

POLAND

1. Third Age Universities

Third Age Universities are conducting educational and activating events for the elderly in compliance with the *lifelong learning* philosophy. Their goal is intellectual, social and physical development of older persons as well as assistance in taking advantages of medical and cultural facilities and other public offices. Moreover, they serve as a platform to maintain social relationships between older persons. Senate of the Republic of Poland announced year 2012 to be the year of Third Age Universities and made a recommendation to strengthen their role in the society. There are currently circa 400 Third Age Universities in Poland and circa 70 000 students participating in the classes organized by them.

2. Governmental Programme for the Social Activity of the Elderly for the years 2012-2013

On 24 August 2012 the Government adopted the Programme for the Social Activity of the Elderly for the years 2012-2013. The programme was adopted in a reference to the challenges that arise when the generations of the baby boom retire so their potential can be still used. The programme is focused on four areas:

- a) Education of the elderly – It focuses not only on the Third Age Universities but also on promoting volunteer work.
- b) Social activity and integration – It focuses on developing different forms of social activity by the usage of the existing social infrastructure (such as public libraries, communities centres) and incorporating young persons into developing relationships with the elderly.
- c) Participation of the elderly – It focuses on increasing the participation of the elderly in the public, social, economical, cultural and political activities for the development of the civic society. Very important role in this process is dedicated to the organisations representing the elderly such as Elderly Councils acting within local authorities.
- d) Social services for the elderly – It focuses on developing different forms of support by increasing the availability and the quality of the social services for the elderly. The crucial element are the local nets of social assistance which base their actions on the volunteer work.

There are two parts of the programme. The competitive part is an opportunity for the non-profit organizations acting within one of the above-mentioned areas to receive a grant. In the first edition 400 projects received the grant. The systemic part focuses on developing long term policy for the elderly (for the years 2014-2020). 20 million zlotys in 2012 and 40 million zlotys in 2013 were addressed for the implementation of the programme.

In 2012 the Department of the Policy for the Elderly was created in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Works on creating the Elderly Policy Council are underway.

3. System of Social Security

The elderly are entitled to social security services under the provisions of Social Security Act of 2004. According to Article 50(1) of the above-mentioned Act a single elderly who requires assistance of others may receive caring services such as:

- assistance in everyday activities such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, accessing public offices;
- cleaning, showering, clothing up, giving medicines, making the bed, preventing the bedsores;
- if possible enabling contacts with family and friends;
- access to psychologists, nurses, physiotherapists and rehabilitation.

Those services are partially payable. The costs depend on the form of the services and the income of the person in need. In cases of poverty there is a possibility of granting an exemption from those costs.

According to Article 37(1) of the Social Security Act the elderly may also receive the pecuniary constant benefit if he or she is single, unable to work and his or her income is low. Moreover, if there is a need to provide a long-term care the elderly person is entitled to receive other pecuniary benefits such as periodic benefit, expedient benefit, as well as required equipment. Those benefits are granted by municipalities.

If a member of the family resigns from his or her employment or is going to the permanent leave the municipality may pay his or her social security fees.

An elderly who requires assistance because of his or her age, illness, disability, inability to function on his/her own, who cannot be assisted in his or her home may be placed in Social Help Houses. Social Help Houses provide the elderly with caring, medical, assisting and educational services. The person placed in the Social Help House is required to pay the costs of the care - up to the 70% of his or her income. If he or she is unable to pay all the costs the family is required to pay the rest. If it still does not cover all the costs the remaining part is incurred on the municipality.

4. National Programme on Actions for the Equal Treatment

Under Article 22 of 2010 Implementation of some European Union Provisions on Equal Treatment Act, the Government's Plenipotentiary for the Equal Treatment was obliged to develop the National Programme on Actions for the Equal Treatment. The works are underway and the Programme will address the problems of all discriminated minorities including the elderly in areas such as labour market, health, education, access to services and goods and working against the house-violence. Increasing social awareness in the areas of equal treatment and cooperation with other organizations and social partners is one of the goals of the programme.