Towards Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Places for All Ages

Follow up to the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and input to the preparation of the 2012 European Year on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

December 2010

AGE
Platform Europe

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Introduction

The importance of environments designed for all in the context of demographic ageing

Europe is at a cross roads as it re-shapes its vision of itself and its priority action areas in the light of the current economic situation. We want and need it all – jobs, competitiveness, growth, as well as security, a sustainable future and a dignified quality of life for all.

The 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion was a wake-up call. As Europe raised awareness of the challenges of poverty, cohesion and exclusion, it is also coming to terms with the lack of progress on the Lisbon Strategy social and ecological bio-diversity targets. Both the current plan 'Europe 2020: A European Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', and the mixed reactions to it, highlight the problems of shaping a shared, inclusive and sustainable vision, and of sequencing and coordinating our steps towards effective action and delivery.

The problem is not just Europe's. Urbanisation, globalisation, climate change and demographic shift are universal trends that are both accelerating and converging. They are all interwoven and need to be looked at together. But in Europe's current focus on economic recovery and climate/energy policy, we are in danger of ignoring the twin challenges of the quality and physical accessibility of our towns, cities and transport infrastructure, and the challenge of ensuring that our short, medium and long-term action plans recognise and accommodate a population that is ageing quickly.

If we continue to consider an accessible physical environment and our older people's health and welfare needs as burdens to be accommodated by the fruits of the labours of our 'at work' generations - we are missing the point. Older people are an enormous economic and social resource that will grow in number and can grow in quality - but we need to provide smart, sustainable, inclusive and connected places for all of us to engage, contribute and prosper.

That is why AGE Platform Europe decided to publish this paper drafted all along 2010 together with its experts in order to raise awareness and make proposals on how an age-friendly environment can be promoted at EU, national and local level to ensure a full participation of older people in society.

I. The importance of an age-inclusive living environment

An inclusive environment is an essential key for a society based on equal rights. It provides its citizens with the autonomy to seek and undertake employment, to receive education and training, and to pursue an active social and economic life[1].

To enjoy our rights as citizens, we should all be able to access and move between our homes, neighbourhood places, public buildings, parks and urban spaces, connecting to services and opportunities for active participation within our communities. Beyond our homes, our surrounding neighbourhoods, including shops, local amenities and leisure and cultural places, needs to be accessible to all.

Many of us experience difficulties while walking on the streets, entering a building, or finding a location inside. The pavement is too high for a pushchair or a wheelchair; there are no benches for a rest in between times; the doors are too narrow for a wheelchair or a walking frame, or too heavy for a child or an older person with arthritis. Sometimes these barriers cannot even be seen because the visual contrasts are too weak or attention fields are missing; the signage is inadequate, over-complex or confusing, lighting conditions too poor to provide a feeling of safety and security.

Our environment, especially in large cities, creates obstacles and barriers, both permanent and temporary for all people, but particularly for those with disabilities, those who are frail or are experiencing age-related sensory or cognitive decline, and those who are functionally restricted – with prams, toddlers or mobility aids. Inclusive environments are easy to use and appealing to everyone regardless of age, ability or circumstance.

While the inclusivity and accessibility of our public, commercial and historical buildings are important – shared urban places and the public spaces between them are vital. Streets, roads, pavements, footways, cycle-paths, open spaces, recreational areas, parks, green spaces, street signs, bus-stops, taxi-ranks, metro and train stations – all form part of the urban fabric of a society and should be safe, convenient and enjoyable for everybody. The extent to which their use is shared in time and space by old and young alike, is a measure of inter-generational tolerance and trust that is a hallmark of friendly and inclusive places.

In our knowledge-based societies, the built environment increasingly includes electronic devices and equipment such as access pads, environmental controllers, automated vending machines, alarms, electronic time-table displays, public address systems, computer controlled traffic management and access authorization turnstiles. Information and communication technology displays and interactions are now part of the ambient background to the built environment. Technologies embedded in the fabric of our urban

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[1] European Commission, "2010: A Europe accessible for all", October 2003. Document available at: http://www.accessibletourism.org/resources/final_report_ega_en.pdf

places and public buildings aid navigation and orientation but they must also be guided by inclusive design principles if they are to be useful and easy to use by all.

Examples
• WHO
Age Friendly Cities programme
Launched in October 2007, The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published guidelines and checklists, providing practical help to support cities become more 'age-friendly'. Based on the principles of 'active ageing', the guide takes a very wholistic perspective on the physical and social experiences of older people accessing, and negotiating barriers to accessing, the full range of places and services in cities and urban settings. It noted a number of requirements for age friendly outdoor spaces and buildings including the need for; general cleanliness, seating both inside and outside, shelter from elements, toilets, smooth non slip surfaces, wheelchair accessibility, ramps where needed, steps with rails and green spaces[2].

• Ireland
Age-Friendly Counties Programme
In recognising the need to coordinate cross-community and trans-agency responses to deliver age-friendly action plans, the Age-Friendly Counties Programme in Ireland is embedding the process of change in the county development structures, where all the agencies and stakeholders in the economic, social and cultural development of each county converge. Most counties,

[2] Towards common ground. The Help the Aged manifesto for lifetime neighbourhoods, Help the aged 2008.

as both spatial and administrative units, deal with a hierarchy of provincial cities, towns, villages and rural communities, and address the inter-connectivities and inter-dependencies between them. Led by County Louth, the model is based on the formation of an alliance, informed and supported by three fora addressing the voice and activities of older people, the interests of the business community and the alignment of service providers. Together, they deliver and monitor an integrated 'age-friendly county strategy' agreed collectively. The action-plan issues are structured in line with the WHO guidelines, providing cross county comparability and resource sharing, but the model allows for fine-grained diversity and responsiveness to individual local needs and priorities. Particular priorities in County Louth include ageing-in-place (integrating housing and healthcare services with technology supports), neighbourhood and home safety and security, and alternative personalised transport options.

• Canada
Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities
2010 was a unique milestone in global settlement patterns where for the first time, the urban population surpassed the rural population. While originally targeted at ageing in cities that are the target of growing urbanisation, the WHO's guidelines for age-friendly cities have also been adapted in several regions to address the needs of communities of smaller sizes. In 2006, the Canadian Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors endorsed

Inclusivity addresses:
Public service buildings: town hall and city administrations, museums, post offices, employment agencies, etc;

Public commercial buildings: shops, restaurants, banks, offices, workplaces, hotels etc;
Health service buildings: GPs, dentists, clinics, primary care centres, outpatient clinics, hospitals, etc;

Private dwellings: homes and apartments;
Historical buildings: can be adapted for inclusivity without compromising their architectural or historic integrity.

a guide for 'Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities'. Built on the source WHO framework, and taking a very strong community development perspective, the rural and remote communities guide addresses the challenge of ageing in communities with a population of less that 5,000, thinly dispersed across the territories where approximately 23% of Canadian seniors live. The guide identifies barriers such as the lack of, or limited supports available to enable older people to 'age in place', the limited housing options, and the high dependency on transport to travel out of their communities to get access to services. Additional high priority items for consideration in the remote/rural checklist include dealing with extreme weather changes (particularly snow), more flexible and responsive transport options, remote 'alert systems', strengthening intergeneration cohesion, and greater use of local communication channels (TV and radio).

• United Kingdom
Lifetime Neighbourhoods
In the UK, the design of the built environment has become a key area of focus for those interested in older people, ageing and ageing-in-place. Promoted by the UK government, the concept of Lifetime Neighbourhoods has been defined as 'sustainable communities that offer a good quality of life to all generations[3]'.
More specifically, lifetime neighbourhoods should aim to be:
- Accessible and inclusive,
- Aesthetically pleasing and safe (in terms of both traffic and crime),
- Easy and pleasant to access, and
- A community that offers plenty of services, facilities and open space.

Some of the potential benefits that lifetime neighbourhoods are likely to foster include: a strong social and civic fabric, including volunteering and informal networks; a culture of consultation and user empowerment amongst decision-makers; and a strong local identity and sense of place.

• Finland
Helsinki for all[4]
The aim of the "Helsinki for All" project is a city in which everyone can move and live with ease. It is a cooperation project established by the Helsinki City Board in 2002 and headed by the Public Works Department. Representatives of city offices, associations for the elderly and disabled, resident associations, government, property owners, commercial life and organizations are all participating in the project. The project will continue until 2011. Helsinki will become a city for all, when the implementation of accessibility is part of the normal function of every office and institution.

The above mentioned WHO age-friendly programme shows that at whatever scale, several consistent elements are emerging that appear central to achieving successful transitions to more inclusive places:
- The active participation and engagement of older people into informing and validating improvement programmes;

3 Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Designing sustainable communities for all. A discussion paper, DCLG/ International Longevity Centre, 2007

4 For more information, please refer to: http://www.hel.fi/wps/portal/Rakennusvirasto_ en/Helsinkikaikille_en?WCM_GLOBAL_ CONTEXT=/HKR/en/Helsinki+for+All

- Strong inter-generational ties to build cohesion and design-out cross-generational conflict in highly negotiated shared space usage;
- Improved information and communications infrastructure to maintain pro-active engagement;
- Cross-agency and cross-sectoral stakeholder collaboration mechanisms to manage integrated projects delivery, built on platforms of strong leadership;
- Evidence-based technical patterns and guidelines (applicable at a range of hierarchical levels – global, European, national and local) that can prompt dialogues and help forge consensus;
- Business/private sector engagement – that can foster innovation, increase, reach and forge economic sustainability.

While these elements address the mechanisms for engagement, decision making and transformation, the substance of 'inclusive places for all' is about availability, accessibility, adaptability, affordability, appropriateness, attraction and attachment.

But it is also about activation. The motivation to act and the energy to sustain action needs to feed off multiple sources – a tangible recognition of the economic and demographic trends and drivers that push change, and a sensitivity to ethical, moral and social justice aspirations that pull and attract change.

II. The importance of inclusive housing to support ageing-in-place

Sustainability and adaptability over the life course

Regardless of age, everyone has a right to live in a home of adequate standard and quality. We all need a home that protects - providing safety and security, a home that shelters – proving warmth and comfort, and a home that promotes health and well-being – providing clean water, light, heat, ventilation and sanitation.
For older people, the home must also be accessible.

Older people may live in private homes that are either owned or rented. They may live alone or with other family members. They may live in public housing or social flats. Or they may live in various types of residential or long-term care institutions, or in other assisted living settings. While housing options and trends vary across member states, all AGE members acknowledge a lack of appropriate facilities, and a lack of measures to promote inclusive housing among older people.

The home design and house-building regulatory environment within and between member states is very fragmented. While the quality and scope of regulations and technical guidelines have been improving and expanding in response to the needs for public health and sanitation, structural safety, fire protection, thermal performance and sustainable energy use, and accessibility

– significant problems of non-compliance and poor enforcement are evident everywhere. Although the quality of new housing stock improves, there continues to be the challenge of upgrading, renovating and adapting existing poor quality buildings to bring them up to higher standards, including insulation for both economical and ecological reasons. Guidelines tend to be restricted to spatial/ergonomic needs and construction detailing – with little recognition of the needs and impact of new smart home equipment, electrical appliances and ICT infrastructures, including facilitations to save energy (e.g. electronic water taps, automatic lighting).

Moreover, the type and tenure of housing options are not equally distributed between urban and rural areas within, and across, member states. In many instances, the nature of existing homesteads in the countryside are more likely to provide a better quality of living for older people, particularly for those with low and minimum pensions.

However the lack of basic public services (e.g. post office, public transport, cultural institutions…), or public services specifically for older people (e.g. hospitals, GPs, health and long-term care, day centres…), may impede many older people from choosing to remain in rural and remote regions, small towns or villages, as their support needs increase. This is also a challenge for the urban middleclass, who may have moved to idyllic rural settings, without taking due regard to their future health service and care support needs.

Examples

- In Greece, housing costs in rural areas are greatly reduced, but access to extensive health care and services drive people to the cities.
- In the Czech Republic there are different categories for quality of housing facilities, setting different minimum standard requirements. Since 2001, all new buildings must be accessible to disabled people.
- In Finland, some municipalities combine nursery homes together with other facilities for older people in order to strengthen the advantage of living outside cities. Although the Finnish government has decreased the number of care homes, at the community level, some alternatives for people with dementia do exist to fill the shortage.
- Sweden adopted a Social Security Act that stipulates the right of older people with special needs to obtain adequate and accessible housing or help at home.
- Beyond Part M (accessibility) of the Building Regulations, the UK government is encouraging developers to adopt 'Life-time Adaptable' housing standards.

Throughout Europe, there is a common trend to support older people to live in their own homes for as long as possible. More older people want to 'age-in-place' but there are concerns over whether there are sufficient levels of housing supports to facilitate this goal. Key challenges include:

- the lack of adaptable housing that can support and assist people who have difficulty with mobility and/or sensory impairments and difficulty with undertaking normal daily living activities, and

- the increasing costs and availability of home care and home support services for those without state support.

There are also issues about the way social lettings are advertised to older people, and the lack of appropriate information about adaptation and access to local support services.

Housing that adapts and continues to fit well with people's changing needs as we age can strengthen autonomy, well-being and quality of life. Older Europeans need greater availability and choice to such adaptable housing options.

Although national housing strategies generally exist in member states, only rarely do they accommodate older people and target their specific needs. Housing strategies need to address provision, tenure, mix, quality, planning, and standards, as well as proximity to services and amenities, and availability of care and home supports. If correctly framed, good housing policies can be decisive contributors to older peoples' wellbeing - ensuring more, and better housing for all.

Affordability

The affordability of rising home rental costs are a common problem throughout member states. The need for safety-net mechanisms and financial supports for older people has been underlined by many AGE members. There is enormous diversity of approach to home rental throughout the Union.

Examples
- In Slovenia, to help seniors living on very low income, non-profit renting is an alternative - allowing the possibility to sell one's house to the municipality, while maintaining the right of residence, and receiving a life-long monthly annuity.
- In the Czech Republic, rent controls are a common measure to keep rates affordable.
- In France, local authorities (Conseil general) can cover renting deposit for low-income people.
- In Finland, financial grants from local authorities for house renovation are available,
- In Greece, the government guarantees lower rents for older people together with in-kind supports e.g. heating allowance to low-income pensioners.
- In Poland, the eligibility conditions to access social housing are very rigid, questioning the whole logic of helping the most vulnerable.
- In Italy and Sweden, the competition in the real-estate market has led to high rents making houses even more inaccessible for low-income pensioners.

Overall, most financial and/or in-kind support measures are insufficient to effectively tackle the difficulties older people - in particular those on very low incomes – face in accessing good quality housing accommodation. Very rigid eligibility conditions or means-testing considerably limit the number of older people who can successfully claim and receive their respective country's financial support. In addition, not only rents or price of the square meter is at stake, the cost of energy may put older people with low income at risk. Energy needs of

older people are usually higher as they spent more time at home, then it is important to consider supporting insulation of their dwelling: in a period where pensions will probably decrease, prices of classical energy will explodes, necessity to better tackle climate change is raising, this issue can't be overlooked.

Alternatives housing

Alternatives, such as intergenerational housing, are gaining popularity in many member states as a solution to the housing shortage among older, active and younger people. Although not new, and generally developed on a voluntary basis, very few initiatives currently exist. However, housing concepts addressing intergeneration solidarity are still new and need to be actively promoted within society.

Examples

- Within the UK, there are planning incentives for mixed housing developments (know as S106) which are currently under review.
- In Belgium, different ideas have been develop like "Abbeyfield house"[5] (An Abbeyfield house is best composed of about ten individual flats, for older people who are reasonably fit but who are looking for more security and solidarity. The residents all become active members of a Non Profit Organisation, especially established for each house, managed by them, if necessary with the help of competent external volunteers), "1 toit pour 2 âges"[6] (to connect older people who have a free room with students seeking for place to leave in), "or "habitat kangourou"[7].

- In France, older women have organised collective housing that they are managing herselves, it is known under the name of "Maison des babayagas"[8].

Quality standards

We also need to move beyond the reluctant provision of minimum quality requirements, and incentivise developers to deliver solutions of the highest quality. A recent UK-led housing study across Europe[9] highlighted several exemplar housing solutions for older people with some, or all of the following design element characteristics:

- Space and flexibility
- Daylight in the home and in shared spaces
- Balconies and outdoor space
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and hubs
- Plants, trees and the natural environment
- Energy efficiency and sustainable design
- Adequate storage for belongings and bicycles
- External shared surfaces and 'home zones'.

Rather than a development 'add-on', the report recommended that housing for older people should become an exemplar for mainstream housing, and meet higher design standards for space and quality. These qualities of space, light, movement, natural environment, privacy and homeliness are also essential in our assisted living, residential care and nursing

5 www.abbeyfield.be
6 www.1toit2ages.be
7 http://www.questionsante.be/outils/habitat_kangourou.pdf

8 http://www.lamaisondesbabayagas.fr/
9 HAPPI Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation. Commissioned by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health. 2009

homes, where dignity and autonomy are more difficult to protect.

Role of ICT

In relation to information and communication technology, and after several years of slow growth, the impact of ICT on the lives of older people, particularly in their homes, is now accelerating. Within Europe, the broad range of ICT-based applications and services for independent living is now generally referred to as 'Ambient Assisted Living' or AAL.

Through systems integration, AAL aims to extend and enhance the time people can live with dignity in their own homes, through increasing their autonomy and self-confidence. This may involve helping to support monotonous everyday activities, or it may focus on monitoring and caring for frail or ill older people, through the remote detection of events and anomalies such as falls, changing health parameters, smoke and fire, water leakage, or home intrusion. Such remote monitoring services can increase confidence and enhance a sense of safety and security for a larger number of people, through more effective and efficient resource use.

Examples

- Recent pan-European regional pilot projects such as DREAMING and HOME-SWEET-HOME[10], undertaken within the ICT area of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), are examining the cross-cultural and cross-regional issues of mainstreaming such AAL services, whilst also building an evidence base to promote broader implementation. In such service platforms, different sensors are put in as many objects as possible, throughout the home. Longer term, the vision is to enable their wireless communication and context-aware actions and reactions in the background, - invisible and without bothering the older person. For example, intelligent floors can provide information on deviating patterns of walking with the possibility of initiating adequate intervention (e.g., in case of wandering of a person with dementia).

- In addition, large-scale ICT projects aim to revolutionize home environments of older people and accessibility planning. OASIS[11] creates a comprehensive system of ICT solutions that will help older people age well in their homes, while VERITAS[12] will provide designers of products, architects and developers with the tools to ensure that all future designs are accessible to all.

However, many older peoples' access to domestic appliances and modern ICT – and more specifically to 'smarter' AAL systems – depends strongly on aspects of *social structure* (age, household composition, income) as well as on *individual attitudes* and *lifelong habits*. In addition, a high level of education and experience with technology are significant pre-conditions for positive acceptance and use of ICT[13]. There are also fears that the growing pace of technological developments may create new social

> AAL can be considered as the overlap of tele-care (with a focus on safety and security), tele-health (with a focus on self-management of chronic diseases), home automation (with a focus on smart control of home elements, systems and appliances), and digital media (with a focus on social connection, leisure and creativity).

[10] For more information, please refer to the websites: DREAMING, http://www.dreaming-project.org/, HOME SWEET HOME, http://www.homesweethome-project.be

[11] http://www.oasis-project.eu

[12] http://veritas-project.eu

[13] Mollenkopf & Kaspar, 2005

barriers and inequalities between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. In parallel, digital literacy of older people should be carefully considered to avoid the enlargement of the digital divide.

The progressive integration and convergence of science and technology is dissolving frontiers between spheres and disciplines that have traditionally been regarded as separate. The distinction between communicating within, and between, the "inside" and "outside" worlds (be it for social pleasure or for essential health maintenance) is now getting blurred. This 'borderless world' can change older people's living patterns in dramatic and unpredictable ways. For older people, the potential of 'intelligent', 'smart' or 'aware' home technologies is enormous. Through the integration of systems, and the processes of automation, they afford almost unlimited possibilities to increase safety and independence.

In addition, the internet is now offering older users a limitless 'ecosystem' of social media and on-line services - tele-shopping, tele-banking, education or entertainment services, video on demand, home consulting, as well as tele-medicine, and tele-care.

The degree to which older people will use smart home technologies will largely depend on their function and value proposition, their attractiveness, their cost, their simplicity, and their stickiness – the extent to which we want to go back to use them again and again – building up an affective attachment. We all have high expectations regarding smart home applications. But they must not be too

complicated for us[14]. We must also find the right market mechanisms to ensure that these technologies do not create more of the social isolation they are trying to reduce!

III. The importance of age-inclusive mobility and transport

The requirement for effective and efficient movement of people and goods is one of the main challenges facing most European towns and cities today. Even with the increasing development of lifetime and sustainable neighbourhoods, outside the home there is a need to get around. To achieve inclusion, and obtain the benefits inclusion brings, transport is a key factor. Studies have repeatedly shown the importance of moving around for older people.[15]

Over the last 5 years there has been much valuable analysis, which leaves us now, in 2010, with a considerable bank of knowledge, both of systems and best practice. Despite this, and despite our research and our many conferences and workshops, real progress across the EU has been slow.

Progress differs across the community, partly because there are different levels of funding available in different member States, and partly because of the present condition of the transport infrastructure. The standards and quality of vehicles and terminals vary enormously both within and between member states;

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[14] Meyer & Mollenkopf, 2003; see also van Berlo, 2002

[15] See, e.g., the findings of the MOBILATE project (Mollenkopf et al., 2005, 2004).

larger cities and conurbations having more developed networks than rural areas. In some countries, we even see fall-offs from achieved improvements due to financial constraints caused by the economic crisis.

There is a need for transport continuity across the EU, and there is a need for a degree of interoperability between states to ensure that at least a minimum standard of connectivity can exist. The requirement for effective and efficient movement of people and goods is one of the main challenges facing most European towns and cities today. In many cities getting around is difficult enough for everyone - motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike. Added to this, public transport is often not suitable for the frail and the less mobile. For that reason, best practice, and there are many good examples, offers us a number of solutions to, what in some places are seen as, insoluble problems.

Mobility, and access to systems in all forms and modes of transport, is a requirement if full inclusion in society is to be achieved by older people. It is seamless travel that we seek. Seamless public transport systems are a prerequisite for the active participation and independent living of older people.

Examples

- In Berlin,[16] since 1992 there is an ongoing commitment of the main transport operators to create a barrier-free city.
- In Goteborg[17] (Sweden), the

municipality, the public transport authority and other local actors are committed in providing high quality public transport for all through accessible stops and pedestrian routes, staff and passenger training, personal assistance, flexible travel options and innovative information and IT devices.
- The Mediate project[18] has developed a set of indicators of accessibility and a Self-assessment tool that aim to create a common European methodology to measure accessibility and to serve as a basis for inclusive urban transport systems.

Accessibility to stations and terminals

In the long term, accessibility at stations and terminals can only be achieved by sensible design of the infrastructure. The principles of universal and inclusive design should be accepted and applied, as they can ensure that a solution, or a group of solutions, is valid for everybody. An urgent problem now, across all transport systems, is how to achieve the best results with legacy infrastructure which, in many cases, is over 130 years old! Only through liaison and understanding can the different levels of accessibility, both within and between member states, be addressed.

Within terminals, there needs to be standardisation of signage. Information displays should be as simple as possible, and they should be consistent and similar throughout the system. The number of falls by older people increases at the points

[16] For more information see the Mediate Good Practice Guide: http://www.aptie. eu/site/fileadmin/Mediate_deliverables/ GoodPracticeGuide_28OCT.pdf

[17] KOLLA project, www.goteborg.se, www.kolla. goteborg.se

[18] http://www.mediate-project.eu/

where changes of direction are made. The tops of escalators, looking for the next sign to their particular platform or exit, are places where this simplicity and consistency of design is essential.

With larger terminals, planning often fails to take into account walking distances between activity centres, and these may be very onerous for frail and less mobile people. If appropriate and 'age-friendly' guidelines and regulations were in force, this could be remedied by low cost seating, resting places and small mobile people carriers. While many systems do provide these facilities, it is enforced standards that we seek to ensure universal compliance.

Examples
- In Krakow[19] there is a public scheme to adapt public transport stops in order to make them safer and more accessible for older people and people with disabilities.

Accessibility of vehicles
The level of standardisation is important with regard to accessibility of vehicles. In the long term, simple, though critical standards such as widths, heights, gaps between doors, size of doors, are all problems that have been well-known for many years, and they can really only be addressed at times of change.

There is a need for realism here. Ferry Boats, TGVs, ICEs, Jumbo Jets, and many other vehicles have life spans of 30 years or more. If they are difficult

of access now, it is unreasonable to expect them to be replaced to meet new standards. The key requirement is the adaption of assistive equipment; ramps, lifts, walkways, special toilets, and sensible adaptation of vehicles until the end of their lifecycle. Again, this requires the sharing of ideas and the use of best practice.

Examples
- In Rogaland[20] (Norway), an area where sea transport is crucial some boats are designed for all with tactile signs, accessible information and wheelchair-friendly entrances and spaces.
- In Burgos[21] (Spain), a project currently on place targets a public transport systems which is 100% accessible to all.

Accessibility of information
When on the move, access of information is critical. Even though "IT" is at the forefront of everybody's thinking today, many pitfalls still exist.

Universal ticketing technology is essential. There is a need to ensure 'the ticket' allows universal access, for only through such ease of movement can we provide seamless mobility for older people. Ticketing systems need to be accessible both for buying tickets and for use throughout the network. Ticket machines should be as simple to operate as possible and of a sensible height to allow all persons to use them. Essential back

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[19] For more infomation see the Mediate Good Practice Guide (http://www.aptie.eu/site/fileadmin/Mediate_deliverables/GoodPracticeGuide_28OCT.pdf)

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[20] For more infomation see the Mediate Good Practice Guide (http://www.aptie.eu/site/fileadmin/Mediate_deliverables/GoodPracticeGuide_28OCT.pdf)

[21] For more infomation see the Mediate Good Practice Guide (http://www.aptie.eu/site/fileadmin/Mediate_deliverables/GoodPracticeGuide_28OCT.pdf)

up to ticketing systems in times of failure is to have a high percentage of vehicles and stations staffed, or if not staffed, to have understandable, simple to use, help facilities.

Information on timetabling, route planning, and location/orientation maps within terminals are all important sources of information for those travelling. Today, much of this is available over the internet and through public kiosks. It is important to get a balance in how these are provided, as many people over 65 have never used the internet, and the lack of access to the web disadvantages older people.

To get older people smoothly engaged into transport systems, the technology needs to be as "simple" as possible and as "standardised" as possible. The lack of standardised equipment and interfaces makes it more and more difficult for older people to understand how to use the systems. Designers and innovators must remember that 'the bigger the step forward they make, the bigger the gulf they create between them and their user'.

Examples
- In London[22], iBus, an on-bus audio and visual information system, provides vulnerable passengers, such as people with visual or hearing impairments, with accessible real-time information.
- In Munich[23], dedicated courses enable older passengers to use the internet to get information about mobility services or even buy tickets, make train reservations and use car sharing.
- In Barcelona[24], ticketing machines were designed to be accessible for all.

Safety and security
The older one gets the more vulnerable some may feel. One of the biggest deterrents for the inclusion of older people in the use of public transport is the 'lack of reassurance' about their safety.

There is a requirement for the presence and the training of staff on duty, closed circuit TV, good lighting, and frequent security/police presence. Good interchanges between modes of travel - bus to train, tram to bus, train to taxi, or private car pick up point - are essential, and are key factors for seamless mobility. These are real issues for the older person.

In a society that is more and more security conscious, there is a widening conflict between the needs of good access and the needs of strict security. Security barriers affect the old more than the agile! This greatly impacts on seamless travel as the increased security creates more, though justifiable barriers -, both psychological and physical. A solution is to increase staffing to assist old people through systems that are in areas of high security risk.

[22] For more infomation see the Mediate Good Practice Guide (http://www.aptie.eu/site/fileadmin/Mediate_deliverables/GoodPracticeGuide_28OCT.pdf)

[23] For more information see: http://www.aeneas-project.eu/?page=munichmeasure2

[24] For more infomation see the Mediate Good Practice Guide (http://www.aptie.eu/site/fileadmin/Mediate_deliverables/GoodPracticeGuide_28OCT.pdf)

Examples

• In Salzburg[25], trainings for older passengers help older people gain confidence in using public transport providing them with useful tips on how to travel with security. Likewise, trainings targeting drivers allow staff members to become familiar with the needs of older people, reducing thus accidents and improving service provision.

The increased difficulty of driving a car due to age-related impairments (failing eyesight, hearing, arthritis, etc) is one of the main reasons why older people give up driving, leaving them reliant on public transport. The loss of the freedom to drive can make older people feel dependent on public transport systems. This means adjusting to less flexibility and freedom to travel, along with the psychological impact of loss of independence. This is felt to a higher degree in rural areas and small towns.

Affordability and availability

The cost of travel is still a major barrier for many older people, whose limited resources are not enough to allow them to travel as often as they would like. This is particularly important as they are sometimes unable to reach basic and necessary facilities i.e. hospitals, or visit their relatives in neighbouring towns. Affordable travel is not a burden on society. Inclusion provides a vast untapped resource if governments could recognise and harness the benefits that accrue. Directly related to affordability,

availability is at stake to enable older people to get out their dwelling, giving them the possibility to be fully included in society.

Examples

• In Krakow[26] (Poland), there is a public transport tariff that includes a free ticket for people over 70 and discounts (about 50%) for retired people. This tariff was established by the City Council in the 1980's and is still running.
• In Ireland, in rural areas, collective transport are regularly organised to give older people the possibility to go to the pub and thus continue to be included in the community life.
• Transport on demand in rural areas like it exists for example in France, or in Spain.
• In Belgium, a letter and free bus pass is sent to people over 65 to inform them about their right to travel free on all local public transport (bus and trams): this kind of action encourages older people to shift from private car to public transport and is not only relying on pull demand.

To give accessibility to older people allows the total community to benefit from their inclusion. Supporting older people to be part of the community through seamless travel:
- Enables them to participate fully in the local community;
- Decreases health costs due to better health status;
- Sustains the environment by reducing car usage and pollution;
- Boosts the economy through the presence of older people in shopping precincts;
- Benefits all sectors through increasing

[25] For more information see: http://www.aeneas-project.eu/?page=salzburgmeasure2

[26] Information from the AENEAS case studies (http://www.aeneas-project.eu/gper/example.php?id=91&lang=1)

demand and increasing use of services;
- Supports volunteering, civic engagement and contributions to committees and stakeholder groups.

Fully inclusive transport requires political will to bring about change, and some regulation is required to make sure basic standards are achieved. It is the 'interchange between modes' and the 'through journey experience' that are important. In times of accident, or heavy delay, when operating staff are fully occupied with the task in hand, it is essential that there are back up staff that can make a presence in the confusion. For at these times, it is the old and the vulnerable that are most at risk.

Good transport systems for the 21st century must be ecologically sustainable, and they should recognise the value to the environment of using clean technologies such as Light Rail and Tramway. This is challenging, for often cheaper diesel powered alternatives are provided in the face of economic pressures. The prevailing financial constraints do not sit well with longer term sustainable planning horizons!

In a future Europe with older people contributing for longer, transport and mobility will be a vital artery. Enabling older people to participate in the heart of the economic and social life of the union will ensure that, far from being tomorrow's problem, with inclusive transport for all - older people will be a big part of the solution.

IV. The problem: beyond barriers to accessibility

Developing a comprehensive and cohesive pan-European approach for age-inclusive environments is not straight forward. The area is fraught with contradiction, confusion, complexity and nuance:
- accessibility for all is vital - but when are solutions truly universal – and when are they specifically adapted to the needs of individuals? When do we separate and differentiate and when do we share and negotiate?
- Is ageing a functional disability – or is frailty and age-related decline something different?
- We focus a lot on mobility, but what about failing eyesight, hearing loss or weakening of memory?
- In promoting positive, active and healthy ageing and well-being - do we risk developing a blind-spot for the vulnerability of difficult ageing?
- We look to technology to provide innovative solutions, but we are apprehensive about older peoples' acceptance and use of technology?
- We look to intergenerational solidarity - and yet we age-segregate our neighbourhoods and housing for older people in the face of perceived fears of youth and crime,
- We look to the rapidly developing silver economy and the 'business of ageing' – but risk excluding older people still caught in a poverty trap.
- We aspire to personal, home-based disease self-management but continue to focus so much of our health budgets into acute hospital systems.

Inclusive design is a way of designing products and environments so they are useable and appealing to everyone regardless of age, ability or circumstance, by working with users to remove barriers in the social, technical, political and economic processes that underpin design'.

(Prof. M. Ormerod, Salford)

We are at risk of risk aversion! In addressing security we often compromise safety – and when we address health and safety we often compromise wellbeing, liveability, attraction, autonomy and choice!

These problems are compounded by the fragmentation and variation of responses across the member states and the challenge of coordinating responses across economic, environmental, cultural and social pillars within member states. Even within the environmental domain at a regional or city management level, harmonising cohesive and integrated responses to urban identity and attachment, inclusive and shared neighbourhoods for all ages and abilities, life-time adaptable housing and sustainable mobility and transport involves breaching silos that our professions and disciplinary specialists have spent years casting and reinforcing. And as for consultation and user engagement...?!

Conclusion

Activate and co-ordinate actions to foster full social participation of older people

Whether it is urban fabric, housing, or transport, to create fully inclusive 'places for all' requires us to bring different dimensions of 'inclusivity and exclusivity' into a common framework. Social inclusion and the problem of combating poverty, economic participation and emancipation, needs to be seen in relation to functional exclusion and the challenge of inclusive environments - 'sharing places for action' for all. Not for some, or for more, or for most – but for all! For this we need multiple strategies, some based on principle and some based on pragmatism, that can tackle the different aspects of our inclusivity spectrum.

Not alone do the exclusion barriers need to be both pushed back and dissolved, but our desirable future 'centre ground' needs to illuminate an attractiveness that can animate and motive policies and actions that will intensify and accelerate social, economic and environmental cohesion. This is the case, whether it is for longer active economic participation in the workforce, or for longer active, dignified and graceful ageing, with all the 'good-will' and 'off-balance sheet' economic contributions that older peoples' social participation accrues. This also needs to be both inter-generational and trans-generational.
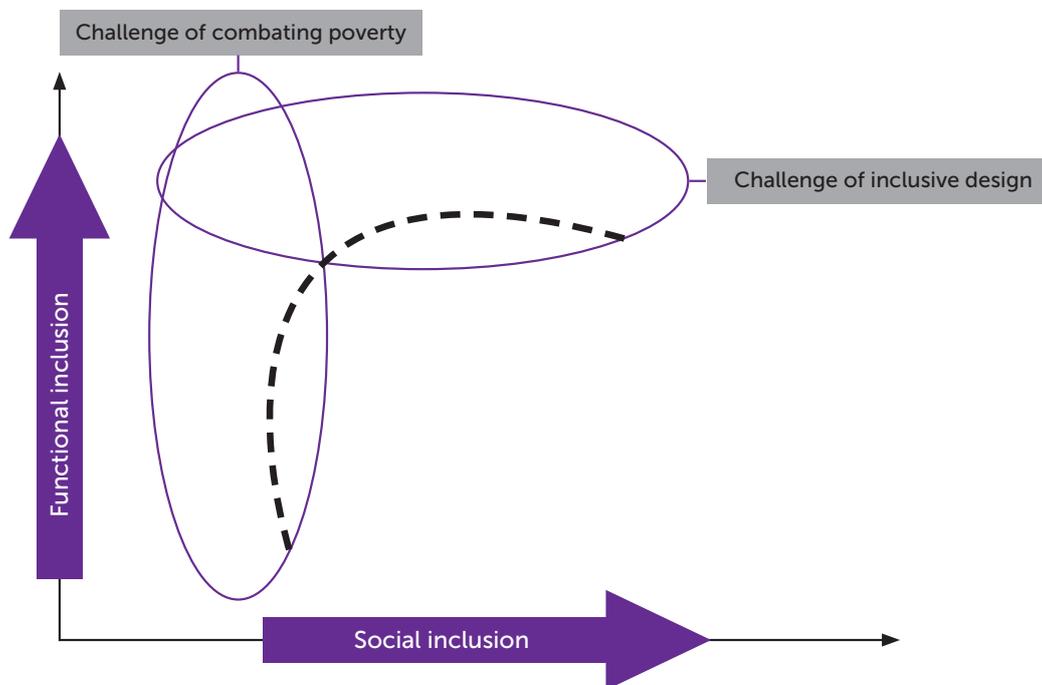
There are many examples of good practices and guidelines throughout the member states. While many may be bound to their regional and cultural contexts, there are the seeds of replicability in all good practice models.

Moving forward requires coordinated actions, and coordinating ad-hoc actions, at all levels, and over a long haul:
- Raising awareness
- scanning and celebrating good practices and being honest about the bad ones
- learning from success and failures
- extracting and harmonising evidence-based guidelines
- negotiating standards
- making commitments
- developing coherent frameworks, models, mechanisms and tools at different levels of operation and application
- educating and training
- changing practice
- and finally, improving places and making a positive difference.

All these must be tackled at one stage or another - but it starts with 'metanoia' - a change of mindset that says we can't continue to allow our cities to develop as they are. There is a better environment supporting a better future for all of us out there – young and old - but it is not likely to happen by accident - and it is not likely to happen without us thinking and acting in a smart, sustainable and inclusive way. The ultimate objective should be to foster a full social participation of older people.

A Manifesto for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Places for All Ages

Now that the European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion and the Lisbon Strategy are over, we can assess better progress made in relation to global competitiveness, ecological bio-diversity, and accessibility for all. Our achievements were floundering long before we encountered our current economic set-backs!

We are also facing two new European Years - raising awareness of volunteering in 2011, and raising awareness of positive and active ageing in 2012, - within a re-calibrated economic strategy leading out to 2020. Smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth needs smart, sustainable and inclusive places for us all to act, contribute and prosper. To live, to live longer, and to live well for longer!

AGE proposes a series of 10 objectives or recommendations to make 'age-inclusive places' in Europe a reality by 2020. The first four elements are couched in a 'rights-based' framework which addresses underlying principles, processes and commitments that are enablers, drivers and attractors for change.

1. **Participation.** We need to shift from a model of older people as passive recipients, consumers, users or subjects of consultation - to an active model of citizen-centred engagement in innovation and change, based on processes of co-design and co-creation. We also need to have in mind that the consultation of the most isolated, dependant and vulnerable elderly people is still quite a challenge and needs to be improved.

2. **Motivation.** Our actions and responsibilities need to be ener-gised by a shared understanding of a 'highly desirable and attracting' unified social, economic, environ-mental and ethical framework for 'inclusivity', that recognises and values the active and passive contribution of older people to our evolving future within and beyond employment.

3. **Inclusive Design.** Based on a coherent model of social and functional inclusion, we need to embed the principles of inclusive design into the fabric of our social, technical, political and economic processes that underpin place-making.

4. **Organisation.** To resource change – we need to harness our individual and collective energies, imagination, knowledge and wisdom - and to exponentially scale them through alignment, creativity and innovation, over a long haul. This demands new models of collaboration, knowledge sharing, resource sharing, and leadership at all levels – individual, corporate, regional, member state, and union.

At a tangible level, the alignment and convergence of these elements can help us to shape and evolve richly inclusive places for all. It will be difficult to progress robustly without them. Reinforcing the three environmental themes within the WHO's age-friendly cities framework, the next six

elements address qualitative aspirations or ambitions that can guide our place-making activities at urban environment, housing, and transport levels.

5. **Desirable and sharable urban places.** Our objective for urban inclusivity demands places that are desirable to all and shareable by all. We know the urban elements; we experience the rich variety of urban outdoor life; and we better understand human ergonomic and anthropometric variation across the life-course. We have different demands and expectations of our urban living between day and night, across the seasons, across communities, across genders and across the generations. We need to focus on the quality of how we fuse these demands together, to create dynamic, living and life-enriching places for all that are a joy to experience.

6. **Health and well-being in our publicly used buildings.** Our objective is to achieve inclusive buildings, that promote dignity, health and well-being for users of all ages. We can identify the buildings we visit. To most, we are visitors, customers or clients. But for many older people over the coming years, these will also be our workplaces. Our understanding of the accessibility elements is growing and we are learning about frailty. We need to work on the quality of how we synthesise these factors with climatic, spatial, and sensory quality, within the contexts of their functional programmes, so that our shared buildings are fit for their purpose within an ageing society.

7. **Sustainable neighbourhoods for all ages.** Our objective is to achieve living, life-enhancing, vibrant, diverse, safe, inclusive and trust-based neighbourhoods that are sustainable environmentally, economically, socially and emotionally for individuals, families and communities, across all ages. While cohesive internally, they must be open to inward and outward flows of people as we grow, explore and settle. We have an intuitive sense that a better mix of housing, housing tenure, adaptability, amenities, schools, employment, local health and care services, and the urban and technical connectivity fabric to glue them together will make a big difference. But we need to learn rapidly from our early endeavours, to provide the evidence that these 'urban-village' models work for us, at all ages, and from all perspectives – economic, social and emotional.

8. **Wellness in Sustainable Housing.** Our objective is that housing for older people should be of the highest quality and that it should lead, rather than follow, as an exemplar for mainstream housing. We need to move beyond the provision of minimum accessibility requirements, to embrace standards of space, quality, flexibility and adaptability that can accommodate our varied life-styles over varying life-courses. Daylight and brightness, balconies, outdoor spaces and the natural environment, adaptability and 'care ready' design are pre-requisites. For multi-unit apartments and clustered living centres, the positive use of circulation space, shared facilities

open to the neighbourhood, and adequate storage for belongings are all needed. While different in detail and execution, these characteristics are even more essential in our assisted living, residential care, and nursing homes, where the dignity and autonomy of older people is at greater risk. In any case apartments/houses should be suited for implementing modern technologies so that older people and people with disabilities are able to profit from their potential for sustaining an autonomous life according to their individual needs and by safeguarding the appropriateness feeling the person has of his/her own interior.

9. **Seamless public transport**. Once available and affordable, our objective is to achieve inclusive public transport is that it is experienced as 'seamless' within and across our varied modes of transport within and between cities, regions and member states. Putting the older person's 'experience of the journey' at the heart of inclusive systems design, the experience of ticketing, terminal and vehicle accessibility, information services supporting route-planning and way-finding, and the sense of safety, all influence the 'quality' of the trip. Beyond the infrastructure, the helpfulness and friendliness of transport staff, drivers, platform attendants and security personnel can smooth the travelling experience. In rural areas, it should be taken into account the need of older people to drive car as long as possible if seamless transport can't be develop.

Thus roads, pedestrian areas and crossings should be design in accordance.

10. **Responsive and integrated personal transport.** Personal transport, cycling, motorcycles and driving, provides people with maximum flexibility to make point to point journeys as and when they need them. Our objective is that older people can continue to get out, cycle and drive for as long as possible, and that the experience, vehicles, signage and parking are designed for inclusivity. As cycling and driving becomes more difficult, personal alternatives such as affordable taxis, car pooling, and volunteer networks should be available, interconnecting with public systems.

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2001-2011: AGE is 10 years old!

AGE Platform Europe is a European network of organisations of people aged 50+ and represents over 28 million older people in Europe. AGE aims to voice and promote the interests of the 150 million inhabitants aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most.

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