



## SUMMARY

### TOOLKIT

# DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, AGE MANAGEMENT AND COMPETENCIES IN THE GAS SECTOR IN EUROPE

2009

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This project was made possible through the funding by the European Commission – DG  
Employment, Social affairs and Equal Opportunities

## PREFACE

In 2009 the European social partners: EUROGAS, EMCEF and EPSU decided to consider the implications of demographic change on skills and competencies in the gas industry, and launched a project in the framework of the social dialogue committee.

A separate study was carried out by David Tarren of the Working Life Research Institute of the Metropolitan University of London, to provide an analysis of trends in demographic ageing, skills and competencies. The study found that demographic ageing and changes taking place in the industry will require new investments and skills and competencies. The study presents the results of a joint survey. From the responses it is clear that employers and trade unions need to set aside time and resources to properly study the effects of the sector's ageing workforce and adequately address them jointly. The survey responses indicate that there is a lack of discussion and bargaining on demographic change and competencies. The study highlights the specific jobs that will be affected, such as, meter readers, engineers, plant operators, and workers in customer services, distribution and exploration.

This Toolkit has been prepared to raise awareness and point to ways that the social partners can address the implications of demographic change on the skills and competencies that are necessary to ensure that the sector remains competitive in the future. The Toolkit identifies the challenges facing gas companies and how they can be resolved. It demonstrates how companies can benefit from the skills and motivations of different age groups in the workforce and provide guidelines, information and good practice approaches. There are several case studies, which exemplify joint company/ trade union approaches, including in the sectors main companies. The toolkit underlines the case for the role of the social dialogue in the management of demographic change, and will be useful for human resource and line managers and trade union officials working in the gas sector, who have a responsibility for drawing up policies and procedures and monitoring progress in this area. The European social partners want to see the toolkit used as a basis for addressing the implications of demographic change on skills and competencies. The toolkit was presented by Dr Jane Pillinger, an independent consultant working from Ireland.

A joint conference was held on "Demographic Change and Competencies in the European Gas Sector" on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The conference was attended by employer and trade union representatives from gas companies across Europe. Presentations from the conference, a summary and full report of the study, and a summary Toolkit and full Toolkit can be found on <http://www.epsu.org/a/5743>.

EUROGAS, EMCEF and EPSU would like to thank all company and trade union representatives who contributed to this study, developed the case studies, provided useful information and fed valuable ideas into the Toolkit.

**EUROGAS, EPSU and EMCEF**

## **TWELVE POINT PLAN**

### **FOR SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES ON AGE MANAGEMENT, DEMOGRAPHIC AGEING AND COMPETENCIES IN THE GAS SECTOR**

- 1. Take a strategic approach to age management, training and skills development.**
- 2. Create training and skills development opportunities for the whole workforce, including older workers.**
- 3. Remove age barriers and implement a culture of equality and diversity.**
- 4. Put in place new methods for providing and delivering education and training to workers.**
- 5. Create a learning organisation by embedding a culture of learning in the organisation.**
- 6. Address the career development of older workers.**
- 7. Develop programmes of job rotation and redeployment for older workers.**
- 8. Implement knowledge management and knowledge transfer programmes.**
- 9. Put in place complementary policies on age management: health and well being in the workplace and flexible working time.**
- 10. Develop programmes for attracting and retaining younger workers.**
- 11. Put in place methods for forecasting future skills and employment.**
- 12. Develop the social dialogue in the workplace, and integrate age management, training and skills development into collective agreements and workplace partnerships.**

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit provides practical resources and information for trade unions and employers in the gas sector to enable them to address the critical challenges of skills and competencies in the gas sector resulting from demographic change.

By raising awareness and providing tools for addressing demographic ageing, the Toolkit will enable the social partners in gas companies to more effectively address the forecasting of skills and competencies and take a more strategic and comprehensive approach to age management.

The social partners have a key role to play in developing joint approaches and solutions to the risks posed by the demographic changes impacting on the gas sector.

## SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN GAS SECTOR AND THE CHALLENGES THAT IT FACES

### **The European gas sector**

The gas sector is facing significant changes in its production, distribution and retail functions, resulting from changes in product markets, the potential of increased demand for energy in the future, and the need to respond to climate change and reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses. These all have implications for energy infrastructure, employment, training and the forecasting of skills and competencies of the workforce. As well, the liberalization of gas markets and global competition pose additional challenges for gas companies as they strive to gain a competitive edge.

The gas sector employs around 246,716 (based on 1,300 gas companies in the EU-27 (Eurogas 2008)). However, there has been a progressive reduction in employment in the sector, which is a general trend since the liberalization of the European energy sector, and there is a trend towards higher skills technical and engineering employment. Women represent between 8 and 15 per cent of the workforce in the gas sector and the employment of highly skilled women will become an important source of employment in the sector in the future.

## **European demographic trends**

The ageing population in the European Union means that the number of people aged 20-59 years will decrease from 208.7 million in 2000 to 151.2 million in 2050. During this time, the numbers of people over the age of 60 will increase significantly so that retired people will outnumber active workers by 2030. This has implications for the gas sector where many companies report that between 10 and 40 per cent of the gas sector workforce are over the age of 50 years.

The issue of demographic ageing has been highlighted a key priority by the European Union, and under the Lisbon Strategy specific targets have been put in place to increase the participation of older workers and women in the labour market, in order to keep Europe competitive. As a result the European Commission projects that the employment rate of older workers will increase between now and 2020.

## **Skills in the knowledge-based economy and the implications for the gas sector**

Building skills and competencies is an essential part of Europe's strategy for growth and to meet the future challenges of an ageing population. The trend in the gas sector, as in other sectors of the economy, towards a more highly skilled workforce and for workers to hold higher skills, competencies and qualifications results from the demands for a skills based knowledge-based economy.

The European Commission recommends the establishment of sector skills councils, which will work closely with the sectoral social dialogue at the European level, in order to adapt skills and improve learning opportunities for the whole workforce. Skills needs identified by employers include information and communications technology (ICT), technical and engineering skills, and key competencies such as problem-solving, analytical skills, self-management and communication skills and linguistic skills.

## **The Social dialogue in the European gas sector**

The social partners in the European gas sector have established a European social dialogue in the gas sector, which was formally recognised by the European Commission in March

2007. The Social Dialogue in gas provides an important role for the social partners to influence the skills and employment composition of the workforce, and to address the twin concerns of demographic ageing and restructuring, within a strategic framework of age management.

### SECTION 3: OVERVIEW OF THE GAS COMPANY SURVEY AND CASE STUDIES

As part of the study carried out to inform the Toolkit, a survey of gas companies and trade unions was carried out, from which more detailed cases studies were drawn up. The survey showed that up to 40 per cent of the workforce is over 50 years of age and that the majority of companies anticipate that demographic change will have an impact on job functions and future skill, particularly in the areas of engineering and information technology.

Knowledge transfer, followed by recruiting and retaining younger workers and forecasting of skills and planning are identified as the most important priorities for companies and trade unions. Trade unions particularly identified the need to update the skills of older workers and getting the issues onto the collective bargaining agenda. Companies have responded to these challenges by introducing knowledge management, mentoring and other programmes for older workers, and specific initiatives to attract and retain young workers.

#### Summary of gas company examples and case studies

**E.ON Ruhrgas AG** has put in place mentoring and knowledge transfer initiatives on an individual basis, and has had some discussions with the trade unions about the impact of demographic change on competencies. Future priorities include the updating the skills of the whole workforce, recruiting and retaining young workers and the forecasting for future skills requirements.

**Swissgas Ag** has held some discussions with trade unions regarding initiatives to help the company adapt to new skills requirements resulting from demographic change. In particular, the company identifies knowledge transfer as a challenge it needs to address in the future.

**Gas Terra BV, Netherlands** has implemented a career path for workers based on competency development, and has identified knowledge transfer as a future challenge for the company in the future. Knowledge transfer has been an important outcome of job rotation programmes.

**Polish Oil and Gas Company** anticipates that demographic change will have a significant impact on the company in the next few years, particularly in engineering. Discussions with the trade unions have taken place over company restructuring. The company anticipates that the retaining of older workers and the recruitment and retention of younger workers as being key challenges for the future.

**DEPA S.A, Greece** has introduced training and development programmes for the whole workforce and identified knowledge transfer as being a key challenge for the future.

**Égáz-Dégáz plc., Hungary** has carried out some work to identify future skills and competencies, and carries out training and development programmes for the whole workforce. Discussions have taken place with trade unions, although no specifically on issues concerning the impact of demographic change on competencies. The retention of younger workers, knowledge transfer and the forecasting and planning of skills are key challenges that will need to be addressed in the future.

**Égáz-Dégáz Natural Gas Distributor plc** anticipates that demographic change will have a big impact on the company, where an ageing workforce will affect specialist, engineering and technical jobs. The company's training and career development programmes aim to compensate for a loss of knowledge by developing the general 'universal' competencies of younger and middle aged professionals, to enable them to have options to move between jobs.

**Wien Energie Gasntz GmbH** sees that the biggest impact of demographic change will be on engineering jobs and the company has implemented specific training and development programmes for older workers and knowledge transfer programmes. Demographic change has been included in company agreements between the social partners on skills and training.

**GDF Suez Infrastructure Branch, France,** highlights that demographic change will particularly affect changing job functions and future skills needs, particularly in engineering. The company aims to include in its next negotiations with trade unions on manpower planning specific training and development programmes for older workers and job rotation programmes, in addition to existing training and development programmes for all workers, knowledge transfer programmes and mentoring programmes.

**MITGAS Mitteldeutsche Gasversorgung GmbH, Germany,** states that the increasing competition in the gas sector puts high demands on the qualification levels of employees and that finding skilled and appropriate staff, particularly in engineering, has become more difficult. The company responded by putting in place a number of measures to recruit and retain young skilled workers, and has introduced the concept of institutional personnel development for all employees. Specific agreements have been signed by the social partners through the company's Works Council.

**Slovak Gas Industry, Slovakia** the impact of demographic change has led the company to introduce a project on anticipation management to enable them to define risks associated with an ageing workforce. Training and talent management programmes have been introduced and specific job rotation programmes, knowledge transfer and mentoring programmes have been introduced for older workers.

**RWE Transgas, AS, Czech Republic** anticipates an impact on engineering jobs and as a result has introduced initiatives to forecast future skills and competencies and has programmes of training and development for all workers. The recruitment and retention of younger workers and knowledge transfer are the main challenges that it needs to address in the future.

**Süwag Energie AG, Germany** demographic change is affecting engineering, information technology and commercial profile. The company has introduced programmes for anticipating and forecasting future skills and runs training and development programmes for

all workers. Retaining of older workers, knowledge transfer and the forecasting of skills and planning are key challenges.

**E.ON Földgáz, Hungary** identifies demographic change as having a particular impact on employees in blue-collar jobs and skills shortages are identified in gas engineering and in technical jobs. As a result, the company has introduced a number of programmes for the continuous and professional training of staff, job rotation and forecasting skills shortages.

**Eni S.p.A Gas and Power, Italy**, views demographic change to be a major challenge and has introduced a range of human resource measures to address this as part of company training programmes. The company has forecast the need for core skills such as information technology, risk management, negotiation skills, customer-focused and commercial skills have become important to company success and competitiveness. The main jobs affected by demographic ageing are in administrative, information technology and commercial related areas. The company has put in place policies to forecast skills and competencies, the introduction of a 'knowledge owners' knowledge transfer programme and specific training for older workers. The social dialogue has been very important to initiating new training initiatives and the unions recognise the need for new capacities to enable the company to respond flexibly to risks and new challenges.

**Fabricom, Norway**, has put in place a range of measures to address demographic change as part of its company equality and diversity programmes and competency programmes. Older workers are provided with special training to keep them in the workforce for as long as possible, and competency development has become a core strategic objective for the company. The company has been successful in recruiting and retaining women and older workers, and has benefited from its 'Inclusive Work' agreement, and the role played by the social dialogue at company level.

**Wales and West Utilities, Newport, Wales**, has identified demographic change and the need to retain the skills of older workers as being key challenges for the future. The social dialogue has been a very important mechanism for addressing issues of training and development, and there has been a good process in the company. The joint consultation structure has led to detailed consultations on workload/manpower matching, establishing career paths and career development programmes. Good relationships, understanding and trust between the trade union and management has resulted from this process.

**RWE Westfalen-Weser-Ems, Germany**, with a workforce of 2,800, has responded to the challenges of demographic ageing by improving company personnel planning and retention and career development of employees in order to achieve the correct skills mix for the future. The company identifies a significant impact on engineering jobs and has focussed on a range of initiatives to retain the skills and competencies of older workers, including programmes to manage diversity, age-based leadership, health and well-being of older workers and personnel planning. The Works Council provides an important vehicle to address the updating and retaining the skills of older workers. A model for anticipating future skills and employment requirements in the company, based on the development of skills and training needs in specific job families, which are modelled to show anticipate changes in the next ten years. Specific policies on training and health and well-being have been introduced to retain older workers. The company has introduced a model for anticipating future skills and employment needs. The objective is to match employee skills with the job requirements, and therefore to identify necessary action and initiate special personnel development measures early on.



## SECTION 4: AGE MANAGEMENT, SKILLS, COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE GAS SECTOR

This section introduces the reader to age management and age diversity as approaches to implementing change in the sector, and shows how a comprehensive and strategic approach to age management in the can be introduced. It shows that added value that the social partners can play in this age management and age diversity

Age management is an integrated and comprehensive approach to tackling demographic change in the workplace. This includes tackling age barriers in the workplace and promoting age diversity. Age management means that there is an understanding of the capacity and skills of all workers, and particularly this forms the basis upon which plans for future workforce skills and employment are designed and implemented. This is particularly important as it is evident that there are no significant differences in job performance between older and younger workers. The capacity of workers to maintain productivity as they age is influenced by a range of factors including their occupation, working conditions and lifestyle. Companies can benefit from the skills and motivations of different age groups in the workforce and particularly from the contributions different age groups bring.

The business benefits of age management and age diversity for gas companies are as follows:

- Gas companies are forward looking and have a competitive edge in the industry;
- Gas companies can meet future skills and employment needs;
- Gas companies can attract and retain a high skilled and high quality workforce;
- Gas companies become employers of first choice and have an improved public image;
- Gas companies achieve improved employee relations and employee satisfaction.

These business benefits can be achieved through the following strategies:

- Managing and ageing and diversity workforce;
- Valuing, harnessing and retaining the skills and experience of older workers;
- Providing quality work for older workers;
- Tackling age barriers and age discrimination in the workplace;
- Addressing the skills and needs of different age groups, and investing in the training and competence of the whole workforce.

Having a strategic and comprehensive approach to age management means that companies need to monitor the age profile of the workforce and put in place measures to make use of the skills, interests and motivations of all age groups in the workforce. In particular, this means establishing a cycle of learning and knowledge development through which young people can gain new skills and a career path, while older workers have opportunities for training and development and to use their acquired skills to transfer knowledge.

The underlying rationale is that the policies benefiting older workers have a long-term effect on companies by creating sustainable jobs that can match future skills needs.

The social partners are well placed to play a key role to play in age management and in forecasting future employment and skills needs. Trade unions bring insights into workers' preferences, needs and priorities, they are able to assess how improvements in working conditions can be made to retain older workers, and they can provide important perspectives related to health and well-being, age diversity, equality and lifelong learning. Demographic change in the gas sector requires that the social partners develop new comprehensive approaches and strategies that address the twin concerns of how to recruit and retain younger workers, while also ensuring that the skills of older and more experienced workers are not lost.

## SECTION 5: TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN THE LIGHT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Section 5 of the Toolkit provides a range of practical tools that companies and the social partners can use to provide a strategic, comprehensive and forward-looking approach to skills, competencies and employment in the light of demographic change. These Tools, which are elaborated in more detail in the full Toolkit, cover guidance, suggestions, practical advice and information about the following areas:

### **Take a strategic approach to training and skills development**

Developing a strategic approach can ensure that training and skills development are integrated into company business planning. A strategic approach should also integrate training and skills development into an overall strategy on age management. Tools that can be used by gas companies include:

- Put in place a company strategic training plan
- Develop a social partners agreement on training and learning
- Create a company competency committee

### **Create training and the skills development opportunities for the whole workforce, including older workers**

Investing in lifelong learning, training and development is essential if companies are to gain a competitive edge in the industry. Updating and developing the skills and competencies of older workers is particularly important if companies are to retain older workers for as long as possible. Training and skills development is an important part of creating a culture of learning in gas companies. The following are some good practice approaches that can be used by gas companies to enhance the contribution and retention of older workers:

- Invest in training and development for all workers
- Introduce specific courses for older workers
- Put in place training methods and supports that are relevant to older workers
- Carry out regular training and development assessments of employees
- Collate data on the *participation of older workers*

### **Remove age barriers and promote a culture of equality and diversity in training and skills development**

Promoting age diversity and a culture of equality and diversity is crucial if companies are to recruit and retain the best talent. Combating age and gender discrimination is an important element of this. Managing a diverse workforce can improve a company's profile and external image. Suggestions elaborated in the Toolkit include:

- Implement age diversity in company training, development and employment programmes;
- Promote equal opportunities between women and men in access to training development and employment;
- Remove age barriers and age discrimination;

- Provide gender and age sensitisation training for human resources practitioners;
- Assess the barriers experienced by older workers and women in the workplace.

### **Put in place new methods for delivering and providing training and skills development**

Education and training programmes can be tailored to the needs and skills profiles of companies. Working in partnership with education and training providers can enable companies to keep abreast of skills development needs. Developing innovative methods of delivering and accrediting education and training have become increasingly important.

The Toolkit elaborates a number of ways in which companies can develop new approaches to providing education and training by:

- Developing partnership with external education and training providers
- Examining how learning can be externally validated and accredited
- Being innovative in the provision of learning and skills development

### **Create the learning organisation by embedding a culture of learning in the organisation**

A key challenge for gas companies is to develop a culture of learning in organisations, and particularly to embrace a 'learning organisation' concept to organisational development. Learning organisations are important to fostering a culture of learning that motivates and supports workers, and recognises their value and worth.

Suggestions, elaborated in the Toolkit, of what gas companies can do to promote a culture of learning include:

- Promote a culture of learning through creative and innovative ways to encourage learning
- Put in place a scheme of employee learning representatives
- Create employee development scheme
- Create learning partnerships at workplace level for this purpose.

### **Address the career development of older workers**

Older workers often miss out on career development opportunities. Career development is important in valuing the contribution of all employees, particularly older employees. Training and skills development is an important component of career development programmes.

Suggestions of what gas companies can do to promote the career development of older workers include:

- Develop career development policies and opportunities for older workers
- Carry out regular career development interviews
- Make use of the skills of older workers in mentoring programmes
- Consult with trade unions to help develop older worker's career and job changes

### **Develop programmes of job rotation and redeployment for older workers**

Job rotation and redeployment of jobs and work tasks are important to retaining older workers. Training and skills development is an important element of these programmes. Older workers are often more satisfied at work and motivated if their working capacities can be linked to rewarding work.

Suggestions, elaborated in the Toolkit, of what gas companies can do to provide opportunities for job rotation and redeployment include:

- Link training to programmes for job rotation and redeployment
- Develop a company job rotation programme
- Put in place a company policy on redeployment
- Monitor the effects of job rotation and redeployment programmes
- Develop methods for the participation of employees and unions

### **Implement knowledge management programmes**

Transferring knowledge from older, experienced workers to younger, less-experienced colleagues is a key element of modern day productivity at company level. Intergenerational

knowledge transfer is particularly important in the light of demographic ageing. Young people can acquire experience, learning and knowledge from older workers, and this can be built into processes of continuing education and training.

Suggestions, elaborated in the Toolkit, of what gas companies can do to manage and transfer knowledge include:

- Put in place a knowledge transfer programme, and consider how this can promote inter-generational knowledge transfer.
- Build knowledge transfer into a learning organisation model
- Introduce innovative ways to retain and manage knowledge
- Develop methods for transferring knowledge to new recruits
- Introduce mentoring and coaching schemes

### **Put in place Complementary policies on age management**

There are a number of other complementary policies on age management that are an integral part of training, skills development and employment of older workers. In particular, health and well-being in the workplace is crucial for older workers, as are company policies on flexible working time. This section of the Toolkit details different strategies that can be put in place by companies to retain older workers through:

- Programmes to promote health and well-being at work as part of a comprehensive strategy on age management
- Working time initiatives whereby time is used as a resource for learning, training, development and the retention of older workers

### **Develop programmes for attracting and retaining young workers and new talent**

Many gas companies are very aware of the difficulties in recruiting the best young talent. At a time of skills shortages many companies have had to become proactive in recruiting and training new talent. This is crucial if companies are to become employers of choice.

Suggestions for gas companies in attracting, recruiting and training new talent that are elaborated in the Toolkit include:

- Examine ways in which the company profile, working conditions, and opportunities for career development can be developed in order to attract young people.
- Give focus to under-represented young people, including minority ethnic groups and girls and women.
- Undertake promotional events with local colleges and universities.
- Put in place training and career development strategies for attracting new talent, as well as taster sessions, internships or work experience for young people. This can include practical and hands-on activities.

## SECTION 6: FORECASTING SKILLS, COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYMENT

Forecasting skills, competencies and employment has become essential to competitiveness. This section of the Toolkit discusses how companies can forecast and plan to meet their future skills, competencies and employment needs. While many companies have begun to implement more forecasting and planning of their skills and employment requirements for the future, it will never be possible to exactly predict the impact of demographic ageing on the industry.

However, companies can manage the risks associated with the ageing of the workforce and the declining pool of potential new recruits to the industry, by putting in place both strategic and preventative approaches to age management and the forecasting and planning of skills and competencies.

Achieving the correct skill-mix for large and complex organisations that are changing rapidly presents many challenges in planning for the future. For this reason achieving the best and appropriate skill-mix requires effective workforce planning and a focus on age diversity.

While hiring new employees is important to any organisation, particularly as this brings in new talent and new perspectives, it would be misplaced for organisations to rely on new employees to meet all future skills needs. For this reason, it can equally be important to retain older employees and invest in their training and development.

It is never easy to evaluate the strategic value of learning and skills development to an organisation. However, all companies should put in place mechanisms for measuring and reporting on the contribution that learning makes to company goals and competitiveness.

Tools for anticipating change and forecasting future skills and employment that are elaborated in the Toolkit include:

- Identify skills needs through workforce planning;
- Match employees to jobs by identifying the skills and characteristics required or employees;
- Ensure that these competencies are planned for and integrated into the workforce;
- Build these strategies into succession planning;
- Retain older workers and develop their skills to match future skills needs;
- Analyse skill needs as a basis for training and development;
- Ensure that there is Social partner involvement in forecasting of skills and competencies.

## SECTION 7: THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS AND THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE

This section highlights the role that the social partners and the social dialogue can play in developing agreements that identify and develop the skills, competencies and employment in the gas sector, with a particular focus on demographic change. The Toolkit includes suggestions for:

- The role of the social partners in developing agreements and initiatives on demographic change, skills, training and employment;
- Using European level action by the social partners;
- Implementing national level action by the social partners.

The social partners have a key role to play in negotiating policies and agreements that can enhance the learning, skills and development of the whole workforce in the light of



demographic ageing, technological change and in meeting the modern day demands of competitiveness in the gas industry. An important finding from our survey is that the social partners need to urgently address the impact of the demographic change in the gas sector and develop joint approaches to resolve the possible negative consequences of demographic change in the sector.

The social dialogue can provide an added-value to skills and competency development by making visible the importance of training and skills development for the workforce, and particularly the importance of including this into collective agreements and workplace negotiations. This can be achieved by developing innovative and creative solutions to skills development and the forecasting of skills and employment in the sector, gaining agreement and buy-in from the workforce and by showing the importance of the right to time off to pursue education and training and to build this into flexible working time policies. It will also be important to make visible a commitment to equality and diversity, so that older workers and women benefit from training and skills initiatives in the workplace.

The social partners have a key role to play in ensuring the survival of the gas sector a number of issues must be addressed including: tackling the consequences of an ageing workforce, increasing the number of women in the sector, addressing the impending (if not current) skills gap, addressing the challenges the environmental agenda brings and offer employees support for training throughout their working lives.

Suggested areas for the development of agreements can include the joint analysis of data regarding the training and development needs of workers; updating of the skills of the whole workforce; training for workers on new and emerging areas, such as environmental change or customer services; changes in job functions resulting from technological or other changes; human resources policies on age management and age diversity; and policies on health and well-being in the workplace and flexible working time agreements.

Workplace representatives play a crucial role in initiating and developing, in partnership with managers, measures to enhance the skills and career development of all workers, but particularly in highlighting the consequences of demographic change.

There are two possible scenarios for the social partners to consider. The first scenario results from no action taken in the gas sector and as a result the competitiveness of companies will be affected. The second scenario offers the gas sector some hope for the future. It places

employers ahead of their competitors and ensures their survival, not only as a leader in the energy sectors, but as an employer of choice.

The Toolkit shows that the social partners need to take on new roles in finding common solutions to the impact of demographic ageing on training, skills development and employment in the gas sector. Through raised awareness of the challenges and by upskilling social partner representatives in the areas covered in this Toolkit will have a lasting value for the sector. By promoting partnership working unions, staff and managers can develop joint approaches and identify and promote shared solutions in the area of training and skills development for an age diverse workforce. Taking this approach will be important to creating an organisational culture of discussion and problem solving.