

## **Policy recommendation 1.**

### **Promoting company programmes to promote health promotion and health maintenance**

Health promotion programmes aim to help maintain and improve the activity and working capacity of older workers, contributing to well-being and longer-term employment. Employers can play a key role in achieving these goals through their ongoing contact with the people concerned, and through their considerable influence on their orientation, scheduling and motivation.

#### **The following measures can help to do this:**

1. Organise regular health check-ups, such as blood pressure, cholesterol, vision, hearing, mobility and blood tests, organised by the company and supported by its budget. These help in early detection and timely treatment of problems.
2. Providing exercise programmes (e.g. corporate yoga, physiotherapy), stress management training and nutritional advice. These are designed to prevent chronic diseases while maintaining activity levels.
3. Awareness-raising campaigns: Workshops, presentations and information materials for employees to promote healthy lifestyles, with a focus on the needs of older people.
4. Improving the working environment: Ergonomic improvements such as adjustable chairs, tables or rest areas to reduce physical strain.
5. Partnership with healthcare providers: Collaboration with private or public health institutions to implement programmes.

Doing the same will improve not only the health and fitness to work of older workers, but will also increase loyalty to the employer and reduce absences and costs from health problems in the longer term. In addition to employers, the state would also benefit significantly from these preventive measures. Positive changes for those affected would result in reduced public expenditure (pensions, health, social care) and improved economic impacts (longer active working lives, increased productivity, etc.). This justifies the need to provide incentives for companies at government level. To ensure the success of these measures, continuous monitoring and the development of programmes tailored to needs are important.

### **Barriers and preconditions for successful implementation**

Barriers that may hinder the implementation of health promotion programmes:

1. **Lack of financial resources:** Lack of public funding or tax incentives can also be a barrier to widespread implementation.
2. **Lack of awareness and commitment:** employers and employees may also lack a sense of the importance of prevention, and therefore interest in programmes may remain low. This may be due to a lack of information or short-term thinking.

3. **Lack of infrastructure and expertise:** access to health services in rural areas is often limited, and the lack of experienced experts to professionally manage programmes can also be a barrier to successful implementation.
4. **Demographic and cultural differences:** the different lifestyles and health status of older workers can make it difficult to develop coherent programmes that reach everyone and help them effectively.

### Preconditions for successful implementation

1. **Financial incentives and subsidies:** tax incentives, tenders or direct grants from the state are key to the implementation of programmes, especially for SMEs.
2. **Awareness-raising:** information campaigns should be used to raise awareness among employers and employees about the importance of health promotion and the long-term benefits of preventive screening and programmes for both parties.
3. **Improving infrastructure and professional background:** providing appropriate infrastructure, such as screening buses or local health centres, and well-trained professionals will increase the effectiveness of programmes.
4. **Taking account of individual needs:** programmes should be tailored to the health, lifestyle and working environment of the people concerned to ensure broad participation and effectiveness.
5. **Measuring results and continuous improvement:** continuous monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure long-term sustainability and to achieve real results, and improvements in line with needs are also essential.

### Practices in Hungary

There are a variety of health promotion programmes and initiatives in Hungary, some of which target older workers and pensioners.

These include:

1. **Workplace health promotion through health funds:** health funds offer services that support preventive screening and medical care for workers. This helps to maintain health and prevent disease. Such funds also offer employers favourable opportunities, for example in the form of tax benefits.
2. **MH Health Preservation SENIOR Premium Program:** a special program of the Hungarian Defence Forces provides comprehensive screening and lifestyle counselling for retired soldiers. The program aims to detect diseases early and promote a long and healthy life.
3. **HR programmes and awareness-raising:** some employers also run mental and physical health support programmes, including workplace stress management and welfare services. The aim is to keep older workers fit for work for as long as possible, thus contributing to the productivity of companies.

There are currently no government-level corporate health prevention programmes or subsidies or benefits available for such programmes.

**Key stakeholder organisations concerned:**

Important actors in the development of health promotion programmes in Hungary are governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Interior, Deputy State Secretariat for the Professional Management of Health; the National Centre for Public Health and Pharmacy, which is responsible for the planning and organisation of primary health care, health promotion and population screening at the regional level, and for ensuring the uniform access of the population to these services. Also the Public Health Departments of the County Government Offices, universities, NGOs, which also play a key role in community programmes and health promotion. In addition, health insurance funds and corporate health service providers can also contribute to prevention initiatives tailored to employees, with the involvement of employers. Relevant employers, chambers of commerce and advocacy and lobbying organisations are also key players.

**Impact assessment**

The promotion of company programmes to support health promotion and health promotion at the state level is in line with both Hungarian and EU policy objectives. In the European Union, both the European Health Union and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasise the promotion of active and healthy lifestyles, with a particular focus on ageing workers. Health strategies in Hungary also pay particular attention to prevention and maintaining the health of the working-age population, such as the National Public Health Programme. These initiatives are also in line with Hungarian and EU strategies for labour market sustainability, which aim to increase the labour market participation of older workers to address demographic challenges.

The effectiveness of company health promotion programmes depends on a number of factors. Their long-term implementation is expected to reduce absenteeism, increase productivity of older workers and contribute to labour market sustainability in a complex way. In the long term, preventive screening and lifestyle improvement initiatives can reduce the burden on the health care system and the cost of disease.

In addition to individual health outcomes, there should also be an increase in job satisfaction and employee engagement, benefiting both workers and employers.

The implementation of the programmes depends on public incentives and employer commitment. Tax incentives, grants for companies and partnerships with health care providers can provide a significant incentive to start programmes. Improving health infrastructure and expertise, as well as ongoing information and motivation of staff, are essential for sustainability. The long-term benefits of measures such as longer working lives and lower direct health care costs can further increase uptake and social effectiveness.

Such programmes can therefore bring significant benefits not only for older workers but also for the labour market and the health system as a whole, enhancing well-being at work and the country's competitiveness.

## **Policy recommendation 2:**

### **Education and training programmes for the 55+ age group**

Providing comprehensive development and training programmes for jobseekers and workers over 55 will significantly increase their chances of finding and maintaining employment. Measures could focus on development and training that is accessible to those concerned free of charge on a universal basis and that offers the opportunity to acquire new marketable skills and knowledge.

The first step is to assess the existing skills and competences of participants to ensure relevance and effectiveness. On this basis, a personalised development plan can be proposed, identifying the necessary training orientations, be it technological, digital, soft skills or professional development. The proposed directions are diverse, and some of the more important suggestions are set out below, organised according to different specifications:

#### **1. Digital and technological skills development**

Targeted training to ensure basic IT skills and the use of modern technologies. For example, using office software, online communication, data security, or even understanding the basics of artificial intelligence.

#### **2. Employment support programmes**

These include interview training, CV writing advice and mentoring programmes to help participants find and succeed in their job search.

#### **3. Developments to support reintegration**

**To help people re-enter the labour market and maintain the stability of their existing employment relationship, stress management training, time management and intergenerational cooperation skills can be used.**

#### **4. Career management and support**

Emphasis should be placed on long-term career planning, including the benefits of alternative forms of work (e.g. part-time, teleworking) and the promotion of a culture of continuous learning. They should also be made available.

#### **5. Strengthening and supporting adult professional training and continuing education**

Ensure that older people who are in and out of work have access to lifelong vocational training and further training. This will enable them to adapt to changing job requirements and labour market changes.

## **Barriers and preconditions for successful implementation**

### **a) Barriers that may hinder implementation**

#### **1. Lack of resources**

- o Lack of financial resources to develop, implement and maintain programmes.
- o Shortage of qualified trainers and mentors.
- o Lack of technological equipment and infrastructure, especially in smaller municipalities.

#### **2. Low interest or motivation**

- o Some of the 55+ age group are less motivated to learn new skills or feel that learning is no longer relevant to them.
- o Fear of new technologies or competition in the labour market.

#### **3. Stereotypes and prejudices**

- o Prejudices on the part of employers that older workers are less adaptable.
- o Older workers' self-perpetuated misconceptions, for example that they can no longer learn new things.

#### **4. Infrastructure and organisational problems**

- o Administrative barriers to programmes, such as complicated application processes.
- o Lack of cooperation between employers, training institutions and government.

## **Prerequisites for successful implementation**

#### **1. Strategic planning and cooperation**

- o Develop partnerships between government, NGOs, businesses and educational institutions.
- o Integrating local and international good practices into programmes.

#### **2. Effective funding models**

- o Mobilise EU and national funding.
- o Sponsorship schemes that also encourage the participating companies to get involved.

#### **3. Targeted communication and recruitment**

- o Emphasising the usefulness and importance of the programmes, especially in a way that is understandable to the target group.
- o Engage and convince employers of the value of older workers.

#### **4. Flexibility in training formats**

- o Combining on-site and online training to make the programme as widely available as possible.
- o Providing flexible courses in terms of scheduling.

## 5. Support measures

- o Financial incentives (e.g. scholarships, travel grants).
- o Psychological and mentoring support to increase participants' self-confidence.

## 6. Measuring results and feedback

- o Continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of the programme, measuring results and integrating lessons learned into subsequent phases.

## Practices in Hungary

There are currently several training and development programmes available in Hungary for jobseekers and workers, including those aged 55 and over, aimed at developing marketable skills. However, the programmes are not continuous, difficult to access and lack flexibility and systematisation.

1. **Redesign Programme:** this is a free, online retraining programme focusing on digital skills development, with the aim of creating new career opportunities for people who have lost their jobs, particularly in IT and digital technology. The programme is practice-oriented and also allows for integration into longer training courses.
2. **GINOP Plus programmes:** training grants are available under the Youth Guarantee Plus and Expanding the Labour Supply programmes to develop digital and professional skills. These grants also provide different levels of cash benefits to participants to encourage their return to the labour market.
3. **National Employment Service (NES) training:** the NES offers a range of short and long-term training for jobseekers, such as digital skills development, vocational training and programmes to learn new skills. Such training is also available in a flexible hybrid format.

Training and development of the age group concerned is currently very ineffective. One of the main obstacles is the lack of continuous and free programmes, which makes development opportunities unaffordable or inaccessible for many. There is a lack of flexibility, which is essential to meet individual needs and rapid change. Bureaucratic and complex procedures slow down and make it difficult for stakeholders to get involved, especially for those most in need. Resource scarcity and territorial disparities particularly limit opportunities for people living in rural areas, while the lack of cooperation between the organisations involved hinders the development of effective solutions. These barriers would require an integrated approach and targeted support to overcome the problems.

## Key stakeholder organisations concerned:

Currently, the organisation and management of adult education and labour market training and development in Hungary is fragmented. There is fragmentation and duplication at both governmental and operational organisational levels. The main actors are: Ministry of Culture and Innovation - State Secretariat for Higher Education, Vocational and Adult Education, Youth; Ministry of National Economy - State Secretariat for Employment Policy - National Employment Service;

Ministry of Interior - Deputy State Secretariat for Public Employment; County Government Offices; Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the County Chambers; National Association of Hungarian Industrialists; Vocational Training Centres; Adult Education Organisations; NGOs.

### **Impact assessment**

Support for training for older people is closely aligned with both Hungarian and EU strategies. The European Union's employment guidelines, in particular in the context of the "Green and Digital Transition", stress the importance of training and lifelong learning. Measures to improve the employability of older workers, in particular to increase labour market activity and renew professional skills, are also a priority in Hungary's efforts. These initiatives contribute to the EU target of 78% of the 20-64 age group in employment by 2030.

The effectiveness of the measure depends to a large extent on the relevance of the training and the content tailored to the needs of the target group. Success can be enhanced through mentoring and labour market linkages, based on cooperation between employers, training institutions and the National Employment Service. The durability of the impact is further enhanced if programmes are adapted to digital and technological developments. For older people, free training programmes can increase their motivation to work, improve their chances of finding a job and reduce inactivity.

The programme will be implemented mainly through a combination of public, EU and private funding. Taking into account local labour market needs and ensuring easy and quick access to the target group, for example through regional centres or online platforms, is key. Cooperation between employers, training institutions, public and non-governmental organisations is needed to ensure that training is relevant and practice-oriented.

For sustainability, programmes should be continuously monitored and fine-tuned on the basis of results. Digitalisation and technological innovation offer sustainable solutions in the long term, for example in the form of online courses. In addition to public subsidies, active participation of employers can be encouraged, for example through tax incentives.