Welcome

The European Research Area in Ageing 2 (ERA-AGE 2) is a three year project funded by the European Commission, under the Seventh Framework Programme. ERA-AGE 2 aims to continue the work of the highly successful first phase of ERA-AGE which ended in February 2009 after 5 years under the Sixth Framework Programme. The project will secure, for the long term, the future of the European Research Area in ageing research and launch Europe’s first joint research programme on ageing.

ERA-AGE 2 comprises thirteen partners who are each public authorities responsible for the funding and coordination of national research programmes, and the project has also recruited five associate partners. In addition, the project continues to recruit partner organisations to maximise the sharing of experiences and build a critical mass of ageing research. The network is coordinated by the UK representative The University of Sheffield and is supported by a steering committee comprising representatives of the partners and associate organisations.

All partners are also committed to delivering the second round of the pioneering FLARE programme, progressively expanding the partnership and developing the European research infrastructure.
Welcome to the first newsletter from the second phase of the European Research Area in Ageing (ERA-AGE2). The thirteen partners are proud to be in the vanguard of the creation of the European Research Area in Ageing field and gratefully acknowledge the support of the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme. After an initial period of activity which led, among other things, to the pioneering FLARE post doctoral programme, the extension of ERA-AGE was announced by the Commission at a major European conference of the Future of Ageing Research in 2009.

During its concentrated 3 year period of work ERA-AGE 2 will extend its membership to a critical mass of European countries, implement a second call for FLARE fellowships and develop a major research programme leading an open call supported by partner countries. A strong start has been made towards these goals by the inclusion of five new associate partners: Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Aging (CIHR-IA); Le Fonds de la Recherche en Santé du Québec (FRSQ); Saxon State Ministry of Social Affairs, Germany; Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania; Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (RILSA), Czech Republic. The FLARE 2 call is underway as is the development of a European research programme based on a joint call.

The consortium welcomes inputs from those interested in the future of European ageing research and as a first step, please visit the ERA-AGE website (www.era-age.group.shef.ac.uk) where you will find more details about the partner organisations, ERA-AGE 2 activities and contact information.

**Professor Alan Walker, Project Director**

**OBJECTIVES**

The ERA-AGE 2 project has the following objectives:

- Develop and implement the framework for a second call for the FLARE postdoctoral programme (FLARE 2), based on the highly successful implementation of the first FLARE call.

- Provide the continuing European framework for the existing FLARE programme by arranging networking opportunities for the post-doctoral fellows, including Summer Schools and an online discussion group.

- Ensure that the key stakeholders regionally, nationally and European are engaged in the activities of ERA-AGE 2 and thereby contributing to the research response to the ageing challenge. The priority stakeholders are from the societal and political arenas. ERA-AGE 2’s dissemination activities will be geared in these directions.

- Continue ERA-AGE 2 essential knowledge transfer activities, including further development of its databases aimed at providing evidence for policy, practice and product development in response to the ageing challenge.

- Engage the majority of European countries in the ERA-AGE 2 network following an explicit programme of engagement.

- Ensure a lasting basis for strategic collaboration between the ERA-AGE 2 partners.

- Develop the framework for and agree an open memorandum of understanding concerning the first European Research programme to follow ERA-AGE 2, covering partner responsibilities, methods and levels of funding.

- To achieve the objectives of ERA-AGE 2 a series of joint activities and events have been designed to share knowledge and good practice and encourage new forms of transnational collaboration.
The membership of ERA-AGE is based upon two categories: full partners, who receive FP7 funding through the project and associate members who support the goals of the European Research Area in Ageing, but have joined the consortium during the life of the project. All of the members of the network are committed to carrying out the objectives of ERA-AGE and to the ultimate aim of a European Research Area in this field.

Initially, in 2004, the ERA-AGE project consisted of nine partners and five associate members. In January 2005 the project was successful in gaining extended funding from Framework Programme Six ERA-NET to bring on board three new partners in Germany, Israel and Italy.

All of the partner and associate organisations in the ERA-AGE network are key players in research management and funding in their respective countries and they each have a history of European and international cooperation. They bring their unique expertise and specific research fields to the network. They also have specific clusters of expertise which collectively constitutes a broad representation of all aspects of ageing research. The current ERA-AGE2 membership comprises 13 partners, 5 associate partners and 1 observer.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Project Steering Committee comprises representatives from each of the ERA-AGE 2 partner organisations and a Chair, Professor Marja Jylha (University of Tampere). The Committee is responsible for all strategic planning and decision making within the project, ensuring that the timetable is maintained and that objectives, milestones and goals are met, taking any corrective action necessary to ensure this. The committee’s primary tasks include:

- Quality control of all reports and other outputs including agreeing agendas and programmes for workshops and conferences.
- Maintaining the highest standards of governance.
- Overseeing the promotion of gender equality in the network's activities.
- Overseeing the implementation of other key ERA-AGE 2 principles such as interdisciplinarity and research user involvement.

The steering committee maintains overall responsibility for legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management of the network. The Committee meets twice a year for the duration of the project. For details of the committee please see inside the back cover of the newsletter.
ERA-AGE 2 Partners and Associate Partners

AUSTRIA
A Austrian Academy of Sciences
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
FINLAND
D Academy of Finland
FRANCE
E Caisse nationale d’assurance vieillesse: CNAV
ISRAEL
H Ministry of Health
ITALY
I Instituto Superiore di Sanità
LATVIA
K Latvian Council of Science (LCS)
LUXEMBOURG
O National Research Fund (FNR)
ROMANIA
N Executive Agency for Higher Education and Research Funding-UEFISCUSU
SPAIN
Q Ministry of Health
SWEDEN
T Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research
UNITED KINGDOM
D University of Sheffield.

Associate partners:

CANADA
F CIHR-IA (Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Aging)
FRSQ (Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec)

LITHUANIA
G Mykolas Romeris University

THE CZECH REPUBLIC
H Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (RILSA)

GERMANY (OBSERVER)
I Projekträger at the DLR (PT- DLR; DLR: Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt, German Aerospace Center), Germany
SAISONY, GERMANY
M Saxon State Ministry of Social Affairs
AUSTRIA
Austrian Academy of Sciences is the leading organisation promoting non-university academic research institutions in Austria. More than 1100 employees carry out extensive research projects. Highly qualified researchers from Austria and abroad are included among its members guaranteeing excellence in the sciences and humanities.

BULGARIA
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was established in 1869. The Academy is autonomous and has a Society of Academicians, Correspondent Members and Foreign Members.

FINLAND
Academy of Finland’s mission is to advance scientific research and its application, support international scientific cooperation, act as an expert in science policy issues and allocate funding to research and other advancement of science. The Academy works to promote the progress of science by allocating funding to the highest-quality and the scientifically most innovative research.

FRANCE
Caisse Nationale D’assurance Vieillesse: CNAV is a national public body in charge of the general pension scheme which manages the basic pension. Through its research department (Direction des Recherches sur le Vieillissement - DRV) it has adopted a strategically planned approach to ageing research (social sciences), running four main national research programmes in this field: ‘Relations Between Generations’, ‘Old Age and Dependency’, ‘Ageing and Migration’ and ‘Technology and Ageing’.

ISRAEL
Israeli Ministry of Health. As part of its strategic approach to ageing research and health, the Israeli Ministry of Health supports in funding the Myers-JDC- Brookdale Institute including its Center for Research on Aging; the Gertner Institute of Health Policy; Israeli hospitals, (general as well as geriatric hospitals), and universities, all of which develop and implement strategic programmes on Health and Ageing research.

ITALY
Istituto Superiore di Sanità is the leading technical and scientific public body of the Italian National Health Service. Its activities include research, control, training and consultation in the interest of public health protection. The Institute conducts scientific research in a wide variety of fields, from cutting-edge molecular and genetic research to population-based studies of risk factors for disease and disability. The Institute is also involved in several major clinical trials, which are frequently conducted in cooperation with the Scientific Institutes for Research and Care (IRCCS) network and hospitals.

LATVIA
Latvian Council of Science (LCS) is a collegiate institution of scientists. The Council’s tasks include advancement, evaluation, financing and coordination of scientific research in Latvia. The Latvian Council of Science prepares, jointly with the Ministry of Education and Research of Latvia, the draft of the state’s science budget. It also elaborates draft decisions and drafts of laws aimed at the development and organization of science in Latvia. The Council distributes funding for projects among the different fields of science.

LUXEMBOURG
National Research Fund (FNR) in Luxembourg has operated since 1999 as an independent institution with funding by the Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research. The FNR participates in the planning of national science and technology policy with the Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research and with the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

ROMANIA
Executive Agency for Higher Education and Research Funding- (UEFISCUS), represents the most significant professional body in the field of higher education and research funding management in Romania. It is organized and operates autonomously, under the Ministry of Education and Research-MEdC ultimate authority. It supports activities including core financing for the higher education institutions and also funding of basic research in universities and research institutes.

SPAIN
Ministerio de Ciencia y Innovacion (MICCN) is the major research funding organism in Spain. Research on ageing is conducted in Spain through, mainly, three different institutions: the MICINN (Ministerio de Ciencia y Innovación); the IMSERSO (Institute for the Elderly and Social Services, depending on the Ministry of Health and Social Services); and the Carlos III Institute for the Science of Health. In the DTHCS, there are, at the present, no fewer than 20 active research projects focused on sociological, psychological and economical aspects on ageing, quality and style of life of the elderly, and so on.

SWEDEN
Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research was established in 2001 through a merger of the Swedish Council for Social Research and the Swedish Council for Work Life Research. Its remit is to promote the accumulation of knowledge in matters relating to working life and the understanding of social conditions and processes through promotion and support of basic and applied research, identification of important research needs, Dialogue, dissemination of information and transfer of knowledge and Promotion of cooperation between researchers both nationally and internationally, particularly in EU programmes.
UNITED KINGDOM

University of Sheffield. is one of the UK’s leading universities. The 2010 Virgin Guide to British Universities states that "Sheffield is a top university across the board". The University has over 24,000 students from 131 countries, and almost 6,000 staff. Its research partners and clients include Boeing, Rolls Royce, Unilever, Boots, AstraZeneca, GSK, ICI, Slazenger, and many more leading business names, as well as UK and overseas government agencies and charitable foundations. The University coordinates the New Dynamics of Ageing, a multidisciplinary ageing research programme.

Associate partners

CANADA, QUEBEC

The FRSQ (Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec) is a non-profit funding agency, created in 1964 under the Act Respecting the Ministère du Développement économique, de l’Innovation et de l’Exportation (L.R.Q., c. M-30.01). It reports to the Minister in charge of Québec’s department for economic development, innovation and export trade (ministère du Développement Économique, de l’Innovation et de l’Exportation) and its mandate is to implement government strategy with respect to human health research as presented in the Québec Research and Innovation Strategy.

CANADA

Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Aging. The Institute of Aging (IA) of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) was established in 2001 as one of thirteen national research institutes responsible for funding health research in strategic theme areas. The IA has an annual research budget of just under $10 million dollars (CAD) for Institute specific initiatives. Overall an estimated 14% of CIHR’s annual grants and awards budget of $974 Million (CAD) funds research on aging.

LITHUANIA

Mykolas Romeris University is a multidisciplinary national higher education body - the 2nd largest university in Lithuania. Traditionally the University has engaged in research in the area of social sciences and more recently, has initiated research in biomedicine, technology and the humanities. In 2008 Mykolas Romeris University completed the implementation of nine European Social Funds and the Lithuanian government’s general financing funded projects (totaling more than EUR 4.3 million).

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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. 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.

GERMANY (OBSERVER)

Projektträger at the DLR (PT-DLR; DLR: Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt, German Aerospace Center), Germany

PT-DLR is one of two main institutions in the area of health research in Germany and a primary funder of ageing research. It is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation specialising in research management and funding. It was founded to support mainly the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG) in research management and the implementation of governmental programmes for research funding. PT-DLR implements the governmental ‘Health Research Programme’ in partnership with other organisations.

During its concentrated 3 year period of work ERA-AGE 2 will extend its membership to a critical mass of European countries
The Saxon State Ministry of Social Affairs is the central organisation within the regional government of Saxony to take care of people in different life circumstances. The ministry designs the framework in order to provide a place for all members of Saxon society. Many people need help in illness, poverty and distress, especially in certain situations of family, unemployment, disability, addiction or discrimination of all kind. In case of need everybody should find an optimum of structure and offer for protection in social and health affairs. This is the overall aim of the Saxon State Ministry of Social Affairs, which also takes care for children and women and fosters compatibility of job and family. Furthermore, it is responsible for long term care and the elderly.

It relies on about 300 civil servants at its headquarter in Dresden. It also runs some specialised institutions for health and family and several hospitals for mental diseases. Saxony cooperates with its neighbours, Poland and the Czech Republic in cross border measures. Its area of responsibility covers about 4.4 Million people. The capital of Saxony, Dresden, has about 500,000 inhabitants.

The Saxon State Ministry of Social Affairs is a public authority who funds, manages and implements coherent, strategically planned regional research programmes on age and ageing. After the German reunification in 1990, the Free State of Saxony as the biggest of the ‘New Federal States of Germany’ faces severe challenges as a consequence of demographic changes. Many young and qualified persons have been leaving Saxony looking for jobs in other parts of Germany.

Between 1990 and 2005 the Free State of Saxony lost 13 percent of its population and is going to lose again more than 11 percent according to studies assuming a constant development. The population aged under 20 years declines from currently 16.9 percent down to 14.9 percent until 2020. Contrary, the percentage of people increases, who are older than 60 years, from 28.9 percent up to 36.3 percent. By 2020 the Saxon population will have declined to 3.87 million people. In comparison to 1990 it is prognosticated that the population in Saxony will decrease by about 1 million people within 30 years, which equals one generation. Against this background, the Saxon Government puts a clear focus on coping with the challenges of the demographic change comprising the implementation of regional funding programmes (including the development of concepts as well as the organisation of calls for proposals and evaluations).

As the first federal state of Germany, the Saxon State Ministry of Social Affairs has developed a health target on age and ageing titled ‘Active Ageing in Health, Autonomy, and participation. The health target was developed in cooperation with 53 stakeholders of the field and consisted of 24 targets referring to ‘needs-based health care structures’, ‘multi-professional qualification’, ‘self-rated health’ and ‘intergenerational solidarity’


Associated with the Saxon Ministry of Social Affairs is the German Institute for Health Research. The German Institute for Health Research is a non-profit organisation conducting research projects in the arrays of health promotion, prevention, rehabilitation, nursing and quality management. One focus of the institute lies on prevention and rehabilitation of age-related diseases. Besides research the institute is engaged in the development of new concepts relating to medical supply structures and health economy.
The Future Leaders in Ageing Research in Europe (FLARE) is the first European programme on ageing research funded by the Member States themselves.

FLARE has two innovative features: part of the fellowship must be spent in another country and it must also involve a cross-disciplinary collaboration. These novel features reflect the strong scientific consensus in ERA-AGE meetings on the need to develop a multi-disciplinary approach to ageing research and also a European network in this area. Another key priority for both scientists and end users is the support of the next generation of researchers on ageing, hence the title, ‘Future Leaders of Ageing Research in Europe’ (FLARE).

The first pilot project was launched in February 2007 when the joint programme provided eighteen 3 year post-doctoral fellowships for recently qualified scientists.

SUMMER SCHOOLS
The first FLARE 2 Summer School took place in Sweden in 2008. Three more Summer Schools are planned to provide FLARE Fellows and other European early career researchers with the opportunity to develop skills and to network.

The first FLARE 2 Summer School for the FLARE fellows, other early career researchers and academics was hosted by The Bulgarian Academy of Science. The Summer School took place in September and included lectures and presentations given by FLARE fellows and academics, with sessions on strategic career themes for post doctoral scholars such as the development of leadership skills, developing research teams and funding streams and strategies. A report and further information can be found on the ERA-AGE website and also more details will follow in future newsletters.

Additionally, an online discussion forum for FLARE fellows has been developed to allow FLARE fellows to continue to share their thoughts and to collaborate in a virtual and secure environment. It also provides an opportunity for sharing and collaborating on documents. It is hosted by the University of Sheffield.
**FLARE 2 LAUNCH**

The Future Leaders in Ageing Research in Europe (FLARE) programme opened for applications on 15th July 2010. From this date, early-career post-doctoral researchers had three months to apply for a three-year FLARE 2 Fellowship in multi-disciplinary ageing research in Europe.

Fifteen three-year FLARE 2 Fellowships in multi-disciplinary ageing research in Europe are available, based in: Austria, Finland, France, Israel, Luxembourg, Quebec, Romania, and Sweden. Funded by eight countries from across Europe and also including Israel and Quebec, fellowships were open to applications from candidates who embrace the two innovative features of the programme: part of the fellowship must be spent in another country and it must also involve a cross-disciplinary collaboration.

FLARE was the first European programme on ageing research funded by the Member States themselves and this unique programme launched in 2007 when 18 successful applicants were awarded the first FLARE Fellowships. FLARE 2 will build on this success.

FLARE was born from a strong scientific consensus on the need to develop a multi-disciplinary approach to ageing research and also the need to forge strong European networks in this area, particularly with regard to supporting our early career researchers. The new FLARE Fellows will also have the opportunity to participate in a number of Summer Schools to network with each other and FLARE 1 Fellows and develop their research careers.

The aims of the FLARE 2 call are:

- To provide outstanding researchers with the opportunity to qualify for a leading position in ageing research;
- To support ageing research and develop a well-trained cohort of European interdisciplinary researchers in this field, connecting them to the prominent research institutes and scientific teams in Europe as well as to other post-doctoral researchers through communication, meetings and schools;
- To enhance communication and multilateral co-operation in ageing research and thereby create a network of leading European institutes and experts to form a basis for future national and EU-funded research on ageing.

The FLARE 2 post-doctoral programme will run from 2011 to 2014.

The deadline for applications for the majority of the funding countries was 15 October 2010. Fellowships start in mid-2011. Details of the call and FLARE 2 progress are available on the ERA-AGE website www.era-age.group.shef.ac.uk.

**THE EUROPEAN FORUM ON POPULATION AGEING RESEARCH**

The first ERA-AGE 2 European Forum on Population Ageing Research was held on May 11th 2010, in Brussels. The event was used to showcase FUTURAGE, a two-year FP7 project to create a Road Map for ageing research in Europe for the next 10-15 years. Focused on four scientific themes – biogerontology, social and economic resources, environments of ageing, healthy ageing – and a user involvement theme, the Road Map is being developed through a series of consultations and workshops to develop consensus among academic and non-academic stakeholders about research priorities, emerging fields and methods in European ageing until 2025.

The audience on May 11th heard the summary results from the first set of scientific and user involvement workshops, and the strategic context surrounding these themes, and the Road Map. Over 150 participants attended the Forum event, representing the European Parliament, European Commission, member state government ministries, national research funders, academia, government research organisations, and various non-governmental research organisations and companies. During the morning, chaired by Prof Emanuele Scafato, Istituto Superiore Di Sanita (Italy), detailed outputs from the FUTURAGE themes were presented, followed by short-break out sessions to allow all attendees a chance to provide their own perspective on the future of ageing research.

In the afternoon the Science Technology Options Assessment Panel of MEPs (STOA) hosted an afternoon workshop at the European Parliament to discuss the importance of ageing research for Europe’s future and to provide a strategic overview of the current state of play, and the future requirements for European ageing research. The afternoon workshop was co-chaired by Mr Paul Rübig, MEP, STOA Chairman and Mr António Fernando Correria de Campos, MEP, STOA Vice-Chair.
The speakers at the event:

**INTRODUCTION: aims and aspirations** - Professor Alan Walker

**FUTURAGE: The Essential Elements of the Road Map**
- **Biogerontology** – Dr Efstatios Gonos, National Hellenic Research Foundation
- **Social & Economic Resources** – Dr Giovanni Lamura, INRCA
- **Environments of Ageing** – Professor Hans-Werner Wahl, University of Heidelberg
- **Healthy Ageing** – Professor Carol Jagger, Newcastle University
- **The User Perspective** – Professor James Goodwin, Age UK

**Guest speakers**
- **Keynote: The New Science of Ageing** - Professor Kaare Christensen - Institute of Public Health – Epidemiology/ Danish Aging Research Center, University of Southern Denmark
- **Keynote: Ageing research in the Research Framework Programmes** - Mr Peteris Zilgalvis, Head of Unit Infectious Diseases - Directorate Health, DG Research, European Commission
- **Room for research on a new integrated care system for aged people** - Dr Ines Guerreiro, Portuguese Ministry for Health

A full report on the Forum will be in the next newsletter. For more information on the FUTURAGE project please visit http://futurage.group.shef.ac.uk/

To keep up-to-date with ERA-AGE activities, please sign up to our news RSS feed.

Some feedback from the event:
- 100% of the feedback received rated the introduction and scene setting either ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’
- 100% of the feedback received viewed the guest speakers as either ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’
- Overall, when asked; ‘How do you rate the event?’, 88% rated the event ‘Very Good’ and ‘Good’.

Other Comments included;
‘Key speeches, high quality presentations and discussion - good context’
‘Bringing together a large group of leading researchers, social actors and decision makers to present the Road Map for Ageing Research to STOA, for that reason I think the most useful part of the event was just such the session in the EP’
‘My congratulations for the organisers of this task in order to join researchers and service providers and politicians involved in ageing’
‘I want to thank and congratulate Prof. Alan Walker for their efforts during all these years to build a solid future for the research on Ageing in Europe.’
An ERA-AGE2 FORUM will be taking place in Vienna on March 1st 2011, kindly hosted by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The overall theme of the FORUM will be based around Ageing and Technology. We look forward to welcoming our project partners and also a wide range of scientists, academics and other interested parties. Please save the date, more information will be available on the website shortly.
The University of Sheffield ERA-AGE 2 Coordination team
Alan Walker – Project Director
Juliet Craig BA – Senior Research Manager
Anouska Kettle – Research Manager
Melissa Nance – Project Secretary
Zoe Nwosu – Finance Administrator
Danielle Page – Events Administrator

Contact details
The University of Sheffield
Department of Sociological Studies
Northumberland Road
Sheffield, S10 2TU, UK
Tel: +44 (0)114 222 6480
Fax: +44 (0)114 222 6492
Email: era-age@sheffield.ac.uk
Web: www.era-age.group.shef.ac.uk

Funded by the European Commission’s Seventh Framework Programme
FP7-ERA-NET-2008-RTD/No 235356