



TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP “EXPERIENCE”

“Tutoring through “Emperia” project (Greece)”

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**MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT
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GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR
MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY
AND OTHER RESOURCES**



***EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN COMMISSION***

Tutoring through “Emperia” project (Greece)

The Greek national action plan (NAP) puts an emphasis on full employment. To reach this ambitious objective, a number of important labour reforms have been introduced, including the transformation of unemployment benefits into employment subsidies, in particular for groups facing social exclusion and the promotion of part-time work in the public sector. Yet there have been no substantial policy measures going in the right direction been taken in terms of working arrangements and incentives to encourage older workers to remain longer in employment and support for skills development.

There is an imperative need to develop appropriate policies to adapt older age active population to industrial change and to the rapidly changing working conditions. These changes concern new technologies, new systems for management and corporate organization, working hours, work flexibility, new specialisations, etc. At the same time, there is an increase in the average age of the active working population.

The active involvement of all actors representing different aspects of the problem and the development of a social dialogue as an intervention tool for the adaptation of older age workers is a necessary procedure within the framework of a democratic approach to the problem and of a substantial contribution to policy making. Undoubtedly, the effective management of active ageing is able to significantly contribute to coping with tightness of local or regional labour market in specialized human resources. This is due to the significant professional experience of the older workers. However, in the business world, there is a prevailing tendency to avoid hiring people over 50 years old, especially when they are in a pre-retirement phase.

At the same time, this age group is invited to cope with a series of additional challenges of personal nature which are possible to negatively affect their labour performance. Thus, at this age, the person starts to enter the ageing phase accompanied by all the associated physical and psychological consequences thereof.

In the framework of the “EMPEIRIA” project, pilot actions have been implemented. The innovative and experimental character of the actions is focused in the fact that for the first time a record of the problems and all its parameters has been made. In addition, the members of the target-group will be supported with consulting, training and mentoring applications. Therefore methodology concerning mentoring has been developed. More specifically tools have been made and tested in a large scale for the problem’s management in a micro-level (enterprise).

The processes presented below refer to the mentoring for management and promotion of active ageing, in enterprises of all three economical sectors. In fact, they are Human Resource Management processes, aiming at combating age discrimination and favouring age differentiation within the organizational structure of the enterprises, facilitating, in the best possible way, the production flows.

The processes and tools described in this section are simplified in a certain degree so that they can be implemented in practice by the person responsible for the human resources management, i.e. the HR Manager, the Personnel Manager or even the businessman him/herself, possibly with the assistance of executives.

The undertaking of mentoring for active ageing management is a continuous process. Therefore, it must be a long term sustainable process, and the HRM has to assure the fact that any such process adopted by the enterprise will be adequately supported at the level of administrative, financial and other resources, even if mid-term only, in order to be effectively implemented.

A crucial parameter is the existence of executive staff capable to manage such issues from the phase of diagnosis to the phase of responding by implementing precise measures and monitoring their effectiveness.

The need for active involvement and support by the employees makes clear that the existence of a positive workplace climate, with intense trait of confidence towards the employer and the existence of good relations between the management and the union of employees - if any - is a necessary requirement for the successful introduction of active ageing management systems in the business.

For the better understanding, the processes and mentoring tools have been divided into the following categories:

1. Personalized counselling and career counselling.
2. Implementation of flexible forms of work organization.
3. Improvement of health and safety conditions at work.
4. Standardized processes of personnel mentoring

III.1 Personalized counselling and career counselling

The term “personalized counselling” means a group of mentoring processes, specially adapted to each employee’s requirements, aiming at helping them in one or more professional life fields. The mechanisms in question vary from informal discussions between the employee and his/her superior or a member of the staff of the Human Resources Department, to perfectly structured sets of discussion based on the one-to-one interaction model between the employee and specially trained staff.

Personalized counselling may concern various different fields of an employee’s professional life, such as performance improvement, career planning or management of private matters which have an impact on labour effectiveness. A basic objective of the Counsellor is to facilitate the person in finding alternative solutions and in taking decisions according to the circumstances.

When it comes to personalized counselling, it is to be noted at that point, that it is necessary to have an office of assistance provided to the senior employees, staffed with qualified scientific personnel, even if only for some hours during the week. The operation of such a structure, even if rudimentary only, forms the prerequisites so that people having personal problems be able to take the step, in principle, to talk to someone about it.

At the same time, an interesting alternative mechanism is the fixed cooperation with specialized scientific organizations and the free provision of personal counselling services to older personnel members. Furthermore, this specific procedure presents the advantage of being more discrete, as the meetings between the older worker and the counsellor take place in the office of the counsellor and not in the workplace, which is something that increases the chances of using the service.

III.2 Application of flexible work organization forms

The main forms of flexible work organization having been developed and implemented by the businesses up to now are the following:

- ⇒ Flexible working hour schedule, with possibility of arriving or departing later or earlier than provided by the fixed schedule.
- ⇒ Over-time, within the week or on Weekends.
- ⇒ Employment at variable working hours, according to the needs of the production process per period and fixed annual working hour number.
- ⇒ Part-time employment, with fixed weekly or monthly working hours
- ⇒ Part-time employment with variable number of weekly working hours and schedule, fixed on the initiative of the employer or the employee
- ⇒ Employment which the employee offers to the business a pre-agreed number of work hours, on an annual basis, according to his/her needs, with high potential of flexibility concerning the working hour schedule.
- ⇒ Teleworking, i.e., the work is done outside the business premises, for example, in the employee's home, with the contribution of the Information and Telecommunication Technologies.

In order that the business obtains a clear picture of the needs and will of its employees aged over 50, to implement flexible employment forms, the first important step to be taken is to conduct employee surveys, through the use of a questionnaire as this in Annex I.

III.3 Improvement of health and safety conditions at work

One of the most important reasons why older workers retire from their work is long-term health condition or disability. The improvement of occupational health and safety conditions is one of the major weapons that the business has in the context of its efforts to prolong its human resources active life. Besides, the health condition of the employees lies among the most fundamental factors which are taken into account in each evaluation process of their employability, while, at the same time, the reasons for early retirement are frequently associated to the strenuous character of their daily job and the wear that it has accumulatively caused them through the years.

Procedures that can be implemented by a business in order to take decisions on the improvement of work conditions are the following:

- The conducting of an occupational hazard assessment study, which records the hazardous and noxious factors within the working environment.

- The organisational health reports which record the condition of health of the enterprise's human resources, as well as data on work accidents and occupational diseases at a certain moment in time, thus allowing to draw conclusions on the diachronic evolution of the enterprise's occupational health.
- The employee survey for recording the situation concerning working conditions. In Annex II a questionnaire could be used for this purpose is presented.

III.4 Standardized processes of personnel mentoring

The standardized processes of Personnel mentoring concern the following fields: recruitment, performance appraisal and continuous vocational training.

The external recruitment is of paramount importance in the context of active ageing management, as it is able to increase the internal mobility of the enterprise, forming, in fact, an internal labour market, which can be proven particularly useful for the employees over 55, giving them the possibility of a new career within the enterprise.

Concerning evaluation, it aims at collecting useful data on the occupation behaviour and performance of the employees over 55.

Continuous vocational training is one of the most useful mechanisms that the enterprises have, in the context of their effort of active ageing management, as it aims at upgrading of the older employees' profile. The standardization of training processes, in this context, involves specialized training counselling tools, such as the one presented below. Training counselling is an integrated system of planning of continuous vocational training actions. The tools developed in the context of this Project cover the needs of the businesses concerning linking the business orientation with the training requirements of their staff, taking always into account the developments and tendencies of the modern business environment.

An indicative scenario of application of the training counselling tool is the following:

- ▶ Conducting of the first anticipated procedure, i.e. business operation diagnostics, either by qualified staff members of the enterprise / agency or by training counsellors.
- ▶ The training counsellor proceeds to the diagnostics of training needs and submits the results to the business / agency.
- ▶ Application of personalized training counselling tools to each candidate-employee for training.

III.5 Conclusions

The main conclusions from the pilot application of mentoring tools in enterprises of all economical sectors are the following:

- Large enterprises agree with conventional policies of ageing management such as premature retirement.
- On the other hand, part-time employment and flexible schedule of work are not widespread practices in Greece.
- In large enterprises the application of mentoring tools is more usual and effective, as enterprises appreciate the experience of older workers and of course they have the economic more capacity of proceeding tools for active ageing management than medium-sized and small enterprises.
- Many employers consider that the flexibility in employment and the access to training and lifelong learning strategies are the most applicable tools for sustaining the employment of older workers, while they offer added value in the enterprise.
- Good working conditions conducive to job retention, in particular in relation to health and safety, flexible working arrangements (including part-time and career breaks) and care services are others measures that enterprises could use for active ageing management.
- But there were many employers expressed the wish that certain motives must be given in order to apply mentoring tools for increasing the employment of older workers and delaying the exit from the labour market. Such motives would be tax exemptions.

Finally, in the framework of the project, it has been recognized that government policies can produce a supportive environment but without dedicated contributions from the social partners the necessary changes in age management will not materialize and spread. The social partners have a major contribution to make in encouraging enterprises to take a forward-looking approach and in facilitating better and longer working lives.

ANNEX I
EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
ON FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENT FORMS

<i>Company Name :</i>
<i>Name of supervisor :</i>
<i>Name of employee :</i>
<i>Department:</i>
<i>Job title :</i>
<i>Date:</i>

1. How old are you?

55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

2. What is the desirable age of retirement from work for you?

3. What are the reasons why you wish to retire early from professional life? (asked only if the answer to the previous question is <64)

.....

.....

.....

4. How long have you worked at this company;

5. How long have you worked at this company in the current position;

6. How long have you worked in total at other companies with similar duties to those you currently have;

7. Your enterprise takes into account, in a satisfactory way the personal needs of its employees of 55-64 years old when drafting the working schedule?

YES NO

8. What is the kind of your employment relationship (contract) and what is your hourly based employment scheme?

a) Open-ended employment contract

Contracted working hours per day	
Contracted working hours per week	
Real working hours per day (in average)	
Real working hours per week (in average)	

b) Fixed-term employment contract

Contracted working hours per day	
Contracted working hours per week	
Real working hours per day (in average)	
Real working hours per week (in average)	

c) part-time

Contracted working hours per day	
Contracted working hours per week	
Real working hours per day (in average)	
Real working hours per week (in average)	

9. You work at home in order to respond to your professional obligations?

YES NO

If Yes, how many hours per month;

10. If you work overtime, which statement of the following is valid?

I would like to work more overtime.	
I am satisfied with my overtime hour number.	
I would like my overtime to be slightly less.	
I want my overtime to be significantly reduced.	
I would prefer not to work any overtime at all	

11. Which of the below statements is valid for you working schedule?

My working hours are fixed and decided by the management.	
The enterprise drafts the working schedule for the following days	
I work when the enterprise needs me	

12. Which are your working days usually;

Monday to Friday	
Monday to Saturday	
Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays	
All days of the week	

13.If you have a five-day week, how many Saturdays and Sundays do you exceptionally work per month and if you have a six-day week, how many Sundays do you work per month respectively?

14. Which are your normal working hours;

Always in the mornings	
Always in the afternoons	
Alternate working hours	

15.What would be for you the ideal number of working hours per week in the current period?

16. What type of employment do you prefer most;

Full-time permanent	
Part time	
Teleworking	

17. How satisfied you are with your free time for taking care of personal, family or social business?

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion / Indifferent	Satisfied	Very satisfied

18. Generally, how satisfied you are from your working hour schedule and your work-personal life balance formed by this schedule?

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion / Indifferent	Satisfied	Very satisfied

19. If you work in the afternoons or/and evenings, does this fact cause you important difficulties (e.g., intense fatigue)?

YES NO

20. Is there a flexibility concerning your arrival and departure hours from work or any other form of flexible working hours. If yes, please describe.

.....
.....

21. What would be the ideal working hour schedule for you at this stage of your career?

.....
.....

22. Are there any days or hours of specific weekdays, during which your work causes you significant trouble for personal, family or other reasons?

YES NO

If Yes, which days and hours;

23. Would it be more convenient for you to work on the basis of a variable number of working hours per week or even per month?

YES NO

24. Would you like to work with a particularly flexible schedule or without schedule and a contracted number of working hours exclusively on an annual basis?

YES NO

25. Do you consider that the possibility of taking more leaves would help you significantly to combine work and personal life?

YES NO

26. Would you like to work from home (teleworking)?

YES NO

If yes, full-time or some days / hours of the week?

27. Which of the below stated reasons would be most important for you in order to decide to telework? (Score according to the degree of importance): 1 = Little important, 2 = quite important, 3 = very important)

ADVANTAGES	SCORE
a) freedom of arranging working time and leisure time	
b) freedom of movements, attitudes, dress code, etc. in the teleworking room.	
c) absence of control ("at any time") by the superiors	
d) absence of control or criticism and evaluation of your job by colleagues	
e) decrease of work stress caused by the workplace	
f) other (specify)	

28. Which of the below stated reasons would deter your from teleworking? (Please score as above)

DISADVANTAGES	SCORE
a) Fear of alienation, lack of communication and social interacting with colleagues	
b) Fear of lack of possibility to defend and bring out one's work through direct contact	
c) Fear of exclusion from the "developments" at work: Raises, promotions, training opportunities, etc	
d) Fear of excessive use of the PC	
e) other (specify)	

29. Would you be interested in the possibility of working with a progressively decreasing number of working hours until your retirement?

YES NO

30. Do you consider that the flexibilities in employment, such as the above mentioned ones, would significantly make you to remain in the active life for many more years?

YES NO

ANNEX II
QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Company Name :
Name of supervisor :
Name of employee :
Department:
Job title :
Date:

1. How old are you?

55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

2. What is the desirable age of retirement from work for you?

3. What are the reasons why you wish to retire early from professional life? (asked only if the answer to the previous question is <64)

.....

.....

4. How long have you worked at this company;

5. How long have you worked at this company in the current position;

6. How long have you worked in total at other companies with similar duties to those you currently have;

7. Do you consider that you could do the same job that you do today, until your 65 years?

YES NO

If No, why?

8. Your enterprise takes into account, in a satisfactory way the personal needs of its employees of 55-64 years old in order to improve the working conditions?

YES NO

9. How many days a month on average do you work for more than 10 hours?

10. When this happens, do you experience any problems of intense fatigue or other health troubles?

Rarely	Often	Usually

11. If you work during the night, how many nights on average do you work a month?

.....

12. Your night work causes you intense fatigue or bothers you in general?

Rarely	Often	Usually

13. Which are your working days usually;

Monday to Friday	
Monday to Saturday	
Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays	
All days of the week	

14. If you have a five-day week, how many Saturdays and Sundays do you exceptionally work per month and if you have a six-day week, how many Sundays do you work per month, respectively?

15. If you periodically happen to work often on Weekends, does this cause problem of intense fatigue or other health troubles?

Rarely	Often	Usually

16. Using the following scale, report whether in your work you are exposed to...

	ALL THE TIME	ALMOST ALL THE TIME	ABOUT HALF OF THE DAY	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER
Vibrations from hand tools, machinery, etc					
Noise, so loud that you would need to raise your voice to talk to other					

people					
High temperatures making you sweat even when you not working					
Low temperatures when being either inside or outside					
Inhalation of smoke, fumes (e.g. from welding), dust (e.g. from wood)					
Inhalation of vapours from solvents and thinners					
You handle or touch chemical products or agents					
Radiation, i.e. X-rays, radioactive radiation, welding light, laser beams					
Other people's cigarette smoke					
You handle or come into direct contact with materials that may be polluted, such as waste, bodily fluids, lab supplies, etc.					

17. Using the following scale, report whether your work involves...

	ALL THE TIME	ALMOST ALL THE TIME	ABOUT HALF OF THE DAY	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER
Strenuous or tiring postures					
Lifting or transferring of people					
Lifting or transporting of heavy loads					
Standing or walking					
Repeated movements of the wrist or the arm					
Working in the business's facilities					
Working in places outside the business, e.g. customer's facilities, in the street					
Transactions – contact with people not being employees in your workplace, e.g., customers, patients, passengers					
Use of personal protection equipment (PPE)					

18. Concerning the occupational health and safety hazards related to carrying out your job, how informed would you say you are?

Not at all informed	Almost informed	Shortly informed	Well informed	Quite informed

19. Your job involves:

Very rapid pace actions?	
Actions to be executed within very narrow time limits	

20. Generally, the pace of your work depends on...

The work executed by your colleagues	
The direct demands of other people	
Quantitative production or performance goals	
Automated machine or product movement speed	
Your superior's direct control	

21. Do you think that your health and safety are at risk because of your work?

YES NO

22. Is your health affected by your work?

YES NO

If Yes, in which ways?

Ear or hearing problems	
Eye or sight problems	
Skin problems	
Aches or pains or other problems in lower back	
Headaches	
Stomach-aches	
Aches or other muscle problems in the neck or the shoulders	
Respirational problems	
Heart problems	
Feeling stress	
Difficulty in sleeping	
Allergies	

Feeling nervous & anxious	
Feeling tired	
Other (specify)	

23. How many days have you been off work due to your own illness during the past 12 months?

24. How satisfied are you with your working conditions in general?

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion / Indifferent	Satisfied	Very satisfied

ANNEX III

QUESTIONNAIRE OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING NEEDS RESEARCH

Company Name :
Name of supervisor :
Name of employee :
Department:
Job title :
Date:

1. How old are you?

55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

2. What is your educational level?

Elementary school [____] High school [____] Lyceum [____]
 Technical school [____] University [____]

3. Do you have previous experiences of continuous vocational training programmes? If yes, describe them.

Subject of the programme	Year	Duration (in hours)

4. Do you consider that in the current phase of your career, you are concerned by vocational training?

Not at all	Shortly	Fairly	Very	Quite

5. If in question 3 you answered NOT AT ALL, please state the reasons thereof.

Your current job has no specific requirements

In this current phase of completing your career, no training is considered necessary

No available time

Learning difficulties

Other (specify)

6. If in question 3 you did not answer NOT AT ALL, please state which of the below mentioned thematic units would you be interested in to attend.

- Value – Cost Fixing
- Financial Statement Compilation and Analysis
- Export trade procedures
- General Accounting Principles (European General Accounting Plan, Code of Accounting Books and Elements, VAT, book keeping, etc.)
- Elaboration of marketing plans and market researches
- Elaboration of business plans
- Computerized accounting
- Business english
- Public relationships
- Sales management
- Human resources management
- Automation introduction
- ISO Quality Assurance
- EMAS environmental management
- Health and safety

7. Which training methods you think will help you better?

- Conventional learning (in a classroom)
- E-learning
- Mixed (conventional + distance learning)
- On the job

8. Are there any factors rendering your participation difficult in actions of continuous training. If yes, please analyse (e.g. cost, luck of time)?

- Luck of financial resources
- luck of information on training programs
- Luck of time
- Other (specify)

9. Do you consider that the business you are with, gives satisfactory opportunities of continuous training to its employees over 55?

YES NO

10. The satisfactory access to actions of continuous training is for you a factor that would significantly prompt you to remain in the active live for many more years?

YES NO