

FACTAGE-BE

Fairer active ageing for Europe

DURATION
1/05/2016 - 30/04/2019

BUDGET
211 050 €

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND OVERALL AIMS

Population ageing is presenting Europe's welfare states with multiple challenges. But how quickly demographic dependency ratios are rising and how far national policies and institutions are aligned and fine-tuned for this demographic change determines the extent of these challenges. Generally, the financial sustainability of public welfare systems is critical, partly because of the substantial amount of intergenerational transfers built into their design. Moreover, there is some evidence to suggest that unequal experiences of ageing are increasing, arguably due to a lack of foresight and recognition of the likely effects of uneven cumulative life course experiences and policy reforms on different socio-economic groups. The FACTAGE consortium recognises these phenomena as major societal challenges, which can be addressed by innovative evidence-based policymaking.

FACTAGE starts from the premise that there is substantial scope for increasing the length of average working lives and active ageing in its multifaceted forms, but realising this potential requires careful attention to equity concerns at older ages, not least prospectively. Furthermore, there is the fundamental issue of how to reconcile the obligation to work longer with concerns over intergenerational distribution. The project is designed to provide a scientific underpinning to better understand and address these intra- and intergenerational concerns, and to propose effective policies.

Given this background, FACTAGE will place a special focus on the emerging inequalities affecting older workers.

FACTAGE aims to generate and disseminate findings in response to the following broad questions:

- How do levels of (healthy) life expectancy differ across socio-economic groups in EU countries?
- How do pension and labour market policy measures designed to expand working lives (current and future) interact with these trends in mortality and healthy life expectancy?
- How do the different institutional arrangements within EU member states affect that process?
- How do differential longevity gains and longer working careers affect (in)equality in the experience of ageing and well-being among older people?
- Which policies and institutional settings can best promote fairness within and between generations?
- And, at the same time, further expand working lives?

One core aim is to devise the necessary tools and then to carry out a comparative assessment of differential mortality risks, health and labour market inequalities. The project will recommend evidence-based policy scenarios for an equitable allocation of labour and retirement across populations and generations.

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FOCUS

Given the project's emphasis on inequality, FACTAGE will focus on impacts on people with lower educational attainment, health limitations and disrupted work histories. The central concept guiding FACTAGE, namely well-being in later life, will reflect multiple dimensions, especially pension income, employment, health, work-life balance and subjective well-being.

We will compare the employment and retirement options of older people with (healthy) life expectancy in socio-economic subgroups to ascertain how institutional design and reforms affect equity across generations. Further, we draw a distinction between policies suitable for the current generation of older people, and prospective policy scenarios.

Based on multidisciplinary research, FACTAGE will provide evidence on policy approaches across EU countries that are favourable to extending working careers and improving well-being in later life, while also generating wider societal, micro- and macroeconomic benefits.

FACTAGE has a strong focus on broad stakeholder outreach and we encourage interested individuals, organisations and companies to get in touch and explore avenues for collaboration.

ORGANISATION

The research is organised around four work packages. The first three explore (in)equalities in a range of domains related to a longer working life and life expectancy.

Work package 1 is concerned with how longer working lives are associated with the changing labour markets that older workers face, and with older populations' general well-being. Work package 2 investigates the need for working longer in the nexus of the workplace (work-life balance, potential inequalities in skills and working conditions, intergenerational exchange). Work package 3 zooms in on the fundamental inequality in (healthy) life expectancy. The outcome will be a toolbox for the assessment of socio-economic differences in life expectancy in the EU. In the last work package these findings are connected and expanded in order to propose policy scenarios that have the potential both to facilitate longer working lives and to positively contribute to intra- and intergenerational equity.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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