

## Grundtvig Contact Seminar

### ACTIVE AGEING: CHALLENGES FOR A SPARKLING LATER LIFE

5-9 October, Villasimius

HOTEL PULLMAN TIMI AMA SARDEGNA  
Località Notteri - Villasimius (CA)

The aim of the seminar is to foster a fruitful reflection and to help create Learning Partnerships and Senior Volunteering Projects among organisations which operate in the field of adult education in different European countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme.

The reflection and the resulting projects should be focused on the challenges related to the process of ageing of the European population. The current demographic trends emphasize the necessity to do more to promote active ageing and to mobilise the potential of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and above. In this context, it is of crucial importance that the contribution of older people in society be better recognised, supported and further developed.

Europeans are now living longer and healthier than ever before. The rise in life expectancy combined with low birth rates imply a shift in the balance between younger and older people, which is expected to sharpen as the baby boom cohorts are reaching their retirement age. These demographic changes present tough challenges, as public budgets and pension systems are put under increased pressure. Ageing is still linked with illness and dependency, which constitute huge strains on health and social care systems. A considerable number of European citizens experience social exclusion and marginalisation as they age, with older women being especially at risk in terms of isolation and poverty<sup>1</sup>. Finally, there is a fear that intergenerational solidarity might suffer from tensions between older and younger generations, as the ratio of working-age people for every person aged over 65 is due to decrease.

But this picture of an ageing population fails to consider the significant contribution older people and the baby-boom cohorts in particular can make to society. While the population aged over 60 will continue to increase, the resources, skills and competences of older people are a valuable potential that needs to be mobilised and better valorised. New cohorts of older people tend to have higher levels of education and more skilled professional backgrounds. Older people themselves are very keen on playing their part and actively participating in their community. A key opportunity for tackling the challenge of demographic ageing and preserving intergenerational solidarity is therefore to ensure that the baby-boom cohorts remain active, healthy and autonomous as long as possible, especially after retirement<sup>2</sup>.

Promoting active ageing implies *“creating better opportunities and working conditions to enable older workers to play their part in the labour market, combating social exclusion by fostering active participation in society, and encouraging*

<sup>1</sup> 22% for female vs. 16% for male in 2008 for EU-27, Ex-Ante Evaluation, Accompanying document to the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012), SEC(2010) 1002 final, 6.9.2010, p 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ex-Ante Evaluation, Accompanying document to the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012), SEC(2010) 1002 final, 6.9.2010, p 5.

*healthy ageing*<sup>3</sup>. The continuing participation of older people in society is therefore a central aspect of the notion of active ageing<sup>4</sup>.

A number of initiatives have been implemented at a European level to help promote active ageing through volunteering, to support healthy ageing, to fight age discrimination as well as to improve the accessibility of infrastructures, goods and services for older people. In its strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the European Commission highlights the importance of promoting healthy and active ageing to help, among other things, achieve high-employment, invest in skills and reduce poverty<sup>5</sup>. In the near future, the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing will serve as a framework for raising awareness, disseminating good practice and supporting policy-makers and stakeholders at all levels to take action in this field. Different European programmes and strategies, including the European Social and Regional Development Funds address the challenges connected with population ageing.

Among these initiatives, the Grundtvig programme can help tackle the problems associated with Europe's ageing population and promote active ageing by supporting transnational partnerships on the theme. In this perspective, the seminar will be focused on the following challenges:

### Active participation of older people in the society

Promoting active ageing in the society is primarily meant to combat the isolation of older people by enabling them to keep an active role in their community. In a context of socio-economic crisis and increased risk of social exclusion, active participation in social activities could help reduce the isolation of older people and develop intergenerational solidarities. Promoting social participation in elderly people through volunteering and education is shown to generate greater social support and to contribute to enhance older people's mental and physical health.

Participating in voluntary and community activities after retirement is for older people a means of contributing to society in other ways, valorising their knowledge, their competences and previous experiences. Older people are actually very willing to participate in volunteering, with 73% of workers approaching retirement stating that they would consider participating in community or volunteer work while 44% of those who had retired had already volunteered or were planning to do so<sup>6</sup>. Beyond voluntary or charity work, senior citizens may engage in several different activities following retirement, such as social activities in clubs, political or community organisations, as well as providing informal help or care to other family members or outside their families<sup>7</sup>. To this extent, volunteering is clearly likely to develop neighbourhood and local solidarities and thereby reduce the isolation of older people.

With more time at their disposal, retired people are also more likely to acquire new skills and competences through formal, non-formal and informal learning. A large number of older people is indeed willing to participate in training, with nearly one in four retired people stating that they had already enrolled in education courses or were planning to do so in a recent survey<sup>8</sup>. More than ever, it is therefore crucial to invest in skills, to increase the participation rates in adult education and training and to provide elderly people with a better access to lifelong learning.

As volunteers, carers, and simply as active citizens, older persons represent a huge potential for society, which needs to be better mobilised and exploited. This is all the more blatant since the new cohorts of older people tend to have higher levels

<sup>3</sup> Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012), COM(2010) 462 final, 6.9.2010, p 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ex-Ante Evaluation, Accompanying document to the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012), SEC(2010) 1002 final, 6.9.2010, p 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, COM(2010) 2020, 3.3.2010.

<sup>6</sup> *Family life and the needs of an ageing population*, Flash Eurobarometer n. 247, October 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (2004-2007)*, SHARE: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, November 2008.

<sup>8</sup> *Family life and the needs of an ageing population*, Flash Eurobarometer n. 247, October 2008.

of education and more skilled professional backgrounds, and are therefore likely to make an even more effective and valuable contribution to society.

### Healthy ageing and autonomous living

Not only actively taking part in social activities is shown to enhance older people's mental and physical health. Conversely, healthy ageing can help older people to remain active in society for longer as well as enable them to take up voluntary work and get involved in social activities. Staying healthy is directly correlated to the quality of individual life, but beyond this, a healthy population can help curb the strains on health and social care systems. It is therefore crucial to help older people improve their mental and physical well-being by maintaining an active, independent, social and meaningful life as they age.

While ageing is clearly linked with disability and illness, healthy ageing policies need to focus both on a better prevention of physical and mental impairment and on the fight against discrimination on the grounds of age and disability. Guaranteeing equal treatment to older people requires to improve the accessibility of goods and services, taking into account their special needs and requirements. The issue of accessibility is crucial if independent living and the mobility of older persons are to be promoted in a context of healthy ageing. Homes and local environment, including public transport, can be adapted and goods and services can be made more accessible so that older people with health impairments can continue to live in their own home as well as maintain social contacts and activities. Accessibility standards have to be developed, which can also benefit other disadvantaged groups whatever their age, especially disable people.

Promoting autonomous living for older people also requires to put in place innovative solutions through information and communication technologies. New technology-based solutions can make an effective contribution for ageing well at home and in the community. There is a huge potential for ICT solutions considering that elderly persons are over-represented within the group of European citizens who have never used the internet (about 30% out of 150 million<sup>9</sup>). A better access to ICT for older people can thus help deal with the challenges connected with ageing and contribute to a better quality of life for elderly people, as well as significant cost-savings in health and social care.

<sup>9</sup> Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012), COM(2010) 462 final, 6.9.2010, p 8.

## PRACTICAL DETAILS

### What is a contact seminar?

A contact seminar is a networking event organised by a National Agency. It aims at bringing together people from organisations which share common interests and would like to develop European cooperation projects/partnerships in the field of education and vocational training. It is a great 'partner-finding' opportunity that will also allow you to:

- receive more information on the Lifelong Learning Programme and the sub-programme you are interested in;
- receive information on good practice examples and meet people from organisations which have already developed European cooperation projects;
- get to know suitable partner organisations;
- take part in workshops where you can draft your future project/partnership;
- receive advice from NA staff and other experts on how to draft a successful grant application

### Location and travel information

The contact seminar will take place from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011 in Villasimius, at Hotel Pullman Timi Ama Sardegna, Località Notteri, Villasimius (CA). The Seminar venue is located on the south-east coast of Sardinia, in an idyllic bay dominated by an Aragonese tower and surrounded by Mediterranean vegetation, around 60 km from Cagliari international airport (Cagliari Elmas Airport) and 2 km from the small town of Villasimius.

Further information about the seminar venue is available at the following link:

<http://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-3040-pullman-timi-ama-sardegna/index.shtml>.

Shuttle buses will be arranged from Cagliari airport to the Hotel and back, since it is not really easy to get to the Hotel by public transportation. However, further travel information will be provided at a later stage for the participants who will need to get to the Hotel by bus.

### Working language

The whole seminar will be in English. Please note that no interpretation will be provided.

### Contact seminar fee

The seminar fee is €750. We can host up to 70 participants.

The seminar fee includes accommodation, meals, documentation, working materials, shuttle bus service from and to Cagliari airport as well as the afternoon cultural visit to Cagliari. Further details about payment modalities and deadline will be provided to the participants once their registration is accepted.

### How to get funds?

To attend a contact seminar, your organisation shall apply for a Preparatory visit grant. For detailed information on grant application form, deadlines and any other requirements applicable at national level, please contact the National Agency in your country.

Contact information of the National Agencies for the Lifelong Learning Programme is available at the following address:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc1208\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc1208_en.htm).

### What to prepare?

We encourage all participants to bring some audiovisual or paper materials about their organisations and activities, as well as any other material in relation with any aspect of active ageing (posters, brochures, photos...), together with some informative documents about their regions and countries of origin.

To prepare for the working groups and actively contribute to the discussion, all participants are expected to discuss possible partnership ideas on the seminar theme within their institution, as well as to consult the following documents:

- *European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012: Everyone has a role to play!*, AGE Platform Europe, 2011
- *Guide for civil dialogue on promoting older people's social inclusion*, AGE Platform Europe, December 2010
- *Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012)*, COM(2010) 462 final, 6.9.2010
- *Ex-ante Evaluation, Accompanying document to the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012)*, SEC(2010) 1002 final, 6.9.2010
- *Council conclusions on Active Ageing*, 3019<sup>th</sup> Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, 7.6.2010
- *Intergenerational Solidarity: the way forward*, AGE Platform Europe, 2010
- *Council conclusions on Healthy and Dignified ageing*, 2980<sup>th</sup> Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 30.11.2009
- *Promoting Volunteering for Europe's seniors*, AGE Platform Europe, 2009
- *How to promote Ageing Well in Europe: Instruments and tools available to local and regional actors*, AGE Platform Europe, October 2009
- *Dealing with the impact of an ageing population in the EU (2009 Ageing Report)*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM (2009) 180 final, 29.4.2009
- *Intergenerational solidarity - Analytical Report*, Flash Eurobarometer n. 269, April 2009
- *Media literacy, digital exclusion and older people*, AGE Platform Europe, December 2008
- *Older people and Information and Communication Technologies*, AGE Platform Europe, November 2008
- *Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (2004-2007)*, SHARE: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, November 2008
- *Family life and the needs of an ageing population*, Flash Eurobarometer n. 247, October 2008
- *Healthy ageing*, AGE Platform Europe, September 2007
- *Lifelong Learning - A tool for all ages*, AGE Platform Europe, 2007
- *Towards a European society of all ages*, AGE Platform Europe, November 2006
- *Ageing and Employment: Identification of good practice to increase job opportunities and maintain older workers in employment*, Submitted to the Commission of the European Communities DG EMPL, Warwick Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick and Economix Research & Consulting, Munich, 7.3.2006
- *Gender, Health and Ageing*, World Health Organization, November 2003
- *Active Ageing - A policy framework*, World Health Organization, WHO/NMH/NPH/02.8, 2002
- *Ageing - Exploding the myths*, World Health Organization, WHO/HSC/AHE/99.1, 1999
- *Growing older - Staying Well*, World Health Organization, WHO/HPR/AHE/98.1, 1998

Useful resources can also be found on the following websites:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/ey2012.jsp?langId=en>

<http://www.age-platform.eu/en/age-policy-work/employment-and-active-ageing>

Finally, all participants are kindly invited to bring any specialty from their countries (typical regional food, drinks or tasty desserts) for the European buffet which will be organised on the first evening. Anything good to eat or drink is very welcome!

#### Who to contact?

For further information, please contact:

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*The Italian Grundtvig Team is looking forward  
to welcoming you in Villasimius!*