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# HELPS

# Newsletter

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## Editorial

Dear Reader,

The HELPS project is turning now into the second half time. Thus we would like to provide you with a brief summary of the activities that have been done during the last months.

The assessment and analysis of good practices as well as the **comparison of the different legal and political backgrounds of the housing and care systems among western and post- communist countries** constitute an important and basic outcome. The achieved results delivered not only an essential knowledge base for the mainstreaming of implementation strategies in a later stage of the project, beyond HELPS provided with the elaboration of an comprehensive **catalogue of 40 good practices on innovative housing and care solutions** a unique package to get inspiration for transferable actions. The outputs can be **downloaded for free** on the helps web-page.

Currently the project partners are successfully approaching the implementation of innovative **local pilot activities**. We will put the focus on these activities in the next newsletter and will keep you updated!

Enjoy reading!

### HELPS at a glance...

HELPS project promotes **innovative housing and homecare** solutions by intervening through a highly integrated approach on six crucial challenges:

- **Access to information** on available services supporting active and independent home living for elderly, people with disabilities and their families
- **Accessibility of daily life spaces and urban areas** through innovative planning encouraging autonomy and facilitating social integration
- **Empowerment of human resources** dedicated to healthcare and/or employed in professional fields challenged by emerging needs
- **Building up of social linkages** at neighbourhood level based on reciprocity and solidarity for both inclusion and assistance purposes
- **Adoption of ICT solutions** strengthening self-sufficiency
- **Sustainability and efficiency** of care systems

### Partnership:



## Project Newsflash

### HELPS attended high level transnational exchange fair

HELPS project, together with **Q-AGEING**: quality ageing in urban environment **SENIOR CAPITAL**, and SOUTH EAST EUROPE project **SILVER CITY**, is glad to announce that a good



Matteo Apuzzo (LP) introduced HELPS in Budapest

practice exchange "Efficient local partnerships for elderly and vulnerable people" was held in Budapest on the 9th of May 2013. Hosted as a networking event among different transnational cooperation projects, the event was designed to ensure the promotion of efficient and concrete tools directed to efficient local partnerships established for helping elderly and vulnerable people. Partners of the above projects have demonstrated the significant actual and potential contribution that older people and/or other vulnerable groups can make to the society through a final set of pilot projects tested (or being tested) in various Central European or South East European regions. Four thematic workshops investigated into issues at stake related to the different contexts of re-integration of elderly and vulnerable groups:

- Innovative solutions/best practices in social care for the elderly and vulnerable people;
- Re-integration of seniors to the labor market (tailor-made education programs, employment solutions, etc.);
- Innovative housing solutions/best practices for the elderly and vulnerable people;
- Re-integration of seniors to the society by voluntary programs. During the workshops it was possible to hear successful concrete practices that other organizations have already tested in Europe, mainly by partners



ostensive demonstration of health prevention

of the involved projects. The event was supported by the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme ([www.central2013.eu](http://www.central2013.eu)) and the SOUTH EAST EUROPE Programme ([www.southeast-europe.net](http://www.southeast-europe.net)). Key decision-makers from relevant national and regional ministries from the Central and South East Europe area and beyond participated, along with interested NGOs, experts and representatives of similar European projects and initiatives' attendance.

## Care training programme for voluntaries developed in the City of Debrecen

During the meeting in Budapest the HELPS partnership put a focus on the pilot activities in the Hungarian city of Debrecen. Together with the University of Debrecen a home care training programme for voluntaries was developed, where practical and theoretical skills are taught in order to enhance the capacity and to motivate the important informal care sector. For more information you can watch the following [video](#).

## HELPS MEETING in Ljubljana – Further development of innovative pilot activities

On 25/26 February 2013 the HELPS project's meeting took place in Ljubljana, with main focus on the activities of WP4, which comprises the elaboration of eight innovative



pilot activities. During the transnational workshop with hosting partner the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organization (Slovenia) and with thematic organization and moderation of the HELPS team of the municipality of Debrecen (Hungary), coordinating partner of the WP4 ("Piloting innovative actions"), HELPS project partners had the opportunity to present their pilot implementation plan and exchange ideas on various implementation-related issues regarding the project's pilot actions, aiming to

support innovative housing and home-care solutions for the elderly and vulnerable people. The workshop served as well to share the experience learnt, difficulties faced and solutions found in course of setting up the local support groups, local platforms including public and private actors competent in the fields envisaged by the project and with the role of assuring effective preparation, implementation and assessment of the local pilot actions. The meeting included also discussion on the actual project and financial management activities as well as a summarizing part on the recently closed WP3. Beside the workshop, HELPS partnership had the opportunity to take part in a study visit to the Slovenian pilot action, the "Info Point for the elderly" in Ljubljana as well as in the public conference held on Slovenia's challenges on ageing and demographic change, concluding action of the HELPS transnational event. For more information on the pilot activities of Ljubljana click [here](#). For an overview on all helps pilot activities click: [HELPS pilots](#).

## Upcoming HELPS meeting in Leipzig

The next project meeting is taking place in Leipzig on **17/18 October 2013**. During the meeting the implementation of the pilot activities will be finalised and marks at the same time the starting point of the last work package, where the HELPS partner going to elaborate local action plans and formulate transnational recommendations.





## Partner Section

**The HELPS project elaborated a comprehensive catalogue of good practices and a comparative study on housing and subsidy systems in Central and Central-East European countries**

Under the guidance and coordination of the researcher team of Martin Lux from the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic, the HELPS partnership commonly produced the first studies and best practice catalogues. They represent a comprehensive comparative analysis on the different housing and pension systems in the countries in Central and central-East European Countries. Of particular interest for practitioners is the catalogue of best practices where you can find particular innovative practices covering five different fields of intervention. The practices describe not merely a description of the actions undertaken, but provide also a deeper SWOT analysis and – where possible the funding schemes of the actions.

### CLICK FOR:

- [best practice catalogue](#)
- [comparative study](#)
- [recommendations](#)

**Interview: With Martin Lux and Stepanka Pfeifferova, Academy of Science, Prague.**

***Ms Pfeifferova, and Mr Lux, within the HELPS project your Institute coordinated a comprehensive research work package focussing on a comparative analysis of the***

***Central-European housing and welfare system as well as the evaluation of good practice examples of different housing models for elderly. What are the potentials and added value in an INTERREG project for you?***

A few EU-supported projects have been carried out in the area of social care for the elderly so far. Nevertheless, the housing aspect has been somewhat neglected. In fact, housing is a very important aspect of welfare, as the elderly are the most endangered group of people in terms of social exclusion. This is caused by their housing's low affordability and accessibility. The search for innovative housing solutions for the elderly and people with disabilities is one pillar of the HELPS project, where the eight participating Central European countries are characterized by substantially different housing systems.



Two types of countries were present: those with so-called super-home ownership housing system, such as Hungary or Slovenia, and those with a very important private and/or social rental sector, such as Austria or Germany. Thus, we were able to test factors influencing the diversity and innovativeness of housing subsidies and options for the elderly in very different housing systems and policy contexts. Moreover, the research activities enabled us to study and compare systems of housing and social care for the elderly in those Central European countries that had not been subject to such an analysis so far. Their findings led to new knowledge.

***Could you briefly summarise the main outcomes of the research study?***

The main results from the research activities, in which all partners of the HELPS project took part, are summarised in two publications the “Main Findings Report” and the “Catalogue of Practices”.

The “Main Findings Report” presents the results from the international comparative research both in the area of housing and social care for the elderly. The international comparison of practices and contexts allowed us to search for those factors that may facilitate or restrain their transnational transfer. In addition, we could define those factors that are the most likely to influence the diversity and quality of social care and housing options for the elderly.

The second publication, “the Catalogue of Practices”, provides a brief overview of 40 best innovative practices identified in the areas of housing affordability, housing accessibility, social and health care, community building and access to information and/or education in each of the eight participating Central-European countries. Indeed, supporting ageing in place is not just a matter of housing affordability and accessibility. It presupposes also the availability of domiciliary social and health care, easy access to information and the integration of the target groups into the wider community in order to prevent their social exclusion. According to our knowledge, such an integrative approach has not been applied so far in a project of this kind. The most important findings and recommendations are summarised in a special “Working Paper”.

***Are there any unexpected results?***

Yes, especially in the field of housing. We found out that a housing system is very likely to influence the diversity and innovativeness of housing subsidies and options supporting the ageing in place in a considerable way. Higher share of rental housing in the housing system of a country leads to more diverse and innovative supply of housing subsidies and

options for the elderly. Consequently, some practices effectively implemented in one environment would not necessarily function effectively in other environment.

This finding was explained both from the perspective of efficiency and effectiveness of



The researcher team around Martin Lux (l.) and Stepanka Pfeifferova

public subsidies supporting ageing in place. In other words, the efficiency of measures to increase housing accessibility is higher when it is assumed that dwelling adaptations will be used for a long-term period. It is less possible to guarantee long-term use of such modifications for owner-occupied housing than social and private rental housing. Second, while the allocation of adapted dwellings to eligible households can be explicitly specified in contracts with private or social landlords, the targeting of subsidies to homeowners is much more complicated. There might be a large share of elderly called ‘income poor, equity rich’ that may have high housing wealth. The potential public subsidies would further increase their wealth; moreover, that wealth is subject to inheritance by their relatives. Consequently, public authorities face the dilemma whether to support ‘wealthy’ people or not and whether it is fair to increase the market value of dwellings of selected homeowners by allocating them public grants.

The impossibility to guarantee the long-term use of the service combined with problems of the fair and effective targeting makes owner-occupied housing tenure less suitable for potential public subsidies promoting housing accessibility and affordability. This may decrease the overall diversity as well as the

level of innovations in the supply of housing subsidies and options for the elderly. Consequently, one of our recommendations directed towards the national level of administration is to apply a more balanced housing policy strategy and reduce the unilateral support for the owner-occupied housing tenure. The findings in the area of social and health care support the thesis that liberal systems are less suitable to ensure an accurate supply and variety of social care services. Innovative approaches are stimulated in particular in those countries where the level of redistribution is higher, i.e. where the government collects enough resources to support both the purchasing power of recipients of care and its various providers.

***What challenges will we have to face in future concerning the housing sector for elderly and vulnerable people? How can we counteract possible shortcomings?***

The main challenge is already well-known. In the context of ageing, we need to search for innovative and diverse subsidies, housing and care options that will allow people to stay in their homes or at least in standard housing forms for as long as possible. This is not only because most of the elderly prefer ageing in place but also due to the increasing public costs for institutional care. Therefore, we need to know the barriers that prevent us from increasing the choice and application of innovations supporting ageing in place. A greater selection of options increases the likelihood that existing measures will be able to meet the diverse needs of eligible households. The possibility to choose between different subsidies and options respects the elderly as dignified human beings with their own individual rights and diverse preferences. **The HELPS partners contributed with a comprehensive good practice catalogue that**

**you evaluated. Due to the different national and legal frameworks the practices are particular for each country. Despite that fact, what aspects are interesting for their transferability to other countries?**

Thorough evaluation of good practices carried out by the project partners and their comparative analysis suggest that the transferability is possible in those areas where the specific context does not play very significant role, i.e. especially in the area of community building and access to information and/or education. It is rather limited in those areas that are strongly determined by national legislation, policies and other contextual factors, i.e. measures in the area of housing affordability. In the areas of housing accessibility and social and health care, that occupy a middle place between easy and difficult transfers, we could identify two measures that are likely and unlikely to be transferred to another country: The different forms of home and urban surrounding adaptations have the greatest potential for transnational transfers in the area of housing accessibility; while different forms of special housing for the target population that mostly reflect the specific national housing system and traditions have the least potential. Analogically, different ICT solutions have the greatest potential for transnational transfers in the area of social and health care.

**How will you proceed with the results?**

The results will be published in the reports mentioned earlier in this interview and disseminated among potential stakeholders. However, some results need to be further verified on a larger sample of countries and we would like to undertake such a research in the future.

**Ms Pfeifferova, Mr Lux thanks a lot for this interview!**

## Miscellaneous

### The Dublin Declaration on age-friendly cities and communities in Europe signed

On the occasion of the EU Summit of “Active and Healthy Ageing”, held in Dublin on the 13 June 2013, 78 mayors and senior political representatives of European cities, municipalities, communities and regions signed a declaration towards an age friendly Europa by 2020. This conference was co-hosted by the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities, the Ageing Well Network, Ireland and the International Federation on Ageing. The Declaration was developed by these three Organizations following a detailed consultation with international experts in the

field of age-friendly cities and with local authorities. More information is available [online](#). The full text is available at [Dublin Declaration](#).

### Access City Award 2013

The winner of the Access City Award for the year 2013 was the German Capital Berlin. The European Commission (DG Justice) now issued a brochure where with a description of the initiatives of the winning city as well as the two other final cities (Nantes and Stockholm) and further cities that produced interesting concepts on ICT, built environment, infrastructure and accessible services. The brochure is available [online](#).

view our homepage: [www.helps-project.eu](http://www.helps-project.eu)

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