to provide for a framework in which stakeholders from the public and private sector can cooperate well together on these common goals.*** Active ageing means creating better opportunities and working conditions to enable older workers to play their part in the labour market ***and volunteering activities***, combating social exclusion by fostering active participation in society, and encouraging healthy ageing. On this basis, the objectives shall be:

Or. en

Justification

In the light of the European Year of Volunteering, it is important to stress the contribution of the older people through volunteering activities. Only through a clear-cut framework,

different actors can in cooperation work on creating benefits for the people of an ageing society.

Amendment 10

Proposal for a decision

Article 2 – point 1

Text proposed by the Commission

to raise general awareness of the value of active ageing in order to highlight the useful contribution older persons make to society and the economy, to promote active ageing **and** to do more to mobilise the potential of older persons;

Amendment

to raise general awareness **at all administrative levels in Member States, cities and regions** of the value of active ageing in order to highlight the useful contributions older persons make to society and the economy, to promote active ageing, to do more to mobilise the potential of older persons, **to put active ageing high up on the policy agenda of stakeholders at national, regional and local level and to promote intergenerational solidarity;**

Or. en

Justification

To increase the impact of the general awareness campaigns, it is of utmost importance to avoid having solely a national focus. National governments should include regional and local government actors in their actions and should boost their engagement. In this context, general awareness campaigns on those levels are required. It should be stressed that in order to influence policy agenda's, all levels of government should be approached through the awareness campaigns.

Amendment 11

Proposal for a decision

Article 2 – point 2

Text proposed by the Commission

to stimulate debate and develop mutual learning between **Member States and stakeholders at all levels** in order to promote active ageing policies, to identify and disseminate good **practice** and

Amendment

to stimulate debate, **support** and develop mutual learning between **public and private actors at national, regional and local level** in order to promote active ageing policies **more successfully**, to identify and disseminate good **practices**

to encourage cooperation and synergies;

and to encourage cooperation and synergies;

Or. en

Justification

All actors that are responsible for executing a large number of projects and initiatives in the field of active ageing should be encouraged to share their learning experiences and good practices.

Amendment 12

**Proposal for a decision
Article 2 – point 3**

Text proposed by the Commission

to offer a framework for commitment and concrete action ***to enable Member States and stakeholders at all levels*** to develop policies through specific activities and to commit to specific objectives related to active ageing.

Amendment

to offer a framework for commitment and concrete action, ***such as fostering an environment that is beneficial to innovation in technologies in the ICT field that respond to the challenge of an ageing society, which enables public and private actors at national, regional and local level*** to develop policies through specific activities and to commit to specific objectives related to active ageing ***by developing long-term strategies.***

Or. en

Justification

Given that the European Year on Active Ageing should attempt to engage all levels of government in Member States, all of them should have a special focus on developing common policies as well as long-term strategies, through which a long-lasting legacy can be created. Developing ICT technologies that respond to the challenge of an ageing society allows Member States to create a silver economy in which the economy and overall competitiveness benefits from an ageing society.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a decision

Article 3 – paragraph 3 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

3a. The initiatives taken in the light of the European Year for Active Ageing will have a decentralised approach and ensure a multi-level ownership.

Or. en

Justification

It will be important to involve regional and local actors in Member States in carrying out the specific actions. Multi-level ownership should ensure the strong involvement of all relevant stakeholders and should furthermore create a basis on which long-lasting efforts and initiatives are carried out.

Amendment 14

Proposal for a decision

Article 4

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Each Member State shall appoint a national coordinator responsible for organising its involvement in the European Year. The national coordinators should also see to it that national activities are properly coordinated.

Each Member State shall appoint a national coordinator responsible for organising its involvement in the European Year. The national coordinators should also see to it that national activities are properly coordinated. ***Moreover, through setting up strategic guidance on the implementation of the various projects within their country, the national coordinator should create a framework to oversee clearly the actions taken by authorities and stakeholders on a regional and local level in order to foster the creation of synergies and to ensure the effectiveness and coherence of the efforts made as well as to avoid any inconsistencies or duplication.***

Or. en

Justification

National coordinators should manage initiatives and actions that are implemented at national level, as well as at regional and local levels, in order to avoid duplication and to foster the creation of synergies.