RECOGNIZING AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE OLDER PERSONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

E. Antipova, Belarusian Government Expert, Head of Economic and Social Geography Department, Doctor of Geographical sciences, Full Professor, Belarusian State University.
1. Realization of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing commitments in the Republic of Belarus

- Measures implemented within the commitments of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the Republic of Belarus since 2012:

1. A number of state programs aimed at ensuring the social integration of older people, as well as strengthening their health and family well-being:

   - A comprehensive program of social services for the population for 2011-2015, including three sub-programs with a subprogram on social support for veterans, people affected by wars, the older and disabled people
   - State program on creation of a barrier-free environment for the life of physically weak persons for 2011-2015
   - The State Program on Social Protection and Employment Promotion for 2016-2020;
   - The State Program "Public health and demographic security" for 2016-2020

2. Measures to increase the economic activity and welfare of older people, as well as to reduce the poverty level of this age group are being implemented.
2. RECOGNIZING OF THE OLDER PEOPLE POTENTIAL AT GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL IN BELARUS

2.1. Recognizing of the economic potential and growth of economic activity of the older persons

- An increase in the number of people over working age in the structure of labor resources is seen in the Republic of Belarus, which indicates their economic activity and understanding the need to use their potential at the governmental level.

There is an increase in the proportion of the population over working age in the structure of the workforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Labour resources in total, thousands of people</th>
<th>Including population over working age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>336,4</td>
<td>5,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>336,4</td>
<td>5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>392,5</td>
<td>6,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>401,9</td>
<td>6,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>423,2</td>
<td>7,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>429,9</td>
<td>7,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1. Recognizing of the economic potential and growth of economic activity of the older persons

- The economic potential of the older persons in Belarus is involved in all sectors of the economy and many types of economic activity.
- The greatest economic activity of the older persons is observed in the services sector. For example, in the education sector, the proportion of the working population older than the working age is the largest among other activities and amounts to almost 20%.
- The number of persons older than working age in the field of health and social services amounts to about 19% and in the sphere of public and personal services - 18.8% and 18.7%, respectively.
2.2. Recognizing of the qualification, educational and scientific potential of the population over working age in the Republic of Belarus

➢ In accordance with Commitment 2: “To ensure the full integration and participation of older persons in the life of society” and as a result of the policy implemented in the Republic of Belarus, the older citizens **are now active participants in the life of the state and society.**

➢ The accumulated experience and high qualification allow older persons to participate in the state decision-making in the Republic of Belarus. Thus, from 2012 to 2015, the share of **citizens aged 60+ in the total number of civil servants increased and amounted to 2.6 % or 1279 people.**

![Graph showing the level of education of the population over working age](chart)

The level of education of the population over working age, per 1000 persons

Scientific potential of older persons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Number of Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Education</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total Number of Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>1073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Science</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2017, Lisbon, 20-22 September 2017*
2.3. Recognizing of the social importance of the older persons in the Republic of Belarus

- **The social activity of the older persons** is growing in the country. Thus, in 2016 the number of public associations and organizations of veterans of war and labor amounted to 89 republican associations and organizations.

- 0.4% of the older persons (at the age of 55+) at least once a week involves in the **voluntary work**.

- The main type of intergenerational relations in the family is the **communication of elderly people with grandchildren**. Strengthening of family intergenerational ties is seen in Belarus in the fact that more than 15% of elderly people aged 55+ take care of their grandchildren or children under the age of 18.

- **Close social ties of older persons aged 55+** are feature of the Belarusian society. On average, 71.6% of them meet once a week with friends, relatives or colleagues.
Since 2010 the practice of teaching older people has been actively developing in the Republic of Belarus. Now their informal education is systematically carried out at several sites:

- **2 UNESCO Clubs for the Elderly** - "Age in Action" and "50 + Drive".
- **University of the Golden Age in Grodno.** About 200 students are studying, the program includes 40 courses and interest clubs.
- **The Institute of the Third Age in Brest** has about 550 students. The Institute of the Third Age is the result of the cooperation of two organizations: the Center for Social and Economic Research of the Leninsky District of Brest and the Socio-Pedagogical Faculty of the Brest State University of A.S. Pushkin.
- **Minsk City University of the Third Age** is a project implemented by the NGO "Belarusian Association of Social Workers". Today 4 departments of the university unite about 10 educational areas, 1327 students of golden age (60 years and older) and the teaching staff of the university includes 123 volunteer teachers.
- The educational project **"Everyone can master Web"** by the mobile operator MTS supported by the NGO "Belarusian Association of Social Workers" and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is called to improve the Internet literacy of the older generation.
3.2. Best practices of the state support of the older persons potential in the Republic of Belarus

- A clear state **system of support of the elderly people potential** exists in Belarus affiliated with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

- Within this system since 2003 a **state social standard in the field of social services** has been implemented according to which the **territorial centers of social services for population/TCSSP (1)** are being dynamically develop in each administrative region of the republic (namely in 118) by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus. Currently, there are 146 such centers around the country.
3.2. Best practices of the state support of the older persons potential in the Republic of Belarus

- As a good example over the past two years the International tourist meetings for the elderly have been held on the basis of Postavy TCSSP Vitebsk region.
- The number of disabled older citizens covered by social services at home was 87.2 thousand, including 24.1 thousand singles.
- To organize the permanent care for disabled older citizens in the Republic of Belarus the 24-hour presence office (2) was established and actively operates affiliated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. Currently, there are 64 such offices in all administrative regions.
- To organize the day care for older citizens in the Republic of Belarus Day care units for senior citizens (3) was established affiliated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection As of July 1, 2017, there are 143 branches in the country.
- There are more than 2 thousand interest clubs for older citizens, including 240 computer clubs.
- The potential of the older is realized through the volunteer retirement club "Youth of the Soul" in the daycare units in Gomel and Minsk within the project "Grandmother for an hour", which help young families to support and educate young children.
3.2. Best practices of the state support of the older persons potential in the Republic of Belarus

○ **Interest Clubs (4)** are focused on the promotion of healthy lifestyle (physical culture, tourist gatherings, gyms, fitobars), on the development of creative skills and abilities, etc.

○ In all regions of Belarus, the "Older for the Elderly" volunteer movement is developing (5), which means patronize the elderly in need of support and assistance by the active older people.

○ In order to ensure the availability of social services for elderly residents of the villages, social centers and branches of the centers are opened, the activities of **household brigades and social service teams is organized on a mobile basis (6)** affiliated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

○ In order to ensure the implementation of the constitutional right of citizens in the field of preserving and strengthening their health **four sanatoriums (7)** with the capacity of 864 beds were opened affiliated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to organize the sanatorium and resort treatment for veterans of war, labor and the disabled older people, funded by the national budget.

○ In the sanatoriums of the Ministry’s system, **elderly people aged 65-82 and over** are taking a course of sanatorium-and-spa treatment.
3.2. Best practices of the state support of the older persons potential in the Republic of Belarus

- The State Targeted Social Assistance System (hereinafter - STSA) is aimed at supporting low-income citizens and people in difficult life situations, including the elderly (8).

- To maintain the health of the elderly in the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry of Health has set up a geriatric service (9), which provides organizational and methodological support to the elderly. There are 7 regional geriatric centers in the country.

- Health schools of the "third age" (10) have been established in all health organizations (10) in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus for purposeful work with elderly people to promote a healthy lifestyle. Today there are more than 633 health schools of the "third age" in the state, in which for the last 5 years more than 788.5 thousand people have been trained.
Thus, the state policy of the Republic of Belarus on the older persons is based on the principles of their independence, full participation in public life, respect for the dignity of this category of citizens. The Republic of Belarus supports the proclamation of these principles as fundamental in building a society for all ages.