

## **The EU Contribution to the Global WHO Campaign to Combat Ageism**

The European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations and the UNECE Vienna Ministerial Declaration of 2012 established the concept of active ageing as the operational approach to ageing policies.

- Following, in Austria, there has been started a new level of public discussion about ageing both in terms of extent and content. Likewise, the 4<sup>th</sup> UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, which just took place in September in Lisbon, promoted a positive thinking about ageing and older people under the motto: “Realizing the potential of living longer”. Thus, the emphasis is no longer on the shortcomings but rather on the potential of older people.
- Like in the Basque Country the Austrian government launched several campaigns to combat ageism and prejudices against older people.
- The Austria-wide campaign run by the Labour Market Service called “Einstellungssache 50+” (which involves both changing the recruitment practices as well as the attitudes towards people aged 50+) raises awareness about the potential offered by workers in the 50+ age group.
- Furthermore, through the “Employment Initiative 50+”, business operations are increasingly given incentives to continue employing or hiring older workers. Funding increased from 150 to 250 million euros in 2016.
- Measures to foster the employment of older persons are at the same time promoting awareness raising of intergenerational

solidarity and encouraging intergenerational age management in enterprises.

- Since 2010, the Ministry of Social Affairs has also been conferring the NESTOR<sup>GOLD</sup> seal of quality upon companies and organizations which are pioneers in intergenerational age-management
- Since 1st of July a pilot project will see 20,000 working places being funded for currently about 50.000 long-term unemployed people 50+ in communities and non-profit organizations. Thus they will have the opportunity to create meaningful jobs to complete tasks and offer services for which they do not yet have sufficient staff. The range of activities will include especially fostering social intergenerational networks in the community.
- To counter stereotypes and prejudices against older persons measures to foster intergenerational solidarity are of great importance for young people to learn from experience about ageing and the characteristic quality of older persons.
- Promoting and strengthening the intergenerational dialogue is above all a matter of volunteer work in Austria and people 50+ are on the highest rank in voluntary engagement in Austria. 55% of them are volunteers compared to 46% of the average of all Austrians above the age of 15.
- The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs supports the organization of annual volunteer fairs in several cities; these are attended by young and older persons alike. The Volunteers Platform on the internet ([www.freiwilligenweb.at](http://www.freiwilligenweb.at)) as well as Volunteer Centers all over Austria help young and old to match the suitable field and organization for interested volunteers.
- Brochures like “Encounters of Generations”. A Manual for Intergenerational Projects in Austria” or “How to initiate projects

successfully” support senior citizens who want to get involved in a spirit of self-determination”.

- The model project on intergenerational learning “Mine+Yours = Our Living Environment” (“MDU-Meine-Deine = Unsere Lebenswelt”) was commended by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs as a good practice project, just like the intergenerational educational project “Vita activa” about knowledge creation, multiplication and learning. The documentary video study on intergenerational learning titled “Learning from, with and about each other” (“Voneinander-Miteinander-Übereinander Lernen“) reflects educational processes and learning settings in which different generations learn from, with and about each other.
- Also the governments of the nine Austrian provinces organize special events and initiatives, let me just present some of them:
  - The Land of Styria organized the expert meeting “Young.Old.Together” and “Tour of Generations” – an awareness-raising campaign on intergenerational coexistence. This formed the basis of the funding programmes “Learning and living in a multigenerational context” which has so far spawned 12 projects. The Land of Salzburg continued the projects “Generational Village” and “Ageing in Good Company” in cooperation with an adult education organization and the community development institution of Salzburg (“Gemeindeentwicklung Salzburg”).
  - Projects on new media bring together the old and the young. By now, the Tyrol boasts 30 “Computerias” which are new platforms for interested senior citizens introduced to new media by secondary school students; these locations are also places of learning and centres for information and networking in the context of volunteering, and often enough intergenerational meeting points. In

Vorarlberg young and old work in museums and run “story-telling cafés”.

- Upper Austria announced the awarding of the “Upper Austrian Generations Prize in 2015” in the course of a symposium organized by the Forum for Intergenerational Dialogue. The project “Making the best of things – Ageing” in Carinthia fosters understanding and acceptance of lifestyles among generations by regular meetings with children and youth. The project is part of the “Healthy Community” programme, with nursery schools, schools, senior citizens’ homes and senior citizens’ organizations participating.
- Another very important aspect is the situation of rural communities, in many of them the proportion of people 60+ will double until 2030. The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs commissioned the study “Intergenerational Quality of Life. Diversity between Urban and Rural Contexts”. And the Austrian Association of Municipalities is working on incentives for younger people to stay in their communities and to foster an intergenerational infrastructure.
- In 2015 the Ministry of Social Affairs showed the European exhibition “How to get to 100 – and enjoy it” at the Vienna University of Economics and Business to foster a positive attitude towards ageing in young and old people alike.
- Let me conclude: I think the most important what just has been started in different new networks is the active participation of older persons themselves in changing the image of ageing. The now 50 years old look forward to be 80 in the year 2050 and they are very strong committed to secure ageing well in 2050 and in best intergenerational understanding.
- Thank you for your attention.