




# TOWARDS AN **AGE-FRIENDLY** EUROPEAN UNION **BY 2020**

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## Table of contents

Forewords	3
Introduction	5
<b>_01 Creating an age-friendly EU as a response to EU demographic challenges</b>	<b>7</b>
What do we mean by an age-friendly European Union?	7
What are the benefits of an age-friendly EU?	8
EU contribution to age-friendly environments	8
<b>_02 AGE campaign to promote age-friendly environments in the EU</b>	<b>11</b>
The need for an EU Covenant on Demographic Change	12
Who supports the Covenant?	13
How can you get involved and support AGE's campaign?	15
<b>_03 Some concrete examples of Age-Friendly Environments initiatives</b>	<b>17</b>
1. A positive attitude to ageing...	17
2. An inclusive labour market...	19
3. Accessible outdoor spaces, buildings and transport as well as adapted housing and physical activity facilities...	20
4. Goods and services that are adapted to the needs of all	22
5. Digital inclusion...	24
6. The possibility to have a voice...	25
7. The opportunity to actively participate in volunteering, cultural, sport and recreational activities...	26
8. Access to lifelong and intergenerational learning...	27
9. Social protection systems based on intra- and inter-generational solidarity...	29
10. Conditions and opportunities to grow and age in good mental and physical health...	30
Conclusion	32
Recommendations	33
Annexes	34



deliver services to the elderly, with the proposal to train them as museum guides and offer them, twice weekly the possibility to use these skills, voluntarily, by leading guided tours in the museum. The volunteer programme of Timisoara's Museum of Art started targeting youth in 2009, and is focusing on seniors since last year. The project targeted seniors, over the age of 55, either retired or in the pre-retirement phase, aiming to provide them with an opportunity to learn, interact and engage in activities that would keep them active, involved and with a better attitude towards life.

Seniors took part in training modules and learned to deal with visitors with special needs such as Parkinson or Alzheimer's patients. Some visitors suffering from Parkinson's disease became volunteer guides as well. For seniors involved in the projects as well for the visitors participating in museum tours guided by senior volunteers the experience was life-changing.

## 8. Access to lifelong and intergenerational learning...

... to acquire new skills and knowledge at any age.

Learning opportunities targeting older people are essential to help national and local authorities achieve a wide range of social and economic objectives, notably to support longer working life, reduce dependency by improving older people's autonomy, health and well-being. Public authorities should therefore write into their policies a broader vision of lifelong learning, which fosters common understanding across ministries and sectors, is inclusive of people beyond working age and enables and encourages flexible forms of non formal learning, as well as informal and formal ones.

Often an "educational" intervention can be a very cost-effective way of achieving these social and economic objectives. Structures may already be in place – NGOs, libraries, health services, community centres, religious organisations, workplaces, families, associations and clubs, sport venues etc., and often they can be very effective at reaching hard-to-reach target groups. However, many people and agencies do not see these activities as "learning", and the expertise is not formally recognised or accredited. Addressing the needs effectively calls for more collaborative working between agencies and services. (One Step Up in Later Life: learning for active ageing and intergenerational solidarity, Brussels, 19-21 November 2012)

**"Voluntary activities are part of informal and non-formal learning for people at all ages and at all stages of their lives and contributes to personal development and to learning skills and competences enhancing employability and providing life-long learning opportunities."**

**The Knowledge Volunteers**

### SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

The EAEA Award for adult learning (Grundtvig Award) 2012 aimed at awarding projects that promote the active participation of older learners in society. "Moving stories and Generations", sub-project of the Crosstalk project, targeted senior citizens, children and young people who live together closely but often rarely communicate with each other, and allowed them to come into contact and exchange stories about their youth. It won the prize in the European category.

**TKV -The Knowledge Volunteers** promotes the acquisition of digital competences among older people at risk of social exclusion as well as intergenerational relations that benefit the education of young people. Voluntary participation of youth and the elderly provides a learning opportunity for both generations,

allowing them to improve their self-esteem while reducing the risk of social isolation among older people.

TKV conducts dedicated pilot training courses in various European countries with the involvement of older people in voluntary activities. The beneficiaries are schools and older people's centres, young volunteers, teachers, older volunteers, and local citizens at large.

The project develops and brings to EU level a didactical ICT learning methodology especially adapted for mature learners, which has been defined and successfully applied at local level by Fondazione Mondo Digitale (FMD). This methodology is enriched with the application of the peer-to-peer course approach carried out by older experienced volunteers to new older students. The didactical intergenerational approach is based on the active role of young students, who act as individual teachers or tutors to the elderly participants. A didactical toolkit has been set up and can be downloaded free.

**Stichting Belangenbehartiging Pleeggrandouders Nederland (SBPN)** is a foundation which is currently working across the whole of the Netherlands. It works exclusively to support grandparents who are the primary care givers to their grandchildren (Foster Grandparents). There are around 5 million children and young people in the country, of whom around 23,000 are currently in the care system. SBPN are able to support these grandparents in a number of ways. They can act as an intermediate between them and the Youth Care Agency, identifying where the foster grandparents could benefit from additional support, and then acting as advocates for them. In other cases they are put in contact with other foster grandparents in their area and the project facilitates peer to peer support. Many of the ad hoc local groups come about in this way. The project also publishes a newsletter around 6 times a year which offers a forum for foster grandparents to support each other and provides SBPN with an opportunity to disseminate any information which might be of benefit to the grandparents.

Every year they run an extremely popular Annual Event. As well as the mutual support grandparents can find in these events, they often form the start of social networks which can be ongoing over time.

**OWLEgo+** The OWLEgo+ was a GRUNDTVIG funded project aimed to identify and address issues relating to employability and entrepreneurship and later life skills for women aged 50+. The project resulted from the experience gained by the Centre for Micro-Enterprise (CME) at London Metropolitan University in working with and researching the needs of older women over a number of years. The project involved partners in Sweden and Italy who addressed:

- ▶ Older women's enterprise competencies and micro business start up
- ▶ Employability and life skills
- ▶ ICT for social and business growth
- ▶ Community involvement
- ▶ Effective senior citizenship in the EU and own country

