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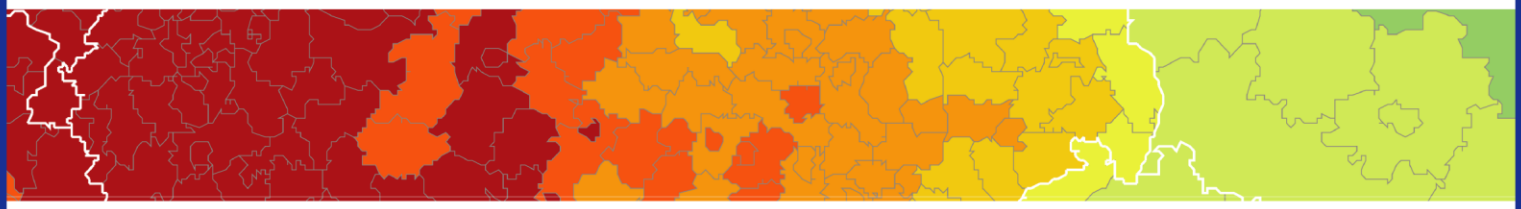

ACPA – Adapting European Cities to Population Ageing: Policy challenges and best practices

Targeted Analysis

Case Study Report: Zaragoza

Zaragoza
AYUNTAMIENTO

Ciudad Amigables
Friendly city together with seniors

Case Study Report: Zaragoza

This Case Study is part of the ESPON Targeted Analysis ACPA, which is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

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Version 28/04/2020

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Abbreviations

EC	European Commission
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
ESPON EGTC	ESPON European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
WHO	World Health Organization

1 Introduction

Many countries in Europe are facing a demographic transition which also entails an increasing number of older people. This trend is usually most apparent in rural areas. However, in urban areas this phenomenon is starting to become visible as well. The cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Gothenburg, Hengelo, Greater Manchester, Nantes, Oslo and Zaragoza belong to a group of cities that are either already facing relatively high percentages of older people in their populations, or expect such high percentages in the near future. During the last years, these cities have undertaken action to improve quality of life for older people. Still, they have a knowledge need related to the following questions:

- How do older people experience the daily life in the cities?
- What do older people view as benefits and constraints associated with urban living?
- How are the eight stakeholder cities responding to population ageing?
- Which policies have been the most effective in developing age-friendly cities and how have they been implemented and which are the success factors?

ESPON ACPA has resulted in good practices and policy recommendations based on case study research in the eight stakeholder cities. These insights have been combined in the ACPA synthesis report, main report and policy handbook. While those reports offer valuable information in aggregated form, it is also valuable to look at the situation in each of the eight stakeholder cities in more detail.

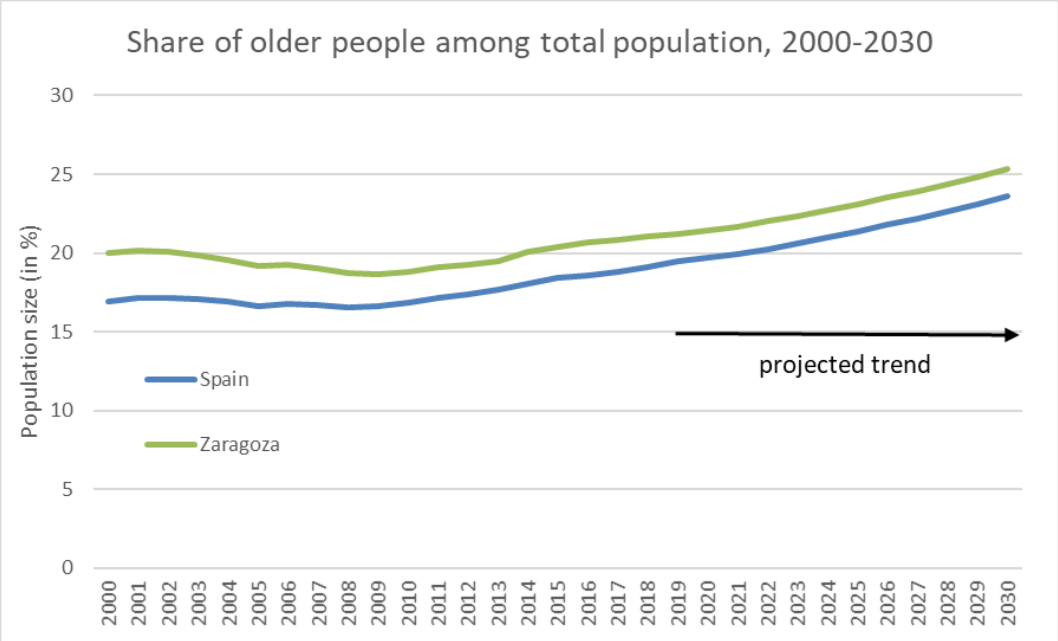
Therefore, eight city reports are available that provide a closer look at each stakeholder city. The present report focuses on Zaragoza and portrays the state of affairs in Zaragoza in terms of:

- Demographic trends and developments related to population ageing within the city;
- The strategy and policies that the urban authorities, professionals and other stakeholders in Zaragoza pursue to cope with population ageing;
- A selection of inspiring examples of how the ageing policy has been implemented;
- Challenges and opportunities from the perspective of older people, interest groups and policy makers;
- Policy recommendations for Zaragoza based on the insights that have emerged from ACPA.

2 Demographic profile

Zaragoza, located in north-eastern Spain and approximately halfway between Madrid and Barcelona, is the fifth most populous city in Spain, with an estimated population of 674,997 people as of 2019. In that same year, an estimated 21.2% of the total population of Zaragoza was 65 years-old and above, up from 17.8% in 2000.[1]

Figure 2.1: Share of older people among total population in Zaragoza and Spain, 2000-2030



The percentage of older people in Zaragoza has consistently been higher than the average in Spain (on average 2.3 percentage points higher between 2000 and 2018). While the gap seems to be narrowing, it is expected that the share of older people among the total population in Zaragoza will continue to be larger than the average in Spain, at least until 2030 (see figure above). As of 2018, Zaragoza had the third largest share of older people amongst the 10 most populous cities in Spain, only after Bilbao (23.9%) and Barcelona (21.5%).[2]

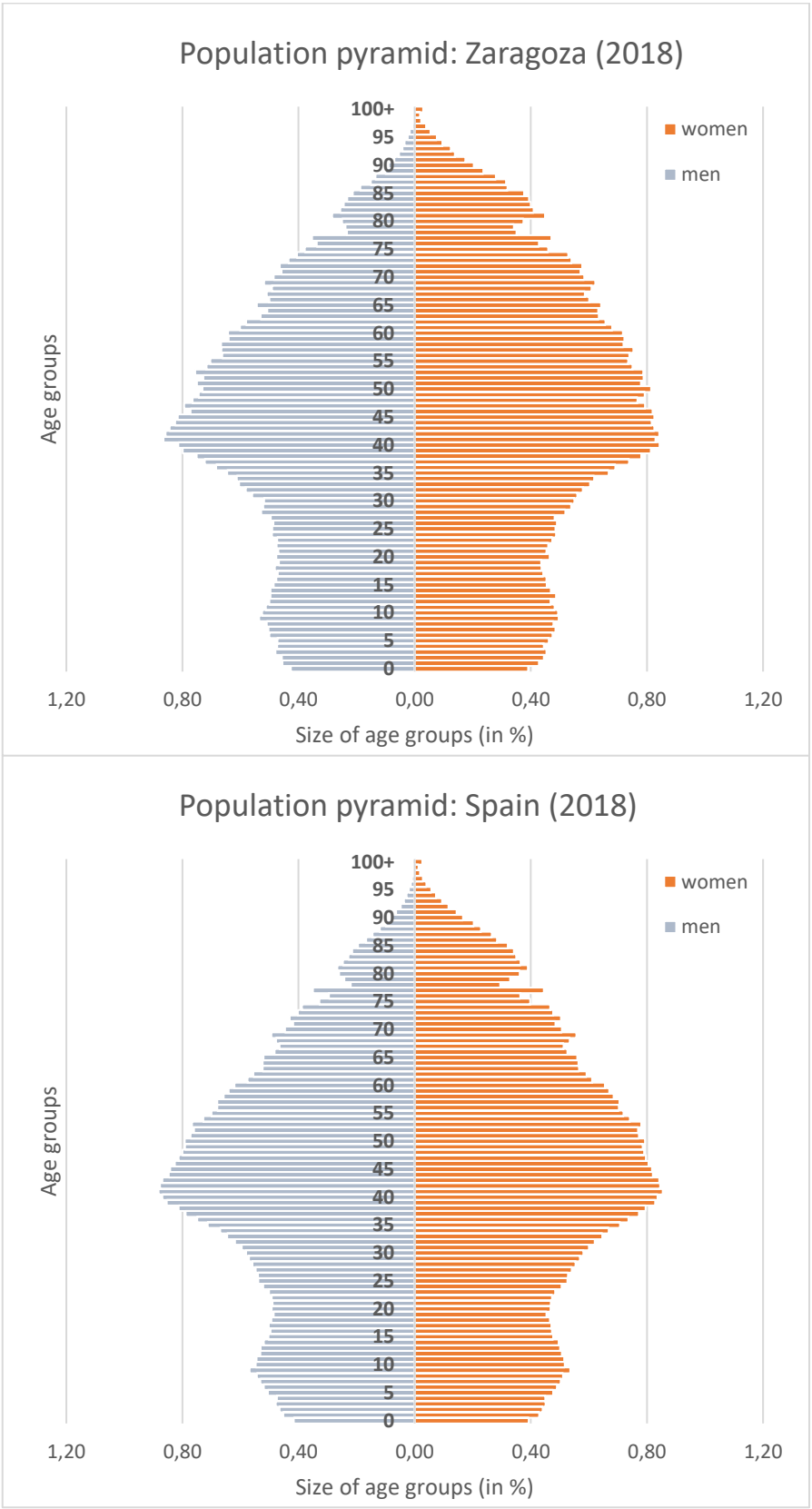
The percentage of older women out of the total population in Zaragoza is larger than that of men (24% against 18%) – which can also be seen in figure 2.2. Keeping in mind that women have a higher life expectancy than men (86 years for women versus 81 for men in Zaragoza), there is a higher concentration of older men in the 65-79 years-old group than for women (73% versus 64%, respectively).[3]

[1] Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España and Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza: Observatorio Municipal de Estadística

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

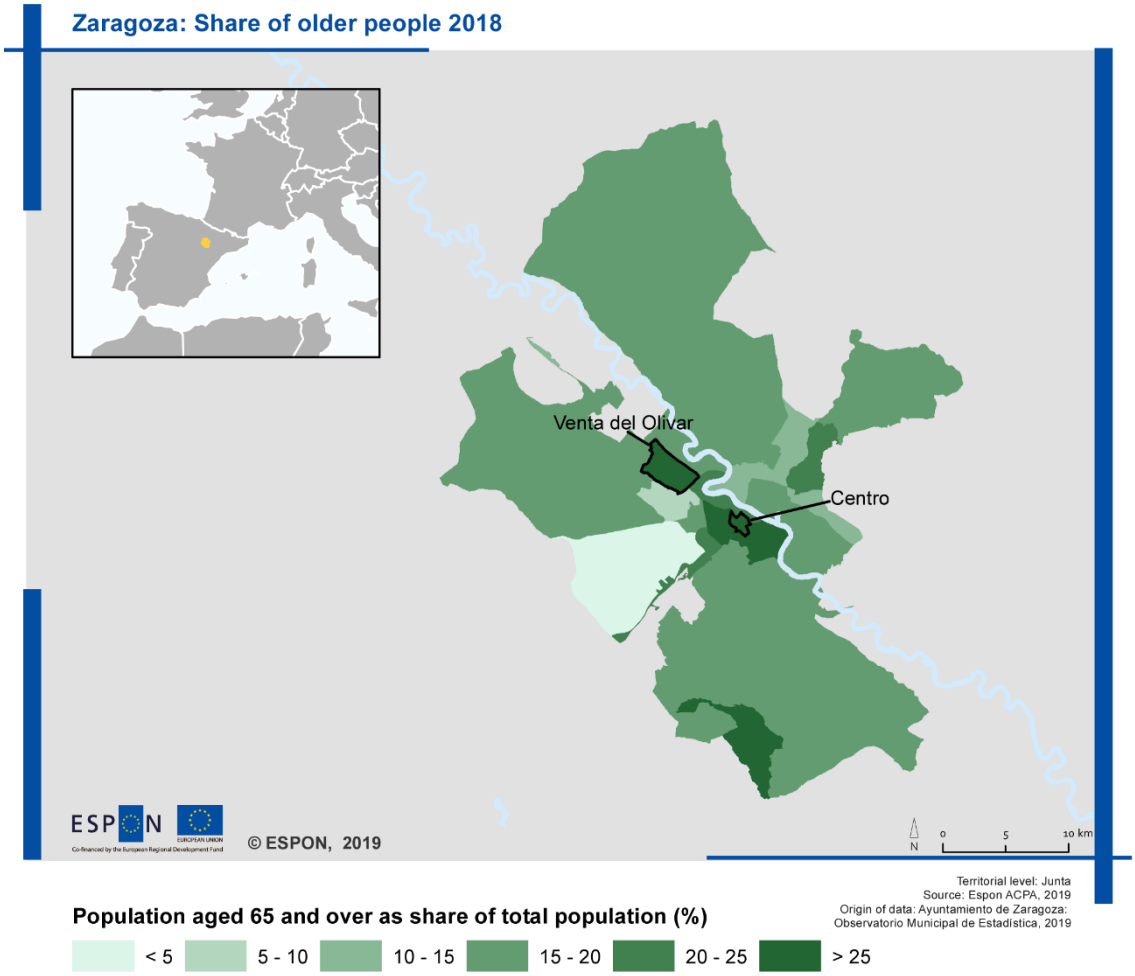
Figure 2.2: Population pyramids for Zaragoza (above) and Spain (bottom) in 2018



Source: National Statistics Institute Spain

The city of Zaragoza went through a major expansion starting in the 1960s, as thousands of people left the rural areas to support the rapid industrialization that took place in Spain during the 1960s and early 1970s. Most of the older people currently living in Zaragoza are those rural migrants who settled into what is today the city centre. Thus, the highest concentration of older people tends to be in the central and older districts of the city, including Venta del Olivar and Centro (see map below).

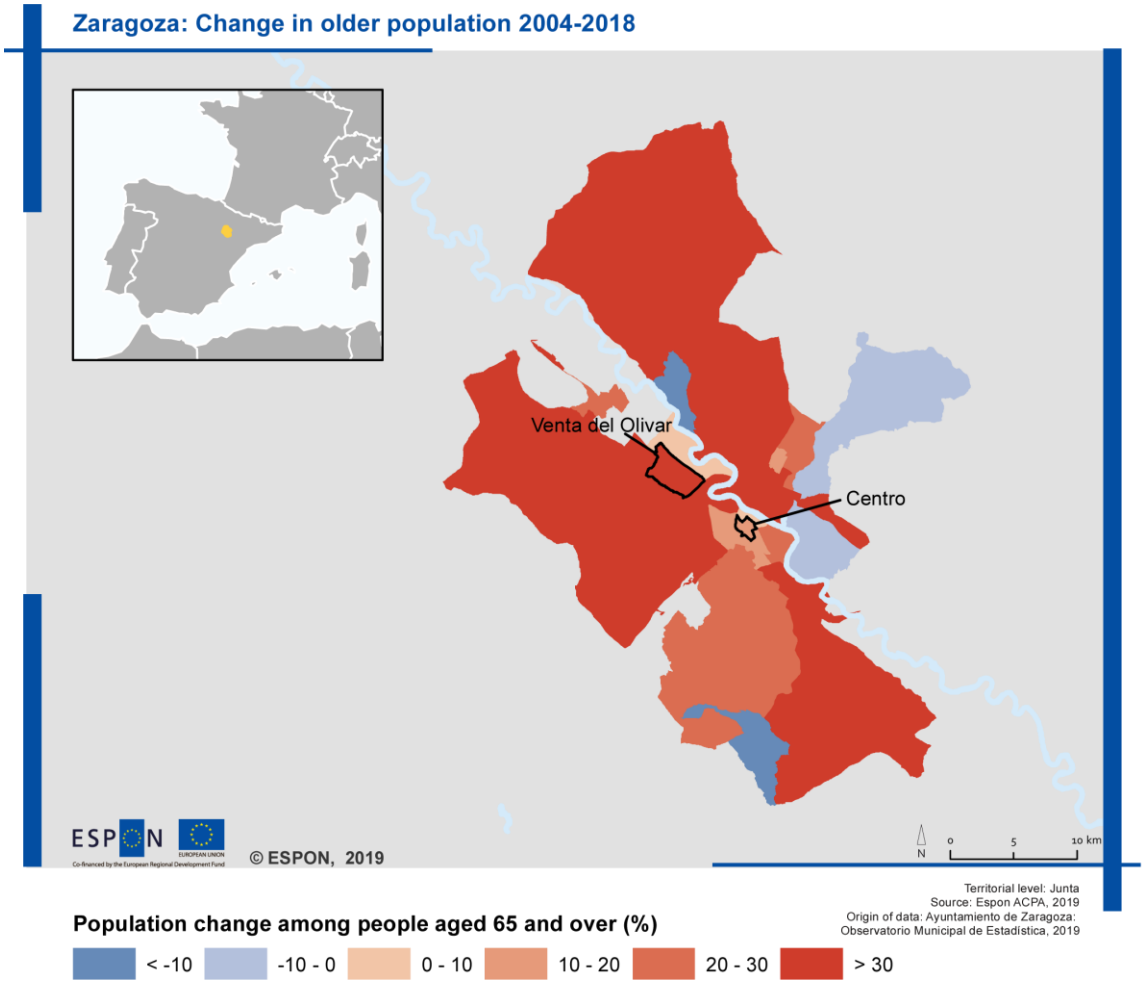
Map 2.1: Zaragoza: Share of older people 2018



Note: the map also indicates the names of particular neighbourhoods that are mentioned within ESPON ACPA.

Since 2000, the number of older people in Zaragoza has grown by 31.1%, with most districts in the city experiencing a growth rate of at least 20% between 2004 and 2018, as shown in the map below. Outer villages, such as Garrapinillos (west) and Sur (south west), appear to be experiencing more growth in the number of seniors compared to the districts closer to the city centre.

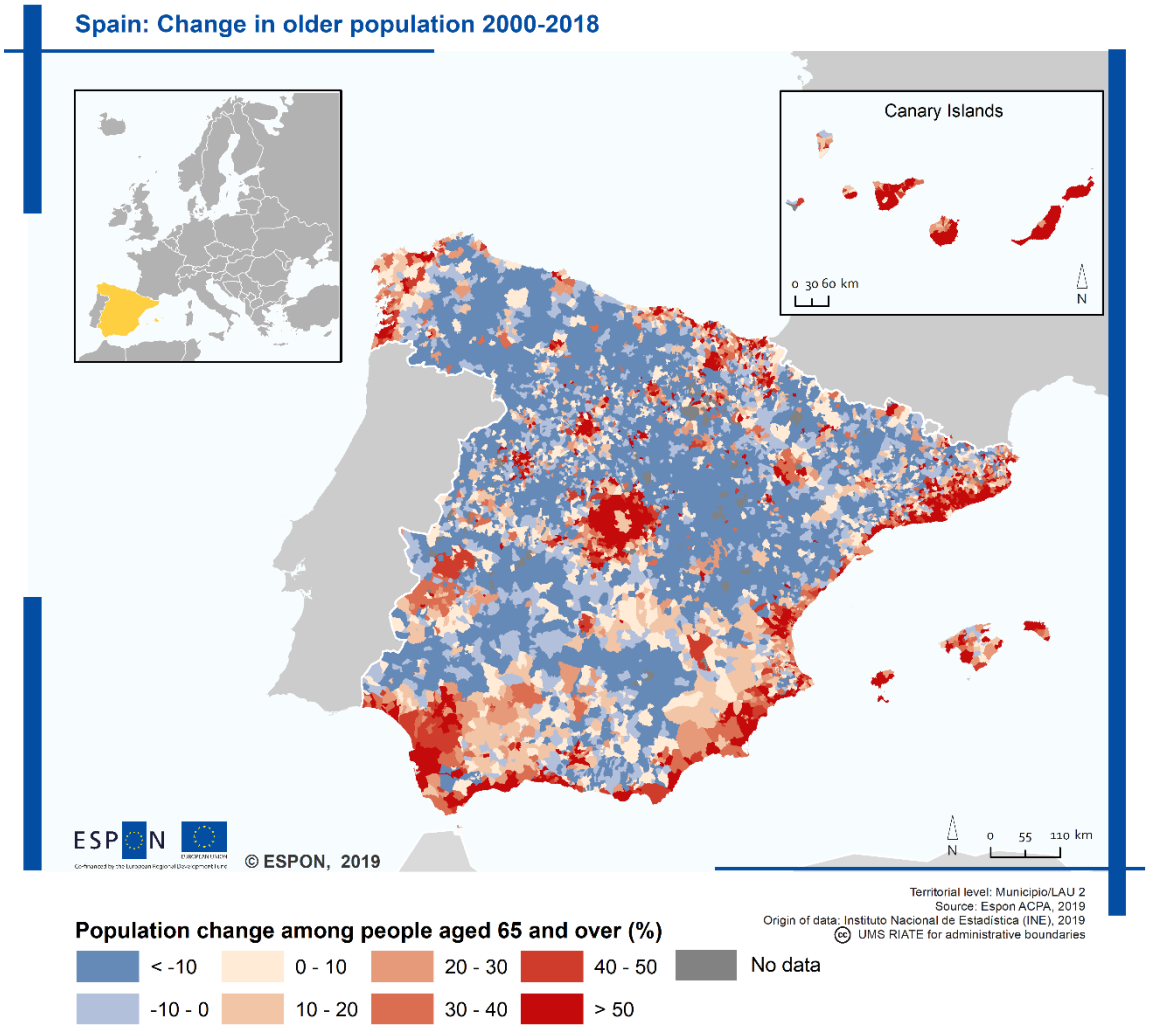
Map 2.2: Zaragoza: Change in older population 2004-2018



Note: the map also indicates the names of particular neighbourhoods that are mentioned within ESPON ACPA.

Although some neighbourhoods have experienced decline in the number of people aged 65 and over, the overall picture is that Zaragoza's population has aged significantly. This is the case for other cities as well. Looking at the national level (map 2.3), it is evident that population ageing in Spain is predominantly an urban phenomenon. Most cities in Spain show a similar trend, while many rural areas have experienced decline in the number of older people.

Map 2.3: Spain: Change in older population 2000-2018



3 Policy overview

The city of Zaragoza joined the WHO's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities in 2011, two years after the city council had unanimously approved joining the Network. Prior to that, there were only a few isolated activities targeting older people and limited political support. Joining the Network has led to a substantial change in the city's ageing policies, both in the approach and in the range of initiatives supported.

3.1 Motivation and goals

Age-friendly policies in Zaragoza are part of municipal social policies and in coordination with other public entities at regional and national level. Over the past five years, age-friendly policies have sought to promote active aging and increase the quality of life for older people in Zaragoza, building on both the WHO's framework as well as existing local structures.

To date, ageing policies in Zaragoza have been spearheaded by the City Council's Technical Office for Seniors. In May 2019, the newly elected municipal government included a Delegation for Seniors within the Area of Social Action and the Family. This recognises the need to have a political body that specifically focuses on older people, as a distinct segment of the population.

Under the slogan "Zaragoza, Ciudad Amigable con las Personas Mayores" (Zaragoza, Friendly City with Seniors), the City Council has disseminated ageing policy initiatives using the logo developed by IMSERSO for its use by all cities and regions in Spain that are part of the WHO's Network.[4]

3.2 Priorities

Upon joining the WHO's Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in 2011, the city of Zaragoza developed an Action Plan for 2014-2017, which outlined actions to be undertaken (based on 25 proposals identified by older people in the diagnosis of the city's "age-friendliness"), responsibilities, and stakeholders that would be involved in the implementation of the Plan.

[4] The IMSERSO (Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales) is part of the Secretary of State for Social Services, under the Ministry of Health, Consumption, and Social Wellbeing in Spain

In order to ensure alignment between WHO's eight policy domains, the actions planned, and the management structure within the local government, the city of Zaragoza defined the following four strands or axes for policy implementation within the city's Action Plan:[5]

- **Strand 1. Participation and social recognition:** This strand includes the "Respect and Social Inclusion" and "Civic Participation and Employment" domains and focuses on valuing the social contribution of the older people, promoting intergenerational coexistence and active participation in their environment, and involving the older people in the improvement of the city. Examples of corresponding actions are: Canas y canicas (Grey hairs and marbles); habil.e.dades (Abilit.ages); participación y asociacionismo (Participation: grupos de actividad).

- **Strand 2. Promotion of leisure and free time for an autonomous and healthy ageing:** Encompassing the domains "Community Support and Health Services" and "Social Participation", the goal of this strand is to promote resources, services and activities especially of a preventive nature that contribute to an autonomous and healthy aging. Examples of corresponding actions are: Talleres de envejecimiento activo (Active Ageing courses), educación para la salud (Health Education), actividades lúdicas y recreativas (Spare time activities, Activity groups); teleasistencia (Telecare), comidas a domicilio (meal home delivery).

- **Strand 3. Accessibility and Transport:** This strand seeks to facilitate the use and access of public and private resources by seniors, improving the accessibility of infrastructures. It covers the domains "Outdoor spaces and Built Environment", "Housing" and "Transportation". Exampels of corresponding actions are: Seguridad Vial (Traffic safety), comercios amigables (Friendly shopping), prevención de riesgos en el hogar (Risk Prevention at home)

- **Strand 4. Information and ITCs:** this corresponds to **"**Communication and Information" and its goal is to enhance the access to public and private services (quantity and quality). Examples of correconding actions are: Informayor (Information for old people), más mayores en red (Older online).

In terms of target audience, most of the actions implemented by the city council to date are attended by people within the 65-75 age group.

[5] Zaragoza, Ciudad amigable con las Personas Mayores. Plan de Acción 2014-2017 https://www.zaragoza.es/contenidos/sectores/mayores/plan-accion-1417.pdf.

While the actions embedded in the Action Plan cover the eight WHO's domains,[6] the city of Zaragoza has focused mainly on Community Support and Health Services, Social Participation, and Social Inclusion and non-discrimination (see Table 3.1), mostly corresponding to Strands 1 and 2. In terms of target audience, most of the actions implemented by the city council to date have focused on people within the 65-75 age group.

Table 3.1: Priority table

Priority areas according to city representatives of Zaragoza *(scores range from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates a very low priority and 5 a very high priority)*	
Domain 1: Outdoor spaces and built environment	3
Domain 2: Transport and mobility	3
Domain 3: Housing	4
Domain 4: Social participation	4
Domain 5: Social inclusion and non-discrimination	4
Domain 6: Civic engagement and employment[7]	2
Domain 7: Communication and information	2
Domain 8: Community support and health services[8]	5

3.3 Approach

The Technical Office for Seniors coordinates with other organizations for the design and implementation of activities targeting older people. This includes collaborating with private organisations (e.g. private healthcare providers, charities and other non-profit organisations) and public agencies at regional and national level (including state and regional government entities, such as the Directorate-General for Traffic (Dirección General de Tráfico), the Health Department within the Aragon government and public universities.

According to the Head of the Technical Office for the Seniors, becoming part of the WHO's Network contributed to a shift in the approach towards ageing policies of the city. The main drivers now are the following key principles:

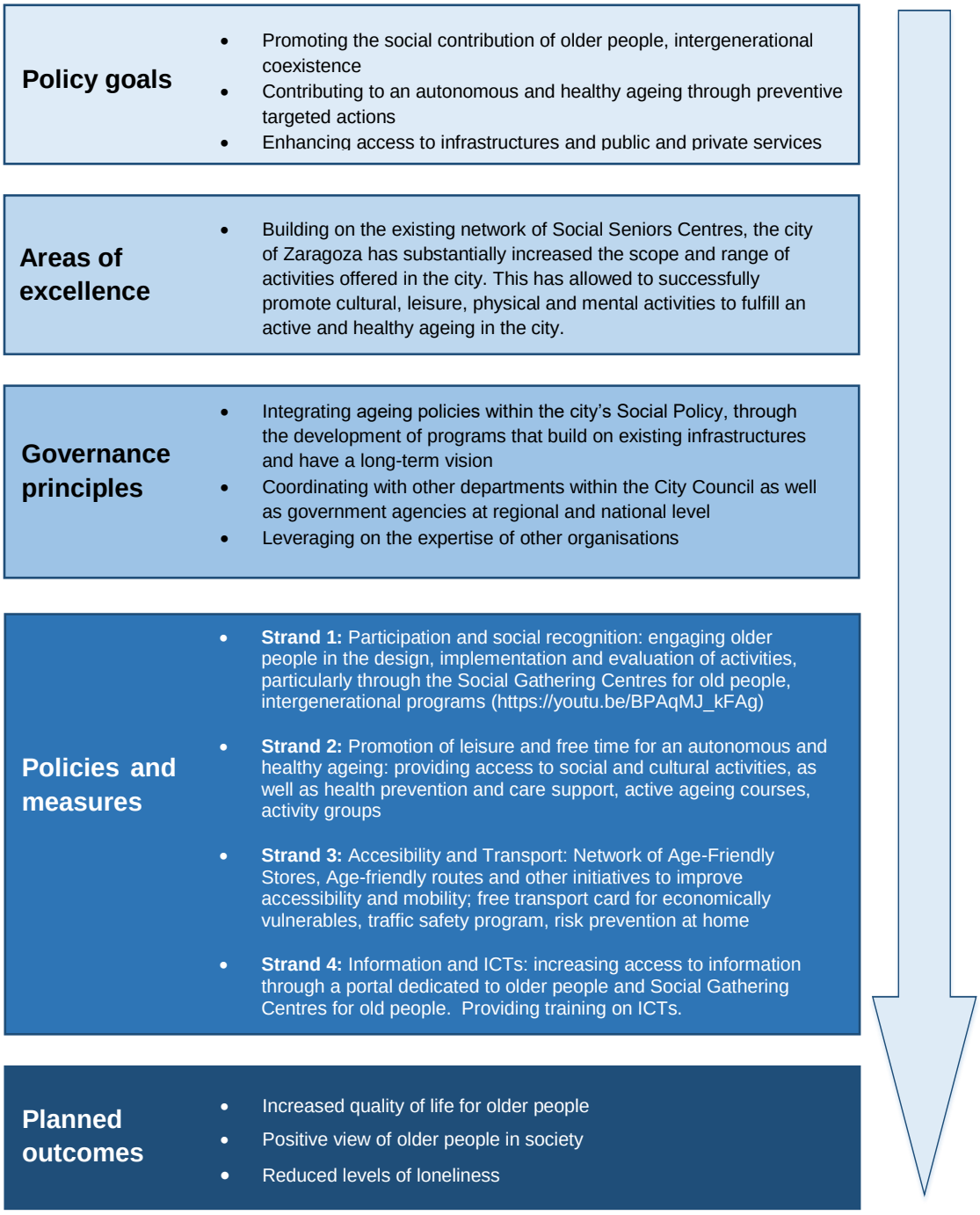
[6] WHO (2007). Global age-friendly cities: a guide. https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/age_friendly_cities_guide/en/

[7] Of the WHO policy domains, domain number 6 is only partly addressed in Age-friendly Gothenburg, as civic engagement is an area of focus, whereas employment is not explicitly included and primarily addressed within policies concerning labour market and adult education. Nevertheless, in the forthcoming action plan for Age-Friendly Gothenburg, one central element will be to make better use of the resources of older people in volunteer work.

[8] Older care and home care are not explicitly included in the Age-Friendly Gothenburg programme.

- **Comprehensiveness:** ensuring that all eight domains were addressed in the Action Plan for 2014-2017, even if a greater focus was placed on Strands 1 and 2.
- **Transversal:** developing actions that work across more than one domain and establishing work streams (Strands) that align with existing municipal government structures, facilitating the development of long-term age-friendly policies.
- **Participatory:** engaging older people in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the activities and policies that affect them.
- **Quality-driven:** engaging experts in the design and evaluation of activities and in utilizing the results from evaluations into the activities and placing more importance on the evaluation of implemented policies. They have also built on and shared experiences with other cities, e.g. Barcelona, San Sebastian and other European cities.

Figure 3.1: Policy Overview



4 Perspectives on policy initiatives

A selection of inspiring policy initiatives and organisational structures in the municipality of Zaragoza is presented below. These initiatives were selected based on intensive consultation with policy makers, stakeholders and older people in Zaragoza. They outline innovative methods that have produced tangible effects. The promising practices that are mentioned have only started recently and do not show measurable results as of yet but are still considered initiatives with high potential. For the complete methodology, please consult the scientific annex provided in the main report of the ESPON ACPA study.

Social Gathering Centres for older people (Centros de Convivencia)

Content and organisation

- The Social Gathering Centres are public spaces for older people to socialise and participate in activities (such as conferences, workshops, training, talks, etc.) aiming to promote an active and healthy ageing. The Centres also provide older people with information and other services that are relevant to them, such as legal counselling.
- These activities are funded by the City Council, which also manages the Centres. The work of each centre is independent, but coordinated by the Technical Office for Seniors.
- 31 Centres are open to all people aged over 65 years. Membership provides access to the activities of all centres in the city.
- Activities are often implemented with support from other organisations and, in some instances, older people take the lead on the design and implementation of some of the activities.

Effectiveness

- These Centres existed long before Zaragoza joined the WHO Global Network, however they have since then transitioned from being places where older people would go to spend spare time to places where they are actively engaged, including in the design and implementation of activities.
- As of 2018, over 69,000 people are members (46.8 % of older people in the city).
- High participation: 15,890 people took part in courses/workshops in 2019; 4,817 persons a day visited the Centres; and about 380 people requested information through the Centres on a daily basis.
- Lunch counter Service (Servicio de Comedor): As of 2019 there are 7 living-dining room available at 7 Social Gathering Centres for old people spread across the city of Zaragoza, where more dan 50.000 daily fixed menus were served.
- The people who attend this lunch counter have the chance to improve and expand their relationships and social networks as well as they receive and inexpensive balanced nutritional menu.
- The Centres facilitate contact and social interaction amongst the older people.

Innovativeness

- While the City Council funds and manages activities and provides the overall strategic direction of the Centres, day-to-day management allows for a bottom-up approach to the activities organised in the Centres. This means members can suggest activities and contribute to the design and implementation of activities, which opens up additional ways of engagement.

Transferability

- The idiosyncrasy of social relations in Zaragoza, which are rooted in rural communities where people have a strong sense of belonging to a community, has been key to the success of the Centres as an effective model for social participation and social inclusion.
- However, this is not necessarily a prerequisite, for the Social Centres themselves provide a platform for facilitating social interaction. In cities where older people may be less predisposed to socially interaction and community engagement, having facilitators/social workers may help bridge the gap. Thus, this model is replicable in other urban environments.

Friendly Shopping (*Comercios Amigables*)

Content and organisation

- This project seeks to create a network of local businesses that are accessible, easy to use, attentive and sensitive to the needs of older people. The initiative is open to all local business within the city of Zaragoza.
- It also fosters the participation of older people, as they are responsible for assessing local businesses and advising on changes required to make them age-friendly.
- The initiative is one of the actions identified by older people during the participatory diagnosis of the city, conducted on Zaragoza upon joining the WHO Network.
- The Technical Office for Seniors oversees the project and provides support both to the stores and to the older people that are involved in the implementation of the initiative. The Office is also responsible for publicising and monitoring the results of the initiative. For this, the Office coordinates with other departments within the City Council to help dissemination.

Effectiveness

- Approximately 670 stores participate in this initiative.
- As the network of Friendly Shopping grows so does the awareness of the needs of older people. By focusing on enhancing the quality of the service provided, it also benefits other segments of society.

Innovativeness

- An important feature of this initiative is the involvement of older people in the assessment of the stores that apply to become part of the network of Friendly Shopping.

Transferability

- This initiative is transferable to other settings, as it does not have any context-specific condition.

‘We like talking’ (*Nos gusta Hablar*)

Content and organisation

- The project aims to create a space where people come together to chat face-to-face. Its goal is to reduce moments of undesired loneliness and isolation while promoting active aging.
- This consists of biweekly meetings that are initially facilitated by a social worker and then self-managed by participants. The participants can attend any time they want without having to sign up beforehand.
- This activity is open to both members and not members of the Social Centres for Seniors. It is also open to people of all ages, but focuses mostly on older people.
- This project was envisaged by the Technical Office for Seniors in collaboration with the Research Group of the Health Science Aragones Institute (Grupo de Investigación del Instituto Aragonés de Ciencias de la Salud, IACS-IIS Aragón), which was interested to research the effect of socialising on older people’s wellbeing.
- The project was piloted in one of the Social Centres and the City Council has now approved scaling it up across all Social Centres for Seniors.

  Video: https://youtu.be/2Xy2IT9cmBE

Effectiveness

- An average of 15 people participate daily per centre..
- Participants indicate the project has helped them build new social networks and has increased their motivation to come to the Social Gathering Centres.

Innovativeness

- While there is nothing innovative about this initiative, an important feature of this project is the role of the social facilitator. The aim is that older people lead and manage these spaces, but to ensure conversations are inclusive, respectful and engaging for all, facilitators provide participants with tools to guide and manage conversations besides.

Transferability

- Implementing this project requires of a comfortable space and the *ad-hoc* support from a social facilitator, making it easily transferrable to other contexts and settings.

Health Networks in the Neighbourhoods

Content and Organisation

- The ultimate goal is to improve health, welfare and equity in the different neighbourhoods and districts of the city of Zaragoza.
- The health project has been developed through the collaboration between the Government of Aragon (Health Department) and the City Council of Zaragoza (Department of Social Policies).
- The initiative identifies the determinants of health in the different stages of the life cycle, encourages networking based on the realities and needs of the community and promotes the use of health assets through community participation.
- Starting from the reality of each neighbourhood, the creation of the Health network in the Neighbourhoods consists of creating a promoter team consisting of representatives of the basic public servicees (social services, health and education) in each neighbourhood and stablishing a motor team, which includes the promoter team as well as professionals from different sectors present in the community. The motor group in each zone identifies the existing healthare needs and assets in the community.

Effectiveness

- It's developed at the neighbourhood level, as an environment of coexistence closer to the people and through the development of networks between the institutions that work in different sectors within each community.
- A pilot programme has been developed in three neighbourhoods of Zaaragoza, to date the protocol for recommending assets is already present in more than a third of the health centres in Zaragoza.

Innovativeness

- Mobilising community assets in the area involves giving them visibility within each neighbourhood, making them known amongst all the actors, entities and organizations that work within the community and recommending them. The idea is that from the primary care centres, doctors, nurses or social workers formally refer patients to the health assets, which they can use to promote their health, and formally record this in the patient's medical history.

Transferability

- The city of Zaragoza plans to implement this initiative in all of Zaragoza's neighbourhoods (25 in total) by 2021.
- The initiative is trasferable to other settings, carried already out in other cities in Spain including Barcelona, and a database of health assets for all these cities is being developed.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO HOUSING

The Housing Department of Zaragoza's City Council is implementing a number of initiatives that go beyond the traditional scope of the subsidised retirement home model and which fits better to the needs and desires of older people. While these initiatives are currently implemented on a small scale, they have the potential of becoming successful alternative housing options for older people who are unable or not willing to live alone.

Blocks with community centres: The city Council has built and is currently managing two buildings (one with 300 homes in one block and the other with 38 one-bedroom apartments) that have an in-built community centre located on the ground floor. The centre, supported by a team of municipal staff, has a dining room, a gym and provides access to social community activities. People residing in these apartments also have access to complementary social services provided by the City Council, as needed. These buildings are not exclusively targeting older people but provide an environment that can foster social interaction and help to build a strong community.

Apartments linked to the services of a retirement home: The Housing Department of the City Council, through the "Casa de Amparo" (municipal retirement home), is also providing support to a small number of people who live independently but who need access to some of the services provided by the retirement home. Beneficiaries of this program have the support of the staff of the "Casa de Amparo" and access to the residence when they need it, paying according to their income level.

Share Life (*Comparte Vida*). This project was initially envisaged by the Commission for the older people from the district *Casco Histórico* (in the city centre) and was developed jointly by several organisations, including the Housing Department of the City Council as well as non-profit organisations (Fundación Federico Ozanam, Fundación La Caridad and Cáritas Diocesana de Zaragoza). The project consists of four apartment flats shared by older people who meet the following criteria: being autonomous, having no family support and limited economic means and whose prior accommodation is considered inappropriate. Older people rent a room in these flats, share expenses and receive social support from collaborating entities (mentioned above). The project also aims to create a space where older people can support and accompany each other.

At the moment, these initiatives are targeted to economically vulnerable people and are implemented at a very small scale, which limits their impact and ability to meet the needs for housing among older people in Zaragoza. However, they show great potential, not only as affordable housing options but also as ways of fighting undesired loneliness and ensuring older people receive the services they need.

5 Challenges and opportunities

Although the previous section has shown successful examples of initiatives for improving the life of older people in the city, interviews with various groups of stakeholders in Zaragoza suggest that in certain policy domains there are still improvements possible. The following overview shows the viewpoint of older people in Zaragoza, the interest groups representing them and policymakers in the city.

Table 5.1: Challenges and Opportunities | Older people

	Challenges	Opportunities
Older people	**General** • There are differences across neighbourhoods, in terms of transportation options, availability of public services, and the outdoor environment. • Lack of awareness about many of the activities/initiatives beyond and outside the Social Centres for the Older people. **Housing** • Insufficient support provided for people while they still live at home. Lack of affordable retirement homes. **Social Participation** • Some of the municipal social centres are small and the activities are limited in capacity. While older people can access activities in other centres, most people prefer using the centre that is closest to their home and where they know more people.	• The 2014-2017 Action Plan has led to the implementation of several initiatives that have been highly appreciated by older people in Zaragoza, including We like talking (Nos Gusta Hablar), Friendly walks (Rutas Amigables) and, most significantly, the activities organised at the Social Centres for the older people. These provide a strong foundation for the future of age-friendly initiatives. • The Social Centres for the older people provide a platform for further strengthening social participation and interaction. Linking the activities of the centres to other community resources and other public services, such as healthcare centres, youth centres, schools, etc., can help increasing the reach and scope of activities targeting the seniors. At the same time, this can help reaching the more vulnerable groups and create opportunities for more intergenerational interactions.

Table 5.2: Challenges and Opportunities | Interest groups

	Challenges	Opportunities
Interest groups	**General** • Insufficient resources available for initiatives targeting the hard-to-reach segments (those that are economically, physically and socially most vulnerable, i.e. older people who hardly leave their home for various reasons, including physically and emotional barriers). • Insufficient coordination, both within government structures at different levels (regional, municipal, etc.) and amongst organisations working with older people. • Lack of awareness/dissemination about ageing policies, partly because some of the dissemination channels used are not accessible to all, including online platforms. • Lack of a deep understanding of the needs for differentiated groups of older people, leading to cookie-cutter policy responses and a lack of personalised responses. **Transport** • While public transport is more accessible than before, for some people who have reduced mobility, door-to-door support would be required. **Housing** • Insufficient places in senior homes to meet current demand, with standard prices (without public subsidies) being prohibitively expensive for most pensioners. • Level of subsidies for home adaptations insufficient to make flats fully accessible and apt for older people to live autonomously and be able to move in and out freely. Older people are often unaware of existing subsidies or find it difficult to follow the bureaucratic procedures required to apply for them.	**General** • The wide range of actors working with older people opens up the opportunity of generating more learning across stakeholders and developing initiatives that are based on past experiences and lessons learned. Leveraging and strengthening the network of public and private organisations can help to identify issues and think of effective solutions. • Since 2018, there is greater awareness of the need to address undesired loneliness. A number of opportunities to strengthen coordination and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and learning have opened up, such as the Ombudsman's Roundtables on Undesired Loneliness. These initiatives could be leveraged to strengthen coordination among stakeholders and deepen the understanding of the needs of older people. • As awareness about the importance of active aging increases even for those younger than 65 years-old, starting to engage people in their early 60s may increase their engagement when they are older than 65 years-old. Preventive measures – such as promoting active ageing - can be more effective if people are already engaged when they are physically in a better condition.

	Challenges	Opportunities
Interest groups	**Community support and health services** • Insufficient support provided to people that are more dependent. Current approaches, e.g. telecare, are not necessarily helping to build greater autonomy. The needs and possibilities of each person to continue to live autonomously are not explored in a systematic way, leading to reactive services without a long-term vision. **Social participation and non-discrimination** Participation to many of the activities is limited to those that are willing or in a position to attend, which in practice usually means there is little rotation in who participates.	**Communication support and health services** • There is still a strong community support system and a sense of belonging amongst older people in Zaragoza. Policy initiatives should seek ways of leveraging existing community structures (both formal and informal), to ease the implementation of projects and to further strengthen community ties. Formal structures include schools, youth centres, pharmacies, associations, etc. Informal: the model of social interaction and the strong sense of belonging to a community/neighbourhood in Zaragoza. • Use points of contact within more vulnerable populations (e.g. during home-based assistance, visits to the doctor) to improve the understanding of the needs of the hard-to-reach and more vulnerable populations.

Table 5.3: Challenges and Opportunities | Policy Makers

	Challenges	Opportunities
Policymakers	**General** • Difficult to meet the needs of certain sub-groups of older people, mostly those that are less autonomous and more isolated, due to; 1) the lack of resources and the fact that some of the policies and resource allocation depend on regional and national governments; 2) insufficient coordination between different government levels and other organisations working with older people; 3) insufficient understanding of older people's needs, also related to lack of effective communication channels (info is not systematically shared amongst stakeholders); 4) more vulnerable groups are mostly invisible to society and face barriers – both physical and social – that make it difficult to engage them in some of the social activities targeted to older people. • Limited ability of policy makers and the administration to change the view the society has of older people, as dependent, useless and needy. • Lack of resources to provide appropriate support for older people that are dependent.	• Growing recognition and consensus amongst government at different levels of the importance of ageing policies. • Leveraging and building upon the structures within neighbourhoods for the assessment of needs, as well as for the planning and implementation of ageing policies. • Building on some of the already implemented pilot activities, including community healthcare linkages to social services, such as the Social Centres for the older people.

6 Policy recommendations

The city of Zaragoza successfully implemented the 2014-2017 Action Plan, increasing the number of age-friendly initiatives while addressing all eight WHO domains, at least to some degree.[9] Stakeholders have highlighted the importance of building on existing initiatives and organisational structures to avoid duplication and ensure the long-term application of age-friendly policies.

Implementing actions across several domains has enhanced coordination amongst the different departments within the local government structures, which probably leads to more and better outcomes. Stakeholders from the city of Zaragoza also highlight the importance of engaging older people in the design, implementation, and evaluation of activities, to make initiatives more responsive to the actual needs of older people, while also giving them a sense of being listened to.

The city of Zaragoza has mostly focused on active ageing and preventive actions, given resource constraints and insufficient coordination with other government departments, particularly at different levels of government administration. While there are a number of initiatives – many implemented by non-governmental actors – for the most dependent populations, these are insufficient to meet the needs of these more vulnerable groups.

6.1 Strategic recommendations

- **Place a stronger focus on dependency and on targeting the hard-to-reach.** Zaragoza has successfully provided many opportunities for older people to remain active (mostly through the activities of the Social Centres for the older people), but participation is concentrated amongst those that are already active or those that are physically and emotionally fit. However, significant amounts of older people remain outside of these initiatives and their needs continue to be unmet, particularly for accessible and affordable housing, convenient transport (particularly for those that have physical barriers), and social inclusion. Some of the ongoing initiatives, such as “Salud en Red en los Barrios” (Health Network in the Neighbourhoods), and some of the housing initiatives are promising, but they need to be implemented at scale to be quantitatively relevant and truly effective. For this, coordinating with other organisations – particularly with regional and national government agencies, and ensuring the allocation of sufficient resources is essential.

[9] Technical Office for Older People 2017 Report. Community Social Services. Social Rights Department. Zaragoza City Council. 2018; Final Report on the 2014-2017 Zaragoza Age-friendly City Action Plan; & www.zaragoza.es/mayores

- **Bring a "Senior lens" to local policies.** Zaragoza has successfully built on existing initiatives and structures for the implementation of the 2014-2017 Action Plan, the best example of this being the Social Centres for the older people, which had been established long before Zaragoza joined the WHO's Network in 2011. In the same spirit, the Social Centres could work together with other departments within the city council, for example, Transport, Housing, etc., to identify ways in which the strategies of the different departments can be aligned with the age-friendly features under the eight WHO policy domains. This would require discussing the specific needs of the seniors as applicable in each policy area, assessing to what extent current plans meet the needs of older people and exploring ways in which the policies of other departments can be made age-friendlier, i.e. more responsive to the needs of older people.

- **Enhance coordination.** The roundtables, organised by the ombudsman in Aragon, are a good example of how stakeholders are brought together to identify needs and to think of solutions. Zaragoza has an extensive network of organisations working with older people and further development and implementation of ageing policies will require the participation of all actors.

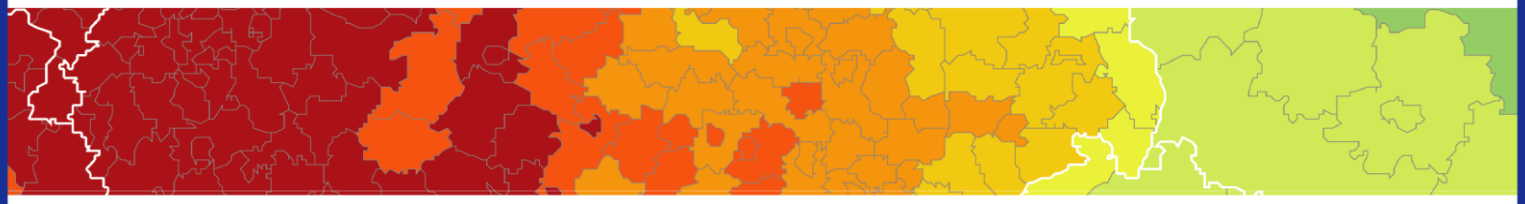
- **Identify differentiated needs amongst older people.** Segmentation not only by age groups but also by different characteristics that define needs. Create platforms to learn more about the needs of the seniors beyond the existing ones (e.g. beyond those attending the Social Centres for the older people). For example, organizations directly involved with older people, such as Atenzia, Fundación Federico Ozanam.

6.2 Thematic recommendations

Outdoor spaces and build environment: Expand the Friendly Routes ('Rutas Amigables') initiative to other neighbourhoods and ensure availability of public toilets, benches and drinking fountains in all areas of town, particularly in the city centre.

Housing: target interventions beyond the economically vulnerable (current focus of the municipal housing policies). It is also important to find ways of providing housing options across all city districts, to allow older people to stay in their communities while ensuring that they continue to be socially integrated in the environment that they know best. Consider scaling up promising initiatives, such as 'Sharing Lives' (Comparte Vida) and Buildings with Community Centres, as these initiatives can not only increase the availability of affordable housing options (an identified need) but also provides ways of promoting the autonomy and greater social interaction amongst older people.

Community Support and Health Services: Build on promising initiatives, such as *Red de Salud de Barrio*, and ensure that the scale up of pilot programs is based on the results of the evaluation.



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ESPON 2020 – More information

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