



11 December 2012

## PRESS RELEASE

### **EUROPEAN CROSS-INDUSTRY EMPLOYERS: “EXISTING EMPLOYER PRACTICES FOR ACTIVE AGEING SHOULD BE RECOGNISED AND PROMOTED FURTHER”**

Yesterday in Nicosia, the Cyprus Presidency co-organised the closing conference for the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012, which is a strong signal and contribution from the EU to addressing major demographic challenges in Europe by identifying effective solutions.

The number of workers retiring each year constitutes a real challenge to Europe's economic growth potential, to the sustainability of public finances including pensions systems, and therefore to the competitiveness of enterprises.

Policy-makers should create the necessary conditions for active ageing to be an efficient and well-functioning policy principle<sup>1</sup>. Older workers should be encouraged to stay longer in work and employers to recruit and retain them. If the right conditions are put in place, employers can help to make active ageing a reality on labour markets.

European cross-industry employer organisations BUSINESSEUROPE, CEEP and UEAPME have undertaken to identify and promote initiatives from private and public service enterprises of all sizes and sectors, across the European Union. In the final synthesis paper of their joint project<sup>2</sup>, European employers present a range of useful practices from flexible working to better skills-mapping on the basis of which they have drawn up ten key messages for policy-makers.

Next year, we will identify and discuss future actions and / or ways in which employers can work, separately or jointly with the other European social partner, namely the European Trade Union Confederation, to better address demographic ageing and its impact on employment.

**ATTACHMENT:** [Final synthesis paper](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> The Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO Council) has adopted on 7 December the “Declaration on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012): The Way Forward”

<sup>2</sup> The project received the financial support of the European Commission

## COMMENTS FROM SIGNATORIES

**Markus Beyrer**, Director General, BUSINESSEUROPE: *“Employers play an important role in making active age management in the workplace a reality. They are committed to find practical solutions to promote active ageing, but they also measure costs and return on investment of the actions to be taken. There are a range of obstacles to be addressed to facilitate the professional integration of older workers, such as strong employment protection legislation, “benefits traps”, heavily seniority-based pay systems, skills mismatches, and peoples’ perceptions.”*

**Valeria Ronzitti**, General Secretary, European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP): *“Current demographic trends will impact heavily on public services employers’ where the workforce is on average older than that of the private sector, with a significant number of employees due to retire in coming years. Combined with the fact that many public services employers are faced with changed circumstances which for instance often restrict their ability to recruit, the need to attract or retain older workers in employment is therefore obvious. The outcome of this project clearly highlights that many good practices linked to active aging policies are being undertaken by public services employers and it is essential that the right framework is in place in continuing doing this.”*

**Andrea Benassi**, Secretary General, European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME): *“SMEs are well aware of the challenges created by demographic change. They very much value their older workers for their experience and reliability. In view of finding the best solutions for maintaining older workers, SMEs should therefore benefit from external advice and support to adapt the workplace in an integrated manner covering health and safety, training and flexible working arrangements. In addition, with thousands of small business owner-managers retiring each year, more should be done to facilitate the transfer of small companies.”*

## NOTE TO THE EDITOR

### **BUSINESSEUROPE**

[www.businessseurope.eu](http://www.businessseurope.eu)

---

BUSINESSEUROPE represents small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, BUSINESSEUROPE's members are 41 leading industrial and employers' federations from 35 European countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

**Press contact:**

Mr Peter Vertessy, [p.vertessy@businessseurope.eu](mailto:p.vertessy@businessseurope.eu), tel.: +32 2 237 65 03

### **The European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP)**

[www.ceep.eu](http://www.ceep.eu)

---

CEEP gathers enterprises and organisations from across Europe, both public and private, at national, regional and local level, which are public employers or providers of services of general interest. CEEP members contribute to more than 26% of EU GDP and employ 30% of the EU workforce; CEEP is one of the three general cross-industry European Social Partners.

**Press contact:**

Ms Priya Klinkenberg, Communication Assistant, [ceep@ceep.eu](mailto:ceep@ceep.eu), tel.: +32 2 229 21 40

### **European Association of Craft, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (UEAPME)**

[www.ueapme.com](http://www.ueapme.com)

---

UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and wider Europe at European level. UEAPME has 84 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

**Press contact:**

Mr Francesco Longu, Press Officer, [pressoffice@ueapme.com](mailto:pressoffice@ueapme.com), tel.: +32 496 520 329

\* \* \*