

Current situation of older people in EU countries

Problems, solutions and actions to be taken
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2022 10 18

Who is old?

We are individuals, not a collective, adding years to life in different ways



We are many and will be more

Europe is aging (Eurostat) 65 +

2018 19.7% - 101 mill. people

2030 23,9 % - 124 mill. people

2050 28.5 % - 149 mill. people

Causes

Fall in fertility

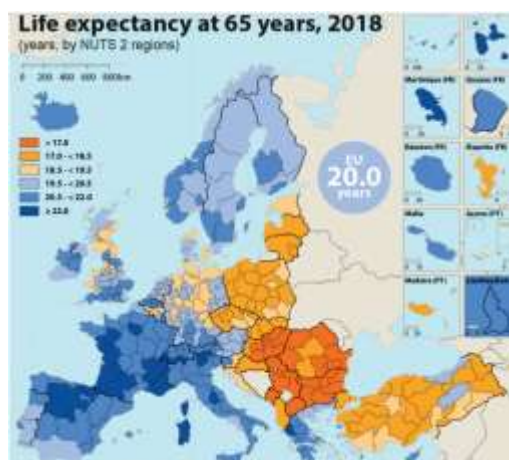
Increased life expectancy (longevity)

Health and medical progress

Improved living and working conditions

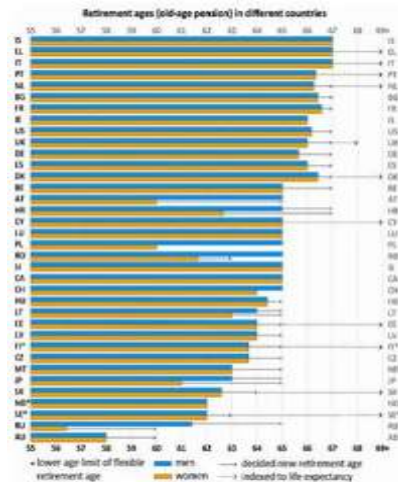


Varying Life Expectancy at 65 years 2018



Pension ages EU

The mandatory pension age is 66, at which you qualify for a full EU pension. It is possible to work until 70 if it is exceptionally justified. After reaching 70 a person is retired automatically and there is no possibility to remain in employment of EU institutions,



Why were pension systems introduced

- In the agricultural society there was work for all ages, children – grown ups – old people
- In the industrial society the working conditions did not allow old people to continue to end of life. Financial support became needed. Pension systems were introduced.
- It divided the grown up population into those working, being seen as a resource, and those with pensions seen as a burden to society

” I went from being a somebody to a nobody”

Transition from work into retirement

An increasing number of people 55-64 years have been active on the labour market during the last three decades. Financial considerations, health status and family commitments often play a role when older people consider the optimal date for their retirement

Some figures

- People aged 55 years or more accounted for almost one fifth of the total workforce
- More than half of the workforce aged 65 years or more was employed on a part-time basis
- More than 2/5 of the workforce aged 65-74 years were self-employed
- 1/7 of the workforce 65+ usually worked from home
- The average duration of a man`s working life was 4.9 years higher than that of a women
- Older people were more likely to be satisfied at work (around 94%)

Pensions, income and expenditure

- Projections show that there will be more and more pensioners, but fewer workers to finance them
- Regarding income, older Europeans are often found to have a lower risk of poverty than other age groups, however:
 - Almost 10% of older people in work are at risk of poverty
 - More than 1/3 of all older people living alone was unable to face unexpected financial expenses
 - Older women experience a higher risk of poverty and are more frequently reliant on income provided by their partner

What do older people do with their time

- More and more continue to work
- People in liberal professions work as long as they will, can and are in demand (small business, musicians, journalists, actors etc.)
- Relatives as care workers
- Sorts leaders for children and young people
- Etc..

The financial value of this should be assessed, known and included in the national financial statistics

To take into account: Housing and living conditions

- A relatively high share of older people in the EU lives in rural areas. Has to be taken into account by policymakers when assessing access to various services for older people
- Older women are generally more likely than older men to face severe difficulties in being able to pay for basic goods and services
- The growing number of older people, in particular older women, living alone is particularly worrying
- Approximately half of older people were living in under-occupied dwellings too large for their needs

Social life and opinions of older people

- Overall, older people have higher levels of life satisfaction compared with other age groups in several western and northern Member States. The main factors that influence their wellbeing are:
 - Health
 - Participation in diverse activities, e.g. returning to education, taking up a hobby, carrying out volunteer group, travelling, playing sports. This is very much linked to the health status of the person
 - Regular contacts with family and /or friends

Health and disability

- Health is an important measure of well-being, in particular for older people as it is an important factor for personal independence and participation in local communities
- A significant increase in demand for long term care is to be expected and services covering diseases that typically affect older people (e.g. arthritis, mental health/dementia, sensory impairment, cancer)
- About half of older people 65-74 years in the EU-27 perceive their health to be good or very good, 75- 84 years one third and 85 + one quarter
- Older people with high incomes are more likely to perceive their own health as good or very good

Health and disability, continued

- Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of people aged 85+ have a long-standing health problem.
- The most common chronic diseases reported by older people are: high blood pressure, arthrosis and back problems.
- Diseases of the circulatory system are the most common cause of death among people 75+.
- Severe walking difficulties: 1/3 of people 75+
- 1/5 of women aged 75+ make use of home care services
- A relatively high share of people 75+ reports depressive systems

Older people and some threats against quality of life and well-being

- War
- Poverty
- Pandemics
- Loneliness
- Elder abuse
- Feeling of not being needed
- Ageism – Age discrimination

Covid 19 crises

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights May 2020

- This crisis has laid bare, and often amplified, many challenges that older people have been facing for years, such as discrimination on older age, lack of social protection and access to health services, lack of autonomy and participation in decision-making, and risk of violence, neglect and abuse”

EU Green paper on ageing 2021

- Purpose to launch a broad policy debate on ageing to discuss options on how to anticipate and respond to the challenges and opportunities it brings, notable taking into account the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UNI decade for Health ageing.
- The green- paper takes a life-cycle approach that reflects the universal impact on ageing and focuses on both the personal and wider societal implications of ageing
- These include everything from lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles to how to fund adequate pensions or the need for increased productivity and a large enough workforce to sustain healthcare and long-term care for older people.

EU Green paper, some important points

- Strengthening intergenerational solidarity and fairness between young and old.
- Healthy and active ageing
- Education and training in a lifelong learning perspective
- Access to life-long learning
- Making the most of our working lives – bringing more people into the workforce
- Productivity, innovation and business opportunities
- Staying active
- Old Age Poverty
- Adequate, fair and sustainable pension systems
- Meeting the health and long-term care needs of an ageing population.
- Mobility, connectivity and accessibility
- Territorial differences in access to care and services

Life experience – life cycle approach

- Childhood, youth – formative years
- Adult life , education – working life, family building
- Retirement: some go on working, volunteering, intergenerational relations, fair, sustainable pensions or poverty, growing health care needs
- Older people are the ultimate experts on their own lives

AGE Platform Europe

- AGE discrimination

Age Platform Europe is a European network of non-profit organisations of and for people aged 50+, which aims to voice and promote the interests of the 200 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union.

- The European Union has since 2000 a directive banning, among others, discrimination on the basis of age in employment and occupation
- AGE felt that the directive was too narrow and proposed 2006 a broader directive to the Commission on age discrimination covering all sectors of society.
- In 2008 the European Commission, based on a proposal by AGE, proposed a widened text of the directive to comprise also social protection, education and access to goods and services. The proposal is under discussion by member states in the Council of the European Union. Some member states have included the proposal in their legislation

Age platform Europe: Green Paper: strengths and weaknesses

- It subscribes a life course approach, showing how much socio-economic inequalities accumulated across one's life have a strong impact on older age. It covers a wide range of issues starting with health and education, life-long learning, employment to finally address old-age poverty, pensions and long-term care. However, the porosity between the different life phases could have been strengthened. It is important to avoid associating old age only with decline and needs and other life stages only with growth, opportunity and participation

Age Platform Europe, Green Paper Continued

- The gender dimension of demographic ageing is mainstreamed throughout the document. The intersectionality between old age and disability is also considered but the systematic references to other EU equality strategies are missing.
- One of the main loopholes is the lack of a consistent human rights-based approach. There is a superficial coverage of discrimination revealing several blindspots in the document.

WHO - Ageing and ageism

- 1982 First UN Conference on Ageing, Vienna: Develop long term policies for tackling the growing age disparity
- 2002 Second UN Conference on Ageing, Madrid: Secretary-General Kofi Annan: Older persons are "our future selves". Ageing and Elder abuse two of the subjects.
- 2016-2030 WHO Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health. "To prevent harm, reducing injustice and foster intergenerational solidarity and the need to reduce ageism against people of all ages".

The word ageism

- Coined 1969 by Robert Butler, an American gerontologist
- Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards others or oneself based on ageing.
- Ageism affects people of all ages
- While ageism has existed across centuries, countries, contexts and cultures, the concept is relatively new and does not yet exist in every language
- It is prevalent, deeply ingrained och more socially accepted than other forms of bias.

WHO: The nature of ageism

- Ageism starts in childhood and is reinforced over time. Ageism often intersects and interacts with other forms of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination
- Ageism can change how we view our selves, cab it one generation against another, can devaluate or limit our ability to benefit from what younger and older populations can contribute and can reduce opportunities for health, longevity and well-being while also having far-reaching consequences
- Ageism pervades many institutions and sectors of society, including those providing health and social care, the workplace, the media and the legal system.
- Ageism has serious and far-reaching consequences for people`s health, wellbeing and human rights. For older people, ageism is associated with shorter lifespan, poorer physical and mental health, slower recovery from disability and cognitive decline.

WHO Global report on ageism (2021)

Why a report

- World Health Assembly (resolution WHA69.3) identified combating ageism as a prerequisite to developing good public policy on healthy ageing and to improving every day lives of older people. In response, the World Health Organization (WHO) was called on to develop, in cooperation with other partners, a global campaign to combat ageism .
- "To prevent harm, reduce and foster intergenerational solidarity we need to reduce ageism against people of all ages".

AGE discrimination, example from health care Development and use of medicines

- Many of the most often prescribed medicines for older people are not tested for this generation
- Medicines are often prescribed to relieve a symptom ,not on the basis of a diagnosis
- Polypharmacy
- Inappropriate combinations

WHO Three recommendations for action against ageism and age discrimination

- Invest in evidence-based strategies to prevent and tackle ageism
- Improve data and research to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it
- Build movement to change the narrative around age and ageing

WHO: Three strategies to reduce ageism

- Policy and law
- Educational interventions
- Intergenerational contact interventions

WHO Advice on specific action by stakeholder groups

- Governments- develop, make use of evidence-based strategies, legislation, education, provision of resources, monitoring of results.
- United Nations agencies and development organizations: support countries in their implementation, funding
- Academic and research institutions : design and deliver evidence – based educational programmes and intergenerational activities to tackle ageism

WHO Advice : Civil society can:

- * Advocate for the development of laws addressing discrimination and inequality and their enforcement, and monitor the applications of these laws;
- * Build capacity of older and younger adults to advocate for and monitor the implementation of laws addressing discrimination and inequality, and strengthen their participation in these activities;
- * Design and deliver evidence based educational programmes and intergenerational activities to tackle ageism against different age groups and incorporate these activities into existing programmes, if possible
- * Seek and establish collaboration between older people`s organizations and youth organizations to encourage intergenerational activities and collaborations

WHO Advice Private sector can

- Develop and implement policies and interventions in business to prevent and respond to instances of ageism
- Build the capacity of employees and employers to detect and respond to ageism
- Monitor the production of movies, television series, advertisements, magazine and newspaper articles, sbooks and other forms of media to ensure that they are not ageist,

WHO: three recommendations for action

- Invest in evidence-based strategies to prevent and tackle ageism
- Improve data and research to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it
- Build a movement to change the narrative around age and ageing

I have dream

The 21st century should be remembered as the Century of Older People when they became seen as a resource in society, not a burden.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. - I have a dream

All older people should live their lives free from discrimination and should feel they are valuable and part of society. They should fully enjoy their human rights

The founder of the Declaration of Human rights

Eleanor Roosevelt

