



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

## ***Active ageing and employment of older workers***

### **UNECE Meeting of National Focal Points on Ageing**

**Segovia, 13-15 November 2006**

*Robert Anderson*

*European Foundation for the Improvement of  
Living and Working Conditions*

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## **Embracing the challenge of an ageing European workforce**

### **Main messages:**

- Ageing workforce has moved high on the European social policy agenda – employment, pensions, productivity and equal opportunities
- There is momentum for change in some organisations but attitudes and commitment have to change
- Not enough to change exit and retirement policies – need investment in a changing workforce
- Age management demands new models of working, learning and caring over the life course - with specific attention to gender

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## Older workers in EU policies

From just another *vulnerable group* to *core resource* for mobilisation

From soft suggestions to direct recommendations in employment and social protection areas

From external phenomenon to integrated element in comprehensive EU policies, e.g. anti-discrimination

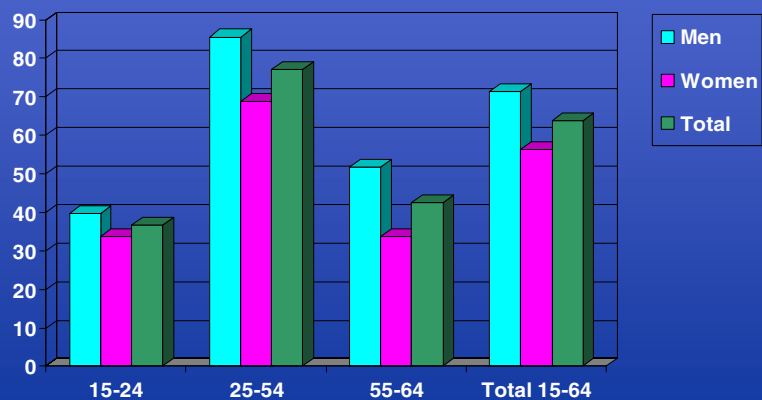
From primary focus on tax/benefit structures to practices of age management in workplaces and labour markets

‘Stockholm’ and ‘Barcelona’ targets

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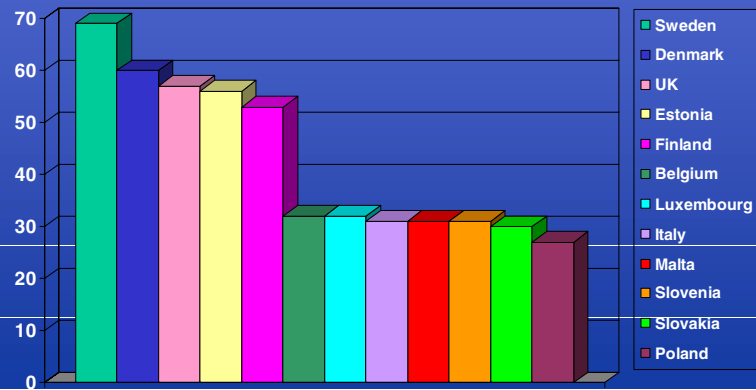
## Employment rates in the EU by age group & gender 2005



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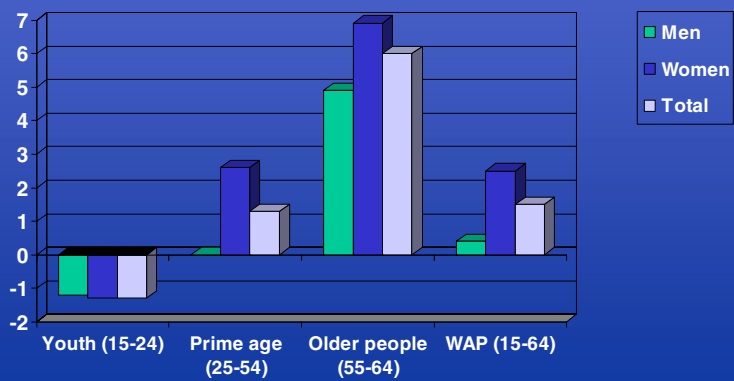
### Older people's employment rates 2005



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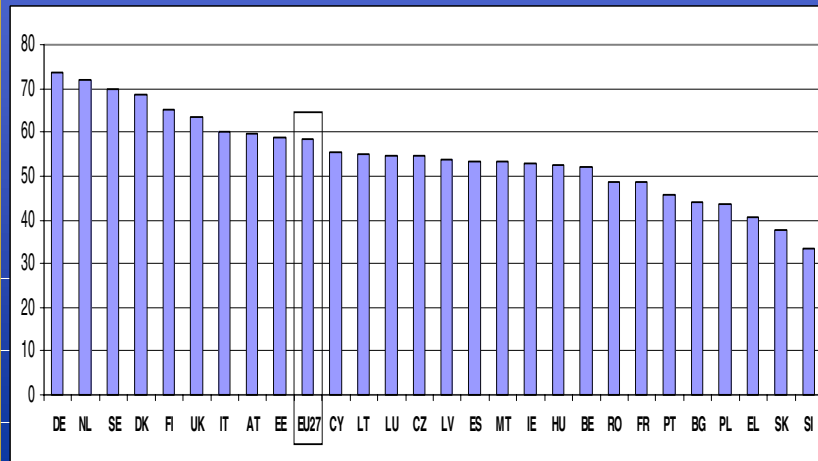
### Change in activity rates between 2000 and 2005 by age/gender grouping



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## Able to do the same job at 60 : yes I think so ...



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## European Foundation research on ageing workforce

- 1996-97: Age barriers in employment
- 1997-8: Case studies of ergonomic measures
- 2001-2: Survey on working conditions
- 2004-5: Employment initiatives for an ageing workforce  
Emphasis on 'good practice' in EU15 and NMS
- 2006: Database of good practice  
Guide to age management  
Report on developments in the EU15 and NMS

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## Age management over the last decade

- Follow-up in more than 100 organisations, three-quarters from the private sector
- Two-thirds of organisations with 500+ employees, a quarter 100-499 employees and one in ten smaller
- Documentation paid special attention to life course, gender and role of collective bargaining.

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## Good practice in age management

- Job recruitment
- Training, development and lifelong learning
- Career development
- Flexible working practice; reconciliation issues
- Health protection and promotion; workplace design
- Redeployment
- Employment exit and transition to retirement

Towards more comprehensive measures

But: Contradictions, Ambivalences, Ambiguities

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## Developments in measures over the last decade

- Most common measures are in training and development followed by flexible working
- Increase over time in the diversity and complexity of approaches to age management
- Tendency for measures to promote health and well-being to be reported more, and specific measures for recruitment or redeployment less
- Targeting to skilled manual workers still prominent but more attention to professional and managerial staff – and more attention to all age groups
- Little specific attention to low-skilled, or to gender issues

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## Market/business case as key driver

- Avoid labour and skills scarcity (& associated costs)
- Retain valuable experience
- Return on investment from training
- Improved work satisfaction contributing to greater quality and productivity
- Age Diversity = Greater flexibility & synergy

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## Reported benefits of effective age management

Staff: Improved health; increased motivation and job satisfaction; better relations with co-workers and managers; improved prospects for both employment and retirement

Organisation: Securing labour supply; reduced loss or absence; improved team-working and productivity; better image; strengthened social dialogue

But very few systematic evaluations

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## Challenges for implementation of policy in organisations

- Clarity and continuity of communication
- Compatibility and consistency with other policies
- Management or staff resistance and negative attitudes
- Conducive work environment and working conditions
- Demonstrating impact and value for money
- Prevalent culture of early exit

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## Conclusions

- Comprehensive and coordinated approaches are possible and worthwhile – need to extend awareness and commitment and implementation
- Policies must consider the whole of working life – working, learning and caring over the life course – but how to operationalise?
- While the focus should be on prevention, some older workers need compensatory remedial provision
- Rethinking of pensions - but also disability and rehabilitation schemes
- The new Member States pose a special challenge for giving priority and particular attention to older workers