

APPROVED
by Order No 156 of the
Minister for Social Security
and Labour of the Republic
of Lithuania of 15 March
2012

NATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE EUROPEAN YEAR FOR ACTIVE AGEING AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS (2012)

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The purpose of the National Programme on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations (2012) is to further the overall objective of the European Year, i.e. facilitate the creation of an active ageing culture in Europe based on a society for all ages.

2. The programme has been drawn up to implement Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011 on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) (OL 2011 L 246, p. 5).

3. In drawing up this programme, account has been taken of comments and suggestions received at meetings with NGOs, public bodies, and the representations of the European Commission and European Parliament in Lithuania.

4. The Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for coordinating programme implementation; whereas the operators are responsible for implementing and financing appropriate measures under the programme. The measures are to be financed from funds provided by the operators responsible.

II. CURRENT STATUS ANALYSIS

General context

5. Analysis of demographic data for Lithuania reveals that the country has an increasingly ageing population and highlights the relevance of dealing with the consequences thereof. According to data from Statistics Lithuania, at the start of 2011 a total of 701 200 persons aged 60 years or over were living in Lithuania, accounting for 21.6% of the total population. Over the course of 2010 the number of persons falling within this age bracket increased by 4 100 (or 0.6%), whereas in the previous ten years this number had increased by 32 600 (or 4.9%).

6. It is worth noting that, over the last three years, the average life expectancy of elderly men and women has increased slightly. Women who reached the age of 60 in 2010 can expect to live on average for another 22.3 years, whereas men can expect to live for another 16.2 years (in 2007 the indicator for women was 21.7 years, whereas for men it was 15.4 years).

7. According to forecasts by the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), Lithuania's population is expected to continue to age rapidly. It is estimated that at the start of 2060 nearly 37% of Lithuania's inhabitants will be elderly, whereas the average for all 27 European Union Member States will be 35%.

Policy delivery

8. Demographic ageing is a complex phenomenon giving rise to several social and economic consequences, so it is important to seek ways of averting the problems it creates by making use of the opportunities presented by longer working lives. It is important to take this phenomenon into

account when developing economic, social and employment policy. In Lithuania, the problem of demographic ageing is considered a national priority.

9. The main document dealing with issues associated with demographic ageing is the National strategy for dealing with the consequences of demographic ageing, as approved by Government Resolution No 737 of 14 June 2004 (Official Gazette, 2004, No 95-3501) ('the Strategy'). The strategy aims to establish conditions, in accordance with the principles of active ageing, for the elderly to live their lives to the fullest, for their experience to be valued and for them to feel secure about their future. In the Strategy, the problem of demographic ageing is seen as a complex issue covering various fields of activity, an analysis is made of the situation which develops as society ages, and potential key developments and challenges are identified. To achieve the objectives and implement the tasks laid down in the Strategy, measures for implementing the National strategy for dealing with the consequences of demographic ageing (2005-13) were approved by Government Resolution No 5 of 10 January 2005 (Official Gazette, 2005, No 5-112).

10. In the Lithuanian Government programme approved by Resolution No XI-52 of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania of 9 December 2008 (Official Gazette, 2008, No 146-5870), demographic ageing is analysed by considering social and family issues. To resolve issues related to demographic ageing, the programme seeks to improve the social security system, foster a relative increase in the size of the old-age pension, establish a more effective system for the provision of social support, enhance the provision of social care and social protection and strengthen community spirit and solidarity between generations.

11. The National Demographic (Population) Policy Strategy ('the Policy Strategy') approved by Government Resolution No 1350 of 28 October 2004 (Official Gazette, 2004, No 159-5795) establishes the long-term demographic (population) policy objectives and tasks for the period up until 2015 and activities to address issues related to demographic ageing: improve the quality of life of Lithuania's population, reduce morbidity, mortality and inequality in order to increase life expectancy.

12. The Interinstitutional Action Plan for Promoting Non-Discrimination (2012-14), approved by Government Resolution No 1281 of 2 November 2011 (Official Gazette, 2011, No 134-6362) also helps encourage the elderly to lead active lives and fosters their dignity. The measures by which this plan is implemented cover various educational events and support for NGO activity to reduce discrimination for various reasons, including those related to age.

13. The State Equal Opportunity Plan for 2010-14 approved by Government Resolution No 530 of 4 May 2010 (Official Gazette 2010, No 56-2757) includes provisions aimed at preventing any discrimination on the basis of gender. The provisions of this programme are also important for ensuring that the elderly are not discriminated against.

14. When implementing the Programme for the Reduction of Social and Economic Disparities Between Regions (2011-13) approved by Government Resolution No 62 of 17 January 2011 (Official Gazette, 2011, No 8-346), measures are taken to deal with the unequal development of social infrastructure, low levels of economic activity in the countryside, and issues relating to the unattractive living environment in some towns, thereby contributing to the resolution of social problems created by an ageing society.

15. Efforts are to be made to better fund social protection systems and ensure that, during times of economic boom, support for the elderly corresponds to the level of social welfare in the country, and during times of economic downturn or crisis the situation of the elderly does not undergo a disproportionate decline. To achieve these objectives, Guidelines on reforming the State social security and pensions system were approved by Resolution No XI-1410 of the Seimas (Parliament) of Lithuania of 24 May 2011 (Official Gazette, 2011, No 66-3103).

16. Special policy measures to foster an active labour market are to be implemented to promote opportunities for elderly people to remain on the labour market. EU funds and initiative projects by local authorities are to be used to achieve this objective.

17. Progress has been made in increasing opportunities for the elderly to use information technology; the development of universal multifunctional centres is helping to adapt educational establishments to their needs. Non-formal adult education institutions are contributing to some extent to the education of the elderly; the potential of Universities of the Third Age are to be strengthened. To achieve this objective, EU structural assistance projects of national importance are to be prepared.

18. Social services are to be expanded. When organising social services in Lithuania, priority is to be given to care in day care centres or short-term 'respite' care to provide temporary accommodation for the elderly in care facilities, and projects designed to make the living environment more hospitable for elderly people are to be carried out to support the activities of families involved in looking after elderly family members.

19. In the area of health, nursing services and palliative care services financed from the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund budget have begun to be provided at home, supporting treatment and nursing services are being developed, primary health care is being strengthened, and prevention programmes are being implemented.

Prospects for demographic ageing policy

20. Despite some measures being implemented to establish conditions for elderly people to have full private, social, professional and cultural lives, this does not yet guarantee all of the changes necessary for their welfare.

21. The current realities underpinning demographic change, the emigration of people of working age for economic reasons and the global economic and financial crisis, encourage striking a balance between demographic ageing policy as it has been up till now and potential longer-term challenges.

22. Given this situation and the challenges presented by demographic ageing, it is important to improve elderly people's quality of life by: increasing support, improving the living environment, increasing the range and accessibility of health services and setting to work on other measures which help to promote active ageing.

23. Given the existing challenges, it is important to pay more attention to improving interaction among public bodies, NGOs, educational institutions, professional associations, the business community and other stakeholders to create favourable living conditions for the elderly, develop services for them and foster intergenerational solidarity.

III. PROGRAMME PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND TASKS

24. The Lithuanian authorities, having evaluated the current situation and challenges, will pursue the following basic priorities:

24.1. The active participation of the elderly in social and family life. This priority is aimed at involving the elderly in public life in various ways, and promoting and expanding social inclusion. This covers volunteering, various forms of participation in social activities, life-long learning, the transmission of knowledge and experience to other generations and other related areas.

24.2. Intergenerational solidarity. This priority implies paying attention to activities in which representatives of various generations participate. It is also important to disseminate the idea of intergenerational solidarity, deepen understanding thereof, evaluate its status in our country and promote innovative solutions for strengthening intergenerational solidarity and disseminating good practice.

25. When carrying out activities relating to the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) the experience gained from the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) and the European Year of Voluntary Activities

Promoting Active Citizenship (2011) will be taken into account and opportunities for exploiting the linkages between these themes sought.

26. Pursuant to the objectives of the European Year as laid down in Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011, it is planned to establish the following national objectives:

26.1. Bring the problems associated with demographic ageing and intergenerational solidarity to the attention of the public, raise the profile of the activities being undertaken in this area, provide new opportunities for synergies and collaboration. To achieve this objective, the following tasks are envisaged:

26.1.1. the development of initiatives to promote intergenerational solidarity, cooperation and understanding;

26.1.2. raise the level of public awareness, disseminate good practice with regard to active ageing and the opportunities and challenges presented by people living longer;

26.2. Concentrate the efforts of public bodies, NGOs, professional associations, the business community, educational institutions and other stakeholders on improving the status of the elderly and strengthening intergenerational solidarity. To achieve this objective, the following tasks are envisaged:

26.2.1. promote the use of experts to improve the status of the elderly and strengthen intergenerational solidarity;

26.2.2. cultivate dialogue among public bodies, NGOs, educational establishments, professional associations and all stakeholders to improve the status of the elderly and strengthen intergenerational solidarity.

27. To achieve the objectives of the programme, the measures set out in the enclosed plan of measures are to be implemented.

IV. INFORMING THE PUBLIC

28. Informing the public is a central and integral part of all of the year's activities. The information must be disseminated by the coordinating institution – the Ministry of Social Security and Labour – and the other institutions taking part in the implementation of the programme by every means available and must be selected in line with the nature of the activity and the target groups. This includes special press releases, information in a special section of its website, and social networks. When preparing events for the European year, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and institutions implementing other measures under the programme are also to avail themselves of other opportunities for cooperation with the media: special publications, interviews, publications in the print and internet media and advertisements of European Year events. All of the partners involved in implementing the annual programme are to be encouraged to provide information on the events they organise and other activities they run, so that the coordinating institution can, with every means of disseminating information at its disposal, spread this information to as broad an audience of interested persons as possible. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour will disseminate information on the activities and initiatives being run by using the information networks of its implementation partners. Particular attention will be paid to publishing information on the www.active-ageing-2012.eu website and cooperating with the Representation of the European Commission in Lithuania.

V. EXPECTED RESULTS

29. Implementation of the programme measures is expected to yield the following results:

29.1. events promoting active ageing and intergenerational solidarity [will have been held], drawing attention to the importance of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity in society;

29.2. an analysis of the current situation having been carried out and through cooperation with all stakeholders, proposals [will have been made] on improving the environment for the elderly;

29.3. awareness of activities designed to bolster active ageing and intergenerational solidarity will have been raised and cooperation reinforced among public bodies, NGOs, professional associations, the business community, educational institutions and other stakeholders in the area of bolstering active ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

VI. VI. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

30. To ensure high-quality implementation of European Year activities, implementation of the programme must be monitored continuously; this monitoring will be organised by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. To carry this out, a European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations Supervisory Committee ('the European Year Committee') must be established, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and other institutions and organisations concerned. The objective of the European Year Committee is to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of measures under the national programme for the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations. The Rules of procedure defining the activities of the European Year Committee and the composition of the Committee are to be approved by an Order of the Minister for Social Security and Labour.
