

## Mainstreaming ageing - revisited

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### Challenging context

The proportion of people aged 65 years and above will increase from 16.8 per cent in 2020 to 24.5 per cent by 2050 in the UNECE region. This demographic shift will have an impact on almost all aspects of society. A comprehensive and forward-looking policy response that anticipates, prepares for, and mitigates the impact of population ageing on the economy, society and different generations is needed.

A future-oriented approach can seize the opportunities that ageing populations bring by enabling individuals to age healthily, learn and continuously develop new skills, extend their working lives, participate in and contribute to societies in diverse and meaningful ways at all stages of their lives. Inaction, on the other hand, may lead to increasing financial burden, shortages of skilled labour, strains on health and care systems, and intergenerational inequity if the risks and costs of population ageing are unfairly distributed. It is therefore important to take decisive action now to better anticipate and prepare societies for the future to ensure sustainable social protection systems, thriving economies, prosperity, and well-being for all generations.

### Suggested strategies

This policy brief highlights several levers to advance the integration of ageing into public policies:

- Political and executive leadership for mainstreaming ageing
- A strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing
- Strengthened governance and mechanisms for effective horizontal and vertical inter-institutional coordination
- Agreed procedures for age-sensitive analysis, such as regulatory impact assessments and age-responsive budgeting
- Strengthened capacity for mainstreaming ageing
- Enhanced awareness, data collection and analysis to inform policy
- Participatory policymaking at all levels

### Expected results

A more effective integration of ageing into all policies at all levels will enhance preparation for and adaptation to population ageing and achieve a more equitable development within society that will benefit all age groups.

### With country examples from:

Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, and Turkey.

This policy brief addresses **Commitment 1 of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17.**



United Nations

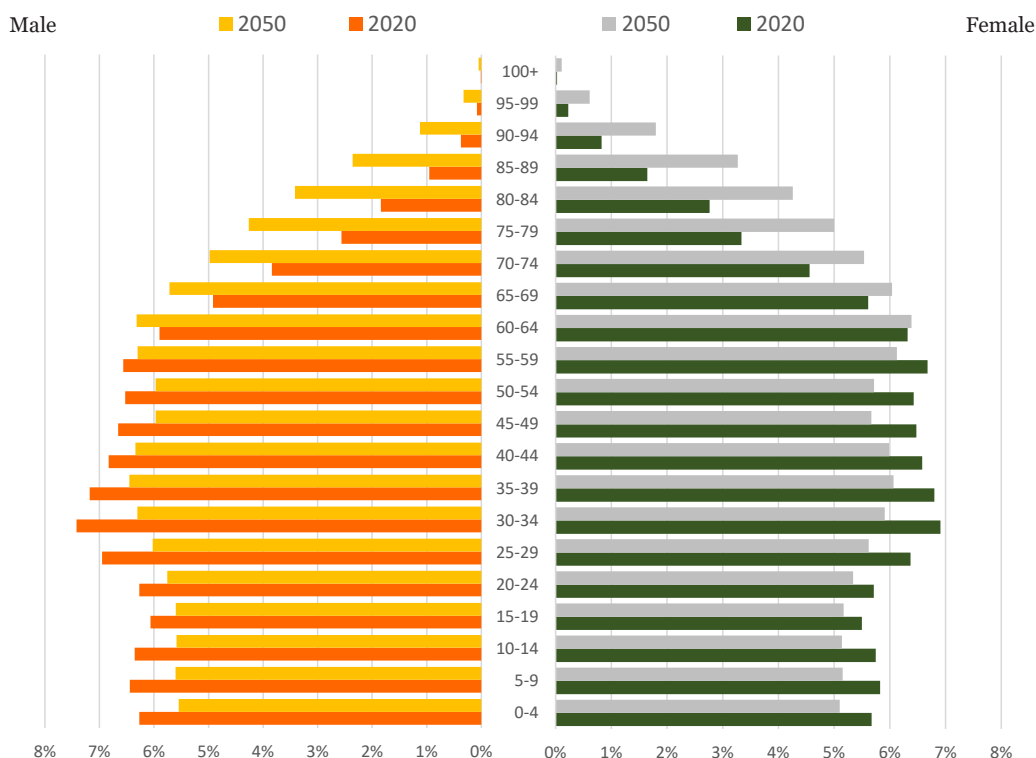
## Introduction

Population ageing has social and economic implications for which societies need to prepare and to which they need to adapt. This requires a coordinated, whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort.<sup>1</sup>

Mainstreaming ageing as a recommended policy strategy was first introduced in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), 2002, calling for the integration of ageing into broader policy agendas on social and economic development and human rights. In the regional implementation strategy for MIPAA, UNECE member States committed to mainstreaming ageing with the goal of securing “gender-sensitive and evidence-based coordinated and integrated policies to bring societies and economies into harmony with demographic change” (MIPAA/RIS). The first UNECE Policy Brief on Ageing in 2009 defined mainstreaming ageing as “a strategy, process and multi-dimensional effort of integrating ageing issues into all policy fields and all policy levels” with the “ultimate objective (...) to achieve a more equitable development within a society that will benefit all social groups”.<sup>2</sup>

Twenty years onwards from the adoption of MIPAA/RIS, considerable progress has been made at all levels to enhance political attention and action on ageing and develop cross-cutting policy measures to respond to the challenges and realize the opportunities of ageing societies. The concept of mainstreaming ageing itself has evolved from a narrower focus on mainstreaming the concerns of older persons across sectorial policies to a more holistic, life-course oriented, gender-responsive, human rights-based and equitable approach that integrates the needed dual response to both population and individual ageing.<sup>3</sup> The present policy brief revisits mainstreaming ageing by reviewing recent advances in this field, and calls for action to make the integration of ageing into broader policy agendas more systematic.

**Figure 1**  
**UNECE population structure by 5-year age groups and gender, 2020 and 2050**



Source: ECE calculation based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision.

<sup>1</sup>UNECE 2021e.

<sup>2</sup>UNECE 2009.

<sup>3</sup>UNECE 2021a.

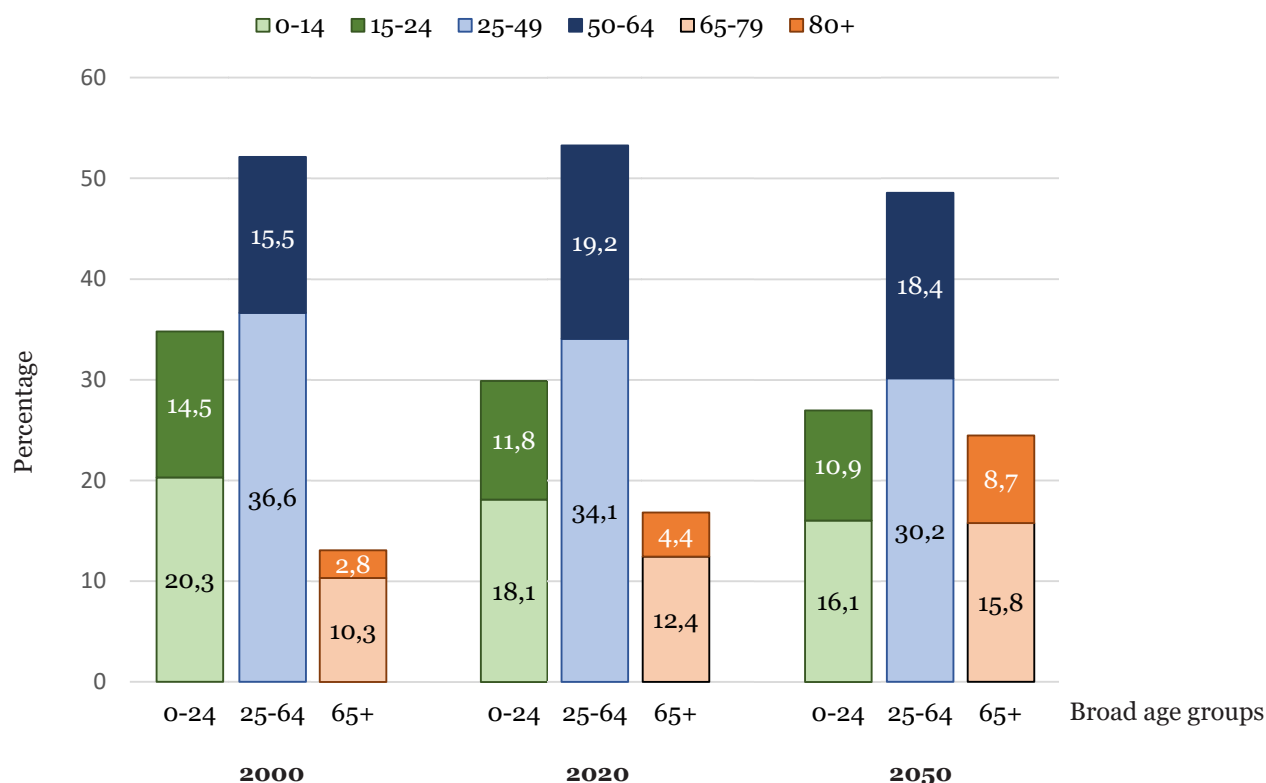
## Population ageing and sustainable development in the UNECE region

People in the UNECE region are living longer. Life expectancy at age 65 has increased from 16.3 years in 2000 to 18.9 years in 2020. This constitutes about two and a half additional life years gained since the adoption of MIPAA 20 years ago. Life expectancy remains higher for women than men. Women aged 65 today can expect to live another 20.3 years compared to 17.2 years for men on average in the UNECE region.<sup>4</sup>

### A shifting age structure

The proportion of people aged 65 years and above is projected to increase in the UNECE region from 16.8 per cent in 2020 to 24.5 per cent by 2050. At the same time, the share of children and youth (aged 0-24) is projected to decrease from 29.9 per cent in 2020 to 27.0 per cent in 2050 (see Figures 1 and 2). Averages of course mask regional diversity. In 16 countries of the UNECE region, older persons (aged 65 years and above) already make up over 20 per cent of the population, with the most aged populations living in Italy, Portugal, Finland, and Greece (over 22 per cent). By contrast, in four countries of Central Asia, the proportion of people aged 65 and above is still below 5 per cent (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan), though it is projected to double by 2050.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 2**  
UNECE population by broad age group, percentage in 2000, 2020, and 2050



Source: ECE calculation based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision.

The median age of the population in the UNECE region is continually rising. It increased from 35.5 years to 39.5 years between 2000 and 2020, and it is projected to reach 43.9 years by 2050.<sup>6</sup> Ten UNECE countries led by Italy, Portugal and Germany already today have median ages above the regional average projected for 2050.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> UNDESA World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> According to the UNDESA World Population Prospects, the median age in Italy was 47.3 in 2020, 46.2 in Portugal and 45.7 in Germany.

*An ageing workforce*

The gradual shift in the age structure of the population impacts the workforce and the ratio between those of working age and those below or above it.<sup>8</sup> As is the case for the general population, the median age of the working population is rising.<sup>9</sup> The proportion of its overall size will be falling as fewer young people enter the workforce while large population cohorts, the baby boomers, have or soon will be reaching retirement age (see Figure 1). This can lead to staff shortages in certain sectors unless mitigating measures are taken.

In 2000, there were 5 people of working age (15-64) for every person aged 65 and above in the UNECE region. This figure has fallen to 3.9 in 2020 and population projections estimate that there will only be 2.4 persons of working age for every person aged 65 and above by 2050.

The working population finances most public budgets through their contributions. It will be difficult for a shrinking working-age population to support the pension payments, health and care expenses, among others, for a growing proportion of pensioners - unless more people work significantly longer in the future, or the source of state incomes and the distribution of financial resources are altered. Enabling longer working lives through investments in lifelong education, age-adapted workplaces, reforms in employment and retirement policies, to name but a few, are key mitigating measures preparing for this shift in age structure.<sup>10</sup>

*Rising demand for health and long-term care services*

The use of health and care services increases with age. Especially, people of advanced age (80+) require health and long-term care services, and their proportion in the total population has increased from 2.8 per cent in 2000 to 4.4 in 2020 and is expected to double to 8.7 per cent by 2050 (see Figure 2). Preparing health and long-term care systems for growing demand, and promoting healthy ageing, is therefore a key priority for societal adaptation to demographic ageing.

*Growing old in smaller and more diverse families*

The size and composition of families change. People have fewer children and many older persons, especially women, live alone.<sup>11</sup> According to the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, on average 86.8 per cent of people aged 75 and above either live in a single-person household or live as a couple.<sup>12</sup> This has important implications for the ability of families to provide support and care for older relatives who need it. Most of the care provision for older persons has been and is being provided by family members, but the potential 'pool' of family carers is shrinking as the number of children decreases.<sup>13</sup> This requires adjustments in the way support and care in families and communities is provided. It puts priority on enabling measures that support the reconciliation of paid work and unpaid care, healthy ageing, and independent living in older age.

*Demographic change challenges urban and rural areas in different ways*

With increasing urbanization of the UNECE region, most people grow old in urban areas.<sup>14</sup> As it is mainly the young and working age population who migrate to the cities for higher education and work opportunities, many rural areas already today experience more accentuated population ageing through population decline.<sup>15</sup> Societal adaptation to population ageing needs to be sensitive to the diversity of challenges – and opportunities – that demographic change implies for local and regional development. Policies should aim to reduce and prevent growing inequities in living standards, opportunities, and access to services based on the place of living.

<sup>8</sup> The working-age population is typically defined as those aged 15 to 64, i.e. the age group between the end of compulsory education in majority of countries and retirement age. In practice, however many young people remain in full-time education beyond age 15, and numerous older adults remain in labour force after the age of 65.

<sup>9</sup> ILOSTAT – Data on Median age of the labour force <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/population-and-labour-force/>.

<sup>10</sup> UNECE 2017.

<sup>11</sup> UNECE 2020.

<sup>12</sup> See 2020 AAI EU results for the indicator 3.3 (<https://statswiki.unece.org/display/AAI/II.+Results>).

<sup>13</sup> UNECE 2019.

<sup>14</sup> UNECE 2020.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission 2021a.

*Migration flows impact the speed of demographic change*

Demographic change, including through domestic and international migration, is leading to population decline in some countries (and regions) in Central, Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern Europe.<sup>16</sup> International migration of skilled labour that temporarily helps address staff shortages, including in the health and care sector of more aged societies, in turn poses significant challenges for countries with outmigration of the working age population.

*People age in an environment of transformative economic, environmental, social, and technological change*

It is important to consider demographic change in the context of the broader trends and challenges that mark our era, bringing challenges as well as opportunities for societal adaptation. The characteristics of future generations of older people will change – they will be more educated and digitally connected than older generations today. Today's youth is ageing in an environment that differs significantly from that experienced by previous age cohorts. Hence, their individual as well as collective life experiences and opportunities in areas as diverse as education, technology, housing, family formation, work-life balance, job security, social protection, healthy environments, peace, and security will be different.

The ongoing demographic transition in the region will shape the society of the future. Population ageing challenges current welfare systems, labour markets, and economies, while influencing the conditions for future social and economic development. That said, the costs of ageing can be mitigated, and the potentials of healthy longevity be realized, through adequate preparation. A future-oriented policy response depends on understanding the transformative power of demographic change in interaction with other key factors shaping our time: globalisation, growing inequalities, environmental degradation, climate change, global migration, digitalization, and the changing nature of work, to name but a few.

*Population ageing and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

The comprehensive, cross-cutting, and universal nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, and the actions required to implement it, provide an opportunity for integrating an ageing perspective in forward-looking international and national development agendas. In the context of its pledge of 'leaving no-one behind', the agenda addresses children, youth, and older persons in vulnerable situations in several of its development goals and targets.

The objectives of sustainable development and bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change are closely connected. Ageing-related policies contribute to fulfilling the goals of the 2030 Agenda by enabling people of all ages to contribute to sustainable development as 'active agents of societal development'.<sup>17</sup> For example, Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for better access to quality education and the development and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities and continued skills development throughout the life course. This is key to preparing individuals for longer productive lives by ensuring that their skills and knowledge are and remain relevant to labour market developments and technological change throughout and beyond their active working lives. Figure 3 provides an overview of contributions of ageing-related policies towards achieving the sustainable development goals.

An overview of ageing-related policies and priorities in voluntary national reviews (VNRs) shows that out of the 158 submitted VNRs between 2016 and 2019 over two thirds included some reference to ageing. Many acknowledged that population ageing would have implications for the achievement of the SDGs including increased demand for basic services, the need to adapt physical environments to the needs of older persons and increased pressure for funding of social services, healthcare, and pensions. Several countries mentioned older persons under specific SDGs, but the review also noted that ageing-related policies and priorities are still absent in many national plans and sustainable development strategies.<sup>18</sup>

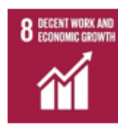
<sup>16</sup> Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, and Ukraine had negative population growth in 2020 according to World Bank Data. Among them, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Montenegro, Poland, and Republic of Moldova had a negative net migration rate for the period 2015-2020, meaning that there were more people emigrating from the countries than people migrating to the countries.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations, HelpAge International and AARP, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> UN DESA 2019.

**Figure 3**  
**Adaptation to population ageing contributes to sustainable development**

1. Population ageing can spur economic growth while maintaining fiscal sustainability, but policies and behaviour play important roles.



6. Fostering a balanced approach to financing old-age consumption can help to ensure generational equity and fiscal sustainability (SDGs 8 and 10).

2. Establishing universal social protection with adequate benefits is key to reducing poverty and inequality and to promoting social inclusion (SDGs 1, 8 and 10).



7. Adopting social security reforms that consider the widening gap in longevity by socio-economic status can help reduce inequality (SDG 10).

3. Promoting lifelong health and preventive care to maintain maximum functional capacity of individuals can improve health and wellbeing (SDG 3).



8. Creating age-friendly cities and communities contributes to making cities and human settlements inclusive and safe (SDG 11).

4. Investing in education and health and well-being for all, including lifelong learning, can improve productivity and maintain economic growth even as the share of working-age population shrinks (SDGs 3 and 4).



9. Eliminating age-related discrimination, including age barriers in employment, can reduce inequality, increase productivity and promote economic growth (SDGs 8, 10, and 16).

5. Promoting gender equality in employment and adopting family-friendly policies can improve labour force participation and lead to more rapid economic growth (SDGs 5 and 8).



10. Improving data collection and analysis of population and economic linkages can provide vital new evidence for policymaking (SDG 17).

Source: Adapted from UNDESA World Population Ageing 2019: Highlights, p. 27-28 on Policy implications for achieving the SDGs.

## Mainstreaming ageing revisited

MIPAA called upon national governments to mainstream ageing and the concerns of older persons into national development frameworks and poverty eradication strategies. It further highlighted the importance of institutional follow-up through the establishment of agencies on ageing and national committees, including civil society representatives and organisations of older persons, which could serve as national advisory and coordinating mechanisms on ageing. It stressed the important role of effective organization of older persons, educational, training and research activities, data collection and analysis, including gender- and age-specific information for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation for the plan's implementation.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the considerable progress in ageing-related policy made over the past 20 years, the development of more systematic approaches to mainstreaming ageing is still in its early stages – both at international and national level. To support countries with the systematic integration of ageing issues in social and economic development agendas, the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing issued new Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing in 2021 (see Box 1).<sup>20</sup> They recommend building a mainstreaming approach that is human rights-based, life-course-oriented, evidence-based, gender-responsive and equitable, and aligned with relevant international policy agendas. The Guidelines call upon governments to consider ageing from both a societal and individual perspective, recognizing and addressing the diversity in needs, rights, and opportunities at all ages through coordinated and integrated policies. A life-course perspective on ageing shifts attention from a focus on older age to considering the evolving needs, and vulnerabilities, of individuals across their entire life span. All generations are impacted by demographic change and are instrumental in bringing policy adaptations to success.

<sup>19</sup> MIPAA, 2002, para 119.

<sup>20</sup> UNECE 2021a.

## **BOX 1**

### **UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing**

The Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing provide policymakers with suggestions on how to advance or improve their mainstreaming efforts, considering ageing both from a societal and individual life-course perspective. They outline five stages that support countries in establishing a Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing:

**Stage 1 - Getting Started** - outlines preparatory activities, including making the case for mainstreaming, securing political commitment, carrying out a stakeholder mapping and analysis and setting up a team to develop the Strategic Framework.

**Stage 2 - Analysis** - proposes to carry out a situation analysis and take stock of the policy context, data situation and existing mainstreaming mechanisms to identify the gaps.

**Stage 3 - Vision and Directions** - focuses on identifying the strategic directions for the Framework and supports formulating the vision, goals, objectives and expected outcomes for mainstreaming ageing.

**Stage 4 - Identification of Activities** - helps defining specific activities to support mainstreaming ageing. Emphasis is put on the importance of instituting a coordination mechanism and selecting implementing partners.

**Stage 5 - Monitoring and Evaluation** - suggests establishing a mechanism that helps measure and evaluate progress over time and fosters continual adjustment and improvement of mainstreaming efforts.

The Guidelines are available on [unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing](https://unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing).

### **Key enablers for the integration of ageing into broader policy agendas**

The following sections discuss progress made across several key dimensions of mainstreaming ageing, and identify steps that could be taken to strengthen the integration of ageing into broader policy agendas going forward.

#### ***Political and executive leadership***

As populations age gradually, for many countries the tangible effects of the demographic transformation they are undergoing will only be felt critically in decades to come. In the absence of public pressure for action today, political and institutional foresight is needed to develop a long-term perspective for sustainable social and economic development in ageing societies. Leadership at all levels is key to enhancing awareness and enabling a concerted and coordinated response across government and society.<sup>21</sup>

Political leadership is instrumental in creating a shared understanding, ownership, and responsibility for this endeavour across political parties, parliaments, and government. To advance this, addressing population ageing should be fully considered as a cross-cutting responsibility in the strategic and long-term government programmes for sustainable development and followed up by ageing-specific policies. In recent years, a number of UNECE countries have addressed population ageing as a challenge for long-term sustainable development in their national development strategies (e.g. Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Spain).

Several intergovernmental leadership initiatives in the region also have raised attention to ageing. In 2020-21, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia, used their Trio-Presidency of the Council of the European Union to call for action on ageing. Under Portuguese Presidency in 2021, the Council adopted Conclusions on Mainstreaming Ageing in Public Policies, encouraging the development of strategic frameworks for mainstreaming ageing at the national level.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> UNECE 2021. Political commitment. How to build the case for a Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing? UNECE Toolkit for Mainstreaming Ageing available on [unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing](https://unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing).

<sup>22</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6976-2021-INIT/en/pdf>, para 26.

## Trio Presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia calls for action on ageing

Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia held the presidency of the Council of the European Union during the 18-month period from July 2020 to December 2021. In their joint declaration they called for mainstreaming ageing in all policy fields “to help societies and economies adapt appropriately to demographic change with a view to societies that accommodate the needs and interests of all ages, strengthening social inclusion and solidarity between the generations (...) adopting a life-course approach to ageing to the benefit of all generations and society as a whole”.

Through international conferences and Council Conclusions, Germany put the emphasis on human rights of older persons in the era of digitalisation, Portugal on mainstreaming ageing in public policies, and Slovenia on the life-course approach and intergenerational cooperation to combat ageism. National and regional older people’s organisations were actively involved in shaping the debate, co-organising two international conferences on ageing held in 2020 and 2021. Under the Trio Presidency the Council of the European Union adopted two Conclusions on “Human Rights, Participation and Well-being of Older Persons in the Era of Digitalisation” (Germany) and “Mainstreaming Ageing in Public Policies” (Portugal).

Source: *Trio Presidency Declaration on Ageing, 2020.*

Another example of raising awareness on the importance of a coordinated response to population ageing is the demographic resilience programme of the UNFPA Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia presented below.<sup>23</sup>

## Demographic Resilience Programme for Europe and Central Asia - UNFPA

In 2020, the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia launched a ‘Demographic Resilience Programme for Europe and Central Asia’. The programme aims to assist countries in the region with strengthening their capacity to understand and anticipate the population dynamics they are experiencing. It aims to ensure they have the skills, tools, political will and public support to manage them. A *Decade of Demographic Resilience* was launched in December 2021 at a Ministerial Conference on “Shaping Europe’s Demographic Future” in Sofia, Bulgaria. During the Decade, a bi-annual Demographic Resilience Forum will take stock of progress, sustain political support, and showcase successful new initiatives to address demographic change. The ‘Sofia Alliance’ – a member States-led policy and practice community facilitated by UNFPA – contributes to achieving the goals of the Decade by offering interested parties a platform to receive support, and share experiences, in addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities related to demographic change in areas such as population ageing, migration, rural revitalization, empowering young people, gender equality, financing of social policies, and enabling people to have the number of children they want.

Source: *UNFPA, 2020.*

### **Strategic frameworks for mainstreaming ageing**

Since the adoption of MIPAA/RIS in 2002, most countries in the UNECE region have developed national ageing strategies and action plans that address the needs of older persons and societal adaptations to population ageing across policy sectors. Recent examples include Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Kazakhstan and Poland).<sup>24</sup>

National ageing policies however generally do not make specific provisions for mainstreaming ageing into broader policy agendas, beyond the defined scope of the respective policy. Investing in strengthening cross-sectoral awareness, joint ownership and coordination of ageing-related policy can enhance the implementation and impact of existing ageing policies. Steps in this direction could be done through revisions of existing policy frameworks on ageing or developed independently through administrative and institutional adjustments.

<sup>23</sup> [https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/156\\_1\\_pager\\_decade\\_of\\_demres\\_r2.pdf](https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/156_1_pager_decade_of_demres_r2.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> For more details, see national reports on MIPAA/RIS implementation: <https://unece.org/population/ageing/review-and-appraisal>.



The UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing lay out steps for the development of a strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing (see Box 1). They encourage national stakeholders to analyze - in the unique context of each country - the degree to which ageing is integrated in existing policies and to take stock of the institutional mechanisms in place to foster mainstreaming ageing across all policies at all levels. An analysis of the strength and weaknesses of current approaches (a 'gap analysis') can help identify areas for improvement.

Measures that can facilitate the integration of ageing into broader policy agendas include defining a clear mandate for mainstreaming, allocating adequate resources, setting up an inter-institutional coordination mechanism for a whole-of-government approach with broad stakeholder involvement, and a monitoring and evaluation framework to continuously assess progress and ensure accountability by the different government departments and other implementing partners involved.

### **Governance and coordination mechanisms**

Ageing-related work is generally led and coordinated by the line ministries in charge of implementing national ageing policies, where these are in place. This responsibility often lies with ministries in charge of labour and social affairs/social protection (e.g. in Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia) or ministries of health (e.g. in Albania, Ireland, Norway). In a number of countries, ageing units or departments have been created to oversee the implementation of ageing-related policies in collaboration with other ministries and institutions. They act as the national focal points on ageing matters. They are generally separate from entities working on children and youth policies and programmes.

### *Strengthening the governance of ageing-related policy*

Some countries in the region have recently undertaken institutional adjustments to strengthen the governance of ageing-related matters within government. In Malta, for example, responsibility for policy measures related to ageing and older persons was initially under the Ministry of Health, then entrusted to a junior minister within the Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity. In 2020, a dedicated Ministry for Senior Citizens and Active Ageing was created.<sup>25</sup> The Government of Canada reappointed a Minister of Seniors in 2018 to ensure that federal programmes and services are developed to respond to Canada's ageing population and champion issues that affect older persons the most.<sup>26</sup>

At regional level, an increased acknowledgement of the strategic importance of addressing population ageing is reflected by the appointment of a Vice-President for Democracy and Demography in the European Commission who led on several important measures since 2019 including a new demography report for the European Union in 2020 and a green paper, and public consultation, on ageing in 2021, among others.<sup>27</sup>

### *Horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms across government*

Apart from the central ageing entities established by many governments, there is currently no system of departmental ageing focal points at the level of line ministries with responsibility for integrating or coordinating an ageing perspective in sectoral policies. Several countries have established inter-agency commissions, councils, or working groups on ageing on which different line ministries and other stakeholders are represented. In recent years, some countries have enlarged the portfolio of these bodies to address societal adaptation to population ageing. In Armenia, for example, the Inter-Agency Commission on the issues of older persons and persons with disabilities, established in 1998, was renamed in 2012 to "Overcoming the Consequences of Ageing and Resolving the Issues of the Elderly".<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> MIPAA20 Report Malta.

<sup>26</sup> MIPAA20 Report Canada; In Canada, a position of Minister of State for Seniors was first introduced in 2011 but then abolished in 2015. Between 2015 and 2018, Ministers of Families, Children and Social Development were responsible for policies related to older persons.

<sup>27</sup> European Commission 2020; 2021c and 2021d.

<sup>28</sup> MIPAA20 Report Armenia.

## Inter-agency commissions, councils and working groups on ageing

In Bulgaria, there is an *Inter-institutional Working Group on Demographic Issues, Incomes and Living Standards* that provides and maintains a constant working format for interinstitutional cooperation, including on the implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of Bulgaria's National Strategy for Active Ageing.

The Czech Republic established a *Government Council for Older Persons and Population Ageing* in 2006 on which almost all government ministries are represented. The Council, chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, is a permanent advisory body to the government on issues related to older persons and the ageing population. In its activities, it strives for the equal status of older persons in all areas of life, for the protection of their human rights and for the development of intergenerational relations in the family and society. Council meetings are held as needed, but at least three times a year. Information on the activities of the Council is publicly available on the government's website.

In Finland, a cross-administrative group including the Ministries of Social Affairs and Health, Education and Culture, Economic Affairs and Employment, Environment, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Association of Finnish Municipalities was established in 2020 to develop an action plan for the first three years of implementation of the *National Programme on Ageing 2030: For an age-competent Finland*. The group developed concrete proposals for measures to implement the key policy objectives and related funding. The implementation of the programme on ageing is led by an inter-ministerial steering group appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, including representatives of the executive management of ministries, and an implementation group including specialists and members of the initial working group.

In the Slovak Republic, the Committee for Seniors under the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (2012) was transformed in 2014 into the *Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic on the Rights of Elderly and the Adaptation of Public Policies to the Population Ageing Process* (chaired by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family). This 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 older persons and closer cooperation of stakeholders. There are eight self-governing regions in the Slovak Republic. Their Governors and regional councils have decision making competencies on health care or education for example. All self-governing regions actively assess policies and measures in terms of their impact on older persons. Representatives of cities, municipalities and self-governing regions councils are active members of the Council.

Source: Country Notes on Mainstreaming Ageing and MIPAA20 Reports; National Programme on Ageing 2030 – Finland

The responsibility for the implementation of national ageing-related policies often lies at regional or local level. In addition to horizontal coordination of ageing-related policy across different government departments, there is a need for vertical coordination across levels of government.

## Vertical coordination of ageing policies in Austria and Spain

In Austria, the principle elements of ageing policies are regulated at the federal level and their implementation is under the responsibility of the provinces and communities. In every of the nine Austrian provinces, there is a unit on ageing policies. Many communities have an officer in charge of older persons. Once a year a joint meeting between the representatives of the federal state and of the provinces in charge of ageing policies is organized. At the national level, representatives of all federal ministries participate in the *Federal Senior Citizen's Advisory Council*, chaired by the Minister for Social Affairs. The Council is an instrument for fostering political dialogue about different issues of ageing policies.

In Spain, IMSERSO coordinates ageing issues across different levels of government through the *Territorial Council of Social Affairs* on which regional and local representatives as well as civil society are represented. The Territorial Council is consulted on new laws and policies dealing with ageing. Through this mechanism, local entities and civil society are consulted prior to decisions on new legal instruments and their implementation.

Source: Country notes on Mainstreaming Ageing and MIPAA20 Reports.

## Coordination of ageing issues in Canada

Canada's Seniors and Pensions Policy Secretariat located at the Government's Employment and Social Development Department, is a focal point for federal seniors-related efforts, to raise the profile of seniors' issues and to develop a collaborative approach to policy and program development for the rapidly increasing number of seniors as Canada's population ages. The Seniors and Pensions Policy Secretariat plays a role in mainstreaming ageing through its support to the Minister responsible for the seniors' portfolio. The Secretariat implements a mainstreaming ageing approach by systematically reviewing Cabinet documents, identifying issues of concern to seniors for the Minister to raise at Cabinet.

The *Forum of Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers Responsible for Seniors* (the Forum), which was created in 1992 and falls within the federal Seniors and Pensions Policy Secretariat, serves as a coordinating mechanism for the application of an 'ageing lens' across provinces and territories. The Forum includes representatives from both federal and provincial/territorial governments at the Minister, Deputy Minister and Official levels. The Forum meets regularly to discuss issues of importance to seniors; share information on seniors' wellbeing; and undertake initiatives to advance issues of common concern, including, where possible, in collaboration with other FPT fora.

Since 2018, the Forum has pursued a multi-year work plan approach to undertake policy research on its priority areas. Additionally, the Secretariat leads and coordinates work related to the *Interdepartmental Committee on Seniors*, which is a forum on seniors' issues for all federal departments and agencies whose mandate and/or responsibilities contribute to advancing federal interests in seniors' and older adults' issues. The Secretariat also supports the *National Seniors Council*, which was created in 2007 to advise the Government of Canada on issues that matter to seniors. Council members are nominated based on their expertise and experience related to seniors' issues.

Source: Canadian country note on Mainstreaming Ageing

Governments may consider reviewing the existing governance structures, mandates, allocated resources, and coordination and monitoring processes to assess how they could be strengthened to facilitate mainstreaming of ageing aspects in policymaking. One measure would be to place the responsibility for government-wide coordination and accountability at the highest level of government, for example the Prime Minister's office.

Another measure would be to establish focal points on ageing in all line ministries (at all levels of government) with a clear mandate - and adequate resources - to integrate an ageing perspective in sectoral policies. This role could combine both societal adaptation to demographic change as well as the needs and interests of different age groups – including children, youth, and older persons - across the life course.

### **Age-sensitive analysis and impact assessments**

Administrative procedures for systematically integrating an ageing perspective in all policies at all levels are needed to embed a mainstreaming approach in the policymaking process. A stocktaking on mainstreaming practices across the UNECE region found that systematic procedures for age-sensitive analysis are still lacking in most countries.<sup>29</sup> In the absence of institutional processes that ensure mainstreaming ageing across policies, the integration of an ageing perspective depends on analysis and inputs provided by ageing units, independent commissioners for older persons, children or youth, consultative bodies, or inputs through expert hearings and public consultations.

Most ageing units cannot currently draw on a system of sectoral focal points and may not have a mandate for mainstreaming ageing beyond the ageing-specific policies on which they lead. Fostering shared ownership and responsibility for mainstreaming ageing across government departments could be instrumental in enhancing capacity and concerted action for the effective integration of ageing into broader policy agendas.

<sup>29</sup> See UNECE country notes on mainstreaming ageing for details on national mainstreaming practice.

*Age-sensitive analysis of existing laws, regulations, and policies*

Conducting a situation analysis to assess the degree to which individual and population ageing is addressed by current policies is essential. A gap analysis helps uncover ‘blank spots’ in mainstreaming ageing, that is policy fields or sectors in which ageing aspects are not or insufficiently considered and addressed. It can point to data and knowledge gaps. A screening and analysis of the body of existing laws, regulations, policies, and programmes can also help uncover any instances of age discrimination that need to be addressed. Overall, age-sensitive analysis helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches.<sup>30</sup>

Italy, under the project ‘*National multilevel co-managed coordination of active ageing policies*’ undertook a comprehensive stocktaking of national and regional policies and interventions related to active ageing in 2019 in view of developing the first national ageing strategy. Based on this information, in 2020, a network of public administrations and stakeholders set up under the project jointly developed recommendations and shared experiences that could inform future measures in the field of ageing at national and local level.<sup>31</sup>

*Regulatory impact assessments*

Regulatory impact assessments (RIA) can provide a useful tool for considering the implications of new laws and regulations when preparing proposals for new legal instruments, policies or measures decided by government. Many countries are performing RIA to assess the potential impacts of new laws on businesses, the environment, health, and social outcomes. Ireland, for example, examines potential impacts of any proposed policy, legislation, programme or service on people with a disability.<sup>32</sup> Gender impact assessments are applied in several countries (including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Sweden) to support gender mainstreaming implementation by analyzing the potential impact of new laws and regulations on women and men.<sup>33</sup>

RIA are less frequently conducted to assess impacts on different age groups or future generations. Examples include Child Rights and Youth Impact Assessments.<sup>34</sup> Youth Checks have, for example, been introduced in Austria, Belgium (Flanders), France, Germany, and Ireland.<sup>35</sup> RIA to assess impacts on older persons are currently not carried out as a stand-alone procedure but are sometimes included as part of broader social impact assessments (for example in France) or demographic impact assessments (in Germany). To avoid a myriad of separate checks by age group, governments may consider developing integrated impact assessments that span across the life course and consider potential impacts on different generations. An example of such a merged tool is the Canadian Gender-based Analysis Plus that includes age as a domain for analysis.

**Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) - Canada**

The Government of Canada began making commitments on mainstreaming sex and gender in the 1970s in its policy development. In 1995, the Government of Canada committed to using Gender Based Analysis (GBA) to advance gender equality in Canada, as part of the United Nations’ Beijing Platform for Action. Over time, GBA has shifted from a more specific gender mainstreaming tool to one that focuses more broadly on how programmes and policies affect various groups of people differently, due to gender and other diverse identity factors, including age.

In 2011, Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) was introduced to highlight this shift. While not primarily focused on mainstreaming ageing, by incorporating age, GBA+ is contributing to mainstreaming ageing. GBA Plus is Canada’s approach to support the development and implementation of responsive and inclusive policies, programs, services and other initiatives. By incorporating age into this analysis, GBA Plus is contributing towards mainstreaming ageing from an intersectional lens. Since 2016, it has been mandatory in all federal Cabinet proposals.

Source: Canadian Country Note on Mainstreaming Ageing and MIPAA20 Report Canada.

<sup>30</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Stage 2 ‘Analysis’ of the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing.

<sup>31</sup> MIPAA20 Report Italy.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, Ireland (2012).

<sup>33</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (2016).

<sup>34</sup> For more information and country examples see <https://fra.europa.eu/en/content/child-rights-impact-assessment>.

<sup>35</sup> OECD (2018). p.28.

The German demography check is an example of a tool that encourages decision-makers to explore the implications of new laws for different policy priorities that contribute to adapting society to demographic change. It was implemented under the *German Demographic Strategy* adopted in 2012.

### Demography Check - Germany

In 2014, Germany integrated a new check list of 24 questions assessing the demographic implications and risks of new laws in its regulatory impact assessment of the economic, social and environmental consequences of new laws and regulations. The demography check aims to sensitize lawmakers to the demographic consequences of planned legislations, their potential interaction with the policy priorities of the *German Demographic Strategy*, their anticipated impact on current and future generations, as well as intergenerational relations and solidarity. The results of the assessment are included in the proposal of each new law.

Source: German country note on mainstreaming ageing; [www.demografie-portal.de](http://www.demografie-portal.de).

Institutionalizing RIA in the law- and policymaking process can ensure that potential impacts of new laws on different age groups and societal adaptation to population ageing is systematically considered early in the policy cycle. An RIA exercise can entice policymakers to consider relevant connections with ageing in their plans and identify and address potential concerns. This can also contribute to raising awareness on ageing among policymakers across ministries and levels of government.<sup>36</sup>

#### Age-responsive budgeting

Mainstreaming ageing in the budgetary process would involve an analysis of budget allocations to assess if government expenditure is equitably allocated between different age groups, and whether government spending decisions contribute to advancing the adaptation of society to population ageing and the goal of a sustainable society for all ages. Inspiration can be taken from the experience gained with ‘gender budgeting’ that mainstreams gender in the budgetary process to ensure that the budget is more effective at meeting gender equality goals.<sup>37</sup> As in the Canadian example of GBA+, introduced earlier, an age dimension can be integrated within gender budgeting methodologies and processes. In 2018, the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act was passed by Parliament enshrining the application of GBA+ in all new budget measures, tax expenditures, and existing expenditures, and requiring the publication of these GBA+ analyses.

Giving due consideration to the long-term financial implications of population ageing is also important from the perspective of intergenerational equity between current and future generations.<sup>38</sup> The financial implications of decisions taken today may disadvantage tomorrow’s youth or older generations. Demographic change requires long-term financial planning to ensure, among others, the financial sustainability of pension, health, and social protection systems to provide adequate living standards for generations to come (see example of the EU Working Group on Ageing Populations and Sustainability below). At the same time new investments should be checked against their contribution towards making societies and economies fit for the demographic transition to older populations.

<sup>36</sup> OECD (2021).

<sup>37</sup> Downes, R. and S. Nicol (2020). See also <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-budgeting>.

<sup>38</sup> Arévalo, Berti, Caretta and Eckefeld (2019).

## EU Working Group on Ageing Populations and Sustainability (AWG)

Established within the Economic Policy Committee (EPC), the AWG contributes to improving the quantitative assessment of the long-term sustainability of public finances and economic consequences of ageing populations in EU Member States. The common budgetary projections by the EPC's AWG provide the basis for the assessment by the Council and the European Commission of sustainability of the public finances of Member States, within the context of the Stability and Growth Pact.

Every three years, the European Commission issues projections on the long-term economic and budgetary impact of an ageing population for EU member States. In May 2021, the Working Group on Ageing Populations and Sustainability published updated demographic, economic and budgetary projections up to 2070 for EU member States within the framework of the Ageing Report 2021.

Source: [https://europa.eu/epc/working-groups-epc/working-group-ageing-populations-and-sustainability\\_fr](https://europa.eu/epc/working-groups-epc/working-group-ageing-populations-and-sustainability_fr).

### Capacity development for mainstreaming ageing

Methodologies for age- and gender-sensitive analysis and impact assessments facilitate the integration of ageing in broader government policy. Guidance and training to staff in how to effectively use and integrate these into their policy-related work is an important aspect of building institutional capacity for mainstreaming ageing.

Mainstreaming ageing cannot be achieved without building awareness, knowledge, skills, and leadership in the diverse government entities and institutions whose action is needed. Training and capacity development of government staff is a key enabler for mainstreaming. This has been clearly identified by gender mainstreaming advocates and many institutions by now offer gender trainings for their staff to support gender mainstreaming. Trainings offered to government staff on demographic change and ageing are less frequent.

## Capacity development on mainstreaming ageing in the Republic of Moldova

In 2014, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and UNFPA, developed a methodology for mainstreaming ageing in public policies - as a pragmatic, simple and easy to use tool for considering the interests and needs of older persons when developing local and national policies. The methodology was approved by the National Commission on Population and Development, chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister on Social Issues. A practical guide on the methodology was developed, which was used in seven seminars to representatives of ministries and Local Public Authorities on integrating an ageing perspective in public policies.

Source: *Country note on Mainstreaming Ageing and MIPAA20 Report for the Republic of Moldova*

Another aspect of capacity development is to sensitize and inform about ageing and policy directions for ageing-related multi-sectoral action. This includes opportunities for information-sharing and experience exchange between colleagues and stakeholders through knowledge networks and events.

## Dialogue and information exchange on demographic change in Germany

To support the implementation of the *German Demographic Strategy "Every Age Counts"*, the German government has created several instruments and processes to foster information exchange between relevant actors at federal, regional and local level. One tool for fostering information exchange on demographic change, compiling in a one-stop-shop relevant demographic data, policy information, research and good practices across all policy domains and levels, is the *Demografieportal*, an online platform, that addresses all relevant governmental and non-governmental actors, including social partners, associations, researchers, civil society, and citizens. Information exchange and collaboration is fostered through a dialogue process including national conferences, demographic dialogue events and thematic working groups that facilitate information exchange, the sharing of good practices and peer learning.

Source: [www.demografie-portal.de](http://www.demografie-portal.de).

## Awareness, data, and analysis to inform policy

Knowledge is central to evidence-informed policy. Research, data collection and analysis related to ageing and demographic change has intensified, supported by global and regional efforts to strengthen the evidence base for ageing-related policy, including recent work by the Titchfield Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data.<sup>39</sup> National statistical offices, research institutes, but also civil society organisations are key actors in raising awareness about ageing-related issues and priorities.

Governments can support research and knowledge production by funding ageing-related studies that address current knowledge and data gaps. To identify these, it can be helpful to comprehensively review the state of data collection and research on ageing. Canada's statistical agency, for example, conducted a comprehensive review of their existing data and analysis related to population ageing and older persons, broadly consulting with stakeholders, including other governments departments and academics, to advise on data gaps and opportunities.<sup>40</sup> In 2017-2019, a *National Report on the State of Research on Ageing and Demographic Change in Austria* was prepared by the Austrian Ageing Network (*Netzwerk Altern*) in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, to present a comprehensive overview of the state of research and reflect the needs of the research community and perspectives on new research directions.<sup>41</sup>

A comprehensive situation analysis, including demographic projections, helps identify priorities and directions for ageing-related policies overall but also to identify the relevance of demographic change for different sectors.<sup>42</sup> Finland identified the need for regular assessments of the trends in population ageing, its consequences and related preparedness using updated demographic projections in their *Government Report on the Future* in 2004. Subsequently, an ageing report giving an overall assessment of the effects of ageing and the adequacy of preparation for demographic changes was published in 2009, informing subsequent policy formulation.<sup>43</sup>

Local demographic projections are useful to understand subnational diversity in demographic change and to inform local policymaking. In Norway, for example, demographic and socio-economic projections until 2040 were prepared for every municipality under the Governments' *Strategy for an Age-friendly Society*.<sup>44</sup>

It is important to make demographic and ageing-related information readily available to decision-makers and stakeholders. Many countries in the region publish annual statistical reports that inform about the situation and needs of different age groups, including older persons. In 2019, Statistics Canada launched a Senior's portal on its website, providing users a one-stop shop to find data and analysis related to population ageing and older persons.<sup>45</sup> At regional level, the *Atlas on Demography* aims to provide easy access to demographic data.

### Atlas on Demography - European Commission

The European Commission is currently working on an interactive knowledge management tool, the *Atlas on Demography*. It aims to enable policymakers and citizens to observe, monitor, and anticipate demographic challenges with timely, robust, and comparable demographic data and knowledge on demographic determinants and projections. Data is provided for the EU, national, regional, and local level. Information covered spans across a range of relevant policy areas such as health, labour, education, access to services, and territorial and cohesion policies.

Source: [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/atlas-demography\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/atlas-demography_en).

<sup>39</sup> In 2016, a multi-disciplinary taskforce of statisticians and policymakers issued recommendations on ageing-related statistics, providing guidance to national statistical offices for improving the production of ageing-related statistics (see UNECE 2016). Since 2018, the Titchfield City Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data, created by the United Nations Statistical Division, works towards establishing international standards and methods for the compilation of statistics and data on the major dimensions of ageing and age-disaggregated data across the life cycle. For more information, see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/citygroups/Titchfield.cshtml>.

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Finland) (2020).

<sup>40</sup> Canadian Country Note on Mainstreaming Ageing.

<sup>41</sup> Austrian Country Note on Mainstreaming Ageing; [www.netzwerk-altern.at](http://www.netzwerk-altern.at)

<sup>42</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Stage 2 of the Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing.

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Finland) (2020).

<sup>44</sup> <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/WG.12/Presentations/5-Norway.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup> [https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/seniors\\_and\\_aging](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/seniors_and_aging).

Monitoring the situation and needs of different age groups and how these evolve over time helps identify priority areas for action to guide policy formulation. The Active Ageing Index provides a tool to measure the untapped potential of older people for active and healthy ageing. It can be calculated at national and subnational levels and allows cross-country comparisons and monitoring of changes over time.

### Active Ageing Index

The Active Ageing Index (AAI) is a practical tool for policymakers that helps identify areas in which older people's potential for active ageing is not yet fully realized. It measures the level at which older people live independent lives, participate in paid employment and social activities as well as their capacity and enabling environment to remain active in older age. The index is constructed from 22 individual indicators that are grouped into four domains. Each domain reflects a different aspect of active ageing. AAI indicators are computed for men and women to highlight the gender gaps in active ageing outcomes.

The AAI is a product of a joint project undertaken by the UNECE Population Unit together with the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna.

Source: <https://unece.org/population/active-ageing-index>.

The Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) provides longitudinal data to enhance understanding of gender relations, life-course trajectories and intergenerational relations and how they evolve over time.

### Generations and Gender Programme

The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) is a social science Research Infrastructure that provides harmonized, large-scale, longitudinal, cross-national panel data on individual life courses and family dynamics. Its Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS) allows insights and answers to current societal and public policy challenges. It follows respondents through relationships, marriages, parenthood, divorces, deaths and many of the opportunities and challenges that people face along the way. It then tracks the causes and consequences of these events at the individual and societal levels.

A contextual database complements the survey data with regional and national level indicators to help increase understanding of the role policy and other contextual factors play in individuals' and families' lives. These open access data resources, curated by the GGP, can support the formulation of scientifically-informed and policy-relevant answers to key societal questions.

For the first GGS (2004-2018) panel waves data was collected on over 200,000 individuals aged 18-79 from 19 countries. A new round of data collection (GGS-II) was launched in 2020 and as of today 11 UNECE countries completed the first wave and additional 5 are planning to conduct the surveys in 2022-2023. The GGP is unique in its large coverage of Central and East European countries and is also the only comparative longitudinal panel study that covers the entire adult age range. Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Moldova, for example, recently conducted the GGS and use the findings to inform new ageing-related policy.

The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) was launched in 2000 by the UNECE Population Unit and has been coordinated by the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute since 2009.

Source: <https://www.ggp-i.org>.

Civil society organisations, including youth and older people's associations, play an important role in raising awareness about aspects of ageing, the needs of different age groups and priorities for policy change. Governments can support them in this role through financing research and awareness-raising activities. In Finland for example, grants are provided to strengthen the role of NGOs and the formation of networks of actors in the field of social and provincial reforms.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Finnish country note on mainstreaming ageing.



## Participatory policymaking

A key element in mainstreaming ageing is active stakeholder participation. Governments may consider developing a participatory stakeholder engagement approach. This can help ensure that different stakeholder groups, including youth and older persons, are actively involved, and listened to, in meaningful cross-sectoral dialogue and collaboration on ageing. Stakeholder engagement should include all relevant actors in the public and private sector, academia, social partners, and civil society.<sup>47</sup>

Countries in the UNECE region have established different mechanisms for stakeholder involvement, including for example multi-stakeholder advisory boards or youth and older people's councils. In Austria, the *Senior Citizens' Council* as the federation of all Senior Citizens' Organizations as well as the umbrella of youth organizations *Federal Youth Representation* have the status of social partners and have the right to give their comments on every law concerning young or older persons.<sup>48</sup>

### High Council for Family, Children and Age in France

France established a *High Council for Family, Children and Age* (HCFEA) placed under the Prime Minister's authority. The Council was established under the *2016 Act pertaining to the Adaptation of the Society to Ageing*. Its mission is to lead public debate and provide the public authorities with forward-looking and cross-cutting expertise on issues relating to the family and children, advancing age, and society's adaptation to ageing, in an intergenerational approach. The HCFEA is in charge of consulting stakeholders concerned by family, childhood and ageing issues (including pensions, adaptation to ageing, prevention and anticipation of the loss of autonomy, etc). HCFEA is responsible for giving opinions and making recommendations on the priority objectives of policies for the family, children, and older persons.

Source: French Country Note on Mainstreaming Ageing.

For more information visit <https://www.hcfea.fr> (in French).

### Stakeholder engagement at regional level in the implementation of ageing-related policies in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic recently enhanced stakeholder engagement on ageing at the regional level through a European Social Fund project on the 'Implementation of the Ageing Policy at Regional Level' (2017-2021). As part of the project, a regional coordinator was established in each region of the Czech Republic with the aim to institutionally anchor the policy of preparation for ageing in the regions of the Czech Republic. Regional coordinators provide basic counselling to older persons.

Other activities of the project are focused on interdisciplinary cooperation, through regional platforms, where information is exchanged between the national level and the self-governments. As part of awareness and educational activities, round table discussions are organised for the public on topics related to the ageing policy and older persons.

One of the outputs of consultations facilitated by the project was a recommendation to establish a committee for the family and older persons at the level of regional and municipal authorities. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, prepared a 'Methodological Recommendation for the Establishment of a Committee for the Family and the Older Persons at the Regional and Municipal Authorities', which became effective on 1 February 2021. The recommendation contains a definition of the legal basis, an overview of main tasks and information on the funding of the committees.

Source: MIPAA20 Report – Czech Republic

<sup>47</sup> See UNECE 2021b for recommendations and country examples of stakeholder participation. See also UNECE tool on Stakeholder analysis: How to map, analyse and engage stakeholders in the development of a Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing.

<sup>48</sup> Austrian Country Note on Mainstreaming Ageing.

Youth are another group whose voice needs to be heard in policymaking, particularly as many children and young people are not yet eligible to vote. Several UNECE countries have developed dedicated youth policies to address the situation, needs and right of children and youth<sup>49</sup>, including their right to have their voices heard and to participate (see example from Ireland below).

Youth and older people's councils at national, regional, and local level are an example of an institutionalised mechanism for the consultation of age-group specific stakeholders that many countries in the UNECE region have put in place. They allow governments to draw on the perspectives of different age groups and give them the opportunity to initiate proposals have a say in the development of policies that affect them. Many countries in the UNECE region have established older people's or senior's councils at regional and local levels to involve older persons in local decision-making (for example in Denmark, Ireland, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey).

### Local councils for children, young and older people in Ireland

In Ireland, local authorities have established local councils for children and young people (Comhairle na nÓg), aged 12-17, in all 31 local authorities under the *Irish National Children's Strategy, 2000*. They give children and youth the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies. The councils work on topics of importance to young people and act as a consultative forum for adult decision-makers in their locality. These permanent structures form part of a variety of ways of listening to and involving children and youth. Other approaches include project-based advisory groups of children and young people.

More recently a *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020*<sup>43</sup> was developed to ensure that children and young people have a voice in the implementation of the Irish government agenda *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020*. A new *National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making*, launched in 2021, provides guidance and checklists for decision-makers in departments, agencies, and organisations on the steps to take to give children and young people a meaningful voice in decision-making. It is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A Capacity Building Grant for organisations wishing to improve their practice will support implementation of the Framework.

There is also an Older People's Council in each of the 31 Local Authority areas. This is a representative group of older people, established by local authorities as part of the development of the Irish Age Friendly City/County programme. The group of older people identify priority areas of need, raise issues of importance and inform and influence the decision-making process of the City or County's Age Friendly initiative. Representatives of Older People's Councils participate, alongside representatives of the relevant member agencies, on the Age Friendly City/County Alliance. In addition to taking on specific commitments related to the implementation of the Age Friendly City/County Strategies, the Older People's Council also provides a citizen or service user perspective in monitoring the implementation of those strategies. The Older People's Councils are representative of the diversity of the older population in the city or county, linked to local older people's groups and supportive of the participation of the most marginalised.

Source: Department of Children and Youth Affairs (Ireland) (2015). *Department of Children, Equality, Integration and Youth (2021)*. See also [www.comhairlenanog.ie](http://www.comhairlenanog.ie) for more details on local councils for children and youth. *Irish Country Note on Mainstreaming Ageing*.

Youth and Older People's Councils are consulted on policy issues that affect them, generally focusing on the needs and interests of their own generation. Together they could be engaged to identify priorities for societies for all ages, with emphasis on intergenerational equality and solidarity.

Countries in which youth and senior councils are only mandated to comment on policies that directly affect them may consider involving them in all policymaking processes, to invite their perspectives on policies that may have an indirect impact on them, now or in the future.

<sup>49</sup> Recent national youth strategies were in place in several UNECE countries, including Austria, Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. See OECD 2018.

## Conclusion

This policy brief has revisited the concept of mainstreaming ageing and highlighted several core ‘enablers’, that need to be in place to advance the integration of ageing into broader policy agendas.

New strategies, laws, regulations, policies, and programmes should be designed with the longer-term implications of rising longevity and population ageing in mind. This requires sound demographic and ageing-related data and age-sensitive research to inform policy responses. At the same times, the brief encourages systematically considering and analyzing the implications of new government measures for different age groups to effectively address their needs and rights, today as well as in the future. An inclusive and participatory policymaking process is at the core of mainstreaming ageing to ensure that the voices and diverse perspectives of multiple stakeholders inform decision-making.<sup>50</sup>

Mainstreaming ageing across government policy at all levels is a complex endeavour that can only be achieved by establishing a clear mandate, shared ownership, responsibility, and accountability for this approach that involves governmental and non-governmental leadership across all sectors. This depends on political will, knowledge, and capacity as well as the readiness to coordinate actions and collaborate across sectors and levels of government. These core pillars for mainstreaming can be worked towards and strengthened by developing a strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing as recommended by the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing.

Core enablers that need to be built or strengthened include:

- Political and executive leadership for mainstreaming ageing
- A strategy for mainstreaming ageing
- Strengthened governance structures and mechanisms for effective horizontal and vertical inter-institutional coordination
- Agreed procedures and processes for age-sensitive analysis, such as regulatory impact assessments and age-responsive budgeting
- Capacity development for mainstreaming ageing
- Enhanced awareness, data collection and analysis to inform policy
- Participatory policymaking.

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<sup>50</sup> UNECE 2021b.

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### International Policy Frameworks

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### MIPAA20 Reports

National Reports on the fourth review and appraisal cycle of the implementation of MIPAA/RIS - Available at <https://unece.org/mipaa20-country-reports>.

### Country Notes on Mainstreaming Ageing

In 2019-2020, UNECE member States shared national mainstreaming policies and approaches as part of a region-wide stocktaking exercise on mainstreaming ageing strategies, structures, methods and tools. The Country Notes informed the development of the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing. Available at [www.unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing](http://www.unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing).

## BOX 2

### UNECE Resources on Mainstreaming Ageing

UNECE supports the implementation of MIPAA/RIS through mainstreaming ageing in public policies. Activities span awareness-raising, the promotion of ageing-related and age- and sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis through the Active Ageing Index and Generations & Gender Programme, tailored Roadmaps for Mainstreaming Ageing and general guidance on mainstreaming approaches and methodologies through guidelines and tools.

Roadmaps for Mainstreaming Ageing have so far been prepared for Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.

Capacity-building workshops and the development of training materials are the current focus of work to strengthen national capacity for mainstreaming ageing.

More details and resources can be found on the UNECE Resource Page on Mainstreaming Ageing: [www.unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing](http://www.unece.org/mainstreaming-ageing).

**Checklist: Mainstreaming ageing revisited**

<b>Main areas</b>	<b>Areas of implementation</b>	<b>Key elements</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	Political commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of societal adaptation to population ageing as a political priority</li> <li>• Integration of ageing into broader policy agendas, including in sustainable development strategies</li> </ul>
	Executive commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared responsibility and accountability for mainstreaming ageing across government and integration of ageing in implementation of sectoral policies</li> <li>• Responsibility for mainstreaming ageing at senior management level across all policy domains</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy</b>	Strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing as outlined in UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing</li> <li>• Inclusion of provisions for mainstreaming ageing in ageing strategies and action plans</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	Ageing entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of entities with the mandate for mainstreaming ageing across government policy, ideally at the highest level of government</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination</b>	Establishment of horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of or extended mandate of inter-institutional coordination bodies</li> <li>• Sectoral focal Points on Ageing at all levels</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis</b>	Age-sensitive analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening of existing laws and policies to identify areas in which ageing is not considered</li> </ul>
	Regulatory Impact Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of impact of new laws, regulations, policies and programmes for different age groups and adaptation to population ageing</li> </ul>
	Age-responsive budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of public budgets regarding intergenerational equity and promotion of societal adaptation to population ageing</li> </ul>
<b>Awareness</b>	Information-sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Societal and political dialogue on ageing and steps towards a society for all ages</li> </ul>
<b>Data &amp; research</b>	Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing-related and age-disaggregated data, including for specific sectors, to inform policy</li> <li>• Information readily available through data and research portals on ageing and demographic change</li> </ul>
	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of research gaps and promotion/funding of new research to address knowledge gaps</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity</b>	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for government staff and stakeholders to raise awareness and skills</li> </ul>
	Mainstreaming tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of methodologies, tools, and guidance for all stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Participation</b>	Meaningful multi-stakeholder participation in policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-stakeholder advisory groups</li> <li>• Establishment of youth and older people's councils</li> </ul>