

DELIVERABLE D2.5
Report on activities on intersectionality

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1. Description of the deliverable

This deliverable, which is part of WP2 and relates specifically to T2.5, presents our ongoing efforts to promote intersectionality, to strengthen our capacity to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in old age and to integrate an intersectional approach across all aspects of our work. Because intersectionality is a transversal objective within our work, many of the outcomes described here also appear in other deliverables. This document, however, focuses specifically on the intersectional dimensions of our advocacy outputs. This work is grounded in contributions from our members, gathered through our Task Forces, statutory meetings and participation in external events.

In 2025, our work has focused primarily on AGE's EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism. It presents a set of nine actionable and high-impact flagship initiatives aimed at ending ageism and embedding age equality across the EU. Grounded in the lived realities of older persons, it adopts an intersectional and life-course approach that recognises how inequalities accumulate and interact over time.

The proposed EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism is designed to complement existing and upcoming EU equality strategies, notably the Gender Equality Strategy, and to reinforce protections for people of all ages. By addressing structural barriers, challenging discriminatory forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities across the lifecourse, the Action

Plan seeks to contribute to a more just and inclusive EU. The EU Action Plan adopts an intersectional perspective and addresses the different intersecting forms of discrimination outlined in this deliverable.

2. Key outcomes

2.1 Intersection between age and gender

Older women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that accumulate throughout the life course and shape their experiences in later life. Ageism does not operate in isolation; it often intersects with sexism, ableism, racism, classism and other forms of structural discrimination. The lived realities of older women are frequently overlooked or rendered invisible, even though they experience ageing in ways that are specific and distinct.

To effectively address the systemic barriers that older women face, European policies must adopt an intersectional gender perspective. This means recognising and responding to the multiple dimensions of discrimination that shape older women's trajectories, and ensuring that policies are informed by the voices, needs and expertise of older women themselves. Without such an approach, efforts to promote equality risk falling short or reinforcing existing gaps.

An intersectional, gender-responsive policy framework is therefore essential to advance the rights, autonomy and wellbeing of older women and to ensure that ageing societies are inclusive, fair and equitable for people of all ages.

On 6 March 2025, we published a 2-pager advocacy tool titled *Gender Inequality in Old Age*. From unequal access to employment opportunities to gendered expectations around informal care and gender-based violence, the effects of gender inequality in earlier stages of life inevitably compound over time. These accumulated disadvantages translate into inequalities in old age – including higher poverty rates, limited access to quality health and long-term care, and reduced participation in social and economic life.

To mark International Women's Day and shed light on the lived experiences and voices of older women, AGE published an article featuring testimonies and contributions from our members and partners, including the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C) and Make Mothers Matter. Entitled *What if Older Women Enjoyed Equal Rights?*, the article published in our CoverAGE, invited readers to imagine what a society in which older women fully enjoyed their rights, autonomy and dignity would look like. By centring the voices of older women in all their diversity, the article highlights both the structural inequalities they continue to face and the transformative potential of gender-inclusive policies that remove systemic barriers.

On 22 July 2025, AGE submitted its contribution to the forthcoming Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030, reiterating the crucial need to mainstream ageing throughout the Strategy. AGE emphasised that gender equality efforts must fully integrate an intersectional perspective that reflects the diverse realities of older women, who are too often further marginalised. This includes, in particular, older migrant and racialised women, older women who are carers, older women with disabilities, those with low incomes, as well as older women living in rural or remote areas.

At the end of the year, we published our AGE Barometer 2025. The AGE Barometer provides an annual assessment of the socio-economic situation of older people across the EU and examines how these conditions affect the protection and fulfilment of their human rights. The analysis draws on:

- Data collected at national level from AGE members.
- Statistics published by the European Union and its agencies.

An intersectional gender perspective is applied throughout the Barometer, ensuring that the specific realities of older women are reflected across all thematic areas. In addition to this mainstreamed approach, the Barometer includes dedicated sections on older women and intersectionality. These cover issues such as the rural-urban divide in digitalisation and regional employment; the challenges older women face in accessing and participating in the green labour market; and the need to promote the intersectional inclusion of older workers in evolving labour markets.

On 28/11 we took part in the conference organised within the framework of the project *FORWARD – Fostering Knowledge and Action for the Rights of Older Women*, which aimed at addressing the persistent invisibility of older women in research, policymaking and institutional responses to gender-based violence and other violations of rights. In our contribution we shared how systemic ageism compounded with sexism and lifelong gender inequality creates unique and persistent barriers for older women and contributes to the invisibility of elder abuse. We stressed the need to address data gaps and silos in policy responses. We also underlined the crucial opportunity offered by the forthcoming drafting of a new UN convention. The conference aimed to contribute to the final project policy brief and recommendations.

2.2 Intersection between age & disability

2.2.1 Inputs disability strategy & Disability Platform

AGE is an active member of the Disability Platform and participated in many of its meetings and activities in 2025. The consultation for reviewing the Disability Rights Strategy was still open at the end of 2025, and while AGE starts preparing its input, it is not ready yet, therefore it is not included in this list of deliverables.

Meeting 27 March 2025

AGE's contribution to the meeting was linked to the context of the proposed withdrawal of the Equal Treatment Directive. AGE, the European Disability Forum (EDF) and others joined their voices to call for keeping the Directive on the table.

Meeting 19 June 2025

The full-day online meeting focussed on the CRPD reporting process, state aid, informal carers, prevention and health care, the Hague convention, partnership with local authorities and the CRPD focal points. AGE participated to the full meeting and made some contributions on our concerns regarding the Hague Convention, the importance of prevention and the need to increase the minimum standards for the support of informal carers from legislation in the Work-Life Balance Directive.

Ad hoc meeting on 10 October 2025

We also participated in the ad-hoc meeting of the Disability Platform with Civil Society Organisations on the continued implementation of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities up to 2030. In this meeting, we presented AGE's priorities for the continuation of the Disability Strategy. We aligned ourselves with the priorities presented by EDF and further stressed intersectional aspects calling for the *systematic recognition of disability across the life course*. We asked for follow-up actions to explicitly refer to older people with disabilities who tend to fall between the cracks of ageing and disability policies. We stressed the need to extend protection from discrimination on the basis of age and disability beyond the field of employment, to address age limits and gaps in services and benefits for older people with disabilities, to address income security in old age and to ensure links with the upcoming negotiations on the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Ad-hoc meeting 10 December 2025

The meeting focussed on the input of disability organisations on the revision of the Disability Rights Strategy. AGE contributed by supporting the inputs of EDF especially on earmarking funds for disability and care in the next MFF. AGE called for better linking the Disability Strategy with the EU Care Strategy, which is part of the EU's implementation of the CRPD. AGE called for targets for quality care and independent living for people of all ages in the European Semester, in line with EDF. Furthermore, AGE raised the issues with the ratification on the Hague Convention on the protection of vulnerable adults, whose provisions are not all in line with the CRPD and which might create an exception with lower standards for older persons by equating older age with disability. AGE also raised the issue that there are still incapacitation procedures being initiated because older patients may be not cooperating with treatment.

2.2.2 Blogpost for European Disability Forum (EDF) for 1st October

AGE prepared a guest blogpost for EDF website on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons (1st October). This article focused on the added value of a new EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism for older people with disabilities. Older persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by poverty, exclusion, and discrimination. They are more likely to face barriers in living in the community, encounter inaccessible healthcare, or be excluded from assisted technology and digital innovation. Women, migrants, and minority communities often experience further inequalities. Without a framework that addresses the intersection of age and disability, EU policies risk leaving these citizens behind. A robust action plan would fill this gap, building on the Disability Strategy while ensuring that ageing policies work for older persons with disabilities too. AGE's proposal would not only combat ageism but also reinforce Europe's broader equality agenda. It aims to close the gaps left by the current Disability Strategy and ensuring that EU law and policies reflect the realities of ageing with and into disability.

2.2.3 Joint amendments on protection of vulnerable adults & EP hearing

In 2025, AGE together with Mental Health Europe, the European Network for Independent Living, Inclusion Europe and EDF proposed joint amendments on the draft EY regulation on the protection of adults. Together we represent the key target groups of the regulation, disabled citizens, older people, citizens with mental health conditions, people with intellectual impairments and autistic citizens. In these amendments we stress that: we are united in the conviction that all aspects leading to a deprivation of legal capacity need to be removed from the regulation. The citizens we represent are clear in their desire to retain full rights to their property and to their right to sign contracts. We are also asking for the removal of the Central Registers from the Regulation. We cannot insist on the principle of data minimisation for the overall population but be ready to diverge from it, when it comes to minority groups. We support the establishment of the European Certificate of Representation. Our amendments have also been translated into an easy-to-read infographic. We have presented these amendments to Members of the European Parliament and also had the opportunity to informally present them to Permanent Missions of Member States on 7th March.

Thanks to our input the JURI report on the regulation on the protection of adults took into account many of our recommendations, namely:

- Supported decision making is well defined in the recitals.
- References for support appear in all we key articles, especially art 2 and 3.
- Guardianship and curatorship have been removed as measures.
- The protection registers have been removed.

Finally, on 4 December 2025, we participated in a hearing at the JURI Committee of the European Parliament bringing the realities of older people to the fore. We showed our support for JURI's first reading but also flagged that the framing and rationale of the directive is per se ageist. We also highlighted key issues in the context of care and support and how ageism is an additional layer that can contribute to restrictions of legal capacity.

2.3 Intersection between LGBTIQ issues and age

A common assumption is that LGBTIQ people are primarily young. Yet LGBTIQ people also grow older, and their specific realities, needs and contributions remain largely overlooked. Older LGBTIQ people are doubly marginalised – both within ageing policies and within LGBTIQ equality agendas. Such lack of visibility creates significant gaps in human rights protection, and social inclusion. Many older LGBTIQ persons face cumulative and intersecting forms of discrimination across the lifecourse, including barriers in housing, healthcare, long-term care, employment and social protection. The absence of recognition also undermines the visibility of their histories, resilience and community-building contributions.

These realities underscore the urgent need for inclusive policies and practices that address the full diversity of LGBTIQ people at all ages. Bringing an intersectional, lifecourse perspective into both ageing and LGBTIQ policymaking is essential to ensure that older LGBTIQ persons are recognised as full rights-holders and can age with dignity, safety and equality. In June 2025, AGE contributed to the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2026-2030 by submitting a consultation response to ensure that the Strategy meaningfully includes older LGBTIQ persons and addresses discrimination across the lifecourse. AGE voiced also the same points in its intervention of the civil dialogue meeting on the LGBTQI Strategy organised by DG JUST on 10 April in-person.

2.4 Intersection between race and age

We also contributed to the forthcoming EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030 by submitting a response to the public consultation. Despite growing evidence of the harmful effects of racism on health, there remains an urgent need to better understand how sustained exposure to racism shapes health outcomes and resilience at different stages of life. Adopting a lifecourse perspective that centres the intersectional lived experiences of racialised older people is essential.

3. Prints of relevant proofs

List of policy papers with intersectional dimensions (links):

- EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism
- Gender Inequality in Old Age
- AGE Barometer 2025

List of annexes:

1- Gender Inequality in Old Age
2- What if Older Women Enjoyed Equal Rights
3- Recommendations for the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030
4- AGE Barometer

5- Agenda FORWARD Conference
6- Infographic on What is Wrong with the Proposed Law on Cross-Border Protection of Adults?
7- Joint Proposed Amendments on the Regulation on Protection of Adults in Cross-Border Situations
8- Recommendations for the EU LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030
9- Recommendations for the EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030

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Gender inequality in old age

Older women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that accumulate during the life course and impact later life. Ageism often intersects with other forms of discrimination such as sexism, ableism, racism and classism to name just a few. Older women's lived experiences and realities are often overlooked while they experience ageing in a specific way. To tackle the systemic barriers that they face, we need to design policies that use an intersectional gender perspective. Gender inequality at a younger age translates into old age inequality.

Employment and social protection



In 2023...
32.7% of women aged 55-64 were in part-time employment, compared with 8,6% of men in the same age group.

The gender pay gap increases with age.

In 2023, women over 65 received a pension that was on average 25% lower than that of men.

- Women who are in part-time employment and/or who experience career breaks because of motherhood or the need to care for relatives face diverse barriers.
- Part-time work and the fact that on average, men earn higher wages than women impact the pension gap.
- The lack of adequacy of minimum pensions in many EU Member States results in higher poverty and social exclusion rates for women.

Long-term care



On average... 70% of unpaid informal carers are women.

- The precarious employment situation in the sector is faced by a mainly female and ageing workforce.
- Differences in life expectancy and the prevalence of chronic diseases lead to older women having more needs for long-term care and support.
- As women have on average lower incomes than men, access to formal care remains largely unequal.

> *"There was no way I could leave without a legal battle over the house, and my sons loved their father, the grandchildren loved him, everyone in my life knew him as well. I didn't think I could start a whole new life, he'd always be in my life. And I was his carer."*
> *Marie, 69 years old*

Gender-based violence



In 2021... 24% of women aged 65-74 reported experiencing gender-based violence.

- Data on gender-based violence against older women is scarce.
- There is a lack of protection mechanisms and awareness that domestic violence affects women of all ages.
- Long term abusive relationships make it difficult for women to leave. Many victims are from generations in which women were less likely to have financial independence.
- Support services are not adapted to the needs of older women.



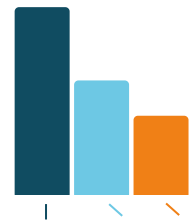





Gender inequality in old age

> ***"Poverty among older women is a result of inequalities in the household, labour market, and state institutions."***
> *Heidrun Mollenkopf, AGE Platform Europe President*

Digitalisation



In 2023...
33.8% of men aged 65-74 had digital basic skill, compared with 23.3% of women in the same age group and 55.6% for individuals of all age groups.

- On average, older women are at higher risk of digital exclusion than older men because they have lower incomes, lower financial literacy, shorter careers, often worked in jobs which required no or low levels of digital skills or faced gender discrimination in accessing training on digital skills.
- Older women's digital exclusion results from accumulated disadvantages during the life course.

Poverty and social exclusion

Older women's poverty rate is 7.5 percentage points higher than men's over 75.

- More women than men face poverty and social exclusion.
- The fact that pensions do not consistently reflect increases in living costs impacts the risk of poverty.
- The risk of poverty is higher among women with disabilities, women living alone, women with a low level of education, and migrant women.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the European Commission adopts a new **Gender Equality Strategy** that is intersectional and takes into account the lived experiences and challenges of older women.
- Work towards an **Age Equality Strategy** that will work hand in hand with the Gender Equality Strategy, focusing on ageism and addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Adopt the **Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive** to ensure that the EU offers comprehensive protection against discrimination in key areas of life, including for older women.
- Support the need for a **UN convention on the rights of older persons** that takes due account of the inequalities faced by older women.
- Collect and analyse **data on older women**, disaggregated by different age groups.
- Following the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention, support the appointment of an **EU Coordinator to end all forms of violence against women** that will work towards the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence and the Directive on Victims' Rights.
- Call on the European Commission to include ageism and how it intersects with racism/sexism in the drafting of the new **Anti-Racism Strategy** and the renewed **LGBTIQ Equality Strategy post-2025.**
- Mainstream the rights of older women, their lived experiences and perspectives in all initiatives of the **FEMM Committee.**
- Ensure the **active participation of older women** in the design and implementation of EU policies, notably via the consultation of organisations of older women.
- Encourage **organisations advocating for the rights of women**, to include older women's realities and challenges.

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What if Older Women Enjoyed Equal Rights?

Imagine a Europe where women would be equal to men. A Europe where women would no longer face multiple barriers throughout their lives. A Europe where women would have equal opportunities for education and work and receive equal pay for equal work. A Europe where women of all ages would be socially, economically and politically empowered... **How would a Europe look like for older women if there were policies designed to better support and empower them, to guarantee their full representation and integration into society?**

Gender Equality in the Labour Market would be a reality

European employment policies and legal measures would consistently take into account the perspectives, lived experiences and challenges of older women. They would address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the labour market. They would:

- Develop support services regarding motherhood.
- Implement the EU Care Strategy and strengthen the Work-Life Balance Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/1158) recognizing unpaid care work, valuing caring roles and thus enhancing work-life integration.

"We imagine a world where care is a shared and valued responsibility, supported by accessible services throughout society. Women and men would have the freedom to choose whether to work or dedicate time to caregiving, without facing economic penalties. Those who care for their loved ones—whether parents, grandparents, or friends—would receive financial recognition. The well-being of care professionals would be a priority, with access to psychological support, mutual aid groups, and paid supervision. Education on caregiving, financial autonomy, and household management would be integrated into schools to equip everyone with essential life skills. Institutions would acknowledge and embrace different family structures, and children would have a voice in decisions that affect them. Cities and homes would be designed with true accessibility in mind, removing barriers, while healthcare services would be deeply embedded in local communities to provide meaningful support for caregivers and prevent burnout (burden)." **Curopoli, AGE Italian member**

- Address stigma around menopause. Women would stop being discriminated against, marginalized or dismissed because of menopausal symptoms and workplaces would be adapted to persons experiencing such symptoms.
- Allow women to work part-time and/or reduced working hours by choice, not by obligation, notably because they are the main carers for children and/or other relatives.
- Offer quality working lives with opportunities to change career.

As a result, older women would have equal access and opportunities to the labour market as men. Women would be paid equally as men and the gender pay gap would become obsolete, such as the gender pension gap.

Being old and a woman would no longer put us at a higher risk of poverty

In a utopian Europe, older women would not face a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion.

During their lifecourse, career break and part-time work due to motherhood and/or other care responsibilities would be supported and mothers would not be economically penalised in the society.

"No mother must choose between financial security and time with her child. Because the choice to nurture a child or chase a career is not a sacrifice, but a right—fully honored, fully supported.

Where motherhood is not a barrier but a strength—not seen as a pause in professional growth but as a journey of learning. The patience, resilience, and adaptability that come with raising a child are recognised as powerful skills—ones that build stronger individuals, more inclusive workplaces, and a more compassionate, interconnected society.

Here, no mother fears the weight of poverty simply because support was lacking. Society does not leave her to struggle alone but stands beside her, offering solutions that empower.

A world where care is not invisible, not dismissed as mere duty, but lifted as the foundation upon which everything else stands. The fabric of society is woven with care, its threads strong and enduring, held not by mothers alone, but by all.

In this world, mothers rise. Families flourish. And society, in turn, becomes whole."

Make Mothers Matter

A gender-inclusive pension system would be implemented in all Member States and would:

- Allow pension rights over the course of working lives with, for instance, flexible contributions options to accommodate career interruptions
- Ensure that survivor benefits extend to same-sex partners and chosen family structures.
- Implement a mandatory report on gender disparities in retirement pensions.
- Promote economic independence in old age, including for older women.

Older women would have equal opportunities in getting sustainable pensions allowing them to live a life of dignity and stop being at risk of poverty.

"In a truly equal Europe, older lesbians and lesbian couples would age with dignity, free from the disproportionate risk of poverty and exclusion. Their contributions to society would be recognized, their relationships valued, and their needs fully integrated into social and economic policies. A just future means ensuring no woman is left behind—at any stage of life." **Silvia Casalino, EL*C executive co-director**

Older women would be fully included in society.

A gender equal Europe would guarantee the right of all women, including the oldest, in all their diversity, to participate. They would thus have equal opportunities to fully participate in society.

Older women's right to participate would be tailored to their individual preferences and abilities and guaranteed through life. Their contribution to their communities would not only be recognised but also valued and they would have the choice to

choose in which aspects of society they would like to participate such as in politics – notably in decision-making where they would have a say on all issues and at all stages of the policy cycle – culture, justice, employment, education and learning, in the same way as for other age groups. Older women would have a full, affordable and equitable access to essential services: access to places of participation, transportation, essential goods such as health and care services, food, housing and banking services or access to the internet, including in rural areas.

Older women would be better equipped to participate in society if:

- They were better supported with accessible lifelong learning for all, including to digital tools. There would be opportunities for education and training beyond retirement age, including affordable training for digital education.
- Member States would address the drivers of exclusion, eliminate the laws, policies, institutions and practices that deny the right of older people to fully participate in society, and tackle the systemic barriers that exclude older women.
- Offline alternatives as well as 'service points' with Internet access were ensured to guarantee the provision of information and participation in public life in sparsely populated areas.

The digital gap between generations would no longer exist and women would stop facing additional obstacles to their right to learn.

"By stimulating digital literacy of women and girls, including lifelong learning of new digital skills by women of all ages (including women over 60+), we will close the digital divide between women and girls of all ages and generations." **Arina Angerman, Older Women's Network**

BUT the reality is that older women still face many inequalities

What we mentioned is all a pipe dream: women are systematically discriminated against because of their gender from an early age. This discrimination accumulates and intersects with ageism and other forms of discrimination in later life.

Some statistics

- *The gender pay gap for 55-64 years people is the highest of all age groups.*

- *In 2023, women over 65 received a pension that was on average 25% lower than that of men.*
- *On average, 70% of unpaid informal carers are women.*
- *In 2021, 24% of women aged 65-74 reported experiencing gender-based violence.*
- *In 2023, 33.8% of men aged 65-74 had digital basic skill, compared with 23.3% of women in the same age group and 55.6% for individuals of all age groups.*
- *Older women's poverty rate is 7.5 percentage points higher than men's over 75.*

This dream can become a reality, but for that to happen, European policies and initiatives such as equality strategies must adopt an **approach to gender and ageing that is intersectional and that supports all women, including older women**. An approach that is has a **person-centred perspective across the lifecourse**. An approach that is **human rights-based**, where older women would no longer be seen as passive recipients but as right-holders and full contributors to society.

There is hope...

The future Gender Equality Strategy is the opportunity to better integrate an age equality perspective and must explicitly address the needs and rights of older women to achieve true gender equality in Europe. It must include older women's experiences and perspectives in different areas such as in employment and social protection, long-term care, gender-based violence, digitalisation, poverty and social inclusion.

Older people's rights movements and organisations such as AGE Platform play a crucial role in ensuring that issues of gender and age discrimination are addressed together. More and more older women are visible and raise their voices around the world, supported by feminist movements. The role of older persons in such movements and civil society organisations is crucial in raising the voices of older women and making visible their experiences and perspectives. Older feminists of today where younger feminists of yesterday; they paved the way for fighting for our rights. Older women stand for themselves, but also for future generations.

AGE Platform Europe's contribution to the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2026 – 2030

22 July 2025

Older women (OW) face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that accumulate over the lifecourse, resulting in marginalisation, violence, economic inequality, social exclusion. OW's poverty rate is 7.5 percentage points higher than men's over 75. This risk is greater among women (W) with disabilities, living alone, with low education, or with a migrant background. Pensions failing to keep pace with the cost of living increase this risk. OW also face ageist and sexist stereotypes, being portrayed as frail/passive/dependent. A Union of Equality is not possible without recognising the lived experiences and structural barriers faced by all W and girls, including OW. The 2026-2030 Gender Equality Strategy must address ageism through an intersectional lens, as age remains the only ground of discrimination without a dedicated EU strategy

Gender-based violence (GBV)

GBV against OW remains largely invisible in research, policy, and law. In 2021, 24% of W aged 65-74 reported experiencing GBV. There is a lack of protection mechanisms and awareness that GBV affects women of all ages. Support services are rarely adapted to OW's needs. Elder abuse is often framed as a neutral "vulnerability" issue, omitting the power dynamics and patriarchal structures that underpin GBV

Gender pay & pension gap

The gender pay gap increases with age. In 2023, W 65+ received pensions 25% lower than men's

Healthcare & long-term care

OW face unequal access to care due to both sexism and ageism. Abuse in care settings includes coercion, psychological violence, and financial abuse. OW live longer but with more years in poor health. Diseases may present differently in W but are less often recognised. Medicines are rarely tested on older people, especially OW, despite high polypharmacy resulting from multiple health conditions. OW also have greater long-term care needs

Employment

Only 56.2% of W aged 55-64 are employed, vs. 68.7% of men and 76.5% of W aged 25-54. 33% work part-time, compared to 8.7% of men. 70% of informal carers are W. The sector's precarious employment conditions disproportionately affect a predominantly female and ageing workforce. Menopause affect OW at the workplace, yet stigma and lack of support persist

Recommendations

- Mainstream ageing across the Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030
- Apply an intersectional lens to address the needs of older migrant W, racialised W, carers, W with disabilities, low income, or living in rural areas
- Adopt an EU Action Plan on Ageism aligned with the Gender Equality Strategy
- Support the appointment of an EU Coordinator to end all forms of violence against W that will work towards the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the Directive on combating violence against W and domestic violence and the Directive on Victims' Rights
- Collect age disaggregated data by different age groups, removing upper age limits

- Recognise elder abuse as part of DV and GBV strategies, acknowledging its unique dynamics (e.g., abuse by adult children, carers, and other family members)
- Strengthen coordination between GBV services, OP's services, and frontline actors including health, social, and justice services
- Commission an EU-wide study on elder abuse and violence against older people
- Ensure medicines are tested for effectiveness on OW and address bias in medical research
- Tackle ageism and gender bias in healthcare through training and awareness campaigns
- Address suicide via a gender perspective among older people – especially older men – through tailored, gendered mental health services
- Adopt a Council Recommendation on support and social protection for informal carers
- Ensure robust implementation of the Long-Term Care Recommendation with a gender and age lens
- Promote employment for OW via gender and age-sensitive policies, flexible work, and life-long learning
- Promote lifelong learning for OW to support participation and inclusion
- Ensure that Member States correctly implement the Work-Life Balance Directive



AGE PLATFORM Europe

BAROMETER 2025

Older workers and the future of work: Navigating digitalisation, the green transition, and labour shortages

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Foreword from Roxana Mînzatu

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness

Europe is in the midst of historic demographic and technological shifts. Skills gaps, labour shortages and a declining working age population mean Europe must tap into all its potential to sustain its economic and social model.

This includes recruiting older workers. Too often, older workers are seen through a deficit lens – as less adaptable or less productive – rather than as experienced professionals who bring mentorship and know-how. This mindset must change.

As this Barometer shows, age discrimination, limited access to training, and inflexible workplaces still prevent many older people from remaining active in the labour market.

Out of the 50 million Europeans outside the labour market, nearly 20 million are people aged 55–64, often leaving the workforce due to caring responsibilities or early retirement. The employment rate for this age group remains around ten percentage points below the overall average.

Labour market policies should support the inclusion of older workers, whose experience and skills are key to Europe's competitiveness and social cohesion.

The European Commission has already laid strong foundations. Initiatives such as the *Toolbox for Action on Demographic Change*, the *Action Plan on Skills and Labour Shortages*, and the *Quality Jobs Roadmap* all recognise that extending healthy and fulfilling working lives is central to our social and economic goals. But we must go further.

We need workplaces that adapt to people – not the other way around. This means investing in ergonomics, flexibility, and lifelong learning, so that older workers can continue to grow and contribute. It means targeted upskilling in digital competences. And it means reinforcing equality legislation and carer support, so that older women – often the backbone of unpaid care – can remain active and valued in paid work too.

Promoting intergenerational cooperation is equally important. When younger and older workers share skills and experiences, organisations become stronger and more innovative. Initiatives such as the upcoming *European Intergenerational Fairness Strategy* can help embed this culture across policies and workplaces, making inclusion not an exception, but the norm.

Creating opportunities for older workers to stay active is an investment in our communities, our economies, and the European social model itself.

This AGE Barometer is both a mirror and a call to action. It reminds us to approach ageing not as a challenge to be managed, but as an opportunity to build a more resilient and inclusive Europe.

Foreword from Heidrun Mollenkopf

President of AGE Platform Europe

In a European context marked by labour shortages, accelerated digitalisation and the green transition, age discrimination in the workplace is on the rise, increasingly marginalising particularly older workers.

Older workers face stereotypes and prejudices that limit their career prospects. Ageism manifests itself in the workplace through discrimination that hinders access to training, career advancement and even job retention. For many, this results in underemployment, long-term unemployment or unwanted early retirement, realities that are even more pronounced for older persons who face intersectional discrimination (the employment rate for older women in Europe is only 40% in some Member States; see AGE Barometer 2023).

The AGE Barometer 2025 explores evolving labour market trends and their implications for older workers. It looks at demographic changes through the lens of three major trends: digitalisation, the green transition and labour shortages. It emphasises the urgent need to rethink employment policies to ensure that they are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of all generations.

Current and anticipated changes offer opportunities for quality, sustainable careers, but only if adequate employment policies are adapted. The valuable experience, resilience, insight and contributions of older workers must be recognised and supported by thoughtful policy design. Ageing well at work and sustainability must be seen as strengths for the labour market. In this sense, this 2025 edition calls for public policies and workplace practices that promote intergenerational collaboration, lifelong learning and healthy working conditions.

Developed through a collaborative effort by members of AGE Platform Europe, the 2025 edition offers a cross-cutting analysis that links labour market trends to the challenges and opportunities of ageing. It presents inspiring practices, concrete recommendations, and a strategic vision for turning ageing into an asset, not only for employment, but also for innovation and social cohesion.

By placing older workers at the heart of the debate on the future of work, the AGE Barometer 2025 calls for collective action to build a fairer, more inclusive and more resilient labour market. It is aimed at European institutions, national governments, social partners, businesses and civil society, with the ambition of transforming the challenges of ageing into levers for progress for all.

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Executive summary

Context and purpose of the Barometer 2025

Europe's labour markets are undergoing transformations. **Labour shortages, the accelerated digitalisation, and the green transition** are reshaping the way people work and the types of jobs available. At the same time, **demographic ageing** is changing the composition of the workforce itself, with older workers representing an increasingly vital share of Europe's human capital. These **overlapping trends** raise urgent questions about the sustainability and quality of working life, as well as about **how inclusive current and future labour market strategies are and will be**.

The AGE Barometer 2025 examine how these shifts are affecting older workers today, and how they may **shape opportunities and challenges** in the years to come.

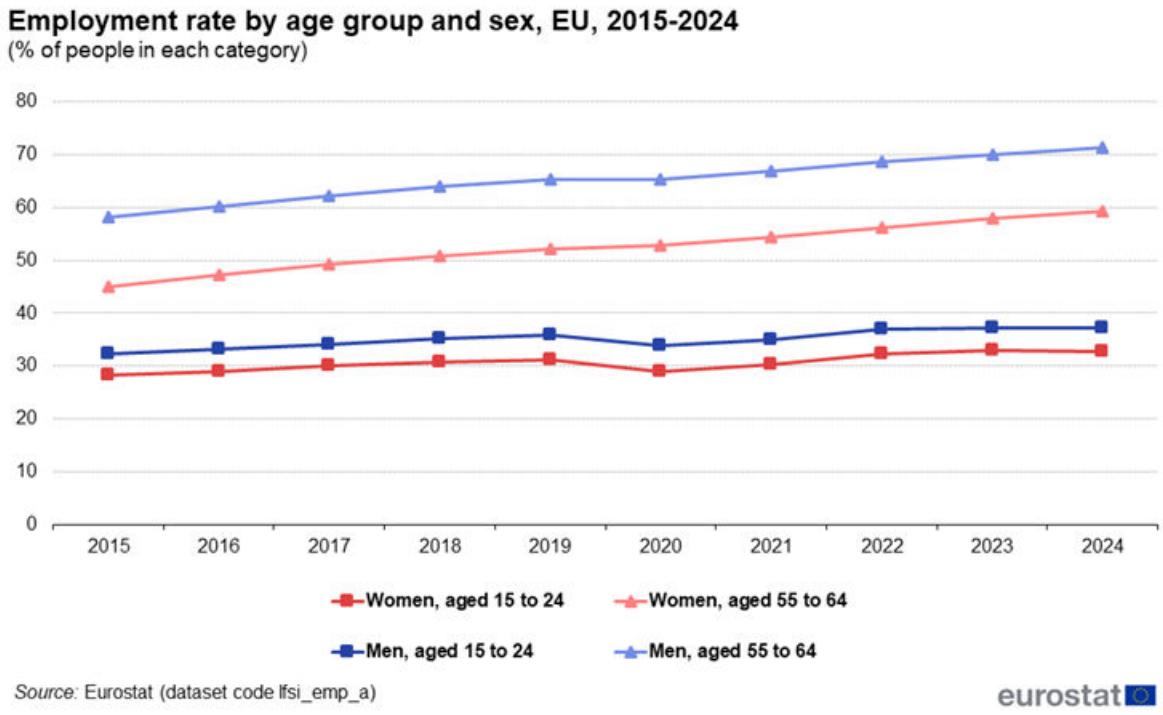


Figure 2: Employment rate by age group and sex, EU, 2015-2024 Source: Eurostat (lfsi_emp_a)

While the employment rate of people aged 55–64 has grown in recent years, persistent inequalities remain across gender, sectors, and regions, leaving many older workers at risk of exclusion from labour market strategies. Too often, adaptation efforts to address labour shortages and/or linked to the digital and green transitions **overlook this group of persons**, despite their right to work, their experience and their potential to contribute to Europe's economic and social resilience.

This year's Barometer therefore seeks to:

- Analyse the current and emerging challenges facing older workers within the broader context of **labour shortages, digital transition and green transition**.
- Observe what experts, social partners, civil society organisations, and EU leaders' insights and perspectives are.
- Highlight **inspiring practices that promote the inclusion of older workers** in dynamic and inclusive labour markets.
- Provide **concrete recommendations** for age-friendly employment policies that recognise the value of older workers and ensure they are not left behind during these major transformations.

The AGE Barometer 2025 aims not only to **inform policy debates at the European level** but also to serve at **national and local levels**. By linking the three megatrends of digitalisation, green transition, and labour shortages, it offers a cross-cutting analysis of how demographic ageing interacts with these forces. Its central goal is to make ageing an opportunity for employment, for innovation, and for stronger, **more inclusive labour markets across Europe**.

Methodology

This new edition 2025 of the AGE Barometer follows on from previous editions by assessing the **socio-economic situation of older people in Europe** with a human rights-based approach. Since 2023, the Barometer has focused on the employment and place of older persons in the labour market, highlighting their often underestimated potential and proposing several recommendations for the

EU, national and company level. In 2023[1], AGE members mobilised to identify and promote good practices that strengthen the empowerment of older workers, enabling them to lead **sustainable and quality working lives**. Building on the findings of this 2023 edition, the AGE Barometer 2025 takes a cross-cutting approach by examining the impact of the three megatrends mentioned earlier, addressing both the challenges and the opportunities for today's older workers and the ageing workforce.

The development of the AGE Barometer 2025 was guided by **a collaborative and multi-layered approach**, coordinated by the secretariat of AGE Platform Europe. AGE members part of the **Employment and Participation Task Force** convened on several occasions to define the thematic scope and subtopics of this edition. These discussions were informed by the European Union priorities, feedback from the 2023 edition, and insights gathered through ongoing dialogue with EU and national policymakers, social partners, and civil society organisations.



Employment Task Force meeting – March 2025

[1] AGE Barometer 2023 - Sustainable and Quality Working Lives

Based on this preparatory work, the Task Force designed **a comprehensive questionnaire**, which was disseminated to all AGE members. This instrument enabled the **collection of national-level data and perspectives**, offering a clearer understanding of the specific challenges faced within labour markets. It also provided valuable insights into how governments, employers, and social partners are responding to the pressures of labour shortages and the digital and green transitions.

In parallel, the AGE Secretariat conducted **targeted research** and held **consultations with key experts** to complement the findings. The combined efforts of the Task Force, AGE members, and the secretariat facilitated the identification of promising practices and innovative approaches that support the inclusion and empowerment of older workers.

This methodology has enabled the AGE Barometer 2025 to present a series of inspiring practices, highlight critical challenges, and formulate strategic recommendations. These are directed at public authorities, social partners, and economic stakeholders at all levels, from EU institutions to local companies, with the overarching aim of fostering a more **inclusive and sustainable labour market for all generations**.

Key findings

Demographic ageing is profoundly transforming the labour market. Older workers, who are often marginalised, find themselves at the crossroads of three major dynamics (digitalisation, the green transition, and labour shortages), each of which presents challenges but also opportunities for ensuring an inclusive labour market and sectors, as well as sustainable, high-quality careers:

Reconciling digital transition and an ageing workforce

A transition that exacerbates inequalities

New digital tools and processes exclude older workers due to ageism, a lack of digital skills and appropriate training, leading to a loss of know-how, early departures, increased stress and a more precarious workforce.

Potential to reveal

- Improved working conditions through automation
- Valuing experience through intergenerational mentoring
- Access to flexible employment models (job sharing, teleworking, etc.)
- Distance learning and retraining in accessible digital professions

Challenge: Valuing older workers, better integrating digital tools into a strategy of inclusion and sustainable careers. Integrating older workers into digital transformation strategies through policies of continuing education, digital inclusion and psychosocial risk prevention.

Green transition: unevenly distributed opportunities

Sectors in decline

Due to significant job losses in declining sectors such as automotive and fossil fuels, a large portion of the workforce is finding itself unemployed. It is particularly detrimental to the older workforce, who are more affected by long-term unemployment than any other age group due to ageism, low mobility and the lack of adequate retraining programmes.

Valuing traditional know-how and practical skills

The green transition promotes job creation in sectors where older workers have strong expertise (construction, recycling, maintenance, for instance) and where traditional know-how and practical skills are valued, enabling older workers to pass on their expertise to younger generations and encouraging intergenerational collaboration.

Challenge: Promote professional retraining without age discrimination by adapting training to individual needs and ensuring the inclusion of all ages for a just transition.

Labour shortages: older workers are undervalued

An experienced but marginalised older workforce: the European paradox

Ageing reduces the working population, exacerbating shortages in key sectors (health, construction, care). Older workers are available but often excluded by discriminatory practices, unsuitable working conditions or inadequate reintegration policies.

A resilient labour market that better integrates older workers

Older workers have valuable skills and can ensure the transfer of knowledge, thereby strengthening cohesion and productivity. Several existing models make it possible to extend careers in line with the wishes and needs of older workers, while unemployed older people could be better supported and mobilised to respond to labour market pressures.

Challenge: Implement strategies for job retention, retraining, flexibility and social dialogue to promote quality careers.

Key recommendations

For digitalisation, the green transition and the response to labour shortages to be socially sustainable, it is imperative to:

1. ***Rethink employment policies by incorporating the specific realities and needs of older workers***

To ensure an inclusive approach to ageing in the labour market, employment policies must explicitly incorporate the realities of older workers, particularly older women and those who are unemployed, and face significant barriers to re-entering the labour market.

The **European Employment Strategy**[2] needs to fully integrate ageing, which is not currently the case. Recently adopted or forthcoming initiatives, such as the **Quality Jobs Roadmap**[3] and the new **Action Plan on the European Pillar of**

[2] European Employment Strategy (EES)
[3] Feedback from AGE Platform Europe on the Quality Jobs Roadmap consultation

Social Rights[4], are strategic levers for older workers, for example by including age-related indicators and integrating career sustainability.

It is also essential to strengthen the monitoring and review of **the Employment Equality Directive**[5] to ensure stronger protection against age discrimination in the workplace, thereby enabling older workers to remain active longer if they so wish.

Supporting the **European network of public employment services**[6] and strengthening the implementation of the **Recommendation on long-term unemployment**[7] is essential to better meet the needs of older jobseekers, particularly women, through a person-centred approach.

Finally, a revision of the **Work-Life Balance Directive**[8] should propose increasing the number of days of leave for carers, guaranteeing minimum standards of remuneration and protecting them from dismissal or forced early retirement. These changes can particularly help women of all ages, as they account for 70% of unpaid informal carers[9].

2. Invest in lifelong learning, targeting digital and green skills

Access to continuing training is essential to enable older workers to adapt to the digital and green transitions. The European Commission **Union of Skills**[10] initiative offers a major opportunity to develop modular, accessible training pathways tailored to the needs of older workers in these areas.

[4] AGE Proposal to the new EPSR Action Plan (2025)
[5] Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation
[6] European Network of Public Employment Services - PES Network - European Commission
[7] Council recommendation of 15 February 2016 on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market
[8] Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU
[9] Caregiving impacts on informal carers' health and well-being – a gender perspective – Eurocarers
[10] Union of skills - European Commission

The implementation of the **Council's recommendations on qualification pathways**[11] and **individual training accounts**[12] must also respond to the specific realities and needs of older workers in terms of learning and employment by adopting a person-centred approach. This means ensuring access to paid training leave, removing age limits for training and aligning learning opportunities with the changing requirements of the transitions.

3. Promote intergenerational collaboration in the workplace

Intergenerational collaboration is a key factor in social cohesion and economic performance. It must be promoted by the future **European Intergenerational Fairness Strategy**[13], which should include concrete measures to encourage mentoring, experience sharing and cooperation between generations in professional environments, highlighting the benefits for businesses and employees.

The adoption of an **Action Plan to Combat Ageism**[14] as part of this strategy is essential to combat age-related stereotypes, raise awareness among employers and ensure fair and inclusive human resources practices.

4. Adapt working environments to extend careers in good conditions

To enable older workers to remain active for longer, it is essential to adopt a systemic approach to career sustainability. This involves systematically integrating the lifecourse approach to occupational health and safety policies, particularly in the context of the current and future **European Occupational Health and Safety Framework**[15]**.**

Member States and companies must be encouraged to implement concrete measures: workplace ergonomics, prevention of psychosocial risks, flexible

[11] Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults
[12] Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts
[13] Intergenerational Fairness - European Commission
[14] AGE proposal on EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism
[15] EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA

working hours, gradual retirement and reintegration. These actions must be supported by monitoring and evaluation tools to measure their impact on quality of life at work and career longevity. Sectoral initiatives must be developed and extended to all sectors to adapt workplaces to the needs of older workers.

Expected benefits and impact

Although the digital transition, the green transition and labour shortages are often addressed separately, their interaction with demographic ageing reveals common challenges that require an integrated approach focused on the inclusion of older workers.

The **digital transition**, in particular, represents a powerful lever for transforming work, improving employment conditions and strengthening competitiveness. However, its potential remains largely untapped for older workers. Inclusive digitalisation could help reduce age-related inequalities by facilitating job retention and access to employment, valuing experience and limiting early retirement. It would also provide tools to prevent unemployment and precariousness at the end of a career, through continuing training and the adaptation of workstations. In terms of well-being, digital tools, when designed to be inclusive, can lighten physical tasks, reduce stress and improve work-life balance.

For businesses, an inclusive digital transition is synonymous with resilience. It helps retain key skills, reduce staff turnover and promote a more open, intergenerational and inclusive organisational culture. It also enhances the attractiveness in a context of talent shortages. In terms of public policy, digitisation designed for all ages helps to reduce the territorial and generational digital divide, while supporting responsible, inclusive and human-centred innovation.

The **green transition** has the potential to offer major economic and social opportunities. It could stimulate the creation of sustainable jobs in sectors accessible to older workers, such as energy renovation, recycling and maintenance. It can also correct regional inequalities by supporting vulnerable

areas. On a social level, it promotes the inclusion of older people through tailored training, improved working conditions and local initiatives that strengthen social ties. Lifelong learning and the development of green skills are becoming essential pillars in enabling everyone to contribute to the transition, regardless of their age.

The ecological transition can also improve health at work by reducing physical and psychosocial risks and promoting healthy ageing that encourages community engagement and activity. To do so, it requires more equitable policies that are better targeted at specific groups and regions.

Finally, **labour shortages** highlight a paradox: while many sectors are under pressure, older workers, who are available and experienced, often remain excluded. Valuing them would boost productivity, reduce discrimination and promote social cohesion. Retaining or reintegrating them into the workforce, particularly through targeted policies, would help reduce long-term unemployment and make better use of existing skills. In key sectors such as health, construction and services, mobilising older workers is essential to ensure business continuity and support transitions.

To address these challenges, it is necessary to adopt innovative organisational models, such as job sharing or phased retirement, and to implement governance policies based on specific indicators and systematic evaluations. This would allow policies to be adjusted to the realities on the ground and ensure quantifiable impact from social initiatives.

The inclusion of older workers in these three transitions is not only a matter of social justice, but also an essential economic, organisational and political strategy for building **a sustainable, resilient and inclusive labour market.**

Chapter I - Digital transition

The impact of the accelerated digitalisation on the labour market

The digital transformation and workforce inequalities

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly transformed the labour market, by accelerating the digital transition and redefining the way we work. This transition encompasses technologies such as remote working, automation, algorithmic management and artificial intelligence (AI). While it has led to efficiency gains and opened new opportunities in the labour market, it has also created many challenges. Some occupation may entirely disappear, while others will undergo major changes, particularly from a social perspective. Up to **46% of jobs might be disrupted** especially due to AI, with 14% of jobs automated and 32% of occupations transformed[16], which would have a particularly worrying impact on workers with fewer resources, who may not benefit equally from productivity gains, and on adults in low-skilled or precarious jobs who risk being left behind.

Leaving entire groups behind, such as older workers, is one of the most significant threats of the digital transition. The exacerbation of existing **social inequalities** caused by this transition has a particularly significant impact on older workers. The pandemic has already triggered **a 'wave of retirements,'** with many older workers leaving the labour market earlier than planned, often due to a lack of organisational support to adapt to new working conditions[17]. As a result, the labour market not only lost a substantial portion of its experienced workforce but also suffered a considerable **reduction of institutional knowledge and expertise**. The departure of older workers created a gap that is difficult to fill, particularly in sectors where mentorship, continuity, and accumulated know-how

[16] Developments and Forecasts of Changing Nature of Work - European Commission
[17] Eurofound Live - Differential Older Workers' Experience with Technology - Presentation from Pr. Matthew Flynn

are critical. This shift has had lasting implications for workforce planning, productivity, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

The growing risk of early retirement and the erosion of institutional knowledge remain pressing concerns, especially as **ageist attitudes intensify** with the digital transition. Employers increasingly favour younger candidates, often assuming that older workers struggle to adapt to new technologies, despite evidence that they frequently perform as well as their younger peers. Moreover, **biases embedded in emerging technologies** pose additional threats to older workers, including exclusion from automated recruitment systems and diminished access to opportunities.

The limited exposure to digital tools throughout their careers and unequal **access to resources, including digital tools, training and digital confidence**, implies unique challenges to adapt to the digital landscape. Yet acquiring updated digital skills is essential to cope with the digital transition in workplaces. But older workers often face barriers to accessing training, particularly digital training, which prevents them from remaining competitive. They often experience difficulties, which have negative consequences on their professional and personal lives, unlike younger workers who have benefited from better education and have strong digital skills, who tend to report positive experiences with digital change[18].

The labour market suffers from **the lack of a structured system that guarantees lifelong learning** and the continuous development of digital skills, including in later life. This shortcoming exposes older workers to increased risks: at best, early retirement; at worst, particularly damaging unemployment at the end of their career. The latter can have repercussions not only on the individuals concerned, but also on businesses and the economy, due to the **loss of valuable organisational expertise**. By neglecting the potential of experienced workers and failing to provide them with the means to adapt to technological developments, the labour market is depriving itself of human capital that is essential for an **inclusive and sustainable digital transition**.

[18] Eurofound Live - Differential Older Workers' Experience with Technology - Presentation from Arianna Poli

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **IRELAND**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

Active Retirement Ireland

Adult Literacy for Life (2021-2030):
A 10-year adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy strategy

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has developed an extensive strategy to ensure that everyone has the necessary literacy, numeracy and digital literacy to fully participate in society and realise their potential. By **challenging the misconception that an inability to read, write or digitally communicate is a failure of the person, but rather a failure of society and the State**, the Irish government aims to ensure support is easily and locally accessible to everyone in need.

As basic digital literacy will be required for almost every type of employment in the future, even those who are currently employed may have difficulty adapting to technological change and will **require periodic upskilling in digital and other key areas**. Employers and employer representatives have a key role to play in facilitating literacy upskilling among workforces. There is now a range of **industry-led networks to support workers lifelong learning, including Skillnet Business Network**, a cluster of private sector businesses that collaborate based on their sector or region, to address skills needs and provide upskilling and reskilling programmes. **Regional Skills Fora**, also provides help for employers and the training system to work together and meet the emerging skills needs of their regions.

Digitalisation and regional employment

Challenges and opportunities due to the digitalisation of the world of work are not evenly distributed across Europe and its Member States. From automation and AI to remote work and platform-based employment, digital tools are reshaping how, where, and when people work. These developments are exacerbating existing **regional disparities** but also **the rural and urban divide**, amplifying existing disparities in infrastructure, investment, and training, while highlighting the need for targeted policies to ensure a fair and inclusive digital transition.

Capital regions across Europe have emerged as the primary beneficiaries of digital growth. Their resilience during the pandemic can be partly attributed to a **higher concentration of jobs that can be performed remotely**. Capital regions and urban centres recorded the highest rates of telework, driven by occupational structures that favour remote jobs[19]. In contrast, rural regions have experienced a decline in employment share, widening the gap between urban and rural labour markets. Italy illustrates this trend, where the difference between the highest and lowest regional employment rates reaches 33%[20].

Internet connectivity also remains a key factor in digital work, not only for remote working but also for training, skills development and finding and applying for jobs. Although connectivity has improved across Europe since 2019[21], a persistent digital divide continues to separate urban and rural communities. This disparity limits the potential for digital work and participation among workers and job seekers in less connected regions.

The adoption of AI tools is accelerating across Europe, but here too, regional disparities remain significant, with northern and continental regions leading the way, while others lag behind. These disparities are also reflected between large and small businesses. By 2024, around 40% of large companies had adopted AI, compared with less than 10% of small companies[22]. This disparity risks creating a two-speed digital economy, undermining the competitiveness of small and

[19] Regional employment change and the geography of telework in Europe | Eurofound
[20] Regional employment change and the geography of telework in Europe | Eurofound
[21] Regional employment change and the geography of telework in Europe | Eurofound
[22] Use of artificial intelligence in enterprises - Statistics Explained - Eurostat

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the European economic model.

This uneven distribution has direct consequences for **older workers, who are overrepresented in sectors and areas slower to digitalise** but at the same time more at risk of being left behind when transitions accelerate. In regions lagging behind, older workers may face a double disadvantage, both age-related skill barriers and structural deficits in digital infrastructure.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **THE DANUBE MACRO-REGION**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Profesni Krizovatky

The eDigiStars project: Building a competitive digital workforce in the Danube region

The eDigiStars project, run from 2020 to 2022, gathered 19 partners from 8 countries (Austria, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine) to tackle **three common issues faced by the Danube macro-region:**

- Lack of skilled workforce in digital fields
- Ageing population and employability difficulties
- Lower competitiveness

The project is based on real professional cooperation of labour offices, training organisations, local government and NGOs to **create functional tools and trainings with certification for unemployed people aged 50+**:

- **POWERYOU tool** is a capacity building resource designed to support labour offices and NGOs engage, motivate and support older people, guiding them to learn and scale up their digital career.

- **CAMPUS tool** guides training organisations on how to adapt their courses to the specific needs of older persons, ensuring they are practice-oriented and aligned with participants' prior IT knowledge.
- **LABEL tool** is a recognised certificate for older persons designed to highlight their competences and build trust and confidence in their expertise.



© Centre for Ageing Better

Digital processes and the ageing workforce

Flexibility and autonomy in teleworking

Teleworking has significantly expanded the possibilities for spatial and temporal flexibility. Its widespread adoption has given workers greater freedom in choosing where and, to some extent, when they perform their tasks.

Teleworking has helped to improve **work-life integration**[23], enabling individuals to better reconcile their professional responsibilities with their personal and family commitments. By allowing flexible working arrangements, teleworking offers older workers who are also carers (of grandchildren and/or older relatives for instance) the opportunity to easily adapt their work to their caring responsibilities, without having to switch to part-time work or leave the labour market prematurely, an option often chosen at the end of a career due to a lack of flexibility. This flexibility is particularly important for women, who, according to the World Health Organisation, account for 70% of unpaid informal carers[24]. Reduced working hours or withdrawal from the labour market due to family responsibilities have immediate and long-term consequences on women's incomes and the distribution of family responsibilities, exacerbating gender inequalities in employment and retirement. This is also particularly relevant as demographic trends increasingly favour home-based care, and the number of older workers juggling employment and caregiving is expected to rise.

Remote working can also **undermine autonomy and intensify professional demands**. One of the most pressing concerns is the 'autonomy paradox'[25]: while digital tools promise greater flexibility, they often create an expectation of constant availability. Constant connectivity can make workers feel like they need to be connected all the time, reducing their actual control over their working hours and contributing to stress. Additionally, the cognitive demands of managing multiple digital channels can lead to **information overload, fatigue, and a loss of control**. This could be exacerbated for people who have difficulty coping with digital change, including a large proportion of older workers.

[23] AGE Policy Paper - Work Life Integration
[24] Caregiving impacts on informal carers' health and well-being – a gender perspective – Eurocarers
[25] The social and health implications of digital work intensification. Associations between exposure to information and communication technologies, health and work ability in different socio-economic strata

Automation and inclusion in the digital workplace

Automation plays a central role in the digital transformation of the world of work and can become a real lever for **the sustainable employment of workers**. By integrating smart technologies into professional environments, it **improves working conditions**, protects employees' health and extends their working lives in better conditions[26].

By **reducing physical strain**, automation helps to lighten the most demanding, repetitive or dangerous tasks. Robots can, for example, lift heavy loads, perform cleaning tasks or work in hazardous environments, protecting workers from musculoskeletal disorders and accidents. This allows older employees to preserve their health and continue working without compromising their well-being.

Automation also **frees workers from certain routine tasks**, allowing them to refocus on more rewarding, creative or strategic tasks. This change in the content of work can increase motivation, job satisfaction and recognition of skills, particularly for experienced workers whose expertise remains essential.

By facilitating the adaptation of workstations, automated technologies also make it possible to **better meet needs specific of older people and/or people with disability**. They offer personalised solutions to compensate for certain functional limitations, while promoting better ergonomics and a more inclusive work organisation.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM THE **2023-2025 EU-OSHA CAMPAIGN**

Collaborative robots (*cobots*):
Balancing innovation and safety in task automation

A manufacturer of plastic products in Sweden has introduced a dual-arm **collaborative robot (*cobot*)** to help prepare medical test samples, a task

[26] Benefit from the opportunities of task automation while considering the risks | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025

that used to involve many repetitive and precise hand movements. The *cobot* now takes care of transferring samples, mixing them with solvents, sealing tubes, adding labels, and preparing them for storage, but workers still supervise the process and check the quality. This change **makes the work faster, more accurate, and reduces the chance of mistakes or contamination**.

The key benefit for workers is better health and safety. By reducing repetitive strain on arms and wrists, **the *cobot* lowers the risk of long-term injuries and makes the job less tiring**. At the same time, it **allows workers to focus on more meaningful tasks rather than monotonous ones**. The company also made sure the *cobot* was safe to use, with training, clear instructions, and **health and safety checks from specialists**. Overall, this example shows how robots can be introduced in a way that improves both productivity and workers' well-being, offering a good model for other companies to follow.

The practice was underlined by the **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) as part of its 2023–2025 Europe-wide Healthy Workplaces Campaign (HWC)**, of which AGE Platform Europe is a partner. According to their findings, companies reported that **prioritising worker safety and health with a human-centred design** of the technology and establishing clear communication channels make the process smoother and reduces challenges along the way.

While automation offers many opportunities to improve working conditions, it can also have negative effects, particularly when it is introduced without human support or consideration of its social impacts.

Over-reliance on automated systems is another challenge. As machines take over certain functions, the associated human skills are at risk of being eroded. This gradual loss of know-how can make workers vulnerable, particularly older workers, who often have valuable expertise that is not widely recognised or passed on. They

may fear that their experience will become obsolete and that automation will be used as a pretext to replace them at a lower cost.

This feeling is all the stronger as older workers are often the most exposed to the **risk of professional exclusion**. If they lose their jobs, they find it more difficult to re-enter the labour market. Automation, perceived as a direct threat to their stability, can thus lead to a **loss of confidence in the system**, a **fear of downgrading** and a **withdrawal into oneself**, hindering their commitment to training or adaptation initiatives.

However, automation can only bear full fruit if it is based on **human know-how**, particularly that of experienced workers. The latter have a detailed knowledge of processes, professional practices, working contexts and human relations that machines, however intelligent they may be, cannot replicate. Their expertise is essential for **guiding, supervising and correcting** automated systems, but also for **passing on skills** to new generations of employees.

The experience of older workers is a major asset in supervising automated systems, detecting anomalies, passing on best practices and ensuring continuity of knowledge.

From this perspective, older workers should not be seen as profiles to be replaced, but as **key players in the digital transition**. Keeping them in employment is not only a matter of social justice, but also a prerequisite for truly effective, ethical and sustainable automation. By incorporating their experience into the design, implementation and evaluation of technologies, companies can avoid costly mistakes, enhance the reliability of systems and promote wider adoption of digital tools.

It is therefore crucial to put in place appropriate training policies that enable older workers to familiarise themselves with new technologies while valuing their role as mentors. This recognition of their contribution strengthens their sense of usefulness, motivation and confidence, while ensuring **complementarity between human intelligence and digital intelligence**.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **CYPRUS**

Information provided by AGE Member

Cyprus Third Age Observatory

Cyprus Productivity Centre (KEPA): Digital skills training programmes for people aged 55 and over

The Cyprus Productivity Centre (KEPA) offers **free digital skills training programmes** to enhance digital literacy among all Cypriot citizens. Funded by the EU Recovery and Resilience Mechanism under the **Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan**, the project is running from March 2022 to December 2025.

The **Digital Skills for the General Public** programme is open to all age groups, providing 18-hour courses on topics such as artificial intelligence, online shop and website management, and eGovernment services. For older participants, these skills can **improve efficiency, support the use of modern tools at work, and help them adapt to new digital processes**. The **Digital Skills with ICDL Certification** programme offers a **recognised credential** that validates digital competence and strengthens career prospects.

The **Digital Skills for Individuals Aged 55 and Over** are programmes tailored for older adults, with 30-hour courses on computers, office software, safe online transactions, eGovernment services, and more. These skills **help older participants integrate digital tools into their work, boost productivity, remain competitive, and navigate everyday digital services with confidence**.

Sector-specific challenges

The manufacturing sector and automation of tasks

Task automation in the manufacturing sector opens new opportunities, particularly thanks to its ability to support workers performing repetitive or dangerous tasks. Faced with the dual challenge of a growing skills shortage and an ageing workforce, automation and digitisation are strategic solutions for the manufacturing sector. These innovations are an essential lever for **preserving health and promoting longer and safer careers**, and so better support ageing at work. While for today's older employees, who are might be more exposed to physical constraints, it supports them to continue to play **an active and valued role** in a sector that is physically demanding.

For example, **collaborative robots** (cobots) can take on strenuous tasks such as heavy lifting or repetitive assembly, while working alongside operators and remaining easily programmable by anyone, regardless of age.

In addition, technologies such as **predictive maintenance** offer employees the ability to monitor machine performance remotely and intervene proactively. These approaches place greater emphasis on strategic supervision than on physical intervention and are ideally suited to experienced workers who wish to move towards less demanding tasks.

The rise of **augmented reality and wearable devices** also provides practical support. By projecting instructions or technical diagrams directly into the field of vision, these tools reduce cognitive load and improve accuracy. They also facilitate remote assistance, allowing older experts to guide their younger colleagues without having to travel.

In short, when properly introduced to workers and tailored to their needs, automation and digital tools can help to better support ageing and older workers. By rethinking roles, improving safety and promoting continuous learning, these technologies offer manufacturing companies the opportunity to **preserve valuable expertise while building an inclusive and sustainable future**.



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Precarity in platform work

Platform work is prevalent in the EU economy as around 6% of workers (11.5 million of people in the EU) earn part or most of their income through digital platforms[27]. It relies on online platforms that connect workers and clients for the performance of specific services or tasks in exchange for payment.

Although platform work offers opportunities for **flexibility, additional income and access to employment**, particularly for people facing discrimination in traditional markets, these benefits are often limited by algorithmic management and evaluation of work. Used to allocate tasks, monitor and evaluate workers' performance and behaviour, algorithmic management ideally used and accompanied by adequate safeguards, algorithmic management could serve to **tailor tasks and schedules to workers' skills and characteristics**, which would

[27] Digital platform work: Facts and figures | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025

be particularly beneficial for groups with specific needs, such as older workers or those recovering from health issues.

However, **many of these jobs fall outside traditional social protection and employment systems**. Working conditions are often poor, with no legislation on health and safety at work, and work managed by algorithms, which often leads to heavy workloads and job and income insecurity, contributing to precariousness, economic instability, discrimination and lack of professional development. Many women engage in platform work to earn additional income and for the flexibility it offers in balancing work and family responsibilities[28]. This carries risks of career fragmentation and challenges in terms of professional development, **reproducing existing gender inequalities**, which ultimately impacts women's access to decent income and social protection, putting them at an increased risk of poverty at the end of their careers and when they retire.

Older workers in general are among the groups of people the most affected by platform work, as they are generally less well equipped/trained to adapt to these changes than other age groups and are often subject to **prejudice in hiring**. Ageist stereotypes about the ability of older workers to adopt modern technologies are particularly prevalent in these occupations, although platform work can be suitable for older people, including retired people who would like to continue working. When this is not the case, **the absence of occupational health and safety legislation**, social protection and difficult working conditions make platform work complicated for older people, while these conditions compromise healthy ageing at work for younger people.

The **Platform Work Directive[29]**, adopted in 2024, is a major step forward in regulating the conditions of platform workers. By recognising certain platform workers as employees rather than self-employed, the directive grants **access to essential rights such as minimum wage, social protection, and collective bargaining**. The directive also introduces important safeguards around algorithmic management. Platforms are now required to **ensure transparency in**

[28] Eurofound - Gender differences in motivation to engage in platform work
[29] Directive (EU) 2024/2831 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on improving working conditions in platform work

their automated systems, including explanations of how decisions are made, what data is used, and the criteria applied. Workers must be notified of any changes to these systems, and regular assessments are mandated to prevent discriminatory outcomes. **The use of sensitive personal data in automated decision-making is prohibited,** and workers are guaranteed the right to human intervention, especially in cases of dismissal. These protections are crucial for older workers, who may be disproportionately affected by algorithms that favour younger profiles or penalise slower adaptation to digital workflows.

However, while the directive represents progress, it does not fully address the broader challenges of digital fairness and inclusion for older workers. Several European initiatives and regulatory frameworks aim to promote ethical use of digital tools, but they often fall short in supporting healthy ageing at work. For example, they **rarely include mechanisms to assess** how digital systems impact older workers differently, nor do they mandate age-sensitive design in algorithmic tools. Moreover, the **implementation of these frameworks is uneven across Member States**, and enforcement mechanisms remain limited.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **GERMANY**

The Granny Angels platform: Fostering professional inclusion of older adults with digital platforms

The Granny Angels platform is an original initiative that **connects families looking for childcare with older citizens who want to remain active**. The idea is based on the **principle of *Leihomas* or *Leihopas* ('grandparents at heart')** who help children with occasional or regular tasks, such as after-school care, accompanying them to activities or simply providing a caring presence at home.

This approach illustrates how a **digital platform, when well-structured and supported, can be a lever for professional inclusion for older**

workers. Thanks to a clear framework that includes profile verification, administrative support and secure networking, the platform offers older people the opportunity to continue working in suitable conditions. This allows them to generate an income and remain socially and professionally active, making the most of their availability and life experience.

This approach also has a **strong intergenerational dimension**. It shows how the platform economy can go beyond a purely transactional logic to become a tool for social cohesion. By promoting solidarity between generations, it **helps to address the challenges of childcare and enables older people to remain active if they wish to**.

Sector specific challenges

The cleaning sector and algorithmic management

Algorithmic worker management systems are increasingly being used in the cleaning sector, particularly in professional cleaning[30]. Their use aims to create a more fluid organisation, **better distribution of workloads** and increased productivity. In some cases, they can also help to **improve health and safety at work** by anticipating physical constraints or adapting the planning of tasks, which is beneficial for healthy ageing at work and older workers.

However, these advantages conceal well-known risks, already mentioned above: loss of autonomy, intensification of work, increased pressure on performance, massive collection of personal data, and social isolation. All these factors can undermine quality of life at work and lead to stress, exhaustion and even a loss of meaning. They are even more pronounced for workers aged 50 and over, who are increasingly represented in low-wage, physically demanding sectors, including cleaning. Many workers over 65 continue to work in these roles, often out of financial necessity, due to

[30] Worker management through AI: Opportunities and risks for occupational safety and health | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025

inadequate pension income and limited alternative employment opportunities[31]. Often exposed to forms of job insecurity and ageism, they can face a double risk. On the one hand, digital systems require digital skills that are not always mastered by older people, increasing the risk of exclusion and stigmatisation. On the other hand, the intensification of the pace of work and the lack of breaks can have particularly harmful effects on their physical health, increasing the likelihood of accidents and musculoskeletal disorders. In a sector already marked by precarious contracts, involuntary part-time work and low social recognition, the introduction of **poorly regulated algorithmic management can therefore accentuate the marginalisation of these workers** and make it even more difficult for them to remain in employment.

Artificial intelligence challenges of an older workforce

The integration of artificial intelligence into workplace processes goes from recruitment to performance evaluation. AI systems used in workers management often rely on large datasets to make decisions. However, the quality and representativeness of these datasets are critical. When training data reflects historical inequalities or lacks diversity, AI systems can replicate and even **amplify existing biases**. This is especially worrying in recruitment, where algorithmic tools may favour younger candidates or those from majority groups, sidelining older workers and minorities.

Age-related bias in AI is a growing but under-researched issue. Employers often assume older workers are less adaptable to new technologies, leading to discriminatory hiring practices. For example, in Europe, candidates under 35 have an 86% probability of being hired for roles involving AI tools, compared to just 33% for those over 60[32]. Older workers also face **barriers to AI training**. Only 38% of workers over 45 participate in AI training, compared to over 50% of younger workers[33].

[31] Ageing workforce | European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
[32] Enabling an intergenerational workforce to benefit from AI - Generations
[33] Enabling an intergenerational workforce to benefit from AI - Generations

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **GERMANY**

"Algorithmic Fairness in Ageing Societies" (AGEAI): Ensuring the ethical development of AI

AGEAI is an interdisciplinary initiative overseen by the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB Berlin Social Science Center), aligned with World Health Organisation concerns that **unregulated AI can reinforce ageism and weaken health and social care for older people**. Its goal is to assess how ageism appears in AI systems, products, and services, focusing on "high risk" sectors under the European AI Act, such as employment and recruitment. AGEAI addresses algorithmic bias to **ensure AI remains trustworthy, human-centred, and fair**, as outdated or biased data can exclude older workers from jobs, distort health assessments, or limit access to digital services.

Through awareness and education, AGEAI promotes resilience, empowering older adults, while informing AI developers and policymakers about age bias. Workshops, hackathons, art exhibitions, and socio-political events are organised in Berlin and Brussels, fostering dialogue, challenging stereotypes, and producing inclusive policy recommendations. In May 2025, for instance, the WZB collaborated with AGE on the **multi-stakeholder event "Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for All Ages: Addressing Ageism"**.

Digital inequalities are also linked to **gender and disability**. Women, especially older women, are less likely to use AI at work. Men aged 25 to 34 are almost twice as likely to use AI tools as women aged 55 to 64[34]. This gap reflects broader structural inequalities in access to digital skills and opportunities. People with

[34] #EurofoundLive: How is AI changing the world of work in Europe?

disabilities face even greater challenges. More limited access to the internet (64.3% compared to 87.9% for people without disabilities[35]) and inaccessible digital platforms contribute to indirect discrimination in the workplace. AI systems often require high cognitive abilities, creating barriers for individuals with intellectual disabilities and, by extension, some older workers.

There is a high risk of using **AI to identify employees deemed 'less productive'** based on quantitative indicators that are often disconnected from human reality. This approach can lead to detrimental decisions for workers: staff replacement, increased pressure, constant surveillance... All these practices risk dehumanising work, target older workers or workers with a disability and weakening teams.

AI should be used to promote a more inclusive and caring vision of work. For example, it could be used to identify obstacles to performance – mental overload, inadequate tools, lack of training – and to propose solutions tailored to each individual. It could also promote a better distribution of tasks, personalised support, and recognition of each individual's unique qualities.

AI should not become a mere instrument of performance, but a lever for improving working conditions. By placing people at the heart of its deployment, we can make it **a real driver of social progress.** But for this vision to become a reality, AI must be properly regulated. In addition to the need for **transparency** regarding the data collected and its usen and **fairness** in algorithms, to avoid bias and discrimination, there is a strong need for **participation** of employees in decisions related to AI. **Human-centred AI systems** can mask age and other characteristics that are used to discriminate in recruitment, thereby reducing bias. Chatbots and **assistive technologies** also have the potential to help older workers who lack the digital skills needed to navigate digital environments more easily. It is essential to involve older workers, people with disabilities and their representative organisations in the design and implementation of AI tools to ensure that they are user-friendly.

[35] Accommodation and Technological Assistance for Employment - EDF



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INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **BELGIUM**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

Vlaamse Ouderenraad

National Convergence Plan for Artificial Intelligence (2022): Becoming an inclusive AI Smart Nation

The national convergence plan to **make Belgium a #SmartAINation** sets out nine objectives which the federal government, in collaboration with its partners, intends to focus on over the coming years. Its first priority is **"Promoting trustworthy AI"**, emphasising that AI can support human rights, democracy, and the rule of law if it is developed ethically and responsibly, **guided by principles of transparency, non-discrimination, diversity, data governance, privacy protection, social and environmental well-being, and technical robustness**.

Addressing **algorithmic bias is central**: datasets must be representative of women, ethnocultural minorities, older people, and other groups to avoid discrimination and strengthen trust. This includes **preventing age-based discrimination in areas such as employment opportunities**, ensuring that older workers are fairly considered for jobs and career advancement. The plan also underlines the importance of **reducing the digital divide**, which disproportionately affects low-income groups, older adults, and people with disabilities, affecting their employment perspectives as a result.

Sector-specific challenges

Ageing in the healthcare sector: Ethical integration of artificial intelligence

The digitisation of healthcare is transforming the way care is delivered, managed and experienced, bringing both opportunities and challenges, particularly for ageing populations and older professionals. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, telemedicine and digital health records are increasingly being integrated into healthcare systems, offering the **potential to improve efficiency, quality of care and working conditions**. However, without careful monitoring and inclusive strategies, these innovations risk reinforcing existing inequalities, including ageism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of AI in healthcare, driven by urgent needs and the availability of large data sets. **AI now automates up to 30% of administrative tasks**, allowing healthcare professionals to focus more on patient care[36]. This development can improve job satisfaction and reduce burnout, particularly in high-pressure environments.

In addition, a meta-analysis of 16 prospective cohort studies supports the view that there is a positive dose–effect relationship between night-shift

[36] Artificial Intelligence and the Health Workforce - OECD

work and morbidity of breast cancer[37], demonstrating the impact of work on the health and healthy ageing of workers. For nurses and other healthcare professionals, who are particularly prone to working at night, this recognition can pave the way for better protection and compensation. In this context, algorithmic management systems could be a powerful tool to support the **health, safety and therefore healthy ageing of workers**. By intelligently redistributing night shifts and monitoring cumulative exposure, AI-based schedule planning could help maintain safe limits for night work, thereby reducing health risks while ensuring continuity of care. These systems can also consider individual health profiles and recovery needs, offering more humane and adaptive shift planning that balances operational requirements and worker well-being. However, to be effective and equitable, these tools must be transparent, inclusive and designed in consultation with healthcare staff.

The World Health Organisation has raised concerns that unregulated AI technologies could perpetuate **ageist biases**, to the detriment of both the caregiver and the patient[38]. Mmany care workers report anxiety about technological change, fear of obsolescence, and limited access to training. A **lack of digital and health literacy** is a major barrier to the adoption of AI tools. Increased training is essential to prepare doctors and other professionals to use AI effectively. This includes not only technical skills, but **also an understanding of the ethical and legal implications of AI in clinical practice**, to better involve healthcare staff at every stage of AI development, from design to deployment, to ensure that technologies meet real needs and **complement human expertise** rather than replace it.

[37] Night-shift work increases morbidity of breast cancer and all-cause mortality: a meta-analysis of 16 prospective cohort studies
[38] Ageism in artificial intelligence for health - WHO



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INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **THE NETHERLANDS**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

Older Women's Network Netherlands

"Digital Skills in Healthcare and Welfare": Supporting vulnerable employees in developing digital skills

Led by the NGO Mediawijs, this initiative addresses **the widespread gap in digital skills among employees in care and welfare organisations** while promoting policies that foster digital inclusion and media literacy within these sectors. It focuses on organisations and staff supporting vulnerable populations, including older adults, providing employees with the skills needed to navigate digital transformation and deliver high-quality services to all.

Three objectives are at the core of this project:

- Informing the healthcare and welfare sectors about the importance of digital skills among employees through **a webpage full of information and tools**.
- Providing guidance on how to incorporate digital inclusion and media literacy into the organisation's policies. This coaching is based on the policy tool **"Digital Inclusion and Media Literacy in Welfare Services"**.
- Training employees who want to become **digital helpers** and strengthen their colleagues' digital skills.

Systemic digital challenges facing older workers

Gaps in supporting digital inclusion in the workplace

In every sector, older workers face growing challenges due to the rapid digitalisation of work environments. These challenges are not confined to one industry, digital process or profession. They are systemic and require coordinated responses at both workplace and policy levels.

Employers have a key role to play in reducing digital inequalities, but many are unaware of their responsibilities or lack the resources to take effective action. One of the most pressing issues is **the lack of awareness and preparedness among employers**. A large majority of them (81%) do not have policies in place to provide assistive technologies, and 75% are unaware of whether their employees already use such tools[39]. Without clear policies and proactive engagement of their company, older workers risk being left behind and struggling to adapt to digital processes and maintain their productivity.

While guidance instruments and frameworks exist, including the **Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions (EU 2019/1152)**[40] at EU level, they are often insufficient alone. This directive requires workers to be informed about key aspects of their job, including algorithmic decision-making. In Italy,

[39] Accommodation and Technological Assistance for Employment - EDF
[40] Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union

national legislation transposing the directive obliges employers to disclose the use of algorithmic management systems and the data that informs them, promoting transparency and accountability. Complementing binding legislation, the **Framework agreement on digitalisation**[41], endorsed by cross-sectoral social partners, provides guidance on collaborative digital transformation. It highlights the importance of digital skills, the right to disconnect and the principle of "human control" in artificial intelligence systems. It also calls for clear rules on data processing and monitoring to protect human dignity. Although not legally binding, the agreement reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that digitalisation benefits all workers and does not exacerbate existing inequalities.

Despite the existence of these tools to support businesses in becoming more inclusive, **practical and financial barriers remain significant**. Only a quarter of employers make use of existing support schemes, and many consider the financial assistance to be insufficient[42]. Assistive devices can indeed be costly, and public subsidies are often underutilised due to complex procedures and low awareness.

The organisation culture also plays a decisive role in shaping digital inclusion. Without fostering a culture of **empathy, collaboration, and openness to feedback**, workplaces will become or remain environments where older workers feel unsafe and unsupported in asking for help with digital tools or in engaging in continuous learning. **The lack of clear guidelines** on the use of digital tools within the company can have adverse consequences. Employees use them according to their own practices, without a defined framework, which can harm the organisation itself or hinder the development of their skills.

Privacy should also be at the core of the organisation culture to better support training programmes, digital tool adoption, and workplace monitoring policies in ways that protect personal data while enabling older workers to participate confidently in digitalised processes. It is crucial to ensure privacy is respected in the adoption of another essential but often missing tool **to monitor digital inclusion,** such as regular staff surveys, tracking the uptake of assistive

[41] Framework agreement on digitalisation | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA
[42] Accommodation and Technological Assistance for Employment - EDF

technologies, and measuring participation in digital skills training. These indicators can help identify gaps, guide targeted interventions, and ensure that older workers are not left behind in the digital shift.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **SPAIN**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members

Confederación Española de Organizaciones de Mayores & Plataforma 50 & Plataforma de Mayores Pensionistas

Strategic plan of the Spanish Data Protection Agency (2025-2030): Responsible innovation and defence of dignity in the digital era

The mission of the Spanish Data Protection Agency (*Agencia Española de Protección de Datos,* AEPD) is to safeguard the fundamental right to personal data protection, with particular attention given to groups in vulnerable situation in the labour market, such as older people. By focusing on **privacy by design and by default as a guiding principle for digital innovation**, it helps employers to implement **digital tools and AI systems that respect the dignity and rights of older workers**, reducing the risk of discrimination or undue monitoring.

Within its **2025–2030 strategic plan**, the agency will develop a cross-cutting intervention strategy to protect groups of people in vulnerable situation in the digital environment, with a special focus on the risks linked to AI. This includes creating adapted materials, updating practical guides, and establishing partnerships with universities, specialised organisations, and the third sector. The plan also seeks to strengthen collaboration with professionals to **promote regulatory compliance and foster a culture of privacy** across professional and economic spheres.



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Psychosocial impact of digitalisation

The digital transformation has also introduced a whole range of psychological and mental health challenges that affect workers in all sectors and of all ages. Older workers face significant psychosocial risks for very specific reasons that require urgent attention from employers, policymakers and occupational health experts.

The rise of algorithmic management and AI can lead to increased **stress, anxiety and fear of losing one's job**. Workers often feel reduced to data points, without really understanding how decisions are made or how to challenge them. This lack of transparency undermines trust and contributes to a sense of powerlessness, which can be particularly pronounced among older employees who may already feel vulnerable in digital environments.

Work intensification is another major issue mentioned. Digital tools often increase the pace and volume of tasks, leading to cognitive overload and burnout. While automation can reduce physical fatigue, it often leads to a decrease in autonomy and increased standardisation, which can undermine job satisfaction. A study conducted in Sweden found that workers' satisfaction with technological

changes was unevenly distributed, with younger, more educated and more digitally skilled people reporting more positive experiences than older workers[43]. Older employees may struggle to adapt to the pace of change and fear becoming obsolete, which can lead to resistance, frustration and psychological distress.

The replacement of human managers with algorithms and the rise of remote working can **erode interpersonal relationships and solidarity**. For older workers, who are accustomed to face-to-face interaction and mentoring, this change can lead to feelings of isolation and a loss of meaning. This lack of dialogue exacerbates psychosocial risks and compromises the secure integration of new technologies.

These challenges are compounded by societal attitudes and corporate cultures that **fail to recognise the value and specific needs of older workers**. Stereotypes that older workers are resistant to change or less able to use technology persist. These influences hiring decisions and workplace dynamics. These preconceptions can lead to older employees being treated as 'special cases', which fosters a sense of isolation or infantilisation, further damaging mental well-being.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **PORTUGAL**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

Associação de Aposentados, Pensionistas e Reformados

The Impact of the Digital Transition on Psychological Health and Well-Being (2024): Recommendations for employers and employees

The Portuguese Psychologists Association (*Ordem dos Psicólogos Portugueses*, OPP) has produced a set of recommendations on how the digital transition can be managed in ways that support well-being, skills development, and productivity in the workplace. The document **emphasises**

[43] EIWO webinar 11: Older Workers and Technological Change Challenges and Opportunities

a people-centred approach to digitalisation, underlining the importance of empathetic leadership, psychological safety, and flexible working practices, including hybrid work models.

The report highlights that **the digital divide reinforces existing inequalities and disproportionately affects certain groups, among them older adults**. Workers with lower digital skills face greater risks of precarious employment and limited career opportunities, which can cause mental stress. Therefore, **targeted support for older workers is needed** to ensure they are equipped with digital skills, protected from exclusion, and supported in maintaining both their professional opportunities and their psychological well-being. Workers are also encouraged to **set clear boundaries between work and personal life** and seek support when needed to manage stress.

Sector-specific challenges

Older workers' mental health in a digitalised construction sector

The construction sector is one of the most physically and mentally demanding in Europe. Characterised by high workloads, tight deadlines and high accident risks, this sector is also characterised by a culture that often minimises mental health concerns[44].

Older workers in the construction sector are exposed to specific psychosocial risks. Age-related physiological changes can increase vulnerability to accidents at work, while repetitive or monotonous tasks can lead to disengagement and stress. In addition, older workers are more at risk of climate-related stress, such as extreme heat or cold, which can trigger anxiety and depression.

As described earlier, digitalisation brings sector-wide challenges that we very much see in the construction sector, such as **work intensification, loss of**

[44] Mental health in the construction sector - Publications Office of the EU

autonomy, heightened surveillance and fears around automation. For older workers in particular, this can amplify **stress, skill obsolescence and feelings of isolation.**

However, digitalisation could also offer promising opportunities to support older workers and improve their mental health. Integrating AI and automation into construction processes can significantly **reduce physical fatigue and exposure to hazardous environments**. For example, AI-powered systems can automate heavy machinery such as excavators, detect obstacles and ensure worker safety[45]. Smart monitoring tools, such as those designed to prevent hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), help **preserve workers' ability to perform precision tasks**, thereby extending their careers and improving their quality of life[46] and mental health.

AI-based worker management systems can also **tailor workloads and schedules to individual capabilities,** which is particularly beneficial for older workers or those recovering from health issues. By aligning tasks with individual strengths and limitations, these systems promote well-being and accessibility.

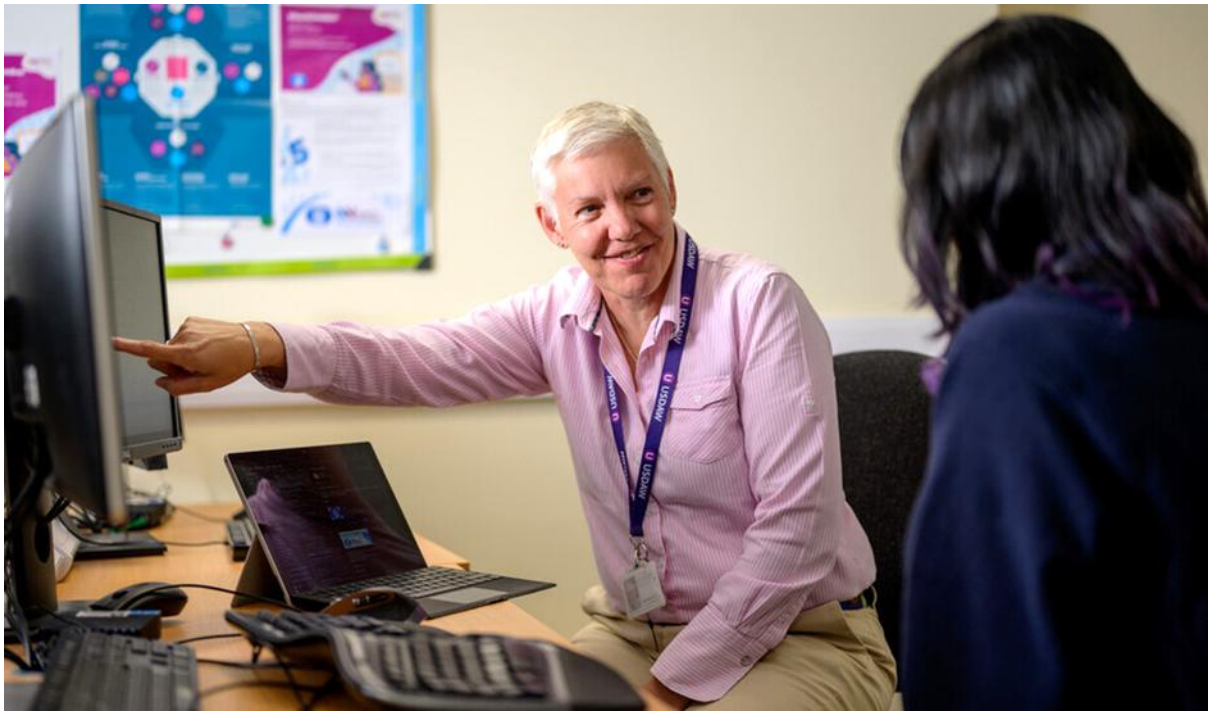
The digital divide and the lack of digital skills

As digital tools become integrated into work processes, **the lack of skills and access to digital tools** is becoming a major obstacle to inclusion and equal opportunities. Older people are particularly vulnerable to this risk. Only 8% of 65–74-year-olds, have digital skills above the basic level[47], which can greatly limit opportunities to remain in or return to the labour market beyond retirement age. Even fewer older women use online services, which limits their opportunities to remain in or return to the labour market[48]. **The lack of continuing education** exacerbates this situation. In the European Union, people aged 55-65 have much

[45] Balancing innovation and safety in task automation: insights from case studies | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025
[46] Preventing hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS): smart digital systems for improving workers' safety and health | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025
[47] AGE Policy Paper - Growing old in a digital world
[48] The complex gender face of digital exclusion in old age - AGE Platform Europe

less access to training than younger people, even though experience shows that with the right support, older workers can catch up[49].

In this context of accelerated digitalisation, older workers risk being excluded from both essential services and professional opportunities. Closing this gap requires combating stereotypes, strengthening targeted training and adapting work environments. The European Union has launched several initiatives, including **the Union of skills**[50], one of whose objectives is to ensure the acquisition of digital skills throughout life, through **the Pact for skills and European academies**. **The AI Act**[51] also introduces an obligation to raise awareness of AI, which will have to consider the specific needs of older workers and people with disabilities.



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But the digital divide is not just about skills. It also affects **accessibility**. Older workers leaving in rural areas that have poor internet coverage and limited equipment, might struggle to use the tools or adapt to digital processes. They may also find it difficult to **afford the necessary subscriptions or equipment**. To date, there is no binding European legislation guaranteeing the reimbursement of

[49] Mind the skills gap: Older workers falling behind in training | Euronews
[50] Union of skills - European Commission
[51] Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence

teleworking costs, which reinforces inequalities. While the EU aims for universal access to online public services and digital identity[52], these ambitions cannot be achieved without full, affordable and inclusive accessibility. Failing this, digitalisation risks exacerbating the marginalisation of older workers instead of offering them new opportunities.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **GREECE**

Information provided by AGE Member 50+ Hellas

Digital empowerment plan for older people and people with disabilities: Building digital skills through dedicated hubs

In 2025, the Greek government announced a **€6.8 million pilot initiative to digitally empower 3,600 individuals over the age of 65** and 2,800 people with disabilities, supporting older adults who wish to remain in or return to the workforce. The programme is part of the national **'Greece 2.0' National Recovery and Resilience Plan**, funded by the EU's **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)**. Its objective is to **familiarise older citizens and people with disabilities with new technologies**, helping to reduce digital exclusion and promote independent living. Planned support measures include digital literacy training, psychological support, and counselling to address technophobia and enhance social participation.

Implementation is expected to take place through **120 digital empowerment hubs in municipalities for older persons** and 80 hubs within organisations serving people with disabilities. Selected participants will attend in-person courses lasting 70 hours for older persons and 80 hours for people with disabilities. Once the courses are completed, educational materials will be made available online as e-learning resources, ensuring wider public access.

[52] Europe's digital decade: 2030 targets | European Commission

A digital transition designed for an ageing workforce

Digital tools designed to improve health and safety risks at work

With an ageing population and workforce, the digital transition offers significant benefits for better ageing at work and for older workers. As seen before, the **automation of tasks** can ease physical strain, enhance mental well-being, and foster inclusion, helping older workers remain active longer.

In addition to task automation, other digital tools are designed to improve health and safety at work are developing rapidly and finding applications in many sectors. Their main purpose is **to monitor, alert, assist and train workers**, rather than replace human functions. Smart personal protective equipment and wearable devices are prime examples of this evolution. These systems, equipped with sensors and software, enable real-time monitoring of employees' exposure to various hazards[53] such as gases, toxins, noise, extreme temperatures or hand and arm vibrations. Smart watches or insoles can monitor posture, heart rate, blood pressure, falls or loss of upright position, and send audible or vibrating alerts to prevent accidents[54]. Some more advanced technologies incorporate **proximity warnings** for vehicles, create exclusion zones, track lone workers, and assess movement and activity levels to reduce risks[55].

Other devices, such as drones or fixed and mobile surveillance systems, can **monitor hazardous areas** in environments such as construction, limiting workers' direct exposure to potential dangers[56]. These technologies can even be equipped with artificial intelligence to inspect work sites or detect anomalies, further improving accident prevention. Monitoring software and digital applications complement these devices by providing accurate data on working conditions, enabling the identification and assessment of occupational health and

[53] Digitalisation and workers wellbeing: The impact of digital technologies on work-related psychosocial risks - OSHA
[54] Smart digital systems for better safety and health at work
[55] Preventing hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS): smart digital systems for improving workers' safety and health | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025
[56] Smart digital systems for better safety and health at work

safety risks. Some applications also encourage workers to adopt safer and healthier behaviour, while facilitating emergency response.

Finally, **virtual reality and augmented reality** play a crucial role in occupational safe and security training. They offer employees the opportunity to practise in safe, simulated environments, promoting the learning of safe procedures and preparation for critical situations.

These digital tools have direct benefits for the healthy ageing of the workforce by reducing physical fatigue, accidents and prolonged exposure to hazardous conditions, helping to preserve the long-term health and independence of workers. For older workers who wish to continue working, these technologies offer **additional support**, enabling them to remain active and productive for longer, while minimising age-related risks and promoting a safe, adapted and inclusive work experience. These measures have the potential to create safer, more preventive and more sustainable work environments, while putting technology at the service of the health, safety and well-being of all workers. However, targeted efforts are essential to integrate these innovations into **age-friendly work practices** that respect **workers' privacy** and put workers at the centre of the decision-making process.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM THE **2023-2025 EU-OSHA CAMPAIGN**

Amarsul: Leading worker safety with digital monitoring

Amarsul, a Portuguese urban waste management company, introduced a **digital monitoring system to enhance safety in high-risk environments**. The initiative combines wearable devices and automated conveyor belt controls to prevent accidents and provide rapid emergency responses. Developed for conditions where employees often work alone or in noisy facilities, it **ensures quick detection of incidents and immediate intervention**.

The system has reduced accident severity, improved communication between teams and security staff, and **cut sick leave by 230 days**. Workers benefit from constant digital connection to support teams, which boosts confidence and mental wellbeing. **Active employee involvement in testing, training, and feedback** made the system effective and widely accepted. Its **cost-effectiveness and adaptability** mean it can be applied to other sectors where isolated or hazardous work is common, highlighting the role of technology in safeguarding workers.

The practice was underlined by the **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) as part of its 2023–2025 Europe-wide Healthy Workplaces Campaign (HWC)**, of which AGE Platform Europe is a partner. Other interesting case studies can be found in this **Barometer's annex**.

Supporting lifelong learning with digital tools

The digital transition can only be beneficial for workers if they are trained to use digital tools and gain digital skills. This is particularly true for older workers, who often have limited access to training due to persistent age-related discrimination, even more so when it comes to digital training. However, it is also true for younger people, who will face technological and digital changes throughout their careers and therefore require continuous and lifelong training. Research shows that while 61% of workers believe they need new skills to adapt only to AI, while 15% are currently receiving appropriate training[57]. There is therefore an urgent need for **accessible learning programmes tailored to the worker's needs**.

Digital skills assessment tools play a key role in transforming vocational training practices. They enable the precise identification of gaps in employees' skills, whether technical, digital or soft skills. Through personalised diagnostics, these tools guide workers towards training pathways tailored to their actual needs and the evolution of their job. This type of solution is particularly beneficial for older

[57] #EurofoundLive: How is AI changing the world of work in Europe?

workers, who are often less familiar with technology, have limited access to continuing education, or face age-related stereotypes. By identifying missing digital skills and offering targeted training, these tools help strengthen their employability, facilitate their adaptation to digital environments, and extend their active participation in the labour market.

Similarly, **learning analytics** complements this approach by providing HR managers and trainers with accurate data on learning behaviours, progress made, and difficulties encountered. By analysing this information, it becomes possible to adjust content, personalise learning paths and anticipate training needs. This makes it possible to quickly identify specific gaps, particularly in digital skills, and offer targeted solutions.

Finally, **virtual assistants and educational chatbots** might complement proper training, by offering personalised support that is accessible at any time and directly integrated into work or training environments. They allow employees to ask questions, receive instant explanations and be directed to resources tailored to their level and objectives. For older workers, these tools are a valuable aid: they reduce barriers to using technology, promote autonomy in learning and allow them to progress at their own pace, without pressure.

Provided that these tools are **used effectively by employers**, they benefit both the company and workers of all ages by enabling proactive talent management, better adaptation to technological changes and overall performance improvement. By integrating these measures into their HR policies, companies can not only improve overall performance but also foster an inclusive learning culture where every employee, regardless of age or skill level, can grow and learn throughout their career. Targeted strategies for skills upgrading and renewal are essential.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **ROMANIA**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

Federația Națională Omenia a Caselor de Ajutor Reciproc ale Pensionarilor din România

National Strategy for Continuing Education for Adults (2024-2030): Supporting lifelong learning for the digital and green transitions

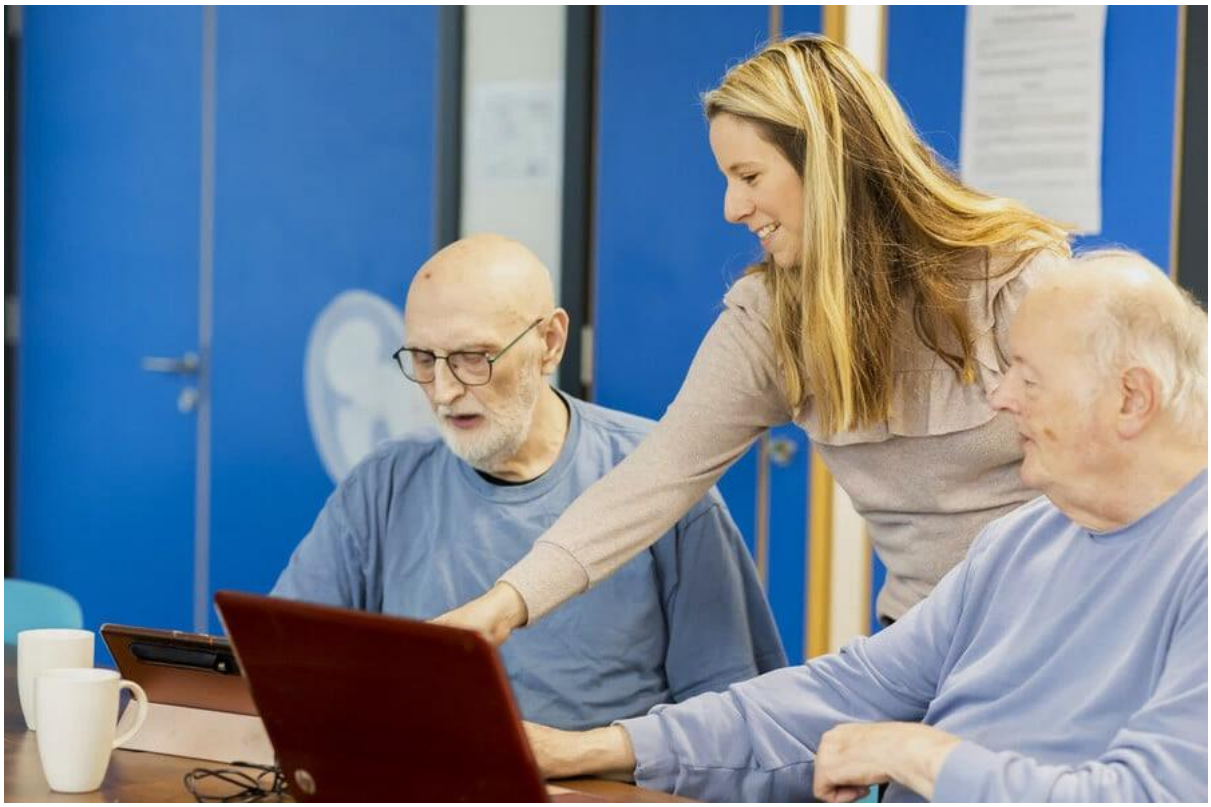
This strategy seeks to **foster a culture of lifelong learning that is accessible to everyone, regardless of age, culture, or background**. It provides a national framework to support adults in their personal and social development, while ensuring their lasting integration into the labour market. A key focus is on **building essential and transversal skills, including digital and green skills**, that are vital in an era defined by rapid technological change and the global shift towards greener practices.

Implementation is expected to bring several improvements: strengthening the national regulatory framework, enhancing the collection of data on adult education, and expanding access to learning opportunities through **more community lifelong learning centres** and better promotion of existing programmes. The strategy also emphasises improving skills assessment and recognition of prior learning, both formal and informal, by increasing the number of **dedicated assessment centres**.

Digitalisation as a catalyst for intergenerational collaboration

The digital transition is also redefining how generations interact and learn from each other. At a time when AI and smart technologies are becoming central to workplace operations, fostering intergenerational collaboration is essential to building resilient, inclusive and innovative teams.

Mentoring programmes remain a cornerstone of knowledge exchange between younger and older employees. These initiatives allow experienced professionals to pass on their institutional knowledge, while younger workers share their digital expertise and fresh perspectives. Digitalisation reinforces this dynamic by creating new roles and workflows that encourage collaboration between age groups. For example, in healthcare and other sectors, older professionals can contribute their expertise to the development and implementation of frontline AI solutions, working alongside younger colleagues and technology specialists.



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Digital tools also **improve communication**, which is essential for effective teamwork. In **masking age-related biases**, chatbots and other digital interfaces enable the formation of complementary intergenerational teams and allowing older workers to participate in decision-making. These tools promote more equitable interactions and help dismantle stereotypes that can hinder cooperation.

Finally, by investing in inclusive digital strategies and promoting **intergenerational learning**, organisations can ensure that the digital transition

strengthens their workforce. When older and younger employees work together, supported by technology and guided by mutual respect, they create environments where innovation thrives, and everyone has a role to play in shaping the future of work.

Recommendations

Combat ageism and bias in AI

- **Promote human-centred AI design** that avoids age-related bias and prevents age-based discrimination
- **Guarantee the right to algorithmic transparency** to ensure AI systems are understandable, accountable, and inclusive for all
- **Include older workers** and their representative organisations in the development and deployment of AI systems
- **Reinforce legal and regulatory frameworks** to tackle age-related bias in AI, ensuring transparency, fairness, and inclusion
- **Guarantee transparency and human oversight** in AI tools used for recruitment, performance evaluation, and task allocation

Promote lifelong learning and digital upskilling

- Leverage the **European Commission's Union of Skills** initiative to create tailored and accessible digital training pathways for older workers
- Implement the **Council's recommendations on qualification pathways** and **individual training accounts** in Member States, adopting a person-centred approach with access to paid training leave, removing age limits for training and aligning learning opportunities with the digital transition
- **Develop inclusive digital training programmes** targeting older workers
- **Promote lifelong learning systems** that include digital skills to ensure continuous skills development

Support inclusive workplaces

- **Foster workplace cultures** of empathy, privacy, and openness to feedback where ageist stereotypes are tackled
- **Ensure equal access** to digital tools in the workplace
- **Guarantee workers consultation and involvement** from the design phase of digital technologies

- **Foster the 'humans in control' principle**, ensuring humans must always have ultimate responsibility for decisions, particularly in critical areas such as healthcare
- **Ensure social protection and fair working conditions** in all sectors, including the most vulnerable occupation such as platform work
- **Use staff surveys and digital inclusion** indicators to monitor progress

Improve working conditions through technology

- **Design and implement technological tools aimed at ensuring sustainable careers** by improving working conditions, guaranteeing workers' health and safety, supporting ageing in the workplace and giving older workers more opportunities for career development
- **Recognise and integrate older workers' expertise** in supervising digital systems
- **Address mental health risks** linked to digitalisation and provide mental health resources
- **Encourage flexible work arrangements for older workers and caregivers**, with a specific attention to women and gender equality in the revision of Work-Life Balance Directive[58]

Strengthen legal and policy frameworks

- **Enforce transparency in algorithmic management** (e.g., EU Directive 2019/1152)
- Expand protections under the **Platform Work Directive** and **AI Act** to include age-sensitive design
- **Establish a comprehensive EU legal framework for remote work** that safeguards worker autonomy by setting clear boundaries for digital availability and ensures fair treatment through binding legislation on telework cost reimbursement, including financial support measures aligned with existing EU directives

[58] AGE Policy Paper - Work-Life Integration

Address regional and sectoral gaps

- **Invest in digital infrastructure** in rural areas and develop tailored regional policies to address local digitalisation gaps
- **Support SMEs** through subsidies and training

Foster intergenerational collaboration

- **Foster intergenerational collaboration** in digital workplaces, through experience sharing for instance
- **Promote mentoring programmes** on digitalisation between older and younger workers
- **Encourage intergenerational learning strategies** in digital workplaces

Chapter II - Green transition

Impact of the green transition on the labour market

The green transition as a driver of job creation in Europe

Driven by ambitious and social policies, the transition to a circular, low-carbon economy represents a major opportunity for the labour market by acting **as a lever for economic growth and job creation**. Projections indicate a net increase in employment of 0.2 to 0.3% by 2030, representing around 700,000 additional jobs in the most positive scenario for the circular economy[59].

Among the most promising sectors, **recycling**, **repair** and **waste management** are expected to experience rapid growth. The waste sector alone could generate up to 660,000 net jobs, thanks to the rise of material reuse and recovery practices[60]. The **construction sector** will also benefit from this transition, particularly through investment in energy-efficient building renovation and improved environmental performance.

Many jobs are and will be created by the green transition. It is crucial to ensure the **quality of these jobs from the outset**. Too often, jobs created by the green transition are exposed to high physical risks or precarious working conditions. For this transition to be truly inclusive and sustainable, it must be accompanied by ambitious policies on training, retraining and improving working conditions. This means ensuring that new jobs are **accessible to all groups of workers**, including older workers.

With the right **support**, the job creation can also encourage **older workers** to remain or return on the labour market, particularly those who have been unemployed for a long time. When older workers lose their jobs, they are **significantly more likely to remain unemployed for a long time[61]**. New jobs generated by the circular economy, particularly in the recycling, repair and energy

[59] European Commission - Impacts of circular economy policies on the labour market
[60] European Commission - Impacts of circular economy policies on the labour market
[61] Persons in long-term unemployment (12 months or more) by citizenship

renovation sectors, can offer real opportunities for these groups, provided that **targeted retraining policies**, hiring incentives and inclusive working environments are put in place.



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INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **FRANCE**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members Union Française des Retraités & Fédération Nationale des Associations des Retraités (FNAR) & Union des Anciens du Groupe BP & Fédération des particuliers employeurs de France

The Shift Project: Train workers for the green transition

The Shift Project is **a think tank focused on promoting a low-carbon, post-fossil fuel economy** through research, advocacy, and policy recommendations. As the restructuring of the economic fabric is accompanied by a strong demand for labour in certain sectors and a

contraction in other areas of activity, it highlights that **"Without continuing education, there can be no ecological transition"**.

Continuing education can respond more rapidly than initial training to urgent skills needs. It supports the **retraining of workers seeking career paths that better align with their values** or those at risk of job loss. Professions related to the transition also offer **opportunities to integrate people who are distant from the job market, such as older workers**. Beyond individual benefits, **training can foster cultural change within companies and public institutions**, generating a collective momentum that facilitates the implementation of transition strategies.

For the think tank, effective training should **prioritise collective formats**, active teaching methods, and practical preparation for participants to act. Experts should be involved in the design process to ensure high-quality content. Training provides participants with a broader understanding of their environment and **concrete tools to become active contributors**. To support this, The Shift Project has developed **targeted "action sheets"** for training organisations, skills operators, local authorities, and businesses.

Social, regional and sectorial impacts

Although the green transition will generate job growth across Europe, it will also bring **deep changes** in some sectors and regions. It could indeed lead to the **loss or transformation of existing jobs**, with significant social consequences.

Among the sectors most at risk are **manufacturing**, particularly the manufacture of metal, chemical and non-metallic mineral products, and the **automotive industry**[62]. These sectors could suffer job losses due to higher production costs or changes in transport policies. Extractive industries and **carbon-intensive** industries, such as fossil fuel production, are also in decline[63]. Similarly, the

[62] Eurofound - Fit for 55 climate package: Impact on EU employment by 2030
[63] European Commission - Impacts of circular economy policies on the labour market

manufacture of new products could be affected by the rise of reuse and circularity, reducing demand for durable goods.

These changes are not evenly distributed across Europe. **Regions heavily dependent on fossil fuels**, such as parts of Poland and Romania, are particularly vulnerable[64]. The closure of coal mines, for example, is leading to massive job losses in already fragile communities, where unemployment rates are high and opportunities for retraining or mobility are limited. Conversely, countries such as Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Denmark, which supply equipment and services for the energy transition, should benefit from this dynamic.

On a social level, although the green transition may create jobs in certain sectors, in others it may lead to significant job losses, mainly affecting well-paid positions in the mining and extractive industries. Ultimately, these changes may expose workers to lower wages in declining sectors. The retraining of miners, for example, who earn high wages, may reduce their willingness to accept new jobs[65]. **Older workers** are also less likely to access new green jobs and more likely to remain in carbon-intensive jobs or leave the labour market.

Finally, the **fast and important changes** associated with the transition may affect the **well-being and mental health** of workers, particularly those facing job insecurity or forced retraining. For this transition to be "just", it must be accompanied by **territorial support plans**, **inclusive retraining policies** and **enhanced social dialogue**.

[64] Eurofound - Fit for 55 climate package: Impact on EU employment by 2030
[65] World Bank - Case study - Options to support workers through a transition away from coal in Eastern Wielkopolska

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Profesni Krizovatky

Operational Programme Just Transition (OPJT): Enabling green transformation in coal-dependent areas

The OPJT is a strategic initiative supporting the country's shift towards a climate-neutral economy, **focusing on regions heavily dependent on coal and energy-intensive industries**. As part of the EU Just Transition Mechanism, it aims to reduce the socio-economic impacts of the green transition on vulnerable areas: **Karlovy Vary, Ústí nad Labem, and Moravian-Silesian regions**. The programme helps all workers transition from coal-related sectors, revitalising local economies through clean energy, innovation, and infrastructure, and addressing the environmental legacy of coal mining. It is particularly valuable for older workers, offering opportunities to reskill and remain active in the labour market despite structural changes.

For the 2021–2027 period, the OPJT is allocated approximately **€1.6 billion**. It supports initiatives such as **retraining and upskilling workers**, aiding SMEs, promoting research, advancing digitalisation and clean energy projects, reclaiming former mining sites, and encouraging the circular economy. By **combining large-scale strategic projects with smaller initiatives**, the programme fosters economic diversification, social cohesion, and sustainable growth in affected regions, with eligible expenditures extending until 2029.

Intersection of demographic ageing and green transition

Valuing experience in green jobs

The green transition is gradually transforming the professional landscape, highlighting jobs related to energy efficiency, sustainable project management and sustainable agriculture. Although innovative, these jobs often rely on cross-functional skills and expertise acquired over time, assets of many **experienced workers**.

Older workers play a key role in this dynamic, acting as **mentors and knowledge transfer agents**. For example, in the organic farming sector, experienced farmers pass on their knowledge of crop rotation, natural fertilisers and composting techniques to young farmers. Similarly, in construction, older workers train new generations in the energy renovation of old buildings, combining traditional know-how with modern environmental standards. Maintenance, repair and remanufacturing are key sectors that require detailed knowledge of both old and new materials and products. In the automotive industry, experienced technicians can repair or recondition parts for older vehicles, while integrating newer, more environmentally friendly components. Their knowledge of traditional mechanical systems is essential for extending the life of equipment and reducing waste.

In the circular economy, jobs require few new skills but rather **cross-cutting skills** such as problem solving, communication and adaptability. For example, a former site manager can become an energy renovation consultant, drawing on his skills in team management, planning and coordination, while training in new environmental standards.

Valuing experience in green jobs is a real strategic lever for a successful ecological transition. By fully integrating older, more experienced workers, businesses and regions can **draw on solid expertise** while promoting an **intergenerational and inclusive approach** to sustainable development.



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Sector-specific challenges

The maintenance sector

At the heart of the transition to a circular economy, the repair, installation and maintenance sector stands out as a strategic area, both for product sustainability and local employment. These skills, which include refurbishment and remanufacturing, extend the life of equipment, reduce resource consumption and limit waste. They fully embody the principles of the **3Rs**: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle[66].

By 2030, the machine repair and installation sector could create **up to 64,000 jobs** in the EU[67]. More broadly, **75% of jobs in Europe** are concentrated in the maintenance sector[68]. These figures reflect a strong dynamic, where professional experience is becoming a strategic asset.

[66] Policy Research Center - Employment impact of the transition to a circular economy
[67] European Commission - Impacts of circular economy policies on the labour marker
[68] Policy Research Center - Employment impact of the transition to a circular economy

Older professionals who have technical expertise, in-depth knowledge of materials and older products, and a valuable industrial culture can support the shift towards more sustainable practices.

In the refurbishment of electronic equipment for instance, experienced technicians can diagnose, repair and recondition complex devices, drawing on skills acquired over many years. Their knowledge of electronic diagrams printed circuits and specific materials is essential to guarantee the quality and safety of their work.

Maintenance jobs are not limited to technical tasks. They also require **cross-functional skills** such as interprofessional coordination, customer relationship management, problem solving and adaptation to company policies. These skills, often developed over the course of a career, are particularly prevalent among older workers, who can thus play a key role in upskilling teams and transferring knowledge.

A path to better working conditions

The green transition is offering opportunities to improve **job quality and working conditions**. These new green jobs have environmental benefits, but also social and professional impacts that are essential for a **fair and inclusive transition**.

Green jobs often contribute to **making workplaces cleaner and safer**. By focusing on activities that reduce pollution and restore ecosystems, they help improve air quality and reduce exposure to harmful substances. For example, jobs in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and green construction are generally less associated with toxic materials. Environmentally friendly workplace design can **benefit workers' long-term health and well-being**. Such as with the introduction of natural ventilation systems or energy-efficient buildings, which can improve indoor air quality and thermal comfort, for instance.

Many emerging green professions involve **lower physical demands** and **reduced exposure to hazardous conditions**. Innovations such as **modular construction**, an innovative construction method that involves manufacturing building components in a factory and then assembling them at the final site, that

allows much of the work to be done in advance, in a controlled environment, making work less physically demanding and accessible to a wider range of workers.

For **older workers**, these improvements are particularly valuable. As physical resilience can decline with age, less physically demanding and more favourable green jobs can help **extend healthy working lives**, thereby contributing to active ageing and social inclusion.

The development of green jobs allows the **integration of safety and health standards from the outset**, rather than implementing them at a later stage. Green jobs therefore have the potential to offer a **better balance between job requirements and available resources**. All these factors contribute to **greater job satisfaction** and a **lower risk of burnout**.

Green jobs represent a real opportunity to improve working conditions **in all sectors.** By promoting healthier environments, safer tasks and better job design, the green transition can support a labour market that is sustainable. To fully exploit this potential, policies must ensure that **job quality** is a central pillar of the green economy, benefiting workers of all ages.



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INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **IRELAND**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

Active Retirement Ireland

Green Skills 2030: Building a sustainable construction workforce

The Green Skills 2030 Strategy is Ireland's first **national framework to embed sustainability across the Further Education and Training (FET) sector**. It focuses on integrating green skills into apprenticeships and training programmes, promoting climate literacy, and aligning education with emerging green job markets. This initiative can be valuable for older workers, giving them pathways to reskill in green construction and sustainability, while helping companies retain their expertise.

In the construction sector, the strategy targets energy-efficient building, modern construction methods, and retrofitting. **Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) courses** develop skills for efficient construction, **Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) training** covers Building Information Modeling (BIM), AutoCAD, and offsite techniques, and **retrofit training** equips workers to upgrade existing buildings and reduce carbon emissions. Training **emphasises health and safety**, climate awareness, and practical experience, delivered through **Education and Training Boards (ETBs)** and **Ireland's national online learning service (eCollege)**, with targeted promotion to construction workers.

Sector-specific challenges

The construction sector

The green transition and the ageing workforce are two major dynamics that are profoundly transforming the construction sector in the European Union.

This sector accounts for around **6% of European GDP** and employs more than **13.5 million people[69].**

The green transition, driven by initiatives such as the European Green Deal[70], places buildings at the heart of the EU's climate strategy, with the objective to make it more sustainable, more energy-efficient and more resilient.

This transformation opens significant economic opportunities. On the one hand, **jobs could be created** through investments in energy renovation, the construction of sustainable buildings, and the installation of green technologies such as solar panels. These activities are very labour-intensive and would require an overall **3.8% increase in employment[71]** in the sector if the Green Deal is fully implemented.

On the other hand, **some traditional jobs may disappear** or be transformed. For example, the introduction of more productive techniques such as modular construction allows for faster construction with fewer personnel, which could lead to a **reduction in employment of around 1%[72]**. Similarly, the circular economy, which aims to reduce waste and reuse materials, can streamline certain processes and thus slightly reduce labour requirements in certain functions.

This **highlights the crucial importance of training and retraining** so that workers can benefit from new opportunities rather than being excluded by technological and ecological developments. The transformation of professions requires a massive effort in terms of upskilling and retraining, supported by European programmes such as **BUILD UP Skills**, which aim to prepare professionals for the demands of sustainable construction.

This transformation is coming up against another reality: an ageing workforce. The sector is facing a wave of retirements that threatens its ability to meet growing demand. To adapt to the new requirements of the sector, but also to working conditions that are and will continue to be impacted by

[69] The greening of the EU construction sector | CEDEFOP
[70] The European Green Deal - European Commission
[71] The greening of the EU construction sector | CEDEFOP
[72] The greening of the EU construction sector | CEDEFOP

climate change, the sector must **invest in both training and working conditions**.

Lifelong learning and vocational training for older workers, as well as improved working conditions and flexibility, will be essential to ensuring the quality of employment for older workers and keeping them in work, in order to achieve a successful transformation that reconciles environmental sustainability and social justice.

Through social inclusion and intergenerational teams

The green transition is not only an environmental imperative, but also a social opportunity. As Europe moves towards climate neutrality, the development of green jobs offers a unique opportunity to **promote social inclusion** and **strengthen intergenerational cooperation** in the workplace and in communities.

Green jobs cover a wide range of sectors with roles requiring and benefiting from a mix of technical skills, knowledge and collaborative approaches, which make them ideal for **diverse, inclusive and intergenerational teams**. Jobs structured around community initiatives, such as shared gardens, repair cafés and local cooperatives, naturally encourage **intergenerational participation**, allowing young and old workers to work side by side, exchanging knowledge, skills and perspectives while contributing to environmental goals.

When combined with the skills and experience of older workers, the skills of younger workers, who are likely to be more familiar with new practices and technologies due to their more recent initial training, can greatly benefit the company. Indeed, such intergenerational teams enable **greater productivity and innovation**, which are necessary for the green transition that is taking place in the labour market.

For older workers, green jobs can offer **attractive opportunities to remain active**, both professionally and socially. Many roles in the green economy are less physically demanding and more collaborative, making them well suited to workers seeking to **age better at work**. Whether mentoring younger colleagues,

participating in local sustainability projects or accessing new roles through lifelong learning, older adults can play a vital role in building a greener future.

Recognising the value of intergenerational teams in an undeniable asset for the company but also for **social cohesion** and **community resilience** as it tackles age-related stereotypes and exclusion. The green transition is more than a change in energy or production. It is an opportunity to **rethink how we work together**. By promoting inclusive and intergenerational green jobs, Europe can ensure that the transition is not only environmentally sustainable, but also **socially just**, offering everyone, including older workers, the opportunity to thrive and contribute.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member International Longevity Centre UK

The Green Jobs Taskforce: Ensuring diverse employment through the green transition

The Green Jobs Taskforce was established by the UK government in 2020 to provide independent advice on **creating high-quality, sustainable employment** as part of the transition to a net zero economy. It brings together representatives from government, industry, trade unions, and the skills sector to coordinate workforce planning, skills development, and supply chain readiness in emerging green sectors, **ensuring that the transition is fair, inclusive, and sustainable for all.** This includes support and training for older workers, helping them adapt their skills to meet evolving market demands, while safeguarding their fundamental rights as valued and independent members of society.

In its 2021 report, the taskforce recommended that the government use **net zero policies and funding** to promote good green jobs, enhance workforce

skills, and develop competitive local supply chains. All applicants for net zero-related funding must **demonstrate best practices in equality and inclusion, and report transparently on workforce diversity**. The report also calls for high-carbon industries receiving decarbonisation funding to **establish Just Transition agreements in consultation with workers or unions**, and for the government to adopt a principle that consistently supports green jobs, skills, and inclusive practices across all major net zero investments.

Challenges for older workers in a greener labour market

Ageism and structural barriers

Older workers face age discrimination and a lack of recognition that hinder their full participation in this transformation. Data shows that older workers (aged 55-64) are around 25% more likely to remain in carbon-intensive jobs than younger workers (aged 18-34)[73], particularly in regions dependent on fossil fuels.

The core factor contributing to the difficulties faced by older workers is **ageism**. In the world of work, this manifests itself in a persistent tendency to view older people as less capable of acquiring new skills, less productive or less adaptable to change. These stereotypes not only undermine older workers' confidence in their own ability to transition but also influence employers' decisions. **Training programmes** are rarely tailored to the specific needs of older people, and **employers are often reluctant to invest in their development**, believing that it is not cost-effective in the short term. This dynamic becomes particularly problematic in the context of the green transition, which requires rapid adaptation to new technologies, practices and roles. Ageism contributes to **reinforcing inequalities** by excluding a significant portion of the workforce from green job opportunities.

[73] Workers and the Green-Energy Transition: Evidence from 300 million job transitions

Older workers are thus less likely to be employed in emerging sectors of the green economy, not because of a lack of potential, but because of systemic biases that limit their access.

The already high **risk of long-term unemployment among older workers** is further increased. Ageism not only limits their current employment prospects, but also their future opportunities, particularly in industries undergoing transformation. In addition, certain measures such as early retirement, if not well designed, can push experienced workers out of the labour market prematurely. These cumulative barriers reinforce inequalities in the face of the green transition and risk permanently excluding certain profiles from the green job market.

Low geographical mobility is another significant barrier faced by older workers, particularly in regions undergoing economic and environmental transitions. This limited mobility is often due to strong family ties, financial constraints or inadequate transport infrastructure, all of which limit the ability of older individuals to relocate or commute to areas where green jobs are emerging. As a result, employment opportunities remain geographically concentrated and inaccessible to those who cannot easily relocate or travel.

The lack of appropriate institutional support only exacerbates this problem. Many older workers do not receive individualised guidance or targeted assistance that could help them navigate the complexities of retraining and career change. Generic programmes often fail to address the specific challenges faced by this demographic group, such as low digital literacy, health-related limitations or the psychological impact of long-term unemployment. In the absence of **tailored support mechanisms**, such as career guidance, older workers are less likely to engage in reskilling initiatives.

Limited support to learn new skills

Many emerging green jobs call for specialised technical abilities, known as **green skills**, that are essential for adapting to new technologies and sustainable practices across key sectors like renewable energy, building renovation, waste management, and sustainable agriculture. The transformation of sectors is not only creating new green jobs but also changing the content of existing jobs. Nearly

40% of workers in the EU will see their tasks change significantly[74]. Medium-skilled occupations, such as technicians, are expected to grow strongly, but will require targeted retraining.

While the transition to a green economy offers many opportunities, **it does not benefit all worker groups equally**, particularly those with medium skill levels, older individuals, and other population groups in vulnerable situation. Older workers are especially at risk of facing a **mismatch between the emerging demand for digital and green skills and their limited access to training opportunities**, exacerbated by age-related biases as explain before.

To support these changes, the European Commission developed **the GreenComp**[75], **the European Sustainability Competence Framework,** as part of the European Green Deal. The GreenComp serves as a lifelong learning tool, helping individuals cultivate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to live, work, and act sustainably. It is designed to be inclusive, catering to learners of all ages, educational backgrounds, and learning environments and offers guidance for educators and institutions to integrate sustainability competences into their curricula and training programmes.

Although the GreenComp provides a valuable foundation for lifelong learning, it is **not yet widely integrated into workplace training systems.** Moreover, there is a noticeable gap in reskilling initiatives that align the GreenComp's competences with the practical realities faced by older workers in sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture. Its universal design, while inclusive in intent, can sometimes fall short in addressing the specific learning needs and contexts of older adults. This situation is exacerbated by a **shortage of skilled workers and educators**, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, where climate and health challenges require rapid upskilling. Training systems must therefore evolve to anticipate skills needs, particularly in areas such as the circular economy, eco-design, repair and maintenance.

[74] Eurofound - Job quality side of climate change
[75] GreenComp: the European sustainability competence framework - European Commission

Finally, the green transition is a great opportunity for groups such as low-skilled workers, older people, the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities, who are over-represented among job seekers, to reintegrate the labour market. However, their integration into new jobs depends heavily on **the adaptation of training systems and support for retraining**.

SPIRING PRACTICE FROM **MALTA**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

National Association of Pensioners

Jobsplus: Building skills for a sustainable and digital future

Jobsplus is **Malta's public employment service**, connecting labour supply and demand while promoting vocational training and workforce integration. **Jobseekers can register for personalised guidance**, where advisors assess skills, set career goals, and direct them to training. The agency offers a **job vacancy database, work placements, and targeted programmes for vulnerable groups**, helping older workers in search of new opportunities.

For employers, Jobsplus acts as a recruitment partner by identifying candidates, while providing financial incentives, guidance on labour regulations, and initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion. The **Mature Workers Scheme** is designed for employers seeking to leverage the skills of individuals aged between 45 and 65. It **provides incentives for hiring mature workers, facilitating the transfer of valuable experience** and knowledge to younger generations.

Jobsplus also prepares the workforce for future labour market needs by **developing green and digital skills**. It supports the ecological transition through training in sustainability, environmental management, and sustainable building practices. Notably, **"Green Skills: The Four Challenges Experience"** immerses participants resource management, emission

reduction, circular economy, and green innovation. At the same time, Jobsplus strengthens digital adaptability through programmes like **"Investing in Skills"**. These trainings can help older workers remain competitive in a changing labour market.



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Sector-specific challenges

The healthcare sector

Healthcare professionals and the healthcare sector are at the heart of the ecological transition, facing a dual challenge: adapting healthcare systems to the growing impacts of climate change while reducing their own carbon footprint, the healthcare sector itself contributes to around **5% of global greenhouse gas emissions**[76]. Climate change is recognised as one of the

[76] European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies - Green skills for a sustainable future: building a climate smart health and care workforce

greatest threats to public health and the development of green skills is becoming a strategic priority.

Green skills in the healthcare sector cover a range of knowledge and practices that are essential for responding to current environmental challenges. They include **climate literacy in healthcare**, which enables professionals to understand the links between climate change and human health, assess risks, communicate effectively on these issues and advocate for sustainable public policies. They also encompass **sustainable clinical practices** aimed at reducing medical waste, optimising resource use and integrating eco-friendly approaches into everyday care. **Public health leadership** is another essential component, involving climate risk management, planning for health system resilience and coordination between different actors in the sector. Finally, these competencies **draw on the cognitive, interpersonal, intrapersonal and technological skills** needed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change on population health.

Despite the urgency, **a gap remains in the education and training of health professionals on climate issues**. A lack of awareness, tailored programmes and continuous professional development is hindering the integration of these skills. This deficit is exacerbated by **staff shortages** (more than 1.2 million in Europe[77]), precarious working conditions and limited resources, which make it difficult to adopt a long-term vision. Green skills are often seen as an additional burden rather than an opportunity for transformation.

The European Commission recognises the acquisition of green skills in the health sector as a strategic lever[78]. It encourages decision-makers to co-construct climate-health policies with healthcare professionals and social workers and invest in innovative training schemes and promote interprofessional collaboration. The European Commission clearly identifies

[77] European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies - Green skills for a sustainable future: building a climate smart health and care workforce
[78] European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies - Green skills for a sustainable future: building a climate smart health and care workforce

the acquisition of green skills in the health **sector** as a strategic lever for addressing the challenges of climate change. It encourages decision-makers to co-develop climate-health policies with health professionals and social workers, to invest in innovative training programmes, and to promote interprofessional collaboration.

Despite this ambition, concrete initiatives remain limited. Projects such as the **BeWell project**, which aim to develop a European strategy for green and digital skills for healthcare professionals, are still in the pilot phase and only cover part of Europe. The integration of these skills into vocational training systems remains marginal, and European funding is often difficult for local structures to access.

These limitations are **even more pronounced for older workers** in the healthcare sector, even if they represent a significant proportion of the workforce. These professionals often face a double obstacle. On the one hand, a **growing gap between their current skills and the new requirements** associated with the ecological and digital transition. On the other hand, **limited access to training opportunities** due to time constraints, workload, and **age discrimination** in training policies.

On the side of national governments, efforts remain fragmented. Green skills are rarely integrated into initial or continuing training, and healthcare institutions **lack the resources to offer programmes adapted to all profiles**, particularly older ones. In the absence of a clear regulatory framework and concrete incentives, training on environmental issues remains largely optional.

For the healthcare sector to play its full role in the ecological transition, it is essential to develop **accessible and contextualised training**, **value the experience of older workers**, and **strengthen partnerships between healthcare institutions, training organisations and public decision-makers**.

INSPIRING PRACTICE IMPLEMENTED IN **SPAIN**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members

Confederación Española de Organizaciones de Mayores & Plataforma 50 & Plataforma de Mayores Pensionistas

The FLOWER Project (2022-2024):

Fostering nature related competences with older people

The FLOWER Project, funded by Erasmus+, was created to **strengthen the connection between older people, their caregivers, and nature**. Its main objective is to **enhance "green skills" and nature-related competences**, enabling caregivers to design meaningful activities that foster **well-being through contact with nature**. The project collected and analysed good practices across partner countries and developed practical training materials to support caregivers integrating nature into daily care. By doing so, it contributes to a broader vision of **active and sustainable ageing in Europe**.

In Spain, the NGO for older people **CEOMA**, organised two co-creation workshops in a dementia care centre in Pantoja. The first workshop, ***Plant Allergens Bingo***, aimed to raise awareness of plant allergens and the benefits of plants through an educational game. The second, ***Earth Heroes Challenge***, encouraged intergenerational teams to take ecological actions, such as creating crafts from recycled materials. These initiatives highlight the importance of **interdisciplinary work between environmental education and social care**, showing how **nature can be a resource for health, connection, and dignity in later life**.

Health and safety at work

While green jobs are often presented as a symbol of sustainability and environmental responsibility, they do not automatically guarantee safe and

healthy working conditions. The transition to a greener economy introduces a range of **physical and psychosocial risks** which, if not addressed, can compromise workers' well-being and prevent certain groups from fully benefiting new opportunities.

One of the most pressing concerns is the physical strain associated with many green occupations. Jobs in sectors such as sustainable agriculture or energy-efficient building renovation often involve **heavy manual labour, repetitive tasks, awkward postures and prolonged exposure to the outdoors**. These demands can be particularly difficult for older workers or those with chronic health conditions, raising questions about healthy ageing in the workplace and the need to ensure that the green transition is inclusive. At the same time, the introduction of new technologies creates new risks. Workers who handle innovative “green” materials may be exposed to **chemical or mechanical risks** that are not yet fully understood and need to be studied from the perspective of workers' health and safety. Without appropriate training, supervision and preventive measures, these risks are amplified, particularly for inexperienced or physically vulnerable workers.



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INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **ITALY**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Associazione nazionale pensionati Cia Agricoltori Italiani & SPI CGIL & Associazione Lavoro over 40 & Associazione Nazionale Anziani e Pensionati (ANAP)

National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) (2021): Advancing sustainable and mechanized agriculture

The PNRR is Italy's national instrument under the **NextGenerationEU** programme. It provides investments and reforms to revive the economy after the COVID-19 crisis, emphasising the need to **transition the current economic model towards greater environmental and social sustainability**.

Mission 2 – Green Revolution and Ecological Transition allocates €5.27 billion to promoting circular economy and sustainable agriculture. It aims to advance precision and resilient farming, support agro-ecological practices, and improve environmental monitoring. Investments target innovation and mechanisation through modern machinery, precision techniques, Agriculture 4.0 technologies, and cleaner vehicles. Training for technicians, managers, agronomists, and workers ensures their effective adoption. These measures can **support older farmers by easing physical strain, providing accessible training, and improving working conditions**, helping them remain active in the sector.

However, the risks of the green transition are not only physical. **Psychosocial pressures** also weigh heavily on workers. Rapid industry restructuring, increasing job insecurity and the need to adapt quickly to new skills and technologies can generate anxiety and uncertainty, particularly among older workers who face many of the structural barriers outlined above. In some sectors, such as healthcare, the additional workload associated with climate challenges and

environmental sustainability adds to already high levels of stress and fatigue. These psychosocial risks can erode motivation, mental health and job satisfaction. Older workers are among the groups disproportionately represented in the most dangerous and unsafe jobs, while having limited access to reliable information, adequate training or effective social protection mechanisms.

To ensure an inclusive and just green transition, it is not enough to promote environmentally friendly jobs. Green jobs must also be designed with occupational health and safety as a fundamental principle, so that they remain **accessible and sustainable for workers of all ages and backgrounds**. This involves not only reducing physical risks through preventive measures, protective equipment and ergonomic design, but also creating new forms of employment that allow for participation without excessive physical strain, such as advisory, training, monitoring or coordination roles. It also requires robust occupational health strategies, **targeted support for groups in vulnerable situation** and greater integration of workers' voices into decision-making processes.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **SPAIN**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members

Confederación Española de Organizaciones de Mayores & Plataforma 50 & Plataforma de Mayores Pensionistas

Strategic Projects for Economic Recovery and Transformation (PERTE): Building a greener, safer, and more inclusive construction sector

In Spain, PERTE are **large-scale strategic project supported by public funding from the NextGenerationEU recovery plan**. Their goal is to modernise key sectors of the economy, accelerate digital and ecological transitions, and strengthen competitiveness. This specific PERTE aims to transform the construction and housing sector by **introducing more industrialised, technology-driven processes**. It seeks to achieve

environmental sustainability by reducing waste, improving energy efficiency, and lowering the ecological footprint of housing.

A key dimension is the **improvement of working conditions**, since shifting part of the construction process into controlled factory environments helps reduce risks of accidents, provides more stable employment, and **makes the industry more attractive, especially for women** who are traditionally underrepresented in construction. These changes are also **beneficial for older workers, who may find heavy physical tasks and exposure to outdoor risks more challenging**.

Sector-specific challenges

Waste management sector

The waste management sector exposes workers to a range of risks that can compromise their health, safety and ability to age well at work. These risks are of particular concern for the healthy ageing of employees, but also for older workers, whose physical and physiological vulnerability may be exacerbated by demanding working conditions throughout their careers.

The physical risks are many and varied. Workers are regularly exposed to **hazardous substances** such as chemicals, infectious materials, fumes and dust. Noise, vibrations from the use of hand tools, repetitive movements, awkward postures and extreme temperatures are all **factors that place intense strain on the body**, with cumulative effects that are more pronounced in older people. The use of specific machinery and vehicles adds a layer of complexity and danger, particularly in terms of handling and traffic. The risks associated with the materials handled are often invisible but equally worrying. Workers may be exposed to **toxic substances** such as asbestos, heavy metals or dioxins released during waste treatment. This exposure, which can be prolonged and repeated, can have serious health consequences.

The sector also has a high rate of accidents at work[79], particularly in transport and collection activities. Road accidents, falls and injuries related to the handling of heavy loads or the use of poorly secured equipment are common and can have lasting consequences on workers' health. Finally, **psychosocial risks** should not be overlooked.

These factors, combined with a fragmented workforce and unequal working conditions, make the sector particularly difficult for those who wish to age healthily while remaining active in the sector.

A green transition designed for an ageing workforce

A sustainable job must be both green and of high quality

A sustainable job must be both environmentally friendly and of high quality to ensure **the empowerment of the workforce**. Indeed, the transition to a carbon-neutral economy will only be fair and sustainable if it considers the realities of an ageing workforce and ensures that workers can remain active in the labour market throughout their careers, and even beyond retirement age according to the worker's desire.

To achieve this, the green transition must generate not only jobs, but also **sustainable careers**. Successful ageing at work depends above all on the **quality of employment**: jobs must be secure, predictable and compatible with the physical and cognitive abilities of older workers. This requires the implementation of rigorous health and safety standards, but also a broader vision of quality of work. The organisation of work must respect life rhythms, allow for recovery time and balance productivity and well-being. Access to stable contracts, fair wages, social protection and career progression opportunities is just as important as reducing exposure to risks. Without these conditions, workers are likely to experience premature burnout, early exit from the labour market or increased vulnerability in old age.

[79] EPSU - Waste management in Europe. Good jobs in the circular economy?

It is essential to **rigorously assess the quality of jobs** created as part of the green transition rather than assuming that they are automatically "better" because they are green. Precarious, overly demanding or dead-end jobs cannot be considered sustainable, even if they contribute to environmental goals. A just transition involves designing green jobs in a way that **enhances employability throughout life**, providing workers not only with immediate income but also with long-term security and dignity at work.

Skills development and **lifelong learning** are another essential pillar of sustainable careers. The transformations associated with the green transition require **continuous upskilling and reskilling**, particularly for older workers who may find it more difficult to adapt to new technologies or methods. Education and vocational training systems must therefore offer **flexible, accessible and financially supported pathways tailored to adults**. This includes modular and short-term training programmes, e-learning or blended learning formats, flexible schedules and personalised support. It is important that sustainability issues are integrated into existing qualifications, certifications and professional standards, so that green skills become part of the normal career path rather than an exception.

In sectors heavily affected by decarbonisation, targeted action plans are needed to ensure the transition of workers to new sustainable roles. For self-employed workers, such as farmers, **innovative training and counselling programmes** must be put in place to ensure their active participation. Public support is essential in this regard. **Active labour market policies** can provide essential services such as retraining, guidance and job placement assistance, ensuring that no worker is left behind.

INSIPIRING PRACTICE FROM **MALTA**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

National Association of Pensioners

Malta Sustainable Development Strategy for 2025: Workforce development and fair labour practices

Malta' strategy for 2050 is a long-term national plan aimed at building a greener, fairer and more competitive society, balancing economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. A key focus of the strategy is workforce development, ensuring that Malta's population is equipped with **high-quality, accessible education and training** that aligns with labour market needs, including green and digital competencies. Emphasis is also put on **re-skilling, up-skilling and work-based learning opportunities** with the aim of enhancing individuals' and enterprises' development.

The strategy places **strong emphasis on fair, safe and inclusive working conditions**, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Gender equality is promoted through **training programmes for women re-entering the labour market or seeking career advancement**. Family-friendly policies include paid parental leave, extended compensated paternity leave, and carers' leave for those with ill relatives. **Flexible working arrangements and the right to disconnect are safeguarded**, while employee well-being is promoted through policies enhancing physical, mental and occupational health. This approach is beneficial for older workers as it guarantees their continued participation as equal members of society and **helps reduce the gender gap that often widens with age** by supporting a better work-life balance.



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Preventing the exclusion of older workers

Preventing the exclusion of older workers requires **a person-centred approach** that recognises the diversity of their needs, experiences and aspirations. Not all workers are ready, able or even willing to take on technical positions in renewable energy, and it is essential that the green transition does not become a new source of inequality.

Older workers are not a homogeneous group. They all have different career paths, needs and aspirations, and **individualised support** plays a decisive role in this regard. Guidance services must consider the personal circumstances of older workers, recognising their constraints as well as their ambitions. For some, continued employment in emerging green sectors may be desirable, but for others, local or socially oriented initiatives may be more appropriate.

If we take a closer look at the **situation of older women**, they face specific challenges that differ from those of older men. The European Economic and Social Committee[80] highlights one major risk in particular: without inclusive policies, the green transition and digital transformation could exacerbate **gender**

[80] Women still underrepresented in green and digital sectors | EESC

inequalities. Women remain **under-represented** in these strategic sectors concerned by the green transition. In the energy sector, for example, the workforce remains largely male, and even in renewable energy, which is more open to diverse profiles, women make up only about 35% of the workforce on average. These figures apply to women of all ages. It is therefore reasonable to assume that age and ageism, combined and intersecting with gender discrimination, call for vigilance to ensure that the green transition does not exacerbate the gender divide in the labour market.

Policies should open multiple pathways such as the **redeployment to support roles** in renewable energy projects, participation in social cooperatives or community initiatives such as recycling centres, repair cafés, shared gardens or sustainable housing projects. These opportunities allow older workers to remain active and valued, while contributing to the resilience of their communities. These initiatives also highlight the broader contribution that older workers can make **beyond traditional employment**. Cooperatives, local workshops and collective projects create environments where the experience and expertise of older workers complement the innovation and energy of younger generations. This **intergenerational exchange** strengthens the social fabric, promotes mutual learning, and ensures that knowledge accumulated over decades is not lost in the transition. By **creating spaces where older workers can pass on their skills**, mentor younger colleagues, or participate in green activities within the community, societies can transform potential exclusion into a source of added value.

At the same time, support for older workers in the green transition must go beyond employment measures alone. **Access to healthcare, psychological counselling and social services** is essential to maintaining resilience in the face of change, not only for workers themselves but also for their families. The stress of economic restructuring, particularly in municipalities affected by mass redundancies, can undermine confidence and increase vulnerability. **Transparent and tailored communication at the local level** about available opportunities is therefore essential to avoid inequalities in access to information and to maintain confidence in the transition process. Finally, to avoid the exclusion of older workers, they must

be seen not as a marginalised group, but as **active participants** in building a greener society. This way, older workers are not left behind but recognised as essential contributors to a **just and person-centred transition**.

Just transition policies facing an ageing workforce

The green transition in Europe is based on a set of policies and instruments designed to ensure that it is fair and inclusive. While these measures provide a solid foundation, their ability to meet the specific needs of older workers remains uneven.

The European Green Deal[81] and the principle of a just transition have been a major turning point. They affirm the ambition to **leave no one behind** and explicitly target groups in vulnerable situations, including older workers. They also promote social dialogue, which is essential for adapting policies to local realities. However, the approach often remains too general: older people are recognised as a group in vulnerable situation on the labour market but rarely benefit from measures specifically designed for them. The training courses, which are sometimes long, demanding or highly digital, may therefore discourage those who need them most.

The Mechanism and Fund for a Just Transition (MTJ/FTJ)[82] reinforce this approach of "leaving no one behind" by mobilising funds over the period 2021-2027. These instruments finance concrete projects for retraining, skills development, employment support and economic diversification, with **a participatory approach** through the **Territorial Just Transition Plans**. However, two limitations remain. On the one hand, the Fund explicitly **excludes early retirement and severance pay**, whereas for some older workers, support for a gradual exit from employment would sometimes be more realistic, answering also to their aspirations, than retraining. On the other hand, the success of these funds depends heavily on the administrative capacity of the territories, which creates **inequalities in implementation**.

Active labour market policies represent another pillar. They have proven effective in several countries, transforming existing skills to adapt them to the

[81] The European Green Deal - European Commission
[82] The Just Transition Mechanism - European Commission

needs of the transition. They prevent exclusion by prioritising retraining over withdrawal from the labour market. However, as mentioned before, older workers often face barriers to access that are not taken into account, such as difficulties with digital technology, lack of appropriate teaching methods, or support about returning to training. The risk is therefore that these schemes will mainly benefit young people or the most skilled, leaving older people behind.

INSPIRING PRACTICE IMPLEMENTED IN **FRANCE**

Social Economy for Older People's Care (SONYA): Strengthening social economy care in rural Europe

The SONYA project is a **Horizon Europe initiative (2024–2028)** led by Rennes School of Business from France. It **strengthens Social Economy Organisations (SEOs) to deliver high-quality, community-based elder care**, particularly in rural areas where services are scarce. SONYA tackles legal and policy barriers, improves working conditions for care workers and promotes inclusive employment, sustainability and innovation within the care sector.

Through living labs, training, digital inclusion and capacity-building activities, **SONYA supports up to 60 SEOs** and engages extensive community networks. It develops scalable tools and policy recommendations to **revitalise rural care ecosystems, attract and retain care workers, and ensure older people can access dignified social care services**. The project is beneficial for older workers, who can find new employment opportunities in the care sector adapted to their skills and experience, while benefiting from improved working conditions and flexible arrangements that make it easier to stay active in the labour market. By sharing its findings across Europe, SONYA also **aims to inspire other regions to adopt similar models** for sustainable and community-driven elder care.

Alongside these measures, **income support schemes** play an essential role in absorbing the social shocks associated with restructuring. They prevent sudden losses of income and provide valuable time to consider a change of direction, whether in terms of training, entrepreneurial projects or social activities. However, if poorly coordinated with active policies, these benefits **can encourage early withdrawal from the labour market**, even when it's contrary to older workers' aspirations, and reinforce the systematic exclusion of older people, rather than supporting their continued or return to work.

Finally, **the dynamics of local development and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)**[83] open interesting prospects for older people. Cooperatives, recycling centres, shared gardens and energy renovation initiatives supporting people to remain active while strengthening social and intergenerational ties. These projects are based on principles of solidarity, which are more inclusive for older workers. However, their main limitation lies in their scale. Often experimental, they struggle to become widespread, and risk being marginalised in comparison with large industrial projects supported by European funds.



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[83] How the Social and Solidarity Economy Can Drive the 2030 Agenda | EU Proximity and Social Economy Platform

Recommendations

Enhance policy coordination

- **Strengthen coherence** between climate, social and employment policies to ensure a fair and inclusive transition that considers ageing and the specific needs of older workers
- **Integrate flexible and tailored pathways** into just transition mechanisms, offering older workers realistic options for adaptation and retraining

Design inclusive green jobs

- **Ensure that green jobs are safe, accessible and of high quality**, incorporating robust standards for working conditions from the outset
- **Encourage the hiring of older workers** through incentives such as subsidies, quotas or dedicated programmes
- **Design inclusive work environments** with adapted facilities and flexible career paths for older workers
- **Promote alternative roles** such as advising, supervising, mentoring, that allow older workers to pass on their expertise
- **Strengthen occupational health and safety strategies**, particularly in exposed sectors such as waste management
- **Develop personalised support for older workers** to facilitate their integration and retention in green sectors
- **Promote access for older workers** to opportunities offered by the social and solidarity economy
- **Strengthen coordination with social and health services** to support the resilience and well-being of older workers engaged in the green transition

Tailor training for older adults

- **Recognise and promote the expertise and experience** of older workers as assets in the green job market

- **Develop continuing education programmes** specifically tailored to older workers through the **European Commission's Union of Skills**, ensuring their accessibility and dissemination
- **Simplify the recognition of acquired skills** to facilitate the validation of experience
- **Design age-inclusive training courses**, with practical and concrete approaches
- **Deploy targeted training in high-growth sectors** such as recycling, repair and energy renovation
- **Promote intergenerational programmes** in key areas such as agriculture, construction and maintenance to encourage the transfer of knowledge.

Ensure inclusive community resilience and just transition for older workers

- **Strengthen social and solidarity economy** by supporting models such as cooperatives, which are drivers of intergenerational cooperation and local resilience
- **Fully recognise older workers as active contributors** to community dynamics and inclusive transition
- **Develop regional conversion plans** in regions dependent on fossil fuels, with support tailored to older workers
- **Anticipate job losses** due to the green transition through enhanced sectoral social dialogue and direct retraining towards growth sectors
- **Develop mobility and relocation schemes** for affected workers, considering the specific constraints of older people
- **Encourage companies to promote generational diversity** in teams and promote this approach through labels or certifications
- **Adapt European funding** to include measures for a gradual transition to retirement, while simplifying access to funds for territories with low administrative capacity

Chapter III - Labour shortages

Demographic ageing and its impact on the labour market

Demographic changes and the ageing workforce

Demographic change is one of the major current trends transforming the European society and economy. The Union is particularly affected by this dynamic with **a proportion of people aged 65 or over increasing rapidly**. In 2019, one in five EU citizens was over 65, representing around 90.5 million people. According to projections, this share will reach almost one third of the total population by 2050, peaking at 129.8 million older citizens[84]. At the same time, **the proportion of the population below retirement age is decreasing** and it will continue to do so until the end of the century, falling from 64% in 2022 to around 54% in 2100[85].

The impact on the labour market and social systems is and will be significant in the coming years. The composition of the workforce is changing, with an increasing proportion of older workers, and urgent consideration must be given to the challenges associated with physical health by adapting working conditions and preventing psychosocial risks. At the same time, sustainability of pension, health and long-term care systems is questioned, and growing inequalities and precariousness for certain vulnerable groups call for more ambitious redistribution and inclusion policies.

Demographic change is also part of a broader context in which the European Union's competitiveness is already being tested. In this context, ageing is often described an aggravating factor, exacerbating skills shortages, increasing social security costs and undermining the foundations of the European prosperity. However, **this transformation should be seen as an opportunity**. The ageing of the working population can become a source of social and organisational

[84] Eurostat - Ageing Europe
[85] European Commission - FTJ - Centring older people in regional transformations

innovation, by valuing the skills of experienced workers, developing intergenerational mentoring and stimulating new services related to well-being and health for instance. The European Union **must invest more in social policies that support older workers** but also guarantee quality careers from the moment people enter the labour market, in order to ensure the sustainability of the workforce.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **ITALY**

Think Care Project:
Supporting age diversity and well-being in the Veneto region

The Think Care project, led by Kairosforma Srl, is part of the regional initiative "Generations in comparison", which funds actions to **raise awareness around age diversity management** in the Veneto region. Its objective is to help organisations **embrace an ageing workforce and ensure healthy, inclusive, and sustainable working environments**. The project aims to **provide tools, methodologies, and models to guide organisations** through the complexities of demographic change and digital transformation, especially for the care sector in Padua and Venice.

Kairosforma also delivers **diverse training programmes**, including courses on enhancing older workers' digital skills (**"Digital Resilience"**), managing diversity (**"How to be Different"**) and fostering intergenerational communication (**"Generation After Generation"**), helping organisations promote inclusion and cultivate an innovative workplace culture. These opportunities can help older people remain confident, skilled, and actively engaged in the modern workplace.

Labour shortages and sectors most affected

The decrease of the working population's rate is putting a strain on the economy by exacerbating labour shortages. For nearly a decade, businesses have been reporting increasing recruitment difficulties, which are impeding productivity and limiting growth prospects[86]. Small and medium-sized enterprises are particularly affected, with nearly four out of five reporting obstacles to finding qualified staff[87].

The tensions are particularly important **in strategic sectors such as health, long-term care and construction**, where labour demand far exceeds supply. In many Member States, more than one in six job vacancies is in long-term care[88]. The sector suffers from a significantly ageing workforce, which exacerbates recruitment difficulties for professions as diverse as doctors, nurses and care assistants. Other sectors such as construction are also facing obstacles. Jobs in these sectors are often physically demanding, prompting many workers to anticipate early retirement.



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[86] Eurofound - Company practices to tackle labour shortages
[87] EU report - Une boussole de la compétitivité pour l'UE
[88] European Commission - FTJ - Centring older people in regional transformations

In this context, the European Union must above all promote and recognise the value of older workers' contributions and consider long-term employment policies through a **career-long approach**. Several strategies must be implemented to this end. Legal reforms on the retirement age cannot be the solution for keeping older workers in employment, particularly in sectors where physical and psychosocial risks or working conditions do not allow people to work longer. However, it is crucial to consider improving working conditions and adapting working environments in all sectors to meet labour needs.

Sector-specific challenges

The construction sector

The construction sector in Europe is facing severe labour shortages, both **widespread and structural**. While there are several contributing factors, such as difficult working conditions and a lack of training, the **ageing of the workforce** appears to be one of the most significant elements.

In this sector, the proportion of older workers is above average: in 2021, **32% of construction workers were aged between 50 and 64**, compared with 28% for all occupations[89]. These figures question the future of the workforce, as the sector will have to simultaneously replace a large generation of workers retiring, creating a **replacement deficit**, and meet growing demand for projects in line with the ecological transition and energy efficiency in buildings. According to Cedefop, **between 3 and 4 million additional workers will be needed in this sector by 2030** to meet the targets for decarbonisation and energy renovation of buildings[90].

The demanding working conditions in construction have a particular impact on the well-being of workers over their career but also today's older workers. Physically demanding tasks, exposure to the elements and the risk of accidents accumulate over time, further undermining **the sustainability of employment in this sector**. The lack of career prospects for older workers

[89] Mental health in the construction sector: preventing and managing psychosocial risks in the workplace - OSHA
[90] Eurofound - Measures to tackle labour shortages: Lessons for future policy

often leads to early retirement, whether voluntary or not, even though older workers possess unique and contextualised skills that are essential for complex construction projects.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **France**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members Union Française des Retraités & Fédération Nationale des Associations des Retraités (FNAR) & Union des Anciens du Groupe BP & Fédération des particuliers employeurs de France

Platform IPERIA: Training and career development for home employment workers

In France, one in two employees in the home employment sector is aged 50 or older. For many of these workers, maintaining employability, adapting to new tools, and sustaining good working conditions are key challenges. Meanwhile, **nearly 800,000 new positions must be filled by 2030**. Yet the sector is marked by demanding schedules, physically and emotionally taxing work, and limited recognition in terms of status and pay, which reduce its attractiveness. Strengthening training and career development is therefore essential, both to keep older workers engaged and valued, and to attract new entrants into the profession.

Mandated by the domestic employment sector and the private employers' branch, IPERIA serves as **the national platform for the professional development of domestic workers**. Each year, employees can access up to **58 hours of training**, including a five-module digital skills programme offered online or in person to adapt to workers' convenience. In 2023, IPERIA also launched the **Sectoral Career Guidance and Development Council (COEPS)**, **a free advisory service run by specialists** for employees considering a career change or seeking to progress within their profession.

Together, these initiatives give older domestic workers the chance to update their skills and manage their careers more freely, while gaining recognition for their work.

Fostering inclusive and accessible labour market for all older adults

Promoting intersectional inclusion of older workers

Groups in vulnerable situations in the labour market continue to be marginalised. Job insecurity, precariousness and low wages disproportionately affect populations, among which older workers. The first mistake being made is to **consider older workers as a homogeneous group** and to develop policies and programmes for them that only meet the needs of a few. On the contrary, the group of older workers is characterised by diverse social, economic and cultural realities that expose its members to specific forms of discrimination. This is highlighted by the concept of intersectionality: age, combined with other factors such as gender, disability, health or immigrant background, are **multiple, cumulative and intersectional factors** that hinder access to and retention in employment.

Ageism remains a common form of discrimination in the workplace. Too often tolerated, it reduces employment opportunities, blocks career progression and fuels stereotypes that hinder intergenerational exchanges and collaboration. But age-related prejudices are often combined with other types of discrimination. **Older women**, for example, often face the 'double penalty' of fragmented careers due to family or care responsibilities, and are further hampered by a lack of accessible services that would enable a genuine work-life balance. **Older workers with disabilities or chronic illnesses** are also more likely to leave the labour market early due to a lack of appropriate accommodations or sufficient support. **Older migrants and refugees** are another group of people concerned, as they face difficulties in getting their qualifications recognised and accessing health and training services.



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At company level, **combating ageism and promoting diversity** should be a priority. Considering the needs of each individual and adopting **a person-centred approach** is crucial to meeting the needs of the workforce as a whole. It is essential to review recruitment practices to ensure they are neutral and to make managers aware of their biases.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member International Longevity Centre UK

Veolia: Building an age-inclusive workforce

Veolia is a global leader in water, waste, and energy management, employing over 200,000 people worldwide. **Nearly 44% of its workforce is aged 50 or over**, higher than the UK average of 38%, making the expertise of older

employees critical. Facing skills shortages, Veolia aimed to **prevent a "massive exodus" of experienced talent** while ensuring younger employees could learn from this knowledgeable group.

Veolia shows its engagement with older workers through multiple actions:

- Veolia's **50-plus campaign** ensures older employees have clear development opportunities. Practical toolkits **help managers and staff plan careers beyond 50**, while a reciprocal **mentoring scheme** enables younger employees to share digital skills and learn technical expertise from older colleagues.
- Through a **myth-busting video campaign and age-bias training for managers**, Veolia actively challenges negative perceptions of older workers. These initiatives demonstrate that employees over 50 are adaptable, digitally capable, and eager to learn, helping to create a culture where age diversity is recognised as a strength.
- Recognising the physical nature of many roles, Veolia also introduced **creative flexible options such as flexible hours, job sharing, remote working, phased retirement, part-time, and time out leave**. These arrangements enable an inclusive and person-centred approach. Depending on the individual and their needs, the diversity and flexibility arrangements allow everyone, in all their diversity, to continue working.

Inclusion must require **profound cultural and institutional change**. It is not limited to company policies and requires **structural measures** supported by public authorities and social partners. Investment in quality childcare and care services provides better support to women, who then might have a better chance of staying in the labour market when they are older, for example. Also, personal assistance programmes facilitate the integration of people with disabilities. For older migrants, individualised pathways combining language training, psychosocial support and skills recognition are key to integration. Finally, **the role of public employment services** is central to improving career guidance, strengthening multi-agency support mechanisms and promoting mobility, which are essential levers.

Building a truly inclusive society requires more **rigorous evaluation of policies**, sustained commitment from institutions, and joint mobilisation of businesses, public services, and civil society organisations. Promoting equality and inclusion for older workers in their diversity is above all an ethical imperative based on **human rights**, but it is also an economic and social strategy that is long overdue. It means recognising that every individual, regardless of age, background or circumstances, has potential that deserves to be supported and valued.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **DENMARK**

Best over 60 award:
Celebrating experienced professionals and their lasting impact

The **Best over 60 award** is an initiative by Djøf, a Danish trade union and professional organisation, that recognises and celebrates experienced workers aged 60 and older. The idea is to **pay tribute to their long and valuable contributions at work**, shining a spotlight on individuals who continue to make a difference well beyond the traditional retirement age.

Each year, **60 people over the age of 60 are honoured** for their achievements, dedication, and continued impact at work. The selection often spans a wide range of professions, from business and public administration to academia and non-profit sectors, showcasing the diversity of older talent.

The award also highlights Djøf's **broader goal of creating a more inclusive and supportive labour market** for older professionals. By sharing the stories of these honourees, Djøf emphasises that their diversity, their knowledge, leadership, and experience are critical assets for businesses, younger colleagues, and society as a whole, and it encourages employers to actively value and integrate older professionals into their workplaces.

Supporting older unemployed persons

Older unemployed workers are overlooked by European employment policies. This is a major challenge that Member States and Europe are failing to address. Despite their efforts to extend working life and improve the inclusion of older people in the labour market, this category of inactive people is often neglected, left without many prospects for reintegration.

One of the main shortcomings is the **lack of specific legal provisions to prevent age-related dismissals**. At European level, the Employment Equality directive[91] prevents from the discrimination of people based on age, including dismissal. However, although proving age discrimination remains difficult, the directive "allows the possibility to justify direct age discrimination, as long as there is a legitimate aim"[92], allowing Member States to apply a wide range of exceptions in their legislation discriminating against part of the population based on their age. In addition, in many Member States, protection against dismissal weakens after a certain age, particularly beyond the legal retirement age. **In France**, for example, employers cannot force employees to retire without their written consent before the age of 70. When an employee reaches the age of 70, the employer can automatically retire them, even without their consent. There is no legal prohibition on continuing to work, but in practice, employees are dependent on their employer, who can force them to retire if they wish. In the public sector, the age limit is even lower. **In Sweden**, the maximum age for remaining in a job protected by law is 69, and it is possible to continue working beyond this age. However, there is no longer any protection against dismissal beyond this age. This situation paves the way for **ageism**, sometimes disguised as workforce management or restructuring measures. Older workers thus become more vulnerable to forced departures, without this being recognised as discrimination.

[91] Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation
[92] Article 6

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **FRANCE**

Force Femmes: Empowering women over 45 back to work

Force Femmes is a French association that **helps unemployed women over 45 in their efforts to return to work or start their own business**. It values women's experience and transforms obstacles related to age or career breaks into opportunities, guided by principles of solidarity, listening, and confidence. With its help, **nearly 2,000 women each year start or advance their projects**, completely free of charge.

The association **offers personalised support**, including workshops on job searching, CV writing, interview preparation, and digital skills development. It also provides individual coaching with volunteers or professional mentors to create tailored career plans. In addition, Force Femmes informs and **raises awareness among companies about recruiting women over 45** and works proactively with public authorities to promote gender diversity and intergenerational inclusion.

Once out of the labour market, **older people find it very difficult to find new employment**. Recruiters are reluctant to hire people close to or beyond retirement age, due to ageism, stereotypes related to productivity, adaptability or wage costs. Support mechanisms for reintegration are often unsuited to their needs, and access to training remains limited.

The **COVID-19 crisis** has exacerbated this trend. Many older workers have been pushed into **early retirement**, sometimes under economic or health pressure, without support or alternatives. This wave of early departures has contributed to a **silent exclusion** of older people from the labour market, exacerbating their precariousness and weakening their right to a full pension. In the absence of targeted policies, inactive older workers find themselves in a **grey area**, neither

fully active nor recognised as retired, and often excluded from support mechanisms.

To address this challenge, there is an urgent need to develop an integrated approach that combines several complementary levers, which must include specific support **for professional reintegration**, with targeted programmes for inactive older workers, incorporating guidance, coaching and job search support. A call for projects inspired by the French programme **Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée (TZCLD)** has been taken up at European level, notably by the European Commission, DG EMPL (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion). This pilot project was launched as part of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) programme, with the aim of **testing territorial active inclusion measures**. It aims to create full employment zones in micro-territories by mobilising local actors to offer jobs suited to the skills of people who are distant from the labour market. One of its objectives is to offer an **employment contract to anyone who is long-term unemployed, a situation that largely affects older workers.**

Finally, **intergenerational and flexibility initiatives** are also interesting practices that enable the retention or re-employment of older workers, while encouraging cooperation between generations and adapting working conditions to specific needs.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **POLAND**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members

BONUM VITAE Foundation & *Alzheimer Polska*

Act on the Labour Market and Employment Services:
Better opportunities for older workers through financial incentives

The **Act on the Labour Market and Employment Services, which came into effect in June 2025,** modernizes Poland's labour policies and emphasizes an inclusive approach that values older workers.

A core aim of the Act is **encouraging employers to hire and retain older workers in better jobs**. Employers hiring older people (women aged 60 or older and men aged 65 or older) can **receive a subsidy of up to 50% of the minimum monthly wage for the first 24 months**. After this period ends, they are required to keep the older people employed for another 12 months, ensuring stability and long-term engagement. By doing so, it prevents skills loss, supports knowledge transfer, and **ensures that older workers have the opportunity to remain in the labour market despite age-related barriers and discrimination**.

The Act also indirectly helps pensioners by **expanding childcare availability**, reducing grandparents' daily caregiving responsibilities and enabling them to take up work if they choose. Through these measures, the Act promotes inclusivity, offers practical support for older workers, and makes fuller use of Poland's experienced labour force.



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Policies and initiatives to retain older workers in employment

Retention strategies and career management

Retaining older workers and managing their careers are strategic challenges for businesses and labour markets. These policies require **an integrated approach** that combines organisational innovation, inclusive human resources practices and appropriate measures to keep people in employment.

Flexibility is one of the most common measures in retention strategies. It not only allows carers to look after a loved one in need, which is common for older workers who support an older parent, but also to balance work and personal life to stay in employment longer. It can also prepare for a gradual retirement, such as combining employment with retirement, allowing for a smooth transition. This is possible thanks to flexible working hours, teleworking when the job allows it, or the use of additional leave days linked to age, for example.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **FINLAND**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members The Union for Senior Services (VALLI) & Finnish Pensioners' Federation

"Towards Successful Seniority" group method: Empowering older workers through career coaching

This group coaching method was developed by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health to support people in the later phases of their careers. Its goal is to help older workers maintain motivation, well-being, and employability by **strengthening personal resources, career management skills, and adaptability to change**.

The method uses a **Trainer's Manual** and a **Participant's Workbook**. Trained facilitators guide participants through **structured sessions that move**

from identifying strengths and career goals, to handling workplace challenges and stress, and to drafting personal action plans for improvement. The group format encourages peer learning and mutual support, helping participants exchange experiences. This method is known to **improve career adaptability and help reduce prolonged absence**, offering clear benefits both for individuals and for organisations.

Among the several models of intergenerational collaboration emerging, the ***employee sharing***, is an interesting initiative that allows flexibility and continued employment, particularly for older workers who no longer wish to work full-time. This model offers them the opportunity to adjust their working hours without leaving the job market completely. It allows networks of employers to pool human resources and offer experienced workers flexible and diverse forms of employment that meet both the needs of businesses and the aspirations of employees. More specifically, in this configuration, an employee is not employed by a single company, but by a group of employers or a network of partner companies, which call on the employee according to specific and planned needs, while maintaining a stable and secure employment contract for the employee. Job sharing can take two forms. The first one is related to the skills where an employee, often experienced or highly qualified, puts their expertise into the service of several companies that could not individually finance a full-time position. The second one is more related to the share of labour, where several employers join forces to recruit staff, whom they then distribute according to their seasonal, cyclical or partial needs. Both can be particularly beneficial when applied to teams composed of young and older workers. It allows the experience of older workers to be valued, as they bring their technical expertise, know-how and knowledge of processes to several companies, often complementing younger employees' competences and knowledge. This practice also facilitates the transfer of skills. By engaging in diverse organisational contexts, older workers act as transfer of best practices. They share their experience, fostering a mutually beneficial exchange with the younger generation.

Adapting workstations and introducing specific schemes appear to be another essential lever. Spaces must be designed according to the principles of ergonomics, neuro-ergonomics and human factors, to create environments suitable for all stages of working life. As we have seen previously, new technologies have a real role to play in ensuring and developing this aspect. Simple adjustments, such as optimising lighting, reducing noise, adapting postures or reducing physical loads, have a direct impact on health and productivity. Reorganising tasks, rotating positions, automating certain operations and preventing musculoskeletal disorders are also effective solutions. At the same time, taking psychosocial risks into account is essential. Preventing burnout, regulating workloads and creating psychologically safe environments must be at the heart of retention policies.

In addition, Human Resources policies must include **career management measures** that need to be though on an individualised basis through a person-centred approach. The linear, upward trajectory of careers is gradually giving way to flexible career paths. Mid-career interviews, followed by regular reviews from mid-career, make it possible to assess skills, through skills assessment and development. It also allows to better address aspirations while anticipating career changes. Expert, project management and technical specialisation pathways must complement traditional management paths to meet a diverse range of expectations, value the competences of older workers.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **HUNGARY**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member

Gerontology Science Coordination Center

Hungary's Individual Learning Account (ILA):

Accessible and personalised paths to career development

The Hungarian Individual Learning Account (ILA) is part of the **EU Council Recommendation**[93] on individual learning accounts adopted in June 2022, which recommends that Member States consider introducing individual learning accounts for adults of working age, whether employed or not, to improve employability and continuing education. Hungary has an **ILA scheme** currently under development, with assistance from the European Commission's technical support instrument. It aims at **addressing skills gaps and increasing adult participation in learning**. The project is set for a nationwide rollout by 2030, but a roadmap has already been drafted to outline key principles and timelines for the ILA scheme.

ILA features a **single digital portal** where individuals can browse training programmes and track their progress, with **assistance available to support users** who may face difficulties to navigate on the platform, such as older adults. A **registry of accredited courses and providers** ensures quality and recognition of skills by employers. The system also includes **skill assessments** to identify strengths and areas for improvement, alongside **career guidance and counselling** to support informed training and career decisions.

Special attention is given to older workers and other high-need groups who are facing significant barriers to learning. Through dedicated ILA schemes, the project aims to ensure that all can benefit from lifelong learning opportunities and enhance their skills and employability.

However, the lack of **systematic policy evaluations** makes it difficult to identify best practices and establish a hierarchy of effective policies. The implementation of measurement and evaluation systems is another important lever. **Monitoring key disaggregated data** such as in employment, training, internal mobility and

[93] Council recommendation on individual learning accounts to boost training of working-age adults - Consilium

engagement rates for employees over 50 enables specific objectives to be set and policies to be adjusted accordingly.

Finally, **support for reintegration after illness or prolonged absence** is another key element of these policies. Rehabilitation programmes, designed in coordination with health and social security services, aim to maintain or restore employability and prevent people from leaving the labour market permanently.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **BELGIUM**

Interregional Service for Economic and Social Welfare (IDEWE): Supporting employee reintegration through ability management training

IDEWE is a leading external service in Belgium specialising in workplace prevention and protection. It offers **a wide range of training programmes to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of workers of all ages.**

Some of their courses focus on **training employers to effectively guide workers who have been on long-term sick leave back to work**. These programmes are designed to help prevent long-term absenteeism, speed up an employee's recovery, and ensure their return to work is sustainable. This is particularly **beneficial for older workers, who may require specific accommodations to return to their jobs after an illness or injury**, ensuring their valuable experience is retained.

IDEWE's programmes can also support workers through age-related challenges. For example, IDEWE **provides training on creating menopause-friendly workplaces**, directly addressing a common health concern for many older female employees.



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Working beyond the statutory retirement age

With the double objective of ensuring the sustainability of pension systems and maintaining a dynamic labour market, public policies have opted for the extended participation of older workers, sometimes neglecting criteria that are necessary and essential for the successful inclusion of older workers.

One of the major trends observed in recent years **is the gradual increase in the statutory retirement age**. This change aims to extend working life and bring the actual retirement age closer to the statutory age. It is accompanied by intense debates, revealing tensions between financial imperatives, the willingness to sustain social systems, the reality of older workers in different sectors, and the social acceptability of reforms. Raising the retirement age has two possible implications for occupational risk prevention and work sustainability. Firstly, many occupational diseases and the effects of strenuous work develop over time due to cumulative exposure. Therefore, extending the number of years worked may **prolong exposure to hazards and increase the risk of developing occupational diseases** or having one's physical capacity affected by strenuous work. Secondly, the working capacity of people over the age of 65 and their **ability**

to continue working in physically or mentally strenuous conditions must be considered. For both of these implications of longer working lives, the importance of reducing exposure to risks and making work easier for all workers is clear. Finally, as careers are currently conceived, without the possibility of adjustments, breaks or adaptations to ensure a work-life balance, an increase in the number of years worked is often perceived as impossible and unthinkable by a sizable proportion of the working population.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **PORTUGAL (EUROPE)**

The Four-Day Workweek:
Evidence of well-being and productivity gains in Europe

The four-day workweek involves reducing the number of working days, typically from five to four, while ideally maintaining the same salary for fewer working hours. For the career sustainability and for today's older workers, this arrangement is particularly beneficial: it **reduces physical and mental fatigue, supports work-life balance, and can help extend healthy careers** by providing more time for rest and personal care.

Many European countries have implemented such initiatives at different levels and in different ways. **Portugal**, for instance, tested **the "100-80-100" model** in 2023, in which **employees receive 100% of their pay, work 80% of their usual hours, and are expected to maintain 100% of their productivity**. This pilot involved 39 companies and delivered very positive results: within three months, **negative mental health symptoms decreased significantly**, with anxiety falling by 21%, fatigue dropping by 23%, and sleep problems reducing by 19%. The share of workers struggling to balance work and personal life also fell from 50% to 16%. Moreover, 93% of workers expressed a desire to continue with the model, and most companies evaluated the experience positively, with 80 % of managers judging the financial impact as neutral or positive.

Maintaining 100% productivity is not easy. Some tasks cannot be reduced proportionally, such as interdependent work, coordination between teams, customer service, etc. There is also a **risk that reducing hours will lead to overload or stress if the remaining work is compressed without any margin**. These parameters must be considered at the local level when such an initiative is undertaken.

Other schemes of reduced workload initiatives have been developed in other member states. They can be found in this **Barometer's annex**. Together, they give an overview of how shorter workweeks can improve employee well-being and life satisfaction while maintaining, or even enhancing, productivity in diverse contexts.

Many Member States, including Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Malta, Spain and Sweden, are implementing various policies and practices such as offering **additional pension benefits** to those who work beyond the legal retirement age. Among them, **financial incentives** can play an important role. Working beyond retirement age is sometimes discouraged by the full taxation of additional income or the obligation to pay full social security contributions. Some Member States have begun to remove these obstacles or introduce thresholds below which additional income does not affect pension payments. Similarly, the possibility of obtaining a higher pension in the event of deferred retirement, the abolition of certain social security contributions for active pensioners and the restriction of early retirement conditions are important levers for encouraging people to continue working. These measures not only enhance the financial security of older workers but also ease the pressure on public finances.

At the same time, Member States are encouraging the development of **progressive retirement schemes**. These schemes offer a smoother transition between work and retirement, allowing workers to reduce their working hours while retaining their acquired rights. By adjusting employment conditions, introducing greater flexibility and removing administrative or tax obstacles to

combining work and retirement, policies aim to adapt working life to the needs of an ageing workforce.

Even after retirement, many professionals remain motivated to stay active on the labour market through forms of **volunteering that make use of their expertise**. This type of engagement not only allows valuable knowledge to be passed on to younger generations and working professionals but also provides a practical response to labour shortages in key areas such as health, education and skilled trades. By offering retirees the opportunity to remain active, recognised and useful, these schemes **strengthen intergenerational cohesion** and contribute to more sustainable human resource management. They demonstrate that the experience accumulated over a career can continue to benefit the economy and society, even outside the formal framework of employment.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **GERMANY**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE member

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen (BAGSO)

The Senior Expert Service (SES): Mobilising experienced professionals for skill transfers

The SES initiative **mobilises retired or on-leave experts and managers for voluntary assignments in all sectors of activity**. SES has been contributing since 1983 to the transfer of knowledge and the strengthening of skills, both in Germany and internationally. In Germany, the focus is on supporting young people in schools and vocational training, particularly through **the nationwide mentoring programme VerAplus**.

This initiative offers a concrete response to the challenges associated with labour shortages by **enabling companies to temporarily benefit from the expertise of experienced professionals**. It also promotes the **intergenerational transfer of knowledge** by valuing the experience of

older people while supporting young people in their professional careers. Finally, it helps to **keep older people active and engaged in society**.

Social dialogue and collective agreements

Social dialogue and collective agreements are essential levers for promoting the continued employment of older workers. By going beyond the minimum legal standards, these instruments offer **additional guarantees to older employees** and make it possible to adapt working conditions to their specific needs.

Collective agreements improve the rights of older workers in several ways. They can provide enhanced protection against dismissal, additional annual leave and age-related benefits. In some sectors, they establish specific schemes to extend working life, such as reduced working hours, gradual transitions to retirement, or partial continued employment combined with pension payments. These schemes offer valuable flexibility, particularly for employees in physically demanding occupations.

Social partners play a central role in this process. The **Autonomous Framework Agreement on Active Ageing and an Intergenerational Approach (AFA-AAIA)**[94], signed in 2017, illustrates this desire to anticipate demographic challenges. It encourages the creation of healthy and productive working environments, the intergenerational transfer of skills and the adaptation of organisations to enable older persons to remain active in good conditions.

Beyond European framework agreements, several sectoral initiatives demonstrate the social partners' capacity for innovation. Some countries have set up **demographic funds** that are either public or managed jointly by trade unions and employers' organisations. These funds support older workers and help companies fill vacant positions. This type of initiative contributes both to the well-

[94] Framework Agreement on Active Ageing and an Inter-generational approach | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA

being of older employees and to the competitiveness of companies, which are better able to manage the renewal of their workforce.

INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **BELGIUM**

Impulsion 55+:
Financial incentives to encourage older workers' retention

The Walloon Region offers the Impulsion 55+ scheme to encourage companies to hire or retain workers aged 55 and over. **Employers benefit from reduced social security contributions, which lowers labour costs and makes experienced employees more attractive**. The amount of the reduction depends on the worker's age: the older the employee, the greater the benefit for the employer. For older workers, this increases their chances of finding a job. They can therefore make the most of their experience, remain active on the job market, and enjoy more stability as they approach retirement.

Collective agreements also play a **protective role in case of corporate restructuring**. In several countries, they give older employees priority in redeployment schemes or provide for specific compensation in the event of collective redundancies.

Ultimately, social dialogue and collective agreements are dynamic tools that enable the challenges to be met through concerted solutions tailored to sectoral and national contexts. They facilitate the retention, protection and development of older workers' skills, contributing to the sustainability of employment in the European Union. Strengthening social dialogue on the employment of older workers is a major challenge for cohesion and collective performance. Social partners have a responsibility to tackle this issue, as the sustainability of older people's employment cannot be guaranteed by national legislation alone. The

ageing of the working population and labour shortages in several sectors require **concerted and ambitious strategies**. It is therefore necessary to **extend the coverage of collective agreements and demographic funds** so that all categories of older workers can benefit from appropriate measures.

At the same time, the practical implementation of progressive retirement schemes, reduced working hours and job adjustments must be strengthened, with managers being made more aware of the importance of these measures. Social partners must also develop continuing training programmes for older workers, incorporating digital, technical and environmental skills in particular, in order to maintain their right to work, their employability and promote internal mobility, specifically targeting older workers. Beyond the technical aspect, it is essential to **promote a genuine intergenerational corporate culture**, where the experience of older workers is valued, particularly through mentoring and knowledge transfer. Finally, for these measures to be truly effective, it is essential to **create monitoring tools and indicators** to measure the employment, training, mobility and satisfaction of older employees, to continuously adapt the policies and strategies put in place.



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INSPIRING PRACTICE FROM **THE NETHERLANDS**

Information collected in collaboration with AGE member

Older Women's Network Netherlands

The Healthcare and Social Welfare Forecasting Model (PMZW): A strategic workforce planning tool

PMZW (*Prognosemodel Zorg en Welzijn*) is a **strategic forecasting model** designed to help policymakers and organisations in the health and welfare sector monitor trends and adjust strategies proactively. It provides **detailed projections up to 2034**, helping policymakers **anticipate challenges such as an ageing workforce and labour shortages**.

The model considers factors like the ageing of professionals (nearly 25% are 55 or older), retirements, and demographic changes affecting care demand. This allows **identification of occupations under pressure, regions at risk of shortages, and guidance for recruitment and retention policies**, particularly for older employees. It also tracks training and mobility, informing strategies for continuing education and enabling older workers to shift into less physical or mentoring roles.

In addition, the PMZW's interactive interface **allows users to create custom scenarios by adjusting variables**, such as retirement rates and training levels, which strengthens the ability of institutions to test the impact of different policies and make decisions based on reliable and up-to-date data.

Recommendations

Recognise the value and needs of older workers in employment policies

- **Recognise and value the contribution of older workers** in employment policies, highlighting their experience, expertise and role in skills transfer
- **Develop proactive social policies** from the moment workers enter the labour market, to promote sustainable, qualitative and inclusive career paths for workers throughout their lives
- Fully integrate the ageing dimension into the **European Employment Strategy** and in recent or forthcoming initiatives such as the **Quality Jobs Roadmap** and the **new Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights**
- Strengthen the monitoring and revision of the **Employment Equality Directive** to ensure stronger protection against age discrimination in the workplace, thereby enabling older workers to remain active longer if they wish so

Inclusive labour market strategies

- **Adopt a person-centred approach** that recognise the diversity of backgrounds and situations among older workers, considering gender, disability, origin and migration status
- **Train managers** to recognise and tackle ageism and value the richness of generational diversity within teams
- **Revise the Work-Life Balance Directive** to expand the rights of carers (more days off, minimum pay standards, protection against dismissal or forced early retirement), particularly for older women who often take on these responsibilities
- **Create age-friendly work environments** through ergonomics, psychosocial risk prevention and more sustainable career management practices
- **Adapt working conditions** in sectors under pressure, such as health, construction and long-term care to make them more attractive and support the retention of experienced workers

Support for older unemployed

- **Develop integrated reintegration programmes** combining training, personalised support, coaching and job search assistance
- Strengthen the role of the **European network of public employment services** and improve the implementation of **the Recommendation on long-term unemployment** to respond more effectively to the needs of unemployed older people, with a targeted support for older women
- **Create stronger legal mechanisms** to better protect workers against age-related dismissals
- **Develop financial incentives** for hiring older workers, inspired by national examples, while ensuring the sustainability and stability of employment beyond temporary aid
- **Set up vocational rehabilitation programmes** with health services to support a return to work after a period of inactivity due to health reasons
- **Train employers to effectively support a return to work** after illness or accident by adapting jobs and conditions for returning to work

Retention and career development

- **Introduce mid-career reviews and flexible career paths** to anticipate transitions, highlight acquired skills and provide new professional opportunities
- **Promote intergenerational mentoring** and innovative models such as job sharing or skills exchange between generations, to value and build on the experience of older workers and strengthen knowledge transfer
- **Adapt workstations** and improve the prevention of physical and psychosocial risks, with a focus on quality of life at work
- **Develop sector-specific retraining** and skills management schemes to anticipate mass retirements, particularly in sectors under pressure
- **Encourage appropriate forms of flexibility** (voluntary part-time work, teleworking, phased retirement) to facilitate end-of-career arrangements and a smooth transition to retirement

- **Remove financial disincentives** to working beyond the legal age and introduce tax and social incentives to support voluntary continued employment
- **Promote the involvement of pensioners** through forms of professional or volunteering activities in key sectors such as health, education and crafts

Strengthen social dialogue

- **Extend the coverage of collective agreements** to more sectors and include specific provisions for older workers (voluntary part-time work, protection against dismissal, adapted working conditions)
- **Promote the creation of demographic funds and sectoral initiatives** to support training, job adaptation and the continued employment of older workers
- **Develop monitoring tools integrated into collective agreements** to assess the impact of measures on employment, continuing training and satisfaction among the over-55s

Annexes – Inspiring practices

Belgium

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Vlaamse Ouderenraad

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital transition* & *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

Skill Centres in Wallonia: Opportunities for professionals over 50

In Wallonia, there are currently **22 Skill Centres**, which offer specialised training in **13 strategic fields of activity** such as IT, mechanics, energy, and healthcare, closely aligned with the needs of local businesses. These centres focus on practical, hands-on skills, making them particularly useful for individuals over 50 who wish to update their expertise, learn new technologies, or transition to a different profession.

Cyprus

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Cyprus Third Age Observatory

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition*

Cyprus Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA): Labour market insights and tailored skills

The Cyprus Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) is a semi-government organisation that has been operating for over 20 years in **addressing unemployment issues and reducing skill gaps** between job seekers and the needs of the labour market.

The HRDA provides **free, targeted training programs for all age groups**, including courses in digital and green skills as part of the **Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan (2021-2026)**, as well as specific programs for unemployed individuals. It also **conducts detailed labour market forecasts**, broken down by both sectors of economic activity and occupational categories, covering 309 occupations. These insights, along with analytical data, employment trends, and occupational indexes, are published on the HRDA website to facilitate the quick identification of job opportunities.

Adult Education Centres in Cyprus: Lifelong learning for all

In Cyprus, Adult Education Centres are public institutions managed by the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Youth, **offering a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities for adults**. These centres aim to **promote social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development, and professional skills**. They provide courses in foreign languages, IT and computer skills, general culture, practical skills such as gardening and arts, and personal development areas like sign language or Braille.

Classes are organised flexibly, taking place in primary and secondary schools or other suitable venues, and are offered at different times of the day to accommodate participants' schedules. The initiative is open to anyone over 15 years old, with **affordable fees and exemptions for older adults** or individuals with significant disabilities. By providing accessible, structured, and diverse educational opportunities, **Adult Education Centres contribute to lifelong learning and empower citizens to develop both personally and professionally**.

The Czech Republic

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Profesni Krizovatky

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition* & *Chapter 2 – Green Transition*

Czech Requalification and Skills Development Portal: Digital and green competencies for the workforce

The Czech Labour Office's webpage (*Nabídka rekvalifikací a vzdělávacích kurzů*) is an **official portal offering a catalogue of retraining and educational programmes** under the state requalification system. It serves jobseekers, employees, and anyone wishing to improve their skills or change professions by providing access to accredited training, making skill development accessible and responsive to labour market needs.

The portal **emphasises digitalisation training**, covering areas such as basic and advanced IT skills, digital business tools, data analysis, online marketing, ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems, and digital process management. These courses help participants remain competitive in a technology-driven economy.

It also provides **training in green competencies**, supporting the ecological transition and addressing growing demand for sustainability skills. Topics include environmental management, sustainable production, ESG (environmental, social, governance) certification, and green building practices, preparing the workforce for emerging green jobs and industries.

Participants may receive financial support for course fees and, in some cases, additional costs such as transportation or study materials. Registered jobseekers typically continue receiving unemployment benefits while attending approved courses. This combination of accessible training, digital and green skills, and financial support makes the portal a valuable tool for

older workers as it gives them the means to be fully included socially and professionally.

Working Conditions and Sustainable Work (2025): Keeping older workers engaged

The Labour Office has **launched multiple projects that support people over 50 years old.**

- The **"Age is not a barrier" project** (*Věk není překážkou*, VNP) supports people aged 55 and over in staying active in the labour market. Its goal is to increase employment, strengthen resilience to labour market changes, and promote active aging and professional mobility in the later stages of careers. The project **focuses on helping older adults adapt to new roles, continue their careers, and overcome barriers to employment**. Participants receive **individual and group counselling**, including career guidance and motivational activities, tailored to their skills and needs. The project also offers **retraining and professional qualification programmes** to improve employability and supports **job placement** through various tools like subsidised jobs, shared work, and self-employment initiatives. Accompanying measures, such as travel reimbursement, childcare support, or commuting allowances, help participants fully engage in the programme and maintain employment.

- Through the European Social Fund (ESF), the Labour Office **implemented projects at the regional level**, the aim of which is to comprehensively address the situation of job seekers aged 50+ and to maximise their active participation in the labour market through education. **Examples of such projects are Chances for 50+ in the Pilsen Region, 50 PLUS in the South Moravian Region, or We are starting after 50 in the Central Bohemian Region.** These projects usually combined consultancy,

training, retraining courses and often also a contribution to the employer when hiring employees from this age group.

- Until September 2025, the Employment Office organises a programme **Digi for a company** **aiming at improving digital abilities of participating employees and self-employed**. The programme provides courses for digital education and requalification courses to support the competitiveness and adaptability of the labour force. This is a general programme that doesn't only target older employees.

- **Project Jsem v kurzu** by the Employment Office **provides subsidies to support requalification of employees**. Employees, entrepreneurs, unemployed or students can look and apply for requalification courses. The courses cover several areas including accounting, HR, management, and marketing.

- **Project POVEZ II**, co-financed by the ESF, sought to increase the adaptability of the workforce to the situation in the market, increase its flexibility by matching the skills and qualifications demanded and offered, and tried to motivate employers to invest in employee education. As part of the project, employers received a contribution to the education of their employees and reimbursement of their wages for the duration of the training with advantages for employees aged over 54. The project ran until December 2023.

55+ Friendly Employer competition: Celebrating inclusive workplace environments

The 55+ Friendly Employer competition (*Společnost přátelská k zaměstnávání osob 55+*) is an annual initiative by the **Hradec Králové Region's Employment Pact**. It **recognises organisations that actively support the employment and well-being of workers aged 55 and older**.

By **showcasing age-friendly practices**, it promotes inclusive labour markets, encourages others to follow suit, and aligns with European and Czech efforts to keep experienced workers engaged and reduce age discrimination.

Participation is open to private companies, public institutions, and non-profits operating in the Hradec Králové Region. Categories for small, medium, and large companies ensure fair comparison among peers. Evaluation focuses on **two criteria: human resources strategy** (30 percent), such as age-management policies or leadership training, **and benefits for employees over 55** (70 percent), including flexible work, reskilling opportunities, task adaptation, and intergenerational cooperation. Employers who accommodate caregiving duties or provide clear paths for older workers to stay active also receive special recognition.

Operational Programme Employment Plus (2021-2027): Building an age-inclusive labour market

With this programme, the Czech Republic is developing an integrated approach to addressing demographic challenges. It **recognises that older people can help the labour market cope with workforce decline**. It highlights the need to **promote a healthy working environment adapted to older people and new work organisation practices**. This includes training for older workers, support for age management, and flexible forms of employment which do not lead to the precariousness of work.

The response to demographic ageing is **reflected in full accordance with the Strategic Framework for Preparing for an Ageing Society 2020-2025, which aims to enhance lifelong learning to support competencies needed for future employment of older adults**. It precises that measures should be developed to support older workers amidst the evolving industrial

landscape, including legislative changes and new tools aimed at retaining them in the workforce.

Denmark

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member DaneAge

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 3 - Labour Shortages*

Adult and Continuing Education programme: Publicly funded adult lifelong learning

The Adult and Continuing Education (*Voksen- og EfterUddannelse*, VEU) is a **key part of the Denmark's lifelong learning strategy**, helping adults update their skills, gain qualifications, or retrain for new jobs. The system serves labour market needs while offering personal and professional growth. Older adults are fully included, often **using VEU to stay active in the workforce or shift careers**, and they **benefit from flexible options and recognition of prior experience**, which can shorten study time.

VEU has several components, including **Labour Market Training Programmes** (*ArbejdsMarkedsUddannelser*, AMU) offering vocational training focused on practical, job-related skills and **Basic Vocational Adult Education** (*Grundlæggende VoksenUddannelse*, GVU) for adults with work experience but no formal vocational certificate, to obtain recognised qualifications. **Funding for these courses is primarily provided by the Danish state**, keeping costs low, and employers may also receive grants or wage reimbursement when supporting employees, making VEU attractive for workforce development.

Finland

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member The Union for Senior Services (VALLI) & Finnish Pensioners' Federation

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 3 - Labour Shortages*

Government Report on the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Targeted solutions for an ageing population

The Finnish's report is a comprehensive national review that **evaluates the country's progress towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals**. It not only outlines achievements and remaining challenges but also key policies, programmes, and stakeholder engagement that drive sustainable development. The report presents future plans and commitments to accelerate progress, serving as a transparent and accountable tool for sharing best practices.

A central focus is demographic change. An ageing population is driving higher care, pension, and health costs, while a shrinking workforce reduces the tax base. To respond, **the government aims to improve wellbeing at work, raise productivity, attract skilled immigrants, and strengthen the functional capacity of older people.** Special measures target groups facing disadvantages, including immigrants, low-skilled workers, older employees, and people with impaired work capacity. Support for the bottom 40 percent of income earners is reinforced through employment policies that make work more rewarding. Finally, **new quality recommendations** (2024–2027) will improve dignity and services for older people.

France

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members Union Française des Retraités & Fédération Nationale des Associations des Retraités (FNAR) & Union des Anciens du Groupe BP & Fédération des particuliers employeurs de France

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 2 – Green Transition* & *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

The National Service for Occupational Health and Prevention (SPSTN): Dedicated support for domestic workers

The National Service for Occupational Health and Prevention (*Service de Prévention et de Santé au Travail National*, SPSTN) was **created to cover employees in the home-employment sector**. Since January 2025, it has been **the reference body for the sector**. The system is financed by a new Health at Work Contribution, paid by private employers and set at 2.7% of gross salary, capped at five euros per payslip each month.

The SPSTN's main role is to **provide health monitoring** through required medical visits, including initial check-ups, follow-ups after illness or injury, and regular preventive appointments. This helps detect health problems early, supports reintegration into work, and maintains employees' capacity to stay active. It also works to **prevent risks specific to domestic work**, such as physical strain, chemical exposure, or stress. Telehealth consultations and simplified procedures make access easier for workers with multiple employers or dispersed workplaces. The service also **helps prevent professional exclusion and ensures equal coverage across France**. For older workers, it plays a key role by monitoring age-related health issues, promoting safe conditions, and supporting them to stay active and employed longer.

France Emploi Domicile:
A comprehensive portal for home employment

France Emploi Domicile, launched in 2023, is an **online portal** developed by the Federation of Private Employers of France (*Fédération des Particuliers Employeurs de France*, FEPEM) and the trade unions representing the home employment sector. This joint initiative highlights the value of a sector offering strong career prospects and opportunities for professional development, **providing private employers, employees, and the public, reliable and transparent information, as well as simplified access to their rights and services**.

The platform offers:

- **Educational content** explaining how home-based employment works, the necessary administrative steps, and updates on legal and tax matters.
- **Practical tools** such as cost simulators, contract generators, document templates, job descriptions, thematic guides, and a collective agreement available in five languages.
- **Dedicated services** including legal consultations, information on access to professional training, retirement, insurance, and discounted leisure offers for employees.

In addition, **more than 400 contact points across the country provide local information** to all citizens. This territorial network continues to grow, strengthened by partnerships between FEPEM, the sector, and numerous organisations hosting the **France Services** (a government initiative making it easier for citizens to access a wide range of administrative and public services).

"Engaging Your Company to Employ Workers over 50":
A practical guide from the French Ministry of Labour and Employment

This practical guide is designed to **help business leaders from all sectors develop an effective and sustainable human resources strategy for employees aged 50 and older**. Its purpose is to encourage companies to recognise the value of experienced workers and to adapt their practices so that they remain fully integrated, motivated, and supported throughout their careers. The guide provides **practical recommendations and tools** for managers, HR teams, and business owners who want to strengthen their workforce while promoting fairness and diversity.

Key areas covered in the guide include:

- Helping companies challenge age-related stereotypes and providing strategies for hiring experienced workers.
- Supporting skills development and career transitions of older workers.
- Adapting work conditions to the specific needs of older workers to protect their health and improve their quality of life.
- Encouraging older employees to mentor experienced job seekers or colleagues.

Agirc-Arrco:
Preparing for retirement with complementary pension training

Agirc-Arrco is the **mandatory complementary pension fund for private-sector employees in France**. It converts the contributions paid by employers and employees into points, which are then turned into a pension that supplements the basic state retirement.

To help employees prepare for this stage of life, Agirc-Arrco **offers training programmes aimed at people approaching retirement**, usually two to

three years beforehand. These sessions clarify the administrative steps to take, the financial implications, and the lifestyle changes to expect, while also covering personal aspects such as health, free time, personal projects, and social relationships. Two formats are available: a one-day course covering the essentials, and a two-day course for more in-depth preparation. These programmes can be delivered in person or online, within a single company or among several companies, with no prerequisites, **enabling participants to better understand their rights and approach retirement with confidence**.

Greece

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member 50+ Hellas

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition*

Germany

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen (BAGSO)

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition* & *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

Hungary

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Gerontology Science Coordination Center

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

Senior University programme at John von Neumann University: Lifelong learning through intergenerational courses

Since September 2022, the Senior University programme at John von Neumann University has welcomed older adults into the academic community. **Selected courses designed for individuals over 50 are offered free of charge.** The programme covers a wide range of subjects, including European Union studies, philosophy, economic history, and natural resources. This initiative promotes cultural engagement, social interaction, and stronger connections between generations on campus. **By contributing their insights and life experiences, older participants enrich discussions and foster dynamic, multi-generational dialogue.**

This initiative aligns John von Neumann University with the **Age-Friendly University Global Network**, **which promotes inclusive education for older learners worldwide**. By participating in the network, the university joins a global effort to make higher education a space where all ages can learn and grow together.

Ireland

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Active Retirement Ireland

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition* & *Chapter 2 – Green Transition*

Skillnet Ireland:
Driving workforce development, digital skills, and green tech innovation

Skillnet Ireland is a **government-funded agency supporting workforce learning and development across Ireland**. It operates through networks of businesses, industry groups, and professional bodies, allowing companies to pool resources and access training tailored to their sector's needs. This collaborative approach **drives innovation, productivity, and lifelong learning, helping employees stay competitive throughout their careers**. Older workers, in particular, benefit from upskilling opportunities that keep their skills current and relevant in a rapidly changing labour market.

Skillnet Ireland works across a wide range of industries, including IT, manufacturing, healthcare, and the creative sector. Employers help shape practical, relevant training, often delivered in partnership with higher education institutions and accredited providers. The organisation places strong **emphasis on digital skills**, offering programmes in data analytics, cybersecurity, cloud computing, AI, software development, and digital marketing, helping employees adopt new technologies and modernise operations.

One notable network is **Green Tech Skillnet, which focuses on renewable energy and green technologies**. It provides specialised training in wind and solar energy, sustainable construction, energy efficiency, and environmental compliance, equipping professionals for Ireland's transition to a low-carbon economy and supporting sustainable growth.

Digital Skills for Citizens Programme: Building digital confidence for all

The Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (DCCAE) is committed to **helping people get online and take full advantage of the opportunities the internet offers**. In a connected society, digital skills are essential to unlocking social and economic potential. Through the Digital Skills for Citizens Programme, the Minister for DCCAE **allocated €2.2 million in 2019 to 12 organisations**. Participants receive **10 hours of free classroom training** and classes are available across multiple locations in all four provinces, making training accessible to everyone. The programme covers essential digital skills and is flexible to meet the needs of trainees. For example, it **can help jobseekers respond effectively to employment opportunities or assist employees in using new technologies confidently in the workplace**.

National Just Transition Fund (JTF): Driving regional transition in the Irish Midlands

The National Just Transition Fund (JTF), launched in 2020, is a key part of the Government's plan to **help the Midlands region move towards a low-carbon economy**. It focused on the Midlands because the area was hardest hit by the planned end of peat harvesting and the closure of peat-fired power stations. The fund's priority is to retrain workers and create sustainable jobs in green enterprise.

In total, **56 projects** from businesses, local authorities and community groups were selected, representing ambitious efforts to make the region a greener and more attractive place to live and work. With **€22.1 million in grants**, these projects are **expected to leverage €15 million in additional**

investment and create around 178 direct and 999 indirect jobs. By **complementing EU Just Transition Fund resources**, the national JTF helps ensure that regional projects are embedded in the broader European framework for a fair and sustainable transition.

Italy

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members Associazione nazionale pensionati Cia Agricoltori Italiani & SPI CGIL & Associazione Lavoro over 40 & Associazione Nazionale Anziani e Pensionati (ANAP)

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 2 – Green Transition* & *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

New Skills Fund: Driving Italy's workforce for a green and digital future

The New Skills Fund (*Fondo Nuove Competenze*, FNC) is an Italian public fund. **The third edition (FNC 3)**, launched in early 2025, **focuses on supporting companies' digital and green transitions**, fostering new employment opportunities, and promoting collaboration among businesses. With a **total allocation of €1.049 billion, it reimburses employers for up to 60% of salary costs (100% for unemployed or seasonal workers)**, plus social security contributions, when employees' working hours are redirected to certified training. FNC 3 programmes cover energy efficiency, sustainable production, circular economy practices, environmental management systems, and digital technologies that support these areas.

Malta

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member National Association of Pensioners

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 2 – Green Transition*

Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+: Advancing education for all ages

The strategy outlines **measures to modernise the Czech education system** and equip citizens with skills, knowledge and competencies for personal, social and professional success. It **promotes lifelong learning as a core principle, advocating independent learning** through formal, non-formal and informal education to help individuals adapt to social, technological and environmental changes.

The strategy calls for continuing education for adults and stable support for organisations providing learning opportunities, including funding, staff training, and volunteering initiatives. It also **encourages recognising skills acquired outside formal schooling** through portfolios, digital badges, online courses, and extracurricular programmes, aiming to use resources efficiently, reduce administrative burdens, and help individuals develop their full potential in a supportive and motivating environment.

The strategy **emphasises developing environmental and digital competences**, equipping individuals to address environmental challenges, contribute to sustainable development, apply green skills, and use digital tools responsibly. Key areas include climate awareness, resource management, sustainable practices, digital literacy, computational thinking, online safety, content creation, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, while supporting educators in integrating these competences into their teaching.

National Employment Policy 2021–2030: Strategies for an inclusive and age-responsive workforce

Malta's strategic framework **aims at enhancing the quality and inclusivity of the labour market**. The country is actively addressing the challenges of an ageing population through **policies designed to retain older workers**. Key measures include promoting lifelong learning and vocational training, particularly in IT and language skills. Policies also focus on improving workplace conditions, occupational health, and adapting employment services to meet the needs of older workers. Malta's retired population is also viewed as a valuable resource for mentoring and training younger workers.

The Netherlands

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Older Women's Network Netherlands

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition* & *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

Green Deal on Sustainable Healthcare 3.0: Building a climate-smart healthcare workforce

The Green Deal on Sustainable Healthcare 3.0, launched in 2022, places a strong focus on improving knowledge and awareness of sustainability and climate change within the healthcare sector. A key effort of this programme is the **integration of planetary health, the connection between human health and the environment, into university medical curricula**. By doing so, future doctors and nurses are trained to consider the environmental impact of their decisions and to promote sustainable practices in their professional work. The programme also extends these principles to primary

care practices, ensuring that **sustainability becomes part of everyday healthcare delivery**.

This initiative is part of the broader **goal of "green skills for a sustainable future"**. In this context, it aims to build a climate-smart health and care workforce: professionals who understand environmental issues, can reduce healthcare's ecological footprint, and are prepared to respond effectively to climate-related health challenges.

Poland

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members BONUM VITAE Foundation & Alzheimer Polska

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 3 - Labour Shortages*

The "Intergenerational School" digital project: Fostering intergenerational learning for digital literacy

Launched in November 2024, the Intergenerational School is a nationwide competition open to primary and secondary schools connected to the National Education Network. The initiative encourages schools to **engage students in organising digital literacy workshops for older people**. These workshops aim to support older people in navigating technology while fostering dialogue and solidarity between generations. Beyond teaching digital skills, the programme seeks to reduce loneliness among older people and strengthen community ties. This could also be **a way for older people to improve their professional competencies**.

Each participating school designs and delivers workshops covering topics such as internet safety, online scams, entertainment, and the use of technology in daily life. Teachers receive support through webinars and lesson plans prepared by experts, while students act as facilitators and

mentors. Schools earn points for workshop implementation, engagement, and reporting, with the top four schools from each region awarded mobile computer labs and educational gift cards. In this way, the Intergenerational School turns classrooms into spaces of integration where knowledge is shared both ways and **digital inclusion becomes a bridge between generations**.

Portugal

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Associação de Aposentados, Pensionistas e Reformados

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition* & *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

Romania

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member Federația Națională Omenia a Caselor de Ajutor Reciproc ale Pensionarilor din România

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition*

National Strategy for Adult Education 2024–2027: Advancing lifelong learning and inclusive workforce participation

Romania's strategy **frames lifelong learning as vital for economic resilience, social cohesion and personal growth**. It promotes flexible, inclusive options, such as modular courses, micro-credentials, transferable credits and individual learning accounts, so adults can upskill, reskill or change careers throughout their lives. Public campaigns and partnerships between government, employers, providers and communities are encouraged to align training with labour market needs and support green and digital transitions.

By 2027, Romania aims to more than double adult participation in lifelong learning, which needs the participation of older people. The strategy **calls for active ageing measures for older workers**, retraining opportunities, adult apprenticeships and workplace learning cultures that value prior experience. **Incentives for employers and flexible formats** such as part-time or online learning are recommended to make participation easier, especially for those balancing work and family duties.

Spain

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Members Confederación Española de Organizaciones de Mayores & Plataforma 50 & Plataforma de Mayores Pensionistas

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 1 – Digital Transition* & *Chapter 2 – Green Transition*

EmancipaTIC: Free digital training and legal assistance

EmancipaTIC is an NGO dedicated to **bridging the digital divide and fostering technological autonomy** among older adults and groups at risk of exclusion. Its mission is to **recognise and value the contributions of older people, including those who wants to remain or re-enter the labour market**. The organisation promotes the use of today's digital tools, prepare for tomorrow's digital challenges, and make informed choices about how they wish to live this stage of life.

To achieve these goals, EmancipaTIC provides accessible digital training that enhances quality of life, opens new opportunities, and encourages participation in society. Training programmes include **customised technology courses designed for both public and private organisations** that support older adults. In addition, the NGO offers **free legal advice** on a wide range of topics related to law, older people's rights, and new

technologies, fields in which the organisation has developed strong expertise.

CEOMA Friendly Company: Promoting age-friendly workplaces

The Spanish Confederation of Older People's Organisation (CEOMA) is **dedicated to defending the rights and well-being of older adults in Spain**. It works to promote active and healthy ageing, social inclusion, and the recognition of older people as an integral part of society.

The CEOMA Friendly Company (*Empresa Amigable*) initiative **recognizes companies promoting inclusion, respect, and appreciation of older people after a specialised evaluation**. The project guides companies in identifying strengths and areas for improvement in strategies for older customers and employees, including generational diversity, job adaptation, training, work-life balance, and participation. This **benefits older workers by fostering supportive workplaces** that accommodate their needs, value their experience, and offer opportunities for growth and engagement. **Companies that pass the assessment receive accreditation as age-friendly businesses**, a seal of quality and social responsibility that enhances their image, reputation, and competitiveness. Accredited companies also join a network committed to active and healthy ageing, gaining access to resources, guidance, and best practices.

CEOMA training programmes: Free opportunities for the professional development of older people

The Spanish Confederation of Older People's Organisation (CEOMA) is **dedicated to defending the rights and well-being of older adults in Spain**. It works to promote active and healthy ageing, social inclusion, and

the recognition of older people as an integral part of society. In 2025, with support from the Institute for the Elderly and Social Services (IMSERSO), CEOMA is offering **free training programmes for older people, helping them enhance both personal and professional skills**. They provide sessions in multiple Spanish cities with flexible online options for better accommodation.

- The **Entrepreneurship Programme** (*Programa Emprende Con CEOMA*) encourages older people to use their life experience to explore entrepreneurship or mentoring opportunities. Targeted at people aged 50 and over, it **provides practical tools for starting projects, consulting, or mentoring others**, enabling participants to apply skills in real-world professional contexts.

- The **CEOMA Network Programme** (Programa Red CEOMA) **promotes collaboration and community building among older adults**. Aimed at participants aged 65 and over, it offers face-to-face workshops on social networks and digital tools, plus online courses and workshops. That way, older people can expand professional connections, collaborate on projects, and explore career opportunities.

- The **CEOMA Digital Programme** (Programa CEOMA Digital) **helps older people navigate the digital world confidently**, promoting the use of modern technologies and social networks. Aimed at people aged 65 and older, it includes courses in basic digital competence, cybersecurity awareness, and social media use.

The Age-Friendly Toolkit:
Promoting inclusive ageing and active engagement

The Age-Friendly Toolkit project **promotes the exchange of knowledge between age-friendly cities, older people's organisations, and training experts**. Its main goal was to define the professional profile of **"Reference Professional for Inclusive Ageing in Age-Friendly Cities"**, which formed the basis for developing open educational resources on ageing strategies within participating countries.

As a result, **the Age Friendly Toolkit Web-App was created to enhance professionals' skills**. The app features five modules with theoretical, practical, and multimedia content aligned with the World Health Organisation's key indicators, covering areas such as social participation and inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and health and community support services. ***Module 4: Employment and Civic Engagement*** **emphasises that retirement does not mark the end of active involvement in the labour market.** Learners completing this module acquire skills to identify the benefits of active engagement and manage resources to support older people's employment.

Plataforma50: Training companies for the silver economy

Plataforma50 is a social consultancy in the Basque Country specialising in the silver economy. It **helps companies and public organisations turn demographic aging into opportunities** by offering age management, territorial development, and professional training. Its services guide clients to adapt strategies, products, and services to meet the expectations of an active and economically influential older population.

Plataforma50 **offers age management strategies for companies, improving conditions for older workers** through workplace adaptations, continuous training, flexible schedules, remote work, and job rotation. These efforts promote inclusion, protect health, and value experience. For instance, the **Senior Talent Training** **focuses on aligning multigenerational talent with organisational goals**, optimising older people's engagement, and addressing disengagement and knowledge transfer responsibly.

Prometeo Senior Steam:
Supporting career development of older professionals

Prometeo Senior Steam is a professional development initiative designed in conjunction with the **Official Association of Industrial Engineers of Bizkaia (COIIB)** and supported by the Provincial Council of Bizkaia and the Basque Government. It **supports individuals and organisations in adapting to changing career and workforce dynamics**, and provides guidance, tools, and resources to enhance professional growth, promote lifelong learning, and address the challenges of an aging workforce.

Prometeo **assists professionals over 45 in leading their own career development** by encouraging reflection on their interests, abilities, and opportunities, helping them make informed decisions about their future. It innovates in job training by offering **territorialised information and support** throughout the second cycle of working life. For companies, Prometeo assists in talent management, turning demographic challenges into opportunities through analysis, identification of barriers, and transitional strategies. Additionally, it **explores new models to highlight the role of older workers**, promoting sustainable employment, entrepreneurship, and meaningful engagement for experienced professionals.

The InterGenic project:
Intergenerational training exchange to combat ageism

The InterGenic project is an innovative initiative led by the Cuatroochenta Chair in Spain, **aimed at fostering intergenerational learning to address social, digital, and ecological challenges**. Its core purpose is to create a structured framework where younger and older generations can exchange knowledge and skills, promoting mutual understanding and collaboration.

A key element of InterGenic is its **mentorship model**, where both youth and older participants take on the roles of mentors and learners. **Young participants are trained to teach digital competencies**, helping older generations improve their technological skills. Conversely, **older participants share their expertise in traditional and sustainable practices**, allowing younger participants to learn from real-world experience. This reciprocal approach ensures that knowledge flows in both directions, maximising the benefits for all involved.

United Kingdom

Information collected in collaboration with AGE Member International Longevity Centre UK

Other inspiring practices available in *Chapter 2 – Green Transition* & *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*

The UK government website:
A starting point to find work at 50 plus

A dedicated section on the country's official website exists to support adults over 50 who are looking to re-enter the workforce or explore a career

change. It **offers a range of practical resources**, including pages to **help users understand their career options**, **improve their CV** and **interview skills**, and **take a Midlife MOT** to assess their work, wealth, and wellbeing. The section also provides **tailored guidance for those balancing work with caring responsibilities**, as well as **advice and support related to menopause in the workplace**.

There are also **several initiatives** aiming to make it easier for workers to access training, reskilling, and job opportunities, while helping employers address skills shortages:

- **Apprenticeships**, open for all ages, offer on-the-job training, enabling individuals to gain practical skills while earning a wage.
- **Skills Bootcamps** are free, flexible courses lasting up to 16 weeks, designed with employers to teach in-demand skills in areas such as digital technology, construction, engineering, and green industries.
- **Sector-based work academy programme (SWAPS)** combine work experience, skills training, and employability support to help jobseekers build confidence, improve CVs, and increase their chances of securing a role in sectors like care, construction, or warehousing.

The Digital Champion Programme: Bridging the digital divide for older people

The Digital Champion Programme, supported by **Age UK** and **Age Cymru**, **aims to tackle digital exclusion by recruiting and training Digital Champion volunteers who will support older people to improve their digital skills**, as well as providing loan technology to those without access. The programme will be **delivered across 2 cohorts, each lasting 18 months between 2022 and 2026**. By 2026, the Digital Champion Programme will have recruited and trained 480 volunteer Digital Champions, delivered awareness-raising activities to 96,000 older people to inspire and

motivate them to get online, loaned technology to approximately 3,000 older people, and **assisted 12,000 older persons through digital skills sessions** to improve their digital confidence and develop new digital skills.

Report on Lifelong learning in the reskilling era (2025): From luxury to necessity

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), a leading professional body for human resource management and people development, highlights in its latest report that **continuous learning has become essential as rapid technological advances and the shift towards a low-carbon economy transform the world of work**. Automation, AI, and green innovation are driving demand for both technical expertise and human-centred capabilities, making lifelong learning a cornerstone of future employability.

The report emphasises that **demographic trends, skills forecasts, and persistent learning gaps call for stronger support to help older workers reskill and upskill**. Despite projections showing that UK employment will grow by 7.4% by 2035, many workers, and particularly those who are older, lower-income, or less qualified, remain less likely to participate in learning due to time constraints, financial barriers, and limited access to support. To address these challenges, **the CIPD advocates for tailored, inclusive learning opportunities that ensure all individuals can adapt to evolving job requirements**. Supporting older workers to remain employable, productive, and engaged will be key to sustaining a resilient and inclusive labour market in the reskilling era.

Europe

The Four-Day Workweek: Evidence of well-being and productivity gains in Europe

The four-day workweek involves **reducing the number of working days, typically from five to four, while ideally maintaining the same salary for fewer working hours**. For older workers, this arrangement is particularly beneficial: it **reduces physical and mental fatigue, supports work-life balance, and can help extend healthy careers** by providing more time for rest and personal care.

While this kind of initiative has been detailed in *Chapter 3 – Labour Shortages*, **many other European countries have implemented such initiatives** at different levels and in different ways:

- **In Spain**, the city of Valencia conducted an experiment from April 10 to May 7, 2023. The outcomes were highly encouraging: stress levels were reduced by 35 %, sleep quality improved for 64 % of participants, 72 % reported spending more time with friends, traffic decreased by 9.5 %, and nitrogen dioxide levels dropped by 58 %.

- **In Iceland**, between 2015 and 2019, a programme reduced working hours for 2,500 public sector employees. The results showed that productivity remained stable or even increased, while employee well-being significantly improved, demonstrating that shorter workweeks can be successfully implemented without harming performance.

- **In the United Kingdom**, a six-month trial conducted in 2022 involved 61 companies and 3,300 employees. At the end of the trial, 92 % of participating companies decided to maintain the four-day workweek, reporting improvements in employee well-being and productivity.

EU OSHA Campaign 2023-2025:
Safe and healthy work in the digital age

On its website, the EU OSHA provides **a booklet showcasing the awarded and commended examples of the 16th Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards competition**, which recognises successful prevention and management of risks linked to digitalisation in the workplace. These practices can be particularly beneficial for older workers engaged in physical or demanding tasks, helping to ensure safer and more supportive working conditions. In addition, the examples presented could help any organisation by tailoring aspects of the interventions described to their individual characteristics and needs. **Here are some examples of inspiring practices from the booklet:**

- **The Netherlands:** Volandis is a Dutch non-profit organisation that has developed the Prevention Care Portal, a one-stop shop for access to the medical records of workers in the construction and infrastructure sector. As a result, doctors, OSH services and workers themselves can easily access, transfer and build on workers' personal medical files in a uniform way.

- **Ireland:** Manually unloading of stacked 60 kg barrels from containers put operators at Midleton Distillery in Ireland at high risk of musculoskeletal injury. With workers' health and safety as top priority, the company invested in a tailored autonomous mobile robot with AI vision to minimise manual handling while keeping a human-in-command approach. As a result, the barrel unloading process has seen a 100 % reduction in accidents.

- **Czech Republic:** Police staff at the Czech Ministry of the Interior who perform computer-based services 24 hours a day are prone to work-related vision issues, stress and musculoskeletal disorders. As such, the

Ministry assigned a Special Methodology Unit in its Service Facility to develop a holistic healthcare programme for its staff. The resulting VISIO project covers neuro-visual training, stress management, nutritional counselling and physical exercise.

The BeWell project:
Enhancing skills and well-being in the European health workforce

The BeWell project is a collaborative initiative running from July 2022 to June 2026. Its primary objective is to **develop a comprehensive strategy for the upskilling and reskilling of the European health and care workforce, focusing on digital and green competencies**. This endeavour aims to equip healthcare professionals with the necessary skills to navigate the evolving demands of modern healthcare systems. The project is developing **a dedicated learning platform** offering training courses tailored to digital and green skills.

The strategy is structured around six strategic objectives:

1. Assessing and addressing skills mismatches within the health workforce.
2. Enhancing digital literacy and competencies among healthcare professionals.
3. Promoting green literacy and competencies to support sustainable healthcare practices.
4. Strengthening the development of soft skills essential for effective patient care.
5. Fostering the physical and mental well-being of the health and care workforce.
6. Advancing training and curricula opportunities that support lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

Redefining Lifelong Learning (2023): Lessons from around the globe

This report by the International Longevity Centre UK **explores how different countries support lifelong learning**, especially for older adults, while highlighting global challenges such as low participation rates, ageism, and financial barriers. The report emphasises the importance of cultural shifts, cross-sector collaboration, financial support, and personalised learning to make lifelong education more accessible and effective. **Examples from the report include the following:**

- **The Netherlands:** The Silver Starters programme, which is provided by the Leyden Academy of Vitality and Aging, aims to empower older persons to become entrepreneurs. The 12-week course gives participants the foundational skills for converting their idea into a business. The curriculum can adapt to people's prior life and work experience.

- **Germany:** With its tool guides, ProfilPASS allows individuals to assess and document their skills to help them find work or training opportunities. More specific ProfilPASSes are tailored for older workers, women, and refugees or migrants.

- **The United Kingdom:** Brave Starts is a UK-based programme that helps people over 45 learn and find meaningful employment. It includes guest speakers from the industries targeted by their learners, allowing them to better understand what they should do to enter their chosen career and how to network with industry stakeholders.

The Skills Development Coordination System (OSKA): Strategic forecasting of skills and labour market needs

The Skills Development Coordination System (*Oskuste Arendamise Koordinatsioonisüsteem*, OSKA) is a national forecasting model, established in 2015 by the Estonian Qualifications Authority. It aims to **anticipate changes in the job market and adjust education and training policies to meet the future demands of the Estonian economy**. OSKA achieves this by combining quantitative analyses from administrative records, such as national statistics and tax data, with qualitative studies by sectoral expert panels.

Based on its 2022-2031 report, Estonia will face a labour shortage as demand exceeds the number of new graduates. Jobs will grow in services, technologies, finance, healthcare, and technical fields, while agriculture, transportation, and retail will decline. Annual needs would be 9,500 higher-education and 5,700 vocational graduates, with shortages in education, technologies, healthcare, industry, and construction. Thus, **meeting demand will rely on migration, retraining, and adapting to trends like digitalisation, automation, and the green transition.** Older people can play a key role in these transitions if they are given opportunities for retraining and proper integration.

At European level, the **European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)** is a multilingual classification developed by the European Commission that **identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications, and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education**. It aims to facilitate the matching of skills with job opportunities across Europe. ESCO serves as a valuable tool for job seekers, employers, and educational institutions to understand the skills and qualifications needed in various occupations.

BUILD UP Skills:
Empowering Europe's construction workforce for a green transition

BUILD UP Skills is **a European initiative launched in 2011 to strengthen the skills of building professionals and support the decarbonisation of the construction sector**. Fully aligned with the European Green Deal and the EU 2030 climate targets, it contributes to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. **The programme develops national training strategies, qualification platforms, and tailored training modules** covering areas such as energy-efficient renovations, renewable energy integration, Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (nZEB), and circular economy practices.

Funded by the EU LIFE Programme, BUILD UP Skills **helps close skills gaps, improve training quality, and facilitate recognition of qualifications across Europe**. It plays a key role in creating a future-ready workforce, while also offering strong opportunities for older workers. By **promoting lifelong learning, modular upskilling, and recognition of prior experience**, the initiative enables experienced professionals to adapt to new technologies and sustainability standards without leaving the labour market, thus extending their employability and contribution to a greener built environment.

Care4Skills:
Strengthening competencies and digital skills in long-term care

Care4Skills is a European initiative, running from 2024 to 2028, that **aims to strengthen the competencies of professionals in the long-term care sector**. It focuses on developing digital skills to address critical skill shortages and on designing and implementing new, modular **Vocational Education and Training (VET) curricula** tailored to identified skill gaps and

emerging occupational profiles within the sector. The project also benefits older care workers by helping them build confidence with new technologies and adapt to modern care practices. Through research, certification, and collaboration among training institutions, employers, and policymakers, *Care4Skills* seeks to **establish a sustainable European skills strategy** that enhances the quality, efficiency, and resilience of long-term care services.

AGE's work on employment

On 1 October 2025, AGE launched its Proposal for an EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism. Grounded in human rights, equality and solidarity between generations, the Proposal for an EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism provides the backbone for a future EU Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness. It aims to help build a fairer, more dynamic, inclusive, and resilient Union – socially, economically, and democratically. This action plan consists of nine flagship initiatives, one of which addresses issues related to employment and skills, with a view to developing a comprehensive set of age-friendly labour market measures to increase employment rates among older workers, remove structural barriers, promote lifelong learning and combat ageism in the workplace. A one-pager of the Action Plan with the flagship initiatives can be found here: EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism – One-Pager.

The previous edition of the Barometer on *Quality and Sustainable Working Lives* addressed three major areas in the field of employment: support for older workers, age discrimination in the labour market, and age-friendly workplaces. These findings and recommendations served as the basis for the development of the 2025 edition.

Latest publications

- AGE Policy Paper on Work-Life Integration: Work-Life Integration - AGE Policy Paper
- AGE 2023 Annual Conference on a European model for sustainable working lives: A European model for sustainable and quality working lives: What is at stake?
- AGE feedback on the consultation for the upcoming European Commission *Quality Jobs Roadmap*: Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

- AGE Policy Paper on lifelong learning to be accessible at all ages asking for the Council's recommendation on the individual learning accounts to explicitly encourage education opportunities in older age
- AGE proposal to the new European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (2025): AGE proposal to the new European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan
- AGE Policy Paper on the right to work: The right to work in old age - AGE Policy Paper
- AGE contribution to the European Intergenerational Fairness Strategy: AGE Platform Europe's Contribution to the Intergenerational Fairness Strategy
- AGE two-pager on Gender Inequality in Old Age: Gender Inequality in Old Age – Two-Pagers
- AGE replied to two European Commission calls for evidence on digital education and digital skills to address the digital gap, remind the need to deliver accessible and inclusive digital education and training and consider the intersectional perspective intro the policy responses
- AGE's answer to the call of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) to NGOs - 12th Session (2022), emphasising the need to improve access to training and education in the workplace but also beyond retirement age
- AGE's answer to the call of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) to NGOs - 13th Session (2023), which included calls for equal participation of older persons in employment and education.

Questionnaire for assessment at national level

Digital Transition

*The **digital transition** is the shift to technologies like automation, Artificial Intelligence, and remote work. It creates new job opportunities, could boosts productivity, and offers more flexibility. However, it also causes job losses, widens skill gaps, and increases insecurity for some workers. With this questionnaire, we would like to understand how the digital transition in the labour market is addressed in your Member States to ensure everyone's benefits.*

1. Has digitalisation led to **the creation, the disappearance of jobs or the redefinition of competencies** in your Member State? In which sectors? Are new jobs accessible to older workers?
2. What policies or programmes exist in your country to **improve digital skills throughout life** or specifically for older workers?
3. What programmes and initiatives does your country have **to promote intergenerational exchange** of digital skills?
4. What initiatives using digital tools have **improved working conditions** throughout working life and the accessibility of older workers?
5. How have your government and companies addressed **the impact of digitisation on mental health** (e.g. work intensification, stress, surveillance)?
6. What are the national **guidelines on ethics** and responsibility in the use of digital tools and artificial intelligence at work?
7. How do the **social partners** (trade unions and employers), **learning institute and government** approach digital transformation? Are there any negotiations between partners?
8. Are you aware of any initiatives in the **care, construction, or waste management sectors** that specifically support ageing in the workplace using digital technology?

Green Transition

*The **green transition** is the shift towards an environmentally sustainable economy. It creates jobs in green sectors while reducing jobs in high-polluting industries and requiring workers to acquire new skills, such as green skills (knowledge and abilities that support environmental sustainability). Regional effects vary, and job losses occur, necessitating support for affected workers. We would like to know how your country ensures the balance between environmental progress and fair, inclusive employment for all ages.*

9. Have specific sectors in your country experienced **significant changes** due to the green transition? If so, which ones?
10. What initiatives are being taken by the government or industry to **develop green skills and competencies** for workers of all ages?
11. Which **national environmental regulations** have a specific impact on older workers in the labour market? In what way?
12. How is your government **supporting sectors** affected by the green transition, such as the construction sector or the waste management sector?
13. How are **social partners** (trade unions and employers) **and government** addressing the challenges and opportunities of the green transition on the labour market? Especially for older workers?
14. What are the **national awareness campaigns** on green job creation or the circular economy? Do they target workers of all ages?

Labour Shortages

***Labour shortages** occur when there aren't enough qualified workers to fill available jobs, a challenge seen across many sectors today. Addressing shortages requires investment in training, better working conditions, and attracting underrepresented groups into the workforce. We would like to know if and how older workers are targeted in your country, in these times of labour shortages.*

15. What **retention strategies** are being developed at national or company level to address labour shortages?
16. What are the programmes and initiatives in your country that **facilitate career transitions**? Do they target older workers, and how?
17. What **lifelong learning incentives and initiatives** in your country target older people so that they can retrain or become trainers?
18. What are the national regulations or company policies that improve occupational safety and health (OSH) in high-risk sectors, such as:
19. **Care sector:** Addressing physical and emotional risks for instance
20. **Construction sector:** Injury prevention or ergonomic support for instance
21. **Waste management sector:** Safety measures for hazardous substances and chemical exposure for instance
22. **Other sectors?**
23. Do you have any national data on **the career aspirations of older employees approaching retirement**, such as the desire to take retirement, continue working with flexible working hours, or become mentor, etc.?
24. What measures have been taken by the government, companies, and learning institutes to specifically support older workers in **the care, construction, or waste management sectors**?
25. Do the pension regulations in your country discourage older workers from **staying in or returning to work**, or, conversely, are there policies in place to encourage a longer working life?

About AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is an empowered coalition of older people's organisations. Its members include, for the most part, older persons who are still employed or retired and actively engaged as volunteers, as well as younger professionals working in services for older individuals. Together, we demonstrate how several generations can collaborate to shape a more inclusive society and ensure that older people have a voice at the European level.

In times of pandemic more than ever, AGE celebrates longevity as one of the greatest achievements of humanity. Guided by values of equality and participation, we seek to combat ageism, promote human rights throughout the life-course, and create equal opportunities to live full and dignified life.

Older persons are the experts of their own lives. Our community is hugely diverse. But our difference is our strength when we speak together. As self-advocates, we have the potential to bring know-how and experience – not to mention countless hours of caring and volunteer work that help society function.

A healthy society provides support at times of vulnerability, while providing space for all its members to contribute. Let's bridge the generation gap to build an age equal society. Our vision is to create the connections necessary for a more inclusive society:

Connecting institutions and constituents

AGE amplifies older people's voices to the European and global levels

Connecting organisations

Our powerful coalition enables older people to exchange experiences and learnings

Connecting countries

AGE is a truly European network, drawing strength from our members' diversity

Connecting people

AGE strengthens communities, empowering older people to contribute actively to Society

TOWARDS A SOCIETY FOR ALL AGES

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FORWARD >>
Fostering Knowledge and Action for the Rights of Older Women
Fortaleciendo el Conocimiento y la Acción por los Derechos de las Mujeres Mayores

Fundació Aroa

FORWARD Conference: Fostering Knowledge and Action for the Rights of Older Women

📅 Friday, 28th November 2025

🕘 09:30 a.m – 2 p.m (CET)

📍 Conference Hall, Faculty of Economics and Business – University of Barcelona

Programme

09:30 – 09:40 | Institutional Opening

- Representative of the University of Barcelona – host institution (TBC)
- Representative Department for Equality and Feminisms of the Government of Catalonia (TBC)
- Mr. Pedro M. Cano, Director General for Older Persons, Government of Catalonia.

09:50 – 09:45 | Tribute to Miss Elizabeth Sclater

The FORWARD conference and the policy brief are dedicated to the memory of Miss Elizabeth Sclater (1946–2024), a key figure in advancing the rights of older women, both through her professional practice as a social worker and through her advocacy for the human rights of older women at the European and international levels. With a professional career spanning over four decades — including her role as Equal Opportunities Officer for older people in the London Borough of Lewisham — she was a co-founder of OWN Europe, promoted pioneering work on gender and age, and played a decisive role in monitoring CEDAW and advancing the agenda for a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, among other contributions. In 2019 she was awarded the *Officers of the British Empire* (OBE) for her services to older women. Her legacy continues to inspire the international movement for the rights of older women.

09:50 – 10:10 | Opening Keynote speech

Dr. Claudia Mahler, United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

10:10 – 11:10 Panel 1 - Human Rights and Public Responsibility in Addressing Gender-Based Violence Against Older Women

Frame GBV older women within the international human rights and due diligence framework, ensuring effective protection of their rights.

Speakers:

- Anne-Sophie Parent (OWN Europe) - joining remotely
- Nena Gerogantzi (AGE Platform Europe)
- Bridget Penhale (University of East Anglia / INPEA / OWN Europe)
- Laia Rosich i Solé (independent expert, former Director-General for the Eradication of Gender-Based Violence, Government of Catalonia)

Moderator: Neus Pociello Cayuela (Aroa Foundation)

11:10 – 11:30 | Coffee break and networking

11:30 – 12:30 Panel 2 - Overlooked GBV and Emerging Knowledge: Feminist Contributions to Uphold Older Women's Rights

Sharing data and knowledge produced within academia and through the situated knowledge of feminist organisations, with the aim of making visible gender-based violence against older women and bringing to light its most hidden manifestations.

Speakers:

- Mònica Ramos Toro (UNATE) – academic research and situated feminist knowledge.
- Maria Petkova (Tulip Foundation / OWN Europe) – research on professional practices and from the perspective of care.
- Sonia Ibañez (independent expert)- intersection of dependency and disabilities.
- Eva Cruells (ALIA) – digital gender-based violence

Moderator: Núria Vergés Bosch (COPOLIS Research Group– University of Barcelona)

12:30 – 13:30 | Panel 3 – Good Practices and Transformative Strategies

Presenting local, national, and European experiences that have fostered tangible progress in awareness-raising, institutional coordination, and policy advocacy.

Speakers:

- Arantza Núñez (AGINTZARI) – community-based work and prevention
- Beatriu Masià (Therapist specialised in the response to gender-based violence)– counselling for older women experiencing gender-based violence
- Bombo N'Dir (Association of Sub-Saharan Immigrant Women – ADIS) – community-based work with older migrant women.
- Paulina Blanco (Fundació Enllaç) – support and visibility for older LBTIQ+ women
- Janet Stevenson (OWN-EU) - justice system to ensure protection and access to rights.

Moderator: Anna Morero, University of Barcelona

13:30 – 13:55 | Presentation of the Policy Brief "A life free from gender-based violence at all ages: policy recommendations to uphold the rights of older women"

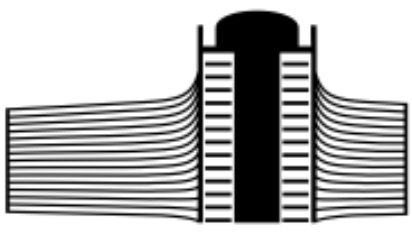
Presentation of the recommendations and advocacy strategies led by civil society, together with a roadmap for advancing the rights of older women in the current context.

- **Policybrief, strategies and roadmap:** Neus Pociello i Cayuela, Aroa Foundation)
- **POWER presentation:** Catarina Alves (Project Manager – ABD)

13:55 – 14h | Closing remarks and acknowledgements – Aroa Foundation and COPOLIS

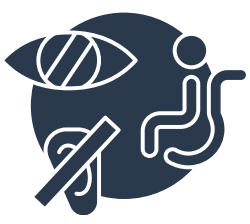
What is wrong with the proposed law on cross-border protection of adults?

The **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**



Introduced a proposal for a Regulation governing the cross-border protection of adults affecting directly:

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



OLDER ADULTS



Considered unable to protect their interests in cross-border situations, such as having money abroad, seeking medical care, or relocating within the EU.

OUR CONCERNS

We recognise the importance of legislation.

HOWEVER Several binding provisions are not in line with the UN CRPD.

1. The recognition of **deprivation of legal capacity** across the Union.
2. Unclear recognition of supported **decision-making mechanisms.**
3. **Facilitated cross-border placement** in residential and psychiatric institutions.

OUR DEMANDS



WE PROPOSE TO:

- **Protect rights** through supported decision-making.
  Amend articles 2, 3, 4, 13, 34, 37 and 45
- **Restrict cross-border placements** to those based on personal choice and support.
  Amend article 21
- **Safeguard privacy** by removing provisions on protection registers.
  Delete articles 45, 46, 47 and 48

Joint proposed amendments on the Regulation on Protection of Adults in Cross-Border Situations

February 2025

This document was prepared jointly by the European Disability Forum, the European Network on Independent Living, Inclusion Europe, Mental Health Europe and AGE Platform Europe. It is also endorsed by the European Council of Autistic People.

Executive Summary

While we recognise the importance of conflict of laws legislation as a means to provide legal certainty, avoid gaps and promote the uniform application of substantive international law, including in the EU, **we deeply regret that the proposed Regulation on Protection of Adults in Cross-Border Situations includes provisions which do not align with international human rights law and would lead to violations of the rights older people and persons with disabilities living in the EU**.

The EU and all its Member States ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Under the Convention and its General Comments, adults who temporarily or permanently require support in making decisions and for their autonomy, must be provided with support mechanisms, irrespective of their age, disability, and the degree of support needed. The Convention does not allow the deprivation of legal capacity. It requires States to change their laws and policies.

Despite the CRPD being mentioned in the recitals of the proposal, **several binding provisions are not in line with the obligations set by the Convention**.

To ensure that the EU and all the Member States comply with the CRPD – including through its progressive realisation which is taking place through legal reform of

decision-making regimes in several Member States – we proposed amendments addressing the following issues:

1. **Ensuring the protection of people's rights by recognising and focusing on supported decision-making measures and mechanisms**

    - Amend **article 2 on the scope** to avoid legitimation of legal incapacitation and take into account the evolution of legislation and policy on legal capacity in EU Member States
    - Amend **article 3 on definition** to include the concept of will and preferences of the person
    - Amend **article 4**'s References to the HCCH 2000 Protection of Adults Convention to make sure the CRPD is mentioned
    - Amend **article 13 on no review as to the substance** to ensure the highest level of protection of the autonomy of adults
    - Amend **articles 34, 37 and 45** related to the certificate of representation to focus on support and representation, and ensure that the adults concerned can request the certificate

2. **Ensuring cross-border placements measures are only possible when they are based on the choice, autonomy and support of the persons**

    - Amend **article 21 on placement** which currently violates the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities, so as to only allow placement measures that comply with the rights and autonomy of the persons concerned.

3. **Ensuring the privacy of citizens covered by the Regulation**

    - Delete **articles 45, 46, 47 and 48** on the establishment of protection registers which violate the privacy of citizens and give disproportionate means of control to authorities.

We also propose amendments to the recitals based on the CRPD and how it should be interpreted in relation to the 2000 Convention on the international protection of adults and the Regulation.

We call on the EU institutions and all EU Member States to promote and protect the rights of all, in line with the CRPD, recalling their commitments made in the Council Conclusions on the Protection of Vulnerable Adults across the European Union adopted in 2021.

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Proposed amendments to articles of the Regulation

Article 2: Scope

Commission proposal	**Proposed amendments**
1. This Regulation shall apply in civil matters to the protection in cross-border situations of adults who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests. 2. This Regulation shall also apply to measures in respect of an adult who had not reached the age of 18 years at the time the measures were taken. 3. The matters referred to in paragraph (1) may, in particular, include: (a) the determination of the incapacity of an adult and the institution of a protective regime; (b) the placing of the adult under the protection of a judicial or administrative authority; (c) guardianship, curatorship and analogous institutions; (d) the designation and functions of any person or body having charge of the adult's person or property, representing, or assisting the adult; (e) decisions concerning the placement of the adult in an establishment or other place where protection can be provided; (f) the administration, conservation or disposal of the adult's property; (g) the authorisation of a specific intervention for the protection of the person or property of the adult. 4. This Regulation does not apply to: (a) maintenance obligations;	1. This Regulation shall apply in civil matters to the protection in cross-border situations of adults ~~**who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests**~~ ***require support in decision making***. 2. This Regulation shall also apply to measures in respect of an adult who had not reached the age of 18 years at the time the measures were taken. 3. The matters referred to in paragraph (1) ***and (2)*** may, in particular, include: (a) ~~**the determination of the incapacity of an adult and the institution of a protective regime**~~ ***Any form of supported decision-making regime, including more intensive form of support*;** (b) ~~**the placing of the adult under the protection of a judicial or administrative authority**~~ ***Powers of representation granted by an adult to be exercised when that adult is not in the position to protect his or her interests***; ~~**(c) guardianship, curatorship and analogous institutions;**~~ (d) the designation and functions of any person or body ~~**having charge of the adult's person or property, representing, or assisting the adult**~~ ***providing a support in decision making to an adult in regard to property, representation or other forms of assistance***;

(b) the formation, annulment and dissolution of marriage or any similar relationship, as well as legal separation; (c) property regimes in respect of marriage or any similar relationship; (d) trusts or succession; (e) social security; (f) public measures of a general nature in matters of health; (g) measures taken in respect of a person as a result of penal offences committed by that person; (h) decisions on the right of asylum and on immigration; (i) measures directed solely to public safety. 4. This Regulation does not apply to: (a) maintenance obligations; (b) the formation, annulment and dissolution of marriage or any similar relationship, as well as legal separation; (c) property regimes in respect of marriage or any similar relationship; (d) trusts or succession; (e) social security; (f) public measures of a general nature in matters of health; (g) measures taken in respect of a person as a result of penal offences committed by that person; (h) decisions on the right of asylum and on immigration; (i) measures directed solely to public safety. 5. Paragraph (4) does not affect, in respect of the matters referred to therein, the entitlement of a person to act as the representative of the adult.	(e) ~~**decisions concerning the placement of the adult in an establishment or other place where protection can be provided**~~ ***the designation and functions of any person or body that is granted the powers of representation****;* ~~**(f) the administration, conservation or disposal of the adult's property;**~~ ~~**(g) the authorisation of a specific intervention for the protection of the person or property of the adult.**~~ ***4. In the transition from substituted decision-making to supported decision-making regimes, this Regulation may also apply to guardianship, curatorship and analogous institutions*.** ~~4.~~ ***5.*** This Regulation does not apply to: (a) maintenance obligations; (b) the formation, annulment and dissolution of marriage or any similar relationship, as well as legal separation; (c) property regimes in respect of marriage or any similar relationship; (d) trusts or succession; (e) social security; (f) public measures of a general nature in matters of health; (g) measures taken in respect of a person as a result of penal offences committed by that person; (h) decisions on the right of asylum and on immigration; (i) measures directed solely to public safety. 5. Paragraph ~~***(4)***~~***(5)*** does not affect, in respect of the matters referred ~~**to therein, the entitlement of a person to act as the representative of the adult**~~ ***to act as the one providing the adult support in decision***

	making or executing powers of representation.

Justification:

The proposed amendments reflect the requirements for the implementation of Article 12 CRPD and General Comment no. 1. to the CRPD.

Paragraph 1

Article 12 CRPD recognises that all persons with disabilities have legal capacity on an equal basis with others. The existence of legal capacity is, therefore, presumed. In order to align the present draft Regulation with these requirements, the notion that adults are not in the position to protect their interests should be erased. Instead, and with the purpose of determining the scope of the draft Regulation, the words "require support in decision making."

Paragraph 3

It is proposed that this paragraph be amended so that it is applied equally for measures both in conjunction with the paragraph 1 and 2 of this Section. This is because there shall be no difference in applying supported decision making regimes to adults and to minors when this is required, especially taking into account that in different EUMS minors can reach emancipation for certain decisions (usually on medical treatment) or be judicially granted full emancipation before reaching age of maturity (usually connected with marriage and parenthood) and they should also enjoy right to enjoy supported decision-making mechanisms when required.

Sub-paragraph (a) shall be completely replaced with the new text to include any form of supported decision-making regime, including more intensive forms of support. The explanation on what these forms of support entail, the Preamble with new paragraphs 4 and 5 should be read.

Sub-paragraph (b) shall be completely replaced with the new text. As people cannot be placed under guardianship of natural persons, their legal capacity cannot be denied by placing them under the protection of any judicial or administrative body. The new text includes advance directives. Removing "judicial or administrative body" from this provision does not imply that EUMS cannot regulate by national legislation that there are safeguards in implementing advanced directives that can be of judicial or administrative nature.

Sub-paragraph (c) shall be completely erased as incompatible with the Article 12 CRPD.

In the sub-paragraph (d) "having charge of the adult´s person or property, representing or assisting the adult" should be replaced with the new text to ensure that the designation or functions of any person or body should involve only supported decision-making regimes. Supported decision-making should not be mixed with guardianship, custodianship or other analogous institutes, because there is a clear distinction between a person or a body of a "guardian", "custodian" or "tutor" and the "supporter", "aide", "advisor". The distinction is made by its function and the way how the supported decision-making regime is implemented; that it always must give a precedence to the will and preferences of the person concerned and never be based on the assumption of the best interests or the concept of dangerousness. The

person or a body (e.g. an organisation that provides services of assisting in decision-making) therefore does not exercise its own volition, but the will and preferences of the person concerned in any legal matter. Sub-paragraph (e) shall be completely replaced with the new text that refers to advance directives. Sub paragraphs (f) and (g) shall be completely erased as incompatible with the Article 12 CRPD. *Paragraph 4* Being aware that EU Member States are transitioning from substituted to supported decision-making systems and that they may be in different stages until the full implementation of the CRPD it is proposed that this Regulation may also be within that context applied to guardianship, curatorship and analogous institutions. *Paragraph 6* It is proposed that the provision of non-application on certain matters does not exclude the possibility of providing support in decision making on these matters.

Article 3: Definitions

Commission proposal	**Proposed amendments**
For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definitions apply: (…)	For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definitions apply: (…)
(2) 'measure' means any measure taken by an authority of a Member State, whatever it may be called, directed to the protection of an adult;	(2) 'measure' means any measure taken by an authority of a Member State, whatever it may be called, directed to the protection of an adult; ***Protection entails the initialisation or recognition of supported decision-making arrangements. Supported decision-making means voluntarily receiving help in exercising one's legal capacity.***
(4) 'Member State of origin' means the Member State in which the measure was taken or the authentic instrument was formally drawn up;	(4) Member State of origin' means the Member State in which the measure ***to initiate supported decision making was taken*** or the authentic instrument was formally drawn up;
(5) 'authentic instrument' means a document in a matter of protection of an adult which has	(5) authentic instrument' means a document in a matter of protection consisting in

been formally drawn up or registered as an authentic instrument in a Member State and the authenticity of which:	accompanying the ***supported decision-making*** of an adult which has been formally drawn up or registered as an authentic instrument in a Member State and the authenticity of which:
(7) 'authority of origin' means the authority which has taken the measure or formally drawn up the authentic instrument;	(7) 'authority of origin' means the authority which has taken the measure ***to initialise or terminate supported decision-making*** or formally drawn up the authentic instrument;
(10) 'system of interconnection' means a system for the interconnection of protection registers and registers of other powers of representation;	~~**(10) 'system of interconnection means a system for the interconnection of protection registers and registers of other powers of representation**~~;
(11) 'decentralised IT system' means a network of IT systems, interoperable access points operating under the individual responsibility and management of each Member State, and the European electronic access point, which enables secure and reliable cross-border exchange of information;	(11) 'decentralised IT system' means a network of IT systems, interoperable access points operating under the individual responsibility and management of each Member State, and the European electronic access point, which enables secure and reliable cross-border exchange of information; ***All information has to be stored with the tasked with accompanying the decision-maker for the duration of the supported-decision making only. No centralised data storage is allowed. Measures must be taken to prevent unauthorised access.***
(12) 'protection register' means a register where measures directed to the protection of an adult or confirmed powers of representation have been registered.	(12) ~~'protection register' means a register where measures directed to the protection of an adult or confirmed powers of representation have been registered.~~ ***Cooperation and data sharing. If a decision-maker wishes to have their decision-making support decision or power of representation transferred to an authority in another Member State, the competent authority in charge may contact the authority in the country of origin to request information, if***

	explicitly authorised by the decision-maker. This authorisation can be withdrawn at any point in time. ***(13) new*** ***Person-centered support involves access to supported decision-making, personal budgets, personal assistance and other forms as outlined in General Comment No 5 and the Guidelines on Deinstitutionalisation, including in emergencies, are the only forms of support permitted under the UN CRPD.***
Justification: It is proposed that the notion of "in respect of his or her will and preferences" is added to the provision in order to emphasise the requirements of Article 12 CRPD and General Comment no. 1. to the CRPD. "Will and preferences" or the "best interpretation of the will and preferences" of the person (para. 21 of General Comment no. 1 to the CRPD) are also applicable to cases where the person cannot provide direct free and informed consent (for example in the case of a person in the coma). On the other hand, Member States should refrain from referring to the "best interest of the person". The CRPD Committee explains that "The "best interests" principle is not a safeguard which complies with article 12 in relation to adults. The "will and preferences" paradigm must replace the "best interests" paradigm to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to legal capacity on an equal basis with others." About (10), (11), (12), see justification under article 45.	

Article 4: References to ***the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and*** the HCCH 2000 Protection of Adults Convention

Where referred to in this Regulation the HCCH Convention of 13 January 2000 on the Interna-tional Protection of Adults ('the HCCH 2000 Pro-tection of Adults Convention'), which attached to this Regulation, shall apply mutatis mutandis.	Where referred to in this Regulation, ***the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)*** and the HCCH Convention of 13 January 2000 on the Interna-tional Protection of Adults ('the HCCH 2000 Pro-tection of

	Adults Convention'), which is attached to this Regulation, shall apply mutatis mutandis.

Article 13: No review as to the substance

Commission proposal	**Proposed amendments**
Under no circumstances may a measure taken by the authorities of a Member State be reviewed as to its substance.	***1.*** Under no circumstances may a measure taken by the authorities of a Member State be reviewed as to its substance. ***New 2. Notwithstanding the rule in paragraph (1) a measure taken by the authorities of a Member State of origin may be replaced with another measure that better protects autonomy of an adult concerned.***
Justification: It is proposed that another paragraph is added to this provision to enable the receiving Member State to amend the existing measure with a more appropriate one that will better protect the autonomy of the adults concerned. This is necessary especially because there will be differences between the Member States on how far they have transitioned from substituted to supported decision-making systems. While in the Member State of origin still the guardianship may be a dominant form of protection, in the receiving Member State there may be more supported decision-making regimes that may better suit the needs of the person concerned. Therefore, the receiving Member State should have an option to replace the existing measure with a more appropriate one.	

Article 21: ~~***Placement***~~ ***Living and Support Arrangements***

Commission proposal	**Proposed amendments**
1. If an authority of a Member State contemplates the placement of the adult in another Member State in an establishment or other institution where protection can be provided, it shall first obtain the consent of a Central Authority of that other Member State. To that effect, it shall transmit to the Central Authority of the requested Member State a report on the adult together with the reasons	1. If an authority of a Member State contemplates the ***living and support arrangements of the adult in another Member State the access to person-centred support shall be evaluated. To that end the adult receiving or the person or persons providing decision-making support shall be consulted. The will and preferences uttered by the adult receiving support shall be implemented.*** ~~**placement of the adult in another Member State in an establishment**~~

for the proposed measure, using the form set out in Annex VI. 2. Paragraph (1) shall not apply where the placement is contemplated with a private person. 3. Except where exceptional circumstances make this impossible, the decision granting or refusing consent shall be transmitted to the requesting authority no later than six weeks following the receipt of the request. 4. Paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) shall not preclude Central Authorities or competent authorities from entering or maintaining existing agreements or arrangements with Central Authorities or competent authorities of one or more other Member States simplifying the consultation procedure for obtaining consent in their mutual relations.	~~**or other institution where protection can be provided**~~, it shall first obtain the consent of a Central Authority of that other Member State. To that effect, it shall transmit to the Central Authority of the requested Member State a report on the adult together with the reasons for the proposed measure, using the form set out in Annex VI. 2. Paragraph (1) shall not apply where the ~~placement~~ ***living and support arrangements are*** ~~is~~ contemplated with a private person. 3. Except where exceptional circumstances make this impossible, the decision granting or refusing consent shall be transmitted to the requesting authority no later than six weeks following the receipt of the request. 4. Paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) shall not preclude Central Authorities or competent authorities from entering or maintaining existing agreements or arrangements with Central Authorities or competent authorities of one or more other Member States simplifying the consultation procedure for obtaining consent in their mutual relations. ***5. Any living and support arrangements of adults covered by this Regulation must be based on the obligations of the Member State emanating from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular with respect to avoiding segregation and limiting freedom of choice. Decisions on living and support must respect the will and preferences of the adult.***
Justification: In its General Comment no. 5 on the Article 19 CRPD, the CRPD Committee recognised that persons with disabilities have historically been denied their personal and individual choice and control across all areas of their lives, while many of them have been presumed to be unable to live independently in self-chosen communities. Thus, the resources have been invested in institutions instead of in developing possibilities for persons with disabilities to live independently in the community, leading to abandonment, dependence on family, institutionalisation, isolation and segregation. This Committee also noted that the denial of legal capacity, either through formal laws and practices or *de facto* by substituted decision-making about living arrangements, represents the barrier between full implementation of Article 19 CRPD. Further General Comment no. 5 explains that all people with disabilities have the	

right to independent living in community. Neither the full or partial deprivation of any "degree" of legal capacity nor the level of support required may be invoked to deny or limit the right to independence and independent living in the community to persons with disabilities.

This provision must be revised to ensure that it would apply to living and support arrangement that are respected the rights and autonomy of the persons this regulation aim to protect. Considering the recent guidance on independent living for persons with disabilities adopted by the European Commission and efforts made by member states to reform their systems, the provision should support efforts of transition from institutions to community living.

Chapter VII: EUROPEAN CERTIFICATE OF ***SUPPORT AND*** REPRESENTATION

Article 34: Creation of a European Certificate of ***Support and*** Representation

1.This Regulation creates a European Certificate of Representation ('the Certificate') which shall be issued for use in another Member State and shall produce the effects listed in Article 40.	1.This Regulation creates a European Certificate of ***Support and*** Representation ('the Certificate') which shall be issued for use in another Member State and shall produce the effects listed in Article 40.

Article 35: Purpose of the Certificate

1.The Certificate shall be issued for use by representatives, who, in another Member State, need to invoke their powers to represent adults who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests.	1.The Certificate shall be issued for use ***by the adults concerned or their*** representatives, who, in another Member State, need to invoke their powers to ***support or*** represent ***the concerned*** adults ~~**who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests**~~.

Article 37: Application for a Certificate

1.The Certificate shall be issued upon an application by a representative authorised, by means of a measure taken or powers of representation confirmed in a Member State, to represent the adult (hereinafter referred to as: 'the applicant').	1.The Certificate shall be issued upon an application ***by the adult concerned or their*** ~~a~~ representative authorised, by means of a measure taken or powers of representation confirmed in a Member State, to represent the adult (hereinafter referred to as: 'the applicant').

	New *3. The certificate and the application process must be available in formats accessible for persons with disabilities.*

Article 45: Establishment of protection registers

Commission Proposal	Proposed Amendments
1. By [two years after the date of the start of application] at the latest, Member States shall establish and maintain in their territory one or several registers in which information is recorded concerning protection measures and, where their national law provides for the confirmation of powers of representation by a competent authority, concerning those powers of representation ('protection registers'). 2.The information recorded in the registers referred to in paragraph (1) shall include the following ('mandatory information'): (a)an indication that a measure has been taken or, where applicable, that powers of representation have been granted or confirmed; (b)the date of the first measure as well as the date of the subsequent measures taken, or, where applicable, the date when the powers of representation were granted by an adult or were confirmed by a competent authority; (c)where a measure or a decision on the powers of representation are provisionally applicable, the date on which the time limit for challenging the measure or the decision on the powers of representation expires; (d)the date of expiration or reviewal of the measures or of the powers of representation, if any;	~~**1. By [two years after the date of the start of application] at the latest, Member States shall establish and maintain in their territory one or several registers in which information is recorded concerning protection measures and, where their national law provides for the confirmation of powers of representation by a competent authority, concerning those powers of representation ('protection registers').**~~ ~~**2.The information recorded in the registers referred to in paragraph (1) shall include the following ('mandatory information'):**~~ ~~**(a)an indication that a measure has been taken or, where applicable, that powers of representation have been granted or confirmed;**~~ ~~**(b)the date of the first measure as well as the date of the subsequent measures taken, or, where applicable, the date when the powers of representation were granted by an adult or were confirmed by a competent authority;**~~ ~~**(c)where a measure or a decision on the powers of representation are provisionally applicable, the date on which the time limit for challenging the measure or the decision on the powers of representation expires;**~~ ~~**(d)the date of expiration or reviewal of the measures or of the powers of representation, if any;**~~

(e)the competent authority which has taken, modified or terminated the measure or registered, confirmed, modified or terminated the powers of representation; (f)the adult's name, place and date of birth and, where applicable, national identification number. 3.The information referred to in paragraph (1) shall be published in the protection registers as soon as possible after the following conditions are met: (a)the authorities of the Member State have: (i)taken, modified or terminated a measure; or (ii)confirmed, modified or terminated powers of representation granted by an adult; (b)the time limit for appealing the measure or the decision on the powers of representation has expired, unless the measure or the powers of representation are provisionally applicable. 4.Paragraph (1) shall not preclude Member States from including additional documents or additional information in their protection registers, such as the name of the representative or the nature and extent of the representation.	**~~(e)the competent authority which has taken, modified or terminated the measure or registered, confirmed, modified or terminated the powers of representation;~~** **~~(f)the adult's name, place and date of birth and, where applicable, national identification number.~~** **~~3.The information referred to in paragraph (1) shall be published in the protection registers as soon as possible after the following conditions are met:~~** **~~(a)the authorities of the Member State have:~~** **~~(i)taken, modified or terminated a measure; or~~** **~~(ii)confirmed, modified or terminated powers of representation granted by an adult;~~** **~~(b)the time limit for appealing the measure or the decision on the powers of representation has expired, unless the measure or the powers of representation are provisionally applicable.~~** **~~4.Paragraph (1) shall not preclude Member States from including additional documents or additional information in their protection registers, such as the name of the representative or the nature and extent of the representation.~~**
Justification The Central Registers aim to record the "protection measures" which are sensitive and personal information about citizens. The sharing of this information through the register without the direct free and inform consent of the persons who are under protection measures, and strong safeguards in place, is a breach of privacy and fundamental rights, also guaranteed under the CRPD.	

In addition, during the transition period from substituted to supported decision making regime, there is a risk that the central registers will be used to implement measures that are not compliant with the CRPD.

To protect highly sensitive information such any personal data needs to be recorded decentralised and only be made available on a need-to-know base.

It is also important to note that the Hague Convention does not foresee the establishment of central registers. Article 22 of the Hague Convention allows implementing state parties, to adjust the rules foreseen according to public policy interests.

In addition, according to European Commission estimates the registers would only be relevant in 2,7% of cross-border situations. The registers do not only affect cross-border cases but include all measures of protection issued/confirmed in a Member State. If such registers do not exist yet, the country would have to introduce them. If they do, an expansion would be required to cover all the data.

The registers go beyond what is necessary to achieve the goals of the regulation. The introduction and interconnection of registers is disproportionate. A harmonisation of national law is proposed which might not be in line with the legal basis in Article 81(1) TFEU.

Articles 46, 47 and 48 on: Interoperability of registers of other powers of representation; Interconnection of registers; Condition of access to information via the system of interconnection

Following the removal of article 45 on the establishment of protection registers, article 46 on the Interoperability of registers of other powers of representation, article 47 on the Interconnection of registers and article 48 on the Condition of access to information via the system of interconnection **are to be deleted too**.

Proposed amendments to the recitals

Commission proposal	**Proposed amendments**
Whereas:	***Whereas:***
(1) The purpose of this Regulation is to lay down rules, in cross-border cases, for the protection of adults who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests. In particular, this Regulation lays down rules on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of measures, acceptance of authentic instruments and cooperation between Member States' competent authorities and Central Authorities.	(1) The purpose of this Regulation is to lay down rules, in cross-border cases, for the protection of adults who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests ***and require support in decision making***. In particular, this Regulation lays down rules on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of measures, acceptance of authentic instruments and cooperation between Member States' competent authorities and Central Authorities. ***NEW (2) The Union concluded the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "UNCRPD") on 22 January 2011 to take a regional leadership and support Member States in the implementation of said Convention to the extent of its competencies.*** ***NEW (3) Equality before the law is a basic general principle of human rights protection and is indispensable for the exercise of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Every natural person has the right to respect for their inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make their own choices independently of other people; therefore, to fully enjoy their legal capacity. Legal capacity acquires a special significance for persons with disabilities when they have to make fundamental decisions about their health, education and work. In many cases, the denial of legal capacity to persons with disabilities has led to them being deprived of many fundamental rights, including the***

	right to vote, the right to marry and found a family, reproductive rights, parental rights, the right to give consent for intimate relationships and medical treatment, and the right to liberty. While all persons with disabilities can be affected by denial of legal capacity and substitute decision-making, persons with cognitive or psychosocial disabilities have been, and still are, disproportionately affected by such regimes and denial of their legal capacity. ***NEW (4) Full recognition of right to legal capacity requires reframing the principle of protection. Instead of placing persons into regimes of protection that restrict their legal capacity, protection within the UNCRPD is understood as a principle that is achieved by the provision of a range of support to people who require assistance in decision making about the exercise of their individual rights. Instead of focusing protection to measures that restrict them in exercising legal capacity, the protection is understood as a principle that inherently respects the will and preferences of the person concerned. Therefore, the person concerned instead of being protected by another person or a body, is protected by ensuring that their will and preferences are respected in the decision making, with which they retain full control over their own lives. Supported decision-making may take many forms. For example, persons concerned may choose one or more trusted support persons to assist them in exercising their legal capacity for certain types of decision, or may call for other forms of support, such a peer support, advocacy and self-advocacy support, or assistance with communication. Supported decision-making regimes might include measures relating to universal design and***

	accessibility by obtaining information in an understandable format or getting professional sign language interpretation. Support can also constitute the development and recognition of diverse, non-conventional methods of communication, especially for those who use non-verbal forms of communication to express their will and preferences. Advance planning mechanisms, when a person concerned may in advance plan how their will and preferences shall be addressed in times of certain decision-making, also contribute to the full respect of legal capacity. Supported decision-making must only be initiated if the person requiring support will and preferences so. Supported decision-making must be terminated if the person requiring support wishes so. Support persons must be selected and dismissed if the person requiring support wishes so. ***NEW (5) Sometimes the more intensive forms of support may be necessary, but even when they may technically look like a substitute, for example that another person signs off a necessary legal form, the decision-making must be done on the basis in respect for will and preferences of the person concerned. That may especially apply for persons in coma or other similar conditions where communication with a person cannot be established with any other form of support. In these situations, a person designated to provide support might make inquiries in the concerned person´s social circle, family or conduct other activities in order to ascertain what would be the wishes and preferences of that person in a certain legal situation. The decision-making in such situations must not be based on the perceived best interest but on the will and preferences of the person***

	concerned, similarly to how advance planning mechanisms are implemented. ***NEW (6) This Regulation designates the progressive interpretation of the interconnection between the Hague Convention on the Protection of Adults 2000 and UN CRPD. Recognising the open-ended nature of the Article 3 of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Adults 2000 and that the mechanisms of protection are not limited only to the institutes of protection that deny legal capacity, this Regulation aims at modernising implementation of this Convention with progressive human rights standards that are focused on full respect of autonomy of persons concerned. As a source of private international law, this Regulation encourages state parties to embrace supported decision-making regimes and advance planning in their domestic systems.***
Justification: The proposed new recitals align with the proposals made in articles of the regulation to comply with, and promote the CRPD. New (3) focuses on the principle of equality before the law and right to legal capacity as enshrined in article 12 CRPD and its interdependence with other human rights covered by the Convention. New (4) gives more details on how to understand legal capacity moving from substituted to support decision-making regimes, while also introducing the notion of "will and preferences" (over the concept of "best interest of the person" which may apply to minors but shall not apply to adults). New (5) gives guidance on more intensive forms of support in line with the CRPD. Finally new (6) covers the relationship and interpretation between the CRPD and the 2000 Hague Convention on international protection of adults.	

Commission proposal	**Proposed amendments**
(33) According to Article 19 of the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities are to have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live, on an equal basis as others, and not to be obliged to	(33) According to Article 19 of the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities are to have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live, on an equal basis as others, and not to be obliged to

live in a particular living arrangement. For the purposes of this Regulation, situations may arise where the authorities of a Member State need to take a measure concerning the place of residence or temporary placement of an adult. Examples of such situations are cases where authorities provide assistance to the adult in making a decision on his or her place of residence or where an adult is not in a position to express his or her views and has not granted powers to make a decision concerning his or her place of residence to a representative, and an admission to a care facility is required. Where such placement is to be implemented in another Member State, a consultation procedure for obtaining consent of the Central Authority of the Member State of implementation should be carried out prior to taking that measure. The request for consent made by the authority of origin should include the reasons for the proposed measure, and the views expressed by the adult concerned where possible, in light of Article 19 of the UNCRPD. The Central Authority of the Member State of implementation should be able to decide promptly whether to grant the consent or to refuse it. The absence of a reply within six weeks should not be understood as consent and without consent the measure should not be implemented. The consultation should not be carried out when the placement is with an individual and does not require the supervision of any public authority of the Member State of implementation.	live in a particular living arrangement. For the purposes of this Regulation, situations may arise where **an adult moves to another Member State for formal support and living arrangements** ~~**the authorities of a Member State need to take a measure concerning the place of residence or temporary placement of an adult. Examples of such situations are cases where authorities provide assistance to the adult in making a decision on his or her place of residence or where an adult is not in a position to express his or her views and has not granted powers to make a decision concerning his or her place of residence to a representative, and an admission to a care facility is required**~~. Where such **placement support and living arrangement** is to be implemented in another Member State, a consultation procedure for obtaining consent of the Central Authority of the Member State of implementation should be carried out prior to **implementing** ~~**taking**~~ that measure. **This should only be possible based on the direct consent of the person concerned, or in line with the best interpretation of their will and preferences, if it is not possible to collect their free and informed consent.** The request for consent made by the authority of origin should include the reasons for the proposed measure, and the views expressed by the adult concerned where possible, in light of Article 19 of the UNCRPD. The Central Authority of the Member State of implementation should be able to decide promptly whether to grant the consent or to refuse it. The absence of a reply within six weeks should not be understood as consent and without consent the measure should not be implemented. The consultation should not be carried out when the placement is with an individual and does not require the

	supervision of any public authority of the Member State of implementation.
Justification: See the arguments provided in the justification for amendment to Article 21 of the draft Regulation.	

Public consultation

Union of Equality: 2026-2030 LGBTIQ Equality Strategy

4000 characters, which is about 700 words

Deadline: 24 June 2025

AGE Platform Europe

Older LGBTIQ people (LGBTIQ P) are a diverse group whose unique experiences and issues are often overlooked, resulting in gaps in human rights representation and protection

A joint report with ILGA-Europe analysing the 2019 FRA LGBTI Survey highlights the significant challenges older LGBTIQ P face.

- Older trans respondents from an ethnic minority face severe financial hardship: 82.27% struggle to make ends meet, compared to 33.55% of older LGBTIQ respondents overall and 56.03% of trans of an ethnic minority respondents of all ages. Older individuals in this group face significantly greater financial difficulties, with a 26% higher rate.
- Homelessness is significantly higher among older trans, intersex and non-binary people in comparison to the average for respondents of all age groups, driven by family rejection, discrimination, and long-term exclusion.
- Discrimination in healthcare and social services is widespread. Nearly half of older intersex people and trans people of an ethnic minority report discrimination. Their needs are often ignored, contributing to poorer health and access barriers.
- Violence against older LGBTIQ P, especially those with disabilities, is frequent, both in private and public settings. Older LGBTIQ P with disabilities report higher rates of violence at home in comparison with the general older LGBTIQ respondents.
- Workplace violence is also higher: older LGBTIQ P were more likely to experience violence at work than LGBTIQ respondents of all ages (4,35%), with older trans men (43.53%) and older people of an ethnic minority (23.66%) most affected.
- Older LGBTI P are twice as likely to experience violence in healthcare, with intersex people, trans women, and those from an ethnic minority at the highest risk.

Policy Recommendations

- Explicitly tackle ageism, sexism, racism, ableism, and SOGIGESC-based discrimination through targeted EU actions.
- Ensure the renewed LGBTIQ Equality Strategy aligns with other EU strategies (e.g. EU Gender Equality Strategy, the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, and the Intergenerational Fairness Strategy).
- Raise awareness of how ageism contributes to hate speech, violence, abuse, neglect and other forms of hate crimes towards older LGBTIQ P.
- Support Member States in banning conversion practices.
- Include older LBTIQ P in implementing the Directive on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.
- Strengthen the Victims' Rights Directive by explicitly including older persons, especially older LGBTIQ P, and addressing elder abuse. Provide training and outreach to professionals supporting victims.
- Improve data collection: the 2019 FRA LGBTI Survey only classified older people as 55+, limiting analysis. Disaggregate data by sexual orientation, gender identity, gender

expression, sex characteristics and different age groups, not limited to a certain age to reflect the diversity of older LGBTIQ P.

- Ensure research is accessible, reaching older people in care settings and those digitally excluded.
- Develop on older lesbians and bisexual women, considering intersecting forms of discrimination and include voices from rural and urban areas.
- Conduct a 4th FRA LGBTIQ Survey inclusive of older people.
- Create mechanisms for meaningful consultation with civil society organisations representing older and older LGBTIQ P.
- Provide adequate funding for civil society organisations to engage at both EU and national levels.
- Address the risks of social exclusion, poverty, and housing insecurity among older LGBTIQ P – due to stigma and discrimination – by targeting them in the Anti-Poverty Strategy and the revised EPSR Action Plan.
- Ensure robust implementation of the Directive on Violence Against Women and the Istanbul Convention by Members States and the EU.
- Design EU policies on gender-based and domestic violence to be inclusive of older LBTI women, supported through training, good practice exchange, and multi-agency coordination.

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Date: 07/07/2025 16:45:07

Open Public Consultation on the EU anti-racism strategy 2026-2030

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The first EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025, adopted in September 2020, is a key initiative of the European Commission to step up the fight against racism and racial discrimination in the EU and an integral part of building the Union of Equality.

The action plan has four dimensions to its approach, namely:
1) Tackling interpersonal racism through legislation,
2) Tackling structural racism,
3) Tackling racism in everyday life, and
4) Diversifying the EU's own human resources.

The report on the implementation of the action plan, published in 2024 concluded that the policies, practices and initiatives that have proven effective should be carried forward and further strengthened, notably in light of the persistently high and worsening incidence of racial discrimination in the EU. The 2023 Eurobarometer survey on discrimination in the EU shows that 60 % of Europeans consider that racial discrimination based on ethnic origin is widespread, compared to 59 % in 2019.

As announced in President von der Leyen's political guidelines 2024-2029, the Commission will propose an EU Anti-racism Strategy. The mission letter of the Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Ms. Hadja Lahbib, states that striving for equality for all and equality in all its senses will continue to be central to the Commission's work throughout the next five years. In the mission letter, President von der Leyen tasks Commissioner Lahbib with presenting 'a new anti-racism strategy with the aim of ensuring that all people are able to live lives free of the barriers that racism creates' and also asks 'to put forward resolute actions to address discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes'. This initiative is also included in the Commission Work Programme 2025.

The objective of this consultation is to ensure that interested stakeholders can express their views and opinions about the upcoming EU anti-racism strategy, notably the priorities and issues that should be further addressed after the current EU anti-racism action plan reaches its end in 2025.

Invited to this consultation are EU citizens and people residing in the EU, civil society organisations, other organisations and public authorities of Member States and international organisations.

Thank you for participating. Please answer all the questions or indicate any questions that they do not apply to you.

About you

* Language of my contribution
  - ○ Bulgarian
  - ○ Croatian
  - ○ Czech
  - ○ Danish
  - ○ Dutch
  - ◉ English
  - ○ Estonian
  - ○ Finnish
  - ○ French
  - ○ German
  - ○ Greek
  - ○ Hungarian
  - ○ Irish
  - ○ Italian
  - ○ Latvian
  - ○ Lithuanian
  - ○ Maltese
  - ○ Polish
  - ○ Portuguese
  - ○ Romanian
  - ○ Slovak
  - ○ Slovenian
  - ○ Spanish
  - ○ Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as
  - ○ Academic/research institution
  - ○ Business association
  - ○ Company/business

- ( ) Consumer organisation
- ( ) EU citizen
- ( ) Environmental organisation
- ( ) Non-EU citizen
- (•) Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- ( ) Public authority
- ( ) Trade union
- ( ) Other

* First name

Nena

* Surname

GEORGANTZI

* Email (this won't be published)

nena.georgantzi@age-platform.eu

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

AGE Platform Europe

* Organisation size

- ( ) Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- (•) Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ( ) Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- ( ) Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

16549972091-86

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.

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- Azerbaijan
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- Ecuador
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- Equatorial Guinea
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- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
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- Greece
- Libya
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Saint Martin
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname

- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Myanmar/Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
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- Niue
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- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Türkiye
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom

- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **Fo r the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

* Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- **Anonymous**
  Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.
- **Public**
  Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

☑ I agree with the personal data protection provisions

Current situation on racism and racial discrimination

* 1. In your view, is racism or racial discrimination a problem in your country?
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - I don’t know

* 2. Since 2020, the overall attention given to racism and racial discrimination in your country has:
  - Significantly improved
  - Slightly improved
  - Not changed
  - Slightly worsened
  - Significantly worsened
  - I don't know

* 3. Since 2020, the overall attention given to racism and racial discrimination in the EU has:

- ○ Significantly improved
- ○ Slightly improved
- ○ Not changed
- ○ Slightly worsened
- ○ Significantly worsened
- ◉ I don't know

Priorities for the new anti-racism strategy

* 4. Racism and racial discrimination manifest themselves on an interpersonal level and become part of societal structures. The consequences for racialised people and groups are numerous and impact all areas of life. In your opinion, which forms of racism should be dealt with most urgently at EU level? Please choose no more than five options.

between 1 and 5 choices

- ☑ Racial discrimination
- ☐ Hate speech with a racist motive
- ☐ Hate crime with a racist motive
- ☐ Racist stereotypes
- ☑ Barriers at work and in the economy (e.g. discrimination in recruitment, in contracts, obstacles to career advancement, pay, financial security)
- ☐ Barriers to inclusive quality education (e.g. direct or indirect discrimination, including segregation, bias in assessment or orientation counselling, inequity in academic achievement, administrative or cost-related barriers, transition from school-to-work etc.)
- ☐ Housing discrimination (e.g. access to rental property, home ownership, access to financing etc.)
- ☐ Barriers to accessing justice
- ☑ Potential racial bias in artificial intelligence and automated decision-making systems
- ☐ Racist discourse targeting specific minorities as part of disinformation campaigns and/or actions of foreign interference
- ☐ Lack of political representation
- ☐ Tackling racism in policing
- ☐ Health inequities, including access to healthcare
- ☐ Silencing of racialised actors and actors speaking up about racism

- [ ] None
- [x] Other (please explain)

If you wish, please explain why you selected this/these options.

200 character(s) maximum

Intersectional discrimination - a lot of the inequalities faced by racialised minorities are intersectional & cannot be adequately addressed unless there is an intersectional lens in policy & practice

*5. Do you consider the current priorities of the EU anti-racism action plan still valid for the Commission's work on anti-racism after 2025?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) I don't know
- (•) Partially (see below)

Partially - please select three of the following that you consider most relevant:

between 1 and 3 choices

- [x] 1.Tackling racism and racial discrimination faced by individuals through legislation
- [x] 2. Tackling structural racism
- [ ] 3. Promoting diversity in human resources of the EU institutions
- [ ] 4. Support EU Member States in combating racism at national level, including national action plans, through regular dialogues, guidance, funding
- [ ] 5. Supporting Diversity Charters in private companies in matters of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)
- [x] 6. Reinforcing civic spaces by enhancing regular dialogues with civil society organisations (CSOs) and through capacity building and funding.
- [ ] 7. Addressing racism in education and educational materials
- [ ] 8. Awareness-raising, training and working with the media
- [ ] 9. Addressing anti-Muslim hatred/racism.

*6. From your perspective, what are the specific challenges that Muslims and people perceived as such face, which should be addressed? Please choose no more than five options.

Minimum 1 selection(s)

- [x] The gender dimension of anti-Muslim hatred and racism

- [ ] Stereotypes and hatred/racism stemming from the conflation of Muslims with terrorism, extremism, violence
- [ ] Anti-Muslim hatred and racism in: education, sport, in the workplace, in health care, housing (please specify)
- [ ] The legal protection against discrimination and hate crimes and prevention of underqualification
- [ ] Public awareness and education about anti-Muslim hatred/racism
- [ ] Lack of representation of Muslims and people perceived as such
- [ ] Reporting mechanisms and victim support services
- [ ] Hate speech on media and social media platforms
- [ ] All of the above
- [ ] None
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

Intrersectional aspects, e.g. the realities of older Muslims by supporting CSOs and gathering disaggregated data without age limits and actively including older people is crucial

7. Is anything not yet mentioned that you think should be included as a priority in the new EU anti-racism strategy 2026-2030?

500 character(s) maximum

Intersectionality, Inequalities in accessing and providing care and support, anti-racism in the context of demographic change, adoption of horizontal directive to adequately protect racialised individuals and communities from multiple/intersectional forms of discrimination

Actions for the new anti-racism strategy

* 8. From your perspective, which actions should the Commission prioritise in the next years? Please choose no more than five options.

between 1 and 5 choices

- [ ] Improve the collection, monitoring and evaluation of equality data disaggregated by race, ethnicity or religion
- [ ] Support Member States in their efforts on national action plans against racism
- [ ] Tackle potential racial bias in artificial intelligence and automated decision-making systems
- [ ] Develop awareness-raising campaigns challenging racist stereotypes and ideologies

- [ ] Raise awareness of the historical roots of racism and of its negative impact on society
- [ ] Encourage the development of educational materials which include the perspectives of racialised people and support teachers, learners, and youth workers in recognising and countering racism
- [x] Mainstream anti-racism into EU policies
- [ ] Reduce the threat posed by violent extremist narratives, including hate and disinformation online
- [ ] Increase diversity and inclusion in the EU institutions
- [x] Reinforce an intersectional policy approach by focusing on different forms of racism and discrimination that intersect, including with other grounds of discrimination such as religion or gender
- [ ] Prevent and address discrimination by law enforcement and public authorities
- [ ] Promote training and capacity-building of public servants on anti-racism topics
- [x] Support the implementation of the EU legal framework to combat discrimination, racism, xenophobia, hate speech and hate crime
- [x] Provide funding to European civil society networks working on combating racism
- [ ] Provide funding for projects that combat racism and racial discrimination
- [ ] Support mutual learning and the exchange of good practices between Member States on combating racism
- [ ] Support the fight against racism internationally through international partnerships
- [ ] Counter disinformation campaigns that target specific minorities, with racial profiling
- [ ] Counter foreign interference actions that target specific minority groups
- [ ] None
- [x] Other (please explain)

If you wish, explain why you selected this/these options.

200 character(s) maximum

*9. Which of the following policy actions should the Commission prioritise to combat structural racism? Please select all that apply.

- [x] Better collection of equality data and research on structural racism

- [ ] Foster mutual learning and cooperation among Member States and stakeholders on how to address prejudice, racism and discrimination in and through education and youth work (guidelines, education materials, projects, identification of good practices etc.)
- [ ] Prevention, including by tackling racist stereotypes
- [ ] Acknowledgement of the historical roots of racism
- [ ] Training and capacity building of professionals, working in areas such as education, employment, healthcare, law enforcement and criminal justice, where data has confirmed the detrimental impact of structural racism
- [ ] I don't know
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

funding for CSOs representing minority groups to ensure their realities are reflected, gather disaggregated data, adoption of horizontal directive & and applying intersectionality in practice

* 10. National action plans against racism are the main instrument introduced by the EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 to counter racism at national level. What kind of policy actions should the Commission take post-2025 to support the work at national level? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] Provide funding to support national anti-racism measures
- [ ] Collaborate closely with Member States to counter racism in the EU
- [ ] Appoint national contact points to counter racism
- [ ] Provide opportunities for Member States to exchange views
- [ ] Arrange country visits between Member States
- [ ] Launch studies on relevant topics
- [ ] Develop thematic guidelines to address specific aspects of racism at national level
- [x] I don't know
- [ ] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

* 11. The Commission recognises the importance of moving toward a harmonised approach in the equality data collection across the EU. Which of the following policy actions should the Commission prioritise to advance equality data collection? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] Introduce a Commission Equality Data action plan
- [x] Introduce Commission Recommendation on equality data collection
- [x] Involvement of civil society organisations in developing data collection and dissemination
- [ ] I don't know
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

Ensure that any Equality data initiative takes an intersectional approach and does not have any age limits or biases

* 12. The Commission recognises the importance of advancing social inclusion (in education, employment, health and housing). Which of the following policy actions should the Commission prioritise to advance social inclusion? Please select three priorities.

- [ ] Ensure that EU funds are used effectively
- [x] Mainstream anti-racism into all Commission policies related to social inclusion
- [x] Develop binding objectives at national level in different sectors, supported by data and indicators
- [ ] Encourage the extension of positive actions for marginalised groups
- [ ] Advocate for stronger sanctions in cases of discrimination
- [ ] Ensure that people are aware of their rights
- [ ] Encourage the Member States to address anti-racism in and through education and youth work
- [ ] Put stronger focus on fighting polarisation and hate in the EU (including online hate)
- [ ] I don't know
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

apply intersectionality in practice, taking due account of situation of older racialised individuals

* 13. What measures should be prioritised in the development of a strategy to combat racism within private organisations? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] Propose mandatory diversity and inclusion training for all employees
- [ ] Enforce transparent reporting and auditing of diversity metrics within companies
- [ ] Establish clear consequences for discriminatory behaviours and practices
- [ ] Promote the hiring and advancement of underrepresented groups through targeted recruitment and mentorship programs
- [ ] Create and support employee resource groups (ERGs) for minority employees to provide a platform for their concerns and suggestions
- [ ] Encourage private organisations to publicly commit to diversity and equity goals and to regularly update on their progress
- [ ] Increase collaboration between private organisations and local communities to address structural racism
- [ ] Develop guidelines to ensure equal pay and opportunities for all employees, regardless of racial or ethnic background
- [ ] Provide incentives for companies that demonstrate significant improvements in racial diversity and inclusivity
- [ ] None
- [x] I don't know
- [ ] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

The Commission emphasises the importance of involving civil society actors representing racialised communities in policymaking at EU level.

* 14 A. What role should civil society organisations (CSOs) representing racialised communities play in EU policymaking? Please order the following choices from most important (1) to the least important (3).

Use drag&drop or the up/down buttons to change the order or accept the initial order.

- ⠿ Ensure the representation of racialised communities in EU decision-making
- ⠿ Advocate for inclusive and anti-racist policies at EU and national levels
- ⠿ Monitor the implementation of EU policies at national, regional or local level

* 14 B. What concrete measures should the EU implement to ensure that CSOs participate in a meaningful and sustained way? Please select all that apply.

- [x] Provide sustainable funding and resources
- [x] Ensure formal, effective and meaningful consultation in policymaking
- [ ] Strengthen their capacity and knowledge, and support leadership programmes
- [ ] Providing collaborative spaces for communities to work together
- [ ] Fostering a conducive environment
- [x] Protecting Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society
- [ ] I don’t know
- [ ] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

* 15. Promoting diversity and ensuring a discrimination-free and inclusive workplace: how could the EU institutions move towards having a more diverse workforce that is representative of the populations of the EU Member States? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Systematically collect data on the diversity of candidates at the various stages of selection and recruitment phases for the jobs in the EU institutions
- [ ] Ensure inclusive Bluebook traineeship programme
- [ ] Introduce targets for ethnic minority representation
- [ ] Expand training on unconscious bias for staff and management
- [ ] Reinforce communication campaigns dedicated to diverse communities
- [ ] Conduct regular diversity surveys of staff
- [ ] Increase showcasing testimonials of role models from diverse backgrounds working in the EU institutions
- [ ] Better coordinate the promotion of diversity and inclusion across all EU institutions
- [ ] I don't know
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

People at the intersections of discrimination must also be included.

* 16. Stereotypes: how could the Commission tackle persistent stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies, which negatively portray people with a minority racial, ethnic or religious background or people perceived as such? Please select all that apply.

- [x] Collect, promote, share and support the analysis of data on the prevalence of different stereotypes among people in the EU
- [x] Conduct awareness-raising and communication campaigns aimed at the general public
- [ ] Engage with the media actors to tackle racist stereotypes in the media
- [ ] Engage cultural actors in tackling racist stereotypes in the field of culture
- [ ] Engage with sports actors to tackle racist stereotypes and promote social inclusion in sports
- [ ] Engage with stakeholders in the field of youth to tackle racist stereotypes through youth work
- [x] Engage with decision-makers in actions to tackle stereotypes and prejudices in politics
- [x] Encourage including anti-racism and awareness of historical roots of racism in initial teacher education and continuous professional development for all staff in education
- [x] Support actions and initiatives to tackle racist stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies
- [ ] Support actions and initiatives that address historical roots of racism
- [ ] I don't know
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

Ensure visibility of all forms of intersectional discrimination

* 17. Employment: according to data, racialised people face discrimination in employment in various ways. Which of the following actions would you prioritise? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Ensure that people are aware of their rights
- [ ] Advocate for safe spaces in the work environment that allow for confidential counselling
- [ ] Advocate for better counselling services for victims of discrimination
- [ ]

- [ ] I don't know
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

Address structural issues through an intersectional lens

* 18. Health: racialised people face health inequities, including as regards to access to healthcare. In what ways could the Commission support Member States in addressing these inequities? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] Advocate for awareness of their rights specific as regards healthcare
- [ ] Advocate for the collection of data on health equality to enable better monitoring
- [ ] Advocate to raise awareness among healthcare professionals about inequities
- [ ] Support capacity building for civil society organisations that interact with national health policy makers
- [x] I don't know
- [ ] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

EU policymaking

* 19. Do you think an anti-racism perspective should be better integrated in certain EU policy areas? Please choose no more than five policy areas:

- [ ] Agricultural, maritime and fisheries
- [x] Asylum and migration
- [x] Home affairs/law enforcement
- [ ] Business, finance and enterprise
- [ ] Climate change and environmental
- [ ] Culture and sports
- [ ] Digital policy
- [ ] Defence and security
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Youth

- [ ] Emergency preparedness and response and disaster risk reduction
- [x] Employment, skills and social policy
- [ ] Energy
- [ ] External relations policy, including development cooperation and humanitarian aid
- [x] Health
- [ ] Housing
- [x] Justice and fundamental rights
- [ ] Media and advertising
- [ ] Regional and rural policy
- [ ] Research and innovation
- [ ] Trade
- [ ] Mobility and transport
- [ ] All
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

* 20. In your opinion, which of the following measures have the most impact on improving the integration of an anti-racism perspective within businesses, organisations and public administrations? Please choose no more than three options:

between 1 and 3 choices

- [ ] Training on anti-racism for staff
- [ ] Training on anti-racism for decision-makers
- [x] Integrating the anti-racism perspective better into studies, impact assessments, evaluations and legislative proposals
- [x] Setting targets for each policy area and monitoring the results
- [ ] Promoting the development and adoption of anti-racism plans across organisations and public bodies
- [ ] None
- [ ] I don't know
- [x] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

Ensure the meaningful participation of racialised people in their diversity with a focus on intersectional inequalities.

* 21. Intersectionality: racial discrimination can link to other grounds of discrimination, such as age, sex, disability, sexual orientation or religion or belief. In what ways could the Commission better take this aspect into account? Please select three priorities:

between 1 and 3 choices

- [x] Addressing racism through an intersectional approach
- [ ] Focusing particularly on the sex/gender dimension in racism
- [x] Focusing particularly on racism and ageism
- [ ] Focusing particularly on racism and religion or belief or perceived religion or belief
- [ ] Focusing particularly on racism and belonging to the LGBTIQ community
- [ ] Focusing particularly on racism and disability
- [ ] Focusing particularly on racism and anti-migrant sentiments
- [x] Improving the collection of equality data that includes intersectional data
- [ ] I don't know
- [ ] Other (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

Need a new intersectional legal framework and strengthened Equality Task Force with more resources and mainstreaming tools balancing it with targeted measures.

* 22. Anti-migrant narratives, which contribute to xenophobia and stereotyping, have increasingly become part of public and political debates in recent years. How can the Commission promote fair migration debates and protect migrants from racist harassment and discrimination? Please select all that apply:

- [ ] Encourage fact-checking, media training and media literacy
- [ ] Encourage counter-narratives and facilitate pluralistic fact-based debates
- [ ] Promptly address cases of discrimination committed by law enforcement and border patrols
- [ ] Improve training and capacity-building for government officials on anti-racism topics

- [ ] Mainstream anti-racism into EU security and migration policies
- [ ] Invest in policies to support social cohesion and integration
- [ ] Protect safe spaces for organisations and media who support refugees and migrants
- [ ] Tackling hate speech on media and social media platforms in line with the Digital services act
- [x] I don't know
- [ ] Other examples (please explain)

Please explain

200 character(s) maximum

Any other comments

23. Open question: if you have any additional comments or suggestions on how to strengthen the fight against racism and racial discrimination in the EU, feel free to use the answer box below.

1500 character(s) maximum

To strengthen the fight against racism and racial discrimination in the EU we need a strong intersectional long-term strategy that creates commitments and accountability across the EU and Member States. This strategy must adopt an intersectional aapproach, taking into account the lived experiences of those experiencing inequalities and exclusion at all stages of their lives, paying due attention to the intersection of racism and ageism. The meaningful participation of racialised communities in their diversity and funding and support for civil society organisations which represent people and groups at risk of intersectional discrimination is necessary. To address structural racism in a comprehensive way, the EU must improve the current legal protections, including by adopting the horizontal equal treatment directive, which would adequately protect racialised people from multiple and intersectional discrimination. The EU should also adopt an Action Plan to Combat Ageism, to strengthen efforts to address inequalities across the lifecourse, as this is the only ground of discrimination not covered by a specific policy framework or initiative, creating gaps for racialised groups facing intersectional forms of discrimination

It is also possible to upload a file, max. 1MB

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