



FUTURE LEADERS OF AGEING RESEARCH IN EUROPE



FLARE SUMMER SCHOOL 2010

27-30 SEPTEMBER 2010

VARNA, BULGARIA

Summer School report

on's



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Background and purpose

Following on from the first Summer School and the recent launch of FLARE 2, the second FLARE Summer School was held to reunite the original FLARE Fellows and to provide an event where current FLARE Fellows, potential FLARE Fellows and early career researchers could get together and network. The aims were also to strengthen the network and community feeling among the post docs, to share their work and to extend the Summer School network in order to promote multidisciplinary interests and to focus on career planning and development.

The Summer School was organised and funded jointly by ERA-AGE2 and the Institute of Population and Human Research - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The Bulgarian planning group consisted of Bojimir Davidov and Genoveva Mihova, who worked closely with the ERA-AGE Coordination Team to deliver a successful Summer School. It was held between Monday September 27th and Thursday 30th, 2010 and the venue was the Hotel Romance, on the east coast of the Black sea in the St. Constantine and Helena resort, 8 km from Varna, Bulgaria.



1: Hotel Romance, home of Summer School attendees for three days

The number of course participants was 33 comprising a wide mix of nationalities and research interests. All participants were active in the area of ageing research and had interest and/or experience in multi/cross-disciplinary research. Leading European experts were invited, covering fields such as demography, social gerontology and multidisciplinary research. Attention was also paid to career planning and European research funding strategies.

Getting together and starting up

By Monday evening all participants had safely arrived, although not without the usual problems of delayed flights. A lucky few arrived in the preceding days and were able to enjoy some lovely Black coast sunshine and paddling in the sea and the surprise of the somewhat colder hotel pool!

One of our Bulgarian hosts, Professor Genoveva Mihova, kindly invited the Coordination team to her house for a traditional dinner on the Monday evening. We were lucky with the weather and spent a thoroughly enjoyable evening outside, overlooking our hosts' wonderful garden, being treated to a veritable feast of Bulgarian specialities. Professor Alan Walker managed to join us straight from the

airport due to a delayed flight, but I have no doubt that the Bulgarian brandy, *Rakia*, as produced by our lovely hosts themselves refreshed and restored his spirits!

Tuesday morning again dawned fair. A good day for the television crews to be out in force! A small army of journalists and camera teams managed to get some excellent footage and interviews before the commencement of the Summer School. These interviews were disseminated via television and in the newspapers over the following days.

After an initial welcome from our host and Chair Professor Bojimir Davidov, (whose promise of good weather seemed to have been fulfilled) we were then fortunate



2: Prof Walker being interviewed by Bulgarian journalists

enough to have a brief address from the Deputy Mayor of Varna, Christo Bozov. Professor Alan Walker then officially opened the Summer School with an overview of the aims of the event including: 'continuation of capacity building of research in ageing', 'providing a networking opportunity and learning experience for early career researchers' and 'gaining an increased understanding of the issues surrounding ageing in Bulgaria'.

Professor Genoveva Mihova then concluded the opening of the Summer School and gave the floor back to Professor Alan Walker for the first key note lecture of the event.

The structure

The Summer School comprised several Keynotes, Lectures and Discussion group sessions.

The Keynotes and lectures for discussion were based around the future of ageing research, European research priorities, ageing in Bulgaria and the challenges facing the New Member States, Eastern European researchers and east/west collaboration generally.

Part of the programme also catered for the important capacity building aspect of the Summer School and included talks on 'Doing Multi-Disciplinary Research' and 'Coordinating European Research Projects', the latter proving particularly popular - understandable in today's economic climate!

The attendees were assigned between two discussion groups. Everybody had the pleasure of listening to the Keynotes and Lectures and then the two groups would break out and discuss what they had heard.

The groups had three overarching themes within which their discussions were located:

- What should be the main thematic focus of a European research programme on ageing?
- What are the 3 key scientific topics for such a programme?
- What infrastructure is needed to mount such a programme?

They were also given a sub theme: “The dream: what would be the ideal scenario for European Researchers and how to make it happen?”

The researchers and their work

All participants had provided written biographies, CVs, a poster and they all gave a twenty minute presentation of their research projects after lunch on the first day. These were done concurrently in the discussion groups in order to allow enough time for all the presentations.

A distinct, but informal division between the bio-scientists and the social scientists manifested itself, a theme that would reoccur throughout the Summer School, but relations and presentations were good. We heard everything from ‘demographic trends in Bulgaria’ to ‘inflammatory cytokines’. As was hoped there was much discussion on all the presentations. The attendees swapped ideas and thoughts on topics outside of their usual areas of expertise and were encouraged to find ways of collaborating, or barriers to, that they could explore. This was part of the ongoing basis of the Summer School, to find ways in which early career researchers can collaborate and network despite initial reservations due to a perceived lack of commonality in the areas of their research.

Day One

Keynote lectures, thematic lectures, group work and continuous discussions

Keynote: Professor Alan Walker “The Future of Ageing Research”

Professor Alan Walker gave the opening Keynote address entitled: “The Future of Ageing Research”. He reflected on the history of ageing research in Europe and its future over the coming years. At the outset of ageing research he discussed that there was very little coherent heritage and no plan or ‘organised longevity’ for the discipline. In reflecting on what is needed for the future one of the clear aims must be to remedy this situation and to bring together Early Career Researchers and the many different disciplines that are involved in ageing research in order to form a structured approach to ageing research in the long term. The salient points in working towards this he highlighted as follows:

- The Emergence of European Coordination
- Towards a European Research Area
- The European Research Road Map
- A New European Research Programme?

It was in the context of these broader points that Prof Walker asked the discussion groups to frame their thoughts, specifically with reference to the themes as mentioned above. It was highlighted that the Early Career Researchers present at the Summer School had a real opportunity to contribute to the future of ageing research. This was the ‘Europeanisation of Research’ in action!

Discussion groups on “European Research Priorities”

The discussion sessions that followed this Keynote were the first of the Summer School and after a brief round of introductions people were “not backwards in coming forwards” (if you will pardon the English idiom) and proffering their opinions. With such a vast topic and so little time there was much ground to cover. Ideas towards the thematic focus, in both groups were defined early in the discussion, albeit loosely as ‘Healthy ageing’ or ‘A Life Course Perspective’. Interestingly both groups wanted to introduce new definitions that were more accurate and less negative in connotation. “*Why must ageing be bad? Don’t you remember the first time you were old enough to eat a whole packet of biscuits and no one could tell you off?!*” to paraphrase one participant “*Ageing is great!*”. The three key scientific topics were harder to pin down and ideas included: transition and the reciprocal relationships between the young and the aged, how to reach the younger population to raise awareness of the importance of recognising and preparing for ageing, participating

young. Implementation followed on naturally from the discussion of different ages participating in different ways – who could possibly have predicted such an incredible – and fast - technological revolution: how to future proof? How to make technological advancement practicable and practical through the different ages? What good is advancement without end user testing, or even *future* end user testing? For this a cry was raised for more longitudinal studies and of course more centralised resources across Europe and funding, funding, funding.

The Infrastructure sub theme was particularly interesting in these discussion groups because of the East/West perspective of the different participants present.

A large stumbling block in collaborative, multinational, multi disciplinary research was the lack of harmonised data sets, access and inequality of resources. Whatever infrastructure was implemented would require standardised tools and methodologies for researchers and scientists to be able to utilise 'off the shelf'.

Such a shelf could possibly be found in a "European Institute of Gerontology". A physical institute would have gravitas and would give the various disciplines in ageing research an umbrella organisation. It could be the hub from which national institutes and organisations originated thereby creating more jobs, embedding the discipline nationally and at a senior European level could be the umbrella organisation for researchers and scientists alike. Much was made of the fact that gerontology is still such a young discipline (the irony!) that degrees, post docs and other qualifications specifically entitled 'gerontology' are still undervalued and met with mystification too much of the time. Standardised awards from a European institute would go far in remedying this and facilitating knowledge transfer outside Europe.

Thematic Lecture: Professor Catherine Hennessy "Doing Multidisciplinary Research"

The afternoon lecture of the first day was given over to a more didactic lecture. With multidisciplinary research becoming such a cornerstone of collaborative research it is essential that its terms are clearly defined. Professor Hennessy elucidated the characteristics of multidisciplinary research and how to avoid the pitfalls and maximise success.

One of the main stumbling blocks, she said, is the terminology. There exist many types of 'disciplinary' research e.g. multi, inter, trans, pluri etc. It must be made quite clear which of these you ought to undertake in order to maximise your project or your research and not only which is the most appropriate for you, but also for your collaborative partners and for the topic.

Catherine outlined the advantages and disadvantages of this type of research. One of the main advantages is the 'reach' of the outputs. Although studies have shown

that multidisciplinary groups do not have significantly more publications and outputs, they do have greater reach and they are received by a wider audience. This gives multidisciplinary teams a better profile and a stronger competitive edge in the market place.

Some disadvantages mentioned were the political barriers, particularly in university departments. It is time consuming to conceive and bring a multidisciplinary collaboration to life. Some university departments also assess via discipline related publications and therefore this type of research is sometimes perceived as being disadvantageous and potentially inferior to 'mono'disciplinary (scientific) research. This was nicely summed up by a particular slide in the presentation, entitled "The Perils and Pleasures of Multidisciplinary Research".

Discussion groups on "Doing Multidisciplinary Research"

The discussion groups on this particular topic were very much a case in point of the perils of researchers from different disciplines in the same room! There was a divide between the perception of multidisciplinary research to scientists and to social scientists. This was largely soothed by the unanimous agreement that the barriers to successfully carrying out this type of research were usually very close to home and in the form of institutional rigidity rather than for example a lack of funding or opportunity. However in the actual *act* of research there were further barriers that were identified and possible solutions to the problems. With the different possible interpretations of multidisciplinary research a barrier was identified to the compatibility of methodologies and approaches. It was suggested that standardised methodological tools could be implemented so that disciplines could start from the same point in the hope that this would break down incompatible or non-transferable research (both across disciplines but also across Europe generally). A 'common language' was needed that could cross disciplines. Currently it was perceived that there exists reluctance on the part of social scientists to understand pure scientific language and methodology a common language would solve this without any issues of stigma (especially if endorsed by the previously mentioned Institute of Gerontology).

A particular sore point for those present who had undertaken multidisciplinary research was that in many cases the project they were working on called for multidisciplinary research but then did not provide the infrastructure to support it. Expectations were not managed correctly and roles had not been defined properly, this seemed to be a common problem. One of the participants, a bioscientist, was working on a multidisciplinary project but had had to learn enough of the other disciplines herself in order to see the project through as there was not enough resource to bring in other scientists. A multidisciplinary project but consisting of only one person! This is perhaps not the most tempting of positions to be in. It was agreed that multidisciplinary research in general needs to be better supported and

must have either appropriate financial inducement or prestige as a lead motivating factor.

Following this discussion group there was a poster session and informal networking session. All the participants had produced an A1 size poster and they were displayed in the main meeting room. The posters were of superb quality and were discussed at



3: Posters from attending post-docs (later to go on tour in Bulgaria)

length in the networking session (which largely took place in the Black Sea!).

In the evening there was a welcome dinner in the *Enoteca* at the hotel: an underground traditional wine cellar.

Day Two

The following day was oriented towards the Bulgarian perspective and the practical difficulties of coordinating European research and collaborating East to West and vice versa. There was a series of lectures until lunch and then an afternoon discussion group session. The day was opened by Professor Penka Naidenova with her Keynote lecture: “Ageing in Bulgaria”.

Keynote lecture: Professor Penka Naidenova: “Ageing in Bulgaria”.

In her Keynote, Professor Naidenova gave an insightful overview of Bulgaria as a country and the demographic challenges it has faced in the past, under different rule, and continues to face in the future. It is a country that has gone through enormous demographic change transitioning from a population that used to be 80% rural to one that is now 70% urban. For the last 20 years the population has experienced a negative natural increment and is steadily decreasing. However as research has shown there tends to be a trend towards population increase in times of economic crisis, which produce a difficult challenge when trying to meet the social and economic needs of an ageing population.

The demographic balance between the urban and rural population is clearly unequal. Evidence of ageing is faster and stronger in the rural areas and as the young urban migrate the more rural villages die out all together, leaving the old isolated in the

countryside and giving the cities a young population. She also illustrated that despite this trend the fertility rate is still stronger in rural areas, possibly leading to a natural assumption that once the young are of an age they migrate to the city for work and prospects, and experience a delay and lower fertility rate as they concentrate on their careers.

Professor Naidenova explained that Bulgaria is not only one of the oldest countries, a country with the oldest old, but also that the government have very limited resources with which to address the situation. In order to ensure wellbeing and quality of life there needs to be sustained support from resources and infrastructure and this must lead to practical implementation. This is the major challenge facing Bulgaria and in the current economic crisis and with a relatively young market economy there is a risk of creating ambivalent and uncertain policy to take Bulgaria into the future.

Lecture: Professor Elka Todorova “Challenges facing the Eastern European Researchers and the NMS and Bulgarian Future Ageing Research Priorities”.

Professor Elka Todorova introduced her lecture by promising to discuss the following topics: challenges to the states, challenges to research, priorities to state policy, and research priorities.

Her proposal was that the main challenge facing the Bulgarian state and the New Member States generally was one of demographic transition. Bulgaria has one of the highest rates of depopulation - this on its own is a major challenge - but it also has a domino effect on other, already existing, areas of challenge, for example how to cope with the speed of change in the labour force. The unemployment rate at age 55+ is particularly high in Bulgaria, second only to Romania. This, combined with issues of public spending particularly with regards to retirement age, means that the underlying causes must be addressed in order to both improve quality of life but also to ease the burden on the state. One of the primary areas with which this could be addressed is via better education for example:

- Need to restore and improve enrollment rates
- Need to invest in lifelong practices to better meet needs of dynamic and flexible economies
- Need to transform education financing

Addressing such issues is inhibited by a clear lack of direction and impetus.

Professor Todorova suggested that the current state of the art fell into the following areas:

- Only interest in demographic data, but no policy implications
- No multidisciplinary interest

- Low sensitivity to ageism
- Arrogant economic and monetary approach to human capital, especially to pensioners and old aged.

Clearly there is a need for demographic study and for clear research objectives and priorities to address these problems, both within Bulgaria and further afield.

Lecture and interactive discussion: Gill Wells “Co-ordinating European Research Projects”.

Originally this session was scheduled to be a brief presentation followed by discussion groups, however the presentation evolved and proved to be more useful as a interactive session, with questions, answers and further discussion flowing naturally from the presentation.

Gill Wells, the UK’s Senior EU Consultant for PNO, began the session with an overview of the different ways a person can come to coordinate a European project. This included the most desirable end goal of being an independent project partner of sufficient quality that you are very much in demand. It also included the lesser known ‘participation by stealth’, perhaps a favourite methodology among early career researchers. This method involves participating by supporting others through activities such as co-writing. However it is a valid and traditional way with which to build a profile and to begin the route to an eventual project coordination role (which provides the greatest influence over a project).

This was then followed up by an overview of FP7 itself and how it is adapted and utilised to cover all areas of currently desirable research. Various types of funding were also explained, for example Marie Curie fellowships and other grants. The primary areas of discussion were generated by the slide below (illustration 4).

The general thrust of the questions focused on:

- What are the best ways to find a route into funding?
- Which areas should be targeted?
- How to find a partner of quality?
- How to form a consortium?

It was clear that although there is a wealth of information available on the European Commission’s website and generally on the web, there was something stopping this information being effectively disseminated to early career researchers. This is something that as part of the network of early career researchers that the Summer Schools programme is trying to promote could be addressed both in a future school and also by the network themselves disseminating the information more effectively to their peers – at an early stage so as to avoid competition and to promote collaboration!

FP7 Programme	Research areas Types of activity	Key points
Co-operation	Aims to build research collaborations across Europe & beyond - Top-down, priority driven research in 10 themes - Research, training, technology transfer, dissemination, SMEs projects, networks...	Consortium – 3 partners 3 countries minimum. 3-5 year projects
Capacities	Aims to build research capacity - Some top-down, some bottom up - Research Infrastructures, Research for the Benefit of SMEs, Regions of Knowledge, Research Potential, Science in Society, Development of Policies, International Co-operation	Normally requires collaboration with other countries
Marie Curie Actions (People)	Aims to support training, careers development and knowledge transfer - Bottom-up - Individual Fellowships & Reintegration Grants - Initial Training Networks - Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways - International Research Staff Exchange Scheme...	Requirement to move countries for individual fellowships - Other projects types normally require consortiums across countries (3 from 3)
European Research Council (Ideas)	Aims to support the best researchers and best research ideas in Europe - Bottom-up, frontier research - PI leads an independent research team - Starting and Advanced Grants - Support Actions	No requirement for collaboration with other countries 5 year projects Portable grant – funding follows researcher
Euratom	Aims to support nuclear research - Some top-down, some bottom up - Nuclear research (fission, fusion, uses of radiation..) - Research, training, technology transfer, dissemination...	- Nuclear research is not eligible for the other FP7 Programmes and is only funded through Euratom

4: A summary of FP7 funding sources – a key point of interest for attendees

Discussion groups on “East/West Collaboration”

The Wednesday afternoon session was devoted to discussion groups on ‘East/West collaboration’ and were chaired by Bojimir Davidov and Elitsa Dimitrova, both of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

One of the key questions raised was “Are there barriers between East/West collaboration”?

Of course many answers, from both perspectives, were given, ranging from practical issues of access and language to the more difficult issues or prejudice, wrongly placed arrogance in behalf of the West and the sometimes perceived inferiority of research in the East. This in itself was postulated as Western ignorance. However without the influence and input of Western money the research scene in the East would possibly still be extremely disjointed. The ways in which the East/West can work together were discussed and possible solutions to the above problems were explored.

Participation in European projects from an Eastern point of view is often hampered by a simple lack of resources. However this was rebutted as - in theory – all research



5: Discussion groups enjoying the sunshine

projects costs, as funded by the Commission, should be budgeted for in the original grant application. A more intangible barrier, but one perhaps more relevant was an information barrier. It is widely acknowledged in Western European research that there is lack of information as to where the excellence lies in Eastern research, and understanding of which countries hold credentials in which fields. Sources of this

information are limited as most publications are published in the native language of the country rather than in any accessible European wide lingua franca. This is not limited to Eastern Europe, problems also exist in Western Europe, however it appears to hinder collaboration to a much lesser degree, due (conceivably) to a more cognisant and well established working relationship and therefore better knowledge of expertise and 'comfort'. A significant stumbling block was identified in trying to remedy this situating in that the East, generally being poorer, had less purchasing power for papers, books, studies etc thus limiting the information flow into the East and further alienating them from the state of the art of research.

An alternative - and rather controversial - view was put forward that there are no barriers to collaboration and Eastern Europe is unfairly perceived as difficult to gain access to and to work with. Several examples of successful cross-national working were used to support this point. It was noted there are challenges in working across the whole of Europe, and different patterns of experience, expertise, interest, national culture and research funding structure should be expected and are simply part of the nature of European research; the interests and specialisms of ageing researchers in Finland will be vastly different to those in Italy.

There is, specifically in Bulgaria, a lack of a nationally approved scientific programme for supporting research via a national Scientific Board.

It was generally agreed that without Western money and collaboration, Eastern research would remain disjointed and researchers would have limited networking opportunities nationally and little leverage with policy makers.

Evening tour of Euxinograd Residence and Dinner at Tunela.

Euxinograd (also translated as Evksinograd or Euxinograde) is a former late 19th-century Bulgarian royal summer palace and park on the Black Sea coast, 8 kilometres (5.0 miles) north of central Varna. It is currently a governmental and presidential retreat hosting cabinet meetings in the summer and offering access for tourists to several villas and hotels. Since 2007, it is also the venue of the Operosa annual opera festival.

After a tour of the gardens and the palace we were treated to a feast at the restaurant Tunela situated in the grounds, and were thankfully fully sheltered from the rather impromptu thunderstorm. The thunderstorm put rather a dampener on the 'Panoramic Bus Tour - Varna By Night', although our tour guide did her best to convince us that Varna by night looked just as beautiful in the rain anyway. We definitely all believed her.

Day Three

Thursday morning dawned fair again and we were treated to our final keynote by Dr Thomas Flatt.

Keynote lecture: Dr Thomas Flatt - "Why We Age"

Dr Flatt is an expert in the genetic and physiological mechanisms underlying the evolution of life history traits, with a particular emphasis on aging and gave us a very insightful presentation on his thoughts thereof.

He proposed that the removal of extrinsic factors such as disease and unhygienic living conditions explains an increase over years in longevity, rather than genetic factors. Why would an organism be genetically programmed to age? Why would evolution favour what is the effective decline that is ageing?

A life span has both extrinsic and intrinsic mortality, however ageing has intrinsic mortality only in that it is a degeneration of function. And what are the risks that increase this ageing process? Or vice versa? For example fecundity decreases with age, but reproduction is also 'expensive' in ageing terms, reducing life span.

There are mechanistic explanations for ageing: DNA damage, cellular damage and decline, physiological processes. However the evolutionary processes of why we age are less clear. Why is there a variance in ageing, in the rate of ageing?

Dr Flatt then went on to discuss genetics more specifically.

Life span can evolve for genetic reason and can be enriched by selective breeding of the longest lived. Therefore ageing has a genetic basis and is in fact subject to individual genetic variation. He posed the questions "How can natural selection lead to deleterious maladaptive date of ageing? How would that be good for reproductive

success?” The answer to this, he postulated, was that the force of natural selection declines with age. The natural world is dangerous and few organisms survive until old age at which point they die anyway, regardless of the state of their health. However the effects of our environment are directly linked to ageing, notwithstanding genetic modification.

Dr Flatt concluded by saying that we have in fact evolved to age as a product of our environment and our rate of ageing is subject to the environments that have gone before us: the lower the risk environment the lower the intrinsic mortality rate.

Feedback from discussion groups

In the penultimate session, chaired by Bojimir Davidov of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, we heard feedback from the discussion groups from the Summer School.

Discussion groups were asked to prepare presentations addressing a set of challenges related to a European research programme for ageing research. They were asked to answer provide their answers around the following structure:

- One main research theme
- 3 key sub topics
- The infrastructure required to deliver this
- The best and worst case outcome scenario

Presentation from Discussion group 1

Following one of the questions in a previous discussion group: “Are older people a waste product of society?” a discussion was generated about the image and perception people may have of themselves and the perceived image that may be held against them. This led to recognition of the need to research ageing with a life course perspective and to include research on image and, most importantly how to implement the research.

Scientific topics:

- Investing more wisely for cost effective prevention, treatment, care and wiser research
- Harmonisation of data
- Communication (facilitated by harmonization of data and definitions)
- How to engage the elderly, the silent majority.

Infrastructure needed:

- Cross disciplinary Journal and an Institute for Gerontology.

- This would provide a common platform for coordination across fields and nations. Group 1 and 2 agreed unanimously that such an institute would bring access to education and a structured career path through a research in ageing career, research funding and a centralized knowledge bank, with possibilities for mentorship, networking, exchange and cross national integration.
- Group 1 also hypothesised that it could be funded by the savings made from wiser investment in research and interventions in the first place as mentioned earlier.

Presentation from Discussion group 2

Discussion group 2 had very quickly, during their first meeting, identified their main theme for European ageing research as active ageing and participation, to ensure older people fully participate in society. This broad theme was broken down further into:

- Differences and similarities between countries: social economic status and barriers
- Active Ageing: Enabling people in ageing ability and choice. Engaging in the ageing process
- Future Population of old people, but also transitional groups and transition problems.

Three key sub themes:

1. Workforce related problems:
 - Attractive not to work – ‘Push’ factor
 - Productive process for engagement in society is labour
 - Therefore research not only needs to address life course ageing, but also work course ageing. There is a need to examine long term enablement in the work place. There is also a need for information in order to be able to make an informed choice but also to be able to then realise that choice.
2. Key transition points
 - The group suggested that this should be divided into topics and groups or subthemes and groups e.g. the disabled, disease, pregnancy and parenthood.
 - There also needed to be research undertaken in a national context e.g. economy and state in order to facilitate maximum health through any and all transition points.
3. Intervention

- Again these were grouped together under large banner titles, all with the need to be investigated e.g: health promotion s, education , technology access, the evaluation of public interventions and measures.

Infrastructure needed:

Group 2 concluded that there was a need for a permanent platform for long term research. Whether this platform was real or virtual was not a conclusion they came to, but it most definitely ought to be mobile. Perhaps a real centre, but with virtual or national hubs, with funding to provide sustainability over 15 years. Perhaps this could be undertaken under an ELSA: A European Large Scale Action. The result of this would be access to education and a structured career path through a research in ageing career, research funding and a centralized knowledge bank, with possibilities for mentorship, networking, exchange and cross national integration.

Summing up the FLARE 2 Summer School - Concluding remarks

Bojimir Davidov chaired this feedback session and also made some closing remarks regarding both the Summer School and also how much of the discussion during the Summer School can be linked into the future of ageing research generally and, more precisely, to the FUTURAGE Road Map (<http://futurage.group.shef.ac.uk/>). He also mentioned the commonality of what had come through in both discussion groups i.e. the need for a life course approach to healthy ageing and ageing research and the need for some sort of overarching body, be it a virtual institute or a physical (perhaps mobile) institution, perhaps hosted by different countries on a rotating basis in order to best capture the best of both East and West and to foster collaboration.

Professor Davidov also mentioned the collective need to take into account: near, medium and long term needs for research and the concurrent need to reach policy makers.

Areas of research are also undergoing fundamental change towards inter and multidisciplinary which means that there is ever broadening opportunity to explore research areas such as the economics of ageing, intergenerational exchange (including possibly moral and ethical perspectives), therefore scientific topics must keep a broad perspective in order to stay modern and relevant. There also needs to be an international awareness of best practice and knowledge exchange.

Part of the remit of the Summer School is to target early career researchers and to provide them with a networking opportunity. This links in with the need to raise awareness of best practice and to exchange knowledge, as mentioned above. By developing a strong and sustainable network of early career researchers in ageing in Europe, the future of ageing research is assured a profile in future policy making and on the research agenda generally. The need for policy implementation is crucial and a pathway to this is perhaps via the career of our current early career researchers.

FLARE 2 fellowships will begin in 2011 and the aim is to provide opportunities for all FLARE fellows to network together and to try and cement a platform for early career researchers in ageing research from which they may build influence in the greater research arena.



6 The group photo, taken at the Euxinograd residence

Appendix 1 – Programme

Tuesday 28 th September	
9:00	Registration and refreshments
9:30	Opening Welcome and Introduction - <i>Chairs: Bojimir Davidov and Genoveva Mihova of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences</i>
10:00	Keynote: The Future of Ageing Research <i>Alan Walker, University of Sheffield, UK</i>
11:00	Refreshments
11:30	Discussion Groups on ‘European Research Priorities’ <i>Chairs: Alan Walker and Bojimir Davidov</i>
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Current research of FLARE fellows and Early Career Bulgarian Researchers: <i>Antje Heinrich – FLARE fellow</i> <i>Kristina Tiainen – FLARE fellow</i> <i>Birgit Trukeshitz – FLARE fellow</i> <i>Elitsa Dimitrova – Bulgarian researcher</i> <i>Sonya Koycheva – Bulgarian researcher</i>
15:15	Refreshments
15:30	Lecture: ‘Doing Multidisciplinary Research’ <i>Catherine Hennessy, University of Plymouth, UK</i>
16:00	Discussion Groups on ‘Doing Multidisciplinary Research’ <i>Chairs: Catherine Hennessy and Bojimir Davidov</i>
17:00	Networking and Posters
19:00	Dinner

Wednesday 29 th September	
9:00	Keynote: Ageing in Bulgaria <i>Penka Naidenova, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences</i>
9:45	Lecture: ‘Challenges Facing the Eastern European Researchers and the NMS and Bulgarian Future Ageing Research Priorities’. <i>Elka Todorova, University of National and World Economy, Bulgaria</i>
10:45	Refreshments

11:15	Lecture: ‘Coordinating European Research Projects’ <i>Gill Wells, Senior EU Consultant, PNO</i>
11:45	Discussion Groups on ‘Coordinating European Research Projects’ <i>Chair: Gill Wells and Bojimir Davidov</i>
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Discussion Groups on ‘East/West European Collaboration’. <i>Chairs: Bojimir Davidov and Elitsa Dimitrova</i>
15:00	Refreshments
15:30	Discussion Groups planning session
17:00	Euxinograd Residence Tour
18:30	Dinner at <i>Tunela</i>
20:30	Panoramic Bus Tour ‘Varna by Night’.

Thursday 30th September	
9:00	Keynote: Why We Age <i>Thomas Flatt, Vienna Graduate School of Population Genetics</i>
10:15	Refreshments
10:45	Feedback from Discussion Groups <i>Chairs: Bojimir Davidov, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences</i>
12:30	The Future of FLARE <i>Juliet Craig, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom</i>
13:00	Lunch followed by sightseeing

Appendix 2 – Attendees

Title	Name	Surname	Position	Institution
Dr	Samrah	Ahmed-Ali	Postdoctoral Research Fellow	St George's University of London
Prof	Atanas	Atanasov	Vice-President	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Prof	Rossitsa	Chobanova	Scientific Secretary of Social Sciences	Bulgarian Academy of Science
Miss	Juliet	Craig	Senior Research Manager	University of Sheffield
Dr	Anna	Dahl	Assistant Professor	Institute of Gerontology, School of Health Sciences, Jönköping University
Prof	Bojimir	Davidov	National Co-ordinator	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Miss	Irene	di Giulio	Post-Doc	IRM Manchester Metropolitan University
Dr	Elitsa	Dimitrova		Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Dr	Nevena	Festchieva		
Dr	Thomas	Flatt	Faculty Member	Vienna Graduate School of Population Genetics
Dr	Antje	Heinrich	Research Associate	University of Cambridge
Prof	Catherine	Hennessy	Chair in Public Health and Ageing	School of Nursing and Midwifery University of Plymouth
	Kalina	Ilieva	Doctoral Student	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Miss	Anouska	Kettle	Research Manager	University of Sheffield
Dr	Krassimer	Kirov		Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
	Sonya	Koycheva	Junior Research Fellow	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Dr	Genoveva	Mihova	Director	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Dr	Sachie	Mizohata	Co-Founder	Online community, social-issues.org
	Stanislava	Moraliiska	Junior Research Fellow	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Dr	Zeinab	Mulla	Post-Doctoral Scientist	Medical Research Council
Prof	Penka	Najdenova	Senior Research Associate	Institute of Population and Human Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Miss	Danielle	Page	Events Administrator	University of Sheffield
Dr	Katy	Stevens	Research Associate	University of Wales, Newport
	Lubomir	Stojtchev	Doctoral Student	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Dr	Janet	Swinburne	Project Manager	Trinity College Dublin
Dr	Kristina	Tiainen	Researcher	Tampere School of Public Health, University of Tampere
Prof	Elka	Todorova	Senior Research Associate	University of National and World Economy, Bulgaria
Dr	Birgit	Trukeschitz	Research Fellow	Research Institute for Economics of Aging, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business
Dr	Emilia	Voynova	Division Director of Population Policy and Minorities	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria
Prof	Alan	Walker	Director of the European Research Area in Ageing	University of Sheffield
Ms	Gill	Wells	Senior EU Consultant	
Dr	Elaine	Williams	Research Associate	Loughborough University
Dr	Friederike	Ziegler	Research Associate	Keele University