



Riga, May 2018, No.2-12/7

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIVE AGEING AND AN INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH AGREEMENT IN LATVIA

Demographic trends in Latvia, as in many parts of Europe, indicate a decline in the population. The workforce is aging and the proportion of older workers is increasing. However, specifically in Latvia the number of young people has dropped dramatically in recent years. Ten years ago, the young people (age of 13 to 25) accounted for almost 20 per cent of the total population of the country, but 2017 - only 13 per cent. Every year around seven to eight thousand young people emigrate from the country.

In 2017 in Latvia, one third or 31% of all employed people are of age 50-64. People aged 50 and older are facing a variety of difficulties in order to compete successfully in the labour market - health problems, lack of modern education and appropriate qualification, inappropriate working environment and conditions.

Demographic trends create new challenges for economic growth and a sustainable social policy. There is a need to give the necessary skills and knowledge to people of all ages that motivate to work longer and provide opportunities to stay and work in Latvia.

By bringing professional education institutions/schools (VET schools) and students closer to the company and encouraging participating in work-based learning, helping workers to learn health-friendly ways of working, creating decent working conditions, supporting the professional development of employees, each employer can contribute to ensuring availability of skilled workforce and improve the well-being of current and future employees.

National social partners – Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) and Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) – jointly and individually are promoting cooperation in the framework of active labour market policy measures to support employment opportunities both for older workers by the statutory retirement age and at the same time for youth to be able successfully integrate in the labour market also by the measures envisaged in intergenerational mobility approach.

- (1) The social partners LBAS and LDDK jointly have applied for translation of the Active Ageing and an Intergenerational Approach Agreement (Agreement) and have agreed on the translation text.
- (2) LBAS and LDDK are discussing possibilities to conclude a national cooperation agreement aimed at reaching objectives of the Agreement.
- (3) LBAS and LDDK have published information about the Agreement on its webpage to facilitate dissemination of information.

- (4) LBAS and LDDK actively participates in the working group established by the Ministry of Welfare on life quality of seniors advocating for implementation of the objectives of the Agreement in legislative acts, collective agreements and practise.
- (5) One of the main platform for activities aiming at building and enhancing activities improving the *ability of workers of all ages to stay in the labour market, to stay healthy and active until the legal retirement age, as well as strengthening a culture of responsibility, commitment, respect and dignity in all workplaces where all workers are valued as important irrespective of age* is the project implemented by the State Employment Agency (NVA) in cooperation with 2 partners - the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) and the Latvian Employers' Confederation (LDDK) "Support for longer working life". The project implementation started on 1 January 2017 and is planned until 31 December 2022. The objective of the project is to promote working capacity and employment of older workers.

The project's target group consists of:

- Persons at the age older than 50 who are at risk of unemployment, including working persons who are already entitled to but not receiving state old-age pension, and who meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - 1) the compulsory or extraordinary medical examination has found a non-conformity of the state of health with the work to be performed, or has signs of occupational disease, or after long-term absence due to incapacity to work;
 - 2) professional qualification or level of education does not exceed the average general or vocational education level;
 - 3) the need to care for family member during normal working hours;
 - 4) part-time or low income employment, which is less than 80% of the minimum wage established in the country.
- Private, and state or municipality owned companies and other institutions (hereinafter - employers).

As a result, the project aims to provide support to 3,000 older workers and to ensure that employers include age management issues in their employment contracts, collective agreements or other employment documents.

During the implementation of the project, the following activities are implemented:

- 1) Public awareness measures to promote longer and better work life;
- 2) Assessment of the work environment and human resources potential in companies;
- 3) Support measures for the target group in line with result of the assessment of the work environment and human resources: career counseling; skills transfer activities (informal education); mentoring (informal education); competitiveness enhancement measures; work-place adjustment; health improvement measures;
- 4) Training of Career Advisers of the State Employment Agency in the work with the persons older than 50 and employers;
- 5) Consultations by the social partners – LDDK and LBAS on including the aging management issues in collective bargaining and collective agreements;

Participation in the project implementation significantly helps to increase social partners' capacity (expertise, knowledge and human resource wise) to reach the objectives of the agreement and ensure wide dissemination of information and raising awareness of society.

So far, the following activities have been organized:

- Social partners (employers, workers and the government) have discussed and agreed on the main issues that should be in the focus of the project cooperation (09.2017).
 - LBAS in cooperation with State Labour Inspectorate has organised a seminar “Safe Workplaces for seniors” to give input on employment and occupational health and safety of senior workers in Latvia (10.2017).
 - LBAS has summarised information regarding aging management issues in collective agreements.
 - Social partners have meetings regularly at least once a month to discuss aging management related issues and activities of the project, also inviting external experts and representatives from Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.
 - Social partners have organised a joint conference “Experience, Knowledge and Health for Longer Work Life” in Riga and regional seminars in Daugavpils, Kuldiga, Gulbene, Jelgava, Cesis (11-12.2017).
 - LBAS organised meetings with its affiliates from various sectors to inform about the objective of the project and receive input regarding practise of social dialogue and collective bargaining aimed at improving working conditions of senior workers.
 - LBAS and LDDK supported collective bargaining negotiations aimed at concluding collective agreement to improve employment and working conditions of senior workers (01-05.2018).
 - LBAS and LDDK regularly organise meetings and seminars and to discuss issues related to active aging and facilitate discussions with municipalities and local public social care and health care institutions, professional education institutions and companies.
- (6) The ultimate goal of the ESF project “Participation of vocational education institutions in work-based learning and practices in enterprises” implemented by the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) in cooperation with partners - VET schools and enterprises – is to reduce youth unemployment, to share responsibility and increase employers’ participation in re-introducing work-based learning and raising the prestige of vocational education. The project started on 27 January 2017 and will run until 31 August 2023. The objective of the project is to increase the number of VET students in work-based learning thus introducing the students to real work places and encouraging cooperation between older workers and young people.
- LDDK is continuously involved in the process of improvements of the legal framework: dialogue with the Ministry of Education in order to submit necessary amendments to the regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers with a view to enlarge project target audience, simplify regulation, and reduce bureaucratic obstacles that limit employers' interest to cooperate with vocational education institutions. In order to ensure favourable regulatory environment for work-based learning system in social partners were involved in the process of negotiation in elaboration and amendments of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations “The Procedure for Organizing and Implementing Work Environment Training (DVB)”.
 - In cooperation with other ESF projects, the LDDK together with partners is promoting acquisition of the pedagogical competencies for business managers and experienced highly skilled professionals including persons older than 50 to ensure that experienced workers can share their professional experience with students, thus providing intergenerational approach in the process of work-based learning.

- By May 2018, more than 600 representatives of companies have completed the course of pedagogical competencies giving the right to work with VET students in work-based learning.
- By May 2018, our project partners include 1400 enterprises (companies of all sizes, including small and micro enterprises in all sectors), 34 VET schools (state and municipality founded) and 2916 students (641 in work-based learning placements and 2275 in company-based practices).
- LDDK is coordinating the work of the sectoral expert councils as a tripartite framework for the promotion of the quality of VET in accordance with the needs of the labor market.
- Social partners in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economics, and other institutions are actively addressing companies and VET institutions to engage and to provide high quality and effective work-based learning and practice opportunities for young people.
- Responding to the discussions with LDDK and partners on support to implementation of the work-based learning in Latvia and in order to ensure availability of skilled workforce in Latvia, European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Republic of Latvia issued an Announcement on 18 May 2018 and:
 - 1) Stressed that everyone should work in the name of the common goal in order to ensure conditions that would encourage young people to study and develop their professional careers in Latvia, emphasized the necessity to actively support the sectoral experts councils as tripartite cooperation mechanism and involve companies in VET and work based learning;
 - 2) Called on youth organizations to promote VET programs, work based learning, the ESF project activities and financial support for VET students by introducing young people with a wide range of opportunities provided by the ESF project.



Egils Baldzēns
LBAS President



Līga Meņģelšone
LDDK Director General