Welcome to the Spring 2012 ERA-AGE Newsletter. In this edition we review the project activities which took place since last autumn, including the third FLARE Summer School which took place Spain in September 2011, the ninth ERA-AGE Forum meeting in Romania in November, an update to the Joint Call on “Active and Healthy Ageing” and information on the latest Associate Member of ERA-AGE.

The Forum in Bucharest, Romania (shown in the photograph above) is the first Forum meeting specifically targeted at the New Member States of the EU, and was dedicated to the development of research capacity in the ageing field. The aim of the meeting was to exchange experiences and discuss and share good practice relating to ageing research and ageing policy from around Europe.
It was co-hosted by ERA-AGE partner, UEFISCDI, the Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education and Research Funding and had four objectives:

1. To engage representatives from the NMS in discussion about ageing research in Europe
2. To introduce participants to the work of ERA-AGE, FUTURAGE and other European initiatives
3. To learn about ageing in the New Member States
4. To share good practice

It was attended by 66 participants from 14 countries, including Albania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Romania.

The Forum was aptly timed, as it reflected one of the key messages of the Road Map for Ageing Research in Europe, The Road Map, which was created by the FUTURAGE project, used inputs generated by ERA-AGE to start its consultation process, and ERA-AGE was also represented at the launch event of the Road Map in October 2011.

In the commentary on development of infrastructure to support the research agenda it contains, the Road Map identifies capacity building as a key issue, with clear priority for the New Member States. The Forum meeting represents another step in the right direction.

FUTURAGE launch

In October 2011 members of ERA-AGE attended the launch of the FUTURAGE Road Map for Ageing Research in Europe. The Road Map was formally launched at a large conference in the European Parliament in Brussels on Tuesday 18th October with over 300 participants. The document was supported by ERA-AGE members from its inception, and they helped to frame the research agenda in two ways:

1. By generating European ageing research priorities during a series of scientific workshops held in 2005 and 2006 during ERA-AGE 1
2. By contributing national consultations to FUTURAGE during 2010/2011, which represented the first round of consultation specifically for the Road Map.

The final Road Map represented two years and eight rounds of consultation and review. ERA-AGE was formally represented at the launch event by Prof Kenneth Abrahamsson, Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research who presented the JCRA call during a section of the programme exploring linkages between the Road Map and other major European initiatives in the field.
The third FLARE Summer School took place in the beautiful and sunny surroundings of San Lorenzo de El Escorial near Madrid in Spain. All attendees gathered for the week in a historic building now home to RCU Marie Cristina. It originally housed the workshops and servants’ residences for the Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

In total 32 post-docs and nine speakers from 14 different countries in Europe and North America gathered on Monday 5th September 2011 for the next three days, comprising FLARE 1 Fellows, FLARE 2 Fellows, FLARE 2 Associate Fellows and post-docs from other countries nominated by members of the European Research Area of Ageing.

The focus of the Summer School was “Navigating career transitions”. The ageing research landscape is changing. Budget cuts and a focus on applied research are changing the nature of research funding, with increased focus on user engagement, impact, and implementation. The Summer School brought together a wide range of post-doctoral researchers, from those immediately post-doc to those almost 10 years post-doc and aimed to share expertise and experience to support the activities and ambitions of early career researchers in ageing.

The programme included a mix of themed and scientific presentations, with discussion groups focused on a wide range of questions. FLARE Fellows were also challenged to contribute to the programme: three of the FLARE 1 cohort each gave summaries of their fellowships, reviewing their research findings and providing advice for the new Fellows on maximising the opportunities of Fellowships, especially in the mobility period and two attendees presented insights on the challenges of a career in ageing research at different career stages—six years post-doc and immediately post-doc.

In addition to the long hot days of speakers and discussion groups the social calendar included a tour of the Monastery of El Escorial, which in 1984 was declared by UNESCO a World Heritage Site. From its situation on the southern slopes of the Sierra de Guadarrama it also afforded a chance to watch the sunset illuminate the towers of Madrid, some 30 miles to the south-east. In addition an after-dinner talk by Prof Maria Angeles Duran (Council for Research of Spain) gave a thought-provoking and beautifully illustrated perspective on “Cultural Views on Ageing” which ranged over diverse issues of historical and current perceptions of death, beauty and expected behaviour norms of ageing populations.

The Summer School was hosted with the generous support of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, MICINN. ERA-AGE 2 would like to thank the MICINN and its staff for their sponsorship and practical support of this event.

The fourth and final Summer School will be held in Galway in Ireland in 2012.
The first ERA-AGE Forum targeted toward the requirements of the New Member States (NMS) took place in Bucharest on 28 November 2011, hosted by UEFISCDI, the Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education and Research Funding. The programme was developed in close collaboration with ERA-AGE partners in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania to ensure activities were of the highest possible value to those attending.

The day opened with a series of presentations from a European perspective. Following discussion groups on good practice in ageing policy, three ERA-AGE partners - France, Luxembourg and Latvia - presented an overview of their strategy to build capacity in ageing research. The second discussion groups reviewed priorities in ageing research for the NMS. Summaries from the presentations and discussion groups are shown on the next few pages.

**European collaboration in ageing research:**

**ERA-AGE 2 and FUTURAGE**

**Alan Walker, University of Sheffield, UK**

Professor Walker reviewed two major European initiatives in ageing research: ERA-AGE, and FUTURAGE A Road Map for Ageing Research. He highlighted the accomplishments of ERA-AGE, including the joint calls, and noted that the FUTURAGE Road Map was launched in October 2011 with the core priority of Active Ageing Across the Life Course.

**Ageing and Ageing Policy in the New Member States**

**Asghar Zaidi, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria**

Dr Zaidi reflected on ensuring adequate pensions and social benefits for all European citizens. The NMS in Central and Eastern Europe face the same challenges of many other European countries: rising numbers of older people who bring both opportunity and also increased age-related expenditure; the economic crisis, followed by jobs and public debt crisis. The situation is compounded by the greater risks of poverty among older people in the NMS. Pension reforms have already occurred in many countries, targeting both sustainability and adequacy of pensions, but a number of policy challenges remain: the full social impact of fiscal policy, especially stimulus/austerity measures, is not fully understood; promotion of active ageing policies in the labour market; and changes to pensions themselves.

**EHLEIS – European Health and Life Expectancy Information System**

**Jean-Marie Robine, INSERM, France**

Dr Robine presented the Joint Action European Health and Life Expectancy Information System (JC EHLEIS) or more simply “Joint Action on Healthy Life Years”. The European Commission has selected Healthy Life Years (HLY) as one of the EU Structural Indicators in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy (2001-2010). HLY aims to assess whether the additional years of life expectancy are lived in good or bad health. EHLEIS is co-funded by DG SANCO and 10 Member States to monitor European initiatives promoting healthy active longevity throughout Europe and to conduct in-depth research on healthy life years.

**Discussion Groups: Sharing Good Practice in Ageing Policy**

**Group 1: Perspectives of older people**

This group examined how best to reflect the perspectives of older people in practice with a particular focus on social care and prevention of acute and continuing conditions. One of the first observations was that there is often fragmentation between health and social care which can make this a very difficult task. The broad expectations of care are strongly affected by traditional views which often vary widely between and within countries (especially between urban and rural areas). Key issues were identified as: the balance between formal and informal care, the latter driven by high costs of formal care or personal preference; the need for services to collaborate with existing organisations delivering within local communities; and encouraging voluntary workers to provide help direct to older people. It was also emphasised that older people’s views should be directly solicited to determine their requirements and services developed in response to this.
Group 2: Inequalities Among Older People

A number of countries represented in this group had undertaken research into inequalities and determined that age-related inequalities are often exacerbated, or sometimes caused, through inequalities in health and social systems. Health services and pensions were common pivots for inequality. Israel was provided as a good example of how this could be tackled; at policy level there are different “categories” of population reflecting differing needs across age groups in urban and rural areas. It was acknowledged that discrimination in the labour market is big issue, although not much information exists on it and it remains under-researched in NMS. Migration, and the impact of it, was identified as a key source of inequality specific to NMS and an issue common to all countries was the role of the media in promoting inequality through their portrayal of older people.

Group 3: Productive Horizontal Collaboration - developing an effective network of ageing researchers

The group began by noting that there is not much identifiable horizontal cooperation in the NMS, but there are active research groups with an increasing level of activity in Framework Programme activities. National policy levers need consideration before the development of, or participation in, horizontal actions; if it is not a priority nationally, there is unlikely to be wide support. A good starting point would be to exploit scientific results from other Framework Programme projects; in support of this it is important to disseminate results at national and European level. Interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity are essential for ageing research and this should be reflected in horizontal collaborations. There was also support for a virtual European Institute of Ageing, as a number of locations do not have a national centre.

Building Capacity in Ageing Research

Latvia: Latvian Council of Science - Uldis Berkis

The Latvian Science Council (LSC) is the governmental institution under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Science which deals with science and research within the country as well as international cooperation issues. The mission of the LSC is enabling research in the basic and applied sciences, especially in interdisciplinary research; consulting the Government on research policy issues and active participation in establishing Latvian science policy; care about publishing of scientific literature and promotion of international contacts of Latvian scientists. LSC is the main expert and financing organization for science and research providing evaluation and funding the basic and applied research projects. Research is focused around 5 expert commissions: Natural sciences and mathematics; Engineering and computer sciences; biology and medicine; agriculture, environment, earth sciences and forestry; humanities and social sciences.

CNAV, France – Michel Tuchman

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’. DRV is one of the very few research teams dedicated only to research on ageing. The current DRV budget - €355,000 in 2003 - covers additional expenses for studies and survey programmes. Some of these programmes initiated and launched by the DRV are developed in cooperation with other public and private institutions and CNAV co-operates with other French or international researchers or research teams and sometimes funds research carried on by other teams. Publishing and organising scientific meetings on the ongoing research, are part of the DRV research activities, including Retraite et Société (Retirement and Society) the only specialised, interdisciplinary and scientific journal devoted to retirement and ageing.

FNR, Luxembourg – Norman Fisch

The 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. The FNR finances research activities in public institutions. One of the basic activities of the FNR consists in the planning and implementation of
multi-annual research programmes in Luxembourg. Concerning ageing research, the FNR has no exclusive funding instrument, but its general schemes are open to research on ageing: one is the multiannual CORE programme (its strands on social sciences and biomedical as well as health research) and the other is the AFR PhD and postdoc grant scheme open to early stage researchers without thematic limitations. Under the AFR scheme, there are two annual calls for each PhD and postdoc grants, one in spring and one in autumn. The annual budget for all calls is around 20 million EUR, of which approx. two thirds are allocated to PhD and one third to postdoc proposals.

Discussion Groups: Priorities for Ageing Research in the New Member States

**Group 4: Are new social gerontological theories needed for NMS**
To consider this question the group considered two key issues affecting the older population in the EU: retirement policy and migration. On retirement it was noted that there are wide differences in both healthy life expectancy (HLE) and life expectancy. If you benefit from long HLE then you can work longer, or have an active life as a retired person but in countries with a low life expectancy (for example in Lithuania it is 67), it is quite difficult to work longer. Migration patterns are often determined by age and vary between countries – wealthier people may retire to sunny Mediterranean climes while younger people in NMS seek work in the north and west - with consequences accruing differently to various age groups too. The economic crisis has exacerbated this and the consequent impact on social welfare. It is clear there is no homogenousness and the NMS are not like the other MS. However the group concluded that specific social gerontological theories for different groups of MS were not needed; the needs and goal are the same but the means and path are different.

**Group 5: Determining cost effectiveness: cost calculation models in community and stationery services**
The aim of this group was to consider the development of a model/method to estimate the community and stationary costs of self-governmental services for older people (caring, inclusive), taking into account also non-economic considerations. The primary responsibility for providing the broad care services for older people with limited autonomy belongs to local governments and local municipalities. It increasingly must involve public authorities in the process of providing services to the older people who are unable to meet their own needs. Therefore, governments should develop tools for estimating the performance and cost of various services, providing enough information for a fully informed choice to be made. In Poland for example, it is currently considered that in terms of economic, organisational and social services community services are a favourable choice (rather than stationary services). However developing local models of cost and comparison requires investment into: quantitative research on standards (among recipients, their families and service funders, commissioners); analysis of recent trends and developments; a multidisciplinary review panel (demographers, economists, geriatricians, gerontologists, psychologists, sociologists, lawyers).

**Group 6: New approaches for active ageing in the NMS; how does this differ from other member states?**
Group participants came from different corners of the EU, and initially examined active ageing at the community level in their countries. It was not easy to identify examples, but those they did pinpoint were characterised by localisation – all were headed by community groups or local governments. It was clear there is no comprehensive approach to active ageing initiatives and the group concluded that existing efforts are out of sync; the research community learn about wellbeing but the information and knowledge is not going far enough, and not effectively reaching governments or communities. The major task is to come up with an idea to make grassroots efforts more vital and targeted at very specific needs and communities (eg such as to treat Parkinsons’ Disease). Some efforts have been made in other parts of the EU, these approaches have not reached the NMS and there is still a lot of work to do to build on existing successful models.
Europe’s first programme in ageing research funded by the Member States themselves opened for application on 1 June 2011. Consortia of researchers from at least three countries were invited to submit a multi-disciplinary application in support of the aims of the call, which is aligned with the European Innovation Partnership pilot in Active and Healthy Ageing.

A total of 35 pre-proposals were received to Stage One and were subject to peer-review over November-December 2011. From this process 12 applications were invited to submit a full proposal during Stage 2 of the process.

The Stage 2 peer-review will take place during May-June 2012 with final funding agency decisions expected over summer 2012.

A total of €4.2 million has been committed to the call by 12 funders in nine countries: Canada, Finland, France, Sweden, Israel, Luxembourg, Latvia, Romania and UK.
Extended partner profiles

The expansion of ERA-AGE 2 also includes two Associate Partners from North America, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research - Institute of Aging (CIHR-IA, Canada) and the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS, Quebec, Canada). Both partners are subject to an expanded profile on these pages.

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 M (CAD) funds research on aging.

The fundamental goal of the Institute of Aging (IA) is the advancement of knowledge in the field of aging to improve the quality of life and health of older Canadians by understanding and addressing or preventing the consequences of a wide range of factors associated with aging.

The Institute has identified five priority areas for health research on aging including: healthy and successful aging; biological mechanisms of aging; cognitive impairment in aging; aging and the maintenance of functional autonomy; and health services relating to older people.

Current strategic initiatives and priorities include:

- Cognitive Impairment in Aging;
- Mobility in Aging;
- The Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA).

CIHR-IA provides funding support for researchers through operating grants, pilot projects, meeting-planning and dissemination grants, travel awards, a Summer Program in Aging for students, annual awards for trainees and new investigators, and investments in international partnership research projects on aging including China, Japan, France and the UK- the latter through partnership with the New Dynamics of Ageing program.

CIHR-IA has made substantial investments in innovative, multidisciplinary programs of research through its Teams in Aging grants, support to emerging scholars, and awards to recognize Canada’s brightest rising stars in aging research.

The Institute’s activities in public engagement include five Regional Seniors’ Workshops on Research (RSWR) held across Canada with a new Café Scientifique knowledge translation program offered by CIHR-IA and being launched in 2010. This program will be planned and organized by seniors’ organizations and community groups.

In its short history, the Institute of Aging has become a national leader in addressing health research priorities related to aging and elderly persons in Canada. IA initiatives not only link and support researchers located in universities and hospitals across the country, but also bring together different levels of government, practitioners, voluntary health organizations and seniors themselves.

For more information:
http://www.cihr.ca/e/8671.html
The FRQS (Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé) is the funding agency for health research in the Province of Québec. Established in 1964, the FRQS was the first provincial health research agency created in Canada. More than forty years later, the FRQS continues to play a leading role in planning and coordinating the development of health research in Québec and collaborates on a regular basis with other funding agencies in Canada and abroad.

The FRQS allocates nearly CAN $90 million (56 million EUR) annually in awards and grants for public-sector research into human health carried out today in universities and hospital-based research centres.

Aging is one of the four priority areas identified in FRQS’s Strategic Plan for 2007-2010 and is an important cross cutting thematic area in many FRQS research centres and groups.

In particular, the FRQS supports three major infrastructures related to research in aging. FRQS supports one Network on Aging, the Québec Network for Research on Aging as well as and two Research Centres; The Research Centre of the Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Montréal (CRIUGM) and The Research Centre on Aging (CDRV) of the Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Sherbrooke. These three large infrastructures are entirely dedicated to research on aging.

- The Quebec Network for Research on Aging’s mission is to support interdisciplinary research on aging and to promote the maintenance of a critical mass of researchers, help increase overall research capacity, and stimulate the creation of research partnerships in this field. The Network currently has over 208 members, 81 of whom are graduate students or postdoctoral fellows. All student members are affiliated with Quebec’s various universities and the FRQS’s various research centres and institutes. The Network’s members are grouped into eight research sections according to their primary and secondary research interests: Cognition, Seniors’ Mental Health, Nutrition and Successful Aging, Urinary Incontinence, Geriatric Rehabilitation, Long-Term Care, Family and Professional Caregivers, and Health Care and Services.

(http://www.rqrv.com/en/)

- The Research Centre of the Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Montréal (CRIUGM)’s mission is twofold; to identify the factors encouraging healthy aging so as to increase healthy life expectancy; and to find solutions for coping effectively (in all respects) with the diseases and conditions that limit quality of life for the elderly and their involvement in social life.

(http://www.criugm.qc.ca/a_index.html )

- The Research Centre on Aging (CDRV) of the Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Sherbrooke’s mission is to train future care providers, researchers and clinical researchers in the field of aging.

(http://www.csss-iugs.ca/cdrv/?L=en)

In addition to these three major research infrastructures, three other FRQS Research Centers; The Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research of the Sir Mortimer B Davis-Jewish General Hospital, The Douglas Mental Health University Institute Research Centre and the Research Centre of the Centre hospitalier affilié universitaire de Québec (CHA) all have specific research axes related to aging.

Quebec is a renowned international leader in Research in Aging. FRQS, through the support it provides to research in this area, encourages collaboration between researchers at a local level, nationally as well as internationally. The FRQS is proud to be a member of ERA AGE.

For more information:
The Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI) is a not-for-profit organisation developed by leaders from the ageing field across Ireland (north and south). CARDI focuses on promoting research cooperation across sectors and disciplines and influencing the direction of research on ageing and older people.

CARDI’s mission is to advocate for and advance the ageing research agenda by identifying, coordinating, stimulating, and communicating strategic research on ageing and older people as a means to improve the lives of older people in Ireland especially those who are most disadvantaged.

CARDI’s approach focuses on:

- Identifying and establishing ageing research priorities relevant to policy and practice
- Promoting collaboration and cooperation to build an ageing research community
- Stimulating research in priority areas to inform policy and practice
- Communicating strategic research to raise the profile of ageing research

An integral part of CARDI’s work is our ageing research grants programme which aims to stimulate interdisciplinary research on ageing issues across the island of Ireland. CARDI’s grants programme provides funding to north-south research partnerships and encourages studies that bring together different disciplines and sectors across the island of Ireland in ways that can help improve the lives of older people and help plan for changing demographics and environments.

CARDI has to date awarded funding to 25 research projects and networks through its grants programme. These projects cover a wide spectrum of research, reflecting the huge range of issues relevant to the ageing research agenda. They bring together researchers from many disciplines including medicine, gerontology, economics, psychology, physics, geography and sociology to work together in a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary manner.

The projects, funded by CARDI, deal with a wide range of issues of concern to older people and policy makers including: income inequalities, access to pensions, dementia care, malnutrition, fuel poverty, elder abuse, transport and environment, inappropriate prescribing and medical treatment, social exclusion and planning for the costs of long-term care.

More information: CARDI’s website [www.cardi.ie](http://www.cardi.ie) provides access to all funded project reports as well as an extensive library of research on ageing and policy publications, research contacts, the latest news, funding and events relating to research on ageing and older people.
ERA-AGE 2 Network Steering Committee

The Austrian Academy of Science
Christina Bonora
Austria

Bulgarian Academy of Science
Bojimir Davidov
Bulgaria

Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Ageing
Yves Joanette
Michelle Peel
Canada

Fonds de recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS), Canada
Anne-Cécile Desfaits
Québec, Canada

Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs/The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Lucie Vidovičová
Czech Republic

The Academy of Finland
Mikael Fogelholm
Anu Nuutinen
Finland

University of Tampere
Marja Jylha (Chair)
Finland

Caisse Nationale d’Assurance Vieillesse
Alain Rozenkier
Michel Tuchman
France

Projekträger des BMBF im DLR (Observer)
Wolfgang Ballensiefen
Germany

Saxon State Ministry of Social Affairs
Volker Kohn
Saxony, Germany

Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI)
Roger O’Sullivan
Ireland

Israeli Ministry of Health
Benny Leshem
Irit Allon
Israel

Istituto Superiore Di Sanita
Claudia Gandin
Emanuele Scafato
Italy

Latvijas Zinatnes Padome
Uldis Berkis
Iveta Ozolanta
Latvia

Mykolas Romeris University
Sarmite Mikulioniene
Vida Kanopiene
Lithuania

Fonds National De La Recherche
Susanne Rick
Luxembourg

Ministry of Health
Mihail Coculescu
Gabriel Prada
Romania

UEFISCDI
Aurelia Curaj
Romania

Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad
Aníbal González
Spain

The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research
Kenneth Abrahamsson
Kerstin Carsjo
Sweden

University of Sheffield (Coordinator)
Alan Walker
U.K.
The University of Sheffield ERA-AGE Coordination Team

Alan Walker
Project Director

Juliet Craig
Senior Research Manager

Contact details:
The University of Sheffield
Department of Sociological Studies
Northumberland Road
Sheffield, S10 2TU, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 114 222 6458
Fax: +44 (0) 114 276 8125
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