



Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe / UNECE, and the Government of the Republic of Austria

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will be involved in the follow-up to the Berlin Ministerial Conference on Ageing, in accordance with (a) the mandate given to the United Nations regional commissions by the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 (MIPAA) to translate the Plan into regional action plans and to assist upon request, national institutions in implementation and monitoring of their actions on ageing (MIPAA, para 128); (b) the mandate given specifically to the UNECE by the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS), which calls upon UNECE “to assist member states upon request with implementing the RIS and in their evaluation of the achievements of the RIS at the national level” (para. 92); and (c) the decisions taken at the Economic Commission for Europe’s 58th session. This will be done in close collaboration with UNECE member States, who have the primary responsibility for the implementation and follow-up of RIS, the civil society at large, and in particular the relevant non-governmental organizations, as well as with other concerned actors, in order to mainstream ageing in an integrated way into socio-economic policies, and to represent the age-specific interests of different age groups, including older persons, so as to promote active ageing, the employability of all persons wishing to work, sustainable income and quality of life for all ages, prevent age discrimination, and foster age diversity, inter-generational equity and solidarity.

The follow-up work will be performed in the spirit of the call in paragraph 131 of MIPAA for systematic review of the implementation of the Plan by the United Nations Member States. It will be sensitive to the wish of UNECE member States to avoid heavy reporting burden, and to have a monitoring process based on effective exchange of information, experiences and best practices that avoids simplistic comparisons.

In this context, the UNECE Secretariat welcomes the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Austria, represented by the Federal Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer protection, to provide technical support to the follow-up process. This initiative was also welcomed by UNECE Member States during the 58th Annual Session of the UNECE. The initiative envisages a co-operative arrangement with the Government of the Republic of Austria, involving the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, which is a Vienna-based organisation affiliated with the United Nations.

As part of that initiative,

- a separate unit would be established within the European Centre, with the consent of its Board of Directors, the work programme of which will be drawn-up in consultation with a task force to be constituted for that purpose, comprising independent recognized experts in different sub-fields of ageing, working for various governmental, non-governmental, international, or other organizations, as well as for the private sector and employee associations. The members of this task force will be identified in consultation with the UNECE Secretariat and the Government of the Republic of Austria;
- to staff this unit, the European Centre will be enabled by earmarked funds from the Government of the Republic of Austria to recruit at least two additional qualified professionals with international experience. For its part, the UNECE will make available for the follow-up work staff and other resources in accordance with its programme of work, as approved by ECE Member States in the context of the programme budget;
- the European Centre will also make available its infrastructure to support the follow-up work, provided that this support is not detrimental to the fulfilment of the Centre's other responsibilities.
- this initiative is initially planned within a time frame of five years of operation. During the fourth year of the initial five year period, the UNECE together with all stakeholders, including the Government of the Republic of Austria, will evaluate the status of the initiative and recommend whether it should be renewed, extended or scaled-back, or it should be phased-out;
- the European Centre will welcome contributions (in terms of personnel, financial resources, or in kind) from other donors to further boost its capacity to work on the follow up to the Berlin Ministerial Conference on Ageing.

The role of the Centre and its specialized unit will be:

- to promote, in collaboration with the UNECE Secretariat, an exchange of experiences in the field of policies related to ageing;
- to carry out and foster data collection, research and analysis, including in collaboration with other organisations (in particular UN agencies such as WHO and ILO, ISSA, the European Community, OECD), national authorities, and other concerned bodies and individuals;
- to maintain, in the context of the above-mentioned data collection, research and analysis work, a network of organizations, national authorities, and other concerned bodies and individuals, active in the field of ageing;

Specifically, the Centre and its specialized unit will perform the following functions:

- identify, in collaboration with the UNECE, the above-mentioned task force and other concerned parties, the priority issues which require more thorough analysis as set forth in Commitment 10 of the Regional Implementation Strategy;

- prepare, in collaboration with the UNECE, a short annual report on implementation measures within the region, based on the data collected by the two institutions, and furnish it to the UNECE Secretariat for possible discussion at the Commission's annual sessions;
- offer support to the follow-up work by developing and monitoring a set of agreed-upon "indicators of achievement";
- facilitate the collection of data and exchange of information in the field of ageing-related policies, specific laws adopted, best practices introduced by UNECE Member States and relevant activities undertaken by NGOs.

As indicated earlier, the follow-up work to be undertaken by the European Centre will benefit from the advise of a task force, all members of which will serve in their personal capacity, and will offer their services on a *pro bono* basis. They will be called upon *inter alia* to offer guidance and advice on the content and priorities of the follow-up and in drawing the plans for future work. Meetings of the task force will be called as needed. The members of the task force will normally be supported by their institutions in terms of working time, travel and accommodations.

Signed on 01/23/ 2004 in Vienna



For the Government of the Republic of
Austria:



For the United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe:

