

## **Editorial: Socio-Economic Dimensions in Extended Working Lives**

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*Active Ageing* policies are associated with a steady extension of working careers since the mid-1990s, particularly through the closing of pathways to early retirement and stronger labour market incentives towards longer working lives. Realising the potential of extending working lives to react to demographic changes requires careful consideration of equity concerns. This includes the fundamental issue of how to account for different labour market groups in regard to their personal opportunities and challenges. This special issue is designed to provide research on understanding and addressing these socio-economic differences in extended working lives.

This special issue is organised as part of the *Fairer Active Ageing for Europe* (FACTAGE) project. FACTAGE is a Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) “More Years Better Lives” project and is financed by the national research foundations of Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain and the UK. The project is led by the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels, in partnership with the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Statistics Austria, the University of Koblenz-Landau and the University of the Basque Country. Considerable efforts have been made by policymakers to encourage individuals to extend their working lives, both in the countries of the project partners and across Europe. The FACTAGE project is exploring the emerging inequalities associated with longer working lives, recognising these as major societal challenges, and thereby helping to inform the further development of evidence-based policy in this area.

This special issue focuses particularly on questions relating to aspects of well-being associated with the extension of working lives. The concept of well-being in later life is reflected in multiple dimensions, such as labour market integration, pension outcomes, and health. While remaining in work for longer can bring benefits for individuals as well as for society more broadly, there is increasing recognition that impacts may differ for different groups. The articles in this special issue consider a range of consequences associated with longer working lives, exploring: the role of different institutional arrangements, experiences of ageing and well-being across social groups, changes in the classical model of family and care obligations and (healthy) life expectancy.

Through the provision of evidence on the multiple consequences of prolonged working lives, this special issue contributes to our understanding of the relationships between society, the economy, institutions and markets as well as the role of individual abilities. Along with the expansion of working lives distinctions in the potential to extend working lives are visible across socio-economic groups. The assessment of policy approaches across EU countries shows that *Active Ageing* policies are favourable to extending working careers, while societal, micro- and macroeconomic effects are wide ranging and require further research. By providing an interdisciplinary and international insight into the impact of *Active Ageing* policies, opportunities and challenges for the future are discussed.