

WHEN POPULATIONS ARE COMING TO AGE

BY

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Current lifespans are longer and of higher quality than ever before, whereas disease trajectories have become more complicated and protracted. The appropriate response to this paradox is to invest further in prevention of harm, and in the repair of damage. Citizens, patients, politicians and entrepreneurs alike, all have great expectations of academia as a creator of change, and it is out of this societal crosstalk that the wish for knowledge-and-innovation-communities emerge. Of course, it is an international endeavour as population aging is a universal phenomenon of which the consequences are felt all over Europe. The differences between the countries are food for the scholarly eye: it is the beginning of a better understanding and the start of innovation.

With the baby boom generation coming to age, we should prepare for this development, pioneering with interdisciplinary research, transboundary education and multistakeholder projects. The strive for a healthier life, an active old age, and an improvement of healthcare services can only be understood amidst other grand challenges. How do we make best out of the revolutionizing information technologies? How do we accommodate economic and political shocks? How do we make our societies sustainable? Here we should make best out of the diversity of academic environments and scientific approaches.

To stand still is to go backwards. With my presentation, I'll introduce you to a journey that we have just begun.