



AGE Platform Europe Written Statement at United Nations General Assembly Open-Ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons

“Discussion on the way forward”

1 April 2021

Honourable Chair, Distinguished delegates and colleagues

On behalf of AGE Platform Europe, I would like to express our satisfaction for the all the introductory statements reiterating the priority that member states give to the human rights of older people and their willingness to make further advances. We also particularly welcome states’ commitments for the broad involvement and consultation of all actors, including NGOs and NHRIs.

We however regret that these commitments are not fully applied in practice. We particularly regret the low level of participation by member states in the panel discussions of this session and the lack of concrete progress towards the fulfilment of the OEWG mandate. We also regret the lack of self-advocates as panellists for this 11th session.

At the same time, we are encouraged by the high numbers of new accreditations to the OEWG and the active participation of CSOs and NHRIs from all over the world, which demonstrates the growing demand to make tangible progress.

Thanks to the documents prepared for this session, the updated OHCHR analytical study, and the input by experts, we now have more than sufficient evidence that the existing standards undermine the equal protection of our human rights when we are older. They lack the ambition, specificity and impetus for change. They embody and perpetuate stereotypes and fail to guarantee to older persons the same human rights that everyone else in society has.

COVID-19 obliges us to make ambitious decisions about our future. NGOs, NHRIs and citizens who replied to the UN75 consultation have repeatedly asked for a UN convention so that all of us are entitled to the same rights when we are older. 146 states supported the policy brief of the UN Secretary General, which called for accelerating efforts to develop proposals for an international legal instrument. We can no longer pretend that the convention is a marginal issue that states can avoid. It is time for the OEWG to fulfil its mandate.

We join others in calling for the creation of a sub-group of the Working Group that would include experts from Member States, CSOs and NHRIs, and the Independent Expert to assist the Working Group in this task during the intersessional period.



We also call on EU member states to review the EU position on a convention and ensure that it is informed by the views of older persons. The joint EU position has not been discussed for several years, while the context since its elaboration has changed dramatically. The recent EU council conclusions which refer to the need to close gaps in the protection of the rights of older persons is a step to the right direction. There is no more time to lose. The EU must lead the rally for a UN convention on the equal enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

Thank you.

For more information you may contact:

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