The European Union is facing unprecedented demographic changes. But variations in life expectancy, for instance, can be seen as a problem ... or as an opportunity. With The SIforAGE Project – Social Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing for Sustainable Economic Growth – we choose to believe in the latter option. That is why the Project aims at bringing younger and older people together to work for a common objective: a “Society for All Ages.”

The main tool we have to reach this future is the Social Innovation Incubator, a tool that gives added value to research, without the need for building something new. It gathers all stakeholders working on Active and Healthy Ageing (AHA) and provides them with the opportunity to exchange ideas, debate, take advantage of mutual collaborations, and to disseminate their results through five Knowledge Management Units (KMUs).

SIforAGE has also coordinated several experiences by organizing, for example, the so-called Technology Experience Cafes (TECs) for integrating end-users into technology, and product- and service-development. The Project has undertaken intervention programmes with children and young people that have been designed to prevent both ageism and ageist attitudes. SIforAGE has also organized Mutual Learning Sessions (MLSs) the objective of which is to improve the participation of policy-makers in the research-diffusion process.

Social innovation activities also consider issues such as ethics and social responsibility in ageing research, particularly through the launching of a research prize in Active and Healthy Ageing (AHA). Dissemination and social awareness activities are also particularly crucial: we need to involve society as a whole, overcome preconceptions, and together pursue a “Society for All Ages.”

SIforAGE is a project funded by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme. We are seventeen partners from all over Europe, and from Turkey and Brazil. Many universities, companies, public administrations, and civil society organizations are working together with more than two thousand stakeholders. The journey began in November 2012, and this three-day International Conference will bring together some of the results of these years of work, experience, and innovation.
We have never lived longer. Ageing is a major achievement, a physiological process only made possible by multiple, noble accomplishments in many different fields such as medicine, technology, and social policies. In fact, we have now more healthy life years ahead than in our wildest expectations. Now, it is time to adapt to this new reality. We need to envision a new world, a new future, where people live longer and healthier lives. Policy-makers, technology-developers, health professionals, lawyers, economists, humanists, social scientists, and older people themselves need to come together and work to find new solutions. Moreover, we need to do this in an inclusive way, by taking into deep consideration the needs and hopes of everyone, the ones who have already aged, and those who will, hopefully, live on into late-age.

With this Conference, our goal is to bring together actors from different fields to discuss ageing, its challenges, and possible paths for the future. We want a visionary participation of all, something that contributes to creating a better society for the future. There is no better time to do that.

This Conference is the final achievement of The SIforAGE Project, an innovative project of four years duration that has just set off on the journey along this path. While some of the work in the Project will be presented and discussed during the Conference, our goal is, also, to attain widespread social participation of everyone who wishes to attend and discuss with us this important matter, a matter that affects us all.

... among other invited speakers.