



EFOS

European Federation of Older Students in Universities
Europäische Vereinigung älterer Studierender an den Universitäten
Fédération Européenne des Etudiants Âgés aux Universités



To the European Commission; GD Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
GD Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
To the European Parliament, Committee for Culture and Education
To candidates for the election to the European Parliament

Bratislava, October 5th 2018


Demographic change in the coming years will give the 65+ age-group a much stronger numerical profile. This growth must be taken account of not only in social and health policies but also in the field of education. The education of older people is rapidly growing in importance. Lifelong learning doesn't cease on retirement from working life but continues to be significant after that. Society can no longer allow the skills and potential of older generations to go to waste. Their contribution to social discourse and political discussion will be of increasing importance. Educational programmes such as those in Universities of the Third Age help them to keep in step with changes in society, technology and science. A healthy democracy is based on well informed and educated citizens.

The programmes of the European Union, especially Erasmus+, have a direct impact on the education of the 65+ age-group and stimulate member-states to increase their educational efforts for this group. To make them more effective projects for the older generations should get a greater share and procedures should be simplified.

The following points should be reflected in the policy of the EU:

1. Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2. Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning
3. An increase in the share for adult education in programmes of the EU. In particular there should be more cross-cutting Erasmus projects in adult and vocational education and training through the use of senior experts to advise, educate and support career development and to teach European values to young people. Retired people (60+, 65+, 67+ according to varying retirement ages in the EU), the largest and still growing section of the EU population, scarcely figure in present EU programmes and their funding.
4. European networks, such as EFOS, which are mainly supported by the voluntary work of older people, should be supported institutionally through simplified funding procedures. Volunteering requires support at all levels.
5. Appointing "senior citizens' representatives" at EU and country level to advise the European Commission and state governments on the effects of the rapid demographic change.

Yours Truly


PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD.
EFOS president



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Attendance list.

	Name	Institution	Signature
1.	FREYMARK, Olaf	Magdeburg Universität, Germany	Olaf Freymark
2.	GOZDOWSKI, Anja	Wroclaw University, Poland	Anja Gozdowski
3.	GOZDOWSKI, Andrzej	Wroclaw University, Poland	Andrzej Gozdowski
4.	GRUNWALD, Katarina	Bratislava, Univerzita Komenského, Slovakia	Katarina Grunwald
5.	HAVRANOVÁ Dana	Bratislava, Univerzita Komenského, Slovakia	Dana Havranová
6.	Von der HEIDE, Wolfgang	Magdeburg Universität, Germany	Wolfgang Heide
7.	HRAPKOVÁ, Nadežda	Bratislava, Univerzita Komenského, Slovakia	Nadežda Hrapková
8.	HUG, Peter	Groningen, the Netherlands Seniorenakademie	Peter Hug
9.	MICHAEL, Rainer	Dresden, Germany Seniorenakademie,	Rainer Michael
10.	MILLER, Stanley	Nottingham U3A Trust, GB	Stanley Miller
11.	ODIN, Björn	Uppsala, Sweden Seniorenakademie,	Björn Odin
12.	RUDOLPH, Evi	Dresden, Germany Seniorenakademie	Evi Rudolph
13.	SHROMAZDILOVA, Lenka	Brno VUT, Czech republic	Lenka Shromazdillova
14.	SPITALER, Herta	Wien Universität, Austria	Herta Spitaler
15.	SPITALER, Wolfgang	Wien Universität, Austria	Wolfgang Spitaler
16.	VELLAS Francois	Toulouse University Capitol, France	Francois Vellas
17.	VOJKUVKA, Michal	Brno VUT, Czech republic	Michal Vojkuvka
18.	WEIKERT, Fritz	Magdeburg Universität, Germany	Fritz Weikert



EFOS Manifesto

Third Age Education - *Lifelong Learning*

Throughout Europe in the next two decades demographic change will become increasingly rapid. And with this social, economic and educational structures, conditions and challenges will also change. Such change also impacts on the concept of lifelong learning to which the European Federation of Older Students (EFOS) is dedicated.

Lifelong learning in all phases of human life is vital for a society based on learning. Success in the active management of demographic change depends essentially on the degree to which the abilities, competencies, strengths and experience of the senior generations are utilised within society. For this to happen there will be a need for citizens from all levels of society to be socially engaged through lifelong learning. To achieve this will require the development of realistic and differentiated views of old age. These are still "often [. . .] based on the perceptions of past generations"¹, and frequently do not recognise the complex nature of old age and thus impede self-development of the elderly. Because many who are retired want to continue to participate in social activity and play an active role in shaping their activity², a correction in attitudes to questions of third age education is required, both with respect to the general and vocational continued education of older employees and also with respect to the educational offerings available to those in "genuine retirement".

The competence, creativity, innovative strength of those even beyond middle age are indispensable and must be preserved in the interest of the individuals themselves, future generations and demographic challenges. In this context older people can make a significant contribution to the development and communication of an awareness which extends beyond generations and national borders.

Lifelong learning is necessary in every strata and at all age levels of the population. Therefore continued learning at all educational levels is a vital necessity, including older people. ***A well functioning democracy requires well-educated and informed citizens of all ages!***

Appeal to Policymakers

For democracy in Europe to function, as well as to preserve and develop the ability to innovate, to achieve economic growth and generally meet future challenges and accomplish future goals of society, policymakers must not merely recognise "education as a right and duty for all ages"³, but above and beyond this they must

- create structures which provide older people with equal and unhindered access to diverse opportunities for high class continuing education.
- pass national laws which guarantee the establishment and continued financial support for appropriate educational institutions (in particular universities and colleges) and ensure seniors

¹ Friebe, Jens/ Melanie J. Tröller: Weiterbildung in einer alternden deutschen Gesellschaft. Bestandsaufnahme der demografischen Entwicklungen, des Lernens im höheren Lebensalter und der Perspektiven für die Weiterbildung. <http://www.die-bonn.de/publikationen/online-texte/index.asp> 2008, S. IV.

² Comp., ibid., S. V.

³ In: Sechster Altenbericht. In: ibid., S. VI.

an equal role in the shaping of educational policy, as well as initiating multi-source financing of third age education as an integral part of a policy for the generations.

- promote a Europe-wide inter-generational comparison of educational activities, habits, necessities and interests at all stages of life.

Appeal to Universities

The institutions of higher education in particular are places of lifelong learning, in which people of all ages can learn and ensure that their knowledge is consistent with the latest research findings. Hence they have a particularly important role in meeting the challenges of the future.

In the current development of higher education, providing education which caters to all generations means offering continuing education which is both vocational and of general social relevance. This requirement must become the guiding principle of the institutions of higher education.

In order to provide education consistent with this principle, higher education institutions should direct their research at the culture of the European society and at a new socially significant culture of ageing. The goal is the formulation of a new concept of ageing and old age.

In this context institutions of higher education must offer programmes targeted at older people which focus on the cognitive and emotional interests and motivations of their target groups, including motivations relevant to personal development and self-fulfilment.

Appeal to Older People

In the context of specific third age education the empowerment and expertise of older people are important factors. These imply self-determination, the ability and the freedom to assume self-responsibility, to formulate one's own ideas, to make decisions and to play an active role in policy making at all levels.

For these reasons, it is necessary:

- To actively participate in the programmes offered to older people by institutions of higher education and thus give these courses additional content and depth, to participate actively in devising these programmes, to make suggestions and to seek dialogue with young students without dominating the discussion.
- To engage actively in the preservation and further development of third age studies and to show that third age learning fulfils real needs and interests. To achieve this the work of organisations and student bodies must be supported and individual networks created which will raise public awareness of third age learning. This will make clear the positive effects on personal well-being and on the needs and future development of society.
- To initiate and expand participation in networks, conferences, symposia and projects. Contacts enrich life. Contacts with third age students in other (European) countries through international organisations such as EFOS and participation in international projects (e.g. as part of the EU Grundtvig Programme) contributes significantly to cultural exchanges between students and countries as well as to better mutual understanding.

Sharing the acquired knowledge and experience with the rest of society will illustrate in exemplary fashion the value and effects of broad third age learning as a necessary part of the future development of society.

19 July 2012