



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Active ageing: keep learning, keep working

Cedefop is at present carrying out extensive work on how older workers learn, particularly on the neglected issue of how to retrain and retain workers nearing retirement age – and what motivates people to keep working past it. An international workshop on 'Working at old age – Emerging theories and empirical perspectives on ageing and work' is to be held at Cedefop, Thessaloniki, on 29-30 September 2008.

By organising this workshop, Cedefop aims to highlight research on:

- The relationship between work performance and age
- Insights from adult learning theories on ageing and work
- Individual and environmental factors enabling longer working lives

- and to develop policy recommendations.

In addition, Cedefop will be publishing a report on '**Innovative learning measures for older workers**'; while its **4th Research Report** (available online at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/ResearchLab/forthcoming.asp) includes a chapter on *The learning society as a greying society*.

Europe's economy needs to keep its citizens in the workforce for as long as possible. No longer do companies and countries favour 'early exit' for their workers: **the younger age groups in Europe are not large enough to replace departing workers.**

The share of older people in the working age population (**50-64**) will increase from 29% in 2010 to 34% in 2030.

The share of younger people (15-24) will decline from 18% in 2010 to 16.6% in 2030.

Employment of workers beyond the age of 65 will increase from 2.8 million in 2010 to 4.9 million in 2030.

Source: Eurostat population projections (2004) and European Commission Economic Paper No. 235 (2005)

Europe also needs to be technologically and organisationally innovative if it is to stay competitive. **We can no longer afford to associate innovation only with youth – and Cedefop shows that this is no longer necessary.** Despite prevailing stereotypes, older workers are not less able to learn on the job. Experience counts for more than was previously acknowledged – accounting for 46% of professional competence (cf. Cedefop, *Promoting lifelong learning for older workers: an international overview* (2006)) while age diversity has been found to be an important factor of innovation in enterprises.

If older workers are not fulfilling their potential, are their workplaces at fault? Human Resources departments typically do not take the needs of older workers seriously enough. Underinvestment in training for this category leads to lost skills but also to lower job satisfaction. Policymakers, companies and researchers now recognise that such attitudes and policies have been failing older workers. This has led to **the emergence of a new field in Human Resources, the management of age and learning.**

About Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training.

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