

# Older Knowledge Workers as the Labour Market Potential (Slovenia versus Finland)

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## Abstract

This article refers to the challenge of demographic changes gaining attention in many developed countries. The European Union recognized the need to activate older knowledge workers, who are underrepresented and pushed out of the labour market or are inadequately motivated to continue their employment for various reasons, despite their accumulated knowledge and experiences. EU member states respond differently to their ageing, with more or less successful national policies. This article is based on research of the labour market development for older knowledge workers in Slovenia compared to the Finnish age management policy at the end of the 1990s that successfully increased Finnish older knowledge workers' employment through focused and holistic measures. Slovenia stagnated in the same period due to a lack of holistic solutions—a situation that continues today. The results and deficiencies of past bad and good practices in these two compared EU member states might offer some further reflections on possible steps to follow or avoid regarding active ageing solutions in the EU.

**Key words:** older knowledge workers, Slovenia, Finland, EU

## Introduction

The research problem focuses on the shrinking working age population in many European countries, with an emphasis on Slovenia and a comparison with innovative ageing management solutions in Finland. Fewer workers mean lower productivity and weaker competitiveness; a lower share of older knowledge workers in the labour market results in a lower level of innovation and a lack of knowledge transfer. Therefore, one must motivate older workers, especially knowledge workers, to not retire. The key research question addresses the search for (1) existing barriers, inappropriate practices, and disadvantages that demotivate older knowledge workers from retiring; and (2) good practices and measures that can motivate a longer working life for the elderly. The objective of the study is to present a requisitely holistic innovative age management model, suitable for Slovenia, that includes all the relevant measures for the longer working life of older knowledge workers and can contribute to a more efficient overall labour market performance.

## Theoretical Background

Europe is ageing. To reach the Europe 2020 benchmark of average 75% overall employment rate (20–65 years) by 2020, the higher employment of older workers,

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especially the most productive ones, matters. Many EU member states have implemented diverse measures to increase the employment rate of older knowledge workers and to delay their retirement. But poor permanent attention and binding political will are dedicated to ageing; therefore, negative impacts of ageing within the EU economies will be seen soon.

The number of people between the ages of 55 and 64 in the overall labour activity (20–64 years) in Europe will increase from 15.5% in 2013 to 19.5% in 2060 (European Commission [EC], 2015b). This trend, if accompanied with insufficient integration or retention of older knowledge workers in the labour market, will deteriorate the age pyramid, widen the professional gaps, and even increase the existing mismatches in the labour markets. The structural imbalances are increasingly intensively stressed in the EC's major strategic documents, including country-specific recommendations (CSRs), suggesting a focus on longer working lives. No systematic support and more binding measures at the EU level related to demographic decline are required as yet. The most recent awareness-raising initiative was reported in the European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity in 2012, but with no further binding follow-up activities.

Fortunately, the European Semester required more detailed long-term ageing impact monitoring. It will enable measurement of the potentially lower GDP growth and productivity impacts due to ageing and shrinking population. Hence, fewer workers should be substituted by higher productivity to sustain economic growth in the EU (EC, 2015b).

Without prompt actions to raise the older knowledge workers' employment, negative social and economic consequences of ageing will hinder the EU's growth and well-being. Adding the impact of the so-called lost generation (young inactive or NEETs), the actual future labour market potential might be even lower. The promotion of longer working lives with adequate tools is essential. In 2012, 43.1% of pensioners retired through the early retirement schemes. Even in 2014, the average employment rate of older workers in the EU (55–64 years) was only 51.8% (EC, 2016b), only 1.8 percentage points above the 50% target employment rate for older workers, as set for an ambitious Lisbon Strategy benchmark in 2000. Due to the importance of older workers' potential in the labour market, it is worrisome that a more precise monitoring of employment trends is omitted in the new EU strategy for the current decade.

Since the 1990s, Finland has managed to improve its labour market and economic situation, finding suitable solutions and technological niches that proved right for its long-term development (OECD, 2010). Unlike Slovenia, Finland was able to adapt its restructuring economy's needs with workers' needs and to keep pace with innovation and productivity,

including investments into humans. Finland reacted fast to its population's ageing by making improvements in its business environment, including efficient public sector innovations. Hence, in 2014, 71.1% of Finnish workers aged 55 to 64 with ISCED 5–8 worked (compared to 53.4% in Slovenia). The gap is still wider in the 60–64 age group: 53.7% of Finnish workers with ISCED 5–8 worked compared to only 29.2% in Slovenia (Eurostat, 2015).

In the EU's labour market, only the number of older workers increased modestly during the crisis, confirming their role as experienced workers. Unfortunately, the focus on the elderly in the labour market mainly covers low-skilled and unemployed persons. Too little attention is paid to older knowledge workers who, in many EU member states, suffer from unjustified prejudices and stereotypes, including discrimination in the labour market. In the knowledge economy, the contribution of older knowledge workers, who are capable of innovation and productivity, should be welcomed more than many reports have shown (Zupančič, 2016).

### Active Approaches to Ageing: Comparison of Slovene and Finnish paths

Slovenia and Finland followed similar structural shifts in their economies and labour markets in the 1990s, reaching diversely intense and holistic impacts and leading to interesting conclusions on the appropriate measures to activate older knowledge workers. Slovenia faced a huge restructuring and market reorientation after independence in the 1990s. It increased unemployment and generous early retirement. Along the slow progress in reforming the economy and the labour market, deficiencies of inadequate structural changes occurred. The effects of gradual changes were even more pronounced in the time of crisis, followed by required fast adaptation to changes in the global markets. Prolonged early retirement schemes and poor attention to retaining workers or providing them with on-the-job training, including older knowledge workers, resulted in lower overall and elderly employment since then. Due to diverse approaches towards the ageing workforce, the difference in employment rates (55–64 years) between Finland and Slovenia was still more than 20 percentage points in 2013 (58.5% versus 33.5%; Eurostat, 2015; see Table 1).

As Table 1 shows, Finland increased its older knowledge workers employment from 2005 to 2014 in relative and absolute terms. The increase was caused by the successful implementation of the FINPAW strategy (a holistic active ageing program). From 1997 to 2002, the employment rate of the elderly (55–64 years) in Finland grew by more than 20 percentage points—more than anywhere in the EU.

**Table 1.** Comparison of Older Workers' Employment (aged 55–64) in EU-28, Finland, and Slovenia, 2005–2014

55–64 years	ISCED 0–2									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
EU-28	33.9	34.7	35.5	34.8	34.8	34.9	35.2	35.8	36.4	37.7
Slovenia	26.7	29.6	29.7	25.7	25.5	27.7	23.5	25.0	25.2	28.6
Finland	43.4	45.0	44.3	45.5	43.7	43.5	44.4	43.9	44.2	44.8
55–64 years	ISCED 3–4									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
EU-28	44.6	45.8	47.0	47.4	47.7	48.0	49.1	50.5	52.0	53.8
Slovenia	26.9	27.6	29.6	30.3	32.7	32.3	28.4	29.9	30.9	32.8
Finland	53.4	54.9	55.5	56.5	55.1	55.2	55.8	57.8	57.6	57.2
55–64 years	ISCED 5–8									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
EU-28	63.4	64.2	65.3	65.0	65.3	65.1	65.7	67.2	68.2	69.1
Slovenia	50.7	55.1	54.4	53.7	61.4	57.1	53.7	54.6	53.0	53.4
Finland	65.6	67.0	67.7	69.5	69.1	70.5	70.0	70.4	70.9	71.1

Source: Eurostat (2015)

**Table 2:** Participation in Education and Training (in the preceding 4 weeks) in the 55–74 Year Age Group and Educational Level from 2005 to 2014 in EU 28, Finland, and Slovenia

55–74 years	ISCED 0–2									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
EU-28	:	:	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.2
Slovenia	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4
Finland	6.0	6.1	6.4	6.1	5.6	5.8	6.1	6.1	6.3	6.6
55–74 years	ISCED 3–4									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
EU-28	:	:	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.9	4.1
Slovenia	4.5	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.8	5.2	5.0	4.8	4.2
Finland	10.8	10.8	11.0	10.7	10.9	10.2	9.9	10.7	10.7	10.6
55–74 years	ISCED 5–8									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
EU-28	:	:	9.3	10.1	9.7	9.4	8.7	8.9	10.7	11.0
Slovenia	12.9	13.4	12.7	13.3	14.9	15.4	16.8	14.6	13.8	12.6
Finland	19.5	20.3	21.0	20.2	19.7	19.7	20.0	20.9	20.2	21.6

Source: Eurostat (2015)

Finland faced similar turbulent challenges in the 1990s, but reacted faster and more efficiently. The comparison is interesting not only due to Finland's successful increase of the elderly employment rate in the described period, but also due to a variety of measures, well-developed working environments, and high quality social dialogue practices. In terms of the importance of knowledge workers' inclusion in the labour market, it is even more interesting to compare employability in both countries with an emphasis on qualification levels. To increase competitiveness and productivity,

Finland substantially invested in humans during its restructuring period (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002). Evaluations proved that productivity does not depend on age, but on investment in humans and on adaptability of work process to the lifecycle of the individual workers. Thus, the employment rate increased very fast during the FINPAW program implementation and even after the program ended. Higher employability in Finland was linked with high investments in lifelong learning for all age groups (see Table 2).

The inclusion of older workers in lifelong learning matters even more for employability than the formal educational level (OECD, 1997). Despite this fact, inclusion in the lifelong learning process is decreasing with age in most EU member states. One must stress that older knowledge workers' specific knowledge is going obsolete even faster. The advantage of upskilling is generally recognized as 88% of employees confirmed the positive impact of upskilling for better employability options (Eurobarometer, 2006). Unfortunately, many employers do not recognize the needed skills of the elderly to include them in lifelong learning. Neglecting the training needs of the elderly, especially knowledge workers, although they are the most productive older workers and their exit age is increasing, is not responsible. Finland—again, unlike Slovenia—has shown a much more positive attitude towards the elderly in training than many other EU member states.

Employers will soon face a lack of adequate workers due to a rapidly shrinking working age population and a poor age management. Already 40% of enterprises in the EU have problems finding workers with an appropriate skills mix (i.e., skills shortages; EC, 2016b). Finland recently saw decreased competitiveness and innovation and reacted fast with renewed relevant policies and programs to regain its lost position in global economies. The described EU member states' comparison confirms the possible effectiveness of an age policy if one has a holistic, clearly defined goal and balanced economic and labour market targets. Previous age management efforts in Finland can be described in general as a balanced interaction among economic, employment, and social policies, which can support a long-term working life (Eurofound, 2003).

### Factors of More or Less Work Motivation for Elderly Knowledge Workers

Scandinavian countries in particular recognize the potentials and advantages of competent elderly workers in the labour market whereas some countries, including Slovenia, still neglect the role of the elderly in achieving more efficient and productive labour markets. Many unjustified excuses not to employ older workers arise from the assumption of the lower productivity of older employees. This assumption has not been confirmed on an individual basis, but can be justified if the approach to upskilling during the whole working period is wrong. As knowledge goes obsolete at always faster pace, the constant investment into human resources no longer depends on age. With this approach to skills aimed to preserve employability and productivity, older knowledge workers in particular are valuable and productive parts of the multigenerational work environment.

Legislative changes alone cannot substantially improve the willingness of older knowledge workers to remain employed. The main barriers hindering a higher share of older workers, especially knowledge workers, in the labour market include the need for a smaller tax wedge, more flexibility at work, gradual retirement options, a better attitude towards the elderly in the labour market, and an adaptable working environment (Eurobarometer, 2012). These barriers do not necessarily require huge financial burdens, but rather a willingness to change practice or adapt it in one's lifecycle.

A Slovenian survey carried out by the author in 2016 confirmed the mentioned barriers (Zupančič, 2016). The survey identified reasons for retirement decisions. Most respondents confirmed that they need autonomy at work, followed by the possibility of work after retirement, more flexibility at work, and the possibility of gradual retirement. In addition, 40% of (recently retired) respondents felt they retired too early, despite reaching full retirement criteria. Even more, many agreed they would retire later if the employer invited them to keep working.

Why are older knowledge workers worth further employment?

- Older knowledge workers possess the knowledge, skills, and characteristics employers need (including soft skills). Due to the mentioned values, older knowledge workers enable more innovative and productive working processes and are desired by clients. Indeed, 63% of employees in the multigenerational teams agree that the age differences contributed to higher innovation and creativity at work (European Business Test Panel, 2008). The invisible treasure of older knowledge workers includes the transfer of knowledge and counselling services through mentoring.
- The EC's (2016b, p. 31) annual labour and social report states that "an important part of economic growth stems from investment in knowledge creation or intangible assets".
- The most prevailing prejudice in the case of older workers is decreased working capacity and productivity due to age. The (sometimes) justified decrease in productivity arises from neglected need for investments into human resources rather than decreased working capacity alone. A Finnish study showed that only 30% of workers aged 50–64 had lower working capacity. Holistic research about health at work in Finland started with the launch of the FINPAW program and even before, all through interactions with employers, to enable workers' higher workability (Ilmarinen, 2012).
- As knowledge grows obsolete in a short time, age plays no crucial role in investment decisions. Training options should be available for each individual, whether young or old. Variations in employment are the highest in the 60–64 age group, possibly due to implemented or

neglected age policies (CEDEFOP, 2015). Finland even raised the age ceiling for education or training.

The implementation of innovative age management approaches, as Finland shows, importantly impacts the retaining and attracting of older knowledge workers in employment. About half of correspondents confirmed that older workers retire too early (Eurobarometer, 2012), and 70% of older workers feel unwelcome at work (EC, 2012). The 2012 European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity presented a welcomed approach to highlighting the ageing and its consequences. Unfortunately, the willingness to enable follow-up activities made room for other, more prominent agendas.

### **Innovative Solutions for More Elderly in the Labour Market**

A comparison of different paths and achievements between Finland and Slovenia in the last two decades indicates possible success factors in different age management approaches. Finland is adapting its skill needs with various forecasting systems and modelling; educational processes are aligned with labour market needs. Quantitative and qualitative analyses, together with practical applicative technological solutions, were crucial for economic growth in the active age strategy implementation period. The share of workers without education decreased from 55% to 18% between 1997 and 2003 through systematic investments in human resources; meanwhile, the share of knowledge workers grew from 12% in 1988 to 39% in 2000 (Eurofound, 2007; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002).

Results of the FINPAW program evaluation show that the situation of the elderly in the labour market in Finland significantly improved after five years of active ageing strategy implementation (Arnkil, Nieminen, Rissanen, Pitkanen, & Lyytinen, 2003). During the implementation phase, 50% of the Finnish population noticed the program framework; the same share felt the program was important and that it had a positive impact on the employability of the elderly (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002). The FINPAW program included more than 40 measures and policies for longer working life, and the emphasis was placed on research and improvements of work environment and quality at work. Additional focus was dedicated to investments in human capital and workplace adaptability, broad national awareness-raising campaigns, the promotion of active ageing, and many seminars and issued publications. However, the most important and successful element of the strategy was the introduction of workability measurement through the workability index.

Ilmarinen's (1999) model of workability presents an interesting innovative concept that contributed to the better perception of preconditions for a quality working life and dimensions of workability (work, values, competences, and health). It was designed for the population over 45 years old with a goal of timely interventions for longer working lives. Consequently, the workability measurement in Finland led to an improved—or at least preserved—level of workability of older workers as well as increased satisfaction and competences (Eurofound, 2007). Furthermore, an evaluation in Finnish enterprises confirmed that investments in workability results in a three- to five-fold gain in returns for the individual worker within a few years. The implementation of Ilmarinen's (1999) workability model was realized in time in 90% of Finnish enterprises with more than two employees, and the awareness of workability for employability increased significantly (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002).

The retirement age increased, and the employment rate of the elderly approached the employment rate of other age groups in Finland. The report identified key factors for improvement in governmental support and broad political consensus for age challenges progress, substantial financial funding availability, and focus on SMEs support, including support for employers' needs. To sum up, the FINPAW promotion positively affected individual jobs and work conditions, to some extent due to extensive managerial training for age management. The additional value added to the program was significant public funding (4.2 million euros in 5 years of implementation); funding demonstrated a serious governmental commitment to improving the labour market situation of older workers in Finland.

What must be changed in Slovenia and other EU member states with low employment of the elderly? As older knowledge workers already possess skills and knowledge, substantial investments in their skills and competences are not needed, but they are in other age groups. Until 2030, there will be a shortage of 20.8 million (6.8%) of workers in the EU (EC, 2015a), including critical knowledge workers (EC, 2013). The contribution of older knowledge workers will matter in the EU labour market.

The service sector prevails in the EU; the older knowledge workers possess the required skills and competences. Knowledge banks, learning organizations, the introduction of interim management, IT-supported work arrangements, and counselling services for older knowledge workers might serve as interesting options for prolonged employment (Eurofound, 2015). A well-developed IT infrastructure allows for more autonomy at work and location irrelevance for aged workers.

The importance of the quality of work increases with age, as Finnish initiatives have recognized in the past. The quality of work affects the organization and the work environment; both matter to older knowledge workers (Eurofound, 2012). Work intensity is one of the major reasons for stress and may accelerate retirement (Eurofound, 2003, 2012). Satisfaction at work is linked with work conditions. Work satisfaction decreases with age; this can easily be ascribed to too few innovative measures for adaptability at work for older workers (Eurobarometer, 2012). Not surprisingly, Slovenia is recognized as a country with the lowest ranking regarding the ability “to do their current job or a similar one until one’s age of 60” (Eurofound, 2016, p. 121).

Furthermore, 60% of all employees in EU-27 still have a fixed working time; among them, 55.3% are older than 50 (Eurofound, 2010). Even more worrisome, age discrimination is the most usual discrimination; it even intensifies for more educated older workers (Eurobarometer, 2012). Age discrimination starts as early as the age of 50 for men and even earlier for women (EC, 2011). Managers, human resource officers, and co-workers doubt the adaptability of older workers most of all (CEDEFOP, 2010a, 2010b). The prohibition of work after retirement in some countries, including Slovenia, is very limiting for knowledge workers due to their skills, knowledge transfer, and counselling possibilities. The government should serve as a role model for holistic solutions to increase the employment rate of the elderly, especially knowledge workers, as potentially the most employable ones. They should bear the responsibility for a more positive attitude towards the elderly by implementing pilot projects in the governmental sector, building a framework for the “silver economy”, and ensuring elderly-friendly workplace adaptation.

### Lessons to be Reconsidered for the Elderly in the Slovenian Labour Market

The future labour markets’ demands in service sectors will require highly competent and knowledgeable workers (CEDEFOP, 2015). Due to the shrinking population in Europe, the demands will be even higher. The available workforce (aged 20–64) will decrease between 2023 and 2060 by 19 million persons (EUROPOP, 2013). Hence, a demographic policy is individual countries’ responsibility and priority.

The educational structure of the population in Europe is constantly rising; Europe will face older, more educated and skilled human resources. In addition, older workers can provide added value in the contemporary society as a source of competitiveness (Griliches, 1970; Temple, 2001). Are we

ready to adapt their workplaces and work environments with adequate measures and tools to keep them working longer?

Compared to the Finnish treating of age challenges, successful active age management in Slovenia requires:

- A long-term vision of age management development and the revision of the existing partial, but inadequate, solutions, if necessary;
- The cooperation of relevant sectors to achieve holistic and mutually supportive solutions;
- More government cooperation with social partners related to the elderly in the labour market and expectations of improved management and work environment (in this respect, Finland played a very positive role during its strategy implementation);
- The transparency of conduct and continuity of actions/reform, clear language, and intensive inclusion of social partners in the age management preparation;
- The implementation of non-technological innovations (in work processes, especially in the governmental sector, registering the most older knowledge workers);
- Sufficient and reliable analytical data for efficient and focused solutions concerning age challenges to foresee future social and economic impacts of ageing;
- Continued increasing awareness of ageing’s trends and impacts on society as 74% of Finns compared to only 45% of Slovenes surveyed agreed that older persons contribute to society as workers (Eurobarometer, 2012);
- The introduction of career plans, pre-retirement activities, and changing working environments for ageing workers; and
- Lifelong reconciliation policies (not only childcare, but also elderly care facilities), taking into account women’s significant human capital and potentially longer contribution to the labour market.

As a proven example of good practice in age management, Finland confirmed the necessity of steps from the micro towards the macro level of actions (Ilmarinen, 2002). Better said, one must proceed from individuals’ needs towards adequate policies. The confirmation of a positive impact of simultaneousness and mutual impacts of the labour market and economic measures might contribute to a successful and inclusive labour market for older, especially very productive, knowledge workers in Slovenia.

Finally, the Norwegian Centre for Senior Policy presented an interesting good practice of a politically neutral institution, dealing with counselling and increased awareness of ageing in society. It might serve as a role model for future national settings by identifying country-specific barriers for higher inclusion and the retaining of older knowledge workers, promoting their potentials and advantages for inclusive and productive work.

## Conclusion

Competitiveness requires more work effectiveness. Ageing is inevitable; it cannot be eliminated, but it can be better managed. The growing number of older workers needs more adaptive work environments aligned with their life-cycle characteristics. The share of older knowledge workers is growing, becoming a significant age group. They need adequate work conditions to keep them motivated and productive.

Autonomy at work, flexible working conditions, an adaptive work environment, and gradual retirement are among the most desired factors of work motivation. These approaches are not expensive to implement. When coping with the increasing share of demotivated older workers, retiring too early is much more expensive for companies and societies. An important signal can be the fact that 65% of respondents and 70% of managers find the combination of part-time work and partial retirement to be an attractive option (Eurobarometer, 2012).

During 2000–2010, the share of older workers in the EU increased from 16.2% to 18.1%, exceeding the share of 15- to 24-year-old workers, which decreased from 19.7% to 18% during the same period (EC, 2011). The central attention to ageing should expose the state of workability (Ilmarinen, 1999). A decrease in workability is often caused by a delay in monitoring potential health risks and workplaces' poor adaptability due to fast ageing. This is why Finland was probably more successful in age policies than other countries: Its ageing agenda was incorporated into its strategic goals and adopted by all relevant stakeholders. The mature approach towards ageing recognizes that achievements are not seen in the short or even mid-term, but later. Finland offered a good practice in awareness-raising campaigns. However, the end of the ageing program also showed a slowdown in further employment rate increases. It might confirm the fact that the ageing agenda is "visible" and highly effective as long as it is found to be politically important.

Therefore, holistic solutions are important, but the best and innovative solutions must also be constantly active to keep positive improvements in the attitude towards the elderly. During the time of demographic changes, the contribution of older knowledge workers is necessary for a higher employment rate, higher productivity, and greater competitiveness in the European labour markets and economies. The Finnish case confirms that economic and social

goals are mutually supported. The work environment for older workers can be highly productive by ensuring a high quality of the work outcomes. The highest barriers to innovation lie in the lack of human capital or financial sources (i.e., 52%) (Innobarometer, 2010). The advantages of a proactive and holistic approach to age challenges have been demonstrated, especially in terms of concerns for older knowledge workers in the EU. More binding recommendations to implement them in EU member states, and more serious progress monitoring might alleviate many unnecessary labour market shocks as well as human capital loss and innovation gaps.

Concretely, to provide for the well-being and motivation of older knowledge workers in Slovenia, one can submit a requisitely holistic innovative age management model, built on identified barriers and Finnish good practices. The model includes all the most important political measures that can contribute to more efficient labour-market performance for older knowledge workers, if implemented. The variety of measures within the model can be grouped into four main areas of implementation. The first set includes innovations at the workplace/work environment for older workers (innovative legislative changes in labour code, pension systems, age management, innovations in job creation and organization, non-technological changes). The second set focuses on measures to raise motivation not to retire (innovations in tax policy, intensive social partners' involvement, awareness-raising campaigns, intergenerational management). The third set covers lifelong investments into competences (changed role of educational institutions, socially responsible restructuring). The fourth set emphasizes a stronger need for investments into the health of older workers at the individual, company, and society levels.

Slovenia has a long way to go to achieve substantial progress to motivate older knowledge workers to remain employed longer. The Finnish example shows it is possible; the strongest barrier probably lies in the maturity of policy decision makers. The implementation of the mentioned model in Slovenia is achievable; the start requires sincere commitments of all relevant stakeholders for needed changes and the recognition of reality in the labour market for the elderly. Despite the fact that improvements will not be immediately visible, it is socially responsible and economically justifiable to change some existing and less productive Slovene priorities towards priorities of some of the best performers in the field of active ageing, as Finland still is. This shift might have multiplications that are more positive for the Slovene economy than some others.

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# Starejši znanjski sodelavci kot potencial trga dela (primera Slovenije in Finske)

## Izvleček

Članek se navezuje na izziv demografskih sprememb, ki pridobiva pomen v mnogih razvitih državah. Evropska unija je prepoznala potrebo po aktivaciji starejših znanjskih sodelavcev, ki so premalo zastopani na trgu dela in z njega izrinjeni oziroma premalo motivirani za nadaljevanje delovne aktivnosti zaradi najrazličnejših razlogov, in to kljub pridobljenemu znanju in izkušnjam. Države članice Evropske unije se različno odzivajo na izziv staranja, z bolj ali manj uspešnimi nacionalnimi politikami. Članek sloni na raziskavi o razvoju trga dela starejših znanjskih sodelavcev v Sloveniji v primerjavi s politiko upravljanja s starejšimi sodelavci na Finskem ob koncu devetdesetih let preteklega stoletja. Z omenjeno politiko staranja je Finska uspešno dvignila zaposljivost starejših znanjskih sodelavcev s poudarkom na celovitih in usmerjenih ukrepih. Slovenija je v istem obdobju zaradi odsotnosti celovitih ukrepov aktivnega staranja stagnirala, napredka pa še zdaj ni videti. Rezultati in pomanjkljivosti preteklih dobrih in slabih praks v omenjenih dveh državah članicah Evropske unije ponujajo nadaljnji razmislek o možnih korakih za napredek ali opustitev neuspešnih politik s ciljem, poiskati rešitve za izziv aktivnega staranja v Evropski uniji.

**Ključne besede:** starejši znanjski sodelavci, Slovenija, Finska, Evropska unija