



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

---

*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

---

**2012/2258(INI)**

11.12.2012

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing  
(2012/0000(INI))

Rapporteur(\*): Milan Cabrnoch

(\*) Associated committee – Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Points out the very different demographic makeup of Member States and the significant national, political and cultural differences in perceptions of the demographic challenge and, especially, of ways of facing it and planning for it; notes the constant rise in life expectancy in every Member State and the significant increase in the numbers of people continuing to work after retirement, with employment rates among those aged 65-74 rising by 15 % in the period 2006-2011;
2. Recalls that elderly citizens are an asset to our societies, and that it is essential to benefit from their knowledge and experience in all walks of life and support them in living independently as long as possible;
3. Stresses that elderly people need different forms of support and care and that services and solutions must therefore always be people-oriented and demand-driven;
4. Points out that employment and voluntary work opportunities, as well as social protection measures, are essential to ensure active and healthy ageing;
5. Welcomes the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, and especially its focus on cooperation between the Commission, the Member States, industry and business, public and private stakeholders, health and care professionals, and organisations representing older people and patients, the exchange and transfer of good ideas and best practice (e.g. the digitally-based 'Marketplace' platform), and the optimisation of existing funding instruments; emphasises the need to view ageing as an opportunity rather than a burden and to recognise and promote the value of older people, their experiences and their ongoing contribution to society; welcomes the Commission's approach, which is clearly geared to promoting the vitality and dignity of older people in Europe by means of innovations of relevance to them, reinforcing a 'culture of active ageing' in a generation-friendly Europe and guiding this process jointly with recognised partners in the world of research and in civil society;
6. Regards crossborder health and care provision as providing a good opportunity for using existing resources more efficiently, creating common high standards for the benefit of the people concerned and, in addition, reducing the costs of ageing;
7. Welcomes the objective of promoting age-friendly environments as an essential tool for supporting older workers and jobseekers and promoting inclusive societies that offer equal opportunities to all;
8. Stresses the need to create the appropriate framework conditions to enable people to participate in the labour market and remain productive, both by improving labour market flexibility through the introduction of lifetime time accounts and part-time possibilities and by making provision for different forms of employment contracts suitable for older

workers, as well as flexible arrangements for retirement, for example by means of partial pensions or bonus years, taking care to ensure that there is always adequate social protection in place;

9. Underlines the importance of ensuring health and safety at work as a prerequisite for a sustainable working life and for active ageing, notably for workers with disabilities or chronic conditions; points out that ICT and machines could play a key role by easing physical tasks for our ageing workforce; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote such technologies where adequate; welcomes the recognition of the significance of prevention in the first pillar of the Strategic Implementation Plan; is convinced that prevention also plays a key role at work by improving occupational health and reducing as a consequence the pressure on health and long-term care systems;
10. Underlines the important role of local and regional actors in modernising, improving and rationalising the delivery of health and social care services with a view to producing models that achieve better results for individuals on the labour market;
11. Stresses the need to fight age discrimination in employment in order to ensure that older workers can keep their jobs or have access to job opportunities;
12. Is convinced that comprehensive reforms are necessary in order to prevent and avoid serious shortcomings in access to labour markets, which would result in a further economic slowdown and a threat to the level of prosperity in Europe; stresses, in this regard, the need to develop a broad perspective that takes account of issues such as economic policy, employment, social security, social protection, gender equality and discrimination;
13. Invites the Commission and the Member States to launch campaigns to improve public perceptions concerning the contribution and productivity of older workers, notably those with disabilities or chronic conditions;
14. Expects the Member States, in using the Structural Funds, to devote more attention to the living and working conditions of the older generation, to jointly create a generation-friendly Europe by 2020, and to expand their social infrastructure so that they can combat poverty among older people;
15. Points out the essential role of investing more in and raising spending on education, training and further training, giving priority to lifelong learning and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, in order to establish a generation-friendly world of work and enable older workers to hold their own in a changing technological environment; in this light, urges a strong focus on lifelong learning within the 'Erasmus for all' programme, which constitutes an effective tool for fostering education and continuous professional development for Union citizens of all ages;
16. Stresses the need for a holistic approach to ageing and for comprehensive development and reforms, not only in the field of lifelong learning and the labour market but also as regards access to them, including such factors as transport, infrastructure and buildings;
17. Recalls the need for fuller recognition of older workers' informal and non-formal

education, notably where obtained through voluntary work or informal care;

18. Believes that intergenerational initiatives at work, such as knowledge transfers, are essential, both to ensure the better integration and training of young workers and to offer possibilities for older workers to help other workers benefit from their experience;
19. Considers that older people need adequate income levels, housing, access to all health, social and cultural services, and strong social networks in order to enhance their quality of life, and also that they need opportunities to continue contributing on the labour market, without restrictions arising from age discrimination;
20. Maintains that further reforms of pension systems are necessary in order to keep them adequate, sustainable and secure, with special attention to reducing the gender pay gap in work and consequently in pensions, and that pension levels must also remain predictable for future generations; to this end, calls for more coherence to be established between the effective retirement age, the official retirement age and life expectancy; calls on those Member States which have raised the statutory retirement age, or will be doing so, to encourage the employment of older people, e.g. through tax and social security exemptions;
21. Maintains that policies to balance family and working life enable women to cope better with ageing, taking into account the fact that work improves quality of life; believes that such policies also enable women to avoid the pay gap and, accordingly, the risk of poverty in later life in cases where, in order to balance family and working life, women have to choose part-time, occasional or atypical work, given that this has repercussions for the amounts paid in pension contributions;
22. Considers it necessary to reinforce the adequacy of pensions by combating gender discrimination on the labour market, especially by reducing the career and pay gaps;
23. Stresses the need for personal responsibility, bearing in mind that individuals also need to think about what they can do to secure their pension age; stresses also the crucial role of family and intergenerational solidarity;
24. Is convinced that further reforms of healthcare systems are necessary, especially through investing in health promotion, prevention, screening and early diagnosis and developing a more affordable, high-quality long-term care system;
25. Believes it is crucial to fight information isolation of the older generation, and that access to and use of new technologies constitute one of the essential tools for active and healthy ageing and the social inclusion of seniors;
26. Calls on the Commission to submit proposals for combating discrimination against older people in access to the labour market, in the workplace and in the performance of work, with a view to achieving a consistently generation-friendly world of work;
27. Calls on employers, where necessary, to step up their efforts to adapt working conditions to the state of health and abilities of older workers and to encourage a more positive image of senior citizens in the workplace;

28. Points out that ageing does not only mean challenges but offers possibilities as well, especially innovation opportunities which, in the long run, could contribute to job creation and enhance economic wellbeing in Europe;
29. Recognises the importance of planning for adequate care provision, both formal and informal;
30. Stresses the need to establish support systems for family carers;
31. Stresses the importance of supporting and facilitating older volunteers and intergenerational volunteering, believes that volunteering and ‘old people for old people’ initiatives for the ageing population could both offer a means of inclusion and make a reasonable contribution to the sustainability of long-term care systems; therefore encourages development and innovation in this field;
32. Stresses the need to pay special attention to the inclusion of ageing people living in remote areas or with multiple disadvantages.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	6.12.2012
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 39 -: 2 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Regina Bastos, Edit Bauer, Heinz K. Becker, Jean-Luc Bennahmias, Phil Bennion, Pervenche Berès, Philippe Boulland, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Minodora Cliveti, Marije Cornelissen, Emer Costello, Karima Delli, Marian Harkin, Nadja Hirsch, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Martin Kastler, Ádám Kósa, Jean Lambert, Veronica Lope Fontagné, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Csaba Óry, Siiri Oviir, Sylvana Rapti, Licia Ronzulli, Nicole Sinclair, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Jutta Steinruck, Andrea Zanoni, Inês Cristina Zuber
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Georges Bach, Françoise Castex, Edite Estrela, Sven Giegold, Jan Kozłowski, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Anthea McIntyre, Evelyn Regner, Birgit Sippel, Csaba Sógor
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Jean Louis Cottigny