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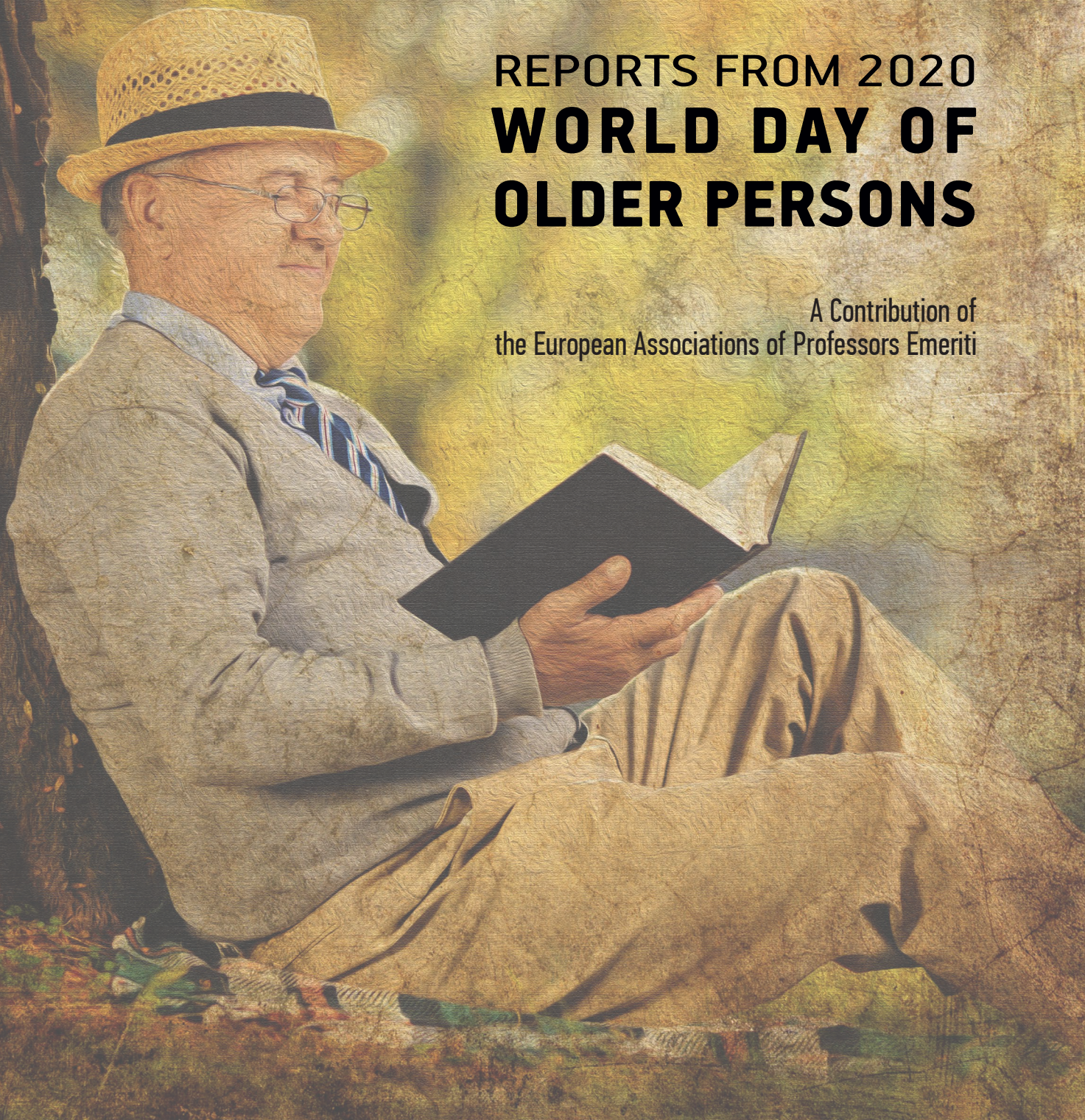
The BULLETIN

OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSORS EMERITI

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REPORTS FROM 2020 WORLD DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

A Contribution of
the European Associations of Professors Emeriti





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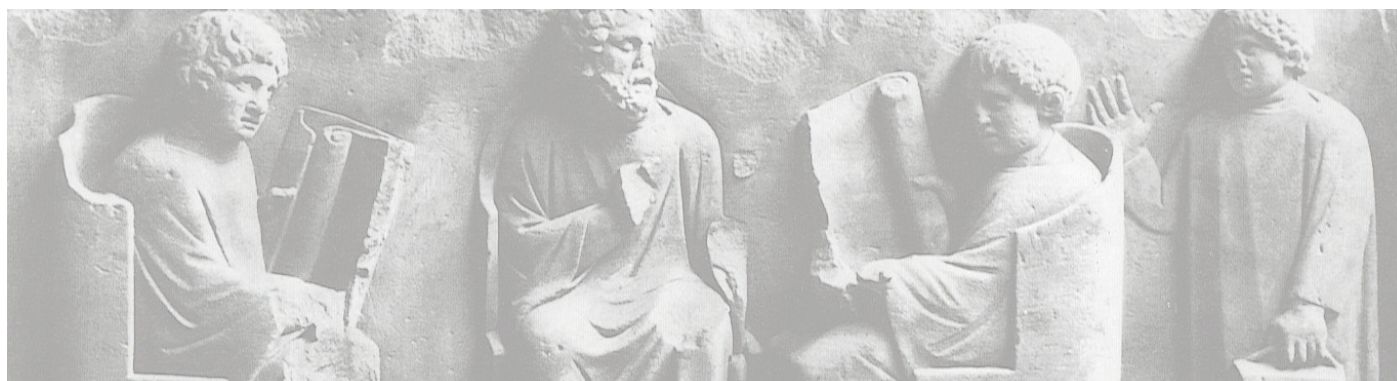
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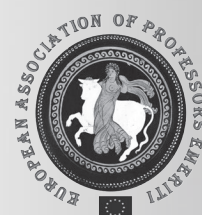
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INTRODUCTION

The Treatment of Elderly People is a Marker of Society as a Whole. Are they an Untapped Treasure?

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This issue of the Bulletin of the European Association of Professors Emeriti is a contribution of our Association in support of the needs of seniors that include, by definition, retired/emeriti academics. This year the celebration of the World Day of Older Persons had a special meaning because of the lethal effects of Covid-19 on the aged. Of particular interest were the messages from the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, and the World Health Organisation (WHO), pointing to new programs and strategies to adopt in protection of the elderly.

The richness of many years of age and the Decade of Healthy Aging

We shall start with an event that took place, in Rome, on January 31, 2020, on that day the Covid-19 pandemic was just a suspicion of a few specialists. Pope Francis, speaking at the *Conference on pastoral care of the elderly*, explained that "the richness of many years of life... is the richness of people, of every single person who has many years of life experience and history behind them", and asked to change "pastoral habits in order to respond to the presence of so many older people in our families and communities". For Pope Francis "longevity is a blessing", and the elderly, too, have a place in God's saving plan. "Aware of the irreplaceable role of the elderly", old and young, are "the future of the Church". He invited the elderly to be protagonists and "'not to pull back the oars into the boat'. This period of life is different from the previous ones...we must therefore, also 'invent it' a little".

Dubravca Šuica, Vice President of EU for Democracy and Demography, and former mayor of Dubrovnik, said that "Our ageing population is one of the main demographic drivers in Europe. An increasingly older population presents both diverse challenges and opportunities not only at the individual, societal and economic level as well as between generations. She also highlighted "the importance of recognising the contribution of older people to our societies. "I want to raise the importance of protecting their rights, including their access to equal and affordable healthcare and digitalisation services. Over the last months

of this pandemic, the rights of the elderly and the very special place they have in our society, across the European Union have come to the fore. I cannot forget the stories of families losing their loved ones in care-homes for the elderly, not knowing whether their family member was alone, frightened or at peace. And we should also remember the care workers struggling to ensure the protection and the dignity of the persons placed in their care".

Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported "Living our lives to the fullest potential". She stressed that the World Day of Older Persons "is an opportunity for us all to reflect on the attitude of our societies towards ageing and older persons... We all have a responsibility to ensure that older persons are heard, listened to and included in the urgently-needed national debates about their circumstances".

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-general, launched the Decade of Healthy Ageing in order to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being of all at all ages... In 2020, the number of people aged 60 years and older will outnumber children younger than 5 years. Over the next three decades, the number of older persons worldwide is projected to more than double, reaching more than 1.5 billion persons in 2050, and 80% of them will be living in low- and middle-income countries. The COVID-19 pandemic may significantly lower older persons' incomes and living standards. Already, less than 20% of older persons of retirement age receive a pension.... Longer life brings with it opportunities, not only for older people and

their families, but also for societies as a whole. Additional years provide the chance to pursue new activities such as further education, a new career or pursuing a long-neglected passion. Older people also contribute in many ways to their families and communities. Yet the extent of these opportunities and contributions depends heavily on one factor: health".

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being of all at all ages

The WHO's goal is to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being of all at all ages.... Ageing healthily is what we all aspire to. *Healthy Ageing* is about maintaining the functional ability that allows you to do the things you value. This means preserving both your physical and mental capacity as you age - it also means making changes to our environments (housing, transportation, public spaces etc.) so that they are accessible to, and supportive of, older people with varying needs and capacities". WHO also suggested "Tackling ageism and the invisibility of older people through intersectoral action between various levels of government and amongst government and non-governmental actors, will be critical to shape institutions towards sustainable inclusivity and to empower older people to achieve things previous generations could never imagine".

Dr. Franziska Giffey, Federal Minister for Family Affairs and former Mayor of Neuköln, asked to work together for older people. She aims to strengthen "the rights of older people and their equal participation in an increasingly digitalised society and to promote their best interests. This will strengthen cohesion across generations and countries". There are two priority goals. "The first is to support older people in need of care, help or other forms of assistance. The second, is to use the potential of older persons to foster cohesion between the generations and promote a society based on sharing and solidarity".

How elderly people are cared for is a key measure of how good is a community

President Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic on the occasion of the World Day of Older Persons stated that "How elderly people are cared for is a key measure of how good a community is. Often elderly people are the ones

who teach us respect for values, they are the ones who show us the path of dignity, dedication and generosity. Their example, in this difficult time, is an extraordinary asset. The quality of the model of community and development depends, in part, on how we guarantee rights and services for older citizens and on how we manage to integrate them into social processes in very rapid change".

Age is an essential part of the life of each of us. That is why it must become inclusive, active, dignified

Janez Cigler Kralj, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia declared that "Age is an essential part of the life of each of us. That is why it must become inclusive, active, dignified".

Since 1963, the Japanese government has given a commemorative silver-plated saki cup to Japanese citizens who had reached the age of 100. In 1963 the number was 153, but with numbers increasing, the government decided to reduce the size of the cup to cut costs in 2009 (2). In 2014, 29,357 people received a cup (2,3). In 2017, Japan honoured 32,097 people (27,461 women and 4,636 men) who turned 100-years old; each received a congratulatory letter and a souvenir saki cup from the Prime Minister.

Nursing homes or besieged castles: Covid-19 in northern Italy

Marco Trabucchi and Diego De Leo, in *Lancet Psychiatry* have written a strong paper about "Nursing homes or besieged castles: Covid-19 in northern Italy" (3). "In the province of Bergamo, more than 600 nursing home residents, from a total capacity of 6400 beds, died between March 7 and 27, 2020. A similar hecatomb is occurring in many other parts of the administrative regions of Lombardy, Veneto, and Emilia-Romagna, where nursing homes commonly have 10–15 deaths due to Covid-19 out of 70 guests. In some cases, 3–4 guests died in a single day...From the besieged castles desperate appeals for help frequently emerge. Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the catastrophe, or unable to find adequate answers, nobody answers" (3).

Stay home order is a wrong approach

Professor Roberto Bernabei, Chair of Geriatric at Policlinico Gemelli in Rome, and member of the Scientific Technical Committee of the Ministry of Health in Italy, confirmed that

1. Special article| Covid-19 pandemic: triage for intensive-care treatment under resource scarcity. Swiss Medical Weekly Published 24 March 2020|doi:10.4414/smww.2020.20229

2. De Santo NG. Scientists encounter difficulties in long TV debate on Covid-19. Europe failed to meet the needs of the elderly. Bull Eur Assoc Profs Emer 2020 1(6): 96-97

3. Trabucchi M, De Leo D. Nursing homes or besieged castles: Covid-19 in Northern Italy. Lancet Psychiatry. 2020 May; 7(5): 387–388. Published online 2020 Apr 27. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30149-8

"since March 2020 only the elderly die. Their mean age is 82 years, each of them has at least 3 pathologies. So, to die you have to be an octogenarian...Thus the *Stay home* order is a wrong approach, since it causes reduction of muscle mass and lean body mass, this leads to difficult walking and this is a lethal condition".

People age to teach the young

Emilio Isgrò, an Italian artist of international repute, born October 1937, has been a founder and professor at the National Academy of Arts, the largest private academy in Italy, and at IULM University Milan. Recently he criticised old people who adopt the habit of youthfulness. He asked, for himself, just the privilege to continue to teach lifelong. "People age to teach the young. It is mere hypocrisy to ask competence in the younger. Those who appreciate and

support the value of competence should know, to a certain extent, it is the daughter of experience since it mainly depends on age" (4). Isgrò's view was also that one should be proud of one's age, but like him, impose respect on the young university fellow, distance oneself from them, but love each other.

Acknowledgements

We thank Joseph Sepe MD, Professor of Biological Sciences, University of Maryland Global Campus, USA, and Adjunct Professor, Department of Mathematics and Physics University of Campania, Luigi Vanvitelli, Naples for copy editing of the reports on the World Day of Older Persons.



4. Isgrò E. The value of my 83 years. That is my teaching to young people. Il Corriere della Serra, Milan 2020, November 9, p 15, col. 1-6.



2020 WORLD DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

EUROPEAN UNION

Ensuring Inter-Generational Solidarity for the Europe of Today and of Tomorrow

Dubravca Šuica, Vice President of EU, Commission Democracy and Demography

As our *Report on the Impact of Demographic Change* shows, people are living longer and healthier lives. Our ageing population is therefore one of the main demographic drivers in Europe. An increasingly older population presents both diverse challenges and opportunities not only at the individual, societal and economic level but also between generations as well.

We all witnessed how the Covid-19 crisis has affected and indeed continues to affect our older citizens. I have been profoundly touched by the images capturing the loneliness of the elderly, often isolated in care homes.

On the International Day of Older Persons, the first of October, I would like to highlight the importance of recognising the contribution of older people in our societies. I want to raise the importance of protecting their rights, including their access to equal and affordable healthcare and digitalisation services. Over the last months of this pandemic, the rights of the elderly and the very special place they have in our society, across the European Union, have come to the fore. I cannot forget the stories of families losing their loved ones in care-homes for the elderly, not knowing whether their family member was alone, frightened or at peace. And we should also remember the healthcare workers struggling to ensure the protection and the dignity of the persons placed in their care.

Older people's right to a life of dignity and independence is enshrined in Article 25 of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights. The pandemic hit the elderly particularly hard and stretched these rights to their limit. The elderly were more exposed to infection, often with fatal consequences while protective measures often intensified their feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Let us also look at the untapped potential of ageing and the opportunities it provides. Many contribute to our society through volunteering activities and some continue to exercise their profession way past retirement age. As grandparents, they are indispensable in the lives of their grandchildren, often also stepping in for their own children when the youngest need to be looked after and childcare is not available.

Our *Report on the Impact of Demographic Change* shows that over the last fifty years, life expectancy at birth has increased by 10 years for both men and women. Living longer in better health is one of the highest expectations of European citizens. This is good news and a significant achievement.

For these reasons, I am very excited about our work on a *Green Paper on Ageing*, planned for adoption in 2021. With the Green Paper, we will launch the debate around the long-term impacts of ageing, care and pensions, active ageing and the capacity of social protection systems to deal with an ageing population. We will look at intergenerational solidarity and fairness, impacts on the labour market, the economy and health and care systems. It is clear to me that ageing concerns all generations, not just the elderly. And it is not only a challenge, but also provides many opportunities.

Active ageing means being able to fully participate in society. Today we inhabit a more digitalised world. Digitalisation and technology helps older people in their autonomy and ability to connect with others. It also raises issues on the right to privacy. This calls for action in increasing digital literacy for older people. Digital tools must be accessible and easy to use, for all ages. Those who are unable to use them should be provided with alternative ways of accessing essential services. We need to better harness the opportunities that come with ageing. This includes the positive role older people play in society, the silver economy, voluntary work and other areas.

Therefore, the Green Paper will not only be about older persons but also about how all of this plays out for the younger generation. It will be about ageing and not only about the aged.

Active ageing also means participating in our democracy. As Vice-President with responsibility for Democracy and the Conference on the Future of Europe in particular, I look forward to hearing the voices of the most experienced members of our society in our deliberations, benefiting from their wealth of experiences and knowledge.

Covid-19 has left many of us without our grandparents,

our elderly neighbours, without our living wisdom. The oldest and most vulnerable in society have been disproportionately affected and unfairly so. The need for solidarity should be the one lesson we learn from the pandemic. This includes intergenerational solidarity and fairness. It is about longer working lives and adequate and sustainable pensions. It is about transfer of much-needed experience and knowledge. It is about mutual support. It is about volunteering too. Our healthcare and welfare systems have been tested and we must make sure they are resilient and ready to face future challenges. It is up to each of us to ensure it is possible to maintain a safe and nurturing environment for both the young and the old

to build their future and lead lives as full as they possibly can. Our work on democracy and demography contributes to this.

As I always say - my responsibilities as Vice-President involve The entire life cycle, from childhood to old age. With this in mind, the objective and motivation for my work is to ensure inter-generational solidarity for the Europe of today and tomorrow – together with you.

Until next time, keep well and stay healthy!



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

International Day of Older Persons

Reflection and Reaction Needed in the Time of the Pandemic

Dunja Mijatovich, Commissioner for Human Rights

The international day of older persons is an opportunity to celebrate older persons, their achievements and their continuing contribution to our societies. This year, we are marking this day in the exceptional context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exposed serious failings in all the Council of Europe member states. This is an opportunity for us all to reflect on the attitude of our societies towards ageing and older persons.

It is a fact that the SARS-CoV-2 virus disproportionately affects the health of any older person it infects. However, its ravages were also caused by bad health crisis management, including neglect, abuse and lack of preparedness in long-term care facilities, discrimination in access to life-saving treatments, a lack of supportive or palliative care, social isolation of older persons with no measures to mitigate its effects on their mental health, and increased risk of poverty. We have also seen disturbing signs of intergenerational fragmentation, including increased violence and abuse targeting older persons.

These effects were the result of structural failings which were exacerbated, but not created, by the pandemic and which had been neglected over the years despite repeated calls from my Office and other international and national

human rights bodies. There can be no more excuses today. All member states must redouble their efforts to combat the isolation of older persons and properly investigate all deaths that occurred in questionable circumstances during the pandemic. They should also embark on overdue social reforms to eliminate the root causes of this tragedy by transitioning to long-term care systems whose core aims should include older persons' human rights, autonomy and dignity.

Reverting to business as usual is not an option and it is a duty for us all to reckon with the terrible record of this pandemic for older persons. As we do so though, it is doubly important for us not to focus solely on the vulnerability of older persons, but also to think about their autonomy, their own views and concerns, and their intrinsic value for our societies. We all have a responsibility to ensure that older persons are heard, listened to and included in the urgently needed national debates about their circumstances.



UNITED NATIONS

International Day of Older Persons - the United Nations

www.un.org › observances

Pandemics: Do They Change How We Address Age and Ageing?

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-general

The Covid-19 pandemic is causing untold fear and suffering for older people across the world. The fatality rate for older people is higher overall, and for those over 80, it is five times the global average. Beyond its immediate health impact, the pandemic is putting older people at greater risk of poverty, discrimination and isolation. It is likely to have a particularly devastating impact on older people in developing countries.

As an older person myself, with responsibility for an even older mother, I am deeply concerned about the pandemic on a personal level, and about its effects on our communities and societies. Today we are launching a policy brief that provides analysis and recommendations to address these challenges. Our response to Covid-19 must respect the rights and dignity of older people.

There are four main messages.

First, no person, young or old, is expendable. Older people have the same rights to life and health as everyone else. Difficult decisions around life-saving medical care must respect the human rights and dignity of all.

Second, while physical distancing is crucial, let's not forget we are one community and we all belong to each other. We need improved social support and smarter efforts to reach older people through digital technology. That is

vital to older people who may face great suffering and isolation under lockdowns and other restrictions.

Third, all social, economic and humanitarian responses must take the needs of older people fully into account, from universal health coverage to social protection, decent work and pensions. The majority of older people are women, who are more likely to enter this period of their lives in poverty and without access to healthcare. Policies must be targeted at meeting their needs.

And fourth, let's not treat older people as invisible or powerless. Many older people depend on an income and are fully engaged in work, in family life, in teaching and learning, and in looking after others. Their voices and leadership count.

To get through this pandemic together, we need a surge in global and national solidarity and the contributions of all members of society, including older people. As we look to recover better, we will need ambition and vision to build more inclusive, sustainable and age-friendly societies that are fit for the future.



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Ageing and Life Course – World Health Organization

www.who.int › ageing Oct 2, 2020

Healthy Ageing and the Sustainable Development Goals

Implementing the *Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health* will contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals which were developed to secure "The Future We Want" for present and future generations.

Today, most people are living longer and a significant proportion of the world's population are older people. By 2050, the world's population of people over the age of 60 will double. This demographic change has strong implications for sustainable development. As people grow older, their

health outcomes, needs and what they value can change. Supporting these changes by taking multisectoral action on ageing and health is therefore critical and will support the Decade on *Healthy Ageing* 2020 – 2030.

What is Healthy Ageing?

Ageing healthily is what we all aspire to. *Healthy Ageing* is about maintaining the functional ability that allows you to do the things you value. This means preserving both your physical and mental capacity as you age - it also means making changes to our environments (housing,

transportation, public spaces etc.) so that they are accessible to, and supportive of, older people with varying needs and capacities.

Action to foster *Healthy Ageing* can help tackle inequities and ensure older people age safely in a place that is right for them, are free from poverty, can continue to develop personally and can contribute to their communities while retaining autonomy and health. *Healthy Ageing* will help build societies that are cohesive, peaceful, just, secure and sustainable.

End poverty in all of its forms everywhere

A commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals means a commitment to *Healthy Ageing* - and a commitment to taking concerted actions to formulate evidence-based policies across all sectors that strengthen the abilities of older persons. In collaboration with Member States and international and national partners WHO needs to lead coordinated global action to foster *Healthy Ageing* across the Sustainable Development Goals.

End hunger, achieve food security, and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

Older people contribute to food production but can also be very vulnerable to food insecurity. Not only do nutritional needs change as we grow older, but in times of scarcity younger people are often prioritised by families and aid programmes.

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all and at all ages

Healthy Ageing is fundamental to the achievement of universal health coverage (UHC), implicit in Goal 3. However, without considering the health and social care needs of the ever-increasing numbers of older people, UHC will be impossible to achieve. Currently most health systems are better designed to deal with individual acute health conditions than the more complex and chronic health needs that tend to arise with increasing age. Moreover, health systems and long-term care systems often operate independently leading to poorer outcomes, inefficient usage of services and cost shifting

Optimizing opportunities for good health at all stages of life will ensure that older people can maintain independence and increase their social and economic participation in society, while reducing healthcare costs.

Include inclusive and quality education for all promote lifelong learning

Learning and growth of knowledge do not cease in later life.

Continued access to training and educational opportunities are important in older age to allow older adults to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to: manage their health better; keep abreast of developments in information and technology; adjust to the changes that ageing brings (e.g. retirement, widowhood, caregiving); maintain their identity, social connections and keep interested in life; foster contact with other generations and participate in society (e.g. by working or volunteering).

Continued personal growth enables older people to continue to do what they value, retain the ability to make decisions and preserve their independence and autonomy. *Healthy Ageing* supports the promotion of lifelong learning.

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Women tend to live longer than men, on average, and thus comprise the majority of older persons, especially at advanced ages. For example, in 2015 women accounted for 54 per cent of the global population aged 60 years or over and 61 per cent of those aged 80 years or over in 2015. Women contribute in a multitude of ways for example through working, child care and long-term care. Women's frequently-restricted participation in the paid workforce has many negative consequences in later life, including a greater risk of poverty, less access to quality health and social care services, a higher risk of abuse, poor health and reduced access to pensions.

Pursuing gender equality throughout the life-course can lead to better later-life outcomes, and enhanced well-being.

Build resilient infrastructure and promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

While there is strong evidence for some of the actions needed to foster *Healthy Ageing*, many knowledge gaps remain and the link between evidence and policy and practice is not always clear. For example, clinical trials routinely exclude older participants and those with comorbidities, despite the fact that these are the people who are most likely to use the interventions being tested.

Reduce inequality within and among countries

Most of the diversity seen in older age arises from the physical and social environments we inhabit (for example home, neighbourhood and community). Environments will influence one older person differently from the next depending on factors such as gender, ethnicity or level of education. These influences can result in unequal access to services and support.

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable

Cities, communities and other human settlements are key to enabling people to live long and healthy lives. For example in developing countries, the share of older people in urban communities will multiply 16 times from 1998 to 2050, to a total of 908 million.

Age-friendly cities and communities are environments that allow all people to maximize their capacity and their ability across the life course. Creating environments that are truly age friendly requires action in many sectors – health, long-term care, transport, housing, labour, social protection, information and communication – by many actors – government, service providers, civil society, older people and their organizations, families and friends.

Working to create cities and communities that are sustainable and accessible to all requires a process across the life course that progressively improves the fit between people's needs and the environments in which they live.

Promote just, and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels

VATICAN

The Richness of Many Years of Life

Natale. G. De Santo, Editor in Chief, Eur Bull Assoc Profs Emer

The Catholic Church has always had a peculiar interest in protecting the elderly. On October 1 1998, at the time of the Papacy of Johannes Paul II, Cardinal Stafford signed a document on the *Dignity of older people and their new mission in the church and in the world*.

This year Pope Francis, at the *Conference on pastoral care of the elderly* (1) on January 31 explained that "the richness of many years of life... is the richness of people, of every single person who has many years of life experience and history behind them", and asked to change "pastoral habits in order to respond to the presence of so many older people in our families and communities". For Pope Francis "longevity is a blessing", and the elderly, too, have a place in God's saving plan. "Aware of the irreplaceable role of the elderly, old and young, are the future of the Church". In this

To achieve this goal a paradigm shift is needed in the way that society understands ageing. Pervasive ageist stereotypes of older people as uniformly frail, burdensome and dependent are not supported by evidence and limit society's ability to appreciate and release the potential human and social resources inherent in older populations.

Ageism – stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against older people on the basis of their chronological or perceived age – creates barriers to developing good policies, both on health and broader development. Research suggests that ageism may be even more pervasive than sexism and racism with serious consequences both for older people and society at large.

Tackling ageism and the invisibility of older people through intersectoral action between various levels of government and amongst government and non-governmental actors will be critical to shape institutions towards sustainable inclusivity and to empower older people to achieve things previous generations could never imagine.



perspective "grandparents are "the indispensable link in educating children and young people in the faith". Finally, he invited the elderly to be protagonists and "not to pull back the oars into the boat'. This period of life is different from the previous ones...we must therefore, also 'invent it' a little".

On March 17, Pope Francis asked to pray for the elderly during the celebration of mass. "Lord give them strength. They give us wisdom; they gave us life and history. They suffer in a special way. It is immense loneliness with a lot of fears".

On June 16, the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome (2) promoted the appeal "There is no future without the elderly - Appeal to re-humanize our societies. No to a selective healthcare system" (2).

1. Pope Francesco. Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the International Congress "The Richness of Many Years of Life". The Holy See – Vatican, www.vatican.va, accessed on November 10, 2020

2. Community of Sant'Egidio. There is no future without the elderly: www.santegidio.org › accessed November 11, 2020

On Sunday July 26 Pope Francis expressed his concern for the old people obliged to stay home because of the Covid-19 restrictions and living in loneliness. He asked young people to perform "gestures of tenderness" toward the elderly, as many are forced into isolation to observe Covid-19 health guidelines. He also asked younger people to "use fantasy of love to reach the elderly". This generated the campaigns, started on the subsequent day "The elders are your parents" and "Send your hug".

Pope Francis recently published *Sharing the Wisdom of Time: The Beginning of a New Alliance*. The book, following the introduction and the preface, discusses work, struggle, love, death and hope (3).

Therein Pope Francis spoke of a new alliance and asked everyone to understand that the elderly represent a capital for our society. "The elderly have wisdom. They are entrusted with a great responsibility: to transmit their life experience, their family history, the history of a community, of a people". The Pope asked for a book that would highlight the voices of those who have lived the longest affirming that they have valuable, life-changing wisdom to share". Pope Francis views elders as a reservoir of wisdom and historical memory and believes "their insight will offer the future generations much-needed understanding and direction". The inspiration was driven by the prophet Joel: "Your elders will dream dreams; your young people will see visions." (*Book of Joel* 3:1).

The Pope's book includes great histories from all over the world, great terse texts originating from more than 250 interviews, collected in 18 months; lavish colour photos by great photographers of persons living in different countries. The stories are inspiring and moving at the same time. Pope Francis thinks the intergenerational exchange

feasible if we adopt the model of the choir which is directed by a maestro but in the choir every singer works, not for himself but for the choir itself. "I call them the memory keepers", which is a translation for the Italian "memoriosi" a word derived from Latin (XIV century). Grandfathers and grandmothers need to assemble a choir. The Pope sees the elderly as the permanent presence in the choir of a great spiritual sanctuary, where prayers and chants support the community "that struggles in the field of life". The elderly also have to take the responsibility of acting to contrast the culture of waste. Humankind is endangered not only due to economics but also to ethics and anthropology. We have put grandfathers and grandmother aside; we have lost their wisdom. Our society is structured on families consisting of two generations, where old people live in loneliness. Pope Francis asks to reconsider our attitude to the elders and, in the introduction, speaks of his grandmother Rose who on various occasions was deprived in life of affection. She gave very little advice, but used to reflect. Pope Francis considers himself a grandfather who would like "a world that lives a new alliance of young and old". Thus, one can understand why he stresses the necessity to age with wisdom. In fact, without wisdom it would be impossible to convey wisdom. Indeed, old persons are not rubbish to discard. For Pope Francis the elderly will outline the road for future generations, to help them in discerning what has a value from what is transitory, what causes limited effects from events that mark forever. "And they know it because they have experienced it first hand in their own story". That is a call for making full use of competence, love and generosity in tutoring, one to one, by teaching and in turning teachings into practice.

3. Pope Francis and Friends. *Sharing the Wisdom of Time. The Beginning of a New Alliance*. Messenger Publications Dublin 2018, 176 pages



BULGARIA

Ruling Party and Opposition Argue on International Day for Older Person

Dimitar Nenov, President Bulgarian Association of Professors Emeriti

The Bulgarian National Radio on October 1, 2020 AT 11.46 gave emphasis to the participation of the Bulgarian Government in the World Day of Older Persons.

"In the most difficult days of the pandemic, we have made the life, health and social care for the elderly a priority, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov wrote on Facebook on the occasion of the International Day for Older Persons. For the third month in a row, all 2.1548 million retirees in Bulgaria will receive a supplement of 25 euros to their pensions to meet their most urgent needs. This support will continue until the end of our term", the Prime Minister wrote.

However, "Members of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) said in parliament that the sum of 25 euros was a form of alms. MP Georgi Gokov pointed out that Bulgaria was the country with the oldest population in Europe and the average pension was only 196 euros. The BSP members insist on the recalculation of all pensions granted until 2015 and a law for the elderly citizens, which will adequately regulate the increase of pensions every year".

In Bulgaria there are 2,154,800 seniors. The total Bulgarian population is about seven million. One of the reasons for so many older persons is the big emigration in recent years. Two million people emigrated from Bulgaria into Western countries to work and live. The Bulgarian Government promised to increase seniors' pensions. They will receive a supplement of 50 euros/month. The Government allows retired persons to work to increase their income.

Some organizations like The Red Cross are periodically giving to older persons foods, clothes and hot soup in special restaurants without charge. In addition, in Bulgaria, in the largest cities, special houses for older persons have been organized. Common opinion is that the help for older persons must be more generous.



GERMANY

Working Together for Older People

Dr. Franziska Giffey, Federal Minister for Family Affairs

Europe is based on the idea that we are all better off if we cooperate. This holds true for European partners working together, just as it does for cooperation between women and men, between generations and between people of different lifestyles."

People in Europe are getting older and at the same time are in good health. This is a stroke of luck for whole generations. During the Covid-19 crisis, older people across Europe have been severely restricted in their everyday lives. Social distancing has been particularly challenging for people living on their own or in nursing homes. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs aims to strengthen the rights of older people and their equal participation in an increasingly digitalised society and to promote their best interests. This will strengthen cohesion across generations and countries.

Policy-making in the context of demographic change

means policy-making that includes all age groups in all phases of their lives. Policy-making in this context means intergenerational solidarity and equity. Demographic change is the order of the day. Society is ageing - mainly as a result of the low birth rate and the fact that people are living longer. Leading an independent life in old age and participating in society is important to almost everyone.

Providing them with the support they need is one of the key objectives in policy-making for senior citizens and there are two priority goals. The first is to support older people in need of care, help or other forms of assistance. And second, to use the potential of older persons to foster cohesion between the generations and promote a society based on sharing and solidarity.

In many cases, responsibility for helping and caring for the elderly is assumed by close relatives but also by professional care givers and, in some cases, by friends.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth places importance on promoting a better reconciliation of family, care and work. The Ministry constantly works to modernise and develop nursing care professions in order to meet the growing need for nursing staff. It would also like to see society give greater recognition to the care provided by close relatives. Making it easier to reconcile care with working life helps in this regard - for example with the right to take care givers' leave.

With a *National Dementia Strategy*, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is developing a comprehensive approach in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Health, the civil society, the states, welfare service associations and research institutions. The aim is to help those affected, and their families, by establishing support networks that help make life with dementia easier. Furthermore, long-term care as well as

medical services should better suit the needs of people with dementia.

Older people want to remain active, take part in society and assume responsibility. Multi-generational centres are just one way to provide meeting places for people of all generations and for them to engage in a wide range of activities. International cooperation is also becoming increasingly important in view of the growing percentage of older persons worldwide. Germany therefore actively advocates for older persons in an international context - at the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe and in direct exchange with partner states (for example France and Japan).



GREECE

On Older Persons Day, the Public is Urged to Protect Seniors from Covid Threat

Message from Hellenic Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (HAGG)

COMMUNITY 01.10.2020

"Isolation, being away from family and loved ones, the inability to be self-sufficient, the danger of infection, the possibility of losing friends and the fear of dying is an explosive mix that poses a threat to the lives of older persons," the HAGG said in an announcement.

"Many older persons suffer from depression and often have psychosomatic symptoms reflecting the problems they are dealing with," it added.

Apart from advising older persons to diligently implement safety measures such as wearing a mask in public settings, maintaining physical distancing and avoiding unnecessary outings from their homes, the HAGG also appealed to younger members of the public to protect their older relatives and neighbours by doing the same.

"The recent serious outbreaks in elderly care homes are due to the negligence of relatives and care givers" the association warned.

In Greece, the National Statistical Service reports that 17.1% of the country's total population is in the age group over 65, with women being more than men, while the prediction for the near future (2020) is approaching 24% and rising to 30% in the next ten years! So, the population is already characterized as aged, since it far exceeds the corresponding criteria of the two above-mentioned World Organizations, which is 7%! In addition, our population is shrinking considerably, with Greece and Italy recording the

third lowest birth rate (9 ‰) in the EU, after Germany (8.4 ‰) and Portugal (8.5 ‰).

It should be remarked that in Greece the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), i.e. the governmental organization in charge of equality between women and men in Greece, has widely publicized the gender aspect of the International Day of Older Persons.

Message for WDOP of Athina Linou, Prolepsis Institute in Athens

The following message is included in an interview by Dr. Athina Linou, Professor of the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and President of the "Prolepsis" Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental and Occupational Health.

"In these hitherto unknown conditions which we are experiencing because of the coronavirus, our first effort must be directed towards the protection of the health of aged individuals. We must not forget that thousands of aged people and many beloved persons who endure loneliness more heavily. Let us show, in an active, practical, and simple way, that they are not alone. With telephone communication or through the use of technology we can offer some minutes of our time to warm their hearts."

Professor Linou has organized a program *Friendship for all ages* in collaboration with «Petits Frères des Pauvres» (PFP, Europe-USA) to help seniors".

HUNGARY

Reintegration of 13th Monthly Pension to Start at the Beginning of Next Year in Hungary: Message of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán

www.kormany.hu, October 1, 2020

At the beginning of next year, we will start the reintegration of the 13th monthly pension, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced on Thursday, on the International Day of Older Persons. In a video message posted on Facebook after the meeting of the Council of the Elderly, the Prime Minister said the most important topic was the 13th monthly pension as everyone is intrigued whether – now that the epidemic is taking its toll not only on the people, but also on the economy – it will be possible to start the reintegration of the 13th monthly pension as pledged earlier.

“On behalf of the government and the finance minister, I gave a clear answer: at the beginning of next year, we will start the reintegration of the 13th monthly pension, regardless of the epidemic,” Mr Orbán stated.

“The coming months will be difficult for the elderly because the citizens of the country have decided not to put the country into lockdown again in the autumn, but to keep institutions, schools, jobs, sports facilities, theatres and forums similar to the Council of the Elderly continuously up and running”, the Prime Minister continued. He stressed that this will require more attention on everyone’s part, both the young and the elderly, as the threat is significant. He indicated that the meeting of the Council of the Elderly, too, was held amidst enhanced safety measures.

Mr Orbán also said “If we fail to take care and pay attention to one another, we could lose many lives, including

lives that we could have otherwise saved. Pensions have been raised to the maximum level allowed by the country’s situation and the current extremely trying times”.

“We convey today a kind thought and gratitude to our parents and grandparents, on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons. To those who have built with great effort today’s society, communities and families, we owe a peaceful and dignified life. We equally owe them the truth, as an elementary form of respect. I am convinced that most of them, poised and wise as we know them, understand that pensions have been raised to the maximum level allowed by the country’s situation and the extremely difficult trials we are going through. And they have the deepest understanding of the fact that promises are easy to make, but the word is hard to keep. The ongoing health crisis also shows us that we must protect those who have taken care of us for our entire life.”

“Whether we follow the safety rules or help them make an online appointment, whether we do their shopping or give them a simple phone call, it is important that the elderly do not feel alone. I wish everyone good health, peace and strength!”.



ITALY

A Community is Measured by Care for Elderly says Italian President Mattarella

Ansa, October 1, 2020

President Sergio Mattarella said, on Thursday, in his message for the International Day for Older Persons that how elderly people are cared for is a key measure of how good a community is. “Often elderly people are the ones who teach us respect for values, they are the ones who show us the path of dignity, dedication and generosity”.

“Their example in this difficult time is an extraordinary asset... The quality of the model of community and development depends in part on how we guarantee rights and services for older citizens and on how we manage to integrate them into social processes in times of very rapid change”.

Mattarella also recalled the many elderly people who have been victims of the Covid-19 pandemic. “In recent months we have witnessed, with dismay, the suffering and death of many elderly people”, he said. “Where the spread of the virus was more widespread, or the conditions of poverty more critical, the pain was even greater”. Mattarella also underlined that the first edition of the World Day for Older People was started to bring to the attention of states and public opinion the problem of the aging populations along with the need for care and cure it carries along as well as along with all potential it can express in favour of the community”.

LUXEMBOURG

Corinne Cahen Minister of Family, Integration and the Greater Region

At the initiative of the United Nations, the international community is celebrating the "International Day of Older Persons" on Thursday, 1 October, to highlight the challenges of increasing life expectancy and to honour the contributions older persons make to society.

This year, the day is an opportunity to emphasise the commitment and solidarity of older persons during the health crisis of Covid-19. While they were considered vulnerable because after 65 years of age they are more likely to suffer from the serious consequences of Covid-19, this did not prevent them from being actively engaged on behalf of those in need.

To illustrate this solidarity of the elderly, the RBS Center fir Altersfroen is publishing, on its Facebook page, on the occasion of this international day and with the support of the Ministry of Family, Integration and the Greater Region, portraits of some of these senior citizens, who have shown through their initiatives that there is no age to commit oneself to others.

"This very special year, dominated by the Covid-19 health

crisis, has shaken the daily life of society in general and of older people in particular. Confinement, and then social and physical distancing, have been particularly difficult to live with, and yet there are countless people who have shown courage and tremendous solidarity. Once again, I would like to sincerely thank them for their commitment," emphasised the Minister for Family and Integration, Corinne Cahen.

She also expressed the hope that this solidarity movement will continue: "This solidarity, illustrated for example by the senior citizens who sewed masks that were then distributed by the scouts to the most vulnerable people, has made it possible to forge new links between generations and between neighbours. It is probably the most positive facet of the pandemic and it is up to all of us to ensure that this solidarity continues, even after the crisis".



Rights of Elderly in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic

Katka Derzsiova, ENG, Former Head of Nephrological Laboratory of the IVth Department of Internal Medicine, University Hospital of L. Pasteur, Košice, Slovak Republic

Slovak Republic

The Government Council of the Slovak Republic for the rights of the elderly and adaptation of public policies process of population aging suggests, coordinates and supervises measures for the rights of seniors and to eliminate the negative effects of an aging population. The Council follows the work of the Committee for the Elderly from 2014.

In Slovakia "The Association of Seniors" has existed for 30 years. It is a civic association that brings together seniors, regardless of nationality, political affiliation, social background or religion. Its mission is to protect their rights and legitimate demands for security, health and social care.

This year, the fifth year of the "Senior Friendly" project will take place on the occasion of the World Day of Older People on October 23, 2020 in Bratislava. This is the "Conference on Active Aging and Intergenerational Cooperation", which will also include the announcement of the Senior Friendly Awards.

The Public Health Office of the Slovak Republic and the

Regional Public Health Offices address the issue of aging through the National Program of Active Aging for 2014-2020, which aims to improve the lifestyle and health awareness of older people and eliminate social isolation, which has a negative impact on mortality and morbidity of older people. The evaluation of healthy aging is a complex process that consists of several important components, which include: genetic factors, environmental influences, lifestyle, good ability to adapt to changed conditions, proper nutrition and physical activity.

For the 2020 World Day of Older People, the Regional Public Health Office organized the "All-Slovak Health Counselling Center", which took place on October 5 in the Tesco hypermarket in Košice. Seniors can get information about a healthy lifestyle, measure their BMI and blood pressure. World Day of Older People wants to draw attention to the loneliness and helplessness of old people who live in future years, knowing that they can no longer expect anything positive from life.

World Day for the Older People was celebrated in the towns of Čadca and Krásno and Kysucou, central Slovakia, through the Regional Office of Public Health based in Čadca and also in Bardejov (Eastern Slovakia)

It has become a tradition that every year in October, seniors participate actively in the celebration of the merits and needs of the elders. An elderly person has the right to a unique life in safety and seriousness, as well as the right to the development of his personality. Seniors - pensioners - want to actively participate in the development and implementation of policy in the interests of the elderly and disabled through their own structures.

Czech Republic

Every year, the World Day of Older People's campaign is linked to a theme. This year is the "Year of the Nurse and Midwife". World Day of Older People (here we call it International Day of Older People) will emphasize the role of the health workforce in contributing to the health of older people. We must not forget the recognition of the nursing profession.

This year's theme focuses on health and well-being and how we will start a decade of healthy aging. Highlights of this year's theme: 1. Inform stakeholders about the strategic goals of the Decade of Healthy Aging. 2. To increase awareness of the specific health needs of older people, their contribution to their own health and to the functioning

of the society in which they live. 3. Raise awareness and appreciation of the role of health professionals in maintaining and improving the health of older people. 4. Make proposals to reduce health inequalities between older people in developed and developing countries. 5. Improve understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on older people and its impact on health policy, planning and attitudes.

The Decade of Healthy Aging is an opportunity for governments, civil society, the media, professionals, international agencies and many more, to come together and work together to improve the lives of older people, their families and the communities in which they live.

As part of the World Day of Older People, the Gerontology Institute will organize the "International Conference on Old Age Joins 2020" in Prague, on 19 and 20 October 2020. The main topics of the conference will be the issue of abuse and neglect of seniors, aging LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and suicide seniors. Top professionals in the field from the USA and Europe will speak at the conference. The term "domestic violence" applies to all situations in which one person is abused by another. However, violence takes place not only at home, but also in residential health or social care facilities, offices, services.



SLOVENIA

The Role of the Elderly in Society and Care for the Elderly

Janez Cigler Kralj, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia

"The role of the elderly in society and care for the elderly is a priority of my mandate and a key topic of the work of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. It is up to us how we take care of the elderly and how compassionate we are. Age is an essential part of the life of each of us. That is why it must become inclusive, active, dignified. An inclusive society that does not push the elderly away is an important goal for me, knowing that the chain is as strong as its weakest link.

That is why, from the first day of my term, I have been paying exceptional, even personal attention to this area, which has unfortunately been too often forgotten, the consequences of which we still feel today. Together with the team at the ministry, both in the first wave of the pandemic, and now, when the introduction of infections in nursing homes and elsewhere is reappearing, I am

in constant contact with the directors of homes and the Community of Social Welfare Institutions. We offer all necessary assistance to our institutions within the scope of our competencies. We perceive needs and respond to them, not only symbolically, but also concretely. We are already targeting five legislative aid packages to deal with the consequences of the pandemic, and above all, to vulnerable groups.

The fifth package of the anti-corona package therefore includes a number of measures important from the point of view of preventing the spread and limiting the infection to Covid-19 in nursing homes. We provide temporary assignment of employees to homes facing increased workloads to provide measures to prevent the spread and limit infection to Covid-19. Employees who are temporarily assigned due to urgent work needs will be entitled to

a 20 percent bonus. We also provide an allowance for employees who work directly with patients with Covid-19, in the amount of 30 percent.

The Covid-19 epidemic in early 2020 showed that adequate protective equipment is one of the key elements in successfully tackling the effects of the virus. Therefore, under PKP5, we provided funding for protective equipment for the implementation of measures to limit Covid-19 infection. The budget will continue to cover the costs of loss of income for homes for the elderly due to unoccupied capacity.

We are therefore trying to respond quickly and efficiently to all the current challenges posed by Covid-19. But the fact is that Covid-19 has occurred at a time which, more than ever, has exposed two key systemic problems in the field of care for the elderly, namely staffing and financial malnutrition of homes for the elderly. I am glad, however, that we have made important progress in this area as well.

We will build and renovate homes for the elderly by awarding concessions and drawing intensively on European funds. The latter are projects related to the provision of additional capacity for day care and deinstitutionalisation, which would consequently free up places in homes and at the same time provide additional jobs.

We are also solving the problem of staff malnutrition at home. EUR 29 million has been earmarked for solving the staff shortage in the next two years by funding approximately 620 additional staff for all providers of institutional care in the public network, with more than 550 additional employees in nursing homes. This means

that staffing and improving standards in homes will not be left on the shoulders of residents / users or their relatives. Recruitment procedures are already underway with contractors.

We want to establish a transparent and accessible system of care for the elderly, which enables them to stay in their home environment for as long as possible, with all the support they need.

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities designs and supports a number of activities and policies that have a major impact on the quality of life of the elderly. Despite all the measures taken so far, we still remain at a time when great challenges lie ahead. In responding to them, it is important to strengthen mutual cooperation, solidarity and co-responsibility. Caring for ourselves and for others gives us all a sense of usefulness and that is the guide we must follow as a society. Maintaining or improving the socio-economic situation of the elderly also remains a key concern.

Thus, as long as a person lives, she/he wants to be useful, called, because the basic need of everyone is to be seen and heard. By connecting different generations, we can achieve an inclusive society that does not push the elderly away, which is an important goal for me, knowing that the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. "



SWITZERLAND

The Potential of Old Age – An Untapped Treasure!

Bea Heim and Roland Grunder, Co-presidents Swiss Seniors' Council

"Older people are younger today" was a recent headline in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung am Sonntag*.

Seniors are physically and cognitively better today than they were 30 years ago; women and men between the ages of 75 and 80 performed better in terms of reaction speed, language skills and memory than they did in the 1990s. This is the result of a Finnish research team study. Correspondingly, the commitment and expectations of older people have also rejuvenated in Switzerland.

"Participate, and participate in decision-making instead of watching" is the motto. Rightly so, because who has more experience and knowledge than the elderly themselves

when it comes to designing traffic flow, streets, forms of living and IT projects in an age-appropriate manner? The successful Gérontopôle project in the canton of Fribourg illustrates the diverse opportunities that can arise in the public sector and for the economy, from cooperation between generations. This active platform serves to examine projects and research carried out, by the public sector, with regard to their effects on old age, as well as questions relating to urban planning, checking safety in public spaces, customer-oriented transport, health and further education, for their age-friendliness and to make technological innovations marketable.

In fact, the longer G rontop le is developing into an interdisciplinary pool of experts in which business and senior citizens' organisations work together on an equal footing, it will inspire a policy that serves everyone. For example, senior citizens are testing the "Silver & Home" residential project at the University of Economics in Fribourg for its suitability for the growing old-age market.

G rontop le sets the course for the equal participation of all generations, including those of old age, in shaping

the future. It is important to discover the potential and achievements of the elderly and to use them in the interests of society as a whole. Participation at communal, cantonal and federal level is the key to generational solidarity and the goal of the Swiss Seniors



UNITED KINGDOM

UK Parliament: Early Day Motion 952: tabled on 01 October 2020

"That this House welcomes the establishment, by the UN General Assembly, of the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October each year; believes that older people have contributed greatly throughout their lives and deserve dignity and fairness in retirement; recognises the significant contribution many continue to make in retirement; acknowledges the value of wisdom and experienced gained throughout long lives; notes research by Independent Age which found Pension Credit is currently being received by just six in 10 (61 per cent) of those who should be receiving it, and which estimates that around

450,000 pensioners could move out of poverty if uptake was increased to 100 per cent; expresses concern that the UK Government is allowing billions of pounds of Pension Credit to go unclaimed; and demands decisive action from the UK Government to maximise the uptake of Pension Credit including a UK-wide campaign to raise awareness."



SCOTLAND

Today Marks the 30th UN International Day of Older Persons and it Should Come as No Surprise that the Theme this Year is Pandemics

Age Scotland media Team, published on October 1

The coronavirus pandemic has touched the lives of everyone but by far the greatest impact has been felt by older people.

Here in Scotland, we know that to be true. Early on we feared that the pandemic would have a devastating impact on older people and those at risk from underlying health conditions.

Sadly, that fear turned into reality. Coronavirus has affected significantly more older people than any other age group – 3,251 of the 4,236 people who have died so far in Scotland were over 75.

No age group is immune but the grim figures highlight how great the toll has been, and continues to be, on our older population. And we must never forget that each and every one of those deaths is a tragic loss to those who knew and loved them.

Protecting older people became a priority as the pandemic took hold, and rightly so. It is vitally important that older people in Scotland know that their lives matter and that they are integral to society.

Once lockdown began, tens of thousands of the most vulnerable older people were advised to shield. The Scottish Government guidance was clear – to stay safe they should remain at home, not invite visitors into their home and avoid all face-to-face social interaction.

Shielding brought with it many challenges. Our Age Scotland Helpline received record numbers of calls from older people and their families who were struggling to arrange essential food and medication deliveries.

But as the weeks and months went by the biggest difficulty faced by many older people was growing loneliness, isolation and anxiety. Lack of face-to-face

contact with loved ones and the cancellation of all social activities has left a large number of older people feeling alone and cut off from their family, friends and community.

To help combat loneliness, which can have a seriously detrimental impact on a person's physical and mental health, we introduced the Age Scotland Friendship Line and invited older people to pick up the phone and have a friendly chat. The service has proved extremely popular. As one caller said: "I don't feel so alone now."

Throughout the pandemic, Scotland's care homes have been on the frontline of the fight against the virus. More than a third of coronavirus deaths involved care home residents and it remains imperative that social care and care home staff are supported with everything they need to prevent the spread of the virus as the infection rate begins to climb again.

For families of care home residents, not being able to see their loved ones was unimaginably hard. Since lockdown eased and restricted visits have been allowed, we have also heard heart-breaking reports of the effect prolonged isolation has had on people living with dementia who have become withdrawn, unable to comprehend why they were not being visited by family. The safe resumption of regular visits from loved ones must be treated as an urgent priority in all care homes.

The unpaid carers of those living at home with dementia have shared similar stories. The Age Scotland About Dementia report, *Locked Down but Not Forgotten*, features the example of Margaret who cares for her husband, Les, who lives with dementia. Margaret has seen a significant deterioration in Les's condition since lockdown stripped him of his usual routine. She now feels as though she is losing her husband much faster than she had prepared for.

Much of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on older people has undoubtedly been grim. But the community

spirit and resilience shown by the older generation has been incredible to witness.

We have enjoyed seeing many of our Age Scotland community groups keeping in touch via Zoom. In Kinross, members of the town's Men's Shed used their skills to make thousands of pieces of PPE for health and other key workers.

Many other older people, who weren't shielding, joined local volunteer networks delivering hot meals to older neighbours, getting their shopping and picking up medication. They proved once again that older people will rise to a challenge and help make things better for others.

Although older people are less likely to have access to the internet, lockdown proved for many to be the ideal time to learn new skills. With the help of grandchildren or by sheer determination, record numbers of older people are now taking part in video calls, using FaceTime or Skype to chat to friends and family all round the world.

Today's International Day of Older Persons seeks to understand the impact of the pandemic on older people but, six months in, it's still too early to know what the long-term effect will be.

In Scotland we are heading into winter and the immediate priority must be an action plan for supporting older people through the rest of the year and beyond.

The pandemic is not going away. We are going to be living with it for years to come. But even in the shadow of this virus, older people must know their lives are important, they are valued and they will be protected by a caring society.



WALES

A Day to Celebrate Ageing

Julies Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services, October 1, 2020

2020 has been a year of unprecedented changes to the way we live. Necessary restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus and protect people's health have meant that some families were not able to see each other face-to-face for some time. And for some older people, the pandemic has reduced their ability, or even prevented them from giving back to their local communities by volunteering or

supporting others.

We asked Age Cymru, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), the Welsh Senate of Older People, Active Wales, National Pensioners Convention Wales, and Pensioners Forum Wales to gather the experiences of people over the age of 50 living in Wales during the pandemic.

The survey received more than 1,000 responses which

are currently being analysed. Respondents were also asked to share their thoughts about how Wales can prepare for the future. The responses will help to shape our updated *Strategy for an Ageing Society* in preparation for a public consultation.

During the pandemic, many people have had to rely on the support of others for the first time. One 75-year-old told the survey: "Age has never bothered me, but this lockdown has made me feel old."

But others shared a different experience and spoke of how their local community and neighbours came together to support each other.

Whatever our experiences over the last six months, International Older Persons' Day is a time to reflect, acknowledge and celebrate the many ways older people contribute to our communities. We must not let this pandemic alter the way we view each other. Everyone, whatever their age, has the potential to make a difference.

At the start of the pandemic, work on our *Strategy for an Ageing Society* was temporarily paused as we focused all

our efforts on keeping people safe. However, the strategy's vision of an age-friendly Wales, which protects and upholds the rights of older people has become even more relevant in light of coronavirus.

Age Cymru has launched the *Friend-in-Need* service to help tackle loneliness and isolation among the over 70s. It is an opportunity for people of all ages to provide friendship and support from our own homes.

To either register for a friendship call, or to make a difference and new connections by volunteering to become a friend, visit the website at www.agecymru.org.uk.

I look forward to continuing my work with older people and their representatives to achieve this vision. We cannot allow this pandemic to embed stereotypical notions that link age to vulnerability and decline and ultimately make it easier for older people's rights to be overlooked.



LONDON

The Mayor of London co-hosts Older Londoners Food Summit for the World Day of Older Persons

To mark the International Day of Older People, which takes place every year on 1 October, the Mayor of London today co-hosted an Older Londoners Food Summit with Sustain, the charity alliance for better food and farming.

The event, chaired by the new Chief Executive of Age UK London, Abigail Wood, launched a new Greater London Authority report on *Experiences of Food Insecurity amongst Older Londoners before and during Covid-19*. The report draws on interviews with older Londoners to understand the causes of food insecurity and malnutrition and the impact of Covid-19 on their experience of accessing food and wellbeing. It also explores the extent to which older Londoners discuss diets and where they access nutritional information and support.

The summit also marked the launch of Sustain's publication *Meals on wheels for the 21st century: A report exploring meals-on-wheels services in London before, during and after Covid-19*.

These reports tell us Covid-19 has exacerbated the issues older Londoners had with accessing food, in particular food that is appropriate for their specific health and cultural requirements.

The research also shows the extent to which older

Londoners offered vital support to their neighbours and local community, began making preparations well before lockdown and demonstrated incredible resilience and adaptability under unprecedented circumstances.

Throughout the coronavirus crisis, the Mayor has worked in partnership with local authorities and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to respond to increased levels of food insecurity, oversee the establishment of Community Food Hubs in every borough and distribute food supplies to those needing support, including older Londoners.

Today also sees the World Health Organisation's *Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030* which focuses attention on actions we can all take to ensure everyone can live a long and healthy life. As we move from responding to the pandemic to recovery from it, the Mayor and I have an ambition for all Londoners to have access to healthy, culturally appropriate and sustainable community food provision. Older Londoners must be at the heart of this.



TURKEY

Turkey's Elderly Population is Growing Faster than Other Age Groups

Reporting by Merve Yildizalp: Writing by Handan Kazanci, Anatolian Agency, Ankara, Turkey

Turkey's Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services supports the elderly through various economic and socio-cultural initiatives.

Turkey's elderly population is growing faster than other age groups, according to the Turkish Statistic Institute (TUIK). Data released by the statistic authority said the percentage of senior citizens (65-year-olds and above) reached 8.5 percent in 2017. The figure is expected to reach 10.2 percent in 2023 and 12.9 percent in 2030, 16.3 percent in 2040, 22.6 percent in 2060 and 25.6 percent in 2080, according to TUIK data.

The Ministry provides home care services for the elderly. Around 500,000 Turkish citizens benefit from this service.

Also, pensions are distributed to needy senior citizens. A total of 618,000 people has been supported with this pension as of the end of 2017.

The elderly who are unable to stay at home are cared for at special centres.

A total of 14,000 people are served at 144 nursing homes which operate under the Ministry. This number reaches to around 21,000 when private nursing homes are included.

Since 2014, senior citizens can also access railways,

sea lines, and municipality transportation vehicles free of charge or at discounted prices.

The ministry is also operating 47 old-age homes.

October 1 is marked as the International Day of Older Persons. This year's theme is "celebrating older human rights champions".

According to the UN, there are some 700 million people in the world over the age of 60.

"By 2050, 2 billion people, over 20 percent of the world's population, will be 60 or older," the UN said. "The increase in the number of older people will be the greatest and the most rapid in the developing world, with Asia as the region with the largest number of older persons, and Africa facing the largest proportionate growth," it added.

Acknowledgements

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AUSTRALIA

The Important Contributions that Older People Make to Society

www.yarranges.vic.gov.au.int

The International Day of Older Persons is an opportunity to highlight the important contributions that older people make to society and to raise awareness of the issues and challenges of ageing in today's world.

Older people have always played a significant role in society as leaders, caretakers and custodians of tradition. With age comes wisdom that can only be gained from life experience. Today we pay tribute to our elders and acknowledge the value of their experience, their knowledge and their deep connection with the communities where they have lived, worked and raised their families. During October we would normally celebrate a vibrant Seniors Festival throughout the shire. Due to the current circumstances, we invite our older residents to enjoy the *Seniors Festival Reimagined* by watching or listening to performances

online and on the radio.

Why 'reimagined'? With physical distancing in place, we want to keep everyone safe but continue to produce a great festival. This year, the Festival comes straight to you in your home. It includes pre-recorded performances and interviews, radio programs, and local online events.

The Victorian Seniors Festival is an important Victorian Government initiative. Now in its 38th year, it celebrates older Victorians and the valuable contribution they make to our community.



CANADA

The Immense Contributions of Canada Seniors

Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau

"Today, we reflect on the immense contributions Canada's seniors have made in shaping our country. They are our friends and family, neighbours, co-workers and role models, and they have laid the foundation for a better life for millions of Canadians.

This year has been tough for many of Canada's seniors. Unfortunately, many have experienced considerable health, economic, and social challenges throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and the disease has disproportionately affected them, particularly those living in long-term care facilities. Some seniors spent prolonged periods alone and separated from their families and communities.

Public health measures meant many seniors needed to rely on friends, families or community services for access to groceries and medicine. Many also saw their savings impacted.

That is why the Government of Canada has introduced measures to support seniors and help them get through this difficult time. Shortly after the start of the pandemic, the Government of Canada contributed \$9 million in funding through the United Way Canada to work with communities in each province and territory to support isolated or vulnerable seniors. We invested a further \$350 million in community-based charities and non-profit organizations to help vulnerable Canadians through the Emergency Community Support Fund.

The Fund provided, with others, added support for the home delivery of groceries and medicine, transportation services for medical appointments and enhanced information and support lines. We also expanded the New Horizons for Seniors Program with an additional \$20 million to support organizations that improve seniors' quality of life by maintaining social support networks through community-based projects.

The Government of Canada introduced a further \$2.5 billion investment in a one-time tax-free payment of \$300 for seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension, with an added \$200 for those benefiting from the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). This measure

provided individuals eligible for both OAS and GIS a total of \$500 in supports.

And, to ensure that seniors continue receiving their benefits, the GIS was temporarily extended for seniors whose 2019 income information had not been assessed. We have also provided a one-time special payment through the Goods and Services Tax Credit, averaging \$375 for single seniors and \$510 for senior couples; this benefited over 4 million seniors. And, we gave seniors extra flexibility with their Registered Retirement Income Funds by reducing minimum withdrawals by 25 per cent for 2020.

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces also assisted in long-term care facilities, and the Canadian Red Cross is still helping. They did a crucial job helping our grandparents, parents and elders, and for that, we owe them our deepest thanks.

In last week's Throne Speech, we said that we will continue to help and protect seniors, by working with Parliament on Criminal Code amendments to penalize those who neglect seniors under their care. We will also work with the provinces and territories to set new national standards for long-term care, take additional action to help people stay in their homes longer, increase OAS once a senior turns 75, and boost the Canada Pension Plan survivor's benefit.

Now that we are building back our economy and starting our recovery, let us find strength in the legacy of resilience, determination and compassion provided to us by seniors. We owe them a debt of gratitude. Now, we need to be there for those who raised us and built this country. Together, on National Seniors Day, let us recommit ourselves to a fairer, healthier, more resilient Canada that is more inclusive for everyone."



INDIA

International Day for Older Persons: Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030)

DD NEWS

Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, restated commitment of the Government to healthy ageing today on the occasion of International Day for Older Persons. Every year 1st October is celebrated as the International Day of Older Persons, as declared by the United Nations, to recognize, enable and expand the contributions of older people in their families, communities and societies at large, and to raise awareness towards issues of ageing.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan spoke of the National Programme for the Health Care for the Elderly (NPHCE) which is aimed to deliver comprehensive, affordable and quality geriatric care services at primary and secondary levels; "outpatient services from district hospital to health & wellness centres, minimum 10 bedded geriatric wards at all district hospitals, rehabilitation services down to CHC and HWC level and developing mechanisms for providing home based care to needy elderly." He elaborated how this would feed into secondary and tertiary institutions through a continuum of care approach. He stated that "19 Regional Geriatric Centres in medical colleges and two National Centres for Ageing are envisioned to render specialized geriatric care through strong cross referrals, developing a strong workforce of geriatricians and geriatric care providers, both medical and paramedical, impart caregiving skills to family members and professionals and carry out need-based operational research."

The Union Health Minister also stated that as 1 October, 2020 is the launch year of *Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030)*, many activities will be undertaken throughout the year, aimed at mainstreaming issues related to elderly and to deliberate upon ways to ensure better and effective delivery of services, making full use of convergence mechanisms. "This initiative is an opportunity to bring together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector for concerted, catalytic and collaborative action to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live," he added.

The Minister affirmed that the broad aims of the Decade of Healthy Ageing will include evolving convergence within various national health programs and also promoting inter-sectoral coordination with other Departments/Ministries. Community-based organisations, NGOs and multinational

agencies will also be involved for developing an implementation framework for multi-sectoral engagement on healthy aging. "Discussions/workshops/webinars with experts/academic bodies/professionals will be organised to bring out policy and programmatic responses to LASI data, (see below) highlighting the best practices for elder care and exploring effective means of promoting and strengthening the participation of older persons in various aspects of social, cultural, economic and civic and political life."

Highlighting the importance of the *Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI)*, he said, "With well-designed and judicious investments, an ageing population can help build-up human, social, economic and environmental capital. However, this would call for investment in all phases of life, fostering enabling societies, and creating a flexible, but vibrant society for all ages. For this to happen, formulation of policies and programmes of the Government, or any modifications therein to improve their reach and delivery, need to be evidence-based. In order to generate comprehensive data on social, economic and health conditions of the elderly, the Government undertook the LASI study, the first nationwide study and the world's largest study on older adults, which will provide evidence base for national and state level programmes and policies for elderly population." Findings of LASI are being finalised by the Ministry and will be released shortly.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also spoke on the emergence of Covid-19 as a public health challenge which has caused an upheaval across the country and the world. The UN theme of the International Day of Older Persons 2020 is "Pandemics: Do They Change How We Address Age and Ageing?". Considering the higher risks faced by the elderly during pandemics such as Covid-19, the Government has responded to address their concerns by recognising them as a vulnerable population category for Covid efforts, issuing advisories, raising awareness of their special needs, encouraging State Governments to develop need-based models for delivery of medications and home-based care to the elderly".



JAPAN

Respect of the Age Day in Japan

Japan Today, September 20th 2020

This national holiday is celebrated on the Third Monday in September, this year on September 15 (1).

Also known as Seniors' Day, Respect for the Aged Day, or Keiro no Hi, was established as a national holiday in 1966 to express respect for the elders in the community, and to recognise and thank them for their contributions to society and last, but not least, celebrate their long lives.

Until 2003, the holiday was observed on September 15th. Since 2004, the Day has instead been observed on the third Monday of September. To honour their elders, many communities throw parties and offer special gifts to bring even more longevity to their lives.

The proportion of Japan's elderly population has risen steadily since 1950 and is expected to surge as high as 35.3% in 2040. Ageing of the population is a major issue as it creates concerns over how the country will fund health care and social security payments in the future with a contracting workforce.

Japanese media often take the opportunity to feature the older generations, reporting on the population and highlighting the oldest people in the country. In September 2020 the estimated number of people aged 65 or older in Japan stood at 36.17 million, accounting for 28.7% of the nation's total population, both figures hitting record highs, according to an internal affairs ministry survey. The elderly population increased by 300,000 from a year earlier and its share rose by 0.3 percentage point. Elderly men totalled 15.73 million-25.7% of the total male population. The number of elderly women stood at 20.44 million, or 31.6% of the female population across Japan.

1. Amy Chavez (2 September 2008). "What is Respect for the Aged Day?". Archived from the original on 28 December 2010. Retrieved 15 September 2008.

Origin of Respect for the Aged Day

This national holiday traces its origins to 1947, when Nomadani-mura (later Yachiyo-cho, currently Taka-cho), Hyōgo Prefecture, proclaimed September 15 Old Folks' Day (Toshiyori no Hi). Its popularity spread nationwide, and in 1966 it took its present name and status.

Commemorative silver sake cups

Since 1963, the Japanese government has given a commemorative silver sake cup to Japanese who reach the age of 100. In 1963 the number was 153, but with numbers increasing, the government decided to reduce the size of the cup to cut costs in 2009[2]. In 2014 29,357 received a cup (2,3). In 2017, Japan honoured 32,097 people (27,461 women and 4,636 men) who turned 100-years old; they each received congratulatory letter and souvenir sake cup from the Prime Minister. According to this report the solid sterling silver cups were replaced with nickel alloy silver plated design which halved per unit cost saving \$1-million annual budget.

Celebration

On this holiday, people return home to visit and pay respect to the elders. Some people volunteer in neighbourhoods by making and distributing free lunch boxes to older citizens. Entertainments are sometimes provided by teenagers and children with various keirokai performances. Special television programs are also featured by Japanese media on this holiday.

2. "Ageing Japan cuts cost of 100th birthday gifts". Reuters. 3 March 2009. Retrieved 26 September 2015.

3. Elahe Izadi (21 August 2015). "Japan has so many super old people that it can't afford to give them special sake cups anymore". Washington Post. Retrieved 26 September 2015.

NEW ZEALAND

A Chance to Think About the Individual Older New Zealanders

Hon Tracey Martin, Minister for Seniors, New Zealand Government, Media Statement

"International Older Persons Day is a chance to think about the individual older New Zealanders we know and to confront ageism", Seniors Minister Tracey Martin said today.

"What happened around Covid-19 is a reminder that our over-65s are a very large and diverse group of people and we need to recognise this across government and in our lives," Minister Martin says.

"Like the rest of the developed world, New Zealand has an ageing population, which reflects more of us are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. This group - and I say group reluctantly - aren't all the same. Seniors, those over 65, are 800,000 very different individuals with very different circumstances and needs. Some older people do have health or mobility or income issues and they do need extra support and care. However, many are still in paid work and lots of our seniors are people who look after others - their children, grandchildren, others in their communities - rather than people who need help themselves. The more seniors there are, and the numbers are growing all of the time, the more diverse this group is. We need to recognise this if we are to do the right things as a society and get the right government policies," Mrs Martin says.

"For example, New Zealand's response to Covid saw community groups, businesses, government and individuals all doing things to reach out and help older people who needed contact or extra assistance. But initially, there was also unfortunate use of the word 'vulnerable' to refer to those over 70. Language is important. There are extra health risks with age, but not everyone over 70 is 'vulnerable' or

'elderly' and it's certainly not how they see themselves."

The Minister said New Zealand needs to think differently about ageing if we are to tap into the potential of the growing seniors' population and to offer people the best possible futures.

"Covid has seen us behave better overall, but I don't want it to set our attitudes back. Our progress has been because everyone, including seniors, did their bit in staying home and keeping others safe.

Some over-65s were also the first to get out and travel domestically after lockdown and the Office for Seniors is currently working on travel promotions for this group to support the tourism sector.

We've got a large senior market and workforce the country simply can't afford to overlook. On the International Day of Older Persons, let's remind ourselves that older people are our parents and grandparents and move away from casual ageism."



UGANDA

Upholding the Rights of Older Persons

Bicholas Agaba, *The Kampala Post*, September 30, 2020

President Yoweri Museveni will, tomorrow, be the chief guest as Uganda celebrates the International Day of Older Persons, with the main function hosted at State House, Entebbe, beginning at 10am.

The event is being organized by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development under the theme: *"Upholding the Rights of Older Persons during COVID 19 Pandemic: A Call for Action"*.

The United Nations General Assembly under resolution 45/106 designated 1st October the International Day of Older Persons.

The day is marked to recognize the contributions made by older persons and to create awareness among the public on the rights and needs of older persons. Furthermore, this is the day the government and other stakeholders take stock of what has been achieved, the gaps and possible solutions to address these gaps.

In Uganda, life expectancy has increased from 45 years in 2002 to 64 years today and this indicates that the number of Older Persons is increasing. Sarah Kanyike, the state minister for the Elderly and the Disabled, said,

citing Ugandan Bureau of Statistics figures of 2017: "This increase in life expectancy has been attributed to improved health care through technological advancement in the health sector, increased positive health-seeking behaviour and people adopting healthier lifestyles among others,".

The National Housing and Population Census of 2014 showed that the population of Older Persons is 3.7%, a population of 1,280,000 Older Persons.

Over the years, the government has also come up with measures to protect the rights of aged people and through the National Policy for Older Persons (2009), the government is focusing on key areas like economic empowerment, social security, food security and nutrition, health care and lifestyle for Older Persons, HIV and AIDS and education, among others. The Ministry is also currently rolling out the Senior Citizens Grant payments, under the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment. This national rollout will now see Senior Citizens Grants extended to all 135 districts in the country, reaching 358,420 Older Persons.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Ministry of Health and Prevention marks International Day for Older Persons 2020

Emirates news agency, Dubai October 1, 2020

The Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP), is joining the world in marking the International Day for Older Persons which is observed on 1st October, as part of its commitment to promoting the quality of life of senior citizens and raising social awareness about their needs.

This occasion is also an opportunity to highlight, and recognise, the role of health workers in maintaining the health of the elderly through a number of the best health and preventive services and facilities to protect them from Covid-19 and ensure their effective engagement in the UAE's social fabric.

Since the Covid-19 outbreak, MoHAP, in cooperation with the competent authorities, has been keen to launch home-testing campaigns to follow up on the health of senior citizens, with all the preventive and precautionary measures in place. Further, MoHAP has launched a host of initiatives for the elderly to develop preventive and curative

services, easing of administrative procedures, priority in appointments, dispensing medicines, and laboratory services, as part of the "Wareed" system.

The ministry-run hospitals offer senior citizens distinguished healthcare services, with the award-winning Obaidullah Elderly Hospital in Ras Al Khaimah considered the first such hospital across the UAE, reflecting the efficiency of health services provided to the elderly.

Being one of the main indicators to measure the development of the health system in a country, life expectancy at birth in the UAE comes first among the Arab countries (77.2 years), while the healthy life expectancy index reached 66.7 years according to the 2016's statistics.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Proclamation on Older Americans Month, 2020

Donald J Trump, April 30, 2020

Older Americans are cherished and invaluable members of our society, deserving our utmost respect, gratitude, and admiration. During Older Americans Month, we pause to draw upon the wisdom, spirit, and experience older adults bring to our families, our communities, and our Nation. We also recognize that during this time of crisis, caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we can persevere and prevail by emulating the resolve, tenacity, and determination of America's more experienced individuals who have endured and overcome life's most challenging times.

Older Americans have built our economy, defended our freedom, and shaped our Nation's character. They have raised families and dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for future generations. They sacrificed in times of hardship and took pride in a job well done. Many served honourably in our Armed Forces during some of the darkest times in the history of our Republic. Older Americans have lived lives of service and sacrifice, bound by devotion to the sacred principles of our country. Although no one could begrudge them rest and respite during their

retirement years, having worked decades to support and grow their families and nurture their communities, many older Americans spend their time volunteering for those in need, mentoring young people, or learning new skills. They pour love into their extended families, places of worship, and neighbourhood centres, and offer profound perspective and insight gleaned from years of life lessons.

My Administration remains committed to enacting policies that benefit our Nation's older adults. In an effort to lower the cost of prescription drugs, the Food and Drug Administration has approved more generic drugs each year during my 3 years in office than any other year in the history of our country. We have also developed a path to allow less expensive prescription drugs to be imported from Canada. Additionally, I ended the terrible gag clauses that prevented pharmacists from telling patients when they could pay less out of pocket by not using their insurance. I have also taken executive action to improve seniors' access to medical care and to bolster Medicare's fiscal sustainability by reducing regulatory burdens and eliminating unnecessary barriers.

This action puts older Americans first by strengthening the program and helping to ensure its success for years to come.

Our Nation's older Americans are among the most susceptible to fraud and other financial schemes. To help counter these vile crimes, I have instructed the Department of Justice (DOJ) to prioritize protecting older Americans from financial exploitation and use every tool they have to disrupt and prosecute these criminals. Over the last year, DOJ has taken unprecedented action against transnational fraud schemes that target seniors, the networks of "money mules" that move stolen funds from Americans' bank accounts to overseas fraudsters, and telephone companies that knowingly facilitate billions of fraudulent robocalls. DOJ has also launched an Elder Fraud Hotline (1-833-FRAUD-11) so that America's seniors can more easily report fraud, find resources, and better protect themselves from this abhorrent criminal behaviour.

Older Americans are among those most vulnerable to the ravages of the coronavirus. As they continue to adhere to the special guidance put in place to protect them, we must acknowledge that far too many are facing hardships of loneliness and social isolation. Many families are unable to visit elderly parents and grandparents, and many men and women in retirement and nursing homes have been

cut off from personal contact and meaningful social connections. During this precarious and stressful time, we must remember our treasured older adults and recommit to doing what we can to support and care for them. I urge all Americans to reach out to loved ones, neighbours, and strangers to extend love, compassion, and encouragement. By delivering food and supplies to the homebound, mailing greeting cards, or using technology to stay connected, we can support our seniors as we defeat the virus. Older Americans know how to overcome. They have done it their whole lives. With the country rallying behind them we can ensure that they can continue to live lives of dignity, joy, and purpose long after the threat of the virus has faded.

Now, therefore, I, Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2020 as Older Americans Month. I call upon all Americans to honour our elders, acknowledge their contributions, care for those in need, and reaffirm our country's commitment to older Americans this month and throughout the year.

A large graphic for the International Day of Older Persons. It features a stylized world map in the background. In the center, two hands are shown holding up two elderly figures, a man and a woman, who are leaning on walking sticks. Below the hands, the text "INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS" is written in large, bold, capital letters. Underneath that, "OCTOBER 1" is written in smaller capital letters, flanked by horizontal lines.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
OLDER PERSONS
OCTOBER 1

Transition

FROM
FULL PROFESSORS
TO **EMERITI**

*"there is nothing permanent
except change"*

HERACLITUS



ARDAILLOU RAYMOND

National Academy of Medicine, Paris, France

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My retirement was gradual because I held three different positions: head of a hospital department, professor of physiology and director of a research laboratory depending of INSERM (National Institute for health and medical research).

I first gave up hospital responsibilities (1996), but my successor left me an equipped office and the hospital director asked me to oversee the construction of a new building for laboratories including the one I was running and had to move. I then gave up (1998) as director of the research laboratory and finally, in 1999, as head of the physiology department at the Faculty of Medicine St Antoine (September 1st 1999). In the meantime, I had been elected full member of the National Academy of Medicine (1996).

All these events went for the best with my successors who had been my collaborators and with whom I had the best relations. As a young retiree and considered a workaholic, I was soon entrusted with many responsibilities: President of the Kidney Foundation, an association designed to encourage nephrology research and raise funds for this purpose, member of the Board of Directors

of the "Physiology and Medicine" section of the Academia Europaea of which I had been elected member, member of the editorial board of the Franco-Quebécois journal "Médecine/Sciences", President of a jury for a high prize awarded annually by the Chancellery of the Universities of the Paris region for studies on lung diseases, member of the Board of Directors of the Claude Bernard Association, which was succeeded by the Robert Debré Association, of which I was president, and whose aim is supporting medical research in Paris hospitals.

In addition to these duties, my responsibilities at the Academy of Medicine were increasing, as I was in charge of the website, president of the jury awarding grants to students, deputy secretary of the Academy of Medicine and then "perpetual secretary" (whose mandate is, in fact, limited in time). So I was never bored, and I was lucky to get these positions, which each had a limited duration, without difficulty and most often without competition. It remains for me to say that when Dennis Cokkinos proposed to me to be one of the founding members, then the treasurer of our association, I accepted with gratitude and joy. I am now 90 years old, continue to work as far as I can following the piece of advice of Cicero in "*de senectute*": "The nature keep the elderly, provided that they retain their practice" (Cato 22).



BERCHE PATRICK

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My professional life began on September 1, 1970, when I was recruited as a doctor at Necker Enfants Maladies Hospital in Paris. This was followed by a long career as a biologist and teacher-researcher. This ended on September 1, 2014, when I retired. It was then that I was appointed Professor Emeritus of Paris Descartes Faculty of Medicine, of which I had been the Dean for 14 years.

Quite unexpectedly, I was then offered to take over

as Director of the Pasteur Institute of Lille, a prestigious research institution created in 1895 by Louis Pasteur and directed by Albert Calmette, the father of BCG. I managed this institution with numerous research teams for four years (800 people) - a hard and exciting task ! Finally, I worked daily until the age of 72, and I feel I was very privileged and lucky, because I never felt the weight of the work, but rather the exhilaration of transmitting knowledge.

During my professional career, I have experienced several pandemics. First of all, the AIDS pandemic, while I was working in the United States in 1981. One discovered,

with horror, this ever-fatal disease that was decimating the young. Then, in 1991, the cholera pandemic in South America, which gave me the opportunity to go into the field as a volunteer from 1992 to 2000, and to set up and direct a program to fight against cholera and childhood diarrhea, supported by the WHO and the EEC. Then came the swine flu pandemic in 2009, which proved to be benign, while demonstrating the difficulties of managing a crisis of that magnitude. This happened again with the Covid-19 pandemic which confined us in March 2020.

Throughout my career, I have been passionate about the history of medicine, which has given me the opportunity

to create a History of Medicine curriculum and to write numerous books and articles, convinced of the importance for medical students and practitioners to know the origin of their practice and the vicissitudes of medical discoveries.

Since July 1, 2018, I am «retired» but I have hardly noticed it because I will only retire on the day I die. Scientific Director of a biology journal, active participant of the work of the National Academy of Medicine, solicited by the media in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic-retirement has changed practically nothing for me, except a greater freedom and an absence of real constraints and stakes. Serenity !



BONAVITA VINCENZO

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President Hermitage Capodimonte, Naples

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I retired as full Professor of Neurology in the University of Naples Federico II when I was 75 years old. Now, at 87, I am

living my fourth age with a deep renewal of my emotions: I am not afraid of death, since being afraid kills every day, whereas the absence of fear kills only once.

When I retired I lived in a black mood for about 3 months, although I thought I had prepared myself for incoming new assets of life with a complex project concerning 3 different domains. Indeed, when, on 24th September 2010, the Ministry of University and Research let me know that I was at the end of a long tenure as Professor Emeritus, I had already decided on the project for life in my fourth age.

In the last 10 years I have been working on the intriguing relationship between headache and intracranial hypertension without papilloedema; I could not discontinue this project although I was a referee of a research project headed by a co-worker of mine, Roberto De Simone. Continuing scientific work with Roberto has led to the publication of more than 15 full papers. But this was not enough for me. The scientific debate has given me a continuous link with Roberto. The clinical debate, however, was expanded in the *Associazione per una Scuola delle Cefalee* / Association for a School of Headache, ASC, founded in 1999 in collaboration with Gennaro Bussone

of the Institute “Carlo Besta” in Milan and Giancamillo Manzoni from the University of Parma. I am co-chairman of all sections and give formal lectures, giving me the experience of still being a professor at 87.

Augusto Murri, Professor of Internal Medicine in Bologna between the 19th and 20th centuries, wrote of Antonio Cardarelli, professor in Naples at that time: “Others describe what they have read, Cardarelli what he has seen”. I shared the views of Murri and Cardarelli throughout my academic life and this gave me my second activity: I decided to intensify my role as a consultant neuropsychiatrist.

The third activity has arisen from my acceptance of the position of President of Hermitage Capodimonte Spa, an organisation for the intensive rehabilitation of neurological and psychiatric patients. This has given to me a new chance: to promote scientific research in Parkinson’s disease and movement disorders in multiple sclerosis and dementia. It was a role of promotion of research, collaborating with three universities in Naples and the University of Palermo. Such a role has been the source of a new life: promoting scientific research is not a direct engagement but a new way of participating in the lives of young fellows. Their enthusiasm gives, to those who are living in their fourth age, the ability to not waste time by useless wondering about it.



BRACALE GIANCARLO

Emeritus Professor of Vascular Surgery
at the Federico II University of Naples

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I became a "Full Professor" in 1986 and held this position continuously for 27 years.

My transition from "Full Professor" to "Retired Professor" took place on November 1, 2013 and, after a few months, on the proposal of the Department of Public Health and the School of Medicine and Surgery, the Ministry of University and Research (MIUR) awarded me the title of Emeritus Professor of Vascular Surgery at the Federico II University of Naples.

Among my many students, 3 have become "Full Professors", 1 "Associated Professor", 2 Permanent Researchers, 12 Hospital Primaries of Vascular Surgery.

My prevalent didactic-scientific commitment from the moment of retirement to today is represented by the three-year teaching assignment in the Postgraduate School of Vascular Surgery and the creation of the Mediterranean Federation for Advancing Vascular Surgery known by the acronym MeFAVS.

The conditions and opportunities that led to the creation of the Federation can be summarized as follows:

1 - In all public sectors: the European Community, the Italian Government, Universities, Research Centers there is a widespread interest and a pressing request for cooperation between all the countries bordering the Mediterranean, from Southern Europe, to North Africa, to the Balkans, to the Middle East for cultural, educational, scientific, clinical-welfare exchanges, but also to promote economic integration, tourism and with it the Tourism and Health Project.

2- The Campania Region aspires to play a coordinating role in this ambitious Project.

3 - A few years ago MUNA was founded: Mediterranean University Association, a network of 13 universities in the Mediterranean area that sees the Federico II University of Naples as Head Coordinator.

4 - About 25 years ago I had the idea and managed to found, with the sharing of prestigious colleagues (three for each of the four constituent countries: Italy, France, Spain and Portugal), the Latin Mediterranean Society of Pathology

and Vascular Surgery, known as the acronym SO.PA.CHI.VA.LA.ME, which has organized 18 international congresses whose inspiring principles are very similar to those of MeFAVS.

5 - In February 2017, during the Congress held in Aswan in Egypt, thanks to the experience gained with So.pa.chi.va.la.me, I was strongly encouraged to found MeFAVS which officially took place on 01/10/2018 during the 1st International Constitutive Congress by 14 founding members from all over the Mediterranean area; I am the president of this Federation from its foundation to the present day.

The aims of the Federation can be summarized as follows:

- Educational and research common projects.
- Exchange of educators and experts.
- Multidisciplinary and multicenter training for post-graduate fellows, residents and young specialists.
- Experiences exchange of clinical-assistance in open, endovascular and hybrid surgery.
- Integration of curative therapies.

All this with the intention of adapting to the highest standards of the more developed countries, avoiding social disproportion between the countries that are part of it.

The 2nd International Congress was held in June 2019.

This year, the 3rd International Congress was scheduled from 30 November to 2 December which cannot be held "in person" due to the very sad events related to Covid-19 but some replacement Webinars will be held with these main topics:

- 1) Comparison of experiences in the preparation of new vascular surgeons between the various countries of the Mediterranean and those of Central and Northern Europe.
- 2) Implications of Covid 19 in the progress of Vascular Pathology, in the prognosis of Vascular Surgery interventions, in the management of the Departments of Vascular Surgery.
- 3) Innovative approaches in the treatment of diabetes and its complications which represents the topic chosen by the founding members of MeFAVS as the most important field of scientific application.





CAMPANELLA LUIGI

General Secretary of the European Association of Professors Emeriti

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Museum Pole and Director of Chemistry Museum, and also proRector cooperating with Italian Confindustria.

All these duties ensured me a vision which helped my passage to retirement. But probably the most meaningful task I assumed during my life in my university was to be the Guarantor of Student's Rights: this has allowed me to create a very close relationship with the Sapienza student community: students remained linked to me even after my retirement and this was probably the main reason by which I have perceived my retirement, not as a detached time

but as an opportunity to continue working on behalf of the university community without the weight of official duties.

Continuity of purpose was also achieved through my position as scientist responsible for two projects in the field of Environment and Cultural. The historical delay times within our Ministry helped me because a project started 3 years before my retirement remained active for more than 5 years after. Thus, I remained working, including in the laboratory, and received great attention from the official Head and from the Steering Committee of the department. I maintained my e-mail box and my telephone number. I continued to follow the activities of the Chemistry Museum. I retained connections with the Cultural and School Network bringing a cultural continuity to the different levels of education.



CHRISTODOULOU GEORGE

Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, Athens University

President of the Society of Preventive Psychiatry

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When leaving a professional environment with which one has been associated for many years it is natural to feel uneasy. Those of us who are mental health professionals know very well that one of the most severe forms of depression, so-called involuntal depression, occurs during this period of life.

In my case the transition was smooth, not so much because of my training and knowledge but because I continued doing many things I had been doing.

I retired as Director of the Athens University Department of Psychiatry and Director of the Sector of Social Medicine, Psychiatry and Neurology of the Athens University Medical School after service of seven years. I consider this period of time sufficient to apply the programs and innovations I had in mind before obtaining these positions. I had produced my Textbook of Psychiatry for students and trainees, and 15 other books. That was enough. I believed other

people should continue what I had started and be given the opportunity and responsibility to do so. For this reason I avoided staying on as a consultant at the University Department.

However, I continued doing things in parallel with my academic work. I continued as President of the Hellenic Psychiatric Association and later as Honorary President. I continued as chair of the Ethics Committee and the Committee on the psychosocial consequences of Disasters of the World Psychiatric Association. I retained my position as President of the Center for Mental Health and Research, the most extensive network of extramural mental health services in Greece. Later I was entrusted with the Presidency of the World Federation for Mental Health. Additionally, I continued seeing patients in my private psychiatric practice. So, I kept myself fully occupied and did not have time to lick my hypothetical wounds following my departure from academic responsibilities.

In short, I did not perceive my transition to Emeritus status as a psychological trauma because I had many things to do. From my professional experience I have learned that those who develop a dysfunctional response to retirement usually do not have the opportunity to continue work, do not have hobbies and feel deprived of their status. Emeriti University Professors are no exception to this.

Having stated the above, I should add that, some years after my retirement, I realised something was missing -

communication. Not so much with colleagues, with whom I continued to have some contact, but more with students and trainees. I missed teaching and interaction with the fresh minds of younger colleagues and students. My mind has always been stimulated by the objections, criticism and the occasional praise of my audience and this I missed. So, I decided to ask academic colleagues in various Greek universities to allow me to give a lecture or two to students and trainees. This filled the gap.



CIAMBELLI PAOLO

Professor Emeritus at the University of Salerno
CEO of Narrando

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I retired on 1st November 2015, after 43 years of research, teaching and technology transfer in the field of Chemical Engineering at the University of Napoli Federico II (18 years)

and the University of Salerno (25 years). My laureate degree was in 1970 at the University of Napoli. In 2016, the Italian Ministry of Research appointed me Professor Emeritus, allowing me to continue to make known the University of Salerno.

Since that time, I have continued to work with the same intensity as during the previous 38 years, doing research, holding a course in Food Industrial Chemistry for the Chemical Engineering Masters degree, and strengthening a novel experience as Narrando's CEO. Narrando (NANO caRBon RAdiation DOSimeter) was born as a spin off from the Centre for Nanomaterials and Nanotechnology of the University of Salerno; it was awarded the Italian prize for innovation 2011, and founded as start up in 2012. Today Narrando is a research-consulting microenterprise focused on, but not limited to, nanotechnology. Narrando is a partner of the Horizon 2020 project "Graphene 3D", dealing with polymeric nano composites for 3D printing.

I have kept my room at the Department of Industrial Engineering in the campus of the University of Salerno, where the registered office of Narrando is located. Since 2016 I have been co-author of 41 scientific papers published in international journals and 3 chapters in books.

These publications attracted more than 400 citations. I was co-chair of two International Congresses: 9th International Symposium on Nano & Supramolecular Chemistry and 3rd International Conference on Nanotechnology-Based Innovative Applications for the Environment.

From this month Narrando's operational headquarters are hosted by the European Foundation EBRIS (European Biomedical Research Institute of Salerno), a common project of the Fondazione Scuola Medica Salernitana and the Hospital for Children of Harvard University. I will start a new challenging cooperation with EBRIS and the Department of Pharmacy of the University of Salerno, aiming to develop novel applications of nanotechnology in biopharmamedicine topics. Very recently, I entered the debate on the current pandemic with a paper on face masks (1).

I am currently promoting the foundation of the Association of Professors Emeriti of the University of Salerno.

Therefore, thanks to my still-acceptable mental health, my unchanged passion for research, the support of colleagues and Narrando's young staff, I have hardly felt the transition to a retired/emergitus status. However, as a non-scientific precaution, let me rub a red coral horn, the most famous Neapolitan amulet!

1. Santarsiero A, Ciambelli P, et al., Face masks. Technical, technological and functional characteristics and hygienic-sanitary aspects related to the use of filtering mask in the community Ann. Ig. 2020 32(5) 472-520.





ČOK LUCIJA

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After a scientific and academic career spanning twenty years and more than ten years of hard work with an excellent group of intellectuals to establish the third public Slovenian university, Lucija Čok was elected the first rector of the University of Primorska. Between 1919 (when the University of Ljubljana was founded) and 2003 (foundation of the University of Primorska) only one public university was established (the University of Maribor in 1975). From the start, the first female Slovenian rector took over the task of setting the conditions for the foundation and organisation of the new university, overcoming the objections of some members of academia, and solving issues regarding higher education policy. The expectations of the founders went beyond established Slovenian practices in the organisation and management of academic institutions. Nevertheless, the strong will and effort on the part of everyone concerned facilitated a new house of knowledge in Slovenia, research based and interculturally oriented.

Looking back to the period after the end of Rector Lucija Čok's term, rethinking what she and successive university leadership have accomplished, it can be seen that the path of the development of the new university was not linear. The University of Primorska could have become an innovative university. But, with the interaction between the study disciplines thwarted by stunted legislation and a weak integration of research and education, the attempt at a new organisational model failed. The most powerful research body of the university, the incubator of

many study programs, found itself forced to disassociate from the university due to a lack of understanding of the importance of its role inside and outside the university. Joint study programmes, which initially brought together borderland universities, were abandoned, and the Board of Trustees which linked the university to the economy dried up due to the economic crisis and the lax involvement on the part of university leadership. The largest goals of the first university leadership were not completed or carried out. That events unfolded in the manner they did was, in fact, predictable, as the subsequent university leadership had a diverse vision. University values, freedom of research and education, civilizational values, responsibility and independence have not changed that much from Humboldt's university model to the present time. The driving force that makes them happen is academic culture and tradition grounded through time.

After retiring in 2009, Lucija Čok did not betray her professional and scientific mission. Her dynamic presence in the social and cultural field, heuristic approaches in research, mentoring and guidance of young colleagues have kept her fully occupied. Openness to diversity of languages and cultures, collaboration in an atmosphere of increasing tolerance, solidifying coexistence, multiculturalism and multilingualism are her fields of interest and research work. Awards at the national level for the development of standards in higher education and for the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in the wider region at the international level (Chevalier de la légion d'honneur, Commendatore della Stella della solidarietà) have placed before her obligations which she cannot abandon.





COKKINOS DENNIS

Professor Emeritus University of Athens
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After retiring from the University of Athens in August 2005, I was named Emeritus in December 2005.

I had the privilege of continuing working as Director of the First Department of Cardiology at the Onassis Cardiac Surgery Center, a leading Cardiovascular Hospital, organising seminars and yearly congresses. In 2007 we introduced transcatheter aortic valve replacement in Greece.

I became Honorary Director in 2009. I also had the opportunity to continue my collaboration with the Department of Pharmacology, University of Athens, in cardiological research, founding two research units. During this collaboration I had the opportunity to prepare a book "Myocardial Ischemia" in 2006, by Springer, together with three colleagues, and to organise the 28th Congress of the International Society for Heart Research in Athens in 2008.

In 2009 I had the great opportunity to join the Biomedical Research Foundation of the Academy of Athens, an outstanding organisation in the Heart and Vessel Department. We have published articles every year. I edited a book, again from Springer, in 2016: "An Introduction to Translational Cardiovascular Research" and a book on my life-long interest on "Myocardial Preservation" (Springer) in 2019, also published in e-form.

In 2018 I became President of the organizing committee promoting the scientific collaboration of the Onassis Cardiac

Surgery Center and the Biomedical Research Foundation of the Academy of Athens with the generous support of the Onassis Foundation. In 2006 I was elected member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.

In 2011 I was elected Corresponding Foreign Member of the National Medical Academy of France.

In 2014 I had the great privilege to be elected President of the Association of Professors Emeriti of the University of Athens, for 2 three-year terms. In 2016 I thought that a European Association of Professors Emeriti (EAPE) could serve a noble purpose. My first communication was with Professor Emeritus of the University of Padova, Lorenzo Pinna, who recommended that I communicate with our current President Natale Gaspare de Santo, thus starting a long friendship.

EAPE was officially founded on October 1st 2016 in the historic "Aula" of the University of Athens under the patronage of Professor Emeritus Prokopios Pavlopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic. I had the honour of being the first elected President. Our first International Congress was held in Athens, May 31-June 2, 2019. From the communications a 317-page book was published in March: "The Capital of Knowledge".

Becoming an Emeritus is only the start of a fruitful and satisfying life, if one is fortunate to maintain good health. The support of my wife Vana, and my children, and the joy of my grandchildren has been invaluable.



DE SANTO NATALE GASPARE

President European Association of Professors Emeriti

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In October 2007, for my 70th birthday, my Rector wrote asking that I should stay in post until November 2012. In Spring 2008 by contrast, I received, from the hospital

manager, notification that he wished to move the Kidney

Unit from its proximity to Cardiology and the Intensive Care Unit. I resigned on October 31st 2008. Since then I have been accommodated in the office of our first surgeon. I received no letter of thanks from the manager for my 35 years of work, but the Ministry of University and Research made me emeritus. The Kidney Unit was not moved!

I opened a private consulting room for kidney patients. I

continued research into kidney function in Space until 2020, with the universities of Bari and Gratz. As emeritus I received the last triennial grant from the Italian Space Agency aged 75. I kept alive a joint program between the Italian Institute of Philosophical Studies (IIFS), the University Vanvitelli and many Mediterranean universities. This program, *Survival is Not Enough*, started in 2007, is a yearly, multisite event with the same format, on the shores of the Mediterranean (the unifying sea). It takes place around World Kidney Day. We invite kidney specialists, transplant specialists, nurses, dialysis technicians, managers, kidney patients, politicians, ethicists, and philosophers promoting support for dialysis patients who conquer every hour of life containing many losses and dependencies.

Being a lifetime councillor of the International Association for the History of Nephrology is fulfilling, as was being on the Secretariat (2007-2017) of the Mediterranean Kidney Society. Countries along the Mediterranean shore have 440 million inhabitants - more than the European Union. They have strong differences (north versus south) in GDP's, access to schooling, science, technology and healthcare.

I have been on the Cultural Committee of the Fraternity of Pilgrims, a Catholic Association started 442 years ago,

whose mission is the needs of the diseased, migrants and disadvantaged young people.

In 2016, with the Universities of Naples and the IIFS we organised an international event on *Human Capital of Age*, a base on which Dennis Cokkinos and scientists from 15 EU countries built EAPE.

I twice won the Emily Dickinson Literary Prize for *Cure di fine vita* (2009) and *The Nature of Water* (2015). Last honours have been: Herald of Hippocratic Medicine, Medals of MKS and IAHN, membership of Accademia di Scienze Lettere Arti, and Honorary Membership of the Polish Society of Nephrology.

Since 2008, 78 papers appeared in Scopus and I published 14 monographs, the last with Erich and Corrad: *This I think should have priority in child healthcare services* (2018).

I explore the borders of nephrology with philosophy and complex systems; I am attracted by complexity. I find time for concerts, driving grandchildren to meetings, visiting museums with them, and enhancing my addiction for books-newspapers! Specialists are needed but also those who look at the whole. So, I support Archilochus who said "the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing" and think "Life is good and friends its fragrances".



EBDON LES, SIR

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If Shakespeare is correct and 'All the world's a stage' (As You Like It, Act 2), then my part had a few extra scenes. The English persist in the quaint nomenclature of 'Vice

Chancellor' to describe the head of a university, whereas the rest of Europe prefer the term 'Rector'. It is generally accepted that it is difficult to sustain a research group as a Vice Chancellor or VC. I can confirm that, as once I was appointed as VC at the University of Luton my research group slowly dwindled in size so that when I became the VC at the larger University of Bedfordshire, it was non-existent. Indeed, I was regarded as exceptional to have been able to sustain a lively research group at the University of Plymouth for 14 years together with a heavy managerial load during my time as Deputy VC. Technically

I did not become Emeritus until the title was bestowed upon me when I retired in 2012 after 9 years as a VC, but some would say that was a recognition of a transition that started some years before.

Even then, I was asked to do a job by Her Majesty's Government to protect the interests of vulnerable students by becoming the regulator of equity in English universities as the independent Director of Fair Access to Higher Education. I do, however, see 2012 as my time of transition. After 60 years of being surrounded by students, I was expected to sit in my study at home and read and approve access plans from 140 universities. I may not have been 'sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste' but it did seem I was 'sans everything' as the Shakespeare quotation that I started with ends, or everything that motivated me, that is students. I quickly devised a programme of visits to

universities to fill the void in my life, to meet students and chastise VCs. This worked very well, until after six years the Government decided to abolish my office.

I felt in some ways that the knighthood Her Majesty graciously bestowed upon me was as much a consolation prize as it was recognition of a difficult job well done but it was also a powerful key. It unlocked the door onto many Boards and Councils, including the Governing Bodies of

3 higher education institutions. All 3 are very different except they all serve non-traditional students who would not formerly have expected to get a university education. So for a few brief months, I was back with students again and then the pandemic struck and we all went virtual. So here I am again confined to my study and reflecting on the circularity of life that Shakespeare alluded to in 'As You Like It.'



GIRLANDO ALBERTO

University of Parma

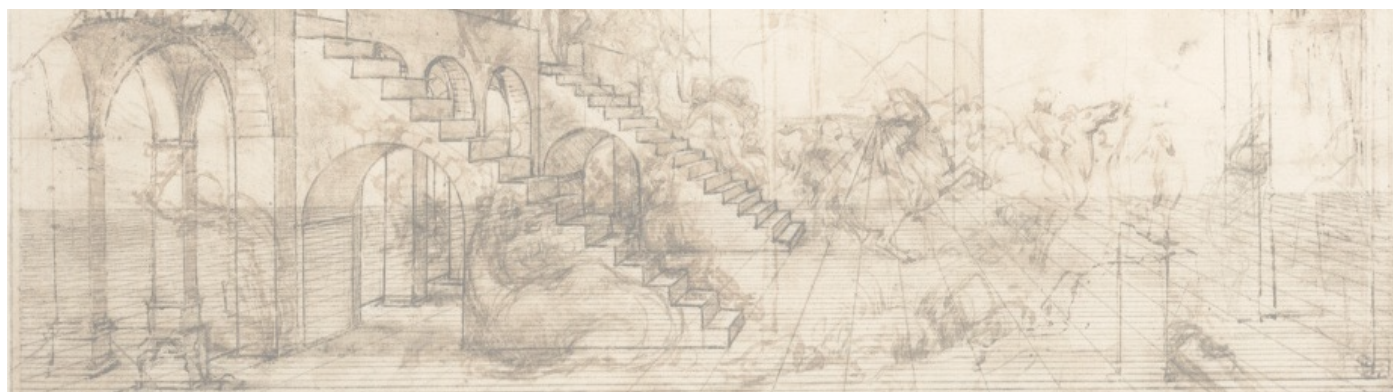
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As in many crucial passages of life, my transition from University Professor to retirement has been marked by lights and shadows. In the very last period of my office I

was involved, as the oldest in service, in supervising the merging of the five scientific departments into two, a process that caused fights and rivalries, and, ultimately, did not leave a good atmosphere. So, I was glad to be relieved of such stress, as well as of being out of the progressive bureaucratisation and corporatisation of the University. Also, due to the conflicting atmosphere described above, I was not appointed emeritus. I was allowed, officially, to use my office for two more years, but disappeared from the University website on the first day of retirement. And, according to a new ruling on institutional e-mail of Parma University, professors were put on the same footing as technical/administrative personnel, with loss of the mailbox after six months. However, this part of the ruling has not been applied so far. I have then built my personal website (albertogirlando.wordpress.com) with a list of publications and a brief curriculum, and I continue

to publish under the heading of my University. In this context, a little gratification after retirement has been to see the publication, in *Nature*, of a short paper ("Brief Communication Arising", BCA. doi: 10.1038/nature22801) by a large international group which I coordinated. BCAs are critical comments on previous Nature papers, and the one here had, among the authors, the 2016 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, J.F. Stoddart. After retirement, I also enjoyed a small, unofficial meeting organised in my honour by my younger colleagues.

I have always liked teaching and maintain contact with students, especially those that made questions difficult to answer! However, in recent years I started to feel the physical fatigue of teaching, so retirement was a relief. But I love to be among young people, and I have been happy to guide my last PhD student to obtain the degree and, in the process, seeing him gain self-confidence. At the same time, collaborations have allowed me to remain scientifically active, partly from home. This has been possible with the help of my former research group. Thanks to them, I can now feel like the "ceryl among the halcyons" described in the famous lyric by the ancient Greek poet Alcman.





GRIČAR JOŽE

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After graduation in business studies (University of Ljubljana, 1964), I worked for 11 years in a company representing Philips Office Computers. We were not selling computers but computer-based solutions to problems in organisations. We were able to be in a close contact with the users—both companies and public administrations.

After that period, I completed my masters in Marketing and PhD in Information Systems. The University of Maribor invited me to the Management Information Systems Department, where I worked for more than thirty years. Mentoring a large number of students, I expected that each student would develop a working prototype of a computer-based solution (proof of concept) to the problem of how to best use the Internet in the interorganisational setting of an organisation.

I had the privilege of spending many semesters with universities in the USA (Minnesota, Arizona, Denver, Baltimore), for four years. During that time, I visited numerous companies and attended IT-related conferences

in order to learn about Electronic Data Interchange (1).

After retirement, ten years ago, I had no problem with adapting myself to the new situation (2.3.4). In fact, I was able to intensify my work in the area of cross-border e-Collaboration. My experiences in the in-country e-Collaboration proved very useful. The status of Professor Emeritus allows me to create a bigger-picture perspective of what I do because of collaboration with colleagues from other disciplines. Interdisciplinarity can flourish in the professors-emeriti environment (5).

Professors emeriti are expected to contribute to society according to their interests, time availability and health. They are in a position to help solve problems in their respective environments by using the methodological experience of their discipline (6). However, they have to organise themselves at national and European level. Defining their academic role along two trajectories, interdisciplinarity and community outreach is relevant and needed (7).

1. Bled e-Conference, Founder and Conference Chair 1988-2008. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bled_e-Conference

2. Successful Faculty Transition into Retirement. Higher Ed Jobs. <https://www.higheredjobs.com/HigherEdCareers/interviews.cfm?ID=709>

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KUNZE MICHAEL

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My transition is based on a unique and, in the meantime, abolished legislation.

Becoming Emeritus means a full professor ends his/her

active duties at the end of the academic year in which he reached 69 years. The emeritus then has no administrative duties but is entitled to do research and teaching using the resources of the university. One is completely free to work or not. And, this is very comfortable, the last salary is paid

without any limitations. This privilege does not end until he dies.

In my case, I have been lucky to benefit from the privileges mentioned from 2011 and I am glad to use these every day.

I feel obliged to pay back, so to speak, by doing what I have been doing for decades: teaching and dealing with public health issues on a daily basis.

Mentoring of young colleagues and students is another important part of my academic routine.

Furthermore, it was decided not to replace me by looking for a professor who would fill my previous position. In a sense I am my own successor though, of course this was not stated in that way.

As already mentioned, these privileges are not available in Austria anymore for other academics.

For me this means to stay healthy and intellectually fit for as long as possible, retirement is not a word in my vocabulary!



MARKATOS NICHOLAS-CHRIS, Dipl.Eng, DIC, Ph. D, Dr.h.c., FIChE, FRSA
Professor Emeritus National Technical University of Athens
Former Rector, National Technical University of Athens
Former Head of School, School of Chemical Engineering

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Technical University of Athens (NTUA) in September 2011.

In January 2012 the Senate of NTUA elected me unanimously as Emeritus Professor, following the unanimous approval of the General Assembly of the School of Chemical Engineering of NTUA, where I worked from 1986, having been the Head of School for 8 years.

Although I am still not happy with retirement, I continue to be very active undertaking most of my previous research and educational activities, missing only the administrative ones.

I continue to teach two postgraduate courses in the Interdisciplinary, Interdepartmental Postgraduate Program of NTUA entitled: «Computational Mechanics». The courses are «Advanced Fluid Mechanics» and «Computational Fluid Dynamics». I also supervise the relevant Master's Theses as well as, though unofficially, some PhD work.

My research activities concern consultancy work for

public and private organisations and participation in European projects. In 2020 I published, with my students, four papers in international journals. I am also preparing two books, one in Greek the other in English, on Computational Fluid Dynamics. Currently we work on computational methods predicting safe distances for people to avoid Covid-19 infection, strength of air-conditioning of public spaces for the same reason, and similar.

The most exciting thing that happened to me, during my retirement, was my appointment as Visiting Professor at the Texas A&M University at Qatar in 2016 that lasted until now and will be renewed in 2022. Those four years (2016-2020) were really exciting. I felt again an active professor teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students, who appreciated my lectures, collaborated with me producing papers and awarded me a prize!

I would say that remaining active as Emeritus Professor is certainly of benefit to the retired person and maybe to the university and society as well, provided that it is not in competition with younger generations of professors. Personally, I would give up everything if I were to become a student again!





MJELDE LIV

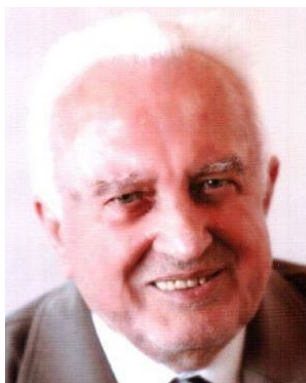
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On 11th March 2011 Kyambogo University, Kampala, Uganda held a goodbye party in my honour. Between 2006 and 2011, together with colleagues from Uganda and South Sudan, I was the Norwegian leader of a project developing a Master program in Vocational Pedagogy at Kyambogo University. Students from both South Sudan and Uganda were part of the project. My Ugandan counterparts and former, as well as new, students gathered to celebrate our common victories on that day in March. This work had involved us spending long periods in Uganda as well as collaborating with authorities in the conflict-filled regions of Sudan and South Sudan. With this party, both a rich learning experience and my period as a full Professor in Vocational Pedagogy at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, came to an end. My first assignment as a Professor Emerita was to give a lecture for colleagues at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, the *alma mater* of one of my former doctoral students.

Back in Norway I joined the Centre for Senior Citizen Staff at Oslo Metropolitan University which is a centre for interdisciplinary cooperation where colleagues from different disciplines present research and research projects to each other and cooperate in writing groups to assist their individual projects. I continued to supervise and examine students at national and international levels while continuing to be part of my professional, sociological community by being on the editorial board of "Yearbook

of Sociology" published at the University of Oslo. Back in 1993, I had attended the first conference of a European Research Network on Vocational Education and Culture in Tampere, Finland. This network produced 15 books in the complex field of vocational education between 2004 and 2017. I have been active in the network in my emerita years and made contributions to most of the books. I have also worked with colleagues in Brazil, Cuba and Uruguay on the publication of my work in Spanish and Brazilian-Portuguese. My last book (2018) is about World War II, entitled: *Secrets and Scissors. War-time Russian Women's Slave Labour and Life in Prison Camps in Northern Norway 1942-1945* (in Norwegian). I have worked together with Tamara Sushko on a documentary film based on the book. I have presented the film at festivals in Murmansk and Sevastopol. The film has won many prizes at Russian festivals in the past two years. I have, in my emerita years, been invited to give keynote talks on various occasions in Norway and at the universities of Stockholm, Sweden, Nagoya, Japan, Athens, Greece and at the book festival in Havana, Cuba. I have presented my research work at international seminars, including in Tanzania. In 2018 I was back in Uganda giving a workshop in vocational pedagogy at Makerere University, Entebbe. I have been a councillor in the European Association of Professors since 2016. A current work in progress is a book on vocational pedagogy in Norway initiated by former students. The year 2020 has been a super-active year with various commitments and publications. Indeed it has been a Transition from Active to Super-Active Life.



NENOV DIMITAR

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President Bulgarian Association of Professors Emeriti

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I retired in 2001 as the chief of the Nephrology and Dialysis Unit of the Medical University of Varna, Bulgaria,

after a fruitful 44-year career. This period included the establishment of Nephrology as a specialty in my home town, the start-up of haemodialysis treatment, the introduction of plasmapheresis and, later, LDL apheresis,

as well as promoting many careers, and organising a lot of international exchange and cooperation. For example, I was invited to present lectures on LDL apheresis in the USA (Houston, Los Angeles, Torrance and Irvine).

After retiring I organised the 6th Congress of the Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology Dialysis and Transplantation (BANTAO) which was held in 2003 in Varna, Bulgaria. This was the second congress of the Association that I had I organised the previous being the first congress in 1995.

At the 2003 congress I started the Association's journal, named BANTAO Journal and I was its first Editor for the next two years. I continued to organise training courses in nephrology, called "Hot topics in Nephrology", every year for another 11 years with the participation of leading national and international specialists.

I was the editor-in-chief of our nephrology journal "Aktualna nefrologia" published by our Kidney Foundation,

of which I have been president for many years. In 2019 I edited a new Manual in Nephrology, in Bulgarian, with the contribution of 21 renal specialists from Bulgaria. This has already been cited 19 times. I also created a small private haemodialysis centre which has operated every summer, helping foreign dialysis patients take their summer holidays in our nearby resorts.

I continue to participate in the annual conferences of the Bulgarian Society of Nephrology making presentations and chairing sessions. I am a member of the Editorial Board of the BANTAO Journal which has made me an Emeritus. I am also a member of the International Federation of Kidney Foundations for which I organised a congress in Bulgaria after I retired. During the latest years I was a founder, with 10 other professors representing the five universities of Varna, of the Bulgarian Association of the Professors Emeriti, and was elected as its Chairman.



NEWELL DIANNE

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I retired from the University of British Columbia in December of 2013, as Professor Emerita of the Department of History. Only one decade earlier I had no particular plans for transitioning to retirement, other than spending the first year of retirement somewhere special and far away. I could not at the time have predicted my *actual* transition and retirement years.

In the 1990s, as an historian of industrial technology and culture, I was heavily involved in my own teaching and scholarship, and also in the academic mentoring of others. Then, to my great surprise, my one-year residency as a Distinguished Fellow of the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at UBC in 2003 transformed into my directorship of that well-funded and much-respected organization; my term as director lasted for eight years. During this period of the Institute's history, I also spent a year on sabbatical leave in Washington, D. C. I had expected to retire in 2008, at the age of 65. Before that date arrived, however, the University eliminated mandatory retirement. This change prolonged

my directorship of the Wall Institute, and provided me with the opportunity to take up a research fellowship in South Africa for eight months, after which I returned to the classroom to teach undergraduate history students during my final year before retiring.

Of the several new programs introduced during my time at the Wall Institute, the international academic partnerships I initiated with a select group of other, complementary research organizations have generated the broadest scholarly and societal impact, creating novel collaborations among hundreds of scholars and high-level international research initiatives. These partnerships were with the venerable Collège de France, Paris (liaising with professors Pierre Corvol and Alain Berthoz); Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Study (STIAS), South Africa (with Professor Hendrick Geyer); and Institute for Advanced Study at the Technical University of Munich (TUM-IAS) (with Professor Patrick DeWilde). I also served as a founding member of the TUM-IAS International Board of Trustees, and it was at Stellenbosch that I spent my first year after retiring from the Wall Institute in 2011. STIAS was an extraordinary experience in every respect, and it allowed

me to reconnect with my own interdisciplinary scholarship on the vibrant Indigenous fish-based communities and cultures of Canada's Pacific Northwest coast.

At UBC I have since 2015 held a post-retirement faculty appointment at the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, Faculty of Science, where I recently led a successful scheme to create an Aboriginal Fisheries Research Unit. We now have hired an accomplished young female Indigenous

fisheries scientist as principal investigator and appointed me as director of the Unit, and we are at present developing a program of indigenous community outreach, teaching, and research. I also became formally involved with the UBC Association of Professors Emeriti, serving on its Executive for the three years during which we produced a successful proposal for an Emeritus College at UBC. I served as the first Principal of the College, which led, in turn, to my current engagement with EAPE.



OCHSENKUEHN-PETROPOULOU MARIA

Professor Emerita National Technical University of Athens

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In September 2015, the Senate of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) nominated me as Emeritus Professor, from Full Professor, following the unanimous approval of the General Assembly of the School of Chemical Engineering of NTUA, where I have worked since 1976.

The transition period was very active in relation to my educational and research activities.

I continued to lecture in the Interdisciplinary, Interdepartmental Postgraduate Program of NTUA entitled: "Materials Science and Technology", teaching courses on "Advanced Instrumental Methods of Analysis for Materials Characterization" and "Superconducting Materials" and supervising two related laboratory exercises. From these activities some Masters Theses resulted and I am still the supervisor of 2 PhD theses and a Post-doctoral thesis.

My research activities, in retirement, concern, especially, my participation in the European Community's (EC) research programs. Liberation from basic academic duties gave me a chance to get on with research projects, having more time to be involved. Due to my research fields on "Utilisation of Industrial By-products" and environmental issues (aerosol research, water quality), I participate as Scientific Responsible on behalf of NTUA, in four EC research projects, each with more than 20 participants. The financial management of these projects is undertaken by an active younger professor who is also the co-supervisor of the projects. The projects secure funds for young researchers in my team, and new apparatus and consumables for

the host laboratory, necessary for the continuation and specialisation of our research. Through these projects I have had the opportunity to take part in many progress meetings and conferences abroad. The dissemination of our results from these projects was published in 15 international journals and 30 conference proceedings.

Furthermore, I organised, as Emeritus Professor, three international conferences on Instrumental Methods of Analysis in Greece, namely IMA2015 (Kalamata, Peloponnese), IMA2017 (Iraklion, Crete) and IMA2019 (Ioannina, Epirus) with 250-300 scientists participating, from all over the world, at each.

As far as other activities are concerned, I created, in 2017, with other Emeriti colleagues, the Association of Professors Emeriti of NTUA, of which I am still a Board Member. I also participate on the Board of the Federation of the Greek Associations of Professors Emeriti. Additionally, I am a member of other environmental associations (e.g., Greek Water Association) and working groups of the Association of Greek Chemists.

In the lockdown period, due to Covid-19, in the spring of this year, I wrote a new edition of my book on "Spectroscopic Methods in the Modern Instrumental Analysis", which will be distributed to graduate and post-graduate students through the Greek Ministry of Education for lecturing on related courses in Greek universities.

In conclusion, remaining active as Emeritus Professor in my retirement time, is of benefit to the University and the person, as well as society, thus making the transition period to an Emeritus Professor both interesting and challenging.



PHILLIPS MALCOLM

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My medical career was spent almost entirely at Charing Cross Hospital, London. From 1967-2005 I worked in the Renal Department at Charing Cross, founded and lead by Professor Hugh de Wardener, a world-renowned nephrologist. I became Head of Department in 1991. From 1994-2005 this role encompassed the Renal Departments of Charing Cross and Hammersmith Hospitals. In 1994 I was appointed Medical Director of Charing Cross. In 1997 this position was extended to cover Hammersmith, Charing Cross and Queen Charlottes Hospitals.

Retiring in 2005, I took two part-time positions. For 6 years I was a medical adviser to the UK Health Services Ombudsman, dealing with complaints, mostly by patients, concerning their health care. This involved analysis of their health records and a recommendation as to whether the complaint should be upheld by the Ombudsman.

My second role was on the General Medical Council's Fitness to Practise Committees, dealing with cases, brought by the GMC, against doctors whose professional or personal conduct was called into question. I was an ordinary member for 7 years and chairman for two. We heard evidence from the doctor, his lawyer and witnesses on his behalf. The GMC

prosecuted the case. Hearings lasted from hours to many weeks. The chairman's tasks were to conduct the hearing and to construct the committee's reasoned decision and recommendation to the GMC on disciplinary action, ranging from no action, giving a reprimand, limiting the doctor's practice, to removal from the Medical Register.

These "retirement occupations" contributed to the maintenance of standards of medical practice in the NHS. They also aided my transition from full-time medical practice to partial retirement, particularly as I had always had an interest in legal matters.

In 2017, through contact with our President, Natale De Santo (who I had worked with during a sabbatical (1970-72) in the Division of Nephrology, Naples and had papers in the BMJ and the Lancet) I joined the International Association for the History of Nephrology (IAHN). I have given two papers at IAHN congresses and co-authored a number of papers on medical topics and articles relating to the History of Nephrology. The most recent work is in press with a leading renal journal. Another, in preparation, is a review and history of a condition described by de Wardener in 1967. In 2018 I was invited to join the Editorial Board of the European Association of Professors Emeriti editing the English version of its Bulletin.



PINNA LORENZO

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In our Country the age of retirement for full professors is 70. Ten years ago however it was still possible for scientifically active senior professors to apply for a two years postponement, to 72. Having taken advantage of this rule, the day of my retirement fell on October 1st 2012, shortly before my 73rd birthday (December 10th). On that date all my teaching and administrative duties (as director of the Institute for the Study of Cell Signalling of

the University of Padova) came to an end as well as my participation on the Board of the Doctorate in Biomedical Sciences.

Having still on-going research projects, however, I was granted the title of "Senior Investigator" (*Studioso Senior*), allowing me to keep my office, with telephone and institutional e-mail. In March 2013 I was also nominated Emeritus Professor, a permanent honorary position officially awarded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research. This however didn't allow me to apply for grants from Italian public agencies nor to have grants administered by my

department. In addition I realized that most of the funding agencies supporting my research had just changed their policy, so that retired professors (no matter if emeriti) were no more eligible as grant recipients. Fortunately this was not the case of AIRC (*Associazione Italiana per la Ricerca sul Cancro*) to which I successfully applied in 2013 and later in 2016. Thanks to AIRC's support my lab in the past 8 years made substantial progress toward the understanding of the implication of some protein kinases in cancer, as documented by more than 60 papers published since 2013 and a 5-years (2015-2020) H-index= 39. A major

problem I had to face upon my retirement was where to have my grants administered, this being impossible at the university department hosting me as professor emeritus. For a while I could circumvent this obstacle putting the money in a private institution, the Veneto Institute for Molecular Medicine (VIMM), Later this was not possible and a better solution was afforded by my belonging as a senior associate researcher to the Italian Research Council (CNR), that has one of its branches inside the department where my lab is located.



PRIVOLOU STELLA

Professor Emerita, President of the Association of Professors Emeriti of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

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The usually neglected "Third Age" came to the fore during the Covid19 pandemic that the world is going through and has been termed a "vulnerable group" in need of protection! "Stay away from the elderly because there is risk of transmitting the virus to them", experts warn on a daily basis. Many seniors, however, experience severe loneliness regardless of the coronavirus. Is there a remedy for it?

I believe that the best way to combat loneliness is by remaining "busy" after the termination of occupational activity and transition to mandatory retirement. Remaining occupied seems to be impossible for many old-age pensioners of course, but for teachers, who see their job as a vocation, teaching activity does not end with retirement. They abide by the wise words of the ancient Roman philosopher Seneca: "otium sine litteris mors est et hominis vivi sepulture". Teachers of all ranks have learned to offer and cannot stop doing it for as long as they live.

This very feeling has united us, Professors Emeriti, into a small society that, driven by youthful passion, strives to offer its best to the young and to society in general. I am part of this society and I must confess that even now, when our communication is necessarily conducted only online, imparting knowledge really fascinates and rejuvenates me despite retirement; it makes me feel an active member of society and "transition" leaves me indifferent, as I actually continue teaching postgraduate students.

"Old age deprives the intelligent man only of qualities useless to wisdom", wrote the 18th-century French moralist and essayist Joseph Joubert.

An indicative example of the activities of Professors Emeriti in Greece is an educational program that is in progress these days. The specific program, which is dedicated to Medicine and lifelong health protection, has been inspired and organized by the former president of the Association of Professors Emeriti of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Professor Emeritus D. Kokkinos, with the cooperation of the vice-president K. Soldatos, board member G. Nikolopoulos and ex board member N. Toutounzakis.

The program includes nine two-hour lessons, from October 2020 until December 2020, and is aimed at students of the School of Health Sciences and the School of Physical Education and Sports Science of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Students may attend the lessons without paying fees, evaluate the program based on a special questionnaire, and receive an attendance certificate after successful completion of the lessons.

There will be similar educational programs concerning the other sciences as well.

Concluding the above thoughts on the subject of "fatal transition", I am reminded of the words of Victor Hugo: "Doing nothing is happiness for children and misery for old people!" Indeed it has been a fatal transition.



SAVICA VINCENZO

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I have often heard of the crisis that has presented itself to many university professors after retirement. I did not believe that this would apply me as I have always chosen to be involved in many university and other activities. The risk that it could happen would have been great had I not engaged daily in research activity immediately after retirement. For one year I continued teaching at the Graduate School of Nephrology and this seemed to satisfy my didactic inclination. After this year, contact with teaching stopped which was a negative element against me. However, I continued my scientific research by publishing, to date, 17 scientific papers which has saved my way of life despite the lack of teaching-contact with students, which I miss a lot. Immediately after my retirement I was appointed Associate Researcher at the Institute of Biomedicine and Molecular Immunology A. Monroy (now called the Institute for Biomedical Research and Innovation) National Research Council of Palermo. I have continued private clinical practice. Since retirement I have been Vice President, President, Past President and also Treasurer of the International Association for the History

of Nephrology. I was President Elect and now President of the Mediterranean Kidney Society. I am a member of the Accademia Peloritana dei Pericolanti at the University of Messina where I have held various scientific conferences. I am also a member of the European Association of Professors Emeriti. I have been invited to participate in numerous national and international conferences. My activity has been full despite lacking contact with teaching and with young people to whom I could pass on my mature clinical and scientific experience which distinguishes Human Capital of Age not considered in Italy.

The described activity did not allow me a long vacation but I will take this when my wife, who is a Professor of Neurology at the University of Messina, also retires. We will visit my son - a Professor of Neurology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. I hope that in the future retired university professors, if they so wish, will be able to continue teaching and research activities in their universities by integrating with, but not replacing, new young colleagues because, as stated by Rita Levi Montalcini, retirement is the possession of a fully active brain that allows you to continue thinking 'usque ad finem'.



Anguish Faced to the End of Life in Elderly People as Seen by Writers

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One of the greatest French writers, Michel de Montaigne, philosophised about death in his book "*Les Essais*" (1572-1592) and wrote this sentence: "I want us to act and to extend the offices of life as long as we can and for death to find me planting my cabbages, but nonchalant of it and even more so of my

imperfect garden" (1). By that he meant that one should work until one's death and not be afraid of it.

How, in literature, is the anguish related to death treated in elderly persons? Many authors have addressed this subject, which is at the heart of human thought. I will refer to some examples, many of them from the French literature, since it is not possible for me to undertake an extensive review. I will also leave out voluntary suicide and the anguish of being killed in combat, both situations affecting mainly young people. In order to establish a classification, I will distinguish several modalities of anguish: those coming from one's own thoughts, those in relation to the attitude of family, and the imposed suicide as met in ancient societies or certain populations.

What about ourselves? Many writers think that one should not be obsessed with the idea of death as long as one is in good health and adopts one or two approaches—either working a lot or having fun in order to chase away all anxiety. Others are of the opinion that we must always think of this event and be prepared for it. Here are three examples from French writers of the seventeenth century: Jean de La Fontaine, Blaise Pascal and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet.

1. Jean de La Fontaine wrote a fable "*The ploughman and his children*" (2): In this fable the dying father teaches his children telling them that he leaves a single legacy

which is not a hidden treasure but a piece of advice drawn from his experience: "the father was wise to show them, before his death, that work is a treasure". La Fontaine thus joins Montaigne in affirming that work is the only remedy to oppose death and the only teaching to be left to others.

2. Not knowing the date of our death allows us to be free. Blaise Pascal considered that from the moment we think that the fear of death is more unbearable than death itself, the only thing we can do is to try to remove this thought from ourselves: entertainment brings precisely this oblivion. Pascal thus shows, not without irony, that this improvidence has its own logic and provides a coherent solution to the problem of the fear of death. If not, we spend our time calculating how long it will be before its occurrence. He wrote in *Les pensées* (3): "Men, having been unable to cure death, misery and ignorance, have wisely decided to make themselves happy not to think about it."

3. J B Bossuet was a bishop famous for the funeral eulogies he pronounced before Louis XIV. He wrote in *Sermon sur la mort* (4): "It is a strange weakness of the human spirit that death is never present to it, no matter how much it may be seen from all sides, and in a thousand different forms. One only hears in the funeral's words of astonishment that this mortal is dead. Everyone remembers how long he had been talking to him and what the deceased had been talking about, and suddenly he is dead. This, it is said, is what man is! And, he who says it, is a man forgetful of his destiny! If he passes in his mind some fickle desire to prepare himself for it, he soon dispels these dark ideas; and I can say that mortals are no less careful to bury the thoughts of death than they are to bury the dead themselves". This long quotation invites us to remember that we can die suddenly and therefore be prepared for it throughout our lives. For Bossuet, this preparation involves observing the prescriptions of the Church and carrying out the three theological virtues: faith, hope and charity.

What about our relatives and our family?

1. de Montaigne M. *Essais*. Bibliothèque NRF de la Pléiade. Gallimard ed. Paris, 1953.

2. La Fontaine J. *Fables*. Alfred Mame et fils ed. Tours. 1887.

3. Pascal B. *Pensées et opuscules*. Librairie Hachette et Cie. Paris. 1917.

4. Bossuet J B. *Sermon sur la mort et méditation sur la brièveté de la vie*. Helleu et Sergent ed. Paris 1921.

1. The role of our relatives was particularly well described by Leo Tolstoy in *The death of Ivan Ilyich* (5). Death, in this novel, is the death of the social individual before being the death of the body. In the final days of his life, Ivan becomes aware of the artificial nature of his life, that makes him fear death, whereas he realised that Gerasim, his uneducated peasant servant who takes care of him with sympathy and devotion, leads an authentic life. Authentic life is made up of compassion, dedication and help to others, whereas artificial life is dominated by self-interest. Just before his death Ivan becomes aware that he no longer hates his daughter or his wife who had lost interest in his disease, considered it to be merely a minor disturbance, and continued to lead a carefree and mundane life. He rather feels pity for them, and hopes his death will bring them back to greater sensitivity and love for their father and husband. Confronted with death, he searches for the meaning of life in the face of death and, in doing so, his terror of death leaves him, and, as Tolstoy suggests, death itself disappears from his thoughts.

2. Another example is the death of Father Goriot described by Honoré de Balzac in one novel of the *Human comedy* in 1835 (6). The narrator insisted on the loneliness of Goriot who feels cruelly the absence of his two daughters, to whom he has given his fortune to enable them to marry in the upper class. "Not having them is agony", he said, just before his death. His friend, Eugène, asks the daughters to come; but they give priority to their mundane obligations. He is alone at the religious ceremony for Goriot. However, when the hearse is brought to the churchyard, two armoured, but empty, carriages, those of the rich and noble husbands of the two daughters, appear and follow the convoy.

What about imposed suicide?

The historian, Tacitus, in book XV of *The Annals* (7), relates the death of Seneca who was accused of taking part in a conspiracy against Nero, and was ordered to commit suicide. Seneca accepted the sentence like the philosopher of stoicism he was and his wife chose to die with him. He did not try to flee and waited for the arrival of the centurion in charge of making known and executing the emperor's will. He must have remembered that his relationship with the emperor was ancient and that he had accepted his gifts for a long time and closed his eyes to his crimes. Tacitus

describes the details of his death that was long in coming. The husband and wife open their veins, but death does not follow swiftly and Seneca had to resort to poison. For Tacitus, who severely judged Nero, and considered him as a criminal despot, Seneca showed the highest moral virtue in the face of tyranny. Perhaps also, Seneca thought in those last moments that this disaster would not have happened if he had been less attracted to wealth and power, thus joining all those who think that it is the life we have led that accompanies our death.



Tacitus - Wien Parlament

I have tried to describe, as seen by famous writers, the attitude in the face of death to come or thought to come imminently. Each one of us knows that it is inevitable. Reading these works teaches us how to prepare ourselves for it. When I was at high school, a topic of dissertation for the pupils was: "Is reading a book a way for you to learn or to be entertained?" The answer when reading the quoted authors is certainly the first one.

5. Tolstoy L. La mort d'Ivan Ilitch in Souvenirs et Récits. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Gallimard ed. Paris. 1968.

6. de Balzac H. Le père Goriot. In Scènes de la vie privée. La Comédie humaine. Editions du Seuil. Paris. 1966.

7. Tacite. Annales. Collection Folio Classique. Gallimard ed. Paris, 1993.



All Countries Need a Minister for Seniors

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Given the growing proportion of elderly people in the total population of most countries, it is encouraging to see that in some countries there are, in their governments, ministers with responsibilities for senior citizens. Here are the links to the websites of these ministers in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Wales and

Scotland.

The ministers have different titles: Minister of Seniors in Canada (1,2), Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians in Australia, Minister for Seniors, in New Zealand (3), Older People's Commissioner for Wales, and Minister for Older People and Equalities in Scotland.

Why is a minister for seniors needed in every country?

Many seniors are still in paid work and many are people who look after others – their children, grandchildren, others in their communities – rather than being people who need help themselves. The more seniors there are, and the numbers are growing all of the time, the more diverse is the group as a whole. We need to recognise this if we are to do correct things as a society and bring about the right government policies.

It is important for the citizens of all countries to unite and build a stronger, more inclusive and more resilient country. Along with that, is the responsibility of the government to engage with the citizens, civil society and stakeholders, including businesses of all sizes, organised labour, the broader public sector and the not-for-profit and charitable sectors. The minister has to be proactive in ensuring that

a broad array of voices provides him with advice from all regions of the country. Having a minister solely responsible for seniors ensures that policies concerning health care and financial security are looked at through a senior's eyes.

The minister for seniors is expected to help the government to better understand and make decisions on the needs of seniors and ensure that programs and services are developed which respond to the aging population. He should support other ministers on initiatives across government that impact seniors. The minister should provide seniors and future retirees greater security and a better quality of life. He must be an "equal voice at the table" with other ministers, speaking on behalf of seniors.

Of great importance is the ministers' collaborations with the ministers of health/ work/ families and social development, on initiatives to promote active and healthy aging. This includes learning from, and building on, federally-supported programs that have proven successful and are supporting the needs of seniors and their families.

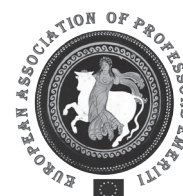
Countries need to think differently about ageing if they are to tap into the potential of the growing seniors' population and to offer people the best possible future. It is necessary to ensure government investments in home care, palliative care and community care and for these services to be well coordinated and have the intended impacts. An important area of the effort needed is to make sure that if seniors do want to stay in the workforce, then the barriers to that should be removed.

More work is required in collaboration with all partners to bridge the gaps between research, education and practice by fostering interactions between students, educators and community members. The related projects can establish meaningful roles for older adults in their community by providing more connections with young people, identifying possible community programs that seniors with mild to moderate problems can take part in and educating students to increase their knowledge and awareness of aging.

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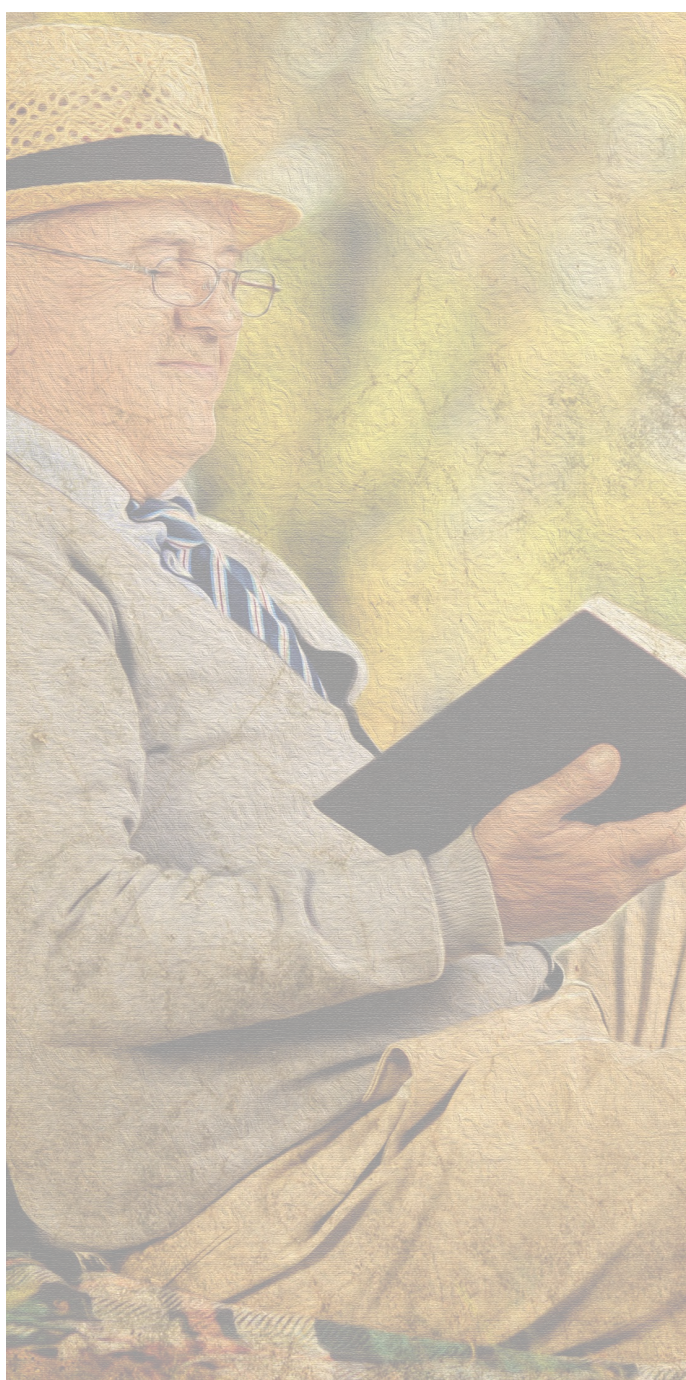
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1. *Journal article published electronically ahead of print*: Authors may add to a reference, the DOI ("digital object identifier") number unique to the publication for articles in press. It should be included immediately after the citation in the References.

Bergholdt HKM, Nordestgaard BG, Ellervik C. Milk intake is not associated with low risk of diabetes or overweight-obesity: a Mendelian randomization study in 97,811 Danish individuals. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2015 Jul 8 (Epub ahead of print; DOI: [doi:10.3945/ajcn.114.105049](https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.114.105049)).

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