

The European Older People's Platform



La plate-forme Européenne des Personnes Agées

AGE – work programme May 2004 – April 2005

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1. Introduction

In response to the Call for Proposals VP/2003/007 for the support to umbrella European level NGOs, AGE - the European Older People's Platform, has adopted a three year Strategic Plan which outlines our goals and objectives and indicates how progress will be measured for the period May 2004-April 2007.

For the first year of this Strategic plan, we intend to implement the following activities to support our goals on the short, medium and long term. This workprogramme must thus be read in conjunction with our Strategic Plan for the period May 204-April 2007.

The budget presents our estimated expenses for the first twelve months of our Strategic Plan based on the activities identified as necessary to achieve our objectives. For the subsequent two years, an updated budget and detailed workprogramme will be submitted on due time.

A summary of the activities per category and timetable is included at the end of the workprogramme.

2. AGE main activities for the period May 2004-April 2005

In order to enable us to achieve our strategic goals, we feel that a whole range of activities are necessary. These activities are grouped per category and the products (indicators for this specific year) are listed after each category.

2.1 Meetings of AGE governing bodies

In order to ensure full participation of our members in our workprogramme and to guarantee the representativity of AGE as the voice of older people in the European Union, AGE needs to organise a series of statutory meetings as foreseen in our Statutes and Internal Rules.

2.1.1 Meetings of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is composed of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and a Secretary. All Executive Committee members are aged over 50. The Executive Committee is responsible for day to day management and staff

management; it prepares the meetings of the General Assembly and the Council; ensures that the Internal Rules are adhered to; and represents AGE in important meetings and events.

To fulfil its role, the Executive Committee will meet 5 times (about once every two months). Meetings take place in AGE office in Brussels and travel arrangements are made to make the best use of financial resources available (crossed APEX flights).

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| Indicators for item 2.1.1: |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 5 meetings of Executive Committee➤ Representation of AGE network in key meetings➤ On-going management guidance |
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2.1.2 Meetings of the Council

The Council is responsible for the overall running of the Association, for the implementation of the programme set by the General Assembly and for the consultative examination of candidature files of full members or others prepared by the Accreditation Committee. Between meetings, the Council plays an important role in the policy development of our network. They are consulted and have to approve the documents and position papers prepared by the Expert Groups. They are also responsible for ensuring a good co-operation 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 the national experts on Anti-Discrimination and Social Protection Expert Groups.

Our Statutes state that all Member States shall be represented in the Council. Over this period, the Council will thus welcome representatives of the new Member States as soon as their country joins the EU and new member organizations join the network. Two meetings are foreseen, one in June and one in November. Budget permitting (if the real expenses are lower than foreseen), we may organize a third meeting in February to prepare the annual General Assembly. All Council members are aged over 50.

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| Indicators for item 2.1.2: |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 2 to 3 meetings of the Council |
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- Setting up of strong national coordination between AGE members of a same country
- On-going policy guidance based on national feedback

2.1.3 Meeting of the General Assembly

The General Assembly is THE governing body of the organization. All Full members are represented at the General Assembly and have the right to vote (one member, one vote). It alone has the power to decide:

- a) on amendments to these Statutes;
- b) on the election of the President, who shall be a member of the Council. The President shall be a full member of a full member organisation **of, or directly representing older and/or retired people**;
- c) on the programme of activities and the budget for the forthcoming financial year;
- d) on the approval of the annual accounts submitted by the Council and on the quitus of the Council;
- e) on the admission and expulsion of members;
- f) on the nomination of the auditor or auditors of the accounts;
- g) on the winding up of the Association and the reimbursement of the Association fund.

As requested by the Belgian legislation, AGE holds one General Assembly per year. It brings together one representative per Full Member (about 120p.) and a few observer members (at their own cost). In addition to the usual constitutional items, AGE organizes a few presentations by key speakers on EU policy issues to give our members an update on the most pressing issues and enable to make an informed decision when deciding the main objectives for the coming years. For example, the General Assembly which will take place 2004 will include presentations by an official from DG Employment on the draft Gender Directive to ensure equal treatment between women and men in access to goods and services, a presentation by the Secretary of the Social Protection Committee, one on social inclusion and a another one on long term care for the elderly. 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.

Indicators for item 2.1.3:

- An annual General Assembly
- New applications for membership approved

- Approved final accounts for previous year
- Approved annual report for previous year
- Approved workprogramme for next year
- Approved budget for next year
- Opportunities for our member organizations to get an update on the main policy issues and ask direct question to key speakers
- General agreement on main policies and strategic goals

2.2 AGE Expert Groups

To help the Council develop a concerted view on the policies that AGE is addressing and to better voice the concerns of older people in the EU, AGE has set up Expert Groups on Anti-Discrimination, Social Protection and Employment. An expert of the Social Protection Expert Group has been nominated to represent AGE on the European Forum on Pensions set up by the Commission. AGE is also participating in the European Parliament Pensions Forum's meetings.

We are proposing to set up an additional small Expert Group on health issues to help us contribute the view of our network to the EU debate on healthcare. This new group will also help AGE contribute more efficiently in the European Health Forum of which AGE has been a member for two years.

Both Expert Groups on Anti-Discrimination and Social Protection are composed of representatives of all Member States nominated by their respective Council member(s). During the first year of our strategic plan 2004-2007, these two Expert Groups will build on the work undertaken so far by the group and will pay special attention to building expertise among the network and identifying new experts from acceding countries. Both groups will develop a toolkit targeted at our member organizations and wider audience through website.

The Employment Expert Group is composed a few experts only (5p.) and aims at helping AGE develop its strategy with regard to employment of older workers.

The Expert Group on Health issues we are planning to set up will be composed of a few experts (4p.) who will help AGE develop its policy response to health issues.

2.2.1 Anti-Discrimination

The **Anti-discrimination Expert Group** will develop a toolkit giving updated information on the two Directives, the important role NGOs can play in supporting potential victims, the need to campaign for an efficient equality body, the importance of establishing synergies with the social partners at national level, etc.

The Expert Group will also give guidance for long term AGE's strategy with regard to discrimination issues, specially what should be done to ensure a EU free of all forms of discrimination. The Group will do a survey of the transposition process in May 2004 (when the new Member States join in) and in December to assess progress after one year. The brochure and leaflet published on December 2nd 2003 to mark the end of the deadline for transposition will be updated based on that feedback and distributed throughout our network. Our member organizations will be invited to translate and publish these documents in their own language adding their logo to AGE logo. Our objective is that policy documents developed by the network should become our members' own campaigning tools.

The Anti Discrimination Expert Group will also look for suitable legal experts who could be nominated for the Commission's group of legal experts. AGE will try to identify legal expertise available throughout the EU on age discrimination and will call on the Commission to establish a group even if geographical balance cannot be achieved in the first years.

This Expert group is however not dealing exclusively with age discrimination. Its workprogramme for the coming year will include following on the proposed Directive on gender equality in access to goods and services which is so relevant to older women. Information about the draft directive will be distributed to the network and AGE will continue its campaign in support of gender equality. A more elaborated response will be developed together with the other Expert groups when more feedback from our national members will be brought together.

The Expert Group will also be asked to respond to the report of the High Level Group on Social Policy with regard to discrimination issues (due in May 2004).

Finally Media Consulta, the media agency running the Stop Discrimination information campaign for the Commission has agreed to devote one of their monthly themes to age discrimination. AGE has suggested to have it in October 2004 to coincide with the International Day of Older people (1st October). AGE is presently exploring how to co-operate with Media Consulta to make the best use of this collaboration. AGE is presently exploring with Media Consulta the possibility to have a common stand at the Employment Week in April 2004 to bring together all European NGOS representing people faced with discrimination in the workplace. If positive we intend to repeat this joint project in April 2005.

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| Indicators for item 2.2.1: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 3 meetings of Expert Group➤ 5 new experts from new Member States➤ Toolkit to support our member organisations in their national campaigns on age discrimination |

- A survey of transposition process at time of enlargement (May 2004)
- An updated survey of transposition process after one year of extended deadline
- A more elaborated response to the draft gender directive on equal treatment for women and men in access to goods and services based on feedback from our national members
- Regular information articles on all discrimination issues, including gender discrimination in CoverAge, our monthly bulletin
- Summary of good practices gathered by experts (to be posted on our website)
- Comparative study on US-EU legislation with feedback from AARP expert.
- A EU wide special focus on age discrimination in October through Media Consulta Stop Discrimination information campaign
- Comments to the High Level Group report on social policy with regard to age discrimination
- Wide dissemination of leaflet on Age Equality
- Translation and dissemination of Age Equality Brochure into 3 other languages (with support of some of member organizations)
- Development of updated information page on age discrimination on our website
- Compilation of articles and webpages on age discrimination published by our members
- Compilation of media coverage of age discrimination in national press.
- Examples of relationships with social partners at EU and national level
- Examples of support to victims of discrimination by NGOs in countries where the Directive has been transposed (IE, I, F and A)

2.2.2 Employment

In the first year of this Strategic Plan, the Employment Expert Group will concentrate its activities on:

- Identifying expertise in Member States where the employment of older workers is most problematic and where our expert group does not yet have members (F, E, I, a few new Member States)
- Develop relationship with social partners at EU and national level
- Develop relationship with relevant EU decision-makers: European Commission and European Parliament
- Following Member States response to the report of the Employment Task Force (Kok report) and the Commission's Communication "Making Work Pay"
- Raising awareness of our network on the relevant Employment guidelines and NAPs Employment
- Help our member organizations provide a analysis of the NAPs from on older worker's perspective

- Raising awareness of our national member organisations on the opportunities for older workers within the EQUAL programme and the funding opportunities under Article 6 of ESF and help them assess these projects.
- Develop contacts with relevant units in ILO and OECD
- Produce information sheets and articles for our website on the European Employment Strategy, the NAPs Empl, the guidelines
- Gather older workers views on working longer and making work pay and develop AGE long term strategy with regard to employment of older workers
- Respond to the report of the High Level Group on Social Policy as regard employment of older workers

This Expert Group will work in close consultation with the other two Expert Groups on discrimination and social protection.

Indicators for item 2.2.2:

- 3 meetings of Expert Group
- 3 new experts from new Member State and South of EU
- Position paper on the European Employment Strategy, the NAPsEmpl, etc. bringing in the perspectives of older workers;
- Briefing notes for our members on employment issues and what they can do to advance the interests of older workers at national level
- Compilation of articles and webpages on active ageing published by our members
- Compilation of media coverage of active ageing in national press.
- Examples of relationships with social partners at EU and national level
- 4 case studies of barriers faced by unemployed older workers who wish to continue to work in F, NL, UK and one new Member State

2.2.3 Social Protection

Up until now our Social Protection Expert Group has been dealing essentially with pensions issues. During this first year of our Strategic Plan, our Expert Group will need to address three main challenges:

- Build capacity within the network: help our member organizations in the new member states contribute to the expert group on pensions issues
- 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.

The Expert Group will also need to help AGE identify experts on health issues for the small expert group we are planning to set up. A good understanding of the overall process and how its various elements interact is necessary to empower our member organizations to take action at national level. The Healthcare Expert Group will help AGE respond to the Communication on Healthcare to the dependent which will be published by the Commission in the spring 2004.

The Expert Group will develop an information brochure and leaflet on the Streamlining process of social protection and social inclusion for wide distribution through our network and publication on our website.

The Expert Group will also respond to the report of the High Level Group on Social Policy (May 2004) with regard to social protection and social inclusion policies.

In the autumn, AGE will collect feedback from its member organizations on the NAPsIncl and the Expert Group will prepare an overview of these comments that will be sent to the Commission and relevant ministries for information.

In the spring 2005, the Expert Group will analyse the first annual social protection report in liaison with AGE national members and paying special attention to our new members in the acceding countries. Our analyse will include a survey of the on-going reform of the pension systems across the EU with regard to AGE five key points:

1. Ensure that older people who have reached statutory pension age have the right to a *decent level of pension*, giving them a fair share of society's economic well-being, not just preventing outright poverty.
2. Guarantee that 1st pillar pensions are *indexed so as to ensure that pensioners keep up with progress in society's prosperity*.
3. Ensure that individuals are able to obtain a *high income replacement rate* at retirement.
4. Give *equal pension rights to women*, eliminate gender discrimination in pension systems and in the labour market, and ensure that time spent caring for children, the elderly, etc. gives pension entitlements under the first pillar system, and that pensions rights are individualised.
5. *Allow and encourage older people to continue working for longer*, outlaw age discrimination, promote lifelong learning, training, etc., and allow for gradual retirement.

Indicators for item 2.2.3:

- 3 meetings of Expert Group (5p. x3 x 1, 5 day)
- 3 new experts from new Member States
- Identification of 4 experts on healthcare issues
- Information brochure and leaflet on the Streamlining process of Social Protection and Social Inclusion
- Position paper on the European Commission's Communication on Healthcare issues
- Overview of our members comments on NAPsIncl
- Coordinated response the report of the High Level Group on Social Policy
- Coordinated analysis of the first Social Protection Report
- Compilation of articles and webpages on social protection / social inclusion issues published by our members
- Compilation of media coverage of NGOs positions on social protection and social inclusion issues ageing in national press.
- Examples of relationships with social partners at EU and national level on social protection, social inclusion issues

2.3 Campaign for a new EU constitution that meets the needs of all

All Expert Groups and the Council will continue to work together on our campaign in support of the new EU Constitution. Our member organizations have been actively involved in our campaign in the framework of the Convention and of the IGC. Depending on the outcome of the Irish Presidency and whether or not they manage to conclude the IGC, we will need to continue to monitor new developments through the Act4Europe campaign and to promote awareness of the new Constitution and its relevance to older people. Once the new Constitution will be adopted, AGE and its members will pursue their campaign to rally support for it among older people.

Indicators for item 2.3:

- Regular update on new development in the IGC to be distributed throughout our network
- Information leaflet on the new Constitution and its relevance to older people to be distributed and translated by our members for dissemination in their own network
- Compilation of articles and webpages on the new Constitution published by our members

2.4 Next European Parliament elections and campaign for the re-establishment of the Intergroup on Ageing

AGE will pursue its information campaign on the next European Parliament elections and, once the new Parliament is in place, we will try to raise support of the new MEPs to re-establish the Intergroup on Ageing. We are planning to organize a ceremony at the European Parliament sometimes in October to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Intergroup and relaunch the Intergroup with the support of our national member organizations. A special attention will be paid to recruiting MEPS from the new Member States and in helping our members establish good contacts with them. We will try to organize a Council meeting around the date that the MEPs will select for the event at the EP in order to enable our representatives to attend the ceremony and meet with their respective MEPs.

Indicators for item 2.4:

- Information campaign on the next European elections and their results
- Campaign to recruit new members for the Intergroup (campaign which will involve our national members)
- Event at the European Parliament to mark the 20th anniversary of the Intergroup and to relaunch it for the coming 4 years

2.5 Information and communication

One of AGE's main objectives is to inform older people, their organisations and other interested organisations of relevant EU developments in order to raise awareness of and facilitate involvement with EU policymaking and implementation. Our information is also targeting key policy makers: EU institutions, MEPs, national policy makers, academics. Our Information Officer will follow some training in computer lay out to improve our information tools. Our information activities cover issues such as policies on anti-discrimination, social protection, social inclusion, employment, research, the new Constitution, the next European elections, healthcare, European programmes of relevance to older people, update in projects where AGE is participating, etc. Our information activities include:

- Gathering information on EU developments and activities.
- Monthly bulletin translated into English, French, German, Italian and Spanish and widely distributed throughout our network.
- Newsflashes
- Website: the revamped website will be further developed (members only section, resource centre, links, etc.)
- Collect information and relevant statistics, initiatives and good practice in the various countries in relation to older people to share with our members and experts
- Welcoming interns from older people's organisations

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| <p>Indicators for item 2.5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further development of our website and improved accessibility to disabled people (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) ➤ Number of interns welcomed in AGE office for short training sessions |
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2.6 Evaluation procedure

Following the external evaluation undertaken in 2003, AGE Council agreed to implement all recommendations including "Reporting on performance". As follow up, AGE has asked Transform Agency to make a proposal for a training course in performance management. The objectives of this training course will be:

- Develop an integrated planning and performance management system that accords with Age's mission and strategy
- Adopt an approach or methodology for managing Age's performance that meets both the needs of the organisation and of the Commission
- Agree a set of performance indicators and measures for the first year
- Agree a mechanism and source of data for each of the performance indicators
- Agree a process for the consultant to assess annual performance with the staff
- Prepare and present a report for discussion with the Executive

So, as an ideal outcome, AGE should end up with a performance management system that:

- Can be repeated each year
- Can be aggregated to assess performance on the strategy
- Remains manageable and practical
- Fulfils the EC's requirements and meets Age's need for a corporate approach
- Doesn't require major consultancy input in future – it is self-sustaining
- Build staff skill and confidence in this area

Indicators for item 2.6:

- Workshop for staff to discuss implications of performance reporting, agree the principles of a performance management system for AGE, agree outline performance indicators for 2004/2005
- Paper from the external consultant summarizing the workshop and proposing performance indicators and ways in which progress can be measured
- Short interim report to Executive Committee
- Final report for Executive and follow-up strategy for subsequent years