

Dr. Jonas Radl
Associate Professor of Sociology
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
Calle de Madrid 126
28903 Getafe
Spain

**COST Action IS 1409:
Gender and health impacts of policies extending working life in western countries**

Local policy workshop:
Extending Working Lives: Retirement and Pensions in Times of Demographic Ageing
20 January 2017, Madrid

REPORT

A local policy workshop was held under the title *Extending Working Lives: Retirement and Pensions in Times of Demographic Ageing* on January 20th 2017 at the *Puerta de Toledo* Campus of Carlos III University in the city center of Madrid. A total of 38 persons attended the event, a mixture between academics and different societal stakeholders. The one-day event started at 9,30 AM and finished at around 6,45 PM. The workshop was held in English (the six research talks) and Spanish (the roundtable discussion).

After a brief work of introduction from the local organizer Jonas Radl, the Vice Chancellor of Carlos III University Javier Prieto extended his welcome to those in attendance, including both local attendees and especially the international visitors, emphasizing the satisfaction of his university to participate in this COST Action. Kène Henkens from the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demography Institute in The Hague and Kathrin Komp from Helsinki University were the first two speakers, and both provided compelling big-picture analyses of the ongoing changes in the retirement landscape. Dr Jonas Radl chaired this first session. While Professor Henkens focused on insights from his research based employer and longitudinal surveys conducted in the Netherlands, Dr Komp provided a stimulating, largely conceptual talk on the virtues and limitations of the conventional tripartite life course model.

After a coffee break used not only for refreshments but also for informal conversations and networking, the second session started, which was focused on Spain and chaired by Dr Juan J. Fernández from the host university. Miguel Requena, Professor of Sociology from the Spanish national distance-education university UNED, presented a paper co-authored

with Mikolaj Stanek from Salamanca University on social differences in the length of working lives in Spain, containing a wealth of empirical evidence and revealing interesting gender differences in trends. Then, José A. Herce, a well-known economist and pension expert in Spain presented a provocative talk on the challenges facing the Spanish pension system, which provided much food for thought and material for conversation during the following lunch break.

Afterwards, Dr Pau Miret from the Center of Demographic Study in Barcelona CED, presented his view on the causes of the financial pressures that are weighing on the system of old-age, disability and survivor pensions in Spain. The paper, which is co-authored with Dr Pilar Zuera from the same institution, essentially claims that up till this point demographic change had little to do with the evolution of pension expenses (although this will almost certainly change in the near future). Dr Hans Dubois from Eurofound in Dublin delivered the final research talk of the day, presenting an impressive amount of quantitative and qualitative data on the availability, regulations and use of part-time retirement arrangement in Europe, highlighting various publications of his institutions on this and related matters.

The workshop culminated in a round-table discussion which was chaired and moderated by Dr Elisa Chulía, from UNED in Madrid, and which featured two representatives from the public sector and two representatives from the private sphere. They were: Dr Miguel Ángel Díaz García, high-ranking official at the Ministry of Employment and responsible for key function of the social security system; Balbino Paldavila from IMSERSO, the central government organization in charge of affairs related with the older population; Mr David Carrasco, economist and director of the BBVA Pensions Institute; as well as Mr Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Parra from ICEA, a think tank by the Association of the Spanish insurance sector. The discussion was propelled by initial statements from the four panelists as well as the chair herself, and then led the way for a lively, sometimes controversial debate centered around pension reform that took place at a high technical level. The discussion also took on board several questions from the audience, providing an optimal ending to this local policy workshop on the future of retirement in Spain.