Ensuring a society for all ages:
Promoting quality of life and active ageing
UNECE 2012 Ministerial Conference, Vienna, Austria

The Project description
The Division of Society and Generations within the Styrian Department of Society and Diversity is currently developing and coordinating a Generations Network for NGOs. Services include information and consulting on Active Ageing, funding for intergenerational projects, as well as support of knowledge transfer and exchange through symposia and expert conferences. In addition, specific projects are launched to raise general awareness for intergenerational issues.

The first Styrian Intergenerational Week took place in June 2012. With a variety of approaches the topic of interaction and solidarity between generations was addressed taking different perspectives into account.

Four different activities were launched:

- **Families as Ambassadors:** Families were invited to share their thoughts on generations living together and describe their personal perspective. Stories could be submitted in various formats (video, audio, and text-format). Four families were selected to report about their personal experience of intergenerational living. Their stories are being published electronically as well as in a weekly newspaper in Hardcopy (www.woche.at/steiermark).

- **“Familienpass” (Family-Card) week:** More than 800 partner companies and businesses offer discounts to Styrian families. Additional specific discounts were available during the Styrian Intergenerational Week.

Taking into account the diversity of family structures also with respect to generations the family card was extended in 2012 to include a third person. In addition to parents a third person can freely chosen by the families who will be eligible for the family card.

- **Photo competition:** Interested persons were invited to submit two photos expressing their views on generations. A jury selected 10 pictures to be presented on the ZWEI UND MEHR Homepage and in the ZWEI UND MEHR journal. Thereby awareness is increased and perception of different generations is challenged and broadened.

- **ZWEI UND MEHR Styrian family app:** A mobile application and website offering information on generation-friendly services and information was launched (http://www.zweiundmehr.steiermark.at).

In addition to these awareness activities a **Generations Fund** for intergenerational projects was implemented in 2011 by the Styrian Administration. Other activities include the first Generations Conference “JUNG.ALT.MITEINANDER!” (YOUNG.OLD.TOGETHER, 23 May 2012, Graz) which shall become an annual event.

Why is it considered a good practice
The Styrian Councilor for Family Affairs, Elisabeth Grossmann, and the Styrian Administration/Department of Society and Diversity focus their activities on Active Ageing to strengthen solidarity between generations. Based on the Styrian Report on Generations 2009/2010 (K. Tangemann, S. Vössner, Generationenbericht Steiermark 2009/2010) specific measures were developed and implemented to meet the demographic and social change with an integrated, comprehensive approach.

Thus information services are offered on multi-generational learning and living, awareness measures are taken and a fund was created funding for intergenerational projects in the years 2011 and 2012, respectively. Selected innovative projects shall serve as Good Practice Examples for others and will support knowledge transfer.

Timeline/duration of the project
The Department of Society and Diversity initiated its activities in 2011. Awareness measures like the intergenerational week will be continued as awareness-rising takes time. The area of Generations represents a major strategic field and will be of importance in the coming years.

Lessons learnt
The current general perception of generations and especially how old people are viewed does not reflect the actual reality. People are growing older than ever before and often are remaining in good health up to a high age. This steadily increasing group of young old people offers resources that are currently untapped. To face the challenges related to demographic change new and innovative approaches have to be tested and implemented. We have chosen a comprehensive approach consisting of a mix of activities including a variety of awareness-rising measures and a novel selection and funding process for intergenerational projects. We are closely reviewing our activities to adapt and improve further measures to meet the needs and ensure efficient use of resources.

Relevance for the UNECE region
The bundle of activities supports maintenance and enhancement of intergenerational solidarity and fosters intergenerational solidarity within the family as a contribution to solidarity between generations and within society as a whole.

Location of the project
The Department of Society and Diversity supports activities and funds projects in all Styrian regions.

Contact information, website
www.generationen.steiermark.at