

Meeting the challenge of demographic ageing in the context of the current crisis:

## A plea for greater intergenerational solidarity



The European Older People's Platform  
La Plate-forme européenne des Personnes âgées

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## Introduction

Following the consultation initiative launched by the European Commission in 2005 on demographic change, AGE and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) began to reflect together on how best to respond to the challenge of Europe's ageing society.

In late 2006, during the First European Forum on Demography, the two organisations asked the European Commission to organise a conference on intergenerational solidarity with a view to launching a debate on this subject and initiating new approaches as to the way in which our society is organised. The Commission responded positively and released the resources needed to hold a conference which was organised by the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union and held on 28 and 29 April 2008 in Brdo (Slovenia). The primary objective of this conference, organised in close cooperation with AGE, YFJ, the International Mutuality Association, the European Association of Paritarian Associations, Slovenian youth and seniors associations and the Erste Foundation, was to examine ways of re-forging social bonds between the generations and to initiate political changes aimed at strengthening inter-generational solidarity.

It was during this conference that the Slovenian Presidency proposed that 29 April should become the European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity and Cooperation, a suggestion that had first been made by AGE and the YFJ. In actual fact, for us NGOs, a European Day is an opportunity for civil society organisations to bring together a whole year's work and to draw the attention of the media and political decision-makers to a particular issue and the solutions which could be implemented in response. It is a unifying event which allows us to explain the

initiatives in progress on the ground and to move public discourse forward on a major social theme.

This idea, which emerged from the meetings of the Intergenerational French-speaking Circle set up by the King Baudouin Foundation in 2007, had in the meantime been made more concrete and had gained the support of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, and an operation named the «Crossroads of the Generations» is given the task to bring together over 30 Belgian French-speaking communities to take part in a range of activities inspired by this theme over the last weekend of April 2009.

This publication is part of an AGE project which we have been running since 2008, with the support of the King Baudouin Foundation, aimed at promoting a European society based on greater solidarity between the generations. The purpose of this brochure is not to present an exhaustive inventory of the issue nor to list the initiatives existing in this area, but to launch the discussion to coincide with the first European Day. We shall continue to gather information on how the debate is progressing and on interesting initiatives and to thus promote the exchange of ideas and experiences throughout the European Union.

If this issue interests you, help us to move the debate forward. Circulate this publication among grass roots organisations, political decision-makers and the media, and send us your comments and examples of inter-generational projects. With your help, by next year we will perhaps already have taken a huge step forward.

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## Why do we need a society based on a greater degree of solidarity between the generations

Every country in Europe is faced with rapid demographic ageing which is beginning to create tensions between the generations and obliges us to review the way in which our societies function. In recent years, the political debate has essentially focused on the problems associated with funding pensions in the long-term with an ever-increasing number of retirees to be supported by an ever-shrinking labour pool and the expected explosion in health-care demands when the baby-boomer generation, the 50-65 year-olds of today, become dependent in old age.

**One thing is certain: the demographic reality, together with the current financial and economic crisis, is forcing us to fundamentally re-think our economic, fiscal and social policies.** Displeasing as it is to a few romantics, society has changed rapidly over recent years, even over recent months, and the ways in which we respond to these new demands will have to adapt accordingly. Confronted with scepticism from some quarters, we would be well advised to remember the basic principles which have allowed European society to become what it is today: a region of peace and solidarity supported by an

efficient market economy and sustained by social rules which are now proving themselves to be valuable assets which allow Europe to hold its own relatively well in the context of the world crisis. The reknown European social model, which is still regarded by some as a brake on innovation and growth in Europe, is now praised by venerable institutions such as the OECD and the ILO who see it as a steadying influence and a long-term investment justified by the common interest. While they may vary in their approach, the economic, fiscal and social systems of the EU Member States are all based on solidarity between the generations and between citizens, between the rich and the poor, and between the healthy and the sick. This solidarity is an integral part of our shared heritage and must remain at the heart of any reform to how our societies function.

Solidarity between the young, the active and the elderly must not be approached solely from a financial perspective, but must be viewed in a wider way, encompassing the promotion of mutual cooperation and exchange between the generations. It must encourage a better mutual understanding of the needs and expectation of other age groups and explore new forms of coexistence. The way in which our society is organised must be reviewed completely in order to rebuild the social fabric and the links between and within the different generations so that all can find the place that suits them where they can flourish and make their contribution to the general well-being as best they can.

Debate is needed at all levels: local and national authorities, town planners, public transport operators, public health organisations, social service providers, architecture schools, social housing organisations, citizens, local national and European representatives, the media, schools, universities, civil society



organisations, etc. This is the direction taken by the diverse initiatives launched as part of the first European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity. It has got off to a great start and we hope the debate will continue for many years to come and that all countries and regions in the European Union will succeed in finding suitable solutions to tackle demographic ageing by building greater social cohesion.

rapidly over the next 20 years. It is also the first time that we witness such an increase in the 60-plus age group and this phenomenon is set to continue and to pick up pace until 2030. In short, the age pyramid is turning itself upside down and beginning to resemble a huge and increasingly unstable mushroom balancing precariously on a narrowing stem.

### Why is this a problem

This is not just because there will be fewer and fewer people actively employed and thus in a position to help support the retired population and pay for the health care of the ever-growing number of seniors and dependent older people, but also because the number of older people living alone is rising sharply, among women in particular, and because the makeup of families has changed enormously which sometimes profoundly alters the relationships between the generations. Finally, this year, for the first time, voters aged over 50 will be in the majority and this ageing of the electorate may result in an imbalance in the representation of the interests of the various age groups with the young being the losers. **Our entire society is going to have to adapt itself to the needs of its ageing population, but it will also have to tackle the new difficulties faced by other age groups so that all generations will be able to continue supporting each other and living together peacefully.** This means that we will have to collectively review our policies and practices as regards town planning, rural development, public transport, access to health care, social protection, employment, civic participation, leisure, and so on.

Over the last twenty years, we have seen mindsets change fast, with a kind of individualism appearing which has had both positive and negative effects on the relationships between the generations. The positive aspect of this trend is that people have become more

assertive and have learned better ways to defend themselves in the whirl of modern life. Hoping to rein in public spending, national decision-makers, regularly called to order by the European Commission, which is concerned that all remain strictly within the budgetary rules of the Stability Pact, have «encouraged» citizens to be more responsible for themselves and to depend less on the community. This approach has unfortunately led some sectors of society to assume that the «each man for himself» attitude was the only one which would guarantee strong economic growth and re-energise a European society which had become engorged by over-generous social policies which they considered too expensive.

The economic and financial crisis we are now experiencing is a universal reminder of the importance of solidarity and social cohesion, not just during a crisis but also during times of growth and prosperity. The many initiatives taken across the European Union demonstrate people's interest in solidarity and cooperation between citizens and between the generations. This interest is confirmed by the Euro-flash survey published by the European Commission to mark the 1st European Day on Solidarity and Cooperation between Generations on 29 April 2009.



## Intergenerational solidarity in urban planning policy

### The issue

At present, our urban environment is designed essentially for the active population, and for the young and healthy; for a world where the car is king and the needs of the more vulnerable citizens are hidden.

How many communities can boast of cycle tracks allowing the young and the not-so-young to pedal in complete safety across town? How many town centres have organised their footpaths so that the elderly are not in danger of a fall at every turn and parents with pushchairs can do their shopping on foot or walk about without finding their stroll transforming into an obstacle course? How many cities design their public parks so that everybody, young and old, is welcome and can enjoy the green spaces: the young with their skateboards, families with young children and the elderly in search of a quiet spot to get some fresh air? How many tourist towns prefer to keep their cobblestones rather than arrange their centres so that the elderly can get about safely? How many local authorities have planned the layout of areas adjacent to schools so that when the children emerge they are safe from the traffic? How many public buildings are still designed as though all their users were young, slender, familiar with new technologies, and able to stand about for ages in queues, etc.? How many

Since time immemorial, our societies have been based on solidarity and cooperation between the generations, so why do we plea today for a society based on greater solidarity?

### The figures

That is because the start of the 21st century is the first time in living memory, with the exception of world wars, that the number of 20-59-year-olds falls and demographers predict that it will continue to fall

neighbourhoods are watching their populations rapidly age and have no idea how to attract young families to boost their region over the long term?

**Our urban environment is dragging its feet in adapting to society's changing needs and is creating barriers to the full participation of large groups** (the elderly, those with reduced mobility, families with young children, disabled people), making it difficult for them to live in harmony with other social groups and destroying the social fabric.

## Some solutions

### At the local level:

In the majority of European Union Member States, it falls on local authorities to plan urban spaces. Some municipalities, faced with the rapid ageing of their residents, have begun to implement urban planning policies aimed at making public space more user-friendly for all, the young and not-so-young, and to foster relationships between citizens. Some can now boast a number of years' experience in this approach and the success of their initiatives is beginning to inspire others.

If you are a local authority or a group of residents interested in developing urban planning policies which are better suited to the needs of all, the **WHO Age Friendly Cities Programme**<sup>1</sup> could be very useful to you. This methodology has been developed by the World Health Organisation to promote an urban space which is suitable for all age groups and supports ageing in good health by helping local authorities to assess the situation and identify the problems arising from the poor adaptation of their urban environment, then to develop solutions adapted to the local context. This guide is mainly aimed at urban-focused stakeholders. The WHO will shortly publish a similar guide covering rural areas.

### » Vienna (Austria), a "local city" open to all

The city of Vienna has launched a large-scale 200-hectare urban development project in the Flugfeld Aspern zone. This project assessed public spaces with a view to making them accessible to all and examined the problems of accessibility for pedestrians (the quality of footpath surfaces, cars parked on pavements, too narrow pathways and hazardous zones), social infrastructure needs, and how park layouts could be improved so that people of all ages could enjoy them (for example, benches were installed in places indicated by the elderly). The project also strove to find out how travelling could be reduced to a minimum by the creation of a «local city» in which everybody could access their essential everyday goods and services in their immediate neighbourhood.

### » Saint Appolinaire (France): Generations: a model of intergenerational town planning

In Saint Appolinaire, in the Dijon suburbs, a pilot project dubbed «Generations<sup>2</sup>» was launched around twenty years ago. This group of buildings houses around a hundred and sixty people of all ages, half of whom are retired while the rest consist of families with small children. Everything has been designed to meet the needs of these different age groups and to encourage interaction between the generations: municipal toy library, playgroup, community hall, school canteen, plus sheltered housing for the mentally impaired, a drop-in centre run by a local authority worker and a day care centre for Alzheimer's sufferers. Other intergenerational town planning projects are to be found in other regions of France too: multi-generation flats in Mulhouse, playgroups adjacent to retirement villages in Paris, housing estates encouraging a mix of young and older people in Nantes, etc.

### » Demography Concept for Berlin (Germany):

To tackle its demographic and socio-economic issues, the City of Berlin decided at the end of 2008 to launch a new project entitled «Demography Concept for Berlin». The aim of this programme is to boost the economic potential of its seniors, revitalise urban centres and residential zone infrastructures, organise public space so that it better serves the needs of children, families and seniors, and promote age diversity in city-centre housing. Another goal of this programme is to help immigrants secure employment in businesses and public administration, and to attract highly qualified migrants. Finally, it aims to promote a positive image of older people, to organise public transport suitable for the elderly and children, and to develop the concept of multi-generation, design-for-all housing and compact towns or cities with services close by.

Other German cities affected by demographic change are endeavouring to revive their centres. **Duisburg**<sup>3</sup>, for example, is one of the Ruhr towns most affected by demographic change. Its population is rapidly ageing and shrinking. A large number of flats in the city centre are vacant yet there is a shortage of accommodation suitable for the elderly. For this reason, local authorities have asked one of Germany's largest city planning firms to come up with a plan to revitalise the city centre. The idea is to create a compact city where all can satisfy their everyday needs and access public services without having to travel too far. Intergenerational housing will soon be springing up to accommodate popular demand. **Hoyerswerda**, in eastern Germany, is also witnessing the rapid ageing of its population. Like Duisburg, it has decided to adapt its planning policies, but in direct consultation

with seniors. This has led to groups of seniors crossing the town on foot and by bus and presenting their suggestions to local authorities: the creation of communication zones, more public benches, greater concentration of small businesses and public services in the market square, and so on. This model will help shape a more user-friendly city for all and is now being emulated by other cities in the region.

### At the national level:

National governments, too, are being required to incorporate intergenerational planning policies into their social cohesion policies and, depending on the way in which their powers are shared, to release funds or develop private-public partnerships to help the municipalities concerned. In this time of crisis, it is especially important that initiatives are encouraged which will help re-create a public space which is accessible to all and which stimulates contact and mutual support between the various social groupings. Rather than creating dependence, which is the case in present-day urban spaces, it is important to seek out urban models which help everybody to be as independent as possible, yet more involved with their neighbours, colleagues and other community groups.

Some national governments have understood the important role they can play by setting up a legislative and financial framework to allow the different power levels to contribute through appropriate responses as part of their planning policies.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global\\_age\\_friendly\\_cities\\_Guide\\_English.pdf](http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.accordages-intergeneration.com/\\_v4/menu-horizontal-haut/banque-experiences/habitat-services/generations-est-une-formule-originale-creation-lien-par-cohabitation-retraites-familles-avec-jeunes-enfants-62.html](http://www.accordages-intergeneration.com/_v4/menu-horizontal-haut/banque-experiences/habitat-services/generations-est-une-formule-originale-creation-lien-par-cohabitation-retraites-familles-avec-jeunes-enfants-62.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.goethe.de/kue/arc/dos/dos/sls/sdz/en1417880.htm>



#### » Federal German ministry's urban development support programme

In 2004, the Federal German Government adopted a series of legislative and financial measures<sup>4</sup> to help towns and cities to better serve their citizens' needs against the background of demographic change: new building code, measures in favour of the «social city», support from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development for communities wishing to develop their infrastructures, etc. Several communities (such as the above) seized this opportunity.

#### » The "Ageing well, living together" quality mark in France

As part of its «Ageing well» Plan, the French Government decided to create the «Ageing well, living together» quality mark to help French towns tackle ageing-related issues by developing innovative projects in city planning, transport, services, local regeneration and in building local community ties.

This initiative falls under the «Age Friendly Cities» methodology developed by the World Health Organisation (see above) and also aims to encourage the exchange of experiences and good practice between cities in other countries which are members of the network.

#### At the European level:

Même si les compétences de l'Union européenne dans ce domaine sont très limitées, de nombreuses initiatives peuvent être prises au niveau européen pour promouvoir des politiques d'urbanisme inter-générationnel à travers l'Europe.

» **Structural funds**<sup>5</sup>: The European Commission should encourage the Member States to make use of the structural funds. These powerful European Union financial tools are intended to promote regional

development and to help towns and cities to implement programmes designed to adapt urban space to demographic change. The European fund JESSICA<sup>6</sup>, for example, is intended to promote sustainable investment, growth and employment in urban areas in keeping with the EU policy of social cohesion. But very few national and regional authorities realise that it can be used to improve their infrastructures to support increased cooperation and greater solidarity between the generations, thus better meeting the needs of people of all ages. The «Regions for economic change<sup>7</sup>» initiative also provides for the possibility of actively supporting initiatives in this area at regional and local level.

» **URBACT**<sup>8</sup>: URBACT is a European Programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which is intended to encourage the exchange of experience between European cities, and to draw conclusions and communicate the knowledge acquired in the area of sustainable urban development. As part of the «Cities - platforms for an integrated and sustainable urban development» theme, the URBACT programme aims to encourage intergenerational urban town planning projects and encourage the exchange of experiences between cities facing extensive demographic change (ageing, migration, etc.).

» **The Open Coordination Method**<sup>9</sup>: To stimulate new initiatives in this area, the European Commission should promote the exchange of best practices between Member States and local authorities as part of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the social field. This method is already allowing Member States (at the national level) to profit from the experience of other countries in the field of social inclusion, and the reform of pension systems and long-term care services. Why not extend this to

urban planning policies which support social inclusion and open it up to regional and local authorities in order to permit direct exchange between the various policy levels that are most directly concerned?

» **The twice-yearly cycle on demography**<sup>10</sup>: The Commission could also organise regular themed conferences on urban development in response to demographic change as part of the twice-yearly cycle on Demography launched in 2006, and invite all the parties concerned to participate: national, regional and local authorities, the European Alliance for Families, NGOs, researchers, social entrepreneurs, etc.

» **Erasmus Mundus**: Finally, as part of its Erasmus Mundus Programme<sup>11</sup>, the Commission should launch a European Master's Degree in Intergenerational Urban Planning to promote new approaches in urban planning schools based on best practices and the concept of design for all.



## Intergenerational solidarity in housing

### The issue

In many countries in the European Union, the young are experiencing enormous difficulties in finding decent housing. **Students unable to find adequate rooms to rent often end up living in sub-standard accommodation; while the old suffer from loneliness in properties which have become far too big after the departure of their children but who lack the means to exchange them for accommodation better suited to their new needs.** Some neighbourhoods or housing projects, developed thirty or forty years ago during the region's industrial boom, are witnessing the rapid ageing of their residents while the young find it impossible to find accommodation. The problem is particularly acute in some large cities and the current crisis will be no solution since the banks are tightening up their mortgage application conditions and, as a consequence, the entire building sector is in crisis with a clear fall in new building projects. So how can the existing property pool be better used and how can we give new impetus to building projects that focus on a greater diversity among different age groups? Are the interests of the young compatible with those of the

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.eukn.org/binaries/germany/bulk/text/german-urban-policy-challenges--eng\\_060907.pdf](http://www.eukn.org/binaries/germany/bulk/text/german-urban-policy-challenges--eng_060907.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.welcomeurope.com/default.asp?id=1100>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.welcomeurope.com/default.asp?id=1160&idpgm=11907&MyPays=en>

<sup>7</sup> Commission Communication "The Regions for economic change" - COM(2006) 675 of the 8.11.2006.

<sup>8</sup> <http://urbact.eu/thematic-poles/sustainable-urban-development/pole-presentation.html>

<sup>9</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/spsi/the\\_process\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/the_process_en.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/spsi/forum\\_on\\_demo\\_future\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/forum_on_demo_future_en.htm)

<sup>11</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index\\_fr.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_fr.html)

elderly in terms of housing? How can public authorities encourage different generations to help each other in light of the difficulties experienced by so many in securing decent accommodation?

## Some solutions

### At the local level:

Local authorities and fieldworkers should develop new housing projects intended to promote a mix of age groups, cultures and solidarity among residents. The public authorities should work out with those concerned how best to remove the legal and structural barriers which hinder the development of this type of project: inappropriate urban planning or building regulations, fiscal consequences for the «landlord» who takes in a student as part of a intergenerational assistance scheme, help in establishing agreements between universities and related organisations concerned with intergenerational housing, etc.

» **The elderly taking in students** (Spain and France): A number of initiatives, both public and private, are seeking to reconcile two needs: that of students in search of comfortable, inexpensive accommodation and that of the elderly living alone and looking for company. In Spain, some years ago, the Caixa Catalunya Foundation<sup>12</sup> launched the Viure i Conviure (Living and Living Together) programme which helps students to find a room with an elderly person in return for a bit of company during the evening and a reassuring presence at night. This intergenerational housing system has been a complete success. Similar initiatives are being developed in other countries. In France, for instance, where PariSolidaire<sup>13</sup> matches

young people in search of accommodation with seniors wishing for company to share everyday chores or bring in a little extra income, on a case-by-case basis.

» **Intergenerational and intercultural kangaroo housing:** In Belgium, the Netherlands and Scandinavia «kangaroo» housing projects attempt to solve two problems: on the one hand, there are ageing individuals who own a house which is too big for them, and on the other hand there are young couples who are experiencing difficulties in finding reasonably priced accommodation. The aim of these house-share schemes is to prevent the elderly from feeling isolated and to re-establish the intergenerational solidarity which tends to disappear from our society. **The Molenbeek kangaroo houses**<sup>14</sup> (Belgium) are a particularly interesting example, as the intercultural dimension has been added to the intergenerational aspect. There is the risk of isolation of the elderly in this part of Brussels, where more than one resident in two is of foreign extraction, and the Dar Al Amal Association has decided to encourage mutual assistance between young foreign families and older people local to the district. After 20 years in existence, the experiment is a success, even if the lack of funding and legal restrictions have prevented this innovative initiative from developing on a larger scale.

» **Intergenerational housing in the rural environment**<sup>15</sup> (Belgium): Intergenerational housing projects are springing up like mushrooms in some European countries, although mostly in urban settings. A Belgian example of intergenerational housing in the rural environment represents an attempt to get away

from the «estate» effect which creates ghettos of same-generation groups, by promoting a diversity of age groups in order to encourage solidarity and intergenerational interaction, to support a social mix, encourage social cohesion, to prevent older people having to move to «rest homes», an expensive solution for the community and often not the preferred option among the elderly, and to make life easier for young families and to boost the supply of inexpensive rental accommodation.

### At the national level:

The distribution of competence for housing between national and local authorities varies from country to country, but national governments often enjoy only very general powers in the taxation area and building safety standards. National governments can, however, play an important role by allowing local stakeholders to launch intergenerational housing projects ensuring that the national legal framework does not create difficulties, encouraging local stakeholders to support a greater mix of ages in their social housing projects, and by offering services and an urban space which are adapted to all age groups in order to encourage a generational mix in private housing.

» **Tax breaks and financial incentives:** National authorities can also develop incentives to encourage private initiatives, for example by reducing the tax burden on families who sign up to the kangaroo housing venture and take in an elderly citizen, or by offering financial support for elderly residents who wish to modify a part of their home so that they can take in a student, as is done for heat insulation work, for example.

» **Support from the German Federal Government for intergenerational housing**<sup>16</sup>:

In 2006, Ursula von der Leyen, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, launched a programme of support for intergenerational accommodation. Today, some 500 centres exist in Germany, offering their residents day-care services, family counselling and services aimed at all age groups. These projects are intended to encourage interactions between residents at different stages of their lives, to encourage independence, to help children and adolescents and to allow the elderly to make the most of their abilities.

### At the European level:

The European Union has no powers in the area of housing, but a number of programmes and financial tools exist which may help cities and regions to develop new approaches to meet demographic, social and environmental challenges. The Structural Funds mentioned in the previous section can be useful. Thematic twinning programmes could also encourage the exchange of experience and best practice in the area of intergenerational housing. The Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities research programme<sup>17</sup> also opens up possibilities of on-the-ground research. Finally, the European Parliament's Urban-housing Intergroup<sup>18</sup> is working with great dedication in this field in close cooperation with CECODHAS<sup>19</sup>, the European social housing organisations liaison committee.

<sup>12</sup> <http://obrasocial.caixacatalunya.es/osocial/main.html?idioma=3>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.leparisolidaire.fr/>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.accordages-intergeneration.com/\\_v4/menu-horizontal-haut/banque-experiences/habitat-services/habitat-encadre-qui-consiste-faire-cohabiter-dans-une-maison-amenagee-familles-immigrees-avec-enfants-personnes-agees-106.html](http://www.accordages-intergeneration.com/_v4/menu-horizontal-haut/banque-experiences/habitat-services/habitat-encadre-qui-consiste-faire-cohabiter-dans-une-maison-amenagee-familles-immigrees-avec-enfants-personnes-agees-106.html)

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.frw.be/fileadmin/user\\_upload/frw/publications/CT3\\_logement\\_intergeneration.pdf](http://www.frw.be/fileadmin/user_upload/frw/publications/CT3_logement_intergeneration.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.fh-nordhausen.de/fileadmin/daten/internationales/IPW\\_2008/AP/Mikkonen1.pdf](http://www.fh-nordhausen.de/fileadmin/daten/internationales/IPW_2008/AP/Mikkonen1.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index\\_en.cfm?pg=huma](http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=huma)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.urban-logement.eu/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.cecodhas.org/content/view/408/333/>





#### » European Programmes which could be useful:

European programmes such as thematic twinning<sup>20</sup> and citizens' panels<sup>21</sup> run by the Education and Culture Directorate General, and the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities research programme<sup>22</sup> run by the Research Directorate General, should enable the exchange of experience and best practice in the field of intergenerational housing in order to open up possibilities for financing to stakeholders wishing to tackle the issue and benefit from the experience acquired in other parts of Europe.



## Mobility and public transport adapted to the needs of all

### The issue

In most cities, getting around is as much a headache for motorists as it is for public transport users or pedestrians of all ages. The public transport network is often not suited to the needs of certain groups, such as the elderly and people with reduced mobility.

The issue is not only the inaccessibility of stations and vehicles, but also the timetables which are unsuitable for some groups, services which are poorly distributed geographically, the recklessness of some drivers which make bus travel a nightmare for the elderly, the disrepair of bus stops, etc.

As they are aware of the fact that they are public interest bodies, public transport operators are making great efforts to adapt their services to the needs of the most at-risk sectors of the population. Mobility issues are a priority for public authorities throughout Europe. But how can we reconcile the needs of the working population faced with the ever-faster pressure of the workplace, children who need a safe environment in which to learn how to manage by themselves, families with young children, the elderly, etc.? Affordability is also an issue: the various authority levels must decide how to promote the use of public transport by setting up a fare policy which does not ignore any target group: the young, the old, families, isolated individuals suffering social exclusion, etc.

### Some solutions

#### At the local level:

Many local authorities already understand the importance of mobility for their ageing populations, but all too often the car takes priority over public transport (very few towns have the courage to introduce bus and taxi lanes) and so the needs of public transport users take a back seat. Local decision-makers must learn from those communities which have made mobility for all a priority and develop strategies which meet the needs of all users of public space: public transport users, pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, etc.

Intergenerational mobility support includes the large number of volunteers who help members of vulnerable groups to move around, young people and seniors who help the very elderly to do their shopping, get to the doctor, etc. Senior volunteers are teaching road safety in schools, young responsible drivers are taking time out to take partygoers of all ages safely home from their Christmas parties, and so on. The public authorities should support these initiatives since they are contributing enormously to creating solidarity between citizens and between generations and helping to improve safe mobility for all, particularly the most vulnerable.

» **Berlin – making mobility easier for all, including women:** Berlin – making mobility easier for all, including women: As part of its 'Demography Concept Berlin', the City of Berlin decided to pay particular attention to the needs of children, seniors, the elderly, families and ... women. What they noticed was that women and men have different mobility needs. Their programme aims to reduce disadvantages in terms of mobility, to promote completely safe mobility for children and young people, to maintain good mobility for seniors and to help people with disabilities.

» **Grenoble<sup>23</sup>: mobility adapted to all needs:** The City of Grenoble has set itself the objective of accommodating a maximum of public transport users. Its new tram, accessible by people with reduced mobility, is also designed for use by the visually impaired. At the same time a new original service, ProxiTag, has been launched in isolated areas. This service, which runs year-round from Monday to Saturday (excluding holidays), focuses on less densely populated areas and the elderly. Accessible at the standard fare, these

minibuses operate via a straightforward telephone booking system. This innovative system complements the bus and tram lines which serve 26 municipalities and a population of around 400,000. With growth of over 27% in the number of passengers over 6 years (74.2 million in 2007 compared with 58.2 million in 2001), the Grenoble Public Transport Mixed Economy Company (Semitag) can be satisfied with the way it has developed, and even more so since all its vehicles now run on «clean» energy (95% in 2007 against 65% in 2001).

#### At the national level:

National authorities can take a number of initiatives to promote public transport which is accessible and adapted to all, to encourage or even impose measures to guarantee safety in the vicinity of schools and the safety of pedestrians in general, and to encourage the use of public transport over car travel by launching awareness-raising campaigns and offering incentives. Accessible and suitable public transport is an essential element in a community serving all age groups since it supports independence, but it also creates more opportunities for contact and interaction between different age groups.

» **Belgium - Free public transport for the over-65s and young children:** Buses, trams and the metro are free for the under-6s and the over-65s who live in Belgium. Seniors automatically receive a subscription card by post from the company operating in their region. The 65+ subscription cards issued by the three operators are valid nationwide and can also be used on the other two operator networks, which means that over-65s enjoy free travel anywhere in Belgium. The fact that you receive your card automatically at 65 encourages many seniors to use

<sup>20</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-actions/doc30\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-actions/doc30_en.htm)

<sup>21</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-actions/doc38\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-actions/doc38_en.htm)

<sup>22</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index\\_en.cfm?pg=huma](http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=huma)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.servirlepublic.fr/actualites/350/semitag-un-transport-accessible-a-tous>



public transport rather than the car. This promotes mobility among the elderly, in particular those on limited incomes, and encourages them to take part in volunteer work, babysit for grandchildren, etc.

#### At the European level:

Although its powers are limited as regards transport, the European Union is doing a great deal to encourage the development of public transport which is environmentally-friendly and accessible to all, given that this is an area which has a direct impact on the free movement of persons within the European Union. A great deal remains to be done, however, as Member States have not yet agreed that public transport must be accessible to all and suitable for everybody. This obligation only applies to cross-border transportation, international air and rail links within the EU, but not yet to local transport.

» **URBAC:** The URBACT programme<sup>24</sup> should encourage the exchange of best practice and research regarding universal mobility and initiatives promoting solidarity between the generations in terms of mobility.



<sup>24</sup> <http://urbact.eu/fr/poles-thematiques/developpement-urbain-durable/presentation-du-pole.html>



## Intergenerational solidarity in family policy

### The issue

**Although the family remains the main source of intergenerational solidarity in most Member States, social policy is not adapted to the families of today.**

Rising rates of female employment and worker mobility, plus the new forms of families (single parent, step families, broken families, single households, etc.) are creating many obstacles to intergenerational solidarity within the family. Few policies recognise and support the role of the family in intergenerational solidarity since it is still too often regarded as something that goes by itself and belongs to the private life. This means that it is urgent to re-think family policies in order to recognise the role of the different generations in family solidarity and to better meet the needs of the family in all its forms by working towards a more satisfactory division of labour between men and women and between the generations.

### Some solutions

#### At the local level:

A wide range of initiatives are being taken at the local level, often by civil society organisations, to help families in difficulty. Local authorities can also prioritise the creation of a family-friendly environment through

crèches, playgroups, parks and recreational activities aimed at families, and activities based on intergenerational solidarity within the family (grandparents' schools, etc.).

**Dizièmefamille: families helping families<sup>25</sup> (France):** Dixièmefamille.com is a mutual support network based on social and citizen sponsorship: nine families from very different backgrounds come together and pool their skills to support a tenth family in difficulty, or an elderly, disabled or isolated individual. The families commit to giving their time, at least half an hour per day up to one day per week. Tailored support arranged online aims to provide homework help for children, help in job searches, provide administrative assistance or help a family in difficulty to furnish and equip their accommodation.

» **School for European grandparents<sup>26</sup>:** The school for European grandparents aims to forge bonds between grandparents and grandchildren so that each can help the other and lasting bonds are created. Shared activities are on offer, particularly those aimed at promoting solidarity between the generations.

#### At the national/regional level:

Member States should review their family policies to ensure that they meet the needs of the families of today and promote justice for those involved: parental leave or time off to care for a relative, welfare assistance for women caring for dependent family members, insurance systems to help the dependent become independent of their families, etc. .

#### » 2006 Conference on the Family<sup>27</sup> - For solidarity in the family: recognition and support (France)

In July 2006, the French government held a conference on the family, concentrating on the theme of family solidarity. In France, over two million people care for an elderly, dependent or disabled parent at home on a daily basis. Among the measures proposed are establishing family leave, setting up «time off» solutions, the recognition of the status of the family carer, and developing support and training for them. Measures such as these constitute genuine recognition of the role of the family in caring for dependent relatives. These measures also extend to the younger family members and include interest-free loans for young people aged between 18 and 25.

#### » Law reform – inheritance rights

In several countries, inheritance legislation has recently been amended to favour altruistic legacies from living parents to their children to help them get a start in life or overcome some hurdle. This takes the form of tax relief on direct inheritance.

#### At the European level:

#### » The European Alliance for Families

To help Member States tackle the challenges arising from demographic change, at the European Spring Summit on 8-9 March 2007, EU Heads of State and Government founded the European Alliance for Families.

The objective of the Alliance is to stimulate the exchange of ideas and views between Member States, to provide incentives for the creation of a family-friendly environment and to promote reciprocal cooperation and learning initiatives throughout the European Union.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.dixiemefamille.com/index.php>

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.egpe.org/ALLO/6\\_2intergeneration.htm](http://www.egpe.org/ALLO/6_2intergeneration.htm)

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.unaf.fr/article.php3?id\\_article=3814](http://www.unaf.fr/article.php3?id_article=3814)

The European Alliance for Families is trying to contribute in a major way towards the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy as regards economic growth and employment, sustainable demographic development, the reinforcement of social cohesion and equal rights for men and women.



## Intergenerational solidarity in the care of dependents

### The issue

As the population ages, the number of dependent individuals is rising fast, while at the same time the number of individuals able to support them is falling.

Although young fathers are spending more time caring for their young children outside of crèche or school hours, it is still women who bear the responsibility for caring for children, grandchildren or elderly relatives. In the previous section on family policies we touched on the question of dependents being cared for by family members. Here we take a look at the care provided by third parties, professional carers and volunteers.

### Some solutions

#### At the local level:

The competences to organise care for dependents is essentially at the local level, whether these services are provided by public authorities, non-profit organisations or volunteer groups. This is an area in which many initiatives depend on the involvement of volunteers of all ages who have devoted themselves to improving the living conditions of vulnerable individuals when this is not organised by the social welfare system.

The current crisis and its effect on local public finances will aggravate the difficulties experienced by local authorities in meeting the needs of their dependent populations, and new forms of solidarity will have to develop to prevent the burden falling entirely on the shoulders of already overburdened families.

Some interesting initiatives have already been launched to fill in some of the gaps in care structures and support at-home care. Local authorities should look at promoting these kind of activities and assist in recruiting volunteers.

» **Baluchon Alzheimer<sup>28</sup>: an idea developed in Canada and spreading throughout Europe**

Usually families prefer to care for Alzheimer sufferers at home for as long as possible. A range of services giving carers a break, such as day-care centres or a few hours respite care, have been in existence for some years. But when carers need a few days physical and mental rest, the only service on offer is temporary shelter, usually offered by long-term care centres, but this is a very stressful solution for Alzheimer sufferers.

This provided the impetus behind the creation of the Baluchon initiative, intended to provide the patient's relatives with a complete break for a week or two without having to move their relative out of his or her home. A trained volunteer comes to the home to care for the patient while the family is away.

» **L'enfant @ l'hôpital<sup>29</sup>:** The L'enfant@hôpital organisation is a simple yet widespread structure which operates in many regions of France. The association's volunteers provide support for children hospitalised in some fifty paediatric departments of 35 hospitals, mainly in re-education centres and CLISs (School Integration Centres). Help for hospitalised children or adults is a very widespread form of intergenerational solidarity which provides some quality leisure time for patients and a break for their families.

#### At the national level:

National authorities also have a major role to play in creating a political and financial environment favourable to the development of innovative measures providing an appropriate response to the needs of all dependent persons. In the framework of the Open Method of Coordination in the area of long-term care, Member States should adopt an approach based on intergenerational solidarity and be inspired by best practices to guarantee both long-term funding and quality care.

» **Bulgaria: a new strategy for intergenerational solidarity:** On the first European Day on 29 April 2009, Bulgaria will be launching a new strategy in support of intergenerational solidarity. The number of older people and particularly those in the over-70s age group living alone is on the increase. Among these, the number of people who have lost their

independence and are in need of care is also rising. But because of the increasing length of working life and greater worker mobility, many families now find it hard to care for their aged parents. This means that it is becoming a matter of urgency to develop social services to meet this need and to promote solidarity networks around the elderly. The Bulgarian Government is launching this strategy with a view to arriving at a better division of the responsibilities involved in taking care of dependent older people, encouraging the active involvement of retired people in volunteer activities focusing on solidarity and the provision of aid for the very old, putting in place measures encouraging the transmission of experience from the old to the young and raising public awareness on the problems experienced by the elderly.

» **The Red Cross - an example of intergenerational solidarity in the care of dependents in emergencies and on a day-to-day basis:**

The Red Cross is not only concerned with emergency aid, but also handles the day-to-day care of the dependent. Highlighted in the 2004 report on World Disasters, the **French and Spanish Red Cross Societies<sup>30</sup>** were found to be better prepared for the summer 2003 crisis than the national health authorities, as it was they who took on the essential task of distributing water and fans, visiting those at risk in their homes, providing support in hospitals and communicating valuable information and advice by staying on duty round the clock and manning telephone exchanges. This contribution was recognised by the governments of both countries, the outcome of which is that the national societies are now closely involved in developing national emergency plans in preparation for future heat waves. As a result of their presence in the community, the Red

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.baluchonalzheimer.com>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.enfant-hopital.org/spip.php?rubrique3>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.ifrc.org/fr/docs/news/04/04102801/>



Cross has been asked to identify groups which are particularly at risk and to arrange services for them similar to those they provided during the summer of 2003. In addition, the Spanish Red Cross, thanks to its many volunteers of all ages, provides a whole range of services in support of the dependent elderly: help in maintaining independence in the home, telephone assistance, suitable transport, day-centres, family support, full-time care services for people needing round-the-clock care, promotion of healthy environments, and so on.

» **Denmark – government support programme for ICT and ageing pilot projects:** The Danish Minister of Finance recently launched a programme aimed at funding pilot projects which will use new technologies in order to better meet the needs of the dependent elderly and create better working conditions for their carers. The aim of this programme is to increase independence among dependent older people while at the same time creating an attractive career path for young people based on new intergenerational relationships between the carer and the dependent elderly.

#### At the European level:

At the European level, an in-depth analysis has been carried out in the framework of the Open Method of Coordination on ways of meeting the needs of dependent persons. The European Commission is coordinating the exchange of best practice in both the provision of long-term care and support for families and unofficial carers.

» **The Ageing Well Programme:** In June 2007, the European Commission launched its Bien Vieillir (Ageing Well<sup>31</sup>) action plan aimed at helping the elderly to live in a more independent way and remain active for longer. Thanks to this programme, the Commission would in particular like to encourage the use of new technologies to help the elderly to remain active in the workforce, in the home and in their communities. This programme should help improve the quality of life of dependent older people, their helpers and families, and create new opportunities for the new technologies industry and personalise health care and the social services.

» **The European Women's Lobby "Who Cares" Campaign<sup>32</sup>:** In May 2006, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) launched the «Who Cares?» campaign on the care of dependents. This campaign recommended the provision of care services for dependents which should be affordable, accessible and of high quality for all dependent individuals and for this to be provided for all men and women, regardless of their financial situation.

In the framework of this campaign, the EWL drafted its position on the care of dependents which covered a whole series of areas which needed to be tackled in order to comprehensively address this issue in European society: 1) Stereotypes of the nature and method of dependency care; 2) The economics of dependency care: the provision of affordable services; 3) Quality work and quality services: dependency care and the labour market; 4) The case of migrant domestic workers and 5) European Union policies and dependency care.

<sup>31</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/einclusion/policy/ageing/action\\_plan/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/policy/ageing/action_plan/index_en.htm)

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.womenlobby.org/site/1abstract.asp?DocID=1693&v1ID=8&RevID=8&namePage=8&pageParent=8&DocID\\_sousmenu=](http://www.womenlobby.org/site/1abstract.asp?DocID=1693&v1ID=8&RevID=8&namePage=8&pageParent=8&DocID_sousmenu=)



## Intergenerational solidarity in ensuring adequate means for a decent standard of living at any age

### The issue

If there is one subject likely to spark controversy today, it is that of adequate income which should be guaranteed at all ages: the battle against child poverty, the provision of a minimum wage, and adequate unemployment benefits and pensions. In the current climate, the tension between the generations on the issue of pensions funding is likely to rise and turn sour if opportunities are not created for the groups concerned to discuss the challenges. Few are willing to do so however and still less in today's uncertain economy. Faced with the meltdown of the financial markets, it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory solution which will guarantee a decent income for those who are already retired and for those groups approaching retirement today after a full working life and who quite justifiably expect to be able to enjoy their retirement without having to worry about their old age. But at the same time, is it fair to expect those who are still of working age to shoulder the burden of the dependent population, particularly now that their own jobs are threatened and their future is uncertain? This is probably the right time to be thinking how we can establish greater solidarity between people of different generations, diverse socio-economic status and varying states of health.

In the current economic climate, deprivation is going to increase in the coming years and we urgently need to find solutions to support the most marginalised of all ages: young people unable to become financially independent, workers facing long-term unemployment, older people seeing the value of their savings and pensions diminish. Soup kitchens, food banks and other services which provide free food to the most marginalised are supporting growing numbers of young people, single-parent families and elderly.

### Some solutions

#### At the local level:

» **How we can all get by together on less money:** It often falls to local authorities to tackle the task of meeting the needs of all those unfortunate individuals affected by the recession, but that does not mean that their financial resources are equal to their responsibilities. In the light of the growing difficulties experienced by many families and single people of all ages, initiatives are developing which aim to return increased purchasing power to the worst hit by grouping together their orders to get a better price, bartering, even for the exchange of services, and mutually support arrangements between neighbours, and so on. This is an area where we can expect to see interpersonal and intergenerational solidarity developing in the years to come and we trust that local decision-makers (public authorities, local enterprises, etc.) will support them, particularly by sorting out the legal complexities regarding barter and mutual support between neighbours, since some people see this as a form of black market labour, which is certainly not the objective of these initiatives which will allow many people in precarious situations to find the help they need and for which they cannot pay.



#### At the national level:

In the light of the current economic climate and the increasing indebtedness of national governments, some governments will be tempted to cut public spending on supporting the poor, arguing that the state's coffers are empty. So at a time of recession and demographic ageing, how can we guarantee adequate resources so that all citizens can enjoy a decent standard of living?

» **Extending working life: should compulsory retirement age be retained?** Since the ageing of the population and the falling number of workers will make it increasingly difficult to cover older people's needs over the long term, one solution is to extend working life. This affects young people, who should be able to enter the workforce faster without having to waste years seeking employment or doing poorly paid work, but also older people who should be allowed to continue working even beyond retirement age if they wish to do so. So what should happen to the compulsory retirement age? Is it still justified in the current climate, and with a view to encouraging solidarity between generations, to force seniors out of their jobs when a growing number of them would like to continue? Since in the Heyday<sup>33</sup> case the European Court of Justice allowed Member States to decide whether compulsory age limits for retirement were permitted, shouldn't governments carefully consider the soundness of their decisions and initiate a debate at national level on the retirement age and the possibility of combining a pension and paid work?

» **A decent minimum income for all:** The guaranteed minimum income is a subject which is highly conte-

nious to a number of European governments. Some consider that this safety net encourages unemployment (why work when the state guarantees you a minimum income). In the context of the current recession, should the minimum income not be viewed as a tool for triggering a revival in consumption and promoting social cohesion? This is an area which certainly merits national debate involving all parties concerned, including organisations representing the most vulnerable groups: organisations for the young, women, migrants, disabled and older people. We hope that national governments will seize the opportunity of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010 to organise debates on this issue and to draw the necessary political conclusions to guarantee a minimum income for all so that everyone can enjoy a decent standard of living (see the next paragraph on 2010: the European Year for Combating Poverty).

#### At the European level:

Although the European Union does not have the competency to guarantee every individual living within its territory sufficient resources to enjoy a decent standard of living, the Commission is keeping a close eye on poverty in Europe and draws the attention of national governments to the difficulties facing children and youth, single-parent families and older people in particular.

» **2010: European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.** In 2008, the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union persuaded the Council to adopt its proposal to declare 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The preparatory work is underway. We hope that this

European Year will tackle subjects such as the inter-generational transmission of poverty, the effect of poverty on the ability of the generations to support one another, etc.



## Intergenerational solidarity in the workplace

### The issue

Even before the current crisis, the oldest and youngest workers were the first to suffer from restructuring processes and unemployment rates among these groups were higher than those of intermediate age groups. Early retirement which was recommended in the 1980s as a solution to youth unemployment failed to help the young to find work. On the contrary, in fact in those countries where it has been attempted, the unemployment rates of both the young and older workers continues to be a cause for concern, and it was those countries which had focused on employment policies targeting all age groups which enjoyed the most success.

Today, these two age groups are again the hardest hit by the recession which is extending across Europe.

**When large numbers of jobs are cut, it is young workers, often in temporary employment, and those nearing retirement who are laid off first.** Women are also encountering more difficulties in the labour market than men with equivalent training and skills because of their family commitments (i.e. responsibility for children and/or an elderly dependent relative).

### Some solutions

#### At the local level:

Local stakeholders (local authorities, local employment agencies, volunteer associations, trade unions) should work more closely together to explore new forms of cooperation with a view to lifting the barriers which prevent certain groups from finding work: the young, the old, those with greater family responsibilities, etc. All too often these players operate in isolation rather than in partnerships and this reduces their impact and chances of succeeding.

» **Integrated support services for workers caring for others:** A number of initiatives have been developed to help families with young children to reconcile family and work. Some, however, have gone beyond creating crèche places and offer integrated services extending from caring for young children and after-school playgroups to washing, ironing and shopping services, etc. These services increase the number of local jobs and allow workers to be more diligent and more productive, thus enjoying a better quality of life at work and at home.

» **Job-sharing by choice:** Some initiatives in the public or voluntary sector have recently been launched which are intended to help individuals seeking part-time work to share a full-time job, such

<sup>33</sup> <http://curia.europa.eu/en/actu/communiqués/cp09/aff/cp090019en.pdf>



as two people sharing one full-time job or three workers sharing two jobs. Job-sharing may be organised either at company level (the employer attempts to satisfy a request expressed by workers who would like to move to part-time work, even though no actual part-time jobs are offered by the company), or it may be at sector level (an agency classes job seekers by profile and helps them to find a full-time position that they share together). Given the current trend to pass on to individuals a part of the responsibility for caring for dependents, we can expect to see the demand for part-time and job-sharing to increase although, apart from the Netherlands where part-time work is common for both men and women, throughout most of the European Union employers continue to prefer to organise their labourforce on a full-time basis.

» **Job-sharing through solidarity:** In the current crisis, a new form of solidarity is developing with the aim of avoiding lay-offs: job-sharing through solidarity. If job cuts become unavoidable, rather than allowing colleagues to become unemployed, workers are reaching agreements to reduce their working time as a whole with a proportionate wage cut. This is a fine example of solidarity between the generations since this allows the most vulnerable (youngest and oldest workers) to continue to work through a difficult period.

» **Mentoring:** For several years now, another model of work-sharing has been developing: mentoring. Here the objective is for older workers and younger retirees to transmit their skills to the younger workers. Mentoring is also often a part of the introduction of the younger person into the social and professional world of the older worker which is a very valuable aid in many occupations where contacts are essential. This type of volunteer work is

highly valued by recently retired managerial staff since it allows them to make use of their professional skills and maintain contact with the work environment.

» **Companionship:** Retired craftsmen teach the young the skills of their trade and also strive to pass on their knowledge and love of a job well done to future generations. Carpenters, cabinet-makers, masons, electricians, etc. who often learnt their trade on the job, seek to help young people, often those experiencing problems at school, to find their vocation.

#### **At the national level:**

National governments are being faced with an unfavourable economic situation which renders their response to demographic ageing all the more problematic. It is true that for some years now they endeavoured to promote the employment of the young, women and seniors, but much remains to be done and the positive trend which was observed in mid-2008 thanks to a considerable upturn in female employment was, unfortunately, reversed at the end of 2008, with joblessness on the rise once more.

How can we extend the average length of working life in the context of recession and the large-scale redundancies we are now seeing? How can we boost employment and create new jobs in sectors which are potentially job-generating such as individual care services? How can we compensate people who care for dependent family members (children, the disabled or the elderly) so that they are not penalised on the labour market because of their contribution to intergenerational solidarity?

» **Danish government pilot programme: new technologies in the service of elderly dependents and their carers**



The Danish Minister of Finance recently launched a programme to set up public-private partnerships using new technologies in order to better serve the needs of the dependent elderly and create better working conditions for their carers. Through this programme the Danish Government hopes to encourage young people to take up careers in personal care and find innovative solutions which help keep elderly dependents at home through the provision of quality services.

#### » **Centrica: age management policy<sup>34</sup> (UK)**

Centrica, a large-scale UK gas supplier, is attempting to encourage age diversity among its labour force by setting up various measures such as the Age Action Group which brings together the managers of various sections to see how they as a group can best meet the needs of their ageing work force. With this in mind, they have developed an awareness-raising programme on age management with flexible working conditions, a network of staff members with family obligations, teams of different ages and potential for mentoring. They feel that the age mix helps staff members in these groups with different ages to be mutually enriched.

» **Your grey matter, your raw material – age management<sup>35</sup>: a business asset (Belgium)** The links between the retention and motivation of employees over 50, the management of the business in the long term, and corporate social responsibility are becoming more obvious. For many businesses, managing different age groups with particular attention being paid to the oldest, ongoing training, the transfer of skills between generations and internal mobility are matters of priority. In partnership with ICHEC-

Entreprises and with the support of the King Baudouin Foundation, Business & Society (B&S) is hosting a colloquium on 28 April 2009 on the subject of managing different age groups in business. This event marks the outcome of the B&S working group in which some twenty businesses have been involved for over a year.

#### **At the European level:**

Employment is a responsibility shared between the European institutions and the Member States. Numerous decisions have been taken at the European level concerning the free movement of workers, recognition of qualifications, the promotion of high-quality employment for all, health and safety in the workplace, male/female equality and non-discrimination in access to employment and ongoing training.

On 10 December 2008, the European Parliament adopted a **report<sup>36</sup> on non-discrimination based on sex and solidarity between the generations** in which it made a series of recommendations and invited the Commission to present concrete initiatives to validate the skills acquired in performing educational tasks, services for dependent individuals and household management in such a way that these skills could be taken into consideration when re-entering the labour market. The European Parliament also drew attention to the evaluation of cross-cutting skills forming an integral part of what is known as the «skills audit», according to the best traditions of national systems bringing work supply and demand together.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.olderworkers.eu/media/File/centrica.pdf>





## Citizen-based initiatives in favour of intergenerational solidarity

### The issue

Local community activities often encourage intergenerational mixing. These include local annual fair or local flea markets, open days at schools or homes for the elderly, carnival parades, homework or handcraft schools, neighbourhood choirs, amateur sports clubs, public area clean-up operations, Neighbours' Days, school parties, etc. There are numerous examples and all have the same goal: to encourage the residents of a neighbourhood to get to know each other in order to develop a feeling of belonging to a community and solidarity between the members of that community.

But in large cities, anonymity is hard to overcome and the feeling of community does not develop naturally. This means that it must be encouraged by particularly motivated individuals. Solidarity organisations are operating in a changing European society and require mediation and structure if a constructive and effective civil dialogue is to be established.

### Some solutions

#### At the local level:

Local stakeholders (local authorities, community associations, volunteer groups, etc.) can do much to create local solidarity thanks to their knowledge of the area and the needs of people living in that community. Sometimes, although not always, a little financial boost may be required from public authorities to help get an initiative off the ground. Allowing local residents to take part in the growth of their community should be a high priority for local authorities and their action plans should encourage citizen and volunteer initiatives which support interaction and solidarity between the generations and between social and cultural groups.

» **Neighbours' Day is now celebrated throughout the EU<sup>37</sup>:** Neighbours' Day is now celebrated throughout the EU : European Neighbour Day is an initiative of the European Federation of Local Solidarity (E.F.L.S.), which works to promote solidarity and neighbourliness throughout the whole of Europe to exchange best practices and create a European dynamic which encourages community ties and «better living together». The most recent Neighbour Day took place on 27 May 2008 in 29 countries, 20 of which are in the European Union, and involved 8 million participants. This year around one thousand mayors, social welfare providers and associations are official Neighbour Day partners throughout the world with the same good humour, meetings, interaction, laughter and happiness everywhere. While it is not directly concerned with housing issues, this initiative promotes better cohabitation and fosters a neighbourhood spirit, strengthening year-round solidarity between neighbours for the benefit of all of them,

irrespective of age.

» **Fálte Isteach: older people are helping newly arrived migrants to integrate by giving them language courses (Ireland)**

The Fálte Isteach initiative was launched by the Third Age Foundation in Ireland in response to the difficulties experienced by newly arrived immigrants in their everyday lives due to their poor command of English. Older people are putting their knowledge and experience to use by welcoming these young people and helping them to enter the labour market. Launched in Summerhill, a small village in the countryside, this initiative is now spreading throughout Ireland.

#### At the national level:

National authorities are in a position to be able to take measures to encourage citizen-based initiatives and volunteering activities, including those involving an intergenerational aspect, by removing the legal, administrative or financial barriers which prevent many from becoming involved.. National governments should also actively support the proposal to declare 2011 European Year of Volunteering (see paragraph below).

» **German programme in favour of intergenerational volunteering activities<sup>38</sup>:** In 2005, the Federal German Government decided to promote intergenerational volunteer action. This pilot programme encourages measures in the following areas:

- Help for children, the young and families with low income;
- New contract extensions/grants for volunteers working in institutions;

- Establishment of networks and improvement in working conditions for volunteers;
- Intergenerational assistance;
- Volunteer services with an international outlook;
- Environmental protection.

#### At the European level:

A number of programmes at the European level may help support intergenerational citizen initiatives, in particular:

The **Grundvig support programme for senior volunteers<sup>39</sup>** which provides support for exchanges of seniors volunteer;

The **Europe for citizens programme<sup>40</sup>** through which it is possible to organise citizens panels involving groups from different countries on concerns that affect their daily lives.



<sup>35</sup> [www.businessandsociety.be](http://www.businessandsociety.be)

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2008-0492+0+DOC+XML+V0//FR>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.european-neighbours-day.com/fr>

<sup>38</sup> P. 7: <http://www.bagso.org/Seniorenreport%20FR%20Endfassung%20neu.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc986\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc986_en.htm) (only in English)

<sup>40</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm)





29 avril 2009  
Journée européenne de la  
solidarité entre les générations

## European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity and Cooperation celebrated on 29 April

As we are convinced of the need to encourage societal and political change, AGE, the European Youth Forum, the European Women's Lobby, AIM, AEIP and CECODHAS decided to launch a joint campaign to raise awareness and inform political decision-makers of the urgent need to reconsider the way society functions. For this reason, we have decided to come together to support the European Day of Solidarity and Cooperation between the Generations and to encourage all relevant stakeholders to mark the Day. This should be an opportunity to communicate what each partner does throughout the year in the area of intergenerational activities.

### Who is our target audience

Our campaign is not just aimed at our member organisations, but also at all interested parties with a view to encouraging them to organise activities intended to raise awareness of their day-to-day work: open days, presentations on intergenerational

projects, discussions with local or national politicians and civil society groups (youth, women's or senior associations), radio or television interviews, press articles, etc. We would like everybody to put as much effort into it as they can and to make the most of the Day to raise public awareness and inform politicians of the need for greater solidarity between the generations.

### State of play

We have started gathering information about the various initiatives taken throughout the EU and we will continue to publish these on our website. In this way, we hope to be able to shed some light on what is happening in other European regions and countries and, from year to year, to ensure that this European Day becomes a real awareness-raising tool serving the millions of local stakeholders who are striving to build a society based on greater solidarity, inclusion and fairness. We have also prepared a press pack to help you/us to attract media attention.

The European Commission has prepared a video for the television networks and a Euroflash survey on intergenerational relationships to mark the 2009 European Day.

If you would like to find out more or share your experience with us, please visit our website dedicated to this European Day [www.age-platform.org](http://www.age-platform.org) and contact us at ([info@age-platform.org](mailto:info@age-platform.org)).



## The European Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity - 2012

During the Slovenian Presidency conference in April 2008, Vladimir Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, who is convinced of the importance of this issue, declared to an enthusiastic audience that he would propose that 2012 should be declared the European Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity.

### What exactly is a European Year?

For a European Year to be officially launched, it must be proposed by the European Commission. A Council agreement must follow (among the relevant national ministers) and this must be approved by the European Parliament which will vote on the budget. This decision-making process takes several years since it requires each institution to commit to doing something concrete. It also requires the corresponding budget to be approved at European and national levels so that activities such as European, national and local level awareness-raising campaigns and proposals for political initiatives (a new European programme, new legislation, new political objectives, etc.) can be funded.

### The proposal for 2012 is well under way

A year after the Slovenian conference, the proposal put forward by Commissioner Špidla has got off to a good start and is now supported by the future Spanish and Belgian Presidencies who will hold the reins of the European Union in 2010. This is the year during which this proposal will have to be adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in order for the initiative to be realised.

The Commission plans to organise a preparatory conference in April 2010 with the support of the Spanish Presidency in order to gather recommendations from those involved at grass roots level on what the European Year 2012 should offer. This will enable them to devise a programme which really meets the expectations of the people on the ground.

### Recommendations

The member organisations of the campaign steering committee will ask the European Commission to do whatever is needed to allow European programmes such as thematic twinning, the citizen panels, and the Structural Funds, etc., to be used to create solidarity between the generations. This should become one of the priority themes for proposals over the coming years.

Local actors must contact their Social Affairs Ministers to bring them up to speed about the campaign and encourage them to express their support for the proposal for a European Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity in 2012. If you need help, do not hesitate to contact us and visit our website dedicated to the European Day (see Useful links).

<sup>38</sup> P. 7: <http://www.bagso.org/Seniorenreport%20FR%20Endfassung%20neu.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc986\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc986_en.htm) (only in English)

<sup>40</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm)

## Useful links

### European Commission:

- DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities: <http://ec.europa.eu/social>
- Communication: Promoting Solidarity Between the Generations (2007): [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/news/2007/may/244\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/news/2007/may/244_en.pdf)
- 2008-2010 PROGRESS programme: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=en>

### Members of the campaign steering committee

- AGE: [www.age-platform.org](http://www.age-platform.org)
- AIM: [www.aim-mutual.org](http://www.aim-mutual.org)
- AEIP: [www.aeip.net](http://www.aeip.net)
- CECODHAS: <http://www.cecodhas.org/content/view/408/333/>
- European Women's Lobby: <http://www.womenlobby.org/site/hp.asp?langue=EN>
- European Youth Forum: [www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)

### Some links on intergenerational issues

- King Baudouin Foundation publication «Une société pour tous les âges. Le défi des relations inter-générationnelles» ["A society for all ages. The Challenge of Intergenerational Relations"]: <http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=236220&LangType=2060> (available only in French)
- Publication Intergenerational solidarity for societal cohesion and viability - results of the Slovenian Presidency Conference, Brdo, 28-29 April 2008]: <http://www.age-platform.org/FR/IMG/Solidarity-EN.pdf>
- Accordages: [http://www.accordages-intergeneration.com/\\_v4/](http://www.accordages-intergeneration.com/_v4/)
- Courants d'âge: [http://www.courantsdages.be/template.php?id\\_ca=23](http://www.courantsdages.be/template.php?id_ca=23)
- Web page on the European Day on Solidarity and Cooperation between Generations: [http://www.age-platform.org/EN/rubrique.php?id\\_rubrique=82](http://www.age-platform.org/EN/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=82)
- List of activities organised throughout Europe to mark the 1st European Day on Solidarity and Cooperation between Generations: [http://www.age-platform.org/EN/rubrique.php?id\\_rubrique=87](http://www.age-platform.org/EN/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=87)

## King Baudouin Foundation

Working together for a better society  
[www.kbs-frb.be](http://www.kbs-frb.be)

The King Baudouin Foundation is an independent and pluralistic foundation. We provide financial support to around 2,000 organizations and individuals annually. The Foundation also acts as a forum for debate and reflection and fosters philanthropy. With an annual budget of 48 million euros, the Foundation looks for sustainable ways of contributing to justice, democracy and respect for diversity. We operate out of Brussels, but are active at regional, Belgian, European and international level. Our Board of Governors sets out broad lines of action, which are implemented by some 60 colleagues. The Foundation was created in 1976, to mark the 25th anniversary of King Baudouin's reign.

The King Baudouin Foundation has been active for many years on issues around ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

Recently it has provided financial support to 172 projects which help older people play an active and meaningful role in society and create sustainable and reciprocal relationships between generations.

The Foundation set up two reflection groups composed of individuals who are active in the voluntary sector, social movement and enterprises and who, after one year of exchange of ideas and experience, concluded with a series of proposals for action.

The Foundation organised a cycle of seminars on intergenerational solidarity to widen the public debate on these issues.

The outcome of the work done by these two groups is described in a publication "Une Société pour tous les âges" (a Society for all Ages) which contains examples of intergenerational projects. The publication is available in French and Dutch on our website and includes an Executive Summary in English.

## PROGRESS

This publication was funded by the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme is managed by the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year programme is aimed at all participants who may help shape the development of appropriate and effective legislation and social and employment policy throughout the EU-27, the EFTA-EEA countries, plus the candidate and pre-candidate countries for membership of the EU.

The aim of PROGRESS is to strengthen the contribution of the EU and thus help Member States to abide by their commitments and satisfactorily perform their actions with a view to creating more and higher-quality jobs, and to build a society based on solidarity. Naturally, it will help:

- To provide analysis and advice in the activity areas in which it has expertise;
- To monitor and report on the application of community legislation and policy in the same areas;
- To promote the transfer of policy, the exchange of knowledge and support between Member States for EU objectives and priorities, and
- To communicate its opinions to participants and society in general.

For more information, please visit:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/progress/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html)

## AGE- the European Older People's Platform

AGE - the European Older People's Platform is a European network bringing together about 150 organisations of people aged 50+, directly representing over 25 million older people in the European Union.

Our network is mainly financed by the European PROGRESS Programme and our members contributions.

AGE works at European level to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges that arise from the ageing of our society, to shape appropriate policy responses and to promote the interests and involvement of the older citizens of Europe

Among our guiding principles is the conviction that a change of attitudes is needed to achieve a society for all ages and to ensure that the rights of all age groups including older people are not only protected but that they are also enhanced. Solidarity between generations should also be sought in a way that recognises older people's contributions to society.

For more information:

[www.age-platform.org](http://www.age-platform.org)

Leaflet on AGE:

[http://www.age-platform.org/FR/IMG/General\\_Leaflet\\_FR.pdf](http://www.age-platform.org/FR/IMG/General_Leaflet_FR.pdf)

AGE publications:

[http://www.age-platform.org/FR/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=61](http://www.age-platform.org/FR/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=61)







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This assessment of the issue and the recommendations put forward were inspired partly by the work carried out by the King Baudouin Foundation's Intergenerational Circle and the conclusions of the EU Slovenian Presidency conference held on April 2008 which were published in November 2008 under the title "Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies". It should be stressed that AGE is solely responsible for the content of this brochure.

We take this opportunity to thank the following European NGOs who support our campaign for greater solidarity and cooperation between the generations and the launch of the European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity:

- » AEIP - Association européenne des institutions paritaires [European Association of Paritarian Institutions of Social Protection]
- » AIM - Association internationale de la mutualité [International Association of Autonomous Health Insurance and Social Protection Bodies]
- » CECODHAS: Comité européen de Coordination de l'Habitat social [The European Liaison Committee for Social Housing]
- » EWL - European Women's Lobby
- » YFJ - European Youth Forum

We thank also the kindergarden class of Profondsart School (Belgium) as well as Sana and Capucine for the beautiful drawings and photos which illustrate how solidarity between generations can help build a better future for Europe and the world.