

UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2017
Lisbon, 20-22 September 2017

Realising Active Ageing in Europe

By Asghar Zaidi
Professor in International Social Policy
University of Southampton
and
London School of Economics



Overview

- 1. Prerequisites of realising active ageing**
- 2. Introducing Active Ageing Index “AAI”**
- 3. Five Key AAI findings**
- 4. Conclusions**



Part 1

Prerequisites of realising active ageing

(MOPACT, with Alan Walker)

FIVE Prerequisites for realising active ageing in Europe

1. **Optimistic paradigm of ageing** – viewing older people as agents of change, with human rights.
2. **Life course perspective** – putting a strong emphasis on active ageing at all ages (AAAAA).
3. **Heterogeneity** – relevant for all individuals, and not reduced to elites with good health/education
4. **Multidimensionality** – capture all aspects: LM engagement/ social participation/ indep living
5. **Diversity** – account for differential institutional capacities/ enabling environment for active ageing



Part 2

Introducing Active Ageing Index

Building knowledge using numbers



“When you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind”

Lord Kelvin in 1883

Mathematician, physicist and engineer, 1824-1907

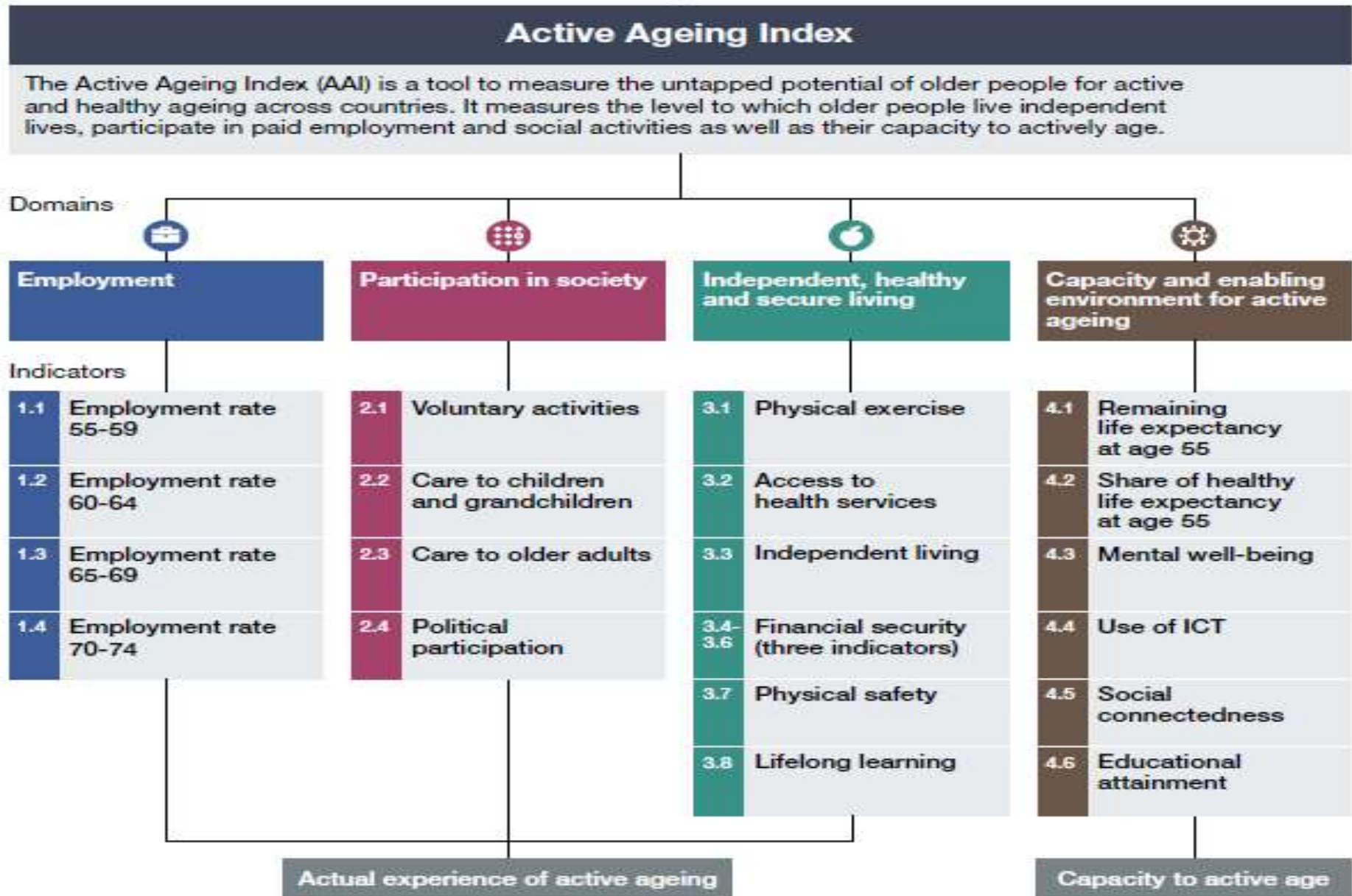
2.1 Objectives of the AAI project

- I. To produce high-quality, independent, multi-perspective **evidence on active ageing**;
- II. To highlight the **contributions of older people** in different dimensions of their lives; and in the process identify **the potential of older people**;
- III. To offer policy makers **comparative and integrated evidence** to develop societal level strategies for active and healthy ageing.

Source: Zaidi et al. (2013), AAI Methodology Report, UNECE

2.3 Analytical framework

22 indicators, 4 domains




Critical observations about the AAI

AAI indicators focus on outcomes rather than processes:

Legal instruments  Implementation  **Outcomes**

- AAI not intending to measure the well-being of older people, but the contributions of older people.

 see also Global AgeWatch Index which measures the QOL / well-being of older people, by HelpAge International

(and also the new [Age UK's Wellbeing In Later Life "WILL" Index](#))



Part 3

Five Key findings

Active Ageing Index 2014 Analytical Report April 2015

Drawing from the latest report, released during the AAI International Seminar, April, 2015

Data points covered:
2008
2010
2012

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Active Ageing Index 2014

Analytical Report

April 2015



Co-funded by



Key message 1: Affluent EU States in the Northern and Western Europe have had a greater success

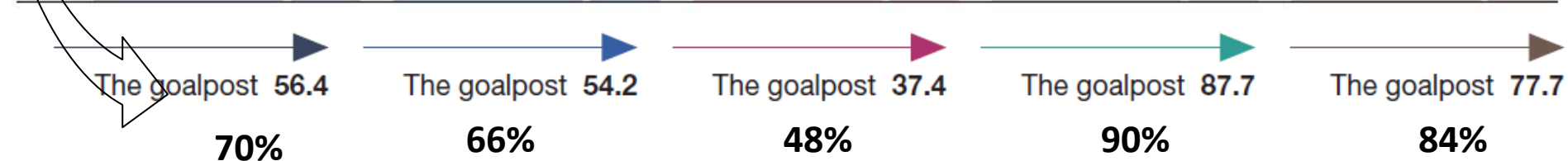


Also, stability observed in the relative position of EU countries over the period 2008-2012

< Higher index value Lower index value >

Key message 2: Top-ranked countries not at top of each domain and indicator, falling short of goalposts

1	Sweden	44.9	Sweden	43.4	Ireland	24.1	Denmark	79.0	Sweden	69.2
2	Denmark	40.3	Estonia	39.7	Italy	24.1	Finland	79.0	Denmark	65.1
3	Netherlands	40.0	Denmark	35.8	Sweden	22.9	Netherlands	78.9	Luxembourg	63.6
4	UK	39.7	UK	35.8	France	22.8	Sweden	78.6	Netherlands	61.8
5	Finland	39.0	Germany	34.4	Netherlands	22.4	Luxembourg	76.7	UK	61.3
6	Ireland	38.6	Netherlands	33.9	Luxembourg	22.2	France	75.9	Finland	60.5
7	France	35.8	Finland	33.7	UK	21.6	Ireland	74.9	Belgium	60.3
8	Luxembourg	35.7	Portugal	32.6	Finland	20.5	Germany	74.4	Ireland	60.0
9	Germany	35.4	Latvia	32.0	Belgium	20.2	Slovenia	74.2	France	59.1
10	Estonia	34.6	Cyprus	31.4	Denmark	19.6	Austria	73.8	Austria	58.2

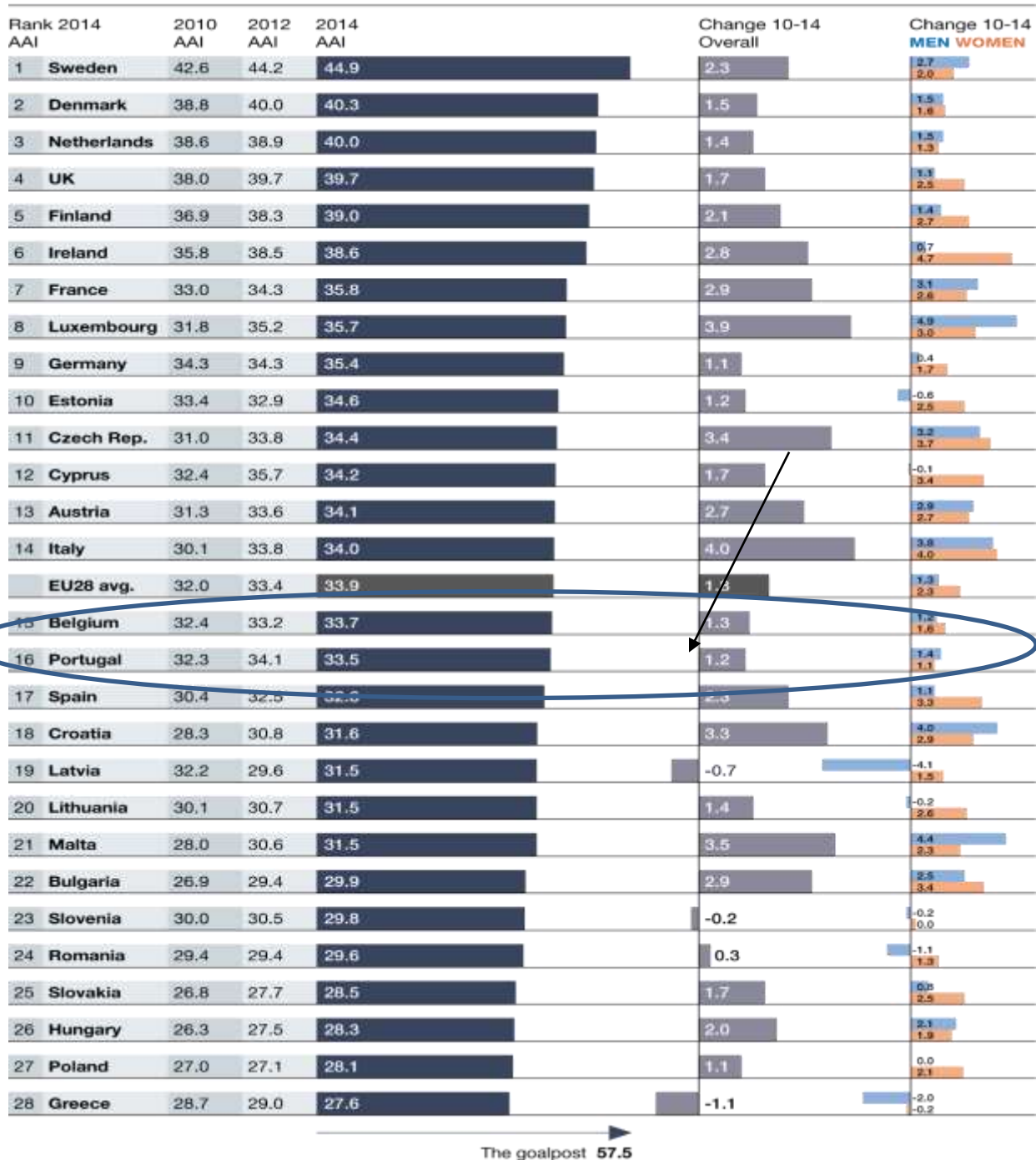


Key message 3:
AAI scores for men are higher than women, especially where employment and incomes are involved

Gender gap 2014		Employment	Participation in society	Independent living	Capacity for active ageing
Rank 2014-AAI		+	+	+	+
1	Sweden	7.1	0.8	1.9	0.7
2	Denmark	9.1	2.6	0.2	0.5
3	Netherlands	13.8	1.9	2.4	2.1
4	UK	10.6	1.7	1.5	1.5
5	Finland	1.5	3.4	2.2	2.8
6	Ireland	12.3	3.8	3.4	0.3
7	France	3.8	2.1	4.0	1.8
8	Luxembourg	7.6	8.9	2.8	3.0
9	Germany	9.3	1.9	3.3	0.5
10	Estonia	0.8	1.8	3.0	6.1
11	Czech Rep	12.4	4.1	1.7	1.9
12	Cyprus	18.1	1.0	2.8	6.1
13	Austria	11.0	2.1	0.9	1.8
14	Italy	13.1	0.5	2.7	2.6
	EU28 avg	9.5	0.1	2.8	0.5
15	Belgium	7.6	3.0	3.9	1.3
16	Portugal	11.2	0.0	2.5	2.8
17	Spain	8.5	2.2	2.8	1.4
18	Croatia	11.6	1.5	4.5	2.1
19	Latvia	2.4	6.3	3.8	1.2
20	Lithuania	5.3	2.0	1.9	2.6
21	Malta	22.9	1.1	1.2	1.5
22	Bulgaria	6.0	0.4	7.5	0.5
23	Slovenia	9.2	1.7	2.5	0.3
24	Romania	10.5	1.6	4.0	2.9
25	Slovakia	10.6	1.3	2.7	1.1
26	Hungary	6.0	0.6	2.9	1.3
27	Poland	12.5	2.3	3.2	2.0
28	Greece	13.1	3.7	3.4	3.2

Key message 4:
Active ageing has been increasing in the EU, despite economic crisis and austerity measures

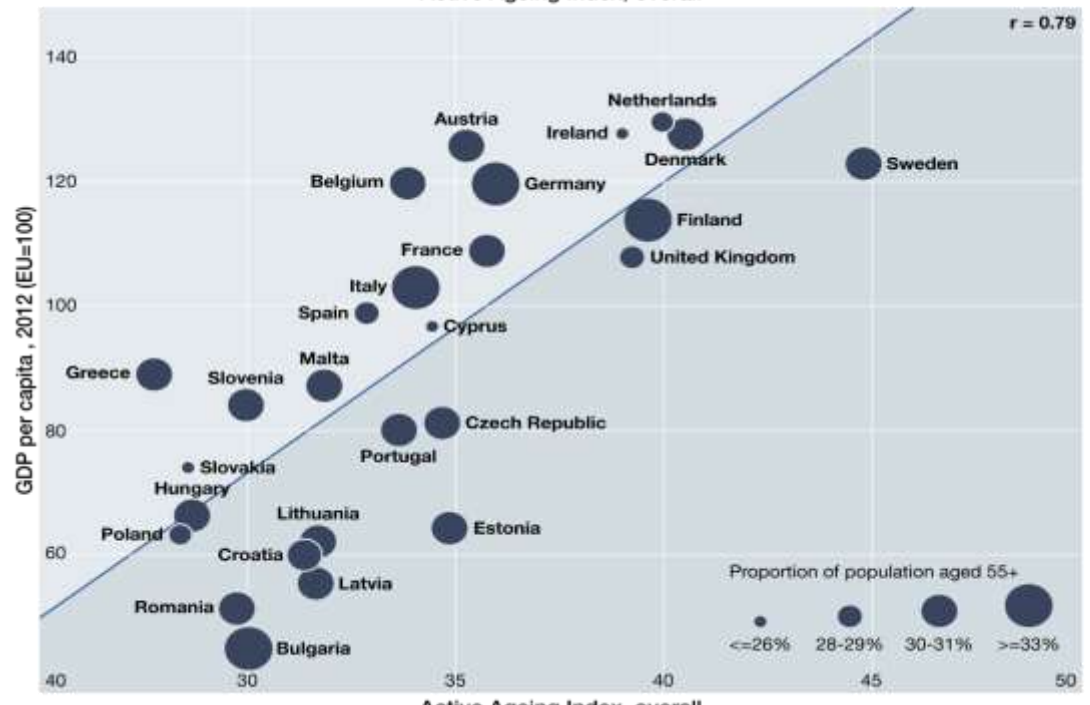
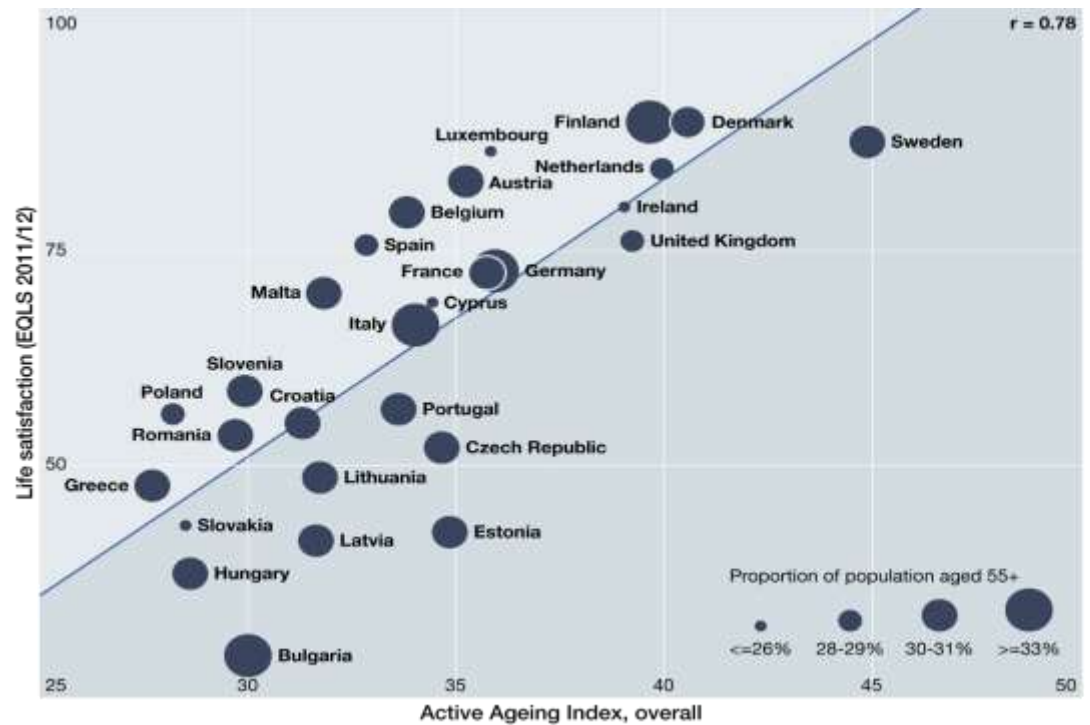
On average, an increase of nearly 2 points in the EU, while an increase of nearly 3 points or more in nine EU countries (during 2008-2012).



Key message 5:

A push towards active ageing does not imply a worsening of older people's quality of life, and it brings real benefits to the economy

No cause-and-effect direction implied!





Part 4

Conclusions

4.1 Strengths and limitations

1. The AAI evidence identifies specific priorities for each country regarding where the potential of older people is not realised, and by how much?
2. The AAI points to successful and innovative policy instruments to promote active and healthy ageing.
3. The AAI evidence is only as good as the underlying data and its comparability – it is the best possible evidence but it is not free from limitations;
4. Comparative research must also capture diversity of contexts across countries; and different goals and visions with respect to active and healthy ageing.



Acknowledgements

The work reported here is undertaken within the framework of the joint management AAI project of the UNECE and the European Commission's DG EMPL. The research work for the AAI is undertaken at University of Southampton with the help of advice received from the AAI Expert Group.

The material does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the funders.



Thank you

email: Asghar.Zaidi@soton.ac.uk
[@zaidia](mailto:Asghar.Zaidi@soton.ac.uk)

The results and their interpretations are my responsibility and my co-author of the AAI Analytical Report. The UNECE or the European Commission are not responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained here.