

Active Ageing  
through Social Partnership  
and Industrial Relations in Europe.  
Workshop Report  
for Poland

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1. Introduction
2. Barriers and facilitators to active ageing
3. Perceptions of active ageing
4. Responses to active ageing
5. Intergenerational issues
6. Good practices in active ageing
7. Final remarks and conclusions

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Research in the project is based on four in-depth interviews (IDI) and five workshops, including one pilot study. Three of the work packages were covered by the research – WP3, WP4 and WP5, which was conducted from June 2017 to May 2018 throughout Poland, with a slight focus in Łódź region.

At the same time, three Aspire project partner countries carried out studies following the mutually agreed research procedure.

activity	date	Number of participants	
<b>WP3 desk research and interview (IDI)</b>			
Trade union	July 19th	Trade union representative Solidarność Volskwagen Poznań (1)	(PL_IDI_TR_1)
Trade union	July 10th	Trade union representative Solidarność University of Lodz, Lodz (1)	(PL_IDI_TR_2)
Employers	July 13th	Employers: Klub 500 (1)	(PL_IDI_EMP_1)
Employers	June 27th	Employers: Łódzka Izba Przemysłowo-Handlowa (1)	(PL_IDI_EMP_2)
<b>WP4 pilot workshop (WP)</b>			
Workshop 1	February, 6th, Warszawa	Forum Odpowiedzialnego <sup>1</sup> Biznesu (FOB) <sup>1</sup> meeting, managers and human resources managers, employers organization reps, NGOs (13+8)	(PL_WSP_1)
<b>WP5 workshops (WP)</b>			
Workshop 2	Łódź 17.04	Trade unions reps (3) and manager and NGO leader and former top manager (2)	(PL_WSP_2)
Workshop 3	Warszawa 19.04	Manager (1), employers organization reps PRACODAWCY RP (1)	(PL_WSP_3)
Workshop 4	Falenty 24.04	Trade unions reps (4)	(PL_WSP_4)
Workshop 5	Olsztyn 8 maja 2018	Trade unions reps (7) and managers, owners (3)	(PL_WSP_5)
Additional material	Falenty 24.04	Panel session, trade unions reps (5)	(PL_WSP_6)

During the individual interviews, no problems or demanding situations were encountered. Regarding WP4 and WP5 research, no complications related to informing the potential project participants about the project itself and research conducted have been recorded. A large promotional campaign was carried out. Not only was it aimed at advertising project goals and assumptions, but it was predominantly an invitation to the workshop. Unfortunately, some of the workshops planned had to be cancelled since the respondents did not register via the electronic registration. Two issues proved to be the key factor in this phase:

- Discussions with employers' organizations and trade unions about their possibility to join the research project included arguments about the lack of time, the need to obtain

<sup>1</sup> Odpowiedzialny - responsible

formal consent of the management or the management board. The decision-making process was prolonged. It seems that the talks that took place in the November-January period brought a postponed effect in April and May 2018;

- The ‘hospitality’ of two already organized events was used – a seminar gathering the FOB employers in Warsaw and the seminar of trade unionists in Falenty.

Ultimately, the study involved 51 interlocutors, representing mainly employers and trade unions, but also non-governmental organizations and policy-makers. The representatives of various trade union levels (national and company committees) could be noted as well as employers representing small, medium and large enterprises, both Polish and foreign, public and private. Overall, it seems to reflect the active aging and industrial relations’ situation in Poland.

The subject of the project was recognized as important and gaining significance not only in Poland, but also in Europe and the entire world.

At the same time, it can be emphasized that enhanced cooperation and newly established contacts with the parties of the Polish social dialogue are promising in the context of further stages of the project – roadsows.

### **Barriers and facilitators to active ageing include several factors.**

Noted by the interlocutors, numerous barriers and facilitators among those are included in the group of **macroeconomic factors**. Changes in the labor market were recognized as the most influential element for the growing importance of the active aging issue. They were referred to by the both sides of the social dialogue and either their reactivity

*In addition, changes in the labor market also pose a huge challenge we are struggling with. (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*Currently, though the labor market is changing, a good professional, whether older or younger, is employed. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

or proactivity on the labor market were highly emphasized.

*The company is developing really well at this moment and we are doing our best trying to encourage these employees in all possible ways. The pension plan was also supposed to be one of the goals. It is also meant to encourage new employees. (PL\_WSP\_2)*

The changes connected with the technological progress were particularly highlighted as well as those triggered by the adjustments in the field of work organization or management tools. Global competition enforces competitiveness (salaries included) perfectly understood by the social partners.

*(...)my company operates in the production industry, aviation production to be more precise. Some time ago, several years ago, in my company there were the so called*

*sheltered jobs, that is for employees who suffered from ill health after some random and health events. During the recuperation period they could perform a less demanding work and then return to their previous position. However, at some point it was no longer a possibility not only in my industry, company, but this is also what I hear from my colleagues employed in other companies. Employers focus on their basic activities and everything that is auxiliary (especially in manufacturing), that is less strenuous, is outsourced. Here, too, a problem arises. If employees deteriorate in health, are no longer able to work, are not efficient at their position, there is nowhere they can be moved to because all the less strenuous positions are already serviced by other companies and this is a very big problem. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*There is noticeable technological progress, which means that in 20-30 years, quite a lot of professions will disappear. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*Still, going back to the young and why employers hire them – because they pay less. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

Some changes in legislation that could encourage entrepreneurs to employ older people and implement age management were also recommended.

*Maybe reduce ZUS for entrepreneurs for 50+ - 60+ and pay less. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

In the area of **legal and social** barriers and facilitators, respondents articulated many issues ranging from constant changes in pension systems, initiated already at the beginning of the socio-economic transformation in Poland, to the public awareness issues. Deficiencies in applicable legal regulations have been noticed.

*the awareness of all the people is slowly changing. Everyone realizes that they will have to work longer because we live longer. Our society lives longer and longer (PL\_WSP\_5).*

*let's not get our hopes up too high when it comes to retirement because this is where the law worked backwards twice: for the first time such a situation took place in 99 and now it is so drastic, that is, lowering social pensions in 2017. I already have such an attitude that I do not hope for pension. (PL\_WSP\_5).*

*Flexible retirement system. We have an apparent tool in the form of an incapacity to work and pension. Yet, the pension is a starvation for a man even though he has worked for forty years. Even though he is, let's say, 55 and let ZUS decide by means of the conversion rates and he answers – no. I have a friend like this, he should have retired much earlier within this flexible system because every month he is off sick for three weeks. (PL\_WSP\_5).*

*I think that in most situations Polish law does not work very well. (PL\_WSP\_5).*

In the last few years, we have had political changes in Poland regarding the retirement age. The retirement age was lowered in a time when the society and social dialogue partners began to notice the necessity of unpopular yet long-term planning – raising the retirement age by the previous government. Little trust in the government, changes in the political sphere in terms of the regulatory variability result in the ‘as soon as possible’ attitude towards leaving the labor market.

*Two aspects could be noted in the whole case of active aging. Namely one – extending the retirement age. Employers have very little influence on this matter. They have an indirect one, but it is a government matter. It should be strongly emphasized that we are facing an aging society, we give money, and it can be seen that it is not consistent. The second element is the issue of attracting people who have obtained pension rights. (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*it is so shocking that these people have such knowledge, such experience, and you let them go so much and let them go without being interested in it at all. (PL\_WSP\_1).*

No unambiguous perception of the potential readiness of older workers to extend their working lives can be noted, though (are older employees in Poland ready to extend their working lives?)

*One should probably ask seniors. Taking into account social expectations such as shortening the retirement age, it seems that there is still a lot of space for work, communication campaign and raising awareness. Of course, the cultural ones are also important here. (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*The number of older people is increasing and will be growing dynamically. A problem arises when it comes to the care of people who are really infirm. Hospices are missing. If the family cannot help, it is important that this person is looked after, otherwise it will not be possible. Moreover, there are people with physical and intellectual disabilities. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

At the same time, capital changes may be an obstacle to the continuation of an advanced social dialogue previously successfully managed – yet with the ‘old’ owner.

*The law allows us to take action to quickly pursue the interests discussed in these conversations but we do not want to because they are building and we know that there are employer goals directed at something else, but we want to include all agreements that concern both young and the elderly. Employment in this area to include this in the collective labor agreement. It is difficult to say whether we succeed or not. For now, the employer has canceled all the previous obligations based on the collective agreement. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

Respondent representing the family businesses environment pointed out the weakness of law in the field of inheritance.

*The problem is also in law and regulations. The father cannot hand over his business to a son. He must close it down, the son must set it up. There is no formal-legal continuity. Unless they establish a copartnership but the taxation it would have is incomparable to the micro-enterprise model. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

A common European frame was noticed.

*The most important is the legal basis of EU law, that is the starting point which gives us all the chance to base internal solutions, in my understanding, of transferring aids. This could be the role of a social fund separated to support such initiatives and the Marshal could provide procedures for these measures and the two systems could meet. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

But also specific national solutions regarding uniformed services which include preferential exit from the labor market.

*my husband is a retired policeman and I understand that what he came into contact with on a daily basis is so burning that two or five years longer could make him simply unable to function socially, but on the other hand I think about the system that allows a person aged 40 to retire and that this system does not say 'ok, you worked in such conditions until this age, but now you are an expert and you will teach these young people.' The state has put a lot of money into training people. (PL\_WSP\_1).*

To a small extent have the survey respondents noticed sector barriers and facilitators.

*Limitations are probably mainly of budget nature and also in the minds of smaller employers (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*Civilian employees in uniformed services have very low salaries. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*They have the same scope of duties because in our day-care service a civilian employee is an educator and officer. They carry out the same responsibilities, but the retirement age is different. The only difference is that the officer had to be available in the service, that is be on the phone, always at attention, and the other employee would work eight hours, go home and there is no availability. Comparing the salary of an officer and a civilian employee they are different. Officers have higher salaries, additional bonuses and other benefits, whereas civil employees as they enter the retirement age get a large psychological burden because they have to work both more and longer. R1: Valuing among us is unfair. I admit that it is embarrassing because we often do the same. We're sitting desk to desk. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

Among the **organizational issues**, the respondents focused on intergenerational themes, entering the discourse on the extraordinary situation on the labor market – the side by side presence of four, if not five generations.

*(...) young man goes to work, got to work, was accepted, a contract was signed and the next day he went on a sick leave. He has not returned, there is a problem but what can they do with it. They have to pay and still they do not have an employee. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*It is also a very valuable generation, they also tie up with the employer and are emotionally loyal. They also respect this work in the sense that they are very attached to it, or they hold in their minds the fact that in our environment, still, an elder is perceived quite stereotypically. They really put a lot of effort into their work. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*The main barrier is the lack of such generational awareness that older workers bring much to the organization and a lot of added value other than the young generation, but it is not that when one approaches the retirement age, he should just wear slippers and sit on a rocking chair with a pipe. I think that in many places dominates such stereotypical thinking that an older generation employee is not able to learn, does not want to learn, does not adapt, is not flexible. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

Employers emphasized not only the necessity of active aging presence in the organization or broadening the employees' awareness, but also the need to set good examples ('the example comes down from above')

*Selecting the topic, but from the organization's point of view. I think to myself that comprehensive perception of employees is important. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*I believe in doing instead of speaking. I think that the nicest and the most beautifully told words of how something is going to look like change nothing until at least small steps are being implemented. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*The best practices that you can come up with are worth nothing unless there is some understanding for example in the management board. I think that this is important but I also see that for example small employers in one-man businesses where the boss owns a company with, let's say, few or twelve people, there, such pro-employee activities are completely omitted, or there is even no such thinking. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

The barriers and facilitators analysis on the union's side depicted an attitude of seeking identity and importance in the process of active aging on the one side, and on the other, the approach related to broadening topics and themes quite loosely related to the subject yet illustrating openness to new and cognitive activities (the respondent earlier indicated that the active aging issue has been present in this trade union for many years).

*I think that the position of trade unions is undefined. The question is not whether there will be problems, only when and what will be their scale. On the one hand, the trade unions are accused of making claims (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*We are now talking about a continuous, universal process. This is only a problem of a scale. And the role of unions is undefined. The problem arises in personal, conflict situations (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*One more thing at the end. See how they publish various magazines and write about, for example, happiness at work. This is a new issue, what a man needs. The next one is the oligarchy that appears in the management especially in the case of young people. Management caste is formed as people in Ukraine take control over their own, etc. This is the next topic that we will deal with. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

Both representatives of employers and trade unions emphasized the situational character of the individual factors. They pointed out that most often the decision about leaving employment is made by the employee due to their health, mental and physical condition, opportunities of further earning and ways of spending their free time.

*There are people who are very intellectually and physically fit up to 70 years old and there are those who at the age of 60 have problems with memory and concentration. (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*Many people who retire do it to rest and they simply do not want to work. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*This is a minority. A definite minority. From what I know, there are those passive people who just have a cup of coffee, a tea, a cookie. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*Calendar age needs to be included here because calendar age and biological age are something dissimilar. A person who is physically active and intellectually active will always be younger. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*physically active people show on television that they are active, they are open, they have their passions, they serve the family (PL\_WSP\_5)*

However, these mature employees' choices are to a certain extent determined by the situation prevailing at the place of employment. The employer, through the organizational culture, methods of communication, treatment of subordinates and motivation may encourage longer activity or just the opposite.

*It depends on the atmosphere in the workplace and what the employer's opinion. Most people, for various financial reasons, want to stay – now the question is whether or not it is possible (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*Most often, supervisors give tasks and these tasks have to be fulfilled. There is no reflection whether the brigade is older or younger. 'Get it done among yourself. This is a matter of getting along.' This is a barrier. This should be systemic (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*the greatest expectations are if those employees who have already lost their health say, 'we want to leave.' When they work under stress, poor working conditions, static load, then all these factors disqualify them and the employer says, 'I need a strong, fit human with a healthy spine.' So it is difficult. On the one hand, we understand the employer, but on the other hand, these people lost their health because of 40 years of work (PL\_WSP\_4).*

Trade unionists noticed that even a very uncomfortable situation, which is the dismissal of an employee, may ultimately prove beneficial to both parties.

*There are employees who have left due to reasons attributable to the employer. They received severance allowances, started a private activity and now provide services to the employer. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

The examples of highly negative consequences of early retirement in ‘uniformed’ professions were also underlined.

*many of our officers who have retired are dead. I was even surprised not having to deal with these people every day. In a certain period of time, a person learns that one was taken by the heart attack, somebody else – by depression, some other – committed a suicide. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*the awareness of people is slowly changing. People realize that they will have to work longer because we live longer. After all, our society lives longer. It is necessary to create opportunities to develop one's own interests at the age when you retire. One's life passions (PL\_WSP\_5)*

or the difficult situation of women *a lot of women who are 50-55 years old have been out of work and it is not so easy to come back (PL\_WSP\_1).*

The analysis of in-depth interviews drew attention to the fact that the issue of active aging is nothing new to the respondents: (...) *visible in the problem of the succession of Polish companies, because businessmen who founded their companies before and during the transition are currently at the age of retirement and naturally they would like to pass their life achievements to the younger generations (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1).* At the same time an antagonistic approach towards the trade unions may hinder this dialogue: (...) *the relationships are a relic of the past, but here they could find their mission through training, the support of such employees, the awareness of the organization of the action (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1).* But sometimes they are not familiar with the topic: *I first meet with the term "active aging in the workplace" (PL\_IDI\_TR\_2) and even misunderstanding: Where does the term "aging in the workplace" come from? What do the social partners do at work? Do they have to force the employer to work out a network of employment based on age and experience of employees? Do you introduce such activities (both in the workplace and outside), so that age does not determine the suitability of the employee? (PL\_IDI\_TR\_2).*

Some dangers of the labor market are perceived by both sides of the industry: (...) *if we do not encourage people to stay on the labor market, the whole system goes down, and if we do not encourage workers to stay, they will not work for anyone. The Ukrainians will eventually go where they pay more. (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1).* Even though the opinions are not clear, the market

*pressure is felt by the respondents: The recruitment is not a problem at the moment (...), yet we have observed bigger rotation of employees (...) looking for something else, making other choices (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1). Not only in the labor market: Well that's a big problem, because we will be missing more and more hands to work. We do not want immigrants, we do not want any migrant population. With disgust we turn away from such ideas, which I think is a mistake. Well, if we do not have a young, immigrant population, we will have an older one, we do not know who will be working in this country. Maybe someone touched my magic wand, I do not know where (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_2). but also in the context of the industry: The industry is perhaps of great importance, because it seems to me that, for example, weightlifting athletes may not be desirable workers in their teens. I think they can not lift the same weight at this time, so the sport of performance is no longer a good way for them. There are sectors where physical strength, physical fitness does not matter (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_2).*

As far as mature workers are concerned, respondents notice physical decline in ability to work: *A human being becomes limited with age. There is a question of trainings or preparing employees to change jobs or profession, soon there will be nobody to work (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1), but also it is necessary to base management, including human resource management, on competences and not perceiving older employees in discriminatory categories: the employee is worth as much as his skills and performance are worth to the company, (...) the employee's age is a side issue, what matters is his willingness to work, wherein mature age employees are often more dedicated than young ones (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1).*

At the same time, social partners appreciate the emergence of new opportunities to support the prolongation of long-term employment in the labor market: *properly functioning environment can be extended to work (...) (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1), ... it is no longer a problem for a worker to work at home or at other times than 8-16, in some cases it is even more beneficial for the company (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1). It is optimistic that employers' representatives see a mature employee in a broader context: (...) very often these older people who respect the values are so precious to the businessmen. Knowing that such a person is in the team, I can be calmer, the composition of this team and what is going on in it. (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_2).*

The dialogue, or rather, the necessity of dialogue, became obvious during the discussions with stakeholders: *the state should support such solutions, but not impose anything, it should be all only a question of dialogue between employers and employees, they should work out the best model for given enterprise, for given employee (...) (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1). A representative of trade unions has observed a certain advantage of workplaces where trade unions operate: if there is a social factor, there is always a pressure on employer, to get some benefits either via dialogue or a compromise (...) (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1).*

## **Perceptions of active ageing**

As it could be observed in the in-depth interviews conducted in the previous phase of the project, Polish respondents found defining active ageing difficult. Analyzing the **level of understanding**, a dissimilar degree of accuracy of associations can be noted.

*And this is a stereotype which is stuck in the society and which is perpetuated by the media and decision-makers. I believe this is the main point also for you, for scientists. Employers can do little about this (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*My knowledge is modest because I do not know. I was interested in the topic and that's why I am here. There is a lot of literature about the ageing process like gerontology, etc. I think the topic is still rather unknown (PL\_WSP\_5).*

Some voices emphasized distrust towards solutions promoting health and physical movement in the workplace (previously, one respondent talked about the facilities for employees that combined active and healthy ageing):

*The good thing is that there is the awareness that you can walk away from your desk and work out, right? This is also a valuable remark because it rarely happens here. To be honest, I have never heard about it and I don't know if I would take it seriously, if they installed a ladder (PL\_WSP\_3).*

However, the necessity of synergistic complementation of many solutions was also verbalized.

*(...) the number of things happening in the background, the number of things that have already happened, the number of things that have to work to keep the atmosphere at work this way and not the other. These are the small things like contests for children (...) English, if the child is born, then the person gets the blanket. These really are small things but someone has to do it and only then we build what can be seen from the outside and we say wow it's nice that the organizational culture is like this but behind it all, a whole range of such small things is hidden (PL\_WSP\_3).*

Numerous associations referred to **work as a part of active ageing**, both in the context of current employment and the unemployed.

*Another issue here is the question concerning people who have already obtained pension rights and have been expelled from the labour market. This, in my opinion, is a very wrong attitude (PL\_WSP\_1)*

*I would highlight here a quite different issue. You have to raise the awareness of the decision-makers. Decision-makers and the media (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*If the company is parting with an employee on the best terms, then the employee is later its advocate (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*Now, all the finesse can and should consist in giving this man a one-year time. He went on pension and now he has all the prerogatives to set up his own business or to retribute*

*employment and the employer will not be offended at the office. We also will not be offended as employers because we will only pay health incurrence for this employee (PL\_WSP\_5).*

*I am here for finding help for those who are very young and retire, on average, when they are fifty. For helping them in finding employment outside (PL\_WSP\_5).*

**Organizational perceptions** are inextricably connected with communication, dialogue that raises awareness permanently inscribed in companies' policies. Aware managers at all management levels can conduct an effective and open dialogue.

*This is the sphere open for incredible actions in terms of internal communication(...)  
PL\_WSP\_2).*

*It would probably be necessary to begin with raising awareness and establishing conditions so that the work can be further continued. They know the company, they know the people. Perhaps, they no longer need to perform heavy duties. But, their experience can be still used (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*This is also the task of employers and managers to use such employees, to provide them with some opportunities and to talk to them. Not much can be achieved without a dialogue (PL\_WSP\_2).*

The communication phase comprises the starting point for building a cafeteria motivational plan that links employees with their current employer.

*All these activities that are addressed to the kids in various competitions, for example, are also addressed to the employees' grandchildren to also show that we know there are parents or grandparents here who would like to show off their children's talents. I believe it builds us and shows that ok I have little children and it's ok for my employer, I have older children and this is also ok, I have grandchildren and this is ok as well. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*There are activities that join an employee with an employer, also the one who wants to work longer (PL\_WSP\_3)*

Communication is a complementary activity in the building organizational identity process and developing the attitudes of commitment.

*Employee is not a cost but an investment. In our company, its generally accepted that an employee is an investment. This is a matter of building awareness. The issue of taking an example from the best because we consider ourselves to be such. We have been awarded a certificate for the best employer last year. This year, we were the second. The investment in an employee is a long-term activity. Provided that the company actually thinks long-term, then, its profitable. This regards adaptation of the workplace, allowing for flexibility, possibility to choose whether you want to come to*

*work at 7 o'clock or 9:30 am and if you want to work at home – then fine, trainings. In 2016-2019 our company will spend 6 million dollars for trainings. If someone wants to develop, then the company allows it. But, of course, with the awareness that this investment will be profitable. Not in a year or two but in a long-term perspective (PL\_WSP\_2).*

Line manager's perception is a derivative of the organizational culture. There is a management style closely related to the organizational culture and which takes into account the awareness of the situational adjustment of both human resources management tools as well as internal and external communication in the field of instruments, language used, frequency of messages, etc.

*(...) discussion at the lowest level. As a goal, paying attention to the lowest level where confrontation is most common (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*This is a field for amazing activities in terms of internal communication. Above all, the question of language. Workers of all ages speak different languages. This is a matter of adjusting messages, communication tools. There are various challenges. In our company, people who work in the office have access to computers, but others, production employees for example, do not. If we target communication activities only at those who have computers, we exclude the other part of employees. It is important to ensure that the communication platform covers all employees regardless of the availability of communication tools. There are also direct relationships with superiors which are very important. Raising awareness of the managerial staff, employees' meetings in the office, on the board with the president at least once a quarter. (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*When there are questions what activities are targeted at e.g. 50+ or 55+ because we don't target activities at the needed employees' age groups, everything we offer is rather complex. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*This is also the task of employers and managers to use such employees, to provide them with some opportunities and to talk to them. Not much can be achieved without a dialogue (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*I have employees who have reached the retirement age, retire and continue working with us. From an economic point of view, we also let them retire and hire those employees again. Also their knowledge, experience and willingness are invaluable and it also impresses me that someone does the same job for 40 years and still wants to do it, because he likes it a lot (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*Everything is connected with the managerial competences. (PL\_WSP\_3).*

Workers' perception is associated with versatile attitudes presented by employees. Many of them result from the lack of knowledge about the possibilities connected with the pre-retirement period. It may be an effect of the absence of a dialogue programmed as a systemic action. This way, both parties lose.

*I have employees who have reached the retirement age, retire and continue working with us. From an economic point of view, we also enable them to let them retire and hire those employees again. Also their knowledge, experience and willingness are invaluable and it also impresses me that someone does the same job for 40 years and still wants to do it, because he likes it a lot (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*I know the case of a woman who liked her job very much. She was 65 years old and she even got into this early retirement but she did not want to leave and here she is the case where there is neither communication nor understanding and there is fear. She really wanted to work but she did not say anything about it. In the end, the boss said she was at a retirement age so she got offended but the boss did not know that she wanted to work. Such a lack of communication and she left. She found a part-time job somewhere else because she could not imagine her life without work, children raised, she didn't want to look after her grandchildren. Lack of communication and there is also awareness that we are talking only to give it more of a human character. Let us not be afraid, speak (PL\_WSP\_3)*

### **Responses to active aging**

**Responses to active aging** can take place at many levels, starting from the national level, through sectoral and regional levels, to solutions designed and implemented in individual organizations of various types. Social partners see a large role of national programs, but they would also like to follow models from other countries. Many studies conducted in our country revealed the need for recognizable, valuable forms of real support for entrepreneurs (tax breaks, lower social burden).

*There would be a need for such actions (...), that is these national programs. Any incentives for employers, let's say, by law. By some higher-order regulation so that the employer would be encouraged.*  
(PL\_WSP\_4)

*Perhaps it would be worth seeing examples of countries that are more advanced in this area because there are already such things as adaptation. We all – employers, trade unionists and older people – would like to benefit from it. We just have to learn it.* (PL\_WSP\_2)

*That he would have some relief in this regard, or any support, or lowering some taxes in employment, or any additional grants so that the employer here shows that he, I would say colloquially, does not get rid of older workers. That here, in this area, there would be some encouragement, a benefit. To show good examples not only in the country, but also abroad. To promote this dialogue and share good practices at home and abroad.* (PL\_WSP\_4)

In line with the slogan, “think globally, act locally”, the partners gave examples of inspiring activities at the regional level.

*In our region we have signed such an agreement with the Certus school network which offered free biennial trainings for our colleagues, which allowed them to obtain qualifications in the areas of occupational health and safety techniques, agritourism techniques and techniques for protecting people and property. Thus, quite often using the experience acquired in the workplace. Additional knowledge, plus additional qualifications and a man could find a job when retiring (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*Finally, it is building a pro-healthy culture, that is, prevention, health promotion, promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Probably in the fall, in September, we will organize a kind of regional days of health and healthy lifestyle promotion (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*Olsztyn organizes a party called 'Olsztyn Actively'. Actively moving. There are about 30 disciplines people can try. These could be events for the elderly (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*our Voivodship Social Dialogue Council notes many successes and good experiences we refer to. Mrs. X appointed specialized commissions in a mixed system. At these committees, opinions, positions are developed and at least analyzed and this is done not in the confrontational manner but rather in terms of exchanging views only. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*The national and provincial councils of social dialogue are invaluable, they are of a great worth. This value would have to be expanded downwards. These social dialogue councils should be based on the feature of a dialogue, develop at the level of counties, at the level of municipalities. We should create a certain extensive structure that will facilitate the implementation of specialized solutions. This may even be an incentive since formally in the amended Act on the councils of social dialogue, nothing seems to be forbidden. We will probably lead to this because I have already had one and two meetings with Olsztyn District Office encouraging people to think about creating such a thing. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

Pointing to the important role of social dialogue councils in building the possibilities of a more effective partnership of social partners in active aging is completely convergent with the perception of this process by those involved in organizing workshops in Poland. Getting information about the Aspire project and research carried out to voivodship social dialogue councils opened up the opportunity to reach the respondents involved, resulted in a network of contacts useful both during the workshops and at subsequent stages of the project.

Response at the Company level in some cases meets the guidelines and bears the hallmarks of best practices in the field of creating strategies, programs and instruments of age management in organizations. At the same time, the ease of global companies with high financial capabilities and know-how was emphasized.

*It is probably easier for some employers to acquire good practices because they work globally and receive guidance. Our Japanese programs 'Place for everything - everything in its place' – ordering the workplace. Ergonomics of the workplace –*

*appropriate desks, appropriate armchairs, gyms in the workplace, access to fresh fruit (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*In addition to the fact that we operate dynamically internally through various initiatives, we still have a whole range of CSR programs. As part of these programs, we cooperate with various foundations, inter alia, located in the Poddębice County. There, some of these programs are addressed to the elderly. We have prepared a project together with the Poddębice County Initiatives Foundation 'Poddębicka Akademia Przedsiębiorczości.'<sup>2</sup> Over the years, we have slightly changed the formula of this Academy because at the beginning it was directed to the unemployed from the Poddębice County, to activate these people. It covered various types of online trainings. Nowadays, we notice the willingness and definitely more people who are aged 55+ and interested in this program. Now part of these programs under the 'Poddębicka Akademia Przedsiębiorczości' is directed towards the elderly. (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*I am the head of the international group of Maspex in Łowicz. Our workplaces can be found in countries of the world, and certainly in Europe. I want to say that we follow these experiences. We use their knowledge and use their experience by introducing certain solutions to companies in the food industry that we are. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

Respondents noticed a number of activities of the procurers aimed at pushing older employees out of the workplace. To some extent this is the result of the need to thoroughly restructure employment in an organization that did not change the competency profile of its employees during the socio-economic transformation, or was delaying technological changes.

*I also see such actions and we have been passing through this many times, such activities of the employer afraid to keep the older employees and instead of pursuing some age management policy, preferring, for example, to run programs of voluntary departures aimed at older employees. Encourage them with some financial incentive to terminate the employment contract, to leave, than to work the other way, to help introduce incentives or to facilitate the work and further refinement until the retirement age. In the case of my company after several years, such programs have been launched several times. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*since 2017, the employer has proposed changing the collective agreement (these rules) to the work regulations where we could not enhance some issues so that it would be more beneficial for employees. Rejection of these conditions by the employee resulted in the fact that it is the employer's fault and the employee may leave for these pre-retirement benefits. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

Some of the analyzed solutions marginalize older employees, with less or greater awareness of trade unions.

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<sup>2</sup> Academy of Entrepreneurship.

*we can boast to the employer that we strongly support employees to create such a training or learning system that our employees' children can benefit from studies, subsidies and then these generations can be employed so they are subsidized if the children of our employees want to learn abroad and study, there is a support in this area. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*Especially here, it is used in the simple cleaning works. There were people employed part-time. Now they are planning to limit the number of hours by half but I say it is using people because working less hours they have to do the same job as they had working full-time (PL\_WSP\_5).*

*the basis for talking to the employer, for carrying out trainings or monthly meetings even regarding the agreement between the employer and the trade union. Only for now there was no such thing (PL\_WSP\_5)*

Sectoral level analysis revealed the specificity and difficulties that appear in uniformed services, they also referred to the experience of the budget and small businesses in the craft sector.

*There would be a need for such actions, which were mentioned yesterday, that is these national programs. Any incentives for employers, let's say, by law. By some higher-order regulation so that the employer would be encouraged. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*Budgetary sector gives you that sense of security. For sure, the employer who has a private company and is only focused on a profit presents different approach. In our company, all these employees are protected. Nobody has such an approach or considers firing of such an employee who still need to wait five years before retiring. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*in the uniformed sector, this dignity is somehow preserved and is quite high. These civilian employees are respected. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*if someone works for twenty years in such constant stress because of the situations consistent with the specificity of their work, such as border guards or police, this stress is in every field and at any time. Suddenly, when it ceases to exist, then there are such somatic symptoms. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*It is important to find some work right after leaving employment (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*We represent areas that are important but unusual for today's image of the labor market – the craft environment. Here, tradition, firstly, between generations is clearly marked though it is different in a different way, and certainly would be a success if the craft was systemically strengthened, fixed as a significant image or even an answer to the problems and challenges of today (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*A first very pillar important would be strengthening the craft institutions as such (PL\_WSP\_5).*

Interlocutors presented various attitudes to social approach, on one hand seeing the necessity of national and comprehensive solutions for the country, on the other hand the need for individual employers' actions. At the same time they noticed a change in the way employers and trade union partners think.

*Employers are starting to change their thinking because every employer came into the market just like you and now he is the employer but one day he will become a pensioner with you. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*There would be a need for such actions, which were mentioned yesterday, that is these national programs. Any incentives for employers, let's say, by law. By some higher-order regulation so that the employer would be encouraged. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*That he would have some relief in this regard, or any support, or lowering some taxes in employment, or any additional grants so that the employer here shows that he, I would say colloquially, does not get rid of older workers. That here, in this area, there would be some encouragement, a benefit. To show good examples not only in the country, but also abroad. To promote this dialogue and share good practices at home and abroad. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*We also have good experiences. I must admit that we have established a so-called parity committee. I would encourage all trade unionists, all companies to create something like that. It would mean that the employers' and trade unions' ideas would be the same. The party is that no decision was made if there was no collective agreement. It functioned perfectly for four years. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

Dissemination and strengthening the social dialogue institutions is obligatory as a process in which apolitical partners participate, talking regularly and transparently with each other the effectiveness of cooperation being an obvious result.

*You cannot attack us because I do not say that all employers are fair, but you can neither attack me as the employer nor attack the trade unionist, and vice versa. There should be a dialogue between us since we are associated in the same institution and should care about it instead of preparing the wheelbarrow, put the CEO there and carry him somewhere. This is the worst. This undermines the foundations of the company. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*the unions will only come to terms with the entrepreneur when they will not be apolitical (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*The essence is apoliticism because the trade union is not a political organization. By their very nature, an employer should be an employer and not a participant in a political game. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*The basis for the dialogue with the employer so that the trainings or monthly meetings can be carried out even about the agreement between the employer and the trade union. Only for now there is no such thing. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*(...) special solutions that would give an opportunity to launch the system, but, for the support, it is also necessary to disseminate social dialogue institutions not only central and provincial, but also the poviats, also the commune. This is a social movement for building a culture of civic communication with each other. This is something that, as can be said, gives a chance to create a new reality culture. Perhaps we will not be the ones to define this new reality but maybe better if we do not even try to define it (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*Finance can always be a hindrance, but this beginning and this first stage is not limited. This is just our job, change of consciousness, meetings, change of regulations – maybe some legislative facilitations and only maybe later, in the next stage, there may be a question of limited finances, but finances can always be obtained. There are some programs, you can create such programs. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*Transparency of communication is the key to success, because I am just a strong supporter of thesis that if topics touch everyone, they should be discussed. (PL\_WSP\_3).*

Unions reps as responses to aging boasted their own system approach, whenever they come out with an initiative, they present a conscious attitude and possessing objective information (conducting research, seeking advice from the academic environment) exert pressure to implement specific solutions in the field of age management for the employer. Solutions that do not have a facade character, but are versatile and multi-tooled in the culture and strategy of the company. There was no noticeable attitudes or approaches to discarding the responsibility for creating a work environment friendly to the perpetrators of an employer.

*We have done that ten years ago and we are still dealing with it and that was the age management. At our request, the company engaged the company in cooperation with highly committed employees. With the help of human resources and trade unions a perfect program suited to the needs was built. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*But here, the company has to change. The company should adapt its philosophy to this program, that is to this age management. It can't be done only to show that we do it, just to build the image – it has to be done comprehensively, that means everything. We don't chose individual issues. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*Now we are going to introduce a rehabilitation program too. We have an idea of workplaces with health activities. There is this OSH committee that also supports us, also from the employer's side, there's, let's say, a good interests in this. It is necessary to exert pressure on them. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*I am the head of the international group of Maspex in Łowicz. Our workplaces can be found in countries of the world, and certainly in Europe. I want to say that we follow these experiences. We use their knowledge and use their experience by introducing certain solutions to companies in the food industry that we are. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*Before this program was created 'age management' it was called but I don't remember exactly its name there were created the so called 'focus groups' consisting of older employees of various ages. (PL\_WSP\_4).*

*For many years we wanted to find out about the problems of older employees. Of course, they also came to us with their problems and we took care of it comprehensively, i.e. we used knowledge of the wiser than us because sociological research was done for example by Professor Nęcki or Sedlak, or other sociologists known in Poland or social psychologists. (PL\_WSP\_4).*

Thus the respondents perceive age management practices in the categories of mutual benefits. They emphasize the benevolent meaning of awareness among employers and the availability of professional personnel services: *an enlightened employer with a solid HR is a guarantee of successful future in the company, his employees are comfortable and they do not surprise their employer with a quitting notice from one day to another (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1). It is also the employer's business to keep his employee as long as possible in his workplace and (...) throughout whole year there are a lot of pro-health actions (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1), or (...) just an entrepreneur does not evaluate any employee in terms of age, only competence (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_2).* The perception of older workers is most important: *A competent employee who reaches the retirement age and wants to leave the company always meets the job offer. From our point of view this has a deep meaning because such an experienced, competent employee has a value that is difficult to overestimate (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_2).*

In such circumstances soft solutions are implemented easily. The employers introduce many facilities related to work environment which gain approval and support of trade unions: *we have our own healthcare center (...), doctors, nurses (...) rehabilitation center (...), gym (...) we do medical check-ups of our employees. (...) The check-ups are held in the three years cycle to provide control and monitoring (...) of health condition (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1).* As far as age management goes (...) there is a medical pack within which employees are entitled to healthcare services in the whole region, not only at work. We have one work environment with noise standards exceeding but we are trying to handle it. We organize workshops for our employees and management group which are a good opportunity to work on common solutions (...) (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1),.

It is worth to emphasize that a community of internal stakeholders is created while implementing a variety of management solutions. There is also a good deal of knowledge from both sides concerning solutions like:

- Workplaces are adapted to the physical conditions of the employee which further makes the employee suffer less, at the same time the statistics change (...) and this results in a positive financial result.
- *Performing certain activities gives these older people some more difficulties than the young and it is slowing down (...) We are looking for more appropriate workplaces where those who have any health problems can (...) be inserted somewhere (...)* (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1).
- *The awareness that age may be the cause of discrimination has improved, but there are more pressing issues like sexual discrimination* (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1).
- *A specialist employed in the company (...) performs the workshop by which ergonomics gets improved in these positions (...). We also have teams called leaderships (...) and within these groups 15 employees are rotating* (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1).

On the occasion of analyzing the theme of responsibility for designing and implying the changes to the organization, the representative of the employers' association refers to the concept of union care for workers:

*(...) it is a perfect opportunity for trade unions to take care of such an employee, activate him, it is also a memory of retired employees (...) a lot of opportunities for trade unions* (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1).

At the same time the need to change attitudes arises: *(...) primarily because such organized actions require a large corporation, for those small it is often pointless as why newsletters seem pointless in small companies (...)* (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1). and the need to age management tools and communication with employees were tailored to the size and specifics of the business - situational approach.

Organizational culture, the style of management as well as approach to work have been pointed as significant aspects of designing and implementing solution related to age management. In a situation when a healthcare problem arises an employee reports his problem to his supervisor and they work on a solution together: *(...) an employee was saying (...) one moment, one moment, discussion with a master and in this occasion it is possible to help him, he was directed to another position with less burden (...) a human approach is necessary to show* (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1). Improving the image of the employer and creating his image of the employer of choice was noticed by a trade union representative: *it forces some (...) employer's actions to improve his (...) image in the environment here* (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1),.

At the other extreme is a misunderstanding of the subject: *Even if the project in question could be included in the "economic and social interests of employees", we have not addressed the issue so far in this way. Perhaps our social activity, and especially its recreational part, can be considered as a substitute for solving this problem?* (PL\_IDI\_TR\_2).

## Intergenerational issues



Intergenerational issues constitute a significant issue of age management. Respondents noticed differences in the approach to work among different generations (the basis of motivation, expectations, behaviors), at the same time they did not point to the conflict of generations. Trade union representatives argued that younger people are not that eager to join trade unions. The issues of deferred effects of designing and implementing solutions addressed to employees of different generations were also raised. Respondents relate the intergenerational support to the transfer of duties, and hence knowledge and experience, by an employee who retires. Certainly besides overt knowledge this also applies to latent knowledge. In an organization this involves duplication of positions which is a cost. Concerns over intergenerational conflict:

*I have never heard of an intergenerational conflict. I think age is not that important here (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*Considering ageing, young people are those who want to introduce some changes and not the other side (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*The next generation Y which lives laxly does not identify, does not attach, which is a challenge for us, employers. (PL\_WSP\_5)*

*These younger generations say they should change their work three times in five years. (PL\_WSP\_3)*

*We think long-term. Only in 10 or 15 years, people will gain this awareness and good habits. They will use it then regardless of their age. If someone uses tools and resources provided by the company being 28, then, this person develops good habits (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*There are other problems, but rather in terms of younger employees who don't want to join unions. But nevertheless, we are trying to reach them very slowly and these are so new, let's say how the company changes, in general our company is already so super-modern and working methods. (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*the young people would like to have a job most willingly in a state-owned company in the office. from 8 to 3 and then don't care after 3:00 PM. Let the boss worry. (PL\_WSP\_5).*

The qualities of the work in intergenerational teams were noticed by representatives of trade unions:

*a person who was 60 years old and was working at the computer was not so fluent in it. You had to adjust the requirements. Young girls with full experience supported these older employees. However, in the production departments, those older people with such experience where you had to do everything manually, show it. In this case, older employees took care of young people. Of course, by doing the work and*

*additionally sharing their experience and knowledge, we paid extra to these employees. The older employee, in addition to the fact that he feels valued, has still received a bonus because it was his time. In addition to controlling the safety of the product and service, he also taught this young man (PL\_WSP\_4).*

but also representatives of employers. There was consistency here, with the basis of cooperation being the consent that some employees have deficits and that these deficits can be compensated during the work of younger and older employees. It is crucial to rely on employee competences, regardless of age.

*we have opened a school called Leniwiec<sup>3</sup> and this is an Excel school with the assumption that if someone knows Excel then he/she may have more time to do other things, because Excel will do everything for that person. Indeed, there is a young boy there who is an Excel magician of some kind, and very different people go there from the youngest employees who do not know, to older people, for whom making the formula of adding anything to anything is a big challenge and they share knowledge. (PL\_WSP\_3).*

Mentoring was noticed, both in the traditional form, but also in reverse mentoring, in which the mentor's role is played by a younger employee and even a trainee. There were also opinions that older workers are great as mentors.

*We've had such an example of reverse mentoring (PL\_WSP\_1).*

*We have an example of this traditional, which is of course a way to appreciate, share knowledge with those who are somewhere at the beginning or in the middle of their career path. Reverse mentoring is a great tool. We had trainees and management. The object was to navigate in social media, but not only. We left them with total freedom. It could be: what is facebook, where do you write comments, but we also had managers who wanted to know the latest trends related to, for example, intelligent kitchen. It was a big challenge. A great example of how two people can be put together. The advantage for the trainee who has the opportunity to stay very close to a board member and, in addition, in the position of an expert – it gives a sense of privilege, being noticed. It also showed experienced people how much they can learn from people who just entered the company (PL\_WSP\_1).*

*To look after young employees when there is a lot of movement, training and learning good habits. Those who are experienced are most suitable here (PL\_WSP\_2).*

*These employees are very often better because you do not have to supervise them. Task-oriented work is easier. This is what we all have to learn – employers and employees (PL\_WSP\_2).*

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<sup>3</sup> lenić się – to laze

The aspect of the enormous challenge of the presence of five generations in the internal labor market has been raised each case being different. Generation is a group of people distinguished on the basis of the similarity of the life cycle phase, and thus the life situation (approach used in social policy referring to professional activity). However the generation is also a group of people of similar age, born in the same period, usually analyzed from the point of view of the common system of values and worldview, shaped by the socio-political context in which individuals were brought up in their youth (approach referring to cultural similarity).

*Five generations suddenly could be found in the company (PL\_WSP\_1)*

*For communication purposes, this is a very important relationship. The younger see how the company perceives those who are leaving (PL\_WSP\_2)*

*to receive a pension benefit, the employment relationship must be terminated, i.e. it is a necessary condition. Here, the employer depends on whether he or she will re-establish this employment relationship with the employee. There are such cases, but very single. In 3,000 employees in the company, these are really some isolated cases. In special workplaces, where, for example, a new person who replaces the pensioner is still not trained, it happens (PL\_WSP\_4)*

*there is a need for continuity in the meaning of the care of this experienced employee over the onboarding of the young man, the transfer of quality, reliability of work, that is, these craft features (PL\_WSP\_5).*

*We now have a case that one of the employees reaches retirement age at the end of the year and we agreed that we have to recruit a successor so that they work together because I think that is something that employers must think of, that there are recurrent increases in employment and costs caused by doubling up positions, but it is necessary for the continuity of the process and knowledge in the organization. (PL\_WSP\_3).*

*(...) there is such a young boy who is a magician of some kind, and save very different people from such youngest employees who do not know, to older people, for whom making the formula of adding anything to anything is a big challenge and they share knowledge. (PL\_WSP\_3).*

## Good practices in active ageing

Respondents easily provided examples of age management practices supporting the process of healthy and active aging.

Company (name)	Details of the practice	Key elements of the practice (content and/or implementation)
Phillip Morris	(...) we are a modern union, (...) we imported a book from the United States, (...)we got it translated for our own purpose. (...) we cooperated with a scholar from the higher education institution in London who visited us and we also got it all discussed together.	Collective bargaining
Agros Nova	In 2012 when the employer was an American fund and with Polish capital, we managed to reach an agreement, because it was a conscious employer and the consent of shareholders was to introduce age management. The employer saw the way to face the creation of this tool and created intergenerational solidarity, which explains why this agreement has gained a rank in the workplace.	
Agros Nova	Unpaid leave. For own purposes. There used to be situations when the employer did not agree to a leave at all, due to no other employees and he just did not agree. This arrangement makes it possible now.	
Japan Tobacco International	There is need for flexibility, innovativeness (...). It is not necessary now for the employee to spend in the office 8 or 9 hours or for him to work from 7 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon. It is not the point anymore. So I am giving my employee this flexibility. If they wish to start at 10:00- be my guest. They will stay longer if there is need for that. If they wish to do home office a couple of days during a month, it also is possible.	Flexible working
Emitel	We (...) allow for the home office under given circumstances. This also is a question of trust and mentality and I guess it is possible to measure these tasks. The role of the head is to distribute tasks in a way they can all be measured.	
Japan Tobacco International	(...) private healthcare, life insurance, flexible work time, co-financing of meals, sport, training, loans, grants, co-financing of studies. They are addressed to employees of all ages. In addition we provide programs with dieters invited. We have massages, a personal trainer with whom you can consult. In addition, doctors come to the factory with whom you can also consult. Do preventive examinations and this on the spot.	Healthy workplace
Emitel	We organized a "Healthy spine" workshop for employees who work in the office for 10 or 12 hours and work in a sustainable working time system. I was also wondering the response would be. I have a unit with men working for 12 hours and there we just have to do extra, because they did not fit everyone into the room. There was a physiotherapist who talked a bit theoretically, and then showed the exercises and ordered a ladder like that in schools. They are young people, on average around 32-33 years old and they go out for a break and practice. I also think that raising awareness is important.	
Emitel	Employers must allow for that. This mustn't be meant but done. Just like we promoted the healthy spine campaign and ergonomics at work we also showed how to exercise. We just held ten minutes' working out at work.	
Emitel	We hold an audit of ergonomics once a year. We check each desk, we measure them and also make sure everyone is seated properly because sometime people complain they are in pain due to lack of comfort. So we	

	give it a check out. Then we see that a chair is ramshackle but still someone likes it because they have worked on it from day one.	
Phillip Morris	It is crucial to get employers and the board convinced that these actions pay to everyone. In our company all generations were examined, how they get aged, when we will face these problems. To get them understand that this is not about paying more.	Performance management
Emitel	(We have a ) development program building technical competences because we are a very technical organization with niche competences of employees very difficult to obtain on the market in some places and we decided to describe all competences. We have outlined eight of these technical competences at three different levels. The employees themselves assessed each competency, their manager assessed them, and then the high-level manager also had a look at it (...)	
JTI	Introducing the retirement plan for all employees still in 2017. We were getting prepared for that for a long time. This is the first such point why we wanted to go out to the employees with such a plan - long-term saving for retirement. In our company - because of Japanese heritage - long-term thinking is important. Indeed, well in advance. This is also an incentive for employees, for young people, to stay in the company, for those who are outside to join. This is a supplement to a wide range of benefits. There are a number of additional benefits beyond the wage rates that employees use, but the retirement plan is such a large project, which many firms did not have at the time. Now in connection with government announcements that these plans will have to be created - many companies decide to introduce them on these old rules. They decide now. We were one of the pioneers on the Polish market. The first contributions went into plan in January 2017.	Recruitment, jobless
JTI	This is also getting people sensitive to thinking about their future and also making them stay with us for years.	
PM	We have a union of retired and pensioners and if they are connected to Solidarity and the company as well, they can get involved there. We also cooperate with other companies regarding these issues.	
PM	We also have this custom for people getting retired that we host them for the last time, we get them to the restaurant, coming with wife or family and friends, we get him to our store choosing a gift worth up to 1,000 PLN, we get his mates and have a goodbye party. We present it on our website, in our magazine (...)	
PM	This last day is very important and it is a really good thing happening that we have funds for that, that the CEO comes and finds little time for that.	
Emitel	We know the person's plans and in return he also knows that he is well taken care of. If we hear that the person would like to work more we are also happy about it. There is no pressure to make someone leave. We are coming back and make an arrangement so that when they know they will want to retire we get someone to work and get acquainted with the range of work.	
JTI	Each employee regardless of age. Age is not a criterion. The only one is the will to work.	Training
UTW Olsztyn	I strongly believe in the power of Third Age University (Uniwersytet Trzeciego Wieku- UTW) for seniors. I know it well as my mom is really active there and she met a lot of people eager to get involved. They have money for that and they really spend nice time together. Whatever that is, organized or winter fires, or trips, or summer performances. These are really active seniors who know how to get busy.	

Emitel	(...) if someone decides that they would like to get skills from the area of assertiveness or anything else, they get signed in and we make them ready to benefit from that. People are not just workers, they are a complex being. It is not just about work. People have expectations and they want to develop and acquire new competences which are maybe not that useful in everyday work but they make family or social relations easier.	
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Phillipe Morris	<p>In 2014, a solution catalog was created in our company, which in our opinion is to support employees, help to preserve their unique knowledge and experience, but, in a broader perspective, it also increases the company's competitiveness towards other companies. I want to emphasize that I was built with the energy that was created during the development of these solutions. It was very good cooperation with the human resources department, trade unions. They were the representatives of projects that accomplished this goal. Finally, the extraordinary openness and trust of employees.</p> <p>A project was created which, in our opinion, is optimally suited to the employees' needs but its full implementation in the proposed shape, effective and supported by the involvement of the entire organization as a whole create a change of the course towards the company conscious of the employee value. We believe that it was a much needed investment and that it can bring many benefits to both the company and employees. There were employees in these focus groups in the age of 55+, there were employees aged 45-55, there were superiors of these employees, there were also retired pensioners, former social partners, analysis departments of our HR centers, a team that deals with the philosophy of health that is works on improving the employees' health, service department and external consultants who coordinated the entire program. There were six areas of interest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mentoring and succession program.</li> <li>2. Individual career paths for the employees five years before retirement.</li> <li>3. Database of employees and individual career paths.</li> <li>4. The suite of tools for managers and employees who supported this process.</li> <li>5. Retirement contract</li> <li>6. "Plan your retirement" program that is what do you want to do when you retire.</li> </ol>	<p>Development of the program was proceeded by the research stakeholders took part in (participation)</p> <p>A comprehensive approach (many areas of age management)</p>
Phillipe Morris	<p>When it comes to the pension contract, some very good solutions can be found here for the organization, for the employee as they organize the period of several years before retirement and there is a sense of security and confidence of the employee, and on the other hand the possibility to plan such activities when it comes to the company.</p> <p>From the management psychologist point of view, it is very important to write down this contract in detail and to keep it because you cannot sign something and then withdraw from it.</p>	<p>Preceding activities (several years before retirement)</p>
Agros Nova	<p>This agreement was aimed at adapting the working conditions of older employees to their health and needs and increasing the competitiveness of the company the employers and trade unions depended on very much and a better use of the potential and experience of these employees with many years of experience. We based everything on assumptions. This was the content of the decision of the European Parliament regarding the European Year of Active Aging. It was a program and we signed this agreement based on this program. If we are talking about older employees, we started from</p>	<p>Age management strategy in the form of an agreement;</p> <p>Inclusion of 45+ employees in order to early</p>



	<p>those aged 45+. Currently, they are very young people, but we started from this age.</p> <p>We agreed with the employer that the sooner we start to build this strategy and improve working conditions and diagnose the direction of improving working conditions and interact on various levels, the better effects we will achieve over a long period of time.</p> <p>Each recruitment process for vacant positions began with an internal offer among the employees of the company. Thus, if there was a workplace someone could express himself in a given position from a different group, someone saw himself in a different position, maybe more prestigious, or perhaps more responsible, then, he had such opportunity.</p> <p>This is not necessarily the case of 45+ people but we gave them choice.</p> <p>This form of job advertisement didn't indicate the age limit and it was very positive.</p>	<p>'drgoon' them into shaping activities</p>
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## Final remarks and conclusions

- This report summarizes the qualitative research carried out in the Aspire project in 2017-2018.
- The study involved 51 interlocutors, representing mainly employers and trade unions, but also non-governmental organizations and policy-makers. The representatives of various trade union levels (national and company committees) could be noted as well as employers representing small, medium and large enterprises, both Polish and foreign, public and private. Overall, it seems to reflect the active aging and industrial relations' situation in Poland.
- In addition, desk research was carried out at an earlier stage of the project. The analysis of websites of the key national union organizations did not confirm that they have noticed the problem of active aging nor they would to join the process of creating a valuable, high quality and healthy work environment. Unions of employers present reports and elaborations on topics related to active aging.
- Organizations of employers that were subject to this research similarly to trade unions notice the problem of aging of the human resources. Respondents declare that all actions related to active aging are precious and needed.
- Interlocutors noticed many barriers and facilitators of the development of active aging in Poland. They were relatively the easiest to give examples from the macroeconomic level, concerning the labor market and national regulations.
- Active aging perception included many references of which the most extensive turned out to be those referring to work and employment as well as related to organizational perception.
- Respondents showed quite a number of activities in response to the phenomenon of aging. Among them the most important were age management solutions. There are isolated examples of collective labor law.
- Many examples of intergenerational issues have been noticed in the research. The greatest deal of attention was given to the issues of knowledge transfer support.

- Respondents mentioned examples of solutions that can be considered as inspiring and promising practices. These were both comprehensive approach like a retirement plan, a training system, an ergonomic audit, a pension contract, an agreement on working conditions as well as individual sub-faculties, which can be used, for example, discussing pension plans with employees, celebrating the last day at work with the participation of trade unions; free holiday; analysis of employee needs using questionnaires, and others.
- Further cooperation with respondents is possible as they seem to be open and willing. They can also participate in trainings which would be seen as a “good practice”.

The utilitarian aim resulting from necessity to design and conduct training module in the ASPIRE project, is gaining practical information regarding these trainings. In general the respondents are of the opinion that trainings on active aging are needed:

- *(...) trainings are very necessary especially in the SME environment because usually they cannot afford “soft” solutions, when in the times of varied employees each knowledge can be useful, the group must be properly organized before and the whole event needs promotion, yet I believe it will be a popular thing. (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_1).*
- *Training modules should provide a chance to learn good practices: it would be good if they provided useful cases (PL\_IDI\_TR\_1).*
- *I think this might be an interesting topic. We look forward to more information (PL\_IDI\_TR\_2).*
- *Needed training from empathy, but I think it is needed and it is also very important, because it is necessary to tell employers that it really does not make sense to defame all the other rules that it is worth seeing just people in this all (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_2).*
- *Interesting is idea: You have to ask these people who are in the center of interest - what kind of facilities would they like? Then analyze what is possible, because not everything is possible. What is possible and what is not? And only the third step is whether employers want to do it. Of course, you can build a training program for other employers (PL\_IDI\_EMP\_2).*

Among the useful issues to broaden the knowledge were: aging index; volunteering, solutions in other countries that can be transferred to Poland. Polish respondents expect at least some part of the training materials to be in Polish.