



Bulletin of European Policies on Senior Citizens/ No.2, 2011 (research results as of May 2011)

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Bulletin of European Policies on Senior Citizens

Demographic change is forcing both national governments and European policy-makers to consider the social changes resulting from population ageing as an across-the-board issue that affects a great range of very different policy areas: pensions and employment, urban and regional planning, immigration, integration, education, volunteering and policies for families and senior citizens etc. The Member States of the European Union have adopted a variety of approaches and strategies to deal with similar issues.

In order to gather information and ideas that could foster the development of policies on intergeneration relations and ageing in Germany, the "Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe" has, since 2010, been monitoring the development of sociopolitical measures and policies on demographic change at European level as well as in individual Member States.

The **Monitor of European Policies on Senior Citizens** represents a research concept that hopes to examine the latest sociopolitical measures and developments for the elderly in eight Member States on the basis of the following key words: **Active ageing – Images of age and ageing – Dementia – Care – Support for informal carers – Services for the elderly – Intergenerational relations.**

The **Bulletin on the Monitor of European Policies on Senior Citizens** summarises the most important results of this research for you.

The authors of the Bulletin are Kathrin Linz-Dinchel and Sabrina Stula.

For information on current German policies on senior citizens provided at the web portal of the German Federal Ministry on Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) please follow [this link](#). Information in German only!

Concept of the Monitor of European Policies on Senior Citizens

The idea

All European Member States are facing great challenges in their efforts to cope with demographic change: ageing populations change the fabric of society, the organisation of the economy and the entire field of policy-making. The various Member States of the European Union have adopted a wide range of innovative sociopolitical approaches and initiatives to face demographic change in a positive and forward-looking manner.

The Monitor of Developments in Policies relating to Generational Issues and Senior Citizens launched by the Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe in 2010 is an instrument with which the Observatory can report regularly – every four months – on trends in eight Member States of the EU that encourage new policies relating to generational and elderly issues, carry out policy reforms and/or present up-to-date information on new aspects of the debate on demographic change.

The method

The Monitor collects and presents information on generational policies and policies for the elderly in Denmark, Finland, France, Austria, Spain, in the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. These countries are Member States of the EU that have already attracted attention with innovative policies relating to generational or elderly issues or are currently undertaking reforms in this area.

The findings presented here on the measures taken in these Member States are based on a review of current literature. The research has taken into account both official government sources and media presentations.

It has focused exclusively on issues dealt with and initiatives taken by or on behalf of ministries at the national level in the countries concerned.

When looking for new issues and initiatives at the level of national governments, our research has therefore considered only policy measures, initiatives in the legislative area or programmes

- 1) that are planned or currently implemented
- 2) that are currently the subject of public debate
- 3) that are not restricted to regional authorities (e.g. municipalities, autonomous regions etc.).

National allocation of responsibilities - policies on senior citizens

The following chart shows the various government authorities responsible for policies on senior citizens and their areas of competence. The list includes national authorities or ministries in the Member States **Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom**. The list is based on the issues dealt with on the websites of these national authorities or ministries. The research was carried out in May 2011.

The results show that none of the countries surveyed uses the words "senior citizens" or "elderly" in the title of the ministry which is predominantly responsible for policies on senior citizens. Most of the Member States surveyed here cover policy issues relating to the elderly in the ministries for social affairs, health and/or employment. To view the chart, please [follow this link!](#)

Good practice from the Member States

Active Ageing, Images of Age and Ageing, Dementia, Care, Support for Informal Carers, Services for senior citizens, Intergenerational relations

Active Ageing

In most Member States, "Active Ageing" is a catchphrase for strategies for examining the *situation of older employees* and achieving *longer employment* in this target group.

In **Denmark**, **France** and the **United Kingdom**, the pertinent ministries have set up specific websites and launched programmes addressed specifically to employers and providing information about the situation of older employees (the **Danish** website "Seniorpraksis.dk", the **French** initiative "Pour l'emploi des seniors", and the **British** "Age positive" programme). In order to encourage older people to work longer, the reformed British activation strategy "Get Britain Working" is expected to introduce targeted reintegration schemes for seniors in the course of 2011. For more information, click [here](#).

Under the heading "Older employees" the **Austrian** Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection presents a series of measures intended in part to encourage the retention of older employees in the workplace.

The low-threshold advice and support programme "Fit2Work" was launched in July 2011 with the aim of maintaining the employability of older employees. It is a preventive programme to reduce the threat of disability through timely professional advice and case management. The programme is addressed to people of working age who have health problems, and it provides help in the form of one-stop shops. The first participating states are Vienna, Lower Austria and Styria. By 2013, consulting services will be gradually established in all Austrian federal states. Project coordination is in the hands of the Federal Social Welfare Office. The actual consulting services ("Fit2Work") will be provided by external implementation partners in each province. € 28 million are being made available for this programme.

More information on this programme can be found on the [website of the "Arbeiterkammer Wien"](#) and the [website of the Austrian Parliament](#).

Other focal points in the debate on "Active Ageing" are the *promotion of civic engagement* and the *participation of older people in the community*. In **Spain**, a "day of participation, voluntary engagement and active ageing" (Jornada de debate: Participación y voluntariado de las personas mayores y envejecimiento activo) took place in May, organized by the Institute for the Elderly and Social Services in cooperation with the **Spanish** Ministry of Culture.

More information on the **Spanish** conference is available [here](#).

The **British** programme "**Active at 60**" supports older people in the transition from work to retirement in an effort to avoid social isolation and loneliness. The programme provides grants to volunteer organizations in the amount of one million pounds. These funds are administered from the UK Community Development Foundation (CDF) and awarded to a total of 30 communities nationwide.

For more information on the **British** programme, click [here](#).

Images of age and ageing

In some countries, the authorities are encouraging public debate on societal images of age and ageing with the aim of sensitizing the public to the potential of older people. However, the term "images of age and ageing" is usually avoided on ministerial websites. One country raising this issue is **Spain**, where on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March, the **Spanish** Women's Institute (Instituto de la Mujer) and the Directorate-General of the Institute for the Elderly and Social Services jointly hosted a conference that was specifically devoted to the situation of older women. [("The chances of age: Wise Women") Las oportunidades de la edad: Mujeres Sabias)].

More information can be found [here](#).

In the **UK**, a number of programmes have been initiated to encourage a positive social image of age and ageing. For instance, the "Ageing Well" programme, which has been running since 2010, helps local authorities improve services for older people, support the civic engagement of older people locally and combat social isolation among the elderly by emphasizing the potential of older people and developing local 'Ageing Well' approaches. For more information, click [here](#).

Moreover, the [International Day of Older People](#) will be celebrated in the **UK** for the third time on 1 October. This year's motto is "getting and staying active in later life". The aim of the campaign is to encourage older people to get involved and to point to the benefits associated with physical, mental and social activity in old age.

In **France**, a national debate on the future of care took place in the first half of 2011. One of the four working groups established within the scope of this debate is dealing with the topic "Society and Ageing"; it hopes to shed light on the situation of older people in **French** society. The final report of the Working Group is available [here](#).

Dementia

All eight Member States examined have been discussing the topic of "Dementia/Alzheimer" at national level.

In **Denmark, Finland, France, Austria, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom**, the current target is to improve the situation of dementia patients who depend on care.

The **Finnish** national programme to combat memory disorders aims to facilitate the care chain for people suffering from dementia. By coordinating care and service chains, the programme promotes prevention, early detection and rehabilitation of memory disorders. For more information, click [here](#).

A national programme entitled "Integrated Care Dementia" (Programma Ketenzorg Dementie) is currently taking place in the **Netherlands**. It aims to improve the care situation of people suffering from dementia through a stronger interconnection of services provided by health insurance companies, private providers and interest groups/ stakeholders. The coordination of service providers also helps to better respond to the actual needs of clients and their relatives. For more information, click [here](#).

Similarly, one of the main objectives of the **UK's** National Dementia Strategy is the improvement of dementia services.

For more information, click [here](#).

The revised implementation plan of "Living Well with Dementia – A National Dementia Strategy" was published by the **UK Department of Health** in September 2010. According to the plan, priority objectives for the years 2010 and 2011 are: good-quality early diagnosis and intervention for all; improved quality of care in general hospitals and care homes and reduced use of antipsychotic medication.

Cf.: "[Quality outcomes for people with dementia: building on the work of the National Dementia Strategy](#)"

Care

There are several sub-topics to consider in this area.

Quality in stationary care is still a central topic of debate in all the Member States examined by our study. However, there are also some new developments in field of *palliative care*:

One of the objectives of the **Dutch** policies on care in 2007-2011 has been to strengthen the palliative care system and to create a legal framework for organizations providing palliative care services. In March 2011, the Dutch ministry published a document on the future financing and organization of palliative care. Additional information can be found at: "Financiering & organisatie van palliatieve zorg: De pioniersfase voorbij?" ([Financing & organization of palliative care: The pioneering phase is over?](#))

For more information on the issue of palliative care and the objectives of the **Dutch** government, click [here](#).

The **Spanish** Ministry of Health, Social Policies and Equality has also published an "[Update on the strategy on Palliative Care in the National Health System 2010 - 2014](#)" (Estrategia en Cuidados Paliativos del Sistema Nacional de Salud Actualización 2010-2014). The document, which shows the strategy for the years 2010 – 2014, is part of the "Quality Plan for the National Health System". Furthermore there are plans to implement a new regulation on palliative care. This [legislative proposal](#) will be presented to the Spanish cabinet in May 2011. The draft law will also reform the rights of dying patients and facilitate the expansion of palliative care services. It will also create legal certainty for professionals in palliative care and consolidate quality standards in their work.

France too has implemented a programme to further develop palliative care, with 18 different measures planned for the years 2008 - 2012. Since 2010, caring relatives of terminally ill persons have been entitled to financial assistance from the programme "End of Life Allowance" ("Allocation de fin de vie"). For more information on the **French** palliative care programme, click [here](#).

Information on the **UK's** "End of Life Care Strategy", which was launched in July 2008 and seems to be modelled on the French regulation for a carer's allowance, can be found [here](#).

PRISMA (Reflecting the **P**ositive **D**iversity of European **P**riorities for **R**esearch and **M**easurement in End of Life **C**are; 7th Framework Programme, Health-F2-2008-201655) is involving 11 partner organizations across 9 countries in Europe and Africa. Organizations from **Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain** and **Portugal** are members of the PRISMA Consortium. "The aim of PRISMA has been to inform best practice and harmonize research in end-of-life care for cancer patients across Europe through comparison and exchange of approaches and experiences in measurement and research priorities(...)" . The outcomes enhance end-of-life cancer care for patients and their families, researchers, clinicians and service-providers and the outputs aid national and EU-level policy. More information on PRISMA can be found [here](#).

Support for informal carers

Some Member States are currently running campaigns and measures to support informal carers. Some of these aim to promote volunteer activities that support informal carers, while others are geared towards improving conditions for informal carers in paid employment (working carers).

Information on the **German "Family Care Time" model (Familienpflegezeit)** can be found [here](#).

According to the latest document on the **Carers Strategy** ("Recognized, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy"), which was published in late 2010, the **UK** government now plans to implement personal budgets for carers and to introduce the concept of carer's leave. Additionally, the UK's Department of Health has launched the "Reaching Out to Carers Innovation Fund", a scheme specifically targeted at voluntary sector organizations in England that are keen to support carers. More information on the Carers Strategy can be found [here](#).

Since February 2011, a budget of £1.35m has been earmarked for 79 projects in this area. Further information on the "Reaching Out to Carers Innovation Fund 2010/2011" can be found [here](#).

In 2009, the **Dutch** government also published a [policy letter on family care and volunteering](#) for the years 2008 – 2011 with the aim of facilitating the support of informal carers at local level.

The **French** national strategy on "[Solidarity with the Elder Generation 2007-2012](#)" (Plan solidarité grand âge) includes plans for the extension of care services and temporary provision of nursing staff during holiday seasons.

Services for senior citizens

There are currently no new policy measures in the area of services for senior citizens in the Member States examined by our study. The pertinent ministries in **Finland**, **Austria** and the **Czech Republic** raise the issue on their websites and provide information and further links

Intergenerational relations

In 2011, the "National Week of Retired and Elderly Persons" (Semaine Bleue, 17 to 23 October 2011) in **France** was placed under the motto "At every age: close and supportive actors" (À tout âge: acteurs proches et solidaires). This is an annual awareness-raising campaign on generational solidarity carried out by French associations and organizations. A "generation prize" is also awarded annually during this week. For more information, click [here](#).

In the **United Kingdom**, the 'Centre for Intergenerational Practice' of the Beth Johnson Foundation published "A Guide to Intergenerational Practice" in March 2011, which is mainly directed to local authorities and the voluntary sector.

For more information, click [here](#).

Guest commentary

In her guest column, Marta Santacreu Ivars reviews the ideas presented in the Spanish White Book on active ageing and offers a critical analysis of Spanish policies. Please follow [this link!](#)

New topics – Policies for senior citizens

A comparative analysis of the results of the latest research (May 2011) in **Austria**, the **Czech Republic**, **Denmark**, **Finland**, **France**, the **Netherlands**, **Spain**, and the **United Kingdom** reveals what topics are frequently discussed. Subjects such as "care", "dementia" and "active ageing" were very much in the focus of discussion in these countries in the period from January 2010 to May 2011, but also the topic of "volunteering by older people".

Volunteering by older people

The topic of volunteering by older people in the Member States covered by the research encompasses measures to promote professional structures in volunteer management and to create networks between existing projects (**Austria**), the provision of public funding for voluntary projects (**United Kingdom**), and the elaboration or implementation of strategic documents to promote volunteering (**Netherlands**, **Czech Republic**) as well as to enhance public awareness, for instance through conferences (**Spain**).

In **Austria**, a **model project** entitled "**GEMA – Working Together**" tested professional organization structures of volunteer management for the production, consultation, mediation and support of volunteers; it ran from 2008 to 2010. The aim of the project (<http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/liste.html?channel=CH0037>), which was developed in collaboration with the social department of the federal state of Upper Austria, was to upgrade and strengthen volunteering. [The pilot project](#) was intended to create a reference model which, after evaluation, could be implemented in all of Austria. In addition, an independent volunteer centre was established in Linz (Unabhängiges Landesfreiwilligenzentrum, ULF) to develop training programs for volunteers and volunteer attendants and link existing volunteer projects, for instance projects for the elderly. A total of 20 pilot projects were selected for the project period, and these were funded for a period of two years (until the end of 2010) by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the social department of the province of Upper Austria and supported by the ULF in Linz. The projects initiated in this period are still running. It is unclear whether, how long and to what extent new financial funding will be granted to these projects.

Further information can be found [here](#).

In the **United Kingdom**, *funding* has been made available for various volunteer projects. Within the scope of the reform of the social care system, three million pounds have been earmarked to revitalize volunteering by older people. In addition, a new fund for the voluntary sector ([Reaching Out to Carers Innovation Fund](#)) was launched by the Department of Health in February 2011 in order to provide support for caregiving relatives through voluntary sector organizations.

In the **Netherlands** and the **Czech Republic**, strategy papers were published with the goal of strengthening volunteering activity. The [strategy paper of the Dutch government in the field of informal care and civic engagement](#) (2008 - 2011) aims mainly to increase community support for informal caregivers. The **Czech** strategy "[National Action Plan to Prepare for Ageing 2008 - 2012](#)" includes the goal of promoting social inclusion and participation of older people in education, culture and society.

In **Spain**, a "Day of participation, voluntary engagement and active ageing" was organized ([Jornada de debate: Participación y voluntariado de las personas mayores y envejecimiento activo](#)). The focus of the conference was on the Spanish "White Paper on Active Ageing" and the Spanish volunteering strategy "Estrategia Estatal del Voluntariado 2010-2014". The issue of the appropriate framework for volunteering for older people was also discussed.

Use of digital communication technologies

Another topic raised by several Member States is the development of digital communication technologies. The application and extended use of new technologies in different areas aims at increasing the quality of life of senior citizens.

In **Denmark**, for example, improved quality in the social sector is to be achieved by increasing the use of technologies. In the **Danish "MedCom" project**, public authorities work together with organizations, and private firms linked to the Danish healthcare sector work in the development, testing, implementation and quality assurance of electronic communication and information technologies. Current projects can be tracked on the [Medcom website](#).

Furthermore, three billion crowns will be provided by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs in the 2009 to 2015 period for the testing, [funding and implementation of new work arrangements in the social sector](#). The aim is to bring about more time and better working conditions for social-sector employees and a better quality of services to citizens through the use of technology.

Further information can be found [here](#).

The **UK Carers Strategy** also encourages the use of technologies (telecare/telehealth). Technology can help carers better reconcile their caring responsibilities with paid employment, for example by reducing the number of hospital appointments for routine monitoring and by making home environments safer and more secure. The **British Department of Health** has been running a project (involving over 6,000 people including 470 carers) which will provide an evaluated evidence base of the effects of using technology in the care of people with long-term conditions. The results will be available in 2011.

Further information can be found [here](#).

Expenses for retirement and pensions as well as for health and nursing care for senior citizens are rising steadily. This means that the issue of future financing of national social security systems is still a driving force for national reforms and debates.

Reforms of pension regulations and incentives for working longer

In **Spain**, for instance, legal pension age was raised to 67 at the end of January 2011. **Denmark** will also raise the pension age of Danish workers, first from 65 to 67; then – parallel to the development of average life expectancy – pension age could go up to 74 years in the longer term. Moreover, early retirement options are expected to be curtailed and discontinued in the coming years. Early retirement possibilities will disappear in the **Czech Republic** as well, where a voluntary pension fund is expected to be introduced within the scope of the **Czech** pension reform. In the **United Kingdom**, pension age for both men and women will be raised to 66 by 2020. The **British** default retirement age is being phased out and will expire in 2011, the pertinent bill having been introduced to Parliament in February 2011. A reform of the public-sector pension scheme was proposed in March. Legislators in **France** passed a pension reform law in November 2010; the new law will raise minimum pension age to 62 by 2018. The **French** government has set up a dedicated website to provide information on the reformed pension law provisions.

Further information can be found [here](#). In the **Netherlands**, pension age is also expected to be raised to 66 by the year 2020.

In addition to pension reform, legislators in the **United Kingdom** are currently reviewing the system of social benefits and taxation in order to create new incentives to "get Britain working" that will apply to all age groups. Special integration incentives for older people will be introduced in the course of 2011.

Additional information on the **welfare reform** in the **United Kingdom** can be found [here](#).

In **France**, a national debate on *Dependence on care* and the *future of care* was initiated in February 2011. It is planned for a period of six months and was preceded by preparatory work at inter-ministerial level on topics such as "Society and ageing" (société et vieillissement), "The demographic and financial challenges of care" (enjeux démographiques et financiers de la dépendance), "Residential solutions and care for the elderly" (accueil et accompagnement des personnes âgées) or "Strategies to cover the costs of elderly persons in need of care" (stratégie pour la couverture de la dépendance des personnes âgées). In January 2011, a [website](#) was created to publicize the results of the working groups and of the regional conferences that took place across the country. The working groups presented their final reports in June 2011. The President will make the results public in the course of the summer, and they will be integrated into policy planning for 2012.

More information on the French debate can be found [here](#).

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