



## **The German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations BAGSO calls for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons**

Video Statement by BAGSO (Heidrun Mollenkopf & Ina Voelcker) submitted to the 11th Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing at the United Nations

1. Thank you for giving me the floor. I speak on behalf of BAGSO, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations.
2. BAGSO expressly supports Civil Society and National Human Rights Institutions in their call for a UN convention on the rights of older persons.
3. This call is more than justified by the serious gaps in the protection of the rights of older people, identified in the past years' sessions of the OEWG-A and the recent Analytical Outcome Study by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.<sup>1</sup>
4. These gaps alone show the urgency of a convention. The pandemic has exacerbated human rights encroachments worldwide, including in Germany.
5. A convention urgently needs to incorporate new developments such as digitalisation, including automated decision-making by artificial intelligence. These technological advances must be seen as a global phenomenon that fundamentally changes both individual areas of life and social coexistence worldwide.
6. Unequal digital opportunities – the so-called Digital Divide – reinforce regional and social inequalities. To guarantee **the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications**, appropriate options must be provided **for everyone** who needs or wants to use available technologies and services.
7. At the same time, alternative options must remain available to cover for diverse needs, abilities and preferences.
8. Although shortcomings such as the exclusion of marginalised and poor people, data security deficiencies, and the risks of threatening personal rights and dignity have been discussed time and again, their human rights implications have not yet been addressed by international law. Therefore, the global implications of digitalisation must be incorporated into a Convention for the rights of older people.



9. Hence, we highly value the European Union's Council Conclusions on human rights of older persons in the era of digitalisation<sup>2</sup>, put forward by the German Government during its EU Council Presidency.
10. We urge all national States to get on with this process and consent to start drafting a UN convention on the rights of older people without any further delay.

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<sup>1</sup> Draft for consultations, January 2021

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11717-2020-REV-2/en/pdf>