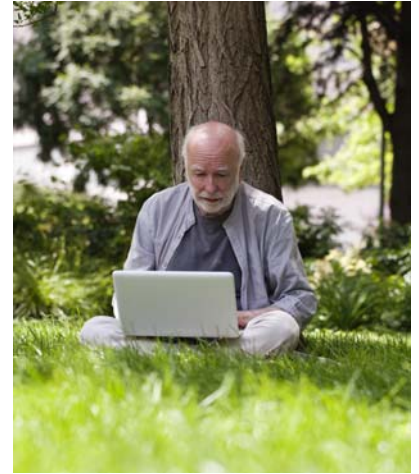


Regional Ministerial Conference on Ageing will review 10 years of implementation of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

At present the share of the world's population aged 65 or more is only 7.6%, but as people around the world stave off illness to live longer, United Nations projections suggest this proportion could rise to 16.2% by 2050.

The phenomenon of demographic ageing is particularly pronounced in the UNECE region where already people aged 65+ make up 14.1% of the population. In many of the countries of Western and Northern Europe and North America around 25% of all people are aged 65 or above, whilst in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia the figures are lower but climbing rapidly, in contexts of limited political and economic capacity to deal with the changes. In all countries of the region, population ageing presents new challenges; not only economic but social, cultural and political.



Recognising these diverse and complex challenges, as well as the potential for benefits if harnessed appropriately, UNECE's Working Group on Ageing held its third annual meeting on November 22nd and 23rd to discuss issues surrounding ageing in the region. Delegates gave their support to the continued work of UNECE in capacity building, indicator development, production of policy briefs, and analysis of intergenerational relationships via a growing series of surveys in the Generations and Gender Programme.

The Working Group discussed two new issues in its series of 'Policy Briefs on Ageing'. One of these, 'Tapping the Potential of Volunteering', calls for greater recognition of and support for the role played by volunteers, especially those who volunteer formally or informally for the support of older people. It also draws attention to the positive benefits of volunteering *by* older people: offering opportunities for their continued integration in society as they age, and the chance for them to share with others the knowledge and skills they have gained over a lifetime of experience. The group agreed two new topics for future policy briefs: 'regional co-operation on ageing policies' and 'images of older persons'.

The Working Group on Ageing also approved publication of a report detailing the outcomes of the first in an ongoing series of projects entitled 'Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing'. These collaborative endeavours with national governments aim to devise concrete steps for ensuring that matters relating to ageing and older persons are considered in all policy areas—a concept known as 'mainstreaming ageing'. The project has been completed in Armenia, and is now underway in the Republic of Moldova. The Working Group's plan for the coming two years includes evaluating the impact of this project in Armenia one year after its adoption, as well as expanding the project to other countries.

The Working Group agreed to organize a Regional Ministerial Conference on Ageing, to be held in Vienna in September 2012, on the tenth anniversary of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the adoption of its regional implementation strategy in Berlin. The conference will allow ministers to review progress and decide on future directions for making and implementing policies on ageing.

Detailed information, including documents and presentations from the meeting, can be downloaded from the meeting website: <http://www.unece.org/pau/age/wg3/welcome.htm>