

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 11 July 2011

**on the research joint programming initiative 'More years, better lives — the potential and challenges of demographic change'**

(2011/413/EU)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 181 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The number of Europeans aged over 65 is expected to rise significantly by 42 % from 87 million in 2010 to 124 million in 2030 <sup>(1)</sup>. This continued increase in life expectancy is a major achievement of the recent past. However, at the same time it risks putting an additional strain on the economy, society and the sustainability of public finances.
- (2) As a consequence of ageing populations, the need for public provision of age-related transfers and services will increase. The fiscal impact of ageing is therefore projected to be substantial in almost all Member States. Overall, on the basis of current policies, age-related public expenditure is projected to increase on average by about 4¾ percentage points of GDP by 2060 in the EU, especially through pension, healthcare and long-term care spending (in the care sector further compounded by the shrinking and often insufficiently skilled workforce) <sup>(2)</sup>.
- (3) The reduction of the working-age population by about 50 million people between 2010 and 2060 and the corresponding increase in dependency ratios, occurring to a large extent already before 2030, could cause a decline in GDP growth unless this can be compensated by rising participation and employment rates in all segments of the labour force and increased productivity growth <sup>(3)</sup>.
- (4) Given the shrinking and ageing population there are large benefits to society by extending the active and healthy

life of older people, by integrating them better in the economy and society and by helping them stay independent for longer, thereby increasing quality of life for older citizens and their carers, improving sustainability of social protection systems (pensions, healthcare and long-term care systems) and creating a large new market opportunity for innovative solutions for ageing well.

- (5) The Europe 2020 strategy has identified demographic ageing as both a challenge and an opportunity for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, and the flagship initiatives 'A digital agenda for Europe' <sup>(4)</sup>, 'Innovation Union' <sup>(5)</sup>, 'An agenda for new skills and new jobs' and 'European platform against poverty' where this topic has been addressed as a priority. Flexicurity policies within the European Employment Strategy recognise the necessity of a comprehensive approach in human resources policies and need for lifecycle approach to work in order to foster labour market participation and to remove existing obstacles.
- (6) The Commission proposed on 6 September 2010 to designate 2012 as European Year for Active Ageing which will seek to support Member States in their efforts to help older people to stay in the workforce and share their experience, keep playing an active role in society and live as healthy, independent and fulfilling lives as possible <sup>(6)</sup>.
- (7) There is an urgent need to strengthen the knowledge base on the process of ageing itself and on effects of ageing for society and economy, in order to support evidence-based policymaking.
- (8) In order to address the abovementioned challenge and capitalise on the opportunities, a concerted action is needed to facilitate high quality research collaboration aimed at providing research evidence to underpin interventions.

<sup>(1)</sup> Europeans aged over 65 will almost double over the next 50 years — from 87 million in 2010 to 153 million in 2060 — Eurostat, Europop 2010 population projections.

<sup>(2)</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>(3)</sup> COM(2009) 180 final: Dealing with the impact of an ageing population in the EU (2009 Ageing Report)

<sup>(4)</sup> 9981/1/10 REV 1.

<sup>(5)</sup> 14035/10.

<sup>(6)</sup> Council conclusions (EPSCO December 2010) 18132/10.

- (9) At its meeting of 26 May 2010 <sup>(1)</sup>, the Competitiveness Council identified and substantiated a set of potential joint programming initiatives (hereinafter JPIs), including 'More years, better lives, the challenges and opportunities of demographic change', as areas where joint research programming would provide a major added value to the current, fragmented efforts by Member States. It therefore adopted conclusions recognising the need to launch a joint programming initiative on the subject and inviting the Commission to contribute to its preparation.
- (10) Member States have confirmed their participation in such a JPI by the sending of formal commitment letters.
- (11) Joint programming of research on demographic change and population ageing would provide for coordination of research in this area, contributing significantly to construction of a fully operational ERA on ageing and strengthening Europe's leadership and competitiveness of research in this field.
- (12) In order to achieve the goals set out by this recommendation, Member States should ensure cooperation and complementarity with major related initiatives — the Ambient assisted living joint programme <sup>(2)</sup> and the Active and healthy ageing innovation partnership, R & D supported by the framework programme, notably in the fields of ICT, health, social science, as well as other research initiatives such as SHARE ERIC <sup>(3)</sup>, and ERA-AGE II <sup>(4)</sup>.
- (13) In order for the Commission to be able to report to the European Parliament and to the Council, Member States should report regularly to the Commission on the progress made on this joint programming initiative,
3. Member States are encouraged to include the following actions, as part of the strategic research agenda and of the implementation plan:
- (a) identifying and exchanging information on relevant national programmes and research activities;
  - (b) reinforcing joint foresight exercise and technology assessment capacities;
  - (c) exchanging information, resources, best practices, methodologies and guidelines;
  - (d) identifying areas or research activities that would benefit from coordination or joint calls for proposals or pooling of resources;
  - (e) defining the modalities for research to be undertaken jointly in the areas referred to in point (d);
  - (f) considering the changing needs of elderly people as well as the needs of their formal and informal carers when defining the objectives for ageing research programmes;
  - (g) sharing, where appropriate, existing research infrastructures or developing new facilities such as coordinated databanks or the development of models for studying ageing processes;
  - (h) encouraging better collaboration between public and private sectors, as well as open innovation between different research activities and business sectors related to demographic change and population ageing;
  - (i) exporting and diffusing knowledge, innovation and interdisciplinary methodological approaches;
  - (j) creating networks between centres dedicated to demographic change and population ageing research.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

1. Member States are encouraged to develop and maintain a common vision on how cooperation and coordination in the field of research at Union level can help meet the challenge of the demographic change and capitalise on the opportunities it presents.
2. Member States are encouraged to develop a common strategic research agenda establishing medium to long-term research needs and objectives in the area of demographic change. The strategic research agenda should contain an implementation plan establishing priorities and timelines and specifying the action, instruments and resources required for its implementation.
4. Member States are encouraged to maintain an efficient common management structure in the field of research on demographic change and population ageing, with a mandate to establish common conditions, rules and procedures for cooperation and coordination and to monitor the implementation of the strategic research agenda.

<sup>(1)</sup> 10246/10.

<sup>(2)</sup> Co-decision report, press release — <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=en&type=IM-PRESS&reference=20080121IPR19252>

<sup>(3)</sup> [http://www.share-project.org/t3/share/fileadmin/press\\_information/SHARE\\_ERIC-EN\\_upload.pdf](http://www.share-project.org/t3/share/fileadmin/press_information/SHARE_ERIC-EN_upload.pdf)

<sup>(4)</sup> <http://futurage.group.shef.ac.uk/>

5. Member States are encouraged to jointly implement the strategic research agenda via their national research programmes in accordance with the guidelines for framework conditions in joint programming developed by the Council high level group on joint programming.

6. Member States are encouraged to cooperate with the Commission with a view to exploring possible Commission initiatives to assist Member States in developing and implementing the strategic research agenda and to coordinate the joint programme with other Union initiatives in this field such as the Active and healthy ageing European innovation partnership and the Ambient assisted living joint programme.
7. Member States are encouraged to report regularly to the Commission on the progress made on this joint programming initiative through annual progress reports.

Done at Brussels, 11 July 2011.

*For the Commission*  
Neelie KROES  
*Vice-President*

---