



AGE – Work Programme May – December 2007

1. Introduction

AGE – the European Older People's Platform welcomes the new Community programme for employment and social solidarity PROGRESS and is happy to submit this work programme in response to the Call for Proposals VP/2006/019.

Since our present contract ends on 30th April 2007, this application covers the period running from 1st May to 31st December 2007.

Our planned activities will aim at strengthening our members' involvement and mainstreaming age equality issues in the following EU policy processes:

- The European Year on Equal Opportunities 2007
- The review of the transposition and implementation of the Employment Directive with regard to age (announced in the Communication on Demographic Change)
- The Streamlining Process (OMC on Pensions, Social Inclusion and health and Long term Care)
- The Employment Strategy and in particular the follow-up to the thematic Note on Lifelong Learning for Older Workers (EMCO Cambridge Review October 2006)
- The e-inclusion strategy led by DG INFSO
- The EU Health strategy

for the support of umbrella European-level NGOs, AGE adopted a three-year Strategic Plan, which was approved by the European Commission. The Strategic Plan outlines our goals and objectives and indicates how progress will be measured for the period May 2004-April 2007. This third year work programme has been developed in that framework.

As for the two previous years the budget presents our estimated expenses for the third year based on the activities identified as necessary to achieve our objectives. The budget covers only the expenses related to our core activities, i.e. the costs involved in coordinating our network at EU level and enabling our members from all over the EU to meet on a regular basis to ensure a true European dimension to our work. This year's budget is very similar to the two

previous year's and takes on board the initial request of the Commission to increase our share of the co-funding by 1% per year.

Our third and last year work programme under this Strategic Plan will continue to aim at making the European Union a place free from all forms of discrimination and at promoting opportunities for all.

Key EU processes in which AGE wants to contribute:

This year's work programme will be implemented in the framework of new EU processes of key importance to us. December 2006 will be the end of the extended period for the transposition of the **Employment Directive** with regard to age. AGE will use that opportunity to take stock at what has been achieved and what remains to be done to make the EU labour market free of age discrimination. We hope to be able to present our annual report on the Employment Directive at the final conference on the EU Action Programme the Commission will organise end of 2006.

This work programme will also focus on the preparation and launch of **the European Year on Equal Opportunities** due to start in January 2007. This will include building capacity of our member organisations to get involved and coordinating views of our network on the main messages we want to promote.

Another important area of work during this year's work programme will be to continue to monitor and influence the setting up of the **European Agency on Fundamental Rights** which should be launched early 2007, to ensure age discrimination is properly addressed in their mandate.

Responding to the expected **Communication on Demographic Change** will be another priority for AGE.

In line with the new strategic approach of the Commission to combat discrimination, AGE and its members will continue to campaign in support and monitor the launch of the **PROGRESS** proposal.

AGE will respond to the mapping study looking at the **feasibility of extending the EU anti discrimination legislation** to the level of the Race directive for other grounds and the study on **multiple discrimination** if it is published within this period by the Commission.

Other areas of work will be the debate on **health and safety at work** where AGE will raise awareness of the link between health and safety issues and age discrimination in the workplace.

AGE will continue to promote **active ageing** and make recommendations to relevant policy processes including to the **Spring Summit** and the **extraordinary Summit on flexicurity** proposed by the Commission.

Key events will be organised in which AGE will need to contribute input to such as the Commission **conference on health and long term care** (September 2006) and the **Round table on social inclusion** (October 2006), the final **conference to mark the end of the anti discrimination programme** (end of 2006).

More generally we will continue to monitor the concrete implementation of the **Social Agenda** in particular with regard to active ageing and demographic change.

Finally , the European Union is at a crucial stage and AGE will do its utmost to help its members get involved in the **period of reflection and the debate on the future of Europe and the Constitution**. We will monitor closely both the implementation of the Commission communication strategy and of the various proposals made by the European Parliament in their recent Resolution. NGOs have a crucial role to play in helping citizens understand what the EU is bringing to their lives and develop a sense of ownership with the European Union project. AGE will contribute to that effort to promote active citizenship among senior citizens.

We tried as much as possible to anticipate the policy developments which will be forthcoming and are aware that some slight adjustments might be needed to ensure that our work remains in step with the EU policy making process following the Spring Summit and the Council's decision regarding the Revised Lisbon Agenda. In particular it is difficult to anticipate whether or not our call to the Spring Summit to ensure adequate feeding out as well as feeding in between the National Reforms Plans and the Social Protection – Social Inclusion streamlined approach will be heard.

Now that anti discrimination legislation is in place in most Member States, we will focus our activities on developing further the capacity of our network, both at EU and national level, to reinforce the EU action to address and combat discrimination on all grounds and in particular on the ground of age and to promote equal opportunities for all. Special attention will continue to be paid to the gender dimension and the issue of multiple discrimination in close cooperation with other non-discrimination NGOs. Significant progress in terms of capacity building has been achieved already in the first two years of our Strategic Plan and we want to build on our experience to continue to boost the capacity of our members to play their role as civil society at national and local level, especially in the new Member States, acceding countries and in some of the EU15 countries where NGOs need extra support. Our members do find the

information they get from us useful and use it to act at national level (see example of UK member in annex).

2. AGE's Main Activities for the period May 2006-April 2007

The range of activities we need to implement this year to achieve our strategic goals will be very similar to those of previous years and will build on the work started two years ago. As in previous years, for reasons of clarity, we have grouped our activities per type and for each type we have indicated to which objective(s) of our Strategic Plan it relates as well as the expected outcomes. The estimated calendar, venue and target audience for each activity can be found in the summary table at the end of the document. Our performance is then evaluated by our external consultant based on the activities and expected outcomes described in the yearly work programme.

2.1 AGE Structural Activities for the period May 2006-April 2007

Relate to Strategic Goals 2, 3 and 4 of our Strategic Plan

In accordance to the Belgian legislation and in order to ensure the full participation of our members in our work programme – a pre-requisite to guarantee the representativity of AGE as the voice of the 50+ in the European Union - we organise a series of meetings of our governing and consultative structures (General Assembly, Council, Executive Committee and Working Groups), in addition to keeping a strong and efficient Secretariat in Brussels.

2.1.1 Annual General Assembly

As requested by Belgian Law, a General Assembly has to be called once a year. The General Assembly is the governing body of the organisation. All Full members are represented and have the right to vote (one member, one vote). The Annual General Assembly is usually held in the spring of each year (March or April). It brings together one representative per Full Member (around 120 people) and a few observer members (at their own cost). In addition to the usual constitutional items, AGE organises a few plenary sessions with key speakers on EU policy priorities to give our members the opportunity to discuss the most pressing issues and enable them to make an informed decision when deciding the main objectives for the coming years. For example, the 2006 General Assembly will include a presentation by Commissioner Špidla and plenary sessions on age discrimination, social protection issues, health, regional policy,

transport and accessibility issues. The General Assembly also gives the opportunity to new members to present themselves to the network and to develop useful contacts with fellow NGOs in other countries.

Expected outcomes for item 2.1.1:

- An annual General Assembly (Spring 2007)
- New applications for membership approved
- Approved final accounts for previous year
- Approved annual report for previous year
- Approved work programme for next year
- Approved budget for next year
- Opportunities for our member organisations to discuss and agree main policy statements and ask direct question to key speakers
- Agreement on main policies and strategic goals for the period 2007-2010, see also item 2.5 (evaluation)

2.1.2 Meetings of the Council

Composition: Our Statutes specify that all Member States have a right to be represented in the Council. In addition to geographical representation, our Council also includes representatives of European Federations and European Organisations. Two to three meetings (30 people) are foreseen, one in June, one in October/ November and one in February.

Role: The Council is responsible for the overall running of the Association, for the implementation of the programme set by the General Assembly and for making recommendations to the General Assembly on membership applications based on the evaluation of the Accreditation Committee. Between meetings, the Council plays an important role in the policy development of our network. Council members are consulted and approve all documents and position papers. They are also responsible for coordinating views between the various AGE members of their country- who have elected them to be their representative at the Council. Council members are also responsible for nominating experts who will take part in our Working Groups and for ensuring that these experts report back and liaise with all AGE members in their country. Council members and experts can be nominated to represent AGE in meetings or conferences where they have strong expertise. (see list of Council members in annex)

National co-ordinations: For the last two years, AGE has encouraged the setting up of strong national co-ordinations in countries where we have several members. In France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and the Netherlands, regular

meetings are now organised prior to AGE Council and General Assembly meetings to co-ordinate the views of all AGE members. These strong national co-ordinations have greatly enhanced the capacity of our members to act jointly on campaigns and to become more visible to their respective national authorities. Informal coordination also takes place in Poland and Germany. AGE will continue to promote national co-ordinations and will encourage synergies with national anti-discrimination NGOs from other sectors.

AGE will continue to provide support to its member organisations for the organisation of national events on age discrimination as these have proved to be excellent opportunities to establish lasting synergies between civil society organisations fighting discrimination.

EU Presidencies: In the framework of the EU Presidency, the Council members of the countries represented in the Troïka are requested to help AGE establish contacts with their relevant Ministries. Their role is to ensure older citizens' concerns and expectations are taken on board by EU Presidencies and NGOs are involved in EU Presidency events (more detailed information in Policy Activities section). Our Finnish, German and Portuguese Council members are already working on the coming EU Presidencies.

Expected outcomes for item 2.1.2:

- 2-3 meetings of the Council (June, October and February)
- Support to national co-ordinations between AGE members of the same country
- Better synergies with anti-discrimination NGOs from other sectors at national level
- On-going policy guidance based on national feedback
- Participation of some Council members and experts with relevant expertise in EU and national conferences and seminars on behalf of AGE
- Enhanced relations with present and future EU Presidencies through our national members in Austria, Finland, Germany and Portugal.

2.1.3 Meetings of the Executive Committee

Composition: The Executive Committee is composed of 7 members: a President (DK), 4 Vice-Presidents (S, NL, EL, I), a Treasurer (F) and a Secretary (UK), 5 men, 2 women.

Role: The Executive Committee is responsible for day-to-day political guidance and management. It prepares the meetings of the General Assembly and the Council, ensures that the Statutes and Internal Rules are adhered to and represents AGE in relevant meetings and events.

To fulfil its role, the Executive Committee will meet 5 times (about once every two months) usually in the AGE office in Brussels.

Expected outcomes for item 2.1.3:

- 5 meetings of Executive Committee
- Representation of AGE network in relevant EU meetings
- On-going management and political guidance

2.1.4 Secretariat

Composition: Our permanent Secretariat is composed of the Director (full time), a Policy Officer dealing with Anti Discrimination and Social Protection issues (full time), a Policy Officer dealing with Social Inclusion and membership issues (4,5 days/week), an Information and Health Officer (Full time), a European Parliament Officer (one day/week), and an Administrative Officer (30h/week).

Role: During this third year of our Strategic Plan, the Secretariat will continue to monitor EU policy developments, inform our members, gather feedback from members on issues of concern, and draft responses in close consultation with our membership. The Secretariat is also responsible for coordinating the network and promoting synergies between member organisations on issues of common interest.

The Director and Officers are all expected to participate in relevant conferences and national meetings organised by our members or other stakeholders. The Director and/or Policy Officers also represent AGE in various fora where we raise awareness of discrimination faced by citizens on the ground of age: European Pensions Forum set up by DG EMPL, the European Health Forum set up by DG SANCO, the High Level Group on Construction set up by DG Research, the Social Platform Working Group on Fundamental Rights. Together with the European Disability Forum, AGE is also regularly consulted by the Commission and other EU stakeholders (Confédération européenne des Chemins de Fer, Association Européenne d'Interopérabilité des Chemins de Fer) on discrimination faced by people with reduced mobility in public transport.

Capacity building: AGE will continue to offer training opportunities to our staff. Together with our external consultant the Secretariat will finalise the performance reporting method based on our experience in the two first years.

Expected outcomes for item 2.1.4:

- On-going management of the network
- Director participation in key EU and national events
- Staff participation in relevant national and EU events

- 4 training courses for staff
- A tailor-made performance reporting method

2.1.5 AGE Working Groups

Composition: To help us access the expertise available within our network and develop informed positions on issues of concern to the 50+, AGE set up five Working Groups on Anti-Discrimination, Social Protection (Pensions), Employment, Social Inclusion and Health issues (see lists of experts in annex). All Working Groups are composed of representatives nominated by our Council members. The Working Groups are open to representatives of all Member States but only the Anti Discrimination and Social Protection Groups hold regular meetings. For budget reasons the other working groups are mostly virtual groups bringing together expertise available in the network on these issues and only small meetings of a core group experts are organised for them.

Role: All Working Groups are consulted on policies related to their dossier. This means that several Working Groups can be consulted on the same issue (e.g. on AGE message to the Spring Summit all Working Groups are consulted). All Working Groups will be consulted on the major policy processes, among others:

- The setting up of the European Agency on Fundamental Rights
- The preparation and launch of the European Year on Equal Opportunities
- The Communication on Demographic Change
- The feasibility study on future EU initiatives the field of anti discrimination
- The debate on multiple discrimination
- Implementation of the parts of the new Social Agenda 2006-2010 which are relevant for our members
- The streamlining process
- Up coming debates on the future of Europe

Expected outcomes for item 2.1.5:

- 3 meetings of Anti Discrimination Working Group
- 3 meetings of the Social Protection Working Group
- 3 (smaller) meetings of the virtual Working Groups on Employment and Health (18p. in total to be shared among these 2 groups according to need). The Social Inclusion Group meets in the framework of AGE transnational project on Social Inclusion.

2.1.6 The AGE Network

Composition: All Full Members are European, national or regional associations of or working for and with people aged 50+ in the European Union. Observer members are those who support AGE's work and wish to participate in this work but who do not fulfil the criteria to become full members. AGE has 141 member organisations all around the EU-25 and in Romania.

Role: The AGE network is informing all policy positions of the association and ensures that AGE fulfils its mandate of voicing and defending the real interests of people aged 50+ in the EU. Through the General Assembly and the principle of one member, one vote all Full member associations have an equal right to direct the future of the association.

Capacity Building: AGE will continue its work to develop its membership to become more inclusive and more representative of older people's organizations in all Member States. Our main aim this year will be to continue to build capacity of our members to use AGE's work in their national policy work by providing tools and information to individual associations. We will continue to encourage strong coordination between the various members in a same member state. Work will also continue to find new members by consolidating existing contacts and encouraging associations that already co-operate with AGE to join the network. Efforts will be stepped up this year to develop co-operation and partnerships with associations from the EFTA and acceding countries.

Expected outcomes for item 2.1.6:

- New member associations in all 25 EU Member States and Acceding Countries
- Members or contacts in all EFTA countries
- Increased total number of Full Member associations.

2.2 AGE Policy Activities for the period May 2006-April 2007

Relate to Strategic Goal 3 of our Strategic Plan

2.2.1 Anti-Discrimination (*Strategic goal 3.1*)

- **The Employment Directive and the Race Directive**

December 2006 will mark the end of the extended transposition period of the **Employment Directive** with regard to age. AGE will use that opportunity to analyse what has been achieved and what remains to be done to make the EU labour market free of age discrimination. Hopefully all Member States will have transposed the Directive by then and lessons can be learnt from those countries where case law is building. We hope to be able to present our annual report on the Employment Directive at the final conference on the EU Action Programme the Commission is planning to organise end of 2006. The report will include our

views on the transposition and implementation process and our recommendations on what should be done to ensure the adequate implementation of existing legislation, in particular with regard to Article 6 and 16 of the Employment Directive, two areas of particular concern identified by our experts.

Updated information on both the Employment and the Race Directives, the important role NGOs can play in supporting potential victims, the role of equality bodies, the importance of establishing synergies with the social partners at national level, sources of information and campaigns at EU and national level, examples of successful implementation, case law, etc will be posted on our website on the page devoted to non discrimination.

A follow-up to our brochure "Towards Age Equality", will be published in December 2006 to mark the end of the EU Anti Discrimination Action Programme and the launch of the European Year on Equal Opportunities. We had planned to issue it in year two but this exercise requires more work and consultation than initially expected to take on board recent policy developments. As in previous years, we will organise an event at the European Parliament, in cooperation with the Intergroup on Ageing, to present AGE work on the Employment Directive. The annual report on transposition and the revised brochure on age equality will be distributed throughout our network and posted on our website.

Our member organisations will be invited to translate and publish these documents in their own language adding their logo to the AGE logo. Our objective is that policy documents developed by the network should become our members' own campaigning tools, something several members have done with previous documents in the last years.

The Anti-Discrimination Expert Group will also continue to work with legal experts to get a better understanding of the legal dimension of issues of concern raised by our members and to build our knowledge on case law.

Preparation and launch of the European Year on Equal Opportunities - 2007

AGE will focus its work on the preparation of the European Year on Equal Opportunities. Our aim will be to provide support to enable our members to get involved in the national programmes to ensure that age discrimination is adequately addressed in all four themes identified for the Year: Rights, Recognition, Representation, Respect. During that period, AGE will develop recommendations for future actions needed to promote equal opportunities on the ground of age in all four areas. We want also to contribute an input in the work the Commission will undertake to develop tools to promote mainstreaming of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all in relevant EU policies.

Our aim is to use the European Year to launch a change of attitudes and get political support for concrete equal opportunities initiatives to be implemented in the coming years.

European Agency on Fundamental Rights

As we said earlier another important area of work during this year's work programme will be to continue to monitor and influence the setting up of the European Agency on Fundamental Rights to be launched early 2007, to ensure age discrimination is properly addressed in their mandate. This will be done in close cooperation with the NGOs in the WG Social Protection.

Legal Expert Group: AGE will continue to follow the work of the Legal Expert Group set up by the Commission and to disseminate the information relevant to age discrimination throughout our network. Given the very limited knowledge about age discrimination in most Member States it is in our view very important to use the work of the legal expert group to raise awareness of the complexity of age discrimination, using the experience developed in some Member States where the issue has received more attention. Their report on age discrimination is a precious tool that NGOs can use to raise awareness of the various aspects of age discrimination. For example AGE was invited in December 2005 by the Spanish Bar to make a presentation on age discrimination to their Annual Conference. We also look forward to the publication end of 2006 of the Mapping study the MPG is undertaking on anti discrimination measures and their impact in EU-25 and other countries as these will be very useful tools for our work.

Gender equality Pact and Gender Institute: AGE will disseminate information about the Gender Equality Pact (which should be adopted at the next Spring Summit) and the Gender Institute. We will encourage our members to continue to pay special attention to gender discrimination and to support gender equality initiatives at national and local levels. We will also continue to monitor the implementation of the Directive on gender equality in access to goods and services, especially with regard to its application to private pensions schemes where exceptions are allowed on the grounds of longer life expectancy of women. We will therefore continue our campaign in support of full gender equality together with the European Women's Lobby. AGE will also continue to press the Commission to be part of the stakeholders in the review process.

Multiple Discrimination

As a follow-up to the Green Paper, the Commission has announced a study on multiple discrimination, an initiative welcomed by AGE. Although this study is not foreseen to be ready before May-June 2007, AGE will aim at contributing views in the debate whenever civil society is consulted.

We will continue to encourage our members to take action on wider equality, human rights and discrimination questions beyond the boundaries of age discrimination. AGE Working Group has set up a sub-group on multiple discrimination last year and has been working on a leaflet on multiple discrimination to raise awareness of the fact that older people do not just belong to the senior section of Europe's population. We plan to continue to work on the

main issues we want to include in the leaflet we intend to publish to mark the launch of the European Year.

Age discrimination in access to goods and services

Our work on the feasibility of large scope directive to combat age discrimination in access to goods, facilities and services is still going on with the support of small team of legal experts. AGE will draft recommendations on the issue and will forward them to the Commission.

Follow-up to the Green Paper on Demographic Change and Intergenerational solidarity

The Working Group will contribute to AGE response to the Communication the Commission is planning to publish in May 2006 as a follow-up to the Green paper.

Stop Discrimination Campaign

AGE and its working group will continue to cooperate with Media Consulta for the Stop Discrimination Campaign. Many of our members have been involved in the campaign's activities and hope to continue in the future, in particular in the framework of the European Year. AGE is presently working with Media Consulta to organise a session with the other anti discrimination networks at the Employment Week (May 2006). We will also disseminate information about the Journalist Award and in particular information on age discrimination.

PROGRESS proposal

Our Working Group will continue to support AGE's campaign in favour of the PROGRESS programme. Once the programme is approved, the Working Group will help draft the work programme and Strategic Plan we will submit to the Commission when the call is launched. AGE feels that the PROGRESS proposal is well designed and should enable the EU to progress on its major social objectives.

Expected outcomes for item 2.2.1:

- 3 meetings of Anti Discrimination Expert Group
- Regular information articles on all discrimination issues, including gender discrimination in CoverAge, our monthly bulletin and on our website
- New leaflet and brochure on age discrimination and EU action to combat discrimination (Dec 2006)
- A leaflet on multiple discrimination (Dec 2006)
- A leaflet on gender discrimination (Dec 2006)
- A survey of transposition of the Employment Directive and analysis of problems identified in implementation of Articles 6 and 16 (December 2006)
- Data on case law collected and widely disseminated in our network

- Draft Directive on access to goods and services and narrative with pros and cons of such an initiative drafted
- Contribution to AGE response to Communication on Demographic Change
- Age ground more visible in the Stop Discrimination campaign and better participation of our members in the campaign
- Active participation in the European Year on Equal Opportunities – 2007
- Strategic plan and work programme ready on time to respond to call for proposals of PROGRESS programme

2.2.2 Employment (strategic goal 3.2)

AGE welcomes the focus on delivering more and better jobs in the Revised Lisbon Strategy and agrees that we need more people to work and people to work longer. AGE welcomes also the acknowledgement that more flexible working arrangements and better access to training are necessary to promote active ageing. However we feel that not enough attention is paid to removing the barriers and fighting age discrimination preventing older workers from remaining in the labour market. Research have shown that barriers to employment affecting older workers are very diverse and will not be overcome unless active labour market policies targeting that age group are implemented. Employment Guidelines were developed in 2005 and they will not be revised in 2006. But their implementation needs to move up a gear and AGE will do its utmost to ensure that active ageing is adequately addressed in the new national Reform Plans and that Member States report on measures undertaken to promote active ageing.

AGE will also seize the opportunity of the European Year on Mobility to raise awareness of the specific problems older workers face in terms of mobility (lack of portability of various social benefits, lack of job security, impact on a partner's career with resulting increased risk of poverty, caring duties toward ageing parents, high costs involved in moving house, etc.) Unless the real barriers preventing older workers from becoming more mobile (both job and geographical mobility) are addressed, they will continue to miss opportunities to remain active in the labour market.

Commission Communication on the active inclusion of those furthest to labour market: the working group has received the communication and will be contributing to AGE response together with the Social Protection working group on issues related to older workers.

Employment Week May 2006: The Chair of our Working Group has been invited to take part in a panel discussion at the Employment Week 2006 on "Employability through diversity – how well is it working?" We plan to distribute a leaflet with our recommendations on active ageing.

Seminar at European Parliament: To promote examples of good practice in the employment of older workers – we plan to organise again a seminar on good practice in employment of older workers at the European Parliament in November 2006 with support of the Intergroup on Ageing. The one we organised last year with the participation of UNICE, Trade Unions and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions was very successful. We plan to issue a brochure on active ageing to mark that event. The working group started to gather data to draft the brochure but due to lack of funding we have not been able to meet to finalise it during year 2.

With the support of its Employment Working Group AGE will:

- Continue to aim at developing expertise in particular in Member States where the employment of older workers is most problematic. We are pleased to have two new experts from France (the WG includes also experts from UK, NL, E).
- Continue to develop relationships with social partners at EU and national levels and encourage them to be more inclusive of older workers in the framework of their campaign on diversity, including by continuing to accept invitations to speak at meetings.
- To take active part in the Employment Week 2006;
- Contribute to AGE response to Communication on active inclusion of those furthest of labour market;
- Hold a seminar at the European Parliament on employment of older workers. (Nov. 2006)
- Pursue our contact with relevant EU decision-makers dealing with active ageing: European Commission, European Parliament etc.
- Monitor the implementation of the Employment Guidelines in the Member States in relation to active ageing in view of drawing recommendations for the next round;
- Raise awareness of our network on the relevant Employment guidelines and National Reform Plans;
- Continue to raise awareness of the examples of good practice identified from EQUAL projects.
- Pursue our contact with relevant Directorates in OECD and follow-up to their report on Employment of Older Workers issued in 2006;
- Continue to gather older workers' views on working longer and making work pay and develop AGE's long-term strategy with regard to the employment of older workers
- Develop a brochure on active ageing (November) and a leaflet (May) to be widely disseminated throughout our network and website.

Expected outcomes for item 2.2.2:

- 3 meetings of Expert Group (most work will be done via the internet)
- 1-2 new experts from new Member States

- Position paper on the National Reform Plans with recommendations on active ageing;
- A brochure on active ageing (EN, FR, D)
- A leaflet with information and recommendations on active ageing;
- Participation in the Employment Week 2006
- Seminar at the European Parliament on active ageing
- Briefing notes for our members on examples of good practice and what they can do to advance the interests of older workers at national level
- Compilation of articles and web pages on active ageing of interest to our members
- Compilation of media coverage of active ageing in national press.
- Examples of relationships with social partners at EU and national level on active ageing issues
- Recommendations on barriers to mobility facing older workers

2.2.3 Social Protection (*Strategic goal 3.3*)

Given the strong links between pensions and longer working lives, our Social Protection Expert Group will continue to monitor and draw recommendations to feed in the debate on the reform of pensions systems including in the debate on flexicurity. More specifically we will need to address the following challenges:

- Develop better knowledge of the Streamlining Process among our national members and help them contribute to the process in their country through the Open Method of Coordination, in particular:
- Analyse and provide input on the Commission Staff Working Document Synthesis report on adequate and sustainable pensions to prepare the next round of National Strategy Reports on Pensions;
- Contribute to the in-depth analyses of the relevant specific issues during this “light year” of the Streamlining process: minimum income provision for older people; non contributory credits set up to compensate carer breaks, flexibility of retirement age (for ex. AGE calls for a ban on age discrimination which prevents people from working beyond statutory retirement age); key issues around private pensions schemes such as the lack of efficient legal framework, security issues, portability issues, inequality in access, reliable information, etc.
- Contribute to the debate on flexicurity and, if possible, to the extraordinary summit proposed by the Commission in the fall 2006;
- Get involved in Social Protection Committee’s consultation on those excluded from the labour market
- Follow-up peer review processes on pensions. We are supporting the suggestion to have a peer review on minimum income for older people.
- Continue involvement in Commission’s Pension Forum
- Keep following the gender directive with regards to gender discrimination in private pensions schemes (in synergy with EWL)

- Build capacity of AGE members to undertake action on Services of General Interest
- Promote AGE position on social protection / pensions
- Pursue contacts with relevant Commission officials, social partners and other stakeholder in the area of pensions (e.g. ETUC, EWL & Social Platform & others)
- Share experiences among members about pension reforms (by having presentations about national systems and reforms) and their impact on the employability of older workers
- Attend Presidency and Commission's conferences on social protection issues.
- Build capacity among members in new Member States and identify a few new experts;

Expected outcomes for item 2.2.3:

- 3 meetings of the Working Group
- 3 new experts from new Member States
- Increased participation of our members in the streamlining process
- Participation in debates on key issues such as minimum income for older people, replacement rates, private pensions schemes, etc.
- Position statement on flexicurity to be published on time for the extraordinary summit of fall 2006;
- Preparation of the next round of National Strategy Reports on Pensions
- Recommendations to the Social Protection Committee on those excluded from the labour market
- Participation in the Commission' Pensions Forum
- Participation in major EU conferences
- AGE position on Social Services of General Interest
- Dissemination of the brochure on AGE position on social protection and pensions issues
- Publication of a leaflet with main points of our Pensions statement;
- Compilation of articles and web pages on social protection issues published by our members
- Compilation of media coverage of older people's NGOs positions on social protection issues in national press.
- Increased relations with social partners and public authorities at EU and national levels on social protection issues

2.2.4 Social Inclusion (Strategic goal 3.3)

Since we set it up two years ago, our virtual Working Group on Social Inclusion has grown and it now brings 16 experts from 9 member states (F, UK, E, EL, NL, PL, IE, LT, CZ, D, IT, SE) who help the Secretariat develop recommendations on social inclusion and take an active part in major EU processes and events such

as the Open Method of Coordination and the Round Table on social inclusion. This group is also involved in AGE's project on Social Inclusion (funded by the Action Programme on Social Inclusion). Together with EAPN AGE has already started to raise awareness of the need to prepare well in advance the European Year against Poverty 2010. We will continue our contacts with the Spain and Belgium who will hold the EU presidencies in 2010. Over the next year work will focus on:

- Continue to develop membership of the virtual working group by developing capacity among our members to get involved in the OMC process on social inclusion;
- Promoting and developing exchanges between these members
- Developing AGE's position with regard to the social exclusion of older people
- Monitor the follow-up to the Joint Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report with regard to social inclusion;
- Get involved on the debate on minimum income for older people;
- Monitor the Open Method of Coordination with regard to involvement of civil society organisations and older people facing social exclusion
- Feeding into and participating in the Round Table on Social Exclusion in Finland, to ensure that poverty and social exclusion amongst older people is properly addressed
- Co-operating with the European Anti-Poverty Network, including continuing AGE's role as a member of EAPN and holding a seat on its Executive Committee.
- Monitor and draw recommendations to member states on how to achieve the common objectives for social inclusion of older people
- Work with Spanish and Belgian future EU Presidencies to prepare the European Year against Poverty 2010
- Keep good contacts with the Social Inclusion Unit of DG EMPL
- Contribute to the consultation by SPC of major NGOs on social inclusion issues;

Expected outcomes for item 2.2.4 on Social Inclusion:

- Consolidation of the working group
- Develop further AGE positions on the field of social inclusion, including the effect of age-based discrimination on social exclusion and poverty of older people.
- Participation in the Round Table on poverty and social exclusion.
- Strong references to older people in the conclusions of the Round Table.
- Participation in the debate on minimum income for older people;
- Follow-up to the Joint Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report.
- Participation in meetings of the European Organisations within membership of the EAPN

- Participation in meetings of the Executive Committee of EAPN
- Participation in relevant task force meetings of EAPN
- Participation in meetings with the Social Inclusion Unit of DG EMPL
- Recommendations to Spanish and Belgian future presidencies for the European Year against Poverty 2010.

2.2.5 Health (*Strategic Goal 3.3*)

The work of AGE in the field of health started in the autumn of 2004 by asking members about which areas AGE should concentrate on bearing in mind the subsidiarity principle. Age will therefore closely monitor the streamlined process and support its members to get involved in the OMC. The role of “users” groups such as AGE members is very important in the debate to ensure accessible, affordable, high quality services responsive to people’s needs. AGE is of the opinion that it is the role of governments to ensure that quality and equitable services are guaranteed to all citizens, free of discrimination including on the grounds of age. AGE will feed the views of its members to relevant policy makers, Commission, European Parliament, Council and in particular the Social Protection Committee.

We are particularly concerned that in several of the documents issued for the Spring Summit, the ever-increasing numbers of older people are typically cited as a reason to expect mounting health and long-term care costs in our societies.

AGE will raise awareness on the fact that one of the most important factors determining health care expenditure is health promotion. Better health contributes to economic growth¹ as well as to enhancing quality of life. Good health helps maintain people economically active for longer and reduces the number of years when one becomes dependent. Our Working Group is working on a brochure to promote healthy ageing. healthy lifestyles for all ages (addressing lifestyle determinants such as working conditions, physical activity, diet, socio-determinants of health) and the responsibility of civil society organisations in promoting good health in older age (to be launched in summer 2006).

A lot of progress in terms of financial sustainability and quality of healthcare resources can be achieved by ensuring better planned service delivery. Specifically, health and social services need to be carefully coordinated, and preventive care measures with early intervention must be the foundation on which user-centred services are delivered.

Much of the inefficient use of resources in the care of older people is due to the fact that physicians and other health care professions lack education in geriatrics.

¹ “The Contribution of Health to the Economy in the European Union”, DG SANCO, 2005

One important task for AGE will therefore be to raise awareness of this serious situation which also leads to human suffering.

The irrational use of medicines and its consequences both for the consumer and for society has come into focus by the publication "*Priority Medicines for Europe and the World*" issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO 2) in 2004 and by the reports published recently by the Council of Europe 1 . AGE will put special effort into the dissemination and implementation of the recommendations made in order to improve the prescribing habits of physicians and the use of medicines by the elderly.

Elder abuse is a hidden problem which causes much suffering. The health group will continue to help the Secretariat develop a leaflet on the importance of violence against older people and will mark the International day against elder abuse by issuing a statement (15 June 2006).

AGE remains committed to combating age discrimination in all areas of life and aims to monitor and influence the implementation of the various EU initiatives in this area. In the area of health as in any other fields, AGE advances the right of older people to be treated equally in health promotion and access to health resources. We look forward to the mapping study launched by the Commission on the feasibility of extending the legislation to cover access to goods, facilities and services on other grounds than race. Equal access to health is already covered by the large scope approach adopted by some member states when transposing the two non-discrimination Directives. AGE rejects chronological age as a reason to deny access to medical treatment or services and feels that older people should be empowered to have a say in the kind of care and services they would like to receive. AGE welcomes the focus on the promotion of healthy lifestyles to enable everyone including older people to participate fully in society. We promote a positive and integrated approach to health that addresses a range of social, economic, housing, planning, transport and other relevant policies, all areas where older citizens face discrimination.

AGE will also continue to respond to policy consultation at EU level (for example within the European Health Policy Forum set up by the Commission) and to participate in major events and conferences. For example, AGE hopes to be invited to play a role in the conference on Long Term Care the Commission is organising in September.

Unfortunately only a very small budget can be devoted to our Working Group on Health. Therefore, AGE's health group works mainly through e-mail and meetings of a core group of members are organised in relation with Council meetings.

Expected outcomes for item 2.2.5 on Health:

- Contribution to the OMC on Health
- Position paper on healthy lifestyles and safe workplaces for older workers
- Leaflet with major recommendations on healthy ageing and safe working conditions for all
- Position paper on rational use of medicines in the elderly
- Position paper on elder abuse
- Position paper on the need of geriatric training for health care personnel in charge of older patients
- Increased knowledge about discrimination faced by older people in access to healthcare
- Continued participation in the Commission's Health Policy Forum
- AGE participates in relevant EU conferences

2.3 Enhancing older citizens' active citizenship

Relates to Strategic goal 3.4

2.3.1 AGE contribution to the reflection period on the new Constitution and the future of Europe

Over the coming year AGE will continue to monitor the reflection process and to inform its members about the debate around the future of Europe. At this stage it is not clear what will be proposed in relation to the Constitution but AGE will do its utmost to keep its members informed and encourage them to get involved in national and EU debates. We will monitor closely the implementation of the Commission's Communication strategy (Plan D) and of the various activities suggested by the European Parliament in their resolution on the period of reflection. AGE produced an analysis of the new Constitution which is now published on our website in 4 languages (EN, F, D, S). We will encourage our members to translate the document into their own language and use it to raise awareness of the Constitution. Particular attention will be paid to raise awareness of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and of the horizontal article on non-discrimination which are both important steps forward in ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Depending on the decision taken by the June Council, we will raise awareness of any new proposal or option agreed for the future of Europe. We agree with the Austrian Presidency and the European Parliament. A broader public debate is needed on the fundamental questions raised in the EP Resolution. Our role will be to encourage older citizens to take part in this debate.

Expected outcomes for item 2.3.1:

- AGE members involved in national debates on the future of Europe

- Better awareness and understanding of the new Constitution amongst older citizens
- AGE analysis of any new proposal that might emerge on the future of the Constitution

2.3.2 AGE and the European Parliament

After the reestablishment of the Intergroup on Ageing in 2004, an ambitious work programme was agreed and a series of seminars were organised on ageing issues at the European Parliament with the support of several co-chairs. This year AGE agreed the work programme for 2006 with the Intergroup Bureau taking on board the evaluation of the first year's programme. AGE members are working hard to mobilise their respective MEPs and to increase understanding of older citizens' expectations among the MEPs.

As we have done in the previous years, we plan to organise a meeting on age discrimination in November/December with the support of the Intergroup on Ageing where the work we will have done on the transposition and implementation of the Employment Directive and its impact on the Employment of Older Workers. This will be presented together with our analysis of the pros and cons of a wider approach (large scope directive on access to goods and services).

Other seminars or meetings will be organised on major EU policy issues with the support of the co-Chairs of the Intergroup, including an event on good practice in employment of older workers, one on good practice in long-term care, one on multiple discrimination (together with the Intergroup against Racism and Xenophobia) and one on the Green paper on Demographic Change.

Expected outcomes for item 2.3.2:

- Increased participation of MEPs in Intergroup meetings
- Increased relationship of AGE members with MEPs
- Participation of AGE in Intergroup meetings
- A few events organised with the support of the Intergroup on age discrimination, active ageing, violence against older people, age – race and gender issues, the draft Directive on portability of Pensions, the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion

2.4 Information and communication activities

Relates to Strategic Goals 2,3 and 4

As mentioned by our external consultant, our legitimacy in voicing the concerns of our members can only be achieved through a strong communication strategy aimed at informing older people, their organisations and other interested organisations of relevant EU developments in order to raise awareness of and facilitate their involvement in EU policymaking and implementation. Our information is also targeting key policy makers: EU institutions, MEPs, national policy makers, academics.

All staff members received training and are now able to update the website directly. Our information activities cover issues such as policies on anti-discrimination, social protection, social inclusion, employment, research, the Constitution and period of reflection, the European Parliament, healthcare and Long Term Care, European programmes of relevance to older people, updates on projects in which AGE is participating, etc. Our information and communication tools include a website (including a well developed "Members section"), a monthly magazine, an annual report, position papers, brochures and leaflets. Our website has developed quite significantly since the beginning of our Strategic plan and the number of visitors rose from 4.000 in April 2004 to more than 12.000 in February 2006; This figure continues to rise and for that reason we plan to devote effort to making it more user friendly. The site contains so many pages, that we are regularly need to reorganise both the public and Members' sections to facilitate consultation by users.

Expected outcomes for item 2.4:

- Further development of our website and improved accessibility of Public and Members' sections (as assessed by number of visitors and questionnaire)
- 11 issues of monthly bulletin in 5 languages (EN, F, I, D, E)
- Newsflashes on developments, which require urgent action, such as consultations on urgent political action, calls for proposals etc. (at least once a month throughout the year)
- Information on statistics, initiatives and good practice in Member States (throughout the year)

2.5 Evaluation procedure and next Strategic Plan

Relates to *Strategic Goal 4.5*

An important part of our Strategic Plan was to develop a performance management system to ensure feasibility and sustainability of our work. During the second year of our Strategic Plan we fine tuned our reporting system with the help of our external consultant. During year 3 we want to finalise the evaluation system and see if we can move mostly to self reporting. We want also to draft our next Strategic Plan for the period 2007 – 2010. Work has started already in year 2 with discussions held at the Council and General Assembly level,

including the internal membership survey undertaken in 2005-2006. This will feed in the drafting of the next Strategic plan and should help us focus our priorities. As recommended by our external consultant we reviewed our logic framework to streamline and limit the number of performance indicators based on our experience during the first year. Our external evaluator will provide us guidance both on the final fine tuning of the performance reporting system and in drafting the next strategic plan, helping set up mechanisms to enable us to do this exercise on our own in the future. He will also continue to provide external evaluations for the interim reports (at mid term, after 10 months and at end of the year)

For more details on our plans, please refer to the enclosed working plan drafted by Transform Agency.

Expected outcomes for item 2.5:

- A finalised performance management system that meets the Commission requirements and AGE's needs
- A new Strategic Plan for 2007-2010
- Interim and final reports by external evaluator
- A method to draft future strategic plans

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