



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

AGE – Work Programme May – December 2007

1. General aims

AGE welcomes the new Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS and is happy to submit the enclosed application in response to the Call for Proposals VP/2006/019.

Since our contract under the Community Action Programme on Anti Discrimination 2001-2006 is ending on 30th April 2007, the present application covers the period from 1st May until 31st December 2007.

Building on our growing network and the experience accumulated through our involvement in the Action Programme on Anti Discrimination 2001-2006 as the core funded organisation for the “age” sector, we wish to focus our first application under the new PROGRESS programme on:

- Strengthening the active involvement of our member organisations in the promotion of a European Society for all ages;
- Helping bridge the gap between senior citizens and the EU institutions and promote their active participation in the most relevant EU policy processes;
- Fostering partnerships between the relevant stakeholders - civil society organisations representing citizens aged 50+, public authorities, equality bodies, social partners, the industry - at EU, national and local level;
- Continuing to develop our network and provide tailor-made support to new comers, paying a particular attention to our new members from Bulgaria and Romania;
- Continuing to develop the capacity of our European Secretariat to provide effective support to our member organisations to help them mainstream EU policies in their work at national level and help them contribute actively to AGE's policy work;

- Continuing to develop our website and communication tools to be a reliable source of information and exchange for our members, the media and the wider public on the EU anti discrimination laws and ageing policies;
- Develop our next Strategic Plan for the 2008-2010 in full consultation with our member organisations.

During these 8 months, our aim will be to disseminate information about all relevant EU policy processes, and to coordinate and advance the views of our constituency on how to ensure equal opportunities for all regardless of age in particular in the following key EU policies:

2. Policy objectives: key EU processes in which AGE wants to contribute:

2.1 European Year on Equal Opportunities for All 2007: Our activities will aim at seizing the window of opportunity available during the European Year on Equal Opportunities for All to develop 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 an age friendly society. Special attention will continue to be paid to the gender dimension and the issue of multiple discrimination in close cooperation with other non-discrimination European and national NGOs. AGE, ENAR, ILGA-Europe and EDF would like to organise a joint Intergroup event at the European Parliament in Autumn 2007 to present NGOs recommendations on concrete actions that should be implemented to promote equal opportunities for all in Europe. We hope that the European Women's Lobby and the European Youth Forum will join us.

To mark the European Year and provide our members with a campaigning tool, AGE is publishing a new brochure entitled "Toward a European Society of all Ages" (in EN, FR, DE) and a leaflet with the main recommendations from the brochure (to be published in more languages). The brochure and leaflet will be launched at the end conference of the Action programme on non discrimination at the end of November 2006 and disseminated throughout our network to be used next year. Our members will be encouraged to use these materials to promote a society for all ages during the European Year and beyond in all relevant activities.

(Council and Anti Discrimination Expert Group involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.1:

- ✓ An EU wide campaign led by our national members based on our brochure "Towards a European Society of all Ages"
- ✓ Active involvement of our members in activities implemented by their National Implementation Bodies and other stakeholders;

- ✓ Improved cooperation between our members and national NGOs fighting discrimination on other grounds;
- ✓ A set of recommendations addressed to the European, national and local authorities and social partners to ensure a long term impact of the European Year in promoting equal opportunities for all.
- ✓ A joint meeting of the European Parliament Intergroups dealing with ageing, disability, racism and sexual orientation, and the Women's Rights Committee in the Autumn 2007 to present our recommendations.

2.2 Follow-up to the Mapping Study on the existing anti discrimination legislation: At the end of November 2006 AGE will send the information gathered from our members on evidence of cases of age discrimination in access to goods, facilities and services. The information has been gathered in response to the call addressed to NGOs by the Commission last June. This work will hopefully inform the mapping study presently being prepared by the Commission and convince policy makers that more needs to be done to promote equal opportunities for all in the EU. When the study will be published AGE will disseminate it widely and gather feedback from our members to address a common reaction to the Commission, European Parliament and Member States.

(Anti Discrimination Expert Group involved).

Expected outcomes for 2.2:

- ✓ Wide dissemination of the study throughout our network
- ✓ Common reaction to the document based on feedback received from our members

2.3 Review of the state of implementation of the Employment Directive with regard to age discrimination: The Commission announced in its Communication on the demographic future of Europe that it will undertake a "Review of the state of implementation of the Employment Directive with regard to age discrimination in 2007. AGE warmly welcomes this initiative. End of November 2006 AGE will present its annual report on the transposition and implementation of the directive with our recommendations on issues which we feel need to be addressed in the Commission's review. Once the Review is published in 2007, we will gather feedback from our members on the Commission's assessment and draft a new set of recommendations to the EU institutions and national policy makers on areas we feel need to be urgently addressed or are missing or not properly covered in the Commission's review. Now that the directive is transposed in (almost) all Member States, a new period opens up for AGE and its members. Our role will be to significantly increase public awareness on the legislation and measures put in place at national level to fight age discrimination in employment. With the support of our Anti Discrimination Expert Group we will

continue to monitor the implementation process and in particular the way Article 6 is interpreted by Member States. We will gather feedback on the impact it has on creating a more inclusive labour market and what can be done to help older people remain in the labour market.

AGE will organise an Intergroup on Ageing meeting on the review of the implementation of the Employment Directive. This event, which we see happening toward the end of 2007, will give us the opportunity to discuss the Commission's Review and present our own assessment and recommendations for the future to the European Parliament.

(Anti discrimination and Employment expert groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.3:

- ✓ Wide dissemination of the Commission's review throughout our network
- ✓ Reaction from our network to the Commission's Review and recommendations on areas where urgent action is needed or which are missing or not properly covered in the review.
- ✓ Meeting of the Intergroup on Ageing to discuss the Commission's Review and present AGE's own assessment (December 2007).

2.4 Follow-up to the Communication on the demographic future of Europe:

Our objective will be to provide recommendations to the Commission on areas of concern identified by our members and which should be addressed in the follow-up to the Communication. These will include a strong call for attention to be paid to both the needs of eldercare recipients and care givers. From the care recipient's perspective, the key issues are quality, availability and affordability of care. From the caregiver's perspective, the main issues are the poor working conditions of professional carers, the challenges faced by informal carers and the discrimination they face. The bulk of care to the elderly is provided by informal/family carers mostly women aged 40+ who face huge inequalities due to their caring duties. Their lack of attachment to the labour market and their increased risk of poverty in old age is not due to a lack of skills, but to their caring duties which prevent them from enjoying the same opportunities in life as men. The needs of retired informal family carers also deserve due attention and are not addressed for the moment at EU level where the debate is focussed exclusively on reconciling work and family life and increasing the employment rate of women and older workers. If the EU is serious about tackling poverty and inequalities at all ages, it needs to address the huge challenges faced by older informal carers as well.

During this period we will also start a reflection among our members to prepare a position on the fore coming Communication on economic migration. AGE responded to the Green paper on migration to raise awareness of the needs of the growing number of migrants caring for the elderly and the needs of older migrants residing in the EU.

AGE would like to continue to work together with the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and the European Women's Lobby to monitor the follow-up to the First Forum on the demographic future of the EU. On the eve of that Forum, AGE, EWL and YFJ launched a Joint Communication to the press with a clear call for NGOs to be involved in the debate. We have heard since that the Commission is envisaging organising an event on intergenerational solidarity in 2007 and we wish to contribute together to this event.

(All expert groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.4:

- ✓ A set of recommendations on areas to be addressed by the Commission in their planned Communication on how best to take account of the needs of an ageing population;
- ✓ AGE position on economic migration from the perspective of migrant carers and older migrants residing in the EU;
- ✓ Active participation of AGE in the event on intergenerational solidarity together with EWL and YFJ.
- ✓ Active involvement of NGOs in the follow-up to the Forum and work to be done by the group of national experts until the next bi-annual Forum.

2.5 Planned Communication on meeting dependency needs better: AGE will send recommendations to the Commission on areas which need to be addressed in the Communication they plan to publish in 2008 on how best to take into account the needs of an ageing population in areas such as town and country planning and access to new technologies.

Long term care for the dependent: In October 2007 AGE will organise a seminar on long term care services for the elderly at the European Parliament with the support of Mr. Bowis, MEP and member of the Intergroup on Ageing and of the Intergroup on Health. The purpose of this seminar will be to present our draft recommendations and discuss them with a broader public including the Commission and the Members of the two Intergroups.

Accessibility of the built environment: AGE has been actively involved in the Build for All project which has drawn recommendations on how public procurements procedures can be used to promote accessibility in the built environment. AGE will disseminate widely the toolkit addressed to policy makers and will encourage our members to promote it at national and local level.

Accessibility of public transport: AGE will respond to the Green paper on urban transport (See item 2.16).

Role ICT can play to support independent living: AGE is working with partners from the industry (INTEL), the King Baudouin Foundation and the European Institute for Prospective Technology Studies (IPTS). AGE organised a meeting last September with these three potential partners and all expressed their interest in cooperation with us in moving forward on this dossier. In October INTEL invited an AGE Vice-President and the Director to a meeting with Craig Barrett, Chair of INTEL Board. The two organisations agreed to work together on the issue of ICT and older people both in the employment field and support to independent living. A special plenary session will be organised at the General Assembly 2007 on equal opportunities for older people in access to ICT. INTEL will present 3 projects they are running in France (older workers), Italy (access to ICT) and Spain (support to independent living) at the next AGE Council meeting on 21 November. AGE receives no sponsorship from INTEL.
(All experts groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.5:

- ✓ Greater involvement of our members in the debate on how to better meet dependency needs;
- ✓ A seminar at the European Parliament with the support of the Intergroup on Ageing and the Intergroup on Health most probably in October 2007;
- ✓ AGE recommendations to the Communication on issues which need to be covered in the Communication on better meeting dependency needs.
- ✓ Work plan for cooperation with INTEL, King Baudouin Foundation and IPTS on the role ICT can play to enhance employment of older workers and promote independent living of the elderly.

2.6 European Agency on Fundamental Rights

The European Agency on Fundamental Rights should be launched early in 2007. Together with the other non discrimination NGOS, AGE will continue to disseminate information about the new structure and influence its setting up to ensure that equality for all, including people of all ages, is properly addressed in its mandate and work programme.

(Anti Discrimination Expert Group involved).

Expected outcomes for 2.6:

- ✓ Greater awareness among our members of the new Agency on Fundamental Rights and its role.
- ✓ The mandate and work programme of the new Agency to include a reference to equal for all regardless of age.

2.7 European Employment Strategy and Integrated Employment Guidelines: During the second half of 2007, in order to provide input to

the review of the Community Lisbon Programme foreseen in 2008 and to influence the next three year governance cycle, AGE will draw recommendations on the most relevant Integrated Employment Guidelines in particular on:

- GL17: to improve the employment rate of older workers;
- GL18: to promote better working conditions for older workers, the provision of accessible and affordable quality care facilities for elderly dependents and support to their informal carers, to improve social protection systems;
- GL19: to promote an age friendly working environment, enhance work attractiveness for older workers, paying special attention to the gender and multiple discrimination preventing the so-called “inactive” from entering or remaining in the labour market; to develop incentives to work longer and more flexible work contracts for older workers
- GL23: to improve access to training and life long learning for older workers; AGE will monitor the measures set up by the Commission and Member States to increase the number of older workers participating in training as agreed by the Spring Council 2006 and reach their target of 12,5% by 2010.
- GL24: to adapt training systems on new technologies to the needs of older workers.

(Expert Groups on Employment, Anti Discrimination and Social Protection involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.7:

- ✓ Greater awareness of the EES and objectives among our network;
- ✓ A set of recommendations addressed to the Commission, the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee in Autumn 2007 ahead of the new Lisbon cycle.

2.8 Follow-up to the Green Paper on the future of Labour Law and Common principles on flexicurity: AGE will disseminate information about these important social policy processes and gather feedback from our member organisations on how these principles should be implemented at national level and their potential impact on people aged 50+. This work will feed our recommendations for the revision of the Integrated Employment Guidelines, see previous point. AGE will also contribute to the common Social Platform position.

We will also present our recommendations on employment of older workers at the Employment Week 2007 (June).

(Employment, Anti Discrimination and Social Protection Expert Groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.8:

- ✓ Greater awareness of the debate and issues at stake among our members and their relevance to older persons;
- ✓ A coordinated response from our sector to the Green Paper on the future of Labour Law;
- ✓ Recommendations for the implementation of the common principles on flexicurity based on feedback received from our members and experts.
- ✓ AGE presentation at European Week 2007

2.9 The streamlining process on social protection and social inclusion:

Our objective in this area will be to continue to help our member organisations get better involved in the Open Method of Coordination in the field of Social Protection (Pensions), Social Inclusion and Health Long Term Care. Special attention will be paid to helping our new members get involved in these processes at national level. AGE will also try to get involved in the relevant mutual learning and exchange exercises implemented during this “light” year of the three year cycle.

Social Inclusion strategy: in 2006 with the support of the Community Action Programme on Social Inclusion, AGE developed a toolkit to help older people’s organisations get involved in the OMC on Social Inclusion and facilitate the active participation of older people experiencing poverty. In 2007 AGE will disseminate this toolkit (available in 20 languages) very widely throughout our network and encourage our member organisations who have not been involved in the project to use it and promote its use at national and local level (valorisation of the outcome of the project). Feedback will be gathered through our Social Inclusion Expert Group to continue to improve the toolkit in the future. *(Social Inclusion Expert Group involved)*

Pensions Reform: NGOs such as AGE can play a key role in building support from the public for the reforms needed to ensure the adequacy and long term financial sustainability of our social protection systems. During this period AGE will continue to monitor the reforms implemented or proposed by Member States and gather their views on the potential benefit or increased risk of poverty from a gender perspective. Last June, AGE was invited as the stakeholder representing older people’s NGOs in the Peer Review on Poverty of Older Women. AGE’s comments were welcomed by the Social Protection Committee members who participated in the peer review and are published on the SPC site. AGE will continue to call for the development of more accurate profiles for the projections used by the Commission and OECD to evaluate the impact of proposed pension reforms. At present the profile used is that of a full time, average earner male worker with a full career, i.e. a profile which is not representative of the wide majority of today’s workers, women in particular. In our view reforms based on such profiles will increase the poverty risk of women with broken careers and the growing number of part timers. The gender dimension of poverty in old age deserves closer attention. Migrants face similar challenges as a result of their shorter working

career in the EU, unemployment periods and poorer working conditions and pay.

Last April, AGE issued recommendations on the draft directive on portability of complementary pensions rights. AGE will continue to monitor the debate and press for a move toward ensuring the full portability of these rights given the growing take up rate and the objective of increased mobility for the workers within the EU. *(Social Protection Expert Group involved)*

Health and Long Term Care: AGE will continue to monitor the new OMC on Health and LTC and help our members to get involved in the process (so far only very few of our members reported being consulted and involved in the debate at national level). In 2006 AGE launched a campaign to call for action to be taken to prevent elder abuse. The Council of Europe has contacted our Secretariat and wishes to work with us on the development of common quality standards for residential homes for the elderly. AGE would like to contribute recommendations to the Commission on what could be done on that issue as part of the OMC on Health and LTC. The “market” for long term care services is rapidly developing in the EU. In our view this calls for EU quality standards to ensure adequate “consumers” protection and patient safety. This is particularly necessary in our view, given the vulnerability of the target group who are often captive consumers with little or no possibility to choose the service provider. AGE would welcome work to be done at EU level in this area.

(Health, Social Protection and Anti Discrimination Expert Groups involved).

Expected outcomes for 2.9:

- ✓ “Citizens friendly” documents to explain the streamlining process and encourage more older people’s organisations to get involved at national level in all three strands of the process;
- ✓ Increased involvement of AGE members in the relevant mutual learning and exchange exercises organised in the framework of the OMC on Social Protection and Social Inclusion in 2007;
- ✓ The needs of older people and the gender/age dimensions are better taken on board in all three strands of the streamlining process
- ✓ Launch of debate on EU quality standards for long term care services.
- ✓ AGE position on the directive on portability of complementary pensions rights.

2.10 Mid-term review of the implementation of the Social Agenda 2005-2010: our objective is to develop our own assessment of progress achieved so far with regard to active ageing, social protection and social inclusion policies paying due attention to their impact on women and migrants.

(All expert groups involved).

Expected outcomes for 2.10:

- ✓ Dissemination of the Commission's mid-term Review of the Social Agenda to our network with a summary of the most relevant parts for older people;
- ✓ AGE's own assessment of progress achieved through the Social Agenda in terms of equal opportunities for older workers, social inclusion and eradication of poverty among the elderly in particular older women.

2.11 Report on the Social Situation in the Union: gather feedback from our members and help them get involved in the debate that the Commission wants to open on key issues such as the challenges of an ageing society, quality of work, new patterns of families and their availability to care for dependent relatives, poverty and inequalities. AGE will respond to the document from an age and gender perspective.

(All expert groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.11:

- ✓ Dissemination of the Report on the Social Situation in the Union with a summary of the most relevant parts for older citizens;
- ✓ AGE comments on the Report on the Social Situation in the Union with recommendations on areas where policies need to be improved.

2.12 Communication on a European Strategy for Social Services of General Interest (SSGI): monitor the process and help our member organisations obtain a better understanding of the issues at stake from an age equality perspective, disseminate information on Commission's proposal on steps to be taken to develop a more coherent approach in the application of EU law and principles in the field of social services. This is a dossier of great relevance to our members because it concerns not only residential and home care services for the elderly, but also social inclusion, employment, adult education and health promotion services, etc.; the dossier is however very complex and difficult to follow for NGOs in particular at national level and directions from AGE would facilitate their involvement in this area. AGE will continue to participate in the debate through the Social Platform.

(Council, all Expert Groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.12:

- ✓ Greater awareness among our members of the issues at stake in the debate on social services of general interest.
- ✓ AGE to contribute to the coordinated position from the social NGOs to influence the future EU strategy on SSGI.

2.13 White Paper on Health Strategy and proposed legal framework for safe and efficient health services: ensure that older people's needs and the age/gender dimensions of health are mainstreamed as fundamental principles in these important initiatives; access to health services is one of the key areas where our members are reporting cases of age discrimination: older people and in particular older women are denied access for example to cancer screening or specific treatments above a certain age and huge disparities exist between Member States. In a number of countries poor incomes and expenses in actually using health services act as a barrier preventing older people to access the health services their condition would require. AGE is currently gathering evidence on cases of age discrimination including in access to health and will forward the information to DG EMPL, Anti Discrimination Unit in November 2006, and the relevant parts to DG SANCO.

(Anti Discrimination and Health expert groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.13:

- ✓ Greater awareness of this debate among our members;
- ✓ AGE call for age equality to be mainstreamed as a key principle in the new EU Health Strategy and proposed legal framework for health services.

2.14 White Paper on Nutrition and follow-up to the Communication on EU Alcohol Strategy: AGE responded to the Green paper on Nutrition with clear recommendations on how to improve nutrition and health among the elderly but unfortunately our response was "lost" and recovered too late by DG SANCO for it to be included in the list of contributions. AGE will try therefore to influence the follow-up process to the White Paper since good nutrition and healthy lifestyles are essential to delay the onset of illness and disability and improve the quality of life of the elderly, a key objective in the context of demographic ageing. AGE will also disseminate information on the new EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm.

(Health Expert Group involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.14:

- ✓ Greater awareness among policy makers of the need to fight malnutrition among the elderly and its costs to the health systems;
- ✓ AGE recommendations on policy initiatives needed to promote healthy ageing.

2.15 European e-inclusion Strategy: AGE is actively consulted by DG INFSO on the role ICT can play to help older people remain socially included and live independent lives. We will disseminate information on the new Communication on ICT and ageing and gather feedback and recommendations from our members on what works and what does not.

(New Working Group on Universal Accessibility and Independent Living (WGUAIL) involved, see point 3.2.5)

Expected outcomes for 2.15:

- ✓ Greater awareness of the European e-Inclusion Strategy and Communication on the role of ICT in ageing among our members
- ✓ New Working Group set up to provide support and expertise to the secretariat on older people's needs in the field of ICT.

2.16 Green Paper on urban transport: AGE will respond to this document stressing the utmost importance of accessible urban transport to ensure equal opportunities in an ageing society; AGE has been actively involved in the UNIACCESS project. This project has developed a guide to improve accessibility in public transport. CEN (the European standardisation agency) is interested in the outcome of UNIACCESS and AGE has been invited to provide input to ANEC's work on accessibility. AGE will coordinate this work with our contributions to the OECD Working Group on the Conference of Transport Ministers on accessible public transport.

(Working group on Universal Accessibility and Independent Living involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.16:

- ✓ Involvement of our members in the consultation process
- ✓ AGE response to the Green paper on urban transport
- ✓ AGE involvement in the work done by ANEC and CEN on accessibility of public transport.

2.17 Follow-up to the White Paper on a European Communication Policy: inform our members of the new proposals and encourage them to develop their own contribution to communicating Europe to senior citizens and promoting civil dialogue with policy makers on EU matters. Although we welcome the attention paid to youth in the initiatives proposed to fill the gap between the citizens and EU institutions and policy making process, we feel that older citizens deserve equal attention and their needs are presently ignored. The heavy reliance on new technologies and use of internet to provide information to citizens means that only a small portion of the population is targeted. The analysis of the users' profile of the Commission "Debate Europe" website shows clearly that these types of

instruments reach mainly young males. Other innovative ways must be developed to make information accessible to everyone, instruments which really meet the needs of all regardless of age or gender.
(*New Working Group on Universal Accessibility and Independent Living (WGUAIL) involved, see point 3.2.5*)

Expected outcomes for 2.17:

- ✓ Greater awareness among our members of the various initiatives proposed by the Commission to improve the European Communication Policy;
- ✓ AGE recommendations to adapt the Commission's communication tools to the needs of an ageing population.

2.18 Debate on the future of Europe: This issue will be one of the priorities of the German Presidency and AGE members. AGE will monitor the process and inform our members, encouraging them to get involved in the debate at national level. Given the high focus put on the youth – which we welcome - it will be important for AGE to ensure that older citizens do not feel left out of the debate. The debate on the future of Europe concerns them as much as anyone else in the EU.

(Council and expert groups involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.18:

- ✓ Greater awareness among our members of the state of play of the debate on the future of Europe
- ✓ Recommendations on areas of concerns for older citizens.

2.19 Proposal for a Directive on the solvency of insurance companies: AGE will monitor the process, gather feedback from our members and draw recommendations on this proposal which will concern 3rd pillar pension schemes providers.

(Social Protection Expert Group involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.19:

- ✓ Greater awareness among our members of the proposal and issues at stake;
- ✓ Recommendations based on our members ' feedback.

2.20 Cohesion Policy - Communication on delivering the Lisbon Agenda on the ground, 2007-2013: disseminate recommendations on how ageing issues and demographic change can be mainstreamed by Member States in their use of Structural Funds. AGE will use the work done so far within

the framework on the Regions for All Ages project to draft recommendations aimed at local and regional authorities on what can be done with the support of the Structural Funds to help regions meet their demographic challenges. AGE is disseminating information on the conference that DG Regio is organising in January 2007 and will build on that to press for a better mainstreaming of the needs of an ageing population in the way Structural Funds are used.

(All expert Groups and Council involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.20:

- ✓ Greater awareness among our members of the role Structural Funds can play in responding to the demographic challenge
- ✓ Concrete proposals on initiatives that can be funded under the Structural Funds to help regions meet their demographic challenges.

2.21 Green Paper on Universal Service in electronic communications:

AGE will disseminate this consultation among our membership and draw a common response with recommendations to ensure that the needs of older people are adequately taken on board.

(New Working Group on Universal Accessibility and Independent Living (WGUAIL) involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.21:

- ✓ AGE response to the Green Paper based on our members recommendations.

2.22 New EU programmes of relevance for our members: AGE will continue to disseminate information about the various programmes which will be launched in 2007 and which could be of interest to older citizens. AGE will help members find partners and get involved in projects.

(Secretariat)

Expected outcomes for 2.22:

- ✓ Information on new calls for proposals of interest to older people's organisations.

2.23 Preparation of the European Year on Intercultural Dialogue 2008:

AGE will provide information on the preparation of this European Year and help our members get involved. Here again, whilst we welcome the high focus put on youth, we want to ensure that older people will not feel left

out of the process and that a broad approach will be adopted to the concept of intercultural dialogue, to include the growing cultural gap between generations. We will try to work with the Youth Forum and ENAR to make the best out of this European Year 2008.

(Anti discrimination expert group and Council involved)

Expected outcomes for 2.23:

- ✓ Recommendations to older people's organisations on how to get involved in the European Year 2008;

3. Governance and membership objectives: development of AGE network and working methods

3.1 Membership composition

Since it was established in 2001 as a European non-governmental, not-for-profit association under Belgian law, AGE has grown to become a wide network of about 140 member organisations around the European Union. Significant progress in terms of capacity building has been achieved already thanks to the support we received from the Action Programme to combat discrimination 2001-2006. We want to build on our experience to continue to boost the capacity of our members to play their role as civil society stakeholders at national and local level, especially in the two new Member States and in some of the EU25 countries where NGOs need extra support.

Our membership includes national organisations in all EU 25 and Romania (Bulgaria has applied and should join at next Council meeting end of November). AGE also includes nine European federations and organisations:

- EurolinkAge*
- FIAPA*
- European Association for Directors of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (EDE)*
- Groupement Européen de Retraités des Caisses D'Épargne, Banques et Institutions Similaires
- EZA (European Centre for Workers' Questions)*
- AFPE (Association des Anciens de la Fonction Publique Européenne)
- Older Women's Network – Europe
- European Senior Citizens Union (ESCU)*
- European Seniors Organisation of the PSE (ESO)*

*: These European federations and organisations have a seat at the Council.

Our network also includes two non European member organisations:

- AARP (USA)
- Japan Productive Ageing Research Centre

Our membership is composed exclusively of organisations of people aged 50+ or organisations providing services to older people who are legally established in the European Union. Organisations from outside the EU can join as observers. The vast majority of Council members are representatives of organisations of senior citizens and the President must come from such an organisation OF older persons (not from a service provider organisation). A new Italian organisation representing workers aged 40+ excluded from the labour market has asked to join.

A coalition of trade unions from the Nordic countries have recently contacted our Swedish Vice-President and Danish President. They are impressed with the work AGE is doing and are interested to join our network. Our President will meet them in November and we will know soon if they confirm their application. We already have two trade unions from the Netherlands and the new Belgian Council member is the former Secretary General of the Belgian Christian Democrat Trade Unions. One of our European member organisation is EZA, the European Centre for Workers Questions, an organisation linked to the trade unions.

Whenever possible members of the Secretariat go and visit our member organisations, for example to deliver a presentation on EU policy developments to their General Assembly or to participate in a national seminar and present the EU perspective. These opportunities for a direct contact with the grass root level are very much valued both by staff members and our members. They offer great opportunities to present the most relevant EU policies in a nutshell to older citizens and national policy makers gathered in these events. For that reason, we want to develop more “citizen friendly” documents which could be translated and used to disseminate information at grass root level by our member organisations.

Expected outcomes for 3.1:

- ✓ An increase in our membership in particular from the new Member States.
- ✓ 5-6 visits from staff to national members events
- ✓ Information toolkit on the main EU policy processes (easy to understand and to translate into other languages)

3.2 Developing a better governance

In accordance with 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 – AGE is structured as follows:

3.2.1 General Assembly:

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 General Assembly meets at least once a year, usually in the Spring (GA 2007 will be held on 19-20 April. This application therefore includes no meeting of the GA). The General Assembly brings together one representative per Full Member (around 120 people) and a few observer members (at their own cost). The General Assembly is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving the annual report and audited accounts for past year;
- Approving the Work Programme and budget for next year;
- Ratifying applications for membership;
- Electing Council members;
- Mandating and granting discharge to the Council;
- Nominating the external certified auditor and evaluator.

In addition to the usual constitutional items, AGE usually organises a few plenary sessions with key speakers on EU priorities to give our members the opportunity to discuss important EU policy processes and enable them to make an informed decision when deciding the main objectives for the coming years. For example, the April 2007 General Assembly will include plenary sessions on the European Year on Equal Opportunities for All, the demographic future of the EU and the role ICT can play to promote social inclusion of older people. 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 3.2.1:

- ✓ No meeting of the General Assembly is foreseen under this period (GA 2007 will be held on 19-20 April 2007)

3.2.2 National co-ordinations

For the last three 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 in these countries. Informal coordination also takes place in Poland and Germany. These 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. It has also increased the visibility of AGE at national level and among national policy makers. AGE will continue to promote national co-ordinations and will encourage them to develop synergies with national anti-discrimination NGOs from other sectors.

Expected outcomes for 3.2.2:

- ✓ Regular meetings of the national co-ordinations in FR, UK, IT, NL, PL, DE
- ✓ Increased co-operation between AGE national members and NGOs from other sectors

3.2.3 Council:

Our Statutes specify that all Member States have a right to be represented in the Council. Acceding countries have a right to participate as observers. In addition to geographical representation, our Council also includes representatives of the European Federations and European Organisations (see list under 2.1). The Council meets 2-3 times a year and 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 take part in our Expert 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)

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. Our German, Portuguese, Slovenian and French Council members are already working with the AGE Secretariat on the coming EU Presidencies.

Expected outcomes for 3.2.3:

- ✓ 2 meetings of the Council (June and October/November)
- ✓ 2 new Council members from Romania and Bulgaria to be nominated at the General Assembly 2007
- ✓ Contacts with the EU future Presidencies
- ✓ Increased participation of our Council members and experts in future Presidency events

3.2.4 Executive Committee

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

The President is elected by the General Assembly and the Executive Officers by the Council from its members. The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day political guidance and management in close cooperation with the Director. 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. The Executive Committee meets about 5 times a year. The mandate of our President, Steen Langebaek, will come to an end in April 2007. The General Assembly will elect a new President and we feel that we will need to organise the first meeting with the new President quite soon after the General Assembly, in May 2007. Two more meetings will be organised as usual during that period.

Expected outcomes for 3.2.4:

- ✓ 3 meetings of the Executive Committee (May, September, December)

3.2.5 Expert Groups

During our last Strategic Plan AGE has set up a series of Expert Groups to gather feedback from our members and provide expertise to the Secretariat on specific policy dossiers. We now have Expert Groups on:

- Age Discrimination
- Social Protection
- Employment
- Social Inclusion
- Health

Given the importance of that dossier at EU level, we would like to set up a small working group on the role Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can play to ensuring equal opportunities and independent living for older people, a policy priority identified in the Communication on the demographic future of the EU.

Experts are nominated by our Council members and work mainly through e-mail exchange. Up until now three meetings/year have been organised for the Anti Discrimination and the Social Protection expert groups. For the other groups, due to lack of funding, only a core group met whenever possible for example on the eve of a Council meeting. We would like to review this system during this transition period in order to move toward a slightly more balanced representation across the groups to reflect the growing importance of their policy dossiers in our strive for equal opportunities for all. With only a slight increase for this item of our budget, it should be possible for us to organise two meetings for each expert group if we limit their number to a core group of:

- Anti Discrimination Expert Group: 20 experts

- Social Protection Expert Group: 20 experts
- Social Inclusion Expert Group: 20 experts
- Employment Expert Group: 10 experts
- Health Expert Group: 10 experts
- Working Group on Universal Accessibility and Independent Living (WGUAIL): 6 experts

This makes a total of 86 experts whose travel and accommodation costs to participate to two meetings/year would be refunded. During this contractual period, given the heavy workload in the discrimination (European Year) and social protection field (follow-up to the Communication on the demographic future of the EU), we propose however to hold two meetings of the Anti Discrimination and Social Protection Groups (in May-June and in October-November) and one for each of the other groups. In our next Strategic Plan 2008-2010, we will then plan two meetings for each group, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn.

The Council members will continue to be responsible for nominating experts for each policy area and all experts will be consulted by e-mail on the work of their respective group (see list of experts per group in annex). With this system, it is possible for Council members to nominate more than one expert per policy dossier if they have identified several persons who could bring an added value to AGE's work. But a maximum of one expert per country will be invited to the meetings for financial reasons and to ensure a more balanced geographical representation. Council members will be encouraged to aim at ensuring a better gender balance when selecting their experts. The chair and gender experts are excluded from this maximum.

Since all Expert Groups are consulted on the main position papers drafted by other groups, the selection of the core group will be made to ensure the best representation of the expertise available and diversity of situations faced by our national members in the EU27. We will aim at ensuring that all Member States have at least one representative participating in Expert Group meetings. These national "experts" will be responsible for liaising with the other experts of their country to ensure that they are on board. This system should support networking between our experts both within a Member State and between Member States. Whenever possible, experts will be invited to participate in relevant EU events, not only those in the core groups. (See full list of expert group members in annex).

Expected outcomes for 3.2.5:

- ✓ 2 meetings of the Anti Discrimination Expert Group (2 X 20p.)
- ✓ 2 meetings of the Social Protection Expert Group (2 X 20p.)
- ✓ 1 meeting of the Employment Expert Group (10p.)
- ✓ 1 meeting of the Social Inclusion Expert Group (20p.)
- ✓ 1 meeting of the Health Expert Group (10p.)

- ✓ 1 meeting of the Working Group on Universal Accessibility and Independent Living (WGUAIL) (6p.)

3.2.6 The Secretariat

The role of the Secretariat is to monitor relevant 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 and others 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.

Our permanent Secretariat is composed of a Director (full time), a Policy Officer dealing with Anti Discrimination and Employment issues (full time), a Policy Officer dealing with Social Protection and Social Inclusion (full time), an Information, Health and Accessibility Officer (Full time), a European Parliament Officer (one day/week), and an Administrative Officer (30h/week). (Job descriptions for all staff members are annexed). This amounts to an equivalent of 5 full time positions who are responsible for the implementation of our core activities.

After 5 years of existence, the time has come for the AGE Secretariat to move up a gear and progress toward a more developed structure. From a small team functioning at two levels (director and policy officers) we would like to progressively develop our Secretariat over the coming 5-10 years to move to a three level structure (director, deputy directors responsible for broad dossiers, policy officers/assistants). As highlighted by our external evaluator, AGE faces huge difficulties in retaining skilled staff due to the very heavy workload, unattractive salaries compared to the Belgian private and public sector and the lack of career prospects. We would like to use this transition period to develop a more equitable staff policy with a clear appraisal system, a fair seniority scheme, an efficient equal opportunities policy and a vision for the coming 10 years. We plan to develop this staff policy in close cooperation with the other core-funded EU social networks to help us all improve the working conditions we offer to our staff. Consultation between the directors of the core funded networks active in the field of non discrimination has already taken place on this issue and we have agreed to work together during this contractual period to develop a more harmonised staff policy, better working conditions and training opportunities for our respective networks.

Communication and Press Officer: For this contractual period, in view of the increased workload falling on the shoulders of our Secretariat and in particular our objective to develop our communication tools and website, we would like to increase our staff with 1,5 full time equivalent to include a full time Communication and Press Officer and a half time stagiaire position. The demand on the Policy Officer presently responsible for Information, Health and

Accessibility issues is much too high. Given the wide scope of the policy areas we are expected to cover to be the representative voice of the 50+ in the EU, we feel that our needs in terms of communication and information would deserve a full time position with the right profile (someone with communication/information training). AGE is more and more consulted by NGOs, public authorities and the media (in the last year alone, AGE was asked to give interviews to three national radio channels and several articles mentioning AGE were published in national newspapers such as the Financial Times and Le Figaro). Each time we need to respond with detailed and researched information within a very short deadline. We feel also that whilst our visibility among policy makers both at EU and national level has grown tremendously in the last few years, we could still improve on our visibility among the traditional media. This however requires special expertise and human resources we do not have at present in the team. In addition, to that the dossier "Health and Accessibility" (ICT and accessibility issues in the built environment and transport) has become a key priority at EU level since last year and AGE has become a reference EU network consulted on older users' needs by external stakeholders: European Commission (DG Research, DG INFSO, DG SANCO, DG TRAN), OECD, and the industry (AGE is involved in research projects involving Siemens, FIAT, GIAT, RATP, European Construction Industry Federation, Architects Council of Europe, European Lift Association, INTEL, CEN, CEMR and Eurocities). We feel that this dossier deserve a full time position and Isabel Borges, our Policy Officer responsible for this policy area has developed the right expertise and contacts to deal with it efficiently.

Stagiaire: Following a very positive experience with a young Romanian law student this past summer, we feel that AGE could play a useful role in helping young graduates, in particular young students from the new Member States, obtain a better understanding of EU social policies by providing them the opportunity to work closely with our Policy Officers for a few months. During the three months she spent with us last summer Ms Lupu got acquainted with the EU anti discrimination legislation and wrote a detailed study on age limits in the renewal of driver's licences around the EU (in view of the coming Directive) and on age limits in access to some insurance products (in view of the opening up of a single market for financial services). Her work has been very helpful for AGE's work and has helped us build evidence on cases of age discrimination in access to goods, facilities and services. Her report has also been highly praised by her evaluators in Tours University (F) where she presented it as her end of study memoire. Ms Lupu received the highest mark of her year group (18/20) and the faculty would like to renew the experience next year with us or other EU social NGOs working in the field of non discrimination. For your information, the new Belgian legislation requires that stagiaires are paid at the least the minimum wage during their stage.

Expected outcomes for 3.2.6:

- ✓ A new full time Communication and Information Officer recruited
- ✓ A new stagiaire welcomed during a few months (6 months)
- ✓ A more equitable staff policy with a clear appraisal system, a fair seniority scheme, an efficient equal opportunities policy and a vision for the coming 10 years
- ✓ Training opportunities to enable staff development (based on 0,2% of gross salary)

3.2.7 AGE Code of ethics in relation to corporate funding

Two years ago, following a long debate among our members, AGE developed Fundraising Principles to guarantee our independence from the potential influence from some industry sectors. This Code of Ethics states that "In order to protect the independence and image of AGE as the voice of older people in Europe, AGE's regular work programme should be exclusively funded by membership fees, subscriptions, donations from members and grants from public authorities (European, national or local), or similar sources. Whilst we see public funding as indispensable to ensure that we do not become instrumentalised by some industry sectors (for example, pharmaceutical companies and insurance industry) who may have a direct or indirect interest in influencing the policy dossiers AGE is working on, we take the demand from the Commission to increase our own resources seriously and are looking at ways to reconcile both our political and financial independence. For more information, the full text of our Fundraising Principles is annexed.

Expected outcomes for 3.2.7:

- ✓ A new fundraising strategy based on our Fundraising Principles to diversify and increase our financial independence

3.3 AGE external role

3.3.1 European Institutions

European Parliament: AGE played a key role in the re-establishment of the Intergroup on Ageing in 2004. With the help of a few of our members, AGE is providing support to the Intergroup Bureau composed of 8 co-chairs. Although AGE members are working hard to mobilise their respective MEPs, a lot still needs to be done to increase understanding of older citizens' expectations among the MEPs. With the established contacts and understanding of how the European Parliament works, AGE is well placed to help its members develop long lasting contacts with their respective MEPs.

As mentioned under the policy priorities, AGE intends to organise 3 events at the European Parliament during that period with the support of the Intergroup on Ageing:

- A joint meeting of the European Parliament Intergroups dealing with ageing, disability, racism and sexual orientation, and the Women's Rights Committee in the Autumn 2007 to present our recommendations for future actions (June or September 2007)
- A seminar at the European Parliament with the support of the Intergroup on Ageing and the Intergroup on Health (October 2007)
- A meeting of the Intergroup on Ageing to discuss the Commission's Review and present AGE's own assessment (December 2007)

European Commission: AGE has regular contacts with DG EMPL, DG SANCO, DG INFSO, DG Research, DG ECFIN (Hervé Carré, Deputy DG ECFIN, was one of the keynote speakers of our last General Assembly), DG REGIO, DG TREN, DG EAC. Over the last few years, AGE's visibility as a representative voice for citizens aged 50+ at EU level has grown very rapidly. As a result AGE has been invited to join the following bodies:

- European Year 2007 Advisory Committee set up by DG EMPL
- European Pensions Forum set up by DG EMPL
- European Health Policy Forum set up by DG SANCO
- E-Inclusion Stakeholders Group set up by DG INFSO
- E-Health Expert Group set up by DG SANCO
- High Level Group on Construction set up by DG Research
- Advisory Group of the Science In Society programme set up by DG Research

Our participation in these advisory bodies enables us to raise awareness of discrimination faced by older citizens and to promote an age friendlier society.

Council and Permanent Representations: AGE is also regularly in contact with Permanent Representations, not only those holding the EU Presidency. AGE is also consulted by the Social Protection Committee (for example AGE was invited to take part in the Peer Review organised by the SPC on Poverty of Older Women and were ask to respond as the NGO stakeholder).

European Committee of Regions: AGE has worked for the last few years on several dossiers with the Committee of Regions. Following the Regions for All Ages project which was presented at the Committee of Regions, this institution agreed to translate and disseminate the toolkit in their network of local authorities.

European Economic and Social Committee: Early 2006, AGE applied to join the EESC Liaison Group with European NGOs. We heard recently that the Liaison Group is reviewing its structure and that AGE should be invited to join soon to represent the "age" sector.

Expected outcomes for item 3.3.1:

European Parliament

- ✓ Increased participation of MEPs in Intergroup meetings, including from new Member States, Romania and Bulgaria;
- ✓ Increased relationship of AGE members with MEPs
- ✓ Participation of AGE in Intergroup meetings
- ✓ 3 events organised with the support of the Intergroup on Ageing and other Intergroups.

European Commission

Expected outcomes 3.2.8:

- ✓ Continued participation of AGE representatives in the various advisory bodies set up by the Commission
- ✓ Mainstreaming of age/gender issues in the work of these advisory bodies
- ✓ Increased relations with relevant DG
- ✓ Increased participation of key officials in events organised by AGE
- ✓ Higher visibility of AGE's work among Commission's services

Council:

- ✓ Increased contacts with Permanent Representations
- ✓ Increased participation of AGE in EU Presidency events
- ✓ Increased understanding among our members of the role they can play to influence Council decisions
- ✓ Increased participation of key national officials in events organised by AGE

European Committee of Regions

- ✓ Continued contacts with the Committee of Regions
- ✓ One event on the role of regional authorities in meeting the needs of their ageing population

European Economic and Social Committee

- ✓ AGE joins the EESC Liaison Group with European NGOs

3.3.2 AGE's involvement in other NGOs

AGE also participates actively in:

- Social Platform Working Group on Fundamental Rights
- Social Platform Working Group on Social Policy
- EAPN Executive Committee, Employment and Social Policy Working Groups

Together with the European Disability Forum, AGE has been regularly consulted by the Commission, the OECD and other EU stakeholders (Confédération européenne des Chemins de Fer, Association Européenne d'Interopérabilité des Chemins de Fer) on accessibility of people with reduced mobility in public transport. This cooperation with EDF on the needs of people with reduced mobility should continue in the future in particular with the announced Green paper on urban transport.

As described under the policy priorities part, AGE intends to work closely with the European Women's Lobby and the Youth Forum on intergenerational solidarity. AGE also intends to work closely with ENAR, EDF and ILGA on multiple discrimination. Finally AGE will organise together with ENAR and ILGA a joint training session for our staff to develop Key Performance Indicators and a better fitted evaluation method with the support of our common external consultant.

Expected outcomes for 3.3.2:

- ✓ Better mainstreaming of age issues in the work of other NGOs
- ✓ Better synergies between NGOs fighting discrimination and gender inequality

3.4 Improving AGE working methods

AGE aims to voice and defend the interests of people aged 50+ in the EU and to raise awareness of ageing issues. Our main activities are therefore to *influence* and *develop policy recommendations*, so that EU policies and programmes can better reflect the interests of all older people. To this effect AGE formulates position papers on relevant EU initiatives, outlining specific policy views and recommendations, which are developed by the Secretariat in close consultation with the expert groups and endorsed by AGE's members. AGE's role is to monitor EU policy-making process closely and to facilitate networks of older and retired people's organisations involved at national level. We believe that there needs to be a greater recognition and understanding at European level of the impact of European policies on today's and future older people. We feel also that older and/or retired people must have greater opportunities to promote and defend their rights and interests in the EU policy making process. AGE's vision is to promote a society of all ages where everyone is valued and enjoys equal opportunities regardless of age.

3.4.1 Internal Rules: To guarantee our representativity and a more effective civil dialogue at European level, and to ensure that our views reflect the common position of our membership, we developed Internal Rules in 2003 and follow our formally agreed working methods closely. (see Internal Rules in annex). During that period the Council will look at the 2003 Internal Rules to see if they need to be amended, for example to clarify the responsibility of the Expert Groups and reflect their role in policy development.

3.4.2 Language regime: Although most of our key documents are presently published in 3 languages (EN, FR, DE) and our monthly online magazine in 5 languages (EN, FR, DE, IT, ES), some of our members have expressed the wish to review our language policy to ensure greater participation of older people regardless of their language skills. This is a huge challenge for us as it is difficult to reconcile the legitimate demand of some of our members to be able to use their native language and a limited budget. The Council is presently discussing this issue and we will hopefully be able to develop a strategy in 2007 to enhance participation and access to key documents in more languages with limited financial implications.

3.4.3 Communication tools: Our members have expressed clearly that in their view one of the main added value of a European network such as AGE is the quality of the information it provides on the various EU policy processes of relevance to older citizens. To achieve our objectives, our members are asking us to develop more “citizen friendly” documents and toolkits to help them understand better what the EU is doing and influence the wide range of policies which may have an impact on their lives. They need easy, yet reliable information to be able to get involved in the debate at national and local level and to participate fully in AGE’s work. To respond to our members’ call, we intend to devote special efforts to develop our communication tools and make summaries of the main documents accessible in more languages with the help of our members (see paragraph above). Our member organisations will be invited to 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.

We will continue to develop our website to make it more accessible and user friendly for members and general public.

Expected outcomes for 3.4:

- ✓ Revised Internal Rules
- ✓ A revised language regime to enhance participation and access to key documents in more languages;
- ✓ “Citizen friendly” documents on the main EU policy processes to be available in several languages
- ✓ Further development of our website, language versions and improved accessibility of Public and Members’ sections (as assessed by number of visitors and questionnaire)
- ✓ 7 editions of CoverAge, our monthly on line magazine in 5 languages
- ✓ 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 period)
- ✓ Information on statistics, initiatives and good practice in Member States (throughout the 8 month period)

3.5 Evaluation

3.5.1 External evaluation on implementation of work programme: At present progress made is evaluated on an on-going basis, both internally by our Director (through mid-year and final reports) and by our external evaluator. In addition to the evaluation reports, in 2003 and 2005, we undertook a survey of our membership to assess their satisfaction. Under this application period, we are planning to join forces with ENAR and ILGA-EUROPE to develop a better tailored evaluation method to be applied in our next Strategic Plan 2008-2010. To achieve this we plan to organise a joint training seminar with ENAR and ILGA-Europe with the support of our common external consultant, John Tierney. Although the logframe system developed during our present strategic plan has been useful to initiate a debate on performance reporting, all three sectoral NGOs report the same difficulties in applying it to our core activities. Such a system was initially intended for project evaluation and is not adapted to our core work. The purpose of the joint seminar will be to develop together with our policy officers and directors a set of Key Performance Indicators better fitted to the needs of European NGOs and a more reliable performance evaluation method based on a three year cycle, to match our Strategic plan. For more details, please see enclosed proposal from our external consultant.

3.5.2 External auditing: AGE's financial accounts are regularly audited by a certified external auditor accredited in Belgium, Danièle Quivy (see in annex copy of letter confirming the General Assembly's decision to nominate Ms Quivy as our external auditor). During this period, the accounts will be audited twice, at mid-term and at the end of the financial period. An external certified accountant also comes once every two months to check the accounting.

Expected outcomes for 3.5:

- ✓ A set of common Key Performance Indicators which will allow comparative evaluation and cross fertilisation between NGOs;
- ✓ A tailor made evaluation method better fitted to the needs and specificity of our core activities
- ✓ Audited financial accounts for mid-term and final reports.

List of policy priorities on which Expert Groups will be consulted:

ADEG: Anti-Discrimination Expert Group

SPEG: Social Protection Expert Group

SIEG: Social Inclusion Expert Group

HEG: Health Expert Group

EEG: Employment Expert Group

WGICT: Working Group on Universal Accessibility and Independent Living (WGUAIL)

Expert Group	Item n°	Policy process
ADEG	2.1	European Year on Equal Opportunities
	2.2	Mapping study on EU anti discrimination legislation
	2.3	Review of implementation of Employment directive with regard to age
	2.4	Follow up Communication on demographic future
	2.5	Communication on better meeting dependency needs
	2.6	European Agency on Fundamental Rights
	2.7	European Employment Strategy
	2.8	Green paper on Labour Law and common principles on flexicurity
	2.9	OMC on Health and LTC
	2.10	Mid-term Review of Social Agenda
	2.11	Report on the social situation in the Union
	2.13	White Paper on Health Strategy
	2.18	Debate on future of Europe
	2.20	Communication on delivering Lisbon on the ground
2.23	European Year on Intercultural dialogue 2008	
SPEG	2.4	Follow up Communication on demographic future
	2.5	Communication on better meeting dependency needs
	2.7	European Employment Strategy
	2.8	Green paper on Labour Law and common principles on flexicurity
	2.9	OMC on Pensions and Health and LTC
	2.10	Mid-term Review of Social Agenda
	2.11	Report on the social situation in the Union
	2.12	European strategy for Social Services of General Interest
	2.18	Debate on future of Europe
	2.19	Proposal for a directive on solvency of insurance companies
2.20	Communication on delivering Lisbon on the ground	

SIEG	2.4	Follow up Communication on demographic future
	2.5	Communication on better meeting dependency needs
	2.9	OMC on Social Inclusion
	2.10	Mid-term Review of Social Agenda
	2.11	Report on the social situation in the Union
	2.12	European strategy for Social Services of General Interest
	2.18	Debate on future of Europe
	2.20	Communication on delivering Lisbon on the ground
HEG	2.4	Follow up Communication on demographic future
	2.5	Communication on better meeting dependency needs
	2.9	OMC on Health and LTC
	2.10	Mid-term Review of Social Agenda
	2.11	Report on the social situation in the Union
	2.12	European strategy for Social Services of General Interest
	2.13	White paper on Health Strategy and legal framework for safe and efficient health services
	2.14	White paper on Nutrition
	2.18	Debate on future of Europe
	2.20	Communication on delivering Lisbon on the ground
EEG	2.3	Review of implementation of Employment directive with regard to age
	2.4	Follow up Communication on demographic future
	2.5	Communication on better meeting dependency needs
	2.7	European Employment Strategy and Integrated Guidelines
	2.8	Green paper on Labour Law and common principles on flexicurity
	2.10	Mid-term Review of Social Agenda
	2.11	Report on the social situation in the Union
	2.12	European strategy for Social Services of General Interest
	2.18	Debate on future of Europe
	2.20	Communication on delivering Lisbon on the ground
WGUAIL	2.5	Communication on better meeting dependency needs
	2.15	European e-Inclusion strategy
	2.16	Green Paper on urban transport
	2.17	Follow-up to White Paper on European Communication Policy
	2.21	Green Paper on universal service in electronic communications

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