**FOCUS AREAS OF THE 10th SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING: Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building**

Pour une présentation complète des politiques de la France, veuillez-vous référer à :

***Mise en oeuvre du Plan d'action international de Madrid sur le vieillissement (PAIMV/MIAPA) et sa stratégie de mise en oeuvre régionale (RIS). Troisième cycle de revue et d’évaluation (2012-2017) : rapport national de suivi***

*For a full presentation of France’s policies, please refer to :*

**Report on the French Ageing Policy . 15 Years since the Second UN World Ageing Plan (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – MIPAA) Madrid 2002**

Disponible, en français et en anglais, **sur le site web des Nations-Unies**:

*Available* ***on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) website****:*

<https://www.unece.org/pau/mipaareports2017.html>

**National Legal Framework**

1. *In your country/region, how is the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age guaranteed in legal and policy frameworks?*

Mandatory regulations have been enacted by the French government to **require employers to meet older workers’ needs, including training**, and to reduce barriers.

In 2002, a law requiring the recognition by universities of prior informal and work-based learning (RPL, also known as ***Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience*** - VAE) and other professional qualifications was passed. The law effectively organises RPL at a national level - through a 8 to 12 month-long procedure - and allows anyone with a minimum of one year of professional experience - related to the content of the targeted certification - to apply for all or part of this diploma, listed on the National repository of professional certifications (RNCP).

Another law, passed in 2004, grants individuals the right to lifelong-learning (***Droit Individuel à la Formation*** - DIF), entitling all employees to take stock of their skills, aptitudes and motivations to define a professional or training plan and access a maximum of 120 hours of training/educational sessions over a 6 year period - during work or free time. DIF is entirely financed by the employer (1% of the budget has to be dedicated to it), and the cost of the learning is not considered part of the salary, therefore individuals aren’t taxed on this benefit. From January 2015, DIF was replaced by the **Individual Learning Account** (*Compte Personnel de Formation* - CPF), meant to follow each person in his/her professional career throughout the lifespan, even through periods of unemployment, with a maximum of 150 hours over 9 years. The same law founded a National Council for Employment, Vocational Training, Education and Guidance (***Conseil national de l’emploi, de la formation et de l’orientation professionnelles*** – CNEFOP).

Between 2006 and 2010, the **National Action Plan for Seniors Employment** was enforced, with the aim of reaching an employment rate of 50% among people aged from 55 to 64 years and improving the conditions for older workers. In addition, the French Law for the Funding of Social Security (*Loi pour le Financement de la Sécurité Sociale* - LFSS) for 2009 **protects elders from forced retirement** - leaving the choice entirely up to the employee (article 61) - and allows them to keep working while receiving a retirement pension (article 59).

Recent policy initiatives have been taken to **encourage the involvement of elderly people in the society**, contributing to life-long learning and skill development at an older age.

The 2015 National Action Plan set up in relation to the law “**Adapting Society to Ageing**” (*Loi relative à l’adaptation de la société au vieillissement*) involved the new *Haut Conseil de la Famille, de l'Enfance et de l'Âge* (HCFEA) in a global information policy on ageing, with a particular emphasis on physical activity and social bonding.

In October 2018, the Minister of Solidarities and Health launched a **Global Consultation on Ageing and Autonomy**, in order to take into account seniors’ major concerns and priorities for the drafting of a new legislation and the building of concrete actions. From the ideas of 415 000 participants, 7 major demands stood out, including helping seniors remain in their own homes as well as reducing the cost and improving the quality of their stay in specialized institutions.

**Availability, Accessibility and Adaptability**

2. *What are the key issues and challenges faced by older persons in your country/region with regard to the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services(1)?*

Although companies are required to offer occasional training to their employees, retired people who go back to work on a contract-basis are at higher risk to be excluded from internal training programmes. However, the creation of the Individual Learning Account allows workers to benefit from training even after 65. Although the account is automatically closed when a person exercises his/her rights to retirement, it can be reopened if he/she chooses to return to work, and he/she can use all the remaining hours (24 hours per year for full-time employees).

Regarding non work-related education, elders can attend classes within Universities of the Third Age (U3A) and benefit from training on a large variety of topics, including information and communication technologies (ICTs). Unlike classic university programmes, those classes are not free but have registration fees, generally amounting to 20-50 euros for a 10 hours-programme. However, the French Association of All Ages Universities (UFUTA) benefits from annual public funding from the Ministry of Education.

3. *What steps have been taken to ensure that education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services are available and accessible to all older persons, adapted to their needs, suited to their preferences and motivations, and of high quality?*

Lifelong learning opportunities for older persons can be found in both public and private settings, and sometimes may be financed jointly by public and private sources. The **Universities of the Third Age (U3A)**, launched by the Faculty of Social Sciences in Toulouse in 1973, aimed at providing continuous education and various cultural activities for seniors. In 1993, it became known as *Union Française des Universités Tous Ages* (UFUTA), and put an emphasis on intergenerational exchange and in-person meetings rather than on formal registration and graduation processes. The U3A model, with the exception of one or two locations, is now open to anyone regardless of age or degree, and can use various names (such as "University All Ages", "Inter-Ages", "For All", "Retirement and Free Time", "Third Time", "Permanent" etc). In France, the model has not yet developed in the form of virtual communities but has remained in-person and linked with either local universities or associations. In 2012, one of the U3A programmes applied to business in longevity, the **Trans-Innov Longevity “TIL” project**, was certified “excellence in innovative training” by the Minister of Higher Education and Research. Private organisations such as “Old’Up” focus on training older persons for useful daily functions – including how to use the new technologies - while promoting intergenerational interactions among members.

In parallel with the 2015 law “Adapting Society to Ageing”, a **Convention “for the development of Free Time Universities in France”** was signed between the Conference of University Presidents (CPU), the UFUTA and the Association of French Mayors (AMF), to gather and share good practices in terms of collective educational and cultural activities. This initiative aimed at encouraging universities and local authorities to commit to the effort and promote intergenerational exchanges, based on previous successful local initiatives.

Other governmental actions have been taken, such as the **National Plan “Ageing Well”** (*Plan National Bien Vieillir* - PNBV) of 2007-2009, which fits into the 3 years-programme “Healthy Ageing” of the European Union. One of its main goals : to reinforce the social links of the elderly through the promotion of intergenerational housing and the development of the “**blue week**” to inform and increase awareness on how retired and older persons contribute to the economic, social and cultural life. The “**Monalisa** (National Mobilisation Against the Isolation of Elders) **Programme**”, launched in 2014,continues along that path by taking steps to prevent the isolation of older persons, through the deployment of volunteers teams organized by national and local social organizations. These teams also intervene in areas where actions that target vulnerable persons are not yet widespread, and put an emphasis on ICT learning to avoid a double divide. Its president is a member of the HCFEA, which closely follows the actions of the Monalisa.

The European Commission established a **Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)** in November 2006 to increase transnational education and training activities. In France, the national agency responsible for managing projects and dispersing european funds is the *Agence Europe Education Formation France* (2E2F). The sub-programme ***Grundtvig***, designed for adult education and senior volunteering projects, was made to effectively engage elders and improve the capacity of education and training systems. For instance, many of the *Grundtvig* programmes focus on improving the skills and competencies needed for the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

4. *In your country/region, are there studies and/or data available on the access of older persons to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age?*

* 2014 - 16 : Surveys CARE (Capacities, Help and Resources of Seniors), led by the Direction of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES) of the Ministry of Solidarities and Health (2014-16) <https://drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/etudes-et-statistiques/open-data/personnes-agees/article/les-enquetes-capacites-aides-et-ressources-des-seniors-care>
* 2016 Barometer of the Fondation de France on social isolation <https://www.fondationdefrance.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/les_solitudes_en_france_2016_-_synthese.pdf>
* France Bénévolat “Voluntary involvement in France between 2010 and 2016”

<https://www.francebenevolat.org/documentation/enquete-france-benevolat-l-evolution-de-l-engagement-benevole-associatif-en-france-de-2010-2016>

* 2013 : International Longevity Center - Life-long learning in France and Europe : <http://www.ilcfrance.org/images/upload/annexe%205%20-%20Lifelonglearning_France_SingaporeSymposium.pdf>
* Agency of local practices and initiatives : <http://www.apriles.net/>

**Equality and non-discrimination**

5. *In your country, is age one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination in relation to education in older age?*

France is signatory of the **European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights**, legally binding since the Lisbon Treaty of 2007, which recognizes in its article 25 “the rights of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life”, as well as the European Social Charter which asks Member Parties to “enable elderly persons to remain full members of society for as long as possible, by means of adequate resources enabling them to lead a decent life and play an active part in public, social and cultural life”.

Within the national legal framework, the article 225-1 of the **Penal Code** recognizes as a discrimination any distinction on the basis of age as a criterium.

**Accountability**

6. *What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building?*

Since the [French organic law of 2011](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000023781167&categorieLien=id) “*relative au Défenseur des droits*”, anyone can appeal to the ***Défenseur des Droits*** (Defender of Human Rights), an independent authority with a constitutional status nominated by the President for a six-year term, and assisted of six experts. This institution relies on a territorial network of 450 delegates, who inform, orientate and help the claimants without any fees. When appropriate, the *Défenseur* has the prerogative to appeal to any competent authority, make comments before Courts, and make recommendations.

Older persons can also appeal to the **Court of Justice of the European Union** if they believe that their rights are not being respected according to the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, as it is legally binding.

1 *including for example: literacy and numeracy programmes; adult education; vocational and professional training; higher education; information and communication technologies (ICT); and informal, recreational and community-based programmes, including* ***volunteering***