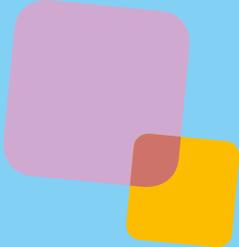




# TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY EU BY 2020



FROM THEORY  
TO LOCAL PRACTICE



Update on EU action and examples  
of good practices across the EU

December 2013



In follow-up to...



European Year for **Active Ageing**  
and **Solidarity between Generations 2012**



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# Foreword

## Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the European Commission

*Excerpt from speech to AGE General Assembly Conference 17 May 2013.*

Your organisation, AGE, is for those in Europe over 50. Already today that means you represent 150 million people. By 2060, though, you could represent close to half the EU population! And over that same period, the number of over 65s will almost double. While government spending on related areas could increase by 20%.

There are a number of ways to look at that. You could see it as a triumph: advancing medical science and enlightened public policy have delivered something wonderful for our citizens. Longer, healthier lives.

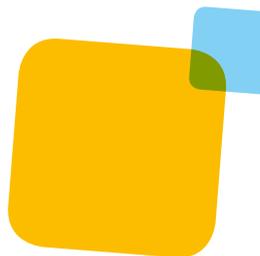
Or you could see it as a fantastic market opportunity. After all, the potential 'silver market' for older people is already worth around €3 trillion – and growing fast.

Or you could see it purely as a challenge. As a rising cost in the national accounts. As an awkward trend demanding an arduous response. And, personally, I think too many people do just see it that way. But however you see it, one thing is clear. The change is huge, and we must respond.

At EU level we are investing in those ideas. Our FP7 and Horizon 2020 programmes will continue to look at fundamental research: into the effect of ageing on body, mind and community. Into the technologies, services and applications that can tackle these challenges. And at how we can help older people live actively and independently for longer.

Healthcare is just one part of an age-friendly EU. It's also about having homes more suited to older people. Or building smarter cities, where it's easier to get around, and which are more responsive to people's needs. In fact Smart Cities is the subject of our "other" European Innovation Partnership.

That calls for a change in attitude. Ageing isn't a problem, but a source of innovation and growth. It's not just an expanding cost to be cut, but a growing market opportunity to be served. We shouldn't protect powers and practices, but must come together to share, and see how we can do things differently.



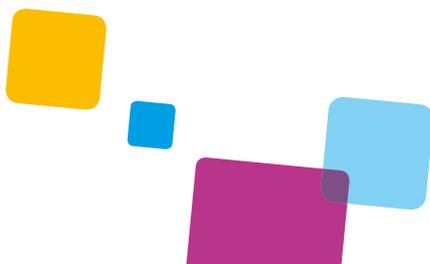
# Introduction

Eurostat population projections foresee that the number of people aged over 60 will increase by about two million persons per annum in the coming decades, while the working age population has started to shrink. This will result in an increasing number of very old persons and fewer young persons to care for them (family members or healthcare professionals).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the physical and social environments are key determinants of whether people can remain healthy, independent and autonomous long into their old age. Promoting age-friendly environments (AFE) is one of the most effective approaches for responding to demographic change and increasing the Healthy Life Year indicator (measuring “disability-free life expectancy”). Creating age-friendly environments means adapting our everyday living environment to the needs of the ageing population in order to empower people to age in better physical and mental health, promote their social inclusion and active participation and help them maintain their autonomy and a good quality of life in their old age. They enable older workers to remain at work for longer, lower the pressure on traditional care and assistance and boost the economy through demand for innovative solutions.

We believe that the best solution to Europe’s demographic challenge is therefore to empower older people to age in better health and to contribute more actively to the labour market and to their communities. This will help lower the pressure on public budgets and will enable our societies to better cope with demographic ageing in a way that is fair for all generations.

Building on the EY2012 of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations and to mark the European Year 2013, AGE Platform Europe organised an open conference back to back with its annual General Assembly on 16-17 May 2013 in Brussels on the theme “Towards an age-friendly EU”. Through three panel discussions, participants discussed various examples of good practice in the field of employment, social protection reforms, use of new technologies, adapting transport and housing infrastructure, promotion of tourism and social participation. These examples are presented in part II of this brochure while Part I provides an update on EU action towards an age-friendly EU by 2020.



# \_01

## Update on EU action towards an age-friendly EU 2020



AGE members believe that the best way to help Europe overcome its demographic challenge is to empower older people to remain actively engaged in the labour market and in their communities by combating age discrimination and promoting the concept of “design-for-all” in all areas of life: transport, built environment, urban planning, health and long-term care services, mainstream goods and services, etc. Removing existing barriers that prevent older people from participating on an equal basis with other citizens will enable everyone to age in better health and to remain independent for much longer. This will help lower the pressure on public health and care budgets and will enable our societies to better cope with demographic ageing in a way that is sustainable and fair to all generations.

Below is an update on the most significant actions taken at EU level that support our campaign towards an age-friendly EU by 2020.

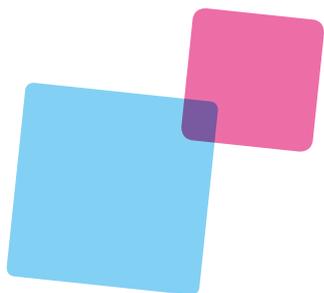
## **Polish EU Presidency Equality Summit 2011 on local and regional action**

This key annual event - co-organised by the Polish EU Presidency and the European Commission DG Justice in November 2011 - took a new approach to equality and looked at how regional development strategies can address equality issues in an effective way; how different partnerships between stakeholders working in equality can be forged at regional and local level; how European funding mechanisms can be used to help people experiencing inequality and discrimination.

## **EU action on accessibility**

Directorate General Justice (European Commission) launched a consultation on the envisaged Accessibility Act which should be released in the first quarter 2014. This forthcoming piece of legislation is enshrined in the EU disability strategy (2010-2020) and the ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

DG Justice is also running every year the EU Access City Award which encourage public authorities to take action to improve the accessibility of the local environment. AGE is involved in juries at both national and European level.





After almost three years of work, the Technical Specifications for rail Interoperability on accessibility for persons with reduced mobility (TSI-PRM) was adopted by the EU Member States on 30 January 2014. The Member States are now obliged to identify existing barriers to accessibility of trains and stations and to progressively eliminate these barriers based on strategic implementation plans.

## **European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing**

Many solutions supporting active and healthy ageing have been developed as pilots across the EU, but they remain isolated and do not get scaled up, not even in their own country. This means that their impact on addressing Europe demographic challenge is limited.

For that reason AGE insisted that one of the action groups of the European Innovation partnership for Active and Healthy (EIP AHA) should be devoted to age-friendly environments. This is how the EIP AHA Action Group D4 was created and in this group AGE is coordinating the Action Area 2 which promotes a European covenant on demographic change. The proposed Covenant has received the support of the Committee of the Regions in their "Opinion on Active Ageing: Innovation, Smart Health and Better Lives " requested by the Danish

EU Presidency and of a large network of stakeholders (local and regional authorities, research centres, NGOs, etc.)

To support our objective of creating an age-friendly EU by 2020 and the launch of a EU Covenant on Demographic Change, AGE is coordinating a large EU project entitled AFE-INNOVNET which will seek to set up a large EU wide community of local and regional authorities (LRAs) and other relevant stakeholders across the EU who want to work together to find smart and innovative evidence based solutions to support active and healthy ageing and develop age-friendly environments (AFE) across the EU. This work is done in close cooperation with the World Health Organisation that will provide technical expertise and documents to support this EU network on age-friendly environments.

## **Senior tourism**

The EU Calypso initiative seeks to help disadvantaged people, including older people go on holiday – while at the same time increasing tourism in the low season.

\_02

## AFE-INNOVNET project

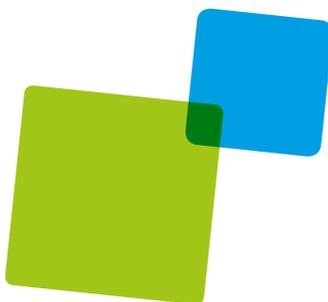


To support our objective of creating an age-friendly EU by 2020 and the launch of a EU Covenant on Demographic Change, AGE will be coordinating a large EU project entitled AFE-INNOVNET which will seek to set up a large EU wide community of local and regional authorities (LRAs) and other relevant stakeholders across the EU who want to work together to find smart and innovative evidence based solutions to support active and healthy ageing and develop age-friendly environments (AFE) across the EU.

This work will be done in close cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) that will provide technical expertise and documents to support this EU network on age-friendly environments. The ultimate aim the project is to develop a strong movement across the EU for the promotion of age-friendly environments that will use the relevant EU policies and funding instruments and will become the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities programme for the EU area.

The overarching goal of this thematic network (TN) is to set up a large EU wide community of local and regional authorities (LRAs) and other relevant stakeholders across the EU who want to work together to find smart and innovative evidence based solutions to support active and healthy ageing and develop age-friendly environments (AFE) across the EU.

The AFE-INNOVNET consortium is composed of 29 partners, local and regional authorities, NGOs, research centres. All in all, the thematic network will support and enhance the operational implementation of the EIP AHA D4 Action Group's work plan.

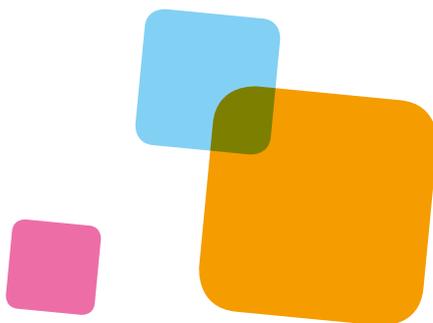


**The AFE-INNOVNET consortium and supporting partners have joined forces to:**

- ▶ mobilise a wide range of local and regional authorities and other stakeholders – industries, including SMEs, research centre/universities, civil society organizations – to link up, benefit from each other’s experience and work together to promote initiatives on AFE across the EU;
- ▶ develop methodologies to help local and regional authorities assess the socioeconomic impact of AFE and the benefits of involving older people in the co-production of AFE solutions;
- ▶ develop a repository of notable and replicable practices in innovative new technologies (ICT) and services solutions with associated socio-economic evidence;
- ▶ facilitate pilot projects clustering to stimulate local/regional investment in ICT and services innovation and thus local/regional economic activity (with a focus on SMEs);
- ▶ facilitate public access to research/expertise and generic methodologies in the field of AFE;
- ▶ ensure convergence and strong coordination with WHO Age-Friendly Cities and Healthy Cities initiatives;

- ▶ facilitate information sharing between all interested stakeholders in the field of AFE;
- ▶ launch an EU Covenant on Demographic Change to create the necessary political and technical framework to bring together in a more formal and long-term structure local and regional authorities – and other stakeholders - across the EU who want to cooperate and implement smart and innovative evidence based solutions. The proposed Covenant will be inspired by the existing Covenant on sustainable energy.

The project has just started and the thematic network is now open to new partners. All parties interested in sharing experience and working together toward our objective of creating an age-friendly EU by 2020 are encouraged to join this project. More information is available on the project website at: [www.afeinnovnet.eu](http://www.afeinnovnet.eu) or [www.towardsanagefriendlyeu.eu](http://www.towardsanagefriendlyeu.eu)



# \_03

## Examples of notable practices



## Adapt labour markets and work places according to evolving needs as people age

Governments all over the EU are promoting longer working lives to help reduce the demographic pressure on public budgets. However, the inclusiveness of the labour market has been increasingly challenged since the crisis started. Younger and older workers are the first ones to be made redundant in case of restructuration.

Rapid ageing implies longer careers for older people but raises the issue of access to employment for younger cohorts, and implications of work careers on pension rights, for instance for women who most often carry the burden of care responsibilities. How then best reconcile needs and requests of different age groups on the labour market which can be sometimes contradictory. Optimisation of individual experience, knowledge and skills seems to be one of the best solutions. Below are some examples of good practices that were presented and discussed at our conference.

### Services vouchers: a tool to prevent stress and to support work life balance, Delphine Chilesse-Lemarinier, Edenred European Affairs Delegate

In the current context of high unemployment rates and stretched budget, job insecurity is rising as well as pressure on employees. This situation is combined to structural factors such as the ageing population or the increasing number of women in the workforce. More and more employees are facing stressful situations while they are shouldering the responsibility of one or more dependents. Access to quality and affordable services (i.e. childcare, elderly care, home services) constitutes an important determinant of citizens' employment opportunities, health and workplace productivity.

Based on studies from international organisations or national institutes, some innovative and practical solutions have been designed to meet employees' needs. Among them, services vouchers have turned out to be efficient tools facilitating the implementation of social and employment policies. Vouchers enable employers to contribute to their employees' domestic services costs in a transparent way.

The system operates on the basis of very simple principles through a specific tax and legal framework and is built on shared responsibility between companies,

employees, services providers and public authorities. Once it has been introduced by a legal framework, this system has proved to be very effective and successful: public institutions grant social subsidies with better fund control and no additional administrative burden, it guarantees the allocation's destination, and creates jobs within the formal economy. It improves employees' quality of life with a greater purchasing power and an access to household services. Workers from all ages can benefit from these schemes to cope with their personal and familial responsibilities.

For instance, the CESU voucher in France is an instrument which eases the employees' access to a wide-range of personal and household services (home cleaning, ironing, child-minding, gardening, services for elderly and disabled people, etc.). This system simplifies administrative procedures to hire a domestic worker in order to convert undeclared work into formal job and to create new activities on a legal basis. It appears to be a really successful and popular solution: in 2011, 3.4 million households were using such services, that is to say, 13% of the French households.

In the UK, the childcare voucher represents a tool to encourage parents to remain at work after child birth. The solution was implemented to involve the employer and make it shares the employees' concerns

about balancing their lives with their job. Childcare vouchers can help contribute towards the cost of childcare while parents are at work. 450,000 individuals from 30 000 companies have used them in 2010. Vouchers can also promote long-life learning and help employees to boost their adaptability to the market, such as the Belgian Opleidingscheque.

Moreover, services vouchers are very easy to manage whatever the size of the company. They then represent innovative, adaptable and efficient tools to answer demographic challenges and to provide employees with an easy access to services that can ease their everyday life.

### **Formabilio, an example of intergenerational entrepreneurship** Maria Grazia Andali and Andrea Carbone, IT

Formabilio was founded by two young communication experts, Andrea Carbone and Maria Grazia Andali, from Milan who decided to take off for a small medieval village in the Veneto region, where they decided to invest in one of the most famous sectors of "Made in Italy", and among the hardest hit by the crisis: furniture.

A start-up with a business eye and ethical mind, Formabilio, was born to make participatory design and "Made in Italy" a brand that can be exported worldwide, thanks to the web and all players involved. Formabilio pinpoints designers through

contests to identify the most innovative, eco-friendly and appealing furniture projects, which are submitted to the assessment and comments of a community of design enthusiasts. The projects are then produced using the expertise of small Italian manufacturing companies and sold on formabilio.com at a fair price.

Nine months after its launch, the platform formabilio.com has about 70,500 registered users. More than 1350 designers have been entering the 14 home design contests and have submitted over 2500 projects. Designers, from all over the world, can enter the contests launched every two weeks and send their furniture, accessories and lighting projects.

The participating projects are not only rated and commented on by our community of design lovers, but also judged by a technical commission that values every entry according to the contest's theme, its sustainability and its attractiveness to potential customers, who are increasingly ecologically conscious and accustomed to buying online. Once the best ideas are selected, Formabilio's network companies develop the prototypes. They are then published on the platform formabilio.com and finally sold online as Formabilio products through the co-operation of manufacturing company and designer.

Based on the idea of crowdsourcing, Formabilio shares the income with everyone involved in the project from the manufacturing enterprises to the designers, who get a 7% fee on the final sale price.

In addition to its entrepreneurial development objective, the participatory system of Formabilio encourages also intergenerational cooperation and knowledge transfer for the production of high quality furniture. The sharing of experience and acquired knowledge take place both within the community of registered users and inside Formabilio's partner companies.





The first four companies chosen by Formabilio as partners tell a unique story of handcraft, tradition, as well as transmission of excellence. Formabilio conserves their know-how based on long-lasting engagement of older workers, consisting of techniques and skills passed down from generation to generation, by investing in the ideas of today's youth, in the local area, in the future of an entire land. Our partners work with motivation, humility and pride –the pride of being a part of this process that aims to promote and increase the values of sustainability and Made in Italy. On the online platform there is an exchange of advice and opinions between young and senior designers, thing that is advantageous for both, because creativity and innovation of the young are improved by the experience of the senior.

During manufacturing process as well, older and experienced craftsmen use their expertise to help new generations of designers improve their concept and adapt it to production and final commercialisation. Furthermore, thanks to the organised contests, the labour market inclusion is encouraged. Formabilio's competitions are addressed to young designer between 18 and 90 years old and 12 % of the members of the design enthusiasts' community are over 50 years old.

## **Strengthen older people's autonomy and quality of life through age-inclusive products and services, buildings, transport, new technologies**

In a context of great urbanisation and demographic shift, improving accessibility of our built environment, transport, goods and services will support mobility, independent living, better health, safety and thus quality of life. Doing so, it will also boost innovation and growth potential across the EU and will bring economic benefits at local, regional, national and EU levels. It is worth noting that countries with high accessibility standards in the built environment, transport and ICT are the countries where the highest levels of employment of both older women and men are found and those which perform best in terms of Healthy Life Years indicator (measuring "disability-free life expectancy"). This shows that promoting accessibility in a pro-active way does not hamper the economy, but on the contrary benefits society and the economy in general by lowering the disability threshold which makes life easier for everyone and supports older persons to age actively and healthily in their communities.

The session was based on an exchange of existing initiatives from across the EU on how age-friendly environments are already implemented or could be further

improved at grass-root level. Panellists presented good practices with regard to the adaptation of goods, products and services, which also take into account the financial constraints in the context of the on-going crisis. Panellists agreed that in this time of crisis it is even more important that all actors concerned by population ageing should invest in solutions which empower all citizens to live more independently and participate fully in society. The panel also provided the audience with an overview of initiatives on outdoor and indoor environment accessibility, the role of ICT solutions to support active and healthy ageing, as well as initiatives of social participation and leisure for seniors.

### **Getting out and about; what's it worth? Prof Catharine Ward Thompson, UK**

The desire to get out and about is always with us. From accessing shops and services to having a walk in the park, being able to use the streets and green spaces around your home is vital to your quality of life. And quality of life is what matters as people live longer.

It is estimated that, by 2050, there will be a 70% increase in the number of people in the EU aged 65 or over. If this population experiences an unhealthy older age, it places a significant financial burden on all levels of government and systems of health and social care. If you are able

to live at home but not actively in your community, you are more likely to be at risk of social isolation and physical inactivity. The latter has been found by the World Health Organization to be the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (6% of deaths globally).

Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I'DGO) has been undertaking research into older people's access to the public realm since 2003. Our research has found that if older people live in an environment that makes it easy and enjoyable for them to go outdoors, or within ten minutes' walk of a park, they are more likely to be physically active and satisfied with life and twice as likely to achieve recommended levels of healthy walking. The pedestrian experience is vitally important to older people, but many find it difficult. Our research participants have told us that this is often due to the poor design, provision, installation or upkeep of neighbourhood features, especially footways.

From tactile paving to 'smart' road crossings, government has worked hard to keep up with innovations in providing inclusive access to outdoor environments. The challenge, however, is that one size does not fit all. In our research, we have found that older people and people with mobility problems do not expect the environment to be tailored to their requirements.

What they do want, however, is to be made aware of how the built environment is changing to meet people's needs and what the implications are for them.

Easy wins for government involve consistency and awareness raising. If you are going to install tactile paving, make sure it conforms to standards and is sending out the right message to people who 'read' it with their feet or with a stick (blister paving at crossings, not steps, for example). If you are going to spend money on intelligent road crossings, especially those where a 'green man' (or equivalent) is no longer visible on the opposite side of the road, inform local residents how the new system works and what the benefits are. Effective consultation at the right time and through the right channels not only promotes good will and accountability but may save both time and money in providing an outdoor environment that everyone feels a part of.

### Creating a better environment for home care, Bart Schelfhout from Philips, NL

At Philips, we are dedicated to creating the future of healthcare and saving lives. A growing part of our solutions enables senior citizens to live well as they age, while at the same time helping governments, policy makers, advocates and planners in addressing the challenges they are facing as a consequence of demographic change. In this way, we help create the positive agenda that we believe longevity deserves as one of the most remarkable achievements of modern history.

Over the last two years, we teamed up with globally renowned experts, developing an 'Ageing Well Model' to explore the possibilities and prospects for successful ageing. The model identifies independence and engagement as the two key quality of life factors people want to maintain as they age. Several of our latest innovations and initiatives that rethink the delivery of healthcare are based on this insight.

We now have an opportunity to transform Europe's healthcare systems to deliver better, more seamless and more consistent care from hospital to home, to manage and treat chronic diseases, lower hospital readmission rates, reduce costs and increase efficiencies.



That is why we are an active partner in the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, working with partners from across Europe on the integration of health and social care enabled by care at home technologies. This will enable people to live better, more comfortably, and as independently and autonomously as possible.

To give one example: Philips is leading the ACT project - Advancing Care Coordination and Tele-health deployment, an EU co-funded programme to overcome structural and organizational barriers to deployment of integrated care. For this, we have partnered with five European regions (Scotland, Groningen, Lombardy, Catalonia and Basque Country) to share data and experiences and create a best practices "cookbook" to ensure that the findings can be replicated in other European regions.

Falls in the elderly are another major health problem. It has emerged from data in the US that roughly 1 in 3 people over 65 fall at least once a year. Half of them experience the same again the next year. That is why we launched a robust, reliable and unobtrusive alarm button with fall detection technology. As part of the iStoppFalls consortium with partners in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Austria, and Australia, we now go one step further: to investigate technology that has the potential to predict falls and measure the fall risk of people over time.

Our solutions and innovation pipelines cover the entire continuum of care, from finding ways to motivate people to stay active and to exercise, over early diagnostics and screening, to therapy and medication management or helping people to deal with sleep apnea and respiratory problems like COPD or asthma. Open innovation is what we stand for. Partnership is the best way towards meaningful development and rapid deployment of innovations to the direct benefit of patients and society. That is why we look forward continuing our relation with AGE Platform Europe.



## **Enhance social inclusion across life-cycle thanks to adequate social protection for all ages**

When asked about difficulties faced in everyday life, older people first refer to the lack of financial resources and increasingly difficult access to affordable health and social care services. In time when governments are reducing public spending in all sectors, the disposable income of older people is decreasing not only due to changes introduced in pension or minimum income schemes, but also in the overall social protection systems, forcing them to spend more “out of pocket” on various services, such as health or long-term care, transport, etc. The trend to shift from pay-as-you-go to supplementary defined contributions schemes will lead to greater risk of poverty among older women if nothing is done to address the discrimination that women suffer in these schemes. Last but not least, with the persistence of the crisis, living conditions are worsening also for a growing number of older people with incomes just above the poverty threshold who are consequently no longer eligible for social transfers.

Various initiatives are seeking to address the current and future challenges when reforming social protection – in particular through tailor-made response to specific needs of ageing populations at local level. The objective is to make social protection systems both financially and socially sustainable on the long-term, and to protect today’s and future generations against old age dependency. The issue of gender dimension in age-friendly social protection systems also needs to be addressed. The persistence of gender inequality at successive stages of life exposes many older women at risk of poverty, in particular at the very old age. The current crisis has made this worse due to the increasing costs of living and the individualisation of protection against the risk of dependency in old age in many Member States.

## **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region strategy in Active and Healthy Ageing**

Gian Matteo Apuzzo, Local Health Authority n.5, on behalf of the Central Directorate for Health, Social-Health Integration and Social Policies, Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (FVG) is facing the challenges of an ageing population and the growth of the number of dependent persons. The rate of over 65 people is more than 23% of the total population, with some cases, like the region capital city of Trieste, where the people over 65 are already around 28%. The dependent persons are 55.000 and it is estimated that in 2050 the figure will double.

In the past, the regional policies supported mostly institutional care solutions and the development of nursing home, but in the last years a transition from institutional care to community welfare has started. Nowadays the main goal is to empower older people to live healthy and independently at home as long as possible. FVG is strongly promoting integrated home care, independent living and community based solutions for older people, supporting the autonomy of ageing people living in their own dwellings (homes, communities) by demand driven solutions.

The most recent regional plans and legislation have defined a model of integrated system of social and health services, and the promotion of home care is developed mainly through the partnership between Municipalities and Local Health Authorities, that are actively involved in strengthening innovative solutions. To deal with the challenges of the ageing population, FVG has been promoting different initiatives aimed at supporting older persons, their families and the local authorities: i.e. there is a regional fund for the autonomy of dependent people (FAP, "Fondo per l'Autonomia possibile"), a regional initiative supporting independent living at home ("Abitare Possibile") and several actions promoting integrated care (social and health care) through a community welfare approach.

One of the most recent initiatives in FVG is a strategic regional project ("ASPAD" Project) to promote home-care and accessibility in the local welfare system through the support to local networks (public-private partnerships) for the home care.

The integrated approach is also addressed by the synergies between social/health and innovation sectors, promoted thanks to the regional law on innovation (law 26/2005), that has a specific article, Art.22, aimed at innovation in the welfare sector, "promoting partnership and involving the private sector". Many pilot projects

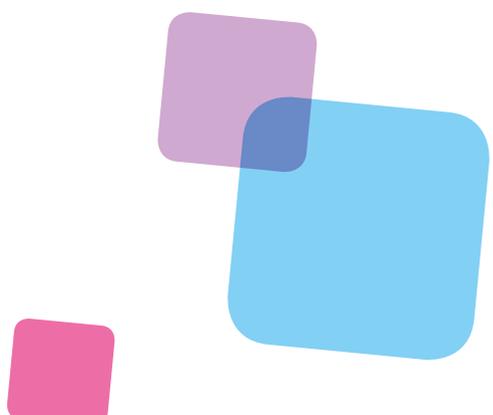
have been promoted in the last 5 years by developing ICT-based solutions in the field of accessibility, domotic and e-health. The Regional Directorate for Health and Social Policies has supported a regional laboratory on Accessibility, Domotic and Innovation (LADI), that has been recently established as the “Cluster for industrial research on technologies for ambient living - “FVG as a l@b”, involving around 45 regional organisations.

FVG is also involved in several initiatives and networks at EU level (through the Local Health Authorities), such as two EU territorial cooperation projects (HELPS, strategic Central Europe project on innovative housing and care solutions for older people and vulnerable persons, and CASA, Interreg IVC funded project on ambient assisted living solutions), SMART CARE (ICT PSP funded initiative on wide deployment of integrated care services), CORAL Network and the commitment in the EIP-AHA D4 WG for age-friendly environments.

### **Dementia-friendly municipalities,** Veerle Baert, Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, BE

The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten, VVSG) is the representative member organisation of all the Flemish municipalities, of the public centres for social welfare and of about fifty inter-municipal companies. It represents the interests of both local elected politicians and municipal employees. The Association of VVSG is involved in the development of dementia friendly municipalities in Flanders (Belgium). Together with the King Baudouin Foundation VVSG published a guide ‘How to make your community dementia friendly’.

In 2012 The King Baudouin Foundation gave the VVSG the assignment of the preservation of the existing dementia friendly municipalities and to develop a strategy to encourage other municipalities to start with a dementia policy.



### **There are 3 key motives why municipalities should become dementia friendly:**

- ▶ There is still a taboo on dementia. The image of dementia is unilateral negative and this has a negative influence on the quality of life of people with dementia. Dementia friendly communities can help to tackle this stigma.
- ▶ The number of people with dementia will be growing in the future due to the ageing society. A dementia friendly community guarantees that people can live at their own houses much longer and that their quality of life becomes higher.
- ▶ People with dementia do not live alone. If we can improve the quality of life of people with dementia, we can improve the quality of life of their family, friends and neighbours.

### **Three Flemish dementia friendly municipalities (Hekla 'Missing', Leuven and Bruges) won a European Award.**

#### **▶ Together towards a dementia friendly Bruges**

This project strives to improve the quality of life of persons with dementia and their environment by bringing about a mentality change among all citizens, organisations, businesses, institutions and officials, all leading to more respectful, equivalent communication and interaction. The

organisation has set up various actions to improve the social integration of persons with dementia so as to let them be considered as "full citizens" again. The main objectives of this project are: breaking the existing taboo on dementia, painting a more nuanced image of the disease and installing a climate of solidarity and shared responsibility.

#### **▶ Hekla 'Missing'**

The Missing project Hekla consists of a uniform protocol to retrieve persons with dementia more efficiently. It builds on an intensive collaboration between the police officers, health care organisations, public transport and citizens. A uniform identification file of the person with dementia helps to reduce the time for retrieving the missing person.

#### **▶ Forgotten to come outside (Leuven)**

The project "vergeten naar buiten te komen» (forgotten to come outside) is for people with dementia in the city of Leuven who are living at their own home who are given the opportunity to participate in cultural and sport activities in and around the city. A dementia friendly community is a project that requests the full cooperation of different partners: local authorities, health care services, police, and not in the least the collaboration of every citizen in the community.

# Useful links

Tackling age discrimination, European Commission website :

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/age/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/age/index_en.htm)

European Innovation partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/eipaha/>

EU City Access Award:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/award/index\\_fr.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/award/index_fr.htm)

AGE Platform Europe's work on age-friendly environments:

[www.age-platform.eu/age-policy-work/age-friendly-environments](http://www.age-platform.eu/age-policy-work/age-friendly-environments)

AGE manifesto for the EP elections 'Towards an age-friendly EU':

[www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/AGE\\_EP\\_Manifesto\\_Nov2013.pdf](http://www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/AGE_EP_Manifesto_Nov2013.pdf)

AFE-INNOVNET project:

[www.afeinnovnet.eu](http://www.afeinnovnet.eu) and [www.towardsanagefriendlyeu.eu](http://www.towardsanagefriendlyeu.eu)

WHO age-friendly environment programme

[www.who.int/ageing/age\\_friendly\\_cities/en](http://www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities/en)

UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

[www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml](http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml)



# TOWARDS AN **AGE-FRIENDLY** EU

You share our vision of a society for all ages where all citizens, whatever their age, can enjoy equal rights and opportunities and are empowered to contribute to the wellbeing of their communities?

Join our movement to promote age-friendly environments across the EU at:

[www.towardsanagefriendlyeu.eu](http://www.towardsanagefriendlyeu.eu)



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