

## HIGHLIGHTS

 Best Agers Newsletter  
 N 01 • 07.2010

- Demographic change - Key Challenge
- Presumably Frequently Asked Questions
- Stay Updated with Best Agers
- Newsflash
- Calender
- Project Partners

## KEY FACTS

- Best Agers - cross-generational innovation environment, where Best Agers work together with different age groups in the fields of business and skills development to generate new ideas and share their expertise and experience.
- Part-financed by the European Union Baltic Sea Regional Program 2007-2013.
- Priority 1 - Fostering of innovations across the Baltic Sea Region.
- 19 project partners.
- 8 countries involved.
- Project duration: January 2010 - December 2012.
- Project budget: 4.423.070 EUR
- Lead Partner: Academy of Economics Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.

 For further information please see  
[www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu)

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE - KEY CHALLENGE

Dear Reader

“Demographic change as a key challenge in Europe” is the central topic of the project Best Agers. It is co-financed by the INTERREG IV B Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007 - 2013. In our first newsletter we would like to introduce you to the project and report about the development and initial activities of Best Agers. We are glad to have you as an interested reader.

Until the end of 2012 the newsletter will be published twice a year, keeping you updated about the project implementation and results. Your ideas and suggestions and even your active participation in the project is of great interest to us. Do not hesitate to contact a project partner in your region – the partners and associated organisations are listed on page 5.

You are welcome to give us feedback on our first newsletter issue. In this way you will be able to influence the next issue and thus receive a newsletter focusing on the topics most interesting for you in the future.

Enjoy the read!



Hartwig Wagemester,  
Lead Partner



*We partners of the Best Agers project welcome you and look forward to finding and sharing new knowledge about best agers during the next three years.*

## PRESUMABLY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Since the purpose of this first newsletter is to introduce the project to you, we have imagined which questions you would like to ask to learn more about Best Agers. Here are our answers to your “Presumably Frequently Asked Questions (PFAQ)”.

### What is the Best Agers project?

Best Agers is a project dealing with the potentials of people aged 55+ in the Baltic Sea Region which is part-funded by the European Union.

The European Union encourages cities and regions from different Member States to work together and learn from each other through joint projects and networks. Such projects and networks are usually created by local and regional authorities and other public or semi-public institutions (such as universities or chambers of commerce) who aim to tackle a common challenge, exchange experience and develop joint solutions.

In order to support this cooperation, the European Commission makes available funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Baltic Sea Region Programme is one of several territorial cooperation (formerly INTERREG) Programmes to which projects can apply for funding. The Best Agers application was submitted by the project partners in March 2009, and the project was approved in September 2009. Due to its relevance for the whole region, the project was awarded the status of a strategic project. Additional funding for the project is provided by the partner organisations and the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development.

### What is a Best Ager?

Each individual defines his or her “best age” differently, and subjectively. For one person, the best time in life might have been primary school age, whereas another might

consider the peak of his or her professional career the best age.

An age above 55 years is, however, not viewed as a productive age in some environments. Despite the fact that the members of the 55+ generation are well-educated, motivated and healthier than ever, they are often treated in a discriminatory way.

The 55+ are the growing part of the working-age population, and hence we cannot afford to disrespect their potential and their readiness to share their experience and skills. Instead, this hidden potential must be utilized.

The contribution of older people to the human capital stock must increase to make up for the shrinking number of young people, and innovation should not be equated with young age only.

Seen from this perspective, the 55+ remain of “best age” for economic activities for many more years, sometimes even well beyond retirement age.

This is why in our project we have decided to define every person older than 55 years, woman or man, as a “Best Ager”.



### What are the objectives of Best Agers?

It is our aim to sensitize public and private employers, the public, and not least the best agers themselves to the uncovered potentials which this age group possesses. In the different pilot initiatives that are part of the project, the partners will show how the integration of best agers into regional labour markets, into innovation processes and entrepreneurship can be improved. By presenting the results of our work we strive to contribute to a change in the public perception that older people lack inspiration, creativity, endurance, risk proclivity and technical skills to be excellent employees or entrepreneurs. The human capital of best agers is there for the taking, it just needs to be put to use – for now and for the future!

### How is the project organized?

The project partnership consists of nineteen formal partner organisations from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom who are joined by one unofficial Russian partner and more than twenty associated organisations from all over the Baltic Sea Region. The project is being coordinated by the Lead Partner – the Academy of Economics Schleswig-Holstein, Germany – with external support from REM • Consult, Hamburg. A Project Steering Group in which every participating country is represented overlooks the project activities and management and decides about the general direction of the project. The project is organised in different work packages which deal with the following themes:

- Labour market and employment
- Coaches and experts for businesses
- Tutors for start-ups, students and pupils
- Motivation, Skills and Entrepreneurship

## STAY UPDATED WITH BEST AGERS

Within each theme, there will be three to five pilot initiatives carried out by two or more partners to demonstrate how the best agers' potentials can be put to use.

Each of the four themes will be featured in one of the up-coming newsletters. If you have particular interest in one of these themes, you can find out whom to contact by visiting our project website.

### Why is a transnational approach needed?

Demographic change is a phenomenon that occurs all over the Baltic Sea Region - in different dimensions and with different consequences. The experiences and answers towards this challenge differ from region to region. A transnational approach enables the Best Agers partners to analyse regional similarities and distinctions and to conjointly develop common solutions. Fifteen Pilot initiatives will be developed, tested and evaluated. There is no guarantee that an approach which works in one country will work elsewhere as well. Therefore, all project activities will be accompanied by a continuous dialogue about cultural, social and economic differences between the partner regions. Through this transnational transfer of knowledge, Best Agers can play its part in taking the Baltic Sea Region a step closer to more regional competitiveness.

### Where can I meet Best Agers?

Our ambition is to be visible to the public – not only virtually, but also in person. Therefore, members of the Best Agers partner organisations have been and will be present at various kinds of events and conferences (see “Best Agers in public” and Calendar).

You are welcome to contact us by telephone or e-mail if you have further questions about the project.

bestagers@rem-consult.eu

**Where to go when you need information concerning best agers and the Best Agers project? The Best Agers project launches newly designed and updated website.**

The Best Agers website is the platform where you can find different information about the project Best Agers and the topics it deals with. We provide you with information concerning partnership, workpackages, activities and new knowledge. It is also the place for you to get in contact with the project partners. We will do our best to deliver a flow of relevant information to attract you as a reader to check back regularly.

On the website you can find

- Information about the partnership
- Information about the project and each theme
- News and press
- Access to Intranet (project partners only)
- Latest activities and meetings in the project
- Subscription to Best Agers Newsletter

We will add more content during the next few months and also include some interactive features, as we

want to involve you into our discussion about Best Agers and their value to economy and society.

### Newsletter

The newsletter you are currently reading is also ready for download from the website. Twice a year the Best Agers project will publish a newsletter with amongst others newsflash, activities and results from the themes.

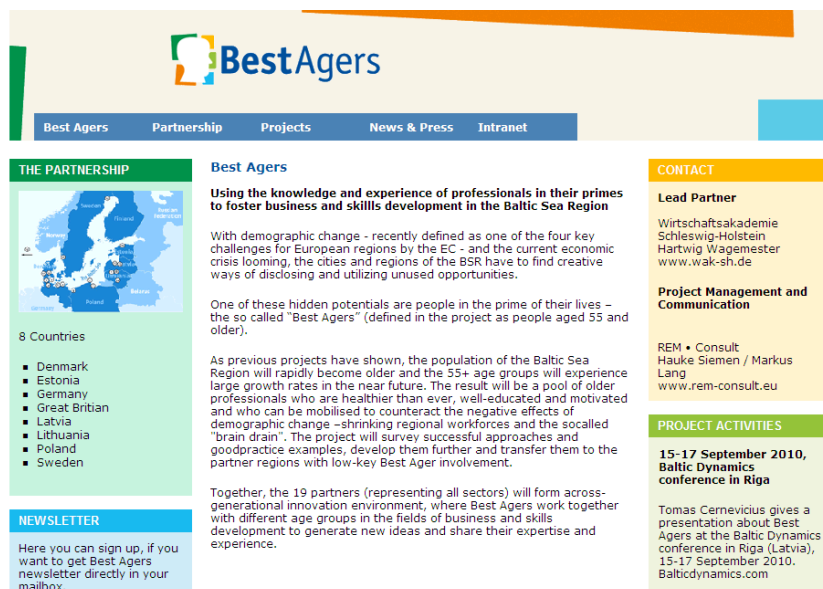
You can download the newsletter from the Best Agers website. Or you can subscribe to the newsletter if you want to get Best Agers newsletter directly in your mailbox. This is also done from the website.

Please visit Best Agers project website [www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu).

## SUBSCRIPTION

Have you not yet subscribed to the newsletter you do so at [www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu).

You will then automatically receive a newsletter from the Best Agers project twice a year - directly in your mailbox.



The screenshot shows the Best Agers website interface. At the top is the Best Agers logo and a navigation menu with links for Best Agers, Partnership, Projects, News & Press, and Intranet. Below the menu are three main content blocks:

- THE PARTNERSHIP**: Features a map of the Baltic Sea region and lists 8 countries: Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Great Britain, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden. It includes a brief description of the project's goal to foster business and skills development.
- Best Agers**: A section detailing the project's focus on professionals aged 55 and older, addressing demographic challenges and the 'brain drain' phenomenon.
- CONTACT**: Lists the lead partner, Wirtschaftsakademie Schleswig-Holstein, and provides contact information for REM Consult, including an email address and website.

Additional sections visible include **PROJECT ACTIVITIES** with a recent conference in Riga (September 2010) and a **NEWSLETTER** sign-up box.

## NEWSFLASH

### Best Agers kicks off at Riga

After more than one year of preparation and development the Best Agers project was officially started in Riga, Latvia, on 10-12 February 2010. Despite the snowy weather, around 50 participants gathered for the Kick-off-Meeting at the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga.

At the beginning of the meeting, the renowned social anthropologist Dr. Roberts Kilis gave an impressive presentation about the expected effects of demographic change on economic and social life in the Baltic States. He stressed that ageism (i.e. discrimination against older people), has become a more severe problem in working life in the Baltic states than sexual or ethnic discrimination. Dr. Kilis' report served both as a wake-up call and as motivation for the partners to put all their efforts into the project activities.

The Partners then signed the Partnership Agreement to document their commitment to the project. On the following two days, the work plan for the next three years was discussed

and refined.

### Best Agers in public

- In March 2010, Hauke Siemen of REM • Consult presented Best Agers to the participants of the mid-term conference of the INTERREG IVB North Sea Region Programme project "DC Noise Demographic Change: New Opportunities in a Shrinking Europe" in Hamburg.
- In March 2010 the project was also represented at the EU conference "Assises pour l'emploi des seniors" in Marseilles, France.
- In June 2010, the project was presented by Roland Kadefors of the University of Gothenburg at the research conference "Older Workers in a Sustainable Society – Great Needs and Great Potentials" in Oslo.
- Also in June 2010, the project was presented by Hartwig Wagemester (Academy of Economics, DE) and Andreas Thaler (County of Pinneberg, DE) to the Working Group of EU commissioners of the County Association of Schleswig-Holstein.

### Best Agers is looking for Age Management experts

One output of the project will be a study on "Creative Age Management Strategies for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the Baltic Sea Region". We will be looking for an expert (consortium) to carry out this study. Watch out for the announcement which will be published on our website by the end of July.

## CALENDER

7-8 September 2010: Internal workshop "Exchange of experience on senior advisor networks".

15-17 September 2010: Baltic Dynamics conference in Riga. Please see [www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu) for further information.

29 September – 1 October 2010: St. Petersburg International Innovation Forum in Saint Petersburg. Please see [www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu) for further information.

7-8 October 2010: Q-Camp in St. Petersburg. Best Agers and students from throughout the Baltic Sea Region work on innovative hi-tech projects.

25-27 October 2010: Best Agers will be present with a stand at the "euregia" Conference on Local and Regional Development in Europe in Leipzig, Germany.

24-26 November 2010: Next project meeting in Gdansk. Watch out for more detailed info on [www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu).

**Is your best ager-activity missing on the list? Send an e-mail to [bestagers@rem-consult.eu](mailto:bestagers@rem-consult.eu).**



*The Partners signed the Partnership Agreement in Riga to document their commitment to the project.*

## PARTNERS AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE BEST AGERS PROJECT

### Partnership

- Academy of Economics Schleswig-Holstein, DE (Lead Partner)
  - County of Pinneberg, DE
  - University of Rostock, Rostock Center for the Study of Demographic Change, DE
  - Research Association Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, DE
  - The Paritätische Welfare Organisation in Schleswig-Holstein, DE
  - Institute for European Initiatives, PL
  - Gdansk University of Technology, PL
  - Western Pomeranian Business School, PL
  - Šiauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, LT
  - Šiauliai Branch of the National Regional Development Agency, LT
  - KTU Regional Science Park, LT
  - CONNECT Latvia, LV
  - Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, LV
  - County Council of Norrbotten, SE
  - University of Gothenburg, SE
  - Green Network, DK
  - University College Lillebaelt, DK
  - Norwich Business School at the University of East Anglia, UK
  - Estonian Association of SMEs EVEA, EE
- (SDEO)
- The Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs St. Petersburg, RU
  - Business Russia, RU
  - CONNECT North-West Russia, RU
  - Center for Senior Policy, NO
  - German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, DE
  - German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, DE
  - Tillväxtverket, SE
  - Region Västra Götaland, SE
  - Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, LV
  - German Baltic Chamber of Commerce in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, DE/EE/LV/LT
  - Confederation of Senior Expert Services, BE
  - Business Development Agency for the KERN region, DE
  - Economic Development Agency Pinneberg/Segeberg, DE
  - Initiative for Regional Cooperatives, DE
  - County of Ostholstein, DE
  - Pomorskie Voivodeship Marshal Office, PL
  - Pomorskie Voivodeship Labour Office, PL
  - West Lithuanian Business College, LT
  - Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy Studies, LV
  - SSE Riga Mentors Club, LV

### Associated organisations

- St. Petersburg State University of Information Technology, Mechanics and Optics, RU (non-voting PSG member)
- South Denmark European Office, DK



## CONTACT

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For further information please visit [www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu)