



**Katja Debelak<sup>1</sup>, Tatjana Kozjek<sup>1</sup>, Barbara Grah<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration, Ljubljana, Slovenia

<sup>2</sup>University of Ljubljana, School of Business and Economics, Ljubljana, Slovenia

### Expanding Working Lives: Public Policy and Age Management in Slovenia

Slovenia, like many European countries, is facing major demographic challenges as its population ages. Public policy and societal attitudes towards ageing are important to address these challenges, especially in extending working life. This paper examines the interplay between public policy, public perceptions of ageing, and the concept of age management as a holistic approach to promoting sustainable workforce participation of older adults (Walker, 2005). Age management, which involves strategies to optimise the potential of employees throughout their careers, plays a critical role in aligning policy initiatives with the realities of an ageing workforce (Ilmarinen, 2006). The study draws on the European Commission's Active Ageing Index (2020), national labour force data from Slovenia (SURS, 2023) and Eurostat statistics on ageing to assess the impact of policy. Public attitudes towards older workers and later retirement are analysed using survey data from the European Social Survey (ESS, 2022) and qualitative interviews with Slovenian policy makers and labour experts. The findings emphasise the importance of integrating age management practises – such as flexible working arrangements, health promotion, and retraining opportunities – into public and workplace policies in order to reduce barriers such as age-related stereotypes and resistance to working longer (Ilmarinen, 2006). The Slovenian experience emphasises the need for policies that not only extend working lives but also create an age-friendly environment that promotes productivity, well-being, and engagement among older workers. By placing the discussion in a broader European context, this paper contributes to the academic discourse on sustainable workforce participation and provides actionable insights for policy makers and employers facing demographic change (Walker, 2005; European Commission, 2020).

**Keywords:** aging workforce, age management, public policy, age-friendly workplaces

#### Biography

Katja Debelak is a PhD student at the School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana and a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Public Administration, Chair of Economics and Public Sector Management. In 2018 Katja co-founded the Neuro Institute EQ, where she consults on organizational development and leadership development. She graduated from the School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, where she got her Masters Degree in 2017. Her specialization and research interests are age management, management, leadership, organizational development, and emotional intelligence.