

Demography  
and the labour market:

a **challenge**  
for the unions



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)



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**T**he ETUC takes the issues raised by demographic challenges very seriously. They are having, and will continue to have, a profound impact on how we work and live in Europe. So we need to handle them correctly, without dramatisation or the imposition of answers which, without being neutral in social or economic terms, can have negative consequences in the long term. The answers to these challenges can only be integrated both in their identification and their implementation, and they must involve all the relevant players.

*The trade union side is a crucial element here. The ETUC considers it important to start discussions on this subject internally, and to put forward the trade union experiences in terms of anticipating and managing demographic changes, more particularly in the workplace, for the sake of inter-generational solidarity. The issue is to create the right conditions so that young and less young people alike can find their place and thereby contribute to the economic and social development of our societies, as well as their own involvement and social well-being.*

*The actions are numerous, and the results very varied. Among the examples that we have been able to analyse are actions aimed at improving the skills of young and older workers in a lifelong learning setting, negotiating and promoting active policies in terms of employment and training, wage policies and organisational policies, and policies on the environment and the content of work based on quality as well as the protection of health and safety, promoting partnership between the social partners and also with the public authorities at the various levels.*

*Probably the most important lesson that we are drawing from this project is linked to the need to drive forward the mindsets of employees, employers and the public authorities with regard to the challenge posed and notably the opportunities opening up for getting quality established at the very heart of the demographic policies: the quality of the involvement in the workplace, the quality of work through a person's active life, and the possibility of choosing to extend active working life. Effective, fair social protection policies need to be in place to enable these challenges to be managed.*

*I should thus like to extend warm thanks to my secretariat colleagues who have worked actively on this project, particularly Henri Lourdelle and Juliane Bir, as well as all the participants in the various phases of this project. Without them, it could never have been a success.*

*Maria Helena André  
Deputy General Secretary*



## **10 avenues for trade union action :** Measures to be implemented to tackle the demographic challenge on the labour market

### **1. Raising employment rates:**

- At the level of the Member States and companies, investing in lifelong training and R&D;
- Acting closer to the ground, for example by creating 'regional' or 'territorial' or 'local' Employment Councils, bringing together political decision-makers and social partners;
- Countering undeclared work by means of measures/sanctions vis-à-vis employers and/or intermediaries that really will act as a deterrent;
- Improving the fight against illegal labour, notably by increasing the human and other resources available to the control bodies (factory inspectorate services, labour courts, etc);
- Developing support structures (for young children, the elderly, etc);

## **2. Making a commitment to the quality of work:**

- Combating the various forms of 'imposed' precariousness (part-time work, limited-term contracts, 'placements' for which workers are often paid little or nothing, etc), with the unlimited-term contract being the rule rather than the exception;
- Any work carried out under such forms of employment must, as appropriate, come with accompanying measures (qualifying training, etc) and/or 'mentoring', and complementary employment security measures need to be developed by promoting the transition to productive, enriching jobs, depending on the wishes of the beneficiary;
- Offering adequate security to workers irrespective of the type of contract, so as to tackle the problem of the segmentation of work;
- 'Protecting' the various types of contract ('professional safeguarding');
- Developing, within the company, measures affording the greatest degree of autonomy and responsibility for workers, both in the organisation of their work and in its performance; this implies developing information and communication within companies, and reviewing relations with the intermediate bosses ('supervisors') as well as implementing more innovative policies on the organisation of work and the management of human resources;
- Promoting a culture which provides for the management of ageing in companies, both for the arrival of young people and for the departure of older workers, and tailoring its details, notably by means of possibilities for phased retirement, while taking account of the hardness of the jobs occupied and the conditions in terms of work, health and safety;

## **3. Developing measures to act as incentives for quality employment:**

- Analysing and improving the measures proposed;
- Promoting equal pay, fighting against 'low-wage traps' and 'deskilled jobs' and/or those which do not encourage qualification, such as certain types of aid proposed, to young people and/or students, or contribution exemptions granted for the hiring of people who are older but who are paid at minimum wage level;



- Urging the Member States to be proactive and to develop measures to integrate young people into the labour market as described in the European Youth Pact;
- Improving low remuneration levels, in such a way that the beneficiary is not deterred from seeking a job, which is the case when work is paid so poorly that the remuneration on offer is tantamount to the (often already low) level of welfare payments or where taking a job, even part-time, automatically means losing the aid received by the person while unemployed;
- Reinforcing the control of the use of public funds;

#### **4. Ensuring a match between training and the labour market:**

- Adapting obsolete technical and/or professional training courses, in other words those which do not lead to jobs;
- Fighting against failure in schools and driving down the number of students leaving school before the end of their education, and thus with no qualifications, by adapting the methods and patterns of teaching for these struggling youngsters if necessary;
- Setting in place a 'common core' at a high level, in terms of training;
- Giving young unemployed workers the advice, the guidance and the aid they require in order to get them back into work (or into work for the first time), and the same for students or future students, so that they can choose their career path in full knowledge of the potential job opportunities;

#### **5. Squaring individualised responses and integrated policies:**

- Moving beyond piecemeal responses but also delivering, in the framework of integrated policies, responses which take account of individual needs and expectations – those of young people, older people or elderly people who do not fall into homogeneous groups;
- Using training to allow and promote transition from one job to another, including on grounds of age, and developing innovative forms of working;



## **6. Redesigning early retirement systems**

- Resisting them when they are designed and used as tools for the management of staff by and within the company;
- In the framework of the social dialogue (within the company or the sector), redesigning them and implementing them for staff in hard jobs or for those who are victims of restructuring policies and who have not been able to benefit from ongoing training during their career – with the definition of ‘hard jobs’ being as a priority a matter for the social partners;
- Anticipating restructuring operations, by setting up ‘warning systems’ so that staff can make preparations upstream for new jobs or new tasks;
- Giving priority to inter-professional negotiations, rather than simply sectoral negotiations;
- Incorporating the issues of gender and of migrants;
- Introducing a minimum of retirements at the European level in conjunction with the economic situation;

## **7. Ensuring the joint mobilisation of the public authorities and the social partners:**

- Developing partnerships between the two sides;
- ‘Decomartmentalising’ approaches;
- Creating ‘Social Development Committees’, bringing together and involving governments, employers and trade union organisations;
- Conducting carefully targeted negotiations;
- Ensuring better protection for the delegates;



## 8. Targeting the concrete measures:

- Promoting 'active' family policies – by developing accessible, high-quality support structures for children and/or dependents or by developing personal services – rather than passive ones – by developing or giving priority to expanding the 'allowances' paid to families so as to allow a balance to be struck between family, personal and professional life;
- Accompanying the return to work, for example for women who have taken career breaks, for people who have been unemployed for longer periods, for older staff, etc, by introducing, as part of lifelong training, skills assessments, professional career guidance, personalised training courses and individual support, etc;
- Encouraging the setting up of flexible and/or voluntary retirement schemes;
- Making the employers responsible: employment and wages cannot be adjustment variables.

## 9. Imposing evaluation

- Not taking any new measures if the ones which are in force have not been previously evaluated;
- Ensuring an evaluation which is not carried out simply from the administrative and/or economic point of view, or simply by the public authorities, but one which involves the social partners and ... the beneficiaries (the people who have been concerned);
- Freeing up the human and financial resources necessary;

## **10. Transforming the demographic trends into opportunities:**

- Undertaking a very concrete and positive reassessment of the questions, such as immigration, which need to be seen as responses (and an opportunity) vis-à-vis the demographic trends;
- Introducing 'mentoring' to help immigrants;
- Changing mindsets, in particular with regard to women and young people, as well as older workers who must no longer be viewed as a burden but as a precious resource and an opportunity, in particular by valuing and using their skills and their experience;
- Valuing the contribution made by the young (competence, dynamism, etc), and above all, getting them involved, starting at the trade union level, in such a way that the trade unions start to be seen as doing more than just ... preserving the 'advantages acquired'!;
- Making work more 'productive' by investing in training, research and development and not in the quest for short-term financial profit.



## Testimonies<sup>1</sup> ...

### **The national trade union organisations are mobilised and in action**

To improve the existing 'incentive' measures

*'In France, the problems faced by young people when joining the labour market are exacerbated by the country's low level of economic growth. Furthermore, the qualifications needed are in short supply, and every year sees 150,000 young people – a quarter of any given generation – leaving the school system with no qualifications.*

*As to driving down the cost of labour, because of the social contribution exemptions applied to low wages, these turn out to be real 'low-wage traps'. One way to remedy this situation, according to the trade unions, would be require companies to provide something in return for these types of aid, in terms of improvements to qualification or recruitment'.*

*'In Slovenia, systems of jobs exist for young people while they are students. But these jobs are not subject to the payment of contributions, so they are not taken into account for the calculation of the retirement pen-*

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<sup>1</sup> These examples are taken from the exchanges which were held during the two decentralised seminars staged by the ETUC with support from the European Commission in Warsaw on 19 and 20 April 2007 and in Paris on 27 and 28 April 2007.

sion. Once young people graduate, they lose their student status and with it their 'jobs'. Hence the tendency to prolong the 'student situation'; this means that in Slovenia, the average length of time spent studying at university and/or in higher education is ... eight years!

To make for better access for young people to the labour market, the trade union organisations propose on the one hand that these 'student jobs' should be made subject to the same rules as other jobs, and on the other that the educational system should be improved so that it is better suited to the forecast needs of companies and more relevant to what is happening in the company'

### To improve skills and support young people

*'In France, skills transfer measures have been negotiated by the social partners.*

*This means that for all employees aged 45, provision is made for a career interview every five years plus a skills report. This mechanism likewise applies to unemployed people from the age of 50.*

*And for the over-55s, mechanisms are in place for part-time activity. To help get unemployed workers aged 57 and over back to work, 18-month limited-term employment contracts are also available, which may be renewed once.*

*For young people aged 18 to 25, Social Life Insertion Contracts (CIVIS) have been in place since 2005. These are intended in particular for less well-qualified young people, but the trade unions note that they are also being used by young people with higher qualification levels.*

*These do not strictly speaking constitute an 'employment contract', they are more a mechanism designed to support young people in getting work. However, the young people concerned are affiliated to the Social Security scheme during that period .*

*The trade unions consider that it is important to provide effective assistance for young people having difficulty getting on to the labour market, because they are increasingly facing precarious situations (three quarters are on limited-term contracts) and they are taking ever longer to get*

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<sup>2</sup> National interprofessional agreement dated 5 December 2003

<sup>3</sup> National interprofessional agreement dated 13 October relating to the employment of older people



fully integrated into active working life – over 7 years. However, at the other end of the chain (taking due account of the hardness of the work), for trade unions, older employees also need to be able to be allowed to pass on their experience and skills until the legal retirement age’.

To ensure that initiatives are better targeted

*‘In Hungary, the trade union organisations consider that it is important to improve the targeting of the people or workers concerned, in order to match the tools to be used to the target. But the effectiveness of the measures taken will be increased if the whole of the population is made aware of this twofold problem represented by the problems that young people are facing in getting on to the labour market, coupled with the fact that older people are retiring ever earlier.*

*They think it is a matter of urgency to include these concerns in the collective bargaining’.*

*‘In Belgium, trade unions are particularly alive to the ‘targeting’ of groups, so as to deliver the response and/or the aid that is best suited to getting them on to the labour market or keeping them there when they are older.*

*With regard to young people, in particular, provision likewise needs to be made for accompanying measures that will allow a longer-term approach.*

*For instance, certain measures taken may, for the time they are in force (six months, a year, etc), provide experience for the young people concerned and involved, but then they slip back into unemployment once the ‘accompaniment’ stops.*

*Accordingly, an accompaniment plan has been introduced in Belgium which:*

- *on the one hand, sets up training courses which lead to a job or make it possible to find a job,*
- *on the other, proves that the person concerned is genuinely making efforts to find a job.*

*An initial evaluation indicates that only 10 to 15% of the young people concerned have been penalised ...*

*Finally, employers need to be forced to provide a substantiated response to letters asking for employment, and to provide training in the company*

*for young people with little or no experience. The trade unions feel it is important to give young people confidence before they start work’.*

*‘In Poland, the trade unions use specific channels to reach workers through the existing Councils such as:*

- the national Employment Council,*
- the regional Employment Councils,*
- the local Employment Councils (at ‘departmental’ level)’.*

**To link active employment and training policies**

*‘In Slovenia, the trade union organisations feel that it is important to give staff ‘security’, in particular older staff. That is why they consider that ‘active’ employment policies will be more readily accepted if options are provided for staff to train or retrain. But also, if the refusal of training does not systematically mean the loss of unemployment benefits!*

*Moreover, they observe that in their county, the rate of female workers is very high, and it is important to set up specific measures because, as they point out, women most usually hold down three ‘jobs’ which are not ‘equally’ recognised: they are wives, they are responsible for raising their children if they have any, and they are employees when they work for a company’.*

*‘In the Czech Republic, the unions support the development of programmes to upgrade the level of professional training.*

*In the ‘national employment programme’, the social partners have the task of finding solutions to the problems, such as those arising in terms of the training of older workers.*

*And finally, negotiations are underway on these issues of the employment of young people and older people.*

*Moreover, the unions are likewise turning to the social economy sector to deliver answers in terms of jobs in certain particular situations’*



### To develop attractive wage policies

*'In Lithuania (a country with a population of 3.6 million, which is falling), the priority for the trade unions is to develop attractive wage policies. The point is that the country has seen strong economic growth over recent years, with GDP rising by +7% in 2004 and +7.5% in 2005. However, GDP/inhabitant represents only 46% of the European average. In other words, this economic growth has not translated into either an improvement in the quality of employment or an improvement in social protection in the country. One third of workers earn only the minimum wage, namely € 170 per month, which explains the very high level of emigration.*

*Between 2001 and 2005, 7,000 people left the country, mainly young people (58% of the population is young and 58% of the population works). This means there is a shortage of labour. So the trade unions are fighting on two fronts: increased wages and investment in higher education (this is an investment over the medium to long term, even though at present, given the wage conditions, there is a very real risk of a 'brain drain!')*

*'The situation in Latvia, with a population of 2.3 million, is quite comparable to that of its neighbour, albeit with a few particular features.*

*It seems that wage levels here are among the lowest in the 27 countries, which is the same for the amounts and the levels of pensions.*

*This means, for example, that retired people continue to work beyond the age of 62, which is the legal pensionable age. Rather than hiring young people, employers prefer to take on retired people, or the many migrant workers coming from Third Countries such as Ukraine and Belarus, etc ... who are less demanding!*

*The trade union organisations are mobilising on this issue and taking it very seriously, but they are coming up against the employers, who seem to be quite happy and therefore are unwilling to sign up to any agreements with the unions.*

*The trade union organisations are likewise mobilising on health and safety at work, especially in the building sector, where workers – men – have few qualifications (women tend to work more in teaching and healthcare). The trade union organisations consider that stress, low wages and alcoholism are responsible for a very low level of life expectancy among men, of 65.1 years, compared to the figure for women which stood at 77.1 years in 2005 and is continuing to rise'.*





To expand mobilisation

*'Hungary has to face up to many challenges, the first one being the wide regional disparity, notably because of a lack of mobility on the labour market.*

*Other issues to be addressed include low levels of employment, hovering around the 56% mark on average.*

*And if we look at the trends by age bracket, we notice that the rate of activity among people aged 55-64 is 21% and the level among young people up to the age of 24 is likewise of the same order, namely between 21 and 22%. Plus these are the two age groups in which the rate of employment has fallen.*

*To tackle this situation and notably the low rate of employment among older people, and to show that the*

*social partners were taking this issue seriously, a common association: 'The Union for Employment of Older People' has been set up, involving trade union confederations and employers' organisations (representing both big companies and SMEs and agriculture).*

*This 'Union' began by commissioning a study, and an action plan has been framed for this year (2007). All this has been done in co-operation between the representatives of the staff and the employers.*

*Another initiative has likewise been taken – aimed among others at young people, but also women and disabled people – which is called the 'Equal Opportunities for All in Companies Plan'. This 'Plan' applies to companies with more than 50 staff'*



### To pay more attention to the situation of young people

*'In Latvia, the trade unions are directing their efforts and their mobilisation at young people, to stimulate their loyalty and encourage them to stay in the country.*

*For example, campaigns organised by the trade unions are being run in secondary schools as well as in technical and professional establishments'.*

*'In Slovenia, trade unions have set up working groups to advise students, and 'regional Bureaux' are active in training young people'.*

*'In France, trade unions comment that the point is not to 'lock' young people into training courses, but to give them, on top of a suitable education, the necessary and useful information. For the problem that is arising, as in other countries, is mobility.*

*For the young people, too, the major problem has to do with the suitability of the training to the actual labour market'.*

### To combine initiatives by the public authorities and the social partners

*'Italy has to deal with a birth rate that is among the lowest in the European Union (1.3%), and a rate of employment among the 55-64 age group of 30% and among the 15-24 age group of 30% for men and 22% for women. And although global unemployment across the whole active population is 6.9%, there are striking regional disparities in this area, with the South having a particularly high unemployment rate of about 20%.*

*To address these challenges, notably in terms of jobs for young people and older workers, measures and initiatives have been taken both by the public authorities and by the social partners.*

*For instance, the public authorities have proposed advantageous tax arrangements, for example for companies converting limited-term contracts for their employees (particularly women) into unlimited-term contracts, or perhaps increasing the contributions of companies who were using subcontractors – major users of limited-term contracts – to encourage them to convert their limited-term contracts into unlimited-term contracts.*

*And older employees, for instance, are being offered wage 'super bonuses', free of income tax, for example, to stay on at work beyond their legal retirement age.*

*From the social partners' side, a 'social contract' was signed in 2006 between the three main Italian trade union confederations and the employers. It seeks to transform precarious contracts (which are particularly widespread in call centres, for example) into definitive contracts. The trade unions estimate that some 10,000 to 12,000 people have had their precarious contracts converted into unlimited-term contracts'.*

### To evaluate the policies set in place

*'In Belgium, for the sake of promoting youth employment, the public authorities have taken a number of initiatives, including setting up the 'Rosetta' plan in 2001-2004.*

*This programme seeks to reach a very 'targeted' public, relating as it does to young people aged under 25, who have low qualification levels and have been unemployed for at least 6 months. Under this plan, companies employing 50 people and more are required to hire at least 3% of these young people, on a one-year contract.*

*In 2004, the Belgian National Labour Council (CNT) – a body made up of equal numbers of representatives from the trade union organisations and the employers' organisations – conducted the first evaluation of the Rosetta plan, which revealed that:*

- 60% of the 'Rosettas' were being implemented in regions where there were 30% of unemployed people*
- only 33% had a low level of education*
- 76.6% of the companies concerned were satisfying the 3% hiring requirement.*

*Following this evaluation, a 'Rosetta II' Plan was set up, extending the target group: it no longer covers only young people aged under 26, but also disabled people and immigrants. The employment contract carries no time limit.*

*Moreover, an 'Inter-generational solidarity pact' has been set up, which includes 11 measures in favour of young people and 57 in favour of older people.*

*Finally, a 'time credit' system, modified in 2002, has also been introduced in Belgium, on the basis of collective agreements'.*



### To improve the quality of work

*'In Poland, the unions find – and these are the thrusts of their action – that if workers leave the labour market early, it is not always because they are 'tired', but because they need 'security'. The unions consider that the reason for this must be sought in the proliferation of precarious contracts, with social deregulation and the very development of the labour market itself generating 'social insecurity' among workers.*

*In addition, the Polish unions feel that this 'quality' of work implies the setting up of 'active' family policies (structures to support children but also for the elderly, crèches, etc), and the development of lifelong learning – even if this is not yet something that Poland is accustomed to: workers do not think about retraining – so as to allow older workers to adapt to new technologies, for example'.*

### To work on living and working conditions

*'In Romania, trade unions are paying particular attention to health and safety conditions at work, and to the hardness of work. The point is that they deem these to be the prime factors driving early departures from the labour market. Tackling these problems is the responsibility of the social partners, even if governments can contribute by adding legislative and/or financial measures to the measures adopted in the framework of collective bargaining'.*

### To help to change perceptions

*'In Romania, the unions are acting to change perceptions, especially with regard to keeping older people in work. The point is that they are combating the mentality which thinks that older workers are occupying jobs instead of young people who are suffering unemployment. What is important for them is to achieve genuine 'age management' without pitting one age group against another. But they do recognise that it is not easy, and changing mentalities and bringing about an evolution in behaviour is no obvious matter'.*



## Questionnaire for the project on demography and the labour market - age management on the labour market: a challenge for the unions?

### **Description of situation for young workers (under 25 years old) and older workers (55-64 years old)**

#### Situation for young workers (under 25 years old)

1. What is the legal school leaving age?
2. What is the average age at which workers enter the labour market?
3. What is the average salary earned by young workers?
4. Is there a special minimum wage for young workers?  
YES    NO  
If yes, what percentage does this represent of the minimum wage?
5. Is there any type of special benefit for young people (autonomy allowance)?  
YES    NO  
If yes, what percentage does this represent of the minimum wage?
6. Which sectors employ the most young workers?  
Examples (Maximum three sectors):



### Situation for older workers (55 - 64 years old)

7. What is the legal retirement age?
8. What is the average retirement age in your country?
9. What is the average salary earned by older workers?
10. Which sectors employ the most older workers?

Examples (Maximum three sectors):

-  
-  
-

### General policies implemented by the public authorities

#### Measures concerning young people

11. Are any financial incentives offered for employing young workers?

YES NO

Examples:

12. Are special employment contracts offered to young workers?

YES NO

Examples:

-  
-  
-

13. Has the use of such contracts increased in recent years? If so, since when?

YES NO

- Over the past 5 years
- over the past 6 - 10 years
- over the past 11 - 20 years
- over the past 21+ years

**14.** Are any financial incentives offered to promote continuing training for young workers?

YES NO

Examples:

**15.** Has the government implemented any measures concerning working time arrangements for young workers?

YES NO

Examples:

-  
-  
-

**16.** Job creation?

YES NO

Examples:

**17.** What are the main measures that the public authorities have taken to increase the number of young people in employment (list a maximum of the three most important measures implemented).

### Measures concerning older workers

**18.** Does your country have a system for early retirement?

YES NO

If yes, when was this system developed?

- Less than 5 years ago
- 6 - 10 years ago
- 11 - 20 years ago
- more than 21 years ago



**19.** Are these early retirement systems being used more frequently?

YES NO

less frequently?

YES NO

If yes, for how long ?

Why?

**20.** Has legislation on invalidity conditions become stricter?

YES NO

Comments :

**21.** Are financial incentives offered to keep older workers in the work place?

YES NO

Examples :

-  
-  
-

**22.** Are older workers offered special employment contracts?

YES NO

Examples :

**23.** Has this type of special contract for older workers been used more frequently over the past 20 years?

YES NO

- Less than 5 years,
- 6 - 10 years
- 11 - 20 years
- more than 21 years

**24.** Has the government taken any measures concerning working time arrangements for young workers?

YES NO

Examples :



**25.** Has the government taken any measures to create jobs?

YES NO

Examples :

**26.** Have specific measures been taken to promote internal mobility for older workers?

YES NO

Examples :

-  
-  
-

**27.** Have measures been implemented to retrain older workers?

YES NO

Examples :

-  
-  
-

**28.** Are financial incentives offered to promote continuing training for older workers?

YES NO

Examples :

-  
-  
-

**29.** What are the main measures that the public authorities have taken to keep older workers in the work place? (list a maximum of the three most important measures implemented).



## Actions taken by the “social” partners”

**30.** Are the social partners aware of the problem of age management in the work place?

YES NO

Comments:

### Measures negotiated concerning young people

**31.** Have the social partners concluded agreements on access to jobs for young people?

At which levels does bargaining take place?

- National YES NO

Examples :

- Regional YES NO

Examples :

- Sectoral YES NO

Examples :

**32.** Have the social partners concluded agreements on working time arrangements for young people?

YES NO

At which levels does bargaining take place?

- National YES NO

Examples :

- Régional YES NO

Examples :

- Sectoral YES NO

**33.** On job creation?

YES NO

At which levels does bargaining take place?

- National YES NO

Examples:

- Regional YES NO

Examples:

- Sectoral YES NO

**34.** Have the social partners concluded agreements on continuing training for young workers?

YES NO

At which levels does this bargaining take place?

- Within the company? YES NO

Examples:

- Within the sector? YES NO

Examples:

- Have national agreements been reached?

YES NO

Examples:

### Measures negotiated concerning older workers

**35.** Are the social partners aware of the population aging problem?

YES NO

Comments:



**36.** Have the social partners concluded agreements on keeping older workers in the work place?

At which levels does bargaining take place?

- National YES NO

Examples :

- Regional YES NO

Examples :

- Sectoral YES NO

Examples :

**37.** Have the social partners concluded agreements on working time arrangements for older workers?

YES NO

At which levels does bargaining take place?

- National YES NO

Examples :

- Regional YES NO

Examples :

- Sectoral YES NO

**38.** Do these working time arrangements concern:

working hours?

- Examples :

decrease in:

Daily working time? YES NO

- Examples

Weekly working time? YES NO

- Examples

Monthly working time? YES NO

- Examples

Annual? YES NO

- Examples

**39.** Have the social partners concluded agreements on creation of jobs for older workers?

YES NO

At which levels does bargaining take place?

- National YES NO

Examples

- Regional YES NO

Examples

- Sectoral YES NO

**40.** On transfer of skills?

YES NO

Examples

**41.** Have the social partners concluded agreements on continuing training for older workers?

YES NO

At which levels does bargaining take place:

- within the company? YES NO

Examples

- within the sector? YES NO

Examples

- do agreements of this type exist at national level?

YES NO

Examples



## Conclusion

**42.** Do the measures taken by and/or agreements concluded between the social partners complement government measures (II General policies implemented by the public authorities)?

YES NO

Or replace them?

YES NO

Comments:

**43.** Do any of the measures listed above specifically concern women?

YES NO

Examples

**44.** Does bargaining between the social partners address integration of young people into jobs and efforts to keep older workers in employment at the same time?

YES NO

Comments:



## Summary of questionnaire replies received<sup>1</sup>

### 1. The situation of young workers and their main sectors of employment

The legal school-leaving age is similar across all the countries, standing at around 16, with variations running from 15 in the Czech Republic to 19 in Poland and Norway.

The average age at which young people come on to the labour market is 21, again with variations running from 17 in Latvia to 25 in Sweden.

The average earnings of young people are about € 1192, with one third of the countries that replied stating that they provide a specific minimum wage for young people. Belgium, Finland and Germany have a specific allowance paid to young people, along the lines of an autonomy allowance or social guarantee.

The sectors in which young workers tend to be found include proximity services, commerce and catering, but also some public services (such as healthcare services), hospitality, and activities associated with information technologies, telephony and the media.

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<sup>1</sup> On the basis of

- the replies received from the trade union organisations in the EU: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Romania, and the EEA: Switzerland and Norway  
- as well as the notes by the project expert, Mr Nicolas Bauduin



## 2. The situation of older workers and their main sectors of employment

When it comes to older workers, the legal retirement age is in general (or 'tends towards', in the case of the new EU countries), 65, with variations running from 57 in Italy and 60 in France to 67 in the case of Norway.

However, this age is highly theoretical, because the average age at which people actually stop work is barely 60.

The main sectors in which there is a concentration of older workers are education, industry, commerce and the public/administration sector.

## 3. Public measures taken in favour of the employment of young people

The replies received from the organisations to the questionnaire sent to them show that in a large majority of countries, there are

- either financial incentives to facilitate the recruitment of young people, namely financial incentives which usually take the form of subsidies or reductions in social contributions (this is the case in virtually all countries);
- or specific contracts for young workers, often in the form of limited-term contracts (Belgium, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Poland, etc), or alternating training and apprenticeship contracts (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Spain, Estonia, France and Italy, for example).

Moreover, in several cases, aids to the employment of young people are set up at the initiative of the public authorities. In the Netherlands, for example, there is a special agency dedicated to the creation of jobs for young people, or there is a specific action programme in Hungary, or then again the introduction of specific career management advice (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Spain and Estonia, for example).

Financial incentives for ongoing training of young workers are quite uncommon (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Hungary, for example).

What are more widespread, on the other hand, are special public measures to regulate the working time of young people, generally in the form of reduced working time (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia,



Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Sweden, for example). Finland has set in place measures relating to limits on the age of higher education.

An original so-called 'relay' system is in place to encourage employers to hire a young person when an older worker retires or chooses to go part-time (Spain, Italy, etc) and in some countries (Belgium), quotas have been introduced for young people.

Finally, in at least two countries (France and Poland), legislation prohibits young people from working at night.

#### 4. Public measures in favour of the employment of older workers or incentives to stay in work

First of all, there are some deterrent measures:

- The first measure relates to the 'early retirement' (or 'early pension') systems which exist in all countries and in some cases date back over twenty years (Belgium, Spain, France and the Netherlands, for example). The States have taken steps to make them more of a deterrent, or more expensive, which means in general that they are no longer tending to grow, although there are some exceptions, notably in the New Member States, which are still grappling with the modernisation, or transformation, of their industrial fabric (Poland, Latvia and Slovakia, for example).
- Other measures have been taken which relate to invalidity pensions, for which the eligibility conditions in particular have been tightened up (the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Finland, Switzerland and Norway, for example).

However, other measures offering more of an incentive have also been introduced

- for instance some of a financial nature, either by means of reductions in contributions or subsidies (Belgium, Spain, Hungary, the Netherlands and Norway, for example) or financial incentives for older workers who agree to go on working beyond the legal retirement age (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal, for example) or to promote the training of these older workers (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Spain, France, Latvia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Finland and Romania, for example)



- or by means of specific employment contracts for this age bracket (Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Romania, for example), which can be in the form of limited-term contracts (the Czech Republic, France and Finland, for example)
- or also by measures to regulate working time, which is the case in Spain and France, for example, which may go as far as reduced working times with financial compensations as is the case in Belgium, among others. On the other hand, only one country, the Netherlands, has implemented measures to promote the mobility of older workers.

### 5. Measures implemented by the social partners (social dialogue) to promote the employment of young people

The replies show that many agreements have been concluded, either at national level (the Czech Republic, Spain, France, Hungary, Portugal, Finland, Romania, etc) or at regional level (Spain, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, etc) and/or sectoral level (Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Romania, etc) on young people's access to employment.

In Hungary and France, too, 'professionalisation contracts' have been concluded in respect of young workers.

In the Czech Republic, Spain, Hungary and Portugal, agreements on working time have been concluded.

Measures to do with ongoing training for young people have likewise been negotiated at national level (Spain, France, Hungary, Portugal, Finland, Romania, etc), at sectoral level (Belgium, France, Sweden, Switzerland, etc) or at company level (the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, etc), sometimes with the financial participation of the company (Sweden).

## 6. Agreements concluded between the social partners to promote the employment of older people or with regard to keeping them in work

The agreements relate, for example, to the regulation of working time for older people within the company, whether it be by reductions in hours worked per day (the Netherlands and Portugal) or per week (the Czech Republic, Portugal, Romania, etc) or per month (Belgium, the Netherlands, etc) and/or per year (Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, etc).

These agreements have been concluded at national level (Belgium, Spain and France) and/or regional level (France) and/or sectoral level (Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, etc).

Certain agreements, notably in Belgium, likewise provide financial incentives in the event of the transition to part-time work.

Similarly, in Belgium, arrangements are in place with regard to night work by these workers.

Agreements have equally been concluded on the transfer of skills between older workers and young workers (Belgium, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, etc).

Likewise, agreements on the training of older workers, in particular in order to keep them in work or to allow them to be retrained in the event of accident or illness, have been concluded at sectoral level (Belgium, France and Portugal) or at company level (the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania).

## 7. Final remarks

The first lesson that we can draw from the replies given in the framework of the questionnaire sent out ahead of the seminars is that this question of 'demographics and the labour market', in other words the management of ageing in the workplace, is an issue being tackled not just by the public authorities, but also by the social partners. The point is that the latter have committed themselves to this problem in all the countries. Things are progressing on the ground, as can be seen in fact from the debates held at the decentralised seminars in Warsaw and Paris.



Of course much still remains to be done if we are to achieve consolidated, strong results, which is the reason behind the list of 10 avenues for action which the participants at the final seminar in Brussels agreed upon, resulting from the two previous debates.

There is another lesson, too: we can see that the public measures and those coming out of the social dialogue are often complementary (Belgium, Spain, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden, etc). Similarly, the measures negotiated relate both to older workers and young people (Belgium, Spain, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, etc).

Finally, there is certainly one point on which the social partners will need to be vigilant, and that is the taking into account of the specific needs of women, notably keeping them on the labour market and/or getting them back on to it

- when they are young and they have children
- and when they are older or are returning to the labour market later on (perhaps after having brought up their children).

The point is that aside from two countries (the Czech Republic and France), there are no specific measures in place for them.

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with the financial support of the European commission