

BAGSO 

# SENIORENREPORT

2/2006



**Service?  
Yes, please!**



BUNDESARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT DER SENIOREN-ORGANISATIONEN (BAGSO)

## Contents

### Senior citizens' policy and work with senior citizens

1. Senior citizens – active and committed 1
2. Older consumers are calling for their needs to be given greater attention at the consumers' policy congress in Bonn 2

### Service? Yes, please!

1. Avoid overwhelming people 3
2. Experience with out-patient services 3
3. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hauswirtschaft (dgh) e.V. 5

### Online – Year 50Plus

- Older people go online – educational initiative in Online Year 50plus 6

### Senior Citizens worldwide

1. "New Horizons – active Age": Conference May 2006 7
2. "New Horizons – active Age": Manifesto – "Learning in mature age" 9
3. Neighbours 13
4. TraVeL AGEnts 13
5. Social Inclusion tool-kit – now available 14
6. Toolkit-Social Inclusion – Full Version 15
7. European Conference of "Demographic Change as Opportunity": The Economic Potential of the Elderly 20

## Imprint

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## Senior citizens' policy and work with senior citizens

### 1. Senior citizens – active and committed

The explosiveness of the data contained in the 2nd Volunteers Survey (a representative study published at the end of March 2006) is due to the fact that it paints a realistic picture of the productive contribution older people make to their social environment. According to the survey, growth rates were particularly pronounced in the period from 1999 (first volunteers' survey) until 2004, especially for the age groups 60 and over. Among 60 to 69-year-olds, the so-called "young old", the authors of the study even identified what they termed a "surge of activation" in various areas.

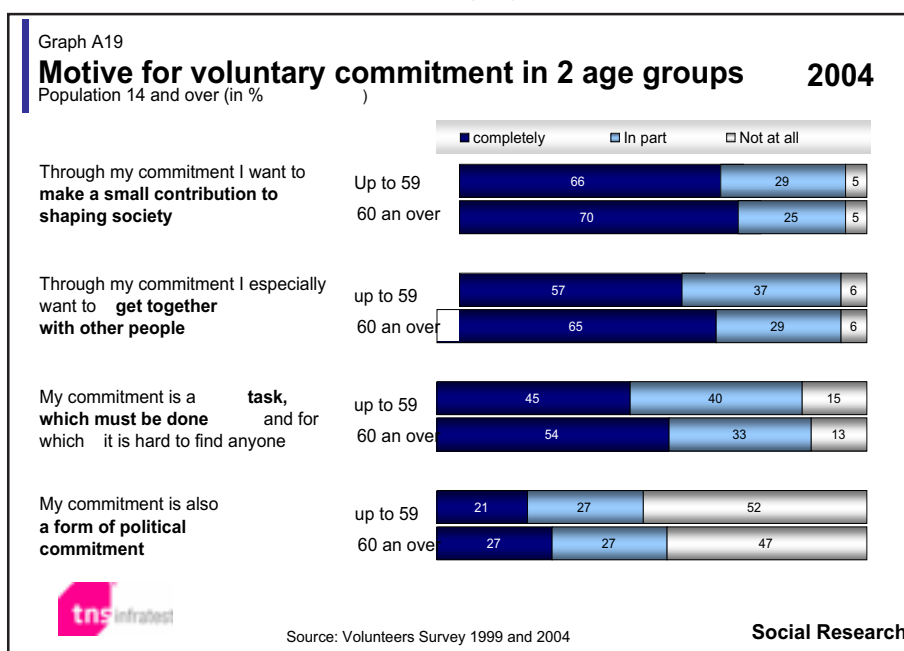
57% of senior citizens voice a strong interest in "what is happening in politics and public life", which not only is considerably higher than for younger age groups of 14-to-59-year-olds (42%) – this figure has also grown markedly by 4% over the last five years (among the younger cohort this growth only amounted to 1%). The percentage of 60-to-69-year-olds even jumped from 52% to 59%, with the figure for women soaring by 9%!

The comparison to younger cohorts clearly indicates that senior citizens are by no means "apolitical". Their interest in politics is the underlying reason why they are more active in community activities such as clubs, associations, groups and organisations than they were five years ago. The figure for people over 60 rose from 55% to 63% - a rise of 8%. The trend among dynamic "young old" people aged 60 to 69 was even greater, registering a 9% rise in actively involved persons to reach an impressive 70%. This comes close to the level for 14-to-59-year-olds of 72%.

The interest in politics and public life relates not only to active involvement, however, but ranges beyond this to include challenging, longer periods of performing various duties, work and functions. This voluntary commitment also rose over the period 1999 to 2004: by 4% for the age group 60 and over (reaching 30% at present) and even 6% for 60-to-69-year-olds (37% at present). This raises the question as to what areas benefit the most from this commitment: "athletics and movement" continues to be in

first place, where the commitment of older people has remained the same at 6.5%. A much higher growth can be seen since 1999 in the area of "church and religion", with a rise of 1.5% to 7% and in the social area with a growth of 2% to reach 7% as well. Here the commitment of younger people has remained at a lower level, which suggests the following: "Older people have thus contributed disproportionately more to a revival of social commitment in Germany – the area which has seen the greatest growth in voluntary work since 1999" (Gensicke, p. 322).

Another interesting question is what the motivation were for older people to make a voluntary commitment on behalf of other people.



Persons of every age who were surveyed agreed that they wanted to "help shape the community at least in a small way through their commitment". This motive is expressed somewhat more frequently – as the diagram shows – by senior citizens 60 years of age and over than by younger people. This also goes for the other secondary motives which were named such as the desire to get together with other people, a feeling of personal obligation to also perform less desirable work and the view that a voluntary commitment is a form of political commitment.

These statements and the frequency with which they are made does not conform very neatly with the pre-established notion and image of older people held by the population or offered up by the media. The situation is similar with respect to answers to the question as to expectations in connection with voluntary work which in comparison to younger people documents a clear orientation towards the common weal and a strong inclination to help out in the social area. The fact that voluntary activity is supposed to

be fun as well is at the top of the list, however, just like with younger people. With the following motives in the ranking, however, the mean value for older people was somewhat higher: "So that one can help other people", "so that one can do something for the common weal", "so one can get together with nice people that one likes". The other statements which were made, however, which are more focused on individual interests, were more important for younger people.

The results of the 2nd Volunteers Survey has cast doubt on another frequently voiced bias, namely that older people do not show solidarity when it comes to their own age cohort. For this reason demands are often forwarded to the effect that they should show more commitment and willingness to support their own generation. This demand has lost substance in light of the data, as 26% of senior citizens surveyed stated that older people were the target group in their voluntary commitment. That was the most any specific target group was named! If we add those older people who for example take care of a parent or spouse, it becomes all the more evident that there is no lack of solidarity here.

*Dr. Erika Neubauer, BAGSO*

Online at: [www.bagso.de](http://www.bagso.de) under the rubric of Commitment.

### **2. Older consumers are calling for their needs to be given greater attention at the consumers' policy congress in Bonn**

Business has discovered the 60plus generation. The branch is describing the estimated 400 billion Euros in purchasing power of consumers over 60 with superlatives such as "megamarket" or "the most profitable market of all time", and courting it on a massive scale. But what does this development mean for senior citizens? Will products, packaging or services be designed in a more seniors-friendly manner in the future? Is there a greater danger of unprofessional products, services and misleading "bargains"? Can consumers defend themselves on their own? 200 experts from the fields of government, business and consumer and senior citizens' associations discussed this and other issues at the congress "Zukunftsmarkt 60plus" upon the invitation of the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry for Consumer Protection at the end of May.

The Minister of Consumer Protection, Eckhard Uhlenberg, called upon business and industry to deal with senior citizens in a fair way: "Communication and new media, nursing care, health and nutrition are growing markets in which older people also need to find their way around. They expect that providers of products and services will take them seriously. Deficiencies such as complicated

cost structures and increasing automation instead of counselling pose major problems – and not only for senior citizens. On top of this, consumers 60 and over are constantly being subjected to new sales methods and strategies which often violate the rules of fair competition. The bandwidth ranges from "dubious" shopping outings to "dubious" notification of winnings in raffles all the way to purported "bargains" by door-to-door salesmen. People who are duped into a buy still have legal recourse. But many older consumers are not aware of their rights."

Informing consumers and counselling them so that they are able to make independent decisions and choices – whether this involves the purchase of an electronic appliance, a medical service or a holiday trip – is for this reason one of the most important demands of the Congress. Consumer policy should create a balance between the interests of consumers and business. The Ministry for Consumer Protection intends to take this legitimate interest into account through a series of dialogue events to take place over a period of several years (Verbraucherforum 60plus) which aims at bringing about improvements in cooperation between business, science, consumer protection and senior citizens' associations. The Ministry intends to initiate and encourage voluntary cooperative ventures focusing on "senior citizens-related consumer work" and form networks with the organisations involved. Possible topics could range from user-friendly product information such as "seals of approval" to qualifications of commercial service personnel working for specific target groups.

According to Minister of Consumer Protection Eckhard Uhlenberg, "together we want to discuss barriers in the market from the perspective of older consumers, look for possible solutions and strengthen the autonomous skills of consumers 60 and over in a sustained manner." The ministry intends to begin the series of dialogue events before the end of this year.

BAGSO works together closely with consumer protection agencies. This provides an opportunity to pool skills in order to improve the quality of life of older people. By the same token, BAGSO serves as an important "antenna" for the consumer protection agencies by communicating to these what is important to older people. Together topics can be developed to be included in counselling programmes and brochures, while joint campaigns and projects can also be carried out. Moreover, BAGSO along with its member associations is an important multiplier for consumer protection agencies in reaching out to old people.

### Service? Yes, please!

#### 1. Avoid overwhelming people

##### Helping relieve the burden of household chores

Independence and autonomy in old age is a crucial precondition for well-being and quality of life, as it provides that pleasant feeling that one can cope with one's own life. It is for this reason that independence and autonomy are also declared objectives of senior citizens policy and aid for senior citizens. It is up to each and every individual to take advantage of these opportunities. People who do not accept help from others do not live independently or autonomously. This is achieved, rather, by people who can determine and shape their own lifestyles without being overwhelmed in the attempt. Home economics plays a major role here. People run a danger of being overwhelmed and thus being restricted in their autonomous lifestyles first of all when they also have to take care of people requiring aid and nursing care in their own household, and secondly when their own capabilities begin to decline.

##### Living situation and environment

People requiring aid and nursing care can make decisions on the lifestyle they desire and the performance of domestic chores, in this manner living in an autonomous, independent manner, and they can ease the burden of work that they have to cope with. One important factor in all this is the external framework in which domestic activities take place. A dwelling which is free of barriers and easy to care for is held to be one of the main preconditions for people to be able to maintain their autonomy when they start experiencing a decline in their capabilities and energy levels. The location of a dwelling determines how easy it is to reach public transportation, stores and infrastructural facilities. There are many small details in an apartment or dwelling which make domestic chores easier or turn these into a major challenge.

##### Ways of easing the burden

When domestic chores become more difficult, the demand for service providers increases. According to a survey of the age group of 70-to-79-year-olds conducted by the Gesellschaft für Konsum-, Markt- und Absatzforschung (GfK), 40% desire cleaning services, 28% meals services, 28% shopping services, 21% laundry services, 21% aid in smaller repairs and craft activities (according to Weinkopf). Most frequently a trusted person from the neighbourhood is employed as a cleaning aid, while the willingness to pay for professional domestic work is still limited. For this reason the importance of the private network of family,

friends and neighbours in helping people help themselves in dealing with domestic chore will tend to increase in the future. As a result of the demographic shift, especially in rural regions, this network could become rent with holes, which is why professional out-patient service agencies will increasingly be offering aid in the domestic area.

In sum, it can be said that measures to ensure autonomy in old age through preventive health care, the design and creation of dwelling spaces without barriers and the upkeep of social contacts need to start long before people reach retirement age. The challenge is for people to be aware of their desires and their options and to take action in a deliberate, conscious manner.

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##### Literature

Weinkopf, Claudia: Haushaltsnahe Dienstleistungen für Ältere. Expertise für den 5. Altenbericht der Bundesregierung. Gelsenkirchen 2005

#### 2. "I can still take care of the household alone" – experience with out-patient services

Home economics expert and gerontology nurse Helga Noll reports on her experience in senior citizen households with a low or average income

##### Ability to keep a household changes when people grow old

People usually do not want to face up to the fact that their health declines with age. They conceal the fact that their own energy and capacity to do household chores diminishes. For this reason, outsiders often perceive these changes before the people affected themselves see a need for help. Only then do they accept outside help. A need for help in performing household work generally arises first – if an acute illness or need for nursing care do not come about suddenly before this. If senior citizens were not previously accustomed to having outside help ease their work load, they try to maintain and organise their own household as long as possible themselves. Even when they find it increasingly difficult to perform this work, they tend to reject outside help in the household with statements like: "I cannot afford the luxury." "I don't need strangers in my home." "I can still do it myself."

In actual practice, experience shows the following to often be the case:

- Superficial cleaning work is performed by mobilising all one's energy at tremendous effort.

- Shopping is reduced.
- Food is prepared less often. This may result in nutritional deficiencies and undernourishment.
- “Meals on wheels” is often tried out, but in many cases discontinued after a while.
- Instead of “meals on wheels”, senior citizens would also invest more money in a freshly prepared meal every day.

When the first inhibitions have been overcome, however, and senior citizens accept outside help, great sensitivity is needed even in the first counselling meeting in order to find the right household service to continue the household in the familiar manner. The support is then gladly accepted and expanded if the health condition of the older person warrants this. The type and frequency of help does not depend only on needs, however – it also depends on the ability to pay for such services. Here one finds another gap between desires, needs and reality. Even assigning older people to a category entitling them to subsidised domestic help does not solve the problem.

### Living situation

Dwellings are usually not built with handicapped people or senior citizens in mind, and it is often not possible to alter them. Because they avoid using other aids such as hand railings as long as possible, older people tend to fall quite frequently. Domestic services should therefore also attend to the safety of the inhabitants and provide appropriate counselling. People are often more inclined to accept housing adaptation measures when these aids are subsidised by the nursing care insurance schemes.

### What older people spend money on

Older people frequently say: „We do not need anything, we have everything we need.” They hesitate to buy things and deliberate long and hard before spending money and only buy things they need. Different experiences have an impact on senior citizens’ decision to buy what they need. When they decide to indulge in something, e.g. products which help maintain health, a pedicure or leisure time services, they attach a good deal of importance to quality. They thus expect aid services for the household or nursing care to be of good quality.

A nursing care service is usually contacted on the basis of personal recommendations. Price comparisons almost never play a role, as agreements with health and nursing care insurance schemes are almost all identical to one another. Price comparisons are made in the case of domestic services without contractual agreements, but here as well the personal recommendation is decisive. Cus-

tomers not only equate high quality with good services – reliability, trust and confidence also play perhaps an even greater role. Senior citizens want their desires to be taken seriously, to choose the times when help is provided and have the same persons attend to them as much as possible.

In the case of domestic services, it is not only the actual work which is performed. Important secondary effects include communication, the conveyance of a feeling of security, appreciation and empathy. All this enhances a customer’s feeling of well-being.

### Out-patient services providing care and domestic support

60% of customers of our out-patient services make use of domestic services while 45% are supported by family members. This allows one to infer the following:

The desire among people requiring nursing care to be supported by their own family members is always latent in spite of statements like: “I don’t want to be a burden on my children.” Daughters and sons sometimes feel uncertain when they hear this. They want to help but their offer of help is rejected. This is often the case when family members do not live nearby or communication between parents and children was or is poor. Here a nursing care service can perform a bridging function, organising the aid it provides in such a manner as to integrate family members in the nursing care when they have time and depending upon their nursing skills, minimise emotional conflicts or even solve them. The quality of relationships in the past is now reflected in the quality of care – whether it be nursing care of the spouse or of the parent.

People with slight functional impairments and restrictions usually only need help with the household at first, while people with slight disruptions in orientation need supervision and support. People suffering from dementia require help around the clock – this can often only be provided by a good network within the family.

People with considerable physical impairments require expert nursing services as well as medical care.

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### 3. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hauswirtschaft (dgh) e.V.

“Work between research and the field of practice” is the slogan of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hauswirtschaft. At the centre of focus is the joint interest in structuring the everyday lives of people in households and domestic service providers which supplement and support these.

#### The focal areas of work in advisory councils and special committees

The dgh represents needs in the household area and articulates the demands of young people and adults for education and training in this area within the framework of its possibilities. Concrete measures which have been identified include *inter alia*:

- Fostering research on households, families and consumption
- Aid in updating and developing home economics occupation profiles and determining the technical qualifications required for these
- Promoting further education and training of young people and adults
- Work informing the general public, among other places in the journal “Hauswirtschaft und Wissenschaft” and additional publications (a directory can be requested from the dgh)
- Cooperating with organisations which have a similar objective, such as now with BAGSO.

The dgh is represented by its six-member board, whose members come from different fields of work in the research area and the field of practice. The work performed by the members of the board and the approximately 200 active persons in the special committees and advisory councils is voluntary. The individual members come from the household science and home economics-occupation field; they work in the areas of science and education, counselling on home economics topics or in companies and associations which provide services relating to domestic households. The corporate members are enterprises and associations: the nutrition industry, household appliances and goods, the chemicals industry, the energy industry, the banking industry and publishing companies. Member organisations include associations, training centres, educational institutions and research institutes with a connection to home economics and consumer-protection agencies.

The following advisory councils and special committees invite people to get involved:

- The “Beirat für Hauswirtschaftliche Verbände in der dgh” (the “Advisory Council for Home Economics Asso-

ciations in the dgh”, the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Hauswirtschaft (National Association of Organisations for Home Economics, BAG-HW). It comprises within it numerous Federal and Länder associations with more than one million members.

- The “Beirat für Internationale Fragen” (the “Advisory Council for International Issues”) represents the interests of the dgh at the international level. It is the “German Section in the Internationaler Verband für Hauswirtschaft (International Association for Home Economics - IVHW)”
- The “Beirat Junges Forum” (“Advisory Council Young Forum”) represents junior researchers and people working in the field of practice as well as students of home economics.
- The “Fachausschuss Beratung für Haushalt und Verbrauch” (“Special Committee for Household and Consumption”) is oriented towards the vocational fields of home economics counselling and consumer counselling. It develops and tests strategies, methods and materials for different types of counselling.
- The “Fachausschuss Hauswirtschaftliche Dienstleistungsbetriebe” (“Special Committee for Home Economics Service Businesses”) is involved with problems facing home economics service businesses, e.g. senior citizens services institutions or canteen meals providers.
- The “Fachausschuss Haushalt und Bildung” (“Special Committee for Households and Training”) sees itself as an informal discussion forum.
- The “Fachausschuss Haushaltstechnik” (“Special Committee for Household Technology”) addresses the development, application and inspection of devices and processes in the household equipment used in private households and home economics service enterprises.

The working group for “Barrierefreie Hausräte” (“Household Appliances Free of Barriers”) is very active in the Special Committee for Household Technology of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hauswirtschaft (“German Society for Home Economics”). It has created brochures for the purchase of household appliances free of barriers and, based on the results of various surveys, recently created a new brochure ‘user-friendly products’, while it also seeks to address younger consumers. The issue of the brochure was funded by the Federal Ministry for Nutrition, Agricultural and Consumer Protection and received the support of BAGSO and the DIN Consumers’ Council. It reaches out a helping hand to senior citizens in selecting user-friendly devices and appliances.

- The “Fachausschuss Haushalt und Wohnen” („Special Committee for Household and Living” works to help ensure that housing is planned, furnished and arranged in a manner that conforms with needs. It also represents the interests of inhabitants and performs a liaison function between the planning and use of housing.
- The “Fachausschuss Strukturwandel des Haushalts” (“Special Committee for the Structural Change of the Household”) analyses fundamental issues in maintaining private and family households



*The dgh Board: Mirjam Jaquemoth, Heilwig Dietrich, Martina Feulner, Alrun Niehage (Chairperson), Konstantin von Normann and Klaus Werner (from left to right)*

The members' journal „Hauswirtschaft und Wissenschaft” (Home Economics and Science - HuW) is the only German-language research journal for home economics and technology. As the “European journal for household economics, household technology and social management”, it focuses also on the European dimension of home economics and technology-related problems.

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### Online – Year 50Plus

#### 1. Older people go online – educational initiative in Online Year 50plus

In the age of the computer, if you aren't online, you are left out in the cold. All the participants in the Internet beginners' course agreed on this. “Too many things pass us by. Others find out about them but we don't,” was how Karl-Egon Rümmler put it. Together with his wife, he took part in a four-hour course in Berlin within the framework of “Online Year 50plus – Internet connects”.

“My first computer was only a replacement for my typewriter, but today I want to be able to talk and discuss things with my grandchildren and with my senior citizens network by e-mail,” is how Ilse Siebert-Ohrlich, from Wiesbaden, who at 85 was the oldest participant in the summer academy, explained her motive. Another participant confessed: “In the past my husband did everything. But now I also want to know how it works.” To be able to discuss current topics, to stay abreast of the times and keep up with modern technology – these were the most frequently cited reasons why the generation 50 and over wants to become familiar with the Internet.

Four-hour Internet beginners' courses are being started throughout Germany on everyday topics like shopping, finance, travel and security within the framework of the Online Year 50plus. The foundations of the Internet are taught in a manner conforming with the interests and learning speed of older people: surfing, searching for and finding information, security and writing e-mails are all part of the learning package. Why the arrow showing the mouse on the computer turns into a hand or how electronic mail from unknown senders can be avoided – these and other questions are answered.

In the courses on the topics of shopping and finance, the programme includes what one needs to know when shopping online or doing online banking. The “security” course provides tips and ideas on how to adjust security settings on the computer, and it is explained how important it is to regularly update security software. The participants learn about how to find rail connections in planning a trip and then buy a ticket online in the Travel Module.

Research on the right nutrition and athletics courses in the region is described in the Health Module. The connection to actual practice in many of the modules was seen in a very positive light by the participants. The course modules were carried out with the support of Deutsche Telekom, Deutsche Postbank, German Rail, BKK24 and Symantec. 40% of the persons surveyed attended several modules in order to acquire knowledge on other everyday topics.

More women (63%) than men (47%) took part in the Internet beginners' courses.

"Our strategy worked," was the satisfied conclusion of Birgit Kampmann, Managing Director of the Competence Centre Technology – Diversity – Equal Opportunity, who jointly with BAGSO initiated the Online Year 50plus and coordinated the courses offered. "We want to reach older people in the generation 50 and over and have priced the courses in line with the strategy: 'the older you are, the less it costs'. The participants pay 20 Euros minus 10 cents for each year of age for the four-hour course: about half of the participants (almost 60%) were over 60, and a quarter were even over 70."

Anyone who would like to take part in the Internet beginners' courses on specific topics can register for the (W)Internet season in October and November. Regional educational institutions are offering four-hour courses on the topics of shopping, finance, health, travel and security at more than 230 locations.

**Price per course: 20 Euros minus 10 cents for each year of age**

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### Senior Citizens worldwide

#### 1. "New Horizons – active Age - Conference May 2006 New Horizons – active living in old age



*Ger Tielen moderating the workshop "Tandems: successful accounts of interaction between generations"*

"How should interaction between generations be re-shaped and restructured in view of the demographic shift?" This question was at the heart of the final conference for the project "New Horizons – active living in old age", which took place on 12 and 13 May in Munich/Benediktbeuern.

The European Action Programme focuses on new educational policy strategies for the 50plus generation which take into account the need for lifelong learning, the linkage between formal and informal learning and promotion of active participation in civil society.

"In both Europe and Asia at present the 'problem area of old age' is being transformed into an 'action field for old age' including at the political level as a result of the inexorable demographic shift taking place in these world regions," is how Doris Hoffmann (GEFAS Styria) summed it up.

Gerda Hasselfeld voiced an appeal for an altered awareness on the part of policy-makers: The policy-making arena needs to see what possibilities older people have to offer as an "economic factor", but by the same token also take advantage of new forms of interaction between generations. As examples, Hasselfeld, Deputy Speaker of the German Bundestag, offered model national programmes such as 'Experience-based Knowledge for Initiatives' (*Erfahrungswissen für Initiativen*) and multi-generational housing.

Christine Schwendner (Bavarian Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Women), set out the objectives and aims for a viable forward-looking senior citizens policy: Senior citizens, who are better educated, wealthier and healthier than ever before, need to be included as 'active elements' while the status of social commitment must be enhanced by interweaving it in a 'patchwork' together with gainful employment. In response to the individualisation and 'de-standardisation' of individual biographies, employment models which are in tune with the times need to be developed, according to André Schleiter (Bertelsmann).

"The three boxes of life" (young/adult/old) have become more "equalised", according to Jumbo Clercq (Odyssey Netherlands). As a result, models of lifelong vocational learning alternating with informal continuing education need to be developed, especially along multigenerational lines. The constant adjustment to meet new requirements and the creation of an individual mix of experience, skills and development possibilities are especially needed nowadays. Innovative European projects measuring and developing skills and competences in voluntary work (e.g

the AVE Project – assessing voluntary experience in a professional perspective) were presented here.

The special strengths older people have to offer – experience and skills developed over a long working life, the ability to apply these skills, “availability” and willingness to travel – these are the basic building blocks in the human resource-development strategy of the company Fahrion Engineering in Stuttgart., which was presented by its owner. Teams made up of different-aged individuals can produce a mix which creates a win-win situation for everyone involved. The model function for business was illustrated with the example of the project “AGE – Agency for Social Commitment” (Arbeit und Leben NRW). In this project companies support voluntary commitments made by their staff make after they retire from working life.

Steve Milsom (Welsh Assembly Government) described the inter-generational strategy in Wales (2003-2008), which is being supported with EUR 20 million and is based on the principles of the UN regarding ageing (combating discrimination against older people, developing a positive image of old age and fostering participation), as a mixture of ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’ elements. It provides for the appointment of a commissioner for older people and is closely linked with an action plan for “healthy ageing” and the integration of structural measures to improve services and programmes on offer for older people. A centre has been established at the University of Glamorgan and assigned the task of further developing inter-generational strategies, gathering information on examples of good practice and offering a distance learning programme.

The national expansion of senior citizens’ universities is of tremendous importance in the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Teaching new technologies is one of the main aims in the effort, according to Lenka Shromazilova (University of Brno, Brunn). The newly acquired skills are used both to begin a second or even third occupational career as well as for voluntary work, according to Dusana Findeisen, from the University of Ljubljana.

The development of a new solidarity between generations is very important in Hungary, emphasised Judit Agnes Szabo, from the Hungarian Ministry for Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity. A “Board of the Elderly” was set up there as far back as 1996 and is headed by the prime minister. The re-integration of older unemployed persons has been fostered in a targeted manner since 2005 by means of a government programme.

In view of the status of European research and development in the area of “multi-generational learning”, Volker

Amrhein from the Berlin project office “Dialogue between Generations” emphasised that there was a considerable need for action. Numerous innovative project ideas were presented: integration programmes for people seeking work in the labour market, promotion of the new autonomy, but also the creation of new forms of voluntary work.

The English “WorkWise” project (AGE-Concern) uses case management as well as mentoring to promote the new autonomy. And the Erfurt Chamber of Commerce’s TANDEM project has linked the reintegration of older people seeking work with the training of young people within the framework of a sophisticated, prize-winning strategy in Thuringia. The improvement in relations between generations in a neighbourhood setting is at the heart of the Belgian project “Neighbourhood Stories” (ATOUTAGE), where schools, senior citizens’ homes and a historical association all help collect and document “everyday history”. A new strategy for multi-generational voluntary services was also presented in the guise of the example “Ge-Mit” (“Walk-With”) Project sponsored by Protestant Voluntary Services and the Federal German Working Group for Senior Citizens’ Offices.

“Paid work” is Norway’s answer to the demographic shift, according to Kjell Iversen, representative of the Norwegian trade unions. The high rate of employment among older employees in Norway as well is due to the long years of an active labour-market policy pursued by the government and the good relations between the government and trade unions.

“New Horizons – Active living in Old Age” is a project which has been carried out by partner organisations from Belgium, Germany, England, Norway, Hungary and Switzerland. The results produced by the project, in which BAGSO was an important partner, are to be used to develop recommendations for action for policy-makers.

*For additional information and the complete presentations of the speakers, see:*

*[www.activeage.feek.pt.e.hu](http://www.activeage.feek.pt.e.hu)*

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### **2. New Horizons – Active Age – Manifesto: Learning in mature age**

**The interface between ‘working life’, ‘learning’ and ‘retirement’.**

#### **1. Productive ageing**

**The scientific and practical focus on ‘Learning in mature age’ aims to locate the development of older people’s skills and knowledge within a framework of different ‘life stages’. At the core of this new conceptual framework sits the idea of ‘productive ageing’. This idea emphasises both the importance of older people in the development of intergenerational learning, as well as a consideration of how older people can contribute to economic prosperity and society as a whole.**

Lawmakers at both European and national levels have a responsibility to establish an overall European strategy on productive ageing. This should be seen not only as a means of prolonging working life but also as a strategy for developing individual approaches to new lifestyles by offering individuals opportunities to establish their own balance between gainful occupation, voluntary work and learning that are adapted to mature age.

This responsibility needs to be delivered through effective anti-discrimination and social protection legislation at national and European levels, as well as through raising awareness of the growing impact of these demographic changes. In particular:

- Older people need to re-orientate themselves to this balance between working life and retirement at an early stage of their life, because of interrupted employment biographies and longer retirement period.
- Companies will face an increasingly foreseeable lack of qualified employees. They need to maintain employability of their workers as long as possible through improving their human resources development strategies, as well as strategies for health maintenance.
- Social partners need to play a more active role in maintaining and promoting the social rights for both older employees and older people outside of the world of employment.
- Agencies responsible for addressing the consequenc-

es of disintegrating family structures need to establish strategies for promoting new forms of social cohesion that actively promote intergenerational solidarity and continuity.

#### **2. Productive ageing and adult learning**

To support these strategies, a paradigm shift in the organisation and purpose of adult learning is required, that considers more explicitly the necessary flexibility required to balance work, learning and retirement in a framework of ‘productive ageing’. This will result in:

- Developing the potential of older people to fulfil new employment roles, either in paid work or through voluntary activities, through the learning of new employability skills
- Guidance on the need to adapt to new employment opportunities and changes in professional careers as well as the ability to alternate between employment-related roles and other areas of one’s life.
- Enabling transitions between general and occupational or formal and informal learning, and the development of a more effective integration of learning opportunities between different educational sectors.
- The development of learning opportunities to help older people anticipate and deal with the transitions they face as well as equip them with the skills and knowledge they require to maintain their roles as active citizens in an ageing workforce.

#### **3. Productive ageing and employment flexibility**

New training concepts should support the potential of the elderly as actors in new areas of occupational activity and in new professional responsibilities. Older people need to be supported to take advantage of the opportunities created by more flexible models of working. This will enable:

- The possibility for second and third careers while economic independence is supported.
- The exploration of flexible employment patterns which might include voluntary work
- Forecasting of and planning for future requirements for older workers in relation to income, health, skills, housing, etc.

- Promotion to employers of the benefits of a mixed-age workforce and the EC wide legal duty not to discriminate against jobseekers, trainees or workers because of their age
- The increasing importance of individual preparation for mature age and ageing during the period of middle age (and a need to re-define concepts of 'middle age' in the light of increasing life expectancy).
- The development of possibilities for older people to make use of their experience beyond the official retirement age, and to continue to play an active role in society.

#### 4. The importance of intergenerational learning

In addition to the above, opportunities for intergenerational learning should also be increased in order to ensure intergenerational understanding, cooperation and solidarity and to maintain and develop families, communities and neighbourhoods. If such strategies were developed at both national and European level then we might anticipate the following benefits

- The breaking down of structures in society that perpetuate the myth that chronological age at both ends of the life span excludes people from mainstream activities and therefore characterizes them as 'a burden' who are not seen as contributing to the economy and the wider society.
- Promoting a sense of social responsibility as a citizen because older people are able to support and nurture the young, whilst the young recognise that older people can become frail and need care as they age.
- Promoting social responsibility within communities that support and value all of its members in a culture of respect and mutual understanding.
- The acknowledgement of human need for reciprocity, giving back something to others, at a time when the opportunities for this to occur within families is diminishing.
- Demonstrating the mutual benefit that each group gains from the exchange of ideas and breaking down perceived barriers between them.

#### 5. Older people as agents of change

As actors and clients of training opportunities older people should be aware of new training concepts in order to:

- Support the development and design of innovative education, cultural, creative, heritage, environmental and arts programmes.
- Demonstrate mature age as valuable contributor to economic prosperity
- Accelerate the development of innovative occupational areas and fields of economic activity for older people

**Requirements for the future systematic support of mature learning:**

#### 6. The impact of learning in a social context

**European education and training frameworks should increase support for 'learning in a social context' by recognising activity-related learning outside employment contexts as opportunities for the development of 'productive ageing'.**

Developing national education and training frameworks to accommodate the needs of older people to maintain employability skills would result in the following benefits:

- Individual employability and the capacity to act is increased with regards to maintaining jobs, re-entry into employment and the development and design of new occupational activities that can secure an income
- Work-based learning delivery is evaluated and enhanced to ensure that provision supports appropriately the needs of older workers and older unemployed people.
- Transition periods between different employment roles are bridged, including the possibility for different professional activities to overlap (e.g. employment together with active citizenship)
- The transfer of experiences between generations in employment-related contexts (including voluntary work) is enhanced
- The contribution that learning makes to the health and well-being of older people and the resulting reduction of need for health and social care interventions needs clearer recognition in both national and regional policies

### 7. Developing innovative approaches to learning for older people

**European training and education frameworks should support the development of new learning opportunities in innovative occupational areas and establish meaningful connections to new social challenges. The development of holistic concepts for personal development should enable the establishing of employment structures that sustain motivation through different life stages, and are thus able to support:**

- The development of continuous career planning, including flexible working times, re-orientation and employment exit models.
- The development of training and education structures that enable older people to gain and update essential qualifications that counters the practice in some EU countries of qualifications only being offered to young people and being perceived to be of life long value and application
- The combination of experienced based knowledge with the delivery of skills-based training in learning programmes leading to qualifications
- The development of in-service learning modules to support the transition to new employment roles and new life stages
- Making use of 'tandem', mentoring and coaching models to support both intergenerational learning and life stage transitions
- Improving the transfer of knowledge and skills through mixed age employment teams and updated models of work-based learning
- Combining models of gradual retirement with the planned transfer of knowledge, skills and experience across generations

### 8. Alternative employment activities

**The formation of social alliances should support the aim of developing creative measures for employing the experience of older people in alternative employment activities. Among the potential actions in this area we can identify the following:**

- Increasing the involvement of companies in developing various forms of volunteer work in the area of 'corporate volunteering'
- Including social partners in voluntary work projects in order to improve the interlocking of measures to enhance the employability of older people
- Promoting the development of local partnerships in order to develop new responsibilities for older people with respect to measures to promote intergenerational solidarity.

### 9. The development of new structures for learning

**New learning opportunities should consider the requirements of older people and take into account their potential for developing alternative employability skills. These might include:**

- Integrating participatory elements for older people during the preparation of projects for community development.
- Preparing for new life stages through in-service training courses for 'transition management'
- Offering support to older people at times of change, reflection and crisis.
- Preparing for new responsibilities in the voluntary sector, in particular regarding social and conflict management
- Communicating specialist knowledge e.g. in 'Training the Trainer' programmes
- Supporting cross-generational learning

### 10. Continuing personal development

**The definition, assessment and use of skills for personal development acquired outside employment structures in informal learning processes should include:**

- The development and use of tools for measuring and reporting the skills acquired by older people
- Making visible and certifying skills acquired in informal contexts through structures such as the Europass or the Weiterbildungspass

- The explicit definition and recognition of the skills and knowledge acquired through active citizenship
- The development and updating of generic (basic/core) skills alongside the need for particular time-limited skills for certain employment areas.

### 11. Conclusions

**The demographic challenge to existing concepts of employability and citizenship is clearly signalled in the recent Communication from the Commission of the European Communities on *Adult Learning: It is never too late*\*. The proposals for action in this document clearly reflect the general analysis of future trends in adult learning across Europe that are signalled in the Communication.**

The communication identifies three key challenges confronting the European Union in the period 2007-13: competitiveness, social inclusion and demographic change. The ageing of the European population will, states the Communication, 'entail serious challenges for the European social model'. The Commission identifies the fact that currently only one in three of the European workforce aged 55 to 64 is in paid employment as an 'obvious' reason to 'employ the full potential of adult learning to increase participation in the labour market'. It is suggested that the recommendations for action in this document can contribute concretely to this strategic objective.

To take forward the responses of member states to these challenges, the Commission identifies five key messages for 'adult learning stakeholders' across Europe. The fourth of these five key messages is *Investing in the ageing population and migrants* and states:

- COM(2006) 614 final. Brussels, 23.10.2006

Member States should ensure sufficient investment in the education and training of older people and migrants, but above all ensure efficiency by designing education and training which matches the needs of the learner. They should also raise awareness of the important role of migrants and older people in society and in the economy.

The Commission identifies a range of potential investments by member states to address the issue of 'active ageing'. These include:

- Raising the average retirement age
- 'Active ageing' policies addressing life both before and after retirement from formal work
- Up-skilling and increasing lifelong learning opportunities for older workers
- Investing throughout the life-cycle, particularly for those entering their mid-career
- Expanding learning provision for retired people
- Increasing the participation of mature students in higher education
- Using the growing numbers of retired people in Europe as a potential source of educators and trainers for adult learning

The proposals for 'systematic support of mature learning' in this document reflect these key messages from the Commission and locate them within the practical possibilities for action identified through the life of the project. These possibilities have been identified through interaction with organisations and individuals across Europe involved in strategies for the active engagement of mature learners in the development of the workforce and in an inclusive and socially just society.

We recommend these proposals to the Commission as an important contribution to the development of a genuine European-wide strategy on productive ageing, and as useful indicators for future action within member states that can address the challenges posed by demographic change across the European Union in the coming years.

### 3. Neighbours

#### Summary of the project

Economical, political and social participation is more and more depending on having access to new technologies. Internet access is becoming an essential tool not only for employment and education but for getting information and participating in society as well.

The project "NEIGHBOURS" wants to promote internet literacy for the senior people by attracting the „offliners" getting familiar with the internet by showing them possibilities, advantages of internet-using in correspondence with their ideas, interests and needs. Objectives are

- Transfer of new competencies to third generation: Life-long learning, empowering of new abilities and skills in accordance with the need of older people
- Promoting internet literacy and confidence in ICT-issues for elderly people
- Forming an elderly people community using the Internet (peer group learning)
- Promoting social and cultural contacts in the internet-community in order to strengthen European neighbourhood. The project unites the communicative interchange with the use of the electronic tools of the Internet. Encounters and initiatives between citizens will arise.
- More and a better participation for elderly people of daily-routines (online-banking, e-mail etc.)
- Creating a network of different European organisations working in the field of adult education, improving a better co-operation among adult-education institutes with the aim of long-term impacts (guidance and professional help)
- Overcoming of the major barriers:
  - price of access to the Internet and lack of equipment and software suitable for older users – through providing the equipment in the training and/or community centers
  - lack of training tailored to the needs and abilities of particular users who are unfamiliar with computers – through the method of attaching at the interests of the participants

Main activities are

- to create internet clubs for senior people in the partner countries

- to create a common website "neighbours" in the process of learning and applying the tools of the Internet
- to introduce personal, cultural, historical events, anecdotes, photos, music, local and traditional food, poesy, broadcasting of people and land on this website for communities, places and citizens of: Zavadka (SK), Ikaria and Patmos Islands (EL), Magdeburg (DE), Timisoara (RO), and a smaller town near Sofia (BG)
- to promote social and intercultural awareness, to emphasize this through a process of participatory cooperation, curiosity and interest among the (near and far) neighbors of European Union.

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### 4. TraVeL AGEnts

Traveling, Volunteering and Learning Activities Generating Employment for the over 55s



*Representatives of partner organisations at their first project meeting in Athens on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007*

The project aims at offering traveling, volunteering, learning, intercultural and income generation opportunities to older people from 10 countries (Greece, Italy, Finland, Germany, Portugal, Cyprus, Estonia, Slovakia, Poland and Czech Republic) through the establishment of the

“Over 55s without frontiers” networks. The networks’ members will be trained in sustainable tour planning, participate in test-travel cultural exchange programs and publish an elderly-friendly low-cost guide book in order to facilitate older peoples’ mobility in the EU and promote social inclusion and active participation. The project activities that will be carried out in all the 10 participating countries will be disseminated through a web site, a newsletter and various conferences, both at national and at European level allowing the exchange of good practices between Northern and Southern countries of the Union and between old and new member countries.

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### **5. Social Inclusion tool-kit now available in 19 languages on AGE’ s website**

In the framework of its Social Inclusion project, AGE and its partners – among others BAGSO as the national coordinator for the German programme -have developed a tool kit to provide older people’ s associations and other interested actors with the information, ideas, suggestions and guidance needed to plan, organise and run small meetings with vulnerable older people (older people living in a situation of poverty or social exclusion). Such meetings are aimed at giving a voice to the most at-risk older people, with the ultimate aim that their voice will be heard by decisionmakers at local, national and European levels. The tool kit is now available on AGE website in 19 languages. Senior people’ s organizations are encouraged to use it and adapt it to their own needs to organize meetings with older people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. AGE would welcome any feedback members could send on activities and campaigns they run to promote social inclusion of older people and progress they achieve at national or local level.

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## **6. A Tool-kit for Organising Meetings of Vulnerable Older People: hearing their voice and promoting their participation within policy-making processes**

### **1. Introduction**

This tool-kit is designed to provide older people’s associations and other interested actors with the information, ideas, suggestions and guidance needed to plan, organise and run small meetings with vulnerable older people (older people living in a situation of poverty or social exclusion). Such meetings are aimed at giving a voice to the most at-risk older people, with the ultimate aim that this voice be heard by decision-makers at local, national and European levels.

Experiences of the members of AGE – the European Older People’s Platform have found that organising such meetings is an excellent way to engage with older people at risk of poverty and exclusion. We would strongly encourage associations working on this issue to consider using the advice contained within this document to develop the way that they work directly with vulnerable older people ‘on the ground’. Key benefits can be:

1. Listening to vulnerable older people themselves and gathering excellent information about what issues are really affecting their lives
2. Encouraging older people’s associations to think actively about how to work with the most vulnerable and include them in their work
3. Giving participants the chance to share their experiences and develop a feeling of solidarity
4. Giving participants a positive experience – it is often the first time that people feel listened to. Participants have also expressed satisfaction at discovering that people are working to try to improve their lives
5. Providing a good opportunity to inform individuals of their rights and identify where rights are not being accessed
6. Drawing attention to older people’s issues and highlighting possible solutions to identified problems

### **2. Background**

#### **2.1 Context: The European Social Inclusion Process**

It is important to understand the European political context into which these meetings can fit.

The European Union has committed itself to making a “decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social

exclusion”; in order to do this it has put in place common objectives and a process to guide and structure national policy-making.

It is particularly interesting to note that these objectives clearly promote the participation of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in developing successful policy making.

**Common European objectives** covering policy-making in the fields of social inclusion and social protection reform in Member States call for:

*“good governance, transparency and the involvement of stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of policy”*

A further objective in the field of social inclusion states that the Member States should ensure that:

*“social inclusion policies are well-coordinated and involve all levels of government and relevant actors, including people experiencing poverty”*

The **common European process** involves a timeframe for governments to submit national strategies on how they are going to achieve the European objectives in their country.

This process, known as the Open Method of Coordination, is based on the principle that whilst policy-making in the field of poverty remains the responsibility of the EU Member States, progress can be achieved faster and more effectively by sharing ideas, experiences and learning between countries. It provides opportunities to push for the voice of older people experiencing poverty to be included within policy debates at national level.

For further information and the full texts of documents referred to above including the objectives, national strategies and European analyses, please visit:

[www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index_en.htm)

### History: Why this tool-kit?

This tool-kit has been written with a view to developing the role of older people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the development and then the implementation of the national strategies against poverty and social exclusion.

The content and principles of the tool-kit are largely based on work carried out by the UK Coalition Against Poverty in 2004 in the context of the **“Get Heard” campaign**, which describes itself as “a participatory process designed to enable people with experience of social exclusion to ex-

press their views on government anti-poverty initiatives and policies”. [www.ukcap.org/getheard](http://www.ukcap.org/getheard)

The European Commission, through the Social Inclusion Action Programme, funded a **Transnational Exchange Project** led by AGE – the European Older People’s Platform to develop the original ‘get heard tool-kit’ specifically for older people. A shortened version of the tool-kit was created, tested by project partners within AGE’s membership and revised on the basis of the trials carried out. This tool-kit represents the result of this process.

[www.age-platform.org/EN/article.php3?id\\_article=353](http://www.age-platform.org/EN/article.php3?id_article=353)

### 3. Content

This tool-kit is a guide on how to organise meetings of older people experiencing poverty or exclusion, not an instruction manual that has to be followed exactly. As guidance it provides:

- The philosophy behind such meetings
- Reasons why meetings should be held
- Issues that need to be thought about before holding a meeting
- Tips and advice on organising successful meetings
- An example meeting plan
- Ideas about follow-up and monitoring

### 4. The Philosophy of Participation

Successful policies to bring people out of situations of poverty and prevent others from falling into such situations require policy-makers to understand the complexities of poverty and the experiences of the individuals directly affected. Through their own experiences, individuals living in poverty have an expertise on the issues that impact on their situation. This expertise needs to be heard as part of the policy debate both to avoid policy mistakes and to encourage an emphasis on human dignity and human rights.

These principles are supported strongly by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the anti-poverty field and are also recognised within the common objectives that the EU member states have agreed to under the European Social Inclusion Process (see page 2).

### 5. The Motivation for Organising a Participatory Meeting

Whilst the principles of participation are largely supported, the reality of participation is often disappointing. NGOs are often critical of the way that governments engage with

the voice of groups at risk of poverty and exclusion. Even within NGOs, however, it is not always as straightforward as it may appear to hear the voice of people experiencing poverty and to bring this voice into the political debate.

The experiences of the transnational exchange project have shown that organising small meetings of older people experiencing poverty in a well thought-out way can be an excellent method for achieving this objective. For organisations keen to play a role in bringing the voice of vulnerable older people into the decision-making process, this tool-kit provides a wealth of advice and guidance on how to go about doing so successfully.

### **The objectives of a meeting of older people experiencing poverty:**

- To enable older people, and those working with them, to think about their understanding of their poverty and social exclusion
- To identify and explore the impact of policies, programmes and initiatives on older people.
- To identify how government policy could be more effective in tackling poverty experienced by older people
- To explore the different ways in which poverty specifically affects older people
- To suggest ways in which national action plans on social inclusion could be more effective in dealing with the poverty experienced by older people.

### **6. Before deciding to hold a participatory meeting of older people**

Many issues need to be considered before launching the process of organising such a meeting:

1. Identifying participants – do you have the capacity to go out and identify the most vulnerable older people?
2. Inviting participants – do you have the ability to ‘sell’ the idea of participating to vulnerable older people?
3. Ensuring presence of participants – are you able to support participants in attending a meeting? On many occasions this will mean providing accessible transport for potential participants who would not be able to reach the venue by themselves. It will also mean providing all the information and support that an individual may need.
4. Hosting participants – do you have access to a venue that would be suitable for hosting vulnerable older people? This means thinking about issues of physical accessibility, both in terms of getting to the venue and

the venue itself as well as issues of comfort and appropriateness.

5. Leading workshop discussions – can you identify someone who would be able to facilitate discussions in an interesting, ensuring the maximum participation and generating real messages and results?
6. Follow-up to the meeting – are you clear what you hope to gain from the meeting and how you intend to use the messages emerging from the discussions? What capacity do you have to keep participants involved?

### **7. Organising a Participatory Meeting – tips and advice**

Good preparation is essential to holding successful participatory meetings. It is crucial to think about the needs of the participants you are looking to bring together if you are going to be able to create a satisfactory environment.

#### **Identifying participants:**

- You will need to think about how to identify potential participants, as this is not as easy as it might seem. The most successful meetings will be with people who are living in a situation of exclusion and who are, by definition, the hardest to access and support in participation. You could target people receiving certain benefits or accessing services for vulnerable people – but are there others who are even excluded from these?
- You might want to work with a group from a particular area or sharing a common experience or decide to bring together a diverse group from different backgrounds. Think about how you want to approach issues emerging from different viewpoints including around gender, race, urban versus rural living, physical disabilities, mental impairments, care etc.

#### **Preparing to host participants:**

- Time needs to be taken to meet individuals and discuss possible participation, identifying what support needs they would have. Issues around physical accessibility and communication needs are particularly important.
- Participants should receive all information in plenty of time to prepare themselves for taking part.
- It can also be useful to visit the participants in their normal living situation to be aware of where individuals have come from.
- It is essential that the participants’ support needs are covered at all stages of the day from leaving their residence to returning home.

- Many participants will not be able to make their own way to the venue - provide accessible transport to and from venues. Individualised transport may well be needed even if this limits the number of participants or the geographical range from which participants can be brought.
- All rooms and facilities (do not forget toilets!) must be physically accessible to everyone – think also about providing for communication needs in cases of visual or auditory impairment.
- The layout of the room should be as suitable and comfortable for the participants as possible (natural light, fresh air...) - try to ensure that there are no loud noises or other distractions that could impair people's participation.
- Prepare something for participants to do, think about, look at etc before the meeting starts. If people are waiting for the meeting to start it is important that they are not just left sitting by themselves and that they are kept informed about what will be happening.

### What might a Typical Participatory Meeting of Older People Look Like?

Length	Activity	Faciliator's notes and methode
20 Mins	Arrivals and settling in	Participants should be welcomed and made to feel at home (provide refreshments). There should be something to do or look at whilst waiting for the meeting to start e.g. a video, preparatory conversations.
15 Mins	1. Intro and overview of workshop	It is important to make sure that people know what is going to happen and why they are there. It should be explained that this kind of consultation fits into a wider European process and that their national government is committed to listening to all relevant actors, including them.
20 Mins	2. Icebreaker	It is strongly advised to start with an activity that gets people talking and ensures they start to feel comfortable in what may be a very new environment. Ideas for this include preparing a quiz on poverty figures and then having some discussion about whether the figures are surprising or not or having a discussion around a recent news item.
15 Mins	3. First Discussion: Identify key themes from Individuals' Experiences	Once people are relaxed, it is important to get them to talk about their own experiences and opinions. This can be done by linking with the icebreaker topic, by asking specific questions about their lives (e.g. around issues of income, transport, health services) or about what makes some older people more vulnerable. It can be a good idea to organise people into small groups or even pairs for these discussions.
5 Mins	4. Quick feedback	Where people have been working in separate groups, time should be taken to share the key concerns and issues. 'What' is important and 'why'?
40 Mins	5. Second Discussion: Exploring Key Questions	Building on the subjects raised in the first discussion wherever possible, participants should think about specific issues in more detail and in terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is working?</li> <li>2. What is not working?</li> <li>3. How should things be done differently?</li> </ol> The facilitator can ask participants to consider issues that might have not been mentioned thus far (for example a specific policy aimed at older people in the national action plan or a known key policy area) but care should be taken not to dictate the discussions. Small groups can be formed to discuss different issues or people can be asked to identify what is working best for them, what is working worst and what should be changed most urgently from any policy issue. The facilitator should try to encourage people to think and talk as much about positive examples and stories as negative examples and complaints.

30 Mins	6. Feedback and identification of key messages	<p>Where the participants have been working in sub-groups, it is important to give them a chance to come back together to share their opinions and experiences. In order to work towards usable conclusions from the meeting, efforts should be made here to identify key messages emerging from the discussions. The facilitator should ensure that the different kinds of key message emerge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the common issues?</li> <li>• What issues are different for different individuals and sub-groups?</li> <li>• What policies (or aspects of policies) should be encouraged?</li> <li>• What should be changed? It can be useful to write the key messages on flip-charts or allow individuals to write their own key messages so that people have the maximum opportunity to express their own view on emerging themes.</li> </ul>
10 Mins	7. Closing session	<p>It is important that people feel they have been fully involved in the discussions and that the emerging messages reflect accurately how they have seen the discussions. It is therefore good to summarise the key messages where possible and see whether people agree. It is also important to check that everyone is happy for certain points, issues or experiences to be documented. Participants should also be made fully aware of what the follow-up to the meeting will be both in terms of their involvement and the dissemination of the key messages.</p>
10 Mins	8. Evaluation	<p>Since the participatory meetings are a learning experience for everyone involved, it is worth taking the time to find out if there are any lessons to be learned for the holding of future meetings.</p>

### Preparing a meeting:

- Prepare materials, such as visual aids, that can be used to provoke people's thoughts
- Plan sessions with sufficient breaks to allow people to keep up with discussions and participate actively at all times.
- Prepare material for the icebreaker activity (e.g. statistics for a quiz, news article for a discussion)
- Ensure knowledge of current policies and particularly the National Action Plan on social inclusion.
- One of the findings of previous workshops has been that there is a lot of demand for information around accessing rights. Try to anticipate this as much as possible and come prepared with information on what participants can do to receive benefits/services that they are entitled to.
- Ensure that you have flipcharts, pens, stickers, blu tack, paper, card, overhead projectors or any other equipment that you might need to use during the meeting
- Ensure you have everything you need to record discussions and emerging messages – this may be an actual tape recorder or paper (remember that this is a job that requires someone specific to take care of)
- Ensure that you have enough organisers/volunteers to support the facilitator and keep things running smoothly.
- Ensure that when participants arrive they can claim back any expenses immediately so that they do not need to chase this up afterwards – ideally they will not need to pay any money up front to participate.

### Running a meeting:

The importance of the role of the facilitator cannot be emphasised enough. It is the facilitator's responsibility to ensure that everyone can participate fully. Although a professional facilitator is not needed, it is role that will be carried out better with experience and which requires natural charisma and tact. Facilitators should follow the golden rules: "keep it interesting" and "ensure participation".

- Although the aim is to hear policy messages out of the meeting, it is important for participation that the language used is relevant to people's everyday lives and that they can connect with the discussions. Be careful with terms like 'social exclusion' and 'poverty'; people might talk more naturally around issues of 'quality of life' and 'low income'
- Make sure that everyone is introduced and that participants are clear what is going to happen, what the context of the meeting is and what will happen after the meeting.
- Keep the discussions relevant to people's own real-life experiences – it is not the intention to have theoretical discussions around policies, but to look at what is really working and really not working in people's lives.
- Similarly, whilst the workshops are designed to provide output, it is important to find a balance with allowing people freedom to speak about what they choose. Overall, it should be ensured that the participants enjoy the

experience, so the session atmosphere should be friendly.

- Think about breaking the group into smaller sub-groups for some discussions to keep things fresh and to ensure that all individuals are as involved as possible (for example, if you think that some issues would be best discussed in gender-specific sub-groups, arrange this; it can also be a good idea to separate more vocal participants into one group and allow quieter ones to talk in their own group(s))
- Ensure that the meeting is not too long (the draft outline suggests around 3 hours) and that sufficient breaks are planned. Regular short breaks usually work better than occasional long ones in keeping participants fresh and engaged throughout the meeting.
- Keep activities short, varied and manageable. Remember that people like to participate in different ways; what works for one person – talking in front of many people, for example, may be difficult for another. It is important that the discussions have variety and flexibility to ensure that people can engage as best they can.
- Use a mix of tools and prompts, some more visual than others, to stimulate discussions.
- Use simple facilitation tools to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have a say – ground rules should be agreed including, for example, indicating when people wish to speak, not interrupting etc. It can be useful to devise a plan for preventing talkative individuals from overly dominating the discussions
- Facilitators should actively seek to include participants who are not contributing fully. In doing so, tact is needed to appreciate how issues of language, self-confidence, gender, age, status and identity serve to enable or disable participants. There should be an awareness of equality issues and good practice in communicating with older people.

### The content of the discussions

- The purpose of the workshop is to ask participants about their lives and communities and to bring out their experiences of poverty. Key questions should always include:
  - What is working?
  - What is not working?
  - How should things be done differently?
- It is important not just to hear consensus, but also to hear all the different and minority views expressed. These voices can be encouraged by asking:
  - How does each issue affect different age groups differently?
  - How does this issue impact on women? How does it impact on men? What is the difference? What needs to be done?
  - Is there an identity difference here? How does the issue affect black and minority ethnic groups? What needs to

be done?

- It will be helpful if workshops can focus on thinking both about what already works well and about solutions to existing problems. A tendency to simply describe problems should be avoided.
- Finally, some time should be spent finding out how participants have found the experience of taking part in the meeting and what expectations they have for the future. This should be used both to help preparations for future meetings and to plan follow-up to the meetings.

### Record-keeping

- You need to think about how you will keep records of the session before you begin. You might want to consider using a tape-recorder to record some parts of your event. This would facilitate the use of exact quotations later. Alternatively ensure there is someone whose sole responsibility is taking notes.
- Inform participants that records will be kept, but be sure to explain that no names will be used and that checks will be made to ensure that participants are happy with the records.
- It can be useful to note down key points on flip-charts during the meeting so that participants can see and react immediately to what is being recorded.
- It is important to note who is saying what. This does not mean in terms of name and address, but in terms of categories of age, situation and identity.
- Note how exercises/sessions went with different people – what worked and what didn't? This is useful in planning future sessions, but it also helps interpret information.
- Whilst it is important to identify common themes and concerns, the records must also reflect the minority voices so as to capture the depth of understanding gained about different people's needs.
- It can be useful to have contact details for the participants so that they can receive feedback and know how to get involved in follow-up to the meetings – however be aware that all participants will want this.
- Some meeting organisers have used questionnaires to allow participants to record their own messages or allocated quiet time for people to note down their ideas between discussions. This can help ensure that everyone has the chance to give their view on the meeting itself and the content of the discussions.

### 8. Follow-up

- Think about how you intend to disseminate results and take the emerging messages to policy-makers – (mid-term, long-term strategy?)
- Think about how you are going to keep participants informed of what has happened, taking into account their expressed preferences

**European Conference on  
“Demographic Change as Opportunity:  
The Economic Potential of the Elderly”  
Berlin, April 17–18, 2007**

In the course of the German EU Presidency, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the EU Commission will organise a European Conference “Demographic Change as Opportunity: The Economic Potential of the Elderly” on April 17–18, 2007 in Berlin. The aim of the conference is to continue the discussion on the challenges and opportunities of demographic change in Europe. The organisers want to focus attention on the economic power of senior citizens. Elder consumers can make through their purchasing power but also through their know-how and experience an important contribution to future growth and economic development. This conference is dedicated to one of the main political priorities of the German EU Presidency.

High level politicians together with representatives of the EU Commission and specialists from the business sector, research and NGOs have been invited as speakers. Presentations that feature good practice examples from various member states are also planned.

You will be receiving a formal invitation with a detailed programme description in the near future. The number of participants is restricted.

Online registration is now possible at:

[http//\\_www.demography-congress2007.eu/\\_](http://_www.demography-congress2007.eu/_)  
(<http://www.demography-congress2007.eu/>).

For the most current information on the Conference of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of the German EU Presidency, please visit:

<http://www.bmfsfj.de/eu>

You may also contact Martina Leisten if you require any additional information.

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BAGSO is the representative of the interests of the older generation and a competent forum for initiatives by and for senior citizens. The executive committee of BAGSO, the national office and specialised committees coordinate matters of common interest and actively promote them in the political arena. Thus they can give advice and make recommendations at all levels of welfare work. At present nearly 93 nationally active associations work together, representing over 12 million German senior citizens.

**The main goals and tasks of BAGSO are :**

- to foster independence in old age
- to assume political and social responsibility and to support solidarity in general
- to improve the image and position of senior citizens in society and within the family
- to take a look at difficult phases of old age, such as illness and death
- to promote learning about and in old age
- to promote the interests of senior consumers

**Committees and working groups that span across multiple associations:**

- The "Volunteer Work Committee": Expert group composed of BAGSO members with the purpose of drawing up the "Practical guideline for volunteering" and a "Recommendation on the training of volunteers and executive committees".
- The "Care committee" with the objectives to support the introduction and implementation of care insurance, to draft BAGSO's position statement titled "Quality of stationary institutional care and to initiate the development of the BAGSO seal of quality "Senior-adapted living and housing".
- The Committee "Hot issues in senior citizen politics" with the objectives to draft BAGSO's position statements on healthcare and nursing policy for senior citizens and on private health and nursing care insurance and to work on the issue of how society deals with live and death.

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- The working group "Self-help for senior citizens" with the objective to explain and promote the importance of self-help initiatives by senior citizens for preserving their autonomy in old age.

Three aspects concerning "new roles of senior citizens" are important in order to cope with the demographic challenges:

- Senior Citizens as an economic factor
- Social and political participation of senior citizens
- Qualification and training for volunteers and social management

**Recent activities:**

- Online Year 50 Plus - 2006 (courses in different regions)
- "Agenda Active Ageing"
- Questionnaire "travelling of older people"
- International Congress in Berlin 4/2007 "Demographic Change as an Opportunity: The Economic Potential of Senior Citizens"

BAGSO has been enhancing the interests of older people not only at national level. BAGSO is a member of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Administration Council of AGE (The European Platform of older people) which is of particular importance in the framework of the representation of older people's interests. BAGSO also has a consultative status with ECOSOC – and is involved in developing the **National Plan of Action** (related to the International Plan on Ageing).

**European Projects:**

- eLSe (eLearning for Seniors) <http://www.el-se.org/en>
- eGovernment-Guide: <http://www.egovernment-senioren.net/>
- SenTrain: <http://www.sentrain.org>
- New horizons – active age
- Transnational exchange project on Social Inclusion: <http://www.age-platform.org/>
- Neighbours
- TraVeLAGEnts

## Member Organisations:

Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) Bundesverband e.V.  
 Arbeitsgemeinschaft „Evangelische und Ökumenische  
 Krankenhaus- und Altenheim-Hilfe“ (EKH)  
 Arbeitsgemeinschaft SPD 60 plus  
 Arbeitskreis für Gerostomatologie e.V. (AKG)  
 ARBEIT und LEBEN Arbeitskreis für die Bundesrepublik  
 Deutschland e.V.  
 Bayerisches SeniorenNetzForum (BSNF) e.V. –  
 Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg  
 BDZ – Deutsche Zoll- und Finanzgewerkschaft –  
 AG „Senioren im BDZ“  
 BegegnungsCentrum – Haus im Park der Körber-Stiftung  
 Betreuungswerk Post Postbank Telekom (BeW)  
 Bund Deutscher Amateurtheater e.V. (BDAT)  
 Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Landesseniorenvertretungen e.V.  
 (BAG LSV)  
 Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Seniorenbüros e.V. (BaS)  
 Bundesfachverband Schlafapnoe / Atemstillstand und chronische  
 Schlafstörung e.V.  
 Bundesforum Katholische Seniorenarbeit (BfKS)  
 Bundesinteressenvertretung und Selbsthilfeverband  
 der Bewohnerinnen und Bewohner von Altenwohn- und Pflege-  
 einrichtungen e.V. (BIVA)  
 Bundespolizeigewerkschaft – Verbund Innere Sicherheit  
 Bundesverband der Katholiken in Wirtschaft  
 und Verwaltung e.V. (KKV)  
 Bundesverband Gedächtnistraining e.V.  
 Bundesverband Information & Beratung für NS-Verfolgte e.V.  
 Bundesverband Seniorentanz e.V.  
 Büro gegen Altersdiskriminierung e.V.  
 Dachverband Altenkultur e.V.  
 Dachverband der Gerontologischen und Geriatriischen  
 Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Deutschland e.V. (DVGG)  
 Deutsche Alzheimer Gesellschaft e.V.  
 Deutsche Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Erwachsenen-  
 bildung e.V. (DEAE)  
 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hauswirtschaft (dgh)  
 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Präventivmedizin e.V.  
 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Versicherte und Patienten e.V. (DGVP)  
 Deutsche Landsenioren e.V. (DLS)  
 Deutsche Seniorenpresse – Arbeitsgemeinschaft e.V. (dsp)  
 Deutsche Steuergewerkschaft – Landesverband NRW  
 Deutscher Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband. e.V.  
 Deutscher Bridge-Verband e.V.  
 Deutscher Bundeswehrverband e.V. (DBwV)  
 Deutscher Evangelischer Frauenbund e.V.  
 Deutscher Evangelischer Verband für Altenarbeit und Pflege e.V.  
 Deutscher Familienverband e.V. (DFV)  
 Deutscher Frauenrat e.V. (DF)  
 Deutscher Guttempler-Orden e.V.  
 Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund (DSB)  
 Deutscher Schwerhörigenbund e.V. (DSB)  
 Deutscher Senioren Ring e.V. (DSR)  
 Deutscher Turner-Bund (DTB) – 50 plus  
 Deutscher Verein der Blinden und Sehbehinderten in Studium  
 und Beruf e.V. (DVBS) – Fachgruppe Ruhestand e.V.  
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 Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Altenarbeit  
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 Evangelisches Seniorenwerk e.V. (ESW)  
 Familienbund der Katholiken e.V.  
 Forschungsinstitut Geragogik e.V. (FoGera)  
 Forum Gemeinschaftliches Wohnen, Bundesvereinigung e.V.  
 Gesellschaft für Gehirntaining e.V. (GfG)  
 Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft – Bundessenioren-  
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 GREENPEACE-TEAM fünfzig PLUS  
 Hartmannbund – Verband der Ärzte Deutschlands e.V. –  
 Ausschuss Senioren  
 Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt  
 Internationaler Bauorden (IBO) – Deutscher Zweig e.V.  
 JAHRESRINGE – Gesamtverband e.V.  
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 Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands –  
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 Kneipp-Bund e.V.  
 Kolpingwerk Deutschland  
 Komba Gewerkschaft  
 Kommunikationsgewerkschaft DPV  
 Kuratorium Wohnen im Alter e.V. (KWA)  
 Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft – „Aktiv im Vorruhestand S-A“ e.V.  
 Lange aktiv bleiben (LAB) – Lebensabend-Bewegung  
 Liberale Senioren Lis@ Bundesverband  
 Memory Liga e.V.  
 MigräneLiga e.V. Deutschland  
 Misereor – Initiative „einfach anders altern“  
 Nationales Netzwerk älterer Frauen e.V. (NäF)  
 NaturFreunde Deutschlands e.V. – Verband für Umweltschutz,  
 sanften Tourismus, Sport und Kultur  
 NAV-Virchow-Bund e.V.  
 Netzwerk Osteoporose e.V.  
 Senior Experten Service (SES)  
 Senioren lernen online  
 Senioren Union der CDU  
 Seniorenarbeitsgemeinschaft der PDS  
 Senioren-Union der CSU  
 Seniorenverband BRH – Bund der Ruhestandsbeamten, Rentner  
 und Hinterbliebenen im DBB  
 Seniorenvereinigung des Christlichen Jugenddorfwerkes  
 Deutschlands e.V. (CJD)  
 Sozialverband Deutschland (SoVD) e.V.  
 Sozialverband VdK Deutschland e.V.  
 Sozialwerk Berlin e.V.  
 TRANSNET Gewerkschaft GdED  
 UNIONHILFSWERK, Landesverband Berlin – UHW Berlin  
 Verband der Beamten der Bundeswehr e.V.  
 Verbraucherzentrale NRW  
 Virtuelles und reales Lern- und Kompetenz-Netzwerk (VILE) e.V.  
 Volkssolidarität Bundesverband e.V. (VS)  
 Zwischen Arbeit und Ruhestand ZWAR e.V.

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