

**EKA**

ATHENS LABOR UNIONS ORGANIZATION

## THE GREEK CONTEXT

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# Introduction



## The general approach to active ageing

- **aims** at activating the whole labor force of all ages and
- **considers** that proper adaptation to the ageing of the population should be an issue of concern to people of all ages.

# ILO recommendations



ILO states that the member states are called on to map out a **national strategy** to promote equality of opportunity and equal treatment for workers of all ages.

And recommends:

- the adoption of measures to combat discrimination against older workers, especially as regards access to career guidance,
- access to a job of their choice according to their qualifications and experience,
- access to training and retraining.

National strategies should take account of the importance of **improving working conditions**.

The measures should be designed so as to permit older workers to remain on the job in acceptable conditions.

# SAATT Project



The Greek context through some simple questions:

# Why? (Why participating in the Project)

The answer is related to the future of the human manpower in Greece

Demographic trends in Greece, on the basis of the **Demographic Dependency Ratio** calculated as the **ratio of inactive to economically active population**, notes high values, showing the proportion of people unable for objective reasons to work related to the workforce of the country.

This fact generates social and economic problems related to the viability of insurance Funds and inadequacy of health systems.

- This indicator for Greece, is expected to show an ascending sequence of values and is expected to jump by 11.6% points from **48.14% in 2005 to 59.2% in 2030**.
- This raises several concerns in terms of management of the ageing Greek population given the lag compared to other European Union countries in terms of planning and care.
- Sustainability of pension funds is a long-standing demand by Trade Unions not satisfied by governments.

## Conclusion:

There is a tangible proof of the complexity of issues arising from the ageing of the Greek population. **Crisis has aggravated the situation.**



# Greece's workforce by 2050

The status of the Greek population in the coming decades:

- By the year 2050 all age groups are expected to shrink, except one.
- More specifically, the population groups 15-24, 25-44 and 45-64 will decrease with different rates (40%, 28% and 1% respectively).
- In contrast, the population group 65 + will increase significantly by 53%. In other words, the only part of the population that will grow are people aged 65 years and older.

These findings urge for active ageing policies in the coming years, therefore for EKA is important to have this issue on the agenda.


\*National Statistics Office and OECD

# Surveys show



Data collected from surveys conducted in **Greece** having as target group people 55 and older in enterprises show:

- ❑ The proportion of older people employed in the enterprises is small and most of those employees are men.
- ❑ Specifically, older women appear to be employed mainly in the services sector (20% in the banking sector, 50.4% in state telephony, 8.4% in retail trade).
- ❑ Similarly, older men appear to be employed mainly in the public services sector (72.5% in state telephony).
- ❑ As regards type of work, about half appear to be employed in administrative services, a significant percentage in production and slightly less than 4.3% in other auxiliary jobs.

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- With regard to the educational level most were high school graduates. In addition, foreign language and computer skills are utilized on the job by 65% and 88% of older people respectively.
  - According to the employers' responses, policies encouraging early retirement are adopted by companies **in the broader public sector** as well as **in subsidiaries of multinational companies/**
  - In the Greek enterprises there was **a lack of training/lifelong learning programs and programs to extend the working life of workers in the target group,** particularly when the practices of Greek enterprises are compared with those of their European counterparts.



# What ? (findings from SAATT Project )



- Measures must be developed to **combat job discrimination**, with particular emphasis on older workers.
- It is important for enterprises to turn their attention **to strategies to support a labor force consisting of older workers** because their work is of great value.
- Cooperation must be developed among **stakeholders** (Unions, Employers, Governments etc) for the creation of a society capable of incorporating an ageing population.
- **Collective bargaining and collective agreements** should include active ageing.

Note:

The weakening of collective bargaining would have catastrophic social consequences.

## How? (best practices)



Practices regarding the management of active ageing that have been successfully implemented in some EU countries.

The different effectiveness from country to country is due to the fact that in some countries do not include **one-dimensional measures** focused on the specific areas affected by the ageing of the population (employment, insurance funds) but consist **of packages of complementary measures** applicable to practically all social sectors (employment, insurance, health, education, social welfare, research, etc.).

# Specific issues



- Employment
- Pensions
- Education
- Healthcare
- OHS for older workers
- Social welfare
- Migration
- Birthrate

# Employment

- **Older people's job experience and knowledge** make them valuable to the labor market. Thus their reintegration into the economically active population is viewed as a necessity.
- It has become apparent that for employment for older people to be feasible it must be accompanied by **the appropriate adjustment** of jobs to the particularities and needs of their age group (e.g. work that is not detrimental to their health, ergonomics, shorter working hours/part-time employment etc).
- Because of the high cost to enterprises of employing people with many years of prior service, one measure might be **financial incentives to enterprises** (such as tax relief, lower contributions to insurance funds) for the employment of older people.
- The adoption of measures **to protect them from dismissal** may also help increase older people's participation in employment.

# Pensions



As regards payment of pensions, since the structure of the population has changed, it is deemed **necessary to restructure the pension system** by changing the manner in which pensions are calculated, in conjunction with increasing the effective pensionable age, so that pensions are adequate to ensure pensioners of a decent living.

# Education



- In order for older workers to be as competitive as younger workers, they must develop their individual skills and acquire qualifications which are in demand in the labor market. On this basis, in order for older people to remain active, their **access to education and vocational training** must be supported through education **and lifelong learning programs**.
- It is also very important for the relevant programs to be accompanied by strong research support and monitoring, ensuring their successful implementation and effectiveness.

# Healthcare



Older people have **greater needs for healthcare services**, since ageing is accompanied by diseases that appear over time.

Thus the state must be armed **with strong medical services** capable of providing long-term care for older people in particular, mobile health and social services units for older people, as well as information on medical issues of concern to the elderly, with regard to both **preventive** and **diagnostic testing**.

# Occupational Health and Safety

Topics of interest are:

- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), psychosocial job characteristics and work organization arrangements (e.g. shift patterns).
- Serious accidents that workers aged 55 and above tend to suffer.
- Incidence of illness which is greater for the 55-plus age group.
- The gender dimension to ageing and work.
- Poorly organised shift structures or excessive working hours can cause fatigue and lead to work-related stress.
- Training requirements may be different for older workers, and training may take longer. This is no reason for training to be withheld from older workers.



# Social Welfare



- Withdrawal from employment should not mean withdrawal from life. **Programs to promote post-retirement activities** for older workers through participation in volunteer programs and involvement in social, cultural, environmental and other organizations.
- It is also necessary to strengthen **intergenerational solidarity and eliminate the social discrimination** often directed at older people due to deeply entrenched views that older people are old-fashioned and unattainable in comparison with younger people.
- We should not overlook other parameters capable of contributing to a drastic, immediate resolution of the problem, the most important of which are **migration and the birth rate**.

# Migration



- The migratory movement towards the economically developed countries has been shown to alleviate the economic problems caused by the ageing of the population. This is due to the fact that **migrants increase the proportion of younger people** in the population and increase country's labor force.
- Migrants also renew the population because they have higher birth rates, in addition, they help increase employment and reinforce the insurance funds and the state economy as a whole.

# Birth Rate



- Fewer births make population renewal impossible and change the demographic map, creating a bigger proportion of older and a smaller proportion of younger people.
- Measures able to help increase the birth rate include economic incentives (allowances and tax relief) to parents of two or more children, support for the family, support for working mothers (establishment of public day nurseries, payment of supplementary allowances) so as to achieve a balance between family and working life.
- A higher birth rate and support for the family may be the most important goal, and achieving it may eliminate the problems that stem from ageing of the population, without any negative effects.

# Remarks



- Practices implemented are effective when they regard all sectors of economic and social life.
- The measures are reinforced when their content is such that makes them acceptable by all the parties concerned.
- The main aim of policymakers is the measures to be suitably adapted in order to be object of social consensus, making participation of older people a right and a free choice rather than an obligation.
- Certain successful policy mixes implemented such as: progressive retirement, part-time employment of older people, lifelong learning, etc. may constitute the first step in designing a complete strategy for managing active ageing.

# Dissemination of project key findings



The key findings of the SAATT Project together with the educational materials is a support in our work and a tool for our reps regarding:

- Measures to protect the rights of older workers
- Employers responsibilities
- H&S
- Reasonable adjustments at work place
- Information of older workers for their rights and entitlements.



Thank you !