

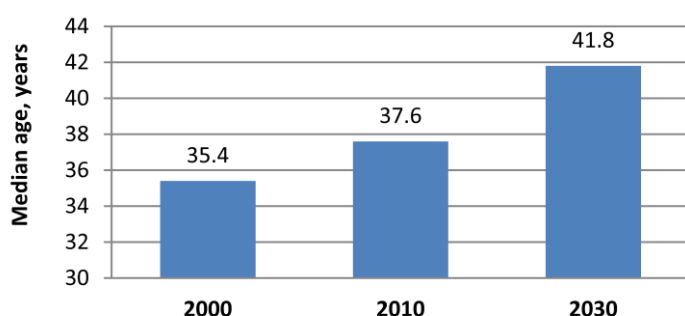


Fact Sheet: Active Ageing

Ageing in the UNECE region¹

- Population ageing is the consequence of increasing life expectancies and decreasing fertility.
- In 2010, the **number of people aged 65 years or above** reached 174.5 million and presently accounts for 14.1% of the region's total population. This proportion is expected to exceed 20 % by 2030. In Germany and Italy, a fifth of population was 65 years old or above already in 2010, and is projected to reach over a quarter by 2030. This will also be the case in Austria, Finland and Portugal. Out of eight UNECE countries where presently the proportion of people aged 65 years or above is below 10%, only four are projected not to breach this threshold by 2030 (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

UNECE region median age in 2000, 2010 and projections for 2030



- The **increases in life expectancy** at birth was notable across the region in the last decade, adding on average three years. Life expectancy at the age beyond 65 increased by nearly a year and a half in the same period.

- Presently, the **total fertility rate** is below

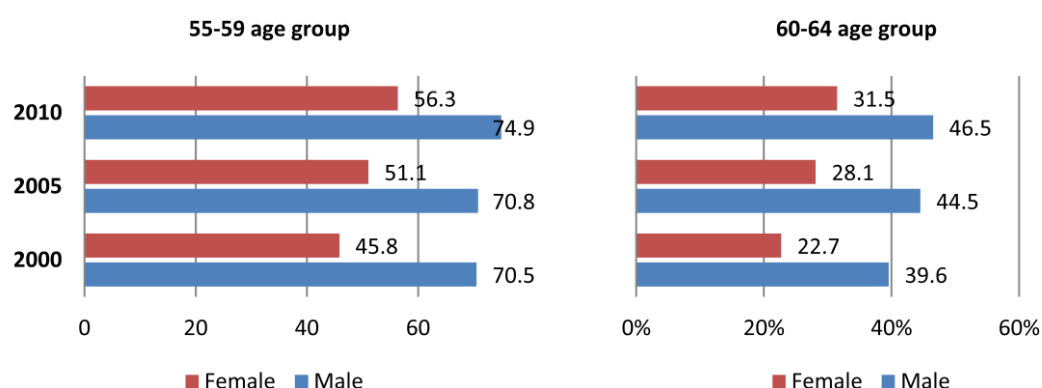
the replacement level (2.1 children) in 45 UNECE countries. Notable exceptions are Azerbaijan, Iceland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, USA and Uzbekistan where the fertility rate is 2.1 or higher. In 18 countries the rate remains under 1.5 children per woman.²

- In 2000-2010, **labour force participation rate** of the older population increased steadily for the region as whole: in the age group of 55-59 years old, the rate went up by 4.4 percentage points for men and 10.5 percentage points for women, and among 60-64 years old, by 6.9 and 8.8 percentage points, respectively.
- The time-use surveys conducted in a number of UNECE countries indicate that 65-74 years old men spent up to 35 minutes per week on **unpaid activities outside their households** while women in that age group spent up to 51 minutes a week. A higher frequency of older women's participation in **volunteering** activities across the region is observed.

¹ For data sources, cf. Synthesis report on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the UNECE region, available at http://www.unec.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Ministerial_Conference_Vienna/Documents/Synthesis_Report_complete_final_with_embargo_sign.pdf.

² These are Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and Ukraine.

Labour force participation rate in UNECE countries in 2000, 2005 and 2010 (in %)



- In most of the UNECE countries people not only live longer, they also remain in a relatively good **health** for a longer period in their lives. **Home-care services** allow older persons to stay in their familiar environments. The proportion of older population benefitting from home care is on average at least twice as high as that of persons in institutional care.
- Total **old-age related expenditure as a proportion of GDP** has increased with a few exceptions across the region in the recent years. In 2009, in four out of ten reporting countries it accounted for 10% or more. Currently old-age related expenditure accounts for about a half of all social benefits in Italy, Poland and Latvia and varies between 30-45 per cent in most EU countries.

What does active ageing mean?

Old age is not a status but the result of a process. Staying physically fit throughout the life course can help not only to live longer but also to stay healthier in old age, thus contributing to better quality of life, including physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Active ageing requires investments at the individual level. Everyone has a personal responsibility for their active ageing. Even the perceptions of ageing that people adopt when they are younger impacts on the quality of their ageing processes. At the same time, governments and societies can strategically invest in conducive frameworks that set the right incentives and enable all members of society to live actively throughout their life-course. As a result people may be less dependent and contribute more to society. This can also help generate considerable cost savings for both individuals and public budgets.

Whether or not people live long and in good health does not only depend on their activity, but also on some biological conditions which cannot be influenced. Therefore, in ageing societies, provisions also need to be made for people who are frail and in need of help.

UNECE member States have identified three priority areas for active ageing:

- **promoting longer working life and maintaining work-ability;**
- **participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons,**
- **creating an enabling environment for health, independence and ageing in dignity**

“Active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO 2002).

“Active ageing means growing old in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in our jobs, more independent in our daily lives and more involved as citizens” (2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations)

Investing into active ageing:

Individual level	Societal level
Promoting longer working life and maintaining work-ability	
✓ Prepare for the realities of longer work lives, consider entrepreneurship or self-employment	✓ Labour market policies allow longer working lives, no mandatory retirement age, phased retirement, disincentives to early retirement
✓ Maintain healthy work-life balance throughout life-course	✓ Promote working conditions that maintain workers' health and accommodate the changing needs of ageing workers
✓ Bear in mind that the attitude of individuals to themselves as they age impacts on the attitude of colleagues	✓ Legal framework that protects against age-discrimination, build a more positive image of older workers
✓ Engage in mentoring, become active as a trainer	✓ Capitalise on older workers' experience through mentoring and age diverse teams
✓ Life-long learning; be open to acquire new skills and competences	✓ Education systems that offer workers of all ages access to training and skills development
Participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons	
✓ Gain financial literacy and plan early for old age	✓ Ensure income security in old age
✓ Volunteer	✓ Provide training and set legal framework for volunteers
✓ Actively seek out available opportunities to participate in cultural, social and political life	✓ Create favourable conditions for participation in society through cultural, political and social activities
✓ Maintain social relationships, intergenerational and family ties	✓ Training and support to family carers
✓ Positive self-perception and approach to own ageing	✓ Promote positive image of ageing
✓ Contribute to adjusting environments to needs of older persons	✓ Create age-friendly environments, including the transport system, housing, public areas
Creating an enabling environment for health, independence and ageing in dignity	
✓ Be physically active; pursue healthy lifestyles: healthy eating, no abuse of tobacco or alcohol	✓ Health promotion and disease prevention programmes
✓ Seek out services and ways to stay independent	✓ Provide services to facilitate independent living, including home-based care
✓ In case of loss of mobility or functionality find goods or services that may compensate	✓ Develop and provide access to age-friendly goods and services
✓ Be an informed patient and take part in decisions regarding one's own health	✓ Ensure long-term care with dignity and with the aim of restoring or maintaining independence
✓ Staying engaged in social networks may help to be protected	✓ Provide protection from abuse

What is UNECE doing?

- UNECE serves as the Secretariat to the **Working Group on Ageing**, established in 2008 and consisting of national focal points on ageing from all UNECE members States.
- The Working Group on Ageing works on implementing the international policy-framework on ageing, set out in the **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)** and its **Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS)** with 10 overarching commitments.
- While active ageing cuts across all commitments, three of them are considered especially important :
 - Commitment 2: To ensure full **integration and participation of older persons in society**
 - Commitment 5: To enable **labour markets** to respond to the economic and social consequences of population ageing
 - Commitment 7: To strive to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain **independent living** including **health and well-being**
- With these commitments in mind, UNECE has worked in **capacity development**, held **workshops** and developed **Road Maps on Mainstreaming Ageing** for specific countries – Armenia and the Republic of Moldova - to act as guidance for policy-making related to mainstreaming ageing.
- Special **topical publications**: Policy Brief on Active Ageing and special report *Active Ageing and Quality of Life in Old Age*.
- UNECE, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna are currently developing an **Active Ageing Index** as a tool for policy-makers to indicate unrealized potential in active ageing. First results will be presented at the Ministerial Conference (20 September, 2012).
- **The Generations and Gender Programme**, initiated and now administered by UNECE, is a two-pillar programme consisting of internationally comparable, theory-driven, large sample panel surveys conducted in three waves and a contextual database. It is designed to shed light on the full spectrum of factors influencing contemporary demographic trends, in particular those related to relationships between generations and between the genders. The GGP is becoming a key data source for policy-relevant research.

Contact

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Further reading:

European Commission, Common Principles for Active Ageing.

2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations: www.active-ageing-2012.eu, <http://www.aktivaltern2012.at/>.

UNECE (2012), Active Ageing and Quality of Life in Old Age, <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=30027>.

UNECE (2012), Policy Brief on Active Ageing, http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Policy_briefs/ECE-WG.1.17.pdf.