



# Mainstreaming Ageing

Summer 2010

Supporting the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Dear Reader,

In an era of increasing longevity, where many 65 year old people today can expect to have enough time to make 15 journeys between the Earth and the Sun, the question is not only what we will do with those years, but how can we make it an enjoyable, comfortable, safe and independent time of life. To age well is something we all wish for regardless of time and space. Yet, we often forget when we talk about ageing and „old age“ that it represents a diverse set of experiences, interests, abilities and needs. This issue’s newsletter contributions not only highlight this heterogeneity within and across populations, but also testify to the need to find ways of continuing to include older people in the process of designing and delivering services that can improve quality of life in old age.

**Eszter Zólyomi**

Project Coordinator

## News in brief...

### **Europe – Green Paper on EU Pension Reform**

On 7 July, the European Commission launched its Green Paper on EU pension reform. Key issues addressed in the Green Paper include the adequacy and long-term sustainability of pensions, the safety of pensions due to the recent economic crisis and the mobility of retirement products within the EU. The report will be followed by a consultation period, until mid-November 2010. [More](#)

### **Europe - Introduction to the European Institutions and the EU Policy-Making Processes of relevance to older people**

This document by AGE Platform Europe provides an overview of the new European institutional and legal framework and the main policy dossiers that are relevant to older people. It aims to help older citizens understand better what the EU brings to them and also provides tips how older people can shape policies that affect them. [More](#)

### **World – Forgotten workforce; older people and their right to decent work**

On 1 May, International Workers Day, HelpAge International launched a report about older people and work in low- and middle-income countries. The report investigates how much work is done by older people in poorer countries, the reasons why older people work, the types of work they do, and the difficulties they face. It reveals that, contrary to some popular myths about older people and work, millions of people across the world continue to work well into old age. [More](#)

## Longevity Rules

„Will we heed Peter Drucker’s advice, ‘The only way to predict the future is to invent it’? Or will we continue as passive participants in our increasing life expectancy?“ asks editor, Stuart Greenbaum, in his introduction to the book *Longevity Rules: How To Age Well Into The Future?*

The book clearly builds on the more optimistic approach and while it points out the problems of ageing, it focuses more on the promise of ageing with the underlying question of how to ensure that the extension of our life expectancy becomes more rewarding than burdensome for individuals and society alike.

What is the „Longevity dividend“? Can intergenerational conflict be avoided? How to combat ageism? What are the benefits of an aging society? How to exploit technology and collaborative innovation to enable quality aging?

These and more questions are answered in the book’s 34 essays by leading US longevity experts from disparate disciplines including medicine, gerontology, technology, economics, public policy, demographics, sociology, education, communications and aging services.

The final chapter of the book offers an inspiring showcase of more than a dozen innovative concepts, models and programs that have successfully anticipated and responded to older adults’ needs and wants.

Sometimes provocative and controversial (Is Google Making Us Smart or Stupid? Why Do Anti-Aging Doctors Die? Generational Nonsense, Good to Gray: Optimism is Not a Strategy) the main goal of this book is to generate dialogue, help policy-makers and the public to better understand the ageing experience, and ultimately persuade action among public-policy shapers in government, business, public service, healthcare, academics and media.

[More on this book](#)



## Improving quality of life in old age: Two examples from Spain

### „Cerca de ti“ Close to you Pilot Project

Very often we put into practice, in the field of social intervention, care systems without previously testing or evaluating them from a scientific perspective; bearing in mind this fact, the Ministry of Health and Social Policy through the IMSERSO has developed the project „Close to you“ in the field of older persons living alone.

The above-mentioned pilot project and the research it implies is now developing in 10 different places in Spanish territory thanks to the cooperation of local entities and tries to further develop interventions aiming to provide emotional support and security to older persons who experience loneliness. It is the purpose of the project to promote the participation of older persons in activities that take place in their environment, if they wish to do so, escorting them inside and outside their homes to attend events where they take place or by phone thanks to one of the most used resources in our country: the teleassistance for older persons.

The project emphasizes matters concerning monitoring and research as far as it tries to be a scientific basis of good practice for any future programme of care provision for older persons living alone or feeling loneliness.

The project has been developed not only thanks to the cooperation of different entities and national and local public institutions, but to the most important private entities providing teleassistance in Spain such as the Vodafone Spain Foundation and the two most important volunteering groups in Spain: Cruz Roja and Cáritas.

For more information on this project, please visit the [website Imserso](#).

### ENclaveRural

Website promoted by the Ministry of Health and Social Policy through the IMSERSO, in cooperation with the General Directory for Rural Development under the Ministry for Environment, Rural and Maritime Affairs. This social initiative started in 2009 and tries to make good practices more visible and improve older and disabled persons' quality of life.

The aim of the website is to provide a public space

to better see the effort of the associative movement and of any entity, private or public, to improve the life of those persons who, due to their age or different disabilities, don't encounter the same opportunities that the rest of the population in a rural environment. With this view, we try to contribute to the standardization of actions, to sustainable rural development and to avoid territorial discrimination.

Visit the ENclaveRural website [ENclaverural.es](#).

*Information provided by M<sup>a</sup> Luz Cid Ruiz and Manuel Montero Rey from IMSERSO, Spain*

## Health promotion through physical activity for older people

### Participation of Greece in the European program PASEO

The Department of Physical Education and Sport (TEFAA) of the University of Thrace participates in a EU-financed project entitled „Building Policy Capacities for Health Promotion through Physical Activity among Sedentary Older People - PASEO“. This program involves 15 European countries through similar scientific institutions. The first phase of PASEO program includes the collection of information on several policies that promote physical activity programs for older people, from three different sectors (governmental and non governmental): the sports sector, the health sector and the social care sector. The second phase involves forging partnerships (alliances) among the three sectors in order to promote more effectively programs for the physical activity of the elderly.

The strategic objectives of PASEO are:

- Assessing existing capacities for physical activity promotion among sedentary older people.
- Building national alliances to strengthen capacities for physical activity
- Developing capacities for physical activity promotion among sedentary older people through national alliances.
- Monitoring the strengthening of capacities for physical activity

Having recognized the importance of physical activity

for elderly, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity has already promoted the program to the Open Centres of the Elderly (KAPI) throughout the country, which provide any form of organized recreation, medical care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, hospital care, and any kind of physical and emotional support to the elderly. Until now much interest has been expressed by the KAPI for their inclusion in the program.

For any further information please visit the project [website](#).

*Information provided by Lorena Androutsou and Kristallia Vougiouklaki from the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, Greece*

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## Measuring wellbeing in the 21st century Gallup's European Wellbeing Summit

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On the occasion of its 75th anniversary, Gallup looked into some of the most pressing questions in this day and age:

*„What makes people happy? Are there universal factors that determine life satisfaction and how can we measure wellbeing? What are desirable outcomes both at micro and macro levels? Is putting constituencies' wellbeing at the heart of policy-making a political utopia or a necessary paradigm shift?“*

The summit, which took place on 19-20 May in Brussels, brought together European policymakers, world-renowned research scientists, including Nobel Prize-winning psychologist and Gallup Senior scientist Daniel Kahneman, and recognised leaders from the private and public sectors, the healthcare industry and government.

The aim of this gathering was to enhance the understanding of crucial issues that affect the wellbeing of Europeans and the world's 7 billion citizens and provide a thorough understanding of its many desirable outcomes and how wellbeing and behavioural economics measurements can be used to develop stable communities, and grow successful and sustainable economies, cities and organisations.

The presentations and papers are available on the [website](#)

For further information contact [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

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## Second European Quality of Life Survey: Evaluating the quality of society and public services

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This report explores the interaction between individuals and institutions, analysing to what extent the key social services are responsible for shaping the quality of people's lives. Drawing on findings from the second European Quality of Life Survey, carried out by Eurofound in 2007 across 28 countries in Europe, the report gives a wide-ranging picture of the diverse social realities in Europe today. It assesses the multiple influences at work in society – such as access to health services, quality of local environment, racial and ethnic mix, as well as police, legal and political bodies – in the light of individual income, gender and age.

The report is downloadable from the following [website](#)

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## European Competition on 'Good practice in cities and municipalities in Europe for and with elderly migrants'

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Local authorities are key players when it comes to improving the quality of life of their citizens.

In 2010/2011 a first European competition will award municipalities for their innovative initiatives in the mutual integration of migrant elders.

The prizes awarded will revolve around local authority initiatives for the mutual integration of migrant elders in all municipal fields of activity for the improvement of the quality of life of elderly people:

- housing,
- leisure and culture,
- social and intergenerational activities
- support of economic activities related to culturally
- sensitive products and services
- support of volunteering by and for migrant elders

The competition was launched by the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration of the State of North-Rhine Westphalia and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), in partnership with the Committee of the Regions.

The objective of this competition is to improve the quality of life of elderly migrants and to promote the exchange of experience on appropriate strategies at European level. European cities and municipalities are invited to present best strategies for active ageing and for integrating elderly immigrants.

The deadline for applications is 31 October 2010.

More information as well as the application forms can be found [here](#)

## Social Well-being of Disabled Older Persons in Europe

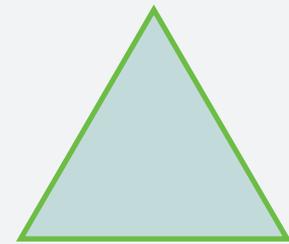
### A Cross-national Study of Experiences of Unequal Ageing

Older persons represent a higher fraction of society in most European countries. This is largely a result of an ever-rising life expectancy, which offers the opportunity for new social and economic experiences during old age over a longer period of time. Indeed, many go on to enjoy this longer post-retirement phase of life. At the same time, older people are far from being a homogenous group. Many older people, for example, cannot fulfil the expectations of active ageing, due to restrictions linked with physical frailty, and therefore run the risk of being socially excluded from the society in which they live. Are these persons also enjoying and benefiting from a longer phase of old age life? How can we capture this unequal experience of ageing?

In measuring disadvantages, many studies focus on the economic disadvantage of disabled persons. Although it is important to show the economic disadvantage, circumstances not linked to financial matters, are also of high relevance when studying the experience of individual ageing. The European Social Survey 2006 offers a wide range of indicators that provide insights into social welfare of older disabled persons that go beyond the economic welfare concepts. Multivariate empirical analyses show that across European countries, disability has a significant effect on social well-being, even after controlling for other relevant factors such as gender, age, marital status, income and education. Disability in the analysis is very broadly defined asking respondents whether they are hampered in their daily activities in any way by any longstanding illness, disability, infirmity or mental health problem. Nevertheless, research results show that the fact of even minor restrictions influences the social well-being of older persons.

One of the indicators to measure personal and societal aspects of well-being is the present satisfaction. Respondents are asked to evaluate the statement „On the whole life is close to how I would like it to be“. Figure 1 presents how the outcome of this question would look like in a perfect, but rather utopian world. The green triangle presents the difference in predicted probabilities between disabled and non-disabled older persons (in percentage points) controlling for other factors. In a world of no difference the light blue triangle and the green indication of the difference are just the same.

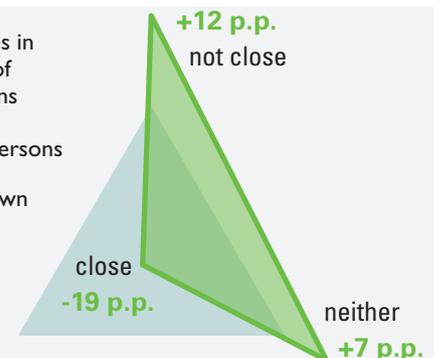
**Figure 1:** Triangle of no difference due to disability



Unfortunately, the multivariate analyses results, presented in figure 2, show that the reality is far away from a „perfect“ world of no difference in social well-being due to disability. The green triangle which has moved to the right as well as up and down indicates that disabled persons are more likely (12 p.p.) to say that their life is not close to how they would like it to be and are at the same time 19 percentage points less likely to say that their life is close to how they would like it to be. Thus, disability has a strong impact on the present life satisfaction of older persons.

**Figure 2:** Differences in present satisfaction of disabled older persons (60+) compared to non-disabled older persons

Source: ESS3-2006, own calculation.



This is just one example out of multiple indicators that show that across European countries, disability has a significant effect on social well-being, even after controlling for other factors. The overall results underline that older population is by no means a homogenous group and that ageing is not one unique experience but strongly influenced by ill-health and disability.

For further information please contact [Katrin Gasior](#) or [Asghar Zaidi](#)

More results presented at the XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology (11-17 July 2010, Sweden). Presentation and information about the congress [here](#).

## Upcoming events



- ▶ **European Population Conference (EPC) 2010**  
 1-4 September 2010, Vienna, Austria  
 The conference, organised by the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS) and the Vienna Institute of Demography (VID), covers many themes related to population studies as well as a special topic „Population and Environment“ about the interactions between global climate change and demographic trends. [More](#)
- ▶ **International Conference on Evidence-based Policy in Long-term Care**  
 8-11 September 2010, London UK  
 The conference aims to provide a platform for exchange on key long-term care policy topics such as how to organise, deliver, fund and regulate services. The focus of the conference is on evaluative research and its impact on social policy. [More](#)
- ▶ **The 2010 International Conference on Aging in the Americas: Issues of Disability, Caregiving, and Long-term Care Policy**  
 15-17 September 2010, the University of Texas at Austin  
 The ultimate objective of the conference is to develop consensus on the best means of ensuring healthful aging of individuals of Mexican ancestry in the United States to inform health care policy and research. [More](#)
- ▶ **International Policy and Research Conference on Social Security, ISSA**  
 29 September - 1 October 2010, Luxembourg  
 The conference will focus on the challenges that various socio-economic developments pose to social security worldwide, in particular the impacts of the current financial and economic crisis. It aims to identify the new demographic context, to analyze the consequences of the current financial crisis and related socio-economic changes for the future of social security and to assess the impact of major emerging trends on social policies and on forthcoming social security challenges. [More](#)

The [European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research](#), an intergovernmental organisation affiliated to the United Nations, has been mandated to undertake various follow-up activities of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing since 2002.

The [Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators to Monitor Implementation \(MA:IMI\)](#) project is an institutionalised collaboration between the European Centre and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Eszter Zólyomi is the Project Coordinator. For further information please visit the [Monitoring RIS website](#)

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