

eInclusion@EU

National policies and activities addressing ICT and work-related active ageing

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eAccessibility and eInclusion in relation to work and employment

Voluminous WP3 title and area covering a broad range of different questions and aspects but a small innovative focus of our work: Linking together themes and debates which up to now have been reflected separately (active ageing <-> ICT) and concentrating on “normal” and not sheltered labour market as well as on main stream and not assistive technology. Not disability and functional restrictions, but “normal” ageing of workforce.



The contribution of ICT to active ageing in work and employment

Issues:

- a) Vocational training and e-skills development at higher age
- b) ICT-contribution to flexible work and retirement schemes
- c) ICT-contribution to the quality of work and human (= suitable for older employees) working conditions



Systematic national data gathering in 27 European countries (EU25-LU+CH+RO)

Six areas covered:

- statistical data and key-figures
- national legislation and regulatory framework
- relevant actors and institutions
- examples of good practice and innovative projects
- national policies, public and political debate
- research questions and projects



Classification, categories

1. Statistics: quality, source, content, age-specificity, ICT-specificity
2. Legislation, regulatory framework: Binding character, object, age-specificity, ICT-specificity
3. Actors and institutions: Level, type, responsibility
4. Good practice projects: Carrier (responsibility, organisation), content, age-specificity, ICT-specificity
5. Discourse: Thematisation and reflection of pertinent issues and problems in public and political debate
6. Research projects: National/international, content



ICT TRAINING AND E-SKILLS OF OLDER WORKERS / LEGISLATION, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

In most of the 27 countries comprehensive state activities (programmes, strategies) but almost nowhere legal obligations and duties of employers are stipulated.

Specific comprehensive strategies linking ICT, ageing and training/e-skills of older workers exists in Estonia, Finland, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia - the only respective law seems to exist in Portugal.

Tax deductions for older workers as trainees and learners are granted in Hungary.



ICT TRAINING AND E-SKILLS OF OLDER WORKERS / GOOD PRACTICE PROJECTS

Most of the reported GPP projects and initiatives are carried out and implemented by the state at national level; much less is being done locally, by the firms and as a private initiative on a self-organised base.

Example of an employer-based project: Intervenção PME-TIC (PT)

Examples of private self-organised initiatives: Senionet (NL, DE, SE, ..) / SHE and CLEVER (European gender projects for older women, mentioned in the report from CY.)



ICT TRAINING AND E-SKILLS OF OLDER WORKERS / ISSUE REFLECTION IN PUBLIC & POLITICAL DEBATE

Strong: Germany, Finland, Lithuania, UK

Weak or none: Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy,
Romania, ...



FLEXIBLE WORK AND RETIREMENT SCHEMES / LEGISLATION, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The debate about flexible and individual pathways to retirement is not about ICT, it's positive shaping potential is not recognised and reflected in most European countries .

Positive exceptions are (a.o.?!) Finland (National Programme on Ageing Workers and National Workplace Development Programme) and Portugal with a number of different national programmes for older and ageing workers.



FLEXIBLE WORK AND RETIREMENT SCHEMES / GOOD PRACTICE PROJECTS

Most of the reported GPP are employer-based, but without an explicit link to ageing and older workers. On contrary, many firms are proud of having one universal personnel policy for all-ages.

Stronger consciousness about positive potentials of work force diversity and age-management: FI, NO, NL, UK, ..

DK-firms, making efforts to retain and attract senior employees.

In English speaking countries, the concept of work-life balance and reconciliation plays an important role.



FLEXIBLE WORK AND RETIREMENT SCHEMES / ISSUE REFLECTION IN PUBLIC & POLITICAL DEBATE

Strong: Germany, Lithuania

In between: Ireland, Malta, Netherlands,
Austria, Sweden, UK

Weak or none: Other countries



QUALITY OF WORK, WORKING CONDITIONS FOR OW / LEGISLATION, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Strong homogeneity, safety and health at the origin of most national regulations.

Legal regulation of working conditions without explicit relation to ICT and older workers.

Exceptions: Malta (National ICT strategy 2004-2006) and Finland (National Workplace Development Programme).



QUALITY OF WORK, WORKING CONDITIONS FOR OW / GOOD PRACTICE PROJECTS

Again, almost all reported projects are state-based and at national level.

Very few employer-based projects and private self-organised initiatives.

Almost no reference to positive ICT-potentials.

Exception: SeniorProfil (DK)



WORK QUALITY, WORKING CONDITIONS FOR OW / ISSUE REFLECTION IN PUBLIC & POLITICAL DEBATE

Strong: Denmark (but without a focus on
positive ICT-potentials)

In between: Germany, Finland, UK

Weak or none: Other countries



General comments and conclusions

“Active ageing” has as concept different meaning and relevance in different parts and countries of Europe. In many (most?!) European countries it is (still?!) is a political backwater, only in very few the word and concept are relevant and known outside of the world of bureaucrats and experts.

ICT are not the main tool and instrument for active ageing in work and employment ... but we know and discuss surprisingly little about their respective positive chances and potentials.

The learning from existing positive examples and experience is surprisingly slow and seem to be hindered by fragmented policies and responsibilities but also by one-eyed and one-sided negative ICT-images (e.g. job-killing, stress and ill-making impacts).



General comments and conclusions (II)

Most advanced countries and pioneers are located in Northern Europe and especially in Finland. Active ageing is a highly recognized concept in this country and the Finns have also elaborated the most explicit, comprehensive and convincing framework for beneficial societal use and exploitation of modern technologies.

One reason for the Finnish lead could be tripartite agreements and good co-operation between policy makers, trade-unions and employers, other might be also high quality, well accepted and implemented research.



General comments and conclusions (III)

In a special and difficult situation with regard to active ageing and possible contribution of ICT are the post communist new members states of EU. (Life-expectancy still low and under EU-average , unemployment, underdeveloped social capital and civil society, problematic relation and interface between the state policy and institutions of civil society, ...)

But even though these countries experience a special situation and lot of problems recently, they learn and catch-up quickly and soon there might be other technology and active ageing lagging countries in Europe.



Information about the results of national data gathering in 27 European countries

Project web page

www.eInclusion-EU.org

Project reports and deliverables



Next workshop in spring 2006

"ICT-contribution to equal occupational chances and opportunities by improved work-life balance and reconciliation". Again the same philosophy: Linking together hitherto separate and not sufficiently interrelated themes (ICT, equal occupational chances and work-life balance). Main target group of this workshop will not be the older workers and people but carers.

