

Combating the demographic challenge in the insurance sector

A selection of initiatives in Europe



A joint project by the European social partners in the insurance sector



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AMICE provides a platform for mutual and cooperative insurers of all sizes in Europe. The mutual and cooperative sector accounts for one third of the insurance companies in Europe and close to 25% of premiums. With more than 100 direct members and 1,600 indirect members, employing 300,000 people approximately, AMICE speaks for a significant part of the insurance sector.

www.amice-eu.org



BIPAR is the European Federation of Insurance Intermediaries. It groups 51 national associations in 32 countries. Through its national associations, BIPAR represents the interests of insurance agents and brokers and financial intermediaries in Europe.

Besides some large multinationals, the insurance intermediation sector is composed of hundreds of thousands of SMEs and micro-type operators. It accounts for 0.7% of European GDP, and over one million people are active in the sector.

www.bipar.eu



UNI Europa is a European trade union federation. It unites trade unions organising in services and skills sectors in 50 different countries. With over 320 affiliated trade union organisations, UNI Europa represents 7 million workers. UNI Europa Finance is one of the sectoral structures of UNI Europa.

www.uni-europa.org

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Foreword by the European social partners in the insurance sector

We are proud to present this booklet, which is the result of fruitful cooperation within the Insurance Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (ISSDC). The Committee is a unique forum at European level, in which insurance employer and employee representatives can discuss topics of common interest.

In 2010 we issued a joint statement – available hereafter – aimed at addressing demographic issues in the insurance sector from a pan-European perspective. The present booklet forms part of the follow-up project to that statement – the project “Addressing the demographic challenge in the European insurance sector: a collection and dissemination of good practices”.

It presents not only examples of effective ways to address demographic challenges in the insurance sector, but also examples of the close and effective collaboration and dialogue between employer and employee representatives.

The solutions described are likely to be used at local and company level as the basis for further discussion and improvement by social partners, thus making the booklet a starting point for increasing good practice both within the insurance sector and even in other sectors.

To ensure that the goals outlined above are achieved, we are organising follow-up events as part of the project, including a conference promoting the booklet and a seminar aimed at assessing the outcome of the booklet’s dissemination. We are expecting these events to contribute to further improving relations, understanding and collaboration between employers and trade unions in the insurance sector at EU, national and company level.

As leader of the project, Insurance Europe would like to thank the other European insurance social partner organisations — UNI-Europa, AMICE and BIPAR — for their close cooperation and active involvement. The four European insurance social partner organisations all together wish to thank everyone — including insurance, reinsurance and intermediary undertakings, their national federations, employer and employee representatives and trade unions — who has shared their positive experiences to the benefit of all.

Last but not least, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the European Commission for its support for this initiative and the entire project.



*Sebastian Hopfner,
Chairman of Insurance sectoral social
dialogue committee, Chairman of the
Social Affairs and Education Committee
of Insurance Europe*



*Elke Maes,
Vice-Chair of the Insurance sectoral
social dialogue committee on behalf
of UNI Europa Finance*



*Jean-Luc de Boissieu,
Chair of AMICE Legal Affairs
Working Group*



*Didier Pissoort,
Chairman of BIPAR EU
Social Affairs Committee*

Statement by the European Commission

By making EU social dialogue an everyday reality, the EU social partners are addressing the effects of the economic and financial crisis in a socially responsible way and contributing to creating jobs and maintaining high standards and working conditions. This is why the Commission supports both cross-industry and sectoral EU social dialogue, by facilitating the consultation and negotiations of EU social partners and supporting their actions financially.

Like many other economic sectors of activity, the European insurance sector is exposed to a process of far-reaching change, which to a large extent is driven by demographic developments. The creation of socio-economic conditions that will allow both the employees and the employers to keep pace with this changing environment represents a huge challenge for member states, the EU institutions and also the social partners.

The results of social dialogue by the insurance sector partners are very important for the world of work as they deal with fundamental changes and help to shape societal responses. Social partners in the insurance sector have jointly addressed the demographic challenge for this sector in their 2010 joint statement. This booklet of good practices is the result of a joint project by the social partners, which the Commission agreed to support in 2011.

The Commission welcomes the priority given by the European social partners in the insurance sector to key issues such as demographic change, work/life balance, lifelong learning and health and safety. Their contribution is crucial for the European Union to meet the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Furthermore, by providing a summary of good practices in these areas, this booklet also contributes towards the achievement of the aims of The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012. As such, it will serve as a useful information tool for social partners active in other areas and sectors at EU level as well as in member states.



Armindo Silva, Director for Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue, European Commission, DG Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion, Directorate B "Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue"

Introduction

The European insurance and reinsurance sector is facing a significant challenge as its workforce is getting older and many employees are approaching retirement age.

On their own initiative, insurance and intermediary companies have introduced many measures to attract and retain talent. And on their side, social partners at company and sectoral level have also developed an impressive number of innovative and effective tools to make insurance an even more dynamic and attractive sector in which to work.

This booklet presents a sample of the many original good practices already introduced in the insurance industry and addresses the three issues covered by the Joint Statement adopted by the European insurance social partners in January 2010: work/life balance, lifelong learning, and health and safety at work. It offers examples of practices that have been selected for their innovation, originality and effectiveness in increasing the attractiveness of the insurance sector and the employability of individuals already working in the sector.



The booklet displays the practices in a way that illustrates the diversity of their objectives and origins. Some are specific to one of the three issues (first part of the booklet), and others are examples of combined measures addressing several issues together (second part). In both cases, they originate at individual company, group or sectoral level.

The booklet describes each example in a similar structure to help readers understand easily the background and key features of the initiatives as well as the impact and benefits they have generated for insurance employees, companies and the sector at large.

Naturally, these good practices are not directly transferable from one company or market to another. They were all designed with specific objectives and contexts in mind as the demographic pressure, the social dialogue organisation and the national regulatory frameworks differ significantly between EU countries - as do companies in their size and the variety of the markets in which they operate. The booklet therefore includes a description of the background and rationale for introducing the measure in question and of the national policy framework. Where possible, it also provides hyperlinks to websites where readers will find further information on the practices in which they are particularly interested.

We hope that the examples in our booklet will provide food for thought and will inspire other companies and social partners to find successful ways to address demographic change in the insurance sector. We have no doubt that many other good practices will emerge in the future.

Joint Statement by the European social partners in the insurance sector

The demographic challenge in the European insurance sector

Brussels, 26 January 2010

Introduction

With its ageing and declining population, the European Union is facing unprecedented challenges in its demographic future. Baby boomers are starting to retire from the labour market and will do so increasingly within the next decade. Simultaneously, as a result of low birth rates, the younger generation entering the labour market is dramatically shrinking and will not compensate for the growing portion of the workforce in retirement. The EU is faced with an ever-increasing number of retired citizens and too few workers to adequately fund welfare state programmes.

These demographic changes affect European insurance undertakings and intermediaries both in their capacity as product providers (of life, pension, health and long-term care insurance, for example) and as employers.

Insurance undertakings and intermediaries as product providers

The sector is aware of the perception that the public in general, and customers in particular, have of the various players providing insurance products and services. Significant work is underway to improve that perception and, we believe, progress is being made.

Insurance undertakings and intermediaries as employers

This joint statement therefore focuses on players in the insurance sector in their capacity as employers.

The average age of employees in the insurance sector is increasing. Many workers are also approaching retirement age. Dealing with the consequences of an ageing workforce will be challenging. Firstly, we need to allow experienced and motivated older staff to continue with their careers beyond the traditional retirement age if they wish to do so. Secondly, we need to attract the new talent into the sector necessary for a sustainable, skilled and diverse workforce.

The insurance sector is aware of the need to intensify efforts to attract qualified and highly trained employees. It is especially necessary for the insurance sector to be seen as an attractive industry with interesting career options, particularly when compared with the banking sector.

As a result, many players in the insurance sector have started to rethink their whole employment strategy and operating model to attract and retain talent.

The role of the European social partners

The European insurance sector social partners believe they have an important role to play in supporting the sector's efforts to address these challenges. In 2008, they agreed on the need to develop constructive responses and strategies at European level and, to this end, decided to include the issue of demography in the work programme of the Insurance Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (ISSDC) for 2008 and 2009.

In the course of their work, the social partners identified attractiveness and employability as two key issues for the insurance sector. They therefore decided to focus their activities on 1) work/life balance, 2) maintaining employability and developing careers and 3) health and safety at work.

This joint statement is a product of the social partners' discussions and exchanges of views on these issues over the last two years. The tools and instruments identified by the social partners to deal with the demographic changes are already applied to some extent in the insurance sector. The fact that these tools and instruments are mentioned in this document does not imply that companies do not already use them.

The European insurance sector social partners call upon their members, as well as all interested parties in the insurance sector, to consider and review their own practices in light of the following joint statement.

Follow-up and next steps

Promotion of the joint statement

The social partners commit to informing, through all available means, trade unions, associations and employers in the insurance sector and beyond about this joint statement. They will encourage the relevant social partners at national level to promote and address this joint statement together. This could, for instance, take the form of holding joint meetings on its contents, making joint presentations to national governments and other relevant players, undertaking joint studies or research activities or addressing it as a theme in collective bargaining. Where possible, the joint statement will also be translated into other official EU languages.

Monitoring of the joint statement

As a follow-up to the joint statement, the social partners will launch monitoring initiatives. The objective will be to determine the progress made in the fields identified as challenges and to assess the impact of the joint statement in practice. This could be done, for instance, by sending questionnaires to the members of the European social partners or to players in the insurance sector.

Publication of a booklet

The social partners intend to follow up the adoption of the joint statement by publishing a booklet highlighting good practice approaches to the above-mentioned topics by different players in the insurance sector and EU member states.

Promotion of the booklet

The social partners plan to distribute the booklet among their members. Social partners and their members will promote the booklet as efficiently as possible, using all existing means at their disposal (eg extranet, website, internal and external newsletters, etc.) to make the booklet known and available to trade unions, associations and employers in the insurance sector and beyond.

Updating the booklet

The social partners intend to update the booklet on a regular basis to take account of new developments both in demographic changes affecting the European insurance sector and in new practices initiated and implemented by stakeholders. The social partners expect to conclude the first phase of this work by organising a conference dedicated to the above-mentioned topics, focusing on the exchange of good practice, the analysis of trends and plans for future action.

1. Work/life balance

The European insurance sector social partners recognise the importance of ensuring a good work/life balance. The balance between life and work is a complex issue that affects all employees. Each employee has his or her own perception of what constitutes a good work/life balance. To maximise the sector's attractiveness, employers should be able to offer a wide range of work-pattern options consistent with the need to operate efficiently and effectively.

The social partners also recognise that work/life balance issues are particularly crucial for women. They can often feel they have to adjust their career ambitions to take account of family needs such as caring for children or elderly relatives. To enable all, regardless of gender, to enter the workforce or return to work after an absence, practices such as flexible hours, part-time work schemes, return to work initiatives, the opportunity to work from home and technology-enabled flexible working (such as telecommuting and teleworking) are useful tools. These initiatives contribute to the desirability of employment in the sector and help to attract and retain talent. Good practices already in place among insurance companies and insurance intermediary companies should be emulated elsewhere.

Flexibility is also essential throughout the course of employees' working life. Policies that encourage older staff members to remain in the company by offering alternative and less demanding work arrangements are effective tools that are tried and tested in some insurance and intermediary companies. These can include reductions in working hours, increased flexibility in working hours and individual arrangements that address the particular needs of older individuals, etc.

The development and expansion of childcare facilities and the provision of various forms of childcare assistance (such as childcare vouchers) allow parents to adopt work patterns that suit them, whether part-time or full-time. The social partners believe that EU member states have a key role to play in the provision of adequate childcare facilities. They welcome the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children (SEC (2008)2597) as a positive step.

2. Qualifications & lifelong learning

The social partners believe lifelong learning is a major contributor to long-term employability. Developed in a framework of mutual responsibility, lifelong learning can be a win-win that creates added value for both the employer and the employee. Lifelong learning is to the benefit of the employee, the employer and the state, and investment in training and education is therefore the joint responsibility of all three parties.

A continuous updating of skills is essential for a full life of work. Individual career development and improvement of skills is decisive in keeping staff motivated and capable of performing satisfactorily.

Continuous training of older staff is particularly important to retain them as an asset to the company, which can thereby profit from their experience and knowledge. This implies the willingness of older staff to be trained.

Every employee has the right to receive the training necessary to fulfill the job he/she is doing. The skills of employees should be updated in line with changes in the industry, and employees should be encouraged to participate in training programmes and take responsibility for their individual careers.

It is also in the interest of employees to take responsibility for their own learning and qualifications in order to perform and maintain their own employability. Employers play a key role in providing for the development of the competences of their workforce. Each employee should be helped, through training where appropriate, to perform his or her job effectively. Employers should encourage their employees to develop and improve the skills and competence they need to carry out their work effectively, as well as their general employment qualifications. For their part, employees have to be willing to become part of the lifelong learning process and ultimately to take responsibility for their own employability.

3. Health and safety at work

Employers and employees have a common responsibility for creating a sound working environment with working conditions that are conducive to a full life of work and that support the physical and mental health of the employee. The social partners believe that both employers and employees have a role to play in promoting health and safety at work. Employers can help by creating environments and introducing policies that support the health of their employees. To this end, occupational healthcare-management systems can assist through such initiatives as exercise, nutrition and stress management advice, employee assistance hotlines and medical check-ups or screenings. However, employers are not responsible for employees' private lifestyles and, therefore, the ultimate success of these measures will depend on each individual's willingness to take full use of them.

Effective policies on health and safety at work are at the heart of ensuring a safe working environment. Employers should take the necessary actions in the workplace to ensure a safe and healthy working environment. Employees, for their part, also play a role in contributing to a good and healthy working environment.

The 2004 inter-sectoral framework agreement on work-related stress suggests that stress can potentially affect any workplace and any worker, irrespective of the size of the company, field of activity or form of employment contract or relationship. The social partners in the insurance sector support the agreement and agree that tackling stress at work can lead to greater efficiency and improved occupational health and safety, with consequent economic and social benefits for companies, workers and society as a whole. The social partners call on employers and employees in the insurance sector to take action to identify the causes of unhelpful levels of work-related stress and to take positive action to prevent, eliminate or reduce them, where possible. It is for each employer to decide what measures it believes to be appropriate to deal with potential issues of stress at work. Where possible, these measures will be carried out with the participation and collaboration of workers and/or their representatives.

Conclusion

The European social partners encourage their members to contribute to addressing the demographic challenges. Demography is a complex topic that needs to be tackled with a variety of approaches at all levels of a social system. The demographic changes affect all divisions of a company. Employers and employees in insurance companies and intermediaries should therefore seek ways in which they can work together to address these issues.



Part 1

Company and sectoral measures in the field of Qualifications and Lifelong Learning, Work life balance and Health and Safety

The following section provides examples of both company and sectoral measures in the fields of work life balance, qualifications and lifelong learning, and health and safety, while the second section of the booklet gives company and sectoral examples of transversal initiatives that employ practices which cover two or three of the concerned fields. The examples detailed in this first section show how the insurance sector is using different methods and tools to address demographic change, including for example: a work life balance measure employed by HUK-COBURG in Germany encompassing a range of initiatives to support its workers; an action plan for the employment of older workers utilised by the French insurance mutual, MAIF-Filia MAIF; and an awareness-raising campaign, which aims to ensure a happy and healthy working environment, led by the Finnish pension insurance company, Etera.

The joint statement recognises the importance of work life balance, qualifications and lifelong learning and health and safety in recruiting people to, and retaining people within the insurance sector. The examples throughout this booklet illustrate the wealth of experience and positive steps taken by the insurance industry in managing and adapting to change. All of the examples in this booklet are evidence that employers in the insurance sector are stepping up and taking action to tackle the different facets of the demographic challenge resulting from Europe's ageing and declining population. The examples show that the insurance sector is making head-way in ensuring a more equal, longer, healthier, happier career for both its current workers and prospective employees, whether young or old, male or female.

1.1 Qualifications and Lifelong Learning measures

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of maintaining employability throughout working life. Rather than focussing solely on job security, it is critical for individuals to obtain transferable core skills and to remain adaptable. The responsibility for maintaining employability is shared by the employer and employee; as set out in the joint statement “Lifelong learning can be a win-win that creates added value for both the employer and the employee. Lifelong learning is to the benefit of the employee, the employer and the state, and investment in training and education is therefore the joint responsibility of all three parties. A continuous updating of skills is essential for a full life of work. Individual career development and improvement of skills is decisive in keeping staff motivated and capable of performing satisfactorily. Continuous training of older staff is particularly important to retain them as an asset to the company, which can thereby profit from their experience and knowledge. This implies the willingness of older staff to be trained”.

Here, the examples show that the insurance industry across Europe attached great significance to lifelong learning and target employees at all levels and all ages. The Irish Brokers Association’s example focuses on easing young workers into the sector to help ensure long and prosperous career paths, while the MAIF example targets all workers and focuses on transferring knowledge. Meanwhile, the Finance Norway example has at its core a lifelong learning programme that seeks to enhance gender equality.

e-learning opportunities for all: key successes among the 50+ age group

► **Name of the company/organisation:**

Slovak Insurance Association (SLASPO)



► **Country of HQ:** Slovakia

► **Size and sector of organisation:** Whole insurance sector

► **Main focus and title of practice:** E-learning initiative

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The age profile of the workforce in the insurance sector is rising. As a result, it is necessary for workers to regularly update their skills and capacities to enable them to work productively and for companies to remain competitive. As an association of commercial insurance companies, SLASPO promotes the common interests of its members; with these interests increasingly focussing on maintaining and increasing the qualifications of their employees. In order to allow employees to take charge of their own learning and development, an e-learning application has been developed by SLASPO, which adheres to the continuous learning culture within the insurance sector.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** The tool was developed in 2009 and is continuously being improved.

► **Partners involved:** SLASPO and e-learning provider

► **Content of the measure:**

The initiative contains a set of education materials to support qualification to the level necessary for agent or insurance employee directly working with non-professional clients. The material meets the legal requirements for this training and participants must pass a relevant examination to prove the professional standard achieved.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

In 2011, 30% of all participants in this project were individuals aged 50 or over. In this same year, a total of 7,218 individuals participated in the training programme – (4,535 women and 2,683 men).

► **Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:**

Emphasis on extending working lives

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

Flexibility of the application allowing individuals to learn approved content to fit in with their own lifestyle.

► **Weblinks:**

<http://www.slaspo.sk/en/> - SLASPO Website

<http://www.e-ducation.com/> - Practice Website



Mentoring works: supporting career progression of female “talent”

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Finance Norway (FNO)

► **Country of HQ:** Norway

► **Size and sector of organisation:**



The FNO was established in 2010 by the Norwegian Savings Banks Association and the Norwegian Financial Services Association. It is a trade association that represents 180 financial institutions operating in the Norwegian market.

► **Main focus and title of practice:**

The Futura programme focuses on achieving greater gender equality through lifelong learning and the greater involvement of women in managerial roles.

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The programme was designed and implemented in response to emerging skill shortages in the sector, arising partly from demographic trends. This resulted in an increasing recognition that companies will have to fully exploit the potential of their well qualified female staff.

► **Date of implementation/duration:**

2006 (ongoing, with the exception of 2011, when activities were halted while the programme was being evaluated)

► **Partners involved:**

The Norwegian Employers' Association for the Financial Sector and the Finance Sector Union of Norway assisted in establishing the programme. No funding was received or indeed formally foreseen in the programme, as all resources and tools were made available by the main organisations involved.

► **Content of the measure:**

Futura is essentially a mentorship programme bringing together so called “talents” and “agents”. The “talent” is a women working in the sector with a strong career motivation. “Agents” can be women or men already established in leadership positions. The programme comprises five parts:

Part I: Matching and development
Talent and agent are matched through a series of interviews and establish working relationship through a series of monthly meetings.

Part II: Training
Talent receives training from external consultant. Joint training sessions are also held with purpose of enabling talent to take on more challenging roles.

Part III: Seminars
Talents take part in a range of personal development seminars delivered by consultant.

Part IV: Thesis preparation
Talent prepares a thesis on an agreed topic of interest to company management. Agent and consultant act as advisors.

Part V: Alumni network
A networking tool for all current and former participants of the Futura programme.



► Impact and benefits achieved:

Between 2006 and 2010, around 140 women have participated in the programme. According to the FNO, the gender balance in management has improved in recent years, with the percentage of women in management increasing from 36% (2004) to 42% (2009) compared to 64% and 58% for men.

In 2010, the career development of the first four cohorts was measured showing the following results:

- 29% have gained positions at a higher organisational level;
- 40% have more responsibility for staff management; between 2010 and 2011 this percentage has risen to 55%
- 30% have more budget responsibility; between 2010 and 2011 this percentage has risen to 55% and,
- 40% have greater operational responsibilities than prior to entering the programme.

Additionally TNS Gallup conducted a survey among employees in the financial sector in 2009, highlighting the fact that women managers recruit more women into management. According to available data, women managers have around 10% more women in their managerial groups than their male colleagues. At the same time, 39% of the survey's respondents claimed they did not know whether their company had gender equality goals. More women than men were familiar with these goals.

► Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:

Legislation was implemented in 2003, stipulating that boardrooms must be made up of at least 40% women played a significant part in the establishment of the Futura programme. The support received from political parties has also had a positive impact on the programme.

► Main success factors/obstacles:

Despite the increasing numbers of female managers, differences remain in the types of managerial roles carried out by men and women. While women are more represented among HR managers, men are more frequently found in technical and market oriented managerial roles.

► Weblink:

<http://www.Futurafinans.no/>

Engaging young brokers: improving representation within the Irish Brokers Association

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Irish Brokers Association

► **Country of HQ:** Ireland

► **Size and sector of organisation:**



Industry association with over 500 members, employing 5,500 individuals in the insurance sector in Ireland

► **Main focus and title of practice:**

Young IBA
Qualifications and lifelong learning

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The goal of the initiative was to allow IBA to better connect with young brokers who were not well represented in the organisation's meetings and activities. Young IBA allows the organisation to make younger workers in the sector more aware of the purpose, service offer and benefits of IBA. Connections can thus be achieved with future broker business owners, helping to ensure a healthy future for the Association and the activities it offers its members. Another key motivation behind the establishment of the initiative was the rising importance of qualifications and ongoing learning in the sector. In 2007, minimum competency requirements were set down in the sector, in addition to statutory professional requirements. Furthermore, the product market is diversifying, requiring professionals to update their knowledge regularly. This only serves to highlight the need for sound initial qualifications and ongoing professional development.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** 2008 (ongoing)

► **Partners involved:** Irish Brokers' Association

► **Content of the measure:**

The main goals of Young IBA are:

- To provide advice and assistance in the training and education of young insurance brokers;
- To help younger IBA members to advance their careers;
- To make insurance brokering an attractive career path;
- To establish social networks between young brokers and between young and more experienced brokers, as well as broker business managers through events and seminars.

Activities are planned through the Young IBA Committee which meets monthly and comprises 13 members from different parts of the country and business (Life and Non-Life Brokers). The Young IBA Committee reports to the IBA Council. Its chair sits on the IBA Council to ensure positive linkages between the activities of Young IBA and the IBA more generally.

Activities organised by Young IBA include:

- Training seminars for broker staff (e.g. sales training, product training)
- Study groups for examinations (e.g. specific sessions for qualifications for life assurance and non-life products, as well as on compliance and regulation)
- Preparation of dedicated study notes for different qualifications
- Online accessibility of useful exam information on the Young IBA website

Examples of training events organised in 2011 include:

- Pension arrangements for non-married couples
- Non-disclosure of material facts
- Motor Insurance Module
- Commercial Vehicle Insurance module



- Business Interruption Seminar
- Compliance with Regulation Workshops
- PRSA's (Personal Retirement Savings Accounts) Seminar
- Selling and Telephone Skills

Wide ranging use is also being made of Social Media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn) to advertise events, post industry relevant news and run competitions on a quarterly basis to attract new members.

Young IBA also organises a series of awards, including for

- Customer Service
- Sales persons
- Team leaders
- Educational achievements
- Innovation

Finally, Young IBA also supports charitable events to engage members in their communities.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

The seminars and events organised by Young IBA have been very well attended since their introduction in 2008. Social media are also widely used to spread information and the awards raise motivation and awareness of best practice and performance in the sector.

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

Service offer tailored to the requirements of young brokers as well as the use of new and innovative media for the distribution of information on news and events.

► **Weblink:**

http://www.iba.ie/development2009/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=83&Itemid=232

(Pro)active ageing: transmitting knowledge and managing transitions

- ▶ **Name of the company/organisation:** MAIF - Filia MAIF
- ▶ **Country of HQ:** France
- ▶ **Size and sector of organisation:** Insurance sector, 6800 employees (2010)
- ▶ **Main focus and title of practice:** Action plan for the employment of seniors
- ▶ **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**



MAIF has tried to address the issue of active ageing in a proactive way. In 2006, the company decided to launch a stock-taking exercise concerning the ageing of its workforce, acknowledging the need to take into account developments in the age pyramid in the enterprise when making future recruitment as well as other policy decisions. The increasing share of older workers in the company is seen as an important factor to take into account in terms of HR management.

A number of experimental measures were launched in 2006, based on the results of a survey of employees. The objectives underpinning this approach were to reverse trends with regards to the use of pre-retirement schemes, to anticipate and take into account the effect of ageing and to motivate older employees until the end of their professional careers.

- ▶ **Date of implementation/duration:**

January 2010 - December 2012 for the current plan (building on previous initiatives started in 2006)

- ▶ **Partners involved:** Employer

- ▶ **Content of the measure:**

The current 2010-2012 Action Plan for older employees, which complies with legislative requirements and builds on previous experimental measures, is the main tool to promote active ageing in the company. The plan covers three main areas:

- **Anticipation of the evolution of careers**
To maintain the motivation of senior workers (defined as workers aged 45 or above), the plan intends to further develop their skills, employability and encourage progression until the end of their careers. Any employee aged 45 or above can request an interview with HR on the 'second part of career'. Such interviews can be repeated every five years if necessary. Their purpose is to:
 - take stock of employees' experiences, career achievements and skills;
 - discuss their professional aspirations;
 - address any training needs and concerns related to working conditions and working hours; and
 - examine the opportunities of involvement in training/mentoring activities.

Individual action plans can be drawn up following the interview with HR in agreement with the employee, which can include training activities tailored to their requirements. Such training is fully paid by the company. Support can also be provided to workers who want to validate their informal learning to acquire a qualification.

- **Transmission of knowledge and skills and development of mentorship**
The plan acknowledges the need to organise the transmission of knowledge and know-how of older employees towards younger generations of employees. In order to achieve this, the plan foresees that a larger share of older employees will be involved in the development of mentorship and in the delivery of ad-hoc occasional training activities. In addition, the plan aims to develop the use of specific interviews for employees about to retire to anticipate and organise the transfer of their skills/knowledge.
- **Adaptation of the end of careers and transitions between activity and retirement**
Some measures aimed at taking into account the needs and aspirations of older workers in their last years of activity are laid out in the plan. These include conditions for access to voluntary part-time work for employees aged 58 and over. Personalised information services delivered by an external provider are offered to all employees aged 57 and above, to help them calculate their pension rights and make informed choices regarding retirement.



► Impact and benefits achieved:

Across the different priorities of the plan, some of the measures outlined above have proved more popular than others among older employees.

- Concerning the anticipation of the evolution of careers, in the case of older workers holding more physically demanding jobs (a minority of older employees in the company), the implementation of specific actions, including professional mobility, is nearly systematic. In these cases, the reconversion towards administrative jobs has proven more popular among older employees than specific targeted interventions at the workplace, aimed at allowing them to continue working in their current role. For more desk bound employees, the anticipation of career evolution is more difficult to implement in practice. Only a small share of workers aged 45 and above has requested to have an interview for the 'second part of their career'. However, the majority of the interviews carried out have been followed by the development of a personalised action plan.
- The transmission of knowledge and skills, and the development of mentoring are viewed positively by older employees. Currently a small majority of mentors and even more occasional trainers are above the age of 45.
- Concerning the adaptation of the end of careers and transitions between activity and retirement, the individual information services meet the needs of older workers and are frequently used. Training sessions to prepare for retirement are also popular (taken up by 40% of employees concerned).

► Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:

As mentioned above, a legal obligation for companies with more than 50 employees to initiate negotiations on how to promote the employment of older workers has been introduced in France in recent years. Article 87 of the Act on the Financing of Social Security of 17 December 2008 states that companies with 300 employees or more must, from 2010, either put in place a collective agreement or a plan for the employment of senior workers. Companies failing to do so must pay a penalty corresponding to 1% of payroll.

This new legislation did actually not prompt any additional developments in the case of MAIF, as the development of active ageing initiatives had started prior to that date.

The impact of the recent reform of the pension system (raising gradually the age at which workers have a legal right to retire from 60 years to 62 years, and to obtain the right to a full pension from 65 to 67 years) is expected to have an impact on the length of careers and on the composition of the workforce within the enterprise.

► Main success factors/obstacles:

Within the company, the proactive approach from HR and management to the issue of demographic change and the ageing workforce contributes to ensure suitable working conditions for older workers. In addition, the type of work carried out and the very small share of staff involved in manual occupations means that that professional reconversion to administrative roles for some older workers is relatively easy to put in place.

The implementation of the plan (and previous initiatives) has however shown that addressing the impacts of the ageing of the company's workforce is a very complex task, which creates a certain number of challenges for HR. Workforce ageing and the prospect of longer careers can create issues for younger generations of employees. This requires HR managers to rethink career progression for all age groups.

Importantly, the initiatives led by the management of MAIF have shown that there is no 'quick fix' in relation to the issue of keeping older workers motivated and that communication around the issue of age management is not always straightforward. In order for measures to be effective, the particular motivations and factors underpinning the decision making of each individual worker have to be understood.

► Weblink:

MAIF homepage:
<http://www.maif.fr/accueil.html>



1.2 Work life balance measures

Work life balance measures have a critical role to play in recruiting and retaining workers. This is particularly true for women, who often feel that they have to adjust their career ambitions to take account of family needs such as caring for children or elderly relatives. The Joint Statement therefore recognises that in order to “maximise the sector’s attractiveness, employers should be able to offer a wide range of work-pattern options consistent with the need to operate efficiently and effectively.(...) To enable all, regardless of gender, to enter the workforce or return to work after an absence, practices such as flexible hours, part-time work schemes, return to work initiatives, the opportunity to work from home and technology-enabled flexible working (such as telecommuting and teleworking) are useful tools”. The importance of offering high quality childcare arrangements is also recognised.

The Joint Statement also highlights the importance of a life course perspective with regard to work life balance measures. Flexibility in the years approaching the end of an individual’s working life can help to extend careers for those who are no longer able, or no longer wish to carry out their existing tasks. “Policies that encourage older staff members to remain in the company by offering alternative and less demanding work arrangements are effective tools that are tried and tested in some insurance and intermediary companies. These can include reductions in working hours, increased flexibility in working hours and individual arrangements that address the particular needs of older individuals, etc”.

The example below shows that the importance of a life course perspective with regard to work life balance is positively recognised in HUK-COBURG’s holistic approach to the management of demographic challenges. Work-life balance measures are given a high profile in many such combined approaches implemented in the insurance sector at company and sectoral level, as detailed in Part 2 of this booklet.

Work life balance: various measures that improve career progression and retention

► **Name of the company/organisation:** HUK-COBURG

► **Country of HQ:** Germany

► **Size and sector of organisation:**



HUK-COBURG
Aus Tradition günstig

General insurance, €5 billion premium income, 8500 employees (2011)

► **Main focus and title of practice:**

"Demography: Now or Never"

Work/life balance (the company's accompanying measures in the field of lifelong learning and health and safety are presented in Part 2 of this booklet)

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The company identified the upcoming challenges resulting from demographic change early on and views measures to anticipate demographic developments as being among the most important human resource tasks to be tackled now and in future, both in terms of recruiting young and retaining older workers. Demographic change can be a particular challenge for rural areas, and this is therefore true for the site of the company's headquarters.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** Introduction of various measures between 2004-2010 (ongoing)

► **Partners involved:** Employer, Works Council, various NGOs and training providers

► **Content of the measure:**

In 2005, the HUK-COBURG decided to undergo certification with the audit berufundfamilie® (work and family audit). In July 2005, the company received the basic certification from the Hertie-Foundation, a nationally recognised institute for the promotion of family-oriented human resource policies. The certification demonstrates that a company has established work life balance measures and is working actively towards continuous improvement. The company was re-audited in 2008 and 2011 and successfully obtained re-certification. In order to allow employees to better reconcile work and family life, a number of measures were implemented over the years:

- "Management in reduced full-time"
Since 2006, HUK-COBURG offers a "management in reduced full-time" programme for staff at the lowest management level (team leaders). This makes it possible to reduce the working week down to a minimum of 25 hours. The offer is based on a standard set of provisions at company level, and is thus available to all managers at this level who request it. The measure is aimed at employees who already hold positions as team leaders, as well as those who would like to take on this responsibility in the future while retaining plenty of family time. The option is currently taken up by more than 30 of the 650 team leaders in the company.
- Holiday care and child-care for 0 to 3 year olds
Together with an association that promotes education and training, the company offers holiday care for employees' children. Over 100 school children under the age of 14 are being looked after during both the Easter and Christmas holidays and for four weeks during the summer. In addition, since autumn 2008, HUK-COBURG has made 24 crèche places available in Coburg. For staff in the nation-wide branches, the company offers an external advisory service which helps to locate childcare places. In addition, employees in the customer service centres receive financial support for any child care required during the hours of 16:00 to 20:00.
- Support for employees with care-dependent relatives
Given current demographic developments, the company took the decision to focus its support services not only on families with children, but also on individuals responsible for caring for dependent family members. The company promotes take-up of the legal entitlement to 10 days leave if a dependent relative falls ill. Additionally, employees can take a leave of absence for up to six months in order to care for close relatives in a home environment. In the event that nursing care is required, the company, supported by an external consulting firm, also offers numerous contacts with retirement and nursing homes. In line with recent new legislation, HUK-COBURG will also offer the

possibility to take up the new “family care time” (Familienpflegezeit) up to 24 months, which allows employees to reduce their working hours for up to 24 months.

The company is also keen to ensure that part-timers have the same access to training as all other staff. In addition, a variety of flexible working time models, as well as teleworking, are available to further enhance the possibility of balancing work and family responsibilities.



► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

The company has prepared a sample calculation which shows that each time a woman takes maternity leave for around 3 years and needs to be re-integrated and trained for new processes, this costs the company €25,000. The offer of childcare places and reduced full-time work for managers has contributed to reducing the time spent away from the workplace, with women more likely to return after 1-1.5 years of leave. In addition, it is estimated that 75% of women taking up reduced full-time working would not be managers today, had it not been for this opportunity.

► **Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:**

There are number of areas in which the national policy framework contributes to achieving positive outcomes. These include:

- The availability of parental allowance (Elterngeld) for one year, which makes parents more likely to return to work after 12 months;
- Legal provisions regarding entitlements to caring time which set a framework for company policy;
- Increasing offer of crèche facilities resulting also from higher government investment in this area;
- Availability of good practice and development support (for example through auditberufundfamilie).

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

- Broad spectrum of measures which can benefit different types of employees in different age groups and skill levels.
- Strong emphasis on work-life balance measures.
- Commitment to developing career paths within the company.

► **Weblink:**

Company human resources report 2010 (Personalbericht 2010)
http://www.huk.de/content/dam/hukde/pdf/ueber_uns/berichte_2010/personalbericht_2010.pdf



1.3 Health and safety measures

“Employers and employees have a common responsibility for creating a sound working environment with working conditions that are conducive to a full life of work and that support the physical and mental health of the employee”.

The Joint Statement thus recognises that a healthy and safe working environment has an important part to play in enabling workers to extend their working lives. This should obviously relate directly to risk factors in the workplace, but can also help generate a wider health conscious culture, as behaviour outside the workplace clearly also has a role to play in health maintenance.

“To this end, occupational healthcare-management systems can assist through such initiatives as exercise, nutrition and stress management advice, employee assistance hotlines and medical check-ups or screenings. However, employers are not responsible for employees’ private lifestyles and, therefore, the ultimate success of these measures will depend on each individual’s willingness to take full use of them”.

In 2004, an inter-sectoral agreement between European social partners recognised the particular risks of workplace stress and highlighted key steps to tackle this phenomenon. This agreement is supported the social partners in the insurance sector who “agree that tackling stress at work can lead to greater efficiency and improved occupational health and safety, with consequent economic and social benefits for companies, workers and society as a whole”. They therefore call on employers and employees in the sector to take action to prevent, eliminate or reduce unhelpful levels of workplace stress.

The examples in this section detail the importance that the insurance industry places on the (mental) health of its employees. Again, these examples are illustrative of practices within the sector, drawn from companies across Europe.

Improving health protection: detecting, reducing and avoiding work related stress

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Allianz Group

► **Country of HQ:** Germany

► **Size and sector of organisation:**



Insurance and asset management group, 141,938 employees worldwide, €103,560 billion total revenue (2011)

► **Main focus and title of practice:**

Agreement on guidelines concerning work related stress

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The demands of the working environment are constantly increasing as a result of factors such as growing international competition and increasing requirements for efficiency and effectiveness in work processes. The accumulation of such factors can, especially in combination with circumstances that have their source in the private environment, lead to negative stress and result in physical, psychological and social reactions and associated ill health. Such ill health can impact on an individual's ability to continue working effectively and productively and can contribute to early exit from the labour market.

In line with the European autonomous cross industry agreement on tackling workplace stress, as well as the recommendation of the Joint Statement of the social partners in the insurance sector, Allianz SE and its (European) SE Works Council concluded an Agreement on Guidelines concerning work related stress.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** 5 May 2011

► **Partners involved:** Allianz SE and Allianz SE Works Council

► **Content of the measure:**

The agreement applies to Allianz SE and all its subsidiaries with registered offices in the Members States of the EU, the contracting states of the EEA and Switzerland. It firmly anchors health protection (to prevent negative work related stress) as a corporate objective which the company and employees should work jointly to achieve. One of the goals of the agreement is to increase awareness of work-related stress, how it can be detected, avoided and reduced early on among both sides.

In order to identify potential causes and eliminate them as much as possible, regular risk assessments should be carried out in line with the relevant European Directive (89/391/EEC). Consultation with and participation of workers in carrying out health and safety assessments is also particularly emphasised.

The company undertakes to improve health protection and avoid work related stress by taking preventative action by ensuring that:

- Change processes are carried out in a way that does not introduce workplace stressors as far as this is reasonably practicable;
- Depending on local structures, information or access to tools to help employees either avoid or effectively cope with stressful situations is provided (e.g. medical advice, confidential helpline, counselling and education and training, etc.);



- Appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration measures are provided for employees whose performance has been reduced due to work related stress;
- A good balance between the implementation of change and learning processes is provided. The agreement also stipulates the various responsibilities of the Board, management, local HR departments and employees in implementing the agreement.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

Two years after the date of signature of the agreement, the companies of the Allianz Group will be asked to provide a report on the actions taken to implement the principles of the agreement. Afterwards ongoing joint reviews will be carried out and it will be explored how best to share good practices implemented on the ground.

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

Availability of the cross industry agreement on work related stress and the sectoral joint statement in the insurance sector, which also focuses on health and safety issues. Strong track record of co-operation within the (European) SE Works Council of Allianz SE.

► **Weblink:**

https://www.allianz.com/en/press/news/company_news/human_resources/news_2011-05-05.html

All for one and one for all: “Colleagues give you strength” campaign

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Etera

► **Country of HQ:** Finland

► **Size and sector of organisation:**



Pension insurance offered to 18,500 companies; 240,000 insured employees within these companies

► **Main focus and title of practice:** Campaign “Colleagues give you strength” Health and safety

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

Etera is one of the six companies in Finland providing pension insurance services. All employers have to pay statutory pension contributions for their employees, but (since 2007) have a choice of which provider to use. Prior to 2007, Etera provided services only for workers in the construction, forestry, agricultural and harbour sectors. Companies in these sectors still make up a large proportion of the company's clients.

A share of all pension contributions at company level has to be invested in wellbeing at work services. Etera provides such services, which means that it assists companies in assessing the level of health and safety issues their employees face, which can lead to absences from work, reduced productivity or indeed early retirement. Based on such assessments, Etera provides advice and tools on addressing the underlying risk factors. These can be ergonomic, related to work or management practices, etc. Because of Etera's historical client profile, average retirement rates in its member companies are two years below the average in Finland, which entails significant costs for insurance companies and the employers (in the payment of incapacity or early retirement benefits). Investment in wellbeing initiatives is therefore important from a financial, as well as a marketing perspective.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** 2010 (ongoing)

► **Partners involved:** Etera, implemented in co-ordination with member companies

► **Content of the measure:**

The campaign was born as a result of the company's research and experience which showed that at the age of 50+, many workers are already thinking about retirement. It was therefore concluded that it is important to target younger workers and to improve the working environment around the life cycle. As well as physical issues (which Etera also addresses through its wellbeing assessment for customers), more and more ill health absence and associated early exit from the labour market results from psychological issues caused by stress, bullying and harassment or an inability to reconcile the demands of work and private life.

In order to address these issues, Etera launched a campaign entitled “Colleagues give you strength”, which includes a number of elements:

- A Facebook campaign and associated discussion forum focussing on psychological wellbeing at work;
- Comic strips dealing with workplace issues, which are designed to get individuals to consider whether the way they are behaving at work and dealing with colleagues contributes to a healthy working environment;
- A series of questionnaires which allow individuals to assess whether they are “good colleagues” in the workplace;
- A web page with concrete instructions on how best to behave in given situations.

Etera has five members of staff who provide services tailored to wellbeing at work. They visit client companies to make relevant assessments and also provide information about the campaign and its tools. One of the important goals is to raise awareness that a healthy workplace is not only the responsibility of management but also of each individual employee.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

Where wellbeing at work services have been introduced for some time, an impact on employee absence, satisfaction and early retirement rates can usually be noted. However, on the whole such assessments are not easy to make as they



are influenced by a variety of different factors. The company and researchers are trying to make progress in identifying beneficial impacts.

The company's Facebook campaign has been popular. It has 12,000 followers who regularly exchange information.

Etera is working hard to develop tools which can be made accessible to all its members, irrespective of the level of contributions they are able to pay. This primarily means that small companies, who – because of their lower number of employees – do not generate significant investment potential in wellbeing initiatives, can also benefit from these tools for their staff and management.

► **Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:**

There are a number of areas in which the national policy framework contributes to this measure. These include:

- The nature of the Finnish pension insurance system: This requires employers to pay statutory pension contributions for their employees. Of these contributions, paid to companies like Etera, a fixed – but small – amount must be used by insurance providers to invest in wellbeing initiatives.
- Increase in the statutory retirement age.
- Strong policy and political emphasis in Finland on extending working lives.

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

Accessibility of the campaign material and tools on Facebook/website. Widespread dissemination of the tool through the launch campaign and ongoing work with employers.

► **Weblinks:**

Information on the Finnish pension insurance system:

http://www.etk.fi/en/service/insuring_in_finland/783/insuring_in_finland

Information on the Etera campaign:

www.etera.fi/tyokaveri (official campaign site)

www.facebook.com/tyokaveri (Facebook page for the campaign)

Analysing job satisfaction and psychological behaviour in the workspace: Topdanmark subcommittee dedicated to the psychological working environment

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Topdanmark

► **Country of HQ:** Denmark

► **Size and sector of organisation:** General insurance, €5 billion premium income, 8500 employees (2011)

► **Main focus and title of practice:**



Topdanmark is one of the largest insurance companies in Denmark, with 2,550 employees and a turnover of DKK 11 billion (2011), which provides life and accident insurance.

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

At Topdanmark there is a good and long lasting tradition of having a constructive dialogue between the management, the local union representatives and employees. Both sides felt that it would be more fruitful to consider psychological and physical risk factors as part of an overall assessment of the work environment.

A sub-committee was created to assess both risk factors. Previous to its creation, the task of assessing the psychological working environment fell upon not only the work environment organisation to company level, but also on inspectors of the Work Environment Authority. It was felt that these inspectors, being external to the organisation, might have found it difficult to connect on such a personal basis with employees and therefore were not able to give an accurate depiction psychological stressors or risk factors. The establishment of the subcommittee was furthermore a reflection of management's appreciation of staff in the insurance sector and the importance to consider their welfare from both perspectives.

► **Date of implementation/duration:**

The sub-committee was established in 2007 following an agreement between the organisations in April 2007 (the Danish Employers' Association of the Financial Sector (FA) and the Association of Insurance Employees in Denmark (DFL) and its work continues today.

► **Partners involved:**

In 2006 there was a change in legislation that gave the employers and workers' organisations the opportunity to make such agreements as that on psychological health and safety. The Danish Employers' Association of the Financial Sector and the Association of Insurance Employees in Denmark agreed to monitor, develop and regulate the psychological working environment in the insurance sector. However, the subcommittee which creates the reports and carries out the analyses was formed under the local representation of the local DFL and the corresponding representative from Topdanmark.

► **Content of the measure:**

The agreement, under which the subcommittee was formed, aims to

- Promote job satisfaction and good mental health; and,
- Ensure that problems with mental health issues, as far as possible, are solved by the local committees, or failing that, by involving the organisations.

The company has a duty to comply with health and safety provisions in the psychosocial field.

The FA and DFL take over the tasks of the Working Environment Act to ensure that companies comply with the provisions in the psychosocial area:

- Requirements for planning and organizing work.
- Requirements for work to be performed safely
- Requiring that the work performed fits the employee's qualifications



- Requirements for the regulation of monotonous work, pace of work, and isolated work conditions.
- Requirements for physical or mental risk to health, because of bullying, including sexual harassment.

The local committee (the Topdanmark subcommittee) shall discuss the principles and guidelines in the psychosocial area, in accordance to the requirements mentioned above. The committee does not address questions about individual employees' conditions.

A local discussion of prevention, identification and solution of problems must be effected by the committee, whereby, it must then discuss how to ensure that the committee members possess the necessary skills to perform the task. Problems are, on the first level, discussed between the employee and local manager.

If the manager and employee cannot solve the problem, it is brought to the next level of management. If there is still a problem, the local DFL Association discusses the problem with the company's management in accordance with the union agreement between the FA and the DFL. If the situation remains unsolved, the FA or DFL can bring the case to the Organisational committee (Samarbejdsraad).

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

The cooperation with the health and safety organisation has improved the dialogue on job satisfaction and the psychological working environment. It has become clearer how the tasks are distributed between the works committee and the work environment organisation and who is in charge of the various tasks.

Further to the psychological working environment, the sub-committee has, in general, had the following issues on the agenda: health, stress, diet, smoking and job satisfaction analysis.

With the internal members of the sub-committee, it has been noted that employees have reacted very positively and are very open to discussion any issues relating to psychological wellbeing.

► **Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:**

The Danish Working Environment Act (amended in 2010) has played a relatively important role in the creation of the psychological working environment sub-committee. As mentioned, prior to the creation of the sub-committee, the responsibility of assessing the (psychological) working environment fell upon the Working Environment Authority. The legislation stipulates that '[it] is the responsibility of the employer to ensure the working conditions are safe and sound in any way.'

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

The sub-committee has developed so well that it now performs proficiently in recognising small problems in the workplace and remedying them before they have the chance to develop into anything more serious.

Where the national inspectors would seldom enter into a work environment of the insurance sector, this sub-committee is constantly committed to creating a better psychological working environment for all employees.

Psycho-social risk analysis and measures to prevent and deal with such risks are now higher on companies' agendas than was previously the case.

► **Weblinks:**

- The Working Environment Act:
<http://arbejdstilsynet.dk/en/engelsk/regulations/working-environment-act/arbejdsmiljolooven.aspx>
- Topdanmark A/S official website: www.topdanmark.dk
- DFL union site in Topdanmark: www.pf-topdanmark.dk



Part 2

Combined measures to address the impact of demographic change

As outlined in the Joint Statement, “demography is complex topic that needs to be tackled with a variety of approaches at all levels of a social system”. As a result of the increasing age of the insurance sector workforce and the need to attract highly qualified and highly trained employees, many players in the sector have begun to rethink their whole employment strategy and operating model, in order to attract and retain talent.

Work life balance, lifelong learning and health and safety measures all have an important role to play in helping the insurance industry to tackle the impact of demographic change and making employment in the sector attractive in the long-term. Although individual measures in these areas can be highly effective on their own, the successful combination of policies and approaches in two, or all three areas can generate additional multiplier effects, and many good practices indeed reflect this combined approach.

The examples described in the following sections convey practices employed under work life balance, lifelong learning and health and safety at both company and sectoral levels. Section 2.1 focuses on sectoral measures, detailing examples from the Belgian, Dutch and Italian insurance sectors. Section 2.2, on the other hand, draws on numerous company level examples from Germany, Italy and Sweden.

Gender action: promoting and disseminating equal opportunities

► **Name of the company/organisation:** ANIA (National Association of Italian Insurers)

► **Country of HQ:** Italy

► **Size and sector of organisation:**

With its 180 members, ANIA represents 90% of employers in the Italian insurance market.



► **Main focus and title of practice:** GenerAzione

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The goal is to make the best possible use of human resources potential and to enhance and promote equal opportunity between the genders in the insurance sector.

The objectives of GenerAzione include:

- Promotion of greater information on principles and challenges connected to equal opportunity issues in the wider context of corporate social responsibility values;
- Collection of positive actions already developed by insurance companies in order to create a positive circle of information within the sector; and,
- Exploiting the best existing examples and stimulating others, in order to plan and improve positive actions.
- GenerAzione consists of a prize-certification officially launched in a public event.

► **Date of implementation/duration:**

The opening ceremony was held in October 2009. The participants provided detailed information on their equal opportunity policies by filling out a survey which has been examined by the National Equal Opportunities Committee (CNPO) and a preliminary investigation on the data acquired by companies was conducted. The procedure will soon be completed in order to provide a final evaluation.

Subsequently, each candidate will be awarded an attendance certificate.

► **Partners involved:**

CNPO, with its 21 members representing insurance employers and trade unions, and the following 15 insurance companies: ALLEANZA TORO S.p.A, GRUPPO ALLIANZ, ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI S.p.A., AXA ASSICURAZIONI S.p.A., AXA MPS ASSICURAZIONI VITA S.p.A. and AXA MPS ASSICURAZIONI DANNI S.p.A., BIPIEMME VITA S.p.A., FATA ASSICURAZIONI DANNI S.p.A., GENERTEL S.p.A., GROUPAMA ASSICURAZIONI S.p.A., GRUPPO HELVETIA, INA ASSITALIA S.p.A., ITALIANA ASSICURAZIONI S.p.A., SOCIETÀ CATTOLICA DI ASSICURAZIONE, SOCIETÀ REALE MUTUA ASSICURAZIONI, UNIPOL ASSICURAZIONI.

The above listed companies represent a large portion of the Italian insurance market and a variety of different business types with diverse structures and management characteristics. While sharing experiences throughout their involvement in GenerAzione, each company gives an added value to the CNPO's common effort in promoting and improving equal opportunities principles in the Italian insurance industry.

► **Content of the measure:**

GenerAzione aims to:

- Promote the dissemination of information on equal opportunities issues and challenges in the sector;
- Gather, disseminate and reward best practices in the sector and supporting other companies to implement similar gender equality measures.

Companies were able to subscribe to GenerAzione if they had already developed actions in this area or if they primarily wished to learn from others. Subscription to the initiative was free of charge. Applicants completed a survey which seeks to establish how well developed their equal opportunities measures currently are and where there may be room for further learning and development. Applicants had to demonstrate either some positive actions already taken or activities planned to be implemented.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

In 2011, 15 of the 180 organisations in membership with ANIA have participated in GenerAzione. Although their number may seem small, these companies represent a large portion of the Italian insurance market. It is expected that in disseminating their activities and sharing their good practice other employers in the sector will be encouraged to follow suit and implement measures to enhance equal opportunities through better policies and dedicated training and mentoring initiatives.

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

Dissemination of information through good practice learning rather than compulsion. Wide spectrum of employers (size and sub-sector) involved, which means that other companies not currently members of GenerAzione will be able to find practices from comparable organisations already involved in the initiative.

► **Weblink:**

ANIA:
<http://www.ania.it>



2.1 Sectoral measures

A win-win project: improving communication and training at all levels

- ▶ **Name of the company/organisation:** Belgian insurance sector
- ▶ **Country of practice:** Belgium
- ▶ **Size and sector of organisation:**



Total premium income of the Belgian insurance sector was €29.4 billion in 2010; 23,700 employees (2010); 75 companies

- ▶ **Main focus and title of practice:** Lifelong learning and health and safety
- ▶ **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

To raise awareness of the importance of good internal communications, training and investment in lifelong learning at all levels.

- ▶ **Date of implementation/duration:** Since 2003 regularly updated through collective bargaining
- ▶ **Partners involved:**

Social partners in the Belgian insurance sector (Assuralia, LBC, CNE, SETCA-BBTK, ACLVB-CGSLB)

- ▶ **Content of the measure:**

The sectoral social partners in Belgium have a long-standing tradition of negotiation, especially in the insurance sector. Furthermore, prevention and management of stress in the workplace is one of the areas in which the social partners in the insurance sector have developed an effective joint project as a follow-up to the 2004 inter-sectoral framework agreement on work-related stress.

These initiatives also dovetail with the objectives pursued by the European social partners in their joint statement The demographic challenge in the European insurance sector.

To illustrate this, the sectoral social partners are currently advocating three concrete action strategies to insurance companies:

1. Improving communications and internal dialogue.
2. Encouraging training of middle management.
3. Investing in lifelong learning at all levels.

In the firm belief that this is a win-win, non-conflictual project, the social partners are also developing an awareness-raising and recommendation policy to steer companies towards practical action.

Moreover, the social partners in the sector had already worked together and submitted a code of best practices and guidelines to the insurance companies to this end.

Finally, in 2004 and 2007 the sector also organised discussion forums that were open to all the stakeholders affected by the company stress prevention and management policy: Human Resources, health and safety advisors, trade union representatives and so forth.

During these forums, insurance companies talk about their plans, interactive discussions are organised and other activities are held.



The roll-out of this awareness-raising policy in the sector is prompting a positive drive encouraging the social partners to work together to coordinate the stress prevention and management policy with two shared goals, namely company performance and staff wellbeing.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

- A variety of joint seminars have been held, e.g. on stress, which have raised awareness and allowed companies and social partners in the sector to exchange experience and good practice (see web link below for further information).
- In 2008 a “Common Recommendation” has been dispatched to all companies in order to push the Belgian insurance sector to focus on the three abovementioned action strategies.

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

There is a strong tradition of social partnership and collective negotiation in the sector. There is a joint fund (fonds paritaire) in the sector to support employment and training.

► **Weblink:**

http://www.assuralia.be/index.php?id=388&L=1&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=874&tx_ttnews%5bcat%5d=418&cHash=28e8b6cbf510eac521a64c3dfbfdc02f

Mapping health risks and carving the way to sustainable employability

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Dutch Association of Insurers and trade unions FNV, CNV & De Unie

► **Country of HQ:** The Netherlands



VERBOND VAN VERZEKERAARS

► **Size and sector of organisation:**

The Dutch insurance sector comprises 320 companies with around 60,000 employees, of which 17,000 fall under the scope of the sectoral collective agreement. Jointly, these companies have a premium turnover of €78 billion.

► **Main focus and title of practice:** Coherent Employability Policy

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The workforce in the Dutch insurance sector is ageing rapidly and skills and labour shortages are beginning to emerge. This means that workers will have to continue working longer, making the continuous updating of skills all the more vital. Similarly, the sector will have to be attractive to younger workers who will have more employment opportunities open to them in a more favourable labour market.

Within an increasingly competitive environment, companies will be required to innovate and anticipate changes to retain their competitive position.

The main focus of this sector-wide policy is to optimally deploy workers in the sector irrespective of their age. In order to do this, it should be easier for employees to carry out different roles in the course of their working life.

► **Date of implementation/duration:**

The joint social partner employability taskforce was first established in 2006 and the most recent collective agreement incorporating the employability policy dates back to 2009.

► **Partners involved:**

Social partners in the Dutch insurance sector through the joint Taskforce “Samenhagend inzetbaarheidsbeleid”. DAI was awarded €120,000 in funding from the ESF in 2009 in order to implement the policy.

► **Content of the measure:**

1. Lifelong learning

The measure is based on a study on “sustainable employability” in the sector. “Sustainable employability” is defined as the extent to which employees wish to and can continue to work within and outside the insurance sector throughout their working life. The underlying assumption is that maintaining employability is the responsibility of both the employer and the employee.

As a result of the study, a series of building blocks to support sustainable employability were developed which can be used by employers and employees in the sector according to their specific requirements. These building blocks supplement one another and are easy to combine: (table p.29)

Materials and support for the project can easily be accessed online via www.inzetverzekerd.nl. All the tools, materials and best practices can be found on this site which was specifically developed for the project. In addition, regular meetings are organised for employers, HR managers and works council representatives, dealing with different employability themes and to raise awareness of employability issues.

2. Health and safety

A further initiative by the social partners in the Dutch insurance sector focuses on health and safety risks in the sector. The Health and Safety Catalogue for the Dutch insurance sector (www.gezondverbond.nl) is a tool for mapping the



main health and safety risks at work. The website offers a questionnaire (improvement check) which can be carried out online, with the website offering solutions for any difficulties identified.

► Impact and benefits achieved:

The impacts and benefits achieved by the Coherent Employability Policy are difficult to quantify and measure, partly because it was an anticipatory initiative rather than responding to a current problem (in which case improvements could have been measured).

There have been various indications to suggest that the policy has had great success in its 6 years of practice, including the attention paid to it by the government which has included the policy in a list of good practices. The policy has also been able to attract ESF funding. DAI has also reported that the majority of its companies, which have adopted the policy and one or more of the tools, are satisfied with the results.

► Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:

The increase in the retirement age has motivated individuals to improve their employability in order to enable them to work longer.

► Main succes factors/obstacles:

Main success factors/obstacles: The main and most widely recognised achievement of the policy and its implementation has been the fact that it has brought together representatives of employers, trade unions and the DAI in ensuring the effective and beneficial implementation of the policy and its measures.

Another success factor is the high profile of the policy and its inclusion on regular meetings of the partners and on company agendas.

► Weblinks:

<http://www.verzekeraars.nl/english.aspx>

[http://www.verzekeraars.nl/UserFiles/File/cao/2010/cao_binnendienst%20engelstalig%20\(dec%20%202009-juni%202011\).pdf](http://www.verzekeraars.nl/UserFiles/File/cao/2010/cao_binnendienst%20engelstalig%20(dec%20%202009-juni%202011).pdf)

www.inzetverzekerd.nl

Awareness raising programme for employees	Do-it yourself programme "together sustainably employable"	Smaller companies toolbox	Presentations for management teams
• The aim of this tool is to encourage awareness among employees regarding their own role in maintaining their employability. It includes the following components: • Online Quickscan: How employable are you? • Online brochure on employability for employees • 4 short videos on "best practice" is staying employable • Workshops for employees	• Programme for managers and HR staff to develop employability within their organisation which includes: • An interactive presentation to encourage discussion on the theme • An employability scan for employees with report for improving their own employability; • Board game 'Route to Employability Ensured' which sets out why employability is important and how it can be ensured	• Designed specifically for smaller employers in the sector, this toolbox includes the following: • How to translate strategic objectives into employability policy • Information about the way in which work organisation can support employability • The role of management in ensuring employability • Manuals, checklists and meeting forms for HR managers	• From 2011, management teams receive visits during which the importance of sustainable employability is explained in achieving a company's targets

2.2 Company level measures

A-B-C-'D-demographic fitness': 4 pillar programme for the management of demographic change

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Gothaer Insurance



► **Country of HQ:** Germany

► **Size and sector of organisation:**

Mutual insurance; 3.5 million members; 4 billion Euro premium income in 2010; 5992 employees (2011)

► **Main focus and title of practice:**

"Demographic fitness"

Work/life balance, training and lifelong learning as well as health and safety measures, demographic analysis, strategic planning, evaluation

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

The age structure of the workforce in the German insurance sector is clearly changing. Whereas in the year 2000, 57.4% of the workforce was aged between 36-65 years, by 2008, this figure had increased to 70.6%. As a result, over the same period, the average age of employees in the sector increased from 38.2 to 41.2. This trend results from overall changes in Germany's demographic profile leading to a reduction in the number of trainees. However, in addition, other sectors are often considered to be more attractive. This perception is aggravated by the fact that there is insufficient sector specific training available at the graduate level.

For the human resources function in the sector this means that more has to be invested in retaining existing employees, ensuring that they stay fit and healthy, as well as keeping their skills up to date. While many pathways to early retirement have been closed and retirement ages indeed increase, this can lead to motivation deficits among those who might previously have expected to leave the labour market early. At the same time, for those young people coming in, the retention of older employees can create the feeling of having pathways to progression blocked. This raises the potential for intergenerational conflict. Gothaer insurance therefore recognised that a broad spectrum of measures is required to recruit, retain and motivate competent staff of all ages.

The process began with a clear mapping of the company's age profile, which assesses future skills and staff requirements by department and job families. The assessment provided the inspiration for many of the measures outlined below.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** Various measures introduced between 2005-2012 (ongoing)

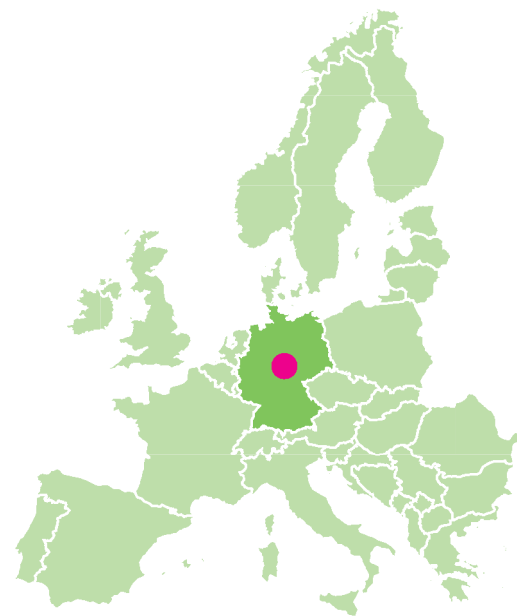
► **Partners involved:** Employer

► **Content of the measure:**

The programme for the management of demographic change at Gothaer takes a holistic approach, based on the four pillars of demographic risk analysis, strategic integration of the issue of demographic change, the development of relevant measures and regular evaluation.

1. Demographic risk analysis: Assessment of the current position and projections

In order to identify the risks of demographic change early on, Gothaer has for some time carried out regular analyses of the age structure of the company. In 2009, it purchased an analysis and prognostic tool which it has continued to develop. This Excel-based tool allows for an analysis of the current age profile of different departments, as well as the projection of future trends in the age structure and resulting potential skills shortages and leadership replacement requirements. This tool therefore allows for the design of relevant measures as well as smart succession planning and the management of timely knowledge transfer.



2. Strategic integration of the theme of demographic change

When the company's personnel strategy was overhauled in 2009, the theme of demographic change was accorded strategic importance within HR management (e.g. in relation to strategies to increase the attractiveness of the business for younger workers, the nurturing of future leadership talent, preparation for upcoming skills shortages and measures for the retention and constant up-skilling of existing staff).

In 2011, the leadership team took part in the workshop to familiarise them with the priorities of the new personnel strategy to ensure buy-in and the full implementation of the relevant measures.

3. Measures to address the impact of demographic change

The following key measures were developed to address the impact of demographic change on the business:

- Development and retention of junior staff

The company has made a commitment to recruit junior staff despite the difficult economic climate. A bachelor degree for the insurance sector has been developed by the Cologne University of Applied Sciences which combines university studies with in-company training. The company funds a number of trainees to complete this degree (31 individuals up to September 2011). In addition, internships are also being offered to talented students in other related disciplines (52 interns in 2011). This helps to introduce them to Gothaer as an employer and allows the company to benefit from the innovation potential brought by the latest research.

For young people with management potential, the company offers a 2-year graduate management start-up programme. This should contribute to train the managerial staff of the future and lower the average age of leadership personnel in the company (there were 9 participants in the first round of the programme which began in 2012). A similar development programme is available for young professionals with work experience (25 participants between 2010 – 2012).

- Women in management

From 2005, there was an increasing recognition in the company of the importance of maximising the leadership potential of its female staff. At the time, the number of female staff and their level of qualification in the company was already above the industry average. However, the number of women in management positions was below the industry average. Gothaer insurance therefore developed a target of significantly increasing the number of women in these positions (from 5.6% in 2005 to 15% in 2016 at the highest level of management; from 5.9% to 20% in middle management and from 30.1% to 40% in lower levels of management by 2016). In order to meet these targets, a three-pronged strategy was developed. One action was the overhaul of selection procedures and the targeting of talented young women, as research showed potential gender stereotypes and bias in the sector. Particular emphasis was placed on exchanging good practice and knowledge with other companies. Another step is a mentoring programme for female managers which began as a pilot project in 2009 with 12 mentees and continued in 2011 with a second round of mentees. Additionally, the company is also improving opportunities to balance work and family life by providing better access to childcare and flexible working. Gothaer joined the network "Success Factor Families" which promotes good practice in work-life balance measures.

- Succession planning on the basis of "job families"

Because of the volatility of existing business structures, the company considers it too risky to base succession planning on functions which are too job specific. A total of around 20 "job families" have therefore been defined which deal with related topics and require similar skills. It is these job families which form the basis of analysis of the impact of demographic profiles, human resource and succession planning and linked development and career paths for more junior personnel.

- Senior expert model

The company has developed a senior expert model, which allows older managers to take charge of specific projects utilising their capacities, while reducing their other management responsibilities. This has been found to boost their

interest and motivation in staying on at work, retains their expertise in the company and uses their particular skills, while at the same time enabling them to improve work-life balance in the final year(s) ahead of retirement.

- **Workplace health promotion**

Workplace health promotion plays a critical role in maintaining work ability among employees. To this end, the company offers a package of measures including initiatives in relation to “ergonomics in the workplace”, “sports and movement”, “nutrition”, “stress management”, “leadership”, “substance abuse/dependency”, “health and safety in the workplace”, as well as medical support. The latter includes health screening, back training, relaxation, cardio training and healthy canteen meals. Significant emphasis is placed on leadership training with regard to health promotion and the recognition and treatment of stress among employees.

4. Evaluation

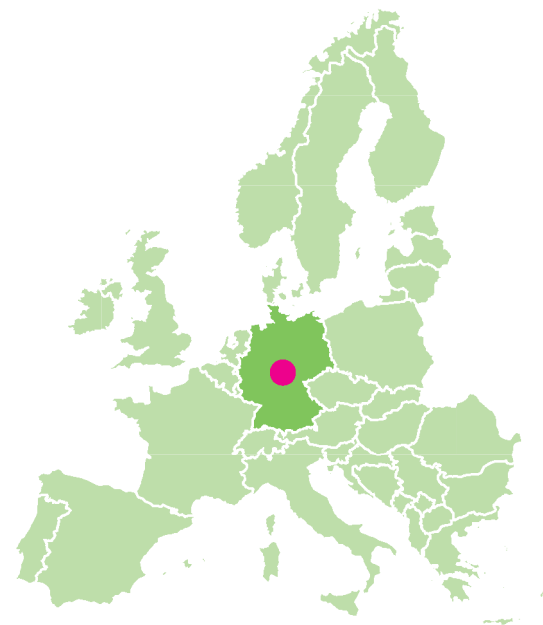
The company places significant emphasis not only on the upfront identification of demographic risk factors but also on the evaluation of measures introduced to address these risks. This includes the Gothaer Health and Safety Index, which amalgamates information on relevant health and safety data to control progress and help to design new measures or redesign existing approaches.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

The company's active management of demographic change has raised awareness of the challenges arising from an ageing workforce. The impact achieved by the various measures can be summarised as follows:

- **Demographic risk analysis:** the use of this tool made it possible to communicate the risks and challenges associated with demographic change in a much more concrete and differentiated way. The involvement of board members and business leaders in the process not only helped to raise awareness, but also contributed to the development of concrete strategies for specific business units.
- **Recruitment of new staff and ongoing development of current employees:** the company's initiatives in this field have proved successful as the following indicators show:
 - In 2010, the company received 24.3 applications for each apprenticeship position, which is significantly above the industry average of 14.3. The combined apprenticeship and degree model has proved to be particularly attractive.
 - The graduate programme “Management start up” has been very popular with 900 external applications for 14 available places in 2010, as well as internally. The programme was awarded as a “career enhancing and fair training programme” in 2012.
 - Between 2002 and 2007, 81% of the management programme advanced by at least one rank in the hierarchy of the business.
- **Women in Management:** The mentorship programme is contributing towards the declared goal of increasing the number of women in leadership positions, with at least a third of the mentees of the 2009/2010 programme advancing to the position of unit head after participating in the programme.
- **Health and safety management:** Company provision in this field is regularly evaluated. A survey carried out in 2010 showed that as a result of participating in the “Got Fit” programme, 80% of employees felt more relaxed; 82% noticed an improvement in their back pain and 88% felt they were coping better with work.

In addition, a scientifically accompanied programme was able to show a reduction in sickness absence in the company. Gothaer has won successive national and European awards for its health promotion programme.



► **Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:**

Increase in statutory retirement age

► **Main success factors/obstacles:**

A particular success factor relates to the close combination of the analysis of the current and projection of the future situation, the definition of an appropriate strategy, the design of relevant measures and the subsequent evaluation of these measures. This guarantees a systematic approach, as well as sustainability, both factors which are critical in the management of demographic change.

Collective agreements and working time legislation can impose limits on working time flexibility, for example for schemes which would aim to make working time more flexible across the life span.

Gothaer Insurance was accordingly awarded the Corporate Health Award 2011, as a tribute for its excellent health management practices.

► **Weblinks:**

Gothaer Insurance –
<http://www.gothaer.de/>

Gothaer Insurance: Annual Report 2010 –
http://www.gothaer.de/media/gothaer_g/pdf/konzern_1/geschaefteberichte/2010_2/Gothaer_Group_2010.pdf

Lifelong learning and health and safety: complementary measures improve career progression, retention and attendance

► **Name of the company/organisation:** HUK-COBURG

► **Country of HQ:** Germany

► **Size and sector of organisation:**



HUK-COBURG
Aus Tradition günstig

General insurance, €5 billion premium income, 8500 employees (2011)

► **Main focus and title of practice:**

"Demography: Now or Never"

Training and lifelong learning as well as health and safety measures (the company's work life balance measures are presented in part 1 above)

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

In 2008, the Board, in co-ordination with the internal Risk Management Committee, decided to carry out an analysis of the age structure of the company at its different locations in order to identify priority areas for measures to be taken. The figures below on developments in the company's age structure demonstrate that the company has achieved a relatively balanced age profile. Nonetheless, it is considered that a failure to bind high quality staff and a lack of measures to deal with an ageing workforce would have negative consequences in the medium to long-term.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** Introduction of various measures between 2004 -2010 (ongoing)

► **Partners involved:** Employer, Works Council, various NGOs and training providers

► **Content of the measure:**

1. Lifelong Learning

HUK-COBURG places strong emphasis on lifelong learning and has implemented a range of measures covering initial and continuous training.

- **Career and succession management**

The goal of this programme is to enable the company to identify future leaders as early as possible. In so-called succession planning meetings, the Board, department heads and department personnel meet every year to discuss the leading positions likely to fall vacant in each department over the next five years (e.g. as a result of retirement). At the same time they identify potential candidates and the training they require to allow them to step up to leadership positions.

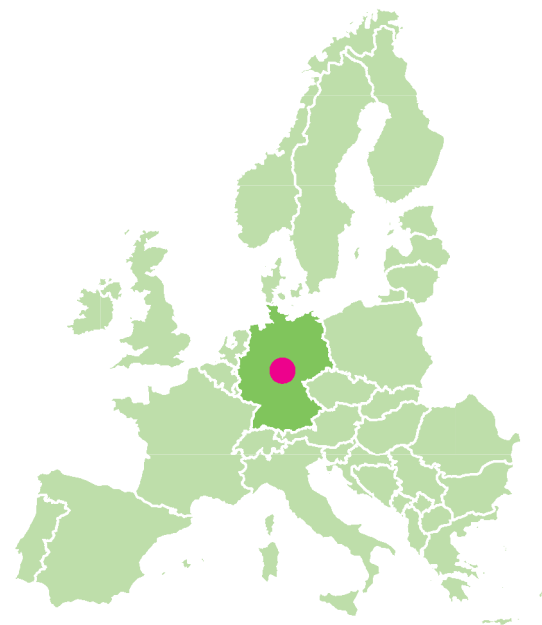
- **Mentoring**

In addition to career and succession planning, there is a focus on mentoring young managers. The measure was introduced as a pilot project in 2009 and continues to date.

- **Cooperation with the Coburg University of Applied Sciences**

Since October 2004, the company has offered the dual degree programme "Insurance Industry" in conjunction with the Coburg University of Applied Sciences. In seven semesters, enrolled students can obtain the internationally recognised academic degree "Bachelor of the Insurance Industry (University of Applied Sciences)" and simultaneously receive a qualification as a management assistant in insurance and finance. The training is conducted at the University, in vocational schools and on site at the company. The trainees/students are selected and fully funded by the company at an average cost of up to €100,000 per trainee.

In terms of further training, since the winter of 2005/2006, employees have had the opportunity to take part in the in-service training "Insurance Management" masters programme at the Coburg University of Applied Sciences. The company covers the full study costs and allows lecture time to count partially as work hours. The course provides graduates with approximately two years of advanced technical and managerial know-how and knowledge in other disciplines enabling



cross-sector working. In 2010, 5 employees participated in this programme (cost to the company €25,000).

2. Health and Safety at Work

The company launched the project "Workplace Health Promotion (WHP)" in 2009. This involves the systematic and sustained implementation of operational health measures for employees and managers at all levels. The aim is not only to reduce absenteeism, but also to increase productivity and job satisfaction. In line with this, the company has implemented the following measures:

- Health conscious leadership and check-ups for managers

Managers are exposed to particularly stressful situations and often fail to acknowledge the importance of their own health. Due to their role model function, they should develop the necessary awareness about health issues and impart this to their employees. This is the goal of the company's seminar "Health Conscious Leadership". The two-day seminar is held with the objective of sensitising managers to the issue of health. Around 80 managers participated in this measure between 2009 and 2011.

- Seminar "Exercise – Nutrition – Stress Management" (ENS+)

ENS+ is a combined, holistic approach to raise employee awareness for the pillars of health promotion. The seminar is divided into the areas of exercise, nutrition and stress management. The participants are schooled over a period of nine weeks in issues such as everyday life and work ergonomics, nutrition and relaxation techniques. The course takes place in the early evening. Participants contribute their free time and the company assumes full responsibility for the costs of the seminar. Between 2009 and 2011 around 165 staff participated in this seminar.

- Subsidised gym membership

The company also offers subsidised gym membership (25% of the cost). In order to receive the credit, the employee must show regular use of the gym facilities. Currently more than 700 staff are taking up this offer. In recognition of these measures, in November 2010, HUK-COBURG won the "Corporate Health Award" of the German financial newspaper "Handelsblatt".

► Impact and benefits achieved:

The measures implemented make the company better able to face existing and future demographic challenges. It already has rather low staff turnover (around 1% per annum), but is keen to cement this position.

► Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:

Key features in the national policy framework affecting outcomes:

There are a number of areas in which the national policy framework contributes to achieving positive outcomes. These include:

- Availability of good practice and development support (for example through auditberufundfamilie)

► Main success factors/obstacles:

- Broad spectrum of measures which can benefit different types of employees in different age groups and skill levels.
- Strong emphasis on work-life balance measures.
- Commitment to developing career paths within the company.

► Weblink:

Company human resources report 2010 (Personalbericht 2010)

http://www.huk.de/content/dam/hukde/pdf/ueber_uns/berichte_2010/personalbericht_2010.pdf

'If' employees wanted to continue learning and strike a good balance between work and life: now they can

► **Name of the company/organisation:** If P&C

► **Country of HQ:** Sweden

► **Size and sector of organisation:**

Insurance sector; 6,400 employees; gross premium income €3.9 billion



► **Main focus and title of practice:** If Academy

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

the If Academy is If's own tailored Business School, where the most current training topics and competence models for the special needs and demands of If are launched.

The If Academy operates using both internal and external trainers to further enlarge the supply of training practices and to exploit the latest research innovations.

A wide range of training practices are provided in the form of traditional and e-based training while others are provided by way of individual coaching, mentoring and learning-by-doing assignments in different contexts. This presents new possibilities, better quality and higher efficiency in education and performance.

In the context of demographic change, the company is keen to maintain and strengthen employee motivation and allow individuals to regularly renew their skills. A commitment to providing employees with easily accessible, appropriate and high quality leaning activities is seen to contribute to the company's goals for equality and diversity in its workforce. This includes a commitment to working in age diverse teams. Another goal of the If Academy is to create new and innovative methods for knowledge transfer.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** 2010 (ongoing)

► **Partners involved:** Company; developed in dialogue with trade unions and staff representatives

► **Content of the measure:**

1. Lifelong learning

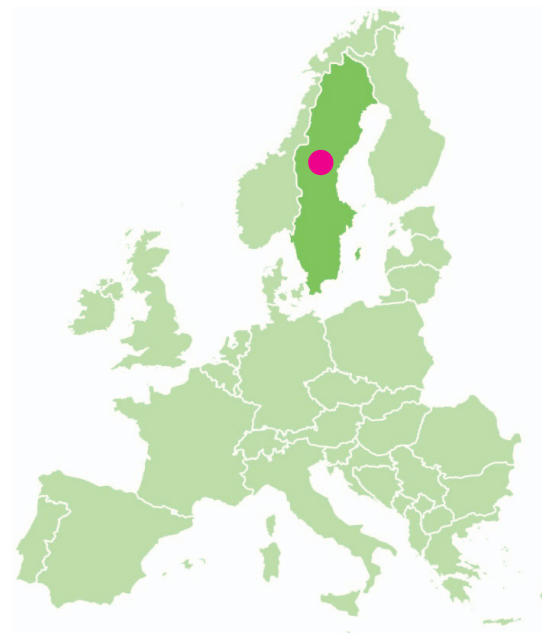
If Academy is the company's internal education and lifelong learning programme, delivering a variety of face to face and digital learning products. The offer is open not only to the company's staff in Sweden but also in its other sites in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The academy has a total budget of €4.2 million and employs 21 full-time equivalent staff in 4 countries, across 9 company locations.

Content is provided for a range of staff, from new starters to top level managers.

Seminars on the company, its goals, values, processes and systems are delivered to new starters (75 participants in 2010).

An important focus of the If Academy is on leadership development with the following modules available:





In 2010, over 200 leaders were trained through face to face seminars and courses and a further 720 leaders participated in digital learning.

In addition, e-learning activities on project and performance management, as well as other content are available via the web 24 hours a day. As well as face to face interaction, trainers use digital channels, including social media to keep in touch with their learners.

The academy also includes mentoring programmes which can take place face to face or via the various digital channels available.

► **Impact and benefits achieved:**

A total of 500 courses and over 900 seminars are offered online. In the first year (2010) alone, nearly 21,000 e-learning courses were accessed and delivered, around 4,000 tests administered and around 6,300 physical seminars delivered. In 2011, 76,000 e-learning courses were accessed and delivered, around 350 physical seminars delivered and around 6,000 tests administered.

The goal is for the learning offer to be constantly expanded and made available to all staff in the organisation. The quality of courses and delivery modes are constantly being reviewed and improved. The academy aims to make increasing use of digital delivery as this offers the flexibility most learners want to fit around their working and home lives.

Although it is currently difficult to measure the financial benefit of the academy, participants are very satisfied with the training and impact on overall staff satisfaction is being measured.

2. Work life balance

The company is also keen to ensure equal opportunity in career development for men and women and enables staff to combine work and family life through a range of flexible working schemes and the offer of teleworking. For individuals who request it, additional parental leave pay is also available.

► **Main succes factors/obstacles:**

This measure has secured strong support from top management and the unions and has successfully contributed to developing a healthy internal culture of lifelong learning.

► **Weblink:**

<http://www.if-insurance.com/web/industrial/about/Pages/default.aspx>

All fields considered: employees supported in striking a balance between work and personal life; improving their qualifications and health

► **Name of the company/organisation:** Società Reale Mutua

► **Country of HQ:** Italy

► **Size and sector of organisation:**



Mutual insurance, 1,400,000 member policyholders, 1,220 employees (Società Reale Mutua, 2009)

► **Main focus and title of practice:** Work life balance, continuous training and health and safety

► **Background/rationale for introducing the measure/policy:**

Reale Mutua's corporate culture is based on the observance and respect of key values which are translated into its dealings with employees and external partners. Particular attention is paid to the individual requirements of employees in an effort to create a favourable and positive working environment. There is a focus on the reconciliation of work and family life, the ongoing development of competencies, staff development and health maintenance in the workplace. It was recognised that such measures are critical to bind employees to the company and support the recruitment of younger staff. It is particularly relevant to the retention of skilled women after they have started a family. Similarly, training measures are being offered to enhance employability, staff satisfaction and motivation and therefore ultimately to retain qualified staff. It is recognised that an increasingly competitive environment necessitates that staff skills are regularly updated.

► **Date of implementation/duration:** 2010

► **Partners involved:** Company, trade unions, employees

► **Content of the measure:**

1. Work life balance

The company seeks to support work life balance by offering flexible working (both start and end times of the working day) and a variety of part-time work formulas to suit individual requirements (from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 29 hours per week). Flexible leave arrangements are also available for individuals with disabled children or relatives, or other close relatives with care requirements. This includes the company facilitating access to legal entitlements, as well as offering time off on a case-by-case basis.

For individuals returning from longer periods of leave (particularly maternity leave), the company offers specific refresher courses.

Holiday activities are also offered to children of staff, in order to provide support during the long summer holidays.

Reale Mutua also offers support to employees in the case of their own sickness or the sickness of a family member by providing financial assistance and advice and guidance.

A number of other benefits are available to employees including the co-financing of annual public transport passes, mortgages and loans at beneficial rates. Financial supplements are also provided to allowances paid during maternity and paternity leave.

2. Qualifications and lifelong learning (continuous training)

The 'Academy', the training school of the Reale Mutua Group, was founded in 2010. The aim of the school is to define a standard managerial model, and to carry out the mapping and updating of relevant technical and specialist skills through continuous training methods and the identification of internal leadership skills, forming a genuine faculty of learning and implementing a knowledge management system.

The Academy forms part of the company's long standing investment in employees' technical and managerial training. It aims to develop both managerial and technical specialist skills with a pragmatic and methodological approach combining theory with practice. This acknowledges that human resources are a critical success factor and a source of competitive advantage.



3. Health and safety in the workplace

For some time now, the company has foreseen and stipulated in its supplementary employment contracts allowances and expense payments in the event that an employee, or his/her family, requires treatment for illness, early diagnostic tests or preventative medical interventions. Cover is also available in the event of injury, death or permanent disability of the employee. The period for which the job will be kept for the employee has increased by 6 months in respect to that detailed by the standard national employment contract.

A personal service has recently been set up which provides support and adequate means in order to resolve personal and family problems. The service is provided by external personnel, who are highly qualified in the areas of health (providing service as regards illness/injury, psychological/psychiatric problems and addictions) and social wellbeing (providing services to young people, elderly people and disabled people, who are affected by social problems).

► Impact and benefits achieved:

The attention that the company dedicates to personal and family issues and the support it provides its employees facing difficulties contributes to the creation of a positive working environment and good employee relations. Its work life balance measures contribute significantly to employees' ability to reconcile work and family life, while at the same time being able to develop their careers.

The company's training measures allow employees to benefit from specialist "made to measures" career paths in accordance with their specific needs and requirements. Offering tailor made training allows the company to build on its specific values and develop its very own leadership model.

Overall these initiatives are considered to be an important reflection of the company's mission, not only in relation to its employees, but also in its interaction with external stakeholders and customers.

A number of the company's initiatives build on and enhance existing legal provisions and collective agreements, for example relating to work life balance.

► Main succes factors/obstacles:

Holistic approach of work life balance, training and health and safety measures, which acknowledge individual requirements in line with the company's philosophy.

► Weblink:

Società Reale Mutua
<http://www.realemutua.it/RMA/rmaweb/reale-mutua.htm>

“Combatting the demographic challenge in the insurance sector - A selection of initiatives in Europe” is available on the Insurance Europe’s website: www.insuranceeurope.eu

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« We hope that the examples in our booklet will provide food for thought and will inspire other companies and social partners to find successful ways to address demographic change in the insurance sector. »

The European insurance social partners



With financial support from the European Union