



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

Country Report Federal Republic of Germany

For the fourth review and appraisal cycle of the implementation of the
Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation
Strategy (MIPAA/RIS)

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Part

A

Overview of the Report

Brief summary

This National Report by the Federal Republic of Germany on the fourth assessment and evaluation cycle for implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) is being presented 20 years after the passing of the MIPAA and commitment to the RIS by the 56 UNECE countries. It reports on the state of implementation of the MIPAA/RIS in Germany in accordance with the structure and criteria defined by the 2020 UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing.

The national implementation of these international obligations within the Federal Republic of Germany is based on the Federal Government's National Plan of Action for implementing the Second United Nations Plan of Action on Ageing and the Regional Implementation Strategy. They are the leading guidelines for the policy concerning older persons at federal level, alongside the international obligations of MIPAA/RIS, United Nations human rights documentation and European level regulations (both EU and European Commission).

A summary of the age demographics in Germany will be followed by a brief explanation of the methodology behind the MIPAA/RIS assessment and of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration, as well as a report on the content based on the stipulated reporting structure. The federal ministry responsible for these matters, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, as well as other ministries have been involved and they have contributed corresponding sections to the report. It starts with a review of the past 20 years of the MIPAA and RIS and the progress achieved since the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. The main areas of focus are: acknowledging the potential of older persons; promoting a longer work life and employability; ensuring ageing with dignity.

Subsequently, the topic of “healthy and active ageing in a sustainable world” is discussed, and the contributions made by the ageing policy to the implementation of the 2020 Agenda and its sustainable development goals are also addressed. Attention will also be drawn to the knowledge gained from handling the consequences of and effects on older persons in emergency situations and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had massive impacts on all areas of life over the past two years. Furthermore, the report also addresses the activities carried out in order to prepare and implement the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030, and ends with conclusions and foreseeable future priorities for the national older persons, policy. Additional current plans of action and expected priorities for the future are defined in the “Older persons” section.

In addition to introducing legal improvements in numerous areas, new model programmes at federal level, and specific projects, political successes for older persons seen at federal level during the reporting period are also addressed. These include the continuation of the “Multi-generation centre” federal programme; the Flexible Pension Act (since 2017); the implementation of an individual basic pension supplement (2021) and the improvement of compatibility between care and career via the care support laws; reform of care professions; the Concerted Action for Care (CAC); the devising and passing of a national dementia strategy with numerous implementation measures for improving the situation of persons in need of care and their informal caregivers; the “Digital Angel” project as well as the “Digital Pact for Ageing” for digital adult education and the inclusion of older persons. The report also addresses other measures and initiatives.

The topic of loneliness among older persons is expected to be more closely examined in the future and counteracted through corresponding measures so that older persons' participation in social life is improved. Furthermore, inclusion is expected to increase through lifelong education services (for example, on digitalisation) and further improvements are planned with regard to long-term care and compatibility between family, care and career. Germany will also continue to combat ageism in the future and is actively participating in numerous international forums and task forces in order to improve the living situation of older persons.

In addition to the report of the Federal Government, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) published a statement,¹ where its member organisations were involved in a comprehensive participation process, and has also provided reports from citizens. The inclusion of civil society in ageing policy, and, thus, in the creation of a statement of civil society, is a chief priority of the United Nations and the Federal Government. This has resulted in the stipulated bottom-up approach being implemented.

General information

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Federal Republic of Germany

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3. Name, reference and date of ratification or state of preparations of the National Strategy, National Plan of Action or similar strategy documentation pertaining to ageing

National Plan of Action of the Federal Government to Implement the Second United Nations Plan of Action on Ageing, Madrid 2002, and the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy, Berlin 2002, "Challenges and Opportunities of Ageing Societies" (2006): https://unece.org/DAM/pau/_docs/age/2007/AGE_2007_MiCA07_CntrRprtDEU_e.pdf

"Every Age Counts", Federal Government's Demographic Strategy (2012): <https://www.demografie-portal.de/DE/Service/Publicationen/2012/demografiestrategie-der-bundesregierung.pdf>

"Every Age Counts Greater prosperity and better quality of life for all generations" Advancement of the Federal Government's Demographic Strategy (2015): <https://www.demografie-portal.de/DE/Service/Publicationen/2015/weiterentwickelte-demografiestrategie-der-bundesregierung.pdf>

.....
1 <https://www.bagso.de/themen/internationales/20-jahre-weltaltenplan>

1

National situation concerning ageing

The population of Germany has grown to approximately 83.1 million people due to immigration and despite intermittent drops in the birth rate. Yet, in spite of high net immigration and a slightly increasing birth rate seen in recent years, the population of persons at employment age will decrease during the coming years and the number of older persons will continue to increase (see Figure 1). Life expectancy both at birth and at the age of 65 years has continuously grown in the past two decades (see Figure 2). As a result of the expected continued increase in life expectancy and the ageing of the baby boomer generation, the age group that is 80 years old and older will increase in particular. Whereas this group only made up 4 per cent of the population in 2000, the current population forecast predicts that they will make up 11 per cent of the population by 2060 (see Figure 3). Ageing varies considerably throughout Germany's regions.

The actual pensionable age in Germany has increased over the past 20 years and it currently stands at 64.2 years. The ageing of the baby boomers born during the 1950s and 1960s will

pose a considerable challenge to Germany in the coming decades, with major impacts on the labour market and the pension system. Around 18 million people will reach pension age between 2020 and 2035. This will also place significant strains on the healthcare and nursing systems. However, people are ageing in a healthier manner, which opens up the potential for older persons to be active in the labour market longer, or being able to volunteer or to spend more time with their families.

As a result of the increase in the life expectancy of people who are 65 years old, with a moderate adjustment of the standard retirement age (gradually, from 65 years in 2012 to 67 years in 2029), the average duration of pension benefits between 2001 and 2020 increased from 18.9 to 22.0 years for women, and from 13.8 to 18.5 years for men.²

2 German Pension Insurance: Pension Insurance in figures 2021. German Pension Insurance statistics, page 65, available online at: https://www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Statistiken-und-Berichte/statistikpublikationen/rv_in_zahlen_2021.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=61

This extension of the pension benefits period, especially amongst men, coupled with the increase in the number of benefit recipients due to baby boomers' retiring, poses an additional challenge for the state pension insurance system. According to calculations by the Federal Institute for Population Research, a continued increase in labour market participation by older persons above the age of 55 years, and by women, could aid in mostly closing any gaps in the labour market caused by baby boomers retiring (see Figure 4).³ This is also due to the fact that the expansion of education is increasing the proportion of highly productive workers.

The remaining life expectancy of people in with good health has also increased in Germany during recent years. In 2019, 65-year-old men and 65-year-old woman could expect another 11.5 and 12.8 years of good health, respectively.⁴ Many older persons now have the opportunity to spend a number of years actively volunteering, being with their families or staying in the labour market.

1.1 Brief description of the situation

Demographic changes are altering society, as it is becoming older and also more diverse. The greatest challenges are caused by the vastly different, regional demographic developments across Germany. Whereas large cities and their surroundings have experienced population growth during recent years, numerous rural and peripheral areas – especially in Eastern Germany and underdeveloped regions – have lost residents. This development is placing a huge strain on cities as they have to provide sufficient housing and infrastructures, whilst it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide basic services to the decreasing population in underdeveloped areas. Municipalities in Germany will need adequate support during the coming years. This is where the equal living conditions policy will come in: an active development policy will seek to achieve specific, local improvements in many areas of life for local residents. The increased ageing of society has also led to more social and political discussion of topics that affect older persons in particular. For some years, domestic migration developments indicate a new phase of suburbanisation, with decreased domestic migration to large cities and increased migration to the surrounding areas. This trend was amplified during the coronavirus pandemic. It cannot yet be said whether this development, strengthened by an increasing number of mobile working opportunities, will be a permanent.

3 Federal Institute for Population Research 2019: Ageing and employment: effects less dramatic than often feared, policy brief, September 2019, online at: <https://www.bib.bund.de/Publikation/2019/Alterung-und-Arbeitsmarkt.html?nn=9859988>

4 Eurostat, online data code: TEPSR_SP320, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tepsr_sp320/default/table?lang=en

1.2 The COVID-19 pandemic

The Federal Government has initiated a number of economic aid programmes for companies, self-employed workers and creative artists affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. These aid programmes, the most comprehensive ever in the history of Germany (both fiscally as well as in the form of various credit programmes, allowances and direct aid benefits), have helped to stabilise the economy, improve prospects for employees, companies and the self-employed, and to strengthen the healthcare system. Some examples are briefly listed below.

In order to strengthen the social insurance system in Germany during the COVID-19 pandemic and to prevent an increase in non-wage labour costs and a decrease in employees' net income – which helps companies' planning security as well as their competitiveness and helps to stabilise the economy – a “Social Guarantee 2021” programme will stabilise social insurance contributions at no more than 40 per cent of employees' gross wages. Any further financial needs will be covered by the federal budget until 2021.

Numerous special regulations covering short-time compensation will apply until the end of 2021 in order to secure jobs and income in the event of work stoppages due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, it will be easier to obtain short-time compensation as the allowance period will be extended, compensation rates will be gradually increased, opportunities for additional earnings during the short-time work period will be expanded and social insurance contributions will be reimbursed. Furthermore, until July 2023, qualification measures will be funded during the short-time working period through the partial reimbursement of social insurance contributions and training costs.

Along with many other measures being used in the ageing and social affairs sectors for combating the coronavirus pandemic, the Social Service Provider Engagement Act came into effect on March 28, 2020. This act ensures the existence of social service providers during the coronavirus pandemic, especially when social service providers are partially or fully unable to render their services. This Act obligates social service providers to provide all feasible and legally permissible support services. In return, they will receive monthly financial allowances from the funding agencies so that they can stay afloat. This upholds the important social infrastructures, such as those in the labour market policy, rehabilitation, or disability assistance sectors. The funding mandate of this Act will end no later than December 31, 2021.

2 Methods of implementing the MIPAA/RIS in Germany since 2002

In addition to the regular monitoring and evaluating of the specific measures that have been or will be implemented, in 2019, the UNECE National Focal Point on Ageing reviewed the ongoing implementation of various measures by the Federal Government with regard to the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. This assessment revealed that the Federal Government is working on the further implementation of the targets specified in the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration, and has commenced action on every point in the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration in order to achieve the targets specified therein. The specific measures are still ongoing.

The ministries of the Federal Government are in constant communication and are including the Federal States in their work as well as the leading municipal organisations, social partners, businesses, science and interest groups.

The most important interest group for older persons, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations [Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen (BAGSO)], has involved civil society, in compliance with the requirements of the United Nations and subsequently drafted a statement about civil society. This is attached to the National Report.

Most other projects are also being monitored and evaluated. The methodology used for this is based on scientific standards and monitoring and evaluations were conducted by external parties. The specific methods all differ from one another and were selected to fit the respective measures. There has not yet been an overall coordination or consolidated summary of the evaluations with regard to achieving the MIPAA/RIS targets.

The mechanism demanded under the ECOSOC Resolution 2020/08 for establishing a national contact office (focal point) has already been implemented in the Federal Republic of Germany. It is located in Department 314, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. There are also contacts with other control mechanisms (for example, implementation of UN Sustainability Targets in the 2020 Agenda).



Part

B

20 Years of the MIPAA/RIS –
Significant Measures and
Progress

1 Acknowledging the potential of older persons

1.1 Enabling individuals to realise their potential for lifelong well-being and social participation

The increasing life expectancy and ageing of society in Germany poses a number of challenges, but also opportunities. Both must be addressed accordingly. The retirement period has become a phase of life that older persons want to, and can, actively shape for themselves. The modern older population is, on average, entering into this phase of life in a better state of health, with higher qualifications and often with better material security than ever before.

In 2020, 24.09 million people who were 60 years of age or older were living in Germany, equating to 28.97 per cent of the total population. And this older population is increasing. Almost one third of the population will be older than 65 years in 2030.

The active contribution that older persons can make to society will strengthen society in turn, as well as their own confidence and sense of responsibility. Their commitment will be essential for families. Senior policy supports this and it will help ensure that the opportunities of increased longevity will better benefit the older population as well as society.

Due to constitutional requirements, the responsibility for taking specific measures to support older persons in Germany falls to the municipalities, which, in turn, receive targeted support from the Federal and State Governments. Municipalities with well-functioning senior citizen infrastructures noticeably help improve their quality of life and they can activate the self-help potential quickly and effectively. For example, numerous instruments and methods (both analogue and digital) have been established since the start of the coronavirus pandemic to date. Numerous social structures are available that can be contacted by the local population and sometimes also provide outreach services.

The Federal Government's senior citizens policies focus on the following action priorities:

- demographic changes and shaping the living environments of older persons,
- improving social participation and involvement of older persons at the local level and inter-generational cooperation,

- combating loneliness,
- creating good conditions for persons in need of care and caretaking relatives, as well as for professional and informal care,
- enabling and encouraging the participation/ inclusion of older persons with disabilities.

The inclusive approach becomes particularly important with regard to supporting persons in need of care. It must also simultaneously be ensured that the existing services are actually available to older persons. This is especially the case against the background of the growing number of older immigrants.

Since 1993, the Federal Government's work on senior citizens policies have been accompanied in each legislative period by Ageing Reports (www.achter-altersbericht.de), covering its senior citizens policy. These Ageing Reports are reports from the Federal Government on the older generation's situation within the Federal Republic in Germany and they consist of an assessment made by an independent expert commission as well as a statement from the Federal Government. The objective here is to provide continuous support for the age policy's decision-making processes.

The ageing reports serve as an important source for public discussion of policymaking in the ageing sector simultaneously they also contribute to expanding and spreading knowledge about the ageing processes and the living situations of older persons.

The following reports have been published since 2002:

- 4th Ageing Report 2002: Risks, quality of life and care for the older persons – With special consideration given to dementia
- 5th Ageing Report 2006: Potential of ageing in business and society – The contribution made by older persons to intergenerational cohesion

- 6th Ageing Report 2010: Social concepts of ageing
- 7th Ageing Report 2016: Concern and shared responsibility at the municipal level – Establishing and maintaining sustainable communities
- 8th Ageing Report 2020: Older persons and digitalisation

Article 3, paragraph 2, sentence 2 of the Basic Law, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, imposes the following obligation at all state levels: "The state shall promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and take steps to eliminate the disadvantages that now exist." One major guiding principle for all measures taken by the Federal Government is the application of gender mainstreaming. This is anchored in the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries in Section 2, as well as in the legal regulations listed in Section 42, paragraph 5 of the Rules of Procedure.

The creation of equal living conditions throughout Germany is one of the Federal Government's declared policy action targets. The Cabinet decree from 18 July 2018 resulted in the establishment of the "Equal Living Conditions" Commission. It was commissioned to develop recommendations for action based on a common understanding of equal living conditions, after taking into consideration the different regional developments and demographic changes in Germany. The Commission established six specialist task forces that presented analyses and recommendations. The Federal Government passed various targets and measures on 10 July, 2019 based on these factors and they included expanding the broadband and wireless networks, expanding the mobility and road infrastructures, revitalising villages and rural regions, promoting volunteer work and social activities, expanding accessibility options as well as promoting municipal cohesion and coexistence.

1 Acknowledging the potential of older persons

Since July 2020, the Federal Government has funded two model programmes for combating social isolation and loneliness among the older population. The one programme funds 29 projects that help older persons transition into retirement for two years, with funds from the ESF (European Social Fund). This ESF programme is expected to continue for an additional five years as from 2022 and fund up to 100 projects during the new funding period. The other programme will make low-threshold access easier to older persons experiencing loneliness and it will be implemented by the Malteser aid agency for four years.

The interim report of the policy for equal living conditions,⁵ released by the Federal Government on 21 April 2021, provides an overview of the implementation statuses of the measures. It also reveals where political action is needed.

Family carers have significantly helped in relieving the burden on the care system during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they were also subjected to additional stress as a result of the pandemic. Measures were implemented to alleviate this strain. Employees caring for a close relative were given the possibility to remain absent from work for up to 20 working days (instead of ten) in urgent care-related cases. The care support benefits were extended simultaneously. The Care Time Act and Family Care Time Act were also made more flexible temporarily until 31 December 2021, allowing for a shorter notification period for family care time, with more bureaucratic streamlining. Employees who have taken or are making use of (family) care leave on the basis of the special regulations under the COVID-19 pandemic can take (family) care leave for the remaining months up to the maximum or rather for the full duration.

Older persons, especially older women, contribute greatly to the promotion of inter- and intragenerational solidarity among family members through their manifold involvement, for example, caring for relatives and grandchildren, hospital visits, volunteer support for school meals (“Snack-time”, compare www.brotzeitfuerkinder.com), and low-threshold teaching of digital skills to other older persons (for example, “Digital Angel”, compare www.digitaler-engel.org).

Through its “Federal Ageing Plan” budgetary item, the Federal Government is supporting model programmes and project-implementing organisations that are helping to provide support to older persons to help them lead independent and equal lives within society. The fundamental and main priorities here are ensuring protection and help in old age, active participation, and activating older persons’ potential and providing assistance for older persons with disabilities so that they can independently participate in social life.

Suggestions are made through model programmes and the Federal Government is using them to help the municipalities to help themselves. These programmes are extensively tested to determine the extent to which participation opportunities can make a significant contribution to counteracting loneliness. The experience gained in this way will ultimately help to expand and adapt the policy activities for combating and preventing loneliness.

The Federal Government is also continuing to support the National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (BAGSO). This is the umbrella organisation for senior citizens’ organisations in Germany and it represents the interests of the older generations. It is committed to working towards an active, independent and ageing in the healthiest way possible with social security. It promotes a differentiated image of old age that includes various options for a longer life as well as times of vulnerability and need of care.

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⁵ <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/178222/7d7b9f258c195b5731d90b726bac7883/politik-fuer-gleichwertige-lebens-verhaeltnisse-zwischenbilanz-data.pdf>

The National Association of Senior Citizens Offices [Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Seniorenbüros e.V. (BaS)] also receives funding. This organisation has around 450 municipal senior citizens' offices as its members, all of which are committed to engagement and participation during old age. For example, it advises municipalities and independent sponsors about how to establish and develop senior citizens' offices, and it represents their interests at both Federal and State levels. It provides consultations, training and seminars and it also initiates projects that are implemented at local levels.

Germany's Senior Citizens' Day is the most important nationwide event covering the topic of ageing in Germany and it is held every third year. With a diverse range of events and an accompanying trade fair, it provides older persons and their family members with information and suggestions for a good life in old age. Policy-makers, associations and social representatives discuss topical matters covering seniors' employment and senior citizen policy.

Furthermore, the Federal Government also regularly exchanges information with the Federal States and leading municipal organisations about topics relating to its senior citizens policy and it also provides information about current measures and plans at the Federal level.

Supporting a positive image of older persons and acknowledging their contributions to society

The "New Images of Ageing" programme has been in place since 2010 and it can be found online at: www.programm-altersbilder.de.

This programme aims to create a positive and realistic image of older persons and it provides a platform for initiating and maintaining broad public discussions. Its aim is not only to show the effects that specific images of ageing have in different areas of life, but also to sensitise all social actors to the potentially negative effects of specific ageing images.

Its objective is to raise awareness of the vastly diverse lifestyles of older generations and to change the ideas about life in old age, whilst encouraging older persons to contribute their skills to society in a self-determined way. Young persons in particular are encouraged to reassess their perceptions of ageing. Willingness of younger and older generations to learn with and from each other is also promoted. Exchanging realistic perceptions of ageing will form a core aspect of mutual understanding as well as social cohesion. The programme also includes the "What's 'old' anyway?" travelling exhibition, which can be presented in German, English and French and is also shown abroad (www.whats-old-anyway.de).

The coronavirus pandemic has partially narrowed the view of old age once again. In view of the fact that older persons have proven to be particularly at risk of suffering severely in the event of infection, the changing of differentiated, potential-oriented images of old age have initially receded into the background. Older persons are once again being equated with illness, frailness and especially with the need for protection. Less focus is being placed on potential, resilience and capability – at least temporarily – yet again. The "Images of Ageing" programme is being continued for this reason.

Volunteering by younger and older persons

The Federal Volunteer Service (www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de) is an offer to women and men of any age to get involved outside of the workplace and school for the common good – especially in social, ecological and cultural matters, or in the athletics, integration, civil safety and disaster prevention sectors.

Volunteering is a worthwhile activity for everyone and it is highly beneficial to the volunteers themselves: young persons will gain practical experience and knowledge as well as be given an initial insight into the working world. Older persons can pass on their rich life experiences to others and through volunteering, they can stay active in topical issues even after retirement – or find new connections after their family phase. The volunteer office also benefits from dedicated support by volunteers.

Furthermore, the Federal, State and Municipal governments all support the volunteers and this contributes to a functioning community.

Development of intergenerational environments

The creation of intergenerational living and housing environments, including those for older persons, is very important to the Federal Government. The Federal and State Governments have been helping cities and municipalities resolve development deficits for 50 years through urban development support programmes. The overriding aim is to enable everyone to participate and exchange ideas in their social lives. This means that urban development funding must also cover the most barrier-free redesigning possible of the infrastructures in the cities and municipalities.

In particular, the “Social Cohesion” programme is a core urban development programme and it aims to increase the quality of living and life with a variety of uses in the relevant neighbourhoods, customised to meet the different needs of the people living in them. Measures for improving age-appropriate infrastructures will also be eligible for funding. Furthermore, these investment-related measures will aim to create lively neighbourhoods that will activate and integrate the neighbourhood residents. The neighbourhood administration, especially as part of its “caretaker role” and numerous other local actors will provide older persons with a variety of low-threshold services, such as workshops for improving their digital skills.

In addition to the urban development promotion programme, the “Social Integration in the Neighbourhood” investment agreement supported municipalities in developing a social infrastructure, with 200 million euros of annual federal funding from 2017 to 2020. The Federal Government’s investment agreement to sponsor athletic facilities (“Golden Plan”), which is a supplement to their urban development promotion programme, has helped to establish well-equipped and accessible athletic facilities as places for strengthening social cohesion and social integration and for promoting health among all age groups. In 2020, 150 million euros were provided in federal funds and a further 110 million euros in 2021.

Only 1.5 per cent of residences in Germany are currently barrier-free.⁶ This is why the Federal Government and the Reconstruction Loan Corporation are using the “Age-appropriate Conversion” programme to support private owners and tenants, regardless of income and age, in applying for allowances or loans to eliminate barriers in residential buildings and make structural anti-burglary alterations. Measures have been implemented in around 720,000 residential units since the programme began on 1 October 2010 (as of: of 7 July 2021).

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6 Federal Statistical Office, 2018 micro-census

However, the grant programme's funds have been exhausted since June 2021. The conversion or creation of community spaces in existing residential buildings with three or more residential units, which can also be used for care purposes, is one example of a measure that is eligible for a loan under this programme (Reconstruction Loan Corporation's own funds). Measures have been implemented in more than 226,000 residential units since the programme began on 1 April 2009.

An evaluation study of the programme predicts a supply gap of around two million age-appropriate homes by 2035. Based on scenarios developed in the study, the barrier-free conversion of apartments has made it possible to remain in the own home, and it is estimated that inpatient care costs of approximately 100 million euros have been saved annually (especially for private households and the statutory care insurance). Furthermore, funding during the 2014–2018 reporting period resulted in a total of approximately 6.8 billion euros being invested in existing buildings.⁷

The long-term care insurance fund can also pay – as needed and upon application – up to 4,000 euros as an allowance for adjustment measures for people grouped in care levels 1 to 5. These adaptation measures aim to enable or simplify at-home care, or to enable the person in need of care to return to independent living to the greatest extent possible. If several people in need of care live in one household, for instance in a residential group, then long-term care insurance can cover up to 16,000 euros.

With the “Shared Housing, Self-Determined Lives” programme and the 34 projects funded by it, the Federal Government has further stimulated communal forms of living that can help older persons lead independent lives. The “KIN (Knowledge, Information, Networks) for shared housing”⁸ service also provides knowledge, advice and networking nationwide to project initiatives that want to implement communal living projects. A pilot programme has already improved home living and relieved the burden on the relatives who were providing care. The “Living as Usual” programme has also addressed the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic and is focusing on inclusive construction and housing, mobility and the use of technical and digital aids that can make daily life easier for older persons and persons in need of care.

1.2 Germany's participation in relevant global/ UN-wide campaigns

Global Campaign to Combat Ageism

The Federal Government is participating in the WHO's Global Campaign to Combat Ageism.⁹ The Federal Government's activities go hand-in-hand with other MIPAA/RIS implementations in the Federal Republic of Germany. The Federal Government is planning to better consolidate the activities in this sector during the coming years and to implement nationwide steps for this campaign as well as for the WHO's Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030 at the federal level, and, if necessary, to develop a national action plan. This will involve a close exchange with the Federal States and leading municipal organisations.

7 <https://www.kfw.de/KfW-Konzern/KfW-Research/Evaluation-Altersgerecht-Umbauen.html>

8 <https://verein.fgw-ev.de/projekte-und-programme/wissen-informationen-netzwerke-win-fuer-gemeinschaftliches-wohnen>

9 <https://www.who.int/ageing/ageism/campaign/en/>

Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A)

Germany is an active participant in the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) meetings, and has contributed to debates and general discussions on the topic during the reporting period. In 2021, the delegation was led by the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. At the behest of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Germany and Austria jointly financed a study of the OHCHR on normative gaps in the protection of human rights in 2020.¹⁰ A German translation has been created to stimulate a debate at the national level.¹¹ This study was introduced as part of a side event in 2021 and it will be extensively discussed during the upcoming meetings of the OEWG-A. It provides a good initial basis for discussing implementation gaps as well as any regulatory gaps, and the possible solutions for closing these gaps.

1.3 Greatest success in the last 20 years

One of the greatest successes of the past 20 years in Germany is the sustainable funding of multi-generational homes (www.mehrgenerationen-haeuser.de), which has been continuously developed further since it was started in 2006. The approximately 530 multigenerational homes throughout the country are meeting places and contact points with low-threshold counselling, educational and recreational services open to everyone, and promote social participation and cohesion amongst generations and cultures. They provide a place for communal activities, promote volunteering among all age groups and strengthen social cohesion and social participation in the community.

Other successes that have contributed to empowering individuals to realise their lifelong potential during the past 20 years include the introduction of family care time, the establishment and expansion of the “Local Alliances for People with Dementia” and implementing the recommended actions listed in the Ageing Reports through various measures at all state levels.

Changes in attitudes and views towards ageing

The Federal Government has produced an Ageing Report in every legislative period. The results from the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth Ageing Reports illustrate the shift away from an ageing image characterised by deficits toward a differentiated image of ageing that focuses on potential.¹²

The independent Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency feels that there is a special need for action with regard to improving legal protection against age discrimination in the General Equal Treatment Act.

In the Third Joint Report by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency and the Federal Government and Parliamentary Commissioners from 2017¹³, numerous recommendations were made to improve access to discrimination protection that are also relevant with regard to age discrimination.

10 <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/documents/eleventh/OHCHR%20HROP%20working%20paper%202022%20Mar%202021.pdf>

11 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/185734/ef49e0de112cbd2ea63df833bcef8836/gaps-paper-data.pdf>

12 <https://www.achter-altersbericht.de/bisherige-berichte> and <https://www.achter-altersbericht.de>

13 <https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/was-wir-machen/bericht-an-den-bundestag/dritter-bericht/dritter-bericht-an-den-bundestag-node.html>

2 Promoting a longer working life and employability

2.1 The potential of employing older employees and for developing labour market strategies

Promoting opportunities for lifelong learning

The Federal Republic of Germany feels that lifelong learning goes far beyond occupational use and is individually and socially relevant even after employment and during the transition periods between employment and retirement.

Participation in further education in Germany has developed positively overall. General participation in further education amongst 50- to 64-year-olds has more than quadrupled since 1979. The originally large differences between older persons and groups of people of younger and middle employment ages have narrowed, but they are still present today. In 2018, 54 per cent of adults had participated in at least one further education measure within the previous 12 months and 50 per cent of 50- to 64-year-olds (2007: 34 per cent).

The promotion of further education in accordance with the Third Book of the German Social Code (SGB III) as a core element of active labour market policy supports education throughout one's entire life. With the Qualification Opportunities Act, which came into force in early 2019, the previous funding options were expanded and employees were granted access to vocational further education in accordance with SGB III and SGB II regardless of qualifications, age and company size. Since then, employees have been able to adapt and advance their occupational skills if they are employed in sectors that can be replaced by technology or if they are otherwise affected by structural changes or are seeking further training for an understaffed profession. With the Work of Tomorrow Act (in force since 2010), the funding conditions of the Qualification Opportunities Act have been further improved and a basic legal entitlement to belatedly obtain a vocational certificate was introduced.

Participation by older persons (over 55 years of age) in measures that promote vocational further training is increasing by around 30,000 participants annually (around 13 per cent more when compared to 2017).

The Decade of Literacy and Basic Education 2016–2026, implemented by the Federal and State Governments, supports the strengthening of adult literacy in various areas of life in order to promote opportunities for lifelong social participation.

Intergenerational access to advice on lifelong learning is provided through the “Further Education Advice Hotline”, which will focus more strongly on the learning needs, opportunities and fields for older persons in the future as a sort of “citizen service for lifelong learning”.

Combating unemployment, reducing financial inequalities and poverty, measures to reduce income discrepancies between women and men

The Federal Government has focused on support measures for the long-term unemployed that are oriented towards individual problem situations and strengths. The Activation, Advice and Opportunities networks (AAO network) initiated improvements in the consulting services in the job centres and established and promoted close cooperation between the Jobcenters and municipal supporters and other actors. Around half of all Jobcentres are involved in the AAO network approach.

The “Working Together” concept, was developed in 2018 based on prior experience. It uses an integrated approach to strengthening qualifications, placement and the reintegration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market, whilst simultaneously providing them with more employment options in the general or social labour markets. “Working Together” demonstrates the approach of considering social participation as a sub-objective of the Jobcenters’ integration efforts.

The core of the concept is the Participation Opportunities Act that came into force on 1 January 2021. It adds to the previous range of services listed in SGB II with two legal funding options for the long-term unemployed: the “Participation in the Labour Market” (Section 16i SGB II) regulatory instrument enables the long-term unemployed who are far outside the labour market to participate socially through wage

allowances paid to employers and additional vocational coaching. These employment relationships can be supported for up to five years. The “Integrating the Long-term Unemployed” instrument (Section 16e SGB II-new) provides employment opportunities in the general labour market to employable persons who are not too far outside the labour market but still need special support in the form of wage subsidies for employers and coaching for two years. The funding opportunities also highlight the relevant peoples’ skills and talents and this helps them by opening up new prospects in the labour market.

Both instruments are being successfully implemented and comprehensive evaluations are used to support the implementations. An initial interim report shows that the right target groups are being reached: around two thirds of the people sponsored under Section 16i SGB II are older than 45 and half of them have not completed a vocational training. Funding under Section 16e SGB II is directed at people of a somewhat younger age. Here, too, only about half of the funding recipients have completed vocational training. With regard to the specific needs for assistance, the first two years of the implementation have shown that an average of 67 per cent of funding recipients were able to stop receiving their SGB II benefits.

In August 2021, around 53,000 participants were employed in jobs supported under the Participation Opportunities Act and were now required to pay social insurance contributions. Funding remained stable despite the COVID-19 pandemic. This confirms that under the two regulations, wage subsidies and coaching are flexibly linked so that potential participants can be motivated to find work, whilst employers in the regular labour market can benefit from employing a target group that partially comes from very complex situations.

Refer to 2.2 for the measures concerning the reduction of income discrepancies between women and men.

Encouraging employers to value the experience of older workers and to hire and retain them

In order to combat unemployment, employees and jobseekers of all ages in Germany now have access to labour market policy benefits under SGB III, which includes active employment promotion benefits in addition to wage replacement benefits, if the legal requirements are met.

The objective of the law covering employment promotion is to counteract the occurrence of unemployment, reduce the unemployment period and maintain the balance of supply and demand in the training and labour markets. In particular, this should prevent long-term unemployment by improving individual employability. Equality between women and men will also be pursued as a universal principle of employment promotion.

The use of active employment promotion is based on integration strategies that have been developed together with the people seeking advice, employment or training. An individual's strengths and potential that are relevant for integration in the employment market are identified through this.

In Germany, people who do not meet the eligibility requirements for benefits under SGB III but are employable and in need, can receive benefits from the basic security for jobseekers under SGB II through the Jobcenters. The aim of SGB II is to enable persons to earn a living independently from the basic security benefits.

The Federal Employment Agency's joint employer service supports these activities. The employer service supports employers in filling job and training positions through consultations and placements. This also includes employers being open to the potential of applicant groups who are having a difficult time in the employment market, such as older persons, as well as opening up new employment opportunities for them. The employment agencies are supporting the integration of older job seekers into the working world with an integration allowance if their placement is more difficult due to personal reasons (for example poor qualifications, frequent unemployment or health problems) and their vocational integration requires funding. The allowance can amount to up to 50 per cent of the employment wages, but it is limited to a maximum of twelve months. The integration allowance can be paid to older employees who have reached the age of 50 for a maximum of 36 months.

Creating incentives for longer employment and more flexible retirement regulations

Pension law in Germany includes incentives for older employees to remain working in the labour market for longer. Flexible retirement is possible and current pension law allows for the beginning of retirement to be postponed beyond the normal retirement age. Voluntary retirement postponement is rewarded with a pension bonus of six per cent for each year.

Since 2017, the Flexible Pension Act has provided additional incentives to make the transition from employment to retirement more flexible. Its measures make it easier to work flexibly until reaching the normal retirement age and it also makes employment beyond the normal retirement age more attractive. The Act also addresses major objectives of the Federal Government's Demographics Strategy.

The effectiveness of these new regulations, especially their actual utilisation as well as their legal conditions, are currently being studied as part of an evaluation project. The results of this evaluation should be available no later than 2022.

Planning and implementing pension reforms

Since 2012, the statutory retirement age has been and continues to gradually being raised from 65 to 67. By increasing the normal retirement age to 67 years in the statutory pension insurance scheme, Germany has taken an important measure in realigning pension insurance with demographic developments. Raising the retirement age will also make an important contribution to stabilising long-term pension financing and maintaining the generational appropriateness of pension insurance. Against the background of demographic change, a longer working life is invaluable in counteracting the impending workforce deficit. The increase in the normal retirement age to 67 years also corresponds to the expected increase in life expectancy in Germany.¹⁴

As an individual basic pension supplement under the statutory pension insurance was implemented in 2021, the lifelong working performance of people who have paid obligatory statutory pension insurance contributions on the basis of below-average incomes during their working lives is acknowledged by this supplement. Pensioners who have acquired at least 33 years of basic pension time (this includes compulsory contribution time and consideration time for raising children and for unpaid care), and whose average contribution is between 30 per cent and 80 per cent of the respective average income nationwide, can obtain a bonus on top of their pension after an income test.

2.2 Measures for levelling the gender pay gap and closing the pension gap as well as measures that consider the situation of older women

The average pay gap between women and men in 2020 was 18 per cent when compared to gross hourly wages. This gender pay gap is narrower amongst younger age groups and widens going up to middle age, with long-term differences in independent old-age provisions. Special measures to help overcome the horizontal and vertical, gender-specific segregation in the employment market aid in abolishing unequal pay and ensuring that fair income prospects for women and men can be attained during their working lives.

In July 2020, the Federal Government adopted the first inter-ministry equality strategy. With this strategy the Federal Government determines, collects, promotes and coordinates the ministries' contributions to equality. The starting point of this strategy is the question of how women and men can live equally well from their incomes and still provide care during their working lives. Lifetime prospects also include life during old age. The Federal Government has included the joint objective of "Wage equality and independent, lifelong financial security" in its equality strategy and it has also devised twelve measures for achieving this objective. There are also measures that promote more women in management positions in private businesses and public service as well as equal participation in science, culture and politics, which will contribute to wage equality by reducing vertical segregation. The implementation progress of these measures is documented at www.gleichstellungsstrategie.de.

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14 <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/16/043/1604372.pdf>

The Wage Transparency Act came into force in Germany in July 2017 in order to better implement the equal and equivalent work requirement. It creates a clear legal basis for the equal wages principle, gives employees in businesses and agencies with more than 200 employees the right to disclosures about similar jobs and wages, imposes a reporting obligation under the German Commercial Code for employers with more than 500 employees to file status reports and it also requires private employers with more than 500 workers to conduct company wage assessments.

An initial evaluation of the Act was presented in July 2019. Whereas the right to disclosure was only used by a minority of employees, 45 per cent of companies surveyed conducted an assessment of their wage structures and 44 per cent of the companies surveyed that are required to submit reports fulfilled their reporting obligation. The Federal Government evaluated the action recommendations from the assessment and it is supporting the application of the Act through its “Promoting Wage Equality. Advising, Supervising, Strengthening companies” company programme.

The programme supports companies in establishing wage equality amongst women and men as the core of their company’s HR policy, which is part of a modern and gender-equal corporate culture from which both employees and the company will benefit. The programme’s components are:

- a website with information about wage equality and the programme, presentation of best-practice examples,
- regular company dialogues to discuss solution-based approaches and implementation difficulties,
- a competition, the German Equal Pay Award, for companies who have made progress towards better wage equality.

One of the causes of wage inequality is that women are less likely to hold management positions than men. The Management Positions Act II that came into force this summer refines the preceding Act in numerous areas with the aim of increasing the number of women in management positions. A minimum inclusion quota of one woman was implemented for certain boards of directors for large German companies and companies with a majority stake held by the Federal Government, and the goal of achieving equal participation of men and women by 2025 was set for public service management positions.

More than five million women under the age of 60 are not employed. Taking on care obligations has had a critical impact on the lifelong prospects of women with regard to the quality of their return to work and independently securing their livelihood with regard to their pension entitlements. With its “Prospects for Returning to Work” action programme, the Federal Government has supported people returning to work following family-related career interruptions since 2008. Returning to work and compatibility are not individual events, but rather processes that are heavily influenced by one’s personal (professional) goals, circumstances, and the relevant system. Specific customised services provided under the ESF (European Social Fund) model programme are needed in order to meet the complexity of these processes. Approximately 65 per cent of participants have been integrated into employment, self-employment or gained qualifications during the current ESF funding period.

Despite an increase in the amount of care provided by fathers, mothers still continue to undertake the majority of parenting work. Many women forgo part of their incomes and pension entitlements for this family work. Time spent on parenting is now considered in the pension calculation to compensate for this. The consideration of time spent on parenting has been improved through the Pension Insurance, Benefit Improvement and Stabilisation Act. As of 1 January 2019, mothers or fathers who have raised children will receive half an earnings point more, that is, 2.5 earnings points for each child born before 1992.

Perspectively, suitable measures must be implemented to work towards a balanced division of paid work and unpaid care between women and men.

Under Germany's presidency, the European Council in December 2020 adopted the conclusions from "Combating the Gender-specific Pay Gap: Evaluating and Sharing Paid Work and Unpaid Care, Nursing and Housework", which call on the EC and EU member states to make possible the balanced sharing of paid work and unpaid care work between women and men, as well as to improve public infrastructures and the availability of external services for "outsourcing" care work.

It is mainly women who take on the care work within the family. Employment is often reduced or given up because of this. This is now taken into consideration in care insurance: caregivers have been subject to compulsory pension insurance under certain conditions since the introduction of long-term care insurance in 1995. The payment of pension insurance contributions through the long-term care insurance is a very important measure towards promoting and supporting home care, and especially in supporting caretaking relatives. The recognition of care in pension insurance was further improved in 2017 by the Second Care Support Acts and improvements in social security for caretakers were also improved.

Periods of unpaid care of at least ten hours per week (until 31 December 2016: 14 hours per week), regularly spread over at least two days per week, is now considered to be care contribution time in statutory pension insurance. As care periods are now being taken into consideration, considerably more caretakers now have claims to the payment of pension insurance contributions. The condition here is that the caregiver does not work for more than 30 hours per week. The amount of the pension insurance contributions paid by the care insurance to caregivers is based on the care level (2 to 5) and the type of benefit received (only care benefits, only outpatient care benefits or combined benefits). The highest pension coverage is based on 100 per cent of the amount of benefits received (until 31 December 2016: 80 per cent), which is only slightly below the pension entitlement of an average earner.

Since an individual basic pension supplement was introduced in the statutory pension insurance in 2021, it is women who have benefitted to a large extent as they often worked in positions that were not as well paid or only worked part-time due to family obligations. In the year that it was introduced, women made up approximately 70 per cent of people entitled to the basic pension.

2.3 Greatest success in the last 20 years

The introduction of the Care Time Act and the Family Care Time Act are amongst the most important successes of the past 20 years in Germany. The aim of the Acts is to improve compatibility between care and work for employees. With the Act for Better Compatibility of Family, Care and Work, major changes were made to improve the compatibility between care and work in the Care Time Act, Family Care Time Act and SGB XI, which came into force on 1 January 2015 to make it easier for employees to care for a close relative at home in addition to their employment. This applies to many employees.

Long-term employability largely depends on employees having a good education and good qualifications. This is why further developments in promoting advanced vocational training and the positive developments seen in participation in vocational training are being especially emphasised (compare also 2.1). General participation in further training amongst people aged between 50 and 64 has more than quadrupled since 1979 and this ensures sustainable employment.

The law covering the promotion of employment also includes many services that counteract unemployment, shorten the duration of unemployment and promote equality in the labour market. The most suitable service or combination of services must be selected for each individual case when choosing from the available services. The skills of the people being assisted, the absorption capacities of the labour market and the documented needs for action in the labour market must be taken into consideration for all age groups.

3 Ensuring ageing with dignity

3.1 Measures

Protecting the exercising of all human rights by older persons and their dignity, and promoting their independence, self-determination and social participation

Older persons are more likely to need more frequent assistance than younger persons, especially with regard to legal matters. If they are unable to entirely or partially manage their legal affairs on their own due to a mental illness or a disability and they are unable to obtain other forms of assistance for this, then a legal guardian must be appointed for older persons. The reform of the Care Act through the Act to Reform the Right to Guardianship and the Care Act, which will come into force on 1 January 2023, is aimed towards better preservation of the right to self-determination of the person concerned, both during the preceding period and during the guardianship. In particular, it will be more clearly regulated so that the guardianship will primarily ensure support for the relevant person in the management of their affairs through their own, self-determined actions and the legal guardian is only to represent the relevant person if guardianship becomes necessary. The priority of the wishes of the person being cared for is standardised as the central measure of the care law and it applies

equally to the legal guardian's actions, the suitability of the legal guardian and the exercising of legal supervision. The changes in the law are also intended to ensure that the person concerned is better informed and more involved in all stages of the guardianship process, especially the legal decision regarding whether and how to appoint a legal guardian, selecting the specific legal guardian and the monitoring of the guardianship by the guardianship court.

Supporting the necessary infrastructure and assisting in preventing abuse or violence against older persons

For several years now, the State and Federal Prevention of Criminal Activities by Law Enforcement programme has worked to prevent fraud attempts directed at older persons (this includes the grandchild scam, door-to-door sales, false prize promises made over the phone). The website at: www.polizei-beratung.de contains extensive information about the specific scams as well as tips and tricks for protecting yourself against them. Numerous brochures and information sheets have also been created for older persons as well as relatives and groups who work with older persons.

The care hotline of the Federal Government provides specific assistance to caregiving relatives. Experts staffing the care hotline provide advice on numerous different questions so that relatives do not feel that they have been left alone with their domestic care responsibilities. This also prevents abuse and violence in care. The hotline is open Monday to Friday, between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at +49 30 20179131 and via e-mail at info@wege-zur-pflege.de. The phone advice conversations are anonymous and confidential and they provide relatives with specific support for their individual situation. The experts can also provide information about other advice and assistance services available in the caller's area.

The nationwide "Violence against Women" helpline was established in March 2013. Available at +49 8000 166 016, it provides confidential, free, around-the-clock assistance and support. A chat and e-mail advice service is also available on the website at: www.hilfetelefon.de. The female counsellors are qualified professionals with experience in advising women suffering from violence. The help line's advice service provides advice about all forms of violence against women, especially marital and partner violence, sexual assaults and rape, sexual harassment, stalking, forced marriage, human trafficking, and forced prostitution.

The evidence-based "Practical Guideline for Preventing Measures that Inhibit Freedom in Professional Care for Older Persons" summarises the knowledge available to professional care personnel, describes the applicable care quality standards and serves as a guide for actions and decision-making.

Promoting the development of innovative methods and services

Digitalisation provides all of us with many opportunities to make our social lives better and easier, especially for older persons. The condition

for this is that everyone has access to digital services, understands how they work and feels safe using them. Access to digital media and using the potential of digitalisation is an important prerequisite for ensuring that older persons can actively and independently participate in social life for as long as possible. This has also been confirmed by the 8th Ageing Report.

The Federal Government has implemented a number of measures to improve access to digital services by older persons.

The service centre "Digitalisation and Education for Older People" run by BAGSO has been financed by the Federal Government since 2017. This service is a national point of contact for older persons. By using the online information portal at: www.wissensdurstig.de, they can find, from a nationwide event database, informational services in their area as well as tips and materials for digitalisation and training. One of the aims of the service centre is to make training services accessible to people who cannot be organised in networks and/or reached through the usual local services, such as older persons in care homes or those with disabilities.

The expert advisory board, established in 2018 at the recommendation of the "Roundtable on Active Ageing", is a forum for critical exchanging of information about new developments in the digitalisation sector and training for older persons and it also provides specialist impetus for more extensive discussions between different target groups. It consists of 16 experts from the science, business, policy and civil society sectors. The expert advisory board has set the following priorities: consolidating specialist expertise from policy, practice and science on the issue of "digitalisation and training for older persons"; further development of "digitalisation for older persons" and "training for older persons".

“Digital Angel – secure, practical, helpful” is a programme that the Federal Government has sponsored since 2019 to increase digital participation by older persons. A mobile advisory team from “Deutschland sicher im Netz e.V.” teaches everyday digital skills to older persons at home, especially in rural areas. Explanatory videos were produced and telephone and electronic consultation sessions were provided during the coronavirus pandemic. Online events about topics such as “Communicating on the internet”, “Welcome to the digital world” and “Smartphone and tablet basics” were held for older persons. “Digital Angel” has had a Facebook presence since 18 June 2021 so that older persons can be reached by their children and/or grandchildren.

On 17 August 2021, the Federal Government, together with BAGSO and ten partners, initiated the Digital Pact for Older Persons.¹⁵ This joint initiative between the Federal, State and Municipal Governments, business, science and civil society aims to improve self-determined and independent living during old age in those areas of life defined in the 8th Ageing Report as “living environments”: housing, mobility, social integration, health and care, and social spaces/neighbourhoods. During the launch event for the Digital Pact, the company competition *Seniorenfreundlich. Digital.Erfolgreich*¹⁶ was initiated. An award is given to companies that have already made exemplary efforts to include older consumers in the digitalisation of their products. In the run-up to the event, 100 local actors who provide manufacturer-independent experience and test areas for new technology were selected and received micro-funding for their technical equipment.

The www.digitalpakt-alter.de internet platform and a Pact campaign that focuses on the opportunities provided by digitalisation illustrate the many good approaches that already exist to improving digital participation by older persons at all levels.

The Federal Government has also initiated a coronavirus project with multigeneration homes that have shown how flexibly and individually they have responded to the current situation and the needs of the people living in these homes during the pandemic. Many services were implemented remotely or sometimes in digital formats, and advisory and interpersonal exchanges took place over the phone and online so that people who were temporarily unable to come to the multigeneration home due to the contact restrictions could still be reached. Furthermore, multigeneration homes have organised and implemented many neighbourhood aid programmes that provide support to older persons particularly affected by the contact restrictions. In 2021, as in the previous year, the Federal Government provided additional funds of up to 1,000 euros per home to help them develop additional remote services to be able to reach older persons through establishing and expanding digital contact infrastructures.

Under the “MGH – communicative & digital” motto the association for social cultural work has provided the multigeneration homes with specialist support in various advice and communication formats.

15 <https://www.bagso.de/themen/digitalisierung/digitalpakt-alter>

16 <https://www.digitalpakt-alter.de/unternehmenswettbewerb/>

Raising quality standards for cohesive care, healthcare and social services and continually adjusting the status, training and working conditions for care personnel

The Federal Government has implemented care profession reforms to make them more attractive and sustainable.

The training to become a care professional in Germany has been fundamentally reorganised under the Care Professions Act. The objectives were to initiate modern and transparent caregiver training, further improve the quality of care and make the care professions more attractive.

The core of the Care Professions Act is a three-year general training course that leads to a “Care Professional” qualification. The new, general care training course gives trainees the skills to care for people of all age groups in all care areas. The new qualification has been integrated into the system that automatically recognises professional qualifications in the EU. The absence of tuition fees, the guarantee of claiming an appropriate training allowance and the possibility of higher-level care training make the training course more attractive. This occupation has been significantly improved through the new regulating of reserved duties that can only be undertaken by qualified care professionals. The new care training course commenced in 2020 under the Care Professions Act.

The Federal Government launched the Vocational Training Initiative for the Care Sector (2019–2023) in order to help implement the new care training courses. The partners in this vocational training initiative include the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Ministry of Health; the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; as well as the federal and state actors and associations involved in care for older persons, children and ill persons.

A major objective of the Vocational Training Initiative for the Care Sector (2019–2023) is to increase both the average number of trainees and the number of training facilities by ten per cent within the duration of the initiative. One of the 111 measures agreed upon is the nationwide “Make a career as a person!” information and public relations campaign.

The initial implementation report about the Vocational Training Initiative for the Care Sector (2019–2023) was released on 13 November 2020.¹⁷

The Care Training Offensive is part of the Concerted Action for Nursing that was initiated in 2018 by the Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Concerted Action for Nursing created the basis – in consensus with the relevant actors for gradually improving the conditions under which care professionals work. It aims to motivate more people to enter or return to this responsible profession or to increase their part-time share. Numerous measures were agreed upon with the relevant actors in 2019 that cover training, personnel management, occupational safety, promoting health, innovative care methods, digitalisation, acquiring of care professionals from abroad and wage conditions in the care sector.

The partners of the Concerted Action for Nursing continued to work on the agreed measures during the COVID-19 pandemic as well. Particularly noteworthy, here, are the roadmap for preparing for the implementation of a binding personnel evaluation instrument to be used in long-term inpatient care, that was published in February 2021,¹⁸ and the Fourth Care Working Conditions Act that came into force on 1 May 2020. This Act will be used to noticeably increase the minimum wage for professional caregivers to 12.55 euros an hour in eastern and western Germany in four stages. A minimum wage of 15 euros an hour for professional caregivers was also initially introduced on 1 July 2021. Professional caregivers in

17 https://www.pflegeausbildung.net/fileadmin/de.altenpflegeausbildung/content.de/user_upload/Erster_Bericht_Ausbildungsoffensive_Pflege_barrierefrei.pdf

18 https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/fileadmin/Dateien/3_Downloads/K/Konzertierte_Aktion_Pflege/Roadmap_zur_Einfuehrung_eines_Personalbemessungsverfahrens.pdf

eastern Germany will especially benefit from the new minimum wage for professional caregivers. Under the Health Care Development Act, wages determined under the collective agreement tariff for professional caregivers who look after older persons and a nationwide personnel evaluation process for fully inpatient care facilities were both implemented. The main results from the consultations about the strategy process for inter-professional cooperation within the health-care and care sectors were also implemented. Professional caregivers will now be given more decision-making powers under the Equipment and Care Equipment Act as well as in suitable service areas covering home nursing. Model projects in which medical activities can be assigned to professional caregivers were also launched. This will enable the caregivers to use their specialised skills for the best possible care of their patients as well as other persons in need of care and be more involved in the care responsibilities.

Further information on the implementation statuses of the agreements can be found in the “Second Report on the Implementation Statuses of the Agreements of Work Groups 1 to 5” from August 2021,¹⁹ which covers the current implementation statuses of the contributions made by the partners of the Concerted Action for Nursing for increasing the attractiveness of the care profession and improving the working conditions.

Numerous Federal Government and legislative measures implemented in recent years have aimed at ensuring and further improving the quality of care services and, therefore, the quality of life of older persons. The most important measures include developing and introducing new quality systems for inpatient and outpatient care.

The Care Personnel Enhancement Act that was issued on 11 December 2018 introduced specific regulations for initiating the new quality system in fully inpatient facilities in 2019.

In accordance with the statutory mandate, the quality of the results will play a much more important role in the new inpatient quality system. A new main component is the care results from all of the residents, which will be recorded every six months by the care homes and which will be based on ten quality indicators. The “Occurrence of bedsores” indicator is used to determine the frequency of bedsores amongst the residents in the relevant care home. The results are published and they can be compared against the average from all of the care homes in Germany. The newly conceived annual, external quality evaluations conducted by the Medical Services and the Private Health Insurance auditing service are based on this data on quality. Overall the new inpatient quality system is a considerable development of internal quality assurance, external quality audits and quality reporting.

New instruments for measuring and evaluating the quality of services, and quality reporting have also been developed for outpatient care. A comprehensive, scientifically monitored practical test has also been conducted. Based on the results of this practical test, the new quality instruments for outpatient care are currently being revised at the order of the Care Self-Administration authority before they are implemented on a mandatory nationwide basis.

19 https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/fileadmin/Dateien/3_Downloads/K/Konzertierte_Aktion_Pflege/KAP_Zweiter_Bericht_zum_Stand_der_Umsetzung_der_Vereinbarungen_der_Arbeitsgruppen_1_bis_5.pdf

The medical service of the National Association of Health Insurance Funds is legally obliged to summarise experiences with quality audits of outpatient care services and inpatient care facilities through submitting reports²⁰ at regular intervals. These reports are based on approximately 28,000 audits conducted every year. Overall, according to the National Association of Health Insurance Funds, there have been considerable improvements in care quality since care quality reporting was introduced in 2004.

A new process, PSG II, for determining care requirements was introduced in 2017. It focuses on independence and self-determination for those in need of care. Accordingly, the need for care is based on cognitive, physical or mental impairments to independence and capabilities, because of which help from others is required. Care, in turn, aims to maintain or regain cognitive, physical or mental capabilities of the persons in need of care, whilst enabling the most independence and self-determination that is possible. The new quality systems for inpatient and outpatient care are based on this understanding of care and need for care. Quality assurance is also used to determine the extent to which care is oriented to the needs and requirements of those in need of care and how their abilities and, therefore, their independence, are maintained and supported. This means that quality assurance is based on the same care principles as the audit process and it also promotes the independence and self-determination of those in need of care.

Support for research

The Federal Government is supporting research into individual and demographic ageing processes in many ways in order to better meet the needs of ageing societies. This is why the Federal Government is providing institutional funding to the German Centre for Ageing (www.dza.de). The Centre for Ageing's studies focus on social participation during a person's lifetime and especially in the second half of this person's life. The knowledge gained from them forms the basis for social reporting and policy advice.

The Centre for Ageing also produces the German Ageing Survey. This is a long-term study into the changes in living situations and the ageing processes that people undergo during the second halves of their lives. This is based on nationwide surveys of representative cross-section and profile surveys of several thousands of participants who were at least 40 years of age or older. Written surveys were conducted during the summer of 2020 for the German Ageing Survey, covering the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the everyday lives and the living situations of people during the second halves of their lives. The results are continuously evaluated and the main focal areas are published.²¹

Another Centre for Ageing study is the German Volunteer Survey. This is a representative survey about volunteering in Germany, aimed at 14-year-olds or older. Voluntary activities and the willingness to get involved are noted during telephone interviews and they are used to represent population groups and specific regions. The volunteer survey forms an essential basis for voluntary activities in all age groups and this included older persons.

20 <https://www.mds-ev.de/richtlinien-publikationen/pflegequalitaet/mds-pflege-qualitaetsberichte.html>

21 <https://www.dza.de/en/research/fdz/german-ageing-survey>

A study into older persons will be carried out in Germany for the first time. This can partly be attributed to the suggestions in the MIPAA, UNECE RIS as well as the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. An increasing number of people in Germany are reaching old and very old ages, but little is known about their living situations. The German Ageing Survey: Old Age in Germany (80+) intends to comprehensively describe the living situations and quality of living of people who are 80 years old or older. Results are expected to be published at the end of 2022.

Clinical studies, systematic overviews and research projects looking at methodical questions with special focus on older persons and very old patients are being supported under the “Healthy – for Life” funding initiative. Its aim is to close existing knowledge and evidence gaps in the care of older persons and very old patient groups in particular as well as contributing to the further development of clinical research in this special sector.

The Federal Government is also funding geriatric and gerontological research through various measures to overcome the existing challenges of an ageing society as well as to be able to use and shape the potential of ageing. The “Strengthening Research in Geriatrics and Gerontology” funding measure considers the needs of older persons in general, as well as the specific needs of older patients. Incentives will be created for undertaking research into ageing in Germany, and sustainable profile building at select university locations in the geriatrics and gerontology sectors will also be supported. This support will take the form of specific research projects carried out by newly established professorship and junior research

groups. The “Studies Into Care Research for Older And Very Old Persons” funding measure, which is part of the “Healthy – for Life” funding initiative, includes concepts for the care and nursing that are being developed and evaluated under everyday conditions. These concepts take into consideration the special needs and requirements of this target group. Functionality, self-determination, social participation and health-related quality of living are the main priorities. Questions about individual and demographic ageing processes are also being addressed in specific research projects as part of open topic support measures, such as preventive research.

Through its participation in SHARE – the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (www.share-project.org) – Germany is ensuring that it is included in a European research infrastructure that is studying health-related, social, economic and environmental aspects of life for European citizens. SHARE reflects the entire lifespan of the survey participants and it primarily examines the extent to which social, economic and health measures have shaped peoples’ lives.

In the human-technology interaction sector²² the Federal Ministry of Education and Research is focusing on researching and developing user-friendly technology. Innovations for care that mainly provide better assistance for older persons have been and are being developed as part of this research. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research’s “Care Innovations 2020” initiative has addressed the digitalisation potential for ensuring high-quality, needs-based care, whereas “Care Innovations 2030” is the Federal Ministry of Education and Research’s initiative for providing sustainable support for using care technology to improve the quality of work and life for those in need of care.

22 https://www.bmbf.de/SharedDocs/Publikationen/de/bmbf/pdf/technik-zum-menschen-bringen-broschuere.pdf?__blob=publication-File&v=2

Cross-border research consortiums are also supporting age-friendly innovations through the “More Years, Better Lives” Joint Programming Initiative (JPI MYBL), which is part of the “Ageing in Digital Living Environments” research notice.

To support the effectiveness of municipal and regional organisational capacities and to make tangible improvements for local people, the “Innovations for Municipalities and Regions in Demographic Change” demographics competition aims to address the specific needs of older persons through innovations in the research and development of digitalisation and interactive technologies through cooperation in science and practice.

Furthermore, the Federal Institute for Population Research (www.bib.bund.de) and the Federal Statistical Office (www.destatis.de) both ensure that various indicators relevant to age research are documented. The Federal Government also supports a number of other research projects.

Promoting participation by persons with dementia and their informal caregivers

From 2020 to 2026, 162 measures will be implemented as part of the National Dementia Strategy²³ to sustainably improve the situation of persons with dementia and their relatives in Germany in all areas of life. The measures in field of action 1 particularly aim to establish and expand structures for the social participation of persons with dementia in their place of residence. This will also include the dementia-sensitive design of social spaces, the creation of suitable mobility services and the strengthening of voluntary involvement. The latter is intended to give persons with dementia, especially those who live alone, as well as caregiving relatives the opportunity to participate in society and social life.

A central goal is to establish and expand professional and volunteer-based dementia networks. Five new waves of funding will be implemented from 2020 to 2026 as part of the “Local Alliances for Persons with Dementia” federal programme²⁴ to expand the 500 local alliances established since 2012 with an additional 150 dementia networks in areas where only few structures exist. Under Section 45c para. 9 of SGB XI, funds from social care insurance and (proportionally) private compulsory care insurance amounting to ten million euros per year have been used to support regional networks since 1 January 2017. This has helped to establish numerous self-organised regional networks throughout Germany in recent years, in which the local actors involved in assisting persons in need of care can work together and network in a structured way. A new regulation in the Further Development of Healthcare Services Act has doubled the amount of funding available every year, so that a total of 20 million euros is now available every year to fund regional networks. The maximum funding amount per network and the possible number of funded networks per district or urban municipality will also be increased. The nationwide establishment and expansion of these various help and support networks are an important foundation to ensure that persons with dementia and their relatives remain part of society and, if needed, can rely on help and support systems or even help shape them.

The Federal Government, in cooperation with Deutsche Alzheimer-Gesellschaft Selbsthilfe e.V., is also promoting dementia awareness amongst the population through Dementia Friends training seminars²⁵ that teach the general public, public transportation personnel, retail workers, banking personnel, fire departments and law enforcement officers about how to deal with persons with dementia. Informational and advisory services for those interested or affected are being further expanded.²⁶ Religious communities will become increasingly involved in this topic so that persons with dementia and their relatives can continue

23 <https://www.nationale-demenzstrategie.de/english>; https://www.nationale-demenzstrategie.de/fileadmin/nds/pdf/2021-01-05_Nationale_Demenzstrategie_EN.pdf

24 <https://www.wegweiser-demenz.de/wwd/aktiv-werden/lokale-allianzen>

25 <https://www.demenz-partner.de>

26 <https://www.wegweiser-demenz.de>, <https://www.deutsche-alzheimer.de/angebote-zur-unterstuetzung/alzheimer-telefon>

their religious lives. Cultural, sport and training institutions and facilities will also develop and implement concepts that include persons with dementia and their caregiving relatives to further enable them to participate in society.

Respect for the self-determination, independence and dignity of older persons, towards the end of their lives

A society with a long lifespan is characterised by an increasing need for hospice care, palliative medical and care services as well as psychosocial and, if applicable, spiritual support. Facilitating self-determination and dignity at the end of someone's life and supporting their relatives and loved ones are challenging tasks. It places high demands on comprehensive, multi-professional and networked outpatient and inpatient hospice and palliative care systems. The Federal Government supports the targeted further development and improvement of hospice and palliative care, especially with regard to older persons so that all terminally ill and dying persons can receive the care they need in the environment they want to be in.

From 2021–2023, the centre for palliative medicine at the University Hospital of Cologne will be developing innovative, digital informational and training services for dealing with the desire to die or death wishes in conversations during inpatient care for older persons, during voluntary hospice support (outpatient hospice services) as well as during home care or providing support. Digital synchronous and asynchronous training modules about working with death wishes during palliative and hospice care, after they have been developed and after the pilot phase, should help care professionals working with older persons and volunteers in end-of-life care nationwide, especially in the form of qualification and awareness-raising measures. These modules will cover theoretical

knowledge about death wishes, legal parameters, communicating death wishes, reflecting on the caregivers' attitudes, interactive exchanging of personal experiences (for example in outpatient vs. inpatient settings), devising reactions in worst-case scenarios and considering the relatives' and volunteers' views in all types of communications.

The Federal Government also supports implementing the action recommendations of the Care Charter for Terminally Ill and Dying Persons in Germany²⁷ by funding the Coordination and Networking Centre for Hospice and Palliative Care Services in Germany through the German Association for Palliative Medicine.²⁸ This office is responsible for supporting the establishing and expanding of networks at municipal level, supporting all of the actors in hospice and palliative care in implementing the main focal points (for example hospice culture and palliative expertise in inpatient facilities) as well as targeted media work.

The central tenet of the Charter for Terminally Ill and Dying Persons is the right to die in dignified conditions. The handling recommendations in the Charter aim to provide everyone with the high-quality, multi-professional hospice and palliative care and support that they need at the end of their lives regardless of underlying illness, their personal circumstances, where they are staying or their place of residence. Based on this, the Federal Government supports the objective of transferring the action recommendations to actual outpatient and inpatient care and service, science, training institutions and the general public.

27 <https://www.charta-zur-betreuung-sterbender.de>

28 <https://www.koordinierung-hospiz-palliativ.de>

The Federal Government is funding the “Young Volunteers in Terminal and Grieving Assistance Services” project, that is coordinated by the Malteser Hilfsdienst e.V.²⁹ from 2018 to 2022, in order to recruit and allow them to qualify for hospice services against the background of technical and demographic challenges. The current curricula for the so-called proficiency course will also be evaluated and adjusted as necessary. Young adults at twelve locations (local project services) are actively involved. The project will be scientifically evaluated in the form of so-called process monitoring and support. The project’s intended results, apart from recruiting young adults, are documented adaptation and expansion of the existing curricula, discussing hospice services with regard to developing voluntary work in hospices, acquiring knowledge about how to recruit young adults in the future, including any necessary adjustments to organisational and practical forms of hospice work. The project will finish with a symposium.

From December 2020 and until the end of 2023, the Federal Government will be funding structural investment measures for expanding and developing semi-inpatient services, like day and night hospices as well as outpatient living, through its “Dying at Home” pilot programme. Its aim is to give older as well as ill persons the opportunity to be kept at the centre of their lives at home for as long as possible. This aims to relieve families and caregiving relatives whilst strengthening hospice and palliative care work. The programme supports structural investment measures as well as outfitting measures. It is backed by innovative, conceptual approaches based on the legal requirements for hospice and palliative care, the Housing Contract and Care Act as well as the basic principles of the Care Charter for Terminally Ill and Dying Persons in Germany. Technical and organisational support is provided through the “Forum for Communal Living”. Scientific monitoring of the measure is planned to start in late 2021.

The EAPC’s (European Association for Palliative Care) 16th “Global Palliative Care – Shaping the Future” global congress was held in Berlin in 2019 with more than 3,000 participants, where a broad range of palliative care services were discussed (internationally, the term palliative care covers both work in hospices and palliative care). One area of focus was the care of older persons with special consideration being given to voluntary work in Germany. An international symposium with approximately 400 participants was also held in advance of the Congress.³⁰ EAPC members DGP, DHPV, and the Austrian Hospice Association worked together in preparing and holding the symposium. International input was provided by experts from Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Serbia, India and South Africa. By sponsoring the symposium, the Federal Government successfully worked towards an international exchange on types of organisation and engagement as well as problems when recruiting volunteers in light of the volunteer study conducted by DHPV and the European Volunteering Charter “Voice of Volunteering – the EAPC Madrid Charter on Volunteering in Hospice and Palliative Care”.³¹

The Federal Government also supports the distribution of preventive information materials on the subject of suicide. The “Older Persons” working group in the National Suicide Prevention Programme (www.suizidpraevention.de) has created a brochure in four languages (German, English, French and Polish) for people experiencing a life crisis, as well as relatives and other trusted people who know older persons at risk of suicide, as well as people who work professionally or volunteer with older persons.³²

29 <https://www.malteser.de/hospizarbeit/junge-menschen-in-begleitungen.html>

30 https://www.dgpalliativmedizin.de/images/190525_Programm_Ehrenamt_in_der_Hospiz_und_Palliativversorgung.pdf

31 See <https://docplayer.org/204266683-Berichtsband-internationales-symposium-das-ehrenamt-in-der-hospiz-und-palliativversorgung-herausforderungen-und-chancen.html>

32 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/wenn-das-altwerden-zur-last-wird-96012>

3.2 Greatest success in the last 20 years

The “Charter on the Rights of Persons in Need of Assistance and Care” is a generally understandable and practical catalogue that defines the rights and needs of persons in need of care in eight articles. They also include the right to advice, information, self-determination, participation in social life as well as the right to personal end-of-life care. The dignity of the individual is always the top priority.

The Charter was prepared by the “Round Table on Care” from 2003 to 2005. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs ratified the Charter together with the Federal Ministry of Health, the State and Municipal Governments, care facility providers, welfare associations, private financiers and care insurance providers.

The contents of the Charter, together with the recommendations for action from the “Round Table on Care” have since been integrated into legislation. The essential rights of persons in need of care, which are listed in the Charter, were operationalised in the Care Insurance Act (Eleventh Social Code Book) to ensure and further improve the quality of care. Care insurance providers were also authorised to develop instruments for auditing the quality of the services provided by the inpatient care facilities.

The new quality system for inpatient facilities was launched in 2019. Numerous facilities and services now use the charter as a quality management instrument or to support their daily working routines. There are also extensive training materials available for care profession training. The “Charter on the Rights of Persons in Need of Assistance and Care” was the model for the “European Charter of Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons in Need of Help and Care” (2010) and the European “WeDo” partnership (“For the Wellbeing and Dignity of Older Persons”).³³

During Germany’s presidency of the European Council (July December 2020), the Council adopted a range of conclusions concerning “Human rights, participation and well-being of older persons in the Era of Digitalisation”.³⁴ The Council’s conclusions about ageing, adopted for the first time in over ten years, will form a work programme for the EU’s member states for the coming years.

An independent expert working for the United Nations for the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons³⁵ releases regular reports on the situation of older persons. These reports provide important proposals concerning the situation of older persons’ human rights.

33 <https://www.age-platform.eu/project/wedo-wellbeing-and-dignity-older-people>

34 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11717-2020-REV-2/en/pdf>

35 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/olderpersons/ie/pages/ieolderpersons.aspx>



Part

C

Healthy and Active Ageing in a
Sustainable World

1

The contribution of ageing-related policies to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its sustainable development goals

The last Voluntary National Review (VNR) was published on 19 July 2021. With regard to the implementation of SDG 3, special emphasis was placed on digitalisation in the healthcare sector in

order to ensure that everyone gets the best possible care, even those in structurally weak areas, and to respond to the challenges of demographic change.³⁶

2

Conclusions from dealing with the consequences for and impacts on older persons in emergency situations: the COVID-19 pandemic

2.1 Negative impacts on older persons due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Older persons were negatively affected by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in a number of ways, such as through loneliness caused by restrictions on receiving visitors and on community services in care homes or because

of restrictions on visiting services and voluntary care programmes.

Older persons were more often affected by COVID-19 than younger persons as a result of hospital treatments, as shown in the 2020 DRG statistic results. According to these statistics, the number of people over 80 years of age undergoing hospital treatment increased continuously from 17.2 per cent in 2016 to 20.2 per cent in the 2020 reporting year.

36 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/279522021_VNR_Report_Germany.pdf

The number of 80 year olds or older people whose deaths were reported in 2020 was 58.7 per cent, which is higher than in previous years (2019: 57.0 per cent; 2018: 56.2 per cent; 2017: 55.5 per cent; 2016: 54.1 per cent).

The number of 80-year olds or older people who died was 8.0 per cent higher in 2020 than in 2019. The total number of deaths in 2020 increased by 4.9 per cent. The percentage of the population of 80 year olds or older people was 4.5 per cent higher in 2020 than in the previous year.

Age-specific death rates, in which the deaths within an age group are compared against the population of the relevant age group, show that mortality increased for both genders in 2020 when compared to 2019, especially in people over 75 years of age.³⁷

2.2 Difficult healthcare decisions

The COVID-19 pandemic is highly dynamic and many aspects of battling the pandemic are unprecedented and unpredictable. The Federal Government has been guided in its actions by the conviction that protecting the public's health is of special importance. The basic right to life and physical integrity is not only a subjective right of defence against state interventions, but also includes the duty to protect and support the life of an individual while also protecting against impairments to the individual's physical health and well-being.

Since the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus started to spread in Germany, the federal and state governments has passed far-reaching precautionary and protective measures. The primary aim of these measures was, and still is, to contain or slow down the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in Germany in order to

preserve the lives and health of all of citizens, to maintain the healthcare system's efficiency and to expand the medical capacities for treating severe COVID-19 cases as well as cushioning the social and economic consequences for people in Germany. These measures are also aimed at protecting persons who, due to their age (or pre-existing illnesses), are at greater risk of a severe or fatal case of COVID-19.

Many older persons in care homes had to forgo visits and internal social contacts; such as shared activities and meal times; for weeks and sometimes even months in order to reduce the risk of becoming infected with the coronavirus, as there was a lack of testing concepts for visitors as well as ways of conducting the tests during the first two waves of the pandemic. Visits have since become possible once more. The facilities are now able to test their staff, residents, and visitors at their own responsibility with point-of-care antigen tests, based on a facility-specific testing concept. In the federal states, compulsory testing is required for staff in nursing homes for the elderly and care facilities, often several times a week. Proof of a current negative coronavirus test for all visitors has been mandatory in almost all federal states since September 2021. The federal states do not require proof of a negative coronavirus test if a person is verifiably immunised against the coronavirus. Through compliance with the general hygiene regulations and the protection concepts applicable in the specific facilities, which must be developed and adapted by the facilities themselves, the risk of severe infection will be reduced for a particularly vulnerable group of people without having to impose an embargo on visits. The measures are defined by each federal state.

37 https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2021/07/PD21_331_12621.html

On 4 December 2020 the caregiver representative from the Federal Government presented a recommendation for inpatient care facilities that aimed at ensuring that residents could also receive visitors during the pandemic with the fewest possible restrictions for themselves and their visitors, yet still be reasonably safe with regard to protection from infection and the efforts of the caregivers. The recommendation was sent out to all of the care facilities. Furthermore, professional standards covering how to react to the different needs of care recipients with regard to social participation and the best possible protection against infection under pandemic conditions are now available (P1 “Social participation and quality of life in inpatient old age care during the COVID-19 pandemic” guideline).³⁸

Visitors are generally required to wear a mask when visiting care homes. In some federal states, two immunised persons are not required to wear a mask when meeting each other. Surgical, FFP2 or KN95/N95 standard masks are recommended. These are precautionary measures that can also be taken in private meetings. The regulations are currently being reviewed against the background of high vaccination rates among residents. Throughout January 2021, eligible persons, persons with pre-existing illnesses and persons who were 60 years old or older were given coupons for FFP2 masks, which could be purchased in pharmacies for a small payment.

Many hints and tips have been created for older persons, such as how to organise contact with older persons and how to counteract loneliness as well as promoting offers of help.³⁹

Experience gained from the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in tele-medical care services, such as video consultations, being used more intensely. Health insurance providers are obliged to provide services to their insured customers that promote digital health skills so that all of their insured customers, regardless of factors like age or digital skills, are given equal opportunities to be able to use tele-medical care services. The services already provided by the health insurance funds are also customised to meet the specific needs of older persons.

The pluralistic and independent German Ethics Council devised an ad hoc recommendation and published it on 27 March 2020 with the title “Solidarity and Responsibility During the Coronavirus Crisis”, addressing ethical matters concerning the management of the coronavirus pandemic.⁴⁰ The German Ethics Council emphasised that all decisions for overcoming decision-related dilemmas concerning the allocation of scarce medical resources must meet the “fundamental requirements of the Constitution”. This means that differentiating due to age, gender, social status, place of origin, disability or similar criteria is prohibited.

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38 <https://www.awmf.org/leitlinien/detail/ll/184-001.html>

39 <https://www.zusammengengencorona.de/informieren/aeltere-menschen>

40 <https://www.ethikrat.org/mitteilungen/2020/solidaritaet-und-verantwortung-in-der-corona-krise>

As part of the basic guidelines drawn up by the Ethics Council, clinical-ethical recommendations made by the relevant medical associations – with expertise from clinical emergency medicine, intensive care, medical ethics, law, and other disciplines – provide attending physicians with clinical criteria for the event that decisions concerning the allocation of finite resources need to be made in extreme situations. A predefined decision making process is a requirement for the peoples' trust in consistent, fair, medically and ethically based prioritising decisions. In the introduction, the authors emphasise that patient consent and the medical indication must form the basis for any treatment-related decision. The patient's consent must be considered on the basis of the current, previously obtained (for example, in a living will) or previously verbally expressed or presumed consent.

In the revised version from 17 April 2020,⁴¹ the authors explicitly state that the equal treatment of all patients has the highest priority and that age, social aspects and underlying illnesses or disabilities are not legitimate criteria for prioritising decisions.

Vaccination strategy and necessary prioritising decisions

Following the approval of the first vaccines to protect against COVID-19 issued in December 2020, an insufficient stock of vaccine doses for everyone willing to be vaccinated existed up to July 2021. This is why prioritisation, based on medical, ethical and legal principles, was needed.

An action framework for the initial prioritisation of vaccination measures against COVID-19 was provided in the joint position paper published on 9 November 2020 by representatives from the German Ethics Council, the Leopoldina and the Permanent Vaccination Committee from the Robert Koch Institute.⁴² It was factually justified, ethically balanced and transparent, and verifiable criteria for fair and controlled access to COVID-19 vaccinations were developed. Parameters and complementary measures were drafted with regard to foreseeable developments and comprehensive communications and continued prevention were especially recommended.

The prioritisation criteria were based on the following ethical and legal principles: self-determination, non-harm (protection of integrity), fairness, fundamental rights equality, solidarity and urgency.

41 <https://www.divi.de/empfehlungen/publikationen/covid-19-dokumente/covid-19-ethik-empfehlung-v2>

42 <https://www.ethikrat.org/fileadmin/Publikationen/Ad-hoc-Empfehlungen/deutsch/gemeinsames-positionspapier-stiko-der-leopoldina-impfstoffpriorisierung.pdf>

The aforementioned principles were included in the Robert Koch Institute's decision on the COVID-19 vaccination recommendation.⁴³

The Federal Ministry of Health followed this recommendation by passing the Coronavirus Vaccination Act. Under this Act the vaccination was first administered to persons at a significantly higher risk of having a severe or fatal infection due to their age or state of health, as well as people who treat, care for or help such persons.

The recommendations made by the Ethics Council and other responsible committees and the political measures based on these recommendations, have ensured that comprehensive efforts have been taken in Germany to ensure the protection and provision of healthcare for older persons during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic with regard to their dignity, their right to life, the best possible health, and self-determination.

The increased availability of vaccines ensured that vaccine prioritisation was suspended nationwide on 7 June 2021 and vaccines were offered to all residents eligible for vaccination as from the summer of 2021.

2.3 Improving social inclusion and solidarity in times of physical distancing

The negative effects from the lack of social contact became clear during the coronavirus pandemic. The sense of loneliness among the population increased during the pandemic, but especially amongst older persons, as shown by a number of studies.⁴⁴

In particular, people over 80 years of age were at a significantly higher risk of social isolation if some of multiple problem situations arose that might abet or cause loneliness and social isolation, such as misfortunes, illnesses, reduced physical mobility, lack of mobility opportunities, increasing old-age poverty or an immigration background.

The Federal Government has used a variety of programmes and projects (including the already introduced ones, such as “Digital Angel” and the service platform “wissensdurstig”) to help ensure that older persons can stay connected and active, even during the pandemic:

During the times of pandemic-induced contact restrictions, all multi-generation homes have continued to receive support throughout 2021 through the “MGH digital & communicative” project that was launched in March. Help from the Verband für sozial-kulturelle Arbeit e.V. has ensured that they were supported in various ways

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43 Robert Koch Institute Recommendation for COVID-19 Vaccination, 3rd Revision from 12 March 2021: https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/EpidBull/Archiv/2021/Ausgaben/12_21.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

44 See https://www.dza.de/fileadmin/dza/Dokumente/DZA_Aktuell/DZAAktuell_Einsamkeit_in_der_Corona-Pandemie.pdf, https://www.diw.de/de/diw_01.c.791408.de/publikationen/diw_aktuell/2020_0046/einsam_aber_resilient___die_menschen_haben_den_lockdown_besser_verkraftet_als_vermutet.html

2 Conclusions from dealing with the consequences for and impacts on older persons in emergency situations

in discovering, expanding and actively shaping digital communications for work and social interaction. Furthermore, every MGH was able to apply for additional funding of 1,000 euros in 2021 for expanding and further developing digital contact infrastructures as well as remote services.

The care hotline (+49 30 20179131) is a service for persons seeking advice on care issues and it also provides (anonymous) assistance in critical and stressful situations. Together with the www.wege-zur-pflege.de website, it provides a service for persons seeking advice about care. Anyone can call the Federal Ministry of Health's public hotline (+40 30 3406066-02) to obtain information about care insurance. The nationwide joint Pastoral Care hotline (+49 800 1110111) provided by the Protestant and Catholic Churches, which is also sponsored by the Federal Government, provides support to persons affected by loneliness.

Since October 2020, the Federal Ministry for Senior Citizens has used five million euros to fund 29 model projects for two years in the "Strengthening Older Persons Participation – Paths out of Loneliness and Social Isolation in Old Age" model programme that counteracts unwanted loneliness. This is the first programme of its type to receive funding from the ESF (European Social Fund) and it is mainly aimed toward helping older employees of 60 years of age or older who are retiring. Its objective is not only to prevent social isolation, but also to strengthen financial security in old age and pave the way for an active, self-determined life in old age. A larger ESF follow-up programme is currently being prepared for the new funding period, and it is expected to be launched in late 2022.

Since July, the Federal Government has provided seven million euros in funding for a "Malteser Hilfsdienst" model project, "With Each Other – For Each Other: Contact and Community in Old Age", which will run for four years. It aims to reach very old senior citizens and its new visiting services are valuable bridges into the community.

The measures and projects that have been carried out so far have shown that there still remains a need to promote exchange about relevant topics and local networking in the communities in order to combat loneliness and social isolation and to distribute good examples of this. The Federal Government continues to support the development of corresponding strategies and concepts.

Along with the previously mentioned examples, numerous other projects and initiatives exist in Germany for improving social participation and cohesion, especially amongst older persons, and through this indirectly counteracting loneliness.

2.4 Decisions ensuring that a main focus is placed on older persons in the COVID-19 pandemic response

Older persons were given priority when COVID-19 vaccines were administered in Germany, but this depended on their age. The costs of preventive testing for SARS-CoV-2 infections in old persons and in care homes are reimbursed and, therefore, they are free-of-charge to residents, staff and visitors. The testing of staff has also been supported as a result of an initiative by the Federal Government. Numerous initiatives that counteract loneliness were established or expanded and digital services, regular telephone calls and other forms of assistance were also provided. Reference is made here to measures already implemented.

2.5 Expanding participation of older persons

The Federal Government is heavily involved in communicating with other countries, be it at a binational level of cooperation (for example, with France) or in the form of funding civil communications (for example, Polish-German communications) within the EU, European Council, UNECE, OEWGA, or ASEM, or participating in specialist conferences and events. Examples of good practice are also exchanged. A good instrument for this are the UNECE Policy Briefs on Ageing, which regularly include best practices from Germany. Germany, alternating with Austria, finances the German translations of the Policy Briefs. They are available to the public.

Furthermore, the Federal Government is regularly in contact with civil organisations (including BAGSO, HelpAge and AGE Platform Europe) to promote participation of older persons and initiate the necessary measures. For example, during Germany's presidency of the European Council in September 2020, an online conference was held with BAGSO and AGE Platform Europe about "Strengthening older people's rights in times of digitalisation – Lessons learned from COVID-19",⁴⁵ the results of which were documented and streamed online as well. The conference's discussions were also incorporated in the EC's "Human Rights, Participation and Well-Being of Older Persons in the Era of Digitalisation" council conclusions that were adopted by the EU member states in October 2020.⁴⁶

45 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/alle-meldungen/online-konferenz-zur-staerkung-der-rechte-aelterer-menschen-160650>

46 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11717-2020-REV-2/en/pdf>

3

Activities for preparing and implementing the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030

Health promotion and prevention for the target group of older people as well as the promotion of age-appropriate living environments are already high priorities in Germany. The Strengthen Health Promotion and Prevention Act came into force in July 2015 to improve the promotion of health and prevention in the population's living environments long before the start of the UN's Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030.⁴⁷ The joint national prevention strategy developed and updated by the National Prevention Conference, with its aim of "health in old age", considered the various living and care situations of older persons and addressed the living Environment Municipality and inpatient care facilities. The objective is to support the expansion of local health-promoting structures and make a contribution to equal health opportunities. The National Dementia Strategy, adopted by the Cabinet in July 2020, also includes measures for health education and prevention. There is currently no separate national action plan for implementing the WHO's Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030. However, as some of the MIPAA/RIS objectives overlap with those of the WHO Decade, the corresponding implementation status in Germany could be reported on. A final decision on this matter will be made in the lead-up to the next national MIPAA/RIS evaluations and reviews.

Conclusions and future priorities

Overall, it is clear that the situation faced by older persons – apart from difficult periods during the pandemic – in the Federal Republic of Germany has continued to improve over the past five years. This is underpinned by the measures and activities implemented by the Federal Government for older persons presented in the preceding national report. This means that the targets of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration were implemented and progress has continuously been made on the MIPAA/RIS objectives since 2002.

The adoption of the Second Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing and the Regional Implementation Strategy (2002) has strengthened and sustainably affected policies concerning older persons globally, which includes the Federal Republic of Germany. In recent years, international discussion has mainly been concerned with strengthening older peoples' rights (especially in the OEWGA). The Federal Republic of Germany actively supports these discussions and continues to work on the international level to close possible gaps in protecting older peoples' human rights.

47 <https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing>

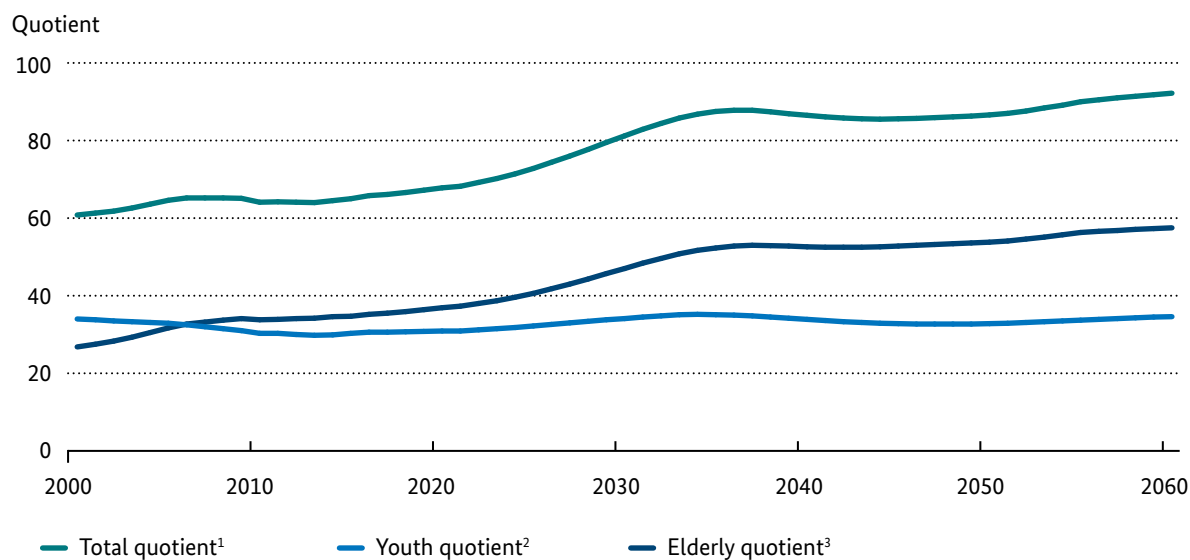
However, senior citizen policies are not only concerned with legal regulations. An active policy for senior citizens in the form of support from civil society and the implementation of specific measures and projects are two sides of the same coin. This is why the Federal Government is actively involved in all international bodies that strive to improve the situation of older persons. This includes active involvement in OEWGA and other UN bodies, as well as broad support for the work done by UNECE-SWGA and involvement in the initiatives implemented by WHO, ASEM, the EC, and the EU, to which the Federal Government is emphatically committed. Cooperation and collaboration with regard to ageing and older persons has to be implemented in the national policy and it also needs international standards and frameworks, whereas international policies and committees also need national policies in order to be effective – as the two go hand-in-hand. International cooperation and partnerships with regard to ageing and older persons have made great progress during the past 20 years and gave positive suggestions to national policies. This has allowed critical focus to be placed on the growing group of older people. The Federal Government feels it would be better if international activities for older persons could be better interconnected and bundled.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the difficult balancing act between protecting people from illness and safeguarding their basic rights to human dignity and social participation has brought this group of older people more to the forefront of political and social awareness. Pandemic-related restrictions and consequences have also shaped policies in the Federal Republic of Germany.

This is why there are future plans to underpin combating loneliness among older persons with corresponding measures and to further promote older peoples' participation in social life. Providing lifelong services for training, digitalisation as well as digital software and hardware training are becoming main focal areas. Further improvements in the compatibility of family, care and work are given just as much consideration in the Federal Government's future plans as the constant assurance and improvement of quality in care, support for actors in civil society as well as the broad range of voluntary commitments. The Federal Government feels it is obliged to engage in international cooperation and it will continue to actively support the various international initiatives for older persons and interconnect good suggestions, such as mainstreaming ageing with its national senior citizens policies.

Annexes

Figure 1: Youth, older persons and total quotients (2000–2060*)



¹Number of people under 20 and over 65 per 100 people in the 20–64 age group

²Number of people under 20 per 100 people in the 20–64 age group

³Number of people over 65 per 100 people in the 20–64 age group

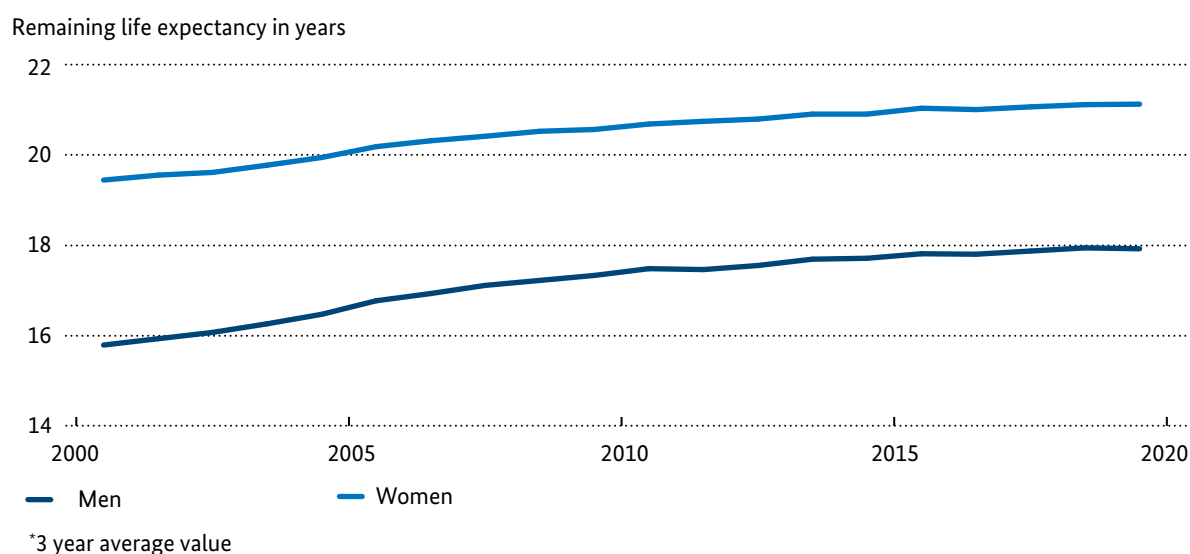
*After 2021: Results of the 14th coordinated population forecast run by the federal and state governments

Variant 2: Moderate development of fertility, life expectancy and migration

(Long-term net migration: 206,000 annually)

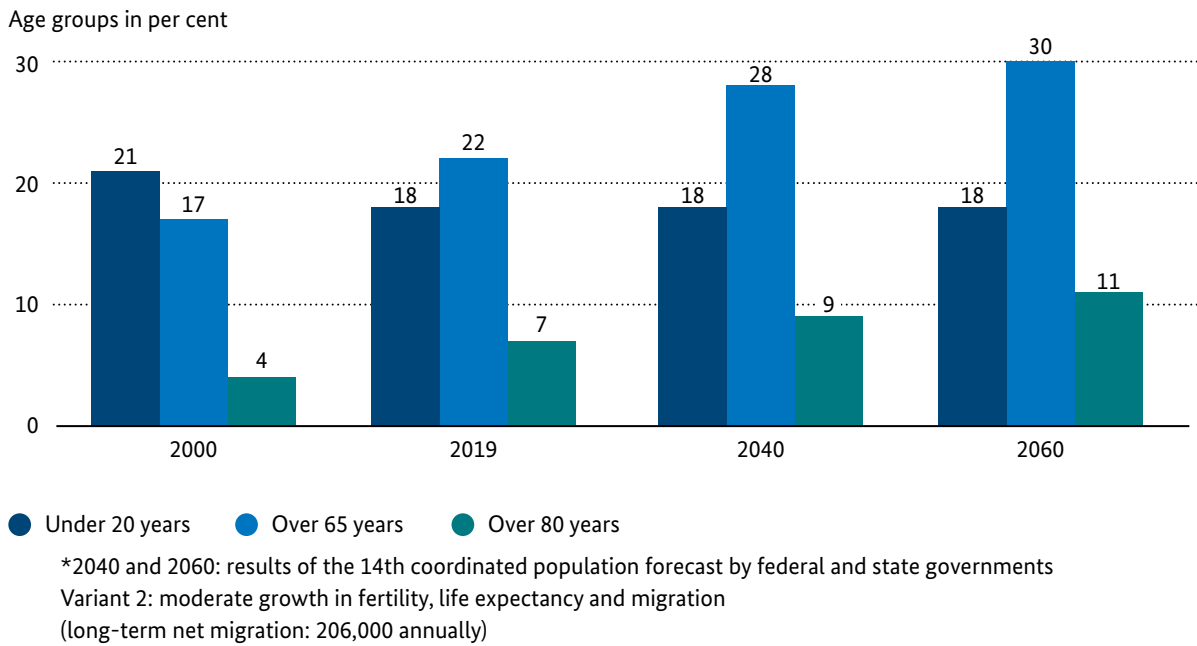
Source: Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), data source: Federal Statistical Office, calculations: BiB

Figure 2: Remaining life expectancy at the age of 65 years and older by gender (2000–2019*)



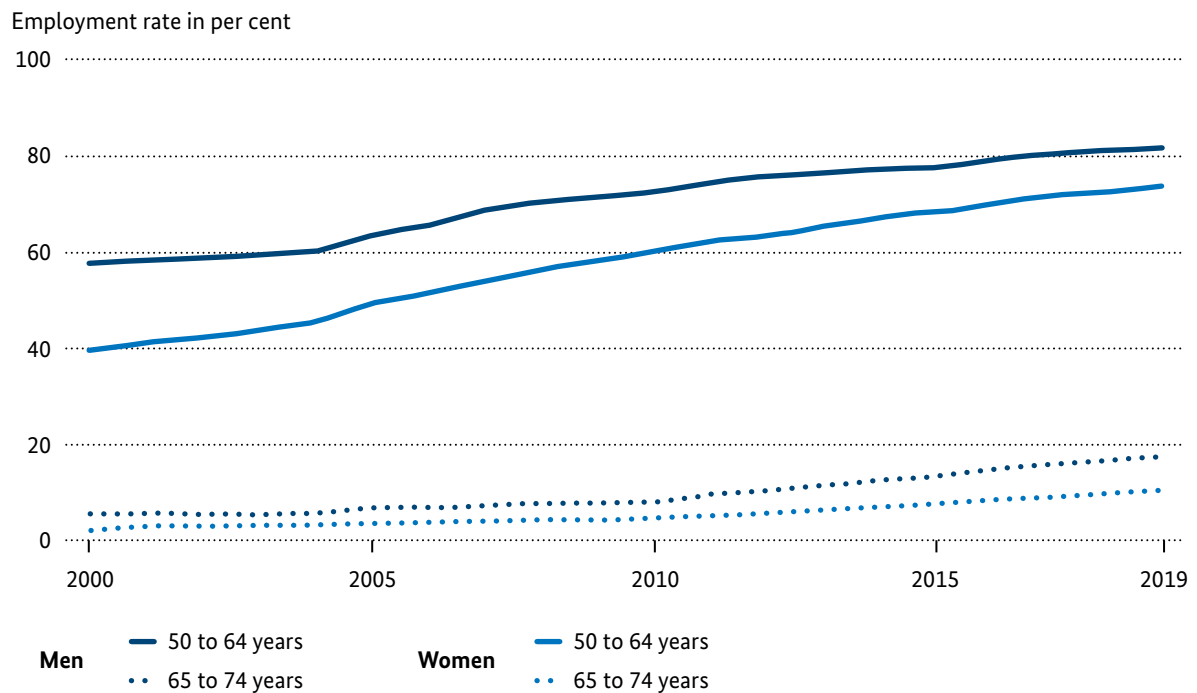
Source: Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), data source: Federal Statistical Office, calculations: BiB

Figure 3: Population under 20 years, 65+ years, and 80+ years (2000–2060*)



Source: Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), data source: Federal Statistical Office, calculations: BiB

Figure 4: Employment rates for 50- to 64-year-olds and 65- to 74-year-olds by gender (2000–2019)



Source: Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), data source: Federal Statistical Office, calculations: BiB

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