

# Report

## **On the Quick Scan of Policy and Research documents on empowerment and participation of older citizens in Europe**

European Project: “From Isolation to Inclusion:  
Promoting Innovation in Re-Integrating Older Citizens into Community  
Life”

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# 1 Introduction

The European Project “From Isolation to Inclusion: Promoting Innovation in Re-Integrating Older Citizens into Community Life” is aiming to (further) develop measures that enable groups of older men and women at a multi-dimensional risk of social exclusion to fully participate in community life.

The present quick-scan of European documents offers an overview about recent European policy and other resources (e.g. existing research reports and trans-national programmes) dealing with social in-/exclusion and active ageing. The reviews are supposed to show whether the topics “empowerment” and “participation” of older citizens are principally given attention to in the respective documents. Apart from providing background knowledge about the political and theoretical discussion, a review of relevant European funding programmes was undertaken. Further, we gathered examples of concrete initiatives and innovative ideas that demonstrate best practice in terms of promoting empowerment and participation of older citizens in Europe.

## 2 Empowerment and Participation of Older People in European Policy Documents

The following European policy documents have been reviewed according to their relevance for the objectives of the project:

- Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004
- Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2005
- Report on Social Inclusion. An analysis of the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (2004-2006) submitted by the 10 new Member states (2005)
- Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002
- Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)
- Active Ageing. A Policy Framework (2002)
- International Plan of Action on Ageing: Report on Implementation (WHO, 2004)
- Older Women’s Network, Europe: Resolution from the Participants at the European conference “Equal Opportunities for Older Women in Politics and Society; [www.own-europe.org](http://www.own-europe.org)

### 2.1 Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004

The Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004, based on an analysis of the NAPs/inclusion for the period 2003-2005, identifies key trends and challenges across the Union and good practice and innovative approaches of common interest to the Member States. All countries have developed their National Action Plans in context of the Common Objectives agreed to at the Nice European Council in 2000 (p. 10):

- to facilitate participation in employment and access to resources, rights, goods, and services for all;
- to prevent the risk of exclusion;
- to help the most vulnerable;
- to mobilise all relevant bodies.

The Joint Report on Social Inclusion conducts an analysis of the contents of National government Action Plans (NAP/incl). It shows that most countries identify the following groups as being at particular risk of exclusion: disabled people, refugees and immigrants, long-term unemployed, lone-parent families, homeless people, young unemployed, disadvantaged elderly and disadvantaged families.

However, little attention is paid to age-related issues, although in most of the Member States people aged 65 years and over suffer from a relatively high risk of poverty and social exclusion. No specific groups such as older migrants or older disabled people are addressed. The issues of disadvantaged people such as immigrants, ethnic minorities or disabled people are presented in rather general terms, highlighting health, housing and employment areas in particular.

Most Member States launched activities to promote the participation of older people in policy making and in the preparation of the NAPs. It has been recognised that their experience and knowledge gives important insights to what does and doesn't work. However, activities promoting social inclusion of disadvantaged groups are often missing.

## **2.2 Report on Social Inclusion in the 10 New Member States 2005**

The Report on Social Inclusion in the ten new Member States is based on an assessment of their first National Action Plans covering the period from 2004 to 2006 and gives an overview of the main strategic approaches and the key policy measures adopted in the Member States.

It is important to stress that the new Member States approach the task of developing a national plan from very different starting points because their levels of poverty and social exclusion as well as their welfare regimes vary significantly. However, all countries have developed their NAPs/inclusion in context of the common set of four objectives agreed to at the Nice European Council in 2000 mentioned above (see chapter 2.1).

Almost all EU10 Member States identify the following high risk groups of social exclusion:

- Immigrants and ethnic minorities (including Roma)
- Disabled people
- Ex-prisoners
- Drug abusers, alcoholics
- Children

However, certain NAPs don't address specific target groups but favour the rather vague category of "vulnerable groups" which encompasses a wide range of groups. Such a broad approach makes a translation of objectives into specific measures particularly difficult.

The outcome from the 2004 NAPs /inclusion shows that most EU10 Member States place employment policy on top of the policy agenda for fighting poverty and social exclusion, while aged-related issues are hardly addressed. A target group which requires particular attention in some of the NAPs is that of old women because they were identified to be at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. In general, it is suggested to accept the future challenge of dealing with the increasing proportion of older people in the population but specific measures haven't been developed yet.

Also in the new Member States the need for and value of input from people with experience of poverty and social exclusion to the NAPs process is widely acknowledged. The most common arrangements for involving disadvantaged groups in policy making is the

participation of their representatives in preparatory seminars and working groups. The challenge ahead is to put in place structured ways of ensuring participation of people experiencing poverty, to involve them directly into the NAPs/inclusion process and to consult with them to broader extent to ensure the development of better-targeted and more effective policies.

In sum, according to the objectives of our project in the NAPs of the new Member States more concrete responses should be given to increase the social and political participation of disadvantaged older people.

### **2.3 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2005**

The Joint Report is intended to present an integrated view of the main impediments Member States have to tackle if they want to reach the Lisbon goals drawing on two rounds of the Open Method of Coordination<sup>1</sup> on social inclusion at the level of EU15, plus its extension to the ten new Member States in 2004.

In the report the fight against poverty and social exclusion is considered to remain a major challenge for the European Union and its Member States. Similar to the Joint Report on Social Exclusion 2004 (see chapter 2.1) following high-risk groups have been identified: single parent household (mainly headed by women), older people living alone (also especially women) and families with several dependants. Further, according to the NAPs/inclusion it is highlighted that immigrants, ethnic minorities and the Roma, people with disabilities, the homeless, victims of people trafficking, people in or leaving care institutions and subsistence farmers face very particular risks.

For the first time older people have been identified as being at high risk of social exclusion. However, age-related topics discussed in the Joint Report 2005 include the modernisation of the pension system, longer working lives and an increase of private provision. Employment is seen as the key factor for social inclusion because it can, among other factors, promote social participation. Apart from this, participation and empowerment don't play an important role in this Joint Report 2005.

### **2.4 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002**

In 2002 the Second World Assembly on Ageing adopted the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which committed governments to meet the challenge of ageing populations and provided the world policy makers with a set of 117 concrete recommendations.

The overarching aim of the International Plan of Action on Ageing 2003 is to “*ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights*” (A/CONF.197/9, p. 7). These recommendations cover three main priority directions:

- Older people and development
- Continuing health and well-being in old age
- Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

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<sup>1</sup> The Open Method of Coordination encompasses five elements: agreeing common objectives (see, chapter 3.1), establishing common indicators as a means of comparing best practice and measuring progress, translating the EU objectives into national/regional policies through the development of two yearly National Action Plans for social inclusion, publishing reports analysing and assessing the National Action Plans and establishing a Community Action Programme to promote policy cooperation and transnational exchange of learning and good practice

In line with the objectives of our project following two central themes running through the International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 are worth mentioning:

- Empowerment of older people to fully and effectively participate in the economic, political and social lives of their societies, through income-generating and voluntary work
- Provision of opportunities for individual development, self-fulfilment and well-being throughout life as well as in later life, by, for example, granting access to lifelong learnings and participation in community life while recognizing that older persons are not one homogenous group

In the International Action Plan on Ageing civic and cultural participation is seen as an important condition for personal well-being and strategies to combat social isolation and support empowerment. Consequently, the governments committed themselves to offer opportunities for active participation to its older citizens by taking measures to enable the full and equal participation of older persons in decision-making at all levels and by providing support to encourage older persons to participate in cultural, economical and social life and lifelong learning.

Further, in the International Action Plan much attention is paid to the full integration of socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Some recommendations address specific groups like older refugees, older women and older persons with disabilities.

## **2.5 Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) – RIS**

In compliance with the goals and objectives of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 mentioned above, the overall aim of the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) for the UNECE region is *“to provide a framework of commitments to support member states in their endeavours to respond adequately to the challenges and opportunities of population ageing in order to achieve a society for all ages”* (p.1).

In the document participation of older people is considered as one of the main policy priorities in relation to population ageing. In particular, the commitment 2 demands *“to ensure full integration and participation of older persons in society”* (p. 2). In sum, inter alia, the following objectives need to be met in order to fulfil this commitment (p. 2-5):

- All parties are urged to promote a positive image of ageing and older persons in the Member States.
- The contribution of older people to families, communities and society as a whole should be encouraged and supported.
- Participation of older people is important in combating social isolation and should be promoted.
- Political participation, in particular, plays an important role in empowering older people and should be emphasised.
- Barriers to older persons, particularly older women, reaching decision-making positions at all levels should be removed.
- Governments and other actors should make every effort to mainstream the needs and concerns of older persons in the decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas.

- In the communities the actors concerned should be encouraged to make facilities available to persons of all age, and create incentives for people of different generations with similar interests to meet, interact and share experiences.
- The establishment or further development of centres of volunteer activity should be promoted.
- All social sectors need to recognise that older people are a heterogeneous group. Accordingly, measures need to be taken to promote a differentiated and variegated view of life of older people.
- In addition to older women ageing migrants are identified as a group at high risk of isolation. Accordingly, their special needs should be taken into consideration in the design and implementation of integration programmes to facilitate their participation in social, economic and cultural life. (p.9)

## **2.6 International Plan of Action on Ageing: Report on Implementation (WHO, 2004)**

The Report on Implementation summarises WHO's contributions to the implementation of the International Plan of Action since 2002 and the results of disseminating the active ageing policy framework.

In sum, the focus of this document is on presentations of projects and programmes undertaken in the field of primary health care and old people, HIV/AIDS and abuse of older people. The access to primary health care is seen as a priority in order to provide the regular, continuing contacts and participation in social life. Accordingly, the target group of the interventions are older people in the need of care.

In this document composed by the WHO projects to promote the participation and empowerment of healthy older people are not mentioned at all.

## **2.7 Active Ageing. A Policy Framework (2002)**

The policy framework of the WHO defines active ageing as *"the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age"* (p. 12).

In the document policy proposals have been designed to address the three pillars of active ageing mentioned in the quotation above: health, participation and security. With regard to the objectives of our project, we focus on the policy proposal addressing participation. These are:

- Provide education and learning opportunities throughout the life course.
- Recognise and enable the active participation of older people in economic development activities, formal and informal work and voluntary activities as they age, according to their individual needs, preferences and capacities.
- Encourage people to participate fully in family community life, as they grow older. In that respect, the aim inter alia is to reduce inequalities in participation of women (enable the full participation of women in political life and decision-making positions as they age, provide education and lifelong learning opportunities for women as they age).

In general, some of the policy proposals are broad and encompass all age groups while others address specific target groups like older people or older women.

## 2.8 Resolution from the Participants at the European Conference “Equal Opportunities for Older Women in Politics and Society”

The participants at the European conference composed a resolution to underline that equal opportunities for women of every age group, despite improvements in existing legislation and other progress made over the past two to three decades, is still not realised in many realms. They confirm the right of women of every age group „*to equal opportunity in terms of participation in policies and society, and their right to a voice in the political processes of decision-making at all levels*“ (p.1).

The following existing problems of many older women, are in the resolution:

- disadvantages in education and professional training
- a greater risk of earlier exclusion from the labour market
- a higher risk of poverty
- a greater burden of work
- a higher risk of becoming socially isolated
- a greater risk of chronic health impairments and inadequate treatment
- restrictions to mobility
- less participation in decision-making processes and interest representation

Against this background, the representatives of NGOs and research institutions appeal to the addressees of this resolution to develop relevant programmes of actions at national and international level inter alia to:

- promote research work on all relevant aspects of the situation of older women
- consider older women as an independent target group in government reports and other government publications, in order to be able to outline policy and legal measures towards improving the situation of older migrant women, members of ethnic minorities and other highly disadvantaged groups of older women
- increase the number and effectiveness of measures already being taken by associations by way of financial and other forms of support; this applies in particular in the case of those measures aimed at supporting the participation of older women in lifelong learning projects and enabling them to take an active part in the establishment and development of networks and self-help organisations aimed at developing and strengthening the capacity of older women to represent their own interests, in the sense of empowerment;
- to increase public awareness of the concerns of older women
- ensure that the mainstreaming approach explicitly includes the perspective of older women and involves older women in national, regional and local social policy initiatives
- establish structures that promote dialogue at all levels between government departments responsible for both equal opportunity and senior citizens, and thereby take the existential concerns of older women into consideration.

### 3 European Programmes under Review

Following documents have been reviewed:

- Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion (principles)  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/programme\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/programme_en.htm)
- The Tavistock Institute, Engender and ECWS (2005). Evaluation of the Programme of Community Action to encourage cooperation between Member States to combat social exclusion
- Decision No 50/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the council of 7 December 2002. Official Journal of the European Communities L10/1
- ERA-AGE: European Research Area in Ageing  
[http://era-age.groups.shef.ac.uk<sup>2</sup>](http://era-age.groups.shef.ac.uk<sup>2</sup)
- Socrates – Grundtvig Programme  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/grundtvig/home\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/grundtvig/home_en.html)
- ENEA-Programme  
[http://www.eubusiness.com/funding/employment-social/empl04\\_en.htm](http://www.eubusiness.com/funding/employment-social/empl04_en.htm)
- Woods, R.; Dobbs, L.; Gordon, C.; Moore, C.; Simpson G. (2004): Report of a thematic study using transnational comparisons to analyse and identify cultural policies and programmes that contribute to preventing and reducing poverty and social exclusion

#### 3.1 Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion

The Programme of Community Action was adopted by the European Parliament and the European Council in 2002 to encourage cooperation between Member States in order to combat social exclusion and to reinforce the efficiency and the output of policies against social exclusion by

- improving the understanding of social exclusion and poverty with the help of comparable indicators
- organising exchanges on policies which are implemented and promoting mutual learning in the context of national action plans
- developing the capacity of actors to address social exclusion and poverty effectively, and to promote innovative approaches (Decision No 50/2002/EC)

With a view to achieving these objectives the following three strands were defined (Travistock Institute 2005. p. 2):

1. Analysis of characteristics, processes, causes and trends in social exclusion
2. Exchange of information and best practices
3. Participation of the various actors and support for networking at European level

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<sup>2</sup> The ERA-AGE website is currently under construction

Programme content under the three strands mentioned above encompasses eight measures and activities: Indicators and Statistics, Thematic Studies, Transnational Exchange Projects (TEPs), Peer Reviews, Non-Governmental Experts, Key Networks and Round Tables and Presidency Events. (Travistock Institute 2005, p.3). The issues participation and empowerment of groups at risk of social exclusion have been incorporated in some of these activities.

The Evaluation of the Programme (2002 to 2006) inter alia showed that the programme has been effective in financing and managing a broad set of actions to meet its objectives. However, more efficiency could be achieved through greater capitalisation of results and more synergies with other programmes. Further, in the Programme some themes<sup>3</sup> are relatively well covered, while others are much less well covered. It is recommended, that the Programme should be more strongly targeted on a smaller number of themes. Some informants from both national authorities and other actors want the Programme to target on a narrower set of actors. (Travistock Institute 2005, p.8-9)

### **3.2 Socrates – Grundtvig Programme**

Grundtvig is one of the eight actions set out under the Socrates II European Education Programme which runs for seven years (2000-2007). The action is part of the European Commission's aim of promoting a policy of lifelong learning and supports the following four types of activities:

- Grundtvig 1: Transnational cooperation projects
- Grundtvig 2: Learning partnership
- Grundtvig 3: Mobility for training of educational staff
- Grundtvig 4: Networks

With regard to the objectives of our project the Grundtvig action is very interesting because it addresses adults who want to learn in order to increase their capacity to play a full and active role in society and develop their intercultural awareness<sup>4</sup>.

Overall responsibility for implementing the Socrates-Grundtvig actions lies with the European Commission. The activities work with different target groups like elderly people, disabled people, migrants and people with special needs and focus on innovative ways of providing adult learning initiatives<sup>5</sup>. (Woods, R., et al. 2004)

### **3.3 ENEA Programme**

The ENEA pilot project on mobility of elderly people was launched 2003 from the European Parliament and was finished in the year 2004.

The pilot project intended to test the feasibility and usefulness of the establishment of European exchange programmes for elderly through specialised organisations tasked with developing inter alia resources for mobility and change of infrastructure. Thus, the programme supported initiatives involved in promoting the transnational exchange programmes for older European citizens in insecure employment situations or at risk of social exclusion.

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<sup>3</sup> In the evaluation report it is not mentioned which themes are well covered and which are not.

<sup>4</sup> See: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/programme\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/programme_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> As examples of Grundtvig projects see the transnational exchange project Still Active and the LACE project in chapter 5

Among others the ENEA programme supported the European Exchange Project for older volunteers named Teaming up (see chapter 5.1)

### **3.4 ERA-AGE: European Research Area in Ageing**

European Research Area in Ageing (ERA-AGE) is a four-year-project funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme<sup>6</sup>. The aim is to promote the development of a European strategy for research on ageing and to enable Europe to gain maximum added value from investment in this field.

On the web presence of the ERA-AGE inter alia following objectives are quoted:

- To facilitate the coordination of existing research programmes on ageing and knowledge exploitation
- To promote joint interdisciplinary research activities between the countries
- To share good practice in the coordination and management of national ageing research programmes
- To help to break down the barriers between research programmes on ageing, policy and practice
- To support the production of European priorities for research programmes on ageing and ensure that these are fed systematically into national/regional funding mechanisms

The network is coordinated by the UK representative The New Dynamic of Ageing Programme and comprises twelve partners all over Europe who are responsible for the funding and coordination of national research programmes. In addition, there are two associate partner organisations to maximise the sharing of experience and good practice. Currently, a comprehensive web based database on European research programmes on ageing is under construction.

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<sup>6</sup> The overall aim of the Sixth Framework of the European Union (2002-2006) is to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of industry and encourage its international competitiveness while promoting research activities in support of other EU policies (see <http://europa.eu.int>)

## **4 Transnational Research Documents dealing with Participation and Empowerment of Older People in Europe**

Following transnational research documents have been reviewed:

- Ney, S. (2004). Active Ageing Politics in Europe: between Institutional Path Dependency and Path Departure. [www.iccr-international.org](http://www.iccr-international.org)
- Stier, K. (2004a). MERI – Mapping existing research and identifying knowledge gaps concerning the situation of older women in Europe (Final European Synthesis Report) [www.sophia-net.org](http://www.sophia-net.org); [www.own-europe.org](http://www.own-europe.org)
- Stier, K. (2004b). MERI – Mapping existing research and identifying knowledge gaps concerning the situation of older women in Europe (Summary of the European Synthesis Report) [www.sophia-net.org](http://www.sophia-net.org); [www.own-europe.org](http://www.own-europe.org)
- Egger de Campo, M.; Gentile, N.; Harpur, J. et al. (2003) MEPESE: Methods to prevent Elderly Social Exclusion. WP4: Proposals and Guidelines for policy makers at local and regional level in Italy. <http://www.cooss.marche.it/mepese/progetto.htm>

### **4.1 MERI – Mapping existing Research and identifying Knowledge Gaps concerning the Situation of Older Women in Europe**

The main objectives of the European project MERI are to increase knowledge about the specific living conditions and problems of older women, to improve the empirical basis and to raise the general public's awareness about the situation of older women. The analysis method used was mapping existing knowledge and identifying blind spots in the research landscape. International research documents and statistical publications on the living situation of older women and further themes (among others social inclusion) were collected and analysed. (Stiehr 2004a, p. 2)

According to the objectives of this quick scan report we focus on the results concerning social integration and participation of older women in Europe. The analysis of research documents shows, that the characteristics of older women including their higher life expectancy, their lower level of education and their worse income situation (especially in very old age), have a major influence on their chances of social integration and participation.

Their lower average age at marriage and higher life expectancy means that older women have a higher probability of becoming grandparents than men and play an important part in intergenerational relations. However, those who do not have any descendants suffer mainly from social isolation at an advanced age. At younger age friends, other relatives and contacts from sports, volunteering etc. compensate for this lack.

Further the research documents display that widows are often more socially integrated than older couples. Based on findings in several countries, neighbourhood networks appear important in situations of social vulnerability. Leisure and cultural activity patterns are not only influenced by gender, but also by social status, education level and local contexts. For instance, older women spend more time reading books, listening to radio, and are more engaged in church and religious activities, while older men prefer newspapers and TV, and are more likely to be members of a club or society. (Stiehr 2004b, p. 7-8)

## 4.2 The ActivAge Project: Active Ageing Policies in Europe

The overall aim of the ActivAge Project is to identify and analyse the socio-institutional, economic and political realities facing the implementation of active ageing policies in Europe. The first phase of the project investigated the institutional contexts in which active ageing in Europe takes place.

The research discovered that active ageing has become a policy issue across Europe, albeit not a very important one and has yet to attain a prominent position on European policy agendas. In most of the countries, commitment from policy-makers in the main is of more rhetorical than practical value and the governance resources devoted to developing active ageing policies are modest. Part of the problem is, that demographic ageing is a transversal issue and affects a wide range of policy domains and policy communities. As a result, the institutional landscapes in which actors formulate and implement active ageing measures are fragmented. With the exception of Finland, none of the countries have structured national programmes on ageing and don't coordinate the divergent strands of policy-making. In addition to the institutional fragmentation, the political mobilisation of older people is poorly developed in Europe. Observers are of the opinion that existing senior citizen organisations have not managed to provide older Europeans with an effective political voice. Further barriers to the development of active ageing policies identified by the researchers are ageism and age discrimination. (Ney 2004, p. 32)

On the other hand, institutional structures in Europe are opportunities for active ageing policies. In most countries of the ActivAge sample, existing institutional structures at all levels of governance hold considerable potential for successful active ageing policy-making and older people themselves are becoming more conscious of their own abilities. In addition, new forms of political participation and civic involvement of older people are emerging in all analysed countries. (Ney 2004, p. 33)

In sum, the challenge for policy-makers at European level will be to design processes to create institutional innovations that benefit Europeans of all age (Ney 2004, p. 35).

## 4.3 MEPESE

Mepese (Methods to Prevent Elderly Social Exclusion) was a project within the programme Preparatory Measures Combating and Preventing Exclusion, DG Labour and Social Affairs and aimed to develop methods of social intervention which will promote social integration in terms of assisting elderly people in taking part in various social activities.

In workpackage 4 recommendations for policy makers at local level concerning methods, initiatives and contents related to different possibilities to prevent social exclusion have been elaborated. These are inter alia:

- Elderly social exclusion is to be considered as a dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon resulted from a process in which various concomitant causes take part
- Open discussions, dialogues and contacts have to be organised, developed and maintained
- Local Social Networks which have a steady cooperation with all active subjects acting in this field should be developed with the aim to favour sharing of experiences and to promote a common and coordinated strategy of intervention
- Public Administration should create structures and instruments in order to coordinate the social interventions and monitor the social situation

- Policy makers should emphasise the third age as a phase of life of great value for the person and the resources and opportunities of this age
- It should be invested in education because education to a culture of respect is considered to be the main way to the creation of an active citizenship. Elderly can be both beneficiaries and the source of educational offers. They could learn how to live a different new phase or they could teach their experience to younger generations

#### **4.4 Mem-Vol - Migrant and Ethnic Minority Volunteering**

The Transnational Exchange Programme „Migrant and Ethnic Minority Volunteering“ (2002-2006) aims to promote and facilitate volunteering and self-help of migrants and ethnic minorities. The objectives of the first project phase (December 2002 – August 2003) were inter alia to compose a brief outline of social situation of migrants and ethnic minorities in each partner country<sup>7</sup>, to compile major findings of research and to identify key actors and local, regional and national political programmes to facilitate volunteering of migrants and ethnic minorities.

The synthesis report shows that systematic research into volunteering of migrants and ethnic minorities so far has been limited in most of the countries. However, there is more and more interest in volunteering of migrants and ethnic minorities in politics and science and there is a variety of voluntary and civic activities promoting participation of migrants and ethnic minorities. Following differences between the participating countries have been experienced:

- In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom the theme of volunteering and civic activities of migrants and ethnic minorities is high on the agenda
- In Germany science and politics started in the 1990s to deal with MEM volunteering
- The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports set up a five-year programme to foster diversity in the voluntary sector in 2001
- In Austria and Denmark, MEM volunteering is not yet high on the political agenda
- In France it is especially aimed at integrating migrants and ethnic minorities into the existing volunteering system and the developemet of self-organisations is discussed as an problem factor in segregation

Further, in the report national programmes and examples of good practice have been identified and documented to enable transnational exchange of experience. Most of the examples focus on general education, culture, leisure activities and socializing, social care and integration into labour market.

According to the objectives of our project, we searched for programmes and initiatives focusing on social and political participation of older migrants and ethnic minorities. However, most of the good practice examples aim at migrants and ethnic minorities in general and do not adress specific groups like older migrants. In Austria, for instance, the Caritas Austria supports migrants to become active as volunteers in social services after participating in a basic training course. Further, the gEMiDE Project in Germany promotes civic activities of migrants and naturalised Germans through volunteering. In the Netherlands the organisation

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<sup>7</sup> Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In June 2003 a Spanish and Hungarian partner joined to enlarge the partnership.

M.A.M.A. was set up to help Antillean and Aruban immigrant women and their families with the objective to make them self-supportive and to facilitate integration into Dutch society.

The objectives of phase 2 are among others to continue compilation of the social situation of migrants and ethnic minorities and to continue identification of further examples of good practices. Further, exchange of experience between self-organisations, welfare organisations, NGOs and national and local authorities in each country and on the European level is to be facilitated.

## **5 Examples of Transnational Initiatives to Promote Empowerment and Participation of Older Citizens**

In the following section a variety of transnational initiatives by and for older citizens to promote their participation and empowerment will be discussed. All of the selected good practices deal with voluntary work and lifelong learning of older people.

With regard to the objectives of our project the following documents and links were reviewed:

- MAIMI – Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators to Monitor Implementation (Follow up phase off the Monitoring RIS for the MIPAA)
- Still Active – An European Exchange Programme for Older Volunteers  
[www.eurag-europe.org](http://www.eurag-europe.org)
- Teaming up – An Exchange Programme for Older Volunteers  
[www.eurag-europe.org](http://www.eurag-europe.org)
- LACE – Lifelong learning and Active Citizenship in Europe’s ageing society  
[www.lace-project.net](http://www.lace-project.net)

### **5.1 Initiatives promoting Voluntary Work of Older People**

#### **Teaming up and Still Active**

The European exchange programmes for older volunteers in non-profit organisations so called Still Active (Grundtvig 1, see chapter 3.2) and Teaming up (November 2004 – October 2005)<sup>8</sup> are sponsored by EU-subsidies and by governments involved. Teaming up and Still Active directed at over 55 years old European citizens who retired from work and aimed at promoting the role of older persons as active participants.

Within the Teaming up project, 150 participants performed voluntary service in community based initiatives abroad over a period of some weeks. The participants in the Final Conference of the project (October 2005) agreed that “*such programmes enable older people to get a more concrete picture of Europe*” and that they “*get the chance to actively participate in creating a common Europe*”.

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<sup>8</sup> The project Teaming up was supported by European Commission in the framework of the ENEA programme.

## 5.2 Initiatives promoting Lifelong Learning of Older People

### LACE – Lifelong Learning and Active Citizenship in Europe’s Ageing Society

The LACE project (Lifelong learning and Active Citizenship in Europe’s ageing society)<sup>9</sup> started in October 2005 and is a partnership of organisations including both formal and non-formal educational institutions from seven different European countries. The aim is to increase the active engagement of Europe’s ageing population. Thus, LACE compares three existing educational programmes in the Netherlands (The SESAM Academy), Belgium (Training for Senior Citizens’ Consultants) and Germany (Erfahrungswissen für Initiative) aiming at volunteer involvement of older people.

The LACE project looks at possibilities to improve these existing programmes but also to replicate these in other parts of Europe. This is done by helping project partners to develop their own projects on national level.

## 6 Conclusion

The analysis of the socio-institutional, economic and political realities facing the implementation of active ageing policies in Europe showed that it has become a policy issue across Europe, albeit not a very important one.

Accordingly, in some policy documents at international level, particularly in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the Regional Implementation Strategy and the policy framework of the WHO „Active Ageing“, empowerment and participation are often seen as an important stepping stone in preventing or addressing social exclusion. Referring to the issues participation and empowerment following main points are discussed in the respective documents:

- Political participation plays an important role in empowering older people and should be emphasised.
- Inequalities in social and political participation by women and ageing migrants must be reduced (remove barriers to older persons, particularly older women, reaching decision-making positions at all levels).
- The establishment or further development of centres of volunteer activity should be promoted.
- It should be recognizing that older persons are not one homogenous group.
- Education and learning opportunities should be provided throughout the life course.

However, the Joint Reports point out that there is little integration of age-related policies in the NAPs and removing material poverty and creating employment opportunities were the dominant issues. In other words, the concept of social exclusion tends to be related primarily to employment and socio-economic factors and social and political participation don’t play an important role. Accordingly, measures mainly focus on older people on demand of long-term care and aim to provide care services and to increase the income of elderly persons as it is shown in the WHO’s Report on Implementation.

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<sup>9</sup> Funded by the Grundtvig 1 programme of the European Commission, see chapter 3.2.

Nevertheless, there are clear signs of growing awareness of the situation of disadvantaged older people and various programmes and initiatives were launched to promote their participation in social, cultural and political life. For instance, international exchange programmes for older people are considered as highly important instruments to promote active citizenship and the mobility of older people at European level. It is apparent that all examples of good practices discovered in the present report deal with voluntary work and lifelong learning of older people.

To sum up, in future, the importance to promote participation and empowerment of older people should be encouraged through targeted policies and programmes and initiatives focusing on the empowerment- and participation-approach should be seen as a new pathway to promote the active citizenship of the elderly.