Foundation Seminar Series 2011 – 2012; Improving working conditions: contribution to active ageing
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Belgium

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Age pyramid in 2011

- Higher life expectancy
- Longer study time

Peak at the age of 47 → Important outflows form the labour market

Not compatible with a shorter career

Source: Federal Public Service Economy
Employment rate (50-64), year 2011 (%)

- Positive evolution
- But: low employment rate of older workers: 51.6% in Belgium
- 57.5% in EU27

Source: Eurostat
Part II: Actions aimed at keeping older workers in employment

1. Research on age management
2. Research on returning to work after a long-term absence
3. Awareness-raising campaign on the employment of older workers
4. Changes in physical and physiological capabilities according to age in the working population (CAPA)
5. End-of-career jobs
6. The Fund for professional experience
1. Research on age management (2011-2012)

• Objectives
  – To define what exactly is meant by age management
  – To identify the current practices of human resources managers (HRM)
  – To provide concrete, practical advice to business employers and their HRM

• Results
  – Overcoming the challenges of age management in business - Awareness raising guide for human resource managers and supervisors
2. Research on returning to work after a long-term absence (2011-2012)

- **Objectives**
  - To examine the system in order to limit any harm to the worker and enable her/him to reintegrate into her/his work environment in the most satisfactory manner for her/him, the employer and for all of the work group

- **Results**
  - Inventory of the regulations in force in Belgium
  - Definition of the roles of the different actors (public and private), institutions
  - Inventory of current practice, initiatives already envisaged, experiences, pilot projects and good practice
  - Reflexion with highlighting the factors hindering and facilitating a return to work
3. Awareness-raising campaign on the employment of older workers (2012-2013)

- **Objective**
  - To show the values of older workers, the importance of keeping them at work for longer, their qualities, etc.

- **Methodology**
  - General information for the general public
  - Theme-based texts
    - Creation of a website (with links to already existing texts/websites)
    - Texts on specific themes relating to the older worker will be published on the website
  - Seminars
    - For a specialized audience and organized on different themes
4. Changes in physical and physiological capabilities according to age in the working population (CAPA) (2006-2009)

• Objectives
  – To map via a questionnaire survey, the stereotypes associated with age
  – To better compare stereotypes with existing scientific literature in order to qualify, to confirm or to invalidate them
5. End-of-career jobs (time credit and career break systems)

- Objectives
  - To reconcile professional and private lives better
- Results
  - High number of beneficiaries
  - But there is a sizeable cost-aspect
  - Positive influence on career length?

• **Budget fund**
  – Created to increase the employment rate of older workers by improving the working conditions

• **Concept of “workability”**(key notion in the projects)
  – Balance between the worker (health, knowledge and skills, intention to stay, etc.) and the specific nature of the working environment (safety, demands of the position, physical and psychosocial demands)
  – A sustainable job is only possible where both elements evolve in a harmonious fashion

• **A three-phased approach is proposed to this effect**
  – To firstly measure the workability (1), and then make a diagnosis (2) in order to improve the workability (3)
Conclusions

• Different measures exist
  – Reinforcement of career requirements to access early retirement
    → Higher exit age from the labour market

• But results (employment rate and average exit age from labour market) are low