

A Society for ALL Ages

AGE Strategy 2022-2025



Preamble

The Strategy 2022-2025 (referred to subsequently as 'Strategy') is the core document designed to direct the overall operation of AGE Platform Europe (referred further as 'AGE') for the four-year cycle. Its aim is to set priorities, focus energies and resources, establish agreed objectives and results, and strengthen day to day activities. In response to changing environments it provides a method of ensuring that our members and secretariat work toward common goals,

adjusted through the annual work programme.

The Strategy's ultimate objective is to increase AGE's capacity to maximise positive changes for older people. Members can at any point, refer to the Strategy to define further actions for the period 2022-2025. The Strategy should also clarify our objectives toward external partners and, therefore, strengthen our collaboration.



Figure 1 - younger and older women posing together

Why? Direction and context

VISION

A society for ALL ages.

AGE's vision encompasses an inclusive society, based on well-being for all, solidarity between generations and full

entitlement to enjoy life, participate in and contribute to society. At the same time, each person's rights and responsibilities throughout their life course have to be fully respected.

MISSION

AGE celebrates longevity as one of the greatest achievements of humanity. We seek to combat ageism, promote human rights throughout the life course, reduce inequalities and enable everyone to live a full and dignified life.

To achieve this mission:

- we will raise the aspirations and needs of older people bridging the gap between them and policymakers.

- we will transform our members' experiences and ideas into policy proposals, advocacy, campaigning, dissemination actions and projects.
- we will support our members' active involvement in AGE's work while promoting mutual learning and networking.

CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

> Respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law, the European Union's fundamental values, unite our members.

> Human rights and dignity do not diminish with age and must be respected throughout each individual's life course.

> Older people are self-advocates. Everyone should be supported to speak on their own behalf as the ultimate experts of their own lives.

> Older women and men are a resource for our societies through their contributions through work, volunteering, informal care, creativity, experience and as consumers.

> Intergenerational solidarity strengthens inclusion and justice between generations respecting and benefiting everyone's experiences, sensibilities, and expectations.

> Age-friendly environments are essential for equitable and inclusive communities for all ages.

OPPORTUNITIES

Living longer, our success story

The success story of longer lives must be accompanied by increased health, well-being, and personal fulfilment for all. The full recognition of the value of each person, whatever their condition and situation, promotes a life-course approach that brings intergenerational balance, recognizing that the past and present experiences of individuals and cohorts impact the future.

Beyond the pandemic

Never have older person's human rights been as challenged or questioned as during the COVID-19 pandemic. Never have the weaknesses and challenges of health and long-term care systems been so visible. Rarely have our economies needed more impetus to recover and grow in a sustainable way. Nor have our societies been so challenged to rethink their organisation, and the role and contribution of all actors and population groups. This provides an opportunity for older people to affect policy making and, ultimately, enhance their human rights.

The COVID-19 pandemic, beyond its tragic impacts and consequences, offers a major

opportunity for our societies to examine the structural gaps and problems of our economies and social protection systems. These can be reshaped with a new vision for more inclusive, participatory and just societies where all ages, including older people, are treated with consideration and their human rights respected.

The diversity of older people

Older people are hugely diverse: whether in terms of chronological and physical age, gender, education, health, frailty, residence e.g., at home or in nursing homes, minority status, income, relations with family and friends or people who grow old alone. Socio-economic and cultural differences within the European Union further adds to this diversity.

This diversity is our strength and will be translated in our advocacy work, into policy responses that address the whole spectrum of realities faced by older people.

CONSTRAINTS

Externally

Taboo of ageing

Ageing is still taboo in our society. We need to change current negative perceptions, narratives, and language about ageing into a more positive,

forward-looking, and realistic vision.

Ageism needs to be challenged through the creation of a positive stories about older people, the promotion of the art of ageing, bearing in mind that ageing occurs

throughout life. Dignity and wellbeing must be respected until the very last day of life.

EU versus national competence

AGE's goals and objectives are aligned with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality which govern the exercise of EU versus national competences. Our work reflects these boundaries and attempts to support and amplify the advocacy work of our members at national level. When implementing this Strategy, AGE will rely on the engagement of the European Union to respect the rights of older people, as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and its article 25 where *"The Union recognises and respects the rights of the elderly to*

lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life."

Euroscepticism

With growing euro scepticism in some countries, the EU has lost its initial appeal for many Europeans including older people who followed its foundation and expansion. The withdrawal of the United Kingdom has further exacerbated this. In this challenging environment, AGE will pursue its pro-European approach to policies on ageing. Our membership development should also reflect the challenge of euro scepticism by promoting the European Union's fundamental values and emphasising the added value of the European project.

Internally

Differing strengths of members

There is uneven representativeness and strength amongst our member organisations, linked to differences in their internal structures (individual and umbrella-type organisations), their human and/or financial resources, or language capacity. We will continue our efforts to address these challenges by strengthening the capacity of our members to act as self-advocates, promoting mutual learning within the network.

Representativeness of network

AGE's membership should better represent the diversity of the ageing

populations in the EU leaving no one behind. We will continue efforts to address these challenges by developing our membership to ensure greater diversity and representativeness.

Erosion of AGE membership

In recent years, some members have withdrawn from our network, reflecting challenges at national level, decline in public and private support for civil society across the EU, or difficulties in linking their work to AGE's objectives. To strengthen our membership, we will strive for a stronger alignment of our respective agendas and objectives as set out through this Strategy.

What? AGE's priorities

Mirroring our vision and mission, AGE will move forward by 2025 toward our **goals** – the desired results we seek to achieve. They will guide our **objectives** – specific,

measurable actions set out and reviewed on a yearly basis.

ADVOCACY GOAL AT EU LEVEL

Adoption, if not substantive progress towards an EU strategy for age equality

To achieve this goal...

AGE will prioritise advocacy in:

- the adoption of an EU law on age discrimination beyond employment;
- a follow-up to the Green Paper on Ageing, ideally in format of a White Paper on Ageing underpinned by EU policy legislations and/or initiatives, such as:
 - the renewed long-term care model, ensuring a proper implementation of principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on access to health and quality long-term care;
 - adequate pensions and minimum safety nets to enable a dignified life and social inclusion, by implementing the principle 15 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on pensions and old age income;
- monitoring the implementation of the EU Employment Equality Directive;
- building on the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic in failures to respect human rights and the dignity of older people.

AGE will continuously:

- Mainstream gender equality across the life course in EU policies to strengthen equality between men and women in old age;
- Mainstream older people's perspectives in EU equality strategies;
- Ensure a proper implementation of EU initiatives on accessibility, such as the European Accessibility Act, and contribute to new actions;
- Monitor EU initiatives to ensure inclusive digitalization, building on the 2020 EU Council Conclusion on Human Rights, Participation and Well-Being of Older Persons in the Era of Digitalisation;
- Monitor the COVID-19 recovery plan, its underpinning instrument "Next Generation EU – COVID-19 recovery package", and the multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027.

AGE will seek to:

- advance the social, civic, and political participation of older people as equal rights holders, using relevant policy process and initiatives, such as the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- impact on the EU agenda on the Silver Economy.

AGE'S ADVOCACY GOAL AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

**Adoption, if not substantive progress towards a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons**

To achieve this goal...

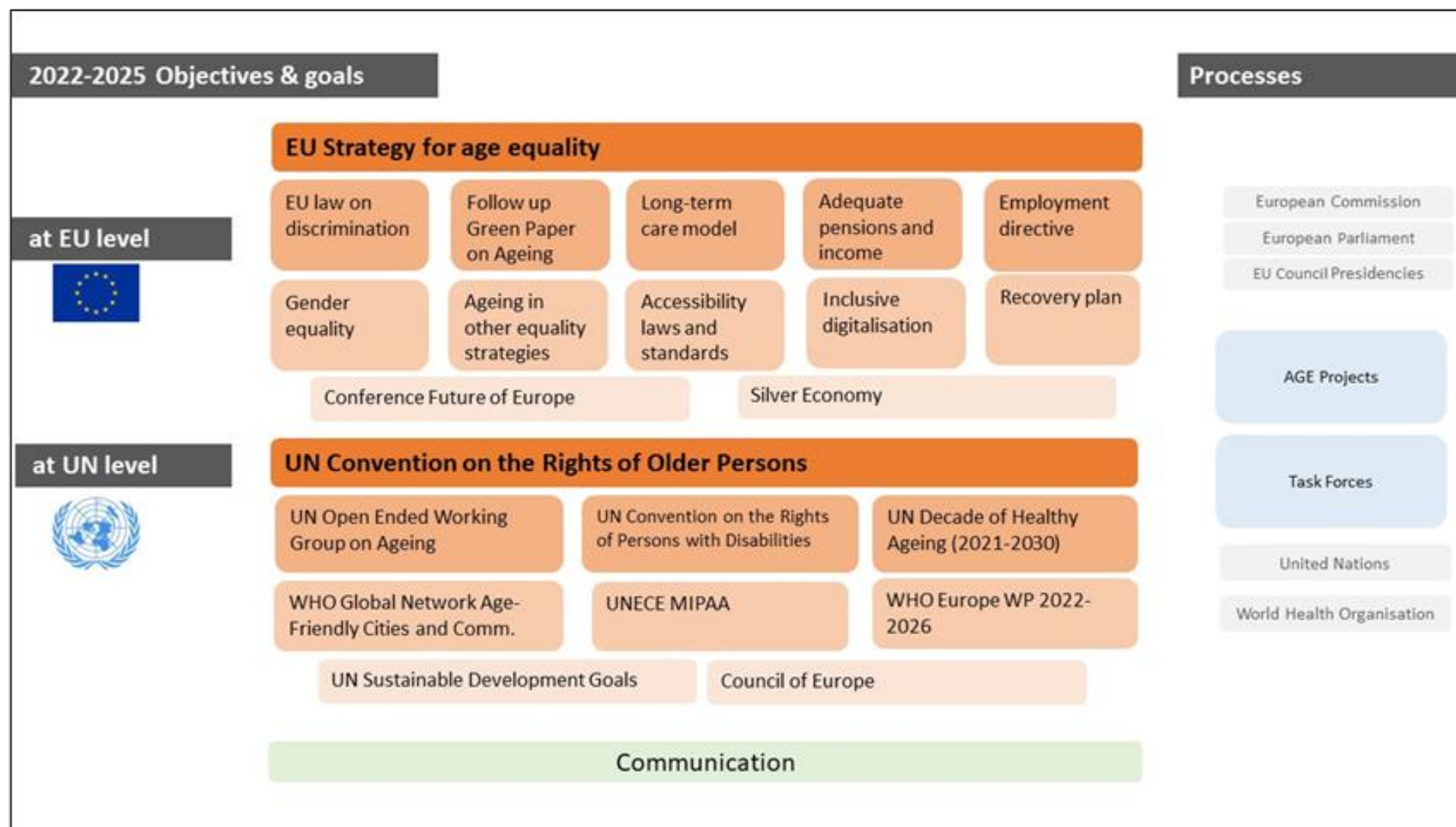
AGE will prioritise advocacy in:

- Reaching a critical mass among EU members states to support a UN Convention on the rights of older people and the establishment of a drafting group;
- Obtaining relevant support from EU's major institutions to advance and elaborate the proposed UN Convention on the rights of older people, aligning them with the promotion of human rights in EU external actions.
- Contribute to the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030;
- Participate in the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities;
- Contribute to the WHO Europe Programme of Work 2020-2025;
- Participate in the UNECE processes around the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

AGE will continuously:

- Contribute to the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing;
- Seize the potential of the United Nations Convention of the Rights for Persons with Disabilities for older people;
- Contribute to key processes of the Council of Europe (Revised European Social Charter, Recommendation on the promotion of human rights of older persons)
- Monitor the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

Diagram summarising AGE's European and international advocacy goals and objectives:



PROJECTS

AGE's advocacy goals and priorities are supported by participation in the conception, implementation, and promotion of project results. The decision to participate in projects shall be based on their added value in informing and impacting our policy work on ageing and

making a tangible improvement to the quality of life of older people. Our objective is to voice older people's perspectives, to involve them as effective end-users, and to ensure ethical and legal issues are correctly addressed.

Our internal goals:

Reflect the voice of older people in all their diversity among our members across Europe

To achieve this goal...

AGE will prioritise actions in:

- Being a representative network across the whole EU influencing policy and putting forward new horizons built on grass-roots evidence and participation.

- Facilitate networking and learning platforms where the diversity, ideas, and experiences of our members are reflected, shared, and deployed.

AGE will continuously:

AGE will seek to:

- Help our members raise their profile vis-à-vis national policymakers.

Adequate and sustainable financial and human resources

To achieve this goal...

AGE will prioritise actions in:

- diversifying sources of own and external income, using available EU funding through the new "Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme";
- supporting a professional secretariat and empowering members.

the EC operational grants by enlarging the membership base and searching for new donors and additional sources of external income.

AGE will seek to:

- Develop cooperation with foundations or other external partners who will financially support our advocacy actions.

AGE will continuously:

- Reduce the pressure on members to cover the co-financing part required by

Stronger co-ownership of the network by all members

To achieve this goal...

AGE will prioritise:

- Regular updates of members on EU and international policy developments on ageing to underpin and inspire their own work and, whenever possible, to raise their profile at national level;
- Frequent collection of information on specific situations at country level across Europe.

AGE will continuously:

- Increase members' capacity to have a stronger impact when advocating for our vision of societies for all ages;

- Create a multiplier effect and build on the knowledge, intelligence, and skills of members.

AGE will seek to:

- Develop and make available to our members a database of good practices related to ageing;
- Promote stronger interaction and networking between members by increasing opportunities for joint meetings and the sharing of experiences and ideas.

Figure 2- AGE workshop participants interacting



Who? Our resources

HUMAN RESOURCES

AGE's mission and objectives relies on our members and our secretariat which are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Members

AGE brings together self-advocating organisations of older people and civil society organisations working with and for older and retired people, with the aim of giving visibility to their views, opinions, needs and interests. Our membership is diverse and pluralistic.

Members contribute, through AGE's statutory bodies and task forces, their skills and knowledge of the situation of older people and national policies in their countries.

FINANCES

The financial strategy aims to seek longer term financial support beyond 2021 including from our main funder, the European Union, through its "Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme".

EU grants and projects

AGE's financial resources for our work 2022-2025 consist of own income (internal and external) and EU funding.

The sources of internal own income derive from membership fees, members donations, or other exceptional internal incomes. The sources of external own

Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day administrative governance of the association, for the implementation of work programmes, decided by our members, and for liaising with all stakeholders in this respect. The Secretariat ensures regular contacts with external stakeholders, namely EU institutions, and liaises with our project partners. The scarce resources of our Secretariat will be deployed to best serve members in the achievement of common goals and the objectives set out in the Strategy.

income, permanent or limited in time, derive from third parties such as corporate or institutional donors. While AGE welcomes donations from a range of external stakeholders, these must comply with AGE's agreed Code of Ethics which aims to protect the independence and image of AGE as the voice of older people.

EU funding is received in the form of subsidies (annual operating grants) and EU-funded projects. These sources of finances are earmarked based on the 2021 budget, as follows:

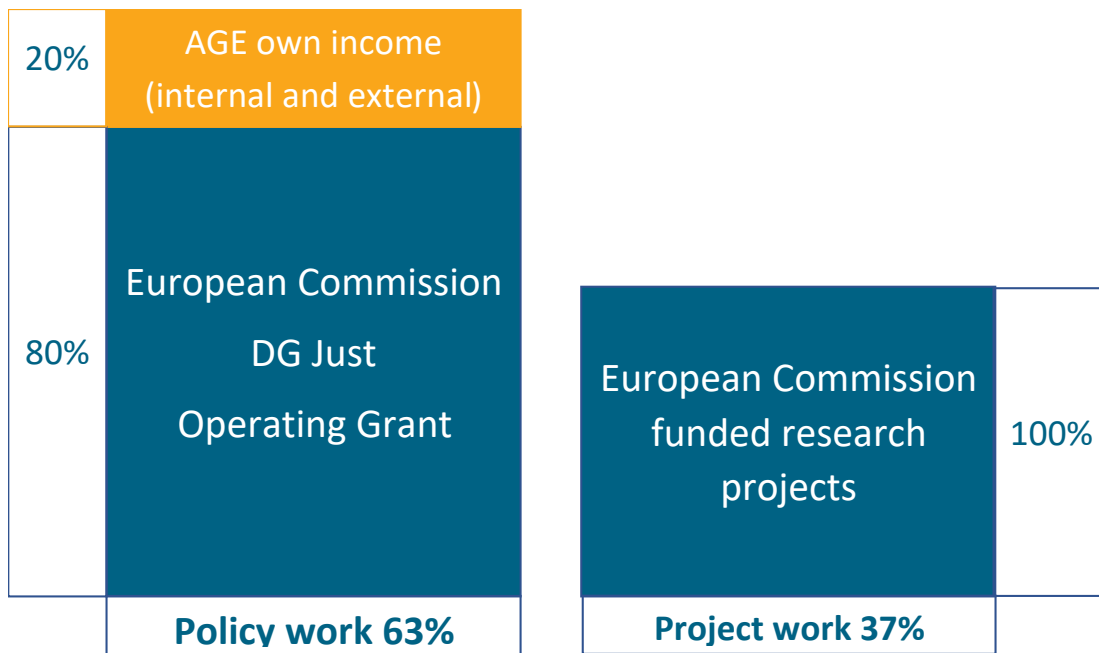
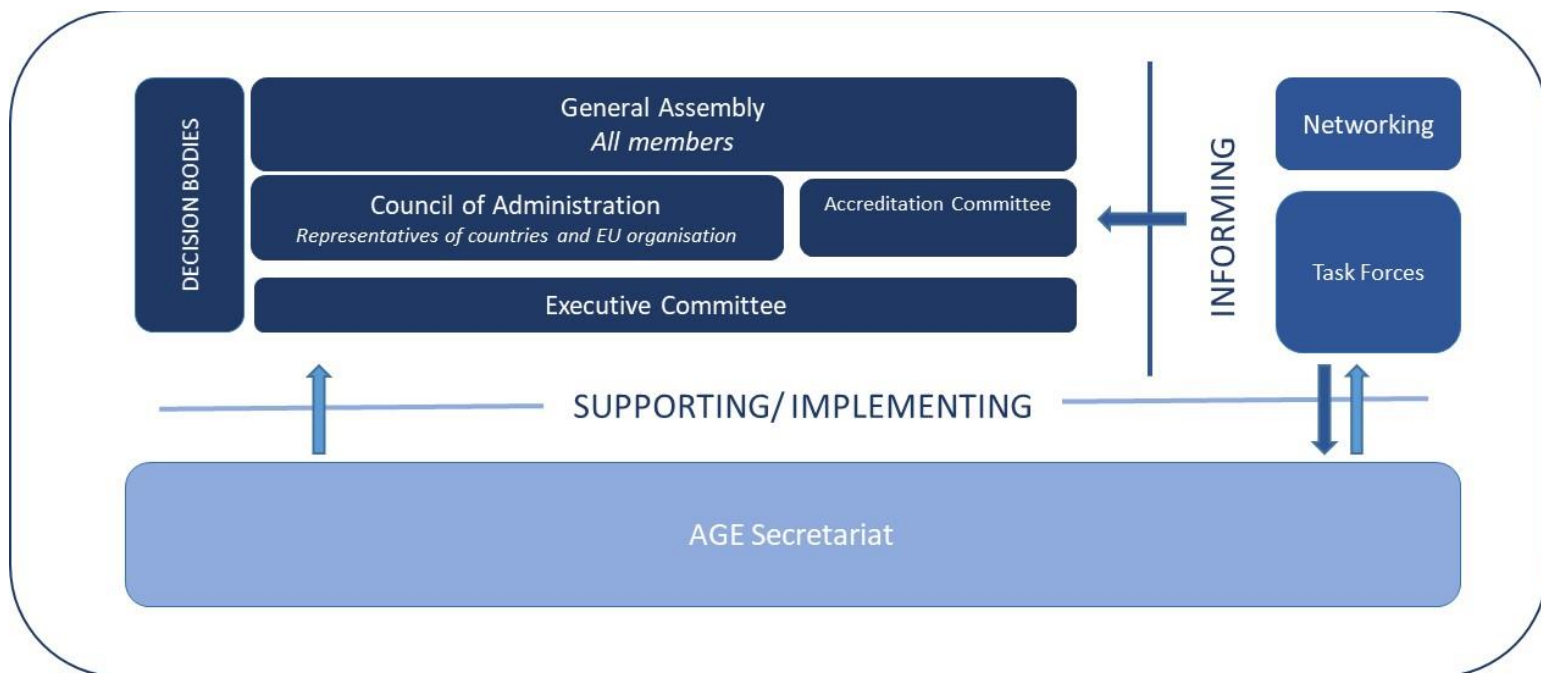


Figure 3 - AGE members sitting at General Assembly



How? Working methods and partnership

Diagram summarising the internal organisation of AGE



TASK FORCES

The aim of the task forces - our main internal working tool - is to use and access the diverse expertise of members to inform AGE's positions and better reflect the situation and concerns of older people

in the EU. They stimulate the exchange of experiences and good practices, propose recommendations, and inform AGE's policy and advocacy work.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

AGE's communication addresses older people, their representative and diverse organisations, and policy makers with the following objectives:

- ensuring the perspectives of older people are brought into public debates;
- strengthening the visibility and the impact of our advocacy work; and
- exchanging information on ageing policies amongst our members and other target audiences.

This is structured through:

- AGE internal communications informing our members of relevant developments and actions that can underpin their work (top-down), organising the collection and dissemination of information from the grass-roots level (bottom-up), and stimulating exchanges within our network (horizontal);

- AGE external communications inform target audience about our positions and seek to influence relevant policy processes.

All flows of information give visibility to and amplifies our members' work. AGE

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to our members, AGE pursues cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders whose actions, directly and indirectly, influence policymaking on ageing and older people. Our stakeholders consist of international institutions, public authorities, academia, the media, the

target audiences and preferred channels and format are specified in AGE's communication strategy, available as an annex to this document.

private sector, and civil society. Collaboration with relevant media and the use of various forms of communication and networks will be further developed to reach a wider range of stakeholders and the public.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

This two-fold process includes monitoring and evaluation of activities and the annual work programme to assess progress and performance in our policy/project work and undertake impact assessment of policy changes resulting from our work.

Monitoring and evaluation will be done on a yearly basis based on internal review

and external evaluation, leading, where necessary, to a re-evaluation of objectives, targets and tools.

The assessment exercise will take a minimum three-year perspective to assess results. External evaluations, done on an annual basis, will be used as indicators for the long-term impact assessment.

Figure 4- older adults listening at AGE General Assembly



| Monitoring Measures on-going activities vs initial plans | Evaluation Measures performance against objectives | Impact assessment Assesses long-term impact on policy and any changes for older people |
|---|--|---|
| Actual work during programme implementation vs. initial plans | Actual work in middle or at end of project/programme cycle | Can be included at all stages and/or can be used specifically after the end of programme/project |
| Focus on actions undertaken vs. actions planned | Focus on actions undertaken versus objectives | Focus on policy making and older people's lives |
| Focus on outputs of our policy and project work / <i>expected results</i> | Focus on outcomes (results) and, if possibly, immediate policy impact | Focus on long-term policy impact and change |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is being done? • Did implemented actions meet expectations? If not, why? What should be improved or modified? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • Did we achieve what we set out to achieve? If not, why? What should be improved or modified? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which policies did we influence, at what levels? • What changed for older people? • How significant is this change for them? • What, if anything, did our work contribute? • Do we need to do more in this respect? • Is there any follow-up needed? What and how? |



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