



# Senior Tourism – implementing practices for active & healthy ageing

Ilenia GHENO  
AGE Platform Europe  
OFF TO SPAS Final Conference

# Travelling is a boost

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## Travelling is a boost:

- it helps people stay active
- it avoids loneliness
- it tackles social exclusion
- It represents a change in the daily routine

Travelling involves discovery, interaction with the environment, intercultural contact and social interaction.

⇒ **Senior tourism is a strategy for active and healthy ageing.**



# Challenges

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Among the main challenges:

- To mobilise the most marginalised ones, those who don't want or cannot travel
- To reach out to those distant from the centers of happenings and opportunities (such as big cities)
- To ensure accessible, affordable and pleasant trips



# Challenges = resources

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In the local context, challenges are solved through local resources:

- **rural areas and remote villages:** maybe their inhabitants find it difficult to travel, but they are depository of local traditions, and are usually very welcoming people
- By the **contact with incoming tourists**, the most marginalised one can be encouraged to travel and explore, or they can learn about what happens elsewhere, which is also a different way to travel!
- **real experiences** are offered, at affordable prices. Accessibility is often however still a problem, but it can be improved and services can be better organised



# Being a local beyond a tourist

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The *EUROSEN - Europe for Seniors* project pursues a twofold objective:

- an **economic one**, which is to strengthen the European tourism industry with a specific focus on the micro, small and medium enterprises,
- a **social one**, which is to foster the active life of senior citizens by involving them in touristic initiatives both as travelers and as hosts of the visiting guests.

To reach its economical aim, the project works with small villages, rich in natural and cultural diversity, and supports them to attract visitors from well-known and close destinations. To reach its social goal, EUROSEN wants to engage the tourists in recreational activities that follow local traditions. This concept is referred to as '*Clusters of Local Culture*'

<http://eurosen.eu/en>





## Senior tourists' preferences (780 respondents)

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- **National travels** are preferred to international ones
- **4 to 13 nights** out are to be privileged, however travels of a length around one week well justify the effort of organization and displacement
- **Cut the times of transfer in favour of stays** (“see less but see better”). 2 hours minimum of relax are to be envisaged.
- Tour Operators must **design with priority programs for singles-couples-small groups “assisted-not-accompanied”**, which prevail in front of more numerous groups (62% of our sample of 780 respondents).
- **Flight (27%) and car (41%)** are the most preferred means of transport to get to the destinations, and it looks like leaving a limited space for the bus (13%)
- The holiday should ideally not cost more than 100€ a day (incl. night costs, excl. flight/train ticket, ...)(80%).
- Walking (50%) is very much appreciated and encourages the **cultural visits** of the destinations,

# Senior tourists' preferences

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- **Seasonality still matters.** With respect to what highlighted in the ESCAPE questionnaire, where summer time was the favourite season, **autumn and spring** have been listed among the preferred seasons for travelling by the majority of the respondents, with the exception of the Italian respondents, who opted for summer time in majority (66%).
- The interviewed sample prefers to organise their holidays individually, but travel agencies and organisations, such as parish organisations, senior associations, or others are also considered as a reliable sources of information and help in planning. The fact that people aged 55+ prefer to organise autonomously their holidays is confirmed also by the **preference for tailored holidays**, rather than standard tourist packages, and this transversally across countries.

# Senior tourists' preferences

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- Despite very widespread stereotypes, internet is also well used by the respondents to search for information and planning the trips. Relative and friends are mostly appreciated as source of information, but the web competes well with them, ranking then travel agencies, guidebooks and specialized magazines below in the ladder (especially in Slovenia). **If internet is an appreciated tool, on the contrary social networks are not very well exploited as a source of information.**
- With respect to the activities that people appreciate to carry out while on holidays, across countries it emerged that there is great willingness to enjoy the local landscape and get to know the local culture. In particular, people seem to like **visiting a local farm or a shop or exhibitions, and going around with local people**. The cooking lesson and the experience of local dishes was however average welcome, alongside with the direct interaction in local dances or singing experience.



# AGE Platform Europe

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- ❖ **Bringing older people's point of view in the European policies' debates**, regarding the most important dossiers for people aged 50+, such as social protection and pension reforms, anti-discrimination, employment, social inclusion, ICT, health, research, accessible mobility and build environment,
  - **120 Members** from all over Europe (EU28 and Turkey)
  - **12 Task Forces** (Accessibility of build environment, transport and ICT, Healthy Ageing, Dignified Ageing, Consumer's rights, ...)
- ❖ **Raising awareness on the users' needs and wishes**, on the principle and practice of users' involvement, in order to add value to the European research, to industrial production, to the service provision and policy-making.
  - Involvement in EU projects (Advisory Boards, User Fora, pilot visits, ...)
  - @ Policy level (EU lobbying, campaigns, e.g. solidarity between generations, age-friendly environments, European Parliament Intergroup on Ageing, ...)
- ❖ **Pooling with other European NGOs and stakeholders**: facing the challenges brought by the demographic change by working together and by sharing the rationale that nothing can be done without the involvement and consent of those the action is addressed to (*"nothing for us without us"*).

# Age-friendliness



**Organisations  
of and for older  
people**

- Input on situation and needs at national and local levels
- Co-funding



- Consultation
- Platform of exchange
- EU Information and news update



**AGE Platform  
Europe**

- Input on situation and needs across EU
- Recommendations



- Consultation
- EU Information
- Funding



AGE's vision: **a society of all ages** where individuals enjoy equal rights in terms of their living and working conditions, economic situation, participation and access to goods and services.

This not only benefits older individuals as citizens and gives the proper value to their wisdom and experience. It is also in the best interest of our whole society, and foster the objective of more solidarity between generations.

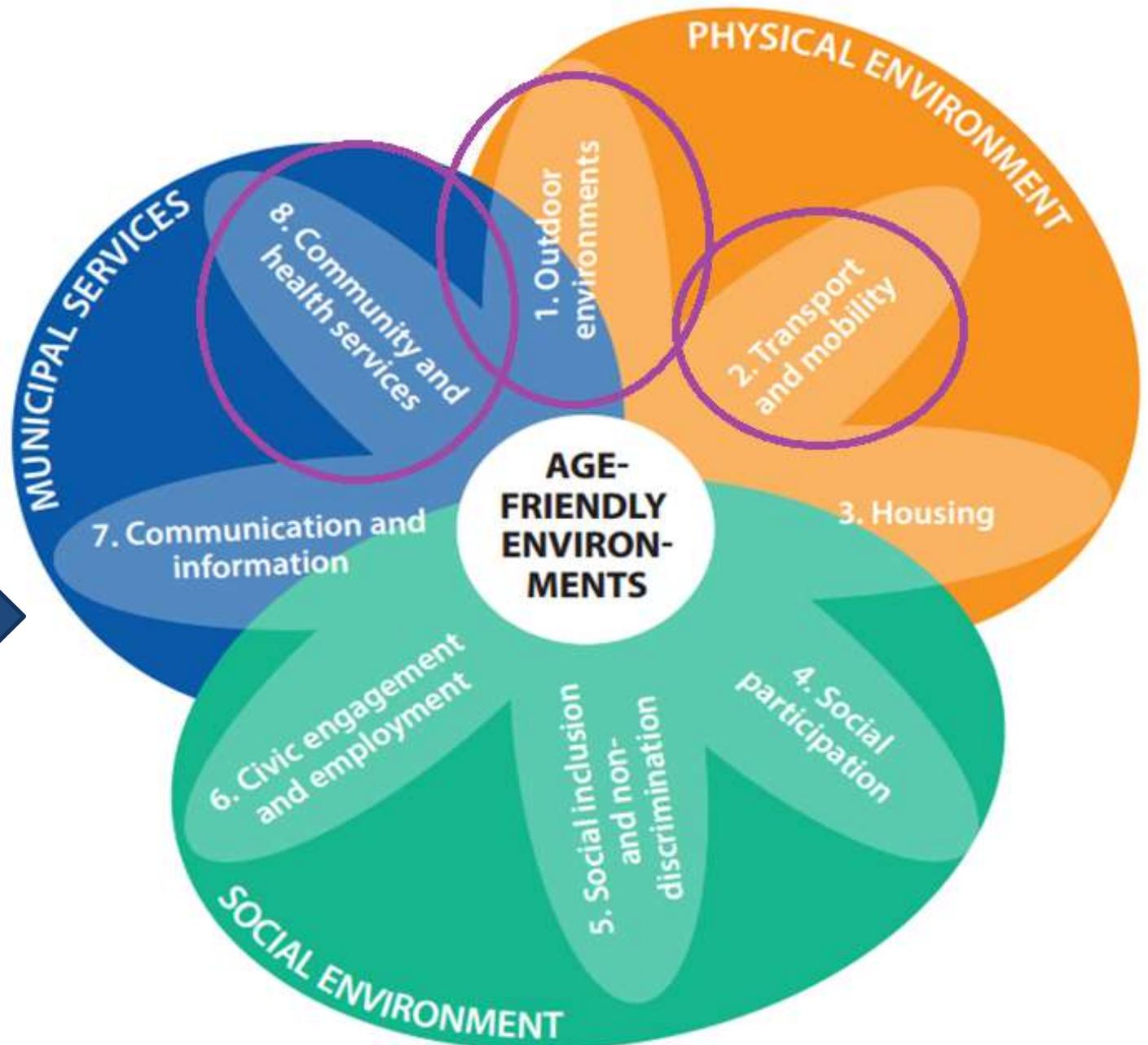


## Towards an Age-Friendly Europe

Covenant on Demographic Change

[www.agefriendlyeurope.org](http://www.agefriendlyeurope.org)

- The **Covenant on Demographic Change** gathers European public authorities, at local, regional and national level, businesses, academics, associations and other relevant stakeholders, committed to develop environments that support active and healthy ageing, enhance independent living and well-being of older persons, and create a society for all ages.
- It creates a formal structure for implementing solutions for active and healthy ageing (based on the WHO model – 8 domains)
- Fosters synergies with relevant stakeholders while connecting with existing initiatives such as the **WHO Global Network on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities**, the WHO-Europe Healthy City Network and the **European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing**.
- 148 organisations from all over Europe already joined voluntarily the Covenant
- The Covenant repository displays notable examples of innovative solutions for age-friendly environments in Europe: <http://www.agefriendlyeurope.org/repository>



(Health) tourism has a role to play



**Thank you for your attention!**



**[www.offtospas.eu](http://www.offtospas.eu)**



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