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QUALITY AGEING IN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

*Q-Ageing WP3*

# TRANSNATIONAL SITUATION ANALYSIS

*“NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS”*

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The following analysis is based on, and using the data and text of, the regional summary reports elaborated by the project partners of Újbuda, Hungary; Sopot, Poland; Maribor, Slovenia; Treviso, Italy; Karlsruhe, Germany and Genoa, Italy.

The analysis has been prepared on commission by the Lead Partner, Municipality of Újbuda, Budapest, Hungary.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the activities of the partners in Q-Ageing in WP3 was to establish a common pool of knowledge, based on researches in previous phases of the project, as to the state and features of the elderly within their reach along the dimension of social integration, employment status, usage of infrastructure, social, commercial, medical and build, usability of urban design and public places, programmes designed for, and used by, the elderly.

Low fertility rates and parallel increase in life span creates fast ageing of the society. All the territories in the project face this phenomenon severely compared to some other countries of Europe and to their wider environment. The shift in generation balance and the sudden growth of number of people over the age of 80 years produce immense challenges to the present social and political system as even larger ratio of the society will become dependent, many of whom with needs for support due to their mental, physical and psychical deterioration in late old age. The ageing of the population coinciding with loss of economic function may even result in urban blight and decay in some areas.

The health of the elderly stays rather good up to the age of 75 where decline is expected and by the age of 80 years almost half of the elderly gets at least somewhat disabled. Social exclusion and shrink in social contacts threatens mostly elderly women due to the difference in life expectancies of sexes that is further boosted by weak general social cohesion in some countries. The majority of the elderly are satisfied with their housing situation and the circumstances of the neighbourhood and municipality. The financial situation of the elderly is less favourable; and beside the obvious differences in status, a substantial drop in living standard is almost unavoidable after retirement in all cases. Insecurity is felt mostly in subjective terms, in unlit areas and where many youths are present.

Retirement starts early, usually earlier than the official age limit. Once leaving the employment, reintegration of the elderly above a certain age is almost hopeless. The majority of the unemployed elderly, even those with favourable health conditions, are not willing to work again and regard their retirement years as a period to fulfil recreational activities, if possible. On the other hand, those, especially men, who remains employed at the age of 60-65, mostly work till the age of 75.

Besides financial burdens, traditional passive attitudes of the elderly pose a major obstacle in the implementation of any projects. Their main recreational activities are passive: watching television, listening to the radio; but a substantial minority of approximately 15-20 per cent are positively interested in further activities, such as going to theatre, hiking and clubs. Nonetheless, most of their social time is spent with their relatives who gradually become the focal points of social contacts and the role of friends and neighbours lessens.

Organisations, both voluntary and formal, play important role in organising social life of the elderly in an efficient way, in recreational fields but even in supporting help and care.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of Q-Ageing (Quality Ageing in Urban Environment) project is to find an effective solution to the problem of the period after finishing active work in two important and overlapping fields: on one hand by improving the quality of the public services including adapting them to the needs of the elderly people and the other hand, by establishing a new urban environment considering the new needs related to the changing lifestyle and the ageing of the society.

The Q-Ageing project is performed within a partnership of nine organisations involved, which are: Municipality of Újbuda as a Leader Partner (Hungary), Municipality of Maribor (Slovenia), Municipality of Slovenska Bistrica (Slovenia), Economic Institute of Maribor Human Resource Development Centre (Slovenia), Treviso Province (Italy), Municipality of Sopot (Poland), Municipality of Genoa (Italy), National Health Research Institute (Italy), Centre for Developments in Civil Society of Karlsruhe (Germany).

The research is carried out on six territories, including cities and regions as well. Present study is aimed at summarising the demographics and state of elderly people within the municipal areas, it examines the social integration and exclusion, the embeddedness in the neighbourhood and the local society, describes the main characteristics of social connections (family, neighbours, civic possibilities, voluntary work). It also gives descriptions and explanations about the situation of the urban environment, the public spaces in relation to the special needs of the elderly. It reviews state of the social and public services, programmes and institutions designed for and commonly used by ageing people, the situation and aptness of the medical and commercial network. Finally, it presents programmes targeting the involvement of the elderly in economical activities either paid or on voluntary basis.

In Europe, ageing is an uncontroversial fact. There are two reasons behind this phenomenon, firstly the sharp decline in fertility which can be experienced from the second decade of the last century and secondly the increase in the life expectancy of the population due to medical progress and improved social support and care for the elderly. The combination of these two effects increased the intensity of this process and it can cause quite startling results. Population of the European Union will start to decrease after an intense ageing process. Projections to 2050 show that not taken the migration into account the population will fall from the present proximately 500 million to 382 million. Even with the current volume of immigration a decrease of 19 per cent could be forecasted. The population in 2050 is to reach unimaginable 1015 million to preserve the present age structure which shows the difficult situation the 'welfare state' faces: the population's demographic structure substantially changes, the old ageing index, given by the ratio between those with more than 65 years of age and those being less than 15 rises that means the predominance of the old over the young. The statistical forecasts are clear; it has been warned of that between 2000 and 2050 the global quote of persons older than 60 years could redouble, going from 10 per cent to 22 per cent.

However, it seems that European societies are getting old with a deeply ambivalent attitude. No matter how the longer life period is pursued, the culture we are living in still is negating to oldness, since it made of quick rhythms, of efficiency, of rapidity, demanded more from young people than from older ones.

From data mentioned above it follows that the 21<sup>th</sup> century will be the century of old people. It can be assured that quality ageing cannot be separated from intensive work for revival of solidarity and harmony between generations which demands for participation of state, family, civil society and business or science, profession and political lines. European and world politics are increasingly aware of pressing problem of demographic situation and are rapidly putting together system of solving measures. It seems like orientation into new solidarity of generations could be the direction promising solution to the crisis.

Due to the altering nature of people entering old age and the increase of life span, the old age is split into different stages. Actual years in definition may vary from country to country, but the tendencies are unanimous: people entering old age – from the age of 60 to 70 or 75 – no longer regard themselves as old and are less willing to take up the traditional roles. They are energetic, have the same habits, pursue recreational activities and some of them are still employed. Between the age of 70 (or 75) and 80 years, more serious problem regarding health, mentality and physical abilities arise and the autonomy gets limited but people in this phase are still more or less capable of independency. After the age of 80 years, physical, economic and social capabilities deteriorate quickly and external support is usually needed in the daily activities.

If the continuation of the active getting old is considered as a strategic line that is fundamental, today and in the future, for the well-being of persons of a more and more advanced age, various and wide aspects of economic and social policies are involved, as well as the behaviours of all the persons able to play an active and responsible role within the economic and social system.

It has to be cleared up that 'active ageing' should not only mean keeping elderly people active and participate on the labour market, but also motivating all the stakeholders, the public institutions, enterprises, families and single person into the adoption of strategies interesting the whole life cycle and allowing to workers of every age to make themselves useful for the society.

The following paper summarises and evaluates the results of the partners in Q-Ageing projects achieved in WP2 in describing the situation of elderly in numerous dimensions and aspects. The purpose of this analysis is to base the ground for further steps in realisation of the project.

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND STATE OF THE ELDERLY

Ageing of the population in general and ageing of the elderly is a common feature of all areas involved in the analysis. The process incorporates two basic phenomena. On the one hand, the fertility rate has been steadily low in the last decade in the partner countries (see Table 1), much lower than the rate necessary for sustaining the present number and age distribution of the society. The societies examined in Q-Ageing belong to the low fertility group of countries, facing declining number and rapid increase in the ration of the 60+ population, despite the immigration.

Table 1: Fertility Rates in partner countries and in some other countries<sup>1</sup>

Country	Fertility rate <sup>2</sup> in		
	1996	2001	2006
Germany	1.316	1.349	1.340
Hungary	1.460	1.310	1.350
Italy	1.200	1.252	1.352
Poland	1.525	1.315	1.278
Slovenia	1.280	1.210	1.310
<i>France</i>	<i>1.710</i>	<i>1.876</i>	<i>1.983</i>
<i>Norway</i>	<i>1.889</i>	<i>1.752</i>	<i>1.904</i>
<i>The Netherlands</i>	<i>1.529</i>	<i>1.710</i>	<i>1.730</i>
<i>Spain</i>	<i>1.162</i>	<i>1.244</i>	<i>1.370</i>
<i>USA</i>	<i>1.976</i>	<i>2.034</i>	<i>2.101</i>

The second major aspect of the changes is the increase of life expectancy (see Table 2).

Table 2: Life expectancy in partner countries and in some other countries<sup>3</sup>

Country	Life expectancy at birth in 2009		
	Overall	Men	Women
Germany	79.26	76.26	82.42
Hungary	73.44	69.27	77.87
Italy	80.20	77.26	83.33
Poland	75.63	71.65	79.85
Slovenia	76.92	73.25	80.84
<i>France</i>	<i>80.98</i>	<i>77.79</i>	<i>84.33</i>
<i>Norway</i>	<i>79.95</i>	<i>77.29</i>	<i>82.74</i>

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.prb.org/pdf07/TFRTTable.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Total Fertility Rate: is the average total number of children a woman will have given current age-specific birth rates.

<sup>3</sup> Source: CIA World Factbook, 2009.

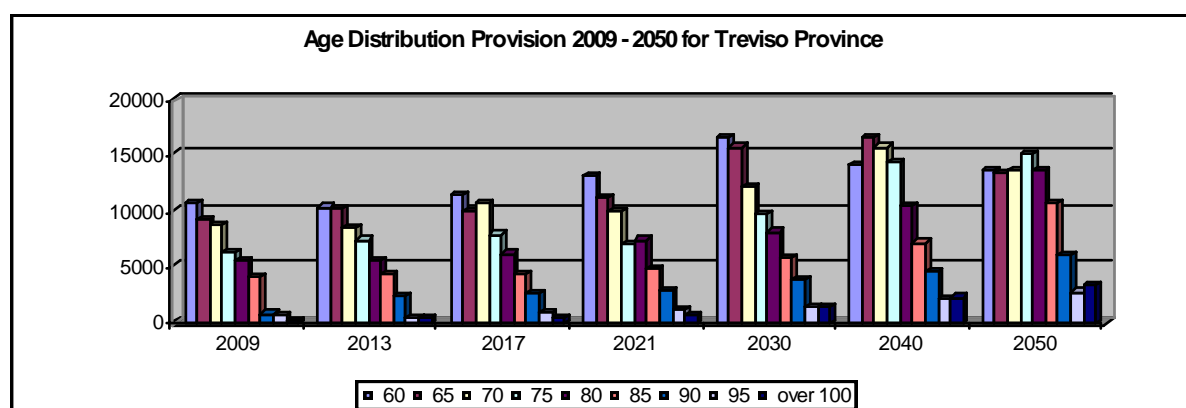
Country	Life expectancy at birth in 2009		
	Overall	Men	Women
<i>The Netherlands</i>	79.40	76.80	82.14
<i>Spain</i>	80.05	76.74	83.54
<i>USA</i>	78.11	75.65	80.69

It is a multi-faceted project, besides the general rise of life-time; it also includes increasing average age, losing the balance between generations, the growth of the ratio of older people within the elderly and decrease of the span between the expectancies of men and women (see Graph 1). All these phenomena can be detected in the partner regions. In Genoa, the population sunk from 812 thousand in 1971 to 610 thousand in 2001 whereas the number of people aged 65 and more grew from 119 thousand to 156 thousand (from 14.6 per cent to 25.6 per cent). In the Podravje Region in Slovenia, the ratio of population in the age of 65 or older had risen from 14.3 per cent in 2000 to 16.5 in 2007, and the average age had increased from 39.5 to 41.8 years of age and the ageing index<sup>4</sup> from 96.6 to 127.7 in the same period. Common features of each of the participating regions and municipalities are that the ageing process is more matured than in the including country or region and the number of residents is in sharp decline – phenomena that render the aim of Q-Ageing project rather essential for the participants (see Table 3).

Table 3: Ageing in Sopot, Poland<sup>5</sup>

	Year		
	2001	2005	2008
Number of residents in Sopot	42 035	40 075	39 000
Percentage of retired people in Sopot	21.7	26.3	23.8

Graph 1: Forecasted Age Distribution in Treviso Province<sup>6</sup>



<sup>4</sup> The number of people aged 65 and over per 100 youths under age 15.

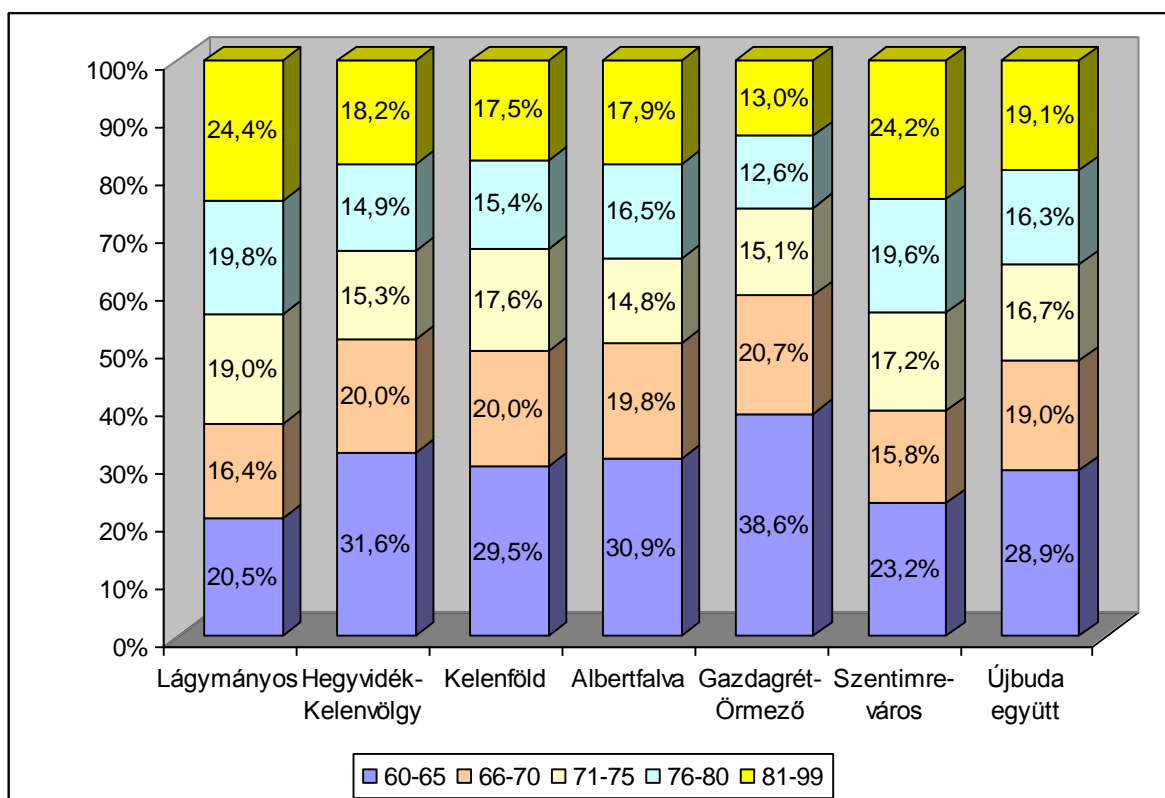
<sup>5</sup> Source: WP2 summary report of Sopot.

<sup>6</sup> Source: WP2 summary report of Treviso Province

Thanks to the difference in life expectancy, the majority of the elderly is women whose ratio is steeply growing in later ages, especially after the age of 80. In Újbuda, the number of people in the age of 60 or older is 39,200 that make up 28 per cent of the populace of the district, of whom 68.4 per cent are women. In Genoa, the number of people in the age of 80 and over is projected over fifty thousand in 2009 of whom two thirds are women. The “ripening” of the elderly creates immense challenges to the present social system as the people after the age of 80, more likely disabled in mental, physical and psychical terms, require more help and support.

These general features veil, however, important differences within each analysed territory. In Genoa, the contrast between stable, middle class or gentrified territories and blighted areas are striking but in other municipalities the territorial composition of the elderly is also rather complex. For instance, in Újbuda, the rapidity and date of the development of the neighbourhoods within the district is clearly reflected in the ratio of elderly and their age composition (see Table 4 and Graph 2). Although spatial segregation in Genoa is rather high it is less reflected in distribution of generation that can be a result of the historical development less hasty than that of Újbuda (see Table 5).

Graph 2: Age composition of 60+ population in Újbuda<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Table 4: Ratio of the elderly in the neighbourhoods of Újbuda<sup>8</sup>

	Lágymányos	Kelenvölgy	Sashegy-Sasad	Péterhegy	Gellérthegy	Kelenföld	Albertfalva	Gazdagrét	Órmező	Szentimrevarós	Újbuda total
Number of 60+, thousand	5.6	0.7	4.6	0.3	2.8	12	3.0	2.4	2.0	5.7	39.2
Ratio of 60+, per cent	28	23	25	36	49	23	25	20	26	52	28

Table 5: Spatial distribution of elderly in Genoa in 2000<sup>9</sup>

Constituency	Total population	Ratio of population 65+	Ratio of 80+ within 65+
		per cent	
Centro est	93522	23.52	27.78
Centro ovest	67741	25.43	24.49
Bassa val bisagno	82451	26.07	25.30
Val bisagno	61035	23.02	21.56
Val polcevera	63368	23.66	24.15
Medio ponente	64401	24.72	24.95
Ponente	66187	24.57	22.90
Medio levante	64563	27.57	29.11
Levante	68902	26.11	25.34
Porto	196	2.55	20.00
<b>Tot Genoa</b>	<b>632366</b>	<b>24.94</b>	<b>25.27</b>

In terms of household category, the biggest group of the elderly share his or her flat with someone, typically with the spouse; for instance it applies to 60.3 per cent of examined households in Karlsruhe in 2005 (see Table 6). The number of people living alone is growing parallel to the age. In Genoa in 2001, within the age group 65-74 years of age 19.4 per cent lived alone while 31.8 per cent in the age group 75-84. Resulting from the difference in life expectancies for men and women, massive majority of those who live alone are woman. According to the 2002 census in Slovenia, for instance, 11.4 per cent of the men aged 65 or more lived alone while this number among elderly women is 33.5 per cent. The same numbers in Genoa are 30 per cent and 39 per cent, respectively. In Slovenia, in the group of 80-84 years of age, only 5.3 per cent of the men lived alone whereas 41.8 per cent of the women.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Q-Ageing and 60+ Survey of the Municipality of Újbuda

<sup>9</sup> Source: WP2 report of Genoa

Table 6: Ratio of one-person household in the partner areas<sup>10</sup>

	Genoa	Újbuda	Karlsruhe	Treviso Province	Podravje Region
Per cent	33	38	31	30	25

The health condition of the elderly is rather good in subjective terms, according to surveys of partners where available. In Újbuda, more than three quarters of the respondents of the survey in 2009 regarded his or her health condition very good or adequate compared to his or her age. In Treviso Province, half of the Q-Ageing survey interviewees defined their health good or excellent and 85 per cent did not consider themselves hindered by health problems in their daily activities – and only 20 per cent complained about health issues. In Karlsruhe, according to a survey in 2005 on people aged 60 or more showed that 43.5 per cent considered their health situation good and additional 38.9 per cent neither good nor bad. Basically the same tendencies apply to all regions. But when the health issue is assessed in objective terms, the picture is less favourable. In Újbuda, the Q-Ageing survey found that 72 per cent of the 60+ population regularly takes medicines and 32 per cent are slightly and additional 13 per cent seriously hindered in their daily activities. The health condition is obviously deteriorating with the age: in Újbuda, 21 per cent of the population aged 75 or more are seriously hindered and need support in their daily activities. Data from Genoa shows the same tendencies (see Table 7).

 Table 7: Disability in age groups in Municipality of Genoa in 2001<sup>11</sup>

Age group	Disabled, per cent	of which seriously
65-69	6.97	3.50
70-74	11.67	5.57
75-79	19.57	11.80
80+	47.67	35.24

Financial situation of the elderly rather differs among the analysed territories and huge differences exist within each of them, in spatial and in gender terms as well. In general, the overwhelming majority of people aged 60 and more are pensioners (see Table 8), many of them retired earlier than the pension age limit, a consequence of permissive retirement policies in the nineties. An average Hungarian retires at the age of 58, and just 14 per cent of Hungarians between 60 and 64 are working, compared with more than half of Americans. Furthermore, in Slovenia, only 33.5 per cent of the population in the 55-64 age group were registered as employed in 2007. In general, the amount of the pension is significantly less than the earlier income from employment and its average value far less than the average net income thus retirement brings along a considerable deterioration in living

<sup>10</sup> Source: WP2 reports of the partners

<sup>11</sup> Source: WP2 report from Genoa, census data

standard that may lead to negative social and psychical consequences. Leaving the labour market could render a well-off family into poverty, as interviews in Genoa show. Besides, the incomes from pension vary a lot between the analysed territories and vastly differ within the actual entities (see Table 9). In Slovenia in 2008, the amount of the average pension was €467, 61.5 per cent of the average salary; the lowest pension was €163 and 40 per cent of the pensioners got less than €400 a month.

Table 8: Ratio of pensioners within senior citizens aged 60+<sup>12</sup>

	Karlsruhe	Újbuda	Treviso Province <sup>13</sup>
Rate, per cent	86,4	89,0	70

Table 9: Average pensions in selected territories

	Western Germany <sup>14</sup>	Budapest <sup>15</sup>	Slovenia <sup>16</sup>	Poland <sup>17</sup>
Euro / month	1195	344	467	318

Since the vast majority of the elderly are pensioners, pension plays a fundamental role within the income of the elderly. However, the incomes from the employed and the inner structure of the pension system create huge differences. In 2005 in Karlsruhe, the average income of senior citizens was €956 with significant differences between men and woman. In Újbuda, the financial conditions of the elderly are superior to the country as a whole. Almost the half of the respondents earns a net monthly amount between €265 and €370 and the income of 28 per cent is between €371 and €560 and 6 per cent receive more.<sup>18</sup> The focus group examinations revealed their expenditure structure in Újbuda: Largest amount is spent on food and then on heating, especially amongst those whose flat has district heating. 50-60 per cent of the income is spent on overhead expenses which with the money spent on food makes up to 60-85 per cent of the income. Huge portion is spent on medical expenses thus there is virtually no resource for clothing and entertainment. Although the survey covered smaller towns in the region, the picture Treviso Province is less dreary, almost half of the respondents are content with their average income and one third consider it only slightly inferior to their needs; while one tenth deem it insufficient to cover all their needs.

In terms of education, the characteristics of the elderly reflect the general features of the society around. Karlsruhe's orientation to industrial activities is echoed in the professional composition of the elderly: 85.9 per cent of them have formal professional qualification – with substantial differ-

<sup>12</sup> Source: WP2 reports from partners

<sup>13</sup> Within the survey interviewees, aged between 55 and 80 years

<sup>14</sup> In 2009. In the East, it was 1050.

<sup>15</sup> In 2008. In Hungary, it was €230 on average in 2009.

<sup>16</sup> In 2008

<sup>17</sup> In 2007

<sup>18</sup> The estimation of income is rather difficult in Hungary, approximately 20 per cent of the interviewees refused to answer the concerning question and reliability of the answers of the rest, due to the sensible nature, is often doubtful.

ence between men (97 per cent) and women (78 per cent) that increases with age. Mostly, the professional degree is apprenticeship (46.9 per cent) and 19.5 per cent of the senior citizens have higher – polytechnic or university – degree. Small town features appear in Treviso Province, where nearly six out of ten senior citizens have only primary school certificate and only three out of ten graduated in higher education. On the other hand, Újbuda is one of the most complex districts of Budapest with large prestigious areas that fact appears in educational level: 36 per cent of the elderly have higher degree and an additional 36 per cent matured. Nonetheless, its spatial distribution is rather unequal: in prestigious green areas, such as Sasad, Sashegy and Gellérthegy, more than half of the elderly have diploma, and this ratio is high, approximately 40 per cent in some older inner areas by the universities (Lágymányos) while in the less favourably situated Albertfalva, with huge and disfavoured housing estates, this ratio is merely 13 per cent and 45 per cent of the elderly there did not mature.

Type of housing also mirrors the spatial arrangement of the communities. In large cities, such as Genoa, Maribor and Budapest, large portion of the elderly live in tenement blocks in the central areas while the outskirts and the countryside is dominated by less dense forms, mainly family houses. These forms of housing represent different problems to their inhabitants in maintenance and in mobility. Housing estates form a special phenomenon in Eastern Central Europe. Large portions of the urban housing stock are composed of prefabricated buildings: in Újbuda, more than one third of the elderly live in such buildings. Independently from the spatial situation, elderly households in housing estates face most severely financial problems: one ninth has problems in paying for public utilities (heating, water, electricity, etc.) while in tenement blocks only one twentieth and in family houses one twenty-fifth has such problems.

Where data available, the majority of elderly is satisfied with their housing situation: in Karlsruhe, 71 per cent of the respondents aged 60+ in 2005 considered their flat or house adequately equipped for their needs and only 7.7 per cent stated it insufficient. Similar tendencies are measured in other partners' territories: the condition of the flat or house is regarded by large majority as good in Újbuda; discontent is reported with the state of the façade in inner neighbourhoods and with wider surroundings in general. Stairs and lifts within buildings are reported as major obstacles in urban areas.

## SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND EXCLUSION

Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationship.

Parallel to increasing economic activity, the main aim of programmes at is enhancing the social integration of elderly people, inspiring the process of self-organising, strengthening the local identity. For this reason it is very important to examine the tendencies, patterns in the present state of integration of elderly people. The main factor in the description of the tendencies is the level of satisfaction about quality of their free-time activities and their embeddedness in the network of neighbourhood.

The major obstacle facing any programme aiming to improve the situation of the elderly in any country is passivity. In Újbuda, for instance, it can generally be stated that most of the elderly people interviewed in the research mostly have passive ways in recreational activity: they usually watch television (the rate is 97 per cent), listen to radio or read newspapers. They do some housework every day, help their family, babysit for grandchildren and visit ill friends. According to the focus group research in Újbuda, the elderly have no or scarce financial resources for active recreation. More than third of the interviewees do not undertake any external activities and only 10 per cent do some sports more or less regularly. More than a half of them have not been on holidays in the previous year.

According to the report of Municipality of Province of Treviso, the situation can be described very similarly there: parents are mostly present for the customary care of grandchildren, the house cleaning and for issues related to household work, while children provide help with transfers, doing the shopping, and housework. Seniors who participated in the survey are particularly active: only one out of ten does not undertake any leisure activity. The remaining parts of sample undertake on average two of the listed activities. In particular, the most frequent activities are those of leisure (recreational 36 per cent or walks 31 per cent), followed by voluntary activities (30 per cent) and activities related to the tending of animals (27 per cent) or children (25 per cent), followed by physical activities (13 per cent) and cultural ones (arts, theatre, cinema, et cetera; 12 per cent). A quarter of respondents want to relax and pursue their own interests (especially those between 55 and 64 years old), instead of going back to work. Four out of ten interviewees consider themselves able to contribute actively to the society. These are mainly men between 55 and 64 years old who have a higher education. Two out of ten, however, do not consider themselves able anymore to give a concrete contribution to the society (especially women over 75 years old and less educated women). According to the study of Sopot, the situation there bears huge resemblances. The participation of elderly in public life is rather unsatisfactory, both in terms of local politics and civil society. Only eight per cent of the elderly are involved in the life of local communities; every third are not involved in the life of

their neighbourhood due to lack of interest and an additional quarter due to lack of strength. Persons aged 65 and over are least willing to co-operate with others in areas such as: lending a valuable item, social work, economic activity, political activity. The highest percentage (53 per cent) of persons unwilling to co-operate with people who are not their family is found among the oldest respondents.

In the City of Karlsruhe, more than half of the senior citizens are satisfied with the frequency of personal contacts, another 36.7 per cent are quite content. With growing age the satisfaction with the frequency of personal contacts decreases. The leisure activity that is carried out most often is going for walks (85.6 per cent); meeting friends and acquaintances is nearly as important (81.6 per cent). Travelling (57.6 per cent), day trips and hiking (57.6 per cent) as well as gardening (48.5 per cent), visiting exhibitions and lectures (44 per cent), sports (40.8 per cent) and theatre/concerts (39.8 per cent) are also mentioned. When asked, whether they miss leisure opportunities, only 8.3 per cent persons answered that they would have additional needs. Out of these 8.3 per cent, women (10.2 per cent) missed further offers more often than men (5.7 per cent). Mostly more opportunities to socialise with others were missed, as well as physical exercise, hiking, day trips and further education.

To sum the aforesaid up, there is a plain correlation between readiness to lead an active way of life and educational level on the one hand: the more educated elderly tend to follow more dynamic patterns in recreation. On the other hand, same applies to the role of sex in such terms that men are on general more active than women, in all age groups.

Slovenian seniors are active in different spheres of activity: from helping their children families, volunteering in the communities, public engagement, housekeeping, personal hobbies, amateurish work, pensioner's organisations, political party, and participating in self help groups of Third Age University.

In Hungary, the attitude of elderly people to the programmes organised by civic organisations or municipalities is positive. Even if they cannot afford to participate in every activity, (especially swimming and other sports), various clubs offer opportunity for socialising and the free medical measuring such as blood pressure and blood sugar measures also very popular. In Újbuda Municipality 44 per cent of the elderly interviewed have heard about the programme Újbuda 60+, targeted on enhancing their living conditions. However, most of the elderly having some knowledge on the programme believe that the main aim of the programme is doing research and secondarily, developing community.

The main assumption in Hungary is that elderly people lack the tradition of participating in the society: citizens are under informed and their need for information is low – the communal responsibility appears on micro-level, on the level of families, relatives and close friends. Strong reclusiveness characterises the social connection of the elderly. Only one in eight goes and visits friends on a weekly basis and 38 per cent are chatting with their neighbours in public places. Embeddedness in the local community is different to a great extent within the area, where the main decisive factor

is the size of the house: the smaller unit the old person is living in, the higher the chance of knowing the neighbourhood. Nonetheless, along ageing, the force of network of neighbours weakens in parallel strengthening of need of family support. Typically, members of family undertake the caring of those who are not self-sufficient and in need of help.

Sense of satisfaction is an important factor in subjective mental condition of ageing people, and thus in their willingness of pursuing active lifestyle. In Újbuda, 22 per cent of the interviewees are completely satisfied with their own life and give maximum score on a scale 1-7. Further 37 per cent are almost completely satisfied and additional 18 per cent express medium (4 score or less) satisfaction. Taking a closer look to the connections of elderly people with their surrounding social environment, a more honest picture will be drawn. A mere three per cent of the respondents have confidence in only a few people, and ten per cent feel that they are unable to influence the way events happen to them, and also ten per cent feels regularly lonely.

In Treviso Province, the overall satisfaction with the quality of life is rather high and covers half of the sample, whereas only seven per cent of them express dissatisfaction (average score 5.3 on a scale 1-7). Such a positive evaluation is mainly affected by the satisfaction with their own family life (5.9) and the relationship with the neighbourhood (5.4). The standard of living is considered to be slightly more unsatisfactory when compared with the last two aspects (5.2). These data are confirmed by the large number of interviewees who define themselves as happy (74 per cent). The image of the today's society as conveyed by the interviewees is characterised by negative aspects such as indifference, superficiality, and egoism. Despite this negative vision of today's society, in their own towns most of the old people feel a sense of inclusion and do not suffer from loneliness (77 per cent). Family and friendship networks seem to be very tight, the 84 per cent of the sample have children, and the number of these is on average 2.2. The relationship with the children is very close and this is presumably the reason for the declared psychological well-being.

In Újbuda, only the two-three per cent of the elderly being involved the research are member of any leisure organisations; membership of the elderly in local community association and charity organisations do not reach two per cent within the interviewees. In ecclesiastical activities, six per cent of elderly are participating. On the whole, 14 per cent of the local senior population are members of any associations or organisations.

Fostering and aiding the integration of the elderly within to one another and to the society on the whole has become a great concern. Different means and tools have been implemented in various countries and areas and the stress of the programmes is placed diverse aspects, resulting from the peculiar characteristics of the given society.

A unique phenomenon in Slovenia is the pensioners' association from Maribor which started in 1990 their own political party named as Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia. Today they have seven members of parliament. Nowadays the party stands for economically successful, socially fair and legal state. It is for society of free people where values other than profit and growth are at

the forefront; and for society where business morale and good people-to-people relations are important.

The most widely spread form of bonding and active participation for seniors is pensioners' organisations in Slovenia. Today more than 250.000 pensioners are actively participating in 486 organisations united in the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners Organisations. Their purpose is to improve the quality of elderly lives, actively participate in development of society, encourage bonding and conquer social exclusion. The Federation is also engaged in adopting legislative decision. Main activities of societies are: sport and recreation, social and health activities, travelling, cultural activities such as singing, attending cultural events, manual skills, and educational activities in forms of courses and lectures. Majority of the activities are open only to members of the pensioner's organisations, with exception of events open for public. Key motif for membership in pensioners' organisations is social inclusion. In the recent years there has been an increasing focus on strengthening social networks of seniors by education.

The federation has since 2004 been carrying out the project 'Elderly for higher quality of life at home'. The project is aimed at uncovering the needs for help of elderly and organising help for them; for all that live at home and are older than 69. Several pensioners' organisations have since the beginning been gradually joining the project, so in 2007 there were 117 organisations involved with 1.384 volunteers visiting 51.000 elder fellow citizens (50 per cent of all elderly living in the area covered by involved organisations). The activation of volunteers is carried out within the framework of the pensioners' organisations. During their visits they are uncovering situations of abuse, violence and loneliness. According to so far existing field researches 25 per cent of people, older than 69 years, need some sort of domestic help.

Establishing intergenerational activities between the elderly and teenagers is also of great importance. In Treviso Province, no reliable date could be gathered on such activities because the activities in this field are often implemented 'spontaneously' in the territory, during some other initiatives with different primary aims. For example, in San Zenone degli Ezzelini, during the development of 'summer camp for children' two or three years ago, an intergenerational activity had been experimented, by bringing children to elder people houses in order to discuss about old professions, local historical events or old games. This activity had been only an idea of one of the teacher, but not a planned project. In the same municipality, every year there is an 'elder dinner' where local population organise the event and cook for elder people, while the latter prepare small objects or other gifts. Often, this event represents a wonderful occasion for an intergenerational exchange of experience, but not formal or planned.

Another important problem related to ageing is the care of disabled. The major desired form of support and care is tending to be based at home which reflects both the expressed needs of the elderly and the shrinkage of the financial resources available for the social services. In Treviso Prov-

ince according to the survey, one of the most significant element in the field of 'assuring a quality ageing' for elderly is the role of 'aged volunteers'. This issue will be detailed in a later part.

In Genoa, too, the informal network is the strongest means of the support of elderly people. In fact, in this life stage, for various and obvious reasons, the notable decrease of the network of friends and of the support of the close relations (because of work, different and far residence places, displacement for various reasons, etc.), are compensated by the increased aids of the neighbours, above all for the women. The 52.4 per cent of the widows older than 74 years of age declare that they rely on persons or families of neighbours, compared to the 47.5 per cent of the widowers.<sup>19</sup>

According to the results of research in City of Karlsruhe, approximately one quarter of the interviewees help other senior citizens, in their own household (5.8 per cent) or elsewhere (17.8 per cent). Support can be given in the household, with healthcare, through visits and conversation or in dealing with public authorities or in organising leisure activities. The readiness to help others outside their own home is much higher than the help quota measured. About one third of the senior citizens would probably be prepared to help other senior citizens in their daily life. The readiness to help others varies in different parts of the city. Most often people would be prepared to act as a companion or contact person or to visit elderly people at home. Less people would be willing to help others outside their home with healthcare.

In the area of cross-generational cooperation, Slovenia already has some tradition and practise. Various organisations have been working in this field for some time. Larger or smaller groups are involved. A good practice is also a project for encouraging the voluntary work of the young for the elderly, Fruits of Society, started in 2006. The purpose of the project is to systematically join the elderly, who live at home, on one side and the school-age youth on the other side, with a purpose of assuring the additional help to the first, for instance socialising, reading newspapers, bringing necessary things from a store or a pharmacy, taking a dog for a walk et cetera, and enabling acquisition of the new knowledge, learning and socialising with elderly through the voluntary work to the latter. However, this kind of cross-generational assistance is far from extended.

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<sup>19</sup> Istat, 2004 data quoted in the WP2 summary report by the Genoa Team

## URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Segregation is a common feature of all territories examined in Q-Ageing research but its scale and the resulting effect on the particular inhabitants and on the community as a whole are poles apart. In municipalities of Treviso Province, segregation can be interpreted between the towns and their exposure to immigration. In larger municipalities, segregation is present within the community. In case of Újbuda, the segregation of population is observable visually and from data as well but no really serious problem stems from it: lower density green areas are rather high in their social status, densely build inner areas are middle class in their nature with strong hints of gentrification in areas close to the centre of Budapest and to the universities. Areas in the south-west, close to the obsolete industrial areas, are working class neighbourhoods. The housing estates are scattered in almost all areas and reflect the nature of their surroundings, more in cultural than in material terms, that is to say, in higher status areas inhabitants of prefab buildings are poorer but almost equally educated compared to their environment. No serious problems regarding segregation were mentioned from other partners' reports, except for Genoa, where the problem is harsh and affects the daily lives of the elderly gravely. As a large port and city, segregation had always existed within the city among constituencies in 'classic' terms – between high status central or suburban areas and working class neighbourhoods but the immigration and the economic transformation changed the picture drastically in the last decades. The immigration altered abruptly the character of some constituencies so that new life styles and social integration rules appeared and the old inhabitants can no longer communicate with the younger generations because of dialectic or language differences. Numerous constituencies have become aged and others are becoming blighted in terms of urban slums or ghettos. The two phenomena often coincide in the same neighbourhoods where poor, analphabetic old people live together with gangs of South American youths. Segregation, forms of decay are present also in Karlsruhe, where difference between areas is remarkable. In the district of Mühlburg, under closer scrutiny within Q-Ageing project, parallel phenomena related to urban blight are present, such as ageing (share of 65+ population is 22.1 per cent compared to 19.3 per cent in Karlsruhe in total), loneliness (share of one-person households is 59 per cent compared to 51 per cent), migration (share of migrant population is 19.3 per cent compared to 14.3 per cent), unemployment. This set of phenomena creates a disadvantageous situation that may lead to a spiral of decay.

Security is in a way related to the aforesaid issue of segregation. In blighted areas, the sense of public security is weak but even in better-off neighbourhoods signs of neglect, dirt and poverty, such as graffiti, neglected façades and presence of homeless create the subjective feeling of danger, especially in inner areas. None of the participant municipalities is especially infected with crime but abandoned buildings, unlit corners and yards even in populated areas generate the sense of threat. Active and passive means of public security, such as presence of police, CCTV systems and proper lighting of areas could ensure a higher sense of security. Public life of youths and gentrification in previously calm inner areas often make the elderly uncomfortable, especially after dusk: many re-

spondents in Újbuda and Maribor stated that they did not like walking the streets and entering parks of inner areas in evenings when many young people are present and have fun in bars and cafés. Their loudness and behaviour threaten many elderly. In Maribor, young people often cause disturbances and behave violently, mostly under influence of alcohol and drugs. In Újbuda, the municipality faces contradicting requirements when it is fostering the gentrification of inner areas while it tries to assure the feeling of security of the elderly. The altered, faster life style gets the elderly in other cities perplexed. In Genoa, the elderly, women with lower education especially, feel insecure in the city and lost in traffic. On the contrary, no real problems of security were mentioned from Sopot, provincial Podravje region and Karlsruhe.

In spite of the aforementioned drawbacks in certain urban areas, the elderly population is on the whole satisfied with their general surroundings in all analysed municipalities and they feel the environment offer them the opportunities fulfilling their requirements and spare time activities, hobbies. In Sopot, 94 per cent of respondents aged 60 or more years are satisfied with living in the city; in Újbuda, 85 per cent of the interviewees have positive feelings towards their living environment. It is important to mention that the Q-Ageing research in Újbuda showed a clear correlation between inner complacency and contentment with the surroundings. On a 100 point scale, where 100 points represent whole contentedness, those who were entirely complacent with their lives gave on average 72 points to the opportunities and services offered by the district whereas those who were dissatisfied with their lives gave only 37 points on average.<sup>20</sup> Social inclusion also plays significant role: the index was 70 points among people with many acquaintances in the neighbourhood while it was less than 60 amongst the isolated. The link between quality of life and quality of urban environment is twofold as the survey in Mühlburg demonstrated: the status of the district, substantially lower than that of the city of Karlsruhe, determines the personal sensation of happiness. A survey among the inhabitants of the district showed that more than fifth of the inhabitants felt that the quality of life had decreased in the previous three years, 23 per cent had no social contacts in the district and further 44 per cent had few and only 14 per cent were closely linked to the district through interest in its life and a mere 26 per cent were interested in participating in the development in the district. These data clearly show a high level of alienation, disintegration and general social decay.

The survey of Újbuda also demonstrated a significant negative correlation between social status and contentment with the living environment: one in five elderly living in higher status areas, such as Gellérthegy, Sasad, Sashegy has negative or neutral feelings towards the surroundings. However, their vast majority of such areas still have positive sentiment for the neighbourhood and the district.

Green areas and parks are of primary importance to the elderly and they are significant in judging the living conditions. They are also scenes of public activities, be it private or communal. In-

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<sup>20</sup> The contracted index contains 11 variables, measuring opinion on environment and the services. The total average is 67 points.

interviewees in Genoa expressed their need for socialising and social integration. Parks, pubs and taverns serve as meeting places for elderly they are rather inaccessible for women in certain societies. In Genoa, women have far less meeting places than men therefore suitable places of socialising are to be developed. In all examined societies, parks and other meeting places could serve as bases of local societies, strengthen local identity and embeddedness. Researches in Újbuda and Genoa showed that turning empty building lots or abandoned gardens into small parks in dense areas or neighbourhoods lacking adequate parks or open meeting places could be a viable option. The need for more meeting places is also demonstrated amongst 36 per cent of the elderly interviewed in Treviso Province.

In Veneto Region, a study with a collection of best practice was elaborated in 2004 aiming at examining the possibilities of making the public spaces and green areas accessible for disadvantage people, including the elderly. It is a tool targeted to public administrators, project planners, buildings companies, but also for the users themselves, in order to raise their awareness of their needs and in order to enable institution to better satisfy them. The 'Green for All' study aims at supporting architects and managers of public green spaces in order to enable them to give 'disadvantaged people' a better solution to live their public spaces, to enable them to feel these spaces as 'their own spaces'.<sup>21</sup>

In Újbuda, two thirds of the elderly have positive attitude towards the state, number and availability of parks in the district, and the substantial majority of the elderly of Sopot and Maribor have the similar attitude. All three municipalities have extensive green areas easily accessible from almost all neighbourhoods,<sup>22</sup> and the wider surrounding areas offer broad range of possibilities for external activities, such as hiking, cycling.

Cracked pavement, little time given at pedestrian crossings with traffic lights, aggressiveness of car users and their intolerance towards older drivers, high stairs and elevated kerbs and other built obstacles to mobility are commonly mentioned problems in all participating municipalities. Even thus, however, at least the half of the respondents in Újbuda and Sopot are content with the conditions of the pavement. Cycle paths appear everywhere in all the municipalities to some extent, but the range of the network and quality the paths are less satisfactory. Despite the concerning EU regulations, the process of easing mobility for disabled and elderly is a slow procedure, changing the traffic culture and shifting the balance of attention to pedestrians and cyclists takes even more time. Needs and limitations of the elderly must be taken into greater consideration when the public space is designed. Organisation of the public space must not only take into account elimination of steps and stairs; the public space must be also friendlier to the elderly and respect their needs and limitations. Team of Sopot advises in this respect that local governments should establish local and regional Senior Citizen Boards to act as advisory and consulting bodies to the field authorities.

<sup>21</sup> Texts of A. De Poli and Lucia Lancerin, quoted in the WP2 Summary Report of Treviso Province

<sup>22</sup> This is a rather unlikely and unique feature of Újbuda in Budapest: most inner areas are so densely developed so there is virtually no greenery easily available, especially on the opposite, left bank of the Danube.

Dog fouling on pavements and on grass, especially inner areas is also commonly mentioned. It is the most severe problem perceived by the elderly of Sopot – nearly 55 per cent mentioned it in connection with urban maintenance. Graffiti on the walls was mentioned in second place, by more than 42 per cent. Presence of homeless and visual expression of poverty in the central areas concern many elderly as well in Sopot and in Újbuda, in relation to both aesthetic and hygienic consequences. The question of pollution emerged in Újbuda from two points of view. On the one hand, the surroundings of the selective garbage collection islands get dirty due to the overflow and neglect. There are garbage islands which are overfilled in spite of the daily emptying. On the other hand, streets in central, densely build areas of Újbuda are often filthy and the street furniture and greenery are often abused there. Budapest is said to be the third noisiest cities in Europe and the noise affects negatively the hearing ability and life expectancy, thus noise pollution presents severe problems in the inner areas and near the main artillery roads and motorways.

In traffic, density and variety of the area and the municipality makes difference. In provincial Treviso Province, issues concerning mobility are not problematic for 80 per cent of the interviewees; those with problems live in one particular town, Grappa and are 'aged' elderly (between 75 and 80 years old). Traffic outside the municipal areas is more problematic, with 29 per cent complaining about difficulties, especially women aged between 75 and 80 years, again from the area of Grappa. Principal means of transport is the car, within towns used by two thirds of the respondents, followed by walking and cycling (especially in the area of Montello). In between towns, the role of car is more prevalent, 88 per cent of the respondents use it while only 11 per cent use the public transport.

In small town Treviso Province and Podravje region, where the quality and usage of public transport is poor, improvement of the services is considered primary among the elderly. In larger cities, the ratio of the usage of, and contentedness with, the public transport are much higher, especially in the densely populated areas. In Újbuda, for instance, 68 per cent of the respondents are satisfied with the services of the local public transportation and their overwhelming majority do not use car regularly; only one in eight respondents use it on daily basis and private car users live predominantly in sparsely populated areas where the service is rarer. In smaller cities, such as Sopot, the usage of public transport is lower but it still it takes up the large majority – with nearly 40 per cent use it on daily and additional 32 per cent on weekly basis. Major obstacle in mobility with public transport is produced by the high threshold of certain buses in service that hinders the ascendance. Besides the public transport, cars and bicycles, taxis appeared as affordable option in Slovenia, parallel to the reducing prices. In general, major problems facing car users in large cities are heavy traffic, the lack and expensiveness of parking lots, especially in the central areas and near major, important social and medical services that often reside in central areas.

## SOCIAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The elderly on the whole are satisfied with the operations of the municipalities. In Újbuda, according to the Q-Ageing survey, 73 per cent of the elderly are content the way the Municipal Office is run, and in particular, almost 70 per cent are pleased with the information on local affairs given by the municipality. In Sopot, 64 per cent of senior citizens positively assess the way the town is managed (61 per cent of inhabitants aged 40-59). Even a higher percentage trust the decisions made by the town's authorities: 69.9 per cent of senior citizens and 65.4 per cent of persons aged 40-59.

Information about municipality and the programmes offered usually comes from the municipal periodical in case of Újbuda: 82 per cent of the elderly read it on a regular basis. The local television programme works less effectively, only 35 per cent watch it weekly. Local and national newspapers and free magazines are also important sources of information; approximately half of the elderly read them. Although the elderly are content with the flow of information from the municipality, they are less content with opposite way: elaborate channels of feedback and consideration of information from the citizens are required by the elderly. Virtually the same applies to Sopot where senior citizens feel that they cannot influence the decisions made by the municipality. The inclusion in decision making processes is low, only 10 per cent declare to have ever participated in public hearings at the Town Hall. The great majority of the elderly regard the information about decision making and on cultural and recreational events as easily accessible; the main channels are press, television, friends, and poster pillars.

Contrary to other partner municipalities that have straight connections to the elderly, in Slovenia, there are no direct links between municipalities and elderly. Municipalities finance the programmes and activities of institutions that are founded for the support of elderly population. Those organisations apply on social care organisation, organisations for home support for elderly, elderly home, Red Cross organisation that widely integrates the elderly population as volunteers, et cetera. Municipalities in Podravje region also financially support various projects for elderly.

Programmes offered by municipality of Újbuda, the availability of programmes organised by the municipality differs from area to area, and some areas are scarcely covered with such activities. On general, clubs, the Voluntary Network, excursions and community activities are most used by the elderly. Affordability of some services, such as swimming pool and other sports activities, are limited as consequence of the prices and lack of resources by many. In case of all participant municipalities, special offers for cultural events are designed for the elderly, such as theatre and cinema performances.

The appearance of concentrated commercial services, such as shopping malls and hypermarkets are not welcomed by the elderly in general, since their majority prefer doing the shopping in small stores because of friendly services, familiar assistants and the help easily given in finding the proper goods. The network of smaller stores is often incomplete in outer, sparsely populated areas

and near shopping centres and super- or hypermarkets. Accessibility of shopping centres in the outskirts by public transport in Slovenia, Poland and Hungary is ensured but the quality of the service is usually rather poor.

The scheme of third age universities or like facilities exists in some cases of the participants. The education of the elderly has been provided by the Third Age University in Sopot, where the senior citizens may seek education in one of the following fields: languages and history, social sciences, environmental sciences, psychology and health preventive medicine. The students also attend open lectures from other fields, meetings with representatives of the world of culture and may participate in a number of workshops. Education for the elderly also exists in Slovenia where lifelong learning has strong traditions but the willingness to learn is constantly decreasing with age and significantly correlates with appreciation of knowledge within the family. Seniors most often take part in the Third Age University which is not a formal university as such but it is an informal voluntary educational movement, meant for people 50+, mostly retired people, but also for elderly workers out of work. It has been established to provide access to culture and education for the elderly and to contribute to changing the social and economic position of the elderly. The Third Age University encompasses at present 35 universities all over the country. Each Slovenian university organises study circles, lectures, and some of them also summer universities, educational camps, study trips, etc. The Third Age University has different goals to accomplish, be educational or social. Mentors are active and retired university teachers, researchers, renowned artists, newspapermen, young graduates or postgraduates. For their work, which is mostly on a voluntary basis, they receive little payment, this being the same for all of them, be they university full time professors or young graduates. Fields of activities: history, art history, ethnology, anthropology, geography, literature, journalism, music, psychology, astronomy, communication, language courses, computer skills, painting, health program, horticulture, et cetera.

In terms of medical services of Újbuda, the opinions significantly differ as to the two major branches of services. The General Practitioners (or family doctors) are well trusted, 73 per cent of the elderly are contented with the service they offer; whereas the services of the medical clinic are regarded with more critique, only two thirds are content. The major problems were the long queues and waiting hours, huge crowds and distant appointment dates. Basically same picture can be given as to Podravje Region in Slovenia where the general picture of medical services is satisfactory but especially for elderly accessibility to public services is not always satisfying. Long waiting periods or regional differences, lack of uniform arrangement (e.g. long-term care) and regional differences in accessibility still exist. Long waiting periods are also present at admittance to social and medical care.

In most cases, special programme including or developed exclusively for, the elderly is in operation. Social services and official care are usually given in a mixed way, by specific bodies of the municipalities and through granted NGOs. This method is both cost effective and ensuring involvement of the civil participation and their networks. Organised care is given mostly in serious condi-

tions, usually relatives provide it. In Karlsruhe, for instance, 9.2 per cent of the interviewees in 2005 needed daily care, of which 34 per cent were looked after by ambulant care.

Normally, household support is usually organised in a non-official way and given by relatives; in Karlsruhe according to the survey, external support by persons 60+ mostly is demanded for small repairs (23.5 per cent), window cleaning or thorough cleaning (19.7 per cent) or cleaning in general (16 per cent). Less use is made of support activities, such as the preparation of meals, shopping, washing/ironing. Generally more women use support from external people than men. With growing age the need for support is rising as well. Only 4.3 per cent of the elderly wanted to receive more support, mostly for cleaning. Results from the research carried out in Treviso Province also confirm the importance of home based assistance: 53 per cent of the interviewees expressed strong need for those services. 38 per cent of the elderly requested forms of assistance provided by the municipalities or public health services, while three out of ten respondents wanted to be directly assisted by their family members and requested for housing with assistance or nursing homes only in the third place. This data clearly demonstrate the need for a higher level of trust between the assisted and the service provider.

The situation with elderly homes is less satisfactory in all cases which results from the expensiveness of the service. Since the demand is rising and will surely not be met by the supply of places, various services in the collaboration welfare system of the municipalities, of NGOs and medical institutions are to be implemented in order to ensure quality life at home for elderly. These forms include, for instance is Sopot, a day care centre, a social consultation centre, a café for the senior citizens under the umbrella 'Rainbow Autumn' for the period of 2009-2011. Same problems arise in Slovenia, where three major forms of social care for senior citizens can be found. Those most in need of care can move to elderly homes but the admittance is rather hard: in 2007, almost 14 thousand people lived in such homes but in the same year more than 14 thousand applications were rejected. A relatively new form of care is given in sheltered housing for the elderly that are special apartments developed as independent housing units in a building designed for older people (65+), individuals or pairs. Residents are older people that are not able to live completely independent and need some organised assistance on daily basis. Those less in need and able to live at home are cared for in day care centres, the same way as in Sopot. They are offering transport to and from such a centre, organised meals, controlled outdoor activities, leisure activities, and alike. Additional form of care is the help at home where in the lack of appropriate relatives or friends, house support is given to those who cannot care for themselves on their own due to old age or severe disability. Furthermore, pensioners' associations and various civil and ecclesiastical organisations provide assistance in Slovenia.

Within the framework of Gelap Project<sup>23</sup> (Local Action Plan for Employment of the Province of Genoa) in 2005, detailed scheme was elaborated on classifying the groups and needs of the eld-

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<sup>23</sup> Source: Gelap Project quoted in the summary report of Genoa

erly. It differentiated three phases of ageing and associated the services with them to satisfy the specific needs. The age groups are as follows:

- 'young elderly people', between 65 and 74 years of age (persons maintaining the same habits and typologies of social relationships that had before);
- 'elderly people in transition', between 75 and 79 years of age (phase in which the persons begin to live more serious problems related to their degree of autonomy);
- 'elderly elderly people', from 80 years of age and over (phase in which the field of life, the need and expectations are more limited than before and problems that sometimes are dramatic appear).

To these phases answer four big groups of services related to the type of need:

1. Animation: recreational activities and for the free time, able to strengthen the social integration and cohesion, referring to the whole band of elderly people;
2. Prevention: activities aiming at pre-emptively addressing problems of adaptation to the old age, typically addressing, though not in an exclusive way, the band of 'young elderly people';
3. Support: activities aiming at supporting elderly people in facing the changes in their life conditions, typically addressing, though not in an exclusive way, the band of 'elderly people in transition';
4. Care: activities aiming at helping and supporting elderly people in a condition of reduction of physical, economic and social capabilities, typically addressing, though not in an exclusive way, the band of 'elderly elderly people'.

*More in details:*

- The need of elderly people with large margins of autonomy is mainly expressed in request of accompaniment and support to the creation of supportive and amity relationships (fundamental basis to prevent situation of discomfort and loneliness);
- The need of elderly people with micro/limited margins of autonomy is mainly expressed in request of home care;
- There are then a series of need/requests of cross nature (some of which related to particular conditions of discomfort and/or to the occurrence of emergencies, more or less temporary);

***Of social nature:***

- ✓ Economic contributes (such as accompaniment cheque);
- ✓ Intervention of 'support' to the family (in case of elderly people living at home);
- ✓ Psychological support;
- ✓ Support in general, also of psychological nature;
- ✓ Need of certain points of reference (emotional need);
- ✓ Need to fill the free time (often lived as "constrain" rather than a resource);

- ✓ Lack of places for gathering (above all for women with a past of housewife, that seldom attend socialising places like pub, etc.);
- ✓ Solitude;
- ✓ Need for general and specific information;

***Of practical nature:***

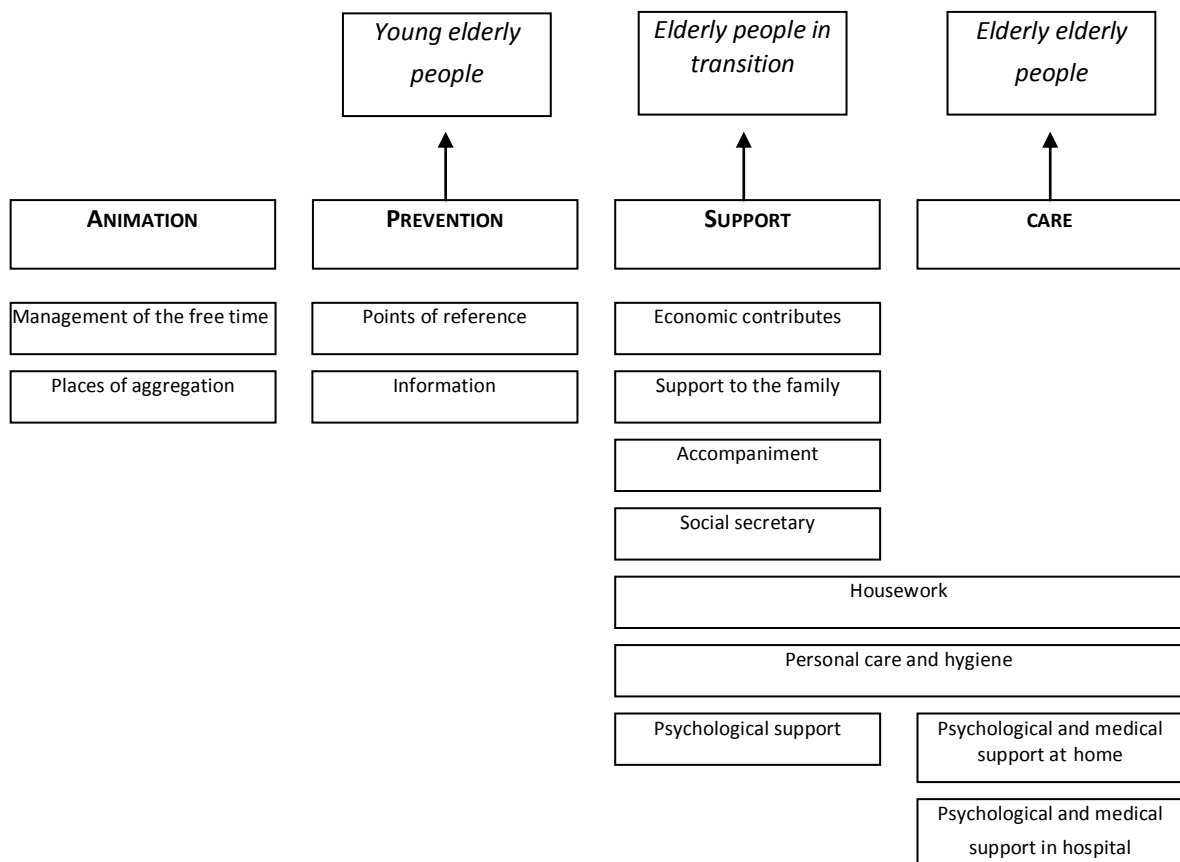
- ✓ Support for bureaucratic practices (social secretary);
- ✓ Juridical representation;
- ✓ Housework;
- ✓ Personal care;
- ✓ Transports;

***Of health nature:***

- ✓ Medical visits;
- ✓ Light nurses' care (like injection, insulin giving, etc.)

The link among typologies and band of need may be summarised the following way:

**Graph 3: Summary of typology and needs<sup>24</sup>**



<sup>24</sup> Source: Gelap, 2005, quoted in the WP2 summary report of the Genoa Team

## ECONOMY AND THE ELDERLY

Increasing the economic performance of the elderly and utilisation of their experiences and knowledge in economy is a primary target in Q-Ageing, therefore exploring the present situation is of key importance. Moreover, the current economic crisis and the increased cost of daily necessities challenge the welfare of the average European household and further marginalise individuals 50+ who silently sit on the knife's edge of economic stress. The precarious situation of these individuals is due to lack of retirement income and/or employment opportunities, inadequate assets and financial management tools, limited health insurance coverage and access to benefits, levels of disability and poor health. Furthermore, these harsh circumstances disproportionately impact women, migrants and persons living alone. Yet with this disturbing overall portrait, potential sources of strength, hope and financial improvement can be discerned.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the differences in the characteristics of the senior population in the partners' territories, many common features arise when their economic activity is examined which can be summed as a rather low economic activity of the elderly. The ratio of employees is small in all partner territories. In Treviso Province, where smaller municipalities were explored within Q-Ageing, only 11 per cent of the respondents between 50 and 80 years of age are still working. In Újbuda, with good general economic activity, high ratio of skilled workforce and favourable location within the Budapest metropolitan area, the economic activity of the elderly, however, is rather low: only 7 per cent of the population aged 60 and more are employed. The same ratio was 8.4 per cent in Karlsruhe in 2005. In Slovenia, only 9.5 per cent of the people aged 55 or more years were still active in 2007.

The ratio of employment is quickly falling with ageing. In Karlsruhe, in the age group 60-65 years, 27.3 per cent worked. Detailed data are available for Újbuda that show the fine structure of employment of the elderly. Based on the Q-Ageing survey, the general 7 per cent of employment of the population aged 60 or more cover considerable differences in terms of locality, gender and age. The rate of employment is 17 per cent in the age group 60-65 years, 6 per cent in the age group 66-70 years, 4 per cent in the age group 71-75 and afterwards it is tending to zero. The gender makes a difference in the activity: the men are much more active. 27 per cent of men aged 60-65 years is still working whereas only 12 per cent of women of the same age. In age group 66-70 years, one tenth of the men are employed and only one twentieth of the women. Spatial differences are also significant: in the high- and middle status housing estates of Gazdagrét and Órmező, with relatively young population, 14 per cent of the elderly are employed; the ratio is 13 per cent in the high status green areas. On the contrary, the elderly population of Albertfalva, mainly living in low status and relatively new housing estates, is less active: only 2 per cent are active – the same ratio as in Szentimreváros, the most aged neighbourhood in the district.

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<sup>25</sup> Diversity and Ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: The Power of Inclusion, AARP Conference; passage cited by the Treviso Team

As to the most active generation of the elderly, namely those aged between 60-65 years, predominantly similar features can be detected: the senior citizens of Gazdagrét and Órmező are the most active, 34 per cent employed, 25 per cent in the green neighbourhoods and only 5 per cent in Albertfalva. Contradictory phenomenon characterises the willingness to work among the unemployed: 16-17 per cent of those workless living in housing estates would consider working again compared to the 12 per cent in the entire district. The above data clearly show that there is an obvious correlation between employment and educational status: employment rate is higher in areas where the elderly are more educated, have they lower economic status, as in Gazdagrét and Órmező, or higher, as in the green neighbourhoods; but the urge to work is more felt in lower economic status areas, although it is usually not realised.

Besides the educational factor, retirement policies of the last decades also lessened the ratio of activity among the elderly. In Eastern Central Europe, in the socialist era, the pension system promoted inactivity in older ages; and during and after the transition in 1989, large chunks of the workforce, especially in the older generations, lost their work and retirement was an advised means of reducing this problem. Still, in Slovenia, the unemployment ratio in the age group between 50 and 60 years is high: 28.2 per cent on the country level and 26.5 per cent in the wider Maribor area.

Researches from Maribor, Treviso and Újbuda show that a firm division has to be taken between ongoing employment and new employment of the elderly. In case of the former, employers not only adapt to older workers not to disturb the working process but actually think highly of them and their qualities. Companies are aware of the value of existing older employees as they have gained a lot of experiences and developed values like commitment toward the company, expert knowledge, responsibility, reliability and working experiences. In Újbuda, for instance, those who work at the age of 65 will likely continue doing so up to the age of 75. The situation is less favourable in case of new employments of older people. Here it is evident that most companies prefer to employ younger people. The reasons stated by the employers in Slovenia are: no applications are received from older candidates, the employment policies, indeed, do not encourage employment of people older than 55, or the requirements are not met because of lack of adequate qualification of older candidates.

But besides the unwillingness on behalf of the employers, the inclination of the elderly for employment is also lacking. According to the survey in Újbuda, 81 per cent of the elderly do not work and would not like to do so. Within those whose possible employment is not hindered by any major obstacle – namely those aged 60-75, in good health conditions and not disabled in mobility – 65 per cent categorically refuse the idea of employment whereas 15 per cent are employed and 21 per cent would consider doing so. In general, only one eighth of the non-employed elderly would consider some sort of official labour but only one per cent would like to do it in full time; eight more per cent would work part time and an additional five per cent would undertake temporary jobs.

The focus group research in Újbuda showed that the majority of the elderly is rather content with their retired life and would not like to be employed again. They see their retirement as a benefit after years of work. They would rather be active in club life, participate in social and civil organisations, help their families, especially in raising their grandchildren, and fulfil their hobbies (gardening, viticulture, etc.). Many have part time work but in a very flexible schedule and only for supplementing their income as craftsmen, engineers et cetera. Many feel that helping their children upbringing the next generation takes so much time that they do not have time to work.

In Treviso Province, the need for projects aiming at retaining mature workers or simply to raise the awareness of elderly people of being still useful and fruitful for the community is demonstrated by the following data. When asked to re-enter the job market, even with easier conditions, the majority of old-age pensioners responds with a refusal (61 per cent). The reasons relate to the feeling of not being able to keep up with the pace of today's frenetic working rhythm (men over 75 years old in particular). However, a quarter of respondents want to relax and pursue their own interests (especially those between 55 and 64 years old). Four out of ten interviewees consider themselves able to contribute actively to the society. These are mainly men between 55 and 64 years old who have a higher education. Two out of ten, however, do not consider themselves able anymore to give a concrete contribution to the society (especially women over 75 years old and less educated women). This verifies the results of the questionnaire sent to the involved municipalities and enlightening the high degree of availability of elderly people to act as volunteers for the community.

The use of internet and modern technology is rather low among the elderly. Although there is a portion, especially the active and more educated that use or would like to use the modern means of communication and data procession. In Újbuda, 28 per cent of the elderly use internet or write email and 62 per cent have mobile phone.

According to the Slovenian team, the most important inducement to improve this situation would in their opinion be more flexible combination of retirement and work, state financial incentives or tax reliefs and similar. The behaviour of the candidates is also quite important: they should be more open to new ideas and innovations, more in favour of team work, as the employers often miss their better mobility and flexibility and fresh knowledge.

Applied abilities of elderly could be a solid basis for future development; by accepting their experiences and wisdom they shall be actively involved in improving life of society as a whole. Therefore a chance to carry out a job as long as they wish or are able to should be given to them, as well as the access to educational and training programmes since the encouragement of elderly to cooperate represents the key element of active ageing.

To improve the situation of elderly on the labour market it is necessary to raise awareness and inform employers as well as wider public about the meaning and added value of older population more intensively. By doing that lifelong learning plays an important role that is many times over-

looked. Inclusion of population into lifelong learning represents the condition for competitiveness and productivity of each individual on the labour market within the full life cycle.

Besides measures aiming at higher productivity, employability and competitiveness of elderly it is utmost important to bring about a change in the employers viewpoints. Therefore it is essential to launch information campaigns and discussion tables especially aimed at small and medium enterprises that typically do not have enough time, information and knowledge to develop social responsibility and older-worker-friendly measures.

Focus group meeting with ten employers and human resource managers within the framework of Q-Ageing in Karlsruhe ended with results that can be generalised. They are as follows:

- Practical experience shows that elderly employees are by no means less effective, less motivated or that they require more sickness leave than younger employees. Especially in the past years an increasing number of young employees (aged 30 to 40) suffer from long-term, especially psychosomatic illnesses). The effectiveness, productivity and motivation rather depend on the individual's personality than his or her age.
- Offering employees on the brink of retirement workshops about new life perspectives and as part of it about volunteering opportunities is regarded as an interesting approach. One manager was very interested to host such a workshop for employees that will retire over the next two years and to those that recently have retired.
- The need for an awareness-raising campaign was confirmed: the City of Karlsruhe promotes its image of a family-friendly city, also offering major opportunities for young people. Therefore it was regarded as desirable to start a campaign on opportunities of elderly employees and to promote good-practice examples in order to get more companies interested in this issue.
- At the same time the individual employee was asked to take over more responsibility and to actively develop ideas for her/ his own professional career: at workplaces where people cannot be let off, the attitude may develop among employees that it is the task of the employer to find a new suitable workplace (in case of sickness or age related problems) within the company instead of developing own ideas and demonstrating initiative.

Slovenia, being aware of the unfavourable demographic composition and the low proportion of elderly employed, has started since 2006 developing a national strategy of active ageing, in accordance with the Lisbon goal of the European Union that prescribes a 50 per cent employment rate as criterion for achieving its purpose of becoming a very competitive part of the world. The most important objectives of the strategy for active ageing are defined as follows:

1. Identifying existing barriers to employment of elderly people;
2. Identifying benefits of employment of elderly people;
3. Definition of appropriate measures for the employment of elderly people;
4. (Enforcement of appropriate modern pension legislation);
5. Measures focused on investing in training, lifelong learning and skills aimed at providing the elderly with higher productivity and the employability and competitiveness in the labour market;
6. Measures aimed at improving working conditions and occupational health and adjustment at work;
7. Measures to change attitudes of employers and the general public to the elderly (promotion of employment of senior citizens).

Besides the paid employment of the elderly, voluntary work could be an important option for the elderly to sustain social integration, to ensure the feeling of usefulness and of activity within quality ageing. One possibilities of voluntary work could be the network of active elderly helping those in need of assistance and support. The Team of Treviso summarised the advantages of such volunteering as follows:

- Economic reasons: municipalities do not need to spend large financial resources.
- Social reasons: Elderly people in disadvantaged situation prefer to be helped by someone they trust with. A friendly face is far more helpful than an unknown one and talking with someone well known, even if for a few minutes, is a great psychological support. For this reason the availability of elderly retired person in service supplying is not only economically convenient, but also socially preferable.

Networks of this kind are operating in small towns in the Treviso Province, they distribute for instance hot lunches and offer care and social support for elderly in hospitals in San Zenone degli Ezzelini, they guard public buildings like offices or gyms and organise health holidays in Valdobbiadene, employ retired people in public job like taking care of public parks and green in Follina, Cordignano and Tarzo, and give free transportation for other elderly people to and from hospital or health centres in Cordignano. In each municipality, an informal network between elder association and institution exists and this network is definitely important for the effective 'quality ageing' of the population. This network is structured and built around the 'voluntariness', almost in each municipality. As the Team of Treviso summarises: Obviously, it is easier for small towns and systems to develop such kind of collaboration, because the activities mentioned above are targeted to very limited territories and often house to house, with specific situations. When the number of users grows, this kind of mechanism is likely to collapse, so as the relationship of trust among people, with a significant loss of efficiency.

Such network of 'aged volunteers' is being brought about in Újbuda within the joint framework of 60+ and Q-Ageing. According to the survey, approximately five per cent of the elderly are interested in some sort of voluntary working activity. The ratio may seem low but given the large number of elderly in the district, approximately 1.6 thousand people can be expected to participate in such programmes.

## CONCLUSIONS

Ageing of the European societies is an inevitable process that affects the urban environment and economics profoundly. The ratio of the elderly increases and the rate of very old amongst the elderly is growing. Therefore creating an appropriate environment for the elderly is a must in all towns and cities. Nonetheless, social exclusion, segregation and disintegration of neighbourhoods could seriously thwart these efforts. The balance between generations will be so shifted that the present working of society will not be sustainable and the old welfare system should cease to exist. So keeping the elderly employed as long as possible not only supports the social inclusion but also creates an important factor in the background of economic sustainability of the society.

The researches carried out by partners showed that the odds are not very promising. Although the health situation of the elderly is considered rather good given their age; the huge majority of people between the ages of 55-75 years are capable of regular activities, most of them are simply not willing to be employed. They feel that retirement is an age of repose and not of further labour activities. Altering this general attitude, accepted by all related parties is a huge task. Besides emphasising the importance of changing the attitudes of the possible employers now it seems worth mentioning the fact that once someone has fallen out the system for a longer while after the age of 55 they are no longer welcomed back and moreover they do not feel like being employed again.

Locality and the neighbourhood connections play an important role in social and mental health. Fostering such links and creating the feeling of belonging are thus of primary importance. Furthermore, intergenerational programmes could help in strengthening social cohesion.

With growing age, the focus of attention moves gradually to the family, social embeddedness is weakening and there is a chance of social exclusion. However, reclusiveness of elderly is a natural phenomenon that the social system has to adapt to by creating the frameworks of voluntary network involving relatives and friends.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STEPS BY THE SLOVENIAN TEAM

Prepared by *eim*, Human Resource Development Centre, September, 2009

Based on findings of the regional situation analysis in Podravje Region, the following further steps in specific subjects can be recommended:

1. Elderly on the Labour Market
  - a. Raise awareness and inform employers as well as wider public about the meaning and added value of older people/employees (information campaigns, discussion tables, etc.)
  - b. Suggest active labour market policy measures design aimed at older unemployed people taking into account key features of weaknesses characterising this group
2. Inclusion into Society and Social Life
  - a. Design models of new voluntary work/activity schemes for older people with focus on strengthening of inter-generational solidarity
  - b. Design new programmes to promote senior knowledge society – enhance participation in knowledge, culture, e-society
  - c. Raise awareness of older people on the meaning of lifelong learning and inform them about the possibilities offered
  - d. Suggest existing programmes to come near the local environments /neighbourhoods which are better accessible for older citizens
  - e. Suggest regular events open for older citizens to express their needs and suggestions regarding quality ageing
  - f. Prepare regional/local action plans/strategies for active ageing
3. Social Care
  - a. Promote development of new social services through development of social enterprises
4. Spatial Arrangements
  - a. Adapt public spaces to needs of senior people by creating new facilities for them (senior sport park, playground for elderly)
  - b. Suggest more rigorous control over offences against the public order and peace in public spaces
5. Elderly in Traffic
  - a. Raise awareness of wider public on vulnerability of older participants in traffic and obstacles to their free movement caused by other participants
  - b. Suggest more severe penalty or more rigorous control over offence causing limited mobility for older participants in traffic