



Occupy Your Age (Valtaa Vanhuus – Med Ålderns Rätt)

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OCCUPY YOUR AGE – 2014 THESES

Growing old is a natural part of life. It's not a disease and it's not a problem. Ageing is a global megatrend. Let's make Europe a shining example. We are challenging all decision-makers and Finnish and European parliamentary candidates to act with courage: to view old age in a new way!

Ageing populations affect housing, transport, trade and service provision, accessibility, culture and information technology. It's not just a social and health issue. Current attitudes will not succeed in future years. A huge change is required, and it's needed now. Issues affecting older people are everyone's concern. Are you brave enough to shuffle the deck and build something brand new?

Generations need each other. And there's no shortage of solidarity between the generations. Make it visible. Translate words into action.

1 THE RIGHT TO YOUR OWN VIEW OF BEING OLD

Everyone grows old in their own way. Older people are individuals. That's why a single concept cannot meet all needs. Differences between older people are greater than differences between people in every other age group. In a good Europe there's space for older people to be themselves and live meaningful lives.

Do you know what older people do when they're together or alone? Are older people offered a wide range of opportunities to engage in different activities? Did you know that accessibility benefits everyone, not just older people? Do you want to contribute to living healthy lives?

2 ON MONEY AND ATTITUDES

All Europeans use services. Finance is of course required. Even with current resources, much can be done in new ways by directing money into promoting wellbeing that benefits people of every age. A good candidate is ready to rethink how services are provided.

Have you considered where resources should be directed? How much should be spent on wellbeing, accessibility, living environments? Do you encourage those who want to operate in new ways? Are you modern enough to view older people as a valuable asset?

3 EXPERIENCE AS CAPITAL AND YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM

Building a good Europe is a team game. Older people are active and skilful. In a good Europe, older people's experience is being used. Call it social sustainability. Cooperation and interaction between all age groups drives development forward. Every form of education needs the perspective that older people offer.

Are you one of Europe's young old people? Do Europe's older citizens understand what young people regard as important? What do working people expect from their old age? Does Europe have forums where different age groups can engage in discussion?

4 DON'T ASSUME, ASK!

Promote a culture of listening. Decision-makers should ensure that older people's voices are heard. Don't imagine, don't think, just ask us! Question older people of different ages, don't think of everyone aged 65+ as part of a homogeneous group. Europe has more than 92 million older people and Finland has more than a million. No single opinion can possibly represent every older person.

Do you know what a 75-year-old is thinking, what an 85-year-old is hoping and what a 95-year-old is doing? Have you asked an older person about their everyday needs? Are users of services listened to, or do only experts' voices get heard?

5 A TEAM GAME EVERYWHERE

Building a good Europe is a team game. We want Europe to be where people live good lives. In a good Europe, respect for old age will be seen in every political forum. Old age also offers happiness and joy. Healthy older people are a European trump card.

Do you know how much older people consume and the kind of consumers they are? How would culture and tourism fare without older people? Do you know how much voluntary work older people do? Older people add vitality to every neighbourhood.

6 INNOVATIONS FOR GOOD LIVES

Companies have a responsibility to develop good products and services for older people - they make up a large group of consumers. For their older residents, Europe's cities and municipalities need new products, services and technologies that take usability into account.

How would you support social innovations that encourage regular contact, promote interaction and feeling safe and secure? Good living requires quality products that are durable and beautiful. How would you encourage companies to develop products that meet older people's needs?