

## EXTENDING WORKING LIVES: POLICIES, PRACTICES AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR OLDER WORKERS

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### CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

In most Western societies, it has become widely accepted that the combination of demographic ageing and pressure to reduce public spending should necessarily result in the delaying of retirement, usually along with reforms to existing pension schemes. Largely promoted by international bodies such as the OECD throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, this vision of **extending working lives** (EWL) as a universal solution to a number of social ills has been actively challenged by social mobilisations and is being increasingly questioned by inter-disciplinary, comparative academic research projects (e.g. COST Action IS1409 *Gender & Health Impacts of Policies Extending Working Life in Western Countries* <http://genderewl.com/>).

In line with the overall objectives of the Congress, this Workshop addresses the *Future of work* by inviting participants to critically assess the importance and the social consequences of such challenges to the Fordist (androcentric) life-course triptych “education – employment – [early] retirement”. We welcome paper proposals based on original sociological research of a theoretical, methodological or empirical nature, which address one or more of the following inter-related sub-topics:

**EWL Policies:** Studies of policy initiatives relating to extending working lives, so-called ‘active aging’ initiatives, the delaying of retirement and associated policies (combining (self-)employment and retirement, un-retirement), either at an international, national, regional or local (organizational) level. Papers should address the moral / economic justification and rhetorical framing of such policies and analyse the conditions of their elaboration, implementation, and/or evaluation.

**EWL Practices:** Studies of the experiences of older workers, their employers or other institutions involved in the framing of the EWL debate. Papers should address the beliefs,

motivations and concrete practices of those directly affected by the drive to encourage older workers to remain in employment for longer, as they occur in the workplace or in households and family networks.

**EWL Privilege and prejudice:** As it is currently framed, the EWL debate often presumes that all older workers have the possibility to work longer and/or that those who delay retirement do so on a voluntary basis. It thus fails to recognize the inequalities (privilege / prejudice), discrimination or difficulties that older workers face, both in the labour market, in terms of their health, and in relation to work-life balance and care provision to dependents (parents, spouse, neighbours, adult children, grand-children). Papers should highlight the social norms and constraints that are mobilised and re-negotiated in the context of EWL policies and practices to produce particular forms of social inequality or injustice.