



Towards an EU Age Equality Strategy: Delivering Equal Rights at All Ages Two-page Summary

What is the EU Age Equality Strategy?

The proposal for an EU Age Equality Strategy provides EU policymakers with recommendations for measures and actions to advance the rights of older people. AGE Platform Europe drafted this proposal together with its members as a follow-up to the European Green Paper on Ageing, addressing the EU's objective to build a 'Union of Equality'.

Why do we need an EU Age Equality Strategy?

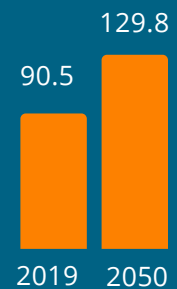
The overall narrative on ageing depicts older people as inherently declining, passive, and vulnerable. Yet ageing is a lifelong process, involving both gains and losses due to the combination of biological, psychological, and social mechanisms. Ageism and age discrimination negatively impact every aspect of older people's lives, from health, work, participation in society to individual autonomy and well-being. At societal level, ageist beliefs weaken social ties, hindering social inclusion and cohesion and

putting different generations against each other. In the current EU framework, age discrimination is only covered in the field of employment and vocational training, under the EU Employment Framework Directive.

How can the EU Age Equality Strategy combat ageism?

AGE proposal for the EU Age Equality Strategy aims to reflect the diversity of older persons, encourage active and healthy ageing, build on intergenerational solidarity, and promote the rights of older people. Once adopted by the EU, it will change the narrative around ageing, based on equality and human rights; it will create consistency between the EU and its Member States; and ensure that ageing is coherently mainstreamed across all EU policies, applying a human rights-based approach.

A human rights-based approach to ageing aims to ensure that we can fully enjoy all human rights when we are old. Old age per se does not make us vulnerable; it is rather societal barriers that negatively impact our rights and well-being. We must all enjoy equal opportunities to be citizens and rights holders when we are old.

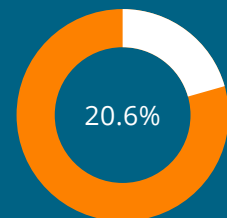


The population of older people aged 65+ in the EU will increase significantly, rising from 90.5 million at the beginning of 2019 to reach 129.8 million by 2050.

The **80+ population** is the fastest growing age group.



In Europe, more than 1/3 people over 65 reported having been a target of ageism.



20,6% of pensioners aged 75+ are at risk of poverty in the EU.

Sources:

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022), World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results
- Eurostat (2020), Ageing Europe - statistics on population developments



The EU Age Equality Strategy proposes the following recommendations:

1- Equality and non-discrimination

- Extend EU legal protection from age discrimination beyond the field of employment.
- Eliminate any ageist practices that affect human dignity in old age.

2- Participation

- Ensure the active participation of older people in all aspects of life such as meaningful political participation, equal access to culture, justice, employment, and digital literacy.
- Allow full, affordable, and equal access to key services such as public transports, and housing infrastructure, meeting people's changing needs throughout their lives.

3- Employment and skills

- Encourage policies where periods of transition between learning, working, family care, periods of unemployment, and retirement can take place at different ages of an individual's life, including after statutory retirement age.
- Guarantee education, life-long learning, and vocational training for everyone, regardless of age.

4- Adequate income

- Empower older workers to stay in the labour market and remove barriers such as mandatory retirement or the inability to combine work and pensions.
- Ensure adequacy of pensions for a life of dignity for women and men, by providing financial security, adequate healthcare and housing, and by guaranteeing regular and automatic pension indexation in line with price developments.

5- Health and long-term care

- Empower older people in long-term care by ensuring their autonomy, independence, participation, and inclusion.
- Improve the quality and working conditions in formal long-term services and support informal carers.

6- International EU Agenda

- Actively participate in the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A), and start drafting a UN convention on the rights of older persons so that we can all age with rights.
- Promote the rights of older people and address the intersection of ageism with other grounds of discrimination such as sexism and ableism across all EU external actions.

Don't older people have the same rights as citizens of all ages? In principle, human rights apply equally to all people without restriction.

But if you lose your job at the age of 50 and look for a new job, do you have the same opportunities as a younger applicant?

If you want to learn more about a new area when you finally have some free time after your job, can you find enough suitable learning opportunities?

If you need help and care in old age, are your wishes, needs and dignity fully respected?

Unfortunately, the rights of older persons are often disregarded. Age discrimination must finally end!

That is why we urgently need a comprehensive EU Age Equality Strategy that applies to all policy areas.



Heidrun Mollenkopf
AGE Platform Europe President

Read [AGE's full proposal for the EU Age Equality Strategy](#).

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Join our forces to promote age equality throughout the life course by disseminating this proposal and referring to it in your own advocacy.

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