

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Proposal for a Council Decision on Community Support for Actions in favour of Older People

Community actions for older people 1991-1993 including the European Year
of Older People and Solidarity between Generations

EVALUATION REPORT

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Community Support for Actions in favour of Older People

INTRODUCTION

In this proposal for a Council Decision the Commission proposes to support a range of actions in relation to older people over the period 1 September 1995 to 31 December 1999. This proposal builds on the foundations laid by the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations (1993) and is intended to have, over the period involved, a positive influence on policies affecting older citizens in Member States. It is presented in fulfillment of the commitment given in the White Paper 'European Social Policy - A Way Forward for the Union'.

A proposal for further action was called for by the Economic and Social Committee in its Opinion of 25 November 1993 on Older People in Society (94/C 34/17; OJ C 34 of 2.2.94, p. 61) and was noted in the Declaration of Principles of the Council of the European Union and the Ministers for Social Affairs, meeting within the Council of 6 December 1993, to mark the end of the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations (93/C 343/01; OJ C 343 of 21.12.93, p. 1). The European Parliament in its Resolution of 24 February 1994 on Measures for the Elderly (PE 206.890; OJ C 77 of 14.3.94, p. 24) further called for a Commission proposal in this area.

The main practical achievements of the European Year are set out in the evaluation report, carried out by independent experts, which is attached to the current proposal.

Whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity, the Commission has shown its ability to provide added value with respect to the raising of awareness of the challenges represented by ageing and the development and dissemination of innovative practices in this field.

1. THE NEED FOR ACTION - THE CHALLENGE OF AGEING

1.1. Demographic developments

The statistics on demographic ageing are by now well-known. At the end of 1994, the European Union comprised 70 million people over the age of 60 : this represents almost 20 percent of the total population and projections point to a situation whereby one-quarter of the population will be aged over 60 by the year 2020. In several Member States dependency ratios for the older population will have almost doubled between 1980 and 2020.

Not only are older people making up an increasing percentage of the overall population but, within the older category, the part occupied by the very old, the over-eighties, who are more likely to be ill and become dependant, is growing even more rapidly. By 2020, about 20

million people will be aged 80 and over in the present territory of the European Union - representing an increase of some 300 percent in this age category since 1960.

The 1994 report on the **Demographic Situation of the European Union** (1) points to the main areas in which the ageing of the population is having an impact : increasing availability of free time, organization of the labour market, social protection expenditure, the economic and social situation of pensioners and the role of the older population. It concludes that ageing is not simply an demographic matter : it has become 'an overall problem of society' with further reaching implications than has been supposed until now.

While we should avoid being too alarmist at the range of crises which might be provoked by the ageing of the population, it is clear that current demographic trends present serious challenges to policy-makers. These challenges are of such breadth and complexity that they cannot all be addressed through a single Community initiative - and especially not through a very limited initiative such as the current proposal. This initiative, which addresses specific age-related issues, takes its place alongside not just other Community actions and proposals in the social field, such as employment policy, social security, social exclusion and equal opportunities, but also in other policy areas. For example, in the field of transport policy, the Commission intends to bring forward proposals to improve transport facilities and services for persons of reduced mobility, many of whom are older people; so, too, policy developments in relation to the Information Society can make a significant contribution to improving the quality of life of older people, particularly in alleviating isolation and in easing access to information and services.

1.2 The economic challenge

The ageing of the population has been described as representing a **challenge to the European economies greater than the oil crises** of the 1970s or the economic recession of the 1980s (2).

Presentation of the macro-economic challenge of demographic ageing has tended to focus on the question 'who will pay?' in the context of worsening dependancy ratios with consequences for social budgets and, ultimately, for economic convergence within the Union. This so-called 'catastrophic vista' embraces pensions and services generally but especially in-patient hospital care, where older people are major users.

These bleak scenarios, however, do not give the full economic picture, concentrating as they often do on the tip of the pyramid, the 'older elderly'. Population ageing involves more than increased numbers of very old people : it embraces a **restructuring of the entire age pyramid**. In this process, the part played by the growing numbers of 'third-agers' or 'younger elderly' can have important economic consequences. With increasing and more diverse care needs calling for innovative responses, there will be growing potential for creation of **new forms of employment in the service sector** as a result of ageing of the population (3).

1.3 The retirement debate

Any re-evaluation of the economic role of the third age is confronted with the complex phenomenon of retirement. Studies by the European Observatory show that, while the policy debate on retirement age has intensified, people's behaviour and attitudes in relation to retirement changed radically throughout the 1980s. Although the trend to early retirement may now be going into reverse, most workers still 'retire' well in advance of the official 'retirement age' (4). At the same time, the very phenomenon of retirement is seen variously as an imposition or a privilege and the transition from working life to retirement remains problematic.

There are European guidelines in relation to retirement age, adopted as a Council Recommendation on 10 December 1982, on the application of which a report was presented by the Commission on 18 December 1992 (SEC(92) 2288 final). The Council, in its Resolution on flexible retirement arrangements of 30 June 1993 (93/C 188/01; OJ C 188 of 10.7.93, p. 1), emphasizes the need for continuing exchanges of information on this topic at European level.

1.4 The 'age resource'

The concept of the 'third age' at the macro level as 'resource' rather than 'burden' is slowly gaining acceptance but is still not fully understood - not to mention made operational by policy makers. We are only beginning to appreciate the 'silent' contribution made by retired people to the economy. More and better data on use of time by retired people is required.

At the level of the firm, the economics of ageing are equally complex. Worries by managers about diminishing competitiveness because of an ageing workforce co-exist with studies showing the advantages associated with older workers. In the meantime, the mass exodus from the workplace by the over-55s continues, while those who remain at work are perceived as suffering unfair discrimination (5).

The suggestion that the developing 'age resource' can partially cover the projected skills shortages consequent on the fall-off in entrants to the labour market is frequently made but needs to be researched further in the light of the evolving debate on the role of the 'third age'. This also applies to the question of the inter-relationship between activation of the 'age resource' and management of immigratory pressures.

1.5 The social dimension

The social challenge stems directly from the changing population structure. Our inherited public structures for social protection are based on assumptions about population composition and are built, overtly or otherwise, on sets of balances between population sub-groups. These balances concern, for example, the pension contributors in relation to pension recipients, carers in relation to dependent people, the number of healthy people in relation to the number falling sick, to mention but the most obvious.

2. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Scope

The term 'older people' in this memorandum and proposal covers the following three groups:

- a) people who are still at work but are approaching retirement;
- b) retired people who are still able to lead active, independent lives;
and
- c) the very old and those who are ill, whose ability to live independently is diminished.

2.2 Definitions

Defining these groups in terms of age is both difficult and usually unnecessary. In the 1980s many people prepared for 'retirement' in their early 50s while a significant number of older people now live independently into their late 80s and beyond.

It might be noted that group b), the active retired, is sometimes referred to as the 'third age' or 'younger elderly' and group c) as the 'fourth age' or 'older elderly'. Traditional terms for the very old, such as 'the elderly' do not cover group a) and are inappropriate in relation to group b) (5).

3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF EUROPEAN INTEREST IN AGEING

3.1 Up to 1990

The situation of older people was first addressed specifically in a number of Resolutions by the European Parliament during the 1980s, beginning with its Resolution of 18 February 1982 on the situation and problems of older people in the European Community.

The Charter on the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, adopted by 11 Member States in 1989, refers, in paragraphs 24 and 25, to older and retired people and brings this group within its ambit.

In addition, a number of established legal instruments and policy initiatives, while not specifically aimed at older people, have nevertheless been of relatively greater concern to the older generation. These include initiatives in the fields of disability, such as the HELIOS programme, European anti-poverty programmes and equal treatment between women and men in the matter of social security.

3.2 Decisions 1990-1992

The Commission's 'Communication on the Elderly' of 24 April 1990 (COM (90) 80 final) set out a basis for action at Community level in the interest of older people, while recognizing the clear application of the principle of subsidiarity in this field.

The two Council Decisions, on Community action for older people (91/49/EEC; OJ L 28 of 2.2.91, p. 29) and on the 1993 European Year (92/440/EEC; OJ L 245 of 26.8.92, p. 43), respectively, confirmed the Community's role as an important but subsidiary actor in the process underway in all Member States to meet the long-term challenges of an ageing population.

By its Decision of 17 October 1991 (91/544/EEC; OJ L 286 of 26.10.91, p. 42), the Commission established a Liaison Group to promote dialogue with organizations representing older people at European level and, thus, to strengthen the voice of the older citizen at this level.

3.3 Solidarity between Generations

The two Council Decisions also established the promotion of solidarity between generations as a central element in the Community's approach to meeting the challenge of an ageing population. The principle of inter-generational solidarity as the essential basis for policy development by Member States was confirmed in the Declaration of Principles of the Council of the European Union and the Ministers for Social Affairs, meeting within the Council of 6 December 1993 to mark the end of the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations (93/C 343/01; OJ C 343 of 21.12.93, p. 1).

3.4 The European Year

1993, European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations, with its thousands of activities ranging from the totally European to the very local, was an exercise in building and managing partnerships across different levels, cultures, disciplines and generations. The effort has been declared a success, not only by an independent evaluation team but also by the European Parliament and by many non-governmental organizations at European and national level. The success of the European Year is, in fact, largely due to the massive contribution of the non-governmental sector in bringing the issues to the attention of those most directly concerned.

3.5 White Paper on Social Policy

The White Paper 'European Social Policy - A Way Forward for the Union', adopted in July 1994, announced that the Commission would propose 'a Decision for further Union-wide actions to help meet the challenge of an ageing population covering, in particular, the role and contribution of the active retired population' (Chapter VI, § 26).

4. THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

4.1 Subsidiarity

In the field of ageing, legislative competence rests almost exclusively with Member States. Indeed, in some cases, important competences are to be found at the **regional and local** as well as the **national** level. However, the EU can play a role in **support** of those policies and actions as established and implemented at the appropriate level, through stimulation of new thinking and exchange of experience. This role, while limited in scope and cost, can be of significant value both for the EU as a whole and for the authorities concerned with the issue of ageing.

4.2 Common challenges

The need for action, at whatever level, is defined largely by challenges which, as has been seen, are **economic** as well as **social** and concern all Member States, without exception. The ageing of the population and its possible repercussions also pose a major challenge to the Union as an entity in key areas of Community competence. In addition to the matter of **social cohesion**, these areas include, as we have noted: pressure on public social budgets, with consequent risks for **economic convergence**; **free movement** of workers; **economic competitiveness**; and **immigration pressures**.

4.3 Shared opportunities

While the challenges associated with the ageing of Europe's population are great, the action proposed is limited and can best be understood in terms of the **opportunity** offered by cooperation between the various authorities against the background of the challenges outlined above.

This opportunity exists essentially because of **diversity**. Demographic ageing, while impacting on all Member States, is doing so differently, depending on the approaches and traditions proper to each Member State. Ageing is also having its effect in different time-scales across the EU : the United Kingdom and Belgium currently have the 'oldest' populations while Ireland, Portugal, France and Spain are the Member States which are least aged. This will change and, by 2010, the situation in regard to dependancy ratios for older citizens will be more similar across the Union (1). Given these circumstances, it is clear that those concerned in the the different Member States have much to **learn from each other** - as, indeed, was seen in practice in numerous activities during the European Year.

4.4 Commission Role

1993, European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations, demonstrated how Europe's key players in the ageing field can work together at European level. The main role elements enabling this cooperation were as follows :

- a) Many players at European level, including governmental and other national experts, European experts, NGOs representing older people as well as individuals and organizations with a potential contribution to make at European level;
- b) A shared understanding of the Commission's role in this matter as catalyst and facilitator of exchange of experience;
- c) A set of adaptive structures, built around the Advisory Committee, which enabled effective communication between the Commission and the main players and amongst the main players themselves.

The Commission considers that its essential role is as **catalyst, facilitator and communicator** in promoting exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of ageing. Those concerned with ageing in Europe should be informed of the fruits of this work. To this end, a proper **communications strategy** involving all the partners should be put in place right from the outset.

5. APPROACH

5.1 Operational Approach

5.1.1 User-driven

Experience up to end-1993 has shown the effectiveness and the efficiency of an approach whereby the Commission, rather than leading, essentially **responds** to and supports initiatives from partners at all levels throughout the EU. This support can be in terms of **information**, derived from studies, **contact identification** for potential partners in other Member States, and **financial assistance** for activities which meet established criteria. In this context, particular attention should be paid to the needs and expectations of the non-governmental organizations active at European level.

5.1.2 User-friendly

For this approach to succeed, the partners - and potential partners - must be **well informed** of the possibilities for support of their actions at European level and must have a clear understanding of the steps necessary in order to access this support. **Procedures** should be simple and straightforward and competent staff should be available to **advise** potential partners within Member States. In this respect, the structures and procedures developed for the 1993 European Year can be taken as a basis and developed further to improve visibility and accessibility of the action. (See 5.2, below).

5.1.3 Practical

In promoting exchanges of information and experience, the focus should be essentially on practice rather than on theory. The actions should serve, in particular, to spread awareness and understanding of **best practices** in relation to each of the major themes of the action and to facilitate, in appropriate ways, the transfer of best practices across the internal frontiers of the EU. The non-governmental organizations which work directly with older people have a key role to play in this context.

5.1.4 Partnership

During the European Year, partnership was an essential principle underlying the actions at European Union level for the benefit of older people. Nobody and no group has a monopoly on the best solutions to the challenges posed by the ageing of the population and complex problems are likely to call forth new and unexpected partnerships. Included will be non-governmental organizations, public authorities, semi-public bodies, social partners, private sector interests, charitable social welfare associations and other organizations representing the many interests in the field of ageing. In this context partnerships across generational interest lines and across the internal frontiers of the Union should continue to receive special attention and encouragement.

5.1.5 Participation

One of the lessons of the 1993 European Year is the extent to which actions such as those now proposed can and should be 'with' older people and not merely 'for' older people. Organizations representing older people at all levels, including the European level, have grown in strength and confidence in recent years. Through them, Europe's older citizens should participate at every stage in the action and their empowerment to participate further should be an objective. Special attention should be paid to needs of important groups whose special situation is sometimes overlooked. Chief amongst these groups are: **older women, older migrants, older people living in remote areas and disabled older people.**

5.2 Structures for management, advice and consultation

5.2.1 Advisory committee of national experts

In the management of the financial support under the proposed Decision, the Commission will be assisted by an Advisory Committee. The positive interaction between the Advisory Committee and the Commission services, which contributed much to the smooth running of the 1993 European Year, should be maintained and operational changes, as suggested in the Evaluation Report (paragraph 2.5), should be implemented in order to make it even more effective as an instrument in managing the actions.

5.2.2 Liaison group of non-governmental organizations

As already stated, the NGOs have an important place in the field and the Liaison Group of European non-governmental organizations must continue to play a key role. Its functioning, however, should be revised in the light of the questions raised in the Evaluation Report (paragraph 2.5). The Liaison Group is established by a separate Decision (of the Commission) and, therefore, is not covered in the current proposal for a Council Decision.

5.2.3 European Observatory

The monitoring centre or 'observatory', established for the Community actions for older people 1991-93 and comprising independent experts in the field of ageing, has produced a

number of reports on the situation of older people throughout the Union. These publications are designed to support decision-making by making information available on a comparative basis concerning the main policies and developments impacting on older people in each of the Member States. The Evaluation Report (paragraph 2.2) underlines the value of the Observatory's contribution at a practical level and suggests its continuation and development. In assessing year-to-year trends and progress in the fields covered by the draft Decision, the Commission will continue to rely on the services of an Observatory established by the Council.

5.2.4 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has been to the forefront in putting various aspects of the ageing of the population on policy-makers' agendas, with its work on family care and the ageing of the workforce being the most recent (7). The Foundation will be the Commission's 'think-tank' insofar as there is a need to study the medium-to-long term implications of the ageing of the European population. In this context, the Commission may wish to associate the Foundation with certain studies and initiatives undertaken under the proposed Decision.

5.2.5 Information points at the national level

For 1993, ad-hoc structures were put in place in most Member States, to stimulate interest in the European actions and to facilitate communication between the Commission and the national/local level in the field of ageing. Typically, these 'coordination offices' were based in a leading NGO and acted with the joint support of the Commission and the national authorities. The important practical role played by these structures has been recognized (Evaluation Report 3.1) and consideration should be given to developing the idea further on the basis of the most successful experiences of 1993.

5.3 Management approach

5.3.1 Planning

The process of adaptation to the ageing of the population is characterized by uncertainty. Against this background it is inadvisable to lay down a fixed programme of work from the beginning covering the entire period. It is better that the process be flexible, with each phase of achievements forming the basis of further priority-setting in the framework of an overall strategy. This approach should be reflected in the operational and financial plans.

5.3.2 Evaluation

As for the first Community actions 1991-93 and the European Year, the actions will be the subject of external evaluation, conducted by independent experts not involved in the activities themselves. An interim report will be presented at the end of 1998 and a final evaluation will be published within one year of the end of the actions.

6. THEMES

Introduction

The 1993 European Year broadened and deepened understanding of the multiple components of the ageing policy field. The result is a rich tapestry of themes and sub-themes around which further action at European level can take its form. The White Paper 'European Social Policy - A Way Forward for the Union' stressed the importance of the **active retired and older women** in any follow-up action at EU level, alongside the established concerns of intergenerational solidarity and social integration of older people. In order to address the full spectrum of issues which concern the older population, it is proposed that these core themes be expanded to include the questions of **care and the ageing of the workforce**.

6.1 Role and potential of the active retired

Prevention of premature dependence has been but one contributing factor in focusing policy-makers' attention on this, the largest group of older citizens. Here, the debate ranges from the meaning of retirement in today's world to the vital but often hidden contribution made by the active retired. To traditional concerns such as **voluntary work** are being added new issues such as '**empowerment**' - strengthening the voice of older people on all issues which affect them. Some of the constraints on retired people reaching their potential are **attitudinal** and are being addressed through special programmes in various Member States. The debate on structures and rules which prevent older people from contributing to society has been enriched by the 1993 European Year. The conclusions need to be strengthened and developed.

6.2 Older Women

Women comprise the majority of all older people and, amongst the very old, are a big majority. In terms of income, women do not fare as well as men in old age and, despite the improvements in the income situation of older people in general in recent years, poverty continues to be a problem for significant numbers of very old women.(4). Women carry most of the 'burden of care', whether as professionals or as informal - and usually unpaid - 'family carers'. For many, the caring role means an interruption in career, possibly with a negative impact later on pension level, while an increasing number of women use their own retirement to care for dependent relatives. The special needs of older women were highlighted during the European Year. The next phase should show how those needs can be better met.

6.3 Ageing of the workforce

The question of industrial **competitiveness** in the context of an ageing population is receiving much attention. The changes in the technology of production require a workforce with adequate skills which is able to adapt to the ongoing technological evolution. With the increased pace of technological change and a workforce that, to an ever greater extent, consists of older workers and fewer recently trained new entrants, the challenge will be to re-

educate and enable the workforce to adapt to the changes. The special problems faced by older job-seekers and the issue of **age discrimination** were brought forcefully to public attention during the European Year (8). The next phase should examine various models which aim simultaneously at improving the productivity of an ageing workforce and meeting the needs of the older workers themselves. See also point 6.4, following.

6.4 Transition to retirement

At the individual level, the problems of age do not begin with retirement. A particularly important complex of issues surrounds the years leading up to retirement, of which only the main questions have begun to be addressed. The main questions concern **preparation** for retirement and **transition** between work and retirement as well as the issue of discrimination against older workers and older job seekers. The particular needs of the 55 to 65 age-group need to be better understood, for example, in relation to part-time work and the types of support necessary to ensure job satisfaction and self-fulfillment during this phase of people's careers, as well as improving productivity; see also 6.3, above. In this connection, the social security systems in the Member States should be studied in order to ensure that they do not represent an obstacle to gradual transition to retirement or to redeployment of older workers in accordance with their wishes and abilities.

6.5 Care and access to care for dependent older people

The care issue embraces questions of **cost** and **quality** as well as of basic **responsibility**. Much discussion has centred on the expected crisis in the financing of care services while less attention has been paid to the question of access to or quality of these services. The care debate is nowadays conducted in parallel to attempts to obviate or postpone the need for care through measures to safeguard for as long as possible the capacity of older people to live independently. The roles and responsibilities of the public authorities and the private sector in both institutional care and 'care in the community' need to be reflected upon.

Carers are often themselves in a vulnerable position and the need to 'care for the carers' is being recognized. The role and limitations of 'informal' or 'family' care needs to be better understood and its function in the 'grey' economy needs to be evaluated against the alternative of **creating new forms of employment** in the caring sector.

7. Article-by-Article Guide

Article 1

The essentially supportive nature of the actions is emphasized.

Article 2

The objectives focus on the themes which emerged as priorities from the 1993 European Year and which were subsequently adjusted in the light of the White Paper on European Social Policy.

Article 3

These will, for the most part, be major initiatives aiming to exchange information on specific priority themes, based on an agreed work programme and involving key organizations concerned in several Member States. The role of the formal structures - especially the Advisory Committee and the Liaison Group - as fora for exchange and experience and information in their own right should not be overlooked. Apart from the Observatory reports, it is not envisaged that many studies will be ordered by the Commission under this Decision.

Article 4

Standard text.

Article 5

The procedure envisaged is as under the first Community Actions, 1991-93.

Article 6

Standard text.

Article 7

In line with the experience of the 1993 European Year, the Commission would prefer, where possible, to organize the dissemination of information on the actions, within each Member State, in close cooperation with the national authorities and through specialists appointed in agreement with the national authorities.

Article 8

This is the formal evaluation report. It is intended to prepare and circulate a less-formal interim report in 1998.

REFERENCES

1. 'The Demographic Situation of the European Union : 1994 Report'; European Commission, 1994.
2. 'Workers versus Pensioners : intergenerational justice in an ageing world'; quoted in 'The Economist', June 1989.
3. 'Growth, Competitiveness, Employment - The Challenges and Ways forward into the 21st Century'; White Paper; European Commission, 1994.
4. 'Older People in Europe - Social and Economic Policies'; Report of the European Observatory; European Commission, 1993.
5. 'Age and Attitudes : main results from a Eurobarometer survey'; European Commission, 1993.
6. 'European Social Policy - A Way Forward for the Union'; White Paper, European Commission, 1994.
7. 'Family Care of Dependent Older People in the European Community'; Hannelore Jani-Le Bris, Dublin Foundation, 1993.
8. 'Age Discrimination against older workers in the European Community'; Eurolink Age, 1993.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Proposal for a Council Decision on Community Support for Actions in favour of Older People

(Presented by the Commission)

**Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION**

on a Community to Support for Actions in favour of Older People

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community and in particular Article 235 thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission (1);

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament (2);

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (3);

Whereas the constant improvement of living and working conditions and the harmonious development of economies are an aim of the European Economic Community;

Whereas the Economic and Social Committee adopted its opinion on older people in society on 25 November 1993 (4);

Whereas the Council adopted its Declaration of 6 December 1993 on mark the end of the European Year of the elderly and of solidarity between generations, in which note was taken of the Commission's intention to present a proposal in this field (5);

Whereas the European Parliament adopted its resolution of 24 February 1994 on measures for older people in the European Community (6);

Whereas the Declaration on cooperation with charitable associations annexed to the Treaty on European Union stresses the importance of cooperation with charitable associations and foundations as institutions responsible for social welfare establishments and services;

Whereas current demographic developments tend towards a major increase in the numbers of older people in the population, whereas this trend will have considerable economic and social implications, in particular for the employment market, social security and social expenditure;

(1) OJ No

(2) OJ No

(3) OJ No

(4) OJ No C 34, 2.2.94, p. 61

(5) OJ No C 343, 21.12.93, p. 1

(6) OJ No C 77, 14.3.94, p. 24

Whereas cooperation and consultation on measures affecting older people between the Commission, the Member States and representatives of older people are important for the development of solidarity within the European Union;

Whereas the measures to be carried out at European level are intended to make known and to complement the different types of measures carried out in Member States at various levels;

Whereas the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations, 1993, served to show in a practical way the value of exchange of information and experience in the matter of ageing in Europe;

Whereas the conditions created by the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations justify a special, one-off follow-up initiative at European level to build on the achievements of the Year;

Whereas the Treaty does not provide, for the measure concerned, powers others than those of Article 235;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

A framework for Community support for actions in Member States aiming at meeting the challenges of an ageing population in the European Union is hereby established for the period 1 September 1995 to 31 December 1999.

Article 2

The actions referred to in Article 1 shall have the following objectives :

1. to identify ways to develop the role and potential of the active retired population;
2. to promote best practice in relation to:
 - a) improving the situation of older women;
 - b) management of an ageing workforce;
 - c) transition from work to retirement;
 - d) care and access to care for dependent older people;
3. to strengthen solidarity between generations and the integration of older people in danger of isolation.

Article 3

The measures designed to attain the objectives referred to in Article 2 shall be as follows :

- a) specific projects which fulfill the criteria in the annex to this Decision;
- b) comparative studies and transnational initiatives designed to exchange information and experience and to promote best practice in relation to the priority themes of the action, in partnerships involving the public or private sectors, professional or voluntary organizations;
- c) the drawing up of regular comparative reports on the socio-economic situation of older people throughout the European Union by a team of independent scientific experts (to be known as the 'European Observatory on Ageing and Older People').

Article 4

1. The Commission shall be responsible for the implementation of this Decision.
2. Decisions on the funding of specific actions shall be taken by the Commission following consultation of the committee provided for in Article 6.
3. The Commission may also consult the committee provided for in Article 6 in relation to other practical aspects of the implementation of the Decision.

Article 5

1. Applications for the funding of actions may be made by organizations and individual persons. Applications shall be addressed to the Commission.
2. The level of Community contribution towards actions approved for support under this Decision shall not exceed 75 percent of the total cost, except in the case of studies which are especially commissioned by the Commission in pursuit of the objectives of this Decision.

Article 6

The Commission shall be assisted by a committee of an advisory nature, hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee', composed of two representatives of the Government of each Member State and chaired by a representative of the Commission.

The representative of the Commission shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft, within a time-limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes, in addition, each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes.

The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the Committee. It shall inform the Committee of the manner in which its opinion has been taken into account.

The Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

Article 7

The dissemination and exchange of information and knowledge concerning the programme shall be organized under the responsibility of the Commission.

Article 8

1. Before 31 December 2000 the Commission shall present to the Council and the European Parliament a report on the implementation and results of the actions.

Article 9

This Decision shall be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

BASIC CRITERIA FOR FUNDING OF ACTIVITIES

I PRIORITY THEMES

At least one of the following themes should be addressed:

- i the role and potential of the active retired;
- ii improving the situation of older women;
- iii management of an ageing workforce;
- iv transition from work to retirement;
- v care and access to care for dependent older people.

II KEY PRINCIPLES

Priority should be given to activities which are based on one or more of the following principles :

1. The promotion of solidarity between generations;
2. The enhancement of the capacity of older people to participate in society;
3. The integration of older people in danger of isolation, especially older migrants, older people in remote areas and disabled older people, as well as older women.

III GENERAL

In selecting activities for funding, account should be taken of the following general criteria :

1. They should be innovative or experimental, compared to what is already being done;
2. They should have as objective the promotion of best practice in the area concerned;
3. They should involve organizations and individuals recognized as leaders in the field concerned;
4. They should include arrangements for informing non-participating interests of the outcome; activities with a high 'multiplier effect' will have greater priority;
5. They should be transnational in scope.

In the case of comparative studies and transnational initiatives (referred to in Article 3), the Commission reserves the right to invite the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and/or the European Observatory on Ageing and Older People to become associated in the work involved.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. TITLE OF THE OPERATION

Community Support for Actions in favour of Older People.

2. BUDGET HEADINGS CONCERNED

B3-4104 : Actions for Older People
AO-1178 : Technical Assistance - Consultants
AO-2380 : Administrative Costs
AO-2600 : Studies

3. LEGAL BASIS

Application of Article 235 of EEC Treaty. The Commission's proposal, herewith, is expected to be followed by a new decision by the Council in mid-1995.

4. DESCRIPTION

A Community framework to support exchange of information and experience, with the following objectives:

1. to develop the role and potential of the active retired population;
2. to promote best practice in relation to:
 - a) improving the situation of older women;
 - b) management of an ageing workforce;
 - c) transition from work to retirement;
 - d) care and access to care for dependent older people;
3. to strengthen solidarity between generations and the integration of older people in danger of isolation.

The duration of the action is 4 years and four months, from 1 September 1995 to 31 December 1999.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE

- 5.1 Non-compulsory expenditure
- 5.2 Dissociated credits
- 5.3 Types of revenue : none

6. NATURE OF EXPENDITURE

6.1 **100% expenditure** : For activities connected with contracts for the provision of services (expenditure relative to studies, experts meetings, conferences and seminars, training, information and publications coordination; advice and support directly linked to the achievement of the objectives of the action of which they are an integral part) but excluding expenditure relative to the management of these actions and general administration. These are part of the Commission's management of the programme.

6.2 **Grants for activities**
Normally for no more than 75 % of the total cost of the activity.

6.3 **Interest subsidies** : none

6.4 **Other types of expenditure** : none

6.5 **Reimbursement** : Payment recovery will be demanded should any action fail to meet the contract's objectives. No 'economic' success in the strict sense is envisaged.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Calculation of the operational cost - Line B3-4104

The cost has been calculated taking the level of activity and expenditure for 1994 as the baseline and assuming the same level of activity in each of the three following years. For 1999, the last year of the actions when a reduction in activity might be expected, the same level is nevertheless envisaged given that 1999 will be the UNO 'Year of the Older Person' and that the EU will probably wish to mark this Year. (cf EU participation in the 1994 UNO 'Year of the Family').

Estimate of Commitments

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	1,0m	5,5m	5,5m	5,5m	5,5m

Tentative Breakdown

Exchange/					
Best practice	0,5m	2,9m	2,9m	2,9m	2,0m
NGO support	0,3m	0,9m	0,8m	0,9m	1,4m
Various grants*	0,2m	1,7m	1,7m	1,7m	2,0m
Evaluation			0,1m		0,1m
Activities carried out by Dublin					
Foundation	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm

*Support for specific transnational projects and activities which further the objectives of the Decision.

8. ANTI-FRAUD

On-going monitoring by Commission services with assistance from technical experts. Interim and final financial reports and contractual periods of one year maximum. Second payments dependent on satisfactory interim reports. Systematic and random on-the-spot checks to be carried out by Commission services (DG V and DG XX).

9. COST EFFECTIVENESS

9.1 Specific aims

The aims are as outlined at 4, above. Ultimate beneficiaries are older people in each of the designated categories. The immediate beneficiaries are the partnership groups taking part in the activities receiving Community funding.

9.2 Justification

The ageing of the population represents one of the greatest economic as well as social challenges ever to the European Union and its Member States (see section 3 of the explanatory memorandum).

The action proposed represents the Union's primary response to the phenomenon of demographic ageing as such. While the response is very limited in relation to the challenge posed by the ageing of the population, it nevertheless goes to the core of the issue in the most effective way possible given the distribution of competences in this area. The key economic as well as social aspects are addressed : the issue of care of the growing dependent population; the particular situation of older women; competitiveness of an ageing workforce; the contribution of the active retired.

Any of these issues on its own is large enough to merit, in economic terms, a major investment in order to avoid the worst of the predicted problems. Indeed, such a development can be seen, in a somewhat haphazard way, across Member States. The current proposal aims at creating practical synergies in the search for solutions to this major complex of problems.

The practical steps proposed - information exchange and promotion of best practice - is a tried and tested method of developing synergy at European level, in line with the principle of subsidiarity and in way most likely to lead to practical changes. The series of actions launched in this field and using this methodology in 1993 was the subject of a very positive evaluation by the team of independent experts engaged to review the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations, 1993 (see Evaluation Report).

As the most important operational contacts have already been established and the methodologies tested in practice, there are no major factors of uncertainty.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation

9.3.1 Performance indicators

The total population falling into the 'older' category, including older workers, is over 100 million across the EU. Clearly, for so limited an action, indicators of impact at the level of the population as a whole are unrealistic.

The primary indicator at the level of the participating projects will be fulfilment of the agreed programme of work with, as secondary indicator, the extent of 'take up' of the project ideas by groups and agencies not directly involved in the project. As an exercise in learning and exchange, the agreed programmes of work will specify measurable indicators of success, such as : number of events and participants, type and level of participants, and follow-up action undertaken.

As a partnership programme, in which the Commission is but one partner, the level of response and interest by other key partners is a significant indicator. In this context it should be recalled that for 1993, European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations, a very high multiplier effect was achieved. Taking numbers of events as a simple indicator, this multiplier was at least 10 : 1. See, in this regard, Evaluation Report 3.1.

9.3.2 Evaluation

External evaluation, by independent experts appointed by the Commission, will put the outcome of the action in a comparative context and will draw out any implications for regional, national or European policy development. The Commission, before 31 December 2000, will present to the Council and the European Parliament a final report on the implementation of the Decision.

9.4 Coherence with financial planning

The action is included in the financial programming of the DG.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE

10.1 Technical Assistance - Lines AO-1178 and AO-238

The current total staff resources dedicated to the support of actions for older people are as follows :

Officials :	A :	1
	B :	1
	C :	1
Technical assistants :		2
Temporary Secretarial :		1

The measures proposed can be implemented without an increase in these staff resources. The implications for Line AO-1178 are, therefore, as follows :

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Technical Assistance	25.000	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000

10.2 Technical Assistance - Administrative Costs - Line AO-2380

Provision should be made for purchase of a minimum of specialized services in the interests of the efficient running of the actions. These services will include : mailing lists, computerization of information and technical design work. The suggested provision for Line AO-2380 is :

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Administrative Costs	7.000	35.000	35.000	35.000	35.000

10.3 Studies - Line AO-2600

One major study will be commissioned and published per annum. The implications for Line AO-2600 are as follows :

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Studies	50.000	250.000	250.000	250.000	250.000

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