

Institute for Population and Human Studies - BAS



ROUND TABLE

**Gender effects of the extended working life in Bulgaria and related
policies: health and economic well-being
(Sofia, Bulgaria, 21.04.2016)**

Summary

Dr. Kamellia Lillova - IPHS-BAS, COST IS 1409 MC member for Bulgaria

On 21 April 2016 a Round table on "Gender effects of the extended working life in Bulgaria and the related policies" took place in Crystal Palace Hotel, Sofia. It was organized by the Institute for Population and Human Studies (IPHS) at BAS. The aim of this round table (RT) was to bring together researchers and experts from different scientific institutes, universities, government institutions, and NGOs and to enable them to present their latest results on gender differences in health status, employment, income, and quality of life of older workforce in Bulgaria and to discuss possible policies and measures to minimize them.

- At the opening of the RT, Dr. A. Hristova, the director of the IPHS-BAS, outlined the European dimension of policies and legislation on the extension of working life and combating age and sex discrimination as a key in supporting active ageing, the need for better understanding of the way in which working conditions and political interventions affect health and welfare of older workers, timeliness and importance of this action in theoretical and practical aspect. Congratulatory letters were received from the President of the Republic of Bulgaria and the President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as well as from the Director of the Institute for Society and Knowledge Study.

Dr. K. Lillova, MC member of the COST IS1409 action, presented this action - its main goals and objectives, scientific program and activities, opportunities for collaboration and development, expected outcomes, etc.

- The forum put the emphasis on three main subjects for the country: 1) gender differentials in employment, income, and economic well-being; 2) extended working life and its impact on health of the older workers; 3) policies on decreasing gender effects of extended working life. These thematic lines were presented in the plenary papers and then discussed in separate sessions of the RT.

- During the plenary session, Prof. K. Borissova-Marinova considered the main characteristics of the older labour force in Bulgaria and its gender differences, compared with the other EU countries, and highlight the main outstanding issues.

- During the first session, an extensive discussion was held on health status of the workforce as a result of economic development, present health, pension and social systems, and policy interventions, as well as on possible future developments. Discussed topics: life potential and employment potential of Bulgarian population, impact of the causes of death on life expectancy; health status of workers by sex, age and structural economic activities; morbidity and mortality among people of working age; chronic diseases and polymorbidity, increasing retirement age and risk of ill health and disability; sources of information for evaluation the extended working age impact on health status of the workers.

- During the second session, the focus was on the gender differences in employment, income, and living standards: quality of life of people in pre-retirement; possibilities to extend the working life of women in Bulgaria through employment; income and quality of life of elderly, effects of extended working life, etc.

- The third session focused on the policies to reduce gender differences in the adult workforce: current state of the policies in Bulgaria and existing opportunities, contribution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in policy making; reducing the pay gap and disparities in social security by gender; informal long-term care in family and gender differences; active ageing in advanced age.

- Finally, it was decided to publish the RT reports in a special edition.

Nearly 60 people participated in the RT - from different universities and research institutes, from Ministry of Labour Force and Social Policy, Ministry of Education and Science, National Centre for Public Health and Analyses, National Statistical Institute, non-governmental organizations, as well as retired scientists and experts. We also had local

guests from the national COST body and from another COST network on ageism. The event was well organized and received approval from all the participants, because of its timeliness and importance. I think, it is a starting point for a chain of subsequent initiatives in this thematic area.



Kamellia Lillova