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**The Federal Republic of Germany - Answer to the**

**Guiding Questions for the focus areas of the X Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing:** education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building

**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?

*Answer:*

*Pursuant to laws on further training or laws on adult education of the Länder, the adult education centres in particular but also other non-governmental sponsors have the task to see to it that there is a basic provision of continuing education services in the field of general continuing education, meaning to have a regular comprehensive range of services in store which meets various social requirements and individual needs. The Federal Agency for Civic Education and the corresponding regional agencies conduct political continuing education events and promote non-governmental sponsors in political continuing education.[[1]](#footnote-1) By introducing the Federal Volunteer Service on 1st July 2011, for instance, all age groups in Germany were given the opportunity (after completing full-time compulsory schooling) to serve Federal Volunteer Service. The Federal Volunteer Service has been shaped as a learning and an educational service. This is why educational support has been arranged comprising, inter alia, at least 12 seminar days for over 27-year olds. In this context, the seminar content is aligned with the older volunteers’ interests.*

**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[[2]](#footnote-2)?

*Answer:*

*In an ageing society, education is becoming increasingly important, particularly also for older people. At the same time, information and communication technologies (ICT) open up development opportunities for older persons that will not be exhausted for a long time – also when it comes to organising a life with the need for care and assistance in old age.*

*On job-related further training: older persons participate less frequently in job-related further training than younger ones[[3]](#footnote-3); in a survey commissioned by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (ADS) among anti-discrimination agencies and senior citizens‘ advocacy groups in 2011, 20 per cent of agencies stated that they received complaints about discrimination based on age relating to the topic of further training and continuing education.*

*On voluntary work: in certain fields, older people do not have access to voluntary activities due to maximum age limits, e.g. the office of lay judge, yet they do have access to volunteer services which, inter alia, allow for informal learning (also see answer to question no.1).*

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?

*Answer:*

*On volunteer services for older persons – see answer to question no.1.*

*Moreover, in 2015, Germany (lead responsibility: the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth - BMFSFJ) set up the Round Table “Active Ageing – shaping transitions“ (RTAA) with experts from science and practice and took over the patronage of the Round Table. A major finding of the Round Table was that education is becoming increasingly important in an ageing society, in particular also for older people. The following action was taken in order to implement the recommendations:*

* *The service point “Digitization and education for older people” was set up with the German umbrella organisation, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO). It serves as an information hub particularly for multipliers also in municipalities.*
* *An advisory committee was set up with the objective to involve all relevant (civil) society stakeholders, if possible, in the further development of this field of action. Priorities of this advisory committee, in particular, being the pooling of technical expertise from politics, practice and science on the topic and field of action “Digitization and education for older people”.*

*Most recently, Germany (BMFSFJ) also addressed the social dimension of digitization in old age during the Digital Summit of the Federal Government. It took place from 3rd to 4th December 2018 in Nuremberg. Amongst other things, an expert talk took place there on the subject “At our service? Algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) for senior citizens”. In September 2018, Germany also participated in the panel discussion at the international conference in Vienna entitled “Human Rights of Older Persons 2018” on the topic “Robotics and Automation”.*

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?

*Answer:*

*The Federal Volunteer Service is very well received by older people. Currently, 5,180 volunteers are over 50 years old, this corresponds to 12.5 per cent (as at 30th November 2018). Furthermore, reference is made to the “Final Report of the joint evaluation of the Federal Volunteer Service Act (BFD) and the Act to Promote Youth Voluntary Services (JFDG)”.*

**Equality and non-discrimination**

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

*Answer:*

*The General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG), inter alia, protects people from discrimination on grounds of age. The AGG particularly applies to working life, part of this being access to vocational training, advanced vocational training and vocational retraining (section 2 para. 1 no. 3 AGG).*

*The remaining educational sector is only covered by the AGG as far as private-law contracts are concerned (e.g. private language school); however, the AGG does not apply in the field of public education (section 2 para. 1 no. 7 AGG).*

**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, life-long learning and capacity building?

*Answer:*

*In working life, the AGG obligates employers to establish complaints boards (section 13 AGG) that employees may address if they feel they are being discriminated against. Employers have to look into the complaint and, in case of discrimination, take measures to put an end to discrimination. Furthermore, pursuant to the AGG, persons who have been discriminated against have the right to claim damages and compensation.*

1. see *KMK (Kultusministerkonferenz -* Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany)*: Das Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2015/2016 (The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany), p. 186 (https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-dt-pdfs/dossier\_de\_ebook.pdf)* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *including for example: literacy and numeracy programmes; adult education; vocational and professional training; tertiary education (higher education); information and communication technologies (ICT); and informal, recreational and community-based programmes, including volunteer work* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. see *BIBB-Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2018 (BIBB – data report on the vocational education and training report 2018) (BIBB-Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung - Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training)* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)