



## PRESS RELEASE

# EU launches the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations: Get involved!

Copenhagen, 18 January 2012 . Today marks the start of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, with a two-day conference in Copenhagen, organized by the European Commission and the Danish Presidency of the EU. The European Year aims to raise awareness about active ageing, especially in the fields of employment, participation in the society and independent living of older people. The European Year will encourage stakeholders and policymakers to set commitments in these areas and take concrete action.

These commitments can range from legislative reform (e.g. remove obstacles that prevent older people from staying in employment), to analysis or public debates, raising awareness, or identifying priorities for action. For instance, cities can join the age-friendly cities programme of the World Health Organisation; companies can improve the working conditions for older workers; civil society organisations can foster senior volunteering. The website of the European Year is the place where such commitments can be made public and where inspiration can be found from what is happening elsewhere. At the end of the year, the most successful commitments will be given recognition at national and European level.

László Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, said: "Active ageing is about helping older people to stay in work and share their experience. It is about them continuing to play an active role in society and living as healthy, independent and fulfilling lives as possible. Active ageing is essential to reach our 75% employment target and to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. The Year calls for action in different areas - employment, social protection, education and training, health and social services, housing and public infrastructure".

The EU's population is ageing. From 2012, the European working-age population will start to shrink, while the number of over-60s will increase rapidly, by about two million people per year. This demographic shift is the result of the large group of post-war baby-boomers reaching retirement. The average age in the European Union is now around 40 years, but by 2060, it will have increased to 47. The proportion of the population in the EU27 who are aged 55 and over rose from 25% in 1990 to 30% in 2010, and is estimated to reach around 40% by 2060. However, Europeans are not just living longer. They are also healthier than ever before, which offers an important potential for the society and economy.

The European Year 2012 covers three dimensions of active ageing:

- Active ageing in employment. Encouraging older workers to stay in employment requires notably the improvement of working conditions and their adaptation to the health status and needs of older workers, updating their skills by providing better access to life long learning and the review of tax and benefit systems to ensure that there are effective incentives for working longer.

- Participation in society. Improving the opportunities and conditions for older people to contribute to society as volunteers or family carers and to participate in society, thus avoiding social isolation and many of the associated problems and risks.

- Independent living. Health promotion and preventive health care through measures that maximise healthy life years and prevent dependency as well as making the environment (public buildings, infrastructure, transport, buildings) more age-friendly, allowing older people to stay as independent as possible.

## Background

Throughout the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, hundreds of activities, projects and communication events will take place and will be promoted both at the EU and national levels.

- The EY 2012 launching conference, in Copenhagen, which will focus on how innovation can bring new solutions to the future challenges of Europe's ageing society in the fields of employment, health and social affairs. Among the speakers: László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, Mette Frederiksen, Danish Minister for Employment, Sotiroula Charalambous, Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Cyprus and Karen Hækkerup, Danish Minister for Social Affairs and Integration and stakeholders.

- The EY2012 Journalists' Conference (a conference for journalists that will take place in March 2012 in Brussels)

- Various events will allow stakeholders and citizens to get involved and to contribute to active ageing and solidarity between generations across the EU. At the end of the year, some outstanding achievements will be highlighted at a European award ceremony..

Key dates and events related to Active ageing:

- 18/19 January: EY2012 opening conference in Copenhagen

- January/February: National opening conferences

- 14 February: Forum on EY2012 organised by the Committee of the Regions in Brussels

- March: Media conference "Reporting on ageing and solidarity between generations" in Brussels

- 7 April: World Health Day on Health and Ageing

- 29 April: European Day of Solidarity between Generations (promote intergenerational encounters in schools around in the weeks before and after 29 April)
- 4 June: Conference on "Good governance for Active and Healthy Ageing" in Brussels
- 19/20 September: UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Vienna
- 1 October: International Day of Older People
- 4 November: European Demography Forum
- November: Award Ceremony in Brussels
- December: Closing conference in Cyprus

For more information:

[Official website for the European Year](#)

[Homepage of László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#)

See also:

[Special Eurobarometer 378: Active Ageing \(Report and Factsheets\)](#)

[Comparative information on EU member states in IP/12/16 and in the MEMO/12/10](#)

[Eurostat news release](#)

### **Publications**

[Eurostat brochure - Active ageing and solidarity between generations – a statistical portrait of the European Union 2012 \(PDF\)](#)

[How to promote active ageing in Europe - EU support to local and regional actors \(PDF\)](#)

[European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 \(PDF\)](#)

### **Videos:**

[Video clip on the European Year - Never to old ...](#)

[Video animation on pensions](#)

On the occasion of the launch of the European Year 2012 the Audiovisual Services of DG Communication has produced the first of two video stockshots of 26minutes duration:

[http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/annonce/template\\_en.cfm?prodid=26550](http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/annonce/template_en.cfm?prodid=26550)

**Contacts :**

Andrea Ricciarelli, ICWE GmbH

Tel: +49 (0)30 310 18 18 43

Fax: +49 (0)30 324 98 33

andrea.ricciarelli@icwe.net

Cristina Arigho:

+32 2 298 53 99

Cristina.Arigho@ec.europa.eu