



# Work Package 4: Employer Attitudes to Older Workers:

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## *Deliverable 4.3 Analysis Report*

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
List of Figures.....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
1.1 Background .....	3
2. The Demographic Time Bomb .....	3
2.1 An ageing workforce.....	6
2.2 Age Management .....	8
3. Methodology.....	10
4. Analysis of responding companies.....	10
4.1 HR Functionality and age management .....	11
4.2 View and attitudes to age management.....	12
4.3 Attitudes towards older workers .....	14
4.4 Summary.....	16
5. Conclusions .....	17
Appendices .....	18

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Effective Economic Old-Age Dependency Ratio, 2010 to 2060 .....	4
Figure 2: Project Population of EU Member States, 2010 to 2060 .....	5
Figure 3: Net Migration flows in EU Member States, 2005 to 2009 .....	6
Figure 4: (Generally) rising employment rates of older workers (55-59 and 60-64), 2000 – 2010.....	7
Figure 5: Age Management Value Chain.....	9

# 1. Introduction

This analysis report is part of Work Package 4 which focuses on establishing current views and attitudes of an ageing workforce among employers. This deliverable presents an analysis of the findings from survey research which was carried out in six European countries: Germany, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and the UK. The focus of the study was to examine current practice and attitudes within companies in relation managing age, and the framework around which the questionnaire was built, was age management theory.

This report also links closely with Work Package 5, Age Management Seminar for Employers, where the results and findings will be presented at a local level by the project partners involved in the delivery of this task. It is anticipated that the results will contribute to the understanding of employers, policy makers and practitioners on the current challenges presented by an ageing workforce across the European Union. The report provides an overview of the factors that drive and influence older worker participation in the labour market and will help inform policy makers and employers by assisting the strategic planning process through addressing the ageing workforce challenge faced in Europe.

To help employers visualise the Age Management concept more clearly, a ‘model’ has been designed that will help organisations achieve greater competitiveness or service provision while at the same time, developing older workers and helping them to realise their full economic potential.

It is anticipated that, by adopting this model and implementing the practices within it, organisations can achieve greater productivity from their older workforce, ensuring that the organisation remains competitive in the future and can be responsive to demographic changes currently taking place.

The following sections of this report present the context in which this research has been carried out, as well as background information on the origins of the demographic challenge faced by society today. It then elaborates further on the age management concepts, presenting a framework and methodology for the research. Finally, the report elicits the key findings from the exercise before drawing conclusions.

## 1.1 Background

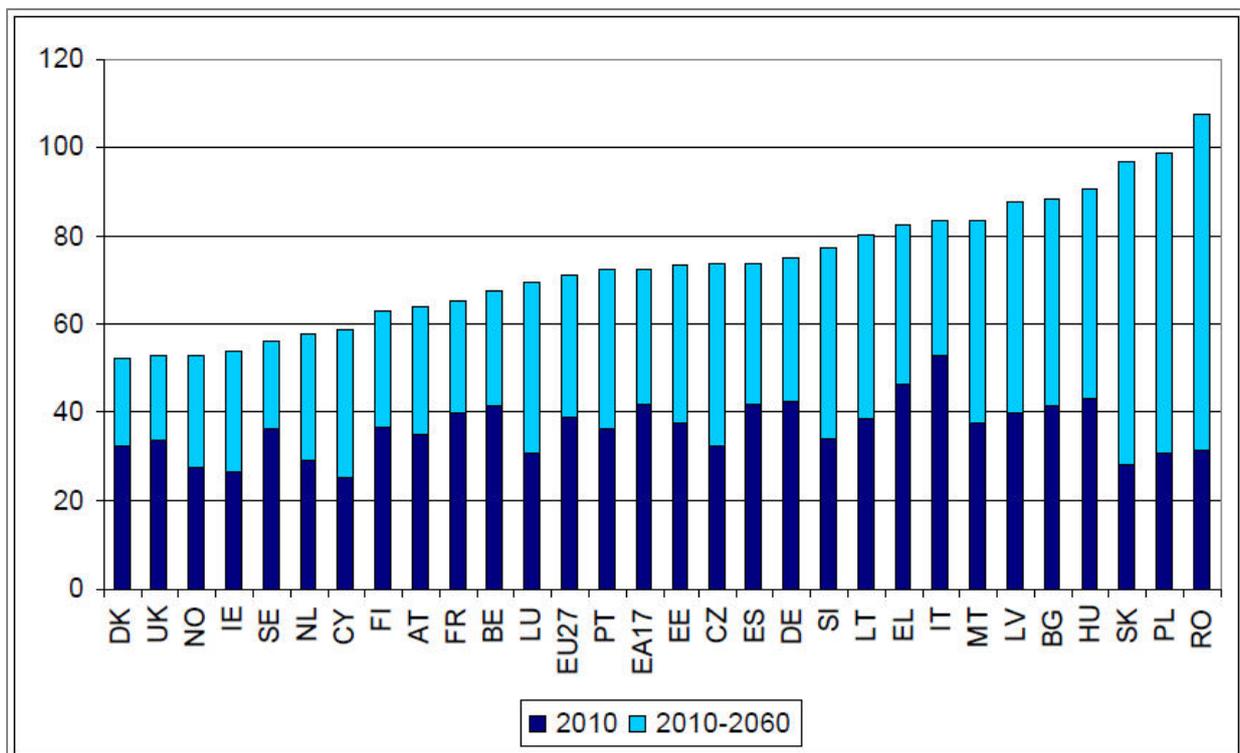
This deliverable relates to Work Package 4 of the AMaP project ‘Employer Attitudes to Older Workers’. The work package aims to develop a questionnaire to carry out a cross-sectional study of employers in each of the partner countries to establish levels of awareness among employers of the ageing workforce in Europe. The objective is to measure attitudes of employers toward older workers in areas such as productivity, capacity for learning and return on investment of training and development.

## 2. The Demographic Time Bomb

Headlines using the phrase ‘*demographic time bomb*’ are increasingly being reported on throughout the world’s media. A realisation is emerging that the demographic profile globally is changing and predicted to impact on all areas of society, from the economy and

health provision, to consumer attitudes. But what does the term ‘demographic time bomb’ actually mean? Essentially, it refers to the demands made on services such as health provision, pensions and other social services as a result of an ageing population. It is also closely associated with the economic old age dependency ratio, the ratio between those of working age and those of non-working age (over 65) who are inactive. Recent data presented shows that the economic old age dependency ratio for 2010 in the EU27 was 39%, or fewer than three people of working age for every older person. And there is no sign of this improving. By 2060, it is projected that the ratio for the EU27 will reach 71%.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1: Effective Economic Old-Age Dependency Ratio, 2010 to 2060**



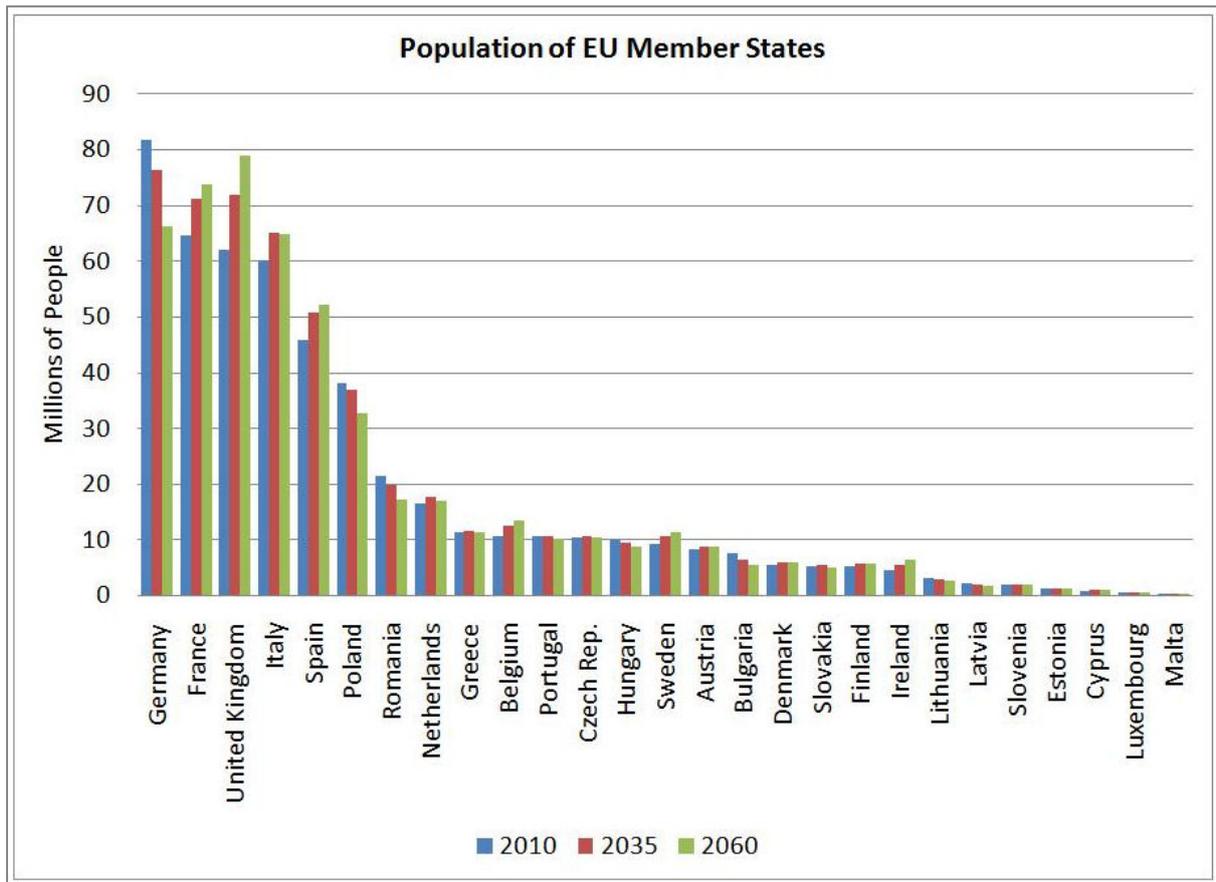
Source: 2012 Ageing Report

This is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, the cost to welfare systems across Europe is increasing. With a greater proportion of older adults and shrinking proportion of the working age population means that government income through taxation is bound to reduce. Secondly, with below replacement level birth rates observed by all European countries, it is unlikely that an increase in the number of younger people will take place any time in the near future. It is widely accepted that for developed nations a fertility rate of 2.1 births per woman is required to re-populate. However, in most developed countries throughout the world fertility rates are lower than required and life expectancy continues to increase which means globally, the population is ageing.

<sup>1</sup> European Commission DG ECFIN (2012) *The 2012 Ageing Report*, Accessed on 14 April 2013: [http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/publications/european\\_economy/2012/pdf/ee-2012-2\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/pdf/ee-2012-2_en.pdf)

The demographic position in Europe has prompted the European Commission to elevate the wider impact of demographic change to the highest level, and begin to formulate strategies for managing it in the future. The total population is projected to remain at current levels in most of the member states with the fertility rate below the required threshold for all countries.

**Figure 2: Project Population of EU Member States, 2010 to 2060**



Source: Eurostat/EUROPOP 2010

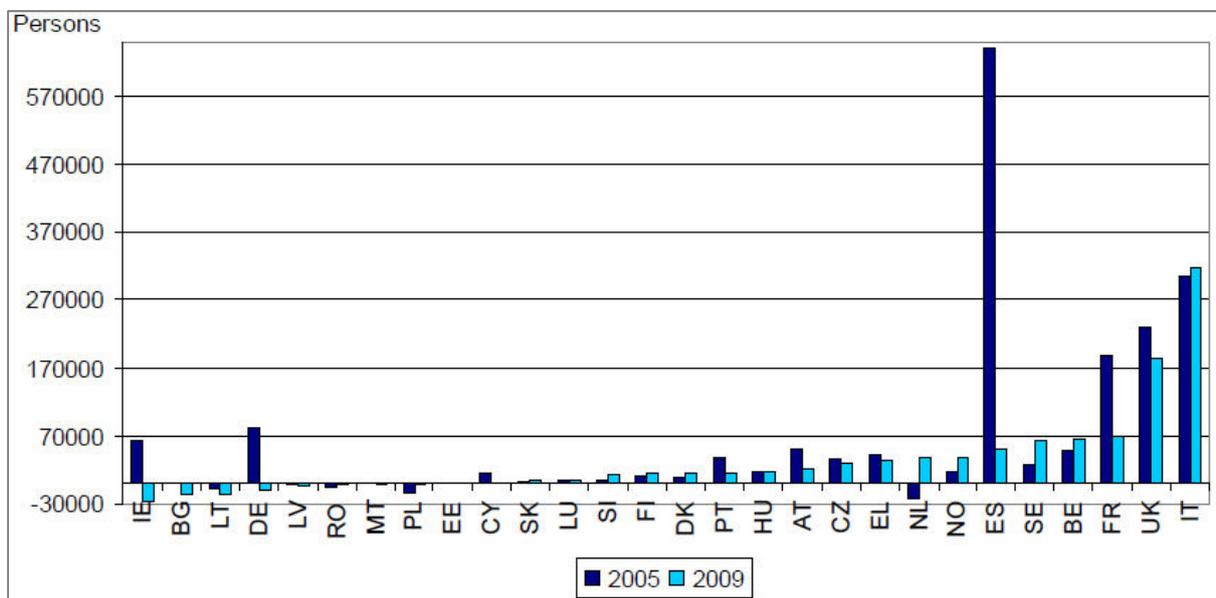
Companies are also beginning to understand the implications of an ageing population on their products. Ford has developed a Third Age Suit, designed to add 30 years on to the person wearing it<sup>2</sup>. This has influenced the design of the latest Ford Focus, particularly with an older consumer in mind, and it has the most headroom of any car in its class, a lower door lip to allow easier access and seats are higher for easier manoeuvrability, a higher suspension to make it taller, handles on the door pillars to assist entry, larger fonts and dials on the dashboard for those with visual impairments and the relocation of the ignition to assist those with joint problems.

<sup>2</sup> Media Ford: Accessed 2 March 2013:  
<http://media.ford.com/news/fordsthirdagesuithelparchitecteddesignhomestomeetneedsofeuropesgrowingelderlypopulation.htm>

So the ‘demographic time bomb’ is a phenomenon that has global implications with economic consequences both in terms of the supply of labour and in consumer choices. A key issue worth noting is that demographic data is open to debate and individual interpretation. Like most statistical information it can be interpreted in many ways. Data are based on future predictions of events taking place today, which may or may not transpire.

One solution to the economic challenges presented by demographic change often cited by governments across Europe is the importance of migration. This may work to the advantage of certain economies; however, it is a risk to hang hope on economic growth on migration alone.

**Figure 3: Net Migration flows in EU Member States, 2005 to 2009**



Source: 2012 Ageing Report

Figure 3 shows net migration flows in Europe and, with the exception of Norway, Sweden, Belgium and Italy, all countries had negative or static net migration levels between 2005 and 2009. This suggests the flow of migration within Europe is unlikely to be the answer to strong economic growth. Additionally, the countries anticipated to have the greatest levels of negative net migration in the coming years are the accession States in Eastern Europe, which will exacerbate the problem of ageing workforces in these areas due to high levels of younger people leaving to work elsewhere in Europe.

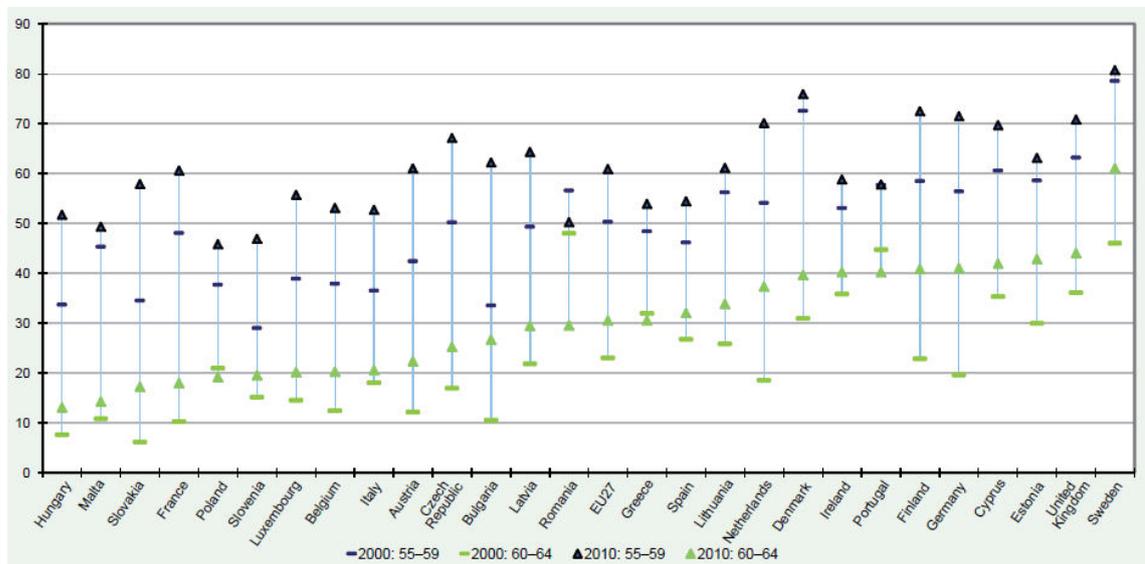
## 2.1 An ageing workforce

Demographic change in Europe over the last 30 years has seen Europe’s population age significantly. The widely acknowledged drivers of increasing life expectancy and lower rates

of mortality mean individuals in Europe are living longer than ever before. This combined with fertility rates that are lower than those required for countries to naturally re-populate means there is a decline in the number of younger people and increasing numbers of older people.

These factors have led to a steady rise in the number of adults aged 50 and over in employment or seeking employment across Europe. Over the last 10 years, there has been a general increase in the employment rates of older adults across Europe. As Figure 4 shows, the increases vary significantly indicating a great deal of diversity across Member States. Only 13% of 60-64 year olds in Hungary were employed in 2010 compared with 60% in Sweden. All countries with the exception of Romania and Portugal saw an increase in the employment rate of workers aged 55-59, while Greece, Poland, Portugal and Romania all experienced a decline in employment rates for 60-64 year olds<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 4: (Generally) rising employment rates of older workers (55-59 and 60-64), 2000 – 2010**



Source, Eurofound / Eurostat Labour Force Survey, 2012

The increase in employment rates of older adults is projected to continue in the future, presenting significant challenges for older workers remaining in the workplace. Barriers such as employer attitudes have to be overcome and changes to legislation, which may force individuals to re-consider their point of exit from the labour market will have to be factored in. In addition, financial circumstances may also mean that early retirement is not an option for many.

The ageing workforce is a development that also has implications for employers and their approaches to human resource management. It is important for employers to have a strategy in place for managing the ageing workforce in order to remain competitive particularly through periods of economic downturn, where often older workers are targeted.

<sup>3</sup> Eurofound - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2012) Employment trends and policies for older workers in the recession, Luxembourg: Publications Office.

Actions taken to encourage older workers to remain active in the labour market later in life should consider the differences and challenges of individual industry sectors as well as cultural differences that exist across Europe. Interventions made in Scandinavian countries may be less successful when implemented in other parts of Europe. It is also important to consider the different challenges that exist between the public and private sectors. In the UK, there are a high proportion of older workers present in the public sector with 33.6% of employees over the age of 50 in Scotland<sup>4</sup>. It is important, therefore, particularly for the public sector to understand the challenge of an ageing workforce and devise strategies for managing it in the future.

Many Member States are in the process of implementing policies and reforms that encourage older adults to work longer in later life and the employment rate of older workers is expected to increase significantly over the next decade. Action and interventions are required to support older adults update their skills and knowledge and to help them re-engage with learning and enhance their employability to ensure both economic and personal needs are met. *“Taking no action would weaken the EU’s ability to meet the future needs of an ageing population”*<sup>5</sup>.

This challenge has led to governments and policy makers across Europe introducing measures, such as increasing statutory pension age that encourage older workers to remain working longer in later life. Paradoxically, many organisations, particularly in a time of economic recession, adopt strategies which adversely affect older workers, for example, through early retirement / redundancy programmes. The true value of the older worker, the tacit knowledge and hidden skills which often exist can be lost to the labour market. Moreover, older adults who exit the labour market at 50+ are less likely to re-enter employment than their younger counterparts<sup>6</sup>. To ensure growth and economic prosperity in the future, employer attitudes and views of older workers must change. For this to be achieved assistance must be provided to help employers and individuals understand the wider implications of exiting the labour market.

## 2.2 Age Management

A key driver of organisations is competitiveness. They want to out-perform their competition and create a competitive advantage. Even in the public sector, service provision is increasingly monitored, with service delivery measured and accounted for. Therefore, it is in the interest all organisations, whether public, private or voluntary to continually look at ways of gaining an advantage or improving performance. Michael Porter<sup>7</sup> is one of the leaders on achieving and sustaining competitive advantage and his ‘Value Chain’ model is often cited as being a model to help companies realise this goal. He proposes that within organisations there are several functions which can be broken down into Primary and Support functions. Primary functions can be attributed to the creation or delivery of a product or service and can be grouped into five main areas: inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and service. The primary activities are linked to

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<sup>4</sup> Loretto, W. (2011) Future Challenges, Presented at Realising the Potential of Older Workers seminar, University of Strathclyde, 26 May 2011.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2009) Dealing with the impact of an Ageing Population in the EU, Luxembourg: Publications Office.

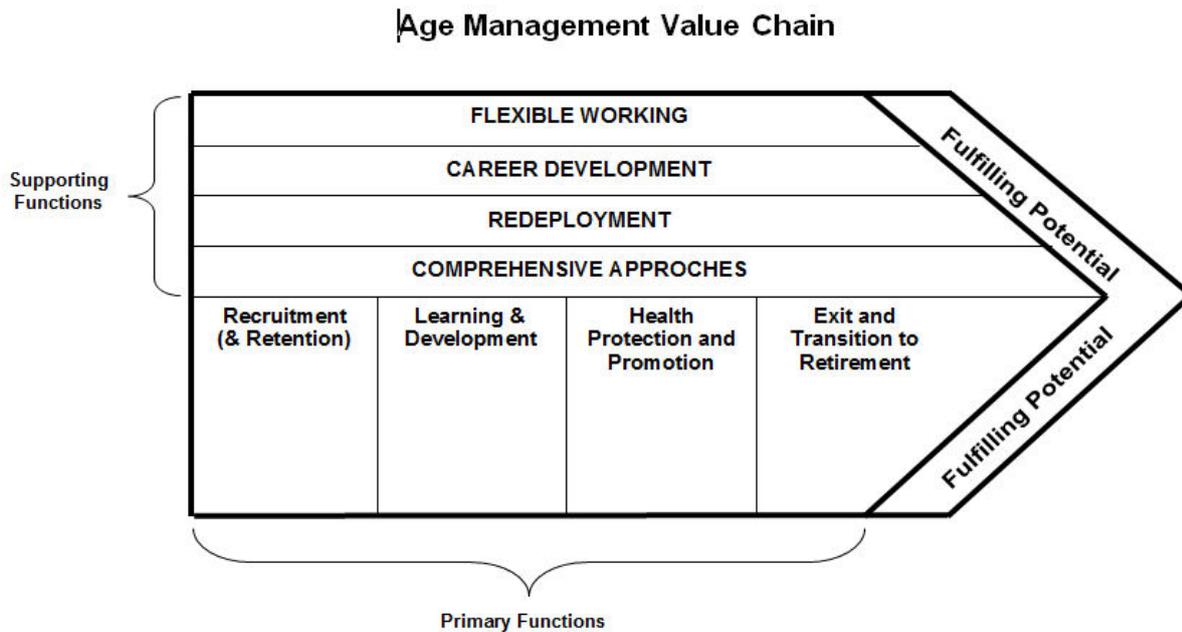
<sup>6</sup> TAEN – The Age and Employment Network (2009) Briefing – The impact of the recession on older workers, Accessed 5 September 2013: <http://taen.org.uk/resources/view/106>

<sup>7</sup> Porter, M.E. (1985) *The Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, New York: Free Press.

support activities which help to improve their effectiveness or efficiency, with four main areas: procurement, ICT including research and development, HRM and infrastructure (planning, finance, quality, information management).

Using this principle of the ‘Value Chain’, the concepts of age management<sup>8</sup>, have been analysed and collated within the ‘Age Management Value Chain’ show in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5: Age Management Value Chain**



Source: Adapted from Naegele and Walker, 2006

The model identifies the Primary Functions which underpin good age management, using them as the foundations for any organisation wishing to formulate age management policies within their organisation. Specifically, these include: Recruitment and Retention; Learning and Development; Health Protection and Promotion; and Exit and Transition to Retirement

In addition to the Primary Functions, Supporting Functions that reinforce good age management are also proposed to compliment the Primary ones, including: Flexible Working; Career Development; Redeployment; and Comprehensive Approaches.

This section will provide greater detail of the Primary and Supporting functions of the ‘Age Management Value Chain’ and considers the purpose of each component as well as elaborating on why organisations should consider adopting particular components. It should be acknowledged at this point that the model draws heavily on previous work carried out by Naegele and Walker (2006) and aims to further enhance the already detailed age management concepts proposed by them.

<sup>8</sup> Naegele, G. and Walker, A. (2006) A guide to good practice in age management, Dublin, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

### 3. Methodology

As previously stated the objective of the research is to measure attitudes of employers toward older workers in areas such as productivity, capacity for learning and return on investment of training and development.

The method used to collect data was a questionnaire, which was developed using Netigate. The questionnaire aimed to carry out a cross-sectional study of employers in each of the partner countries to establish the levels of awareness among employers of the ageing workforce in Europe. The survey consisted of approximately 50 questions which were divided into the following sections; information about the company; HR Department within the company; Age Management and attitudes towards older workers within the company. The survey consisted of multiple choice questions together with open questions. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 employers in each partner country through the web based survey system Netigate. A total of 341 companies responded to the survey.

### 4. Analysis of responding companies

There is a wide variation in the companies that participated in the survey. The largest group of respondents were from sole proprietorships and limited companies. Together these groups constitute 73% (limited companies 36% and sole proprietorships 37%) of the population. Companies in public administration make up almost 9% of respondents. Voluntary organisations and foundations also comprise around 9%. Limited companies dominate in Sweden and Portugal. Sole proprietorships are numerally the largest type of enterprise among the participators in Germany and Greece. The majority of companies responding in Poland are from foundations. The UK stands out by having the most responses from employers in public administration.

The industry diversification is also large. The enterprises represent companies in education, health care, the finance and banking sector, retail, retailers, the building and construction sector, advertising and media, IT/telecommunication, manufacturing, transport, service, restaurant/café.

If we compare the size of the companies, measured by the number of employees, the responding companies are evenly distributed between small/smaller companies (49.5%) and medium sized/larger companies (50.5%). Companies with fewer employees (<50 employees) dominate among the answers from Germany, Poland and Portugal. In the UK, Sweden and Greece the majority of the answers came from companies with more than 50 employees.

If you use the total revenue to compare the size of the enterprises the outcome is more or less the same. Small and smaller companies (0-1 million € total revenue) represent 46.6% of the answers. Medium sized and large companies (more than 1 million € total revenue) represent 53.4% of the respondents.

When the survey was distributed it was sent to the person in charge of HR/equivalent or the CEO.

More men (59.9%) than women (40.1%) participated in the survey. The most equal countries were Portugal (51.2% men, 48.8% women) and the UK (51.6% men, 48.4% women). Germany (80% men, 20% women) and Sweden (70.8% men, 29.2% women) responses were male-dominated.

The range of ages, in total, was leaning towards middle aged/older respondents. The group of 36-50 years had the most respondents (43%), the second largest group 50 years (35.9%) and the group 25-35 years (19.7%). There is a clear dominance of middle aged and older employees. The UK, Germany, Sweden and Greece had a higher average age in the profile of respondents. Portugal and Poland had a lower average age in the profile of respondents.

The majority of those who answered the survey had a position as CEO/equivalent (79%). The person in charge of HR/equivalent constituted 21% of the respondents. In Germany all respondents to the survey were CEO/equivalent.

The experience profile of those who answered the survey had many years of experience. 66% of the respondents had more than 6 years of experience in their position.

## 4.1 HR Functionality and age management

Around half of the companies responding to the survey had an HR Department. The correlation to the size of the company is palpable. That is, the countries with a majority of larger companies in their survey answers, the UK, Sweden and Greece, also have a much higher percentage of companies with HR Departments.

The majority (>70%) of companies do not document the range of ages among the co-workers in their annual reports. Sweden differs from the other countries by having around 50% of companies that document the range of ages in their annual reports.

More than 50% of the companies in the survey state that they do not have a written policy expressing that "age should not be a factor in recruitment".

The majority of the companies (>70%) claim that they provide both training and competence development opportunities for staff. They have an annual plan which is implemented and evaluated. The correlation between large companies and competence development of staff is evident.

About half of the companies in the survey work with a plan that focuses on future training needs and competence development. That is, a strategic plan which matches future societal changes to meet the needs and skills required by the company.

The majority of the companies (>70%) in the survey know what vocational-oriented training is and how to use it to develop the competence in the company.

More than half of the companies state that they have dedicated policies for health and wellbeing. There are higher numbers among the companies in the UK, Sweden and Portugal (>70%).

The most common measures companies use to increase the flexibility of their employees and achieve higher efficiency in the workplace are:

- 1) Flexitime
- 2) Work rotation/redeployment
- 3) Working from home
- 4) Part time
- 5) Reduced responsibility/shared responsibility
- 6) Redeployment to other work tasks

## 4.2 View and attitudes to age management

The majority of companies (>70%) believe that age management policies for older workers would have a positive effect on the work performance of the older members of staff. However, Sweden differs in this matter compared to the other countries and employers are more sceptical about the impact of policies for older members of staff. 51% of the participating Swedish companies believe that policies for older staff members would have a positive impact on the work performance.

Companies in general have a positive attitude toward older members of staff and age management.

In terms of recruitment and selection, a large amount (>70%) of the respondents offer older members of staff the same conditions and opportunities as other age groups, therefore not discriminating as a result of age.

This shows that the majority of the companies display both awareness and a positive attitude towards managing older people in terms of the recruitment process. Naturally, recruitment and selection should be a key component of age management.

Approximately 50% of companies believe it is important that those in charge and managers have specific knowledge and/or experience managing older workers. The Swedish companies in the survey have a differing view, 72% state that it "is not important/not needed at all".

Of the participating companies, only 30% state they have a policy or practices relating to the transfer of knowledge across generations. Sweden differs slightly from this since about 50% of the company's state that they have a policy and practice for this.

It is somewhat remarkable that the percentage is so low. It should be in the interest of the companies to avoid loss of competence and consequently dips in productivity related to older workers leaving the organisation. This can be avoided by having a policy and good practice for transfer of competence across the generations.

More than 80% of the companies responding to the survey do not have any kind of distinctive policy or education program for developing competence among older employees. The reason to why so few companies work with specific program for developing competence among older employees could partly be due to resources and partly because companies do not believe programs like these have a significant return on their investment. Another reason might be that they want to treat all members of staff equally, regardless of age.

Areas within internal training which are most common among older employees are highlighted below:

- 1) Advanced IT training

- 2) Basic IT training
- 3) Health and Work environment
- 4) Foreign Languages

Companies responding to the survey prioritised the most important knowledge/competence that older employees would need in the future and this is outlined below:

- 1) IT, computer knowledge, Internet
- 2) Mentorship, coaching
- 3) Leadership in general

A majority (>70%) of the surveyed companies agree that regular physical examinations and a focus on health and wellbeing for older members of staff lead to increased productivity and develops the older employees.

More than half of the companies surveyed work deliberately with older employees and their work environment. Sweden differs in this case, 72% of the Swedish companies that took part of the survey state that they do not focus on older employees and their work environment in particular.

Companies were asked if performance appraisals are used as a tool for developing older employees in their work. About half of the respondents used performance appraisals in this way. The UK and Sweden elicited the majority of "yes answers", roughly 70% respectively roughly 90%. In Germany and Greece, only 20% of respondents used performance appraisals for this purpose. As responding companies from Sweden and the UK are represented by large companies, it is likely that the large companies have established practices for annual appraisals, which are an important part of the manager's work. Smaller companies probably believe that they have neither the resources nor see the benefit of the appraisals. The situation in Greece is somewhat difficult to analyse, since Greece also has a large share of larger companies in the survey, this is probably due to other traditions in management in Greece.

When it comes to the frequency of the appraisals, the majority take place once a year.

The content of the appraisal meeting can be ranked in the following order:

- 1) Training/competence development
- 2) Career planning (how will the position of the employee at the company be able to developed)
- 3) Plan for retirement

A distinct majority (>70%) of surveyed companies believe that efforts to create more flexible working conditions for older staff will lead to improved productivity.

More than half (60%) of the companies surveyed do not believe that a strategy for optimising productivity of the older members of staff is necessary. However, this is not the case in Portugal and Sweden. A majority (>50%) of the companies in these two countries believe that a strategy for optimising the productivity among older employees would be important.

## 4.3 Attitudes towards older workers

Roughly 60% of the companies that participated in the survey believe that it is valuable or very valuable to try to retain older employees within the company. About 25% of the companies "lack an opinion" and 10% believe that it is not valuable to retain older workers in the company. Greece and Sweden have the most positive attitudes towards retaining older employees. About 70% of Greek companies and about 90% of Swedish companies responded that it is valuable to retain older employees.

In conclusion, more than half of the companies that have answered see a value in keeping older employees, while less than half of the companies that answered do not feel strongly or believe that retaining older employees within the company is of not of any value.

There is a correlation between higher age in those who have responded and companies that believe that it is valuable to retain keep older employees within the company. Companies in Sweden and Greece highlight value in keeping older staff within the company.

Significantly less than half of the companies in the survey (>40%) believe that it is important for the older employees to be identified as a unique group that has to be managed in a different way, from a leadership perspective, compared to younger employees.

The responses from Swedish company's surveyed stand out since 77% of the respondents believe that it is important to manage the older employees as a unique group from a management perspective.

It is difficult to analyse the profile of the responses to this question to assess the attitude towards older employees. It is likely that the equal opportunities philosophy within the company affect the answers in this matter. It can be both positive and negative to treat a group of employees differently because of their age.

A large majority (ca 80%) of the companies positively encourage and motivate older employees to participate in vocational-oriented training and competence development.

About a half of the companies in the survey agree that a training and development programme for older members of staff would promote the productivity of the company. The UK and Sweden differ in this matter with a more negative attitude towards development programmes aimed solely at older staff. Only 36% in the UK and 20% in Sweden feel it is important to adopt such an approach.

The responses may be influenced by the philosophy of equal opportunities within the company. Demographics within a company have the potential to cause problems and consequently affect productivity.

With respect to the connection between older employees and high productivity, 50% of the companies believe there is a correlation. This indicates a fairly positive attitude towards the work performance of older employees. However, one must consider that approximately 40% of the other responses consisted of "do not know" and "no".

To get a picture of the attitude towards older employees, the companies that participated in the survey were asked to assess how they believed older and younger employees performed at work, with 24 "job related" statements as a starting-point.

Many of the responses were expected but there were some unexpected responses.

*Older employees are ranked higher than younger when it comes to:*

- Reliability
- Stability and safety
- Responsibility
- Long-sightedness and calmness
- Level of theoretical and practical knowledge
- Experience and knowledge of human nature
- Ability to comprehend complex situations
- Ability to cooperate

*Older employees are ranked lower than younger when it comes to:*

- Ability to quickly absorb new knowledge
- Performance ability
- Level of energy/driving force
- Mobility
- Willingness to change
- Ability to be innovative
- Competence in IT

*Older and younger employees are equally ranked when it comes to:*

- Wide perspective in the employees work
- Positive attitude
- Risk of being absent from work

In many respects the answers were quite predictable. However, two questions differ from the traditional pattern when it comes to the assessment of older employees, are "Positive attitude" and "Risk of being absent from work". A preconceived opinion in these matters could be that older employees are ranked more negatively than the younger, but in this survey older and younger employees are ranked equally.

Something worth noting when is that the companies from the 6 countries that participated in the survey have a very symmetric profile of responses. There are marginal deviations between the countries.

The research gives some indication of the attitudes to older and younger workers in the workplace however, further research is needed with a greater number of respondents and a wider selection, as well as a complementary research tools to confirm the results. However, it is possible that the orientation in the profile of responses, in a larger survey, would point in the same direction.

For employers, it is important, not to be guided by preconceived opinions in terms of the human resources within the organisation. At the same time companies could benefit from having more information on how older and younger employers differ from each other in their approach and attitude to work. Armed with this information, it may be possible to optimise the work processes of the company and implement effective age management systems.

Naturally, companies that actively work with age management as a tool and are prepared to consider new models in age management have a positive attitude towards creating

opportunities for older employees. This usually leads to a positive outcome for both the employee and the company.

In this survey we have focused on the attitude of the *employers* towards older employees. It is evidently just as important to work with and try to change the attitude of the older employees to the company and their work. The employer should be the driving force in the process and it has to be taken care of in a positive and dedicated way. Of course, it should be done within reasonable limits. It may not be possible to have the same level of success with all employees.

## 4.4 Summary

### Routines and capacity in general in HR

- Large and medium sized companies have good resources for working with HR related areas. They often have dedicated HR Departments with a function of managing human resources within the company. This also means that they are in a better situation to implement age management policies and procedures.
- The smaller (<50 employees) companies and the small (<10 employees) companies have limited or no resources for HR activity. Naturally, these companies also deal with HR related issues however these issues cannot be prioritised in the same way as in larger companies.

### The age management practices and their benefits

- The companies in the survey all implement age management practices in different ways and are aware of the effects.
- There are differences between large and small companies. Age management policies and practices are more developed in large companies than in smaller and small companies. This is quite natural. It is a matter of resources. However, the awareness about and the interest in age management are on the same level in large and small companies.
- The survey shows that the companies believe that they benefit from age management policies and practices.
- Companies are more negative towards age management routines that focus exclusively on older employees.

### The employer`s attitude towards older employees

- It is, in general, possible to say, with this survey as a starting-point, that the employer`s attitude towards older employees is, on the whole, positive, both in terms of the performance of the older employees, and opportunities to continue to develop their positions.
- By actively working with age management orientated methods and tools, a majority of the employers who have participated in the survey show a positive attitude towards their older employees. They also see opportunity in improving the development potential of older employees by developing age management within the company.

## 5. Conclusions

There are still a number of rather simple but effective practices that some of the companies have implemented, such as clear methods for competence transfer across generations, monitoring the age structure within the company, and most often using performance appraisals as a tool for follow-ups and coaching. However, the survey shows that it mainly the large companies that implement performance appraisals.

In order to move from "good" to "excellent" age management in a company, it is necessary to create cultures that foster positive attitudes to generations within the company. It is also of great importance to implement age management practices work early on. 5 years before planned retirement is too late. The work should start at least 10 years before planned retirement.

The attitude toward older employees, from an employer perspective, is according to the answers to the survey, clearly positive. Naturally, there might be underlying attitudes towards older people that do not show in the survey, that is however unlikely. Despite this, it is important to be very observant in modern work with age management when it comes to general and summary values of older employees. That is why we should avoid seeing all older employees as an homogeneous group and "judge everyone alike". Older employees should be seen as separate individuals, just as other employees.

The attitude of the older employees towards age management and their motivation to working productively right up to the day of retirement (and perhaps after) is crucial in order for companies to reach success with age management. Employers must take some responsibility for this.

The age management survey has shown that there are differences between how large and small companies work with age management. There is of course nothing wrong with that. Large companies have more resources and can work with a clear structure and plan with many established practices. There are several manager and decision levels that call for a functioning process control. This presupposes good planning and effective organisational models, or else there will be chaos. Age management should not be implemented in the same way for a small organisation as it would be in a large company. Small companies should develop age management based on its "size benefits", short decision-making routes, moving quickly between word and action, flexibility etc. It is very important to take this into account when meeting with an employer to discuss age management.

The survey aimed at employers is one part of the AMaP project. It is important that the results from the entire project are spread as widely as possible, not only to those who have participated and taken part of the project, but also to other interested parties in other EU countries.

## Appendices

App 1: PPT Summary of all countries

App 2: PPT Survey UK

App 3: PPT Survey Sweden

App 4: PPT Survey Poland

App 5: PPT Survey Germany

App 6: PPT Survey Greece

App 7: PPT Survey Portugal