



ACTIVAGE: Overcoming the Barriers and Seizing the Opportunities for Active Ageing Policies in Europe

Objectives

Demographic ageing is a key challenge European policy-makers will face in the coming decades. An ageing society will strain European labour markets, pension systems and health care systems. Yet, demographic ageing also is a unique opportunity for Europe: increasingly, older Europeans represent a rich reservoir of skills and experience. Current reforms in these sectors have coped with demographic ageing by focusing on the supply-side of the equation. Recently, European policy-makers have demanded a more holistic and pro-active policy approach that reduces the demand for social and health care services in old age. These policies, so-called active ageing reforms, ensure that European citizens can actively participate in the economy and society in older age. The ActivAge project, then, identifies maps and analyses the socio-institutional, economic, and political realities facing the implementation of active ageing policies.

The *overall aim* of the ActivAge project is to ***identify and analyse the socio-institutional, economic, political realities facing the implementation of active ageing policies in Europe.***

This implies the following:

- 1) Chart and analyse the existing active ageing policy landscape in Europe.
- 2) Identify and outline the barriers to and opportunities for implementing active ageing policies in Europe.
- 3) Highlight and explore means of overcoming barriers and seizing opportunities for active ageing policies in Europe

Description of the Project

The *first phase* of the ActivAge project outlines national active ageing policies in Europe. The aim was to systematically chart existing active ageing policy initiatives and their socio-institutional settings in 10 European countries. The ActivAge consortium has identified policy goals, policy instruments, and institutional mechanisms of current active ageing policy agendas. This phase has also entailed the mapping of the socio-institutional and political contexts in which national active ageing policies are embedded. The outcome was a comprehensive overview of active ageing strategies in Europe as well as a map of the socio-institutional and political landscape in which active ageing policies operate.

The *second phase* project has analysed the barriers to and opportunities for implementing active ageing policy agendas in Europe. The ActivAge consortium has accomplished case studies assessing recent and ongoing reforms in European labour markets, pension systems and health care sectors in the light of the active ageing policy agenda. Wherever possible, ActivAge has evaluated the implementation of existing active ageing policies. In parallel, the ActivAge project has monitored selected active ageing initiatives in the civil society. For the second phase, the ActivAge consortium has produced a series of case studies outlining the institutional, political and socio-economic contingencies facing active ageing policies in Europe.

The *third phase* has explored means of overcoming the barriers to implementing active ageing strategies and seizing the opportunities offered by European institutional landscapes. By using foresight methods, ActivAge has identified ways of improving policy learning as well as ways of embedding active ageing policy objectives in ongoing reform efforts. Based on experts' opinions, the outcome was a set of recommendations on how to overcome the barriers and seize the opportunities facing policy makers at national and European levels.

Results

The ActivAge project provides

- A map of European active ageing policies and their socio-institutional contexts
- A catalogue of socio-institutional, economic and political barriers to and opportunities for implementing active ageing policies
- A set of recommendation of how to overcome these barriers and seize the opportunities for active ageing policies
- A series of workshops in which the European researchers, policy-makers and practitioners dealing with ageing issues have discussed the findings of the ActivAge project