

Stocktaking on Mainstreaming Ageing in the UNECE region

Slovak Republic

About

The European Commission has marked the year 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. This action indicates an increased awareness of the urgency to make progress in finding solutions to what some perceive as the “problems” of ageing societies. The mentioned activities evoked debate towards the need for Slovak national ageing programme.

In 2012 the Statistical Office of the SR, was paying a special attention to this issue by issuing a publication Population of the SR in the context of the European year for active ageing, where the active ageing indicators until 2011 have been published. The monothematic issue No 3/2015 of the Journal Slovak Statistics and Demography was also dedicated to the issue of active ageing.

National Programme for Active Ageing for the years 2014 – 2020 is based on several international documents, including the Madrid International Action Plan on Aging 2002. Until 2014, the Slovak Republic had not had a national document which would recognize the issue of active aging as a national policy.

The Strategy for Active Ageing

This document was created in 2013 within the implementation of the National Programme for Active Ageing in the Learning Centre of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. The authors focused on the impacts of the intensive population ageing in relation to the labour market and the pension system.

It draws attention to the fact that the Slovak republic does not have effective tools to deal with a population ageing . It was targeted primarily to the position of the older people in the labour market within the concept of active ageing.

National Programme for Active Ageing for the years 2014 – 2020

The Programme reflects problems related to significant population ageing, which is the result of current demographic in the Slovak Republic. It is the first national document which recognized the support of active ageing as one of the most important political priorities.

The Programme is divided into three sections:

1. Protecting human rights, promoting active independence and civic participation of older people,
2. Employment and employability of older people,
3. Independent, safe and high-quality life for older people.

<https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/rada-vlady-sr-prava-seniorov/npas-2014-2020.pdf>

Structures

National level

While responsibility for the pension and social systems lies with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, specific ageing issues are distributed

among other ministries (the Ministry of Health of the Slovak republic, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak republic etc.). However there are not specific ageing units in different ministries. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic is responsible for preparation of National Programme of Active Ageing and for submitting its evaluation and monitoring report to Government.

In 2014 the Committee for Seniors was transformed into the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic on the Rights of Seniors and the Adaptation of Public Policies to the Population Ageing Process (chaired by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family). The Council is an advisory, initiative and coordinating body of the Government of the Slovak Republic. It was set up as a specific advisory body to provide cooperation and to ensure systematic approach to the issues of senior rights, living conditions, equal opportunities and equal treatment of seniors and closer cooperation of stakeholders.

There are eight self-governing regions in Slovakia. Their Governors and regional councils have decision making competencies about for example health care or education . All self-governing regions actively assess policies and measures in terms of their impact on seniors. Representatives of cities, municipalities and self-governing regions councils are active members of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic on the Rights of Seniors and the Adaptation of Public Policies to the Population Ageing Process.

Laws, Policies, and Strategic Framework

By Resolution no. 688 of 4 December 2013, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the National Programme for Active Ageing 2014 – 2020. The Programme was prepared by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with all relevant subjects, i.e. all the relevant ministries, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, regional authorities, the Association of Towns and Municipalities, the Union of Pensioners of the Slovak Republic, the Association of Christian Senior Citizens, Forum for the Help to the Elderly, the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic, the Association of providers of social services in the Slovak Republic, the Republic Union of Employers and the Association of employers' Associations of the Slovak Republic. The Programme was adopted with the aim of promoting human rights of older people through their mobilisation using public supportive policies. It is not just the issue of addressing the labour market participation of older people but also the support of their lifelong learning, civic and social activities outside the labour market, supporting their independence, dignity, economic and social security, including protection against abuse.

Methods and tools

Data collection and analysis

Is there a coordination mechanism for the production and use of national statistics on ageing?

We do not have special methodology for using national data on ageing only standard regulation is applicable.

Is ageing-related data centrally compiled and disseminated, for instance through websites focusing on ageing or annual ageing reports?

Unfortunately, whole data relevant for ageing are fragmented into more departments of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (for example field of labour market, pensions and LTC), other Ministries (like Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education etc.) and Statistical Office (demographic issues). So, our knowledge is that currently no Slovak institution compiled and disseminates all these data. Some data could be found on the websites of the relevant institutions (like Social Insurance Agency, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and Statistical Office).

Is there dedicated government funding to advance ageing-related research?

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is funded some ageing-related researches through subordinate organisation "Institute for Labour and Family Research". Researches are done by independent experts of the Institute for Labour and Family Research.

Are there known data gaps related to ageing statistics? If yes, what are those gaps? How were the gaps addressed?

We think that the most problematic is lower possibility of collecting and using of the cross-sectional data for micro simulation analysis. As the way of improvement more communication/cooperation between relevant analytical units is necessary.

Awareness raising, advocacy and education

Are there any awareness raising mechanisms in place to increase mindfulness of government officials regarding ageing-related issues?

The representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family attend conference, round tables, workshops organized by civic association or state bodies dedicated to various topics related to aging.

On national level Academy of education provides some courses of ageing related issues (<http://www.akademiavzdelavania.sk/>).

Are there any government sector-specific notes, presentations, or other tools disseminated within government to raise awareness about ageing-related issues, for example in transport, housing, security, health

There are sector specific notes (e.g. Strategic Healthcare Framework for 2013-2030, National action plan for the transition from institutional to community-based care in the social services system 2016 – 2020, preparation of National Skills Strategy) which raise awareness about ageing-related issues.

Has population ageing been included in school/education curricula?

Population ageing is not particularly included in school/education curriculum.

Stakeholder engagement

Are stakeholders consulted on ageing-related issues?/Are there mechanisms in place such as older people councils to involve older persons in the policymaking process?

As already mentioned on the national level there is the Council, which members are also stakeholders and which have the right to give comments on every policy concerning older persons.

On regional level for the purpose of involvement older persons in the policymaking process the cities set up the councils/boards of elders as initiative and advisory body of the mayors.

Are there examples of information campaigns to raise awareness on ageing among the general public and/or specific target groups or sectors (e.g. employers)

Ministry of justice of the Slovak republic in partnership with non-governmental organization BAGAR held conference "*Vulnerable in the digital age*" for seniors and people with disabilities. During the conference, participants discussed the problems of seniors in digital world and how state can help them to access digital world by providing necessary technology and training.

Non-governmental organization *Senior friendly* held conference "*Active Aging and Intergenerational Cooperation*", under the auspices of the Ombudsman with the aim to draw attention to changes in the labor market as a result of an aging population.

In order to ensure awareness on ageing among employers there were several conferences focused on age management. For example in October 2019 was held final conference of SILVER project under auspices of the Secretary General of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family "*SO AS 50+ would NOT MEAN MINUS*".

All mentioned conference were held with the participation of local and foreign experts, representatives of relevant departments and also with representatives of public, private, non-profit institutions and general public.

Age-sensitive analysis, generation-proof / age-sensitive /age-responsive policy development

Are there tools to screen and evaluate existing laws, policies and programmes to ensure that the needs of all generations are taken into account? (If yes, please describe them and provide links to documents) /Has age-sensitive analysis been institutionalised as a systematic process? Are government actors encouraged/required to do it?

There are no specific tools to screen and evaluate existing laws, policies and programmes to ensure that the needs of all generations are taken into account.

Generation proof/ age sensitive / age-responsive budgeting

Are there any methods/procedures in place for age-responsive budgeting similar to gender-responsive budgeting? (If yes, please describe them and provide links to documents).

In order to ensure responsible budgeting to ensure sustainability and not to burden future generations every change in pension system is examined thoroughly. However there are not any specific methods/procedures in place for age-responsive budgeting.

Are there any procedures in place to ensure responsible budgeting to ensure sustainability and not to burden future generations (intergenerational equity)?

In March 2012 constitutional Act on budget responsibility entered in force. It sets limit for the general government debt – so called debt brake. The aim is through sanction and correction mechanism prevents the increase of Slovakia´s debt to critic levels. Governments tend to create debts (spent more as they have to disposal) not only during crises, but also in good times. Generated debt increases over time until it reaches such a high level it would be possible for the government to borrow, so the country defaults. Should this happen or the country would like to avert such a threat, the government has to adopt drastic austerity measures. As a consequence living standard of the inhabitants declines. The debt brake should increase the government´s discipline to overcome such situation with a sufficient reserve.

Monitoring and performance assessment

Every second year the Minister submits a report on the implementation of tasks arising from the Programme to Government for approval. A first monitoring and evaluation report was approved by Government in 2016. In 2021 the Minister will submits the last monitoring and evaluation report. Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Family is currently preparing a new National Programme for Active Ageing for years 2021 -2030.

Good practices

1. The Centre of Active Aging (CAA) is a unique, innovative project designed primarily to improve the health of seniors by promoting physical activity. The Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Comenius University is working on the project in cooperation with the Institute of Physical Medicine in St Pölten in Austria. The aim of the Slovak and Austrian project partners is to improve the conditions for the effective provision of preventive care and support for the health of the elderly and thus contribute to their better social inclusion. The Centre for Active Ageing, where experts combine the latest proven scientific knowledge in the field of physical activity, will provide comprehensive movement programmes under the guidance of qualified professionals focused on the prevention and promotion of senior citizens' health.

<https://www.active-ageing.eu/en/>

2. „Safe Autumn of your life ” is a project of the Ministry of Interior organised by the Presidium of the Police Force. The aim is to inform older citizens about the possibilities of protecting themselves and their property against crime, to instruct them how to "not get caught" by fraudsters, how to behave so that they do not become victims of crime and how to proceed if they have already been victims.