A comprehensive approach to ageing research

An EU-funded project worked to produce a definitive roadmap guiding European research on ageing and health for the next 10 to 15 years. Combining all major coordination actions, the initiative mobilised (and supported partnerships between) leading scientists in the field and end-user stakeholders.

The FUTURAGE (FUTURAGE: A roadmap for ageing research) project focused on four major scientific themes: biogerontology, social and economic resources, environments of ageing, and healthy ageing. A fifth theme – end-user involvement – was also defined as critical for the roadmap's development.

Project work began with a series of national consultations, which supported
subsequent scientific and user involvement workshops. A second set of workshops was held towards the end of the project to examine and refine the work from previous workshops.

Research funders, policymakers and NGOs attended stakeholder meetings to contribute their own perspectives to the development of the roadmap. A Council of Scientists provided high-level scientific oversight regarding development and content of the actual roadmap.

A specially designed process ensured input from scientists and stakeholder perspectives, including policymakers, practitioners, business people, older people and relevant non-governmental organisations. Consultations, conducted across distinct stages, involved a total of 1 000 people and organisations representing thousands of people. The approach as a whole was successful in establishing broad and deep consensus on major future priorities.

A conference was held at the European Parliament in 2011 to present and launch FUTURAGE’s final product, 'A Road Map for European Ageing Research'. This is the outcome of the most extensive consultation ever undertaken in the field and will help Europe deal with the demographic challenges it faces over the next decade and beyond.

FUTURAGE’s research agenda calls for new and more multidisciplinary approaches to ageing research. These should be focused on life course, engaging users and emphasising knowledge exchange. It also recommends a new vision, promoting positive possibilities of older people as well as inclusion and full citizenship rather than exclusion. The Road Map challenges all stakeholders in ageing research to work together for maximum impact on the well-being of all Europeans as they age.

The Road Map constitutes a powerful European instrument for coordinating ageing research. It promises to shape and streamline research efforts, enabling a better understanding of the ageing process, maximising healthy life expectancy and offering an overall better quality of life.

**Keywords**

Ageing, ageing research, biogerontology, healthy ageing, quality of life

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**Project Information**

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