



**European Cooperation
in the field of Scientific
and Technical Research
- COST -**

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COST 046/14

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Subject : Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action IS1402: Ageism - a multi-national, interdisciplinary perspective

Delegations will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for COST Action IS1402 as approved by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) at its 190th meeting on 14 May 2014.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
For the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as
COST Action IS1402
AGEISM - A MULTI-NATIONAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding, declaring their common intention to participate in the concerted Action referred to above and described in the technical Annex to the Memorandum, have reached the following understanding:

1. The Action will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of document COST 4114/13 “COST Action Management” and document COST 4112/13 “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” , or in any new document amending or replacing them, the contents of which the Parties are fully aware of.
2. The main objective of the Action is to enhance scientific knowledge and attention to ageism by integrating disciplines, developing collaborations, stimulating scientific and public interest, and developing a new generation of researchers in the field.
3. The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of information available during the planning of the Action, at EUR 32 million in 2014 prices.
4. The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect on being accepted by at least five Parties.
5. The Memorandum of Understanding will remain in force for a period of 4 years, calculated from the date of the first meeting of the Management Committee, unless the duration of the Action is modified according to the provisions of section 2. *Changes to a COST Action* in the document COST 4114/13.

A. ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

Ageism (i.e., the complex and often negative social construction of old age) is highly prevalent. There is unequivocal evidence concerning the negative consequences associated with ageism at the individual, familial, and societal levels. The long term goal of this Action is to challenge the practice of ageism and allow older people to realize their full potential. This will be achieved by enhancing scientific knowledge and attention to ageism, by bringing together and integrating the different disciplines of research, by developing national, multi-national and international collaborations with public policy officials, non-academic professionals, civil society NGOs and older persons, and by fostering a new generation of researchers. Expected deliverables include: a) the creation of a web-site; b) a depository database of scientific measures and evidence based interventions that target ageism; c) the facilitation of scientific Training Schools, Short Term Scientific Missions and conferences; and d) the dissemination of collaborative working papers, scientific reports, proceedings, academic publications, policy and recommendation papers and an edited book on ageism. In light of the changing demographics, the high prevalence of ageism, its complex social roots, broad consequences, and the limited research on the topic, this Action is timely and has both practical and scientific significance.

Keywords: discrimination, prejudice, human rights, ageism, older adults

B. BACKGROUND

B.1 General background

Ageism (i.e., the complex and often negative social construction of old age) is highly prevalent worldwide (Bytheway, 1995; Nelson, 2005; Palmore, 1999). A recent study based on the European Social Survey (The Everyday Ageism Project, (www.eurage.com)) found that ageism is the most prevalent type of discrimination, reported by almost 35% of all participants over the age of 18 (Ayalon, 2013). Ageism occurs at the structural and the individual levels, and exists in many different contexts (Iversen, Larsen, and Solem, 2009). Despite the high prevalence of ageism and its negative effects, research on ageism is relatively scarce, especially when compared to sexism and racism (Nelson, 2005).

The overall goal of this Action is to challenge the practice of ageism and allow older people to realize their full potential. This will be achieved by enhancing scientific knowledge and attention to ageism, by bringing together and integrating the different disciplines of research, by conducting

cross national comparisons of policies and practices, by developing collaborations with public policy officials, non-academic professionals, civil society NGOs and older persons and by fostering a new generation of researchers. This Action is desirable for several reasons: a) to develop new understandings and best-practices concerning the topic of ageism and create a platform for original thinking, which harmonizes various disciplines, methodologies, schools of thought, and cultures; b) to develop new collaborations and nurture existing ones in order to enhance the state of research and develop future applications for collaborative research mechanisms; c) to serve as a platform for knowledge dissemination and integration among researchers, practitioners, policy makers and NGOs; and d) to enhance the field of gerontology and geriatrics through the provision of instrumental support and mentorship to a new generation of researchers in ageism-related fields.

B.2 Current state of knowledge

There is ample evidence concerning the negative effects of ageism in all spheres of life. Ageism takes place at the structural-societal level, the family level and the individual level and is present in many different contexts (Iversen, Larsen, and Solem, 2009). Ageism reinforces social inequality as it is more pronounced towards older women, poor people, or those with dementia. Moreover, self-directed ageism is a risk for both morbidity and mortality. Below is a non-exhaustive review of the manifestations and consequences of ageism:

Ageism in the healthcare system. Approximately, 17% of the European population is over the age of 65. Healthcare utilization and costs are disproportionately higher in this group and are expected to increase with the advancement of medicine and technology. This phenomenon has led some philosophers to wonder whether older Europeans have a duty to die, given the burden that the prolongation of life in old age puts on the healthcare and family systems (Hardwig, 2013). Although not always explicitly stated, this argument might be at least partially responsible for differential treatment and practices concerning the allocation of a finite amount of medical resources, such as the failure to screen for various conditions in old age, age-based restrictions for transplant surgeries or fertility treatments, and the failure to offer innovative, rehabilitative or expensive treatments to older adults (Access all Ages, 2012, Austin et al., 2013, Lawler et al., 2013). Health care professionals are also less likely to involve older patients in treatment decisions, and are more likely to communicate in patronizing and disrespectful ways with older adults as compared to younger adults (Harrigan et al., 1990).

Ageism can also be a factor in the mismanagement of diagnostic and treatment procedures (Fialová and Onder, 2009). The prescription of potentially inappropriate medications for geriatric patients is

common in Europe, as confirmed by two multicenter EU projects, ADHOC and SHELTER (Fialová et al., 2005). Almost 20 % of older home care recipients in 2001 used at least one potentially inappropriate medication. Poor economic situation was the most important predictive factor of this type of prescription (OR=18, 95% CI [1.82- 3.39]). In nursing home settings, 40.5% of older adults used at least one potentially inappropriate medication in 2009 (Fialová D., June 23-27, 2013). The health, social, and economic consequences of such misguided strategies are expected to be high, but have never been estimated at the European level.

Despite the high use of medicine by older adults they are often excluded from clinical trials, solely because of their age. The multicenter European project PREDICT confirmed that the mean age of individuals involved in clinical trials on heart failure was 61–63 years, but the common age at diagnosis was 74–78 years. In clinical trials on dementia the mean age of participants was

Ageism in the judicial-legal system. The judicial decision making system suffers from ageism. For example, studies in the field of elder guardianship have found that courts tend to nominate guardians over older persons without seeing or hearing the elderly person, while adopting an ageist discourse which equates old age with mental incompetence (Doron, 2004). Other studies regarding the judicial construction of old age in case law have shown how judges lack critical knowledge on key dimensions of ageing. These courts found it easier to adopt a narrative justice based on ageism and on a paternalistic legal policy aimed to protect rather than respect autonomy (Doron and Golan, 2007). Moreover, whereas judicial decisions tend to assess the overall capacity of individuals (especially with dementia), in reality capacity is task specific, so a person incapable of one task may be capable of another. The Action posit that assuming overall incapacity solely based on age is blatant ageism. These ageist trends are found both in the courts and at the local, national, and international legislative levels (Doron and Apter, 2010).

A recent study regarding the European Court of Justice (ECJ) found that the amount of elder rights cases brought before the ECJ is very low, and their overall quantitative weight is minor at best (Doron, 2013b). There is no real sign of increased awareness, or an increase in the number of cases in this field. When these cases do reach the ECJ, the core legal issues are usually narrow. Major legal issues in the field of elder rights such as patients' rights, health-care, institutional or community-based long-term care, housing, or employment are almost non-existent. Finally, older persons from key European countries and key elder rights NGOs have minimal or no presence before the ECJ (Doron, 2013b). Other examples of the ageist attitudes employed by the ECJ can be found in the ECJ's ruling concerning the Joined Cases C-159/10 and C-160/10 where the court suggested that it was legitimate to retire older workers to encourage the promotion of a younger workforce and prevent disputes concerning employees' fitness to work beyond a certain age.

Ageism in the workforce. One of the most important social arenas that reflects the depth and explicit negative expression of ageism is the labour force (O'Cinneide, 2005; Meenan, 2012). Although, for the most part, older people are considered to be as productive workers as younger adults (Ng & Feldman, 2008, 2010), older people are exposed to multiple sources of discrimination (Bal, Reiss, Rudolph, & Baltes, 2011). Older workers are less often nominated for further education in comparison to younger workers. In addition, managers are often influenced by negative age stereotypes when judging the achievement of older workers. From the standpoint of social policy, one can argue that a mandatory retirement age forces productive members of society to offer their skills free of charge solely because of their age. Moreover, older people have a much more difficult time finding a job, and they are most likely to be the first employees to be laid off due to economic considerations (Radovic-Markovic, 2013).

According to a 2012 Eurobarometer survey, 48% of Europeans considered age to be a disadvantage when seeking employment. This percentage has increased by 3% since the last survey was conducted in early 2008. More generally, opinions on the extent of discrimination on the grounds of age have changed greatly over the course of just one year. While in 2008 the majority of Europeans surveyed perceived age discrimination to be quite rare (52%), the majority now considers this discrimination to be widespread (58%). An analysis of the survey reveals that people aged 40 and above are more likely to say that discrimination on the grounds of age is widespread. There is a strong link between the economic crisis and the increased perception of age discrimination, with 64% of respondents indicating that the economic crisis will contribute to an increase in discrimination in the labour market on the basis of age. Hence, this Action is particularly timely.

Ageism in the media. The media rarely presents good news about older people and if good news is presented, these stories remain as specialized press or extraordinary cases. Most commonly, stories about older people relate to pensions, economic and social burden, health care costs, frailty, loneliness, or vulnerability (Media and diversity in an ageing society, 2002-2004). The media presents a clear example of the intersection between ageism and sexism. Older men continue to capture prestigious positions on television, as they are perceived as possessing power and knowledge. Women, on the other hand, are viewed mainly as sex symbols, whose value fades as they age. Hence, whereas younger women advertise almost anything, including products that are aimed for men, older women advertise only age-specific items. On television, older women are usually presented in the roles of victims, the sick, or housewives, rather than as people at a particular age group. When older women capture more powerful roles, these roles tend to be negative (Dolan, 2013). The stereotypic portrayal of old age is also evident in social networking sites, such as Facebook, which tends to portray older adults in negative ways (Levy et al., 2013).

Hence, it is not surprising that as exposure to media increases, so also do the negative stereotypes of old age (Donlon et al., 2005).

Internalized age stereotypes. Internalized age stereotypes contribute considerably to ageism.

Younger people internalize the predominantly negative societal views of older people (i.e. age stereotypes) which then also shape their self-perceptions of ageing as they grow older (Kotter-Grühn & Hess, 2012; Levy, 2003; Rothermund & Brandtstädter, 2003). This subliminal internalization process helps to explain why ageism is prevalent in both younger people and older people. Research has consistently shown that older adults also hold negative views towards old age and tend to view negatively individuals who are older or more disabled than themselves (Dobbs et al., 2008). These views are particularly pronounced towards women (Clarke & Griffin, 2008).

At the other end of the spectrum, children as young as fourth graders already hold negative views towards old age, and hold strong beliefs about what older adults should look like (Seefeldt, 1984).

In a comprehensive meta-analysis of 232 effect sizes, researchers found that older adults were more likely to be rated negatively when compared to younger adults across five categories, including evaluation (e.g., generous, friendly), competence (e.g., intelligent, good memory), attractiveness (pretty, wrinkled), behaviour/behaviour intention (e.g., willingness to interact with, make phone call), and age stereotypes (e.g., old fashioned, talks about past), (Kite et al., 2005). Nevertheless, recent studies revealed that older people are evaluated positively in some life domains (e.g., family/close relationships, religion/spirituality, leisure) and more negatively in others (e.g., health limitations) (e.g., Kornadt & Rothermund, 2011). Likewise, evaluations of older women are typically more positive than those of older men in most life domains (Kornadt, Voss, & Rothermund, 2013), which casts some doubt on the assumption of a strict and general “double standard of ageing” (Sontag, 1972).

There is strong evidence for the negative consequences associated with ageism (Minichiello et al., 2000). Ageist beliefs and attitudes directed towards older adults impair their cognitive and functional performance (e.g., Levy et al., 2002, Levy et al., 2011, Sargent-Cox et al., 2012). Ageism has also been associated with a lower sense of self-worth, feelings of distress, isolation, and loneliness (McHugh, 2003). Moreover, self-directed ageism is a risk for increased morbidity and mortality (Levy et al., 2009). Finally, like sexism and racism, ageism is an infringement of the fundamental human right of older persons: the right to dignity and equality.

Ageism and its consequences have been examined in multiple settings and contexts. Nevertheless, even though the topic is of potential interest to researchers from almost any discipline, most research to date has not been interdisciplinary. Moreover, even though ageism has a substantial societal impact, there is limited empirical research on interventions that attempt to eradicate

ageism. There is also a real societal urgency to develop a new generation of researchers in the field. This Action will promote the integration of various lines of research in order to create a pan-European perspective on ageism. The Action will also serve as a much needed bridge between research, policy and practice, and will nurture an infrastructure for ageism research.

B.3 Reasons for the Action

In light of the changing demographics, the high prevalence of ageism, its complex social roots, broad consequences and the limited research on the topic, this Action is timely and of potential practical and scientific significance. The uniqueness of this Action stems from its interdisciplinary nature and its cross national comparative approach to enhance scientific knowledge and attention to the phenomenon of ageism. This is much needed given the relative scarcity of research on ageism as compared to research on sexism or racism. Because of the complexity of the topic, and the fact that it has been studied from different perspectives, a networking mechanism, such as COST, would allow for the integration of disciplines and practices and for the development of a common language. This Action would also allow for the comparison of cross-national practices and knowledge in the field of ageism. This will provide a preliminary step towards the development of more elaborated theoretical conceptualizations of ageism that consider individual, familial, communal, and country-level mechanisms. Moreover, because ageism holds both theoretical and research utility, and articulates important social, economic, and moral values related to civil society, there is an urgent need to connect science, policy, and practice in an effort to increase awareness of and fight ageism. The Action will allow the different parties to communicate with each other and to develop a common language and goals. Such integration between science and practice will benefit both sides. Finally, there is a dearth of researchers and practitioners in the field of ageing. The Action will nurture a new generation of young professionals and will produce an infrastructure for ongoing innovative research in the field of ageism. Ultimately, it also has the potential to increase quality of life for older people.

B.4 Complementarity with other research programmes

This Action complements several current and past programs. The ADHOC (AgeD in HHome Care project), 5th FP, 2000-2003 evaluated 4010 older adults receiving home care from across 11 EU countries, the SHELTER project (Services and Health for the Elderly in Long Term Care), 7th FP, 2008- 2011, evaluated 57 EU nursing home facilities, 4156 residents from 7 EU countries and

Israel, and PREDICT (Increasing the PaRticipation of the ElDerly in Clinical Trials) 7th FP of the EC, 2009- 2011 all focused on relevant issues related to the care of older adults. The European Social Survey's 4th round (funded through the European Commission's Fifth and Sixth Framework Programmes, the European Science Foundation (ESF) and national funding councils) had a special module on ageism. The European Research Group on Attitudes to Age was responsible for this initiative. The Survey of Health Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), funded by the European Commission (M4), provides a longitudinal evaluation of the lives of individuals who are at least 50 years old. The Families and Societies Project (FP7) is a multidisciplinary research initiative aiming to investigate the diversity of family forms, relationships, and life courses in Europe. Activating Senior Potentials in Ageing Europe (7FP) evaluates employers' perceptions of older workers. Members of this Action have taken an active role in many of the programs listed above. This Action plans to maintain active collaborative relations with the various projects by inviting relevant members to participate and contribute to the present Action. The knowledge gained through these various research projects will be evaluated and utilized by this Action in an attempt to reach state-of-the-art conclusions concerning ageism from a cross national, interdisciplinary perspective.

While not directly connected to research or to the European context, this Action fits well with most recent UN initiatives regarding the debates around a potentially new and innovative human rights convention on the rights of older persons (e.g. the UN Open Ended Working Group on Aging; Doron & Apter, 2010). The Council of Europe Draft Recommendation on the promotion of the rights of older people (to be adopted in 2014) and the Age-Friendly cities program of the WHO are additional activities of relevance to this Action.

C. OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

C.1 Aim

The aim of this Action is to enhance scientific knowledge and attention to the topic of ageism by integrating the different disciplines and schools of thought, by developing collaborations with public policy officials, non-academic professionals, civil society NGOs and older adults, by stimulating scientific and public interest, and by developing a new generation of researchers in the field. This Action is not intended to embark on new data collection efforts, but rather to consolidate and harmonize existing measures and empirical evidence in the field in order to generate new directions and collaborations for research and practice. Expected deliverables include: a) the creation of an internet-based web-site; This web-site will not only serve as the "working platform"

for this Action, but will become a scientific "hub" for the study of ageism, by sharing and publishing knowledge, connecting researchers and activists in the field, and serving as the host for the "Depository" described in section b; b) a depository database of scientific measures and tools for the assessment of ageism as well as for evidence based interventions (good practices) and public actions that target ageism. Policy reports and non-scientific contents adapted for non-specialized audiences will be posted in order to make links outside the research community; c) the facilitation of scientific Training Schools (TS) for Early Stage Researchers (ESR) and more established Action researchers, Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) for ESR, public conferences that host experts from COST and International Partner Countries (IPC) and local workshops organized by Action members in an attempt to address local stakeholders; and d) collaborative recommendation papers derived from Working Group (WG), scientific reports, proceedings, academic publications, recommendation papers and an edited book on ageism.

C.2 Objectives

This COST Action will:

1. Increase awareness of the topic of ageism at the scientific, public policy, grassroots, and societal levels. Even though the phenomenon of ageism is more prevalent than racism or sexism (Ayalon, 2013), this topic has received substantially less attention in current scientific discourse (Nelson, 2005, North and Fiske, 2012). The Action will measure increased awareness through the increase in the number of COST members over time, traffic to the website, an increase in the number and quality of scientific and non-scientific publications on the topic, an increase in the number of research projects which consider ageing (even if they are not-age specific), media attention to the topic and potential improvements in legislations and policies related to older adults at the local, regional, national and international levels.

2. Enhance and harmonize multi-national and multi-disciplinary research in the field of ageism. Much of the research currently conducted on the topic of ageism is produced by sole researchers or researchers from a single discipline. Nevertheless, the topic encompasses almost all aspects of our daily lives and can be approached from a variety of disciplines. As such, the integration and harmonization of the assessment of and research on ageism is desired. Furthermore, an increase in high quality interdisciplinary research in the field will indicate the achievement of this objective.

3. Facilitate evidence-based public policy action geared towards tackling ageism and allow older people to realize their full potential. Because ageism is both a scientific topic of high

relevance to a variety of disciplines, and a societal issue of direct impact on the lives of older adults and the people who care for them, this Action is designed to bring together researchers, public policy officials, non-academic professionals, civil society NGOs and older adults. As such, this Action already includes two NGO members among its founders with the explicit purpose of facilitating debate and collaboration between academia and the public. An increase in media exposure, public policy reports, and improvements in public policies and legislation at the national and European levels will provide evidence of the fulfillment of this objective.

4. Foster the development of ESRs and more established researchers in the field of ageism.

There is a genuine shortage of training and research in the field of ageing (Singh and Hubbard, 2011, Diachun et al., 2013) which is closely tied to a shortage of health care professionals in the field (Weiss and Fain, 2009, Haron et al., 2013). No doubt, ageism is at least partially responsible for these shortcomings. The training and mentorship of a new generation of ESRs interested in the field is a measurable outcome of this objective.

5. Encourage the sustainability of this network beyond the lifetime of this Action. This Action on ageism will provide an ideal jumpstart for continued collaborative efforts on ageism research and policy. The achievement of this objective will be evident through continued engagement, publication and financial support of the Action members. The Action aims at continued networking with non-research partners for the improvement of public legislations and policies.

Action members will monitor these objectives using the criteria throughout the lifetime of this Action.

C.3 How networking within the Action will yield the objectives?

Networking within the Action is expected to take place using two main communication modalities: face to face and electronic. *Face-to-face* communication will be facilitated through Management Committee (MC) meetings, WG meetings, TSs, conferences, STSMs and local workshops. *Electronic communication* will take place primarily via email, Skype, and the website specifically designed for this Action. These various networking mechanisms are expected to set the foundations for meeting objectives 1 through 5:

1. **Increased awareness of the topic of ageism at the scientific, public policy, and societal levels** will be achieved through an increase in the number of participants in this Action, the implementation of conferences and TSs, and the development of a website. Media communications, publications in scientific journals, an edited book, and the generation of policy statements will reach a wide and diverse audience beyond the

participants in this Action. The diverse disciplines, geographic coverage, and dissemination channels (for example through conferences, websites, and newsletters) of the Action participants will facilitate the dissemination of the topic across disciplines and nations.

2. **Enhanced and harmonized multi-national and multi-disciplinary research in the field of ageism** will be conducted through the following mechanisms: a) Action meetings will serve as the setting for formal and informal discussions; b) international experts will address the Action members on topics related to ageism; c) TSs will be geared to enhance methodological aspects related to the study of ageism; and d) the development of a depository website which includes policy and position papers, selected measures and interventions, scientific publications, state-of-the-art reports, and an edited book.
3. **Facilitated evidence-based public policy action geared towards the betterment of ageing individuals and the improvement of intergenerational relations** will be supported through a) ongoing communication among researchers, practitioners, NGO members, older adults, and civil society at large. This communication will occur both at the international level through Action meetings, conferences, and electronic communication and through the activation of national, regional and local networks (e.g., local workshops; media announcements; and the broad organizational structure of some NGOs which facilitates the dissemination of knowledge); b) the development of policy papers on ageism; and c) a TS on social activism and public policy in the field of ageism.
4. **Foster the development of ESRs and more established researchers in the field of ageism.** This goal will be facilitated through the development of TSs, STSMs and active mentoring to junior researchers. In addition, junior researchers will be invited to conferences and Action meetings so that they can benefit from the opportunity to collaborate with more established researchers.
5. **The sustainability of this network beyond the lifetime of this Action** will be achieved through: a) the identification of additional funding sources at the local and international levels; b) the development of collaborative networks for the submission of joint research applications; c) the development of ‘state-of-the-art’ reports, and the identification of future directions for research and practice; d) the establishment of a

depository website of relevant measures and interventions in the field of ageism; and e) cross-fertilization between the current Action and ongoing projects in which Action members are already involved.

C.4 Potential impact of the Action

Expected benefits will accrue at the scientific, public policy, and societal levels:

At the scientific level: This Action will enhance and harmonize research on ageism and develop a common terminology and methodological guidelines for ageism related assessment and intervention across different nations and disciplines. In addition, this Action will boost the volume and quality of research, develop new platforms for multi- and interdisciplinary collaborative-research programs, and enhance the academic development of emerging and more senior researchers in the field of ageism.

At the public policy level: This Action will bring the topic of ageism into the spotlight and serve as a catalyst for social innovation and judicial-legal and policy changes. This Action is designed to identify potential mechanisms to combat the negative aspects of ageism. Furthermore, the Action will foster knowledge sharing and collaborations with decision/policy makers at the local, regional, national, and the EU level.

At the societal level: This Action will encourage capacity building and dissemination of knowledge in non-academic settings and civil-society NGOs. In addition, the Action will increase public awareness and understanding of ageism and encourage communication and collaboration between academic partners, service providers, policy makers, NGOs, advocacy organizations, older persons, and civil society. This Action will also contribute to existing and future global debates about the promotion of human rights of older persons.

C.5 Target groups/end users

This Action includes both academic and non-academic representatives because of its ambitious goals to impact science, policy, practice and civil society at large. As such, researchers interested in the topic of ageism from literally any discipline would benefit from this interdisciplinary, cross-national Action. Policy makers, NGOs, older adults, and civil society at large are all likely to benefit from this Action. This Action already includes researchers from the social sciences, humanities and health sciences from several different COST countries and research institutions and

NGOs. All researchers currently involved in this Action already conduct research in the field of ageism. The NGOs' members involved in this Action have a long tradition of activism in the field of aging and in international research on ageism. These organizations have a wide geographic coverage and operate both towards policy improvements and towards grassroots change.

D. SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

D.1 Scientific focus

The focus on the topic of ageism, which has largely been off the research and policy radars yet is highly prevalent and has extremely negative consequences, is a major strength of this Action. In congruence with this Action's objectives, its scientific foci are: a) increase scientific, public-policy and societal attention to ageism; b) enhance and harmonize research in the field of ageism; c) facilitate evidence based public policy action; d) develop and strengthen an infrastructure of researchers in the field; and e) extend the network beyond the lifetime of this Action.

Content-wise, the Action will focus on five main scientific areas organized around WGs. These WGs will address the following settings in which ageism occurs: a) the healthcare system; b) the judicial-legal system; c) the workforce; d) the media; and e) internalized age stereotypes at the individual level. The following methodological aspects will be evaluated within these settings: a) assessment; b) spatial design; c) prevalence, antecedents and consequences; d) intervention; and e) conceptualization and theory. Action members will be assigned to the particular WGs based on their preferences and skills, with an emphasis on establishing diverse WGs in terms of members' background. Because of the flexibility of this Action in terms of membership status, the exact issues addressed by WGs will be determined during WG meetings.

The division into five WGs is made for practical reasons in order to increase efficiency and gain in-depth understanding into the various topics. Nonetheless, these topics are inter-related and cross-fertility is encouraged. In order to ensure that the different WGs share their insights, specific time slots that allow all Action members to meet will be designated during WG meetings (e.g., plenary sessions). WGs will also present their work during the interim and concluding conferences as well as in other local and international conferences. Work conducted by WGs will be displayed on the website and published in scientific and non-scientific outlets. Below is a description of the five WGs:

WG1) Healthcare system. This WG will focus on various health care settings, and evaluate the healthcare provision and medication management of older adults. Potential areas of focus would be the various stakeholders involved in this system, including physicians, social workers, nurses or

patients.

WG2) Judicial-legal system. This WG will focus on legislations, judicial decisions and court rulings at the local and international levels and their implications for the rights and lives of older adults.

WG3) The media. This WG will focus on television shows, newspapers, social media and advertisements depicting or targeting older adults, as well as implications for inter-generational understanding and tolerance.

WG4) The workforce. This WG will evaluate specific employment settings or situations (e.g., the economic crisis) in which ageism might be more pronounced. Behaviours and attitudes of employers and their impact on employees of various age groups will be examined.

WG5) Internalized age stereotypes. This WG will examine ageism at the individual level from the perspective of older adults as well as society at large.

Depending on the configuration of each WG, the following areas will be explored, in a gradual fashion, so that in Years 1 & 2, the focus will be on a) assessment, b) spatial dimensions, and c) prevalence, antecedents, and consequences of ageism, whereas Years 3 & 4 will be devoted to d) interventions and e) theories related to ageism.

a) Assessment: WGs will examine strategies and methods for the assessment of ageism in the different settings outlined above. One of the challenges facing researchers interested in the study of ageism is its assessment. In past research, ageism was operationalized in many different ways, such as knowledge about ageing, attitudes towards older adults, or ageist behaviours. Ageism can be either self or other-directed. It also can be studied using qualitative means, such as drawings of older adults or focus group interviews. Each of these methods operationalizes ageism differently and as a result, measures gather different constructs. Moreover, the explicit assessment of ageism is often subject to demand characteristics, and as a result may not reflect the true attitudes of the respondent. This disparity encourages the use of implicit measures of ageism (Shiovitz-Ezra et al., 2011). The primary goal will be to conduct a review of available measures, compare and contrast their psychometric properties and provide recommendations for the assessment of ageism.

b) Spatial dimension: WGs will explore the topic of how spatial separation between old and young facilitates and maintains ageism (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005). Spatial inequalities can be linked to ageing experiences as the planning and management of places can enhance or limit one's sense of security and belonging. Built environment is significant as it can enable or disable, and restrict or facilitate mobility and independence in an older person, which impacts in turn on quality-of-life, including opportunities for social participation. The role of spatial dimensions can be taken into account when considering the five WGs. The primary goal will be to provide an overview on the

role of spatial design in restricting or improving the lives of older adults.

c) Prevalence, antecedents, and consequences: WGs will explore the etiology, prevalence, manifestation, and consequences of ageism in different contexts and settings (e.g., workplace, healthcare etc.). As clearly outlined in the background section, ageism is prevalent in different settings and is manifested in different shapes and forms. Selected questions that might be addressed, depending on the interests of WG members are: is the prevalence of ageism consistent across different countries? Is the etiology of ageism similar in different settings (i.e., are the origins of ageism in the long term care system consistent with those in hospitals)? What are some of the factors that account for self-directed ageism? The primary goal will be to provide an overview on the prevalence, etiology and consequences of ageism.

d) Intervention: Although research with regard to effective anti-ageist interventions may be limited, it is known from other fields about potentially effective interventions. These may include: a) raising public awareness and sensitizing civil society. This is a core idea behind this Action; b) enacting and enforcing laws. Here, Action members could examine whether existing European and national anti-discrimination initiatives address the issue of age discrimination; and c) correcting false beliefs (e.g., educating healthcare professionals that certain processes are due to illness and not to ageing per se). WGs will review evidence based interventions that target the negative aspects of ageism or promote compensatory means to address the challenges imposed by ageism. The cross-national, multidisciplinary perspective employed by members will result in a comparison of local interventions in order to identify 'state-of-the-art' and "best practice" interventions. The primary goal will be to develop reference points and recommendations for fields of action aiming at reducing ageism.

e) Theory: In 1969, Butler first coined the term ageism to describe “the systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old” (Butler, 1969). This definition has evolved through multiple iterations over the years, with a more recent definition arguing that ageism can be against or in-favour of any age group (Angus and Reeve, 2006; Iversen, Larsen, and Solem, 2009). Moreover, there is a considerable debate concerning the difference between ageism and legitimate age boundaries. The primary goal will be to focus on theorizing, conceptualizing and re-inventing the concept of ageism.

D.2 Scientific work plan methods and means

The main means for delivering the scientific work plan are through the WGs. Key tasks to be carried by the WGs include:

- a) develop the structure for the web site of this project (Year 1);
- b) conduct a review of the existing literature (Years 1-4);
- c) prepare ‘state-of-the-art’ reports and policy recommendations and place them in the public domain through the project's web-site (Years 3-4);
- d) create a depository source for selected measures and interventions and publish it on the project's web site (Years 1-4);
- e) present ‘state-of-the-art’ knowledge at the conferences (Years 2 & 4);
- f) deliver presentations at local workshops while encouraging ESRs and other professionals to present their experiences and knowledge in the field (Years 1-4); and
- g) develop research and public policy agendas and research proposals for future collaboration (Years 3-4).

Each WG will review current research activities and evidence, related to the particular issues at hand; conduct international, multi-disciplinary and comparative reviews of the current knowledgebase to identify commonalities and differences; and deposit selected measures and interventions on the website for public use. WG members will extend the Action to other researchers and stakeholders at the national and international level. This extension will be achieved through local workshops and international conferences (not necessarily part of this Action, but related thematically), develop partnerships, and identify funding sources and publication outlets to disseminate and elaborate the Action and enhance its impact beyond the life of this Action. Policy makers, NGO officials, and older adults will be invited to participate in this Action in order to increase the visibility of ageism and to enhance the practical and policy values of this Action, in addition to its expected scientific value.

It is expected that the integration and assessment of current available research in the field of ageism will facilitate the development of a common language among researchers from different fields and cultures. This outcome will enhance communication between the various stakeholders, including scientists, public policy officials, practitioners, NGOs, and greater society. This initiative is also expected to be a driving force for the preparation of collaborative grant proposals at the national and international levels, and for the launching of new research directions by Action members.

Communication and dissemination of research ideas and findings will take place at the a) WG-level and b) Action-level; and will be directed at the scientific community, public policy officials, older adults, and greater society. The following means will be used to encourage such communication and to address the scientific foci of this Action:

- a) Members of each WG will meet in-person at least twice per year during WG meetings for parallel sessions. In order to encourage cross-fertilization and collaboration between the different

WGs, plenary sessions will be scheduled following WG meetings. During these sessions, Action members will learn about the work conducted in the parallel WGs. Additional communication, when needed will take place electronically.

b) The creation of an internet-based (website). The website will foster the exchange of ideas, empirical data, and collaborative work, and serve as an international virtual knowledge center for the study of ageism, and for evidence-based anti-ageist policies and programs. The website will include measures and research protocols, instruments, consensus papers, and meeting minutes. TSs materials will be made available for online learning via the website. This feature will enhance communication between Action members. In addition, relevant contents will become available to the public in order to expedite knowledge dissemination.

c) An online depository database (on the Action website) of scientific measures and tools for the assessment of ageism as well as for evidence-based interventions and public actions that target ageism. This database will provide the means for decision/policy makers and researchers from multiple disciplines and national backgrounds to develop a common language for comparative research and interventions, and will enable international and multi- and interdisciplinary comparisons.

d) Preparation of scientific TSs for ESRs and more established Action members. This mechanism will foster emergent and established researchers in the field. A total of four TSs will be offered. Each TS will include strong methodological tools as applied to ageism. The first TS will be devoted to the use of systematic reviews in the study of ageism. This TS will serve as an excellent preparation for the review and assessment of existing literature by WGs. The second TS will be devoted to measurement development and evaluation in the study of ageism. This topic was selected because assessment and measurement are believed to be the pillars of empirical research. The third TS will be devoted to the use of the internet and the social media in the study of ageism. This TS was selected because of the relative novelty of the topic in the study of ageism. The fourth TS, 'from bench to bedside' will be devoted to evidence based social activism and public policy in the field of ageism. This TS will serve as an excellent tool for further dissemination of evidence-based practice to policy officials and the integration between science, policy, and practice.

e) Several STSMs will be carried each year in order to broaden the experiences of ESRs and to promote a European network on ageism.

f) Two international conferences on the topic of ageism will be organized over the life course of this Action. These conferences will facilitate the development of collaborative research networks, the development of a cross-national, cross- continent, comparative view on ageism, and increase the scientific and public awareness of the field. These conferences also will be open to the public.

g) Local workshops targeting specific topics, such as ageism in healthcare or law and designed to enhance communication among the relevant stakeholders at the local level will be offered in order to increase public attention to ageism.

h) Media communication and public announcements at the local and European levels will be encouraged in order to bring the topic of ageism to the public debate.

i) Collaborative papers from each WG, scientific reports, proceedings, academic publications, an edited book, and policy and recommendation papers. These publications will increase the scientific and public attention to the topic of ageism and encourage and stimulate international research and policy.

E. ORGANISATION

E.1 Coordination and organisation

This Action is a perfect match to the ISCH Domain which explicitly encourages interdisciplinary collaborations. Our group already includes researchers from the social sciences, humanities, and health sciences from several COST countries, research institutions and NGOs. All researchers currently involved in this Action already conduct research in the field of ageism. The NGOs' members involved in this Action have a long tradition of activism in the field of aging and in international research on ageism. Moreover, one NGO has an extremely wide geographic coverage across Europe, which will allow for easy dissemination. The basis for collaboration between current COST members stems from a) mutual interests in the field of ageism; b) diverse theoretical and professional backgrounds (e.g., psychology, social work, law, pharmacology, dementia studies, statistics, quality of life, medicine, social activism, economics); c) diverse national origins in terms of welfare policies and attitudes towards older adults; and d) the quality of their work. Additional participants will be able to join this Action, if funded.

This Action will follow rules and procedures for implementing COST rules and will adapt the typical COST Action Management structure:

The Management Committee (MC) will supervise and monitor scientific progress, coordinate annual reports, supervise budget allocation, and evaluate new applicants. At the kick-off meeting, the MC will set up the SC, WG, and dissemination board. The MC will meet every six months.

The Steering Committee (SC) will harmonize and coordinate the methodological framework of the WGs and STSMs. This SC will be composed of the Chair and Vice Chair of this Action, and the leaders of each WG. The SC will meet every 3 months either in person or through electronic means.

The Working Groups (WGs) will be in charge of the implementation of the scientific program outlined above. Each WG leader will be in charge of the coordination and harmonization of its WG's activities. Specific topics to be addressed by each WG will be largely determined by the composition of the particular WG. Most of the activities of the WGs will involve the critical review of the literature. Based on this review, WGs will complete a summary of current knowledge in the field, shortcomings, and barriers to the development of new knowledge and recommendations for future research and practice. WGs will present their work during conferences as well as in international and local workshops. WGs will meet at least every six months. Additional electronic communications will be encouraged.

A Dissemination Board (DB) will be in charge of disseminating reports and research papers to the public, the research community, and policy makers. The DB will consist of the steering committee and other interested members. The DB will meet every three months electronically or in-person. Three subcommittees will be formed within the DB in order to provide the board with logistic support:

A website committee (WC) will conduct executive tasks related to the development and maintenance of the Action website on ageism. A conference committee will be responsible for the scientific and administrative development of the conferences. A TS committee will focus on the scientific and administrative tasks associated with the development of the four TSs. These three subcommittees will include representatives from each WG. Subcommittees will meet in-person every six months. More intense electronic communication will be initiated in order to meet specific milestones associated with the tasks of the various committees.

E.2 Working Groups

Please refer to Section D1 for a description of the WGs.

E.3 Liaison and interaction with other research programmes

The Action will strive to develop collaborative relations with existing networks and research programs currently funded by national and international sponsors. Most Action members are already involved in other research networks and programs and thus, will facilitate cross-fertilization. In addition, members of already funded networks and programs of relevance (See B4) will be offered the opportunity to participate and collaborate in this Action. International experts will be invited to present during TSs and the conferences.

E.4 Gender balance and involvement of early-stage researchers

Currently, women compose about 60% of all Action members. Given the highly diverse nature of this Action, and the fact that Action members may come from literally any discipline, this helps ensure that gender balance will be maintained. The field of gerontology and geriatrics in general and ageism in particular will greatly benefit from the involvement of ESRs. About 30% of those currently involved in the preparation of this Action are ESRs. In order to encourage the participation of junior researchers and the development of a European infrastructure in the field of ageism, we will implement the following methods: a) Number of STSMs will be distributed each year in order to give ESRs an opportunity to meet with more established researchers in international settings; b) the WGs will provide the setting in which mentorship and advice will be offered to more junior researchers. There will be active attempts to ensure the representation of ESRs at WG meetings and plenary sessions; c) TSs that combine methodological and theoretical innovations in the field of ageism will be offered to both ESRs and more senior researchers; d) the conferences as well as local workshops organized by WG members will be made available for junior researchers; and e) the website which will include scientific and non-scientific material on ageism as well as recommended funding schemes will be made available for ESRs as well as for more senior researchers and the general public.

F. TIMETABLE

Networking Activities	0-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36	36-42	42-48
WG meeting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MC meeting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conference				X				X
Training School		X		X		X		X
STSM	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2

Local workshops	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
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The total duration of this Action is four years (48 months). In order to save costs and expedite processes, some of the events will take place in tandem (e.g., WG meetings and MC meetings). SC meetings and dissemination board meetings are not listed in the Table as these will take place in tandem with MC meetings as well as electronically.

Expected outcomes:

Year 1: Website design; WGs’ review & publication strategy; WGs’ reports; 1st TS materials available via the web; media announcements.

Year 2: Reports and materials uploaded via website; WGs’ reports; 2nd TS materials available via the web; interim conference proceedings; media announcements.

Year 3: WGs’ Reports and materials uploaded via website; 3rd TS materials available via the web; publications in scientific outlets; media announcements.

Year 4: Reports and materials uploaded via website; 4th TS materials available via the web; publications in scientific outlets; policy reports; collaborative grant applications; conference proceedings; an edited book; media announcements.

G. ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The following COST countries have actively participated in the preparation of the Action or otherwise indicated their interest: BE, CZ, DE, IE, IL, IT, PL, UK. On the basis of national estimates, the economic dimension of the activities to be carried out under the Action has been estimated at 32 Million € for the total duration of the Action. This estimate is valid under the assumption that all the countries mentioned above but no other countries will participate in the Action. Any departure from this will change the total cost accordingly.

H. DISSEMINATION PLAN

H.1 Who?

This Action targets five different end users:

1. **Researchers.** This COST Action will bring together researchers from different countries and from highly diverse disciplines, including the social sciences, humanities,

health sciences, life sciences, and engineering. Policy makers, NGOs, practitioners, and older adults are also invited to participate. Bridging across disciplinary, methodological, national, linguistic, and theoretical barriers in order to establish a collaborative network is a tedious task, not currently employed in the field of ageism. The strong emphasis on nurturing the new generation of researchers in the field through active mentoring, STSMs and TSs will also benefit the research community. The highly diverse academic and scientific backgrounds of the Action members clearly attest to the need for such a collaborative network.

2. **Policy makers and NGOs.** Policy makers and NGOs will benefit from the opportunity to collaborate with researchers on policy papers and “state-of-the-art” reports that reflect the best evidence currently available. Integrating between science and practice is a challenging task that will benefit from the development of a common language and priorities. This synergy will be enhanced through the present Action on ageism. The fact that two NGOs are already part of this network attests to the importance of this continued dialogue.
3. **Practitioners.** Practitioners working with older adults will be invited to participate in this Action, and to attend international and local workshops and conferences. These practitioners will also benefit from accessing the website which will include scientific and position papers, and recommended measures and interventions.
4. **Older adults.** Older adults will also be invited to participate in this Action, and to attend international and local workshops and conferences. Older adults will be able to benefit from an increased awareness of and interest in the topic. This heightened awareness will likely result in improved attitudes and practices towards older adults and stronger intergenerational solidarity.
5. **Civil society.** Equal rights and opportunities represent one of the pillars of civil society. In contrast to racism or sexism which may not be part of the shared experiences of some individuals. Therefore, improving the lives of older adults and enhancing the intergenerational climate through this Action is expected to have both direct and indirect positive effects on civil society at large.

H.2 What?

Three main modalities will be used for dissemination: a) electronic communication; b) publications; c) face-to-face contact.

Electronic dissemination will capitalize on the following means:

1. A dedicated website will be used to post information about this Action, and invite potential stakeholders to take part in local workshops, conferences and TSs. The website will contain relevant WG summaries and state-of-the-art reports. To facilitate communication among WG members, work in progress will be available for access using a password.
2. Emails and Skype will be used to facilitate ongoing communication between Action members.
3. Media communication and public announcements will be issued by WG members in order to increase the public attention to the topic of ageism.

Dissemination through publications will take the following forms:

1. Working papers
2. Recommendation and policy papers
3. Scientific reports
4. WG proceedings
5. Scientific publications
6. An edited book

Face-to face dissemination will use the following means:

1. MC and WG meetings will take place at least twice per year in order to facilitate communication among Action members.
2. An interim and a concluding conference will be organized in order to allow Action members to share insights reached from participating in WGs. These conferences will also be publicized to international experts, public policy officials and NGOs in an effort to produce fruitful communication between the various parties.
3. TSs will be offered in order to strengthen the methodological foundation of research on ageism. TSs will be available to both ESRs and more advanced researchers interested in developing their skills.

4. STSMs will be offered to ESRs in order to facilitate the mobility of ESRs and to allow ESRs an opportunity to network with more advanced researchers.
5. Local workshops will be organized by WG members in order to better connect the goals and activities of current Action with local stakeholders.

H.3 How?

A dissemination board will be established in Year 1 in order to facilitate dissemination. Three subcommittees will be responsible for the creation and maintenance of a designated website, the organization and preparation of TSs and the organization and preparation of the interim and the concluding conferences (See E1 for details).

Because this Action targets broad and diverse audiences in terms of geographical location, cultural heritage, disciplinary school, professional trajectory, and interests, this Action capitalizes on broad means of dissemination. To better facilitate dissemination, a designated TS will focus on public activism and action. Dissemination activities will be carefully monitored by Action members, and modified if needed.

A designated website will be a major source of communication and dissemination of information both among Action members and the general public. The website will store all the outputs and activities of this Action. These will be available to all interested parties. Password protected areas will be used to store work in progress.

E-mail and Skype will be used to facilitate communication among Action members.

WGs will be responsible for the production of proceedings, research reports and state-of-the-art papers.

WGs will be responsible for the communication of their findings at local workshops as well as for the dissemination of findings at international conferences.

TSs will be organized and prepared by the TS subcommittee. TSs will include experts in the field in addition to Action members. These will be advertised via the web, media reports, social media, and through the personal network of Action members.

STSM will be offered to ESRs who are interested in elaborating their research network by gaining international experiences at established research labs. STSM will be advertised on the web and through the personal network of the Action members.

Media communication and public announcements will be encouraged in order to bring the topic of ageism to public debate.