



# Newsletter **SILVER**

*number 1 July 2008*

## *Editorial*

The ageing of the European population and the adjustment of the labour market to this new stake is a burning and thorny topic. As the challenges led by this ageing phenomenon are all identical across the European Union, the European authorities have settled, in 2000, during the Lisbon summit meeting, several goals in matter of employment.

The primary aim is a global employment rate of 70% across all the 27 countries of the continent, and more specifically, an employment rate of older workers (55-64) of 50% by the year 2010. Older workers, who are barely called up today, represent an important resource to avoid global employment decline. Significant discrepancies are existing between the different European countries in matter of older workers employment.

As soon as 2000, some of them were displaying really good level of older workers employment rate; others have known huge differences and are now displaying topping level of this rate. However, Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Hungary have still major efforts to make, even if the biggest gaps are already fulfilled.

France is particularly late regarding the issue of older workers employment rate. Indeed, the older workers employment rate (people between 55 and 64) is among the lowest in the E.U.. One of the most important measures taken has been the lengthening of the employees' contribution period, within the framework of the 2003 retirement reform. Basically financial, this measure extends of one year the required contribution period in order to reach a full retirement pension.

Thus, the period will pass from 40 years working to 41 years. To be a source of progress and efficient, it must be coupled with measures which support the containment of older workers employees.

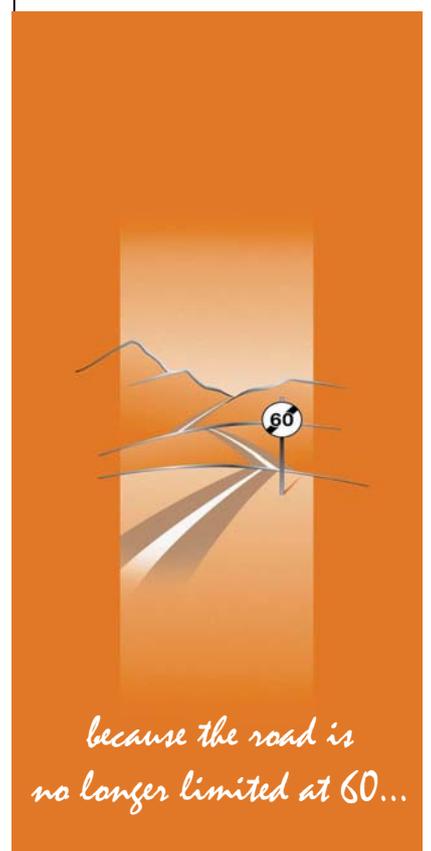
To cope with this challenge and in order to maintain their level of activity and performance, enterprises must implement an age management system. The SILVER device aimed at SMEs, industrial SMEs, and bigger firms, is dedicated to lengthening and evaluating older workers' activity inside the enterprise.

The proposed toolbox allows the enterprise to face the risks linked to the current demographic issues such as, for instance, the loss of competencies consecutive to baby-boomers' massive retirements. This project brings a sustainable answer to firms thanks to its toolbox, which has been already fully tested and implemented in the frame of previous programs.

***The SILVER team***

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## Age management: a new way to improve competitiveness

The SILVER device is enrolled on the European Commission employment policy and benefits from the European financial support.

It has been developed by CEFORALP and its European partners. The goal of the device is to bring an answer to the issue of older workers' containment in a professional activity.

This device aims to integrate, within firms, methods and tools so as to assess the enterprise's situation in respect to older workers' employment; the risk level that is incurred by the enterprise; and also actions that can be implemented to jam these risks.

In fact, with the global active population decreasing, enterprises already face and will face many risks. Among them, there is the loss of competencies due to the massive retirement dynamic; workers' moral fatigue and physical wear-out issues; and recruitment issues within the context of an increasing shortage of labour force in some fields; and eventually intergenerational relationship problems.

The SILVER methodology allows firm's managers to assess their "age situation" thanks to:

a population pyramid;

an assessment of the competencies which allows the visualisation of the situation of the enterprises and of its different departments as regards 3 factors linked to competencies: the management of knowledge and competencies, the flexibility and the management of change in the activity;

a plain and clear assessment grid which diagnoses the risks linked to ages.

This device also advises an "individual self-diagnosis" which assesses employees' appetencies and competencies. This self-diagnosis enables enterprise to advocate to its employees missions and positions that are consistent with their global capacities. This can lead to a new working dynamic and a rising motivation among the older workers.

At last, by the description of the appetencies and competencies of each one of their employees, enterprises can review their organisation and settle more coherent teams.

This approach is in keeping with a both corrective and preventive logic, which aims to provide firms with essential resources to gently go through the demographic shock and to retain talents who are playing a main part within the competitiveness of the enterprise.

In this way, the SILVER device aims to:

- propose more and better training for older workers;
- settle tutoring between older and younger workers to keep the core competencies inside the firm;
- implement a real age management system.

It gives firms the opportunity to capitalise on its older workers' competencies and in fine, it helps them to improve their competitiveness.

**SILVER applies to all kind of enterprises, and more specifically to SMEs, whatever their activity is.**



SILVER is currently in its experimentation stage in the 5 partner countries of the project.

The results will be available on the Internet website of the project

[www.silver-project.eu](http://www.silver-project.eu) from the first quarter of 2009.

*a simple approach, an easy diagnosis* **Silver**

an operational approach based on the "diagnosis - synthesis - action" 3 step process to coach the enterprise from the diagnosis of its age-related situation to the implementation of progress actions

a **method** and **tools** to identify and quantify age-related risks and implement the corresponding measures in order to make the competitiveness of the enterprise more durable

a European programme coordinated by CEFORALP, in partnership with the UIC Rhône-Alpes in **France**, STZ in **Germany**, CEPYM Aragón in **Spain**, ITL Group in **Hungary** and Confindustria Veneto SIAV in **Italy**



The SILVER partnership is a multi-players partnership, full of various and complementary competencies; with an extensive experience in engineering pedagogy and in management.

The originality of this partnership is that it is composed of actors from varied origins, with different missions. It brings together a professional training agency, a consultancy SME, an inter professional federation of employers, two professional branches, an association specialized in consultancy and training as well as one university.

**STZ (Sächsisches Technologie Zentrum):**  
It is the German partner, an apprenticeship and training centre, which develops and implements technological services and innovative trainings for apprentices and employees of industrial enterprises (more specifically from the metallurgical sector).

**CEPYME (Confederación española de la pequeña y mediana empresa):**  
It is a professional organisation which brings together more than 20 000 SME of all fields within the Aragón area. Its mission is to egg on and help the Aragón SMEs to develop them and to constantly adapt them to the environment. It achieves its mission thanks to a permanent social dialog in favour of a constant growth that also participates in improving the quality of life in the area.

**Confindustria Veneto SIAV:**  
It is an enterprise that is at the service of the regional federation of the provincial unions of the Venetian employers.

The organisation has three proficiencies centres. It offers training programs to young people and employees, within a logic of lifelong learning.

It provides enterprises with advices on quality, innovation, environment and security. At last, it identifies emerging development opportunities for firms, notably concerning European programs.

**ITL Group:**  
It is a consulting agency specialized in the support of Italian SME in Hungary. It brings its expertness to 13 000 firms who want to invest in the Hungarian market by offering several services as, for instance, market studies, accountability management, training, etc.

**HEC Lausanne (Faculté des Hautes Etudes Commerciales):**  
It is the economic faculty within the university of Lausanne. It is a school with an excellent academic level, which is pursuing innovating research activities in partnership with various institutions.

Within the framework of this cooperation, several projects regarding lifelong learning have been implemented by the Faculty.

**SECS (Société des Employés de Commerce Suisse):**  
It is the most important professional organisation in Switzerland. It brings together employees from office workers to sales employees and assimilated jobs.

It offers many professional training by means of different subdivisions that are managing schools and training institutes.

**UIC Rhône-Alpes (Union des Industries Chimiques):**  
It is a professional organisation, which gathers the regional chemistry firms. The organisation offers to these enterprises services in many fields like social, juridical, and technical fields, and in matter of communication.

It has many experts, tools and means to answer firm's issues in a competitive environment, which is submitted to rising legislation.

The UIC is involved in training thanks to several partnerships with training organisms.

**CEFORALP:**  
Project promoter and coordinator, it is an association which aims to accompany enterprises, especially SME, in their efforts to improve their competitiveness.

It brings together a team of 12 persons, proficient in conception, engineering, implementation, and project leading, around three expertise areas (industrial processes, ICT and services) reinforced by transversal skills (innovation, age management, transition management, etc.)



## the Leonardo da Vinci programme

During the Lisbon European Council held in March 2000, the Heads of State and Government set to the Union a major strategic goal for 2010: "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Three main objectives have been ratified by the European Council: the educational and training systems should combine quality, accessibility and openness to the world.

Among the priorities of the strategy of Lisbon, there is the participation to education and life long learning.

This participation is still marginal with only 9.7% of adults who enjoyed it in the European Union in 2007.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme aims to contribute to the realisation of a European educative area by promoting the development of education and life long learning, and also in insuring the continuation of the cooperation between the actors

of the professional training across the European Union.

This programme fosters the mobility of people who want to acquire a professional experience, it eases the exchange of good practices between people in charge of training and it forms a great tool to settle new methodologies of training.

This programme is addressed to young people in formation, or in insertion, job-seekers, employees, trainers, human resources managers, etc.

Mainly, the programme is following three strategic objectives :

Strengthening the competencies and the capabilities of people;

Improving the quality of the professional training and of the long life acquisition of aptitudes and competencies.

Promoting and strengthen the contribution of the professional

learning to the process of innovation in order to enhance competitiveness and corporate spirit.

Among the considered measures to reach these goals, there is the support to pilot projects which rests on transnational partnerships aiming at developing innovation and quality in professional training.

Thus, in 2006, more than 8500 mobility internships within E.U. have been funded in France.

22 projects of training engineering proposed by French organisations have received the support of the European Commission.

SILVER is one of these projects.



## *your contacts in Europe*

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## *get more info on the employment of older workers*

Several works, books and articles, are dealing with the issue of the employment of older workers in France have been recently published . We have picked 2 of them for their clarity and their relevance.

Wendy Laretto, Sarah Vickerstaff, Philip J.White. The future for older workers. New perspectives. 18th July 2007. this book deals exclusively with the issue of older workers. They have a global view on this issue as they have taken into account all the stakeholders of it: the workers, the employers , and the governments. The study is concentrated on mature industrial and post-industrial economies.

George W. Leeson. Bernhard Ebbinghaus : reforming early retirement in Europe, Japan and the USA. European Sociological Review. 31th July 2007. The author proposes in this article ways to reform the retirement systems in these countries.

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