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**FIRST SESSION**

(Strasbourg, 31 May - 3 June 1994)

**REPORT**

on

**EUROPE AND ITS ELDERLY PEOPLE:  
TOWARDS A PACT BETWEEN GENERATIONS**

Rapporteur: Mr Enrico GUALANDI (Italy)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

## INTRODUCTION

Like other international organisations, the Council of Europe has already addressed the subject of elderly people, particularly from the point of view of social protection.

In particular, Article 4 of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter is intended to protect elderly people from social exclusion, to enable them to choose their life-style freely and lead independent lives and to guarantee their dignity.

Similarly, the Intergovernmental Programme of Activities has given in-depth consideration to the question of adapting social security systems to the needs of an ageing population.

However, a new avenue has now been opened up, focusing on ageing as a process, the role of the elderly, their rights and obligations, their participation in community life and the prevention of all forms of marginalisation and social exclusion. This new approach was already evident in Resolution 1008 of the Parliamentary Assembly of 3 September 1993 on social policies for elderly persons and their self-reliance.

On the other hand, 1993 was declared "European Year of the Elderly and of Solidarity between Generations" by the European Community. Here I should like to single out two of the results of the many international meetings that were held on this occasion, firstly the "Lisbon Declaration" adopted in October 1993 by the Elderly People Sub-Committee of the Welfare Committee of the "Eurocities" movement, and secondly, the Declaration of principle adopted on 6 December 1993 by the Council of the European Union and the Social Affairs Ministers. In the latter document the member states declare that they are prepared to carry out a policy based on the essential principles of solidarity between generations, in order to promote the social integration of the elderly and to encourage respect for the individuality of elderly people.

Another major event in 1993 was the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe held in Vienna on 8 and 9 October, which saw the adoption of a declaration and action plan to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

The Vienna Summit gave the Standing Committee (now Congress) of Local and Regional Authorities additional reasons to act in fields where it had already made a substantial contribution (such as multicultural integration, citizenship and extreme poverty, implementation of the right to housing, participation of young people in local and regional life, protection of gypsies and other minorities, protection against infringement of the rights of people with HIV/Aids), as well as in the "new" field of the elderly.

It seemed clear that, in order to build a Europe based on tolerance and respect for the inalienable dignity of all human beings, it was vital to take action to give elderly people the respect which they deserve and to combat the stereotypes of a society where age and old people are refused, rejected and excluded.

The idea grew to organise an international Conference on "Europe and its Elderly People", not only to compare local and regional policies but also to lay down some guidelines for the future and for the action of the CLRAE in this field.

### **THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIENA CONFERENCE:**

Before summarising the proceedings, I should like to stress that this Conference was a success, not only from the point of view of organisation, attendance, and the quantity and quality of the papers and interventions, but also from that of principles and ideas for action. The principles included the need to strip retirement of all connotations of passivity, uselessness and dependence; the ideas for action included, in particular, the "Citizen Generations" project, which became one of the main inspirations for the draft recommendation on "Europe and its elderly people: towards a pact between generations", which is reproduced separately.

I shall go on to present the principles and objectives affirmed in the draft recommendation, but firstly I shall focus on the proceedings of the Conference proper.

The Conference was held from 14 to 16 October 1983.

The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly was represented by Mr Schwimmer; Mr Leuprecht, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe also took an active part in the Conference.

The Conference was opened by Mr Zahn, the Chairman of the CLRAE Committee on Social Affairs and Health.

Your Rapporteur then took the floor to make some introductory remarks on the Conference. I stated, in particular, that all human and material resources had to be brought to bear in order to carry out a new policy on the elderly, one designed not only to provide support but also to promote their autonomy.

The opening speeches were given by Ms Carli, the Deputy Mayor of Siena and Mr Leuprecht.

Ms Carli stressed her hopes that the Conference would lead to a new concept of the "elderly person" and at the same time to guidelines for a new policy on the elderly, especially at local level. She explained that elderly people should not be seen as a factor of decline, but rather as a resource for society, and that, in the face of this development, the voluntary sector and solidarity between generations were becoming increasingly important.

In his speech, Mr Leuprecht set the Conference in the context of the above-mentioned Campaign against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance. He stressed that in a society where "... Today, men and women are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with others and with otherness, to accept others as they are, with all their possible differences and to establish relationships with them", "... Others also means the elderly". In his conclusion, Mr Leuprecht made the following plea, "... Let us work together to give elderly people the place and the respect they deserve in a Europe of warmth, solidarity and respect for the

inalienable dignity of all human beings".

The afternoon session on the first day, chaired by Mr Gensburger in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the CLRAE Committee on Social Affairs and Health, was devoted to the presentation of the three general introductory reports to the Conference.

Ms Reboul, Professor of gerontological psychology at Université Lumière Lyon 2, in charge of teaching gerontological psychology and responsible for the Université Tous Ages (Senior Citizens' University), presented the first of these reports, on "The place and role of the elderly in Europe in the year 2000. Evolution of concepts and ideas". After tracing a broad outline of the situation of the older generation in our era and denouncing the stereotypes which often condition our ways of dealing with and understanding ageing and old age, Ms Reboul stressed the fundamental and unique role of the elderly in building the Europe of today, and the need to delay ageing.

Ms H Jani-Le-Bris, expert at the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, presented, as the second report, a comparative summary of the situation and objectives of European countries' policies concerning the elderly. In particular, she outlined the situation regarding care in the family, home-help services and residential care in the various countries. In conclusion, she stressed that socio-gerontological policies now cover at least two generations, the second being the "young elderly", and that as a result they must not be limited to care and assistance, but should also be concerned with delaying ageing and the participation of "this vast reservoir of experience and know-how" in working life.

In her report, Ms Colombini, a member of the Lega nazionale delle autonomie locali (Italian League of Local Authorities), began by stating that the elderly were now entitled to new rights and that a new social solidarity and a new model of development therefore had to be created. After stressing the role to be played by local and regional authorities in implementing a "policy on the rights of the elderly", she went on to present the results of a survey of policies carried out for the elderly at local level in 100 towns in 12 countries. She mentioned the following areas of intervention: home, social and health policies; housing policies; policies of social integration and participation; innovative residential policies; family support policies and policies for involving private individuals. By way of a conclusion, she recommended that the Conference result in "... a permanent common commitment, whether at the level of exchange of experience ... or developments in policies for the elderly ...".

The day's work closed with a discussion.

The proceedings on 15 October - chaired by Mr Meyers, in his capacity as former Minister - were largely devoted to the presentation of policies for the elderly in nine towns and four regions of Europe: on the one hand, a comparison between Siena, Göteborg, Dublin, Piraeus, Paris, Czestochowa, Thessaloniki, Carpi and Wealden, and on the other, a comparison between Tuscany, the Brussels-Capital Region, Andalusia and Bavaria. These towns and regions have all developed genuine policies on housing, protection, and in some cases, home-help services and have encouraged the elderly to live independent lives.

The second day closed with a discussion and Round Table of the rapporteurs of the towns and regions concerned, open to the public and with the participation of experts,

European citizens and non-governmental organisations<sup>1</sup>.

Mr Mollstedt, in his capacity as President of the CLRAE, chaired the closing session on 16 October, which opened with a discussion between the representatives of eight non-governmental organisations on the theme: "Local authorities, associations and voluntary work: ways of working together".

The Conference ended with the adoption of the conclusions which I presented following the discussion between NGOs.

The participants in the Siena Conference on Europe and its Elderly People (14-16 October 1993) concluded the proceedings by inviting the CLRAE to present the conclusions of the Conference to the European Parliament and the Commission and Council of the European Community, in order to follow up the proposals which they contained.

A COMPARISON OF EUROPEAN TOWNS: Siena, Göteborg, Dublin, Piraeus, Paris, Czestochowa, Thessaloniki, Carpi, Wealden and elderly people

After citing the number of elderly people in Siena<sup>2</sup> and describing their economic situation<sup>3</sup>, the Deputy Mayor, Ms Strambi, outlined the policies which the city had carried out since 1972, above all with the aim of preventing the marginalisation of the elderly.

In particular, she mentioned the work of the Committees for the Third Age, set up in the municipality's five electoral constituencies, which organise social solidarity activities providing voluntary help to elderly people who need it and also leisure and cultural activities.

Ms Strambi also stressed that the municipality saw the bolstering of home-help services and socialisation activities as a priority, particularly for old people living independently, "so that they can stay in their home environment".

With a view to supporting home-help services, the municipality promoted both psycho-social assistance (provided by social workers) and practical initiatives such as day centres (like the one at "Villa Rubini Manenti"), home-helps, meal, laundry and tele-aid services, and

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<sup>1</sup> The following took part in the Round Table: Ms Reboul, Ms Jani-Le-Bris and Ms Bennett; MM Mollstedt, Logothetis, Tylicki and Gualandi. The Round Table was moderated by Mr Bollendorff, Honorary President of the parliament and the Association of Luxembourg Towns and Districts.

<sup>2</sup> As of 30 September 1993, citizens over sixty accounted for 32% of the total resident population and the over sixty-fives constituted 25%.

<sup>3</sup> Some 5,670 people are living on the minimum old-age pension, paid by the INPS: Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale (National Social Security Fund), and 1,141 people are receiving care allowances. However, some 10,000 elderly people have gross incomes under 16 million lire, and only a third of these own their own home.

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Mr Mollstedt, the President of the CLRAE and a municipal councillor in Göteborg, concentrated on illustrating the plans of action which the local authorities had drawn up to attain specific objectives, determined on the basis of an assessment of the needs of the elderly. With regard to the concrete results of these plans, Mr Mollstedt stressed, amongst other things, that "in five years, starting in 1990, 1,000 service flats, 525 places in group housing and 500 places in other collective forms of housing will be built or created in Göteborg".

Ms Bennett, a Senator and municipal councillor in the City of Dublin, began by outlining the developments in care for elderly people in Ireland between 1968 and 1988 and noted, amongst other things, "significant improvement in income maintenance, in benefits in kind, in housing and in health services". She also outlined the 1986 report adopted by the Minister for Health, which served as the blueprint for the development of care and services for the elderly. Ms Bennett mentioned the following services: home nursing and other support services for elderly people and their carers living at home; respite facilities to relieve families caring for the dependent elderly living at home; specialist assessment and rehabilitation units associated with acute general hospitals; extended care beds, particularly in the eastern health board area which is experiencing a rapid increase in its elderly population.

However, she also noted that the role and position occupied by elderly people in Irish society was limited, since elderly people were generally absent from political and economic life.

With regard to Dublin in particular, Ms Bennett explained that the municipality was responsible, firstly, for guaranteeing good-quality housing to retired people and, secondly, for supporting socio-cultural activities so as to develop an "active retirement" movement. The sheltered housing programmes implemented by the local authorities were some of the key measures taken by the city to guarantee its older people good-quality housing. Ms Bennett explained that: "Sheltered housing usually provides grouped housing with a range of support services including a warden and/or alarm system".

After criticising the shortcomings of state social policy and local administration in his country, Mr Logothetis, the Mayor of Piraeus, also stressed the need to design more efficient programmes at Council of Europe and EC level, and to co-ordinate these with national programmes.

Piraeus had, however, set up three centres for the protection of the aged (KAPI): these were run by specialist staff and their purpose was to develop social relations, organise leisure activities, provide preventive medical services and boost morale and attitudes among retired people so that they did not feel rejected and isolated.

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In the first part of his speech, Mr Rueda Cascado, the Secretary General for Social Affairs of the Regional Government of Andalusia, talked about the progressive ageing of Andalusian society and reviewed various aspects of the situation of the elderly (namely, the pension system, the public health care and welfare systems, housing and the representation of the elderly on the labour market). In the second part, he described the measures introduced under the National Gerontological Plan and the Andalusian Social Services Plan in order to adapt gerontological policy to the problems and needs created by the ageing of the population and at the same time to enhance the quality of life for the people concerned. The plans included the following objectives: to increase pensions, to improve health, health care and social services, including those promoting solidarity between generations, to organise cultural activities and to encourage the elderly to participate in social and political life.

Mr Kippes, Ministerialdirigent in Bavaria, firstly outlined the situation of the elderly in the Land. He stated that "... Bavaria, one of the 16 Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany, has a population of just under 12 million, of which 1.8 million or 15% are over 65 years of age and as many as 800,000 or 7% over 75. This 'advanced age' population component formed by the over-75s has increased considerably since 1960, when it stood at 3.4%". He also stated that "Approximately 56% of the over-65s live with their spouse or with children or grandchildren, some 40% live alone in their own homes and only about 4% live in residential or nursing establishments for the aged".

Mr Kippes then went on to trace the development of Bavarian old-age policy from 1962 (when the first of four action programmes was adopted) to 1988 (fourth action programme). After focusing initially on residential care, the Land had recognised the need to emphasise prevention and rehabilitation aspects and the importance of domiciliary assistance and support for families caring for the elderly, by offering "all possible outpatient care".

In conclusion, he noted that improved living conditions and ever-increasing life-expectancy meant that elderly people needed to organise and manage their own lives. In this context, he mentioned the "Senior citizens' advisory boards", which gave elderly people an input into decisions concerning them.

### **"LOCAL AUTHORITIES, ASSOCIATIONS AND VOLUNTARY WORK: WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER"**

The opening statements were made by Mr Parfait, speaking on behalf of the IFHP (International Federation for Housing and Planning) and Mr Labayle Couhat, speaking on behalf of AREPA (Association des Résidences pour Personnes Agées), who presented a declaration on "Towns and relations between towns". They criticised the situation in many countries with regard to housing for the elderly, the lack of a specific regional policy, the lack of a real development policy for sheltered housing and the lack of financing to modernise and adapt sheltered housing. It was therefore essential that a comprehensive policy for the elderly, capable, amongst other things, of providing for the construction of appropriate housing facilities and the adaptation of the oldest sheltered housing units, be defined at regional level.

The following speaker was Mr Marquardt, for "Eurolink Age", who reported on the

results of a comparative study of 13 European countries on "voluntary work in social welfare activities" at national, regional and local level. The study was an analysis of the national replies to the Council of Europe Secretariat's questionnaire prepared by the Directorate of Social and Economic Affairs. The analysis was sub-divided as follows:

- a. breakdown of responsibility;
- b. promotion of voluntary work by means of: legal recognition, subsidies, tax exemption and exemption from social security contributions, cover for accident risks and civil liability, removal of the obstacles to voluntary work, an information policy;
- c. co-operation between the public sector and voluntary organisations: co-ordinating bodies;
- d. conclusions<sup>8</sup>.

Ms Ertl (for "Pro Senectute") presented the Austrian national report on care for frail older people. After outlining the structure of the social security and social welfare systems and the history, philosophy and objectives of care policy, she explained that the reform programmes adopted since 1991 had been aimed at promoting the independence of frail elderly people and providing adequate services.

However, she criticised the complete, or almost complete lack of day centres and offers for short-term care, the underdevelopment of domiciliary assistance and care services and the lack of support for families caring for elderly people. In conclusion, she stressed, amongst other things, that owing to the inadequacies of the financing system, it was impossible for dependent people "... to pay for help and care in terms of market prices ...", or to "employ personal care assistants".

In a lively presentation, Ms Podlaha (for the "Vereinigung der Österreichischen Städten"), recalled the basic objective of creating "the prerequisites for shaping this longer life in a 'normal' and therefore humane way" and said that, to this end, "a rethinking of attitudes is not only necessary from the human point of view, it is economically vital as well". This meant, amongst other things, that it was necessary to combat the absurdities and inadequacies of existing systems. I should also like to quote Ms Podlaha's conclusion in its entirety: "... Close co-operation is therefore needed between all those concerned in theory or practice with gerontology, old people's welfare and policy on the elderly, whether they be individuals, associations, services or institutions. But above all, everybody, especially the younger generation, must be made to realise clearly and unequivocally that they will be the next or next but one generation of old people".

Mr Lishman began by presenting the "Age Concern" organisation, which is the largest

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<sup>8</sup> As it is impossible to summarise the results of the study without taking away much of its substance, I refer all curious readers to the Council of Europe document on the subject, doc. CDPS (91) 7 of 12 March 1991. I should also point out that in spring 1993 the Council's Directorate of Social and Economic Affairs decided to update the document.

non-governmental organisation working with older people in the United Kingdom. The "Age Concern" movement had four major functions: direct services, social advocacy, innovation and research, and partnership and co-operation with other organisations and individuals.

He then went on to describe the "new British approach" to care for the elderly: in particular, the transfer of financial responsibility for residential care from the central government to local authorities, the emphasis on the assessment of the needs of individuals and the involvement of users in designing, managing and running services.

The Italian experience was presented by Don Giovanni Nervo (Zancan Foundation), whose report on "Local authorities, voluntary organisations and voluntary work: forms of co-operation" firstly distinguished three types of voluntary sector work for and with the elderly: welfare work, charity and preventive and confidence-building work. Mr Nervo then sought an answer to three fundamental questions, through the experiences of those working "on the ground": what do voluntary workers do? what kind of training do they need? and what should they not do?

In the last part of his report, he presented the results of a seminar with a group of experts which the Zancan Foundation had organised in co-operation with the Ferrero di Alba Foundation. These results had included, in particular, the drawing up of a private member's bill, which had been tabled in the Senate by an all-party group of Senators, on preventing the elderly from being relegated to the fringes of society and on promoting their health<sup>9</sup>.

Mr Hassler, for the "Coderpa" Association (Alsace), presented an Activities Charter, aimed at "... all elderly persons resident in an institution or considering moving to one ..." and which proposed that every institution adopt a programme of "organised activities", covering all leisure activities, physical as well as cultural, so as to ensure a "high quality of life" to elderly persons resident in institutions.

## **IN SEARCH OF A NEW APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY**

In the light of the various written and oral contributions and the discussions and debates which followed, particularly during the Round Table, the Siena Conference produced the "Conclusions" which appear as an appendix to the draft recommendation.

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<sup>9</sup> With respect to the provisions of this bill : Section 1 defines the purpose of the Act and the areas of activity covered by it; under Section 2, the activity referred to in Section 1 is entrusted to the person concerned through a private-law contract; Section 3 indicates the different types of community work; Section 4 indicates how local authorities can administer these contracts; Section 5 deals with the financial aspects of the matter; Section 6 provides for compulsory annual planning by the regional authorities; Section 7 provides for a national fund to cover the costs.

The intention behind these conclusions is to propose a new approach to the problems posed by the ageing of the population in general and elderly people in particular. The following section traces the development of, and illustrates, the conclusions of the Siena Conference<sup>10</sup>.

Preliminary remarks:

Given current demographic trends, all European countries have an ageing population. In view of the increasing life expectancy of individuals, the proportion of very elderly persons is set to grow.

Suppositions have been made about a subsequent reduction in the "old continent's" innovative and creative potential. This conclusion, however, is contested by gerontological research, since it transposes clichés about individual ageing to societal level, without any scientific backing.

When society has a marked tendency to assess people according to their ability to do productive work, the elderly are excluded and marginalised, with retirement being regarded as an extended period of so-called "inactive life".

Consequently, the first observation is that we must now acknowledge that the economic, social and political integration of elderly people is one of European societies' major challenges.

The second is that the elderly are not a homogeneous group. It is therefore obvious that the policies of towns, regions and states cannot consist in a single policy for the elderly.

On the contrary, each group calls for a separate policy. Some need home care, others a special senior citizens' university; some require alterations to their housing and town planning adapted to their reduced autonomy, while others want sports facilities to meet the needs of the elderly; some would like to work for the public good while others would like cultural activities to be provided for them.

After defining the problem, we tackled the basic and urgent question of objectives, strategies and means of implementing them:

First, what should be done and how can local and regional authorities meet the needs of elderly people and thus face up to the challenge of their economic, social and political integration?

Our first consideration was that a response to the problems posed by Europe's ageing population demanded new forms of solidarity between generations, in families and in the community.

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<sup>10</sup> See also doc. CONF/Sienne (93) 4.

Towns could make use of **technological innovations** to try out strategies which would help to reduce the dependence of their elderly residents. For example, they could launch programmes such as distance alarm systems attached to home-help services.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that there is a lack of information dissemination and of private or public investment to make full use of technological progress for the benefit of the elderly. This means that there is a very small market for many of the home automation products already available and many individuals cannot afford them, however useful they are.

On the one hand, the European Community should include specialised programmes in its European R&D programmes. On the other, the state ought to promote the purchase of home automation products through buying institutions and by partially offsetting private purchases through social security payments.

In the long term, mass-produced goods should become accessible to a greater number of people. This could become a factor of economic specialisation for companies in the "old continent", which, given the growing number of elderly people in the world, is far from negligible.

### 3. To promote social integration and charity work

There are numerous strategies for promoting the social integration of senior citizens, and European exchanges make it possible to develop new ones<sup>11</sup>.

In general, all occasions for exchange and solidarity between generations should be encouraged: experiences of programmes for meetings between generations have generally proved extremely fruitful, both for young people and the elderly, who discover a renewed interest in their past in society against the general trend towards a rejection of all that is old.

There is no doubt about the main objective, namely to dissociate retirement clearly from any connotation of passivity, uselessness or dependence.

Encouragement and support should therefore be given to associations, clubs and voluntary organisations offering the elderly an opportunity to exercise activities which are recognised as useful.

Consequently, Recommendation (85) 9 of the Committee of Ministers to the member states of the Council of Europe on voluntary work in social welfare activities and Recommendation (91) 2 on social security for workers without professional status, should be fully implemented.

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<sup>11</sup> These exchanges should initially take place through town twinning, eg between pensioners' clubs, colleges or special universities for the elderly. Another possibility would be a "senior ERASMUS" programme to mobilise Community funds.

## CONCLUSIONS

The actual conclusions of this report are drawn from the draft recommendation on "Europe and its elderly people: towards a pact between generations", which is reproduced separately.

This draft recommendation, on the one hand, takes up and further develops the principles affirmed by the Siena Conference and, on the other, proposes a strategy for the future development of appropriate policies.

In this context, I shall restrict myself to stressing some of the aspects which I regard as essential.

Firstly, a general observation: current trends in the advanced industrial societies have not only social, economic and cultural repercussions but also political implications, since they affect the entire network of relations between generations (young people, adults and old people).

In the majority of industrialised nations, the current economic cycle is threatening to cause a steady reduction in opportunities for working, doing things and taking action and the gradual exclusion of sizeable sections of the population, in particular young people and old people, from society and community life, as well as to destroy the time framework for human activities and hence make the different stages of life meaningless.

Next, it was necessary to emphasise once again that ageing is a process, which, in view of current demographic trends, is spread over many years and that physical and mental dependence is an extreme situation which concerns only a small fraction of the elderly population.

Consequently, ageing should be stripped of any connotations of passivity, uselessness and indeed superfluity and it should be recognised that even physically and mentally dependent people can play a fundamental role in our society since they help to make the world a more human place.

As the member states of the European Union have rightly underlined in a Declaration made at the close of the European Year of the Elderly, it must be recognised that elderly people make a valuable contribution to social, cultural and economic life.

In addition, the existence of an ageing population is an opportunity for Europe, in so far as it prompts people to reassess the position and role of old people in society. Old people are a key factor in fostering continuity without conservatism, stability without authoritarianism, economic and cultural vitality without fanaticism, and tolerance and stability.

Furthermore, within the general framework which I have just outlined, the challenge of economic, social and political integration, which has been mentioned many times, takes on a wider significance: if our civilisation is to gain a new understanding of the value of the past and the possibilities for the future, in other words of progress in its deepest sense, it is necessary to re-establish dialogue and strengthen solidarity between generations. In order to

Towns could make use of **technological innovations** to try out strategies which would help to reduce the dependence of their elderly residents. For example, they could launch programmes such as distance alarm systems attached to home-help services.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that there is a lack of information dissemination and of private or public investment to make full use of technological progress for the benefit of the elderly. This means that there is a very small market for many of the home automation products already available and many individuals cannot afford them, however useful they are.

On the one hand, the European Community should include specialised programmes in its European R&D programmes. On the other, the state ought to promote the purchase of home automation products through buying institutions and by partially offsetting private purchases through social security payments.

In the long term, mass-produced goods should become accessible to a greater number of people. This could become a factor of economic specialisation for companies in the "old continent", which, given the growing number of elderly people in the world, is far from negligible.

### 3. To promote social integration and charity work

There are numerous strategies for promoting the social integration of senior citizens, and European exchanges make it possible to develop new ones<sup>11</sup>.

In general, all occasions for exchange and solidarity between generations should be encouraged: experiences of programmes for meetings between generations have generally proved extremely fruitful, both for young people and the elderly, who discover a renewed interest in their past in society against the general trend towards a rejection of all that is old.

There is no doubt about the main objective, namely to dissociate retirement clearly from any connotation of passivity, uselessness or dependence.

Encouragement and support should therefore be given to associations, clubs and voluntary organisations offering the elderly an opportunity to exercise activities which are recognised as useful.

Consequently, Recommendation (85) 9 of the Committee of Ministers to the member states of the Council of Europe on voluntary work in social welfare activities and Recommendation (91) 2 on social security for workers without professional status, should be fully implemented.

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<sup>11</sup> These exchanges should initially take place through town twinning, eg between pensioners' clubs, colleges or special universities for the elderly. Another possibility would be a "senior ERASMUS" programme to mobilise Community funds.

## CONCLUSIONS

The actual conclusions of this report are drawn from the draft recommendation on "Europe and its elderly people: towards a pact between generations", which is reproduced separately.

This draft recommendation, on the one hand, takes up and further develops the principles affirmed by the Siena Conference and, on the other, proposes a strategy for the future development of appropriate policies.

In this context, I shall restrict myself to stressing some of the aspects which I regard as essential.

Firstly, a general observation: current trends in the advanced industrial societies have not only social, economic and cultural repercussions but also political implications, since they affect the entire network of relations between generations (young people, adults and old people).

In the majority of industrialised nations, the current economic cycle is threatening to cause a steady reduction in opportunities for working, doing things and taking action and the gradual exclusion of sizeable sections of the population, in particular young people and old people, from society and community life, as well as to destroy the time framework for human activities and hence make the different stages of life meaningless.

Next, it was necessary to emphasise once again that ageing is a process, which, in view of current demographic trends, is spread over many years and that physical and mental dependence is an extreme situation which concerns only a small fraction of the elderly population.

Consequently, ageing should be stripped of any connotations of passivity, uselessness and indeed superfluity and it should be recognised that even physically and mentally dependent people can play a fundamental role in our society since they help to make the world a more human place.

As the member states of the European Union have rightly underlined in a Declaration made at the close of the European Year of the Elderly, it must be recognised that elderly people make a valuable contribution to social, cultural and economic life.

In addition, the existence of an ageing population is an opportunity for Europe, in so far as it prompts people to reassess the position and role of old people in society. Old people are a key factor in fostering continuity without conservatism, stability without authoritarianism, economic and cultural vitality without fanaticism, and tolerance and stability.

Furthermore, within the general framework which I have just outlined, the challenge of economic, social and political integration, which has been mentioned many times, takes on a wider significance: if our civilisation is to gain a new understanding of the value of the past and the possibilities for the future, in other words of progress in its deepest sense, it is necessary to re-establish dialogue and strengthen solidarity between generations. In order to



do so, exchanges, mutual understanding and co-operation must be encouraged, thereby creating a genuine "pact" between generations.

Mr Leuprecht clearly emphasised in his speech that the re-establishment of dialogue is the only way in which we can hope to encourage the integration and autonomy of elderly people while respecting their individuality and rights as citizens.

I should also like to refer back to my initial observation: current trends in the advanced industrial countries are tending to affect the entire network of relations between generations. Yet we know that relations between the different age groups (young people, adults, old people) cannot be determined solely in relation to production and consumption, and that any form of indifference towards the past (and old people), like any lack of interest in the future (and in younger generations), is a serious threat to Europe as a civilisation. It is obvious that a redefinition of the mutual responsibilities of the various generations can help to overcome current difficulties and hence put an end to futile opposition between young people and old people.

For this purpose, it was appropriate to approve the "Citizen generations" project proposed at the Siena Conference and give it a new impetus.

It is therefore as a means of dealing with the many problems of our times that it is necessary to contemplate the creation of a PACT BETWEEN GENERATIONS, forming a social bond across Europe based on respect and friendship and aimed essentially at the reciprocal learning of active and shared solidarity.

Society as a whole and the authorities at all levels - who have a duty not to waste the energy and skills of retired and older people - should therefore adopt an approach based on solidarity between generations as a means of designing and implementing innovative policies.

The approach based on solidarity between generations can therefore be regarded as both the method and principal inspiration for a new policy on the elderly. Consequently, it is both logical and justified for this approach to be one of the main pillars of the strategy envisaged in the draft recommendation, in order to safeguard the autonomy of elderly people, encourage their participation in political and social life and show respect and affection for them in life's final stage, particularly when it is experienced as dependence.

Out of a twofold concern to save work and do justice to the many proposals which it was thought necessary to make to European national, regional and local authorities, towns and municipalities, the governments of the member states, the European Union, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, I shall not enumerate these proposals here. I refer you to paragraph VII of the draft recommendation, where they are set out and explained in detail.

In conclusion, I propose that we set to work without delay, according to the letter and spirit of the conclusions of the Siena Conference and the recommendation.

I hope, in particular, that the conclusions of the Siena Conference and our recommendation will help to launch the proposed pact between generations, for the benefit of all generations, so that a genuine social bond can be formed between all citizens.

It is now for the Council of Europe and all its component parts, including in particular our Congress, to continued along the path towards a free, united and tolerant Europe able, on the one hand, to recognise that differences enrich our civilisation and, on the other, to overcome the futile oppositions which are a source of injustice, prejudice and intolerance.