Report of the SIforAGE project's event at the European Parliament:

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF AGEING THROUGH SOCIAL INNOVATION

Introduction

Europe is getting older. According to EUROSTAT, life expectancy at birth has increased by about 10 years over the past 50 years for both men and women in the EU-28. Between 2002 and 2013 alone, life expectancy in the EU region increased by almost 3 years. If in 2002 life expectancy in the European Union was 77,7, by 2013 it had risen to 80,6. The unprecedented demographic changes the European Union is facing are undeniable. The question arises as to how we should react to these data. Is ageing a problem or an opportunity?

SIforAGE project recommendation is to answer to that challenge with one word, innovation. The Social Innovation Incubator developed by SIforAGE brings together a large number of stakeholders whose work is involved with AHA and provides them with opportunities to exchange ideas, to benefit from mutual collaboration across Europe, and to disseminate their results through five Knowledge Management Units (KMUs). The Social Innovation Incubator provides added value to research by drawing together well-established innovative experiences.

In this way, The SIforAGE Project is enabling the coordination of a myriad of experiences by organizing, for example, Technology Experience Cafés (TECs) at which end-users are given an in-situ presentation of new technologies, and product- and service-development. SIforAGE also carries out contact programmes with children and

young people that instruct in the prevention of ageist attitudes. Mutual Learning Sessions with policy-makers have also been organized.

Our social innovation activities also promote ethics and social responsibility issues in ageing research, particularly through the launching of a research prize on AHA. Overall, gathering together different stakeholders to enhance social innovation requires organizing activities such as workshops for innovative services and business models for better lives, as well as engaging with the scientific community in international meetings, and journal publications.

The SIforAGE project – Social Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing for Sustainable Economic Growth – strives for these changes to be perceived not as a problem, but rather as an opportunity. Under the paradigm of AHA (Active and Healthy Ageing), the project aims at bringing the young and the elderly together to work for a common objective: a "Society for All Ages." SIforAGE is a project funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme. It involves 17 partners from all over Europe, Turkey, and Brazil, as well as many universities, companies, public administrations, and civil society organizations are working together with more than 2,000 stakeholders.

Professor Antoni Font – SiforAGE Coordinator, Full Professor on Law at the University of Barcelona

Professor Javier Tejada – GISME Director, Full Professor on Fundamental Physics at the University of Barcelona

Dr. Elena Urdaneta – SiforAGE Scientific Coordinator, Research and Development Director at the Basque Culinary Center

Dr. Dirk Jarré – President of EURAG, the European Federation of Older Persons

Professor Josef Weidenholzer – Member of the European Parliament, Intergroup on Active Ageing, Intergenerational Solidarity and Family issues

I. Main lines of discussion and policy recommendations

This report addresses the discussions and the policy recommendations of the event that took place on the 18th of April, 2016 on the premises of the European Parliament (Brussels, Belgium). SIforAGE organized an international one-day event entitled "Towards 'A Europe for All Ages'" together with the European Parliament's "Intergroup on Active Ageing, Intergenerational Solidarity and Families Policies" to discuss social innovation strategies and policy recommendations for active and healthy ageing policies at the European Union. The aim was to make a contribution on this debate by bringing together policy-makers from the European Parliament, some of the most relevant civil society representatives, as well as some of the most prominent international scholars researching on the field of ageing.

The main topics addressed in the event concerned the life-course perspective through the lens of the Active and Healthy Ageing paradigm by raising questions such as: what are the core concepts of the Life-Course Perspective paradigm in which policy-making should be framed in order to grant Active and Healthy Ageing for European Citizens? How do views from the Life-Course Perspective help to ensure that EU policies overcome the current understanding of ageing and demographic change as a problem to be solved? How to create effective strategies on how to bring about a positive economic impact?

The debate focused on how to improve the social participation and the contribution of elderly persons in social innovation policies. To do so, the debate questioned the means and ways to be applied in order to ensure an effective implementation of these policies. They discussed the article 25 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union that indicates that:

> *"The Union recognizes and respects the rights of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life."*

Proposals for evidence-based public policy and decision-making processes for a "Society for All Ages" were a key point in the agenda of the event. The discussion draw alone the lines of what role (if any) should play social innovation and how it can facilitate the participation of the elderly in social and cultural life, in creating new EU

and national political concepts, policies, strategies, and projects, and in preventing traditional, age-related problems.

II. *Opening and Introductory Remarks,*

Dr. Dirk Jarré, is President of the European Federation of Older Persons (EURAG). EURAG is responsible for the coordination of KMU3, one of the transversal Knowledge Management Units of the SIforAGE project. This KMU deals with the issue of "Older Persons" active participation and inclusion in society and inequalities associated to ageing.

Dr. Jarré opened up the event by commenting on current demographic shifts, their impact on the elderly, future generations, and contemporary society in general. Dr. Jarré stressed that in less than the last 300 hundred years the population was multiplied 20 times. Consequently, this may lead to more formidable challenges such as: increasing the involvement of aged people and civil society organisations in research, assuring the cohesiveness of a society for all ages, and balancing the distribution of resources in the society and the labour market. Moreover, he stated that very often there is little contact and communication between the older generations and policy makers, which puts barriers to improve the lives of older people. For example, pharmaceutical industries and research institutions lack communication with the elderly and thus, very often they are perceived as objects rather than subjects.

Dr. Jarré also argued that during the decades of their working life people accumulate an enormous amount of personal and professional experience that should not simply be lost when they retire from their jobs. In the majority of cases, they have to cease their salaried activities due to statutory provisions. In this sense, people need and appreciate strong systems of social security and rights to pensions, but at the same time many of them would like to continue work after retirement. According to his view, older people would like to go on having a specific, meaningful task to perform, to maintain their capabilities, and they desire to be recognised as competent and useful as they are. That way, the important assets and advantages of older persons should be much better valued and benefitted from by companies and by the economy at large. Their experience and competence should be used not only for passing them on to the younger workforce but also, and in particular, for the creation and/or improvement of age-friendly work places

and working conditions that allow older persons to go on working easily and productively as long as they want to and are able to.

New and flexible concepts for “transitional work” or for “advisory activities” in companies need to be conceived and developed for retirees so that both sides can benefit from this accumulated experience. Companies should be encouraged to creating the necessary conditions by i.e., tax incentives and should be distinguished for their commitment to social progress.

Moreover, Dr. Jarré noted that life experience of older people should be more valued for their wisdom and due impact in their capacity of judgement. Considering that older persons in European society have accumulated a huge experience over their life, it more than astonishes how little their knowledge is recognised and used in various domains of public interest. What older persons have seen during many decades in terms of successes, failures, broken promises, erroneous concepts and the like – be it in power politics, in technologies, in social policies, in economic developments, or other domains – constitutes a still living treasure of mankind that cannot be transmitted simply through recorded documentation. Their collective experiences enable these persons to make a comprehensive judgement on current issues in society and put them into a position of providing a more balanced advice to decision-makers in various key areas of society.

The admirable dynamism, the boldness, the trust in technological advance, and sometimes the simple and irrational confidence into the future of the younger generation can thus be very well balanced and lead to more prudent attitudes. An intensive dialogue between the generations may well be of great help for using the advantages of long time experience combined with new drives and, thus, to adequately plan for the future of society.

Further and more detailed elaboration of comments and suggestions made by Dr. Jarré as part of the NGO Committee on Ageing, Vienna, can be found in a brochure titled "Recommendations for Decision Makers to Promote Active Ageing in a Society for All Ages,” published in September 2015.[1] The comments and recommendations contained

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[1] This publication is the result of cooperation among the SIforAGE project, Dr. Jarré, and the NGO Committee on Ageing in the United Nations in Vienna. The publication contains 31 comments and recommendations in which it tackles issues related to inequalities associated with ageing, identifies barriers and obstacles for participation and inclusion, and highlights opportunities and actions to be taken. The statements, comments and recommendations are evidence-based and carefully argued in view of their political value and their practical implementation possibilities. They are the outcome of intensive research of a scientific project and based on the collection of good (and bad) practice examples according to a pre-established grid of important elements in respect to the present situation of older persons as well as requirements to improve the respect of their dignity, the integration and the participation of older persons in society.

in this publication are destined to be used by decision-makers in various areas and at different levels, global and European civil society organisations dealing with ageing issues, and public and semi-public structures in the region. Yet, this publication is not only addressed to decision-makers and their support staff, but also to "ordinary" citizens of all ages to argue their concerns, needs and hopes; it might help them in strongly formulating their own criticism as well as demands to those who decide on them or for them.

Professor Dr. Javier Tejada Palacios, is Director of GISME Group (Interdisciplinary Reflections Group and Math Solutions for Entities). He is a full professor of Physics at the department of fundamental physics, University of Barcelona.

According to Professor Tejdada, today we are living the so called "Second Machine Age." While the preceding age was marked by the invention of the steam engine, followed by the sudden boom of the oil industry, and the rise od petrolium power, in a matter of decades we are bringing our economies into a digital era. As professor Tejada mentions, the historical progress is linked with ageing, this is to say, both energy and ageing are two inseparable key words.

For many thousands of years, humanity followed a very gradual and upward trajectory. In fact, before the Common Era the worlds' population were few tens of millions. Yet in the time of the Roman Empire there were around 500 millions. However, around 200 years ago, the first Industrial Revolution bent the curve of human history, and with it, curved the humanity's demographic and social development. The First Revolution meant a whole shift from the limitation of human and animal muscle power, to the generation of massive amounts of useful energy at will.

As professor Tejada highlights, what it can be concluded since the rise of the steam power is that por progress is driven primarily by technological innovations. As data shows, the ability to generate massive amounts of mechanical energy is the main explanation why today the human population worlwide is close to 7000 millions. That in less than 300 years the world's population it has increased by a factor of 12.

Nowadays, continues Professor Tejada, we are living the so called Second Machine Age. This means that, technological progress allows humanity to overcome previous limitations and step into a whole new territory. In words of Professor Tejada: how exactly this transition will play out remains unknown, but whether or not the new machine age bend the curve as dramatically as the steam engine is an extremely important question.

According to Professor Tejada, both the search for new energy sources, and how we are working for a better tomorrow are the two problems modern societies, and by extention Europe in currently facing. What is more, our capacity to successfully tackle our future is therefore bond to our ability to promote sustainable population growth. It is particularly noticeable that, according to Euroestat, life expectancy at birth in Europe has increased by about ten years in the past fifty years. Furthermore, the predictions for the future of other parts of the world also point at a dramatic increase of population.

As highlighted by Professor Tejada, our generation will likely have the good fortune to experience two of the most amazing events in history: the creation of true machine intelligence and the connection of all humans via a digital network. These two events will be essential to allow us to walk down the road towards a sustainable and welfare "society for all ages".

III. Plenary Lecture: Life Course Perspective at the Core of the Active and Healthy Ageing Paradigm

Professor Dr. Rania is Professor of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, at the Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University, Hamilton, CANADA.

Professor Parminder Raina begun his presentation with a graphic showing the demographic shift in four graphics. The graphics showed, broadly, the increase both in absolute and relative terms of the population +70. The graphics showed, respectively, the population in the years 1851, 1901, 1951, and 2006.

This concern is reflected in the following quote:

> "Population aging is unquestionably the most important demographic force of the first half of the twenty-first century"
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> (Schoeni FR, Ofstedal MB. "Key Themes in research on the Demography aging" Demography, 47, 2010: S5-S15)

In fact, according to Professor Raina, with regard to world population ageing, during the last decades there has been a global decline of mortality and fertility from higher to lower levels. World population is specially growing older: the share of the population aged 65+ is expected to double between 2010 and 2040 from 7.8% to 14.7%. The number of older people will increase from 530 million in 2010, to 1.3 billion by 2040. In this sense, another aspect of world population aging is the aging of the older population: the share of the older at ages 80+ (the "olderst-old") is growing more

rapidly than the older population itself. This growth will translate into a large increase of oldest-old within the world's older population, from 16% in 2000 to 24% in 2040, according to the *US Census Bureau, International Data Base*.

Why does aging happen?

According to Professor Raina, there can be two types of ageing distinguished: primary and secondary ageing. What is "normal" in the aging process is called primary aging. While what results in more susceptibility to disease is called secondary aging. However, with the increase in the amount of elderly people, there is more heterogeneity in the elderly population. Onset indeterminable and progression varied. To this heterogeneity genetic as well as environmental factors are determinant. Professor Raina noticed that: gender is a significant factor and lifestyle a primary factor. Thus, various theories of aging attempt to explain the process-bottom line, as there is disruption of homeostasis.

He presented various theories that study the aging process, to wit: biological theories that attempt to respond to how do cells age and what triggers the aging process. Sociological theories that ask how does a society influence its old people and how do old people influence a society. How social and economic inequalities influence aging? The psychological or cognitive perspective asks how behaviour or cognition affected by aging is. Do patterns of behaviour or cognition change over time in any identifiable way? Finally, there is the biomedical perspective; this perspective asks how aging and disease processes are related, as well as different. How is disease processes impact function, quality of life, and health care delivery?

Professor Raina focused on the main risk factors for disease, disability and longevity. On the one hand, he noticed that risk factors are multiple, this is to say, that there are many factors contributing to the process. In addition, he mentioned that gender difference remains unexplained, there is a loss of prediction, and thus, paradoxes in prediction. However, according to Professor Raina, there are new opportunities for research. He mentioned that there is a larger number of very old people, and thus, longer term follow-up. There are longitudinal data which allows identifying optimal trajectory. Finally, he noticed that there are common risk factors.

He highlighted that, currently, there is a Paradigm Shift. The perspectives addressing the aging process are changing. One of the main features of this change are the life course perspective and multi-level factors. Those are individual, contextual and environmental factors. The new approach considers as well the ageing process as expressed as dynamic models. In this sense, the traditional risk factors of research are being incorporated within broader ecological models that consider social and political determinants.

The Life Course or Longitudinal Perspective distinguishes, broadly, four factors: the social, cultural, and environmental influences. This combines rural, socio-economic, exercise, nutrition. The genetic factor, as they may generate telomeres or oxidative stress, psychological and cognitive abilities, and immune functions. The chronic diseases factors makes reference to diabetes, cancer, dementia, arthritis, and cardio. Finally, the health and social services enter into the equation as far as infection due to the aging process enter into the scheme.

In this sense, professor Raina stressed that aging is from birth to death, and the past shapes the present and future too: social conditions experienced in early life influence life choices and opportunities. In this sense, health behaviours adopted in childhood influence later life. Health in childhood influences health in later life. In his view, as an expert in the field, it's never too soon to adopt healthy behaviours and never too late. He identifies three life-course themes and develops them as following: first, each life transition presents a unique opportunity for interventions to inform policy and practice that can improve health and quality of life. Second, interventions can be focused on particular stages or on the entire life-course. Finally, chronic diseases likely result from the complex interplay of critical and sensitive period, and trajectory and accumulation processes.

What is a life course health development?

Professor Rania suggested that there are multiple determinants operating in context that change as a person develops. There are multiple contexts. Thus, health development is an adaptative process composed of multiple transitions, design, and process of health development. In addition, different health trajectories are the product of cumulative risk and protective factors. There may be variations in the trajectories. The timing and sequence of multiple determinants and experience influence health and development of both individuals and populations. He notices that there are critical and sensitive periods to that development that have different impacts in different individuals.

Strengths and limitations of a life course approach to studying aging

Finally, professor Raina identified certain limitation to the proposed approach: first, there are few life course studies and absence of life course studies of aging, second, there are many methodological challenges, thirds, the long-term investment is an expensive method, and fourth, there are losses to follow up, and it raises many complex ethical issues.

However he also identified some strengths in the perspective: first, the life course model make researchers consider the timing (critical), the duration (accumulation) and, the

temporal ordering (chains of risk or interactions) of exposures, second, it integrates social, psychological, lifestyle and biological risk processes, and finally, it promotes interventions earlier in the life course.

Professor Raina's lecture was chaired by Professor Dr. Norbert Bilbeny, Full Professor on Ethics at the University of Barcelona and member of the GISME group.

Professor Binbeny made the following comments to Professor Raina's intervention:

As has already been mentioned, the influence that society has on the elderly and that the elderly have on society is a common and proven fact. Society evolves over time, but it also is diverse and changes in space.

I would only like to highlight that, after differing lifestyles, both society and the elderly are becoming increasingly heterogenous in ethno-cultural terms as well. This is a fact that is still only backed by a few studies. As such, we know how genetic, behavioral, and contextual heterogeneity influence elderly people's health, but we know little of the impact of linguistic, cultural and religious heterogeneity. Nowadays, every city is a universal enclave. Ethnocultural diversity must be considered when it comes to the impact it can have on elderly people's health, just as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and the role one plays or the skills one has are considered. Every culture perceives things differently: health and sickness, that which is proper and that which is improper, autonomy and dependency.

Because of this, research into how each group's ethnocultural values influence elderly people's ways and quality of life may be needed. These are relevant facts for public health services as well as for epidemiology and could help further understand illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Many risk factors and the protection from them cannot be disassociated from an individual's lifestyle since it is shaped by his or her belonging to a certain culture. Public health services cannot ignore that beliefs and customs shape the lives of groups and individuals, including the elderly, for which they have an impact on their illnesses and, likewise, on their healing processes. In my opinion, more empirical studies and critical approaches to this effect are required.

IV. Presentation of Main SIforAGE Results

Dr. Andrey Girenko, is a SIforAGE partner and a member of Deutsches Forschungszentrum für Künstliche Intelligenz (DFKI), AAL Competence Cente.

In his presentation, on “Active participation of older end-users in research and technology development,” Dr. Girenko stressed the rapidly growing of the so called Silver Economy. To be clear, silver economy is the economy for older persons and with older persons. He also stressed the importance of active participation of end-users in research activities and in particular, what has been developed under the umbrella of the so called Technology Experience Cafés (TECs©), as one of the main experience of SIforAGE. These experiences are identified as one of the possible ways to increase the social visibility of the elderly in social innovation and to promote active participation of older end-users in research and technology development.

As Dr. Girenko pointed out, even though statistics convincingly show that older persons use innovative products/services much lesser than younger persons, multiple studies reveal that new technologies are able to radically improve the quality of life of older persons. Although it is true that many older adults need assistance learning how to use new devices and digital services. However, an unjustified negative notion about older people’s involvement in innovative technologies spring from sceptical attitudes about the benefits of technology and stereotypes that associate older people with inability to use technologies. This phenomenon is also known as the “stereotype threat.” In this sense, the TECs© experiences show a completely different image.

During the TECs©, at which end-users are given an in-situ presentation, the participants can have first-hand experiences about innovative technologies and how they can facilitate their everyday lives. TECs© also enable open and direct dialogue between older users of technology and the representatives of assistive technologies, such as researchers and technology developers, industry, retailers, marketing agents. Those face-to-face events also help to engage in this dialogue all stakeholders, such representatives of older people associations, caregivers, public authorities, or insurers, involved in proliferation of new assisted living technologies to daily lives of older people. TECs© are an example of a direct dialogue between older people and the representatives of assistive technologies designed for older users, since they foster a social and interactive dialogue event to get feedback on the technological development from end-users. The TECs© experiences are beneficial on both counts.

Older people benefit for these experiences as they get an insight into the latest technological developments and market trends and are given space to provide their opinions to technology developers and their needs for future developments. Moreover, TECs© also serves as a place for socialization, meeting new people, and, nonetheless, having fun.

In return, scientists, technology representatives, and policy-makers, through the face-to-face interactions with the end-users, get “user experience” of their research results and products. This way, they may be able to estimate the market potential and sharpen the marketing and exploitation strategies, as well as meet potential investors and uptake supporters. The ideas, needs, and opinions of older end-users serve to elaborate better evidence-based public policies to increase active and healthy ageing based on their observations of the needs of the older people with whom they had a direct contact. The successful implementation of innovative technological solutions shows that Europe can become the innovation hub for tools and services for the elderly.

Although during these activities technologies are at the core, very often they become secondary as the events acquire a more social character, in which older people share their experiences of growing older, comment on social and family issues, and propose solutions for their better integration and visibility in society and decision-making processes. Their interactions serve as a valuable data to understand better the needs, challenges, and difficulties of older people and their experiences with innovative technologies.

The participants of the events agreed that older persons should be more involved in the development of new technologies not only because they possess a huge, but still very much untapped, purchasing power that can help for the development of new technologies capable of radical improvement of quality of life for older people, but also because older people can greatly benefit from the hi-tech innovations. It is an error to generally judge older persons as neither interested nor competent in new technologies. Quite the contrary seems to be true considering that a large segment of them desire to be up-to-date in the use of modern devices and processes and thus be able to keep up, in a way, with the younger generations. However, what is still essentially lacking is an intelligent involvement of older persons in the creation of goods and services particularly oriented towards the “silver fraction” of society. An approach to simply use them to test such products once they are available and ready for the market is neither sufficient nor satisfactory. Older persons need to be involved in the process much earlier and over the whole production cycle - which means beginning at the stage where such goods and services are in a conceptual phase, through the design of the proto-type of the product until it is given the final touch. This would make decisions on production much more rational, avoid or minimise errors, save investments, provide more satisfaction on the users’ side, and thus insure success for the entrepreneur.

Dr. Elena Urdaneta, the SIforAGE project, and Scientific Coordinator and the Director of Basque Culinary Center, Research and Development.

Dr. Urdaneta presented the current results deriving from the SIforAGE project and how they may be helpful and supportive for in increasing social and economic participation of elderly persons in society, the involvement of elderly persons in research at various stages, and the development of appropriate technology.

According to Dr. Urdaneta, one of the main aims of the aim of the SIforAGE project is to strengthen cooperation among the stakeholders working on active and healthy ageing. This aim is elaborated in the project through the above mentioned knowledge management units, that results in the activities carried out and explained in detail both by Dr. Jarré and Dr. Girenko. In addition, the project aims at putting together scientists, end-users, civil society, public administrations, and companies. The objective is to improve the competitiveness of the European Union regarding the promotion of research and innovative products for longer and healthier lives. The SIforAGE project interdisciplinary and international nature is developed through the integration of a wide range of stakeholders along the value chain of innovation, such as: private foundations, care centers, civil society associations representing aged people, universities, public policy makers, think tanks, and experts at European and International level. The aim, above all, is to bridge the existing fragmentation among them.

In her intervention, Dr. Urdaneta addressed the importance of the promotion of a positive image of elderly persons, particularly among the younger generations. These actions have been carried out in various international institutions through contact programmes with children and young people with an aim to instruct in the prevention of ageist attitudes, and identify the basis for evidence-based anti-discrimination laws. Dr. Urdaneta also highlighted the so called life-course perspective in policy definition through the evidence-based decision-making processes and presented the Social Innovation Incubator that brings together a large number of stakeholders. The work of these stakeholders is involved with AHA and provides them with opportunities to exchange ideas, to benefit from mutual collaboration across Europe, and to disseminate their results through the SIforAGE project's five Knowledge Management Units (KMUs). The Social Innovation Incubator provides added value to research by drawing together well-established innovative experiences. The SIforAGE project's social innovation activities also promote ethics and social responsibility issues in ageing research. In SIforAGE these values are promoting particularly through the launching of a research prize on AHA. As Dr. Urdaneta notices, gathering together different stakeholders to enhance social innovation requires organizing activities such as workshops for innovative services and business models for better lives, new technologies, Mutual Learning Sessions with policy-makers, and product- and service-

development. All these are activities that the SIforAGE project has been doing from its very beginning.

According to Dr. Urdaneta, the main goals of the SIforAGE project are: first, to disseminate the knowledge sharing with policy-makers, researchers and civil society working on the field of Active and Healthy Ageing, second, to increase the networking of European policy-makers with relevant stakeholders on the issue, and third, to gather and spread the most relevant conclusions deriving from the event(s).

V. *Round Table Discussion with Policy Makers,*

Professor Joan Guardia is Full Professor of Psychology and Methodology of Behavioural Science, University of Barcelona. He is a member of the GISME group.

In his intervention in the round table with policy makers, professor Guardia noticed that the interaction between politics and attention to diversity on ageing matters is problematic. However, according to Professor Guardia, this interaction is key as the ageing challenge should be addressed from the political institutions following evidence-based recommendations that takes into account that diversity as a relevant angle of the problem. In his view, social innovation activities play an important role in developing evidence-based policy recommendations.

He agrees with professor Raina in the fact that demographic challenges need to be addressed from a life course approach. In this sense, the derivative policy recommendations would cope with the diversity intrinsic to the ageing problems. According to professor Guardia, these resulting policies should treat the demographic challenges not only with centralized policies, but also with local policies, that would be able to address particular demands. He highlights that some of the most common diseases derived from ageing, contributing to the demographic challenge, are the so called non-communicable diseases.

As mentioned by Professor Guardia, one of the most challenging questions is, which will be the new role of elderly persons in European soceities. One tentative conept, in this respect, would be the importance of elderly people as active citizens of European soceities. In this regard, social innovaiton may be a stimulous for change. In this sense, according to Professor Guardia, two key policy recommendations are: to develop health and cognitive indicators, and to include elderly people in social activities.

Dr Uffe Bundgaard-Jørgensen, CEO & Founder of InvestorNet-Gate2Growth, PhD in economics and operations research from University of Copenhagen and Danish Technical University

Dr Giuseppe Borsalino, DG Research and Innovation, Science with and for Society, European Commission.

Professor Josef Weidenholzer, Member of the European Parliament, Intergroup on Active Ageing, Intergenerational Solidarity and Family issues

VI. *Conclusion and follow-up: The SiforAGE International Conference 2016*

The road towards the improvement of life of the elderly is a difficult one, marked by significant and far-reaching challenges to sustainability, since the old 20th century model is no longer applicable to rapidly changing social climate and human longevity. Thus, it is instrument to seek out new, innovative routes to ensure citizens can continue to live in healthy and dignified ways. The decisions taken and the outcomes of the event require active participation not only of those directly involved with ageing issues, but everyone. Therefore, dissemination and social awareness activities are particularly crucial to involve society as a whole, overcome preconceptions, and pursue a "Society for All Ages." The SIforAGE project organizes a three-day International Conference in October 2016 in Barcelona, which aim is to bring together actors from different disciplines and fields of research to discuss ageing, the ageing process, the challenges presented, and possible ways ahead for the future.