

5 WISHES AND NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY

Mervi Himanen and Jutta Jantunen

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports some of the results of the work concerning the wishes and needs of the elderly. The results are from interviews that were carried out in a number of interesting cases in the four participating countries. The objective of this part of the project was to identify the wishes and needs of the elderly concerning housing, the surroundings and facilities, with respect to function fulfilment. This included considerations of the wider living environment, including opportunities for social interaction. It was considered important to gain insights into the wishes and needs of future elderly people, which raised important methodological issues. This chapter discusses also differences in wishes and needs of the elderly in the participating countries, on the basis of institutional and cultural differences. The full results are in the country reports in Deliverable 3 by Himanen and its annexes prepared by the other partners (2004).

The work in this work package was divided into 4 tasks:

- a. Survey of study methods. Various quantitative and qualitative methods have been developed to assess user needs. These methods were reviewed in order to find and adapt for use the most suitable for this purpose.
- b. Preparation of a study framework. Based on the survey, a methodological framework was developed and used by the partners in all the participating countries
- c. Study of wishes and needs in the participating countries: Using the common framework, the partners carried out studies in their own countries.
- d. Identification of improvement needs in terms of dwelling, surroundings and facilities. By comparing the state of the art as reported in the chapter on Present practices, and the wishes and needs, development needs were identified.

5.2 Method and data

The study of the wishes and needs was carried out as case studies in the four participating countries. Larger numbers of individuals, belonging to selected target groups, were interviewed. This approach was chosen because of the future orientation of the study. The selection of respondents and the content of the interview are clarified in this section.

To assist in targeting and formulating the questions, researchers conducted a literature review (cf. existing regulation, standards, recommendations, etc. in Deliverable 1 by van der Linden and Stenbekkers [2003]).

The questionnaire was divided into four parts as follows:

- Housing, surroundings, services for independent living and communication, to study the present situation and the future needs and wishes
- Testing current standards of such selected areas as personal hygiene, storing rooms, safety, home appliances, home control, surroundings,

conveniences, asking if respondents (1) have them already, (2) would like to have them now or (3) would like to have them when they need them or (4) they don't want to have them

- Scenarios of daily activities and services; (1) of food or nutrition, eating, cooking and shopping, (2) of cleaning and (3) of personal business and mobility
- Demographic data (age, gender, education, household type, income) including also health condition, activity level and willingness to pay possible extra costs due to needs of getting older.

The most future oriented part of the interview was the scenarios of lifestyles. The scenarios were short stories of stereotype alternatives of everyday activities.

Structured questions were composed for the interpretation purposes. The questionnaire was translated into all four languages. In the case of difficulties in harmonising national differences of questions two means were used:

For each question it was possible to use three "standard" answers: refusal, unknown or not applicable. Additional questions were used in each country in such situations, where essential information could be missed without them.

Despite the fact that in all countries except in Denmark Euro has recently become the common currency, the previous national currencies were used during the interviews when questions concerning money were asked.

The questionnaire was pre-tested in each country except in Finland, because almost all of the questions included into the questionnaire had been previously used in interviews in Finland.

In each country the researchers selected the target group. No effort to find identical groups in each country was made. The main criterion for choosing a case was to find interviewees who were active in the respect of the plans and ideas about their future housing and living conditions. The willingness to live as independent life as possible was also important. The target group, i.e. case, selection criteria were as follows:

- Active elderly who have had a reason to consider their future living conditions,
- Those who have recently become clients of a service organisation (younger than 80),
- Other groups of elderly with a future oriented approach.

If the case consisted of a large number of individuals (larger than hundred), the respondents were chosen randomly or a meaningful subgroup was selected, such as the first on a waiting list. If the size of the case was less than hundred, all were interviewed, or a list for a selected subgroup was made.

The selected case groups in each country were as follows:

Denmark: 30 visitors of advisory office for elderly who consider to move or to make changes in their housing situation in the second largest municipality Aarhus with nearly 300.000 inhabitants.

Finland: altogether 106 respondents from three cases; (1) 32 members of Aktiiviset seniorit association, a group of active seniors, who plan a senior house of their own called "Loppukiri" at the Arabianranta housing area in the city of Helsinki, (2) 28 tenants of two housing companies As. Oy Säätökartano and As. Oy

Säästöranta in Puotila housing area in the city of Helsinki, where the elderly are the majority and their houses need repairs, and (3) a randomly accessed group of 46 elderly in the largest and easternmost residential area in city of Helsinki in Vuosaari, where population is growing rapidly and new housing development has started in 1990's in greater extent since 1960's, the time of the establishment of the residential area.

The Netherlands: altogether 30 seniors consisting of three cases, (1) a group of five elderly in the town of Wageningen who try to initiate a kind of commune for elderly and a second group of eleven people who were regular visitors of a recreation and information centre, (2) eight regular visitors of a recreation and information centre for elderly in the town of Lopik, a more rural village and (3) six residents of an institute in the city of Nieuwegein.

Spain: altogether 100 respondents from 15 cases in the city of Barcelona and the neighbouring towns, living (1) in regular housing, (2) in senior housing, (3) in private and (4) municipal service homes.

The study was carried out by personal interviews in each country, because it might have been difficult to get written answers from the eldest and because it is more reliable method than the posted questionnaire. The data collection took place in Denmark in the beginning 2003, in Finland from September 2002 to May 2003, in the Netherlands in October 2002, and in Spain in January and in February 2003. A more detailed description of the method and the data can be found in Deliverable 3 by Himanen (2004).

5.3 Results

When discussing the results of the interviews it is important to remember their qualitative nature. While it can be stated for example that the majority (x %) of the respondents in a certain case had a certain opinion, the result cannot be extrapolated to mean that the majority of the elderly, even in the country or city in question, share that opinion. When comparing results from one country with those from another, the purpose is to acknowledge the importance of the context where people live, rather than a comparison in a statistical sense. Overall, the results are used to point out important issues that should be considered, either for realism or for inspiration, when developing the future independent living conditions of the elderly.

5.3.1 Demographic and background characteristics

Altogether, the mean age of the respondents was 71 years. The respondents in Finland were youngest of all cases (average 64 years) and those in Denmark eldest (average 76 years). Respondent belong mainly to the baby boom generation born after the Second World War.

The sex ratio (men per 100 women) in the population aged 60+ in 2004 was 80 in Denmark, 71 in Finland, 78 in the Netherlands and 77 in Spain (United Nations Statistics 2000). In all participating countries the ageing population consists largely of women. The cases in Finland and in the Netherlands were following the national gender distribution while those in Denmark and Spain included more men than the total age group.

There were both single people and couples among the respondents in all the cases. In Spain, and to a lesser extent in Finland, there were respondents who lived with their children. Also in The Netherlands two respondents lived in a nuclear family. On the whole living with one's children is more common in Spain than in the other three countries and very rare in The Netherlands and in Denmark (see Deliverable 1). However, the alternative of living within nuclear family is not at all in favour among the Spanish elderly that belong to the cases that were studied.

The question concerning a wish of living companion in the future was not asked in Denmark. In Finland, in the Netherlands and in Spain it is clearly found that the single status is less wanted than what is the current reality.

About half or more than half of the respondents in all cases considered themselves to be quite healthy. A smaller number had some disease that they took regular medication for, or in Spain, were living in a special home because of a more permanent or severe medical reason.

Most respondents shared the vision of not knowing what will happen in the future in the health condition. Still, especially the respondents from the Danish and Finnish cases believed that taking care on one's health is the best one can do for oneself.

All participating countries belong to high-income countries but today's elderly tend to have lower incomes than the population on average. In all cases a vast majority of the respondents was pensioned.

All the cases were selected by the researchers with the interest in planning the future dwelling as a dominant factor. This resulted in a very positive response to the question concerning planning one's future (Table 8). Only in Spain almost half of the respondents report simply that they do not plan their future and an additional third of them do not plan their future because of the possible unexpected changes in life. The interviewer got the impression that the interviewees did not want to know right now much about matters concerning growing old and the plans of dwelling quality then.

The activities and desired activities of the respondents were studied. The difference in having hobbies and other activities is striking between the Spanish and Nordic responses to the interview (in The Netherlands the question was not asked). Half of the respondents of Spanish cases reported that they do not have any hobbies. As many respondents of Nordic cases reported to have a hobby which takes almost as much time as a job. In addition, a good share of Finnish respondents had a hobby which takes time periodically.

Here it is a question of what is meant by a hobby. The response might have been different if the options of spending leisure time, entertainment and having fun (reading, watching television, listening to music, playing cards, surfing in Internet and chatting, etc.) had been included in the question. Some of these were studied in the context of services for independent living. It was found that the Spanish respondents go to coffee shops and restaurants or visit the church more often than the Finnish respondents who go to library or swimming hall more often than the Spanish respondents. A good share of respondents in the Spanish cases had other activities. Regardless of the difference in activity, the most common response from all cases was the same: no added activities were wished.

A fifth of the respondents in the Finnish and Spanish cases were working voluntarily for charity or looking after old, sick, disabled or children. No one was doing so in the case in Denmark (the matter was not studied in the Netherlands).

Improvements of a dwelling and services can be costly. Therefore it is interesting to study the attitudes towards paying for such improvements.

The respondents in the Spanish cases were more often than the Finnish respondents willing to pay for services which are not covered by municipalities or the state, especially if those services are something very necessary (Table 8). If not willing to pay themselves, the majority of respondents in both countries hope that the national or municipal social and health care take care of costs. Almost one fifth of the Finnish answers showed willingness to have a voluntary insurance for such costs while that option was not rated high among in Spanish case.

Also willingness to pay for renovations is different between the respondents of the Finnish and Spanish cases. Moving was given as an alternative for renovation costs. Almost a quarter of the Finnish respondents approve the option of moving while only a few of the Spanish respondents thought moving would be a good way to avoid renovation. This could be a matter of housing markets or reflect the willingness to stay at one's present home, as well as the overall housing histories of the countries.

An additional possibility to avoid renovation costs was given: the option of suffering from an inconvenient situation. A quarter of both Finnish and Spanish respondents thought that they rather suffer from an inconvenient situation than pay themselves for renovation costs.

Two options for covering the costs of renovation were given: managing without any special financial arrangements, or making the renovation possible by some financial arrangements. The option to manage the renovation with financial arrangements such as a loan was much more popular among the Spanish respondents than among those in Finland. As a matter of fact half of the Spanish respondents thought that making the renovation possible by some financial arrangements would be their way of taking care of the possible needed renovation costs themselves, while a third of the Finnish respondents chose the option of managing without any special financial arrangements.

In the open question about the future plans the Spanish respondents made it clear that they were not interested in repairs and changes in their homes, because most of them think that it is going to be a nightmare. Instead, everyone wanted to talk about inadequate pensions, the high cost of living. This was the case in the rental housing in particular.

There is one factor that can influence this willingness to pay for renovation. The investment in dwelling has not been very high in Spain during the last part of 1990's and lower than in Finland (Haffner & Dol, 2000, p. 17). Housing needs tend to become acute after they have been unsatisfied long enough. Ageing is then adding the pressure by increasing the assortment of needs and making the renovation more necessary.

Table 8. Summary of cases on the values and attitudes of respondents.

Factor	Denmark	Finland	the Netherlands	Spain
Existence of future plans for living and dwelling	Almost all plan	$\frac{3}{4}$ plan Less than one fifth don't plan	Almost all plan	Half don't plan One third don't plan because of unexpected events
Level of activity	Hobbies taking time like a job	Hobbies taking time like a job Hobbies periodically		No activities or Other activities than hobbies
Future activities	No additional hobbies	No additional hobbies		No additional hobbies Like to but cannot
Willingness to move	Most moved already or wanted to move	A majority plan to move	Most have no plans to move	Most have no plans to move
Reason to move or not to move	Change in health condition	Change in health condition Wish to lead easy life		Don't want to give up present home
Willingness to renovate	$\frac{3}{4}$ do not	$\frac{3}{4}$ do not Some indoor repair Some larger repair	$\frac{3}{4}$ do not	$\frac{3}{4}$ do not Some indoor repair
Willingness to pay for renovation	(adaptations are free of charge in Denmark)	Rather move Managing without financial arrangements		Managing with financial arrangements
Willingness to pay for services	(many services are free of charge in Denmark)	One fifth not willing to pay Half pays for necessities About one third pays for extra		Only few refuses to pay Over half pays for necessities One third pays for extra

¹ A group of people was interviewed who had asked advice for either moving or making changes in their current home

Blank square: not asked

5.3.2 Scenarios for lifestyles

The desired lifestyles were studied by means of scenarios of daily activities and services for independent living in Finland and in Spain (the questions on similar subjects were asked differently in The Netherlands and Denmark, see country reports in Himanen 2004, Deliverable 3 for more detail). Three areas of daily living were studied:

- Food or nutrition, eating, cooking and shopping,
- Cleaning and
- Personal business and mobility.

In Spain the questions were about wishes for good life. In Finland also the desired situation for independent living in the future in case help is needed was studied.

In the Finnish and Spanish cases respondents share the idea that daily quality cooking is important instead of simplicity and easy cooking or eating out. Also with cleaning the ideal was to keep as it is at present.

Also differences appeared. In addition to these main wishes the Finnish cases showed also the interest in keeping cooking as a hobby, which included also gardening, fishing, etc. This was not popular among Spanish respondents.

Further, the Finnish cases showed also the interest in making cleaning easy for oneself which was not popular among Spanish respondents. The Spanish respondents chose the option of "cleaning together with an assistant" as a popular one. Among the Finnish respondents this kind of help would not be desired unless help for independent living was needed. In this case, however, most Finnish respondents would like to ask for help from a cleaning service provider.

Running personal errands is most convenient either by living in a neighbourhood that has the services available, by using public transport or by driving one's own car. The respondents in the Spanish cases were mostly in favour of the services of the own neighbourhood, and the Finnish interviewees were fond of public transport for mobility. In the case of difficulties in coping with independent living the Finnish cases suggest the solution of bringing services to the home. A good share was trusting also on communication and services via Internet and emails.

If help was needed for cooking the Finnish respondents preferred to solve it either by getting meals-on-wheels or using modern technique for easier cooking. Some elderly criticised meals-on-wheels in their oral response. At time of the interviews, a combination of freezer and microwave oven, able to make meals, was on the market and in use already in several homes of elderly and disabled. It was well liked. However, the facility is not available any more due to the unexpected bankruptcy of the provider.

5.3.3 Housing, surroundings, services and communication

Moving, renovating and choosing the ideal dwelling

Most of the respondents (about $\frac{3}{4}$) of all the cases do not plan to make any changes or repairs in their dwelling. Most often the reason is that there is no need. For example the Finnish respondents did not feel very confident about their knowledge of changes and repairs of their home. This was also the case in Spain. The oral response to open questions was that the technical matters are too expensive and complicated to understand – even though there was a male bias in the Danish and Spanish cases.

A good few of those Finnish respondents who plan to make changes or repairs are planning to make indoor reparations. Equally many are planning a renovation on a larger scale or feel that the home needs some changes because of the age of the building. Those Spanish respondents who plan to have their home repaired are thinking of smaller repairs which they can arrange relatively easily.

To test how seriously the interviewed senior citizens plan to make changes, adaptations or repairs in their dwelling, a question was asked about the recent repairs. A half of the respondents in Spain and in the Netherlands had made repairs, in Finland one third and only a few in Denmark. The economy of the respondents and the willingness to invest on housing can influence the result. In

Denmark, the willingness to invest on housing has been very constant and average for a relatively long period (Haffner & Dol, 2000, p. 17).

The female dominated Dutch cases consisted of women who have made home repairs and are planning to do so in the future. It is not known whether the same group of respondents has made home repairs and will continue to do so, or whether those who have not yet renovated are planning to start.

Questions concerning the willingness to move got a mixed response. Most of the Spanish and Dutch respondents have no plans to move. This is also the case with many Danish respondents. A majority of the Finnish respondents will move more willingly, but there was also a good portion of those who want to stay in their current home.

Among the Finnish cases are the members of Aktiiviset seniorit association who have a new commune type house built for themselves. Obviously they are willing to move to this new house. Among the rest of the Finnish cases half of the respondents are willing to move.

The Danish case was special in this respect while a group of people was interviewed who had asked advice for either moving or making changes in their current home. Therefore, most moved recently already or wanted to move.

One third of the interviewees in Spain lived already in a special home, which might influence their unwillingness to move. A half of the interviewed senior citizens in the cases in Spain and in the Netherlands had recently made changes, adaptations or repairs in their dwelling, to facilitate future daily life, which also might influence the unwillingness to move.

The most common reason among the Spanish respondents not to move is the unwillingness to give up their present home. The reason for the Finnish respondents to move is either the change in health condition or the wish to make life easier. The open question of the circumstances under which those who belong to the Finnish case groups would move, show that ageing and weakening health are important reason for moving to a new dwelling.

The questions about the details of future housing plans in the case of moving were asked from everyone in Finland, whereas in Spain only those who were willing to move were asked these questions. The detailed questions of moving were answered by 15 people in Spain while most of the Spanish respondents didn't want to move.

From the answers to open questions was concluded that the most common reason in Spain was that respondents had problems regarding space and had difficulties in keeping the house clean and tidy. The present dwelling was either too big or too small.

The most desired housing type among the Finnish respondents was an apartment in a multi-storey building with an elevator. Also many Spanish respondents share this wish. The second best, but far less attractive alternative was an apartment in a row house.

Such special types of housing as senior house, service house, nursing home or commune all had their small numbers of supporters among the Finnish interviewees. In Finland the most popular future wish home option turn out to be a community with people of different ages. Also in Spain a small number of respondents had a dream to spend the last years of their life with some friends on a

big farm in the middle of nowhere. The idea was to join economic efforts with community services.

In the discussions during the Finnish interviews it was found that some elderly feel that it would be good to have someone around whole day long, even if they received home help. In this situation many feel that they have to move somewhere, where constant care is available.

The relative unpopularity of private senior housing might be caused by the varied quality of those existing. A municipal service house was a popular option within the Finnish cases. According to the interviewer a reason for that was what the respondents knew about the municipal service homes for elderly near the Puotila and Vuosaari housing areas because of acquaintances or friends living there and being satisfied with the quality of those homes.

The Finnish respondents were not confident about their knowledge for making decision where to live when older and over half of them said they needed further information for a final decision.

Building, dwelling and second home

In general dwellings in Finland are small in size and Spanish ones spacious (Haffner & Dol 2000, p. 23). Despite the fact of small dwellings in Finland in general and despite the fact that Finnish elderly respondents had smaller dwellings than the Spanish, half of the Finnish elderly who were interviewed wanted to have less space than now and many wanted to keep it as it is; half of the Spanish respondents wanted to keep the dwelling space as big as it is now, and some even wanted more space.

In Finland, the members of Aktiiviset seniorit association were a big group wishing to have less space. Many of them wanted to move from suburban area to the city centre which meant that due to the higher prices of the property or rents the next apartment will most probably be smaller.

The size of family can be an explanatory factor influencing the need of space also in this study. In general (Haffner & Dol 2000, p. 12) and among the cases of this study the household size is larger in Spain than in Finland, since in Spain many interviewees lived with their children.

In the dwellings of Finnish cases there are most often three rooms and a kitchen (or kitchenette) but also two and four rooms apartments are common. Apartments with four or more rooms are the most common in the dwellings of the Spanish cases. The number of rooms is relatively high in the Finnish dwellings compared to the floor area. No wonder that the wishes of the future number of rooms are opposite in Finland to those in Spain. A half of the Finnish respondents want to have less rooms and a half of the Spanish respondents want to have more rooms.

The wishes of the respondents in the Netherlands were quite similar to those in Finland, although there were some more wishes for more space than in Finland. These Dutch wishes of less space are obvious while the Dutch dwellings in general are the biggest ones in Europe and also there were many big dwellings in the study.

In Spain the studied multi-storey buildings had more often an elevator than those in Finland. This might be due to the difference in numbers of elevators in general in those countries or because of the selection of buildings, which was fa-

vouring buildings designed according to the needs of the elderly while such a buildings were not in the Finnish cases.

The one-family houses of the Finnish cases have less often stairs than those in the Spanish cases. The mean of solving possible future problems with accessibility was in most cases moving among the Finnish elderly respondents while their Spanish fellows would rather stay in those floors of the present dwelling accessible for them.

In most cases in Finland, in Denmark and in Spain the dwellings had one floor, while in the Netherlands there were as many one floor dwellings as those with two floors. Despite this difference, all elderly respondents favoured a dwelling on one floor in the future.

The question about the building type revealed that a building with an elevator is more popular than one without. The question was not taking into the count costs. However, elevators are very costly to install and that is why they are not common in all residential houses.

The costs of an elevator should be weighed against cost of the service which might become necessary if the ageing resident is unable to manage his or her daily life because of the stairs.

As regards the shortcomings of the present housing, the needs of kitchen repair, lack of elevators, poor soundproofing and indoor air quality, difficulties to use bathtub, or the wish to have a balcony (or two), a need for an easy access out and lack of natural light are common to all cases.

A second home is an extension of the permanent dwelling. It can influence the need of space and it carries also many values, which are not all dwelling oriented. In this study, the interest on the whole was in if elderly are wishing to have a second home or not.

The summer cottage is a typical Finnish second home and one fifth of all households in 1994 owned one. The number of summer cottages has been increasing during the last years. Summer cottages are not only a part of Finnish and Scandinavian culture, but for example in Spain they are quite common, whereas in some other European countries like in the Netherlands they are very rare.

In Finland and in Spain almost a half of the respondents owns or has access to a second home. Also in the Danish case a quarter of the respondents has a summer cottage. The legislation in Denmark is making it easier for the elderly to stay at summer cottages even permanently if they wish.

In Finland a quarter of the respondents is still dreaming of having a second home in the old ages, while only one person in the Spanish case shared the same dream. These "second homes of dreams" were either for leisure or for a home abroad.

The case studies in Finland and in Spain show that second homes are used a couple of months per year (one to three) and the respondents plan to use them similarly or slightly more in the future (two to four months).

Present and ideal surroundings

In the Finnish cases most people live in suburban areas either in row houses or in apartment buildings. If they want to move, it is either to the city centre or to a rural area in countryside or village, or elsewhere (not named). All these three options are almost as popular.

Roughly a half of the respondents in Spain dwell in apartment buildings in suburban areas and one third of them in the city centre. It seems that if willing to move, those who live in the rural villages wish to move most willingly to suburban into a row house or a single family house.

In the Danish case the respondents willing to move wish to move either from a suburban area or rural area to the city centre. People interviewed in the most crowded country in Europe (Haffner & Dol 2000, p. 6) in the Netherlands wanted to move from a suburban area to rural areas in the countryside.

It was also asked if the elderly had favourite places in the hometown or city (coffee shops, clubs, recreation and meeting places, etc.), which they liked as places to visit, alone or in company, and which are important as meeting places. In all cases half of the respondents had such a place and another half didn't.

Services

There are a few services which people quite often cannot do without: a post office, a bank, an office of municipal and social services, a grocer or a kiosk, a supermarket, a healthcare centre and a pharmacy. Within the Finnish and Spanish cases¹ they all seemed to be necessary.

In Finland relatively few answered the question that tried to extract the one they could manage without; most respondents said right away that all are needed. The few thought they can manage without municipal and social services within walking distance. The result from the Spanish cases was totally different. They needed an office of municipal and social services most of all in the near neighbourhood.

Especially in the Puotila housing area in Finland the respondents stressed the need of basic services because the services have started to vanish one by one. The larger commercial centres at Itäkeskus and Vuosaari create increasing competition to the services in Puotila.

When asked about the three most liked services in the neighbourhood, a market place and a shopping centre, as well as nature around or a park were important for half of the Spanish respondents. Around a quarter of the Finnish respondents needed all the services mentioned in the question (a shopping centre, nature around or a park, a place where to sit outside, a terrace or shelter for social events in the courtyard or in the garden, a hairdresser or barber) except a market place and a hairdresser or barber, which were not very important for the Spanish respondents either.

The Finnish respondents do not find it so important to have all the services in their own neighbourhood. Such services

- a coffee shop, bar or restaurant
- a beautician and/or a solarium
- a masseuse
- a cinema
- a theatre
- a church
- a library
- an education or training centre

¹ Modified questions in Denmark and in the Netherlands.

- a service station
- a car repair shop
- a swimming hall or a sport centre
- a boat club
- a golf club.

The Spanish respondents had visited a coffee shop, bar or restaurant, a mas-seuse and the church much more often than the Finnish respondents. The Finnish respondents had used the services of a library and a service station, as well as attended a swimming hall or a sport centre quite often while most Spanish respondents had not used them at all.

Connections for communication

In Spain most of the respondents of the interview meet other people - friends or relatives -regularly or often while only one fifth of Finnish respondents visit others that often. An additional third of Finnish respondents has a chance to talk with someone daily about worries or when something nice has happened. One fifth has good neighbours whom they visit occasionally. A quarter of the Finnish respondents keep contact frequently with friends or relatives by phone, by mail or via email, if they live far away or it is otherwise difficult to meet them except on special occasions.

Almost all the Finnish respondents had or wanted to have both a wired and a mobile phone, while in Finland the younger generation has started to have only mobile phones and the number of fixed phone lines is declining. In Spain the number of fixed lines is still increasing when all inhabitants are taken into account. Also all the Spanish interview respondents had or wanted to have wired phones but there were also many present or future holders of mobile phones.

More than a half of the Finnish respondents had or wanted to have a connection to information networks while every tenth respondent of Spanish cases had or wish to get access to information networks.

Similarities and differences were found from the result of the Elderathome interview when studying which means were used for contacting various target groups: children, relatives, friends, neighbours, health care, social workers and home help. Health care and social workers were named most often among those with almost no connection at all by all studied groups. If contacted, health care was reached by phone and visit. Some of the Finnish respondents said they phone to the social workers.

Within the Spanish cases people kept in touch with children, relatives and friends by phoning and meeting. Also the Finnish respondents did it, but in addition to that they used mail and email for the purpose. A few users of emailing were found already to keep in contact with children, relatives and friends in Spain, too.

The most important reason for having ICT at home in Spain is to keep in contact with relatives and friends and for safety reasons. In Finland multiple purposes are reported about how to use ICT.

Video phones are not at all popular, although experiments of the use of it in senior service homes in the town of Tampere have given proof of its usefulness for example in preventing loneliness, because the video contact is more personal

than the voice phone. The low quality of the video image exchange – due to the high capacity requirements of the video information – has been said to be a reason for the inconvenience of using video phones.

5.3.4 Existing regulations, standards and recommendations

The questions about the usefulness of existing regulations, standards and recommendations covered seven topic areas: personal hygiene, storing rooms, safety, home appliances, home control, surroundings and those for one's convenience.

The Spanish respondents have already most of the facilities for personal hygiene, while the Finnish respondents didn't have them as often as respondents in Spain. However, they wanted to have them all except a wardrobe in bathroom for the clothes and slippers. Both Finnish and Spanish respondents have their suspicions about handrails in bathrooms, but responded that they would like to have them if needed. In Denmark the responses were divided: some had already some facilities which are recommended, while others did not want to have them.

A Finnish curiosity is the sauna. The popularity of common sauna was a bit better than of that in an apartment.

Most of the respondents of all cases were using the kind of storing rooms that were covered in the questions. It can be interpreted as an expression of satisfaction with current situation and with the existing regulations, standards and recommendations of storage spaces. However, the response from the Finnish cases showed a need of space for seasonal clothes and for visitors' bedding.

The respondents from the Spanish and Finnish cases mostly accepted the safety aspects suggested in the questions. They were more often in use in the Spanish than in the Finnish cases. Among the Spanish respondents are many who live already in a service home. The Finnish respondents wanted to have them when needed. The only exception was an alarm system, which can be installed easily in the future. A good number of Spanish respondents did not want to have it and several Finnish and Spanish respondents have their suspicions about it while responding that they'd like to have it if needed.

The security of surroundings was not a major consideration among respondents from the Finnish and Spanish cases. The question was testing the Dutch design recommendation, the "Woon Keur Certificate" about paths behind housing to be social secure, conveniently arranged and not inviting for unauthorised people. This unpopularity of the Dutch recommendation within Finnish and Spanish cases might have something to do with the population density which in the Netherlands is the highest in Europe and the lowest in Finland and relatively low also in Spain (Haffner & Dol 2000, p. 6).

There are different responses to the questions of home appliances. The Finnish respondents want to have home appliances with safety features when needed, but they do not want to have equipment which has to be maintained by them selves. The Spanish response was favouring the kind of domestic appliance which prevents incorrect use, as well as those to be maintained by the end-users, but the response to fixed safety control setting was mixed.

The interview showed that the elderly within the cases in Finland and in Spain accepted a temperature limiter in the water faucet. Many respondents had it already.

Such home control which is related to safety (alarm buttons, safety bracelet, motion sensor and equipment facilitating connections in emergency situation) is very well accepted according to the response of the interview. Most of the respondents in Finland and in Spain were fond of home control facilitating easy living and energy efficiency such as lamps that turn on automatically, when entering a room, and off, when no one is present. But there were also many who did not want to have this kind of control.

5.4 Conclusions towards development and use of criteria

This chapter has highlighted some of the results of the study of the wishes and needs of the elderly. The very rich material from the four countries is reported in detail in Deliverable 3 by Himanen and its annexed country reports (2004). In the work to develop the criteria for dwelling, surroundings and services, the material has been studied in detail, question by question. The work on the criteria is summarised in the next chapter of this report.

Some more general findings concerning the wishes and needs can be brought up here. These findings are mostly about the situations and approaches that should be considered when applying the criteria.

The variety and high level of activity of many respondents is impressive. The criteria should be open to this variety, encouraging and supporting it, rather than settling for some minimal level and variety. Staying active, within the limits of one's health and abilities, is in itself a factor that improves the possibilities of living longer independently.

People differ in how prepared they are to plan for their future. Even those who do plan admit that it is impossible to know what happens in terms of one's health and that of one's companion. Many try actively to keep in good health or otherwise maintain the quality of life, and the criteria should encourage such activity. When situations change and adjustments are needed in the dwelling, surroundings or services, a set of criteria would be a useful tool for an elderly person and a professional planner or service provider to assess the situation.

Such assessments and plans should cover financing possibilities – from affordable, small repairs for which special financing might not be needed, to loans or public subsidies that are available. People's willingness to pay and their capacity to pay vary according to their economic situation and the ownership of their dwelling, as well as the type of housing.

House repairs require know-how and management to be successful. To encourage the elderly to make the repairs that would improve their quality of life, reliable repair services are needed.

In managing their daily lives many elderly pay a lot of attention to the quality of cooking and the appropriate cleaning of their house. A variety of different solutions to take care of such activities should be encouraged so as to improve the sense of personal control.

Space management is also an issue. Some people live in homes that are too large to manage. Some have too little space. If moving is not possible or desired, a possibility would be to develop a manageable core in the large apartment and

create extra storage possibilities and ensure the choice of suitable items (furniture, appliances) for the smaller apartment.

As regards services, the list of the most essential services is not common to all people. It is therefore crucial to find flexible ways of securing access to services. The ways include for example location nearby, public or shared transportation or having the service visiting the neighbourhood or the person.

When larger renovations are made to maintain the building in a good condition, the criteria for independent living should be brought up and considered. Some residents of an apartment building, or the present or future resident of a one family house could benefit from some improvements that are cost efficient and technically feasible to make in the context of a renovation.

Accessibility in general and for example an elevator in a multi-storey building is one of the most common needs. It is also one of the most costly renovations. The cost should be considered against alternative costs, such as providing service to people who cannot take care of their own errands. The problem here is that it is not the same people who pay for the different solutions. Innovative, even partial, solutions should be considered, and various financing schemes found (see case reports in chapter 7).

The criteria should be used not only to plan a minor or a major renovation but also to choose a new apartment in case a person is moving to improve his or her situation. Obviously, the criteria can be used when planning a new building, as shown in chapter 8 of this report.