

**Interreg
Danube Region**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



IntegrAGE

IntegrAGE project

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

GERMANY

1. Country and Regional Context

Germany is one of the five "super-aged" societies worldwide, with a steadily growing proportion of the population over 65 years old. Projections indicate that this segment will increase to nearly one-third of the total population by 2050. The demographic aging presents significant challenges for the country, particularly in terms of the labor market, healthcare system, and long-term care. Simultaneously, it offers opportunities for innovation and social change.

2. Key Strategies and Policies Related to Age Management

The German federal government has developed a comprehensive demographic strategy titled "Every Age Counts." This cross-departmental strategy aims to promote prosperity and quality of life for all generations. A key focus is on promoting active aging and harnessing the potential of older people. Various round tables and working groups have been established to develop action strategies. In the labor market, the government has implemented pension system reforms, such as gradually raising the retirement age to 67 and introducing flexible retirement options. Additionally, programs have been launched to promote employment, education, and further training for older workers, as well as to improve working conditions.

3. Main Findings from the Country Analysis

The labor force participation of older individuals in Germany has significantly increased in recent years, although it still remains below the overall employment rate. There is particular potential for improvement among women and low-skilled workers. Identified challenges include the impending shortage of skilled workers due to demographic change and the increasing demand for care and health services. Positive aspects include the high life expectancy and good health status of many older people in Germany. Three-quarters of those over 65 still feel fit. However, the prevalence of chronic and mental illnesses, such as dementia, is increasing.

4. Regional Methodological Approach

4.1. Process

For the analysis, relevant strategy documents and reports from the federal government, as well as scientific studies, were initially evaluated. Additionally, expert interviews were conducted with representatives from ministries, associations, and research institutions. In a multi-stage stakeholder process, fields of action were then prioritized and potential measures discussed.

5. Selected Measure 1: Expansion of Age-Appropriate Workplaces

5.1. Short Description

This measure aims to better adapt workplaces and conditions to the needs of older employees. This includes ergonomic improvements, flexible working time models, and age-mixed teams. Companies are to be supported through consultation and financial incentives for implementation.

5.2. Barriers and Prerequisites

So far, mainly large companies implement such measures. SMEs often still face information deficits and resource constraints. For broader diffusion, target group-specific consulting services and funding programs are necessary. Moreover, good practice examples should be more widely communicated.

5.3. Impact Assessment

Relevance: The measure addresses the central aspect of prolonged employability and is considered highly relevant by all stakeholders. **Effectiveness:** Studies show positive effects on the health and motivation of older employees. However, effectiveness strongly depends on the specific implementation in companies. **Efficiency:** The benefits (longer employment, fewer sick days) generally outweigh the costs for companies. Initial state funding can further increase efficiency. **Sustainability:** Consistent implementation can achieve lasting improvements in working conditions. However, regular adjustments are necessary. **Impact:** In addition to direct effects for older employees, positive spillover effects on corporate culture and employer image are expected. **Feasibility:** Technical feasibility is assessed as high. Challenges mainly exist in financing for SMEs and overcoming reservations.

6. Selected Measure 2: Promotion of Digital Competencies for Older Adults

6.1. Short Description

The measure includes the expansion of low-threshold educational offerings to strengthen digital competencies of older people. This includes courses in adult education centers and senior facilities, as well as outreach programs. A focus is on everyday relevant applications and the use of digital health services.

6.2. Barriers and Prerequisites

Existing offerings often reach only a portion of the target group. Barriers include lack of interest, fears, and limited access opportunities. For success, target group-appropriate formats, reduction of access barriers, and qualification of trainers are crucial.

6.3. Impact Assessment

Relevance: Given increasing digitalization, the measure is assessed as very relevant to ensure social participation of older adults. **Effectiveness:** Evaluations of similar programs show that participants' digital competencies can be significantly improved. However, reach is still expandable. **Efficiency:** Costs per participant are relatively low. Efficiency can be further increased through synergies with existing structures (e.g., adult education centers). **Sustainability:** It is crucial that learned skills are applied and further developed in everyday life. Follow-up offerings and support structures are important for this. **Impact:** In addition to improved digital participation, positive effects on social contacts and everyday independence are expected. **Feasibility:** Implementation is assessed as quite feasible. Challenges mainly exist in reaching educationally disadvantaged groups and ensuring comprehensive coverage.

7. Summary

The impact assessment shows that both measures address relevant fields of action and are expected to have positive effects. The promotion of age-appropriate workplaces can make an important contribution to extending working life, while strengthening digital competencies promotes social participation of older adults. However, both measures require target group-specific approaches and broad participation of various actors.

8. Implications for Action Plan

For the action plan, it is recommended to include both measures and interlink them. For instance, digital competencies could be more strongly integrated into concepts of age-appropriate workplaces. Additionally, approaches to reach underrepresented groups (e.g., low-skilled workers, people with migration backgrounds) should be developed. The involvement of local actors and the use of existing structures are central to successful implementation.