



Friendly spaces and mobility for ageing

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Given the growth of ageing populations in cities, debate on how to promote and design urban spaces that facilitate or enable active lifestyles for the elderly as a challenge for future planning. Urban centers, especially the historical ones, are nowadays places where a greater number of elderly people are concentrated, both residents and visitors.

It has been observed that neither the urban public space nor the transport system necessarily respond to the needs and aspirations of these ageing population, especially in what concerns to their mobility. A key strategy to facilitate and promote more inclusive environments is to change cities into more age-friendly ones.

An age-friendly city enables people of all ages (residents, tourists and others) to actively participate in community activities, making easy to them to stay connected and feel healthy and completely integrated. One of the strongest environmental factors associated with better levels of physical activity results from local walking opportunities.

Moreover, public spaces in transition should be adequately planned at the level of urban design and infrastructures, regarding, in particular, streets, pedestrian and bicycle itineraries, accesses to buildings and to transport systems. Another fundamental aspect, namely in historical city centres, is to rethink transport system in order to make those areas gain universal accessibility and universal connection with other urban areas in the perspective of sustainable mobility.

This process should go beyond desk work, and should also create social innovation, by holding participatory and dynamic collaboration sessions with the population, assessing more precisely how to overcome their difficulties.

The special session should reflect on three main topics:

- Understand how older people experience urban spaces and main obstacles/limitations they face.
- Explore tools to be used in participatory processes in a community based-approach.
- Discuss planning policies & measures to support innovative social actions, to promote sustainable mobility of ageing population.