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

2010/0242(COD) - 14/09/2011 - Final act

PURPOSE : to designate 2012 as the 'European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations'.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012).

BACKGROUND : ageing is undoubtedly a challenge for the whole of society and for all generations in Europe, and it is also a matter for intergenerational solidarity and for the family.

The part of the population of the Union comprised of people in their late 50s and over will increase at a much faster rate than ever before. Successive European Councils have recognised the need to tackle the effect of ageing populations on European social models. A key response to this rapid change in the age structure consists in promoting the **creation of a culture of active ageing** as a lifelong process and thus ensuring that the rapidly-growing population comprised of people who are currently in their late 50s and over, who are, on the whole, healthier and better educated than any such age group before them, have good opportunities for employment and active participation in social and family life, including through volunteering, lifelong learning, cultural expression and sports.

The Council adopted, on 7 June 2010, Conclusions on 'Active Ageing' inviting the Commission 'to pursue the reparation of a European Year for Active Ageing in 2012, during which the benefits of active ageing and its contribution to solidarity between generations can be highlighted and promising initiatives in support of active ageing at all levels can be publicised'.

The European Parliament adopted, on 11 November 2010, a Resolution entitled 'Demographic challenge and solidarity between generations', calling on Member States to make active ageing one of the priorities for the coming years. The resolution also stressed that the European Year should, in particular, highlight the contribution that older people make to society and afford opportunities to foster solidarity, cooperation and understanding between generations and to get younger and older people to work together.

The designation of a 'European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) fulfills this request.

CONTENT : through this Decision, the European Parliament and Council establish a 'European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)

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.** The European Year shall encourage and support the efforts of Member States, their regional and local authorities, social partners, civil society and the business community, including small and medium-sized enterprises, to promote active ageing and to do more to mobilise the potential of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and over.

In doing so, it shall:

- foster solidarity and cooperation between generations, taking into account diversity and gender equality;
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promote active ageing by creating better opportunities so that older women and men can play their part in the labour market, combating poverty, particularly that of women, and social exclusion, fostering volunteering and active participation in family life and society and encouraging healthy ageing in dignity;
- aim to adapt working conditions, combating negative age stereotypes and age discrimination, improving health and safety at work, adapting lifelong learning systems to the needs of an ageing workforce and ensuring that social protection systems are adequate and provide the right incentives.

Specific objectives : on this basis, the objectives of the European Year shall be:

- **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 people make to society and the economy, and to do more to mobilise the potential of older people, 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**, with the involvement of civil society, the social partners and businesses and to develop **innovative solutions, policies and long-term strategies**, including comprehensive age-management strategies related to employment and work, through specific activities;
- 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 Decision sets out the measures to be taken to achieve the objectives above, the main ones being as follows: (i) conferences, events and initiatives, to promote debate contributing to sustained and lasting impacts; (ii) information, promotion and educational campaigns, making use of multimedia; (iii) exchange of information, experience and good practice; (iv) research and surveys on a Union, national or regional scale.

When implementing these activities, the Decision provides that attention shall be paid to involving all generations in particular by encouraging the participation of older and younger people in common initiatives. Efforts shall be made to ensure that all activities of the European Year addressed to the wider public are easily accessible to all, including persons with disabilities.

Coordination with Member States and at EU level: each Member State shall appoint a national coordinator to be responsible for organising its involvement in the European Year. 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, and foster the involvement of civil society, in the activities of the European Year.

The Commission shall implement the European Year at the level of the Union. It shall convene meetings of the national coordinators and 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 and the European Parliament: the Decision provides that 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.

The European Parliament, Member States, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions shall be associated in the activities of the European Year.

Financial and non-financial support: activities that occur at the level of the Union may give rise to a procurement contract or the award of grants financed from the general budget of the Union.

Where appropriate, programmes and policies in fields which contribute to the promotion of active ageing, such as employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, education and culture, health, research, the information society, regional policy and transport policy may support the European Year, in accordance with the applicable rules and within their existing possibilities for priority setting.

Non-financial support may be granted by the Union for activities undertaken by public and private organisations.

Budget: the financial envelope for the implementation, at the level of the Union, of the Year for the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2012, shall be **EUR 5 000 000.**

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**.

Participating countries: participation in the European Year shall be open to:(a) Member States;(b) candidate countries;(c) the countries of the Western Balkans; and (d) European Free Trade Association States that are parties to the European Economic Area Agreement.

International cooperation: for the purpose of the European Year, 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: the Decision provides that by 30 June 2014, the Commission shall submit a report containing an overall assessment of the initiatives provided for in the Decision with details of implementation and results to serve as a basis for future Union policies, measures and actions in this field. It must also provide information on how gender equality has been mainstreamed in the activities of the European Year and how the accessibility of those activities for persons with disabilities has been ensured.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : the Decision will enter into force on 24 September 2011.