

A European Code of Good Practice on Age and Employment (for Older Workers)

by Elizabeth Drury*

1. Introduction

This article presents the results of European-level research to develop a common European Code of Good Practice to promote the retention of older workers in the labour force and the recognition of their value as employees. This was designed as a voluntary initiative, which would run alongside binding measures at national or European level in the future. It has generated interest among employers and policy-makers at national and European Union level. First, then, we examine why this topic is of interest in Europe.

Across Europe, policy-makers are increasingly concerned about the economic and social impacts of falling labour market participation rates among older workers, in the context of Europe's ageing population. The demographic ageing of (especially) Europe's population has led, on the one hand, to increasing burdens on pensions and social security schemes, and, on the other, to increasing numbers of older people of working age. The numbers of people in Europe aged 50–59 will increase by 5.5 million (12 per cent) in the next ten years, with those aged 60–64 increasing by 1 million, while the numbers of younger people aged 20–29 will fall by 9 million (–17 per cent).¹ Yet despite the increasing numbers of potential older workers, in practice, employers have continued the established trend for older workers to leave the labour market before pensionable age, which has put further cost burdens onto the state: in some countries it has produced spiralling costs of early retirement schemes, and where workers are not covered by early retirement, invalidity or other schemes, there has been increased and mainly long-term unemployment among the 55–64 age range.

National governments therefore have clear economic incentives, from both the ageing of the workforce and the rising costs of pensions, to reduce early-retirement schemes and to encourage an extension of the working life. In recent years several European governments, including Austria, Finland, France and Germany, have reduced their support for early-retirement schemes, in recognition of the economic impact of this situation, while others, such as Germany and Italy, have implemented pension reforms designed to encourage longer working lives.

However, most employers across Europe do not, yet, share these economic pressures. They continue to target older workers, who often have higher labour costs, for redundancies, while many consider workers aged over 45, or even over 40, too old to employ due to various age-discriminatory practices in the workforce or to expectations of lower retirement ages.

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¹ Statistics taken from "Combating Age Barriers in Employment", Professor Alan Walker, 1996.

2. European research results

The conclusions of European research in recent years are that age barriers to employment of older workers are widespread across the E.U. and there is evidence of various forms of discrimination against older workers in different E.U. countries.² With this awareness came the growing recognition among policy-makers and social partners of the need to tackle age barriers in order to create equal opportunities in the labour market³ and the realization that a business case can be made for employing older workers and promoting age diversity in their organization.

Major Europe-wide research was carried out on “Combating Age Barriers in Employment” in 1995–1998 by the European Foundation for Improvement of Living and Working Conditions,⁴ led by Professor Alan Walker, and as a result of intensive studies and company interviews in seven E.U. countries, an impressive portfolio of existing good practice was published, listing over 150 examples from organizations in both the public and private sectors.⁵ Some organizations deliberately targeted older workers as a group, while others benefitted older employees within a framework of age diversity and age-neutral personnel management.

Three examples of such practices are summarized here. First, a U.K. insurance company which decided to target older workers due to labour shortages. It actively tried to appeal to older people in recruiting and offered flexible working hours and part-time work to those with caring responsibilities. The company policy of tailoring training to individuals’ needs was particularly helpful for older recruits, whose computer skills may not be so advanced, and confidence-building was an important support for older people re-entering the workforce after long-term unemployment.

Secondly, an example of workplace design in a French hospital group which aimed to ease age-related working difficulties through ergonomics and using machines for heavy tasks. There are no age barriers to recruitment and ageing is not regarded as a handicap, since its impact on working conditions is studied with the aim of easing the problems. However, this is part of an age-neutral management policy and age is seen as just one of various broader problems which affect hospital staff. The group has seen clear reductions in staff turnover since introducing these policies, and particularly sharp falls in ‘voluntary’ departures (availability, resignations), from 3,000 in 1991 to only 1,842 in 1993.

Finally, a German chemicals company whose policy is to provide continuous training and allow workers to structure their own training schedule has around 28 per cent of its workforce aged over 50, which is considerably higher than in the economy as a whole. It has not introduced age-related initiatives in workplace design or in in-house training, but its existing training and related policies allow older workers to be included to a large extent. The company has found older workers to be better suited to the control and supervisory tasks

² Drury, E. (ed.) (1993), *Age Discrimination Against Older Workers in the European Community*, London, Eurolink Age; Walker, A. (1993), *Age and Attitudes*, Brussels, E.C. Commission (DGV); Walker, A. (1997a), *Combating Age Barriers in Employment: European Research Report*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

³ Naegele, G. (1999), *Active Strategies for an Ageing Workforce*, Dublin, European Foundation.

⁴ European Foundation for Improvement of Living and Working Conditions: project “Combating Age Barriers” (Walker, 1997a; 1997b; 1999; Walker and Taylor, 1998). Walker, A. and Taylor, P. (1998), *Combating Age Barriers in Employment: A European Portfolio of Good Practice*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities).

⁵ Walker and Taylor, 1998, op. cit.

which prevail in the company, and although it found they needed more time to adapt when new technology was introduced, once adapted their productivity was the same as that of their younger colleagues.

One or two governments in the E.U., notably the U.K., have built on the results of this research and are reassessing their attitudes towards older workers, and some have recognized a business case for employing older workers. In the U.K., the Employers Forum on Ageing was set up at the initiative of Age Concern England and supported by U.K. government policy to promote good practice actively within U.K. business. In the Netherlands, the National Bureau on Age Discrimination performed a similar task of raising national awareness and working with employers. It is clear that examples of good practice in the employment of older workers are increasing steadily, but that they remain a tiny minority in terms of overall employment opportunities.

3. The need to change attitudes

So there is an emerging case for combating age barriers in job recruitment and training on grounds of pragmatism, commercialism, good human-resource practice and in the interest of equal opportunities for all workers. But very little practical action has been taken by either employers or public authorities to date.

The research undertaken in this field shows this is largely due to low awareness among employers about the hidden costs of age discrimination, and the continued trend among employers to expect older workers to leave the workforce before pensionable age. This indicates a need for education and awareness-raising among employers to effect a change of attitude. Governments and policy-makers have already been educated on this issue from an economic point of view in recent years, whereas many employers have not yet caught up with the financial implications of an ageing workforce for their own long-term business.

A few governments have already taken practical action to promote the inclusion of older workers in the labour force, including anti-age discrimination legislation, yet the debate on changing attitudes among employers usually concludes that binding legislation rarely changes employers' views, since they see legislation as an additional burden laid on them by governments. So the question is raised as to what other means exist of raising the debate about older workers and managing an age-neutral workforce.

4. National practice to date: legislation versus voluntary initiatives

Those governments which have already taken practical action towards promoting integration of older workers have mainly combined legislation with incentive programmes:

- Finland has had anti-age discrimination legislation since 1998, and has a national programme for ageing workers in 1998–2002;
- Ireland has had anti-age discrimination legislation and special measures for older workers since October 1999;
- The Netherlands proposed a ban on age discrimination in employment in 1999 and established a special Task Force on Age and Employment in early 2001, led by the Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, with the aim of developing a National Action programme to promote the labour market participation of older workers.

The U.K. Government, on the other hand, started with awareness-raising initiatives, focused on the promotion of a voluntary “Code of Practice for Age Diversity in Employment”

in 1999. It has so far kept ideas for anti-age-discrimination legislation at the level of informal discussions, without making formal legislative proposals. This voluntary initiative in the U.K. provided the inspiration for a pan-European Code of Good Practice.

5. The European context: growing political awareness of older workers

Older workers and the consequences of demographic ageing have been steadily moving up the European political agenda in recent years. Driven by economic factors, as already mentioned, several countries have restricted early retirement schemes, some have implemented pension reforms, and all share concerns about the rising costs of unemployment and social security benefits.

There has been general discussion about the need to extend the working life and to retain or reintegrate older workers in the labour force, with a few exceptions such as Spain, where early-retirement schemes are still being introduced.

This has been officially reflected in the annual E.U. Employment Guidelines for Member States, which is becoming an increasingly important instrument to guide national policies, although the recommendations are not binding on national governments. In 1999, for the first time, these guidelines mentioned older workers as a group with specific needs, the following year they were included with reference to potential review of tax systems affecting their employment, and last year the Employment Guidelines for 2001 included a special section, "developing a policy for active ageing". This section talks of the need "to make the best use of older workers' experience" by developing positive measures to help "older workers to remain in the labour force as long as possible". It also mentions the need "to raise employers' awareness of the potential of older workers".

While the Employment Guidelines can be said to represent one type of "voluntary" approach at E.U. level, there have also been significant moves in the area of binding legislation affecting older workers. The Maastricht Treaty revision, which came into force in May 1999, includes a new Article 13 on non-discrimination, where discrimination on grounds of age is specifically included. This was the first time that "age" had been included in the E.U. Treaty in any context and as such was a significant step forward for awareness in this field.

Using the Maastricht Treaty Article as a legal basis, the Commission then proposed E.U. legislation to combat discrimination in employment. The final E.U. Directive on discrimination in employment was adopted in October 2000. It covers all the groups specifically cited in the Treaty Article 13, but significantly, age is the only category that has a special article defining various "let-out" clauses which actually permit discrimination on grounds of age. These loopholes in the basic principle of non-discrimination on grounds of age in practice remove any binding commitment on Member States to stop age discrimination at work, by leaving it to the discretion of national governments to justify "derogations" in various cases from the provisions of the Directive. This approach was strongly supported by employers' organizations. In addition, the Directive does not come into force in Member States until 2006.

The E.U. Directive is therefore considered a poor implementation of the moral principle of the Maastricht Treaty to remove discrimination on grounds of age, but it leaves the door open for national governments to interpret the Directive strictly if economic grounds dictate the need for retaining older workers in the labour force.

So European policies and legislation do not, in the final count, oblige European employers to take any practical steps to remove age barriers in employment, although employers in three Member States do have obligations at national level. This situation, then,

led to the idea of developing a voluntary code of good practice at European level, which would support the intentions of the Maastricht Treaty in reducing age discrimination in the employment field, and could be accepted by policy-makers and social partners across Europe as helpful guidelines to run alongside the other E.U. measures.

6. A European Code of Good Practice for age and employment

Why?

The main reason for developing the Code at European level is to help raise awareness among employers, governments and other interested groups, and to promote a real change of attitude towards older workers which is reflected in practical actions. It was felt that a voluntary code would be more favourably received by employers than binding legislation, and that discussions on the code would help to raise awareness across Europe of the issue of age discrimination in employment with all actors.

What is it?

The Code is a set of voluntary guidelines on good practice, related to the employment of older workers.

Codes of good practice in employment of certain groups of workers (women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, etc.) already exist in certain Member States. They operate as an alternative to legislation to ensure equal employment opportunities for these groups. They can operate within public, professional or NGO sectors and at local, regional or national level.

With respect to age, only one national code of good practice currently exists, in the U.K., although there are references to older workers in some sectoral codes in other E.U. countries.

The Code provides more detailed guidelines and recommendations for practical actions by employers on age and employment than legislation ever can. It is designed to run alongside existing legislation and policies – either the E.U. Directive on discrimination in employment, or the various national legislative acts or programmes addressed to age discrimination and older workers.

The guidelines were developed by a team of national experts from eight E.U. countries – Germany, Spain, Finland, France,⁶ Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, the U.K. – in consultation with national and E.U. employer and trade-union representatives, and other interested parties. The work was co-ordinated by EuroLinkAge, a European non-governmental organization which exists to promote the interests of 121.4 million older people across the E.U. The project was largely funded by the European Commission's Directorate General (DG) for Employment.

What is 'good practice'?

Good practice in the employment of older workers has been defined, following the "Combating Age Barriers" research, as a combination of specific measures to overcome or minimize age barriers, and general employment or human-resource (HR) policies which

⁶ The Geneva Association took part in this study with Geneviève Reday-Mulvey of the Four Pillars Programme co-responsible for France.

provide a work environment in which individuals are able to achieve their potential without being disadvantaged by their age (Walker, 1999, p. 3).⁷

Some examples of good practice can be found in organizations that nonetheless have various other age barriers. The comprehensive elimination of age barriers requires a broad “age management” strategy, which involves changing attitudes within organizations, and this is included in the draft code. The final aim is to eliminate the impact of ageing on employment and to achieve a position of age neutrality.

So far evidence of good practice has been demonstrated mainly in large organizations and there is clearly considerable scope for sharing that experience with smaller ones. Many examples of good practice can be found in the Combating Age Barriers Portfolio⁸ and it is clear that such examples are growing across Europe, although they are still a small minority.

The researchers on the project agreed it would be helpful to include in the Code specific examples of good practice in the different E.U. countries and related to the different areas covered. In view of cultural differences between the Member States, it was found there could be confusion in some countries over the meaning of some of the recommendations, and precise examples related to the recommendations would have been helpful illustrations. However, this level of extra research could not be covered in the original research project.

The Code addresses the six main areas of human-resource management which have been identified as key factors for good practice, plus the important additional area of change of attitude within the organization. These six key areas are:

1. *Learning, training and development*: to encourage all employees to take up training opportunities, and to help ensure that all employees have equal access to these opportunities throughout their working life;
2. *Flexible working practices and the modernization of work*: to adapt working time and other employment-related factors to take account of the changing needs of workers and of their caring responsibilities during their working lifetime;
3. *Workplace design and health promotion*: the design of the workplace and its processes, as well as the organization of work, need to promote the health and capacities of employees to enable them to perform well;
4. *Job recruitment*: recruitment should be made on the basis of merit, according to skills and abilities to do the job;
5. *Promotion and internal job changes*: promotion should be based on the ability, or demonstrated potential, to carry out the job;
6. *Employment exit and the transition to retirement*: redundancy decisions should be based on objective criteria, and retirement schemes should offer choices and not be targeted at particular groups.

The additional seventh area identified, and included, in this Code was:

7. *Changing attitudes within organizations*: educate the whole of the workforce on the ways in which age barriers and age stereotypes arise, and why they must be combated in order to reduce age discrimination and promote age diversity in the workforce.

⁷ See Note 4 above.

⁸ See Note 4 above.

The text of the proposed European Code is attached at the end of this article, for readers' further information on the detailed recommendations under each of these sections.

How was the Code developed?

Several of the national experts on the research project, and particularly the project leaders, Professor Alan Walker and Professor Dr Gerd Naegele, had already been closely involved in the previous Europe-wide research project on Combating Age Barriers in Employment. The project-leaders produced an initial draft code, which national experts assessed and amended according to their own experience and judgement of their respective countries' issues. The revised draft code was then sent out to wide consultation of key opinion-formers in the eight Member States, and also at E.U. level. The national contacts interviewed about the Code – in total around 150 representatives of different organizations – were social partners, government ministers and officials, major employers and others, such as labour market experts, research institutes, personnel management organizations, and NGOs.

Following the consultations in each of the eight countries, the national experts met to pool their results and to agree on a common draft for the Code which would address as many of the national concerns and priorities as possible, while remaining a common European text.

The majority response from the consultations was that the Code is a useful instrument, and it could be used to raise general awareness of the problem and to contribute towards changing existing attitudes. The proposal for a Code was generally welcomed in the context of demographic changes. It was not expected, however, that the Code by itself would directly lead to a real improvement in job opportunities for older workers.

It was generally agreed that there could be a supportive role for the Code within legislation and collective agreements, but that it could not replace these other measures.

This viewpoint has been borne out by the experience in the U.K., which introduced a voluntary Code in 1999, and where evaluations have subsequently found that its impact on employers' behaviour in practice had been very limited. Now the U.K. Government is again actively considering the introduction of anti-age-discrimination legislation, as a binding measure to run alongside the principles introduced by the U.K. Code.

From all interviews it was clear that employers would be strongly opposed to any binding aspects of the Code, and many employers indicated an interest in becoming more directly involved in giving their views. Yet it is clear from the U.K. example, at least, that employers' practices do not change as a result of voluntary agreements, and that in some cases binding measures are necessary to produce a change of behaviour.

The key changes made to the draft Code after consultation focused on two or three areas of common interest: those to whom the Code was really addressed; whether it should be an "age-neutral" Code, or one focused on older workers; and how to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) feel involved in the Code.

In terms of to whom the Code is addressed, while there was agreement that it needed to be directed mainly at the enterprise level and the relevant decision-makers there, it was also clear that other decision-makers outside companies, such as employment agencies, personnel agencies, or recruitment consultants, could make use of the Code, as well as older workers themselves in order to clarify individual employment problems. The language of the Code was therefore changed to avoid directing its recommendations too specifically at employers, and also to address employees themselves where possible.

The most debated point was whether the Code should specifically focus on the older workers' group, or on human resources practice aiming at age diversity in the workforce. It

was proposed that “age and employment” should not just be about older workers, but should also include middle-career and younger workers – but this was not agreed by all the national experts, some of whom considered that the issues of older workers needed to be spelled out clearly in order for some awareness to be raised. It was finally decided that, where clearly necessary, the term “older workers” would be used in the text, and for the rest the term “ageing workforce” could be used, or even age-neutral terminology. However, the explanatory preamble makes it clear that the Code is based in the framework of the various problems encountered by older workers.

This aspect of awareness of older-workers’ issues, together with the use of the term “age discrimination”, was the issue which most clearly pointed up cultural differences between the eight E.U. countries involved. It was nevertheless clear to researchers who had been involved in this field for some years that European attitudes on this issue, and particularly in terms of recognition of “age discrimination” in the workforce, are steadily converging. This is no doubt due partly to the levels of common debate undertaken at European Union level, and the adoption of the age discrimination clause in the Maastricht Treaty, as well as the common financial challenges faced by E.U. countries in the context of demographic ageing.

Finally, there was general agreement that the Code need to apply more directly to SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), and that it was vital that SMEs felt they were addressed by the Code. Language changes were therefore made to ensure that phrases which tended to focus mainly on activities of middle-sized and large companies were avoided. Ideally, the researchers would have liked to expand on possible different applications of the guidelines for SMEs, but the time allowed in the initial research project did not permit this.

Another additional activity which was ruled out due to lack of research time was the support of the various recommendations by practical examples from the individual countries, particularly where they considered it useful to clarify areas of uncertainty over the meaning for their national contacts.

Progress in implementing the Code

The final draft of the Code was agreed in October 2000 and is now published in three official language versions – English, French and German – as well as printed translations for Italian, Spanish and Dutch. It has been widely disseminated to key contacts in all 15 Member States, as well as to the social partners and policy-makers at E.U. level.

There is still uncertainty over the formal process for its practical implementation across Europe. The initial aim was to encourage the social partners at E.U. level to adopt it as a European Code of good practice for age and employment under the Union’s social dialogue procedures. If that happened, it would be formally disseminated by national organizations representing the social partners in each country and employers’ and workers’ organizations within the E.U. would be encouraged to adopt and follow the principles laid down in the Code. However, to date this has not happened, mainly due to hesitancy by the trade-union representatives at E.U. level, who were focused on maximizing the binding aspects of E.U. legislation to combat discrimination in employment. Nevertheless, in view of the very weak provisions on discrimination on grounds of age in the E.U. Directive, it is hoped that trade-union representatives may consider a voluntary code in a more positive light as a support for groups of older workers, for example within collective bargaining agreements between employers and trade unions on issues affecting older workers.

Meanwhile, the European Employers’ Federation (UNICE) has disseminated the Code

to all its members across Europe as an initial exercise. It is hoped that the Code may help to inspire new policies in some organizations, or across specific employment sectors.

Cross-European interest to follow up the Code

Expressions of interest in follow-up with the Code have already come from several countries at a national level, including, for example, Germany and Spain, which currently do not have specific legislation on older workers in employment. In Germany, the Federal Ministry for Science and Education is likely to look favourably on an application for a national project on the Code to work with individual German employers to help them address and implement its recommendations for good practice. In Spain, a large regional employers' organization is proposing itself to organize a conference to examine the Code and to disseminate it more widely among the employers in that region.

Policy-makers at European and national level have shown direct interest in ensuring the Code is promoted across Europe. A report on older workers by the E.U.'s Economic and Social Committee, adopted in September 2000, specifically endorsed the principle of a European Code of Good Practice, and the European Commission, as well as UNICE, have taken a close interest in the project. At national level, policy-makers in the Netherlands and in the U.K. have indicated their intention to incorporate the European Code in their future national action on older workers.

7. Conclusions

At present, the European Code remains a proposal, drafted by expert researchers from across Europe, which has been supported in principle by European and national policy-makers, and by various employers' organizations across Europe. There are doubts from trade union organizations that the Code could by itself produce improved job opportunities for older workers, and these are realistic. Clearly, such a voluntary initiative needs to work alongside other measures at national or European level. The experience of the U.K. voluntary Code over the past two years also bears this out.

Nevertheless the proposed European Code has been recognized as a significant step forward in providing detailed guidelines on practical actions for good practice in this field, in a way which legislation itself could not do. National governments, which have already changed their attitudes towards older workers, largely driven by economic reasons, are now looking for ways to help employers change their views too and persuade them to collaborate with governments in the extension of the working life. Employers, however, equally driven by financial considerations, have yet to embrace a business case for retaining older workers and leave behind their tradition of accepting financial incentives to operate early retirement or redundancy schemes.

The inspiration behind this voluntary code of good practice is that companies who are already operating the good practice it outlines are doing so precisely because they have seen the business case for ensuring age diversity, or maximizing the potential of *all* their workers. So the Code can be seen more as a business opportunity than a potentially burdensome list of "duties", to those who have the eyes to recognize it as such. Good practice does equal good business sense in this case.

Appendix: Ageing in Employment: A Proposed European Code of Good Practice

1. Learning, training and development

Encourage all employees to take advantage of relevant and suitable training and ensure that, as far as possible, all employees have access to learning, training and development opportunities throughout their working life.

To create a skilled and up-to-date workforce:

- Ensure that learning and training opportunities are an integral part of career planning and not purely job-specific;
- Ensure that the learning, training and development needs of all staff are regularly reviewed and that age is not used as a barrier to training;
- Encourage workers of all ages to take up learning and training opportunities;
- Focus on the individual's as well as the organization's needs when providing training and development opportunities;
- Ensure that different learning styles and needs and the diversity of previous occupations and skills are taken into account in the delivery of training;
- Work to combat negative age stereotypes about motivation and capacity to learn (among both older and younger workers and managers).

2. Flexible working practices and the modernization of work

Adjust working time and other aspects of employment to reflect changes in the way people work and in family and caring responsibilities of the workforce.

To respond flexibly to the changing needs of employees over their working lives:

- Ensure that flexible working opportunities are provided, on the full range of jobs available, to meet the changing needs/capacities of workers at all levels;
- Enable workers to have greater flexibility in their hours and conditions of work;
- Encourage and assist workers at all ages to be involved in the implementation of changes in work conditions and work organization;
- Ensure that caring responsibilities are recognized at different phases of the lifecycle *and do not interfere with other rights (e.g. pension rights)*.

3. Workplace design and health promotion

Work processes and the organization of work should enable employees to perform well and must ensure that their health and capacity to work are optimized.

To enable employees to realize their potential:

- Use workplace design creatively both to *prevent* physical and mental decline and to *compensate* for it and to account for variations due to ageing;
- Aim to reduce work-induced illness and disability and to promote a healthy workforce;
- Encourage employees to maintain healthy lifestyles and safe working practices;
- Use workplace design to facilitate re-employment;
- Ensure that all regulations concerning safety and hygiene at the workplace are adhered to.

4. *Recruitment*

Recruit on the basis of the skills and abilities needed to do the job. Select candidates on merit by focusing on skills and abilities and on performance at interview.

- Avoid using age limits or age ranges in job advertisements;
- Target advertisements to reach and attract a wide age range;
- Focus on the skills, abilities, experience and potential of the candidates and not on age;
- Ensure that all those involved in selecting staff are trained to avoid basing decisions on prejudices and stereotypes.

5. *Promotion and internal job changes*

Base promotion on the ability, or demonstrated potential, to do the job.

To ensure fairness in promotion and other job changes:

- Make sure that promotion opportunities are made available to all staff who have demonstrated the ability or the potential to do the job;
- Focus on the skills, abilities, previous experience and potential of the candidates when sifting applications, including transferable skills;
- Ensure that those responsible for promotion decisions are trained to avoid basing decisions on prejudices and stereotypes ;
- Offer opportunities for flexible late career development both inside and outside of the organization.

6. *Employment exit and retirement transition*

Base any redundancy decisions on objective, job-related criteria and ensure that retirement schemes offer a choice of options and are fairly applied.

To promote fairness and flexibility in employment exit:

(a) *Redundancy*

- Where permitted by law use objective, job-related criteria and not age when considering candidates for redundancy;
- Look at flexible alternatives to redundancy such as part-time working, tele-working, job-share or career breaks and short-term contracts;
- Ensure that workers made redundant are prepared for job-seeking and re-employment.

(b) *Retirement*

- Give individuals as much choice as possible in the way they retire;
- Avoid using early retirement without evaluating its impact on both the individuals concerned and the organization;
- Use flexible or phased retirement schemes and/or flexible work schedules where possible;
- Allow workers the freedom to work beyond pension age if they wish, *including via the use of outsourcing*;

- Make sure that full use is made of the skills and experience of ageing workers before they retire;
- Make retirement preparation available to employees.

7. *Changing attitudes within organizations*

Educate the whole of the workforce about how age barriers and age stereotypes arise and why they must be combated.

To achieve effective age management, reduce age discrimination and provide an environment in which age diversity flourishes:

- Challenge the acceptance and use of negative age stereotypes;
- Introduce age-awareness training for key personnel such as line managers and recruitment staff and consider extending this to all staff;
- Regularly reinforce messages about the benefits of age diversity;
- Learn from good practices in other organizations;
- Include the prohibition of age discrimination in collective agreements;
- Encourage a wide age range in representation on works councils and other company bodies;
- Regularly analyse the organization's own age profile to assess the age diversity of employees;
- Widely disseminate this code of good practice.