



601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049

T 202-434-2277
1-888-OUR-AARP
1-888-687-2277
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org

EU2020 Consultation: Comments from AARP

AARP* is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people age 50 and over have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP currently represents nearly 40 million people.

AARP welcomes the Commission's intent to develop and implement a forward looking and comprehensive strategy for the EU, a new vision which takes into account the many challenges facing the continent. AARP also applauds this consultation, which demonstrates a willingness to include and engage all stakeholders in the development of this new strategy. As an international organization with strong EU ties, AARP believes that it can offer an additional perspective to this consultation.

As the largest trading bloc, the EU drives nearly a third of the world's economy, almost as large as the U.S. and China combined. The transition from a region with high unemployment to an area with a lower unemployment rate than the United States is remarkable. The EU should also be commended for the levels of health and financial security provided to citizens.

The sustainability and growth of this social market economy is a key driver in the future EU2020 strategy, and the consultation background document has a strong focus on these issues. We agree with the Commission that the EU must adapt to the new economy and new challenges, including the aging of the population. However, the EU must also embrace the longevity and talents of its older population. We commend the explicit reference of population aging in the consultation document and encourage the EU and the Member States to do more to develop sustainable societies, especially in the area of health promotion.

Over the next decade people will live longer. AARP sees this as an opportunity - not as a cause for alarm. There is great value in the older population and tapping this resource is one of the keys to the EU creating a more vibrant economy and inclusive society. We at AARP have recognized this fact and so have many governments, NGO's and businesses in the EU and all over the world.

Keeping the population healthy will assist this goal. The EU must continue to embrace "Healty Life Years" as part of the Lisbon Strategy and as a key component of EU2020. Quite simply, health should not be seen as an economic cost; it should be viewed as an investment in the future. As the Commission itself has advocated on many previous occasions, health equals wealth. Health should be considered in all policies and recognized for its broad impact on jobs and innovation. Policy



makers must be aware of the cost of doing too little on health care.

AARP believes in the diversity and power of the single market to achieve the objectives of EU2020. For years, we have worked to bring together different collaborators including the Commission, Member States, businesses, and NGOs. We convened these organizations through our Reinventing Retirement series in London in 2004 and in Durstein in 2008. In 2007, we launched the AARP International Innovative Employer Award within Germany, the UK, and Denmark, recognizing companies that utilize age-friendly employment practices. In 2008, AARP launched the "AARP/DSL Workforce Assessment Tool" in Germany with which businesses can assess and address workforce needs and in 2010, we plan to launch the "AARP/TAEN Workforce Assessment Tool" in the United Kingdom.

In 2008, AARP worked directly with DG-Employment to co-host a meeting on age and talent management in Europe. We shared best practices from opinion-leaders and policy makers in the EU, U.S., and Asia. Flexicurity and life-long learning were key components of this meeting. AARP looks forward to continuing these types of collaborations with the Commission during 2010 and beyond.

The Commission must stimulate and facilitate measures which make it easier for older people to work longer in the formal economy. Older workers have vast experience and knowledge, which should not go to waste. Decreasing birth rates will also hasten the need for employers to actively recruit senior talent across all sectors. The EU can support its business community by retraining workers to meet the demands of the new economy (e.g. by means of the European Social Fund).

We believe in the central ideas put forth in the EU2020 consultation document and agree that no single member state can achieve these goals alone. That is why AARP is committed to seeking out and sharing best practices in health and financial security as well as the employment field.

We look forward to working with the Commission and Member States over the next 10 years to make the EU healthier, more productive, and inclusive.

* AARP does not endorse or make financial contributions to candidates for public office.