



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

A8-0241/2015

23.7.2015

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 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Article 25 thereof on the rights of older people,
- having regard to the Commission final report on the European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing of 9-10 March 2015,
- having regard to the Commission background paper of 23 February 2015 entitled ‘Growing the Silver Economy in Europe’,
- 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 entitled ‘The 2015 Ageing Report. Economic and budgetary projections for the 28 EU Member States (2013-2060)’ (European Economy 3|2015),
- 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,

¹ OJ L 246, 23.9.2011, p. 5.

² OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

- 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’,
- having regard to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) report of 31 October 2014 on ‘Access to healthcare in times of crisis’,
- having regard to the work currently being undertaken by the UN Working Group on Ageing towards a Convention on the protection of the rights of older people,
- having regard to the Eurofound Foundation Findings report entitled ‘Work preferences after 50’ (2014),
- having regard to the Eurofound Foundation Focus document entitled ‘Sustainable work: Toward better and longer working lives’ (December 2014),
- 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 4 July 2013 on Impact of the crisis on access to care for vulnerable groups¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 May 2013 on an Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions²,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 November 2010 on the demographic challenge and

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0328.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0204.

solidarity between generations¹,

- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A8-0241/2015),
- 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, and by all stakeholders in the public and private sector;
- B. whereas it is expected that by 2050 the average age of people in the EU will be over 50;
- C. whereas the EU is facing unprecedented demographic, social and structural changes that have to be addressed without delay; whereas the general ageing of the population is accompanied by the growth of social welfare, health- and care-related needs for elderly people and their families, and the long-term quality and sustainability of public services in the EU will largely depend on the action that is taken over the next few years;
- D. whereas the increase in average life expectancy should be seen as a gain for civilisation and a factor of social progress;
- E. whereas in 2006 the Demographic Change Regions Network, which includes some 40 European regions, was set up, and whereas that network aims to raise awareness of how important challenges such as ageing and a declining population are for the EU and its economic and social cohesion;
- F. whereas the average number of children per woman in the EU is lower than the threshold of generation renewal, the economic crisis has been a factor in the reduction of the birth rate and life expectancy could grow by an additional five years by 2050;
- G. whereas active ageing is one of the major challenges of the 21st century;
- H. whereas, in addition to the phenomenon of ageing, there is an ever-increasing number of European regions in which demographic decline is occurring as a result of falling birth rates, combined with population decline and high rates of ageing, dependence and decline in the number of people in work; whereas all of these phenomena are exacerbated in the rural areas of the regions concerned, as it is common for people to leave rural areas and move to large or medium-sized cities;
- I. 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;
- J. whereas the success of active ageing policies is strongly linked to the effectiveness of a range of non-discrimination, social protection, social inclusion and public health

¹ OJ C 74 E, 13.3.2012, p. 19.

policies developed throughout the lifecycle of EU citizens and workers;

- K. whereas, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the word ‘active’ refers to continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force, and whereas, consequently, older people who retire from work, and people who retire because of invalidity or illness, can remain active contributors to their families, peers, communities and nations;
- L. whereas a holistic approach is needed, taking into account the different elements that contribute to making work sustainable over the life course for all individuals and for society as a whole;
- M. whereas different groups of workers experience different working conditions, leading to occupational health inequalities;
- N. whereas immense visible discrepancies exist between Member States and regional and local authorities as regards active ageing policies and policies on social protection in old age, support infrastructure and budgetary resources;
- O. whereas active and healthy ageing creates new social needs, requiring investment in diversified public services, both existing services and new services that are yet to be created, and of course in the field of health and care for the elderly, and whereas it unlocks new potential in relation to the enjoyment and extension of leisure and rest time;
- P. whereas the financial and economic crisis had an impact on the increase of poverty levels among the elderly, and whereas poverty, or being at risk of poverty and social exclusion, poses not only health risks, but also hampers any possibility for active ageing;
- Q. whereas there are some 125 000 occupational pension funds operating across the EU, holding assets worth EUR 2.5 trillion on behalf of around 75 million Europeans, which represents 20 % of the EU’s working-age population;
- R. whereas one of the basic principles of a human society is solidarity between generations; whereas, as average life expectancy grows longer and longer, intergenerational relations are becoming increasingly important; whereas the economy and society need the life experience, commitment and ideas of all generations if they are to achieve their goals;
- S. whereas active participation in lifelong learning and sport programmes greatly contributes to creating a genuine culture of active ageing, allowing the population not only to adapt their skills throughout the course of life to the changing requirements of the labour market, but also to stay healthy, active and participative in society in a more general sense;
- T. whereas older women represent 20 % of the EU population and this percentage will continue to increase according to the current demographic trends; whereas in most EU

countries older women are at higher risk of poverty than older men – on average 21 % for women and 16 % for men; whereas the gender pension gap in the EU is 39 %;

- U. whereas accessible technologies can enable and facilitate access to the labour market, an independent life and participation in all aspects of society; whereas today, however, over 69 % of people who lack basic digital skills are aged over 55; whereas owing to the lack of accessibility, the rapid evolution of ICT and poor digital literacy, many older people and people with disabilities are at great risk of not taking full advantage of the future Digital Single Market;
1. Recognises that EY 2012 provided important political momentum which helped to open a discussion of the challenges of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity in Europe;
 2. Defines intergenerational justice as the equal distribution of benefits and burdens between the generations; considers that functional cooperation between the generations is based on solidarity and must be informed by mutual respect, responsibility and a willingness to care for one another;
 3. 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;
 4. Notes and welcomes the fact that it has become clear through the EY2012 events and initiatives that older people are not a burden on the economy and society, but rather – through their experience, their achievements and their knowledge – an asset;
 5. 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 for sharing resources, projects and ideas among the public sector, private sector and civil society 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; stresses the need to improve capacity building in order to promote the active participation of senior citizens in society;
 6. 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;
 7. Stresses that reliable statistics on the situation of older people and demographic changes are needed to develop better targeted and effective active ageing strategies; calls on the Commission to ensure comprehensive high-quality data collection on the societal status of older people, their health, rights and standard of living;
 8. Considers it very important 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, active participation and the well-being of all generations, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality; recalls that EU legislation concerning ageing policies must be effectively implemented in order to combat and

prevent discrimination in all spheres of life against both younger and older people;

9. 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, including industries which provide innovative goods and services in support of independent living;
10. Calls on the Commission to carry out a study on demographic decline, which is affecting an increasing number of regions in various EU countries, and to draw up a communication on the problem and on the steps that could be taken at European level, at Member State level, and in the regions affected, to address the challenge of demographic decline;
11. Emphasises that regions with serious natural or demographic disadvantages – such as, for example, sparsely populated regions, islands and mountain areas – are hit especially hard by the problems associated with ageing, and have fewer resources and less infrastructure in place with which to promote active ageing; calls for consideration to be given to whether stimulus plans are useful in addressing the problem of ageing, which is generally made worse by parallel processes of depopulation affecting many of the regions concerned, and which can pose a threat to the survival of those areas;
12. 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; notes the smaller budget allocated to the EY 2012 compared with previous EYs and the consequently scarcer resources to implement EY 2012's objectives;
13. Recalls that active ageing is, inter alia, the process of optimising opportunities for health and for participation in society in order to ensure that people can retain a good standard of living and quality of life as they age; takes the view that active ageing policies should increase people's potential for physical, social and mental well-being throughout the course of their lives so as to allow better social inclusion and greater participation in society; highlights the fact that active ageing also means better access to health, long-term care and social services, which have come under pressure in some cases during the crisis, and to lifelong learning, participation in society and cultural activities, boosting existing social infrastructure such as homes and day centres, the elimination of age discrimination and stereotypes, action to combat poverty and social exclusion, and greater awareness of the value of active and healthy ageing;
14. Recommends to all the Member States that, through their social security systems, they promote and strengthen high-quality public infrastructure for the elderly (homes, day centres and home support), where elderly people are seen as active participants rather than passive recipients of the initiatives in which they take part;
15. Takes the view that a European strategy on dementia needs to be developed, which should include measures for assistance to the families of the patients, information campaigns, awareness raising and exchange of best practices between Member States;
16. Calls on the Commission to study the worrying problem of unemployment among

people over the age of 50 and the ever rising level of long-term unemployment, and, in conjunction with the Member States, regional and local authorities and social partners, to look into the circumstances and personal situations of older people who are unemployed and to develop effective tools for keeping workers who belong to this vulnerable category in the labour market, offering opportunities for lifelong learning and upgrading of skills, in-work training and accessible and affordable learning programmes and promoting intergenerational training and transfer of knowledge at work for all;

17. Stresses that consideration should be given in this connection above all to programmes such as ‘generational mentoring’, in which exchanges are encouraged between older experts and the younger generation at work and in training; points out that mixed-aged teams should be supported in the work process and outstanding projects should be rewarded; considers that incentives for businesses to hire more older workers could be put in place by Member States, and that, as a matter of principle, older workers should not be treated less favourably than younger workers with regard to vocational and continuing training; stresses in particular the importance of adapting workplaces to the needs of older workers and providing more opportunities for older workers to work part time in line with their preferences, as well as facilitating longer working lives for those who want and are able to work for longer; takes the view that special retirement plans for older long-term unemployed people should be set up, striking a balance between these people’s need for social stability and that of social security systems;
18. Considers it regrettable that older people are still often exposed to age discrimination, stereotypes and barriers; calls on the Member States, therefore, to correctly implement Council Directive 2000/78/EC on equal treatment in employment and occupation without delay; notes that the proposal for the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive¹ has been blocked in the Council since 2008 and calls on the Member States to find a solution as soon as possible;
19. Strongly rejects, however, the consideration of active ageing policies solely as an instrument to maintain the employability of older workers, and urges the Member States to make all the necessary assessments and efforts to shift to a lifecycle approach and, where appropriate, reform the pension system, while making every effort to stabilise the rules on retirement, taking into account actual unemployment rates among the population above the age of 50 before changing the mandatory pension age; believes that linking the retirement age only to life expectancy fails to take account of the importance of labour market trends and should not, therefore, be the only instrument used to tackle the challenge of an ageing society; considers that instead, through their employment protection legislation and systems of wage formation, Member States should support the recruitment of older workers in particular before their statutory retirement age, as unemployment would have further negative effects on their retirement income, and that Member States should ensure sustainable social protection systems;
20. Calls on the Member States to ensure sustainability of public pension schemes and to guarantee individual and adequate pension income and rights for all to ensure a

¹ Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426).

dignified life in old age – including those who have taken justified career breaks, mainly women; stresses the importance of adequate supervision and independent audits of occupational pension funds for safe and sustainable pensions;

21. Stresses that older people must be given the opportunity to play a key role in helping their families, and draws attention to the valuable voluntary work performed by older people;
22. Stresses the importance of accessible technologies for ageing European societies and calls on the Commission to develop an inclusive Digital Single Market strategy by ensuring that accessibility is mainstreamed throughout the strategy and linked with the promotion of the ‘silver economy’ in Europe;
23. 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 (ESIF), Horizon 2020, Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the Health Programme; calls for better coordination between the programmes and various instruments made available by the EU for the promotion of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity, and calls, in line with the priorities of Horizon 2020, for the creation of a European research priority entitled ‘Applied Health and Active-Ageing Sciences’;
24. Calls on the Member States to use available European Social Fund (ESF), ESIF and EaSI funding to provide financial assistance to self-help programmes run by organisations for older people, who are sharing their energy, knowledge, experiences and wisdom with each other and helping people in need, thereby contributing to active and healthy ageing, and living independently for a longer time;
25. Recalls the Commission’s Budget Review 2010 which identified ‘EU added value’ as one of its core principles; insists that this principle must represent the cornerstone of all expenditures and that EU funding, particularly that under the ESF, should not be used to subsidise national approaches but to provide additional support to Member States’ active ageing programmes;
26. 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 urges 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;
27. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to collect complete and reliable data allowing assessment of the effectiveness of ESF spending on older workers;
28. Calls on the Commission to assess the feasibility and added value of a new EU financial instrument to provide a minimum income for all EU citizens below the poverty line;
29. Recommends to the Member States that they draw up and implement public policies and programmes that will not only improve physical health but also promote mental

health and social ties;

30. Considers it essential to support older people in living independently and actively for as long as possible, as set out in Article 25 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, by developing and maintaining people-oriented and demand-driven public support, assistance and care services and by improving the connection between these services; calls, therefore, on the Member States to ensure affordable, accessible and non-discriminatory health care and to prioritise prevention in their health care policies; calls, therefore, on the Commission to implement the Social Investment Package, to keep healthy ageing and the adequacy and quality of long-term care high on the political agenda, and to analyse the affordability of health care for older people, collect data on waiting times in health care systems across the EU and propose guidelines for maximum waiting times; considers it essential to promote personal and individual responsibility for one's own health, with a marked increase in the level of information on health care and national motivation campaigns, as well as to encourage cooperation on health literacy in order to empower older persons to take care of their health; recalls that we should devote greater attention to innovative technological solutions and tools; finally, recognises the importance of effective dissemination of information relating to local services and entitlements in achieving this goal;
31. Calls on the Commission to follow up the conclusions of the joint report entitled 'Adequate social protection for long-term care needs in an ageing society' and to present concrete proposals without delay;
32. Believes that priority should be given to integrating elderly people within their families; suggests to the Commission that it explore the potential offered by family businesses and the corresponding work in the field of care for the elderly;
33. Points out that more effective public transport is one of the top priorities for older people for the creation of age-friendly environments¹, supporting an independent life and access to basic services; calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve the accessibility and interoperability of transport systems;
34. Welcomes the Commission background paper entitled 'Growing the Silver Economy in Europe' and reiterates the need to further develop the 'silver economy', which caters to the wishes and 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 and taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable socioeconomic groups;
35. Notes that a one-sided rejuvenation of workforces does not lead to more innovation, but represents a waste of experience, knowledge and skills;
36. Takes the view that older people should be a fully fledged part of society and that their participation in daily life, including public life, should be supported; considers, furthermore, that an active dialogue and exchange of experiences between young and

¹ European Commission (2012). Special Eurobarometer 378 on Active Ageing.

elderly people should be encouraged; highlights the role of intergenerational projects in this context; supports, furthermore, the right of elderly people to lead a life of dignity and independence, as set out in Article 25 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; also believes that the active political participation of representatives of the younger and older generations should be secured at all EU levels, wherever generation interests may be affected;

37. Draws attention also to the valuable social role that older people play by imparting values and experience to others and providing pointers on how to approach community life;
38. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to adopt a positive position within the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing to ensure that older citizens can fully enjoy their human rights; invites the Commission to closely cooperate with the UN Independent Expert on the Rights of Older Persons and with older people's representative organisations in the EU;
39. Deplores the fact that people's patterns of employment are becoming increasingly uneven and insecure as a result of temporary work, the growth of short-term contracts, marginal employment and unemployment;
40. 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 identify areas within the EU budget where savings and efficiencies can be made in order 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);
41. Calls on the Commission to adopt an EU Strategy on Demographic Change to coordinate EU action in various areas in order to ensure synergies and maximise their positive impact on Europe's citizens, economy and job creation, as well as protect the human rights of older persons in all EU policies;
42. Believes that demographic challenges are not adequately addressed at European level; calls, therefore, on the forthcoming Presidencies of the Council of the EU to put this item back on the EU agenda and work out strong policy responses;
43. Stresses that demographic change should not be advanced as a justification for the dismantling of social entitlements and services;
44. 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;
45. 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 Active Ageing Index which are to be achieved through comprehensive active ageing strategies, and to monitor progress towards those targets;

46. 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;
47. Believes that a UN Convention to protect the rights of older persons will improve the lives of older persons by guaranteeing them equal access to political, economic, health care and cultural rights, and would represent an important platform to create an attitude shift towards ageing on a global scale;
48. Calls on the Commission to adopt an Action Plan on elder abuse, taking stock of the European Quality Framework for Long-Term Care developed by the WeDO Partnership and addressing the issue of the rights of older persons in need of care and assistance;
49. Regrets that the Commission has not yet addressed age inequalities in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Disability Strategy; calls, therefore, on the Commission to raise awareness of and address the rights of older persons with disabilities and the age discrimination they suffer, and to ensure that the application of the UNCRPD does not leave older people behind;
50. Calls on the Commission to release the long-awaited European Accessibility Act to ensure that transport, housing and ICT-based products and services, including the ones offered with the 'silver economy', are accessible to older persons;
51. Calls on the Commission to issue country-specific recommendations addressing the adequacy, sustainability and fairness of economic reforms in the field of employment, pensions, social inclusion and long-term care within the European Semester framework; calls on the Commission to better assess the social impact of economic reforms, notably in the context of population ageing;
52. Stresses the importance of volunteering, which cannot be taken for granted and should therefore have its added social value taken into greater consideration, and which promotes intercultural learning and intergenerational solidarity, fosters active ageing and lifelong civic participation, and enables older people to display a commitment to society, thereby improving their quality of life, well-being and general state of health; encourages the development of more flexible and inclusive approaches to participation in volunteering programmes; in this context, regrets the discontinuation of the Grundtvig programme which supported older volunteers; recalls the importance of European and transnational networks of associations and public and private bodies working to foster the integration of elderly people, which should be given particular support, and urges the Commission to acknowledge the value of successful EU

programmes which combined civic participation with EU-wide group exchanges involving older people;

53. Stresses that a policy for justice between the generations must aim to create the necessary tools for conducting an open and frank intergenerational dialogue with a view to achieving win-win situations; calls on the Commission and the Member States to work intensively on such tools in order to create solidarity;
54. Stresses the importance of social enterprises that help to provide services for the elderly and look after their health and participation in society;
55. 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,

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)

support for social engagement and health promotion and preventative health care.

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.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	15.7.2015
Result of final vote	+: 43 -: 9 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Laura Agea, Guillaume Balas, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Enrique Calvet Chambon, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Lampros Fountoulis, Elena Gentile, Arne Gericke, Thomas Händel, Marian Harkin, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Agnes Jongerius, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Patrick Le Hyaric, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Emilian Pavel, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Terry Reintke, Sofia Ribeiro, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Romana Tomc, Yana Toom, Ulrike Trebesius, Ulla Tørnæs, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber, Tatjana Ždanoka, Jana Žitňanská, Inês Cristina Zuber
Substitutes present for the final vote	Tim Aker, Tania González Peñas, Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, Eduard Kukan, Tamás Meszerics, Ivo Vajgl

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

43	+
ALDE	Enrique Calvet Chambon, Marian Harkin, Yana Toom, Ulla Tørnæs, Ivo Vajgl, Renate Weber
ECR	Arne Gericke, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Anthea McIntyre, Ulrike Trebesius, Jana Žitňanská
PPE	David Casa, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Eduard Kukan, Adam Kósa, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Thomas Mann, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Marek Plura, Sofia Ribeiro, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Romana Tomc
S&D	Guillaume Balas, Brando Benifei, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Ole Christensen, Elena Gentile, Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, Agnes Jongerius, Jan Keller, Emilian Pavel, Georgi Pirinski, Maria João Rodrigues, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Marita Ulvskog
Verts/ALE	Tamás Meszerics, Terry Reintke, Tatjana Ždanoka

9	-
EFDD	Laura Agea, Tim Aker, Tiziana Beghin
GUE/NGL	Tania González Peñas, Thomas Händel, Rina Ronja Kari, Patrick Le Hyaric, Inês Cristina Zuber
NI	Lampros Fountoulis

2	0
ENF	Mara Bizzotto, Dominique Martin

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention