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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EX-ANTE EVALUATION

Accompanying document to the

**DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012)**

COM(2010) 462

1. INTRODUCTION

The present ex-ante evaluation follows a call from the Slovenian Presidency in 2008 for a European Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity (2012). The Council reiterated its interest in such an initiative in November 2009 when it invited the Commission to develop awareness-raising activities to promote active ageing including a European Year.

The Commission plans to adopt a proposal for a Decision by Parliament and Council on designating 2012 as European Year on Active Ageing. The Commission opted for the short title of active ageing which implies that intergenerational solidarity is to be seen as an outcome of active ageing which presents a key opportunity for preserving solidarity between generations.

In preparing the ex-ante evaluation, the Commission services have also asked for the views of key stakeholders regarding the orientation and implementation of the European Year (see below 3.4). In addition, the Commission services took into account evaluation results of previous European Years.

This ex-ante evaluation considers the different options for an initiative on promoting active ageing. The structure of the document is as follows: definitions and policy context (2), problem analysis and needs assessment (3), objectives (4), policy options (5), assessment of policy options (6), implementation of preferred option (7), monitoring and evaluation (8).

2. DEFINITION AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1. Definition of active ageing

Active ageing is defined by the World Health Organization as the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age¹. It allows people to realize their potential for wellbeing throughout their lives and to participate in society according to their needs, desires and capabilities, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need assistance. While this definition includes the notion of continuing activity in the labour force, it also encompasses continuing participation of older people in society.

2.2. The policy context

In April 2002, the United Nations' Second World Assembly on Ageing², adopted the Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing, which includes the recognition that persons, as they age, should enjoy active participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their societies as a main development objective. The political messages of the Madrid Action Plan were supported by the Commission in its Communication of 18 March 2002³.

¹ World Health Organisation (2002) *Active Ageing - A Policy Framework*, p. 12.

² United Nations Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002 A/CONF.179/9.

³ Europe's response to World Ageing - COM(2002) 143, 18 March 2002.

In October 2005, the Heads of State and of Government stressed at their Hampton Court informal summit that demographic ageing is one of the main challenges that the European Union will have to face in the years to come.

In October 2006, the Commission presented its views on the demographic challenges the EU faces and on opportunities for tackling them in the Communication "The demographic future of Europe — from challenge to opportunity"⁴. The Communication expressed confidence in Europe's ability to adapt to demographic change and notably population ageing. It identified five key policy responses through which Member States can respond in a constructive way to demographic change and make population ageing manageable.

In this context, the Council adopted in 2007 a Resolution on the "Opportunities and challenges of demographic change in Europe: the contribution of older people to economic and social development" which emphasized the need to increase the possibilities for active participation by older people⁵.

In 2008, the Slovenian Presidency organised a conference on "Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies". The conference conclusions presented to the EPSCO-Council put forward the idea of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity: "The year 2012 should be called Year of Intergenerational Solidarity as well as European Year of Active Ageing"⁶.

As a follow-up to the Slovenian Presidency conference, a coalition of European NGO networks organised for the first time, on 29 April 2009, a European Day on Solidarity between Generations.

On the same day, the Commission issued a Communication on dealing with the impact of an ageing population⁷. The Communication presented age-related expenditure projections and outlined the Commission's views on Europe's ability to tackle the challenge of ageing in view of the economic crisis. It stated that governments have a window of opportunity before the baby-boom generation retires to implement policies that address the challenge. In this context, the Communication stresses the importance of helping and encouraging the ageing baby-boomers to stay in the labour market rather than retire early, as previous generations have tended to do. Europe's best chance of ensuring that ageing will not be perceived as a threat, but as a historic achievement, lies in not wasting the potential of these baby-boom generations.

The Council adopted on 8 June 2009 Conclusions on "Equal Opportunities for women and men: active and dignified ageing", which recognizes that, throughout the EU, older women and men face serious challenges as they seek to live active lives and to age with dignity and proposes a number of actions to Member States and the Commission in the domain.

The Council adopted on 30 November 2009 Conclusions on "Healthy and dignified ageing" which invite the Commission to develop awareness-raising activities to promote active

⁴ COM (2006) 571, 12 October 2006.

⁵ Council conclusions of 22 February 2007.

⁶ Information from the Slovenian Presidency on the Conference on Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies (Brdo pri Kranju, 27–29 April 2008), 10318/08 (SOC 342).

⁷ COM (2009) 180, 29 April 2009

ageing, including a possible European Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity in 2012⁸.

The Treaty of Lisbon mentions for the first time in Art. 3. 3. solidarity between generations as one of the objectives of the European Union.

The 18-month programme of the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies announced that the three Presidencies will focus on supporting various initiatives in the context of population ageing, and thus conduct preparatory work for the European Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity in 2012.

The Commission emphasises in its Communication on "Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" the importance of the European Union's ability to meet the challenge of promoting a healthy and active ageing population to allow for social cohesion and higher productivity.

3. PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Today, Europeans are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. Since 1960, life expectancy has risen by eight years, and demographic projections forecast a further five-year increase over the next forty years. This is a historic achievement that deserves to be celebrated.

Rising life expectancy, combined with low birth rates, also imply a changing balance between younger and older people, a shift that is currently being accelerated by the fact that the large baby boom cohorts are reaching their retirement age.

The EU population pyramid clearly shows an increase in cohort size just after the end of World War II, marking the start of the baby boom. This was 60 years ago, and the first of these large baby boom cohorts are now beginning to retire. From the year 2012 onwards the European working-age population will shrink, while the population aged over 60 years will continue to increase by about 2 million people a year, according to a scenario that assumes sustained immigration and a slight increase in birth rates⁹.

These demographic changes present certain challenges and opportunities. Population ageing may increase pressure on public budgets and pension systems, as well as on the staffing of social and care services for older people. Old age is still often associated with illness and dependency, and older people can feel excluded from employment as well as from family and community life. There is a fear that accelerated ageing of Europe's societies could lead to the older generations becoming too heavy a burden on younger, working-age people and that this could result in tensions between the generations.

This view neglects, however, the significant actual and potential contribution that older people and the baby-boom cohorts in particular, can make to society. A key opportunity for tackling the challenge of demographic ageing and preserving intergenerational solidarity

⁸ Council conclusions of 20 November 2009 on healthy and dignified ageing,

⁹ 2nd European Demography Report Meeting Social Needs in an Ageing Society. SEC (2008) 2911
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=502&newsId=419&furtherNews=yes>

therefore consists in ensuring that the baby-boom cohorts stay longer on the labour market and remain healthy, active and autonomous for longer after retirement.

3.1. The main challenges

3.1.1. Tackling early retirement

Policies in Member States have reversed the trend to earlier retirement, the EU-27 average employment rate for people aged 55-64 years increasing by nearly about nine percentage points from 36.9 % in 2000 to 46.0% in 2009¹⁰. This trend is a clear indication that the Lisbon strategy, with its objective of promoting employment of older persons, is having an impact.

Recent projections from Eurostat indicate that the working age population is set to decrease by about 50 million people between 2008 and 2060, which could produce a concomitant decline in GDP growth¹¹. In great part this decrease will be caused by members of the large baby-boom cohorts (now in their 50s and 60s and making up a major share of Europe's labour force) retiring. Encouraging this generation to stay in employment requires removal of obstacles to employment and the introduction of flexible retirement mechanisms rewarding longer working lives. More flexible working time and work organisation is needed, in order to encourage, for instance, more part-time working as an alternative to retirement, and to improve access to lifelong learning for older workers. Health promotion throughout working life, as well as effective and efficient health services are also important because ill health is a key factor in early retirement. In the current context of an economic recession, it is also vital to ensure that dismissed older workers will be able to return to employment once the labour market situation improves and to fight age discrimination. A recent Eurobarometer showed that the economic crisis led to a shift in public opinion about the extent of discrimination based on age. Europeans now far more often perceive discrimination on the grounds of age (+16 percentage points since 2008)¹².

Providing more high-quality jobs for older people is a necessary part of a strategy to tackle some of the causes of poverty among this age group. Giving older workers the choice to work for longer means that they can benefit from higher incomes while still at work, as well as from higher levels of savings and pensions at retirement. This issue is particularly acute for older women, a group that faces high relative poverty rates in the EU (22% in 2008) in part due to women's careers being interrupted more frequently by caring responsibilities, and from their lower lifetime levels of earnings and savings.

The Lisbon Strategy defines a comprehensive strategy to promote the employment of older workers. Although some progress has been made, more needs to be done. In order to encourage a process of change it is important: (1) to raise the awareness (among the general public, policy makers and other stakeholders) of the potential of older workers which could be unlocked; (2) to foster exchange of experience among stakeholders on how to implement active ageing strategies in employment; (3) to encourage public authorities and stakeholders at all levels to develop policies further to reduce early exit from the labour force through specific measures.

¹⁰ Source. Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey.

¹¹ Eurostat (2008) *Statistics in Focus: Population and social conditions*, 72, p7.

¹² Discrimination in the EU in 2009. Special Eurobarometer 317.

In the Commission's public consultation, responses often noted the need to strengthen the opportunities for older people to continue working, in part to help maintain their economic and social integration¹³. Some public authorities and civil society organisations noted the increasing impoverishment of older people, while others feared that the retirement of the baby boom generation would generate shortages of specialists working in certain sectors, including teaching, health professionals and leaders of small businesses.

3.1.2. *Combating the isolation of older people through active participation*

A considerable number of EU citizens experience old age as a time of marginalisation and poverty, the current socio-economic crisis creating additional pressure. Compared to men, older women face particular difficulties in terms of isolation and risk of poverty (22% for female vs. 16% for male in 2008 for EU-27). Active participation in voluntary activities following retirement could help reduce the isolation of older people as well as help develop intergenerational solidarities.

A recent survey found that older people are willing to participate in volunteering with nearly half of those who had retired stating that they had already volunteered or that they planned to (Flash Eurobarometer n° 247, 2008). Equally, nearly one in four retired people polled stated that they had already or planned to enrol in education courses. Encouraging older people to acquire new skills will enable them to participate more actively in society. Evidence is growing that promoting social participation in older people through activities such as volunteering and education enhances older people's mental and physical health and reduces mortality rates, perhaps through generating social capital and greater social support¹⁴. In the Commission's public consultation, respondents described the important task of reducing the isolation of older people by developing neighbourhood and local solidarities through initiatives such as volunteering.

After their retirement from the labour market, senior citizens may pursue a wide range of other activities. A detailed picture on the social participation and activities of older people can be obtained from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE¹⁵), although it covers only 12 Member States. Data from the latest wave (2006-2007) of SHARE show that 19 % of people aged 50 or over were engaged in general social activities (in clubs and political or community organisations) in the month prior to the interview, another 13.5 % of respondents provided informal help outside their families, 11 % were involved in voluntary or charity work in the month preceding the interview, and 6 % provided care to other adults, typically to other family members.

There also appears to be increasing readiness among policy makers to promote voluntary work by older people. Such initiatives need to take into account the fact that new cohorts of older volunteers will tend to have higher levels of educational attainment, and more skilled professional backgrounds. This could allow them to make an effective contribution as volunteers, provided the right framework for mobilising their potential is put in place.

¹³ European Commission (2009) Public consultation on a possible designation of 2012 as European Year of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

¹⁴ Onyx J & Warburton J (2003) Volunteering and health among older people: a review. *Australasian Journal on Ageing* 22 (2) 65-69.

¹⁵ See: <http://www.share-project.org/t3/share/index.php?id=73>

To develop the potential of older people as volunteers it is important: (1) to raise awareness of the potential contribution of senior citizens to society through volunteering; (2) to stimulate good practice between Member States and stakeholders at all levels on how to promote senior volunteering; (3) to support Member States and stakeholders to develop specific activities and to commit to objectives related to senior volunteering.

3.1.3. *Tackling ill health in older ages*

Improving population health is vital for individual and societal well-being. While directly contributing to individual quality of life, a healthy population is critical for economic growth and prosperity in Europe by enabling people to remain active in society for longer as well as by limiting strain on health and social care systems. The Commission has recently projected an increase in public healthcare expenditure of 1-2 % in most Member States as a result of population ageing alone; a figure which represents an increase in the proportion of GDP spent on healthcare of up to 25 %¹⁶. However, projections also show that if future gains in life expectancy were generally acquired in good health and without disability, the rise in healthcare spending due to population ageing would be halved¹⁷.

The prevalence of physical health problems among older people is high, according to surveys such as the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). While there is some recent evidence indicating some compression of morbidity among the elderly, new treatments enabling those with once fatal diseases to survive may lead to a longer period of morbidity in the future¹⁸. While life expectancy in Europe is increasing, the trends for the number of years people live in good health (healthy life years) are more divergent, with the situation in some countries in the EU15 getting worse. Figures from 2006 show that men in the EU15 can expect to live about 85 % of their lives in good health on average; while women may live longer, they spend only about 80 % of their lives in good health¹⁹.

Many of the illnesses that cause poor health in older age, such as cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes and mental illness, are preventable. Although these conditions may be the outcome of risk factors accumulated over a lifetime, much health gain can still be achieved at older ages. Tackling these chronic illnesses will require a two-fold approach to promote health throughout the lifespan and tackle health inequalities linked to social, economic and environmental factors.

In the public consultation, respondents argued that the concept of ageing as healthy and active needed to be promoted and supported. Policies encouraging active ageing promote improved mental and physical well-being in older people by helping people maintain an active,

¹⁶ The impact of ageing on public expenditure: projections for the EU25 Member States on pensions, health-care, long term care, education and unemployment transfers (2004-2050), Economic Policy Committee and European Commission (DG ECFIN) 2006, European Economy, Special Report no.1/2006.

¹⁷ *idem*.

¹⁸ Parker MG & Thorslund M (2007) Health trends in the elder population: getting better and getting worse. *The Gerontologist* 47 (2), 150-158; Nolte E & McKee M (2008) Caring for people with chronic conditions - A health system perspective. *European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Series*. <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E91878.pdf>; Jeune B & Brønnum-Hansen H (2008) Health trends in health expectancy at age 65 for various health indicators, 1987-2005. *European Journal of Ageing* 5 (4), 279-85.

¹⁹ European Commission (2007) *Discussion Paper "Healthy ageing: keystone for a sustainable Europe"*. DG SANCO, DG ECFIN and DG EMPL, p. 5.

independent, social and meaningful life as they age. Enhancing active ageing means extending life-long learning and facilitating older people to stay in employment and take up voluntary work. Tackling illness or disability, which are major causes of retirement, will aid active ageing policies in turn. To this end, promoting healthy ageing can help improve labour participation and productivity in older people²⁰.

In order to promote healthy ageing and to support the implementation of policies aiming to promote mental and physical well-being in older age, it is vital: (1) to increase public sensitivity and raise the awareness of policy makers to the possibilities for reducing significantly ill-health in older age and the quantified benefits of having a healthy older population, translated also into the contributions that older people can continue to have in the labour market and in society; (2) to stimulate active debate amongst stakeholders at all levels in order to develop initiatives but also to identify and transfer good practices; (3) to encourage Member States and relevant stakeholders to develop specific activities and to commit to specific objectives related to healthy ageing.

3.2. Current initiatives at EU level

The European Union has already taken various initiatives to promote active ageing.

3.2.1. Policies to promote active ageing in employment

The elements for a comprehensive strategy to promote the employment of older workers have been defined, and are being monitored, within the European Employment Strategy and the Lisbon Strategy. They include notably the improvement of working conditions and their adaptation to the health status and needs of older workers, better access to training and life-long learning, better access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and the review of tax-benefit systems to ensure that there are sufficient rewards for working longer.

Through the open method of coordination on social protection and social inclusion, the EU supports, monitors and assesses the implementation and impact of national reforms of retirement pensions and to ensure the long-term sustainability of pension systems. Prolonging working lives by providing effective incentives for later retirement is an important policy to unlock the potential for increased employment. Pension reforms in the majority of Member States are already rising the labour market exit age, but much can still be achieved in this area. This concerns not only pension schemes, but also early retirement and social security schemes (disability, unemployment, sickness) that are sometimes used as an exit route from the labour market.

Within the European Social Fund (ESF) 1.01 billion euro are being devoted to measures to promote active ageing and a longer working life for the programming period 2007-13. Older workers can also benefit from active labour market measures which represent 15.3 % of ESF resources.

In addition, activities promoting active ageing are receiving funding under the Community programme for employment and social solidarity – PROGRESS²¹. PROGRESS' mission is to strengthen the EU contribution supporting Member States' commitments and efforts to create

²⁰ *idem.*

²¹ Decision of the European Parliament and Council of 24 October 2006 on a Community programme for employment and social solidarity – PROGRESS, OJ, L 315 of 15 November 2006.

more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. It supports the development of EU policies in the following areas: employment, working conditions, gender equality, social protection and social inclusion, non-discrimination and diversity. Priorities for funding under the PROGRESS programme are defined at the beginning of each year. Financial support is then awarded on the basis of calls for tender and calls for proposals. Gender mainstreaming is an integral part of these processes.

3.2.2. Active ageing through volunteering

The Grundtvig programme for adult education can finance projects supporting senior volunteering. The European Union decided to designate 2011 as European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship²², which will also aim to promote voluntary work of older people.

3.2.3. Healthy ageing

Supporting healthy ageing means both promoting health throughout the lifespan, aiming to prevent health problems and disabilities from an early age, and tackling inequities in health linked to social, economic and environmental factors. The European Union supports healthy ageing through its health strategy and through the open method of coordination on social protection and social inclusion. The 7th Framework Programme for research and development is devoting 6.5 billion euro to improving health over the life cycle and, in particular, to resolving the specific health problems of older people. The results of research funded under this programme are expected to contribute to a better prevention of physical and mental impairment. Funding is also devoted to ICT solutions promoting independent living and mobility of older persons.

3.2.4. Age discrimination

The EU has established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation²³ (Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000) which also prohibits discrimination on the ground of age. The recent Commission proposal for a directive on equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation could potentially contribute to better accessibility of goods and services for older people²⁴.

3.2.5. Infrastructure and autonomous living

Homes and local environment, including public transport, can be adapted and goods and services can be made more accessible so that older people with health impairments can continue to live in their own home as well as to maintain social contacts and activities.

The Commission's Disability Action plan 2008-2009 (COM (2007) 738) has defined accessibility for all to goods and services as a priority²⁵. The Commission has issued two standardisation mandates to the European standardisation organisation in order to develop

²² Council Decision of 27 November 2009 on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011), OJ, L 017 of 22 January 2010

²³ Council Directive of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, OJ, L 303 of 02 December 2000.

²⁴ COM(2008) 426 of 2 July 2008.

²⁵ COM (2007) 738, 26. November 2007

accessibility standards for information and communication technologies and the built environment to be used in public procurement procedures.

Furthermore the EU and all the Member States have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention contains very relevant obligations for state parties in order for persons with disabilities to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Convention relevance for older person is evident given the correlation between disability and ageing.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has provided support and an arena to effectively understand and respond to demographic challenges. In particular, the ERDF has addressed²⁶ infrastructure problems caused by population ageing in the framework of active ageing policies (e.g. lifelong learning infrastructure, health infrastructure, ICT infrastructure), education infrastructures (schools at all levels, Universities or e-learning for all ages) in the framework of human capital enhancement, infrastructure for the provision of key services in demographic declining areas or the restructuring of social service facilities and care services for older people.

Following a public consultation the Commission adopted the "Action Plan on urban mobility"²⁷. The Action Plan proposes twenty measures to encourage and help local, regional and national authorities achieve their goals for sustainable urban mobility. It also addresses the issue of accessibility for disabled people. With the Action Plan, the European Commission is presenting for the first time a comprehensive support package in the field of urban mobility. The actions are being launched over the four years following the Action Plan's adoption. The European Commission will conduct a review of the implementation of the Action Plan in the year 2012, and will assess the need for further action.

In 2008 older people represented 20% of road fatalities (40% as pedestrians). The ageing of the population is putting an urgent emphasis on the need to assess the vulnerability of older and disabled people in traffic. Knowledge is still very limited in this field and focused research efforts are needed to establish on medical criteria for the assessment of fitness-to-drive.

The Commission adopted a Communication on "Ageing Well in the Information Society"²⁸, which presents an action plan to accelerate the introduction of new technology-based solutions for ageing well at home, in the community and at work. The EU supports also the Ambient Assisted Living joint research and development programme undertaken by a group of Member States²⁹. The action plan and research programme will enable a better quality of

²⁶ “The ERDF intervention areas assessed as relevant (mostly in an indirect way) to the issues at stake were carried out in all the case studies. Indicatively, the analysed ERDF measures indirectly addressing demographic issues account for 23% of the total ERDF budget in the selected regions”. See “Ex post evaluation of cohesion policy programmes 2000-2006 co-financed by the European Fund for Regional Development (Objectives 1 and 2): Work package 7: “Effectiveness of the Cohesion Policy: Gender Equality and Demographic Change”.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/expost2006/wp7_en.htm

²⁷ COM (2009) 490, 30 September 2009

²⁸ COM (2007) 332,

²⁹ Decision of the European Parliament and the Council of 9 July 2008 on the Community's participation in a research and development programme undertaken by several Member States aimed at enhancing the quality of life of older people through the use of new information and communication technologies, OJ, L 201 of 30 July 2008.

life for elderly people, make significant cost-savings in health and social care possible, and create a strong industrial basis for ICT and ageing in Europe.

3.3. Need for further action

Europe's best chance for coping with the challenges of population ageing lies in not wasting the potential of these baby-boom generations, which will require the promotion of active ageing. Related policy responses generally fall within the responsibility of the Member States, which are stepping up their efforts to mobilise the potential of older persons. However, during the public consultation, responses received from Member State national authorities were overwhelmingly supportive of the idea of action at European level. Respondents appreciated that the European Union can support their endeavours by creating a more supportive environment through increased awareness among policy makers and the general public, helping to mobilise policy makers and stakeholders at all levels, supporting mutual learning across Europe, monitoring progress, and helping to define common objectives and targets.

While current initiatives at EU level have been described above, more needs to be done given the magnitude of the challenge. Current activities at EU level seem inappropriate to comprehensively respond to the following gaps identified in section 3.1: (1) to raise awareness of the general public, policy makers and other stakeholders of the importance of active ageing and of the need to better mobilise the potential of the baby boom cohorts; (2) to foster exchange of information and experience between Member States and stakeholders; (3) to give Member States and stakeholders an opportunity to develop policies further through specific activities and by committing to specific objectives.

In order to gain political momentum for active ageing policies, broad-based support will be required at all levels of society and from a wide range of stakeholders. The key challenge to be overcome is to mobilise stakeholders in a way that will generate significant action at national, regional, local levels across the EU. Developing a framework within which action at different levels will be developed would be a useful step, in order to increase consistency between actions currently taking place at EU-level as well as to enhance opportunities for mutual learning between actors at national, regional, local and company level. With greater political momentum and visibility for active ageing policies, policy makers can be encouraged to take more ambitious initiatives.

A European Year for active ageing could provide an appropriate framework for action to be taken at local, regional and national level as well as for transnational projects. It could also provide the political momentum and visibility needed to promote active ageing policies, especially those to develop the potential of the baby boom cohorts.

3.4. Public consultation

In its commitment to an inclusive approach in developing and implementing EU policies, the Commission consults as widely as possible on major policy initiatives. To this end, it asked for the views of relevant stakeholders on the theme of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity as well as on the orientation of a possible European Year, in order to obtain input for its formal proposal, to enhance transparency and to promote early coordination.

Early consultation was in the form of an online questionnaire which gave public authorities from Member States, social partners, NGOs, as well as other interested parties and experts the opportunity to express their views. It was available on the web page “Your Voice in Europe”, the European Commission’s single access point to a wide variety of consultations, for over

two months from June to July 2009. The questionnaire focussed on the following themes: threats and opportunities of ageing in relation to intergenerational solidarity, recommended policy measures, the specific role of the EU in promoting the right policy responses, topics and activities for a European Year, and the involvement of stakeholders.

132 responses from key stakeholders involved at European national and regional level were received. The results provided valuable input for the preparation of this ex-ante evaluation and for the draft Decision to be adopted, and some are also included here. DG EMPL will publish a summary analysis of the contributions received on its Europa website³⁰. About half of the responses were from civil society organisations, with public authorities making up another quarter of the responses (the breakdown by type of respondent and by region is presented in the annex). This unbalanced distribution of stakeholder type reduces the interest of analysing whether responses differed by category of stakeholder.

Generally, respondents, including many of those from civil society organizations and public authorities, agreed that the contributions of older people to family and community life deserved to be recognized, supported and further developed, as part of policies of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity. The importance of developing volunteering and extending working lives in this age group was also accepted. Obstacles to developing active ageing policies were mentioned by some respondents. Resistance to change was seen to be linked to a lack of awareness among the public and policy makers of the importance of the problem, persisting negative stereotypes of elderly people and fiscal pressures. One particular difficulty is that active ageing is a long-term cross-cutting issue that requires the cooperation of many partners.

Most respondents, representing a wide range of types of stakeholders, supported increased EU activity in this area in order to increase the visibility of the challenge and to support national and local activities. They called on the EU to develop its role in helping to coordinate and mobilise stakeholders, as well as to encourage research on the identification of good practices. Respondents noted the wide diversity of the EU's current projects in the area of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity, requesting that these programmes be more closely coordinated in order to increase the visibility of the results of these projects and to encourage networking between local and regional actors.

Contributors generally considered a European Year on the theme of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity an appropriate policy instrument. They appreciated that it would raise awareness of those key themes which would be touched upon by the year, placing them more firmly on political and public policy agendas; it would provide recognition and support for those already working on these topics; it would support the sharing of good practice, and that it would generate innovative approaches as well as new synergies between existing actors. More than once, respondents stated their desire for a European Year to leave a long-term legacy, in part by generating long-lasting initiatives. Respondents of all types (civil society organizations, public authorities, social partners, etc) showed a great willingness to be involved in a European Year, indicating activities they were planning to hold which could feed into such a year as well as proposing additional projects.

Responses underlined the importance for the European Union to provide a coordinating role for information pertaining to the European Year, both in terms of generating information

³⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=699&langId=en&consultId=1&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes>

campaigns and in centralising information produced during the year. Out of some responses to the public consultation from a variety of different types of stakeholders came the idea of the development, at EU-level, of an online interactive portal, which would detail all the initiatives held at local, national and EU level as part of the proposed European Year. While supporting an EU-wide information campaign, stakeholders frequently affirmed the role of the European Year in supporting a flowering of local and regional initiatives.

3.5. Previous evaluation results

Five evaluation exercises for European Years implemented by DG EMPL have been taken into account: the 1993 European Year for Older People, the 1997 European Year against Racism, the 2003 European Year of People with Disabilities, the 2006 European Year of Workers' Mobility and the 2007 European Year on Equal Opportunities for All. The Commission also looked at the evaluation report of the 1999 United Nations Year for Older People.

In addition, the expertise of Commission officials responsible for the organisation of the on-going 2010 European Year on Social Exclusion and Poverty and the forthcoming 2011 European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship was utilized.

According to previous evaluations European Years have the following potentials. They:

- can raise general awareness on a specific theme or of a problem;
- can serve as an effective tool for enlarging awareness to more stakeholders and are effective in promoting mutual learning between organisations. They are designed to involve a range of stakeholders in publicising, debating and exchanging views and experience on a specific theme, and therefore in creating multiplier effects;
- can be an effective instrument for creating political momentum and for putting political issues on EU agenda. The broad level of participation that can be achieved within a limited timeframe has helped to harness political support, to trigger media interest, to pave the way for broader political commitments and to contribute to policy change;
- can be effective instruments for strengthening the visibility of existing activities and for creating synergies between various areas of intervention and at different (EU, Member State and regional/local) levels.

In order to exploit fully this potential, evaluation results point to the need to organise a European Year on the following basis:

- by encouraging coordination and co-operation of stakeholders across Europe;
- by extending the preparatory phase and set up well in advance the coordination structures within the Commission and the Member States. A European Year should be planned on a 3-year timescale: preparation (1 year); implementation (1 year) and follow-up (1 year);
- by collaborating closely with relevant stakeholders at European, national, regional and local levels.

4. OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of this initiative shall be to encourage and support the efforts of Member States, their regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society to promote active ageing and to better mobilise the potential of the of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and above. Active ageing means creating better opportunities and working conditions for the participation of older workers in the labour market, combating social exclusion through fostering active participation in society and encouraging healthy ageing. On this basis, the objectives of the initiative should be:

- (1) To raise general awareness of the value of active ageing in order to highlight the useful contribution older people make to society and economy, to promote active ageing and to better mobilise the potential of older people;
- (2) To stimulate a debate and develop mutual learning between Member States and stakeholders at all levels in order to promote active ageing policies, to disseminate good practice and to encourage cooperation and synergies;
- (3) To offer a framework for commitment and concrete action in order to give an opportunity to Member States and stakeholders at all levels to develop policies further through specific activities and to commit to specific objectives related to active ageing.

5. POLICY OPTIONS

5.1. Option 1 - Continue current activities (status quo)

The first option is to continue with existing activities to promote active ageing. The activities described under see 3.2 would continue to take place, but there would be no new EU initiatives.

5.2. Option 2 - Thematic year within the PROGRESS programme

The second option is to launch a thematic year within the PROGRESS programme by focussing its annual work programme on activities related to active ageing. No formal decision of the European Parliament and of the Council would be needed. The Commission and the PROGRESS Committee would decide to finance under each of the five thematic strands of PROGRESS some activities related to active ageing (e.g. conferences, studies, exchanges of good practice). However, given the restrictions imposed by the PROGRESS decision it could not be presented as a European Year in its traditional form.

5.3. Option 3 – A European Year coordinated and centralised by the Commission

A European Year without a specific budget coordinated and centralised by the Commission which would bring together activities funded under a broad range of existing EU programmes. The European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009) is an example for this option. A formal Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council would be needed.

5.4. Option 4 – A European Year launching calls for proposals for projects at national/regional or local level

A European Year with a specific budget which launches calls for proposals for concrete projects. These calls would be delegated to the Member States with the Commission only coordinating the opening and closing events for the European Year. The European Year on Equal Opportunities gave priority to this approach. A formal Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council would be needed.

6. ASSESSMENT OF THE DIFFERENT POLICY OPTIONS

This section examines the four options from the perspectives of coherence and added value, effectiveness and efficiency.

"Coherence" implies consistency with other Community Initiatives that are already in place.

"Added value" refers to the extent to which the policy contributes to strengthening Community efforts and stimulating further national efforts in order to achieve the relevant EU objectives.

"Effectiveness" means the extent to which the objectives can be achieved.

"Efficiency" looks at the relationship between the resources and effort invested in an initiative in relation to the (expected) outcomes. In this case, possible risks concerning the feasibility of outcomes are also considered from the perspective of efficiency, in addition to that of effectiveness.

6.1. Option 1 - Continue current activities (*status quo*)

6.1.1. Coherence and added value

The absence of any new EU action does not raise any issues in terms of consistency with other Commission activities. This option would restrict the scope of promoting active ageing to the policy areas and programmes already addressing this issue, not allowing for areas or cross-cutting approaches to be explored. Therefore, this option does not generate any added value.

6.1.2. Effectiveness

The absence of any new action contains the risk of not giving adequate attention and political visibility to the challenge of a rapid change in the age structure and not having sufficient support to meet the objectives set (raising awareness, stimulating debate, offering a framework for commitment and concrete action). This option is therefore weak in terms of effectiveness.

6.1.3. Efficiency

The "zero" extra cost for this option does not offset the risks highlighted above in terms of the failure to achieve the objectives. As "no new action" in this case could imply negative rather than neutral outcomes, this option also seems weak in terms of efficiency.

6.2. Option 2 - Thematic year within PROGRESS programme

6.2.1. Coherence and added value

In a thematic year within the PROGRESS programme, comprising activities coordinated and centralised at EU level, the Commission would be able to ensure consistency with other EU initiatives and programmes that are directly or indirectly linked to PROGRESS. A thematic year would contribute to the mainstreaming of active ageing in the different policy areas covered by PROGRESS. However, this option risks limiting the scope of promoting active ageing to those areas covered by PROGRESS. Hence the added value of this option is somewhat limited.

6.2.2. Effectiveness

The objectives set out above are broadly in line with the general objectives of PROGRESS and could therefore be achieved under this option. However, this option would probably not ensure the visibility that previous European Years have managed to produce as stand-alone initiatives, by also obtaining the formal commitment of the European Parliament and the Council due to their involvement in the preparation of each European Year through the process for a formal decision. This option could therefore fail to create much political momentum and could have limited effectiveness.

6.2.3. Efficiency

The Commission would use the possibilities offered by an existing programme without having to create a new instrument requiring the agreement of Council and Parliament. No extra financial or human resources would be necessary. This option would ensure good coordination at EU level, in both administrative and financial terms as well as on content. However, there is a risk of wasting valuable time in the preparation of an option that could eventually meet political opposition, on the basis of arguments in relation to the legal basis of PROGRESS which stipulates that the programme shall not finance any measures for the preparation and implementation of European Years. A thematic year might be seen as European Year type initiative.

6.3. Option 3 – A European Year without a specific budget coordinated and centralised by the Commission

6.3.1. Coherence and added value

In a European Year with activities coordinated and centralised at EU level, the Commission would be better able to ensure consistency between the activities of a European Year and those of other EU initiatives and programmes. This option would ensure that the promotion of active ageing is mainstreamed in the relevant policy areas covered by other Community programmes. Significant added value can therefore be expected.

6.3.2. Effectiveness

This option has the potential to achieve all of the objectives. The degree of effectiveness will ultimately depend on the synergies created with other existing activities and programmes relevant for active ageing. Overall, this option can be expected to be quite effective.

6.3.3. *Efficiency*

The Commission could use funding from existing programmes which cover issues related to active ageing. No extra financial or human resources would be required. Any costs or human resources needs related to the coordination of activities would be covered under existing budget lines and with existing human resources. The Commission would not have to mobilise financial resources from the reserve.

This option would ensure good coordination at EU level, both in administrative and financial terms as well as on content.

Although this option could be challenged by political lobbying from stakeholders arguing that the majority of previous European Years had a specific budget, the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009) has set a good precedence.

Overall, the efficiency of this option can be considered high.

6.4. Option 4 – A European Year launching calls for proposals for projects at national/regional or local level

6.4.1. *Coherence and added value*

While the substantial differences among Member States offer strong arguments in favour of decentralised actions for a European Year, launching calls in a field where various programmes could intervene entails significant risk for inconsistencies and duplication of efforts. . Although this option would provide some added value at national, regional and local level, this would not always be guaranteed due to the risks mentioned above.

6.4.2. *Effectiveness*

This option has the potential to achieve all of the objectives, provided that the Commission offers strategic guidance to Member States on implementation. However, it could prove difficult to find the budgetary means required for this option.

6.4.3. *Efficiency*

The efficiency of this approach in terms of “working on the ground” would be hampered by the lack of a link between different actions and different levels of intervention. Activities risk being isolated and disconnected from one another with possible inconsistencies and duplication of efforts. It would be very difficult and, if attempted, extremely costly, for the Commission to monitor closely national efforts in order to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. The cost of managing specific calls for proposals for Member States can be expected to be relatively high. The number of projects likely to be proposed would be disproportionate in relation to the budgetary resources available, which could lead to the rejection of many good proposals and the disappointment of stakeholders.

Overall, this option seems to be problematic in terms of efficiency.

6.5. Comparing the options

All four options could help to achieve the objectives to different degrees. However, options 1 and 2 are expected to have limited effectiveness and no or very limited added value. They are

also very weak in terms of efficiency. Option 4 can be effective and has the potential to involve national, regional and local stakeholders which would ensure visibility at these levels. Although it is expected to generate some added value at this level, there are also important risks in terms of coherence and duplication of efforts that can weaken the added value aspect. This option also rates poorly on efficiency. Option 3 has the strongest potential from the perspectives of coherence and added value, effectiveness and efficiency. This option, “a European Year without a specific budget coordinated and centralised by the Commission” is therefore the preferred option.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREFERRED OPTION

The designation of a European Year requires a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council.

7.1. Architecture of the European Year

The purpose of a European Year would go beyond awareness-raising. It should be seen as the highlight of a major effort spanning the period 2011-2014 during which the EU would focus many of its existing programmes and policies on the issue of active ageing and put in place a framework in which new initiatives and partnerships supporting active ageing at all levels (Member State, regional, local, social partners, civil society) can be encouraged and publicised.

In 2011, public authorities, social partners and civil society organisations at all levels would be encouraged to commit to achieving specific goals related to active ageing; the focus would be on achievements during the European Year. The goals are to be documented on a European website which would then become the website for the European Year.

In 2012, the focus of the European Year would be on implementing the commitments taken during 2011 and publicising these initiatives through media activities. Results of projects related to active ageing and being funded under existing budget lines and programmes would be presented.

7.2. Mobilising Member States and Stakeholders

The European Year would mobilise stakeholders at all levels, including local and regional authorities, the social partners and civil society organisations.

Member States would set up a national coordinator and national 'active ageing councils' including personalities that enjoy wide popularity and can act as ambassadors for the European Year. The national coordinators could also ensure the coordination at national level of activities relating to the Year.

The Commission envisages the possibility of convening meetings of the national coordinators in order to coordinate at European level the implementation of the Year and to exchange information regarding the activities at national level.

The Commission would establish an advisory group composed of a broad range of stakeholders, in particular of civil society organisations, social partners and networks of European regions and cities, which would advise the Commission on the implementation of the European Year.

7.3. Building on existing community programmes

The European Union has already taken various initiatives to promote active ageing. These activities should benefit from an enhanced visibility in the context of the European Year.

Many of the existing policies and instruments can be geared towards the goals of the Demography Pact and the European Year. To this end, the Commission would bring together the different services working on issues related to active ageing.

The following budget lines and programmes could potentially be utilised:

DG EMPL

Autonomous budget lines

- 04.03.07 Analysis of and studies on the social situation, demographics and the family (E1)
- 04.03.03.01 Industrial relations and social dialogue
- 04.03.03.02 Information and training measures for workers' organisations

ESF

An immediate priority will be to promote active ageing in the form of higher employment rates of older workers. This is eligible for support from the European Social Fund which could play a major role in helping regional and local stakeholders pursue ambitious goals with regard to active ageing.

PROGRESS

It is proposed to boost the effectiveness of PROGRESS activities related to the challenges of ageing through the European Year. Active ageing is being promoted to a different extent under all strands of the PROGRESS (employment, social protection and inclusion, working conditions, non-discrimination, gender equality).

DG EAC

- Grundtvig programme for adult education
- European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011)

DG SANCO

- Health programme

DG INFSO

- Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme
- European Action Plan for "Ageing Well in the Information Society"

DG REGIO – European Regional Development Fund

- Lifelong learning infrastructure
- Infrastructure for information and communication technologies
- Education infrastructures (schools at all levels, Universities or e-learning for all ages) in the framework of human capital enhancement
- Infrastructure for the provision of key services in demographic decline areas or the restructuring of social service facilities and care services for older people

DG MOVE

- Action Plan on urban mobility
- Protection of vulnerable road users including older people and people with disabilities
- Passenger rights of travelling persons with disabilities and reduced mobility

DG RTD

- 7th Framework Programme for research and development

AGENCIES

Various agencies can be involved in the Demography Pact and the European Year:

- The Dublin Foundation for Living and Working Conditions
- CEDEFOP
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

7.4. Type of measures

Measures to be taken shall include the following activities at European, national, regional or local level linked to the objectives and themes of the European Year of Active Ageing:

- conferences, events and initiatives to promote debate and raise awareness of the importance of active ageing;
- information, promotion and educational campaigns;
- exchange of information, experience and good practices;
- undertaking of research and surveys on a Community or national scale as well as dissemination of results.

In all these activities due attention will be paid to gender equality issues.

In addition, policy makers and stakeholders at all levels will be invited to present their initiatives as contributions to the goals of the European Year. The Commission or the Member States may permit the use of the name of the European Year in promoting those activities insofar as they contribute to achieving the objectives of the European Year.

8. ADDED VALUE OF EU INVOLVEMENT AND OF THE PREFERRED OPTION

The preferred option would benefit from the added value provided by EU involvement, for the objectives set out in this document could not be achieved only by action at national, regional and local levels. This is because action solely at these levels would not benefit from the advantage of a common EU framework, nor from exchanges of experience and good practice between Member States aiming to promote active ageing. Coordination at EU level will enhance the impact of action within Member States by encouraging transnational exchange of ideas and good practices and increasing the visibility of national initiatives. Programmes can generate added value in one or more different ways: through *volume effects*, *scope effects*, *role effects* and *process effects*.

The European Year would generate added value:

In terms of *volume effects*, by stimulating further national action through the activities organised under the European Year. This could include a greater number of debates as well as more activities for the exchange of good practices than would otherwise have taken place in Member States or at European level.

In terms of *scope effects*, by mainstreaming the policy objectives for active ageing in all relevant policy areas and programmes, especially where such considerations were not present before. In other words, the European Year could broaden existing actions or policy areas to address an ageing population (e.g. the 55+ age-group as well as specific sub-groups within this group) that would not have been otherwise addressed.

In terms of *role effects*, by influencing the way policy is developed in different areas pertaining to active ageing. The European Year could promote innovation and transfer of good practices from other policy areas or contexts of implementation in order to better address the needs the ageing population.

In terms of *process effects*, by improving the administration of programmes by Member States and other actors through capacity building. This may change the way new procedures are developed, revised and how policies are implemented in the future.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The design of the monitoring framework will mainly be the responsibility of the Commission in consultation with the Member States. A common monitoring template and specific guidance on monitoring will be developed with the Member States during 2011, the year preceding the launch of the European Year. The aim will be to ensure that Member States will collect information in a systematic way using the same approach, so as to have comparable EU-wide information that can be used in an evaluation exercise, to enable the identification of results and impacts of the year as well as drawing lessons for future initiatives.

An external evaluation exercise will be launched in 2012 in order to assess the implementation of the Year in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, to assess its results and impacts, draw conclusions on its added value, draw lessons and provide recommendations for action within existing policy frameworks of action and for future initiatives. Preliminary work on the evaluation methodology will be carried out during the preparatory year, more specifically on defining the indicators that should be used in the evaluation exercise for

assessing the achievement of the three key objectives of the European Year. These indicators will be defined in line with the proposition in the table below. Moreover, the website documenting the commitments related to active ageing made by public authorities, social partners and civil society organisations could also be used in the evaluation exercise. Throughout the preparation for the year as well as during the year itself, the website could serve as a communication platform with stakeholders, enabling them to participate in those surveys necessary for interim and final reporting.

The final evaluation results should be available by end of 2013. This arrangement will allow the Commission to report to the EU institutions by mid-2014 on the results achieved. The task of this report to EU institutions will be to assess the results achieved by the European Year of Active Ageing in the light of its objectives.

The objectives of the European Year will be monitored by specific indicators that will be developed with the help of evaluation experts and formally agreed on during the preparatory year:

Objective	Proposed monitoring tools / methodology	Proposed types of monitoring indicators
To raise general awareness of the value of active ageing in order to highlight the useful contribution older persons make to society and economy, to promote active ageing and to better mobilise the potential of older people	In-depth interviews and focus groups with stakeholders Monitoring of media coverage	2-3 qualitative indicators measuring change in attitudes towards active ageing and older people, that could be attributed to the European Year A qualitative indicator reflecting the level of media coverage for the European Year (e.g. limited, moderate, high) using specific definitions
To stimulate a debate and developing mutual learning between Member States and stakeholders at all levels in order to promote active ageing policies, to disseminate good practice and to encourage cooperation and synergies.	Establishment of a comprehensive European website where stakeholders at all levels can publicise their initiatives; establishment of a typology of initiatives and a common presentation facilitating comparisons. Analysis of the information on the website: collection	2-3 qualitative indicators expressing change in levels of mobilisation of key stakeholder groups that can be directly attributed to the EY (e.g. no change, limited, moderate, significant;) using specific definitions

	<p>of information on number of Member States, regions, cities that have put in place various types of measures to promote active ageing</p> <p>In-depth interviews with main stakeholders</p>	
<p>To offer a framework for commitment and concrete action in order to giving an opportunity to Member States and stakeholders at all levels to develop policies further through specific activities and to commit to specific objectives related to active ageing.</p>	<p>Website structured to offer each MS, region and major city a place to present their measures related to active ageing. Analysis of the information on the website: collection of information on number of MS, regions, cities that have put in place various types of measures to promote active ageing</p> <p>In-depth interviews with main stakeholders</p>	<p>2-3 qualitative indicators expressing the impact of the European Year on institutions and/or policy, in terms of setting a sustainable framework for commitment and action (e.g. no impact, limited, moderate, high), on the basis of specific definitions</p>

10. ANNEX

The European Commission received 132 responses to the public consultation. In Table 1, the responses are itemized by type of stakeholder, whether public authorities, industry and professional associations, trade unions, etc. Nearly half of the responses to the consultation came from civil society organisations. Graph 1 shows the locations of the stakeholders: contributions were received from stakeholders in 14 Member States as well as from representative bodies at EU and international level.

Table 1: Contributions received by stakeholder category

Stakeholder category	Number of replies	Percentage
Public authorities (local, national) & other publicly funded agencies	32	24%
Industry & professional associations	15	11%
Trade unions	2	2%
Civil society organisations	63	48%
Academic & think tanks	12	9%
Individuals	8	6%
All	132	100%

Graph 1: Contributions received by country and region

