

REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON ACTIVE AGEING INDEX

I. Organisation and attendance

The third meeting of the Expert Group on Active Ageing Index (AAI) took place on 29–30 January 2014 in Brussels. It was jointly organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Professor Asghar Zaidi, the leading researcher for the second phase of the Active Ageing Index (AAI-II) project at the University of Southampton (UoS) and the research team leader for the first phase of AAI project at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna (ECV) presented final 2012 AAI results and also provided inputs for the expert discussion on the future (methodology/research-related) work under the AAI-II project during 2014.

The meeting was attended by 12 experts from the following organizations and research centres: AGE Platform Europe, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Eurofound, ECV, French National Institute of Health and Medical Research, German Centre of Gerontology, Italian National Institute of Statistics, Jagiellonian University Krakow, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Oxford Institute on Population Ageing/University of Oxford, and University of Southampton A representative of the Biscay Provincial Government, representatives from the European Commission, and UNECE, were present at the meeting.

II. Objective

The meeting aimed at reviewing the 2012 AAI results and lessons learned from the first phase of the AAI project (January 2012 to February 2013) and discussing the work to be implemented under the second phase (AAI-II) that has started in October 2013. In particular the experts were asked to:

- Provide feedback on the project implementation process and 2012 AAI results:
 - strong and weak points of AAI
 - recommendations on further improvement of AAI.
- Advise and exchange ideas on the main elements of the AAI-II project, notably:
 - research component: geographical extension of AAI, retrospective calculation, and AAI calculation for 2014/2015; trend analysis and contextual information
 - outreach to stakeholders
 - communication, visualisation and dissemination of AAI.

The meeting benefited from the participation of various groups of stakeholders: policymakers, researchers and civil society organisations and provided an opportunity to learn about interest in and actual use of AAI. The presentations on the AAI application at the regional level in Poland and the ECV policy paper on use of AAI in the Czech Republic as well as the comparison of AAI for EU with AAI for the United States advanced the discussion.

III. Brief summary and overview of decisions¹

The work plan for the second phase of AAI project (AAI-II) was presented to the Expert Group. The steps under AAI-II are as follows: further research (geographical extension of AAI, retrospective calculation, and calculation for 2014/2015), strengthening outreach to stakeholders and improving communication and dissemination of information on AAI.

¹ The minutes of the Third meeting are provided in the annex to the current report.

AAI is recognised as an efficient tool and is already making its way through the research community. Though it is a good sign, the further success of the index will be measured by its uptake by policymakers and other stakeholders. It is necessary to clearly show the value added of using the AAI, to define its “sales pitch” that should first of all respond to the needs of policymakers.

To meet policymakers’ expectations, AAI should be a stable and easy-to-use tool (with a brief guide for results interpretation to be put together soon) in particular for the international comparability but also for observing AAI trends over time. Any methodological fine-tuning has to be carefully considered (if absolutely essential) while working on extension of country and time coverage for AAI. Some flexibility might be necessary in view of a growing demand for AAI to be used as a tool for a subnational (regional/local) policy analysis and monitoring at the various levels of governance (and this flexibility will be at the discretion of those who develop the subnational AAI). Similar to the issues of extending AAI to the countries not covered by the internationally comparable surveys, data availability is an impediment at a subnational level. In such cases AAI should be seen as a framework with core dimensions and indicators to be used while allowing for a possibility to substitute missing data for some indicators with the most relevant available data. To adhere to the AAI domain/indicator weighting structure, the calibration of substitute variables might also be needed.

Another challenge is to inform the stakeholders about AAI. This requires efficient communication and dissemination of AAI-related information.

Taking into account the outlined issues the following decisions were made:

Further research:

- work on making AAI applicable at the subnational level, including cooperating with countries and regions that already showed their interest (Biscay province, Bulgaria, Italy, Poland), — to have a peer review on the regional application of the index (Poland) and developing a methodological guide on how to adapt the index for the regional/local level
- explore possibility of calculating the index for a developing country, for example India (use at the IFA Seminar in Hyderabad in June 2014)
- approach Canada to see if interested in calculating AAI for their country
- due to limited data availability make retrospective calculations only for one discrete period (year 2007/2008) — this year is selected for the availability of a more harmonised and complete EU-SILC data and also the availability of EQLS for the same year
- investigate a feasibility for AAI breakdown other than by gender, e.g. by education, occupation, urban/rural, at least within some of the AAI domains (nb. life expectancy and healthy life expectancy will not be available for any other subdivision than gender)
- review usefulness of combining domains (e.g. productive ageing score based on domains I and II)
- study the options in using clusters for presenting AAI results (i.e. income levels, age structure, etc., in addition to the conventional).

Methodology

- look into how the methodology can be fine-tuned without making drastic changes
- weights of indicators need further consideration and a clear explanation of the arbitrary choice
- further investigate the issue of setting the goalposts for indicators: 100 per cent is not an imperative goal (but what could it be?)
- follow up with Eurostat to ensure continuation of variables used in AAI in the context of modernisation of social statistics.

Interpretation

- use the term “value” and not “percentage” when explaining/presenting AAI results to avoid normative judgement
- interpret AAI results in the social and economic context of a given country.

Researchers’ seminar in spring 2015

- *call for papers*: go broader than the originally proposed call on the life-course perspective; to include a component on promotion and current practice of the AAI use by policymakers; possibly to ask for papers on group-specific results apart from gender breakdown, e.g., by education
- prize for the best paper — targeting only young researchers
- to have a mixed audience at the seminar including researchers and policymakers (100–150 participants)
- P. Dykstra and A. Zaidi volunteered to help with the call for papers examples. K. Howse, J. Perek-Bialas, and A. Zaidi will participate in evaluation of papers. A. Zaidi would, if necessary, provide guidance to the researchers as to where the data can be found
- venue is to be agreed on, options being: Southampton, Bilbao, United Nations Vienna International Centre, Brussels at the EC venue or Committee of the Regions, Geneva at the Palais des Nations.

Communication

- prepare information for external communication on AAI, its value added and how it can be used
- keep the methodology transparent and simulation tool available (i.e. Excel spreadsheets with all the data)
- pay more attentions to dissemination of the results through existing webpages (wiki), at the relevant events (e.g. European Population Conference, Global Conference of the International Federation on Ageing, etc.) — the good example of the dissemination strategy of the Global AgeWatch Index was mentioned
- develop later on an efficient and user-friendly visualisation and simulation tools for AAI (through website)
- distinguish clearly AAI from the Global AgeWatch Index while presenting.

Expert Group

- very valuable contribution during the first phase — continued involvement expected throughout the second phase of the AAI project
- it was preliminary agreed to have the Fourth meeting of EG in October or November 2014, possibly back to back with the Open Method of Coordination Peer Review on Active Ageing (possibly in Poland).

ANNEX. MINUTES FROM THE EXPERT GROUP DISCUSSION

29 January (14:00–18:00)

The Chair, Mr. Ralf Jacob (European Commission), welcomed the participants and opened the meeting. He expressed appreciation of the experts' work during the first phase of the AAI project (January 2012 to February 2013). Mr. Jacob announced the launch of the second phase of the project — AAI-II. He pointed out that AAI is an instrument and guidance for policymakers who should be supported to find the index interesting and helpful, and that the success of AAI will be defined by its uptake by policymakers and other stakeholders.

Ms. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich (UNECE) also expressed appreciation and mentioned that nearly all the Expert Group (EG) members working under the first phase of the project chose to continue their engagement under the second phase, and welcomed new members of EG. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich explained the United Nations' perspective of AAI: the Index should help monitoring implementation of the international framework on ageing (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and the Regional Implementation Strategy for MIPAA). Ms. Gaucaite Wittich announced that the research component of the further work within the project will be ensured by the University of Southampton on the basis of an institutional consultancy, with Prof. Asghar Zaidi as a leading researcher.

Mr. Zaidi presented an overview of the methodological work implemented under the first phase of the project. Mr. Zaidi pointed out that AAI has emerged as an effective toolkit to engage with policymakers and other stakeholders; there is a demand from a variety of users for additional analysis on the basis of AAI; conceptual framework may require further elaboration; empirical data used for 2012 AAI lagged behind and failed to capture recent developments. Mr. Zaidi also stressed the importance of a gender breakdown for evaluation of active ageing and its potential.

The Chair asked the participants to express their view on the project, the AAI 2012 results and the steps to be taken next and opened the *tour de table*.

The feedback from the experts focused mostly on the following:

Weights: several participants expressed their concerns about the arbitrary weighting of indicators and domains (Mr. Andres Vikat (UNECE), Mr. Eric Meyermans (European Commission), Ms. Hilde Olsen (OECD), Ms. Anne-Sophie Parent (AGE Platform Europe), and Mr. Alexander Elu Teran (European Commission)).

Interpretation of AAI: The participants raised a question of interpretation of AAI values and analysis of countries ranking. Thus, Ms. Eszter Zolyomi (ECV) shared with the group the comments from policymakers that AAI should not be interpreted out of economic and social context. Mr. Robert Anderson (Eurofound) questioned the high ranking of the United States (AAI developed with AARP support at the margins of the project) especially regarding participation and employment. Participants also suggested avoiding the use of words “better” and “best” and use “higher/lower” meaning “more/less active” when talking about ranking (Ms. Pearl Dykstra (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Mr. Anderson).

Setting a benchmark and possible goalposts/targets for indicators: it was clearly stated that 100 per cent should not be viewed as a realistic target to achieve (instead it should be presented as inevitability in the methodology in use). Participants suggested using the highest performance as a benchmark for comparisons and possibly for some indicators (Ms. Olsen, Ms. Parent), or ad hoc targets introduced by users for individual indicators (Ms. Parent).

Value added of AAI: it was pointed out by Ms. Dykstra that the efforts are now needed to “sell” the index, which requires defining a clear “sales pitch”, i.e. the value added in using the composite index as

compared to individual indicators. Mr. Anderson noted that AAI promotes the idea of active ageing in general which is very useful and pointed out that one of the advantages of AAI is the transparency of the used methods, data sources, etc. (though the concept of the 3rd domain is not as clear as the one of 1st and 2nd). Mr. Kenneth Howse (Oxford University) stated that the added value of AAI for policymakers is aggregating domains into a single index — which presents a visible evaluation of a situation in a country.

Further development of the AAI methodology: Ms. Quattrociocchi (ISTAT) stated that it is necessary to improve some of the methodological aspects of AAI; Mr. Jean-Marie Robine (French National Institute of Health and Medical Research) noted that changing methodology while extending AAI will not allow performing consistent comparison, and recalculating AAI applying the changed methodology will mean that there are two different products on the market which might be confusing for users and detrimental to the index image. Ms. Parent supported fine-tuning the methodology as opposed to its reshuffling; against revising the methodology were also Ms. Jolanta Perek-Bialas (Jagiellonian University Kraków) and Mr. Sergio Murillo Corzo (Biscay Provincial Government). Several participants asked about possibility to break down data by criteria other than gender, e.g. education/skills (Mr. Meyermans), occupation (Mr. Elu Teran), urban/rural, etc.

Mr. Jacob and Mr. Zaidi commented on the raised questions:

Weights: it was pointed out that the weights are a result of a consulting process and are adjusted in conjunction with implicit weights to those agreed on by the Expert Group; there is a publicly available simulation tool (excel file) where one can change the weights. In general, *any weighting (including equal weights) will be arbitrary.*

Interpretation of AAI: normative judgement should be avoided; “higher” should be understood as “more active” and not as “better”. The aspect to be highlighted is the “potential for improvement”.

Setting a benchmark and possible goalposts: the question is how to set a reasonable target. It definitely cannot be 100 per cent. The value of 100 is used for standardising the values of different indicators, it is a methodological necessity. While interpreting results various benchmarks could be used depending on the interest and context: it can be the country/region/ municipality with the highest AAI, it can be a neighbouring country/region/municipality, etc. Each AAI user for analytical purpose can develop its benchmark, and AAI should be that flexible. As for goalposts of individual indicators — finding not arbitrary or “scientifically proven” goalposts is a very complicated (subjective) matter and we rather remain with the standard zero to 100 per cent values.

Value added of AAI: “sales pitch” is to be discussed.

Further development of the AAI methodology: Disaggregation by education will be looked at within the second phase, though it can be complicated for the indicators in 3rd and 4th domains (e.g. for remaining life expectancy); it is doable for the first domain, but overall — difficult to implement. A breakdown by occupation can be done within 1st domain, maybe for some indicators for the 2nd but not for the indicators in other two domains and hence not for the aggregated index.

The participants also shared their views and ideas on a number of points in addition to the ones listed above.

Mr. Vikat pointed out that it is necessary to report on lessons learned related to the data availability, to find out how much of the data is actually missing, lack of data being the main obstacle to expansion of AAI coverage.

Ms. Quattrociocchi stressed the necessity to promote use of AAI at national and international levels. She also pointed out that in Italy it is difficult to involve stakeholders and decision makers, partly because more sub-national results may be necessary for this purpose.

Ms. Immaculada Arpa Camos (European Commission) informed about the results of June 2013 call for proposals for Strategies for Active Ageing, in response to which 19 proposals were received. Six countries were selected, and two of them are planning to use AAI.

Ms. Dykstra expressed her appreciation of the implemented work and the fact that AAI had been used by the Czech Republic and Poland. Ms. Dykstra pointed out that the word “value” should be used instead of “percentage” when talking about countries ranking.

Mr. Robine asked about countries’ reaction to the AAI 2012 results. Mr. Jacob, Mr. Zaidi and Ms. Gaucaite Wittich replied that consultations with EU member states and presentation of AAI 2012 at different events showed that there is a strong interest towards the index; there was no criticism as to the presentation of the results in terms of ranking; the comments and questions were raised often to clarify and not to contest. Norway and Switzerland have asked for the index to be calculated for them.

Mr. Murillo Corzo informed the group about the initiative to apply AAI to measure the performance of the Biscay province and a positive reply from the Basque Institute of Statistics as to the possibility to use AAI *if* it is a proven a stable tool and measurable using data from the official statistics. Mr. Jacob noted that it will be very useful to understand how to meet the needs of regional policymakers with the help of AAI.

Mr. Anderson provided an example of data presentation — “Social cohesion radar” (<http://www.gesellschaftlicher-zusammenhalt.de/en/international-results/>) where countries are grouped into quintiles since differences are sometimes very small.

Ms. Perek-Bialas informed that in response to the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Poland created a new department for seniors’ policy. AAI was disseminated and referred to several national events. Given the Poland’s low ranking AAI results were received as an impetus to change the situation. Before that active ageing policy was not really visible.

Mr. Heribert Engstler (German Centre of Gerontology) pointed out that he only heard of AAI in the autumn 2013 when Ms. Gaucaite Wittich made a presentation at the German Gerontology Centre which points to the lack of information about AAI. Mr. Engstler asked how AAI would work in a society with a fast growing number of 80+ persons and about the relation of AAI to other indexes, such as “Global AgeWatch Index”. Mr. Jacob said that it should be checked if the inclusion of the data on the 75+ population leads to a distortion of AAI. As for the Global AgeWatch Index, one could perceive it as competing with AAI, but this is not the case (*see the further discussion on AAI and GAWI below*).

Ms. Parent pointed out that AAI has proved to be useful tool for civil society advocacy and should also become a tool for regional and local authorities.

Mr. Elu Teran asked if the cohort effect (as for the gender gap) was analysed. Mr. Jacob noted that it will be interesting to make projections with AAI, but certainly at a later stage of the project.

Mr. Howse suggested combining domains, e.g. productive ageing score based on domains I and II. Mr. Jacob replied that recombination of domains is an interesting idea that can be considered during a later stage, and be discussed at the next meetings.

SECOND PHASE OF THE PROJECT — AAI-II

Ms. Kasia Jurczak (European Commission) presented the plan of activities under second phase of the project namely:

- Future research activities: geographic extension of AAI to Croatia (new EU MS), Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States; Pilot studies in non-EU UNECE countries

(Serbia and Turkey); Retrospective calculation of the index; Calculation of the updated AAI 2014/2015; Contextual analysis of the results.

- Outreach to stakeholders: policymakers through national level seminars, OMC Peer Review, and additional EC funded projects (Comprehensive strategies for active ageing); academic community through the Expert Group and a Seminar for researchers with a prize for young researchers; civil society (AGE Platform Europe network).
- Communicating AAI: maintaining and updating Wiki, data visualisation, presentations at conferences, Wiki Progress, Interaction through ageing@unece.org.

AAI-II: RESEARCH COMPONENT

Mr. Zaidi presented the research component of the work under the AAI-II. He specified that the geographical extension of AAI will be done using data for 2010/2011 (though it is called AAI2012), and the retrospective calculation will be done most like only for one year (2005 or 2007). Mr. Robine pointed out that the start of the SILC was only in 2004 and the questionnaire on health was changed by Eurostat in 2008 and the changes can influence the AAI results. He added that the SILC will be changed once again by Eurostat. Taking this into account it was decided to choose the year 2007 (period 2006–2008) for the retrospective calculations and to follow up with Eurostat on the changes of the survey for the future calculations.

Mr. Robine asked how the indicators are computed to be comparable with the United States. Mr. Zaidi specified that the principle has been “the best comparability possible”, and one can understand that they are not 100 per cent comparable; the specific perspective, as to why it is being measured (what question should be answered), had to be kept in mind.

Mr. Jacob suggested to have AAI calculated for Canada. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich said that it can be done based on the same principles as for the United States and informed the group that the focal point in Canada was already contacted on this question. The Canada is also represented at the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics, which will be helpful.

30 JANUARY (9:00–16:30)

Chair — Ms. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich

The Chair noted that in the prior discussion two main directions have been formed: several experts (especially new ones) suggest adding new indicators or changing/refining the existing ones; the others hold to the cautious approach, that is, to have a stable product and do some fine-tuning in parallel if necessary. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich asked Mr. Zaidi to summarise the 29 January discussion related to the methodological and interpretation aspects of AAI.

Mr. Zaidi made an overview of the discussion with the focus on the following:

- Some of the experts’ questions/suggestions are in line with the work plan outlined for the second phase, meaning that the foreseen activities are in the right direction
- Transparency was noted as an advantage of AAI. AAI is a useful tool to provide evidence.
- There is a necessity to provide a better basis for dissemination (“sales pitch”, how to show the value added)
- Weighting of indicators is still an issue and remains an arbitrary choice
- Targeting — it should be explained much better that 100 per cent is not a target but a methodological issue

- Policymakers do not like changes (revisions) in the indicators, it is therefore important to hold on to the existing AAI, provided that the index should continue be relevant
- Importance of the national context in interpreting and highlighting findings.

AAI-II: RESEARCH COMPONENT (continuation)

Within the continuation of the discussion on the research component and particularly on the issue of data availability Mr. Vikat presented the work of the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics gathering statisticians, policymakers, and researchers, and mandated to improve availability, accessibility and comparability of statistical data related to ageing (in support of ageing-related policymaking in the framework of MIPAA/RIS). An overview of existing sets of statistical indicators, and international data availability and comparability will be made. The results of the Task Force work will be shared with the Expert Group and the cooperation of EG with the Task Force will continue.

Ms. Gaucaite Wittich informed the Group about the pilot study of AAI in Georgia carried out in 2012. It appeared that the data for social indicators are the most difficult to obtain. The principal source for the data is the Integrated Household Survey. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich announced that under the AAI-II two pilot studies are planned to be carried out — in Serbia and Turkey. The work will start in March–May 2014. A pilot study consists of a desk study investigating the public availability of comparable data at international and national levels and identifying data gaps, a following field study which allows involving stakeholders and aims to review/obtain missing data, and final report with full or partials AAI computation and brief interpretation of results. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich asked EG to share/indicate about availability of comparable data for Turkey and Serbia. Mr. Anderson informed that Eurofound has the data for 2007 and 2012 on Turkey and probably Serbia, and Ms. Olsen — that OECD has some data on Turkey.

FURTHER USE OF AAI

Ms. Zolyomi presented the results of a policy use of AAI in the Czech Republic. The 2012 AAI results for the Czech Republic were compared to the results for the other EU Member States to identify the priority areas for the policymakers / stakeholders.

In reaction to the presentation Ms. Dykstra suggested avoiding words “best”, “better than” when speaking about ranking but make reference to “high/low values” and asked if AAI gave some new prospects / insights. Ms. Zolyomi commented that the novelty of the index is that it is multidimensional (it is easier to link the different dimensions). Mr. Bernd Marin (ECV) noted that idea of comparison to the EU MS came from the Czech Republic’s government. Using terms “better” while comparing is inevitable. Comparing results across countries gives an idea of a potential and an impetus to catch up to the “best” performance. It is fair that the countries with best performance can be proud of their results.

Mr. Engstler expressed his doubts as to whether the countries ranking based on AAI should give directions for policymakers, e.g. “good” performance (high ranking) of Romania in terms of employment. Mr. Zaidi pointed out that the objective of AAI is to capture contributions that people are making, and Ms. Gaucaite Wittich reminded that in terms of the 2012 Vienna Ministerial Declaration one of the goals is to encourage longer working life and maintain ability to work, which means that higher level of employment is understood as a positive sign. Mr. Zaidi noted that it seems difficult to avoid normative judgement and stressed once again that one should be very careful while comparing and analysing results.

Mr. Howse pointed out that in the presented paper the analysis was implemented at the level of individual indicators, undermining the value of AAI as an index. Ms. Zolyomi responded that it was necessary to go to the level of individual indicators for this paper.

Ms. Perek-Bialas presented how AAI was used in Poland at the regional level. The low ranking of Poland provided an argument to ask for funding for the implementation of the regional level analysis. Policymakers in Poland already take AAI into account. AAI promotes active ageing for population. For the regional use several original indicators of AAI had to be replaced, e.g. “Share of healthy life expectancy at age 55” was replaced with “Share of healthy persons in 65+”, “Political participation” with “Participation in public meetings” etc. Different scenarios assigning various weights to the domains were used. The gender breakdown was not possible to do except for the first domain. Breaking down by occupation (or urban/rural) is very difficult.

Ms. Perek-Bialas added that the original methodology of AAI should be followed and the national data should be adjusted rather than other way round. She also stressed that further work will benefit greatly from the advice from the Expert Group.

The presentation gave a start to the discussion on the possibility of a subnational application of AAI.

Mr. Robine stated that countries are very much interested in using AAI at the regional level. If AAI is only to compare countries we will not be able to “sell” it. At the same time, he added, there is a challenge — lack of regional data sources. Only LFS (of the surveys used for AAI) provides data by regions.

Ms. Parent noted that once adapted for the use at the subnational level AAI will become an efficient advocacy tool for regions.

Ms. Gaucaite Wittich suggested including a component on regional application of AAI in national level seminars planned for 2015.

Mr. Murillo Corzo stated that AAI is possible to use in the Biscay province, since most of the data is available and that the region is ready to test application of AAI. At the same time, it is not clear if the Index applied in Poland is actually a “valid AAI” given the introduced modifications. Mr. Murillo Corzo suggested AAI to be validated by EG and validation rules that would define to what extent AAI can be flexible to be developed.

Mr. Jacob replied that further on a user manual for policymakers and a methodological guide on how to adapt the index for the regional level should be developed. Mr. Jacob stressed that while it is possible to replace data that are not available and use other variables than in the original AAI this requires a thorough analysis and readjusting weights not to distort the Index, and suggested discussing the validation issue on the internal wiki page.

Ms. Gaucaite Wittich supported the idea of “validation” of AAI but not the idea of creating a “validation body”.

Mr. Zaidi presented the work on application of AAI to the United States. The idea was to hold on to the concept, to have the closest possible definitions of indicators and to keep methodology without changes. Not all the definitions used in the United States are strictly comparable to the ones used in the EU AAI. Nonetheless, there has been a high demand from the United States for comparison with Europe. Comparability of indicators and the results for the United States were discussed at length with the focus on the difference of the context, idea to use perspectives instead of exact definitions, etc.

Ms. Parent asked if the United States public authorities are to be encouraged to use AAI as an official tool, the country being a UNECE Member State. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich replied that she would follow up with the focal point in the United States (if they agree that we use AAI calculated with support of AARP or if they want to supply data themselves for the AAI computation).

OUTREACHING TO STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNICATING INFORMATION ON AAI

Ms. Jurczak informed EG that the representatives of EC will attend the 12th Global Conference on Ageing in Hyderabad, India, 10–13 June 2014 organised by the International Federation on Ageing. This is an opportunity to disseminate information on AAI and to suggest a feasibility study for India (or one of its regions). Ms. Gaucaite Wittich said that the poster on AAI can be presented at the European Population Conference in Budapest, on 25–28 June 2014.

Ms. Gaucaite Wittich shared with the experts the information on recent initiatives regarding composite indicators under which AAI is also mentioned:

- 1) the in-depth review of leading, composite and sentiment indicators carried out by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Bureau. The topic of composite indicators will be discussed at the 62nd plenary session of CES in April 2014. The background paper for this discussion will be shared with the EG (posted on the dedicated EG AAI wiki)
- 2) the initiative of three Swiss universities to implement a study of existing composite indicators to evaluate their robustness and to come up with a “check list” of characteristics that make a composite indicator robust. (This initiative is a project awaiting funding.)

Mr. Zaidi mentioned “An Inventory of Composite Measures of International Human Progress” — a working paper by UNDP/ Human Development Report Office (the paper will be posted on EG AAI wiki).

Ms. Dykstra asked if there is communication with Population Europe (network of research centres funded by EC). Mr. Jacob replied that he would contact them.

Ms. Parent asked to identify what information on the AAI-II project should be public, e.g., on future work, it will be useful to have a summary for external dissemination. It was agreed that Ms. Olga Kharitonova (UNECE) will provide the information shortly and will update the public wiki page on AAI. It was decided to inform EG members about wiki updates by email.

Ms. Jurczak gave a presentation on reaching out to stakeholders and she focused on the researchers’ seminar, initially intended to deal with interpretation of the AAI results from a life-course perspective. A call for papers with a prize for young researchers is foreseen.

The possible topics for the papers were discussed, particularly the questions whether papers focusing on a single indicator could be accepted or those with analysis at the level of domains and index as a whole should be preferred; if it should cover one country, several countries or all the 27 countries. Mr. Robine suggested comparing one country’s results to a reference country (not necessarily with the highest rank) as it will be interesting to explain the results differences, and one country will not be enough but 27 too many. It was suggested to include component on advocacy for policymakers (Ms. Dykstra, Mr. Jacob, Ms. Parent). It was agreed not to use “life-course perspective” in the seminar’s title. Mr. Zaidi noted that it would be interesting to have papers on group-specific results apart from gender breakdown, e.g., by education. The draft of a “call” should be consulted with EG. The organisers asked for a good example of a “call”.

Mr. Vikat noted that the transparency is required in the course of the work given the prize. The criteria for prize assignment should be set. Ms. Perek-Bialas suggested an alternative form of a prize — it can be a paid travel to the seminar.

In regard to the target audience it was agreed to have a mixed audience including researchers and policymakers aiming at 100–150 seminar participants. Policymakers can be invited to talk about their experience (if any) of using AAI, or as discussants of papers. It could also help with funding.

Ms. Parent reminded that in the case of a mixed audience the discussion should not be too technical, and that the speakers should adapt their presentations for the audience.

Ms. Dykstra and Mr. Zaidi volunteered to help with the examples of a call for papers. Mr. Howse, Ms. Perek-Bialas, and Mr. Zaidi will participate in the evaluation of papers. Mr. Zaidi also said that he would provide guidance to the researchers as to where the data can be found if necessary.

Regarding the venue, following options were suggested:

- University of Southampton (Mr. Zaidi noted though that the venue may not have the capacity to hold large numbers, say if it exceeds 200 participants)
- Bilbao at the local governmental venue (Mr. Murillo Corzo) — disadvantage is the difficulties with travelling to the venue
- United Nations Vienna International Centre (Mr. Marin, to be explored)
- Brussels at the EC venue
- Geneva at the United Nations' venue
- Committee of the Regions in Brussels (150 people capacity)

It was stated that the date for the seminar should be defined well in advance taking into account possible competing events.

Ms. Kharitonova gave a presentation on visualisation and communication component of the project pointing out the necessity of a more active communication within EG; of a better external dissemination of information on AAI; of developing eventually a better visualised AAI tool (a user-friendly website allowing the users to get the information they are looking for in a simple and demonstrative way, of which a Global AgeWatch Index (GAWI) website is a good example). The two AAI-devoted wiki pages (external and internal) will be maintained and updated. All the relevant materials can be placed on the web for discussion. Ms. Kharitonova asked for further suggestions on dissemination.

Ms. Parent said that a link to the external wiki would be added to the website of the AGE Platform Europe.

The experts had a discussion on the relations of AAI and GAWI. GAWI was developed along the lines of the AAI (it is indicated in the insight report as well as in the methodology report on GAWI). For an external user the indices may seem competing, although they are rather different. It was felt that more explanation is required in making it clear for the public how AAI is different from GAWI and in what ways AAI is more suitable for its purpose to measure potential for active ageing. This information should be included in presentations / other means of communication of information on either of the two indicators. GAWI focuses more on the state of welfare and well-being of older people whereas AAI points to the unused potential for active ageing. AAI should be presented as a tool that can be used by each country (its focusing on EU countries will not make it “sold”), and further on as a tool that each country can use to make a regional level analysis.

The Chair asked for suggestions as for the timing of the next meeting of EG. It was preliminary agreed to have a Fourth meeting of EG in October or November 2014, possibly back to back to the Open Method of Coordination Peer Review on Active Ageing in Poland. A scheduling calendar (Doodle) will be used to set the dates.

The Chair thanked the participants for the active participation and closed the meeting.