

# I AGEING IN EUROPE:TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

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There are about 60 million people of at least 65 years within the EU area, which equals 15 % of the total population. By the year 2030 the number will be around 90 million. Especially the number of people over 80 years of age will rise.

In table 1 the total population for all European countries in 1999 is shown. Also the part aged 15 years and younger and the part aged 65 years and older is shown. Especially the latter age category is relevant for this project.

**Table 1. European population in 1999**

	Population, 1-1-1999	Part 15 years and younger (in %)	Part 65 years and older (in %)
Austria	8.078.000	17.1	15.4
Belgium	10.239.000	18.0	17.0
Denmark*	5.330.000	18.4	14.7
Finland*	5.160.000	18.4	14.7
France	58.518.000	19.0	15.8
Germany	82.037.000	15.8	15.9
Greece	10.516.000	15.6	16.7
Ireland	3.745.000	22.1	11.3
Italy	57.613.000	14.7	17.1
Luxembourg	436.000	18.7	14.1
Netherlands*	15.760.000	18.5	12.5
Portugal	9.968.000	16.9	15.2
Spain*	39.853.000	15.5	16.3
Sweden	8.861.000	18.5	17.3
United Kingdom	59.237.000	19.2	18.7

\* Participating in Elderathome project

Source: ministry of VROM (Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment), The Netherlands (2000)

As is shown in table 1, in 1999, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy and Belgium had the highest proportion of people aged 65 years and over. From the participating countries in the EU-project Spain leads the group with the highest proportion of people aged 65 years and older (16.3%), followed by Denmark (14.7%), Finland (14.7%) and the Netherlands (12.5%).

The number of people aged 65 years and older will increase rapidly during the next decades. This future estimate is shown in table 2.

**Table 2. Future estimated age structure**

	Age	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Denmark	0-14	19	18.5	17.9	17.5	17.7	18.3
	15-64	66.1	65.7	64.2	63.5	62.6	61.2
	65+	14.9	15.8	17.9	19	19.7	20.5
Finland	0-14	17.3	16.1	16.0	15.9	15.8	15.5
	15-64	66.9	66.5	63.7	61.5	59.9	58.8
	65+	15.7	17.1	20.3	22.5	24.3	25.7
Netherlands	0-19*	24	24	23	22	22	22
	19-64*	62	61	60	59	58	56
	65+	14	14	17	19	20	22
Spain	0-14	14.6	15.0	15.2	14.4	13.2	12.2
	15-64	68.1	67.2	66.3	65.8	65.3	64.1
	65+	17.3	17.8	18.5	19.7	21.5	23.7

Source: [www.tilastokeskus.fi](http://www.tilastokeskus.fi), [www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl), [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)

\* Due to the available data the age category of the Netherlands is different from the other countries. The most important part of this table is the age category 65+ so this difference is acceptable.

As can be seen from table 2 the biggest increase of the number of elderly people will be in Finland (10% in 25 years), followed by the Netherlands (growth of 8% in 25 years), Spain and Denmark (growth of 6% in 25 years).

The number of older people is increasing. This is due to the fact that people are living longer than in the past. Table 3 gives information about the life expectation of men and women.

**Table 3. Table 3 Life expectations for men and women**

	Men	Women
Denmark (1999)	74.0	78.8
Finland (1999)	73.7	81.0
Netherlands (2000)	75.5	80.6
Spain (2000)	75,7	83.1

Source: [www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl), [www.tilastokeskus.fi](http://www.tilastokeskus.fi), Danish National Statistical Bureau, 2001, [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)

One of the political and social priorities of the future is to support elderly people living in their homes as long as possible. More attention is needed to ensure that homes are accessible, convenient and safe and capable of meeting the needs of occupants with declining capacity. Most of the dwellings that older people will require are already in existence. It is a great challenge to adapt the existing housing stock to the needs of the elderly.

When people get older, sooner or later many of them encounter more or less severe difficulties while coping with daily life. The following tables show examples from three countries about data concerning such difficulties.

**Table 4. Table 4 Denmark: elderly that can do certain activities without trouble in 1997, %**

Can without trouble	Age					
	52	57	62	67	72	77
Cut toe-nails	94	92	89	82	73	59
Walk on stairs	94	91	88	83	77	66
Walk around outside the house	94	96	96	93	88	81

Source: Danish National Institute of Social Research, 2000

**Table 5. Table 5 Finland: major problems or total incapability in certain activities, %**

	65-69 years		70-74 years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Hearing	22	13	32	18
Seeing	7	15	14	29
Going up and down the stairs	15	24	24	39
Doing day-to-day shopping	4	8	11	18
Carrying the shopping bag	9	16	19	29
Using public transport	4	10	12	19
Doing heavy domestic work	23	40	30	54

Source: Nissinen & Santalo, 2001

**Table 6. Table 6 the Netherlands: elderly that have no difficulties with the following activities 1998, %**

	Daily shopping	Preparation of hot meals	Washing	Light household work	Dressing and undressing
55-64 years	81	77	96	87	94
65-74 years	82	74	95	89	93
75 years and older	59	64	80	74	82
Total 55 years and older	76	73	92	85	91

Source: Ministerie van VROM, The Netherlands (2000)

It is thus a challenge to improve the existing dwellings and their surroundings, and to provide services, so that a growing number of elderly people can continue to live independently despite some difficulties in managing daily tasks.