



PRESS RELEASE

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Older women's poverty and abuse: the hidden face of gender inequalities

Gender abuse and discrimination over the lifecycle lead to greater inequalities, vulnerability and poverty in old age, as European-wide studies report. The situation will have even more serious social and economic consequences as Europe is ageing. So, let's mobilize to [#PressforProgress](#) on gender equality at all ages!

Largely echoed in the media, the recent global mobilization and protest that followed the revelation of sexual harassment affairs involving show business personalities has shed new light on the persistent and unacceptable sexual violence experienced by many women worldwide.

More invisible and silent, but equally unacceptable, is the abuse and violence faced by many women in their old age. According to a [2011 survey](#) conducted among 2.880 women across 5 European countries, 28% of older women surveyed had experienced some kind of violence or abuse in the previous 12 months. Many of them are in a situation of vulnerability and dependence, facing greater difficulties to report and seek protection from law enforcement and victim support services. They need help to make their voice heard!

[Together with 29 other civil society organisations](#), AGE is calling on the European Union to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention to end violence against girls and women of all ages.

Older women's vulnerability mostly results from a lifetime of discrimination, leading to increased inequalities and much higher poverty risks in old age. Among the biggest challenges experienced by women in their lifetime, the gender discrimination in employment and their caring responsibilities - for children and/or dependent relatives - has a serious impact on their income in old age with a persisting gender pension gap of almost 40 %. Indeed, one in three carers has financial difficulties as a consequence of their caring responsibilities, according to a recent [study carried out by COFACE-Families Europe](#). The increasing pressure on informal carers has also been recently [reported by Eurofound](#).

With the ageing of the population and given that 80% of care work in Europe is provided by informal carers, mostly women, it is obvious that further investment in quality care services and measures to support informal carers have become **not only a social, but also an economic necessity**.

Why do carers need support? [Check our infographics!](#)

The proposal for a [European directive on work-life balance](#), tabled by the European Commission in April 2017 as part of the European Pillar of Social Rights, is a first step toward the recognition of the difficult situation experienced by carers in managing their private and professional lives. Yet, there is still a long way to go before work-life balance fully supports gender equality at all ages.

More information:

- [AGE Platform Europe, Work-life balance: an urgent and necessary initiative also for older workers!](#)
- [Joint Statement to Employment and Social Affairs ministers: Call to support swift progress on Work-Life Balance Directive at EPSCO Council](#)
- [Informal care and work-life balance: increasing pressure on carers reported by Eurofound](#)

Note to the editor

About AGE Platform Europe:



AGE is a European network of organisations of and for people aged 50+ aiming to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. www.age-platform.eu

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