



**Long-term Senior Policy  
in Poland**  
for the years 2014-2020  
*in outline*

# **ASOS** 2014-2020

**Rządowy Program na rzecz Aktywności Społecznej  
Osób Starszych na lata 2014-2020**

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# MINISTER'S FOREWARD



Long-term Senior Policy in Poland for years 2014-2020 is the first such document that completely relates to seniors and challenge, which is imminent aging population in Poland. The aging of the population in developed countries is an irreversible consequence of great achievements and the progress of civilization - resulting from the significant increase in life expectancy and reduction in mortality. For many people, old age is the fear of becoming a burden to the next or the lack of a separate and independent existence. Others see older people as individuals striving only for their interests and imposing a large burden on the younger generation - especially for the labor market, the health system and the need to provide them with decent living standards after retirement. Often we do not see and do not appreciate the potential capabilities, experience, knowledge and many others values which are transmitted to us by older generations. This is because young people are not thinking about old age even though it is a necessary stage of life.

Contemporary Poland must be prepared for all the consequences, positive and negative changes resulting from the alarming demographic projections, resulting in progressive aging of the population. However, it should accept the current and future state of the population of the country, as inevitable and treat it as a challenge, which is also an opportunity to use in the development of social policy, including the senior policy. The senior policy development, including support actions to support and ensure fair aging in good health and independence would not be possible without adopted by the Council of Ministers in the so-called "Package For Seniors" on December 24th, 2014.\*

The publication presented the objectives, assumptions, priorities and recommendations for the directions of intervention for each key policy areas of the senior. The aim of the publication is to disseminate the Long-term Senior Policy in Poland for the years 2014-2020 in a transparent way for any interested reader - citizen. Key areas for action in the senior policy are: health and independence; economic activity; educational activity, social and cultural activities; silver economy and intergenerational relations.

It is important to adopt simultaneous changes and actions across all these area of life. It is also important to prepare for old age, which should consist of: preparing for the age of each of us - your daily active and healthy way of life and taking care of the development and investment in their own abilities and skills,

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\* 1) Long-term Senior Policy in Poland for 2014-2020  
2) Government Programme for Social Participation of Senior Citizens for 2014-2020  
3) Solidarity of Generations. Programme 50+

employment and providing a sustainable income but also to prepare for old age the whole society - by actions taken by the state authorities, relating directly to adapt the labor market and economic market (goods and services) to the real needs and expectations of older people. This is related to the adoption of the attitude of being responsible for your future, lengthening the period of their abilities and creative activity of life, while maintaining as long as possible - health and ability to work.

Old age affects every human being. Present, the efforts should be designed with care to ensure the future - ours and the next generations to old age was not surprising times in life but by extending the period of activity and human creativity was moved to a later time. In order for us, despite reaching old age people were still fully active in working life and society and people full of health and strength. Use the potential of the people 50+ on the labor market; prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles and the development of medical-care services for the elderly; offering special educational offer; supporting the development of Universities of the Third Age; engaging older people to be active citizens and participate in volunteering; to promote integration within and between generations, it is only the senior major policy priorities, which are described in detail in the publication.

Implementation of the goals and objectives contained in the document is primarily to help older people to become their sense of being a full-fledged social group and prevent social exclusion. The action in the senior policy are directed to a large audience of social life in the country. An important element to make changes and take concrete action is public cooperation with public authorities at all levels, the private sector and non-government and social partners. The division of tasks and complement each other in the pursuit of building and development of an active and healthy aging is the extraordinary strength of the future success of the senior policy - Improvement of the situation of older people for the dignified aging in good health.

Let's take care commonly about healthy, active, joyful and full of new possibilities old age!

Włodzisław Kosiniak - Kamyż

# DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN POLAND



Contemporary European societies are characterized by dynamic changes in the demographic structure of the population. Because of the two co-morbid phenomena: low fertility rates and lengthening life expectancy increasing proportion of older people (60+) in the population.

**Table 1: Proportion of people in different age groups of the EU-27 and Poland in 2011 (in%) (as of 31.12.2011)**

	0-14	15-64	15-60	60-64	60+	65+
UE -27	15,6	66,6	60,5	6,1	23,9	17,8
Poland	15,1	71,1	64,7	6,4	20,2	13,8

Source: own study based on the Eurostat.

According to the criteria adopted by E. Rosset determinant of demographic aging threshold is exceeded 12% of people over 60 years of age and older in the general population, which means that Poland is among the countries where the process of demographic aging is advanced.

**Table 2. Participation of elderly people (60+) in the population of Poland in 2011**

Indicator	Value of the indicator (%)	The number of people (in mln)
60+	20,2	7,8
Including:		
percentage of persons 80 +:	3,6	1,4

Source: own study based on the Central Statistical Office data.

Eurostat data show that in 2020, people over 60 years of age will constitute nearly 25% of the population of Polish society.

**Table 4: Forecast population in the years 2010-2035 by age groups (in%)**

Age	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
0-14	15,0	15,2	15,6	15,0	13,7	12,5
15-64	71,4	69,2	66,0	64,1	64,0	64,2
60-64	6,1	7,1	7,0	5,8	5,7	6,8
60+	19,6	22,7	25,4	26,8	28,0	30,0
65+	13,5	15,6	18,4	21,0	22,3	23,2
85+	1,4	1,8	2,0	2,1	2,1	3,1

Source: own study based on Central Statistical Office data, Population forecast for 2008-2035.

The process of population aging is characterized by a number of significant ways. One of them is the high proportion of older people engaged in single-person households. This process is associated with loneliness, increases the risk of social exclusion, such as in the case of limited independence.

The second characteristic is the feminisation of aging. As shown by the Central Statistical Office data (Demographic Yearbook 2012) in the age group 50-54 years, there is a surplus number of women over the number of men (103 women per 100 men). This surplus is steadily increasing in older age groups.







**Senior policy** is generally a package of actions performed by public administration at all levels and other organizations and institutions that perform tasks and initiatives shaping the conditions of a dignified and healthy aging.

**Health promotion** is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. It moves beyond a focus on individual behaviour towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions (WHO definition)

**Volunteering** according to the definition supplementation in official statistics, volunteering is unpaid, voluntary work done for people outside their own household (including not residing together for family, friends, neighbors, but also for the benefit of strangers), for the environment, society or the local community, taken individually or as part of an organization or institution (Central Statistical Office).

**Silver economy** is an economic system aimed at exploiting the potential of older people and taking into account their needs.





## INTRODUCTION

**Senior policy** is generally fraud of public administration at all levels and other organizations and institutions that perform tasks and initiatives shaping the conditions of a dignified and healthy aging.

Assumptions of Long-Term Senior Policy in Poland for the years 2014-2020 are performing the obligations provided for in the Government Program for the Elderly Social Activity for 2012-2013 (ASOS Program). ASOS Program is the first nationwide program developed on such scale, designed for the elderly and intergenerational cooperation. Implementation of the Program ASOS enable setting up the base for the senior policy (policy on the elderly and for the elderly).

**The aim of the senior policy in Poland is support and provide opportunities for active ageing in health and opportunities for continued self-reliant, independent and fulfilling life, even with some functional limitations**

Senior policy for purposes of this publication is widely understood as the set of activities throughout life, leading to ensure the extension of activity, both occupational and social, and self-reliant, healthy, safe and independent living for the elderly.

Properly designed and developed senioral politics is an essential element of social policy model. Should react to current challenges. The targets and courses of action will be implemented through the involvement of the different actors. Senioral policy should be

designed horizontally, ie, should be consistent with the state policy in the field of social security, employment, health, education (learning throughout life), infrastructure, housing and others. The acquisition by the government UFPJ not entail additional costs for the public sector.

Although, ZDPS have a framework, it also constitute a concrete set of necessary policy actions in the senior policy in Poland, which is addressed to a wide audience. First to society, which due to their competence and potential is a key element in the process of building and development of an active and healthy aging. Secondly, public authorities at all levels, the private sector and non-government and social partners, whose activities will allow proper management of assets resulting from the lengthening of life.

In the work on the senior policy assumptions used in the concept of active aging, which is defined as a process that allows both individuals and social groups with the development of their potential life-course perspective, the behavior of both mental and physical well-being and economic activity, social, independence and self-reliance .

The main challenges identified for the senior policy around which developed the directions of intervention are:



- the increasing proportion of older people in the population and readiness for many social and economic consequences of this phenomenon,
- longer working lives,
- the inclusion of the potential of older people in the area of social and civic participation,
- demand for solutions to those working at the age of 50 + on reconciling work and private life (the need to care giving for their parents or other dependents).

# 1. HEALTH AND INDEPENDENCE



The main objective of the senior policy in the area of health and self-reliance is to create conditions for independent living as long as possible and to maintain good health and autonomy.

## 1.1. CONDITIONS OF MEDICAL SOLUTIONS AND CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The area for the health of older people is identified as one of the most important in the senior policy in Poland.

### 1.1.1. Health condition

Both women and men 50 years of age are experiencing all sorts of diseases, but more so for women than men. However, it is worth noting that men in Poland have still a few years shorter life expectancy than women, especially for people at risk of poverty. Poverty remains the most important determinant of life expectancy and healthy life. A healthy lifestyle is not a distinguishing characteristic of persons 50 + in Poland. Poles do not lead active in terms of mobility lifestyle. Low physical activity translates to a weight problem among the elderly, and consequently the progressive development of cardiovascular disease and physical limitation. This translates into the need for integrated care organizations, based on specialized geriatric approach, thus taking into account the difficulty in remembering, spatial and temporal disorientation, hearing loss, blurred vision, and decreased physical performance and circulatory failure. The ability to self-healing process in the elderly is limited and requires institutional support.

In addition to poor health observed the phenomenon of e-exclusion, reduction of family ties, poor interpersonal relationships, seniors lag behind technological development in their everyday life, which in turn predisposes to the sense of alienation and, consequently, leads to an increased proportion of depressive states.

**Objective: Preparation for the period of its own old age in terms of knowledge about the physical and psychological changes during the aging process**

***Directions of interventions - recommendations:***

- educate people about the aging process and its consequences
- sensitize public opinion to the problems of old age and dependency
- restore the neutral character of the concept of „old age” as the last stage of human life
- create mechanisms of psychological support for people in crisis or in need of support

## 1.1.2. Medical staff



A particular problem is the deficit of specialists in the field of geriatrics and other professionals who care in old age. Due to the significant shortage of professionals geriatrics (about 270) and a geriatric hospital beds (approximately 600) is necessary to increase the competence of doctors in other specialties, and above all, specialists in internal medicine and family medicine.

Moreover, determined by experts is the lack of isolated teaching within the subject geriatrics majoring in medicine, resulting in deficits of knowledge and skills in this field among doctors. It should be noted, however, that the observed systematic increase in the number of training places in the organizational units authorized to specialization. Training in the relevant field should be carried out also in the context of postgraduate education of doctors most specialties.

### **Objective: Development geriatric medicine as a specialization**

#### ***Directions of interventions - recommendations:***

- enable the training of doctors, nurses and other medical staff towards holistic and comprehensive health care for the elderly patient
- strengthening the role of the primary health care (PHC) and PHC nurses in the care of elderly
- creating a system of incentives for education in the field of geriatrics by students and graduates of medical faculties
- development of specialist education of doctors, i.a., in the field of geriatrics
- increasing the availability of geriatric beds by adapting infrastructure medicinal entities to the growing number of elderly patients, also using the potential of non-state actors

### 1.1.3. Healthcare infrastructure



For the quality and benefits granted the availability of the health care a state and equipping with the infrastructure are a key element in the health care. The largest reserves are found in a primary health care which is the first stage in getting the patient to the health care system.

Also protecting needs of citizens which became dependent in relation to illness, is insufficient with the injury or the age. There is a significant shortage of units that provide long-term care.

#### **Objective. Support and development clinics and geriatric care in Poland**

##### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- provide medical care to the elderly
- dissemination of such solutions to the elderly patient with previously diagnosed chronic illness and prescribed treatment could obtain basic advice and prescription medications permanently to the doctor the other specialties
- support the development of outpatient geriatric and geriatric consultation (especially in rural areas)
- institutional development and promotion of medicinal entities, realizing benefits in terms of geriatric care
- investment in infrastructure development of transregional teaching hospitals and research institutes
- support for entities implementing the provision of long-term care
- support therapeutic entities pursuing palliative care and hospice
- increase the numbers and improve the care and treatment



## 1.1.4. Organization of benefits system for the elderly



The health and social care for the elderly in Poland is unsuited to the needs of this population - has disintegrated, fragmented and inconsistent benefits. The system does not meet the standards of geriatric approach - universality, quality, availability and comprehensiveness of meeting complex needs. Long-term care of the infirm and seriously disease elderly in Poland rests mainly on the family - under-aided medical services and the welfare system outside medical state. On the other hand, please note the lack of preparation of family physicians to geriatric care and lack of coordination of highly specialized care, which is an important cause of treatment failure or deterioration of the health of a large portion of elderly patients. In addition, discrimination in the field of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures based on age, on the other hand, the eligibility of patients for highly specialized procedures without full analysis of geriatric contraindications (no relation assess the expected benefits and risks) is an important cause of treatment failure or adverse events in a large portion of elderly patients .

**Objective. Development of social services tailored to the needs and capabilities of older people**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- Planning and organizing social services and the needs of the elderly and adapt them to the needs and abilities of older people
- liquidation architectural barriers to mobility and transport and the activity of the elderly
- enable older people to enlist the help of assistants providing social services at home and outside the home
- dissemination of using care services based on new technologies







## 1.1.5. Physical activity



An active, healthy senior is supporting for the economy by lightening system of the health care, social security, involving the family in the help burden for the senior, at simultaneous lightening by senior citizens of persons actively working in the family from the parts of duties associated with the organization of the house and the supervision of children. Therefore promotion associated with correct habits concerning diet, a physical effort, the consumption has a key importance of alcohol and avoiding the tobacco smoke.



## Objective 1. Promoting appropriate lifestyle

### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- promote a healthy lifestyle at any age
- popularization and development of the educational offer in terms of proper nutrition
- popularization and development of the educational offer in the prevention of common diseases of old age
- inclusion in health education mental health issues
- recruiting participants in health education among a wider group of older people, including those with lower income, disabled
- creating group meetings conducive to interpersonal relationships and improving mental health
- extension of the educational offer for working people in contact with the elderly
- taking into account the specific needs of older people in the planning and implementation of health education and recreation
- education of healthcare professionals in the field of physical activity, diet and a healthy lifestyle in old age
- development and implementation of prevention programs in preventing diseases, which are a significant cause of withdrawal from the labor
- development and implement national programs of health education and promotion of healthy lifestyles, to counter the disease constitutes a major cause of withdrawal from the labor
- develop and implement programs aimed at eliminating health risks in the workplace



## Objective 2: Development and promotion of physical activity

### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- increase the availability of existing sports facilities for the elderly
- development of an environment favorable to seniors physical activity, such as place of residence, in the workplace, in public places
- promoting the initiatives concerning the physical activity amongst elderly people
- development and support a system of organized physical activity classes for adults and older



### 1.1.6. Caring for the elderly and the role of informal carers





In 20 years will decrease the number of working-age population estimated at about 2 million people. At the same time it will shift part of care services for the growing population of seniors (from 5 million to over 8 million).

The results clearly indicate that the need for care in older age groups are quite large.

Duty of care to older people in Poland and provide a variety of care services is primarily a family responsibility.

Ensuring the proposed changes must take account of the needs and expectations of informal carers of older people who will need systemic solutions that enable them to take care when they are not employed and can devote themselves to the care, but also when you will have to reconcile care with the work. Informal carers play a key role in providing care for their loved ones - older people in the family and support them is the senior policy challenge.

### **Objective 1: Provide adequate care with limited independence through development of care services**

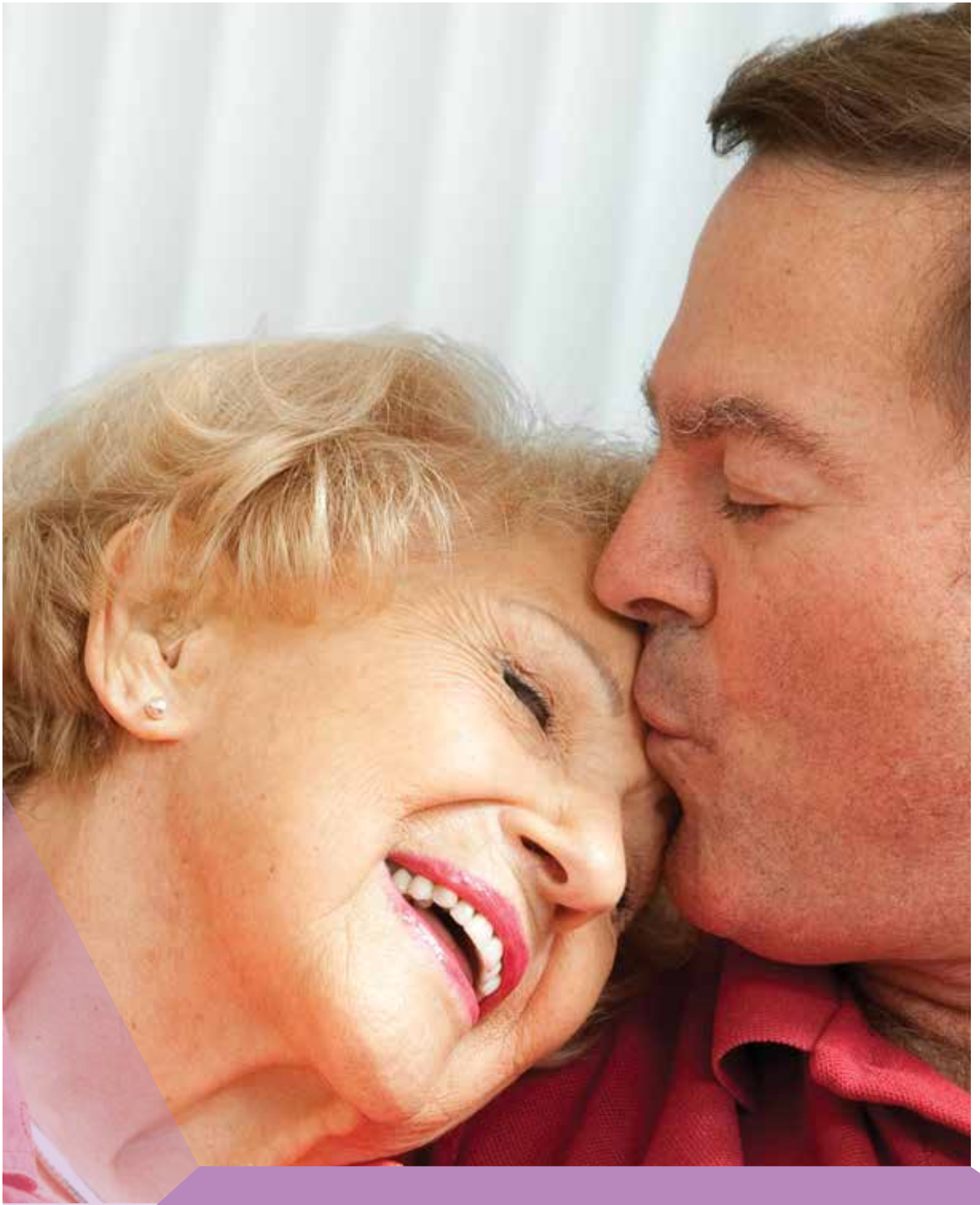
#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- improvement of access to care services
- development of the system of cash benefits in kind or checks to cover expenses for services and products relating to the the care
- creating conditions to increase the diversity of care for seniors
- elimination of legislative and administrative barriers to employment legislation informal carers
- reducing the share of „grey economy“ in the market of care services
- creating conditions of stable sources of funding of care services
- better adjustment of currently available services to the needs of the elderly, as well as the development of new solutions
- provide support to elderly people living in single households
- improve the quality of care (including nursing) for the elderly

### **Objective 2: Creating support systems for informal carers, particularly at the local level**

#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- support of family and informal carers
- development system solutions to support caregivers of the elderly
- creating broad access to information on opportunities for carers
- enable the care of long-and short-term over an older person
- development of voluntary welfare (including neighborhood and the local environment)



## 1.1.7. New technologies in the care of elderly



New technologies can be a great support in the care of older people. Allow greatly relieve the health care system, to facilitate the daily functioning of older people and carers to enable reconciliation of the roles that they play in society. In Poland there are currently no commonly available solutions in the area of telecare and telemedicine, which could be used in the support and supervision of the elderly, while reducing caregiver strain and stress and improving the safety of seniors.

It is also necessary to increase the safety and dignity of seniors in the area of social, legal and financial by providing recommendations addressed to them concerning the quality of technology, civil contracts and other issues, the perception of the elderly is difficult.



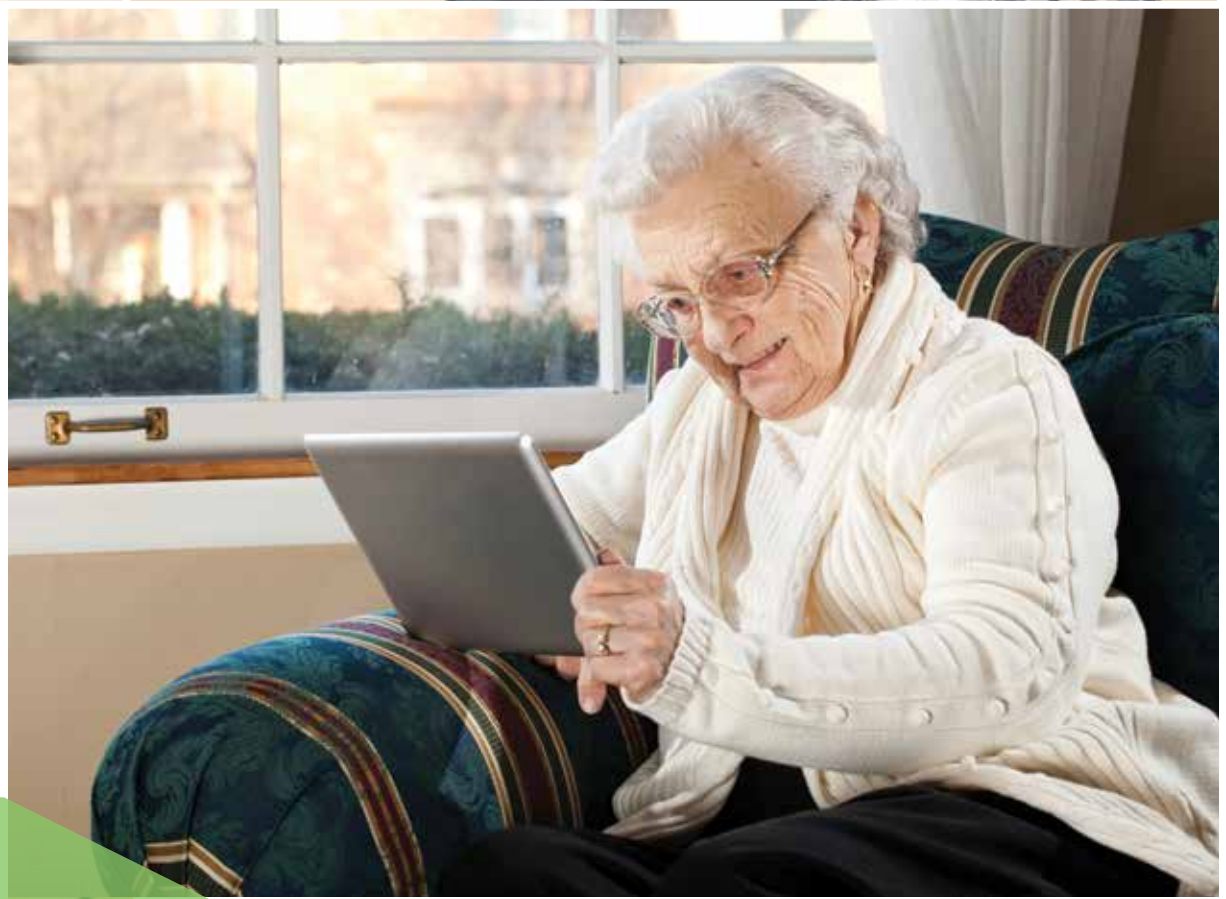
**Objective: Development and implementation of telecare and the use of innovative technologies in facilitating the organization of care for the elderly**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- developing minimum standards for telecare and other forms of indirect care services using new technologies (ICT)
- identify the sources and principles of financing or co-financing of telecare and other forms of indirect care services
- mobilization of local communities to create social (neighborhood) self-help methods using new technologies (ICT)
- support the implementation of solutions using telecare
- use of new technologies for the development of prevention and health behaviors







## 1.2. SENIOR SAFETY



The risk of increasing aggression against older where caregivers are not adequately equipped to perform this role, which is connected to them with an increased stress. Offenders are often people dependent elderly - in terms of financial resources (due to lack of work), housing, and welfare. In the case of unintentional violence, the risk increases due to the overload protector obligations under the constant attention, hard physical work and stress.

A special type of institutional violence are unfair trade practices against older people, especially in connection with financial services.

**Objective: Ensuring safety of the elderly and prevention of abuses used against them**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- prevention of elder abuse (recognition of and response to cases of violence) within the vocational education and informing persons of the first contact
- increase awareness of older people on the situation of violence and the institutions to which they can turn in the situation of experiencing violence
- increase awareness of violence among persons with ambient
- introduction in institutions and individuals providing care services procedures in the event of violence
- introduction helpline for the elderly (eg, Fall Line)
- creating the conditions for coordination reports of abuse of the elderly, including legal and psychological assistance to victims of violence directed
- counteracting economic violence
- prevention of unfair trade practices against older people



### 1.3. SENIOR SPACE AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE





The objective of design for all is the organization of space, to become friendly and accessible to residents. The rule should be to take into account the needs of different groups of people: the elderly, disabled, families with children, women and men.

You also can not ignore the issue of the senior policy assumptions housing adapted to the situation, opportunities (both financial) and the needs of the elderly. Not only within a single housing, but housing units (settlements) with appropriate infrastructure and services to their residents.

**Objective. Supporting universal design, including the needs of elderly people**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- cooperation with senior citizens and social organizations on the assessment of sites and public buildings in terms of accessibility for old people
- public transport planning, including the needs of older people
- introduce measures shortening the waiting period for service in public places (offices, libraries)
- implementation of inclusive design principles at every level
- promoting the construction of housing units, as well as changes in the existing one



## 2. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF PEOPLE 50+



The main objective of the senior policy in the area of professional activity is to plan and take actions that will allow the best use of the potential of older workers on the labor market and it will enhance and extend the working life of people 50 + and 60 +.

In Poland, it was noted one of the lowest employment rates of people aged 50 + and one of the lowest average retirement age among European countries. Extending working lives of employees over age 50 is one of the priority actions of all European Union countries.

## 2.1. PREPARING TO WORK - EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Currently in Poland is observed deficit of appropriate training and forms of learning effectively supporting people aged 50 + and 60 + to adapt to improve their functioning on the labor market. What's more, the existing training is not conducted in a manner appropriate to the needs and predispositions of those people. Information about their training are also not widely available. There is also a wide variation of access to the educational offer, depending on local conditions (especially occurring limited of educational services in smaller towns and rural areas).

**Objective: Dissemination of learning, improving its quality and adapting to the needs of people 50 +**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- development of training courses for people 50 +
- implementation of customized organizational solutions enabling participation in training
- development of forms of the type of distance learning, e-learning, blended learning
- development and disseminating solutions to help employers of small and medium-sized enterprises organizing training for their employees
- promoting investment in improving competences of employees
- implementation of the National Qualifications Framework and the development of a network of institutions and institutions validating quality assurance
- dissemination of solutions developed within the framework of the activities financed from the ESF, monitoring of training effectiveness

## 2.2. Age management and ergonomics



Encouraging the growing number of older workers to remain in employment is justified only if the parallel efforts are aimed at maintaining the ability to work through the whole period of activity the employee and lifting his/her qualifications, as well as activities aimed at modifying tasks in order to adapt them to changing employee's ability in a lifetime. Age management is not yet widespread in Poland, as in other countries.



**Objective: Create a friendly working conditions for employees and using solutions in the field of age management**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- adjusting rate of work to the elderly, flexible working time, analyze the possibility of leave for professional development, the abandonment of shift work, increasing the role of initial and periodic testing of employees
- provide the possibility to choose the order of tasks, time, breaks, clearly define the roles and perspectives of professional workers in the older age
- limitation of heavy physical work and work in hot or cold environments
- change in human resource management in order to identify and exploit the strengths of older workers
- initiatives promoting positive attitudes towards older workers
- providing opportunities for professional development and career at any age

## 2.3. Labour market institutions



There is a need to support institutions in activating people 50 +. Activities offered by these institutions have different, often small efficiency. Institutions do not have reliable knowledge on the effectiveness of actions taken, in particular with regard to persons 50 +.

**Objective 1: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of activities to promote employment and economic activity of people aged 50 + and 60 +**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- profiling unemployed and better matching of Active Labour Market Policies for people aged 50 +
- reliable assessment of the effectiveness of actions for people aged 50 +
- creation of business incubators / centers of active ageing
- using the concept of smart specialization to determine the directions of support people 50+ and their labor market participation
- supporting the program of the vocational activation of persons which lost a job for reasons for the workplace
- building tools to support career counseling programs for persons 50 +
- recruitment and development of a network of guidance counselors aged 50 + as a confidence -inspiring among their own age group
- development agency and work advisory for people 50 + out of non-public institutions
- supporting entrepreneurship 50 +
- developing the model of the support for a long term unemployed persons 50 +
- inclusion of health policy in the context of labor market policy for people 50+

**Objective 2: Development cooperation to stimulate employment of people 50 +**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- promotion solutions supporting public consultations with people 50 +
- creation and implementation of mechanisms for permanent cooperation of employers, public and private actors in shaping the educational offer for people aged 50+
- development of tools to support local governments in the implementation of activities for people 50 +

### 3. EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY OF ELDERLY PEOPLE



The social activity is one of essential elements of the realization of the idea of the active and healthy ageing. Towards the end or limiting the career associated with achieving the retirement age, devoting the time for the help free of charge other constitutes the essential space for the activity of elderly people. Significant meaning has not only a help to family members, but also action taken for the local communities.

**The overall objective of the senior policy in the area of educational activity, social and cultural activities is to support the idea of learning among the elderly and activating the civic and social activities, including:**

- development of learning opportunities for older people
- developing and supporting social activity of older people (including civic engagement and volunteering)
- increasing the participation of older people in the culture as both its customers and developers

### 3.1. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY



Enabling older people to learn is an essential factor in the development of their activities and the preservation of good health and independence in old age, thereby significantly contribute to improve the quality of their lives. Raising the competence necessary for life in the modern world can also counteract the social exclusion of older people. Educational activity of these people also brings benefits in terms of greater involvement in activities for their own and younger generations in the local communities and the full functioning of the civic dimension.

The overall objective of the senior policy in the area of educational activity is to increase the participation of older people in education, and increase the availability and quality of the educational offer.

### 3.1.1. Development of learning opportunities for older people in areas that align with the needs



The most common areas of education offered for older people include health education, citizenship and new technologies.

#### **Objective 1: Dissemination of health education**

Health promotion and prevention are one of the key elements that have a positive impact on life expectancy in good health. An active lifestyle in adulthood increases the number of years lived in good or relatively good health.

Many years of research indicate that physical activity is as part of necessary for the proper functioning of the human body at any age. Regular physical activity is also one of the most important components of health promotion elderly.

Health education is already a regular part of the educational offer for the elderly, especially of Universities of the Third Age (UTA). For health education can also include knowledge and understanding of ageing, including ageing in health. Most are held three types of action: broad preparation for old age, conferences and research and counseling. In some cities at the UTA work points in the field of counseling psychology. Outside of UTA also operate clinics and helplines.

#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- Development of educational seniors offer in the field of preventive health care
- development of conditions in the various forms of learning seniors to promote healthy lifestyles
- promoting an awareness of the need for physical activity and observance of proper diet in old age
- development of awareness among seniors of the effects of dangerous behavior



## Objective 2: Promoting civic education



A special area of education is to prepare for being aware and informed citizen, including a person who may be involved socially in various activities for their local environment, including for example volunteering.

Generations of seniors usually are more passive in civil dimension of subsequent generations. This is not only settled in the previous system, a sense of lack of real influence on decisions about public affairs in the country, region or local communities, but also from the lack of guidance on the functioning of the state.

### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- Development of the educational aspects concerning the formal legal and practical representation interests of their own community and social groups
- development in older people social and civic competences
- preparation of local leaders / animators civic action as well volunteering
- promotion and development of „innovative forms of education (education and training) in the elderly

### Objective 3: Dissemination of education in new technologies



Possession of digital skills and their development is a necessary condition to fully benefit from the increasing range of services provided electronically. What is particularly important with regard to the elderly, digital services contribute to the phenomenon of social inclusion, and thus prevent marginalization in modern society. Providing seniors access to resources is one of the key factors for improving the functioning of seniors not only in the number of basic activities of daily living, but also of social life. Increasing degree of digitization and use of new technologies in everyday life makes demand for the adaptation of older people to function in the world of new technologies.

#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- creating system solutions for the learning of older people in the field of digital literacy
- development of the intergenerational education system especially in this thematic area
- dissemination of the benefits of having digital skills and practices in the context of new technologies among seniors
- supporting educational activities in the use of modern technology in the service of the elderly to enable seniors and people with disabilities to live independently and as full as possible social active
- disseminating the results of research on modern technologies for and with the participation of older people and support their implementation

### 3.1.2. Supporting the development of system solutions for organizations of various forms of learning to older people in the movement of Universities of the Third Age



An expression of the effects of environmental civil society seniors movement is a dynamic development of organized forms of learning that meet the growing need in this environment, the extension of formal education and to provide access to non-formal education and informal education. This activity is carried out by a diverse group of stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, institutions and companies with the profile of education and training, and some cultural institutions (libraries, community centers) to the most organized and most widely generalized form, which is the movement of Universities of the Third Age (UTA) . However, the estimated number of all participating in these activities seniors is a very small percentage of the total number of elderly people in Poland. People who use this type of activity are mainly older people with higher or secondary education. Thus, the offer UTA is often not addressed or do not reach to other elderly.

Additionally it is possible to notice the significant feminization amongst participants in educational action and disproportion of the access to educational action on the countryside and in small cities.

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- create a model of activities to stimulate the learning process of the elderly
- development and implementing programs to support the efforts of developing educational activity of seniors in rural areas and in small towns
- development and implementing programs to support the efforts of developing educational activity of seniors in large estates of larger cities
- development of the system of financing educational activity (learning throughout life) within the public administration
- development effective educational programs for the elderly tailored to the different needs
- creating conditions for the development of operating standards and learning offer for elderly
- development of conditions for the coordination of learning older people in the region and to stimulate social activity of these persons
- creation of conditions for development cooperation (including international) between different educational and scientific institutions for the effective use of the potential of intergenerational
- support cooperation of platforms for seniors mutual communication in the educational activity including new technologies





### 3.2. ACTIVITY IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE



The main objective of the senior policy in the area of culture is to increase the participation of older people in the culture both as its audience and artists.

Shaping the conditions for the seniors lead active lives, with special emphasis on participation in culture and its dissemination, allows for the use of their intellectual resources as a factor in the development of creative social potential.

Participation in culture as well as its co-promotes release and activating potentials available to the elderly; also promotes the development of subsequent activity not only at the level of artistic or cultural, but also in other areas as active citizenship, social, voluntary, economic, physical. You should also pay attention to differences in access to culture for urban residents and small towns and villages.

### **Objective 1: Raising the cultural competence**

#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- facilitating equipping elderly people with tools for involvement in the culture and to assist them in activities aimed at intergenerational transmission of values
- supporting informal cultural and artistic education, talent development serving the elderly

### **Objective 2: Integrating the activities of institutions and organizations**

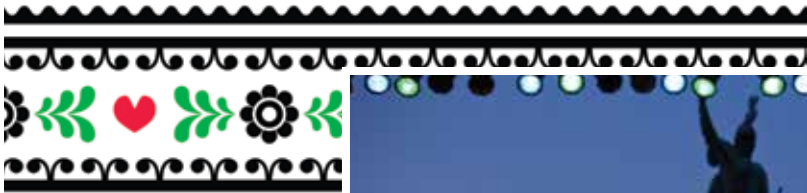
#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- promoting business cooperation sectors of culture, education and science with non-governmental organizations, and private entities to implement projects aimed at participation in the culture
- adapting offer and local infrastructure to perform the function centers of culture and dialogue with the participation of older people

### **Objective 3: Promoting cultural animation**

#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- strengthening position of older people as active leaders for participation in the culture of local communities and the activities of older people in the public space
- support creation of conditions for the promotion of cultural heritage produced in intergenerational partnership
- promote dissemination of cultural products through the exchange of creative environments of older people from Poland and abroad



### 3.3. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION



The concepts of „civic engagement“ or „active citizenship“ are defined differently. It is assumed that the social activity of the elderly is a broad concept and is divided into active citizenship (civic participation, civic engagement) and for activities for the needy people, the environment and the organizations and institutions, or volunteering.

#### 3.3.1. Development active citizenship of older people

It is possible to understand the active citizenship as the individual local and domestic commitment to matters, as well as the belief in the ability to exert direct influence on them.

The main objective of the senior policy in the area of civic activity is to increase the involvement of older people in the local community life and public issues and increase the role of senior citizens in solving social problems.



**Directions interventions - recommendations:**

- dissemination rules for the participation of senior citizens in civic activity
- creating conditions at the local level for the development of dialogue and civic engagement among seniors
- increase the involvement of local government units in activation programs seniors
- provide senior citizens equal access to use the full voting rights
- reducing social withdrawal from the elderly, to initiate and support the active involvement of seniors in the life of local communities
- creation at the local level database of good practices and organizations for active citizenship seniors

### 3.3.2. Development active citizenship of older people



Development of valuable potential of older people - knowledge, skills, work experience and life and the desire to work for others, is one of the key challenges of the senior policy.

According to the definition accepted in public statistics, volunteering is unpaid, voluntary work done for people outside their own household (including not residing together for family, friends, neighbors, but also for the benefit of strangers), for the environment, society, or the local community, taken individually or as part of an organization or institution (GUS).

It seems that a large number of organizations in the third sector has not yet discovered the potential of older volunteers. The main concern, which is associated with the involvement of older people is their health and physical condition weaker. In addition, there are big concerns about the ability of older people, particularly in the field of modern technology, and their openness to new experiences and working methods.

The main objective of the senior policy in the area of volunteering is to increase the participation of older people in various forms of voluntary activities to allow for the development of the potential of these people and the development of new competencies.

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- creation conditions for development of older people volunteering in Poland
- build public confidence in elderly volunteers and promote the benefits of volunteering seniors and the development of international cooperation in this field
- development staff preparing for the specifics of cooperation with the elderly
- institutional development of volunteering
- encouraging public institutions to initiate voluntary activities of older people in its operations
- strengthen the cooperation and communication between organizers of voluntary activities of older people with the organizers of youth volunteering
- promote volunteering as part of learning throughout life, especially in the area of informal learning

## 4. SILVER ECONOMY



Ageing population makes it emerge from a large group of people with diverse, although specific needs. This change is an opportunity for the emergence of new products and services for this group of consumers. They are of the one part related products, arts and entertainment, but also to facilitate daily life, care and rehabilitation and recreation.

**Silver Economy is an economic system aimed at using the potential of older people and taking into account their needs.**

Implementation silver economy in the economic system is only possible if old age is treated not as a burden but as a natural, inevitable and irreversible process, and it is assumed that the ongoing demographic processes, especially the decreasing birth rate, decrease mortality and longer the average life carries certain consequences, which must be dealt with.

### **„White jobs“**

One of the key elements in silver economy are white jobs - the sector of health care services and services primarily for the elderly, whose importance increases with the increasing number of elderly people in the population.

In Poland, a large part of care sector is providing by informal carers. Palliative privately care or outside the formal labor market is not currently monitored. Carers are usually not trained to be the caregiver to an elderly person or in terms of ergonomic working conditions.

Inclusion of these people in the labor market is an opportunity to reduce unemployment, poverty and future burden of the social security system. This would increase the demand for training services in the field.

The main objective of the senior policy in the field of silver economy is to support the development of effective solutions tailored to the needs and expectations of older people.

#### ***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- development of alternative forms of care for the elderly
- promotion working in the caring profession
- promotion of economic activity in the field of elderly care
- improving the qualifications of caregivers (including informal carers)
- promoting the development of service offer, hardware and software tailored to the capabilities and needs of the elderly persons living in need of care





## 5. INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS



From the observation and research shows that in Poland the elderly are treated differently. Actions are needed for a positive image of older people and their role in the society.

**Positive image of older people** is one that involves looking at old age as a natural stage of human life. It is also important to the public debate represent older people as a group of diverse, creative, who has brought a significant contribution to the social and economic life. Create a positive image of older people is a long-term process of social change, which requires the involvement and cooperation of many actors m.in .: media, senior organizations, local governments, schools and universities, employers.

**The main objective of the senior policy in the area of intergenerational relations is solidarity between generations as a pattern for society, social policy, culture and the labor market.**

***Directions interventions - recommendations:***

- promoting cooperation and exchange of experiences between local government committees / councils, non-governmental organizations for young people and older people
- use of existing social infrastructure for creation and development of friendly, easily accessible space for intergenerational meetings and exchange of experience for young and old people
- introduction to the system formal and informal education issues related to old age, ageing populations and the communication and cooperation between generations
- opening schools and colleges to cooperate with senior citizens organizations
- development and dissemination tools to support the collaboration of different age groups, taking into account methods of mentoring and age management
- cooperation of NGOs, governments, journalists and entrepreneurs in preparing the campaign, programs and other action to promote a positive image of older people
- changing speaking and writing language about old age and the elderly
- entering topics of promoting cooperation generations and positive image of old age as a part of mission of the public media







# FROM EXPERT

## 1. Introduction

The dynamics of economic and technological development seen recently in European societies, Western especially, unfortunately do not correspond to the demographics, what has become one of the key challenges Europe is currently facing. Recent analysis of the statistical data can be considered as more and more worrying. According to the statistics in recent years we can expect a significant increase in the number of European citizens over 65 years old. The latest forecasts predict that the number of senior Europeans in coming 50 years will double - from 87 million in 2010 to 148 million in 2060.<sup>1</sup> It should be underlined here how this unfortunate demographic decline is to be seen in Poland. According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS) the percentage of elderly citizens, in their post-productive years, will increase by 11% from 16% in 2007 to 26,7% in 2035. What is more, 2010-2020 will be a decade with an yearly increase of 200 000 people aged 60 or more.<sup>2</sup>

This omnipresent tendency will become a significant challenge to the public administration, especially at the time when the strain on the budget increases and so does the demand for medical products and services.

We are facing a breakthrough in our demographic reality, that will consequently undermine the financial stability of the healthcare and social care systems. This will force the EU as a whole, as well as the members states individually, to find solutions addressing the needs of seniors - the fast-growing part of the European society. Even now the costs of public healthcare in the EU make around 7.8% of the GDP. Due to the ageing of Europe's population these figures are foreseen to increase with 3% of the GDP until 2060.<sup>3</sup>

The EU seems to understand the importance of this issue, which may be proven inter alia by the European Parliament resolution of 11 November 2010 on the demographic challenge and solidarity between generations.

In the current situation European officials underline the need to introduce common measures, as much on the institutional level as within the member states. Only through a common, well-coordinated European action, based on the efficient implementation of a well-thought-through legislation, we can

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

<sup>2</sup> Population projection (Prognoza ludności na lata 2008 - 2035), <http://stat.gov.pl>

<sup>3</sup> Ageing Report 2009, [http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/publications/publication14992\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication14992_en.pdf)



try to create conditions adapted to the needs of the new society. A society which in a few years may not resemble the one we know today.

## **2. European ageing policy**

### *A. Promoting active ageing and solidarity between generations*

Through announcing the year 2012 as European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY2012) Europe has emphasised the importance of demographic decline. Year 2012 was chosen intentionally, as it is the 10th anniversary of implementing the UN Action Plan on Ageing.<sup>4</sup>

It was decided that the main objectives of EY2012 will be to promote active ageing in the economic and social areas, emphasising the healthy ageing as a condition to independent living, as well as to enhance solidarity between generations in order to create an open and friendly society for all ages.<sup>5</sup>

EY2012 emphasised the need to address the requirements of the aging population on numerous levels, in a short as well as long-term perspective. The events accompanying the EY2012 initiative may be seen as its greatest achievements. They were the starting point to raise awareness in order to change people's perception of elderly citizens and their role in the society. Numerous conferences and debates were the tool to promote the idea of active aging, presenting it as an attractive and, what is more important, possible alternative to the current passive indifferent attitude.

The most valuable achievement of the EY2012 may be the fact that numerous member states were inspired to work on a new conception of the policy. Poland was among these countries implementing the National Programme of Social Activity for the Elderly for 2012-2013 (translation from: Rządowy Program na rzecz Aktywności Społecznej Osób Starszych na lata 2012 - 2013) and creating the Advisory Council for Seniority Policy (translation from Rada ds. Polityki Senioralnej).

### *B. Towards an age-friendly society*

The future challenges deriving from the need of the EU member states to address the growing phenomenon of the aging society are the key components of the EU's social and economic strategy, Europe 2020: A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. Its two main goals are directly referring to

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<sup>4</sup> Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011 on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/ageing/policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ageing/policy/index_en.htm)

the aging policy. As one of them suggests there is a need of raising the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 to 75%, including the greater participation of older workers. Another goal is set to promote social inclusion, in particular through reduction of poverty, by aiming to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion.<sup>6</sup> As we can see the EU, facing demographic decline, sets specific goals, which should be however consequently followed by actions.

Nevertheless, while speaking of the EU's priorities with regard to the ageing policy one should above all mention the Pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (the Partnership). On 29 February 2012 European Commission released a Communication with regard to the Partnership, which is to support the strategic implementation plan. In this document the Commission states that the Partnership *has been selected as a pilot to tackle the challenge of an ageing population*.<sup>7</sup>

The central objective of the project is to increase the average healthy lifespan by two years by 2020. While meeting this goal it will be possible to achieve beneficial outcomes in three areas: improving health and standard of living, increasing the sustainability and efficiency of social and health care systems, and finally creating the possibility for the economic growth while generating new opportunities for business.<sup>8</sup>

The Partnership has become an opportunity for the public and private stakeholders, business ventures and NGOs to cooperate in order to establish a new environment for citizens to age in dignity and better health. In its Communication the Commission underlines that the Partnership *is neither a new funding programme or instrument nor a new legal entity, and does not replace existing decision-making processes*<sup>9</sup>. Its role is seen more as a flagship over already existing initiatives within the ageing policy. It is set to meet the political goals of Europe 2020 such as: Innovation Union, A digital agenda for Europe, An agenda for new skills and jobs, European platform against poverty. The Partnership is seen to have a significant role in reaching goals of the previously mentioned EY2012. A set of operational priority actions within the Partnership is specified in the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP), adopted by the high level Steering Group in November 2011. The priorities specified are divided into three categories: prevention and early diagnosis, care and cure; active ageing and independent living.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index\\_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing](http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing)

<sup>7</sup> COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL COM/2012/083 Taking forward the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem

The European Commission underlines however, that success of the programme may only be achieved through a close cooperation between all the stakeholders, as much on a European level as national, regional and local. The EU is meant to support this process by creating favourable legislation (while amending the specific legislative acts the Commission is planning to incorporate targets and priorities as set by the Partnership)<sup>10</sup> and introducing efficient financial mechanisms (inter alia 220 million Euro has been assigned to health research which may influence the success of the Partnership, a sum of 25 million is allocated to finance the activities within the scope of the Ageing well in the information society: The Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Programme, which corresponds to the range of priorities of the Partnership). Furthermore, in order to facilitate exchange of ideas between the partners, a digital based platform - 'a marketplace' has been created. This tool will not only enable the stakeholders to share their ideas, good practices and data, but will be useful in finding new partners. The Partnership programme is meant to be supported on the national, regional and local level through initiatives that already exist, mainly within the scope of the structural funds, giving the opportunity to support innovation, research and other practices creating the conditions to age in good health. Particularly important are the initiatives focusing on the idea of e-health as well as an investment in the reform of the healthcare system, infrastructure and the human capital to improve health prevention, diagnosis and care.

The first positive effects of the Partnership were seen in 2013, when 32 European cities and regions had been awarded for the introduced measures supporting senior citizens. The innovative solutions both technological, social and organisational are being implemented in order to increase the efficiency of health care and social care systems. A perfect example of such developments may be found in the region of Andalusia, where the efficiency of the social care addressing over 1,3 million citizens over 65 years old was successfully improved. Another example that should be mentioned is Scotland, where a new risk assessment tool was implemented in order to support the preventive care initiative and ensure a longer life in better health in home environment. As a result a number of hospitalisation cases decreased and the time spent in hospitals shortened, showing cost efficiency of 190 GBP net per patient.<sup>11</sup>

### *C. More chances and possibilities*

Europe without borders, freedom to move, and an open job

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<sup>10</sup> Ibidem

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.pi.gov.pl>

market brought new opportunities to Europeans of all generations. The pensioners are free to move abroad and enjoy the same rights, benefits and health care services as the national citizens of the member state. Europeans should be free to make such choice, therefore legislation guarantees retaining the public retirement benefit (in Poland 1<sup>st</sup> pillar), employment-based pension (2<sup>nd</sup> pillar) as well as private savings (3<sup>rd</sup> pillar) as an additional income.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, as a response to Green Paper and White Paper of the Commission, the Parliament called upon the member states to introduce a closer coordination of pension systems, in particular with regard to adapting and reforming all national pension systems to ensure that they are all well financed to guarantee a sufficient standard of living.

Being a member of the European Union has its consequences also for the health care system. Not so long ago it was not possible for the EU citizens to be treated in another member state within the scope of benefits of their national health care system. In January 2011 this situation was improved by implementing new regulations giving the right to a cross-border health care which means that citizens can be treated abroad on the cost of their national health care system without any prior arrangements.<sup>13</sup> This is good news for all who wish to use their retirement time to travel across Europe, but also for those suffering from rare diseases. A better coordination and cooperation between the member states will improve the diagnosis and standard of care.

Finally, one should mention another important European measure which concentrates on fighting neurodegenerating conditions, especially Alzheimer's disease. The European Parliament's Resolution of 19 January 2011 on a European initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias calls for acknowledging these conditions as one of the EU priorities in the area of health care, urging the member states to work on national plans and strategies tackling this issue. What is more, the EU has allocated a part of the Seventh Framework Programme budget to support the research in the area of neurodegenerating diseases. The financial support is given to 33 large and 120 smaller research projects focusing on brain and neurological system as a whole.

### **3. Conclusions**

It is about time we face the facts. The average lifespan in Europe is constantly growing, what is to have far reaching consequences

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<sup>12</sup> REGULATION (EC) No 987/2009 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems

<sup>13</sup> DIRECTIVE 2011/24/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare



in the future. It is well known that the senior generation is characterised by their own consumption patterns and lifestyle models. It is obvious that they have their special requirements when it comes to health and overall care and that such requirements should be incorporated into the health care systems.

What is more, the growing number of pensioners combined with the decreasing number of citizens in active employment and declining birth rate significantly influences the budget of social security and healthcare systems.

Europe has ran out of time to sit and watch the demographic decline phenomena, hoping it is only a bad dream that will eventually fade away. The evidence show that this bad dream became our reality. Thus, it is essential to assess the needs of our society in advance in order to be able to address them adequately. All the above mentioned projects implemented by the EU are proving that Europe has acknowledged the need to strengthen the initiatives aiming to improve the life standard of older people - the constantly growing social group. Creating an environment that will ensure the conditions to grow old in dignity is the best way to collectively thank the people, who have already offered their potential and capital building the European wealth. It seems that the need of solidarity between generations is now greater than ever.

*Bogusław Sonik*