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Opening Speech - Abstract

Ageing workers in an ageing society: Labour force transitions and work in late life

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In many countries, pension reforms have been initiated to facilitate the extension of working lives. The social transformation of retirement is fueled by longer lives, uncertain pensions and the need for individuals to adapt to more risks over the course of their working lives. Today, I will discuss how older workers deal with the new reality of extended working lives. I will discuss the impact of the multilayered contexts of institutional arrangements, employer behaviors, and households on retirement. Furthermore, I will dispel some of the myths surrounding the discussion of longer working lives, with respect to the role of individual planning, organisational policies, and household decision making. Results will be presented from two different sources. The first involves studies from eight different countries carried out among European employers. The second set of findings is based on a new Dutch study among 6700 workers aged 60-65 and their spouses, who work for more than 1000 different organizations in The Netherlands. The respondents of this study are among the first generation who will have to work much longer than they originally anticipated. The changing retirement landscape will challenge us to address not only new research questions about how to facilitate longer working lives, but also, how to keep individuals healthy and happy both prior to and following the retirement transition.