



Federal Ministry of Social Security,  
Generations and Consumer Protection



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Joint Meeting  
of the Task Force *Monitoring RIS*  
and the Expert Group for the UNECE Conference on Ageing

Vienna, 26-27 February 2007

Report

Geneva 2006

## **I. Introduction**

The Joint Meeting of the Task Force Monitoring RIS and the Expert Group for the UNECE Conference on Ageing was held from February 26-27, 2007 in Vienna, Austria, at the invitation of the Austrian government.

In preparation of the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing, the UNECE secretariat established an Expert Group, which is expected to provide policy advice and expert assistance to the intergovernmental Preparatory Committee of the Conference.

The Group consists of leading experts on ageing from a broad cross-section of professional, geographic and organisational backgrounds. Many of the experts are also members of the Task Force that advises the UNECE secretariat on monitoring the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

In particular, the Group is expected to

- draft papers on the key areas of MIPAA/RIS;
- propose topics for the political declaration and agenda items for discussion at the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing, for consideration by the Preparatory Committee;
- provide expert advice on the regional summary report based on the national country reports on the implementation of the Regional implementation Strategy of the MIPAA.

The joint meeting of the expert group and the Task Force Monitoring RIS provided an enlarged discussion forum, which was expected to enhance the discussion of the contributions by the members of the Expert Group and the discussion of the overall content of the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing. At the meeting and in subsequent email exchanges, the experts and members of the Task Force decided to submit to the preparatory committee a set of recommendations. This report summarizes the discussions and results of the recommendations of the experts and members of the Task Force.

The conclusion of the work of the Expert Group is submitted to the Preparatory Committee of the UNECE Member States for their kind consideration.

## II. Conclusions of the different sessions

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### 26.02.2007 - Morning session

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Chair: Ms Erika Winkler

**Mr. Andres Vikat**, Chief of the UNECE Population Activities Unit, presented a “Roadmap to the UNECE Conference on Ageing”. He pointed out the steps that have already been taken for the preparation of the León Conference in November and explained the further steps. A preliminary structure of the Conference was outlined and information on background material and upcoming preparatory meetings was given.

On behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain, presentation by **Ms. Carmen Diaz**, Adviser of IMSERSO, of the preparatory process leading to the León Conference and the Civil Society Forum. After the Focal Point Meeting held in Segovia (Spain) in November 2006, the Spanish delegation at the last Commission for Social Development (CSD) at New York has carried out interviews with other national delegations to inform about the Ministerial Conference on Ageing of the UNECE co-organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Spain. The intervention of IMSERSO during the CSD Plenary and in the Side Event Program, the reinforcement of the professional staff for the preparation of the Conference and the visit to Madrid and Leon of the UNECE officers in March are some of the preparatory activities.

### Discussion

In the subsequent discussion the establishment of an intergovernmental “Forum on Population” was addressed. The forum would be a necessary body to oversee and strengthen the work of the Secretariat. It would be important to ensure that there is no duplication of work or competition between the Forum on Population and the existing Task Force Monitoring RIS. The possibility of implementing a broader forum, which would also be in charge of gender issues, was mentioned.

It was emphasised that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Austrian Government and the UNECE should be renewed in order to enable the Task Force Monitoring RIS and the European Centre Vienna to continue their work for another five years as this 2008-2012 review and appraisal cycle will be a demographically most crucial window of opportunity for adjustment for the majority of countries within the UNECE region.

**Mr. Holger Osterrieder**, Associate Population Activities Officer, presented the presentation of Mr. Alexandre Sidorenko, UNDESA. He addressed the challenges of population ageing in intergovernmental cooperation (Commitment 10) by describing the existing intergovernmental mechanisms to support the follow-up of MIPAA/RIS. The presentation focused on the content of intergovernmental decisions on ageing since the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid 2002.

**Mr. Dirk Jarré**, Vice Chair Task Force Monitoring RIS, EURAG-EUROPE, focused on the Participation of organized civil society in preparations for the UNECE Conference on Ageing.

He raised questions about how NGO representatives would be involved in the preparation process and what their official status will be. He highlighted the importance of the contribution of organised civil society, and in particular NGOs in the preparation of the Conference. He also referred to the most successful and appreciated precedent of NGO involvement in the preparation of the Berlin Ministerial Conference in 2002 and the absolute need, in the León process, not to fall behind the achievement already made in the partnership between civil society and governments. Participants strongly agreed and unanimously adopted the presented paper on an adequate strategy of NGO involvement (Annex 2).

**Mr. Aurelio Fernandez Lopez**, member of the Task Force Monitoring RIS, Spanish Commissioner for the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing, and former President of the UN Commission for Social Development (1998-2000), emphasised the need for “Mainstreaming Ageing in EU Countries” (Commitment 1). He pointed out that discussions connected to ageing are mostly focusing on economic issues (for example the impact of ageing on public expenditure or the need to increase employment levels), while the social dimension finds little consideration. It was underlined that ageing was more than an economic issue and that answers to ageing challenges and opportunities should be addressed from a broad social cohesion perspective.

### **Discussion**

The plenary fully agreed to the need of an integrated approach on ageing. Still the high importance of the continuous adjustment of the retirement age to the increasing life expectancy was highlighted. An adaptation has to be undertaken in order to maintain productivity and stabilise public finances, which already are confronted with increasing expenses due to the demographic change (pension schemes, long-term care insurance). It has also been emphasized that the smaller and regular these necessary adjustments will be done the less controversial they will be. An automatic “lifetime indexing” – like inflation proofing of wages and pensions -- is preferable to dramatic once-on big bangs in retirement age increases.

In this context it was proposed to include a session on demographic change in the agenda of the Conference in order to alert politicians once again to demographic developments.

Nevertheless it has to be remembered that while mainstreaming ageing on the political level the social level must not be forgotten. On the social level ageing is still seen as a problem not as a resource, which shows the need of a change of attitude. Stronger involvement of the media would be supportive to create a more positive image of ageing. Additionally more research on how to change the negative image of older persons would be needed.

**Mr. Nikolai Botev**, Adviser UNFPA, CST Slovakia, focused on “Mainstreaming ageing and the related capacities in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia”.

He discussed the issues that governments and other stakeholders are facing with mainstreaming ageing, and drew parallels with gender mainstreaming. He argued that the conceptualization and operationalization of mainstreaming will be particularly

challenging for the countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, because of lack of capacities, resource constraints, etc. He emphasized that both the macro- and micro- dimensions of ageing have to be considered, and that a balance between mainstreaming and targeted actions needs to be reached.

**Discussion:**

Three prevalent or emerging issues were identified and discussed from the point of view of that balance: the income security of older persons in the region, the development implications of the changing age structures in Central Asia, and the disordered cohort flows in Eastern Europe.

During the discussion it was also highlighted that “mainstreaming ageing” should focus on the process of ageing at any age throughout the life cycle more than only on the group of older persons.

Again the importance of addressing Ageing in different policy sectors at the same time and obtaining thus synergies, was emphasised. By mainstreaming ageing the gender perspective should always be taken into consideration.

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**26.02.07 – Afternoon session**

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Chair: Andres Vikat

**Mr. Dirk Jarré**, Vice Chair Task Force Monitoring RIS, EURAG-EUROPE, and **Ms. Evelyn Hönigsperger**, President EURAG-EUROPE, gave a presentation on the “Integration and Participation of older persons” (Commitment 2). It was outlined that the well-being of the citizens and the insurance of a life of dignity were common values in the EU. They pointed out that the quality of life of older persons was highly dependent on their opportunities of participation in social life. To ensure a life of dignity for older persons, on the one hand social protection and care has to be provided by governments, on the other hand possibilities for active ageing and life-long learning should be increased. The needs of older persons should also be taken into consideration by the market by adapting its products to that effect.

**Ms. Eveline Hönigsperger**, President EURAG-EUROPE, focused additionally on the “Bottom-up approach for review and appraisal as a tool for increasing older persons’ participation”. She pointed out the formal implementation of the bottom-up approach in the documents of MIPAA/RIS and outlined an analogy to private industry, where participation is used as means of successful performance. The mobilization and involvement of civil society is therefore not only essential for the review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS, but concerning all action taken on ageing. Thereby the concept of participation develops from former legally formalised representation and participation to more individual forms of involvement and participation nowadays.

**Discussion:**

Due to new technologies like the Internet participation in everyday life can become a main challenge for older persons. Regarding this helplessness in some areas of life, it is difficult for older persons of an achievement society to identify with their role as old person. This identification can only be reached through involvement from the

beginning. The bottom-up participatory approach is therefore no longer only a monitoring tool, but also a tool to increase participation. Participation should thereby not stop at the decision making process, but be extended to management issues also. Notwithstanding partnerships with governments are important to reach the goal of high participation, which means that top-down and bottom-up approach should be applied complementary.

**Mr. Alan Walker**, Professor, University of Sheffield, Department of Sociology, made a presentation on how to “Ensure quality of life at all ages” (Commitment 7). He highlighted the importance of taking in a life course perspective on well-being and quality of life. This implies the need for a combination of preventative and remedial actions in order to ensure a high quality of life for a “society for all ages”. He explained that a main challenge of ensuring “Quality of Life” lies in its multidimensional nature. Taking also into consideration a life-course perspective and the dynamic nature of ageing it is a main policy challenge to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure quality of life at all ages. These challenges again vary highly between different regions (EU/EECCA).

**Ms. Anahit Martirosyan**, Leading Expert, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Armenia, focused on the insurance of quality of life at all ages in the context of economic hardship. She pointed out existing problems concerning ageing in societies suffering from economic hardship. Main obstacles are the absence of statistical data and analyses during the development of economic reforms. The well-being of older persons is widely not considered, as resources are dedicated to the solving of economic problems. Furthermore contradictions between the new socio-economic conditions and old traditions can lead to difficulties in developing new strategies. She pointed out the importance to conduct surveys in the respective countries in order to obtain recent data material as background for the development of strategies. Also the coordination of the assistance of different donors is considered as crucial. An important pillar of ensuring good quality of life at all ages is seen in increasing the opportunities of participation for older persons in all areas of life.

#### **Discussion:**

The discussion focused primarily on the measurement of Quality of Life, which is generally controversial discussed. It became clear that health, as often used, is not sufficient as a proxy for quality of life. Empowerment of older persons and need of participation seem, besides others, to be essential pillars for the improvement of quality of life for older persons.

Regarding the political declaration the importance of labelling further aspects of Quality of Life besides health was highlighted.

**Ms. Irene Hoskins**, President, International Federation on Ageing, talked about “Health” as one specific pillar of the general concept of Quality of life (Commitment 7). She pointed out the important role of health promotion and disease prevention throughout the life course, which can lead to an increased proportion of older persons upon the disability threshold. Rising expenses due to health technology and high demands for quality could then be offset by further gains in healthy life expectancy.

#### **Discussion:**

In the discussion the importance of including mental health into the general concept of health was highlighted. This means that an approach integrating mental and physical health is needed.

Besides the issue of mental health, accessibility and affordability of basic medical treatment is still considered as a problem, especially in the EECCA region.

**Mr. Joseph Troisi**, Professor, Director, International Institute on Ageing, UN Malta, made a presentation on professional and informal care (Commitment 7 and 9). He pointed out that care should not only be focused on health, but also take into consideration social, economic and cultural factors. Even if formal care could play a more significant role, it should still be a supplement rather than a replacement for informal care. Governments should strike a proper balance between formal and informal support services for older persons. In any case older persons in need of care should be strongly involved in the design and implementation of care policies and programmes.

**Ms. Gunhild Hagestad**, Professor, Aarder University College, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Kristiansand, Norway, focused on “Intergenerational relationships and family care of older persons (Commitment 9). She pointed out the role of the “Janus generation”, which is caring at the same time for its children and its parents. Females mainly take this role, which shows a strong impact of gender in the domain of care providing. It was shown that important policy and research challenges are implied in the question on how to ensure care for individuals with weak demographic capital (old and young) and if support for these groups can be coordinated. However, it was underlined that older persons get the most support in societies with a fair amount of public care.

#### **Discussion:**

In the discussion it is mentioned that family care is costly, even if this is not visible due to the fact that is mostly not valued in accounting. Nevertheless the right to care should be promoted by at least counting the time spent in providing family care in pension schemes.

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**27.02.07, Morning session**

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Chair: Mr. Dirk Jarré

**Mr. Bernd Marin**, Executive Director, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, commented on the “Adjusting social protection systems: A broad view” (Commitment 4). He presented a general framework on work, income and social security in job-holding societies, emphasising the predominance of unpaid work in many countries, which increases the poverty risk especially for older women as their domestic work is not accounted for in their pension.

**Mr. Asghar Zaidi**, Director Research, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, focused on “Adjusting pension schemes” (Commitment 4). He went

into the topic of guaranteeing adequate pension incomes for women. He pointed out the importance of active labour market policies for women as the best policy to tackle poverty risks amongst older women.

### **Discussion**

During discussion the need of inclusion of non-labour market work, as providing care to children or older persons, into pension schemes was highlighted. It was underlined that the more pension systems are redesigned according to contributions made, the more pension credits for highly valued labour market absences such as unpaid care work will be indispensable both for fairness and equity reasons as well as for appropriate incentives.

**Mr. Andres Vikat**, Chief of the UNECE Population Activities Unit, presented research results from the ILO.

One main outcome is the fact that the average exit age of the labour market is too low taking into consideration increasing life expectancy.

### **Discussion**

The importance of expanding working life was highlighted.

Quasi-disability is one main factor leading to early retirement. There is therefore a need seen in adapting parts of the labour market to the abilities of older persons. The enforcement of continuous learning can furthermore enhance the continuance of people in the labour market.

Concerning the political declaration it was mentioned that an integration of interrelated areas regarding ageing, like labour market, health, social protection and continuous learning, would be recommended.

**Mr. Franz Kolland**, Professor, Institute of Sociology, University of Vienna, presented the concept of “Lifelong Learning” (Commitment 6).

### **Discussion**

The discussion focused on three different aspects of lifelong learning. Firstly the right to learn as element of Quality of Life, secondly the importance of training in order to maintain employability and thirdly the need of training for older persons to handle the challenges of everyday life. The main goal in providing Lifelong learning should not only be to maintain capabilities of older persons, but even to optimise them.

It was stated that investment in lifelong learning would contribute to increasing productivity and should hence become more institutionalised.

**Mr. Joaquim Oliveira Martins**, Senior Economist, OECD, went into the topic of “Economic growth” (Commitment 3). He pointed out the forthcoming shrinkage of the labour force and the decline of productivity. Compensation to this change should be made by expanding education for all ages in order to raise the productivity of the remaining workforce.

**Ms. Jenny Gierveld**, Professor, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, presented new research on “Gender and living arrangements” (Commitment 8) based on data collected in the UNECE Generations and Gender Programme. She pointed out that social embedment of older persons within the family is realized via contributions up and down the generations, with older persons in a very active role. However, the



data also showed that the possibilities for maintaining embedment and participation are especially risky for older and oldest people living alone. By far the majority of those living alone at older ages are women. Although children do support those living alone, it is shown that more attention is needed for an optimal combination of (informal and formal) support and care for those older persons living alone and in need of help, in order to ensure full embedment and participation.

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### **27.02.07, Afternoon session**

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Chair: Mr. Aurelio Fernandez Lopez

## **THE CONFERENCE**

The afternoon session was dedicated to recommendations for the format and content of the Conference. At this point the outcomes of the discussion will be reflected. The documents “Draft elements for the political declaration” and “draft elements for the agenda of the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing” summarize and synthesize these conclusions.



### **General principles for the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing**



It was agreed that the Conference has to be backward looking in order to accomplish the review of the process since the implementation of MIPAA/RIS, as well as forward looking in order to develop prospective strategies and ideas.



### **Title**



It has been emphasized that choosing a title for the conference is of utmost importance.

The experts suggest to the Preparatory Committee to consider the following criteria when choosing a title:

- \* Focus on the process of ageing rather than older persons
- \* Strengthen intergenerational/ intragenerational solidarity
- \* Cooperation among different actors/ shared responsibilities
- \* Respond to new challenges, be forward looking
- \* Emphasize basic value of dignity of people of all ages

- \* Emphasize social cohesion, and the need to combat fragmentation and discrimination
- \* Emphasize the positive aspects of extended life-spans for individuals as well as for society at large
- \* Be stimulating and encouraging.
- \* Focus on active longevity and self-attainment without being normative

With regard to the title, the experts have not agreed on a single proposal. Instead, a number of proposals have been put forward. The proposals below were those that were mentioned by one or more experts and that did not receive vehement opposition. None of them received a majority.

The experts therefore recommend to the Preparatory Committee to consider the following ideas and to engage into the necessary discussions to find an appropriate title.

- Meeting the challenges of longer-life societies
- Maximizing Longevity: Empowering Older Persons in a Society for All Ages
- Maximizing Longevity's Benefits: Social and Economic Elements for Cooperation to Advance Quality of Life
- Extending well-being in ageing societies
- Building wellness across ageing
- A Society for All Ages: Making a Vision a Reality
- A Society for All Ages: Making the Vision a Reality
- Challenges and Chances of Ageing Societies

The title “rejuvenating long-life societies” was strongly supported by one expert, with the argument that the seemingly paradoxical fact that a person of the same age – however “young” or “old” – becomes ever younger the longer we live points to another very pleasant feature of ageing societies, namely that the remaining lifetime continues to expand while we are living our lives. This title was also supported for its capacity to be puzzling and thought provoking.

A few ideas were met with opposition by one or more experts:

“From ageing to longevity” was rejected because of the insufficient or in-existent focus on the quality of life.

“Rejuvenating longer-life societies” was rejected because of the potentially negative connotations of this title with regard to the place of older persons in society.

◆  
**Main issues and topics**  
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During the meeting a thorough discussion on key topics was held among the experts, on the basis of different presentations, and along the lines of the agenda of the expert meeting.

The experts concluded that the phenomenon of ageing is asking for all policies to contribute to the positive development. This means that the documents and the programmes of the meetings and the keynote speeches should be thematically

horizontal, not arranged sector-wise. The interdependence of policies addressing the phenomenon of ageing societies calls for a horizontal approach. Mainstreaming of ageing as already demanded by the Berlin Strategy also calls for a comprehensive approach. Therefore, it should be tried to deal with the aspects of the different sectors of ageing under overarching themes during the Conference.

In the beginning the issue of **monitoring** was raised in order to clarify, if it should be handled as a thematic item itself or, if it was automatically to be included in every single session. It was argued that monitoring should be a self-evident component in all areas of action. However, the bottom-up participatory approach goes beyond the concept of monitoring and should therefore, in connection with the issue of increasing participation, be included in the agenda.

Another main focus was put on the need to identify **cross-cutting issues** between different areas related to ageing. The gender perspective, for example, is highly cross-dimensional and should be included in each panel. It was highlighted that integrating different areas of action on ageing and elaborating overarching themes should be of importance for the Conference.

Furthermore it was proposed to include an item on **environment** into the agenda, which would contain issues like transport, housing, and accessibility of public institutions. Moreover it was discussed, if the impact of **emerging issues** like globalisation and new technologies on ageing should be addressed in the Conference. However, this was seen as not specific enough for the Conference. There were concerns about including topics that are global and as such less specific to ageing.

Regarding the additional challenges countries in the EECCA region are facing due to economic hardship and lacking capacities a **development perspective** should be included in the ageing approach as well. In this regard it was noted to bear in mind the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>1</sup> It was also emphasized that development, MDGs, and ageing, in the context of the countries of the EECCA region, merit particular attention at the Conference.

The experts particularly emphasized the need to promote the wellbeing and health of aged people. This means that the focus of ageing policies should be on mental, physical and social activities of older persons.

In general the experts highlighted the need of **further research** in various fields connected to ageing in order to develop suitable strategies to deal with the changing structures of society. The proposal by researchers in the field of ageing and represented at the Vienna meeting is attached in annex 1.

◆  
**Format of the conference**  
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<sup>1</sup> The capacity development workshop on ageing in Chisinau on 13-16 March 2007 provided an opportunity for some of the experts who were also present in Vienna to reiterate the high importance of this topic.

It was decided to propose to the Preparatory Committee a three-day conference, plus a one-day NGO forum before the Conference. The third day would consist of a ministerial segment.

It was decided to suggest to the Preparatory Committee to have several thematic panels, for 3 sessions (day 1 afternoon, day 2 morning and afternoon). Two panels would always be running in parallel.

The experts agreed that monitoring, reviewing and updating the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing should be the objective of the Conference. However, the proposal of dedicating one full day to general country reports (What have countries done so far to implement MIPAA? What do they plan to meet commitments of RIS?) did not find support.

Additional information is to be found in the document “Draft elements for the agenda”.

◆  
**Topics of the thematic panels**  
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During the discussion different topics for the thematic panels were discussed. Two main proposals were systematically discussed in detail, whereby the second one was generally supported by the experts and members of the Task Force.

With regard to the titles of the thematic panels, it was emphasized that titles that provoke a lively debate, such as “no forced retirement as a human right” should be favoured.

**1) Cluster of commitments**

- Policy actions aimed at achieving a society for all ages (1,8)
- Intergenerational solidarity and relationships in family and society (2,7,9)
- Population ageing : challenges and opportunities for economic growth and societal development (3)
- Adjustment of social protection systems and labour markets (4,5,6)
- Lessons from review and appraisal : new insights gained with the bottom-up participatory approach and from cooperation with civil society

**2) Horizontal and comprehensive topics emphasizing the need for the coordination of different policies** (suggestion based on Mr. Fernandez’s proposal)

- Creating integrated and coordinated approaches to ageing
- Human rights, participation and social inclusion
- Intergenerational dynamics in ageing societies
- Lifelong learning/growth/extending working lives

- Ageing and Poverty<sup>2</sup>
- Quality of Life/ Independent living and promotion of self-sufficiency/ living arrangements/ social isolation and loneliness
- Health (including mental health), wellbeing and active ageing
- Balancing care strategies in ageing societies
- Review and appraisal of the Research Agenda on ageing

The other different options mentioned include the following ones:

### **3) Cross-cutting issues as topics**

- human rights
- quality of life/ social quality
- gender
- monitoring
- national action plans
- research

### **4) Cross-sectoral, comprehensive themes as topics**

- Enabling Environments (transportation, housing, technology, etc.)
- Participation
- Guidelines for national implementation of MIPAA
- Ensuring the political inclusion of older persons
- Raising visibility of older persons
- Integrated and coordinated policies for ageing instead of approach
- Bottom-up approach
- Migration
- Emerging issues
- Volunteerism

### **5) Specific priority issues as topics**

- Health and well-being
- Environment
- Development (e.g. transformation of labour markets)
- Goals for a society of longevity
- Millennium Development Goals

### **6) Cross-dimensional topics**

- A Sense of Purpose: Strategies for Active Ageing
  - Lifelong learning
  - Civic participation and volunteerism
  - Role of the media in promoting positive ageing

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<sup>2</sup> It is suggested to use a broad definition of poverty, including different aspects such as social, economic, cultural, etc.

- Alleviating poverty among older persons
  - Employment strategies
  - Pension schemes
  - Rural older persons
  
- Health and well-being
  - Health promotion and health literacy
  - Health systems
  - Etc.
  
- Creating liveable communities for all ages
  - Transportation
  - Universal design
  - Independent living/living arrangements
  
- Balancing care strategies in ageing societies
- Review and appraisal of the Research Agenda on ageing

It was underlined that chances and positive viewpoints of ageing process in societies should be emphasized in each panel.

It was emphasized that the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing should bring the agenda further and focus on new findings and priority areas since the 2002 Berlin Ministerial Conference. Thus, it was agreed -- after a thorough and thoughtful discussion and inclusion of additional requests for modification -- to base the recommendation to the Preparatory Committee on the suggestion by Mr. Fernandez. This proposal emphasizes the need for a horizontal and comprehensive approach and the need for the coordination of different policies rather than focusing on a sectoral approach.

The proposal is also contained in the document “Draft elements for the agenda”.

◆  
**Format of the thematic panels**  
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Each thematic session should be introduced by a keynote speaker. The panellists should represent a balance between experts, government representatives and civil society representatives.

◆  
**Background documents/ presentations and reports**  
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The experts and members of the task force did not discuss in detail the background documents, presentations and reports, and emphasized the need for further discussion.

It was pointed out that it should be borne in mind that the Conference has as the main objective monitoring, reviewing and updating the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002. In all sessions, a guiding structure might be followed by participants with the goal to fulfil this objective whatever the strategy for monitoring, reviewing and updating the MIPAA (bottom-up or top-down approach) followed. Also, this guiding structure might be in the reports made by representatives of member States and by other organizations. Finally, it the central role the European Centre in this process should be reflected.

It was also suggested that demographic issues with relation to ageing be addressed in one of the keynote speeches in the plenary.

◆  
**Ministerial Roundtable**  
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The topic should focus on intergenerational solidarity. It was however emphasized that due attention should be paid to ensure that the discussion remains clearly focused and pragmatic.

◆  
**Public events at the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing**  
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In order to make the Conference visible an appealing title should be found and it could moreover be positive, if one agenda item of the Conference would include the public outside the conference hall. This event should focus on intergenerational solidarity.

In addition, the media should be attracted to do a live transmission of the ministerial roundtable discussion.

◆  
**Documents to be distributed at the UNECE Conference on Ageing**  
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The experts emphasized the need to make publicly available at the conference the main documents related to ageing, including MIPAA/RIS, the MDGs, and the UN Principles for Older Persons, and the UNDESA Guidelines for implementing the Bottom-Up Participatory approach.

◆  
**Civil Society Contributions to and Involvement in the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing**  
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The need for full participation and involvement of civil society into the process of the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing was strongly emphasized. The paper on the

contributions and involvement of civil society to the Conference, which was unanimously adopted by the experts, is attached in Annex 2.

It was also emphasized that the UNECE Member States support their national NGOs other national groups involved in the ageing agenda (researchers, experts, etc.) in the preparation of the Conference. The involvement of every stakeholder in every country is seen as a key to the success of the Conference.

In addition, it was suggested that the activities of organised civil society in the field of ageing should not only be described but should also address strategic deficits, impediments coming from the public sector, in particular by not involving NGOs in development and reform processes and lacking readiness of federal and local governments as well as municipalities to provide the NGOs with the necessary resources which would enable them to fulfil their tasks.

◆  
**Research**  
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All experts and members of the Task Force emphasized the need for further strengthen research in the field of ageing in the UNECE Member States.

The attached document (Annex 1) on a research forum in preparation of the Conference and on additional questions on research for the national focal points on ageing reflects the common position of the researchers present at the meeting in Vienna.

◆  
**Ageing related activities at the UNECE**  
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The members of the expert group and the task force called for strengthening the capacities of UNECE PAU, particularly so that it could adequately support the follow-up to the international forums on ageing, and for finding appropriate arrangements for the intergovernmental supervision of its work. Some members also suggested to call upon the Preparatory Committee to consider including the issue in the draft Political Declaration. The Task Force agreed to draft a letter to the relevant ministers of the UNECE Member States asking for additional support to the work of the UNECE secretariat on population ageing.

The experts emphasized the important supportive role for the ageing-related activities at the UNECE performed by the Task Force and by the European Centre Vienna.

◆  
**Contributions by Austria and Spain**  
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The experts unanimously expressed their appreciation to the governments of Austria and Spain for their support the work of the UNECE PAU and the European Centre



Vienna. They also emphasized the need to continue with the Task Force Monitoring RIS and the work of the European Centre Vienna.

◆  
**Chair of the Task Force Monitoring RIS**  
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The Task Force unanimously thanked Ms. Eveline Hönigsperger for her outstanding work as Chair of the Task Force Monitoring RIS.

The Task Force welcomed Ms. Erika Winkler as the new Chair of the Task Force.

## **Annex 1: Manifesto by researchers**

Joint Meeting of the Task Force Monitoring RIS and the Expert Group for UNECE  
Conference on Ageing (Vienna, 26-27 February 2007)

### **RESEARCH FORUM in preparation for the UNECE CONFERENCE ON AGEING León, Spain: November 6 - 8, 2007**

Experts participating in the joint meeting (Vienna, 26-27 February, 2007) for the preparation of the UNECE Conference on Ageing (León, November 2007) strongly emphasized the importance of research for responding to population ageing and providing evidence for improving the implementation and evaluation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Regional Implementation Strategy.

Before the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the Berlin Ministerial Conference on Ageing, several meetings were organized thanks to the joint efforts of the UN Programme on Ageing and the International Association of Gerontology (IAG).

Finally, before the Second World Assembly on Ageing – where, at the same time, NGOs met - a *Research Forum on Ageing* took place in Valencia (April, 2002). From all these meetings a *Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* was developed and published (IAG, 2003) and afterwards adapted to the European region (Andrews et al., 2006).

The Regional Implementation Strategy has taken into consideration research as a “motto” in the development and advancement of political actions on ageing as well as in its contributing role towards a bottom-up and top-down review and appraisal.

Therefore, the UNECE Conference on Ageing to be held in León has to be open to the following issues:

- *Focal Points* should include research as one of the components of their RIS reviews and appraisal.
- A *Research Forum* is required in which experts can discuss the contributions from research to the implementation of the MIPAA in the Region as well as in what extent the Research Agenda has also been implemented. This Forum could take place before the Conference (at the same time when the NGOs are meeting). In addition, one of the thematic panels could be devoted to research.
- The *Political Declaration* should emphasize that:  
“scientific research is vital to enable Europe to respond to population ageing, to provide evidence for policy, practice and citizens. To be effective research must be multi-disciplinary, well funded, based on international collaboration and, ultimately, directed towards improving the quality of people's lives as they age”.

**QUESTIONS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON  
THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE UNECE MINISTERIAL  
CONFERENCE ON AGEING**

The experts also recommend, in future evaluations on the follow-up to MIPAA/RIS, to include a specific element on research. The questions could be as follows:

**Research**

In the past 5 years have there been any national programmes of ageing research:

Yes: /\_ / No: /\_ /

If yes,

How many such programmes? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the total level of funding? \_\_\_\_\_

What fields have been covered by these programmes? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a national body responsible for coordinating ageing research?:

Yes: /\_ No: /\_ /

If yes, what is its name? \_\_\_\_\_

Vienna, February 2007

## Annex 2: Civil society participation

### Vienna Declaration on NGO participation

#### Participation of organized civil society in preparations for the UNECE Conference on ageing, León, November 2007

In its session in February 2006, the Commission for Social Development concluded a panel discussion on the subject of participation with the statement that *“it is clear that bottom-up, participatory review and appraisal can be a tool of better decision making and improved policies and programmes. ... The social perspective they introduce provides new and essential information to policy makers and increases their understanding of actual conditions for older persons in their country. ... Encouraging active involvement ... in the review and appraisal exercises can help to overcome stereotypes and lead to greater social capital, as people connect, share experience and resources, organize networks to promote their interests and well being, and contribute to better policies.”*

Experts participating in the preparatory meeting in Vienna, 26-27 February 2007, have strongly emphasized that participation of people through organised civil society, and in particular non-governmental organisations, is one of the decisive factors for social cohesion and social quality of a society – and this in particular in the area of policies promoting a society for all ages. In this context participation means more than consultation but active involvement of relevant stakeholders in the design, preparation, implementation, delivery and evaluation of policies and programmes aiming at the improvement of living conditions and the well being of people – and in particular of older persons.

#### NGO participation in the UNECE conference on ageing, León 2007

- When conceiving a strategy for the involvement of NGOs in the preparatory process for the forthcoming León Conference of the UNECE it is of particular value to remember **an experience, which produced excellent results, recognized by both by governments and NGOs, and which has to be considered as the guiding precedent.**
- In the preparation for the Regional Implementation Strategy of the UNECE Region and the Berlin Ministerial Conference on Ageing in 2002 non-governmental organizations on ageing, be they active at national or regional level, were **closely involved in all major stages of the process.**
- In particular representatives of such NGOs **participated in the three technical expert meetings, which identified the major issues to be dealt with** in Regional Implementation Strategy and in the Political Declaration.
- **Two NGO representatives, serving in their personal capacity, were members of the Drafting Committee preparing the Regional Implementation Strategy and five NGO representatives introduced NGO views and demands into the negotiations of the Open Ended Working Group** on the Regional Implementation Strategy.
- NGOs had previously pre-negotiated their **common positions** during a Preparatory NGO Meeting attended by some 70 NGO representatives from major international and national networks on ageing from the UNECE region and its member states. These **were then presented in a consolidated NGO contribution to the process.**

- The **draft of the Regional Implementation Strategy** which was negotiated by the Member States of the UNECE in the Open Ended Working Group **contained in an integrated form(!) the consolidated remarks and demands of the NGOs. Five NGO representatives took part in the negotiations** but, obviously, without voting rights.
- **At the Ministerial Conference** on Ageing in Berlin in 2002 a **spokesperson representing the world of NGOs** in the area of ageing had the opportunity to voice the concerns of this sector in a **speech which was an integral element of the plenary and prominently placed in the programme.**
- This final contribution was highly appreciated by government representatives. In fact, it was one of the motivations of the creation of the “Task Force Monitoring RIS” initiated by the Austrian government in order to **benefit in a systematic way from the expertise of civil society** at large.
- The preparatory process for the UNECE Conference on Ageing in León 2007 has **at least to match the qualitative criteria set and so successfully experienced by all partners** during the preparation of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin in 2002. It would be a most regrettable **political and strategic error to fall behind these standards.**
- This means that **the importance of close involvement of organizations of older persons** or working for them **needs to be fully recognised in all relevant documents** of technical and political nature and such **non-governmental organizations be full fledged partners of governments at all stages** of the preparatory process.
- In particular, NGO should be asked to **contribute to the main background document** for the León Conference, a representative of the NGO world should **participate in the drafting group** responsible for this background paper, and NGO experts serving in their personal capacity need to **be members of the Expert Group** and **participate in the open-ended Preparatory Committee** for the Conference.
- The UNECE Conference on Ageing in León has to be open to NGO participation and needs to **provide, at a prominent time in the programme, the opportunity to NGOs to communicate their views, concerns and visions** as a crucial societal community.
- It has to be acknowledged as a “*conditio sine qua non*” that **NGO involvement requires timely and adequate financial and technical support** in order to be able to organize themselves in a transversal manner for the process and produce consolidated positions reflecting the issues of common concern – and not just individual stances of different organisations.
- While the “NGO Forum” to take place the day before the UNECE conference in León will have a predominantly public interest character, **NGOs need the possibility to meet already in late Spring or early summer to be able to prepare in common their contributions** to the conference – and in particular to the background papers, the contents of the conference programme and the envisaged outcome. **The necessary funding needs to be insured.**

**Finally, the joint meeting of the Task Force and the Expert Group also strongly recommended that Member States of the UNECE be encouraged to include civil society representatives, particularly from NGOs active in the field of ageing, in their delegations to the UNECE Conference on Ageing in León in November 2007.**

**This “Roadmap” on the participation of organized civil society in preparations for the UNECE Conference on ageing in León, November 2007, has been adopted unanimously by the joint meeting of the Task Force “Monitoring RIS” and the Expert Group for the preparation of the UNECE Conference on Ageing (around 35 persons) in their final working session in Vienna on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007.**