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Better Aging, Better Care-Exploring Solutions for an Aging Europe

More than 100 participants from regions across Europe gathered at the joint workshop "Better Aging, Better Care" organised by Intel and AGE in Brussels in October 2007. The event was held during the European Week of Regions and Cities.

The debate focused on one of the most pressing issues of our time: how will we care for our aging population?

Therefore, social inclusion, financial issues and opportunities related to the ageing population as well as the growth in chronic medical conditions were examined in considerable depth.

During the workshop, participants' interventions showed that technology can play a crucial role in achieving the goal of 'an active population' – but only on condition that the process is both participative (involving elderly citizens as early as possible in the design process) and inclusive (ensuring that they continue to care for themselves and play an active role in society, while facilitating access to services and ensuring devices are user-friendly).

Benny Ginman (Intel Europe) argued in his opening speech that in an aging world, technology can help people to stay out of hospital, but that requires a shift of the healthcare paradigm from acute treatment to prevention. Therefore, politicians will need to invest heavily in broadband infrastructure, which connects people to the hospital, rather than have to bring people to the hospital.

The Director General of AGE (European Older People's Platform), Anne-Sophie Parent, argued that she saw a huge role for all stakeholders at all levels (EU, national and regional regulators; service providers; and user organisations) in order "to relieve the heavy burden put on carers and to break the isolation of those who are totally excluded". The focus moved to how individuals also have a role to play; it was important that people stay active and work longer. Mrs. Parent concluded by reminding the participants at the workshop that it is of tremendous importance to invest more in health prevention, given that, in the long term, this will prove to be both cost effective as well as a source for job creation.

For more information, please visit <http://www.age-platform.org>

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