

**National Report
on the Implementation of the
UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) for the
Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) 2002**

2007–2012

REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

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Executive summary

Population ageing in Slovenia is a process that cannot be avoided. From 1989 to 2009, the share of the population in Slovenia aged 65 and over increased from 10.6% to 16.5%. During the same period the share of the population aged 0–14 decreased from 20.9% to 14.0%. The old-age dependency ratio has been widening and reached 23.8% in 2010. These trends are projected to continue and represent a huge challenge for policymakers, who have to deal with the following:

- the sustainability of the pension and social security systems;
- adjusting the economy and in particular workplaces to an ageing labour force;
- labour market shortages as the number of working age persons decreases;
- higher demand for healthcare services and long-term care;
- potential conflict between generations over the distribution of resources.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has been attempting to tackle the demographic challenge and to fulfil commitments of the UNECE RIS for the MIPAA in the following ways:

- by establishing the National Council for Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in August 2007, which aims to connect all relevant governmental departments, experts working with older people, NGOs and representatives of the older population so as to improve relevant policies at the national level;
- by preparing a comprehensive strategy for dealing with ageing at the national level (the Strategy for Protection of Older People by 2010 – solidarity, coexistence and quality ageing, adopted in 2006, the new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020 has been under preparation);
- by promoting the full participation of older people in society and various forms of intergenerational cooperation;
- adapting social protection systems to population ageing (social transfers system reform was implemented in 2012, the labour market reform was partially implemented in 2010, the pension reform has been prepared, adopted by the National Assembly, but rejected at the referendum held in 2011, healthcare and long-term care reforms have been under the preparation);
- preparing a new National Programme for social protection in 2011 -2020, which among others defines services for social inclusion of older people for independent living in community (home-assistance, mobile help, day care, family assistant);
- adopting a gender mainstreaming approach in policy making.

However, despite a good normative framework there is room for improvements in practice. The main findings from the Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for Protection of Older people by 2010 – solidarity, coexistence and quality ageing were that the objectives set up in the Strategy were only partially met and guidelines for policy making were not taking into account in all relevant policy areas. The main **challenges related to ageing** to be dealt with in Slovenia in **the near future** are as follows:

- to complete the new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020;
- to adapt social protection systems to population ageing, giving priority to pension system reform and long-term care.

In addition to the above, the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations (ZDUS) takes the view that greater efforts should be made in the following areas:

- to reduce poverty among older people, especially women living in single households;
- to raise awareness of the valuable contribution made by older people to the development of society as a whole;

- encourage older workers to remain longer in the labour market;
- encourage employers to employ older workers and to adapt working places to the needs of older workers;
- to improve financial support to the active ageing programmes of voluntary organisations;
- to raise awareness in society on the prevention of violence against older people;
- to promote the residential mobility of older people and introduce alternative forms of housing for older people.

General information

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- Strategy for Protection of Older People by 2010 – solidarity, coexistence and quality ageing (adopted in 2006),

http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti_pdf/strategija-EN-starejsi.pdf

- A new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020 has been under the preparation and is planned to be adopted in 2012.

1. National ageing situation

Slovenia's population has been increasing in recent years. Slovenia had 2,047,000 recorded inhabitants in January 2010. According to the baseline variant of EUROPOP2008 population projections Slovenia's population shall grow in numbers only until the early 2020s, then it shall start to decrease.

From 1989 to 2009, the **share of the population in Slovenia aged 65 and over increased** from 10.6% to 16.5%. During the same period the share of the population aged 0-14 decreased from 20.9% to 14.0%. This trend is projected to continue: in 2029 24.8% of the population is expected to be at least 65 years old and in 2059 already 33.5%; in 2029, 12.9% of the population is expected to be less than 15 years old and 12.8% in 2059. The fastest is the increase in the share and number of population aged 85 or more (the upper part of the older population). According to the projection by the end of the 2050s, the number of population aged 85 or more shall have increased fivefold and represent 7.6% of the total population.

The number of people aged 65 and above has been rising faster than the population aged 15–65, the **old-age dependency ratio also widened** and reached 23.8% in 2010. However, it remains below the EU average. According to projections, the ratio of working age to old-age population is expected to deteriorate to 4:1 by 2013. After 2020, it should drop to less than 3:1, and after 2040 to less than 2:1. This increasingly critical ratio could not be significantly improved, either through a higher fertility rate or higher migration.

The **fertility** of the population has been declining significantly in recent decades. After 1980 the number of newborn children started to fall and the fewest children so far were born in 2003; the number then began to rise again slightly. The fertility rate for Slovenia stood at 1.2 in 2003 and 1.57 in 2010 – slightly below the EU average. Increased life expectancy is also a characteristic of the population of Slovenia. The life expectancy for a newborn baby in Slovenia is increasing: a boy born in 2006/07 in Slovenia can expect to live to the age of 75.0 and a girl born then and there to 82.3 years; in case of boys this is 8.9 years longer and in case of girls as much as 10.3 years longer than in the early 1960s.

In Slovenia, women live longer than men. In 2009, **life expectancy at age 65** was 20.5 years for women and 16.4 years for men.

The growing number of older people also has an influence on the **mean age of the population** of Slovenia, so that it keeps increasing. Over the past 30 years, there has been a persistent and fairly steady rise. The mean age of the population increased from 35.6 years in 1989 to 41.4 years in 2010.

Following an extended period of improvement, **the labour market situation started to deteriorate in the last quarter of 2008 as a result of the impacts of the crisis.** The number of employed persons fell, while the number of unemployed persons rose. Slovenia still has one of the lowest employment rates for people aged 55 and over in the EU: 35.0% in 2010 (24.5% for female, 45.5% for male).

The **number of pensioners** is growing faster than the number of those who make contributions to the pension fund. There were 474,507 pensioners in Slovenia in 2001 and 577,919 pensioners at the beginning of 2012. The average gross pension in 2011 was EUR 580.61. The average retirement age is rising, but is still relatively low. In 2011, the new Pension and Disability

Insurance Act (ZPIZ-2), which stipulates a gradual increase in the statutory retirement age to 65 for both men and women, was rejected at the referendum.

3.1 *Data on trends in the average number of recipients of individual kinds of pensions from compulsory insurance between 2001-2010*

Year	Type of pension received						
	Old-age	Invalidity	Survivor's and widow/er's			Partial old-age	Total
			Total	Survivor's	Widow/er's		
1	2	3	4=5+6	5	6	7	8=2+3+4+7
2001	287,902	97,704	88,877	84,260	4,617	24	474,507
2002	295,271	97,621	90,973	81,688	9,285	33	483,898
2003	302,303	97,433	92,113	78,818	13,295	62	491,911
2004	308,348	96,556	92,827	76,038	16,789	95	497,826
2005	314,983	96,665	93,231	73,254	19,977	109	504,988
2006	322,617	95,736	92,304	69,297	23,007	138	510,795
2007	332,616	94,511	91,514	65,601	25,913	164	518,805
2008	342,786	93,389	91,552	62,624	28,928	206	527,933
2009	354,270	92,123	91,818	59,699	32,119	244	538,455
2010	368,615	91,051	92,628	57,097	35,531	267	552,561

Source: Pension and Invalidation Insurance Institute of Slovenia, <http://www.zpiz.si>

The at-risk-of-poverty rate (after receiving social transfers) in Slovenia was 12.7% in 2010, which is below the EU average. However, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for people aged 65 and over in Slovenia was 20.2% in 2010, which is slightly above the EU average (19%). Women aged 65 and over are more exposed to poverty than men.

Accessibility of public services and goods of general interest is improving in most areas, often because of payment from private sources. Looking at **the health-care system**, Slovenia's households have been increasingly burdened by expenditure on health in recent years. In the structure of private expenditure on health, the share of out-of-pocket household expenditure has already exceeded expenditure from voluntary insurance.

The accessibility of **services and social-care programmes** has been improving. Despite the growing need for long-term care as a result of population ageing, access to institutional care is increasing due to the growing capacity of homes for older people, while Slovenia still lags behind other European countries, especially in the provision of help for older people living at home. Spending on long-term care has been increasing in real terms at all times, in the last two years mainly from private sources.

Currently, **home care services are less developed**, and are provided to 2.2% of population over 65 years, with most integral services provided in residential facilities. Furthermore, demand exceeds supply. Estimates are that with 21,000 available residential care places (from which 17,000 places in homes for older people) the potential additional demand reaches 6,000, and is expected to increase due to the ageing population (Association of care homes of Slovenia). This not only requires additional care facilities, but also stimulates Slovenia to put in place preventive programmes.

In the 2000–2009 period the number of people in **care in old people's homes** increased by almost 36%. In 2009 there were over 16,000 people in care, which was over 6% more than in 2008. In 2009 people aged 80 and over dominated in old people's homes, namely with almost 63%. The share of this group increased further over the 2008 figure. Of all the people in care almost 75% were women. Almost 76% of older people were admitted to the old people's home because of their age, 64% of those were ill. Other common causes for admission of older people were a serious physical illness (almost 10%) and a serious mental illness (almost 7%).

The share of general government expenditure

In 2010 17.3 % of GDP was paid by government for social benefits (other than social transfers in kind) in Slovenia. Public spending for health in 2010 was 6% of GDP.

2. Methodology

Statistical data and indicators in individual chapters are based mainly on data collected by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of Slovenia, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia (ZPIZ).

3. Review and appraisal of national actions required to fulfil the commitments of the UNECE RIS for the MIPAA for the period 2007–2011

Commitment 1: To mainstream ageing in all policy fields with the aim of bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change to achieve a society for all ages

In September 2006 the ***Strategy for the protection of older people by 2010 – solidarity, coexistence and quality ageing*** was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the purpose of creating conditions conducive for solidarity among generations and quality ageing through enhanced cooperation among relevant stakeholders in the implementation of coherent objectives. For monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy a **National Council for Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations** was established by the Government in August 2007. The aim of the Council is to connect all relevant governmental departments, experts working with older people, NGOs and representatives of the older population so as to improve relevant policies at the national level.

The Council prepared a ***Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for Protection of older people by 2010 – solidarity, coexistence and quality ageing*** in April 2009. The main findings from the Report were that the objectives set up in the Strategy were only partially met and guidelines for policy making were not taking into account in all relevant policy areas. In the reporting period Slovenia has made the following progress:

- the National Council for Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations was established by the Government in 2007;
- the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act was adopted in 2008, which provides for the special protection and care of older people;
- the Review of Measures for Promoting Active Ageing was adopted by the Government in 2010 for the purpose of increasing the employment rate of older people (55–64) to 43.5% by 2013;
- The new Pension and Disability Insurance Act (ZPIZ-2) which stipulates a gradual increase in the statutory retirement age to 65 for both men and women was adopted by the National Assembly in 2010, but was rejected at the referendum held in 2011;
- the participation of older people in all spheres of society has been improving;
- intergenerational solidarity has been promoted;
- NGOs dealing with older people are well organised – the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations (ZDUS) has been especially strong in developing various active ageing programmes.

However, due to the specific circumstances (early elections) Slovenia is lagging behind in the process of adopting the new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020 and the National Programme for social protection in 2011–2020, which defines, among other things, the services required for the social inclusion of older people for independent living in the community (e.g. home assistance, mobile help, day care and family assistants).

Commitment 2: To ensure full integration and participation of older persons in society

In 2007 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia established a **National Council for Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations**. The aim of the Council is to connect all relevant governmental departments, experts working with older people, NGOs and representatives of the older population so as to improve relevant policies promoting active and healthy ageing at the national level.

At the national level, the associations of **older persons participate** in the preparation of relevant documents and legislation in the working areas of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (The Agreement on cooperation between the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations was signed in 2009), Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Public Service. The cooperation with Ministry of Health started in 2011. However, in the opinion of associations for older workers the cooperation in the governmental strategic planning has been inadequate and needs to be improved in the future.

At local levels, older people are also well integrated into strategic community planning through participation in community councils.

Older persons can **influence the content and quality of services** provided to them by joining working groups dealing with the implementation of services. Retired experts of the Federation of Pensioners' Associations in Slovenia are involved in the supervision of work in old people's homes and centres for social work. However, we must improve the monitoring and evaluation of the accessibility and quality of services.

Older people are involved in the **work of political parties**. In Slovenia, there is also a political party in the National Assembly that mostly brings together representatives of the older population. It is called DeSUS – the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (*Demokratska stranka upokojencev Slovenije*). At the early [2011 Slovenian parliamentary election](#) in December DeSUS won 6.97% of the vote.

Public transport connections with more remote areas are a major problem, which requires special attention. Pensioners in Slovenia are entitled to subsidised public transport.

The promotion of **intergenerational cooperation** has a long tradition in Slovenia, characterised by connecting schools, pensioners' societies, other NGOs, old people's homes and other social institutions in different activities. In 2005 the Slovenian Philanthropy - a society promoting volunteerism has started systematically establishing connections between volunteers of pensioners' societies and schools all over Slovenia, participating in a joint project "Fruits of the Society". Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs fosters intergenerational relationships also through supporting the establishment of **intergenerational centres** at local level. By the end of 2011 there were more than 20 different intergenerational centres set up for the purpose of enhancing solidarity and cooperation among generations.

In Slovenia, inter-generational volunteerism is also well developed. Volunteers from three generations cooperate in various cultural associations and fire-brigades. Slovenian Philanthropy, in close cooperation with the Federation of Pensioner's Associations, has been endeavouring to promote volunteerism in humanitarian acts. The **European Year of Volunteering 2011** has undoubtedly contributed positively to promotion of volunteerism among civil society. However, NGOs believe more effort should be made by the Government to improve the status of volunteerism in Slovenia.

Meetings of all generations have been organised every year since 2000 in the Slovenian capital under the title "Third Generation Festival". The main goal of the festival is to promote a **positive image of ageing** and better intergenerational cooperation and understanding. The festival is organised with the participation of several governmental ministries, NGOs and private enterprises, and a special media promotion of issues related to ageing is organised during the festival.

Older people are aware of the importance of active ageing. As a result, half of this demographic takes part in various active ageing programmes within the framework of non-profit NGOs. Local communities support them in pursuing their activities. At the ministerial level, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs looks to support and co-finance voluntary assistance programmes for older people, while the Ministry responsible for culture promotes and co-finances the participation of older people in cultural events. In other ministries, however, there is, unfortunately, still insufficient awareness of the importance of encouraging older people to remain active and financially independent for as long as possible.

In the context of the **European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012** several activities are planned by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in cooperation with NGOs and the social partners in order to promote a positive image of ageing and to improve active ageing opportunities.

The Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations joined the international project for the promotion of alternative housing, together with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs co-financed by the EBRD and launched in October 2011.

With the support of the ESF and the Ministry of Public Administration, the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations developed an active citizenship model for older people and invited other three older people self-help organisations to participate in its implementation. Launched in 2010, this project was designed as a long-term endeavour to promote the participation of older people in the work of the Slovenian National Assembly.

The Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs signed an Agreement on cooperation in preparing the strategic and other documents related to older population.

Moreover, the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations, which comprises half of all the retired people in Slovenia, has developed an **elder rights advocacy system**, funded by the ESF and the Ministry of Public Administration.

Commitment 3: To promote equitable and sustainable economic growth in response to population ageing

Intergenerational solidarity has long served as the basis for the key strategic priority of sustainable development. According to the National Reform Programme 2011, sustainable long-term economic growth will be achieved by implementing economic policy measures, structural measures and institutional adjustments.

In the last three years the structural reforms were prepared in order to response properly to the population ageing: **pension reform, healthcare reform, labour market reform and reform of the social transfers system**. Some of the reforms (i.e. the pension reform and part of the labour market reform) were rejected in referenda held in 2011 and the health reform has ground to a halt due to political reasons. The reform of the social transfers system was passed in 2010 and amended in 2011. Its implementation commenced in 2012. The main goals of this reform were to implement more targeted system of social transfer and to **provide more adequate income support** and better incentives for work. The need to **increase the employment of older people** was identified also in the National Reform Programme 2011: *"When implementing the active labour market policy, special attention will be given to the promotion and expansion of labour force participation of older people. The active labour market policy programmes will therefore supplement structural changes in the field of retirement and the functioning of the labour market. To this end, the scope of implementation of public works (renewed public works) and social entrepreneurship will be increased. In view of the situation in the labour market where the number of older unemployed people has been rising, it is necessary to encourage the development of long-term care services, and to □promote the greater inclusion of older people in these types of public works."*

Commitment 4: To adjust social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences

Population ageing requires implementation of some structural reforms in Slovenia. The main planned structural changes according to the National Reform Programme (2011) concerned pension system. In the reporting period no structural reforms were implemented in Slovenia,

except the reform of the social transfers system and partially labour market reform as referred to in commitment 3.

The Pension and Disability Insurance Act II was adopted by the National Assembly in December 2010; however it was rejected at the referendum held in June 2011. The fundamental objectives of the Act are long-term financial sustainability, the increased labour participation of older workers and adequate pensions for future pensioners. The key elements of the planned reform are the extension of working life by raising the full retirement age to 65 years, the introduction of a more stimulating bonus policy and a more restrictive malus policy, the elimination of certain social transfers from the pension system, the transformation of mandatory additional pension insurance into occupational insurance for all workers performing particularly hard work, and the reform of the voluntary supplementary pension insurance scheme.

In February 2011 a **proposal to upgrade the health system by 2020** was presented for public debate by the Minister of Health. The proposal was based on draft laws on health services, healthcare and health insurance. The top priority of the proposed reform was to set up a health system that would cater for the needs of its users while ensuring financial sustainability. The proposal has not yet been adopted by the Government due to the early elections to the National Assembly held in autumn 2011.

According to the data collected by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs the **system of long-term care** covers approximately 38,000 people. In recent years, the number of users of long-term care services and benefits has been growing continuously. The need and demand for long-term care is growing. However, mostly due to the problems associated with long-term care funding, the proposal of the Long-term Care Act is still under preparation.

The reform of social transfers system comprises two new acts: the **Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act** and the **Social Benefits Act** which were adopted in 2010 and amended in 2011. The implementation of this acts started on 1 January 2012. The acts introduce fundamental changes in the access to and delivery of social benefits and subsidies that are means tested. The **main goals** of the reform are, among others, to improve the transparency, efficiency and user-friendliness of the distribution of social transfers and subsidies that are means tested, the harmonisation of the criteria for granting social transfers and subsidies that are means tested, a more targeted system, more adequate income support, incentives for work and to encourage people to actively search for solutions to their problems, a greater focus on activation measures, more adequate income support for older people not capable of work.

Commitment 5: To enable labour markets to respond to the economic and social consequences of population ageing

Labour market in Slovenia is marked by low labour force participation and strong labour market dualism. The economic crisis has influenced the increase of the unemployment rate and a reduction of the employment. The rate of older unemployed persons has been rising sharply amongst the registered unemployed population. This is related to early withdrawal from the labour market, i.e. retirement in the past years and to insufficient adaptation of jobs to the needs of older workers. For a number of years, Slovenia has been ranked among countries with the lowest labour force participation rate of older people (aged 55–64) in the EU. The data for the second quarter of 2011 shows that the labour force participation rate of older people dropped to 30.6% (35.0 % in 2010).

In 2010, the Government adopted a strategic document "**Measures to promote active ageing**" which is an action plan with clearly defined objectives to get older people employed. The action plan provides for all critical mechanisms regarding the activation of older people. It describes active labour market measures for older workers, education and training options for older employed and unemployed persons, awareness raising campaigns to break ageing stereotypes, measures to increase health and safety at work and measures aimed at improving public employment services. Tailor-made job search assistance and social activation as preconditions for the employability of older people take centre stage.

Specific ALM programmes are devoted to older unemployed persons in line with experienced good practices of inclusions in the past, such as the following:

- public works;
- on-the-job training;
- work trials;
- subsidies for the employment of hard-to-employ persons;
- reimbursement of wage costs (reimbursement of employer contributions);
- subsidies for self-employment;
- the effective intervention of the Public Employment Service
- green and white job options.

Commitment 6: To promote lifelong learning and adapt the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions

In 2004, the Resolution on National Adult Education Programme was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia which provides a systemic basis for development of lifelong learning in Slovenia. The umbrella public institution which is responsible for adult education is **the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education**. The Institute drafts professional bases and evaluations, monitors the development of the adult education system, develops various non-formal and formal forms of learning, develops programmes to improve adult literacy, and pays particular attention to improving access for vulnerable adult groups to education and learning. In doing so, it develops the necessary infrastructure to support learning, develops models for the self-evaluation of quality and the validation of prior learning, and provides professional education and training for adult educators. The Institute keeps professionals and the general public informed of all of these processes and achievements, and contributes to a broader awareness of the importance and role of adult education. The most prominent promotional campaign in the area of education and learning in Slovenia is **Lifelong Learning Week**, which is coordinated by the Institute every year. These festival events, which take place in May and June all over the country, draw attention to the importance of learning at all stages of life and in all environments.

In 2007, the **Strategy for life-long learning** was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The main objectives are as follows:

- to raise awareness that learning from cradle to grave is the right and obligation of every member of society in all environments;
- to educate for personal development, promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training;
- to improve accessibility of lifelong learning and mobility for disadvantaged groups.

The Third Age University of Slovenia is a voluntary educational movement, meant for people aged 50 and over, mostly retired people, but also for unemployed older workers. It has been established to provide access to culture and education for older people and to contribute to changing the social and economic position of older people. The Third Age University currently encompasses 35 universities throughout the country. Each Slovenian university arranges study circles, lectures, and some also organise summer universities, educational camps, study trips, etc. The Third Age University has different goals to accomplish, be they educational or social. It has recently introduced two new fields of research and activities pertaining to all adults regardless of their age: dyslexia in adults and burn out as a result of non-reciprocal relationships.

Commitment 7: To strive to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living including health and well-being

In February 2011 a **proposal to upgrade the health system by 2020** was presented for public debate by the Minister of Health. The main purpose of the proposal was to improve the accessibility of health services and to set up a health system that would cater for the needs of its users while ensuring financial sustainability. The proposal has not yet been adopted by the Government due to the new political circumstances arising from the early elections to the National Assembly held in autumn 2011.

The need and demand for long-term care is growing. However, mostly due to the problems associated with long-term care funding, the **proposal of the Long-term Care Act is still** under preparation. One of the objectives of the draft Act is to promote and improve the home assistance system for older people in order for them to maintain independent living for as long as possible.

We are aware of the fact that appropriate healthcare development will ensure better health and lessen the need for the medicinal and long-term care of older people.

The Ministry of Health is therefore currently preparing the **Strategy for the Development of Geriatrics and Gerontology in Slovenia**, in which it will assess the population's needs for geriatric treatment and propose a method for the restructuring of the healthcare system in order to meet all the healthcare needs of older people in the years ahead.

Moreover, the Ministry of Health carried out an **analysis of the accessibility of healthcare services in rural and less developed areas** by taking the problem of the ageing population into consideration. It follows from this analysis that there is a need for a different approach to be adopted in regulating accessibility to relevant services. In certain areas, the need for more doctors has been established, while in others, nursing services must be enhanced or outpatient clinics equipped with modern medical equipment. There is also a plan to establish special rural outpatient clinics.

In addition, the Ministry of Health appointed a working group to deal with issues related to the medical treatment of dementia patients. The main tasks assigned to this working group were to describe the current situation related to the treatment of dementia patients, to draft a proposal for clinical guidelines covering their treatment and to define the capacities that must, in the long term, be provided in order to ensure the appropriate treatment of these patients pursuant to the

aforementioned guidelines. The working group proposed the preparation of a national dementia programme and the establishment of a national dementia centre.

Commitment 8: To mainstream a gender approach in an ageing society

The **Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of Slovenia in the period 2005–2013** was adopted in 2005 on the basis of the **Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men** (2002). The Resolution is a strategic document which defines objectives and measures as well as key policy makers for the promotion of gender equality in different areas of life for women and men. On the one side, the Resolution involves the encouragement of changes, building on the recognition of differences or, in other words, on the identification of the specific needs of women and men and of the impact of particular policies on their lives. It encourages the implementation of special measures aimed at improving gender equality, as appropriate for the differences identified. On the other side, the strategy introduces gender mainstreaming, meaning that a gender perspective is taken into consideration by policy- and decision-makers in all stages of any political process. The implementation of gender mainstreaming is binding on the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, line ministries and local government authorities. The Slovenian Government is obliged to report to the National Assembly on the basis biannual monitoring of the periodical action plans.

Since 2009, the Equal Opportunities Office of the Republic of Slovenia has been organising the **awareness raising educational programmes** for equal opportunities coordinators in governmental authorities at the national and local government levels and for the representatives of NGOs. The aim of the programmes is to improve the capacity of the aforementioned authorities to adopt a gender mainstreaming approach in policy making and practice.

Commitment 9: To support families that provide care for older persons and to promote inter- and intra-generational solidarity among their members

The increase in the number of older people has led to a growing need for specific care. This type of care is often supplied by families and relatives. The fact that the responsibility for the care of older people is usually assumed by their families may be a result of limited access to formal care. On the other hand, family care is driven by a strong cultural component as regards taking responsibility for older family members, mainly in the rural areas.

Long-term care in Slovenia includes benefits in kind (healthcare and/or social services in a form of residential or home care) and cash benefits. Currently, long-term care is regulated by several acts in the field of social security, such as healthcare and health insurance, pension and disability insurance and social assistance. Cash benefits and residential care are organised centrally whereas home care services are provided on a local level. Since 2004 (**Act Amending the Social Security Act**) family carers of older people can under certain conditions register as 'family assistants' and receive financial compensation if care-giving affects their employment (payment for loss of income).

Slovenia currently **lacks an integrated system for long-term care**. A draft law has been under preparation since 2005. The new law would aim to provide a national legal basis for an insurance-based residential and home care system.

Informal unpaid care (volunteers, neighbours, friends, religious organisations, etc.) for older people is an important supplement to formal care and private services in Slovenia. Volunteerism is also widespread. It is usually performed by laypersons that are not trained for social work. Some associations are also training volunteers due to specific areas they are covering (Hospice, Social Gerontology and Gerontogogics Association of Slovenia (SGGAS), various intergenerational associations etc.). Charitable organisations operate successfully on a completely voluntary basis and offer material or non-material, personal help to older people, for example Caritas, the Red Cross, intergenerational associations for quality ageing, SGGAS, etc.

Some faculties, NGOs and other institutions occasionally conduct **research** related to the problems encountered by older people. The **Anton Trstenjak Institute** deals with these problems the most and it also publishes a specialised gerontology magazine *Quality Ageing (Kakovostna starost)*.

Commitment 10: To promote the implementation and follow-up of the regional implementation strategy through regional cooperation

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia has been participating in the following activities in the area of ageing at the regional level:

The European project WeDO – Wellbeing and Dignity for Older People (2010–2012)

The objective of the project is to develop a lasting and growing partnership between organisations at all levels to promote the wellbeing and dignity of vulnerable and disabled older people and prevent elder abuse at all levels and in all settings through the promotion of quality long-term care. The project seeks, in particular, to develop a European Partnership Guide, including a set of fundamental principles (the Quality Framework). The Slovenian national coordinator is the Pensioners' Association of the Municipality of Ljubljana. **The Central European (CE) Knowledge Platform for an Ageing Society** aims to **minimise the negative effects and impacts of demographic change in Central Europe**. The project concept derived from cooperation between various partners and their desire to jointly contribute to improved framework conditions in their regions in order to foster economic growth, regional development and social cohesion. It is built on the belief that the challenges faced in the cross-cutting issue that is "ageing" can only be solved by working together. The CE-Ageing Platform aims to jointly develop a CE-Ageing Strategy enabling partners to adapt to demographic change, thereby integrating lessons learnt from previous activities on the one hand and results and lessons learnt from innovative actions implemented by the CE-Ageing platform on the other.

URBACT's Active A.G.E. project is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. The project sought to actively address the challenges by:

- promoting a mutual learning process between nine European cities in order to improve professional capacity and identify good practices;
- providing a common methodology to put in place an integrated approach.

The project focused on the following three sub themes: age and the economy, age and care, and age and inclusion.

4 Conclusions and priorities for the future

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has been attempting to tackle the demographic challenge and to fulfil the commitments of the UNECE RIS for the MIPAA by:

- establishing the National Council for Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in August 2007 which aims at connecting all relevant governmental departments, experts working with older people, NGOs and representatives of the older population so as to improve relevant policies at the national level;
- preparing a comprehensive strategy for dealing with ageing at the national level (Strategy for Protection of Older People by 2010 – solidarity, coexistence and quality ageing, adopted in 2006, the new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020 has been under the preparation);
- promoting full participation of older people in society and various forms of intergenerational cooperation;
- adjusting social protection systems to population ageing (social transfers system reform has been implemented in 2012, labour market reform has been partially implemented in 2010, pension reform has been prepared, adopted by the National Assembly, but rejected at the referendum held in 2011, healthcare and long-term care reforms have been under preparation);
- adopting a gender mainstreaming approach in policy making.

However, despite a good normative framework, there is still room for improvements in practice. The main findings of the Report on the implementation of the strategy for the protection of older people by 2010 – solidarity, coexistence and quality ageing were that the objectives set in the strategy had been only partially met and the guidelines for policy making were not taking all relevant policy areas into account.

The main **challenges related to ageing** to be dealt with in Slovenia **in the near future** are as follows:

- to complete the new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020;
- to adapt social protection systems to population ageing, giving priority to pension system reform and long-term care.

In addition to the above, the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations (ZDUS) takes the view that greater efforts should be made in the following areas:

- to reduce poverty among older people, especially women living in single households;
- to raise awareness of the valuable contribution made by older people to the development of society as a whole;
- encourage older workers to remain longer in the labour market;
- encourage employers to employ older workers and to adapt working places to the needs of older workers;
- to improve financial support to the active ageing programmes of voluntary organisations;
- to raise awareness in society on the prevention of violence against older people;
- to promote the residential mobility of older people and introduce alternative forms of housing for older people.

Slovenia's major **strengths and weaknesses** in the field of ageing are described below.

Strengths:

- a good normative framework for age mainstreaming is in place;
- the participation of older people in all spheres of society has been improving;
- social security systems provide adequate support for the most vulnerable;
- NGOs dealing with older people are well organised – the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations (ZDUS) has been especially strong in developing various active ageing programmes;
- inter-generational solidarity exists within families.

Weaknesses:

- the implementation of the normative framework for ageing is incomplete;
- delay in the preparation of the new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020;
- delay in the preparation of the National Programme for social protection in 2011–2020;
- difficulties with carrying out urgent reforms (pension, healthcare, long-term care);
- weak cooperation between different services taking care for quality life of older people;
- lack of financial resources for supporting voluntary organisations;
- insufficient use of EU funds.

Planned activities of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in the area of ageing:

- to complete the new Strategy for quality Ageing, Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations in Slovenia by 2020 (in 2012);
- To carry out various awareness raising activities within the framework of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012;
- to complete the National Programme for social protection for 2011–2020;
- to implement the pension reform (in 2013);
- to implement the healthcare reform (in 2015);
- to implement the long-term care reform (in 2015);
- to promote the role of local communities in providing home assistance to older people.

Priorities for policy research in planning of changes:

- to establish a database for the monitoring of long-term care (services and expenditure);
- to carry out an analysis of the implementation of home-assistance provided by public services;
- to study the active inclusion of older people in the framework of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012.

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