

**Challenges of Ageing in Villages and Cities:  
The Central European Experience**

# **Challenges of Ageing in Villages and Cities: The Central European Experience**

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## Preface

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Ageing is one of the most serious challenges that Europe and more particularly Central and Eastern Europe is facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to reasonable estimates the number of old-age persons will be more than twice of children in most European countries by 2050. This demographic transformation challenges our societies in many different ways including the sustainability of the social welfare system, the reproduction of labour force or the high concentration of elderly people in certain regions or settlements and the concomitant social problems. Due to these challenges ageing has also been selected as the UNESCO MOST regional priority theme for Europe, including Central and Eastern Europe. In the light of this the Hungarian MOST National Liaison Committee organised an international scientific seminar in Szeged, Hungary on 20–21 May 2009. During the seminar invited scholars from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Russia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia with different disciplinary background (demography, sociology, geography etc.) presented papers and discussed the most important challenges that ageing creates for our societies. Participants of the seminar also tried to find answers how these challenges could be handled by national and local policy interventions. The main aim of the interdisciplinary seminar was to provide a platform for academics who can exchange their views on different aspects of ageing. In addition innovative approaches and policy instruments regarding problems caused by ageing were also looked for. Present volume contains written versions of papers presented at the seminar. The organisation of the conference as well as publication of this volume was supported by the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO and the University of Szeged.

Zoltán Kovács