

Joint EU Social Partners' Conference on "PROMOTING ACTIVE AGEING THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING"

Brussels, 18 April 2013, ITUH Auditorium

Presentation of the joint EU employers' project 2012: Age Management Policies in Enterprises in Europe



Understanding supporting factors and obstacles for employer policies

Context



Increasing retirement age
Foreclosing avenues to early exit
Reforms to welfare and benefit systems
Anti-discrimination rules
Incentives/disincentives in EPL
Wage formation

Challenges



Increasing financial benefit for additional years worked
Facilitating continued working beyond retirement
Investing in lifelong learning and recognition of competencies
Investing in safe and healthy workplaces

Main findings

Elements
of good
practice

Preparing for demographic change

- (Pro-active) workforce mapping, forward and business planning: understanding where you are, knowing where you are going
- Valuing age (age positive and targeted recruitment practices)

Flexible working

- Can include geographical, temporal and functional flexibility
- Functional flexibility as means to support retention

Main findings

Elements
of good
practice

Maintaining work ability: a concept which includes safeguarding health and safety at the workplace, ongoing training, attitudes/motivation of the individual and work organisation

Inter-generational learning and succession planning: a formula for a successful and productive organisation

Peer-learning / Exchange of good practice among companies

10 key messages

- 1. National policy frameworks** have an important impact on the policies and practices enterprises develop to support active ageing. They should support work ability throughout working life. Employment protection legislation and systems of wage formation must also be designed to equally support the recruitment and retention of older workers.
- 2. Determination of labour costs** on the basis of seniority can be a disincentive for employers to hire older workers, by disconnecting the total cost of labour from productivity levels. Compulsory wage indexation systems amplify this effect.
- 3. Flexible working practices** have a role to play to facilitate active ageing. They can create „win-win“ situations for both employers and employees, while taking into account the complexity of managing work organisation, and help employers to take account of variations in production cycles.

10 key messages

4. Tools and processes, including a regular review process to **assess the age composition of the current workforce and future skill needs** can contribute to devising effective strategies to address the impact of demographic change at the level of the enterprise.
5. Wherever necessary and efficient, relevant training can support employers to remain competitive and employees to stay adaptable to changing market needs. Support should be made available in particular to SMEs to **assess their future skill requirements and to allow the effective and efficient delivery of training**.
6. Different methods are available to support the effective **transmission** of skills from experienced to younger workers, including joint learning/training, mentoring and coaching. Planning ahead for successful knowledge transfer is key.
7. **Succession planning** can be a concern for SMEs and in particular micro businesses. External assistance can be required to identify a suitable purchaser and to mediate relationships between current and future business owners.

10 key messages

8. Flexible retirement schemes can provide assistance in offering a smooth transition from work into retirement or from employment into self-employment. Tax thresholds need to be set in such a way to **allow individuals to combine employment or self-employment** with the receipt of a pension, even after retirement age if they so wish. This supports job creation and growth opportunities.
9. Structures supporting workplaces adaptations to allow individuals to continue working help to effectively manage work ability. **Cost-effective public health promotion and measures supporting lifestyle adaptations** have a role to play in an individual's ability to continue working up to retirement age.
10. The European Union can play an important role by supporting national labour market reforms to create the necessary policy frameworks for enterprises to put in place effective age management policies. It can also play a role in **formulating pertinent policy messages on the need to maintain the sustainability of pension systems and provide funding for measures to support effective age management policies.**