Welcome to the Autumn 2011 ERA-AGE 2 Newsletter. This newsletter marks a watershed for the consortium with the recent launch of the joint call for research applications in Active and Healthy Ageing Across the Life Course.
This is the third joint call that the network has launched in the last four years: 2007 marked the start of the FLARE programme for post-doctoral fellowships, FLARE 2 followed in 2010, and now; the Active and Healthy Ageing Joint Call for multinational, multi-disciplinary research projects.

2011 has also seen the completion of the second call under the FLARE programme and has awarded 15 post-doctoral fellowships to early-career researchers from Austria, Finland, France, Israel, Luxembourg, Romania and Sweden. This second cohort, which brings the FLARE Fellows to 33 in total, joined FLARE 1 alumni in Spain this autumn for the third FLARE Summer School. New Fellows had a chance to learn from the pioneering FLARE 1 cohort and continue to develop their networks, when they were joined by participants from non-FLARE countries including Canada. A full report will be made in a future newsletter.

The growing Europeanisation of ageing issues is also echoed in the declaration of 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations which intends to raise awareness of the contribution that older people make to society. It seeks to encourage policymakers and relevant stakeholders at all levels to take action with the aim of creating better opportunities for active ageing and strengthening solidarity between generations.

Alan Walker Director of ERA-AGE 2

FLARE Summer School

The third FLARE Summer School, bringing together both FLARE 1 and FLARE 2 Fellows for the first time, was held in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, near Madrid in September 2011. A report from this Summer School will be featured in a future newsletter.
On 1 June 2011 the European Research Area in Ageing published a call for multidisciplinary research applications on “Active and Healthy Ageing Across the Life Course”. This is Europe’s first programme in ageing research funded by the Member States themselves and has a total of 12 funders from nine countries contributing a total of €4.2 million to the call.

The call directly supports the goal of the pilot European Innovation Partnership in Active and Healthy Ageing (EIPAHA) to increase average life expectancy by two years by 2020, across the European Union. The three objectives of the call are:

1. Generate new knowledge on the biological, clinical, behavioural, social and environmental factors that enable individuals to live actively and healthily into later life.

2. Explore comparatively different models, methods, approaches and good practices in societal responses to increased longevity which emphasise both social inclusion and sustainability.

3. Engage in effective knowledge exchange activities that will assist European and other countries to achieve the goal of increasing healthy life expectancy by 2 years by 2020.

In addition to direct funding from nine countries support is also available from the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO) for collaboration with Belgian researchers. Belgian applicants to the “Demographic challenge and social cohesion” strand of the BELSPO “Society and Future” research call are also eligible to submit their research proposal as part of a consortium applying to the ERA-AGE 2 joint call. Successful applicants will receive funding to cover networking costs of participation in the ERA-AGE 2 project.

The call closes to stage one pre-proposal applications on 3 October 2011.

Funding organisations

1. Biotechnology Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), UK
2. Fonds de la Recherche en Santé du Québec (FRSQ), Canada
3. Academy of Finland, Finland
4. Caisse Nationale d’Assurance Vieillesse (CNAV), France
5. Caisse nationale de solidarité pour l’autonomie (CNSA), France
6. The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS), Sweden
7. Chief Scientist Office, Ministry of Health, Israel
8. Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR), Luxembourg
9. Latvian Council of Science (LCS), Latvia
10. Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Romania Ministry of Health, Romania
11. Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Canada
12. Economic and and Social Research Council (ESRC), UK
FLARE 2 update

The second set of post-doctoral Fellowships awarded as part of the FLARE programme were finalised in Summer 2011. In 2010 FLARE 2 was opened to applications from outstanding post-doctoral researchers who embodied the multi-national and multidisciplinary ethos of FLARE. Following the completion of the peer review and the funders’ decision-making process, we are pleased to report that 15 FLARE 2 Fellows, funded by seven countries, have been awarded Fellowships during 2011.

### FLARE 2 Fellows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Host Institution</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ana-Mara Buga</td>
<td>University of Medicine and Pharmacy Craiova, Molecular Medicine Department, Craiova, Romania.</td>
<td>Identification of axonal growth-relevant genes in the aged post-stroke brain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Dahl</td>
<td>Karolinska Institutet, Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Stockholm, Sweden.</td>
<td>Weight trajectories and health in late life; a life course approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henna Hasson</td>
<td>Karolinska Institutet, Medical Management Centre (MMC), Stockholm, Sweden.</td>
<td>Successful implementation of improvement programs in elderly care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marko Korhonen</td>
<td>University of Jyväskylä, Department of Health Sciences, Gerontology Research Centre, Jyväskylä, Finland.</td>
<td>Can regular exercise slow the aging processes in muscle and bone? International collaborative study on lifetime athletes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gitit Lavy Shahaf</td>
<td>Bar Ilan University, Dept: The Mina &amp; Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, Unit: The Computational Immunology Lab, Ramat-Gan, Israel.</td>
<td>Understanding B cell lineage population and repertoire changes in aging, and in people with AIDS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anja Leist</td>
<td>University of Luxembourg, INSIDE, Walferdange, Luxembourg.</td>
<td>Health in Old Age: A study on the interplay of Economic and Individual influences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fredrica Nyqvist</td>
<td>National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Mental Health Promotion Unit, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Helsinki, Finland.</td>
<td>Social Capital, Loneliness and Mental Well-Being in an Ageing Population: Social Inequalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicolas Sirven</td>
<td>Institute for Research and Information in Health Economics (IRDES), Paris, France.</td>
<td>Frailty Research in Economics, Society, and Health (FRESH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulrike Waginger</td>
<td>University of Vienna, Working group for Social Gerontology, Life Course and Social Policy Research, Institute of Sociology, Vienna, Austria.</td>
<td>Early Retirement and Well-being in Europe: A secondary analysis based on SHARE and ELSA</td>
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The current FLARE 2 cohort includes six Associate FLARE 2 Fellows. Due to the number of high quality applications received during the FLARE 2010 call, the Academy of Finland has funded another five FLARE applicants under a standard Finnish scheme; a sixth Fellow chose to pursue their FLARE project in Sweden and is also included as an Associate Fellow.

**Petra Grönholm-Nyman**
Host institution: Abo Akademi University, Department of Psychology and Logopedics, Turku, Finland.

**Project:** Conigitive training in normal and aging and Mild Cognitive Impairment.

**Kathrin Komp**
Host institution: Umeå University, Department of Sociology, Umeå, Sweden

**Project:** The moral economy of the third age. Why governments encouraging productivity in old age are unpopular.

**Jenni Kulmala**
Host institution: University of Jyväskylä, Gerontology Research Centre, Department of Health Sciences, Jyväskylä, Finland.

**Project:** Are psychosocial symptoms and self-rated health early and shared risk factors for physical disability and cognitive decline in old age? (PSCog)

**Ulpukka Isophkala-Bouret**
Host institution: University of Helsinki, Institute of behavioural Sciences, Helsinki, Finland.

**Project:** What is the matter with ageing and expertise? Narrative inquiry into the experiences of older workers who acquire Master’s degrees in their fifties.

**Mirka Rauniomaa**
Host institution: University of Oulu, Faculty of Humanities, Oulu, Finland.

**Project:** Back behind the wheel: Social interactional Perspectives on Older drivers and driver education.

**Monika von Bonsdorff**
Host institution: University of Jyväskylä, Department of Health Sciences, Jyväskylä, Finland.

**Project:** Dynamic retirement - Prospective analysis on early and midlife individual and work-related predictors.
The eighth ERA-AGE FORUM, a meeting of the “European Forum on Population Ageing Research” took place on 1st March 2011 at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, Austria. Over 58 people from 18 countries gathered for this event which had the theme “The role of technology in achieving extended life years”.

The Forum focused on a critical ‘topic’ in ageing research and practice, technology, and we would like to thank our colleagues in the Austrian Academy of Sciences for co-organising and hosting it, and particularly to Dr Günter Lepperdinger, who took over chairing duties at very short notice due to ill-health; he did an excellent and enthusiastic job and helped to create a successful event.

Over the one-day event a morning of presentations was followed by a series of discussion groups during the afternoon. The discussion group topics drew on a wide range of experiences and expertise to address three divergent topics: achievements and ambitions for use of technology among older people; how to focus multidisciplinary collaboration in this field; the role of EU initiatives in ageing-related technologies. The summaries from the discussion groups and brief information about the presentations are below.

Summary of presentations:

**ERA-AGE 2: aims and update**
Prof. Alan Walker, University of Sheffield, Coordinator ERA-AGE2

The European Research Area in Ageing has been at the heart of coordination of ageing research in Europe since 2004, the culmination of ten years’ activity in this area. While many milestones have been reached in the Europeanisation of ageing research, many ambitions have still to be realised. The European Forum on Population Ageing Research, and currently ERA-AGE have made some significant achievements in this area and the next step for ERA-AGE is the proposed launch of Europe’s first joint programme of ageing research.

**Ambient Assisted Living – an update**
Dr. Gerda Geyer, FFG, Austria

The overall objective of the AAL Joint Programme is to enhance the quality of life of older people and strengthen the industrial base in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The next round of funding is focused on “ICT-based Solutions for Advancement of Older Persons’ Mobility” and will target orientation & navigation and assistive technologies; organisations in 23 countries are eligible for funding through the scheme.
**BRAID: Bridging Research in Ageing and ICT Development**

Dr. Benjamin Knapp, Queens University Belfast, United Kingdom

BRAID is developing a comprehensive Research and Technological Development (RTD) roadmap for active ageing by consolidating four existing roadmaps and by describing and launching a stakeholder co-ordination and consultation mechanism. A taxonomy of the field as well as a trend analysis has been recently completed. The project is in the process of characterising key research challenges and has just completed a first draft of a multi-faceted vision for a comprehensive approach in supporting the well-being and socio-economic integration of increasing numbers of senior citizens in Europe.

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**Technology and therapy control for geriatric patients**

Prof. Monika Lechleitner, Medical Director, Federal Hospital Hochzirl, Austria

Recent developments in technology might offer tools for improved diagnostic procedures and control of therapy with respect to adherence to medication, efficacy and safety. Technical systems seem to be of advantage to help the elderly to live independently, especially in the management of chronic conditions. Telemonitoring may be an effective strategy for disease management in high-risk heart failure patients and for blood pressure values. Technology has already been proven helpful in the care of diabetes and in order to reduce the risk of side-effects and drug-interaction (e-medication).

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**Innovation and the new demography**

Joan Cornet Prat, Executive chairman at Fundació TICsalut, Spain

Information and communication technology is having a big impact on the way we deliver health services and social care. At the same time technological innovation has become a key issue in providing new tools and new processes. Innovation in technology is not in itself an aim, and is useless if is not rightly inserted in a process of change management. To achieve a real implantation of innovating technology, it is important to put the right questions in order to find out the right answers.

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**Achieving and sustaining digital inclusion of older people: some key challenges**

Prof. Leela Damodaran, Department of Information Science, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Experience from the Sus-IT research project illustrates the learning journey experienced by older people acquiring skills in using information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the many threats to sustaining this capability. The focus is on developing better understanding of digital engagement of older people and to identify empowering sociotechnical solutions.

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**New technologies emerging from biogerontology research – what is utopia, what is reality?**

Dr. Günter Lepperdinger, Institute for Biomedical Aging Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria

Some biogerontologists push beyond investigation of how and why we age on the molecular, organismic and evolutionary level to seek ways to “slow down” and even reverse the ageing process. Despite the ubiquitous emergence of fallacious products, together with the fact that there is still much unknown about the specific mechanisms driving ageing in a human being, future scientific discoveries could very well lead to effectual interventions. There are many scientists and investors seeking practical means for achieving substantial advancement to realise “successful ageing” and they may certainly accelerate high-flying implementations. Indeed far-reaching developments in stem cell research and regenerative medicine, profound insights in immunology and vaccination have been achieved by now.
What have we achieved with new technologies for the elderly – what is still missing?

The group were first asked to contemplate what new technologies have achieved for the elderly so far before considering what technologies for the elderly were missing from existing projects and plans. Smart homes, social networking, large bandwidth (for personal computing as well as telemedicine) and falling costs of technology were identified as current achievements, although it was acknowledged not all of these are exploited to their full potential. Implementation gaps (including in smart homes), lack of measurement and assessment metrics to evaluate interventions, standardisation, unequal access (with profound differences both in and between different countries) and the difficulties in cross-border projects between national health systems were identified as future targets to utilise technology for the older population. The group finished by making the following recommendations to help address the gaps and meet the challenges for the future: raising awareness of solutions and benefits across all aspects of society; make better use of living labs; create compatible European platforms to work across systems and countries, and the development of a platform for evidence creation on the benefits and business models of technology.

How much have EU-funded initiatives helped so far - what is still needed?

The group took a very positive view of EU funded initiatives - Age Platform Europe, Value+, epSOS, CALLIOPE, the eHealth Governance Initiative, CPME, UEMS were a few that the group could name when called on. Although these are excellent examples of cooperation there is still a lot of work to do. Focus on end user involvement is a critical point, but sometimes problematic due to the heterogeneity of the end user population. This could be overcome by: a database of potential end users and user organisations; better integration into the project; development of trust in technology to lower anxiety, supported by a reference group/person; choice of the right language to communicate. Effective dissemination of project results would help support end user engagement but projects need to be prolonged to enable this to happen; skills also need to be increased in this area. Implementation of results could be improved through better planning and evaluation; innovation and research outcomes should be clearly connected to the market. Finally it was deemed essential to contribute to the consultation to the FP7 successor to influence ideas on integration of end users and dissemination and implementation of project results.

For more information: www.era-age.group.shef.ac.uk/forum-8.html
The Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (RILSA) is one of the most important Czech research institutions with a long tradition of research on age, ageing, intergenerational relationships, gender issues, social policy and care, and retirement policies. RILSA builds upon the traditions of the Social Institute of the Czechoslovak Republic which was founded as early as in 1919. Since 2007 RILSA has been, from the legal point of view a public research institution.

Today, the Institute operates mainly in the following research areas: labour market and employment; social dialogue and labour relations; social protection; family and equal opportunities; incomes and wages and theory of social policy. Issues concerning ageing and older people are researched across these areas by highly qualified research teams which enables the detailed study of a wide range of topics and involves and combines different views from various disciplines including sociology, economics, social policy and social work. Together with the interdisciplinary nature of the research teams, available expertise in qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods provides added value since the topic of ageing often requires both research at the individual level and a wider theoretical approach.

One of RILSA’s main aims is to enhance knowledge on the socio-economic development of society, while it also strives to raise awareness about the role of demographic ageing in shaping the future of Czech and European society. RILSA supports the Government, Ministries, local government and other bodies including tertiary education and commerce, in improving their decision making processes by providing expertise, education and consultation. Many members of the various research teams lecture at prestigious schools and universities and also serve as analysts for the media in order to support the wider dissemination of research results to the general public.

In recent years RILSA has carried out several research projects dealing with the social and economic aspects of ageing. In terms of the labour market, research into the employment and (long-term) unemployment of older workers and the monitoring of older workers’ earnings is available. Research into the provision of social care for older people is of great importance since the system has undergone major restructuralisation. Selected projects looked at the effectiveness of social services financing for old peoples’ homes; the qualification needs of workers involved in social services for the elderly and regional aspects of elderly care provision. Pension systems constitute a further important and widely researched issue at RILSA. Projects provide analysis and international comparisons of pension systems in order to support potential solutions for further pension reform in the Czech Republic. Recent research topics include pension entitlement and conditions; the nature of pension insurance institutions and the assessment of pension calculation bases. Although RILSA uses primarily socio-economic paradigms, the interconnection with health policy cannot be overlooked when dealing with older age issues. The analysis of the potential for removing disability insurance from the old-age pension insurance system including the social-health aspects of invalidity development provides a perfect example of such efforts. Other projects have dealt with more general issues connected with ageing in (post-)modern societies, such as a survey on age and age-discrimination; a study on securing the needs of seniors with an emphasis on the role of the non governmental sector and a project introducing age mainstreaming as a possible management strategy for ageing populations.

In the future RILSA will continue to further develop the research goals outlined above as it is presently working with the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs on the National Programme for Preparation for Ageing for 2008-2012. The participation of RILSA in the ERA-AGE2 network will considerably enhance its research potential and will help to prepare Czech society for the opportunities and challenges issuing from the ageing of the population. ERA-AGE2 partners may, on the other hand, benefit from a wide range of RILSA services including information services, a documentation centre and an on-line library which offer unique support for further ageing-related enquiries.
New partner: Lower Silesia Voivodeship Marshal Office, Poland

The Lower Silesia Voivodeship Marshal Office in Poland has recently joined ERA-AGE as an Associate Partner representing their region. A profile is below.

The Marshal Office of Lower Silesia Voivodeship, as a public institution, is responsible inter alia for the health policy creation for their citizens. As in the whole of Europe, the elderly are a growing part of our population. Therefore, the Health Policy Department in the framework of health promotion, focuses on programs dedicated to pursuing a number of elderly people. As part of the activation of local communities for the development of environmental services for the elderly, we announced a tender for an open competitions for the public implementation for: activating groups; health promotion, and; protection efforts, including development of community services for the elderly. On the initiative of members of the Australian Council for Senior Citizens, appointed by the Authority, once a year (every year in another city / municipality) the Forum of Australian Universities of the Third Age is held. In total there are presented examples of good practice on issues such as cooperation between organizations, mobilization of resources from the EU, etc. The activities of the Department of Health Policy and Senior Citizens Council of Lower Silesia are presented on a national and international conferences and public debates.

A very important element of our business was the implementation of the “Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) Four-leaf Clover - quality model of senior service sector” project. Within this project, we began work on the econometric model of senior service quality through a satisfaction survey. Preliminary studies were started with the participation of researchers from the University of Economics - Department of Quality Analysis. Follow-up Department action dedicated to the elderly will be continued under the existing activities such as needs reported by members of the Council Board of Lower Silesia and the needs of seniors resulted by strong international cooperation. Health care institutions also include the cooperation related to the provision of adequate care for the elderly. Planning is underway to create an institution which is a center of training and implementation of innovations in the field of geriatrics. To help develop support for geriatric residents of our province, it is necessary to prepare highly specialized staff, both medical, nursing and administration to accomplish this task. It becomes necessary to create a medium to train specialist staff who will be able to provide geriatric care. Education of medical professionals in the field of geriatrics primarily takes place in hospitals, led by a branch of professionals active in the field. Another project is focused on developing in a residential geriatric rehabilitation center with the aim of transitioning into geriatric home care. The establishment of this center will improve the quality of care for the elderly throughout the region, and also open the possibility of cooperation with other voivodeships.

The ageing of society and its associated consequences are the subject of many studies in Poland. Poland is an example of a country where the transformation of health, social and retirement systems took place as part of constitutional changes due to the fall of the communist system in 1989. Prior to this, the Polish government guaranteed all citizens work, health and social care. Some of these reforms are still in progress and further action, in political terms, has been implemented.

Lower Silesia Voivodeship cooperates with the Parliamentary Team for the Elderly which was created in June 2008 and brings together members and senators from across the Polish Parliament. The team seeks to respond to the challenges that an ageing society brings. They see the need for developing a long-term strategy for using and strengthening the human capital of older people.
ERA-AGE 2 Network Steering Committee

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