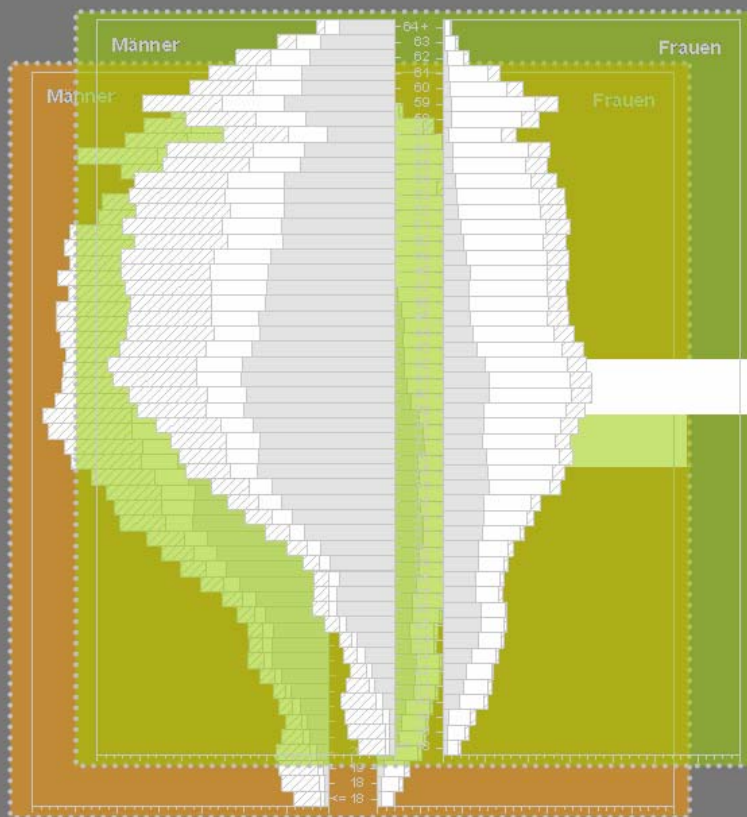




Federal Ministry  
of the Interior

# Demographic Change and the Public Sector

European Expert Conference



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# **DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

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Foreword from the Federal Minister

Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble

The demographic change which the Member States of the European Union are currently undergoing, and which will accelerate over the coming decades, is also leading to considerable changes to the conditions under which public service fulfils its functions. The impact of demographic change on the public service is becoming increasingly apparent. That not only applies to Germany, but to all Member States of the European Union - albeit to varying degrees.

It is clear that we will need to adapt on account of these major changes in population structure. Public administration cannot detach itself from this general social development. Consequently, the Member States of the European Union are all working on strategies, concepts and their implementation in order to make the required adaptation processes as effective as possible.

We need to develop concepts to enable public service to carry out its tasks with fewer employees because of the drop in the size of the working population. The first step will have to be to initiate technical and organizational modernization measures; public service tasks will also have to be subject to a fundamental critique.

We must likewise ensure that the public service remains an attractive employer when competition between public and private employers intensifies.

I am delighted that we are able to present this collection of good practice examples from the European administrative area. It indicates what action can be taken and provides ideas on how to pro-actively plan future measures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wolfgang Schäuble', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble,

Federal Minister of the Interior



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## **ABSTRACT**

Population ageing in Germany and Europe is a challenge not only for national systems of social insurance; government authorities and public-sector organizations will also have to determine whether their ageing workforces can keep up with the demand for ever-increasing efficiency and innovation. In view of demographic change, the key issue is whether the greying of the public sector can be expected to limit its performance (e.g. in terms of competence, productivity and flexibility) and which measures may be taken soon to avoid problems later. We need labour and human resources policy that is tailored to an ageing workforce. It will be necessary both to recruit and retain skilled and productive staff, and to encourage and require all staff to take part in a lifelong process of skills development in order to tap the potential of older workers as well.

There is now likely to be greater awareness of the challenges caused by demographic change, but probably few public-sector organizations have taken specific steps to determine which changes they will have to make when the proportion of older workers rises and recruitment of younger workers becomes more difficult. The availability of young skilled workers depends not only on demographic change, but also on the quality of the education system. The need for skilled and highly skilled labour will in any case continue to rise. How successfully the public service is able to recruit young skilled workers in the coming years largely depends on its attractiveness as an employer.

Population ageing forces the public sector to think about how to provide a flexible range of infrastructure that meets public needs. Public services in the fields of education, health, social services, utilities and waste disposal, transport and the environment must be assessed and evaluated with demographic change in mind. Ageing, migration and a shrinking population must be taken into account especially when planning infrastructure projects, as such planning usually is done years in advance. Altered or reduced demand for public services for reasons of demography requires long-term strategies in order to ensure that living conditions in sparsely populated areas are the equivalent of those in metropolitan centres.

There are certainly a number of viable solutions and models which individual EU countries or individual public-sector organizations have already put in place, but so far there has been no broad-based, rapid implementation of such models. Given the explosive and pressing nature of the problems associated with demographic change, such action is urgently needed.



## **1. Introduction**

Demographic change poses a wide-ranging challenge that will continue to be a feature of our society for quite some time to come. Falling birth rates need to be taken into account, as do the resulting drop in population size, increasing life expectancy and changing age structures in Germany and Europe. Demographic change raises two key questions in relation to public service:

- What impact will it have on human resources in public administrations?
- What changes will have to be made in regard to public services on account of the changes in society?

Dealing with demographic change is, not least, dependent on how effective public administration is. Public service administrations not only need to find answers to the internal ageing process, they also need to react to the changing needs of an ageing society that will also shrink in the long term.

The following article presents requirements made of and current concepts for personnel management that result from demographic change. It also addresses challenges for and solutions to the future range of public services.

The articles and examples are based on presentations and discussions during the European conference of experts entitled "Demographic Change" that was organized by the Federal Ministry of the Interior on 2 May 2007 in Brühl as part of the German EU Presidency.

## **2. Demographic change in Europe and Germany**

As a result of demographic change, the overall population of the 27 EU Member States will drop slightly, while the average age will rise significantly. In terms of the economy, the most important change will affect the working-age population (aged 15 to 64), which will shrink by 48 million by 2050. The dependency ratio (number of persons aged 65 and over compared to the number of those aged 15 to 64) is likely to double, reaching 51% by 2050. This means that in the EU, there will be only two persons of working age instead of four for every person 65 and over.<sup>1</sup>

Sinking birth rates and rising life expectancy are the reason that Germany's population too will begin to shrink in a few years, while the average age of the population will rise. If current demographic trends continue, the total population will fall from 82.5 million in 2005 to between 74 and 69 million by 2050. At the same time, the proportions of young and old will change: In late 2005, 20% of the population was less than 20 years old and 19% was 65 or older. The remaining 61% made up the working-age population (20 to 64 years old). In 2050, only about half of the population will be of working age; more than 30% will be 65 or over and about 15% will be under 20.<sup>2</sup>

By 2040, the number of those aged 65 and over will have increased by about half, from the current 16 million to about 24 million; thereafter, this number will drop slightly. The number of persons over 80 will rise dramatically, from just under 4 million in 2005 to 10 million in 2050.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission: Die demografische Zukunft Europas – Von der Herausforderung zur Chance [Europe's demographic future: From challenge to opportunity]. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007, pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Statistical Office (ed.): Bevölkerung Deutschlands bis 2050. 11. koordinierte Bevölkerungsvorausberechnung [Germany's population to 2050: 11th coordinated population estimate]. Wiesbaden: Federal Statistical Office, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

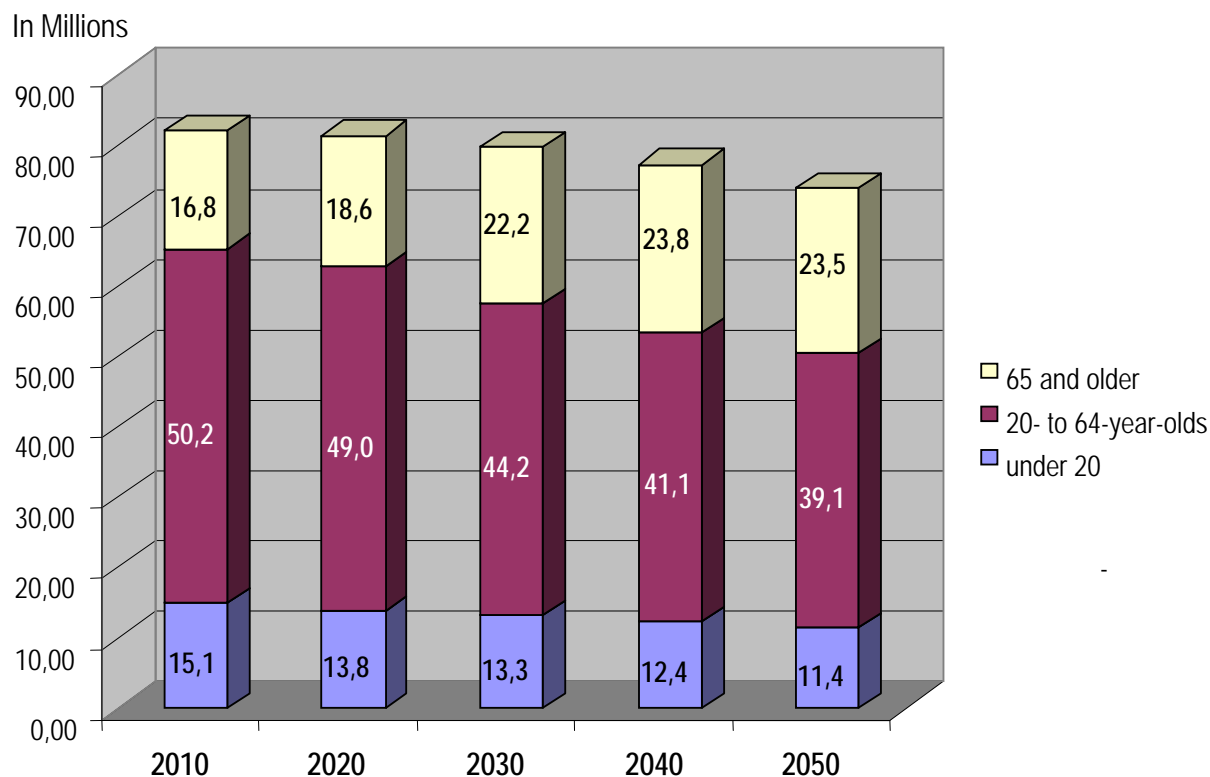


Figure 1: The population of Germany to 2050 in millions (11th coordinated population estimate)<sup>4</sup>

Whereas population decline in Germany will only be gradually noticeable, the changes in the age structure of the workforce will have largely taken place by 2020. The ageing of the labour force is already well under way. Despite uncertainties in forecasting, all the current scenarios agree that the proportion of workers over 50 will rise significantly after 2010, while the proportion of 20- to 30-year-olds will continue to drift downwards. Apart from these averages, changes in the age structure will vary greatly by region. At the moment, many employers view demographic change more as a “shortage of skilled workers”, especially younger workers in technical and engineering fields, and are less likely to recognize the underlying cause: the ageing of the overall labour force. What consequences can be expected?

- The likelihood of imbalances by region and skills between labour supply and demand will rise.
- Recruiting among younger age cohorts will become more competitive, especially among the most skilled. Younger skilled workers are likely to be in short supply, driving up their wages and salaries.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-63. Variations: frequency of births largely constant, basic assumption of life expectancy, net migration 200,000 persons per year.

- Significant ageing of the permanent public-service workforce can be regarded as given.

	<b>aged 20-29</b>	<b>aged 30-49</b>	<b>aged 50-64</b>
<b>2005</b>	20%	50%	30%
<b>2020</b>	18%	42%	40%
<b>2050</b>	17%	43%	40%

Figure 2: Age structure of Germany's labour force to 2050 (11th coordinated population estimate)<sup>5</sup>

Germany is not the only country affected by workforce ageing; the other EU countries are experiencing similar trends. The most important impact of demographic change on the public sector is that it will bring significant ageing of public-service staff. The proportion of persons over 50 in the labour market and public administration will rise significantly in the coming years.

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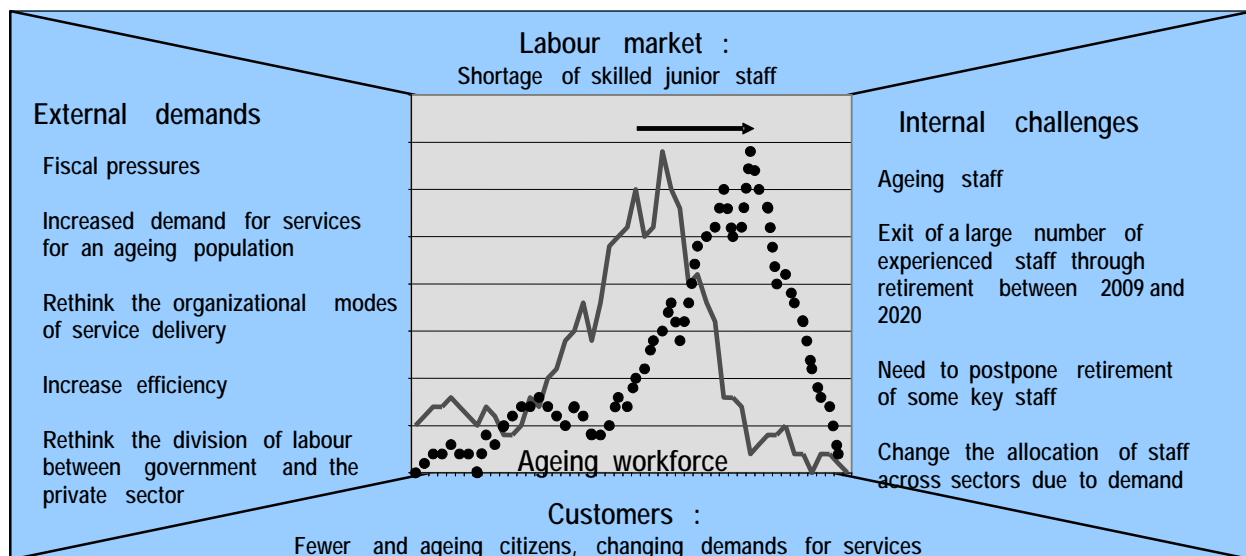
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Demographic change and the public sector: An overview

An ageing population creates pressure for changes in service delivery with implications for human resource management in government.<sup>6</sup> There is a need to reallocate resources across sectors resulting from an increased demand for additional staff in the social sectors. At the same time, the fiscal pressures resulting from the increased demand for services from an ageing population emphasize the need to reduce staff costs and to rethink the organizational modes of service delivery in order to increase efficiency. This will force further consideration of the division of labour between government and the private sector, or an autonomous status for service delivery organizations, and their implications for the employment rules for staff working in those sectors.

While the public sector must respond to the changing demands made by an ageing society, civil servants are themselves ageing and a large number of experienced staff will retire, most of them between 2009 and 2015, and continuing through 2020.<sup>7</sup> The education and the health sectors will be the most affected by the ageing of the civil service.

Significant staff departures are an opportunity to bring new skills into government, decrease staff numbers and staff costs (entry level salaries are lower), and change the allocation of staff across sectors. However, they also present a challenge, as they entail the loss of key capacity and may result in the need to postpone retirement of some key staff. Keeping a balanced demographic profile in the public sector will be particularly difficult in the next decade.



<sup>6</sup> OECD: The challenges of managing the public service in the context of an ageing population. Internet: [http://www.oecd.org/document/55/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34139\\_35724855\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/55/0,3343,en_2649_34139_35724855_1_1_1_1,00.html), 29.8.2007.

Figure 3: Implications of an ageing society for the public services (Source: Buck)<sup>8</sup>

Demographic change significantly alters the framework conditions for the public service. Hiring freezes and vacant positions left unfilled drive the average age of staff upwards. When larger age cohorts begin to retire in the coming years, new and qualified staff must be recruited from a labour market in which the supply of younger workers is shrinking. The public sector's ability to recruit will then depend heavily on its attractiveness as an employer. Many organizations will find it necessary to do more recruiting among older workers.

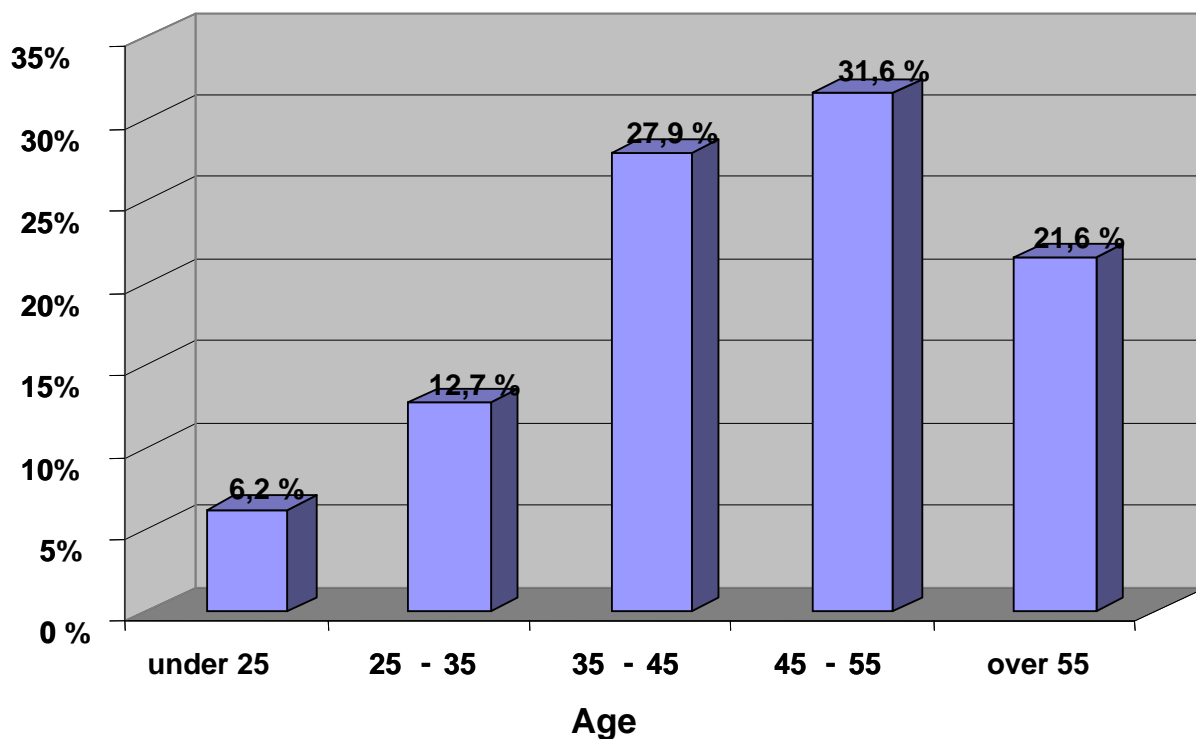


Figure 4: Age distribution among federal employees, 2006<sup>9</sup>

Ageing in the public service is occurring in a context of growing challenges. Due to staff reductions in past years and a growing number of tasks, many employees are facing much larger workloads. Additional and more complex tasks mean not only different, but also higher demands. Overall, public-sector organizations are facing heavy pressure to innovate, which they must manage with an ageing workforce.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> The contents of external demands and internal challenges are based on OECD, Public Employment and Management, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Federal Statistical Office: Employees by sections of the federal budget as of 30 June 2006, not including career soldiers or fixed-term volunteers.



### 3.1 Effects of demographic change on human resource management

The phenomenon of demographic change seems to be regarded by many companies and organizations at present as a limited “shortage of qualified labour”, particularly of younger technically skilled specialists and engineers, rather than being recognized for what it is: the ageing of the workforce right across the board.<sup>10</sup>

A central task of personnel policy should be to make sure that the age structure of organizations’ workforces is as balanced as possible. The dominance of particular age groups should be avoided in order to prevent age gaps in the available human resources and to steer clear of marked waves of recruitment and retirement. For this reason, a key task is to plan the right mixture of youth and maturity in advance. However, an absolutely equal distribution of all age groups is unlikely since the age spread among the population or labour force as a whole is not even.

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<sup>10</sup> Buck, H.; Weidenhöfer, J.: Betriebliche Personalpolitik - Demographische Herausforderungen bewerten und annehmen [Human resource policy in companies: Assessing and accepting demographic challenges]. In: Prager, J., Schleiter, A. (eds.): Länger leben, arbeiten und sich engagieren. Chancen wertschaffender Beschäftigung bis ins Alter [Living, working and remaining active longer: Opportunities of value-creating employment into old age]. Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung: 2006, pp. 103-116.

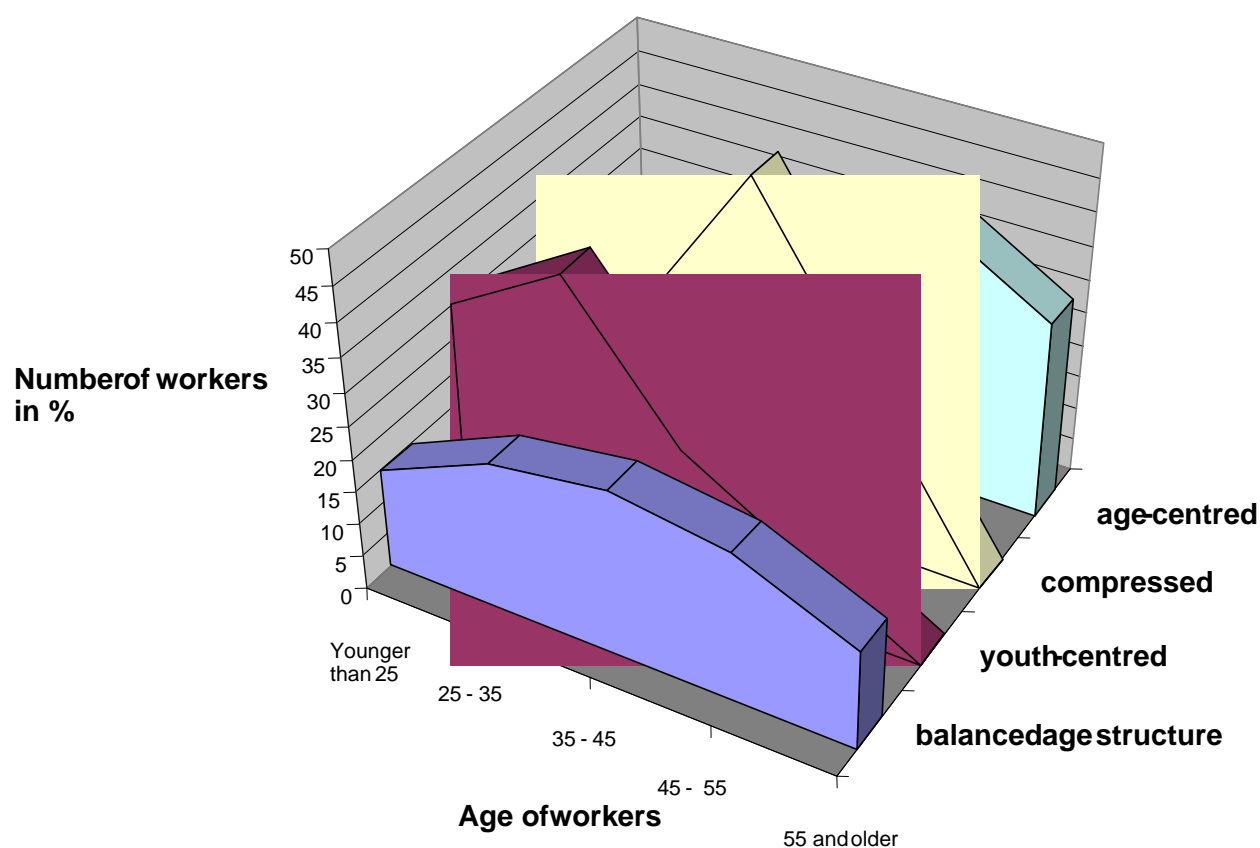


Figure 5: Age distributions of organizations (Source: Buck)<sup>11</sup>

To what extent the problem of demographic change does or will apply to specific organizations in the future depends on the sector, the size of the organization and the regional economy and labour market. Generally speaking, however, organizations face the challenge of rethinking and adapting their deployment and recruitment strategies often geared exclusively to younger workers. The consequences of an ageing workforce are magnified in the public sector because it generally has an older demographic profile than the private sector.<sup>12</sup>

The situation would be particularly precarious if recruitment had to take place in a situation characterized by a shortage (and corresponding increase in the cost) of younger labour. However, this is precisely the scenario we may expect for the public sector faced with the need for large-scale recruitment in five to ten years' time when demographic changes really do begin to make themselves felt. Just a few, attractive employers will be able to keep a "compressed" age structure (mainly consisting of the middle-aged) as is often the case today.

<sup>11</sup> Buck, Hartmut: Personnel management and workforce ageing. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

<sup>12</sup> OECD, op.cit.

The maintenance and continued development of the know-how and skills already available to organizations will grow in importance as firms are less able to rely on recruiting younger staff as a source of new knowledge. In the future more and older employees must be integrated in a continuous process of further training and innovation.

Due to financial concerns, generational turnover in organizations by means of early retirement is becoming more and more difficult. In view of the population bulge, there is no doubt that current regulations on early retirement will have to be discontinued sooner or later.

Age management encompasses the following eight dimensions:<sup>13</sup>

- job recruitment;
- learning, training and lifelong learning;
- flexible working time practices;
- career development;
- redeployment;
- health protection and promotion, and workplace design;
- employment exit and the transition to retirement;
- comprehensive approaches integrating these dimensions.

Good practice in age management involves specific measures to combat age barriers and promote age diversity. Such measures, however, may co-exist with other measures which restrict employment opportunities for older workers. Many companies, particularly larger ones, opt for a comprehensive approach such as flexible working hours combined with health care measures. Integrated human resource policies for active age management are not common.

An integrated age management strategy would be more effective, instead of the reactive stance adopted by many employers.<sup>14</sup> Primary ingredients of such a strategy are an emphasis

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<sup>13</sup> Naegele, Gerhard; Walker, Alan: A guide to good practice in age management. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (ed.), Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Taylor, Philip: Employment initiatives for an ageing workforce in the EU15. Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (ed.), Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006, p. 23.

on prevention and a focus on the entirety of working life, not solely on older workers. In the short term, special provision for older workers may be necessary, particularly for older women, who missed out on specific skills training or whose health has suffered as a result of their employment.

Range of possible organizational interventions:

- addressing age bias in recruitment,
- awareness-raising,
- training and continuing professional development targeting older workers,
- job redesign and ergonomic improvements,
- special leave for careers,
- more flexible employment contracts,
- gradual retirement, and
- organizational commitment to lifelong learning.

Strategic human resources management in the context of demographic change also includes creating the framework conditions for performance orientation and applying tools for performance-related pay. It is not enough to analyse and evaluate trends affecting age structure; it is also important to provide working conditions that are compatible with different life phases and to ensure through health promotion that staff are able to continue to work until the legal retirement age. At the same time, implementing the necessary processes of change and innovation with an ageing workforce requires support from a different kind of leadership culture.<sup>15</sup>

### **3.2. Effects of demographic change on public services**

Public service administrations and organizations must not only find responses to in-house ageing; they also need to respond to ageing in society as a whole. Only innovative public

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Pröhl, Marga: Auswirkungen des demographischen Wandels auf das Personalmanagement im Öffentlichen Sektor [Effects of demographic change on personnel management in the public sector]. Presentation, 1st Demographic Congress, Berlin, 24 August 2006.

administration can develop alternatives and solutions for dealing with demographic change in the various countries.

General social needs associated with demographic change can be illustrated using the example of Poland. Population ageing there has recently led to the following:<sup>16</sup>

- a shortage of forms of care, in terms of services provided at home and in establishments like hospitals, senior homes and within palliative care;
- the need for more social workers with high standards of professionalism. Their present number is insufficient given current and future needs;
- education is becoming indispensable for intergenerational integration because discrepancies between old and young people's level of education often create a barrier that isolates seniors from their children and grandchildren.

Education, health, social services, utilities and waste disposal, transport and the environment are among the essential basic services.<sup>17</sup> A central task for policy-makers is to provide or ensure these services with the necessary coverage, in the necessary form and at a reasonable cost for everyone. Reducing public services, especially in sparsely settled rural areas that are experiencing population loss, calls for careful decisions as to location, as well as new forms of provision and contact strategies to reach all residents at an affordable price. Rapid population ageing is forcing almost every city and town to consider how to provide infrastructure services flexibly and in line with demand.

Demographic change not only affects social and age structures, but also leads to population loss in certain areas and greater population density in others, with the following effects:<sup>18</sup>

- decreasing need for child day care and schools,
- new forms of housing and care for the elderly,

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<sup>16</sup> Potrykowska, Alina: Changing needs of an ageing society: A Polish perspective. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development; Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (eds.): Öffentliche Daseinsvorsorge und demographischer Wandel. Erprobung von Anpassungs- und Entwicklungsstrategien in Modellvorhaben der Raumordnung [Public provision of essential services and demographic change: Testing strategies for adaptation and development in regional planning models]. Berlin, Bonn, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Appel, Clemens: Demografischer Wandel – Herausforderungen für Politik und Verwaltung. 12. Fachtagung des Kommunalwissenschaftlichen Instituts der Universität Potsdam [Demographic change: Challenges for policy-makers and administration. 12th Expert Meeting of the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Potsdam]. Internet: [http://www.stk.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php?gsid=lbm1.c.353771.de&\\_siteid=36](http://www.stk.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php?gsid=lbm1.c.353771.de&_siteid=36).

- changes in supply of and demand for health-care services,
- reduction of private and public services in outlying areas,
- vacant homes and public buildings,
- under-utilization of technical infrastructures,
- reduced revenue for public budgets, etc.

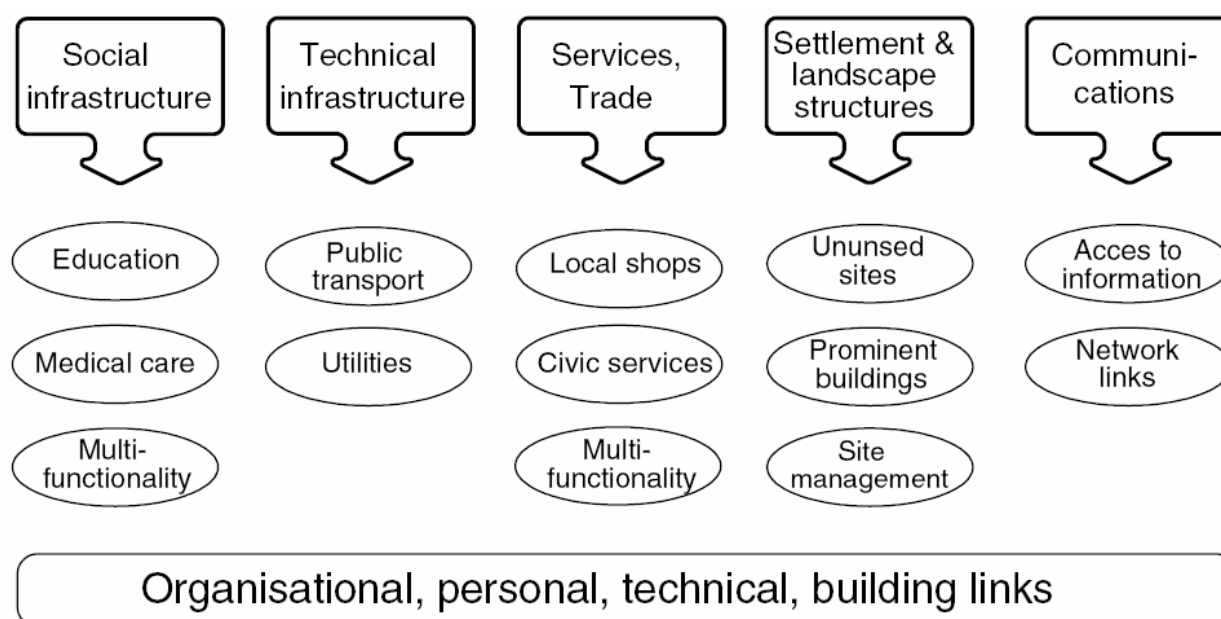


Figure 6: Fields of action for adaptation strategies<sup>19</sup>

The provision of public infrastructure must take into account population trends and the major growth in the number of elderly now, as infrastructure is usually built to last for decades. High fixed costs for local utilities and waste disposal systems will have to be borne by fewer taxpayers, especially in areas undergoing depopulation,<sup>20</sup> where local taxes and the cost of utilities could rise significantly. Demographic change could thus lead to noticeable increases in the financial burden of public infrastructure. To prevent this, appropriate measures must be taken.

<sup>19</sup> Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development; Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (eds.): Public services and demographic change. Proving of adaptation and developing strategies in Demonstration Projects of Spatial Development. 2006, p. 19.  
[http://www.bbr.bund.de/EN/Publications/SpecialPublication/2006\\_\\_2001/PublicServices.html](http://www.bbr.bund.de/EN/Publications/SpecialPublication/2006__2001/PublicServices.html)

According to DB research, three parallel strategies should be pursued:

- First, public administration must be trimmed.
- Second, private models of financing and operating in the public sector must be strengthened.
- Third, local governments should introduce property management systems.

In general, it is necessary to discuss which public services will have to be cut back in the future due to costs and which will have to be maintained or expanded due to demographic change.

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<sup>20</sup> Just, Tobias. Demografische Entwicklung verschont öffentliche Infrastruktur nicht [Demographic trends do not spare public infrastructure]. Deutsche Bank Research: Aktuelle Themen Demografie Spezial [Special Issue on Demographics], No. 294, 28 April 2004.

#### **4. Selected Examples in Europe**

##### **3.1 Preparing for an ageing society: The case of Finland<sup>21</sup>**

Some European countries have developed strategies to cope with demographic change in the public sector (especially northern European countries). Almost all European governments are aware that there is a problem approaching for the public service.

Finland is one of the most rapidly ageing societies in the EU. Regional differences in old-age dependency ratios are forecast to increase substantially between 2003 and 2030. Due to a shrinking supply of labour and to rising expenditures for pensions and health care, strong pressures on public finances can be expected. A special problem is the provision and financing of public services in the regions with the weakest age structures.

Under these circumstances a broad approach is needed:

- Population policy: Improving preconditions for higher birth rates and increasing immigration
- Promoting health and functional ability
- Taking care of children and youth
- Strengthening the potential for economic growth
- Reforming benefit schemes (including pension reform)
- Taking measures to extend working life and to increase employment of the elderly
- Safeguarding regional development and welfare services
- Supporting and utilizing the resources of older people

Measures to increase public sector efficiency are central government spending limits for the whole government period and a central government productivity action programme. This productivity action programme aims to reduce state personnel by 8% to 2011. Modernization

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<sup>21</sup> Vihriälä, Vesa: Preparing for an ageing society: The case of Finland. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.



efforts focus on coordination and cooperation in finance, human resources administration and IT operations, e.g. an increase in electronic services.

Municipal and service structure reform is a key issue as municipalities are responsible for providing most welfare services. It includes cooperation between municipalities in service provision and mergers of municipalities when necessary. The restructuring is helped by a demographic “window of opportunity”, as baby boomers retire in large numbers.

Finland is very close to the top in many comparisons of competitiveness. Public-sector efficiency is good by international standards. The labour market situation is much improved. In particular, the labour market participation and employment of elderly workers has been rising.

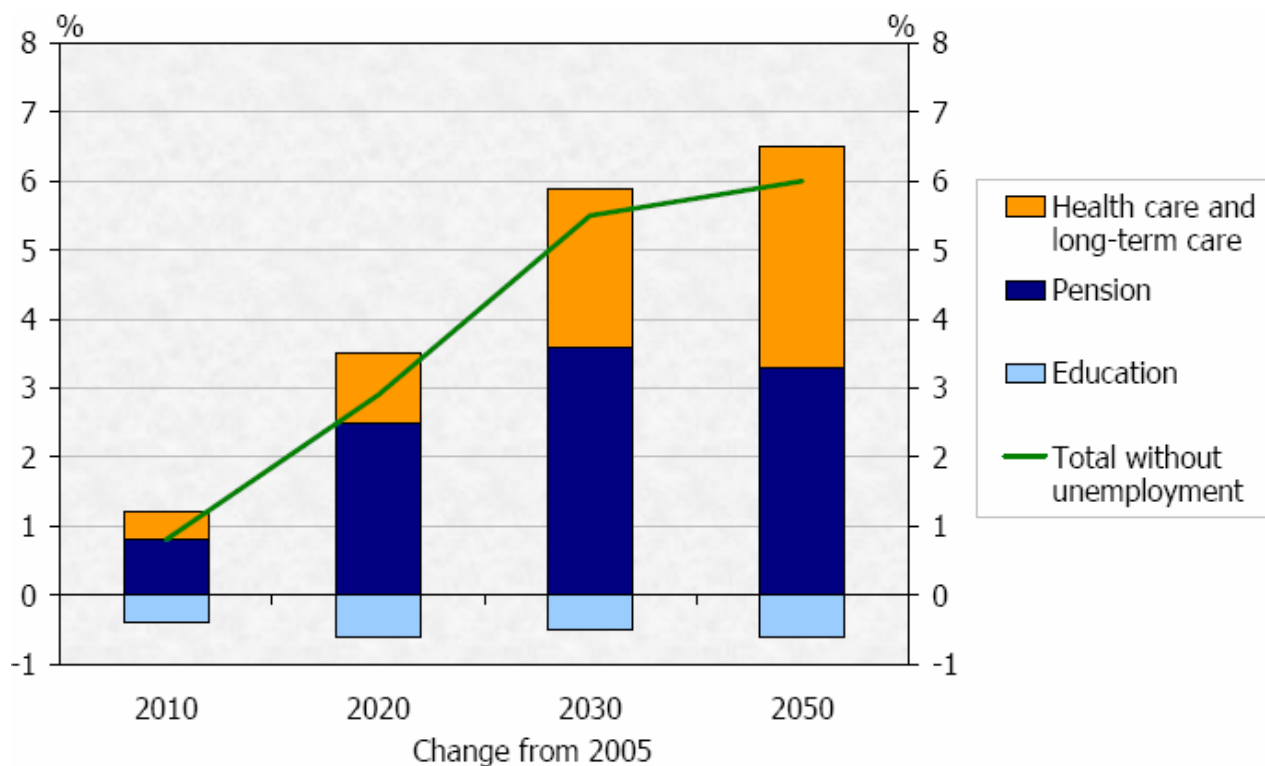


Figure 7. The increase in age-dependent expenditure as percent of GDP (Source: Ministry of Finance, Stability programme for Finland)<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, many challenges remain:

- The employment / unemployment situation remains unsatisfactory.
- The cost of long-term care and health care is still projected to increase substantially.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

- Despite the pension reform, pension expenditure is still projected to increase substantially as a share of GDP.
- Productivity in the provision of public services is improving only slowly.
- Regional differences remain large in general and in the capacity to provide services to the elderly.
- Older workers often still face discrimination.
- Obesity and alcohol consumption threaten public health.

The programme of the new government seeks to address these challenges.

### **3.2 Demography-Sensitive HR Management in the Federal Employment Agency – Germany (BA)<sup>23</sup>**

The Federal Employment Agency's personnel policy is sensitive to demographics and based on the principle of equal opportunities. As part of diversity management (the management of the wide variety of employees' skills) it is thus orientated to the principles of leadership and cooperation. Sensitivity to demographics and diversity management have an active role to play in improving a value-based personnel management policy and making a forward-looking contribution to ensuring efficiency and innovative ability and the stability of reform processes.

The Federal Employment Agency's personnel policy, which is geared to the principle of equal opportunities within the meaning of the Act on Equal Treatment, consciously encourages and challenges the diversity of employees' different skills. Diversity management thus means putting that diversity to good use in the interests of providing better customer-oriented services which reflect the diversity of customers. Promoting equal opportunities for all employees is an integral part of personnel development, and therefore a leadership task. The Federal Employment Agency has thus also positioned itself as an attractive and forward-looking employer with an eye on demographic change.

Regular analyses of the age structure of staff at the Federal Employment Agency serve as a source of data for developing corresponding personnel policies and assessments. Both the equal opportunities policy and the integration agreement stipulate that measures should be better coordinated and linked, taking demographic requirements into account.

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<sup>23</sup> Behrens, Beatrix: Demographic-sensitive HR management: Personnel management and workforce ageing. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

The Federal Employment Agency has identified a total of six areas of action in its overall strategy. The Agency has based measures developed as part of its demography-sensitive personnel policy on diversity management on these six areas.

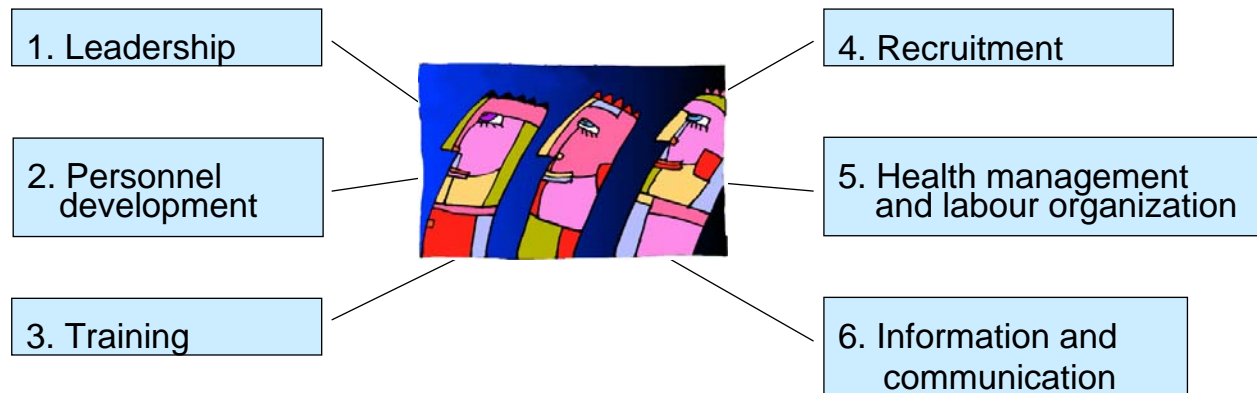


Figure 8: Areas of action for implementing demography-sensitive Diversity Management (Source: Behrens, Federal Employment Agency)

## Leadership

Management-level staff must develop a "correct" attitude to older members of staff. Possible prejudices and stereotypes in relation to their ability to work under pressure, their creativity, flexibility and competence must be eliminated. Staff become more sensitive to older employees when the topic is included in management training programmes (diversity sensitivity training), for example training courses run as part of the Diversity Network (cf. also **Information and communication**). In addition, there are plans to hold workshops and forums on a regular basis from 2007, in particular for senior executives, on key issues of demography-sensitive personnel policy.

## Personnel development

Developing professional experience/professional skills on the one hand and formal qualification on the other hand will be put on an equal footing and will become a fixed component of job descriptions and skills profiles. Upper age limits formerly used as part of assessments for skills-based feedback have already been abolished. Experience management needs to offer flexible horizontal and vertical personnel development opportunities regardless of a person's age. The knowledge and experience of older employees will be harnessed by, for instance, releasing older specialists and managers of their duties and enabling them to provide

internal advisory services and to work on projects (among other things, a Senior Manager Pool is being set up). In addition, it is possible to retain the experience and know-how of older employees after they have retired from public service, for example by giving retired members of staff the opportunity to advise managers, experts and projects.

## **Training**

The concept of life-long learning is being supported as part of modular training and skills development, the focus being on in-service training. This takes into account the expectations and needs of experienced employees with regard to training curricula, methods and organization. The training teams are normally mixed(-age). This enables the older staff to pass on their experience to younger staff members and the younger staff to pass on their knowledge to older staff members. In addition, special modules for older specialists and managers are available (eg a seminar on "Life-long top performance. The work-life balance"). Successful learning in all age groups requires that all those involved be sensitized to the issue and that they undergo training. Older employees in particular can be used as trainers, "learning sponsors" or points of contact for new employees. Positive experience has been gained with the tool of "mentoring" in the Federal Employment Agency's trainee programme.

## **Recruitment**

The Federal Employment Agency is endeavouring to open up its recruitment yet more to experienced applicants (50+) on all levels in order to utilize the experience of this group of people and their greater commitment and loyalty to the organization. The aptitude tests used during the recruitment process were reviewed as regards the factors "age" and "experience" - observers in assessment centres have undergone corresponding training.

## **Labour organization**

A further area of activity is the optimization of labour organization, in particular working time management. The goal is to bring working time in line with life-cycle phases. The Federal Employment Agency has the following possibilities at its disposal:

- Flexible working time rules with working time accounts,
- Considering various possible working life time account options,
- Sabbaticals.

Furthermore, there are wide-ranging possibilities for alternating telework as part of working time management. In addition, the employer and the works council reached agreement on

preventive occupational health management (OHM). The Federal Employment Agency's OHM also systematically addresses the issue of older employees.

### **Information and communication**

Information measures are also required in addition to the aforementioned measures, in particular in order to change people's attitudes to older employees. At the Federal Employment Agency these measures include launching an information site on the intranet so as to enable employees to take responsibility for themselves and to regularly provide information on diversity management via the employee magazine. The topic has also been included in a personnel development handbook for managers and personnel consultants. Personnel development consultants can advise staff on this issue, creating an internal, national diversity network and driving forward the use of all facets of personnel marketing both internally and externally..

### **3.3 Systematic learning in response to the productivity and innovation challenges of ageing: The case of the civil service in Cyprus<sup>24</sup>**

#### **The challenge**

Cyprus's civil service is a very attractive employer for qualified and talented young people, as compared to the private sector (e.g. with respect to salaries, job security, work schedule, pensions). Thus, overall, ageing has not been considered a significant challenge so far, though a certain ageing problem is apparent in the area of middle and top management, due to the fact that promotion to those levels tends to take place exclusively on the basis of seniority. A moderate degree of ageing is now anticipated for the coming years as the retirement age has been raised from 60 to 63 years and recruitment policies have become more restrictive.

Particularly among higher-ranking officials, age can have adverse effects on performance, above all on productivity and innovation. The main reasons for this are the following:

- It is more difficult for older staff to keep up with technical/scientific developments in their specialized fields.

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<sup>24</sup> Shiakides, Sotos: Systematic learning in response to the productivity and innovation challenges of ageing: The case of the civil service in Cyprus. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

- Organizations are less able to take full advantage of information and communications technology (ICT).
- Older staff have a disadvantage with respect to the (crucial but largely new) EU knowledge and skills.
- Ageing leads to a decrease in dynamism. The dominant culture is less favourable to promoting and accepting innovation and change (e.g. in ideas, values, management practices, organization structures). Also there is an insufficient emphasis on the modern strategic approach to management and leadership.

### **Responding to the challenge**

In response to these and other performance challenges a system of methodical management of lifelong learning was established, centring on the work of Learning Units (LUs). LUs are intra-organizational teams for managing learning – one in each civil service organization – trained and supported by the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA). Learning Units are responsible for

- analysing learning needs in their respective organization, and
- planning, implementing and evaluating learning activities to satisfy the needs identified.

Properly functioning LUs are allocated their own learning budget and organize learning activities either by themselves, using their own trainers, or in association with CAPA. (LUs will soon be electronically networked with CAPA as well as among themselves).

In addition to satisfying selectively – at the request of LUs – decentralized organization learning needs, CAPA undertakes horizontal learning initiatives on the basis of its own learning needs analyses. For example, in 2004 CAPA, in association with the Greek National Centre of Public Administration, carried out the diagnostic survey “The Adaptability of the Cyprus Civil Service to the Managerial and Organizational Requirements of the EU”.

Areas of learning emphasized in both LU- and CAPA-initiated training and development programmes, addressing ageing challenges among others, include:

- EU issues: EU institutions and processes, EU policies and programmes, management and organizational implications of EU membership for the civil service.
- Information and Communications Technology (e.g. facilitating office automation projects and supporting the introduction of a financial information management accounting system).
- Leadership, including change management, work in mixed-age teams, participatory management, strategic management, performance management, and the creation of an innovative culture.
- Communication.
- Induction of new entrants.
- Team development.
- Organizational development (designing and facilitating the implementation of organizational development projects).
- Organizational self-evaluation by means of the Common Assessment Framework model (CAF).
- Staff appraisal for performance improvement and promotion according to merit.

### **3.4 HR policies developed in the French civil services to cope with demographic change<sup>25</sup>**

Demographic change is seen as an opportunity to reduce the size of the public sector (21% of the French workforce). At the same time, the civil services have to take into account the performance-based approach included in the constitutional law on finances of 1 August 2001 (*Loi organique relative aux lois de finances, LOLF*).

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<sup>25</sup> Vaugiraud, Frédéric de: HR policies developed in the French civil services to cope with demographic change. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

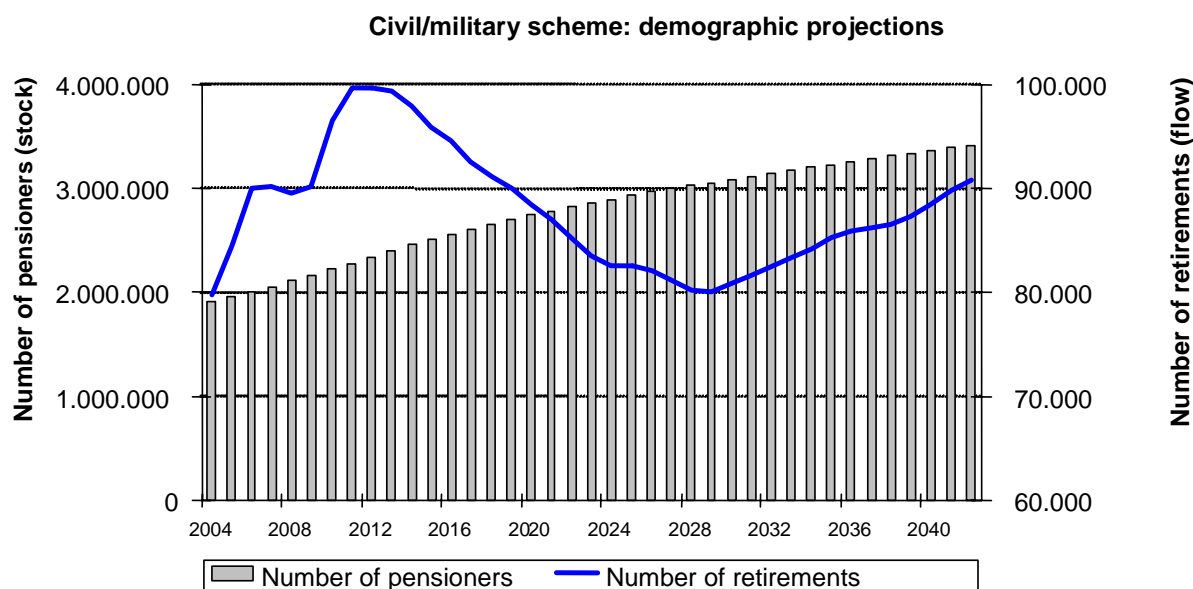


Figure 9: French ministries: Number of pensioners and number of retirements (Source: Vaugiraud, Ministry of Civil Service)

Another major consequence of the demographic change in the French public sector is the improvement in HR management. The main tasks are to maintain the attractiveness of the public sector and to improve mobility and develop training processes in order to prepare civil servants for new tasks. Government strategy and actions focus on improving HR planning in ministries: i.e. planning for jobs, planning the workforce and planning for skills. The Ministry of Civil Service encourages other ministries to develop strategic policies on HR. It develops an HR Information System and exchanges best practices. Furthermore the ministry develops active recruitment and training processes by reviewing policies on recruitment and lifelong training.

An additional strategy of the government is encouraging mobility and performance through career and wage management. A change in assessment policies and modification of frameworks and habits is planned.

### 3.5 Managing the government workforce in the context of an ageing population: Recent measures in Portugal<sup>26</sup>

Life expectancy in Portugal is now more than 77 years and can be expected to rise, increasing the number of pensioners and the number of years they remain in the system. The social



security system is near financial breakdown. There are huge differences between the public- and private-sector schemes, which is a source of unfairness. Before the reform, the retirement age in the civil service was 60 years of age or 36 years of service, while the retirement age in the private sector was 65 years of age or 40 years of service.

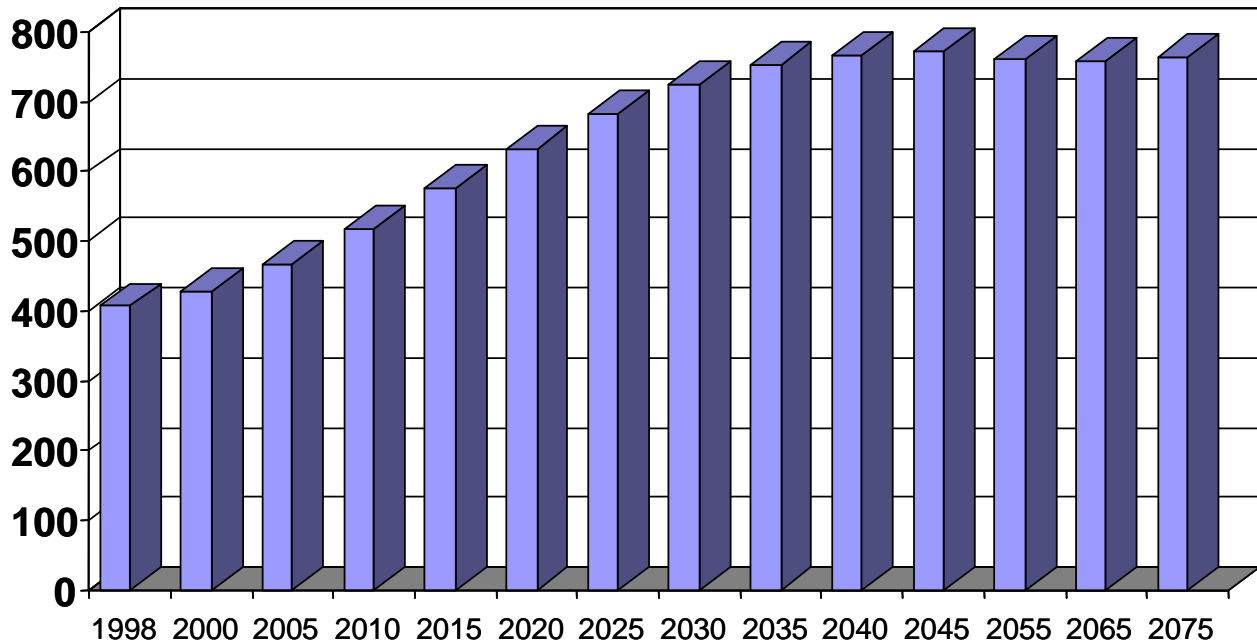


Figure 10: Total number of pensioners and retired people in Portugal (Source: Luís Evangelista)

The following measures were taken to strengthen the equity and sustainability of social protection systems, as well as to follow the evolution of average life expectancy:

- the legal retirement age will rise from 60 to 65 years;
- incentives for early retirement will be abolished;
- the formula used to calculate pensions will be changed;
- several special regimes will be cut;
- lifelong learning and continuous learning will be promoted, e.g. suitable training courses for older staff with a view to their re-classification or vocational retraining/conversion or to the development of new skills, particularly in ICT; and

<sup>26</sup> Evangelista, Luís: Managing the government workforce in the context of an ageing population: Recent measures in Portugal. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

- flexible working arrangements will be offered, e.g. special part-time work for staff over 55 years old and at the end of their professional lives.

From January 2006 all new public service employees (in general) will be covered by the private-sector social security system. For new public service employees, contributions will be the same as in the private-sector system, for both employees and employers. The legal retirement age for public service employees will rise gradually from 60 to 65 during the period from 2006 to 2015, by one six-month increment each year. The number of years needed to receive a full pension will be extended in stages from 34 to 40 years during the period 2006–2013, again by one six-month increment each year. There will be no incentives for early retirement.

Modernizing without excluding older staff is the challenge that the Portuguese public administration is currently facing. All forms of training are integrated in an annual training plan, included in the respective organizational activity plan.

### **3.6 An ageing society in Norway: Meeting the challenges in working life<sup>27</sup>**

The Norwegian economy differs significantly from that in other European countries. On account of its flourishing oil and gas industry, Norway has full employment, budget surpluses and the world's highest per capita gross domestic product. The unemployment rate in Norway is currently 2.7 per cent and will, according to estimates, continue to drop. It is assumed that in future the number of vacant jobs in the private and public sector will exceed the number of people seeking employment. In 2004 the rate of employment in the 55 to 64 age group was 63 per cent for women and 73 per cent for men.

Various strategies were implemented at national level to enable older people to continue to work for longer:

- A Centre for Senior Policy (CSP) was set up ([www.seniorpolitikk.no](http://www.seniorpolitikk.no)).
- An Inclusive Working Life (IW) Agreement was concluded.

The CSP, initiated by the government and social partners, is responsible for coordinating the "National Initiative for Older Employees". The biggest social partners are represented on its

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<sup>27</sup> Lund, Finn Bjørnar: An ageing society in Norway: Meeting the challenges in working life. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

Board. Over the past six years the CSP has received funding from the national budget. Following the last evaluation the decision was taken to continue the CSP. Around 1990 the focus of its work shifted from preparing employees for retirement to retaining older employees in companies for longer. The key goals of this three-way agreement between the state, employers and trade unions are to:

- Raise awareness of the resources and qualities provided by older employees,
- Stimulate an integrative and open attitude to all age groups in the work force (age diversity),
- Better coordinate leadership strategies between the social partners and the state.

The goals of Inclusive Working Life (IW) include: to reduce the sickness rate and integrate more physically and mentally handicapped people into the world of work, to better utilize the skills and experience of older employees, and to raise the average age of retirement by six months by 2009.

Other strategies for keeping older employees working addressed the possibility of additional holidays and further incentives for employees over the age of 62. The public sector also carried out controlled pilot projects using various working time models, for instance an ICT advanced training project *Seniornett* ([www.seniornett.no](http://www.seniornett.no)) for employees over the age of 55.

Further strategies are planned post 2010 in order to retain older employees:

- Changing pension models: extending life working time.
- Considering raising the legal age of retirement from currently 70 to 72 in the public sector.
- New social benefit models: combining full retirement pensions with paid jobs and contracts in order to oblige those on social benefit to work or undergo training/further training in return for benefits.

### **3.7 Ensuring public services against the background of demographic change: Germany<sup>28</sup>**

There are regional disparities in access to services and infrastructure. The ideal is to achieve equivalent (not equal!) living conditions in all regions.<sup>29</sup> But we have lived with regional disparities for decades. Equivalence does not mean identical living conditions everywhere, but rather

- equal opportunities and certain minimum standards for access to and availability of public services,
- options for earning a living, and
- infrastructure and environmental quality.

#### **Concept of central places**

Central places provide supralocal supply services. This is an important component to achieve spatial equivalence of living conditions. Central places, particularly higher-order centres, are characterized by high population density and a bundled supply of jobs and service facilities. Following the reunification of Germany, the central place concept was transferred to the new federal states.

Primary schools have already been affected by demographic change. Collapsing birth rates in eastern Germany after reunification forced many primary schools to close. New schools were established near major towns (due to suburbanization).

The following table shows the minimum standards for the number of educational facilities in the central places in Bavaria, according to the Bavarian development programme. For example, a secondary service centre must have at least one primary school, while a higher-order centre ought to have scientific facilities and a technical college or university as well.

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<sup>28</sup> Spangenberg, Martin: Ensuring public services against the background of demographic change. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

<sup>29</sup> The Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung, BBR) supervises the most important federal buildings at home and abroad. It supports the federal government by providing expert consultation in the areas of spatial planning, urban development, housing and building. The regional planning system in Germany requires cooperation across all planning levels: local governments and counties, regions, states and federal government.

Centrality criteria	Secondary order centre	Lower-order centre	Middle-order centre	Higher-order centre
Primary school	X	X	X	X
Secondary school		X	X	X
School for adult education			X	X
Secondary school leading to intermediate qualification			X	X
Grammar school			X	X
Vocational school			X	X
Technical college/polytechnic, university				X
Source: LEP Bayern, 2003				

Figure 11: Standards in public services exemplified by school locations<sup>30</sup>

In summer 2006 the Standing Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning (MKRO) adopted new priorities and approaches for spatial development in Germany. The three main tasks of spatial planning over the next few years are promoting growth and innovation, ensuring public services and conserving resources, and shaping cultural landscapes. These three tasks have equal priority and address all types of space, from rural/peripheral to metropolitan areas.

### Ensuring public services

There is a commitment to ensuring an appropriate basic supply of public services, particularly in the areas of health, education and public transport in the future. Even with ever-tighter budgets, the target will still be to ensure that all segments of the population have equal and non-discriminatory access to utilities and public services. For this task, five focal points for implementation can be defined:

- adjusting the central place system,
- communicating adjustment processes,
- considering the long-term costs of technical and social infrastructure,
- making public services the subject of interdisciplinary dialogue, and
- empowering communities based on solidarity.

<sup>30</sup> BMVBS/BBR (eds.): Perspectives of Spatial Development in Germany. Bonn/Berlin, 2006, p. 47.  
[http://www.bbr.bund.de/EN/Publications/SpecialPublication/2006\\_\\_2001/PerspectivesSpatialDevelopment.html](http://www.bbr.bund.de/EN/Publications/SpecialPublication/2006__2001/PerspectivesSpatialDevelopment.html)

One goal is to preserve basic public welfare under changed demographic conditions, particularly in regions with a predominantly older population as well as in sparsely populated areas undergoing depopulation. We need to reorient strategies, standards and instruments to provide equivalent living conditions in all regions of Germany. Appropriate minimum regional standards oriented on regional demand, accessibility and financial resources have to be defined. In view of the changing needs of an ageing society and of families with children, the concept of central places supplemented by flexible provision of public welfare must be reviewed. There are no ready-made solutions for making the adjustments required by demographic change in order to guarantee public services. Instead, local and regional solutions must be found. Good practices must be translated and adapted if they are to work in a different context.

#### **Case study: Education**

Small schools in rural areas in East Thuringia: developing a strategy to manage the necessary secondary school closures in the region in an integrated and collaborative way, leading to a school network in which almost all communities are within 10 km of a secondary school.

#### **Case study: Medical care**

Medical care in the Mecklenburg-Seenplatte region: developing a strategic model of medical centres for rural areas, bringing together several GPs and possibly specialist consultants, care services and providers of psycho-social advisory services.

#### **Case study: Transport**

Joint public transport services with flexible timetables in the region “Fürst-Pückler-Land” in eastern Brandenburg and Saxony: Rural transport provision was not felt to be frequent enough, but buses were never full. A solution was found by bringing in smaller buses managed by private companies, operating on demand. The rural transport system now offers two strands: Public companies operate the main routes and private companies operate flexible “ring-a-ride” services to bring passengers to the main routes. The private operators receive a subsidy to ensure viability, which is still more cost-effective for local authorities than the previous public scheme.

### **Case study: Intercommunal cooperation in basic supply**

One example of successful intercommunal cooperation is the project “Village Centres” in East Thuringia, which aims to ensure integrated basic supply. “Thinking in terms of functions, rather than facilities” is the underlying standard in this project. The basic idea: merging various social infrastructures (e.g. kindergarten, primary school, care for the elderly, cultural facilities) and private services (e.g. ambulatory consultations). The shared use of a building and/or staff at different times is meant to minimize the cost of facilities and ensure adequate take-up.

### **Conclusion**

The region is the main level for ensuring provision of public services of general economic interest under conditions of demographic change. Regional strategies to adapt infrastructure to changes in population structure need the support of the people living in the region. The process of reconsidering real development prospects must take place step by step, with increasing degrees of commitment and specialist integration. At the same time, strategies for adapting infrastructure must examine and adapt existing regional development goals as needed. Regional strategies for adapting infrastructure development are informal plans and need to be implemented within a new type of regional plan. Central places offer an appropriate way to ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure, as long as they are not assumed to involve a fixed catalogue of services but are associated with the provision of structurally adequate services.

Maintaining a differentiated structure of central places in rural/peripheral regions requires further scrutiny. Adaptation should not simply mean reducing the services provided, but must generate new forms and more efficient organization. Regional adaptation strategies can only be developed in cooperation, and the regional actors have to overcome local or sectoral egoism if infrastructural approaches are to be implemented. The development of consensual regional adaptation strategies must be moderated in a structured and differentiated process of communication and dialogue (guidance by moderation).

## 5. Summary

The forecasts are clear: The total population will begin to shrink starting around 2020, while the age structure of the working-age population will shift mainly in the period 2005 to 2020. We are already in the midst of this process. Demographic change in Germany and other European countries means that the proportion of people over 50 will grow significantly.

The change in the age composition of the overall labour force will also be reflected in the employee age structure at individual workplaces. The proportion of workers over 50 will rise significantly in the coming years. As early retirement options are phased out, workforce ageing will speed up even further.

Although the public sector is aware of problems related to demography, strategies for hiring and development often do not take foreseeable workforce ageing or recruitment shortages into account soon enough. It is a major challenge to look well ahead beyond the usual planning horizon to address the changing demographic conditions sufficiently in advance, as it is not possible to fundamentally reorient human resources policy at short notice.

The current debate in organizations about positive recruitment strategies for “high potentials” does not go anything like far enough towards meeting the challenge of demographic change. As far as the problems of recruiting skilled labour and ageing workforces are concerned, organizations must rethink their positions and must step up the amounts they invest in qualifying their employees of all age groups.

Given the need for highly qualified workers and the dramatic rate of technological change, company personnel policy should concentrate on developing the skill potential of all age groups. The concept of lifelong learning will have positive effects only if further training continues to be offered as an established part of companies’ personnel development policies

In the future even more flexibility and mobility will be demanded in the world of work – not only in terms of working hours, but also in terms of the stability of career paths. An increasingly older labour force threatens to collide with a world of work which demands patterns of behaviour tailored to younger age groups.

Many organizations now recognize that their human resources are their most valuable asset. It is equally important for all workers to realize that their qualifications, and their continuing development throughout working life, will increase the options available to them in the labour market. Unlike in the past, it is unusual nowadays for people to remain in one trade or profession up to retirement. For this reason, it is essential for people to realize that after their



schooling and initial vocational training, they still have many new learning phases ahead of them throughout their lives.

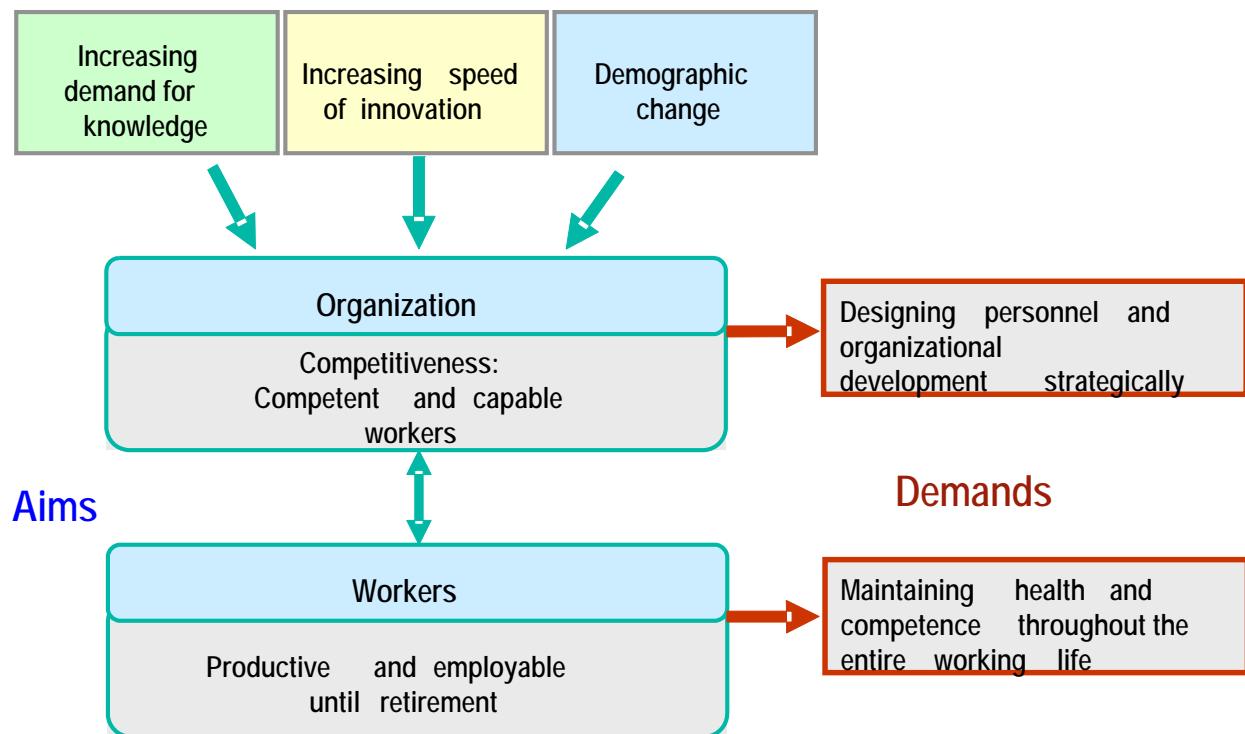


Figure 12: Demands for organizations and workers (Source: Buck)

The number of public- and private-sector employees with health conditions limiting their ability to work generally increases with age. Many of them need job assignments which are better suited to their capabilities. But in the course of modernization and rationalization, less-demanding occupations which could be performed by older workers with health problems have been cut back or done away with entirely, while job performance requirements have become more demanding. It is thus increasingly difficult to find appropriate work for these employees, who used to have the option of early retirement, especially if they are less qualified.

To be effective, career planning should start at career entry or even during occupational training, rather than with older workers whose productivity has already begun to fall. Action should be taken as early as possible to counteract foreseeable reductions in qualifications, health and motivation.

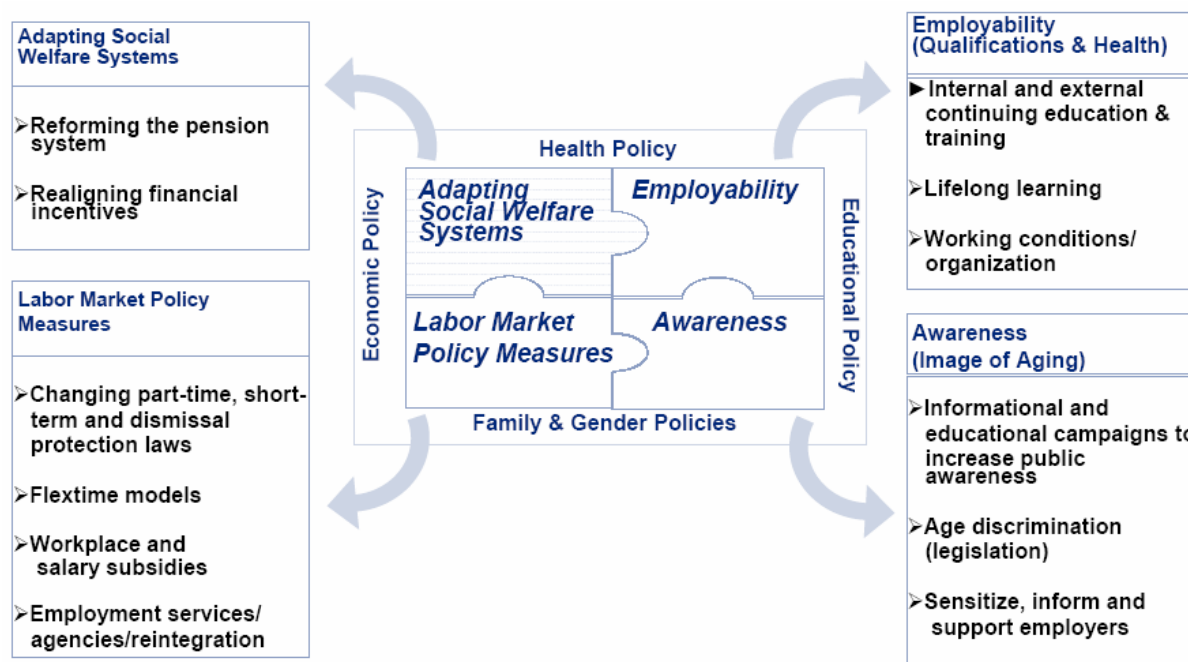


Figure 13: Policy mix to promote employment of older workers (Source: Schleiter, Bertelsmann Stiftung<sup>31</sup>)

Labour-market policy measures for older workers who are unemployed or at risk of losing their jobs have assumed greater importance in recent years. However, efforts by public and private employment agencies to find jobs or funding for such workers have only a limited chance of success if employers hold negative opinions about the productivity of older workers or if older workers in fact lack skills. Individual support, personal coaching and the ability to market oneself are essential for improving the employability of older workers. The likelihood of reintegrating older workers in the primary labour market does not depend on the quality and intensity of efforts to find work alone, however, but also on creating new jobs and kinds of work.

Apart from the question of how to increase employment rates of older workers and make the pension and social insurance systems sustainable in the face of demographic change, the public sector must address the larger question of how to provide public services and infrastructure flexibly and in response to public needs. Public services in the fields of education, health, social services, utilities and waste disposal, transport and the environment must be assessed and evaluated with regard to demographic change. Ageing, migration and a shrinking population must be taken into account especially when planning infrastructure projects, as such planning usually is done years in advance. Altered or reduced demand for

public services for demographic reasons requires long-term strategies in order to ensure comparable living conditions in sparsely populated areas as well as metropolitan centres.

When compared to existing strategies for age management and demographic-sensitive human resources policy, the discussion of adapting public services and optimizing infrastructure to deal with demographic change has only just begun. The public sector must continue to concern itself with the medium- to long-term effects of demographic change and measures that need to be taken now. Although there are certainly a number of viable approaches and models which individual organizations or countries are already applying, there has not yet been any broad-based, rapid implementation of such models. Given the explosive and pressing nature of the problems associated with demographic change, such action is urgently needed.

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<sup>31</sup> Schleiter, André: Demographic challenges for HR management. Presentation, Expert Conference on Demographic Change, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brühl, Germany, 2 May 2007.

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