

Digital Single Market

DSM blog post

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Addressing demographic change: a socio-economic challenge and opportunity for Europe

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--- Posted by Peter Wintlev-Jensen, DG INFSO, ICT for Health, Workshop organiser at Digital Agenda Assembly

We are living for longer. That is all thanks to medical progress and lifestyle changes brought about by progress. In today's EU, women aged 65 can expect to live another 20 years (yet men only 17!). A key concern is what those 20 years after retirement age will really hold for the elderly. Will they be able to remain healthy, active and independent and truly enjoy those years?

It is a pressing question for us, both as private individuals but also as a society. In parallel to the extension of life expectancy fertility rates are declining, consequently the ratio between people at work and remaining population will change from 4-1 today to 2-1 by 2050 in average in Europe. The growth in the number of the elderly is both a societal and economical challenge.

In that context, the European Commission recently adopted a [pilot European Innovation Partnership \(EIP\) on Active and Healthy Ageing](#) ^[1], which seeks to launch a set of targeted activities to address the specific challenges of an ageing population and the growing need for chronic disease management, integrated care and independent and active ageing.

The pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing will pursue a triple win for Europe:

- 1) enabling EU citizens to lead healthy, active and independent lives while ageing;
- 2) improving the sustainability and efficiency of social and health care systems;

3) boosting and improving the competitiveness of the markets for innovative products and services, responding to the ageing challenge at both EU and global level, thus creating new opportunities for businesses.

This is supported through the [Digital Agenda for Europe](#) [2]'s objective to harness the potential of ICT to boost prosperity and improve people's quality of life. The Digital Agenda seeks inter alia to ensure that ICT allows more independence for people who are frail or suffer from chronic conditions and for persons with disabilities. It aims to double the take-up of independent living arrangements for the elderly by 2015.

Similarly, "fostering good health in an ageing Europe" was identified as one of the three main objectives of the EU's Healthy Strategy "[Together for Health](#)" [3].

At the Digital Agenda Assembly, the [workshop on demographic change](#) [4] will present the progress and explore the thematic areas of the EIP. It will also provide an opportunity for stakeholders to give feedback.

Even if you cannot attend, you can ask your questions to the speakers via the Comment box on the [workshop page](#) [4]. Please indicate whether your question is for industry, government or users representatives. A report of the workshop will be made available shortly after the event. NB: To post a question you need to log in, using your [Information Society Portal Events profile](#) [5].

You can also contribute to the discussions on twitter using the hashtag: [#daa11ageing](#) [6]

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