

Denmark's National Follow-up to the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) from 2018-2022

Part 1

Executive summary

The recommendations in the Regional Integration Strategy (RIS) on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) are embedded in the Danish Government's policies and strategies concerning older people.

In January 2021, a new sectorial organization was established, meaning that the elderly area moved to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is now called The Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens. This change of ministries aimed to enforce the link between the important welfare services in the municipalities.

Among some of the major achievements in fulfilling the commitments of MIPAA/RIS since the last report in 2017 is the introduction of smaller, self-governed teams in several municipalities. The aim of this is to ensure that older people gets familiar with the social- and healthcare workers that comes to their home, and thus create a closer dialogue between the older citizens and the social- and healthcare workers. It has thus been agreed to set aside DKK 192 million that the municipalities can apply for to work with such teams. Another important achievement has been continuing the funding of the National Action Plan on Dementia 2025. The vision of the plan is that all people living with dementia should be able to live a dignified and safe life. DKK 244 million have been allocated over four years to follow up on the plan. Another achievement is the Act on Welfare Agreements. The Welfare Agreements is an initiative that aims to set leaders and employees free of all unnecessary governmental and municipal regulations. Three of the municipalities are set free of regulations in the elderly care. The ambition is to reduce bureaucratic rules and procedures and instead focus more on the needs of the citizens and the professionalism of the employees with the overall aim to heighten the quality of the welfare.

General information

The Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens coordinates the Danish national follow-up to the MIPAA/RIS. Other ministries who have contributed to this report are the Ministry of Employment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior and Housing and, the Ministry of Finance.

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1. National ageing situation

Denmark has a total population of around 5.8 million people of which 20 percent are 65 years or older. In 2050 it is expected that almost 25 percent of the population will be 65 years or older. One of the reasons for the expected increase towards 2050 of people at the age of 65 or more, is that the Danish people live longer than previous generations. Life expectancy in Denmark has increased from 77.1 years in 2010 to 79.5 years in 2020 among men and 81.2 years to 83.6 years in the same period of time among women.

This forecast reflects a demographic trend. As life expectancy increases, the population of older people grow as well. At the same time, the working population is steady and is expected to decrease in the coming years. Also, the large post-war generation has reached or is getting close to retirement age, which also increases the number of older people in the population. Adding to this, many social- and healthcare workers are retiring, and it is difficult to recruit new personal to the jobs and to retain them.

The described development represents a challenge for the public organization of the Danish welfare system that consists of universal, public funded benefits and services to the elder population and others in need of help, regardless of their economic situation. The Danish welfare system is almost exclusively tax-financed and the increasing elder population and decreasing population at working age challenge the funding of the Danish welfare system because the workforce must provide for an increasingly larger group of older people. As a consequence of the demographic changes, it will be important to adjust the capacity of the Danish welfare system to the future needs of an ageing population.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on many older people's lives in Denmark, both in terms of getting severely affected by the virus, and dying with COVID-19. The measures to combat COVID-19 have also taken its toll on many older people. In order to mitigate the social consequences on older people, the government alongside a broad majority of other parties in the Parliament has since the beginning of the pandemic made several political agreements targeting vulnerable populations, including older people. Essential elements in the agreements were financial funds for initiatives such as counselling, free social activities and day trips for people living in nursing homes.

In June 2019, a new Danish government took office after a general election. In January 2021, a new sectorial organization was introduced, meaning that the elderly area moved to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is now called The Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens. The goal was to enforce the link between the important welfare services in the municipalities.

2. Method

Significant parts of Danish elderly policies are placed under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens. Hence, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens coordinates the national Danish follow-up to the MIPAA/RIS. However, other ministries also legislate in areas of importance to older people and ageing in general, and have thus also been asked to contribute to this report. These are the

Ministry of Employment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior and Housing and, the Ministry of Finance. Furthermore, civil society (this includes Ældre Sagen, Danske Seniorer, Faglige Seniorer, Danske Ældrerråd and Globale Seniorer) have also been invited to share their perspectives on the report.

The follow-up to the MIPAA/RIS, including assessing the effect of policy actions concerning older people, is embedded in the day-to-day work in the Danish Government and thus constitutes a natural part of the government's work. It is, however, important to stress, that the local authorities have the primary responsibility for all elderly care services. In order to enhance co-determination and co-responsibility for older people in the municipality, all local authorities have a council for older people that provides a forum of dialogue between the local council and older people.

Involvement of stakeholders across sectors is an important part of the decision making process, the legislative process as well as the process of assessing the impact of the various initiatives and policy actions concerning older people and in the work of solving ageing related challenges. Older people themselves and their relatives, social- and healthcare workers, private stakeholders and NGO's are often invited to participate in the work on securing good conditions for older people.

Research (both quantitative and qualitative) concerning the impact of policy actions and ageing in general is carried out by a number of institutions and organizations. Especially Danish universities, the Danish Dementia Research Centre, as well as the ministerial agencies such as the Danish Center for Social Science Research and The Danish Health Authorities play an important part in analysis and research on ageing.

The report is structured around the three policy goals from the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. In each section there are subsections which will address the relevant developments in Denmark in regard to these goals as well as take into account the ten commitments of RIS and questions mentioned in the guidelines for the report.

Part II: 20 Years of MIPAA/RIS

Main actions and progress in implementation of MIPAA/RIS and the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration goals

1. Recognizing the potential of older persons

1.1. What has been done to empower individuals to realize their potential for physical, mental and social well-being throughout their lives and to participate in and contribute to society according to their capacities, needs, and desires along the RIS commitments 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10 and the goals of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration?

Person-centered elderly care:

A core principle of the Danish political and administrative system is that older people's views, opinions and preferences are taken into account. Thus, elderly care in Denmark is characterized by being person-centered and adapted to the individual, always aiming for the highest possible level of participation and inclusion. This enables the citizen to remain independent, self-reliant, and to participate actively for as long as possible when providing them with elderly care.

Senior citizens councils:

All Danish municipalities are by law obligated to establish a Senior Citizens Council. The councils are elected by direct election. The aim of the Senior Citizens Councils is to enhance the co-determination and co-responsibility of the citizens and to help ensure a good dialogue and cooperation between older people in the municipality and the local council.

The Senior Citizens Council gives older people formalized access to discuss and follow the contents and form of the concerned municipality's ageing policy and thereby helps older people to be heard and have influence on the local ageing policy. All citizens above the age of 60 with permanent residence in the municipality have the right to vote and are eligible to run for the Senior Citizens Council in their municipality of residence.

Integration and participation of older persons in society

Besides the above mentioned Senior Citizens Councils, it can be added, that many Danish elderly people are active participants in society. Many are members of organizations for older, which aim to be the political voice of the elder population. Volunteer work, advice and social humanitarian work is also a part of the work of the organizations. To support the work of the organizations they are given grants from the Danish state. In addition, the Danish state supports individual projects within the organizations. This has also been the case during the COVID-19 pandemic, where organizations have been given grants to mitigate the consequences from the virus (please see 2.3-2.4 for more details).

Elderly-friendly housing:

The elderly population will grow considerably the following years and towards year 2050. Therefore, the need for elderly-friendly housing is also growing. The Danish Government's aim is to ensure a rising amount of elderly-friendly housing as well as low-cost housing, including social housing.

With the Danish Government's agreement on Green Housing 2020 (Boligaftalen 2020), regarding the financial framework for The National Building Foundation, it is agreed to set aside resources to increase the well-being of elderly regarding housing. One of the aims of the agreement is to increase the accessibility in Danish Social Housing units, so that it is possible for citizens with physical disabilities to live in their own homes adapted to their needs. Increased accessibility can result in better coping with everyday life as well as preventing loneliness. It is expected that the resources aimed at accessibility will result in an increased amount of units that are suitable for physical disabled residents. Furthermore, it is agreed to analyze the opportunities and barriers regarding housing and building communities as well as shared accommodation for older people.

Digital inclusion:

Daily life in Denmark is digital to a very high extent. In the mid-10s, it was made mandatory by law that communication with the public sector be digital. An extensive digital-first push strategy. Many other countries have applied pull-strategies to their digital transition. Making the digital services an alternative for those who have the skills. In Denmark's case, non-digital services have become the alternative for those who can document that they cannot use the digital service.

Citizens are highly digital in Denmark, and for most, public services are closer and of higher quality than ten years ago. 92.5 percent receive their mail by Digital Post. But that leaves 7.5 percent without digital communication with the authorities, including senior citizens, who make up the majority of exemptions (from DP). Many really want to be digital, but are vulnerable to change.

To tackle the groups of people, who are digitally challenged, The Danish Agency for Digitalization have started the Network for digital inclusion. The network is made up of citizen organizations, relevant private organizations and (local and central) authorities. They provide the authorities with knowledge of the challenges citizens experience and invaluable input to the effort, and in return they receive influence on the activities – what is being done and how. The organizations are also a great help when implementing the initiatives (as well as other agency projects) as they simply have a much closer contact to those citizen groups that are hard to reach. Since it started six years ago, the shape of the output has changed. The focus has all along been on producing materials and carrying out efforts that specifically help the digitally challenged (and those who help them). For example, a sandbox environment for citizens was created to try some of the most widely used solutions. The national eID and Digital Post in particular.

These days, effort is to a higher extent also focusing on some more structural challenges – e.g. making sure that conditions for digital helpers are sufficient and that the rules of exemption work for those who need to be exempt from digital communication.

Agreement on The Good Elderly Life:

Another political agreement, The Good Elderly Life (Det Gode Ældrelev) finalized in December 2020 and includes initiatives on increasing communities focused on older people. The agreement contains a number of initiatives, including supporting the relatives of older people, creating communities and fighting loneliness as well as rehabilitation. The agreement also gives older people the right to say no in advance to be resuscitated if they suffer a heart attack.

Senior Summit:

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens have in collaboration with FOA (trade union and unemployment insurance fund), Local Government Denmark (KL) and DaneAge (Ældre Sagen) held two Senior Summits in 2020 and 2021 respectively. The purpose of both summits were to discuss challenges, possible solutions, and future directions for the elderly sector. The work have focused on six different areas:

1. Organization of elderly care and visitation close to everyday life
2. Audits and learning
3. Involvement of relatives
4. Recruitment
5. Quality and competence development
6. Professional leadership in a learning culture

The summits have sparked fruitful debates and have provided a lot of important insights and knowledge on how to take on the challenges and find new solutions.

A charter for a dignified elderly care:

To follow up on the Senior Summit of 2021, the same four partners who collaborated on the summit, agreed on a charter for a dignified elderly care. The charter is based on the knowledge and experience gathered during the two summits, and sets out a common framework to work towards in the area of the elderly.

The charter contains three main landmarks:

1. Securing welfare (bund under velfærden)
2. An elderly care with a focus on presence, quality of life and care (en ældrepleje med fokus på nærvær, livskvalitet og omsorg)
3. Good solutions must come from practice in everyday life and must be disseminated (gode løsninger skal komme fra praksis i hverdagen og spredes)

1.2. Please also reflect on your country's participation in the relevant global/UNwide campaigns:

1.2.1. Does your country take part in a [Global Campaign to Combat Ageism](#) led by the World Health Organization (WHO)^[1]? Do the activities in your country contribute to the endeavours of this WHO-led campaign? Which ones? Did your participation in the campaign contribute to the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS in your country? Which measures have been set in this context?

There are different initiatives in Denmark that contributes to the aim of the campaign. A few of them are listed below:

The Danish Act on Prohibition against Differential Treatment on the Labour Market:

In 1996, The Danish Act on Prohibition against Differential Treatment on the Labour Market was adopted. It was later revised in 2004 with the addition of an age criteria. The Act forbids direct and indirect differential treatment and harassment as well as instructions to discriminate on grounds of age, etc. within the labour market. The age criteria was inserted in the act in connection to the implementation of parts of EU Council Directive 2000/78.

Ban on asking applicants to state their age in a job application:

As also mentioned in 2.1, a tripartite agreement on labor shortage was recently agreed on. The agreement bans employers from asking applicants to state their age, preventing employers to screen job applicants based on their age when submitting a job application. It aims to ensure that job applicants are not disqualified due to age. However, it will be possible to emphasize age if it has a purpose, for example positive special treatment of older applicants in order to promote their employment opportunities.

1.2.2. Does your country take part in the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons? Do the activities in your country contribute to the endeavours of the OEWG-A? Which ones? Do national policies ensure protection of the human rights of older people in your country? Do you see any legal gaps?

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens continually participates in meetings in the Open-ended Working Group on ageing in UNECE. Furthermore, the ministry participates in other international forums contributing to strengthen the conditions of older people and ensure they have better opportunities. Many of the activities in Denmark that contributes to the OEWG-A, and ensures protection of the human rights of older people are described throughout the report.

1.3. *Highlight in a nutshell the most important policy achievement during the last 20 years to contribute to empowering individuals to realize their potential for physical, mental and social well-being throughout their lives and to participate in and contribute to society.*

During the last 20 years, there has been several important policy achievements to contribute to recognize older people's potential. Some of the major achievements are highlighted below:

Preventive home visits:

In 1996, a new legislation on preventive home visits to everyone over 75 years of age were introduced. The law has since been revised, and the target group is today much more differentiated. For example, in addition to the fixed appointments of preventive home visits, the municipality must offer preventive home visits if you are between 65 and 81 years old and you are at particular risk of having

reduced social, mental or physical functioning. The overall purpose of the preventive home visits is to contribute to increased security, well-being and health of the citizen by:

- supporting the preventive and health-promoting efforts towards older people by providing advice and guidance on activities and support their opportunities
- making older people aware of offers that could help prevent or solve any problems before they might occur.
- supporting older people in making the best possible use of their own resources, master self-care and thereby strengthen autonomy and maintain the level of function as long as possible or, if possible, improve this.

Free choice:

In 2002, free choice of nursing home was implemented. This means that all citizens approved of residency at a nursing home have the right to pick a nursing home of their own choice. In 2003, free choice of supplier of services for home care was implemented. All citizens approved of services for home care thus have the right to choose between different suppliers of services for home care.

Rehabilitation:

As described in the MIPAA report from 2017, the Danish Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution to set up a Home Care Commission to describe the challenges in home care services and present proposals for how to allocate the resources available in the area in the best possible way (in 2012). Based on the report from the Home Care Commission there was a political agreement on a new legislation regarding rehabilitation, also called reablement schemes, which is the promotion of independence in elder people's life. Since 2015, it has been mandatory for the municipalities to assess if a person in need of home care services could benefit from a reablement scheme in the form of a specific training program aiming at regaining physical or social functionality and achieving better quality of life.

The Welfare Agreements:

In 2021, the Act on Welfare Agreements were passed. The Welfare Agreement is an initiative that aims to set leaders and employees free of all unnecessary governmental and municipal regulations on day-care facilities, early childhood education and the elderly care in seven Danish municipalities for a period of three years. Three of the municipalities are set free of regulations in the elderly care. The municipalities are to follow only a few regulations, e.g. providing the citizen with the assessed individually necessary care. The ambition is to reduce the bureaucratic burden and inflexibility in the municipalities and instead make room for reevaluated welfare with a starting point in the needs of the citizens and the professionalism of the employees with regards to heighten the quality of the welfare and ultimately create better results in the elderly care.

National Strategy to fight loneliness.

Covid-19 has highlighted the societal impact of loneliness. In November 2021, there was a broad political agreement to develop a national strategy to fight loneliness. The aim is to address the issue

of loneliness across all age groups, across sectors (senior citizens, social services, housing, employment, education) and through partnerships between public authorities and civil society organizations.

2. Encouraging longer working life and ability to work

2.1. Which measures have been implemented to recognizing the potential embedded in the employment of older workers and developing labour market strategies to promote maximum participation opportunities for workers of all ages along the RIS commitments 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 and the goals of the Lisbon Declaration?

Lifelong learning opportunities:

Denmark has a comprehensive education system with educational and learning opportunities throughout life. For adults, this includes both the general adult education programme, adult vocational training and non-formal adult education. The latter is one of the special features of the Danish education system and includes both evening schools and voluntary activity in associations, university extension courses, day folk high schools, and private independent boarding schools (folk high schools, arts and crafts schools, and continuation schools).

Upskilling of low-skilled and unemployed:

In recent years, several measures have been introduced targeting low-skilled and unemployed people to help them back on the labour market. In 2017, additional funds were allocated to increase skills in reading, writing and math for unemployed workers. Furthermore, an experiment with an adult apprentice programme was launched to enable more adult unskilled workers to gain skills. In 2018, an initiative was launched to simplify the Danish active labour market policy. Several rules and process requirements were removed, and the oversight of municipalities was strengthened. This was done to obtain a less rigid and more effective active labour market policy system. Also in 2018, funds were allocated to hire educational ambassadors in the municipalities and to strengthen the early intervention for social assistance benefit recipients to help them back on the labour market. In 2019, a retraining reform was passed to retrain unemployed and low-skilled workers. This included basic vocational training for unemployed workers, job rotation for experienced workers and a continuation of a trainee programme for new graduates.

Vocational training and on 110 percent unemployment benefits and short vocational training programmes:

The COVID-19-pandemic increased the need for reskilling and upskilling on the Danish labour market. Therefore, during the pandemic the Danish Government introduced new measures to boost the labour market and get through the crisis stronger. A new temporary scheme grants the right to vocational education with 110 percent of unemployment benefits. Benefit recipients must be older than 30 years old, and the training is targeted good job opportunities based on labour market demand. The scheme runs from 2020 until 2022. In addition, the Danish Government invested massively in short vocational training through regional programmes with a job focus.

Task force on recruitment

In response to the recruitment challenges in Denmark, multiple initiatives have been introduced. For example, a task force (Veje til flere hænder - Task force om social- og sundhedsmedarbejdere) was set up in 2019 to cover the challenges and trends in relation to recruitment as well as provide some recommendations to support sufficient recruitment in the years to come. The results were presented in 2020.

Employment of adult students:

In 2020, it became mandatory for all municipalities to employ adult students aged 25 and above from the beginning of their education. As the initiative ensures that the students gets a salary during the initial basic course and after, the aim was to make it more attractive to apply as a social- and healthcare worker.

Inquires about age in the application process:

In recently concluded tripartite negotiations between the Government and the social partners, it was agreed to prohibit inquiries about age in the job application process. The aim is to avoid that applicant are deselected due to their age. However, the agreement allows for relevant age considerations, for example regarding youth workers or privileges for senior workers. The tripartite agreement also includes additional funds for helping seniors back on the labour market and a call to all work places to motivate more senior employees to continue on the labour market.

Reform trends concerning pension policy and retirement:

In recent years, the focus of pension policy has been on an ageing population, nudging older workers to stay in the labour market and work past pensionable age, while securing alternatives for those who cannot work till the pensionable age, and promoting savings in occupational schemes. As listed below, a wide range of initiatives have been launched since 2018.

Senior Think Tank:

In 2018, a Senior Think Tank was established to prepare recommendations for better opportunities and conditions for a longer senior working life. The think tank presented its report to the Government in November 2019, which included 20 recommendations based on numerous analyses and case studies. These recommendations included promoting local solutions at the work places; data-driven employment assistance for seniors; consultations by the pension funds about the possibilities of longer working lives; better job match between seniors and work places; better assistance with job applications for seniors above the pension age; and expansion of pensioninfo.dk to highlight the economic benefits of postponing retirement.

Delayed pension:

Denmark has several measures with the aim to incentivise longer working lives. *Delayed pension* gives seniors who have reached retirement age the option to continue working and postpone pension payments. The senior will earn a *waiting percentage*. The longer the pension is postponed, the larger

the waiting percentage. When the person chooses to retire and have his or her pension paid out, he or she will receive a *waiting supplement*. In 2018, the rules for delayed pension were changed so that the waiting supplement can be paid out on terms that are more flexible for the pensioner.

Senior premium:

With the Finance Act of 2019, a new measure, *senior premium*, was introduced. The senior premium is a one-time tax free cash benefit which is paid out to seniors who have worked at least 1,560 hours on the first year after retirement age. Subsequently in 2020, the amount was increased from DKK 30,000 to DKK 42,840, and a new senior premium of DKK 25,500 was introduced for seniors who continue working during the second year after retirement age.

Senior pension:

In January 2020, senior pension was introduced and replaced the now former senior disability pension. Senior pension can be granted to persons with a permanently reduced working capacity who are six years or less from retirement age. It is a requirement that the person has a long-term link to the labour market with at least 20-25 years of employment and that the working capacity is reduced to a maximum of 15 hours a week compared to the person's most recent job. With the introduction of senior pension, additional measures were introduced to incentivise longer working lives. The base credit of pension benefit recipients was increased from DKK 100,008 to DKK 122,004 per year. This means that pension benefit recipients are allowed to earn DKK 122,004 per year without deductions in their pension benefits.

Along with introducing senior pension, the government also appointed a commission concerning retirement and the Danish pension system. The commission is asked to review the pension system and to provide recommendations for changes. The commission are due to report in first quarter of 2022.

New early retirement pension:

The increased longevity of lives and working lives is overall a positive development. However, many years on the labour market takes its toll. Especially skilled and unskilled manual workers who have the longest working lives and the most physically demanding jobs are often worn down. This requires adjustments in the design of pension systems that account for the different conditions that different groups on the labour market have.

New early retirement pension scheme was introduced with effect from 1 January 2021. The new scheme introduces a new right to early retirement for persons who have been on the labour market for the longest time, often in physically hard jobs. The new scheme offer these persons the possibility of withdrawing from the labour market before they become too worn down – up to three years before they are normally eligible for old-age pension.

The right to the early retirement pension scheme is based on objective criteria concerning time spent on the labour market. The criteria are:

- 44 (or more) years on the labour market gives the right to three years with the early pension scheme
- 43 years on the labour market gives the right to two years with the early pension scheme
- 42 years on the labour market gives the right to one year with the early pension scheme

Time on the labour market can be earned from the age of 16 until turning 61. Included are periods as an employee, as self-employed (with profit), with unemployment benefit, with sickness benefit and maternity/paternity leave. The first persons will be eligible for the scheme in 2022, when the retirement age is 67. This means that they will be able to retire at the age of 64, 65 or 66. The right to the early pension scheme is based on objective criteria and that the allocation of it does not require visitation from a doctor or a municipality. In a context of population aging and an increasing retirement age, the new early retirement pension scheme ensures that people with the longest and most attractive working lives are able to retire earlier than the rest of the population.

2.2. Which special measures did your country set to close the gender pay and pension gap as well to take into account the special situation of older women?

Gender equality is a strong priority for the Danish Government. It is fundamentally a question of equal opportunities for everyone, where a person's sex should have no consequence for his or her opportunities in school, on the labour market, in management or in the family.

The Equal Pay Act prohibits wage discrimination on the basis of sex, however we still haven't achieved equal pay for equal work between men and women. Women are underrepresented in management, politics, and research, and women take by far the lion's share of parental leave. The Danish Government is working to change these patterns. Currently, political negotiations are ongoing regarding the transposition of the Work Life Balance Directive and a more equal sharing of family leave between the parents. This will help promote more equal opportunities for women and men on the labour market and within the family.

Redistributive pensions:

Low-income groups receive substantially more in public pensions and tend to have better replacement rates than high-income groups. This is a result of the income-testing of old-age pensions: the flat-rate part of the public pension (the basic amount) is only reduced for income from work income above a significant amount, while the income-tested part (the pension supplement and the supplementary benefit) is reduced for all kinds of taxable income above certain amounts and can only be claimed by people with modest or no income besides the public pension.

It can be taken into consideration that older people in Denmark have access to free universal healthcare as well as the most all-encompassing free home help in the world.

In recent years, disposable income has increased faster for older people than for the general population. This is mainly due to the maturation of occupational pension schemes, and a growing number of people continuing to work beyond the pensionable age and either postponing their pension claim or combining a public pension with some work income.

2.3. Highlight in a nutshell the most important achievement during the last 20 years in recognizing the potential embedded in the employment of older workers and developing labour market strategies to promote maximum participation opportunities for workers of all ages? Give some recommendations for future action (what is planned/needs to be done).

During the last 20 years, there has been several important policy achievements in terms of employment of older people. A few of them are highlighted below:

Increasing employment frequency for seniors:

A very important achievement during the last 20 years is the steadily increasing employment frequency for seniors on the Danish labour market. Since the financial crisis in 2008, the employment frequency of all age groups from 55 years and older have steadily increased. The increasing activity on the labour market for seniors is a benefit to the individual seniors who are able to work longer as well as a benefit to the economy as a whole. Multiple reforms of the labour market, education system, health care system and pensions systems have contributed to this development. The challenge is to continue the upward trend and at the same time address the different situations for different groups on the labour market, for example groups with the longest working lives and the most physically demanding jobs.

Current proposal - removal of deductions in the spouse's pension benefits:

An obstacle to participation for older workers can be the interdependence of married couples' social pension benefits and wage income. A pension benefit recipient will see a deduction in his or her pension benefits due to the earnings of the spouse. This can be a disincentive for the spouse and thereby reduce his or her participation on the labour market. For that reason, the Danish Government has proposed in a new reform programme, which includes a proposal to remove the interdependence of social pensions and wage income, so that the social pension recipient will not see a reduction in his or her pension payments due to the wage earnings of the spouse. The proposal encompasses both old-age pension, early retirement pension, and senior pension.

3. Ensuring ageing with dignity

3.1. Which measures have been contributing to protecting older persons' enjoyment of all human rights and dignity, promoting their autonomy, self-determination and participation in society, and making sure that no law, policy or programme leaves room for discrimination of any kind along RIS commitments 7, 8, 9 and 10 and the goals of the Lisbon Declaration?

Quality of life:

Municipalities are required to annually determine their quality standards for long term care. These include personal help and nursing, help, care and support, rehabilitation, training services, home care

and residential care. These must be publicly available, and used in tenders and in audits. The purpose of these quality standards is to ensure that older people gets professional, dignified and qualified treatment.

Quality indicators:

As a part of an agreement between the government and Local Government Denmark in 2020, it was agreed to develop three quality indicators in the elderly care sector, which will be used to strengthen the focus on the quality and effect of the efforts in elderly care. In relation to the indicators, it was agreed to establish an annual national user satisfaction survey among recipients of home help and in nursing homes.

Audits:

To further ensure quality in elderly care, there is an audit system in place that monitor and supervise units each year. With an agreement from 2018, it was agreed to establish a pilot scheme regarding a supplementary audit with a specific focus on elderly care. In 2021, it was agreed to continue these audits. At the same time, it was decided that care unit that receives one or more orders (påbud) from the Danish Agency for Patient Safety must undergo a follow-up and learning course conducted by The National Center for a Dignified Elderly Care.

Dignity policies:

As also described in the MIPAA report from 2017, it has become mandatory for the municipality councils to formulate a dignity policy, which describes the overall values and priorities in the field of elderly care. As of today, the municipal councils must describe how they secure dignity in elderly care in the following areas:

1. Quality of life
2. Self-determination
3. Quality and coordination of elderly care
4. Food and nutrition
5. A dignified death
6. Relatives
7. Loneliness

The Municipal Council must involve the local Senior Citizens Council (please see 1.1) in formulating the dignity policy as well as other relevant stakeholders such as relatives to older people, voluntary associations and professionals working with elderly care. The Municipal Council is under the obligation to make the dignity policy an integrated part of their quality standard which must be published at their homepage.

The National Center for a Dignified Elderly Care:

In 2018, a national center for knowledge about dignity in elderly care (Det nationale videnscenter for værdig ældrepleje) were established. The purpose of the center is to assist the municipalities in improving the focus on dignity in elderly care, for example by offering different types of skill develop-

ment, guidance, network facilitating, and providing information about good experiences, best practice and methods. The center also provides a mobile unit that offers different courses to the municipalities. The focus in these are often on a specific municipality's workflow or the organizational framework.

National Plan of Action to prevent and handle extroverted behavior in the elderly care:

As a person's dementia progresses, it may sometimes result in aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior can be very distressing for people suffering from dementia and for those around them, including the professional caregivers. With the Finance Act of 2019, it was agreed to allocate DKK 60 million in total over four years to a new National Plan of Action to prevent and handle aggressive behavior in the elder care. The action plan contains 10 concrete initiatives with a focus on disseminating knowledge and methods to prevent extroverted behavior and strengthen the knowledge and competencies of managers and employees within the following four areas of focus:

1. Developing recommendations and inspiration to prevent and handle aggressive behavior in the elder care
2. Competence development training in regards to preventing and handling aggressive behavior in the elder care
3. Inspiration on how to organize the care in relation to preventing and handling aggressive behavior in the elder care
4. Adapting accommodation and physical surroundings in regards to preventing and handling aggressive behavior in the elder care

The continuation of the National Plan of Action for Dementia 2025:

In late 2019, the new Danish government and its supporting parties concluded that the National Plan of Action for Dementia 2025 has made important contributions to strengthening the dementia effort in Denmark. However, the parties also agreed that there was a need to continue some of the initiatives from the National Plan of Action for Dementia. With the funding expiring in 2019, the Danish government and its supporting parties settled on a political agreement that resulted in the allocation of DKK 244 million over four years to continue 12 of the initiatives from the National Plan of Action for Dementia 2025 within the following three themes:

1. Improve the quality of the medical assessment and diagnosis of people with dementia
2. An improved effort to reduce the consumption of antipsychotic medication among people with dementia
3. An improved effort to create meaningful everyday lives for people with dementia and their relatives

Furthermore, the government and its supporting parties have settled on a political agreement that has resulted in the allocation of DKK 41.7 million from the Finance Act of 2021 to activities that will strengthen dementia-friendly communities in Denmark.

Violence against older people:

The Danish municipalities are obligated to offer support and counselling to women, including older women, who take residence in a shelter for battered women. The municipalities are obligated to offer 10 hours of psychological treatment free of charge to all women who come to stay in a women's shelter. The municipalities are also obligated to offer temporary accommodation facilities for men and women with social problems who cannot stay nor have a home. Among these temporary accommodations are shelters specialized for battered men, including older men. In addition to the social services rendered by the municipalities, a number of NGOs receive public funding in order to offer free ambulatory counselling for female and male victims of domestic violence. Moreover, victims of domestic violence can call the national hotline operated by the national unit against violence "Live Without Violence" (Lev Uden Vold). The hotline is a 24 hours service and offers guidance to victims of all types of violence.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the Danish government imposed a number of necessary restrictions, effectively closing down the country. For many, the necessary restrictions led to loneliness and anxiety, and in some cases, an aggravation of abuse and violence. Therefore, Denmark has undertaken various measures to tackle this problem. Denmark decided to fund approximately 55 temporary rooms at shelters for battered women, including older women, across the country. The extra rooms was in place for four months. Following new restrictions in December 2020, Denmark decided to fund additional rooms at women's shelters and temporary accommodation facilities for men for four months. In addition to the emergency shelters, all the parties of the Danish parliament signed an agreement, which secured additional funds to increase the capacity of ambulatory counselling and treatment programs for victims of violence in intimate relations as well as perpetrators.

New innovative ways to strengthen the elderly care:

With the Finance Act of 2020, the Danish government and its supporting parties agreed to allocate DKK 245 million to a total of 31 projects that will develop and test new innovative ways to strengthen the care and social interaction with elder people in the elder care. Five Danish municipalities have received funding to work with different digital solutions that will promote the autonomy and self-determination of each individual older person and provide them with the opportunity to choose and participate in activities and be part of the social community through the use of various technological tools and welfare technology.

Permanent, self-governed teams in the elderly care:

Too many older people experience that their home becomes a transit hall when they receive home help services. In order to ensure that older people gets familiar with the social- and healthcare workers that comes to their home, a part of the solution are permanent and self-governed teams. It has thus been agreed to set aside DKK 192 million that the municipalities can apply for to work with permanent, self-governed teams. These funds are a part of the Finance Act of 2021 in which the Danish Government alongside its supporting parties agreed to allocate DKK 425 million in 2021,

DKK 450 million annually in 2022-23 and DKK 500 million annually from 2024 and forward on to higher education and more employees in the elderly sector.

Inter-ministerial Committee to assess screening solutions to enhance quality and qualifications:

The Minister of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens has tasked an Inter-ministerial Committee with assessing different screening solutions with regards to the quality and qualifications of people who obtain employment within the field of elderly care. The primary purpose of the work conducted by the Inter-Ministerial Committee is:

- To assess the pros and cons of:
 - A duty to obtain public criminal records, or care certificates, as a recruitment procedure within the field of elderly care.
 - Authorisation of nursing aid employees with no responsibility or tasks related to medical treatment.
 - A register to detect and show former employees from the field of elderly care.
- To research how existing laws for recruitment procedures can secure that only qualified employees obtain employment within the field of elderly care.
- To assess the economy of the different initiatives.
- To include information of similar initiatives and experiences from other countries; specifically the Netherlands and Nordic countries.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee will provide recommendations and findings to the Minister of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens for review and discussion prior to submitting these findings to the Social Committee in the Danish Parliament.

3.2. Highlight in a nutshell the most important achievement during the last 20 years to protecting older persons' enjoyment of all human rights and to raising quality standards for integrated social and long-term care and health services as well as adapting the status, training and working conditions of professional care workers. Give some recommendations for future action (what is planned/needs to be done).

In the last 20 years, there has been several important policy achievements contributing to ensure ageing with dignity. Some of the major achievements are highlighted below:

The Danish Act on Social Services

The key piece of legislation, the Act on Social Services, clearly states that: Any person who is lawfully residing in Denmark is eligible to receive assistance under this Act. As so, with the Danish Act on Social Services it is ensured that people with vulnerabilities or disabilities get the support and help that the person needs. The objectives of this Act are to offer advice and support to prevent social problems, to offer a number of general services designed to serve as preventive measures at the same time and to satisfy needs resulting from impaired physical or mental function or special social problems. The purpose of the assistance provided under this Act is to improve the capability of the individual recipient to be self-reliant, or to facilitate his/her daily life and enhance the quality of life.

The assistance provided under this Act is based on the individual recipient's personal responsibility and the responsibility for his/her family. The assistance shall be provided on the basis of a specific individual assessment of the recipient's particular needs and circumstances and in consultation with the individual recipient. The Act has been revised several times.

Commission for Quality of Life and Independency in nursing homes:

In 2011, the Parliament appointed a commission for quality of life and independency in nursing homes. The Commission filed a report in 2012. On the basis of this report, five initiatives relating to increasing the skills of the staff at nursing homes and to boost the voluntary work with promoting the quality of life among residents in nursing homes were started. The initiatives were evaluated and completed in 2016.

Current proposal on a Welfare Act.

In order to cope with the demographic changes, the municipalities finances were raised by 1.4 billion for 2022, compared to 2021. The year before, a similar agreement were made raising the municipalities' finances by DKK 1.5 billion, compared to 2020, and the year before that, the municipalities' finances were raised by DKK 1.7 billion, compared to 2019. In the years to come, however, there will continue to be more children and older people in Denmark. For that reason, the Danish Government have proposed a Welfare Act, which includes a proposal to ensure that "the money follows the demography". For instance, the Act aims to ensure that there is sufficient funds to hire more social- and healthcare workers in the future, as the number of older people will rise.

Part III: Healthy and Active Ageing in a Sustainable World

1. Contribution of ageing-related policies to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals

1.1. Has your country already submitted voluntary national report(s) (VNR) to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the implementation of the SDGs? Please briefly report on whether and how the population ageing and older persons' issues were addressed in your country's VNR(s).

In June 2021, The Ministry of Finance in Denmark submitted Denmark's voluntary national review to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Population ageing and older persons' issues have been addressed in the report in different ways. For example, population ageing and/or older persons' issues are mentioned in regards to SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).

1.2. Within the national political planning are there any established links between ageing issues and the 2030 Agenda (a mapping of the connections between MIPAA/ RIS and the SDGs that shows areas for policy integration is available on the UNECE website¹)?

¹ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/>

There are multiple links between ageing issues and the 2030 Agenda. Please see the voluntary national review submitted this summer where some ageing issues are addressed in regards to the SDGs.

1.3. Given the information reported about MIPAA/RIS implementation, what are the most relevant SDGs which could be nourished by current policy measures (specify which measures)? Were they or will they be included in your country's VNR(s)? Describe 1–3 good practice examples.

In general, there is a natural interplay between implementing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing MIPAA/RIS. For example, The Housing Agreement of 2020 (also mentioned in Denmark's VNR) allocates funding to make housing in the social housing sector accessible to older people and people with disabilities. The initiative is closely tied to SDG target 11.3 on inclusive and sustainable urbanization, as well as target 11.7 on providing access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces, but is at the same time also tied to Commitment 7 from RIS on ensuring quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living. Selected ageing issues are included in the VNR.

2. Lessons learnt from managing the consequences and impacts for older people in emergency situations: the COVID-19 pandemic

2.1. How were older people affected by Covid-19 in your country? Was there a higher share of hospitalisation and rate of deaths among older people in 2020 than for population in general and in relation to previous long-term observations?

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent government lockdowns in Denmark have had profound consequences for the well-being and mental and physical health of many older people, who have been worst affected by both the virus, and the lockdown measures. For many older people, particularly people suffering from dementia, the lockdown measures during the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly increased the risk of social isolation and loneliness.

Share of hospitalizations and deaths for older people (+65) among total numbers of hospitalizations and deaths					
Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Share of total hospitalizations* among older people (+65)	44 pct.	45 pct.	46 pct.	46 pct.	47 pct.
Share of total deaths among older people (+65)	84 pct.	85 pct.	85 pct.	85 pct.	86 pct.
Older people (+65) share of total population	18.8 pct.	19.1 pct.	19.3 pct.	19.6 pct.	19.9 pct.

*Somatic hospitalizations only

Sources: <https://statistikbanken.dk/>, <https://www.esundhed.dk/Emner/Patienter-og-sygehuse/Noegletal-for-sygehusvaesenet-og-praksisomraadet#tabpanel182906FAFBF5D4119B0118B5229AA1315>

[00 MIPAA RIS 2030 Agenda Areas for Policy Integration.pdf](#)

The share of total hospitalizations among people older than 65 years was 47 pct. in 2020. This is a one-percentage point increase compared to 2019. Thus is it continuing the general tendency observed since 2016. A similar development is observed in terms of deaths where 86 pct. of the total deaths in 2020 were among the people older than 65 years compared to 84 percent in 2016. In 2020, people older than 65 years constitute 19.9 percent of the total population compared to 18.8 percent in 2016.

2.2. *What has been done to ensure that difficult health-care decisions affecting older people are guided by a commitment to dignity and the right to health? Please reflect on the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Policy Brief, when applicable, and briefly describe the main challenges and 3 - 5 good practices.*

Older people are at a significantly higher risk of mortality and severe disease following COVID-19 infection than younger people. Therefore, older people have been a top priority in health-care decisions regarding COVID-19 in Denmark. With reference to the enrolment of the vaccinations against COVID-19, older people were among the very first to be offered the vaccines. A number of initiatives have been taken in order to help older people get vaccinated. For example, the municipalities have reached out to the older people in Denmark that did not book an appointment one week after the invitations were send out. Furthermore, older people have been offered free transportation to their vaccination appointment, and if necessary they have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated in their own homes. The revaccination in Denmark has now begun, and the older people are once again a top priority.

With the Parliamentary Health Committee's report of 16 March 2021, a majority of parliament has agreed to launch an impartial investigation of the background of the COVID-19 outbreak and deaths in nursing homes and the home care in Denmark in 2020-2021. The background of the investigation is the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent COVID-19 outbreaks and COVID-19-related deaths in nursing homes and in the home care in Denmark during 2020 and the beginning of 2021, where 719 elderly residents at nursing homes in Denmark have died of COVID-19, totaling approximately 40 percent of all COVID-19-related deaths in Denmark as of 17. January 2021. Against this background, a majority of the Danish Parliament decided that it was relevant to investigate how the Danish society was prepared for a pandemic in the elderly sector, and how the Danish society and the authorities managed the pandemic in the elderly sector during 2020 and the first months of 2021. The overall purpose of the investigation is to examine lessons learnt from the Danish management of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to improve the management of future pandemics and to secure the protection of older and vulnerable people. The Parliament has appointed VIVE – The Danish Centre for Social Science Research to carry out the investigation. VIVE are expected to give a final report on the results of the investigation in June 2022.

2.3. *What has been done to strengthen social inclusion and solidarity during physical distancing? Please reflect on the recommendations of the Secretary General's Policy Brief, when applicable, and briefly describe the main challenges and 3 - 5 good practices.*

To strengthen social inclusion and solidarity while physical distancing, the government alongside a broad majority of other parties in the Parliament has since the beginning of the pandemic made several political agreements targeting vulnerable populations, including older people. Essential elements in the agreements were financial funds for initiatives such as counselling, free social activities and day trips for people living in nursing homes. A few of the agreements are described below:

Agreement on DKK 50 million to fight loneliness:

In November 2020, the Danish Government alongside a broad majority of political parties agreed to allocate DKK 50 million to fight loneliness (Aftale om 50 mio. kr. til at bekæmpe ensomhed). The funds were set aside to target vulnerable populations, people with disabilities and older people.

Agreement to fight loneliness among older people:

In March 2021, the Danish Government alongside a broad majority of political parties agreed to allocate DKK 15 million to civil society (Aftale om at bekæmpe ensomhed). The aim was to support activities to fight loneliness among older people, to create safe social activities that would bring joy and a feeling of quality of life, and to support counselling aimed at weakened older people and their relatives.

2.4. *What has been done to fully integrate a focus on older persons into the socioeconomic and humanitarian response to COVID-19? Please reflect on the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Policy Brief, when applicable, and briefly describe the main challenges and 3 - 5 good practices.*

The government alongside a broad majority of other parties in the Parliament has since the beginning of the pandemic made several political agreements targeting vulnerable populations, including older people. Please see some of the initiatives below:

Agreement on weakened older people:

The Danish government and a wide majority of the political parties settled on a political agreement (Aftale om initiativer for svækkede ældre i forbindelse med COVID-19) that resulted in the allocation of DKK 160 million to initiatives towards weakened older people in terms of COVID-19. Of the total amount, it was agreed to allocate DKK 100 million to new solutions to maintain social contact with weakened older people in nursing homes during the COVID-19-related lockdown measures, including older people suffering from dementia. Moreover, the parties agreed to allocate DKK 30 million to activities that will relieve relatives cohabiting with people suffering from dementia as well as relatives to people suffering from dementia in nursing homes. In addition to this, the parties agreed to allocate DKK 6 million to support individual guidance to weakened older people and their relatives, including people suffering from dementia.

Agreement on summer- and business package:

Following the reopening of the Danish society after the second COVID-19-related lockdown, the Danish government and a wide majority of the political parties agreed that there was a need for boosting the economy and launch initiatives aimed towards the industries, cultural life, and vulnerable populations, including weakened older people. It was therefore agreed to allocate DKK 80 million to the municipalities to initiate cultural and social activities for weakened older people and people with disabilities, or to offer them supplementary home help services (Sommer- og erhvervspakke).

2.5. *What has been done to expand participation by older persons, share good practices and harness knowledge and data? Please reflect on the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Policy Brief, when applicable, and briefly describe the main challenges and 3 - 5 good practices.*

In order to expand participation by older people and to share good practices, multiple partnerships have been established during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, with the Agreement on weakened older people, it was agreed to set aside funds to establish different partnerships between The Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens and several organizations, one of them in the elderly area. The partnerships have since been renewed. The aim of the partnerships is to collect and disseminate good practices and provide input to possible solutions. The good practices have been published on a portal at The National Board of Social Services.

3. Activities in preparation and implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020 – 2030

3.1. *Is your country preparing (or already has) a National Action Plan (or similar) for the implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020 – 2030? If yes, please briefly describe main actions foreseen.*

Denmark does not have a National Action Plan for the implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030. However, the government continuously works towards ensuring good conditions for older people.

3.2. *Would your country agree to report on the implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020 – 2030 in the framework of the next national reviews and appraisals of MIPAA/RIS?*

Yes, we agree to report on the implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030 in the next MIPAA/RIS report.

Conclusions and priorities for the future

During the last five years, Denmark has made significant contributions to further enhance the lives of older people and to address the objectives described in MIPAA/RIS as well as the goals of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. A major part of the focus has been on the many investments in the elderly sector in recent years, e.g. raising the finances of the municipalities so they can keep up with demographic changes, or the continuation of the National Action Plan on Dementia 2025. Another significant part of the focus has been on reducing bureaucratic rules and procedures to free up time for care and presence, e.g. with the implementation of The Welfare Agreements, where three municipalities are set free of regulations in the elderly care, and the experiments with small and self-governed teams.

Despite the major progress towards improving older people's lives as iterated throughout the report, Denmark still faces some challenges. Like many other countries, Denmark is facing an ageing population as well as changing demands. As the population ages, older people will make up a larger share of the population. Adding to these demographic challenges, there is also an employment challenge in Denmark, with many social- and healthcare workers retiring. At the same time, it is difficult to recruit new personnel to the jobs and to retain them.

The described challenges are addressed by various means with an ongoing focus on measures aiming at enhancing healthy and active ageing, reforms and adjustments to the labor market, the pension systems, and the healthcare and elderly care area. In dealing with these challenges successfully, we encourage other countries to share perspectives and solutions internationally, e.g. in terms of the challenges associated with demography and recruitment of personnel.

The Danish Government will continue to work towards an elderly care with a focus on presence, quality of life and care. The government aims to achieve this through a focus on dealing with unnecessary bureaucratic rules and procedures, and coping with the recruitment challenges while securing the Danish welfare system to the future needs of an ageing population.