

Consultation on the Green Paper on Ageing

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

GREEN PAPER ON AGEING – Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations

This Commission has put demography high on the EU policy agenda. In June 2020, it presented the [report on the impact of demographic change](#) setting out the key facts of demographic change and its likely impacts. The [green paper on ageing](#) is the first outcome to this report and launches a debate on one of the defining demographic transformations in Europe - namely ageing.

Never before have so many Europeans enjoyed such long lives. This is a major achievement that is underpinned by the EU's social market economy. One of the most prominent features of ageing is that the share and the number of older people in the EU will increase. Today, 20% of the population is above 65. By 2070, it will be 30%. The share of people above 80 is expected to more than double, reaching 13% by 2070.

This demographic trend is having a significant impact on people's everyday lives and on our societies. It has implications for economic growth, fiscal sustainability, health and long-term care, social cohesion and intergenerational fairness, and it concerns every age. In addition, the pandemic's disproportionate impact on older people – in terms of hospitalisations and deaths - has highlighted some of the challenges an ageing population poses to health and social care systems. However, ageing also provides new opportunities for creating new jobs, boosting prosperity, for instance in the 'silver' and care economies, and fostering intergenerational cohesion.

This consultation enables all European citizens, Member States and relevant stakeholders to provide their views on the [green paper on ageing](#) and contribute to the debate.

About you

* Language of my contribution

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- English

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- Academic/research institution
- Business association
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- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation
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- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other

* First name

Amandine

* Surname

Oset

* Email (this won't be published)

amandine.oset@echamp.eu

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

European Coalition on Homeopathic & Anthroposophic Medicinal Products

* Organisation size

- Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

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* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

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The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

* Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

Anonymous

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

Public

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

The following questionnaire includes all the questions contained in the [green paper on ageing](#).

You may provide your opinion in the text boxes under each question. Please feel free to either answer all the questions, or choose to answer the questions that are of most interest or concern you directly.

You can also upload your written contribution, if you so wish, by using the button available at the end of the questionnaire.

Laying the foundations (chapter 2 of the green paper)

1. How can healthy and active ageing policies be promoted from an early age and throughout the life span for everyone? How can children and young people be better equipped for the prospect of a longer life expectancy? What kind of support can the EU provide to the Member States?

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Children and young people who grow up in a world where pluralism in healthcare is the norm will have the means to take responsibility for their own health and well-being.

Pluralism, or an integrative approach to health, combines conventional medicine and complementary medicine into an overall concept which focuses on the whole person and allows patients access to a broad choice of individually adapted solutions. This is particularly relevant in meeting the growing needs of an ageing population. In its Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) elaborates the role of Traditional & Complementary medicine (T&CM) in the prevention and management of lifestyle-related chronic diseases. The strategy aims to support Member States in developing proactive policies and implementing action plans that will strengthen the role traditional medicine plays in keeping populations healthy. WHO describes T&CM as ‘an important and often underestimated health resource’.

An integrative approach to health can contribute to a vision for healthy and active ageing by:

- Improving health maintenance, health literacy and supporting self-care;
- Prevention of illness;
- Offering more personally and financially sustainable treatment methods for chronic diseases.

The European Parliament report on EU options for improving access to medicine calls for every EU citizen to “have access to the healthcare and treatment options of their choice and preference, including to complementary and alternative therapies and medicines.” The EU can support the Member States in this aim by acknowledging, endorsing and encouraging the conscious integration of pluralism into the EU healthcare system as follows:

- More recognition at EU level of the rational use of T&CM to allow the Member States to openly explore how to harness the full potential of these products and further integrate those therapies into their healthcare systems, so as to offer freedom of choice of healthcare, treatment and therapy.
- The encouragement of knowledge generation by supporting research and development in this area. EU level R&D can make a contribution to developing a plurality of health choices and thereby promote access to and availability of the services that consumers and patients require and prefer.
- The development of an EU platform for the exchange of best practice in integrative health

2. What are the most significant obstacles to life-long learning across the life-cycle? At what stage in life could addressing those obstacles make most difference? How should this be tackled specifically in rural and remote areas?

2500 character(s) maximum

Making the most of our working lives (chapter 3 of the green paper)

3. What innovative policy measures to improve participation in the labour market, in particular by older workers, should be considered more closely?

2500 character(s) maximum

4. Is there a need for more policies and action at EU level that support senior entrepreneurship? What type of support is needed at EU level and how can we build on the successful social innovation examples of mentorship between young and older entrepreneurs?

2500 character(s) maximum

5. How can EU policies help less developed regions and rural areas to manage ageing and depopulation? How can EU territories affected by the twin depopulation and ageing challenges make better use of the silver economy?

2500 character(s) maximum

New opportunities and challenges in retirement (chapter 4 of the green paper)

6. How could volunteering by older people and intergenerational learning be better supported, including across borders, to foster knowledge sharing and civic engagement? What role could a digital platform or other initiatives at EU level play and to whom should such initiatives be addressed? How could volunteering by young people together with and towards older people be combined into cross-generational initiatives?

2500 character(s) maximum

7. Which services and enabling environment would need to be put in place or improved in order to ensure the autonomy, independence and rights of older people and enable their participation in society?

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8. How can the EU support vulnerable older persons who are not in a position to protect their own financial and personal interests, in particular in cross-border situations?

9. How can the EU support Member States' efforts to ensure more fairness in the social protection systems across generations, gender, age and income groups, ensuring that they remain fiscally sound?

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10. How can the risks of poverty in old age be reduced and addressed?

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11. How can we ensure adequate pensions for those (mainly women) who spend large periods of their working life in unremunerated work (often care provision)?

2500 character(s) maximum

12. What role could supplementary pensions play in ensuring adequate retirement incomes? How could they be extended throughout the EU and what would be the EU's role in this process?

2500 character(s) maximum

Meeting the growing needs of an ageing population (chapter 5 of the green paper)

13. How can the EU support Member States' efforts to reconcile adequate and affordable healthcare and long-term care coverage with fiscal and financial sustainability?

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Homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products offer cost-effective options that contribute to the financial sustainability of healthcare systems. They have a valuable role to play alongside conventional medicine systems in tackling the health challenges that Europe is now facing. The full potential of these medicines must be explored and exploited, reducing any unnecessary burden on health systems at a time when resources are already stretched.

The impact of chronic diseases on an ageing population is likely to increase, and with it problems of multimorbidity, polypharmacy and adverse drug reactions. A growing body of evidence clearly suggests a potential role for homeopathy and anthroposophic medicine in prevention of age-related disease, in reducing drug-load, reducing risk of adverse drug reactions and improving mental health and wellbeing.

There is promising evidence for the role of homeopathy in supporting the management of age-related musculoskeletal and rheumatologic disorders such as back pain, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, as well as complaints associated with menopause. Studies show that patients treated by certified homeopathic

physicians were less likely to be prescribed psychotropic drugs for sleep, anxiety and depressive disorders, reducing their usage and avoiding their addictive potential. Patients with musculoskeletal disorders treated with homeopathy did as well clinically as those treated with conventional medicine but used only half the amount of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and had fewer NSAID-related side effects. One study shows that the management of anxiety and depressive disorders in patients aged ≥ 65 years by homeopath general practitioners appears to have a real public health interest in terms of effectiveness and lower use of psychotropic drugs.

A recent large scale survey in the Netherlands demonstrates that patients whose GP has additional training in homeopathy, acupuncture or anthroposophic medicine have substantially lower health care costs and lower mortality rates. Two recent observational studies conducted in primary care practices in Germany showed a beneficial role of homeopathic and anthroposophic medical treatment in the long-term care of older adults.

The EU can support the Member States by acknowledging, endorsing and encouraging the conscious integration of pluralism into the EU healthcare system.

14. How could the EU support Member States in addressing common long-term care challenges? What objectives and measures should be pursued through an EU policy framework addressing challenges such as accessibility, quality, affordability or working conditions? What are the considerations to be made for areas with low population density?

2500 character(s) maximum

15. How can older people reap the benefits of the digitalisation of mobility and health services? How can the accessibility, availability, affordability and safety of public transport options for older persons, notably in rural and remote areas, be improved?

2500 character(s) maximum

16. Are we sufficiently aware of the causes of and impacts of loneliness in our policy making? Which steps could be taken to help prevent loneliness and social isolation among older people? Which support can the EU give?

2500 character(s) maximum

17. Which role can multigenerational living and housing play in urban and rural planning in addressing the challenges of an ageing population? How could it be better harnessed?

2500 character(s) maximum

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