

Ageing population in cities

The ageing of populations is one of the main social and environmental challenges in the 21st century all over the world. By 2025 more than 20% of Europeans will be 65 or over, with a particularly rapid increase in numbers of over-80s. Ageing population affects a wide range of sectors and services of a society: it requires the need for reforms of pension and health care systems, which will have large influence on labour markets and the health and wellbeing of citizens. Because older people have different healthcare requirements, health systems will need to adapt so they can provide adequate care and remain financially sustainable.

The main problem regarding the labour market issues very important in large cities is how to keep older people, still active and how to increase the average retirement age. The current status in many countries shows that retirement decisions depend not only on economic and social factors of each country, but also on such factors like job characteristics and quality of work, job satisfaction, health status, social networks and co-workers and family status. There is a need for the future to increase the attractiveness of profession working in the field of active and healthy ageing such as doctors, nurses, physiotherapists.

Well-being of ageing population is not only economic problem but is driven by other factors determining quality of life: psychological well-being, life in the family, or contacts with family members, contacts with other social networks and contacts across the generations, satisfaction with daily life and activities, physical and mental health, and so on. These basic aspects of well-being in ageing population are more accelerated in cities and large urban complexes. Health care of ageing population is a complex requiring coordination between health services, social services, and other sectors as transport, housing, volunteering at local levels. Such approach needs a deep understanding of needs and demands, desires of older people, and a vision how to maximise health, independence and activity.

New technologies and innovative ICT-based products, services and systems for ageing population bring a new approach of ageing well at home, in the community, and at work. ICT increase the quality of life, autonomy, participation in social life, skills and employability of elderly people, and reduce the costs of health and social care. The best possible use of any technologies is ageing populations in cities is a great challenge for the future.

What is required to make the ageing population well ageing, especially in large cities? One of the main tasks is to sort the data at the individual and the firm level as well as data on the institutions in every country. We need better access to and documentation of these data at any level and their coordination. We recommend developing the economic centres of expertise with infrastructural knowledge on labour market institutions, financial, pension and social security, institutions and health care systems, taking in account the heterogeneity and individual at a given point in time. The possibilities of a broad world network aimed at international exchange of country specific survey in the field of ageing, health and pensions need to be explored.