European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)

2010/0242(COD) - 07/07/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 557 votes to 33, with 15 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012).

Parliament adopted its position at first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a new series of compromise amendments negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council. They amend the proposal as follows:

Title of the Year: the title of this initiative has been changed. It shall now be known as the 'European Year for Active Ageing and **Solidarity between Generations**'.

General objectives: the overall objective of the European Year shall be to **facilitate the creation of an active ageing culture in Europe based on a society for all ages**. It shall encourage and support the efforts of Member States, their regional and local authorities, social partners, civil society and the **business community**, including SMEs, to promote active ageing and to foster solidarity and **cooperation between generations**, taking into account **diversity and gender equality**. To this end, the European Year shall aim to adapt working conditions, combat negative age stereotypes and age discrimination, improve health and safety at work, adapt life-long learning systems to the needs of an ageing workforce and ensure that social protection systems are adequate and provide the right incentives.

Specific objectives: new specific objectives are defined as follows:

- to **raise general awareness** of the value of active ageing and its various dimensions and to ensure that it is accorded a prominent position on the political agendas of stakeholders at all levels in order to highlight the useful contribution that older persons make to society and the economy, raising the appreciation thereof, to promote active ageing, solidarity between generations and the vitality and the dignity of all people, and to do more to mobilise the potential of older persons, regardless of their origin, and to enable them to lead an independent life;
- to **stimulate debate, to exchange information and to develop mutual learning between Member States and stakeholders at all levels** in order to promote active ageing policies, to identify and disseminate good practice and to encourage cooperation and synergies;
- to **offer a framework for commitment** and concrete action to enable the Union, Member States and stakeholders at all levels, with the involvement of civil society, the social partners and businesses and with particular emphasis on promoting information strategies, to develop innovative solutions, policies and long-term strategies, including comprehensive age-management strategies related to employment and work, through specific activities, and to pursue specific objectives related to active ageing and intergenerational solidarity;
- to **promote activities which will help to combat age discrimination**, to overcome age-related stereotypes and to remove barriers, particularly with regard to employability.

The content of measures have been amended in accordance with the specific objectives. It is stated that when implementing the activities, attention shall be paid to involving all generations in the pursuit of the objectives of the European Year, in particular by seeking to develop an inclusive approach and by encouraging the participation of older and younger people in common initiatives. The Commission and Member States shall take into account gender mainstreaming in all their activities in connection with the

running of the European Year. The Commission shall take into account the potential of cross-border activities taking place at a regional or local level for achieving the objectives. Lastly, efforts shall be made to ensure that all activities of the European Year addressed to the wider public are easily accessible to all, including **people with disabilities**.

Coordination with Member States: under the proposal, each Member State shall appoint a national coordinator to be responsible for organising its involvement in the European Year and shall inform the Commission of that appointment. The national coordinators shall also see to it that national activities of the European Year are properly coordinated and may also promote and facilitate local and regional activities in this context. The national coordinators shall also foster the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in the activities of the European Year.

The Commission shall implement the European Year at the level of the Union. It shall facilitate and **support the activities of the European Year at national, regional and local level**, including by proposing, where appropriate, new pathways and tools for the achievement of the objectives of the European Year and their evaluation.

Priority given to the Year by the Commission: the theme of the European Year shall be made a priority by the Commission in the communication activities of its representations in the Member States and by relevant key Union-level networks receiving support for their running costs from the general budget of the Union in their work programmes.

Budget: the financial envelope for the implementation, at the level of the Union, of this Decision, for the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2012, shall be **EUR 5 million**.

In a joint Interinstitutional declaration, it is stipulated that **EUR 2.3 million** will be used from the **budget 2011** without utilizing available margins to fund notably communication activities and EU conferences for the European Year, and at least **EUR 2.7 million**, which shall be reprioritised from existing resources without utilizing the existing margins, will be reserved and made visible in a budget line in the **draft budget 2012**.

Financial and non-financial support: activities at the Union level may give rise to a procurement contract or the award of grants financed from the general budget of the EU. Where appropriate, programmes and policies in fields which contribute to promoting active ageing, such as employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, education and culture, health, may support the European Year, in accordance with the applicable rules and within their existing possibilities for priority setting.

Participating countries: Participation in the European Year shall be open to: (i) Member States; (ii) candidate countries; (iii) the countries of the Western Balkans, and (iv) European Free Trade Association States that are parties to the European Economic Area Agreement.

International cooperation: the Commission may cooperate with relevant international organisations, in particular with the United Nations and the Council of Europe, while ensuring the visibility of the Union's efforts to promote active ageing.

Report: Parliament calls for the Commission report to provide information on how the gender and disability have been mainstreamed in the activities of the European Year and how the European Year has contributed towards developing a sustainable active aging culture across Europe. This report shall serve as a basis for future Union policies, measures and actions in this field.