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A photograph showing the back of a person's head with short, wavy grey hair. Two pens, one blue and one green, are crossed and stuck into the hair. The person is wearing a white t-shirt.

P.E.O.P.L.E.

**Age Diversity and Age Discrimination
in the Czech Republic**

Overview

Mgr. Klára Cozlová

Overview of Basic Statistical Data

Discrimination Rates

(Un) Employment of Pensioners and People Over Fifty Five (55+) Employment Rates (according to gender)

In the Czech Republic, 45 - 65 years old people comprise over a quarter of the entire population¹ and their employment plays a key role in the country's economy. The data presented here is based on the official national statistics, which are typically classified by age. Unfortunately, the age categories are not consistent across all types of data. In comparison to the EU, the employment intensity in the Czech Republic is slightly higher than average. The employment rate of the working age cohort 15 - 64 years was **65.2 %** (as of 2009). The employment rate of 20-64 year olds was **70.7%** (while the average rate in the EU was 68.8 %).

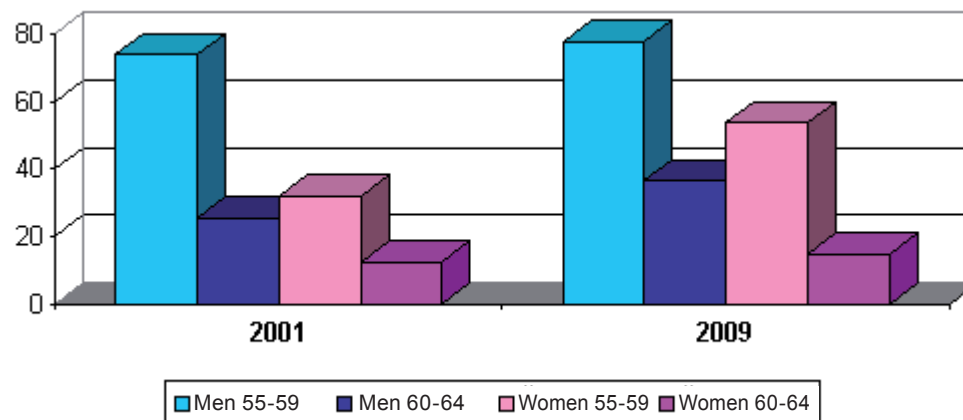
- In comparison with the average rate in the EU, the employment rate of men in the CR was higher (73.7 %) but the employment rate of women was significantly lower (56.5 %).
- As the following chart illustrates, in February 2011 and at the end of 2010 the number of unemployed men rose much faster than the number of women.

On the other hand, the **employment rate among 60 - 64 year olds is only 25 % in contrast to the average 30 % in the EU.**

- **14.6 %** of 60 - 64 years old women are employed in the Czech Republic. In the EU, it is 22.5 %. Besides employment, gender plays an important role in other areas of women's lives. „Women make up approximately 58% of the all the 65 years and older. Two thirds of all the elderly who live on their own are widows, most of whom struggle with poverty. Until 2020, poverty among the elderly is practically going to become an elderly women's issue.

1/ Šimek, D. (2005). *Nová práce ve starším věku. In Třetí věk trojí optikou. Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis*. Olomouc : UP, pp. 11 – 17

Chart 1: Employment Rates - Men and Women



The probability of using up their savings and living below the poverty level as a result rises with age.²

According to long-term statistics of the Czech Statistical Office, about **4 % of people older than 65 are economically active.**

Unemployment rates of people 50-64 years old vary according to the way the rates are calculated. Some methods use the numbers of only those unemployed who have registered with job centers and others use general data on economic status. Different sources thus vary:

According to the Czech Statistical Office, the unemployment rate among 50-64 year olds is 7.6 %. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the unemployment rate in this age cohort is 8.4 %.

2/ Curran, Renzetti (1999). *Ženy, muži a společnost*. Praha: Karolinum, pp. 462 - 463

In 2005, the rate of **unemployment among 50+ was only 5.7 %** . This is “either a testament to a great resistance to ageism (in the Czech Republic) or to generous early retirement benefits”.³

The rates are much higher in the 2009 data set:

UNEMPLOYED 2009		
	total in thousands	%
total	352,2	100,0
age groups:	unemployed in thousands	unemployed in %
15 až 24 let	70,6	20,0
25 až 29 let	50,7	14,4
30 až 34 let	50,6	14,4
35 až 44 let	69,9	19,8
45 až 54 let	68,4	19,4
55 a více let	42,0	11,9

Source: Czech Statistical Office,
<http://www.czso.cz/csu/2010edicniplan.nsf/p/3115-10>

Overall, the unemployment rate of the 55-64 year-old cohort is lower than the 45 - 55 year-old cohort because people at this age often **decide to retire early rather than stay unemployed**. This is particularly common among **men**. This strategy of addressing unemployment has consequences for the economic life of other unemployed people as well as for the state, which must extend citizens retirement, unemployment, and other cash benefits.

Employment trends among 55+ years olds are interesting (according to J. Ferenc of the Czech Statistical Office⁴)

3/ Šimek, D. (2005). *Nová práce ve starším věku*. In *Třetí věk trojí optikou*. Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis. Olomouc : UP, pp. 14.

4/ Ferenc, J. (2010). Zaměstnanost osob předdůchodového a důchodového věku. www.czso.cz/csu/csu.nsf/informace/ckta28062010.doc, 20.03.2011

- between 2001 and 2009 the **employment rate** of people 55-64 years old **grew from 52.1 % to 65.5 %**. It was the fastest growth of employment of all age groups although there was a slowdown between 2005 and 2009 due to the economic crisis.
- Several factors had contributed to this growth:
 - o changes in the labour market and retirement age regulations (retirement age for women was changed from 55 to 59)
 - o demographic growth in this age group
 - o employing people entitled to old age pension was easy (it was possible to offer them a series of limited-term contracts, the negative was that during the recession, these contracts were not renewed, producing a growth in the unemployment rate in this age cohort)
 - o a trend of pension benefits dropping in relation to average wage
 - o less need or willingness among pensioners to look after their children or grandchildren
- Recent developments demonstrate that people 55 - 64 years old are more vulnerable than before. Employment trends in the recession years 2008-2009 show that while employment rate in other age groups has been rising, it has been dropping among 55 - 64 year olds.
- In years **2001 - 2009, the number of employed women between 55 and 64 increased by 85 % but the number of men rose by 39.5 %**.
 - o This was an effect of a policy that set the retirement age to later than the original 60 years of age for men. For women, the age limit changed from 53 to 57 years of age for women.
 - o This policy also eliminated one type of early retirement benefits.
- 2001 – **Employment rates of men and women 55 - 59 years old** differed by 42 percentage points. In 2009, the difference was only 24 percentage points.
- 2001 – **Employment rates of men and women 60 - 64 years old** increased from 13.1 percentage points to 21.9 percentage points in 2009 (25.4:12.3 to 36.5:14.6 – men’s employment rose much faster than women’s).

Employment rates **according to level of education**: The **employment rate of 55 - 64 years old people with university education** is higher than the average employment rate of all people older than 15 and higher than the average employment rate of 55 - 64 year olds. This rate grew even during the economic recession in years 2008 - 2009.

Typical Jobs Among People 55+

Industries: manufacturing, storage and transportation, housing and hospitality, retail, wholesale. Professional Occupations: public administration, science, engineering, education, health care

- Employment rates of **women** are higher in education and health care.
- **95.800 or 53.3 %** of all the employed people over 60 (60 - 64 and 65+) were employed in the following jobs: **administration, management, legislation, engineering, education and lower level public administration.**
- These people are employed primarily in Prague and the Central Bohemia and Zlín regions.

In respect to European statistics, data on **part-time work** are quite specific. Part-time work is typically discussed in the context of family and work life balance and flexible employment options. This issue can be equally important in regard to employing older people, particularly pensioners.

In the Czech Republic, the proportion of **men working part-time** (2.8 %) is lower than the EU average (8.3 %). Among **women**, the proportion of part-time workers is the fourth lowest in Europe (9.1 % to 31.2 %).

The economic recession hit everybody including people in their productive age but it showed that employing people close to or of retirement age with basic education is a problem. The drop of employment rates in relation to the so-called economic crisis affected men disproportionately harder than women.

The analysis carried out as a part of the 50+ Project⁵ showed no evidence of direct discrimination in the job market. As there are hardly any successfully resolved discrimination cases, people do generally not attempt to protect or defend themselves against discrimination. No discrimination lawsuits have been filed in the Czech Republic. In contrast, latent discrimination of

employees and job applicants is common, particularly in the recruitment process (In addition to language or IT skills which are not common among older people, position descriptions include age or health requirements.). Job advertising is often explicitly discriminatory.

- The lack of formal complaints about discrimination, however, does not mean it doesn't exist ("young and dynamic team"...)
- **Ageism – discrimination on the basis of age** - "a systematic stereotyping and discrimination of people on the basis of their age... old people are viewed as senile, rigid in their thinking and ways and old-fashioned in both their morals and skills"⁶ is palpable in all areas of everyday life and in the media.

5/ Project 50+ is run by Respekt institut.
<http://www.respektinstitut.cz/50-aktivne/>, 20.03.2011

6/ Vidovičová, L. (2005). *Věková diskriminace – ageismus: úvod do teorie a výskyt diskriminačních přístupů ve vybraných oblastech s důrazem na pracovní trh*. Praha, Brno: VÚPSV

Public Pension Scheme Essentials: How it Works, Retirement Age and Employment Options

In 2011, the Employment Law⁷ defines people over fifty as older and offers them the following protections in the labour market:

- The period of entitlement to unemployment cash benefits is limited to 5 months for people younger than 50, 8 months for people younger than 55 and 11 months for people over 55 years old.
- In the first two months of being unemployed, the recipient obtains 65 % of her/his previous average monthly net wages (last previous employment contract)
- The benefit amount drops to 50% of previous wages in the **next two months** and for the rest of the entitlement period, the amount drops to 45 %.
- If the unemployed participates in a re-qualification program, the benefit rises to 60 % again, up to a cap of 14.883 CZK.
- Once the entitlement period expires (5, 8 or 11 months), the only benefit an unemployed person receives is a social care benefit at the level of the minimum living wage, which is approximately 3.200 CZK. Finally, if he/she does not demonstrate an active approach to job search (or other economic activity) and does not perform to the expectation of the authorities, the cash benefit drops all the way to the official subsistence level of 2.020 CZK.
- Benefits for people who leave their jobs on their own will (whether by agreement or by giving notice) are generally lower - only 45 percent of their former wages. An exception and regular benefits are allowed to those who terminated their employment for „very serious reasons“ (as determined by their case worker/public official).
- People who receive severance from their former employer are not entitled to unemployment benefits for a limited period of time. Once this period of time expires, they become eligible for benefits.

- Until 2011, unemployed persons had been allowed to earn money in addition to their cash benefits. They used to keep their benefits if their earnings did not exceed a half of the minimum wage. This is no longer the case this year. People are no longer eligible for benefits if they work for pay.
- If the unemployed is at her/his retirement age but does not claim old age pension, she/he is entitled to unemployment benefits.

The amount of **old age pension** is calculated using two types of calculation bases - percentage and standard. Pension and benefit calculations are carried out by social security administration officials.⁸

- In 2011, the standard insurance amount (basic benefit) was 2.230 CZK.
- The date of eligibility for old age pension varies for men and women. For women, the number of children affects their eligibility age.
- A working old age pensioner must pay taxes on his income and his social and pension insurance.
- Old age pension is taxed only if it exceeds 24.000 CZK per month.
- Pensioners are allowed to work for pay in addition to their pensions. They may also choose to receive partial pension or no pension at all. If an old age pensioner works for at least two years, his pension increases (for every 90 days worked, the percentage calculation base rises by 1.5/0.9 %).
- The number of working old age pensioners has been decreasing since 1994. In 1994, the number of registered employed old age pensioners was 225.000. In 2005, there were only 150.000 (Czech Statistical Office).

7/ Employment Law 435/2004 Coll.

8/ Law 155/1995 Coll.

Chart according to age for people born in or after 1947

YOB		lower	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
men		60	60+2	60+4	60+6	60+8	60+10	61	61+2	61+4	61+6	61+8	61+10	62
women	childless	57	57	57	57	57+4	57+8	58	58+4	58+8	59	59+4	59+8	60
	1 child	56	56	56	56	56	56+4	56+8	57	57+4	57+8	58	58+4	58+8
	2 children	55	55	55	55	55	55	55+4	55+8	56	56+4	56+8	57	57+4
	3–4 children	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54+4	54+8	55	55+4	55+8	56
	5+ children	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53+4	53+8	54	54+4	54+8

Chart according to age for people born from 1948 to 1960 inc.

YOB		1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
men		62+2	62+4	62+6	62+8	62+10	63	63+2	63+4	63+6	63+8	63+10	64	64+2
women	childless	60+4	60+8	61	61+4	61+8	62	62+4	62+8	63	63+4	63+8	64	64+2
	1 child	59	59+4	59+8	60	60+4	60+8	61	61+4	61+8	62	62+4	62+8	63
	2 children	57+8	58	58+4	58+8	59	59+4	59+8	60	60+4	60+8	61	61+4	61+8
	3–4 children	56+4	56+8	57	57+4	57+8	58	58+4	58+8	59	59+4	59+8	60	60+4
	5+ children	55	55+4	55+8	56	56+4	56+8	57	57+4	57+8	58	58+4	58+8	59

Chart according to age for people born in or after 1961 and younger

YOB		1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	higher
men		64+4	64+6	64+8	64+10	65	65	65	65	65
women	childless	64+4	64+6	64+8	64+10	65	65	65	65	65
	1 child	63+4	63+8	64	64+4	64+8	65	65	65	65
	2 children	62	62+4	62+8	63	63+4	63+8	64	64	64
	3 children	60+8	61	61+4	61+8	62	62+4	62+8	63	63
	4 children	60+8	61	61+4	61+8	62	62	62	62	62
	5+ children	59+4	59+8	60	60+4	60+8	61	61+4	61+8	62

Public Pension Scheme Outlooks – Summary

Public Pension Policy Reform

- Pension insurance will amount to 28 % of pre-tax wages. There is a proposal to invest 3% of commercial capital funds as a part of the second pillar of the planned pension reform. It is also proposed that individuals can choose to invest another 2% of their wages in these funds.
- People must determine their deductions before they reach 35 years of age. This decision is irreversible.
- In addition, they may opt to give 1% of their wages to one of their parents but the amount will not reflect in a reduction of their own pension. (There is no economic reason why not redirect but will it lead to a gap in the public system? And if yes - are they going to compensate with taxes?)
- Pension funds are to pay out pension benefits in three forms: cash benefits until the end of beneficiary's life (benefits are terminated at death), pension benefits until death with additional benefits for close family members for 3 years after death or regular annuities over 20 years (the remainder of savings to be paid out to the beneficiary's family). In the event of death before pension eligibility date, savings are treated as inheritance. It may be possible to postpone the start date of the payout period and to continue saving.

Pension - „A concrete example of ageism in the Czech public pension scheme is the increase of old age pension amounts for people more than one hundred years old. The cash benefit increases by an amount equivalent to the amount of the official helplessness allowance. This is a typical example of assuming that physical and mental abilities are directly associated with chronological age.⁹

9/ Vidovičová, L. (2005). *Věková diskriminace – ageismus: úvod do teorie a výskyt diskriminačních přístupů ve vybraných oblastech s důrazem na pracovní trh*. Praha, Brno: VÚPSV. P. 37

The Biggest Challenges Facing Elderly People and People Over Fifty in the Czech Republic

When examining age discrimination in the Czech Republic, it is useful to distinguish two categories of older people - people over fifty years old and elderly retirees. Even though there are individual differences in regard to income, retirement benefits and employment opportunities, age is an important factor that affects one's health, access to health care, economic activity and financial life.

- Old age pensioners in the Czech Republic are typically about seventy years old and they usually rely on their pensions as the only income. Sometimes they are able to use the savings they have made over their lifetime but these savings are generally quite small. As a demographic group, people around and over seventy struggle to make ends meet. Pensioners often live alone and need to use their meager resources to cover their essential life expenses, such as housing, health care and social care. These basic needs take priority over leisure activities or social life.
- On the other hand, people over fifty are considered to be in their productive age and are thus not eligible for old age pension. In their working life, however, they are subject to multiple discrimination. People over fifty are frequently unemployed and face discrimination in every aspect of their job search. Starting with discriminatory job advertisements which might contain illegal wording, for example „looking for new members for our youthful team“, or illegal recruitment practices when companies reject candidates unfit for their „dynamic and flexible management concepts“, discrimination also takes place in job interviews and on the job itself. Finally, in the process of downsizing, companies typically let go of older employees first, justifying their decisions by saying these employees would be retiring soon regardless. Unfortunately, unemployed people of older age struggle with stereotypes when looking for a new job.

- o The differences among employment opportunities of old age pensioners and early retirees aggravate this problem. From the perspective of employers, there is no difference between an early retiree and an old age pensioner. From the perspective of the unemployed, however, the difference is great. Employees do not realize that early retirement is going to effectively prevent them from working again. The Czech law does not permit claiming retirement benefits and working for pay at the same time. Moreover, early retirement is penalized by a lower pension amount which never reaches the same level as the amount of old age pension even when the early retiree reaches eligibility age. Companies which force employees to retire early and claim their job prospects are going to be better thanks to their age thus operate on false pretences. Unfortunately, these practices are quite common in the Czech Republic.
- In the last decade we have observed an interesting phenomenon called the „sandwich generation“. Reflecting the trends of longer life and late fertility, this term refers to people who still look after their children at the age of fifty while their own parents are also slowly becoming dependent on their support. Women are over-represented in this demographic. At the age of fifty, they juggle work with care for their aging parents as well as for their teenage children.
 - o In the Czech Republic, it is equally common that older people and seniors look after their elderly parents. Sixty-five years old pensioners experiencing growing limitations to their mobility or health and living on minimal income have to deal with caring for their own eighty-five year old parents.
- Finally, the public and media discourses in the context of the upcoming retirement reforms have been presenting pensioners as

„those who are using up the money we need for our own pensions“ .
This image of a retiree as someone enjoying needless support has been
feeding fear of old people and hostility in the society despite the fact
that this situation concerns practically every family .

Job Market and Professional Development Issues Among Pensioners and People Over 55 (including the gender and intersectionality perspectives)

Like in other countries, the working environment in the Czech Republic is changing. We can see new trends in regard to the content and nature of work and the division and organization of labour: worksites are transforming into virtual ones, people telecommute and work from home. The formerly linear, hierarchical organizational structures are becoming flexible and network-like and include ad hoc elements. **Entire generations are encountering these new structures for the first time and often are unable to be flexible and to adjust.**¹⁰ This statement does not stereotype as it does not only concern older people. Even young people can be rigid and unable to demonstrate the flexibility necessary to accommodate new demands. Changing work environments can be confusing. In general however, new organizational structures represent obstacles particularly for older workers.

- The current work environment sharply differs from what older generations have experienced in their life. **Prior to 1989, there was no real unemployment.** On the contrary, **employment rates were over-inflated and to job switching was perceived negatively.** Work life today is very different than the work life older workers had in the first half of their productive age; their experience and imagination were trained under different conditions. As a result, older workers struggle much more with the current pressure to be flexible than their younger counterparts. The real risk of losing their jobs and its social, economic and psychological consequences also hits them most severely.¹¹

We must distinguish two categories of older people in the Czech Republic: people over fifty years old and elderly pensioners. There are individual differences, some cannot find employment and receive low retirement benefits and others have a sufficiently high income or benefits. However, age remains a key factor in regard to health, access to health care, economic activity and individual financial situation in general.

- In general, **old age pensioners** are about seventy years old and **rely on their pensions as their only income.** Sometimes they have access to their savings but these tend to be quite small. Old age pensioners struggle to make ends meet. They often live alone and need to use their meager resources to **cover their primary needs**, such as housing, health care and social care. These needs take priority over leisure activities or social life or social contacts.
- **People over fifty**, on the other hand, **are considered to be in their productive age** and as such, they are not eligible for old age pension. In their working life, they face **multiple discrimination** they find very hard to fight against. People over fifty are also frequently unemployed and face discrimination in every aspect of their job search. It starts with discriminatory job advertisements which might contain illegal wording such as “looking for new members for our youthful team” and ends with illegal recruitment practices when companies reject candidates unfit for their “dynamic and flexible management concepts” and in the course of interviews. Discrimination also takes place on the job itself, particularly in the process of downsizing. Companies typically let go of older employees first, justifying their decisions by saying these employees would be retiring soon regardless. Unfortunately, unemployed people of older age struggle with stereotypes again when looking for a new job.

10/ Šimek, D. (2005). *Nová práce ve starším věku. In Třetí věk trojí optikou. Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis*. Olomouc : UP, pp. 11 – 17.

11/ Vidovičová, L. (2005). *Věková diskriminace – ageismus: úvod do teorie a výskyt diskriminačních přístupů ve vybraných oblastech s důrazem na pracovní trh*. Praha, Brno: VÚPSV, p. 37

- The differences among employment opportunities of old age pensioners and early retirees reinforce this problem. From the perspective of employers, there is no difference between an early retiree and an old age pensioner. From the perspective of the unemployed, however, the difference is significant. Employees do not realize that early retirement effectively prevents them from working again. The Czech law does not allow people to claim retirement benefits and to work for a salary at the same time. Moreover, early retirement is penalized by lower pension amounts which never reach the same level as the pensions of old age pensioners even when the early retiree reaches the eligibility age for regular pension. Companies which force employees to retire early claiming their job opportunities would be better thanks to their 'young' age, operate on false pretences. Unfortunately, this is common practice in the Czech Republic.

People over fifty and especially people over fifty-five have little access to professional development opportunities. Projects or activities targeting these age groups are rare (or not advertised). Employers might claim that their training programs are not age-specific and that they respond to the needs of company's most important positions. However, this typically excludes people over fifty. On the other hand, professional development at a later age is not easy.

- Expertis Inc. conducted a training program titled Third Career - Professional Development for Managers Over Fifty targeting older age groups¹²

Facts about education and re-qualification of unemployed people follow: According to 2006 statistics, 2,240 people 55 - 59 years old and 100 people 60 - 64 years old attended re-qualification courses. There were over 50,000 unemployed people in these age groups, which means that less than only 5 % unemployed workers became successfully re-qualified.

In CR, people generally prefer the conventional education system of formal schools. They have little pro-active attitude towards learning and only a few

view learning as a life-long process. Only 5,7 out of 100 people 25 - 64 years old have attended a training in the last month when research took place.

Older people are also often uninterested in continuing education. 90 % people in this age group lack foreign language skills, computer skills or knowledge of communication technologies. They are not willing nor interested in investing their time or money in training (according to research 50+ aktivně).

Besides cultural and sociological factors such as ageist stereotypes in the job market, there is a lack of appropriate job opportunities and flexible forms of work.

Structural unemployment presents a series of inter-connected issues: employment opportunities in the job market and the range of qualifications older job candidates offer or can obtain are limited.

- This brings us back to the need to support life-long learning and to consider incentives for employers who employ older workers (financial instruments which would help companies profit from employing them).

In the last decade we have also observed a phenomenon called the „sandwich generation.“ IN line with the trends of longer life and late fertility, this term refers to people in their fifties who still look after their children while their own parents are also becoming dependent on their support. This demographic includes more women than men. At the age of fifty, they juggle work with caring for their aging parents as well as for their teenage children.

- It is equally common that older people look after their elderly parents. Sixty-five years old pensioners living on minimal income and experiencing limitations to their own mobility or health have to deal with caring for their eighty-five year old parents.
- Finally, there is a dangerous lively public discourse that views pensioners as people who „use up the money we need for our own pensions“. Even though multi-generational issues concern practically every family, this image fosters fear and hostility toward older people.

^{12/} See more: <http://www.expertis.cz/O-Expertisu/Tematicke-projekty>

Studies, National Analyses and Papers on Age Discrimination, Ageism, and Age-Related Issues of Gender Discrimination and Multiple Discrimination – Overview, Bibliography, Annotations

L. Vidovičová (2005), Age Discrimination - Ageism: Theoretical Introduction and Discrimination Practices in Selected Areas With Particular Attention to the Labour Market.

Job market and aging:

- Besides gender, age is a crucial factor in employment and in the job market. Age plays a role in every stage of employment: from job postings to organizational structures, work task organization and staff allocation, performance evaluation, career planning, benefits and remuneration to professional development, promotions and the end of professional careers.
 - o The study showed there were no (subjectively perceived) differences in salaries in the Czech Republic.
 - o The average age of senior managers and other team leaders was 45.4 years old (2001). 35% of these workers were older than fifty.
 - o According to the study respondents, the most age-sensitive elements of the job market were: recruitment (77 %), job loss (61 %), professional development and training opportunities (59 %), promotion prospects (56 %)
 - o In industries where market competition is key to success, pay is contingent on performance. In government-dominated industries, wages are regulated, taking into account years of experience and qualifications (priority given to years of experience). Young people prefer employment in competitive businesses where they expect significantly higher incomes than in the public sector. In general, the average salary of older people is different than the average salary among their younger counterparts. These age groups also tend work in different fields. Claims that younger and older workers are in direct competition are thus not fully reflecting the reality.
- Discrimination is prohibited, including discriminatory advertising. Legal avenues for fighting discrimination are available through the court system or through the labour inspection authorities.
 - o The burden of proof is with the employer. It is possible to request compensation for material and immaterial damages.
 - o A lack of formal complaints about discrimination does not mean it doesn't exist ("young and dynamic team"...).
- Stereotypes and auto-stereotypes are common among people who are discriminated against. Do they lack self-confidence or are they merely realistic about their lack of skills?: „I am too old to learn something new. It wouldn't be any use anyway.“
 - o Older people often claim to be unable to use new technologies and that they don't like being advised by younger colleagues.
- Among pensioners, ageism is a more common form of discrimination than sexism. Single cases of ageist discrimination don't usually contain elements of sexism. Men are more often victims of ageist discrimination than women (26 % vs. 18 %). Recurring discrimination is usually sexist and targets women five times more often than men.
- Ageism is common in the job market and usually concerns people over fifty.
- The decreasing rate of unemployment among 55+ people is related to the system of early retirement which is used as an escape from unemployment. This trend „optically“ lowers the unemployment rates in older generations.

- 40 % of unemployed people over forty have experienced a job position being denied to them on the grounds of age.
- Almost every person over fifty has also had this experience (Mareš 2002).
- 2003 - the number of unemployed older people was increasing and the number of (available and utilized) re-qualification programs was decreasing. This is no longer true today as the number of projects for people over fifty is currently growing.

Necessity: life-long learning and human resource development

Job market flexibility, recruitment of appropriate employees, psychological health and support services, effects of unemployment on people over fifty

Project Active 50+ (by Respekt Institut):

- April-June 2010, extensive sociological research (23 in-depth interviews, 5 focus groups, 2020 survey questionnaires/respondents)
- interest in life experience of 50+ people, experience with the job market, job and life satisfaction, leisure activities, attitudes toward life, friends and family
- unemployment – impacts health, family relations, financial situations, sense of happiness (see study)
- sharp drop in unemployment among 55 year olds and above (55+)
- 18 % of people 55+ have experienced unemployment in the last five years (50-54 years old people with secondary education without matura (A-levels) face unemployed most frequently)
- reason behind job loss (among unemployed people and pensioners)
 - expiration of job contract, elimination of job position, retirement, health reasons, family reasons
 - **people older than sixty prefer premature retirement rather than being officially unemployed!**
- Older employees have access to all job center services. They constitute an at-risk group and as such, they are also entitled to special treatment by the job center staff, unlike old pensioners. Old age pensioners have

limited access to job center services, cannot claim unemployment benefits while receiving old-age pension nor can participate in re-qualification programs. However, they can use job center services if they wish and if they do not claim old age pension, they can utilize all the instruments of the current “active employment policy” (unemployment benefits, benefits during re-qualification programs).

- Job seekers: have a right to job search assistance, unemployment cash benefits, special care and occupational rehabilitation programs (including special support with their re-qualification). On the other hand, job seekers have an obligation to cooperate with job center employees and their comply with their instructions. If there are problems, they can be suspended from the program and lose their benefits (and may return no sooner than six months).
- The official active employment policy consists of re-qualification programs (at or off worksite, partial or full reimbursement of expenses), investment incentives, creation of positions for public good, training contributions for employers, incentives for start-ups and for companies transitioning to a market business/entrepreneurial model, and community service work
- Problems: there is no follow-up for re-qualification programs that would place newly qualified workers with appropriate positions, programs are not very effective and they are not targeted to specific social groups. These issues could be addressed with **supervised placements** (see examples of good practice among regional projects, specifically project Career After Fifty in Liberec).

Discrimination – shortage of part-time positions, low qualifications that do not match job market requirements, ageism and age discrimination

- direct discrimination – unfavorable behavior or attitude (including neglect) that affords preferential treatment to some and not others
- indirect discrimination – behavior or neglect demonstrated in a seemingly neutral policy, criterion or practice which favors some people over others. A discriminating behavior, policy, criterion, or practice which is justified by a legitimate goal and the means used

are appropriate and necessary for reaching this goal, is not considered discriminatory. Differentiation is permitted only in some fields, not all differentiation is discrimination, distinct days/areas where it is prohibited (see Anti-Discrimination Law for details)

- ageism – is a belief that different stages of life are of different value
- age discrimination – practice of ageism that prevents equal treatment of people of different ages
- research: there is little direct discrimination in the Czech job market, it is „...not very common.“ The less people identify discrimination, the more they encounter it in its latent form, which is even more serious because it is hard to prove. Respondents mention that the rate of discriminatory practices varies according to field and position.
 - o Discrimination is obvious in recruitment practice: many candidates are eliminated right at the start of the recruitment process and are forced to accept lower pay and lower level of work. (Even though date of birth is not obligatory information, recruiters can tell from other information provided such as work experience.)
 - o knowing what to do:
 - Labour Inspection Act No. 251/2005 Coll.
 - Anti-Discrimination Law No. 198/2009 Coll.
 - approaching the Manager
 - mediation options
 - complaint procedures at job centers – on candidate selection
 - Labour Inspection authorities
- „The analysis showed that unemployed people at the age two or three years before old age pension eligibility are the highest-risk group at all times, not only during the economic crisis.“ (Active 50+)
 - o Several ways of addressing employment issues of older workers were outlined:
 - incentive for employers of workers over fifty
 - income tax deduction
 - language and computer skills re-qualification programs targeting people over fifty facilitated by job centers
 - creation of new job positions designed for older employees

(particularly in the public sector)

- implementing a regulation that will prohibit firing of older employees

Dušan Šimek (2005): *New Work at Later Age, Acta universitatis palackianae olomucensis, Third Age in Three Perspectives (třetí věk trojí optikou)*

- essential changes to work content (in administration, for instance, the position of a secretary has become that of an assistant with computer and database skills, knowledge of accounting software, office management and language skills - in the past, a secretary used to type and make coffee)
- the nature of work has changed and caused changes in the content of work (topic or type of work specialization, little room for potential re-qualification, a full re-training is needed for specialists in typography, for example)
- shifts in the division of labour
- changes in work organization – paid, institutionalized types of work are disappearing, work hours and work sites are becoming flexible.. transition from a centralized system of full-time employment with one employer for a lifetime to a high-risk system of work that is flexible, varied, de-centralized and consists of limited term contracts
 - o work continues to be paid but there are many new forms of limited-term employment (part-time work, several contracts with different employers at one time, presents difficulties)
- social problems tend to be viewed as psychological problems – moving problems to a personal level, lack of ability, guilt, fear...crisis becomes a personal issue, not a social issue (see Ulrich Beck)
- **job (salaried work) and family have become absolutely central to one's life**, education is specialized from early on, situation is changing, ...problems with old age and unemployment!
- limited opportunities for promotion - older workers understand promotion is only available to favorites

- solution: knowledge-based society (no discrimination in access to education), transformation of elementary education and adult education systems

Jan Ferenc (2010): Employment Among People Approaching and in Retirement Years.

- The economic recession hit everybody including people in their productive age but it showed that employing people close to or of retirement is difficult. This is particularly true for women and people with basic education and for 60-64 year olds.
- The employment rate of the 20-64 year olds was higher than the EU average (70.7 % vs. 68.8 %) but in the 60-64 age group it was lower in the Czech Republic than in the EU (25 % vs. 35 %).
- 14.6 % of 60 - 64 years old women are employed in the Czech Republic. In the EU, it is 22.5 %.
- The same principle applies to job market regulation and retirement age regulation.
- Between 2001 and 2009 the employment rate of people 55 - 64 years old grew from 52.1 to 65.5 %. It was the fastest growth of employment of all age groups although there was a slowdown between 2005 and 2009 due to the economic crisis.
- In the area of employment, there is a lack of appropriate job opportunities and flexible forms of work in addition to cultural and sociological factors including ageist stereotypes. Structural unemployment presents a series of inter-connected issues: the range of employment opportunities in the job market or the qualifications older job candidates offer or can obtain.

Resources:

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Šimek, D. (2005): Nová práce ve starším věku. In Třetí věk trojí optikou. Acta Universitatis

Palackianae Olomucensis. Olomouc : UP, s. 11 – 17. ISBN 80-244-1006-0.

Národní program přípravy na stárnutí 2008-2012. dostupné z:

<http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/5045>

MPSV: Národní akční plán zaměstnanosti 2004-2006.

www.evaluate.cz/dokumenty/dokumenty_cr/napz.pdf

MFCR: Národní lisabonský program 2005-2008.

www.mfer.cz/cps/rde/xbcr/mfcr/NPR_CZ_102005_pdf.pdf

Projekt 50+ aktivně (Respekt Institut):

<http://www.respektinstitut.cz/50-aktivne/>

projekt Třetí kariéra pro rozvoj manažerů 50+ (Expertis) -

<http://www.expertis.cz/O-Expertisu/Tematicke-projekty>

Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic:

<http://www.spcr.cz/statistika/vsps.htm>

The Czech Social Security Administration: www.cssz.cz



Gender Studies, o.p.s. is a non-governmental non-profit organisation that has performed the function of an information, consultation and education centre in the area of relations between women and men and their position in society. The goal of the organisation is to gather, analyze, work with and disseminate further information related to gender-relevant issues. Via specific project, GS actively influences change concerning equal opportunities in different areas such as institutional mechanisms, labour market, women's political participation, information technologies etc. GS also runs a library covering variety of publications and materials related to feminism, gender studies, women's and men's rights etc.

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Wise Owls is the lead body who, with its partner organisations from Czech, France, Slovakia and Spain is developing a network aiming to improve matters for the 'baby-boomer' generation. In addition we have non-funded partners from Italy and hope to include partners from every EU country.

Project partners:

Wise Owls – Great Britain

ACE – Association Chercheurs d'Emploi - France

CEOMA – Confederación Española de Organizaciones de Mayores - Spain

Forum pre pomoc starším – Slovakia

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