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BAROMETER 2023

**Empowering older people
in the labour market for sustainable
and quality working lives**

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AGE Platform Europe | A society for ALL ages

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Foreword from Nicolas Schmit

European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights

To enhance social convergence and build a stronger Social Europe, the EU set an ambitious target of 78% of Europeans in employment by 2030, which was welcomed by the EU Leaders at the May 2021 Porto Social Summit and by the European Council in June 2021. Many of the European Pillar of Social Rights principles are relevant for active and healthy ageing – from old-age income and pensions to long-term care and healthcare or fair working conditions. To deliver on this, the EU and Member States will need to keep investing in quality and inclusive jobs for all, including older workers, whose employment rate stood at 74.6% in 2022, after a steady increase from 66.8% in 2013.

The Pillar Action Plan translated into an unprecedented number and breadth of initiatives put forward by this Commission in the social field, many with a direct impact on older persons. Most recently, the Report of the High-Level Group on the Future of Social Protection and of the Welfare State in the EU of February 2023 strongly supported a life-course approach to welfare policies. The European Skills Agenda includes actions to make training pathways more flexible and fit for ageing societies, in a lifelong perspective. Anticipating and managing change in the context of ageing societies is also one of the priorities of the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021- 2027.

The focus of this Barometer on barriers that impede older workers to stay in their job is very much welcome. Even though reducing, over the years, the exclusion of people aged between 55 and 64 from work and their higher share of long-term unemployment should not be accepted as a fatality. As this report rightfully notes, many solutions exist that are still under-exploited to make sure employment after a certain age can be of a high quality and benefit workers and companies alike. With the digital transition, training and life-long learning are needed to preserve the employability of older workers, at risk of skills obsolescence. More flexible forms of retirement (e.g., combining pensions and work) and flexible working arrangements can also help keep older workers in the labour force.

The way societies prepare for ageing needs to go beyond economics. Experiences such as volunteer activity by older people or intergenerational learning, including mentoring or experience sharing, can promote intergenerational solidarity and build social capital, benefiting young and older people alike in terms of knowledge, experience and self-esteem. This needs to be part of our social contract for the years to come. I therefore welcome whole-heartedly the work of AGE Platform Europe on this Barometer as it will help draw the solutions of tomorrow for a fair, sustainable and inclusive society.

Foreword from Heidrun Mollenkopf

President of AGE Platform Europe

Policymakers, business managers, social and urban planners, health and employment officials need a reliable data base to make well informed and appropriate decisions in their respective areas of responsibility.

In this context, it is not sufficient to rely solely on sober statistical data material. In addition to such data, country- and location-specific framework conditions, historically evolved traditions and welfare regimes, as well as special problem situations must be taken into account in planning and implementation processes.

Ageing and social policy must also consider the great heterogeneity of the different cohorts of older persons and their diverging competences and needs.

AGE Platform Europe strives to provide policy makers and other decision makers at all levels - international, national, regional and local - with the best possible basis for their work through discussions, publications, conferences and statements.

With the Barometer presented here, we provide this missing data and material in the area of employment and work. Thanks to the input of our member associations, the report can show the different preconditions of European labour policy. At the same time, it provides a wide range of suggestions on how older workers and employees can be empowered to make full use of their skills and interests in the labour market and thus, on the one hand contribute to the economy of their country and on the other, maintain a job that is personally satisfying and securing an adequate income.

We hope that the Barometer can serve as a document of reference and useful tool both for the work of policymakers and employers, and in the efforts of civil society organizations to ensure that working lives in older age are satisfying for all concerned.

Introduction

For the past four years, AGE Platform Europe has been publishing Barometers that report on the socioeconomic situation of older people. Each edition focuses on specific area(s) in which respect for the human rights of older people is assessed. Among all the topics addressed, earlier editions covered gender equality, employment-related issues, the fight against poverty and social exclusion and adequate income ([2019](#)), non-discrimination, health, long-term care, disability, social inclusion and elder abuse ([2020](#)), as well as lifelong learning, volunteering and participation ([2021](#)).

This 2023 edition is dedicated to employment and the situation of older people in the labour market. Recognising the full potential of older people in the labour market and in society, this Barometer seeks to answer the following question *“How to empower older people in the labour market so they can lead sustainable and quality working lives?”*.

From an intersectional perspective, three key policy areas are analysed: the support for older people in the labour market, the fight against ageism at work and the creation of workplaces for all ages. Based on data collected by AGE members and desk research, a report was drawn up on **19 countries**: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Finally, through country-by-country assessments, we have been able to highlight the commonalities and divergences between Member States and set out AGE's positions on these three policy areas to, ultimately, build recommendations applicable to all levels of governance.

Executive Summary

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan¹ has set the target of at least 78 % of the population aged 20 to 64 to be in employment by 2030, paying particular attention to halving the gender employment gap and improving young people employment prospects. Older workers – aged 55 years and over – are not mentioned, yet older people are far from well off in the labour market. Today, the employment rate in Europe for people aged 55-64 is only 62.3%. This figure is lower than 40% for women in this age group in Greece and Romania. Given the ageing of the EU workforce, the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan's objective cannot be achieved without a significant improvement in the employment rates of older people.

Demographic change initiates new challenges and leads towards longer working lives. However, we cannot simply raise the retirement age. **We first need to remove the barriers older workers currently face to remain in employment and offer tailored solutions for quality working lives.** The Member States, as well as the European institutions, must adopt an approach that reflects the realities of the life course and the influence of employment on an individual's life, embracing the full potential and the experience of older people in the labour market and in society. Taking into account the heterogeneity of the labour market, including the diversity of sectors, companies, types of jobs and contracts, they must define policies and practices to empower older workers without further delay.



¹ EUR-LEX - 52021DC0102 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:102:FIN>

The key findings of the 2023 Barometer are the following:

❖ **Support for older people in the labour market**

- The fact that 2/5 of persons aged between 55 and 64 are not in work illustrates the exclusion of aspects of ageing from the scope of employment policies and the need to adopt a life-course approach.
- Long-term unemployment rate (12 months or more) is much higher for older workers than for other age groups. The lack of support for older people in the labour market means that a large majority of them are more likely to become inactive than to find a new job after the age of 50. A person-centred approach to better support older workers is needed.
- Employment policies generally focus only on adults of "working age", thereby restricting people over pensionable age in terms of accessing their rights to social protection when they are self-employed for instance, or to work opportunities, or adult education and training. Yet, in a context where more and more people continue to work beyond pensionable age, this restriction seems unjustified and obsolete.

❖ **End age discrimination in employment**

- Ageist views and considerations about older workers prevail in the labour market. Ageism is at the root of various malfunctions at work and has a major impact on older people in the labour market, going as far as to deny older people's right to work.
- European and national legislation outlawing age discrimination in the labour market contains exemptions and legal justifications that allow a wide range of practices to deny older workers the right to work, for example through using age limits.
- Older people are too often seen as a homogeneous group, when in fact they are perhaps the age group with the most differences due to the various paths they choose or face over the course of their lives and life experience. An intersectional approach is needed to meet the needs of a very diverse population.
- The diversity of ages in a company is an added value that promotes productivity, by strengthening the complementarities between employees of different ages. It is also an opportunity to share knowledge and experience, and to build a multi-skilled team that will better meet the expectations of consumers and "receivers" of different ages and life paths.

❖ *Workplaces for all ages*

- Adapting workplaces and working conditions to the needs of each age group, including older workers, in all their diversity
- The mental health and well-being of older workers is largely impacted by ageism. This is not only because ageist daily attitudes negatively influence workers self-esteem, but also because of the lack of tailor-made opportunities available to older workers, such as life-long training or flexible working conditions to ensure a work-life balance which are necessary at work in a rapidly changing environment.
- Digital technology is often seen as a way of providing solutions for an ageing workforce. However, not enough is being done to ensure the availability, affordability and accessibility of new technologies, which raises a number of issues, including a clear risk of exclusion for some people.



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Methodology for the AGE Barometer

The AGE Barometer is an annual exercise, now planned every two years. This 2023 edition is the fourth one. It is based on the analysis of two types of data:

- statistics collected and screened by the AGE secretariat, based on European statistics available for cross-country comparisons;
- data collected at national level and based on AGE members' feedback on the questionnaire prepared by the secretariat (attached at the end of the Barometer).

This assessment is based on key policy processes and legislation at European and national levels in regard to ageing such as the European Pillar of Social Rights and its related Action plan², the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work for the period 2021-2027³, the 2019 European work-life balance directive⁴, or even the General Framework for Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation⁵, also known as the Employment Equality directive (2000/78/EC).

Data on older people is scarce. In the context of employment and the labour market, good quality data are all the rarer because they observe age groups that are too broad, when a more detailed breakdown is needed and because they take little or no account of people beyond the established "working age". What's more, the little information and data available is not disaggregated enough and does not take into account people experiencing intersectional marginalisation. There is very little data on older women or older LGBTIQ people, for example. This makes it difficult to assess trends, make comparisons between countries and formulate appropriate recommendations.

Our research at national level is mainly based on AGE members' views of the situation in their Member States. Thanks to AGE members and desk research, we have outlined what could be developed and successfully implemented to empower older persons in the labour market to improve quality of working life and make it more sustainable.

² EUR-LEX - 52021DC0102 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:102:FIN>

³ EUR-LEX - 52021DC0323 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0323&qid=1626089672913#PP1Contents>

⁴ EUR-LEX - 32019L1158 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019L1158>

⁵ EUR-LEX - 32000L0078 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>

Key messages and recommendations

Support for older people in the labour market

Career long guidance and management

Employment rates and long-term unemployment figures underline the increasing difficulties for some workers to keep up with rising pension ages. The sustainability of careers cannot be based solely on the goodwill of workers, incentives or obligations for employees to work longer. Major investments must be made in training, mobility and tailor-made working conditions. To achieve this, **employees must be involved in their own career development** through consultations on the implementation of the employer's social policy, as well as through regular consultations between employers and employees.

European rates in 2022 <i>Eurostat numbers</i>	From 20 to 64 years old	From 50 to 64 years old	From 55 to 64 years old
Employment rates ⁶	74.6%	68.8%	62.3%
Long-term unemployment rates of the total unemployment ⁷	40.7%	53.3%	55.7%

In **Belgium**, a collective agreement concluded between social partners provides for the adoption of a plan to maintain or increase the number of employees aged 45 and over in private companies. The plan is assessed by employee representatives, such as trade unions or works councils, who can also make suggestions that cannot be rejected by the employer unless there is written justification. Measures of that plan could relate to recruitment processes, skills and qualifications, care development or working conditions for instance.

Career management and career guidance are often overlooked in late career stages. However, looking at the individual's situation, desires and needs, to understand the career path and expectations for the future is essential to maintain older workers in employment. Implementing career guidance for employees of all ages enables to retain talent, to redeploy functions, to reskill and upskill older employees while assessing their needs, their motivation and their desire for the future. Career guidance also enables to better target age management policies and implement the right adaptations for the health, security and well-being of the entire workforce. The results is a boost to productivity, attraction to qualified candidates and reduction of staff turnover.

⁶ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

⁷ *Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a percentage of the total unemployment, by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/c9cd7297-2f79-4d30-8905-111bb4a72301?lang=en&page=time:2022>



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Using a more flexible life-course approach in the labour market

In contrast to a traditional view of the life-course where an employee gets initial education, works, and retires, employment policies should be based on a more flexible model.

The traditional view of the life-course fuels prejudice and exclusion, particularly at the end of a career. In a later career, retirement is seen as natural or inevitable, regardless of the abilities of older people or their desire to continue working. However, alternatives to retirement should be possible. Rethinking this model by proposing more flexibility throughout working life must result in the adoption and application of policies supporting, periods of learning, rest, care or retraining for a second or third job at any point in life for instance.

A more flexible approach to the life-course is also a way to recognise the diversity of older people's life experiences. Older persons are too often seen as a homogeneous group, even though their life-courses differ widely because of the differences they have accumulated throughout their lives. Adopting a flexible life-course approach therefore also means looking at the individual to best meet the needs and expectations that will enable sustainable, quality working lives.

Employers play a predominant role in the sustainability of working lives. However, the implementation of career management and guidance cannot be the sole responsibility of employers, which do not always have the necessary resources to provide it such as small and medium-sized companies. It must also be supported by policies. In **Slovenia**, career orientation is defined in the Labour Market Act which states that lifelong career orientation includes activities that enable the identification of abilities, competencies and interests for making decisions in the field of employment, education, training and career choices, and enables the

management of life paths in such a way that individuals learn and use these skills and competencies.

Interviews focusing on the employee's long-term career plans should be conducted. It should assess the quality of working conditions, and take into account the employee's entire previous career path and career prospects up to the time of retirement.

European Commission – a better representation of retired civil servants

The AGE member SEPS/SFPE, the Association of Seniors of the European Public Service aims to defend the interests of former European civil servants and other agents as well as colleagues in invalidity and, as a priority, to defend their social rights. The major objective of the association is the effective defence of acquired rights of the former members of staff beyond their period where they were active for the European public service: the sickness insurance system (JSIS), pensions, the method of adjusting pensions, allowances and any other relevant questions. In this respect, SEPS advocates for the effective representation of the retired staff with voting rights in the main joint committees and negotiating groups of the Staff Regulations for officials of the European civil service. In order to be represented and informed, SEPS invites members of staff who are still active but close to retirement, and who wish to defend their future rights, to become members of the Association and of the Board of Directors. In this way, active SEPS staff take part in negotiations when rules concerning "post-active staff" are discussed.

SEPS volunteers are also responsible for ensuring good communication with their members and are committed to making this accessible. To do so, they ensure that their communication is both digital and distributed by post and their meetings are hybrid, accessible both by videoconference and on-site in Brussels. Finally, they provide ongoing assistance to their members through their call centre, which includes legal assistance and office hours.

A more flexible life-course approach also involves nurturing talent. Career management is thus inextricably linked to **lifelong learning**. To achieve principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the EU-level target of 60% of all adults taking part in training every year by 2030⁸, lifelong learning must be accessible at all ages. However, too often life-long learning offers are targeted at the young and forget to address older people. When they are, they are not that relevant or helpful in the labour market. In **the edition 2021 of the Barometer**, AGE members underlined the fact that the potential of learning policies targeting older persons is not sufficiently harnessed. They particularly highlight the impact of ageist stereotypes, lack of communication and of systematic entitlements to training hinder the participation of older workers in these programmes. Moreover, pensioners are systematically excluded from informal and formal learning opportunities, while specific groups such as people with disabilities, older people living in rural areas and older people from migrant backgrounds face additional barriers.

⁸ EUR-LEX - 52021DC0102 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:102:FIN>

It is all the more important to give priority to jobseekers at risk of becoming long-term unemployed to start training or education, whatever their age.



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Support for older jobseekers

In the context of labour shortages in some sectors, public employment services are challenged to promote the value of older workers with employers and to build the employability of jobseekers. Although long-term unemployment figures (over 12 months) are particularly high among older persons, there are currently few or no policies in place to guarantee their return to the labour market. Due to the lack of support and alternatives, many older jobseekers turn to self-employment, which is a way to pursue passions and interests, to be more flexible and align with their own needs. However, this includes dealing with a number of challenges, such as the lack of support for older people in this area, or risks such as the lack of adequate social security. Also, the self-employment option might not be an option for blue collar workers.

To prevent unemployment among older workers, **France** is currently discussing a tool called the "index senior", designed to assess the number of older people employed by a company, to encourage them to maintain or increase their numbers by implementing appropriate measures, and to measure their progress. With a similar objective, **Sweden** has adopted two age-neutral measures that indirectly help older workers keep their jobs. The "first in, last out principle" provides that, in the event of

redundancy, employees with the most seniority should not be the first to be made redundant, thereby largely protecting older employees and encouraging the retention of the most experienced workers. The “equal pay for equal work” principle is also an incentive to keep or hire older workers in the company. While seniority wages can be a financial barrier for organisations to hire or retain older workers, this Swedish rule ensures that older and younger workers are paid equally within the organisation.

Regarding unemployment, reducing the minimum income adequate for reintegration could constitute a disincentive to work or a poverty trap when the first job is unsustainable, underpaid or of low quality. The Council recommendation on adequate minimum income for active inclusion contains a recommendation to allow minimum income to be maintained during the transition to the labour market.

A person-centred approach to support older jobseekers

To facilitate a return to the labour market, a **person-centred approach** could allow personalised action plans, including profiling, expectations, identification of training needs and matching support. It is more than essential to adequately support older job seekers not only to find a job but also to ensure sustainable careers. With better equipment, trained staff and better funding, public employment agencies could better support older jobseekers by connecting them to supporting entities that provide tailor-made training and guidance. From that perspective, the **Guarantee of Employability of Workers** programme developed in **Italy** aims to foster an approach centred on the individual, with public and private services and an offer of personalised pathways to integration or reintegration into the labour market. Another type of experimentation is being developed in **France** with the **Territoire Zéro Chômeur de longue durée** which aims to offer any person who wishes to work but has been out of work for an extended period of time, a permanent job, by developing and financing useful activities that are not in competition with existing jobs, in order to meet the needs of the various players in the area. This inspiring initiative is supported by a number of players with a view to developing it at European level through an **EU job guarantee**.

As well as supporting lifelong learning, we need to invest more specifically in **learning second careers**. Depending on the type of job and the associated working conditions, workers' ability to remain in the labour market can be weakened as early as mid-career. Training for a second job from mid-career would enable workers to change professions whenever the need or desire arises. On this model, a **Dutch** initiative called Silver Starters supports entrepreneurial activity and aims to give older people the opportunity to live out an active lifestyle, increase employability and reduce risks of financial vulnerability and ageism.

Working beyond the legal age of retirement

Self-employment often represents the only viable opportunity for older persons looking for work, for **pensioners wishing to continue working** or for people **to reduce their working hours** for other priorities in their later careers. This lack of opportunity varies from one Member State to another. Yet there are few policies to support these people in their search for work. This task is often the fruit of the work of local associations, as in the case of the **German association Mice for Older People** which offers jobs for older people and counselling services for pensioners who want to continue working in several cities. Among all the activities offered, there is the possibility to meet people in the same situation fortnightly for three months to help each other realise personal goals on the topic of "Working 60+".



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Recommendations for a better support in the labour market

Changing the policy narrative on ageing at work by:

- emphasising the benefits of age diversity and multigenerational teams ;
- making lifelong learning a priority, increasing opportunities for adult learning, with paid training leave and the possibility of learning a second profession from mid-career onwards;
- recognising the skills, including soft skills and experience, of older workers;
- raising awareness among future managers about career-long guidance, age management and lifelong learning for their future employees
- supporting extending working lives, gradual transition to retirement and combination of pension and work.

Legislate at national level to make age equality plans mandatory in every sector, which will include:

- age management strategies based on the life-course approach aiming to maintain ageing workers in employment and achieve a balance between the ages in the workforce;
- mandatory measures and tools to support career-long guidance such as regular “professional reviews”, giving access to a professional progress report, a skills assessment or a professional development programme;
- regular assessment of employers’ application of their age management strategy in terms of combating age discrimination, career development or adaptation of premises and procedures for instance;
- the production of more in-house data and analysis, using tools such as an index in companies, to assess the number of older employees, and measure progress made to maintain and employ older workers;
- the adoption of incentives (e.g. eligibility for public aid) and sanctions (e.g. legal proceedings with financial compensation) for employers.

Adopt a better outplacement system by the public employment services through:

- a person-centred approach that allows for personalised action plans, including profiling, expectations, identification of training needs or matching support for instance;
- specific support (e.g. on how to develop a business) and strong social protection for older people's self-employment;
- compulsory sector-specific communication on the options available when approaching retirement;
- better communication on work opportunities after retirement.

End age discrimination in employment

Reviewing lawful exceptions to age discrimination protection

According to the World Health Organization, “ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people on the basis of their age.”⁹ The WHO report looks specifically at ageism towards older people¹⁰, which is widespread in Europe. In the field of employment in particular, ageism is the cause of older people being side-lined despite their desire to be active in the labour market. All Member States have legislation implementing non-discrimination based on age in employment. Most of these laws transpose the EU directive establishing the Employment Equality directive (2000/78/EC)¹¹.

The implementation of this directive is to be evaluated every five years in a report by the European Commission. In this evaluation process, stakeholders are invited to provide their views on the application of the directive. AGE last participated in this consultation in 2020¹². However, AGE could not access the Commission's report to follow this consultation, making it impossible to make appropriate recommendations.

In the March 2021 policy paper, *The Right to Work in old age: How the EU Employment Framework directive still leaves older workers behind*¹³, AGE points out that Article 6 of the directive “allows the possibility to justify direct age discrimination, as long as there is a legitimate aim”. This allows Member States to apply a wide range of exceptions in their legislation discriminating against part of the population based on their age.

Age limits

Although the adoption of the Employment Equality directive has increased general awareness of the unacceptability of age limits in recruitment, maximum age requirements in access to employment, training or social protection relating to employment, are still accepted.

Among the most commonly accepted age limits, compulsory retirement at a certain age still applies in some countries, denying a certain section of the population its right to work. The 2022 *Comparative analysis of non-discrimination law in Europe* of the European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination divides the application of this article into three categories of Member States: Member States with legislation that does not impose a mandatory retirement age, nor does it remove protection against unfair dismissal for workers

⁹ *Global report on ageism*. (2021). World Health Organisation. <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/demographic-change-and-healthy-ageing/combating-ageism/global-report-on-ageism>

¹⁰ We use the term “ageism” to talk about ageism towards older people. It will be specified each time that ageism must be understood in its broadest sense.

¹¹ EUR-LEX - 32000L0078 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>

¹² *20 years of fighting age discrimination, and still many gaps to fill - AGE responds to EU Consultation on Employment directive* | AGE Platform. (s. d.). <https://www.age-platform.eu/policy-work/news/age-responds-eu-consultation-employment-directive>

¹³ *The right to work in old age : How the EU Employment Framework directive still leaves older workers behind*. (2021, March). AGE Platform Europe. https://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/The_right_to_work_in_old_age-AGE_Platform_Europe_June2021.pdf

over a certain age; Member States where the retirement age is specified in national legislation for public sector employees only; and finally, Member States whose legislation allows for the compulsory retirement of employees, whether in the public or private sector, because employees have reached a certain age.

However, age limits also exist in many Member States as support measures for older people in the labour market. In some countries, these seem to be more widely available across the territory, whereas in others unequal treatment is at stake in case some local authorities offer these services and others do not. These measures are good to proactively aim to avoid exclusion. The measures, however, should not portray older people as more vulnerable. Age-neutral measures supporting older workers such as the “first in, last out” principle in **Sweden** that encourages the retention of the most experienced workers, are a good alternative to support older persons in the labour market without setting an age limit.



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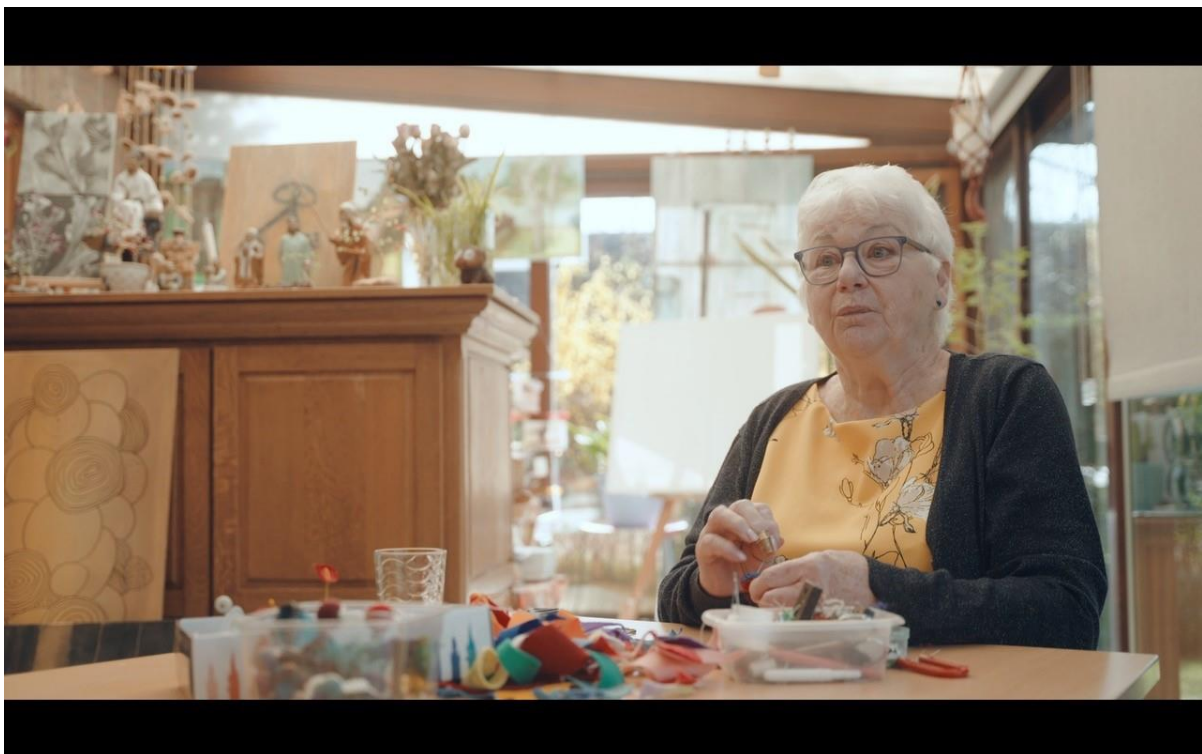
Although the revision of the Employment Equality directive is not being considered, alternative paths are taking shape. First, AGE continues pushing for the adoption of a horizontal directive aimed at proposing an EU-wide minimum level of protection against discrimination through a horizontal approach, complementing the Employment Equality directive. In December 2022, the European Commission published two proposals for new directives on standards to strengthen national equality bodies, which would support the implementation of the Employment

Equality Directive in EU Member States by helping to prevent discrimination and better protect victims¹⁴.

When asked about the procedures to follow in the event of age discrimination, AGE members reported the difficulty of pursuing this type of complaint. The procedure is often unknown to the general public or complaints are not followed up. According to the EU Equality law review of 2020/2¹⁵, there has been an improvement in national legislation regarding sanctions and solutions in cases of discrimination. However, it also states that in several countries, compensation for age discrimination is very low. In several Member States, in particular, no sanctions are imposed for age discrimination, even though they exist for other types of discrimination.

The need to adopt a new narrative on ageing

To put an end to ageism in the labour market, AGE welcomes the existence of information and communication. However, AGE recommends raising awareness on ageism in the labour market, through local campaigns and training for instance. Among the initiatives identified by AGE members, the **Belgian** documentary REBELS by Ann Peuteman and Brecht Vanhoenacker where the character of Nadia stubbornly continues to apply for jobs without success, illustrating the negative view of ageing and being sidelined by society.



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¹⁴ *Standards for equality bodies: Council agrees its positions.* (s. d.). Council of the EU. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/06/12/standards-for-equality-bodies-council-agrees-its-positions/>

¹⁵ *Publications Office of the European Union. (2020). European Equality Law Review. 2020/2.* Publications Office of the EU. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6b9c44bf-2ae6-11eb-9d7e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-224817896>

Still in **Belgium**, the independent public institution UNIA gives access to an online training module called "eDiv" which enables employers to learn how to apply the non-discrimination legislation in their daily work. Finally, in **Romania**, AGE members have highlighted the platform Angajez 45+ ("I hire 45+"), aiming to raise awareness and mobilise employers and employees to end age discrimination in the recruitment process.

Age discrimination in the recruitment process, a good practice called "Experience Required"

VeHadarta – The Third Force, an Israeli NGO, is dedicated to reshaping the prevailing societal perception of senior adults, reframing them from a perceived burden to a valuable resource. Within this demographic, many individuals have retired due to ageism—experiencing poor treatment and career limitations because of their age—or have been affected by restrictive pension laws. A significant portion of this group finds themselves relying on welfare subsidies, inadequate pensions, or, when available, the financial support of their children. VeHadarta's central goal is to empower these individuals, fostering financial security, independence, heightened self-esteem, and emotional well-being.

To realise this vision, in 2009 VeHadarta introduced a groundbreaking model known as "Experience Required." Developed in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of Social Equality, Israeli and international companies, and private benefactors, this innovative online job platform directly connected employers with senior adult job seekers. Simultaneously, VeHadarta provided extensive support and guidance to both job seekers and employers registered on the platform. In the public sphere, VeHadarta organized conferences for employers and orchestrated awareness-raising events aimed at combating ageism in the workplace. Notably, VeHadarta was featured in the AARP international comparative survey of aging programs, recognized as Israel's pioneering flagship online job platform dedicated to older adults (The Aging Readiness & Competitiveness Report, AARP International Journal, p14).

The success of the "Experience Required" model led to the evolution of a more sophisticated version, "Experience Required 2.0." This enhanced model delved into a wide spectrum of diverse data, illuminating the shortcomings of the traditional employment landscape, particularly the dearth of opportunities aligning with the needs and skills of older workers.

As a result, in 2022, VeHadarta made a pivotal transition from the "Experience Required" model to "SKEELZ", a cutting-edge program founded on "skills-based hiring." This approach allows employers to reduce reliance on degree completion and previous employment history, emphasising an assessment of demonstrated skills, talent, and competencies. Leveraging an artificial intelligence engine in the field of human resources, this model maps and matches the skill sets of senior adult job seekers with the hiring needs of employers, thus increasing the number and quality of placements while shortening placement times.

Through the "SKEELZ" platform, VeHadarta is catalyzing a sustainable and substantial societal transformation: the emergence of a "world without age,"

where age ceases to be a barrier, and the merits of the third age—experience and skills—take center stage.

Over the past year, VeHadarta has successfully completed Stage 1 of the new “SKEELZ” website, which is currently operational, boasting approximately 3,000 job seekers and 500 relevant job postings. Each day, VeHadarta facilitates numerous matches between senior job seekers and suitable positions in the evolving job market. Furthermore, VeHadarta has elevated the quality of job listings and enhanced our technological capabilities. VeHadarta is also proactively pursuing additional public and business partnerships, fortifying the initiative's long-term sustainability.



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AGE members also stressed the need to enhance the value of age diversity in companies. They further demand to counteract the prejudice that high hiring rates of older workers create barriers to young people’s employment. On the contrary, it seems that when employment rates of older workers are high, employment rates of younger workers are also high. Cooperation between generations benefits companies and the labour market in several ways. At the company level, a diverse workforce is generally more productive and more prone to innovation because it brings together different talents and experiences. An OECD report¹⁶ about age-inclusive workforces explains that “building multigenerational workforces and giving older employees *greater opportunities to work could raise GDP per capita by 19%*

¹⁶ *Promoting an Age-Inclusive Workforce : Living, Learning and Earning Longer*. (2020). OECD Library. <https://www.oecd.org/publications/promoting-an-age-inclusive-workforce-59752153-en.htm>

over the next three decades". Companies with an age diversity policy report a more resilient workforce and improved workforce continuity and stability. Lastly, they seem to respond better to the expectations of consumers and/or customers whose age and life paths are diversified. Several initiatives to promote age diversity in companies exist at the Member States level, such as an initiative financed by **the Republic of Slovenia** and the European Union under the European Social Fund, which seeks to reduce and eliminate stereotypes, promote intergenerational cooperation and respect for other generations in the workplace through educational workshops on these issues and give MEGA (short for Intergenerational active company in Slovenian) awards to employers.

An intersectional approach reflecting the population in its diversity

Some Member States recognise age's intersection with other forms of discrimination in their legislation. In **Malta** for instance, National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2021-2027 *"recognises the significance of intersectionality"* and suggests also *"several policy and legal measures with a specific approach to intersectional discrimination"*.



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Intersectionality

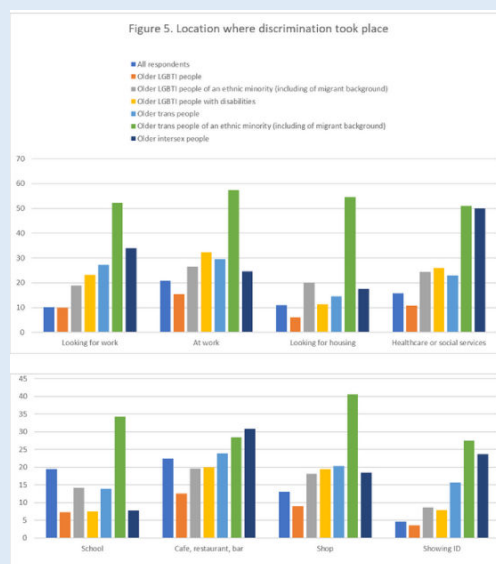
Older people cannot be seen as a homogeneous group, but rather in all their diversity. The older we get, the more different we become thanks to life experience. In this context, an intersectional approach is necessary to tackle different and multiple forms of discrimination that older people face.

❖ Older women

Older women are particularly affected by intersectional discrimination in the labour market. Indeed, the gender gap for people between 55 and 64 years old is the highest of all age groups (12.5 percentage points¹⁷). Women are disowned and discriminated against because of their gender from an early age. This discrimination accumulates and is reflected even more strongly in later life. The pay gap between men and women, the lack of autonomy granted to women with regard to the family, the absence of adequate support to combat systemic sexism and gender bias, and the fact that the vast majority of women have to reduce their working hours because they are responsible for informal care, are just a few examples of the way discrimination against women manifest itself on the labour market. Employment-related policies need to focus on the specific obstacles faced by women throughout their lives, to better address the difficulties encountered in the labour market in old age. The **Swedish** model is inspiring in this respect because several measures provide special support to women throughout their lives to guarantee their right to work, care work, for those concerned, their autonomy and their work-life balance. This is reflected in the position of older women in the labour market.

❖ Older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people

As explained in the joint policy paper from AGE Platform Europe and The European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe), untitled [Equality for older lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in Europe](#), “A major source of insecurity for older people in same-sex couples results from the lack of legal recognition of their relationships, exemplified by the denial of entitlement to inheritance of property, tax inequality and lower or denied entitlement to pensions compared to their heterosexual counterparts.” It is also the case in the labour market where, for instance, same-sex couples are not allowed to access employment benefits for married couples.



¹⁷ Employment and activity by sex and age - annual data. (s. d.). Eurostat. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/daeb0f4e-5567-4e29-a0a4-cf9e68bd9fb2?lang=en>

In a survey carried out for the joint policy document, AGE and ILGA reported higher figures than the general average (4.35%) for violence received from colleagues:

- 43.53% of older trans men experienced violence from a colleague much higher than trans men of all ages: 9,28%
- 19.86% of older non-binary people experienced violence from a colleague

❖ *Older migrants*

Professor Matt Flynn, from the University of Leicester Business School, conducted a research project in the UK called *Dragons Voice: Giving older migrants a Say in healthy work*¹⁸ aiming to understand the problems faced by older migrants in the labour market. The results of this research showed in particular that migrants are more likely to work after pension age. However, they are often in insecure jobs despite their skills and experience. The project highlighted that:

- 30% of migrants 65-70 years old are still in work
- 22% of 50+ working migrants say they are self-employed
- 45% of retired migrants say ill health was a reason for leaving work
- 25% of 50+ migrants consider their health fair or poor.

Among the recommendations, the project highlights the need to support older migrants to pursue missions they left behind when coming to the UK and give older migrants a voice in designing work for their second mission.

¹⁸ *Migrants – second mission*. (s. d.). <https://secondmission.org.uk/migrants/>

Recommendations to end age discrimination in the labour market

Conduct large-scale campaigns to raise awareness among the general public, employers and employees of age discrimination in the labour market, by:

- using age-friendly vocabulary and pictures that reflect the age diversity of the workforce;
- shedding light on the issues faced by older women, older lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people, older migrants and groups of older people who are at the intersection of different forms of discrimination in the labour market.

Develop a new vision on older workers and ageing within companies in:

- providing regular training and guidance to employers about ageism in the workplace, focusing on processes such as the recruitment;
- providing guidance to human resources staff, based on good practices;
- providing regular training about ageism and unconscious bias to employees;
- creating spaces for intergenerational dialogues and exchanges at work;
- monitoring the impact of trainings and campaigns to the company and in the labour market.

Develop research on ageism and age discrimination, including through:

- producing more disaggregated data;
- analysing and implementing an intersectional approach.

Non-discrimination and labour law legislation should fully cover older workers by:

- implementing the European directive on equal treatment in employment without legal exceptions at Member State level;
- strengthening the monitoring of the directive's compliance in Member States.

Guarantee that older workers have access to their rights and can claim them, by:

- ensuring a better access to information;
- easing legal procedures for claimants to raise issues of age discrimination, ensuring that the burden of proof shifts to the employer or other persons;
- training for the legal professionals on issues related to ageism and the multi-dimensional barriers faced by older people in the labour market;
- provide financial and specialist support to complainants and allow support for out-of-court mechanisms such as trade unions or equality bodies.

Workplaces for all ages

Health and safety at work

Health and safety at work are key elements in the sustainability and quality of working life. The European Union has adopted a *Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work for the period 2021-2027*¹⁹ (called EU OSH Strategic Framework later in the document) which focuses on three key cross-cutting objectives: anticipating and managing the changes in the new world of work brought about by the green, digital and demographic transitions; improving the prevention of accidents and illnesses in the workplace; and strengthening preparedness for any potential future health crises. At national level, health and safety strategies are often adopted, based on this EU OSH Strategic Framework. It is the case in **Cyprus** where the Department of Labour Inspection promotes “a workplace safety and health policy for all ages” in the Action Plan joined to the national Health Safety Strategy for the period 2021-2027. AGE members also reported OSH campaigns organised by the EU-OSHA such as in **Romania** with the Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load campaign from 2020 to 2022 aiming to highlight the significance of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) to employers and employees, or the promotion in rural areas of OSH measures with caravans to address specific risk factors identified in farms for instance.

Health and safety at work in the European Union

In 1989, the European Union adopted the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Framework directive²⁰ which “lays down the main principles to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers. It guarantees minimum safety and health requirements throughout the European Union while Member States are allowed to maintain or establish more stringent measures”²¹. Since then, many directives focusing on specific aspects of safety and health at work have been adopted. They are supplemented by strategic documents such as Strategic Frameworks on health and safety at work which define the key objectives and key actions to implement in these areas. The one in effect today is the **EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work for the period 2021-2027**.

The **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)**²² plays a role alongside the EU OSH Strategic Framework. The agency aims to disseminate information, offer guidance and promote healthy and safe working environments, by raising awareness through campaigns and social dialogue. The agency is based in Bilbao, Spain and is composed of members of the European Commission, Member States’ representatives, workers’ representatives, and employers’ representatives.

¹⁹ EUR-LEX - 52021DC0323 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0323&qid=1626089672913#PP1Contents>

²⁰ EUR-LEX - 31989L0391 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31989L0391&qid=1615985898418>

²¹ *Health and safety at work*. (s. d.). Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=148>

²² *European Agency for Safety & Health at Work - Information, statistics, legislation and risk assessment tools*. (7 July 2023). <https://osha.europa.eu/en>



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The current EU OSH Strategic Framework highlights demographic change and the ageing of the workforce as an element that "requires continuous reflection and response". It also refers to the Green Paper on Ageing as a starting point for a debate that includes a discussion on the conditions for the participation of older workers in the labour market. Indeed, today's working environment is not designed and thought through for long-term careers and work in older age. In 2012, Eurostat figures showed that among people aged 50 to 69 who were economically inactive and receiving a pension for having stopped working, 20.9% of them were in this situation due to their state of health or disability²³. In addition, the 2020 figures show an increase with age in the percentage of people reporting a work-related health problem²⁴, while 43.1% of 55-64 year-olds say they have been exposed to risk factors likely to affect their mental well-being²⁵. These figures highlight how difficult it is for workers to continue working as they age because of poor working conditions that affect their health. Yet, according to the Eurofound report *"Extending working*

²³ Main reason for economically inactive persons who receive a pension to quit working (%). (s. d.). Eurostat. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/36d08857-25a3-4c7b-9f94-d2303c9fbe5e?lang=en>

²⁴ Persons reporting a work-related health problem by sex, age and educational attainment level. (s. d.). Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HSW_PB1__custom_6853227/default/table?lang=en&page=time:2020

²⁵ Persons reporting exposure to risk factors that can adversely affect mental well-being by sex, age and educational attainment level. (s. d.). Eurostat. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/c81bc32a-5a15-477a-bd1c-5b5620719341?lang=en>

*life: What do workers want?"*²⁶ many workers are in favour of extending their working lives, for example by adopting other measures that offer certain working conditions conducive to a longer working life. It is urgent to adopt a more flexible life-course approach to support healthy work in late career and sustainability of the workforce.

However, some jobs have a greater impact on health. For the employees concerned, provision should be made for the possibility of changing jobs mid-career in order to benefit from less physically strenuous work²⁷. Some members reported that initiatives were in place in this regard at national level. In **France** for instance, the *Compte professionnel de prévention* (C2P) allows a worker exposed to factors related to the rhythm of work or to an aggressive physical environment to cumulate points giving access to training for jobs that are less or not exposed to occupational risk factors, to benefit from part-time work without loss of salary, or to validate quarters of increased old-age insurance duration and to allow for earlier retirement. In **Norway**, the Working Environment Act provides that "an employee who has reached the age of 62 or who for health, social or other weighty welfare reasons, shall have the right to a reduction of his or her normal working hours if the reduction of working hours can be arranged without major inconvenience to the undertaking".

Finally, healthy and safe working environments should take all age groups into account and understand older workers in their diversity as they are not a homogeneous group. Adopting an intersectional approach in measures addressing ageing at work and in health and safety strategies is crucial. At national level, some initiatives try to focus on this diversity angle such as The Lombardy Workplace Health Promotion Network, an **Italian** collaborative approach to health promotion and sustainable employability for companies and employees, encouraging employees from different socio-economic backgrounds to participate in health activities.

²⁶ *Extending working life : What do workers want ?* (s. d.). Eurofound.

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2017/eu-member-states/extending-working-life-what-do-workers-want>

²⁷ *Physically strenuous work here is to be understood as any employment in which working conditions can lead to serious health problems for the employees such as in the construction sector.*



Recognition and adaptation of workplaces to specific needs: the case of menopause

Most women will go through menopause transition during their working lives. On average, women experience menopause around the age of fifty. Among the most common and challenging symptoms, women report physical symptoms such as hot flushes, but above all psychological symptoms such as insomnia, fatigue, anxiety, nervousness and memory problems. They are not identical or of the same intensity for all women and they can last for many years.

The majority of women will experience them during their working years and their work may be disrupted as a result. Some even stop working. As an employer, to continue to retain and attract female talent, it is important to address menopause as a health issue.

The first challenge in understanding menopause at work is to break the taboo surrounding the subject which is not confined to the workplace but exists at all levels of society. On a global scale, campaigns should be run on the subject to encourage an open, honest and informative dialogue. In the workplace, employers should create a culture where everyone knows what menopause is and allows women to talk about it if they want or need to.

Stigma is another aspect of menopause which can potentially lead to a whole series of negative discriminatory behaviours. To remedy this, employers need to adopt a menopause policy that recognises the impact of menopause in the

workplace and offer training and education for employers and employees allowing an open dialogue and putting an end to the taboo and stigma.

Finally, physical adaptations should be implemented in the workplace to facilitate women's well-being at work. To best meet their needs, a dialogue and regular consultations should be established with women employees. Adaptations should include better flexibility of working time and place, and access to counseling services for employees concerned.

Mental health and psychosocial risks among older workers

Mental health is another aspect to consider while talking about the health of workers over their life-course, including in old age. Several factors are at the root of psychosocial risks among older workers such as ageist attitudes which can cause a significant impact on older people's self-esteem and mental health. The fast-changing working environment, if not accompanied by adequate training, can also lead to feelings of being overwhelmed. The fact that older workers are not supported at the end of their careers and the resulting uncertainty, or the fear of losing one's job knowing that it will be more difficult to find a new one afterwards, can also be sources of bad mental health at work. Finally, ordinary restlessness and the failure to adapt workplaces to individual needs can also explain why older workers experience stress at work. AGE members reported inspiring initiatives at national level that address the specific challenge of well-being at work. In **Finland**, for instance, the Kunta10-study focuses on municipal staff in several cities to measure specific changes' impact on staff health and well-being. The data from this first study will be used to develop management projects to ensure the well-being of all employees throughout their careers. In **Portugal**, the government provides companies, employers and employees with information leaflets that address the factors leading to psychosocial risks. However, AGE members do not have recorded specific measures or initiatives addressing the mental health of older workers.

At European level, the EU OSH Strategic Framework addresses the challenge of psychosocial risks at work. The European Commission also adopted a comprehensive approach to mental health in Europe²⁸ which plans to ensure good mental health at work by raising awareness and improving prevention. Although it does not mention the specific challenges faced by older workers, the Commission recognises the importance of combating inequality and discrimination through intersectionality in society and appropriate support, particularly for people in vulnerable situations, including older people.

²⁸ EUR-LEX - 52021DC0323 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0323&qid=1626089672913#PP1Contents>



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Work-life balance

The balance between professional and personal life plays a critical role in the well-being and mental health of older workers. The specific case of informal carers²⁹, illustrates its importance as many working carers need to either decrease or leave paid work to balance work and care. Indeed, most of the informal carers are still of working age and have to cope with carers' duties and consequently might struggle to stay in employment. It is important to stress that a large majority of informal carers are women among whom many are in middle and late middle age, thus contributing to the gender employment gap. According to the World Health Organization, on average, 70% of unpaid informal carers are women and "the gender imbalance is greatest at ages 50–64 years when caregiving prevalence is highest."³⁰

Demographic change and the policies to maintain people in their homes for as "long as possible" mean that informal care will be a reality for more and more people in the years to come. To ensure sustainable employment under these conditions, we need to enable informal carers to care without having to leave the labour market. This is one of the aims of the 2019 European work-life balance directive (WLB directive) (2019/1158)³¹. The WLB directive lays down minimum

²⁹ Eurocarers defines carers as people "who provide – usually – unpaid care to someone with a chronic illness, disability or other long-lasting health or care need, outside a professional or formal framework" - [About carers – Eurocarers](#)

³⁰ *Caregiving impacts on informal carers' health and well-being – A gender perspective* – Eurocarers. (s. d.). <https://eurocarers.org/publications/caregiving-impacts-on-informal-carers-health-and-well-being/>

³¹ EUR-LEX - 32019L1158 - EN - EUR-LEX. (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019L1158>

requirements designed to better support a work-life balance for parents and carers, encourage a more equal sharing of parental leave between men and women, and address women's underrepresentation in the labour market.

The WLB directive requires that all workers providing personal care or support to a relative or person living in the same household have the right to at least five working days of carers' leave per year. It is important to note that the duration of five days of leave per year is a minimum requirement : Member States may increase the number of days. Indeed, five days is certainly too short for regular care and even too short to coordinate emergency care in case of an acute development. According to the study conducted by Reed Smith, prepared at the request of the Social Platform (January 2023)³², all Member States have a regime in line with the directive regarding carers' leave duration, except for Belgium which does not respect the minimum requirement of five days³³. Some Member States, such as France or Greece, have taken advantage of the possibility to render the carer's leave subject conditions based on the type of relationship between the carer and the beneficiary or the length of time the carer has been in employment.

The WLB directive also states that all carers have the right to request reduced working hours, flexible working hours, and flexibility in the place of work. Although flexibility allows older workers to stay longer in the labour market, creating income and productive input to society, the study requested by the Social Platform highlights that Member States do not have transposed equally the directive. Indeed, some Member States, such as Cyprus or Sweden, make the right to request flexible working arrangements conditional upon a period of work qualification, for instance.

It is worth noting that the WLB directive does not require Member States to provide income support or other compensation to informal carers who do reduce their working hours, nor does it provide for other supporting services (such as respite care or daycare). The EU Care Strategy tries to fill this legislative gap, but does it only in the form of Council Recommendations³⁴, demanding voluntary measures by Member States. In addition to national legislation, collective agreements can also play an important role by involving the social partners and negotiating as closely as possible to local needs, the specific features of the sector and employees' constraints.

In the absence of rights to sufficient time off, income support and support services, it is more likely that informal carers drop out of the labour market entirely, eventually using minimum income schemes or unemployment benefits, or that they reduce their working hours permanently by changing their contract or employer, without a right to return to full time once the need to provide informal care disappears.

³² 2019 EU Work-Life Balance directive - Overview of national transposition measures. (s. d.). Reed Smith - Prepared at the request of Social Platform.

³³ According to the study of Reed Smith: "In Belgium, the reference period is not a year but the employee's working career. Six months makes approx. 24 periods of 5 days. Given that a working career can last for longer than 24 years, the six months cap for complete interruption appears not to be perfectly in line with the minimum requirement set out in Art. 6.1 of the directive."

³⁴ EU ministers adopt recommendations on early childhood and long-term care. (8 December 2022). Council of the EU. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/08/eu-ministers-adopt-recommendations-on-early-childhood-and-long-term-care/>

The impact of new technologies and digitalization on work

The EU OSH Strategic Framework also focus on the opportunities that new technologies and digital tools can provide to workers at all stages of their careers. It states that digital solutions with accessible tools can be supportive of the health and well-being of workers with disabilities and older workers, and improve the work-life balance for men and women. The use of new technologies is already considered in that sense in some Member States. In **Poland** for instance, AGE members reported that the 2023-2025 National Programme for the Improvement of safety and working conditions, has set the objective to use digital technologies to monitor working conditions as well as to study the risks associated with new forms of work and their prevention.

Telework is a good example of a tool that revolutionised the daily face of work and supports employees with care duties for instance or older workers who might prefer working from home to commuting. However, telework should not be an obligation, and legislation must clarify respective rights and obligations between employer and employee. Many Member States have adopted legislation on this such as the **Italian** legal system which has adopted a regulatory framework on smart working allowing employees to perform their work duties from anywhere and at any time.



Nonetheless, new technologies and digitalisation raise several challenges such as a clear risk of exclusion for some people. In the case of older people, they might be less skilled digitally because of their limited access to education and lifelong learning due to an outdated consideration of the life-course approach and ageism, including

internalised ageism³⁵. Yet, the speed of change in the digital technology sector should alert us to the need to strengthen the digital literacy of younger generations as well and adopt a lifelong learning approach. When the support is adequately provided, we create opportunities for people of all ages to gain new skills at work or embrace career change, and even give the opportunity to pensioners who would like to stay active in the labour market. The EU OSH Strategic Framework itself recognizes the importance to develop the “needs and capacities of an ageing workforce [and] requires further relevant legislative updates”.

Finally, to prevent the digital divide from widening, investment in assistive technologies for older workers with disabilities is a priority and must take into account the accessibility of new technologies in the work environment. We also need to adopt an intersectional approach when tackling digital education and the digital gap, creating opportunities for people who live in rural areas with poor broadband access (availability), or for people who are not in a financial position to afford expensive technical equipment (affordability), for instance. In **Hungary**, the initiative called “The Hello IT! for Women” is a digital skills programme supporting women by offering free online courses for women of all ages.



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³⁵ Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe (s. d.). European Commission - Have your say. https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13207-Digital-education-enabling-factors-for-success/F3339849_en

Recommendations for workplaces for all ages

Develop and implement occupational safety and health strategies that recognise the specific needs of older workers in their diversity by:

- adopting an employment framework that recognises the potential impact of work over the life-course and addresses the specific challenges faced by some, such as menopause for older women;
- running campaigns and opening social dialogues to give more visibility to older workers' needs;
- conducting research on health inequalities in the workforce to identify areas where stronger health and safety policies are needed;
- supporting informal carers by improving their social protection and by providing more resources to care systems;
- improving digital literacy by increasing learning opportunities for older workers and improving the availability, affordability and accessibility of new technologies.

Take better account of the mental health of older workers by:

- increasing research and spreading good practices in stress management and prevention;
- involving older workers in developing well-being policies in workplaces;
- creating an open, inclusive and supportive culture regarding ageing;
- breaking the taboo around health issues related to age, such as menopause for older women.

Adapt workplaces accordingly at the company level in:

- providing guidance and training for employers, human resources staff and employees about healthy ageing;
- involving older workers in OSH policies and adaptation of the workplace;
- ensuring that telework is not an obligation and that legislation clarify the rights and obligations of employers and employees in that sense;
- exploring digital technologies' potential to monitor working conditions as well as to study the risks associated with new forms of work;
- providing health services and any other necessary equipment.

→ Ensure flexible working arrangements by:

- moving towards a more ambitious transposition of the work-life balance directive at national level, offering more than the minimum number of days required by the directive for carers' leave, ensuring proper income support and supporting services and protection against redundancies;
- supporting job rotation;
- allowing flexible working time for women going through challenging symptoms of the menopause.

National-level contributions to the Barometer

Austria

Information provided by Pensionisten Verband and desk research

Support in the labour market

In Austria, the employment rate of 20–64-year-olds (77.3%) is slightly above the European employment rate (74.6%). However, after age 55, the employment rate drops drastically to 56.4% (among 55–64-year-olds), which is 5.9% below the European average³⁶. The long-term unemployment rate of 49.3% among 55–64-year-olds is also particularly high³⁷.

Employment rate ³⁸	Men 20-64	Men 55-64	Women 20-64	Women 55-64
2004	76,4	36,6	62,7	18,2
2010	79,0	49,9	68,8	33,0
2019	81,2	63,1	72,4	46,0
2020	79,5	62,7	71,5	47,0
2021	29,9	62,7	71,3	48,3
2022	81,2	63,9	73,4	49,0

According to the 2022 labour market report prepared by the Austrian statistics office, looking at age groups and genders, men aged 35–44 (90.5%) have the highest employment rate. Women aged 45 to 54 (84.2%) have the highest employment rate. **From the age of 55 onwards, the proportion of men and women in employment is significantly lower.** The employment rate for people aged 55–64 was 56.4% in 2022. In Austria, **women currently retire earlier than men (60 versus 65)**. However, from 2024, the retirement age will be increased by 6 months each year, so that women and men will eventually have the same retirement age. As a result of this difference in the retirement age, in 2022 significantly more men (63.9%) than women (49.0%) were employed in this age bracket.

Since 2018, €165 million is available annually for the integration of older workers into the labour market under a **"50+ Employment Initiative"**³⁹. Funding is granted to

³⁶ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%). (2022).* Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

³⁷ *Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a percentage of the total unemployment, by sex, age and citizenship (%). (2022).* Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/c9cd7297-2f79-4d30-8905-111bb4a72301?lang=en&page=time:2022>

³⁸ *Arbeitsmarktstatistiken 2022 : Ergebnisse der Mikrozensus-Arbeitskräfte-erhebung und der Offene-Stellen-Erhebung.* (s. d.). www.statistik.at. https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Arbeitsmarktstatistiken-2022_Web-barrierefrei.pdf

³⁹ *Beschäftigungsinitiative 50+.* (n.d.). oesterreich.gv.at - Österreichs Digitales Amt. https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/arbeit_und_pension/aeltere_arbeitnehmer/1/1/Seite.2100200.html

workers who are 50 years old or more and have been registered with the public employment service for more than 90 days. If jobseekers have poor chances of finding a job due to health problems or a long absence from the labour market, they can benefit from the "Employment Initiative 50+" even before the 90-day registration period expires.

Austria also supports **partial retirement**, which allows employees to reduce their working time until retirement, with minor financial losses. Incentives are in place for this purpose, through a subsidy from the public employment service for employers who allow their employees to work part-time.

Overall, women's participation in the labour market has increased significantly in recent years, but almost exclusively as a result of the expansion of part-time work. According to the labour market report for 2022 from the Austrian statistics office⁴⁰, between 1995 and 2022, the part-time employment rate for women with children under 15 rose from 40.9% to 73.0%. The reasons for working part-time differ greatly according to gender. 39.5% of all women working part-time did not work full-time in 2022 because of personal or family obligations. This is mainly due to caring for children, disabled people and people in need of care.

On the other hand, to encourage pensioners to continue working when the statutory retirement age is reached, **the worker-pensioner can receive, for three years, a bonus and an increase of 4.2% per year** in the old-age pension.

Age discrimination in employment

In Austria, the world of work is probably the most protected area against discrimination compared to all other areas of life. This applies both to employment relationships in the private sector and to employment relationships in the public sector.

The EU Employment Framework directive⁴¹ has been transposed into national law by **the Equal Treatment Act**⁴². It provides, among other things, that an application for a job may not be rejected solely based on the applicant's age. Selections must be made exclusively based on **objective criteria**, namely, qualification and professional aptitude. The law also provides that in the context of an existing employment relationship, age must not lead to discrimination in terms of remuneration, training and further training measures, promotions or working conditions. It also provides that if a dismissal is based on age, it can be reported and damages can be claimed. Finally, there is also protection in the case of harassment (namely derogatory remarks, jokes, insults) by co-workers or superiors based on age. In addition, age discrimination is not allowed in the areas of vocational guidance, vocational training, further vocational training and retaining.

⁴⁰ *Arbeitsmarktstatistiken 2022 : Ergebnisse der Mikrozensus-Arbeitskräfte-erhebung und der Offene-Stellen-Erhebung.*

(s. d.). [www.statistik.at. https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Arbeitsmarktstatistiken-2022_Web-barrierefrei.pdf](https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Arbeitsmarktstatistiken-2022_Web-barrierefrei.pdf)

⁴¹ *EUR-Lex - 32000L0078 - EN - EUR-Lex.* (s. d.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>

⁴² Ausgegeben am 15. März 1979. (1979). *BUNDESGESETZBLATT FÜR DIE REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH.*

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1979_108_0/1979_108_0.pdf

Some sectors are given additional protection. This is the case for civil servants protected by an Equal Treatment Act, which exists at the federal level but also at the provincial level⁴³.

However, age discrimination exists in practice. In his latest report (2018/19), the Equal Treatment Ombudsman documented that **it informed and advised people 427 times about age discrimination and provided individual support after incidents of age discrimination**, which represents about 10% of all complaints.

The length of the complaint procedure is also an issue. More attention should therefore be paid to speeding up the procedures. To this end, it is essential to increase the human and material resources of the **Equal Treatment Commission** to allow for substantial acceleration.

Access to the Equal Treatment Act and the enforcement of complaints arising from it remain very difficult and burdensome for the persons concerned. The sanctions provided for in the law are often not sufficient to protect employees who are discriminated against and to have a general and specific preventive effect on employers. However, awareness of legal possibilities and knowledge of institutions that can be helpful (e.g., the Equal Treatment Commission) is not very high.

Finally, **the Equal Treatment Commission and its role** should be better known among the population. Campaigns should be developed, as many of the persons concerned are still unaware of the possibility of a free procedure before the courts of the Equal Treatment Commission⁴⁴.

⁴³ RIS - Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz - Bundesrecht konsolidiert, Fassung vom 19.05.2023. (s. d.). <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10008858>

⁴⁴ Gleichbehandlungsberichte der Privatwirtschaft - Bundeskanzleramt Österreich. (s. d.). <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/frauen-und-gleichstellung/gleichbehandlung/gleichbehandlungsberichte/gleichbehandlungsberichte-der-privatwirtschaft.html>

Belgium

Information provided by OKRA, trefpunt 55+ and Vlaamse Ouderenraad vzw and desk research

Support in the labour market

In Belgium, the employment rate is below the European average from the age of 50. Between the ages of 50 and 64, the employment rate is 64.5% compared to the European average of 68.8%⁴⁵.

Against this trend, a **collective agreement 104**⁴⁶ concluded by the social partners proposes the adoption of **a plan to maintain or increase the number of employees aged 45 and over in private companies**. The measures adopted can be selection and recruitment procedures, development of skills and qualifications, career development and vocational guidance, organisation of working time and conditions, health and safety at work and/or recognition of the skills obtained. The Works Council, the Trade Union Delegations or the Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work, does an annual evaluation of this plan. Workers can make suggestions or alternative proposals and the employers are obliged either to take up these proposals or to give written reasons why a proposal will not be taken up. A competent social inspectorate will then check these reasons.

The possibilities of reviewing, rethinking and adapting the careers of older workers have been thought out and planned mainly for the private sector where this collective agreement plays an important role. Other specific aspects of career management are being explored and developed. For example, there are several existing **initiatives supporting lifelong learning and adult skills** (see the 2021 barometer on this topic). For instance, the **"congé-éducation payé"**⁴⁷ allows employees in the private sector who wish to undertake training to benefit from paid educational leave. In this way, they can follow their training, during or outside working hours, and be paid as usual.

Finally, there are some notable measures aimed at achieving greater equality of career opportunities between men and women. Among them, employers have to fill in a yearly **"social balance sheet" providing detailed data by gender** on the number of workers, full-time and part-time, salaries, benefits in addition to salaries, salary gap, level of education, professional category and hierarchy, training opportunities. There is then a national collective agreement that obliges employers to inform the Works Council or Trade Union Delegations of this data, to discuss it with them and to provide information on future developments to improve equal opportunities.

In order to prevent unemployment among older workers, **Belgian labour law provides for severance payments** that can often amount to several years' salary, thus

⁴⁵ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%). (2022)*. Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

⁴⁶ *Plan pour l'emploi des travailleurs âgés | Service public fédéral Emploi, travail et concertation sociale. (s. d.)*. https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/themes/emploi-et-marche-du-travail/mesures-demploi/plan-pour-lemploi-des-travailleurs-ages#toc_heading_1

⁴⁷ *Congé-éducation payé | Belgium.be. (s. d.)*. https://www.belgium.be/fr/emploi/conges_et_interruption_de_carriere/conge_education_paye

discouraging the dismissal of older workers. This generally applies to white-collar workers and, since 2013, partially to blue-collar workers. Furthermore, for the private sector, the national **collective agreement CAO 82**⁴⁸ concluded between the social partners and made compulsory by law for all companies in all branches, provides for the obligation to offer **all workers over 45 years of age who are made redundant outplacement support by an external agency paid by the employer**. The agreement states that 'the task of professional reintegration implies that one or more of the following services and advice be provided: psychological counselling, the establishment of a personal assessment and/or assistance in the development and implementation of a job search campaign, assistance in negotiating a new employment contract, support for integration into the new working environment and, finally, logistical and administrative support. There is also the **'bruggpensioen'**, a mechanism in the social security system that links unemployment to pension, aiming to support people who receive unemployment benefits supplemented by a monthly contribution from their former employer, thus guaranteeing 80% of net salary until retirement age.

Finally, retirements can be supported internally. This is the case in private companies and NGOs. The Belgian government has taken measures to allow people to work after pensionable age, by lifting some restrictions on combining pension with salary. A system for working after pensionable age exists in a limited number of sectors such as the catering industry. It is a system called **"flexi-jobs"** which allows older workers to earn money without paying taxes, while reducing their employer's social security contributions. However, it does not give any entitlement to social security in the event of illness or unemployment and does not contribute to pension contributions.

Age discrimination in employment

Three Belgian federal laws constitute **anti-discrimination legislation**: the "Gender Law", the "Anti-Racism Law" and the "Anti-Discrimination Law". This anti-discrimination legislation applies to different areas of public life, including the labour market. In the context of employment, two collective agreements establish principles of **equal treatment in the workplace**, including a prohibition on the employer making a distinction on the basis of age during the recruitment process.⁴⁹

The Belgian cooperation agreement between the Federal State, the Regions and the Communities provides for **the mission of Unia**, an independent institution, to fight against discrimination and defend equal opportunities in Belgium. Unia has several roles. It offers individual support and guidance to people who feel discriminated against and listens to witnesses of discrimination via a reporting form or a toll-free number. Unia's mission is also to raise awareness and prevent discrimination. To this end, the organisation runs information and awareness campaigns and organises tailor-made training for employers who wish to implement a diversity policy. Through a brochure updated in 2019, Unia recalls the legal context and concrete

⁴⁸ C.C.T.n° 82 du 10 juillet 2002, conclue au sein du Conseil national du Travail, relative au droit au reclassement professionnel pour les travailleurs de quarante-cinq ans et plus qui sont licenciés | Service public fédéral Emploi, Travail et Concertation sociale. (s. d.). <https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/link/cctndeg-82-du-10-juillet-2002-conclue-au-sein-du-conseil-national-du-travail-relative-au-droit>

⁴⁹ ANNEXE À LA CCT N° 38 DU 6 DÉCEMBRE 1983 CONCERNANT LE RECRUTEMENT ET LA SÉLECTION DE TRAVAILLEURS. (2008). UNIA. <https://www.unia.be/files/Documenten/Wetgeving/cct-38annexe.pdf>

examples of age discrimination in the labour market. **An online training module called "eDiv"⁵⁰** enables employers to learn how to apply the legislation in their daily work. This online support tool⁵¹ compiles 150 situations, each with a legal response and advice for the manager.

The Unia website has a search page with Belgian case law that provides access to several cases of age discrimination in the labour market. These include cases of age discrimination in the recruitment process. As an example, we can observe the decision of **the Labour Court of Wavre on 19 February 2019** where a person over 50 years old responds to a job offer and is rejected by referring to his age and for "lack of computer skills" while the successful candidate, aged 25, seems to have the same level of computer skills⁵². Other cases are more related to unlawful dismissals. Among them, **the decision of the court of Liège on 16 May 2018** condemns an orchestra that dismissed its employees over 60 years old who "allegedly" have health problems that could affect the artistic quality of the ensemble, with the payment of additional unemployment benefits.

Among the initiatives that combat preconceived ideas and change the way people look at ageing is **the documentary REBELS⁵³** by Ann Peuteman and Brecht Vanhoenacker. In this documentary, the character of Nadia, who stubbornly continues to apply for jobs without success, illustrates the negative view of ageing and of being sidelined by society. She reminds us of the right to work at an advanced age.

Workplaces for all ages

Belgian labour law provides for **a special time-credit scheme called "landingsbanen"**⁵⁴ allowing employees aged 55 and over to work up to half-time, with the aim of ensuring a working environment adapted to their needs. To supplement their wages, they receive an allowance for the days off. Thanks to the time-credit, older workers can have more free time to meet their family obligations, which is not insignificant for female careers, as more women are informal carers and are therefore more often forced into early retirement.

In several sectors, a range of measures have been taken to compensate for the difficulties associated with arduous occupations to ensure the health and safety of older workers⁵⁵. In this respect, **a collective agreement on the exemption from work in the context of end-of-career issues and the granting of additional leave** for certain categories of staff in the care sector was concluded in 2005 within the Joint Committee on Health Services and made compulsory in 2008. Following this adoption, records show a substantial increase in older workers remaining at work.

⁵⁰ www.ediv.be. (s. d.). <https://www.ediv.be/>

⁵¹ www.ediv.be: *Exemples inspirants*. (s. d.).

https://www.ediv.be/theme/unia2019/situations_tools.php?content_type=situation

⁵² Tribunal du travail Wavre, 19 February 2019 | Unia. (s. d.). Unia. <https://www.unia.be/fr/jurisprudence-alternatives/jurisprudence/tribunal-du-travail-wavre-19-fevrier-2019>

⁵³ Admin. (2023). *Rebels*. Victoria Deluxe. <https://www.victoriadeluxe.be/rebels/>

⁵⁴ *Landingsbanen | Federale Overheidsdienst Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Sociaal Overleg*. (s. d.).

<https://werk.belgie.be/nl/themas/feestdagen-en-verloven/het-tijdskrediet-cao-nr-103/landingsbanen>

⁵⁵ https://www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/StIA_20151207_AddendaWerkbaarheid_RAP.PDF: *Addenda werkbaarheid bij de sectorconvenanten 2013-2015 onder de loep* (Stichting Innovatie&Arbeid). (2015). Stichting Innovatie & Arbeid. https://www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/StIA_20151207_AddendaWerkbaarheid_RAP.PDF

Another sector is currently evaluating its own measures to create easier working conditions in order to keep people at work for longer⁵⁶: the food industry. Currently, older workers in the food industry can benefit from **end-of-career jobs and a supplementary pension** to facilitate the end of their careers.

Finally, all companies in the chemical, plastics and life sciences sector have been contributing to the **demografiefonds** since 2016. A committee of employers and employees has created an action plan promoting better work opportunities for older workers at company level which receives financial support from the fund. The result is a wide variety of different measures at company level supported by the sector⁵⁷.

The issue of psychosocial risks is part of **the law on well-being at work via the laws of 28 February 2014 and 28 March 2014**⁵⁸ which set a general framework for the prevention of psychosocial risks at work. In this context, the employer is obliged to take the necessary measures to prevent psychosocial risks at work, to prevent the damage arising from these risks or to limit this damage. The federal government is currently working on **a national action plan to improve the well-being of workers at work 2022 - 2027**⁵⁹. This is the transposition at Belgian level of the European Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 and pays particular attention to the prevention of psychosocial risks.

Among the policies or services designed to tackle the digital gap in a context of digitalisation, the **demografiefonds** for the chemical, plastics and life sciences sector mentioned previously includes education projects to digital tools or practices based on digital technologies to ensure better conditions for older workers through, for instance, the use of a digital platform to ease promotion of activities or even manual work. Finally, **the Edusprong project**⁶⁰, part of the Flemish Resilience Plan aims to give a boost to adult education, with the overall objective of increasing the chances of success in the labour market. Edusprong encourages every Fleming to become a lifelong learner and to renew and improve adult education provision, including the strengthening of digital skills.

⁵⁶ WERKBAAR WERK INSPIRATIE VOOR VOEDINGSBEDRIJVEN. (2017). Alimento-IPV vzw. <https://www.alimento.be/sites/default/files/uploads/Werkbaar%20werk%20-%20Inspiratie%20voor%20voedingsbedrijven.pdf>

⁵⁷ Accueil. (s. d.). Fonds Démographie. <https://www.demografiefondsdemographie.be/fr/>

⁵⁸ Nouvelle législation relative aux risques psychosociaux au travail à partir du 1er septembre 2014 | Service public fédéral Emploi, Travail et Concertation sociale. (s. d.). <https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/actualites/nouvelle-legislation-relative-aux-risques-psychosociaux-au-travail-partir-du-1er>

⁵⁹ Plan d'action national pour améliorer le bien-être des travailleurs lors de l'exécution de leur travail 2022 - 2027 | Service public fédéral Emploi, Travail et Concertation sociale. (s. d.). <https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/publications/plan-daction-national-pour-ameliorer-le-bien-etre-des-travailleurs-lors-de-lexecution>

⁶⁰ Edusprong : een boost voor volwassenenonderwijs. (s. d.). Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming. <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/edusprong>

Cyprus

Information provided by PASYDY Pensioners Union and Cyprus Third Age Observatory and desk research

Support in the labour market

In Cyprus, unemployment of older workers is considered to be one of the major challenges at present. In 2022, long-term unemployment was 34.1% for those aged 20–64. A much higher figure of 47.9% can be seen for people aged 55–64⁶¹. To address this, employment support for older people and specific resources on this issue are being developed.

Emphasis is placed on the promotion of lifelong learning through the **Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA)**, a semi-government organisation, whose main strategic objectives are to upgrade “the country’s human resources, through the systematic lifelong training of the employees, the new entrants in the labour market, the unemployed, the inactive females and the low skilled and older age persons”⁶². Last year, the HRDA developed an **online system** allowing substantial improvements in its operations and services reducing bureaucracy and administrative costs⁶³.

The Resource Development Authority implements **programmes for training, placement of the unemployed and development of a skills system**. These programmes are not specifically targeting the older unemployed but can be beneficial to them. They aim to provide training opportunities for the unemployed to acquire, enrich and/or improve their skills according to the needs of the labour market, to broaden their prospects for integration/reintegration and better integration into employment, as well as to meet their expectations for a new professional career. Companies and organisations are also involved in the project to provide work experience and training in programmes where there is also an internal part for real working conditions.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a percentage of the total unemployment, by sex, age and citizenship (%). (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/c9cd7297-2f79-4d30-8905-111bb4a72301?lang=en&page=time:2022>

⁶² HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CYPRUS (HRDA). (s. d.). https://www.hrdauth.org.cy/wps/portal/hrda/refernet/members/crc_cyprus_refernet_consorrtium/crc_national_refernet_coordinator/Topics%20Details%20Page/topic/lut/p/z0/zY9NDwExEIZ_i8MeZUoQjhtilwQRB6uXpluDYts1W1__XlnCiavjvB8zzwCHBLiRJ72WtlSj935e8Jal4ziM0xM2Zp1Bk00ns367EfWg7QaDGRoYAv8Simr3LXp70PAQuLLG4cVbsqGIFiQrJINOnDF90MJYJ3AfsPQcswyxFKqKMSAI1zelYvFu-Ulhy-piVvnlifyYsLbXXLf3A9L_8BaaPIBcC5myu1Z2qTqPuaA08I25T1WZIIsm9fBfNqzy9nsNK5QbnPMhf/

⁶³ Cyprus : a new digital portal for the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus. (2022, 17 mai). CEDEFOP. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/cyprus-new-digital-portal-human-resource-development-authority-cyprus#group-details>

⁶⁴ Προγράμματα Κατάρτισης Ανέργων. (s. d.). https://www-anad-org-cy.translate.goog/wps/portal/hrda/hrdaExternal/training/trainingUnemployed/Topics%20Details%20Page/katartisi2.7/lut/p/z1/tVRdb4IwFP0r7oFH1I1IKyKMKk5koUeMHfTEFinaTgqzTuV-__urgsPohZHH1pm3vuufee5hQQsAREOD1fU8kLQbfqHhF7FQRBJ3BD00r7cwTHbb9neVPX9AYILL4B8MrqQEDq8-eAAFImpAWRSx1MM8R010qRjpPM0WliGDqLHSexaQwRjk_oRMhSbkC0qVK6Yh-SVarT1oHFraQQkgnZYIsNnqL_QQ3KinLBxfr39C5YXm6LI0s1eM7T4CuVtJL8jaNHR41G6rrHM6MeEhr4DKiTp1YgzwCREti5CuhCsNhzdgaZUVS5erDpH_UM4K0K9p0VbtBbjdJPCLP0zYozMf-XHrrPFhyH06c27nuTbojupB_ccrf6PvjLbk66yrUnj31IsGzatqomqoa94VqNQuVG5ylrwPICUuazvG3aEz8b-ia0Bvvp7ki_3Eh8PDX8AT1W3NQL/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?_x_tr_sl=fr&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hi=fr&_x_tr_pto=wapp

Specifically dedicated to digital learning, the HRDA also has a Digital Skills Training Programme. This programme can be completed by an **e-skills training** designed for people over 55 in the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan⁶⁵.

Age discrimination in the labour market

The Cypriot Constitution contains a general anti-discrimination provision in Article 28⁶⁶, but does not specifically protect against age discrimination. In 2004, following Cyprus' accession to the EU, **directive 2000/78/EC⁶⁷ was incorporated into Cypriot law as the Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation Act**. This law acts as a bulwark against discrimination in the workplace on a number of grounds, including age, and regulates equal treatment in the labour market. This law applies in the public and private sector for all matters relating to "access to employment, self-employment and work, selection criteria and recruitment conditions, in all sectors of activity and at all levels of the professional hierarchy, including professional training, access to all types and levels of orientation, training, continuing education and professional reorientation, including the acquisition of practical experience and professional, working conditions and conditions of employment, including dismissal conditions and emoluments, as well as membership and participation in organizations of employees or employers".

Complaints about age discrimination can be made to **the Office of the Commissioner for Administration, the Cyprus Ombudsman**. The Ombudsman has the power of appointment and formally decides on complaints (e.g. decision or recommendation to the parties). These decisions are legally binding.

Direct age discrimination in the age criterion in a job advertisement of the Nicosia Municipality ⁶⁸

"Case: In May 2015, the Equality Body of Cyprus received a complaint. In April 2015, the Nicosia Municipality advertised 11 vacancies. The advertisement stated that applicants would be assessed on the basis of their academic qualifications and experience in related duties. Applicants scoring equally on these criteria would be further assessed on the basis of their date of birth (priority was to be given to younger applicants). In response to the Equality Body's investigation, the Mayor of Nicosia argued that the age criterion would be applied only where the applicants had scored equally on the first two criteria, adding that the same system applied to promotions in the public sector. The mayor argued that in the end, the Municipality did not have to resort to the age criterion because applicants did not score equally on the first two criteria.

⁶⁵ 2022 European Semester : Autumn package. (24 November 2021). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-autumn-package_en

⁶⁶ *The Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus* | Law Office of the Republic. (s. d.). <http://www.law.gov.cy/law/law.nsf/constitution-en/constitution-en?OpenDocument>

⁶⁷ EUR-Lex - 32000L0078 - EN - EUR-Lex. (s. d.-b). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>

⁶⁸ Direct age discrimination in the age criterion in a job advertisement of the Nicosia Municipality. (2015). *European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination* advertisement-of-the-nicosia-municipality-pdf-111-kb. <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/3971-cyprus-direct-age-discrimination-in-the-age-criterion-in-a-job-advertisement-of-the-nicosia-municipality-pdf-111-kb>

Decision of the Equality Body: the Equality Body found that differential treatment based on age can only be justified if the conditions set in the law with regard to proportionality and legitimacy of the aim are met. (...) The report found that the aim behind the age criterion in this case was not legitimate, as it merely sought to address the dilemma of candidates scoring equally on the first two criteria set. The aim was not directly or indirectly connected to employment policy, nor could it otherwise be justified within the remit of the directive. By introducing the age criterion, the Municipality expressed its preference for younger candidates without justifying this preference on any of the exceptions foreseen in the directive. If the age criterion had been applied, it would lead to less favourable treatment of candidates scoring equally on all other criteria, so essentially *the Municipality was on the one hand trying to address the dilemma of candidates scoring equally but at the same time secure that younger rather than older employees would be joining its workforce*. As a rule, employers tend to justify the age criterion in favour of younger employees through the *inaccurate and stereotyped perception that older persons do not have the same will, readiness and capacity to respond to job requirements and cannot adapt to developments and new needs*. In law however, the age criterion can only be justified if it meets the requirements of the principle of proportionality. The report concluded that the Municipality's age criterion amounted to unlawful direct discrimination and recommended that in the future the possibility of a candidate scoring equally."

Workplaces for all ages

Cyprus has adopted its new **Health and Safety Strategy for the period 2021- 2027**⁶⁹. This plan is based partly on the main results of the previous strategy 2013-2020⁷⁰ but also on the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027⁷¹. Among the results of the previous strategy, it is interesting to note that the institution providing occupational safety and health services to the self-employed, many of whom are over 50 years old⁷², has been expanded and better established.

In this new Strategy, the Department of Labour Inspection promotes "a **Workplace Safety and Health Policy for all Ages**", aiming to address the problems arising from the ageing workforce, and thus improve the quality of life of older workers, in view of the announcement by the United Nations General Assembly of **the Decade of Healthy Ageing** (2021 - 2030). In this context, a **specific Action Plan** is planned to be formulated, with a focus on the "development of a working environment that will promote sustainable working life."

⁶⁹ STRATEGY OF CYPRUS FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK 2021 - 2027 : unofficial translation of the document « Στρατηγική της Κύπρου για την Ασφάλεια και Υγεία στην Εργασία 2021-2027. (s. d.). *Cyprus Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance*.

[https://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dli/dliup.nsf/All/B208115A0B53109FC22580B3002FB4D9/\\$file/HEALTH_AND_SAFETY_STRATEGY_2021_2027_EN.pdf](https://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dli/dliup.nsf/All/B208115A0B53109FC22580B3002FB4D9/$file/HEALTH_AND_SAFETY_STRATEGY_2021_2027_EN.pdf)

⁷⁰ *Strategy of Cyprus for safety and health at work during the period 2013-2020 - OSHwiki | European Agency for Safety and Health at Work*. (s. d.). <https://oshwiki.osha.europa.eu/en/themes/strategy-cyprus-safety-and-health-work-during-period-2013-2020>

⁷¹ *EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA*. (s. d.).

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/safety-and-health-legislation/eu-strategic-framework-health-and-safety-work-2021-2027>

⁷² Archive : Employment in detail - quarterly statistics. (2022, février). *Eurostat, Statistics explained*.

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Employment_in_detail_-_quarterly_statistics&oldid=584638#Self-employment:_outline_and_latest_developments

Finland

Information provided by the Association of Swedish-Speaking Pensioners in Finland and desk research

Support in the labour market

In Finland, the employment rate of people over 50 is higher than the European average⁷³ (75.6% vs 68.8%). Conscious of the ageing population, Finland has been planning since 2020 the implementation of a **National Plan on Ageing for 2030**⁷⁴, part of which relates to employment and the ageing workforce. This plan involves the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of the Environment, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Association of Finnish Municipalities.

National Plan on Ageing for 2030

Extend the functional ability and working careers of older working-age people

Recognising that the functional capacity of older working-age people has improved, and careers have a longer duration, particularly in the services for older people, the National Plan on Ageing provides three objectives for 2030:

Preparing for ageing begins in middle age and continues when people retire (both at individual and societal levels).

Different solutions and types of flexibility are used to ensure longer careers and prevent age discrimination in working life.

The competence and coping of those working in the services for older people and the attractiveness of the sector have been improved.

Regarding older job seekers, several programmes newly implemented support them among other unemployed people in vulnerable situations. According to the Joint Employment Report 2022⁷⁵, in January 2021, several amendments to the labour law allowed more **tailor-made and integrated services** for people in vulnerable situations, in particular the long-term unemployed. Additional changes have been pursued in May 2022, including a law on public employment and business services⁷⁶ regulating the **Nordic model of employment services** aiming to provide more personalised and integrated services to support some 10,000 persons into employment by 2025⁷⁷. Finally, there is an ongoing continuous learning reform⁷⁸

⁷³ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%). (2022)*. Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

⁷⁴ *National Programme on Ageing 2030 : For an age-competent Finland*. (2020). Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162596/STM_2020_38_J.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁷⁵ *2022 European Semester: Proposal for a Joint Employment Report*. (s. d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-proposal-joint-employment-report_en

⁷⁶ *Public Employment and Business Services - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment*. (s. d.). Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö. <https://tem.fi/en/public-employment-and-business-services>

⁷⁷ *2022 European Semester: Proposal for a Joint Employment Report*. (s. d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-proposal-joint-employment-report_en

⁷⁸ *Continuous Learning Reform - OKM - Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland*. (s. d.). Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö. <https://okm.fi/en/continuous-learning-reform>

aiming to reach the most disadvantaged groups in upskilling and retraining to adapt to the changing work demand.

Age discrimination in the labour market

In Finland, age discrimination is prohibited by the Finnish Constitution, the Non-Discrimination Act and the Employment Contracts Act.

The Ombudsman for Older People is an autonomous and independent authority that promotes the realisation of the rights and best interests of older people. The Ombudsman for older people is responsible for ensuring that the rights and status of older people are taken into account in legislation and decision-making⁷⁹. The new official Ombudsman for Older People Dr Päivi Topo, took up her post in January 2022.

In October 2022, the Ombudsman for Older People proposed to policymakers three solutions to promote equal opportunities for older people in the digital society. The three specific measures could have a significant impact on giving equal opportunities to older workers in the labour market by ensuring better accessibility to digital training and digital support. Firstly, it proposes to regulate the obligation of municipalities to coordinate digital support in their territory in order to ensure, better than today, sufficient support for the use of digital devices and services for older people in each municipality. Then, it proposes the establishment of a centralised transactional channel at national level for people who do not use digital services. Finally, it wants to clarify electronic transactions on behalf of others and assisted transactions⁸⁰. These measures could, at different levels, help all people to access their labour market rights, even if they have poor digital skills. Similarly, they support all the steps of older jobseekers who may not have sufficient digital skills in their job search or in administrative contacts related to their unemployment.

Workplaces for all ages

The “**Hyvä veto**” project⁸¹ launched in the frame of the National Plan on Ageing will propose a model aiming to improve well-being at work. It consists of good practices developed in collaboration with social and healthcare organisations in several areas, including strengthening the cooperation between younger and older employees. It is also planned to use research data and analysis to enable the development of recommendations and guides that can be used for training and professional life.

This project will be based in particular on the first results of a preliminary study: **the Kunta10-study**.⁸² Targeting municipal staff in several cities, this study measured the impact of specific changes on staff health and well-being. The data from this first

⁷⁹ Welcome | Vanhusasiavaltuutettu. (s. d.). Vanhusasiavaltuutettu. <https://vanhusasia.fi/en/front-page>

⁸⁰ Iäkkäiden ihmisten syrjäytyminen digiyhteiskunnasta on ollut tiedossa pitkään – Vanhusasiavaltuutettu ehdottaa kolmea ratkaisua päättäjille yhdenvertaisuuden edistämiseksi | Vanhusasiavaltuutettu. (30 November 2022). Vanhusasiavaltuutettu. <https://vanhusasia.fi/-/iakkaiden-ihmisten-syrjaytyminen-digiyhteiskunnasta-on-ollut-tiedossa-pitkaan-vanhusasiavaltuutettu-ehdottaa-kolmea-ratkaisua-paattajille-yhdenvertaisuuden-edistamiseksi>

⁸¹ Ensuring the availability of staff and the attractiveness of the sector in elderly care services (Hyvä veto) | Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. (s. d.). Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. <https://www.ttl.fi/en/research/projects/ensuring-availability-staff-and-attractiveness-sector-elderly-care-services-hyva-veto>

⁸² Notice for the Kunta10 participants | Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. (s. d.). Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. <https://www.ttl.fi/en/tutkimus/hankeet/kunta-ja-hyvinvointialan-henkiloston-seurantatutkimus-fps/kunta10-tiedote-tutkittavalle>

study will be used to develop management projects to ensure the well-being of employees throughout their careers.

France

Information provided by the coordination AGE France and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of older persons remains above the European average until the age of 59 and then falls below the European average⁸³. The French approach to ageing in the labour market includes some good practices that are foreseen in theory but do not seem to be systematically implemented in practice.

Several tools exist to facilitate professional reconversion. One of these is the **Validation of Acquired Experience (VAE)**, which makes it possible to obtain a diploma, title or certificate of professional qualification on the basis of the main activities that a worker carries out or has carried out, the context in which they are carried out and the resources mobilised. It offers the possibility of reorienting oneself by applying sectors for which it is considered that the demand for employment is or will be exponential. Similarly, the **Professional Training Account (PTA)** accessible to all working adults aged 16 and over was presented in the Lifelong Learning Barometer 2021. Training accounts allow individuals to use their accumulated training rights to undertake training or skills assessments from a list of certified opportunities, recognised by the State. However, the fact that this system is free of charge is challenged by the intention to introduce a co-payment, which will particularly affect the most vulnerable employees.

An interesting initiative for the long-term unemployed, including the very old, is the **"Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée"** (TZCLD)⁸⁴ experiment set up following the law of 29 February 2016. It was initially rolled out in 2017 in ten pilot areas and will be extended to other areas in 2021. This experiment enables the socio-professional integration of people who are permanently unemployed (PPDE) who so wish. The project is based on three principles: that no one is unemployable, that employment must be adapted to each individual, that there is no shortage of job opportunities, and that money is no barrier. On this last point, the initiative notes that joblessness imposes numerous costs on society, as well as a loss of income (taxes, social security contributions) and induced costs linked to the social consequences of unemployment. The aim of this initiative is to reallocate these costs to financing jobs for all those affected, without any additional costs to the community. The results of the first experiment show the positive effect of this initiative on the beneficiaries: "in the absence of this scheme, only 55.9% of EBE employees would have been in employment, and just over a third on permanent contracts"⁸⁵.

⁸³ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

⁸⁴ *Accueil - territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée*. (2022, 15 décembre). *Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée*. <https://www.tzclld.fr/>

⁸⁵ *Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée : un pas vers le droit à l'emploi ?* (s. d.). Vie-publique.fr. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/286834-territoires-zero-chomeur-de-longue-duree-vers-un-droit-lemploi>

The last campaign on the employment of older people dates from 2012-2013 with the "Contrat Génération"⁸⁶. The **lack of follow-up of these campaigns and public policies** prevents the full use or improvement of existing tools such as those mentioned above and recruitment aids for older job seekers. However, recruitment difficulties and the recent debates on pension reform have brought back to the forefront the issue of older people's employment. An interesting tool called **the "index senior"** is currently discussed with the aim to promote transparency on the number of older employees and make companies more responsible for maintaining and improving the employment of older workers. In particular, such a tool would make it possible to effectively measure the efforts and progress made by companies in employing older people.

Some pension funds offer retirement preparation courses such as the **Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Vieillesse**, a French social security body that manages the minimum pension for private sector employees, self-employed workers, public sector contract workers and artists, as well as the supplementary pension for self-employed workers. It has an extensive local network of 220 agencies and 286 reception points for pension beneficiaries and is present in many public service centres. It offers a number of tools, including online tools, to help prepare for retirement. There is, for instance, **"Mon agenda retraite"**⁸⁷ which provides regular information and personalised advice on how to prepare for retirement with peace of mind. There is also a **podcast entitled "Le temps d'être soi"**⁸⁸, which deals with a number of subjects such as the break with working life and calls for people to prepare for retirement, to get used to a new status, a new rhythm and possibly to continue an activity through association work, for example.

Statement of commitment on the place of employees over 50 in the company

Communicate the commitments of this act to all employees and to the management line. Raise awareness of the importance of living well together, the strength of intergenerational relations and the fight against age-related stereotypes in line with the company's values.

To act with kindness and respect towards all our employees, throughout their professional careers, whatever their age.

Support the development of skills and encourage employees to engage in actions to develop their employability and to open up new career opportunities.

Recruit people at all stages of their careers, offering opportunities throughout their working life to enable everyone to work in an inclusive environment until retirement.

Encourage the transmission of knowledge and the sharing of experience between generations by putting in place dedicated mechanisms.

⁸⁶ *Le contrat de génération – Ministère du Travail, du Plein emploi et de l'Insertion*. (4 Septembre 2019). Ministère du Travail, du Plein emploi et de l'Insertion. <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/archives/archives-courantes/actualites-du-contrat-de-generations/article/le-contrat-de-generation>

⁸⁷ *Préparez votre retraite sereinement avec Mon agenda retraite !* (s. d.). <https://www.lassuranceretraite.fr/portail-info/sites/pub/hors-menu/actualites-nationales/actif/2021/demarches-agenda-retraite.html>

⁸⁸ « *Le temps d'être soi* », une série de podcasts pour préparer sa retraite. (s. d.). <https://www.lassuranceretraite.fr/portail-info/sites/pub/hors-menu/actualites-nationales/institutionnel/2021/le-temps-detre-soi--une-serie-de.html>

Valuing experienced employees, highlighting inspiring career paths and role models to change the perception of ageism.

Offer adapted and individualised support on aspects of health and well-being at work throughout the career (notably related to menopause or andropause, for instance).

Accompany and support employees who are caregivers.

Pay particular attention to preparing and supporting employees when they retire (transitional arrangements). At the time of departure, thank employees by celebrating and acknowledging their careers.

After departure, for those who wish to do so, the company can offer to maintain the link, in particular through the Alumni, or to encourage an associative commitment.

The Club Landoy, a think tank dedicated to the demographic revolution, has produced a Commitment Act⁸⁹ on the place of employees over 50 in companies, which 32 companies have signed. By signing this act, the employers commit to deepen their work on this subject by upgrading existing measures or developing new ones. In a process of co-construction and exchange, they share good practices and meet annually to communicate the progress of their actions.

Age discrimination in the labour market

In France, the **Defender of Rights** has been responsible since 2011 for defending people whose rights are not respected and ensuring equal access to rights for all. Its role is to investigate age discrimination, among other grounds of discrimination, but he did not work with AGE members on a specific case. Among its tasks, it is in direct contact with professional actors such as Pole Emploi, the French public employment service, and with the Defender of Rights within the Liaison Committee of Employment Intermediaries. Launched in September 2012, **the Liaison Committee** meets to discuss anti-discrimination and equal treatment policies in recruitment. In particular, the members of the Committee exchange information on difficulties and good practices and follow up on the **Charter Together for Equality in Recruitment**⁹⁰, signed on 7 October 2013. No specific cases have been made public yet.

The specific situation of **older women** in the French labour market is not particularly targeted, but in general, in order to encourage employers to end employment inequalities, companies with at least 50 employees are required to publish a **gender equality index**. The publication of this index encourages companies to reflect on the careers of women compared to men, but there is no obligation on employers to improve the number of women employed. Support to address the inequalities faced by older women at work is needed.

⁸⁹ Antoinet, P. (17 March 2022). *10 engagements pour valoriser la place des +50 ans dans l'entreprise* - Club Landoy. Club Landoy. <https://www.clublandoy.com/10-engagements-pour-valoriser-la-place-des-50-ans-dans-lentreprise/?hilit=charte>

⁹⁰ *Charte des intermediaires pour l'emploi : Ensemble pour l'egalite dans les recrutements* (Republique Francaise, Le defenseur des droits). (2013). https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ddd_cha_20130710_intermediaires_emploi.pdf

In 2019, the National Association of Human Resources Directors⁹¹ (ANDRH) proposed a "**senior index**" modelled on the gender equality index, to encourage "the hiring and retention of older workers". Like the gender equality index, this proposed index should be more than a simple incentive and should lead to an obligation of age equality and job retention policy for older workers. No legal action has been taken so far on this interesting proposal.

The Diversity Charter⁹², a text of commitment proposed for signature by any employer who wishes, through a proactive approach, to act in favour of diversity and thus go beyond the legal and judicial framework of the fight against discrimination, aims to promote age equality and diversity in companies. This charter provides in particular for "the promotion of the application of the principle of non-discrimination in all its forms in all acts of management and decision-making of the company or organisation, and in particular in all stages of human resources management", but also "the promotion of the representation of the diversity of French society in all its differences and richness, the cultural, ethnic and social components, within the workforce and at all levels of responsibility".

Workplaces for all ages

Occupational medicine is an important element in France, but general measures concerning older workers are rare and often at the discretion of employers. Among the existing measures, since 2021, there is **the mid-career medical examination** which is an obligation when the employee reaches the age of 45. The purpose of this examination is to assess the adaptation of the workstation to the employee's state of health. It takes into account the risks to which the employee is exposed, assesses the risks of professional disintegration and **addresses ageing at work** and the prevention of professional risks. After discussion with the employer and the employee, the occupational physician may propose adjustments to the workstation and/or working hours.

Finally, the French pension system takes into account the hardship of work, thanks to the **Compte professionnel de prévention (C2P)**⁹³. This account allows a worker exposed to factors related to the rhythm of work, such as night work or repetitive work at a high frequency and under constrained pace, or factors related to an aggressive physical environment, such as exposure to noise or extreme temperatures, to accumulate points in a personal account. These points can be used by the employee in three ways: to access training for jobs that are less or not exposed to occupational risk factors, to benefit from part-time work without loss of salary, to validate quarters of increased old-age insurance duration and to allow for earlier retirement. Unfortunately, these points can only be used until retirement, although training to continue working after retirement could benefit both the retired person and the labour market as a whole.

⁹¹ *Presentation ANDRH*. (s. d.). www.andrh.fr. <https://www.andrh.fr/presentation-andrh>

⁹² *Charte de la diversité | Charte de la diversité*. (s. d.). Charte de la diversité. <https://www.charte-diversite.com/charte-de-la-diversite/>

⁹³ *Compte professionnel de prévention (C2P)*. (17 March 2022). Service-public.fr. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F15504#:~:text=Le%20compte%20professionnel%20de%20pr%C3%A9vention,une%20d%C3%A9claration%20de%20fa%C3%A7on%20d%C3%A9mat%C3%A9rialis%C3%A9e>

Germany

Information provided by BAGSO - Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen (German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations), and desk research

Support in the labour market

Germany has an employment rate that is higher than the European average. However, as in most, if not all, European countries, the employment rate decreases drastically between the age groups 55-59 (80,7%) and 60-64 (63.2%)⁹⁴.

Since 2006, the Demography Network Association⁹⁵ set up by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been promoting examples of good practices to develop sustainable and successful employment strategies in companies. From the start, **cross-company exchange** has been the central instrument of the association. In addition to a steadily growing number of thematic working groups, a regional network structure has also been developed, some of which still exist today. Also supporting the corporate sector, **the "UnternehmensWert: Mensch" programme**⁹⁶, launched in 2014 and funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the European Social Fund, supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing employee-centred human resources strategies in the face of demographic and digitalisation changes in the labour market. Today, there are about 110 initial counselling centres for human resources management counselling and advisory services and approximately 1,500 process advisors active throughout Germany.

In terms of tools to support older workers in career management, lifelong learning is promoted through **continuous vocational training** implemented by The Federal Employment Agency, which is covered up to 100% of older employees. The **WeGebAU**⁹⁷ initiative of the Federal Employment Agency specifically serves the further training of low-skilled and older workers. **The Federal Employment Agency** also offers a wide range of support to guide employees of all ages in their desire to know about career perspectives and reorientation such as career counselling, including re-entry counselling, Vocational Psychology Service⁹⁸, medical service⁹⁹ and helps with hints and tips for business start-ups. A more specific approach to older people is offered by initiatives such as **ProfilPass**¹⁰⁰ which advises on reorientation, new orientation, and counselling for the post-professional phase, with the scientific support of the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE). An interesting tool called **Job Futuromat**¹⁰¹ has been set up by the Institute for

⁹⁴ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%). (2022)*. Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

⁹⁵ *Startseite*. (s. d.). ddn e.V. <https://www.demographie-netzwerk.de/>

⁹⁶ *Startseite*. (s. d.-b). <https://www.unternehmens-wert-mensch.de/startseite/>

⁹⁷ *Weiterbildung für Ihr Personal – Zukunft für Ihr Unternehmen | Bundesagentur für Arbeit*. (s. d.). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/k/weiterbildung-qualifizierungsoffensive>

⁹⁸ Vocational Psychology Service (BPS): The psychologists at the employment agencies provide advice on vocational goals and assess suitability for a profession.

⁹⁹ Check of the capacity and resilience to perform certain activities.

¹⁰⁰ *ProfilPASS-System / ProfilPass*. (s. d.). <https://www.profilpass.de/fuer-nutzer-innen/profilpass-system/>

¹⁰¹ *Start | Job-Futuromat*. (s. d.). Job-Futuromat. <https://job-futuromat.iab.de/>

Employment Research (IAB) to determine how a profession could change because of digitalisation.

The action programme **Perspektive Wiedereinstieg**¹⁰² is aimed at people who want to reorient themselves professionally, get information on informal care and work, or return to work after a career break. The programme particularly supports women who wish to return to work after several years of family leave. All in all, the situation of older women in the labour market is supported by several gender equality measures of the Federal Government¹⁰³, including measures for equal participation of men and women or to promote transparency of pay structures.

In Germany, older people continue to receive proportionally little support for (re-)employment and their chances of (re-)employment in formal work are lower compared to younger people. Municipal employment agencies provide support in job search up to retirement age, but the support ratio in employment services is too low for this target group and the duration of the meetings is too short¹⁰⁴. Although, it is worth mentioning the **Perspektive 50plus programme**¹⁰⁵ from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that aims to provide job opportunities and to re-integrate older people aged between 50 and 64 into the labour market. Even if the programme officially ended in 2015, some regions are still pursuing it. Support can also come from associations such as **Mice for Older People**¹⁰⁶ which offers jobs for older people and counselling services for pensioners who want to continue working in several cities. The association has an interesting programme gathering people in "**success teams**" with the aim to meet fortnightly for three months and help each other realise personal goals on the topic of "Working 60+". It offers the opportunity to work on one's own goals in a committed way, get advice from people in the team and learn from each other's approach.

Guidance when approaching pensionable age is also provided by more than 460 senior citizens' offices¹⁰⁷ across the country with counselling, workshops as well as orientation and accompaniment in taking up voluntary work. Several organisations also offer information, such as AGE member **BAGSO** through its guidebook¹⁰⁸, and BAGSO member organisations through seminars or programmes focusing on post-retirement counselling¹⁰⁹. Another noteworthy initiative that raises the profile of older workers is the prize awarded to social entrepreneurs aged 60 and over by the Körber Stiftung¹¹⁰. The prize honours three personalities per year who have found solutions to the social challenges of our time using entrepreneurial means, and who have succeeded in creating a company or social enterprise to do so.

¹⁰² *Perspektiven schaffen*. (1 June 2023). Perspektiven schaffen. <https://www.perspektiven-schaffen.de/>

¹⁰³ *Lohngerechtigkeit*. (s. d.). BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-und-arbeitswelt/lohngerechtigkeit/lohngerechtigkeit-80398>

¹⁰⁴ *Arbeitsmarktpolitische Maßnahmen: Wie werden Ältere gefördert?* (2020). Institut Arbeit Und Qualifikation (IAQ), Universität Duisburg-Essen.

¹⁰⁵ *Bildung ab 50*. (s. d.). *Bildung ab 50 | Fortbildung und Weiterbildung für die Generation 50plus und Senioren*. <https://bildung-ab-50.de/>

¹⁰⁶ *Beratung - Mäuse für Ältere*. (2022, 15 décembre). Mäuse für Ältere. <https://mausefueraeltere.de/beratung/>

¹⁰⁷ DevAdmin. (2023). Startseite - BaS. <https://seniorenbueros.org/>

¹⁰⁸ *Berufsende in Sicht ?!* (s. d.). <https://www.bagso.de/publikationen/ratgeber/berufsende-in-sicht/>

¹⁰⁹ *Startseite | Bundesagentur für Arbeit*. (s. d.). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/>

¹¹⁰ *Zugabe-Preis*. (n.d.). Körber-Stiftung. <https://koerber-stiftung.de/projekte/zugabe-preis/>

In terms of legislation, the **Flexi Pension Act**¹¹¹ seeks to make flexible working up to pensionable age more attractive and facilitates continued working beyond pensionable age. Its objective is to facilitate the employment of older people and create more attractive opportunities for pensioners. Unfortunately, it has been rarely used so far¹¹².

Age discrimination in the labour market

The **General Equal Treatment Act (AGG)** is the set of regulations implementing the EU anti-discrimination directives in Germany. A study commissioned by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, called "*Protection against Discrimination and Promotion of Personal Diversity in Working Life: Status of Implementation and Practice in Companies, Public Administrations and Third Sector Organisations*"¹¹³, points out that the AGG has contributed to changing the behaviour of employers. However, the impact of the AGG is examined in very few companies and only reflected in the adoption or not of regulations and instruments available to employees. This study also shows that "Administrations (...) have overall better knowledge of the AGG than companies and to some extent third sector organisations. (...) While all large companies are very well informed, similar to the administrations, more than half of the small companies do not know the AGG." In principle, the legal process is accessible to all, but lack of knowledge about the AGG and about complaint mechanisms makes it difficult to implement the right to non-discrimination on the basis of age. In practice, the **Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency** advises people who experience discrimination¹¹⁴ and refers them to other advice centres. Trade unions are also seen as important interlocutors.

In support of employers seeking to develop a diversity and inclusion strategy, the **Charta der Vielfalt**¹¹⁵ provides a lot of information on the different dimensions of diversity and has a large pool of resources, including on the age dimension. Similarly, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry highlight the assets of older workers and encourage the business sector to address demographic challenges with specific tools. Among those good practices, **intergenerational collaboration** at work is encouraged in a dossier¹¹⁶ published by the Diversity Charter, which highlights good practices in the corporate, public and social sectors such as "bringing older and younger staff together in intergenerational workshops that promote knowledge sharing and exchange of experience, but also mutual understanding of different life

¹¹¹ Sozialministerin Carola Reimann gibt Startschuss für Seniorenkampagne „Von wegen Ruhestand! Perspektiven Ü60“ | Nds. Ministerium für Soziales, Arbeit, Gesundheit und Gleichstellung. (2019, May 3).

https://www.ms.niedersachsen.de/startseite/uber_uns/presse/presseinformationen/sozialministerin-carola-reimann-gibt-startschuss-fuer-seniorenkampagne-von-wegen-ruhestand-perspektiven-ue60-176560.html

¹¹² Düsseldorf, D. R. R. K. 7. 4. (n.d.). *Möglichkeiten der Flexirente werden wenig genutzt | Ihre Vorsorge*. <https://www.ihre-vorsorge.de/rente/nachrichten/moeglichkeiten-der-flexirente-werden-wenig-genutzt>

¹¹³ *Der Schutz vor Diskriminierung und die Förderung personaler Vielfalt im Arbeitsleben : Umsetzungsstand und Praxis in Unternehmen, Verwaltungen und Organisationen des Dritten Sektors* (Dr. Annette Icks, Dr. Teita Bijedić, Dr. Rosemarie Kay, Philipp Latzke, Andreas Merx, unter Mitarbeit von Christian Mappala). (2021). Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes. https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Expertisen/Studie_Schutz_vor_Diskriminierung_im_Arbeitsleben.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3

¹¹⁴ *Unser Beratungsangebot*. (s. d.). Antidiskriminierungsstelle. <https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/wir-beraten-sie/jetzt-kontakt-aufnehmen/jetzt-kontakt-aufnehmen-node.html>

¹¹⁵ *Diversity Management - Für Diversity in der Arbeitswelt*. (s. d.). <https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/fuer-arbeitgebende/diversity-management/>

¹¹⁶ *JUNG - ALT - BUNT : Diversity und der demographische Wandel* (Redaktion Charta der Vielfalt e.V. Kerstin Tote). (s. d.). https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Studien_Publikationen_Charta/Jung_Alt_Bunt.pdf

situations". Here too, Trade Unions¹¹⁷ provide support through seminars on the benefits of age-diverse teams and inclusion.

Workplaces for all ages

The Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAUA) compiles the **basic principles and fields of action for age-friendly workplaces**. With regard to occupational health and safety, the study points out that "as ageing is a cross-cutting issue, it must be the subject of a coordinated procedure between all the areas of responsibility concerned (personnel, organisation, management, occupational health and safety) and provide for occupational health and safety assistance, occupational health management (OHM), occupational health promotion (OHP) and occupational integration management (OIM)". **For strenuous professions**¹¹⁸, managers should implement measures such as mixed work and job rotation, healthy shift planning with sufficient rest, free time in blocks and breaks.

Employers can receive **financial assistance in the form of grants and loans**¹¹⁹ up to the full amount of the costs if they equip new or existing workplaces and training places for people with disabilities - for example by providing suitable access, disposal or sanitary facilities. For disability-specific aspects (e.g., visual impairment and hearing impairment), the technical advisory services of the Integration Office (Inklusionsamt) or the Federal Employment Agency¹²⁰ provides support.

The Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (GDA) is a long-term platform of the federal government, the Länder and the accident insurance institutions, anchored in the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Book VII of the Social Code. Within this platform, the **Psyche**¹²¹ work programme focuses on support for companies, qualification of supervisory staff and revision of regulations, especially regarding stress at work. A similar interdepartmental initiative called **Mental Health Offensive**¹²² aims to improve the networking of prevention services in general.

Federal Ministries such as the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and the Federal Ministry for Health also offer material and practical tools for well-being and mental health at work. Similarly, the **New Quality of Work Initiative** (INQA) project **psyGA - Mental Health in the World of Work** offers e-learning tools for managers and employees, as well as practical aids and examples.

Finally, many projects focus on the acquisition or renewal of digital skills for seniors. Some of these projects are summarized in the **DigitalPakt Alter**¹²³, a joint initiative by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Woman and Youth and

¹¹⁷ Metall, R. I. (21 July 202). *Potentiale nutzen Arbeit für Jung und Alt betrieblich ermöglichen*. IG Metall.

<https://www.igmetall.de/service/bildung-und-seminare/seminardetails/potentiale-nutzen-arbeit-fuer-jung-und-alt-betrieblich-ermoeglichen>

¹¹⁸ « Neue Wege bis 67 » . (s. d.). ddn e.V. <https://www.demographie-netzwerk.de/mediathek/artikel/neue-wege-bis-67/>

¹¹⁹ Rehadat, I. D. D. W. K. (s. d.). *Leistungsträger*. Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln, REHADAT. <https://www.rehadat-hilfsmittel.de/de/ablauf-finanzierung/hilfsmittel-fuer-den-beruf/kostentraeger/>

¹²⁰ Rehadat, I. D. D. W. K. (s. d.-a). *Barrier-free workplaces*. Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln, REHADAT.

<https://www.rehadat-hilfsmittel.de/en/ablauf-finanzierung/barrierefreies-bauen/barrierefreie-arbeitsstaetten/>

¹²¹ GDA Portal - *Arbeitsprogramm « Psyche »* . (s. d.). https://www.gda-portal.de/DE/GDA/3-GDA-Periode/AP-Psyche/AP-Psyche_node.html

¹²² *Offensive Psychische Gesundheit - Wir machen mit*. (s. d.). www.inqa.de. <https://inqa.de/DE/vernetzen/offensive-psychische-gesundheit/uebersicht.html>

¹²³ GmbH, W. (s. d.). *Start*. Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen. <https://www.digitalpakt-alter.de/>

BAGSO, aimed at strengthening the social participation and engagement of older people in a digitalised world. This is also the case of *the Digital-Kompass*¹²⁴, a meeting place for all questions on the internet, developed by BAGSO, in cooperation with Deutschland sicher im Netz e.V. and funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).

In terms of work-life balance, BAGSO demands the introduction of wage replacement benefits for people taking on care responsibilities. While Germany, already in 2019 when the EU directive was introduced, provided for higher standards than required through the directive¹²⁵, there is still room for improvement, as highlighted in the recently published Report of the German Independent Advisory Board on Work-Care Reconciliation¹²⁶.

¹²⁴ Standorte | Digital-Kompass. (s. d.). Digital-Kompass. <https://www.digital-kompass.de/standorte>

¹²⁵ Vereinbarkeit von Familie, Pflege und Beruf europaweit stärken. (2019, 2 June). BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/alle-meldungen/vereinbarkeit-von-familie-pflege-und-beruf-europaweit-staerken-133646>

¹²⁶ Zweiter Bericht des Unabhängigen Beirats für die Vereinbarkeit von. . . (s. d.). BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/zweiter-bericht-des-unabhaengigen-beirats-fuer-die-vereinbarkeit-von-pflege-und-beruf-228546>

Greece

Information provided by 50+ Hellas and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of people between 50 and 64 years old in Greece is 60.9%¹²⁷. This is below the European average. No specific measures have been taken to support older workers in doing career reviews or facilitating professional reconversion. There is also little protection against skills obsolescence for older workers, except for some periodic courses. However, some existing measures act in the interest of a better employment rate for older people. This is the case, for example, with the existence of **high redundancy payments**, especially for an older worker who has been in the company for some time. This is an important obstacle for employers who wish to dismiss their older workers.

In Greece, the long-term (12 months) unemployment rate for people between 50 and 64 is 73.3%. This is the highest rate in Europe. To address this, the Employment Office (OAED) has set up **a temporary subsidy programme for employers to employ people aged 55-67 in the wider public sector** (NPDD). However, this programme has significant weaknesses, such as the fact that the job offer is only for full-time jobs. The fact that the programme can benefit jobseekers of such a wide age range raises questions. It would be interesting to observe whether these measures benefit 67-year-old jobseekers as much as 55-year-olds and to adapt the measures accordingly.

In 2021, Greece recorded **a fall in the unemployment rate well above the average** (2.9 pps). The adoption of **a new subsidy program** the same year strengthened the country's efforts¹²⁸. This program provides for the payment by the State of the social contributions of newly hired employees for six months and provides additional salary support of €200 per month for those who were previously long-term unemployed. 150,000 new jobs in the private sector would benefit. Older people represent a considerable proportion of the long-term unemployed, it would be interesting to know if this reform has benefited them and if not, to think about a clause to ensure more inclusion.

At EU level, the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) is expected to create 62,000 jobs by 2026. A key element of the RRP is **to promote job creation and labour market participation**. The plan includes measures that will benefit workers, including older workers. Measures include the promotion of workforce development and re-skilling, the improvement of the public employment service (OAED) and the improvement of the coverage and distribution of benefits to the unemployed, as well as the modernisation and simplification of labour law, which includes the implementation of **a work-life balance framework** to combat the gender employment gap.

¹²⁷ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

¹²⁸ *2022 European Semester : Proposal for a Joint Employment Report*. (s. d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-proposal-joint-employment-report_en

Self-employment was once a way for older workers to earn income, however, it declined in 2017 due to high tax/insurance maintenance costs.

Finally, the transition to retirement depends on the human resource management policies of each company as there is no pre-established model. Early retirements are more common and are used instead of dismissal by employers.

Age discrimination in the labour market

In Greece, **law 3304/2005** implements the Council directive 2000/78/EC, which establishes the general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

In June 2019, a **new labour law 4808/2021** introduced crucial reforms to the Greek labor market. Among the measures it includes, this law prohibits dismissal on grounds of discrimination. This law also provides for **regulations against violence and harassment in the workplace**. It also provides for the right of an employee who is the victim of workplace harassment or violence to leave the workplace for a reasonable period, without loss of pay or other consequences, and the obligation of employers to adopt written policies to prevent and combat harassment and violence at work and deal with internal complaints.

There has been an **Ombudsman** in Greece since 1998. It is an independent authority established by the Constitution. It acts as an intermediary between public administration and citizens in order to help citizens exercise their rights effectively. Its main mission is to fight against discrimination, particularly with regard to age.

The Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan¹²⁹ provides a component to “**increase access to effective and inclusive social policies**”. One of the investments consists in developing and delivering “**diversity training programmes for employees** in both the private and public sector with the aim of fighting discrimination against all dimensions of diversity in the workplace”. The Equality Observatory of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will be supported to produce “**comprehensive reports assessing the state of play of equal opportunities**” and a **certification mechanism with an award system** will be developed to promote good practices.

Workplaces for all ages

Several institutions are responsible for monitoring working conditions. Among these, the **Social Partners for Occupational Health and Safety (ELINYAE)** and the **Labor Inspectors Control Body of the Ministry of Labor**, made fully independent by **Law 4808/2021**¹³⁰. However, no reference to the specific situation of older workers is made and does not seem to be a priority to date. The DYPA has a service for ergonomic adaptation of the workstation, but it is only intended for people with disabilities.

¹²⁹ ANNEX to the Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Greece. (6 July 2021). *Council of the European Union*. https://greece20.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ST_10152_2021_ADD_1_en.pdf

¹³⁰ *ΝΟΜΟΣ 4808/2021 (Κωδικοποιημένος) - ΦΕΚ Α 101/19.06.2021*. (s. d.). kodiko.gr. <https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/727771/nomos-4808-2021>

The new law 4808/2021 has transposed directive (EU) 2019/1158 on **work-life balance for parents and carers**. This new measure facilitates the reconciliation of professional and personal life and thus supports working informal carers and in particular older women who are more likely to be in this situation. The law also provides for the establishment of a **flexible schedule** allowing for an adjustment of working time.

In terms of digitization, the new law 4808/2021 provides for **teleworking**. The law provides in particular that the employee can ask to work remotely to avoid health risks, which can be beneficial for older people with reduced mobility. The law guarantees the worker's protection by providing the right to disconnect or requiring the employer to pay for the costs incurred by teleworking.

Several policies or services aim to **bridge the digital divide** at work and facilitate the inclusion of older workers in the context of digitisation. There are indeed lifelong learning programs that include digital skills. However, communication around these programs is weak, especially when it comes to informing or targeting older people. The Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan¹³¹ will also **reform the training model** to ensure the qualification, re-skilling and upgrading of the workforce. A specific focus on **digital training of older people and people with disabilities** is provided, focusing on the "acquaintance, familiarisation and education of older people and persons with disabilities in new technologies, mainly in terms of digital information, communication and internet-based and social media skills (such as making electronic payments, submitting applications through digital platforms, using social media)".

¹³¹ ANNEX to the Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Greece. (6 July 2021). *Council of the European Union*. https://greece20.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ST_10152_2021_ADD_1_en.pdf

Hungary

Information provided by the Gerontology Science Coordination Center and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of 55–64-year-olds in Hungary is slightly higher than the European average: 65.6%. Older workers are protected through the provisions of **Act I of 2012 of the Labour Code**¹³², which provides for obstacles to the dismissal of workers within five years of retirement age. Dismissal is not impossible but must be justified by the behaviour of the employee that makes the employment relationship impossible. Termination by the employer during this period leads to an increase in severance pay.

When the statutory pension age is reached, there is no obligation to retire. In addition, **the pension increases by 0.5% for each additional month of service**. This can explain, among other things, an employment rate of 9.4%, which is almost in line with the European average for Hungarians aged 65–74. Other incentives to work beyond the legal retirement age include a **reduction in the tax and contribution burden**. Thus, only personal income tax (15 per cent) is applied to wages. Another incentive for the employment of pensioners is **the pensioners' cooperatives**¹³³. They aim to help retired workers who would like to be active in the labour market, to reduce labour shortages and to transfer skills and professional know-how. At the same time, one of the main advantages of being a member of a cooperative is not having to pay social security contributions. It is also the cooperative that is in charge of negotiating with employers interested in hiring retired workers. The initiative is interesting but it seems that it attracts many pensioners who receive a small pension and is therefore more a necessity than a real choice for many of them¹³⁴.

To ensure a smooth transition between work and pension, **the Treasury has set up an online platform**¹³⁵ that guides workers through the different pension bodies, the methods of paying the pension, the different benefits available and any other administrative steps of interest to the new pensioner.

Among 55–64-year-olds, the employment rate for women (55.7%) is much lower than for men (76.8%). This may be explained by **the programme “Women 40”** introduced in 2011. It gives the possibility to women of any age who have at least 40 years of eligibility to retire early with a full pension. The 40 years of eligibility are based both on gainful activity (work) and benefits connected to child raising, recognising the burden on women who are, more often than men, putting their careers on pause to provide informal care. However, it seems that this programme

¹³² Kft, W. K. H. (s. d.). 2012. évi I. törvény a munka törvénykönyvéről – hatályos jogszabályok gyűjteménye.

<https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200001.tv>

¹³³ Kft, W. K. H. (s. d.). 2017. évi LXXXIX. törvény egyes törvényeknek a közérdekű nyugdíjas szervezetek létrehozásával összefüggő módosításáról – Törvények és országgyűlési határozatok.

<https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A1700089.TV>

¹³⁴ Hungary : Pensioners' cooperatives active on the labour market | ETUI. (s. d.). etui. <https://www.etui.org/covid-social-impact/hungary/hungary-pensioners-cooperatives-active-on-the-labour-market>

¹³⁵ Nyugdíj – Magyar Államkincstár. (s. d.). <https://www.allamkincstar.gov.hu/nyugdij>

is not financially beneficial¹³⁶. Indeed, it seems that if a woman applies for a preferential pension three years before reaching her age limit, the amount can only increase over the following three years through regular increases in the pension in line with inflation. If, on the other hand, she works until she reaches her age limit, her earnings would generally have risen three times faster in recent years. At the same time, **the measure targeting only women is discriminatory**, especially as the reasons for the scheme seem to be related to the fact that grandmothers can stay at home to look after the children while younger people can more easily return to work¹³⁷.

A programme, called HelloIT¹³⁸, is specifically designed to train women in digital skills. One-third of the enrollees are over 40 and 50% of the women enrolled are from rural areas. The programme provides a certificate aiming to support the careers of participants.

Age discrimination in employment

Article XV of the Fundamental Law prohibits discrimination, in particular with regard to recruitment, training, working conditions or remuneration. Equal treatment in labour relations is reiterated in the Labour Code of 2012¹³⁹.

In 2003, Act CXXV established **the Equal Treatment Authority** (Egyenlő Bánásmód Hatóság)¹⁴⁰, an autonomous and independent administrative body. The Authority examines complaints and statements received in relation to discrimination. It investigates a request from a person who has been harmed.

Another instrument to prevent age discrimination in the workplace is the **European Diversity Charter**¹⁴¹, which is implemented in Hungary. This can be signed by various organisations, regardless of their size and type, which are dedicated to respecting equal treatment, creating a diverse organisational culture and engaging in continuous development to achieve the objectives of the Charter.

Workplaces for all ages

In Hungary, **Act XCIII of 1993 on occupational safety and health**, and its amendment of 1 January 2008, includes provisions related to stress at work, stressing that employers have a duty to assess and reduce psychosocial risks.

¹³⁶ Portfolio.Hu. (2022, 2 December). Tényleg rosszul járhatnak a nők a kedvezményes nyugdíjjal? Portfolio.hu.

<https://www.portfolio.hu/gazdasag/20221202/tenyleg-rosszul-jarhatnak-a-nok-a-kedvezmenyes-nyugdijjal-582390>

¹³⁷ Constitutionality of the Early Retirement for Women With 40 Years of Service Period in Hungary. (s. d.). ÓZSEF HAJDÚ*.

<https://core.ac.uk/download/159498632.pdf>

¹³⁸ fps web agency. (s. d.). Újra elindul a Hello IT! for Women ingyenes informatikai kurzus - Human - DigitalHungary - ahol a két világ találkozik. az élet virtuális oldala! digitalhungary.hu. <https://www.digitalhungary.hu/human/ujra-elindul-a-Hello-IT-for-Women-ingyenes-informatikai-kurzus/15299/>

¹³⁹ Kft, W. K. H. (s. d.-b). Magyarország Alaptörvénye (2011. április 25.) - Hatályos Jogszabályok Gyűjteménye.

<https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100425.atv>

¹⁴⁰ Kezdőlap - AJBH. (s. d.). AJBH. <https://www.ajbh.hu/kezdolap>

¹⁴¹ Európai Unió Sokszínűségi Karta Magyarország - HBLF Sokszínűségi Karta. (12 April 2023). HBLF Sokszínűségi Karta.

<https://sokszinusegikarta.hu/hu/sokszinusegi-karta/>

Act XCIII

Article 54, d): the employer shall take the human factor into account in the design of the workplace, the choice of work equipment and the work process, to reduce the duration or harmful effects of working in unison at a fixed pace, the organisation of working time, the prevention of stress caused by work-related psychosocial risks;

87 § 1/H. Interpretative provisions: Psychosocial risk: all the effects (conflicts, work organisation, working hours, job insecurity, etc.) which affect the worker at work, and which may affect his or her reaction to these effects, or which may lead to stress, accidents at work or psychosomatic illnesses.

87 § 1/D. Occupational disease: an acute and chronic impairment of health which occurs in the course of work or occupation, or which appears or develops after the exercise of work or occupation and which

(a) is due to physical, chemical, biological, psychosocial, or ergonomic pathological factors related to the work, occupation, or work process, or

(b) is the result of a higher or lower than optimal worker strain.

Italy

Information provided by Associazione Lavoro Over 40, Associazione nazionale pensionati (ANP) della CIA-Agricoltori Italiani and Associazione 50 & Più and desk research

Support in the labour market

In Italy, the employment rate of people between 50 and 64 years old is of 61.5 %¹⁴², which is below the EU average of 68.8%. Ageing in the labour market is not particularly targeted by Italian employment policies. Large companies offer career and orientation reviews as well as facilitated retraining processes, but this remains at the discretion of the company and is not made mandatory or even suggested at national level.

With one of the highest long-term unemployment rates (65.1%) for people between 50 and 64 in the EU, Italy has adopted a general approach for the employability of the unemployed without focusing much on older workers. Some measures such as the creation of a **National Agency for Active Labour Policies (ANPAL)**¹⁴³ indirectly support that goal as its role is to promote the right to work, to ensure training and professional growth of people and to coordinate active employment policies among regional job centres. Others specifically target older workers, with the aim to reverse the current long-term unemployment rates for people over 50, such as the **reduction of employers' contributions with extensions** for companies that support employment creation for women and those aged 55 years and over.

In the same general perspective, **Italy's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)**, put in place by the European Commission to financially support the implementation of national reforms and investments in line with EU priorities, is expected to create 240 000 jobs by 2026¹⁴⁴. Through its mission called "inclusion and cohesion", the RRP should facilitate labour market participation and foster social inclusion. It plans to strengthen workers employability, to better support people in vulnerable situations.

Strengthening Employment Centres¹⁴⁵ to ensure effective services for unemployed people is one of the major investments of the Italian RRP. It will be coupled with a national programme to ensure workers employability, **the Workers' Employability Guarantee (GOL)**¹⁴⁶, and **a National Strategic Plan for the upskilling and reskilling of the adult population**¹⁴⁷ for a more effective service at local level with innovative and individual-centred methods. The GOL programme is mainly based on networking of different labour market actors to address unemployment. Among the beneficiaries of this project, it is expected that at least 75% will be women, long-term unemployed,

¹⁴² *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

¹⁴³ *Anpal*. (s. d.). <https://www.anpal.gov.it/>

¹⁴⁴ *Italy's recovery and resilience plan*. (s. d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/italys-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en

¹⁴⁵ *Strengthening of Employment Centres - Italia Domani*. (s. d.). <https://www.italiadomani.gov.it/content/sogei-ng/it/en/Interventi/investimenti/potenziamento-dei-centri-per-l-impiego.html>

¹⁴⁶ *Anpal*. (s. d.). <https://www.anpal.gov.it/programma-gol>

¹⁴⁷ *Italy : National strategic plan for upskilling and reskilling adults*. (12 October 2021). CEDEFOP. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/italy-national-strategic-plan-upskilling-and-reskilling-adults>

disabled people, young people under 30 and **workers over 55**, with pathways including re-employment, upskilling, reskilling and collective outplacement, all designed to be as personalised as possible.

Support to women in the labour market, including through women entrepreneurship, is also part of the Italian RRP. This support aims to reduce the gender pay gap, through a set of measures, such as the creation of **a national system of gender equality certification**¹⁴⁸. It requires from employers to increase opportunities for women, to ensure equal pay for equal work, to implement gender diversity policies and to develop a better transparency in companies' processes.

The employment reforms of 2014 have abolished the right to work beyond the retirement age in Italy for civil servants who have to retire as soon as they reach the mandatory retirement age (67)¹⁴⁹, while employees in the private sector can continue working until 70 years old. This represents age discrimination in the labour market.

Age discrimination in employment

The equality principle is included in **Article 3 of the Italian Constitution**¹⁵⁰ and prohibits all forms of discrimination, including age-based discrimination. The Legislative Decree 216/2003¹⁵¹ introduced **further protections against discrimination in employment**, specifying the direct and indirect discrimination. This decree is the implementation of the EU directive 78/2000¹⁵².

AGE member ATDAL Over 40, short for "*Associazione nazionale per la tutela dei diritti dei lavoratori over 40*" is an association composed of people who have been forced to leave their jobs as a consequence of dismissals or individual resignations and were not yet entitled to receive a pension from the State welfare system although in some cases certain workers were very close to qualifying for those pensions. **One of their services is to support people who have been victims of age discrimination.** In cooperation with UNAR, the Italian public equality body, ATDAL Over 40 provides guidelines on how to challenge age discrimination in recruitment processes and how to report it for support on a webpage¹⁵³. Thanks to the intervention of ATDAL Over 40, several advertisements containing illegal age limits have already been removed or amended. Some are available for consultation on their website.

¹⁴⁸ *Certificazione della parità di genere*. (s. d.). <https://certificazione.pariopportunita.gov.it/public/info>

¹⁴⁹ *Italy : Reform of right of public sector employees to work beyond*. (s. d.). Eurofound. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/fr/publications/article/2015/italy-reform-of-right-of-public-sector-employees-to-work-beyond-retirement-age>

¹⁵⁰ *Constitution of the Italian Republic* (Italian e Parliamentary Information, Archives and Publications Office of the Senate Service for Official Reports and Communication). (s. d.).

https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf

¹⁵¹ Stato, I. P. E. Z. D. (s. d.). *DECRETO LEGISLATIVO 9 luglio 2003, n. 216 - Normattiva*. <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legislativo:2003:216>

¹⁵² *EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA*. (s. d.). <https://osha.europa.eu/en/safety-and-health-legislation/eu-strategic-framework-health-and-safety-work-2021-2027>

¹⁵³ *DISCRIMINAZIONE PER ETA' ? ADESSO BASTA ! | Benvenuto in ATDAL Over 40*. (12 June 2015). <http://www.atdal.eu/2015/06/12/1736/>

Workplaces for all ages

The main legislation concerning health and safety at work in Italy is the *Testo unico sulla Salute e Sicurezza sul Lavoro*¹⁵⁴. It regulates health and safety competences between the Italian State and the Italian regions. Legislation is controlled by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and all information concerning new programmes or the evaluation of activities is shared between the bodies concerned through the **National Information System for Prevention at Workplaces**¹⁵⁵.

INAIL, the **National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work**¹⁵⁶, has a research centre which carries out technical-scientific activities. Its data confirm an **increase in work-related accidents and illnesses**¹⁵⁷.

Smart Working in Italy

In 2017, the Italian legal system adopted a regulatory framework on smart working¹⁵⁸. Employees from a company adopting the smart working approach could not only work remotely, or telework, but also be flexible in their working hours. In other words, smart working allows employees to perform her/his work duties from anywhere and at any time. This approach could notably ease the work of workers with low mobility or informal carers for instance, providing them more flexibility to balance their work and the care they provide to their relative in need.

The law still ensures health and safety for the employee: *"The employer guarantees the health and safety of the worker, who performs the service in agile working mode, and to this end delivers to the worker and the workers' safety representative, at least annually, a written information, in which the general risks and the specific risks related to the particular mode of execution of the employment relationship are identified"* and that *"The worker is required to cooperate in the implementation of the prevention measures prepared by the employer to face the risks associated with the execution of the service outside the company premises"*¹⁵⁹.

The Observatory of the Milan Polytechnic¹⁶⁰ defines it as "a new managerial philosophy based on **giving people back flexibility and autonomy in the choice of spaces, times and tools** to be used in exchange for greater responsibility for results".

Although it has only been adopted by a few multinationals operating in Italy following the 2017 legislation, it was a first step towards a better work-life balance. As of March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the value of this legislative framework and of smart work. In particular, the government and trade unions

¹⁵⁴ Altalex, R. (2023, 15 mai). Testo unico per la sicurezza sul lavoro. *Altalex*. <https://www.altalex.com/documents/codici-altalex/2013/10/16/testo-unico-in-materia-di-sicurezza-sul-lavoro>

¹⁵⁵ Italy | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA. (s. d.). <https://osha.europa.eu/en/about-eu-osha/national-focal-points/italy>

¹⁵⁶ English - INAIL. (s. d.). <https://www.inail.it/cs/internet/multi/english.html>

¹⁵⁷ *Infortunati e malattie professionali, online gli open data Inail del 2022* - INAIL. (s. d.).

<https://www.inail.it/cs/internet/comunicazione/sala-stampa/comunicati-stampa/com-stampa-open-data-2022.html>

¹⁵⁸ Stato, I. P. E. Z. D. (s. d.-b). *LEGGE 22 maggio 2017, n. 81 - Normattiva*. <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2017:81>

¹⁵⁹ Article 22 - Stato, I. P. E. Z. D. (s. d.-b). *LEGGE 22 maggio 2017, n. 81 - Normattiva*. <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2017:81>

¹⁶⁰ *Osservatorio Smart Working : la Ricerca 2023*. (s. d.-b). <https://www.osservatori.net/it/ricerche/osservatori-attivi/smart-working>

adopted a shared protocol¹⁶¹ for the regulation of measures to control and contain the spread of the virus in the workplace and called on employers to maximise the use of smart working for all activities that could be carried out by the home or remote worker.

¹⁶¹ https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/protocollo_covid_19.pdf

Malta

Information provided by the National Association of Pensioners and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of Maltese between 25 and 64 years old is higher (81.1%) than the European employment rate (74.6%). This employment rate drops drastically after the age of 50 to only 63.7% for those aged between 55 and 64¹⁶². However, in a policy note¹⁶³ published in February 2020, the economist Aaron G. Grech of the Central Bank of Malta presented data on the proportion of full-time employees aged fifty and over, broken down by sector and occupational category. The data indicate that the share of older workers in many sectors including public administration, wholesale and retail trade, has been increasing over the last ten years. More surprisingly, it finds this increase in more physically demanding occupations, such as the agricultural, fishing and construction workforces. In contrast, relatively new service sectors, such as information and communication, have seen a decline in the proportion of older workers.

The **National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2021-2027**¹⁶⁴ made the following recommendations to increase the number of older and ageing workers in Malta: developing vocational training for older adults; improving healthy working conditions, age management techniques and employment services for older workers; combating ageism and age discrimination; implementing the tax and benefit system; encouraging mentoring programmes in professional organisations; and strengthening reconciliation work and informal care.

As of today, it is up to the individual to determine the choices relating to the management of his or her career path and professional mobility. Employers can advise or support the employee according to company policy. This applies to both the private and public sectors.

The acquisition of new skills or the improvement of qualifications is also the responsibility of the individual. In addition to the classical higher education qualifications, there are several platforms offering training opportunities specially focused on career transition. For example, **Jobsplus**¹⁶⁵, the Maltese Public Employment Service, offers courses aimed at helping individuals to acquire cross-cutting or specific skills related to the labour market. Similarly, the **Institute of Public Services**, which is the main source for the professional development of public employees in Malta, offers a tool available to mid-career employees with the objective of holistically assessing his or her competencies as part of an overall performance management programme. It allows the employee to assess his or her training and development needs. In addition, the programme provides career

¹⁶² *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

¹⁶³ *The ageing of the Maltese workforce and the impact of pension age changes* (Aaron G. Grech). (2020). [Policy Note]. Central Bank of Malta. <https://www.centralbankmalta.org/file.aspx?f=92776>

¹⁶⁴ *National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing. Malta 2021-2027*. (s. d.). https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSCA/Pages/Consultations/NationalStrategicPolicyforActiveAgeingMalta20212027.aspx

¹⁶⁵ *Jobsplus*. (s. d.). <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/training-opportunities>

development paths and specialised training¹⁶⁶, as well as professional and personal development activities¹⁶⁷. Finally, **the recruitment portal**¹⁶⁸ can also be seen as a tool to assist in the transition from one job to another within the civil service.

Among the support provided to older unemployed people in the labour market, the local employment agency Jobsplus has been running a **Mature Workers Scheme**¹⁶⁹. Part of the overall mission to "increase accessibility to the labour market through modernised and targeted services, while facilitating labour mobility and promoting investment in human capital", the Mature Workers Scheme targets employers and self-employed people who hire people over 45 who have been unemployed for at least 6 months. These employers are encouraged by a reduction in their income tax, "up to €11,600 in tax deductions for the first two years of employment of each eligible employee. In addition, they have the opportunity to benefit from tax deductions up to 50% of the cost of the training, up to a maximum of 400€ per employee".

In Malta, after remaining unchanged for several years, the retirement age started to increase in 2012 and has gradually risen aiming to reach sixty-five (65) by 2027. When a person reaches statutory retirement age, she can receive a retirement pension while continuing to work and without any reduction in pension entitlement. Those who remain in employment after the age of 65 continue to receive contributions which are taken into account in the final average for assessing pension entitlement¹⁷⁰. To encourage more people to continue working after retirement age, **the Maltese government announced in 2021 a 5-years plan to exclude all pension income from taxation for working pensioners within five years**. As part of this plan, the government has proposed to the parliament that around 20% of the pension income will no longer be considered part of the taxable income, while the amount not considered part of the taxable income will increase to 40%¹⁷¹. To go further in the support provided to pensioners who wish to continue working, the National Pensioners' Association has suggested, that a register of pensioners wishing to bring their skills to the labour market should be easily identified

Age discrimination in employment

Since 2012, age has been one of the protected grounds of discrimination **in the Equality for Men and Women Act**¹⁷². The Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age in the areas of employment, education and vocational guidance, especially addressing management, work allocation, training and working conditions.

This Act provides for the establishment of **the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)**¹⁷³, whose role is to promote equality. It covers, among

¹⁶⁶ *Prospectus*. (s. d.). <https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/institute/prospectus/Pages/CAT-07/Programmes/default.aspx>

¹⁶⁷ *Prospectus*. (s. d.-b). <https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/institute/prospectus/Pages/CAT-06/Modules/default.aspx>

¹⁶⁸ *Recruitment Portal*. (s. d.). <https://recruitment.gov.mt/en/page/home>

¹⁶⁹ *Jobsplus*. (s. d.-b). <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/schemes-jobseekers/mature-workers-scheme>

¹⁷⁰ Gemma - Know, Plan, Act. (2020, 24 février). *Employment beyond Pension age – Age 65 - Gemma - Know, Plan, Act.* <https://gemma.gov.mt/employment-beyond-pension-age-age-65/>

¹⁷¹ *Budget Speech 2023*. (2022). Ministry for Finance and Employment Malta.

¹⁷² *EQUALITY FOR MEN AND WOMEN ACT : ACT I of 2003, as amended by Legal Notice 427 of 2007 ; and Acts IV of 2009, IX of 2012, XVIII of 2014, and VII and XI of 2015.* (2003).

https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Home/Welcome/Chp.456_updated%202015.pdf

¹⁷³ *Equality Laws*. (s. d.). https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Pages/Rights_and_Obligations/Equality_Laws.aspx

other things, age discrimination in employment, access to education and career guidance. The NCPE conducts general investigations to determine whether the provisions of the Act are being complied with. It also deals with complaints of a more specific or individual nature to determine whether the provisions are being breached in relation to the complainant and, where deemed appropriate, mediates such complaints. It also provides assistance, where necessary, to persons who have been discriminated against to assert their rights under this Act.

The **National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2021-2027** provides policy recommendations against ageism and age discrimination¹⁷⁴. Moreover, the National Strategic Policy “recognises the significance of intersectionality” and highlights the **necessity of addressing the diversity of the ageing population**. In the programme, it is stated that “the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing distances itself from homogenising discourses and grand narratives which make generalisations about ageing based upon common sense ». Among the measures and initiatives planned to tackle age discrimination :

Measure	Initiative
Develop intergenerational programmes that include positive contact with older adults and are cooperative by all parties working toward a common goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch an information campaign. • Create an abuse reporting centre and a victim support service for older persons.
Ensure adequate education about ageing in primary and secondary schools, and post-secondary and tertiary institutions, that involve practical interactions with older adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include issues relating to ageing in curricula and put emphasis on inter-generational learning
Educate all professionals and workers on the myths of ageing as it is essential that age prejudice and stereotypes about ageing do not take root in no occupational service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate on how to recognise ageism through media campaigns. Educational material should also include what actions one should take if there are feeling discriminated against because of their age.

The National Strategic Policy¹⁷⁵ suggests also **“several policy and legal measures with a specific approach to intersectional discrimination”**. For older women, the strategy provides for a lifelong approach to the risks of gender inequalities that cause poverty among older women and gender gaps in pensions. With regard to discrimination against LGBTIQ older people, the policy includes a measure to establish a national working group to identify the common, but also different, social and health challenges faced by the LGBTIQ population. For older people from ethnic minorities,

¹⁷⁴ *National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing. Malta 2021-2027.* (s. d.). p.10, https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSCA/Pages/Consultations/NationalStrategicPolicyforActiveAgeingMalta20212027.aspx

¹⁷⁵ *National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing. Malta 2021-2027.* (s. d.). p.50, https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSCA/Pages/Consultations/NationalStrategicPolicyforActiveAgeingMalta20212027.aspx

one initiative will be to develop a standard on cultural and linguistic sensitivity that will be continuously monitored and raise awareness for all, but also for older people in general. Finally, there is an initiative to study how service providers for people with disabilities treat older users.

Workplaces for all ages

The Malta Occupational Health and Safety Authority¹⁷⁶ (OHSA) is responsible, among other things, for providing information on occupational health and safety matters and on the methods required to prevent occupational accidents, diseases or fatalities, as well as for monitoring compliance with the relevant occupational health and safety regulations and taking enforcement action where necessary. However, even though the new strategic plan 2022-2027¹⁷⁷ notes the ageing of the workforce and explains that this is a new challenge to be taken into consideration, no specific provision or measure is made for older workers or ageing at work.

In the Maltese Public Service, there is an **Employee Support Programme**¹⁷⁸ (ESP) which aims to identify and address the needs of employees who are experiencing work and/or life difficulties. The programme offers counselling, support, workshops and awareness sessions for employees and managers but also sector-specific sessions addressing self-care, well-being, and mental and physical health. The overall aim is to enable employees to be healthier, more productive and provide a quality service. In addition, the formulation and streamlining of policies related to the employment conditions of public employees is carried out by the **People Support & Wellbeing Directorate**¹⁷⁹. The Directorate is the main point of contact for the relevant ministries on issues relating to conditions of employment, allowances, disciplinary matters, special leave and work-life balance measures. In both cases, there is a general approach, without specific attention developed to address these issues from the perspective of older workers.

Finally, in July 2021, two Maltese social partners, the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and the General Workers' Union, announced the launch of a **digital tool promoting good practice in active ageing and intergenerational exchange**. They signed a **framework agreement**¹⁸⁰ aiming “a healthy, safe and productive working environment, to enable workers to remain in the labour market and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experiences between generations”.

¹⁷⁶ Seasus. (s. d.). *Mission / OHSA*. <https://www.ohsa.mt/about-ohsa/mission>

¹⁷⁷ *STRATEGIC PLAN FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY 2022-2027* (Occupational Health and Safety Authority). (s. d.). https://www.ohsa.mt/sites/default/files/2022-06/Strategic-Plan-2022-2027_0.pdf

¹⁷⁸ *ESP Home*. (s. d.). <https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/people/ESP/Pages/Home.aspx>

¹⁷⁹ *Reports*. (s. d.-c). <https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/people/Pages/PeopleSupportandWellbeing/Reports.aspx>

¹⁸⁰ Admin. (s. d.). *The Malta Chamber and GWU to promote active ageing and address legal anomalies*. <https://gwu.org.mt/en/the-malta-chamber-and-gwu-to-promote-active-ageing-and-address-legal-anomalies/>

The Netherlands

Information provided by Older Women's Network Netherlands (OVN-NL) and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of people aged 55–64 in the Netherlands is rather high: 73.1%¹⁸¹. In the period 2013–2022, this employment rate has increased for all age groups but especially for women aged 55–65: from 49.3% in 2013 to 63.5% in 2021¹⁸².

The ageing of the population has quickly been considered in Netherlands' policies through a changed approach towards older workers. In the past, the retention of older workers was not a priority because **voluntary retirement schemes (VUT)** were offered by employers and benefited older workers fiscally. With the abolition of these schemes and benefits, coupled with the increase in the statutory retirement age, employers are now challenged to keep older workers productively at work¹⁸³. **The Policy Agenda 2020**¹⁸⁴, drafted in June 2011, foresaw an improvement in the position of older workers in the labour market and led to collective agreements aimed at all stages of life, setting up for example a '**vitality budget**' and a '**generation pact**'. Although the infrastructure for sustainable careers is still weak, the social partners and the government have set up **the programme "Social Partners Together for Sustainable Employability"** (Sociale Partners Samen voor Duurzame Inzetbaarheid – SPDI)¹⁸⁵. Within this programme¹⁸⁶, several measures support employers as well as workers of all ages, including a customised arrangement per sector, subsidies for the implementation of these programmes, the possibility of early retirement for employees who wish to do so, the possibility for employees who wish to do so to save 100 weeks of non-statutory leave without the employer having to deduct tax from it, the introduction of a scheme to support SMEs to invest in the development of sustainable employability of their employees (SLIM agreement (Subsidy agreement for learning and development in SMEs), for instance).

In the Netherlands, as in most member countries, the unequal position of women is reflected, among other things, in the pay gap, income/pension and career opportunities, and the representation of women in management positions. To address the gender pay gap, the FNV and the Equal Reward Foundation launched an equal pay campaign in 2022 called **#IkVerdienMeer**¹⁸⁷ (**I EarnMore**). The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs also plans to introduce legislation to close the gender pay gap, which will include transparency measures, such as reporting

¹⁸¹ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

¹⁸² Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (s. d.). *Arbeidsparticipatie naar leeftijd en geslacht*. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/dashboard-arbeidsmarkt/werkenden/arbeidsparticipatie-naar-leeftijd-en-geslacht>

¹⁸³ *Employers more proactive in dealing with an ageing workforce* (Oude Mulders, J. : Oude Mulders, J., Henkens, K., Turek, K.,). (2019). Gerön, digital magazine.

¹⁸⁴ *Beleidsagenda 2020 : investeren in participatie en inzetbaarheid*. (2011). https://wp.workplaceinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/Beleidsagenda_2020_investeren_in_participatie_en_inzetbaarheid.pdf

¹⁸⁵ *Sociale Partners Samen voor Duurzame Inzetbaarheid*. (5 April 2023). SPDI. <https://duurzaamhetwerk.nl/>

¹⁸⁶ *Actief ouder worden*. (s. d.). <https://www.stvda.nl/nl/publicaties/actief-ouder-worden>

¹⁸⁷ Chris. (2023). IK VERDIEN MEER. . . JIJ OOK ! - Ik Verdien meer. <https://stichtinggelijkebeloning.nl/>

obligations for companies with more than 250 employees and the right to information for employees.

The CNV trade union surveyed the over-55s about their experiences in the labour market¹⁸⁸. According to the results of this study, **70% of them have difficulty finding a job**. However, 75% say they are willing to invest more in their own training if asked by potential employers, while 41% are already investing in their training.

There are financial aids to support older unemployed people. From the age of 60 or older at the time of entering unemployment benefit, older people are entitled to a minimum level of benefit based on the **Income of the Older Unemployed (IOW)** provision after their unemployment benefit expires. There is also IOAZ support for self-employed people aged 55 or over who have insufficient income from their businesses and need to stop or sell it¹⁸⁹.

Recognising that almost all entrepreneurship promotion programmes are aimed at young people, organisation such as the Silver Starter organisation¹⁹⁰ encourage entrepreneurial activity of older people, giving them the opportunity to lead an active life, increase employability and reduce the risks of financial vulnerability and ageism. Similarly, the over 55s platform Senior2go¹⁹¹ encourages alternative initiatives involving older workers. This platform brings older workers together to carry out a service or social project together.

Regarding the situation when approaching the legal age of retirement, workers can find support in five different **training institutes that provide courses to ease the transition to retirement**¹⁹². To better understand the representation and process of retirement, several studies have been carried out¹⁹³. The **Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute also launched a major survey¹⁹⁴ with older employees to better understand the process**. Finally, the Leiden Academy on Vitality and Ageing is planning a study for 2023 on the transition from work to retirement from the perspective of women over 60¹⁹⁵ as today, little is known about how women in the Netherlands experience the transition from work to retirement, how they feel about continuing to work and what this means for their well-being and health. The aim of this study is to gain more insight into the wishes and ambitions of women regarding this theme.

¹⁸⁸ *DPG Media Privacy Gate*. (s. d.). <https://www.ad.nl/werk/oudere-werknemer-komt-lastig-aan-het-werk-a80e634e/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

¹⁸⁹ Business.gov.nl. (2023). *Older and Partially Disabled Self-employed Income Support (IOAZ)*. business.gov.nl. <https://business.gov.nl/subsidy/older-partially-disabled-self-employed-income-support/>

¹⁹⁰ *Silver Starters - Leyden Academy*. (2023, 9 mai). Leyden Academy. <https://www.leydenacademy.nl/silver-starters-programme/>

¹⁹¹ *55-plussers en hun « tweede bedrijf »*. (s. d.). Innovatief in Werk. <https://www.innovatiefinwerk.nl/inzetbaarheid-langer-doorwerken/2016/06/55-plussers-en-hun-tweede-bedrijf>

¹⁹² *Pensioen in Zicht*. (s. d.). <http://www.pensioeninzicht.nl>

¹⁹³ *Broadening the view on retirement - Leyden Academy*. (2020, August 3). Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing. <https://www.leydenacademy.nl/influence-of-work-on-happiness-and-health/>

¹⁹⁴ *Doorwerken na pensionering beperkt deelname vrijwilligerswerk : Vol. NUMMER 4* ([Olga Grünwald, Marleen Damman & Kéne Henkens]. (s.d.). DEMOS Jaargang 37). (s. d.). DEMOS JAARGANG 37. <https://publ.nidi.nl/demos/2021/demos-37-04-grunwald.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ Leydenacademy. (2023, January 11). *Hoe ervaren vrouwen de overgang van werk naar pensioen?* - Leyden Academy. Leyden Academy. <https://www.leydenacademy.nl/hoe-ervaren-vrouwen-de-overgang-van-werk-naar-pensioen/>

Age discrimination in employment

Age discrimination in the labour market is prohibited by **Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution**, but also by the **Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Age at Work Act (WGBL)**, which was adopted in December 2003 and came into force in May 2004.

In February 2020, the **Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI)**¹⁹⁶ asked 1,566 workers aged between 40 and 68 whether, and in what cases, they had experienced age discrimination in the labour market in the past five years. The results of this study clearly show that in the Netherlands the experience of age discrimination in the labour market increases with age. It is striking that the 55-59 age group is just as often (18%) confronted with age discrimination as the 50-54 age group. This suggests that many employers see the age of 50 as a kind of anchor point. A similar effect seems to occur at age 60 (23%). It can also be assumed that the experience of age discrimination is even greater among people who are unemployed and actively looking for work, because they are more often rejected.

The **Institute for Human Rights**¹⁹⁷ - **College Rechten van de Mens** - offers people who are discriminated against because of their age in the labour market to file complaints about age discrimination at work. The institute's website¹⁹⁸ also provides access to the existing jurisdiction in this area. The Dutch government also provides information and advice on equal treatment at work and how to avoid age discrimination during the recruitment process¹⁹⁹. The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (Min. SZW) is particularly active in combating age discrimination at work, by encouraging employers to hire older people through financial benefits such as contributions to salary costs. With **the financial CV tool**, the employer can create an overview of the financial benefits to which one is entitled, encouraging him to hire an older worker.

In The Netherlands, 428 Dutch companies signed the Diversity Charter²⁰⁰ which is affiliated with the European Platform of Diversity Charters. In addition, **the Diversity at work project**²⁰¹ of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER)²⁰², aims at stimulating diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The project actively helps companies to develop, execute and monitor their diversity plans. Knowledge from science and case examples are combined in expert reports such as the expert report 'Diversity in recruitment and selection', sharing best practices in the fields of diverse recruitment, inclusive management and more.

¹⁹⁶ *Leeftijdscriminatie ervaren door oudere werknemers: Vol. Nummer 8.* (s. d.). DEMOS Jaargang 36.

<https://publ.nidi.nl/demos/2020/demos-36-08-oudemulders.pdf>

¹⁹⁷ *Oordelen | College voor de Rechten van de Mens.* (s. d.).

<https://oordelen.mensenrechten.nl/oordelen?verstuurd=1&ZoekTerm=&Jaar=&Nummer=&Discriminatiegronden=dc07cab9-09cd-34f0-2cda-ca22ab47ce24&Discriminatiegronden=f0a4f042-3f0b-7306-18c7-95978912ffeb>

¹⁹⁸ *Oordelen | College voor de Rechten van de Mens.* (5 October 2023). <https://oordelen.mensenrechten.nl/oordelen>

¹⁹⁹ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid. (2022, 21 March). *Wat kan ik doen bij ongelijke behandeling bij een sollicitatie of op het werk?* Rijksoverheid.nl. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/gelijke-behandeling-op-het-werk/vraag-en-antwoord/wat-kan-ik-doen-als-ik-ongelijk-behandeld-word-bij-een-sollicitatie-of-op-het-werk>

²⁰⁰ *Diversity in recruitment and selection: Expert Report* (The European Platform of Diversity Charters.). (2020).

<https://www.ser.nl/nl/thema/diversiteitinbedrijf/english/-/media/6EBB5D44466D418C964738BFE9D91BAA.ashx>

²⁰¹ *Diversity at Work.* (s. d.). www.ser.nl. <https://www.ser.nl/nl/thema/diversiteitinbedrijf/english>

²⁰² *What is the SER.* (s. d.). SER. <https://www.ser.nl/en/SER/About-the-SER/What-is-the-SER>

Workplaces for all ages

The Netherlands has adopted several good practices to ensure the health and safety of workers and guarantee sustainable employability. Among these good practices, the adoption of the **Lombardy Workplace Health Promotion Network approach** allows health and sustainable employability for employers and employees. This collaborative approach between employers and employees focuses on healthy work environments and encourages employees from different socio-economic backgrounds to participate in health activities, make healthy choices and develop themselves. Since 2015, special emphasis has been placed on factory workers and labourers.

Workers giving informal care to a relative can be supported **through courses to address the significant stress this situation causes**²⁰³. These online or paper-based courses offer relaxation exercises, help people to identify the areas in which they face specific problems in combining informal care with work and social and personal life, and offer, for example, tools for participants to learn how to say "no" or to ask for help and from whom. According to the **Working Environment Act (Arbowet)**²⁰⁴, the employer is obliged to implement a policy as part of the general working environment policy, which aims to prevent or limit psychosocial workload if this constitutes a risk within the organisation. The Act requires employers to map risks and do a risk inventory and assessment. In return, the employee is obliged to take care of his or her own safety and health and that of other persons concerned to the best of his or her ability. Via the **Arboportaal** website²⁰⁵, initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, or the Arboplatform of the Economic and Social Council (SER), employers and employees have access to information on good working conditions, health and safety at work, sustainable employability and campaigns for instance. In particular, the Arboportaal website addresses the specific needs of older workers in relation to menopause²⁰⁶, and workers with disabilities²⁰⁷ by providing information, exchange of experience and recommendations.

Finally, the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) also recommends adapting the **"Work where you want" law**²⁰⁸ and the **"Flexible work" law**²⁰⁹ to re-evaluate the legal frameworks and adapt them to flexible work, i.e. independent of place and time. Furthermore, the SER recommends reviewing legislation to adapt it to healthy and safe hybrid work, which also involves improving the digital infrastructure, skills and cyber security.

²⁰³ *Interventies zoeken*. (s. d.). Loketgezondleven.nl. <https://www.loketgezondleven.nl/interventies-zoeken#/InterventionDetails/2000035>

²⁰⁴ *Working Conditions Act Act of 18 March 1999, containing provisions to improve working conditions (Working Conditions Act)*. (2013). <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.arboineuropa.nl%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F9%2F2021%2F12%2FWorking-conditions-act-ENG.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

²⁰⁵ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid. (30 January 2019). *Praktijkverhalen*. Duurzame Inzetbaarheid | Arboportaal. <https://www.arboportaal.nl/campagnes/duurzame-inzetbaarheid/betrokkenheid/praktijkverhalen>

²⁰⁶ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid. (12 October 2022). *De overgang en werk*. Arboportaal. <https://www.arboportaal.nl/onderwerpen/overgang-en-werk>

²⁰⁷ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid. (2021, 18 février). *Werken met arbeidsbeperking*. Rijksoverheid.nl. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/werken-met-arbeidsbeperking>

²⁰⁸ *Wetsvoorstel 'Werken waar je wilt' door Tweede Kamer*. (n.d.). www.ser.nl.

<https://www.ser.nl/nl/actueel/Nieuws/aangenomen-wet-werken-waar-je-wilt>

²⁰⁹ *Voorstel van wet van de leden Van Weyenberg en Maatoug tot wijziging van de Wet flexibel werken in verband met het bevorderen van flexibel werken naar arbeidsplaats (Wet werken waar je wilt)*. (n.d.). Eerste Kamer Der Staten-Generaal.

Norway

Information provided by the Norwegian Pensioners' Association (Pensjonistforbundet) and desk research

Support in the labour market

Norway has a much higher employment rate than the European average, which is also reflected in the 50–64 age group, where the employment rate is 77.1% compared to the EU average of 68.8%²¹⁰. There is also a large gap between the unemployment rate of 50–64 years old in Norway, which is 1.9%, and the EU average of 5.4%.

In Norway, **the law prohibits the dismissal of anyone under the age of 72 because of their age**²¹¹. Employees of the State and private companies affiliated to the Norwegian Civil Service Pension Fund are covered by the Law on Age Limits. **This law sets a general age limit of 70**²¹². This age limit basically implies an obligation for the employee to resign when he or she reaches it. An extension of up to five years may be granted if the employee meets the requirements of the position. **The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)**²¹³ **also provides work-oriented measures to support people up to the age of 67**. These measures are tailored to the individual's qualifications and vocational training needs.

After the legal retirement age, workers are encouraged to continue working. For example, older workers can continue to work while receiving a pension without it being reduced. In addition, the longer the worker remains in employment, the higher the pension can be. The NAV also offers **benefits to encourage workers to remain in employment**. For example, up to the age of 67, these older workers can be registered as jobseekers and receive unemployment benefits²¹⁴ if they lose their job, even if they are already receiving a pension. Sickness benefit is also guaranteed between the ages of 62 and 70, even if the worker has taken out a pension and compensation is possible.

Each of these measures, even the ones protecting against redundancy or supporting old age in the workplace, sets age limits and raises questions about discrimination against people older than the limits set.

Finally, in order to support people in their transition from work to retirement, many pension providers (public and private) offer **introduction courses on the pension system**. The NAV also provides a lot of information on its website²¹⁵ and answers questions about its public pension. When in retirement, a large proportion of older

²¹⁰ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

²¹¹ *Lov om arbeidsmiljø, arbeidstid og stillingsvern mv. (Arbeidsmiljøloven) – kapittel 15. Opphør av arbeidsforhold*. (2005, 17 June). Lovdata. https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-06-17-62/KAPITTEL_17#%C2%A715-13a

²¹² *Lov om aldersgrenser for statsansatte m.fl.* - (1956, 21 December). Lovdata. <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1956-12-21-1/%C2%A72#%C2%A72>

²¹³ *Forside privatperson* - nav.no. (s. d.). nav.no. <https://www.nav.no/>

²¹⁴ - *Dagens regelverk er urettferdig og ulogisk | Pensjonistforbundet*. (s. d.). Pensjonistforbundet. <https://www.pensjonistforbundet.no/nyheter/dagens-regelverk-er-urettferdig-og-ulogisk>

²¹⁵ *Pensions and pension applications from outside Norway* - nav.no. (s. d.). nav.no. <https://www.nav.no/en/home/benefits-and-services/pensions-and-pension-application-from-outside-norway>

people in Norway participate in voluntary activities, which creates great value for society while keeping older people active.

Age discrimination in employment

In Norway, the **Working Environment Act** has a chapter²¹⁶ on age discrimination. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of age and provides for exceptions from the prohibition against discrimination as suggested by article 6 of the European directive²¹⁷. It applies both to permanent and temporary work, and to all aspects of employment, including publications, trainings, working conditions and termination of employment. Since 2018, age discrimination is also prohibited by an **Equality and Discrimination Act**²¹⁸ which apply for all sectors of society.

CHC Helikopter service - RT. 2012 S. 219 ²¹⁹

The case concerned the company Helikopter Service agreeing with the Pilots' Union and the Employer's Federation on pension and retirement age set at 60. However, the age limit for helicopter pilots in Norway is 65.

Ten pilots were denied the right to work based on this agreement and claimed that the age limit of 60 was illegal and a discrimination based on age.

The Norwegian justice system is hierarchical and has three main levels: the District Court (tingrettene), the Court of Appeal (lagmannsrettene) and Supreme Court (Høyesterett)

Both the District Court and the Court of Appeal found the 60 age limit to be fully factual and legal. However, the pilots won the case in the Supreme Court who recognised a discrimination on the basis of age in violation of the EU directive 78/2000 and the Prigge-case²²⁰, where the Court found that health and safety considerations did not justify a retirement age agreed in a collective agreement that was lower than the age limit provided for in international aviation law. However, the pilots concerned were not entitled to compensatory damages.

Workplaces for all ages

The **Working Environment Act**²²¹ ensure safe working conditions for all employees. It provides that every company should have a **working environment committee** and **safety delegates**. Regarding older workers, the Act provides that "an employee who has reached the age of 62 or who for health, social or other weighty welfare reasons so needs, shall have the right to reduction of his or her normal working hours if the

²¹⁶ Act relating to the working environment, working hours and employment protection, etc. (Working Environment Act). (2005, 17 June). Lovdata. https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2005-06-17-62#KAPITTEL_14

²¹⁷ EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA. (s. d.). <https://osha.europa.eu/en/safety-and-health-legislation/eu-strategic-framework-health-and-safety-work-2021-2027>

²¹⁸ Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act). (2017, 16 June). Lovdata. <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2017-06-16-51>

²¹⁹ Aldersdiskriminerte helikopterflygere har ikke krav på erstatning. (s. d.). <https://www.domstol.no/no/hoyesterett/VERKTOY/utvalgte-rettsomrader/eoseu/aldersdiskriminerte-helikopterflygere-har-ikke/>

²²⁰ [Case C-447/09 \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:61985CJ0447)

²²¹ Act relating to the working environment, working hours and employment protection, etc. (Working Environment Act). (2005, 17 June). Lovdata. https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2005-06-17-62#KAPITTEL_14

reduction of working hours can be arranged without major inconvenience to the undertaking”²²².

²²² Section 10-2.- *Working hour arrangements*

Poland

Information provided by BONUM VITAE and desk research

Support in the labour market

In Poland, the employment rate of 20-64-year-olds of 76.7% is higher than the EU average of 74.6%. However, when we look at the employment rates of older people, we see a drastic decrease, reflecting insufficient support for older workers. The employment rate for Poles aged 50-64 is indeed 64.7% compared to 68.8% in Europe²²³.

Among the measures in place, **a provision²²⁴ of the Labour Code protects Poles close to the retirement age from unemployment**. It provides that "an employer must not serve a notice of termination on an employee who will reach the retirement age in not more than 4 years if his employment period would enable him to receive a retirement pension upon reaching this age".

Some **local initiatives support older job seekers**, such as the Employment Office in Gdańsk²²⁵. At this centre, counsellors examine the education, work experience and skills of older people who visit the centre to help them create applications, search for vacancies and prepare for interviews.

In 2020, **the Ministry of Family and Social Policy announced a resolution establishing a new long-term programme to support older people: Active +²²⁶**. This programme is active from 2021 to 2025 and provides for the co-financing of projects of NGOs and other entities acting for the benefit of older people. The funding of these projects focuses on four priority areas: social activity, social participation, digital inclusion and preparation for old age. Within the first area of activity, the programme will fund projects aimed at increasing the involvement of older people in the labour market.

In Poland, older people have the **possibility to work during their retirement**, but there are salary limits. In practice, this makes it difficult for pensioners to find additional attractive and well-paid work, for fear that their pension payments will be suspended if they exceed a certain amount of earnings. According to the Central Statistical Officer²²⁷, "roughly one in ten (12.5 per cent) pensioners is earning a pension. Women predominated among working pensioners at the end of last year and accounted for 57.5 per cent of employed seniors. More than 94 per cent were aged 60/65 and over. The average age of working pensioners was 66.9 years. For men, it was 68.3 years and for women, it was 65.8 years".

²²³ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4ddb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

²²⁴ *Ustawa z dnia 26 czerwca 1974 r. Kodeks pracy*, Article 39

²²⁵ *O projekcie*. (s. d.). Centrum Pracy Seniorek i Seniorów. <https://www.pracadlaseniorow.pl/o-projekcie/index>

²²⁶ „Aktywni+”. *Ministerstwo ogłasza nowy program dla seniorów - Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej - Portal Gov.pl*. (s. d.). Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej. <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/aktywni-ministerstwo-oglasza-nowy-program-dla-seniorow>

²²⁷ *Badowski, M.* (2023, 15 février). *Dobrze płatna praca dla seniorów. W tych zawodach emeryci i renciści zarobią najwięcej. Od grudnia nowe limity*. *Strefa Biznesu*. <https://strefabiznesu.pl/dobrze-platna-praca-dla-seniorow-w-tych-zawodach-emeryci-i-rencisci-zarobia-najwiecej-od-grudnia-nowe-limity-dorabiania/ar/c3-16953501>

The Medical University of Gdańsk has produced an interesting study²²⁸ which points out in its chapter "Occupational Activity" that every third person aged 60–64, every fourth person aged 65–69 and every sixth person aged 70–74 declare to be interested in a job and that the most important factors increasing this interest are higher pay, part-time work and the possibility of working from home. Thus, in their conclusions, the Medical University of Gdańsk reminds us **of the need to produce more disaggregated data on the subject**. They also point out the need to **implement instruments that encourage and enable older people to work beyond retirement age**, including delaying the transition to retirement or part-time work after receiving pension benefits.

Age discrimination in employment

The Polish legislation provides an **anti-discrimination clause** through article 32²²⁹ of the Constitution which states that "all persons shall be equal before the law. All persons shall have the right to equal treatment by public authorities » and that "no one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason whatsoever ».

More specifically, **the Polish Labour Code provides discrimination in employment**. The amendments from 2004 allowed to transpose the EU Employment directive and introduced age discrimination. It states that « Any discrimination in employment, direct or indirect, in particular in respect of gender, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political views, trade union membership, ethnic origin, creed, sexual orientation or in respect of the conditions of employment for a definite or an indefinite period of time or full or part-time, are prohibited. »²³⁰

The main Equality body in charge of the implementation of the principle of equal treatment is the Commissioner for Human Rights. In **the 2021 report on the activities of the Commissioner**²³¹, a key task mentioned is the fight against age discrimination. In particular, the Commissioner instructed the Minister for Family and Social Policy to take measures to combat the phenomenon of ageism. He also recalled that he "has been engaged in the debate and activities aimed at drawing up a new Convention on the rights of older people. In this regard, he has cooperated, inter alia, with the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA)". These activities, while not specifically aimed at addressing ageism in the workplace, have the objective of ending ageism in a holistic way within society and in all sectors of activity.

Workplaces for all ages

In 2016–2017, under the patronage of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), the Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research

²²⁸ *Badanie poszczególnych obszarów stanu zdrowia osób starszych, w tym jakości życia związanej ze zdrowiem (POLSENIOR 2)*. (s. d.). https://polsenior2.gumed.edu.pl/attachment/attachment/82370/Polsenior_2.pdf

²²⁹ *Poland's Constitution of 1997*

²³⁰ *Ustawa z dnia 26 czerwca 1974 r. Kodeks pracy*, Article 11–3

²³¹ *Report on the activities of the Commissioner for Human Rights 2021 and on the state of observance of human and civil rights and freedoms* (Office of the Commissioner for Human Right). (2022). <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/2022-09/Summary%20of%20the%20report%20on%20the%20activities%20of%20CHR%20in%202021%20-%20annexed.pdf>

Institute coordinated a **Healthy Workplaces for All Ages campaign** in Poland²³². The campaign highlighted the various challenges for the ageing workforce including the lack of prevention, age discrimination and specific need of older workers. To address this, the campaign emphasised the need to follow good occupational safety and health (OSH) management practices and address the needs “of the entire working population, from those new to the job market to those nearing retirement”.

The campaign was also the opportunity to shed light on a number of organisations that have adopted good practices for sustainable working lives. In terms of health and safety protection for employees aged 50+, **the programmes implemented by Cemex Polska S.A.**²³³ are promoted by the campaign. These programmes aim to support older employees to extend their professional activity thanks to “self-development, additional medical care package, access to sports clubs, health-promoting schemes and involvement of employees aged 50+ in an occupational risk monitoring ticket system and volunteer work.” Another programme promoted by the campaign was led by **the Prison Service Occupational Medicine Clinic in Szczecin run by the Regional Prison Service Inspectorate in Szczecin**²³⁴. The programme was focusing on employees of all ages, with the idea that well-being at work is a lifelong process to enable sustainable working lives. It included a workshop with specialised doctors and psychologists, prevention and promotion of mental health, workplace visits aiming to inform employees about their rights in terms of working conditions and health-oriented programs covering stress at work among other psychosocial risks.

Among the priority areas of **the Active+ Programme**²³⁵ announced in 2020, several aspects should have significant impacts on the well-being of older employees in the workplace. This is particularly the case for projects for **better digital inclusion**, which aim to increase the digital skills of older people and the implementation of technological solutions for social inclusion. It is also the case of projects related to the preparation for old age which aim **at strengthening sustainable intergenerational relations** and the dissemination of **a more positive image of older people**.

Finally, in the 2023-2025 National Programme for the Improvement of safety and working conditions²³⁶, the objectives defined include **the use of digital technologies** such as Virtual Reality or Artificial Intelligence to monitor working conditions as well as to study the risks associated with new forms of work and their prevention. Another positive objective provides **a specific approach to older people** among other groups through the development of “organizational and technical solutions to prevent the exclusion from the labour market of people with disabilities, the elderly,

²³² *Problem of Workforce Ageing*. (s. d.).

https://www.ciop.pl/CiOPPPortalWAR/appmanager/ciop/en?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=P47800196321541598847316&html_tresc_root_id=300009843&html_tresc_id=300009851&html_klucz=300009843&html_klucz_spis=

²³³ 1. *Health and safety protection of employees aged 50+*. (s. d.).

https://www.ciop.pl/CiOPPPortalWAR/appmanager/ciop/en?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=P47800196321541598847316&html_tresc_root_id=300009843&html_tresc_id=300009850&html_klucz=300009843&html_klucz_spis=

²³⁴ 2. *Health promotion scheme : “Fit and in service”*. (s. d.).

https://www.ciop.pl/CiOPPPortalWAR/appmanager/ciop/en?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=P47800196321541598847316&html_tresc_root_id=300009843&html_tresc_id=300009853&html_klucz=300009843&html_klucz_spis=

²³⁵ „Aktywni+”. *Ministerstwo ogłasza nowy program dla seniorów - Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej - Portal Gov.pl*. (s. d.-b). Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej. <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/aktywni-ministerstwo-oglasza-nowy-program-dla-seniorow>

²³⁶ *Objectives*. (s. d.).

https://www.ciop.pl/CiOPPPortalWAR/appmanager/ciop/en?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=P63600143061675073020165&html_tresc_root_id=300014210&html_tresc_id=300014203&html_klucz=12345&html_klucz_spis=

women and young workers, as well as solutions to help prevent psychophysical stress and maintain workability.”

Portugal

Information provided by APRe! - the Associação de Aposentados Pensionistas e Reformados and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of 55–64-year-olds in Portugal is 65.9% and is, therefore, higher than the European average (62.3%)²³⁷. Similarly, the unemployment rate of 55–64-year-olds remains slightly lower than the EU average (5.2% compared to 5.5%). However, **the percentage of unemployed 55–64-year-olds has been rising steadily since 1970** reaching 17.3% in 2021, while it is down for the other groups this year²³⁸.

In Portugal, although the population is ageing, **early retirement remains customary**. Workers should have access to training or have the possibility to move to another position. Unfortunately, early retirement seems to be often favoured by employers who do not want to revert their older employees close to retirement age.

Testimony of Maria – early retirement instead of reasonable accommodation?

Maria is 65 years old and is a teacher in a public school. She enjoys her job and would like to keep on teaching until she reaches retirement age. But she has a disabling illness (fibromyalgia) that is getting worse and worse, forcing her to take frequent sick leave. A full teaching schedule is too physically demanding for her. Despite all the difficulties of the pandemic, teaching online was an advantage for Maria, who could better manage her time and the physical exhaustion caused by her illness, being able to work all the time without taking sick leave. Maria suggested to her school management to only have half-time classes, so she could do other tasks that were less physically demanding. The school says that this is not possible. If she cannot work full-time, the best option is to retire. Under these circumstances, Maria is considering retiring as soon as she has enough time to claim her pension free from penalty.

In 2017, a National Strategy on Active and Healthy Ageing for 2017–2025 has been presented to the parliament. It has been sent to UNECE in June 2022 in the framework of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its regional implementation strategy²³⁹. However, it seems that the Strategy itself has never been approved by the Portuguese parliament and is far from being implemented according to AGE members.

²³⁷ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

²³⁸ *População desempregada segundo os Censos: total e por grupo etário*. (n.d.). Pordata. <https://www.pordata.pt/portugal/populacao+desempregada+segundo+os+censos+total+e+por+grupo+etario-3721>

²³⁹ Portugal Report, 4th Cycle of Review and Appraisal of The Implementation of The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy. (2022). <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/mipaa20-report-portugal.pdf>

There are also general policy measures promoted by the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, in particular, to **support entrepreneurship**²⁴⁰. These measures, although not specifically aimed at supporting older people in retraining, can possibly contribute to this objective.

In terms of gender equality, there is a public entity called **the Commission for Equality in Work and Employment**²⁴¹, whose mission is to protect labour rights, taking into account situations of gender inequality. This entity receives complaints and responds to cases of gender discrimination. Its activities are transversal to all ages and do not focus specifically on age issues. Despite the existence of this commission and other initiatives, there is still **evidence of structural inequality between women and men**, also with regard to professional opportunities and salaries, which is even more exacerbated for older women.

To support older job seekers, there is a range of recent initiatives by **the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training**²⁴² supported by the European Social Fund or the RRP, Recovery and Resilience Plan, and funded by the EU to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, including several employment subsidies. These initiatives²⁴³ consist of **a set of measures providing financial support** to employers who sign open-ended or fixed-term employment contracts of 12 months or more with unemployed people, with an **obligation to provide vocational training to the contracted workers**. These measures are intended to support in particular the youngest, aged 29 or less, but also the oldest, aged over 45.

As the legal retirement age approaches, which is 66 years and 4 months from 2023, the ePortugal website²⁴⁴ **informs future or current retirees of their rights, the type of pensions available and the different opportunities to remain active**. It is also possible to continue working beyond the legal retirement age. In the civil service, people can extend their working life until the age of 70. Working retirees are covered by the same general laws that apply to all workers, especially in the case of self-employed professionals (such as doctors or lawyers) who are self-employed after retirement.

Age discrimination in employment

The European directive 2000/78/EC²⁴⁵ has been transposed into the Labour Code, which provides for a **general principle of non-discrimination**, including on the basis of age, for employees and job seekers. However, age discrimination is a poorly recognised phenomenon in Portuguese society, although it is very present in everyday life. Despite the many examples of age discrimination in the workplace, it is still not perceived as a structural phenomenon and people are not aware of the mechanisms to defend themselves.

²⁴⁰ *Iefponline - Apoio Técnico à Criação e Consolidação de Projetos*. (s. d.).

<https://iefponline.iefp.pt/IEFP/medApoioTecnicoCriacaoConsolidProj2.do?action=overview>

²⁴¹ *Commission for Equality in Work and Employment*. (s. d.). <https://cite.gov.pt/web/pt>

²⁴² *Accessing Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) Services - ePortugal.gov.pt*. (s. d.).

<https://eportugal.gov.pt/en/aceso-aos-servicos-publicos-em-portugal/atendimento-nos-servicos-do-instituto-do-emprego-e-formacao-profissional-iefp->

https://www.iefp.pt/apoios-a-contratacao?tab=medida-incentivo-ativar-pt_destinatarios

²⁴⁴ *Entrar na reforma*. (s. d.). <https://eportugal.gov.pt/guias/entrar-na-reforma>

²⁴⁵ *EUR-Lex - 32000L0078 - EN - EUR-Lex*. (s. d.-b). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>

There is a **Portuguese Diversity Charter**²⁴⁶. It provides for "the recognition, respect and appreciation of the difference(s) between people, including differences related to (...) age (...) The valorisation of the characteristics, skills and talents of each person promotes equal treatment and opportunities, fighting against stereotypes and discrimination and encouraging a culture of inclusion based on respect for the human being." Since 2018, **the Portuguese Association for Diversity and Inclusion**²⁴⁷ has been acting in favour of the charter but, although age is taken into account, the activities of this association seem to be more focused on cultural diversity.

Sustainable examples of intergenerational collaborations are limited as it seems that young workers in Portugal face a serious problem of job insecurity in various sectors where most workers are older. This has especially created bad feelings among the workers. On the one hand, older workers, who are heavily overworked, want to quit due to burnout, and on the other hand, younger workers, who have poor working conditions and find it difficult to make a career.

Workplaces for all ages

Psychosocial risks at work have only recently been discussed in Portugal. The government provides companies, employers and employees with **information leaflets**²⁴⁸ that address the factors leading to psychosocial risks, the symptoms and consequences on the individual but also on the organisation, and the assessment of the risks, stressing the need to cover all workers. The Portuguese Red Cross has also produced a similar **informative leaflet which aims to "provide national guidelines for the different agencies of the Portuguese Red Cross regarding awareness and promotion of healthy workplaces, for all ages and all areas of work"**²⁴⁹. Stress at work is addressed by other associations and in particular by APSEI²⁵⁰, the association representing companies and professionals in the fields of fire safety, electronic safety, safety at work and safety in the transport of dangerous goods.

For the specific case of people with a disability, there is assistance in adapting jobs and other specific protective measures. They are systematised in a manual of the National Rehabilitation Institute²⁵¹.

The 2021 Green Paper on the future of work in Portugal recommends adapting employees' working hours to enable them to reconcile work and family life and recalls the right to have holidays. In particular, it stresses the need to create more flexible working time arrangements, to promote new organisational methods that encourage work-life balance, and the right to extended leave or teleworking in certain situations, as is the case, for example, for informal carers. As of 1 January

²⁴⁶ *Carta Portuguesa para diversidade*. (s. d.).

https://www.iefp.pt/documents/10181/4618300/Carta+Diversidade_Assinada.pdf/e0296e66-eed9-45c4-a4f1-aae4038197bd

²⁴⁷ *A Carta da Diversidade na Europa | APPDI - Associação Portuguesa para a Diversidade e Inclusão*. (30 September 2020). APPDI. <https://www.appdi.pt/a-carta-da-diversidade-na-europa/>

²⁴⁸ *Portal ACT*. (s. d.). <https://portal.act.gov.pt/Pages/Home.aspx>

²⁴⁹ *ORIENTAÇÕES NACIONAIS Para Processo de Avaliação de Riscos Psicossociais* (Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa – Sede Nacional). (2018).

https://www.cruzvermelha.pt/images/pdf/Orienta%C3%A7%C3%B5es_Avalia%C3%A7aoRPS.pdf

²⁵⁰ *Stresse No Trabalho - APSEI - Associação Portuguesa de Segurança*. (n.d.). Scribd.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/611769169/Stresse-No-Trabalho-APSEI-Associação-Portuguesa-de-Segurança>

²⁵¹ *Guia Prático - Os direitos das pessoas com deficiência em Portugal*. (s. d.).

<https://www.grafe.pt/clientes/INR/GuiaPratico/40/#zoom=z>

2022, the Portuguese legislation for the right of employees to disconnect²⁵² comes into force. This law imposed special duties for employers, favouring and supporting employees. For instance, it provides that the employer to 'Inform the worker, when necessary, about the characteristics and manner of use of all devices, programmes and systems adopted to remotely monitor his or her activity'. In that sense, **the law requires employers to train their employees in the use of digital equipment necessary for remote work.**

Secondly, **the law refrains the employer from contacting employees outside regular working hours.** This law is one of the most avant-garde on the subject because, contrary to the legislation of other Member States, the law provides here that the employer must be responsible for ensuring that the worker's time off is respected. This provision is of great benefit to older workers who are also informal carers, for relatives, and for whom it is particularly necessary to **guarantee a work-life balance and to articulate correctly the hybridisation between home and office work.**

Finally, the law provides that the employer must "make every effort to **reduce the isolation of the worker,** promoting, with the regularity established in the telework agreement, or, in case of omission, with intervals not exceeding two months, face-to-face contact between the worker and the superiors and other workers".

²⁵² Lei n.º 83/2021, de 6 de dezembro. (s. d.). *Assembleia da República*. <https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/lei/83-2021-175397114>

Romania

Information provided by the National Federation Omenia/Federatia Nationala Omenia and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of 55–64-year-olds is the lowest of all Member States: 46.7%²⁵³.

There do not seem to be many initiatives in terms of career monitoring and management. Career reviews seem to be more commonly accepted when a retiree wishes to work beyond the legal retirement age or when changes and reorganisations are planned within the company.

The health crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an exacerbated vulnerability of the labour market. According to a survey conducted by IPSOS²⁵⁴, it seems that **60% of Romanians have suffered, from a professional point of view, from the pandemic**. In particular, people aged 45–54 have been the most affected by job loss.

In Romania, **law no. 76 of 16 January 2002**²⁵⁵ lays down provisions to protect people against the risk of unemployment, to ensure a high level of employment and to adapt the workforce to the requirements of the labour market. In particular, this law provides that in order to prevent unemployment and strengthen jobs by increasing and diversifying employees' professional skills, **employers who organise vocational training programmes for their employees are partly financed from the unemployment insurance budget**.

This law also provides **job-search assistance that is focused on the individual**. The National Employment Agency is required to provide information and advice, define the job seeker's profile and level of occupation, and offer activities to develop skills and self-confidence so that job seekers can decide on their own careers.

Support for job seekers, especially older job seekers, is expanding and improving. According to the Proposal for a Joint Employment Report 2022²⁵⁶, Romania launched a project in December 2020, funded by the European Social Fund, to modernise the structures of public employment services by **developing case management services for job seekers, including people in vulnerable situations such as older job seekers**.

According to the Joint Employment Report 2022, Romania also plans to launch a **new platform to improve public employment services for employers**, including the training of 900 people and actions to foster cooperation with territorial employment agencies, thus facilitating the accessibility of services needed for job search by older job seekers.

²⁵³ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

²⁵⁴ *Viitorul joburilor în România - de la făină și drojdie la pâinea zilei de mâine*. (2020, June 17). IPSOS. <https://www.ipsos.com/ro-ro/viitorul-joburilor-romania-de-la-faina-si-drojdie-la-painea-zilei-de-maine>

²⁵⁵ *LEGE 76 16/01/2002 - Portal Legislativ*. (s. d.). <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/33919/>

²⁵⁶ *2022 European Semester : Proposal for a Joint Employment Report*. (s. d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-proposal-joint-employment-report_en

To protect older workers at risk of unemployment, **Romanian legislation provides for the possibility of early retirement.** However, the conditions for access to this early retirement are quite strict. The older worker concerned must be within 5 years of retirement and have completed a contribution period of at least 8 years in excess of the full contribution period as stipulated by law.

The inclusion of pensioners in the labour market is made possible by Law no. 263/2010²⁵⁷ on the unitary public pension system, which establishes that people who retire at the statutory age may receive, in addition to the pension, income from wages or self-employment, such as money from copyright activities or rents.

In Romania, **pensioners' mutual societies** are among the oldest entities in the social economy in Romania. Organised around the values of self-help, they encourage the work of older people in management and implementation structures, their participation in training programmes, socialisation, sports and cultural activities. Thus, the 130 self-help organisations that are members of **the AGE member Omenia National Federation²⁵⁸** offer quality jobs (part-time or full-time) to more than 1,000 older people nationwide (over 65 years of age), but also to younger people who ensure the implementation of social and financial inclusion activities for older members.

Lastly, Romania has **one of the lowest gaps in Europe between men's and women's earnings²⁵⁹.** There is indeed **complex national legislation that promotes equal opportunities between women and men,** thus aiming to reduce the accumulation of discrimination against older women in the labour market. Among these measures, **Law no. 202/2002²⁶⁰ on equal opportunities and equal treatment between women and men,** with its subsequent amendments and additions, regulates the measures to promote equal opportunities and equal treatment between women and men, in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on sex, in all spheres of public life in Romania.

Age discrimination in employment

The Governmental Ordinance No. 137/2000²⁶¹ is the transposition at national level of the European directive 2000/78/EC. It ensures **the prevention of all forms of discrimination and has the authority to investigate, acknowledge and apply sanctions.** The Governmental Ordinance defines discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social status, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, **age**, disability, chronic non-contagious disease, HIV infection membership of a disadvantaged group and any other criteria which have the purpose or effect of restricting or eliminating the recognition, use or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms or of the

²⁵⁷ LEGE 263 16/12/2010 - Portal Legislativ. (s. d.). <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/124530>

²⁵⁸ Federatia Nationala Omenia - Federatia Caselor de Ajutor Reciproc ale Pensionarilor din Romania. (2023, 4 décembre). <https://www.fn-omenia.ro/>

²⁵⁹ Gender pay gap statistics. (2021). Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics

²⁶⁰ Romania : Law 202/2002 for Equality of Opportunities between Women and Men (Legea nr. 202/2002 privind egalitatea de sanse intre femei si barbati). (15 June 2015). Equal Rights Trust. <https://www.equalrightstrust.org/content/romania-law-2022002-equality-opportunities-between-women-and-men-legea-nr-2022002-privind>

²⁶¹ OG 137 31/08/2000 - Portal Legislativ. (s. d.). <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/24129>

rights recognised by law in the political, economic, social or cultural fields or in any other field of public life.”

The Romanian national authority for the protection of human rights and the fight against discrimination is the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD)²⁶². It guarantees the respect and application of the principle of non-discrimination, in accordance with national and international legislation.

Communication about ageism is almost non-existent. Although there is strong legislation protecting workers. There are some private campaigns/projects aiming to support older workers and older jobseekers. This is the case of Angajez 45+²⁶³ (I hire 45+) - **a platform for employers and employees over 45 years old** that started in 2018 to raise awareness and mobilise to **end age discrimination in the Romanian labour market and more specifically in the recruitment process**. The Platform wants to serve as a link between all actors in the labour market with the aim of facilitating communication between the different actors.

Workplaces for all ages

In December 2022, Romania adopted a **new strategy for active ageing and long-term care 2023-2030**²⁶⁴. It focuses in particular on improving access to quality medical services, especially for people living in rural areas. The strategy refers to the reform of long-term care for older people and the promotion of active ageing, which includes, among other things, investment in the establishment of a number of decentralised day-care centres at national level for dependent older people, with mobile home-care teams, which should better support informal carers.

In the last few years, Romania has participated in OSH campaigns organised by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work²⁶⁵, notably, the EY Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load campaign from 2020 to 2022²⁶⁶, **highlighting the significance of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)** for employers and employees in nearly all sectors of activity.

Among the activities and projects developed in Romania, the ROMTENS Foundation has supported **OSH caravans promoting OSH in rural areas**²⁶⁷. Information and education sessions, workshops and training addressed the main risk factors identified in enterprises and farms.

Finally, according to the Joint Employment Report 2022²⁶⁸, the Romanian legal framework on the rights of persons with disabilities, and protection from discrimination has been adapted to guarantee equality of chances²⁶⁹, **accessibility**

²⁶² Sergiu. (2023, 12 mai). Home - CNCD. CNCD. <https://www.cncd.ro/>

²⁶³ Angajez 45+. (s. d.). Great HRs Community. <https://www.angajez45plus.com/despre-proiect>

²⁶⁴ STRATEGIE NAȚIONALĂ din 14 decembrie 2022 privind îngrijirea de lungă durată și îmbătrânirea activă pentru perioada 2023-2030. (2022). legislatie.just.ro. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/263601>

²⁶⁵ Events | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025. (s. d.). <https://healthy-workplaces.eu/en/media-centre/events/romania-national-network-meeting-roadmap-2021>

²⁶⁶ Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025. (s. d.). <https://healthy-workplaces.eu/en>

²⁶⁷ OSH caravans to promote Occupational Safety and Health in rural Romania | Healthy Workplaces - Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025. (s. d.). <https://healthy-workplaces.eu/en/tools-and-publications/campaign-toolkit/tools-and-examples/osh-caravans-promote-occupational-safety>

²⁶⁸ 2022 European Semester : Proposal for a Joint Employment Report. (s. d.). European Commission.

https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-proposal-joint-employment-report_en

²⁶⁹ Lege 448 06/12/2006 - Portal Legislativ. (n.d.). <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/77815>

of the workplace and the adaptation of duties in accordance with the functional potential.

Slovakia

Information provided by Fórum pre pomoc starším (Forum for Help to Age, National Network) and desk research

Support in the labour market

The employment rate of 55–64-year-olds in Slovakia is 64.1%²⁷⁰, within the European average. However, Slovakia has **the highest long-term unemployment rate** (12 months or more) for 55–64-year-olds in Europe (76.2%)²⁷¹.

The Labour Code²⁷² does not explicitly state how to protect older workers from long-term unemployment, yet it is common for older workers to be dismissed before retirement. However, the Labour Code provides **protection for any worker in the event of a change in work organisation** and requires retraining and changing working positions or types of work if necessary.

Also, the Labour Code provides for **participation in further training for any employee who wishes to acquire skills necessary for the proper performance of his or her work** and for the employer to grant leave and salary compensation if the employee increases his or her qualifications according to the demands of the job. This provision encourages the employer to **invest in the workforce** and not to replace employees who no longer have the necessary skills, which can happen, for example, with older workers who do not have the adequate skills that younger workers would have acquired after their education, but rather **to allow them to evolve by staying with the company**.

According to AGE members, the guidelines for retirement are inadequate while the law is complex and unreadable for many. The law states that the protection of these workers is assured, but this is not respected.

Slovakia has adopted a **National Programme for Active Ageing (NPAA) for the period 2021-2030**²⁷³. It addresses active ageing in four key areas, including the contribution of older people to the development of sustainable societies through their active position in the labour market in paid employment. Focusing on the need to "support human resources throughout the life-course", the NPAA calls for better legislation in favour of lifelong learning and "the education of older people to improve their employability or their retention in the labour market, accepting the key trends of the fourth age". To achieve this, key educational programmes focusing on digital literacy, personal development and mental health in the context of the labour market and employment requirements will be developed.

²⁷⁰ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

²⁷¹ *Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a percentage of the total unemployment, by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/c9cd7297-2f79-4d30-8905-111bb4a72301?lang=en&page=time:2022>

²⁷² Sr, M. (s. d.). *Labour code - WebJET 8*. <https://www.employment.gov.sk/en/labour-employment/labour-code/>

²⁷³ Sr, M. (s.d.). *Národný program Aktívneho starnutia - MPSVR SR*. <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/ministerstvo/rada-vlady-sr-prava-seniorov/narodny-program-aktivneho-starnutia.html>

Age discrimination in employment

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic²⁷⁴ stipulates the principle of equality before the law and non-discrimination in general on all grounds, including age.

The Labour Code provides that the employer must not violate the principle of equal treatment with regard to access to employment during the recruitment process. This protection is supplemented by the Law on Equal Treatment²⁷⁵ in certain areas and on protection against Discrimination, which also provides for the protection of age discrimination.

Workplaces for all ages

Some protections for the health and safety of older workers are provided by the Labour Code. The latter stipulates, among other things, that **"an employee whose job falls within the category of health care in accordance with the Law and who is over 50 years of age may not be ordered to work overtime"**. Similarly, it provides for **employee security and preventive and therapeutic care** in the event of temporary incapacity to work due to illness or disability, among other reasons set out in the Code. Finally, the Code provides that the employer shall provide **the necessary working arrangements for employees with disabilities** so that "they can, as far as possible, achieve the same work results as other employees and make their work as easy as possible".

The previous National Programme for Active Ageing for 2014-2020²⁷⁶ also planned to **improve the safety and health protection of employees over 50 at work**. The programme aimed to introduce targeted **labour inspections and risk assessment for older workers**. The focus was to be on "the creation of appropriate working conditions taking into account the ageing workforce, the adaptation of workstations and workplaces from an ergonomic point of view, working conditions taking into account the state of health, psychosocial load, stress factors and triggers for health problems, etc.". These inspections were to result in **a work plan to be implemented from 2014 and adapted every two years**. These preventive measures can be helpful in terms of catering to changing needs, however attention must be paid not to stigmatize older workers.

Among the risks to future development, the new NPAA for 2021-2030 identified **the pressure on older people to stay longer in paid employment without adequate working conditions and the low level of digital literacy among older people**, which is a prerequisite for their access to quality jobs, information, goods and services, as well as social contacts.

²⁷⁴ Constitution of the Slovak republic. (s. d.). <https://www.ustavnysud.sk/en/ustava-slovenskej-republiky>

²⁷⁵ ACT No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination, and on amending and supplementing certain other laws as amended (Antidiscrimination Act). (2004). https://www.gender.gov.sk/en/files/2012/07/antidiscrimination_act.pdf

²⁷⁶ Sr, M. (s.d.). Národný program Aktívneho starnutia - MPSVR SR. <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/ministerstvo/rada-vlady-sr-prava-seniorov/narodny-program-aktivneho-starnutia.html>

According to the Proposal for a Joint Employment Report 2022²⁷⁷, Slovakia has planned to use the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility to **provide digital skills training and basic equipment for 172,800 older people and disadvantaged people.**

²⁷⁷ *Publications Catalogue - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission.* (s. d.).
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8431&furtherPubs=yes>

Slovenia

Information provided by Zveza Društev upokojencev Slovenije (ZDUS) and desk research

Support in the labour market

With an employment rate (from 20 to 64 years) of 77.9%, Slovenia is above the EU average of 74.6%²⁷⁸. However, the specific employment rate for people between 55 and 64 years old (55.2%) is well below the EU average (62.3%), reflecting an inadequate approach to the retention and/or integration of older people in the labour market. However, some measures and good practices have been put in place to reverse this ratio.

The **Labour Market Regulations Act** offers lifelong career guidance²⁷⁹ and includes services explaining the current labour market situation, but also deals with independent career management, basic career guidance, in-depth career guidance and learning career management skills. Career guidance, with all the elements of career planning and management, is provided mainly to the unemployed and young people, and is provided by the **Employment Service for Employment**, the Republican Institute²⁸⁰ with municipal and regional units throughout Slovenia.

To protect older workers from unemployment, the **Employment Relationships Act** provides in Article 114²⁸¹ that the employer may not terminate the employment contract of an employee who has reached the age of 58. The law also provides for some exceptions to this general provision.

AGE's Slovenian member, ZDUS, offers different types of training in its programme, which includes education, maintenance and updating of skills and abilities, and training in the use of digital resources, tools and programmes²⁸². There are also programmes to support older jobseekers issued by the **Employment Agency**²⁸³, which implements active employment policy measures in Slovenia. These include encouraging employers to take on older workers by offering financial support to employers that employ long-term unemployed people²⁸⁴ and providing training to older workers, including practical ones to enable them to take up future jobs.

Support to prepare for retirement is offered in certain sectors. This is the case in the Ministry of Defence with regular courses and occasional seminars for soldiers and police officers. The Association of Retired Pedagogues also offers annual courses. This year, AGE member ZDUS is campaigning with all ministries to make retirement preparation a legal obligation for all employers.

²⁷⁸ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

²⁷⁹ Article 18, *Labour Market Regulations Act of 28 September 2010 (Text No. 4304)*. (2010).

<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/89477/102807/F-392019526/Labour%20Market%20Regulation.pdf>

²⁸⁰ International Republican Institute. (29 January 2022). *Europe | International Republican Institute*. <https://www.iri.org/iri-around-the-world/europe/>

²⁸¹ *Zakon o delovnih razmerjih (ZDR-1)*. (2013). <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO5944>

²⁸² *Slovenije, Z. - Z. D. U.* (s. d.). ZDUS. Zdus - Zveza društev upokojencev Slovenije. <http://www.zdus-zveza.si/>

²⁸³ *Jobseekers*. (s. d.). ZRSZ. <https://www.ess.gov.si/en/jobseekers>

²⁸⁴ *Priložnost zame*. (s. d.). Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje. <https://www.ess.gov.si/iskalci-zaposlitve/programi-za-zaposlovanje/predstavitev-programov/priloznost-zame/>

The possibility of working for pensioners is defined by the Labour Market Regulations Act, the Labour Relationships Act and the Pension and Disability Insurance Act, and to a lesser extent by the Occupational Safety and Health Act. **Working after the statutory retirement age is possible, but there are limitations on pension payments and the work must be temporary or occasional**, according to the Labour Market Regulations Act²⁸⁵.

The law states that a pensioner may work a maximum of 90 hours per month, or exceptionally 120 hours per month up to three times a year, with the sum of all temporary and casual work adding up to a maximum of 1080 hours per year. It is possible to work for several employers at the same time, but in total the pensioner must not exceed the prescribed limit on the number of hours and the amount of income. Based on this work, a pensioner is not required to have pension and disability insurance, the additional income does not affect the pension, but there may be an increase in income tax.

The **Slovenian Constitution** provides equal opportunities for men and women. This obligation is reiterated in the Employment Relationships Act, the Labour Market Act, and the Framework Act on Protection against Discrimination of 2016.

Nevertheless, **the wage gap in Slovenia is a reality**. Data from the Slovenian Association of Free Trade Unions show that the biggest difference between the incomes of men and women is in the financial and insurance sector (men are paid 24.5% more than women), health and social care (23.2%) and education (16%).²⁸⁶ The difference in wages then continues even in retirement, which results in the feminization of poverty in Slovenia, where the difference in pensions currently stands at 24% and every third woman over 70 lives in poverty.

The growth of the pay gap indicates the deterioration of the position of women in the labor market and the increase of gender inequality in society.

Age discrimination in employment

The European directive 2000/78/EC²⁸⁷ is translated into **the Employment Relationships Act**²⁸⁸. The Act prevents direct and indirect discrimination and stipulates that the employer and employee are obliged to comply with its provisions. It also contains provisions on the employer's liability for compensation in the event of discrimination.

The legal definition based on the directive has raised awareness of discrimination in general in Slovenian society. AGE's Slovenian members deplore **a lack of awareness among workers of their rights, the difficulty of identifying different forms of discrimination and a form of internalised ageism**. Despite the support of trade union representatives, the Slovenian members of AGE recommend an increase in

²⁸⁵ *Zakon o urejanju trga dela (ZUTD-C)*. (s. d.). 1.3 Začasno ali občasno delo - Articles 27 b), c) and č.

<https://zakonodaja.com/zakon/zutd>

²⁸⁶ *Za trajnostni razvoj, ki nikogar ne pusti ob strani : POROČILO NEVLADNIH ORGANIZACIJ O CILJIH TRAJNOSTNEGA RAZVOJA 2020*. (2020). Koalicija2030, SLOGA.

²⁸⁷ *EUR-Lex - 32000L0078 - EN - EUR-Lex*. (s. d.-b). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>

²⁸⁸ Article 6, *Zakon o delovnih razmerjih (ZDR-1)*. (2013). <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAK05944>

individual assessments of a worker's abilities and skills to emphasise the equal value of a job regardless of age.

In 2021, the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU organised a conference on the theme: **"Human rights for all ages: a challenge to be met"**²⁸⁹. It was pointed out that ageism is widespread in institutions, laws and policies around the world and has serious consequences for both older people and society.

In the framework of the **Comprehensive Support for Actively Ageing Workforce (ASI) project**²⁹⁰, a national campaign "Stari, imava problem. ASI za rešitev?"²⁹¹ ("Old dude, we have a problem. Should we solve it?") was developed to combat age-related prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. The campaign aims to change attitudes and beliefs towards older workers, eliminate negative stereotypes and recognise the benefits older people bring to the workplace.

There is also a **project SODELOVALNICA**²⁹² ("collaboratory"), co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union within the framework of the European Social Fund, which aims to reduce and eliminate intergenerational stereotypes and promote intergenerational cooperation in the workplace, with the aim of **raising awareness, educating, and providing appropriate support to employees and employers**. The project aims to overcome conflict situations that arise between employers, older and younger workers. It offers **educational workshops** on these issues and awards MEGA (Intergenerational active company) prizes to employers who are actively working towards intergenerational cooperation in the workplace.

Workplaces for all ages

In Slovenia, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has proposed the project '**Comprehensive Support for Actively Ageing Workforce**'²⁹³ (ASI), which aims to extend the working life of older workers, strengthen their skills, overcome stereotypes about older workers, equip employers with the skills to manage an ageing workforce and delay retirement. Managed by the Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of Slovenia, the ASI project **provides workshops for employers and employees** to learn good practices and work on concrete cases.

As part of this project, a **special catalogue**²⁹⁴ intended for companies, employers and employees offers a list of measures to be taken in the areas of health promotion and

²⁸⁹ *Human rights for all ages : Promoting a life course perspective & intergenerational cooperation to combat ageism | AGE Platform.* (s. d.). <https://www.age-platform.eu/event/human-rights-all-ages-promoting-life-course-perspective-intergenerational-cooperation-combat>

²⁹⁰ *Comprehensive Support for Actively Ageing Workforce | Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia.* (s. d.). Comprehensive Support for Actively Ageing Workforce | Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia. <https://www.srips-rs.si/en/razvoj-kadrov/celovita-podpora-podjetjem-za-aktivno-staranje-delovne-sile-asi>

²⁹¹ *Kampanja - Stari, imava problem | Javni štipendijski, razvojni, invalidski in preživninski sklad RS.* (s. d.). Kampanja - Stari, imava problem | Javni štipendijski, razvojni, invalidski in preživninski sklad RS. <https://www.srips-rs.si/razvoj-kadrov/celovita-podpora-podjetjem-za-aktivno-staranje-delovne-sile-asi/ozavescanje>

²⁹² *About us.* (s. d.). Sodelovalnica. <https://sodelovalnica.si/en/about-us/>

²⁹³ *Comprehensive Support for Actively Ageing Workforce | Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia.* (s. d.-b). Comprehensive Support for Actively Ageing Workforce | Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia. <https://www.srips-rs.si/en/razvoj-kadrov/celovita-podpora-podjetjem-za-aktivno-staranje-delovne-sile-asi>

²⁹⁴ *KATALOG UKREPOV ZA UČINKOVITO UPRAVLJANJE STAREJŠIH ZAPOSLENIH (Celovita podpora podjetjem za aktivno staranje delovne sile).* (s. d.). https://www.srips-rs.si/storage/app/media/katalogi/Katalog_ukrepov_za_UUSZ_2020_oktober.pdf

protection, ergonomics, the adaptation of work and working hours and staff development. Among the measures dedicated to older workers, the catalogue suggests taking several shorter breaks; a "smooth" return to the workplace after an extended period of sick leave; shorter exercises are organised in the workplace, adapted to individual groups of employees and the nature of their work. The catalogue also suggests that the company organises **workshops on healthy ageing**, where older employees learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle and what they can do to be healthy.

The **Occupational Health and Safety Act**²⁹⁵ requires the employer to adopt measures to prevent, eliminate and manage cases of violence, mobbing, harassment, and other forms of psychosocial risks at the workplace that may pose a threat to the health of workers. The employer must designate one or more **safety officers** from among its workers to carry out tasks such as: coordinating measures for the prevention of psychosocial risks; establishing the professional basis for the safety declaration; carrying out periodic inspections of the harmfulness of the working environment; carrying out internal control of the implementation of measures for safe working practice; drawing up instructions for healthy and safe working practice.

In 2020-2021, the **National Institute of Public Health conducted a project entitled "PKMO - Promotion of activities for the prevention of musculoskeletal diseases and psychosocial risks at work"**²⁹⁶. The project activities were aimed at workers over 45 years of age, to raise awareness, prevent and control them thanks to an online tool and an e-manual.

The **Star Vital project**²⁹⁷ proposes several combined measures for the vitality of older workers, the main objective of the project being to create a healthy workplace, where employees and employers work together to improve health protection and promotion, to ensure sustainable employment, health, and well-being of employees. Also, the project **"Polet - Prolonging working life and reducing absenteeism"**²⁹⁸ proposes a comprehensive business model for employers for active and healthy ageing of employees. The project develops a strategic online platform for the management of older workers in companies, which will help employers to plan, implement and evaluate measures for the treatment of older employees and to reduce absenteeism.

Finally, the **e-VZD project**²⁹⁹ - **Training of employers to promote safety and health at work** - aims to raise the level of safety and health at work in companies, with a focus on employees over 45. Through a public call the project selected 20 organisations to receive funds to implement specific workplace adaptations for workers, including the oldest and most exposed in terms of the number of occupational accidents (manufacturing activities, transport, and storage for instance).

²⁹⁵ Slovenia - Health and Safety at Work Act of 24 May 2011 (Text No. 2039). (s. d.).

http://ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=89470&p_country=SVN&p_count=553&p_classification=14&p_classcount=59

²⁹⁶ PKMO - Promocija aktivnosti za preprečevanje kostno-mišičnih obolenj in psihosocialnih tveganj pri delu. (s. d.).

<https://pkmo.si/>

²⁹⁷ STAR-VITAL - pot do boljše vitalnosti vaših zaposlenih. (s. d.). STAR-VITAL - pot do boljše vitalnosti vaših zaposlenih.

<https://www.star-vital.si/>

²⁹⁸ Projekt POLET - Pozdrav aktivnim ! (s. d.). POLET. <https://projekt-polet.si/>

²⁹⁹ eVZD - Varnost in zdravje pri delu. (21 January 2021). Usposabljanje za varnost in zdravje pri delu - e-VZD. e-VZD.

<https://www.evzd.si/>

Milan, male, 76 years, on "What is ageism to you?"

"When you are old, you feel like you are no longer needed."

"When you are old you feel like you bother young people, you feel like you have done your job, you feel like you disturb progress of young people who live differently. It's like with old things, when you no longer need them, you put them away ... When a person retires, he/she has the right to maintain his/her socio-economic position as it was during the working period. We should have the right to be included in society and to decide about our own social status in society."

Tatjana, female, 55 years, Slovenia, on access to work for older people

"I am an active job seeker, just before my retirement, also facing health issues ... I have sent a lot of job applications, but employers simply do not reply to any of them. I have come to realize that the knowledge and experience of older people are not being considered and valued at all. Employers only seek a young labour force. Any work is honourable work. We, older people, would also like to be treated equally, so we can have a decent life."

Spain

Information provided by the Confederación Española De Organizaciones De Mayores (CEOMA), the Catalanian Federation of Elder Associations (FATEC) and the Fundación Pílares para la Autonomía Personal and desk research

Support in the labour market

In Spain, the population over 55 years of age is over 15.5 million, representing 32% of the total population. Almost one in three people in Spain is over this age. The active population over 55 years of age who work as employees is 2.8 million. Eight out of ten active seniors work as employees, while unemployment among the over-55s is constantly increasing³⁰⁰. The employment rate for 55–64-year-olds is 57.7%, which is lower than the European average (62.3%)³⁰¹. The unemployment rate for this age group, at 13.4%³⁰² is the highest in the European Union. It has been rising steadily for the last ten years even though it does not reflect the growing number of older people “forced” into self-employment.

After the age of 52, unemployed people can benefit from financial support via a state subsidy³⁰³, provided they comply with all other retirement requirements non-related to age. However, people over the age of 55 most often turn to self-employment or entrepreneurship following the loss of a job because the chances of finding work otherwise are low. For this purpose, they use the possibility of receiving all unemployment benefits at once to become self-employed and start a new activity.

During a career, senior talent management programmes are almost non-existent outside large companies. These large companies may also offer training courses for redundant people to support them in their search for a new job. However, these training courses are usually short and without concrete results. Finally, other large companies are implementing positive measures for the older workforce. This is the case of **El Corte Inglés, the country’s largest shop, which has excluded people over 50 from job cuts, as it considers them to be “those who have the most difficulty integrating into the labour market³⁰⁴.**

In 2019, the Spanish government approved **the reintegration plan REINCORPORAT³⁰⁵**. The general objective of the Plan is to improve the employability of the unemployed and to develop preventive actions to avoid a decrease in long-term unemployment. The target groups include the over-45s. This Plan implements 63 measures divided into 6 lines of action: 1) guidance, giving priority to the over-50s, 2) training, including a number of skill training for the over-40s, 3) employment

³⁰⁰ MAPFRE FOUNDATION. AGEING-NOMICS. *Mapa del Talento Senior 2021. Algunos datos del talento sénior en España.*

<https://documentacion.fundacionmapfre.org/documentacion/publico/es/media/group/442.do>

³⁰¹ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

³⁰² *Unemployment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2021).

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSA_URGAN___custom_5329938/default/table?lang=en&page=time:2021

³⁰³ De Empleo Estatal, S. P. (s. d.). *Tengo más de 52 años | Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal*. Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal. <https://www.sepe.es/HomeSepe/Personas/distributiva-prestaciones/he-dejado-de-cobrar-el-paro/tengo-mas-de-55-anos.html>

³⁰⁴ EL PAÍS. El Corte Inglés excluye del ERE a los mayores de 50 años. 8/03/21.

³⁰⁵ *Plan Reincorpora-t: 6 Ejes | 63 Medidas | IFAP*. (s. d.). IFAP. <https://ifap.es/plan-reincorpora-t-6-ejes-63-medidas/>

opportunities, 4) equal opportunities in access to employment, 5) entrepreneurship, with special attention to the over 45s, 6) improving the institutional framework, in order to facilitate the connection of the over 50s unemployed with companies.

In Spain, **retirement is possible from 66 years and four months old or 65 years old if people have contributed for at least 37 years and 9 months**³⁰⁶. The recent pension reform, with the aim of keeping workers in the labour market longer, has provided an incentive to prolong working life, by raising the pension increase coefficients. Active retirement is also possible by making 50% of the pension compatible with a job, provided that one is retired after the legal retirement age and has reached 100% of the regulatory base.³⁰⁷

Most initiatives concerning older people are focused on male older workers, which does not correspond to the most excluded from the labour market in Spain. There is a significant gap between the employment rate of men aged 55-64 (64.5%) and the employment rate of women of the same age (51.1%)³⁰⁸. It reflects **the intersectionality of gender and age discrimination** and can be explained by gender differences in caring for children and older people, resulting in having to leave their jobs to devote themselves to these activities, and the difficulty of finding a new job. There is also the lack of opportunity for women to access managerial and leadership positions, which is only reinforced among older women workers³⁰⁹.

Age discrimination in employment

In Spain, **Article 14 of the Spanish Constitution**³¹⁰ provides for the equality of Spanish people before the law. **Article 4 of the Workers' Statute**³¹¹ prohibits discrimination, including discrimination based on age, whether direct or indirect. More explicitly, **Article 17 prohibits such discrimination in labour relations** by providing that collective agreements, pacts or decisions of the employer that directly or indirectly discriminate based on age are invalid. Unless provided for by law, any positive or negative discrimination by the employer during employment is prohibited. In Catalonia, **the Law 19/2020 of 30 December on Equal Treatment and Non-discrimination** also makes it possible to make situations of ageism more specific and to penalise them³¹².

There are some notable campaigns aimed at combating ageism in a comprehensive way. This is the case of the **#OldLivesMatter** campaign run in Spain by the Sociedad

³⁰⁶ BBVA. (s. d.). *Seguir trabajando más allá de la edad de jubilación tiene incentivos*. BBVA Mi jubilación.

<https://www.jubilaciondefuturo.es/es/blog/seguir-trabajando-mas-alla-de-la-edad-de-jubilacion-tiene-incentivos.html>

³⁰⁷ Gobierno de España. *Real Decreto-ley 5/2013, de 15 de marzo, de medidas para favorecer la continuidad de la vida laboral de los trabajadores de mayor edad y promover el envejecimiento activo*. <https://www.seg-social.es/wps/portal/wss/internet/InformacionUtil/44539/45370>

³⁰⁸ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

³⁰⁹ *Liderazgo, género y mujeres mayores*. (María Silveria Agulló-Tomás, Vanessa Zorrilla-Muñoz, María Victoria Gómez García, Blanca Criado-Quesada). (2019). https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Vanessa-Zorrilla-Munoz-2/publication/338753356_Liderazgo_genero_y_mujeres_mayores/links/5e86639d92851c2f52779caa/Liderazgo-genero-y-mujeres-mayores.pdf

³¹⁰ Senado de España. (s. d.). *Spanish Constitution | Spanish Senate*.

<https://www.senado.es/web/conocersenado/normas/constitucion/detalleconstitucioncompleta/index.html?lang=en>

³¹¹ *Estatuto de los Trabajadores* (MINISTERIO DE LA PRESIDENCIA, RELACIONES CON LAS CORTES Y MEMORIA DEMOCRÁTICA). (2015). https://www.boe.es/biblioteca_juridica/abrir_pdf.php?id=PUB-DT-2023-139

³¹² *Ley 19/2020, de 30 de diciembre, de igualdad de trato y no discriminación*. (2020).

https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2021-1663

Española de Geriátría y Gerontología (SEGG) and 42 other organisations in 29 different countries³¹³. The 'I'm old, not stupid'³¹⁴ campaign, which calls for the financial exclusion of older people with the digitalisation of all services, has also drawn public attention to the issue of ageism. Finally, **the Engage-cm programme's awareness-raising campaign** against ageism through the platform "I'm older, I'm like you"³¹⁵ - #SoyMayorSoyComoTu - proposes the use of a tool so that anyone can calculate their level of ageism and identify problematic situations.

Some foundations are developing information documents, such as the Triangle Foundation, which offers a guide to good practices against ageism in companies³¹⁶. More concretely, other foundations are integrating and promoting the Silver Economy in their business development and sustainability model³¹⁷.

Workplaces for all ages

In Spain, **the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health**³¹⁸, the technical scientific body specialised in the prevention of occupational risks of the General State Administration, proposes a **Strategy 2023-2027**³¹⁹. This strategy is modelled on the European strategic framework for health and safety at work³²⁰. One of its objectives is to "strengthen the protection of the most exposed or vulnerable workers". The strategy also stresses the need to consider demographic changes which imply "designing specific measures to ensure the health and prolong working life" and "the creation of new forms of employment, with a greater prevalence of ergonomic and psychosocial risks".

In talent management programmes, age is seen as a key factor for flexibility and mobility in the company and takes account of workers' health. For example, the company **NATURGY is developing the "We care for experience"**³²¹ programme in this area. It focuses on health protection and knowledge transfer.

However, there is still a lack of awareness among people, especially in certain sectors such as agriculture, the self-employed, and micro-enterprises, who do not know or do not apply certain occupational health and safety measures at all ages.

³¹³ Ymás. (14 September 2020). # OldLivesMatter, la campaña global contra el edadismo. *65 y más - El diario de las personas mayores*. https://www.65ymas.com/sociedad/segg-42-organizaciones-29-paises-oldlivesmatter-contra-edadismo_19206_102.html

³¹⁴ País, E., & País, E. (23 January 2022). "Soy mayor, pero no idiota". *El País*. <https://elpais.com/opinion/2022-01-23/soy-mayor-pero-no-idiota.html>

³¹⁵ *Transferencia | ENCAGE-cm*. (s. d.). <https://encage-cm.csic.es/actividades-id/transferencia/>

³¹⁶ Admin. (8 November 2019). *5 buenas prácticas para evitar el Edadismo en la empresa - Blog de Fundación Triangle*. Blog de Fundación Triangle. <https://www.fundaciontriangle.org/blog/5-buenas-practicas-para-evitar-el-edadismo-en-la-empresa/>

³¹⁷ *Genior Xallenge 2023 - Fundación Empresa y Sociedad*. (s. d.). <https://www.empresaysociedad.org/genior/>

³¹⁸ *Instituto Nacional de Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo - INSST - Prevención de Riesgos Laborales - Portal INSST - INSST*. (s. d.). Portal INSST. <https://www.insst.es/>

³¹⁹ *Estrategia Española de Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo, 2023-2027 - INSST - Portal INSST - INSST*. (s. d.). Portal INSST. <https://www.insst.es/el-instituto-al-dia/estrategia-espa%C3%B1ola-de-seguridad-y-salud-en-el-trabajo-2023-2027>

³²⁰ *Estrategia Española de Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo, 2023-2027 - INSST - Portal INSST - INSST*. (s. d.). Portal INSST. <https://www.insst.es/el-instituto-al-dia/estrategia-espa%C3%B1ola-de-seguridad-y-salud-en-el-trabajo-2023-2027>

³²¹ Naturgy. (16 January 2018). *Programa Cuidamos la Experiencia* [Vídeo]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSD6UWzF3f8>

Sweden

Information provided by SPF Seniorerna and Nordic Older People's Organisation (NOPO) and desk research

Support in the labour market

Sweden is one of the longest-working countries in Europe. The employment rate of 55-64-year-olds is 77.3% in 2022³²². In 2012, 64.8% of pensioners in Sweden continued to work for non-financial reasons such as job satisfaction³²³.

This high rate is partly due to the support given to older people in the labour market by social practices and **a strong trade union tradition** dating back to the 1930s. For example, collective agreements between employers and employees provide for a smooth transition to retirement. Some also guarantee the employability of workers throughout their working life, by improving participation in training for workers at the end of their career. This type of agreement allows older people in difficult and arduous occupations to move into more sustainable jobs.

Several **age-neutral measures** benefit older workers but also companies. This facilitates professional retraining within the organisation itself, which, by investing in training, retains the talents and experience of its employees, even at a later stage in their careers. Among these measures, **the FILO seniority rule** based on the "first in, last out" principle encourages the retention of the most experienced workers and on working time in the company. The **"Equal pay for equal work"** is also an incentive to keep or hire older workers in the company while seniority wages can be a financial barrier for organisations to hire or retain older workers. Both rules are based on seniority rather than age.

According to Eurostat, in 2021, 44.3% of the long-term unemployed were aged between 55 and 64, which is lower than the EU average of 54.1%³²⁴. The above-mentioned agreements and rules provide strong guarantees for older workers and protect them from unemployment. They also have an incentive effect and facilitate the hiring of older people seeking employment. In addition, up to the age of 60, students at e.g. university college, university or vocational college, the compulsory and upper secondary level at Komvux (adult education college) or folk high school, can get student grants and loans. According to the Joint Employment Report 2022, Sweden has strengthened **lifelong learning programmes** at the municipal level and within educational institutions for adults who need to improve their labour market situation. However, there are currently no specific programmes or interventions for older jobseekers.

³²² *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

³²³ *Main reason for persons who receive a pension to continue working (%)*. (2012). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8dc91c2f-ccf7-4b9e-964b-3e2c3f95b9b9?lang=en>

³²⁴ *Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a percentage of the total unemployment, by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/c9cd7297-2f79-4d30-8905-111bb4a72301?lang=en&page=time:2022>

There is also a programme called **Nystartsjobb**³²⁵ which offers compensation to employers who are willing to hire a person who has been absent from the labour market for a long period. This programme had special rules for people over 55, allowing employers who hired jobseekers over 55 to receive twice as much support, up to a maximum of 10 years or until the age of 65. These special rules ended in 2017 despite the fact that most jobseekers aged 54-65 have been registered with the Swedish public employment service for more than a full year.

According to the proposed Joint Employment Report for 2023³²⁶, Sweden remains the best-performing country in the EU with an employment rate for women of 78%, approaching the employment rate for men. For Swedish women aged 55-59, the employment rate is 81.9%, compared to 87.3% for men of the same age³²⁷. **The Swedish approach supports women in their right to work and their autonomy, which could explain the high employment rate of older women.** Both men and women are entitled to 18 months of parental leave, which must be shared over at least 6 months. In addition, as soon as the child is one year old, the municipalities must offer a childcare solution to the parents. These two measures make it easier for women to take leave and share parenting activities. In addition to the fact that there is no incentive to stay at home, Every tax-payer declares their income independently, and not for example together with a spouse, This individual and not a family approach could, for certain types of jobs and families, favour women's employment. An additional challenge for greater gender equality would be to address the remaining gender pension gap.

Age discrimination in the labour market

In 2009, Sweden adopted the **Discrimination Act**³²⁸, which prohibits age discrimination and applies to working life. It was amended in 2017 to oblige employers and education providers to investigate the existence of risks of discrimination or other barriers to equal rights for individuals and to take proactive measures.

An **Equality Ombudsman** is also responsible for monitoring compliance with the law. In 2012, its report on age discrimination in working life³²⁹ indicated that age discrimination is common in working life, particularly in the recruitment process.

Case law on age discrimination from the Swedish Labour Court ³³⁰

Two bus drivers and a transport and medical care driver were refused new employment, as required by a company's age policy, on the grounds that they

³²⁵ *Nystartsjobb för arbetsgivare*. (s. d.). Arbetsförmedlingen. <https://arbetsformedlingen.se/for-arbetsgivare/anstallningsstod/stod-nar-en-person-varit-arbetslos-lange-eller-ar-nyanland/nystartsjobb/#/nystartsjobb>

³²⁶ *2023 European Semester : Proposal for a Joint Employment Report*. (s. d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-proposal-joint-employment-report_en

³²⁷ *Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)*. (2022). Eurostat Data Browser.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/8b21d427-45f9-45ab-a251-e4dbb2b4591c?lang=en&page=time:2022>

³²⁸ *Discrimination Act, 2008 : 567*. (s. d.). DO. <https://www.do.se/choose-language/english/discrimination-act-2008567>

³²⁹ *Åldersdiskriminering i svenskt arbetsliv*. (s. d.). DO. <https://www.do.se/kunskap-stod-och-vagledning/publikationer-om-diskriminering/2012/aldersdiskriminering-i-svenskt-arbetsliv>

³³⁰ *New case law on age discrimination from the Swedish Labour Court*. (s. d.). www.delphi.se. -

<https://www.delphi.se/uploads/2018/08/1512-sofie-haggard-larsson-new-case-law-on-age-discrimination-from-the-swedish-labour-court.pdf>

were over 70 years old. The parties agree that the company's actions in themselves led to a difference in treatment on the basis of age that falls under the prohibition of discrimination in Chapter 1.4 of the Discrimination Act. The question is whether the difference in treatment can nevertheless be regarded as having been permitted under one of the exceptions provided for in Chapter 2, Section 2, of the same Act.

The issue, in this case, was whether the '70 year rule' could be considered a genuine and determining occupational requirement for the job of a driver in the current company. The Court held that, although the '70-year rule' is not in itself a requirement, certain physical abilities may constitute a genuine and determining occupational requirement in this case. Secondly, the question remained whether the general age limit was appropriate and necessary to achieve the legitimate objective of road safety. The Labour Court found that the employer had not convincingly demonstrated that the general age limit was an appropriate and necessary measure to achieve the legitimate objective of increasing road safety. The court found that other measures could be taken (such as medical checks) to assess the physical and mental capabilities of drivers, and that the age limit was therefore prohibited.

As the court found that the employer had not intentionally discriminated against the employees, the financial damages awarded to the employees were limited to 4 000€.

Workplaces for all ages

Sweden has its own law on health and safety at work: **the Working Environment Act³³¹**. This law provides for the adaptation and rehabilitation of the workplace. It states, among other things, that the employer shall adapt the work situation of an individual employee to meet his or her abilities for the job. The Work Environment Authority, wishing **to adapt this legislation to the ageing of the population and thus the workforce**, recommends that the special needs of older people be taken into account and that their skills and experience be used to optimise any reorganisation of work. Mental health and psychosocial risks are also covered by the Working Environment Act, the Working Time Act and collective agreements between employers and workers' organisations.

In order to support older workers in arduous occupations, an employer can call on **the occupational health service called Företagshälsor**. The experts of the occupational health service help employers to prevent and reduce all kinds of risks in the working environment. They support and assist the employer in preventing illness at the workplace and in facilitating a quicker return to work in case of illness or injury³³². Finally, there is also a health and safety committee in all companies. They are assisted by the trade union apparatus and train the company's employees to appreciate dangerous and painful situations at work.

³³¹ Regeringen och Regeringskansliet. (4 November 2015). *Work Environment Act (Arbetsmiljölagen)*. Regeringskansliet. <https://www.government.se/government-policy/labour-law-and-work-environment/19771160-work-environment-act-arbetsmiljolagen/>

³³² Om Företagshälsovård | Sveriges Företagshälsor. (s. d.). <https://www.foretagshalsor.se/sv/om-foretagshalsovard>

AGE's work on employment

AGE conducted its [2023 Annual Conference](#) on sustainable and quality working lives based on the first results of this Barometer.

AGE advocates for an [Age Equality Strategy](#) that ensures equal rights at all ages, calling for policies that support sustainable and quality working lives and guarantee education and life-long learning for older persons. A [2-pager of the Strategy](#) is also available.

AGE participated in recent consultations, such as on '[Strengthening social Europe](#)' and on the '[Green Paper on Ageing](#)', voicing our concerns and recommendations on the right to access the labour market, the work-life balance, gender equality, age-friendly workplaces, and education and life-long learning for older persons.

The [first edition of the AGE Barometer in 2019](#) also looked at aspects related to employment of older workers

Work on support for older workers in the labour market

- AGE has been active in the European Semester process of social and economic policy coordination.
- AGE took part in the [European Commission's consultations on individual learning accounts and micro-credentials for lifelong learning](#), and asked for lifelong learning to be accessible at all ages asking for the [Council's recommendation on the individual learning accounts](#) to explicitly encourage education opportunities in older age, including beyond working age and to embrace the diversity of the population across generations.
- AGE submitted [a reply to the call of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing \(OEWG\) to NGOs - 12th Session](#) (2022), emphasising the need to improve access to training and education in the workplace but also beyond retirement age.
- AGE submitted [normative elements related to access to work and access to justice](#), responding to the call of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) to NGOs - 12th Session (2022).
- AGE submitted a [reply to the call of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing \(OEWG\) to NGOs - 13th Session](#) (2023), which included calls for equal participation of older persons in employment and education.

Work on age discrimination in employment

- AGE contributed to the [Commission Report on the application of the Employment Equality directive](#).

- AGE warned about the limits of the Employment Equality directive and how it leaves older workers behind addressing [the right to work in old age](#) in a Policy paper on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the directive.
- AGE collaborated with ILGA Europe to [report on the challenges faced by older LGBTI people in Europe today](#), including in employment.

Work on workplaces for all ages

- AGE contributed to [the Commission's call for evidence for a comprehensive approach to mental health](#), including in workplaces.
- AGE participated in [the EuroHealthNet webinar addressing psychosocial risks and supporting the mental health of older workers](#) by highlighting the impact of ageism on well-being at work and the specific situation of informal workers.
- AGE replied to two European Commission calls for Response a deux European Commission calls for evidence on [digital education](#) and [digital skills](#) to address the digital gap, remind the need to deliver accessible and inclusive digital education and training and consider the intersectional perspective into the policy responses.
- AGE participated in the [International launch event of the "All Digital Weeks 2023"](#) reminding the risk of exclusion which goes hand in hand with new technologies and the need to enhance digital skills to make sure noone is left behind.
- AGE is a partner in many projects around digitalisation, among which is the Digital project to counter disinformation. The FAITh project aims to foster the digital inclusion of older persons by training digital mentors.
- AGE was involved in the Smart for Democracy and Diversity (SDD) [project](#), where we developed a free online game on focusing on equal rights, participation and protection against discrimination and racism. The game targets adult educators, EU policymakers and human resources services for them to use it as a way to deconstruct stereotypes and biases, including in the workplace.



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Questionnaire for assessment at national level

Support to older people in the labour market

Career path management

- Do you know about any initiatives supporting older workers, both blue- and white-collar workers, in:
 - doing career reviews?³³³
 - facilitating professional reconversion?³³⁴
 - promoting gender pay and career equal opportunities?

Long-term unemployment and access to the labour market

- Does your Member State provide safeguards to protect older workers from unemployment?
- Are you aware of campaigns/programmes supporting older jobseekers?

Transition from job to retirement

- What is the available guidance to those approaching retirement age?
- Are you aware of good practices to support a flexible transition to retirement?

Inclusion of pensioners – the right to work at older age

- If it is possible to work beyond retirement age, are you aware of any good practices that ensure older workers' support and protection in the labour market?
- What innovative and suitable form of work exists today for pensioners that you would recommend promoting and expanding to various sectors?

Age discrimination in employment

Age discrimination law

- More than 20 years after its adoption, could you identify what this EU directive has changed at national level? Please, specify the advantages but also the shortcomings.
- Are employers/employees in all sectors aware of the right to non-discrimination based on age according to the EU directive or national law? Is the legal procedure accessible to all?
- Are you aware of significant case law(s) on age discrimination in your Member State?

Age discrimination in working life

³³³ Taking into account skills assessment, aspirations, but also challenges due to the development of the sector of work (e.g. how to adapt to the rapid changes in the industrial intelligence sector)

³³⁴ It could be support to adapt the form of employment (e.g., an employee becoming self-employed) or support to switch from one sector to another

- Do you think communication about ageism³³⁵ is sufficient and effective in all employment sectors?
- Are you aware of any good practices to fight age discrimination at work?

Age discrimination during the recruitment process

- Are you aware of positive guidance for employers on how to avoid age discrimination during the recruitment process?
- Are you aware of good practices preventing age discrimination during recruitment?

Promotion of age diversity

- If there is a diversity charter³³⁶ in your country, do you know the good practices it promotes in terms of age diversity?
- Are you aware of initiatives highlighting older people's skills, including soft skills?
- Are you aware of initiatives fostering intergenerational collaboration at work?

Workplaces for all ages

Health and safety at work

- What health and safety measures should be improved given older workers' needs?
- Do you know of any good practices to ensure the health and safety of older workers in strenuous professions (blue-collar, agriculture, lower ranks in service or retail, ...)?

Well-being at work

- How do your Member State's government or employers address psycho-social risks at work?
- Are you aware of initiatives specifically designed to address the well-being of older workers and prevent psycho-social risks?

Adaptation of workstations

- Are there programmes in place to adapt workplaces to the needs of an ageing workforce?
- Do they address the needs of all, including older female workers (considering menopause for instance) or workers with disabilities?

Digitalisation

- Are you aware of policies or services designed to tackle the digital gap at work and to facilitate the inclusion of older workers in a context of digitalisation?
- Are you aware of any practices based on digital technologies or artificial intelligence that ensure better working conditions for older workers?

³³⁵ In its *Global Report on Ageism*, WHO defines ageism as the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people on the basis of their age

³³⁶ Diversity charters are voluntary commitments by groups of companies in several Member States to pursue policies to emphasise diversity in their human resources. Many charters have been focussing on the promotion of good practices between companies and highlighted the business case for diversity.

About AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is an empowered coalition of older people's organisations. Together, we ensure older people are at the European table, and participate in the debates to an inclusive society.

In times of pandemic more than ever, AGE celebrates longevity as one of the greatest achievements of humanity. Guided by values of equality and participation, we seek to combat ageism, promote human rights throughout the life-course, and create equal opportunities to live full and dignified life.

Older people are the experts of their own lives. Our community is hugely diverse. But our difference is our strength when we speak together. As self-advocates, we have the potential to bring know-how and experience – not to mention countless hours of caring and volunteer work that help society function.

A healthy society provides support at times of vulnerability, while providing space for all its members to contribute. Let's bridge the generation gap to build an age equal society. Our vision is to create the connections necessary for a more inclusive society:

Connecting institutions and constituents

AGE amplifies older people's voices to the European and global levels

Connecting organisations

Our powerful coalition enables older people to exchange experiences and learnings

Connecting countries

AGE is a truly European network, drawing strength from our members' diversity

Connecting people

AGE strengthens communities, empowering older people to contribute actively to Society

TOWARD A SOCIETY FOR ALL AGES



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