<h1 style="text-align:center">REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING<br>OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON THE ACTIVE AGEING INDEX</h1>

## I.  Organisation and attendance

The sixth meeting of the Expert Group on the Active Ageing Index (AAI) took place on 20–21 October 2016 in Brussels. It was jointly organized by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The meeting was attended by 16 participants.[1]

## II.  Objective

The meeting aimed at discussing with the experts and getting their advice on most recently implemented project tasks, possible directions for further methodology fine-tuning, a number of events to be organised under the third phase of the project, as well as at sharing information on outcomes of related research studies, events and other activities.[2]

In particular the experts were asked to provide their feedback and opinion on:

- Timing of the tasks under the third phase
- Further directions of methodology fine-tuning
- Results of the pilot study of AAI at local level in Germany
- Structure and content of the guidelines on usage of proxies to be developed
- Organisation of the international seminar in 2018, national seminars and an event on AAI at the UNECE Ministerial conference on ageing in 2017.

## III.  Brief summary and overview of decisions[3]

This was the first meeting under the third phase of the AAI project (AAI-III) launched in May 2016. The third phase will continue through April 2019; it foresees a number of activities in research, promotion of AAI use, visualisation, communication, and dissemination areas. The project team is going to engage consultants (institutional or individual) for a number of research activities, namely: 1) criteria-specific analysis of AAI results in two to four countries; 2) development of guidelines for the use of proxies (in non-European Union (EU) or subnational context); 3) other research activities, including methodology fine-tuning, expansion of AAI coverage (geographically and in time), analysing trends against contextual policy review, implementing more of specific analyses etc. Additionally, a consultant will be engaged for further work on AAI result visualisation.

One of the most important directions of the further work on AAI is its application in "non-original" context, i.e. in countries outside EU or/and at a subnational level. This requires certain adjustments of AAI which would make it more flexible and thus applicable in different contexts. However, the essence of the index has to be preserved. In this regard the experts discussed at length the guidelines on calculation of AAI at subnational level or/and non-EU context. The introductory part of guidelines will make clear what AAI can offer, and for what purposes it can be used. Depending on users' needs they will choose to either follow closely the original methodology (in case they would like to have results comparable to EU AAI at national level) or to make certain adjustments (e.g. to obtain results for territorial units at subnational level comparable between themselves). Particularly for the second option, the guidelines will include detailed description of a rationale behind the overall index, domains and indicators, suggest possible alternative variables, approaches to measurement, data sources etc. The core of AAI is, nonetheless, to be preserved, meaning that it should still measure how

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[1] See Annex 1 for the list of participants.
[2] See Annex 2 for the meeting agenda.
[3] See Annex 3 for the minutes of the meeting.

much potential of older men and women to contribute to economy and society is used, and how much the environment enables them to do so. Active ageing being a multifaceted concept an adjusted AAI will need to maintain its four domains to grasp all the dimensions.

The feasibility of calculating AAI at subnational level has been already proven by several examples, of which most recent is the pilot study on AAI at local level in Germany, carried out by a research team in the Institute of Gerontology at the Technical University of Dortmund. Given a number of challenges with identifying and obtaining suitable data for AAI indicators at NUTS 3 level, a different approach was used in order to calculate the indicators: data from several sources were pulled together for each indicator; in all the other aspects, including aggregation steps, dichotomisation, etc. original AAI methodology was followed. The final results of the study are available from http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/VI.+Documentation. At the Peer review devoted to the use of AAI at local level and the pilot study (14–15 April 2016, Berlin) stakeholders agreed that AAI could be helpful in policy monitoring and evaluating of various aspects related to population ageing at different levels. It is however important to link AAI indicators to local circumstances and policies for wider uptake and more efficient application of the index.

Several major events are planned under AAI-III. These include a side-event on AAI at the UNECE Ministerial conference on ageing in 2017, international seminar in 2018 and several national seminars. Mots possible candidates for hosting national seminars are Italy, Poland and Spain. The Ministerial conference offers two options: organising a session on AAI at a research forum (day preceding the conference) or/and a side event on the second day of the conference (high-level segment). The experts opted for having both, in this way addressing both researchers and policymakers. The international seminar will most likely be organised in September 2018, meaning that the call for papers is to be launched in April 2017. Several experts agreed to stay on/join the evaluation board.

The following decisions were made:

**Research and methodology**
- Guidelines for the usage of proxies will propose a rather flexible approach to selection of indicators, preserving, however, the core of AAI, i.e. four domains and rationale behind the overall index, domains and indicators. It will include indications to alternative data sources, variables, and offer some good practices
- The methodology paper (annex) is to be updated by a research consultant so that the calculation of indicators is as clear as possible for external users

**Outreach and promoting use of AAI**
- The international seminar will be organised in September 2018
- A number of topics for the call for papers for the international seminar were agreed upon
- A tentative timeline of preparations for the international seminar, including the call for papers launch, and the schedule of the evaluation board work and its membership were agreed upon
- Experts suggested aiming at organisation of both a session at a research forum and a side-event at the UNECE Ministerial conference on ageing in September 2017
- Possible candidates for national seminars are Italy, Poland, and Spain

**Communication**
- Continue working on AAI presentation to relevant stakeholders avoiding normative interpretation of results
- Continue working on wiki-space
- Look into possibility of creating a database of research done on AAI

## ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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**ANNEX 2. AGENDA OF THE SIXTH EXPERT GROUP MEETING**

**DAY 1: 20 OCTOBER 2016**

**Chair:  Radek Maly, European Commission**

14:00 – 14:20   Welcome
*Radek Maly, European Commission*
*Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE*

14:20 – 14:35   Overview of activities implemented since October 2015 and final set of activities
for AAI-III
*Olga Kharitonova, UNECE*

Methodology issues to be addressed
*Ettore Marchetti, European Commission*

14:35 – 15:20   **Discussion**
- on suggested work format and schedule, taking into account data release timing,
major events etc.
- on approaches to methodology fine-tuning

*15:20 – 15:40   Coffee break*

15:40 – 16:20   Pilot study of AAI at local level in Germany
*Jürgen Bauknecht, Technical University of Dortmund*

16:20 – 16:40   Peer review of AAI at subnational level, Berlin, April 2016: main outcomes
*Jolanta Perek–Białas, Warsaw School of Economics and Jagiellonian University,
Krakow*

16:40 – 17:40   **Discussion** on the pilot study and the peer review outcomes

17:40 – 17:55   Task-force on ageing-related statistics: revised recommendations
*Andres Vikat, UNECE*

17:55 – 18:00   Q&A

18:00 – 18:15   "Gender and Social Class Inequalities in Active Ageing: Policy meets Theory":
outcomes of the project
*Eszter Zolyomi, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research*

18:15 – 18:20   Q&A

*18:20        Close of day one*


**DAY 2: 21 OCTOBER 2016**

**Chair: Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE**

09:00 – 09:15   Welcome and recap of day 1
*Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE*

09:15 – 09:25   AAI in non-EU countries: outcomes of two workshops on active ageing indicators
*Olga Kharitonova, UNECE*

09:25 – 09:40    Final AAI results for Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland
                 *Asghar Zaidi, University of Southampton*

09:40 – 09:45    Q&A on the presentations

09:45 – 11:00    **Discussion**: Main components and structure of guidelines on usage of proxies at
                 national and subnational level

*11:00 – 11:20    Coffee break*

11:20 – 11:35    2016 AAI preliminary results
                 *Olga Kharitonova, UNECE and Ettore Marchetti, European Commission*

11:35 – 11:40    Q&A

11:40 – 11:50    Ministerial conference on ageing, 2017: side-event on AAI
                 *Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE*

11:50 – 13:00    **Discussion**
                 - Organisation of the event
                 - Format and structure

*13:00 – 14:00    Lunch*

14:00 – 14:10    Updates on the editorial process
                 *Asghar Zaidi, University of Southampton*

14:10 – 16:00    **Round table**: preparations for the international seminar (2018) and national /
                 subregional seminars
                 - Format — same as for the seminar of 2015 or different?
                 - Topics
                 - Volunteers to be on the evaluation board
                 - Awards
                 - Ideas for holding national / subregional seminars: potential host countries and
                   timing

16:00 – 16:30    Summary
                 *Radek Maly, European Commission*
                 *Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE*

*16:30          Close of the meeting*

**ANNEX 3. MINUTES OF THE EXPERT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**20 OCTOBER (14:00–18:20)**

*Chair — Mr. Radek Maly (European Commission)*

The Chair welcomed the participants, particularly the new member of the Expert group — Mr. Jürgen Bauknecht (Technical University of Dortmund), — and opened the meeting.

The Chair pointed out that concern with demography, ageing, and active ageing in particular, is growing and that more and more research is carried out and events organised in this area. He particularly mentioned the Mobilising the potential of active ageing in Europe (MoPAct) project with its final conference to be held end of November, and the Second European Summit on Digital Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing which will take place in December 2016 and where AAI will be presented. The Chair reminded that the third phase of the AAI project was launched in May 2016. He spoke about growing interest towards AAI use at subnational level, particularly stopping on the pilot study at local level in Germany and initiatives in Biscay province and Friuli Venezia Giuli region, and stated that subnational application of AAI is one of the priority directions of the work under the third phase of the project.

Ms. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich (UNECE) joined in welcoming the participants and thanked the experts for their continued commitment to the AAI project. She informed the Expert group that Ms. Pearl Dykstra could not continue her participation in the group. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich pointed out that there are a lot of activities foreseen under the third phase including not only research but also organisation of various events. She mentioned that more and more countries outside of EU would like to use AAI and make attempts to calculate it, e.g. Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, and the Russian Federation, where the first wave of AAI calculation took place in 2015 (second wave is in process with the support from the World Bank). Ms. Gaucaite Wittich also informed the participants that according to UNECE rules the second phase of the AAI project is now undergoing evaluation by an external consultant who might contact experts for an interview.

Ms. Olga Kharitonova (UNECE) gave a presentation outlining the activities implemented since the fifth meeting of the Expert group, including a pilot study on AAI at local level in Germany, carried out by a research team at Institute of Gerontology at the Technical University of Dortmund under a contract with UNECE; finalisation of pilot study for Serbia and Turkey and of calculations of AAI for Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland; two workshops on active ageing indicators organised by UNECE. She also reminded what activities are to be carried out under the third phase of the project[4] and presented a preliminary schedule of their implementation. A particular attention of experts was drawn to different types of consultant contracts, under which most of the research work will be done during AAI-III, and to the United Nations Global Marketplace[5] — a procurement portal, where potential consultants have to register in order to participate in the bidding process.

Mr. Ettore Marchetti (European Commission) suggested two of many possible areas of work in methodology fine-tuning, namely ways of treating missing values and the issue of weak/negative correlation of some indicators with the others and with the overall AAI. Regarding the missing values, he gave an example of Bulgaria and the indicator 3.8 Lifelong learning for which the data are missing. Since during the development of the index it was decided not to use imputation, the current way of treating missing data is to reduce the denominator weight (sum of weights within a domain) for a given country by the weight of the indicator for which data are missing. However, such non-imputation means that for this indicator an average of the values of other indicators is used, which could lead to a distortion, especially given that the values are not standardised. Another matter

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[4] See Annex 4 for the list of tasks for the third phase of the AAI project.
[5] For more information, please visit https://www.ungm.org/.

Mr. Marchetti pointed to was a weak correlation of the indicators 2.3 and 4.6 with the overall index. Moreover, a negative correlation is present in case of the indicators 2.2 and 3.4. Changing weight of negatively correlated with the overall index indicators influence the results. And given the flexibility of AAI, this issue should be made clear for users who might be interested in adjusting weights for their own purposes. Mr. Marchetti stressed that raising these issues is not criticism of the established methodology, and there is no immediate need for its revision; it is however important to be aware of the issues raised to allow for better interpretation of AAI results.

*The discussion followed*

***Missing values***: Mr. Giovanni Lamura (INRCA/IRCCS) pointed out that in case of missing values the Delphi method is often used. Mr. Asghar Zaidi (Southampton University) argued that there is a lot of alternative ways of dealing with missing values, and reminded that for AAI in the course of its development an explicit decision was made not to do imputation. He also argued that the impact of usage of different methods of treating missing values is insignificant, and that it affects ranking rather than the final index values. The ranking, he added, has been given too much attention, and the relative position of countries in it should not be a priority. Mr. Heribert Engstler (German Centre of Gerontology) reminded that no imputation means implicit imputation (in this case of an average of values of indicators across the domain). He argued also that with the further extension of AAI to more countries there will be more and more cases of missing values, and it is important to decide on the way to deal with them, e.g. do imputation based on prediction modelling and run a robustness check. The Chair supported the idea that there should be an established general approach to treating missing values rather than an ad-hoc treatment, especially given the extension of AAI.

***Correlation***: Mr. Lamura reminded that there are possible "trade-offs" between certain elements of the index, e.g. employment vs social participation, which are in line with the concept of the index. Regarding social participation, Mr. Lamura argued that there are two levels — family (mesolevel) and society (macrolevel) — and suggested a possibility of splitting second domain indicators into two groups accordingly: mesolevel with care provision indicators (2.2 and 2.3) and macrolevel with 2.1 and 2.4. Mr. Zaidi replied that there is no need to divide indicators into different domains, but it is important to keep the division, pointed out by Mr. Lamura, in mind for interpretation purposes. Mr. Zaidi also reminded that several data sources are used for the indicators within third and fourth domains and that this leads to issues with correlation. Mr. Engstler agreed that negative correlations do not pose a problem, but in general correlations between indicators and with the overall AAI could be looked into.

Mr. Kenneth Howse (University of Oxford) suggested developing a list of methodology issues (not limited to the two raised ones) for the team project and the experts to be aware of those and their effect on the AAI results and to give directions for methodology fine-tuning work. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich supported the idea and asked the experts to start working on the list already now. Mr. Robert Anderson (Eurofound) inquired if there is a source where methodology studies on AAI can be found. Mr. Zaidi pointed to the original methodology paper and to certain papers submitted for the international seminar in 2015 which used other methodological approaches, sometimes critical of the original one. He also stated that it was high time the original methodology paper was updated and offered to do so. Mr. Marchetti suggested to go further than collecting all methodology papers in one place, and suggested having a source where all AAI-linked studies could be uploaded. He mentioned that the number of research studies related to AAI, apart from the ones submitted to the seminar, is growing, and asked if the project was mature enough to start forming a database of AAI-linked studies. Mr. Lamura supported this idea and brought it further by suggesting usage of interactive ways to discuss such studies; he also referred to his positive experience in working with young researchers involving the use of readily available interactive tools. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich agreed that the idea of forming a database is tempting, but pointed out that there should be some screening process before

uploading papers to filter out those of low quality or of no relevance, and this requires resources. Mr. Lamura suggested addressing some of the researchers who submitted papers to the international seminar and who might be interested in doing such pre-screening. He also warned from underestimating the multiplier effect of investing even limited resources in this.

**Pilot study on AAI at local level in Germany and a Peer review**

Mr. Bauknecht gave a detailed presentation of the work implemented under a **pilot study on AAI at local level in Germany** and the results it yielded. Ten surveys were used for the pilot study, while 16, also considered initially, were not due to either refusal of data providers to share data or data not being available at NUTS 3 level. Eighty-eight entities at NUTS 3 level were considered at the initial stage of the study. Thirty entities (representing 25.1 per cent of German total population) were included in the final analysis. Mr. Bauknecht explained the way the data from several surveys were used for each indicator in order to increase case numbers, and how the dichotomisation was carried out. The aggregation and dichotomisation were implemented in a way close to the one used for AAI at EU level; nevertheless the results for the NUTS 3 entities are not comparable with those at EU level. Interpretation of the results is less clear-cut than for EU-AAI, given that several variables / questions from different surveys were used to compute each indicator. Low numbers of respondents impede further subdivisions, e.g. between men and women. Data for men and women separately were not available from all data sources. However, an access to more data sources should allow for mitigation of the issue of low case numbers. In terms of the pilot study results, it appeared that there is a certain pattern: southern German entities (e.g. Esslingen, Stuttgart, Rems-Murr and Rhein-Neckar) show mainly higher results, while eastern entities are in the middle of the ranking table (e.g. Dresden, Chemitz, Leipzig) or below (e.g. Bautzen, Erzgebirge, Halle, Mittelsachsen, Zwickau), and large cities of the Ruhr area (Essen, Dortmund, Duisburg) find themselves lower in the ranking in the overall AAI and across the domains, with the second domain being an exception and demonstrating a somewhat different pattern.[6]

Ms. Jolanta Perek-Bialas (Warsaw School of Economics and Jagiellonian University) reported on the **Peer Review** "Active Ageing Index at the local level" which took place in Berlin on 14–15 April 2016 and was hosted by the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.[7] The meeting was attended by government representatives and experts from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Malta, Poland, Romania and Spain, local administrations in Germany, as well as stakeholder representatives from AGE Platform Europe, European Social Network. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) also participated in the meeting. During the meeting the preliminary results of the pilot study on AAI at local level in Germany were presented and discussed. Prior to the Peer Review its participants received a questionnaire on existing policies of active ageing and usage of AAI in their countries. Based on the replies the following conclusions were drawn: several countries already have policies related to active ageing (e.g. Poland, Spain, Malta) at different levels. Apart from the results of the German pilot study, only Biscay province (Spain) has AAI calculated at NUTS 3 level (albeit, there are a number of research studies done at NUTS 2 level). Countries also defined their needs for additional support in application of AAI in the following areas: sharing of experience in practical application of AAI between countries, regions and localities; helping to increase stakeholder awareness; provision of advice and consultations on methodology and application of AAI at subnational levels, and others. The participants of the Peer review agreed that AAI could be helpful in further monitoring and evaluating of various aspects related to population ageing. The potential of AAI to be used as a monitoring tool at local level was discussed at length at

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[6] The full report on the pilot study is available from
http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/VI.+Documentation.
[7] Information about the Peer review is available from
http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1024&newsId=2333&furtherNews=yes.

the Peer review. In particular, the importance of demonstrating clear relevance of AAI indicators to local circumstances and policies was stressed.

*The discussion followed*

Mr. Engstler informed the Expert group about an upcoming meeting with the Germany Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth regarding the results of the pilot study and the prospects of further extension of AAI to all German entities at NUTS 3 level. He expressed his concern regarding the usage of multiple data sources for each indicator as it is not clear if it helps to ensure representativity while hinders comparability with EU AAI and result interpretation. Mr. Engstler suggested using microcensus as a principal source of data for AAI calculation in Germany at local level.

Ms. Eszter Zolyomi (European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research) pointed out that the selection of sources depends on the purposes of the study: if comparability among localities needs to be ensured or the goal is to look into trends within a given territorial entity.

Mr. Bauknecht stressed that the aim of the pilot study was to try to replicate AAI at local level as close as possible to the original, which implies inter alia selecting questions (variables) close to the original ones, and this could not be done for most of the indicators based on the microcensus. For the same reason needs of particular localities were not taken into account under this study. He also reminded that one of the main issues with the data collection was reluctance of a number of institutes / data producers to provide the TU Dortmund with the necessary data.

Mr. Andres Vikat (UNECE) recommended making use of the momentum of the present political pressure to improve cooperation with data providers in Germany. He also suggested looking at a possibility of using register data, and of running a pilot study at a local level in a country with good-quality register data.

The experts then discussed the matter of AAI flexibility when applied at subnational level. The index should meet the needs of policymakers at this level, but also preserve itself from becoming a different measurement tool. Most important is to keep the four domains (which reflect the Vienna declaration goals) and make sure that the adjusted index still measures the potential of older persons to contribute to the economy and society. As long as these requirements are met the original methodology can be adjusted in accordance with users' needs. It was noted that four domains press policymakers not to focus only on employment but to look at other aspects of active ageing, e.g. poverty among older people, independent living, voluntary activities etc.

Mr. Zaidi reminded of an approach developed by Ms. Pearl Dykstra and Ms. Kasia Karpinska with three main aspects to take into account when analysing AAI results from a policymaking point of view: if indicators can be influenced directly by policies; at what level (national, regional, local) policy responsibilities for each indicator are typically located; and the time period (short-, medium-, long-term) before a given policy yields results reflected in a change of an indicator value.

Ms. Gaucaite Wittich reminded that even if some indicators cannot be influenced directly at local level, respective policies being defined at national level, there are certain measures which can impact those indicators nonetheless, e.g. in case of employment at local level it is possible for policymakers to encourage self-employment.

**UNECE Task force on Ageing-related statistics**

Mr. Vikat gave an update on the work of the UNECE Task force on Ageing-related statistics. The revised recommendations on ageing-related statistics, developed by the Task force in consultation with member States, were approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in October 2016. The final report includes recommendations on the role of national statistical offices,

data collection, disaggregation, communication etc. regarding identified indicators of ageing linked to the four goals of the Vienna Ministerial Declaration (Longer working life; Social inclusion; Health and independence of older persons; Intergenerational solidarity). On the matter of disaggregation by age, Mr. Vikat explained that the final report recommends to produce data for 5-year groups at least up to age 85 (10-year groups being less desirable, but still possible). Particular attention was drawn to a lack of official statistics on institutional population (moreover, there is no commonly agreed definition of institutional population) which constitutes an important part of the older population. The further work regarding the recommendations includes their publishing and holding an ad hoc expert meeting to review their implementation. Mr. Zaidi expressed his appreciation of the work done by the Task force led by UNECE, particularly pointing out the involvement of specialists from various areas of expertise, and not statisticians only. Mr. Vikat expressed his hope that these recommendations would help to raise eagerness among statisticians to produce ageing-related statistics.

**Gender and Socio-economic Inequalities in Active Ageing**

Ms. Zolyomi presented the outcomes of the project "Gender and Social Class Inequalities in Active Ageing: Policy meets Theory" which aimed "*to take a critical look at existing evaluations of active ageing policies and extend them with a view to gender and social class differences*".[8] The AAI domains were used as a framework of active ageing within which the inequalities between genders and different social classes were assessed. For disaggregation by social class income (quintiles) or education level were used — possible but not the only proxies for socio-economic status. Three main data sources were used for the study: EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), European Social Survey (ESS) and Survey on health, ageing and retirement in Europe (SHARE), supplemented with selected indicators from EU Labour Force Survey (LFS). Ms. Zolyomi stressed that there are data limitations which impeded in-depth analysis in certain areas, namely informal care provision by older people. The results of the study show that socio-economic inequalities in enjoying active and healthy ageing are present; moreover these inequalities are often accumulated throughout the life-course thus putting certain vulnerable groups (e.g. women with lower level of education) at a greater disadvantage at older age. Policies aimed at enabling active ageing for the whole population do not automatically bring equal opportunities for different population groups and in some cases lead to even greater inequalities. It is therefore necessary for the underlying factors of such inequalities to be addressed by active ageing policies.

Since Ms. Zolyomi pointed out that there were doubts about using education and income levels as proxies for the socio-economic status, the experts voiced their opinion that using those is justified. Mr. Zaidi pointed out that particularly the education level is a good proxy for taking into account early life-course experiences. The question of using wealth and income as proxies was also discussed: Mr. Howse gave an example of the United Kingdom where good wealth measurements are available; Ms. Gaucaite Wittich informed the group that the wealth is now reflected also in the Generations and Gender survey (GGS). Mr. Zaidi stressed that wealth is nevertheless difficult to measure, and that use of proxies is therefore inevitable.

Mr. Vikat pointed out that women in many cases are employed on a part-time basis involuntarily and asked about the ways it was measured in the research study. Ms. Zolyomi explained that LFS includes a question on reasons behind working part-time.

Mr. Zaidi brought up examples of studies on AAI at individual level submitted for the international seminar in 2015 results of which would be interesting to analyse against income inequalities.

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[8] The report is available from http://www.euro.centre.org/detail.php?xml_id=2563.

**21 OCTOBER (9:00–16:30)**

*Chair — Ms. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich (UNECE)*

The Chair briefly summarised main outcomes of the discussion of 20 October and welcomed another new member of the Expert group — Mr. Karel Van den Bosch (Federal Planning Office, Belgium).

**AAI in non-EU countries: outcomes of two workshops on active ageing indicators**

Ms. Kharitonova gave a presentation on outcomes of two workshops on active ageing indicators for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and Western Balkans. The workshops were organised by UNECE with financial support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the second workshop. The workshops took place on 18 November 2015 (Geneva) and 23–24 June 2016 (Minsk). Altogether 18 countries representatives attended both workshops. UNECE with the help of invited experts provided consultations to national focal points on ageing and specialists from national statistical offices on approaches to identify data sources and suitable alternative variables for the 22 indicators of active ageing (AAI indicators), which are included in the statistical annex to national reports on Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) implementation. Most problematic indicators identified were those of the second domain (2.1–2.4), mental well-being (4.3), healthy life expectancy (4.2), physical safety (3.7), and no severe material deprivation (3.6). Overall, the workshops helped to clarify the methodology of certain indicators (e.g. 3.6, 4.2), allowed for direct experience exchange between countries; gave materials for developing a list of proxies (by UNECE); pointed to potential sources beyond the "usual suspects", including light Time Use Survey.[9]

**Final AAI results for Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland**

Mr. Zaidi gave an update on the AAI results for the four non-EU countries, namely Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. Calculation of AAI for Iceland did not present any problem since all the data sources used for EU AAI can be used for Iceland as well. Out of the other three countries, AAI for Canada turned out to be the most difficult to calculate. The indicator 3.6 (No severe material deprivation) appeared not possible to calculate. Statistics Canada provided data for 17 indictors based on six surveys and mainly for the year 2010. Data for the other four indicators — 3.1, 3.2, 3.8 and 4.3 — were provided by the International Longevity Centre Canada based on the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (3.1, 3.8, 4.3) and Canadian Community Health Survey, 2012 (3.2 and also 4.3, calculations for the latter are still in progress based on this survey). Calculations for Switzerland were limited as the country was not covered by the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS). The data for missing indicators were provided by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and Swiss Foundation for Research in Social Sciences (FORS). Indicator 4.3, though calculated based on the Swiss Health Survey, is being calculated based also on SILC additional module. For Norway the main issue was the same as for Switzerland — no EQLS indicators for 2012. The Ministry of health provided funding to the statistical office, so that they would work on calculations of respective indicators based on GGS and the European Health Interview Survey. Altogether, except for Iceland, AAI for the non-EU countries is not strictly comparable to EU results. More work is needed on ensuring comparability and on providing accompanying comments to avoid misinterpretation of the results.

The Chair noted that though it would have been useful to compare the results of these three countries to those of EU, it is most important for the countries to focus on comparability across time and monitor trends.

Mr. Marchetti and Ms. Luciana Quattrociocchi (Istat) informed the participants about a **regional meeting on active ageing** in Trieste, Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) region, Italy, which took place on

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[9] The reports of the workshop and other relevant documents can be found at
http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=40393#/ and http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42481#/

19 September 2016. A regional law on active ageing had been adopted in FVG in 2014 making it the first Italian region to have such a law. The law has a rather holistic approach addressing such issues as employment, social participation, health, ICT etc. Usage of AAI at regional and local levels was among the topics discussed at the meeting, local- and regional-level policymaking being of high importance in Italy. Ms. Quattrociocchi stressed that it is important to push other regions to plan and monitor implementation of ageing policies.

Mr. Lamura added that though a number of activities are being (or planned to be) carried out to implement the law, there is a certain caution regarding measurement. He pointed out that AAI might seem too complex for the use in non-EU or subnational context and suggested that policymakers would be more willing to use a simpler and more compact version of AAI (*AAI-light* — Mr. Engstler). Mr. Howse reminded of importance of identifying alternative indicators which would be comparable or at least respond to the questions of the original AAI (perform the same function). Mr. Zaidi stated that strict comparability cannot be achieved, and that AAI should be seen as "inspiration" and each indicator as "perspective". Ms. Gaucaite Wittich reminded of a good practice of collecting data for AAI of Biscay province via a phone survey based on a questionnaire which included the same questions as the original variables.

The discussion moved to the **components and structure of guidelines on usage of proxies**. It was agreed that the target audience of the guidelines should be policymakers, but also researchers / methodologists and other stakeholders to the extent possible, meaning that the guidelines should be suitable for all kinds of potential users. In the interest of addressing a wider audience the guidelines should begin with an introductory part where the concept of AAI, possible ways of its application, purposes of and gains from its use will be explained. The fact that the index can be calculated and applied in different contexts should be particularly stressed here. The methodological part could be either placed in the annex, or in the main text. In the latter case, an executive summary will be added to the guidelines.

The users will be informed that the use of alternative indicators / variables will undermine comparability with the EU results at national level. At this point it will be made clear that if the purpose of the AAI application is comparison of the results with those at national level (EU), the original methodology instructions should be followed as close as possible; however, if the point is to monitor trends within a country/region/locality or obtain comparable results among territorial units at subnational level, certain adjustments can be made.

Though the index should be adaptable for other than EU national level use and thus some modifications to it would be required, the following aspects have to be preserved: the goal of AAI use and the multifaceted approach, i.e. the index, even in a modified version, should measure the (un)used potential of older people to contribute to economy and society and the extent to which their living environment enables them to do so. This implies that the four domains should be maintained, and, though the indicators within each of them can be adjusted to the users' needs and possibilities, they should aim at incorporating the aspects the original indicators are measuring. To this end, the guidelines will include a list of the original indicators explaining the rationale behind each of them — what aspect of active ageing they are supposed to capture. The list will provide detailed instructions on indicator measurement, on what kind of data could be used for their calculation and point to possible challenges in measurement, alternative variables (possibly with examples of good practices), approaches to data collection, e.g. additional modules in existing surveys, etc.

UNECE will check other composite indicators to see if some good practices on how to present this kind of information can be used; work on the terms of reference for a consultant who will work on the guidelines, and might consult the Expert group once again via email before advertising the position.

**2016 AAI preliminary results**

Ms. Kharitonova and Mr. Marchetti presented preliminary 2016 AAI results. They stressed that there were issues with comparability with the previous AAI waves due the fact that it was not possible to use microdata for calculations; also, a different approach was used to treat missing data (see discussion during the first day). However, significant discrepancies occurred only in the case of the indicator 3.3 Independent living arrangements. Overall, the results confirm the positive trend observed in previous years: there is a moderate but continuous increase in the overall AAI and in all the domains. It is important to keep in mind that the EQLS data were available for 2007 and 2011/12 only; therefore 6 indicators in 2016 AAI are of the same value as in the second AAI wave. The largest increase was observed in the first domain, mainly thanks to an increase in the employment rate within the 60–64 age group.

Ms. Kharitonova asked the experts to advise on cases where data are available only for earlier years, e.g. ESS data for Luxembourg are available for 2004 only, — should one use 2004 data or not. Mr. Engstler replied that it is best not to use data which are from more than four years before the year of calculation.

The Chair reminded that it is of high importance to ensure replicability of the indicators so that the credibility of the AAI results is not undermined. The methodology should be very clear, including formulae and indications of weight applied where needed.

Mr. Anderson raised a question of how to decide which changes in indicator / domain values are viewed as significant, and which are not. Mr. Zaidi replied that so far in the AAI result interpretation changes of about 3 and over percentage points had been considered significant. Otherwise deciding on significance of changes would require calculation of standard error, confidence intervals etc. Mr. Van den Bosch made a point that in case of SILC, calculation of standard error is very complex due to in particular different sampling design by countries, and added that some changes are due to modifications in questions or methodology rather than to sampling error. Mr. Anderson pointed out that with more AAI waves it will be clearer what the significant change is. He added that continuous increasing trend observed so far gives confidence in reporting the results.

The discussion moved to the question of presenting the AAI results: Mr. Lamura argued that a way different from ranking should be found. Various options for clustering were discussed. The Chair pointed out that to present results by clusters, one needs to decide upon a basis for clustering, and the factor analysis could be of help. Mr. Van den Bosch suggested presenting results in two dimensions, i.e. domains. The Chair reminded that in the very first policy brief on AAI, graphs on correlation between first three domains and the fourth domain were presented. Mr. Engstler suggested focusing on presenting changes rather than the resulting values. Mr. Vikat noted that, as discussed on many occasions, our goal is to have a resulting single value which should be easily interpreted by users and that users will compare their results with other users' in any case. In this regard, ranking is the simplest way to present the results, moreover the graphs which have been used so far show not just the ranking but the values as well and it is easy to see that the difference between results are sometimes very small. Mr. Maly agreed with Mr. Vikat, adding that clustering if presented should be made simple and be rather based on regional clustering than statistical methods, such as principal component analysis.

**Ministerial conference on ageing, 2017: side-event on AAI**

The Chair informed the group about the UNECE Ministerial conference on ageing which will take place on 28–29 September 2017 in Lisbon, Portugal. The conference will conclude the third cycle of review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS). Usually one day prior to the conference,

research and expert fora are held. There are two possible options for presenting AAI: 1) have a session devoted to AAI within the research forum; 2) organise a short, 60–75-minute-long side-event, e.g. during lunch-break, on the second day of the conference (high-level segment) which would be accessible to high-level policymakers. The Chair added that organisation of a side-event needs to be discussed with the host country, and of a session during the research forum — with ECV, responsible for the forum organisation. Ms. Zolyomi said she would check with her colleagues in ECV dealing with the forum preparation. The discussion followed during which there appeared to be a strong support of an idea to have both events. The experts emphasised the importance of reaching out to policymakers and gave side-event option a higher priority if organisation of both events is not possible. Mr. Anderson stated that the Eurofound will aim at providing the project team with the EQLS microdata in June 2017 so that the new AAI results could be presented at the side-event. The question of the format of the side-event was discussed. The Chair reminded that in 2012 at the Vienna Ministerial conference the side-event was held in form of a panel, and noted that if this format is to be kept potential panellists and a moderator need to be identified. Ms. Perek-Białas argued that the panellists should have experience in working with and applying AAI. She also suggested inviting panellists from both EU and non-EU countries. The experts discussed a candidature of a potential moderator: inviting a journalist or a former minister/government representative to play this part. A number of suggestions were made, and it was agreed to approach Mr. László Andor.

**Updates on the editorial process**

Mr. Zaidi presented the updates on the **editorial process** of a book and a special issue of the Journal of Population Ageing which are being prepared based on the selected papers submitted for the International Seminar "Building an evidence base for active ageing policies: Active Ageing Index and its potential" that took place on 16–17 April 2015 in Brussels. Five papers are to be published in the journal. The editorial process was somewhat delayed, since for the journal papers are required to pass through an evaluation of referees in addition to the assessment of the evaluation board convened for this purpose. However, the online version is planned to be ready by the end of 2016. The hard copy of the journal should appear in early 2017. Regarding the book, it will include 19 papers. It would be useful if the preface is written by a high-level person, possibly the Commissioner. At the moment there was an expression of interest from the Macmillan Publishers, however no details, e.g. regarding additional proofreading, or royalties, were discussed. The target date for release of the book is April 2017. Mr. Zaidi stated that two years after the submission of papers is a more realistic time-period for preparing a book than initially announced one year.

During the discussion which followed it was stressed that it would be useful to make papers more publicly accessible and to have a book released before the UNECE Ministerial conference on ageing in September 2017, so that its copies could be put on display there. It was also pointed out that it is important to have the book ready before the launch of a call for papers for the next international seminar.

The discussion followed on the organisation of the **international seminar** to be held in 2018. Two options were discussed — holding the event in June or September 2018. It was agreed that September would be better in terms of allowing sufficient time for calculation of 2018 AAI and drafting of an analytical report on the AAI results to be launched at the seminar.

**Seminar format**: Mr. Zaidi supported the idea of using the format of 2015 seminar as a basis. Mr. Lamura agreed and suggested building on the first seminar by raising some points which came up as challenges at the first seminar. Regarding the audience, it was agreed to aim at having the same target audience, i.e. researchers and policymakers. Mr. Zaidi pointed out that at the first seminar a presentation by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the Human Development Index was very useful for demonstrating the added value of and existing demand for composite

indicators; for the 2018 seminar he suggested having a presentation on use of composite indicators by a high-level person (from outside of the project team and the expert group) who uses and/or is aware of issues of composite indicators. Mr. Howse suggested having a high-level panel where policymakers would present / discuss the use of AAI for their purposes. This panel would however not be a part of an open call for papers. Ms. Zolyomi reminded about the funds allocated by the European Commission to the countries working on their active ageing strategies and suggested inviting their representatives.

**Call for papers**: it was suggested to include in the call for papers some background/history from the 2015 seminar; Mr. Zaidi offered to prepare a revised version of the call for papers to be used for the seminar 2018. He also suggested looking into a possibility of including the information about the call in the journal of the International Institute on Aging. The call itself might mention a possibility of publishing best papers in the Journal of Population ageing and a book. Mr. Howse, Mr. Zaidi, Ms. Perek-Białas volunteered to stay on the evaluation board for the second seminar. Mr. Van den Bosch volunteered to join the board, and Mr. Lamura said that he would suggest a colleague of his for this task.

The preliminary schedule for the call for papers: launch — April 2017 (depending also on the time of the book publishing); the policymakers should be invited at least a year before the seminar; abstract submission — beginning of October 2017; abstract evaluation — by 1 November 2017, with a face-to-face meeting of the evaluation board members organised back-to-back to the Expert group meeting; submission of papers — by April 2018; another face-to-face meeting of the evaluation board members to be held in July 2018. The call for papers is to be shared with the UNECE Working Group on Ageing.

**Topics**: Ms. Zolyomi suggested keeping the topic of methodology, but incorporating new perspectives, e.g. inequality perspective. Mr. Engstler pointed to possible topics of transnational ageing and migration, and one of contribution of older persons, e.g. in form of financial transfers, or in other words of financial contribution of active ageing. Mr. Howse raised a question if the topics should be restricted to the use of AAI; it was agreed to do so, but allow papers on usage of other surveys (e.g. SHARE) or measurements in addition to or based on AAI (Mr. Zaidi, Mr. Maly, Ms. Gaucaite Wittich, Mr. Marchetti). Mr. Murillo Corzo suggested keeping the topic of use of AAI for policymaking. Mr. Lamura proposed to include papers on actual experience of using AAI, e.g. by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The suggestions was supported, and extended to the actual use of AAI for policymaking / policy adjustments at both national and subnational levels. Mr. Marchetti suggested considering papers on how to best present and disseminate AAI results.

**Awards**: it was agreed to have monetary and non-monetary awards for the best papers. The categories are to be decided. Within the framework of the first seminar monetary awards were given to early career researchers. Mr. Van den Bosch suggested awarding also best retired researcher; Ms. Perek-Białas suggested using the term "experienced" instead.

The Chair asked the participants to give their input on organisation of **national / subregional seminars** which are foreseen under the third phase. She emphasised the importance of such events which allow for more concrete discussion of AAI results in the national / subregional context, including the analysis of trends against ageing-related policies. She stressed that a national seminar needs to be organised by a government (and possibly subnational authorities) as its main focus is policy. Seminars are held in national language where possible, but UNECE can organise interpretation. Ms. Perek-Białas, Mr. Lamura and Mr. Murillo Corzo expressed their interest in looking into possibilities of holding seminars in their countries focusing on subnational level rather than national, making Poland, Italy and Spain potential candidates. It was agreed that by the end of 2016 they will inform UNECE if and when the seminars could take place. Mr. Lamura stressed the

importance of having materials on AAI available in national languages. Mr. Marchetti mentioned that a summary of the Analytical report[10] is available from the wiki in English, French, German, and Russian.

The next Expert group meeting is preliminary planned for October 2017. Ms Kharitonova will suggest possible dates to the experts.

The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

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[10] UNECE/ European Commission (2015) "Active Ageing Index 2014: Analytical Report" , Report prepared by Asghar Zaidi of Centre for Research on Ageing, University of Southampton and David Stanton, under contract with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), co-funded by European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Brussels).

**ANNEX 4. ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT UNDER AAI-III**

T1: Calculation of 2016 AAI, 2018 AAI, and for earlier years

T2: Implementing specific analysis of AAI results, including

- possible comparative analysis of AAI results for urban and rural settlements, groups with different socio-economic status, education level etc.
- analysis of AAI results over time, including a decomposition analysis establishing the impact of each indicator to the AAI changes
- age cohort analysis of AAI results

T3: Calculation of AAI for additional countries

T4: Pilot studies of AAI in selected UNECE countries

- at national and subnational levels
- guidelines for calculation of AAI at subnational level

T5: Further fine-tuning of methodology, including

- assessing and stabilising the "goalposts"
- assessing the impact of population structure on the AAI overall and domain scores
- looking into using of the SHARE data
- preparing a methodology for and a note on the use of proxies

T6: Two papers on AAI results and trends

T7: Coordinating activities and organising meetings of the Expert group on AAI

T8: Presenting the AAI results

T9: Holding an international seminar on AAI, including

- launching a call for papers on AAI-related topics
- awards — monetary and non-monetary — to authors of the best papers
- papers will be assessed and selected by an independent evaluation board of researchers.

T10: Organising national or subregional seminars on AAI

T11: Organising a side-event on AAI during the UNECE Ministerial conference on ageing in 2017

T12: Maintaining a wiki space on AAI and improving AAI visualisation