



AGE Platform Europe Statement of pre-recorded video on “General Discussion”

29 March 2021 GA Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing

Mr President and delegates,

I am speaking on behalf of AGE Platform Europe, the largest European network of organizations of and for older people.

The ongoing pandemic has rendered more visible than ever before, that our society often treats older people as second-class citizens. Although governments have made commitments to increase the participation of older people in society, progress in practice is slow, limited, and inconsistent.

Over the first wave of the pandemic, across the EU, older people in Residential Care suffered loneliness and exclusion, and were often left abandoned, even to die alone. According to WHO estimates, around 50% of those who died of COVID-19 in the first wave were older people in residential care.

Only few EU Member states consulted older people regarding confinement measures.

To put it short: what we have witnessed is a flagrant violation of human rights and a complete deviation of EU governments’ commitments to facilitate older people’s full participation in society.

Our experience from the pandemic requires us, to make important decisions now about our future. As demonstrated in the recent UN report on ageism, ageism is harmful to individuals and society at large. If there is one thing that we can learn from the pandemic, let it be that we cannot treat older people’s rights as less serious.

146 Member states, including all EU governments have supported the brief of the UN Secretary-General, which calls for developing proposals for an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons.



We now ask all Member States to use this OEWG session to make concrete steps towards drafting a convention that will guarantee the equal respect of our human rights when we are older.

By supporting a convention, governments will show their commitment to leave no one behind.

Thank you

Ebbe Johansen

President

AGE Platform Europe

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