**Guiding Questions for the focus areas of the X Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing:** Education, training, life-long learning and capacity- building

**National Legal Framework**

1. In your country/region, how is the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age guaranteed in legal and policy frameworks?

*The rapid aging of the population in Bulgaria requires strong economic, institutional, administrative, budgetary and financial changes, without which the cohesion in society, intergenerational solidarity will be impaired and difficult problems with aging will arise. The rights of elderly people are guaranteed in Bulgaria through the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020 which defines the strategic framework of the state policy. The document is addressed to all types of education and continuing adult education. One of the main priorities of the strategy is to provide an educational environment for equal access to lifelong learning, active social inclusion and active citizenship.*

**Availability, Accessibility and Adaptability**

2. What are the key issues and challenges faced by older persons in your country/region with regard to the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services1?

*The National Concept for Promoting Active Aging in Bulgaria (2012-2020) is an expression of understanding and consensual recognition of the need to address the aging population's pressures on the functioning of social systems and society as a whole. In the foreground, the possibility of a flexible choice for lifestyle in the elderly is highlighted - through participation in training, employment, various voluntary activities and care. Adoption of a healthy lifestyle, longer participation in the labor market, later retirement and retention of activity after retirement. In this way, encouraging the active life of older people means providing opportunities for a better life rather than limiting the rights to individual realization and life choices.* *The definition of "active aging" belongs to the World Health Organization and covers, in addition to continuing physical activity and participation in the labor market, the need for the full participation of adults in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic life.*

3. What steps have been taken to ensure that education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services are available and accessible to all older persons, adapted to their needs, suited to their preferences and motivations, and of high quality?

*The emerging long-term trend of population aging and the progressive increase in the proportion of the adult population each year is a process of great importance and influence for future social programming as it affects areas of high importance. Demographic aging is an irreversible process, and therefore the answer to this challenge should be not just to mechanically change the basic demographic indicators but to develop an integrated policy to mobilize and make full use of the available human resources capacities of older people and purposeful investment in development. These factors are reflected as the main objectives of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020 - promoting lifelong learning among all sections of the population as a factor for personal development, sustainable employment and social inclusion.*

4. In your country/region, are there studies and/or data available on the access of older persons to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age?

*Yes, there is evidence of the access of elderly people to the right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building at a later age. They are reflected in specialized editions to relevant institutions as well as in the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020.*

**Equality and non-discrimination**

5. In your country, is age one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination in relation to education in older age?

*With the increase in the number of elderly people due to demographic changes, there are prerequisites for increasing cases of neglect and violence against the elderly, there are still cases of unequal treatment, direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of age. Equality before the law and the protection against discrimination of all persons is an inalienable right recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination , the UN Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.*

 *In the Republic of Bulgaria there is a modern, well-developed and effective legislation in the field of equal opportunities and non-discrimination.*

 *The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria prohibits discrimination on all grounds and guarantees the equality of citizens. In the National Concept for Promotion of Active Aging in the Republic of Bulgaria 2012 -2030, the development guidelines are clearly and precisely defined.*

**Accountability**

6. What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building?

*Aging is often seen as something negative, although the elderly are a key human resource for social and economic development, a generator and source of experience and knowledge. Elderly people provide important support to society and the family by taking care of dependent persons by passing their work experiences to the younger generations and contributing to the maintenance of life and social relationships. Social cohesion, equal opportunities and equal treatment of the elderly are needed; prevention of age discrimination; prevention of multiple discrimination with a leading "age".*

*The legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria gives citizens a full opportunity, incl. elderly people to defend and seek their rights in terms of education and capacity building.*

1 including for example: literacy and numeracy programmes; adult education; vocational and professional training; higher education; information and communication technologies (ICT); and informal, recreational and community - based programmes, including volunteering