

## PUBLIC DISSEMINATION CONFERENCE

# “FUTURE IS EXPERIENCE PLUS MOBILITY” EXPERIENCE FROM GREECE, FINLAND, ITALY, GERMANY

*Results of the European project:  
“Promoting Intra-European Mobility for Elderly”*

## BERLIN MANIFESTO

Us – the participants, organisers and attendants of the EU-project „Promoting Intra-European Mobility for Elderly“ which has been implemented in the four partner countries Italy, Greece, Finland and Germany – release the following manifesto on the occasion of the final conference of the aforesaid project held on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2005 in Berlin:

The Council of Europe in Stockholm aimed at an increase of the employment rate for people at the age of 50-64 years of at least 50% until the year of 2010 to take into account the demographic trends and the tendencies of exclusion. This decision goes along with the efforts of the EU-Member States to improve general political conditions as well as social living conditions of this age group and at the same time to raise awareness for their economic and social potentials.

The conference „Future is experience plus mobility“ focussed five mission statements. As the result of the lively discussion, the participant’s panel presents the following theses to European public:

1. Age discrimination is strictly impossible due to the validity of human rights. The society should, however, overcome this negatively accentuated view of age by means of an increase of communication between the generations in order to redefine social identity of the elderly.
2. The socio-cultural identity of the elderly is the precondition to promote an (again) improved integration of the elderly people in economy and society. The promotion as well as the implementation of cross generational and cross national dialogue- and work-structures serve for this purpose which is what the project „Promoting Intra-European Mobility for Elderly“ exemplifies. In doing so, the connection between experiences of the elderly and knowledge of the young plays a crucial role.



The intercultural opening of European societies should also take into account the specific needs of the elderly who have a migration-background (overcoming of language barriers, sensitisation for cultural and religious conditions).

3. The EU's aims regarding the broadly understood mobility of the elderly requires a coherence of the policies of its member states while interacting with the 55plus generations. Besides expansion respectively setup of senior-representations and elderly-parliaments, a good age-mix in all parliaments, inclusive the European parliament is a requirement for this.

4. General frameworks for the permanent social integration of all society members and to prevent exclusion are living conditions, labour conditions and housing conditions (e.g. disabled accessible) as well as an infrastructure which is responds to the needs of people of all ages (children as well). Those need to be combined with free social space in order to be able to live age-appropriate.

There has to be a change in the understanding of health – the traditional, merely medically oriented health care has to be amended by a prevention-oriented focus which can be –if necessary – continued as care and fosterage.

5. Better education, a more stable well-being and higher financial resources are important requirements for the successful use of offered trainings for the elderly. Promotion of employment needs to be carried out CV-oriented and age-neutral and should in the future focus (again) more on hiring and training of elderly people. Permanent, individually offered trainings have to be combined with those of a collective and intergenerational nature. Age as the criteria for social selection concerning dismissal needs to be relativised, as the reintegration of unemployed elderly is considerably more difficult.

Berlin therefore sends the plea, that nation states as well as Europe need to keep working on instruments for complementary policies in favour of the elderly, on dialogue structures between peoples and generations for the (re)integration of the 55plus generation. Solely like this, the ambitions aims of the Stockholm Convention of the Council of Europe are within reach.

The organisers thank all those involved in the EU-Project for their active assistance and the good collaboration.

In the context of the UN document “International Plan of Action on Ageing”, regarding the reflection of the conference topics as well as the answers to the question which we, as the elder generation, expect of (a) the younger generations, (b) politics and (c) of ourselves, the following **catalogue of requirements** has been developed within the scope of the conference. It implies the mutual change of awareness.

#### **a) Younger generations**

- Willingness to respect older generations, to show solidarity, to communicate with the older generations (e.g. about traditions or to preserve them),
- Willingness to learn from older generations and to teach them new things, willingness to understand them,
- Willingness to pay more attention to the elderly and to honour their accomplishments / their social contribution,

- Volunteer for the elderly or in favour of their interests,
- Willingness to develop a higher level of social, political and ecological consciousness and to stand up for an improvement of social, political and ecological general frameworks,
- Willingness to put energy in keeping democracy and peace,
- Willingness to accept trans-generational cohabitations (communal housing, travelling together, realising mutual projects/plans).

#### **b) Societal and political frame conditions**

- Integration is needed, i.e. society should accept the elderly as equal society members,
- Possibilities for part-time jobs without losing pensions, less taxes for the elderly,
- Thoughtfulness concerning the needs of the elderly and improvement of their working conditions (longer breaks among others),
- To adjust infrastructure to the needs of the elderly (barrier-free access),
- Special support for those who suffer from severe resp. chronic diseases,
- Better offerings of education- and recreation-facilities for the elderly (education centres, 3<sup>rd</sup> age universities, open centres),
- No more cuts in social, public and health services, resp. improvement of accessibility for socially weaker groups; upgrading and promotion of professional and voluntary care- and foster services,
- Public allocation of facilities which permit the cohabitate of the generations,
- Promotion of international relationships on open and equal basis.

#### **c) Ourselves**

- Willingness, to respect and tolerate the younger generation's mentality and to be open for a dialogue with the younger generation,
- Willingness to pass on knowledge and experiences to the younger generations,
- The elderly should actively participate in (local) political decision-making processes and in social life (e.g. transgenerational neighbourhood alliances, swap circles, volunteering, mutual aid, maintain social and family networks) and motivate their environment to do so, too,
- To exercise and to claim auto-sufficiency.